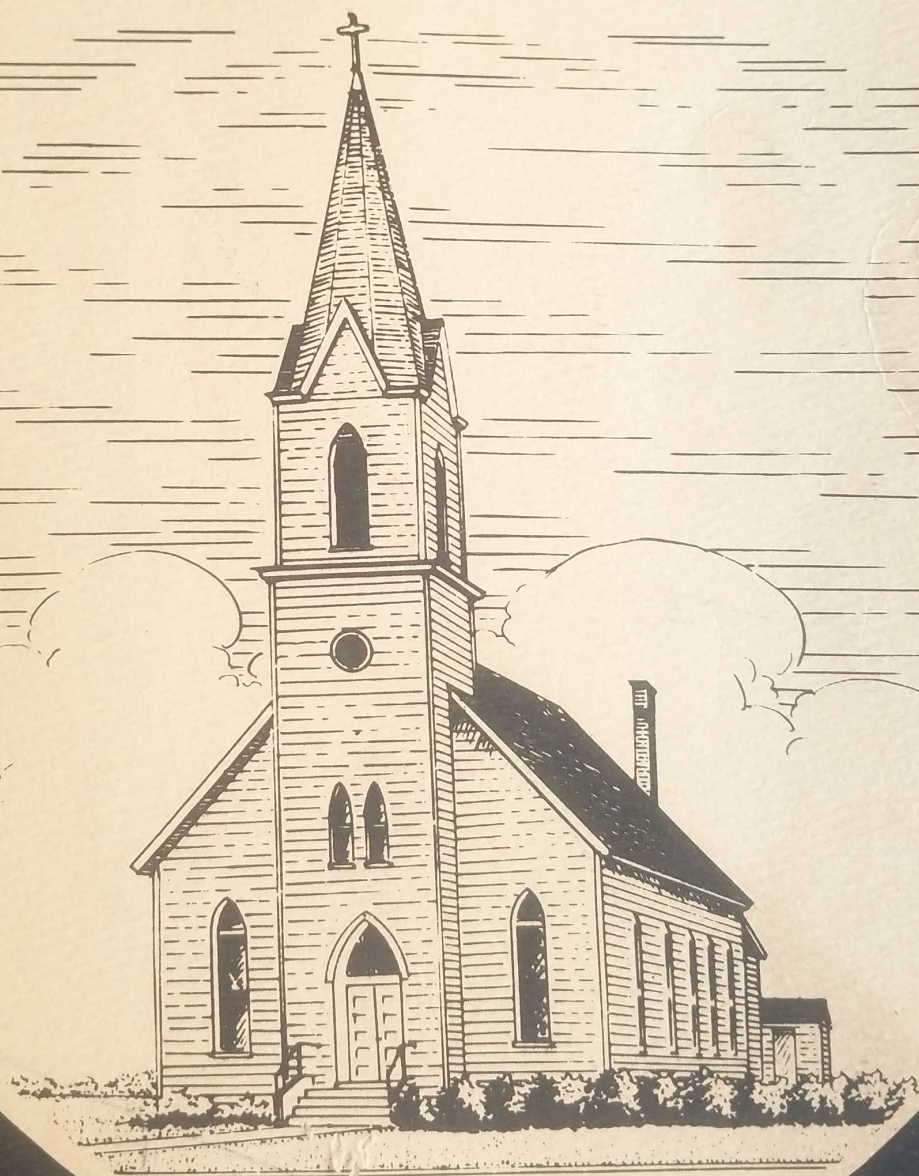


*A Heritage
of Faith*



Immanuel Lutheran Church

A Heritage of Faith

Introduction

This book is intended to be a chronicle of a hardy group of German Lutherans, who came to America and settled in Nebraska, and built a community and church, with a heritage of neighborliness and friendliness that exists today, one hundred years later. The history of the Elk Creek community and Immanuel Lutheran Church is synonymous because Immanuel Lutheran Church sprang up and grew with the settlement of the German Lutheran families on Elk Creek and nearby. Although the church no longer stands, there is a monument at the church cemetery that commemorates the church and school that tied the community together, and the cemetery holds the graves of many who built the community and whose descendants still live in the nearby area. Standing on the hill where the cemetery is located, one can look out over the countryside and see the development of the land, and the home places of many of the early settlements. If buildings no longer mark the locations, often a stand of trees shows where the homes had stood. A modern farm atlas shows some of the names that were found in a 1900 Plat Book, and these same names appear over and over in the quiet, windswept hilltop cemetery, names like Schievelbein, Wendland, Ziebell, Bloch, Weber, Marquardt, Monter, Helms, Esslinger, Hinz, Gehring, Maahs, Kath and Kalthoff.

Much of the information that I have written down about the early German Lutheran settlement on Elk Creek and the church that they organized, Immanuel Lutheran Church, has been given to me in bits and pieces, and I have taken events and dates from many different types of writings. I do not consider myself an authority, and I would not be offended by corrections and additions. I feel sure that if I felt that this story had to be complete, it would never be printed.

I thank everyone who assisted me in this research, and in the resulting book. Without encouragement I would not have been able to complete my project. My hope is in gathering all these pictures and information together, the story of Immanuel will be here for all members of the Elk Creek family, and for anyone else who is interested. I regret that some things are missing, I would like to think that each family would add whatever is available to them. It is a story that should not be lost.

I would like to leave the impression that my research has made me feel very close to my forefathers. They are no longer the old-fashioned people with unsmiling faces we see in photographs. I feel sure that their happinesses and disappointments were much as ours are today. I feel a deep pride in my heritage, and hope that I have learned lasting lessons from my ancestors and their dedication to faith and family.

The Leon Weber Family



Left to Right: Scott David, James Alan, Mary Lou, Leon, Jerald Dee, Linda Ruth and Douglas Lee.

It is especially for my children that I have written this history. They can follow their ancestry through the Schievelbeins, the Wendlands, the Webers, the Marquardts, the Monters and Ziebells, and the Hermeses. Immanuel was their church and school, and they grew up, I always liked to say, "in the shadow of the cross of the church", which was located about one-half a mile from our home.

Immanuel Lutheran Evangelical Church

On a windswept prairie hill near the Elk Creek
Once there stood a church of God,
Built by a hardy group of German pioneers
A place to gather and to praise the Lord.

In a tall steeple they placed a bell
Its message of joy or sadness heard afar.
Calling all to worship, pealing out the news
Of weddings, deaths, and a believer's prayer.

There was a school across the road,
Where eager children came to learn.
The Four R's were taught each day,
Religion, Reading, Writing and Arithmetic in turn.

A cemetery was laid out near the church,
A final resting place
For loved ones God had called to Him
To await the summons of His grace.

Each Sunday they came to worship,
To lay their cares on God,
To sing his praise and say their prayers,
To rest from labors with the sod.

The heritage of faith that shone so bright
At this worship place above the creek
Has remained a blessing in the hearts
Of families scattered, their fortunes to seek.

And if we listen with our hearts,
We can still hear the hymns and prayers
Of all the faithful members
Who came to worship there.

Immanuel Lutheran Evangelical Church,
The ties we have to you and yours
Are a monument of pride and joy
To each of us who passed between your doors.

Memories of beloved friends and relatives,
Of how we all grew together near this place;
We thank you, God, for this heritage.
May it continue to be a cornerstone of our faith.

by Mary Lou Weber

In the year 1872, there was much unrest among the German Lutherans in Pommern, Germany. There was a war, and military service was required, in a very unpopular war. Taxes were so high that it was impossible to have anything left when they were paid. And land was owned by the wealthy, with no chance for the working class and peasant class to acquire any. If the family did have property, only the eldest son could inherit.

The Union Pacific Railroad had been completed in America, and now the railroad was advertizing in German language posters and pamphlets that the railroad would help to settle immigrants in the United States, where it was possible to acquire land for every family.

At Greunberg, Dramburg, Prussia, the W. Christian Schievelbein (sometimes listed as Christoff or as Chr. W.) family lived with their nine children. Mrs. Schievelbein was the former Maria Christine Koepke, who had been born April 4, 1818 in Brohmstied, Pommern, Germany. He had been born on March 21, 1814 in Pommern. They were married in 1840. Two of their daughters and their husbands decided to come to America in order to try to acquire land of their own. These were Mr. and Mrs. Fred Wendland and their two children, Anna and Julius, and Mr. and Mrs. Julius Ziebell and their three children, Hermann, Julius, and Emilia. Another daughter of the Schievelbeins, Emilia, borrowed money to accompany them, \$90 for the passage. The trip took eighteen days on the ship across the Atlantic. The group came to Arlington, Washington County, Nebraska in 1873. On September 13, 1874, the elder Schievelbeins, with their sons, Wilhelm and Julius and another daughter, Bertha, also came to America. They were accompanied by friends, Fred Melchert and his sister, Bertha.

We are not able to say why the group came to Nebraska, while some immigrants went to Louisiana or Texas. We do know that the agents sent to Europe by the railroad helped place the immigrants on ships, and met them in the United States, at Ellis Island and other ports, and then helped them to board trains to the interior of the country. Unreliable sea captains had much to say about where they landed with their passengers, the immigrants. Also the weather dictated where the ship would land. The supply of food was purchased in Europe, and if it was not used up, the captain would often keep moving on down the coast, perhaps even to Texas, so that he would not have food left over. So it can be seen that the two parts of the Schievelbein family were indeed fortunate to come to the destination in Nebraska. Possibly Nebraska was the original destination of the Siegfried Schievelbein family, who settled in Texas several years later. Siegfried is believed to be the brother of W. Chr. Schievelbein.

While the family was located in Washington County, there were four weddings. Fred Melchert married Bertha Schievelbein and Wilhelm Schievelbein married Bertha Melchert on August 30, 1875. Emilie Schievelbein married Gustav Bloch in Arlington in the Lutheran Church in 1876. Julius Schievelbein married Albertine Louise Dahms. While the family lived at Arlington in Washington County, there were fourteen children born to the families, two to the Julius Schievelbeins, two to the Wendlands, four to the Ziebells, three to the William Schievelbeins, two to the Blochs, and one to the Melcherts.

After seven years in Washington County, the family made plans to find a permanent place to live and build a community. We can imagine them reading carefully the newspapers and flyers, written in the German language, that they received, and then making preparations for part of the family to go on ahead to find a suitable place for all of them to come to. The trip would be made by wagon to the west, taking all of their possessions with them, because they intended to remain in the far part of the state. The Fred Wendland family with their four children and the Fred Melcherts, who had one son, decided to be the families to go ahead of the rest, and they would send word back to the family at Arlington when they had found a suitable place.

To set the scene for the arrival of the German Lutherans at the Elk Creek area, we need to look at events of that time, the year of 1880. Less than twenty years before, the United States had been divided in a Civil War. Nebraska had been a state for only thirteen years. Only four years before, the nation had celebrated its one hundredth birthday. The Pacific Railroad had been completed eleven years before. In the year 1880, the United States was electing as its president, James Garfield, and as its vice-president, Chester A. Arthur. President Garfield was shot by an assassin, Charles Guiteau, at the Baltimore Railway Depot in Washington, D.C. on July 2, 1881. After his death on September 2, 1881, Arthur became president.

Arapahoe, eight miles south on Elk Creek, had become a village nine years earlier, in 1871. At this time the town had a newspaper, "The Arapahoe Pioneer", two flour or grist mills, one on the Republican River and one on the Muddy Creek, a saw mill, and a hotel and many other businesses. The railroad came to Arapahoe in the fall of 1880. Besides the businesses on both sides of a wide main street, there were a few homes scattered about the adjoining blocks. One block had been reserved for a park, but it was used for just about any purpose. Circuses and medicine shows pitched tents there, farmers tied horses and wagons there and fed the horses for the day; so it was just an eyesore. The town had a telegraph, so news came every day, and even a weather forecast, proclaimed by means of a flag atop the bank. You had only to learn the meaning of each particular flag, and you had a weather forecast. There were kerosene street lights that were lit by a lamplighter each evening. The town was located in a valley between two creeks, the Muddy on the west and the Elk Creek on the east, both of which had running water year around from springs further north. The Republican River was just south of town.

There were no bridges across the river or the creeks, because no large timbers could come to Arapahoe until after the railroad came. Crossings in the creeks were simply logs, laid down in the creekbed. There was a ferry across the river south of town, so that people did not have to ford the river. The owner of the ferry charged ten cents each way for each rider. To the east, there was a bridge across the Republican, at Red Cloud, south of Hastings.

Because the log bridges on the creeks were located in the creek bed, they could not be used when high waters came, and often they washed out when the water rushed down the creek beds. These bridges were owned by the farmers on whose land they were located, and travelers were allowed to use the bridges at any time, and also cross the farmer's

land on their way to and from town. After a bridge on the Elk Creek washed out, which had been used by travelers to and from Arapahoe, a German settler named Ruhling, who had a bridge at the north end of the Republican Valley decided to capitalize on those stranded travelers, and he charged twenty-five cents to everyone who crossed the bridge. After the disgruntled people of Arapahoe recovered from the shock of a toll bridge, they cooperated to build a free log bridge once more across the Elk Creek.

Freight wagons traveled usually in groups of two or three from the north at Plum Creek, now the city of Lexington, where there was a railroad. There was a stopping-place between Lexington and Arapahoe, called the Half-way House. The wagon trail came south from Elwood, through the Devil's Gap, to the Homerville community, the county seat of Gosper County. Then the trail crossed the Elk Creek just north of the present Armin Leising home, and continued into Arapahoe, a trip of nearly 25 miles. Stages also used this route, charging \$3 for the trip from Lexington to Arapahoe.

The area was far from a wilderness. There were already many settlers scattered about, and much of the land had been claimed, some of which the owners were willing to relinquish as quit claims. Muddy Creek to the west and Turkey Creek to the east already had some settlements. The county seat of Gosper County was Daviesville, located on the Muddy Creek in W. Muddy Precinct. The name appears on a map of Gosper County in an Atlas of 1902. This settlement included two stores, one hotel, one blacksmith, and a doctor and a school. Church services were held in the home of Rev. Davies. Gosper was a village located west of Elk Creek, where farmers sold produce that would be shipped by wagon to Arapahoe, and bought supplies in the stores. About three miles east of Elk Creek was located the post office at Ceryl, with postmaster Z. M. Stout. Now living on the place where Ceryl was located are Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Weber.

The population of Gosper County in 1880 was 1673 people. (Sometimes the figure of the population was embellished for different reasons, so we cannot be sure there were that many people living in the county.) There were 119 school children, and six schoolhouses, four of which were soddies. Some people who already lived in the area included William Ross, who came in 1870; Josiah Snyder, 1872; McGuire, 1873; (The McGuire Cemetery, near Elk Creek, and one mile north of the Immanuel Church site was located on this claim. This cemetery is the place of the first burials in the German Lutheran community, twin babies, girls, born to the August Marquardts, Feb. 5, 1883.)

In 1874, new names listed included C. Dunlap, Samson, Dawson, and Cross; in 1878, Stout, Kolp and Gardner were listed. There was a Haussler-Mues settlement on Muddy Creek, which was also German Lutheran.

Records shown on homestead patents do not always show a true date of a family's arrival, because until the land was registered, or a patent gotten, no taxes had to be paid. So often settlers lived on their homesteads until somehow their claim might be threatened, and then they registered it.

John Stevens in his "Early Arapahoe" writes of his family's search up the Republican Valley for a free homestead, and tells that most of Furnas County was claimed in the year 1878. So probably land for settlement was not so easy to find.

The countryside must have looked quite lonely and frightening at the time of the arrival of the settlers in Gosper County. There were many scattered homesteads, but most of the homes were soddies or dug-outs. Providing just the bare necessities of life had to be difficult. As long as everyone was well and strong, the parents could rest after a hard day's work and make plans for the next. But when there was illness or an injury in the family, it must have been heartbreaking. The families depended much on their faith to carry them through the difficult times.

No one today remembers just why the area at Elk Creek was chosen by the Schievelbein families. We can surmise, however, that there were several reasons. First of all, a large available area was necessary because it needed to support at least six families. The land should adjoin as much as possible, so that the families could use each other for support. The creek afforded water from springs, and trees for lumber and firewood. There were some German Lutherans living in the nearby areas, and that would be helpful to the immigrants, who could speak only the German language. Arapahoe was eight miles to the south, and Gosper offered a close-by market.

So on Feb. 17, 1880, by wagon, came the families of C. Frederick Wendland and his wife Johanna nee Schievelbein, and Fred Melchert and his wife, Bertha nee Schievelbein, to obtain new and cheap land, which was in part still to be had as free homesteads. They came to Plum Creek, which was located near where the town of Lexington is located today. The story is told that when they arrived, the Platte River was high, and so the men rode their horses across and went south in search of a home place, while the women and children waited for their return and for the water to go down, so the wagons could be taken across.

There were nine persons in the party; the children were the four Wendland children, Anna, who had been born in Germany and was ten years old, K. F. Julius, who had been born in Germany and was eight years old, Bertha Louise, 6, and Hermann Wilhelm, 1, both of whom had been born in Washington County in Nebraska; and Paul Melchert who was born in Washington County and was one year old.

Life was not easy for the families. They could not speak English, so it was hard to have any dealings with the settlers already here. The two families settled on quarters of land adjoining each other, on both sides of the Elk Creek. They made some kind of home, either dug-out or soddy. The creek banks were a good location for dug-outs, and many sites remain to this day, showing as hollowed-out depressions in the grassy pastures. A site on Elk Creek where a man named McMeechan lived shows the dug-out that was the home, a dug-out for storage, and across a gully, another dug-out that was a barn with stalls for horses. Mr. McMeechan had also laid a corduroy log bridge across the creekbed so that he could cross.

These homes had very little furniture, usually only what could be made with materials at hand, or what had been brought with them from former homes. They had a few milk cows and some chickens, and the settlers planted gardens. They had little money, so they depended much on each other for their needs.

The first dug-out home of the Fred Wendland family was built on the first bank of the Elk Creek. He also had a dug-

out barn with stalls for horses. When the creek overflowed its banks in those early years, the Wendlands lost their home and the horses that were tied in the barn in the high water. Now living at this site are Keith and Barbara Wendland Maaske, she is a great-granddaughter of the Fred Wendlands.

Despite the rugged conditions in the new homes, these families sent word to the rest of the family in Washington County that the future looked promising and land could be had, and the rest of the family came to Gosper County in March, 1881. These families included Gustav Bloch and his wife Emelia Schievelbein Bloch and their two children, Anna and Louise, who were four and two years old; Julius Ziebell and his wife, Augustina Schievelbein Ziebell and their six children, Hermann, 12, Emilie, 8, Bertha Marie, 6, Frederick William, 5, Heinrich, 3, and William, who was less than 6 months old; Julius Schievelbein and his wife Albertine Dahms Schievelbein and their children Emma, 5 and Wilhelm, 2; William Schievelbein and his wife Bertha Melchert Schievelbein and their three children, Ida, 5, Clara, 3, and Louisa, 2; and the elderly parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. Christian Schievelbein. These families established homes on quarters of land adjoining the Elk Creek and the land of their relatives. The elder Schievelbeins did not establish a home of their own, because they no longer worked hard, but depended on their children for a place to live. They lived most of the time with the Fred Melchert family. When the church was organized the next year, Mr. Schievelbein did not sign the constitution, but old hand-written records show that he and his wife took communion whenever it was offered when the Rev. Caemmerer was holding services in the community.

In the year 1880, the German Lutheran settlers were part of the preaching mission of a traveling minister, Rev. L. Meyer, who was stationed at Blue Hill, Nebraska. His parish included the Arapahoe preaching station in Arapahoe. He served one voting, eleven non-voting congregations and four preaching stations, so it can be easily understood that he couldn't come more than a few times each year. In the absence of their minister, the faithful would gather in some home and one of their group would read the lessons for the Sunday and a sermon from the Book of Sermons. Services were held in the sod home on the Fred Wendland place on Elk Creek in the earliest days, and marriages were also performed there. News reports stated that Rev. L. Meyer was replaced by the Rev. Toentges, who in 1881 preached for the Trinity Church in Arapahoe. The Nebraska District of the Missouri Synod was organized in 1882, and in that year, young candidate Caemmerer came to Arapahoe on the Eighth Sunday after Trinity.

Born the fall of 1881 were two baby girls, in September, Augusta to the William Schievelbeins and Helene to the Blochs in October.

August Marquardt also came from Washington County to join the community in 1881. The story was told that Mrs. Wendland saw a man coming down the hill from the east and told her family that August Marquardt had come to Gosper County. He married Eva Piscaske, of the Salem community in northern Gosper County, the first marriage in the group in Gosper County, and because of this, the first recorded burial for the Immanuel Congregation by Rev. Caemmerer was for the Marquardt twin baby daughters, believed buried in the McQuire Cemetery near Elk Creek, February 5, 1883.

In the year 1882, on September 3, Immanuel Congregation was organized by Pastor Caemmerer, who drafted the first constitution for the new congregation. The constitution was written in German longhand, and on the opposite page, the same words were written in English, and served the congregation for several generations. The first seven signatures on the original constitution are those of Fred Wendland, Fred Melchert, Julius Schievelbein, William Schievelbein, Gustav Bloch, Julius Ziebell and August Marquardt.

During this second year of their settlement, school was being held in the homes, and there were ten children of school age. These included Herman Ziebell, Emilie Ziebell (Haussler), Maria Ziebell (Monter), Fred Ziebell, Ida Schievelbein (Wendland), Emma Schievelbein (Lallman), Anna Wendland (Monter), Karl F.J. Wendland, Louisa Wendland (Westerbeck), and Anna Bloch (Riepe).

News items from the Arapahoe Pioneer Newspaper included:

On March 9, 1882:

- Dr. White of Oxford moved to Daviesville.

November of 1882:

- Gosper County was visited by a very destructive forest fire last week.

December 9, 1882:

- Reverend Caemmerer, the Lutheran minister, has become a trifle worldly, and now rides in a fine top buggy purchased of C. S. Albee.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. Julius Schievelbein in 1882, a daughter, Marie. (Later married Henry Monter, father and mother of Reinhold Monter and Leona Monter Warner.)

On December 22, 1882:

- The Arapahoe Pioneer said that "A. S. Gardner of Gosper County has opened up a shop for repairing boots and shoes, on the George Gardner ranch on Dry Creek, and all work entrusted to him will be neatly and promptly done."

The Gardner land was adjoining the home of the William Hermes family located on Dry Creek in southern Gosper County, on the Furnas County line.

The first confirmation in the new community was for Herman Ziebell, who took his first communion on March 26, 1883. He became the first of the youth of the new community to become a member of the church. He later married Anna Monter, they are the parents of Louisa Ziebell Hermes and the other members of her family.

In the year 1883, three families came to join the Lutheran church community in the Elk Creek area. The family of Christoff Esslinger included two children, Ludwig, who was three, and Rudolph, a baby less than six months old; the Albert Kath family had three children, who were Julius, 8 years old, William Adolph, six years old, and Louise, two years old; and the Julius Hinz family who had five children, William J. Carl, 6, Louis, 4, Emma 3, Julius, 2, and Bertha, who had been born in March 1883. (Emma later married Fred Ziebell, and Bertha married Henry Helms.)

In the Church Directory of the Arapahoe newspaper, there appeared this item:

- Lutheran German preaching at the school house every third Sunday except Festival Day, May 6. Rev. F. Caemmerer, Pastor.

It is not known if the people of the Elk Creek community traveled to Arapahoe for services at this time, or if the pastor came to the home of some of the members of the congregation. It is known that there was not a church building in the community at this time.

In 1883, Homerville became the county seat of Gosper County, and the town sprang up overnight. A courthouse was built there to house the papers of the county; until now, each officer kept all the papers in his own home. But the railroad did not come to Homerville, it was built about twelve miles north of there, so the county seat did not remain at Homerville for more than five years. The post office was moved at this time from Gosper to Homerville.

In 1883, communion records written on a piece of tablet paper show that communicants included the name of E. Freidank and Wilhelmina Freidank, who was living with her uncle, Ernst, near the Elk Creek community. Wilhelmina later married Hermann Weber, who came to the Gosper area as a bachelor, to live with his half-brother, August Marquardt. Also listed in 1883 were the names of W. Wathling and his wife, who lived on the creek at the time when the Schievelbein families came to the area. Before homes were established, church services and school sessions were held in the Wathling soddy on the Elk Creek.

William Schievelbein soon became active in the county government, and also worked hard to publicize the fact that there was a German Lutheran community growing in the county. He advertised in the Washington County papers, and others, and was also in touch with Gosper County settlers who wanted to give up their land. Often, when new families came to the community, they came to the Schievelbein home, and remained there until they could find land of their own to move to. (The Schievelbein home is now the home of the Leon Weber family.)

In the year 1884, births in the Elk Creek community included Bernard to the Julius Schievelbeins; and Bertha to the Gustav Blochs (later married Wichmann); and Lydia to the Christoff Esslingers, (later married Ed Huff).

After five years in the Elk Creek area, the community built its first place of worship, a sod church. This was located at the northern edge of a plot of ground to the east of the Elk Creek, just about half way up the hill, on land owned by William Schievelbein. In later years, this building was used as a chicken house by the pastors and their families, because it was near where the parsonage was later built. Mr. Cornelius Merz, who later was one of the teachers in the parochial school, told of playing there in the "soddy". Teacher Merz began his schooling at Immanuel when his father was he pastor of the church.

During the year 1885, two children were born to the members of the new congregation, Anna to the Julius Ziebell, and Otto to the William Schievelbeins. Two children died during this year, the daughter and son of the William Schievelbeins, and they were buried in the cemetery that was laid out near the sod church. The little ones were injured in an accident, and died within a few days of each other. These were

Augusta Emma, who had been born in the fall of 1881, and Otto, who had been born ten months earlier in the year 1881. During this year, the railroad came to Elwood, and the town was laid out. Then began the wrangling between Elwood and Homerville over which little town should be the county seat.

The years of 1885 and 1886 were hard years in Nebraska and there were many hardships and discouragements for the settlers. There was no feed for livestock, and so small, young animals were destroyed so they would not starve. There was no market for farm produce, and farmers having a surplus of corn burned it for fuel. The town of Arapahoe was in a depression, and many moved away. Farmers abandoned their farms and moved on too. However, there is no record of any family of the German Lutherans leaving the Elk Creek settlement. We can imagine the families sharing and working together, stubbornly managing through a disheartening time.

In 1886, seven new babies were born: Johann, to the Fred Wendlands; Herman to the Julius Schievelbeins; Johann to the August Marquardts; Emma to the Henry Helms; Sophie to the Christoff Esslingers; and Siegfried Gustav Hinz, to the Julius Hinz family; as well as Emil to the Albert Kath, who had come to Gosper County late the year before. Mrs. Henrietta Kath was a sister to Mrs. Julius Schievelbein, who was formerly Albertine Dahms.

Also during this year, there were more settlers in the community. It is very interesting to find the family ties or other connections that brought the new people to the community. The Henry and Christoff Helms families came from Ohio, bringing with them seven children. The Henry Helms family had four children, Maria, 11 years old, Elnora, 9, Heinrich Fred, 5, and Maria Rosa 3. The Christoff Helms family included Anna, 7, Ida, 4, and Marie Louisa, 2. Their home had been in Cleveland, Ohio. Soon after their arrival, the Henry Helms family added a daughter, Emma. Emma told that the family came to the William Schievelbein home, and Mr. Schievelbein helped to locate them in the community.

Heinrich Carl Moenter and his wife came with their children, Frederick William, who was 14 years old, Anna, 13 (she later married Hermann Ziebell, and was the mother of Louise Hermes.) Herman, 9, Wilhelm, 6, and a married son, Karl and his wife. The young couple had their first child in November of 1887 in Gosper County. The family remembered that they came because William Schievelbein knew of a family who wished to leave the community and dealt with them for the place that was to be their home. Later years found the Reinhold Monter family living at this home place.

Also coming this year was Hermann Weber, who came to live with his half-brother August Marquardt. He would marry Wilhelmina Freidank in the next year. She was living with her uncle and was included in the lists of communicants of the early Immanuel Church. The uncle, Ernst Freidank, never married. His home was located west of the Elk Creek, west of the now existing Highway 283. He dug his well by hand by himself, hauling out the dirt by a bucket and a rope. He used a rope ladder to make the many trips down into the well. He also constructed a dam with his wheelbarrow, to hold the water that was washing across his farm.

Heinrich Schnieder, brother of Mrs. Christoff Helms, came to Gosper County in 1886, and homesteaded south of the

Elk Creek community. He would later marry the sister of Mrs. Henry Helms, whose names were Hagedorn. He brought his wife from Chicago to live in a soddy. The way of life must have been very barren and cruel to her, she brought her pretty clothes and other fine belongings with her to furnish the soddy; she remained to raise a family of two daughters, Meta, Mrs. Gustav Hinz, and Esther, Mrs. Herman Hinz.

There was a terrible blizzard in Gosper and Frontier County in the year 1886. The storm lasted for three days, and although there was a large loss of livestock, no human lives were lost in the Elk Creek community. Soddies were covered with snow, and no one went out. One farmer did not see his horses or cows for three days.

A big event for the families was to go to town when a photographer came to town on a train. His studio was in one of the train cars. The family would be dressed in their everyday clothes for the trip to town, carrying their best clothing with them. It was quite an undertaking for everyone to change to their good clothes in the train car, and get situated so the photographer could take a family picture. Often copies of these pictures were sent to families that were still in Germany.

In the year 1887 there were two marriages in the sod church, Hermann Weber married Wilhelmina Freidank and Heinrich Schnieder married Auguste Hagedorn.

Births this year included Emil to the Gustav Blochs, he later married Agnes Marquardt, and Herbert E. to the William Schievelbeins, he later married Marie Wendland Baker. A daughter, Amanda, was born to the Karl H. Monters. Johanna was born to the Christoff Esslingers.

At this year of 1887, there were probably 36 children in the school. Ages did not mean the children went to school, because sometimes they were kept home for a time to help with the work. Often school met only for three months of the year. Sometimes the boys went to school only on every other day. Assuming that the school age was five to sixteen would have to be the rule to follow. There were two of the children who had been confirmed and were probably not in school. These were Herman Ziebell, who was 18, and Anna Wendland, who was 16. F. William Monter, son of the Heinrich Monters, was 15. Emilie Ziebell, K.F.J. Wendland, and Anna Monter (Ziebell) were 14; Marie Ziebell (Monter) and Louise Wendland (Westerbeck) and Julius Kath and Maria Helms were 12. Fred Ziebell and Ida Schievelbein were 11. Anna Bloch, William Adolph Kath, William H. Carl Hinz, Elnora Helms, and Herman Monter were 10; Clara Schievelbein was 9 years old, and she died this year. Henry Ziebell, William Schievelbein, Louise Schievelbein, Louis Hinz, and Anna Helms were 8 years old. William Wendland, Paul Melchert, Ludwig Esslinger, Emma Hinz, and Henry W. Monter were 7 years old. Six-year-olds were William Ziebell, Pauline Wendland, Augusta Schievelbein, Helena Bloch, Louise Kath, Julius Hinz, and Heinrich Fred Helms; and Maria Schievelbein and Ida Helms were 5 years old. Pre-schoolers included four-year-olds: Louisa Ziebell (Esslinger), Marie Wendland (Baker-Schievelbein), Emilia Melchert (Hinz), Maria Rosa Helms. Three-year-olds included Bernard Schievelbein, Bertha Bloch, Lydia Esslinger (Huff), Otto Hinz, Marie Louise Helms. Anna Ziebell (Esslinger) was 2 and there were nine children who were one year or younger: John Wendland, Herman Schievelbein, Herb Schievelbein, Emil Bloch, Sophia Esslinger (Ziebell), Emil Kath, Gustav Hinz,



Main Street Arapahoe . . . 1887

Johann Marquardt and Emma Helms.

Because the congregation was growing so fast, a frame chapel-school was built on a five-acre plot that had been given by William Schievelbein for a church ground. There were approximately 100 souls in the church at the year 1888, only 8 years after settlement began. The families included Mr. and Mrs. Chr. W. Schievelbein, Mr. and Mrs. Julius Ziebell and seven children, Mr. and Mrs. C. Fred Wendland and seven children, Mr. and Mrs. Julius Schievelbein and five children, Mr. and Mrs. Wilhelm Schievelbein and four children, Mr. and Mrs. Gustav Bloch and five children, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Melchert and two children, Mr. and Mrs. Christoff Esslinger and four children, Mr. and Mrs. Julius Kath and four children, Mr. and Mrs. Julius Hinz and seven children, Mr. and Mrs. August Marquardt and one son, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Helms and five children, Mr. and Mrs. Christoff Helms and three children, Mr. and Mrs. Heinrich Moenter and five children, Mr. and Mrs. Karl F. Moenter and one daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Hermann Weber, Mr. and Mrs. Heinrich Schnieder, and Clamor Monter.

By the year 1890, ten years after the first families came to the Elk Creek community, they were still being joined by other German Lutheran families, who wanted to join the church and send their children to the church school. John and Albertine Gehring came with their two sons, Carl and Herman, who had been born in DeKalb, Indiana. Mrs. Gehring's brother was Pastor C.H. Seltz, who was the minister of the Trinity Lutheran Church in Arapahoe, and also serving the Immanuel congregation. Under his leadership, the Immanuel congregation was working toward becoming a self-supporting congregation. Pastor Seltz persuaded the Gehrings to come to the Elk Creek area, where they homesteaded. Mr. and Mrs. F. Wilhelm L. Kalthoff (Anna Maria nee Toedtmann) came with their four children, Frederick, Katharina, Wilhelm and Sophia, to live in a dugout north of the church area near the Elk Creek. Their son, Heinrich was born in August after they came in 1889.

1890 was a drouth year in Nebraska, poor crops had been grown for several years, and living was hard. Grasshoppers always seem to go with drouth, and they were numerous, eating everything that did find enough moisture to grow. It was impossible to get rid of the hoppers. People even tried to frighten them away from their gardens. Grain averaged less than five bushels per acre that year. The bad years extended on into the 1890's when only 8-9 inches of rain fell on the Great Plains.



Arapahoe in 1890.

The church in the picture is the Catholic Church, located at that time in the southwest part of town, and later moved to its present site.

The German Lutheran settlers, struggling like everyone else was during those years, did not give up, but worked together to build their community. Blessings had been many, children were growing up and adding to the community. The church had prospered.

By the year 1890, three more graves had been added to the cemetery near the church. Both twin babies of the Hinzes, August and Augusta, had died before they were one year old, in 1888. In 1889, Emil Kath, the three-year-old son of the Albert Kathes, was buried in the cemetery. A baby, son of the Christopher Helms', was buried when he was six months old in 1896.

So far, the graves in the cemetery were for little children. But in the year 1897, Christoff W. Schievelbein died at the age of 83. He had fallen into the water on Elk Creek while fishing and contracted pneumonia. He had lived in the Elk Creek community for 16 years.

The next year, his daughter-in-law, Albertina Louise Dahms Schievelbein died, probably after an extended illness with cancer. She was 54 years of age, survived by five children who were living at home, and her husband, Julius Schievelbein.

Two more little children died and were buried before 1900, Martin, son of the Hinzes, and Alfred, son of Auguste Wendland.

August Roepke, an area farmer, was buried in the cemetery in 1894, when he had reached the age of 48. His wife was buried beside him in 1903, when she was 63. There is no record of the Roepkes being members of the Immanuel Congregation, but church records of that time mention their names.

The 1890's continued to see the migration of German Lutheran families to the Elk Creek community. The settlers were sure that after living here for more than ten years, they could promise their relatives a good living. They were confident that the rains would come, even though in 1893 crops were poor and corn sold for 10 cents a bushel.

It is very interesting, as the list of newcomers to the community goes on, to find the connection that brought each family to join the church. Usually, relatives came, to join some family already established in a home; sometimes they came because there was a church and school. During the years to come, the Wendland name became a very common name

in the community, and appeared in the church records many times as the family grew.

Fred Wendland's parents, Johann and Lena Wendland did not leave their native Diedersdorf, Germany. However, most of their sons came to America, and two of them came to the Gosper County area where their brother Fred lived. In 1894, the eldest son, Karl Frederick Albert Wendland, came to the United States with his wife and three sons. The three sons remained in the Elk Creek area near their uncle, Fred Wendland. The Karl Wendlands moved to Wisconsin, Fred then to Washington, where he died in 1904. His wife died in 1945. Both are buried in the Immanuel Cemetery. The three sons were Franz Frederick August, who married Anna Helms; Paul Johann Ludwig, who married Louisa Bloch, and Rudolph, who married Louisa Helms and Lydia Kasper. Rudolph and his wife, Lydia and his son John and his daughter Helen died of the flu during the epidemic in 1918.

Another brother of Fred Wendland, August, also came to America in 1894. August's eldest son, Fred, already lived in Gosper County, he had married Ida Schievelbein.

F.F. August Wendland and his wife, Fredericka nee Mews, came to Gosper County with their children: Anna, who married August Petermann; Bertha, who married William Hermes; Auguste, who married Chris Obermueller, divorced him in the first divorce in the community, and then married John Emrich; Maria who married Paul Melchert; and Julius, who married Augusta Schievelbein.

The story is told that August Petermann lost his first wife and returned to Germany to marry Anna Wendland. He helped finance his wife's family in their move to America. The family was also assisted by the nobleman for whom the Wendlands worked in the old country. Bertha and the nobleman's son had fallen in love, and because he did not approve, the nobleman helped with the costs to send the Wendland family to America.

The August Wendland's youngest son, Gustav, did not come to America until 1914. He was in the German Army. He had a son, Hugo, born when his wife died in childbirth. He had married Maria Meier Ritschell, who was a widow with a young daughter, Maria. When the family came to Nebraska, it also included two sons, Walter and Erhardt, and two daughters, Hertha and Irma. Money had been sent from Nebraska so that the family could come while the aged parents, the August Wendlands, were still alive. But the father, August, died before the arrival of his son, Gustav and family in Gosper County.

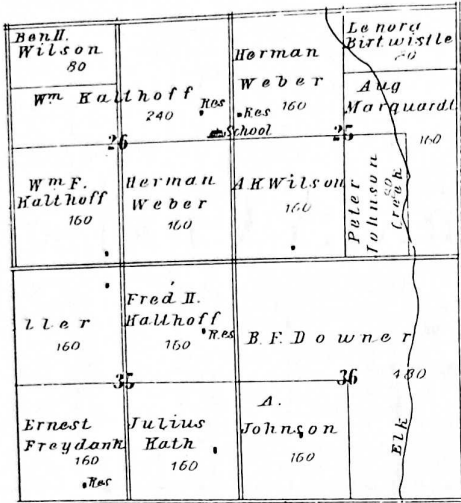
Gustav, the youngest brother of C. Fred, August and Karl, settled in Minnesota where he worked for the railroads. It is not known if there was any contact between the families in the early years, or if Gustav and his family ever visited with their relatives on the Elk Creek.

After the years of the early 1900s, when the community, church and school had its largest growth, the families began spreading from coast to coast. Usually some of each family remained in the Gosper County area. Not many of the old home-places still exist because the farms have been combined, and neighbors are not so close that they can walk to visit anymore. The familiar names still appear on lists at churches and schools in the area. Invisible ties bring members of the Elk Creek families back to Gosper County and to the relatives that have remained here.

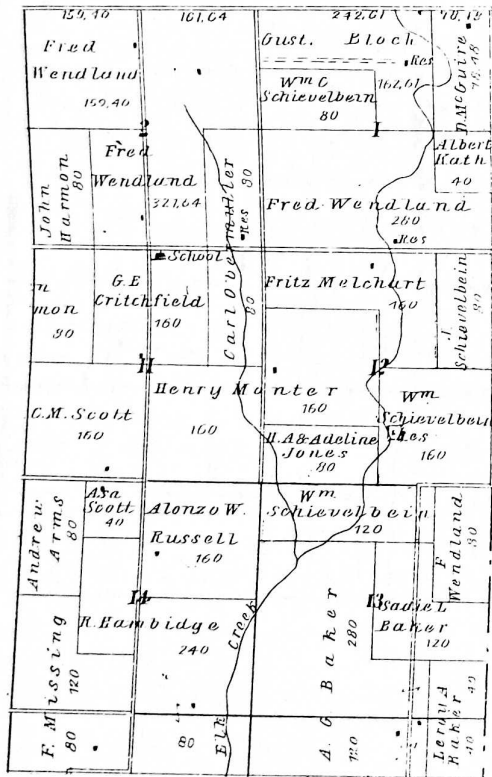
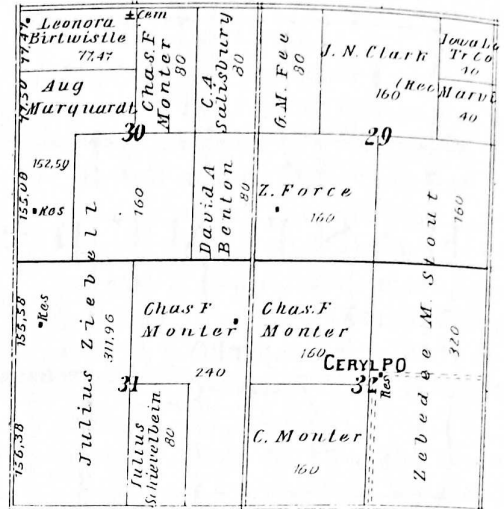
Gosper County Precincts

These enlargements of the highlighted areas of the four precincts located in southern Gosper County, show where the German Lutherans, with Immanuel Lutheran Church as the center of their community, located their homes on the Elk Creek.

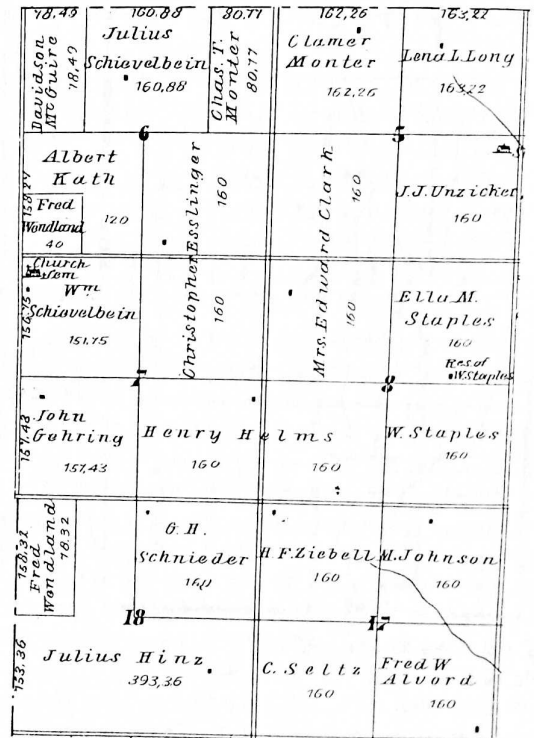
East Muddy



Turkey Creek



Elk Creek



Union

Immanuel Lutheran Church

The Immanuel Lutheran Congregation built three churches while it was in existence. The first house of worship was a soddy, built on the quarter of land owned by William Schievelbein, and was north of the plot laid out for the cemetery. The soddy was built in 1885, after the church had been organized in 1882 under the leadership and guidance of Rev. Fr. Caemmerer of Arapahoe. He also drafted the original constitution written both in German and English. At the end of the year after the soddy was built, Rev. Caemmerer accepted a call to another parish.

It is not known whether the church or the cemetery came first, but also in 1885, the first funerals were for the two babies of the William Schievelbeins who were injured in an accident with a binder in a harvest field just west of their home in 1885. Little is known about the accident, the tombstone at the cemetery shows that one child lived several days longer than the other. It is hard to imagine feelings of fear and helplessness that must have overwhelmed the families when one of theirs was injured or ill. Mothers especially must have been very uneasy about the safety of their families. Providing just the bare necessities for life must have been a big undertaking. As long as everyone was well and strong, the parents could rest after a hard day's work and make plans for the next. But when illness or accident or other disaster struck, as it surely must have, the settlers needed their God and a place to worship Him, and to gain strength and confidence for their undertakings. The church was the tie for the community, a very important part of the settlement for young and old.

Anna Wendland was confirmed on April 5, 1885. We do not know if the soddy had been erected at that time. She also took her first communion on that day. Anna was the daughter of the Fred Wendlands, and she later married Clamor Monter.

We also know that two children were baptized that year. Anna, daughter of the Julius Ziebell, who later married Emil Esslinger; and Otto, son of the William Schievelbeins, who was killed in the binder accident when he was ten months old.

Probably the first wedding performed in the new church soddy was for Hermann Weber and Wilhelmina Freidank, in 1887.

In 1886, Rev. Joh. Hackmann, who served both Immanuel and Trinity, Arapahoe, entered the first church records into the register.

By 1888, the little soddy had become too small, and just south of it the congregation erected a frame chapel, 42 by 20 feet. This building served for 18 years as church and school. Inside the entry at the west end were two doors, one for the women to move to the left side of the church, and the other for the men, who sat on the right side. Older children sat at the front, where they were instructed in the Bible each Sunday, and the younger children sat with their mothers. Many people walked to church, although there were a few who had a wagon.

School was held in the frame chapel for four days, during which the children studied Catechism and Bible History, as

well as reading, writing and arithmetic. They practiced music, and sang songs.

On Thursday, the older children cleaned the building and turned the benches to face the east, where there was a pulpit and altar. In the southeast corner was a curtained area where the Pastor had his chair and books. There was a large heating stove in the center of the building.

Following the church services, the benches were turned to face the west, where the blackboard was, and the building became the school. Possibly thirty-two children were attending school by this time. The Pastor did much of the teaching.

In 1888, Rev. C.H. Seltz was installed in the Trinity congregation in Arapahoe, and he proved to be a tireless worker for the Lord in the Arapahoe area. Beside serving as pastor at Immanuel, Trinity, St. Matthew's, and Salem Lutheran congregations, he taught school for four months at Immanuel, four months at St. Matthew's, and two months at Trinity. He had regular German services on Sunday mornings, and English services every two weeks on Sunday afternoons. Rev. H. Prange came as a missionary to carry on the English work, and he preached in the English language so that Pastor Seltz could serve his other charges. During the service of Rev. Seltz, the four congregations became self-supporting, and Immanuel called its first Pastor, Rev. Albert Merz, who came in 1893. The congregation built a parsonage for him and his family, north of the chapel-school. Cornelius, his son, later told of playing in the old soddy which had been the first church, and which his father was using at that time as a chicken house.



The frame chapel-school. The flag flying at the left of the picture would lead one to believe the picture was taken when school was in session. The date on the back of the picture is 1888. It is possible that the building at the left of the picture is the sod church.

In 1899, Rev. William Baeder came with his wife and three children to serve the Immanuel congregation. On February 4, 1900, Mrs. Emma Marohn Baeder died, and was buried in her hometown of Schuyler, Nebraska. She was 34 years old, and left three children, Richard, 8; Louise, 5; and Clara, 2. Rev. Baeder served Immanuel until 1909, and his children attended the parochial school there.

In 1906, the congregation planned a new church and construction began. Materials were hauled from Arapahoe by team and wagon. The church building was described thus: "A stately new church edifice, 58 by 34 by 18 feet with alternich, constructed at a cost of \$8000.00, the furnace and furnishings included. In the majestic steeple, 85 feet tall, a 1200 pound bell was placed to call the church members and others to divine services, to greet the bridal parties and to toll the sad news abroad whenever any of the church members have departed from life." A beautiful altar and pulpit and other furnishings for the nave were white, trimmed with gold. These furnishings now are on display at the museum in Arapahoe.

In 1910, Rev. A.L. Gresens became the new Pastor of Immanuel. He was the guide of the congregation through the World War I, when all the Lutheran congregations were ridiculed and criticized for being German. Germany had been the home of the Immanuel people, and relatives still lived there. It was really a hard time for the German Lutherans. Their correspondence with relatives in Germany became suspect, they were accused of being spies, and before long, the German language was offensive to the people that they did business with. The church leaders tried to incorporate the English language into church services and school lessons, encouraging the Lutherans to use the English language as much as possible, even in their homes. The story was told that at a long, hotly contested meeting at the church when the change to English services was being considered, one staunch German father stood up and voiced his argument thusly: "My grandfather was German, my father was German, and God is German. Why should church services be in English?"

It was a very difficult change to be made. But many parents understood that it was an argument they couldn't win, and so they began to learn the English language, and before long all German was dropped, and families no longer taught their children to speak German. So that part of a heritage was lost. My parents spoke German only between themselves, when they did not want us children to know what was being said. I sincerely wish that I could speak German.

Despite the harassment, Immanuel sent four "German" sons to serve in the armed forces: H.J. Monter, Herman Hinz, Jacob Esslinger, and Ewald Marquardt.

From 1922 to 1942, Immanuel was served by the Rev. Martin Schabacker. A history of Immanuel could not be complete without relating the efforts and the leadership of this beloved pastor. He led the congregation through the years of its greatest growth. He toiled with them through the Twenties, when the young people of the church no longer could be kept from consorting with the English people and moving out into the neighboring communities. He suffered with them through the years of the "Great Depression," and prayed with them through the years of World War II, when so many of the young men of the congregation were sent again to War. And he praised God for the many blessings the congregation knew through those years. A school was built, and a full-

time teacher was called to instruct the pupils of the congregation, with the pastor's help. At one time, there were 150 students in the school, and a confirmation class was prepared for confirmation each year. At this time, the congregation numbered as many as three hundred souls.

Sons In The Military Service Of Our Country

World War II and Korean Conflict, 1941-1957:

There were three who gave their lives:

John Wendland
Franz Wendland
Harvey Raeder

Others who served:

Edwin Esslinger	Hugo Esslinger
Clarence Helms	Albert Ziebell
Ervin Petermann	Edward Gehring
Edwin Bloch	Leon Weber
Gordon Gehring	Oscar Petermann
George Huff	Glen Hinz
George Wendland	Ralph Marquardt
William Gehring	Martin Petermann
Ewald Ziebell	Duane Helms
Paul Gehring	Leyland Hermes
Oscar Ziebell	Emil Bloch, Jr.
Ambrose Meyer	Edgar Esslinger
Raymond Esslinger	Glen Monter
Arthur Ziebell	Norman Schievelbein
Edwin Helms	Melvin Weber
Walter Bloch	George Marquardt
Clarence Schmid	Roger Monter
Leonard Bloch	Robert Wendland
Richard Schmid	Kenneth Breinig
Heinz Weber	James Ziebell
Verne Anderson	William Monter

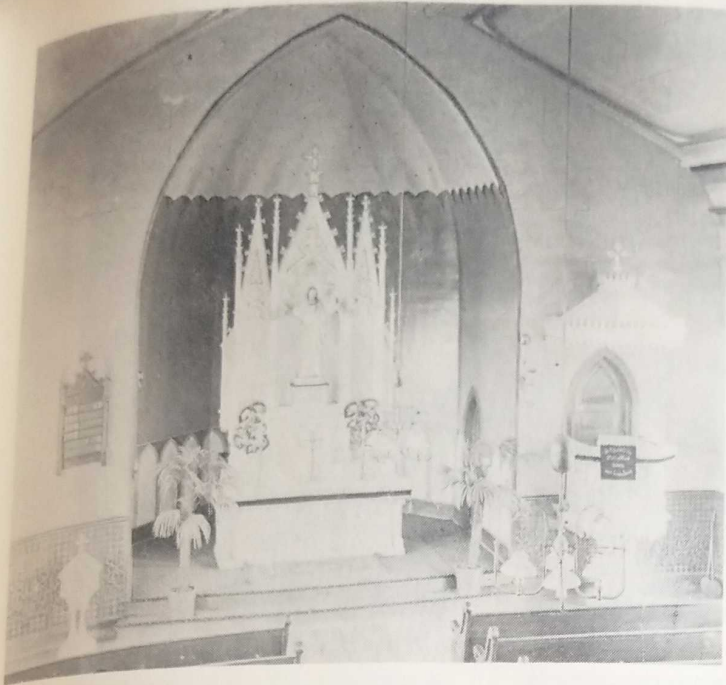
During the years following World War II, many changes came about in the countryside and in the church. Young people were moving away, farms were becoming fewer and larger, the congregation began to shrink. Pastors came and left after a short service, and it became difficult to support a church and school. With heavy hearts, the congregation gave in to the inevitable, and in 1967, closed its doors. The members of the congregation joined with neighboring Lutheran churches, and continued their lay-service there. But there is always a special spot in their hearts for the church at Immanuel, and the friends and relatives that they grew up with.



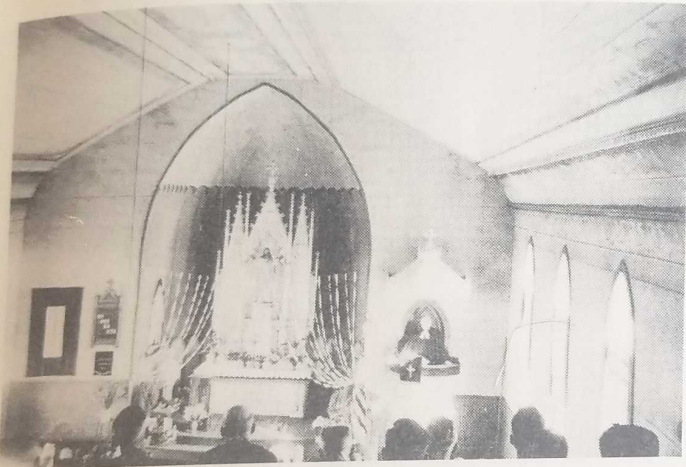
During the eighty-five years of service of the Immanuel Lutheran Church, 581 had been baptized, 445 had been confirmed, 129 had been married, 157 had died. At the time of closing, the roll counted thirty voters and 83 communicants. It was believed to be the oldest church in Gosper County at that time. Closing services were conducted by Rev. Herbert Biermann, who had served as vacancy pastor since January of that year. He based his sermon on "Be ye steadfast, and abound in the word of the Lord." This picture was taken in 1967.



Building in the background is the chapel-school. Note the fence around the grounds at the front. At this time, parking was only on the north side of the church. The fence was at the front of the cemetery. The picture was taken shortly after the church was built in 1906.



This early photo, prior to 1920, shows the ornate gas lights, the collection baskets in the corner at right, the beautiful altar and pulpit, which were white with gold trim, and the baptismal font at the front. The background at the altar had gold stars on the ceiling. The parament on the pulpit read in German: Blessed Are Those Who Hear God's Word. At this time there was no lectern. Plants on the step and the altar were artificial. The interior of the church was cleaned each week by members of the congregation. A list was posted, and each family took a turn.



These two photos were taken at the 60th Anniversary Celebration in 1942. Rev. Schabacker is in the pulpit. The Servicemen's Flag is displayed on the front wall. Stars stood for men from the congregation serving in the Armed Forces at that time.



The beautiful altar at Immanuel. This picture was taken after 1950.

Ministers Who Served Immanuel Lutheran Congregation



Rev. C.H. Seltz — 1888-1893



A. Merz — 1893-1899



Wm. Baeder — 1899-1909



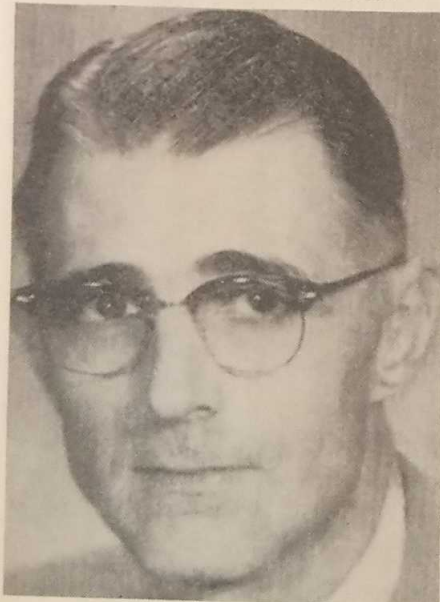
A.L. Gresens — 1910-1922



M. Schabacker — 1922-1942



A.R. Lade — 1942-1946



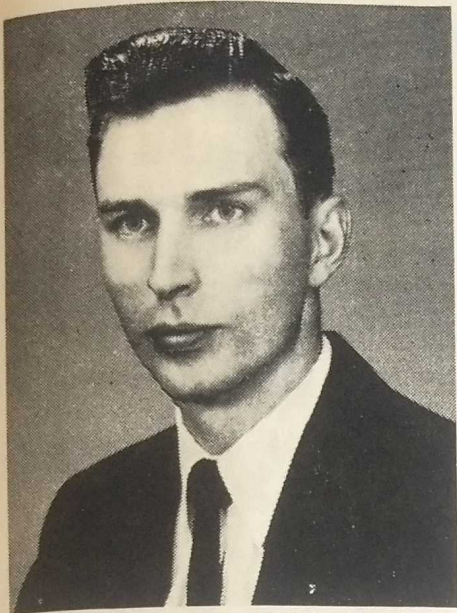
C. Harms — 1947-1948



P.H. Heitmann — 1949-1951



A. Allman — 1951-1953



D. Krueger — 1954-1955



Pastor Mommens — 1956



The Rev. A.L. Gresens and his Family. He served Immanuel from 1910 to 1922. Back row: Hedwig, Adolph, Agnes (Bundfuss), Ida. Front row: Helmuth, Meta, Rev. Gresens, Mrs. Gresens, Clara.

75th Anniversary Celebration In 1957



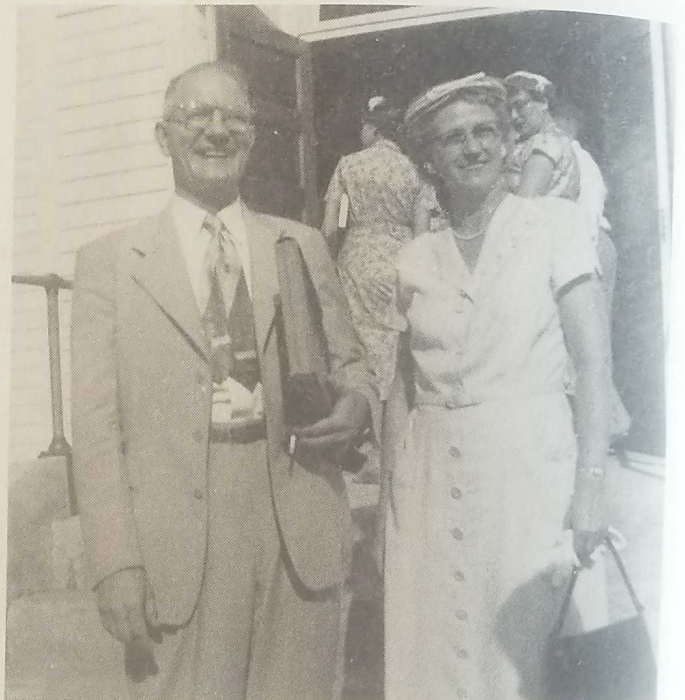
Pastor Martin Schabacker, his son William and his wife,
and Mrs. Martin Schabacker.



Rev. Alvin Lade, his wife and son.



Rev. Mommens, his wife, and family.



Teacher Edwin Wohler, and his wife Anna.

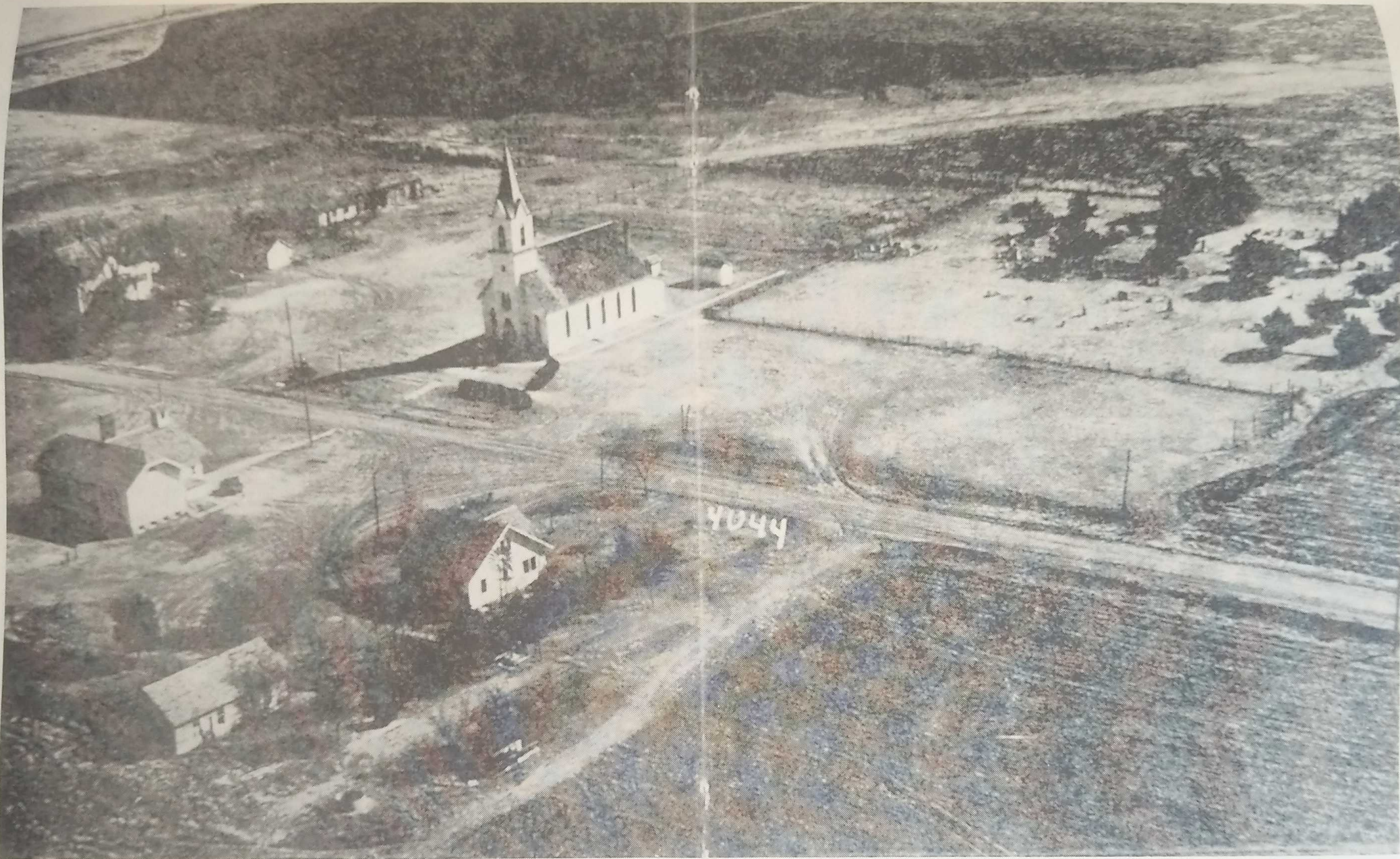
Mission Festival

For many years, Immanuel joined with the neighboring Lutheran churches for a Mission Festival, when guest pastors came to speak. This Festival was held on a Sunday in the summer, first probably in the Mues Grove near Arapahoe, and later in the Arapahoe City Park. Services were held both in the morning and in the afternoon, and families took their dinner for a noon picnic. The two photos, taken July 30, 1916, show the women seated together, and the men seated together. Probably the men in the foreground on both photos were pastors.





Taken at the time of Mission Festival, in the summer of 1905 in front of the frame church that was the second house of worship for the congregation. (Note the Barred-Rock hen in front of the crowd. It probably was a part of the Pastor's flock of chickens.)



The Photomap, taken in 1953, shows the location of the church buildings at that time. From left to right at the top are: 1. The parsonage and outbuildings. Somewhere in this area once stood the soddy that was the first church. 2. The stately church, with parking to both the north and south. The woodshed and restrooms at the back, toward the east. 3. The cemetery. 4. Across the road, the schoolhouse. 5. The teacherage. The building at the lower left was the chapel-school which had originally stood between the parsonage and the church building.

Immanuel Lutheran School

Immanuel's parochial school was the special pride of the members of Immanuel congregation. The first school building was the frame church-school, which was built in 1888. It was used through the week as a classroom, and for Sundays the seats were turned to face the altar at the east end of the building for worship services. The students used the entry-way to hang their coats and keep their other cold weather clothing. Their lunches also were set in the unheated entryway until lunchtime. Water for drinking and for washing was brought in from the well at the parsonage in pails. Heat for the building came from a wood heater in the center of the building.

After the school began holding classes for the children, it did not close until 1966, when there were only 16 pupils: Douglas, Jerry, Jim and Linda Weber, Jane, Phillip, Ruth and Arlene Leising, Lyle Weber, Douglas and Shirley Monter, Neal Monter, Candace and Judy Esslinger, Emil Esslinger and Daniel Meyers. Immanuel's membership had dropped so much that they could no longer support both a teacher and pastor.

For a time during World War I, because of the harassment of the German school, classes were not held at Immanuel, and students attended the schools that were located in their local school district. At this time, students received their first report cards; none were ever given at the parochial school. It was simply understood that all students did their very best — if problems arose that the school could not handle, and this was very seldom, parents were told and things straightened out.

Students from the parochial school had to pass an eighth grade examination, given at the county courthouse by the county superintendent in Elwood. It was not unusual for Im-

manuel students to score at the top of the list. In the early years, students did not go on to High School. Mathilda Ziebell and Magdalene Hermes were the first to attend the high school in Arapahoe and graduate. It is remembered that the Pastor, Martin Schabacker, strongly objected, and spoke to the fathers of the girls. Short years later, his children also attended the school in Arapahoe. A few of the young men were sent to Lutheran High Schools such as Seward, Nebraska and Winfield, Kansas. It was hard for 13 and 14 year-olds to stay away from home, and few were able to remain and complete their studies. Walter Wendland, son of Gustav and Marie Wendland, completed his years of study and went on to become a Lutheran pastor. His last parish was at Richland, Washington. His family resides near there. Immanuel's people remember with pride the young people who attended schools of higher learning and became pastors and teachers in the churches of the Synod. Most families could tell of one of their lineage who had persevered and became a church worker.

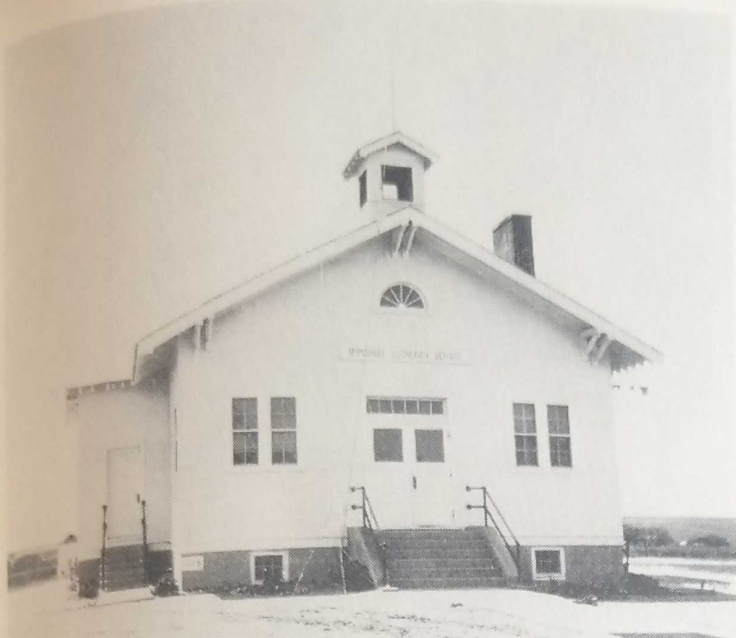
Edwin Wohler was the first called teacher of the parochial school. He came as a young man, and married a young woman of the community, Anna Monter. At this time, the congregation built a teacherage, and Mr. Wohler and his wife raised their four children there. The school building, which had been built in 1925, soon almost burst at its seams as the children filled the desks. In 1932, Mr. Wohler, with assistance from Pastor Schabacker, had 65 students to teach. The school was a first through eighth grade school, with religious classes taught every day.

After the new school building was erected, the building that had been the chapel-school was moved near the teacherage, and was used as a barn.

The Chapel - School



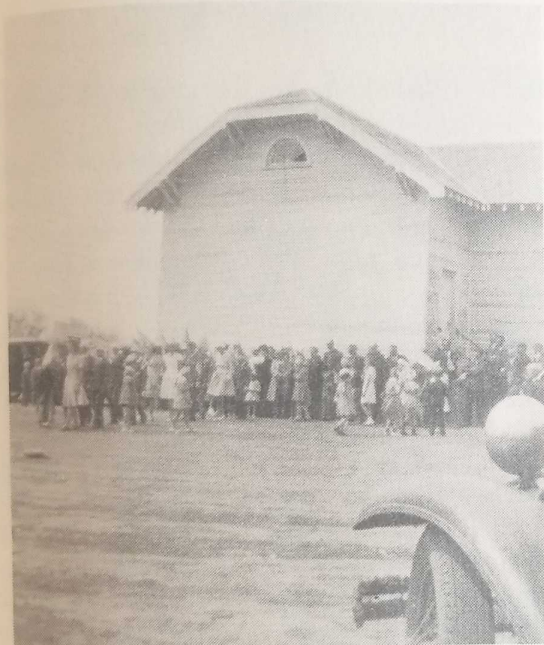
The chapel - school, about 1900, when the building served the dual purpose of church and school. The young man with the bicycle, right front, was probably Paul Melchert, he was known to have had a new bicycle at that time. The minister, in the front row in front of the raised hat, is Reverend Baeder.



The school – built in 1925.



Mr. Wohler, starting the Victrola for flag drill on the last day of school, an annual event, along with a last-day picnic. In early days, the picnic was held on the banks of the Elk Creek, to the west of the school.



Last day of school – ready for the flag drill.



Picture taken at the chapel-school of children, probably about 1902. Only identification that I have is Emma Helms (married Ludwig Esslinger – checked), young man in center is Henry Helms, and second row: Hannah Esslinger Huff and Carl Helms. Other faces are familiar, but to identify them would be a guess.



A group of Immanuel's young people.

The following article was written by Cornelius Merz, who was a loved and respected teacher in the Immanuel Lutheran School.

To Whom It May Concern:

Our first appearance in the Elk Creek vicinity was in the Fall of 1893. Our family at that time consisted of my parents, Rev. and Mrs. Albert Merz and myself, Cornelius. I was about a year-and-a-half old when we moved from Wellfleet, Nebraska. The parsonage near Wellfleet was a sodhouse, in which I was born. The "soddy" was on an 80 acres that my father had homesteaded and later sold to his brother in St. Louis.

The parsonage at Elk Creek was a spanking new home built for the first permanent minister of Immanuel.

The church and school was a two-in-one affair. During the school term the pupils faced the west. For Sunday service the benches were reversed to face the east.

Two amusing incidents happened, as I recall them, during church service. My father was at the altar, and the prayer must have hit a familiar phrase to a little chap, so he hauled off in a loud voice and prayed his prayer, "Abba lieber Fater; Amen." The other one happened to me during the sermon. Some of the neighbors had made me some little sticks out of red cedar. I was in the vestry at the time as mother could not be in church that Sunday. I started to pound the sticks. Father nodded at me several times to stop. Father finally came from the pulpit and took the noise-makers away, and the service continued.

My first school year was spent at Immanuel. My father was the teacher. Most of the subjects in school were taught in German. The first church building was of sod. When we lived there it was used as a chicken house.

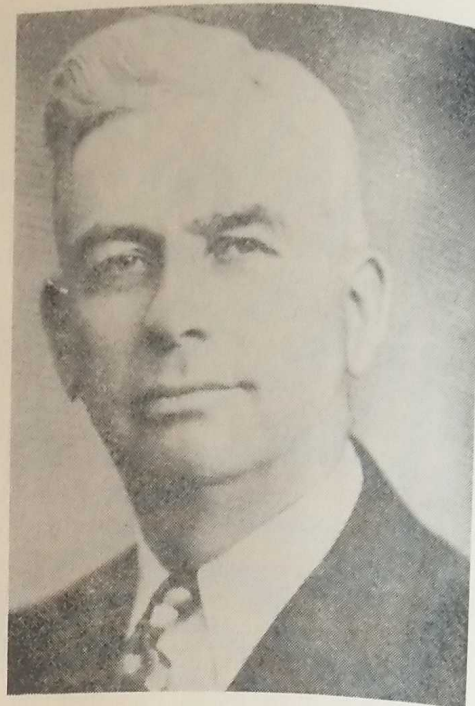
Baseball games and Fourth of July celebrations were usually big events in Arapahoe. Father was interested in baseball and usually took me along. He got the schoolboys interested in the game. It was played in German and Low German. The ball was homemade and so was the bat. All had a good time.

Hunting, fishing, berry-picking and birthday parties were the usual activities.

The only wedding I recall happened at the bride's house. A dog and I got involved. I was about four years old. When I stepped outdoors the big dog met me and jumped on me and with his paw slashed me from the forehead to the chin. You can imagine the commotion when my mother saw me.

In the Fall of 1899, our family moved to Plainview, Nebraska. Our family, at that time, consisted of five members. My sisters, Beata and Martha, were born at Arapahoe.

By Cornelius Merz



Cornelius Merz - 1955

the organization included a by-law that said only Lutherans could be buried in the Immanuel Cemetery.

A driveway went through the center of the cemetery from west to east. The Lord's Acre, a lot reserved for burial of family of pastors, was laid out just north of the driveway. While the church was active there was not a grave in this lot; however, it is no longer reserved for pastors. At the Lutheran cemeteries surrounding in Gosper County, only in one, St. Matthew's, north of Holbrook, was the Lord's Acre used. Their Pastor Schabacker died and was buried there, after which his son became their pastor.

At Immanuel, the first graves were for the two little children of the William Schievelbeins, who were killed in an accident in 1885.

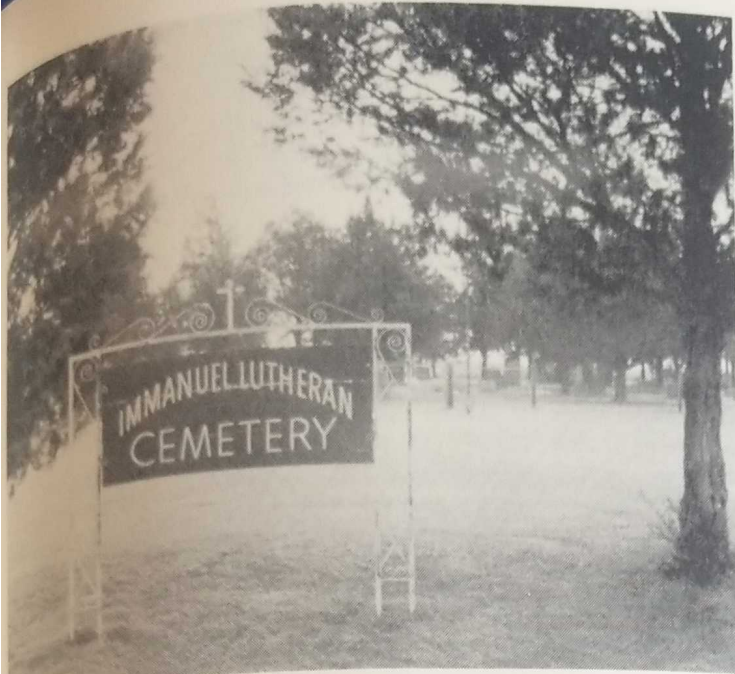
At certain times, a pastor could not perform the burial service. A suicide was not condoned, and so some sympathetic member would read Bible verses, prayers, and as the body could not be brought into the church, nor through the front gate of the cemetery, the family was responsible for the burial.

During the terrible flu epidemic in 1917, when thirteen members of the congregation died, committals were made by friends or neighbors, usually privately, since everyone feared the deadly disease. Rather than the undertaker taking the body to his mortuary, he brought out a burial box and prepared the body for burial in the home. As the flu raged through the community, the task of bringing out the box, laying out the body and making the trip to the cemetery was done by a neighbor or a friend with their team and wagon.

Today, the cemetery is cared for by a perpetual fund, set up from moneys from the sale of the church property. Memorial Day services are held at the cemetery each year. The windswept cemetery becomes a lovely green garden with many memorial wreaths decorating the graves in memory of loved, departed ones.

Cemetery

A cemetery was laid out to the south of the soddy. The front of the cemetery was to the west. Lots were laid out, varying from 33 feet square to 35 feet square. Each family was designated owner of a lot, which was passed down in the family as years went by. After organization of the cemetery association at the time of the closing of the church, lots were sold to families for a small fee. The constitution of



Today, at the site of the Immanuel Lutheran Church. This sign was placed at the cemetery looking east from the road.



Choir at Immanuel, about 1920. The men are: Emil Esslinger, Emil Bloch, Herman Hinz, William H. Monter, Rev. A.L. Gresens, H.E. Schievelbein, Herman Schievelbein, John Esslinger. The women are, center row: Ida Hinz, Agnes Gresens, Bertha Hinz, Emilie Monter. Front row: Marie Monter, Louise Ziebell, Clara Gehring, and Mathilda Gehring.



Confirmation class at Immanuel, 1945. Front row: Helen Wendland, Marjorie Hinz, Dolores Monter, Dorothy Petermann. Back row: Elaine Bowers, Mary Lou Hermes, Lucilla Helms, Minnie Ann Schmidt, Leland Wendland.



Christmas Program, 1950's. Teacher Elwin Schroeder is at right.



Immanuel's Walther League in 1944.

Disposing of the property of Immanuel Lutheran Church was a task undertaken with heavy hearts. The members of the church hoped that all of the treasured belongings of the church and school would be used with love to the glory of God, as they had been used for so many years.



This picture was taken at the time when the church building was torn down, following the disbandment of the congregation. Shown is the entry and the base of the bell tower.

The following is an item that was printed in the Lutheran Witness concerning the bell that had hung in the church tower. The bell was placed later at the Lutheran Camp Luther at Fremont, which was just being planned at that time.

Need a Bell?

I am a bell, a church bell. I belong to Immanuel of Arapahoe. I am looking for a home. My owners want a good home for me. They no longer need me, for this rural church northeast of Arapahoe is closing its doors, and my people are joining neighboring groups in the towns adjacent to my area.

It makes me a little sad to see these changes come, but I am certain that those who used me and relied on me to call them to worship will find new life and inspiration in the larger numbers they will become a part of by the grace of God.

For many years I have called the faithful to worship and have had my tones reach even the ears of the erring and the unconcerned. There was a time when, in answer to my call, more people came to worship here than in any other settlement in this area.

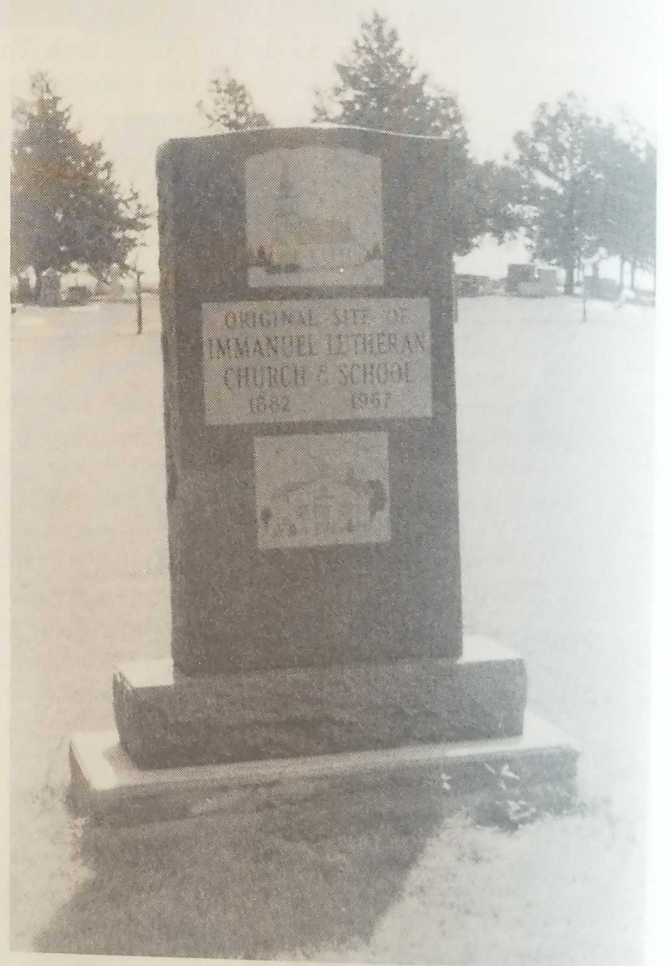
During good days and bad, during seasons of plenty and the "dirty thirties," during days of war and of peace, during days of prosperity and of adversity, yes, for sad occasions

and happy ones, God's people came at my call to find comfort and peace in the forgiving message of the Cross. I am happy to have been base metal put to such use.

I would like to continue to serve the Creator and Savior in the future young and old, and especially the children, who come arunning at my call.

Need a bell? Well, I need a home, so won't you write today a little note to George J. Gehring of Arapahoe, Nebraska 68922. He will be most happy to make arrangements for my future.

Monument



The monument placed by the Immanuel Cemetery Association in 1968 to commemorate the location of the church and school. The cemetery is in the background, to the east.

A Brief History Of The Evangelical Lutheran Church, Elk Creek, Gosper County, Nebraska

(Taken from The Directory of Our Lutheran Churches of America, Missouri and Wisconsin Synods, Furnas and Gosper Counties, 1918-1919.)

The Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of Milton, Gosper County, Nebraska, located ten miles northeast of Arapahoe, was organized by a number of Lutherans, who in the years 1880 and 1881 came here from Arlington, Washington County, Nebraska. The founders of the congregation were Fred Wendland, Fred Melchert, Julius Schievelbein, Wm. Schievelbein, Gustav Bloch, Julius Ziebell, all with their families, and August Marquardt, single. At first, divine services were held in private homes by the Rev. Toenjes, traveling missionary. The Rev. Caemmerer, resident pastor in Arapahoe 1882-1886, drafted the constitution. The first signers of this constitution were the aforesaid gentlemen and Chris Esslinger and Julius Hinz.

In the year 1885, the little congregation built a sod church. Soon, however, the "soddy" was too small and therefore, three years later, 1888, it became necessary to provide a larger house of worship. Accordingly, on a 20 acre plot donated by Mr. William Schievelbein, a frame chapel, 42 x 20 feet was built. This chapel is now being used as a schoolhouse. In the year 1906, a stately new church edifice, 58 x 34 x 18 feet, with altarniche, was erected at the cost of \$8,000, the furnace and interior furnishings being included. In a majestic steeple, 85 feet tall, a 1200 pound bell was placed to call the church members and others to divine services, to greet the bridal parties and to toll the sad news abroad whenever any of the church members have departed from life.

In the years 1885-1889, the Elk Creek Congregation was served by the following pastors: Braur, Jahn, Baumhoefner and the president of our Nebraska District Synod of Nebraska, Rev. Hilgendorf. All these pastors, having charges in other fields, could only occasionally preach here. However, in the year 1888, the Elk Creek Congregation, jointly with the sister congregation of Arapahoe, extended a call to Rev. Hackmann and now had regular services. But the above mentioned pastor did not remain very long in his new field. He was succeeded by the Rev. G.H. Seltz, whose work was visibly blessed. Under his active leadership the congregation soon became independent and self-supporting and a call was extended to the Rev. A. Merz, which he accepted. The congregation, having a pastor of its own, had to now provide a dwelling for him. Hence, members got busy and built a small parsonage, which is even now used for that purpose. The Rev. Merz was succeeded by Rev. Baeder, 1899-1909. After serving his flock diligently for ten years, the Rev. Baeder departed for Lincoln, Nebraska to take charge of a new field.

At the present time the Elk Creek Church numbers 260 souls, 145 communicant members, 52 voting members and 44 children. The pastor usually has charge of the school, although the present school term is being taught by a theology student from the Lutheran Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. Following are the officers of the congregation: H. Schneider, chairman; P. Wendland, secretary; W. Moenter, F. Wendland, F. Ziebell, trustees, elders; and Rev. A.L. Gresens, pastor since 1909.

Early Records Of The Immanuel Congregation

These records of the early years of the Immanuel congregation were written on pages of tablet paper by Rev. Caemmerer. He served four congregations, so not all information pertains to Immanuel congregation. Pages before page 9 were not found.

On page 9, the German word, Dreieinigkeits Gem. means Trinity Congregation. On this page are listed, item 7 through 13, confirmations for children, geb. stands for date of birth. Item 12 says: Anna Wendland, conf. on 5 of April, '85 in the Imm. Cong. in Gosper County.

Following that are listed communions, date and names and number of communicants at Trinity Congregation in Arapahoe.

7. Sophia Marie Morkmann, geb. am 6. März 1870.
8. Angerike Emilie Gennrich, geb. 7. März 1869.
9. Margaretha Düppner, geb. am 8. Juni 1870
1884
10. Johanna Borkmann, geb. am 7. Januar 1869,
conf. am 27. April '84 in Arapahoe.
1885.
11. Wilhelm Wendler, confirmiert am 15. März '88
in New Era - ganz beim Glauben.
12. Anna Wendland, conf. am 5. April '85 in
der Tr. Gem. in Gosper Co.
13. Caroline Wiekentkauff, conf. am 5. April
in der Salomee Gem. in Lopez, Franklin Co.

Communicanten in der Dreieinigkeits Gem.
in Arapahoe, 1882.

- Sept. 24. H. Mues & Frau, H. Mues & Frau, A. H. Mues
& Frau, H. Morkmann & Frau. (8)
- Dec. 25. A. Reutz & Frau, H. Hülke & Frau, L. Mues
& Frau, Christob. Hänigler & Frau & Frau Georg,
H. Hülke & Frau, E. Hülke & Frau, Sophia Hülke,
Johanna Pommerehne (15)
1883.
- May 25. P. Nolte, Margaretha Düppner, Carl Nolte,

in Hermann Rosalie Mott, P. Schottke Frau,
Hermann & Frau, E. Haysoll & Frau, J. Burges,
Fania, W. Kuss & Frau. (15)

15: A. Meyers & Frau, E. Haysoll & Frau,
L. Haysoll & Frau, G. Borkmann & Frau, H. Haysoll
& Frau, J. Haysoll & Frau, J. Haysoll & Frau,
alle, J. Haysoll & Frau, Haysoll & Frau.
(15)

2. Oct. 1883 10 Communicanten.

1884.

April 27: G. Borkmann & Frau, F. Haysoll & Frau,
Haysoll & Frau. (4)

Dec. 21: F. Haysoll, F. Haysoll & Frau, F. Haysoll
& Frau, H. Haysoll & Frau, H. Haysoll & Frau,
& Frau, Haysoll & Frau, E. Haysoll & Frau, G. Haysoll,
& Frau. (15)

1885.

Aug 8: W. Kuss & Frau, H. Haysoll & Frau, H. Haysoll
& Frau, H. Haysoll & Frau, G. Haysoll & Frau,
J. Haysoll & Frau, H. Haysoll & Frau, F. Haysoll & Frau,
& Frau, H. Haysoll & Frau, H. Haysoll & Frau,
& Frau. (24)

July 19: E. Haysoll & Frau, J. Haysoll & Frau,
& Frau, F. Haysoll & Frau, H. Haysoll & Frau.
(9)

December 85:

Communicanten in New Era 1882:

Nov. 29: Carl Hinge & Frau, F. Haysoll & Frau,
H. Haysoll & Frau, H. Haysoll & Frau, H. Haysoll & Frau,
Haysoll & Frau, F. Haysoll & Frau, J. Haysoll & Frau,
Friedrich & Frau. (14)

1883.

April 1. F. Haysoll & Frau, F. Haysoll & Frau,
J. Haysoll & Frau, F. Haysoll & Frau, H. Haysoll & Frau,
& Frau. (9)

Oct. 7: C. Hinge & Frau, F. Haysoll & Frau, F. Haysoll
& Frau, F. Haysoll & Frau, Hermann Haysoll & Frau,
H. Haysoll & Frau, F. Haysoll & Frau, F. Haysoll & Frau,
& Frau. (13)

1884.

Zu Anfang des Jahres 9 Communicanten.
In Orleans Parish Co: K. Bockel & Frau, F. Haysoll & Frau,
Marie Oliver K. Blume & Frau, P. Haysoll & Frau,
C. Bockel & Frau, J. Haysoll & Frau, W. Haysoll & Frau,
& Frau, H. Haysoll & Frau. (14)

Communicanten in der Tr. Gem. in Gosper Co.
1882.

Sept. 10: W. Haysoll, F. Haysoll & Frau,
W. Haysoll, C. Haysoll, F. Haysoll & Frau, F. Haysoll
& Frau, C. Haysoll, A. Haysoll & Frau, J. Haysoll & Frau,
& Frau, F. Haysoll & Frau, J. Haysoll & Frau,
& Frau, F. Haysoll & Frau, H. Haysoll & Frau, W. Haysoll & Frau,
& Frau. (22)

Page 10 shows listings of communicants at Trinity Con-
gregation, Arapahoe.

The four top entries on page 11 are of communicants in
the New Era Congregation near Oxford, NE.

The bottom entry is for communicants in the Immanuel
Congregation in Gosper Co. — Sept. 10. Listed are 22
names.

Dec. 26: F. Wendland & frau, J. Schivelbein & frau,
W. Wathling & frau, F. Melchert & frau, W. Schivel-
bein & frau, A. Marquardt, J. Ziebell & frau,
W. Schivelbein & frau, Bertha W. Ruhle.
1883. (16)

Aug. 20: F. Wendland & frau, W. Wathling & frau,
J. Schivelbein & frau, G. Bloch & frau, J. Ziebell &
frau, A. Marquardt, W. Ruhle, Fr. Melchert,
L. Hermann Ziebell. (14)

July 22: Fr. Wendland & frau, J. Schivelbein & frau,
W. Ruhle, W. Ruhle, Jul. Schivelbein & frau,
W. Schivelbein & frau, F. Hinz & frau, G. Bloch
& frau, W. Wathling & frau, A. Kath & frau,
Fr. Melchert & frau, Jul. Ziebell & frau & Sohn
L. Hermann, A. Marquardt, Sophia Huxoll. (25)
1884.

May 11: 18 Communicanten.
Oct. 21: Ch. W. Schivelbein & frau, W. Schivelbein
& frau, Jul. Schivelbein & frau, F. Wendland &
frau, G. Bloch & frau, J. Hinz & frau, J. Ziebell
& frau & Sohn L. Hermann, Fr. Melchert & frau,
A. Marquardt. (18)
1885.

April 4: Fr. Wendland & frau & Tochter Anna,
W. Wathling & frau, J. Schivelbein & frau, G. Bloch,

& frau, Fr. Melchert & frau, F. Hinz & frau, W. Wathling
& frau, Jul. Ziebell & frau, A. Marquardt, G.
Esslinger & frau, Jul. Kath & frau, A. Freidank
W. Ruhle, Fr. Melchert, W. Ziebell, Wilhelmina
Freidank. (27)

Im Oct. '85: 20 Communicanten,
Im Dec. '85:

Communicanten in der Salmt. Pm. in Essling, 9
1883.

April 3: P. Jürges, Fr. Litz & frau, W. Schütz,
T. Lemp, J. Ziebell & frau. (7)

July 22: W. Schütz, P. Jürges, Fr. Jürges &
frau, Fr. Hinz & frau. (6)

Nov. 27: G. Ziebell & frau, W. Schütz, Fr. Litz &
frau. (5)

1884.

May 4: 4 Communicanten.

Oct. 17: W. Schütz, H. Schüller & frau & frau,
W. Wendland & frau, A. Pfeiffer & frau.
1885. 8

April 3: W. Schütz, P. Jürges & frau & frau,
H. Wendland & frau & frau & Tochter Christiane,
Fr. Melchert & frau & Tochter Wilhelmine, G. Ziebell
& frau, Fr. Jürges, H. Berendt & frau. (15)

This hand-written list of communicants for Dec. 26, 1882,
lists the following names, written in German script and sign-
ed by Rev. Caemmerer:

F. Wendland and frau, J. Schivelbein and frau, W.
Wathling and frau, F. Melchert and frau, W. Schivel-
bein and frau, A. Marquardt, J. Ziebell and frau, W.
Schivelbein and frau, Bertha W. Ruhle. (16)

On March 26, 1883, he lists:

F. Wendland and frau, W. Wathling and frau, W.
Schivelbein and frau, G. Bloch and frau, J. Ziebell and
frau, A. Marquardt, W. Ruhle, Hermann Ziebell. (14)

On July 22, 1883, he lists:

Fr. Wendland and frau, W. Schivelbein and frau,
Fr. Ruhle, W. Ruhle, Jul. Schivelbein and frau, Chr.
W. Schivelbein and frau, J. Hinz and frau, G. Bloch
and frau, W. Wathling and frau, A. Kath and frau, Fr.
Melchert and frau, Jul. Ziebell and frau and son Her-
mann, A. Marquardt, and Sophia Huxoll. (25)

May 11, 1884:

18 communicants (not listed)

October 21, 1884:

Chr. W. Schivelbein and frau, W. Schivelbein and
frau, Jul. Schivelbein and frau, F. Wendland and frau,
G. Bloch and frau, J. Hinz and frau, J. Ziebell and frau
and son Hermann, Fr. Melchert and frau, and
A. Marquardt. (18)

April 4, 1885:

Fr. Wendland and frau and daughter Anna, W.
Wathling and frau, J. Schivelbein and frau, G. Bloch
and frau, Fr. Melchert and frau, J. Hinz and frau, W.
Schivelbein and frau, Jul. Ziebell and frau, A. Mar-
quardt, G. Esslinger and frau, Jul. Kath and frau, E.
Freidank, W. Ruhle, Fr. Ruhle, He. Ziebell, Wilhelmina
Freidank. (27)

October '85:

20 communicants (not listed)

December '85:

Date written, no listing.

Life on Elk Creek Before 1900

Farming

The major occupation of the Elk Creek community was farming. Farming in the earliest days of the community was very hard work. Sometimes someone was hired to break the sod, however probably a plow was shared, and strong young men with a good team of mules broke the sod. It cost \$1 per acre, and 2 acres could be broken in one day. Corn was planted by hand and picked and shelled by hand. The best ears were reserved to be the seed for the next year. Hay was cut, often by hand, later with a mower, in the canyons to provide winter feed for the livestock. During the summer, cattle were staked out or were herded each day, and the cows were milked by hand each morning and each night. The cows were trained to stand where they were, without being tied, and while sitting on a stool, the milk was taken into a pail. Often the cow moved or stepped into the pail, and the milk was lost. One just had to pick up the pail and stool and follow the cow until she once more stood still, and finish the milking.

Eggs in 1884 sold for 5¢ a dozen. If there was no money to buy coffee, wheat or rye were roasted and used as coffee.

Following are some stories that were written in accounts of life on the prairie in Nebraska: (Author unknown.)

My father sowed wheat by broadcasting, and a few spears grew up. We children pulled them up by hand and threshed the grain with a stick. We had two sacks of grain from 15 acres. Mother roasted it for coffee. The rest of the wheat came up after rain in August and we used it for cow pasture. We ate wild turnips, peas, buffalo beans, onions and greens. We had one-half slice of rye bread per day. We tried wild crow, but once was all we could stand.

In 1881, we raised a little wheat, stacked it together and had it threshed by a horse-powered machine owned by Mr. Herm. Bendler from Oxford for \$5.00 for 100 bushels. It took him three days for the round trip to our farm.

Father had two loads of ear corn to sell in Arapahoe, and they carried the corn upstairs in bushel baskets. The corn was \$1.05 per bushel. There were no roads; when we wanted to go someplace, we started out in the general direction and went a short way until we came to a canyon pocket, went around it, then in the general direction again, around another pocket, until arriving at our destination.

When my parents went to church in town, the children were left at home to do the chores, as the trip took more than a day.

People had a nut-brown complexion, because they were in the sun so much. In 1881, a homestead sold for \$25.00, one offered a tree claim that sold for less than \$2.00, which was owed for butter.

Many did not have anything at all, were discouraged and left.

Resettlement of the area began in 1882 and 1883.

In early 1880, buffalo, elk and turkeys were no longer seen, however there were antelope, prairie chickens,

quail and jackrabbits. Often a little extra money could be made by picking up wagon loads of buffalo bones and horns, and selling them at \$1.50 per load at railroad sites to be used for fertilizer in the East. Also, wood could be sold for \$1.50 a load.

Fortunate was the farmer who had trees on his land. He shared with relatives and friends who did not, and usually was paid back in some way for the wood to heat and cook with.

Horses were available after the railroad came. They were broncos or little western ponies brought from Oregon. First they were driven all the way on picket ropes, but many of these died. A few became treasured members of the livestock family of the settlers.

The farmer and his family were almost self-sufficient. Much of what was raised was used to feed the horses, and the few head of other livestock. Wheat was taken to town to be ground at the mill while the farmer waited. Molasses was made from sorghum and used as a sweetener. Wives made soap, grew large gardens, helped with butchering and preserved meat in salt and lard, and the entire family was involved in milking the cows, skimming the cream, and churning the butter. Cream could be separated by adding water to the milk, and the heavier cream raised to the top. Some families had a separator which drained the milk out of the bottom of the large bowl, through a sort of spigot, and left the cream in the bowl.

The wives made all their family's clothing and did the washing by hand. They also did all their baking and cooking. Only a few staples were purchased in town and they were considered luxuries.

Horses were a very important part of the settlers' livestock for many years, even into the early 1900s when there began to be some mechanized farming. The horses were used for field work as much as possible, and were used to transport the family to church, town, and to the neighbors. Owners often boasted about the great things their horses could do, and sometimes the horses were entered in races, with the competition being very keen, and lots of betting going on. When the horses were working, they were an impressive sight with their harnesses, netting to keep the flies from bothering them, and blinders to keep the horses from being startled by something coming up on their side. Often as many as six horses were harnessed together as a team when the farmer was doing his farming tasks. To drive that many horses at one time was a job for only a knowledgeable horseman.

A fair was held in 1884, prizes for the best horses, cattle, mules and hogs, and for farm products were offered. Horse races attracted betting money and large purses were offered for the winners.

Broom corn was a special kind of corn that was raised in the area near Arapahoe. It was planted in the sod, often unbroken sod, because it was very hardy. It was cut and sold in Arapahoe to be shipped to broom factories in eastern Nebraska.

Early farming stories include stories about herding cattle

because there were no fences. This was often the job of the children in the family. Early fences included plantings of Florabunda Rose and of hedgeapple trees. Both were thorny and made a good hedge. Sometimes farmers dug a narrow trench so that cattle and hogs did not cross boundaries.



In his buffalo hide coat, Herman Weber is going hunting.



Herman Weber's first tractor, a Farmall F-20. Note that there were steel treads on the wheels for traction. Often horse-drawn machinery was rebuilt to be used behind the tractor when it was first used for farming.



E.H. Hermes, with the large hog that he owned with his brother, Fred C. In the background is the Hermes' home, located on the Furnas-Gosper County line.



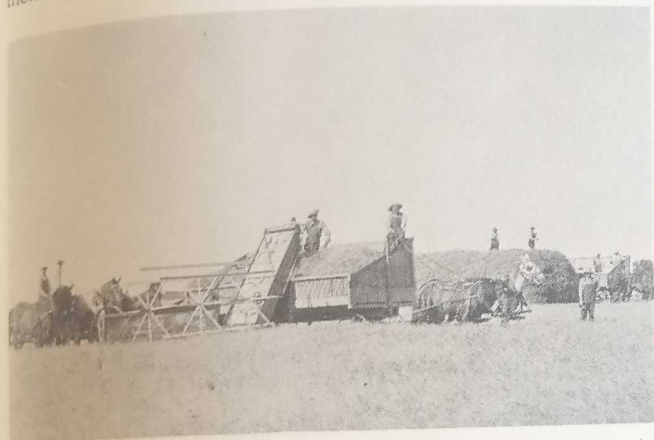
An early tractor drawing a corn binder. This tractor has rubber tires.



Herman Weber, with his sons Leon and Heinz, ready to hitch up the six horses to his two-row lister to plant corn. In the background is the large barn at the Weber farm.



Herman Weber picking corn by hand. Notice how thinly planted and how short the cornstalks were. It must have taken most of the day to fill the wagon with ears of corn. The horses walked along the rows and the corn picker just walked alongside, picking off and peeling the shucks off the ear before tossing it into the wagon. On his arms, the shucker wore shucking sleeves to protect his shirt sleeves. Because the picking went on for months, the denim sleeves were good protection. On the hand was worn a shucking hook, which was a leather cover for the palm of the hand with a hook on the thumb below the thumb to hook into the shucks to help clean them off the ear of corn.



A header to harvest small grains. This unique early machine was pushed by four horses on an evener that extended from a doubletree. The grain was cut and elevated into the barge, a large open-topped wagon, and then unloaded and stacked as can be seen in the back of the picture.



In the second picture of the header, note the elaborate harness on the horses.



One year's corn crop. The corn sheller has shelled the pile of corn in the foreground from the corncobs. The corn sheller is hidden by the corn pile, the steam engine that ran it is to the left.



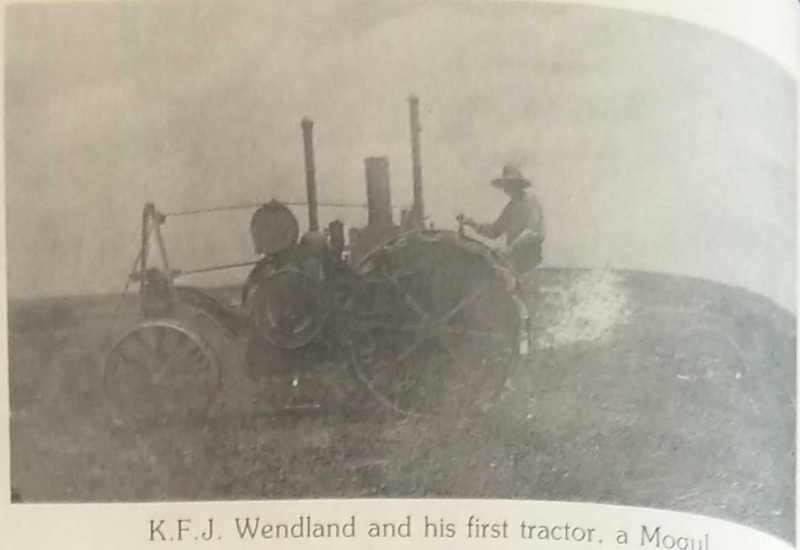
This picture shows the corn sheller and the steam engine. This machine probably belonged to George Critchfield.



Later a team of three horses pulled a binder, which also tied the cut grain and left it in bundles to be shocked in the field, prior to being hauled in hayracks to a threshing machine and threshed. The straw from the grain was piled into huge straw piles, which fed cattle and horses in the winter.



This picture shows loose feed being pitched by pitchforks onto a hayrack to be brought to the corrals and fed in the winter.



K.F.J. Wendland and his first tractor, a Mogul.



Lumber wagons filled with corn ears, picked from the field by hand.



Herman Hinz and an early tractor.



Mrs. Gustav Wendland is feeding her chickens from the grain that she has in her apron. This picture was taken at the Brauner place where she was living with her family.



Mrs. Marie Melchert, feeding her chickens from a basket of grain.

Homes

Life for the early settlers held many hardships, and the families had to work together to win the battle with the elements. Their first homes were often dugouts, left behind by the first homemakers on the land. Sometimes the one-room dugouts were "lined" with muslin or sheets. Heavy paper could be put on the floor — maybe a piece of carpet over that. Most furniture was handmade from packing boxes and available tree trunks. In the blizzard of 1888, the story was told that the one-room log house was heated by a cookstove. In order to make the temperature livable, blankets were hung all around the stove to hold the heat in. Days were spent standing around the stove and meals were eaten standing up because the blankets were too close to permit chairs to be drawn up to the stove.

Water for the house was carried from the springs of the creek until wells could be dug. Most travel was by foot those first years. The family horses had to keep rested for the work that they had to do.

Prairie fires were greatly feared. Often the fires would burn from the Republican River all the way to the Platte River. Farmers built firebreaks around their homes to protect them from the fires.

When members of the families became ill or were injured, it was not simply a matter of going to the doctor. Often, it would mean a long trip. Sometimes there just was not a doctor available. So the families learned to treat themselves during most emergencies. The Home-Apotics Box was kept high on a shelf in the closet and was brought out to treat stomach upsets, cuts and abrasions, burns, and other complaints.



The homes of the early settlers were very crude. Sometimes there was a dugout or a soddy located on the quarter of land from the first homesteader. If not, the family might spend some time with relatives and friends until some shelter could be erected. Almost every family had at least one trunk where material or paper could be stored to protect it from the ever-thick mice. Many snakes also populated the area and they could easily get into the homes. Once a large snake crept across the roof and into a home to eat the canary in a cage. Then it was stuck at the swollen place where the canary was so the snake was destroyed.



A dugout home on the banks of the Republican River about where the old city water works stood.

Ice

Putting Up Ice for the Next Summer

Because there were good springs in the Elk Creek, the people of the community did not have to purchase their blocks of ice from someone in town. They put up their own ice from the creek to be used to keep foods such as milk and butter and cream cool in the summertime, to cool cold drinks, or to make homemade ice cream.

It was really quite an operation to put up ice. Early in the winter, a dam was built with shovels to back up the water in the creek. As the water froze, the dam was raised until the ice was several feet thick. Then a spillway was cut to let the water drain from beneath the ice. The ice was ready to cut into blocks with the ice saws, pulled up out of the creek on an ice ramp, and loaded into the lumber wagons. The ramp consisted of long planks which were nailed together, and side boards were nailed along the planks.

The ice was stored in ice houses which were dug into the ground, sometimes cemented out, and a small building placed above it. A ladder was used to climb down into the ice cave. The ice blocks were packed in straw to keep them frozen. When ice was to be used, chunks were sawed off or broken off with a hammer and rinsed clean.

Wood

Cutting Wood for the Heating and Cooking in the Homes

The people whose land included the Elk Creek were very fortunate to have wood to burn in their homes in the winter. Some owners sold wood and were very careful about selling only damaged trees to keep the healthy trees flourishing. Often friends and relatives shared wood cutting chores and the wood. Wood was also supplied for the furnace to heat the church.

If a tree claim had been started on one of the quarters owned by a farmer, as they often were, careful harvesting of those trees was practiced. Herman Ziebell planted potatoes where he had cleared wood, and he had especially good potatoes.

The large trunks were trimmed and the smaller branches taken home in lengths. Two men usually manned the large

Baseball

saw for the tree trunks. Pieces that could be handled were sawed on a buzz saw at the farmstead, and then split with an ax and wedge so they would fit the heaters and ranges. The largest pieces were split where they lay and brought home after being cut to size.

H.E. Schievelbein had a tree claim just east of the church site. A crew spent the day cutting and buzzing wood and by evening had a large pile to divide and take to their homes. But the next morning the pile was gone, with only ashes to show where it had been. Maybe a spark from a nail or a piece of wire had fallen into the sawdust under the buzz saw when the men were sawing and all the fruits of their labor were gone before morning.

The largest tree on the Elk Creek was cut down after it had died and the wood was given to the church for heat. It had grown on the creek on the K.F.J. Wendland place and was said to be over one hundred feet tall.



Shown in the picture are some of the men from the Immanuel Congregation when they were working to put up the wood. The woman in the white head-scarf is Mrs. Johanna (Schievelbein) Wendland.



Herman Weber and Ted Wendland at the buzz saw.

One of the favorite pastimes in the summertime was baseball, and the young men of Immanuel became very good ball players. Their team was well-known in the community, and they played in many neighboring towns.

Their home field was located about one-half mile north into the pasture at the K.F.J. Wendland farm, just west of the Elk Creek. The diamond was placed so that the catcher's position was to the northwest. Left field sloped toward the creek so a ball hit to left might roll for a long time, and the left fielder chasing the ball would be out of sight of home plate. Right field was on a flat area stretching south a long distance. There was no home run fence, but a high fence of netting was behind the catcher, toward first and third, and here the fans would park their vehicles to watch the game.

At one time, Herb Wendland took admission to help pay for some equipment, such as bats, balls, and the catcher's pud. But usually, you did not have to pay to watch the game.

The umpire stood on the middle of the infield, behind the pitcher, because he had no protective equipment. Even Hermes, who also was a player, was known as one of the fairest umpires in the area.

Some people who were mentioned as outstanding players included: Walter (Slim) Imhoff, an outstanding first baseman; Emil Wendland, an excellent pitcher; Herb Ziebell, an infielder and later a very good pitcher, played also for the Arapahoe Town Team, and later was their manager; Lorenz Ziebell, an excellent catcher.

The Esslinger brothers played on the team, and Cornie Wendland was mentioned as an outfielder.



Baseball players that Herb Schievelbein named "The Fastest Team to Come Down the Pike." The picture was taken early in the 1900s. Left to right: Henry Helms, Emil Bloch, Herman Bloch, Herman Hinz, John Esslinger, Emil Esslinger, Julius Hinz, Herb E. Schievelbein, and Frank Petermann.



Family Stories

Immanuel Lutheran Church

Chr. Wilhelm Schievelbein and Maria Koepke Schievelbein



Christoff Wilhelm and Maria Koepke Schievelbein

The elderly Christoff W. Schievelbeins (she was born Maria Christina Koepke), were the patriarchs of the family that came to live on the Elk Creek in Gosper County, and to help organize the Immanuel Lutheran Church. Their names are listed on the communion records by the Rev. Caemmerer, but Mr. Schievelbein did not sign the church constitution. At that time, people who were about fifty years old or older, left all business and homemaking to their children, saying that they had worked long enough and that the younger ones should now take over. Mr. Schievelbein and his wife did not make a home in the area, but lived with families of their children. It is known that they lived with the Melcherts.

I was not told any personal information about Mrs. Schievelbein, but I have been told that Mr. Schievelbein was an active man, weaving footstools and baskets for the members of his family from grapevines that grew along the creek. Some of these are still treasured items in families of his descendants. He also made shoes for his family, carving a sole from boxelder wood and nailing a strip of leather for the upper. The Leon Webers have a pair of these shoes, they were found under their house.

Mr. Schievelbein did a lot of fishing on the Elk Creek, and also made trips by horse and buggy to the Republican River

where he sometimes stayed overnight. He would salt his catch so that it could be preserved. Cornelius Merz told of remembering him stopping at the parsonage on his way home so that he could share his salted fish with the family of the Pastor, Rev. Merz.

Mr. Schievelbein was 67 years old when the family came to Gosper County. He died in 1897 at the age of 83, after contracting pneumonia after he fell into the water in Elk Creek when he was fishing.

Mrs. Schievelbein died in 1904 after she had attained the age of 85 years.

The first members of the group to come to the Elk Creek community and to organize the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Gosper County were all members of the family of Wilhelm Christoff (or Christian) (and sometimes written Chr. Wilhelm) Schievelbein and his wife, Maria Christina Koepke Schievelbein. He was born March, 1814 in Pommern, Germany and died July 13, 1897 at the age of 83 years. She was born April 4, 1818 in Pommern, Germany and died February 29, 1904 at the age of 85 years. They came to America in 1874 and to Gosper County in 1881.

The Schievelbein Family

Wilhelm Christian Schievelbein (1814-1897)
 married: **Maria Christina Koepke** in 1840
 *are buried in the Immanuel Lutheran Cemetery.

children:

1. Julius F. Schievelbein (1841-1934)
2. Johanna (Wendland) (1843-1927)
3. Augustina (Ziebell) (1846-1931)
4. William F.C. (1850-1906)
5. Fifth child died in Germany
6. Emelia (Bloch) (1852-1955)
7. Bertha (Melchert) (1854-1926)
8. & 9. Twin daughters died when they were one year old.

1. Julius F. Schievelbein (1841-1943)

married: Albertine Louise Dahms in Washington County, NE (1843-1898)

*Mrs. Schievelbein was the first of the original families' parents to die, probably of cancer. All of her children were still at home and they were raised by their father, Julius.

children:

Emma Bertha Emilie (Dec. 13, 1876-)

married: William Lallman
 children: Clara; Fredericka (Hoyle); Edward; Elsie (Westerbeck)

William Gustav (March 5, 1879-1960)

married: Emma Sydow Wendland
 children: Irene Wendland, married Gustav Stagemeyer; John Wendland, (a World War II casualty); Arthur, married Genevieve Hermes; Reinhart; Leo, married Leona Haussler; Glen, married Clarice Debban, married Eva.

Maria Frederika Christina (1882-1974)

married: Heinrich W. Monter (1880-1950)
 children: Clara; Hilda, married Otto Hermes; Reinhold Julius, married Viola Helms; Leona, married Oscar Warner; Herbert, married Irene Ziebell; Hertha, married Oscar Ziebell.

Bernhardt Fr. Julius (March 1, 1884-1923)

married: Maria Wilhelmina Weber (Feb. 26, 1893-1983)

children: Leona, married Richard Fahnholz; Berdina, married Melvin Evans; Norman, married Shirley Chambers.

2. Johanna Schievelbein (1843-1927)

married C. Frederich Wendland (1842-1906)

children:

Anna (1870-1969)

married Clamor Monter (1865-1909)
 children: William, married Lilly Niemann; Emilie, married William Meyers; Marie, married Herman Rolfing; Elfrieda, married Fred C. Hermes; Fred H., married Minnie Hermes; Laura, married Harry Graning; and Martin, married Emma Wendland.

Julius (1872-1944) Also known as K.F.J.
 married: Ida Hartman (1885-1938)

children: Carl; Max, married Esta Dunlap; Leonard, married Anna Hermes; Henrietta, married Leonard Warner; Martin, married Dora Riepe; George; Emma, married Martin Monter; Elvira, married Howard Waln, married Harold Bloch; Bertha, married Howard Kalthoff; Margaret, married Leonard Dahms; Victoria, married Helen Wendland; and Helene, married Richard Dickmeyer.

B.M. Louisa (Nov. 18, 1874-)

married: Wilhelm Heinrich Westerbeck (May 31, 1873-)

children: Raymond, Clara, John, Mary, Lillie, Mabel, Walter, Edna, Harold.

Frederich (died at five years of age)

H. William (Febr. 1, 1879-1946)

married: Ella Sydow (1887-1971)

children: Adele, married Henry Meyer; Herbert, married Genevieve Hermes Schievelbein; Albert, married Ruth Waln, married Fern Bray Hawesden; Anna, died of the flu in 1981; Agatha, married Raymond Michel; Lenora, married Howard Palmer; Elda, married Melvin Roethemeyer.

Albertine Pauline (Febr. 24, 1881-Nov. 13, 1908)

married: Heinrich Imhoff (1866-1934)

children: Margaret, married Glen Eland; Gerhardt; William; Walter.

Maria J.C. (April 6, 1881-1959)

married: Roy Baker (1873-1912)

children: George; Ethel, married Felix Wendland.
 married: Herbert E. Schievelbein (1887-1972)
 children: Alice, married Ben Best; Helena, married Ewald Ziebell.

Johann G. (August 15, 1886-1912) (drowned with Roy Baker in 1912)

married: Emma Sydow

children: Irene, married Gustav Stagemeyer; John (a World War II casualty)

3. Augustina M. Schievelbein (January 14, 1846-1931)

married: Julius Friederich Ziebell (Jan. 21, 1838-1922)
 children:

Herman Ferdinand (Sept. 13, 1868-1956)

married Anna Marie Engel Monter (Dec. 15, 1873-July 13, 1954)

children: Julius, married Margaret Hinz; Magdalene, married Paul Leising; Louise, married Ewald Hermes; Arnold, married Ida Steinhour, married Helen; Herbert, married Peggy Watts; Tillie, married Henry Hermes; and Martin.

Julius died in Washington County.

Emilia Carolina (July 1, 1872-1964)

married: George Aug. F. Haussler (1868-1951)

children: Christoph Julius, married Alvina Walter;

Maria, married Ernest Stillman; Herman, married Marie Luhman; Meta, married Herman Stillman; Emily, married Edward Mues; Henry, married Velma Warren, married Edith Farr.

Bertha Marie Rolline (Nov. 3, 1874-1967)
married: Friederich Wilhelm Monter (Jan. 16, 1872-1941)

children: Heinrich, died during flu epidemic; Herman, married Bertha Gehring; Margaret, married Frank Petermann; Elsa, married Oscar Wendland; Otto, married Minna Wendland; Anna, married Edwin Wohler; Louise Emilie Helene; George; and Meta.

Freiderich William (Dec. 12, 1876-1953)
married: Emma Hinz (1879-1957)
children: Benhardt, married Audrey McCue; Hilda, married Don Hess; Clara, married Cornelius Wendland; Meta, married Marion Bohlen; Ewald, married Helena Schievelbein; Arthur, married Alice Petermann.

Heinrich Gustav (Nov. 13, 1878-1960)
married: Mathilda Gehring (1892-1985)
children: Marna, married LaVerne Hermes.

Wilhelm B. (Jan. 19, 1881-1947)
married: Sophie Esslinger (1886-1957)
children: Lorenz; Emil, married Vera Anderson; Marie, married Harold Weber; Ida, married Walter Roth; Oscar, married Hertha Monter; Irene, married Herbert Monter.

Albertine Johanna Louise (May 13, 1883-1962)
married: Johann Esslinger (1888-1971)
children: Ervin, married Ruth Kluck; Ida, married Sass; Erich, married Violet Engleking; Doris, married Hans Liebenou; Clara, married Cecil Klages.

Anna Bertha Augusta (Aug. 24, 1885-1963)
married: Emil Esslinger (1891-1954)
children: Elsa, married Henry Kroger; Herbert; Renata, married Wilbur Brell; Edwin, married Renetta Meister.

4. **William F. C. Schievelbein** (1850-1906)
married: Bertha Melchert (1848-1936)
children:

Ida Bertha Maria (July 10, 1876)
married Johann Friedrich Wilhelm Wendland (June 7, 1865)
*moved to Oregon, raised their family there.
children: Hedwig, Herbert, Walter, Arthur, Alice, Howard.

Clara born 1878, died 1887 in Gosper County
Louise (Oct. 20, 1879-)
married David Dunn

Auguste (Sept. 1, 1881-1926)
married Julius August Ferdinand Wendland (April 24, 1880-1951)
children: Erich, married, was a parochial school teacher in Texas; Cornelius, married Clara Ziebell; Felix, married Ethel Baker; Lillian, married Ewald Wendland; Erna; Richard, married Viola Wieland; Ted, married Phylis Wieland.

Emma (1883-1885)

Otto (1885-1885)

*the two little children injured in the accident at their home.

Herbert Erich (Aug. 19, 1887-1972)
married: Maria Wendland Baker (1883-1959)
children: Ethel Baker, married Felix Wendland; Alice, married Ben Best; Helena, married Ewald Ziebell.

5. **Child Died in Germany**

6. **Emelia** (Aug. 28, 1852-1955)
married: Gustav Bloch (1852-1908)
children:

Anna (1876)
married: Frank Riepe
children: Helene, married Otto Lueking; Clara, died in California; Henrietta Louise, died at birth, June 25, 1909.

Louisa (1878-1973)
married: Paul Johann Ludwig Wendland (1874-1956)
children: Hilda; Gertrude, married Henry Walter; Ewald, married Lillian Wendland; Elfrieda, married Dyvde McNair.

Helene (October 5, 1881 - June 20, 1979)
Bertha Helene (Dec. 28, 1884-March 11, 1945)
married Oscar Wichmann (1893-1953)
children: Alvin, married Louise Steinke; Leonard Oscar, married Florence Lucas

Emil Gustav (October 4, 1887-Feb. 10, 1974)
married: Agnes Marquardt (Aug. 6, 1897-Feb. 4, 1987)
children: Harold, married Elvira Wendland Waln; Edwin Gustav; Walter, married Pauline Wendland; Leonard, married Shirley Brixner; Elda, married Kenneth Stillman; Elfrieda, married Ted Luhman; Emil, married Karen Kalthoff.

Clara (Aug. 14, 1889-Feb. 22, 1907)
Herman Otto (Jan. 31, 1892-Aug. 6, 1956)
married Minnie Zimmermann (April 1, 1885-Dec. 24, 1976); was a parochial school teacher.
children: Verona Emilie, married Kenneth Bock; Waldemar, married Lois Werner; Victor, married Viola Baker; Norman, married Patricia Nash; Lorenz; and Charlotte, married Paul Studtmann.

7. **Bertha** (October 20, 1854-1926)
married: Fred Melchert (1859-1918)
children:

Paul Wilhelm Melchert (1878-)
married: Maria Wendland
children: Oscar; Lawrence; Elsie, married Ed Peterson.

Emelia Bertha Juliana (1883-)
married: William Hinz
children: Laura, married Lonnie Cagle; Meta; Olga, married Benjamin Klein; Bertha; Gertrude, married Harry Kentopp; Hilda, married Harrison Helling; Harold; Margaret, married Franklin Vangardner; Willabell, married Delbert Shank.

8. & 9. **Twin daughters** who died when they were one year old.

Family of Julius F. and Albertina (Dahms) Schievelbein



The Schievelbein children: left to right: Emma, William, Herman, Bernard, and Maria.



Bernard Schievelbein.



Henry and Maria Monter.



Gathering at K.F.J. Wendland's. Some identifications may not be correct. Adults in back row: J.A. Wendland, unknown, Herman Schievelbein, Ella and William Wendland, Marie Schievelbein, William Hermes, Ida and K.F.J. Wendland, the baby is Emma, unknown, Herman Weber, Emma and William Schievelbein. The dark-haired young girl standing by Marie Schievelbein is her sister, Agnes Weber.



Mr. Schievelbein raised his family on the farm after the death of his wife. They milked cows and from the cream made butter that the girls took to the town of Homerville to sell. He liked to feed hogs, and always cooked the feed for them in a large iron kettle.



William and Emma Schievelbein.

Family of Johanna (Schievelbein) and C. Frederich Wendland



Shown in this picture are Mr. and Mrs. C. Frederich Wendland (Johanna Schievelbein). Their family was one of the original family of Chr. W. Schievelbein, which made the settlement on the Elk Creek.



K.F.J. Wendland and his wife, Ida nee Hartman.



Clamor Monter and his wife, Anna Maria Louisa nee Wendland, and some of their children. Anna (Monter) was the oldest child of the Wendlands.



William and Louisa nee Wendland Westerbeck.



William and Ella (Sydow) Wendland.



Pauline and Henry Imhoff. (She was Pauline Wendland.)



Mr. and Mrs. Roy Baker (Marie Wendland, later married Herb E. Schielbein).



Herb E. and Marie Wendland Baker Schielbein.



Johann and Emma (Sydow) Wendland.



Mr. and Mrs. K.F.J. Wendland (Ida Hartman) and seven of their twelve children. Left to Right: Max, Emma on Father's lap, Martin (Pete), Charley, Mother with George, Leonard, and Henrietta.



Marie Schievelbein and Anna Monter, sisters, daughters of C. Frederick and Johanna Wendland.



K.F.J. Wendland family at their home on the "Tree Claim."



Grandma Wendland (Johanna Schievelbein) and her two grandsons, Gerhardt and Walter Imhoff, whom she raised after the death of their mother, Pauline Wendland Imhoff.

Family of Augustina Schievelbein and Julius F. Ziebell

Julius Frederick Ziebell was born in Germany in the year of 1839. As a young man, he entered the German military service and his outfit became known as the Bone and the Skull. It is noteworthy that it was his Regiment that took Napoleon III captive during the Franco-German War in 1870, which ended Napoleon's empire. During this victory at Sedan he saw many of his comrades fall all around him, and Mr. Ziebell's decision to come to America was made so that his sons would be spared the bloody conflicts of war that he had been forced to endure.

In 1867, he married Augusta Schievelbein, and in 1873, the family which now also had three children, immigrated to America with Augusta's parents, the W. Christoff Schievelbeins.

In the company of two other ships, they began the long ocean voyage but a violent storm caused one ship to be lost during the trip. After docking in New York, they came by train to Washington County in eastern Nebraska, where Mr. Ziebell found employment. They lived in a crude board shack. Because of the poorly constructed building and the severe winter, the family suffered many hardships. One morning Mrs. Ziebell found the diaper frozen to baby Fred and snow drifting into the shack. One son was lost to pneumonia and he is buried in a cemetery in Arlington, NE.

In 1881, the Ziebell family came to homestead 12 miles northeast of Arapahoe, buying the homestead rights from a trapper, and lived in a sod house. This farm is located about one and one-half miles north of the Immanuel Church location.

During Mr. Ziebell's last illness, he recalled the many horrors of war and his last request was that all medals and decora-



Mr. and Mrs. Julius Ziebell (Augustina nee Schievelbein).

tions which were bestowed on him by the German government be buried with him. He died in October of 1923 at the age of 84 years. Mrs. Augusta Ziebell died in March 1931, at the age of 85 years. Both are buried in the Immanuel Cemetery.



Mr. and Mrs. Julius Ziebell and their children. Back row: Fred, William, Henry and Herman. Front row: Marie Monter, Emilie Haussler, Anna Esslinger, Louise Esslinger.



Herman (eldest) and Anna (Monter) Ziebell family. Back row: Herbert, Magdalene Leising, Julius, Louise Hermes, Arnold. Front row: Martin, Herman and Anna, Mathilda Hermes.



The Herman Ziebell family at the time of their Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary. Left to right: Martin, Herb, Arnold, Julius, Herman, Anna, Magdalene, Louise, Mathilda.



Herman Ziebell at his home on the farm.



Mr. and Mrs. George Haussler and family. Back row: Christoph, Marie, Meta, Herman. Front row: Emily, Father George, Mother Emelie (Ziebell), Henry.



The family of William and Marie Ziebell Monter. Back row: Anna Wohler; Elsie Wendland; Herman, married Bertha Gehring; Henry, died of the flu; Margaret Petermann; Otto, married Minnie Wendland. Front row: George, Father William, Meta, and Mother Maria.



Mr. and Mrs. Friederich Ziebell (nee Emma Hinz).



The Fred Ziebell family left to right: Clara, Meta, Father Fred, Bernhard, Arthur, Mother Emma, Ewald and Hilda.



Mr. and Mrs. Henry (Mathilda Gehring) Ziebell.



Ladies of the Ziebell family in the 1920's. Left to right: Louise Ziebell Esslinger; Anna Ziebell Esslinger; Elsa Esslinger (Kroger); Emilia Ziebell Haussler; Maria Ziebell Monter; Alvina Walter Haussler; Magdalene Ziebell (Leising); Anna Monter Ziebell; Louise Ziebell Hermes; Grandmother Augustine Schievelbein Ziebell; not known; Mathilda Gehring Ziebell; Sophie Esslinger Ziebell, and Margaret Hinz Ziebell, with her baby son, Albert.



Mr. and Mrs. William Ziebell (Sophie Esslinger).



Mr. and Mrs. William Ziebell and family. Back row: Marie (Weber), Lorenz, Emil. Front row: Oscar, Father William, Irene (Monter), Mother Sophie (Esslinger), Ida (Roth).



Mr. and Mrs. Johann (Louisa Ziebell) Esslinger.



Mr. and Mrs. Emil (Anna Ziebell) Esslinger. Children: Herbert, Renata (Brell), Elsa (Kroger), Edwin.

Family of William F.C. Schievelbein and Bertha (Melchert) Schievelbein

William Schievelbein came to America as a single young man, with his parents, two married sisters, an unmarried brother, and two unmarried sisters. Also in the party were young friends of the family, Fred and Bertha Melchert.

While the Schievelbein family was located at Arlington, NE in Washington County, William married Bertha Melchert. They had two daughters while they lived in the eastern part of Nebraska.

After coming to Gosper County and locating on the Elk Creek, William and Bertha first lived in a sod house, later building a frame home that still stands and is now the home of the Leon Weber family. William became active in community and county government. He was very interested in promoting the Elk Creek community and the German Lutheran settlement. People in eastern Nebraska, Kansas, and even farther away, saw the flyers he had mailed out and contacted him, and he helped them find a plot of land that was available for sale or trade. It is known that he received a commission for his services. He often took the newcomers into his home until they could be settled. The Schievelbein home was always open to anyone who had any need of a place to stay or for any other use. A mother went into labor during church services in those early days, and she was brought to the Schievelbein home to have her baby.

William's son, Herbert E., often told of driving his father on business and of waiting in the buggy with the horses hitched while his father conducted his business.

Following the death of her husband in 1906, Mrs. Bertha Schievelbein remained in the home, later sharing it with her son Herbert and family until she reached an old age. She and her husband are buried in the Immanuel Cemetery.



Pictures of Mr. and Mrs. William Schievelbein.
The baby with his parents is Otto, their first son.



Mr. William Schievelbein, probably taken while he was living in Gosper County.



Mr. and Mrs. William Schievelbein standing east of their house.



William Schievelbein in his Army uniform. Herbert, his son, always called him the Colonel, and it is assumed that he had achieved that rank.



Mrs. Bertha Schievelbein in her flower garden.



Herbert E. Schievelbein and his wife, Maria.



Maria Schievelbein and her ducks, taken at the east side of their home.



Herbert E. and Maria Schievelbein at their twenty-fifth anniversary.



Johann Frederick (Fred) Wendland and his wife, Ida nee Schievelbein, at the time of their wedding. Fred was the oldest son of August and Frederica Wendland, and Ida was the daughter of the William Schievelbeins.



Julius August Wendland and his wife, Augusta nee Schievelbein.



Louise Schievelbein (Mrs. David Dunn).

Family of Gustav and Emilie (Schievelbein) Bloch



Gustav and Emilie nee Schievelbein Bloch family. Back row: Louise, Anna, Bertha and Helene. Front row: Emil, Father Gustav, Herman, Mother Emilie and Clara.

Johann Bloch was born early in the nineteenth century in Germany (Prussia) and died in battle in the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871). He was a Prussian Cavalry officer, member of the Uhlan Lancers.

Anna was born in Prussia in the early nineteenth century. She was probably still living in 1890. She married Johann Bloch sometime before December of 1852. Their son, Gustav Bloch, came to Arlington, NE in the 1870s and there married Emilie Schievelbein, daughter of the W. Christoff Schievelbeins.

Emilie Schievelbein Bloch came to America in 1873 with her two married sisters. She cried so at the thought of being separated from her sisters that a brother-in-law loaned her the passage money of \$90. In order to repay the loan, she worked for a farmer near Omaha in Washington County for \$8 a month, doing household chores and milking cows. She was quoted as saying that during that period of her life, she cried as hard from homesickness as she had cried to be allowed to come to America.

Her father had been an overseer for a wealthy landowner in Germany and his wife and children had worked long hard hours in the fields with no pay. In America, the work was for herself and her family. Once she picked blackberries and sold them for ten cents. She used the money to buy a mirror for her home.

The Bloch family originally lived in a sod house on the homestead on the banks of the Elk Creek. They were among the organizers of the Immanuel Lutheran Church and are buried in the Immanuel Cemetery.

Emil, their oldest son, took over the operation of the farm when he was twenty-one, at the time of his father's death.

His father had a stroke that prevented him from speaking, but by signals, the old man signified that he wanted the farm to be Emil's. Emil and his wife Agnes, nee Marquardt, and their family resided at the farm which now is operated by their son, Edwin.

It has been told that Clara, daughter of the Gustav Blochs, was particularly interested in the bell being installed in the new church building at Immanuel. She was the first for whom the bell tolled in the tower at her death that year. Legend said that the first person to ring a new church bell would die within the year. She had tugged on the rope as the bell lay on the ground, causing the bell to ring.

Anna Bloch married Frank Riepe. They lived on a farm just north of Arapahoe. After the death of her husband, Emilie Bloch lived with the Riepes until they moved to California.

Louisa Bloch married Paul Wendland, they raised their family on a farm near the Elk Creek.

Bertha Bloch married Oscar Wichmann, and lived in Denver, Colorado with their family. Bertha's sister, Helene, also lived with them in Denver for thirty years. Helene then returned to Arapahoe to care for her mother, Emilie.

Herman Bloch graduated from Concordia College in Seward, NE and became a parochial school teacher. He taught in Chicago for many years. He was married to Minnie Zimmermann.

Emilie Bloch lived to be 102 years of age. She died on a Sunday morning, just after receiving Holy Communion from her Pastor at her home in Arapahoe. She had retained her memory and her sharp mind until the end, and her family heard many recollections from her of the early years in Gosper County.



Wedding of Emil Bloch and Agnes Marquardt, July 13, 1918. The two ladies sitting on the step in front are believed to be Eva Marquardt and Emilie Bloch.



The family of Mr. and Mrs. Emil Bloch. Left to right: Emil, Elda, Leonard, Walter, Edwin, Elfrieda and Harold.



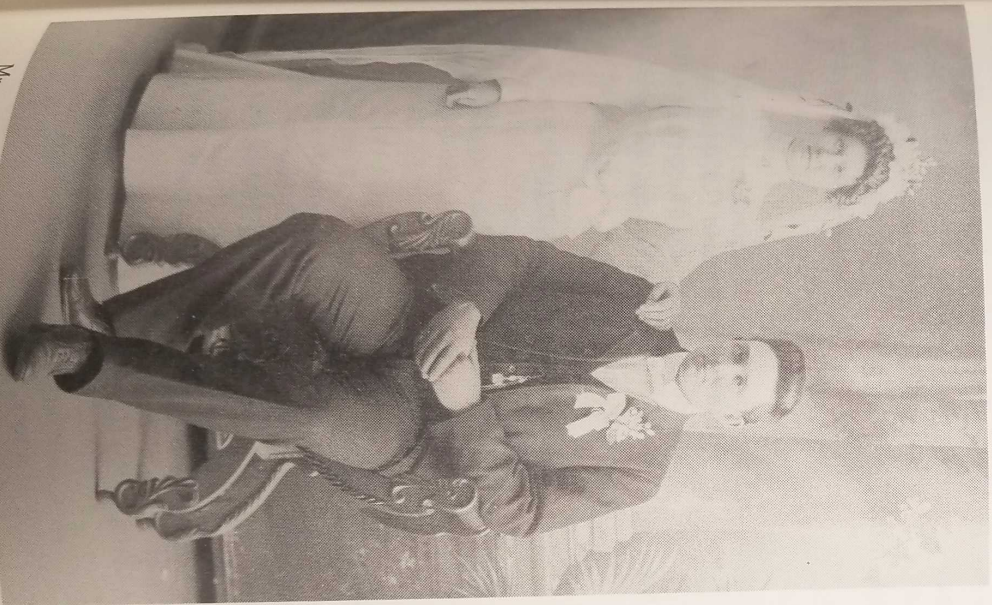
Wedding of Emil Bloch and Agnes Marquardt, July 13, 1918. The two ladies sitting on the step in front are believed to be Eva Marquardt and Emilie Bloch.



The family of Mr. and Mrs. Emil Bloch. Left to right: Emil, Elda, Leonard, Walter, Edwin, Elfrieda and Harold.

Family of Bertha (nee Schievelbein) and Fred Melchert

Friedrich (Fritz) William August Melchert was born to John and Clara Melchert August 16, 1851 in Poep-Pomerania, Prussia. He entered the Prussian Army in the 10th Infantry Brigade, as a second class rank in March 25, 1873. By law, he would be required to serve in the Reserve until the age of 31 years or until the event war was declared. In Prussia, if a young man did not join the active army, he was required to be apprenticed to a journeyman. Fritz was apprenticed to a cabinet maker. On September 13, 1874, Friedrich and his sister, Bertha, set forth for America with friends, the Schievelbeins. The group first settled in Arlington, Washington County, Nebraska. There, Fritz was married to Bertha Schievelbein and Fritz sister Bertha married William Schievelbein. In 1880, this group traveled further west to Arapahoe where each family homesteaded ground north of Arapahoe. With them was their son, Paul, who had been born in Washington County on December 30, 1879. Paul later married Maria Wendland, daughter of August Wendland. The Melcherts' daughter, Emilie, married William Hinz.



Mr. and Mrs. Paul Melchert (Maria Wendland).



Mr. and Mrs. Fred Melchert (Bertha Schievelbein), Their children, Emilie and Paul.

Family of Wendland

There is an area in Lower Saxony, the area around the city of Luchow, about sixty miles southeast of Hamburg in West Germany, settled by a Slavik people called the Wends, and this area is called Wendland. Some historians believe this people inhabited this area in Central Europe even before the Germanic peoples came in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The Wends built distinctive villages called rundlings, keyhole shaped, with a single road providing access to the circle of farmhouses facing a village green. The Wendish culture has all but disappeared, but a museum exhibits a few mementos in Luchow. The religion of the remaining people is ninety percent Lutheran, although before the time of their colonization by the Germans, they were pagan. The Germans call these people Wenden or Sorben; they call themselves Srbi, (plural of Srb.).

If one wishes to tour this area today, the bicycle is the perfect vehicle to explore the forests, fields, villages and wildlife preserves. There would be the annoyance of an East German border patrol, which cuts off about half of the peninsula; and here the barbed wire and mine fields have been disguised by foliage. No jets fly here, people are afraid to buy land, and industry is reluctant to settle. To enjoy the isolation and beauty of Wendland, a visitor should go to Elbholz on the Elbe River. A trail leads to a grove of oaks that is characteristic of North Germany. In an inn, a visitor can sample the gute burgerliche fare of schnitzels with fried potatoes, smoked ham sandwiches on dark bread, and yeasty pastry.

Below is listed the families of the Wendlands, once the most common name on the Elk Creek church records.

Johann Wendland Lena Wendland
(no further information)

Their family:

1. **Wilhelmina (Hattie)**
(no other information from Minnesota Wendlands)
(Ewald Hermes remembered that there were two sisters, Wilhelmina and Hedwig)
2. **Karl Fred Albert** (1839-1904)
married: Amelia (Maria Emilie Erdmuth Wegner)
daughter of Johann (1843-1945)
*Came to America about 1894
*Buried at Immanuel Lutheran Cemetery
children:

Franz Frederich (August) (1869-1949)
married: Anna Mary Helms (1879-1918)
children: Helmuth, Emil, Ida, Carl, Mathilda, Hubert
and Franz (lost in W.W. II)

Carl (no further information)

Paul Johann Ludwig (1874-1956)
married: Louisa J. Bloch (1878-1973)
children: Hilda, Gertrude, Ewald, Elfrieda

Otto (no further information)

George Rudolph Julius
(Aug. 5, 1885-Dec. 28, 1918)
married: Louisa Helms (1884-1911)
children: Oscar, Helena, Minnie, John, Meta
married: Lydia Kasper (1885-1918)
*Rudolph, his wife, Lydia, his children, Helena and John all died within a week of each other during the flu epidemic of 1918.

3. **C. Frederich Wendland** (Jan. 2, 1842-Aug. 19, 1906)

married: Johanna Schievelbein (Dec. 29, 1843-Nov. 15, 1927)

*Came to America to the Elk Creek community in 1881, as one of the family of Chr. W. Schievelbein, his wife, their two sons and four daughters and families, first German people to settle the Elk Creek community of the Immanuel Congregation.

*Both he and his wife are buried at Immanuel Lutheran Cemetery.
children:

Anna Marie Louisa (1870 in Pommern-1969)
married: Clamor A. Monter (1865-1909)
children: Emilie, William, Mary, Fred, Elfrieda, Laura and Martin

Julius (K.F.J.) (1872-1944)
married: Ida W. Hartman (1886-1938)
children: Carl, Max, Leonard, Henrietta, Martin, George, Emma, Elvera, Bertha, Margaret, Victor, and Helene

Louisa
married: William Westerbeck
children: Raymond, Clara, John, Mary, Lillie, Mabel, Walter, Edna, Harold

Frederich died at five years of age

William
married: Ella Sydow
children: Adele, Herbert, Albert, Anna, Agatha, Lenora, Elda

Pauline (1881-1908)
married: Heinrich Imhoff (1866-1934)
children: Margaret, Gerhardt, William, Walter

Maria J. (1883-1959)
married: Roy Baker (1873-1912)
children: George, Ethel
married: Herbert E. Schievelbein (1887-1972)
children: Alice, Helena

Johann (died with Roy Baker in 1912)
married: Emma Sydow
children: Irene, John (a World War II casualty)
children: see Schievelbein Family section.)

Johann (no further information, not known if he ever came to America).
*two stepchildren (this may not be correct)

Franz Frederick August (Nov. 19, 1845 in Pommern - July 12, 1911)
married: Friedericka Mews (June 6, 1840 at Ketzenet, Kreis Schievelbein - February 16, 1916)
*Both buried at Immanuel Lutheran Cemetery
*A story says that they and their family came to America because their daughter Bertha and the son of the nobleman they worked for fell in love, over the objections of the nobleman, who financed part of the family's trip to America. After W.W. II, a letter was received by Bertha's daughter, from the nobleman's son, inquiring about Bertha.
children:

Johann Frederick Wilhelm (moved to Oregon about 1914)
married: Ida Schievelbein
children: Hedwig, Herbert, Walter, Arthur, Alice, Howard

Emilia (died in Germany)

Carl (died in Germany)

Anna (1870-1944)
married: August Petermann (1856-1950)
children: Frank, Maria, Agnes, William, Frieda, Baby
*Only two of the Petermann children grew up. Marie died of a gunshot wound at 18 years, and Frank raised a family at Arapahoe.
*Aug. Petermann lost his first wife, returned to Germany to marry Anna Wendland, and helped finance the move of her parents, the August Wendlands.

Bertha M. (Oct. 26, 1873-March 29, 1935)
married: Wilhelm Heinrich Hermes (July 9, 1850-Dec. 28, 1933)
children: Fred, Henry, Ewald, Hermina, Anna, Marie, Margaretha, Magdalene and Clara

Augusta (1875 in Pommern -)
married: Chris Obermueller (divorced, first in community)
children: Elizabeth, Alfred (both died in infancy)
married: John Ernrich (both Augusta and John are buried in California)

Gustav (1878-1936)
married: no information is known of 1st marriage.
child: Hugo (disappeared in the 1910's, never heard from again. May have gone back to Germany, where as only grandson, he could inherit property)
married: Maria A. Meier Ritschel (1869-1946)
children: Maria's daughter, Marie Ritschel, Hertha, Walter, Irma, Erhardt, baby son (Heinz, died at birth).

Julius August

married: Augusta Schievelbein
children: Erich, Cornelius, Felix, Lillian, Ema, Richard, Ted

Maria

married: Paul Melchert
children: Paul and Emilie

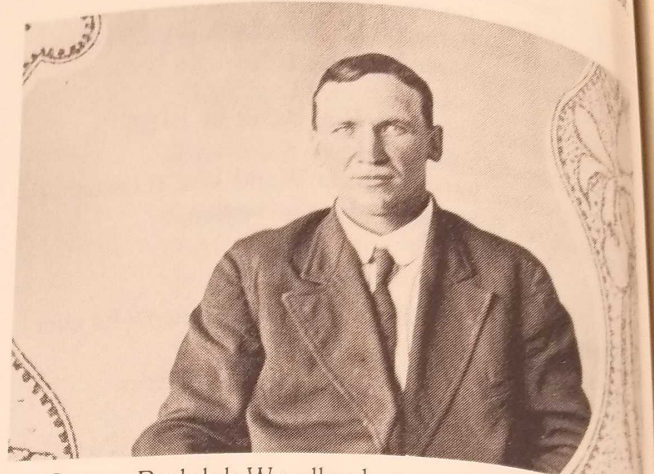
6. Gustav Ludwig (May 11, 1851 in Diedersdorf, -)
married: Emilia Frances Schutz
children: Paul, Adolph, John, Lydia, Louise
*Gustav went to Eyota, Minnesota when he came to America. He was a switchman on the Railroad in Germany, and came to Minnesota in 1886. His son Adolph's son Roy Wendland was born in 1906. Roy's son, Kenneth, born in 1933, contacted me. He said that there is a very large Wendland family in Minnesota. His address is Waseca, Minnesota. Part of this family also moved to Oregon and Washington. He made a trip to Germany, said that the areas that he wanted to see are now in East Germany.

Sons of Karl F. and Amelia Wegner Wendland

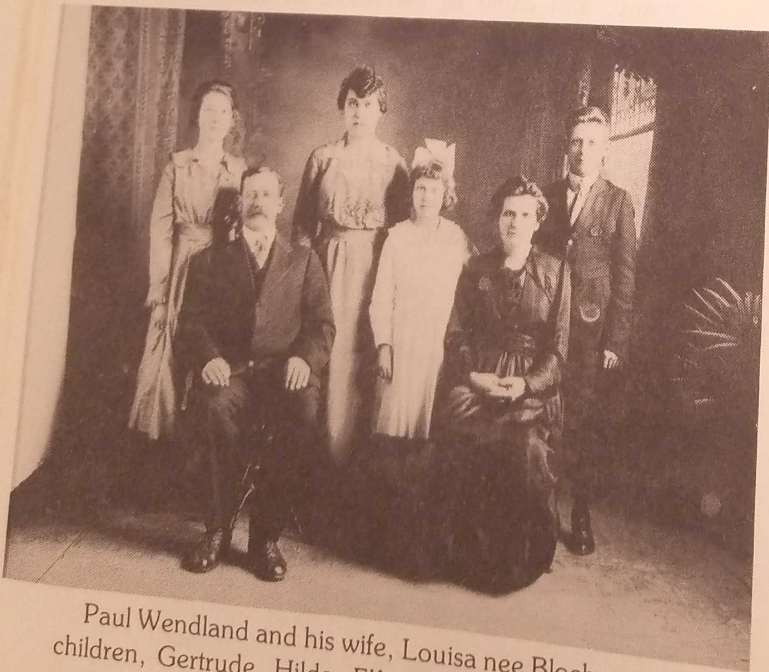
Three sons of Karl Fred Albert Wendland and his wife, Amelia (Maria Emilie Erdmuth Wegner). Karl was oldest son of the Wendland family. His brother, Frederich, came to Nebraska and the Elk Creek with the earliest group. Another brother, August, also brought his family to the Gosper County area.



Franz Frederich, and his wife Anna nee Helms. Known as F.F., he raised his family on a farm about two miles north of the Furnas-Gosper County line, following the death of his wife Anna at the birth of their son Franz. Children pictured are Ida, Helmuth, and Emil. Their children also included Carl, Mathilda, Hubert and Franz.



George Rudolph Wendland, married Maria Louise Helms, sister of Anna Helms who married F.F. She died at childbirth leaving five children, Oscar, Helena, Minnie (married Otto Monter), John, and Meta (married Allan Chambers). Rudolph remarried, to Lydia Kasper, and Rudolph, Lydia, John and Helena all died during the flu epidemic in 1918.



Paul Wendland and his wife, Louisa nee Bloch, with their children, Gertrude, Hilda, Elfrieda, and Ewald.



Oscar Wendland, his son, who later married Elsie Monter.

Family of F.F. August and Friedericka Mews Wendland



This is a picture of Mrs. August Wendland, taken before she probably at the home of her daughter, Auguste in ... Shown with her are two granddaughters, Maria ... and Maria Ritschell (Weber), and Auguste and ... Emrich.



August and Anna Petermann, and Bertha and William Hermes. The ladies were sisters, daughters of the August Wendlands.



Pictured here are four daughters and two sons of the August Wendlands. Left to right: Anna Petermann, Bertha Hermes, Gustav Wendland, Auguste Emrich, Julius A. Wendland, and Marie Melchert. The car in the picture, at the right, belonged to Julius Wendland. It had a cloth top, and during one card game at the Herb Schievelbein home, a goat walked on top of the car and stepped through the cloth top.



Left to right: Maria Ritschell Weber; her aunt, Auguste Wendland Emrich; her brother, Erhardt Wendland; and her parents, Gustav and Maria Wendland.



Shown in this picture are Franz and Maria Petermann, children of the August Petermanns. Shortly after this picture was taken, Maria Petermann died of an accidental gunshot wound, from which she bled to death before help could be secured.

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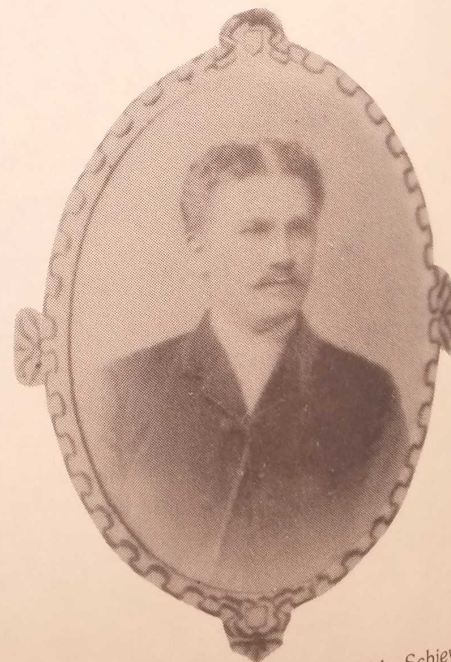
Marie M. L. Petermann
Geb. 20 Mai, 1896.
Gest. 4 Mai, 1915.
Alter 18 Jah. 11 Mon. 14 Tage.

Du Blume Gottes, wie so früh
Brach Dich des Gärtners Hand,
Er brach sie nicht — Er pflanzte sie
Nur in ein bess'res Land.
Schlumm're sanft hienieden,
Oft von uns beweint,
Bis des Himmels Frieden
Droben uns vereint.

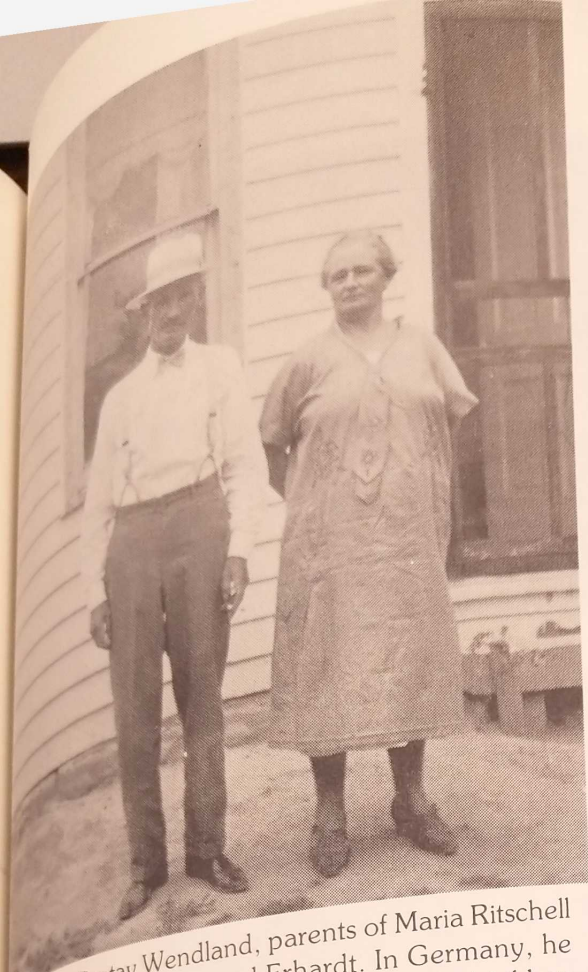
This, written in German, is an announcement of the death of Marie Petermann.



The Wendland cousins, after they had waded in the Elk Creek after a heavy rain brought the water in the creek up to the second bank. Left to Right: Walter Imhoff, Max Wendland, Cornie Wendland, (in front) Rich Wendland, Gerhardt Imhoff, Erich Wendland, Felix Wendland, and Charley Wendland.



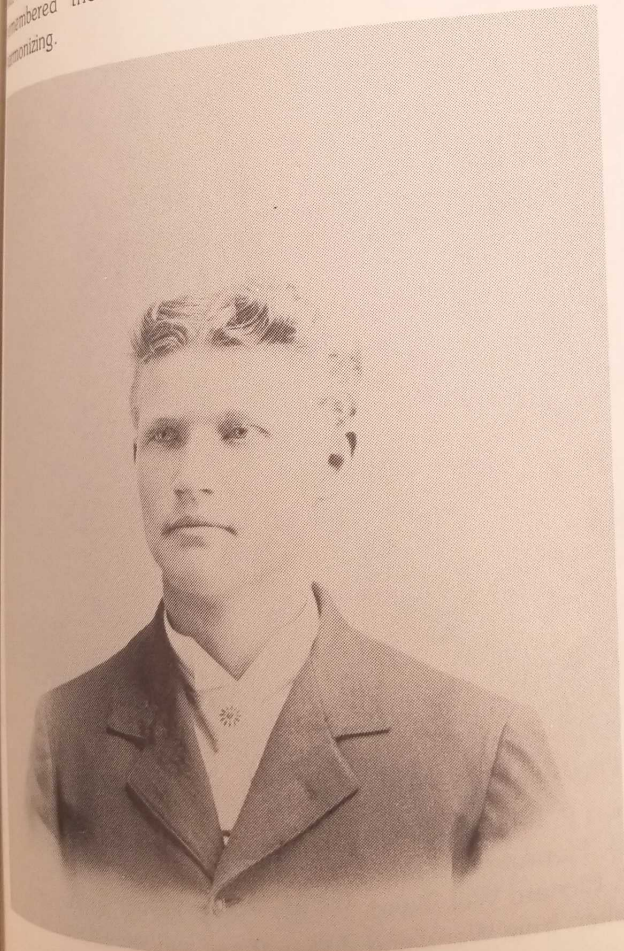
Fred Wendland of Oregon, married Ida Schievelbein.



Mr. and Mrs. Gustav Wendland, parents of Maria Ritschell
Hertha, Walter, Irma, and Erhardt. In Germany, he
was a choir master, she sang in the choir. Their grandchildren
remembered them singing together in the evening,
harmonizing.



J.A.'s sons: Erich, Come, and Felix.



Julius August Wendland (J.A.).



The J.A. Wendland home, now home of Don Warner
family.



Cousins Hertha and Corne Wendland.



Left to right: Erich Wendland and his son; Herbert E. Schievelbein; Corne Wendland; Ted Wendland; Richard Wendland; and the young boy is Leyland Hermes, son of Fred and Frieda Hermes.



Back Row: Augusta and Julius A. Wendland, Herbert E. and Maria Schievelbein; Maria and Gustav Weber. (Gustav and Julius Wendland are brothers), Herman and Marie Weber. The baby is Harold Weber. Front Row: Corne Wendland, Ted Wendland, Richard Wendland, Walter "Slim" Imhoff, Erna Wendland, Gerhardt Imhoff, Felix Wendland, Ethel Baker, Irma Wendland, Lillian Wendland and Erich Wendland.

Family of August and Eva Piskoski Marquardt

Ferdinand August Marquardt was born May 5, 1853, at Folkenburg, Pommern, Germany. In about 1870, as a young man, he emigrated to America. For about three years, he made his home in New York.

About 1873 he came to Nebraska, living in Colfax and Washington Counties. The desire to own his own home brought him to Gosper County where he bought a relinquishment and files on a homestead in the fall of 1879. In the early spring of 1880, he moved into a home on this land and lived there until his death.

In 1882 he was married to Eva Piskoski who shared with him the joys and sorrows of pioneer life until his death. They were married by one of the earliest Lutheran missionaries by the name of Toenges. At the time of her death, she was one

of the remaining charter members of Immanuel Lutheran Church.

Ferdinand Marquardt died July 31, 1935, at the age of 82 years. His wife, Eva, died October 19, 1940, at the age of 91 years. Both are buried in the Immanuel Lutheran Cemetery in Gosper County.

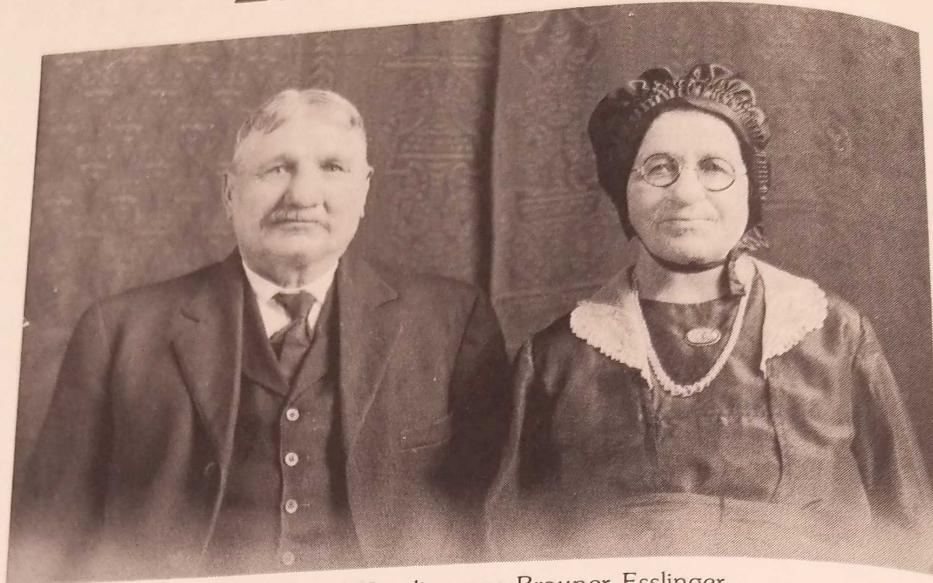
Twelve children were born to the Marquards, and there are many descendants. The family belonged to that generation which conquered the vast rolling prairies and changed them from range land of wildlife to habitable farms and homes.

(The name Piskoski sometimes is written as Piske in later years.)



Back Row: Father August, Agnes (married Emil Bloch), Mother Eva, Emilie, and Mary (married Gruber, then Wildman). Front Row: Hubert, Herbert, Paul, Fred, Ewald, Louise, John. Twin daughters, Anna and Emma died at birth. They were the first children of the Marquards.

Esslinger Family



Christoff and Karolina nee Brauner Esslinger.

Christoff Esslinger was born January 10, 1855 to Ludwig and Frederica nee Hildebrand at Kolonien Kostlitz, Bessarabien South Russia near Odessa. He was their third child. His father died soon after his birth. Later his mother married again to Mr. L. Karlin in her native town.

Chris emigrated to America when he was seventeen, and settled on a farm near Columbus, Nebraska.

Karolina Brauner was born October 25, 1854 to the Joseph Brauners in Austria. Her mother died when she was very young, and her stepmother was very cruel to her. She was made to carry firewood on her back for a couple of miles, which hurt her health, and she had no chance for education, so her memories of her childhood were not pleasant.

She emigrated to America as a young woman. On board ship crossing the ocean, she heard her first Lutheran sermon, which left her with the wish to become more acquainted with the Lutheran church. Her first home was in Platte County, Nebraska. She and Chris Esslinger were married October 23, 1879. In 1884, they moved to the Elk Creek community to make their home in a sodhouse near the creek. They bought a homestead from John Reed, 160 acres for \$700.00.

Chris was a careful farmer, hard worker and carried on his own blacksmith shop at his farm. He was noted for his German greeting, "Wie Gehts," and his hearty laugh. He always looked forward to receiving his German newspaper. His grandchildren remembered him for his peppermint candy, which he always had plenty of. The family always loved music, and different members of the family were excellent musicians.

Christoff (1855-1937) and Karolina Brauner (1854-1933) Esslinger

Their children:

Ludwig, born August 13, 1880 in Platte County
married: Emma Helms

children: Cornelius, Minna, Tina, Esther, Raymond,
Elda, Richard, Hugo, Elmer

Heinrich, born October 26, 1881 in Platte County
Rudolph, born March 5, 1883 in Platte County

married: Alma Helms

children: Walter, Suzanna, Edgar

Lydia, born August 2, 1884 in Gosper County

married: Edward Huff

children: Harold, George, Mildred, Marjory

Sophia, born March 16, 1886

married: William Ziebell

children: Lorenz, Emil, Marie, Ida, Oscar, Irene

Johanna Fredericka, born September 10, 1887

married: Henry Huff

children: Carl

Johann Friederich, born December 25, 1888

married: Louisa Ziebell

children: Ervin, Ida, Erich, Doris, Clara

Emil Christian, born March 12, 1891

married: Anna Ziebell

children: Elsa, Herbert, Renata, Edwin

Jacob, born May 6, 1893

married: Francis Sander

children: Evelyn, Marie, Howard

Gustav, born July 8, 1895. Died at 12 years.

Christian Fritz, born July 25, 1897

married: Alma Holst

children: Donald

Julius, born January 1, 1900

married: Leona Holst

children: Wesley, Rogene

A Story for History by Emma Helms Esslinger

This is what my mother told me when I was bigger before they had heavy rains, hail and a tornado, and a tornado hit, it took the northeast corner of the house. It was a sod house, all built up from broken-up ground, and piled with brush and grass, then dirt on it. The neighbors had to help build the house up that day.

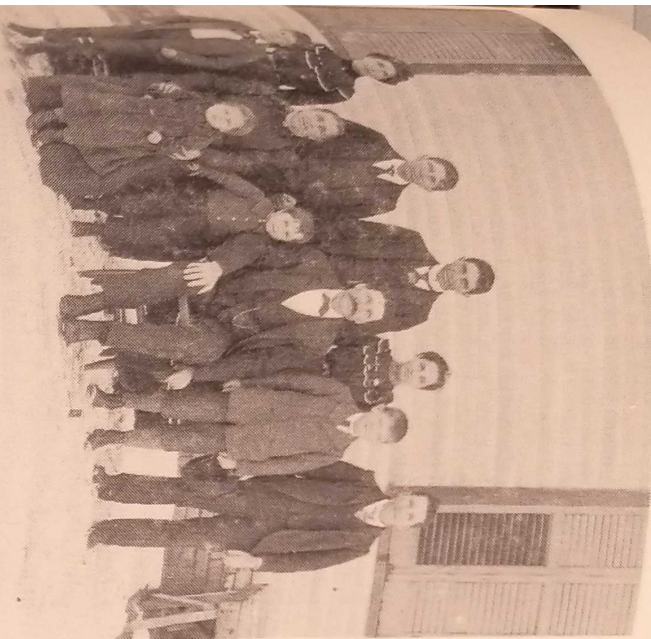
They had lived in Kansas for a year, but the older children had too far to go to school, and Dad decided to come out here. He homesteaded south and east from where Immanuel Church stood. I was baptized in a sod church. The women wore plain print dresses and a sunbonnet. The women Parochial school was held there too. In later years they had a large wooden schoolhouse and church. For four days they had school in the building. Then the older children had to clean it on Thursday and turn the benches around and on Sunday we had church there. In that church and school I was confirmed, but we got married in the new church. I was just one couple who got married before us in that church, which they just tore down.

In those days most people walked, but in later years those that had small children drove with horses and wagon. Grandmother, who we just laid to rest the other year, would pick us up and give us a ride to the corner, then we didn't have to walk so far. She had her little ones in a wagon box, with hay in, so they wouldn't get so cold, and covered with quilts. I went to that wooden church and schoolhouse four days in the week. One day we had Catechism, the next day Bible Class, and reading, writing, and arithmetic. We did practice lots in singing and prayed mornings and evenings, too.

We had just two horses, two cows, and twelve chickens. They all had a little place dug in a bank, first for chickens, horses and cows there. Then they dug a little place in a bank. That's where the hog was in. We had a well, had to pull all the water out of there with a large bucket, and a rig to run the rope over. It was a deep hole, three or four feet wide, dug out by hand, and a wooden board fence around and high enough so no children could fall in. We were so glad when we got the well with such a little hole in so no one could fall in any more.

We lived in that sod house till I was nine or ten years old. Then my folks bought where Mishler lives, the Charley Helms home. We lived there until I got married. We got married the same spring when they built the nice new church, and we got married in that. I think there was another couple before us. Oh, we were so proud of that church. It was so nice.

The old church and school had a pulpit to the east. On White Sunday I made paper flowers and took greens from the creek and put it around the altar. They would always decorate on White Sunday. The blackboard was to the west. There were two doors to the west, one for the men and boys, the other one for the women and girls. It was kind of like an enclosed porch. We kept our lunch buckets and clothes in there. In the center of the church and school there was a large heating stove, to heat all that building with. The southwest corner had maybe three feet from the wall, where the Pastor



Christoff and Karolina nee Brauner Esslinger family. Front Row: Jacob, Sophia, Henry, Ludwig, Johannah. Back Row: Julius, Chris, Father, Emil and John.



Ludwig and Emma nee Helms Esslinger.

had his chair in and a few books, it had just plain calico of dark brown around it.

My folks visited with Charley Monters and Clamor Monters, but only once a year or so. We had more company with the English neighbors. They had a big family too, so when we got a little bigger, we went to our church in the morning and in the afternoon we went to their church. It was English, that's what we enjoyed. We learned to understand English. The others were Staples. They only had a boy and two girls, but they were older than we were, but they were nice to us.

Henry Schnieder lived some four miles from us. That's our uncle and aunt. They would come to church, then have dinner with us and later they would go home. They were Meta and Esther Hinz' parents. The first years we had to herd cattle, even on Sunday morning. Some would dress, then the others would come home from the cattle. Then in time for church, Poppa would whistle and we would drive the cattle in just a small fence, shut them up and go to church. When we came home from church we put on our other clothes and turned out the cattle again, as there was no fence at that time yet. In later years Dad fenced it all in, and neighbors too, as none had a fence at that time yet. We had a tank, chopped from a large tree, all the inside was chipped out. That's what kept the water for the cattle and the horses and hogs. Of course, we had to carry it all.

After we were married first we went to church four miles on a lumber wagon every Sunday, then we got a spring wagon from my dad. Of course, later we had ourselves worked up and then we got an automobile. On that one place we lived 20 years, then moved to the Esslinger's homeplace. We took Henry Esslinger in with us, as I only had nine children of our own. So I had to cook for twelve people every day, and do the washing too. But God gave me strength to do all of it. Then in 1948 my husband died, and four years later, my brother-in-law, he was sorta retarded, passed away, and now I have lived here in town for twenty years.

We had English neighbors that were good to us. They had a family of nine children, and lived in a dug-out house on a bank. They did farm too, but he planted cane seed, sugar cane, just like they used for cattle but planted it four to five inches apart so it would grow real tall. Then when it was headed out they stripped all the leaves off, and cut the seed off to plant the next year. They cut the bare stalks off and hauled them to the neighbors to make molasses of it. They used it for on bread, instead of butter, and it made such wonderful cake. Momma called it molasses cake. They had a little building of wood with a roof on and a couple of windows in it. They had a stove in there with eight or ten pans on top of the stove about two inches deep, eight inches long, and four to five inches wide. In that they cooked the syrup. They had two large rolls they rolled the cane through, and squeezed all the juice out. One horse went around with a thing on to turn the rollers. They had large jars where they put the juice in. Then it was strained and put on that stove and made molasses out of it. Twenty-five gallons was nothing, my folks had that much more times. All the people that came from far and near got molasses there. In later years they built it all up nicer, and sure did a good job of making molasses. When he got too old his children quit it, and just farmed like other people. They were awful good people, but the dad was not well at all.

They had to cut the wheat with a zi (scythe) the first years, then they began to plant more, and the kind of binder came. The first years they threshed the wheat with some kind of sticks in their hands, but the corn they picked like the wheat. Then they shelled it by hand. Pretty quick they got little corn shellers by hand. They worked nice to shell the corn by hand. Then they put it in large barrels and put water on it, so it got soaked for the hogs. That is in summer. In winter the hogs ate it just the way it was shelled. The cobs we burned in the house for the cook stove to bake bread and do the cooking and keep the house warm. When we had and do the cows, mornings and evenings, we had large gallon crocks, the flat ones, that we strained the milk into. The next morning we had to take the cream off these crocks. When we had enough cream, we churned it. When Poppa went to town he took along lots of times five gallons of butter and bought groceries with it. The gallon crocks had to be washed mornings and evenings, so they were clean. It was all kept in the cellar, basements we call them now. When the milk was skimmed, that's the milk the calves got. In the winter it was warmed up for the calves. Of course, there weren't many calves and not so many cows, maybe ten to fifteen, that's all.

The hogs got greens every day while there were greens. We took gunnysacks and filled them with redroots, and that fatty weed that grows on the ground. When Poppa came home evenings with the horses he hauled them home for the hogs. The next morning we got them from all over, where they were the nicest and that made the hogs grow quicker. Momma would set her setting hens in a large box and cover them during the day. In the evening, Momma would uncover them and they all got out to eat and drink. Then they would go back to their nests to set, three weeks. When they were hatched, they were kept in a box outside. We closed it at night, so the skunk wouldn't get to them. When it rained, they had to be moved into the little hen house. After they got feathers, they always stayed with the old ones.

Momma had a nice garden that she could use during the summer. There was no canning like now. I remember the first tin cans that Momma canned, quart cans like you buy things in now, of tin and a tin lid, kind of a crease in the lid that fitted over the can. They had sealing wax that was red stuff. It was made hot and put on there to seal it. It wasn't long then the glass jars came out, and they were better than the tin ones. They are all made handier and better now than they were at that time.

My sister Rosa and I herded the cattle on our ground and to the north the Clarks herded theirs, and to the east was Daisy Staple. She herded there too. So if we could manage, we drove the cattle together and then we visited, too. When it was school we were not together much, but when school was out then we did quite often. Then the dads fenced all of the ground in and the herding of the cattle came to an end. Were we ever glad! But we still had lots to do, pull up some weeds and stick them in sacks. When evening came, Dad would take them to the hogs. We shelled corn with a hand corn-sheller. We filled a large barrel half full, and that was soaked for the next day for the pigs. They did lots better on that soft corn than on hard corn. We would cultivate.

After we got married we lived kind of far from the church, so we just joined in with the English neighbors, right across the canyon. They were the Gardners, George Gardner's

Hinz Family

Julius August Hinz was born April 24, 1854 in Falkenburg, Pommern, Germany. He was married in 1876 to Wilhelmina Bertha Mathilda Schievelbein, daughter of Siegfried Schievelbein and his wife, nee Lenz. Bertha was born in Kreis-Dramburg, Pomerania, Prussia on November 1, 1857. Their son, William, was born in Germany in 1877, and then the family migrated to America and settled in Seguin, near San Antonio in Texas. Their children, Louis in 1878, Emma in 1879, Julius in 1881, Bertha Emilie in 1883, were born to them in Texas. Then, because of the mother's health, the family decided to move to Nebraska where cousins of Mrs. Hinz were already living. These relatives were the W. Christian Schievelbein family in Gosper County. They acquired some land adjacent to the families already there and took a patent on this land on March 6, 1891.

The hard journey to Nebraska with their few possessions, one black cow, and their small children was a long and memorable one. It is believed that they traveled north as far as possible by rail, then by foot for the rest of the way. William, the eldest son, related memories of his father pushing a two-wheel cart with all their belongings in it plus the small children, and of he and his mother walking and leading the one cow they owned.

The Hinz family had 15 children, 12 of whom grew to adulthood. They are buried in the Immanuel Cemetery, she having died on October 11, 1925 and he on April 20, 1926.

The connection of Mrs. Hinz' father, Siegfried, to W. Christian Schievelbein is known only by conjecture, but they were born within a few years of each other in Pommern, Germany, Siegfried in 1817 and W. Christian in 1814. So possibly they were brothers since Mrs. Hinz referred to the people in Gosper County as her cousins. Siegfried's wife died in Germany when he was about 60 years old and he decided to come to America with his family, sons Julius and Wilhelm, and daughters Christina and Bertha, who was Mrs. Julius Hinz. Son William married Louise Kluth, whose mother's maiden name was Koepke, as was Mrs. W. Christian Schievelbein. Using their ages as a guide, the two Koepkes could have been sisters.

The tale was told that when they lived in Texas, it was very warm so the older children slept on the floor. In the night there came a disturbing sound from the dog and from a mother hen with her brood of chicks outside. Upon investigation, a huge snake was found curled up between the children on the floor. The parents managed to pick up the children without their being attacked by the snake. When they had killed the snake, it was found to be 8 feet long and 8 to 10 inches in circumference. Later they found out that the snake had escaped from a zoo.

Julius August Hinz, (1857-1925) and Wilhelmina Bertha Mathilde Schievelbein, (1857-1925)

Their children:

William Julius Carl, Jan. 8, 1877

married: Emilie Melchert

children: Laura Cagle, Meta, Olga Klein, Bertha, Gertrude Kentopp, Hilda Helling, Harold, Margaret

Vangorder, Willabelle Shank.

Louis Otto Heinrich, May 4, 1878

Bertha Emma Emilie, Dec. 30, 1879

married: Fred Ziebell

children: Bernhard married Audrey McCue; Hilda married Don Hess; Clara married Corne Wendland; Meta married Marion Bohlen; Ewald married Helena Schievelbein; Arthur married Alice Petermann.

Julius August Albert, Aug. 28, 1881

married: Edna Hagedorn

children: Edwin; Elsie Huckfeldt; Leona Esch

Bertha Emilie Wilhelmine, March 17, 1883

married: Charles Gehring

children: Bertha married Herman Monter; George married Viola Rohlfing; William C. married Dureese Davis; Erna married Harve Bergman; Paul; Myrtle married Edwin Hain; Gordon married Helen Haussler; Edward married Pearl Mabry.

Adolph Otto Albert, Nov. 1, 1884

married: Louise Horman

children: Ida married Paul Matthes; Helen married Lawrence Helzer;

married: Jenny Horman

children: Frank married Edith Riepe; Evelyn married Elmer Nichols; Rodney married Ina Watson; married Pearl Menz.

Siegfried Gustav Hinz, born Sept. 18, 1886

married: Meta Schnieder

children: Berdina; Helen married Roy Russell; and Glen.

Twin daughters

Bertha Johanna Elanora, June 18, 1890

married: Henry C. Helms

children: Reinhold married Tillie Jorgensen; Viola married Reinhold Monter; Bertha married Herman Evers; Edna married Richard Downing; Edwin married Grace Huxoll; Clarence married Lois Stillman; Henry married Lillian Stillman, married Doris Schmidt; Loreen, married Gene Flicker; Ruth, married Hugh McGhghy; Lucilla, married Roscoe Carr.

Herman Helmut Heinrich, born May 19, 1892

married: Esther Schnieder

children: Twyla married Orvin Debban; Ardeth married Kenneth Schutz; Marjorie.

Ida Anna Agnes, born April 20, 1894

married: William Weber

children: Luella; Lester married Shirley Chamber; Duane married Gloria Baker.

Reinhold Jacob, born July 25, 1898

married: Margaret Dudden

children: Georgia married Leonard Osler; Ramona married Harvey Hoffman

Margaretha Auguste Emilie, born May 3, 1900

married: Julius Ziebell

children: Beata married Ervin Petermann; Albert; Robert married Carol Johnson; James married Carol Faw.



The Julius Hinz Family. From left to right: Otto, Emilie Gehring, Emma Ziebell, Bertha Helms, Gustav, William, father Julius, Julius, Louis, mother Bertha nee Schievelbein, Reinhold, Margaret Ziebell, Herman, and Ida Weber.



The Hinz home in Gosper County. This house was destroyed by a tornado in 1956. Julius and Margaret (Hinz) Ziebell were living here in 1956.



Herman Hinz and his wife, Esther Schnieder.

Helms Family

In 1867, Henry Jobst Helms and his brother, Christopher Henry Helms, came to America, in spite of the objections of their family. When they turned 21, they would have to serve in the army, and they wanted to avoid this. Heinrich Helms was born May 26, 1845. Christoff Helms was born December 23, 1849. Christoff married Maria Schnieder, who had been born in Bruckhausen, Germany, the birthplace of the Helms brothers. Apparently, they were married in Germany, and their daughter, Anna Maria was born there. Maria's brother, Heinrich Schnieder, lived near the Helms family when they came to America, and lived in Cleveland, Ohio. While they lived there, Heinrich married Maria Hagedorn in 1871.

The brothers often wrote to their parents, but the letters were not answered. So they were cut off from family ties to Germany, and nothing else is known of their family.

The families came to Washington County, Kansas, because they wanted to own their own farms. From there, they came to the established German community in Gosper County in 1886. William Schievelbein helped the Helms families locate on their land. The Heinrich Helms family built a sod house, and lived there with their nine children, until they built the family home ten years later.

The Henry Helms Family (Maria Clara Hagedorn)

The Helms Family

Maria Dorothea, January 25, 1877

married: Frederich Kalthoff

son: Heinrich William.

Fred died when his son was very young as a result of an accident with a horse. William spent much time with his Grandparents Helms and attended school at Immanuel, although his mother did not live in the community.

Elnora, February 20, 1879

Heinrich Fred, born May 26, 1881

married: Bertie

son: Keith

Maria Rosa, September 28, 1883

married: Willhelm Kalthoff

children: Edna, married Stagemeyer; Walter; and Frank, married Bertha Wendland.

Emma Karolina Martha, August 5, 1886

married: Ludwig Esslinger

children: Cornelius, married Dorothy Raeder; Tina, married Gus Martens; Esther, married Martin Gehring; Raymond, married Helen Boyd; Elda, married Martin Leising; Richard, married Lucille Wegner; Hugo, married Ruby Holsher; Elmer, married Joann Wegner.

Christoff Heinrich, February 9, 1889

married: Bertha Hinz

children: Reinhold, Viola, Bertha, Edna, Edwin, Clarence, Henry, Lorene, Ruth and Lucilla.

Karl Ferdinand, March 12, 1891

married: Bertha Holste

children: Darlene, married Verne Anderson
Leonard Schutz; Duane, married Connie Lovejoy

Alma Anna Katharina, May 22, 1893

married: Rudolph Esslinger

children: Suzanna, Walter, Edgar

Anna Louisa, born July 1, 1896

married: Herman Hermes

children: Evelyn, married Clifford Hilkler; La Verne
married Marna Ziebell

Christoff Helms Family (Maria Elnora Schnieder)

The Helms Family

Anna Marie, born November 10, 1879 in Germany

married: F.F. Wendland

children: Helmuth, Emil, Ida (Kimmel), Carl, Mathilde
Hubert, Franz

Ida Klara, born March 26, 1882 in Cleveland, Ohio

Maria Louisa, born January 27, 1884 in Cleveland, Ohio

married: Rudolph Wendland

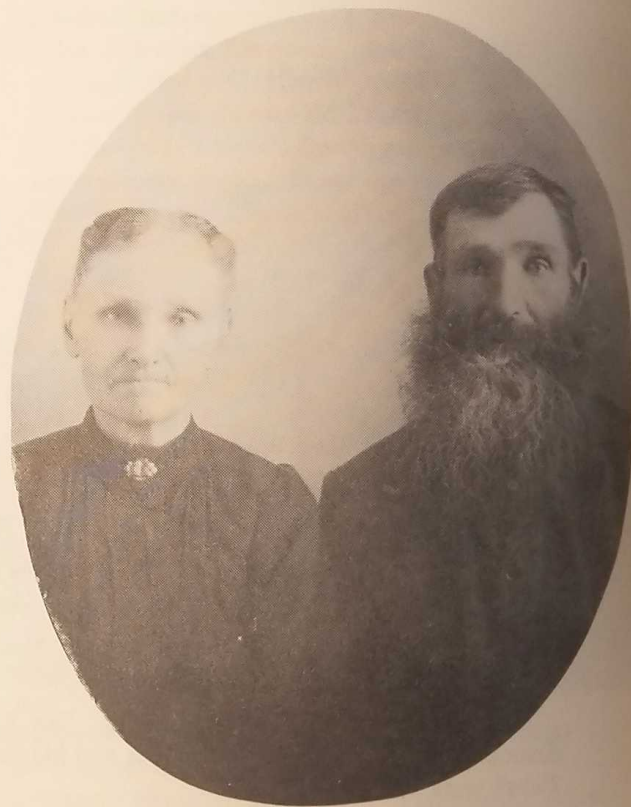
children: Oscar, Helena, Minnie, John, Meta

Heinrich Otto, born May 5, 1892 in Gosper County

died at 6 months

Heinrich Arthur, born April 18, 1897 in Gosper County

married: Clara Monter



Henry Jobst Helms and his wife, Maria Clara nee Hagedorn.



The Helms Family: left to right: Charles, Rosa, Father Henry, Dorothea, Alma, Emma, Louisa, Mother Clara, Henry, Fred, Elnora.



Helms family at their home. Farm is now owned by Duane Helms, son of Charley. From left to right: Fred, Henry, Charley, Father Henry, Louisa, Mother, Dora, Rosa, Emma, Alma.

The Henry Schnieder Family

Henry Gerhardt Schnieder came to America when he was 16 years old with his sister and husband, M&M Christ Helms from Brockhausen, Germany. He came to Cleveland, Ohio in 1881 where he worked in a bolt factory for five years. From Cleveland, he came to Barnes, Kansas where he worked for a year before coming to Nebraska in 1887. He settled in Gosper County and worked for a Mr. Lord south and east of Elwood or north and east of Homer-ville, post office and county seat at that time. The county seat was moved to Elwood the following year.

Henry Schnieder sent for his bride-to-be, Augusta Maria Hagedorn, from Cleveland, Ohio in the summer of 1887. She was working for "Mackies," the owner of a large department store in Cleveland before coming to Nebraska. They were married on October 6, 1887 in the first Immanuel Lutheran Church north of Arapahoe by Rev. Hackman. This church was built out of sod in 1885. They went to his sister and her husband, M&M Christ Helms for their wedding supper which was bean soup.

On June 8, 1887, M&M Schnieder bought 160 acres from James M. Hill who had homesteaded it. The description of this land is Section 22, twp. 5, rg. 22, W2 NW 1/4 NE4 NW4 NW4 NE4 in Gosper County. They built a sod house and lived in it for 8 years and then they added on two frame rooms and lived in this for 3 more years. Their two daughters were born here, Meta Lucy (Mrs. Gustav Hinz) and Esther Julie (Mrs. Herman Hinz). The family used a lumber wagon pulled by horses for transportation. There were no fences at this time to keep the cattle in, so sometimes they wandered many miles from home before they located them. Schnieders sold this place to Cora Blackwood on March 8, 1898.

They then purchased 160 acres 1 mile south and 1/2 mile east of where the Immanuel Lutheran Church used to stand. They bought this land from Nancy Stewart who had homesteaded it on March 8, 1898. The description of this land is NE1/4 section 18, twp. 5, rg. 22 in Gosper County. They bought this farm in order to be close to church and school. They lived here until February, 1921 when they moved to Arapahoe, Nebraska where they lived the rest of their lives. Henry Schnieders moved into the house they had built at 662 Walnut in the year 1931.

The farm has remained in the family. Their daughter and husband, M&M Herman Hinz lived on the farm until February, 1954 when they moved into the house that her father had built in Arapahoe. The farm is now owned by Henry Schnieder's great-grandson, Douglas Schultz of Arapahoe.

An interesting event that Henry Schnieder repeated many times was about the flu epidemic during W.W. I. So many people had died that it was impossible for the undertaker to take care of everyone. Henry's niece died then so he and John Gehring went in the house to take care of her. They decided if they smoked their pipes while in the house, it would keep them from catching the flu and it worked. They dressed her and placed her in a coffin and loaded the coffin on

a truck and proceeded to the cemetery. This was on a very cold snowy day, but Henry set out in the open truck on the coffin on the way to the cemetery. They had no service at the church that day because the rest of the family were still sick. When the families were well, they had one service for all six members of the Immanuel congregation that had died from the flu epidemic.

Heinrich Gerhardt Schnieder, born April 14, 1865 in Bruckhausen, Germany and **Auguste Marie Hagedorn, born Febr. 23, 1859** in Dover, Ohio.

Their children:

Meta Lucie, born July 21, 1892 in Gosper County. married: Gustav Hinz children: Berdina, 1917-1923; Helen, 1922, married Roy Russell; and Glen, born 1925.

Esther Julie, born July 10, 1897 in Gosper County. married: Herman Hinz children: Twyla, 1921-1964, married Orvin Debban; Ardeth, 1924, married Kenneth Schutz; Marjorie, 1932-1947.



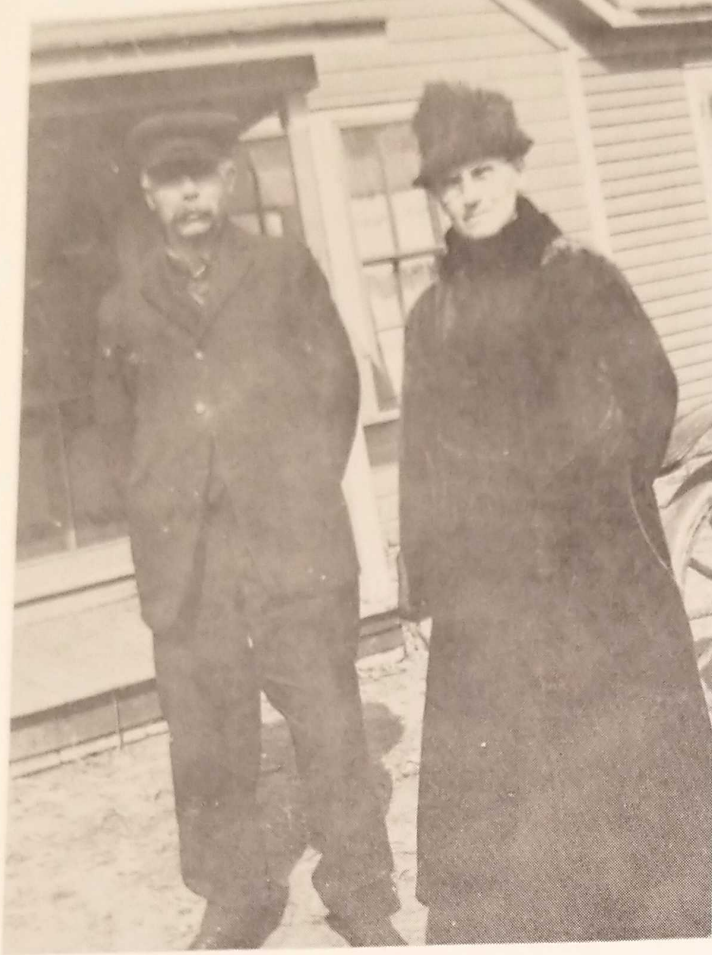
Henry Schnieder, daughter Esther, daughter Meta, and Augusta Hagedorn Schnieder.



The Schnieder family at their home on the farm in the Elk Creek community. Farm now owned by Douglas Schutz, a grandson.



Mr. Schnieder on his farm. He liked to raise hogs.



Mr. and Mrs. Henry Schnieder.

Schnieder Family



Herman Hinz and his wife, Esther Schnieder.



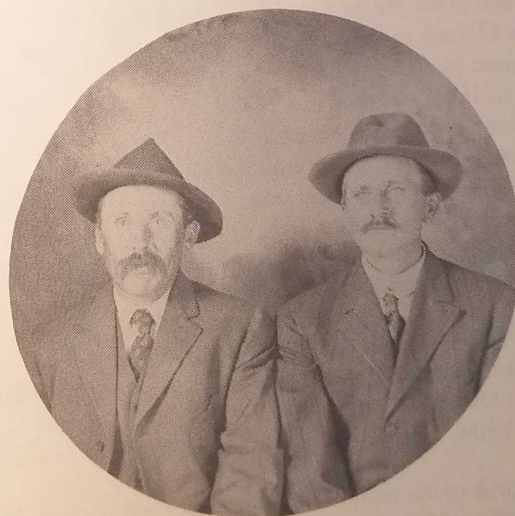
Mr. and Mrs. Gustav Hinz and their daughter, Berdina.

Kath Family



In this picture of a wedding in the Kath family, the wedding party consisted of Emelie Kath, married C.A. Mues; William Schievelbein, married Emma Sydow Wendland; the bride and groom, Louise Kath and Ed Briegel; the woman attendant is not identified, the man attendant is Julius Kath. Other members of the family of Julius Schievelbien and Albert Kath, whose wives were sisters, members of the Dahms family, can be seen in the picture.

The Kath family consisted of Albert H. Karl Kath and his wife, Henriette Fridericka Auguste Kath, nee Dahms, and their children, Julius Karl A., born March 26, 1875 in Germany; Wilhelm Adolph, born Feb. 7, 1877 in Minnesota; Louise Mathilda Theresa, born March 15, 1881 in Minnesota, and Heinrich Gustav Julius, born July 23, 1883 in Gosper Co., NE. Anna Bertha was born July 26, 1888, Emilie Louise was born Feb. 28, 1891, and Bertha Maria was born May 25, 1893.



Julius Kath and his cousin, William Schievelbein.

The Hermann Weber Family

Hermann Weber was born in Falkenburg, Kreis Darmburg, Pommern, Germany December 16, 1860. He came to Nebraska in 1877 when he was 17 years old to Colfax County, and in 1879 to Washington County. From there he came to Gosper County in 1886 to where his half-brother, August Marquardt, lived. He staked a tree claim on the SW $\frac{1}{2}$ of Section 13 in Range 6, Township 13, Gosper County, Nebraska. He received a Receiver's Receipt for the land in 1893. His son, Alfred, lived on the farm for many years and owned it until his death in 1977 when it was sold to Bill Nott.

In the year 1887, Hermann Weber was married to Wilhelmina Freidank, niece of a farmer in the Elk Creek community. Ernest Freidank was a bachelor and he was known for his futuristic ideas and the hard work that he put into making his ideas reality. He dug a water well by himself with a bucket and rope to bring the dirt out of the hole. With his wheelbarrow, he built a dam across a gully to keep the runoff water from eroding his farmstead.

A letter received by the Hermann Weber family in 1925 from the Freidank family in Wolmsdorf by Niedergorsdorf, Kries Gutenberg, Lucken, stated that the writer was a cousin to Hermann Weber, that his mother was Ernestine nee Freidank Clemens, a sister of Wilhelmina and that their grandfather was named Gottlieb Friedank. There was also a sister, Johanna, who lived in Berlin; a brother, Ernst, who lived in Berlin; and a sister, Anna Haseloff. The grandfather was dead and there had been a problem with his estate and so the letter was written to heirs of Wilhelmina. The writer, Erich Clemens, told of bad times in Germany and said that he was considering coming to America. He was thirty years old at that time.

The Webers were parents of eight children: Heinrich Friedrich, born Feb. 1, 1888, and died at his home in Holyoke, Colorado in 1968; Alfred Gottfried, born October 5, 1889, spent his life in Gosper County and died at the hospital in Oxford in 1976; Herman Otto, born June 18, 1891, farmed in Gosper County and retired to a home in Arapahoe in 1968 and died in 1977 after celebrating his 55th wedding anniversary with his wife, Marie; Marie Wilhelmina, born February 26, 1893, later married Herman Schievelbein, farmed in Gosper County, and retired with his wife to a home in North Platte, where they were living at the time of their deaths; Wilhelm Otto, born December 19, 1894, married Ida Hinz, retired from farming to California where they were living when they died, he in 1969; Anna Luise Susanna, born July 7, 1898, married John Garber of Grand Island and lives there; Emma Dorothea, born July 1, 1902, married William Hermes of Oxford and lives there; and Agnes Sophie, born March 2, 1904, married Hugo Grosse of York and still lives there.

At the time of the birth of the youngest child, Agnes, Mrs. Weber died on March 8, 1904 at the age of 43 years. She is buried in the Immanuel Lutheran Cemetery. The baby daughter went to the home of a relative, Grandma Bloch,

to be cared for while she was a baby. The rest of the children remained at the home with their father. The story was told that after the baby Agnes went home to her father's house, there were often tears, both from Mrs. Bloch and the baby, whenever they met at church and could not leave together. Seven years after the death of his wife, Hermann Weber became ill. He made trips east to Omaha to a specialist but died of cancer on August 15, 1912. The three older sons were informed that their father had inoperable cancer and that the illness would be fatal but the oldest daughter, Maria, was not told that he was hopelessly ill. She tirelessly nursed her father, doing everything that she was able to do to make him comfortable. When the end came, she collapsed and had to be under a doctor's care. An item in the Arapahoe Pioneer, following the obituary of Hermann Weber, told of the illness of his daughter, Maria. She said that she had labored so hard, thinking that she was helping him to become well, and it was more than she could bear when she found that it was all for naught.

The children continued to live at home, caring for each other. Their house became the gathering place for the young people of the community, particularly after evening Bible Class or choir practice at the church.



The first homestead of Hermann Weber, later the home of Alfred Weber, in Gosper County. Now owned by Bill Nott.

Herman O. Weber, son of Hermann and Wilhelmina (Nebuska) Weber born June 18, 1891 in Gosper County, Nebraska; died July 6, 1977, buried at Immanuel Cemetery.

Marie Selma (Ritschell) Weber, daughter of Heinrich and Maria (Meier) Ritschell, born September 28, 1894, Pörschwald, Austria; died May 5, 1974, buried at Immanuel Cemetery.

Their children:
Harold A., born December 9, 1916, died July 14, 1980, buried at Immanuel Cemetery.
married: Marie Ziebell, April 8, 1945; born May 18, 1915; died January 9, 1981, buried at Immanuel Cemetery.
children: June Marie; Carol Jean; Darrel Dean; Lyle Harold.

Walburga L., born July 21, 1918.
married: Glen Brown born March 9, 1918; died, buried in Hastings, NE.
children: Diana Marie; Ronald Glen.

Arnold G., born September 27, 1919.
married: Maxine Fredricey on May 4, 1952, born June 12, 1918.
children: Trudy Jo; Catherine Marie.

Lieta A., born November 20, 1920.
married: Charles Koch on February 9, 1950; born June

12, 1908; died November 7, 1974, buried at Eustis, NE.
children: Beverly Jean; Betty; Randall; Kenneth; Robert; Michael.

Elsie M., born January 23, 1922, died July 23, 1965, buried at Curtis, NE.
married: Lorenz Koch born September 16, 1920; died October 2, 1979, buried at Curtis, NE.
children: Shirley; Roger; Sandra; Gary; Dale; Patricia Dee.

Heinz W., born November 30, 1923; died March 18, 1964, buried at Immanuel Cemetery.
married: Mildred van Campen on February 20, 1954, born June 8, 1930.
children: Debra Kay; Karen Sue; Stephen Michael; Denise Ann.

Leon W., born February 3, 1925.
married: Mary Lou Hermes on May 6, 1951, born May 19, 1932.
children: Douglas Lee; Jerald Dee; James Alan; Linda Ruth; Scott David.

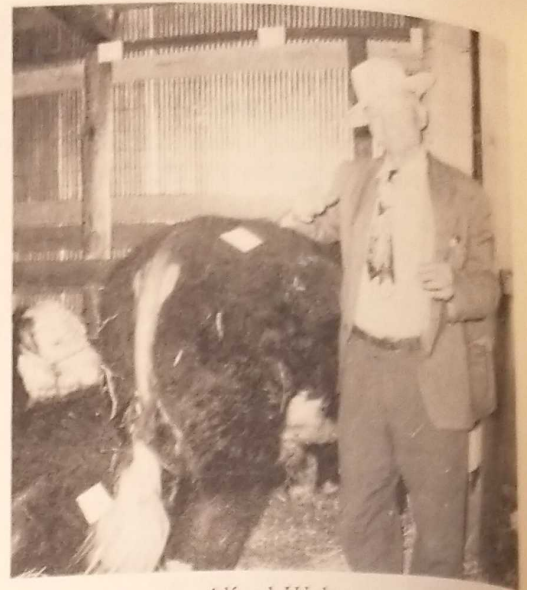
Melvin L., born November 11, 1932.
married: Catherine Cox Hanson on June 23, 1962, born May 6, 1930.
children: Jane Marie Hanson; Ann Francis Hanson.



Herman and Marie Weber, shortly after their wedding.



Herman and Marie Weber.



Alfred Weber.



Walter Wendland and Emma Weber.



Herbert E. Schievelbein and William Weber.



Henry and Emma Weber.



From left to right: Herman and Marie Weber and Anna Weber Garbers and her husband, John. Children are Arnold, Heinz and Leon Weber.



Herman and Marie nee Weber Schievelbein and their daughters, Leona and Berdina.



Marie Weber and her sister-in-law, Agnes Weber.



Herbert E. Schievelbein, Leon Weber, and Herman Weber in 1967. H.E. thought that Leon looked like Abraham Lincoln in his centennial beard and so he posed him in the chair for the photo.



The Herman Weber family (all except Melvin who was not born at this time). Daughters Elsie, Wally, and Lieta; sons Harold, Leon, Heinz and Arnold, taken in 1926.



From left to right: Herman and Marie Weber and Anna Weber Garbers and her husband, John. Children are Arnold, Heinz and Leon Weber.



Herman and Marie nee Weber Schievelbein and their daughters, Leona and Berdina.



Marie Weber and her sister-in-law, Agnes Weber.



Herbert E. Schievelbein, Leon Weber, and Herman Weber in 1967. H.E. thought that Leon looked like Abraham Lincoln in his centennial beard and so he posed him in the chair for the photo.



The Herman Weber family (all except Melvin who was not born at this time). Daughters Elsie, Wally, and Lieta; sons Harold, Leon, Heinz and Arnold, taken in 1926.

Maria Anselma Ritschell Weber

Grandparents: Dr. and Mrs. (Babette) Meier, Peterswald, Austria.

children: Adolph (died young, not married); Franz (had a son, Franz); Emma (married Ritschell), children Walburga, Julius; Maria (married Heinrich Ritschell).

Parents: Heinrich and Maria Meier Ritschell.

children: Maria Anselma and Elizabeth.

The Heinrich Ritschell family moved to Neundorf, Germany where Mr. Ritschell died of consumption when Maria, his daughter, was six years old. Baby sister, Elizabeth died the same year and both are buried in Neundorf.

The next year, Maria Meier Ritschell married Gustav Wendland, a widower who had a son, Hugo. A baby girl, Hertha Elizabeth, was born while they lived in Germany when daughter Maria was eight years old.

Gustav Wendland had been in the German Army. He was a fine singer and sang in choirs.

In 1904, when daughter Maria was ten years old, the family went back to Austria and lived there for eight years. In 1912, the family decided to come to America where Gustav's elderly parents, the August Wendlands, and his sisters Bertha, Mrs. William Hermes; Anna, Mrs. August Petermann; Maria, Mrs. Paul Melchert, and Augusta, Mrs. John Emrich; and his two brothers Fred W. and Julius A. were living. The family was urging Gustav to come to America while the parents were still living. However, the father, August, died before the Gustav Wendland family got to Nebraska.

Members of the Gustav Wendland family who came to America included: father Gustav, mother Maria, his son Hugo, and her daughter Marie, and their children Hertha, Walter, Irma and Erhardt. Marie was eighteen years old. She dreaded leaving her friends and relatives in Austria. She was deathly ill of seasickness on the voyage over, at one time it was feared she had died.

Life in America was not easy for the family. They moved into the home of Gustav's sister, Bertha Hermes, where the August Wendlands had also lived. William and Bertha Hermes had eight children, Fred, Henry, Ewald, Hermine, Marie, Margaret, Magdalene and Clara. None of the Gustav Wendland family could speak English. Marie and her cousin Marie Petermann spent much time together, and Marie Ritschell learned the English language from her cousins, Marie, and Hattie Wendland (later Butenhau). When a sailor that Marie had met on the voyage from Germany came to Nebraska to visit her, he was introduced to Marie Petermann and they planned to be married. But Marie Petermann was killed in a hunting accident, and the young sailor was never heard from again.

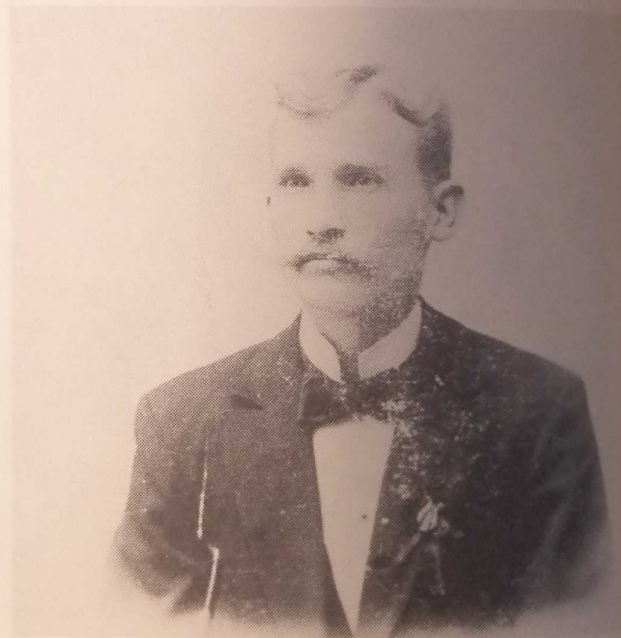
Marie Ritschell went to Omaha to work in a candy factory with Marie Petermann and they stayed with their aunt, Mrs. Emrich. When they returned to Arapahoe, Marie Ritschell was courted by Herman Weber in the year of 1915. That winter, Herman's sister, Marie, married Herman Schievelbein in the Immanuel Church. Because she wanted to attend the wedding and there was no other way to get there, Marie Ritschell walked from her parent's home. (They were living at that time on the place where Otto Menze later lived.) The snow was so deep in the canyons that it often was hip-high.

But when you walked, you cut across country so that the miles were not so many. It was three miles across to the church.

Herman Weber and Maria Ritschell were married May 16, 1916. Marie had been living with her parents, the Gustav Wendlands on the Fred Wendland farm where Glen Hinz now lives. Marie told that her wedding dress had been a gift from Herman, and that Herman came in his horse and buggy to take her to the church for the service, which was spoken by Pastor A.L. Gresens. Their witnesses were Marie's cousin Frank Petermann and Herman's sister, Emma (Mrs. William Hermes of Oxford). They lived on Herman's farm, 1/4 mile north of the George Gehring home for several years, then moved to the location of the Ceryl Post Office, about 3 1/2 miles east where they lived until their retirement from farming. They moved to Arapahoe in 1968 and lived at 908 Main until their deaths, Marie in 1972 and Herman in 1976. They had celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary and were the parents of eight children and had 32 grandchildren.



Babette Meier, mother of Mrs. Gustav (Maria Meier Ritschell) Wendland.



Gustav Wendland, taken while he was living in Germany.



The Gustav Wendland family in front of their home in Austria. In the center of the picture are Gustav and Maria and their children, Walter, Erhardt and Irma. The other people in the picture lived in the ground floor rooms of the house, the Wendlands lived on the second floor, windows of which are hidden by the vines which have grown over the house.



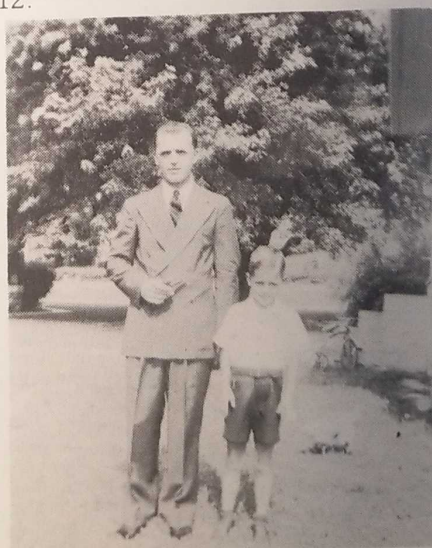
Marie Ritschell and Marie Petermann.



Marie Ritschell and some sailors and a young woman friend on board the ship which brought the Wendland family to America in 1912.



Maria Wendland and her two daughters, Hertha and Irma.



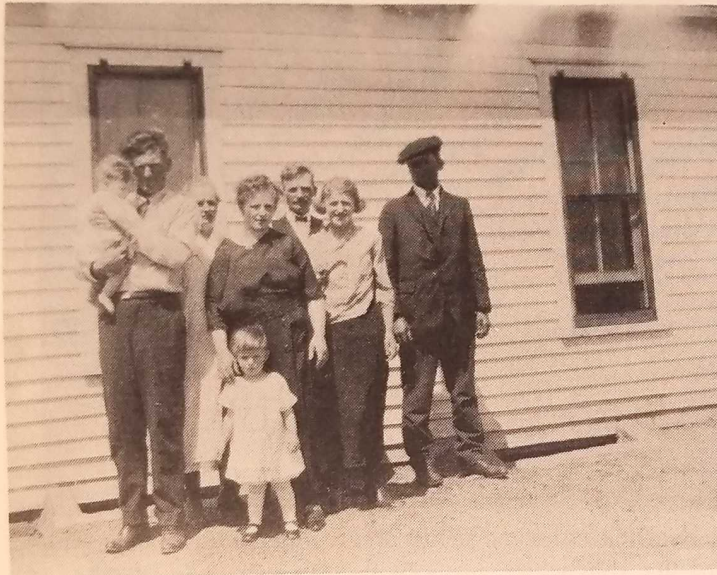
Walter Wendland and his son, Walter.



Erhardt and Ellenora Wendland and their children.



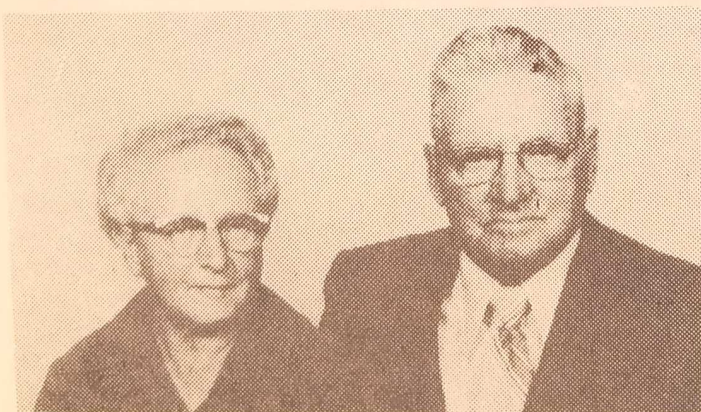
The Gustav Wendland family at their home. Left to right: Marie Ritschell, Irma, Marie and Gustav, Hertha, and Erhardt. Herman Weber is standing on the porch.



Left to right: Herman Weber, holding Arnold, Maria Wendland, Wally Weber Brown, Marie Weber, Gustav Wendland, Irma Wendland, and Alfred Weber.



Five oldest Weber children: Arnold, Wally, Elsie, Harold, and Lieta.



Mr. and Mrs. Herman Weber.



Mr. and Mrs. Eddy Tully, nee Hertha Wendland.

Monter Family

In the middle 1870s, Karl Heinrich Moenter, his wife, Elisa, and his family began making plans to journey to America. In 1880, Mr. Moenter applied for and received a letter of discharge for his family. This letter also stated that with their acceptance, the family lost their Prussian citizenship. The letter is dated August 15, 1880.

They came first to Reilly County, Kansas. The eldest son, Ludwig, stayed in Prussia. Here their son Karl married Martha Lass who had been born in Cook County, Illinois and Marie married Fred Soncker. Son Freiderich made his home in Edmond, Oklahoma.

In 1886, the family came to the Elk Creek community at the recommendation of William Schievelbein who had inquired about the farm owned by a Mr. Cummings, which joined the Schievelbein farm on the west. Upon finding it for sale, the Moenter family purchased it and it is still in the Moenter family, now owned by the family of Reinhold Monter, Heinrich's grandson. Son Clamor came to Gosper County the following year.

No pictures are available of the Karl Heinrich Moenters. It is remembered that he was a large man and always wore his coat unbuttoned in the winter. He drove a span of buckskin mules on a lumber wagon when they went to church, to town, or visiting.

In the year 1900, Mrs. Monter died in April. Her grandson, Herman Ziebell, son of Herman and Anna Ziebell, died of whooping cough in the hot summer. Mr. Heinrich Monter told of a dream he had had that the next to die would be

carried out, feet first. When he died that year in August, in a chair in his small bedroom, he was laid out on the bed. The casket could not be brought in through the small hall so he was lifted out a window, feet first.

Karl Heinrich Moenter, July 1, 1833 in Wehrendorf, Kreis, Osnabruck (name is also given as Ortbuier), August 25, 1900, buried at Immanuel Cemetery.

First marriage: Clara Elizabeth Meisemeyer (no other information available).

children:

Ludwig

Charles, or Karl F., born March 21, 1860, married Martha Lass

Maria, married Fred Soncker

H. Friederich, lived in Edmond, Oklahoma

Clamor A., born February 15, 1865, married Anna Wendland.

Second marriage: Elisa Engel Dorothea Schaper December 24, 1842 in Schwege, Kreis Osnabruck; died April 9, 1900, buried Immanuel Cemetery.

children:

Wilhelm, born 1872, married Maria Ziebell

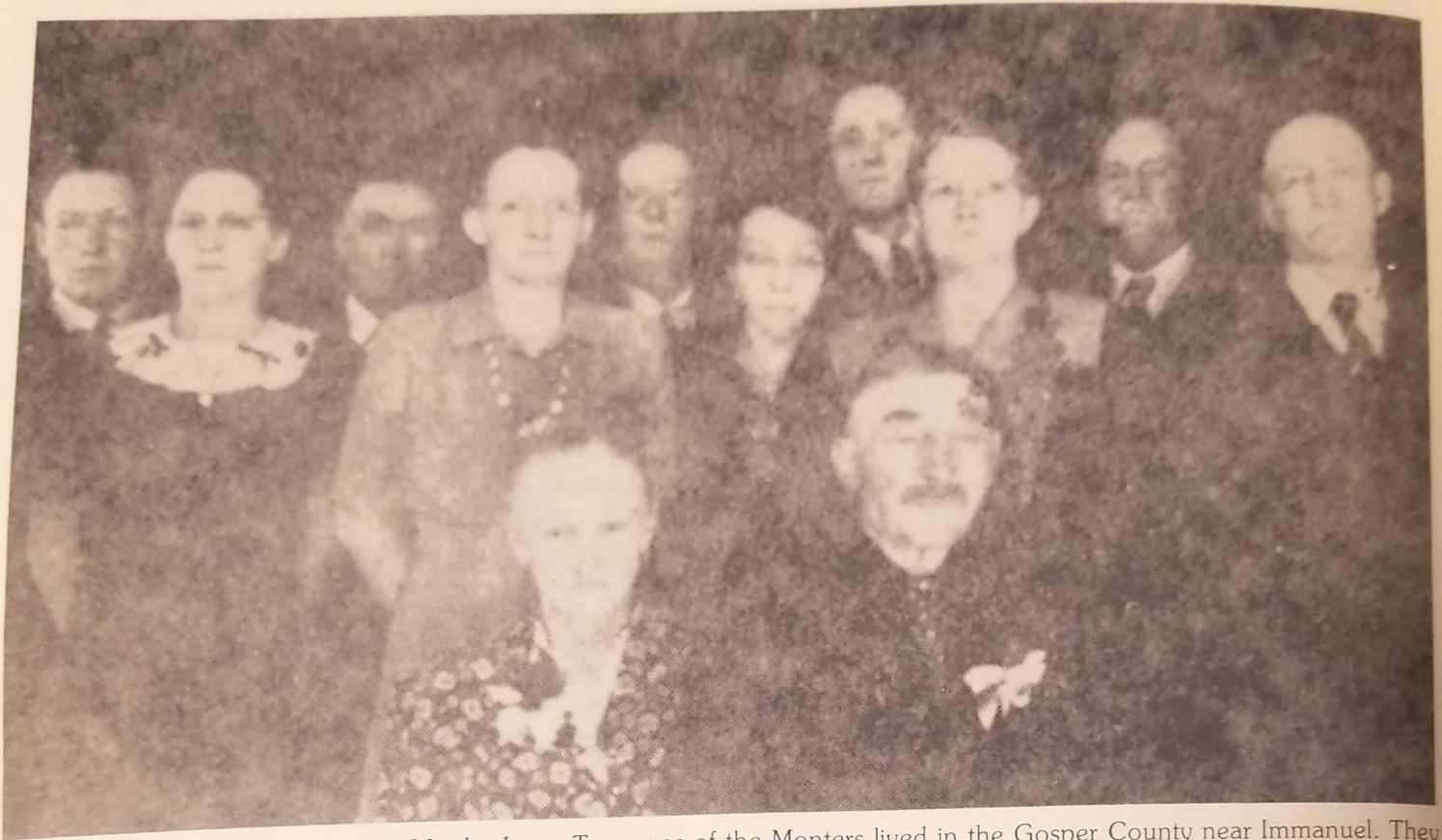
Anna Maria Engle, born December 15, 1873, later married Herman Ziebell

Herman Ludwig, born August 17, 1877

Heinrich Wilhelm, born February 26, 1880, married Maria Schievelbein.



Mr. and Mrs. Karl F. Monter and daughter Agnes.



Mr. and Mrs. Karl F. Monter nee Martha Lass. Two sons of the Monters lived in the Gosper County near Immanuel. They were Henry J. and Edward. Shown in this picture, left to right, are Arthur, Martha, Albert, Clara, Mother Martha, Henry, Agnes, Walter, Father Carl, Amanda, Charles and Edward. Many of the rest of this family made their homes near Monte Vista, Colorado.



Mr. and Mrs. Henry J. Monter with their grandchildren.



Clamor Monter family, taken after his death years before. Back row: Emelie, Mrs. William Meyers; C. Martin, always called "Mac," married Emma Wendland; Laura married Harry Graning, a World War II casualty; Marie, married Herman Rohlfing. Front row: Elfrieda, married Fred C. Hermes; Fred H., married Hermine (Minnie) Hermes; William, married Lilly Niemann; and Grandma Monter, Anna nee Wendland.



Mr. and Mrs. William (Maria Ziebell) Monter and children, Herman, Henry, and Margaret.



Herman and Anna nee Monter Ziebell and their children, Magdalene and Julius at their home. This is presently the home of Ervin and Beata Petermann, Beata is the granddaughter of the Herman Ziebells, and the daughter of Julius Ziebell and his wife, Margaret nee Hinz Ziebell.



Maria and Henry Monter, taken in 1950.

Their children: Hertha, married Oscar Ziebell; Herbert, married Irene Ziebell; Hilda, married Otto Hermes; Reinhold, married Viola Helms; and Leona, married Oscar Warner.



Their home, built in 1887. In front of the home are left to right, Hilda, Father Henry, Baby Reinhold, and Mother Maria. Now Tim and Carmen Petermann live in this home.



The Henry Monters had one of the first cars in the neighborhood. At night they had to light the carbide headlights with a match so they could see on their way home.

Gehring Family

Johann Gehring was born in DeKalb County, Indiana on January 5, 1854. His wife, Albertine Marie nee Seltz, was born Nov. 7, 1860 in Cleveland, Ohio. They lived in DeKalb County, Indiana, and their two sons were born there; Karl Johannes on May 9, 1885, and Hermann Dietrich on Dec. 1, 1888.

The Rev. C. H. Seltz had come to Arapahoe as the first resident pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, and he also served the St. Matthews and Immanuel congregations as mission place. He corresponded with his family in Cleveland, and especially with his sister and her family, the Gehrings, and persuaded them to join him in Nebraska. Through his financial aid for trainfare and the like, the family came to Arapahoe in 1890. They settled on a homestead ten miles north and east of Arapahoe. The 1902 Gosper County Atlas also shows that C. Seltz owned a quarter of land south of the place where Herman and Anna Ziebell lived, later the home of the Charles Gehring family.

The Gehrings were parents to four more children in Gosper County:

Emilie Suzanna was born July 7, 1890. She died at the age of 18, possibly from complications of the flu.

Mathilda Maria was born June 19, 1892. She later married Henry Ziebell; Mrs. LaVerne (Marna) Hermes is their daughter.

Clara Louisa was born April 8, 1896. She married Hugo Kleint in Indiana; is still living there at the age of 93 years.

Martin William was born Nov. 3, 1901. He married Esther Esslinger; has two daughters, Betty Tull and Carol Albers; is still living in Lexington at the age of 87.

Early on Sunday mornings, when the weather was cold, Johann Gehring would walk the nearly half-mile to the church to start the fire in the coal-burning furnace, so the church would be warm for services.



Gehring family: Adults: Herman Gehring and his wife, Carrie; Henry and Tillie Ziebell; Carl and Emilie Gehring; Father Johann, Martin Gehring, Mother Albertine Maria; Herman and Bertha Monter; Myrtle Gehring; Erna Gehring; Bill Gehring; George Gehring; Children: Elinor Gehring, daughter of Herman; Gordon Gehring, son of Carl; Marna Ziebell, daughter of Henry and Tillie Ziebell; Herbert, son of Herman Gehring; Edward Gehring son of Carl, with Dolores Monter, daughter of Herman and Bertha Monter, and Paul Gehring, son of Carl.



Wedding picture of Carl and Emilie Gehring nee Hinz.



Family gathering at the Carl Gehring home. Emilie Gehring was a Hinz, and some of her family are in this picture. Left to right: Ida nee Hinz and William Weber; Grandmother Albertine Gehring, nee Seltz; Herman Hinz; Grandfather Johann Gehring; Esther Schnieder Hinz, wife of Herman; Bertha nee Hinz and Henry Helms; Emilie nee Hinz (she is holding flowers) and Carl Gehring; Fred Ziebell and his wife, Emma nee Hinz, in the back row; Tillie nee Gehring and Henry Ziebell; Margaret nee Hinz and Julius Ziebell.

Hermes Family

William Heinrich Hermes was born July 19, 1866 to Bernhardt Hermes and his wife (no information), at Ohrite near Bippen in Hanover, Germany. He had two brothers, Bernhardt and Gerhardt, and three sisters. (The names of two of the sisters may have been Wilhelmina and Hattie.)

The brothers and sisters of William stayed in Germany, the elder was to inherit the acreage that the family lived on, but there would be no place for William, who was a middle son. One sister later came to America, she lived in Missouri. Her daughter was married to a man named Kramer.

Other Hermes families lived south of Arapahoe, but although they had come from the same Dorfe, or village, in Germany, to their knowledge, the families were not related.

William Hermes and his cousin, Henry Imhoff, and Henry's cousin, Carl Brandt, came to Illinois in 1892 when William was 26. The next year they came to Nebraska to work for August Droste at Hendley, where they helped to break sod. William Hermes often said that his health was ruined breaking sod at the Droste farm.

William Hermes married Bertha Wendland, born October 26, 1873 at Pommern, Germany to August Wendland and Fredericka Mews Wendland on March 16, 1899 at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Gosper County. William had met Bertha on board the ship coming to America. Henry Imhoff married Bertha's cousin, Pauline Wendland, daughter of C. Friederich Wendland.

Bertha Wendland was a seamstress, the wedding dress she sewed for her cousin who married William Westerbeck was modeled at a style show in the 1960s by a granddaughter of Bertha Wendland Hermes, Charlotte Hermes Hawthorne. At the time before Bertha's marriage to William Hermes, August Wendland and his family probably lived on the Elk Creek just west of the August Petermann place. Bertha came to Nebraska to live near relatives in the Immanuel Lutheran community in Gosper County in the early 1890s. In the following years, the rest of her family came to Nebraska. Her brothers and sisters were Fred W., Mrs. Anna Petermann, Mrs. Augusta Emrich, Julius A., Gustav, and Mrs. Marie Melchert.

Upon their marriage, William and Bertha Hermes moved to a soddy on the Jack Snyder farm on the west side of the Elk Creek. Their three sons were born there, Fred, Henry and Ewald. Then they purchased a farm on the Furnas-Gosper County line and lived in a soddy until the house was built in 1907 with the help of August Krumme. The sod house on the site was located where the double granary was later built. Ewald remembered playing in it after the family moved into the large two-story frame house when daughter Anna was born. This home still stands, it was located about 100 yards north of the soddy, and built in 1907. It was also the home of the Ewald Hermes family. At one time, when members of the Wendland family were making their way to Nebraska from Germany and establishing homes in the community, as many as twenty people lived in the home at one time. This farmstead, built up in later years by William Hermes, was located on a hill above Dry Creek, which drained from the north in Gosper County to the Republican

River. The creek often flooded during heavy rains, and at the time of the Republican River flood in 1935, water flooded the lower buildings on the farmstead. The first well dug on the farmstead was a hand-dug well, located south and a little west of the soddy and was dug by August Petermann, who was a small man. It was about thirty feet deep.

William Hermes died at his home in Arapahoe, where he had retired from farming, of a stroke on December 28, 1933 at the age of 67.

Bertha Hermes died at her home in Arapahoe of complications of surgery for cancer on March 19, 1935 at the age of 68, less than two years after the death of her husband and three weeks after the death of her brother, Gustav.

Both William and Bertha Hermes and her parents, August and Fredericka Wendland, are buried in the Immanuel Lutheran Cemetery eight miles north of Arapahoe.

The story was told that Bertha Wendland's father and some of his family worked for a nobleman in the old country, and the nobleman's son had fallen in love with Bertha. The nobleman did not approve and so he helped finance the trip to America for Bertha and some of the members of her family. After the World War, a letter was received by the William Hermes family inquiring about Bertha from the nobleman's son.

Ewald Hermes told that he well remembered making the long trip to Hendley to visit in the home of the Brandt family. The trip was made with horse and wagon, and the Hermes family stayed all night at their friend's home.

The Wendland family was a happy, close-knit group. They had much fun together, with brothers, sisters, and cousins. When they played cards, Scat and 66, it was serious business. Although women ordinarily did not play cards, Bertha Hermes played with the men and was an excellent player. Often the card games went on until dawn. Then the families left for their respective homes. Louise Ziebell Hermes remembered her father, Herman, saying on Monday morning that there must have been a card game because the families were just going home in their wagons. The story was told that one nephew often borrowed his uncle's car when the games were going strong. The uncle ran out of gas on the way home and just couldn't figure out where so much gas could have gone.

Evert Hermes said that his first car was shared with his two brothers, Fred and Henry. When Fred married Freda Monter, he took the car. Evert then purchased a Maxwell in about 1922 because his good friend, Herman Weber, had a Maxwell. However, it was not a good car and was traded for an Overland and then for a Model A Ford in 1930, which he had when he and Louise were married. This was the family car for almost fifteen years, during which the family made a trip seven miles to the north every Sunday morning for church. When the children started going to parochial school for their confirmation instruction in about 1943, son Billy drove the car the seven miles even though he was only in the seventh grade and only 12 years old. The car also went to town each day after the older children were in high school. One time it upset on the icy highway near the Methodist Church when the children were on their way home from

school. However, the car was set up on its wheels again and it continued to go to town each day. Then it was retired for a jeep, which Billy did not get to drive, he was killed by a lightning bolt the summer of the year he had been a freshman. The jeep was used to transport all of the children of the Hermes family to school in town.

Louise Ziebell Hermes remembered her father, Herman, saying on Sunday morning that the Hermes family was coming up the road, so it was time for all to get on the way to church. Evert Hermes said that his family had the slowest team he ever saw, but that was probably the way it seemed after a seven-mile trip to church.

Louise also remembered the funeral procession from the south when Mrs. August Wendland died in 1916 after being an invalid for years in the Hermes home. Herman Ziebell had counted the tolls of the church bell, and knew that it had to be for an elderly member of the church because the toll rang once for each year of the age of the deceased. Evert said that he had no memories of her, except that she was always in her dark clothes with her black cap about her face, and of her being bedfast. Evert told that he remembered his grandfather, August, who had loved to tease and play with his little grandsons. One time, when the grandfather got tired of the teasing and chased Evert to hit him with a stick, Evert climbed up on a pole barn where his grandfather could not

reach him but stood below waving his stick and scolding in German.

The William Hermes Family

Their children:

Fred C. married: Elfreda Monter.

children: Genevieve, Darien, Leyland.

Henry F. married: Mathilda Ziebell.

children: Richard, Kenneth, Daniel.

Ewald H. (Evert) married: Louise Ziebell.

children: Mary Lou, William Harlan, Ruth Elaine, Elizabeth Ann, Alice Irene, Charlotte Kay, Charles Ray, Cheryl Sue.

Hermine married: Fred H. Monter.

children: Eileen, Dewey, Dolores.

Anna married: Leonard Wendland.

children: Patricia, James.

Margaret: a graduate of Seward College, Margaret taught in parochial schools, and was a librarian at a Lutheran College in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Magdalene married: James Larson.

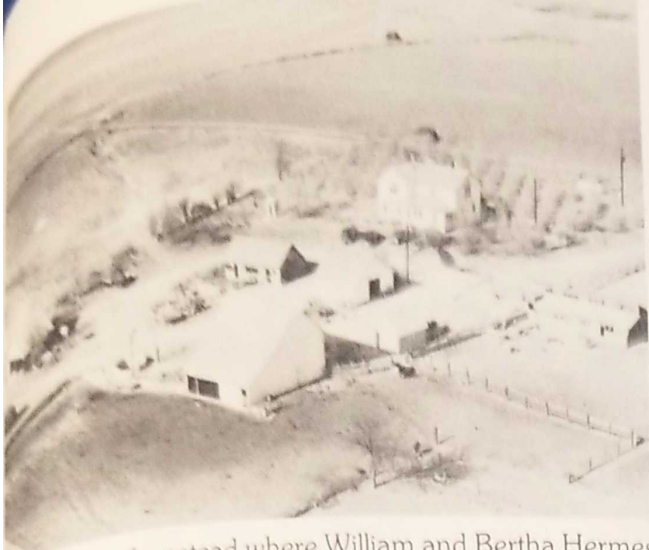
children: Dorothy, Judith, Nancy.

Marie deceased in childhood.

Clara deceased in childhood.



The William Hermes family. Left to right, back row: Henry, Anna, Ewald, Hermine, Fred. Front row: Magdalene, father William, Clara, mother Bertha, and Margaret. The sisters, Anna and Minnie, wore black waistbands in mourning for their sister Mary who had died earlier that year at the young age of 11 years. The picture was taken in 1920.



The Hermes farmstead where William and Bertha Hermes lived, later where Fred C. and Freda Hermes lived, and where Evert and Louise Hermes and family lived. The picture was taken in the 1940s.



The Hermes family in the 1940's, left to right: Anna (Wendland); F.C.; Minnie (Monter); Evert; Magdalene (Larson); Margaret; and Henry.



Clipping of wedding account from local paper for Ewald and Louise Hermes, April 8, 1931.

Ziebell-Hermes

A pretty wedding was solemnized on April 8th at 8 o'clock in the Elk Creek Lutheran Church when Miss Louise Ziebell and Mr. Ewald Hermes were united in the bonds of holy wedlock by the Rev. M. Schabacker.

The bride wore a gown of white crepe back satin, a lace veil and carried a shower of Easter lilies and white sweet peas. The maid of honor, Miss Mathilda Ziebell, wore a gown of pink lace. The first attendant, Miss Anna Hermes, wore a gown of blue lace, and Miss Ida Steinhour, second attendant wore a gown of gold lace. The Misses Margaret and Magdalena Hermes wore gowns of green lace and gold lace, respectively. The groom was attired in the conventional blue. The ushers, Henry Hermes, Leonard Wendland, Arnold Ziebell, Cornelius Wendland and Herbert Ziebell, were attired to harmonize the occasion.

The little flower girl, Dolores Monter, wore a dress of pink lace and carried a basket containing rose petals, which she strewed in the path of the bride. The ringbearer, Albert Ziebell, was dressed in a suite of white. He carried the rings on a silk pillow.

Assisted by the Lohengrin wedding march, the couples formally arranged in the aisle so that the bride could pass through to meet the groom at the altar.

In the address the officiating pastor reminded the young couple that the blessings given by Christ to the followers are not empty promises, but full of life and peace.

Following the ceremony the bridal party and friends and relatives went to the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. H.F. Ziebell, which was decorated according to the color scheme selected for the church, namely pink and white. At the desired hour, a delightful supper was served, after which the young folks sang hymns of praise.

Interesting facts about the Hermes wedding that were not printed in the paper:

All of the dresses for the wedding were made by Anna Hermes, Ewald's sister. Louise's dress was the first full-length white dress at Immanuel Church. The supper was prepared and served by the Millenseiffer family from Arapahoe, for whom Louise had worked. The Ziebell home was also decorated for the supper by the Millenseiffers.



This picture is of the wedding of Henry Imhoff and Pauline Wendland, and is taken at the Wendland home in Gosper County. The bride and groom are located behind and to the right of the bartender, and to their right is the pastor of the church, Rev. Baeder. The three little boys in white shirts in the front are the Hermes brothers, Henry, Fred and Ewald. Their father, William Hermes is to their right and behind them. Other men, squatting in the front row and holding babies, were John Wendland and K.F.J. Wendland, brothers of Pauline.



This picture shows the wedding of Fred C. Hermes and Elfrieda Monter, and was taken at the Monter home in Gosper County. The wedding party were Fred H. Monter, Hermine Hermes, attendants; Fred and Frieda Hermes, bride and groom; and Henry Hermes and Laura Monter, attendants. Standing to the left of Fred Monter can be seen the mothers of the bride and groom, Mrs. Bertha Hermes and Mrs. Anna Monter. Other people that are identified include Ewald Hermes, standing tall against the house with a hat on, and August Petermann, the man in the dark vest at the right of the picture.



Family of Ewald H. (Evert) and Louise nee Ziebell Hermes, taken at the time of their Golden Wedding Anniversary. Left to right: Mary Lou, Mrs. Leon Weber; Alice, Mrs. Victor Oelke; Charles, married Margaret Lainson; Betty, Mrs. Walter Beck; Charlotte, Mrs. Bob Hawthorne; Cheryl, Mrs. Douglas Schutz.

The Leon and Mary Lou Weber Home

The farm where the William Schievelbein family settled when they came to Gosper County is now the home where I live and where Lee and I raised our five children. The house is very old, I have been told that it is the oldest in the community. There are now six rooms on the ground floor and four rooms on the second story. It is the house where many children of the community boarded when they attended the Lutheran parochial school.

It sets down in the canyon, a short distance from the banks of the Elk Creek. When our children were growing up, they spent much time at the creek, the banks at places are very high, and water runs from springs the year around. There were bullhead fish to be caught, and the boys spent hours catching a mess for our breakfast. In the years since irrigation wells have been put down in the neighborhood, some of the springs to the north have a lessened flow and the creek has taken on a different appearance.

I had often heard of a soddy, which was the first home that the Schievelbeins lived in. Most people said that they had no recollection of the location of the soddy, and we had found no signs of it in the pastures on the place. Then Pauline Wendland Bloch wrote to tell me that she remembered a story about the sod house. Pauline's "Gross-Mama" Schievelbein (Bertha Melchert) grew to be quite old, she would wander away from home and would be found at this spot which she called the "sod house." As a signal, the church bells would be rung a certain number of times and the neighborhood would come to help search for the elderly lady. There is a definite depression in the pasture, clear at the top of the hill west of the creek, and near the fenceline that runs east and west at the south border of the farm. I feel certain in my mind that this is the place where the soddy stood.

The home of the William Schievelbeins, later the Herbert E. Schievelbeins, and presently the home of the Leon Weber family, was for many years a showplace on the creek. The

Schievelbeins, especially Maria, wife of Herbert E., planted a lawn and many flowers which they kept watered by a supply tank above their windmill. This gave them water pressure, because it was above the yard, so they could sprinkle the lawn and flowers.

I was told that since it was large and because it was very close to the church, it was not unusual for the home to be used for many gatherings. The trip to the creek for the last-day-of-school picnic was made across the place. I was told of one funeral that was held from the home for Henry Imhoff. He died after being hit by a car in Arapahoe on September 19, 1934. His body in the casket was brought to the home for relatives to sit with until the burial. He was a widower, his wife, Pauline nee Wendland had died in childbirth in 1908 and two little sons were raised by their grandmother, Mrs. Fred C. Wendland. The older son, Gerhardt, died in 1927 following an accident when his car was struck by a train in Arapahoe.

I wish that I knew the year that the house was built. From information that I have, I have decided that it was probably built in 1885.

Many people have told me that there was not a soddy or dugout at the location of our farmsite. Yet the two little children, I was often told, were injured in a field of cane just west of the house. That was in 1885.

I was also often told that families stayed with the Schievelbein family while they were locating in the Elk Creek area. Emma Helms Esslinger told of her family staying there, and when I asked her if that had been in the soddy, she said no, in the big house. She said that the children of her family liked to walk to the Schievelbein home and have cookies with Bertha Schievelbein, and she also said that her family considered the Schievelbeins to be well-off, because they had a big house. The Helms families came to Gosper County in 1886.



The Schievelbein farm after a heavy snow, probably early in the 1900s.

When I was a girl growing up, my family often stopped at my grandparents' home after church. Mother would help cook the Sunday meal, Grandma said that she was too old to do very much work. My Uncle Herb and Uncle Martin still lived at home. Herb was a very special person to me, and Martin, born with Downe's Syndrome, always a child, was truly loved because he had such gentle ways.



Mr. and Mrs. Herman Ziebell.

I got to stay with my grandparents, and I remember waking up to the sound of Grandpa's radio. We did not have a radio at home, so that was a treat. The radio was battery-run so it was used sparingly.

I remember Grandpa praying in German at mealtime, slowly, softly and reverently. After breakfast, after giving thanks, he also prayed the Lord's Prayer in German. It sounded almost like a song, chanted that way. I've been told that Uncle Herb fidgeted, anxious to get to the field, while Grandpa slowly prayed, "Fater, Unser Der Du Bist in Himmel..."

I did not learn to speak German. My parents spoke German only when they did not want us children to know what they were talking about. It was an effective way to keep secrets from us.

Grandma never took her hair down from its bun through the week. On Saturdays, we would unfasten her hair, it was iron-gray, and so soft, and it hung to her waist. We would wash it, I don't know what was used as shampoo. Then we would comb and comb it to dry it. It was beautiful. Then she would twist the entire back part into a bun and fasten it just above her neck. The sides, which she parted away, would then be rolled and fastened around the bun. I often wished she would not wear her hair so plain, because I had seen it when it was so pretty. While we combed and combed, she would tell me stories about her family.

Grandma, when she was first married, would carry her washing to the home of her parents, since she had no washing machine. She would walk the two miles across the Elk Creek, crossing the William Schievelbein home place as she went.

Mother remembers Grandma saying on Monday mornings, "Now hurry and get our washing hung out before the Monters do." The William Monters lived across the canyon to the east, and the two families were very close friends. But there would always be white clothes on the line when the Ziebells took out their first basket. Finally Grandma said that the Monters must hang out a dirty sheet, or maybe tea towels from the night before, just so that they could have the first wash on the line.

Mother told of all the children walking to school at Immanuel in the years of 1910-20. She remembered that the Wm. Monter children would be coming down the road from the east, but Grandpa would say: "You have time to milk one more cow." And they did, and still would walk together to school.

Mother also told of watching the wagon go by with the casket on when her cousin, Henry, who had died in the flu epidemic, was carried to the cemetery for burial. During the terrible time of the flu, funeral services were not held. Bodies were buried and a memorial service was held later, after the epidemic had run its course. Families were terribly afraid of the disease, and if they were fortunate enough to be among the healthy ones, they did what they possibly could for the stricken families.

The Henry Monters had one of the first cars in the neighborhood. My mother told of the Monter family coming to visit one day and that night they had to light the carbide headlights so that they could see on their way home.

by Mary Lou Weber



Immanuel Lutheran Church, about 1910. Buggies can be seen with horses in the left background. The church could be plainly seen from Highway 283, one and a half miles across the Elk Creek to the west. The landmark of the church was used by airplane pilots as a marker of their location for many years. The site of the church is bare now, but in our minds, we still see the stately building, reaching to heaven.