Community analysis, 500-1000 words, plus tables, etc.

You now know a fair bit about some community or area in Wisconsin from the last two assignments. We’re going to build on that. (A few folks have switched communities for good reasons. In those cases, choose the more interesting community for this assignment.) What we’ll do now is start reading some local materials that gives insight into the situation of language and immigration. Many towns have published histories. Amazing numbers of churches and synagogues do as well, and often schools and social organizations. And at worst, counties will have good histories and local newspapers are hugely valuable sources. Here’s the assignment:

• Compile a bibliography of materials on the history of the community or area. (If you’re looking at a larger place like Milwaukee or Fond du Lac, etc., you don’t need an exhaustive list, just a few, like 10, that are most relevant to language.)
• For each entry, write up a sentence or two about what it might be able to tell us about language and immigration in the community.
• Read selected material (or all if there’s not much), with a focus on things where language is relevant. How much you read will vary, but it should be a significant amount, like a couple of short books.
• Describe what the sources tell us generally about language and immigration in the community. Again, our Hustisford paper shows you some ways to approach this, but it will vary widely according to what’s available for your community.
• If you can identify particular events in local history that are relevant to language — closure of a foreign-language newspaper, some particular conflict, e.g. around the Bennett Law, search for local newspapers articles.

The above is really focused on gathering basic information. The final step is to begin to develop an argument or answering an original question about language and immigration in the community. At this point, I would ask you to propose the directions you think the data best support. I’ll then work with you to shape this as original research. This will be the basis for the first oral report, coming up soon. We have official conferences about papers and presentations later, but I urge you to talk to me with questions, ideas,

(50 pts)