

**THE OSTFRIESIANS IN AMERICA**

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## CHAPTER I – PURPOSE AND METHOD

It is the purpose of this study to examine the process of assimilation in the Eastfriesian settlements in the United States. Most previous studies of immigrant assimilation have been made of urban groups. There is a paucity of data concerning the assimilation of rural immigrants. An analysis of the assimilation process in a rural situation may lead to a better understanding of the changes in customs and beliefs in the course of three generations.

In order to understand these changes we must know the attitudes of the members of different generations toward those institutions, objects, and practices that are of major interest to them. To understand why some customs and beliefs are quickly changed while others persist through succeeding generations, we must discover the values they attach to them. Attitudes manifest themselves in the things people say and do. The data of the study consists of the record of the activities of the members of this group, including their oral and written expressions.

The *Ostfriesische Nachrichten*, a four page newspaper appearing three times a month, and widely read in the Eastfriesian communities, was established in 1882 for the purpose of uniting the scattered Eastfriesian settlements in America more closely and to keep them in touch with their native land. It proved a rich mine of information concerning the attitudes of the immigrant generation. (1 & 2) Over one hundred life histories, written at the request of the author by members of the three generations studied, were also utilized. Six hundred questionnaires were sent out. Two hundred and eighty were returned. The baptismal records of 40 Eastfriesian churches were examined and the changes in the names noted. The pastors of these churches furnished information concerning the number of children in the families connected with their respective churches. Frequent contacts with the Eastfriesian people in several communities over a period of twenty years together with innumerable personal interviews yielded accurate knowledge of their customs, beliefs, and attitudes.

The historical data presented in Chapter III provide a background more readily enabling the reader to place the group in time and space.

## CHAPTER II – EASTFRIESLAND – THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

In the northwest corner of the lowlands of northern Germany, close to the border of the Netherlands lies a bit of land in which that group under consideration in this study was cradled. This land, Eastfriesland, is in the form of a peninsula; on the north lies the North Sea which, extending on either side far inland, forms the eastern and western boundaries as well. On the south a wide belt of swampy morass connects and separates it from the mainland. For centuries, it was an isolated land and this isolation left its mark on the culture of the people.

The community contains 3,111 square kilometers of land, approximately 1215 square miles, nearly 800,000 acres. It is 1/46<sup>th</sup> the size of the state of Iowa and only two and one-half times as large as one of Iowa's counties, (Grundy County). It is inhabited at the present time by about 300,000 people. (1)

The coast is of such a nature that its approach is possible only to those who are familiar with it. It is a low, flat land, protected against the sea by a great system of dikes. Beyond the dikes lies a chain of islands, seven in number, once the home of a few fishermen, now widely used as summer resorts. Surrounding the islands and extending to the mainland are numerous sandbanks, a constant hazard to navigation. Thus, sea and swamp unite in drawing a Chinese wall around the land, the latter separating from the continent of Europe, the former from the activities of the rest of the world. The wall has two gateways; the river Ems giving access to the sea, and a narrow strip of higher ground uniting it to Germany proper.

It is a land of green meadows upon which thousands of flocks and herds graze; a land of 100,000 canals, windmills and dikes; a land devoid of forests.

Geologically Eastfriesland belongs to the present. While many parts of Germany may be traced back to the Tertiary period, Eastfriesland did not come into existence until the Quaternary. (2)

Most of the land is alluvial. Along the coast is a broad belt of exceedingly rich, slimy soil, the gift of the sea, albeit this gift has been wrested from its power. Beyond this belt lie the dikes, silent monuments to the price that has been paid in the centuries of endless toil in order to secure a relative security from the sea.

The climate is changeable. The winds from the Atlantic bring mild weather, but also clouds and rain. The sea has a marked influence on the temperature. Both summer and winter come later here than they do in the rest of Germany. The winters are tempered by the Gulf Stream and are consequently not as severe as in the south of Germany. The damp climate brings asthma, rheumatism and tuberculosis. Malaria is present.

The origin of the Eastfriesian people is hidden beneath the uncertainties of an unknown past. Tradition speaks of a wonderful king Frieso who long ago led the people from far off India to their present home giving them his name. (3)

If it is true that the ancestors of the Eastfriesians came from Asia, it must have been in an early day and now nothing of an Oriental culture remains. (4)

There is no authentic information as to whence the first people came. The land probably was not inhabited in the Paleolithic age. When the Romans came, toward the end of the pre-Christian era, the entire region was inhabited.

In the fifteenth century Eastfriesland was already an independent state. Later it was known as the Province of Eastfriesland, and since 1866 under Prussia, as *Regierung-Bezirk Aurich*.

At the present time it is politically a part of Germany. It has a density of population of eighty-five per square kilometer; Germany as a whole has 128 per square kilometer. Nearly fifty percent of the people are engaged in agricultural pursuits. It is still a land of dikes and canals, of windmills and meadows. It is from these surroundings that the ancestors of the Eastfriesians in the United States came.

Tacitus is quoted as naming the people living between the mouth of the Rhein and Ems, Friesen, while these to the east of the Ems he calls Chauken. There is no record as to what became of the latter as the name disappears from history; the East Friesians now continue along the entire coast. (5.)

The name Friesian is probably derived from the Gothic *fries*, meaning "free" or "freedom." This was later, when the people were struggling to maintain their independence, given expression in the slogan, "Wir wollen bleiben frie und friesisch." (6) (We want to stay free and Friesen – hgs translation)

Tacitus speaks well of the people. Pliny pictures the conditions among which they lived. The tide, with its regular ebb and flow, sent its waters far inland as it advanced and left a murky, slime-covered land when it receded. He is quoted as saying these people live in a place that is covered twice a day by the ocean so that it is difficult to determine whether it is land or sea. They live in huts and hovels erected on hillocks, some natural, some artificially made. When the tide is in these houses resemble house-boats, when it is out they resemble the wrecks of ships. These hillocks were called "*Warfen*", undoubtedly derived from "werfen", which would indicate that they had been artificially made. (7.)

Pliny further states that they have no cattle and consequently no milk, they do no hunting as they have nor forests. They live on fish which the tide brings them most abundantly catching them in traps made of reeds. They gather the slime in their hands and after drying it by casting it in the air, use it for fuel. (8&9).

This description of Tacitus is undoubtedly of those immediately along the coast. He speaks of those further inland as the most virtuous of the Germanic tribes, who sought to retain their status only on the basis of righteousness and justice. They lived contentedly, having no desire for conquest, seeking a quarrel with none, strangers to the prevailing spirit of robbery and plunder.

Known to their neighbors as cruel foes and highly respected as peace loving friends, they infrequently took part in the quarrels of the Germanic tribes. Nor did they roam about; they were content to live peacefully in their own territory where a relative security was theirs.

It was difficult for the Romans to understand why the people defended themselves so stubbornly. A miserable existence as previously described, was theirs, and yet these people dared to think that if they submitted to the Romans they would be slaves. Freedom had

become traditional and had been preserved by the isolation and natural protections which they enjoyed. They were anxious to preserve it.

In 200 A.D they joined a confederacy consisting chiefly of Franks and later the Franks joined the Saxon confederacy. (10)

A few centuries brought great changes among the people. Once peace loving, the people became pirates. They attacked and plundered the coastal regions of Belgium and Gaul. Capable as seamen, they became the dread of the coastal towns. Feats of strength and acts of bravery were much lauded among them. Dangers that might easily have been avoided were deliberately faced. The harder the battle the sweeter the victory! The spoils of war were the reward of him who proved valiant in battle. Plundering was no disgrace.

Ruten, roven dat en is ghein Schande,

Dat doynt die besten ven dem Lande. (11)

The inhabitants of the British Isles knew the daring and able exploits of the Saxon tribes. Their shores had often been visited and laid waste by them. Helpless against the invasions of their ancient enemies the Picts and Scots of the north, the Britons, forced to seek aid somewhere, turned to the coastal tribes of the Saxon Confederacy. These responded readily and in 449 three shiploads of soldiers, under the command of two brothers, Hengst and Horsa, crossed the North Sea and drove the invaders back to the coasts of Scotland. A Saxon fleet of eighteen ships followed and the Picts and Scots were subdued or driven away never to return. But Briton's fertile fields tempted the Saxons to remain and claim the land for themselves. Trouble arose between them and the Britons. The British king was imprisoned and many of the more prominent Britons were executed. A treaty of peace was made with the Picts, Briton's ancient enemies. During the course of the next century many Saxons came to England. They killed, drove away, or enslaved the Britons. In 455 Hengst declared himself king of Kent and other small Saxon kingdoms were established. (12).

While these things are primarily a part of the history of England and as such are common knowledge, they are important in this study inasmuch as they give us in part, the historical background of the group under consideration, and they reveal also the cousinly relationship existing between them and the present Anglo-Saxon people. The original three shiploads of men under the direction of Hengst and Horsa consisted chiefly of Friesian people. Certainly many tribes could not have been represented in this small group. The majority of those coming in the fleet of eighteen ships that followed, inasmuch as they were gathered principally from the coastal regions inhabited by the tribes of the Saxon Confederacy, must have been Friesians. The surrounding country undoubtedly contributed its full quota in the migration that followed. At this time Eastfriesland need an outlet for her increasing population and this migration provided the outlet and relieved the pressure. Some historians include the Friesians among those who participated in the Saxon conquest of England at this time. (13)

The three principal tribes inhabiting England at that time were Britons, Anglos, and Friesians. The bay near Edinburgh, Scotland was at one time known as the Friesian Sea. During all this time until the close of the seventh century they were a pagan people. They were the last of the Teutonic tribes to accept Christianity. In 677 Wilfrid, Bishop of York in Northumberland stopped in Friesland on his way to Rome. He was well received and gained many converts.

He continued on his way to Rome after spending the winter preaching to the Friesians. Other missionaries followed him, but with indifferent success. However, Adgill, who was king at the time, was favorably inclined toward the new faith. His son and successor, Radbod, was hostile to the Christian religion and sought to restore the religious practices of his fore-fathers. He was finally persuaded by Bishop Wulfram to accept the faith and be baptized. As Radbod stood with one foot in the baptistery he said, "Just one further question Bishop. Where are the majority of my ancestors? Are they in paradise or in hell?" Somewhat abashed the bishop answered that his un-baptized ancestors were undoubtedly in the realms of the unsaved. "I prefer," he answered, "to be with my ancestors with Woden than to be with you Franks in heaven." He refused to go on with the ceremony. (14)

Their hostility to Christianity was due to the fact that Christianity came to them from the Franks, their bitter enemies. The hatred they bore the enemy was transferred to their enemy's god. During all this time and for some time afterwards the Friesians were subject to the Franks and although they repeatedly tried to free themselves, they remained in subjection. In spite of the efforts of the Franks and the spiritual forces, idolatry continued to flourish. In 750, Boniface came to the country as the leader of the spiritual forces. He was successful in converting great numbers to Christianity and in destroying many pagan shrines. The destruction of these shrines incensed the worshipers. Early one morning, in January 754, his tents were surrounded by a large number of heathen Friesians and Boniface and fifty three of his companions were put to death. Wiarda remarks that at that time Christianity was not spread as in the day of the apostles with patience, mercy and gentleness, but the spiritual leaders went armed or were accompanied by armed soldiers. (15)

The power of the church increased considerably during the next two centuries, 800 – 1000). There is evidence of repeated rebellion on the part of the Friesians against the tribute demands of the church. They realized too, that the acceptance of Christianity meant submission to the king of the Franks, and the loss of their traditional freedom. Although the Friesians were cruel in paganism, making human sacrifices, in moral customs they were certainly not inferior to their Christian neighbors.

The authority of the Roman Catholic church was not as powerful in Friesland as elsewhere. They refused to pay the tithe as they considered it an invasion of their property rights. When on one occasion large portions of lands were inundated by flood, the church authorities explained this as a righteous punishment from heaven as this was the only land in all of Christendom that did not pay the tithe and brought no first fruits.

They refused to accept unmarried priests and the celibacy of the priesthood never existed in Friesland.

The fact that they were the last of the Germanic tribes to accept Christianity speaks eloquently of their great love for freedom. Christianity in those days was spread with fire and sword. Other tribes might willingly surrender their freedom and their gods, not so the Friesians. Their one great concern was to maintain their freedom and they guarded their independence most jealously.

The story is told of two Friesians who came to Rome in the days of Nero to consult the Roman Government in regard to some land question that had arisen. For entertainment they were taken to the theater where all were seated according to rank. The visitors noticed

among the Roman senators, a number of persons who were not dressed in Roman garb. In answer to their questions they were told that those men were representatives of some of the conquered nations honored in this manner because of their bravery. The two Friesians asked that they too, might be seated among the senators, for, they said, there were no people on the face of the earth superior to our own in bearing arms, nor are there any more trustworthy and brave. The Romans were pleased with this manly group-conscious spirit and Nero granted the two men the rights of Roman citizenship. (16)

In the course of the years it became increasingly difficult to maintain their cherished freedom and the history of Eastfriesland is replete with struggles. When Prussia came in 1774, Frederick the Great promised to respect their traditions of freedom. During the Napoleonic wars their freedom was lost and it was a time of much sorrow.

Before the great Protestant Reformation came to Europe there was considerable opposition to the activities of some of the ecclesiastical authorities, and especially to the monasteries that had appeared in Eastfriesland. A political leader of that day tells us, "The monks have not come from God, nor the angels, or from human ancestry, but they are truly children of the devil. A monastery is far worse for a land than four dens of thieves and the monks are worse than pagans and Turks." (17)

Many of the Eastfriesians participated in the first crusade in 1099 and because of the valiant service rendered the Pope invited them to take part in the later crusades. Many were enrolled at that time in a sacred order called the "Order of the Cross." "Eine grosse menge Menschen, nicht blos Maenner, sondern auch Weiber von allen Seekuesten der friesischen Provinzen liessen sich von dem Geistlichen Schwindel be thoeren und sich mit dem Kreuz zeichnen." (18)

In 1223 the Pope addressed the following communication to the Friesians, "Inasmuch as you, Friesians of the sign of the cross (referring to membership in the Order of the Cross) rendered the Lord such splendid service beyond the Mediterranean with a fully equipped fleet, so that your deeds will be remembered for many generations, and among whom your great name will ever be honored, we find it necessary and advisable to invite you, brave soldiers of Christ, into his service. We are highly confident that you will valiantly take up the struggle for the Lord, inasmuch as you supersede all other nations in success of arms and bravery. We plead with you and exhort you and your entire country, that you may forthwith equip a fleet and come to the help of the Lord at the appointed time." (19) Another fleet was sent, but there were no noteworthy results.

The language spoken in Eastfriesland at the present time is not pure Friesisch, but a mixture of Saxon and Friesisch. The following is a comparison of the old Anglo-Saxon and Friesisch. Old Anglo Saxon: Dryhten cwaeth to minum Dryhture: site on myne swythan healfe onth thet ic sette thine fiund the to fotscamel. Al friesisch: Drochten queth to minum Drochten; sitte on mina swidra halfdel ont thet ic sette thine fiund the to fotscamel . (20)

The above is a verse of scripture, Matthew 23:44, reads in English as follows, "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thy enemies thy footstool."

An article appearing in the Ostriesische Nachrichten of January 1, 1916 is of special interest. The following is the gist of the article: "The American people are particularly proud of their freedom and of the fact that America has become known throughout the world as an asylum

for the persecuted and the oppressed. What was the source of this idea? The American text books tell us this idea came from England. The fact is that it is of Friesian origin. England was just as intolerant of those who differed as any other nation. The Puritans and Quakers were driven from England because of their religious faith. Among those who had to leave England was William Penn. He went first to France, then to Holland and finally came to the city of Emden in East Friesland. Emden at the time was a haven for those who were persecuted for their faith. Several hundred came from England establishing their own church in which the Gospel was preached in the English language. Others came from France and especially from Holland to escape the activities of Phillip of Spain. It is said that William Penn stood with some of the leading citizens of Emden at the gate of the city to welcome the persecuted pilgrims and it was there on Eastfriesian soil that he conceived the plan to seek a land that could offer freedom and protection to all. He finally received a grant to a large tract of land in America and founded a colony in Pennsylvania and began the city of Brotherly love. The opening sentence of the constitution of the colony contained a statement that no one should suffer because of his religion. This was written by Penn while on Eastfriesian soil. (21)



### CHAPTER III – THE MIGRATION

Eastfriesland, like many other lands, contributed its full quota to the great migration that brought millions of immigrants to the shores of the new world. A few hardy individuals ventured forth as early as the seventeenth century. In 1837 a small colony of East Friesians established themselves in Texas. It never consisted of more than two dozen families and they have long since disappeared by being completely assimilated. (1)

There were the usual reasons for migration. The political upheavals of 1848 contributed something to the desire to seek better condition, but the chief reasons are to be found in the unfavorable social and economic conditions that prevailed in the home communities in those years.

After a number of families had established themselves in the new world the letters written to the home folks wielded a tremendous influence, inducing others to follow. Some of the letters emphasized the opportunities the new world offered to the lower classes to advance; thus the desire to raise one's status becomes the supreme motive in numerous cases.

It was their bitter poverty that drove these people away from the shores they loved. Most of them realized when they bade farewell to friends and relatives that they were never to see them again. When purses are empty three thousand miles of ocean become an insurmountable and effective barrier. Then too, most of them realized that they were going to face difficulties and hardships. But the desire to improve one's status, to gratify the wish for security has ever been a powerful factor in determining attitudes and activities among the members of the human family.

America at this time welcomed all those who were willing to work. Cheap land was available and after the years of privations had passed, the thrift and industry of these people was rewarded most abundantly. Most of the families were large, thus affording an abundance of help without paying out good money for wages. All united in a common cause and it was but natural that they should prosper. They had not come to escape drudgery, but to reap some reward from their hard labors. To gain homes of their own, to provide a competence for life's declining years, and to give their children a financial start in life was the aim of most of them.

In the fall of 1845 there was considerable excitement in some of the villages of Eastfriesland occasioned by the reports coming from America. A group of young people decided to risk the trip across the ocean. After a two months trip in a sailing vessel, they landed at New Orleans where some of the members remained. Others proceeded up the river to St. Louis where most of them settled. One engaged couple continued to Alton, Ill. Soon after their arrival they wrote a letter to the folks at home and after speaking of the two months consumed on the ocean trip and the eleven day trip up the river to St. Louis, the letter continues.

2. We are glad that we are in America and we have no desire to return to Germany. Here with a little work it is easy to earn enough to buy white bread while there it was hard to earn enough to buy black bread. This is the Promised Land for every German who is willing to work. Forty acres of good land may be bought for \$50, land that is as good as the best clay soil in Eastfriesland. I am earning \$96 the first year and will get \$150 next year. We eat meat three times a day and nice white bread. There are churches and schools here just like in Germany. Game is plentiful;

deer, rabbits, and chickens maybe seen every day. Sometimes we see deer as large as two year old cattle in groups of twenty. Now, my parents, and you my brothers, Johann and Harbert, don't you want to come to this beautiful land, America? And you my sisters, Hilke Behrends and Volste Behrends, if someone will give you the money to come we shall pay it back immediately. It is especially good in this country for girls. They do not have to start the fire in the morning, Negro boys do that. Thousands have made their fortunes in this country and many more can still make theirs. The Americans say the steamboat goes 1200 miles further and then one might go on for two thousand miles more through still more good land. Comrade Gehard Nebel, if you had come with me you would be earning big money instead of the \$22 you are getting. And friend Heinrich Hesse! Here you can ride a horse. Even the common man rides a horse. The Americans do not go on foot even though the distance is short. Do not think we are writing you falsehoods. And do not say as the old women say "Bliebe im Lande und nahre dich redlich." (Stay in the land and feed thyself well. (2)

Many such letters were written and in a short time twenty families left the community from whence the two had come and settled in the region where they were now working. One member of this group wrote a long letter in a similar vein to a cousin in Eastfriesland which was published in pamphlet form and widely distributed. There was scarcely a family that did not receive a copy. This undoubtedly was a potent factor in the increase in immigration from those regions. That such letters were instrumental in generating dissatisfaction with the existing conditions and also led to a desire to better one's status is evident from the following.

A man and his wife had inherited a small house and garden in Eastfriesland and lived happily and contentedly. Although not actually growing poorer, certainly they were not getting richer. Thus they lived, happy and contented until one day a neighbor entered their home with a letter from America which stated that there the people ate white bread every day and meat and pork three times a day, and that it was possible to earn as much there in a month as in a year in Eastfriesland. Soon the decision was made to cast their lot in the new world. It was a sad day when their few possessions were auctioned. The events of the last Sunday were never completely forgotten. The pastor prayed for them in the public service. The ocean trip in the sailing vessel took six weeks. They established their home and soon grew terribly homesick. At home at night they often wept together and said to one another, "Oh, that we were back in our little home in Eastfriesland." They resolved to return as soon as possible. The weeks grew into months and with the passing of time their homesickness departed. Soon some cheap land was purchased and the course of time they became well to do and deeply rooted in foreign soil. (3) By 1860 the emigration from Eastfriesland had reached large proportions.

3. Emigration to America, exceedingly rare 25 years ago, is constantly increasing. It is no longer the individual who is compelled to leave because of shiftlessness or by other unpleasant circumstances, who is migrating; but at the present time some of the strongest and best laborers of both sexes, artisans and some well-to-do people, often wealthy land owners, are crossing the ocean to establish new homes for themselves and their children, where a better future is anticipated. Just recently the local transport company carried one hundred and ten people to Oldenburg and daily, emigrant trucks are carried through the streets. The great majorities of these people

are accustomed to hard labor and self-denial, and expect to be engaged as farmers or farm laborers in America where many relatives and friends await their coming.

We need not to be surprised to see an ever increasing number leaving and the resultant de-population of some of our communities. It is reported that from the small village of Warsingsfehn alone, some seventy people are planning to leave because of the existing unfavorable conditions. It is evident that both the social and political conditions are factors in creating the desire to leave. (4)

It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that there was any noted migration from Eastfriesians to the new world. When the trek had once started, they came in ever increasing numbers. The movement reached its height from 1875 to 1885.

The number of Eastfriesian people, both immigrants and their descendents, in the United States at the present time is variously estimated at between 80,000 (5) and 150,000 (6) people.

Dr. Schneller says in this connection: "A period of two generations has passed since the first Eastfriesians came to this country. They have settled largely on both sides of the Mississippi river in the states of Illinois and Iowa. They have now increased to such an extent that there are half as many Eastfriesians in America as there are in Germany." (7)

Perhaps somewhere between the two figures given is a fair estimate of the number now living in the United States.

The early immigrants from Eastfriesland settled primarily in Illinois, forming communities in Stephenson and Champaign counties.

The settlement at German Valley, Stephenson County, Illinois is claimed as the oldest Eastfriesian settlement in the United States. The immigrant pioneers came to this community in 1847. From this source went forth many who laid the foundations of other communities.

Soon the need for more land was felt and Iowa became the next stopping place. At the present time in addition to Illinois and Iowa, the states of Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas all have many fair sized Eastfriesian settlements, while smaller groups or scattered families may be found in Oklahoma, Texas, Oregon and many other states. Perhaps ninety per cent of the Eastfriesians and their descendents in the United States reside in the larger settlements of the above named seven states. It seems that in each case they have settled in some of the most fertile regions of the particular state. The largest Eastfriesian settlement at the present time is located in Grundy, Butler, and Hardin counties, Iowa.

4. After my father's wheat on the Hagen Place had grown so that it stood tall and green and rippling like a lake, a German immigrant offered him a price for his land which seemed too good to be true. He had paid something like five to seven dollars an acre for it in 1866. He was now offered something like twenty – I think it was twenty for the land and crops as they stood, with the stable made of crotches with hay for a roof, and the little house boarded up and down.

This was when the great German immigration reached central Iowa. It had flowed into Illinois some years before and many of our German neighbors came from that state. Illinois was jealous of the drawing power of Iowa. People took sides between those two states as they do now between football or baseball teams. I remember a story of toast answering toast attributed to two German farmers in a saloon – one from Illinois and one from Iowa. It will not bear setting down here; but it shows the keenness of this partisanship. (8)

Those early settlers were poor. In most cases they brought only a few clothes, some household utensils and a willingness to work. Occasionally someone would bring some agricultural implement only to find after a laborious and costly trip that it was useless to him.

Because of the existence of the immigrant communities it is much easier for the later immigrant to adjust to the conditions of the new world than would otherwise be the case as the following letter shows.

5. It is just a little more than three years ago that I came on the great "Columbus" across the ocean to this country. Having been so cordially received by friends and relatives, I have been happy here from the very first day. Because of the extensive use of machines the work is not nearly as hard as it is over there. At first it is difficult for one accustomed to slower ways to understand the methods used here but a person finally gets into the swing of things and is then unwilling to return to the limited ways of the past. If there are any who have the opportunity to come they should by no means allow such an opportunity to pass. (9)

## CHAPTER IV – NATIONALISM

The purpose of this chapter is to determine to what extent the memories and ideals of the old world prevail among the Eastfriesian people in the United States through succeeding generations.

The immigrants cherished the memories of earlier days. When they left the old home they realized that it meant a permanent separation from all they held dear. It is not surprising that nostalgia should manifest itself and that with the passing of the years the memory should become selective, eliminating the unpleasant experiences of childhood, and retaining and glorifying the pleasant and satisfying. While appreciating what America had done for them, the immigrants still love the old home with its customs and traditions. Numerous expressions reveal this sentiment. It was present in the heart of the old gentleman whom the writer of the following article met in a small town in Nebraska.

6. He is a veteran of the Franko-Prussian war and it is with evident pride that he related incidents of those days. He speaks of the advantages of the new world and would by no means return to the cramped conditions of his younger days, and yet his questions, his wishes, and his hopes reveal that his soul still seeks the small, distant Eastfriesland of his earlier days. (1)

In 1912, the thirtieth anniversary of the Ostfriesische Nachrichten, the editor expresses the opinion that the German nationalistic spirit still persists.

7. It seems that the East Friesian national consciousness among the immigrant Eastfriesians and to a certain extent among their children, is today just as vital and potent as it was thirty years ago. (2)

Later in the same article the editor strikes a different note when he speaks of the passing of the immigrant generation and how frequently the children write him to discontinue the paper.

8. Father and mother have both passed away and we have no further interest in the paper. We are unable to read German. (3)

The following article taking the form of a dialogue between Peter and Kasper was undoubtedly written for the purpose of showing the advantages that America offers.

9. Peter: There is only one Germany and "Deutschland geht ueber alles," and in all Germany there is only one Eastfriesland and "over Ostfriesland geht d'r nix," (nothing is superior to Eastfriesland.) I am often real homesick for the old home....

Kasper: You have remembered only the good things. You forget that almost everyone had to work hard – very hard – just to have enough to eat. Your sons would all have to be soldiers and if you were to send one of them to an institution of higher learning, it could only be done at a very great sacrifice and finally you would perhaps be disappointed in him.

Peter: There (in Germany) is a government worthy of the name and it is not a football of the whim of the people, of the lawyers, and the mammon. The law is not a dead letter as is so often the case here. The laws are enforced and the police give protection to the honest and peaceful folks.

Kasper: I love this new country more than Germany and Eastfriesland, and I think more highly of the stars and stripes than I do of the Prussian eagle. We should be thankful to God for having brought us to this richly blessed land where we may eat our daily bread in peace, honor, and tranquility.

Peter: Tranquility? Here everyone runs through life in the mad chase after the dollar and seeking his fortune – it is so different here compared with over there.

Kasper: Peter, you are subject to moods as so many people are. Let me tell about an experience I had. You knew my old neighbor, Freerkohm, did you not? When he was a young man he came from Krumhoern to this country. When he was old he again visited the old home. When he returned, I visited with him and found him singing the praises of Eastfriesland. His boasting soon became tiresome, so that I decided to show the old gentleman where he was mistaken. So I asked him what the conditions in Eastfriesland were before he came to America. He said “You know well enough Kasper that I had to work hard like everybody else, digging ditches...and the entire winter threshing on the threshing-floor for very little pay.” The food? “Sour blackbread with rancid butter or cheese, buttermilk soup, beans with stale pork and similar foods. You had no fresh meat, white bread cake, pie, no preserves? No, Kasper, we did not know these know these things.” And how much did you have when you came to America? “On my feet two hard boots, (describes the simple clothes he wore). In my pocket I had a handkerchief in the corner of which I had tied a Prussian Taler...” Well, well, but you need not feel ashamed of that Freerkohm, who knows, perhaps many were not as well off as that. But, if I may ask, what do you possess now? “I now have 320 acres of land, twelve horses, sixty head of cattle, about 100 hogs, several hundred chickens, machinery and vehicles as needed, and confidentially, a good many dollars in the bank.” Well, I am glad to hear this; would you have gotten along as well in Eastfriesland? “Oh, my no! Why ask such a question?” And would you have been able to ride to town and to church in a carriage? “No.” And what could have become of your children? “Ah! They would have been in the same condition of poverty.” Oh tell me truly, Freerkohm, would you be willing to change with a farmer in Rheiderland or Krumhoern? “I believe I would not do so, Kasper”. Well then, I wish you would keep your honorable mouth shut in regard to the advantages of Eastfriesland.

Peter: My, that was a long sermon Kasper, but it is strikingly true.

Kasper: The important thing is that it is true.

Peter: In Germany the Bible and the Catechism have a prominent place in the schools and here we teach the children things about apes and owls. Our schools are on a pagan basis. (4)

By ridiculing others one may assume a position of superiority. The following article comments on the news item that two hundred and fifty million dollars were contributed to philanthropic purposes and asks sarcastically,

10. Who gave this? The answer is, Saint Rockefeller, Saint Carnegie, and Saint Morgan. It was given principally where it would attract the most attention, building

libraries, endowing colleges, and establishing art galleries; but there is no interest in the needs of humanity or in higher wages. James 5:1-5. (5)

The two following statements reveal attitudes toward the land of their nativity of a contrary nature.

11. Over Ostfriesland geht d'r nix! (Nothing is superior to Eastfriesland) may often be read in the Osfriesische Nachrichten. It is true conditions have improved since I left there seventeen years ago. This improvement is undoubtedly reflected in the stopping of emigration from Eastfriesland, but at the time the conditions of the laboring class were deplorable, it was truly slavery. One could hardly earn enough for a miserable existence. The unskilled laborer could not earn enough to support a family. In addition to that whenever a person met a clay farmer it was necessary to remove the hat and almost kneel down to him. Here things are different. (6)

12. "Over Ostfriesland geht d'r nix." Certainly one will seriously doubt this. When I think of the "Gellimarkt" (a fair), I always feel somewhat strange in the region of the heart and still more when I think of the good "Janever (a drink) that we had there. (7)

Pride in Germany's achievements is often manifest as the following articles show.

13. Germany passed through another stirring year. In many ways she won the admiration and also the envy of the rest of the world with the Zeppelin without any untoward incident; never before had anyone circumnavigated the globe in such a short space of time. His journey became a triumphant march which held the interest of all the peoples at a very high pitch.

The finest and fastest ship that the world has ever seen, the Bremen, was sent to America for the first time; it made the fastest crossing ever made by any passenger steamer to date and again aroused amazement and admiration.

The mightiest aero plane ever conceived was launched in Germany with the results far above expectations. All of this aroused the amazement of the world.

On the other hand Germany was trampled underfoot by the intense hatred and greed of her enemies. Only gradually may she free herself from the shame of foreign occupation. Taxes are unbearably high and the unemployment situation eats at the very vitals of her national well being. (8)

14. The new marvel of the ocean, the Bremen, arrived in New York harbor on July 22 and was received with great enthusiasm. In four days and seventeen hours this ship crossed the ocean. This is practically nine hours faster than any previous ship. In six days this giant travels from Bremen to New York, an unheard of speed as many even of the modern ships consume ten days in making this trip. And with all this great speed the vessel traveled smoothly that not a single case of seasickness was reported. One American newspaper calls the Bremen "The Queen of the Atlantic Ocean;" another praises the German shipbuilding technique and says the Bremen is unquestionably the finest and proudest vessel that ever entered New York harbor. Still another paper could not very well hide its jealousy. While acknowledging the speed and beauty of the ultra modern appointments of the new vessel it says that the Bremen is not the largest ship afloat as the largest ships are in the hands of the

Americans and English. This jealous lout should have added that those larger ships were also built by the Germans and the present owners have no further honor in possessing them than that which they gained by simply taking them from the Germans during the war. The British sent their congratulations in a rather sweet-sour manner, and then announced that they would soon astonish the world with a much better ship. Certainly they will do everything imaginable to take the title of "Queen of the Seas" away from the German Boat, but first of all they will have to show the world that they are able to build such a ship. They have long wanted to surpass the Zeppelin – yes, many have wanted to do that.

The striking thing about this event is not that a new and faster ship has again shortened the distance between Europe and America: in this age of remarkable technical development this record may soon fall again. The remarkable thing is that it was the Germans that were able to achieve this. Ten years ago the Germans were practically swept from the seas; the English had the best in ships and materials to be found anywhere on the seas of the world; as never before they ruled the waves. It was to achieve this that they carried on the war.... They now felt safer and easier. As the German ships reappeared in over increasing numbers, the British were at first sympathetically amused, but this amusement soon changed to concern. And now, only ten years later, the Germans proudly steam past John Bull's door with the blue ribbon attached to the mast of the "Queen of the Seas", and asked him if he cares to take a ride in the fastest and finest ship afloat. It is not the victors who ten years ago basked in the sunlight of the spoils of war they gained but the vanquished, the victims of robbery, who are able to take this progressive forward step and who now stand in the front rank? A clearer proof of the possibilities of German ability is scarcely imaginable. Perhaps even the British will ultimately realize that it is impossible to prosper with stolen goods. (9)

There is a sentimental attachment in the hearts of many immigrants to the old home and its surroundings. Sometimes this reveals itself in the desire to revisit the old home. The following item coming from one of the villages of Eastfriesland show such a desire fulfilled.

15. Unexpected company came to the home of widow Poppen when her sons, Johann and Marfuius Poppen, who had been in American 27 and 17 years respectively, came to visit their aged mother. They came with the Eastfriesian delegation that arrived to spend Christmas in their native land. The mother was naturally overjoyed and she refuses to think of the fact that the boys must soon again cross the big pond; she is happy to have them at home on Christmas eve and the "home-comers" are no less happy to be home. (10)

This sentimental attachment may reveal itself in a love for the old German hymns and for the German language.

16. The Christmas season is observed in this land of roses and flowers in a most elaborate manner. This year the electrical illumination was extraordinary. From many loud-speakers the Christmas hymns might be heard continuously. As I was standing on a street corner one day, I suddenly heard the hymn, "Herbei o ihr Glaubigen", (O Come All Ye Faithful) sung in the German language. I was strangely moved. America has certainly taken the old German Christmas hymns to her heart.



The above mentioned hymn and the incomparable "Stille Nacht", may also be heard over the radio every day in those homes that have radios, which means practically all.

In Southern California there are relatively few Eastfriesians. In our congregation there are seven; two from Aurich, one from Jemgum, three from Norden and vicinity, and one, the writer, from Weener. In Anaheim, about thirty-five miles from here, there resides my friend Benneke who was born in Leer. When he and I get together the best language in the world, the honest, old "Plattdutsch", (Eastfriesian Low-German) is immediately used. Friend Benneke speaks the Low-German as perfectly as if he had never left the banks of the Leda. (11)

17. Hinderk Wehrmann, a fellow-countryman from Greethusen who has worked here during the past five years near Shannon, four of them in succession for Henry Buurma, has undertaken a journey to the old home. The German young people arranged a farewell party for him in our home for which a great number, young and also older countrymen gathered. Again the hymns of the old home (Heimathlieder) were sung. He left on the twelfth and expects to sail on the fifteenth in order to be in Greethusen with his mother in time to hear the Christmas bells. (12)

In similar vein speaks the writer of the following:

18. It may be of interest to the reader to know that the last issue of the Ostfriesische Nachrichten, of January 20 reported 101 deaths. Of these 58 were past 70, 16 were past 80 and 12 between 90 and 98. Who says the people do not get as old at the present time? For 35 years I have been reading the "Peterie" of old Peter (referring to the articles, Peter am Feierabend in the Ostfriesische Nachrichten) and 35 years ago he was considered old and yet he writes more vigorously than all the drab writings of all the other newspapers. May he never grow old. I am one of those, like my neighbor Fred of Blue River, who cannot get away at the present time to visit the old home, so I buy an Ostfriesland Kalender, and it brings me a large piece of the Old Home right into my house. It names all the cities and villages, gives the population and names the officials of each and then when I look at the map of Kreise Wittmund, I have a strange feeling around the heart. There is something strange about the German heart, even if it has been entirely forgotten; quite suddenly it is revived. (13)

That such memory are not regrets, not desires to return to live, is evident from some of the above as well as from the following:

19. This winter I spent several weeks visiting in Illinois at first with my brother near Oregon.

Everyone who has left home and relatives knows the pleasure it brings to gather again in a family circle.... Then I spent several days with my uncle and then visited several families near Forreston. We spent many happy hours together, especially as several other guests were there and each of us told of his experiences in the land of Uncle Sam. It may be true as the song says, "Ist's auch sohoen im fremden Lande, doch zur Heimat wird es nie," (Though it be ever so nice in a strange land, it will never be home) but one will find very few Eastfriesians in this country who wish themselves back in the old home. At least we are happy and grateful to be here. (14)

That the preservation of the German Language and customs is often the matter of pride is evident from some of the documents presented in Chapter Five as well as in the following.

20. Our community has often been called "Little Eastfriesland", and that it still is such was revealed recently to a friend from the Peoria Sun who visited this community. He writes, among other things, as follows: "The Low German language, the mother tongue, is used and cherished in this community from the cradle to the grave. This does not mean that the inhabitants of this community are unable to use the language of the land. It is really a pleasure to hear young and old use the low-German. On the grave stones which are erected to the memory of those who sleep in the peaceful cemeteries one finds German scripture verses exclusively. A further pleasing incident is the way the children are brought up to obey, and they will still give heed to the words of their parents and elders. As evidence of the fact that the German customs and folkways will not soon die out may be mentioned the fact that whenever a young person anticipates entrance into the group from outside through marriage, he must acquire sufficient knowledge of the Low German language so that he is able to use it in conversation. This part of Champaign County under consideration is about 20 square miles and consists of three pure German Lutheran congregations. One of these is in Flatville, one in Royal and another in Gifford.... Although the great majority of the inhabitants are well to do they are very humble and it is evident that the almighty dollar has not gone to their heads. A spirit of cooperation prevails. In such labor matters that require many hands, labor is exchanged and in their social gatherings they are well able to amuse themselves. Whosoever has enjoyed the hospitality of the Eastfriesians in that community knows that they spare no labor in making the stay of their guest among them as pleasant as possible. And the guests are soon convinced that they enjoy setting a good table. Hats off to these pure, fearless Eastfriesians of Champaign County and their descendents who are not only unashamed of their German origin but who are proud of it. During the World War they were not intimidated by the super-patriots of that time, but continued to use their mother tongue. There is no doubt that these conditions will continue for a long time as the German is still preeminent. (15)

Other communities also lay claim to the title of "Little Eastfriesland."

21. A short time ago I arrived here safely at my brother's home after a pleasant trip from my native village in Uphusen. Here is an Eastfriesland on a small scale, full of people from Rheiderland, Krummhorn, and other Eastfriesian communities, and if it were not for the large fields and strange houses and the great number of autos, one would imagine himself still in Eastfriesland. Certainly anyone should be pleased to be here and I am happy to be here.... (16)

As already noted there is appreciation of and pride in the fact that prosperity has been theirs as the following letter, in which the writer speaks of the boyhood companions in the old home, shows:

22. The years passed and we all drifted to America. Together with my two brothers we came to distant Texas and we all are living here on our unencumbered farms.... (17)

The retired farmer is proud of his prosperity and proud of the land that made it possible.

23. I have emphasized the clash of traits between our German neighbors and us in Iowa. When I come to speak of my boyhood associates, I shall give the Germans all the best of the comparison. I have shown that there were some things to harmonize in our differing characters in this irruption even of Nordic Protestants. These differences never led to anything like enmities. There was room on the land for all of us on tolerable terms. And the Iowa Germans have assimilated. The present generation of these formerly ignorant and superstitious peasants are blessed with the virtues and cursed with most of the faults of average Americanism. They live in electrically light farm homes, have bathrooms, plumbing, telephones, and radio sets; drive about in their motor-cars, struggle to make the farm pay on its recent monopoly values – or they have migrated to California where they live on their rents and sing the praises of their old home or explain why they cannot live there. And the old home is Iowa, not Germany. (18)

Some of the older people think there are none on the face of the earth quite as industrious as the Eastfriesians.

24. The Germans here are always in a hurry; they have no time but always have money. The Americans have lots of time but no money. In town they have nice green lawns around their homes, but no potatoes in the cellar. If a person must hoe potatoes a bit of haste is essential and it may mean a backache. Dear fatherland, what riches are thine in thy industrious people! (19)

When war broke out in Europe in August 1914 it was natural that the Eastfriesian people in this country should side with the land of their birth. We may note the service that the Ostfriesische Nachrichten brought to its readers.

25. The echoes of the war will naturally be heard on this side of the ocean and the descendant of each nationality will discuss the war issues with partisan bias. Do not enter into such discussions. Nothing is gained by this, nor will the course of events be changed. Do not hypocritically proclaim that you are Americans and therefore unconcerned about the welfare of the land of your fathers, but when the friends of the British and French swagger and boast do not start a controversy with them. Turn your back upon them and leave them alone, you will save yourself many later regrets, and perhaps even more than that. God bless Germany! (20)

All this reveals the striving and the desire of the older generation to maintain the nationalistic characteristics of the home land. They were successful only in part. While figures are not available the non-citizen is the exception rather than the rule. They are proud of their American citizenship.

26. (Personal interview). I have in my possession as one of my choicest treasures my father's citizenship papers. The law at that time as now, required five years residence in the United States before naturalization was possible. Five years and twelve days after he set foot on American soil in New York City my father was the proud possessor of this bit of paper that declared him to be no longer a subject of the Kaiser but a citizen of the United States and I recall the pride with which he used to tell that in all the years that passed since, he had missed voting at but one election and that when seriously ill with typhoid fever.

27. (Life History). I side with my father who said, "I came to America the land of freedom so that I will not be a public charge when I get old and that my boys won't need to serve the Kaiser and go to war. Thus I honor the stars and stripes. My parents were much enthused about America and its customs.

The older generation realizes that changes are inevitable and that they have accommodated themselves to that fact is evident from articles like the following:

28. It is not often that any items appear in the Ostriesische Nachrichten from Pekin. When I came here 50 years ago Pekin was a little Eastfriesian. Most of the old people who were here at that time have passed on, others have moved away, and the Eastfriesians of the younger generation who are still here have changed in many ways and they no longer speak the Low-German.... (22)

Among the second generation there is very little interest in the native land of their parents. To them Eastfriesland is a foreign country. They hear their parents speak of some of their early experiences and they become somewhat familiar with the names of towns, but there the interest ends. Nowhere have I found anyone who did not express himself as well pleased that his parents came to America. However, they also believe that their people have made a contribution to the economic and social well-being of their communities in the Middle West. The following, is typical of many such statements.

29. (Life history, second generation) I think it was most fortunate for the Eastfriesian people that they came to the United States for their own good and likewise America was fortunate in having the Low-Germans come here.

Further expressions of this nature are common and the following taken from life histories of the second generation all express similar sentiments.

30. I am glad my parents came to America because I think we have a better chance to make a living. I have never visited the land where my ancestors were born and have no desire to live there. America is good enough for me. While my parents did not put forth any extraordinary efforts to continue their customs, we attended German church. What I deplore mostly is that there was no English reading matter in my parental home except for the weekly paper. So I never had an opportunity to read as a boy. We were situated on the western prairie and could not get books. Father always emphasized the need of an education and would have given my brothers the chance if they had wished it, but they chose to stay at home and farm. I am glad my parents came to America because I have a better opportunity for a better living here. I have never visited although I should like to visit the place my parents came from. So many people moved away from there, there must have been a reason. I like the Eastfriesian people because I am one of them but some of them are too much German and think Germans are just it. Most of my friends are in this group but I have just as intimate friends among other groups.

31. I am glad my parents came to America as I consider America the greatest country in the world. Being in business I must say that the Low-Germans have always been loyal to me in a business way, would go out of their way to trade with me, had their utmost confidence in me, and would consult with me about their problems very often. I still feel very close to anyone I know who is a real Low-German.

32. My parents sought to retain their traditions and customs by clinging to them and making no effort to change them. I should not want to live in Eastfriesland as I believe America gives larger opportunities and better living. I married a person not belonging to the Eastfriesian group. My parents did not approve of this. I am glad they came to this country to have the American opportunities.

33. I was handicapped in school because of the lack of the English language. I have visited my parent's birthplace but should not care to live there. America for me! I believe the Eastfriesian people in this country excel others in thrift, industry, and honesty, and equal them in intelligence. They are also superior in religious interests. Because of the larger opportunities, I am glad my parents came to America.

34. I have never read any books on my parent's native land and have no interest in that land. There is no place like the U.S.A.

35. My parents put forth every possible effort to retain the old customs; it was always Low-German. The Eastfriesians seem to think only of the Low-German, even being among them one is apt to stay in a rut. I believe they are superior to others in many respects except in intelligence.

While I have often had a desire to go abroad it is not merely to see Eastfriesland. I do not care whom my children marry in regard to nationality just so they are good, clean, upright, young people. I do not believe the government should do anything in particular for the farmer. It isn't so much what the government should do, as what the farmer should do, stick to his business, work six days a week, and sleep at home nights.

36. My parents desired that their children should be educated in German as well as American. I should prefer to have my children marry German-Americans rather than English. I believe birds of a feather should flock together. I do not like to see a German married to a Greek or Italian. I think they will understand each other better if they are of the same class of people. In voting, I have always considered personality and qualifications rather than race or nationality.

37. The Eastfriesian people are industrious, honest, and frugal, but terribly clannish.

The native land of their grandparents means nothing to the members of the third generation. Sons are unable to speak the Eastfriesian Low-German. Many do not care to speak it. They find their friends among the people of different nationalities and English is the common language. However, many believe that the Eastfriesian people possess traits that are superior to those of other groups. By proclaiming his people equal to any, a person may actually assert that he believes them superior. The documents that follow are of this nature.

38. (Life history). On one can ever convince me that the Low-German people compared with other people are not as good as other nationalities. These Low-German people have braved greater trials in building their homes, forming communities, and living up to their ideals than other nationalities. I can still remember my grandfather tell of his experience in finding a home for his family when he came to the wild prairies, building a sod shanty and how the Indians molested them and many other trials. These trials were easily overcome because of their firm

belief that a mightier Hand was guiding them. In the Low-German people we find religious people as well as an educated people and those holding good offices, so why should one wish to belong to another nationality.

39. (Life history). I think that on the whole the Low-German people are a very good nationality and better than some nationalities. When I was younger I used to often wish I was not German, but now I am not a bit ashamed, and in fact, rather proud that I am a German.

40. In our Grundy County there are Germans – in the north part and English more in the south part. The business men say the Germans are very prompt in paying their bills and better to do business with. The north part of the county is wealthier. The German people may go to church more and I think that makes more difference than the language of the people. I am satisfied to be a German. I get along with all English neighbors.

41. I think the Low-German people are just as well educated and live up to the correct standards of living as well as the people of different nationalities. I think they have better standards of living and are just as good as or even better than other classes. There is generally more of a love of the home and church in the hearts of Low-German people than any other class. No, I have never wished to belong to any other nationality. I am proud of my nationality because my parents and grandparents are of this nationality.

42. The Low-German families are generally the most common of all races of people. Their standards of living are more clean and good. I think the German classes are always the more cheerful and the best natured group of people there are. They are the most common and hard working class of people.

43. Speaking of comparison of the Lo-German people with other people, I can see nothing superior or inferior. It seems that all nationalities have their lower and higher classes, and therefore I see no way to compare them. I have never wished that I belonged to some other nationality – I have always had all the advantages that the other children have had and have never felt that my nationality was a drawback. In fact, I have found it is an advantage to speak German as well as American. There s no harm in speaking our own native language as long as we are true to our country and are law abiding citizens.

44. Nationality does not make any difference whatsoever; it's the individual that counts. Low-Germans are no better than anybody else. As for myself, I have not any wish for anything else but that I as an individual come up to the standard and am for my country America. It is a good thing to be acquainted with the different languages. English should be used as much as possible of course but not talking German away from the older people completely. The church helps us to live a more respectful life.

Occasionally there is the acknowledgement that certain difficulties and handicaps were encountered in school or elsewhere because of language differences and the wish to be like one's associates as the following document shows:

45. I have sometimes wished that I were of some other nationality, especially when I went to school as it was harder for me to understand things as we were always

talking German. I prefer American Church services. At present I am staying at home with my parents, and later I expect to go back to the farm. I prefer to marry someone of my own nationality.

Sometimes the belief in one's own people is expressed with vehemence and there is suspicion toward any who may dare to raise questions.

46. I think the Low-German people are as nice a people as you want to meet. Most of the American people of today are attending dances, and every other thing there is going on. And during the war they made fun of the Germans and now you are trying to get information from the people, and see if you can't put the German language out.

Some of the third generation is not entirely sure that the Low-German group is so much superior to others as is sometimes claimed. There are those of the older groups who are prone to criticize the use of English and the acceptance of new ideas. The young person writing document 47 has perhaps encountered this. Gossip prevails in the Eastfriesian Communities as the final documents show.

47. (Life history). Low-German people in comparison to other people are much more independent. You notice this more in church affairs. They will never go up and talk to a stranger while in another church someone will come and talk to you. I am glad that I am a German, but my only regret is that I can't talk it better than I can. It is a great help when clerking in any store. I hope to learn High-German too, some day. The German language is nothing to be ashamed of, but some people think it is.

48. (Life history). I think the Low-German people are honest and good, hard working people, but some have some crazy ideas. Leave them talk whatever they want to, but not criticize the "English." I think our church should use mostly English, because a lot of our young people and smaller children cannot understand High-German.

49. (Life history). The Low-German people have a tendency to think they are better than others if they have more money. Not in all cases of course, but in many. They like to talk or rather gossip about other people's affairs. One thing that may be true of the German people more than some other nationalities is what a physician told me. He said, "The German people pay their debts more and better than any other nationality I have met."

## CHAPTER V – LANGUAGE

The East Friesian people in the United States use three languages. In school and business the English language prevails; for conversational purposes the Eastfriesian Low-German is used; while the literary German is the language of their religion. They rather assumed that the Low-German would preserve itself, but with the German it was a different matter. It is so far removed from the Low-German that it is an acquired language for the Eastfriesian people. The immigrants had acquired the knowledge of German early in life in the common schools of their land. Coming to America they found it necessary to put forth some effort if the German should be preserved. The Sunday schools they established in connection with their churches were in fact language schools. Special instruction in religion and German was given to the young people during the winter months, while during the summer vacation a German student for the ministry would give instruction in German to the children for a period of four to six weeks. Many of the older people felt that if the German language should go, their religion would also be lost.

The spiritual leaders encouraged the people to believe that it would be a decided spiritual loss if the German language were not retained. The attempts to promote German instruction were often made at considerable sacrifice. The pastors, many of them unable to use any language except German, put forth every possible effort to retain it as the following article shows. The writer tells of meeting the pastor of a German church ministering to Eastfriesian people in a small town in Nebraska.

50. He is a man advanced in years, having served this church for 33 years. As a pillar of Germanism he stands in this community today. Though he is now old and gray, the German is still his chief concern. He still acts as teacher of German and religion. He has been able to keep the young people thoroughly German, both in spirit and in the use of the language. Nowhere is so little English spoken by the young people of the second generation as in this community. (1)

This writer also speaks of the difficulties that are encountered in the attempt to maintain the German language.

51. A word about the German among our people here. Those in Eastfriesland think that the first concern of the emigrants is to lay aside the German nature, and language like the old garment in which they are ashamed to be seen. Many German visiting America speak of this as their personal observation even though they visited only the larger cities or look at some of the other regions from the windows of an express train. They refer to the migrants as the lost sons of the house of Germania. If these "observers" could visit the rural communities they would be much surprised. The strength of Germanism is not in the larger cities where assimilation is going on quite fast, but in the rural districts, on the farms and in the small towns. When we see children at play whose parents and perhaps grandparents were born here speaking German exclusively; when the baptismal records of the Church show the Eastfriesian names Jurgen, Gerd, Peter, Talka, Gretje, Trientje, etc., just as frequently as those in Eastfriesland, one is forced to realize the strength of the German here. Especially is this true when one knows the conditions. It is easy on native soil, under the straw roof of the native village, to speak of the value of preserving the German customs and language, but it is another matter in a strange land to be willing to struggle for these things, for it is a constant struggle to remain true to the old home.



The Government here is very tolerant in the widest sense of the term and grants absolute freedom to everyone to live, speak, and seek salvation as he sees fit, but the social and industrial conditions are tugging with might into the whirlpool of Americanism. The language of the land is English; on the streets, in hotels, in business, in court and public meetings, English predominates. Customs and folkways, pleasure and recreations are different from those in German. The children born here go to school, meet with those of other nationalities, and English is the common meeting ground. And the danger is they are changed and made forever into Americans. The larger the settlement of the group, the less the danger. To offset this Americanizing force of the public school, many congregations have established their own (Parochial) schools in which instruction is also given in German; others hold German school during the summer, and where neither of these is possible, German religious instruction is given on Sunday and so the young people learn to speak and read fairly good German. These things that are natural and free as the air itself over there are attained here at the cost of much labor and money. Admittedly, there are many simpletons who deny their origin but it is wrong to think they are typical. In general, Germans possess a strong love for their language and it is especially evident here in a foreign land how deeply this trait is imbedded. That trait is not so easily torn out of the heart; even though in the mad scramble for material possessions one may have forgotten, or though it may have been crowded out by new customs of life and world concepts and business worries, or deliberately thrust aside, a single word touching a responsive chord, a greeting from his birthplace, where once long ago for a short time he thought he had found a paradise, a word from a long forgotten friend, like a song long since ended, this love for the old home land – again arises in his breast. And so it is easily understood that men and women, now old and gray, who as a result and endless labors have become well to do, and who seemed and wanted to be Americans, are suddenly seized with an indescribable longing to return to the haunts of their younger days – a desire that is not satisfied until they return for a visit. I have found none who did not express the desire to return once more. (2)

The attempt to combine the two, religion and the German language, may be noticed by the following advertisement of the Pleasant Prairie Academy of German Valley, Illinois. The notice announces the opening of the next term and adds,

52. An Gottes Wort und deutsches Wesen, Daran wird eins die Welt genesen. (3)

It became a matter of pride to retain the German language in a community.

53. This is the oldest, largest, and purest settlement in which the mother tongue has been retained. (4)

In spite of all their efforts to retain the German language they were forced to bow to the inevitable. Parents found it difficult to interest their children in religion when it was presented to them in a foreign language. The wish for a single class in the Sunday school in English soon found expression. The older people looked with alarm on the innovation, but it meant losing the young people from the church unless the wishes were granted. Some churches persevered in using German exclusively and saw their young people drifting away. Others experienced bitter feuds as a result of the language question. A few churches split over it. The war hastened the coming of the inevitable. The older generation was almost unanimously opposed to introducing English in the churches.

54. (Personal interview). We are Germans and should remain Germans. Let us stay with the German for the sake of keeping the truth.

55. (Personal interview). English sermons are nothing but stories.

56. (Personal interview). If we permit English to enter our churches we shall soon have all the social affairs and other activities that are a curse to the church in America.

It is not true that the older generation neither was unanimously in favor of retaining the German language nor is it true that the members of the second generation were all in favor of the change.

57. (Personal interview with a 75 year old woman). I'll tell you just how I feel about the language situation in our church. If I were to decide whether it should be all German or all English, I would say, make it all English! It is true I can't understand English sermons, but then I had the privilege of attending German services during all these years and I still have my German Bible. My children understand the English as well as the German and my grandchildren understand English only, so for their sakes I say, let's have it all English. Last night (Sunday evening English Service) after church had started, I went to the door of the church and looked in and saw the large crowd present. I then went home rejoicing that so many attend the English services. I know if the evening service were in German there would be only a few of us old folks present.

58. (Personal interviews, lady, second generation, age about 35). I don't see why so many think that we must change everything in our churches to English. We grew up under the German preaching and we became good enough (morally) so why can't the young people of today do the same?

At the present time the older generation, realizing that their numbers are fast diminishing, has accommodated themselves to the fact that the German will soon entirely disappear from their group. They hope church services will continue in part in German while they are still here.

59. (Personal interview, immigrant 75 years old). Some day it will all be English. Just so we have some German as long as we live. After that it doesn't matter what they do about it.

The members of the second generation are putting forth very little effort to preserve the German language. In their homes English is very largely used. They take the position that the German should be retained for the sake of the older people but they would prefer to have all their church services in English. They read English papers almost exclusively. If any German is read it is in a religious paper.

60. (Questionnaire). In speaking with my parents I use both Low-German and English. I do not see why this Low-German should be kept up. I go to church regularly when the services are held in the English language and if I had my way our church would use English only. I cannot read German.

Almost without exception members of the second generation maintain that their parents put forth no effort to preserve the language, customs, and traditions of their native land. As a matter of fact the parents taught their children both the Low German and the German languages; they sent them to German Sunday School and insisted upon the use of the Low-German in the home. It was so natural for the children of the immigrant to attend German church and Sunday school and to speak the Low-German language that they fail to see that their parents were putting forth special efforts to preserve the old customs.

61. (Life history). My parents put forth no special effort to maintain either their language or customs. And while I have tried to teach German to my children we use both German and English in our home with English having a preference. The Eastfriesian people are earnest and sincere; however they are very prone to cling to old ideas. As far as my family is concerned there is no need of preserving the Low German language in this country.

62. (Life history). My father had been well educated both in Germany and America in several branches and in law. He was a country school teacher. My parents encouraged me in every way possible desiring that their children should be educated in German as well as American. As a youth I spent much time in study. While I have no preference in regard to the use of language, my younger children do not speak the German. I wish all my children could speak both German and Low-German. It is important that the Low-German language should be preserved.

63. (Questionnaire). It is amusing in our little town where in school and church only English is spoken; on the street and in their places of business and even over the telephone Low-German prevails. Even a few who by birth were English have acquired the Low-German. It has a charm.

While a member of the second generation may find many occasions to use the Low-German language, some using it more than the English, it is quite evident that those occasions become less and less as the generations pass.

The members of the third generation speak with their friends and brothers and sisters in the English language. In many of the homes English predominates. These young people are willing to see the Low-German remain while the grandparents, especially if they are unable to use the English, are still with them; beyond that they see no reason why the foreign language should be maintained. It may be maintained, some say, providing it is not brought too prominently into the foreground. Everyone should be able to use the English language and, if he wishes to acquire another language, it is perfectly all right, but English should have preeminence. The following documents advocate an attitude of sympathetic leniency toward the older generation.

64. (Life history). While my grandparents were living I spoke German with them but with my friends and my brothers and sisters as well as my parents, I speak English exclusively. I read no German newspapers or magazines. I think and sincerely believe and encourage that we be very considerate in our dealings with all foreign and home affairs connected with nationality. I feel that we must continue in spreading and using our native language for a time at least. Our parents and grandparents are the pioneers of our community; they have established homes, churches, schools and everything for the uplifting of our community welfare. In due

consideration of the fact, I feel that our mother tongue should continue to flourish as long as they are still with us because of the inconvenience which would otherwise be caused.

65. (Questionnaire). I believe the German language may be kept up but only as a spoken language but not to be used in public meetings, schools or churches.

66. (Questionnaire). I think other languages besides English should be used in this country because this country has to deal with foreigners that come in from time to time and they cannot understand or know our language. Therefore if the American people can speak more languages they can help the foreigners better and they in turn will become Americanized more quickly. People who speak the same languages usually understand each other better and thus make them feel at home in the new country and willing to conform to the laws and the ideals and become loyal citizens.

While there are those who advocate the use of the English in an ever increasing measure, there are others of the third generation who believe the German language should be retained for some time at least. They believe it would not work out very well if the German language were removed from the churches. The two documents that follow both express this idea.

67. (Life history). I think we should continue with the use of other languages in this country, because of the fact that there is an admission of immigrants to this country each year. The older people who were born in their native country think nothing but just speaking their own home language and some won't learn any other language, and in that way their children and grandchildren usually learn and speak that language. Now, more than ever before, high schools, colleges, and universities are having a foreign language as one of their subjects. When it was first introduced, it was not necessarily required. Therefore a person now receives a better education by learning more than one language.

68. (Life history). I believe as long as there are so many older people that hardly speak the American language other languages should continue in this country. In time the American language will be the only language used as the Low-Germans are dropping the Low-German fast and I suppose the same is true in regard to other foreign languages. I think 99% of the fourth generation speak only the American. I suppose it would cause a lot of trouble in the country to try and force everyone to use only the American language, but I think that everyone in the US certainly should be able to talk the American language and it seems like in time it probably will be the only language used except for communities and settlements composed of foreigners, as in the larger cities, where the children do not have the opportunity to attend public school as they have in the rural districts. I have never wished that I belonged to another nationality, for what nationality excels the Low-German? Although I believe the Low-Germans may not have had the education in the past, they have other good qualities. For instance, I believe the Low-German people are faithful people to their church.

69. (Questionnaire). I believe this is a free country and it is all right to use the language which you can use best, but everyone in the U.S. should be able to speak English as well. Not only speak it but read it as well. Otherwise this country may be

divided someday into many little countries according to languages. All children should be taught one language. If they then desire to study others, that is their privilege.

70. (Questionnaire). Here in my community we have German services in the morning and Sunday school, Christian Endeavor and services in the evening in the English language. Personally I would prefer it to be changed and have it all in the English language but due to the fact that some of the older folks prefer German rather than English I suppose it is about as good the way we have it now.

71. (Questionnaire). I think the use of other languages besides the English language is all right in his country. As there are so many different races of people in the U.S., I do not think it would work out very well if they used only the English language.

72. (Questionnaire). The church should use the language which most of its members are familiar with. In the German churches I think they should have half German and half English. The church helps me in my life to become better acquainted with God. It gives me more confidence in myself.

73. (Life history). I think that the use of other languages in this country should be done away with. I think there should be a uniform language. It is all right to study other languages so you are able to make foreigners understand you or you understand them, but anybody coming over here from a foreign country to take up American customs should be willing to sever their relationship from their country if they wish to become naturalized and become a full-fledged American citizen. There is no excuse for anyone not willing to learn the American language if they intend or want to make a living on American soil.

74. (Life history). I think Low-German people are as good as any other people but the English language should be used because this is an American country not a mixed language country. The church should use the American language because the younger generation does not speak German. Amusements should be good and wholesome and plenty of them. Clubs and societies are all right if they are kept on level basis.

It is interesting to note how a language undergoes marked changes when in a strange environment. Any foreign language that is used in the U.S. must of necessity incorporate many English and American words within itself. The writer happened to reside in a community some years ago into which some recent immigrants from Eastfriesland came and it was very evident that the newcomer had considerable difficulty at first in understanding the Eastfriesian Low-German as it is spoken in the U.S. at the present time. A list of such words shows that they are concerned primarily with objects of material culture. Such words are very readily incorporated into the Low-German. First there are the farm implements and other articles about the farm and the home. Tractor, truck, binder, engine, disc, side-rake, planter, shredder, husking, fence, fence-post, pulley, load, weeder, packer, hay-loader, side-rake, manure-spreader, gang-plow, two-row, silo, bran, timothy, sweet-clover, alsike, header, reaper, sledge, grader, scraper, wheel-scraper, woven-wire, wire-stretcher, hatchet, belt, and belt-dressing. All of these articles were new to Eastfriesians. Many of them have come into existence only in recent years. Articles that were known in Eastfriesland retain

their Low-German names. For example the Low-German word ploeg is used for plow, it was known in Eastfriesland; however the gang-plow, was unknown there and consequently has no Low-German name. Sometimes in the low-German an article may have a name that is partly of one and partly of the other language. For example, the Low-German work for knife is mest and it still prevails, but butcher-mest is a combination of two languages.

Other names of articles incorporated are such as these: parlor, dining-room, bed-room, lights, lounge, davenport, rocker; also catalogue, advertisement, desk, radio, and the items pertaining to the radio such as tubes, batteries, loud-speaker, static, etc.

Domestic animals known in Eastfriesland retain their original names but the names of the different breeds of animals and poultry are used in English such as the following: Short-horn, Jersey, Angus, Belgium, Percheon, Poland-China, Hamshire, Berkshire, Plymouth Rock, Leghorn, Shepherd, etc.

In politics the names used for various offices and activities in the American community are also incorporated: politics, governor, congress, tax, tariff, assessor, auditor, treasurer, sheriff, recorder, clerk, court, board, supervisor, trustee, county, township, town, mayor, marshal, vote, run (a run for office), justice of the peace and also the words farm and poor-farm. Again acre, bushel, and other units of measure.

Articles and matters pertaining to transportation are similarly used. Train, auto, car, buggy, top-buggy, bicycle, motor-cycle, battery, gasoline, carburetor, spark-plug, coil, radiator, engine, switch, brakes, driven, (to drive), gravel, cement, road, pavement, etc.

The list of clothing and food are not so long: suit, collar, tie, overall, jacket, coat, union-suit, belt, sweater and also articles of travel as trunk and satchel.

Of food articles, those of later invention are prominent: breakfast foods, corn flakes, etc. Also drinks, coca, postum, pop, soda water, lemonade. Again, ice cream, pie, cake, salad, and steak.

An example may help us to see how the language changes. The Eastfriesian farmer may tell his son to take the truck and fill it with gasoline after adjusting the carburetor, and to put a new valve core in the tube of the left rear tire, then to put the roll of woven wire and about fifty of the new steel fence posts on the truck and to go out to the pasture to fix the fence. He tells him to take the tools, including the wire stretcher and the sledge, and perhaps the hatchet will also come in handy. He should also take the tiling spade as the tile on the north forty are clogged. He tells him not to smoke too many cigarettes and not to drop any matches in the barn. In saying this he speaks Low-German, but all the English words that are underlined are incorporated into that language. This is not an unusual sample; all the daily conversations contain such American words.

## CHAPTER VI – CHURCH AND RELIGIOUS LIFE

The Eastfriesian people in the U.S. are a religious people. Their European background was such that they immediately felt the need of religious guidance when they settled in the new world. As pioneers it was distasteful for them to build their homes without the cultural influence of the church and without the comfort of their religion.

Their continuous struggle against the sea in Europe developed a fatalistic theology. They took their religious life seriously. It was a severe religion but it gave moral strength, preventing social disorganization, helping them over many hard places. The early experience in the U.S. augmented the need of a fatalistic creed. Those early years were years of hardship. When crops failed, when the grasshoppers came, when the prairie fires raged, and when sickness came into the home it was comforting to believe that all things were in the hands of a sovereign God, who does all things well. When hopes failed, they were revived by such a faith and many who might otherwise have become discouraged, kept on until finally the hardships and poverty were replaced by a relative ease and prosperity.

The church has ever had a prominent place among them. Churches were established soon after the first settlers came and some of the most prosperous rural churches in America today are to be found in the Eastfriesian colonies. Those of Grundy County, Iowa and Stephenson and Champaign Counties, Illinois, are noteworthy examples.

The Eastfriesian immigrants made many sacrifices for the cause of their religion and their church. The story is told of one community where a group of Eastfriesian people built a church only to find when it was completed that the builder refused to allow them to use it until it had been paid in full. So determined were they to gain possession that a number of them mortgaged their cattle in order to get possession of their church.

The church is the only organization that the Eastfriesian people have maintained in this country. Among other Germanic groups various organizations are to be found, but not among the Eastfriesians. The following article points this out.

75. There is a marked difference between the viewpoints of Eastfriesians and some of the other Germanic groups, for example those from Schleswig-Holstein. The Eastfriesian establishes a church which becomes the center of his cultural life and through which he seeks to preserve his old world customs. Some others, notably the Holsteiners, are not so much interested in the church, but they do not feel at home without festivities, dancing, song, and music. They establish Krieger, Schutzen, Turn, and Gesang Versine. This is foreign to the nature of the Eastfriesian and it is with great difficulty that any organization that he may establish in addition to the church is maintained. (1)

In general, the preaching in the Eastfriesian Church is thoroughly doctrinal. It seems the Eastfriesian enjoys being told that he is a sinner in the sight of God and must repent. It is, however, striking that emotionalism is strangely lacking in their religion. Emotional revival services have not found a place among them up to the present time.

Such a prominent place does the church occupy that a history of the Eastfriesian people is practically a history of the church among them. The larger part of Dr. Schnuecker's book is taken up with church and religious matters. (2)

The Eastfriesians have always been a church-going people. On Sunday, all roads lead to church. In the early days the farm wagons served as conveyances. Now there are churches in the Eastfriesian communities around which on Sunday morning upwards of 100 automobiles are parked. Church attendance is considered a very vital part of their religion. Many of the members of the older generation look with contempt upon the American churches as the following document indicates.

76. Before the war there were many churches that were true to the old ecclesiastical piety and were not found wanting in stability. Today their very existence is threatened as they chase after the modern ecclesiasticism and seek to multiply organizations within the church. (3)

If a minister fails to preach a biblical sermon he is scarcely considered worthy of the name. In some quarters the belief exists that the biblical sermon is unknown in the American pulpit.

77. Yes, we have some ministers here who still preach God's Word, but they are in the minority. The churches have been emptied with lectures and now the leaders are trying to bring the people back with music. I prefer the simplicity of the former days. (4)

That God is considered the governor of the universe by the immigrant generation and that all things are in his hands is evident from the following documents. These are illustrative of the large number that might be quoted. In the first document the writer speaks of the low prices of farm products.

78. It is the Lord who permits these prices or perhaps sends them. We should be thankful for all the good things we have received, we are no better than Indian or Armenia where famine prevails. (5)

That such a conception of the guidance of the almighty in the affairs of men was a powerful factor in the lives of the Eastfriesian people when crops were failing and when their less religious "Yankee" neighbors were moving out utterly discouraged is self evident. Mr. Quick speaks of the conditions of one community into which the Eastfriesians were moving in the seventies and tells the following story.

79. The manufacturer can be shut down when the market is bad or specialize for a few weeks or months on a thing which pays. The business man may slow up on purchases and narrow his operations, pursuing one policy one month and making a change the next always trying things out in a small way and feeling his projects out. But the farmer's experience always takes a year and involves so great a loss in case of bad judgment or misfortune that he per-force becomes very conservative. We were so in our devotion to wheat. It was tragic but natural.

It was a severe strain on the morale. Our next neighbor on the east was a German farmer who suffered with the rest of us. Over on the other side of us lived Frank Crippen. Probably no two men were farther apart in the matters of opinion and conduct than Crippen and Rieman. The former, was to say the least, a latitudinarian. He worked on Sunday if he took a notion. He sneered at piety. He looked upon the wine when it was red; and then failed to move himself aright. Rieman, on the other hand, clung to his church and its forms.



Once when my mother was endeavoring to drum up an audience for a minister who was to hold services in our school house, she asked Mr. Rieman to come and bring his family. It was a Yankee gathering and Jake shied from it a little. Finally he asked about something which seemed vital to him.

“Does he kneel down when he prays?” he inquired.

“No”, replied my mother.

“Den maybe I come”, said Rieman. “But it makes me so damned mad to see a preacher kneel down when he prays dat I can’t see.”

Actuated by his sort of piety, Rieman one Sunday morning when the wheat was in full blight, had held his family religious services, attained quiet of spirit, greased his boots, put on his other clothes, loaded his numerous family into the lumber wagon, and started on his four mile trip to what we called “the Dutch church”, which has continued to serve the community to this day. I suppose he was trying hard to keep his mind on his blessings and off the blackening wheat by the roadside, when he saw Crippen emerging from the field with his hand full of the plucked heads of the staff of our physical and financial lives. Crippen came to the house and told us what took place.

He put his foot up on the hub of Rieman’s wagon after it came to a halt, and began descanting on the awful condition of the farmers. I can imagine about what he said. Everything had gone to the devil. The wheat wouldn’t pay for cutting. The grain there was in the rotten straw wouldn’t make bread. So far from being No. 1 or No. 2 or even No. 3, it would grade as rejected only. We all might as well quit and let our farms go for the mortgages. Anyone who was fool enough to move into such a hell of a country as Iowa deserved to starve. Well, we’d starve all right!

Rieman sat listening to this flood of pessimism and felt it surging against the dike of spiritual quiet which he had built about his soul. This Yankee neighbor was destroying his preparation for religious comfort. His glance strayed from the horses’ ears and fixed itself sternly on the face of Crippen the tempter. From sternness, it passed to rage. He pulled up on the lines as a signal for his horses to start and spoke,

“Why, damn your lousy Yankee Soul” said he, “Don’t you know that our Lord yet lives?”

And the wagon load of rural misery moved up, leaving another bit of depression standing in the blue joint grass by the road.

“For a minute”, Frank asserted, “I thought I’d foller the Dutch fool up and give him a lickin’, but his team was hittin’ a fast trot, and I thought how I’d look chasin’ him. I guess I’ll forget it.”

The following article speaks in a similar vein.

80. Severe visitations came upon our land during the past year. The floods in the Mississippi Valley were the severest in the history of the nation. 100,000 were made homeless losing all they had, many of them even their lives. The material damage is almost beyond computation. As late as November the New England states were

visited by a series of floods and storms causing damages running into the millions. These events offered a splendid opportunity for benevolent activity and no time was lost in meeting the need. But these are also occasions for meditation for they are visitations from God, who has something to tell us. Unfortunately the rod is all too soon forgotten. We continue in the old ways as if nothing had happened, with the exceptions of those places where storms and floods prevailed and the isolated spots of drought. However, the harvest on the whole was good. The Lord gave bread to the eater and seed to the sower. May He be praised! (7)

The American conception of the place the church occupies in the life of the nation, seeking to bring about reforms, is foreign to the mind of the Eastfriesians as that mind is represented by "Peter am Feierabend".

81. As I have often said, I believe the churches should keep their noses out of politics. The mission of the church lies in another sphere. But they are anxious to do something to make people happy and entangle themselves in activities where they have no business. In this way they are gliding further and further away from the Word, they lose sight of their goal, draw the world into the church, and are actively engaged in functions that belong to the state. It is not the mission of the church but the state to pass laws; it is not the church but the state that that is responsible for law enforcement. But the churches think everything will go wrong unless they mix in. They fail to realize that in so doing they are actually neglecting their own duty. Many church people seem to believe it is their duty to mix in politics. In the churches there may be found two political parties, the pacifists, and the bellifists. The pacifists, or friends of peace, forget that the Lord Jesus said, "I came not to bring peace but a sword". To be sure he says also, "Blessed are the peace-makers for they shall be called the children of God", but that peace is a different peace, one that the world knows not and one that the world can neither give or take away. The pacifists are confused. They are seeking to persuade the nations to follow their ideas, and their ideas are to establish eternal peace here on earth by human wisdom and art. It is not the mission of the church to chase such phantoms. But in spite of this their activities are better than those of the bellifists, of whom the church has more than she needs. We experienced this during the world war. Then the war-cry resounded in nearly every church, and they didn't even know why and for whom the war was carried on. They merely followed the phrase makers and the mouths that spoke the loudest. It will be the same in the future. If the mass of the people is again thoroughly aroused and if the weather-vane of public opinion points to war, the majority of the churches will trim their sails and again preach war. (8)

This writer does not approve of the prohibition activities in which the churches are so actively engaged at the present time. Although he is himself a clergyman, he censures the churches for this activity.

82. The Anti-Saloon League consists largely of church elements. The League is now willing to assist the Government in enforcing prohibition in spite of the fact that they can plainly see, if they are only willing to see, that they are causing much trouble. The League seems to be incensed at some of the newspapers that disagree with them on this question. The League demands that these papers shall stop calling the government officials, who are enforcing prohibition, sneaks, snoopers, and murderers. One of the newspapers answers this by asking, "But who is calling

sneaks, snoopers, and murderers, government officials?" The Anti-Saloon people have not been appointed by the government and yet they would nose around in government matters. It almost seems that in addition to the regular Government we must have all sorts of self-appointed rulers to maintain order or disorder, mostly disorder. Our country has never been lacking in reform...but the reformers, male and female, have never been as bold as at the present. They have seldom accomplished anything that is good, but have caused much trouble. (9)

In the same article the writer takes another slap at the preachers of the larger churches.

83. Everything is at present in the sign of vacation. The schools are closed and the teachers and pupils have shaken the dust off their feet. Even many of the churches are closed; the people want a rest during the heart of the summer, for religion is quite an effort for many people. Many of the preachers take vacations in order to rest from their strenuous service. The length of the vacation depends on the size of the salary that a preacher receives. If he receives a small salary, he can teach and preach the year around and look after all the other church work without breaking down. But the higher the salary, the longer the rest period that is needed.... (10)

Another item is of a similar nature.

84. The churches, with few exceptions, have fallen away from God and his Word and are sailing with contraband through the world. One could hardly expect anything else. They have pushed the Word of God and the Gospel of Christ aside and are suffering from worldliness, indifference, unbelief, modernism, atheism, evolution, and everything else that is contrary to sound doctrine, as with a plague. It is hard to tell where this will end. From many pulpits there is preached a mass of drab confusing stuff that is anything but the Gospel of the crucified Christ. There is a present a spiritual famine in the world. The churches are more and more neglected, some have been closed. Instead of bread the people are given ashes. These churches are "facing a crisis or a catastrophe." (11)

The church services were originally carried on in German. The Eastfriesland Low-German never has been used as a medium of religious expression. The language of the schools and churches of Germany, including Eastfriesland, is German, and the immigrants came with an adequate knowledge of the German language for church purposes. The children of the immigrant families acquired the Low-German in the home; in their contacts in school and in their play group, English was learned. But German, the language of their Bible and of their churches must be acquired in some other way otherwise the children would grow up in paganism. It was the recognition of this danger that caused them to put forth special efforts in this direction, and the Sunday school became a language school. The child began with a German primer; this was followed by a Bible history, in German. Thus, religion and language, developed side by side. Religion was the motive for the study of German and the German language became the vehicle by which religion was attained. The young Eastfriesian born on American soil of immigrant parentage acquired knowledge of religious and Biblical history and a reading knowledge of the German language at the same time. The teaching of the German language in the Sunday school was supplemented by instruction in the home. The following document shows the working of this system.

85. (Life history). I started to public school before I went to Sunday school. I acquired the knowledge of English before I knew any German. My mother taught me some German shortly before I started to Sunday school and I soon learned to read the language. The Low-German, of course, I already knew as it was the only language that used in our home for conversational purposes. In Sunday school I was soon placed in the class in which the "Biblische Geschichte", (History of the Bible) was used. Each pupil would read a paragraph in turn and then the teacher would explain the lesson using either the German or the Low-German in his explanation. In this way I acquired a fairly good knowledge of Bible History and also a good reading knowledge of the German language.

The second generation acquired a much better knowledge of the Bible than might be supposed. The religious zeal manifesting itself in regularity in attendance and in supplementary instruction in the home easily offset the handicaps imposed by language differences. Their religious training was far superior to that received by many children of native-born Americans. This may be accounted for by the greater interest in religion on the part of the immigrants which even the barriers of language could not stem. The following document from one who is familiar with both the Eastfriesian and American church groups may provide some basis of comparison.

86. (Personal interview). As a pastor, I am acquainted with many of the churches in the Eastfriesian communities and also with a number of churches to which only those of native born parentage belong. It is my conviction, based on many years of experience in young peoples' work that the young people in the Eastfriesian communities are better trained in religious matters and have a better knowledge of the Bible than those of the strictly American churches. Among the Eastfriesians you can always depend on the presence of the young people at meetings planned for them. This is true of the second generation as well as the third. It is still possible to conduct classes in religion among them, and the young people acquire a good knowledge of the Bible. This cannot be said of the young people in the American churches. In many of these, if religious instruction classes are arranged, they are poorly attended. The difference lies in the home. In the Eastfriesian home there is still a vital interest in religion and the church. In many American homes this interest is lacking even though the parents are members of the church. This is true of the church attendance as well. In the American community a church with a responsible membership of 200 may have about 100 people present at the usual Sunday morning services. In the Eastfriesian church of equal membership the attendance will be over 300. Sometimes I hope they do not become "Americanized" too quickly in this trait.

The sacrifices of the immigrants for their church were not made in vain. In no other way could the attention of the children have been directed so pointedly to the church as the following document shows.

87. (Personal interview). The first time that I ever thought seriously about religion was when I was a young boy on the farm. My father was an officer in the nearby country church. The church was without a minister, but one was coming to conduct services the following Sunday. When Saturday came we were in the midst of the harvest. The grain was very ripe. Great was my surprise when in the middle of the afternoon my father unhitched the horses from the binder and drove to town to get the preacher who was coming on the train to conduct the services the next day. I

realized then that my parents must consider the church tremendously important if they would leave the ripened grain standing in the field when the danger of losing it by its lodging, because of being over ripe in order to get the preacher that services might be held.

The pastor has always held an important position in the Eastfriesian community. Among the immigrants there is the European background of the state church and the prestige which accrues, especially in the peasant type mind, from the dignity of being a government official. The European pastor sought to retain that dignity through segregation and distance. He did not mingle with the people as freely as the American pastor does. Document "A" in the appendix reveals this when the writer says, "I liked the intimacy between the pastor and his flock (in America). I was not used to that. I had never seen a minister in our home, and I deemed it a great privilege to shake hands with one."

In the Eastfriesian communities there has continued to exist a very wholesome respect for the pastor. Not in the sense that he is coddled and lives in luxury and ease. No, in the days of the pioneer he often worked in the field side by side with his people and in later years in the country parishes, he has a large garden and keeps one or several cows to supplement an all too meager salary. Dr. Schnuecker gives an illuminating picture of the activities in an Eastfriesian community.

88. The pastor is not a minor personality in the life of his flock and in the cultural development of the community, whether he be called pastor, preacher or dominie, and regardless of the measure of modesty that may be his. True, the prominence of the German Parson (Pfarrherrn) has not been allotted to him. The authority and the respect given to the German pastors by virtue of their being state officials, are lacking as well as the German training. His salary, too, is so low (salaries run from \$800 - \$1200) that nearly every family in the congregation has a higher income than he. To keep a man or a maid as a servant is therefore out of the question. He performs their tasks himself. He starts the fires in stove and furnace; carries out the ashes; feeds his cattle; milks the cow; curries the horses; cleans their stalls; washes the buggy; spades the garden; hunts the eggs; sets the clucks; assists his wife with the weekly wash; teaches school; gives catechetical instruction; visits every family in the congregation at least once a year; makes a great number of sick calls; holds prayer meetings, singing schools and young people's meetings; attends Ladies Aid and Dorcas Society meetings; leads prayer and Bible study groups; leads Sunday School; prepares two sermons each week for the following Sunday; preaches at seven or more "mission fests"; plans and rehearses for the Christmas program; and with all this he must as an educated man seek to enrich his own intellect to prevent becoming a back number in the onward march of time. Dear reader, is this not a nice bit of work? When I presented this program of activities to a dear colleague in a village in Krummhorn (Eastfriesland) he threw up his hands and exclaimed, "But my dear colleague, what becomes of the clergyman in America?" Indeed, a life of ease and leisure is unknown to the pastors of the Eastfriesland congregations in this country. They prefer, through unostentatiously rendered service, to become the leading men in their communities and as such to lift the spiritual Niveau of the people." (12)

Nevertheless, the pastor is a person of considerable importance. His people look to him not only in moments of sorrow and need but frequently for legal and other advice.

It was but natural that the young men of intelligence and ambition, seeking some other work than the farm, should be directed toward the ministry. The ministry was the first of the learned professions which the boys of the second generation entered in any number. The opportunity for rendering service, the place of importance the pastor holds in the community, thus fulfilling the wish for recognition; together with the strongly religious background undoubtedly sufficed to direct the minds of many boys, (If they were “lads of part”) to the ministry. There are churches in some Eastfriesian communities that during the 50 or 60 years of their existence have sent from 10 – 12 young men into the ministry – one for every five years of their existence!

Of late there seems to be a change, the young men who do not stay on the farm are seeking other professions, business claiming the larger number, teaching, the law, and medicine others. The young women are now entering full time Christian service and passing through the same experiences as their brothers before them. It would seem, therefore, that the pastor has lost some of his prestige in the eyes of the young men who are now seeking other fields.

That the church still fills a large place in the lives of the people of the second and third generations is very evident from the documents that follow. It is difficult to find anyone who will express himself as believing the church has outlived its usefulness.

There are few churches at the present time in the Eastfriesian communities that do not have some English services. A few have changed over entirely to the English. In the majority of the churches the morning services are conducted in the German language while all the other services, including Sunday school, the Young People’s organizations and the evening services, are held in English. In some the demand for more English services is being felt. From 15 – 25 years are required for a church to make the transition from the German language to the exclusive use of the English. Dr. Schnuecker, pastor for many years in Eastfriesian congregations, fears that with the loss of the Eastfriesian language from the homes the people will also lose their national consciousness as Eastfriesians and that with it many other worth-while traits such as piety and religious interest will be lost. (13)

The documents that follow show the interest the members of the third generation have in the church, also how language and religion are interwoven.

89. (Life history). I attend the Presbyterian Church which is called the German Presbyterian Church but we have as much American as German. In the morning services the German language is exclusively used which gives everyone who cannot understand American a chance to worship in German. The evening services are all American, which gives all Low-German and Americans a chance to attend services which they can understand. The work of our young people is all carried on in the American language. I think this plan we carry on here in regard to the language used is all right for some years yet as it gives our grandparents a chance to worship as well as our younger people.

The Church is the greatest asset that a community can have. We gather to worship as well as to meet our friends and to have social activities. The church helps us in singing, instrumental music and leading. We can help with the services by taking a part in some work which we can handle even if it’s a small part, it shows that we are interested and also helps ourselves, others and the church. We must remember that

in union there is strength. The church gives us strength when in trouble, gives us a goal of Higher understanding, therefore we need the church as much as the church needs us.

90. (Life history). The church should use the language that the most number of people can understand. The church should spread the Gospel story and not start to teach language. I went to German Sunday School at first and I did not get anything out of it. I know one church that has a German Sunday school. They try to teach the child the language first, which is not doing the command of God. Use the LANGUAGE in the church that will spread the Gospel story the furthest.

91. (Questionnaire). I think that the church should have both German and English services. By having only English we are depriving a lot of the older people of the benefits that the church owes them. We should respect them enough to let them have German services. If it hadn't been for their efforts our churches would probably not be here.

92. (Life history). I think a church should use English but where there are quite a few Germans it might be all right to have a little German for them. But I think though they should get the English in the church a little more all the time because the younger generation is growing up and they can all understand the English and because this is America. A church helps me in a lot of ways. I can hear God's Word being preached there and it helps me live a better life.

93. (Life history). What language should the church use? How does it help in your life? As far as I'm concerned the church should use the American language. It is the place where most young people attend at least once every Sabbath that is if his parents do. I believe that if some language which they do not understand well is used they lose interest and gradually stop coming. Nearly every person living in the U.S. should be able to understand the American language. Many of our older people say or make the excuse that the German language must be continued for their sake because they are unable to understand the American. I believe that some of these people who have lived here for from 10 – 50 years ought to be able to grasp the American language. If not they better go back to the country in which their language is spoken and used. The same is true of any other language. The people born in this country cannot help but learn the American language because of the state law which provides each person to attend school until a certain age is reached and a certain grade attained. The church is the one place where the universal language should be used. Many people consider religion and church going dry in itself and then if a language is used that they can understand only a little of, it does not improve it but instead decreases their interest. The church is the foundation upon which the success of this country depends whether our state and national prisons shall be filled to their capacity or whether it shall decrease the number. If a person is brought up, attending church services and take part in all facilities of the church, he will not in his old age depart from it providing he has been able to understand what the minister preached about. If he had to sit through every service listening but not knowing what the speaker was talking about he soon tires of it. There is the probability that such person will attend some church where he is able to understand the language used but everyone wishes to remain in the community in which he was born and

later grew up. Probably some churches should use the language of some other countries for the immigrants who come into this country.

94. (Life history). I think the church should use the American language because I can't understand the German. The church helps me enjoy life much more because I come in closer contact with my Lord and Savior.

95. (Life history). The people of the earth do not necessarily have to be able to understand every one of the languages. They can get along well enough with the language they now speak. God can understand every one of the tongues and it was He who gave the different types of people. So I think it will and is best for everyone to keep their own language. For if God thought it best for the people on this earth to have only one language He would have done so, but God knows best, and He created this earth in the best of ways, and with his own knowledge.

96. (Life history). In home life a family may use the language they desire, but in public only the English should be used. The language that is used in the church is nothing to me, but many cannot understand the High-German. If it were not for the church my home life would be nothing. Many people belong to so many clubs, lodges, and other organizations, that they find no time, absolutely no time for church activities; they are gone all week and on Sundays they are so tired they cannot go to church but must stay home and sleep, or they go to bed so late on Saturday night that they forget to get up on Sunday morning.

97. (Life history). The Low-German people have their own peculiar characteristics, they are enthusiastic and flourishing and more economical than English people. They have more envy and are good executives. Everyone should learn the English language fluently, but the privilege of using other languages should not be taken away. The church should use the language that most of the members understand best. The church has done more for me than any other factor, spiritually and morally. The Low-German people should be more interested in educating their children. Most of them are very backward. Amusements of all kinds are not craved as much by the German people except those that are clean and wholesome, although too many are enjoyed and too much money is squandered on them.

The following documents show the history of the transition from the exclusive use of the German language to the partial or complete use of the English in several churches. This is not always accomplished without conflict, but in some churches it has worked out very successfully<sup>7</sup> and to the general satisfaction of all concerned.

98. Our church began using the English language in one class in Sunday school in 1915. Previous to this we had a pastor who was unable to use the English language and he condemned all those who desired any other language in the church besides his own German. The result was that many of the younger people drifted away from the church and it seemed that with the passing of the older people the church must close its doors.

After he left we conducted the Young People's Meeting in English and started English Sunday School. The result was that soon the Evening Services were changed to English and in a few years the Sunday school dropped the German. This has worked



very successfully and we are still carrying on the work in this way. This plan will undoubtedly be continued for some time, but I believe the time will come when the church work will all be carried on in the English language. While this plan has worked out successfully in holding the young people in the church many of the older people have been very outspoken against the English and while our church has been free of disturbance that some others have been subjected to, it has sometimes been unpleasant to notice the conflict of languages as the church passes through this transition period.

99. Our church has perhaps retained the use of the German more successfully than most others and a large part of our Sunday school work is still carried on in that language. This is due to the fact that our pastor put forth strenuous efforts to retain the German. For many years during the summer vacation months, German language school was held for the children of the church. In addition our pastor held instruction classes on Saturdays throughout the winter in which the German language and religion were taught. In this way he has been able to continue the German not only in the preaching services but in Sunday school and until lately in the Young People's meeting as well. A few years ago a desire for some English in the Sunday school was expressed and a few of the classes use English in part. Then, when it was discovered that the young people were attending the evening services in a nearby church which was conducted in English, it was decided to conduct the Young People's Meetings in English.

I believe in a few years there will be a demand for more English in the Sunday school and I fear that many will oppose the change. It is surprising how many of the second generation in this community are insistent on the use of the German language. It will be a long time before German passes in our church.

A question may be appropriately asked in regard to the relation of religion and morals to this group. As previously stated, the religious interest is highly prevalent. During succeeding generations, this interest has been successfully maintained and attendance at church is regular and considered necessary. The question regarding morals and moral standards necessarily comes to the fore. Are moral standards higher than in other communities? Are these people purer and more virtuous than others?

Some of the documents indicate that those who are not of the group, but who have had dealings with them consider them honest, thrifty and industrious. These are virtues which have frequently been considered a part of the moral fabric of a people. There are many among them who consider card playing, dancing and perhaps even attending shows and staying away from church as immoral and sinful. The Eastfriesian people frown on these things and in some of their communities the moving pictures are attended very infrequently and a few of the young people dance. Of young people to whom the questions were put, "Do you attend movies?" 17 answered in the negative and 57 said they attended occasionally. 70 said they do not attend dances while eight do.

In the matter of the relation of the sexes it is perhaps more difficult to gather authentic information. Divorce is rare and broken homes are few. Nor is it often that a girl becomes sexually promiscuous as far as general knowledge of the matter is concerned. The Eastfriesian communities are primary groups and public opinion and gossip are successful means of control and successful too in enforcing customs and morals. In some communities

pregnancy frequently hastens the marriage of the engaged couples. There is scarcely ever a question of promiscuity of sexual intercourse and the maternity of the unborn child is not denied, but the intimacies of courtship pass quite easily into the intimacies of sexual relationship. Communities differ in this respect. If the pre-marital relations which have resulted in pregnancy are followed by marriage, the people do not condemn the young people involved. The following document is typical of such an attitude.

100. (Personal interview). I believe the girls sometimes allow the young men these privileges because of a fear that they will lose them and thus the intimacy may result in pregnancy. It is too bad but if they get married it is not as terrible.

The following opinion was expressed by a pastor in regard to this matter.

101. We should emphasize and condemn the Eastfriesian attitude toward base unchasteness which reveals one of their outstanding moral sins, e.g. The knot of a must-marriage having been tied, which is of common occurrence, it is common for Eastfriesians to offer congratulations to the unchaste couple as if nothing unusual had ever happened.

That such occurrences are not unusual may be seen from the following.

102. (Personal interview). In our community at one time those forced marriages were quite frequent. In fact for a number of years the young people, who were married without being hurried by impending child birth, were almost without exception. I know some families in this community in which all or nearly all the young people were so involved before marriage. I believe conditions have changed somewhat for the better, but it is not uncommon even now. In some families the same program prevails through succeeding generations. The parents themselves having been married under similar conditions find it difficult to censure their children.

That the Eastfriesian people brought a higher morality to the communities into which they came is the opinion of Mr. Quick who speaks of the moral decay of a particular community with which he was acquainted and the effect of that community on the lives of the Eastfriesians who moved into it.

103. It used to be the fashion to magnify the dangers encountered by the boys and girls of the cities in growing up, - the manifold temptations, the evil companionships, into which it was so easy to slip. It was thought quite different in the country. Rural simplicity was supposed to make for a virtuous life. We had this delusion in our family. I have often wondered what city boy ever had more evil associates than I out there on the prairie. There were good boys in our vicinity, but it so happened that, save for the sons of the German immigrants, I was most often thrown into intimate association with them. The simple innocence of the Deserted Village was absent.

The frontier drew all sorts of people, and had its own temptations. Boys of excellent parentage sometimes went wrong through the successive breaking up of ties which went with our frequent migrations as the frontier moved from region to region. Whole communities went wrong sometimes. I call to mind one little town which was settled by the usual mixture of good and bad. It had active churches and its full quota, apparently of people of honor and probity. No one could have said in 1867 that it was not as good a community as any other of the new towns scattered about

the country. Yet this community literally went to hell. It became a sort of a back country slum. In a peculiar way, the first generation of the life of a frontier community lives in a time which tries the soul, not only of men and women but of communities and of boys. Such things occur in older societies, but in this matter, as in many other respects, events in a new country follow one another more quickly. This community went to hell; and was finally redeemed by the fact that it was eventually re-peopled by the German immigrants who brought their own higher morality with them, and were very largely immune to the moral contagion of the place. (14)

The specific character of the religious work in the Eastfriesian communities is very ably set forth by a pastor of an Eastfriesian church in the accompanying article. He describes the present feature of the work, the difficulties encountered in the transition from the exclusive use of the German language to a limited use of English in the churches, and speaks also of the continuing the bilingual activities at least for the present.

Dr. Stratemeier himself an Eastfriesian by birth, is a pastor and he is also editor of "Der Presbyterian", a religious weekly, printed in the German language and circulating very largely, although not exclusively, among Eastfriesian congregations.

104. The specific character of our German work must be understood in order to recognize the justification for its existence at the time when the use of the English tongue is making rapid inroads into its functions. The earmarks of that character are these:

1. It serves a racial element which is predominantly German. The old stock of members emigrated from Germany. This is especially true where we have to do with the churches peopled from Eastfriesland which churches are in the majority. These are the owners of the best land, but they brought along a deep religious concern, and both factors, thrift economically, devotion spiritually, made possible the development of these churches. Will their descendents maintain both farms and churches...? In some of our churches, like the one I minister to for instance, we have both, a substantial force of the old pioneers (whose passing, will, however, be a matter of a decade or two) and also their descendents of the second and third generation, taking their full place in the life of the church. That is still more so the case, in some of the churches in the open country. But because of the rise of the land prices, because of inadequate opportunities offered by the small towns, we shall regretfully see many of our younger generations move away.

Who serves these churches of ours? Where do their pastors come from? Of the 50 ministers engaged in the work only 13 are of Eastfriesian descent, only five of which come directly from Eastfriesland, of which I happen to be the youngest....

2. The bilingual requirement gives our work a stamp of its own. Happily the days when transition from the one language to the other in part or in whole, creating storms so severe as to threaten the life of the congregation, are seemingly over. But great tact is still necessary. I know of no church now which uses only one language. The use of two languages carries with it many dangers. It is not at all conducive to solidarity. Sometimes it seems as if one has to deal with two congregations. The bilingual requirement is a heavy tax upon the ability and energy

of the minister if he means to use both languages acceptably, an accomplishment which is very little appreciated, because most of our communities lack the cultural interest which look upon proficiency in several languages as a gain. In the larger churches of our Synod, the two languages will be in demand for some time to come.

3. Our churches make an adequate showing in material progress. Nearly every congregation has made telling improvements in recent years. The houses of worship generally present a good appearance. Nearly every congregation has its own parsonage. Our churches pay a living wage but not beyond that. As far as I know the salary nowhere exceeds that of \$2000 and the usual amount paid is about \$1500.

4. There are some special features which give distinction to our German work. These are:

1. The special Mission Rally days (Missionfests). We wonder why they have not become popular with churches of other presbyteries. Or is it so that to seek to learn anything of the German churches is a mark of inferiority? To my knowledge these occasions of blessings and real Christian fellowship have never received any notice in the literature of our Boards. Perhaps the matter was not methodical enough.

2. Persistent catechetical training. Someone has called the catechism "The people's popular theology." We believe it to be a real aid to the life of the church when the youth is given sound religious and specialized instruction such as only the specially trained pastor can impart.

3. Our services have received depth because of the grand old hymnology, even the kind characterized by Barth as "ancient songs full of weighty and weird memories, strange ghostly witnesses of the sufferings, struggles, and triumphs of the long departed fathers, all leading to the edge of an immeasurable event, all, whether the minister and people understand what they are singing or not, full of reminiscence of God, always of God. God is present!" (Karl Barth, "The Word of God", English Translation p. 106). We must but record with regret that our churches in supplying for their English services have not resisted the popular trend of bringing into vogue the superficial hymns and tunes so much current in religious circles of our day. I still hope so much our churches will be aroused to make selections in the hymns to be sung in the future in order that they may be really helpful.

4. Our churches do attract because generally speaking there is still our active Christian life marked by simplicity, depth, and responsibility to kingdom tasks without recourse to many schemes suggested and tried on every hand to bolster up congregational life. Our churches are not dead – behold the increasing number of those representing it on the home and foreign missionary field. Our churches are not dead – behold the number and character of the boys and girls we have sent to the halls of the University of Dubuque, and we expect you of this school to bear the full responsibility of their development here. They are here that you may give them something for which they would look in vain in many other schools – namely an increasing devotion to serve in utter loyalty to Christ and the Church in whatever field the Holy Spirit shall call them. No other ministers will quite serve our churches so well as those trained in these halls.... (15)

One of the distinctive features of the Eastfriesian church is the annual mission fest. Almost without exception, every congregation sets aside one day for this purpose. This festival is held during the week, and although it occurs in the early summer, which is a busy season for the farmer, all work ceases and the day is devoted to this cause.

The program of the day is somewhat as follows: At about 10 o'clock the first service begins. Two sermons are given at this service. At noon a community meal is served in the basement of the church, formerly under the shade-trees on the lawn or occasionally a large tent was erected for the purpose. At two o'clock the bell again calls to worship. The afternoon service lasts to 4.30 or 5.00 pm and during this period two or three sermons are given. Then follows another meal, after which the young people hurry home for the necessary farm chores while the older people visit. The final service is intended principally for the young folks and the talks and sermons are directed to them.

At each service a missionary offering is received and in some of the larger churches, with a membership of two hundred, the total offering not infrequently reaches the sum of \$1,000 or more.

The pastors and the people of all the neighboring Eastfriesian churches within the radius of 15 miles are invited and many of them participate, some of the neighboring pastors doing the preaching. One or two speakers from a distance, pastors, missionaries on furlough, or professors from church colleges, are usually procured as special speakers of the day.

Sometimes the afternoon crowd is so large that the church building is unable to accommodate all so an outdoor meeting is held, in addition to the other, in some nearby grove or on the lawn of the parsonage, both meetings being carried on simultaneously.

One noteworthy feature of this service is the way it continues to hold the interest during the succeeding generations. The "Mission-fest" is as popular and as strongly entrenched today as it has ever been. Some of the services are now held in English and perhaps a few features such as quartettes and choirs have been added, otherwise they have remained unchanged.

Another striking fact is the absence of emotionalism in all the services. The needs of the missionary and educational causes are presented, but there is no attempt to have the people, either young or old, come forward and publicly dedicate either their lives or their money to this cause. The offering is received in the usual manner by the passing of the plates and if the decision is made by any young man or young woman to dedicate his or her life to the missionary cause, it is made in the quietness of his or her own heart and not with public ostentation. Unquestionably such decisions are made at those services, but they are not deliberately sought under the impulse of crowd emotion. Some of the churches have held as many as 50 annual services and the amounts given to missions runs into the thousands of dollars.

## CHAPTER VII – EDUCATIONAL INTERESTS

The Eastfriesian people in the United States have not been noted for their intellectual attainments. Of the various Teutonic groups there are perhaps few among whom educational interests have ranked so low.

In the early days in this country books and newspapers were scarce. It seemed a sinful waste to pay hard-earned money for books. Whatever books they had were mostly religious. Their general educational level was therefore exceedingly low. Several factors contributed to this condition.

At the time the Eastfriesian immigrants came to our shores, conditions in their native land were exceedingly hard. It was with great difficulty that the unskilled working man earned a wage that was sufficient for a bare subsistence for himself and his family. The children were out to work as soon as possible that their earnings might supplement the meager family income. Under those conditions there was little inclination to advance and certainly no money for education.

Most of the Eastfriesian immigrants went to school until 14 years old, thus attaining an education equivalent to that offered by our grade schools. There were many who received very little education, being hardly able to read and write. Thus in general it may be said they did not bring an interest in educational values with them as some other nationalities did. Nor was there interest in education at all comparable to their interest in religion.

Dr. Schnuecker mentions another reason. He speaks of the mental attitude that prevailed in regard to the value of an education. Almost without exception the Eastfriesians became well-to-do although they possessed little or no education. Consequently an education was considered a luxury and there was little time or money in those families for the luxuries of life. Why should time and money be spent for things that were considered of no economic value and might even become detrimental? It was by hard labor that farm land was acquired and the families that worked hardest and longest, consequently neglecting the schools, possessed the most land. (1)

Whatever the rationalization may have been, farm land was preferred to a higher education.

The idea that an education would make a loafer out of a boy prevailed. Education may be all right for a person who will use it. If a boy wished to become a minister or a physician or if a girl wished to teach, some encouragement might be given, otherwise educational ambitions were frowned upon. It was unthinkable that a young person should waste precious years and spend good money for the sake of getting an education. However, they early encouraged the "lad of parts", if he felt the call, to prepare himself for the Gospel ministry, but unless such a goal was definitely in mind it was not considered advantageous to attend high school. The following documents present this view.

105. (Personal interview). My neighbor's boys are both going to high school, but I don't know what he wants to make of them. It is a good place for them to learn a lot of foolishness. It would be better if he put them to work.

106. (Personal interview). H. \_\_\_\_\_ is not going to high school anymore. She said she didn't know if she wanted to teach or not so she might as well stop if she didn't

want to become a teacher. Her parents can use her at home and it's perhaps just as good for her to learn house work.

107. (Personal interview). Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ went to college four years and now he is back on the farm. We thought he was going to be a minister but I guess he was too dumb. If he didn't want to become anything it would have been better if he had stopped going to school long ago and kept right on working on the farm. I suppose he won't be much good on the farm any more now.

The children of the immigrant fared little better in an educational way than their parents. The immigrant wished to become financially independent. He soon procured a piece of land and then the entire family worked hard to pay off the new indebtedness. The children were put to work as early as possible and school life was forgotten. In many immigrant families the children received less formal education than their parents. The ideal held up before the Eastfriesian farm boy was for him to take his place driving a team and doing a man's work as soon as possible. The boy thought himself a man if he were permitted to drive a team all day long to a plow or cultivator at the age of 10. Fathers boasted of their 9-10 year old children doing a man's work. The boy who could leave school at 10 or 12 was the envy of the other boys who must continue in school, and he looked with contempt upon those who must study while he was free to work. The facts presented in the following document could be repeated a hundred fold.

108. (Personal interview). I went to school until I was nine years old. I then took my place with my older brothers and the hired men cultivating corn with a walking cultivator. After I stopped going to school, I soon forgot the little that I had previously learned. The result is I have never learned to enjoy reading. It is too difficult for me. I want my children to have at least a grade school education, but they must also learn to work with their hands.

When the indebtedness on the first piece of land had been cleared away, it might have been possible, to pay some attention to educational matters. But such was not the case. A taste of prosperity – of acquisition, having been had, the land hunger grew and could only be satisfied by procuring more land. Another farm grew and could only be satisfied by procuring more land. Another farm would be purchased and the process of hard work, of frugal living, of long hours, of keeping the children out of school and putting them at work, continued. In some cases where the families were large, one farm after another was acquired and such an Eastfriesian family became well to do; became in many cases, the county's biggest land owner, but at the price of depriving the children of even an elementary education and robbing them of the carefree days, to which we think a child is entitled. It became a passion among these immigrants to provide a farm for each child of the family, and the families were large, but in many cases they succeeded in attaining this. It was impossible to give each child both a farm and an education so the intangible yielded to the tangible. The farm represented a visible, material, dollar and cents value. It was but natural to prefer the farm and some boys even when they had the opportunity to choose, preferred the farm rather than an education

At the present time a different idea prevails. In many families the younger members attend high school and college. This became possible through a combination of circumstances. When the younger children of a large family reach high school age the parents usually find themselves in fairly well-to-do circumstances. They also feel that it is time for them to retire

and enjoy a well earned rest. The farm is turned over to one of the older married sons and the parents move to a nearby town where the younger children may attend high school.

The members of the second generation, realizing what they have missed, are seeking compensation by giving their children an education they vainly craved. Almost without exception these folks assert that they did not go to school as much as they wished, but are sending their own children to high school and in ever increasing numbers to college.

The members of the third generation realize the value of an education and are earnestly seeking to acquire it. The following documents are typical of a large number of expressions from members of the third generations concerning education.

109. (Life history). I think an education is the very best thing parents can offer their children. It seems that a good education is more necessary every day. No position can be filled now by anyone who hasn't been properly educated to fill that particular place.

110. (Life history). Education is a great help to anyone ready and willing to make use of it. I think everyone should educate himself or herself in their particular work. This education may be gotten in several ways, by means of self education that is by observation and reading, or by colleges or instruction. Everybody is not able to attend college but I think anyone who has attended college has a larger outlook on life itself. In your college work you not only gain book knowledge but you come in contact with so many different classes and races of people. In coming in contact with these it gives you a different viewpoint upon life itself. It also makes you realize that your own distinct race or nationality isn't the only one. Therefore I believe in education, not only educating the mind but our souls as well. Ignorance is no excuse in this day and age.

111. (Life history). I think that our education is Americanizing or giving the people of today the same ideas. It makes them look at important questions in a broader sense. Every child that is of school age should attend so as to make better citizens in the future. The America of tomorrow depends on the young generation of today. Therefore let every child attend school and learn of the American methods and its government.

The two documents that follow seem to voice the fear that educational opportunities offered to the members of the third generation may not be fully appreciated by them.

112. (Questionnaire). Education is all right if used in the right way. Some people seem to have the idea that education is all they need. In this day and age I think that very few people if not educated to some extent will find it hard to get through the world. Many young people are spoiled by being educated and do not want to work after they acquire an education.

113. (Life history). I think everyone should have an education. Of course all people like my parents didn't have the opportunity to get an education like we younger folks. But today there is every opportunity in the world for us to get an education if we really and truly want one. So many of the young people get the idea into their head that they must have a good time and nice clothes regardless of how much money it costs their parents. The plain fact is that all they go to school or college for



is to have a good time and would be better off if they would stay home. They get so that they go every night and go on wild parties, ruining health, honor, and reputation. By doing these things a child or grownup can't keep their minds on their lessons. A person most generally gets the best education when they have to work their way through so they have just enough means to get by, and besides that, we need our proper rest in order to do justice to our work the next day.

Athletics in schools is all right I think to some extent, but most schools nowadays overdo it and I think it helps to take their minds off their work. I believe in educating the child. Every child should have an education so that when they grow up they can step out in the big, wide world and take the places of their parents, becoming good citizens, helping our nation to become a better nation in every way. In doing that we must all help, the parents especially. They must bring up their children in such a way so they will be fit to step out and into the older generation's places.

## CHAPTER VIII – PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Assimilation is largely a matter of participation. It is therefore important to notice the extent of participation in the community activities on the part of Eastfriesians in the United States in succeeding generations.

When the first Eastfriesian settlers came to America they brought with them a distrust of other nationalities and a love for their own countrymen. Consequently they settled in communities. This voluntary segregation increased their clannishness and their distrust of others. There were also cultural differences, the most significant of which was the language. This proved a distinct handicap and kept them very largely out of political and community activities. Except for petty offices in the township and the local community, the older Eastfriesian was a follower and not a leader. He was satisfied to devote himself to his own affairs, finding his friends among his own group and if he sought recognition it was through the church rather than in politics. The older generation participated in the local caucus, held some minor offices, exchanged work with their neighbors, some of whom were American, and were on friendly terms with all the community, but they were not anxious to be recognized as community leaders, nor were they politically ambitious.

There is a deep-rooted opposition to lodges and secret fraternal organizations. Some of the Eastfriesian churches refuse to accept into their membership anyone who is connected with a secret fraternal organization. Should a pastor join such an organization, woe unto him! Nor will they permit the use of the church for a funeral of a lodge member. This same attitude toward these organizations seems to prevail in Eastfriesland at the present time as the document shows.

114. Dr. Schoneberg was elected as Burgermeister (mayor) of Norden. The citizens wanted him for this office, but they were somewhat hesitant in electing a free-mason as head of their city. Dr. Schoneberg, however, gave the assurance that he did not care to continue as a Mason in Norden and the inhabitants breathed easier and elected him. The Burgermeister of Norden draws a salary of 9000 marks and is elected for a term of 12 years.... (1)

Some of the members of the older generation are very sincere in this viewpoint as the following documents indicate.

115. (Personal interview). The lodge people do not belong in the church and I do not care to associate with them. They are children of the evil one. If the pastor of my church should join a lodge I would no longer come to sit under his preaching.

116. (Personal interview, second generation). We do not accept lodge members into the membership of our church. We have a rule against it. A few years ago there was a man in our community who was seriously sick. He knew he could not get well and wanted to join the church. But he was a member of the lodge and carried several thousand dollars insurance with his lodge. We could not accept him for that reason and told him so. He finally severed his connection with the lodge, dropped his insurance, and joined the church.

Sometimes this opposition to secret organizations is transferred to other groups whose work and purpose they fail to understand. Document 117 not only reveals such an attitude toward

service clubs, but also shows the segregated life they expect the pastor to lead. Their clannishness seemingly is to be imposed on others as well.

117. (Personal letter from the pastor of an Eastfriesian Church). The social attitude is largely lacking. To speak of prohibition is not preaching the Gospel. (See also document 82.) To point out some of the things that make for social injustice is also not the gospel. Illustrations from any source except the Bible with older people are taboo. A warless world is impossible. We are steadily growing worse. The pastor must have no contact with a godless world. He must confine himself to the church. He must take no part in the civic enterprises of the community. When I joined a service club upon its organization, opposition arose. One man, a regular Sunday morning attendant, was heard to denounce me in the most profound language. He has not been in church lately.

The passing of the first and the coming of the second generation automatically removed the language barrier. Other customs might possibly set him apart, but these were easily removed and the Eastfriesian of the second generation could participate on equal terms with those of other nationalities. He desired to participate; he became politically ambitious; he engaged in business; he sought and held public office; he entered the professions. The following document shows to what extent they have entered into the life of the community.

118. (Personal letter). The Eastfriesian people or their descendants today are the backbone of at least six of the leading churches of Freeport with which I am acquainted. In Forreston and Baileyville there would be none left if the Eastfriesian stock were taken away. In business it's much the same. The City Attorney, States Attorney, County Clerk and Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, are all Eastfriesians who can talk it in conversation. This shows what a factor they are in the affairs of a city like Freeport.

That there is a keen interest in politics and governmental affairs is evident in such cases as the one following.

119. (Life history). I have held a number of offices in my township and county. I think the government should devise means to compel industry to sell in open markets as the farmers must do now, or stabilize farm product surpluses as industries are now stabilized through the tariff. We should elect presidents and legislators who are not in partnership with industrial leaders of the east, but who are in sympathy with the agricultural Middle West. It takes a Roosevelt or a Bryan, who are leaders, and no Hoovers who sit in easy chairs accepting dictation from the money powers, or Moses who considers us western people nothing more than plain, wild jackasses. Let people learn to vote for principles instead of parties.

The children of the Eastfriesian immigrants do not differ in their interests or in their activities from other American born children. I have failed to find any games among the children of this group that are not played by other American children. The following document shows this normal interest and activity.

120. (Life history). I was born on a South Dakota farm, attended school, played baseball, went swimming in summer and skating in winter, attended parties and went to Sunday school. I was interested in farming and now my special interest is in

trees and flowers, in pure bred cattle, hogs, and poultry. I am also interested in church work.

I never felt sorry that I belonged to the Eastfriesian group. The better class are honest, pay their bills, do all they can for their children and tend to their own business. I have noticed that newly arrived immigrants work hard and save their money and they soon have a business of their own. They know the Bible. I hold several offices in my community and am interested in the welfare of my country. If the farmer is left alone, he will be all right. The government spends the farmers' money for foolishness and for things they do not need. I am glad my parents came to America the best country in the world

That there are some from this group in the second generation that has assumed positions of leadership is evident from the following.

121. My parents came from Emden, Germany, in the spring of 1881, to Iowa. I was born in July of that year. We stayed in town until I was seven years old, when we moved on a small farm. My father was a tinsmith by trade and never did take to farming, consequently his children learned very little about farming. I went back to town to work for my uncle in a general store at the age of 14. I worked there between school hours, and completed high school at the age of 16 and then went to Chicago to an automobile school. I worked in the automobile industry for about three years, started to college at the age of 20, took a Ph.B. (This is not a misprint – it is as it was in the original document) degree at the University of Chicago and later a J. D. at the same school. I was in the service during the world war, in the aviation department, and have been practicing law in Iowa since 1920. My parents went to school regularly until they were about 14 years old.

I attended school in Iowa, Automobile School in Chicago – Iowa State Teachers College at Cedar Falls – and the University of Chicago, interested mostly in government and law. My parents continued to use the German language and some the German customs in their home, but made no effort to pass it on to their children. My plans as a child were to study medicine. Those plans were changed after I got to the University of Chicago. I think I am somewhat mechanically inclined. I like the study of psychology and efficient production. I have thought that I would like to visit the land where my parents were born, but have never thought I would want to live there.

I have never felt sorry that I belong to the Eastfriesian group. I think their racial habits and instincts passed on to us are as good as any. I especially like their sociability. I personally know of several families who visit together from house to house, drinking their tea, talking about past experiences, thus forming a social group. They, as a general rule, are very honest in their business dealings. Their family relations are very close and pleasant, and very few of their families are broken up by divorce.

I use the Low-German language very little but do enjoy using it sometimes as a kind of change of mode or expression. I have taken no interest in the land where my parents were born and have done very little reading on this subject. Most of my

friends and associates in my college fraternity, K.P. Lodge, the American Legion and the Commercial Club were Americans.

I think the Eastfriesian people are fairly thrifty, industrious, and intelligent. They rank high in honesty and religious interest.

I have engaged in some community activities in the above named organizations and have been mayor of my town and County Attorney of my county.

The following document was written by a member of the second generation. The statement concerning the imminent assimilation and consequent disappearance of the immigrant groups is significant not only because it may be based on observation, but the writer does not seem to object to assimilation.

122. (Personal letter). It looks to me that all traces of foreign nationalities will soon have disappeared in the great American melting pot; it is only a matter of a few more years and the process of assimilation will have been completed. The Eastfriesians never made much of a mark in the line of education and culture and the most that can be said of them is that they were religious, industrious, and saving, indeed all very good traits but it seems the pendulum of the new generation has begun to swing in another direction. Some one used to say, "Every third generation is in the ditch", and it seems they are getting there pretty fast, even though it may be by means of the automobile.

The members of the third generation are participating to a greater extent in the affairs of their communities than their parents did. They have a lively interest in the affairs of the nation. The teaching profession lends itself readily to the fulfillment of the ambitions of the young women and they are taking advantage of this. In the past two decades there has been a decided increase in the number of those of Eastfriesian descent who are entering the professions and engaging in business enterprises. The following may be duplicated in many communities.

123. Many young women of Eastfriesian descent are engaged in educational activities, especially in the country schools of Grundy County, (Iowa). In several townships every teacher engaged bears an Eastfriesian name. (2)

That such a movement for a fuller participation in the American activities was already manifesting itself in 1917 is evident from the statement of Dr. Schnuecker. He believes this was induced by the increase in educational interest in the Eastfriesian communities together with the ideals maintained and presented by the church in which interest has never lagged.

124. During the past decade a pleasing counter current is noticeable, an ever increasing desire to give to the children a thorough higher education. When a family retires from the farm they are guided in the choice of a residence by two factors, whether there is a suitable church in the town and whether there is a high school for the children that are still at home. In the denominational colleges there is an ever increasing number of Eastfriesian sons and daughters; and among the grade-school teachers Eastfriesian names occur more frequently. The Eastfriesian towns and villages reveal Eastfriesian business firms also exclusively. The banks, the chief patrons of which are our countrymen, and in which the Eastfriesians were given occasional directorships for political reasons, are now noticeable more and more,

falling into the hands of the Eastfriesians. The fathers preside in the directors' meetings, the Eastfriesian sons act as the cashiers and tellers, and the books are kept by the blond, Eastfriesian daughters. Eastfriesian attorneys are appearing increasingly, and it is not infrequently that a person of Eastfriesian extraction is in the law-making halls of our land. In the homes the daily papers appear regularly as do the monthly journals and magazines. The dawn of a new period has come; a period which promises a vigorous participation on the part of our countrymen. A search for the chief factor in bringing this change leads to the conclusion that this is directly due to the Eastfriesian church in America! (3)

The following document shows the extensive interests of one family. The grandparents in this case were immigrants. This was written by a 28 year old farmer's wife.

125. (Personal history). I was born on a farm in Iowa and am now married to a farmer. While I speak German to my grandparents I use English mostly in my home and when I am with my friends as well as when speaking to my parents, brothers, and sisters. I taught school for five years. I think it's every woman's desire to have a home of her own and I intend in the future to keep house and raise a family.

Among my friends, number some Danish, Norwegians, Swedes, Germans, and Americans. The following papers come to our home, and all of them are printed in the English language: Des Moines Register, Our County Paper, Pathfinder, Wallace's Farmer, Household, Capper's Farmer, Women's World, Needlecraft, People's Home Journal, Gentlewoman, Illustrated Mechanics, Shorthorn World, Farm Journal, Modern Homemaking, Babyhood, Presbyterian Messenger, and Christian Endeavor World. Most of the young people of this community go to high school these last numbers of years and many go to college.

The young people of the third generation believe they should participate in all activities. The Eastfriesians have frowned on many forms of amusements as having no place in a group like their own. Very few of those interviewed go to dances.

They do demand that conditions become such in matters of language and in the church that no further handicaps may be encountered.

126. (Life history). As far as the Low-German people are compared I think they are a sociable set of people, willing to make any kind of improvement they see will make for advancement. I have wished that I belonged to some other nationality for I felt the Low-German is not a language of any account, you don't have a script. You will also find that Low-Germans mix very readily with other nationalities.

As far as language is concerned: Let the people use the language which is handiest to them. I think as long as the children go to our schools they naturally will all in turn go to the English.

The young people realize that the older people are opposed to some of their amusements as the following documents show.

127. (Life history). I really haven't much to say on the topic of nationality, although I want to say this that I really think in a way American people, it seems to me, are more friendly than Low-German especially the older Low-German. They always have

so much to say about the young people of today, more than other nationalities, of course, maybe I'm not enough with other nationalities, and maybe they run them down as well.

In one way it would be nice if this country were all English but still we should not wipe away our nationality. I think the church should use American because there are more people that understand it than any other language.

The church helps a person a great deal in life – if you do not attend church regularly you forget about worshiping God, studying His Holy Word, having faith in Him, etc. My idea is the church brings you closer to our Lord day after day. I think it's very nice to have an education in a great many ways. You can get a position much easier, understand more clearly the things you read, the speeches you listen to, etc.

The young people should have a lot of amusements, and happy ones too, but none that would not be pleasing in the sight of God. I think it's nice for young people to have a social, playing games, etc., when having their C.E. (youth) business meeting or any other society meeting, and to have a party once in a while.

128. (Life history). I think amusements are all right such as movies, ball games, etc. It keeps an interest in a young person's work and church societies; and dancing is all right as long as you can be a gentleman.

129. (Life history). Many places furnish good amusements. Personally I can see no harm in dances or movies. Whatever sort of amusement people wish to attend is their own personal affair and as long as they know their place and have respect for themselves they will do nothing unbecoming a lady or a gentleman.

Among the members of the third generation there is a decided change of attitude toward lodges. Many of the secret organizations in the communities where the Eastfriesians predominate are not attractive organizations, being seldom composed of the better class of people in the community. The third generation does not have the fear of those organizations that the first generation had. They are not only joining them, but seek to justify their membership as the following document shows. General community interest is also evident.

130. (Life history). I think and sincerely believe and encourage that we be very considerate in our dealings with all foreign and home affairs connected with nationality. I feel that we must continue in the speaking and using of our native language for a time at least. Our parents and grandparents are the pioneers of our community; they have established homes, churches, schools, and everything for the uplifting of our community welfare. In due consideration of this fact, I feel that our mother tongue should continue to flourish as long as they are still with us because of the inconvenience which would otherwise be caused.

We have but one life to live here on earth and must therefore try in every way to live a life of noble deeds, contentment and happiness.

My being a member of secret organizations is no doubt contrary to the beliefs and interpretation of our so called Low-German element. I therefore wish to say at this time that I have derived some very helpful benefits therein. Everything being done

with the open book of law and in His name, I feel that the principles taught are being a help to me in my daily endeavors. I furthermore feel that anyone who will entirely ignore such organizations is ignorant or rather, has been misinformed of the proceedings therein.

Our nation, government, church and all other civic organizations should stress the importance of the dealings of our young people. Good, clean, upright, moral characters are diminishing altogether too fast. They are not upholding the wonderful home ties and spirits of our ancestors.

It is true that I attend a good show occasionally and must say that I have gained good and helpful information through the moral of the picture itself. The scenery at times is marvelous and gives one an idea of what is proceeding in the outside world. The news reels are also in keeping with the topics of the day.

It is true that some pictures are very undesirable but all in all, I feel that I have overlooked these due to the principles taught me in my home life. Another interesting feature I have found in my choice of vocation is that our entire force agrees that our German people are our most desirable customers.

Perhaps a word should be said concerning a few of Eastfriesians by birth that has attained a notable success in their particular fields.

As a scholar and theologian the name of Dr. N. M. Steffens undoubtedly heads the list. He was born in Emden, Eastfriesland, served a while as a foreign missionary, married a Scottish woman, came to America as a pastor of an Eastfriesian church, felt equally at home preaching in the English, German or Dutch languages, was a student of Greek and Hebrew, could also converse in Italian and French, taught in the Theological Seminaries at Holland, Michigan, and Dubuque, Iowa and achieved a nation-wide reputation as a preacher, scholar, and a theologian. Unquestionably an outstanding man with a superior mind!

From the various Eastfriesian colonies there have come forth a goodly number of pastors, educators and leaders in business and politics. Many have become well-to-do on the farms. Several who have achieved outstanding success in business are mentioned in the following article by Mr. D.B. Aden, of Breda, Iowa. He describes a trip to Sioux City, Iowa to the Interstate Live Stock Fair.

131....Near the forest is a large sign-board giving the important announcement that here in Sioux City "E. and W. Clothes are the best everywhere." In Woodland Park...I see a picturesque valley a mile long. In the midst of this I see another sign, "E. and W. Clothes." I angrily turn and look in the opposite direction. There I see a sign advertising chewing tobacco and a little further on at a street corner I again see "E. and W. Clothes." These American vandals in their tireless chase after the dollar have no respect for the beauties of nature and in their business zeal paste their signs in the most restful spots! Behind this name "E. and W." may be found a rather common Eastfriesian tailor, who at the beginning of his successful tailoring career made clothes for the people of Krumhorn (Eastfriesland). He has long since laid aside needle and scissors, but sells more clothing each year than all of the old home



community could possibly use. Not only in Sioux City but in a number of other important cities, especially in Illinois, he operates on a large scale and has made a fortune.... We leave the car on a corner near an imposing five story building – there it is again, “E. and W. Clothes”. That inescapable tailor from Krumhorn!

There are many other Eastfriesians who were eminently successful in the new world. The cover of one of the most noted magazines presents an artistic advertisement, recommending the widely used “Mennens Toilet Powder”. The trade mark shows the picture of Gerhard Mennen – a child of Emden, Eastfriesland.

Even Wall Street in New York City, where the money kings reign, one may find several Eastfriesians in responsible positions. And in the capitol of the State of Iowa, among the law-makers, there is a Habbe Boomgaarden. He calls himself Habbe even in the official register; and the biographical sketch tells us he was born in the village of Grothusen in Germany. These are just a few of whom I happened to think. Everywhere in the land of the stars and stripes may be seen the trails of the sons of Eastfriesland. (4)

The two documents that follow are taken from the writings of Herbert Quick and although they consist largely of generalizations, are undoubtedly based on his observations of this group during the earlier years of his life. He came into intimate contact with the members of this group, he knew them as neighbors, their children attended the school he taught, and he saw how they were being changed even as the country was changed and made over through the industry of this immigrant group.

133. I took the examination at the close of this six weeks of emergence into the great world; and though I was not yet sixteen, I was given a certificate. Then I went out to apply for a school, as we called it. The certificated teacher went forth like a man looking for a job in a harvest field, until he found a school director willing to give him a trial. My victim was a German over in the northwest part of Shiloh Township. His name was John Menninga. I rode in my search for a location on one of our farm horses, and was directed to a farm house some two or three miles northwest of where the town of Wellsburg now stands. Nothing was there then but the great house, barns and yards of George Wells, whose great estate was always in my mind as I created the environment of J. Buckner Gowdy in my Iowa trilogy. I was not, however, in the character of Buckner Gowdy, creating in the least that of Mr. George Wells.

A farmer pulled out into the road with a load of wheat as I approached the home of my director. I halted the driver to inquire as to where I could find Mr. Menninga. “Dots’ me”, said he.

“Have you a teacher for your school for the winter term?” I asked.

“No,” he replied.

“I came to apply for the school,” I said unwaveringly. “My name is Quick. I live over in Colfax Township. I’d like to teach your school this winter.”

"You ain't very oldt yet," said he.

"No," said I; "But I've a pretty good percentage in my certificate."

He looked at the certificate, showing very little indication of understanding it.

"Vell," said he, "I guess you'll do." And as soon as I had signed the written contract which he produced, the deed was done. A man would have given the matter of choosing a wife scarcely less thought.

My salary was \$25 a month. Every child in the school was German and no English was spoken on the playground or in the school, except in class or in remarks addressed to me. I suppose that German is the language of every-day life in that neighborhood still; but even then, children 10 years old and over could read English with a fair degree of understanding; and the fact that the activities of the county, the township and the school district had to be carried on in English was slowly giving, even to people who had come from Germany as adults, a smattering of our language; and these same factors were making them over into Americans. The process, however, was much more rapid and effectual along the edge of the German zone in localities like that of my father's farm. There the neighbors of the old stock Americanized our German friends (5).

133. As I write this Dr. Charles William Eliot is giving the press much to say in the discussion of his utterances in the assimilation of the races in America. He is quoted as having said that the melting pot is non-existent, and that assimilation is neither possible nor desirable. I suspect that what he said has been misunderstood.

Surely he could not have meant that assimilation has not taken place in the past. He could not have denied the assimilation of such races as the British, the Irish, the Germans, the Dutch, and the Scandinavians in the history of the United States.

Take the Germans for instance. Our first great inland frontier was largely Germanic. From the Hudson to the Delaware it was preponderantly Dutch. Southward along the Cumberland-Shenandoah Valley and on behind its mountain wall clear to North Georgia, it was more German than anything else; but – and here is the significant thing – it was strongly impregnated with English, Scotch, Irish and in some localities Scandinavian. Read Doddridge's "Notes" or Kercheval's "History of the Valley;" study the names in any directory in those regions today for proof of the great infusion of German blood among the pioneers who wrested the Appalachian Valleys from the Indian and held them against the French.

Our Germans in Iowa were no pioneers. They were never covered-wagon people. But in that first great frontier, the most important in some ways which our country has had, the Germans pushed into the wilds with their families. They built blockhouses and defended them against the savages. They fell before the Indian attacks as they cultivated their fields, were scalped and burned at the stake; and then turning on their foes, hunted them to their death in the strangely cruel wars which all

races indulged in on that outline of civilization. They furnished frontier heroes as Lew Wetzel. And even in that era, the assimilation of all races that I have mentioned had begun in that region. It has gone on until no distinction can be made between the descendants of the various races. In fact, the Americans of that region are a blend of all the original stocks, Germans, Irish, Scotch, British, Scandinavian, and the other races are literally melted together in the short space of a century and a half, I have seen Pennsylvania Germans named Oneil and Oharrow. The very names have been altered, and the original traditions and customs have been merged for all these nationalities into a homogeneous American character. The alloy of the races has been formed and is complete and perfect.

But those who lived their youth with me in Iowa do not need to refer to history for an example of racial assimilation. I have rather extensively described the human elements which were thrown together into a human hash in our state, and from it time has cooked a dish of perfectly good Americanism.

Our German neighbors rapidly grew prosperous. They came in a marvelously short time to be excellent farmers even under their new conditions. Their children went to the common schools and especially along the margins of their settlements, mingled with the Yankee children, studied with them, played with them, fought with them; an American farmer exchanged work with a German farmer, traded with him and with him discussed their common problems. Gradually the things in them which offended us disappeared, or were better understood, and lost their offensiveness. They became used to us too.

With their ascent from the intellectual and economic status of European peasants, to that of independent American farmers, they shed the practices entailed on them by their own poverty. This would have been inevitable no matter where it might have taken place. For a long time intermarriages between them and us were unknown. As time passed they became frequent. Customs became identical. Our German friends soon abandoned their wooden shoes, and the German girl passed the stage of pulling up her skirts to get at the huge patch-work reticule (bag or purse) which hung under her clothes from a belt around her waist. Dress, language, circles of acquaintance, politics, lodges, their common interest in roads and schools, farm organizations – a thousand things gradually produced forgetfulness of those early differences.

The German neighborhoods in Iowa are now as American as the rest of the country. I believe the assimilation is actually more complete than in the purely German counties of Pennsylvania, where the American residence has existed for the better part of two centuries. The melting pot does exist where the conditions are right – and it should exist.

Not that the Midwestern immigrants from Europe have lost their racial traits. Of course not! They are still German or Scandinavian, or Irish or Bohemian or what not, where the blood has not been crossed with other strains, with all the inherent virtues and shortcomings which go with race – whatever they are. But all Americans possess these peculiarities. They have ceased to be divisive influences as between man and man, citizen and citizen, and neighborhood and neighborhood. They have become

individual traits and not mass traits. They have become such, they have ceased to be barriers to association in the various activities required by our common American life. Such traits make neither for nor against the assimilation of people into common citizenship. The melting pot does not change the atoms of citizenship. It merely adapts them into a good alloy. (6)

## CHAPTER IX – CHANGES IN CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS

This chapter deals with customs that were brought to this country by the Eastfriesian immigrant. A few of them persist, while most of them have disappeared. Such changes in an immigrant community are significant. When a group is laying aside traits by which it has been differentiated from the larger group, assimilation is taking place.

The Eastfriesians brought their own of dress. The wearing of wooden shoes was perhaps the most obvious peculiarity. These were worn about the yard, but were found impractical in the fields. Their use did not continue long. "I remember as a boy seeing a neighbor wearing wooden shoes. He lived near the country school that I attended and it was a great curiosity to the children. This was about 30 years ago. I have never seen them since that time."(1)

The Eastfriesian immigrants wore beards. This custom has now largely disappeared.

The Eastfriesians have been remarkable tea-drinkers. The older families bought tea in five and ten pound lots. Tea was served before breakfast, at breakfast, at three in the afternoon, at supper, and frequently in the evening after supper. To neglect to serve tea when callers came in the afternoon or evening was a serious breach of social etiquette. In other respects, the diet of the Eastfriesian immigrants did not differ widely from their American neighbors. Possibly it contained more garden vegetables such as cabbage and kale. "Sauerkraut and Speck" were in frequent demand.

In addition to the burden of bearing large families the women frequently worked in the fields during the busy seasons of the year.

134. The modern generation is deeply moved when thinking of the patient sacrifices of the pioneer Eastfriesian woman. Hard work and sacrifices were her lot. She found her joy in the contentment of her husband and children. It was not for herself, but for the members of her household that she labored. In home-made clothes, wearing the crude wooden shoes brought from Europe, she sacrifices both appearance and health in order to assist her husband in the home, in the field, and about the barn. She feeds the cattle, milks the cows, shears the sheep, spins the wool and dyes it; she then weaves the cloth cut of which she makes clothes for the family. She bakes and cooks; she washes, patches, and darns; and in the evening she finds time to read to the children from the Bible and Hymnbooks, and to instruct them and to keep them in the way of God. And sometimes as the flames dance on the hearth, to the accompanying hum of the spinning wheel, she tells them stories of the old home across the sea; at Christmas time as the snowflakes fall enshrouding fields and forests in a white mantle, she tells them of the Christ-child and teaches them to sing the dear old Christian hymns. With tear-filled eyes many a hard-fisted man acknowledges today what he owes his pioneer mother as he tells his children of the difficulties and hardships of those pioneer years. Practically all those who labored and struggled through those pioneer years are now sleeping peacefully in the last resting places of the Eastfriesian congregations. (2)

The tasks the women performed in the field are referred to by Mr. Quick.

135. We divided into factions in support of our favorite machines. On our farm we were partisans of the dropper; but after a while we found out we were wrong. The

Germans taught us. They used their boys and girls and women in the harvest field. We hired men who would now be called hobos.

The women were economically dependent upon their husbands who had complete control over the financial affairs of the household. Money was scarce and the Eastfriesian women had very little of it. Check books were unknown to them. The butter and egg money was used for household expenses and the women had no other income.

The immigrant families were large. It was economically profitable to have large families as each additional son meant the possibility of tilling more acres and there was much the daughters could do. A childless marriage was a calamity. "Be fruitful and multiply" was the divine injunction which the Eastfriesian pastor quoted at the marriage service. It was a duty to fill the command; to shirk it was a sin.

136. About one half of the American families have only one child or none. The American race is dying out because of this sinful abomination. We have in this country 5,000 women professors and instructors in our colleges and universities; we also have 25,000 women preachers in direct opposition to I Cor. 14:34-35; I Tim. 2:11-15. (4)

137. Most of those early settlers had a stately number of children, for in those days we knew nothing of the limitation of births and race suicide was considered a sin against the Holy Ghost. (5)

138. (Personal interview). The early years that we spent in this country were hard years. We all worked hard. During the summer months father (the husband) worked some miles away from home. He came home on Saturday night and Sunday we all walked to church a mile and a half away. On the way I always wanted to walk alone and father often wondered why I would not walk with him and the children. The reason was this. There was another baby coming, and I would spend my time on the way praying that I might die before that baby was to appear so that I would not need to go through with it again.

The Eastfriesian people in their native land were exceedingly superstitious. They believed in witches (Hexen). Every community had a number of people who were supposedly endowed with supernatural powers. They believed in premonitions (Vorloop, Hellsehen, Vorgesicht). Death casts its shadow in advance. If a light sputtered it was said, the light burns "dodgtsk." If a carpenter heard a noise as if someone were pounding it meant that he would soon be called upon to make a casket. Sometime a light is seen in the room in which there will be another corpse, or the entire funeral procession may be seen in advance.

The power of "Hellsehen" is peculiar to some families and is hereditary. Undertakers, sextons, and casket-makers are particularly endowed with such powers. A person so endowed is often obliged to arise at night and guided by an unseen hand, is led to the cemetery to see a funeral procession that is soon to pass. Often the corpse is recognized in advance.

Prophecies are also seen in plants. If a cabbage or kale plant has a few striped leaves, it means that some member in the family is marked to die (fege). (6)

In sickness the people prefer magical practices to medical attention. For members of the family to avoid close bodily contact with a sick member....is evidence of a lack of religious faith. The view is completely fatalistic. "De Dood kan man neet entloopen." Sympathetic magic occupies a prominent place in healing the sick. Warts touched by the hand of a corpse disappear; they will also disappear if rainwater from the hollow of a tombstone is applied. (7)

Among some of the immigrant families the beliefs continued in America. There are a number of Eastfriesian communities that were torn asunder by stories and rumors of witches and witchcraft when the immigrant generation still predominated.

139. Our German neighbors, as far as my acquaintance went, all believed in witches. They followed our American custom of using the term "witch" as a noun of common gender. One of them told me that "Vunce in Chermany", on a bitterly cold day in winter, while he was thrashing grain with a flail in his master's barn, a butterfly came fluttering though the place. How could that be, he asked, when it was so cold?

"It hatched out in the warm barn," I ventured.

"It wasn't a butterfly at all," he explained scoffing..."De man ve vas vorking for was a vitch. He made himself into a butterfly so he could fly in to see if ve vas vorkin' hart enough!"

"Vunce in Chermany" became to me the equivalent of "Once upon a time" of the fairy tales.

"Vunce in Chermany" a witch had displayed to the people a rooster walking about with a huge log attached to his leg. The fowl jerked the log about as if it had been a feather. But in the crowd was a child who was superior to the wizard's enchantment – I believe because it had not been christened. To this eye of innocence, the log appeared for what it actually was – merely a straw tied to the rooster's leg. Witchcraft was balked. It was thus that, when with our German neighbors, I lived in a strange and un-American world. (8)

The Eastfriesian communities have been fertile fields for medical quacks and faith healers. These documents show the following: such men may gain especially if they give the impression of piety and faith.

140. (Personal interview). A strange man came to our community a few days ago. He was able to heal people by the laying on of hands. He visited a good many of the sick people of our community. We also got him to see my mother. I asked him how he accounted for his strange power. He answered he could not account for it in any other way but that it was a divine gift that must be used for the benefit of mankind.

Of this same healer and community another speaks with more skepticism.

141. (Personal interview). I was living in a community into which a so-called faith healer came some years ago. He was called into many of the homes of the community and by the laying on of hands claimed to be able to heal the sick. I was asked what I thought about this matter. I answered that I was rather skeptical, but if he or any such man might be able to relieve some suffering let him by all means do

so. I said, however, that I had never encountered anyone who claimed to possess such power that did not later prove he was a fake and a fraud. I have heard since that not one of those upon whom he called was in the least helped by his visit.

In another community there was also a wide following of such a healer.

142. (Personal interview). A man came to our town several times a week all winter a few years ago and people came to him for treatment. It was surprising the large number that came to see him. Many testified that when he placed his hand on them they could feel a strange sensation as if some power were passing from him to them. The scoffers remarked that he had electric batteries hidden in his clothes and that it was this current that was felt. How successful or how permanent his healing was I do not know.

Mr. Quick gives some interesting material concerning the customs of marriage and courtship that prevailed in the community of his boyhood days.

143. To us rather primitive Yankees, as they called us, their courtships and marriages were matters of astonishment, not to say scandal; as much so as the amatory conduct which, according to Diedrich Knickerbocker, the young men of Connecticut endeavored, with some initial success, to introduce among the maidens of the New Amsterdam Dutch. When one of our young Germans courted his flaxen-haired Fraulein, he made no effort to conceal the process. He just went ahead and courted. There was no assumption as among us that he had dropped in to talk about the weather or the Hessian fly in the wheat. He did not bring a pocketful of candies with mottos on them to furnish a substitute for conversation between him and the girl until the men of the family pulled off their boots, set them by the stove and retired. No, our German swain, as often observed by me, sat in the family circle in the presence of the whole world with his pipe in his mouth and his arm about the waist of his girl. He did this very much with the air of a knight planting his banner on the battlements, not so much for the pleasure of it as from a sense of duty, and as a sign of conquest. It was the thing to do, you know.

Some of their peasant ideas as to marriage were equally surprising. An instance is in point: One of our neighbors had left in Germany a sweetheart who, he said, had promised that she would join him on the farm which he confidently expected to acquire in America. This expectation having been realized, he saved the money for the girl's passage. The business of bringing immigrants from Germany to Iowa had grown to be a profitable one, and was in the hands of the Germans with talents developed in that direction. To one of these Fred entrusted the money for the girl's passage. The land and immigration agent went to Germany with the money and returned with a cargo of Germans, and a girl for Fred. He was astonished, he told us, and I think, strangely put out at first, to find that it was not his old girl at all.

"It vas dis vay," he explained: "Ven he got dare mit my money, dis olt girl I hat didn't vant to come anymore. Maybe she was scairt of the vater. Mabe she ad anodder feller yet. So anodder girl said she'd come. De feller dot hat my money looked at dis new girl, and he said, "I dank you'll do." Ven she got here I vas mat, but I looked at her; and after a vile I sait, "You'll do all right," and ve got marriert. You see, I hat all dat money in her. She's a goot worker. She'll do goot !"



Now among us the sentiment of love was scarcely ever mentioned save in the agony of courtship. Such mention involved a concession to sentiment which was extraordinarily difficult. But as the basis of matrimony, the sentiment itself was conclusively presumed to exist. Such a thing as Fred's matter-of-fact acceptance of the substitute mate, and its failure to be regarded as anything but a good joke on Fred by his fellow-countryman among us had a tendency to set him and them off from us as a different order of beings. Such things are important factors in the process of the assimilation of peoples.

As for Fred's marriage, I do not see how it can be denied that it was a success. He had bought a small tract of what we called inferior land on a contract by which he paid for it by a share of the crop. It was soon paid for. If babies had been treated as are the motor-cars now, Fred and his wife would have been obliged to get one more set of license plates every year as I knew them. There was a new pupil in school every year from that family. And I am informed that, starting with 80 acres of land, Fred has given to each of these sons on the coming of age 160 acres, and to every daughter \$1,000 as a wedding present. I regard it as proof that the substitute wife has, as Fred predicted, "done pretty goot." (9)

The home life of the Eastfriesian families of the second and third generations resembles that of other American families more than it does that of the Eastfriesian immigrants. There are no vestiges of un-American dress.

The tea drinking is not as prevalent as it was in the immigrant families, and other strange food habits have disappeared.

Women occupy a different position; greater economic freedom is theirs. They have more money than their grandmothers had, and they sign checks for articles they buy, whether for the house or for personal use, as freely as the men.

All available information points to smaller families.

144. (Personal letter from the pastor of an Eastfriesian church). Our people are not raising the large families they used to raise. In the first 10 years of the history of this church (1867 – 1877) there were 173 baptisms. At the time the church numbered 35 families. That meant a child for every two families each year. Now it takes a dozen families for one child each year. What a change! Where are we going?

Figures gathered of 460 families, all the parents born before 1860, some of them immigrants and some born in this country of immigrant parents, show a total of 2,971 children in these families or approximately 6.5 for each family. In another group of 361 families, the parents born between 1860- 1890, the total number of children is 1,209 or 3.8 for each family. In the older group it seems that seven was the favorite number of children as 74 of the 460 families had that number. Five was next in popularity, 64 families of the 460 had five, while six and eight followed in order named, 51 families had the former and 49 the latter number. In the latter group nearly all of the parents were born in America. The favorite number of children in this group of 316 families is two and three, there being 58 families among the 316 who have two and an equal number who have three children. 5.5% of the group is childless, while 1.75% of the families of the other group have no children.

The customs of courtship and marriage mentioned by Mr. Quick have disappeared entirely. The young swain of Eastfriesian descent does not do his courting that way at present. He uses modern methods. He takes his best girl to church, to the movies or to the weekly band concert in his own car. In many families every grown son has a car of his own. The courtship technique of the Eastfriesian boy of the third generation does not differ from that of any other American boy.

Witches and ghosts no longer walk in the Eastfriesian communities.

In the matters of sickness, magical practices still prevail to a limited extent. A physician speaks of his experiences.

145. (Personal interview). I have practiced medicine for many years in a community in which the Eastfriesians predominate and I find that they will use all sorts of remedies before they call me and also in addition to the medicine that I prescribe. In cases of pneumonia I have often found a bag with camphor tied around the patient's neck. Imagine a pneumonia patient with a bag of onions tied around his neck! It's hard enough for him to breathe without having onions about all the time. Recently I was called to see a person with pneumonia and found the foul-smelling bag tied to the patient's chests. I took that bag and threw it just as far as I could. I suppose they put it back after I left.

One of the most significant changes in customs in the Eastfriesian group in the United States is concerned with the changes in the names given to the children. These changes clearly show that a process of Americanization is going on. In the old home in Europe as well as among the immigrant families in America, the custom of naming the children after the grandparents prevails. This custom is continued to a limited extent among the members of the second generation.

In a typical Eastfriesian family, when this custom is followed, the first-born, if a boy, receives the name of his paternal grandfather. The second child is named after the maternal grandparent, the name depending of course on the sex of the child. Thus the names alternate from the father's family to the mother's. Usually the first and third children are named after the parents of the child's father and the second and fourth are named after the parents of the child's mother. After the names of four grandparents have all been used the name of the brothers and sisters are used next, beginning with the name of the father's eldest brother or sister and turning next to the mother's eldest brother or sister.

A concrete example may help us understand the system. Harm Meyer, the son of Peter and Aintje Meyer, may take unto himself Elske, the daughter of Behrend and Geeske Smit, as wife. The first child of this union will preferably be a boy and there is no difficulty in selecting a name; he will be called Peter, thus honoring his paternal grandfather, who buys the baptismal dress, also a baby-carriage, and later the first suit of clothes. This child will be known as Peter H. Meyer. Thus the initial letter of the father's name functions to distinguish this Peter Meyer from others of that name as Harm may have several brothers each of whom in the course of time will have a son Peter. If then we read of Peter H. Meyer in the newspaper, we know that this is the oldest son of Harm.

The second child may be a girl and she is called Geeske receiving her name from the maternal grandmother. The third is another daughter and she is called Aintje after the

paternal grandmother; next is Behrend, this boy bearing the name of his maternal grandfather. And so the names of the four grandparents are perpetuated, and everybody is happy. But, more babies come and so additional names are needed. The fifth child, if a girl, receives the name of her father's elder sister, Hilke in this case. The sixth is another girl and should be called Jantje, the name borne by her mother's eldest sister. Number seven is a son and Harm decides to bequeath his own name upon this child and so when the next daughter appears she is named after her own mother, Elske.

A diagram may assist in understanding the system.

|    |         |         |
|----|---------|---------|
| 1. | Peter   | Parents |
| 2. | Geeske  |         |
| 3. | Aintje  | Harm    |
| 4. | Behrend | and     |
| 5. | Hilke   |         |
| 6. | Jantje  | Elske   |
| 7. | Harm    |         |
| 8. | Elske   | Meyer   |

Numbers 1, 3, 5, and 7 are named after the father's family; numbers 2, 4, 6, are named after the mother's. But this family is becoming Americanized and when the children start to school some of the names undergo slight changes; Peter remains as it is, but Geeske becomes Grace, Aintje is named Anna, Behrend is known as Benjamin, Hilke prefers Hilda, Jantje becomes Jane or Jennie. Harm probably remains as it is but Elske is really Elsie.

If fate should frown on the family so that all the children should be girls, Peter would be changed to Peterka, Behrand to Behrendina and Harm to Harmka, in each case changing the name into its feminine form.

We see by the above how the system works in practice. It does work and the older generation insists that it shall work. When a child is born into such a home, the name comes automatically as the result of the system. One case came to my attention to which the grandmother naturally assumed that her little granddaughter who had recently appeared in her son's home would bear her name. The dress and the carriage were provided when to the surprise and indignation of all, the parents decided to give the child a modern name instead. It is considered highly disrespectful toward the parents if the children disregard the system.

However, the system has been slowly yielding to the inevitable changes that take place in the customs of an immigrant group surrounded by other customs. It has now almost completely disappeared. An analysis of several thousand names reveal the fact that previous to 1900 the children were given names that were 100% Eastfriesian, and the system as described, was followed most religiously. At the present time the Eastfriesian names are almost entirely absent and there is only an occasional adherence to the system. This change has not come suddenly, but it came gradually. Following the close adherence of the system previous to 1900, there came a period in which several tendencies appeared sometimes in a combined form, sometimes singly. One of those was the tendency to Americanize or Anglicize the old Eastfriesian names, for example, if the grandmother's name was Geertje it was changed to Gertie, similarly Hilke was changed to Hilda and Elske to Elsie. Sometimes for the sake of familial peace the child might actually be given the name Gertje, Hilda, or Elsie thus giving the grandmother time to adjust herself slowly to the ways of a changing world.

Again, the Eastfriesian name may be given to the child together with a modern middle name attached and the child will be known by the middle name only. For example the grandfather's name may be Lubbert, the child will be named Lubbert Charles and will later sign his name L. Charles Meyer.

It is interesting to note this change of names. The Eastfriesian name Dirk is changed to Dick in the next generation in popular usage and later re-appears in the third generation as Richard. By a similar method Wessel becomes Wesley, Freerk is changed to Fred, Wilhelm is made into William, Jan or Johann may both become John, Jantje and Janna become Jennie or Jane, and the process goes on.

The surnames are not very readily changed. I have knowledge of only a few such changes. Mueller is readily changed to Miller; Hoogestraat becomes Highstreet, and Groeneveld is changed to Greenfield. In each of these cases the meaning has been retained. Names that are not subject to such ease of translation are retained in their original form.

It will be noted from the appended lists that the tendency during the past decade has been toward the use of names that are quite far removed from those of the older generation. These names are taken from the baptismal records of several Eastfriesian Churches and bring before us the name given to the children of those communities during the past five decades. The names given to the children in the more recent years are not like the old. It seems in their determination to get away from the traditional custom the parents have not only stopped using the ancestral names, but they are selecting names so far removed from the Eastfriesian as possible.

Someone asks, "Whence come some of the names? Turn to novel so and so. Do we not get our styles from Paris, so why not the names of our children from France? Have we no better reason for the name we select than the euphonic? Where is our national consciousness? It is a bad mis-mating to hitch a good Eastfriesian surname to Delos or Phadoris."

| <u>1867-1877</u> | <u>1880-1890</u> | 1890-1900 |
|------------------|------------------|-----------|
| Isbrand, Jacob   | Ulfert           | Christina |
| Henriette Anna   | Jan              | Jannas    |
| Antje Margareta  | Engelke          | Klass     |
| Klasina          | Trientje         | Wessel    |
| Jacob            | Antje            | Bertha    |
| Bene             | Rindelina        | Evert     |
| Afke             | Andreas          | Hilka     |
| Harm             | Jacob            | Heero     |
| Lydia            | Johann           | Mareka    |
| Clasina          | Amke             | Bina      |
| Ernst            | Albertus         | Haboo     |

|                         |                   |                  |
|-------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Imkea                   | Lumke             | Skamke           |
| Foikea                  | Hrokr             | Hinderk          |
| Johannes                | Wupke             | Baukelena        |
| Berend                  | Geerd             | Hau              |
| Heirrich                | Harmina           | Grietje          |
| Christian               | Geelkelima        | Fantje           |
| Juren                   | Wilhelm           | Eke              |
| Jan                     | Freerk            | Lutjen           |
| Friederika              | Reemt             | Siefer           |
| Janna                   | Frauke            | Klaasina         |
| Folkert                 | Christoffer       | Berendina        |
| <u>1890-1900</u> (cont) | <u>1900-1905</u>  | <u>1905-1910</u> |
| Jacob                   | Hermann Toenjes   | Himke            |
| Ralph                   | Edna              | Talke            |
| Johan                   | Wilhelm           | Heye             |
| Martha                  | Anka Regina       | Elske            |
| Annette                 | Hanna Maria       | Heibe            |
| Fannie                  | Harm              | Tali             |
| Elizabeth               | Metteus           | Gaert            |
| Bernard Herbert         | Antje             | Hans             |
| Johanna Marie           | Mina              | Altje            |
| Katie                   | Joest             | Rickste          |
| Ida Effie               | Berendtje         | Jueren           |
| Harm                    | Christina Harriet | Temme            |
| David                   | Greito            | Menno            |
| Christian               | Christian         | Poppe            |
| Arthur                  | Wubbo             | Hinderk          |
| Clara                   | Hinnertje         | Grietje          |
|                         | Upke              | Hilka            |

Hermann Gepka  
 John Alrich  
 Janna  
 Grietje  
 Anna  
 Geerd  
 Elisabeth

1910-1918

|            |                  |                      |                    |
|------------|------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
|            | Lawrence         | Erma Florence        | Grant Ralph        |
| Alma       | Ruth             | Edgar Herman         | Doris Hinderike    |
| Meta       | Fred             | Velma Pauline        | Edith Virginia     |
| Harvey     | Helen            | Alvin Arthur         | Malvin Clarence    |
| Harm       | Tillie           | Alvera Grace         | Bernardine Lucile  |
| Martha     | Caroline         | Dirk John            | Mary Martha        |
| Frances    | Arthur           | Delbert Harm         | Esther Lydia       |
| Stelva     | Richard          | Dirk Peter Lambertus | Kenneth Oliver     |
| Raymond    | <u>1918-1929</u> | Elsa Helene          | Leola Elizabeth    |
| Grace      | Grace Leona      | Helen Margaret       | Lloyd Vernon       |
| Anna       | John Frank       | Lloyd                | Orval George       |
| Beatrice   | George Arthur    | Lester               | Lester Vergil      |
| Lucile     | Francis Verdina  | Luella Gertrude      | Margaret Elizabeth |
| Lucinda    | Calvin Henry     | Emil Edward          | Donald Maynard     |
| Amos       | Theodora Edwin   | Esther Marie         | Lillian Elsie      |
| Hannah     | Herman Frederick | Evelyn Emma          | Esther Marie       |
| Evelyn     | Russell Reints   | Andreas Christ       | Florence Ethel     |
| Pansy      | Samuel Willie    | Ernest George        | Nina Louise        |
| Thomas     | Doris Helina     | Elna Jesse           | Lucile Doris       |
| Nancy      | Alma Anna        | Earl                 | Arlene Dorthea     |
| Alice      | LaVon Phyllis    | Lucile               | Naomi Mae          |
| Evangeline | Edward Henry     | Irma Anna            | Leo Edward         |

|         |                |            |                 |
|---------|----------------|------------|-----------------|
| Maria   | Murrel Orletta | Everet Lee | Lloyd Eugene    |
| Lillian | Albert         | Roy Emil   | Reynald Lamcine |
| Bernice | Lucile Dorothy | Frederick  | Viola Marcella  |

Knowledge of the Eastfriesian group in this country together with the study of several thousand names given to their children during the past half century makes it clear that a number of stages are clearly discernable.

An analysis of 3912 names given to children born in the Eastfriesian households in America between 1867-1928 reveals the change as mentioned. Prior to 1890 the names were 100% Eastfriesian, while in the decade before 1928 the Eastfriesian names were used only in 6.2% of the cases

| <u>Period</u> | <u>No. of Names</u> | <u>No. of Eastfriesian names</u> | <u>% of Eastfriesian names</u> |
|---------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1867 – 77     | 173                 | 173                              | 100.0                          |
| 1880 – 90     | 25                  | 25                               | 100.0                          |
| 1890 – 00     | 1113                | 1070                             | 95.7                           |
| 1900 – 10     | 445                 | 370                              | 83.1                           |
| 1910 – 18     | 227                 | 97                               | 42.7                           |
| 1918 – 28     | 1829                | 115                              | 6.2                            |

There was one list of names received that was a striking exception. This was a list of 93 names of children baptized in the period of 1918-1928, and 37 of these names were Eastfriesian. This was 39 and 39.7% of the total of that group, as contrasted with 6.2% of the 1829 names in that period given in the above table. I believe this may be accounted for by the fact that the pastor of that church is very German in his sentiment and consequently whenever it was possible to do so he entered the names in Eastfriesian form. One example may suffice, the names of Jan Marvin and Jan Kenneth appear on the record; these children were doubtlessly named John Marvin and John Kenneth, but the pastor preferred to record them as Jan, which is the Eastfriesian equivalent for John.

The greatest change occurred in the period from 1910-18; this was the time of the world war and hastened the change from the use of older names. Thereafter the change was rapid and the parents who still adhere to the custom, in the communities studied, are now almost the exception.

## CHAPTER X – GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

As we now look back across the materials that have been presented in these chapters we see first a group of people in their old home across the sea where a relentless battle is carried on with the sea to preserve their shores and to wrest a bit more land from its grasp. We find a people whose ideas of liberty and democracy had already found expression in a republican form of government two thousand years ago.

Because of prevailing hard economic conditions in their native land, a great migration to the shores of the new world took place during the past century, beginning in 1830 and reaching its height about 1875. It is with these migrants that we have been concerned in this study. They and their descendents, numbering about 100,000, are now living in various parts of the country, principally in the Midwest.

The Eastfriesian immigrants were pioneers in many of the communities of the Midwest. Through their efforts and frugal living, they became well-to-do in the course of time. Much of the land fell into their hands. They established their homes and churches and raised large families.

They came because of the great economic opportunities that America offered; they had no desire to return. There remained a sentimental attachment and perhaps a secret longing to return for a visit, but their entire interest centered in America.

The immigrant preserved their native Eastfriesian Low-German for conversational purposes with their countrymen and they taught it to their children. They worshipped in the German language.

Religion has had a vital place in this group. It was not of the emotional type. The immigrants came to church and listened to long sermons. They rather reluctantly lifted their voices in song; they bowed their heads in prayer but they prayed in silence. It is with the greatest hesitance that they gave vocal or any other overt expression to their religious emotions.

The members of the second generation are but remotely interested in Eastfriesland. They know it only through the stories and the traditions of their parents. The memories and means that would make them one with the people of that land are lacking. They are happy in their new home. They know no other, nor do they desire another. "America is good enough for me," voices the unanimous opinion of this group. They maintain a few customs of their fathers, but they think in terms of American, not in terms of Eastfriesland!

The second generation tried to preserve the Low-German language but found it increasingly difficult to maintain and now it serves only intermittently as a medium of conversation. In families of the second generation the older children learned to read German, but many of the younger members did not, and so the German too, is slipping away together with the Low-German. Their churches are turning to the use of the English language and the German as a medium of worship is disappearing from the group.

The third generation has lost all interest in the native land of their grandparents. It is to them a mythical land whence long ago their ancestors came. They know practically nothing about it, have no interest in it, do not care to visit it, and would be entirely out of place if they went there. They believe, however, that the group from which they have come is second to none, and are sensitive to any intimation that these people are not equal of



others. They join their parents in giving expression to their pride in the Eastfriesian traits of thrift, honesty, and religious interest.

There is a decided preference for the English language among the members of their generation, both for conversational purpose and in their religious worship. Religion is still a vital factor in the lives of the men and women of the third generation. The grandson of the Eastfriesian immigrant attends church as faithfully as his grandfather did before him. Religion means as much to him; he is just as willing to sacrifice for it.

Participation in community activities has increased with each succeeding generation; the present generation participates to the fullest extent. In increasing numbers the young people are leaving the farms and are entering other professions. The increased education prepares these young people for usefulness in other fields.

In many respects the old Eastfriesian customs remain as memories only. Such vestigial remnants as are still present will apparently disappear before another generation has passed.

One striking characteristic of the Eastfriesian people is the close familial coherence and solidarity that has continued through succeeding generations. There has never come the break between the immigrant and his children which has been common and which has often proved disastrous in the immigrant groups, especially in the urban situation.

While it is not primarily a part of this study to make a prognosis, it may not be out of place to try to see the future development of this group on the basis of their past experiences.

Apparently there will be a complete removal of the German language from the Eastfriesian churches. In some cases it will only be a matter of a decade, in others it will be longer, but this change is inevitable. Probably at the end of two decades there will be very few churches of the Presbyterian and Reformed group that will use German at all. With the passing of the immigrant generation, and the disappearance of the German born pastors this change is certain. In some churches this change will come sooner. In the Lutheran churches the German will probably be retained longer.

The Low-German will continue for a time in the homes, but even now the English is replacing it. The members of the third generation prefer to speak the English language with their brothers, sisters and friends. When they establish their home many of them will use English exclusively and their children will scarcely ever hear the Low-German. To them it is a foreign language. Thus, the Low-German will disappear. This will be hastened by the intermarriages of the Eastfriesian young people with those of other nationalities. There will be a wider distribution of these young people through the general population. This will hasten assimilation and amalgamation. In the past the clannishness of the people resulted in extending the boundaries of the community to make room for the natural increase. This tendency tends to decline as it becomes more difficult to provide a farm for each of the children. The increase in higher education means that many of the young people will not return to the home community, but will seek employment elsewhere. This general distribution will result in the gradual disappearance of the group as a group.

146. What will be the future of the 16,000 families? Yes, who knows! Only from the lessons and experiences of the past may we venture to predict the future. And the picture that reveals itself to the careful observer is about as follows: Because of their innate industry,

thrift, honesty, and simplicity, the American Eastfriesians must be counted among the well-to-do citizens of the land. But their forcible language, together with their many customs and folkways brought from the old home, will be lost in the not too distant future because of the surrounding Americanism which is more and more crowding in upon them. The Americanization of our children is increasing rapidly, especially in the smaller communities and their incorporation into the life of the American community is inevitable. Irresistibly the stream flows on until it is swallowed up by the sea. And who regrets this? The future of this country belongs to the American spirit and the American people. Should it not suffice if we have made a cultural contribution to the country, the sense of freedom, righteousness, diligence, and Eastfriesland piety? Have we not fulfilled our mission when we have given to the America of the future of which we and our children will be an integral part, the finer traits of the Eastfriesian character and when America has made these her own? Should we not be content in the knowledge that we have rendered noble assistance in planting the seed that promises a splendid harvest? Should we not be content to have assisted in building a home and a country for our children and grandchildren that is better and more kind than the land that we and our fathers knew across the sea? (1)

## APPENDIX A

I am the son of a black-smith, one of seven children. After completing public school father thought I should join his clan but it did not appeal to me. Many suggestions were proffered me but nothing appealed. I did not know God who guides the destinies of men, to turn to in those days. I had some kind of a subconscious instinct toward the gospel ministry, for whenever I saw a preacher stand in the pulpit a bold phantom arose within me. I guess one might call it a Joseph's dream or ambition. In those days a Macedonian cry came from America in the person of a brother, whom I had promised when he left seven years before that I would follow him. He offered to send the ticket, and finally I resolved in my heart to obey and meet the challenge. It was hard for mother, yet she knew it would mean much to the one whom she had bidden "good-bye" seven years before. I landed in Baltimore with one Mark (German coin) in my pocket and a piece of rye bread in my homemade trunk. I arrived in Holland, Iowa after a two day's trip over land with the German coin still in my pocket very proud to be privileged to bequeath it to my stranger – brother. Bread and water had been my rich menu those two days – that was better than Elias and Christ fared in the olden days. I arrived at 11 am, and at 1.30 I was sitting on a disk pulverizing cornstalks. I had never driven a horse before but it was April and the grain had to be covered up. I was tired and blue, I lost sight of the row, and got a scolding and I cried, and I conjured the skies to shower some mercy upon me. My brother was a stranger to me and the world around me was all so strange. To me it was like a child taken out of a little village into a busy metropolis or as being transplanted from a little village store into a modern department store. I was overwhelmed by the magnitude of the vast expanse of this country and the methods and instruments of work. The people wanted to be kind and sympathetic to me but my bashful disposition was not potential to appreciate it. I like the intimacy between the pastor and his flock. I was not used to that. I had never seen a minister in our home and I deemed it a great privilege to shake hands with one. But I did not understand his messages, for I was spiritually dead. I had to great desire to attend the church, and I thought people in America were super-religious. Sunday school was a strange factor in my life, I had received Bible training in public school and of course I was confirmed and had outgrown that sort of thing.

I wanted to earn money, and I earned the monstrous sum of nine dollars a month and I worked seven months for wages and five months a year for board and bed. It took me almost two years to pay off my ticket.

The second year I passed through quite an ordeal. I contracted blood poisoning in my nose. I did not get the medical attention and suffered mercilessly. Toward fall of my second year in this country I became conscious of my sinful estate. I realized I was lost in sin. My trials and the influence of the family altar and the sympathetic attitude of Christian friends brought this about.

The more I searched the scriptures and frequented the house of worship, the more my unholy wretched condition was made manifest. I sought day and night righteousness, peace, and joy with the result of further buffeting within. Until the fall of 1901 at noon day after I had turned seven times to the God of heavens for mercy I passed out of darkness and hellish pain of soul into the light and peace and joy of a redeemed man. I was conscious of the great crisis that had come in my life. I cried, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" I received the call to the gospel ministry. The mantle of the holy ministry had been cast upon me and I turned from plowing corn to preaching Christ.

Friends helped me to secure the necessary education and today I am a preacher of the gospel, able to preach the gospel in two languages, with nineteen years of rich and blessed experience. Thirteen years after my landing in this country I returned to visit my people. I had become a perfect stranger to them. Everywhere I was spoken of as the "American." My appearance, my habits, my speech, etc. had made me a different man. The land of my boyhood dreams had lost its charm. I did not feel at home in the place of my cradle. I had become a new man in the new land of my adoption, which is home, sweet home to me.

## APPENDIX B

(Life history, second generation).

About ten years before I was born my parents left Eastfriesland and came to Iowa. They had been married about five years and had two children. They had enough money to pay for their passage, brought a few clothes with them and that is all they had. We lived on the edge of a large Eastfriesland community where they had purchased a farm five years after their arrival. My parents were poor and it was only by strict economy that they were able to get along and were at last able to pay off the indebtedness they had on the farm for many years.

I went to country school and had many problems to face. I early realized my family differed from the other families in the neighborhood. In general, we dressed the same as others, but my mother did not care to have me wear the common overalls that the other boys wore so she made trousers for me at home. I was too young to wear long trousers and mother thought it was too cold to wear knee length trousers. The result was a compromise – trousers that reached just about to the shoe tops and in these I went forth to meet the jests of my playmates. The result was many heartaches and tears and a tendency to withdraw from the group and remain aloof.

In my home life the Low-German and the German languages prevailed. All our conversation was in the Low-German, my parents discouraging any attempt of the children to use the English language among ourselves.

We had our American school-books and the weekly paper and a monthly farm paper in the English language, but all other books and papers were German. I recall how and read and reread Harper's Fifth Reader, a book which had been used by an older sister. All our religious books were in German as were also the Sunday school materials that we used.

We were trained diligently in religion and it was the custom in our home for all to gather around the table after supper with our Bibles and read several chapters, each member of the family reading in turn. In this way I acquired a good reading knowledge of German and knowledge of Biblical history as well.

We spoke the Eastfriesian Low-German at home; at school, however, only the English language was used as the great majority of children came from native American homes. In all our school and community interests we belonged to this group of people who were not Eastfriesian. However, in our church interests and our social activities among friends and relatives our interests reach out in another direction. We attended a country church some miles away. It stood in the midst of a prosperous Eastfriesian community and this became the center of our religious and cultural life. All the services were held in German. We attended Sunday school and the preaching services on Sunday. On Saturday the children went to the church to receive special training in the German language and religion. Our social intercourse also centered in this group about the church and it was with them that we visited back and forth as well as with relatives who were also of this group. The result was that I grew up in two cultures; on one side were the school life and the intimate contacts with the friends and playmates of the school and play-ground. Even during the summer vacation my only daily companions were from the English speaking homes, few of whom attended church or Sunday school regularly. On the other side was the church group.

Consequently I was on the margin between the two – more German than the playmates in the one group and more Americanized than my companions of the other group. I yearned for the English speaking group; I had more things in common with them than with the other. I wanted to be like them, I longed to be different.

A relative economic independence having been attained, my parents moved to town when I was seventeen and the opportunity to go to school came to me. Up to this time I had attended no other school except the country school and having completed the grades at fourteen, it means that three years were spent at home doing farm work.

I now went to a strange city to a school maintained by my church and it was here that I made the beginnings of studies and adventures that were to lead me into many and diverse paths. When I left home that first time I stepped into a world that was strange and new. I had never had a train ride before and had never been out of the state. I had been outside of the county only twice before. I had never seen a street car or a paved street.

I hardly realized at the time that henceforth my life was to be different. I returned home occasionally but never for more than a week or two at a time and the contacts made in the new surroundings have made me over entirely. I have never felt out of sympathy with my parents and my contacts with them have ever remained intimate and sympathetic. I still love to visit the old home community although my parents have long since passed on. I had never attended high school nor had any of my brothers and sisters had the advantage of a high school education. And so I started with high school work and remained to take a college course. Those were important years in my life. A complete change came over me. Gradually I emerged from my backwardness until I became one of the leading figures on the campus. I participated in athletics, making the team in football and baseball although I had never played either. I was active in most of the school activities. I was elected president of my class and served as editor of the college paper. When I left school after those years I was not the same as the one who had entered eight years before.

During all these years I felt that I was an American, as a boy I thrilled to the stories of the exploits of the Revolutionary heroes. I rode with Paul Revere on his famous midnight ride; I exclaimed with Patrick Henry, "Give me liberty or give me death;" I even stood on the gallows with Nathan Hale and regretted with him that I had but one life to give for my country. In short, America was my country; her heroes were my heroes and I knew no other.

When in college the Spanish speaking students presented a flag of Mexico to the institution to be hung in the dining room. Not to be out-done, the German students asked me to join them in procuring a flag of the German Empire for the same purpose. I refused to participate and told them I knew no other flag except the American flag.

My college work completed, I again lived for five years in an Eastfriesian community. In the meantime I had married outside the Eastfriesian group, and it seems I no longer fitted into the situation. I was different and restless and wanted to get away. For the past ten years I have been away from this group living in English speaking communities where I am a part of the community. I am a vital part in the educational and religious and social life of my community. My family does not differ from others except that its cultural standards and ideals are higher than most in the community. I still have occasional contacts with the Eastfriesian group, but they are brief. I reverence the memory of my pious Eastfriesian parents who directed me into what I am now. I have the greatest admiration for my parents

and other immigrants who dared to face a strange and unknown world. They knew when they left they would never see their dear ones again. I wonder if they realized that their children would be made over into citizens of a new and strange country. Had they known that their children would become Americans instead of Eastfriesians would they have taken the step? Perhaps they would have hesitated a bit longer, but I believe the unfortunate economic conditions of those days in Eastfriesland were such that home ties of blood-relationship and loved of country were very easily overcome.

I admire the worthwhile traits of the people, their honesty, their willingness to work, and their religious interest and activities. I deplore their clannishness, their limited vision and whatever other faults they may have. I am not sorry that by origin I am one of them; I am glad I am not living among them. If I think how different, how restricted, my life would have been had my parents remained in Eastfriesland, I am grateful that they took this step which made me by birth, sentiment and memory an American citizen.

## APPENDIX C

(Life History). I am the son of a poor working-man and besides me there were six other children who depended on my father's wages. It was impossible to make any headway at all at that time in Germany. If you were poor you were bound to remain so all your life. At that time when I was a boy, there were many moving out of Germany and there arose in me a longing for a better country.

When I was fifteen years old I joined some acquaintances and came to America. I came with the firm intention of making this my future home, never to return. Had I remained there it is hard to say what I would have done. It was on the morning of the fourth of July that I first set foot on American soil and as I looked about me on that first morning I asked myself the question, "What will this country bring me?" I was green in everything, as green as they make them in Germany. But I believe I was a child of God and did not know it.

During those first years I worked on a farm in Iowa for some relatives and I was a Joseph in Egypt. I was a slave in that home during those hard years under the burdens that were mine. (Let me not go into detail in regard to these hardships.) I often wished and prayed that I might never be born. I did not have a home but in a wonderful way a home was opened to me in a nearby community. I was interested in farming and rather liked the work. I felt at home among the Eastfriesian people and they all received me well and treated me well except the relatives for whom I worked.

The greatest difficulty that I had was in acquiring knowledge of the English language, but I believe I can speak it fairly well as I am using it constantly both in conversation and in public address. While I am getting a number of German papers most of my reading is in the English language. My oldest son can understand German fairly well, the rest know very little about it. I want them to use the English language, and I am willing to do everything within my power to give them a college education. I am not particular into what nationality my children will marry, but I should like to see them married to young people who are Christians. I liked the church in Germany much better than the church in America. A person did not dare talk with the person sitting beside him, while here it seems to me the people talk all the time and about most anything. The first years that I was in this country I went to church because I had to. I did not want to go and I did not want to listen to the pastor so I slept most of the time in church.

I believe the young people in America are just as willing to work as those in Germany and they behave much better. There the young people that I knew were much wilder than they were in Iowa when I was young. Over there they drank and danced their way and I did not care for that.

I am glad that I came to America. I have been a citizen of the United States for 30 years and this is my home and the home of my children.



## APPENDIX D

Transplanted, or a Process of Americanization as Observed in My Life. (Dr. K.J. Stratemeier)

### I. The Old Soil – 1888-1902.

Born July 24, 1888 in Loquard, one hour's walking to the Northwest of Emden, Eastfriesland, Northern Germany. Father a day laborer. Entered school at six and almost completed the grades (Volksschule). America was before me almost constantly. We saw some move away thither. In the 14<sup>th</sup> year of my life a letter came from there urging us very much and because of advancing age of the parents making this final opportunity for coming. Father was undecided. I remember how I besought father to go, pleading for my own future. My school days had been extremely happy ones, but my ideal, my call, was urging me on and I sensed the impossibility of realizing it in the Fatherland, and I saw America beckoning to me from with the promise of fulfillment. My urging convinced my father and so we left, as we all thought never to see the old places again, but – on our way to Paradise.

### II. Trial and Error Days – 1902 – 1909,

Settled in Iowa. (Little Rock). The third day after our arrival I followed a man on the farm. Accustomed to village life I would feel lonesome at times, all the more so because I seldom came in contact with others, hardly even on Sunday. I cannot remember learning more than a dozen English words that summer. But I went to school a little the first winter and enjoyed it. A little more of Americanism penetrated as the next two years were spent as a hired man on another farm. There English newspapers were read. The new mail routes were just opening up. I remember the government weather report received in the mail every day. In the winter I went to school some more. The readers appealed to me. I made such progress that I could read Carpenter's Geographical Readers with enjoyment. One of my teachers got me interested in special literary work. She organized us into a literary society to meet the closing hours of Friday afternoon. To my horror I was chosen president, but the teacher was kind enough to help me over my difficulties and blunders. I remember how fervently I read the accounts from the lives of Washington and Lincoln. They almost immediately meant quite as much and more to me than any German emperor ever did. But in the succeeding years I considered myself too big to go to school. But for a dollar I secured a World Fact book from a mail order house and that became my text book. No one suggested anything else. More progress was made the last two years on the farm. I hired out to an Irish farmer and was now surrounded daily with the sound of the foreign tongue. In this home I found the Ladies' Home Journal edited at that time by Bok and found it a delightful matter to peruse. While working here I also joined a district literary society and recited freely bits of verse appearing in "Successful Farming", such as

I live for those who love me  
For those who hold me true  
For the heaven that smiles above me  
And awaits my spirit too.

Much headway was made during these two years.

### III. Conscious Imbibing – 1909

Following the call of youth it was finally possible for me to set out to gain that special preparation needed to become a minister of the Gospel. With the dawn of the new year of 1909 I came to Dubuque (now University of Dubuque) and enrolled in the Academy department. An understanding master of the English language guided me a deeper understanding of grammar and literature. I found American literature especially attractive; it seemed to breathe the very air of the land. English literature, though appreciated because of its greater polish and range, seemed to voice a message more remote. German literature also provided added factors toward the understanding of life and the equipment for a bilingual ministry. The inter-racial, cosmopolitan atmosphere at Dubuque, due to the presence of representatives from some thirty nationalities, almost automatically corrected every narrow slant. Special summer work at the University of Chicago, also Columbia, summers of 1913-1915, helped to deepen the American outlook. It was a source of satisfaction in the summer of 1915 to be entrusted by Professor Devine of Columbia to direct the class in practical sociology to Ellis Island, where 13 years before I arrived as an immigrant. What a process of adaptation connected the Then and the Now! Three years of special theological training were also spent in Dubuque, after which in 1916-1919, I was surrounded with the spirit of Princeton Theological Seminary at Princeton, New Jersey. From there, after in 1918 marrying an American girl of Dutch and German descent, I stepped into the ministry which in the nature of developments in our church life increasingly demands the exclusive use of the English language. As editor of a German Church weekly I find the use of two languages rather a help than a hindrance to sense and to interpret the peculiar American spirit.

### IV. A Comparison

Last summer after 27 years of wonderful living in America full of change of scenes (farm, school, village, city, East and West), I returned to pay a visit to the Fatherland and the village of my birth. While enjoying it all, the impossibility of abiding there was again noted. Now my former schoolmates there still regarded existing distinctions as insurmountable, while my democratic feelings revolted to mark any such differences. Against their visions narrowed down by centuries of circumspect living, I found myself desirous to breathe the freer air of the American prairies. I went, thinking still everything must taste much better over there, and some things did, but I found that my diet had become Americanized as much as my outlook. I found American newspapers more interesting than German. The countryside of course had its ancient and romantic appeal but everything seemed so small and confined. I paused at many a spot holding it dear because of former associations, but I felt no inclination to tarry there permanently. I came away with a deep reverence for the spirit of the past brooding over these scenes of childhood days, while I felt more consciously than ever, that I belonged to America.

## FOOTNOTES

### CHAPTER I

1. Luepkes, Ostfriesische Volkskunde, p. 362.
2. The Ostfriesische Nachrichten is published in the German language at Breda, Iowa. The Rev. L. Huending, D.D., is the editor and publisher. One regular feature of the paper is the article "Peter am Feieradend." The writer of the article, himself an immigrant, may be considered an unofficial spokesman for the immigrant generation.

### CHAPTER II

1. Emil Schrader, Ostfriesland, p. 7.
2. Schrader, op.cit., p. 11.
3. Onno Klopp, Geschichte Ostfrieslands, p. 2.
4. H.F. W. Perizonius, Geschichte Ostfrieslands, Vol. 1, p. 3.
5. Klopp. Op.cit., p. 3.
6. Klopp. Op.cit., p.4.
7. It may be of interest in this connection to note that the word "Werf" is still extant even among the Eastfriesian people in the United States. It is used to designate the plot of ground occupied by the farm buildings, or more particularly the plot lying between the farm house and the barns.
8. T. D. Wiards. Ostfriesische Geschchte, Vol. I., p. 5.
9. The following item from the daily press may be of interest in this connection. "Scientists of Europe are taking an interest in reports that mud is to be made the source of electrical supply at a power station being erected, at Karnap, Germany. The mud will be extracted from the river Ems. It is said to contain a combustible material that by a new method will be extracted, dried and then used for fuel for the works. The heat value is said to equal that of lignite. Investigators declare that the new process is of international importance because there are many rivers in coal districts throughout the world, the mud of which could be treated in the same manner. (Muscatine Iowa Journal, April 15, 1929.)
10. Ibid., p. 38.
11. Ibid., p. 40. This may be translated, "To rob and plunder is no disgrace, Among the best in the land it has found a place."
12. Ibid., p. 42.
13. Ibid., p. 43.
14. Ibid., p. 67.
15. Ibid., p. 74.
16. Ostfriesische Nachrichten. Vol. 31, No. 1, (Jan. 1, 1912).
17. Wiarda. op. cit., p. 170.
18. Ibid., p. 170.
19. Ibid., p. 179.
20. Klopp. Op. cit., p. 30.
21. Article: "Jungens holt fast!" Ostfriesische Nachrichten. Vol. 35, No. 1, (Jan. 1, 1916).

### CHAPER III

1. George Schnuecker. Die Ostfriesen in America, p. xi.
2. Ostfriesische Nachrichten. Vol. 31, No. 22, (Aug. 1, 1912).

3. Ostfriesische Nachrichten, Vol. 32, No. 1, (Jan. 1, 1913).
4. From Leerer Anzeigeblatt, quoted by W. Luepkes, Ostfriesische Volkskunde, p. 340.
5. Schnuecker. Op. cit., p. 311.
6. Ludwig Schneller, "Unter dem Sternenbanner: Amerikanische Reisebriefe." Quoted by W. Luepkes. Ostfriesische Volkskunde, p. 359.
7. Ibid. p. 359.
8. Herbert Quick. One Man's Life, pp. 110-111.
9. Letter from Dell Rapids, South Dakota. Ostfriesische Nachrichten, Vol. 48, No. 36. (Dec. 20, 1929).

#### **CHAPTER IV**

1. D. B. Aden. "zu den Ostfriesian in Nebraska. Landwirtschaftliches Zentralblatt fuer Ostfriesland. Vol. 5, No. 41, (Oct. 12, 1910).
2. Ostfriesische Nachrichten, Vol. 31. No. 1, (Jan. 1, 1912).
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. "Peter am Feierabend", Ostfriesische Nachrichten, Vol. 31, No. 5, (Feb. 10, 1912).  
The Scripture passage referred to, James 5:1-5, reads as follows: "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth eaten. Your silver and gold is cankered and the rust of them shall be a witness against you and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cries: and the cries of them that have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter."
6. Letter from Balaton, Minn., Ostfriesische Nachrichten, Vol. 30, No. 34, (Feb. 20, 1912).
7. Letter from Albany, Oregon, Ostfriesische Nachrichten, Vol. 30, No. 34, (Dec. 1, 1911).
8. Article, Ostfriesische Nachrichten, Vol. 49, No. 1, (Jan. 1, 1930).
9. "Peter am Feierabend". Ostfriesische Nachrichten, Vol. 48, No. 22, (Aug. 1, 1929).
10. News item from Germany, Ostfriesische Nachrichten, Vol. 49, No. 4, (Feb. 1, 1930).
11. Letter from Los Angeles, California. Ostfriesische Nachrichten, Vol. 49, No. 3, (Jan. 20, 1930).
12. Letter from Shannon, Illinois, Ostfriesische Nachrichten, Vol. 48, No. 36, (Dec. 20, 1929).
13. Letter from Diller, Nebraska, Ostfriesische Nachrichten, Vol. 48, No. 4, (Feb. 1, 1929).
14. Letter from Renville, Minnesota, Ostfriesische Nachrichten, Vol. 47, No. 8, (March 10, 1928).
15. Letter from Flatville, Illinois, Ostfriesische Nachrichten, Vol. 48, No. 27, (Sept. 20, 1929).
16. Letter from Clara City, Minn., Ostfriesische Nachrichten, Vol. 48, No. 18, (June 20, 1929).
17. Letter from McCaully, Texas, Ostfriesische Nachrichten, Vol. 49, No. 1, (Jan. 1, 1930).
18. Herbert Quick, One Man's Life, pp 127-128.
19. Letter from Lennox, South Dakota, Ostfriesische Nachrichten, Vol. 35, No. 15, (May 20, 1916).
20. "Peter am Feierabend", Vol. 33, No. 23, (Aug. 10, 1914).

21. Schnuecker. Op. cit., p. 307.
22. Letter from Pekin, Ill., Ostfriesische Nachrichten, Vol. 49, No. 1, (Jan. 1, 1930).

#### **CHAPTER V**

1. D.B. Aden, "Zu den Ostfriesen in Nebraska," Landwirtschaft Zentralblatt Fuer Ostfriesland, Vol. 5, No. 41, (Oct 12, 1910).
2. Ibid., Vol. 5, No. 46, (Nov. 16, 1910).
3. Ostfriesische Nachrichten, Vol. 32, No. 23, (Aug. 10, 1912).
4. Ostfriesische Nachrichten, Vol. 31, No. 1, (Jan. 1, 1912).

#### **CHAPTER VI**

1. D. B. Aden, op. cit., Vol. 5, No. 41. (Oct. 12, 1910).
2. George Schnuecker. Die Ostfriesen in America.
3. Letter from Streeter, N.Dak., Ostfriesische Nachrichten, Vol. 48. No. 13, (April 1, 1928).
4. "Peter am Feierabend", Ostfriesische Nachrichten, Vol. 31, No. 1, (Jan. 1, 1913).
5. Letter from Nokomis, Ill., Ostfriesische Nachrichten, Vol. 16, No. 3, (Jan. 20, 1987).
6. Herbert Quick, One Man's Life, pp. 210 – 212.
7. "Peter am Feierabend", Ostfriesische Nachrichten, Vol. 47, No. 1, (Jan. 1, 1928).
8. "Peter am Feierabend", Ostfriesische Nachrichten, Vol. 48, No. 18, (June 20, 1929).
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. "Peter am Feierabend", Ostfriesische Nachrichten, Vol 47, No. 33, (Nov. 20, 1928).
12. Op cit., pp. 300-301.
13. Op.cit., p. 123.
14. Herbert Quick, One Man's Life, pp. 146-148.
15. Klass J. Stratemeier. "Our German Work", Presbyterian Messenger (Dubuque, Iowa), Vol. 8, No. 8, (Dec. 23, 1929).

#### **CHAPTER VII**

1. Schnueker, op. cit., p. 292.

#### **CHAPTER VIII**

1. News item from Norden, Eastfriesland. Ostfriesische Nachrichhten, Vol. 48, No. 9, (Mar. 20, 1929).
2. Letter from Grundy County, Iowa, Ostfriesische Nachreichten, Vol. 48, No. 29, (Oct. 10, 1929).
3. G. Schnuecker, op. cit., pp. 284-295.
4. Quoted by W. Lupkes, op. cit., pp. 346-347.
5. Herbert Quick. One Man's Life. pp. 248-249.
6. Ibid., pp. 122-125.

#### **CHAPTER IX**

1. Personal interview.
2. Lupkes, op. cit., p. 358.
3. Herbert Quick. One Man's Life, p. 194

4. "Peter am Feierabend", Ostriesische Nachrichten. Vol. 33. No. 1. The scriptural references given are as follows: I Cor. 14:34-35. "Let your women keep silence in the churches for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home, for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." I Tim. 2:11-15. "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being first deceived, was in the transgression. Notwithstanding, she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety."
5. Schnuecker. op. cit. p. 70.
6. Lupkes. op.cit. p. 120-123.
7. Ibid., p. 118.
8. Herbert Quick. One Man's Life. pp, 117-118.
9. Ibid., pp. 118-120.

## **CHAPTER X**

Schnucker, op. cit., pp. 311-312.

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