

(Top to bottom) Edwin Weiss (1885-1965), Carl Nuechterlein (1888-1970), Pastor Emil Voss (1890-1968).

# **Frankenmuther Bayrische [fränkische] Geschichten**

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[The 1982 version is out of print and has been converted to this format for educational and research purposes. Information obtained from this booklet should include a reference to the source: Frankenmuth Historical Assn. The dialect that is spoken in the Frankenmuth area is phonetic, not written: most of the spellings are the writer's. This dialect is properly called "fränkisch Dialekt" or "Franconian" although local residents traditionally called it "Bavarian" or "Bayerisch" after the former kingdom in which this was one of several dialects spoken.]

## Introduction

[In the 1960s,] three men, whose ties to Frankenmuth go back several generations, got together informally to tape record their humorous Frankenmuth experiences. Today, in this booklet, their stories are printed in both the original "Bayerisch" dialect [see above] and in translation. The Frankenmuth Historical Association is indebted to these farsighted men. They provided us with a tangible element of one key local cultural trait – their "Bayerisch" dialect. Frankenmuth's renown is not purely the product of some modern advertising plan. The community has an unusual place in nineteenth century history. Historians and social scientists identify language, especially a local dialect, as an important means of maintaining community identity.

Humor within a dialect is more difficult to understand because of the subtle nuances used. The Frankenmuth dialect is a mixture of the original "Bavarian" dialect, changes made when it was transported to America, and English words. The men who made this recording were Edwin Weiss (1885 – 1965); Carl Nuechterlein (1888 – 1970); and the Rev. Emil Voss (1890 – 1968, son of St. Lorenz pastor Henry Voss and pastor at Saginaw's Holy Cross Church). They met in Mr. Weiss' house in 1963 or 1964 and entertained themselves retelling humorous stories in "Bayerisch." They met purposely because even then they knew their language was disappearing. Perhaps they met because they lamented Frankenmuth's changing character and wanted to do something about it. Prior to WW II, the German language was common throughout the community – at church, school, business, and socially. In the 1950-70's the population increased substantially. At the same time the younger generations lost the continuity of Frankenmuth as a Bavarian-Lutheran enclave. Frankenmuth had joined mainstream American society.

The Frankenmuth Historical Association is presenting this booklet for several reasons. Foremost is its obvious purpose of presenting another facet of local history. You will find the stories preserve examples of "local color." The Association's purpose is to preserve all of Frankenmuth history. This includes its oral tradition as well as its artifact history. We hope that you enjoy this publication and that it will spark a renewed interest in preserving the language. There are already some people who are keeping the tradition alive, notably the "Siem G'scheit" (Seven Smart) group.

I want to thank the Greater Frankenmuth Area Community Foundation for providing the funds to print this booklet. Marv Engel translated the "Bayerisch" sections, keeping the dry humor intact. Daho Designs and Frankenmuth News are responsible for the design and production quality. Also, thanks to Georg Keilhofer and Marv Engel for their "Seven Smart" cartoons.

Sincerely, Carl R. Hanson, Director

## **FRANKENMUTHER BAYRISCHE GESCHICHTEN**

This is a record of a volunteer committee prompted by the historical interest to preserve for posterity some of the grassroots humor of our Franconian Colonies, a strong section of the backbone of the body now grown into the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod: humor as we find it in Frankenmuth, Frankentrost, Frankenhilf, and related communities.

A good sense of humor has always been recognized as one of the saving qualities with which God has endowed men when things begin to get hard and trying. The ability to smile under pressure to relieve tension by some well chosen anecdote or humorous quotations has often turned disaster into triumph, and ignominious defeat into joyful victory.

The committee was formed at the suggestion of a sainted professor of our St. Louis Seminary [**Pastor Theodore Graebner D.D.**] whose pioneer ancestry could be traced back to the first resident pastor of Frankentrost. The original committee included the now sainted veterans of the Cross, Pastor Louis Nuechterlein, and President Andrew Zeile of the Michigan District, who had their childhood roots in Frankenmuth; the third one [**Pastor Emil Voss**] who was a fellow in this endeavor with them, whom God has still granted life, has passed the half century mark of service to the Kingdom all in the Saginaw Valley, and the men now with him on this tape recording are his close lay friends from Frankenmuth, one even a schoolmate – “Wir sind fei z’samme in die Schul ganga.” (**We actually went to school together**). Remember when “der Pfarrersbu” (**the Minister’s son**) wanted to talk English or High German in school because he had just come from Kansas and knew not “die gute, alte Muttersprach” (**the good old Mother tongue**), the schoolmates gave him the Bronx cheer and said “Der Pfarrarsbu macht s’i aber g’scheit.” (**The Minister’s boy really thinks he’s smart**.) So the “Pfarrersbu” didn’t talk much until he could even play baseball in “Bayerisch” with his schoolmates, and found in the humor of the “Bayerisch” dialect an unending source of joy and laughter, and real rock-ribbed wisdom. We sincerely hope that this recording may help others to receive the same benefit from the “Bayerische Stueck” (**Franconian dialect pieces**) which follow.

We have tried to line them up roughly under three headings:

- I. Those Involving the Ministry.
- II. The Teaching Profession.
- III. The Rugged Laity.

The collaborators in this effort are the well-known Ed Weiss and Carl Nuechterlein of Frankenmuth, outstanding members of the International LLL [Lutheran Laymen’s League]; prominent in business in their hometown; and faithful Christian servants of St. Lorenz congregation, having served in various offices on the boards of their church.

## I. Those Involving the Ministry.

Wie gehts, na, Ed?

**(“How are you, Ed?”)**

Und wie geht's bei dir, Carl?

**(“And how goes it with you, Carl?”)**

I' hoab mi' fei rech saumaessig g'freit dass ihr zwei mithelfen wollt in die Bayerische Stueck.

**(“I was happy as a fattened pig that you too will help in this ‘Bavarian’ piece.”)**

I' wass ihr haett immer recht gut Pfarrer g'habt.

**(“I know you always had good Ministers.”)**

I' wass ihr hoabts immer a' recht g'erhrt und respektiert, oder die Leit hebben a' ausg'funna dass kei Mensch werkli' vollkommen ist, und manchmal der Pfarrer a' nett.

**(“I know you always honored and respected him, or that the people had found out that no human being is perfect and sometimes also the Minister.”)**

Wie woor des noch, Carl, mit'n junger Mann der den Pfarrer auf'n Krankenb'such holen wollt am Samsdoog Obend?

**(“How was it Carl, with the young man who wanted to get the Minister for a Saturday evening visit to a sick friend?”)**

Ja, der hat an'n Pfarrer sei' Studierstub' anklopft, und wie der Pfarrer die Tuer aufmacht und fraegt, “Wass willst du mein Lieber?”

**(“Yes, he knocked on the Minister's study and as the Minister opened the door and asked, ‘What do you want my friend?’”)**

Na' hat der g'sagt mit die Kappen in die Hand: “Herr Pfarrer, mei Bruder is' fei arg krank and moecht Sie gern seh'n.”

**(“Then he said with his cap in his hand, ‘Pastor, my brother is really sick and would like to see you.’”)**

“Na, hat der Pfarrer g'antwort: Du weist ich geh abends nicht gerne aus, kann dass nicht bis morgen warten?”

**(“Then the minister answered, ‘You know I don't like to go out in the evening, can't it wait until morning?’”)**

Na' hat der junge Mann g'antwort: “Ja, Herr Pfarrer, pressier'n dut's nett, aber bis morg'n lebt er nimmer.”

**(“Then the young man answered, ‘Yes, Pastor, it isn't that urgent, but by morning he won't be alive anymore.’”)**

Und wenn's a' Leich' war in St. Lorenz mit selben Pfarrer, und er hat predigt, do haben alleweil a boar g'sagt:

“Ja, wenn mir net in'n Särch g'schaut haetten, no haett mir wieder net g'wisst ob ebbet g'storben is'.”

**(“And when there was a funeral at St. Lorenz and the same minister preached, a couple guys said, ‘Yes, if we wouldn't have looked in the casket, we wouldn't even know that he had died.’”)**

And, Ed, what's that story about the "bus" transportation from Gera?

[Ed Weiss] "Well, you know, they had a synodical convention at St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth, and a three-seated surrey was sent to Gera to bring the pastors from the railroad station, four miles north of St. Lorenz Church. But two pastors had missed the morning train and were coming in on the later afternoon train, and since they had not notified authorities, no surrey was there, and they started to walk. Soon a farmer with a lumber wagon overtook them and recognizing them as pastors, he stopped and asked them courteously, "Wollen die Herren mitfoor'n?"

**("Do the gentlemen want a ride?")**

They of course gladly accepted and on reaching the church they wanted to show their appreciation and said to the kind farmer. "Wie viel schulden wir Ihnen?"

**("How much do we owe you?")**

And the farmer scratched his head and said, "I' woss net – wenn i' a' Load Watzin foohr, no krieg i' fuenf Doohler, und wenn i' a Load Miest foohr, no krieg i' an Doohler, no, weil Ihr's seid, no gebt mir 50 cents."

**("I don't know -- when I carry a load of wheat then I get \$5.00 and when I carry a load of manure I get one dollar. Oh, well, because it's you, give me 50 cents.")**

By the way, that the railroad station was four miles from Frankenmuth had this reason. At the time both the Pere Marquette and the Michigan Central were trying to purchase a right of way through Frankenmuth. But the City Fathers, all staunch "Bavarians," got together and came up with this answer, "Na, dess denna mir net, da kummt z'viel alt's Englishes G'schlamp nei nach Frankenmuth."

**("No, we won't do that. Too much old English trash will come into Frankenmuth.")**

And so the P.M.R.R. [Pere Marquette railroad] went four miles north, and the M.C.R.R. [Michigan Central railroad] six miles south.

Attending a funeral in the home of one of the neighbors, the "Bavarian Lutheran" was taken aback by the funeral oration, and coming out after the service he was heard to observe (speaking of the preacher), "I' wunder bloss wo die Factory is wo's die Sorten machen!"

**("I wonder where the factory is that makes that type!")**

"Von unser'n is kanner."

**("It's not one of ours")**

One of the kindly old Pfarrer (**pastors**) of Frankenmuth saw a group of children playing in the mud and building something with it. He stopped and said kindly, "Na, was macht ihr Kinderchen den?"

**("Well, what are you children making?")**

And he received the startling answer, "'Ezt bau'n mir erscht a' Kerch, und wenn mir g'nug Dreck uebrig he'n, no' bau'n mir auch noch a' Pfarrer."

**("First we build a church, and if we have enough dirt left over, then we will also build a minister.")**

When the custodian of St. Lorenz became a little careless in cleaning the church, the youngest and strongest of the Board of Elders was appointed to call the custodian's attention to such lack of cleanliness. And so, on Sunday morning after the service the Elder beckoned the custodian and said, "Geh' amol her doa Ke'l, i' haett' dir was zu'm soagen."

**("Come here my fellow I have something to tell you.")**

And when he came the elder pointed to a corner of the nave where spider webs and dust had accumulated and said, "Schau a' moal die Spinnaweben, und den Staub. Mannst net d' koennst die Kerch' a bislau besser aufputzen?"

**("Look at the spider webs and the dust. Don't you think you could clean the church a little better?")**

But the custodian came back as quick as a shot –

"So – und du bist a' Vorsteher und woast des net, wenn ma' in der Kerch is' da schaut ma' net auf die Spinnaweben, da schaut ma' auf'n Pfarrer!"

**("So – and you are an elder and don't know that when one is in church, you don't look at the spider webs, you look at the minister!")**

This custodian of St. Lorenz [**sexton, George Ranzenberger**] in his long and faithful service to the church has become a legend in Frankenmuth also because of his telling swiftness in repartee. This answer for instance the speaker heard himself. It was a nice spring morning when Dr. E.A. Mayer [**Pastor of St. Lorenz**] and I walked past the front of the church. The door suddenly opened and the custodian appeared, limping, and said, "Gut'n Morgen, Herr Pfarrer – bloss i' wass net, mei' ans Ba' dut mir so weh, i' glaub' i' hoab's Reihmadismus."

**("Good morning, Mr. Pastor. I don't really know why my one leg hurts. I think I have rheumatism.")**

But Dr. Mayer said, "Ach was, das ist nicht Rheumatismus – das is das Alter."

**("Oh really, that is not rheumatism – that is old age.")**

But the custodian came back swiftly and said slapping his other leg, "Des is' net woahr, des Ba's groad su alt wie's annere." (**"That is not true. This leg is just as old as the other."**)

Another answer between the same personalities was enlightening. The Dr. [**Mayer**] met the custodian coming home from the village on a nice summer evening holding an opened umbrella above him, and so the pastor said to him, "Na, an einem so schoenen Abend spannt man doch nicht einen Schirm auf."

**("Well, on a nice evening like this you don't have to open an umbrella.")**

But the answer came back quick and sharp, "Herr Pfarrer, des is' recht – obber Sie muessen wissen, i' bin fei a wen'g spaet, und i' wass wenn i' hamm komm, no' gibt's a' Sturm."

**("Pastor, that is true – but you have to know, I am a little late and I know when I get home, there's going to be a storm.")**

Sometimes the renowned orators of Missouri didn't rate so high at the "Bavarian" grassroots. When at the occasion of a **church anniversary**, "a' Kirchwah," a renowned professor was asked to be the guest speaker. He came, but with a rather stiff expense account for Pullman service and meals. And when he had preached, two hard-fisted "Bavarians" were heard to say, "Des woar net viel." (**"That wasn't much."**) And the other answered, "Woas? Des war goar nichts! Der waer besser daham blieb'n." (**"What? That was nothing! It would have been better if he had stayed home."**)

At the same congregation one of the real classical answers was given by one of the farmers, notorious for his griping about the crops, something like this.

“Heier gibts wieder goarnichts – “

**(“This year there is nothing again – )**

“- der Wazen is rostig, des Korn waechst net hinterschie’ no’ voederschie’ – die Erdbier’n sind verfroren, und die Bohne’ de’suffen – heier gibts wieder Garnicks.”

**(“- the wheat is rusty, the corn doesn’t grow backward or forward, the strawberries froze and the beans drowned – this year there is nothing again.”)**

But in this one year the wheat was excellent and as the pastor drove by the field in his buggy he saw the farmer shocking his wheat in close and heavy shocks, so the pastor stopped by the roadside and called to the farmer to come near and said to him – “Dies’ Jahr, mein Lieber, hat unser Herr Gott Sie aber reichlich gesegnet. Dies’ Jahr sollten Sie doch zufrieden und dankbar sein.”

**(“This year my good man our God richly blessed you. This year you should be satisfied and thankful.”)**

But the farmer scratched his head and looked back over the heavily-laden field and said, “Des is’ scho’ ganz recht, Herr Pfarrer, oaber es is’ doch vordollt hart an’s Land.”

**(“That is true, Pastor, but it is terribly hard on the land.”)**

## **II. The Teaching Profession.**

Of course the teachers of the Christian Day School were also often involved in this “Bavarian” grassroots wisdom and humor. For instance, when in one of the nine school districts of St. Lorenz one of the schools was not doing well, a pastor asked his brother who lived in this district, “Was ist den los mit eurem Lehrer?”

**(“What is wrong with your teacher?”)**

And the brother answered, “Dass kann i’ dir soagen. Der Lehrer is fei a’ gutter Kerl, und a’ feiner Mann, a’ recht Christli’; und gut mahnt mit die Kinder (a’ Mutter koennt’s net besser mahne). Blos a’ Ding kann er abbn net: Er kann ka Schul holten.”

**(“I can tell you this. The teacher is really a good guy and a fine man; also very religious; and he means well with the children. A mother couldn’t do any better. But one thing he can’t do: he cannot teach classes.”)**

Then in another daughter congregation of the Franconian mothers, there was the question of introducing English evening service once a month to keep in stride with the times. One of the fine sincere Christian men got up and said, “Wenn sie’ der Pfarrer noch mehr Erbet machen will, no’ derf er - i’ schlag’s fuer.”

**(“If the minister wants to take on more work, then he can – I’ll make a motion for it.”)**

And at the words, “I’ unterstuetz’ a” (**“I support it”**) one of the older members arose to ask for the floor and said, “Des waer mir ganz recht. Die Englischa’ Gottesdienst g’faellten mir a’ - die Froag is’ blos ob unsere Lehrer a’ Englisch spielen koenna auf die Orgel.”

**(“That would be OK with me. I also like the English church service. The question is just whether our teacher can also play English on the organ.”)**

Then there is the incident in St. Lorenz, when one of the teachers received a call to a large and prosperous congregation in Chicago and presented the call rather proudly to the congregation with an ever more straightening of the backbone. Then one of the members asked for the floor and said, “I’ glaub’ mir besser lass’n ihn geh’n, sonst bricht er uns noch roh – was denna mir noa’ mit die Trummer!”

**(“I believe we should let him go, otherwise he’ll break off, yet – what would we do with the rubble?”)**

In St. Lorenz again at the occasion of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the congregation decided to buy a new set of church bells and appointed a committee of two teachers and the pastor to suggest the proper tones for these bells. So, in the next meeting Dr. Mayer reported, “Wir haben uns die Sache ueberlegt und meinen dass ein Dreiklang in D-moll das Beste waere.”

**(“We have thought this over and think that three bells in D-minor would be the best.”)**

There was silence then for some time. Finally a staunch layman, a well-known lay theologian, got up and said, “Ja, Herr Pfarrer, was wissen mir dumme Bauern von an Dreiklang in D-Moll. Koenne mir net amol hoer’n wie si’ des o’hoert?”

**(“Yes, Pastor, what do we dumb farmers know about three bells in D-minor? Could we hear once how it sounds?”)**

And Dr. Mayer said, “Gewiss! Marquard, du nimmst des Ton, und Laesch, du den anderen und ich nehm den dritten”

**(“Sure! Marquard, you take this one tone and Laesch, you take the other one and I will take the third.”)**

And so they intoned the Drei-klang! But there was silence again, and finally the same layman got up and said, “Ja, lieben Brueder, i’ mahn wenn si’ des net besser o’hoert, noa b’halten mir lieber die Alten.”

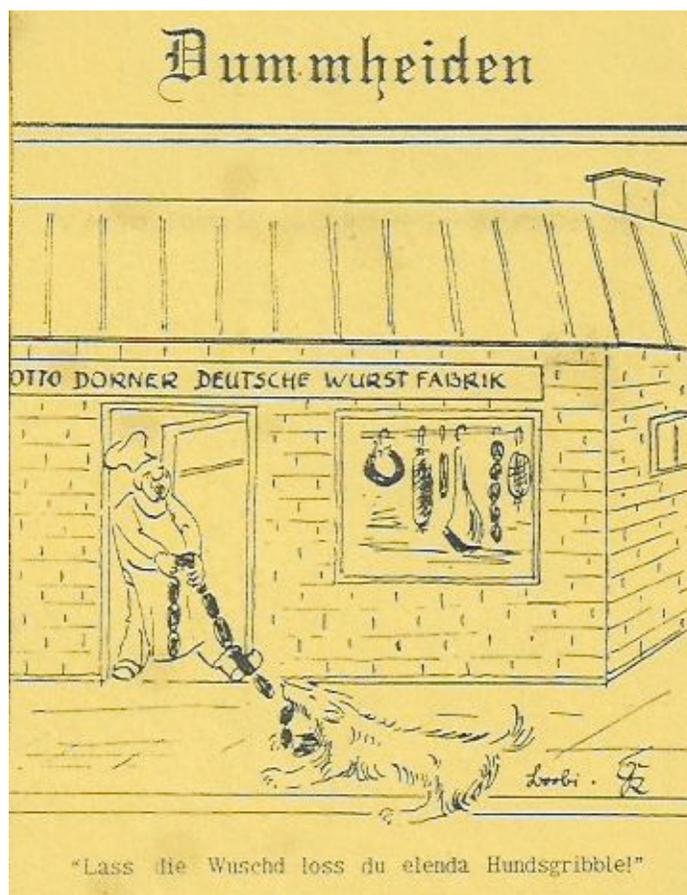
**(“Yes, my beloved brothers, I think if it doesn’t sound any better than that, we might as well keep the old ones.”)**

In Holy Cross [Lutheran Church] (Saginaw, Michigan) the official organist for many years was Teacher Grauer, but the custodian of the church also served together with Grauer for a number of years, and had the duty to pump the organ. He finally figured out that it took so many strokes up and down on the pump handle to supply the proper air pressure for the organ during the singing of the “Grosser Glaube,” Luther’s three verses of the creed which was traditional in every Sunday morning service. But one Sunday Grauer was ill and a younger man had to step in to play the organ, and used up quite some time in prelude and interlude, so that when the congregation was halfway through the third stanza of the creed, the count of the custodian had run out, and so he dropped the pump handle and sat down, but everybody around him was motioning to him to continue. However, the custodian merely turned to them and said irritably, “I’ wass doch wie viel Wind in’n Grossen Glaub’n neigeht.”

**(“I know how much wind goes into The Great Faith.”)**

At another time the organist suggested they should add a rank of trumpets or “Posaunenchor” to the organ. But a venerable member of the Board of Elders arose and said, “Des waer mir a’ scho ganz recht, und su’ a’ Posanenchor g’faellt mir a’ – die Frag’ is’ bloss, ob mir a’ an Lehrer hem der’s bloasen kann.”

**(“That would be fine with me and such a trumpet chorus I also like – the question is, if we have a teacher who can blow it.”)**



**Lass die Wuschd loss du elenda Hundsgribble!  
(Let go of that sausage you “dog-cripple” mongrel!)**

Old Cantor [choirmaster] Riedel had a special good friend among the laity of St. Lorenz who would bring him a “Metzelsuppe” (some samples of butchering day sausages), and so one day he came again with a package for Cantor Riedel and said, “So Herr Kantor, da hebbens a’ Stueck von a’ doten Sau.”

**(“So, Cantor, here you have a piece of dead sow.”)**

But the Cantor, a bit squeamish and embarrassed, said: “Vielen Dank, mein Lieber, bloss soll man wirklich von einem toten Schwein was essen?”

**(“Many thanks, my friend, but should we really eat something from a dead pig?”)**

– And the donor said, “Noa, waas mahnes’ Herr Kantor, i’hoab no’ niemals vo’ a’ lebendigen was g’fressen!”

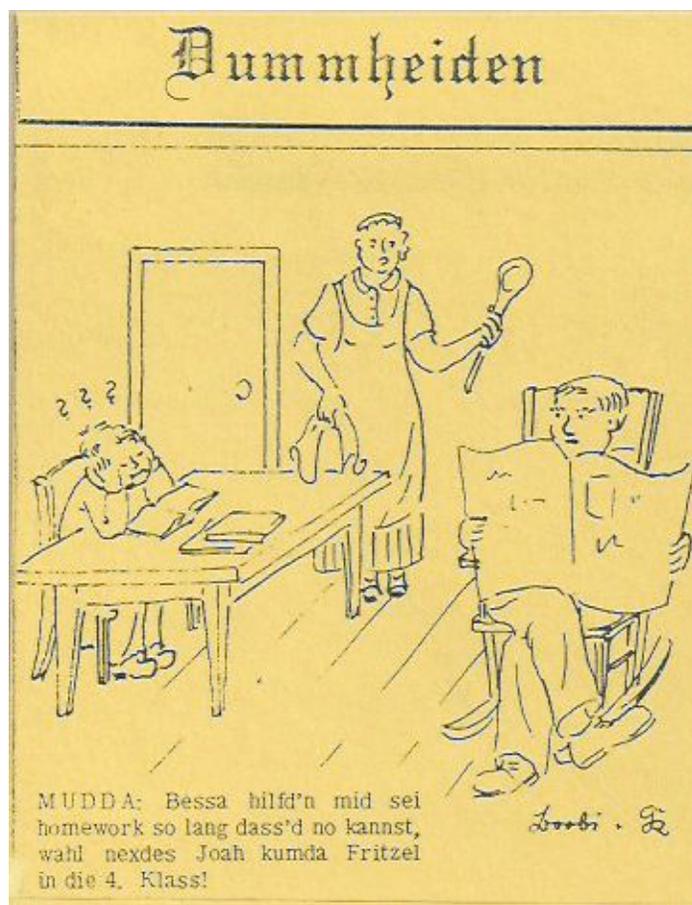
**(“What do you mean, Cantor? I have never eaten anything from a living one!”)**

This kind donor had become a widower with several children and the Cantor was worried about it, urging his friend to marry again, and so asked him one day, “Weist du denn von keiner die du heiraten koennst?”

**(“Don’t you know of anyone you could marry?”)**

But his friend answered, “Ja, Herr Kantor, wenn i’ anna wissest wo i’ moeget, da waas i’ scho’ glei’ a’ Dutzend wo mi’ net moegen.”

**(“Yes, Mr. Cantor, if I knew of one that would take me, but I already know of a dozen that wouldn’t take me.”)**



**MUDDA: Bessa hilfd’n mid sei homework so lang dass’d no kannst, wahl nexdes Joah kumda Fritzel in die 4. Klass!**

**(Mother: Better help with his homework as long as you can – next year Fritzel is in the Fourth Grade.)**

### III. The Rugged Laity.

Endless of course also is the humor involving the laity among themselves. For instance, this classical one, when the School Board for the public school district consisting of 100% of St. Lorenz members was considering hiring a teacher, and everyone was trying to sell his particular candidate to the board, one member said, "I' hoab fei a' rechten, guten Kandidat. Der hat net bloss auf an', na' der hat auf zwei Colleges studiert."

**("I have a truly good candidate. He did not study only at one college, no, he studied at two colleges.")**

And this rebuttal came immediately from an old and sage member of the board, "Des soagt nu' garnichts. I' hoab a'mal a' Kalb g'hatt, des hat von zwoana Kueh g'soffen, un' is' doch a' Ochs wur'n."

**("That doesn't mean a thing. I once had a calf that nursed from two cows and still became as dumb as an ox.")**

In the early days when there was no bridge across the Cass River and men and goods had to be ferried across by a boat – the ferry was just about ready to cross again when a man with a calf on a rope came hustling down the river bank and the ferry man asked, "Willst a' mit foorh'n?"

**("Do you want to ride along too?")**

The answer came quick and biting, "O' na, i' wollt bloss mei' Kalb dei' schoen's nei's Boat zeig'n."

**("Oh, no, I just wanted to show my calf your nice new boat.")**

In 1904 the Cass River left its banks in the spring and flooded the lower village by several feet, and to commemorate such an unusual inundation they nailed a board to the outside wall of Hubinger's Store with the legend: "Hochwasser – 1904" ("**Highwater – 1904**"). After some years a native of Frankenmuth returned for a visit and saw the board, and since it seemed impressively high, he asked, "John, soag mir bloss, woar des Wasser werkli' su hoch in 1904?"

**("John, tell me, was the water really that high in 1904?")**

And the answer came, "Oh, na' bloss da unten do hemma's die Buben immer rohg'rissen, no hebben mir's halt da oben hie-g'nagelt."

**("Oh, no, but down here the boys always tore it off, so then we nailed it up that high.")**

Who says that this wasn't a really wise and practical solution of the problem?



**SCHOSCH: Da Dokda hat gsacht, ich soll bloss ah Biea in dohg drinkn.  
Noh bini halt zu zeha Dokda ganga.  
(George: The doctor said I should drink only one beer a day.  
So then I went to ten doctors.)**

There was a farmer whose love and care for mules became proverbial, so that everybody put the prefix “Esel” before his family name. One day driving through the village on a cart, his mule started to balk right downtown and he could not make him move. Just then the family doctor of Frankenmuth, for many years the beloved physician of the people, stepped out from one of the homes, and the farmer seeing him said, “Ja, Herr Doktor, es was i’ – vernunfftige Menschen di’ koennas’ kurieren, aber net su a’ unvernunfftigen Stueck Vieh wie des da.”

**(“Yes, Doctor, I know you can cure rational people, but not such an irrational animal like this one.”)**

And the doctor answered, “Oh, ich weiss nicht.” **(“Oh, I don’t know.”)** And he took a powder out of his little black bag and asked the farmer to help him open the mouth of the mule. Having accomplished it, the doctor dropped in his powder and only a split second later all you could see was a disappearing cloud of dust with a mule’s tail sticking straight out of it. Amazed the farmer turned to the doctor and said, “Wie viel kost noh’ des Pulver?”

**(“How much does that powder cost?”)**

The doctor answered, “Oh, zwei Schilling (25 cents).” **(“Oh, two shilling [25 cents].”)**

And the farmer demanded, “No’ gibts mir glei’ 50 cents wert.” **(“Then give me 50 cents worth,”)** And when the doctor asked what for, the farmer answered, “I’ muss doch mei’ Esel ei’holen.” **(“Because I have to catch up with my mule and bring it back here again.”)**

The sexton of St. Lorenz was renowned far and wide for his quick and sharp answers. And so one spring morning when he was dipping superfluous moisture from a grave he had dug for the afternoon funeral, another member of the church (not a particular example to the flock) came to see what the sexton was doing and finally said, “Des soag i’ dir aber – wenn i’ a’ mal sterb’ – in su’ a’ nass Loch dust mi’ net nunter.”

**(“I can tell you – when I die, you are not putting me down into such a wet hole.”)**

And the sexton looking up, saw who it was and said, “Sorg di’ nur net – wo du a’ mal hi’ kommst, da werscht scho’ bald wieder trucken.”

**(“Don’t worry about it – where you’ll be arriving someday, you will dry off fast enough.”)**

After a particularly impressive sermon on a Sunday morning, two were driving home together silently. Finally one of them broke the silence and said, “Hannes, wenn des woahr is’ dass mir a’ mal vo’ a’ jeden unnutzen Wort Rechenschaft geb’n müssen, no’ wenn mei’ Alte dro’ kummt, da geht fei die halbe Ewigkeit drauf.”

**(“John, if it is true that we have to account for every unnecessary word we say, when it is my old lady’s turn, half of eternity will go by.”)**

Another story of the sexton of St. Lorenz which a former well-known President of the Michigan District [Missouri Synod] often used to point out the foolishness of a hit and miss method of church work was this. The sexton had a pear tree in his yard and toward fall, when the pears began to ripen, the squirrels would play havoc with his nice crop of pears. So he borrowed an old horse pistol and started firing at the squirrels, always missing the mark. So in desperation he finally said to the squirrel, “Du, verdollt’s Luder, wenn du a’ mal hiehupfts wo i’ hie’ schiess, no’ werscht scho’ ausfinna.”

**(“You miserable wretch, if you would jump once to where I shoot then you would get punished.”)**

When a new and young supervisor of the township was elected to replace the retiring old one, the latter was not too impressed with the wisdom of the young man, who was charged to build a bridge over the Cass River. The old man warned the young one that he was building the bridge too low and said, “Wenn’s Hochwasser im Fruehjahr kommt, no’ reist’s dir des ganz’ Geschlamp nunter.”

**(“If high water comes next spring, it will tear this whole trash down.”)**

But the young man refused to listen and so when the spring floods came, the bridge was in imminent danger of being torn down by the ice floes, and the old man did a bit of gloating especially when the young man said, “Wenn i’ bloss da oben a’ Hoaken haett, no’ koennt i’ di’ Bruecken aufzieg’n.”

**(“If I only had a hook up there then I could pull the bridge up.”)**

And the old man came back with this observation, “Ja, wenn unser Herr Gott g’wollt haett dass mir so an dumme Supervisor electen denna, no’ haett er scho’ da oben a’ Hoaken hi’ g’macht.”

**(“Yes, if our Lord God wanted it that we would elect such a dumb Supervisor then He would have already made a hook up there.”)**

We know that for the “Bavarian” the good old Hopfen und Mais (**hops and corn**) is a rather cherished beverage and so Frankenmuth had two breweries – the oldest one was Geyer Bros. And Ed, what was that story yet about Geyer’s beer? Well at the time, there were book salesmen traveling through the land (they called them *Kolporteurs*) and one of them came to a farmer’s home and tried to sell a set of Shakespeare’s works to the farmer’s wife, but she excused herself and said, “Da muss i’ erscht in’n Kuhstall und ‘n Vater froage.”

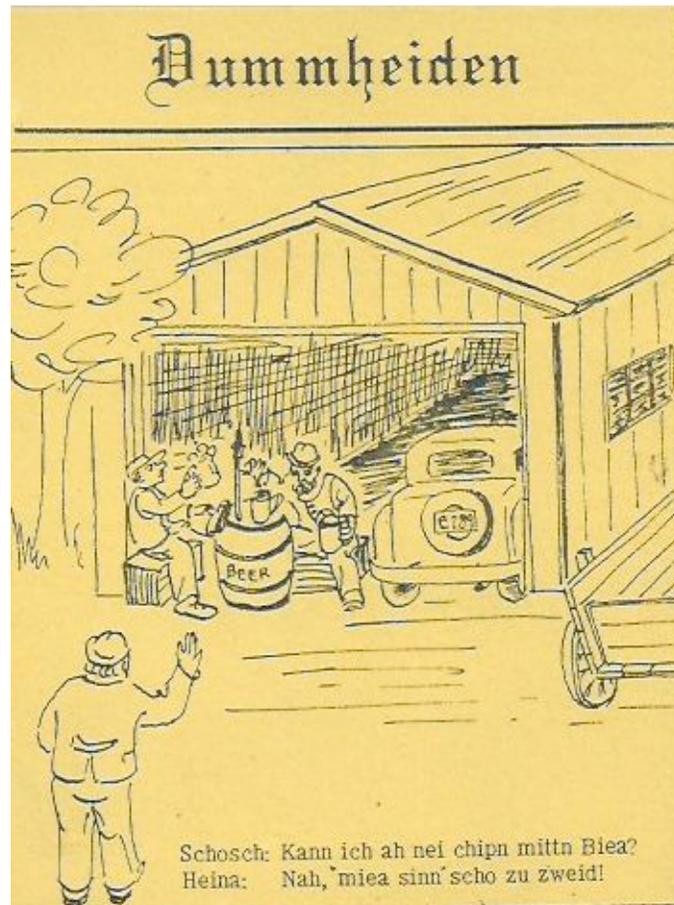
**(“First I have to go out to the cow barn and ask father.”)**

After a little while she came back and told the agent, “Der Vater hat g’sagt, des moag scho’ alles ganz recht sos’ mit’n Shakespeare, obber mir bleib’n alle’ weil lieber bei’ Geyers Bier.”

**(“The father said that Shakespeare undoubtedly is OK, but for the time being we’d rather stay with Geyer’s beer.”)**

Standing at the booth on a 4<sup>th</sup> of July picnic, two older members were refreshing themselves on a hot day with a glass of beer. Both were talking earnestly and seriously as I saw them, when suddenly a cloud passed over the sun and a few drops of rain began to fall. Quick as a flash one of the men put his hand over his glass and looking up said, “Herrschaft, dass mir da bloss kei’ Tropfen nei’ faellt.”

**(“Goodness, I hope that not one drop falls in.”)**



**Schosch: Kann ich ah nei chipn mittn Biea?**

**Heina: Nah, miea sinn scho zu zweid!**

**(George “Schosch”: Can I chip in with the beer?**

**Henry “Heina”: No, there are already two of us.)**

And when, on a picnic, one had really looked too deep into the glass, one of the members of the Board of Elders admonished him and said, “Steffa, etz hoast’s scho’ wieder z’viel. Woas doch des Vieh wen’s g’nug hat.”

**(“Stephen, again you drank too much. Even the cow knows when it has had enough.”)**

And the tippler answered, “Ja, von Wasser woas i’ a’.”

**(“Yes, if it were water I also know when to stop.”)**

This same farmer stood by his water trough at the end of a hot day when cows returning home from the pasture stuck their noses deep into the water trough and seemed to breathe it in, and he shook his head sadly and said, “Schoad’, werkli’ schoad’ um so’ a’ schoena Durscht.”

**(“Too bad, really too bad for such a beautiful thirst.”)**

Yes, those that had a notable thirst for the amber fluid were described thus, “Der hat a’ an haasen Stah’ verschluckt.”

**(“He had also swallowed a hot stone.”)**

When modern bathrooms were beginning to be installed in the home, two young ladies met downtown and Mary said to Barbara, “Hoabd ihr daham a’ su’ a’ schoen’s, neies Bodzimmer eig’richt?”

**(“Do you have one of those nice new bathrooms installed at home too?”)**

And Barbara said “No’ ebbet, und was mahnst no’, der Vatter hat sei’ erscht’s Boad g’numma, und weil’s Wasser su schoeh woar, no’ is’ er halt eing’schloafen.”

**(“Of course and what do you think, father took his first bath, and because the water felt so good, he fell asleep.”)**

And Mary said, “O mei’, no’ is’ er doch net dersuffen!”

**(“Oh my, he didn’t drown did he?”)**

But Barbara replied, “Na, er hat halt’s Maul aufg’hatt.”

**(“No, he had his mouth open.”)**

And Carl, what was that story about the Bayerische Knoedel (**Bavarian dumplings**)? Well, one of the young fellers made a bet he could clean up a dozen Knoedel in one sitting. Somebody took him up on it and in Zehnder’s Hotel they served him with a platter of a dozen real big and round and luscious Knoedel. He started out on high, and when he had six down he had to shift into second, and another few he went into low, and finally the old engine began really to steam and smoke, but there was one left on the platter – and the engine had conked out. He couldn’t make it. So he shook his fist at the lone Knoedel and said, “Herrschaft, haett i’ des g’wiszt, di’ haett i’ z’erscht g’fressen.”

**(“Goodness, if I would have known that, I would have eaten this one first.”)**

There was one kindly elderly gentleman in Frankenmuth, beloved of many for his cheerful, kindly spirit. But at home he somehow had lost command and followed rather than led, and so at a wedding reception he would have liked to stay a little longer and just have one more glass with his friends. But Ma came in and said, "Pa, etzt genna mir hamm"

**("Pa, we are going home now.")**

And he said "Oh, Ma, bloss nu' a' glahn's Glaesla?"

**("Oh, Ma, only one more small glassful?")**

But she said, "No etzt komm!"

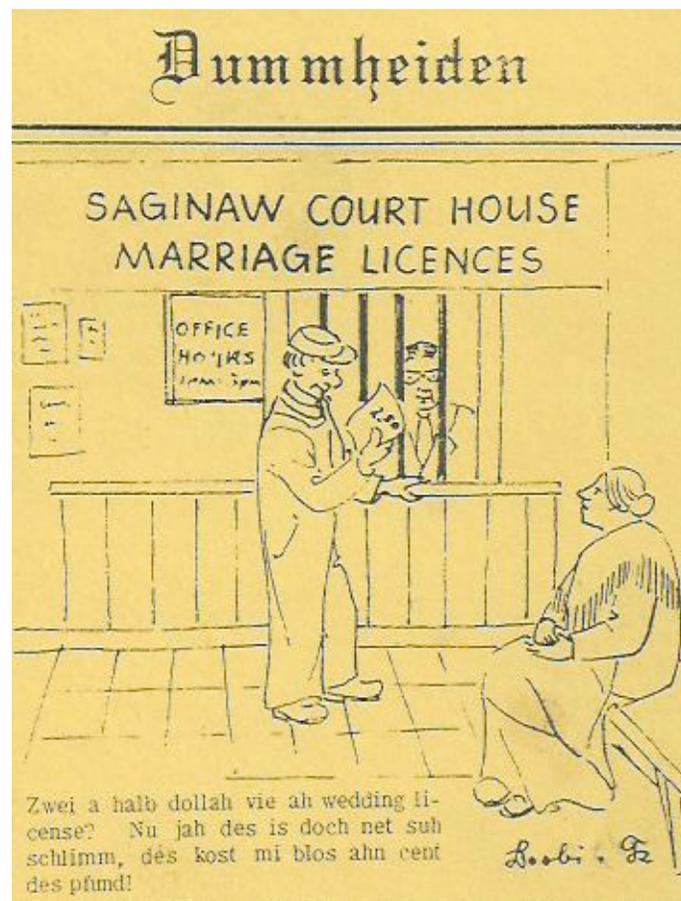
**("No, now come.")**

So he hung his head and followed, but on reaching the door he turned around and said to the company, "Ihr muesst fei wissen, i' bin a' bissla unter'm Pantoffel, odder dess Bissla is VIEL."

**("You have to know I am a little bit henpecked, nay, the little bit is a lot!")**

And when an old bachelor finally found a helpmate who certainly hadn't very recently won a beauty contest, and introduced her to an old friend, this friend's companion said reviewing the introduction, "Die muss er doch ganz g'wiss in der Mondfinsternis g'heirat hoeben."

**("Really, he must have certainly married her during an eclipse.")**



**Zwei a halb dollah vie ah wedding license?  
Nu jah des is doch net suh schlimm, des kost mi blos ahn cent des Pfund!  
(\$2.50 for a wedding license? Now, that's a good deal.  
It only costs a penny a pound.)**

The frugality of the “Bavarian Fathers” is well attested by the family physician who had treated and prescribed some medicines for one of the parishioners and he recovered before he had used the supplies of medicine and pills, and when his wife at spring housecleaning time asked him, “Was dut mal nu’ mit all’ die deire Medizin?”

**(“What are we going to do with all the expensive medicine?”)**

He answered, “Hatma’ den deiren Stoff kafft, na’ muss man a’ einemma’ –

**(“Since we bought the high-priced stuff, we also have to take it.”)**

– and proceeded to do so. Very shortly he had to call in the good physician for an antidote.



**Mann, der Mensch hat vei Wassa af die Gnee!  
(Man, that man really has water on the knee!)**

The committees that were sometimes sent out for admonition or [tithe] collections were not so successful at times. Like this one, of whom the prospective delinquent said, “Na su’ a’ Komitee. I’ woas g’wiss wenn die kumma, den’n stell’ i’ a Bier und a’ Lunch hie’, und den ganzen Na’mittag sagt mir kanne a’ Wort von dera G’ma.”

**(“Oh, such a committee. I know for sure when they come I will give them beer and lunch and the whole afternoon they won’t say a word of committee business.”)**

Or this committee, that was confronted with this excuse by a delinquent churchgoer.

“Ihr wist’s lieben Brueder, wie alt i’ bin, und zum la’fen is’ schier z’weit, und u’er die Streck’s die Car ‘raus holl’n, des Zahlt si’ schier net.”

**(“You know my dear brothers, as old as I am, and to walk it’s too far, and to take the car out for that short distance, it just does not pay.”)**

Or when a committee, which was sent out to bring in the Treasurer to submit his books for an audit, came back with the report that the delinquent had said, “Die ganz’ G’ma kann mir’n Buckel ‘naufstei’ng.”

**(“The whole congregation can climb up my back.”)**

But the pastor had the good sense to say “I’ tut’s net.” **(“I won’t do it.”)**

And when the pastor was urging his members for greater interest and greater contributions for missions in the district, he was asked where these missionaries were stationed - - he mentioned a

large metropolitan center of the State. Then one of the members said, “Des muss doch a rechte Heidenstadt sei’ wenn’s so viel Missionaere brauchen.”

**(“That must be a real heathen city if they need that many missionaries.”)**

And then when the first collections were held for the pension fund and it was explained this fund would finally be able to render adequate support mainly by its accumulating interest, one of the members got up and said, “Woas denna mir no’ mit all’ dem Geld wenn der Juengste’ Doag kummt?”

**(“What are we going to do with all the money when Judgment Day comes?”)**

The pastor answered kindly, “Dann geben wir’s halt Ihnen.” **(“Then we will give it to you.”)** But another brother thought this was too rough an answer and said, “I’ mahn’ der Pfarrer braucht net su scherf antworten.”

**(“I think the minister should not answer with such sharpness.”)**

And the only thing the pastor could say was, “Wollen Sie’s dann haben?”

**(“Why, did you want it?”)**

That ended the question.

In some instances there could be real irritation about little things, and when two of them really were on the outs, the worst thing they could say to a fellow member was: “Mit dir bin i’ ganz und gaar ferti’. Du brauchst a’ net auf mei’ Leich’ kumma.”

**(“I’m done with you completely. You don’t even have to come to my funeral.”)**

The funeral services in St. Lorenz were always phenomenally well attended. It was always a real occasion, but sometimes misinterpreted by the younger generation. Like the boy who had received a pretty crimson pair of pants for Christmas, and when a week later his great aunt was to be buried, he came down dressed in his bright and cheery pants. But his mother reprimanded him, “Des geht net fuer a’ Leich’. Geh nur gleich ‘nauf und zieh die alta Husen o’.”

**(“That does not go for a funeral. You go right back up and put on your old pants.”)**

And the boy almost in tears said, “Wenn i’ mei’ rote Husen net o’ziehen derff, no’ freit mi’ die ganze Leicht nett.”

**(“If I cannot wear my red pants, I won’t be happy throughout the funeral.”)**

And to bring things a little more up to date.

Ed, tell us what you told your brother-in-law when he led you sightseeing up to the Empire State Building in New York.

Well, I looked it up and down, mainly up, and said, “Herrschaft, was koennt ma’ da fuer Hei ‘neiloaden.”

**(“Goodness gracious, could we pile a lot of hay in it.”)**

And Carl, what did you tell Stephan Nuechterlein when he asked you how fast you drove with your new Buick?

“Oh, I said, never more than 50 or 60 miles an hour, but you know I’m diligently tending to business and the Lord promised the protection of His angels on our rightful way.” And Stephan said, “Ja, wenn du so schnell faehrst, noa’ kumma die Engel nimmer noach.”

**(“Yes, when you drive that fast the angels cannot keep up.”)**

And trying out another Buick, they put one of the older men in the rear seat and asked him to watch for one “mit’n Motorsickle” (**[policeman] “with the motorcycle”**).

The driver began to let the Buick out a bit, but every once in a while asked, “Kummt er etzt?” (**“Is he coming, now?”**), and finally he was really going a great clip when the man in the back seat said, “So ‘etzt is’ der mit’n Motorsickle do’n.” (**“So now he is here with the motorcycle.”**) Yes, right aside of them!

When the congregation had up for consideration the upping of prerequisites for funerals from \$3.00 to \$5.00 (they called them “*Accidentien*” then), one of the trustees got up and said, “Na, dess denna mir net. Des is’ a’su scho’ traurig g’nug.”

(**“No, we won’t do that. It is already sad enough.”**)

In a circuit meeting later on where this trustee was present, unbeknown by the speaker, he mentioned this incident as an undue show of unappreciative miserliness. When the trustee got home that day to his brother he said,

“I’ hoab mi’ fei su g’schamt, i’ haett in a Mausloch krischen moeg’n.”

(**“I was really so ashamed. I could have crawled into a mouse hole.”**)

And his brother answered quickly, “Ja, wenn’s die nei’ laesst!”

(**“Yes, if the mouse would have let you in!”**)

There are a great number of the Frankenmuth sons who are pastors and one in particular, a classmate, has this quick reaction of the “Bavarian.” We were at a conference in Lansing and the host pastor there at noon recess took us to the Michigan State University campus, finally ending at the barns of the blooded Holstein cows, and getting out of our cars we were assembled briefly to wait for a guide and I said to the brother, “So, etzt genga’ mir nei und schau die Rindsviecher.”

(**“So, now we are going in to look at the cows, smart alec.”**)

And he quickly glancing around said, “Braucht ma’ da erscht ‘nei?”

(**“Do we need to go in first to see them?”**)

And finally to show how honest and upright the good “Bavarians” are, here is the ultimate proof. Georgla (**little George**) comes to Hannes one day and says, “Hannes, i’ moecht’ gern a’ Geld von dir borgen.”

(**“Johnny, I would like to borrow some money from you.”**)

And Hannes said, “Wie viel willst, no’?”

(**“How much do you want?”**)

And Georgla answered, “Oh, a poar hundred Dahler.”

(**“Oh, a couple hundred dollars.”**)

“Ja, die hoab i’” (**“Yes, that much I have.”**) said Hannes and went into the bedroom to get them out of the bureau drawer, and handing them to Georgla he said, “I hoab fei g’hoert, heit’ z’dag wenn die Leit Geld borgen, na’ machen’s a’ Papier aus. I’ glaub’ si’ nennas a’ Note.”

(**“I have heard that now-a-days, when someone borrows money, you make out a paper. I think they call it a note.”**)

“Na, ja” Georgla said, “Wenn sie’s alle denna, no’ denna mir’s a’.”

(**“Well”, Georgla said, “If they all do it then we will do it too.”**)

So they got themselves a note and when they had filled it out, Georgla scratched his head and said, “Ja, Hannes, wer kriegt no’ des Papier?” (**“Yes, Johnny, now who gets the paper?”**)

And Hannes answered “Na, du hast’s Geld, so nimmst hald des Papier a’.”  
**(“Well, you have the money, so you might as well take the note too.”)**

Honest, upright, happy and full of humor, that is the God-given talent of the “Bavarian.” And the renowned sexton of St. Lorenz shall help us to a fitting conclusion.

The voters of St. Lorenz had been arguing for a long time about the problem whether their cemetery should be fenced in. That would mean taking the broken and obsolete one down and replacing it with a fitting new one. The argument finally got really stale and so the sexton got up and said, “Warum wollt ihr Herrn a’su lang disputier’n von a’ Kirchhofa Fence? Wisst ihr nett dass die wo auf’n Kirchhof sind koenne net ‘raus, und die wo drausen sind woll’n net ‘nei? Wass brauch ma’ doa noch a’ Fence?”

**(“Why do you men want to argue so long about a cemetery fence? Don’t you know that those in the cemetery cannot get out, and the ones on the outside don’t want to get in? What do we need a fence for?”)**

And so the final resting place for the “Bavarian” is always free and open.



Heina: Etz brauchst oba da Fritz nemma leidn!  
 Schosch: Oh, issa gshtorm?  
 Heina: Na, sei Frau!

**(Henry: Now Fritz doesn't have to suffer anymore!  
 George: Oh, did he die?  
 Henry: No, his wife!)**