Regions have been a focus of study for decades, but have recently experienced a revival, particularly among social scientists who seek to understand how they contribute to cultural, economic, and political discourses. The historical and geographic construction of a region’s identity and borders is a complex, and at times a fuzzy process, that relates to the outcomes of power dynamics and negotiations within a community. This paper examines the ways the construction of borders, identity, and belonging work together to shape regions. By examining the layers of a region known as Wisconsin’s Holyland and its relationship with the German Eifel region, we can better understand the processes that contribute to regional identity and regionalism. Historical and contemporary data, such as immigration and census records, plat maps, church and family histories, interviews, and a survey of current residents are utilized to explore these themes. Among the findings is a sense of regional belonging is based on the construction of identity and boundaries, whether real or imagined, that link people across space and time. Indeed, community members often actively engage in activities that perpetuate regional identity and boundaries that are used to identify who belongs (or doesn’t belong) in this place.

Light refreshments and snacks will be provided.