Discussion questions for Mon., Jan. 28: 'Good old immigrants'

This is the paper that started a lot of work on language and immigration in Wisconsin and Miranda did the real heavy lifting on it. Keep in mind that there was nothing much like this and even now much of the work of this type is coming from Wisconsin. Other communities and people speaking different languages developed differently — though many are like Hustisford in some ways. Some of your writing assignments, our community profiles, will flesh out the broader picture across Wisconsin and for groups other than 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, how and why people stop speaking one language for another, 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'? Why?

5. What can you glean from the 1910 Census? 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? What kinds of caution are needed?