Life at Four Corners
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NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. These figures are taken from the Statistical Yearbook of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1884–1945].


4. I am using the definition of patriarchy as defined by Gerda Lerner in The Creation of Patriarchy [New York: Oxford University Press, 1986], 239. “Patriarchy in its wider definition means the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of
male dominance over women in society in general. It implies that men hold power in all the important institutions of society and that women are deprived of access to such power. It does not imply that women are either totally powerless or totally deprived of rights, influence, and resources.”


6. The omission of race as a necessary category of analysis is not to slight the importance of skin color. Obviously, as white Europeans, Block residents benefited from their race, receiving all the social, political, and economic benefits inherent in being white in America. I have chosen to focus on these other variables (ethnicity, gender, and so on) because they are critical to a description of the community’s educational systems and responses to Americanization. When outside contacts bring the residents of Block into mixed racial settings I do discuss issues relevant to race.


9. Outside contacts in the economic and political arena provided the initial interactions for the residents of Block, particularly for the men. These contacts became important in the early twentieth century, and World War I dramatically forced the community into the outside world.

10. This is not to minimize the importance of religious beliefs to Scandinavians, but Scandinavian Lutherans typically belonged to other, more liberal Lutheran synods, particularly the American Lutheran Church (ALC) and the Lutheran Church of America (LCA). A very small minority belonged to the Wisconsin Synod, which has conservative practices similar to those of the Missouri Synod. In present-day Lutheranism, the ALC and LCA have merged with a small [more moderate] group of Missouri Synod Lutherans to form the Evangelical

11. Roman Catholic churches and schools serving German communities may have been less homogeneous than Missouri Synod churches and schools. Rural Catholics might have been assigned a priest of a different ethnic background or had women religious of different ethnic backgrounds teaching in their schools. In fact, an ethnic difference between religious and laity often caused problems within the parish. For an excellent analysis (although predominantly urban) of German Catholic immigrant parishes, see Jay P. Dolan, The Immigrant Church: New York's Irish and German Catholics (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), Dolan, The American Catholic Parish, 1850 to the Present (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), and Dolan, The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present (Garden City, N.J.: Image Books, 1987). Chapters 5–12 provide the most pertinent section: "The Immigrant Church between 1820–1920."


CHAPTER 1. COMMUNITY OVERVIEW


2. Through the use of census data, obituaries, and other family records such as baptism and confirmation certificates, it is often possible to approximate the time of arrival and place of German birth. This is important since by the fourth or fifth generation this information is often lost, misplaced, or simply no longer known by any living family members.

3. Particular works that discuss this emigrant desire to preserve rural German culture include Russell Gerlach, Immigrants in the Ozarks (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1976); Terry G. Jordan, German Seed in Texas Soil: Immigrant Families in Nineteenth Century Texas (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1975); Conzen, "Germans," 412–17. For information on other ethnic...


6. Gottfried Duden, Report on a Journey to the Western States of North America [Elberfeld, Germany: Swiss Society for the Promotion of Emigration, 1829]. Duden was a disenchanted German professor who emigrated, toured the Midwest (particularly Missouri), and returned to write his emigration handbook, which was extremely popular in Saxony Province. For more information on Duden and the influence of his writing on emigration to the state of Missouri, see Audrey Olson, "St. Louis Germans, 1850-1920: The Nature of an Immigrant Community and Its Relation to the Assimilation Process" [Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 1970], 3-5.


8. Author interview with Clarence Clausen, March 15, 1986.

9. By examining early state and federal census data it is possible to determine the approximate date of arrival by comparing the age and place of children's births; if one child is born in Germany and the next in the United States, this information helps pinpoint the time of arrival. The "Registration Affidavit of Alien Enemy" required during World War I also helps to determine when the emigrants arrived. The documents for Kansas are located at the Kansas City, Missouri, Branch of the National Archives [Miami County, 1918, Box 17]. J. Neale Carman, who researched foreign-language settlements in Kansas in the early 1950s, states that the Block area remained linguistically important because of some late immigration in the 1920s. Carman, "Foreign Language Units of Kansas: Historical Atlas and Statistics," [manuscript, University of Kansas Archives], 2:1291-95.

10. Author interview with Nora Ohlmeier Prothe, June 24, 1986.


12. Author interview with Irene Minden Prothe, July 18, 1986.

13. This story was taken from "The Kahman Family Tree," in the possession of Minnie Cahman Debrick, who was Eidena's granddaughter.


15. Author interview with Nora Ohlmeier Prothe, June 24, 1986.

16. Author interview with Marie Dageforde Monthey, August 16, 1986.


18. Ibid., 79.

20. This story was told to Mrs. John Sponable, who reported it as part of her "History of the Block Community," *The Miami County Republican*, Aug. 17, 1951.


25. Founded in 1855, the county was initially named Lykins after the pro-slavery missionary David Lykins. When Kansas became a free state in 1861, the county was renamed Miami, presumably after the Miami Indians whose reservation lands encompassed the region. The Wea-Piankishaw, Potawotomie, and Peoria-Kaskaskia reserves were also located within the county. For this and other county history, see George Higgins, *Miami County: The King of Counties* (Paola, Kans., 1868), 8–9.


27. For the best discussion of German-American agricultural methods and crops, see Jordan, *German Seed in Texas Soil*.


30. Kansas, First State Census, "Miami County" [1865], Microfilm, reel #6, Topeka: Kansas Board of Agriculture.


33. German newspapers had the largest readership of any ethnic newspapers in the United States. In the 1920s, there were fifteen German-American news-

34. Sponable, "History of Block Community."

35. The change to some English names probably reflects the dire economic situation during the Great Depression. As in other parts of the farm belt, the dust bowl years discouraged some farmers in the Block area who were forced to pursue or decided on other work options. The English names that appeared on the plat map are those of wealthy town dwellers who bought real estate as an investment, not necessarily as a homesite. Another factor that accounts for the loss of German-owned property may be that third- and particularly fourth-generation males chose other options in preference to farming. As elderly parents moved to town and younger family members decided not to farm, the land was sold.

36. This quote is taken from an interview with Herman Clausen conducted by Jill Denning, *Miami County Republican*, Jan. 1, 1980.

37. The information about the stores in Block has been acquired by piecing together newspaper items and reminiscences of deceased and living residents of Block. Some of the dates are difficult to confirm, but all stores, shops, and mills mentioned did exist, although some for only brief periods of time.


39. Ibid., 114.

40. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, county papers were full of articles, editorials, and letters to the editor about the county road and bridge situation. When males from Block were elected to public office they usually served as road overseers as well as in other offices such as constable and justice of the peace for East Valley Township.

41. For a short period of time, Block was considered as a possible railhead, but probably for political reasons, the community of Henson, named after the family of the county judge, received the coveted honor. Had Block received the railhead, its isolation in the county would have lessened.

42. Reminiscence of George Reifel from an interview conducted in 1951. These reminiscences are from the personal papers of his niece Myrtle Neu Thoden.

43. Although this seems like an incredible number of trains leaving Paola for Kansas City, the newspaper advertisement, *Western Spirit*, Feb. 19, 1892.


45. Reifel reminiscence.

46. Notice in *Western Spirit*, May 12, 1905, that delivery for Rural Route 9 would begin.

47. Article in *Miami County Republican*, Nov. 28, 1968, 5.

48. I have been given much anecdotal information about the telephone party-line system at Block. Some East Prussian speakers would use this dialect to keep
most "listeners" from understanding conversations. Although I have no written documentation, interviewees said that during World War I, "some people didn't like" for them to speak German on the telephone; it aroused suspicion and seemed unpatriotic. German on the telephone was discouraged but never discontinued and was used particularly by older residents who remained uncomfortable conversing in English.


52. The "Old Lutherans" included a number of different Lutheran groups besides this early Saxon group. For a specific description of each group and their religious controversies, see Owen, "The Old Lutherans Come."

53. Der Lutheraner was a journal published for both clergy and laity in the synod. Walther realized the importance of communication and publication, and his initiative in publishing served as a catalyst for unification and organization. The journal continued publication well into the twentieth century.

54. Early synod founders and leaders were German educated, most from Leipzig University; many early pastors were also from German universities. After its founding, the synod began creating its own seminaries, established along lines similar to German universities; thus even the early pastors' education stood in dramatic contrast to their congregation's educational background.


56. Two books provided the most comprehensive information on the school system of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. See Walther H. Beck, Lutheran Elementary Schools in the United States [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1939] and August C. Stellhorn, Schools of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963].


58. Frederick Luebke, "The Immigrant Condition as a Factor Contributing to the Conservatism of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly 38 [April 1965]:22. See also Luebke's Germans in the New World, Introduction.

59. This slogan, "No Union without Unity," was a principle of C. F. W. Walther and was used continuously by Walther and later by other theologians to
discourage any religious partnership that did not accept the synod's theological dictates.

60. Erwin L. Lueker, ed., Lutheran Cyclopedia (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1954), 542. This book is one of the best sources available for understanding all facets of Lutheran belief and theological terminology.


62. Almost every book and journal on Missouri Synod theology discusses and maintains the subordinate status of women. The church has made some changes in the late twentieth century but continues to exclude women from the ministry. Concerning "women's place" in church and society, one may examine the nineteenth- and twentieth-century lay magazines, journals, and "advice" books to better understand the Missouri Synod's position.

63. Luebke, "Immigrant Condition as a Factor," 27.

64. I am referring here to the repeal of the Bennett Law in 1890 and the Oregon Law of 1922, laws that threatened to ban the use of foreign language in the schools and to prohibit private schools. The synod joined Roman Catholics and others in actively fighting these laws.

CHAPTER 2. CHURCH


2. The first two years of the congregation are sketchy since early records were destroyed in a house fire of one of the members.

3. The information on buildings and dates is taken from Protokoll ("minutes" from the voters' assembly), Book 1, 1–2, 23, 73–76, 105–7, Trinity Lutheran Church (TLC) Archives, Block, Kansas.

4. These figures are taken from the Statistical Yearbook of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1884– ). My statistics are taken from the yearbooks published in 1884, 1895, and 1920–1945. The numbers of children are approximate, referring to those fourteen years and under who were not yet communicants. One reason for the decline after 1920 was the creation of a daughter congregation (First Lutheran) in the nearby town of Paola.

5. All references to the Trinity Lutheran Constitution are taken directly from the original document approved by the Missouri Synod in 1872. The constitution has been updated, but I will be quoting from or referring to this original document unless otherwise stated. The original document can be found in the archives of Trinity Lutheran Church, Block, Kansas.

7. Jon Gjerde, "Conflict and Community," 682. Gjerde's community makes an interesting comparison with the church at Block. The Norwegian Synod had direct ties to the Missouri Synod, and early pastors were trained at the Missouri Synod's Concordia Seminary. The major controversy in the 1880s involved interpretation of Lutheran doctrine on predestination. Part of the Crow River group sided with the conservative German Missouri Synod, and the rest refused to accept this orthodox position. For additional information on German-Lutheran churches, see Carl S. Meyer, "Lutheran Immigrant Churches Face the Problems of the Frontier," *Church History* 29 (Dec. 1960):447–48. For a similar discussion on German Catholics, see Jay P. Dolan, *The Immigrant Church: New York's Irish and German Catholics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975).

8. The early decades of Trinity Lutheran Church were marked by debts and financial problems. Besides discussions about finances, *Protokoll*, Book 1, often includes admonishments against certain members who had abdicated their financial responsibilities for church, school, pastor, and teacher.

9. It is clear from *Protokoll* that pastors felt overburdened in trying to manage their church and school duties. They typically would ask to leave Block once they received a call from a congregation who had a teacher already hired. After losing yet another pastor in 1890, the congregation finally decided to hire a teacher.

10. *Protokoll*, Book 1, 18–22 and 47–48. Clergy functioned as district representatives, so a hierarchy of decision making was the specific method of handling a dispute.

11. The educational contrast between lay persons and clergy was profound. First-generation Block residents may have received some elementary education, and later generations were expected to complete eighth grade. Carl Mundinger describes nineteenth-century Concordia Seminary's curriculum for future pastors, stating that the seminary was a nine-year program modeled after the German Gymnasium, with subjects taught by a theology faculty in a German university. Curricula included Greek, Latin, Hebrew, German, English, French, geography, logic, history, arithmetic, and catechetics (Governance in the Missouri Synod, 197–98. He further states that "no one on the frontier had an education that could approach that of his pastor.


17. Author interview with Lydia Schultz, Feb. 13, 1982. The young man discussed was Lydia’s husband, Louis. Lydia said that Lou and the pastor never really “made peace.” Interestingly, Louis and Lydia left the congregation at Block in 1921 and became charter members of the daughter church in the nearby town of Paola.

18. Author interview with Nora Ohlmeier Prothe, June 24, 1986.

19. Graebner, *Uncertain Saints*, 4–5. Once again it is interesting to compare the Catholic experience in German and other immigrant parishes; Jay Dolan’s work on Catholic immigrant parishes describes a similar scenario. Although American culture encourages the laity to “freedom and independence,” Dolan argues that European-educated priests struggled with this “equalitarian” concept and believed that increased lay activity usurped their authority and control [Dolan, *American Catholic Experience*, 221–24].

20. Luebke, *Germans in the New World*, 80. Lutheran doctrine is very clear concerning the distinct separation of church and state. Martin Luther repeatedly repudiated “good works” as a means of salvation and redemption. In essence, charity could be viewed as “good works” and considered the duty of the state and not the church, which needed to focus on spiritual salvation. For examples of synodical attitudes on this subject, see *Lutheran Witness* 18 [1900]:134 and *Der Lutheraner* 65 [1909]:231. See also Graebner, *Uncertain Saints*, 4–5.

21. Frederick Dean Lueking’s *A Century of Caring: “The Welfare Ministry among the Missouri Synod Lutherans, 1868–1968* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968], 3, describes the slow movement toward philanthropy in the late nineteenth century. By the 1890s, the synod did sponsor some urban orphanages and hospitals staffed by “untrained laity” and male clergy. Although C. F. W. Walther stressed that congregations help the poor, widows, orphans, and the aged, nationally the synod focused on the importance of “proclaiming and preserving the Divine Word, Law and Gospel” above any other cause.

22. In the 1880s and 1890s, seven incidents in *Protokoll* refer to charitable giving. All but two involve giving money to financially strapped congregations, local members, or the synod’s educational institutions. An undisclosed sum of money was sent to “our needy brothers in the West,” and another undisclosed amount was sent to a “heathen mission.”

23. *Protokoll*, May 1932, Book 2, 119–20. This is significant since only one other item was on the agenda and this was a “special,” not a regularly scheduled, meeting. The sisters apparently accepted the offer and were buried in a special row that includes two other nonmembers of the church. This cemetery was sacred ground kept for those who died in the Lutheran faith in good standing at Trinity Lutheran Church. Anyone who requested burial and was not a member of Trinity Lutheran needed special permission from the voters’ assembly.

24. These descriptions of officers’ duties are taken from the Trinity Lutheran Constitution, Article 7 – Terms and Duties of Officers (TLC Archives).

25. St. Peter’s Church kept a recordbook, membership lists, and *Protokoll* from 1878 to 1882. These two books had been lost or forgotten until 1985 when Lydia Prothe Schultz found them in the stored possessions of her father-in-law,
Michael Schultz, who had died in 1954. Although failing to create a church “across the river,” Schultz became a charter member of the first town church in the county. The First Lutheran Church of Paola formed in 1921, and Schultz, his wife Louisa, son Louis, and daughter-in-law Lydia helped establish this daughter church as an alternative to Trinity Lutheran at Block.

26. Protokoll, Book 1, 124–25. The 1,000-pound bell was bought from Stuckstedle in St. Louis, Missouri. The congregation spent $450.00 to add additional support to the bell tower and paid $166.86 for the bell itself, which could be heard for miles; it continues to be a great source of pride and a symbol of the past for many residents of Block.

27. Slayton, Back of the Yards, 114. He described the church as a place that offered stability, maintained social order, promulgated rules of morality, taught children, and served as a social center for family rituals (119–20).

28. This practice of paying boys and men for some services does not carry over to paying for services provided by women in the congregation.

29. Protokoll, Book 1, 3, 8.

30. The *Klingelbeutel* was a tradition in their German churches. The small bell served to attract people’s attention and let them know a collection was being gathered.

31. Protokoll, Book 1, 27–35. The early minutes were unsigned, but Ursula Huelsbergen, the translator, is convinced that the pastor probably wrote them. The writing is erudite and replete with theological terms that demonstrate a high degree of formal education. Some of the topics discussed appear in the minutes in an essay form and it is quite possible that these topics were the pastor’s ideas and that the laymen discussed them or asked questions after his presentation was over.

32. Protokoll, Book 1, 45.


34. Protokoll, Book 1, 99.

35. Seating position was critical in the church, and the voters’ assembly spent time discussing if each change was warranted. Age, gender, infirmity, and marital status determined a person’s place. I cannot explain how these decisions were made, but it was obviously important to the voters that these group distinctions be defined clearly. Ironically, only when the new church was constructed in 1959 did men and women sit on the same side of the aisle. Typically, nothing was announced or formally changed, but from the first church service in the new building people simply sat as families instead of grouping themselves according to past distinctions.

36. H. C. Senne was the first pastor to have a long stay in the Block community. His seventeen years there were critical to the community’s cultural and conservative tendencies; he ruled with an iron hand. For his “mini-lectures and pronouncements,” see Protokoll, 1890–1907, Book 1. His successor, F. D. Droegemueller, continued Senne’s conservative practices and staying power (1907–1926). Droegemueller would have stayed longer but ill health forced him into retirement.

37. This method of discipline was continued well into the twentieth century. Although fewer individuals seemed to be disciplined in the twentieth century, the process described was the typical form for addressing the controversy.

38. Only in 1904, nine years after the beginning of the controversy and the initial vandalism, was the issue discussed in Protokoll. The April 1904 minutes began, “Pastor discussed the topic that everybody knew but hadn’t discussed
before the congregation." The congregation not only contacted the sheriff but also the county attorney because "it was clear something had to be done... to find out what to do" and to "protect our pastor" (Protokoll, Book 1, 160–61).

39. Protokoll refers to "Mrs. Block"; at the time there were two Mrs. Blocks, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. Although the minutes do not make the distinction, I believe the older Mrs. Block (Gesche Mahnken Block) was most likely the woman in question. She and her husband sold the land to the church, and the community was named after them. She was also a practicing midwife and seemed to have considerable respect and prestige in the community. She would have been fifty-four years old at the time. Louis Timken, her proxy, was her daughter's husband and also a church officer.

40. Protokoll, Book 1, 49–50.


42. In 1921 the number of persons from Block living in the neighboring town of Paola had reached the point that a daughter church, First Lutheran, was organized. All of the charter members had grown up in Block but for economic or personal reasons had decided to live "in town." Besides St. Peter's Church "across the river," one other attempt was made to rival the church at Block; in 1881 the people living north and east of Block attempted to organize a church in the Highland community, but Zion German Evangelical Church remained small throughout its eighty-five-year history. This church was not affiliated with the Missouri Synod, and some members from Block joined the Highland church if they became dissatisfied with Trinity Lutheran.


44. The two best sources on the synod's welfare ministry and women's contributions to it are Luening, A Century of Caring, and Ruth Fritz Meyer, Women on a Mission (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967).


47. Women's domestic production was clearly valuable although it was undervalued and often unnoticed. Quilts, food production, and other homemade goods brought profit even in rural communities.

48. Constitution of the Trinity Lutheran Ladies Aid of Block, Kansas (TLC Archives), 1.

49. Although no official membership roster is available, this May 1935 meeting did record the members' names. The minutes also list newly accepted members as well as guests for each meeting, which reveals some information about
the composition of the membership and the rate of growth and change from its inception through 1945.

50. The "hired girl" experience played a crucial role in the education of Block's adolescents and young adults, particularly if the young woman worked in Kansas City.

51. The translator, who worked with both sets of minutes, did not see a gender difference in the written language skills of the recording secretaries. As the secretaries changed for each group, both the men's and the women's groups showed equal variability; some secretaries had excellent skills in written German, and others did not. However, the translator did see skills growing poorer in written German as each group came closer to making the complete change to English. The women began writing in English in 1934 and the men in 1936, but both groups waited until they had finished a recording book. Also, each group voted on making the total switch to English.

52. Ladies Aid Minutes [English translation], April 14, 1926 [TLC Archives], 24.

53. For a good source that focuses on comparing male and female personal writings, see John Mack Faragher, Women and Men on the Overland Trail [New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1979], 128–33. For further understanding of women's writings, see Lillian Schlissel, Women's Diaries of the Westward Journey [New York: Schocken Books, 1982]; Elizabeth Hampsten, Read This Only to Yourself: The Private Writings of Midwestern Women, 1880–1910 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982); and the important work done by the Personal Narratives Group, Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989]. Other than some correspondence, I have no knowledge of any personal writings left by first-, second-, or third-generation women of Block. Midwest historian Linda Pickle laments the lack of personal writings left by German women in Kansas and Nebraska. "Most often one is forced to glean bits of information from the writings of German men, from public documents and other printed sources" ("Rural German-Speaking Women in Early Nebraska and Kansas," Great Plains Quarterly 9 [Fall 1989]:239).

54. Specifically, I am referring to domestic and nurturing activities typically assigned to and performed individually by women. These activities often became formalized when women joined together in groups such as reform societies, clubs, and other charitable organizations operated through churches or secular societies.

55. Author interview with Nora Ohlmeier Prothe, June 24, 1986.

56. Hospitals and orphanages in Kansas, Nebraska, and Colorado received most of the women's work. Also, a black congregation in Alabama, a missionary hospital in India, and a German relief fund received monetary donations from the group.


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61. Constitution of the Trinity Lutheran Walther League [TLC Archives], 192.
62. Lutheran churches historically have filled services with singing. Martin Luther is given credit for this phenomenon because of his understanding and enthusiasm for music of all kinds; he wanted the congregation to participate actively in worship. The Lutheran Cyclopaedia quotes Luther as stating that “next to theology there is no art which is the equal of music, for she alone, after theology, can do what otherwise only theology can accomplish” (723).

CHAPTER 3. SCHOOL

1. Walter H. Beck, Lutheran Elementary Schools in the United States [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1939], 101. Beck and August C. Stellhorn, Schools of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963], provide the two most complete works concerning synod schools; Stellhorn studies elementary through postsecondary education. For the most recent work that examines Missouri Synod national school policy and its implementation in Wisconsin, see John P. Boubel, “A History of Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Schools in Wisconsin: National Policies and Local Implementation” [Ph.D. diss., Marquette University, 1989].
3. Stellhorn, Schools of the Lutheran Church, 172.
6. Many sources discuss the problem of ethnic children who assimilate more

7. Protokoll, April 1896 (quarterly meeting), Book 1, 119.

8. Although specific data are available on the use of the German language in worship services, the parochial school data on language usage are more difficult to obtain. Before the pressures of World War I, most schools taught religion and some reading and writing in the German language; in fact, most Missouri Synod parochial schools were called "German schools" by local communities. Each congregation experienced pressure during World War I and responded to it differently. Some schools stopped using German, some did not use it for a few years but returned to it, and others continued to use it throughout the war. The 1924 Statistical Yearbook of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1884–) noted that 60 percent of the Kansas district used the German language predominantly in church services. For a discussion of nineteenth-century bicultural (German) schools in Midwest urban areas, see Audrey L. Olson, "St. Louis Germans, 1850–1920: The Nature of an Immigrant Community and Its Relation to the Assimilation Process" (Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 1970), 94–97.


10. Since the church had no basement, the schoolhouse was used for Walther League meetings, youth rallies, box suppers, band practice, debates, spelling bees, Red Cross meetings during World War I, telephone meetings, and many other religious and secular activities. This practice was typical of most rural schools, parochial or public, in the nineteenth-century Midwest. For a complete discussion of the importance of the school to a rural community, see Wayne Fuller, The Old Country School: The Story of Rural Education in the Middle West (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); David B. Tyack, "The Tribe and the Common School: Community Control in Rural Education," American Quarterly 24 (1972): 3–19; and Mary W. M. Hargreaves, "Rural Education on the Northern Plains Frontier," Journal of the West 18 (Oct. 1979): 25–32.


12. Protokoll, July 1872, 6 (quarterly meeting), Trinity Lutheran Church (TLC) Archives, Block, Kansas.

13. Ibid., 98.

14. As childrearing practices changed for white Americans in the nineteenth century and women took a primary role in fostering a child's education and well-being, Missouri Synod doctrine advocated a father's responsibility for his children's education similar to the role that Puritan fathers had been encouraged to fill. See John Demos, A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 100–106 and 131–44, and Edmund


16. 1 Cor. 14:35 (King James Version). This passage defined women’s silent role in the Missouri synod church, effectively barring them from voting, speaking, or becoming a pastor or teacher.

17. *Protokoll*, Book 2, 15–16. Because of the large German-Lutheran influx around Block Village, the public schools in the area were “nearly empty.” The public school enrollment in this area of the county was small because the vast majority of children, who were German Lutherans, went to the (very crowded) parochial school. In 1911 the two-room Block school housed seventy-seven students in eight grades.

18. Federal and state census data show inconsistencies in literacy rates for first-generation adults in Block and are not always dependable. For example, the 1865 Kansas State Census (“Miami County,” microfilm #6, Topeka) and the 1870 Federal Census (“Population, Miami County, Kans.” microfilm #12, Washington, D.C.: GPO) show Dietrich and Gesche Block as literate. However, 1870 is the year the Blocks sold land to the church, and the deed records an “X” for both Dietrich and Gesche; neither wrote their signatures. Scholars of German education described elementary education before 1870 as inconsistent, particularly for women, and people from the rural regions had even less opportunity for schooling. See Gerald Strauss, “The Social Function of Schools in the Lutheran Reformation in Germany,” *History of Education Quarterly* 28 (Summer 1988): 191–206; Marjorie Lamberti, *State, Society, and the Elementary School in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); and George and Lottelore Bernstein, “Attitudes toward Women’s Education in Germany, 1870–1914,” *International Journal of Women’s Studies* 2 (1979): 473–88.


22. This description is a composite provided by interviewees and a 1922 visiting county superintendent, Emma Mills; her comments and description were published in *Western Spirit*, Jan. 27, 1922. Since the school was not under county supervision, she was probably invited by the teacher, H. F. Kinkermann, to alleviate some political pressure brought about by past and current legislation attacking parochial schools as “un-American.” The two-room school was built
in 1916 with a basement furnace; before, the school had been a one-room build-
ing and the church annex had served the primary grades when student numbers
exceeded expectations after the turn of the century.


Lutheran Church*, 125. The importance of Concordia Publishing House to the
synod cannot be overemphasized. Many church groups understood the neces-
sity of creating their own educational materials, and several Protestant denom-
inations used a church-sponsored publishing house to educate the laity. Jay
Dolan adamantly states that Catholic literature was an important component
in the main reading material in Catholic homes (*American Catholic Experience*,
246–47). Contemporary Christian fundamentalist groups use their own publish-
ing companies to ensure Christian-oriented textbooks for their schools.


27. Music and singing were excellent for instilling German values and cul-
ture, and interviewees reported that they always sang in German. The inter-
viewees may have forgotten much of the German language, but typically they
remembered songs in German. Music and singing were an important part of
every religious and cultural activity in Block.

28. The term “hidden curriculum” is a label used by contemporary educators
in describing informal or incidental activities not considered part of the formal
curriculum, and it usually includes values, beliefs, and behavior that the culture
reinforces in response to gender, age, class, or racial differences.

29. Laura Koelsch Ohlmeier told how young girls after confirmation would
be asked by teacher Wolters to clean the school on a Saturday and added that he
often provided watermelon as a reward for their voluntary work. She also de-
scribed how the confirmation class of the 1930s (girls and boys) would clean their
instruction room in the spring. After the cleaning, new members of the group
were supposed to climb across the crossbeams in the old church and touch the
bell as a rite of initiation; some children resisted this dare, but most girls and
boys accepted the challenge and made the climb (conversation, Sept. 4, 1986).

30. Interviewees described a “tomball” as a sponge or string ball larger and
softer than a baseball; a large oversized bat was used to hit it. A fielder could
record an out by catching the ball after one bounce or by throwing the ball ahead
of the runner to a base.

31. Childrens’ games in Block were typical of rural children’s games in the
Midwest and West. Elliott West, *Growing Up in the Country*, 101–17, provides
a fascinating discussion and categorization of children’s play and compares the
play of midwestern and western children with that of their peers in more settled
parts of the country.


33. I am referring to shame as the act of degrading, ostracizing, or humiliating
a child in the presence of his or her peers; it requires the presence of a community
or group that has similar attitudes and beliefs. Guilt refers to instilling in the
child more internalized feelings as a control mechanism. Both are used as a
means of social control, but guilt relies more on children’s internalizing their
belief systems and self-control. As a group or community becomes more heter-
genous, shame becomes less effective since important values and beliefs may
no longer be shared by the group. There is an abundance of literature discussing

34. Author interview with Marie Dageforde Monthey, Aug. 16, 1986.
38. Stellhorn, *Schools of the Lutheran Church*, 73.
40. Stellhorn, *Schools of the Lutheran Church*, 210. A call is sanctified and directed by God through his human representatives in the congregation.
41. In 1864 extensive work in Bible study and the Lutheran confessions was combined with history, arithmetic, geography, and drawing. Incredibly, the teacher-trainee had to be proficient in violin, piano, organ, and vocal music and also had to know some music theory (Stellhorn, *Schools of the Lutheran Church*, 136).
43. Ibid., 116–17.
44. In 1934 Trinity Lutheran at Block hosted a Kansas district teachers' conference that included sixty teachers and teaching pastors. A small article appeared in the October 26 *Western Spirit* on the conference, which included guest speakers, "theoretical papers," and "practical demonstrations" on all types of curriculum—religious and secular.
45. *Protokoll*, Book 1, 98.
46. My thanks to Myrtle Neu Thoden, who sent me the official list of teachers and the dates they taught in Block (correspondence, Oct. 11, 1985). Although the *Protokoll* (Books 1 and 2) mentions most of these individuals by name, the minutes do not always include first names or the names of teaching assistants.
47. In 1880 a Kansas public-school teacher received an average salary of $27.56 per month; in 1890 Block's first teacher received $25.00 per month. Two years later, the congregation built a teachers' residence and continued to provide housing and fuel (Federal Census, 1880, microfilm #17 and #18, 1:916–17, and *Protokoll*, Book 1, 107).
48. Interestingly, the organ was viewed as an instrument that a female could play. Although all the teachers were male, interviewees said that they took lessons from the teacher, as many of their friends did. The girls would play the church organ for weddings, funerals, Sunday worship services, or for the pleasure of their families; however, most other instruments were seen as masculine. The band at Block in 1916 was all male, with trumpets, trombones, a baritone, and a bass drum. Men also played stringed instruments [fiddle and guitar] for dances or for entertainment.
49. *Western Spirit*, June 29, 1894.
51. Much of the synod's theory on the subordination of women is based on St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 13:34–35); see also 1 Tim. 2:11–12.
52. Protokoll, Book 1, 158–59. This salary was approximately one-third of the male teacher's salary; he also had free housing and fuel.
54. In 1919 at Concordia College in Seward, Nebraska, women were allowed to make up 20 percent of the total enrollment; in 1938 at the teaching college at River Forest, enrollment of women was held to 30 percent. For further data see Stellhorn, Schools of the Lutheran Church, 424–26. See also George J. Gude, “Women Teachers in the Missouri Synod,” Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly 44 [Nov. 1971]: 163–70.
56. A 1938 survey describes the problem. Of the women teaching in synod schools, 40 percent had degrees from state colleges, 20 percent had only an elementary education, 4.5 percent held degrees from sectarian colleges, and 35.5 percent held degrees from Missouri Synod institutions (Gude, “Women Teachers in the Missouri Synod,” 167).
60. Author interview with Marie Dageforde Monthey, Aug. 16, 1986.
62. Slayton, Back of the Yards, 47. For additional information on Catholic confirmation practices and school, see Dolan, American Catholic Experience, 255–57.
63. For the first four decades of the twentieth century few children from Block attended the high school in Paola. Some car pooled before the bus service began in 1936; however, if children wanted to stay on the farm, the difficulties of transportation and economic exigencies contributed to keeping most of them out of high school until the 1940s.
64. In the nineteenth century, most girls hired out to family members or friends, but as economic needs in the twentieth century changed, girls were working as live-in maids in Paola and later in Kansas City.
65. Protokoll, April 1896 [quarterly meeting], Book 1, 119.

CHAPTER 4. FAMILY


4. Lydia said that her mother was warned not to let her daughter sleep with her grandmother because folk wisdom deemed that a child’s energy would be sapped by sleeping with an older person. This example illustrates that the house was indeed crowded, but it also demonstrates the lack of privacy because nonfamily members obviously knew other families’ sleeping arrangements.

5. For descriptions of German family life and the importance of duty and order, see Evans and Lee, *German Family*; John C. Fout, ed., *German Women in the Nineteenth Century: A Social History* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1984); and Hinda Winawer-Steiner and Norbert A. Wetzel, “German Families,” in *Ethnicity and Family Therapy*, ed. Monica McGoldrick, John K. Pearce, and Joseph Geordano (New York: Guilford Press, 1982). The writings of Martin Luther and early church fathers unfailingly supported and espoused the importance of order and duty in the family setting. For a more contemporary discussion of parental duty and authority over children, see Allan H. Jahsmann, *What’s Lutheran in Education? Explorations into Principles and Practices* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1960).

6. Elliott West, *Growing Up in the Country: Childhood on the Far West Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989), 158–61. I would argue that West’s informants may have been reluctant to discuss disciplinary practices because by contemporary standards they would have seemed harsh and abusive. These informants may not have wanted their parents to appear unduly or inappropriately severe in their administration of corporal punishment. The informants from Block certainly seemed to feel that some corporal punishment was necessary and appropriate, but most commented on how differently spanking was viewed in their era from the way it is viewed today.


12. Elliott West describes this all too common nineteenth-century frontier scenario that forced many young children into adult responsibilities in *Growing Up in the Country*, 95.


17. For a detailed look at children’s work responsibilities, see West, *Growing Up in the Country*, 73–100. I agree with West that gender was an important variable, but need always took precedence over gender in a rural setting.


19. For an excellent discussion of Geschlechtscharakter (“complementary nature of the sexes”), see Hausen, “Family and Role-Division,” 51–83. Basically the term means that mental and physical attributes are related specifically to biological sexuality. The ideology of “complementary roles” accepts this perceived innate difference between men and women and espouses the necessity of heterosexual marriage as the ideal partnership since male and female “characteristics” can then merge and become whole, one complementing the other.

20. John Mack Faragher, “History from the Inside-Out: Writing the History of Women in Rural America,” *American Quarterly* 33 [Winter 1981]:541. To quote Faragher on the meaning of status: “The question of status is not primarily a question of what people do, but rather of the recognition they are granted for what they do and the authority that recognition confers.” I certainly believe that the residents of Block understood the value of women’s work, but since culturally males were viewed as superior, whatever work they did would automatically carry more status.


22. Linda Pickle, “Stereotypes and Realities: Nineteenth-Century German Women in Missouri,” *Missouri Historical Review* 79 [April 1985]:294. Pickle particularly singles out the synod’s prescriptive literature and the constant efforts to maintain this female stereotype. *Der Lutheraner* and *Lutheran Witness* magazines are replete with articles on the importance of marriage and motherhood and the dangers of rejecting “God’s plan” for the sexes.


27. Author interview with Ida Minden Peckman, Aug. 18, 1986.
29. For additional discussion on the "fluidity" of rural women's roles, see Jensen, Promise to the Land; Glenda Riley, "Women's Responses to the Challenges of Plains Living," Great Plains Quarterly 9 (Summer 1989):174–84; Cornelia Butler Flora and Jan L. Flora, "Structure of Agriculture and Women's Culture on the Great Plains," Great Plains Quarterly 8 (Fall 1988):195–205; and also in the same GPQ issue, see Carol K. Coburn, "Ethnicity, Religion and Gender: The Women of Block, Kansas, 1868–1940," 222–32.
30. Over one-half of the third-generation interviewees came from families of seven children or more. Of the sixteen women from Block forced to register as aliens during World War I, eight had given birth to seven children or more; twelve to six or more; and three to ten children or more.
34. Graebner, "Birth Control and the Lutherans," 236. This article provides an interesting look at attitudes and the prescriptive literature of clergy and compares this review with actual birth records of synod congregations. Graebner thinks the most important cause for change in clerical attitudes was the behavior of the laity, who continued to have fewer children in the twentieth century.
35. Author interview with Lydia Prothe Schultz, Nov. 25, 1984. Lydia heard this comment as she sat with her sister Lena after childbirth; apparently Lena's husband took her seriously as they had no more children.
36. Although three granddaughters, Frieda Timken Baumgardt, Lydia Prothe Schultz, and Nora Ohlmeier Prothe, provided the most information on Grandma Block, other interviewees remembered her or remembered stories told about her.
37. Western Spirit, Jan. 5, 1912. Doctors traveled seven miles from Paola or seven miles from New Lancaster to come to Block.
40. Author interview with Frieda Timken Baumgardt, Nov. 12, 1988. Interestingly, Grandma Block had two granddaughters who became involved in healing: Mary Tinken Koelsch was said to be a "healer" and helped people by touching them with her hands, and Elizabeth Block Thomas became a Red Cross nurse and served in France during World War I. Since both women grew into adulthood during Grandma Block's lifetime, it is interesting to speculate about her influence; both women healed the sick but used very different methods.

42. These statistics are taken from death records kept by Trinity Lutheran Church from 1868 to the present. In each case the cause of death is listed as “stillborn.” Some children died within hours of birth, but they are not counted in these figures.

43. I wish to express my thanks to Mary Zimmerman, associate professor, Health Services Administration, at the University of Kansas. She helped me interpret the data and suggested various approaches to clarify the statistics.


45. Flora and Flora, “Structure of Agriculture,” 204. The Floras argue that women’s networks mitigated men’s absolute control over resources. They acknowledge the importance of informal networks, and they specifically label Catholic and Lutheran churches as important sites for women’s formal networks.


47. Author interview with Marie Dageforde Monthey, Aug. 16, 1986.

48. Author interview with Clarence Clausen, March 13, 1986.

49. Author interview with Marie Dageforde Monthey, Aug. 16, 1986.

50. Author interview with Lydia Prothe Schultz, Feb. 13, 1982. Lydia is Henry’s daughter; she told and retold this story many times to me. Although she cannot remember the name of the medicine, she assures me it “cured him.” Home remedies were prevalent in Block well into the twentieth century. Doctors were accepted but not used unless really needed, and hospitals were considered frightening places where people went to die.

51. Author interview with Nora Ohlmeier Prothe, June 24, 1986.

52. Nine drought years are officially recorded in the “Progress Report” (Topeka: Kansas State Planning Board, 1934). The years listed are 1860, 1874, 1901, 1911, 1913, 1917, 1918, 1930, and 1934. The devastating drought of 1936 put the count at ten. For this and other information on Kansas agriculture and population, see Carroll D. Clark and Roy L. Roberts, eds., *People of Kansas: A Demographic and Sociological Study* (Topeka: Kansas State Planning Board, 1936), 11.


57. Some adults chose to remain single, and those who remained in Block typically lived with parents or another family member. Although I have no specific statistics, it appears as though more men remained single than women. Single women sometimes chose to work in another community as hired help.

58. Author interview with Ida Minden Peckman, Aug. 18, 1986.


60. Lydia laughingly recalled this anecdote and added that "they ate every bit of it even as they complained loudly." Ironically, after this early lesson, Lydia perfected her pie-baking skills into a money-making enterprise. She spent the latter part of her adult life earning a living by making twenty pies a day to support herself after her husband's death. The *Miami County Republican* [Jan. 21, 1987] recorded her death and in her obituary stated that "she was known for her pie baking." She would have been pleased.


62. Between 1868 and 1920, approximately fifteen children were baptized each year; after 1920 baptisms averaged around nine per year, although during World War II the figure was much lower.

63. The doctrine of original sin specifies that each newborn comes into the world a sinner and must be redeemed, first through infant baptism and then later through confirmation and acceptance of Christ as Savior. In fact, emergency baptism is allowed in the Missouri Synod whereby a lay person can baptize a child if a pastor is unavailable and the child is not expected to live. Children in confirmation class are taught how to perform this emergency baptism. In 1889 newborn Heinrich Herman Wendte was baptized by his father; the baby lived, and the baptism was formally acknowledged by the pastor in church two months later.

64. Dr. Martin Luther's *Small Catechism* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1943], 174.

65. Baptismal records, 11, Trinity Lutheran Church [TLC] Archives, Block, Kansas. Although giving five first names was highly unusual, this example demonstrates the importance of family connections in the naming process. In nineteenth-century Block, the custom of using the names of dead children was practiced by many families; if a family lost a child, the next same-sex child born would receive the first name of the deceased child.


67. It was not until the 1920s that dancing and card playing became more acceptable in Block. Before the arrival of Pastor O. C. J. Keller, the pastors were rigid in their rhetoric against dancing and card playing. Dancing was considered a preliminary to "whoring behavior," and card playing was always associated with gambling. *Protokoll* entries in the 1870s sternly admonish members caught dancing and provide explicit definitions of engagement, adultery, and divorce.

68. Author interview with Esther Prothe Maisch, June 25, 1986.
69. Marriage records, TLC Recordbook. These figures are the average marital ages compiled from 1885 to 1945. Since during some years no marriages took place and in others there were seven or eight, I decided that looking at individual years was not representative and chose to examine decades to calculate an average marital age for men and women. There were marriages before 1885, but ministers did not begin recording ages until that year.


71. Author interview with Marie Dageforde Monthey, Aug. 16, 1986.


73. *Western Spirit*, Oct. 23, 1891. Although the author is not known, it was probably B. J. Sheridan, editor of a Paola newspaper. Sheridan grew up in Osage Township and had known many of the residents of Block for years. His friendship with "the Germans" gave the Block community extensive coverage in the Paola paper, and he covered many activities in Block himself.


75. Death records, TLC Recordbook. This record provides date of death, exact age, survivors, and the cause of death. Also, all statistics are grouped using figures for the entire decade as follows: 1868–1879, 1880–1889, 1890–1899, 1900–1909, 1910–1919, 1920–1929, 1930–1939. Since yearly numbers were too small to be significant, I decided that decade averages would be more representative.

76. The decade of the 1890s is an exception to this, as then the average age of females at death was only four years less than that of males.

77. Author interview with Nora Ohlmeier Prothe, June 24, 1986.

78. *Protokoll*, 1921, Book 2, 60–61, TLC Archives, Block, Kansas.

79. Author interview with Alma Clausen Debrick, March 15, 1986.

80. No one living in Block can explain why the cemetery is in chronological order. "It's always been that way, so why change now?" I have been told this custom is definitely not a carryover from Germany, but I have little other information.


CHAPTER 5. THE OUTSIDE WORLD


3. Author interview with Mildred Block, Nov. 22, 1985. Although I have quoted only Mildred Block I was repeatedly told a similar story by other interviewees.


5. Church records clearly demonstrate that when carpenters or any labor for the church was hired, members were always chosen if they had the necessary skills. When the church or individuals needed skills or materials unavailable within the Block community, the individual or business chosen to do the work invariably had a German surname. In discussing the business development of the Block community, J. Neale Carman writes, “Only a Lutheran could succeed commercially” (“Foreign Language Units of Kansas,” [Manuscript, University of Kansas Archives], 2:1292).

6. This description of the two men and their stores is a compilation of information from interviews and newspaper accounts.

7. Interview with Marie Dageforde Monthey, Aug. 16, 1986. Marie also described a “butcher ring”: One family would butcher and then share with other families in the group; then another family in the “ring” butcheted and once again shared with the others until each family had shared their butchered meat with the others.


14. The subject of how women felt about their work has been greatly ignored, but recent oral history projects have attempted to fill in the large gaps about this topic. Rural women, particularly midwestern women, often did not leave written diaries, nor did they articulate their feelings about their work; they were either too busy or simply felt that they had nothing important to say or write. For a discussion of midwestern women's writing and introspection, see Elizabeth Hampsten, *Read This Only to Yourself: The Private Writings of Midwestern Women, 1880–1910* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982]; Jensen, *Promise to the Land*; and Lillian Schlissel, Vicki L. Ruiz, and Janice Monk, eds., *Western Women: Their Land, Their Lives* [Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988].


17. Kansas State Census "Miami County," [1865], Microfilm, reel #6, Topeka: Kansas Board of Agriculture. The state census provides a cumulative list of agricultural products for each household in each township of the county, and thus shows the value and amount of women's domestic products. All agricultural products are listed together, however, so that male heads of households are given exclusive credit for all production.


21. In 1900 the Peiker-Wishropp grocery store printed a large front-page advertisement in a Paola paper offering "to take all produce our county customers can offer" ([*Western Spirit*, Aug. 24, 1900]).


23. Women in Block, like other twentieth-century farm women, took jobs in town for wages during times of financial need. Usually these jobs were temporary, and the women returned to the farm when their families were financially stable again.


25. Author interview with Irene Minden Prothe, July 18, 1986.


29. For a discussion of generational succession among German farmers, see Kathleen Neils Conzen, "Peasant Pioneers: Generational Succession among German Farmers in Frontier Minnesota," in *The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation*, ed. Steven Hahn and Jonathan Prude (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 259–92. Although time and place are very different, there are some similarities to colonial America and the effects that land division had on colonial patriarchy and male inheritance. The lack of inheritable land forced some people from the community or into other occupations. For examples of this, see John Demos, *The Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), and Philip Greven, *Four Generations: Population, Land, and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1972).

30. Schultz's German Lutheranm actually helped him acquire the coveted mechanic's job on the railroad. The local union had become embroiled in a strike with the Missouri Pacific Railroad, and since the synod forbade men to join labor unions because of secular (particularly socialist) associations, Schultz willingly crossed the picket lines and was hired immediately.

31. For a brief history of First Lutheran Church in Paola, see *History of Churches: Miami County Kansas*, ed. Sister M. Charles McGrath (Paola, Kans.: Paola Association for Church Action, 1976), 67–70. There were some specific differences between the mother and daughter churches. Only English was spoken in First Lutheran, and the town church attempted to interact with outsiders economically, politically, and socially. Lutheran theology could not be compromised, however, and the church community in Paola retained its exclusivity in doctrinal practices.

32. Once again colonial literature provides a similar example of a mother-daughter church situation that pits town dwellers against farmers. In Salem,
Massachusetts, the town church was established first, unlike the Block-Paola situation. As the community grew, a strong rural contingency began to demand a church and governing body of their own in Salem Village; they felt their needs were not being addressed by the urban group. Competition and rivalry abounded and with much more serious consequences [see Paul Boyer and Stephan Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974)].

33. Although First Lutheran remained less conservative than Trinity Lutheran, the late 1940s and 1950s saw a return to more conservative practices. Some older couples in Block who turned over farm operations to sons moved into town and began attending the Paola church. Their presence, in addition to a conservative minister, provided a powerful conservative element to the town church.


35. Although this movement began in the 1920s, the depression pushed many men of Block into traveling or relocating to find work. *Western Spirit* recorded such visits and returns in a special section called “Block Items,” which appeared weekly. Trips to see family and friends working elsewhere became commonplace in the 1930s.


40. An example of the synod’s change of position on domestic work involves the use of contraceptives and birth control. Early synod prescriptive literature recommended domestic service for young women. In the early twentieth century, however, when the fertility rate declined for Missouri Synod women, the synod blamed “hired girls,” who had the most access to “outsiders” [Alan Graebner, “Birth Control and the Lutherans: The Missouri Synod as a Case Study,” in Women and American Religion, ed. Janet Wilson James [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980], 232]. The widely read lay magazine Lutheran Witness published an article in the May 22, 1923, issue that labeled birth control as “infanticide.”

41. In order to obtain the most accurate data, I have labeled a girl as a “hired girl” only if all the interviewees identified her as such; therefore, my estimates are conservative. The 1913 confirmation class was the earliest group the interviewees could remember accurately. The 1937 confirmation group seems to be the last class that included girls who worked as domestics.

42. Author interview with Nora Ohlmeier Prothe, June 24, 1986. This first-born hiring-out practice for German girls was also noticed by Laurence Glasco, “Life Cycles,” 288.


44. Author interview with Irene Minden Prothe, July 18, 1986.


46. Interview with Ida Minden Peckman, Aug. 18, 1986.

47. Interview with Lydia Prothe Schultz, Feb. 3, 1986. See Sylvia Lea Salquist, “The Image of the Hired Girl in Literature: The Great Plains, 1860 to World War I,” Great Plains Quarterly 4 (Summer 1984): 166–77. Although Salquist focuses most of her analysis on fiction, she wrote that the hired girls’ memoirs mention “education as a motive for being a hired girl” as well as the “opportunity to be in town.”

48. The Neuers and the Wilsons were two of the wealthy families served by the hired girls from Block. These two families owned and operated the lucrative Wilson Meat Packing Company in Kansas City.

49. Author interview with Irene Minden Prothe, July 18, 1986.


51. Author interview with Irene Minden Prothe, July 18, 1986.


55. Frederick Luebke, “German Immigrants and American Politics: Problems of Leadership, Parties, and Issues,” in Germans in the New World, 79–92. Luebke goes on to state that the Germans were the most politically divided of any ethnic group in the United States. Carl Wittke, We Who Built America, rev.
ed. (Cleveland, Ohio: Western Reserve University Press, 1964), writes that the conservative Lutherans tended to remain with the Democratic party since they [the Lutherans] approved of slavery on biblical authority [245].


57. Western Spirit, June 29, 1877.

58. Western Spirit, Nov. 12, 1880. This and all other election information quoted in this section were taken from election results printed in the Paola paper. The votes on each issue or person are recorded by township. Although East Valley Township contained some non-Germans, the Block community represents the vast majority of voters in the township.

59. Western Spirit, May 27, 1927. B. J. Sheridan, editor, wrote a series of essays on the early political days of the county; this story is taken from his reminiscence.

60. Western Spirit, Sept. 16, 1904.

61. The following description of B. J. Sheridan is a compilation of information gleaned from studying Western Spirit from 1870 to 1945. Many of the interviewees mentioned Sheridan, and their impressions have also helped create the portrait.

62. Author interview with Clarence Clausen and Alma Clausen Debrick, March 15, 1986.

63. Western Spirit, July 30, 1880.

64. Information on the AHTA was gleaned from newspaper notices in Western Spirit, May 28, 1886; Nov. 15, 1901; Aug. 17, 1906; and Feb. 13, 1914.


66. Protokoll, Jan. 1, 1901, Book 1, 135, and Jan. 15 (special meeting), 1901, 135–36, Trinity Lutheran Church [TLC] Archives, Block, Kansas. There is no indication that the pastor or the synod disapproved of the AHTA's tactics or purpose; the objection was to the secret nature of the society and its required oath.


68. Author interview with Marie Dageforde Monthey, Aug. 16, 1986.

69. Protokoll, July 9, 1888, Book 1, 89, and Western Spirit, Aug. 20, 1886. Although the newspaper does not make it clear that the mission meeting was attended by members from the church at Block, the gathering was held in Henry Block's grove where all future mission festivals were held.

70. All information on the origin of the mission festival is taken from Paul F. Koehneke, "Joint Mission Festivals in the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod until 1868," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly 24 (April 1951):24–34.

71. Author interview with Nora Ohlmeier Prothe, June 24, 1986. The festival setting was moved in the 1920s to a site one-half mile south of the church grounds.

72. Western Spirit, Aug. 25, 1893. Although the author of the article is unknown, one hopes that he or she understood German since all early festivals were in the German language only.

73. In Protokoll, from 1900 into the 1940s, both ministers' names are usually listed along with the language of his sermon.

74. For examples of these announcements, see Western Spirit, Aug. 3, 1923; July 29, 1927; Aug. 1, 1930; and Aug. 2, 1935.

75. Protokoll, July 3, 1904, Book 1, 151.
76. Western Spirit, Aug. 7, 1914.
77. Western Spirit, Aug. 2, 1918. This picnic appears to have been an obvious ploy to exhibit American patriotism; the program was full of American patriotic songs, drills, and recitations. The proceeds of the picnic were donated to the Red Cross, something never done before or after 1918.
78. Western Spirit, June 19, 1925, and June 10, 1932.
80. Author interview with Clarence Clausen, March 15, 1986.
82. Block residents played some baseball in the 1920s, but the local paper did not cover the games until interest was renewed in the 1930s.
83. The 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, “Block Items,” a section of the local paper, shows the extent to which residents of Block traveled to see family and friends. It also describes anniversary celebrations, young people’s employment, and lists of out-of-town guests and activities.
84. The role of the ethnic community in easing the process of assimilation by slowing it down has been discussed in other rural and ethnic research. See the summary section in Kathleen Neils Conzen, Immigrant Milwaukee; Frederick C. Luebke, Immigrants and Politics: The Germans in Nebraska, 1880–1900 [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1969], 35; and Russell Gerlach, Immigrants in the Ozarks [Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1976], 174–75.

CHAPTER 6. AT WAR WITH GERMANY

1. Western Spirit, April 19, 1918.
4. Religion and some reading and writing were always taught in the German language; singing was also usually in German.
5. Western Spirit printed a number of pro-German articles before American involvement in World War I. For examples, see Western Spirit, July 7, 1916; Dec. 22, 1916; and March 30, 1917. After U.S. entry in April 1917, both papers began a series of anti-German essays and editorials, some local and some reprinted from other newspapers. For examples, see Western Spirit, May 18, 1917, and Jan. 25, 1918, and Miami County Republican, Oct. 19, 1917, and Oct. 26, 1917.


10. Western Spirit, Feb. 1, 1918, explained "alien enemy" registration and on June 21, 1918, described the registration of "enemy females."

11. Ladies Aid Minutes [English translation], March 6, 1918, 11, Trinity Lutheran Church (TLC) Archives, Block, Kansas.

12. Protokoll, April 1, 1918, Book 2, 47, TLC. This was an important meeting since for the first time the pastor read a dictate from the synod office and also a letter from the government. "War time" refers to contemporary daylight savings time, which moved the clock forward one hour. The school and church service were moved to ten o’clock from nine o’clock.

13. Ibid., May 12, 1918, 48.


15. Western Spirit, Aug. 2, 1918.

16. Protokoll, Oct. 6, 1918, Book 2, 50–51. It is impossible to determine if the "patriotic committee" was from the national synod or the Kansas district offices, as each group had a public relations board to render advice and help congregations minimize problems. The Army/Navy Board was the national synod's committee organized to provide Missouri Synod chaplains for the military. For a description of the problems and pressures of the Missouri Synod in creating its own independent board, see Alan Graebner, "World War I and the Lutheran Union: Documents from the Army and Navy Board, 1917–1918," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly 41 (May 1968):51–64.

17. The synod's rigid definition of the separation of church and state remained an important issue for Missouri Synod officials, who continuously refused to use the pulpit for purposes of drumming up support for the war and the sale of liberty bonds. For more detailed descriptions, see Luebke, Bonds of Loyalty, 232–39; Graebner, "Acculturation," 54–56; and Ralph L. Moellering, "Some Lutheran Reactions to War and Pacifism, 1917 to 1941," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly 41 (Aug. 1968):121–31.


19. Ibid., 54–56. Although Graebner generalizes in his comments on resistance even to synod dictates on change, the Block community certainly moved slowly in accommodating and responding to pressure from the synod. Officially, the synod ended its "official silence" in December 1917, but the voters' assembly did not act officially to make changes until April 1918.

20. Luebke discusses and analyzes this type of personal response to the war in Bonds of Loyalty, 232–38.

21. Correspondence of Lydia Prothe Schultz in the possession of her granddaughter, Carol Coburn. Translated from the German by Ursula Huelsbergen, Lawrence, Kansas, 1987.

22. Most of the individuals who continued to correspond with relatives before World War I stated that correspondence was impossible during the war, and this often signaled the end of family connections with relatives in the old country. All of the second- and some of the third-generation interviewees recalled that their parents subscribed to German-American newspapers as well as to local county papers; both mothers and fathers seemed to be newspaper readers and often read to their children. The most likely German-American paper to be read
in Block was *Staats-Zeitung* from Kansas City. Luebke states that by 1919, 47 percent of all German-American newspapers had stopped publishing (*Bonds of Loyalty*, 271).

23. Graebner, “Acculturation,” 90. In discussing army life for German-American youth, Graebner adds, “Probably no melting pot functioned with such brutal efficiency as army life.”

24. Sarah D. Shields, “The Treatment of Conscientious Objectors during World War I: Mennonites at Camp Funston,” *Kansas History* 4 (Winter 1981):255–69. According to Shields and other scholars, the Mennonites were sent to Leavenworth to be imprisoned. If they refused to work they were forced to stand chained to the bars for nine hours a day, abused and beaten by guards. These men were all released by mid-1919.


26. Ibid., June 21, 1918, 1.


28. Rosena Debrick Schultz’s registration form and those of all the men and women required to register can be found in “Registration Affidavit of Alien Enemy,” 1918 (Marshall-Miami County), Box 17, Federal Archives–Kansas City Regional Branch, Kansas City, Missouri. These documents are a rare find since most states destroyed them some time after the war.

29. Author interview with Nora Ohlmeier Prothe, June 24, 1986.

30. “Registration Affidavit of Alien Enemy,” Miami County, Box 17.

31. All information concerning Elizabeth Block was obtained from two articles in *Western Spirit*, June 28, 1918, and March 8, 1935. She was considered unique in the Block community because she was one of the few if not the only single woman to leave the community before World War I. Her pursuit of a career and her special out-of-state training also made her a curiosity, but she was highly respected because of the profession she chose. She went to Chicago after the war and returned to Block only for family visits.


34. *Western Spirit*, April 5, 1918.

35. Ibid., March 15, 1918.

36. The April and June listings were published in *Western Spirit*, April 19, 1918, and June 7, 1918. The May listing included sixty-five of seventy new Red Cross members from the Block community (*Miami County Republican*, May 24, 1918).

37. The threat of violence was quite real, and many German communities in Kansas and throughout the Midwest suffered from the anti-German backlash of 1918. Churches and schoolhouses were burned and vandalized; individual German Americans were verbally and physically abused. For excellent descriptions and analyses of the situation, see John A. Hawgood, *The Tragedy of German America* (New York: Putnam, 1940); Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty*, 238–50; and Nelson, *Rise of World Lutheranism*, 397–98. Nelson states that the central Midwest suffered the most, and the more immigrants a community had, the more despised it was.


40. Walter H. Beck, *Lutheran Elementary Schools in the United States* (St.
Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1939), 326. As recorded in the Kansas State Statutes (352), the state passed such a law on March 3, 1919. The state law also required that patriotism and citizenship be taught and stipulated that each school could be visited by the State Board of Education.

41. The particular Supreme Court cases that resolved the issue are Meyer v. Nebraska (1923) and Pierce v. Society of Sisters (1925). The former struck down English-only language laws for public and private schools, and the latter affirmed the right of private and public schools to educate children.

44. Ibid., Jan. 1925, 76–77.
45. Ibid., Jan.–July 1929, 101–6.
47. Ibid., April–July 1931, 114–17.

50. Many of the interviewees described this problem, and most were upset that some women were forced to do this for so long. One of the interviewees, Josephine Overbeck Prothe, and her two sisters married Lutherans from Block and found themselves in such a situation.

51. J. Neale Carman, "Foreign Language Units of Kansas" (Manuscript, University of Kansas Archives), 2:1294.
52. Western Spirit, July 19, 1935.
57. Ibid., April–Oct. 1944, 41–43.
58. Ladies Aid Minutes [English translation], Jan. 1944, 43.
59. Western Spirit, Sept. 4, 1942.

CONCLUSION


3. Although it is not unusual that institutions, particularly churches, are slow to change, it is important to remember that the extreme conservatism and
exclusivity practiced by the church at Block were part of an attempt to resist powerful external pressures brought about by World War I. Few institutions have been subjected to such virulent, inflammatory attacks by the national and local media. Even with these types of pressures, the church resisted and sought every opportunity to avoid Americanization.

4. According to the interviewees, the environment of the school at Block in the late 1920s and the 1930s became less "hostile." Although corporal punishment was still used, its severity and frequency seemed to decrease. More "accountability" was required by parents, but the church was also subject to some state requirements that included on-site visits by the county superintendent.


8. See Joan Jensen, Loosening the Bonds: Mid-Atlantic Farm Women [New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1986], 91.


11. I use these cities as examples because each has had a definitive study completed on its nineteenth-century German population—Audrey Olson, "St. Louis Germans, 1850–1920: The Nature of an Immigrant Community and Its Relation to the Assimilation Process" [Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 1970]; Kathleen Neils Conzen, Immigrant Milwaukee, 1836–1860 [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976]; and Nadel, Little Germany. St. Louis provides a particularly appropriate comparison because it is the home of Missouri Synod Lutheranism, and the publishing house and seminary are located there.


13. Lerner, Creation of Patriarchy, 38.


15. A number of scholars have examined the changes in gender behavior in women's church organizations. For an excellent example, see Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America [New York: Oxford University Press, 1986].


**NOTE ON SOURCES**

1. I have ended my study in 1945 because the major battles of assimilation and Americanization seem to have ended by the end of World War II. Also, to ensure the privacy of the people who currently remain in the community, I felt I should not continue the study.

2. I have great confidence in their meticulous and time-consuming endeavor.
This couple spent two years completing their verbatim translations of the recordbook. Their primary concern was in translating the correct “cause of death” in the death records. Periodically, they consulted a German medical dictionary to ensure a correct translation in labeling various diseases or ailments.
