Discussion questions for ‘Good old immigrants’

This is the paper I told about on the first day. It started from the story that I told and Miranda did the real heavy lifting on it. Keep in mind that there was nothing much like this and that very little has been done. Other communities developed differently — though many are like Hustisford in many important ways — and one purpose of the writing parts of the course is to flesh out the broader picture across Wisconsin and for groups other than Germans / German-speaking immigrants.

1. We decided early on that the most valuable thing would be a case study of one town where we had clear patterns AND access to lots of other material, and we settled on Hustisford. Why do you think we found it important to use both qualitative and quantitative data together?

2. How do the other towns we talk about compare to Hustisford, in terms of monolinguals and who they are? (This is important for your own community profiles … they will all differ.)

3. We briefly discuss a model of language shift, based on ‘verticalization’. Describe it briefly. How does it compare with Fishman’s?

4. People regularly talk about World War I as a time of great anti-German sentiment and argue that it caused the loss of German. What role do we see ‘anti-German sentiment’ sentiment playing? Why?

5. What can you glean from the 1910 Census? Why do we have to treat it with great caution? What kinds of caution are needed?

6. Within Hustisford, who were the monolinguals? U.S. born vs. immigrant? Jobs? Gender? How do they compare with what you expected before you came to the first class?

7. What kinds of qualitative evidence do we draw on? What do they tell us? Do they support the picture from the Census or not? Why do we have to treat this data with great caution? What kinds of caution are needed?