

Transcribed 1999 by Mona Mueller Houser, descendant of Michael Sasse, Sr., uncle of the author of these memoirs. There are two variant copies of these memoirs, one from the Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, and a typed copy supplied 1998 by David Fellwock of Black Jack, MO. The main text is from the Quarterly. Brackets [such as these] indicate text from the typed copy where it varies significantly from the Quarterly. Comments in {brackets and Italics} are phrases or names that I have added for clarification, based on family research that I have done. The spelling of the hometown in Brandenburg (Nahausen) has been corrected.

A footnote to the articles in the Concordia Historical Institute DATE?? VOL???. says:

"These memoirs were written in German a few years before Fellwock's death and later translated by one of his sons. August H Sasse, a nephew of Fellwock, submitted them to the Quarterly with the statement: "I will quote these memoirs verbatim -- with such exceptions as would of necessity require the affixing of data and one or two places which, through the years of the following generation, later were not recorded and 'blank' -- all of which, however, are clear and well remembered by this writer and correctly filled in." Mr. Sasse, now in retirement in Pueblo, Colo, has been a very active member of the Lutheran Church. With others he was instrumental in establishing our first congregation of the Missouri Synod in Port Arthur, Texas in 1898. The many Germanisms found in the memoirs have been retained lest a correction result in a mistranslation. The original manuscript is not available. A portion of the memoirs translated and edited by Mr. P. B. Fellwock of Lake Worth, Fla. appeared in the Quarterly, XV, October, 1942, pp 91 - 96.

MEMOIRS of JOHN FREDERICK FELLWOCK 1831 - 1917

Chapter I

I was born October 9, 1831. I was born in Dorf (village) Nahausen, near Koenigsberg, in the Neumark, Kingdom of Prussia, Germany. My parents owned a small farm near the village. My ancestors were of the German Wends.

Soon after the Thirty Years' War three brothers decided to migrate to Brandenburg to seek work and means of livelihood in the Uckermark. One of them found employment [and settled down]; the other two crossed the River Oder into the Newmark. One of them found work there, locating at Nahausen. He is my ancestor. The third brother turned east into Pommerania and found the desired employment there. I am unable to give the name of locations and places where the first and third brothers finally made their abode. Such meager information as I can give I obtained from my father Johann Friedrich Fellwock (after whom I am named), and from his brother, Martin Fellwock. The latter, especially, taking interest in such matters, asserted, however, that he was reliably informed that one of those two brothers had finally crossed his path into France.

Nahausen had quite a few merchants who dealt in seeds, etc, their trade extending over the entire Province of Uckermark and into the Pomeranian settlements. Through this source, information was gleaned that the name "Fellwock" occurred frequently in these provinces; to these Fellwocks our family, however, was not related as far as we could ascertain.

[As above stated, the Nahausen Fellwock is my ancestor. He was the owner of a farm. Whether he got it being industrious, being saving, or by marriage - I am unable to say. This is the farm that was later inherited by my father.]

My father's father, whom I well remember, lived at the time of the Seven-Year's War. But since I was then only a child, I do not remember any of his sayings. When I was ten years old in 1841, he died a quiet death. [He was the first person whose death I witnessed.] Often I heard my father say later he wished for such a quiet passing for himself.

After my grandfather's death his second wife lived for a number of years and -- who would imagine it! -- she later became my grandmother-in-law, because her grandchild later became my beloved wife.

Early Schooling

My father, John Friedrich Fellwock (after whom, as stated before, I was named) was born in 1796. My mother [-- nee Sasse --] one year earlier in 1795. Both were devout Christians who took their Christianity very seriously; and in this spirit their children were reared - five daughters and one son, the latter being myself. And there was no thought of pampering this their one and only son. I will cite just one instance: my father's offices included that of a peace officer, or what we here in America would call a justice of the peace, also that of a school trustee of the village. One day a woman, highly excited, brought her son to Father's office but Father was absent, so the lady called on my mother. Mother asked, "Why the excitement?" The woman, bringing her darling boy with her, unbuttoned his trousers and lowered them, saying, "See, Frau Fellwock, see, that's the way the school teacher has chastised my boy and I will not stand for it." Thereupon my mother said, "Dear Mrs. Pfannkuchen [Mrs. Mueller], if that's all, please quiet yourself, it will not kill the boy." And seeing me come into the house, Mother called to me, "Fritz, come here!" As I did so, she, firm and resolute woman that she was, my dear mother lowered my own trousers and, pointing to the affected area, said, "Look at that, Mrs. Pfannkuchen [Mrs. Mueller], what do you think of that? Mine got it, too, just as badly as yours; pity the stroke that misses the mark." Without another word Mrs. Pfannkuchen bid Mother adieu.

Not quite six years old, I was ready for school. There were two schools in the village, known as the big and the little school. When the children were nine or ten years, they were transferred from the little to the big school. However, exceptions as to age were sometimes made. [Before my school age I had little touch with the other children in the street. My parents would not permit me to play except in the rear yard under the fruit trees, and on a nice green lawn so I had no companionship with the older boys.]

After attending the little school for two years, being able to read fluently and mastering also the other studies to some degree, I was entitled to be enrolled in the first class of the big school. This usually happened immediately after Easter. Arriving at the big school, the teacher would take names and ages of children. When my turn came he -- because of my small stature -- asked whether I would prefer to remain in the little school another year. Upon my positive no he enrolled my name. Since the good Lord had endowed me with gifts and enthusiasm for learning, it happened that -- as children were seated according to their knowledge and ability -- I soon passed over big fellows who were too lazy and had nothing but foolishness in their heads.

In good stead came visits and conversations of certain men of the village. As before stated, my father was a justice of the peace, and [as such he was] also the tax collector. At certain times of the year people would, during daytime and evenings, bring in their moneys or speak of matters, which directly pertained to the interest of the community. Thus, conversations sometimes became very interesting to me as I grew older, overhearing them while I was in the adjoining room studying my school lessons. Many evenings, too, we had visits from the mayor of the village. His name was Friedrich Berendt -- a very gifted man and of a strong personality. I always looked up to him with high esteem. Among many other visitors were also several justices of peace, our schoolteachers, and last but not least, the distinguished clergy.

These men, all of a higher standard of knowledge and education than the average farmer, proved a boon too much of my own learning. They would discuss matters of public interest until late in the night. I was always glad for these evenings [every tenth of the month] when I was permitted, after completing my school lessons, to listen to them. I gained much from their conversations. Indeed, when my good mother called, "Fritz, ten o'clock," it meant, "Hurry to bed." However, I was permitted to leave the door of my bedroom ajar, which adjoined the room in which these gentlemen carried on their discussion; and thus, sitting up in bed, I would now listen in rapt attention until I fell asleep. These men were all earnest men; they carried on no wishy-washy village gossip. Only matters of interest to the state, community, church and school [and improvement in farming] -- all were "live wires," every one of them, and I gained much from their talk. [If I am not mistaken - it must have been in the year 1843 or 1844 -- when a Roman Catholic incident attracted their special attention. Bishop Arnold of Trier caused a coat to be exhibited and adored, which was said to be the coat of Christ on which the Roman soldiers drew the lot at His crucifixion. From near and far people flocked to Trier to adore this holy relic.]

[The Catholic priest, John Ronge, however, wrote an open letter to the Bishop branding the whole affair as an imposition and swindle, which indeed it was. Through the controversy, which followed, the entire Christian world became agitated. Many thought that the priest's exposure would ruin the Catholic Church. This also was the opinion of Mayor Berendt. He opined that Priest Ronge would become a second Luther. Teacher Platz of the big school, however, did not share this view. He cited instances where the

Catholic Church did not succumb to many other controversies. Here I learned for the first time that for a time there were three Popes cursing and excommunicating each other.]

I listened to [these conversations - as before stated - with rapt attention and interest. They greatly assisted me in my education. Much of what I heard in school - to my delight - I already knew, which - in turn - was a stimulus and driving force for more study, and I can say in all humility that in my teacher's own words my progress had been a matter of joy to him.]

It was at one of these meetings when, one evening after the others had gone home, my teacher Mr. Platz tarried -- then complained to my father about my behavior in school. The circumstances were as follows:

Due to my good behavior [and industriousness in my studies I was making good progress in consequence of which] other boys, older and much taller than I, were obliged to sit below me. This caused bitter envy. It brought on [hissing and] mockery, in various ways to such an extent that it embittered my disposition, so that I, too, resolved to be as bad as they. Owing to this fact, the teacher discontinued, during school hours, his praises of my previous good work. These praises, so openly spoken when all went well, I feared would only increase the temper of the other boys in my class; which later, I think, in my estimation, proved correct. However, I did not improve; and small as I was, I countered the other boys whenever I found a chance, which certainly did not improve the situation, but helped to make it worse. All this, and perhaps more, the good teacher reported to my father late that night. And sitting up straight in my bed, with a beating heart, I missed not a word. [I do not remember his exact words or those of my father] Surely I was excited. I now realized more than ever before [that my teacher had my interest at heart. I also realized] that my conduct had been wrong and that the punishment which had filtered through my trousers a week or two before in connection with that of Conrad Pfannkuchen was well deserved. Before that time I had not considered my actions as being seriously wrong, but it now arose before me like a mountain, seeing and acknowledging my wrongs -- not only the wrongs of the other boys, but mine as well; right there and then I decided to improve and become a better boy.

I did; small as I was, I felt I was man enough to do it. But it had to be done gradually. [To change my conduct immediately would not do. That would quickly draw the bigger boys' attention. Gradually I would drift into my former better behavior.] Now it happened within a few days after Teacher Platz had confided to the father the above-narrated episode, that I was instructed to remain after classes. In summer school was dismissed at 11 A. M. When I did not get home at the regular time father sent my sister with a request to the teacher to let me come home as I was to take dinner to the hired men in the field, it being haying time. [The hay was to be brought under roof that afternoon.]

With the message delivered, Sister again went home, and Teacher Platz with the message in hand came in the schoolroom. Stepping close to me, he asked in warm words the reason for my present conduct. Instead of joy as formerly, he continued, I was now giving him pain and trouble through my behavior; he became so serious, with kindly

words admonishing me, he could not withhold his tears; he was so earnest and true of heart, lumps came to my own throat, and I could no longer hold back my tears. I related to him the entire situation and the actions of the older boys, older than I, toward me. He replied, "I had an idea of this." And all the words he spoke went from heart to heart.

I could not realize at that time the love of a teacher for his pupil, as I now do -- having been a teacher myself, I can now fully understand it. [I have among my pupils children - by the mere mention of their names my heart warms. But now, back to the school room.] With words of sound advice, love and cheer, and my faithful promise to do better in the future, the good teacher gave me his blessings with a warm handshake when we parted.

On my way home [I resolved never to displease my good teacher again, but rather to endure the teasing of the older boys.] I felt lighthearted. Again I had a clear conscience. But at home the unexpected had taken wings. [Being in a light mood, I had no idea that my father might be vexed due to my delay from school caused by my bad conduct.] While the men in the field expected their dinner, I had permitted time to slip away; and had not the teacher only a few nights prior thereto complained about little Fritz? Father received me in a displeased mood. Had he known what had occurred during the past half-hour [between the teacher and myself], all would have been well. But he did not. [No sooner did he see me than he said, "Come here, Fritz!" I came. Without saying a word he reached for a handy stick. Never before nor after have I received such a sound thrashing. Then - making it short, he said, "The men's dinner is in the wagon. Take it to them without further delay. There will be enough - you can eat there."] I was glad when I could finally hop into to the wagon to drive away with the workingmen's dinner; however, I had to stand up driving, my seat being too sore to sit down; yet I could not blame my father--had he only known --everything came about so quickly after me returning home, that my excuse only was drowned in the pain which seemed to circle around the same spot where ten days ago or so Teacher Platz had made an exploration at the time Conrad Pfannkuchen got a blessing. [I realized that my shortcomings at school fully deserved such punishment. But instead of it coming from my teacher, I got it at the hands of my dear father.]

I now made the solemn resolution, with God's help so to conduct myself at school that the teacher again should be pleased with me, and apparently I must have succeeded; our parting, when school was completed after several more years, was a most cordial one.

Church Conditions

My mother's ardent wish regarding my future was that I should study for the ministry or a teacher. For the former I had no inclination whatever. I did have fond hopes to study for the teacher's profession, but my Aunt Rebecca Machmuller was decidedly opposed to this and tried her best to discourage me. In the meantime other circumstances developed which made practically impossible the wishes of my mother.

About this time -- 1845-- my parents more and more realized that the German State Church as interpreted by the King of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm III, did not proclaim and teach the pure Word and the Sacraments in true form according to the Word of God. Their conscience would not permit them to remain, so they joined the then so-called Old Lutheran Church. But before they took this step, they had serious obstacles to overcome. Mayor Berendt did his utmost to prevent them from taking this step. He caused the State Church Visitor from Berlin to come to Nahhausen, Mr. Gelach by name. This gentleman tried his best to have my parents and several other families remain in the State Church. However, they, together with Father and Mother, had come to see its fallacies, and, as stated, these families with my father as one of their leaders, joined the Lutheran Church. With this movement, it must be stated right here, much friction between a number of families in Nahhausen was inevitable, owing to questions of faith.

In the year 1846 I was old enough to be confirmed. But since my parents had changed churches and there was no Lutheran church in Nahhausen, I, with three other students, was sent to Old Ruednitz -- two German miles from Nahhausen, about equal to ten American miles -- for confirmation classes. [From the entire neighborhood children of parents who likewise had joined the Lutherans were brought to Old Ruednitz for the same purpose.] Teacher Vierad, a kind and conscientious man, was our instructor. Indeed, he was a shepherd, well fitted to feed lambs and to direct them to Jesus, the Chief Shepherd.

Once a week Pastor Schneider, likewise devout, a very sincere man, came into our classroom to thoroughly go over our week's lessons, taught according to Scripture and Dr. Martin Luther's Catechism.

On Sunday, May 3, 1846, twenty-six children, including myself, were confirmed by Pastor Schneider of Berlin and the assistant, Fr. Lasius, at the Ev. Lutheran Church at Old Ruednitz. The ceremony was impressive, with splendid Christian admonition to us children from the pastor.

Looking for a Religious Haven

In the winter of 1845-1846, just before I was confirmed, my parents entertained the thought of migrating to America. My father's former friend, Mayor Berendt and a number of others, formerly the best of friends, now made life unbearable; all on account of our having joined the Lutheran Church. With poisonous hate toward them, their former

friends would now harass them in every way possible, because Father and some others with him had rebuked such religious teachings as were implanted by the higher authorities, including the King as the only ne plus ultra in matters of religion at the time. This was more than my peace-loving father could bear.

[In the year before - 1844 - my father's brother, Michael Fellwock, had migrated to America, to the State of Wisconsin. He wrote that they had organized a Lutheran congregation and that between a number of pastors and congregations there was a movement on foot to organize a Lutheran Synod. To my family, this information was the deciding factor, and while I was still in Old Ruednitz they decided to migrate to America and sold their farm. The above Synod did organize and was named Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States.]

While I was yet in Old Ruednitz, my father's decision to migrate to the United State and the State of Wisconsin was firmly carried out. He promptly resigned his several office appointments which had held, and a further substantiation there of was shown through the sale of the farm.

Before closing this chapter, I feel it is well to mention the glad tidings my father had received from the wonderland of America. There, in the land of the free, Lutheranism was beginning to flourish unobstructed and with a vigor that put Germany, the land of its birth, to shame. In or near a city named Saint Louis, in the State of Missouri, an organization of Lutherans were about to form a brotherhood, or "synod," to spread the true Gospel of God over the entire land of the free. This was a godsend to Father and Mother and those friends who believed as they did. Carefully the State of Wisconsin was chosen for an abode and Milwaukee as a landing place, because there and in its surroundings for several hundreds of miles much government land was yet available, and settlements already formed there were to a large extent the German speaking class, among whom also could be found Lutherans.

CHAPTER II

Leaving the Homeland

On June 11, 1846, we bade our old and remaining friend's farewell, my father, mother, my five sisters, and myself. There were nearly a score of families, including our own, all from our neighborhood of Dorf Nahausen. They hired an Oder-River boat, which took us to Hamburg. The railroad from Berlin to Hamburg was then under construction. Only a half-mile from Nahausen was an arm of the Oder River, and here our hired boat was anchored, awaiting us.

[A large delegation of friends had assembled to bid us farewell.] All baggage and belongings that were to go with us had previously been put aboard the craft. About 12 o'clock noon the craft pulled out, the passengers and cargo bound for an unknown world. As anchor and ropes were drawn in, we sang several verses of spiritual songs. We kept

this up for some time; also waving of hands and handkerchiefs from land and boat kept up until we, forever passed on and out of sight. Where there was joy from one end of the boat to the other, yet there rolled many a tear over the cheeks of every passenger, especially mothers and the mature. In a few hours we arrived at the junction of the main Oder River. This we followed to the Fino Canal, through the canal into the Hafel River, and finally into the Elbe River. After three weeks we arrived in Hamburg.

Perhaps the captain was responsible for our slow headway; he was an unhurried individual. [At every town a landing was made and several hours delay caused by it.] In Hamburg there were more passengers than the ships could carry. Owing to this shortage in ships, the better, abler, and more well to do were required to accept a delay of three weeks. This included us [and several other family co-travelers,] all of whom were anxious to get to America.

At last we bade farewell to the Fatherland. Our voyage consumed fifty-five days, until we arrived in New York on September 19, 1946. Think of it, eight weeks, a little short of two months from Hamburg to New York. Compare this with modern traveling of our day as well as with the improvements in every other line of endeavor.

Such a long voyage on a sail ship is, indeed, replete with hardships. This was our experience, and while our ship was not so crowded as some others, it was nevertheless an ordeal. The food was such as would nauseate us. Luckily my parents had taken along a goodly supply of toasted bread, bacon, ham, and other victuals, which we now for some time were enjoying as "delicatessen" as compared with the ship's fare, in the meantime leaving our ship's portions to others.

My mother and my oldest sister, Wilhelmina, never did see the ocean. From the very start both got seasick and remained so to the last day. I had a touch of it, but quickly overcame it, and thereafter felt entirely well on the remainder of the trip.

Wisconsin Bound

As you know, we were Wisconsin-bound. After one day's stay in New York--then already a big city--we, very slowly, by steamer, went up the Hudson River to Albany, New York and from there by railroad to Buffalo. On this trip we were several times in danger of being cremated alive. The coach -- a miserable affair--had no seats. It was a sort of "box-stall"--if you know what I mean--probably a cattle or freight car. Four families (twenty-nine persons) with all their baggage and belongings were crowded into this car. Where one stood or squatted, he would remain. No elbowroom, any chance for exercise. Neither was this all our plight. As stated before, we were faced with the predicament of being destroyed body and baggage, from fiery cinders of the locomotive ahead of our car. There was no glass in the door of our car; it was broken as nearly as I remember; smoke would pour in at times to suffocation; sparks at other times would make their appearance in such profusion that ignition of our belongings, such as wrapped

bed clothes and other wrapped valuables, including the entire cargo, was practically unavoidable. No conductor showed up; we were isolated in Uncle Sam's great domain, wiping cinders out of our swollen and reddened eyes, while the smaller children pitifully kept up the orgy of crying.

But we soon found a weapon that would guard against these cinders; a wet cloth was hung across this door opening. But, oh! such a job! While it seemed comparatively easy to stand there doing nothing but keeping the cloth moist, my turn of sixty-minute shifts was as painful to me as was the incident of yesteryear, when I was compelled to stand up driving, taking dinner to the workmen in the hayfield. Never in my life did I find the time to pass so slowly, doing nothing most of the time. Nevertheless it required two of us boys to guard the situation when the winds blew against us. One to hold the cloth in place while the other kept up moistening the cloth, or extinguishing the fire whenever the cloth caught fire. The job was a grimy one to us boys as well as it was funny; we were glad when it ended with our arrival in Buffalo.

Various incidents retarded our journey going west. Frequently we were sidetracked for hours and hours. At one time we broke down in a cornfield, where we were delayed for over twenty-four hours before all was well and ready to continue. Finally Buffalo was reached, and the railroad between Buffalo and Chicago not having been completed, we had to make, again, a voyage on the Lakes, directly to Milwaukee.

The trip over the Lakes was stormy, with no pleasure in it, but after several days we arrived at Milwaukee in fairly good spirits, as nearly as I can remember. Now another fifty or sixty miles, and we would be at our journey's end. My father's brother met us at Milwaukee. [The next day our goods were loaded on farm wagons for our final destination. The home of my Uncle Michael at Lebanon, Wisconsin, was that destination and we arrived there on September 29, 1846, after a two day trip] {from Milwaukee.}

The trip from Milwaukee to Lebanon consumed ten days. {In reconstructing these events from the ship's passenger list and the dates given here, we see that 10 days had passed from their departure from New York until they arrived in Lebanon.} We had now been on the go since June 11, a total of one hundred and eleven days, nearly four months since we left our old home at Nahausen. Think what expense and physical hardships we all, every one of us, old or young, had to endure, and welcomed it because there was at that time no other way out. [Now we were in America, and a life under entirely different conditions was apparent. But - God willing - more later.] February 4, 1907

The writer of these memoirs became ill of a lingering sickness and he notes as follows, "I should like to have finished but am unable to continue. I submit to God; His will be done."

CHAPTER III

After about two years, having regained his health, he takes up the writing of his memoirs as follows:

With God's permission, I will now try and continue with my memoirs.

All Congressionally controlled land in the vicinity of Lebanon had been sold. Father, therefore, together with twelve or more families, decided to locate elsewhere and at a distance sufficiently far enough from Lebanon to create an entirely new settlement mostly Lutheran; a settlement, if possible, sufficiently large to harbor several churches and schools of the Lutheran faith.

About twenty-five miles north of Lebanon, in the vicinity of the little town of Mayville [in Dodge County] such an ideal location was believed to have been found. However, as everywhere else, thick woods covered the land.

Early in November 1846, all the able bodied men went there to clear some of the land. I, then a 16-year-old lad, went along. One wagon was loaded with stoves, bedding and the necessary cooking utensils. We were able to drive to within four miles of our tract of land under survey. Here our road, very poor as it was, ended--not even a path was to be found. Here we stayed over night with [a farmer who lived in the woods. His name was] Mr. Horton.

Early the next morning, with axes in hand, we started to fell trees and build a roadway to get to our tract of land as best we could, four miles away, while we could not see 100 yards ahead.

Wood, we must remember, had no value in those days. We felled, as much as possible, only small trees to facilitate our progress. On this account you may imagine the zigzag of this road. It was a problem for the most experienced driver to follow that road in broad daylight; [and after dark next to impossible to follow.] It was initiated right there and then to the glory of work done with a strong arm. Our crowd worked without delay to build a log cabin as soon as we arrived at our tract. [By evening that day a little log cabin was completed except for the roof. An opening for a door was at one side. Now we had at least a place to stay - if it was only an enclosure without a roof.]

The roof was attended to the next morning. Linwood logs were split in the center, and the flat center was cut out in trough-like fashion. These were laid side by side next to one another with the bark down. Another batch likewise with bark up covered all cracks and fairly well gave us protection against rain and moisture. This was for a long time our "headquarters" where from ten to fourteen men abode and slept. [Our stove gave the necessary warmth. Cooking also was done on it.] Meals, naturally, were frugal, and the slices frequently were thin. [Butter, bread, potatoes, cornmeal, smoked meat and coffee was the usual bill-of-fare] but, what was best, everyone was in good spirits.

Clearing a certain acreage of the land was the order of the day. On Sunday mornings there would be divine services, with the reading of Scripture and of a sermon by one of the men. Our lands were located in Theresa Township, and there we went again after Christmas to do some more strenuous clearing in order to have a desired acreage ready for spring plowing. The Township, by the way, was named after the youngest daughter of the old historic Indian warrior and settler Solomon Juneau, the man who founded Milwaukee, present metropolis of the State of Wisconsin.

Upon our arrival at our lands we found from 16 to 20 inches of snow spread out so nicely and evenly, in spite of our increased hardships with which we were now handicapped, we began snowballing, oldsters as well as youngsters alike; everyone was happy. Trees now, when felled would lie in deep snow. The hardships now increased and continued from day to day and multiplied under the conditions and in the situation we encountered and had to fight against in the desolate wilderness. [When the woods without leaves in wintertime look bare -- then it is doubly cheerless when the ground is covered with snow -- a disconsolate wilderness as far as one could see, which in most cases was not very far. Sometimes we had sleet ice which would transform the woods in to a glistening, beautiful sight.] Winter had just begun. Snow, ice, and the intense cold began to make our life desperate at times; our work practically came to a standstill, but what could we do? God Almighty was still above us and above it all.

Gradually the days began to get longer, and with renewed vigor, and determined as Father and the entire crowd was, troubles and obstacles were gradually one by one overcome, and by the grace of God Theresa Township, once a wilderness, is this day settled with prosperous farmers, and a number of churches proclaim the same faith, for which those first settlers, including my father, under such trying experiences hewed the way. They have all passed on; indeed, the third generation is on the way at this time of writing, but as surely as God liveth forever, the roots that were well laid years ago -- nearly a century ago-- sprouted to the glory of God and man.

By spring of 1847 log houses were built. Every family was anxious to be again united and together for a life more routine. The land was rolling with ridges, valleys, and small streams. In spring the colorful beauty of blooming trees was a sight to behold, a veritable riot of color. Wild apple, wild cherries and plums, and many others we did not know -- an earthly paradise, but many of them had to fall under the ruthless axe of man.

[The modest little log houses having been complete - the families were brought up from Lebanon. Whenever there was a thaw, or heavy rains, the streams would overflow into the valleys so that communication between the settlers was impossible for days at a time.]

Father's first and main objective always was the furtherance of the spiritual. Frequently he told his daughter Henrietta, with whom he made his abode in later years, that he would have been a bad disciple and follower of Christ, who led him all through his years, if he

had ignored the importance of His leadership among those pioneers who followed him in the aspect of their religious belief or doctrine.

Accordingly, as soon as we were settled with our families at Theresa Township, about three miles back of the little hamlet named Mayville, arrangements were made with Pastor Geier from Lebanon, who would serve our community every eighth Sunday with Word and Sacrament. All summer and the following winter in 1848 our services were held in the house of Friedrich Jagow.

New settlers came to make their homes among us and were welcomed. It became apparent that we needed a church building to accommodate the membership. In the very beginning a tract of forty acres was purchased for the specific purpose of locating a church and a school, including a cemetery. Through energy and hard work a church building was completed, and on Pentecost Day, 1848, it was dedicated. No benches were yet available for seats; short log blocks, therefore, were installed, on which boards were fastened. Primitive, indeed, but it answered the purpose for the time being, we were all joyous in having a church of our own in America in less time than one year since we removed from Nahausen in Germany.

When the news spread throughout the State that a Lutheran Congregation flourished here in Dodge County, it happened that a number of would-be preachers flocked in, anxious for the post. Our fathers, however, went slowly, sifting the "wheat" from the "chaff." Their European experience came in good stead and would not permit them to sell the pure Biblical truth of the Lutheran doctrine to any charlatan that was coming to them.

Finally came a man by the name of Boehme. He claimed to have been sent by the well-known Lutheran pastor W. Loehe in Germany to minister to the Lutherans in America. Ah, that was a balsam! He made a good impression and, due to the fact that he came from Pastor Loehe, he was engaged to serve us. All were happy because now we had our own pastor. However, this joy was of short duration. Pastor Boehme proved to be an arrogant person in the presence of school children. He would snarl at his aged father who, in all kindness, drew his attention to certain incidents that happened at school, which, also, Pastor Boehme taught several days during the week. In a word, Pastor Boehme was harsh; his actions and rejoinders proved very unsatisfactory. Our congregation also was informed, directly by Pastor Loehe, that Pastor Boehme was not sent by him to minister to the Lutherans, but Boehme was directed to the Fort Wayne Seminary to take further studies for a year or two.

Boehme had some likable qualities, and he was young enough to learn. The congregation was not hasty. However, one Sunday after church services, when he stepped into the house, he called to his wife saying, "Today I did some tall juggling before those stupid farmers." Well, it happened that one of the church members was in the adjoining room and heard the remark. This was the last straw. It gave more offence. Now soon after this, things were getting more strained; Pastor Boehme's sermon deviated so grossly from his

text one Sunday; it was too much. The majority of the membership was ready to release him.

A small number, however, were opposed to this. But the majority rules. Boehme was released, and this caused some more concern among some of the church members. There were now two factions that stood separate among the members. This was a lamentable affair, but it was believed that this opposition among the members might cool down pretty soon and all be well again. So it was agreed that both factions should use the church building alternately every Sunday-- one party in the morning, and the other in the afternoon. The next month they would turn about. This went along for a time when Boehme induced his followers to abrogate the agreement. His argument was that since his adherents had the pastor, they were entitled to the church. Against some objections from several of their side, Boehme forced the issue.

When on the following Sunday the members of our faction came to church, they found it already occupied by the other faction who had already commenced their service. Our side then went to a private home to worship. The other side was jubilant that it had been so easy to oust our side. But the old saying, "Sow wind and reap storm" came true. Most of those members that went with Boehme were later arrivals in the settlement. They had in fact neither helped to pay for the land nor in the construction and cost of the church. The deed for the church property was in the name of five men, all members belonging to our side. One of these had lived in New York State, and had some experience in matters similar to those existing here. He convinced our leadership that Boehme and his followers were in error and should by all means be ejected on short notice according to the law. My father was opposed to this but reluctantly gave in at last. The result was that Boehme was compelled to leave the entire church property within a few weeks.

Boehme and his adherents at first threatened to refuse, but when the deadline came, he had left for parts unknown. Later it was learned that he had applied for membership in the Synod of Missouri, Ohio and other states, but on account of certain conditions was refused. Boehme then joined the Buffalo Synod. This information we received through one of Boehme's previous adherents who, altogether with other members of their faction, expressed regret over the entire affair and exhibited as much joy in coming back to our side as we did in receiving them back into our congregation as formerly.

Then came a man whom my parents had known in Germany when he had been assistant pastor in Nahausen. A Berliner named Leonard. He left his post, he asserted, on account of disagreement with the superiors in the Nahausen parish. This was easily understandable to our Wisconsin members, since they, too, had disagreed. All members, therefore, who had emigrated from Nahausen, now believed that Pastor Leonard had "seen the light" according to Luther, just as we had seen it, and were happy to recommend Pastor Leonard, with the result that he was appointed and ordained as our pastor. [And happy we were to again have a pastor.] But again, alas, while Pastor Leonard had the good will and confidence of the entire congregation, our confidence was misplaced. While he was an able speaker and well liked, it soon developed he was a visionary

fanatic. His sermons were often a mass of confusion, at times hard to understand, while at other times his digressions from the Scripture were as plain as daylight. I will quote just one example, which every Lutheran can grasp without further pondering, the very minute the words are spoken. One Sunday the Pastor preached that Jesus, at the time of His birth, was born a human only. That only after His baptism by John did He become divine. Such heresy, grossly presented, was too much for our fathers, and after several fruitless discussions and meetings he, too, was dismissed.

[It again happened that the same members that caused the split before again left and took Leonard with them. He lodged with a private family - he being a bachelor in the high sixties. After a few weeks something happened that I do not wish to record here. Suddenly he was compelled to leave the house. His later whereabouts were never learned nor cared for.]

In order to get a new pastor, my father and a young member [John Mueller] were selected and delegated to see Pastor Geier of Lebanon to ask him to serve us.

[Pastor Geier had just gone through certain difficulties that had caused a three way split in his congregation. Apparently his nerves were on edge from worry. He agreed to accept the call only on the condition that our congregation would declare his two opposing factions as a gang of church outlaws. To this the committee could not agree, but asked him to come to our church meeting, which he did, making the same demand. A number of members were willing but the majority would not agree to this unreasonable demand, as they had no accurate information nor understanding of his controversies. Whereupon he demanded of those that were against it to leave the meeting. Instantly several members sprang to their feet and told him that they were the ones that organized the congregations, built the church, school and parsonage with their labor and funds and - at this Pastor Geier and those that agreed with him left and held a meeting in a nearby house.]

[Strange to say again they were the same members that left the fold twice before. They were mostly Pomeranians while our side were mostly Brandenburgers.]

[This no doubt had something to do with this and former disagreements. My father took the split to heart. He could not understand how Pastor Geier, a normally mild mannered man, could be so hard and unjust, and I personally felt the same way about it.]

[To apply to the Missouri Synod was thought inadvisable, as we had been told they did not teach the pure Lutheran Gospel. To apply to the Buffalo Synod was opposed by several members who had previously belonged to it in New York State.]

Again a committee of two was selected to interview a teacher named Teacher Pankow, who lived near Lebanon. A learned and respected man, sincere, well educated in the fundamentals of spiritual and Biblical interpretations. He was heralded my many that knew him as being a true Lutheran and as devout as Pastor Geier had been. We felt that,

with all these favorable reports we had gathered about this man, if he could successfully teach children, he could also preach to the grown, and the committee of two, of which my father was one, was sent to this gentleman who at the time had gathered a number of children of the neighborhood into a class for religious and elementary schooling.

Mr. Pankow accepted the invitation to serve our congregation every other Sunday for a while, if not altogether thereafter in a regular way. This again "upped" our spirits; moreover Mr. Pankow's sermons were fundamental, instructive, as well as practical. I admit that through them we became real Lutherans -- proper Christians.

On those Sundays that he served us he would not return to his Lebanon home until Monday mornings. Now, since every member knew that Mr. Pankow had his headquarters with Michael Friedrich Sasse (who later became my father-in-law), Mr. Sasse's home soon developed into a public forum place where members of our church as well as non-members were gladly supplied by Mr. Pankow with answers to their spiritual problems or to questions carefully selected for debate. Mr. Pankow was a scholar. He had read much, very much, of Luther's writings while yet in Germany. He had left, just as my parents had done, the State Church, and joined the Old Lutherans. He also highly recommended reading the Lutheraner -- the new official periodical of the Missouri Synod. Mr. Pankow served us well. His priorities at Lebanon, however, and our friendship with the Lebanonites would not permit a severance for the sake of personal affairs. Also, several years had elapsed, and with it several improvements, great forward strides, indeed, had been inaugurated and completed in our Theresa Township community. Then another way out was formulated and satisfactorily adopted and welcomed.

We had now lived in America eight years, and things became more familiar to all of us. By this time two church buildings had been erected in the parish, known to this day as the "upper church" and "lower church." They are several miles apart, one standing on an elevated prominence, while the other build in a valley -- hence these distinctive names. Both congregations were prosperous, and the pastor finally engaged was Martin Stephan. A likeable man! He served both parishes every Sunday. He, also, in his zeal for the furtherance of the Lutheran "Missouri Synod," gave us many good instructive sermons on topics therewith related or connected. Pastor Stephan, however, to the regret of us all, accepted a call to another congregation, and we became spiritual orphans again.

Pastor Philip Dicke was our next pastor. He also served both congregations, each of which now had its own school. He also was an ardent supporter of the Lutheraner, and worked toward joining the Missouri Synod. This however did not take place until his successor, Pastor Wambsganss [Wambagans], had been installed a few years later.

In the meantime, over a period of about fifteen years or more, various things happened that were directly connected with our family and surroundings which should be noted here. Soon after we arrived in America, my oldest sister was married to a Mr. Schoeneke. A few years later, in 1853, my second-oldest sister, Henrietta Ernestine, married

Michael Friedrich Sasse, oldest son of Michael Friedrich Sasse, after whom he was named and who later became my brother-in-law through my marriage to his sister Wilhelmina Amalia Sasse on December 6, 1855, Pastor Martin Stephan officiating. . On May 24, [1859] my good and dear mother passed away. She was a thoroughly sincere, Christian woman who tried her best to raise and nurture her children in the fear of the Lord. Often did I hear her pray for them in great earnest -- especially for the only son. This no doubt was necessary, because as a young man of twenty-one years I was in contact with unbelievers who were ever ready to spray their poison to others; and to my shame I must admit that sometimes I yielded by listening to their venom and reading their rubbish. However, the good Lord protected me from contamination and surrender thereto by my reading of other, good clean literature, and I this became firmer in my Christian convictions.

And when I got married at the age of 24 years, after a happy courtship, my wife, who was the soul of goodness, with a thorough Christian understanding and faith, removed every last barnacle that was yet clustering to the ship of our matrimonial voyage. We lived in perfect peace; as she also did with my widowed father, who stayed with us frequently after my mother had died. Not one unkind word did I ever hear between them.

Wisconsin winters, long and severe. The War Between the States was in full progress owing to the slavery question. Politics were fierce. Turbulence everywhere; not religion, as a decade or two ago in the Old Country; here it was politics, and more of it daily, concerning the slave question; spilling of blood among brothers and sowing of hate. My brother-in-law William Sasse, who had married my youngest sister, Louise, was already a victim of the war and buried in the State of Georgia. {William Sasse was killed at the battle at Peach Tree Creek, Georgia, but he had not married Louise Fellwock. I believe Louise had married Carl Sasse, one of William's older brothers.} Consternation reigned everywhere between our intermarried families. The split between the Democrats and the newly created Republican Party was too much for the average politicians, and fistfights were a daily occurrence. I stood firmly with Lincoln. Others of our relationship were firm in defending slavery. This friction sickened me, and since my brother-in-law Michael Sasse, who was married to my sister Henrietta, as you will remember, decided to move -- lock, stock and barrel -- into Illinois, where the climate was milder, I, too, felt I should follow my brother-in-law Michael into Illinois, even if a year later. He was a Republican of the first water, owing to the fact he had been one of the few who were present at the little Wisconsin schoolhouse back in the woods where and when the Republican Party took its first breath of life.

Political bellowing was at its peak in the winter of 1863-1864. Right or wrong, if they differed on the slave question, the best of friends would "sour down" between one another. My own good uncle one day told me, "Fred, you are disgracing the name of Fellwock." Even dear Pastor Wambsganss's efforts were enlisted to change my views. These political disputations, as stated above, caused many good farmers to move out of their neighborhood in order to live more peacefully while holding to their own political opinions. Young Michael Sasse, my brother-in-law, and a number of others had just

moved out at the time when General Lee surrendered April 9th [1865] and the war was declared at an end.

CHAPTER IV

[Early in 1864 both of my brothers-in-law, Frederick and] Michael Sasse and several other families [sold their farms and] moved into southern Illinois, near Vandalia, the county seat of Fayette County and former capital of the State of Illinois before it was removed to Springfield, its present site. [In December of the same year, my brother-in-law Frederick Schukar, his brother August and myself went to Illinois to look over the land. We were well pleased with the country and decided to move. The latter part of March, 1865, F. Schukar and I sold our farms in Wisconsin and moved to Illinois.]

These farmlands were located about fourteen miles southeast of Vandalia and about the same distance northwest of Farina, Ill. The land was out of the Congressional grant to the Illinois Central Railroad Company and in the hands of their agent F. A. Hoffman, who later as a journalist assumed the name of "Hans Bushbauer." What formerly in Wisconsin was all solid woods and timberland was here just the reverse, open prairie lands for miles and miles around. It was under a boom. Settlers flocked in from a number of States, mostly, however, from Michigan and Wisconsin, our caravan alone consisting of a dozen or more families. Then others from Collinsville, Ill, St. Louis, Mo., and Fort Wayne, Ind. Also a number out of Washington County, Illinois, moved in.

It must be remembered that a year prior to this boom, young Michael Sasse and his brother Fred had broken the first ground for a Lutheran settlement. Altogether isolated as they were, they build it up again "from scratch," just as their fathers had done in Wisconsin some eighteen years before. These two young men had their hands full the first year of operation just to get their homes established and to lay a foundation for a church, which they did the following year. The war being over, the Railroad Company expected to inaugurate and create a boom thorough the sale of its remaining lands at bargain prices. [Previously the railroad company had promised that if sufficient settlers would buy land and organize a congregation, they would donate 40 acres for the church property. So I was asked to write Mr. Hoffman, the land agent, but the reply came that the Railroad Company did not see their way clear to do so. Mr. Hoffman, however, promised to donate \$20.00 out of his own pocket, which he did.]

With people flocking in early in 1865, including our family and a goodly number of Lutherans from other localities, a meeting was called for a possible immediate organization. The meeting [which brought twenty odd men] had been called to get acquainted and to find a name for the organization. The name selected was The Evangelical Lutheran St. Paul's Church U. A. C. So it stands to this day in the center of the settlement, with other Lutheran churches right and left within a radius of some sixteen miles, all prospering and flourishing.

Elders were duly elected, and worship was first held in a private home with one of the elders reading. Occasionally Pastor Streckfus from Washington County, Illinois, from whence, you will remember, several families had moved into this settlement, would preach and serve our needs. At a subsequent meeting forty acres of land were purchased for church, school, and cemetery purposes, the same as had been done in Wisconsin. The ground was acquired as close to the center of the settlement as was reasonable. After the meeting was over, all went out to see the tract, and here in the vast open space of the prairie, open and desolate at that time, we all joined in singing "Praise Ye the Lord." It was inspiring. Here, now, many years later, as time passed many of our forebears from Nahausen were laid to rest, awaiting God's call for resurrection. Here my good father, the Nahausen tax collector and promoter of the pure Gospel according to Luther, in Germany as well as in America, rests in peace. There is only one grave, that of a Mr. Rebbe, between father and his son-in-law, young Michael Sasse, the first Lutheran settler in that community. He was married to my sister Henrietta, who also is buried in this place of rest. Also buried here are my good and beloved wife, Wilhelmina Amalia, her father, several of our children and many more out of the first, second, and third generations, more or less connected with our family.

By autumn of 1865 we bought a building in which both church services as well as school could be held. Pastor Streckfus served us for several years, making occasional visits only, since Washington County, where he lived, was 70 miles to the southwest. By this time the congregation had grown nicely so that it wished to call its own pastor. Being one of the elders, I was instructed to write President Buenger of the Missouri Synod at St. Louis that we desired a man who for a time could teach our day school.

A pastor named Endres was recommended. He accepted our call and came. About a year after this, a regular full time teacher was called. His name was Plehn. Pastor Endres left us after a little over two years. The reason for this, before an investigation was held, struck our members like a thunderbolt. There was a doctor in our community named Rheiner. He was no church member, but an intimate friendship had existed between pastor Endres and Dr. Rheiner. Somehow they became estranged and finally became enemies. Perhaps both were to blame. At any rate, the matter became obnoxious and demanded an investigation. President Buenger and Professor Brauer of the Missouri Synod finally were asked to come over and air the scandal into which it apparently appeared to develop. After the evidence was all in, Pastor Endres was handled without gloves by the two synodical officials.

(Note inserted by the translator, Augustus H Sasse: This entanglement between Pastor Endres and Dr. Rheiner was mostly due, it proved later, to a controversy between the two which implied that Pastor Endres, though he was sincere and meant well, was too previous and assumed leadership or authority over Dr. Rheiner in the treatment of the sick. It so happened that my father, Michael Sasse Jr. was the victim. After I had grown up, my mother frequently mentioned that she believed Father would still be living had not the well-meaning Pastor Endres interfered with his so-called Baunscheidtismus care in the midst of Father's typhoid fever and Dr. Rheiner's treatment. In her anxiety for Father's

recuperation, and believing all the pastor had reported of the virtues of this wonderful instrument, which was a new discovery and patented, Mother did not remonstrate when the pastor applied this instrument to certain parts of the body. This was done in spite of and contrary to doctor's orders, my father's weakening fever besides. This instrument was designed to draw out sickness from the body through tiny silver needles, a great many embedded within a circle the size of not more than a silver dollar. Through a spring these needles were forced into the flesh, probably fifty or more with each strike wherever the instrument was set to operate. Then an oil, Baunscheidtismus oil, was rubbed every so often over this artificially made sore to draw out the enemy to life. But alas, my father, healthy and robust a week or two before, could not withstand the Dr. Rheiner cure and the Pastor Endres cure, and passed away at forty, when this writer was a lad of only a few years.)

Soon after Pastor Endres left, taking another call, Teacher Plehn also left for St. Louis, having decided to study for the ministry. Now we were without a pastor and teacher. At this juncture we called Pastor Carl G. Schuricht of Vandalia, where he served a small membership of Lutherans. He accepted, an upright, conscientious, and faithful minister. As elder of St. Paul's congregation for many years, and later as teacher, I enjoyed a continuous and lasting friendship with him for many, many years. A little later his brother Hermann Schuricht became our teacher and he, too, served us long and faithfully.

We now had three separate school districts. Unconventional actions of an indifferent teacher in one of these school districts in later years caused friction, yet only a few members would take part in it. Pastor Schuricht thought best to accept another call. With much regret and tears we parted.

On September 4, [August 6], 1869 my dear father passed away. He died a peaceful death like his father, for which he often prayed. He lived to be seventy-three years old. He died at my sister's home, the widow Mrs. Henrietta Sasse.

Years passed with their joys and griefs. Five young children were borne heavenward by the angels out of our family, [twigs broken from the stem, leaving bleeding wounds.] Then November 24, 1877, it was God's unsearchable will to take home my beloved wife and the mother of our remaining children. This was an unspeakable loss to me and the children. No happier union could be imagined. To her children she clung like a guardian angel, nowhere happier than in her family circle. She was a splendid singer with a pleasant voice, and many long winter evenings did we join in songs. [At one time we had a family quartet. Now she had passed to Heaven to join the angel chorus.] I did not begrudge her eternal joy, but, oh, it was very, very hard to bear the loss. Had it not been for God's Word and promises, I could not have endured the strain and mental pain. Seven mourning children stood at her bier – the youngest Emma, only two years old. [It was a blow beyond expression to a once so happy family.]

[Other misfortunes came by the purchase of a sawmill. I had acquired an elephant that devoured more than he produced. The mill was disposed of at a loss. In addition there came a heavy loss of money due to giving security for others. Other things turned up that caused me much worry and anguish, all of, which was evidence to me that this world really is a vale of tears. However, one consolation and joy did remain mine. The children -- none of them gave me any particular trouble.] All children were well brought up, which next to God, I attributed to the thorough Christian training by their mother, which was now continued by my widowed mother-in-law {Maria Juhr Sasse} who was keeping house for us with our oldest daughter, Minna, twelve, who had to assist her materially, since my mother-in-law's physical strength was waning at the age of 70.

It was my mother-in-law who after a year or more urged me to marry again. I had sincere misgivings, but was urged on more and more [My father had had a stepmother who treated her stepchildren hard and besides, had it not been for other people taking a hand, she would have taken the inheritance from the first wife's children and diverted it to her own.] The children's grandmother insisted she was unable to carry on, so on January 12, 1880 I married the widow Louise Schwan,. Her children already were older but she still had two minors, a boy and a girl.

In the fall of 1884 I became seriously ill, very seriously. [I did not think I would overcome this sickness.] However God's will that I should yet survive became apparent, and I slowly improved and got well again. Then in 1885, my son Emil, 16 years old, became ill with a high fever. The doctor pronounced it as serious. Emil wished to get well. This is a natural wish. [I told him that was an entirely natural and Christian wish, but that God's will was best.] One day he called me to his bed. "Father, when you were sick last year, did you want to die?" he asked. I said, "Yes, as for myself, I was willing, but for the sake of my children I preferred to live." The next day he called me again and said, "I have thought about what you said yesterday and so, if it is God's will, I will gladly die and be in heaven. [All my earthly] trouble [and temptations] will then be ended." After a few days his soul was passed on. We all mourned. Emil was such a good boy and very promising, but could we envy (sic) him? His soul was resting in peace with Jesus.

[In 1885 a new church was built.] In 1880, only sixteen years after the first Lutheran settlement came into life, a very imposing church with a 110-foot steeple was erected. A fine, big Geo. Kilgen and Sons pipe organ was a natural sequence. Four years prior thereto, in 1876, a big general merchandise store, including a post office named "St. Paul," was built and started in close proximity to the church and operated by Mr. John Boye, a member of the church. Mr. Boye was another newcomer from Washington County, Illinois.

The congregation had grown wonderfully. The three school districts, each having its own teacher and its own school building, with the church located in the center of the district was a glorious accomplishment to the glory of God Almighty. However, after a few years, for some reason

the teacher of the eastern district resigned. [The teacher of the central being physically unable to take it over] Now the teacher of the western district was asked to help out a few days each week until a better routine could be established. Declining the offer, he too, resigned. Both [outlying] schools were now without a teacher. Two calls went out, one for each district; both, however, were declined.

At a subsequent meeting of our church members Pastor Schuricht remarked that someone, some member of the congregation, take over this post to keep the children together until things could be shaped into better order. No one knew to whom he referred when he said there was a member who had the ability if he would only accept. "Who could that be?" was now the question heard in an undertone. I myself, at first, had no idea to which he referred. In a few minutes I heard my name whispered. The pastor then asked for [the elders to attend] a meeting the next Wednesday evening. After our adjournment he asked me to remain. He now explained that he had meant me as the man to take on the appointment; that he had already talked to the other elders and they wished to hear what I would have to say about it. I at first broke into shivering at the thought. To get along with the children of this I had no fear, [I had always been a lover of children.] But the ability to properly represent the schools was an altogether different matter, so I frankly expressed my doubts to the pastor.

He too was frank in his reply that he and the other elders had fully discussed that very point but that they all agreed that I would be amply able to fill the position creditably. Indeed, one of the elders, Ernest Kaiser, had ardently prayed that I would accept.

I could not decide; it was too sudden. Pastor Schuricht then said, ["Now, Mr. Fellwock, we will not press you for an answer today.] Place it yourself before the throne of God in prayer, and give us your answer a week hence." During the week several members called and encouraged me to accept. At the next meeting the Pastor and elders expressed their utmost confidence in my ability and urged me so that I finally had to say, "Very well, friends, I will try it with the help of God." I figured by myself that in another three months school vacation would begin. If by that time I could not do the cause justice, I, too, would take a summer vacation, and out I go for good.

I did not attend the next membership meeting, knowing the assembly had no other business on hand but either to elect or to eject me as their schoolteacher. And while I believed, calmly viewing the situation by myself, that a possibly small majority might carry me ahead, I was simply overwhelmed when the report came to me that out of 144 votes, I had received all but two, and these two, I was told, had figured that for a man of my age to serve these schools, seven miles apart, would mean overtaxing my strength. In due time I received a letter calling me to the position. I accepted, and thus my boyhood ambitions to be a teacher were fulfilled.

On April 9, 1886, I stepped for the first time into my school, the western district. I confess I had a feeling of timid awe. When school was underway, this feeling disappeared entirely. After I had taught three days at the western end, I drove the next six

miles due east and one mile south to teach there as agreed. I now had no thought of giving up. I loved the work and thoroughly enjoyed my calling. With a genuine friendliness and at the same time earnest treatment, I soon gained the confidence and respect of the children. What a blessed calling to lead in Christian day schools the children to the Good Shepherd for time and eternity! In a short time I had the pleasant knowledge that my efforts and results met with entire satisfaction of the children's parents as well as of the congregation.

After five years of restless labor in my schools, as also in my own further training, I again became sick with a severe nervous breakdown. With all the suffering of body, soul and spirit, I often cried out, "O my God, my God, do not forsake me!"

[Pastor Schuricht made many cheering calls. Also my son Frederic would come every Sunday - seven or eight miles to ease my mental suffering. The doctor said that I never would be able to teach school again, but he suggested a change of surroundings. So on October 17, 1901, {this date seems to be in error. If he taught for 5 years after 1886, this should read 1891.} I left with my daughter Emma for Springfield, Illinois, to be with my son William, where I found a hearty welcome. Gradually my condition improved, and after a four-month's stay, I returned to St. Paul. En route on the train I caught a cold, and my old troubles started anew.]

[Then on March 3, 1902 [1892?] I journeyed to Evansville, Indiana, to my son Bernhardt, where, too, I found a hearty welcome. By and by my condition again improved.] I had long relinquished my post at St. Paul, Ill, but to their credit I must state they treated me nobly. For ten months regularly they kindly sent my pay which I had not earned and did not expect.

Praise the Lord now, after nearly two years of all sorts of wallowing pain and suffering, a surge of new life and altogether better feeling, bodily and spiritually, took hold of me, and with thanks to God on high, as soon as I felt sufficiently able for the duties required in a schoolroom with a class, I applied to Pastor Heineke, in whose congregation one of my sons was a member, and where I tarried at the time.

Pastor Heineke advised me to write to [President Nieman, whose reply referred me to] Director Krause, of the Addison Illinois, Teachers' College. In the meantime I received a call from Jackson County, Indiana, in the "Sauers Settlement" near Seymour, of which congregation the Rev. Pohlman was pastor. I later learned that my good friend Pastor Schuricht had recommended me for the post. And here within this congregation I worked for another 10 years to the satisfaction of the congregation, which I can truthfully state in all humility, working here to the end of my career as schoolteacher. The years now began to tell on me, and I asked to be released. [I had intended to join the Missouri Synod, but from sources unexpected and uncalled for, I was discouraged, much to my chagrin in later years.]

[My children in Evansville, William, Bernhardt, Frederic, and Emma, who were now living there, had for sometime asked me to retire and live with them to spend my declining years in peace and rest. But, man proposes, God disposes. Not long after locating in Evansville with my children I became sick - the same old nervous trouble of years before. Again the same mental torments and terrible suffering of my soul. This lasted intermittently for years - in fact never entirely left me, all of which you, my dear children, saw and lived through with me.]

My sincere wish, hope and prayer, now as always, is that you, my good children, all of you, as well as others who may read these lines, live upright, truly Christian lives and be faithful members of the Lutheran Church. That you raise your children in the fear and admonition of the Lord and send them to our Christian day school. In this way, as well as at home, give them a thorough education in the fundamentals...according to the Scriptures...[That you work for all this and give for the support of these willingly and cheerfully, according to your means. All this will follow if you remain in true faith, which - God grant - is my fervent prayer.]

[Regarding Mama {Louise Schukar Schwan Fellwock}, she has always said that when I would die she would live with her own children, to which there can be no reasonable objection. My fervent wish and prayers are that when her time has come, she may join me in heaven.]