

Claiming Germanness in America:
The Reception of the Bennett Law in Wisconsin's German-Language Press

By

Christopher George Stohs

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

(German)

At the

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

2020

Date of final oral examination: 12/5/2019

The dissertation is approved by the following members of the Final Oral Committee:

Mark Loudon, Professor, German

B. Venkat Mani, Professor, German

Weijia Li, Assistant Professor, German

Cora Lee Kluge, Professor Emerita, German

John Sharpless, Professor Emeritus, History

Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: Wisconsin's German Americans and their Schools	13
Chapter 2: Defending <i>Deutschtum</i> , the <i>Germania</i> 's Bennett Law Coverage.....	27
Chapter 3: A Stand for <i>Schulpflicht</i> : The <i>Amerikanische Turnzeitung</i> and the Bennett Law	69
Chapter 4: Continuing the <i>Culturkampf</i> : The <i>Columbia</i> Covers the Bennett Law.....	93
Chapter 5: <i>The Milwaukee Sentinel</i> vs. <i>The Milwaukee Daily Journal</i> : Dueling Bennett Law Narratives in the Anglophone Press.....	138
Chapter 6: Beyond the Metropolis: German Bennett Law Coverage Outside Milwaukee.....	164
Conclusion	194
Bibliography	200
Appendix.....	206

Acknowledgments

While often described as a solitary exercise, writing a dissertation is the work of many. For those who have helped me along the way, I would like to say a word of thanks. First, I owe thanks to the Wisconsin Historical Society for its helpful employees, well-kept records, and gorgeous study space. I'm also thankful for my committee members, who took time in the midst of a busy semester to read this dissertation and to make for such an engaging defense. Professor Emerita Cora Lee Kluge deserve special thanks for her thorough and thoughtful edits. Of course, a word of thanks is also due to Professor Mark Loudon, for opening the world of American German-language newspapers to me and advising me throughout this process. All remaining errors are my own.

I would also like to thank my family and friends for their support over the last few years. My daughter, Aurora, deserves special mention here for giving me a deadline to complete my writing. She was born a mere 10 days after I finished my first full draft. Most of all, I would like to thank my wife, Julianna, for supporting me, bearing with me, and letting me use the computer so much these past several months.

Thank you all!

Christopher Stohs

Soli Deo Gloria

Abstract

Wisconsin's Bennett Law of 1889 ignited a fiery debate regarding the merits of bilingual education, the proper degree of immigrant assimilation, and the extent of freedom of religion, conscience, and association. The law drew heavy German-American opposition because it was viewed as an attack on German parochial schools and thus on *Deutschtum*, on German culture itself. With the help of German Americans, Wisconsin's Democratic Party won its biggest victory in 1890 since before the Civil War, leading to the repeal of the Bennett Law in 1891 during the next legislative session. When historians have examined the Bennett Law, they have focused mostly on English-language sources and tended to neglect German-language ones. This dissertation seeks to fill that research gap by examining how Wisconsin's German-language newspapers covered the Bennett Law controversy.

This dissertation reveals how the divisions among German Americans were reflected in their newspaper coverage of the Bennett Law. The Protestant *Germania* described the Bennett Law as an attack on parochial schools, the German language, and German culture and argued against the law employing different genres, such as critical essays and impassioned songs and poems. Taking a different view, the editors of the *Amerikanische Turnzeitung* expressed support for the Bennett Law, viewing it as allowing the state to fulfill its duty to properly educate its citizens. The editors of the Catholic *Columbia* saw in the Bennett Law controversy echoes of the *Kulturkampf* that their fellow Catholics had waged with Bismarck in the German Empire. Newspapers published outside of Milwaukee were drawn into the Bennett controversy, too. Wausau's Republican *Der deutsche Pionier* supported the law, while Madison's Democratic *Wisconsin Botschafter*, the Democratic *Watertown Weltbürger*, and politically independent *Pionier am Wisconsin* opposed it.

Understanding the ways in which German-language newspapers in Wisconsin reacted to the Bennett Law sheds light on how citizens of diverse ethnic backgrounds have, since the founding of the Republic, approached issues such as immigration, assimilation, religious freedom, and the role of government that are of enduring relevance in American society.

Introduction

The Bennett Law, passed without debate by the Republican-led Wisconsin Legislature in April 1889, was a compulsory education law that laid Wisconsin's religious and ethnic fault lines bare and shook the state's political balance of power. Officially named "An Act Concerning the Education and Employment of Children," the Bennett Law was named for its sponsor, Representative Michael Bennett. Most Wisconsinites had no problem with compulsory education per se, but many supporters of private schools believed that the Bennett Law overreached. These included German Lutherans, Scandinavian Lutherans, and German Catholics.¹ They saw the law as an attack on their parental rights, parochial schools, and ethnic cultures, especially the clause that required the core subjects of reading, writing, math, and U.S. history be taught in English. If the state could determine the language of instruction in parochial schools, they reasoned, what would prevent the state from regulating other parts of the curriculum based on that precedent? The law also declared that schools that did not comply with the English-language requirement would not be recognized as schools and that local school boards could decide which schools were in compliance. Moreover, since children would be required to attend a school in their own district, many rural parochial schools would lose out-of-district students.

The issue proved disastrous for Wisconsin Republicans. First, the Democratic ticket nearly swept the April 1890 Milwaukee municipal elections. Then, after months of impassioned campaigning in favor of the Bennett Law, William Dempster Hoard, the former dairyman and incumbent Republican governor, lost the November 1890 gubernatorial election to the Democratic newspaperman and Milwaukee mayor George Wilbur Peck. The Wisconsin

¹ See Robert Carrington Nesbit, William Fletcher Thompson, and State Historical Society of Wisconsin, *Wisconsin: A History* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 354.

Democratic Party saw its greatest victory since the 1850s. The 1890 Democratic wave included the governorship, majorities in the state Senate and Assembly, and all but one congressional seat. While their stance in favor of tariffs sank the Republicans nationally, German-American Catholic and Lutheran opposition to the Bennett Law was a decisive factor in bringing the Democrats to power in Wisconsin in 1890. In 1891, the Democrats made good on their campaign promise and swiftly repealed the Bennett Law.

Despite the role that German Americans played in the controversy, German-language sources have been underused in Bennett Law scholarship. German-language newspapers, for example, have not been given nearly as much attention as English media. When German newspapers are quoted, the quote is often second-hand from a translation by English-language newspapers. Sometimes, the translated quote was published by a paper like the *Milwaukee Sentinel*, which was unsympathetic to anti-Bennett German papers and their arguments. While German-American newspapers have tended to remain unread, English-language texts produced by German Americans have been consulted by historians. There is, for example, an oft-cited English version of Christian Koerner's pamphlet that outlines the prevailing German Protestant views on the Bennett Law.² He uses legal and common-sense arguments to convince readers that the Bennett Law was unnecessary and in need of repeal. Wisconsin's Catholic Bishops also published an English-language document protesting the law.³ Even though such documents exist, German-language newspapers can teach us things about German Americans that English-language sources cannot. The satirical parodies, the heartfelt poetry, the elegant prose, and the sharp rhetoric that pervades German coverage of the Bennett campaign is lost when we only look

² Christian Koerner, "The Bennett Law and the German Protestant Parochial Schools of Wisconsin" (Milwaukee: Germania Publishing Co., 1890).

³ Michael Heiss, Killian C. Flasch, and Frederick Xavier Katzer, "A Protest of the Catholic Bishops of Wisconsin Against the Bennett Law," 1890 .

at English source material. When we see a German-American article published in translation, in a different newspaper altogether, we lose the original context in which the article first appeared. We should also read the German press simply because it was influential; in 1890, tens of thousands more German newspapers were sold in Milwaukee than English ones.⁴

While German-language newspapers have not been used to the extent that they might have been, that is not to say that there has not been good Bennett-Law scholarship already written. The English-language sources are numerous, and they can tell us a great deal about the controversy.

Many accounts of the Bennett Law controversy emphasize its religious dimension. One of the first of these appears at the turn of the twentieth century in a chapter of Bruncken and Hense-Jensen's history of Wisconsin Germans, *Wisconsin's Deutsch Amerikaner*. This two-volume work was written only 10 years after the Bennett Law's repeal and published by the *Germania* publishing company, which had vigorously opposed the law. Bruncken and Hense-Jensen's Bennett Law chapter echoes the stance that the *Germania* took on the law. They argue that Lutherans found their voice in the heat of the Bennett controversy, taking the mantle of German-American leadership from the Turners and Freethinkers.⁵ In an influential article about the Bennett Law published during the First World War, Louise Kellogg emphasizes the role the German-American leadership, especially the clergy, played in leading its followers to the polls.⁶ William Whyte, a friend of Governor Hoard in the state Republican party, penned a 1927 essay recounting the campaign from an insider's perspective. Like Kellogg, he suggests that German

⁴ *American Newspaper Directory* (New York: George P. Rowell & Co., 1891), 755.

⁵ Ernest Bruncken and Wilhelm Hense-Jensen, *Wisconsin's Deutsch-Amerikaner, bis zum Schluss des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, vol. 2 (Milwaukee: Verlag der deutschen Gesellschaft, Druck der Germania, 1902), 168–69.

⁶ Louise Kellogg, "The Bennett Law in Wisconsin," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History*, September 1918, (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin).

Americans were submissive to their religious leaders, but he also emphasizes that Governor Hoard's intransigence was largely to blame for alienating religious German Americans and leading the Republicans to electoral disaster.⁷

Richard Jensen devoted a chapter to the 1890 election in his monograph, *The Winning of The Midwest*. Religion is a decisive factor in Jensen's account, in which he broadly categorizes Wisconsinites into three religious types: pietistic (Protestants with roots in New England), liturgical (Catholic and Lutheran), and "anticlerical freethinker[s]."⁸ One of the best treatments of various religious perspectives on the Bennett Law, particularly the Catholic view, comes from Thomas Hunt. His 1981 article⁹ was republished as a book chapter in 2007 with a co-author, James Carper. The chapter emphasizes the deeply held beliefs of all involved, both individuals and groups, and supports his claims with ample quotes and citations.¹⁰ Like most Bennett Law scholars, Carper and Hunt rely overwhelmingly on English-language source material.

Some scholars place more emphasis on ethnic and linguistic issues when writing about the Bennett Law. For instance, in his "Wisconsin Ethnic Groups and the Election of 1890," Roger Wyman does not take at face value Catholic and Protestant arguments that their religious freedom was at stake. He states: "Again and again, regardless of the official protests against the Bennett Law on the basis of state paternalism, the central concern of Germans involved the language provision."¹¹ In making this argument about the primacy of the language question,

⁷ William Whyte, "The Bennett Law Campaign in Wisconsin," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History*, June 1927, (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin).

⁸ Richard J. Jensen, *Winning of the Midwest*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press., 1971).

⁹ Thomas C. Hunt, "The Bennett Law of 1890: Focus of Conflict Between Church and State in Education," *Journal of Church and State* 23, no. 1 (January 1, 1981): 69–93.

¹⁰ James C. Carper and Thomas C. Hunt. "Chapter 4: The Bennett Law." *Dissenting Tradition in American Education*. 77-119. n.p.: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2007. *Education Research Complete*.

¹¹ Roger E. Wyman, "Wisconsin Ethnic Groups and the Election of 1890," ed. William Converse Haygood and William C. Marten, *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 51, no. 4 (1968): 269–93.

Wyman draws on a master thesis by Janet Johnston, which was originally written in 1966¹² and published in nearly identical form in 2011.¹³ Neither Wyman nor Johnston make much use of German-language source material, instead relying on English-language primary and secondary sources. Wyman cites more secondary sources and letters than Johnston before getting to his analysis of the vote. Johnston cites both firsthand and secondhand sources, especially favoring the English-language *Milwaukee Journal* and *Milwaukee Sentinel*.

While most accounts of the Bennett Law controversy draw exclusively on English sources, some scholars have cited German sources. Narrating the Bennett controversy in 1939 from the perspective of various American Lutheran synods who generally opposed the law, Walter Beck refers to official church documents written in German and supplements these with English-language source material.¹⁴ August Stellhorn's 1963 book on the history of parochial schools was focused solely on the Missouri-Synod Lutheran school system. In his chapter on the Bennett Law, Stellhorn relies heavily on Beck at times, but also quotes German-language synodical documents at length to illustrate the Missouri Synod's¹⁵ anti-Bennett Law position.¹⁶ When Wayne Schmidt discusses the Wisconsin Synod's opposition to the Bennett Law in the second volume of his dissertation, he cites German-language synodical documents, including the

¹² Janet Carole Wegner (Johnston), "The Bennett Law Controversy in Wisconsin, 1889-1891; a Study of the Problem of 'Americanization' in the Immigrant Church and Its Relation to the History of Church and State in the United States" (Thesis (A.M.), Brown University, 1966).

¹³ Janet W. Johnston, *The Bennett Law Controversy in Wisconsin: A Study of Americanization Among Immigrant Populations* (Casa Grande, Ariz.: Signal Peak Press, 2011).

¹⁴ Walter Herman Beck, *Lutheran Elementary Schools in the United States: A History of the Development of Parochial Schools and Synodical Educational Policies and Programs* (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1939, 1965), 225–44.

¹⁵ At this time, what is today known as the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod was known as the *die Deutsche-Evangelisch-Lutherische Synode von Missouri, Ohio und andern Staaten*. For brevity, I refer to this church body as the Missouri Synod in this dissertation.

¹⁶ A.C. Stellhorn, *Schools of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod*. (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Pub. House, 1963), 235–47.

Wisconsin Synod's official school journal.¹⁷ However, neither Beck, nor Stellhorn, nor Schmidt make use of German-American newspapers. The two-volume dissertation by Robert Ulrich from 1965 does, however, and is far and away the lengthiest treatment of the Bennett Law. Notably, Ulrich discusses the importance to many German Americans of *Deutschtum* (Germandom).¹⁸ While Ulrich cites more German-language sources than most and does sometimes reference German newspapers like the *Germania*, he primarily relies upon the English press and other English-language material. His chapters about the Bennett Law campaign itself rarely include references to German sources.

To understand the Bennett controversy better, we need to understand Wisconsin's German Americans and the oft-contradictory narratives they told about the Bennett Law in their native language. Thus, before examining the German-American press and its Bennett Law coverage in subsequent chapters, the first chapter of this dissertation will situate this coverage within its historical context. After a brief overview of Wisconsin Germans' immigration history, the chapter will turn its attention to the three most prominent religious and cultural groups among German Americans: the Catholics, Lutherans, and revolutionary liberals. Each of these groups founded its own schools with varying degrees of success, and each of these groups was proud of its German language and culture. For differing reasons, each was also suspicious of state interference in its affairs, the Catholics because of the *Kulturkampf*, the Lutherans on account of the Prussian Union, and the liberals for the sake of the failed 1848 revolution. By learning about these groups' attitudes towards public and private schooling, and towards the

¹⁷ Wayne E. Schmidt, "Wisconsin Synod Lutheran Parochial Schools : An Overview of the Years 1850-1890" (1986).

¹⁸ Robert J. Ulrich, "The Bennett Law of 1889: Education and Politics in Wisconsin." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1965.

state, we will better be able to understand the context of their arguments for or against the Bennett Law.

Having established the historical context, the dissertation will then shift in focus to an examination of three newspapers generally representative of the three main religious identities claimed by Wisconsin's German Americans. These are the Protestant *Germania*, the Catholic *Columbia*, and the Freethinking Turner paper, the *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*. All three papers were weeklies at the beginning of 1889, but the *Germania* started publishing on a semi-weekly basis late in the year. These chapters focus on the issues published between April 1889, when the Bennett Law passed, and November 1890, when the Democrats swept into office, assuring the law's repeal. Every available issue in that time period was examined.¹⁹ The Bennett Law was by no means the only issue of importance for those newspapers, but over that time period they did indeed publish a great deal of material pertaining to the Bennett Law itself as well as other topics related to education. Each newspaper framed the Bennett Law controversy in its own way, using all manner of articles, songs, poems, headlines, and pictures to convey its message.

The second chapter will deal with the *Germania*, one of the giants of the Bennett controversy.²⁰ Not only did it have the biggest circulation of any newspaper in Wisconsin, but its staff was intimately involved with the campaign to repeal the Bennett Law. Already up in arms about another measure, the Pond Bill, which they perceived to be establishing state authority over parochial schools, the *Germania* condemned the Bennett Law swiftly after its passage. The

¹⁹ There are a few notable gaps in the record for the *Columbia* which the author acquired from the Wisconsin Historical Society. The author tried other Wisconsin newspaper databases, the Milwaukee Public Library, and the Library of Congress, but could not find additional copies of the *Columbia* from the time period under examination. One major gap was March 13, 1890, which would have likely contained an important protest from the Wisconsin bishops. Also, May 1 was only issue from May 1890 that this author could get. Unfortunately, the issues immediately surrounding the 1890 election are also missing, namely October 30 and November 6. Despite these gaps, a mountain of *Columbia* Bennett coverage is still extant.

²⁰ An earlier version of this chapter appeared in the 2017 edition of the *Yearbook for German-American Studies* under the title "Defending *Deutschum*: The *Germania*'s Bennett Law Coverage."

Bennett Law, they believed, was an assault on freedom of religion, freedom of conscience, and parental rights. While arguing against the Bennett Law on the basis of constitutional and natural law, the *Germania* also polemicized against Hoard and Bennett Law supporters, calling them and the law nativist. The *Germania* saw itself as defending *Deutschtum*, German language and culture, when they defended parochial schools.²¹ Indeed, for the editors at the *Germania*, parochial schools were the very bulwark of German culture in America, the *sine qua non* without which future generations would give up German and even apostatize. For them, there was no real separation between language, culture, and religion; all were inseparably bound together. So important was this issue to the *Germania's* editors that they broke with the Republican Party, which they had hitherto supported, and instead lent their considerable influence to the Democratic Party and its gubernatorial candidate, George Peck. When all was said and done, the Republicans defeated, and the Bennett Law condemned to a swift demise, the *Germania* relished its victory won for German Protestants, who they believed had wrested the mantle of German-American leadership from the *Freisinnige*, or German liberals.

German anti-clerical liberals found their voice in the pages of publications such as the *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, the subject of the third chapter. The *Turnzeitung* was the official newspaper of the North American Turner Association. Its editor, Hermann Boppe, also edited a newspaper for Freethinkers, *Freidenker*. His freethinking outlook on life strongly influenced his coverage of the Bennett controversy. The *Turnzeitung* did not cover the Bennett Law as extensively as the *Germania*, particularly in the early stages of the controversy, but its staff was no less interested in educational questions. In 1889, the *Turnzeitung* published a number of articles attacking parochial schools and the “secular” state schools for imparting an outdated

²¹ As will be shown in the *Germania* chapter, the concept of *Deutschtum* as used by German-American minorities was not the same as its usage by majority German nationalists in Europe.

religious worldview to impressionable young minds. The goal of education, according to the *Turnzeitung*, was to raise up citizens who were able to think for themselves and practice the virtues of self-rule necessary for life in a Republic. The Republic's right to an educated citizenry and the student's right to membership in society at large trumped the parent's right to determine his child's education. If the *Turnzeitung* editors were to have their way, then public education would be truly secular, and religious schools would slowly close down as they grew more irrelevant. When it became clear in early 1890 that the Bennett Law would become a political issue with ramifications for state authority in educational matters, the *Turnzeitung* started arguing in favor of it. At the same time, the editors continued their polemic fusillade against parochial schools, orthodox Lutherans, and, most especially, the Catholic Church.

In the fourth chapter, this dissertation will take up the *Columbia*, which opposed the Bennett Law from a conservative Catholic perspective. Replete with endorsements from Catholic bishops, the *Columbia* claimed to be the official newspaper of German Catholics in the old Northwest. Later, after receiving endorsements from bishops outside of Wisconsin, the *Columbia* asserted that it was a national Catholic newspaper. Like the *Germania*, the *Columbia* opposed the Bennett Law for the duration of the controversy. Defending *Deutschtum* was still a concern for the *Columbia's* German editors, but not nearly so much as for those at the *Germania*. The *Columbia* primarily focused its arguments on defending parental rights and parochial schools from state interference. When Wisconsin's Catholic bishops issued their official protest against the Bennett Law in March 1890, nearly a year after the law was passed, they explicitly did not protest the English-language requirement. While opposing state interference in their parochial schools, the *Columbia* also had to deal with internecine Catholic controversies. Generally speaking, Irish Catholics were more comfortable assimilating into American culture than

German Catholics. This assimilation question directly affected the issue of the typically ethnic parochial schools, which were more strongly supported by German- and Polish-American Catholics than Irish-American Catholics. Thus, the *Columbia* found itself fighting something of a two-front war during the Bennett controversy, defending parochial schools against attacks from the state as well as from other Catholics like Archbishop Ireland of St. Paul, Minnesota, whose comments on education appeared to undermine the whole parochial school project. To defend their schools, the *Columbia* long urged organization on the part of Catholics to match the organization of their Protestant countrymen. This organization eventually materialized and paid off. In November 1890, the *Columbia* reveled in its successful defense of parental rights against the Republican Hoard-Rublelee clique, which referred to Governor Hoard and Horace Rublee, editor of the Republican-leaning *Milwaukee Sentinel*.

After examining the above three newspapers in detail, the focus of this dissertation shifts to an overview of six other Wisconsin newspapers and their coverage of the Bennett Law in the fifth and sixth chapters. Of these, two are English-language newspapers, and four are German-language newspapers. The English-language papers, the Republican *Milwaukee Sentinel* and Democratic *Milwaukee Journal*, have often been cited by historians researching the Bennett Law, but are analyzed briefly in the fifth chapter to provide a fuller context for the German-American newspapers that make up the primary focus of this study. The four German-American newspapers of the sixth chapter have been selected for their ideological and geographical variety. They include newspapers from Madison, Watertown, Wausau, and Sauk City. Two of them, the *Watertown Weltbürger*, from Watertown, and the *Wisconsin Botschafter*, from Madison, were both explicitly Democratic and accordingly opposed the Bennett Law. The *Wisconsin Pionier*, published in Wausau, was edited by a staunch Republican who defended the Bennett Law to his

readers. The *Pionier am Wisconsin* of Sauk City was independent and run by a religiously agnostic editor, but the *Pionier* also opposed the Bennett Law. Both the *Weltbürger* and *Pionier am Wisconsin* were among the oldest German-language newspapers in the state, run by men belonging to the Forty-Eighter generation. Though Forty-Eighters generally have a liberal reputation, as these two editors show, that does not mean that they were necessarily anticlerical like Boppe of the *Turnzeitung*.

Through this investigation of German press coverage of the Bennett Law controversy, I hope in this dissertation to give a more nuanced perspective on German-American reactions to the Bennett Law than has to this point been the case. We know definitively from analyses of the election results that German Americans swung the vote in favor of Democrats in 1890.²² These newspapers can, to a certain extent, help us to understand some of the reasons for that political sea change. One of the main reasons why these newspapers opposed the Bennett Law was a sense that behind the measure was a nativist attack on German culture. Other reasons for opposition had to do with German-American religious commitments. As the *Columbia* and *Germania* coverage indicates, Lutherans and Catholics were concerned that the Bennett Law would set a precedent for state interference in their parochial schools. The anticlerical liberal readers of the *Turnzeitung* disagreed. They were convinced that the Bennett Law was necessary to ensure that the coming generation of Americans would be able to fulfill the duties of a free citizenry. Other Germans had partisan reasons for supporting or opposing the Bennett Law. German-American Republicans, when not convinced to jump ship by papers like the *Germania*, thought that the Bennett Law could be amended to do away with its offensive portions. German-American Democrats also viewed the issue with a partisan lens. They saw the Democratic party

²² See Wyman, "Wisconsin Ethnic Groups and the Election of 1890," 281-285, and Robert Booth Fowler, *Wisconsin Votes: An Electoral History* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 70-72.

as the party of personal freedom, and the Republican party as the party of paternalism. The Bennett Law, viewed in this light, was just another example of Republicans trying to control the lives of everyday citizens. German-American Democrats viewed the 1890 wave not just as a victory for parental rights, freedom of conscience, or German culture, but as a springboard for the 1892 presidential election.

The concluding chapter will discuss how these oft-forgotten newspapers can offer us both a window into the past and a mirror to the present. While the Bennett Law is long gone, the issues that it raises, and the arguments for and against them, are perennial to American history and human life. There will always be differences of opinion in American public life over the foreign-language issue, assimilation, education, church-state relations, and reliability of news sources. The Bennett Law controversy can tell us something about how these questions have been answered in the past and can perhaps give us new ways of understanding their manifestations in the present.

Chapter 1: Wisconsin's German Americans and their Schools

German Americans had been living in Wisconsin for about fifty years by the time of the Bennett Law controversy. German immigrants coming to Wisconsin in the 1840s and 1850s tended to go first to New York; follow the Hudson River northwards; take the Erie canal; and finally sail across the Great Lakes to Milwaukee or Chicago. By the 1890s, about 50% of Milwaukee was German-born or had German ancestry. High concentrations of German immigrants also settled along the lakeshore counties, from Milwaukee County up to northern Manitowoc county. From the lakeshore, they tended to spread inland, with the highest concentrations in the southeastern portion of the state. The best farmland, in the south of the state, had been already taken by the Yankees, largely American-born New Englanders and New Yorkers. Thus, the Germans often had to clear forest land for their farms.

Despite arriving in Wisconsin later than the Yankees, German Americans prospered economically. During the Civil War, for instance, Germans succeeded at supplying Union soldiers with a variety of products. Tanners and leatherworkers trained in Germany found a ready market for the belts, boots, and other such necessities.¹ German beer barons made inroads among other ethnic groups during the Civil War as liquor sales languished on account of wartime taxes.² Milwaukee's brewers also took advantage of their proximity to the sizeable Chicago market and improvements in refrigeration technology, becoming some of the first brewers in the country to export beer outside of their home market. They were so successful in this, and other ventures, that by 1890, malting and brewing ranked as the third largest industry in Wisconsin.³ German farmers also did well in Wisconsin. Yankees and Irish tended to move on when

¹ Nesbit, Thompson, and State Historical Society of Wisconsin, *Wisconsin*, 277.

² *Ibid.*, 278.

³ *Ibid.*, 333.

something new beckoned, but the Germans tended to stay put and steadily increase their holdings and profits.⁴⁵

This general economic prosperity among German Americans never really translated into a commensurate level of political power. Wisconsin's German Americans formed neither a cohesive cultural whole nor a consistent voting bloc. They brought their internal divisions over the sea with them. In the nineteenth century, German-speaking Europe was divided religiously, culturally, politically, and linguistically, and throughout the century, emigrants came from all regions of Germany to Wisconsin. The three peaks of German immigration to the United States can broadly be characterized by their different regions of origin.⁶ Before the Civil War, many Germans emigrated from southwestern Germany; between 1865 and 1875, another wave came largely from northwestern Germany; and from 1880 until 1890, most immigrants arrived from northeastern Germany. Immigrants from the northeastern and northwestern German provinces tended to be Lutheran while immigrants from southeastern German provinces tended to be Catholic. By 1890, about a third of Wisconsin's population was either first- or second-generation German American. Because Germans immigrated to Wisconsin in such large numbers, they were able to form cohesive communities and maintain their distinct religious, cultural, and linguistic boundaries longer than immigrant groups that came in lesser numbers and thus assimilated more quickly.

Among Wisconsin's German Americans, Catholics, Lutherans, and revolutionary liberals formed the most influential cultural sub-groups, each with distinctive political leanings. From the antebellum years and throughout the nineteenth century, German Catholics tended to vote for

⁴ Richard H Zeitlin, *Germans in Wisconsin* (Madison, Wis.: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 2000), 27.

⁵ Nesbit, Thompson, and State Historical Society of Wisconsin, *Wisconsin*, 164.

⁶ Zeitlin, *Germans in Wisconsin*, 4.

Democrats. German Lutheran immigrants also shared support for the Democratic Party with German Catholics, at least initially.⁷ After the failed 1848 revolution in Germany, many liberal political refugees, the so-called Forty-Eighters, fled to Wisconsin. Often educated, anticlerical, and politically engaged, this relatively small minority among German immigrants frequently clashed with members of the larger, more conservative German immigrant groups. Forty-Eighters generally switched their allegiance to the Republican Party in the 1850s.⁸ In the years following the Civil War, Lutherans, particularly those living near Catholics, increasingly voted Republican. When Lutherans lived apart from Catholics, though, they still voted Democrat.⁹ Thus, at the time of the Bennett controversy, those opposing the Bennett Law tried to convince Republican Lutherans to change their party allegiance. These would probably have been more urban, like the 100,000 subscribers of the *Germania*, the Republican-leaning, Protestant newspaper of Milwaukee. Rural Lutherans and rural Catholics, by contrast, voted almost identically before the Bennett controversy in 1888.¹⁰

Wisconsin's German Americans across the religious and political spectrum subscribed to newspapers as the leading source of news and information in the nineteenth century. By 1889, the press had long been influential among German Americans. As Kathleen Conzen notes in her account of antebellum Milwaukee, "The press played a crucial role in German community formation, helping to arouse a sense of united *Deutschtum* and reflecting and fomenting its divisions."¹¹ Because so many Forty-Eighters were educated and politically engaged, they had an outsized influence on the German-American press soon after their arrival. Catholics and

⁷ Nesbit, Thompson, and State Historical Society of Wisconsin, *Wisconsin*, 351.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 351.

⁹ La Vern J. Rippley, *The Immigrant Experience in Wisconsin*, The Immigrant Heritage of America Series (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985), 54.

¹⁰ Jensen, *Winning of the Midwest*, 143.

¹¹ Kathleen Neils Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee 1836-1860: Accommodation and Community in a Frontier City* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), 184.

Lutherans also founded newspapers to provide platforms for their religious and political views. Bolstered by the massive influx of German immigrants in prior decades, Wisconsin's diverse German press flourished at the start of the 1890s as the Bennett Law issue came to the fore. At that time, newspapers catering to Catholics and Lutherans had higher circulations than liberal-leaning ones.¹² Republican and Democratic newspapers written in the German language were also well-established in Wisconsin by then; Socialists also found readers for their newspapers.

While religiously and politically differentiated, these German-American groups shared a commitment to education, especially to private education. In Wisconsin in 1893, there were 217,277 pupils between the ages of 7 and 13 attending public schools.¹³ Also in 1893, there were 279 Catholic schools with 44,669 pupils, 149 Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran schools with over 9,000 pupils, 107 Lutheran Missouri Synod schools with about 8,500 pupils, and 7 other Lutheran synods, including Scandinavian ones, with 63 schools and 2,464 pupils.¹⁴ Maintaining their German language and culture was one reason that German immigrants established their own schools. Another was that for the pioneers, at least, there were no schools to begin with, public or private. While the Forty-Eighters established private schools initially, they grew to embrace public schooling more than their Catholic and Lutheran countrymen, who, while desiring to pass on their linguistic and cultural heritage, also desired religious instruction for their children. In founding their own schools, the Catholics and Lutherans were also seeking to keep their children apart from the Protestant atmosphere of the public school system.¹⁵

¹² See Milwaukee circulation statistics in *American Newspaper Directory*, 755.

¹³ Oliver Wells, "Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of the State of Wisconsin for the Two Years Ending June 30, 1894," (Madison, WI: Democrat Printing Company, State Printer, 1894), 3.

¹⁴ Nesbit, Thompson, and State Historical Society of Wisconsin, *Wisconsin*, 354.

¹⁵ Bruncken and Hense-Jensen, *Wisconsin's Deutsch-Amerikaner, bis zum Schluss des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, 1902, 2:202–3.

Public Schools

When Wisconsin became a state in 1848, delegates from both urban and rural areas supported a constitutional provision for free, state-funded, public schools. This law turned out to be more aspirational than effectual; many years would pass until public schools throughout the state were appropriately funded. Money raised for schools by land sales often did not make it to the schools, and the school funds would sometimes flow to friends of state commissioners.¹⁶ Before a tax increase in 1885, the state usually spent no more than fifty cents on education per child.¹⁷ In addition to variable funding from school district to school district, there were also varying rates of school attendance, which, over time, prompted calls for statewide compulsory education laws.

Debates over compulsory education and its enforcement were long-term issues in Wisconsin. Attendance in rural schools tended to lag behind schools located in cities and towns, and many Wisconsin citizens were suspicious of such laws. As a state superintendent put it in 1874, “I cannot help thinking that there is in a compulsory school law something essentially opposed to the genius of our free institutions—something essentially un-American.”¹⁸ Even when these laws were passed, as in 1879, they were a dead letter in many precincts.¹⁹ For one thing, many children were needed on the farm to help with labor there. For another, schools were difficult to get to, especially in the country where the roads were often bad and schools far away. Another factor leading to low attendance in rural areas was lax enforcement of these laws. Schools were governed at the local level and local officials did not always wish to report their

¹⁶ Lloyd P Jorgenson, *The Founding of Public Education in Wisconsin* (Madison, WI: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1956), 108.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 110.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 139.

¹⁹ Conrad E Patzer, Wisconsin, and Department of Public Instruction, *Public Education in Wisconsin* (Madison, WI: State Superintendent, 1925), 75.

neighbors for violating such laws. While the 1903 truancy law helped increase attendance somewhat in cities and towns, residents of rural areas continued to be resistant to such measures.²⁰ Many families would not or could not spare their children because of work around the house and farm. Nevertheless, at least in theory, education was held in high regard among Wisconsinites.

In *The Founding of Public Education in Wisconsin*, Lloyd Jorgenson describes how important education was to Americans, at least in theory. Since the early nineteenth century, free education had been seen as a “bulwark of Republican institutions” that “would transform the world.”²¹ The most common argument in favor of public education in eastern states was that it “would develop in the masses a respect for property rights.”²² There was also a widespread belief among educators that universal education could be a means of preventing another civil war, that “It was the lack of free public schools that had plunged the South into this tragic struggle.”²³ Education, even in elementary subjects, was thought to have beneficial effects on a child’s character: “If a pupil would attend to his reading and writing and arithmetic, he would in due course of time become a just and upright man.”²⁴

The three R’s were not considered sufficient by all; many called for public schools to engage in explicit moral instruction:

If only it included the proper moral training, education would indeed remake the world. This concept of education as a moral undertaking is an important key to an understanding of educational thought in nineteenth-century America. It was this, perhaps more than anything else, that gave the public school movement its crusading, evangelistic nature. Indeed, it was more than a movement. It was the Cause, the Common School Awakening, the Great Revival. The American faith in education, Dean Roscoe Pound once remarked, can be compared only to the medieval faith in religion. ‘I have long been accustomed to

²⁰ Ibid., 75.

²¹ Jorgenson, *The Founding of Public Education in Wisconsin*, 112–13.

²² Ibid., 113.

²³ Ibid., 114.

²⁴ Ibid., 116.

look at this great movement of education as a part of the Providence of God,' explained Horace Mann, 'by which the human race is to be redeemed.'²⁵

Such a messianic mission, it was believed, could not be accomplished in a strictly secular school because teaching morality ultimately relied on teaching religion. As John McMynn, Superintendent of Public Instruction, first president of the Wisconsin Teacher's Association, and regent of the University of Wisconsin put it, "The mission of teachers, [...] [is] in large part a Christianizing one."²⁶ While Christian, McMynn did not believe that such instruction should be sectarian. In practice, this meant that there should be bible readings, but that there could be no sectarian exegesis.

This Christianizing effort was decidedly anti-Catholic. Indeed, Protestants of the day looked with suspicion on Catholics, and many did not even consider them to be Christian:

...consciously or unconsciously, they harbored the mental reservation that the Catholic Church was not a part of the Christian community. Its fundamental truths were not truths at all, but superstitions. It was the Christian religion that was to be taught in the schools, not popish fabrications.²⁷

By submitting to Rome and the Church, Catholics were thought to be enemies of American democracy. As Steven Jones explains in his *Religious Schooling in America*, "Protestants of all denominations could rally behind the banner of public education not just because it avoided denominational hot buttons, but also because it united them against a common enemy, Rome."²⁸ Jones argues that the Protestant nature of public schools eased the "cognitive dissonance" felt by religious groups that would not have wanted the education of their children to be purely secular.²⁹ Unlike today's avowedly secular public schools, nineteenth-century public schools

²⁵ Ibid., 117–18.

²⁶ Ibid., 119.

²⁷ Ibid., 122.

²⁸ Steven L Jones, *Religious Schooling in America: Private Education and Public Life* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2008), 4.

²⁹ Ibid., 21.

“were seen by many as contributing to, rather than undermining, Protestant culture in America.”³⁰

Protestant clergy were often in the vanguard of this project, themselves teaching in the common schools. Such was the cultural expectation that a preacher also teach, that parochial schools were sometimes criticized because ministers who taught in them were not fulfilling their supposed duty to teach in public schools.³¹ Many school superintendents at all levels of government were Protestant ministers,³² and Protestant clergy often served on local school boards.³³ As Jorgenson puts it, “The entire educational enterprise was therefore permeated by the religious influence. Sessions of teachers’ conventions were opened and closed with the singing of the doxology, and the order of business at school picnics included addresses by ministers.”³⁴ This Protestant religiosity of public schools was not welcomed by all Wisconsinites.

An unlikely alliance between Freethinkers and Catholics ended up pushing bible readings out of Wisconsin schools. Freethinkers did not want religion in the public schools at all. Catholics objected to the fact that the Protestant bible, the King James, was being used and wanted the option of using their own bible, the Douay, with Catholic students. In 1889, the Wisconsin Supreme Court decided the Edgerton Bible case in favor of the Catholics and Freethinkers, theoretically removing Bible readings from Wisconsin public schools. Nevertheless, the Protestant influence on Wisconsin public education was deeply imprinted on teachers.

³⁰ Ibid., 21.

³¹ Jorgenson, *The Founding of Public Education in Wisconsin*, 122.

³² Ibid., 123.

³³ Nesbit, Thompson, and State Historical Society of Wisconsin, *Wisconsin*, 230.

³⁴ Jorgenson, *The Founding of Public Education in Wisconsin*, 124.

Teaching, even by ministers, had something of a two-sided reputation. On the one hand, teaching was considered to be the fulfillment of a divine calling, to shape the religious and moral character of the next generation.³⁵ On the other hand, teachers were not usually paid well. Indeed, “Despite this lack of social and financial recognition—or possibly because of it sometimes—many of those engaged in teaching proclaimed that it was, with the possible exception of the ministry, the noblest work in which mortals could engage.”³⁶ Teaching was seen by many as a stepping stone to another career for men, or a step up from domestic service for young women. Thus, despite the supposed missionary nature of the job, turnover was high.³⁷ Women formed the majority of teachers in the public schools. An exception to this in Wisconsin was in heavily German Ozaukee county, where more men were teachers. These male teachers, common in German communities, were also farmers, who, being bound to the land, stayed for many more years than their more deracinated countrymen. These long-tenured men were paid better than teachers in other counties, who tended to be young women.³⁸ Teaching was viewed as a calling in private schools as well, and with the important exception of Catholic nuns, German-American immigrants of all confessions tended to believe that men ought to answer the call to be a teacher.

Catholic Schools

Locked out of the public school funds by dominant Protestants, many Catholic parents built their own schools so that they could educate their children in accord with their religious beliefs. Catholics founded more private schools than any other religious group in the United States. Apart from the religion classes, Catholic schools at the time of the Bennett controversy

³⁵ Ibid., 127–28.

³⁶ Ibid., 127.

³⁷ Ibid., 137.

³⁸ Ibid., 149.

taught the same subjects as those taught in public schools, and always included English.³⁹ Across the country, different bishops encouraged Catholic parochial schools to differing degrees. By 1884, supporters of parochial schools were ascendant, and the American bishops meeting in Baltimore decreed that Catholic parents were obliged to send their children to Catholic schools.⁴⁰ Despite this decree, only about half of Catholic parents actually sent their children to parochial schools. Support for these schools varied according to Catholic ethnic group. Some, like the Italians, were generally less supportive of parochial education, while others, like the Germans and Poles, were more supportive of it.⁴¹ Germans, settling largely in the Midwest, supported parochial schools more than other Catholic ethnic groups in the United States:

They built their schools quickly with no complaint about cost. Funds were raised through pew rentals, voluntary donations, and funds received from mission societies in Europe. To provide continuing support, many German parishes organized school societies that had the responsibility of raising additional funds. German missionary priests working in America traveled to Europe to convince superiors of religious orders to send a few sisters to the Midwest to teach in the parish schools. By the 1860s, it was hard to find a German Catholic parish without a thriving school. It was an altogether remarkable achievement.⁴²

Such Germans dominated the Catholic hierarchy of the state of Wisconsin. Just as in other parts of the country, Wisconsin's German-American Catholics founded more private schools than other groups that immigrated to the state.

These Catholic schools were run by religious teaching orders, priests, and lay teachers. In the 1870s and 1880s, Wisconsin Catholic schools became the beneficiaries of Bismarck's *Kulturkampf* as Catholic religious orders fled Germany for the religious freedom of America.⁴³ Since all Catholic orders except for those involved with nursing were banned, there was soon a

³⁹ See Zeininger, 661 and Walch, *Parish School*, 74.

⁴⁰ Timothy Walch, *Parish School: American Catholic Parochial Education from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1996), 32.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 76–77.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 51.

⁴³ Juliane Jacobi-Dittrich, "*Deutsche*" *Schulen in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika: histor.-vergleichende Studie zum Unterrichtswesen im Mittleren Westen (Wisconsin 1840-1900)*. (München: Minerva-Publ., 1988), 139.

high rate of immigration among the teaching orders, particularly of nuns. Many of these nuns made their way to America, where they ran parochial schools throughout the Midwest, in both urban and rural areas.⁴⁴ Around the time of the Bennett Law controversy, most Catholic schools in Wisconsin were taught by members of such orders.⁴⁵ Still, because of the desire for single-sex education, male Catholic lay teachers, and sometimes priests, were often called on to teach boys. Lay teachers played an important role in staffing Catholic schools, especially up through the mid-nineteenth century.⁴⁶ Though more nuns were teaching by the end of the century, in the early 1890s, nearly 90 Catholic men attended the Catholic Normal School of the Holy Family and Pio Nono College in St. Francis, just south of Milwaukee.⁴⁷ Teacher training for the nuns, on the other hand, was done in convents.⁴⁸

Lutheran Schools

Like their Catholic countrymen, German-American Lutherans also maintained their own parochial schools. These German-Lutheran immigrants founded schools and churches at the same time to pass their faith, language, and culture on to their children. Establishing and maintaining Lutheran schools was an essential aspect of practicing Lutheranism. August Stelhorn even assures us in his history of Missouri Synod Lutheran parochial schools that the foundation of a school “often preceded the founding of a congregation.”⁴⁹ The founders of the Missouri Synod were particularly wary of state interference in their faith because of what they had experienced in Prussia and Saxony, where each respective government had been forcibly

⁴⁴ Henry Geitz et al., *German Influences on Education in the United States to 1917* (Washington, D.C.; Cambridge; New York: German Historical Institute ; Cambridge University Press, 2006), 124.

⁴⁵ Zeininger, “Catholic Schools and Institutions,” 660.

⁴⁶ Richard M Jacobs, “U.S. Catholic Schools and the Religious Who Served in Them: Contributions in the 18th and 19th Centuries,” *Journal of Catholic Education* 1, no. 4 (June 1, 1998): 367.

⁴⁷ Zeininger, “Catholic Schools and Institutions,” 672.

⁴⁸ Jacobi-Dittrich, “*Deutsche*” *Schulen in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika*, 186.

⁴⁹ Stelhorn, *Schools of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod.*, 92.

unifying the Reformed and Lutheran churches. These lingering memories of the forced union of churches may partially explain some of the vehemence with which Missouri-Synod Lutherans and Lutherans like them fought the Bennett Law.⁵⁰

In the early days, Lutheran schools were taught by pastors as a rule, but as time wore on, more and more lay teachers, mostly men, were hired by congregations to teach.⁵¹ By 1890–1891, there were 75 lay teachers in Wisconsin’s parochial schools compared to 58 pastors.⁵² Rural schools tended to have more pastors teaching in the parochial schools than urban schools, who could more easily afford a separate teacher.⁵³ Beck asserts that the rural Lutheran schools compared favorably with the rural public schools, saying that they were, “as a rule, quite superior to them.”⁵⁴ As with Catholic parochial schools, many Lutheran schools by the time of the Bennett controversy were increasingly using public-school textbooks in addition to their own materials.⁵⁵ Missouri Synod teachers were trained at a synodical normal school in nearby Addison, Illinois. Despite this normal school and the zeal with which the synod planted schools, even through the First World War there was “a continual dearth of men for both church and school.”⁵⁶ Even understaffed, parochial schools remained an important part of most synodical congregations.

⁵⁰ Schmidt, “Wisconsin Synod Lutheran Parochial Schools,” 310-311.

⁵¹ Stellhorn, *Schools of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod.*, 93.

⁵² Beck, *Lutheran Elementary Schools in the United States: A History of the Development of Parochial Schools and Synodical Educational Policies and Programs*, 180.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 180.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 181.

⁵⁵ Bettina Goldberg, “Our Fathers’ Faith, Our Children’s Language: Cultural Change in Milwaukee’s German Evangelical Lutheran Congregations of the Missouri Synod, 1850-1930” (Berlin: John F. Kennedy-Institut für Nordamerikastudien, Abteilung für Geschichte, 1990), 12.

⁵⁶ Beck, *Lutheran Elementary Schools in the United States: A History of the Development of Parochial Schools and Synodical Educational Policies and Programs*, 185.

Forty-Eighter Schools

Like Catholic and Lutheran German Americans, liberal German Americans founded their own private schools, too. Unlike Catholics and Lutherans, liberal German Americans did not found their schools for religious reasons, but because they found the public schools to be inadequate.⁵⁷ These German-trained intellectuals were critical of what they deemed the mechanical pedagogical methods of public schools, favoring instead more lively methods that fostered independent thought.⁵⁸ Had they found adequate public schools, they would have made use of them because “They held it to be not only the right but the duty of a republican government to provide free secular schooling for future citizens.” The German-American liberals were among the first to introduce gymnastics, skilled manual work for boys, and kindergartens.⁵⁹ The German-English Academy was perhaps the most prominent of Milwaukee’s secular German schools. Founded in 1851, for 23 years the school was led by Peter Engelmann, whose teaching methods also found their way into Milwaukee’s public schools. Students were to learn first from concrete, tactile things and then move onto more abstract concepts.⁶⁰

In the mid-1860s, the secular German private schools that they founded were at their height, with about 1000 students, but this number was even then much smaller than the 3000 students attending parochial schools or the 9000 attending public schools in Milwaukee.⁶¹ As the century wore on, most of these had closed down or merged with English-language private schools, especially since the public schools offered German classes and had taken on some of

⁵⁷ Geitz et al., *German Influences on Education in the United States to 1917*, 181.

⁵⁸ Ernest Bruncken and Wilhelm Hense-Jensen, *Wisconsin’s Deutsch-Amerikaner, bis zum Schluss des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, vol. 1 (Milwaukee: Verlag der deutschen Gesellschaft, Druck der Germania, 1900), 136.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 1:138.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 1:137.

⁶¹ Geitz et al., *German Influences on Education in the United States to 1917*, 183.

their methods.⁶² The Lutheran and Catholic parochial schools, on the other hand, were quite strong at the turn of the century, even though the public schools had made improvements since pioneer days.⁶³

Wisconsin's German Americans thus had a vested interest in the outcome of the Bennett Law controversy. Germans had been a part of the state since the territorial days, and by the 1890s had established a number of enduring institutions, both sacred and secular. The Bennett Law ignited a debate about education and church-state relations that touched these institutions, the church and school, which were so essential to German-American identity. This debate no doubt played out among people in cities and towns throughout the state, but we have the most thorough record of this debate from the German-language press. As in today's world, interpretations of events varied widely depending on each publication's editorial slant. Wisconsin's German newspapers reveal a picture of the Bennett controversy as diverse as Wisconsin's German Americans.

⁶² An exception to this was the German-English Academy of Milwaukee. Under pressure during World War I, the school changed its name to the University School of Milwaukee, the name it bears to this day.

⁶³ Bruncken and Hense-Jensen, *Wisconsin's Deutsch-Amerikaner, bis zum Schluss des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, 1902, 2:203.

Chapter 2: Defending *Deutschtum*, the *Germania*'s Bennett Law Coverage

The *Germania* was founded in 1873 by German-American Protestants of Milwaukee who did not see their views represented by the Catholic *Seebote* or the various Forty-Eighter papers.¹ The *Germania* was one of the most influential newspapers to cover the Bennett Law in any language. On its header, it boasted the widest circulation of any German weekly. According to the 1891 edition of the *American Newspaper Directory*, the *Germania* had between 75,000 and 100,000 weekly subscribers, head and shoulders above its German- and English-language Wisconsin rivals.² By October 1889, the *Germania* had become popular enough to warrant two weekly editions. The owner, George Brumder, added a daily edition during the Bennett controversy.³

The *Germania* staff played an influential role in the campaign to repeal the Bennett Law. George Brumder loaned money to the Anti-Bennett City Executive Committee for the spring campaign and later told them that he did not need to be reimbursed.⁴ The “legal editor” of the *Germania*, Christian Koerner, headed the Anti-Bennett Executive Committee for both the Milwaukee municipal election and the state general election in November. Koerner was a Lutheran and the author of a widely distributed anti-Bennett pamphlet. Its editor-in-chief, George Koeppen, supported the anti-Bennett cause by shaping the editorial policy and penning many articles himself. Finally, the *Germania*'s business manager, August Roß, fought the Bennett Law by addressing anti-Bennett forces at their June 1890 convention.⁵ With so many

¹ Carl Frederick Wittke and William K Hubbel, *The German-Language Press in America* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1957).

² *American Newspaper Directory*, 755.

³ “Historic Designation Study Report,” City of Milwaukee, February 2014, 8.

⁴ “Endorsieren eine Platform,” *Germania*, March 28, 1890, 12.

⁵ “Anti-Bennett Konvention,” *Germania*, June 28, 1890, national edition 12.

employees invested in the controversy, it is no surprise that so much about the Bennett Law appears on the *Germania*'s pages.

While the *Germania*'s editors were invested in the defense of parochial schools, they were probably at least tempted by potential profits. Such a controversial issue as the Bennett Law would have provided an opportunity to sell more newspapers and special publications like Koerner's pamphlet. A local Milwaukee business tried capitalizing on the issue by taking out Bennett-related advertisements in the *Germania*.⁶ The *Germania*'s editors might have calculated that their readership would decrease if the law stayed in effect and the next generation could not read German. Still, their stands on issues relating to state oversight of parochial schools before the Bennett controversy, such as their response to the Pond Bill, indicates that the *Germania* editors' concern for the religious liberty of parochial schools was sincere. The editors wanted *Deutschtum* to flourish, and they considered parochial schools essential to that flourishing.

The *Germania* did all it could do to defend *Deutschtum* during the Bennett controversy, which lasted from April 1889 through November 1890. It did not portray the fight for German parochial schools in Wisconsin as something that started with the Bennett Law, but rather as part of a wider struggle for schools in the state. The *Germania* editors argued that the controversy began with an address that Governor Hoard made to the Wisconsin legislature in January 1889, continued with the contentious Pond Bill that spring, and reached its culmination with the Bennett Law.⁷ The *Germania* situated the Bennett Law against a national backdrop of German Americans advocating for their rights and freedoms against oppressive nativist forces. The

⁶ The business, Espenhain & Bartels of Milwaukee, offered English-language dictionaries for "the poor German boy" that Governor Hoard referred to in many of his speeches. Starting September 1, the store would give out one of 1000 Webster's dictionaries to every customer who spent at least \$8 on either a children's or women's coat or jacket. Tongue in cheek, the ad talked about how if the Democrats won, "the poor German boy" would need a dictionary to help him not to forget English. *Germania*, September 9, 1890, 8.

⁷ "Allerlei aus Milwaukee," *Germania*, September 2, 1890, 8.

newspaper rallied German Americans nationwide to defend *Deutschtum*. The *Germania* repeatedly made the case that German parochial schools needed to be defended against state interference lest *Deutschtum* itself fail. More particularly, the *Germania* felt the need to counter the arguments spread by pro-Bennett newspapers, especially the *Milwaukee Sentinel*. In numerous articles, it defended German Protestants from what it saw as half-truths, lies, and misrepresentations published by the *Sentinel* and other newspapers. Christian Koerner's influential pamphlet gave German Protestants an intellectual shield to defend their schools and culture from *Sentinel* articles and Republican sophistry. The *Germania* also published German-language poems which spoke to the heart of German-Americans, to their fears that their language and heritage were under attack and to their hopes that their children would keep the German language and continue their uniquely German (-American) way of life. Intellectual and emotional arguments were both on display at the Anti-Bennett Law State Convention, at which two members of the *Germania* staff held speeches. As the campaign wore on, and it became clear that Hoard and the Republicans continued to support the Bennett Law, the formerly Republican *Germania* definitively threw its hat in for Peck and the Democrats.

Deutschtum

Deutschtum was an important concept for the writers at the *Germania*. During the Bennett Law campaign, they told their readers that an attack on parochial schools was an attack on *Deutschtum*, and that German Americans needed to defend their schools to preserve *Deutschtum*. The term *Deutschtum* had strong emotional connotations. It represented German culture in America, an intergenerational bond based on a shared history and especially German virtues. Many of the poems and songs that the *Germania* printed during the campaign draw on this concept and its ties to parochial schools.

An illustration of *Deutschtum* in poetry can be found in Civil War veteran Konrad Krez's "Seid einig" (Be united!). The poem calls for German Americans to band together to defend their language, faith, and culture. While lionizing the German pioneer generation, Krez emphasizes the importance of church and school for German-American settlers:

Soon enough, out of his hard work comes
 A contribution to the house of God,
 Wherein the pastor or teacher
 Builds up his listeners' spirits in German.

From such a church stands not far removed
 The school, where the little towhead learns
 What he needs in life, and they teach him:
 "You shall honor your father and your mother."

Healthy and strong, even if not learned,
 He grows up. Unfooled by ambition,
 He will satisfy himself with the simplest joys,
 To plow his father's farm in German.⁸

Krez's poem tells in verse what has been noted in the previous chapter, that German Americans founded parochial schools at about the same time that they founded churches. Naturally, the pastor builds up the congregation in German, and school would be held in German. The poem suggests that a primary purpose of education is to teach religious and moral lessons, like the

⁸ Author's translation. Konrad Krez, "Seid einig!," *Germania*, January 31, 1890, 1. Original:

Bei seinem Fleiß kam bald genug heraus
 Zu einem Beitrag für sein Gotteshaus,
 Worin auf Deutsch ein Pfarrer oder Lehrer
 Erbaute die Gemüther seiner Hörer.

Von solcher Kirche steht nicht weit entfernt
 Die Schule, wo der kleine Flachskopf lernt,
 Was er im Leben braucht und sie ihn lehren:
 „Du sollst den Vater und die Mutter ehren.“

Gesund und kräftig, wenn auch nicht gelehrt,
 Wächst er heran. Von Ehrgeiz nicht bethört,
 Wird er sich mit dem schlichten Glück begnügen,
 Sein väterliches Gut auf Deutsch zu pflügen.

biblical admonition to honor one's father and mother. The poem implies that one way that children can do this is by learning German. First-generation German-American parents reading this poem would have witnessed their children speaking more English than German, especially in urban areas. While recognizing the need for English, such parents often hoped that parochial schools would teach their children to honor them by speaking German and keeping the faith. The poem tells how such children would be raised to be humble and healthy instead of ambitious and learned. Their education would enable them, like their fathers, to live out the culture of *Deutschtum*, a traditional, German-speaking way of life. In this view, an education should not lead students to leave their communities for greener pastures, but to encourage them to cultivate an appreciation for their way of life and give them the tools needed to keep it.

In the same poem, Krez argues the state of Wisconsin has no right to interfere with this way of life sustained by parental freedom and parochial schools:

The State of Wisconsin gave the German nothing
 As he cleared the virgin forest by the sweat of his brow,
 Nothing, but the promise of freedom
 And it may not break its word.

Where then is freedom, when someone can
 Rip from a man his child, his most precious one?
 He robs me of a child who, by stealing
 His mother tongue takes also his soul!⁹

⁹ Author's translation. Ibid. Original:

Der Staat Wisconsin gab dem Deutschen nichts,
 Als er im Schweiß seines Angesichts
 Den Urwald klärte; nichts, als das Versprechen
 Der Freiheit und er darf sein Wort nicht brechen.

Wo bleibt die Freiheit, wenn man einem Mann
 Sein teuerstes, sein Kind entreißen kann?
 Denn wer ein Kind mir rauben will, der stehle
 Mit seiner Muttersprache seine Seele!

The poem thus implies that the Bennett Law is an example of the state seeking to arrogate a right to itself that properly belongs to German parents, who had asked nothing of the state government apart from the freedom to form and cultivate their own communities. By usurping parental rights and requiring English at the expense of German, the state is even causing spiritual harm because, Krez implies, German is essential to the spiritual lives of German Americans: Robbing German children of their language is like stealing their souls. This forceful language indicates how important the German language was to German-American religious and cultural identity, binding members together with their God, family, and ethnic group. Such sentiments found a ready audience among German Lutherans, who were accustomed to using German as their religious language, unlike German Catholics who celebrated the Mass in Latin.¹⁰ Among German Lutherans, there was a belief that the German language, German culture, and Lutheranism were, as Bettina Goldberg put it “inseparably bound together and that the loss of one would necessarily result in the loss of the other and thus threaten the very existence of the church.”¹¹

In the final stanza, Krez hectors German Americans to break out of their stagnant voting behaviors:

Then is the German really a servant already?
 Is there no parental right for him?
 Is he only good for being driven to the polls like an ox,
 And for paying the salary of his betters?¹²

¹⁰ Jacobi-Dittrich, “*Deutsche*” *Schulen in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika*, 139.

¹¹ Goldberg, “Our Fathers’ Faith, Our Children’s Language: Cultural Change in Milwaukee’s German Evangelical Lutheran Congregations of the Missouri Synod, 1850-1930,” 8.

¹² Author’s translation. *Ibid.* Original:

Ist denn der Deutsche wirklich schon ein Knecht,
 Giebt es für ihn kein elterliches Recht,
 Ist er nur gut zu Stimmvieh bei den Wahlen,
 Und den Gehalt für seine Herrn zu zahlen?

Krez knew that many German Lutherans had been supportive of Republicans in recent elections. This stanza indicates that he was worried that they would unthinkingly continue in their partisan voting pattern. Krez challenges his readers to prove that they are neither serfs, nor mindless partisans, but that they were free men willing to support parental rights, fight for parochial schools, and defend *Deutschtum*.

The Pond Bill

Before the Bennett Law became a topic of discussion, the *Germania* was already wary of attacks on *Deutschtum* in the form of state attempts to regulate and control parochial schools. In the spring of 1889, the *Germania* editors were primarily concerned with the Pond Bill, a measure that would have required the collection of attendance statistics from both private and public schools throughout Wisconsin. The *Germania* and its German parochial school allies saw the bill as an attack on their parochial schools.¹³ The reason for their reaction was Governor Hoard's inaugural address to the Wisconsin legislature in January 1889, an event which the *Germania* framed as the starting point for the entire school controversy. In the address, Hoard suggested that public school boards ought to have authority to inspect all schools, both public and private, to ensure that English was being taught. Recalling this speech, the *Germania* interpreted the Pond Bill as a wedge that would allow the state to meddle in the affairs of parochial schools.¹⁴ German Americans expressed their displeasure by attaching 40,000 signatures to a legislative petition. After some attempts to defend his bill, Senator Pond abandoned the cause. The *Germania* celebrated the victory of German Americans over the alleged nativists, saying, "It is

¹³ "Allerlei aus Milwaukee," *Germania*, April 17, 1889, 8.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

enheartening that because of the massive flow of petitions, our fellow citizens have grasped the importance of Wisconsin's Protestant Germandom and its views."¹⁵

The very next week, the celebration ended when the *Germania* learned of the Bennett Law. It caught Pond Bill opponents like the *Germania* off guard, passing as it did without debate at the end of the legislative session. The *Germania* acknowledged that in many respects the law was reasonable: it prevented child labor and required children to go to school.¹⁶ Already in April 1889, however, the *Germania* took issue with section five of the law, which required that reading, writing, arithmetic, and American history be taught in English if schools were to be formally recognized by the state.¹⁷ In this section, the *Germania* editors saw the stamp of anti-German sentiment more clearly than in the Pond Bill.¹⁸ They noted that the law might not have much of an effect on a school's day-to-day operations, but that it could be too broadly interpreted. The *Germania* believed that the Bennett Law was motivated by the same impulse that had motivated the Pond Bill and Hoard's address; the Bennett Law was really meant "to suppress German parochial schools."¹⁹

Defending Deutschtum

On numerous occasions, the *Germania* made the case for the importance and quality of parochial schools, arguing that *Deutschtum* would stand or fall with them.²⁰ On September 11, 1889, the *Germania* published an editorial defending the quality of these schools, especially of

¹⁵ Author's translation. Original: "Erfreulich ist auch, daß unsere amerikanischen Mitbürger durch die massenhaft einlaufenden Petitionen einen Begriff bekommen haben von der Gesinnung und auch von der Bedeutung des protestantischen Deutschtums von Wisconsin." Ibid.

¹⁶ "Allerlei aus Milwaukee," *Germania*, April 24, 1889, 8.

¹⁷ "An Act Concerning the Education and Employment of Children," Pub. L. No. 519, 841, A Laws of Wisconsin 729 (1889).

¹⁸ "Allerlei aus Milwaukee," *Germania*, April 24, 1889, 8.

¹⁹ Author's translation. Original: "Dieses Prinzi[p] geht – ganz wie die Botschaft des Gouverneurs, wie die Pond-Bill etc. – darauf hinaus, die deutschen Gemeindeschulen zu unterdrücken." Ibid.

²⁰ "In Wisconsin haben," *Germania*, December 24, 1889, 1.

their teachers, against Bennett-friendly newspapers. The author noted the hypocrisy of newspapers that had once held up the German educational method as exemplary and had criticized the Yankee method, but which were now saying that the “soul-deadening memorization” in “American schoolmarm-led schools” was better than the German system.²¹ The author observed that many public school instructors were not teachers for the long term, but instead started in the schoolhouse and moved on to advance their careers.²² German parochial schoolteachers, on the other hand, considered teaching to be a life’s calling. Stepping back a little from the harsh rhetoric, the author asserted that he did not want to bash the public schools but thought that parochial schools and their teachers were not getting the credit they deserved for their contributions to American education.²³

For the duration of the controversy, *Germania* coverage emphasized that Wisconsin German voters were part of a much wider battle for the survival of *Deutschtum* throughout the country and, to a lesser extent, around the world. Illinois, for instance, had passed similar compulsory education legislation to Wisconsin, the Edwards Law.²⁴ The *Germania* covered the Illinois school controversy closely throughout 1889 and 1890. In both the Wisconsin and Illinois cases, the *Germania* editors deemed the laws to be attacks on *Deutschtum*. They even tied the situation in these midwestern states to the oppression of German minorities abroad in Russia, Bohemia, and South Africa, claiming that in those countries, governments hostile to German

²¹ Author’s translation. Original: “...von diesen amerikanischen Schulmamsellen geleiteten Schulen, mit ihrem so oft verurtheilten System des geisttötenden Auswendiglernens...” “Der in Medford, Wis.” *Germania*, September 11, 1889, 1.

²² Ibid.. Jorgenson also discusses the tendency for teachers to see their job as a steppingstone. See Jorgenson, *The Founding of Public Education in Wisconsin*, 156.

²³ “Der in Medford, Wis.” *Germania*, September 11, 1889, 1.

²⁴ The Edwards Law was passed in May 1889. It was stricter than the Bennett Law, requiring geography to be taught in English in addition to reading, writing, arithmetic and U.S. history. Illinois Democrats, like their Wisconsin brethren, ran against the school law and allied themselves with German Americans in opposition to the law. Illinois Republicans and Illinois Democrats could not agree on the terms of repeal until 1893.

language and culture were attacking parochial schools.²⁵ They also linked the temperance movement, which they considered another infringement of their personal liberties, to the battle for the parochial schools. In the final issue before the November 1890 election, the *Germania* issued a call to arms to its German readers across the country, exhorting them to vote for all forms of freedom and against oppression and tyranny.²⁶ It went on to say that, no matter whether against prohibition in Kansas, Iowa, and Nebraska or against the school laws in Illinois and Wisconsin, *Deutschtum* was actually combating nativism and xenophobia.²⁷ When the November election results came in from around the country, the editors declared a German-American victory in the West, referring to the modern Midwest.²⁸

A guest writer, F. Scheer, wrote in November 1889 about the Bennett Law and *Deutschtum* in sweeping, world-historical terms. He worried that the Bennett Law would deliver *Deutschtum* a *Todesstoß*, a deadly dagger thrust.²⁹ To him, the fact that Bennett Law proponents had pushed a measure through the legislature more offensive to German Americans than the Pond Bill was further evidence that the Bennett Law was directed against *Deutschtum*. He believed such an attack was particularly unjust considering the contributions that loyal German-American citizens had made throughout U.S. history. Scheer would have had the U.S. become more like Switzerland, a flourishing, multilingual polity. His final line of argumentation echoed the pride that many German Americans felt in the newly founded German Empire. Scheer thought that German was an important language for children to learn in light of Imperial Germany's increasing economic and military might.

²⁵ "Daß die Zukunft des Deutschthums," *Germania*, August 19, 1890, 1.

²⁶ "Uebersicht der Tagesereignisse, Inland," *Germania*, October 31, 1890, 1.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ "Der Ausgang des Wahlkampfes," *Germania*, November 11, 1890, 1.

²⁹ "Die Schulfrage," *Germania*, November 19, 1889, 1.

According to Sheer, an age of enlightenment would replace one of power, and German would be essential in that enlightened age. In this vein, he concluded, "...our motto should not be regress, which would mean suppressing German, but progress. With progress as our emblem, we can cultivate both German and English, and so give our children a double armor in the unavoidable battles for their daily bread."³⁰ The *Germania*'s vocal defenses of *Deutschtum* and the German language put it on a collision course with the *Milwaukee Sentinel*, which, for its part, vociferously advocated for Hoard and the English provision of the Bennett Law.

Feud with the Milwaukee Sentinel

Between the summer of 1889 and the November 1890 general election, the *Germania* feuded almost weekly with the *Milwaukee Sentinel*. Horace Rublee, a Republican and the editor of the *Sentinel*, had been an early and enthusiastic backer of Governor Hoard. Rublee had supported Hoard despite objections from party bosses and maintained a personal interest in seeing Hoard succeed. This made adversaries of George Koeppen and his colleagues at the *Germania*.

In a July 1889 article, the *Germania*'s editors sarcastically questioned the *Sentinel*'s concern for German schoolchildren.³¹ The *Sentinel* had reported on reforms in German parochial education in Milwaukee but lamented the state of affairs in rural parochial schools. *Sentinel* editors also asked why supporters of parochial schools were so agitated about the Pond Bill and the Bennett Law. The *Germania* editors thought that such questioning was late in coming because they and the various Lutheran synods had been opposing both measures for months and clearly expressing why they were doing so. The *Germania* reiterated synodical arguments that

³⁰ Author's translation. Original: "Darum: nicht Rückschritt sei unsere Parole, indem wir das Deutsche unterdrücken, sondern Fortschritt sei die Devise, indem wir Deutsch und English in gleicher Weise pflegen, und so unseren Kindern eine doppelte Rüstung mitgeben für die unvermeidlichen Kämpfe ums tägliche Brod." Ibid.

³¹ "Allerlei aus Milwaukee, *Germania*, July 10, 1889, 8.

German Protestants were not against the public schools but wanted to maintain their right to educate their children according to the dictates of their conscience. In what would become a frequent argument, the *Germania*'s editors quibbled with the characterization of German as a "foreign language" in the United States, remarking that German had been spoken in America for 200 years. Additionally, they disputed a *Sentinel* charge that the *Germania* was the mouthpiece of a church, saying simply that it was a political newspaper that sought readers among German Protestant Christians. For their part, the staff of the *Germania* believed that the *Sentinel* was not motivated by religious bigotry, but by an enmity toward the German language. This enmity went all the way back to the *Sentinel*'s coverage of Governor Hoard's inaugural address to the legislature in which he had asked for a law allowing local school inspectors to ensure that enough English was being taught in schools.³²

The *Germania* provoked the *Sentinel* when it compared the events in Wisconsin to the suppression of ethnic minorities under German and Russian rule.³³ In those areas, minority groups were often forced by law to use the majority language. The *Germania*'s editors said that the *Sentinel* would likely characterize such foreign laws as unjust. They argued that the *Sentinel* writers ought to be able to recognize that what was tyrannical in European monarchies was no less tyrannical in the United States. The *Sentinel* disagreed with that comparison, and the next week, the *Germania* pressed its point. The *Germania* argued that there was practically no difference between what was going on in Europe and in America, no difference between "verbieten und nicht erlauben," (forbidden and not allowed).³⁴ In Prussia, the *Germania* argued, Poles were *forbidden* to use their language apart from in religious instruction, while in

³² James C Carper and Thomas C Hunt, *The Dissenting Tradition in American Education* (New York: P. Lang, 2007), 85.

³³ "Allerlei aus Milwaukee," *Germania*, July 17, 1889, 8.

³⁴ "Allerlei aus Milwaukee," *Germania*, July 24, 1889, 8.

Wisconsin, Germans were *not allowed* to teach in German for most subjects apart from religion. The newspapers continued to spar over each other's Bennett coverage.

One tactic of the *Sentinel* during the Bennett controversy was to find Germans who could not speak English well to illustrate why the Bennett Law was necessary. The *Germania*, of course, did not take such examples at face value. With the help of its readers, the *Germania* debunked as many of these mischaracterizations as possible, often chastising the *Sentinel* for lazy journalism. In February 1890, the *Sentinel* reported that two Germans had needed a court translator in Wausau, bringing to eight the total number of Germans with poor English whom they had found, according to the *Germania*'s reckoning.³⁵ The *Germania*'s writers were suspicious of the report, recalling the *Sentinel*'s debunked claim about a Jefferson County man who had attended German parochial schools and allegedly could not speak English well. It turned out that the man had had a disability, but nonetheless spoke English even better than German. Just below this article, the *Germania* editors printed a report from the Green Bay *Landsmann* which discussed a recent find by the *Sentinel* of a German family with four children who could not speak English. The *Landsmann* editors did not dispute the fact, but rather expressed their frustration that the *Sentinel* was overlooking the thousands of Germans who never attended public schools and yet still spoke excellent English. They also criticized the public schools whose students spoke "slang" instead of proper English but somehow get a pass from the *Sentinel*.³⁶

The 1890 spring municipal elections brought more disagreement with the *Sentinel*. The Milwaukee election had turned into an early referendum on the Bennett Law. In the heated days before the election, *Germania* editors accused the *Sentinel* of misrepresenting the law by

³⁵ "Allerlei aus Milwaukee," *Germania*, February 25, 1890, 8.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

claiming that it was merely meant to help the “poor German boy,” in the words of Governor Hoard.³⁷ Moreover, they were frustrated that German Protestants were consistently being depicted as fools who were against the public schools, the public order, and the English language. If German Protestants were bitter, it was largely the *Sentinel*'s fault that they had become so, opined the *Germania*. Just as the French were provoking the Germans in Europe, the Yankees were provoking Germans in America. The Yankees were attacking *Deuschtum* at its center, the parochial schools. Referring to a speech by Bismarck, the *Germania* predicted that on election day, Yankees would see the *furor teutonicus* they had conjured up with their provocations and tricks.³⁸ The *furor teutonicus* was loosed indeed; George Peck, the anti-Bennett Democratic candidate, was elected mayor of Milwaukee in a landslide. After the election, *Germania* editors commented on the amazing exaggeration, lies, and nonsense that had been said by defenders of the Bennett Law in the days since the election.³⁹ They further complained that the English-language press, despite all argumentation and evidence to the contrary, still believed that German Protestants wanted ignorant children, opposed compulsory education, and were uninterested in learning English.

Though the *Germania* editors took a hard line and sometimes used inflammatory language, they sought to avoid personal attacks. They explained their position thus: “der Sache Feind, dem Manne Freund,” (an enemy to the cause, a friend to the man).⁴⁰ They tried to stick with this credo even when the *Sentinel* editors did not, such as when the *Sentinel* spread false rumors about a feud between *Germania* editors Koerner and Koeppen.⁴¹ The *Germania* proved

³⁷ “Zur Wahl,” *Germania*, March 28, 1890, 1.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ “Allerlei aus Milwaukee,” *Germania*, April 8, 1890, 8.

⁴⁰ “Zum Bennettgesetz,” *Germania*, January 21, 1890, 8.

⁴¹ “Allerlei aus Milwaukee,” *Germania*, July 29, 1890, 8.

its intent to follow its maxim by its editorial policy, often giving column space to people with opposing viewpoints. For example, in January 1890, the *Germania*'s editors published a long letter from Horace Rublee, the editor of the *Sentinel*.⁴² Late in the Bennett campaign, they also printed a lengthy editorial from Republican U.S. Senator John Spooner, who sought to defend the Bennett Law and the Republican platform.⁴³

The Koerner Pamphlet

To counter sophisticated Republicans like Rublee and Spooner, to make their anti-Bennett reasoning widely known, and to motivate German-American voters, the *Germania* published a polemical pamphlet written by its legal editor, Christian Koerner. It is titled, "Das Bennett Gesetz und die deutschen protestantischen Gemeindeschulen in Wisconsin (The Bennett Law and the German Protestant Parochial Schools in Wisconsin). The pamphlet first appeared in English but was later expanded and translated into German. Though often referenced in historical works on the Bennett Law, little is said about how the pamphlet came to be. It includes a copy of the text of the Bennett Law, analysis of each section, statistical tables for German parochial schools throughout the state, and sharp objections to the law. A German version from later in the year includes an appendix that includes several campaign songs as well as the anti-Bennett platform from June 1890.

The story of the Koerner pamphlet begins in Watertown in August 1889 with the joint meeting of representatives from the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and the Wisconsin District of the Missouri Synod. These two Lutheran church bodies had already formed their own committees tasked with providing an appropriate response to the Bennett Law. The pastors and teachers present decided to merge these individual Bennett committees into a single executive

⁴² "Zum Bennettgesetz," *Germania*, January 21, 1890, 8.

⁴³ "Senator Spooner von Wisconsin über das Bennettgesetz," *Germania*, October 10, 1890, 1.

committee.⁴⁴ Among the new committee's tasks were the defense of congregations that might be affected by the law, the composition of reports to be released to the press, and the compilation of parochial school statistics. Eventually, Christian Koerner would lead the executive committee, but at the beginning, he was on the statistics committee.⁴⁵ The tables in Koerner's pamphlet probably came from this committee work. At some point in the next few months, Koerner also began to work on the essay that would become the body of his pamphlet. On December 27, 1889, representatives from nearly every denomination with a German congregation in Wisconsin met in Milwaukee and approved the first draft of Koerner's essay.⁴⁶ Politicians from both parties as well as lawyers scrutinized the draft before recommending its publication along with the Lutheran parochial school statistical tables.⁴⁷ On January 4, 1890, a version of Koerner's work appeared in the *Milwaukee Daily Journal*.⁴⁸ Three days later, the *Germania* announced that it had copies of Koerner's *Journal* article for sale that readers could share with their English-speaking neighbors.⁴⁹

The pamphlet version was completed in the period leading up to the 1890 Milwaukee mayoral election. On February 4, the *Germania* announced that it was printing the English edition.⁵⁰ The pamphlet included the statistical tables and expanded, refined, and reorganized arguments from Koerner's *Journal* article. Additions included ample quotes indicating Lutheran approval of public schools, analysis of statistics showing English use in parochial schools, and a lengthier conclusion.⁵¹ The goal of the pamphlet was to show English speakers what German

⁴⁴ "In Sachen der Gemeindeschulen," *Germania*, August 14, 1889, 1.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ "Fighting the Bennett Law," *Milwaukee Daily Journal*, December 28, 1889, 1.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ "Their Objections to It," *Milwaukee Daily Journal*, January 4, 1890, 1.

⁴⁹ "Eine Schrift gegen das Gesetz," *Germania*, January 7, 1890, 8.

⁵⁰ "Im Geo. Brumder'schen Verlage," *Germania*, February 4, 1890, 1.

⁵¹ Koerner, "The Bennett Law and German Parochial Schools."

speakers did in their schools and help people see how papers like the *Sentinel* had been distorting the truth.⁵² The *Germania* hoped that even the most ardent enemies of German parochial schools would see that the Bennett Law was unnecessary, that the statistics provided irrefutable proof that parochial schools already taught English.⁵³ The pamphlet was sent to all the newspapers in the state, state officials, members of the legislature, school superintendents, German pastors, teachers, and more.⁵⁴

Soon, a German edition was completed. First, a text of the German edition without statistical tables appeared in the *Germania* on February 18.⁵⁵ Then, the *Germania* announced a completed edition on February 25. The *Germania* said that its German translation was much more precise than ones made by other German newspapers.⁵⁶ It claimed that it was the most important anti-Bennett document, suggesting that even opponents would want a copy. Framing the sale of the pamphlet as a public service, the *Germania* declared that the cost of the pamphlet was just high enough to cover the cost of printing. The editors also announced that the second English printing was ready less than a month after the first one had appeared. The *Germania*'s editors concluded with a request for readers to send in any missing information about parochial schools in their area.

Over the next month, thousands of pamphlets were bought and distributed. Many pastors circulated pamphlets to their congregations in the weeks before the city election of 1 April.⁵⁷ The *Germania* reported which congregations were getting pamphlets and the number of pamphlets each congregation received. By March 11, the *Germania* editors were boasting that because of

⁵² "Im Geo. Brumder'schen Verlage," *Germania*, February 4, 1890, 1.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ "Gute und triftige Gründe für die Bekämpfung des Bennett-Gesetzes," *Germania*, February 18, 1890, 1.

⁵⁶ "Allerlei aus Milwaukee," *Germania*, February 25, 1890, 8.

⁵⁷ "Vorarbeiten für die Wahl," *Germania*, March 11, 1890, 8.

the pamphlet's thorough argumentation and wide distribution, no one could act on the Bennett Law without taking German Protestant views into account.⁵⁸

Koerner's objections to the Bennett Law on behalf of German Protestants had either a constitutional or practical basis. Most objections rested on constitutional grounds. Koerner believed that granting public school boards authority over parochial schools was a violation of religious freedom. He also alleged that parents' right to trial by jury would be usurped by school boards because school boards would have the discretion to impose fines.⁵⁹ Koerner further argued that if no parochial schools were in the child's district, the law would implicitly violate constitutionally protected freedoms of conscience by forcing students to attend public schools. Finally, Koerner reasoned that schools would lose their right to observe weekday religious holidays because the law required that students attend school for a *consecutive* number of days.⁶⁰ Koerner's other objections rested on practical grounds. He argued that forcing students to attend in-district schools would deprive rural schools of students. Koerner also noted that clergy, who often taught classes in addition to fulfilling their pastoral duties, would have difficulty teaching more than four days per week, as the law required.⁶¹ According to Koerner, the law would be detrimental to German-American students' education because students from German-speaking homes learned better with German as the language of instruction.⁶² His final argument appealed to the American love of freedom and hatred of tyranny. It is quoted here from the English edition to emphasize the fact that the primary audience for the pamphlet were English speakers, not German speakers:

⁵⁸ "Allerlei aus Milwaukee," *Germania*, March 11, 1890, 8.

⁵⁹ Koerner, "The Bennett Law and German Parochial Schools," 16.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 16–18.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 15.

Men who have not breathed the fresh and free air of our country long enough to cleanse their blood of monarchial ideas, who still consider the servants of the commonwealth as authorities to whom absolute submissiveness and blind obedience is due, who believe our great republic should follow in the paths treaden by European monarchies, are praised as enlightened and broad-minded patriots, worthy of imitation by men whose first breath was freedom and whose whole life is patriotism. Such is a truthful pen-picture of the leaders in this bitter and unjustifiable warfare against our parochial schools. Does the reader long for such company? Will he entrust himself to such leadership?⁶³

Koerner clearly hoped that the reader would conclude that supporters of the Bennett Law were supporting tyranny and that German Americans were fighting for freedom. Notably absent from this conclusion is any appeal to *Deutschtum*. As described above, this document was a polemic first written in English. That is, the core arguments were directed more at outsiders than at German-American insiders. Koerner's pamphlet was not directed towards an audience that wanted to hear about German industriousness, the beauty of the German language, or the piety of the German people. Instead, it appealed to outsiders using arguments based on the constitution and common sense. For German speakers, the *Germania* turned to poetry, both in the appendix of the German-language pamphlet and in its regular issues.

Poetic defenses of Deutschtum

The *Germania*'s German-language campaign poetry appealed to reader's hearts in its defense of *Deutschtum*. The *Germania* printed political songs and poems in addition to its typical fare of apolitical poems, songs, and serialized stories. Some of the political poems were original works, and others drew upon well-known German songs and poems including "O Tannenbaum," "Die Wacht am Rhein," and Goethe's "Erlkönig." The period prior to the April 1 municipal elections provides a rich sampling of such campaign poetry. Some are more playful, and others more earnest, but taken together they make the emotional argument that German Americans needed to defend *Deutschtum*, their German way of life, from nativist attacks.

⁶³ Ibid., 20.

One of the first poems to appear during the spring campaign was Franz Grether's "*Bleib Deutsch*," "Stay German."⁶⁴ Grether depicts a father exhorting his son to hold on to the German language and his essential identity, despite outside pressures:

The free country wants to rob you of freedom
 (saying) you should not be what God has made you to be.
 O hold fast to the old biblical belief,
 And "Fear God and but nothing else in the world!"⁶⁵

According to the logic of Grether's poem, to "remain German" is for the son to fulfill a divine mandate, to be what God made him to be. Giving up his German identity would be akin to giving in to worldly pressures and thus defying the will of God. By remaining German, the son will show that he holds fast to the old biblical faith, fearing only God, and not the world. Later, the father tells the son that he may learn English, but that he must hold on to his mother tongue "damit das deutsche Herz dir nicht entweicht," (so that he doesn't lose his German heart). Instead of taking on the language and, thereby, the mores of the wider culture, the son, and implicitly the reader, are told to "Sprich, sing und bete deutsch in deinem Haus," (Speak, sing, and pray German in your house).⁶⁶

Alphons Horwitz's "Nur unentwegt," (only steadfast), suggests that Bennett Law supporters are trying to rob German Americans of their language and culture.⁶⁷ The first few stanzas urge Germans to unite to preserve the "Kleinod" (gem), of their fathers, namely the German language, and their right to pass German on to their descendants. He then implies how entwined together the German language, faith, and parochial schools are:

⁶⁴ Franz Grether, "Bleib deutsch," *Germania*, January 28, 1890, 3.

⁶⁵ Author's translation. Ibid. Original:

Das freie Land will dir die Freiheit rauben,
 Du sollst nicht sein, wozu dich Gott bestellt;
 O halte fest am alten Bibelglauben,
 Und „fürchte Gott und sonst nichts in der Welt!“

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Alphons Horwitz, "Nur unentwegt!," *Germania*, February 7, 1890, 2.

Do not let your mother's sound be robbed,
 The German word, the German song;
 The language with which the school
 Raises up your child in the faith of your fathers.⁶⁸

The parochial schools, by teaching the German language and culture, were complementing the work of Lutheran parents in bringing children up in the faith. The “Mutterlaut” (mother’s sound), that teaches German words and songs, begins a child’s education in faith and morals. Then, at school, the child learns the “Väter Glauben” (faith of the fathers), the theological underpinnings of their beliefs. For German Lutherans, this was a faith with a theology and hymnody that had hitherto been read and sung almost exclusively in German for three centuries.

Horwitz’ next stanza continues his appeal to German Lutherans:

And where in churches and chapels
 Words of devotion ring out in German,
 The boom like waves of the sea
 Sounding forth “A Mighty Fortress” in might.⁶⁹

Horwitz knew that Martin Luther’s “A Mighty Fortress” would be popular with the *Germania*’s Lutheran readership. Furthermore, his use of the term “Wort,” word, in the context of religious services and devotion would have resonated with Lutherans. Lutherans have traditionally emphasized that the Bible is the Word of God. John’s Gospel refers to Jesus as the Word made Flesh. Lutheran pastors are said to preach the Word. Church services are divided into Word and

⁶⁸Author’s translation. Ibid. Original:

Laßt euch den Mutterlaut nicht rauben,
 Das deutsche Wort, das deutsche Lied;
 Die Sprache, drin im Väter Glauben
 Die Schule euer Kind erzieht.

⁶⁹ Author’s translation. Ibid. Original:

Und wo in Kirchen und Kapellen
 Zu Deutsch der Andacht Wort erschallt,
 Dem Brausen gleich der Meereswellen,
 ‘Ein’ feste Burg’ mit Macht erschallt.

Sacrament. To defend their language of faith, the “Wort” of God, for their children and their children’s children, Horwitz summons his readers to defy their opponents.

The *Germania*’s poetic defenses of *Deutschtum* from this spring election period could also be more playful, as seen in August Krüger’s rendition of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s famous poem, “Erlkönig.” In the original poem, a father rides with his apparently sick child through the woods, presumably to a doctor, or to their home. While they do so, the Erlkönig and his daughters, supernatural beings who live in the forest, tempt the child to come and join them. The father tells the child that what he sees can be explained by natural phenomena. The Erlkönig, seeing that the child will not come willingly, declares that he will take the child by force. In the end, the father and son arrive at their destination, but the child is dead.

Krüger’s poem is more lighthearted than the original. As in Goethe’s rendition, a father and son are going through the woods. Instead of riding, they are walking hand in hand, and instead of heading home or to the doctor’s office, they are going to the German school. The Erlkönig is replaced by “Den langen Kerl mit dem Bennett Law” (the slender fellow with the Bennett Law). The boy hides his face in fear at the apparition of the Bennett Law man, but the father reassures him that the Germans are still there. The Bennett Law man tries tempting the child to come with him:

“You German child, come, go with me,
 We will go to the English school.
 You don’t really need the German language;
 You can become President if you speak English.”⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Author’s translation. Krüger, August, “Bennett als Erlkönig,” *Germania*, March 7, 1890, 10. Original:
 „Du deutsches Kind, komm, geh mit mir,
 In die englische Schule gehen wir;
 Die deutsche Sprache brauchst du ja nicht,
 Man wird Präsident, wenn man englisch spricht.”—

The father assures his son that the Bennett Law man is not actually looking out for his best interests. Then, in lieu of the Erlkönig's daughters, schoolmarms appear on the scene:

“Will you, O German boy, go with me?
In the English school it's all so pretty.
Our schoolmarms, they'll give you such great delight,
They'll sing and spring and dance with you.”—

“My father, my father, and can you not see,
How the schoolmarms stand there before the school?—
“My son, my son, I see it plainly:
I'll never entrust you to those schoolmarms.”—⁷¹

Krüger is probably not just finding a convenient stand-in for the Erlkönig's daughters but is likely also referencing the fact that female teachers tended to be more prevalent in Yankee schools than German schools. When this tactic does not work, the Bennett Law man, like the Erlkönig, tries force. Unlike in the original poem, there is a happy ending,

Then the father grabs him with mighty hand,
The fellow with the Bennett Law flies in the sand,
The father gives him an additional kick—
And the German school is safe from him.⁷²

Another parody, “Zur Wahl,” which was set to the popular patriotic anthem, “Die Wacht am Rhein,” makes explicit how Germans can defend their language, culture, and faith.⁷³ In its

⁷¹ Author's translation. Ibid. Original:

„Willst, deutscher Knabe, du mit mir gehn?
In der englischen Schule ist's gar zu schön:
Unsre Schoolmams, die machen dir viel Pläsir,
Sie singen und springen und tanzen mit dir.”—

„Mein Vater, mein Vater, und kannst du nicht sehn,
Wie die Scholmams da vor der Schule stehn?—
„Mein Sohn, mein Sohn, ich seh es genau:
Diesen Schoolmams ich nimmer dich anvertran.“—.

⁷² Author's translation. Ibid. Original:

Da packt ihn der Vater mit kräftiger Hand,
Der Kerl mit dem Bennett-Law fliegt in den Sand,
Einen Tritt giebt der Vater ihm noch dazu—
Und die deutsche Schule hat vor ihm Ruh.

⁷³ H.L.W., “Zur Wahl!,” *Germania*, March 21, 1890, 10.

chorus, printed out in full only after the first verse, the song urges Germans Americans to rally together, “Für Muttersprach’ und Schul’ zugleich / Zum Kampfe alle scharet euch, o scharet euch!” (For mother tongue and school together / Everyone rally to battle, o rally yourselves!).

The German language is thus depicted as bound to the parochial school. In other verses, the connection is made between religious practice, maintaining a parochial school, and speaking German. As with Horwitz, the author of this poem also appeals to Lutherans. Here, the emphasis is on German as the language of Luther:

The language that Luther once wrote,
That was ever his dearest inheritance
And also here in the far wide West
The German never lets it go.
For mother tongue etc.⁷⁴

By calling this German linguistic legacy “das liebste Erbtheil” of German Americans, the author is using language more commonly used to describe faith. In the Bible, faith, not language, is described as a precious jewel, as something that should be held onto and passed from one generation to the next. “Zur Wahl” explains how important parochial schools are for linguistic and spiritual health:

The language of the child’s first words.
How would it ever be truly learned,
If there were no German schools,
No cradles of his language?
For mother tongue etc.

The language of belief and prayer,
Ever of the holiest thoughts,
Taught from the mother’s mouth,
From which it makes known her love.

⁷⁴ Author’s translation. Ibid. Original:

Die Sprache, die einst Luther schrieb,
Die ihm das liebste Erbtheil blieb
Auch hier im fernen, weiten West’
Der Deutsche nun und nimmer läßt.
Für Muttersprach’ u. s. w.

For mother tongue etc.⁷⁵

German, the language of a mother's love, of the holiest thoughts, and of prayer and faith, is worth defending. The poem closes with a call for Germans to stand "unentwegt," (steadfast) for their rights, echoing the title of Horwitz's poem.

After the successful spring campaign, the *Germania* published "Viktoria," by August Krüger, which can be sung to the popular German Christmas carol, "O Tannenbaum." "Viktoria," while reveling in the spring victory, looks forward to a successful fall campaign and eventual repeal of the Bennett Law. The first verse references the ill will the Bennett Law has instigated:

O Bennett Law! O Bennett Law!
 Now is your last little hour near!
 You have caused us much vexation,
 Have kindled hatred and quarrelling,
 O Bennett Law! O Bennett Law!
 Now is your last little hour near!⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Author's translation. Ibid. Original:

Die Sprach', des Kindes erster Laut;
 Wie würd es wohl mit ihr vertraut,
 Wenn keine deutsche Schul' es hätt,
 Die seiner Sprache Pflegstätt?
 Für Muttersprach' u. s. w.

Die Sprach' des Glaubens und Gebets,
 Der heiligsten Gedanken stets,
 Die es gelehrt der Mutter Mund,
 Drin es giebt seine Liebe Kund.
 Für Muttersprach' u. s. w.

⁷⁶ Author's translation. Krüger, August, "Viktoria," *Germania*, April 1, 1890, 8. Original:

O Bennett Law! O Bennett Law!
 Jetzt ist dein letztes Stündlein nah!
 Du hast uns viel Verdruß gemacht,
 Hast Haß und Hader angefacht.
 O Bennett Law! O Bennett Law!
 Jetzt ist dein letztes Stündlein nah.

This verse thus repeats the allegation that it was people like Hoard, Rublee, and nativists who were to blame for the vitriol already produced in the Bennett campaign. Such people are warned of continued political consequences if the law is not changed:

O Bennett Law! O Bennett Law!
 We Germans were there this time.
 So that you will not forget in the future:
 The German does not let himself be fooled.
 O Bennett Law! O Bennett Law!
 The German cries out victory!

O Bennett Law! O Bennett Law!
 The German yells in victory!
 He has showed you this time,
 That he also plays first fiddle.
 O Bennett Law! O Bennett Law!
 The German cries out victory!

O Bennett Law! O Bennett Law!
 Take what happened as a warning.
 Good advice is as good as gold:
 So hurry up and turn around.
 O Bennett Law! O Bennett Law!
 Take what happened as a warning.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Author's translation. Ibid. Original:

O Bennett Law! O Bennett Law!
 Wir Deutschen waren diesmal da.
 Daß ihr's Zukunft nicht vergeßt:
 Der Deutsche sich nicht narren läßt.
 O Bennett Law! O Bennett Law!
 Wir Deutschen waren diesmal da.

O Bennett Law! O Bennett Law!
 Der Deutsche ruft Viktoria!
 Er hat Euch diesmal gezeigt,
 Daß er auch erste Geige geigt.
 O Bennett Law! O Bennett Law!
 Der Deutsche ruft Viktoria!

O Bennett Law! O Bennett Law!
 Nimm dir's zur Warnung, was geschah.
 Ein guter Rath ist Goldes werth:
 Drum mach geschwinde rechtsum kehrt.
 O Bennett Law! O Bennett Law!
 Nimm dir's zur Warnung, was geschah.

In warning Bennett Law supporters of the political price they will pay, these stanzas also assert the cultural ascendancy of *Deutschtum*, which the *Germania* believed was being led by German Protestants. Indeed, these stanzas emphasize that German-American Protestants, and German Americans more broadly, were a powerful political force that was willing to exercise its power to defend its rights. The final verse ties the *Germania* to this movement:

O Bennett Law! O Bennett Law!
 So also cries out the *Germania*.
 They have felt the blows:
 The German school triumphs.
 Victory! Victory!
 So also crows the *Germania*.⁷⁸

The spring electoral victory was thus not just a victory for *Deutschtum* and its schools, but for the *Germania* itself.

The songs and poems printed in the *Germania* during the Bennett Law campaign spoke to the emotions of German-speaking Bennett Law opponents. Many of these opponents were parents who believed that parochial schools were the *sine qua non* of German linguistic, cultural, and religious maintenance in the United States. By painting the Bennett Law as an attack on parochial schools, poets tapped into German-American anxieties about the future of their way of life in America. These fears were likely one of the factors that motivated Republican Lutherans to leave their party and join with Democratic Catholics in defense of their *Deutschtum*. With their coverage of the Anti-Bennett-Law State Convention, the *Germania* would present

⁷⁸ Author's translation. Ibid. Original:
 O Bennett Law! O Bennett Law!
 So ruft auch die *Germania*.
 Die Hiebe haben sie gespürt:
 Die deutsche Schule triumphiert.
 Viktoria! Viktoria!
 So ruft auch die *Germania*.

arguments that appealed to the heart, as found in its Bennett Law poetry, and arguments that appealed to the head, as found in Koerner's pamphlet.

Anti-Bennett Law State Convention

For the most part, the *Germania* devoted only a few columns to the Bennett controversy in each issue, but on June 6, nearly two entire pages concerned it, indicating just how important the editors considered the Anti-Bennett Law State Convention (hereafter referred to as Anti-Bennett Convention). Like the Republican and Democratic conventions that would meet in August of 1890, this, too, was a political convention. The delegates heard speeches, named committees, and adopted resolutions. While the *Germania*'s convention coverage was almost entirely in German, the convention itself was held mainly in English.⁷⁹ The *Germania* hoped that this would open Bennett supporters' eyes to the high level of English proficiency among German Americans and help them recognize how unnecessary the Bennett Law was. At this assembly were over 700 anti-Bennett pastors, professors, and members of German cultural associations. There were also two *Germania* employees among the speakers: August Roß and Christian Koerner.

Koerner gave the rousing opening address in English, in which he summarized the development of anti-Bennett resistance among German Protestants over the previous 15 months. The *Germania* printed these remarks in the original English. Koerner began by describing the controversy in military terms and framing the issue as one of bigoted nativists versus religious Germans, saying that after the Bennett Law had passed, "An earnest war began against this issue of know-nothingism and ignorance..."⁸⁰ Koerner continued in this vein and recounted how Lutheran church bodies had met in the summer of 1889 "well knowing that their parochial

⁷⁹ "Anti-Bennett Konvention," *Germania*, June 6, 1890, 12.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

schools and institutions of learning, and even their churches and congregations were, not openly and manly, but cowardly and covertly attacked by this abominable outgrowth of stupid and bungling hatred against the foreign born citizen...”⁸¹ To counter such foes, the Wisconsin Synod and the Wisconsin District of the Missouri Synod met to discuss a plan of action. The plan was to make use of the spring elections as “a proper occasion to call a halt to the champions of hatred and oppression.”⁸² Koerner then described how an executive committee was formed from both synods and how the committee helped organized Milwaukee churches with parochial schools ahead of the spring election. Seeing how successful the spring campaign was, the committee thought that an Anti-Bennett Convention would be a good idea, too. They summoned all opponents of the Bennett Law, whom Koerner called “—friends of liberty, enemies of slavery— ready to take such action as will bring the patrons of slavery to terms or bury them and set them a monument of public indignation so heavy that they shall never again arise.”⁸³ This language frames the Bennett Law in Civil War terms, with a righteous North representing parochial school supporters and a slave-owning South representing Bennett Law supporters. Koerner wanted an anti-Bennett Union to defeat a pro-Bennett Confederacy. He closed his speech with a stirring call to action, “Down with the Bennett law—down with its champions! Unfurl the flag of liberty, civil and religious, throw it out to the breeze of popular indignation against this abortive attempt of oppression, onward then with God for home and altar and—*in hoc signo vinces*.”⁸⁴ Koerner thus connects anti-Bennett people with another righteous cause. Supporters of parochial schools were like Constantine seeing the Chi Rho at the Milvian Bridge and knowing that he would conquer in that holy sign. Instead of a Chi Rho, the banner of liberty was to guide Wisconsin

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

Germans to victory. Soon after the speech, Koerner was officially elected to be the chairman of the convention. Then, after some remarks by the newly elected Mayor Peck, F. W. von Cotzhausen addressed the crowd.

Cotzhausen opened his long speech by admitting to his audience that, unlike most opponents of the Bennett Law, he was not a member of any church. He hastened to add that he would rather not be considered anti-Christian or a heathen and that he and his children had been brought up “in den Grundsätzen der christlichen Kirche” (in the principles of the Christian Church).⁸⁵ Cotzhausen then told the assembly about how he considered America to be a Christian nation that incorporated Christianity into its legal foundations. Further seeking to convince his churchgoing audience that he was not its enemy, Cotzhausen emphasized his belief in “a well-regulated civil society, not in state socialism.”⁸⁶ Cotzhausen assured his listeners that he was not like the unbelievers who supported the Bennett Law and opposed parochial schools simply to be contrarian.⁸⁷

Cotzhausen, a lawyer by trade, explained his understanding of parental rights to the crowd. He argued that parents had a legal right to nurture, that is, to care for and educate their children until they reached the age of 14. Furthermore, while acknowledging that compulsory education, *Schulpflicht*, was acceptable, he thought that *Schulzwang*, forced education, was not. Cotzhausen disputed any right of the state to force parents to send their children to any particular school. He argued that they could delegate the right to educate their own children to someone else, namely to a public or private school, but that the state could not keep them from homeschooling if they wanted to, so long as they did it reasonably. Nevertheless, Cotzhausen

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Author’s translation. Original: “...eine wohlregulierte, bürgerliche Gesellschaft, nicht an Staatssozialismus.” Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

admitted that there could be situations when the state might need to step in for the sake of the child. In his framing of the issue, he sometimes referred to parental rights and a father's rights interchangeably. Cotzhausen believed that if a father was unable or unwilling to fulfill his natural duties to his child, then the state was obliged to stand *in loco parentis* and assume care of his child. Cotzhausen again clarified that parental rights could be given up by parents, but not taken from them by the state. He believed that the Bennett Law interfered with these parental rights,

The discretion of parents and natural guardians cannot be hemmed in by a code of inflexible rules which a legislature dictates from time to time and has handed over to a local ministerial agency for its implementation.⁸⁸

Cotzhausen believed that the cases of parental neglect that might necessitate the removal of a child from parental custody were rare. Such decisions, he believed, were best decided in court rooms on a case-by-case basis.

Cotzhausen further disagreed with the Bennett Law because he believed that it set a bad legal precedent. The American legal system, he reminded the audience, is built on precedent. The Bennett Law set the precedent that the state could dictate both the language of instruction and particular subjects taught in public and private schools. Cotzhausen was concerned that once the state was granted this right to decide what was taught, that nothing could stand in the way of the state eventually dictating what may or may not be taught in Wisconsin schools. He considered such state paternalism highly undemocratic and dangerous. Because of the danger of setting such a precedent, Cotzhausen urged the convention to hold the line on the Bennett Law to prevent a worse law down the road.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Author's translation. Original: "Die Diskretion der Eltern und natürlichen Vormünder kann in diesem Punkte nicht durch einen *Codex unbiegsamer Regeln* eingehemmt werden, welche eine Legislatur von Zeit zu Zeit diktirt, und einer ministeriellen lokalen Behörde zur Ausführung überwiesen hat." Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

Instead of the freedom allowed in the American system, Cotzhausen suggested that Bennett Law proponents were arguing for laws usually found under authoritarian governmental systems. In making this claim, he cited both modern and classical examples. The United States, he believed, should not emulate Germany and Russia, both European monarchies with restrictive language policies. Americans should furthermore not long for the paternalistic governance and state interference in education matters of ancient Sparta, where children were taken from their parents and raised by the state. Cotzhausen believed that a Connecticut law requiring children to be taught with an orthodox catechism approached Spartan levels of educational control. In Cotzhausen's estimation, local Turners like the anti-clerical editor Hermann Boppe, who tended to endorse state interference in education, would likely not appreciate having their children endure "Zwangsunterricht im orthodoxen Kathechismus" (forced instruction in the orthodox catechism).⁹⁰ Cotzhausen thought that such paternalism might sound appealing when it is in line with one's beliefs, but was something of a two-edged sword, becoming intolerable when the state stood for other beliefs.

Cotzhausen played with the idea that the Bennett Law was really a hidden attack on the German language. He speculated about whether, after the failure of the Pond Bill, foes of German were aiming for its destruction by more indirect means. Prohibition might also be playing a role, he mused. After its defeat in states like Pennsylvania, perhaps Prohibitionists were seeking a different line of attack. Ultimately, Cotzhausen decided not to delve too deep into such speculations, but to instead encourage his audience to fight against the Bennett Law, against what he called "legislativen Mißbrauch unter dem Deckmantel der Reform" (legislative abuse under the mantle of reform).⁹¹ Like Justice Ryan of the Wisconsin Supreme Court, Cotzhausen

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., 12.

believed that the legislature should generally stay out of the private, natural, holy relationship between father and child.⁹²

To close his speech, Cotzhausen elucidated his own principles on the school question. He believed that parents have a right to educate their children in the way they see fit until the child reaches 14 years of age. If the parents are negligent or abuse their rights, they may lose said rights by order of a judge, but the legislature and executive branches of government should not summarily make such a decision. Only if the parents have been found guilty can the state step in, be *in loco parentis*. Otherwise, Cotzhausen declared, parents must have discretion in deciding upon what education their children ought to receive, whether it be homeschooling, public schooling, or private schooling. As long as public school boards did not meddle in the affairs of private schools, reasoned Cotzhausen, there was nothing inherently wrong with compulsory education laws because such laws only required parents to perform their natural duties. After Cotzhausen's extensive speech, the convention named a committee to work on the official convention declarations.

While the committee deliberated, Konrad Krez, the poet, provocateur, and Civil War veteran, spoke to convention attendees. His speech was less formally argumentative than Cotzhausen's. In it, Krez made more of a scattershot attack on the Bennett Law, and, more than Cotzhausen, framed the law as an attack on the German language and German culture. Krez claimed that "the whole Bennett Law shows nothing, in the main, apart from hatred towards the German language."⁹³ He argued that German had as much a right to be spoken in America as English, citing the fact that Germans had been in the country for nearly as long as English

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Author's translation. Original: "Das ganze Bennett-Gesetz zeigt weiter nichts, als Haß gegen die deutsche Sprache hauptsächlich." Ibid.

speakers, and that they had fought for the Union in the Civil War, "...the German has bled for the freedom of this country, and there was nothing about that blood that could tell you whether it was German or English."⁹⁴ Krez acknowledged that English was the de facto official language of the government and that German should not be forced on public institutions. He also argued, based on the Wisconsin constitutional guarantees of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, that that all citizens, no matter their country of origin, had a right to continue speaking their mother tongue. Krez concluded his speech with a call for German Americans to be proud of their heritage, of *Deutschtum*: "Yet we can be proud of our Germandom, and whoever is ashamed of it, then he or his parents should be thrown into jail where they belong."⁹⁵ This joking about throwing people into jail for not being proud of their culture is a play on the Bennett Law penalizing parents for not sending their children to an appropriate school. After Krez spoke, the Norwegian-American Rasmus Anderson gave a speech that encouraged immigrants to be proud of their language, culture, and unique contributions to society. Then, the convention committee returned with its resolutions.

The anti-Bennett convention committee's resolutions were unanimously accepted by the convention. These resolutions summarized arguments that the *Germania* had been making throughout the campaign. The first few of them sought to dispel any misconceptions about the anti-Bennett position. They acknowledged the necessity of public schools and pledged to continue supporting and funding them. Moreover, they declared that they would not seek public money for the parochial schools. The delegates also reiterated that they were not enemies of the English language and that they wanted their children to learn English in addition to German.

⁹⁴ Author's translation. Original: "...der Deutsche hat ebenfalls für die Freiheit dieses Landes geblutet, und an dem Blute war nicht zu merken, ob es deutsches oder englisches war." Ibid.

⁹⁵ Author's translation. Original: "Doch können wir stolz auf unser Deutschthum sein und wer sich dessen schämt, der oder dessen Eltern faßen im Zuchthaus und gehören dahin." Ibid.

Finally, they made clear that they opposed neither compulsory education nor laws that prohibited child labor in factories.⁹⁶

Next the committee enumerated the reasons for their opposition to the law. They believed that the district clause deprived them of their rights as parents, citizens, and Christians to send their children to the school of their choice. Also, they argued that section one of the law was unjust because, by allowing public school boards to fix when the consecutive school term would begin, the law robbed private schools and churches of flexibility in setting their children's educational schedules. They further objected to the portion of the law requiring schools to teach reading, writing, arithmetic, and U.S. history in English, arguing that it was unjust for the government to dictate the language of instruction and curriculum in private schools. They feared that the law was written in such a way that public school boards would feel empowered to interfere in the affairs of private schools. Therefore, the delegates resolved to support only candidates who would vote to repeal the Bennett Law, regardless of their party. An addendum expressed the delegates' disappointment with Governor Hoard, who had suggested that pastors and congregations were conspiring to hold their children in ignorance. They also felt insulted by the *Sentinel* and its editor, Horace Rublee, who had accused the German-American laity of blindly following the clergy.⁹⁷

After the resolutions were passed, August Roß, the business manager of the *Germania*, gave what was initially to be the closing speech. In it, he expressed his displeasure with the tendencies among some Americans to unnecessarily accelerate assimilation: "They would like to accelerate the process of forming a nation through all sorts of snake oil."⁹⁸ Roß thought that

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Author's translation. Original: "Man möchte durch allerlei Quacksalbereien den Prozess der Bildung einer 'Nation' beschleunigen." Ibid.

prohibition was one example of this forced-assimilation snake oil, and that forcing everyone to speak English was another. He believed that such assimilation tactics were an affront to liberty, that if there should really be just one nation and one language, then the U.S. should simply rejoin monarchist England again.⁹⁹ He thought that English requirements were meant to force immigrants, especially Germans, to give up their language, Americanize faster, and become “goody goodies,” for whom temperance laws were palatable.¹⁰⁰ He continued hyperbolically along these lines:

Then they can also finally hope to plant in all children an intolerance for all things drinkable that are not composed of pure water. They will thus get to the point where the bad men who brew beer will be robbed their property. [They also hope] that the people who prefer to drink beer and wine over water will die out or emigrate as soon as possible and enable the formation of a pure, English-American temperance nation. Then finally the millennium will break out; then the world of men will with grateful hearts grant voting rights to the eternal, feminine sex, or the [men] will give these rights up to the [women]. Yet until then there is hopefully still a good while.¹⁰¹

Roß’s sarcastic reference to the millennium is likely a dig at strains of American Christianity that looked for a thousand-year reign after Jesus Second Coming. Catholics and Lutherans rejected such a view, holding that the thousand years referenced in the book of Revelation should not be taken literally. Unlike Cotzhausen or Koerner, Roß linked the Bennett Law to a wider program of forced Americanization involving temperance and women’s suffrage, two unpopular issues among male German voters. Roß continued panning the Bennett Law in this playful style.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Author’s translation. Original: “Dann kann man endlich auch hoffen, allen Kindern schon in der Schule einen Abscheu vor allem Trinkbaren, das nicht aus reinem Wasser besteht, einzupflanzen und so dahin kommen, daß die bösen Männer, welche Bier brauen, ihres Eigenthums beraubt werden, daß die Leute, die lieber Bier und Wein trinken, als Wasser, aussterben, oder möglichst bald auswandern und uns die Bildung einer rein englisch-amerikanischen Temperenz-Nation ermöglichen. Dann endlich wird das Millenium anbrechen; dann wird die Männerwelt dem ewig weiblichen Geschlecht aus dankbarem Herzen das Stimm- und Wahlrecht bewilligen, oder dies gar ganz an dasselbe abtreten. Doch bis dahin hat es hoffentlich noch gute Weile.” Ibid.

Roß recognized the necessity of learning English and believed that his fellow Wisconsinites were of the same mind. Because of the self-evident importance of learning English, he called laws requiring English like the Bennett Law to be as unnecessary as laws requiring bathing:

I gladly recognize that it is desirable for every citizen of this country to become as familiar with English as can be. I also gladly recognize that it is good for the health of a man if he, for example, bathes regularly. Yet I would not like to have compulsory bathing introduced, or, like here in Milwaukee, where there is a public bath, that each citizen should be forced to use it and to see bathing at home as insufficient. But my gentlemen, if one could bathe differently in 'American,' or if in so doing one might learn some English, or if Temperance might thereby be given a boost, I could not say for sure that such laws would not be passed.¹⁰²

After all of these criticisms of laws that require English, Roß again reminded his audience that German Americans were not enemies of English, that it was the language of the land and that immigrants should learn it as quickly as they can. Roß also remarked that English was closely related to German, especially "Plattdeutsch" (Low German), which he jokingly suggested should become the country's official language. He concluded the speech by saying that everyone in the crowd would have to go out and convince his neighbors to vote against supporters of the Bennett Law.¹⁰³

After Roß finished, there were two short speeches, one by a Mr. Gardner of Watertown and one by Rev. Willibald Hackner, a Catholic priest from Fountain City. Rev. Hackner was a frequent contributor to the Catholic newspaper, the *Columbia*. The *Germania* did not record

¹⁰² Author's translation. Original: "Ich erkenne gerne an, daß es wünschenswerth ist, daß jeder Bürger dieses Landes sich mit der englischen Sprache möglichst vertraut mache. Ich erkenne auch gerne an, daß es für die Gesundheit des Menschen sehr zuträglich ist, wenn man z. B. fleißig badet. Aber ich möchte doch nicht einen Badezwang eingeführt wissen, oder gar, wenn, wie jetzt hier in Milwaukee, ein öffentliches Bad existirt, jeder Bürger gezwungen werden sollte, dasselbe zu benutzen, und etwa das Baden zu Hause als nicht genügend angesehen würde. Aber meine Herren, wenn man sich auf „amerikanisch“ anders baden könnte, oder wenn dabei etwas Englisch zu erlernen oder der Temperenz dadurch Vorschub geleistet werden könnte, so wollte ich nicht gut dafür sagen, daß nicht solche Gesetze erlassen werden würden." Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

what Hackner said. Indeed, it appears that the editors were displeased that Gardner and Hackner spoke at all since they were not a part of the official program. The committee had not approved them and the *Germania* editors opined that they did not “rightly fit in the noble framework of the really magnificent convention.”¹⁰⁴ The full reasoning behind the *Germania*’s omission of Gardner’s and Hackner’s speeches is unclear. Perhaps members of the editorial staff, which had been so involved in planning the convention, were perturbed by interlopers. Perhaps it was the fact that Hackner was a Catholic priest, or that he argued for the clergy’s right to participate in politics, something that the *Germania* editors might not have wanted to print lest they give more ammunition to political opponents who were already suspicious of meddling clergy among the anti-Bennett crowd.

The *Columbia* gave brief reports on each of these speakers. Gardener made two points. One point was that foreign clergy were not the primary source of opposition to the Bennett Law. His other point, which was apparently received with great applause, was that no compromise was possible in the case of the Bennett Law, that it should not just be amended but repealed. After Gardner spoke, Rev. Hackner defended the rights of clerics to participate in politics as citizens, saying that pastors and priests had civil rights and duties, too. He dismissed the claim of Bennett Law supporters that public schools were somehow under attack and emphasized that it was really the parochial schools that were being threatened. Hackner closed with an appeal to unity among Bennett Law opponents, which he believed would assure victory. As with Gardner’s, Hackner’s remarks were said to have been met with applause.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Author’s translation. Original: “...recht in den vornehmen Rahmen der wirklich großartigen Konvention passen.” Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ “Die Anti-Bennettgesetz-Convention,” *Columbia*. June 12, 1890, 5.

The Anti-Bennett Convention was a chance for the *Germania* to shine. For months, the editors had been making the case against the Bennett Law. They had been organizing behind the scenes and defending *Deutschtum* in the public pages of their newspaper against opinions published in other newspapers like the *Sentinel*. Already in the springtime, they had flexed their political muscle and played their part in motivating German Protestants to unite against the law. With delegates present from throughout the state, the *Germania* staff members could rest assured that they had been heard and that they had a good chance of getting it repealed. In so doing, they thought they would be playing a decisive role in defending American *Deutschtum*. The convention speakers had made the case against the law from a number of angles, appealing alternately to their audience's reasons and emotions. In the months to follow, the *Germania* was keenly interested in how closely the major political party conventions might follow the anti-Bennett convention's lead.

The Reluctant Shift from the Republican Party

As a Republican-leaning newspaper, the editors of the *Germania* often expressed the hope that repeal of the Bennett Law would receive bipartisan support. For instance, in January 1890, they emphasized that although the law might be an issue in the upcoming elections, it need not be so since neither party had yet taken an official position.¹⁰⁶ The editors had more reason to expect a bipartisan solution in March, when the prominent Republican, Henry Clay Payne, agreed that the law needed amending.¹⁰⁷ Before the summer conventions, they continued in their hope that both parties would agree to stand against it, particularly after hearing that both major parties had declared their opposition to the Edwards Law in Illinois.¹⁰⁸ The *Germania* also

¹⁰⁶ "Allerlei aus Milwaukee," *Germania*, January 14, 1890, 8.

¹⁰⁷ "Allerlei aus Milwaukee," *Germania*, March 11, 1890, 8.

¹⁰⁸ "Allerlei aus Milwaukee," *Germania*, July 8, 1890, 8.

encouraged its readers to make their voices heard at the Democratic and Republican state conventions so that both parties might be pushed to call for the repeal of the law.¹⁰⁹

The *Germania*'s reaction to the 1890 political platforms adopted by the Democrats and Republicans showed its reluctance to support the Democrats. Once the Republican platform came out with a pro-Bennett plank, the *Germania* expressed mixed feelings about its preferred party. At first, the *Germania* commented that many in the Republican party did not want to support the Bennett Law, but were doing so only reluctantly because Hoard and the English-language press had tied the Republicans' fortunes to it.¹¹⁰ The *Germania* editors believed that the Republican platform could be interpreted too broadly, but they decided to withhold final judgment until they heard what the Republican leadership and press made of it.¹¹¹ Despite its questions about the state platform, the *Germania* eventually expressed approval of Republican Senator Spooner and the national platform.¹¹² When the Democratic platform came out a week later, the *Germania* was pleased with the anti-Bennett plank but thought the rest of the platform was weak.¹¹³ A few weeks later, the editors argued that while the Republican platform could be interpreted positively, Governor Hoard's statements made the law's true intent clear. Starting with his January address to the legislature, Hoard had shown his desire for state control over parochial schools, leading to the eventual "Vernichtung der deutschen Schule und damit des Deutschthums" (annihilation of the German school and thus of Germandom).¹¹⁴ Nonetheless, *Germania* editors argued that Republicans running for national office need not lose votes on account of state-level issues like the Bennett Law.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ "Die Platform," *Germania*, August 26, 1890, 1.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ "Die Demokraten von Wisconsin," *Germania*, September 2, 1890, 1.

¹¹⁴ "Allerlei aus Milwaukee," *Germania*, September 16, 1890, 8.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

As the November election neared, however, the *Germania* changed its attitude toward Senator Spooner. Despite the great amount of column space Spooner had been given, the *Germania* printed articles that called for his ouster. C. F. W. Huth of the Anti-Bennett State Central Committee argued in a *Germania* essay against the Republican ticket on October 14, shortly before voter registration closed. He said that German voters especially needed to defeat Governor Hoard, calling him “Dieser engherzige Deutschenhässer und Religionsfeind” (that closed-hearted, German-hater and enemy of religion).¹¹⁶ Huth also exhorted his readers to defeat Hoard’s supporters, including Senator Spooner. He brought up how Spooner was defending Hoard and actively working toward the defeat of German Protestants. *Germania* readers were urged to see through Spooner’s rhetoric, “It is precisely (Spooner) whom we need to show that we are men, and that a true and just man does not let himself get distracted by any flattering or sweet-sounding rhetoric when the time comes to stand up for freedom and justice.”¹¹⁷ Huth concluded his essay by telling readers to register to vote and put opponents of the Bennett Law into office. Huth and the *Germania*’s appeals apparently fell on fertile ground; Hoard and the Republicans were soundly rejected.

Conclusion

The *Germania* actively campaigned against the law and its backers in nearly every weekly edition between April 1889 and November 1890. During that time period, the *Germania* printed a wide variety of arguments against the Bennett Law, many of which were based on traditional American values such as liberty, equality, and justice, as well as traditional German virtues, such as loyalty to one’s heritage and piety. Such arguments were tailored to fit different

¹¹⁶ “Allerlei aus Milwaukee,” *Germania*, October 14, 1890, 8

¹¹⁷ Author’s translation. Original: “Gerade ihm müssen wir zeigen, daß wir Männer sind, und daß ein echter und rechter Mann sich durch keine schmeichlerischen und schönklingenden Redensarten davon abbringen läßt, seine Pflicht voll und ganz zu thun, wenn es gilt, für Freiheit und Recht einzutreten.” Ibid.

audiences. Koerner's English-language pamphlet emphasized that the Bennett Law was unconstitutional and un-American. The pamphlet's arguments appealed to Anglophone citizens, who shared a love of country and respect for the constitution with the German Americans. The *Germania's* German-language coverage included constitutional arguments and patriotic appeals as well, but it placed a stronger emphasis on the dangers that the Bennett Law posed to the German language, German culture, and faith. German-language campaign poetry made some of the most impassioned appeals to these values associated with *Deutschtum*.

The *Germania's* coverage of the Bennett Law controversy was characterized by its belief that it was defending *Deutschtum*, from the beginning making the case that the language, traditions, and institutions of German Americans were under attack. The *Germania* saw the parochial school as the bulwark of German culture. Without the parochial school, the *Germania* believed that *Deutschtum* would fade away and that German-American children would be bereft of their heritage. Using poetry, impassioned arguments, and sober analysis, it made the case that the Bennett Law was an attack on the parochial schools and, thus, the heart of German-American culture.

Chapter 3: A Stand for *Schulpflicht*: The *Amerikanische Turnzeitung* and the Bennett Law

The *Amerikanische Turnzeitung* voiced the concerns of *Freisinnige*, or classically liberal, German Americans of the day. While the *Turnzeitung* was the official newspaper of the North American Turner Association, *Nordamerikanischer Turnerverbund*, the views expressed in the *Turnzeitung* were not limited to Turners. There was a great deal of overlap among liberal German-American groups: Forty-Eighters, Turners, Socialists, and Freethinkers. For instance, Victor Berger, a member of Milwaukee's southside Turner club, would later go on to become a Socialist member of Congress. The *Turnzeitung* editor, C. Hermann Boppe, was also the editor of the *Freidenker* newspaper and a member of the *Freie Gemeinde*, a congregation of Freethinkers. The historians Bruncken and Hense-Jensen describe him as "a unique man, Swiss by birth, talented but eccentric, who still held firmly and unchangingly to the ideas of Forty-Eighter radicals, who in their time had also raved about state-run education."¹ The editorial slant of the *Freidenker* would not have differed substantially from that of the *Turnzeitung*; in fact, they sometimes published the same material.²

At the height of both the spring and fall elections of 1890, when the *Germania* and *Columbia* were campaigning against the Bennett Law with poetry and creative writing, the *Turnzeitung* continued publishing its regular fare of poetry, addressing the controversy only tangentially. The *Turnzeitung* usually published about 3 or 4 poems per issue on all manner of topics, including religious and political ones. Many poems were apolitical, extolling the beauties of the natural world, for instance, but others were more pointed, revealing the *Turnzeitung*'s

¹ Author's translation. Original: "Dieser eigenthümliche Mann, ein Schweizer von Geburt, talentvoll aber exzentrisch, hielt noch immer unveränderlich an den Ideen der Achtundvierziger Radikalen fest, die ihrer Zeit auch für ausschließlich vom Staate geleiteten Schulunterricht geschwärmt hatten." Bruncken and Hense-Jensen, *Wisconsin's Deutsch-Amerikaner, bis zum Schluss des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, 1902, 2:154.

² "Correspondenzen," *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, August 3, 1890, 6.

underlying values. Some poems, like “Das Land der Freiheit,” pointed out hypocrisy in the purported land of freedom, a land where Germans could get in trouble with the authorities for violating Sunday blue laws.³ Some poems, like “Abendmahl,” criticized traditional religion, suggesting that mental dullness, ease, and common custom were really all that kept people coming to church.⁴ The poem “Wacht auf!” called on readers to bow to no one, to bring freedom to themselves and others and usher in a new era of enlightenment, brotherly love, and freedom.⁵ Such critiques of puritanical society and revealed religion were frequent in *Turnzeitung* prose. Just as common in *Turnzeitung* articles was praise for enlightened thinking, personal freedom, and personal responsibility, especially in the schools.

While the *Turnzeitung* did not directly address the Bennett Law controversy until the fall of 1889, related issues like educational policy were often topics of articles and editorials appearing throughout the year. The *Turnzeitung* strongly supported public education, but also supported private Turner schools and private teacher training. In their private schools, the *Freisinnige* were free to teach German to their children and avoid the supposedly secular but essentially Protestant public schools, which, like the parochial schools, supported Christian beliefs like the Mosaic creation story. The *Turnzeitung* commonly accused parochial schools of forcing rigid dogma and blind obedience onto impressionable young minds. The *Freisinnige* writing in the *Turnzeitung* could hardly disagree more with the religious character of parochial schools, but they shared with German Lutherans and Catholics a desire to pass on the German language and its associated German values to the next generation. The *Turnzeitung*'s 1889 take

³ Karl Reuter Kerger, “Das Land der Freiheit,” *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, October 5, 1890, 2.

⁴ Ernst Wachler, “Abendmahl,” *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, October 2, 1890, 1.

⁵ Leopold Jacoby, “Wacht auf!” *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, March 18, 1890, 1.

on the Bennett Law even expressed some sympathy to the anti-Bennett position, including a concern about interference with parental rights and freedom of instruction.

Throughout 1890, the *Turnzeitung*'s opinions concerning the Bennett Law grew further apart from those of religious, anti-Bennett newspapers. The spring campaign of 1890 had morphed municipal elections into an unofficial referendum on the Bennett Law, leading the Turners finally to take an official position on the issue. While believing that the Bennett Law should be modified to ensure freedom of instruction, the *Turnzeitung* considered anti-Bennett forces and their arguments about parental rights to be disingenuous. The *Turnzeitung* editors thought that Bennett opponents were really interested in protecting church privileges and preventing the state from exercising its legitimate rights of school supervision and enforcement of compulsory education laws. In the aftermath of the spring elections, the *Turnzeitung* turned up its rhetoric and accused religious groups, particularly Catholics, of trying to interfere with the state's educational prerogatives. They disdained the Democratic candidate, George Wilbur Peck, whom they considered to be an opportunistic demagogue trying to ride the wave of anti-Bennett sentiment into the governor's mansion. The *Turnzeitung* instead supported the incumbent Republican, Governor William Dempster Hoard, whom they deemed a man of honor who would stand up for the Republic's duty to educate its citizens. In various editorials during the fall campaign, the *Turnzeitung* disagreed with German-American newspapers that expressed the belief that the law was anti-German or injurious to fundamental rights. After the November 1890 election, the *Turnzeitung* blamed the Republican loss on clergy who had driven their congregations to the polls *en masse* to vote for Peck and the Democrats.

Beliefs about Education

At the end of March 1889, the *Turnzeitung* expressed high hopes for what the public schools might someday become. Public school teachers, they believed, should train children to think and act for themselves, and to perform the duties of self-government.⁶ Public schools ought to be places where bold teachers could teach the unvarnished truth. The *Turnzeitung* opposed the “schoolmaster neutrality” of the day: “Neutrality is being raised up to be the highest virtue, a virtue that does not actually exist, but is, in reality, a cowardly avoidance of the Truth.”⁷ Neutrality, they believed, should not extend to telling lies to children, and for the *Turnzeitung*, religious instruction was a way of lying to children, whether in private or public schools.

The *Turnzeitung* was dissatisfied with the religiosity of public schools. It considered religious instruction in them unwarranted and against republican principles:

It seems to us to be a crime against the free spirit of the Republic, that also in the schools of our country, even though they are supposed to have no ecclesial influence and nothing to do with religion, that religious nonsense still claims so much space for itself.⁸

The *Turnzeitung* noted that they were not the only group to have a problem with religion in the public schools, but that Catholics and orthodox Protestants also had a problem with it.⁹ The *Turnzeitung* believed it saw religion finding its way into public schools in myriad ways: by requiring bible readings, preferencing Christian teachers, and ignoring proselytizing as long as it was done by Christians.¹⁰ Christianity also found its way into the schools by means of textbooks, which could even be found in the liberal teacher’s seminary and flagship German liberal school,

⁶ “Wissenschaft und Schulunterricht,” *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, March 31, 1889, 4.

⁷ Author’s translation. Original: “Zur Hauptschulmeistertugend wird die ‘Neutralität’ erhoben, eine ‘Neutralität,’ die es in Wirklichkeit gar nicht gibt, die stets nur ein feiges Abweichen von der Wahrheit ist.” “Wissenschaft und Schulunterricht,” *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, March 31, 1889, 4.

⁸ Author’s translation. Original: “Es erscheint uns ein Verbrechen gegen den freien Geist der Republik zu sein, daß auch in den Schulen unseres Landes, obwohl dieselben keinem kirchlichem Einflüsse unterstehen und mit Religion nichts zu thun haben wollen, Dogmenspuk für sich noch so viel Raum beansprucht.” Ibid.

⁹ “Naturgemäße Erziehung,” *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, August 18, 1889, 4.

¹⁰ “Wissenschaft und Schulunterricht,” *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, March 31, 1889, 4.

the German-English Academy.¹¹ Finally, the *Turnzeitung* was wary of the “Reverends” among teachers, administrators, and professors, who ensured that religion remained in the public-school curriculum. The *Turnzeitung* thought that teaching truth contrary to what the “Reverends” approved of would get one put on trial as a heretic.¹²

For the *Turnzeitung*, one of the chief ways in which schools obscured the truth was by teaching creation either exclusively or alongside evolution. In numerous articles, *Turnzeitung* editors argued for the new way of understanding the world. They believed that education could not be true to nature until the Mosaic creation story was no longer taught. Despite the Copernican revolution that Darwin brought to the natural world, the *Turnzeitung* argued that the Ptolemaic universe still held sway in both public and private schools.¹³ Despite the relative popularity of the biblical creation account, the *Turnzeitung* editors believed that this would not always be the case: “Where Truth nakedly and clearly claims its right, Falsehood must give way.”¹⁴ The *Turnzeitung* believed that the truth of the Darwinian worldview would necessarily win over more people, leading to the inevitable demise of the religious influence in the schools.

Maintaining the German Language and Liberal Values

While German-American *Freisinnige* held a different worldview from Lutherans and Catholics, they shared with them an anxiety about the future of the German language and how it might best be passed on to the next generation. They believed that the fight for the German language was a fight for the continued existence of German-American institutions, a *Lebensfrage*.¹⁵ This stance echoed the concerns of German-American Lutherans and Catholics,

¹¹ “Wundarbar ist es, daß ungeachtet alles Betonens...” *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, August 11, 1889, 4.

¹² “Wissenschaft und Schulunterricht,” *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, March 31, 1889, 4.

¹³ “Naturgemäße Erziehung,” *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, August 18, 1889, 4.

¹⁴ Author’s translation. Original: “Wo die Wahrheit nackt und klar ihr Recht behauptet, muß die Lüge weichen.” *Ibid.*

¹⁵ “Turnlehrerseminar und Lehrerseminar,” *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, July 14, 1889, 4.

who believed that the maintenance of their heritage language was bound up with the continuity of their churches. The *Turnzeitung* argued for the perpetuation of the German language in almost religious terms, “Without impugning our American patriotism, the German language and literature are holy to us, and we see it as our solemn duty to leave them to coming generations.”¹⁶ Thus, the *Freisinnige* sought to perpetuate their language and worldview by creating private schools of their own and by promoting German in the public schools.¹⁷ They saw their liberal traditions as bound up with the German language, which they sought to spread to their fellow Americans.¹⁸ They considered themselves to be *ebenbürtig*, of equal rank, with Anglo-Americans. Their values, they believed, could help enlighten their fellow Americans, and help free those still under the sway of a monarchical mentality.¹⁹ For the *Freisinnige*, the highest and most precious of these liberal values was “The love of truth, which is the light of the spirit and the idea of freedom...”²⁰

Like the pastors and teachers who taught multiple subjects in parochial schools, liberal German Americans like the Turners hoped to train instructors who could teach more than just gymnastics in the German language. By showing aptitude in teaching multiple subjects, these trained Turners would be able to keep smaller, rural schools alive, which might not otherwise be able to afford a Turner as well as another teacher.²¹ Such men were not simply to teach German and basic subjects while remaining neutral on the questions of the day, but they were to spread

¹⁶ Author’s translation. Original: “Unbeschadet unseres Amerikanerthums sei uns deutsch Sprache und Litteratur heilig und betrachten wir es als eine ernst zu nehmende Pflicht, dieselbe auch den kommenden Generationen einzuflößen.” “Das Ende,” *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, October 20, 1889, 4.

¹⁷ “Turnlehrerseminar und Lehrerseminar,” *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, July 14, 1889, 4.

¹⁸ “Das Ende,” *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, October 20, 1889, 4.

¹⁹ “Zum 19. Deutsch-amerikanischen Lehrertag,” *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, August 4, 1889, 4.

²⁰ Author’s translation. Original: “Des Geistes Licht, der Gedanke der Freiheit, die Liebe zur Wahrheit, sie sollen dem Deutschamerikanerthum stets als höchste Güter gelten, lieb und theuer bleiben.” “Das Ende,” *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, October 20, 1889, 4.

²¹ “Turnlehrerseminar und Lehrerseminar,” *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, July 14, 1889, 4.

liberal ideas as well: “No rubber men and watery apostles should be sent out from the Turner seminary, but ... Turners who are unfolders, bearers, apostles of free intellectual power, of natural development.”²² The mission of this secular teacher’s seminary was, thus, religious in nature: to train teacher-apostles who would spread a gospel of the free, natural development of mind, body, and spirit. In the view of the *Turnzeitung*, the mission of these Turner schools differed markedly from that of the parochial schoolteacher.

Critiques of Parochial Schools

Parochial schools earned a great deal of scorn from the *Turnzeitung* editors. According to them, religious education alienated youth from the true essence of republicanism and bound them in a “Geistesnacht” (an intellectual and spiritual night).²³ They accused the churches of instructing children in this fashion to make believers out of their children but not thinkers. Instead of submissive subjects, the Turner teachers would help raise up free citizens:

We stand for the *free* German spirit, which possesses the spirit of Truth. This spirit is an enemy to all lies and hypocrisy, insists on the right to think and research, and wants to develop men, and not subjects who avoid all doubts and decisions.²⁴

The *Turnzeitung* believed that parochial schools taught values different from those needed in a true Republic.²⁵ Parochial school teachers, or religious teachers in public schools were the sort

... who take orders from above telling them that it is their duty and obligation to beat the virtues of subjugation into children or to plant empty dogmatic madness into young brains. Such dogmas deny this earthly life as an end in itself, instead viewing it as

²² Author’s translation. Original: “Aus dem Turnlehrerseminar sollen keine Kautschulmänner und Verwässerungapostel in die Welt hinausgesandt werden, sondern Turner, die [...] sind: Entfalter, Träger, Apostel der freien Geisteskraft, der naturellen Entwicklung.” “Siebente Generalversammlung des Nationalen deutsch amerikanischen Lehrerseminars,” *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, July 21, 1889, 4.

²³ “Zum 19. deutsch-amerikanischen Lehrertag,” *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, July 28, 1889, 4.

²⁴ Author’s translation. Original: “Für den freien deutschen Geist treten wir ein, der den Muth der Wahrheit besitzt, aller Lüge und Heuchelei feind ist, auf dem Rechte des Denkens und Forschens besteht und Menschen und nicht auf alles Zweifeln und Urtheilen verzichtende Knechte heranbilden will!” Ibid.

²⁵ “Naturgemäße Erziehung,” *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, August 18, 1889, 4.

something whose meaning consists only in being a station of suffering and testing for an eternity of either eternal heavenly joys or eternal hellish sufferings.²⁶

It would have been hard for the *Turnzeitung* editors to imagine any true unity with people who they believed beat virtues of subservience into their children and planted all sorts of mad, dogmatic seeds into their young brains. While working together with religious German Americans for the sake of the German language, the *Turnzeitung* editors were wary of any enduring alliances with them, particularly where German educational institutions were concerned: “Never ever can the hitherto liberal Teachers’ Union merge with ecclesial school organizations into a unified whole.”²⁷

Underlying this hostility to religious institutions is probably, in part, a sense of the waning influence of Forty-Eighter-style, revolutionary liberalism among German Americans. One question brought to the fore by the Bennett Law controversy was, Who speaks for German Americans? For decades, the Forty-Eighters and their intellectual descendants and allies had arrogated that role to themselves. These highly educated immigrants had founded a number of institutions over which religious traditionalists were exercising steadily more influence. German Catholics and especially German Lutherans had always outnumbered the German liberals, but the liberals had punched above their weight in the cultural and political spheres because of their education and political activism. The Catholics had been their main sparring partners in the press beginning in the 1840s, but after waves of immigrants from Germany’s Protestant north, the German liberals increasingly also had more traditional Lutherans to contend with. During the

²⁶ Author’s translation. Original: “...dessen ihm von Oben anbefohlene Pflicht und Schuldigkeit es ist, die Unterthanentugenden in die Kinder hineinzuprügeln oder in die jugendlichen Hirne wüsten Dogmenwahn zu pflanzen, nach welchem dem Erdenleben aller Selbstzweck abgesprochen wird und dasselbe nur die Bedeutung eines Leidens und Prüfungsstation für ein Jenseits mit ewigen Himmelsfreuden oder ewiger Höllen pein hat!” “Zum 19. deutsch-amerikanischen Lehrertag,” *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, July 28, 1889, 4.

²⁷ Author’s translation. Original: “Nie und nimmer kann sich aber der bisher freisinnige Lehrerbund mit kirchlichen Schulorganisationen zu einem einheitlichen Ganzen verschmelzen.” “Zum 19. deutsch-amerikanischen Lehrertag,” *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, July 28, 1889, 4.

Bennett campaign, German Protestants under the *Germania*'s banner had largely eclipsed the German liberals. As Bruncken and Hense-Jensen put it in their history of Wisconsin's German Americans, the Turners

...had set the tone in the political life of German Americans since the Civil War, when they had stood united for the stars and stripes. Whoever had the Turners' support, believed he could be sure of the support of the entire German element. That was now changing. In the Bennett campaign, their weakness in comparison to the religious element was revealed all too clearly.²⁸

One way that we can see this relative weakness is in newspaper subscriptions. The *American Newspaper Directory* reports that the *Turnzeitung* had approximately 3,000 to 4,000 subscribers, while its sister newspaper, the *Freidenker*, had about 2,400.²⁹ The *Germania*, by comparison, claimed between 75,000 and 100,000 subscribers. This loss of cultural and political influence likely exacerbated conflicts between the liberals and religious German Americans, making it difficult hold on to such common ground as there was.

Early Bennett Law Critiques

Despite the *Turnzeitung*'s hostility to the content of parochial education, their earliest takes on the Bennett Law actually appear sympathetic to anti-Bennett arguments. In late 1889, the *Turnzeitung* argued that the state had a right to demand certain minimum educational competencies, including English-language ability, from both public and private schools. However, it did not see any reason to require a certain language be the language of instruction for set subjects. The *Turnzeitung* acknowledged that even though it was unsympathetic to the aims of parochial schools, any suppression on the part of the state would be anathema to the

²⁸ Author's translation. Original: "Sie hatten seit dem Bürgerkriege, wo sie so einmüthig für die Sterne und Streifen eingetreten waren, im politischen Leben der Deutsch-Amerikaner den Ton angegeben. Wer die Unterstützung der Turner hatte, glaubte der Unterstützung des gesammten deutschen Elementes sicher zu sein. Das wurde jetzt anders. In der Bennett-Kampagne hatten sie im Gegensatz zu der Stärke des religiösen Elements ihre Schwäche allzu deutlich verrathen." Bruncken and Hense-Jensen, *Wisconsin's Deutsch-Amerikaner, bis zum Schluss des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, 1902, 2:167.

²⁹ *American Newspaper Directory*, 755.

Republic's principles, and that state suppression would not have the intended consequence, "Reason and better knowledge will win the victory over the churchdom. Opinions and convictions may not be imposed upon or decreed away by state power."³⁰ The editors also defended parental rights, a position that they would qualify over the next year. They praised freedom of thought and freedom of conscience, and even suggested that the Bennett Law went in the direction of suppressing private schools: "A Republic has even less of a right to suppress private schools than a Monarchy..."³¹ Their sympathy toward those oppressed by the state for their beliefs probably had historical roots. Freethinkers had long suffered under state oppression in countries with state churches and appreciated their American freedom to worship, or not, as they wished, and to form their own educational institutions. As the campaign grew fiercer, however, the *Turnzeitung* editors found much to criticize in the argumentation and behavior of their religious counterparts.

Turners and the Spring Campaign

When religious German Americans turned the spring 1890 municipal elections into an unofficial referendum on the Bennett Law, German-American liberals, like the Turners, felt the need to take a stand on the issue as well. The *Turnzeitung* thought that the position taken by Milwaukee's Turner organizations was a reasonable one. The Turners approved of the Bennett Law's restrictions on child labor and stricter attendance requirements. Unlike their more religious counterparts, the Turners did not call for the unconditional repeal of the law, but simply

³⁰ Author's translation. Original: "Ueber das Kirchenthum müssen Vernunft und besseres Wissen den Sieg erringen. Meinungen und Ueberzeugungen lassen sich aber nicht durch Staatsgewalt aufdrängen oder wegdecretiren!" "Notizen," *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, November 24, 1889, 5.

³¹ Author's translation. Original: "Privatschulen zu underdrücken habe eine Republik noch weniger ein Recht, als die Monarchie..." "Die neuliche Debatte in der Freien Gemeinde (Milwaukee)," *Die Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, December 1, 1889, 4.

for its emendation, that the “offensive” and “dangerous” paragraphs be turned in a more progressive direction.³²

Shortly before the April municipal elections, the *Turnzeitung* published a frontpage article covering how the city’s Turner societies were responding to the Bennett Law. The *Milwaukee Sentinel* had published an article claiming that Turners were the true authors of the Bennett Law. The northside Turners denied this, but they did say that they were supportive of it, apart from a few sections that needed improvement. While discussing Milwaukee’s northside Turner society and its meeting, the *Turnzeitung* quotes its own editor, C. Hermann Boppe, at length. Since Mr. Boppe was the editor of the *Turnzeitung*, and the quotes are so precise, the reader might reasonably assume that he authored this article. Boppe first reiterated that private schools, whether religious or secular, had the right to operate without state oppression. Then, he talked about the state’s right and “heilige Pflicht” (holy duty) to ensure that children grew into good citizens. While supporters of parochial schools referred to the Bennett Law as a *Schulzwang* law, a law that forces children to go to certain schools, Boppe referred to compulsory education laws as *Schulpflicht* laws, that is, attending school as a duty. The state, in his reasoning, could set up public schools, but had no right to monopolize education.³³ Thus, he thought that the Turners needed to be supportive of the law’s underlying principles, but also had to acknowledge that certain sections of it needed to be changed in order avoid abuses. In taking this position, Boppe warned against turning the issue into an ethnic struggle. Although taking a position similar to the churches, Boppe still expressed his suspicion of them, and particularly their usage of the term “Elternrecht” (parental rights), believing it to be a cover for “Kirchenrecht” (church rights). On the other hand, Boppe supported the rights of parents to send

³² “Die Turnvereine Milwaukee’s und das Bennettgesetz,” *Die Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, March 23, 1890, 1.

³³ “Die Turnvereine Milwaukee’s und das Bennettgesetz,” *Die Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, March 23, 1890, 1.

their children to the school of their choice, provided the school met certain minimum state standards. Boppe called on all true friends of public schools, regardless of ethnic background, to support amending the Bennett Law as needed while still holding to the principle of compulsory education, saying "... no child can be limited in his natural right to an education and yet the state school can claim no monopoly, that is, in no way tread on freedom of thought or conscience."³⁴

The Milwaukee southside Turners, one of whose leaders was Victor Berger, also discussed the Bennett Law. Berger would later become famous for winning a seat in Congress as an anti-war socialist, being denied a place there by a suspicious House, and winning a Supreme Court case that allowed him to finally be seated. Back in 1890, Berger the Turner recognized the contributions that parochial schools had made to the maintenance of the German language, but did not think the supporters of these schools were justified in their belief that the Bennett Law attacked them. He approved of the restrictions the law placed on child labor but wanted the district clause done away with and the required time spent in school to be increased from 12 to 24 weeks. With regard to the English requirement, Berger believed that the law should simply require reading and writing in the English instead of legally binding English instruction to particular subjects.³⁵

The *Turnzeitung* and Turner societies it reported on disagreed with the stance that newspapers like the Protestant *Germania* took on the Bennett law. The *Turnzeitung* thought that the *Germania*'s opposition to the Bennett Law contradicted its stated support for teaching U.S. history and English reading and writing: "When the *Germania* endorses the idea that no child should grow up without being taught to read and write English, then why make a *causus belli* out

³⁴ Author's translation. Original: "...kein Kind in seinem natürlichen Recht auf Schulung verkürzt werden kann und doch für die Staatsschule kein Monopol beansprucht, also der *Denk- und Gewissensfreiheit* in keiner Weise nahe getreten wird." Ibid.

³⁵ "Turnerische Mittheilungen," *Die Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, March 30, 1890, 8.

of a requirement that directly aims at just that?”³⁶ After all, the *Turnzeitung* editors reasoned, supporting compulsory education and quality schools requires a certain amount of state control. The *Turnzeitung* believed that the only plausible reason a citizen would have for fighting against a compulsory school law would be if the law actually opposed foreign language instruction or opposed doctrines taught in private schools. Since the Bennett Law did not do such things, argued the *Turnzeitung*, there was no reason to rebel against the Republican Party.³⁷

The *Turnzeitung* was not persuaded by the Democratic Party’s arguments against the Bennett Law. The Democratic state convention called for the law’s unconditional repeal, calling it unnecessary, unjust, and in violation of natural, parental rights. However, the Democrats clarified that they supported public schools and the 1879 compulsory education law, opposed child labor, and opposed dividing public school funds. The *Turnzeitung* thought that the Democrats went too far in condemning the Bennett Law, arguing that all compulsory school bills would be dead-letter laws if parents always had the last word on education. The *Turnzeitung* editors thought that the Democrats’ argument that the Republicans had simply failed to enforce the 1879 compulsory education law was made in bad faith because Democrats knew that the 1879 law had proven unenforceable. If the Democrats truly wanted an effective compulsory education law, opined the *Turnzeitung*, then they would be calling for a new one to replace the Bennett Law, a law that would respect a child’s natural right to an education.³⁸

The *Turnzeitung* also believed that religious anti-Bennett groups were arguing in bad faith, asserting that they were actually opposed to public schools. By refusing to recognize any

³⁶ Author’s translation. Original: “Wenn die ‘Germania’ es gutheißt, daß kein Kind aufwachsen sollte, ohne daß es Englisch zu lesen und schreiben gelehrt wurde, warum denn aus der dahinzielenden directen Forderung einen Kriegsfall machen?” “Die kommende Wahl und das Bennettgesetz,” *Die Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, March 30, 1890, 1.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

state control of their schools, the *Turnzeitung* reasoned, they were *de facto* making any truly effective compulsory education law impossible. The editors feared that religious German Americans were trying to use German-American liberals to undermine basic republican principles.³⁹ In essence, the *Turnzeitung* thought that religious Germans, especially Catholics, were using parental rights and freedom of instruction as a smokescreen for the Church's true purpose, which was to control its members. Thus, the *Turnzeitung* opposed unconditional rights of parents over their children, condemning such a stance as equivalent to slavery.⁴⁰ The *Turnzeitung* argued that parental rights could only go so far before injuring a child's right to become a member of society as a whole: "Against parental rights we set the natural right of a child to become a man. Humanity begins first through the relationships of man to his fellow men."⁴¹ The beliefs of the Catholic Church and its schools, the *Turnzeitung* held, were hostile to the freedom and flourishing of children, particularly in a Republic.

Critiques of Parochial Education and Catholicism

The *Turnzeitung* was suspicious of American Catholicism because of the throne and altar Catholicism of the Old World. They worried that the Catholics would abandon any commitments to personal freedom once they were in power in the New World:

...whenever one ever hears the champions of intolerant Catholicism babble about "freedom of instruction." That is a principle that Catholicism only knows when it is in a hopeless minority. Where it has power, it has a masterful understanding of school tyranny.⁴²

³⁹ "Die Turnvereine Milwaukee's und das Bennettgesetz," *Die Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, March 23, 1890, 1.

⁴⁰ "Wo ist der Zwang?" *Die Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, March 30, 1890, 4. See also Dr. Ludwig Fritsch, "Der Schulzwang," *Die Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, May 11, 1890, 5.

⁴¹ Author's translation. Original: "Dem 'Elternrecht' stellen wir das *natürliche Recht* des Kindes, *Mensch werden zu dürfen*, entgegen. Das Menschenthum beginnt erst durch die Beziehungen des Menschen zu den Mitmenschen." "Wo ist der Zwang?" *Die Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, March 30, 1890, 4.

⁴² Author's translation. Original: "...wenn man nun die Champions des unduldsamen Katholicismus immer von 'Unterrichtsfreiheit' fabeln hört. Das ist ein Princip, das der Katholicismus nur kennt, wo er in hoffnungsloser Minderheit ist. Wo er die Macht hat, versteht er sich ganz virtuosenhaft auf Schultyrannie." "Bibel und Religion in unserer Schule," *Die Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, January 12, 1890, 4.

Similarly, when commenting on Pope Leo XIII's papal encyclical, *Immortale Dei*, the *Turnzeitung* accused Catholics of meaning something quite different when they spoke of "parental rights." The *Turnzeitung* noted that the encyclical put religion at the heart of Catholic curriculum and teaching methods. As such, Catholic schools could not be places where republican values were effectively taught. Instead, argued the *Turnzeitung*, "The schools of the Republic must inculcate self-thought, self-judgment, and self-action. They will not and must not raise up men in a spirit of slavery, which is the essential precondition for keeping the church in power."⁴³ Continuing their harsh tone, *Turnzeitung* editors argued that schools under the sway of the Pope and the Church were harmful to the free development of children:

The free human spirit is mercilessly crippled from tender youth on and stuck in the church straitjacket. The natural human rights of children are disregarded, and schools are dishonored, becoming places that force faith. Whenever somebody says anything about "parental rights," then priestly privilege and church compulsion should be understood.⁴⁴

A couple of weeks later, the *Turnzeitung* published another article using harsh rhetoric about religious education. After complaining again about religious content in public schools, the *Turnzeitung* goes after the parochial schools,

Now we still have the institution of special parochial schools, which can never ever become places where true Republicanism can be planted. These church schools have the special goal of violently planting religious doctrines into children's brains in order to hold their spirits in the church's power. Blind subjugation to authority, the supremacy of church over state, the sinfulness of all appeals to one's own reason, where it's all about the truth, revealed by God Himself, which splits human understanding, the hollowness of human knowledge versus the divine wisdom taught by priests – therein must the effectiveness of parochial schools culminate.⁴⁵

⁴³ Author's translation. Original: "Die Schule der Republik muß zum Selbstdenken, Selbsturtheilen und Selbsthandeln erziehen, sie will und darf die Menschen nicht im sklavischem Geist heranziehen, wie er, um die Kirche in Herrschaft zu erhalten, unerläßliche Vorbedingung ist." "Wie die Schule beschaffen sein muß," *Die Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, May 18, 1890, 4.

⁴⁴ Author's translation. Original: "Da wird der freie Menschengestalt von zarter Jugend an erbarmungslos verkrüppelt und in die kirchliche Zwangsjacke gesteckt. Das natürliche Menschenrecht des Kindes wird mißachtet, die Schule zu einem Organ des Glaubenszwangs herabgewürdigt und wenn man von 'Elternrecht' spricht, so ist darunter nur Priesterübermuth und Kirchengewalt zu verstehen." Ibid.

⁴⁵ Author's translation. Original: "Nun haben wir aber noch das Institut der besonderen Kirchenschulen, die nie und nimmer Pflanzstätten des wahren Republicanismus sein können. Diese Kirchenschulen haben den speciellen Zweck,

Such strong anti-Catholic and anti-religious sentiment undoubtedly helped push the *Turnzeitung* further away from more religious German Americans as the Bennett campaign neared its close.

Supporting Governor Hoard

Unlike the religious groups who supported the Democratic Party because of its Bennett Law stance, the *Turnzeitung* initially refused to endorse either party during the spring elections. The editors held both major parties in low esteem: “We stand not just alienated by the standing plunder parties, but directly hostile to them.”⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the editorial staff of the *Turnzeitung* still wanted to do its duty and vote. Thus, it sought to support only candidates of high character.⁴⁷ After both parties had convened in the summer of 1890 and released their platforms, the *Turnzeitung* editors decided that they preferred the Republicans in Wisconsin because of their unconditional support for compulsory education and for the right of the Republic to oversee all schools. The *Turnzeitung* argued that compulsory education implicitly necessitated state oversight in order for such laws to be effective. This right to oversee schools, they believed, would in no way threaten freedom of instruction. To their mind, compulsory school laws and the attendant state oversight were necessary for a democratic Republic to flourish.⁴⁸

While the *Turnzeitung* editors favored the Democrats nationally because of their firmer stand against Prohibition, they supported Hoard and the Wisconsin Republicans because they believed that Wisconsin Democrats, by opposing the Bennett Law, were opposing compulsory

gewaltsam in das Kinderhirn religiöse Doctrinen zu pflanzen, die Geister im Banne der Kirchen zu halten. Blinde Unterwürfigkeit unter die Autorität, die Suprematie der Kirche über den Staat, das Sündhafte aller Appellation an die eigene Vernunft, wo es sich um von Gott selbst geoffenbarte ‘Wahrheit,’ wie sie des Menschenverstandes spaltet, handelt, die Hohlheit menschlichen Wissens gegen die von den Priestern gelehrt göttliche Weisheit – darin muß die Wirksamkeit der Kirchenschule gipfeln.” “Zum Kampf um die Schule,” *Die Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, June 1, 1890, 4.

⁴⁶ Author’s translation. Original: “Wir stehen beiden ständigen Beuteparteien nicht nur fremd, sondern direct feindlich gegenüber...” “Zur Schulfrage in Wisconsin,” *Die Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, September 7, 1890, 4.

⁴⁷ “Die städtische Wahl,” *Die Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, April 6, 1890, 8.

⁴⁸ “Zur Schulfrage in Wisconsin,” *Die Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, September 7, 1890, 4.

education and state oversight of schools. The *Turnzeitung* editors also could not stand George W. Peck, the Milwaukee mayor and Democratic candidate for governor: “It’s really sad that the Democrats are seeking to elect somebody to high office who is an opportunistic know-it-all and editor of the youth-corrupting, vulgar tabloid *Bad Boy*.”⁴⁹ The editors complained of hearing only tactless, partisan, school-boy speeches from Peck. They thought his address at the Democratic convention was an embarrassment. His demagoguery, they asserted, was unskilled to the point where it would hurt him more than help him. About this most vapid of candidates the Democrats could have put forward, the *Turnzeitung* concludes: “His ‘wit’ is tailored only to idiots.”⁵⁰

Governor Hoard, on the other hand, the *Turnzeitung* considered to be a “...bold supporter of public education and at the same time a true friend of German Americans...”⁵¹ The *Turnzeitung* editors did not see any danger to the German language from him, even if they believed that he should not be trying to tell schools specifically which subjects ought to be taught in English. The editors blamed other state German-American newspapers for smearing Hoard as a nativist and German hater. Such newspapers, they believed, were also suggesting that the Illinois and Wisconsin compulsory education laws were more similar than they actually were, when, in reality, the Illinois law was worse.⁵² The *Turnzeitung* would have preferred a Republican platform that clarified that other languages could be used to instruct schoolchildren. Such a clarification, they believed, would have assuaged the fear that nativist sentiment was hiding behind stricter compulsory education laws and the promotion of English. The *Turnzeitung*

⁴⁹ Author’s translation. Original: “Es ist geradezu Traurig, daß man den gewerbsmäßigen Wißling und Verfasser des die Jugend verderbenden Colportage-Romanes ‘*Bad Boy*’ zu einem so hochverantwortlichen Amte in Vorschlag bringt.” Ibid.

⁵⁰ Author’s translation. Original: “Sein ‘Witz’ ist nur für Geistesarme berechnet.” Ibid.

⁵¹ Author’s translation. Original: “...muthigen Förderer des öffentlichen Schulwesens und gleichzeitig ehrlichen Freund der Deutsch-Amerikaner...” Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

editors did not think that such a clarification was strictly necessary because the law allowed for other languages to be taught alongside English, but they did believe that such a clarification would have been politically savvy.⁵³

Disagreements with Other German-Language Newspapers

Weeks later, the *Turnzeitung* offered a generous interpretation of section 5 of the Bennett Law, the controversial English clause, which read: “No school shall be regarded as a school, under this act, unless there shall be taught therein, as part of the elementary education of children, reading, writing, arithmetic and United States history, in the English language.”⁵⁴ The *Davenport Demokrat* had interpreted the section to mean that *only* English could be the language of instruction for reading, writing, arithmetic, and U.S. history. The *Turnzeitung*, on the other hand, did not believe that that was the case. Rather, the *Turnzeitung* emphasized the words “as part” in section 5, suggesting that under the Bennett Law, schools only had to be concerned about English instruction for a minimum of 12 weeks, and only in those subjects, as merely a “part” of the overall instruction. The *Turnzeitung* thus believed that the law allowed sufficient flexibility to teach both English and other languages like German. Since Hoard and the Republicans had made clear that they had no interest meddling in parochial schools, the *Turnzeitung* sarcastically remarked that parochial schools could rest assured in the knowledge that they would still be able to waste time with the “ramming of dogma down pupils’ throats,” *Eintrichtern von Dogmenreligion*.⁵⁵ The editors further believed that neither party actually defended the Bennett Law precisely as written, and that the compromise of requiring only English reading and writing as subjects would prevail.⁵⁶

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ An Act Concerning the Education and Employment of Children.

⁵⁵ “Wie der Blinde von der Farbe,” *Die Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, September 21, 1890, 4.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

The following week, while responding to a critique of the Turner position on the Bennett Law in the *Lehrerpost*, the *Turnzeitung* pushed back vigorously against Bennett Law opponents' appropriation of the term, "patriotism." They thought it ridiculous that a monopoly on patriotism was being attributed to "the unnatural alliance of the greedy-for-spoils 'Democrats' with the Romanists and orthodox 'Lutherans'" in their fight against state control of schools.⁵⁷ Further, the *Turnzeitung* found it unfair that Bennett opponents were denouncing as "Nichtspatrioten" the citizens of all political stripes who hesitated to follow the German Catholic Bishops to war, and who refused to put basic republican principles into question.⁵⁸ To the *Turnzeitung*, the worst abuse of patriotism was when teachers felt it was their patriotic duty to be totally neutral in the classroom. The editors feared that neutrality under the guise of patriotism would keep monarchical, submissive tendencies alive in the schools and prevent students from learning to think, decide, and act for themselves. While supporting a certain degree of neutrality so that public schools could truly be for all people, the *Turnzeitung* argued that neutrality was not the *sine qua non* of education: "This Neutrality needs its limits and must not become identical with lies."⁵⁹

The *Turnzeitung* editors were frustrated by much of the German-American press, accusing it of spreading lies in the time leading up to the November election. They accused newspapers like the *Seebote* of being "unscrupulösen Partisanenblättern" (unscrupulous partisan papers), that were "Bandesgenossen" (gang members) with the Democratic Party, the "Papstpantoffelküssern" (papal slipper kissers), and "gegen jede erzieherische Mission des

⁵⁷ Author's translation. Original: "...der unnatürlichen Allianz der beutegierigen 'Demokraten' mit den Römlingen und orthodoxen 'Lutheranern.'" "Leichtfertige Kritik," *Die Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, September 28, 1890, 4.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Author's translation. Original: "Diese Neutralität muß aber ihre Grenze haben und sie darf nicht mit der Lüge identisch werden." Ibid.

Staates protestirenden orthodox gläubigen Lutheranern” (orthodox Lutheran believers who opposed every educational mission of the state).⁶⁰ Such biased papers, according to the *Turnzeitung*, could be found not only in the state of Wisconsin, but outside the state as well. It accused such newspapers of repeating the lies of the Wisconsin German press and writing hateful articles against defenders of the state’s right to pass compulsory education laws. The *Turnzeitung* worried that German Americans would get a bad reputation if opponents of compulsory education ever managed to become their leaders.

The November Election and Its Aftermath

In its last issue before the November election, the *Turnzeitung* repeated its endorsement of Governor Hoard in the state gubernatorial race. Before doing so, however, the editors again made clear their displeasure with both major parties, accusing them of being interested only in political power itself. To perform their duty and vote, they thus would have to select the man with the highest character whose beliefs most closely aligned with their own. Even if the candidate they would support had little chance of winning, they would rather support him and stand up for their principles than compromise: “A thousand times rather a lost vote than the conscious prostitution of a holy republican right.”⁶¹ They were endorsing Hoard, because “in mannbarer Weise” (in a manful way), he was standing up for compulsory education and state supervision of schools while Peck was coming across as an opportunistic politician and demagogue, “who throws every principle overboard when he believes that in so doing he can all the better pilot his little striving ship forward.”⁶² This support of Hoard, they clarified, did not

⁶⁰ “Die Wahllüge, daß im Wisconsin ein Kampf,” *Die Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, November 2, 1890, 4.

⁶¹ Author’s translation. Original: “Tausendmal lieber eine verlorene Stimme als bewußte Prostituirung eines heiligen Republicanerrechts!” “Die kommende Wahl,” *Die Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, November 2, 1890, 8.

⁶² Author’s translation. Original: “...der jedes Princip über Bord wirft, wenn er glaubt dadurch sein Streberschifflein desto besser vorwärtslootsen zu können.” Ibid.

extend to the national Republicans policies like the McKinley tariffs. At this late stage, the *Turnzeitung* editors still wanted the Bennett Law to be amended but feared giving power to people whom they considered to be secret enemies of public schools, people who would get in the way of the state's educational mission and interfere with compulsory education.⁶³

The *Turnzeitung* editors responded to the electoral results with mixed feelings. On the one hand, they were satisfied with the Democrats' national victory due to Republican support of tariffs and prohibition, but they were not happy with the results in Wisconsin. The churches had won in combination with the Democratic Party, whom they accused of throwing out basic democratic principles "einige fette Aemter erbeuten zu können" (to capture a few fat public offices).⁶⁴ They believed that pastors and priests had played a major role in driving their flocks to the polls and ordering their parishioners to vote for particular candidates.⁶⁵ As the size of the Democratic victory became clearer a week later, the *Turnzeitung* repeated its claim, that in combination with dissatisfaction with the Republican tariffs, anti-Bennett forces under clerical authority had made a big difference: "The call to war against the Bennett Law, the full and fanatic interference of ethnic elements that take and carry out the commands of church authorities, they certainly did a good portion of the work..."⁶⁶ Among these parishioners allegedly taking orders from priests were the Irish, Polish, and Bohemian Catholics: "Thousands on thousands who would have otherwise been indifferent to the election exercised their right to vote after having been instructed, often while in church itself, by ecclesial authority."⁶⁷ The

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ "Der 4. November," *Die Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, November 9, 1890, 1.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Author's translation. Original: "...der Kriegsruf gegen das Bennettgesetz, das volle und fanatische Eingreifen aller Volkselemente, die von kirchlichen Autoritäten Befehle annehmen und ausführen, dazu ein gut Theil beigetragen..." "Zur Wahl am 4. November," *Die Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, November 16, 1890, 1.

⁶⁷ Author's translation. Original: "Tausende und Tausende, die sich sonst den Wahlen gegenüber indifferent verhielten, übten so, im Sinne der von kirchlichen Autoritätspersonen und oft in der Kirche selbst erhaltenen

Turnzeitung thought that the liberal German-American vote had been split because some had believed what had been said about Hoard, that he was an enemy of German Americans who wanted to destroy private schools. Nevertheless, the *Turnzeitung* thought that most *Freisinnige*, and nearly all Turners, had pulled the lever for Hoard.⁶⁸

Drawing out the meaning of the election, the *Turnzeitung* editors painted a bleak picture of the past, when schools labored under the yoke of the Church. In their telling, such schools contrasted sharply with schools of a Republic “that educate freedom and desire to expand understanding, which would break through the night of intellectual darkness and shine in bright sunlight.”⁶⁹ The *Turnzeitung* interpreted the vote to mean that, despite Wisconsin’s progressive reputation, a majority in the state had been led astray by the clergy to vote against principles essential to the continuance of the Republic. As in old Europe, these reactionaries, the *Turnzeitung* alleged, were trying to bring schools under the Church’s yoke. In response, the *Turnzeitung* warned, all liberal elements needed to band together.⁷⁰

The *Turnzeitung* tried to explain how compulsory education, *Schulpflicht*, and freedom of instruction, *Unterrichtsfreiheit* were both essential to a Republic. Compulsory education was needed to see that children go to school, along with state oversight to assure that such laws were enforced. Such state oversight, in the *Turnzeitung*’s view, would be concerned only with demonstrable knowledge and abilities, and would necessarily stay out of school’s freedom of instruction and any attendant opinions, worldviews, or doctrines.⁷¹ The *Turnzeitung* repeated its

Anweisungen ihr Stimmrecht aus.” “Wir haben vor dem Redakteur,” *Die Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, November 16, 1890, 4.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Author’s translation. Original: “. . .die zur Freiheit erziehen und Erkenntniß ausbreiten will, die die Nacht der Geistesfinsterniß durchbrechen und im hellen Sonnenschein leuchten will.” “Schulpflicht und Unterrichtsfreiheit,” *Die Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, November 16, 1890, 4.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

suspicion of religious opponents who appealed to parental rights to fight the Bennett Law, believing them to be appealing to these rights only until they could put public schools back under the yoke of the Church.⁷² The *Turnzeitung* argued that the state had a duty to educate every child, regardless of economic status, and that it could fulfill this duty without treading on freedom of conscience or oppressing private schools.⁷³

Conclusion

The *Turnzeitung*'s views on the Bennett Law reveal tensions among German-American liberals on the topic of education. They had a firm faith in the power and necessity of public education in a Republic. Only students trained to think and act independently and to understand the world scientifically could become adults able to bear the responsibilities of citizenship. The *Turnzeitung* argued that traditional religious instruction in public and private schools undermined independent thought, a foundational principle of the Republic. They also saw instruction in the German language, a language associated in German-American liberal minds with enlightenment and progress, as an important way of passing on enlightened, progressive thought both to the next generation and to other Americans. Thus, when public schools were deficient in teaching quality, religious in nature, and lacking in opportunities for learning German, liberals took it upon themselves to create their own private schools and institutions to train their teachers.

While supporters religious private schools were vehemently the Bennett Law, the editors of the *Turnzeitung* were of two minds. On the one hand, they affirmed the principles of state-run, secular education, which included English instruction. On the other hand, they did not want state interference in the curriculum of private schools like their own. In the case of the Bennett Law, they disagreed with religious German Americans, trusting that state supervision of all schools,

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

including private schools, would not lead to interference in the substance of what was taught, and that all parties agreed that the law needed some emendation. The *Turnzeitung* editors believed that the natural rights of children to a basic education were more important than the parental rights that anti-Bennett forces appealed to. Combined with a firm belief in Governor Hoard's character and disdain for Mayor Peck, the *Turnzeitung* editors' belief in compulsory education, trust of the state to supervise schools, and suspicion of Lutheran and Catholic motives led them to endorse Hoard and the Bennett Law. In the aftermath of the November elections of 1890 and the landslide Democratic victory, the *Turnzeitung* had to reckon with the relative strength of the Lutherans and Catholics, ultimately blaming the clergy for goading their parishioners to the polls.

Chapter 4: Continuing the *Culturkampf*: The *Columbia* Covers the Bennett Law

The *Columbia* was one of the German-language Catholic newspapers printed in Milwaukee during the Bennett Law controversy. In March 1889, the *Columbia* billed itself as the official paper of German Catholics of the Northwest. It boasted the support of seven bishops from the old Northwest on their masthead, hailing from Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, and what would soon be South Dakota. Though a number of these men had already died by 1889, their names remained on the title page. The *Columbia* updated the list of bishops in late 1890, when, in the midst of the Bennett campaign, the paper received additional endorsements from bishops from states like Colorado and New Jersey. By that time, the *Columbia* had expanded its claim, calling itself a newspaper for German Catholics in the *United States*. This probably not only reflected the additional support they had received, but also pretensions towards becoming one of the leading national Catholic newspapers of the day. The national attention that the *Columbia* received probably had to do with its extensive, and often pointed, Bennett Law campaign coverage.

Like the *Germania*, the *Columbia* was up in arms about the Pond Bill in March of 1889. Although Pond had stated that the bill was merely about taking school statistics from parochial schools, the *Columbia* thought that it opened the door for state interference in parochial school affairs. They did not like the possibility that school superintendents would implicitly be given oversight over children's education.¹ By April 25, 1889, the *Columbia* had gotten wind of the Bennett Law and condemned it. It even printed a short excerpt from the *Germania* stating that the Bennett Law was an attempt to suppress German parochial schools.²

¹ "Die Pond'sche Bill," *Columbia*, March 28, 1889, 4.

² "Die Legislatur," *Columbia*, April 25, 1889, 5.

When covering the Bennett Law, the *Columbia* invoked the German *Kulturkampf*, which had led to secular control of German Catholic institutions and, in reaction to it, the rise of the Catholic Center Party. In the American context, the *Columbia* believed that Catholics should fight for the rights of their schools not only against state control, but also against the masonic threat behind it. To fight the Church's foes and the Bennett Law, the *Columbia* encouraged its readers to organize politically. One of the first instances of Catholic organization on the Bennett Law issue came from the Wisconsin's Catholic bishops, who penned an official protest against the law during the spring campaign of 1890. While supportive of the bishops' stance on the whole, the *Columbia* had sometimes supported positions that the bishops explicitly denied in their protest, such as the right for Catholic schools to get public money and the importance of the German language in German-American Catholic institutions. The Catholics of the *Columbia* not only had to contend with external adversaries like the secular state and a hostile Protestant culture, but internal opponents as well, like Archbishop Ireland of St. Paul, Minnesota. In the midst of the Bennett Law controversy, Ireland made comments about Catholic education that undercut the Bennett Law protest in Wisconsin. In the fight against its ideological and political opponents, the *Columbia* enlisted the help of the talented priest and writer, W.H., who penned creative polemics for the German Catholic cause. The *Columbia* also published a creative Pennsylvania Dutch "solution" to the Bennett Law proposed by the Catholic priest, Michael Lochemes. As the campaign reached its peak, the *Columbia* reported on Catholic political organization efforts. Ultimately, these efforts appear to have paid off, and the *Columbia* was able to report that German-American Catholics and their Lutheran allies had successfully defeated the Republican Hoard-Ruble clique.

Culturkampf

One of the primary lenses through which the *Columbia* viewed the Bennett Law was that of the German *Kulturkampf*, or as the *Columbia* spelled it, *Culturkampf*. Until the late 1880s, Bismarck had led the German Empire's Protestant majority in a systematic suppression of Catholic institutions, most particularly their schools. This had led the Catholics to organize themselves politically. Though always a minority, the Catholics became a formidable voting bloc in the Bundestag under Windthorst, nicknamed "die kleine Exzellenz" (the little excellence) for his small stature. Beloved by Catholics, Windthorst became one of Bismarck's bitterest foes. By the late 1880s, as the German Socialists increased their political might, Bismarck mollified his stance against the Catholics, making common cause with Windthorst and the Center Party to keep the Socialists in check. While still not fully satisfied with their place in Imperial Germany, Catholics were gradually improving their political situation there. For the *Columbia*, the *Culturkampf* was not limited to Germany, but something that Catholics had to contend with throughout the world, including the United States.

The *Columbia* perceived a nationwide *Culturkampf* aimed at suppressing the Catholic Church by suppressing its parochial schools: "The signs of a *formal* and *systematic Culturkampf* directed against the *parochial* and *congregational schools* in the country are multiplying."³ Throughout 1889 and 1890, the *Columbia* monitored bills and laws across the country that would put parochial schools under state supervision or control. Unlike the imperial German government, which was open about its aims, the *Columbia* believed that anti-Catholic groups in the United States were using more subtle means to attack the Church. In places like New York

³ Author's translation. Original: "Die Zeichen, daß es auf einen *förmlichen* und *systematischen Culturkampf* gegen die *Pfarr-* und *Gemeinde-Schulen* im Lande abgesehen ist, mehren sich." "Zum Schulkampf," *Columbia*, February 13, 1890, 4.

and Illinois, the *Columbia* believed that Catholics needed to wake up to the threat and defend their parental rights and religious freedom from state overreach.⁴ They also kept tabs on other states like Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Missouri, reporting on any hint that a similar school bill might be passed. Apart from Wisconsin, the state that the *Columbia* was most concerned about was Illinois.

Like the *Germania*, the *Columbia* reported extensively on the impact on parochial schools of Illinois' new compulsory education measure, the Edwards Law. The Edwards Law was stricter than the Bennett Law, requiring that English be the language of instruction in *all* elementary subjects. Unlike the Wisconsin Bennett Law, it was actually enforced, at least sporadically. One case involved Catholic school children in St. Claire who were being forced to attend a public school.⁵ In November, there was another case in Campbell Hill, Illinois, this time of Protestant parochial school children being forced to attend public school. The *Columbia* argued that state officials in Wisconsin were only kept in check by the fear of a public reaction against such laws, but that nothing in the Bennett Law precluded them from acting in a similar fashion to Illinois officials.⁶ The *Columbia* warned that even if the Bennett Law was not presently being used to persecute parochial school children in Wisconsin, it would remain a constant threat until its removal. It feared that nativists and know-nothings would take steps to execute the law as soon as the "einfältiger Dutchman" (simple Dutchman) let down his guard.⁷ The cases kept trickling in from Illinois. In Bible Grove, a man was arrested and fined 50 dollars

⁴ "Zu dem New Yorker Culturkampf Gesetz," *Columbia*, May 5, 1889, 4-5. See also "Eine Schulzwang Bill," *Columbia*, May 5, 1889, 5.

⁵ "Der Schulkampf beginnt," *Columbia*, October 17, 1889, 4.

⁶ "Die neuen Schulzwang-Gesetze," *Columbia*, November 7, 1889, 5.

⁷ Author's translation. Original: "...es würde eine beständige Drohung bleiben, zu deren Ausführung unsere Nativisten und Knownothings sicher schreiten werden, sobald sie annehmen zu dürfen glauben, daß die Opposition gegen das Gesetz genügend eingeschläfert sei und die 'einfältigen' Dutchmen" nun leicht übertölpert werden können." "Die Ausführung der neuen Schulzwang-Gesetz," *Columbia*, October 3, 1889, 5.

by local authorities for sending his children to a parochial school.⁸ The *Columbia* warned its readers that the Bennett Law also gave similar powers to Wisconsin's local school boards, many of whom, they feared, could end up being composed of enemies of parochial schools. The *Columbia* was worried that such hostile school boards might force Catholic parents to send their kids to public schools that, whether truly secular or not, would be harmful to their children's spiritual wellbeing.

To the *Columbia*, public schools were not adequately equipped to educate Catholic youth because they could either be too secular or too steeped in anti-Catholic Protestantism. In a November 7 article from 1889, the *Columbia* took on the notion of neutrality in public schools. The editors disagreed with those who suggested that state schools were fine for Catholic children since nothing religious goes on in them. For the *Columbia*, if public schools were truly secular, they would still be problematic:

In a school that even ignores the existence of a personal God and his lordship over man, even the faith of children with a religious upbringing will grow cold and die off for lack of [spiritual] food. Meanwhile, those whose religious education has already been neglected at home will grow up completely like heathens.⁹

The *Columbia* did not believe that there could be any sort of a "Mittelding" (middle way) between a secular and religious school, but that any school would necessarily be one type or the other. Often enough, Catholics had experienced public schools where the education was far from secular. To prove its point, the *Columbia* recalled to its readers a story about Boston public schools teaching a Protestant understanding of indulgences.¹⁰ In St. Louis a similar case had

⁸ "Zur Warnung," *Columbia*, March 20, 1890, 4.

⁹ Author's translation. Original: "In einer Schule, die selbst das Dasein eine persönlichen Gottes und seine Oberherrlichkeit über die Menschen ingorirt, muß mit der Zeit der Glaube selbst religiös erzogener Kinder erkalten und aus Mangel an Nahrung absterben, während solche, deren religiöse Erziehung schon zu hause vernachlässigt wird, vollends als Heiden aufwachsen." "Zur 'Neutralität' der Staatsschulen," *Columbia*, November 7, 1889, 5.

¹⁰ "Zur 'Neutralität' der Staatsschulen," *Columbia*, November 7, 1889, 5.

occurred when a professor said that Protestants go to church and hear a sermon, while Catholics come and pay a dollar for their confession and then go home thinking that their sins are forgiven. One of the Catholic girls in the class had challenged him. Then she and the other girls left the classroom in protest.¹¹ The *Columbia* believed cases such as the ones in Boston and St. Louis were part of a wider, worldwide threat to parochial schools.

Masons

The *Columbia* considered the Freemasons to be among its primary adversaries in the *Culturkampf*. In an article from June 1889, the *Columbia* reprinted a *Wanderer* article about Masonic plans for society.¹² The Masons had published a tract in Leipzig about the recent papal encyclical. In this article, the *Columbia* asserted that the Masons had finally put their plans out in the open. According to the *Columbia*, the article showed that the Masons were seeking the destruction of church authority, the total separation of church and state, the abolition of all religious instruction, the dechristianization of family life, and the emancipation of women. The author believed that even though the tract was made in a European context, the American Masons were trying to carry out its program in the New World, too. Ultimately, such a program, like the one in Europe, would lead to the “Entchristlichung der gesamten Jugend” (the dechristianization of the entire youth).¹³

The *Columbia* published another article in July by a Rev. J. H. Buschfahrer that further elaborated on alleged Masonic meddling in American schools. According to the article, the Masons were advancing their aims by hiding behind whatever causes might be convenient at a given time, “...sometimes with love of the national language, at other times with love of progress

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² “Was die Freimaurer mit der Schule vorhaben,” *Columbia*, June 6, 1889, 4.

¹³ Ibid.

and enlightenment, sometimes hiding itself behind know-nothingism, nativism, or Puritanism... ”¹⁴ The article reported that Masons had called public schools the cornerstones of masonic temples, saying, “Die Schule ist die Loge der Kindheit,” (School is the lodge of childhood).¹⁵ The lodge in Antwerp was said to have spoken against fostering a belief in God among children and decrying catechesis as harmful to a child’s “Geist” (intellectual spirit).¹⁶ The spirit of Freemasonry, warned Buschfahrer, leads to godlessness and amorality. If the Church did not stand up for its parochial schools, and instead went down the dangerous path laid for them by the Freemasons, then society would fall into vulgarity and barbarism. Calling supporters of parochial schools to action, he closed with a quote from a Mason, “Wem die Schule, dem die Zukunft!” (Who holds the schools holds the future!)¹⁷

Another reason to defend schools from attacks by Masons and the like were the schools’ sacramental associations. Near the end of the article, Buschfahrer elaborates on these:

Yes, if *Christian parents* want to see their children truly happy, if the *spiritual authorities* want to see the coming generation hold onto the faith, if the *secular authorities* want to raise up obedient, loyal citizens full of true patriotic love, then all must earnestly stand up for the *religious school*. *No sacrifice is too great that can be brought for the religious education of children in Christian schools*: parents, teachers, priests, and all friends of the young who bring a sacrifice for such an education will be richly rewarded. Jesus, the divine friend of children, looks on this sacrifice as if it were brought for Him.¹⁸

¹⁴ Author’s Translation. Original: “...bald mit der Liebe zur Landessprache, zu Fortschritt und Aufklärung, bald versteckt sie sich hinter Knownothingthum, Nativismus oder Puritanismus...” Rev. J.H. Buschfahrer, “Wem die Schule gehört, dem gehört die Zukunft,” *Columbia*, July 25, 1889, 4.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 5.

¹⁸ Author’s translation. Original: “Ja, wollen *christliche Eltern* ihre Kinder wahrhaft glücklich sehen, wollen die *geistlichen Obrigkeiten* die kommende Generation dem Glauben erhalten, wollen die *weltlichen Obrigkeiten* gehorsame, treue, von wahrer Vaterlandsliebe erfüllte Bürger heranziehen, dann müssen Alle ernstlich für die *religiöse Schule* eintreten. *Kein Opfer ist zu groß, das für die religiöse Erziehung der Kinder in christlichen Schulen gebracht wird*: Eltern, Lehrer, Priester und alle Jugendfreunde, die für solche Erziehung Opfer bringen, werden reichlich belohnt. Jesus, der göttliche Kinderfreund, sieht diese Opfer an als für ihn selbst gebracht.” Ibid.

The language here echoes the language surrounding the Eucharist in a Catholic Mass. In the Mass, a sacrifice of bread and wine is brought from the people of the congregation. From that sacrifice is made the sacrifice of Christ as the elements are transubstantiated into Jesus' body and blood when the priest speaks the Words of Institution over them. As Jesus rewards a congregation in the sacrifice of the Mass, so also does He reward supporters of the schools for their sacrifices made for Christian education. Since parochial schools were so essential to the Church's mission and identity, and allegedly so hard pressed by the Masons, the Church needed reliable allies to stand up with them for religious education.

W.H.,¹⁹ a frequent *Columbia* contributor, warned against expanding an alliance of Lutherans and Catholics to include the Freethinkers because "they almost all belong to the lodge."²⁰ He reasoned that the German-American Masons would have little issue allying with the native-born Masons, particularly if the German-American Masons looked the other way on Prohibition in exchange for some German classes in the public schools. W.H. thought that both lodges were joining forces against Catholics and Lutherans:

Who can assure us that both lodges aren't going hand in hand together to bump off the private school, and thus give a donkey's kick to the strict Christian confessions, Catholicism and Lutheranism, which Masonry disdains? The German lodge has nowhere yet shown itself to be friendly towards positive Christianity—indeed, otherwise it wouldn't be a lodge.²¹

W.H. describes the upcoming fight for the schools as a "*kirchenpolitischer Kampf*" (ecclesial-political battle) between Christianity and anti-Christianity.²² As such, it was incumbent upon

¹⁹ Willibald Hackner. Hackner was a Bavarian Catholic Priest serving as dean of a parish in Fountain City, Wisconsin. As the Bennett Campaign continued, his contributions became more frequent. He spoke briefly at the Anti-Bennett Convention of June 1890.

²⁰ W.H., "Der Kampf um die Schule," *Wanderer*, as published in the *Columbia*, August 29, 1889, 5.

²¹ Author's translation. Original: "Wer bürgt uns dafür, daß dann nicht sämtliche Logen Hand in Hand gehen, um die Privatschule abzumurksen und so den streng christlichen Confessionen, dem Katholizismus und dem Lutherthum, welche das Logenwesen verpönen, den 'Eselstritt' zu geben? Die deutsche Loge hat sich dem positiven Christenthum noch nirgends freundlich gezeigt—sonst wäre sie ja keine Loge." Ibid.

²² Ibid.

those natural allies, adherents of a *believing*, positive Christianity, to take up the fight and see it through to its successful end.

In the same issue in which W.H. called on Catholics and Lutherans to fight together against Masons, the *Columbia* reported that it had found a reason why the Masons were exerting themselves against parochial school so much in recent years. Recently, there had been an international congress of Freemasons in Paris that Masons from Massachusetts had attended.²³ The *Columbia* had previously voiced its suspicions that there was a connection between the recent attacks on parochial schools originating in Boston and the attendance of Boston Freemasons at the international congress. A report out of New York appeared to validate this view. According to a former Mason named William H. Peckham, the American Masons of the Scottish rite had joined with the Great Orient of the French in 1888. This was significant because the French rite denied the existence of a personal God, a stance which Peckham could not countenance. The *Columbia* believed that the Masons were using the nativists and know-nothings who were not already Masons to undermine religious education in the United States. One way this could be accomplished was by creating a wedge between English-speaking Catholics and those who spoke other languages. Their attack on non-English parochial schools was just a beginning. Recalling the Lodge's attitude in France, Italy, Belgium and other countries, the *Columbia* was concerned that Masons were indeed seeking to destroy all religious schools. In order to counter this Masonic threat, the *Columbia* called for its Catholic readership to organize, hopefully at the upcoming Catholic convention.²⁴

²³ "Die Loge und der Kampf um die Schule," *Columbia*, August 29, 1889, 5.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

Organize!

In the article, “Der Kampf um die Schule,” W.H. also encouraged Catholics to counter attacks against their parochial schools, Masonic and otherwise, with organization.²⁵ He reminded his German-American readers of the 1870 Franco-Prussian war, particularly the speed of mobilization and overall organization of the army. The German army’s superior organization, he argued, was a key reason for its victory. In the same fashion, W.H. thought that organization was necessary in political battles. Like an army getting troops to the right place at the right time, so also a political organization needed to get voters to the right place at the right time, and voting for the right party. Catholics in America, he thought, should emulate the well-organized Catholic Center Party in Germany. The Center party had maintained its unity and fought through the *Culturkampf*—“furchtbar dastehend wie ein wolausgerüstetes Schlachtheer” (standing there fiercely like a well-armed battle-host).²⁶ Impelled by conscience to fight for their religious schools, Catholics needed unity of purpose, method, and action. Such unity was needed for internal Catholic groups, as well as for Catholic groups that could work together with the Lutherans. In the American context, W.H. thought that Catholics should do what Missouri Synod Lutherans had done and form national and district committees. The district committees would report to the central committee on local conditions, and together they could coordinate the legal and political defense of parochial schools. W.H. was glad that, unlike in Germany, the *Culturkampf* in the United States as it related to the parochial schools would be fought state by state instead of nationally. W.H. was confident of success at the state level, where party politics had less influence.²⁷

²⁵ W.H., “Der Kampf um die Schule,” *Wanderer* as quoted in the *Columbia*, August 29, 1889, 4.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

W.H. continued making the case that Catholics would need political organization to meet threats to their parochial schools. In one article, he said the *Culturkampf* had crossed the ocean and come to America, and that the Church's new opponents were becoming clearer. These opponents included the Turners and Freethinkers, who had recently taken the opposing stance on the Bennett issue to that of Catholics and Lutherans. W.H. believed that German-American Turners and Freethinkers would oppose religious freedom and freedom of education at every turn, even if it meant the "Grab Geläute für das Deutschthum" (the death knell of Germandom).²⁸ He said that these groups, who made themselves out to be "the saviors of Germandom in America," were more amusing "than when the goat brags about his care as a gardener for the heads of lettuce."²⁹ In the end, W.H. believed that their hatred for religion had proved stronger than their love of the German language and culture. W.H. could not help noting that he had predicted that the liberal German elements would prove unreliable six months earlier in his article "Kampf um die Schule." Still, he did not worry about the liberal German Americans' decision to support the Bennett Law. Going forward, he thought that that it would only make it easier for Lutherans and Catholics to organize around a simple repeal of the Bennett Law instead of an amendment. Referencing Constantine at the Milvian bridge, W.H. summons defenders of parochial schools to battle: "in this sign, we will conquer—in and through organization."³⁰

Seeing that Catholics were falling behind Protestants with regard to political organization against the Bennett Law, W.H. took to hectoring his Catholic readers into doing more. He shamed them, wondering if Catholics loved their parochial schools less than Protestants, with

²⁸ W.H., "Das Eine Nothwendige gegen das Bennett-Gesetz," *Columbia*, March 27, 1890, 4.

²⁹ Author's translation. Original: "Daß solche Leute, solche Renegaten des Deutschthums den Mund immer 'boppisch' voll nehmen, als ob sie die Retter des Deutschthums in Amerika wären, ist noch amüsanter als wenn sich der Bock als Gärtner seiner Sorgsamkeit für die Salatköpfe rühmt." Ibid.

³⁰ Author's translation. Original: "...in diesem Zeichen werden wir siegen—in und durch die Organisation." Ibid.

whom Catholics shared a love of education and love of German. W.H. argued that Catholics needed to avoid the accusation that they were slow to defend their rights or lukewarm when fighting the good fight. W.H. then emphasized that theirs *was* a good fight, something worth getting excited about, saying that even enemies of parochial schools knew that those schools were the heart of any Christian congregation. He demanded of his readers: “Will we let this our heart be cut out without defending ourselves, without crying out?”³¹

W.H. concluded the article with a few concrete measures that Catholics could take to get organized. First, he wanted all Catholic voters to be informed about the Bennett Law. He told his readers to find those who did not read Catholic newspapers and let them know about the law. Readers were to encourage the fainthearted and goad on the strong to a greater zeal that would encourage them to convince even non-Catholics about the law’s injustice. W.H. also thought that Catholics needed a fund to hire skilled orators to give speeches about the Bennett Law. He warned that their enemies, like the *Sentinel*, were doing everything in their power to fight for the Bennett Law. He wanted a central organization like that of the German Catholic Center Party under Windthorst’s direction and suggested that Milwaukee Catholics lead the way, saying: “The eyes of all look to you—Milwaukee.—from Athens, Miltiades and Themistocles beat the Persians—apparently from ‘German-Athens’ the troops must be ordered and led into the field against the Bennett Law.”³² W.H. thought that the Catholics should meet in April to make initial efforts at organization, and then ratify their conclusions at the meeting of Catholic support clubs

³¹ Author’s Translation. Original: “Wollen wir uns dieses Herz heraus schneiden lassen, ohne uns zu wehren, ohne einen Aufschrei zu thun?” Ibid.

³² Author’s translation. Original: “Oculi omnium expecant te—Milwaukee.—von Athen aus hat ein Miltiades und Themistokles die Perser besiegt—von ‘Deutsch-Athen’ aus müssen auch offenbar die Truppen gegen das Bennett-Gesetz geordnet und in’s Feld geführt worden.” Ibid.

on Whit Monday. His final line referenced Jesus telling his disciples to follow the example of the good Samaritan: “The Lutherans did it in about the same way—Go forth and do likewise!”³³

While excited about the Democratic victories during the spring municipal elections, the *Columbia*'s editors still wished for greater organization among Catholics. Just after the election, they urged Catholics to work on their statewide organization and not to rest until “das nichtnutzige Gesetz” (the useless law) was done away with once and for all.³⁴ A week later, the *Columbia* continued its plea for organization, encouraging its readers to avoid falling into a false sense of security just because of the first political victory. Organization was easier in Milwaukee than the rest of the state, they believed, because Milwaukee had such a high concentration of Lutherans and Catholics. Only with effective organization throughout the state would foes of the Bennett Law be able attain the majorities in the state legislature necessary to ensure the Bennett Law's repeal.³⁵ The *Columbia* told its readers to learn more about the importance of organization in the next article on the page.

This plea for organization was again written by W.H., who had urged Catholics to organize just a few weeks earlier. He titled the article “Quantum potes, tantum aude” which means approximately, dare to do as much as you can, go all in. W.H. urged Catholics to adopt this motto in their fight for the parochial schools because of how these schools are important for the church. Like Reverend Buschfahrer, W.H. made associations between parochial schools and the sacraments. When a priest is not sure whether the sacrament is valid, it is better for him to play it safe (*pars tutior est sequenda*). He can say the Words of Institution again, because the sacraments are such an important matter that they are worth doing right. W.H. argued that

³³ Author's translation. Original: “So ähnlich haben es die Lutheraner gemacht.—Gehet hin und thuet desgleichen!” Ibid.

³⁴ “Ein glänzener Sieg der Elternrechte und der Unterrichtsfreiheit,” *Columbia*, April 3, 1890, 5.

³⁵ “Organisirt Euch!” *Columbia*, April 10, 1890, 4.

parochial schools were only a step below the sacraments in importance. Indeed, he viewed them as essential to the preparation of children for the sacraments. For W.H., such schools formed the foundation of sacramental life: “Therewith is the parochial school the proper basis from which rises the seven sacraments, the seven-armed light of the Church of Christ.”³⁶ Because parochial schools were so important, W.H. wanted Catholics to go the safest way (*pars tutior est sequenda*) and refuse state money.³⁷

Most of all, W.H. wanted Catholics to stand up for their schools by getting politically organized. He compared the situation in the United States with the *Culturkampf* in Germany. W.H. wondered what German Catholics might have given at the beginning of the *Culturkampf* to have the political freedom that American Catholics enjoyed. Catholics, then, needed to use their freedom to act and to organize. W.H. declared that Catholics need a veritable Waterloo of a victory to discourage their *Culturkampf* opponents and keep them at bay for the rest of the century. He believed that an organized movement, even without a clear leader at the beginning, could still be successful. As with Catholic Center Party leaders such as Mallinckrodt or Windhorst, or the leaders of the French revolution, so also would leaders rise up out of a movement made of German-American Catholics. In the American context, he believed that the most organized party usually won the election, and that the Republicans were the best organized party. Thus, in order to win, to beat the most organized party, Catholics needed to get organized themselves. W.H. compared his repeated pleas for Catholic organization to Cato’s famous pleas for the destruction of Carthage:

And so, it is with me as it was with Cato in old Rome. The same one (Cato) always came back to his “Carthage must be destroyed,” just as I to the necessity of organization,

³⁶ Author’s Translation. Original: “Somit ist die Pfarrschule die eigentliche Basis, auf welcher der ‘seibenarmige Leuchter’ der Kirche Christi, die Seibenzahl der Sacramente sich erhebt.” W.H. “Quantum potes, tantum aude,” *Columbia*, April 10, 1890, 4.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

*“Cæterum censeo esse organizandum” — Furthermore, I believe that one should get organized.*³⁸

Rome eventually did get around to destroying Carthage, and the German Catholics of Wisconsin eventually did get organized, despite the internecine struggles they faced within the Catholic Church in America.

Wisconsin Bishops' Protest

The Catholic bishops of Wisconsin took a step in the direction of political organization by publishing a formal protest against the Bennett Law during the period leading up to the municipal elections of 1890. The manifesto, “A Protest of the Catholic Bishops of Wisconsin Against the Bennett Law,” was signed by Michael Heiss, Archbishop of Milwaukee, Kilian C. Flasch, Bishop of La Crosse, and F. X. Katzer, Bishop of Green Bay, all of whom had German ancestry.³⁹ While not endorsing any particular politician or party platform, the protest’s timing suggests that the bishops were hoping that it would have an effect on the spring municipal elections. In their opening statement, the bishops voiced their belief that the Bennett Law was really meant to bring parochial schools under state control and eventually destroy them. Then they deemed the law unnecessary, offensive, and unjust. The rest of the document explains precisely why the bishops thought the Bennett Law deserved such descriptors.

The Wisconsin bishops believed the Bennett law was unnecessary because English was already taught in essentially all of their parochial schools. They thought that only places where

³⁸ Author’s translation. Original: “Darum geht es mir, wie dem Cato im alten Rom. Derselbe kam immer wieder auf sein ‘Carthago muß zerstört werden’ zurück, wie ich auf die Nothwendigkeit der Organisation: ‘Cæterum censeo esse organizandum’—für’s Uebrige glaube ich, daß man sich organisiren soll.” Ibid.

³⁹ Unfortunately, the March 13th issue of the *Columbia* is missing from the Wisconsin Historical Society’s copy of the newspaper. This would likely have been the issue in which the bishops’ protest was published. Fortunately, the English version of the protest can be found on the Archdiocese of Milwaukee’s website: Michael Heiss, Killian C. Flasch, and Frederick Xavier Katzer, “A Protest of the Catholic Bishops of Wisconsin Against the Bennett Law,” 1890, <https://www.archmil.org/ArchdioceseofMilwaukee/history/MC-011-Bennett-Law-Bishops-Protest.pdf>. Accessed 1/9/2020.

English might not yet be taught were in far off rural areas and among newly arrived immigrant populations. In such cases, the bishops did not think that it was necessary for English instruction to be mandated by law. Instead, they believed that the problem would work itself out naturally over time without any state interference.

Next, the bishops explained why they thought the Bennett Law was offensive. For one thing, they took umbrage with the fact that the state was trying to interfere with schools that had never accepted state funding, schools that “have been built and are maintained by parents themselves, often at very great cost and sacrifice.”⁴⁰ Indeed, the Bishops found the law particularly insulting to Catholic parents:

It is, consequently, an outrage upon the intelligence and the good character of our Catholic people, to interfere with their schools. Are the 50,000-60,000 Catholic fathers and mothers of families so ignorant and stupid, that they do not know what kind of education their children need; or, are they so destitute of love and interest for their children, that they would not be willing to provide proper education for them? Have they deserved to be treated as persons who cannot or will not take care of the interests of their children, so that the State has to step in and act as guardian for them?⁴¹

Finally, apart from the Bennett Law’s perceived disrespect towards parents, the bishops found the rushed nature of the Bennett Law’s passage offensive. They believed that the Bennett Law would have been opposed by the public if the public had known about it and been given enough time to debate it openly. The Pond Bill, after all, had failed because of intense protest from both Catholic and non-Catholic supporters of parochial schools. The bishops bolstered their claim that the Bennett Law would have been opposed when it was still a bill by pointing out that the law had been opposed “as soon as it was published.”⁴²

⁴⁰ Ibid., 1.

⁴¹ Ibid., 2.

⁴² Ibid.

The bishops argued that the Bennett Law was unjust on three grounds: that it interfered with parental rights, threatened unjust fines, and opened “every avenue to partiality and injustice, to strife and disorder.”⁴³

The bishops then proceeded to defend parental rights and explain why the state should not interfere with parochial schools. According to the bishops, a parent’s right to educate his or her children derives from his or her duty, before God, to educate them. The bishops allowed that the state could intervene, but only in cases of abuse or neglect of this duty. Any state right to education, then, was not native to the state, but delegated by parents. Accordingly, parents may or may not choose to delegate their educational responsibilities towards their children to the state. Since Catholic schools support “the welfare of the State,” as attested by the many virtuous citizens who have gone through them, they should be left alone.⁴⁴

The Wisconsin bishops anticipated and rebutted arguments that the Church, by requiring its members to send their children to Catholic parochial schools, was guilty of undue compulsion towards them. The bishops argued that parents needed to provide their children with a religious *and* secular education. They were of the opinion that because public schools were avowedly secular, then the parochial schools were essentially the only way for Catholic parents to fulfill their duty to educate their children in their religious faith. That is why the Church had made parochial school attendance by its members obligatory. In doing so, the bishops argued, the Church did not interfere with parental rights at all, “but simply insists on the parents doing their God-given duty.”⁴⁵

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 3.

The bishops, for their part, accused the state of overstepping *its* bounds. Jesse Thayer, the Wisconsin school superintendent, had said that the state was not trying to "...ostracize, antagonize or in any manner or degree to interfere with the parochial or any other form of private schools..."⁴⁶ Thayer said that state would only require, in the interest of its own welfare, that parents make sure that their children have sufficient secular education. However, he had also said parents "must show sufficient reason for non-attendance of their children upon the Public School."⁴⁷ Catholic parents would thus be accountable for the education of their children to state officials. The bishops saw this as a contradiction with Thayer's earlier statement about leaving parochial and private schools alone.

The manifesto next deals with the bishops' objections to particular sections of the law. Like the Lutherans, they did not think that section 1 was fair, because it would keep children from attending out-of-district schools and could instead compel attendance at state-run schools in district. They also objected to the idea that public school boards had any right to set the precise dates when parochial schools should be in session. Citing section 5 of the Bennett Law, the bishops further objected to the idea that local school boards had the authority to determine whether a school should be allowed to exist before the law. However, unlike many other opponents of the Bennett Law, the bishops stated, "We have, indeed, nothing against the demand that reading, writing, arithmetic and United States History be taught in the English language."⁴⁸ Another aspect of the Bennett Law that the Wisconsin Bishops found unjust was the clause allowing fines to be charged to parents, who, for whatever reason, were found incompliant with its requirements. Especially if calculated out over the course of the year, the fine had the

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

potential to put significant financial strain on families. Even though they suspected that the maximum fine of \$20 would seldom, if ever, be used, the bishops did not want such high amounts on the books because they acted as a threat to parents.

The final charge of injustice that the bishops brought to the Bennett Law had to do with what they considered its potential to open the door “to partiality and injustice, to strife and discord.”⁴⁹ The bishops thought that the Bennett Law gave far too many discretionary powers of prosecution to local school boards. Citing cases in Illinois, the bishops were concerned that there would be strife, particularly in rural areas of Wisconsin, where school boards might “annoy and vex parents to their heart’s content, all in the name of the famous Bennett Law of the state of Wisconsin.”⁵⁰ They did not think that any official, no matter how fair, should be given such great discretionary power, “otherwise he is apt to act arbitrarily and to exceed the wishes and wants of his constituents.”⁵¹

The bishops closed their protest by rebutting the argument that they were looking out for German Catholics and the German language as much as they were standing up for parental rights. To such a charge they made the following statement:

We hereby declare, most unequivocally, that such is not the case, though we fully concede to every not English speaking nationality in our State the right to preserve their language, as long as they believe this to be for the best interest of themselves and their children.⁵²

They affirmed the importance of English as the *de facto* official language of the country and stated the necessity of schools teaching it even more than the 12 weeks the law required, even all year long. The bishops also argued that bilingual children would do no harm to the state. To

⁴⁹ Ibid., 4.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

further prove that they were not opposed to English, but to the aspects of the law that put public officials in control of their parochial schools, the bishops argued that their English-language schools would also be affected by the law, even if they were not immediately harassed. The bishops called on all voters who supported parental rights, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, to stand with them in opposition to the Bennett Law

Closing the protest, the bishops emphasized that they were not entering the political arena willingly, but only because the Bennett Law had forced their hand. They denied any responsibility for raising up strife and discord, asserting their desire “to live in peace and good fellowship with our fellow citizens.” The bishops ended by emphasizing their long-term work for parochial schools in Wisconsin:

We have labored incessantly for the education of our youth: we shall continue to do so to the end of our days. Under God we have always relied on the zeal of our priests and the generosity of our people. We have never received one single cent of State help for our Schools—we want no State interference with them either.⁵³

That is, there is no reason for the state to start interfering with parochial schools that they have left alone for several decades, especially since these schools never accepted state money. The bishop’s statement gives the reader the impression that they were not interested in state money for parochial schools, but such an idea was by no means settled among American Catholics, including those who wrote for the *Columbia*.

Public Funds and Parochial Schools

Over the course of the Bennett campaign, the *Columbia* appears to have shifted its editorial stance on the issue of public funding for parochial schools. In a July 4, 1889 article, the *Columbia* disagreed with a *Germania* portrayal of the Catholic stance on the issue. The *Columbia* argued that whereas the *Germania* had seen a difference between the Catholic and

⁵³ Ibid.

Lutheran view of the matter, there really was no essential difference. Catholics could agree with them on the principle that both church bodies were justified in creating religious schools because secular state schools were unsuitable for the children of Christian parents.⁵⁴ The *Columbia* argued that true difference between Protestants and Catholics was not on that matter of principle, but on the conclusions that each group drew. The Protestants, opined the *Columbia*, were denying that parochial schools should get help from the state not out of principle, but out of political convenience, “because in this way they hope to more easily beat back attacks from the Christian schools’ enemies.”⁵⁵ Such calculations were delusional, in the *Columbia*’s opinion, because enemies of parochial schools like the *Sentinel* would not relent even if parochial schools claimed no school funds.

The Catholic claim to school funds, argued the *Columbia*, made sense, “It is really not hard to see that logic is on the side of the Catholics, while our Protestant friends are seeking by means of a sort of ‘opportunistic politics’ to ‘temporize’.”⁵⁶ The *Columbia* believed that the principles of equal rights for all and no taxation without representation were two principles that should apply as much to Catholics and Lutherans in America as they did to Freethinkers and those who are practically religionless. The *Columbia* argued:

Catholic and Lutheran citizens have *the same* right as the Freethinkers and practically religionless to demand appropriate schools for their children, and further, to *demand* state aid, so long as the State is taxing one group as well as the other for educational purposes.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ “Zur Schul-Frage,” *Columbia*, July 4, 1889, 5.

⁵⁵ Author’s translation. Original: “...weil man auf solche Weise die Angriffe der Feinde der christlichen Schule leichter anzuschlagen hofft.” Ibid.

⁵⁶ Author’s translation. Original: “Daß die *Folgerichtigkeit* dabei auf seiten der Katholiken ist, während unsere protestantischen Freunde mittels einer Art ‘*Opportunitäts-Politik*’ zu ‘*temporisiren*’ suchen, ist doch nicht schwer einzusehen.” Ibid.

⁵⁷ Author’s translation. Original: “Katholische und lutherische Bürger haben *dasselbe* Recht, geeignete Schulen für ihre Kinder zu verlangen, wie die Freidenker und praktisch Religionslosen, und ferner Staatshilfe dabei zu *verlangen*, solange der Staat für Schulzwecke von ihnen wie von jenen Steuern erhebt.” Ibid.

The *Columbia* thought that if the religionless state schools were “ungeeignet” (unsuitable) for the children of faithful Lutherans and Catholics, then it followed that it was “ungerecht” (unjust) to tax those parents to support these unsuitable schools. This injustice towards Lutherans and Catholics could only be remedied “if an *appropriate* portion of the school funds is approved of for the maintenance of their [the Lutherans’ and Catholics’] *own* schools.”⁵⁸

As the campaign wore on, however, the *Columbia* appeared to take the opposite position, that the parochial schools should not have a portion of the school fund after all. W.H., at least, did not think it was wise to request state funds:

Away with all this leering after the fleshpots of Egypt, after State contributions, which at most brings our schools into subservience under the state, as we can observe in some European countries. Let’s keep our parochial schools *free and independent* of anti-religious influences, as they are overall only too gladly forced through and smuggled in by the modern state.⁵⁹

W.H. argued that maintaining independent parochial schools would be the best strategy for Catholics, even though such schools were more expensive. The Wisconsin Bishops’ protest seemed to echo these sentiments. The bishops had emphasized that one of the reasons that the state should have no say about what goes on in parochial schools was that the state had never paid for parochial schools. Shortly before the election, the *Columbia* explicitly denied any desire to have access state school funds. The Democrat William Vilas had denied that he wanted to take public funds and apply them to private schools, and the *Columbia* said the same: “Even so has the *Columbia* recently taken repeated opportunities to speak unequivocally *against* the claim of

⁵⁸ Author’s translation. Original: “...wenn ihnen für den Unterhalt ihrer *eigenen* Schulen ein *verhältnismäßiger* Antheil an den Schulgeldern bewilligt wird.” Ibid.

⁵⁹ Author’s translation. Original: “Weg mit all diesem Schielen nach den ‘Fleischtöpfen Aegypten’s,’ nach Staatszuschüssen, welche unsere Schulen höchstens in die Dienstbarkeit des Staates bringen, wie wir es in manchen europäischen Ländern beobachten können. Behalten wir unsere Pfarrschulen *frei und unabhängig* von religionswidrigen Einflüssen, wie sie durch den modernen Staat nur zu gern überall vorgeschoben und eingeschmuggelt werden.” W.H., “Quantum potes, tantum aude,” *Columbia*, April 10, 1890, 4.

state support for parochial schools.”⁶⁰ By the end of the campaign, the *Columbia* had thus taken the same stance as those whom it had accused of denying, out of political expediency, the right for parochial schools to receive public funding.

The Columbia, the Bishops, and the German Language

While the *Columbia* had voiced strong support for the bishops’ manifesto, the newspaper’s arguments in defense of their language and culture indicate that the *Columbia* differed from the bishops on the importance of the German language in the Bennett Law controversy. Their rhetoric, particularly near the end of the campaign, betrayed concerns that the Bennett Law was not just problematic because it might put parochial schools under the supervision of tyrannical school boards, but that the Bennett Law, and laws like it, aimed to destroy German language and culture in America. The *Columbia* was not only concerned with anti-Catholic bigotry, but with anti-German and xenophobic tendencies among Bennett Law supporters as well.

The *Columbia* thought that parochial schools were essential to *Deutschtum*, to German language and culture in America, and that undercutting these schools would undercut *Deutschtum*. For example, the *Columbia* was incensed by an unnamed German-language newspaper, probably the *Abendpost*, which the Republican Party had bought and which was publishing pro-Bennett articles. The *Columbia* believed that the paper was, for a “Judaslohn” (Judas payment), working to “undermine German schools and churches, these foundational pillars of Germandom.”⁶¹ A month later, the *Columbia* called the *Abendpost*’s Bennett Law

⁶⁰ Author’s translation. Original: “Ebenso hat die ‘Columbia’ noch neuerlich wiederholt Anlaß genommen, sich in unzweideutiger Weise *gegen* die Inanspruchnahme staatlicher Unterstützung für die Pfarrschulen auszusprechen.” “Stadt Milwaukee. Hr. W. F. Vilas,” *Columbia*, October 23, 1890, 5.

⁶¹ Author’s translation. Original: “Untergrabung der deutschen Schulen und Kirchen, dieser Grundpfeiler des Deutschthums...,” “Die erbärmliche Feilheit,” *Columbia*, September 11, 1890, 5.

support “Verrath am Deutschthum” (betrayal of Germandom).⁶² In another article, the *Columbia* used similar imagery to depict what Hoard and his allies were fighting for:

...that namely Hoard’s battle and the battle of the Bennettians is actually a battle of “foreigner” -haters and anti-Germans, who are aiming for the extermination of Germandom and its primary supports, the German parochial and congregational schools, as well as the violent suppression of all non-English character in general.⁶³

The *Columbia* believed, then, that parochial schools were the primary support, the cornerstone of *Deutschtum* in America and that supporting the Bennett Law was akin to undermining parochial schools. In the face of *Deutschtum*’s adversaries, the *Columbia* wished that German Catholics would hold firm to the faith of their fathers like the German Catholic Center Party, and show “...that you should be ready to fight for your mother tongue, that you should not only be unashamed of your German heritage, but proud of it.”⁶⁴ After the November 1890 election, W.H. told how he believed that “der größte moralische Gewinn” (the biggest moral victory) had been for *Deutschthum*, and for “foreigners” in general. Know-nothingism had been defeated.⁶⁵ All this talk of *Deutschtum* indicates that for the *Columbia*, at least, the English-language requirement of the law was not quite the matter of indifference that it appeared to be for Wisconsin’s Catholic bishops. In their own language, perhaps, the German Catholics spoke more honestly about their hopes and fears for their language and culture than when they expressed themselves in English.

⁶² “Kirchenhaß und ‘Boodle,’” *Columbia*, October 16, 1890, 4.

⁶³ Author’s translation. Original: “...daß nämlich der Kampf Hoard’s und der Bennettianer überhaupt ein Kampf der ‘Fremden’-Hasser und Deutschenfeinde ist, der auf die Ausrottung des Deutschthums und seiner Hauptstütze, der deutschen Pfarr-und Gemeinde-Schulen, sowie auf die gewaltsame Unterdrückung alles nicht-englischen Wesens überhaupt abzielt.” “Hoard hineingefallen,” *Columbia*, October 2, 1890, 4.

⁶⁴ Author’s translation. Original: “...daß man bereit ist, für seine Muttersprache zu kämpfen, daß man sich seiner deutschen Abstammung nicht nur nicht schämt, sondern stolz auf dieselbe ist.” “Den Katholikentagen,” *Columbia*, September 11, 1890, 4.

⁶⁵ W.H., “Nach der Wahlschlacht,” *Columbia*, November 13, 1890, 4.

Archbishop Ireland versus the Columbia

German-American Catholics contended with challenges to their parochial schools coming from both outside the Church and inside the Church. Unlike German-American Lutherans, whose church bodies tended to be ethnically homogenous, German-American Catholics had to find their place within a large, multinational, multilingual church body. Different Catholic ethnic groups tended to come to different conclusions on the major issues of the day, like parochial education. Some Catholics, like the German bishops of Wisconsin, were strong advocates of parochial schools, seeing them as essential to the education of Catholic youth in a largely hostile, Protestant country. Others, including many Irish prelates, tended to favor a more accommodating approach towards American culture and public-schooling. These and other likeminded Catholics believed that public schools might be able to work with the Church to provide sacred and secular instruction to Catholic youth. One of the more prominent Catholics holding such culturally accommodating views was the Archbishop of St. Paul, John Ireland, sometimes called “The Blizzard in the North.”

Archbishop Ireland caused a stir in the pages of the *Columbia* when he waded into the Bennett Controversy on July 10, 1890, at the National Education Convention in St. Paul, Minnesota. In his speech, there were a few phrases that particularly galled the *Columbia*, which printed Ireland’s controversial statements in the original English:

I am *the friend and the advocate of the State* school. In the circumstances of the present time, I uphold the parish school. I do sincerely wish that the need of it did not exist. I *would have all schools for the Children of the people State schools*. I *unreservedly* favor State laws making instruction compulsory. I turn to the *parish school*. It exists. I repeat *my regret* that there is a necessity for its existence. *In behalf of the State school*, I call upon my fellow-Americans to add in the *removal of this necessity*.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ P.M. Abbelen, “Einige sachliche Erläuterungen zu der Rede des hochwürdigsten Hrn. Erzbischofs Ireland über Staats- und Pfarrschulen,” *Columbia*, July 17, 1890, 4.

Ireland also appeared to express approval for a version of the Poughkeepsie Plan. The Poughkeepsie Plan, named after a public-private school compromise implemented in Poughkeepsie, New York, would have allowed secular education for all students in the middle of the day, but then Catholic education before or after secular school hours. By tacit understanding, the teachers during the day could be Catholic, too.⁶⁷ Over the next couple of months, the *Columbia* printed a series of articles defending parochial schools, rebutting Archbishop Ireland's statements, and criticizing the Poughkeepsie Plan. These articles were taken from a variety of Catholic newspapers, both English-language and German-language ones, and included articles written for the *Columbia* by P. M. Abbelen and W.H.

Father P. M. Abbelen was not pleased with Ireland's speech, calling it "bedenklich" (concerning). He believed that unless the Pope himself, the Plenary Council, or a meaningful number of bishops expressed approval of Ireland's ideas, that "...thousands and millions of Catholics would *strongly doubt whether this suggestion* by the Lord Archbishop of St. Paul *stands on church footing.*"⁶⁸ Abbelen reminded readers of how strongly the rest of the hierarchy had supported Catholic parochial schools:

Until now the instructions from Rome, the provisions of our Councils, the efforts of our bishops and priests, the downright heroic sacrifice of our Catholic people all point towards the idea that parochial schools should be founded, sustained, and promoted all over, that the *entire* education of our *entire* youth during the *entire* time in school should be a *Christian* one, and namely in the *parochial school*. And now all of a sudden, it's *drop the parochial school and let it become a state school!*?⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Author's translation. Original: "...werden Tausende und Millionen von Katholiken es *stark bezweifeln, ob dieser Vorschlag* des Herrn Erzbischofs von St. Paul *auf kirchlichem Boden steht.*" Ibid.

⁶⁹ Author's translation. Original: "Bis jetzt gingen die Instructionen von Rom, die Bestimmungen unserer Concilien, die Bemühungen unserer Bischöfe und Priester, die geradezu heroischen Opfer unseres katholischen Volkes allesammt dahin, daß Pfarrschulen überall gegründet, unterhalten und gefördert werden sollen, daß die *ganze* Erziehung unserer *ganzen* Jugend während ihrer *ganzen* Schulzeit eine *christliche* sein soll, und zwar in der *Pfarrschule*. Und nun soll auf einmal *die Pfarrschule fallen und Staatsschule werden!*?" Ibid.

Abbelen speculated that Archbishop Ireland was not actually out to harm the parochial school, but that his plan would do so anyway if it gained traction. He believed that parents and children would have their trust in the Church shaken if the plan went through and the children were forced to attend more secular schools. He wondered if the Church, which founded the parochial schools “with the most willing cooperation of sacrifice-ready parents,” was all of a sudden no longer willing to run them.⁷⁰ Schools, said Abbelen, were an integral part of a congregation, the churches of the children. Such a measure, he believed, would “give credence to the idea of omnipotence of the state over the rights of parents and of the church.”⁷¹ This, Abbelen argues, would be appropriate for a monarchy but “totally inappropriate in a free government of the people.”⁷²

Abbelen thought it odd that the Archbishop looked to Prussia as an example, and wondered whether he knew about the *Culturkampf* there, and how Catholics lost their schools and had been fighting ever since to win back control over them. Abbelen also wondered whether Ireland had thought about the fact that public schools would likely bring secular or anti-religious influences into the parochial schools under his plan. He also disputed the idea of limiting religious instruction to the beginning or end of the day, as suggested by the Poughkeepsie Plan. Priests would have a hard time getting there so early, and children would see religious instruction as a burden if they saw the other kids leaving before them. Moreover, Abbelen believed that limiting religious instruction to the beginning or end of the school day was inferior to full-day parochial school instruction because in parochial schools so much religious instruction happened

⁷⁰ Author’s translation. Original: “...mit der opferwilligsten Mitwirkung der Eltern.” Ibid.

⁷¹ Author’s translation. Original: “... der Staatsomnipotenz über die Rechte der Eltern und der Kirche eine Anerkennung gegeben.” Ibid.

⁷² Author’s translation. Original: “... mit dem Geiste einer freien Volksregierung durchaus nicht im Einklang...” Ibid.

in passing, informally throughout the day. Such instruction would not, he suggested, be possible in a Poughkeepsie school because of the presence of non-Catholic children. A parochial school that started to work that way would lose its Christian identity.

Abbelen was distressed that Archbishop Ireland was willing to praise the public schools eloquently but had nothing good to say about parochial schools. Indeed, Ireland had even expressed regret that the parochial schools existed at all. Abbelen was profoundly disappointed with the archbishop's comments:

It can only hurt one in the deepest part of his soul to hear a speaker with the position and ability of an Archbishop Ireland to thus praise schools which he himself has described as religionless and causing religionlessness, and then to be called on *to participate in bringing* the parochial school, that which has been constructed as a dam and bulwark against secularism, as *a sacrifice to the state school!*⁷³

Abbelen found it regrettable that Archbishop Ireland missed the chance to praise both secular schools and parochial schools, to show off his patriotism as well as his Catholicism. While very critical of the Archbishop's comments, Abbelen made sure to let the reader know that he was not attacking the bishop personally, or meaning any sort of disrespect, but taking up the bishop's call for a public discussion of his speech.⁷⁴

A couple of weeks later, W.H. gave his contribution to the public discussion of Ireland's speech. He compared the situation for Catholics in the United States with that of Catholics in Bavaria, where he grew up. W.H. was not impressed with how little the Bavarians were willing to stand up for their rights. Instead they were getting by with concessions from the state. The Pope had urged Bavarians to fight bravely for their rights, and W.H. wanted German Americans,

⁷³ Author's translation. Original: "Es kann Einem nur in der tiefsten Seele wehe thun, einen Redner von der Stellung und Tüchtigkeit eines Erzbischof Ireland die von ihm selbst als religionslos und Religionslosigkeit erzeugend gekennzeichnete Staatsschule so preisen zu hören, und dann noch aufgefordert zu werden, *mitzuhelfen*, daß die als Damm und Schutzwehr gegen die Religionslosigkeit errichtete Pfarrschule—der *Staatsschule zum Opfer falle!*" Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

especially those in Wisconsin and Illinois, to fight, too. To W.H.'s thinking, "Even a half victory, reached in the fight for Freedom and Justice, is worth more than an entire concession, gotten through haggling with the state."⁷⁵ He referenced "certain people," who "want to haggle with the state over our parochial schools."⁷⁶ The certain people most likely refers to Archbishop Ireland. W.H. was of the opinion that such people would make concessions with the state, ceding all control of the schools and pushing religion to the periphery of instruction just so that the state, "opens up its wallet for such secularized private schools."⁷⁷

W.H. worried about what making such deals with the state would do to the Catholic Church and its schools in America. Looking to Jewish history, he urged readers to imitate the Maccabees, who fought their enemies with the sword. According to W.H., Jewish fortunes changed in the ancient world when they started making concessions. W.H. feared putting schools in the hands of the state because then the church would have to be constantly on guard, keeping watch lest a law got changed and religious content removed. W.H. thought it wiser to fight and possibly lose independent, privately funded parochial schools than to make a deal with the state for some tax money.⁷⁸ The Wisconsin bishops, he believed, were like the Maccabees, ready to fight for parental rights rather than make questionable concessions to the state. They would not settle for some half-religious "Poughkeepsie-Plan" schools but parochial schools that were "durch und durch religiös" (religious through and through).⁷⁹ Such schools, believed W.H., had

⁷⁵ Author's translation. Original: "Selbst ein halber Sieg, errungen im Kampfe für Freiheit und Recht, ist merh werth als eine ganze Concession, ergattert im Schacher mit dem Staate." W.H., "Wird nix g'schachert!" *Columbia*, July 31, 1890, 4.

⁷⁶ Author's translation. Original: "Gewisse Leute wollen mit dem Staate bezüglich unserer Pfarrschulen schachern." Ibid.

⁷⁷ Author's translation. Original: "...seinen Geldbeutel für solche verstaatlichte Privatschulen aufthun." Ibid.

⁷⁸ Author's translation. Original: "Es ist allerdings möglich, daß wir im Kampfe gegen den 'Staat' unterliegen; aber es ist ebenso möglich, und noch viel wahrscheinlicher, daß wir im Schacher mit dem Staate von demselben überlistet werden. Besser, wir fallen in ehrlichem Kampfe, als durch schmachvolle List!" Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

been recommended by the Pope, were worth the cost of funding privately, and were worth the fight for freedom and independence for Catholics and Lutherans in Wisconsin and Illinois. He wanted Catholics of Wisconsin to follow their own bishops, and not “dem Lockruf Anderer zum Schacher” (the siren call of others to compromise).⁸⁰ Like Brennus the Gaul, who threw his sword into the scale, he wanted Wisconsin Catholics to put their votes into the scales at the election, and win such a decisive victory that there would be no more thought of compromise or haggling. In Wisconsin, he wanted the motto to be not, “we haggle here, but instead, *we fight here!*”⁸¹

W.H.'s Granattensplitter

W.H. used his pen to fight for Wisconsin’s parochial schools. While the *Columbia* editors published less campaign creative writing and poetry than the *Germania*, they did publish some, especially as the 1890 fall campaign heated up. W.H. wrote most of these works. As the Bennett campaign neared its completion, W.H. composed a regular column for the *Columbia* called “Granattensplitter aus dem Schulkampfe” (grenade splinters from the school battle). The column contained brief, clever snippets about recent news from the Bennett campaign. W.H. made use of puns, wordplay, and occasional poems to pan Hoard and the Republicans and build up supporters of parochial schools.

On August 21, 1890, W.H.’s “Granattensplitter” were mostly directed at Archbishop Ireland and his comments in favor of public schools and against parochial schools. W.H. makes a biblical allusion, saying “Archbishop Ireland ‘came into his own’ (in the first part of his speech); ‘but his own did not receive him’ (in the second half).”⁸² This alludes to the introduction to the

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Author’s translation. Original: “Hier ‘wird nix g’schacert,’ sondern *hier wird gekämpft!*” Ibid.

⁸² W.H., “Granattensplitter aus dem Schulkampfe,” *Columbia*, August 21, 1890, 1.

Gospel of John when Jesus is described as not being welcomed by his people. W.H. appears to be saying that, in a similar fashion, the first half of John Ireland's speech which praised public schools was welcomed by German-American Catholics, but the second half, which denigrated parochial schools, was not welcomed by them. In another "Splitter," W.H. plays on the Archbishop's nickname, the Blizzard of the Northwest, saying, "It is typical of blizzards, that they bring things to the *freezing point*. The *Blizzard of the Northwest* has affected the opposite; he has—even if perhaps against his will—first *really enflamed* enthusiasm for the parochial school."⁸³ Using examples from the natural world, W.H. compares the Poughkeepsie Plan to a goose egg placed under a brooding hen. Like the goose egg that will still hatch a goose, even if it is taken in under the wings of a mother hen, so will the state schools remain state schools even if the church takes them in under its wing. Finally, W.H. recalls Creation and the Fall when referring to Archbishop Ireland, "It is not good, thought Archbishop Ireland, that the parochial school should be alone; we shall make for it a helper—in the state. *But Eve misled Adam afterwards!*"⁸⁴ W.H. was, of course, wary of making deals with the state about religious education.

A month later, W.H. tried out a variety of creative forms to discuss Bennett Law news, including a dramatic sketch, poetry, a spoofed newspaper ad, and a riddle. In the article's dramatic opening, W.H. imagines the scene from Schiller's ballad, "Die Bürgschaft" (The Pledge), where the two reunited friends are hugging, and the tyrant, moved, asks to join their friendship. In W.H.'s scene, Governor Hoard and the Socialist Robert Schilling of the Union

⁸³ Author's translation. Original: "Es ist den 'Blizzards' eigen, daß sie die Dinge auf den *Gefrierpunkt* bringen. Der '*Blizzard of the Northwest*' hat aber das gerade Gegenteil bewirkt; er hat—wenn auch vielleicht wider Willen—die Begeisterung für die Pfarrschule erst *recht angefacht*." Ibid.

⁸⁴ Author's translation. Original: "Es ist nicht gut, dachte Erzbischof Ireland, daß die Pfarrschule allein sei; wir wollen ihr eine Gehilfin machen—im Staat. Aber die Eva hat den Adam verführt hernach!" Ibid.

Labor Party are having a heart to heart talk at a table when the anarchist Johann Most comes in. Most “cries out pathetically as he walks up to the two, ‘I would be, if you would grant me the request, the third one in your group.’” Then follows “gegenseitige Umarmung” (hugs all around). Meanwhile, former governor Jeremiah Rusk appears in the background wagging his finger. Hoard grows pale, and the curtain falls.⁸⁵

W.H. was thus tying Hoard to socialists and anarchists, archenemies of his Catholic readers. These groups were especially suspicious to the general public because of the bombs allegedly thrown by anarchists at the Haymarket Riot of May 1, 1886, in Chicago. Socialists and anarchists had also been among the few German groups that supported the Bennett Law. Based on pro-Bennett comments in socialist newspapers like the *Volkszeitung*, the *Columbia* argued that the principles of socialism and that of the Bennett Law were not far apart, that both assumed that the state should have control over children and their schools.⁸⁶ W.H. brings up Schilling and Most because earlier in that month, the Union Labor Party, supported by many such socialists and anarchists, had considered endorsing Governor Hoard and the Republicans for the sake of the Bennett Law instead of putting up their own ticket.⁸⁷ W.H. includes Rusk in the tableau presumably because Rusk would no doubt disapprove of his fellow Republicans’ new political allies. Rusk had also said that he would not have signed the Bennett Law if he were still governor.⁸⁸ As the campaign intensified, Rusk backed down from his prior opposition to the

⁸⁵ Author’s translation. W.H., “Granatensplitter aus dem Schulkampfe,” *Columbia*, September 25, 1890, 4. Original: Dramatische Scene: *Hoard* und *Schilling* sitzen im vertraulichen Gespräche am Tische. Herein tritt Hannes *Most*, und ruft pathetisch, indem er auf die Beiden zu schreitet:

‘Ich sei, gewährt mir die Bitte,
In Eu’rem Bunde der Dritte.’

Darauf gegenseitige Umarmung. Im Hintergrund erscheint der Schatten von Ex-Gouverneur *Rusk*, der drohend den Finger erhebt. Hoard erblaßt, und der Vorhang fällt.

⁸⁶ “Hoard und seine Bundesgenossen,” *Columbia*, September 11, 1890, 4.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ “Hoard und das Bennett-Gesetz,” *Columbia*, September 11, 1890, 4.

Bennett Law, a turnaround that the *Columbia* attributed to Hoard, Rublee, Payne, Spooner and the like working on him, making him “knieschwach” (weak in the knees).⁸⁹

W.H. tied Bennett Law supporters like Hoard to socialists and anarchists in a few other entries in his *Granatensplitter* articles. He imagined, for instance, Hoard’s famous little red schoolhouse standing on a hill with a red flag raised over it, representing the red of socialists and communists. W.H. told a joke on this theme, too, asking “Why will the Republican Party in Wisconsin blow up this fall? Because it’s loaded with *dynamite* (Anarchists).”⁹⁰ Again, the dynamite probably refers to the dynamite thrown at Haymarket. A week later, W.H. continued in this vein. He said that no Bennett Law opponent had, to his knowledge, thrown a bomb at the little schoolhouse, but that citizens should worry about anarchists and socialists bombing the schools since they had experience with such things.⁹¹

W.H. used other literary forms common to newspapers of the day to poke fun at Bennett Law supporters. One style was the newspaper ad: “For Sale: *Bennett-Muzzle* for little German, also Polish, Bohemian, etc. boys woven out of the finest Republican wire based on protected Russian prototypes, available at the ‘*Legal Language*’ Store, at the corner of Knut Street and Knownothing Avenue.”⁹² This, of course, refers to the *Columbia*’s belief that nativists were trying to muzzle immigrant languages via the Bennett Law, just like what was happening in the Russian Empire. Another ad, in English, poked fun at the little schoolhouse:

⁸⁹ “Wieder eine Campagne-Lüge,” *Columbia*, October 2, 1890, 4.

⁹⁰ Author’s translation. Original: “Warum wird diesen Herbst die *republicanische Partei* in Wisconsin gesprengt werden? Weil sie mit *Dynamit* (Anarchisten) geladen ist.” W.H., “Granatensplitter aus dem Schulkampfe,” *Columbia*, September 25, 1890, 4.

⁹¹ W.H., “Granatensplitter aus dem Schulkampfe,” *Columbia*, October 9, 1890, 5.

⁹² Author’s translation. Original: “Zum Verkauf: *Bennett-Maulkörbe* für kleine deutsche, auch polnische, böhmische etc. Knaben nach bewährten russischen Mustern, aus feinstem republicanischem Draht geflochten, zu erfragen im ‘*Legal Language*’-Store, Ecke Knuten-Straße und Knownothing Avenue.” W.H., “Granatensplitter aus dem Schulkampfe,” *Columbia*, September 25, 1890, 4.

Wanted to rent: A little schoolhouse to establish therein a political wire-pulling establishment. Terms: It must be on a hill. Time of contract expires on first Tuesday of November.

Hoard, Rublee & Co.⁹³

This “ad” implies that the little schoolhouse is simply being used as a puppet by the Hoard-Rublee clique to advance their political goals. The expiration date is election day, on which Hoard, Rublee & Co will have presumably been defeated and their wire-pulling behind the schoolhouse will be at an end. W.H. also uses a riddle to lambast his political opponents:

Flat on the outside—
 Hollow on the inside—
 Never satisfied—
 What is that?
 The Republican Party.⁹⁴

The answer to the riddle, the Republican Party, is printed upside down, as such answers normally appeared in newspapers of the day.

W.H. also wrote campaign poetry to make fun of the pro-Bennett position and its supporters. Like some of the *Germania*'s writers, W.H. also set new words to an old song. He called this a *Schullied*, a school song, set to the tune of the lullaby, “Weißt Du, wie viel Sternlein stehen”:

Do you know how many little children go
 Free around the field and forest?
 Standing about in the alleys,
 So that the school is nearly empty—
 Papa Hoard has counted them,
 So that not one of them is missing
 Of the entire, great number!⁹⁵

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Author's translation. Ibid. Original:

Nach außen *glatt*—
 Nach innen *hohl*—
 Ein Nimmersatt—
 Was ist das wol?

Die republicanische Partei. [written upside down]

⁹⁵ Author's translation. W.H., “Granatensplitter aus dem Schulkampfe,” *Columbia*, October 9, 1890, 5. Original:
 Weißt Du, wie viel Kindlein gehen

In the original song, the narrator wonders about how many stars and clouds there are in the heavens. The second half of the song answers that God knows each and every one of the great multitude. W.H.'s version follows fairly closely, but instead of the stars or clouds in the sky, it is the children who are not in school. Instead of the God, it is Papa Hoard who knows their number. This song plays on Hoard and his argument that a measure like the Bennett Law was necessary because so many Wisconsin children were not attending school. When Hoard and the Republicans gave attendance statistics trying to prove their point, newspapers like the *Columbia* disputed their accuracy.

W.H. also composed two acrostic poems using the names "Hoard" and "Peck." The first one plays with how the name Hoard can sound in German:

H örst Du, Freund den Namen ' <i>Hoard</i> '—	If you, friend, hear the name, 'Hoard'—
O traue nicht dem wälschen Wort!	O trust not the foreign word!
A nd'ren Sinn hat deutscher Laut;	The German sound has another meaning;
R uhig Blut und aufgeschaut:	With calm blood and looking up:
D eutsche, wählt den ' <i>deutschen Hort</i> .' ⁹⁶	German, choose the ' <i>German treasure</i> .'

The name "Hoard" sounds like the German word, Hort, which means hoard, or treasure, or refuge. W.H. is saying that although his name sounds like treasure, Governor Hoard is not one.

The second poem says more about who this "German treasure" might be:

P eck ist dieser 'deutsche Hort':	Peck is this 'German treasure':
E r verspricht und hält sein Wort,	He promises and keeps his word,
C hicanirt die 'Fremden' nicht,	He does not hassle the 'foreigner'
K ümmert sich um seine Pflicht. ⁹⁷	Concerns himself with his duty.

Frei im Feld und Wald umher?
Auf den Gassen umher stehen,
So daß fast die Schule leer—
Papa Hoard hat sie gezählet,
Daß ihm auch nicht Eines fehlet
Von der ganzen, großen Zahl!

⁹⁶ W.H. "Granatensplitter aus dem Schulkampfe," October 23, 1890, 1.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

Mayor Peck is thus the German treasure or refuge that should be chosen. Unlike Hoard, he neither hassles foreigners nor wastes public money travelling throughout the state campaigning but stays put in Milwaukee doing his public duty. The promise W.H. refers to is Peck's promise to have the Bennett Law repealed.

Lochemes, Fuchs, and the Pennsylvania Dutch Compromise

A very different sort of creative piece of campaign writing came in the form of a letter to the *Columbia* editor by a certain Meik Fuchs, which appears to be written in Pennsylvania Dutch. Meik Fuchs was the pen name of the Milwaukee priest, Rev. Michael J. Lochemes. Lochemes was not actually Pennsylvania Dutch, but he nevertheless was able to write convincing Pennsylvania-Dutch prose. Mark Loudon speculates that he was able to do so for a few reasons.⁹⁸ One is that his mother came from a part of the Palatinate, which is not far from where many Pennsylvania Dutch immigrants originated. Another is that Lochemes happened to be living at the height of Pennsylvania-Dutch literary productivity. Thus, he had probably read at least a few actual Pennsylvania-Dutch works. Finally, the fact that Lochemes was bilingual, that he could speak both English and German, would have helped him know when it made sense to sprinkle anglicisms into his writing. That this writing made it into the *Columbia* is no great surprise. After all, Lochemes was a Catholic priest who lived in Milwaukee; it was only natural that his alter ego, Meik Fuchs, would weigh in on the Bennett Law. His original letter to the editor is reprinted in its entirety here, followed by a summary:

Mister Drucker!

Schun e lange Weil zurück hab ich in dei'm Päper genotißt, daß e Feit im gang is vun wegen em gewisse Law, wo die 'Bennett-Law' heeße dhut. Die Rerepublikahner sage, die Deutsche wollte die englische Sproch net mehr in der Schul stände, un die Deutsche sage—un ich hab e Noschen, daß se net arg mistäken sin!—die Bennett-Party wollt' die deutsche Sproch aus em Land dreiwe un die Deutsche aach. Beede Parties hen nau ihre

⁹⁸ Mark Laurence Loudon author, *Pennsylvania Dutch: The Story of an American Language* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016), 414–15.

Candidate uffgestellt un 's geht heeß zu. Am mehrste hen die Rerepublikahner Angst. Sie wolle affkors die Knownothing-Plattform net uffgewe un wollen aach die deutsche Voters net verliere. Do derfor dhäte se gern uff der Fenz reide.—

Ich hab die Sach so hin un her considirt un bin zur Concluschen komme, die Rerepublikahner solle, instätt for englisch oder for deutsch, ganz eenfach for *pennsylvänisch-deutsch* rauskomme. Vielleicht könnte se dene Weg die deutsche Vote zurück kriege.—Do hen mer Deutsch un Englisch gemixt. Die Sproch is schön un iesie un is hier *uff amerikanischem Boden gewachse*.— Schulbücher hätt mer aach bal' zusamme. Der Dreschurer vum Staat könnt e 'Rechenbuch' mit dem neueste System vun Interest publische, der United-States Senet könnt e neue 'Geographie' rausgewe mit lauter rebublikahnische Congreß-Districts, unser Gowernor könnt e 'History' for de 'Arme deutsche Bu im kleene Schulhaus' compeile un for e 'Lesebuch' dhät sich z. B. 'Dreiguds un Noschens' vun Meik Fuchs suute. —

Hau wär Sel for hei, Mister Drücker?

Yurs truly

Meik Fuchs.⁹⁹

Meik's letter suggests a unique solution to the Bennett Law controversy. He begins by telling what he has heard about the Bennett Law, that the Republicans are saying that the Germans don't want to learn English, while the Germans are saying that the Republicans want to drive the Germans and their language out of the country. Meik, of course, tends more to the German point of view. He remarks upon the trouble that the Republicans are in, that they don't want to give up their know-nothing platform, but they also don't want to lose voters. Thus, they would prefer to ride the fence on the Bennett issue. Instead of going all in for English or all in for German, as a compromise, Meik proposes that Republicans instead support teaching Pennsylvania Dutch in the schools since it's a mix of both English and German. That way, the Republicans might be able to win back some of the German vote. Plus, Pennsylvania Dutch has the advantage of being a "native" language, having grown up on American soil. Meik goes on to say that state treasurer could publish an arithmetic book based on the "new" way of calculating interest he had invented, the Republican Senate could publish a geography book composed of Republican congressional districts, and the governor could write a history book for the poor

⁹⁹ Meik Fuchs, "Ein Vorschlag," *Columbia*, October 2, 1890, 4.

German boy in the little schoolhouse. Finally, Meik suggest using his book, *Dry Goods and Notions*, as the class reader.

Lochemes commentary via Meik thus plays off of common themes that the *Columbia* has brought up throughout the campaign and gives them a Pennsylvania Dutch twist. The charge that Hoard and company were trying to destroy the German language and were generally opposed to the Germans was not a new one, and neither was the know-nothing label. The whole basis for Meik's compromise, though, stands on the assumption, as evinced by the letter's own language, that Pennsylvania Dutch is "mix" of English and German. Certainly, the language has diverged from its Palatinate German roots over time, but the language remains syntactically German and retains a great deal of German vocabulary as well. There are numerous English loan words, but these have tended to be adapted into Pennsylvania Dutch's existing German paradigm, enhancing the vocabulary rather than displacing German words.¹⁰⁰ While the letter is ostensibly about the Bennett Law controversy, it is actually more revealing of the divisions between the Pennsylvania Dutch and more recent immigrant groups. Certainly, the Bennett Law people are being mocked, but the undertone of the letter is that the Pennsylvania Dutch and their language are somewhat rustic or quaint, objects of amusement rather than peers.¹⁰¹ In the weeks before the fall election, however, the *Columbia* called for unity, organization, and action among the fractious German-American supporters of parochial schools.

¹⁰⁰ For a more detailed account of Pennsylvania Dutch, see Mark Laurence Loudon, *Pennsylvania Dutch : The Story of an American Language* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016).

¹⁰¹ While we do not see it here, it's worth noting that the condescension was often mutual. For their part, the Pennsylvania Dutch could sometimes look down on their brethren as arrogant *Deitschlenner*, late-comers to America.

Catholic Political Action

By September 1890, German-American Catholics had organized to defend their parochial schools in the political arena. One way they accomplished this was by holding a national gathering of German-American Catholics in Pittsburgh, as the Catholics belonging to the Center Party had done in Germany. Another level of organization occurred at the state level. Like the Lutherans, Wisconsin Catholics formed their own Catholic Anti-Bennett State Central Committee, hereafter referred to as the Catholic Anti-Bennett Committee. The Catholic Anti-Bennett Committee made a pamphlet like the Protestants and circulated it around the state. The *Columbia*, which had for months been calling for such organizational measures, was pleased to report this development.

The *Columbia* editors were glad to promote the fourth German-American Catholic Assembly, *Katholikentag* in Pittsburgh. They encouraged every German-American Catholic congregation and association to send a delegation. In Pittsburgh, they could join Catholics from around the country to discuss the burning questions of the day, and to decide how they, as Catholics, ought to respond to them.¹⁰² The *Columbia* editors believed that such assemblies had helped Catholics in Germany win victories in the *Culturkampf* by unifying and encouraging them, and they thought that American Catholics could do the same. Attending such *Katholikentage* in America would put German-American Catholics in a more confident position, able to defend their institutions from an aggressive liberalism seeking to secularize schools and subordinate them to the state.¹⁰³ The editors reported on the proceedings in Pittsburgh at length,

¹⁰² "Jede deutsch kath. Gemeinde," *Columbia*, September 11, 1890, 4.

¹⁰³ "Den Katholikentagen," *Columbia*, September 11, 1890, 4.

appreciating the assembly's affirmation of parental rights and approval of the Wisconsin bishops' Bennett Law protest.¹⁰⁴

The *Columbia* editors were also happy about state-level action against the Bennett Law undertaken by Wisconsin's Catholic Anti-Bennett Committee. In mid-September, the committee sent every congregation in the state a circular in German and English that called for Catholic voters to organize. In the pamphlet, the committee followed the lead of the Wisconsin bishops and demanded "...the *unconditional* repeal of this unnecessary, insulting, and unjust..." Bennett Law.¹⁰⁵ To accomplish this, the committee believed that Hoard and his fellow Republicans needed to lose so that the Democrats could achieve an absolute majority in the legislature. The pamphlet encouraged readers to put up candidates for assembly districts who would promise to repeal the law and requested the names of influential people and groups to which the pamphlet might be sent.¹⁰⁶ *Columbia* editors reported displeasure with the pamphlet on the part of the *Sentinel* and other pro-Bennett papers. These newspapers accused the Church of meddling in politics. The editors at the *Columbia* thought the charge was unfair since it implied that the state could interfere in religious affairs, but that religious organizations were not allowed to defend themselves in the political arena.¹⁰⁷

The *Columbia's* editors continued to do what it could to organize Catholic voters in defense of their schools in the weeks before the November election. Articles reminding voters of how and when to register and vote were common. For instance, during the primary and caucus season, the editors reminded their readers to only support candidates who opposed the Bennett

¹⁰⁴ "Vom Pittsburger Katholiken-Tag. Großer Erfolg!" *Columbia*, October 2, 1890, 1.

¹⁰⁵ Author's translation. Original: "...den *unbedingten* Widerruf dieses unnöthigen, beleidigenden und ungerechten..." "So ist's recht!" *Columbia*, September 18, 1890, 4.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ "Stadt Milwaukee. Das Circular," *Columbia*, September 25, 1890, 8.

Law. As the election neared, they reminded voters when to register and thus make their vote count on election day. W.H., in one of his articles, encouraged readers to take the anti-Bennett pamphlets with them when they went to visit their neighbors and to discuss with them the importance of the upcoming election.¹⁰⁸

The “Hoard-Sentinel Clique”

At the state level, the “Hoard-Sentinel clique” became shorthand for the group against which Wisconsin Catholics needed to organize. Like the *Germania*, the *Columbia* continually printed articles expressing frustration with misleading coverage of the school issue by Horace Rublee’s newspaper, the *Milwaukee Sentinel*. Sometimes, instead of expressing their displeasure with the “Hoard-Sentinel clique,” the *Columbia* editors lamented the “Hoard-Rublee clique” and its bias. Rublee was one of Governor Hoard’s most loyal and enthusiastic backers and so his *Sentinel*, as noted in the *Germania* chapter, continually made the case to its readers for Hoard and the Bennett Law. The *Columbia* viewed the *Sentinel* as one of the major mouthpieces for Hoard’s reelection campaign. What the *Columbia* read in the *Sentinel* they often criticized as misleading, dishonest, and characterized by nativism and know-nothingism. This discontent with the “clique” featured into much of the *Columbia*’s coverage of the Bennett Law.

An early reference to a clique comes from an article printed in the *Columbia* from the newspaper, *Landsmann*. The article begins with a quote in English from Horace Rublee,

No doubt the State has the right to take complete control of schools for the education of the young, but there are many rights possessed by the State which it would be neither just nor wise to exercise.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ W.H., “Granatensplitter aus dem Schulkampf,” *Columbia*, October 9, 1890, 5

¹⁰⁹ “Das Recht des Staates á la ‘Sentinel,’” *Landsmann*, as printed in the *Columbia*, October 17, 1889, 4.

The *Landsmann* saw Rublee as the head of the German-hating clique, and believed that with that statement, he had at last put his true thoughts out in the open.¹¹⁰ The article argued that Rublee believed in the absolute right of the state to close parochial schools and force parents to send their children to secular state schools. The author found it odd that Rublee would argue that the state had this right on the one hand, but, on the other hand, that such a right was neither just nor wise to actually exercise. Furthermore, the author believed that the state had as little right to force Christian parents to send their children to non-Christian schools as it did to be concerned whether someone was a Christian, Jew, Muslim or heathen. The *Landsmann* considered this a logical extension of the control over citizens implied by Prohibition, that the state was simply seeking to extend its control over children throughout their lives, as in ancient Sparta. Making a more modern comparison, the *Landsmann* compared such state control over citizens and schools to socialism and communism. In response to such ideas offered by nativist newspapers like the *Sentinel*, the author summoned Germans to set aside their religious and political differences and unite to defend every citizen's freedom.¹¹¹

Later in the year, the *Columbia* published another article critical of this Hoard-*Sentinel* clique. The criticism came in an article describing instances in the state of Illinois when school boards or other governmental entities had tried forcing families with children in parochial schools to send their children to public schools instead. The *Columbia* editors warned their readers that such actions would eventually be tried in Wisconsin, and cited as evidence "the equally aggressive, *hypocritical*, and *dishonest agitation* in favor of the Bennett Law, which the Hoard-'Sentinel' clique and its followers have been recently pushing in the press as well as at

¹¹⁰ This is a paraphrase of the rather colorful German used to open the article. Original: "So, da hätten wir's denn einmal ungeschminkt! Das heißt doch vom Obermeister der deutsch-hassenden Clique frei von der Leber weg gesprochen!" Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

farmer and teacher assemblies.”¹¹² The editors thought that the clique was lying to the public about the true nature of the law even though section 5 explicitly referred to public school boards being granted the authority to decide whether schools could be recognized as such before the law. Instead, Hoard and this group kept talking about how the law was simply a measure to help German children learn a little English. The *Columbia* editors were not convinced, saying that what Hoard and company were truly supporting was “the right of the *state* to *forcibly deliver* the entire youth to **its** schools.”¹¹³ The article concluded with a warning for *Columbia* readers to be on guard to protect their freedom of religion and conscience.

The *Columbia*’s editors indirectly attributed the victory of Bennett Law opponents in the spring elections of 1890 to the clique. They condemned the Hoard-*Sentinel* clique’s behavior during the campaign, saying that it had led “a campaign of lies and distortion, of baseness and even of hateful personal attacks against those who were called by duty and service to be guardians of the threatened rights of parents and the Church.”¹¹⁴ The editors believed that such dirty campaigning had had the opposite of its intended effect, galvanizing the Bennett Law opponents rather than firing up supporters of the “nativist and know-nothing clique.”¹¹⁵ The very next week, the *Columbia* included an article telling its readers to organize against the Hoard-*Sentinel* clique, which they believed counted nearly the entire English Republican press as its

¹¹² Author’s translation. Original: “...die ebenso aggressive als *heuchlerische* und *verlogene Agitation*, welche die Hoard-‘Sentinel’-Clique und ihr gesammter Anhang seit einiger Zeit sowol in der Presse, wie in Farmer- und Lehrer-Versammlungen zugunsten des Bennett-Gesetzes betreibt...” “Der Krieg gegen die Pfarrschulen,” *Columbia*, December 26, 1889, 4.

¹¹³ Author’s translation. Original: “...das Recht des *Staates* auf *zwangsweise Auslieferung* der gesammten Jugend an **seine** Schulen herausgelesen werden...” Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Author’s translation. Original: “...eine Campagne der Lüge und Entstellung, der Niedertracht und selbst der gehässigsten persönlichen Angriffe gegen diejenigen, welche durch Pflicht und Stellung zu Hütern der bedrohten Rechte der Eltern und der Kirche berufen waren.” “Ein glänzender Sieg der Elternrechte und der Unterrichtsfreiheit,” *Columbia*, April 3, 1889, 5.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

vassals, and would stop at nothing to continue its “freiheitsmörderischen Anschlägen” (freedom-murdering attacks) against parochial schools.¹¹⁶

The *Columbia* was especially frustrated by Hoard and the clique’s claims that the public school was under attack. In his stump speeches and in newspapers, Hoard summoned Wisconsinites to stand by the little schoolhouse. To the *Columbia*, Hoard seemed to be saying that Lutherans and Catholics hated English and wanted to drive public schools into the ground. The editors thought that Hoard and his allies were thus turning the whole Bennett issue on its head, since no one was actually attacking the public schools. Rather, it was the Lutheran and Catholic parochial schools that had to fear for their existence under the strictures of the Bennett Law. In contrast to their opponents, whom the *Columbia* accused of clouding the issue, the *Columbia* believed that supporters of parochial schools were fighting “offen und ehrlich” (openly and honorably).¹¹⁷

After the November elections, the *Columbia* reveled in the Catholic and Lutheran victory over the Hoard-*Sentinel* clique. A few weeks prior, the *Columbia* had referenced a stump speech that Governor Hoard had made in which he expressed the wish for his tombstone’s epitaph to read that he was the one who passed the Bennett Law. Back then, the *Columbia* had predicted that the Bennett Law would instead be the tombstone for his political career. Now that Hoard and most of the other Republicans in the state had lost so badly, the *Columbia* praised the Wisconsin people for making their prediction a reality. The people had effectively buried Hoard and the Bennett Law and set up a stone over them so heavy that they would never rise again.¹¹⁸ The

¹¹⁶ “Organisirt Euch!” *Columbia*, April 10, 1890, 4.

¹¹⁷ “Nur flott drauf los gelogen,” *Columbia*, October 2, 1890, 4.

¹¹⁸ Author’s paraphrase of the following. Original: “Das brave Wisconsiner Volk hat diese Voraussagung buchstäblich *wahr gemacht* und mehr als das. Es hat am 4. November nicht bloß Hoard und sein Bennett-Gesetz ruhmlos in die *Grube* fahren lassen, sondern auch auf letztere einen ‘*Stein*’ gewälzt, dessen Gewicht Beiden das Wiederauferstehen unmöglich machen dürfte.” “Als Gouverneur Hoard,” *Columbia*, November 13, 1890, 4.

Columbia declared the Hoard-*Sentinel* clique politically “tot und begraben” (dead and buried), and then, writing in English said that “the Bennett-law did it!”¹¹⁹

Conclusion

The *Columbia*'s Bennett coverage reveals the internal and external struggles that German-American Catholics had to deal with in America. In Germany, Catholics had endured religious prejudice under the Protestant majority, but they were doubly outsiders in America. In this country, they not only endured prejudice because of their faith, but because of their language and culture, too. In response, German-American Catholics were liable to propose what has been deemed a siege-mentality Catholicism. Unlike in Germany, American Catholics had the freedom to run their own schools and could move to more amenable states when they encountered anti-Catholic bigotry. When the Bennett Law came around, the Catholics of the *Columbia* believed that, just as in Germany, the Protestant majority was trying to take over their schools, and that Masons stood behind the efforts. In response, the *Columbia* polemicized against the law and defended the parochial schools not only against the Hoard-*Sentinel* clique, but also against other Catholics like Archbishop Ireland. Like the *Germania*, the *Columbia* took to organizing its readership politically, and like the *Germania*, the *Columbia* could look back on its efforts with satisfaction, as it enjoyed the fruits of its victory.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

Chapter 5: *The Milwaukee Sentinel vs. The Milwaukee Daily Journal*: Dueling Bennett Law Narratives in the Anglophone Press

Examining two of Wisconsin's more prominent English-language newspapers and their Bennett Law coverage can better contextualize the German-language newspapers which compose the heart of this dissertation. English-language newspaper accounts of the Bennett Law have been amply cited in scholarly works, so this chapter does not seek to treat these newspapers exhaustively, but simply to render a fair sampling of each newspaper's Bennett coverage. This sampling has been drawn primarily from the weeks and months immediately preceding the spring and fall elections of 1890. The papers chosen for this chapter were *The Milwaukee Sentinel* and the *Milwaukee Daily Journal*. The *Republican Sentinel* and *Democratic Journal* both figured prominently in the Bennett Law campaign, and both newspapers are cited frequently in German-language newspapers. These two papers offer two different narratives about the Bennett Law and its aims. As might be expected, the *Sentinel* stood up for the Bennett Law, and the *Journal* called for its repeal.

The Milwaukee Sentinel

The Milwaukee Sentinel had both daily and weekly editions at the time of the Bennett controversy. Its editor, Horace Rublee, had been a champion for Governor Hoard, a relative newcomer to politics, and helped him to get elected. While its circulation was much less than the *Germania*, its status as Milwaukee's foremost English-language Republican paper made it an important player in the state's political world. Its importance can be seen in the fact that newspapers throughout the city and state thought the *Sentinel* important enough comment upon—or to feud with.

The *Sentinel* had a longstanding feud with the *Germania* over the Bennett Law that lasted throughout the campaign. All newspapers in this dissertation responded to what other

newspapers in the state and country had to say about the Bennett Law controversy. They quoted one other liberally, expressing editorial approval or disapproval as the case may be. Naturally, some newspapers entered into longer-term disputations, as was the case with the *Germania* and the *Sentinel*. Each side accused the other of misrepresenting the facts, or being obtuse, or arguing in bad faith. Each side claimed that its interpretation of the Bennett Law, and its editorial stance in general, was clearly the most sensible and reasonable. Perhaps part of the reason for the duration and intensity of the spat between the *Sentinel* and *Germania* was the fact that the *Germania* had supported Republicans in the past but changed sides on account of the Bennett controversy. The pointed language that colored this debate between 1889 and 1890 is understandable when seen in the light of a rift between former political allies.

At the end of January 1890, after long months of feuding with the *Germania* and similar newspapers, the *Sentinel* defended its Bennett Law coverage. The occasion for the article was a letter to the editor published in the *Milwaukee Journal* by a reader who signed off simply as “Lutheran.” This letter pointed to the *Germania*’s publication of a statement by Mr. Rublee with relatively little commentary.¹ The “Lutheran” said that the *Sentinel* should do the same and present opposing views without editorializing. The *Sentinel* editors took umbrage at this critique, arguing that they had, in fact, giving plenty of column space to those who disagreed with them, and that the *Germania* had offered plenty of commentary to its publication of Rublee’s piece. In general, the *Sentinel* thought that the German press was unfairly representing Bennett Law proponents. The *Sentinel* believed that they had done the opposite:

We have defended the law, but we have opened our columns liberally to the other side. We have published article after article taken from the German press in opposition to the law.... We desire our readers should know the grounds upon which the law is opposed as well as the arguments in its favor.²

¹ “Zum Bennettgesetz,” *Germania*, January 21, 1890, 8.

² “Giving Both Sides,” *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, January 31, 1890, 4.

The *Sentinel* often did publish translated articles from a variety of German-language papers. They also gave a great deal of column space to speeches from the anti-Bennett Convention in June 1890. The *Sentinel* even translated, published, and commented on some of the political poetry that appeared in the *Germania*.

One such poem was Konrad Krez's "Seid Einig!" which the *Sentinel* translates as "Be Solid." The editors asked for Krez to present his own English version, but in case he would not, they took the liberty of publishing their own translation, which they described as "a rough-and-ready version, giving the sense, but of course lacking the perfection of form and metrical smoothness which the colonel might, if he chose, impart to an English translation."³ The translation is fair, and gets the main thrust across without being literal. The *Sentinel* had a problem with the German audience of Krez's poem, arguing that, "in opposing a measure which concerns all citizens, he addresses himself to citizens of a special class, and urges them to political action from motives of race."⁴ Instead, reasoned the *Sentinel*, if Krez believed that the law was wrong, then it should be wrong for all, and all should unite against it. If Krez were to run for governor, the *Sentinel* wondered if he would "...come before the people as a German or as an American[.]"⁵ In the *Sentinel's* reading, Krez was amplifying ethnic political divisions and misrepresenting the Bennett Law when he suggested that the law would impose a penalty simply for speaking German. The *Sentinel* also thought that it would not be regrettable if, as the poem warns, grandchildren of German immigrants could not understand their parents' tombstones. On the contrary, the *Sentinel* would interpret such a development to mean that those grandchildren were able to read the country's founding documents easily in the original English.⁶

³ "Col. Krez Drops Into Poetry," *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, January 31, 1890, 4.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

The *Sentinel* pushed back against Krez and others who saw proponents of the Bennett Law as enemies of the German language. In doing so, the *Sentinel* used language that German Americans, like those reading the *Germania* and *Columbia*, might have pointed to as *prima facie* evidence of nativism,

The talk about native American opposition to the German language is frantic nonsense. No German who has lived outside a sectarian school long enough to become familiar with and to comprehend the nature and mental habits of native Americans, or who is not striving to create race animosities for his own political promotion, ever thinks of charging native Americans with opposition to the preservation and extension of any tongue in whose use and literature there is an idea or a feature of beauty.⁷

The *Sentinel* then described how “native” Americans had been putting forth efforts to learn German in Milwaukee’s public schools. Such language comparing “native” Americans with German-born Americans probably did not help the *Sentinel* if they truly were interested in dispelling German-American accusations of nativism. The line about Germans attending “sectarian” schools, a pejorative term, would not have endeared German-Americans to the *Sentinel* either. Even though the *Sentinel* considered German a worthy language of study, they put a higher value on all Americans learning English. While waxing poetic about the necessity and promise of an English-speaking America, they could not help but get in another dig at religious leaders: “It is by unity of speech and harmony of thought that the ultimate America is to be the light of civilization. The English tongue is the birthright of every child in this land, not to be sacrificed to the needs of secluded priests.”⁸ The *Sentinel* continued in this line of thought, accusing demagogic politicians and priests of riling up German Americans and blinding them to the fact that English and German could both be learned and used in harmony. The piece closes with a telling remark about what the *Sentinel* thinks about Lutherans and Catholics:

⁷ “Not Opposed to German,” *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, February 4, 1890, 4.

⁸ *Ibid.*

Leaving out the despicable selfishness of the political demagogue, it is simply a matter of alarm among foreign-tongued priests that the modest demands of the Bennett law are assailed. It is a senseless alarm as far as the German Lutherans are concerned, for the spirit of the Lutheran church is not out of harmony with the results of a knowledge of the English language.⁹

The *Sentinel* was saying that German Lutherans should not be alarmed by the Bennett Law like Catholic, “foreign-tongued” priests, because Lutheranism was apparently compatible with the English language in a way that Catholicism was not. Such an article, ostensibly meant to prove that “native” Americans were not opposed to German Americans, essentially undermined its argument, at least among German-American Catholics, by using such inflammatory, implicitly anti-Catholic language.

The *Sentinel* continued in this nativist vein before the Milwaukee municipal elections of April 1890. They described Democrats as being “in a state of intoxication yesterday—a usual occurrence on the eve of all elections.”¹⁰ Such language plays off common stereotypes of the Democratic Party being the party of bibulous immigrants. This low view of the Democrats, however, did not mean that the *Sentinel* approved of Prohibition. Indeed, the *Sentinel* thought that despite Milwaukee’s many beer gardens and saloons, the citizens of the city committed less crime, drank more moderately, attended church more, and showed greater social cohesion than comparable cities.¹¹ Despite these positive views of alcohol consumption in Milwaukee, the *Sentinel* did not depict Republicans as drinkers. Before the election, the Republicans, in contrast to the Democrats, were described as “perfectly sober” with “full command of their brains” and “at work with the air of men knowing what they were doing.”¹² With such characterizations, the

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ “Tide Has Turned,” *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, March 27, 1890, 1.

¹¹ “The Morals of Milwaukee,” *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, April 5, 1890, 4.

¹² “Tide Has Turned,” *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, March 27, 1890, 1.

Sentinel might have been trying to signal support to Prohibitionists within the Republican Party without actually endorsing Prohibition.

The *Sentinel* editors believed that they could see signs of an imminent Republican victory. For instance, they quote an unnamed German who said that Lutherans, especially the young, would not “submit to the dictation of their priests” and instead vote Republican. A day later, while reporting on a meeting of Lutheran leaders at Trinity Lutheran School in Milwaukee, the *Sentinel* reported that at least three gentlemen who attended were not convinced by Koerner’s arguments that they should vote Democrat.¹³ Even on March 30, the Sunday before the election, the *Sentinel* thought that it could see the Democratic coalition fracturing: “The revolt in the ranks of the Democratic party has assumed serious proportions.”¹⁴ They had heard reports that hundreds of Democrats were unhappy about the anti-Bennett stance of the Milwaukee Democratic Party. The *Sentinel* again quoted Germans who thought that the laity would not follow the clergy in turning against the Republicans. For good measure, it also claimed that the Democratic Party was attracting the city’s “dissatisfied, grumbling elements.”¹⁵ The *Sentinel* credited Republicans with running a professional, organized, and dignified campaign. In an era before modern polling, the *Sentinel* could not have known that its confidence was misplaced.

The *Sentinel* credited Peck’s spring victory to “the Catholic and Lutheran clergy with their Democratic allies.”¹⁶ This framing of the issue is consistent with the *Sentinel*’s depiction of opposition to the Bennett Law as something coming more from the clergy than the laity. The editors implied that the laity were blindly following the orders of their religious leaders. They further believed that the funeral of Archbishop Heiss had helped increase Democratic turnout. A

¹³ “Stick to Koerner,” *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, March 28, 1890, 1.

¹⁴ “Cannot Stand It,” *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, March 30, 1890, 1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ “Peck is Elected,” *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, April 2, 1890, 1.

holiday had been called for Catholics because of the funeral, and since more Catholics had the day off, they had more time to vote than they otherwise might have had. The *Sentinel* credited the Lutheran leadership for “hustling just as zealously as some of the editors of *The Germania*, and the Democratic bosses seconded them with a good supply of money and men.”¹⁷ Despite the superiority of Republican organization, the party “seemed powerless to stem the tide in the Lutheran wards.”¹⁸ In another article that day, the *Sentinel* attributed the victory to the “R. C., L., and D. party,” referring to Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and Democrats.¹⁹ The Democrats had been the more confident party, in the *Sentinel*’s opinion. Going forward, the *Sentinel* thought that Republicans should craft a more “bold and aggressive” platform, and campaign with greater confidence and more frequent public speeches to reach more voters.²⁰ The *Sentinel* knew that the fate of the Bennett Law would ultimately be decided in the fall, but that in the meantime, Mayor Peck could enjoy his victory, and “drink beer at such hours as he craves it.”²¹

Soon after the election, the *Sentinel* responded to criticism it had received from other newspapers for its Bennett Law coverage. A German Republican paper had blamed the election loss on the *Sentinel*, and a Democratic paper from La Crosse said that Hoard and the *Sentinel* had made the Bennett Law too big of an issue and incited ethnic hatred. The *Sentinel* replied that it had not itself sought to make the Bennett Law a political issue but defended it after it had already been made an issue. The *Sentinel* traced the feud back to summer 1889, when, after Lutheran synods had passed resolutions against the law, the German press had attacked the law, too. The *Sentinel* claimed that it had simply responded to these attacks. Further, the *Sentinel* editors were

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ “The Election Yesterday,” *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, April 2, 1890, 4.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

amenable to the emendation of the Bennett Law, as long as the core of it was untouched. The *Sentinel* reiterated that the law “was not enacted in a spirit of hostility to any nationality or religion, and that its principle is a just and wholesome one.”²² In the editors telling, the Bennett Law would have been made an issue by the German Lutheran and Catholics anyway. If the *Sentinel* had not spoken up, then it would have effectively surrendered “to those who protested against the right of the state to require that children shall receive instruction in the language of its laws.”²³ This framing of the Bennett Law, was, of course, vigorously rejected by Bennett Law opponents.

When the Anti-Bennett Convention met in June 1890, the *Sentinel* was there to render a firsthand account. According to the *Sentinel*'s story, the convention was mostly attended by Lutherans with a smattering of Catholics and Democratic leaders. Apparently Christian Koerner arrived late and without credentials. The ticket-taker refused to admit him, so a *Sentinel* reporter had to vouch for him so he could get into the very convention he had helped organize.²⁴ Once situated on the stage, Koerner banged the gavel and called the convention to order. The *Sentinel* compared the convention to an opera, with everything going off relatively smoothly, “according to the pre-arranged plans.”²⁵ This differed from many other political conventions of the day, where the outcome was not necessarily assured at the outset. Terming the convention an opera also implied that this was all political theater. The *Sentinel* related what each speaker said and continued to provide small details about what went on in between the speeches. The convention passed a resolution against the *Sentinel* itself, which was accused of saying that the Lutheran laity were just blindly following their clergy. After that resolution had been adopted, H.C.

²² “An Answer to Hostile Critics,” *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, April 5, 1890, 4.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ “Must be Downed,” *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, June 5, 1890, 1.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

Gardner gave a speech excoriating Rublee and the *Sentinel*: “He tried his very best to annihilate the editor and pressed half of Webster’s unabridged into service to do it.”²⁶ Apart from the subtext of annoyance at the above comments, the *Sentinel* refrained from rebutting such charges in its convention report.

The *Sentinel* gave an amusing account of Father Hackner’s speech, which was the last of the convention. Hackner was the same Catholic priest who wrote under the pen name, W.H., and authored the “Granatensplitter” for the *Columbia*. Hackner’s speech centered on the idea that a member of the clergy also had “rights as voter and citizen,” and the *Sentinel* reported that he made gestures that were “very peculiar and amusing.”²⁷ Koerner apparently tried but failed to get Hackner to stop speaking. This was probably because he felt that Father Hackner’s point about clergy rights was out of place in a convention which was explicitly seeking to rebut charges that the laity was sheepishly following the clergy. There was probably also limited tolerance for a Catholic priest speaking to a largely Lutheran assembly. In any case, the crowd soon started applauding, thus drowning out Hackner. He initially kept talking, but then figured out what was going on, “and, gesticulating wildly, jumped from the stage.”²⁸ After Hackner’s speech, the convention adjourned. The *Sentinel* closed its coverage with a comment from a delegate about a recent dust up between the *Germania* and Lutheran church officials. The *Germania*’s proposed Bennett compromise did not go over well with these officials. Allegedly, there had been a secret conference in Watertown, and Lutheran church officials had threatened to withdraw their support of the *Germania* and start a new Lutheran paper in Milwaukee if the *Germania* did not support the law’s unconditional repeal.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

The *Sentinel* thought that Catholic and Lutheran church organizations were meddling inappropriately in politics. In late September 1890, the *Sentinel* claimed that it had published a “secret” pamphlet sent out by Catholics to congregations throughout the state.²⁹ The use of the word “secret” seems out of place here since the official outlet of local German Catholics, the *Columbia*, had published the pamphlet’s contents for all to see on the eighteenth, and the *Sentinel* published it on the nineteenth. In essence, the *Sentinel* had a problem with the fact that were seeking to persuade the laity to vote against the Bennett Law. The *Sentinel* characterized the two churches as horses who join together “to pull the Democratic wagon out of the mud. It is a queer sort of a team. The two nags have not been in the habit of pulling together hitherto, and are likely to prove fractious before they reach the end of their journey.”³⁰ The *Sentinel* editors thought that Catholic clergy had a tighter grip on their congregations than the Lutherans, but hoped that there were enough priests “imbued with the proper American spirit,” that they would stay out of politics. The Lutheran, they believed, had a “stronger spirit of independence, and, “[if] he be an intelligent man, before he allows himself to be treated as a chattel by Boss Koerner, or by his pastor, he will examine the Bennett law and the party platforms for himself.”³¹ Doing so would help the average Lutheran to see better the sense of the law and recognize that Hoard was not against them. The *Sentinel*’s belief was that any reasonable person would see the sense of the Bennett Law and the Republican platform. German papers opposing the Bennett Law encouraged their readers to examine the law and the platforms for themselves, too, but of course expected them to come to the opposite conclusion.

²⁹ “The Circular to Catholic Priests,” *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, September 20, 1890, 4.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

As the fall campaign drew to its close, the *Sentinel*, just as in spring, was seeing signs of a Republican victory. For instance, it reported that Hoard handily won the mock vote at a Milwaukee exposition.³² Then, at the end of October, the *Sentinel* exuded confidence because of the enthusiastic crowds Hoard was drawing: “Any one who is present at one of the meetings at which Gov. Hoard speaks believes that he has seen the most enthusiastic meeting of his life, but he has only to attend the next one to find that the enthusiasm grows the nearer election comes.”³³ The *Sentinel* was particularly impressed by the crowd Hoard drew in Bayfield where people of all ages cheered him. Hoard is said to have elicited a “cyclone of applause, which swept round and round the room,” when he referenced the Democrats who broke with their party by supporting the Bennett Law.³⁴ The enthusiastic shouting to end the speech was “deafening,” and the skating rink where they met “trembled with the echoing plaudits of the throng.”³⁵ This glowing report of Hoard’s campaign work, as might be expected, contrasts markedly from the *Sentinel’s* coverage of his Catholic and Lutheran opponents and their campaign.

The *Sentinel* thought that Lutheran and Catholic leaders were essentially doing all the work for the Democratic Party, that the official party “will hardly feel called upon to make any particular effort.”³⁶ Lutheran congregations, they predicted, would be asked to give a special offering for Koerner’s and the *Germania’s* expenses. Both Catholic and Lutheran clergy would supposedly tell their flocks how to vote and even give them copies of the Democratic ticket at church. The Democratic leadership, the *Sentinel* sarcastically remarked, will be “...praying upon their knees for God’s blessing,” and Peck, a Mason, “will come around to inquire how his

³² “Hoard Far Ahead,” *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, September 28, 1890, 3.

³³ “Better Each Day,” *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, October 26, 1890, 1.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ “Nearing the End,” *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, November 1, 1890, 1.

friends, the priests and pastors, have done their work.”³⁷ The *Sentinel* foresaw a “general love-feast” at the Democratic headquarters that would last until the Tuesday of Election Day, but by Wednesday, the Democrats would “...be sore and sick and they will stay at home or elsewhere trying to rest from their arduous but fruitless work.” The Democratic defeat could only be assured by the noble Republicans and their allies who supported education, loved freedom, and opposed Koerner and company. Unlike the Democrats, who would have their work done for them, Republicans would have to get out the vote without church help.³⁸

The *Sentinel* was particularly peeved by Catholic clerical politicking as the campaign drew to a close. Two Sundays before the election, they reported that German Catholic priests had given orders from the pulpit to their congregations to vote for Peck and the Democratic ticket. They expected that the Sunday before the election would see “a mighty straining to drive the entire mass of German Catholics to the polls.”³⁹ The *Sentinel* alleged that Bishop Katzer and other priests would consider Catholics voting for Hoard and his ticket to be traitors, and thus liable to be excommunicated.⁴⁰ The editors of the *Sentinel* believed that the Catholic clergy was acting this way because they did not want their parishioners learning English and did not want to cede any power to English-speaking priests. They further accused the Catholic leadership of seeking to control legislation concerning education in the state. A win for the Catholics on the Bennett Law would simply be a first step in a church takeover of state education. In response, the *Sentinel* asked all citizens, regardless of party, to stand united against the Catholics on this

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ “The Katzer Forces to the Front,” *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, October 29, 1890, 4.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

issue.⁴¹ While exhibiting a stronger bias against Catholics in the heat of the campaign's closing days, the *Sentinel* also had plenty of spleen to vent on account of Lutheran electioneering.

In an article titled "Boss Koerner's Roll of Slaves," the *Sentinel* expressed its disapproval of Koerner and the Lutherans' campaign tactics. Koerner and the Anti-Bennett State Central Committee had sent out circulars to state legislative candidates requesting their position on the Bennett Law, specifically whether or not they would support the unconditional repeal of the Bennett Law. The *Germania* had recently published the results of this survey. Only two Republican candidates for the Wisconsin Senate and seven candidates for the Assembly had given a response. These responses were all deemed unsatisfactory by the *Germania*. Of the Democratic senatorial candidates, all responded to the *Germania*'s satisfaction but one. One Democrat, W. F. Nash of Manitowoc, apparently changed his response after Koerner pressured him. Additionally, all Democrats but one running for a place in the Assembly pledged themselves to the Bennett Law's repeal. Dow Maxon, a Democratic Assembly candidate from Washington county, supported the Bennett Law, and thus did not receive an endorsement from Koerner and company. The *Sentinel* thought that the Democrats were cowardly and that they had unnecessarily pledged themselves to repeal the law "to Boss Koerner—or the German Lutheran church, if that term is preferred—." Instead, argued the *Sentinel*, they might have at least remained open to the idea of simply amending the law and keeping its less controversial aspects.⁴²

As the election results were tallied up, the *Sentinel* had to reckon with the magnitude of Hoard and the Republicans' defeat. Initially, they believed, citing Republican Chairman Payne, that while the Democrats and Peck had won the governorship, that the Republicans would

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² "Boss Koerner's Roll of Slaves," *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, November 2, 1890, 4.

probably hold the state legislature, thus allowing Spooner, the prominent Republican leader, to be reelected to his seat in the U.S. Senate.⁴³ More returns came in by the time the Thursday edition went to press, and the *Sentinel* had to report that Peck and the Democrats had won in a landslide that included both chambers of the state legislature and most of Wisconsin's congressional delegation. The *Sentinel* believed that one cause of the defeat was that the Bennett Law had suffered from "flagrant misrepresentations of its character and purposes," and that German Catholics and Lutherans had entered politics against Republicans.⁴⁴ The tariff, they believed, had not had enough time to effectively manifest its possible good effects, and enemies of it had exaggerated its negatives. The *Sentinel* thought if not for partisan politics, all reasonable citizens would have agreed on the merits of the Bennett Law. The editors commended Hoard and the Republican Party for standing by the law in the face of church opposition:

They preferred, if the state was to abandon its right to any voice in the education of its children, that the shameful task should be performed by some other party. That was the attitude of Gov. Hoard, a brave, sincere, able, patriotic and honest man, who would rather go down in defeat than purchase office at the sacrifice of his truth and his honor.⁴⁵

This depiction of Hoard was no doubt influenced by editor Horace Rublee's personal affection for Hoard, whom he had supported when the soon-to-be former governor was still a political outsider. The *Sentinel* editors were also upset about the inevitable loss of Spooner from the Senate, saying, "It is a misfortune to the state and to the country that he should have fallen a victim to this temporary spasm of fanaticism and unreasonable and unfounded discontent."⁴⁶

While stung by defeat, the editors believed that the Republicans would win again one day, and that Spooner would have another chance to serve as senator.

⁴³ "Both Claim It," *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, November 4, 1890, 1.

⁴⁴ "Results of the Election," *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, November 6, 1890, 4.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

The experience of reading the *Sentinel's* Bennett Law coverage feels in some ways like seeing the photo negative of the *Germania's* or *Columbia's* coverage of the issue. The editors of these German-language newspapers managed to read the same law as the *Sentinel's* editors and come to radically different interpretations as to its meaning. The *Sentinel's* coverage was marked by loyal support for Governor Hoard and the Republican Party throughout the Bennett campaign. Unfortunately, the legitimate criticisms published in its pages are sometimes hard to detangle from its biases and use of inflammatory language, particularly against Catholics. The *Sentinel* also rather blatantly misrepresented opposing arguments at times, and sometimes printed outright falsehoods. Such tactics bring the rest of its coverage under some suspicion. Its critics charged the *Sentinel* with nativism, and they were perhaps not wrong. The emphasis on “native” Americans in an article purporting to show their lack of hostility to the German language, the open contempt for Catholic clergy, the condescension towards German laypersons, and the premium placed on immigrant assimilation all support such claims.

The Milwaukee Daily Journal

Like the *Germania*, the *Milwaukee Daily Journal* boasted of its circulation, which it claimed was the highest for a daily newspaper published in Wisconsin. The American Newspaper Directory, however, puts the number at between 10,000 and 12,500, which is actually less than the 12,500 to 15,000 subscriptions attributed to the *Sentinel*.⁴⁷ The *Journal* had less to say in 1889 about the Bennett Law than the *Germania*, *Columbia*, or *Sentinel*. In summer 1889, the *Journal* had mentioned the Lutheran synodical protests against the law, but there was nothing like the constant flow of articles coming from other local news outlets. Like the *Turnzeitung*, the *Journal* started paying more attention to the controversy at the end of 1889 and in the run up to

⁴⁷ *American Newspaper Directory*, 754.

the spring election in April 1890. As mentioned in the *Germania* chapter of this dissertation, the *Journal* had reported on an important meeting of anti-Bennett religious groups in late December 1889. There, Koerner had presented a version of what would become his pamphlet, which the *Journal* published soon after the meeting. Throughout January and over the ensuing months, the Bennett Law coverage became more constant.

Early in the spring campaign, the *Journal* laid out its position on the Bennett Law. The editors called it an example of “bungling legislation” passed by the Republican-controlled legislature, “ill-advised and uncalled for.”⁴⁸ They suspected that Republicans might have passed the law to make political hay out of the matter, citing Hoard’s speeches to farmers that referred to poor immigrant children and their need to learn English. The *Journal* informed its readers that it would be investigating whether immigrant children were actually being prevented from learning the language of the state or not. The *Journal* editors thought that the 1879 compulsory education law had also been unnecessary, as shown by local reliance on parents to monitor their own children’s education. They affirmed their belief that the right of parents to guide their children’s education superseded the state’s right to educate. The *Journal* observed that American parents speaking languages other than English knew the utility of English and that their offspring did, too. Indeed, it reminded readers that parents often had difficulty getting their children to continue speaking their native language. Instead of passing such measures as the Bennett Law, the *Journal* thought that the state should instead look to its own house and clean out the corruption by state officials like the treasurer.⁴⁹

Like the *Sentinel*, who looked for Democrats in support of the Bennett Law, the *Journal* reported on Wisconsin Republicans and their often ambivalent views on the Bennett Law. While

⁴⁸ “The Bennett Law,” *The Milwaukee Daily Journal*, January 7, 1890, 1.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

agreeing that English should be taught in all Wisconsin schools, Representative Van Schaick of Wisconsin's fourth congressional district thought that the Bennett law "should never have been passed, and ought to be repealed."⁵⁰ Jeremiah Rusk was a former Republican governor of Wisconsin serving as the United States Secretary of Agriculture at the time of the Bennett controversy. Rusk said that he would not have signed the Bennett bill into law if he had been governor. Finally, the *Journal* reported that one of Wisconsin's U.S. Senators, Philetus Sawyer, thought that the Bennett Law was "uncalled for" as it was presently written.⁵¹ These negative views of the Bennett Law contrasted with Governor Hoard's position. The *Journal* quoted Hoard as saying that while he might consider some amendments to the law, he would "gladly go down" with it because of the "fundamental American principles" that stood at its heart, namely, "the right of the state to see to it that every child shall receive the rudiments of an education, and the right of every child to receive such an education."⁵² Horace Rublee, editor of the *Sentinel*, also argued in the Bennett Law's favor, saying that the law might need some improvements, but was good in principle and not meant to inflame religious or ethnic hostilities.⁵³ The Republican Party boss, Henry C. Payne, hedged a little, saying that he had not looked at the issue in enough detail just yet, but thought, at first glance, "some of its provisions are crude and unwise, and ought to be modified and the law amended."⁵⁴ Payne found himself in a tough position as he sought to keep Republican Lutherans in the fold while simultaneously supporting Governor Hoard.

As the Milwaukee municipal election neared, the *Journal* reported on the difficult situation in which Republicans such as Henry Payne had found themselves. The *Journal's*

⁵⁰ "The Bennett Law," *The Milwaukee Daily Journal*, March 21, 1890, 1.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

coverage is almost a photo negative of the *Sentinel*'s; where the *Sentinel* saw signs for Republican hope in the spring election, the *Journal* instead thought that news relating to the Bennett Law augured well for Democrats. Apparently, Payne had tried negotiating a compromise with German Lutherans that would leave the Bennett Law on the books but amended. The Lutherans had refused any such compromise measures, instead demanding the law's unconditional repeal.⁵⁵ Payne had been unable to acquiesce to such demands because of pressure on him from other Republicans. The *Journal* alleges that the Republican leadership was annoyed at the *Sentinel* and the *Herold* for making the Bennett Law an issue in the Milwaukee city election at all.⁵⁶ In its coverage of the Republican city convention, the *Journal* depicts Payne as sympathetic to immigrants who had a problem with the law, especially the districting clause. He suggested a plank in the Republican city platform that supported compulsory education, proposed that all students learn to read and write in English, and argued for the necessity of instruction in U.S. history. Presumably to assuage the fears of German Americans, the platform reaffirmed the right of parents to send their children to the school of their choosing, and affirmed freedom of conscience and worship.⁵⁷ In a string of headlines, the *Journal* described the disunity of the Republican convention. They called its resolutions a "Nauseating" attempt by party boss Payne to keep the Republican Party together, saying Payne had "Cram[med] an Anti-Bennett Law Platform Down Their Throats" and that Governor Hoard "...Weeps Alone" because he had not gotten even more support from the party.⁵⁸ With such disunity among Republicans, the *Journal* was confident that things were going their way, predicting a Democratic landslide.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ "Side-Lights of Politics," *The Milwaukee Daily Journal*, March 20, 1890, 1.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ "Try to Ride Two Horses," *The Milwaukee Daily Journal*, March 22, 1890, 1-2.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ "A Landslide Coming," *The Milwaukee Daily Journal*, March 27, 1890, 1.

In the same issue, the *Journal* made its pitch to readers that the Democratic Party was the party of personal freedom. The editors argued that measures like the Bennett Law were unnecessary, citing as proof the lack of enforcement of the 1879 law by the Republican-led government and lack of public concern about it. They described Bennett Law advocacy as “demagogic in every feature. It is a tilt with windmills, a contest with defects in our educational system which have but an imaginary existence.”⁶⁰ The *Journal* thought that such laws were examples of state overreach, that government should merely provide the schools, but had no need to compel attendance because parents would see to their children’s education as a matter of course. Such laws, argued the *Journal’s* editors, “go even beyond the plan of salvation provided for the world. In that all orthodox teachers of whatever creed declare that salvation is offered to us and that while we reject it at our peril, yet we are at the liberty to do so, being ‘free moral agents.’”⁶¹ Not all Christian denominations would agree that salvation works just like that. This statement reveals a particular, underlying strand of American Protestantism in the *Journal* editors, one that emphasizes personal agency in being saved. The *Journal* concluded that if the state provides the schools and shows citizens their worth, then “[h]uman nature and the general desire of all people to keep up with the times” would ensure that parents from all backgrounds would continue to send their children to school.⁶² In the coming days, the *Journal* continued publishing articles against the Bennett Law.

On the Monday before the spring election, the *Journal* reminded its Democratic readership of its duty and its principles. The editors first took on the idea that the Bennett Law had nothing to do with a municipal election, pointing out that school board officials would be

⁶⁰ “This is a Free Country,” *The Milwaukee Daily Journal*, March 27, 1890, 1.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

elected that Tuesday. They also warned against being deceived by Republicans, whom they accused of distracting voters with an outside issue as they had in 1886 with the “riot issue,” presumably a reference to the election that followed the Haymarket affair. The *Journal* reiterated how unnecessary the Bennett Law was, that Germans and others had been learning English well enough without a law requiring it. The newspaper accused Republicans of acting in bad faith by passing the Bennett Law. They were said to be making appeals to “prejudiced sentiment” and using the law as “a bait to catch votes.”⁶³ Instead of forcing English on immigrants, the *Journal* would have the state leave them and their parochial schools alone, trusting that without compulsion they would continue to see the value of learning English as they had before. Any such compulsion the *Journal* considered “contrary to the spirit of our institutions” and “criminal” in the cases when parents are already doing their best of their own volition.⁶⁴ The *Journal* also opined that compulsory education had been ineffective at achieving its ends, calling such laws an “utter failure.”⁶⁵ Instead, they argued that free schools and bans on child labor were all that was needed to convince parents to send their children to school.⁶⁶

As it turned out, of course, the *Journal* and its German-American allies’ arguments proved the more persuasive during the spring election. In Milwaukee, the *Journal* called the election results “astonishing, even to the most sanguine democrats who had confidently predicted a party triumph,” and figured that Peck’s majority would have exceeded 10,000 if the Democrats had been more organized.⁶⁷ It believed that the returns showed that it was not just “religious and national” issues motivating voters, but something more.⁶⁸ In the statewide results, the *Journal*

⁶³ “The Duty of Democrats,” *The Milwaukee Daily Journal*, March 31, 1890, 1.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ “Utter Failure!” *The Milwaukee Daily Journal*, April 3, 1890, 1.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ “Sham Slam,” *The Milwaukee Daily Journal*, April 2, 1890, 1.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

saw not simply irritation at the Bennett Law at work but citizens recognizing the need for a change in the Wisconsin statehouse. Thus, the *Journal* believed that the spring election augured well for autumn.⁶⁹

As they had in the spring, the *Journal* worked hard to campaign for Democrats during the fall campaign. In one campaign article, the *Journal* reminded Democratic voters about what was at stake in the coming election, namely, congressional redistricting, the tariff, and the cause of justice for the Democratic Party.⁷⁰ The *Journal* thought that Republicans in power had been unfair to Democrats in the minority. In another article, the *Journal* quibbled with Republican campaign tactics, especially those surrounding Archbishop Ireland and his statements about public and private schooling. The *Journal* printed an interview with the Archbishop in which he said that he had been misunderstood and his statements misconstrued by Wisconsin Republicans. The *Journal* assured readers that Ireland had not explicitly endorsed the Bennett Law, or the Poughkeepsie Plan, for that matter, and that he had simply taken views that the Democratic Party had always taken, that all children should have the chance to get an education. The *Journal* had strong words for the newspapers that had misconstrued the Archbishop's words: "They have no hesitation in publishing any matter, however false or defamatory, which will help along their purpose of arousing sectarian prejudice to the point where votes can be made for the republican ticket."⁷¹ These articles about Archbishop Ireland were doubtless meant to persuade anglophone Catholic Democrats to remain in the party fold.

One of the ways that the *Journal* responded to Republican campaign tactics was to coopt them. The "Little Schoolhouse" had become emblematic of the Republican campaign. As the

⁶⁹ "A Political Revolution," *The Milwaukee Daily Journal*, April 3, 1890, 1.

⁷⁰ "If there is a democrat in Wisconsin," *The Milwaukee Daily Journal*, October 31, 1890, 4.

⁷¹ "Infamy of the Republican Bosses," *The Milwaukee Daily Journal*, October 31, 1890, 4.

Bennett campaign wore on, Republicans often argued that opposition to the Bennett Law was akin to opposition to public schools. Republican newspapers urged their voters to support Hoard and the Republican politicians who would stand up for public schools. In doing so, they made use of a picture of a local public school, the likes of which the *Sentinel* printed. It had the words “the little schoolhouse” on the roof, “district school” above the front door, and an American flag flying from a small bell tower above the entrance.⁷² Below it, in a large font and all caps, were the words: “Stand by it.”⁷³ Underneath those words, the *Sentinel* listed the Republican ticket, followed by the Democratic ticket in a different font. The schoolhouse in the *Journal* is a copy of the one posted in the *Sentinel* and other Republican papers, but the text surrounding the schoolhouse is catered to Democratic sensibilities. There is a quote by Mayor Peck about how he remembered his own education in public schools, that he would not do anything to harm them. The *Journal* also reminds readers that it was the Democratic Party which had passed legislation creating Wisconsin public schools in the first place. Readers are reassured that the modern Democratic Party will continue to support and protect these schools. The *Journal* also signals democratic support for parochial schools, emphasizing that Peck and the party are for *all* schools, not just the public ones.⁷⁴

Looking back on the campaign, the *Journal* argued that Republicans had not been campaigning in good faith, especially on the school issue. In the *Journal's* telling, Democrats were doing what they could nationally to campaign against the McKinley tariff bill. In Wisconsin, Democrats were trying to rid the Wisconsin state government of corruption and keep the state budget under control. The *Journal* believed that Republicans were using the school

⁷² “It’s a Good Ticket,” *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, November 3, 1890, 5.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ “Stand by It!” *The Milwaukee Daily Journal*, November 1, 1890, 4.

issue to distract voters from the tariffs and the financial mismanagement in the statehouse. Furthermore, the *Journal* editors believed that Republicans were unjustly giving the impression that English “was in danger of being supplanted by a foreign tongue,” sowing enmity between immigrants and native-born Americans, and turning “neighbor against neighbor through fear of untold calamities” in order to convince voters that keeping the Republican Party in power would save “cherished institutions” like the public schools.⁷⁵ The *Journal* also accused Republicans of inconsistency, of vowing, on the one hand, “to amend the obnoxious law in such a way as to render it harmless to everybody,” but on the other hand, telling people “that the law must be maintained in all its important particulars” and that the governor will veto any “destructive amendments” to it.⁷⁶ The Democrats, by contrast, had been consistent in their calls for repeal of the law on the principle that it was “undemocratic, dangerous and subversive.”⁷⁷ The *Journal* painted the Democrats as the ones who would fight for individual rights and the Republicans as the ones trying to “subvert” those rights.⁷⁸ Readers were encouraged to vote Democrat in order to give an unforgettable “rebuke” to “republican bosses and political schemers.”⁷⁹

As with the spring elections, the *Journal* had reason to rejoice in the fall results. The day after the election, a headline on the front page of the *Journal* read, “Sound the glad tidings o’er land and o’er sea! The Democrats have triumphed, the people are free!”⁸⁰ Underneath this glowing announcement, the *Journal* printed a few more summary headlines. It considered the Democratic win statewide to be evidence of “One of the Most Remarkable Political Revolutions on Record,” and reported that all of Wisconsin was “Wildly Rejoicing Over the Restoration of

⁷⁵ “Closing of the Campaign,” *The Milwaukee Daily Journal*, November 1, 1890, 4.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ “Sound the Glad Tidings O’er Land and O’er Sea! The Democrats have Triumphed, the People are Free!” *The Milwaukee Daily Journal*, November 5, 1890, 1.

the People's Party to Power and the Rebuke to Imperialism."⁸¹ A couple of days later, when the magnitude of the Democratic victory became clear, the *Journal* reported that there was "Nothing Like It in History."⁸² While happy with the prospect that Democrats would be in power again for the first time in years, the *Journal* already looked forward to 1892 and the prospect of increasing the party's share in the House and Senate as well as putting Grover Cleveland back in the Oval Office.

With the election over, the *Journal* hoped that the Bennett Law issue would disappear from the political scene. In a strongly worded article, the editors chastised Wisconsin Republicans for framing the school fight as one between friends and enemies of the public schools. After suggesting that only someone "raked out of an idiot hospital" would oppose the public schools, the *Journal* continued ripping into Republicans for declaring opponents of the Bennett Law to be opponents of public schools:

It is an absolute lie and libel, so far as democracy is concerned, and not a republican in the state believes it. It is mean, malignant and cowardly, an infamy unworthy of the most desperate straits of partisanship.

Except as the result of cold, calculating, sordid malice, for the purpose of stirring up sectarian hate and using it as an instrument of politics, no such affront to human intelligence could ever have been centered upon. Those guilty of such an enormity would rifle the graves of their fathers and sell their bones for a campaign fund to carry out party ends.⁸³

Such indignation at the Republican Party's campaign tactics was, as we have seen, also present in German-language newspapers. We do not have exit polling, but we might surmise that anger at Hoard, Rublee, and the Republicans for allegedly misconstruing the school issue played a role in driving their opponents to the polls. Since Democrats had wrested control of the Wisconsin legislature from Republicans, the *Journal* looked forward to the Bennett Law's end and hoped

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² "Measure of the Victory," *The Milwaukee Daily Journal*, November 7, 1890, 1.

⁸³ "Should Be Heard No More," *The Milwaukee Daily Journal*, November 6, 1890, 4.

“the little schoolhouse humbug will pass from memory as a shade of total depravity that has temporarily obscured the sun of intelligence.”⁸⁴ After expressing this hope, the *Journal* laid into Republicans for breaking what they considered the period of relative peace and toleration that had hitherto existed between religious groups in Wisconsin, saying, “Of all the crimes against society, that must be esteemed the most infamous that sows the seeds of hate and makes bigotry the fulcrum to lift a party from the mire into which it has fallen.”⁸⁵ The *Journal* thought that the Republican campaign had so disgraced the party that “no honest man should ever again trust it.”⁸⁶ The *Journal* might have been partially correct that voters trusted the Republican Party less than before, but once a big economic downturn hit a few years later, the Democrats were swept out of office and the Republicans swept in.

The *Milwaukee Journal's* coverage of the Bennett Law elections is marked by its affinity for the Democratic Party. The Bennett Law, while playing an important role in both elections, seems to have been for the *Journal* an interesting issue mostly because of its effect on the party's fortunes. The *Journal* located the controversy within a wider context of Democratic values. For them, the Bennett Law was primarily wrong because it violated the Democratic Party's principles of negative freedom. That is, the government should refrain from interfering or overly regulating personal freedoms and civil society. For the *Journal*, compulsory anything was considered suspect, and this included compulsory education. The corollary to this view that citizens should be left to govern their own affairs, was the view that citizens left to their own devices would, with perhaps a little governmental incentive, generally make decisions leading to the good of society. Thus, while the *Journal* supported state-run schools, they balked at attempts

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

to coerce attendance. As the results of the 1890 election rolled in, the *Journal* was primarily happy not just because the Bennett Law would be repealed, but because of the advantageous position in which Democrats suddenly found themselves. According to the *Journal*, the Republican Party was chiefly at fault for how nasty the campaign had become. The editors hoped that when all was said and done the whole school issue would go away along with all of its associated ethnic, religious, and partisan rancor.

Chapter 6: Beyond the Metropolis: German Bennett Law Coverage Outside Milwaukee

An examination of German-language newspapers published outside of Milwaukee can enable a more comprehensive understanding of the variety of opinions that Wisconsin's German Americans held about the Bennett Law. In nineteenth-century Wisconsin, even relatively small cities and towns could support multiple newspapers, often in multiple languages. The papers selected for this chapter were chosen for their geographical and ideological variety. They were published in Wausau, Madison, Watertown, and Sauk City, and they represent Republican, Democratic, and Independent editorial viewpoints. Generally, these newspapers tended to be less concerned with the Bennett Law during the spring campaign of 1890, but all included Bennett coverage in the time leading up to the fall general election. The Bennett Law was one of many concerns that interested the editors of these newspapers. The McKinley tariff often appears to have been at least as important to the rural communities these newspapers served as the school question.

Der Deutsche Pionier

Der Deutsche Pionier (The German Pioneer), owned and edited by Andrew W. Young, was published in Wausau, Wisconsin, in the north-central portion of the state. There was a news lag between Milwaukee and Wausau; based on the train schedules published in the *Deutsche Pionier*, it took eight hours and twenty minutes to travel between the two cities.¹ Perhaps this is one of the reasons that there is less original Bennett coverage in the *Deutsche Pionier* and more material from other newspapers. Local news generally seems to have been more important than news from Milwaukee or Madison. Nevertheless, the editorial stance on the school question was clear; the *Deutsche Pionier* leaned Republican and supported the Bennett Law. In April 1890,

¹ "Abfahrt der Züge der Milwaukee, Lake Shore & Western Ry," *Der Deutsche Pionier*, November 8, 1890, 4.

when the *Deutsche Pionier* editor, Young, was appointed postmaster for the city of Wausau, the *Deutsche Pionier* published various newspaper reactions to the appointment from around the state. These reactions make clear that Young had a reputation as a staunch Republican, and that his newspaper was known as Wausau's German Republican newspaper. A reaction from the *Journal* even suggested that Young got the office as a reward for defending the Bennett Law.² During the spring campaign, the *Deutsche Pionier* indicated its support for the Bennett Law, relying on Freethinker and Turner arguments, which held that the law was good in principle, but perhaps could use slight emendation. In the fall, the *Deutsche Pionier* supported Hoard and public education, but also put a lot of energy into defending the tariffs to its readers. The Republican editors of the *Deutsche Pionier* had to make the case for tariffs to Wausau's skeptical farmers, who would likely have been worried about price increases cutting into their margins. Despite the *Deutsche Pionier's* best efforts, including last minute appeals to voters, Republicans lost, of course, and the *Deutsche Pionier* had to come to terms with the new political reality.

On February 8, as the spring campaign was heating up, the *Deutsche Pionier* printed a few articles relating to the Bennett Law. One was a German translation of the Bennett Law that originally appeared in the *Milwaukee Reformer*, edited by the Socialist, Robert Schilling.³ Following the translation, the *Deutsche Pionier* approvingly reprints a *Reformer* article about the law. The *Reformer*, like the *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, interpreted section 5 of the law to mean that English only had to be the language of instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic and U.S. history *a part of the time*.⁴ The article's author wanted German Americans to stop agitating against the law, fearing that it could go badly for them, particularly if Governor Hoard became

² "Postmeister," *Der Deutsche Pionier*, April 12, 1890, 1.

³ "Das Bennett-Gesetz," *Der Deutsche Pionier*, February 8, 1890, 1.

⁴ "Viel Geschrei und wenig Wolle," *Milwaukee Reformer*, as printed in *Die Deutsche Pionier*, February 8, 1890, 1.

more popular with English-speaking Wisconsinites. Anglophone Wisconsinites, worried the *Reformer*, might become less sympathetic to German Americans and German-American culture if German Americans fought the Bennett Law.⁵ On the same page, the *Deutsche Pionier* also printed superintendent Thayer's circular to school boards regarding the Bennett Law. Thayer was of the opinion that the law was not meant to interfere with parochial schools, but that local school boards could adjudicate whether parents had sufficient reason for keeping their kids out of public schools. He believed that the law was only meant to give children with negligent parents the chance to get an education. Such cases, he thought, were fairly rare.⁶ Future articles printed in the *Deutsche Pionier* also emphasized the importance of the Bennett Law in guaranteeing that all children, no matter their family circumstance, would have a chance to learn.

A few weeks later, an article from the *Arminia* reprinted by the *Deutsche Pionier* made arguments for the Bennett Law from a Freethinker perspective.⁷ According to the *American Newspaper Directory*, the *Arminia* was a freethinker newspaper published in Madison with a circulation of 2,500–3,000.⁸ The editor and publisher of the *Arminia*, Michael Biron, also published a monthly literary journal called *Lucifer*, whose inflammatory title speaks to its Freethinker origins. The article first made the argument that the Bennett Law was not against the German language, and that schools that simply had German as a part of the curriculum had nothing to fear from the law. The supporters of parochial schools, the article asserted, should not have been so worked up since they could still teach subjects other than reading, writing, arithmetic, and U.S. history entirely in German. The *Arminia* did not recognize any reasonable grounds to oppose the Bennett Law unconditionally but could understand how the law might be

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ "Staats-Schulsup. Thayer's Zirkular an die Schulbehörden," *Die Deutsche Pionier*, February 8, 1890, 1.

⁷ "Ist das Bennettgesetz, 'deutschfeindlich?'" *Arminia*, as published in *Der Deutsche Pionier*, March 8, 1890, 1.

⁸ *American Newspaper Directory*, 752.

amended to assuage the concerns of parochial school supporters. The editors saw in papers like the *Turnzeitung* or *Reformer* evidence of the German press coming to the Bennett Law's defense and clearing up misconceptions about it among their readership. The *Arminia* opined that the *Germania*, too, was less opposed the law itself, and more concerned with the principle of parental rights.

The *Arminia* thought that the concept of parental rights was being overexaggerated in the Bennett controversy. The editors described this emphasis on parental rights as a

...sad holdover from an earlier barbarism in which parents were free to do with their children what they wanted, to kick them out, for example. They [Parents] sold them [children] as slaves, punished them horribly, let them starve, whipped them to death, etc. If parents had the unbound right to determine how and what their children should learn or not learn, then they would also have the right to let their children learn nothing, to keep them far away from any school or to bring them up systematically in thievery and villainy or to train them in skilled, artful begging, etc.⁹

Like the *Turnzeitung*, the *Arminia* editors believed that the right of children to have a timely education took precedence over the rights of parents, arguing that the “normale (kollektive) Vernunft eines staatlichen Gesellschaft” (normal (collective) reasoning of civil society) trumped that of the “individuelle Vernunft eines sehr oft ungebildeten, rohen und stumpfsinnigen einzelnen Elternpaares” (individual reasoning of the very often uneducated, raw, and insensitive individual parents).¹⁰ By printing this article without criticism, we can safely assume that the editors of the *Deutsche Pionier*, held similar views on the topic.

⁹ Author's translation. Original: “...ein trauriges Ueberbleibsel früherer Barberei in der es den Eltern freistand, mit ihren Kindern nach Belieben zu verfahren, sie z. B. auszusetzen, als Sklaven zu verkaufen, grausam zu züchtigen, verhungern zu lassen, zu Tod zu peitschen u. s. w. Haben die Eltern das schrankenlose Recht, zu bestimmen, wie und was ihre Kinder lernen oder nicht lernen sollen, dann hätten sie auch das Recht, die Kinder gar nicht lernen zu lassen, sie von jeder Schule fern zu halten oder sie systematisch in Diebereien und Spitzbübereien zu unterrichten oder zur kunstgerechter Bettlerei u. s. w. künstlich heranzuziehen.” “Ist das Bennettgesetz, ‘deutschfeindlich?’” *Arminia*, as published in *Der Deutsche Pionier*, March 8, 1890, 1.

¹⁰ Ibid.

On March 22, the *Deutsche Pionier* gave an overview of what a number of German American groups and newspapers were saying about the Bennett Law. They reported, for instance, that the Milwaukee Turner societies had met and resolved to support the basic principles of the Bennett Law. In that same article, *Deutsche Pionier* interpreted the protest of the Catholic bishops as an attack on the public schools:

Not to defend parochial schools is the Bennett Law being fought, also not out of love for the German language have these princes of the Church raised up their voices, but merely for the sake of turning against the public school system. That is why all the lord clerics worked against the Bennett Law.¹¹

The *Deutsche Pionier* does not specify which portion of the bishops' protest they considered to be against public education. In the same article, the *Deutsche Pionier* again accused the Catholic *Seebote* of attempting to use demagoguery to agitate voters and drive them to the Democratic Party. In the *Deutsche Pionier*'s opinion, all such attempts were proving to be in vain. The editors were pleased to report the apparent disunity among Bennett Law opponents. In contrast, they believed that there was unity among the Turners in support of the Bennett Law's underlying principles.¹²

The *Deutsche Pionier* tried making the best out of the poor showing for Republican candidates in the spring election. Of the five major offices up for election in the city of Wausau, the only Republican supported by the *Deutsche Pionier* to be elected was Alfred A. Bock, the treasurer. In celebration of Bock's victory, the *Deutsche Pionier* printed a picture of a crowing rooster with the following text above: "Ein Kleiner Jubel! / Wir sind auch mit Wenigem zufrieden. / Hurrah für Bock." (A small jubilee! We are also satisfied with little / Hurrah for

¹¹ Author's translation. Original: "Nicht um die Kirchenschulen zu beschützen wird das Bennett-Gesetz bekämpft, auch nicht aus Liebe zur deutschen Sprache haben diese Kirchenfürsten ihre Stimme erhoben, sondern lediglich um den verhaßten Freischulen-System zu Liebe zu rücken wirken alle die Herren Clerikalen gegen das Bennett Gesetz." "Zum Bennett-Gesetz," *Der Deutsche Pionier*, March 22, 1890, 1.

¹² *Ibid.*

Bock.)¹³ There was no report on the results from Milwaukee until a week later, when the *Pionier* published reactions to the election of leading Republican state officials. The responses came from an unnamed English newspaper. Governor Hoard is reported to have said that he did not think that the Milwaukee election of Peck meant anything for the fall election, but that it might spur on supporters of the public schools. For Hoard, the main issue would be whether Wisconsin schools and laws would follow church or state leadership. Secretary of State Ernst Timme did not think that the Bennett Law would play a role in the next election. State Treasurer Henry Harshaw thought that Republicans would have a 20,000-vote plurality in the fall. But unlike Hoard and Timme, he thought that the Bennett Law was going to remain an issue throughout the upcoming campaign. Jesse Thayer, the School Superintendent, thought that the Milwaukee results indicated that some voters did not actually understand the Bennett Law, but he believed that in time, the misunderstanding surrounding the law would be clarified. Philip Cheek, the insurance commissioner, thought that Republicans would do well in the general election because they always did well when fighting for principle. The principle behind the Bennett Law, he believed, was sound, in that every child should get a basic education in English, and that public schools should be outside of the influence and control of the churches.¹⁴ Since the Bennett Law did turn out to be an important political issue in the coming months, the *Deutsche Pionier* defended it for Republicans as best it could.

In fall 1890, the *Deutsche Pionier* tried convincing voters to support Hoard and the Republican ticket. Like the *Sentinel*, the *Deutsche Pionier* published a picture of Hoard's little schoolhouse. The words written on an under the schoolhouse were the same, with "the little schoolhouse" appearing on the roof, "district school" above the door, and "Stand by it!"

¹³ "Ein Kleiner Jubel," *Der Deutsche Pionier*, April 5, 1890, 5.

¹⁴ "Wie die Staatsbeamten über das Wahlresultat in Milwaukee denken," *Der deutsche Pionier*, April 12, 1890, 1.

immediately below. Underneath the *Deutsche Pionier's* schoolhouse are also some German words, namely, "Das ist das Schulhaus. / Der Eckstein unserer Republik. / Der Hort unserer Freiheit" (That is the schoolhouse. / The cornerstone of our Republic. / The treasury of our freedom).¹⁵ The editors went on to call the schoolhouse the place where citizenship and patriotism are taught. They recounted all of the presidents who had a public education, from Washington to Lincoln, Jefferson to Garfield.¹⁶ Implicit in this picture and language was the idea that the public school needed somebody to stand by it, that schools were the primary institution for instilling patriotism, and that going to public school might help a child to become president someday.

In addition to publishing the picture of the little schoolhouse that was emblematic of Hoard and the Republicans' campaign, the *Deutsche Pionier* also issued an appeal to voters on Saturday, November 1, its final issue before the election. This appeal appeared on the front page next to a picture of the "little schoolhouse." The appeal to voters was a letter from Governor Hoard that he had written in August to a man asking about the school question. In it, Hoard made clear that he did not say that children would be forced into public schools. He believed that the law would impart such knowledge of the country's language as would enable children to grow up and become informed citizens. Hoard said that such English knowledge could be obtained from private, public, or home schools. Friends of compulsory education, he assured the reader, did not want to harm private or parochial schools, they just wanted all children to have an equal opportunity in life. To this end, all children needed to have the chance to learn the country's language.¹⁷ The letter avoided going into specifics on the Bennett Law, neither supporting nor

¹⁵ "Stand By It!" *Der Deutsche Pionier*, October 18, 1890, 4.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ "Ein Brief von Gov. Hoard," *Der Deutsche Pionier*, November 1, 1890, 1.

opposing any changes to it. It left unanswered the question of state or private authority for determining the subject matter of parochial school. It simply claimed that there was no ill intent towards parochial schools. In the end, such appeals did not work for Hoard, the Republicans, or the *Deutsche Pionier*. Even the incumbent candidate for the House of Representative from Wisconsin's ninth district, Myron McCord, lost to a Democrat. This happened despite the *Deutsche Pionier's* best efforts on his behalf, efforts which included a full-page political ad. The next week, the *Deutsche Pionier* had to report on Republican losses.

The *Deutsche Pionier* did not lend very much column space to commentary about the Democratic victory. The editors were clearly displeased with Peck, sarcastically suggesting that *Peck's Bad Boy*, the humorous and somewhat lowbrow newspaper edited by the governor-elect, would soon be made a standard school textbook. The editors claimed that the "Lutheran-Catholic-Democratic League had voted in each state official, with Peck and *his Bad Boy* on the tip."¹⁸ They called Peck a literary "Hanswurst," referring to a popular character in German culture known for being amusing, but also crude and something of a buffoon.¹⁹ After announcing the winners of the Marathon county races, the *Deutsche Pionier* published an excerpt from the *Milwaukee Herald*, another Republican newspaper. The *Herald* piece argues that Democrats and their allies had not just opposed the Bennett Law, but Hoard himself. In the *Herald's* opinion, the governor's allies had alienated voters with their pugnacious campaign style. In the end, the *Herald* thought that it was a shame that voters had decided to vote against a law that the Republicans had already promised to amend.²⁰

¹⁸ Author's translation. Original: "Die lutherisch-katholisch-demokratische Liga hat jeden Staatsbeamten gewählt, mit Peck und *his Bad Boy* an der Spitze." "Ein demagogischer Sieg," *Der deutsche Pionier*, November 8, 1890, 4.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

Der Deutsche Pionier stayed true to its Republican principles throughout the Bennett Law campaign. In spring 1890, when it became clear that the Bennett Law would become an issue, it stood by Hoard and the party. The *Deutsche Pionier* borrowed arguments from Turners and Freethinkers that supported the Bennett Law, but it did not appear to have the same problem with religious institutions that outlets like the *Amerikanische Turnzeitung* did. Attacking traditional religion would have alienated potential Republican voters, and the *Deutsche Pionier* wanted to attract these voters. The *Deutsche Pionier* sought to reassure religious voters that their parochial schools were not under attack with the appeal from Governor Hoard that they printed in the closing days of the campaign. Naturally the *Deutsche Pionier*'s editors were disappointed with the magnitude of the Republican loss.

Wisconsin Botschafter

The *Wisconsin Botschafter* (Wisconsin Messenger), founded in 1869, was published and edited by Richard Porsch for German Americans living in Madison and its environs. It had a circulation of between 1000 and 1500, according to the *American Newspaper Directory*.²¹ The *Botschafter* billed itself as an *Organ der Demokratie*, that is, a newspaper of the Democracy, meaning the Democratic Party. The city of Madison, Wisconsin's capital city, was smaller and less influential economically and politically in the nineteenth century than it has since become. With few exceptions, Madison had been a Democratic stronghold since its founding, and continued this Democratic voting tendency through the 1890 election.²² The *Botschafter*'s Democratic editors supported the official party stance and opposed the Bennett Law.

The Milwaukee newspapers covered the Bennett issue more than the *Botschafter* because the Milwaukee spring election had become an unofficial referendum on the law. Nevertheless,

²¹ *American Newspaper Directory*, 752.

²² Fowler, *Wisconsin Votes*, 236–37.

the increasing prominence of the Bennett Law in public discourse led the *Botschafter* to make its position known. On February 6, for instance, the *Botschafter* reprinted “Seid einig!”, Krez’s call for German-American solidarity against the Bennett Law.²³ On February 20, the *Botschafter* published an article from the *New York Staatszeitung* about the Bennett Law, which argued that the law had set a “lead weight,” a *Bleigewicht*, on the German schools.²⁴ While the schools were not going to be destroyed all at once, the law would eventually cause them to waste away. The *Staatszeitung* also criticized the *Sentinel* for its Bennett Law coverage, specifically for republishing material from the *Medford Waldbote* that suggested that German-American parochial schools failed to make independent citizens out of immigrant children. On March 6, the *Botschafter* reported on recent political developments relating to the Bennett Law and the upcoming election. Like the *Journal*, the *Botschafter* told its readers about the Wisconsin representatives in Washington and their initial opposition to the Bennett Law.²⁵ The article speculated that even if Republicans turned on the law, then German Americans would still not be fooled by Republicans again. There is also a short report about George Koeppen, editor of the *Germania*, and about how Governor Hoard had reappointed him to the Wisconsin University Board of Regents. Koeppen was going to turn Hoard down and refuse the reappointment because Hoard was so firmly in favor of the law and Koeppen so firmly against it.²⁶ On March 13, the *Botschafter* announced the Wisconsin Catholic Bishops’ protest against the Bennett Law. The *Botschafter* believed that it would help Democrats not only by boosting their portion of the Catholic vote, but by persuading Republican Catholics to vote Democrat instead.²⁷

²³ Konrad Krez, “Seid einig!” *Seebote*, as found in the *Wisconsin Botschafter*, February 6, 1890, 5.

²⁴ “Das Bennett-Gesetz und die Presse,” *New York Staatszeitung* as found in the *Wisconsin Botschafter*, February 20, 1890, 1.

²⁵ “Neuestes in der Staatspolitik,” *Wisconsin Botschafter*, March 6, 1890, 1.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ “Protest der kath. Bischöfe,” *Wisconsin Botschafter*, March 13, 1890, 1.

The *Botschafter* was ultimately satisfied with the results of the spring municipal elections. Much of its coverage had gone to local issues and local races, which were not yet influenced by the Bennett Law controversy. The results from Milwaukee, though, were considered highly newsworthy. By April 10, the scale of Democratic victory was clear. The *Botschafter* reported that Democrats had not just won in Milwaukee, but also in places like Oshkosh, where a Democratic mayor was also elected. The *Botschafter* believed that German Americans were unified for once, that Catholics and Protestants had come together on the Bennett Law issue. The editors hoped that German Americans and other friends of personal freedom would band together in the fall and support a Democratic legislature that would repeal the Bennett Law.²⁸ They also thought that a good showing in the 1890 midterm election would build momentum towards the 1892 presidential election.

The *Botschafter* followed the political conventions from the summer of 1890 and reported on what each platform said about the Bennett Law. The Anti-Bennett Law convention put on by Koerner and other mostly Protestant leaders got front page coverage in the *Botschafter*. Apart from the convention's resolutions, it published only Konrad Krez's fiery German speech at length, which probably indicates that the editors considered Krez the most important. Krez had argued that the law was unjust, unconstitutional, and hostile to the German language and German culture.²⁹ Late in the summer, the *Botschafter* reported on the Republican convention and its platform. The Republican platform stated that the party would seek to reform the Bennett Law, but only so long as its underlying principles remained untouched. The *Botschafter* suspected that Hoard would not really accept any meaningful adjustments to the Bennett Law, particularly since he had said in a speech given in Waukesha "that he would stand or fall with the Bennett Law and

²⁸ "Die Wahl im Staate," *Wisconsin Botschafter*, April 10, 1890, 1.

²⁹ "Die Anti-Bennett-Gesetz Convention in Milwaukee," June 6, 1890, 1.

would never ever approve one iota of change to the law.”³⁰ After the Democrats decided on their platform, the *Botschafter* editors approvingly relayed to its readers that the Democratic platform simply demanded the Bennett Law’s repeal, and not vaguely qualified amendments.³¹

As the fall election drew to a close, the *Botschafter* featured more Bennett Law coverage, and encouraged its readers to support Peck, the Democrats, and all schools. From early September through October, the *Botschafter* printed the slogan, “Peck u. alle Schulen” (Peck and all schools), on its front and back pages. This slogan was meant to convey that unlike Hoard and the Republicans, who were telling Wisconsinites that needed to defend the public schools, that Peck and the Democrats were standing up for *all* schools, public and private. On October 2, the *Botschafter* printed a picture of Hoard’s schoolhouse with the slogan “Stand by it!” underneath.³² The schoolhouse picture with its English slogans is identical to the one posted in the *Journal*, *Sentinel*, and other newspapers. Underneath it is essentially the same text that appears in the *Journal*, but in German instead. There is also the same quote by Peck about his appreciation for the education he received in public schools and by working for a newspaper.

The *Botschafter* also regularly printed a copy of the Democratic state ticket on its front page, encouraging readers to cut it out and bring it to the polls with them so that they could more easily navigate the new, secret ballot.³³ This would be the first statewide election in Wisconsin since the adoption of the secret ballot, which was generally called the Australian ballot, or, in Wisconsin, Cooper’s ballot, after the legislator who had introduced the secret ballot bill to the Wisconsin legislature. The *Botschafter* believed that the secret ballot would make it harder for

³⁰ Author’s translation. Original: “...daß er mit dem Bennett-Gesetz stehen oder fallen wolle und nie und nimmer darin einwilligen werden, daß an dem Gesetz auch nur ein Tüpfelchen vom i geändert werde.” “Die Republikaner des Staates,” *Wisconsin Botschafter*, August 28, 1890, 1.

³¹ “Zur Staats-Convention,” *Wisconsin Botschafter*, September 4, 1890, 1.

³² “Peck u. alle Schulen,” *Wisconsin Botschafter*, October 2, 1890, 1.

³³ “Zur Wahl,” *Wisconsin Botschafter*, October 9, 1890, 1.

politicians and their auxiliaries to buy votes.³⁴ With Wisconsinites freer to vote their conscience, the *Botschafter* thought that German-American workers would be more inclined to vote for Democrats instead of Republicans, and that the 10,000 German-American Republicans might switch sides.³⁵ The *Botschafter* saw itself as standing up for Wisconsin's German Americans and their interests, and was proud to be in the company of other newspapers that had taken a stand against the Bennett Law: *Germania*, *Columbia*, *Patriot*, *Excelsior*, *Seebote* and *Journal*.³⁶ Ultimately, they believed that the campaign would be successful, and that voters should "prepare themselves for the greatest victory celebration that was ever celebrated in Wisconsin."³⁷ Before such a celebration, though, German Americans would have to go vote.

In the last issue before the election, the *Botschafter* made its final appeal to German-American voters. At stake in the election, according to the *Botschafter*, were a number of important issues. The election would decide whether German Americans could send their children to parochial schools, whether the state had the right to supervise these and make decisions about their curriculum, whether German congregations could retain their German character, and, in general, whether German Americans would remain independent citizens.³⁸ The *Botschafter* believed that German Americans held their fate in their own hands, needing only to exercise their right to vote for Peck and the Democrats in order defend their rights and their schools. For the *Botschafter*, Election Day offered the chance for German Americans to display a "längst ersehnte Einigkeit" (long longed-for unity) with their votes.³⁹

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ "Hier und dort," *Wisconsin Botschafter*, October 23, 1890, 1.

³⁶ The *Excelsior* was a German Catholic paper published in Milwaukee. The *Patriot*, published in La Crosse, was owned by the same publisher. The *Seebote* was an independent newspaper that leaned Catholic and Democratic. It had been published in Milwaukee since 1851.

³⁷ Author's translation. Original: "...bereitet Euch auf die großartigste Siegesfeier vor, die je in Wisconsin gefeiert wurde." "Hier und dort," *Wisconsin Botschafter*, October 23, 1890, 1.

³⁸ "Noch ein Wort zur Wahl," *Wisconsin Botschafter*, October 30, 1890, 1.

³⁹ Ibid.

The *Botschafter* editors were enthusiastic about the election results. On November 6, they printed a crowing rooster on the front page under the headline “*Ein Sedan in Wisconsin!*”⁴⁰ Sedan is referenced because at the Battle of Sedan, the German Army under Prussian command decisively defeated the French Army, paving the way for German unification. The *Botschafter* seems to be suggesting that, like the German army at Sedan, German Americans had unified and defeated their enemy as well. On November 13, the nationwide magnitude of the Democratic victory was apparent. The *Botschafter* described what happened as a “mächtige Lawine” (mighty avalanche).⁴¹ The *Botschafter* editors believed that the election meant that the people had stood up to the state and reclaimed their rights, and that, further, the people would rather have lower taxes than higher tariffs.⁴² In Wisconsin, the *Botschafter* believed that the Bennett Law and the tariff issue had worked together in the Democrats’ favor. Even without the tariff issue, the *Botschafter* thought that Peck would have been elected because of German-American anger about the Bennett Law.⁴³ The *Botschafter* assured its readers that Wisconsin Democrats knew that they had German Americans to thank for their victory. The editors were hopeful that German Americans would henceforth not be treated as second-class citizens but as first-class citizens with equal rights, who simply wanted to raise their children in peace and according to the dictates of conscience.

The *Wisconsin Botschafter*, like other German-American newspapers outside of Milwaukee, tended to have less coverage of the Bennett Law overall, and definitely less springtime coverage than with the Milwaukee newspapers. As the Milwaukee campaign heated up, though, and the Bennett Law became an issue, the *Botschafter*, like other newspapers, started

⁴⁰ “Ein Sedan in Wisconsin!” *Wisconsin Botschafter*, November 6, 1890, 1.

⁴¹ “Wahlbetrachtungen,” *Wisconsin Botschafter*, November 13, 1890, 1.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

increasing its Bennett-related coverage. As a Democratic Party paper, the *Botschafter* dutifully followed the party line and opposed the Bennett Law, fitting the law into the wider narrative that Democrats wove about fighting governmental interference in citizens' lives. While sounding a lot like the *Journal* in some respects, the *Botschafter* put more emphasis on the idea that the German language and culture were under attack than the English-language paper. Because of this belief that German Americans were under attack, the *Botschafter* emphasized the need for them to unify, fight for their rights, and defeat the Bennett Law.

Watertown Weltbürger

Founded in 1853, the *Watertown Weltbürger* (Watertown World Citizen), was the bigger of the two German newspapers in Watertown during the Bennett Law controversy, the other being the newer *Watertown Journal*. The *Watertown Weltbürger* had a circulation of 1,500–2,000.⁴⁴ Watertown was known as an important city for Forty-Eighters. The famous Union general and statesman Karl Schurz had lived there with his wife Margarethe before the Civil War. Margarethe started the world's first Kindergarten in Watertown. Other German groups settled there as well. These included conservative German Lutherans like the Wisconsin Synod founders of Northwestern College, a German-style gymnasium. The president of Northwestern College in 1890, Professor August Ernst, became an outspoken opponent of the Bennett Law. In 1890, the *Weltbürger* was led by the same man of the Forty-Eighter generation who had edited it in 1853, David Blumenfeld. With the help of his son, Blumenfeld led the *Weltbürger* according to his Democratic political convictions. These were clearly manifested during the Bennett campaign.

⁴⁴ *American Newspaper Directory*, 764.

In 1890, a March 15 letter to the editor reported on the Bennett Law controversy and how it had been influencing the spring municipal election campaign.⁴⁵ Its author worried that the Bennett Law could be too broadly interpreted by local school boards, warning that the overreach by school boards in Illinois could happen in Wisconsin, too. The letter writer wanted Bennett Law opponents to use the spring elections to ensure that local school boards were populated by members sympathetic to parochial schools. A Milwaukee contact of the author believed that the Republican city convention would come out against the Bennett Law. Despite such hopeful news, the author urged all “Freunde persönlicher und religiöser Freiheit” (friends of personal and religious freedom) to give “den Puritanern und Knownothings” (the Puritans and knownothings) a message that they would not soon forget. The author then told how Watertown citizens had also set up an anti-Bennett committee made up of representatives from local German churches. The committee was already active organizing voters and asking local candidates about their stance on the Bennett Law.

On March 29, the *Weltbürger* published its own editorial about the Bennett Law and its effects on the spring city elections in Watertown and Milwaukee.⁴⁶ In contrast to the letter to the editor from the fifteenth, this editorial said that the Bennett Law would not really affect the Watertown elections. The editors took it as a given that most of Watertown was for the “Widerruf des nativistischen Gesetzes” (repeal of the nativist law).⁴⁷ Since opposition to the Bennett Law was so common in town, Watertown’s local political parties did not bother to stress the topic. The editors remarked upon how different the situation was in Milwaukee, where both major parties had taken a stance on the issue, and papers like the *Seebote* and *Germania* were

⁴⁵ “Der Kampf gegen das Bennettgesetz,” *Watertown Weltbürger*, March 15, 1890, 4.

⁴⁶ “Das Bennett-Gesetz,” *Watertown Weltbürger*, March 29, 1890, 5.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

agitating against the law. The *Weltbürger* editors then quoted a *Seebote* article which framed the controversy as a fight between Democrats and their allies from all nationalities and confessions versus the nativists. The *Seebote* enthusiastically endorsed the Democratic city platform with its repeal plank over the Republican platform and its amend plank. The *Weltbürger* editors added their endorsement of Peck, who they believed would become the Milwaukee mayor in the spring, and Wisconsin governor in the fall.

The *Weltbürger* enthusiastically welcomed news of the Democratic victory not only in Watertown, where it was expected, but also in Milwaukee, where it was more surprising. To celebrate, the editors printed a picture of a crowing rooster with the headline “Wir lassen den Hahn krähen” (We let the rooster crow).⁴⁸ The *Weltbürger* thought that the Democratic repeal stance had helped them win against Republicans, who came out at the last minute in favor of amending the law. The article then described Lutheran efforts to get out the vote and send a message to Republicans by holding anti-Bennett assemblies in their churches before the election. The *Weltbürger* editors believed that the Bennett Law’s days were numbered, and that if the Republicans took up the issue in the fall, the Republicans would surely lose. They also hoped that the Milwaukee election would have a salutary effect on neighboring states with substantial German populations.

The *Weltbürger* was eager to see what the Republicans and Democrats ultimately decided to put in their state platforms. On August 23, the editors reported on the recently released Republican platform and Hoard’s renomination. They approvingly reprinted an article from the *Illinois Staatszeitung* about the Republican convention. The *Staatszeitung* was unimpressed with the Wisconsin Republicans’ school plank. For them, it did not do enough to assuage German-

⁴⁸ “Wir lassen den Hahn krähen,” *Watertown Weltbürger*, April 5, 1890, 4.

American fears that the government was interfering with parental rights. They were also having a hard time taking Republican promises to amend the law seriously because of their decision to renominate Hoard, an act which the *Staatszeitung* compared with “den Bock zum Gärtner gemacht” (making the goat the gardener).⁴⁹ Just after this article, the *Welbürger* published a fable that made a similar point with imagery from the natural world.

In Konrad Krez’s poem “Der Wolf und die Gans” (the wolf and the goose), the scene opens on a wolf groaning miserably because he is choking on his last meal. A goose comes by and sees the suffering wolf. The wolf asks the goose to help, claiming to be related to the goose, and saying that if he (the wolf) did not eat so many other creatures, then there would not be any food left for the goose to eat (because the other animals would eat everything the goose would like). The goose seems to buy this reasoning. She is also flattered and wonders how they might be related. The wolf says that her father had once hissed at him when he was a young wolf. Unduly angry, the wolf had eaten the father goose. The wolf tells the goose that her father had become a part of him, so the goose was something of a niece to the wolf. Presumably feeling sympathetic, the goose then tries to find a bone in the wolf’s throat, but is unsuccessful, as the wolf simply bites off the goose’s head. The fable closes with this message for Wisconsin Germans,

The moral of the story is as follows:
 The wolf with the bone in its throat
 Is the Republican Party,
 Which is lying in Wisconsin choking,
 And if we Germans were to help it in its time of need,
 We would be the goose, that, as the fable shows
 Lost its head through stupidity.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ “Bock als Gärtner,” *Illinois Staatszeitung* as found in *Watertown Weltbürger*, August 23, 1890, 4.

⁵⁰ Author’s translation. Konrad Krez, “Der Wolf und die Gans,” *Watertown Weltbürger*, August 23, 1890, 4.
 Original:

Die Nutzenwendung ist hievon wie folgt:
 Der Wolf mit einem Knochen in dem Hals

Through this vivid imagery, the *Weltbürger* emphatically told its readers not to trust the Republican party on the school issue.

The *Weltbürger* wrote more approvingly about the Democratic convention's stance on the school issue than the Republican convention's.⁵¹ The editors reported happily that nobody raised his voice to speak against the repeal plank of the Democratic platform. The Democratic Party held the law to be an unnecessary measure that interfered with the personal freedom of everyday citizens. After getting a plurality on the first ballot as nominee for governor, Peck eventually received a majority by the sixth ballot. In his acceptance speech, Peck covered a number of topics, but spoke clearly for the repeal of the Bennett Law. Peck thought the law would give too much power to the government to determine how and what children learned in school. He also clarified that no Democrat was trying to do anything to harm public schools. After closing its report on the convention, the *Weltbürger* published a number of articles from other newspapers that gave glowing endorsements of the Democratic party's ticket, platform, and anti-Bennett stance.

As the campaign grew more intense, the *Weltbürger* expressed frustration with the Republicans' insinuation that opponents of the Bennett Law opposed public schools, calling it "nichts wie Schwindel und Humbug!" (nothing but swindle and humbug!).⁵² Like other Democratic newspapers, the *Weltbürger* argued that the historical record told another story, that it was Democrats who had passed the legislation establishing public schools in the state in the

Ist die republikanische Partei,
Die in Wisconsin am Erstickten liegt,
Und hälfen ihr die Deutschen aus der Noth,
So wären sie die Gans, die ihren Kopf
Durch Dummheit, wie die Fabel zeigt, verlor.

⁵¹ "Die Demokraten von Wisconsin," *Watertown Weltbürger*, August 30, 1890, 4.

⁵² "Unverschämt und geschmacklos," *Watertown Weltbürger*, September 27, 1890, 4.

first place and had defended the system ever since. The Democrats thought that it was the Republicans who had harmed the public schools by wasting the school fund.⁵³ Like other Democratic newspapers, the *Weltbürger* printed a picture of “the little schoolhouse” with captions emphasizing Democratic support for all schools. Bolstering its claim that Democrats supported public schools, the *Weltbürger* reported on the Texas Congressman and Democratic leader, Representative Roger Mills, who was campaigning for Democrats in Wisconsin. Mills had given a speech in Racine about Democrats’ support for public schools, opposition to state paternalism, and respect for the natural rights of parents to educate their children.⁵⁴

With the election drawing closer, Watertown’s Bennett Law opponents held an assembly on October 16, 1890, to drum up voter support. The assembly had two starting times, one in the afternoon, for those from farther outside of town, and one in the evening, for those closer to town. Due to bad weather, many more people attended in the evening than in the afternoon, bringing the evening total to about 1500 total. Konrad Krez and Professor Ernst of Northwestern gave speeches in German at both the morning and evening sessions, and a county official from Juneau named Mr. Christiansen gave an English-language speech in the evening. Ernst gave the keynote, in which “der in meisterhaft klarer, überzeugender und erschöpfender Weise die Gründe der Opposition gegen das neue Schulgesetz vorführte” (he demonstrated the grounds for opposition to the new school law in a masterfully clear, convincing, and thorough manner).⁵⁵ He brought up the questionable manner in which the law was passed, as well as the problematic aspects of it, including the district clause, fixed school term, and “die Unterstellung der Privatschulen unter die Willkühr der Schulboards” (the subordination of the private schools to

⁵³ For an example of this see Jorgenson, *The Founding of Public Education in Wisconsin.*, 108.

⁵⁴ “The Little School House,” *Watertown Weltbürger*, September 27, 1890, 4.

⁵⁵ “Anti-Bennettgesetz-Versammlung,” *Watertown Weltbürger*, October 18, 1890, 5.

the whims of school boards) which he believed would ultimately ruin parochial schools and damage their associated congregations.⁵⁶ Ernst was unimpressed by Republican pledges to change the law, and so summoned German Americans to band together for their freedom. Krez echoed Ernst's unifying themes and encouraged his listeners to fight against the xenophobic spirit that had crept into parts of the Republican Party. The Republican, Mr. Christiansen, closed the assembly with a speech that also acknowledged the "böser Geist" (evil spirit) that had entered his party, and he told the audience to resist the unfair, tyrannical law.⁵⁷ Apparently, a *Sentinel* reporter had attended the assembly but needed help from a translator to understand the first two speeches. The *Weltbürger* editors thought that the reporter who had translated for him was a good example for the reporter of the benefits of being bilingual, and they expressed the hope that the reporter might learn a little German. His doing so, they opined, would at least help the accuracy of his and the *Sentinel's* reporting.

In the final issues before the election, the *Weltbürger* continued its efforts to get out the vote. On October 25, the editors printed a front-page article called "Die Entscheidung" (The Decision)⁵⁸ In it, the editors made a concise case for voting Democrat in the upcoming election. The editors wanted readers to know that the whole country was watching the decisive battle about to be fought in Wisconsin and wondering what it would mean for the presidential election in 1892. With a Democratic victory, then "...erleidet Hoard und sein gesammter engherziger, raubzöllnerischer, nativistischer Anhang eine gepfefferte Niederlage... (...Hoard and his entire small-hearted, thief-tarriffing, nativist entourage will suffer a pointed defeat...)." ⁵⁹ Further, the whole nation would see a Democratic win as a German-American victory. Such a victory could

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ "Die Entscheidung," *Watertown Weltbürger*, October 25, 1890, 1.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

help ensure German-American rights not only in Wisconsin, but in other states as well. Thus, reasoned the editors, Democrats and Anti-Bennett Law Republicans should be seen as fighting for “die Sache aller Deutschamerikaner” (the cause of all German Americans).⁶⁰

After the election, the *Weltbürger* was understandably enthusiastic that Peck was to be governor of Wisconsin, and that Democrats throughout the country had done well, too. On their editorial page from November 8, the editors printed pictures of no fewer than four roosters crowing about the victory. A whole column was dedicated solely to enthusiastic headlines. The Democratic wave, reported the *Weltbürger*, had been strong enough to overcome partisan gerrymandering on the part of Republicans. The editors were glad to see the whole Republican “Humbug” about the little red schoolhouse blow up, and to instead see the success of German Americans in their fight for freedom, justice, and the continued existence of the German language and German schools.⁶¹ Further, they claimed that it had been a victory by Democrats and Anti-Bennett Law Republicans against nativism, monopolies, robbing tariffs (*Raubzoll*), pension swindles, and wasteful governance. Considering how impressive the Democratic victory was, the *Weltbürger* editors were optimistic about Democratic chances in 1892. First though, the *Weltbürger* would celebrate the current victory, inviting readers to come to a victory parade accompanied by music and followed by a party with speeches from city luminaries like Professor Ernst.⁶²

The *Watertown Weltbürger*’s coverage of the Bennett controversy reveals a strong editorial concern for the prospects not only of the Democratic party, but German Americans more generally. Early in the controversy, the editors had framed the issue as a fight between

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ “Hurrah! Hurrah!” *Watertown Weltbürger*, November 8, 1890, 4.

⁶² “Demokratisches Sieges-Fest,” *Watertown Weltbürger*, November 8, 1890, 5.

tyrannical state control over parochial schools and the rights of citizens to exercise their personal rights and educate their children according to their conscience. The language of personal rights fit into the reigning Democratic ideology of the day, that the government should be small and efficient, and keep from unnecessarily meddling in its citizens' lives. The *Weltbürger's* Democratic interpretation of the Bennett campaign dovetails with the coverage given by newspapers like the *Botschafter*. Like the *Germania*, however, the *Weltbürger* framed the Bennett controversy as part of a broader struggle for German-American rights throughout the country.

Pionier am Wisconsin

The *Pionier am Wisconsin* was published in Sauk City, Wisconsin, about 25 miles northwest of Madison. It was politically independent and relatively small, with a circulation of between 500 and 750.⁶³ By the time of the Bennett controversy, it was, like the *Weltbürger*, one of the longest running German newspaper in the state.⁶⁴ From its inception, the paper had been known for its independence, though the editors had taken stances against slavery and in support of the Union.⁶⁵ This independence might have had to do with the relatively small size of Sauk City and the fact that its German-speaking groups differed religiously. Sauk City is known for having one of the longest enduring Freethinker congregations in the United States, but the city and its environs also attracted other German groups like the Catholics. The *Pionier am Wisconsin's* Bennett coverage shows that the editor was generally tolerant of Catholicism and supportive of the Democratic Party. Its owner since 1855 and editor during the Bennett campaign was C.C. Kuntz, who called himself religiously agnostic. When it came to the Bennett Law,

⁶³ *American Newspaper Directory*, 761.

⁶⁴ *The History of Sauk County Wisconsin* (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1880), 417.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 414.

though, the newspaper was on board with the Lutherans and Catholics who opposed the law and critical of Freethinkers who supported it.

The *Pionier am Wisconsin* published few articles relating to elections or the Bennett Law in spring of 1890. The one local race that seemed to interest the *Pionier* was not really much of a race at all. A German American was running unopposed for circuit court judge, and the *Pionier am Wisconsin* wanted all German Americans in the area to support him.⁶⁶ Still, the Bennett Law did not go wholly ignored. In a brief article, the *Pionier am Wisconsin* explained the Catholic, Protestant, and Turner views of the law. It reported approvingly of the protest from Wisconsin's Catholic bishops and noted that the Protestants were also demanding repeal. The editors then quoted the Turner resolutions at length, which approved of the law in principle, but wanted it to be changed so that it was clear that teaching languages other than English would not be put into question.⁶⁷ Perhaps the *Pionier am Wisconsin* was trying to appeal to all German groups with its newspaper, or show the area Freethinkers that, on the Bennett Law, at least, there was some agreement between them. In a short report, the *Pionier am Wisconsin* informed readers about the results of the Milwaukee election. In its telling, the Republicans had made the mistake of sitting on the fence, saying "Wasch mir den Pelz und mach ihn mir nicht naß" (Wash the pelt, but don't get it wet).⁶⁸ The editors said they would not be surprised if their "alter Freund George" (old friend George), meaning George Peck, became the Democratic candidate for governor and won the race to boot.⁶⁹ Closing the small notice, the editor clearly staked out his position on the issue, saying "Das Bennettgesetz muß abgeschafft werden" (The Bennett Law must be abolished).⁷⁰ In

⁶⁶ "Nicht zu übersehen," *Pionier am Wisconsin*, March 27, 1890, 8.

⁶⁷ "Das Bennettgesetz," *Pionier am Wisconsin*, March 20, 1890, 1.

⁶⁸ "Locales," *Pionier am Wisconsin*, April 3, 1890, 8.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

the coming months, the *Pionier am Wisconsin* continued to indicate its support for the anti-Bennett cause.

As anti-Bennett forces convened to organize politically and formally condemn the Bennett Law, the *Pionier am Wisconsin* reported on their actions. At the end of May 1890, the *Pionier am Wisconsin* reprinted the invitation to the Anti-Bennett convention that Koerner had written.⁷¹ After the convention, the *Pionier am Wisconsin* gave a front-page summary of the event and published the primary resolutions adopted by the convention, but, unlike other newspapers, did not report on the individual speeches.⁷² In early June, the editors reported on the German-Catholic convention in Milwaukee, which had preceded the more Protestant anti-Bennett assembly. The Catholic resolutions published by the *Pionier am Wisconsin* do not differ much from those later passed by the more Protestant group.⁷³ In both of these cases, the *Pionier am Wisconsin* was content to publish convention material with little editorial comment; the newspaper was against the law, but not to the degree that its editors felt the need to condemn it at length.

Soon after Republicans and Democrats released their party platforms, the *Pionier am Wisconsin* published a letter about the platforms written by Christian Koerner on behalf of the anti-Bennett committee. Underneath Koerner's signature is a statement encouraging newspapers to republish the article.⁷⁴ Thus, we can surmise that this sort of letter was sent by the committee to newspapers throughout the state in an attempt to convince German Americans that the anti-Bennett committee had the correct interpretation the platforms. In the letter, Koerner argues that the Republican platform would have left the core of the Bennett Law untouched, meaning that

⁷¹ "Anti-Bennett-Konvent," *Pionier am Wisconsin*, May 29, 1890, 1.

⁷² "Gegen das Bennett-Schulgesetz," *Pionier am Wisconsin*, June 12, 1890, 1.

⁷³ "Der deutsche Katholikentag," *Pionier am Wisconsin*, June 5, 1890, 1.

⁷⁴ "An die Wähler von Wisconsin," *Pionier am Wisconsin*, September 18, 1890, 1.

the rights of the state, including local schoolboards, would still have authority over parochial schools. Further, he argues that Republicans, in nominating Hoard again, were nominating a “fanatic,” who, instead of allowing changes to the Bennett Law, would only make it worse.⁷⁵ The anti-Bennett committee found the Democratic platform totally satisfactory as it pertained to the Bennett Law. Thus, they declared that they would support only those people who supported the Democratic platform and try to defeat those who supported Hoard and the Republican platform.⁷⁶

In an editorial from October 23, the *Pionier am Wisconsin* commented on the Bennett campaign at length and discussed a speech given on the topic by Konrad Krez. The editors remarked that the Wisconsin campaign was fiercer than usual and pointed to the Bennett Law as the main reason, not just the tariff.⁷⁷ They could see that German-language newspapers, with few exceptions, were fighting the Bennett Law and standing up for German Americans. On the other hand, the Freethinkers, they believed, held “ihr Freidenkderthum höher..., als ihr Deutschthum” (their Freethinkerdom higher than their Germandom).⁷⁸ Though himself religiously agnostic, the editor believed that the Freethinkers ought to have known that “when the parochial schools are first ruined, then the little bit of German in the public schools will very quickly be at an end.”⁷⁹ Such a fate for the German language is something the author wanted to avoid, especially because he, like the Freethinkers, had supported laws making room for German instruction in public schools.

The article then takes a personal turn as its author, Kuntz, speaks about how difficult it is for him to objectively cover a stump speech recently given in Sauk City by Konrad Krez, his

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ “Stumpreden,” *Pionier am Wisconsin*, October 23, 1890, 8.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Author’s translation. Original: “...wenn erst die Kirchenschulen ruiniert sein werden, dann wird dem Bischen Deutsch in den öffentlichen Schulen der Garaus sehr schnell gemacht werden.” Ibid.

longtime friend. Kuntz reported that Krez, more known for his poetry than his politicking, condemned both the tariffs and the Bennett Law in his speech. Some Republicans who had been hoping to hear Krez, the poet, were disappointed to hear Krez, the politician on the stump. Kuntz admitted that Krez could have chosen less strident language at times, but thought that his speech was appropriate on balance because of Krez's role that day as "Volksredner" (people's speaker).⁸⁰ Kuntz encouraged his readers to read Krez's political poem "Gutenberg," which had appeared on the front page of the issue.

"Gutenberg" discusses the lessons that contemporary readers can learn from the life and work of Johannes Gutenberg, the famous inventor of the printing press. Kuntz thought that political poems like "Gutenberg" would not be a piece of enduring literature, but that it was appropriate to write such poems because through them, their authors used whatever talents they might have to serve the cause.⁸¹ The poem opens with a description of a statue of Gutenberg in the Straßburger Münster. The statue was created by a French artist and depicts Gutenberg holding a Bible. Thanks to a German, the message of the Bible was brought to the world, a message that saves and enlightens mankind. The narrator says that a modern-day newspaperman who looks down his nose at Germans and their language should remember whom he has to thank for his livelihood. When such a man, "with a brain the size of a fingertip, whose heart is no bigger than a hazelnut," tries to treat children as if they belonged to the state, then he needs to be reminded about important lessons that he has forgotten.⁸² He needs to be reminded that all men have inalienable rights that the state can only take away as part of the punishment for a crime. Teaching a child in German, in the language that he or she knows, is not a crime, and German

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Author's translation. Original: "...mit einem Fingerhutvoll Hirn, deß Herz/Nicht größer ist, al seine Haselnuß..." Konrad Krez, "Gutenberg," *Pionier am Wisconsin*, October 23, 1890, 1.

parents should not have to worry about having to pay a fine for raising their children as they see fit. Krez compares German immigrants to the Pilgrims, who, before they came to America, had left the Netherlands so that their children could grow up in an English-speaking country. He wonders what they would think of their descendants persecuting Germans who are doing the same. Krez closes the poem with verses that bind loyalty to native tongue with loyalty to country:

When we swore the oath of loyalty
 We did not swear off our language
 How could one be true to the state,
 Who has become a traitor to himself?
 A German, who does not honor his language,
 And turns his back to his own people,
 He is a changeling, and not a scion
 Of the blood that Körner, still so young, shed,
 And that also out of Schill's and Hofer's wounds flowed,
 He is no good addition for the State,
 For his mother's milk was high treason.⁸³

Körner, Schill, and Hofer had fought in the Wars of Liberation against Napoleon in the Lützow corps. The Lützow corps was known for being a volunteer corps that had attracted students and academics to its ranks from a variety of German-speaking states. Krez is implying that Germans who give up their language cut themselves off from the freedom-loving legacy of Körner, Schill, and Hofer. Such people are also harmful to that state because they have been treasonous to

⁸³ Author's translation. Ibid. Original:

Als wir den Eid der Treue leisteten,
 Da schwuren wir nicht unsere Sprache ab
 Wie könnt auch einer treu dem Staate sein,
 Der an sich selber zum Verräther wird?
 Ein Deutscher, der nicht seine Sprache ehrt,
 Und seinem eignen Volk den Rücken kehrt,
 Der ist ein Wechselbalg u. nicht ein Sproß
 Des Bluts, das Körner, noch so jung vergoß,
 Und das aus Schill's und Hofer's Wunden floß,
 Er ist kein guter Zuwachs für den Staat,
 Denn seine Muttermilch war Hochverrath.

themselves, their language, and their culture. Considering the context of this poem, Krez is implying that Germans who do not stand up for their German parochial schools by opposing the Bennett Law are traitors to their heritage.

A week later, the *Pionier am Wisconsin* made its final case to voters about why they ought to support the Democrats on Election Day and fight the Bennett Law. The editors published articles from Lutheran, Catholic, and Forty-Eighter newspapers that each argued for German Americans to use their votes to fight against the Bennett Law, Prohibition, and tariffs. An article from the Lutheran *Rundschau* reminded readers about what was at stake in the election:

Our German school, our incomparable wonderful mother tongue with all its treasures, the German song, folk as well as church song, our core national mores, our freedom, personal and religious freedom of conscience...⁸⁴

The *Rundschau* urged German-American voters in the Midwest to stand united and vote for the candidates who would defend these values. An article from the *Illinois Staatszeitung*, edited by German-American liberals, sounded a similar note. The *Staatszeitung* warned German Americans that no one could afford to stay at home or to be deceived by the lies of their enemies. For example, despite what some newspapers were saying, neither Lutheran nor Catholic schools were seeking public money for their private schools.⁸⁵ In addition to articles addressing the tariff and Prohibition, the *Pionier am Wisconsin* also published an article from the Catholic *Seebote* that criticized the Bennett Law for disturbing the peace that had governed Wisconsin's civil society over the past several decades:

Now everything is different all of a sudden. The entire order of our beautiful state of Wisconsin needs to be stood on its head, and whoever can't read or write English should

⁸⁴ Author's translation. Original: "Unsere deutsche Schule, unsere unvergleichbar herrliche Muttersprache mit allen ihren Schätzen, das deutsche Lied, Volks- wie Kirchenlied, unsere kernigen Volkssitten, unsere Freiheit, persönliche und religiöse und Gewissensfreiheit..." "Stimmt unabhängig!" *Rundschau*, as found in the *Pionier am Wisconsin*, October 30, 1890, 1.

⁸⁵ "Keine deutsche Stimme darf fehlen," *Illinois Staatszeitung* as found in the *Pionier am Wisconsin*, October 30, 1890, 1.

in the future no longer be considered ‘proper,’ but only as second-class citizens. That is the blessing of the Bennett Law!⁸⁶

Taken together, these articles paint a picture of German-American solidarity despite the deep differences dividing these groups. A week later, the *Pionier am Wisconsin* announced the Democratic victory to readers, letting them know that Democrats had not just won in Wisconsin, but throughout the United States.⁸⁷

The *Pionier am Wisconsin* opposed the Bennett Law, but compared to German-American newspapers like the *Columbia* or *Germania*, it did not publish nearly as many anti-Bennett articles. Like *Der Deutsche Pionier*, the *Pionier am Wisconsin* was written for a rural community of German Americans, many of whom were more concerned with other matters like the tariffs. Written for such a small market, the editors could ill afford to alienate sizeable segments of their readership. Still, they did not waffle, but took a clear stance on the Bennett Law. They believed that opposition to the Bennett Law was something that German Americans of all stripes ought to agree on. Like the *Germania*, the *Pionier am Wisconsin* hoped that German Americans would unify and vote only for candidates who would defend German Americans’ language, schools, and freedoms.

⁸⁶ Author’s translation. Original: “Jetzt ist das urplötzlich anders geworden. Die ganze Ordnung unseres schönen Staates Wisconsin soll auf den Kopf gestellt werden, und wer nicht englisch sprechen und schreiben kann, der soll in Zukunft nicht ‘zünftig’ sein, nur als Bürger zweiter Klasse angesehen werden. Das ist der Segen des Bennettgesetzes!” Untitled article, *Seebote* as found in the *Pionier am Wisconsin*, October 30, 1890, 1.

⁸⁷ “Umwältzung. Demokratische Siege,” *Pionier am Wisconsin*, November 6, 1890, 1.

Conclusion

No single newspaper spoke for all of Wisconsin's German Americans during the Bennett Law controversy. German-American Catholics, Lutherans, Freethinkers, Turners, Republicans, Democrats, and Socialists from all over the state of Wisconsin printed their own newspapers, each with its own unique perspective. The *Germania* defended *Deutschtum* with poetry, and constitutional rights with pamphlets, all while aspiring to take up the mantle of German-American leadership. The *Amerikanische Turnzeitung* fought for the Bennett Law and the state's right to educate its citizens, and it fought against religious institutions, which they accused of inculcating servility. The *Columbia* waged a two-front war, continuing the *Culturkampf* against Protestants who would assert state control over their parochial schools while at the same time rebutting fellow Catholics who undermined the cause of parochial education. Meanwhile, English-language newspapers like the Republican *Milwaukee Sentinel* and Democratic *Milwaukee Journal* daily made the case to readers of the merits of their particular parties and candidates, all the while polemicizing against their political opponents. Democratic papers outside of Milwaukee like the *Wisconsin Botschafter* and *Watertown Weltbürger* fought against the Bennett Law in their party's interests, too, but also for German Americans and their rights. The Republican *Deutsche Pionier* did not think that the Bennett Law was a threat to German Americans and their institutions and thus, unlike the *Germania*, stuck with the Republicans. The independent *Pionier am Wisconsin* fought the Bennett Law because its editor thought that the law was a threat to German-Americans' language, culture, and institutions, and he believed that all German Americans, no matter their religion or politics, should oppose it.

Largely because of the German-American vote, the Bennett Law was repealed in the spring of 1891, but the Democratic wave continued to crest. In 1892, with Grover Cleveland at

the top of the ticket, Democrats won again both in Wisconsin and nationwide. The Panic of 1893 would spell the political doom of Cleveland and the Democrats. The Progressive Era of Republican domination began with this Democratic demise. In Wisconsin, this meant the ascendancy of Robert LaFollette, who mixed Republican progressivism with hard-nosed politicking. While wiped out in the 1890 Democratic wave, LaFollette had safely managed to avoid irrevocably antagonizing the Germans. In the years to come, he would not forget the importance of the German vote in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin's German Americans had won a victory for *Deutschtum* even as underlying economic, social, and cultural forces undermined it. First generation German Americans had long complained that their children were speaking too much English and not enough German. The instabilities of the industrial revolution and its attendant urbanization continued to work their way through societies the world over, and the effects of these forces were no less evident in Wisconsin than elsewhere. The years passed, and Wisconsin's German Americans steadily moved to cities or married English speakers, and the German language was steadily lost, though high levels of immigration from Germany over the course of decades had slowed this trend. By the 1890s, immigration from Germany had slowed, and would never again attain the rates seen earlier in the century. The First World War and its attendant anti-German sentiment probably accelerated the loss of German, but it was by no means the primary cause. Rural areas held on to German the longest, and in rural Wisconsin the last generation of speakers of German descended from nineteenth-century immigrants can still be found.

The Bennett Law has implications for our understanding of how quickly immigrants learn English and assimilate. In the American context, it has only been groups with strong religious and cultural ties to their heritage language that have maintained it in the face of modernity.

Orthodox Jews, Amish, and Hutterites are all examples of such groups among immigrants speaking German or languages related to it. Immigrants, particularly of the first generation, often have strong, heartfelt ties to their native language and culture. While their children often share a measure of this affection, the second generation is more likely to be bilingual and more at ease in American culture. Especially in urban areas where people from many different backgrounds mix, English quickly becomes the dominant language. Immigrant assimilation, then, tends to happen as a matter of course, and does not need specific legislation to hurry it along.¹

The Bennett Law controversy is also an example of a continuing debate in American politics and law about the relationship between private schools and the state. Anti-German and anti-foreign sentiment from the First World War led Nebraska to ban foreign language instruction at the elementary school level until the Supreme Court overturned the ban in 1923 in *Meyer v. Nebraska*. In 1925, the Supreme Court decided in *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* that Oregon could not force all students to attend public schools. Another Supreme Court decision from 1972, *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, confirmed the rights of religious communities like the Amish to decide for themselves how long their children would be educated, despite what state compulsory education laws might say.

In recent years, there have been debates about whether state funds can go to private schools. Voucher programs have in some states run up against the so-called Blaine amendments, which explicitly ban public funds from going to sectarian schools. The Blaine amendments were passed at the state level in the late nineteenth century after a failed constitutional amendment, brought by James Blaine, which would have federally barred public funding for sectarian

¹ Pressure to assimilate could also take more coercive forms. German Americans of the era did not have to deal with the same forced assimilation that Native Americans did. Native American children were taken from their parents and forced into boarding schools in the late nineteenth century so that they would be immersed in European, Christian culture and so forget the culture of their peoples.

schools. Due to the Protestant nature of many public schools at the time, the law was understood to be a way of keeping public money from going to Catholic parochial schools. Recently, in a 2016 case, *Trinity Lutheran Church of Columbia, Inc. v. Comer*, the Supreme Court ruled that the State of Missouri could not exclude Trinity Lutheran Church from taking part in a program that would allow the Church to access public funds for creating safe playground surfaces. As of this writing in early 2020, the Supreme Court will be hearing arguments on *Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue*. In *Espinoza*, the plaintiffs are seeking access to state scholarship money to attend a religious school, but the State of Montana has decided that such funding going through the scholarship program to parochial schools would violate the state's Blaine Amendment. How modern Americans react to such Supreme Court cases, and to educational issues in general, depends a great deal on their prior religious, philosophical, and political commitments, but also on where they get their news.

Like Wisconsin's German Americans, modern Americans have a wide variety of news sources, each catering to different segments of the population. The *Sentinel and Journal*, *Germania* and *Turnzeitung*, *Columbia* and *Deutsche Pionier*, all framed the Bennett Law controversy in different terms. While our digital age is by no means the same as nineteenth-century Wisconsin, the fact that there are competing, often highly politicized accounts of the news is not so different from the nineteenth century. Then, newspapers wore their biases on their sleeves, and now, in today's splintering of news sources, there appears to be an increasing trend in this direction. As in the past, there are often more than two sides to a given issue. During the Bennett controversy, there was more to simply being for or against the law; there was nuance, history, and philosophy behind the stances that German-American newspapers took. While some

aspects of Wisconsin in the 1890s might be familiar to modern students of history, one thing that has certainly changed is the influence of the German-language press on American affairs.

German Americans have left behind a treasure trove of largely unread accounts of American history, a German-language window into the nation's past. Future scholars could use German-American newspapers to pursue any number of lines of inquiry. This study has sought to fill in some of the scholarly gaps in our knowledge of the Bennett Law controversy by detailing some of the many German perspectives on it. Still, there remains much more about this issue that could be researched and fleshed out. Indeed, this dissertation by no means purports to have exhausted everything that can be said and learned about German Americans from their extensive campaign coverage. For instance, a study of a German Socialist newspaper from this time period like *Vorwärts* would certainly be worth undertaking.² Reading German-language newspapers from other states, like the *Illinois Staatszeitung* and *New York Staatszeitung*, and getting their take on the Bennett controversy would also be worthwhile. Both newspapers, after all, were cited by Wisconsin's German-language press. German-American newspapers, like English-language papers, were in constant dialogue with other newspapers, both English and German. There is a great deal more to be said, for instance, about the *Sentinel's* feuds with German-American newspapers like the *Germania*. Historians might also discover unique perspectives on the Bennett Law by reading newspapers from that time written in neither German nor English, but in Polish or Norwegian, for example.

This study is a reminder that the English-language record of American history is far from the only one.³ Millions of Americans descend from ancestors who did not speak English when

² The author could not locate editions of *Vorwärts* for this time period.

³ There is also more to American literature than English-language literature. For attempts to broaden our understanding of American literature see the following works: edited and with introductory essays by Cora Lee Kluge, *Other Witnesses : An Anthology of Literature of the German Americans, 1850-1914* ([Madison, WI]: Max

they first arrived. Though the task of understanding these immigrant views can be difficult for English monolinguals, it is certainly rewarding. The perspective of the foreign language press is, on the one hand, the perspective of insiders, inasmuch as the press was writing in America for Americans. On the other hand, the linguistic and cultural norms of the immigrant press gave them something of an outsider perspective in American culture. Such dual perspectives can enrich our understanding of the American story. From these German-American perspectives, we can see that Bennett Law was about schools and not about schools; that it was a legal issue, but also a cultural issue; and that at some level, the Bennett Law controversy went to the heart of what it means to be an American.

Bibliography

- American Newspaper Directory*. New York: George P. Rowell & Co., 1891.
- Amerikanische Turnzeitung*. Milwaukee Wis.: Freidenker Pub. Co., 1885.
- An Act Concerning the Education and Employment of Children, Pub. L. No. 519, 841, A Laws of Wisconsin 729 (1889). <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/1889/related/acts/519.pdf>.
- Anderson, Rasmus B. "Chapter 142: The Bennett Law." In *Life Story of Rasmus B. Anderson*, edited by Albert O. Barton, 594–600. Madison, WI, 1915.
<http://solomon.imld.alexanderstreet.com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/asp/philo/imld/getdoc.pl?S8558-D142>.
- Arndt, Karl John Richard, and May E Olson. *The German Language Press of the Americas, 1732-1968: History and Bibliography. Volume 1: United States of America*. München: Verlag Dokumentation, 1976.
- Baldasty, Gerald J. *The Commercialization of News in the Nineteenth Century*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992.
- Beck, Walter Herman. *Lutheran Elementary Schools in the United States: A History of the Development of Parochial Schools and Synodical Educational Policies and Programs*. St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1965.
- Brennen, Bonnie, and Hanno Hardt. *The American Journalism History Reader: Critical and Primary Texts*. London: Routledge, 2011.
- Bruncken, Ernest, and Wilhelm Hense-Jensen. *Wisconsin's Deutsch-Amerikaner, bis zum Schluss des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Milwaukee: Verlag der deutschen Gesellschaft, Druck der Germania, 1900.
<http://archive.org/details/wisconsinsdeutsc01hens>.
- . *Wisconsin's Deutsch-Amerikaner, bis zum Schluss des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*. Vol. 2. 2 vols. Milwaukee: Verlag der deutschen Gesellschaft, Druck der Germania, 1902.
<http://archive.org/details/wisconsinsdeutsc01hens>.
- Carper, James C, and Thomas C Hunt. *The Dissenting Tradition in American Education*. New York: P. Lang, 2007. <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/api/volumes/oclc/80460268.html>.
- Clark, James I. *Education in Wisconsin: An Historical Sketch*. Madison, WI: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1958.
- Columbia*. Milwaukee, Wis.: Columbia Pub. Co., 1872.

- Conzen, Kathleen Neils. *Immigrant Milwaukee 1836-1860: Accommodation and Community in a Frontier City*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976.
- Daggett, Clay Justin. *Education in Wisconsin*. Whitewater, WI: Whitewater Press, 1936.
- Der Deutsche Pionier*. Wausau, Wis.: Pionier Company, 1881.
- Douglas, George H. *The Golden Age of the Newspaper*. Westport (Conn.); London: Greenwood Press, 1999.
- Fowler, Robert Booth. *Wisconsin Votes: An Electoral History*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008.
- Geitz, Henry, Jürgen Heideking, Jürgen Herbst, and D.C.) German Historical Institute (Washington. *German Influences on Education in the United States to 1917*. Washington, D.C.; Cambridge; New York: German Historical Institute ; Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Germania*. Milwaukee, Wis.: German Protestant Printing Assoc., 1873.
- Glänzende Rechtfertigung: Gouverneur Hoard ist kein Feind, sondern ein Befürworter des deutschen Unterrichts: die Erziehungsfrage : ein lesenswerthes Gespräch zweier Nachbarn über das Bennett-Gesetz*. Milwaukee: A. Wetzel & Bro., 1890.
- Goldberg, Bettina. "Our Fathers' Faith, Our Children's Language: Cultural Change in Milwaukee's German Evangelical Lutheran Congregations of the Missouri Synod, 1850-1930." Berlin: John F. Kennedy-Institut für Nordamerikastudien, Abteilung für Geschichte, 1990.
- . "The German -English Academy, the National German-American Teachers' Seminary, and the Public School System in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1851-1919." In *German Influences on Education in the United States to 1917*, edited by Henry Geitz, Jürgen Heideking, and Jürgen Herbst, 177–92. Washington, D.C.; Cambridge; New York: German Historical Institute ; Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Grether, Franz. "Bleib deutsch." *Germania*. January 28, 1890.
- Günther, Karl-Heinz. "Interdependence between Democratic Pedagogy in Germany and the Development of Education in the United States in the Nineteenth Century." In *German Influences on Education in the United States to 1917*, edited by Henry Geitz, Jürgen Heideking, and Jürgen Herbst, 43–56. Washington, D.C.; Cambridge; New York: German Historical Institute ; Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- H. L. W. "Zur Wahl!" *Germania*. March 21, 1890.

- Heiss, Michael, Killian C. Flasch, and Frederick Xavier Katzer. "A Protest of the Catholic Bishops of Wisconsin Against the Bennett Law.," 1890.
<https://www.archmil.org/ArchdioceseofMilwaukee/history/MC-011-Bennett-Law-Bishops-Protest.pdf>.
- Hinrichs, Beate. *Deutschamerikanische Presse zwischen Tradition und Anpassung: die Illinois Staatszeitung und Chicagoer Arbeiterzeitung 1879-1890*. Frankfurt am Main; New York: P. Lang, 1989.
- "Historic Designation Study Report." City of Milwaukee, February 2014.
<http://city.milwaukee.gov/ImageLibrary/Groups/cityHPC/DesignatedReports/vticnf/Germania.pdf>.
- Jacobi, Juliane. "Schoolmarm, Volkserzieher, Kantor, and Schulschwester: German Teachers among Immigrants during the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century." In *German Influences on Education in the United States to 1917*, edited by Henry Geitz, Jürgen Heideking, and Jürgen Herbst, 115–28. Washington, D.C.; Cambridge; New York: German Historical Institute ; Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Jacobi-Dittrich, Juliane. *"Deutsche" Schulen in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika: histor.-vergleichende Studie zum Unterrichtswesen im Mittleren Westen (Wisconsin 1840-1900)*. München: Minerva-Publ., 1988.
- Jacobs, Richard M. "U.S. Catholic Schools and the Religious Who Served in Them: Contributions in the 18th and 19th Centuries." *Journal of Catholic Education* 1, no. 4 (June 1, 1998). <https://doi.org/10.15365/joce.0104022013>.
- Jensen, Richard J. *Winning of the Midwest*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press., 1971.
- Johnston, Janet W. *The Bennett Law Controversy in Wisconsin: A Study of Americanization Among Immigrant Populations*. Casa Grande, Ariz.: Signal Peak Press, 2011.
- Jones, Steven L. *Religious Schooling in America: Private Education and Public Life*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2008.
- Jorgenson, Lloyd P. *The Founding of Public Education in Wisconsin*. Madison, WI: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1956.
- Kellogg, Louise Phelps. "The Bennett Law in Wisconsin." *The Wisconsin Magazine of History*, September 1918.
- Kleppner, Paul. *The Cross of Culture: A Social Analysis of Midwestern Politics, 1850-1900*. 2nd ed. New York, London: Free Press, Collier-Macmillan, 1970.

- Kluge, Cora Lee, editor. *Other Witnesses : An Anthology of Literature of the German Americans, 1850-1914*. Madison, WI: Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies, University of Wisconsin–Madison, 2007.
- Koerner, Christian. *Das Bennett-Gesetz und die deutschen protestantischen Gemeindeschulen in Wisconsin*. Milwaukee: Germania Pub. Co., 1890.
- . “The Bennett Law and the German Protestant Parochial Schools of Wisconsin.” Milwaukee: Germania Publishing Co., 1890. Wisconsin Historical Society. <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/turningpoints/search.asp?id=746>.
- Lacher, John Henry A, and Don Heinrich Tolzmann. *Wisconsin’s German Element: J.H.A. Lacher’s Introductory History*. Baltimore, MD: Clearfield, 2001.
- Louden, Mark Laurence, author. *Pennsylvania Dutch : The Story of an American Language*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016.
- Mac Cormick, Allen E. *Germans in America: Aspects of German-American Relations in the Nineteenth Century*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.
- Marzolf, Marion Tuttle. *Civilizing Voices: American Press Criticism 1880-1950*. New York; London: Longman, 1991.
- McKenny, Charles. *Educational History of Wisconsin: Growth and Progress of Education in the State from Its Foundation to the Present Time, with Portraits and Biographies*. Chicago: Delmont, 1912.
- Meier, Eugene B. *How Was the Acculturation of Children of Alt Lutheraner Descent in Wisconsin (1843-1915) Affected by the Relationship of Home and Market?* DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University, 1977. <http://books.google.com/books?id=kXYvAQAAMAAJ>.
- Merrill, Peter C. *German-American Urban Culture : Writers & Theaters in Early Milwaukee*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, 2000.
- Miller, Sally M. *The Ethnic Press in the United States: A Historical Analysis and Handbook*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1987.
- Milwaukee Daily Journal*. Milwaukee, Wis: Journal Co., 1882.
- Milwaukee Sentinel*. Milwaukee, Wis: Sentinel Co., 1837.
- Nesbit, Robert Carrington, William Fletcher Thompson, and State Historical Society of Wisconsin. *Wisconsin: A History*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004.

- Oehlerts, Donald E, James L Hansen, and Wisconsin Historical Society. *Guide to Wisconsin Newspapers, 1833-2007*. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Historical Society, 2014.
- Ostergren, Robert Clifford, Cora Lee Kluge, and Heike Bungert. *Wisconsin German Land and Life*. Madison, WI: Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies, University of Wisconsin--Madison, 2006.
- Ostergren, Robert Clifford, and Thomas R Vale. *Wisconsin Land and Life*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997.
- Otto, Luther B. "Catholic and Lutheran Political Cultures in Medium-Sized Wisconsin Cities." [publisher not identified], 1963.
- Patzer, Conrad E, Wisconsin, and Department of Public Instruction. *Public Education in Wisconsin*. Madison, WI: State Superintendent, 1925.
- Pionier Am Wisconsin*. Sauk City, Wis.: C.C. Kuntz, 1853.
- Reilly, Daniel Flavian. *The School Controversy, 1891-1893*. American Education: Its Men, Ideas and Institutions. New York: Arno Press & New York Times, 1969.
- Ripley, La Vern J. *The Immigrant Experience in Wisconsin*. The Immigrant Heritage of America Series. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985.
- Sachsman, David B, and Dea Lisica, eds. *After the War: The Press in a Changing America, 1865-1900*. London: Routledge, 2017.
- Schmidt, Wayne E. "Wisconsin Synod Lutheran Parochial Schools : An Overview of the Years 1850-1890," 1986.
- Shell, Marc and Sollers, Werner, editors. *The Multilingual Anthology of American Literature : A Reader of Original Texts with English Translations*. New York: New York University Press, 2000.
- Sloan, William David. *American Journalism History : An Annotated Bibliography*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1989.
- Stearns, John William. *The Columbian History of Education in Wisconsin*. Milwaukee: State Committee on Educational Exhibit for Wisconsin, 1893.
<http://books.google.com/books?id=Wx4WAAAIAAJ>.
- Stellhorn, A. C. *Schools of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Pub. House, 1963.
- The History of Sauk County Wisconsin*. Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1880.

- Ulrich, Robert James. "The Bennett Law of 1889: Education and Politics in Wisconsin." University Microfilms, 1986.
- Walch, Timothy. *Parish School: American Catholic Parochial Education from Colonial Times to the Present*. New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1996.
- Watertown Weltbürger*. Watertown, Wis.: D. Blumenfeld, 1867.
- Wegner, Janet Carole. "The Bennett Law Controversy in Wisconsin, 1889-1891; a Study of the Problem of 'Americanization' in the Immigrant Church and Its Relation to the History of Church and State in the United States." Thesis (A.M.), Brown University, 1966.
- Wells, Oliver. "Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of the State of Wisconsin for the Two Years Ending June 30, 1894." Government report. Biennial Report of the Department of Public Instruction. Madison, WI: Democrat Printing Company, State Printer, 1894. Google Books.
<https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=ScdEAQAAMAAJ&rdid=book-ScdEAQAAMAAJ&rdot=1>.
- Whyte, William F. "The Bennett Law Campaign in Wisconsin." *The Wisconsin Magazine of History*, June 1927.
- Wisconsin Botschafter*. Madison, Wis.: R. Porsch, 1869.
- Wittke, Carl Frederick, and William K Hubbel. *The German-Language Press in America*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1957.
- Wyman, Roger E. "Wisconsin Ethnic Groups and the Election of 1890." Edited by William Converse Haygood and William C. Marten. *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 51, no. 4 (1968): 269–93.
- Zeininger, August. "Catholic Schools and Institutions." In *The Columbian History of Education in Wisconsin*, edited by John William Stearns. Milwaukee: State Committee on Educational Exhibit for Wisconsin, 1893.
<http://books.google.com/books?id=WX4WAAAIAAJ>.
- Zeitlin, Richard H. *Germans in Wisconsin*. Madison, Wis.: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 2000.

Appendix

The Bennett Law—Full Text. An Act Concerning the Education and Employment of Children, Pub. L. No. 519, 841, A Laws of Wisconsin 729 (1889).
<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/1889/related/acts/519.pdf>.

LAWS OF WISCONSIN—CH. 519.

729

account showing the amount then due thereon, and the vendee shall have the right at any time within fifteen days after such taking to redeem the property so taken by paying to the vendor the full amount of the price then unpaid, together with the interest and all lawful charges and expenses due to the vendor; and the fifteen days hereinbefore provided during which the vendee shall have the right to redeem the furniture or household effects so taken, shall not begin to run until such statement is furnished; provided, the vendee or other person in charge can be found by the vendor by the exercise of reasonable care and diligence. No contract mentioned in this act shall be valid as against any other person than the parties thereto and those having notice thereof unless such contract shall be in writing subscribed by the parties thereto, and the same or a copy thereof shall be filed in the office of the clerk of the town, city, or village where the vendee resides or if he shall not be a resident of the state then in the office of the clerk of the town, city or village where the property may be at the time of making such contract, and such clerk shall file, keep and index the same in like manner as mortgages of personal property, and receive a like compensation therefor; but the effect of such filing shall not extend for more than one year after the time fixed for payment of the contract price or for the performance of the other conditions of such sale.

In case of forfeiture vendor to furnish statement of amount due to vendee; redemption; time when begins to run.

Contract to be filed in office of town, city or village clerk.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and publication.
 Approved April 18, 1889.

[No. 841, A.]

[Published April 27, 1889.]

CHAPTER 519.

AN ACT concerning the education and employment of children.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Every parent or other person having under his control a child between the ages of

Boards of education to fix time for attendance of children in schools for a period of twelve weeks, duty of parents.

seven and fourteen years, shall annually cause such child to attend some public or private day school in the city, town or district in which he resides, for a period not less than twelve weeks in each year, which number of weeks shall be fixed prior to the first day of September in each year, by the board of education or board of directors of the city, town or district, and for a portion or portions thereof, to be so fixed by such boards, the attendance shall be consecutive, and such boards shall, at least ten days prior to the beginning of such period, publish the time or times of attendance, in such manner as such boards shall direct; provided that such boards shall not fix such compulsory period at more than twenty-four weeks in each year.

Penalty for neglect by parents having control to comply.

SECTION 2. For every neglect of such duty the person having such control and so offending shall forfeit to the use of the public schools of such city, town or district a sum not less than three dollars (\$3.00) nor more than twenty dollars (\$20.00); and failure for each week or portion of a week on the part of any such person to comply with the provisions of this act, shall constitute a distinct offense; provided, that any such child shall be excused from attendance at school required by this act, by the board of education or school directors of the city, town or district in which such child resides upon its being shown to their satisfaction that the person so neglecting is not able to send such child to school, or that instruction has otherwise been given for a like period of time to such child in the elementary branches commonly taught in the public schools, or that such child has already acquired such elementary branches of learning, or that his physical or mental condition is such as to render attendance inexpedient or impracticable, and in all cases where such child shall be so excused the penalty herein provided shall not be incurred.

Penalty for making false statement concerning age of child for purpose of evading.

SECTION 3. Any person having control of a child who, with intent to evade the provisions of this act, shall make a wilful false statement concerning the age of such child or the time such child has attended school, shall, for such offense, forfeit a sum of not less than three dollars (\$3) nor more than twenty dollars (\$20) for the use of the public schools of such city, town or district.

LAWS OF WISCONSIN—CH. 519.

. 731

SECTION 4. Five days prior to the beginning of any prosecution under this act such board shall cause a written notice to be personally served upon such person having control of any such child, of his duty under this act, and of his default in failing to comply with the provisions hereof, and if, upon the hearing of such prosecution, it shall appear to the satisfaction of the court that before or after the receipt of such notice such person has caused such child to attend a school as provided in this act in good faith and with intent to continue such attendance, then the penalty provided by this act shall not be incurred.

Board to serve notice on person failing.

SECTION 5. No school shall be regarded as a school, under this act, unless there shall be taught therein, as part of the elementary education of children, reading, writing, arithmetic and United States history, in the English language.

What regarded as a school.

SECTION 6. Prosecutions under this act shall only be instituted and carried on by the authority of such boards, and shall be brought in the name of said boards, and all fines and penalties, when collected, shall be paid to the school treasurer of such city, town or district, or other officer entitled to receive school moneys, the same to be held and accounted for as other school moneys received for school purposes.

Prosecutions, how instituted and carried on.

SECTION 7. Jurisdiction to enforce the penalties herein described in this act is hereby conferred on justices of the peace and police magistrates within their respective counties.

Justices of peace and police magistrates to have jurisdiction.

SECTION 8. Any child between the age of nine and fourteen years, who, without leave and against the will of his parent, guardian or other person having the right to control such child, habitually absents himself from the school to which he is sent or directed to be sent, and is beyond the control of his parent or guardian or other person having the right to control such child in that regard, and wanders or loiters in streets, alleys or other public places, shall be deemed a truant child, and on such truancy being alleged and proved, such truant child shall be adjudged a dependent child in like manner as is now provided by law for the adjudication of dependent children, and on being so adjudged dependent may be committed in like manner for such time not exceeding two years,

Truant children may be committed as are dependent.

Officers may take children found loitering on streets, etc., in school hours and compel their attendance at school.

as the judge or court having the jurisdiction of the matter may determine. Any child so committed may, upon proof of amendment, or for after sufficient cause shown upon a hearing of the case be discharged by such judge or court at any time, but such child shall not be so confined after the age of fourteen years, nor shall he be bound or apprenticed nor placed out of any school to which he shall be committed. Officers appointed by the board of education or board of school directors shall have power and authority to take a truant child found on the streets, alleys or other public places during school hours to such school conveniently located to the home of such child, as may be designated and requested by such parent, guardian or other person having the right to control such child, and such officer shall ascertain from such parent, guardian or other person having the right to control such child, the school which he desires such child shall attend; or in case of refusal to designate and request, by the parent, guardian, or other person having the right to control such child; or in case such child has no parent, guardian or other person in control, then to the public school situated in the district where such child lives, or to such public school as such board may direct.

Children under 18 years not to be employed or allowed to work in factory except, etc., when permit may be granted by county court.

SECTION 9. No child under thirteen years of age shall be employed or allowed to work by any person, company, firm or corporation at labor or service in any shop, factory, mine, store, place of manufacture, business or amusement except as hereinafter provided.

Permit, what to state, record of.

SECTION 10. The judge of the county court in the county where the child resides and is to be employed or to work, may, by order of record, grant a permit to any child over ten years to be exempt and in such county from the operation of this act as to such employment, and to such extent, and for such time and on such terms as may be named in such permit, on its being shown to his satisfaction that such child can read and write the English language and that it is fit and proper considering the lack of means of support of the family of which such child is a member, that such permit should be granted, and such permit may be rescinded by any such judge on written notice to such child, or to any person hav-

LAWS OF WISCONSIN—CH. 519.

733

ing control of or employing such child. Such permit must state the age, place of residence and the amount of school attendance prior to the granting of such permit. A record of such permits to be kept in such court. The court may, when the business of the court requires, appoint a suitable person to hear and report on all applications for the issuance and rescision of permits, and may, on hearing such report, grant or refuse such application. Such person to be paid a reasonable compensation by the county, to be fixed by the county board. Such person shall be an officer of the court, and removable by an order of court at any time. No charge or fee shall be required in any matter under this section.

Person may be appointed to act on permits.

SECTION 11. No child shall be so employed or work who does not present such permit and every person before employing or permitting such child to so labor, or be at service shall require and retain such permit, and shall keep the same together with a correct list of all children so employed posted in a conspicuous manner in the place of employment, and shall show such list on demand, to any school officer or teacher or police officer.

Not to employ children not having permit, employer to retain permit, etc.

SECTION 12. Any person, company, or corporation who employs or permits to be employed or to work any child in violation of this act, and any person having the control of any such child who permits such employment or work, shall, for every offense forfeit a sum of not less than ten dollars (\$10), nor more than fifty dollars (\$50), for the use of the public schools of such city, town or district, and every day of such illegal employment shall constitute a distinct offense.

Penalty.

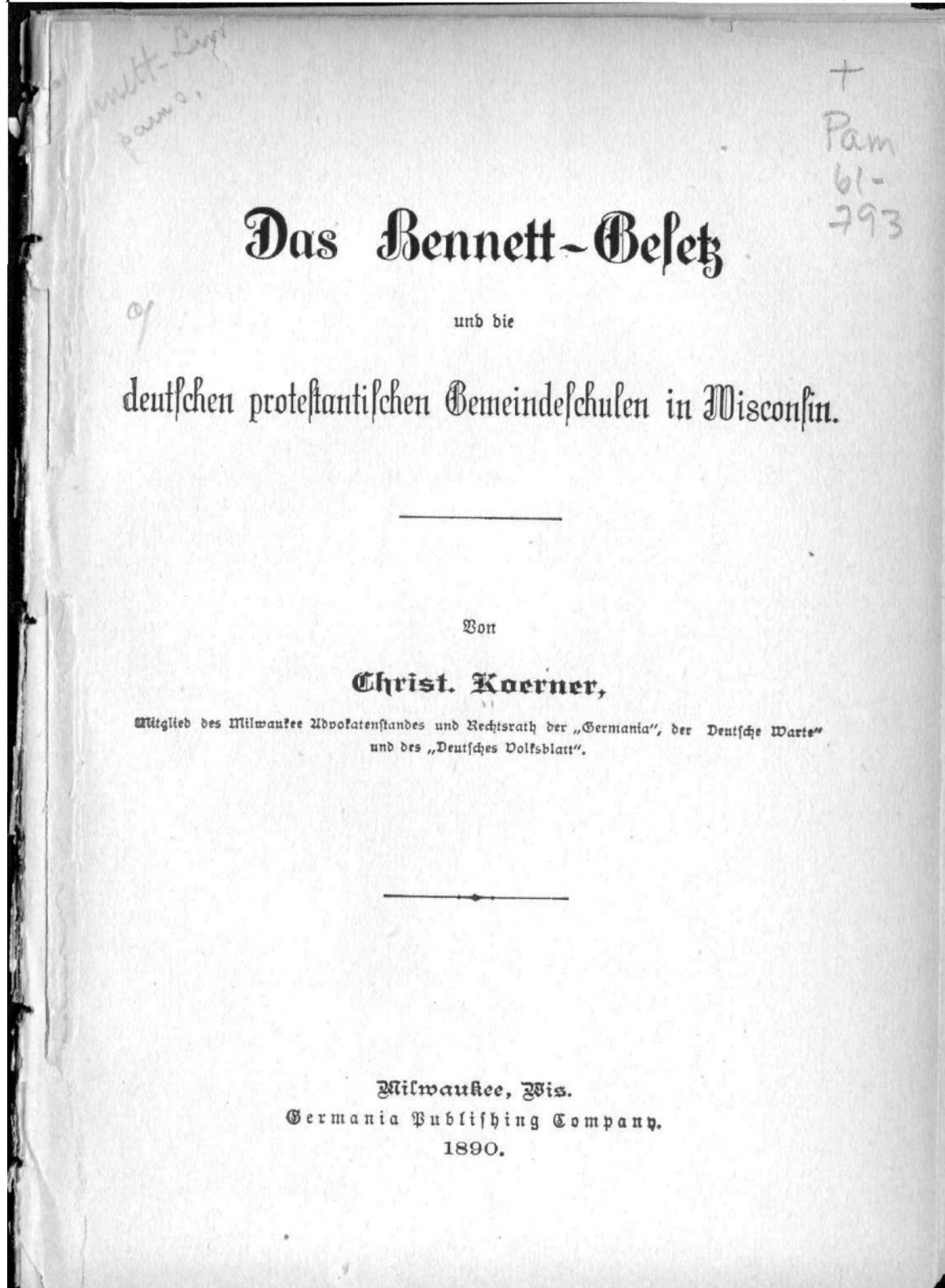
SECTION 13. Any person having control of or in his employ a child who, with intent to evade the provisions of this act, shall make a false statement concerning the age of such child or the time such child has attended school or shall instruct such child to make any false statement, shall, for such offense forfeit a sum of not less than ten dollars (\$10) nor more than fifty dollars (\$50), for the use of the public schools of such city, town or district.

For making false statement

SECTION 14. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and publication.

Approved April 18, 1889.

The Koerner Pamphlet (excerpts). Koerner, Christian. *Das Bennett-Gesetz und die deutschen protestantischen Gemeindeschulen in Wisconsin*. Milwaukee: Germania Pub. Co., 1890.



Gute und triftige Gründe

für die

Bekämpfung des Bennett-Gesetzes.



Wir Gegner des Bennett-Gesetzes werden von den Vertretern desselben mit ungewöhnlicher Freundlichkeit bedacht und mit den lieblichsten Rosenamen beehrt. Dummköpfe sind wir in ihren Augen, die das Gesetz nicht verstehen, wenn wir nicht gar Lügner heißen müssen, als die muthwillig die Bestimmungen desselben verdrehen. Wir müssen Feinde der englischen Sprache heißen, denn wie könnte man, so folgern die Bennett-Leute, sonst dagegen sein, daß die Kinder „ein bißchen Englisch“ lernen? Als Thoren und Narren werden wir hingestellt, die nicht wissen, was zum Wohle ihrer Kinder dient, oder als Rabeneltern, die gezwungen werden müssen, ihre Kinder auf den späteren Kampf des Lebens auszurüsten und sie zu befähigen, denselben siegreich zu führen. Ja, diese Bennett-Helden möchten uns und der ganzen Welt weismachen, daß sie unsere Kinder mehr lieben als wir selbst, und daß sie besser für unsere Kinder sorgen wollen, als wir zu sorgen verstehen. Doch, wir wollen ihnen diese pharisäische Heuchelliebe noch versalzen, sei es mit Hilfe der Gerichte oder mit Hilfe der Gesetzgebung — unsere Stimmgabeln sollen noch schwer ins Gewicht fallen.

Im nachfolgenden wollen wir nun den Nachweis liefern, daß wir das Bennett-Gesetz weder aus Dummheit noch aus Bosheit bekämpfen, sondern aus guten und triftigen Gründen. Zu dem Zweck wollen wir zunächst die Bestimmungen des Gesetzes genauer kennen lernen, und sodann nachweisen, warum wir diesen Bestimmungen unsere Zustimmung und Billigung versagen.

I. Bestimmungen des Bennett-Gesetzes.

Wenn Einwände gegen die Bestimmungen des Bennett-Gesetzes erhoben werden, heißt es gewöhnlich: „Ihr versteht das Gesetz nicht recht; Ihr legt das Gesetz falsch aus; das ist ja gar nicht der Zweck und die Absicht des Gesetzes.“ Woher soll man denn nun den Zweck und die Absicht des Gesetzes kennen lernen? Soll man etwa die einzelnen Legislatur-Mitglieder aufsuchen und darum befragen? Da würde man gar häufig vergeblich anklopfen; denn viele der Herren, die für die Annahme des Gesetzes gestimmt haben, kannten den Inhalt desselben nicht und konnten darum bei Abgabe ihrer Stimme auch keinen besonderen Zweck im Auge haben. Oder sollen wir uns etwa bei den Verfassern des Gesetzes nach dessen eigentlichem Zweck und wahrer Absicht erkundigen? Ei, wer sind denn die Verfasser des Gesetzes? Weiß es jemand? Wenn so, dann hat er sich noch nicht gemeldet. Wohl hat ja Herr Bennett die Vaterschaft großmüthig übernommen, aber ist das Gesetz wirklich sein Kind, oder hat er es nur unter seinen väterlichen Schutz genommen? Es heißt — und das Gerücht trägt den Stempel der Wahrscheinlichkeit — daß ein Komitee von Hundert in Chicago zusammengetreten sei und die Vorlagen ausgearbeitet habe, die später von den Legislaturen der Staaten Illinois und Wisconsin zum Gesetz erhoben wurden. Und allerdings zeigen beide Gesetze eine Aehnlichkeit, wie man sie nur bei Zwillingsskindern zu finden gewöhnt ist. So scheint

Anmerkung. Diese Flugschrift gegen das Bennett-Gesetz wurde in ihrem ersten Entwurf, wie sie im „Milwaukee Journal“ erschien, einer Versammlung von Freunden der deutschen Sprache und der Gemeindefchulen, die am 27. Dezember in Milwaukee abgehalten wurde, vorgelegt und von derselben besprochen und angenommen.

Leser einmal die Führer in diesem Kampfe gegen die deutsche Sprache und gegen die Gemeindefschulen ein wenig genauer an! Da wird er gewahren, wie Leute, die bisher für ehrenhaft galten, in der Hitze des Kampfes die Maske abwerfen und sich in der kläglichen Blöße ihres wahren Charakters zeigen. Ganze Versammlungen von Männern, die unter ihren Mitbürgern hohes Ansehen genießen, geliebt und geehrt werden, mit denen die Vertreter des Bennett-Gesetzes nicht wagen dürfen sich zu vergleichen, werden von diesen, weil sie das jämmerliche und klägliche Machwerk bekämpfen, mit bitterem Lohn und Spott überschüttet; während irgend ein unbekanntes Menschenkind oder nur zu wohl bekanntes Subjekt, sobald es sich nur willig zeigt, gegen die Gemeindefschulen Partei zu ergreifen, mit größter Zuversicht und Herzlichkeit als Bruder und Kampfgenosse empfangen wird. Männer von großer Gelehrsamkeit und tiefem theologischen Wissen, die ihre besten Jahre in diesem Lande und in unserem Staate verlebt und viel zur geistigen und sittlichen Hebung und Förderung unseres Volkes beigetragen haben, werden als theologische Cranks und Querköpfe verschrien, denen man keinen Glauben schenken dürfe, da sie nur ihren eigenen Vortheil und die Befestigung ihrer Pfaffen-

herrschaft suchen: während irgend ein unbekannter Herr Reverend, der nichts zu seiner Empfehlung mit sich bringt als seinen guten Willen eine Lanze für das Bennett-Machwerk zu brechen und die Gegner desselben höhrend zum Kumpf zu fordern, mit Jubelgeschrei empfangen wird und ein vor Freuden fast wahnsinniges Chor antimmt: „Heil Dir im Siegeskranz!“ Männer, welche die frische freie Luft unseres Landes noch nicht lange geathmet haben, um ihr Blut von knechtischen monarchischen Anschauungen zu reinigen, die noch die Staatsdiener als Vorgesetzte ansehen, denen blinder Gehorsam und unbedingte Unterwürfigkeit gebührt, die noch meinen unsere große und freie amerikanische Republik müsse in den Pfaden europäischer Monarchien wandeln, werden als hocheleuchtete Patrioten hingestellt, als nachahmenswerthe Beispiele für Männer, deren erster Athemzug Freiheit war und deren ganzes Leben Patriotismus ist. Dies ist ein wahrheitsgetreues Bild der Führer in diesem bitteren ungerechtfertigten Kampfe gegen die deutsche Sprache und die Gemeindefschule, wie jeder bezeugen kann, der auch nur ab und zu liest, was dieselben gegen uns schreiben. Gestülzet es dem Leser nach solcher Kameradschaft? Will er sich solchen Führern anvertrauen?

Die Statistischen Tabellen

auf Seite 19 ff. enthalten die Statistik der deutschen protestantischen Gemeindefschulen für Wisconsin allein. Dieselben sind mit großer Sorgfalt nach den Originalberichten von Predigern und Lehrern, die an den betreffenden Gemeinden und Schulen stehen, zusammengestellt worden. Zum Verständniß der Kolonnen 10 und 11 dürfte folgender

Schlüssel

bienen.

In **Kolumne 10** wird der Leser gewisse Ziffern in Klammern bemerken, welche wie folgt zu verstehen sind:

[1] = alle oder beinahe alle Schüler der Gemeindefschule besuchten auch die öffentliche Schule; [2] = die Hälfte oder mehr dieser Schüler besuchten die öffentliche Schule; [3] = alle Schüler besuchten die öffentliche Schule, bis der Konfirmanden-Unterricht für sie begann; [4] = ein kleiner Theil der Schüler besuchte die öffentliche Schule; [5] = eine Anzahl der Schüler besuchte die öffentliche Schule, doch wird nicht berichtet, wie viel; [6] = keine der Gemeindefschüler besuchten die öffentliche Schule; [7] = alle Schüler besuchten die öffentliche Schule nach der Konfirmation; [8] = es wird englischer Unterricht erteilt, doch wird die Stundenzahl nicht berichtet.

0 [1] bezeichnet also dies: Es wurde kein Englisch in der Gemeindefschule gelehrt, aber alle Schüler besuchten die öffentliche Schule. — 15 [1] heißt: Es wurde in der Gemeindefschule 15 Stunden per Woche Englisch getrieben; außerdem besuchten alle Schüler die öffentliche Schule.

In **Kolumne 11**: D = Deutsch wird von den Schülern im Umgang mit einander mehr gebraucht als Englisch; D E = Die Schüler bedienen sich beider Sprachen etwa gleich viel; E = Das Englische herrscht vor.

Die Deutsche Evang.-Luth. Synode von Wisconsin u. a. Staaten.

(Statistik für 1888—1889.)

Zusammengestellt aus Original-Berichten von CHRIST. KOERNER.

COUNTIES.	WOHNORT DES PASTORS.	NAME DES PASTORS.	Zahl der Gemeinden.	Zahl der zjshrigen männl. Glieder.	Seelenzahl.	Schulen.	Schülerzahl.	Schulwochen im Jahre 1888—1889.	Englisch. Unterricht Stunden per Woche	Umgangssprache d. Schüler unter ein- ander.
Barron Co.....	Cameron.....	J. Freund.....	2	—	—	2	—	—	—	—
Brown Co.....	Morrison.....	Geo. W. Albrecht....	2	197	689	2	76	44	15	D
"	Green Bay.....	Wm. Huth.....	2	90	350	1	49	39	10	E
"	Wrightstown.....	Christian Popp.....	1	122	400	1	30	20	0	E
Buffalo Co.....	Fountain City.....	Aug. Fr. Nicolaus....	3	155	1000	1	23	20	0 [3]	E
Calumet Co.....	Brillion.....	Gust. Denninger....	1	38	200	1	30	5	0 [1]	D-E
"	T. Woodville.....	Fr. Eppling.....	1	70	—	1	33	—	0 [1]	D-E
Chippewa Co...	Eagleton.....	Gust. Schoewe.....	2	42	200	1	—	—	0 [1]	—
Clark Co.....	Neillsville.....	F. J. Eppling.....	2	115	—	1	40	36	15	E
Columbia Co...	Columbus.....	O. H. Koch.....	1	412	1600	2	78	41	6 [1]	E
"	Town Leeds.....	Joh. A. Petri.....	2	94	414	1	30	23	0 [1]	E
Crawford Co...	Prairie du Chien..	Max Busack.....	1	35	125	1	12	—	12	E
Dane Co.....	Deerfield.....	W. Hagedorn.....	1	38	211	1	84	6	0 [1]	D
Dodge Co.....	Iron Ridge.....	K. W. J. Aeppler....	2	125	542	2	109	24	0 [1]	D-E
"	Beaver Dam.....	C. F. Goldammer....	1	52	200	1	30	—	0 [1]	D-E
"	Brownsville.....	A. Gottmannshausen	1	47	220	1	21	20	6 [1]	D-E
"	Juneau.....	Theod. Hartwig.....	1	77	819	1	33	16	0 [5]	E
"	Lomira.....	Joh. Killian.....	2	114	500	2	79	53	0 [1]	D
"	Hustisford.....	C. P. Köhler.....	1	160	800	2	155	40	14	D
"	Lowell.....	Karl Machmüller....	2	120	—	1	30	20	0 [5]	D-E
"	Theresa.....	Otto Posselt.....	3	107	160	1	35	—	0 [5]	D
"	T. Hermann.....	F. W. A. Toepel....	3	261	1050	3	161	16-37	0 [1]	D
Door Co.....	Voseville.....	A. Vogt.....	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dunn Co.....	T. Weston.....	Aug. Kirchner.....	1	16	87	1	20	12	0 [1]	E
"	Menomonie.....	Aug. Pieper.....	3	245	—	1	102	37	14	D-E
Fond du Lac Co	Fond du Lac.....	Ph. Hoelzel.....	1	280	—	3	200	40	15-20	D-E
"	T. Forrest.....	Ernst Mayerhoff....	1	200	800	1	49	17	7½ [1]	E
"	Vandyne.....	J. Rien.....	1	34	153	1	45	30	0 [2]	D-E
"	Eldorado.....	Geo. Saxmann.....	2	93	390	1	50	27	0 [1]	D-E
Grant Co.....	Platteville.....	M. J. Hensel.....	1	73	325	1	45	30	14	E
Green Lake Co.	Princeton.....	A. G. Hoyer.....	2	260	715	3	130	44	12	E
"	T. Manchester.....	Ad. Spiering.....	2	221	500	1	46	15	0 [1]	D-E
"	Markesan.....	F. W. A. Thrun.....	2	54	170	2	—	—	0 [1]	E
Jefferson Co...	Waterloo.....	Geo. Rud. Bock.....	1	100	350	1	50	24	6 [4]	E
"	Watertown.....	J. H. Brockmann....	1	320	1550	3	213	44	4-15	D-E
"	Rome.....	Joh. Dejung.....	2	75	238	1	28	17	0 [1]	E
"	Ft. Atkinson.....	Jul. Haase.....	2	195	900	1	78	35	0 [1]	E
"	Lake Mills.....	W. Hagedorn.....	1	92	365	1	40	20	0 [1]	D
"	Helenville.....	C. J. Koerner.....	1	185	650	1	45	42	0 [2]	D
"	Ixonia Centre.....	Chr. Roeck.....	3	112	—	1	—	—	18	D-E
"	Jefferson.....	Heinr. Vogel.....	1	227	900	1	107	40	0 [1]	E
Juneau Co.....	Wonewoc.....	A. Schlei.....	3	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
Kenosha Co....	Kenosha.....	E. Dornfeld.....	1	180	858	2	137	44	15-18	E
"	Slades' Corners...	Heinr. Gieschen....	2	125	500	1	35	20	0 [1]	E
Kewaunee Co...	Ahnapee.....	C. A. F. Döhler....	1	155	750	1	87	37	16	E
La Crosse Co...	Burr Oak.....	J. J. Meyer.....	1	140	400	1	50	—	10 [1]	—
"	La Crosse.....	C. G. Rein.....	1	258	1500	2	124	44	10-11	D-E
"	Barre Mills.....	Rich. Siegler.....	1	135	—	1	70	—	14	D-E
"	N. La Crosse.....	Ferd. Stromer.....	2	87	450	1	17	21	13	E
Lincoln Co....	Eagle River.....	R. F. Rutzen.....	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Manitowoc Co..	Reedsville.....	G. Ph. Brenner.....	2	170	—	2	97	39	14	D
"	Cooperstown.....	Alb. Wm. Keibel....	2	70	325	1	42	25	3 [4]	D
"	Larabee.....	Heinr. Miller.....	1	58	—	1	32	—	12	E
"	Newton.....	A. B. Pieper.....	3	157	750	1	94	26	12	—
"	Manitowoc.....	L. R. P. Pieper.....	1	350	1750	4	320	41	15	E
"	Two Rivers.....	A. F. Siegler.....	2	255	1000	1	94	42	13	E
"	T. Centreville.....	Phil. Sprengling....	2	134	420	1	50	—	15	D
Marathon Co..	T. Berlin.....	Joh. Geo. Glaeser....	2	152	500	1	67	—	0 [1]	D
Marinette Co..	Peshigo.....	Christ. Gevers.....	2	104	525	1	—	—	4	D-E
"	Marinette.....	H. Hillemann.....	3	174	—	1	54	—	12½	D-E
"	Peshigo.....	Jul. Voss.....	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
Marquette Co..	Montello.....	Chr. Sauer.....	2	200	800	1	42	8	0 [1]	E

Platform

der am 4. Juni 1890 in Milwaukee abgehaltenen Anti-Bennett-Staats-Konvention.

I.

Indem wir als Bürger des Staates Wisconsin zur Bekämpfung des sogenannten Bennett-Gesetzes — Laws of Wisconsin 1889. Chapter 519 — zusammentreten, finden wir es geboten, uns von vornherein gegen gewisse Verdächtigungen zu verwahren, durch die man unsere Stellung in ein schiefes Licht zu setzen versucht hat. Deswegen erklären wir —

a. Wir sind nicht Feinde der englischen Sprache, sondern sehen im Gegentheil darauf, daß unsere Kinder einen gründlichen Unterricht in derselben bekommen.

b. Wir erkennen öffentliche Schulen als eine Nothwendigkeit an, sind aber der Ansicht, daß den Eltern die Freiheit und das Recht zusteht, Schulen für ihre Kinder selbst zu errichten oder zu wählen.

c. Wir erklären, daß wir keinen Anspruch machen auf die Unterstützung von Kirchen- und sonstigen Privatschulen aus dem öffentlichen Schulfond.

d. Wir sind nicht gegen das gesetzliche Verbot der Kinderarbeit in Fabriken, gegen ein vernünftiges Schulzwangsgesetz, noch gegen das Einschreiten des Staates gegen solche Schulen, die sich etwa in Widerspruch mit der öffentlichen Ordnung und den Gesetzen der Moral befinden.

II.

Wir protestiren aber gegen das Bennettgesetz, weil dasselbe in unnöthiger und ungerechter Weise unsere religiöse und persönliche Freiheit beschränkt. Denn

a. Es giebt dem Schulboard das Recht, willkürlich zu bestimmen, daß ein Kind während der Zwangsperiode nur in eine Schule der Stadt, des Town oder Distrikts geschickt werden darf, in welchem es seinen Wohnsitz hat, und nimmt den Eltern das Recht, ihre Kinder in eine bessere und mehr entsprechende Schule außerhalb des Distrikts zu schicken.

b. Es bindet die Kirchen und = Privatschulen an Zeitbestimmungen, die von den Schulbehörden getroffen werden, ohne daß diese auf gemeindliche und kirchliche Verhältnisse die geringste Rücksicht zu nehmen brauchen.

c. Es schreibt uns gewisse Fächer und eine Unterrichtssprache vor und ist überhaupt so gefaßt, daß es den Schulbehörden Gelegenheit giebt, sich Rechte herauszunehmen, die ihnen nicht zustehen, während der Staat und die Staatsbeamten doch kein Recht haben, sich in die inneren Angelegenheiten von Kirchen- und Privatschulen einzumischen.

III.

Wir erklären, daß wir ohne Rücksicht auf bisherige Parteiverhältnisse nur für solche Kandidaten stimmen werden, die für den Widerruf des Bennettgesetzes zu wirken sich verpflichten.

IV.

Als patriotische Bürger, als Vertheidiger religiöser und persönlicher Freiheit, als Vertreter einer wahrhaft vernünftigen und sittlichen Unterrichtsweise, als Freunde der englischen Sprache und als Gegner jeglicher engherzigen Unterdrückung eingewanderter Bürger und des berechtigten Gebrauchs ihrer Muttersprache fordern wir darum alle gleichgesinnten, freiheitsliebenden Bürger ohne Unterschied der Partei und Abstammung auf, sich mit uns in dem Bestreben zu vereinigen, den Widerruf des unnöthigen, Zwietracht stiftenden, ungerechten Bennettgesetzes zu erzielen.

Michael Heiss, Killian C. Flasch, and Frederick Xavier Katzer, "A Protest of the Catholic Bishops of Wisconsin Against the Bennett Law," 1890.

A Protest of the Catholic Bishops of Wisconsin

— AGAINST THE —

BENNETT LAW.

As Bishops of the Catholic Church in Wisconsin, we feel called upon to make an official declaration concerning the Bennett Law—in fact, to enter our protest against it. If this law were of a purely political nature, we would not have a single word to say about it; but as it touches upon questions of the greatest interest to our Catholic Church and our Catholic homes, we consider ourselves in duty bound to express and explain, even at some length, our opinion concerning the same. After calm and careful study of the Bennett Law we hold that it interferes with the rights of the Church and of parents. We, moreover, conscientiously believe that the real object of this law is not so much to secure a greater amount of instruction in and knowledge of the English language, as rather to bring our Parochial and Private Schools under the control of the State. And in this attempt, we cannot but apprehend the ultimate intention, gradually to destroy the Parochial School System altogether.

The impression which a close study of the law leaves on our minds is this: that in the eyes of its framers, the Parochial School exists by the grace and toleration of the State, and may continue to exist, if it humbly submits to the discretionary powers granted to School Boards through the Bennett Law, but not as a free, recognized institution, as old as the State itself, and deriving its existence from the free will and the generous efforts and sacrifices of hundreds of thousands of citizens, acting in full accordance with the dictates of their conscience and the spirit of the free institutions of our State and Country. In this our general view of the law and its object, we are strengthened by the personal knowledge which we have, from actual observation, of our Schools. For we are certain that in them the English language is used and taught to at least as great an extent as the Bennett Law requires.

After this general observation we enter our most earnest protest against the Bennett Law for the following particular reasons:

We consider the Bennett Law

1. An unnecessary law;
2. An offensive law;
3. An unjust law.

Ad. 1. We have in our three Dioceses 264 Parochial Schools, 14 Colleges, Academies and Select Schools, 9 Orphan Asylums. To the best of our own personal knowledge the English language is used and taught in all of them, even for a longer time each year, than the 12 or 24 weeks required by the Bennett Law. The exceptions, if any, are so few, that no special legislature is needed as a remedy; and certainly, not a law so harsh and severe as the Bennett Law, fairly bristling with threats of prosecutions and fines. We know, it is true, of some districts in the State where, on account of hardly any English being spoken at home, the children make but little progress in English at school. But this is precisely as true of the children who attend the Public Schools in those districts, as it is true of those who attend the Parochial Schools. The fact, that our mixed and fast growing population is in no part of the State of a really remote and, in many, of a very recent date, sufficiently accounts for this defect. The natural causes of this defect being beyond the control of legislature, we may, from general development and improvement, safely expect the disappearance of this defect without any legislative provisions.

Ad. 2. In the second place we consider the Bennett Law an offensive law.

We have at least 350,000 Catholics in Wisconsin. They are as good, law abiding citizens as any. Except in some places in which Parochial Schools are impossible, and in some cases of carelessness, they send their children to the Parochial Schools. All these schools have been built and are maintained by the parents themselves, often at very great cost and sacrifice. Never, as far as we know, has the State been asked to appropriate one single dollar for these schools. A great number of them have been in operation for more than 25 or 30 years. They have turned out hundreds and thousands of as good and useful citizens as any.

It is, consequently, an outrage upon the intelligence and good character of our Catholic people, to interfere with their schools. Are the 50—60,000 Catholic fathers and mothers of families so ignorant and stupid, that they do not know what kind of education their children need; or, are they so destitute of love and interest for their children, that they would not be willing to provide proper education for them? Have they deserved to be treated as persons who cannot or will not take care of the interests of their children, so that the State has to step in and act as guardian for them? Such, indeed, is the appearance of things, when the State attempts to force upon so many of its citizens a law, of which not one in ten, and perhaps not one in a hundred, had an idea, or felt the want, when they sent their representatives to Madison—a law against which thousands upon thousands of the State's most industrious and conservative citizens, outside of our religious communion, most unanimously and vigorously protested, as soon as they got knowledge of that law. It is a well-known fact, that in the same legislature which passed the Bennett Law, the Pond Bill had to succumb to the pressure of remonstrances against it from all parts of the State, though that bill provided for State Supervision of Private Schools for the sole purpose of obtaining reliable statistics. Towards the close of the Session, when bills of any great importance naturally cannot command the consideration which they deserve, the Bennett Law was substituted for the Pond Bill. That the citizens at large would have tried to prevent its passage, as well as that of the Pond Bill, is evident from the fact, that they began to protest against the Law as soon as it was published. From all this, it is but too clear that the Bennett Law must be called an offensive law. But it is also

3. An unjust law. And on this account, we object to it still more strongly than on any other.

The Bennett Law is an unjust law, because

a. It interferes with the sacred, inalienable rights of parents.

b. It threatens penalties which are really beyond all equity.

c. It opens every avenue to partiality and injustice, to strife and disorder.

Ad. a. Parents have the *duty* to educate their children, because, under God, the children belong to parents who have to give to Him an account for them. This most sacred duty necessarily gives them also the inalienable *right* to educate their children. If any one, the State not excepted, takes away from parents this right or interferes with it, he violates one of the first principles of the natural order. There may be cases, in which parents either grossly neglect this duty or positively abuse this right, for the damage or ruin of their children. It is only in such cases that the State, as the custodian of the rights of its citizens, is justified and obliged to step in and make parents do their duty or punish them for the abuse of their right. The cry has been raised that, as to Education, Catholics, and especially their Bishops and Priests, deny every right to the State and assume every right for the Church, that they want to make Catholic parents free from the State and slaves to the Church. Here may be the proper occasion to place this question in its true light and meaning before the public at large. Indeed, we deny to the State the right to educate the children of those parents who are willing and able to do so themselves. If parents want to delegate the exercise of their inalienable right to the State—as those parents do who send their children to the Public Schools—the State acts simply by delegated power, as the agent or functionary of those parents, not above them, but for them. If other parents, and they are thousands upon thousands, do not want to delegate the exercise of their right, they are perfectly free to retain it for themselves. All the State can demand of such parents for the common good, is that they do not allow their children to grow up in such ignorance or to acquire such knowledge as would make useless or dangerous citizens of their children. Now, whereas our Catholic parents provide an education for their children which not only not endangers but promotes the welfare of the State, their schools should not be molested by any interference on the part of the State. The conduct of our children in and out of school, the character of the younger generations which have passed through our schools, their standing and success as farmers, mechanics, business men and professional men, should be sufficient guarantee to the State that our parents have not neglected their duties towards the State, in the education of their children. Official inspection and supervision by Boards—the members of which are generally not better posted on School matters and certainly not more interested in School children, than the parents themselves—should be left aside; for friendly visits of fellow-citizens or State Officials our schools shall be open.

As to the position of the Church:

She insists, indeed, on parents giving their children not only a secular, but also a religious education. This obligation of parents, however, is not chiefly the result of a positive Church Law; but it is an obligation incumbent on Christian parents by the natural and divine law, independent of the action or

law of the Church. It is a most sacred and indispensable duty of Christian parents to educate their children in the knowledge and fear and love of God—to provide religious instruction for their children, a duty which they cannot neglect without guilt. The Church merely urges parents to comply with a duty imposed upon them by divine law, and every Catholic parent will acknowledge that it is his conscientious duty, to save and protect the faith of his children, to have them well instructed in it, both theoretically and practically.

No one can be a true member of the Church and at the same time hold a different view or follow a different practice from this. "The Church," says the III Plenary Council of Baltimore (No. 194), "whose mission on earth, above all, is this, to lead every man, regenerated in the Baptism of Christ, even from the first use of his reason, in the ways of truth and justice to his supernatural end, can by no means allow that Catholic parents—whose natural and divine right, as well as duty, it is to provide a Christian education for their children—procure for them a merely secular education; because such education cannot equip them with the means necessary to know and reach their last end." The Church, then, teaches distinctly, that the Christian education is the natural and divine duty and right of the parents, which they have anterior to and independent of any law and action of the Church.

But how can they fulfill this their sacred duty? The Public Schools professedly and exclusively give only a secular education; the Parochial School is established and operated to give both a secular and religious education, and is, in our present time and circumstances, the ordinary and, we may say, almost the only means for securing to Catholic children the necessary religious education. For these reasons the Church urges and obliges parents to send their children to Parochial Schools, for whosoever is bound to the end is also bound to the means. The Church hereby does not violate the rights of parents in any sense whatsoever, but simply insists on the parents doing their God-given duty.

So much to show that the Church by no means interferes with parental rights, by insisting on parents doing their natural and divine duty, whilst the State, through the Bennett Law, attacks these rights, by interfering with the Parochial, that is, the Parents' School. It will not do to object that the Bennett Law, or at least the one official explanation of it, given by the State Superintendent, assures us "that there is no attempt or purpose to ostracize, antagonize or in any manner or degree to interfere with parochial or any other form of private schools;" that "the law has due regard for the rights of conscience and holds parents alone responsible, and requires of them only that they provide for their children, somehow or somewhere, that secular education which the State deems necessary for its own prosperity and for the welfare of its citizens." For in the very next sentence, the State Superintendent explains, that parents, even though they provide for the education of their children, in private schools—certainly then "somehow or somewhere"—may be summoned by the School Board and "must show sufficient reason for non-attendance of their children upon the Public School." In the one part of his explanation, the State Superintendent fully asserts the right of parents and in the very next he denies the same entirely, by making parents liable to be summoned for making use of it. This is direct interference with Parochial and Private Schools, the Schools of the parents, and, consequently, the rights of the parents.

But not only in the general principle, also in various details are the rights of parents attacked by the Bennett Law.

Sec. 1 provides that the children must attend school "in the city town or district in which the parent resides." According to this parents could not send their children to the Parochial School, if it so happens that it is outside of the district in which they reside. Nor could they send any of their children to a Boarding School, outside of the city, town or district in which they reside. In both cases they would have first to obtain permission from the School Board of the district. They would have to apply for a like permission, if, as so many country parents do, they wanted to send their children to town for at least some months previous to first Holy Communion, if that period of time should fall within the weeks fixed by the School Board for consecutive attendance upon some school in the district. Again, the Law does not allow parents to have anything to say as to the time of the year during which the 12 or 24 weeks of compulsory attendance should be fixed. It is the School Board that decides all; the parents have nothing to say.

Sec. V. goes even so far as to leave it to the decision of the Board, whether a school is to be regarded as a school at all, under this Law or not. We have, indeed, nothing against the demand that reading, writing, arithmetic and United States History be taught in the English language. But we do object to the power granted by this provision, to School Boards to decide, whether our schools have a right to exist before the law or not.

[B 2/6/7] [mc 11]
f-4

Ad. b. The Bennett Law is furthermore an unjust law, because of the fines which it threatens. We do not hesitate to call them ruinous fines. If any one will take the trouble to calculate the fines which a parent might have to pay for one single child during a single year, he will find out that the amount is simply appalling. It will come to hundreds of dollars, and all that within the letter of the law. It will not help much to say, that such exorbitant fines will never be collected, or that it is not even the spirit of the law that they should be collected. They stand as a part of the law and either have not been well considered, or they must have been intended as a threat by which to scare timid people into a trembling submission to an unjust law.

Ad c. Finally we consider the Bennett Law unjust, because it opens every avenue to partiality and injustice, to strife and discord.

Sec. IV. speaks of prosecutions under this law, on the part of the School Boards.

But neither here nor anywhere else is it defined, *that* and *when* they must prosecute. They may and they may not.

This evidently gives the parents entirely over to the discretionary powers of the School Boards, opening every way to partiality and strife. In cities with large Parochial Schools, in which there are many children of influential citizens, the School Boards will probably be rather slow about prosecuting. In rural districts, as the experience of our neighboring state, Illinois, plainly shows, they may annoy and vex parents to their hearts' content, all in the name of the famous Bennett Law of the State of Wisconsin. It may be claimed that, in as much as the School Boards are not appointed by the government but elected by the people, they will naturally be inclined to act agreeably to the wishes of their constituents. But, no matter how fairly they may be disposed, no officer should have any more discretionary powers than absolutely necessary; otherwise he is apt to act arbitrarily and to exceed the wishes and wants of his constituents.

It is possible, that some may attempt to weaken the force of our protest, by the insinuation that it is dictated perhaps as much by the German Catholics' interest in the German language, as by our zeal for the intact preservation of parental rights. We hereby declare, most unequivocally, that such is not the case, though we fully concede to every not English speaking nationality in our State the right to preserve their language, as long as they believe this to be for the best interest of themselves and their children. As the English language is the official language of our country, our Schools will and must use and teach it, even to a greater extent than the Bennett Law requires, not only for 12 or 24 weeks of the year, but all the year around. As long, however, as any other language—be it German, French, Polish, Dutch, Bohemian or any other—is in many parts of our State the language of home and family, we consider it a great advantage for children to know, besides the English, the language of the home circle, and we cannot possibly see what disadvantage to State and society there could arise from the instruction of our children in more than one language.

It is not our concern about any language, but the defense of God-given rights and duties which has prompted this our protest. Our exclusively English Parochial Schools are as much affected by the Bennett Law, in principle, as our mixed schools, though probably, for reasons of prudence, they would be allowed, for the near future at least, not to feel its effects, if the law should remain a part of the legislation of our State. But we confidently hope, that not only our Catholic voters, but all friends of parental rights will stand together for the repeal of this law.

It is certainly no pleasure for us, to come out with this protest. Nothing but our duty, well considered before God, could have prompted us to enter it. Neither we ourselves, nor our beloved Clergy, nor our faithful people have invited the necessity of this protest; it is forced upon us.

We want to live in peace and good fellowship with all our fellow-citizens: if strife and discord has been stirred up, the fault rests not with us. We teach by word and example, respect and obedience to law and government: no law should be forced upon us, for the repeal of which we would have to raise our voice.

The youngest of us has lived and worked in our State nearly twenty-five, the oldest almost fifty years. We have labored incessantly for the education of our youth: we shall continue to do so to the end of our days. Under God we have always relied on the zeal of our priests and the generosity of our people. We have never received one single cent of State help for our Schools—we want no State interference with them either.

† MICHAEL HEISS, Archbishop of Milwaukee.

† KILIAN C. FLASCH, Bishop of La Crosse.

† F. X. KATZER, Bishop of Green Bay.

Campaign Poetry and Creative Writing

Konrad Krez, "Der Wolf und die Gans," Watertown Weltbürger, August 23, 1890, 4.

Der Wolf und die Gans.

In einer Brombeerhecke lag ein Wolf
 Und stöhnte jämmerlich. Im Halse stak
 Ein Knochen ihm von seinem letzten Raub
 Und brachte dem Erstickungstod ihn nah.
 Da kam durch Zufall eine Gans des Wegs
 Daher gewatschelt. Als der Wolf sie sah,
 Ging ihm ein neues Licht der Hoffnung auf.
 In einem Tone, der geeignet war,
 Das Herz der Gans zu rühren, rief er ihr
 Von weitem schon aus seinem Dickicht zu:
 „Frau Gase! haltet doch! erschreckt euch nicht!
 Ich bin es, euer Vetter Wolf, an dem
 Ihr jetzt ein gutes Werk verrichten könnt.
 Ein Knochen steckt in meinem Hals; der will
 Nicht vor noch rückwärts rutschen; zieht
 Ihr ihn mit eurem Schnabel nicht heraus,
 So bin unrettbar ich verloren. Drum,
 Geliebte Gase, zeigt euch jetzt an mir
 Erkenntlich für das Gute, welches ich
 Und mein Geschlecht an euch gethan und thun;
 Denn säuberten wir von der Ueberzahl
 Der Pferde, Rinder, Schafe, Hagen und
 Kaninchen nicht die Weiden, bliebe nicht
 Ein Grassalm für das Futter einer Gans!“
 Als sie ihn reden hörte, stand sie still.
 Sie fühlte sich geschmeichelt, daß ein so
 Vornehmer Herr so ein gewöhnliches
 Stück Federvieh, wie sie, anredete,
 Als wär sie seines Gleichen, war ihr auch
 Bisher verborgen, daß ihr bischen Gras
 Der Wölfe zärtlicher Besorgniß um
 Das Wohl der Gänse zu verdanken war.

Sie sprach: „Der Schrecken macht mich
 flügelahm;
 Verzeiht, Herr Vetter, meine Mutter hat
 Von der Verwandtschaft nie etwas erwähnt,
 Die Aehnlichkeit ist jedenfalls nicht groß.“
 „Die Art, wie ich in eure Freundschaft kam,
 Ist sonderbar,“ entgegnete der Wolf.
 „Ich ging einmal vor eurem Dorf vorbei,
 Die Zunge hing mir auf den Grund vor
 Durst,
 Da lief ein Ganser spöttisch auf mich los
 Und zischte mich bei meinem Glend aus.
 Zähzornig, wie ich in der Jugend war,
 Biß ich den Kopf ihm ab. Die Neue kam
 Sogleich und doch zu spät. Ich that für ihn,
 Was noch in meiner Macht war, und ich gab
 In meinem Magen ihm ein ehrlich Grab.“
 „Glaub es mir, der alte Herr war zäh.“
 „Es wurde denn sein Fleisch zu meinem Fleisch,
 Sein Blut zu meinem Blut und da sein Leib
 Ein Theil nun meines Leibes ist, so bin
 Ich euer leiblicher Verwandter. Da
 Der Ganser eurer Mutter ruder war,
 So bin ich euer Ohm eigentlich,
 Und ihr seid meine Nichte. — Nichte helfst!
 Der Athem geht mir aus.“ Er öffnete
 Den Rachen weit. Die Gans war dumm
 genug,
 Den Kopf hinein zu stecken; und sie zog
 Den Knochen aus dem Schlund. Wahr-
 scheinlich weil
 Sie sich zu lang besann, biß der Wolf
 Zum Dank ihr den Kopf ab; denn man
 fand ihn mit
 Dem Knochen noch im Schnabel im Gestrüppe

* * *

Die Nutzenwendung ist hiervon wie folgt:
 Der Wolf mit einem Knochen in dem Hals
 Ist die republikanische Partei,
 Die in Wisconsin am Ersticken liegt,
 Und hälfen ihr die Deutschen aus der Noth,
 So wären sie die Gans, die ihren Kopf
 Durch Dummheit, wie die Fabel zeigt, verlor.
 Konrad Krez.

Konrad Krez, "Seid einig!," Germania, January 31, 1890, 1.

Ihr, die ihr Deutsch als Muttersprache sprecht,
Seid einig und behauptet euer Recht:
Steht treu zusammen gegen eure Hasser,
All ihr Pläne werden dann zu Wasser.

Der Staat Wisconsin gab dem Deutschen nichts,
Als er im Schweiß seines Angesichts
Den Urwald klärte; nichts, als das Versprechen
Der Freiheit und er darf sein Wort nicht brechen.

Mischt ihr nicht eins der Sippschaft baldigst aus,
So nageln sie euch noch ein Brett an's Haus:
„Bei zwanzig Thaler Strafe für's Verbrechen
Ist hier vom Staat verboten deutsch zu sprechen.“

Wo bleibt die Freiheit, wenn man einem Mann
Sein theuerstes, sein Kind entreißen kann?
Denn wer ein Kind mir rauben will, der stehle
Mit seiner Muttersprache seine Seele!

Als in das Land der Deutsche kam, da stand
Der Wald noch unberührt von Menschenhand,
Und da, wo er sein Blockhaus bauen wollte,
Kief er sein Stück des Staats mit deutschem Golde.

Ist denn der Deutsche wirklich schon ein Knecht,
Giebt es für ihn kein elterliches Recht,
Ist er nur gut zu Stimmvieh bei den Wahlen,
Und den Gehalt für seine Herrn zu zahlen?

Wie Roggen vor der Sense fiel alsbald
Vor seiner Axt der jungfräuliche Wald—
Wie mühsam häufte er das Holz zusammen,
Das Feuer schürend für die trägen Flammen!

Und war ein Haus gebaut, das Dach gedeckt,
Für's erste Brot die Saatfrucht eingeeget,
Da half er Straßen durch die Wildniß bauen,
Und über Bach und Fluß die Brücken bauen.

Bei seinem Fleiß kam bald genug heraus
Zu einem Beitrag für sein Gotteshaus,
Worin auf deutsch ein Pfarrer oder Lehrer
Erbaute die Gemüther seiner Hörer.

Von solcher Kirche steht nicht weit entfernt
Die Schule, wo der kleine Flachskopf lernt,
Was er im Leben braucht und sie ihn lehren:
„Du sollst den Vater und die Mutter ehren.“

Gesund und kräftig, wenn auch nicht gelehrt,
Wächst er heran. Von Ehrgeiz nicht bethört,
Wird er sich mit dem schlichten Glück begnügen,
Sein väterliches Gut auf deutsch zu pflügen.

Und wenn das Alter seinen Eltern naht,
So wird er thun, so wie sein Vater that,
Er wird ihr Stab sein, bis sie ihm zum Segen,
Die Hand auf's Haupt vom Sterbebett auslegen.

Mit einer deutschen Inschrift wird ein Stein
Auf ihrem Grab ihr einzig Denkmal sein,
Es soll, um dieser Inschrift Sinn zu wissen,
Kein Enkel einen Dolmetsch suchen müssen.

August Krüger, "Bennett als Erlkönig," *Germania*, March 7, 1890, 10.

Wer eilet denn dort durch Sturm und Wind?
 Es ist der Vater mit seinem Kind;
 Er führt den Knaben wohl bei der Hand—
 Zur deutschen Schule wird er gesandt.

„Mein Sohn, was birgst du so bang dein Gesicht?“
 „Siehst, Vater, du den Kerl dort nicht?
 Den langen Kerl mit dem Bennett Law?“—
 „Mein Sohn, wir Deutschen sind auch noch da.“

„Mein Vater, mein Vater, und hörest du nicht,
 Was der Kerl mit dem Bennett-Law mir verspricht?—
 „Sei ruhig und höre nicht nach ihm hin—
 Der Kerl hat nichts Gutes mit dir im Sinn.“—

„Willst, deutscher Knabe, du mit mir gehn?
 In der englischen Schule ist's gar zu schön:
 Unsre Schoolmams, die machen dir viel Pläsir,
 Sie singen und springen und tanzen mit dir.“—

„Mein Vater, mein Vater, und kannst du nicht sehn,
 Wie die Scholmams da vor der Schule stehn?—
 „Mein Sohn, mein Sohn, ich seh es genau:
 Diesen Schoolmams ich nimmer dich anvertran.“—

„Dich, deutschen Jungen, dich habe ich bald,
 Und kommst du nicht willig, so brauch ich Gewalt!“—
 „Mein Vater, mein Vater, jetzt faßt er mich an!
 Der Kerl, der hat mir ein Leid's gethan.“—

Da packt ihn der Vater mit kräftiger Hand,
 Der Kerl mit dem Bennett-Law fliegt in den Sand,
 Einen Tritt giebt der Vater ihm noch dazu—
 Und die deutsche Schule hat vor ihm Ruh.

Krüger, August, "Viktoria," Germania, April 1, 1890, 8.

O Bennett Law! O Bennett Law!
 Jetzt ist dein letztes Stündlein nah!
 Du hast uns viel Verdruß gemacht,
 Hast Haß und Hader angefacht.
 O Bennett Law! O Bennett Law!
 Jetzt ist dein letztes Stündlein nah.

O Bennett Law! O Bennett Law!
 Wir Deutschen waren diesmal da.
 Daß ihr's Zukunft nicht vergeßt:
 Der Deutsche sich nicht narren läßt.
 O Bennett Law! O Bennett Law!
 Wir Deutschen waren diesmal da.

O Bennett Law! O Bennett Law!
 Der Deutsche ruft Viktoria!
 Er hat Euch diesmal gezeigt,
 Daß er auch erste Geige geigt.
 O Bennett Law! O Bennett Law!
 Der Deutsche ruft Viktoria!

O Bennett Law! O Bennett Law!
 Nimm dir's zur Warnung, was geschah.
 Ein guter Rath ist Goldes werth:
 Drum mach geschwinde rechtsum kehrt.
 O Bennett Law! O Bennett Law!
 Nimm dir's zur Warnung, was geschah.

O Bennett Law! O Bennett Law!
 So ruft auch die Germania.
 Die Hiebe haben sie gespürt:
 Die deutsche Schule triumphiert.
 Viktoria! Viktoria!
 So ruft auch die Germania.

W.H., "Granatensplitter aus dem Schulkampfe," Columbia, September 25, 1890, 4 (excerpts).

**Granatensplitter aus dem
Schulkampfe.**

(Von W. H.)

Dramatische Scene:
H o a r d und S c h i l l i n g sitzen
im vertraulichen Gespräche am Tische.
Herein tritt Hannes M o s t, und ruft
pathetisch, indem er auf die Beiden zu
schreitet:

„Ich sei, gewährt mir die Bitte,
In Eu'rem Bunde der Dritte.“

Darauf gegenseitige Umarmung. Im
Hintergrund erscheint der Schatten von
Er-Gouverneur R u s s l, der drohend den
Finger erhebt. Hoard erblaßt, und er
Vorhang fällt.

* * *

A little schoolhouse on
the hill, with a red flag floating
over it — wäre ein sinniges und pas-
sendes Sujet zu einem Transparent für
die B e n n e t t - L e u t e.

*
*
*
Campagne-Anzeigen:

Zum Verkauf: Bennett-Maul-
körbe für kleine deutsche, auch polni-
sche, böhmische u. Knaben nach bewähr-
ten russischen Mustern, aus feinstem re-
publicanischem Draht geflochten, zu er-
fragen im "Legal Language"-Store,
Ede Knuten-Strasse und Know-nothing-
Avenue.

Wanted to rent: A little school-
house to establish therein a po-
litical wire-pulling establishment.
Terms: It must be on a hill. Time
of contract expires on first Tuesday
of November.

Hoard, Rublee & Co."

* * *

Räthsel:

Nach außen glatt —
Nach innen hohl —
Ein Rimmerjatt —
Was ist das wol?

* * *

Warum wird diesen Herbst die re-
publicanische Partei in Wis-
consin gesprengt werden? Weil
sie mit D y n a m i t (Anarchisten) ge-
laden ist.

The Little Schoolhouse—Republican
 “Stand by it!” *Deutsche Pionier*, October 25, 1890, 4.



The Little Schoolhouse—Democratic.

“Peck u. alle Schulen,” *Wisconsin Botschafter*, October 23, 1890, 5.

Peck u. alle Schulen.

—0—

„Ich erhielt meine Erziehung in der öffentlichen Schule und in der Druckerei und werde diesen Beiden nie entgegen treten.“—Geo. W. Peck.



STAND BY IT!

—0—

Ge gründet von der Demokratie.
Unterstützt von der Demokratie.
Beschützt von der Demokratie.

—0—

„Die demokratische Partei hat das öffentliche Schulsystem in diesem Staate in's Leben gerufen und wird stets eifrig über dasselbe wachen und es aufrecht erhalten.“—Demokr. Plattform.

—0—

„Alle Schulen in unserem Staate sollten aufrecht erhalten werden. Alle stiften Gutes.“—Geo. W. Peck.

German-American Newspaper Titles

FREIHEIT, BILDUNG UND WOHLSTAND FÜR ALLE

Amerikanische Turnzeitung

Herausgeber: Freidenker Publishing Co. Geschäftslocal: 470 East Water Street.

Jahrg. 5. No. 30. Milwaukee, 28. Juli 1889. Laufende No. 239

<p>Approbationen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> † P. M. Gessert, Mitglied von Milwaukee. † H. G. Gell, Mitglied von Milwaukee. † F. Z. Grambsch, Mitglied von Green Bay. † G. G. Gell, Mitglied von La Crosse. † P. M. Gessert, Mitglied von Milwaukee. † H. G. Gell, Mitglied von Milwaukee. 	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Columbia</h2>	<p>Approbationen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> † W. S. Gatter, Mitglied von Elgin. † F. S. Gatter, Mitglied von Elgin. † P. M. Gessert, Mitglied von Milwaukee. † G. S. Gell, Mitglied von La Crosse. † H. G. Gell, Mitglied von La Crosse. † W. S. Gatter, Mitglied von Elgin. † W. S. Gatter, Mitglied von Elgin.
Jahrgang 18.	Milwaukee, Donnerstag 23. October 1890.	No. 48.

Der Deutsche Pionier.

H. B. Young, Herausgeber.

Jahrgang 8 No. 20. Wausau, Wis. 17. August, 1889. No. 333

<p>„Germania“ das am meisten verbreitete deutsche Wochenblatt in America. am Dienstag und Freitag. Jahrgang 17. No. 20. Milwaukee, Freitag den 2. Mai 1890.</p>	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Germania.</h2>	<p>Dadurch, daß die „Germania“ in jedem zwei Mal in der Woche erscheint, erhalten die Leser die neuesten Nachrichten weit schneller als bisher. Die Frage auf unsere Seiten beantwortet auf die auf Seite 4 enthaltenen Mittheilungen.</p>
Milwaukee, Freitag den 2. Mai 1890.	Zweite Halbwochentliche Ausgabe.	17. Jahrgang, Nummer 78.

Pionier am Wisconsin.

Herausgegeben von G. C. Kunz.

35. Jahrgang. Sauk City, Wis., Donnerstag 25. Juli, 1889. No. 45.

Watertown Weltbürger.

Ein Organ der Demokratie.

Jahrg. 36.

Watertown, Wisconsin, 29. Juni 1889.

No. 26.

Printed and Published for the Proprietor by J. W. ...

Wisconsin Gotschaster.



Ein Organ der Demokratie.

Jahrgang 20.

Madison, Donnerstag, den 16. Mai, 1889.

Nummer 44.

Entered at the Post Office at Madison, Wis. as second-class mail matter. Ihre größtentheils leicht geprügelt, rungen aufgelegt werden, zahlen müssen, die Beigabe bei 100jähriger Schwere. Im Auftrag ...