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The Decline of the German Language in Early America: The Henkel Family of New Market, Virginia, 1760-1840

Ich danke Gott, daß ich in deutscher Zunge meinen Gott also höre und finde, als ich ihn bisher nicht gefunden habe, weder in lateinischer, griechischer oder hebräischer Zunge. (Martin Luther, 1517)¹

During the colonial and early national period, the use of spoken and written versions of the German literary language by descendants of pre-Revolutionary German immigrants was gradually but ultimately completely assimilated into "the American melting pot." This forms one of the obscure aspects of American immigration history. After all, language is an expression of cultural and national identity. How could an entire national group permit the loss of its linguistic distinctiveness? Did Germans undertake anything to prevent it? This study inquires into the transition from the German to the English language on the American Appalachian frontier between 1760 and 1840. During these decades bilingualism invaded the formerly strictly German-speaking settlements, and ultimately paved the way for English as the accepted form of speech. The ensuing conflict between cultural adherence to the mother tongue and movement towards Americanization was experienced by every German-speaking colonist.

To retrace the course of this development, I have singled out the example of a Lutheran family who came to fight most fervently against the decline of the German language: the Henkel clan of New Market, Virginia. In 1717, the Lutheran pastor Anthony Gerhard Henkel had emigrated with his twelve children from the small town of Neckargemünd near Heidelberg to Pennsylvania.² For the next hundred years, his descendants encountered lingual pluralism, faced the increasing competition between their ancestors' tongue and the language of their new homeland, and ended up preferring the New World's dominant language. This language battle was finally to be decided in the German churches. The Henkels became key figures among

southern Lutherans, and their thoughts and activities during the linguistic disputes—as documented by the vast amount of letters, books and pamphlets they wrote—provide us with a telling example of "linguistic conversion."

This study begins with Pastor Paul Henkel (1754-1825), who was the great-grandson of Anthony Gerhard Henkel. Paul Henkel's parents lived on the frontier in what is now Pendleton County, West Virginia.³ Like all German settlers in America who originated from areas with a distinctive regional idiom, the family probably spoke a dialect—in Virginia known as "Valley Dutch"—at home and in the neighborhood. Martin Luther's *Hochdeutsch*, on the other hand, was used for school and church services, and in communication with other dialect groups.⁴ Accordingly, young Paul Henkel was instructed in German, also. As his earliest diary entries reveal:

We had for our teacher a German lady named Catherina Klein In the German school she taught us how to read, write, . . . and took pains so that in a short time we could all read German. My parents had so much regard for language and church that they took care that I was instructed in them.⁵

But father Jacob Henkel, a carpenter, made religious and linguistic pluralism the basis of his children's education:

[A]n English school was established in the neighborhood, and I and my elder brother, Moses, were also sent to it There we learned reading and writing The head of our school, William Robinson, was from old England, and had studied at Oxford University He was devoted admirer of the Episcopal Church of England. (1768)⁶

It appears that initially none of this family of German descent was committed to the preservation of their peculiar faith or their ancestors' language. This was due to the increasing German-English contacts, particularly after the Revolution. In the Revolutionary War, the joint fighting and the shared pain united German and English-speaking settlers.

In addition, the growing social amalgamation of the two language groups in formerly monolingual communities made many Germans feel along American rather than German lines. Young Paul Henkel, for example, felt attracted by the religious values of English-speaking Episcopalians, Baptists and Methodists, and the German Lutherans alike.⁷ His initial liberalism concerning language and denomination reflected the prevalent religious situation on the frontier. Generally, the English-speaking churches sent out many more itinerant preachers into the South than did the Germans. Not before 1785 was the first Lutheran minister ordained to a congregation south of the Mason-Dixon line.⁸ As late as 1809 the Lutheran register of Virginia

recorded forty-eight congregations in the state—but only eight pastors, mostly in the Shenandoah Valley.⁹

Thus, Germans on the southern frontier had to accept whatever itinerant preacher came along, whether he was an apostle of the Episcopalians or an Anabaptist, whether he promised salvation in English or in German.¹⁰ The overwhelming majority of English-speaking churches impressed young Paul Henkel so much that initially he suppressed his desire to become a Lutheran clergyman. As he explained, only the direct intervention in a dream in 1782 by the great German reformer Martin Luther changed his life:

He said: You are worried because of your calling as a teacher.¹¹ I acknowledged this and said that I was one left alone in the world: I had no people here who were my fellow believers, but they were all of other convictions and were enemies to the faith of our Church, and, I had noticed, also to me because I still held to its faith. He gave me for answer that he had many times been anxious for the doctrines of the Church, and had also had to suffer many things on their account.¹²

Clearly Henkel did not feel strong enough to maintain in an environment dominated by "all other convictions" a German church without the support of "fellow believers." But the dream was the signpost for Paul Henkel's future, and for the rest of his life, he remained a devoted follower of the Saxon reformer. His personal identification with the "German Master of Languages" was to become so strong that he would compare himself with Martin Luther innumerable times.¹³

Though not yet licensed, Paul Henkel now set out to be a minister. Without official authorization he preached to German and English congregations in Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina. He also underwent instruction by the German pastor John Andrew Krug of Frederick, Maryland. Finally, in 1783, he was licensed as catechist for the ministry by the Ministerium of Pennsylvania. As a catechist, he had the right to baptize and preach within a limited geographical area. Nine years later the Ministerium of Pennsylvania ordained him as a Lutheran minister.¹⁴ Paul Henkel's diary entries during his early years as a clergyman (1783-92) enumerate tireless travels and successful religious work, but they do not yet tell much about the German language. Henkel's life task was to strengthen the few dispersed Lutheran communities in Virginia and the adjacent states against the much stronger popular churches and sects. Since he wanted to convert both English and Germans to true Lutheranism, he preached daily in German and in English. In 1785 for example, Henkel noted: "I found . . . a very large congregation of German and English. I preached to the Germans and English so that both understood it. The English people invited me to preach to them on the following day."¹⁵

The younger generation of Lutherans usually favored services in English, but many older Lutherans were bitterly opposed. An ugly clash took place in the Hebron Church in Madison County, Virginia, in 1789, with the elders forbidding the pastor to preach in English. The itinerant Henkel, however, was welcome to preach in English occasionally.¹⁶

Some congregations even ousted pastors who dared to try to introduce English-language worship. Others made the transition silently when a deceased German or bilingual minister was replaced by an English-preaching successor. The Germans of Winchester in the Upper Shenandoah Valley, for example, were very grateful for the fact that Christian Streit was bilingual and thus could preach to them in German.¹⁷ But when, after Streit's death in 1812, a new pastor named Abraham Reck arrived, the church secretary noted that "as the German Language is nearly extinct, we are compelled to keep the minutes in the English language."¹⁸

By the time Paul Henkel was ordained to the Lutheran ministry in 1792, the language problem was widely debated. Ardent Germans petitioned the House of Delegates of the General Assembly of Virginia,

setting forth that their ignorance of the English language renders it impossible for them at present to become acquainted with the proceedings of the General Assembly and praying that a sufficient number of the laws of this Commonwealth for their use may be printed in the German language.¹⁹

Two years later, the House of Delegates resolved to translate several laws, thus recognizing for the first time a linguistic minority in the state.²⁰ Nevertheless, if a German wanted to enter actively the political scene, he had to promote himself in the country's first language.²¹

At the same time there arose a strong concern for the German language in the Lutheran Church. Until the Revolution this organization had relied on the immediate personal, financial, and moral support from the central Lutheran Church in Germany. After 1776, in sharp contrast to most denominations, the Lutherans did not organize to achieve independence from their European superiors and tradition. However, the authorities in Germany were less willing or able to maintain their American extension.²² As a result, for the next four decades American Lutheran officials were unable to form a strong church body in the New World. For a long time American Lutherans failed to decide the difficult question of whether they should remain a traditional German Church or convert to the spirit and language of the new-born nation. The traditional faith of the Lutheran Church was based on the *Confessio Invariata* (*Unverändertes Augsburger Bekenntnis*). This confession, made at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530 by various Protestant groups and turned over to Charles V, included all doctrinal differences by which Protestants set themselves apart from the hated Catholics.²³ While most Protestant groups

later on modified or withdrew from the Augsburg Confession, Lutherans demanded a strict (*unverändert*) adherence to it until the nineteenth century. But the altered conditions in the New World confronted Lutherans with a number of problems: How could a church with a German tradition minister to its own youth, who literally "spoke a different language"? If one transplanted the pietism of their German ancestors into English, what would be distinctively Lutheran in the result? How was a church with a parish-oriented clergy going to cope with the mobile population of this new land? How could the high standards of theological education, which most Lutheran leaders considered necessary, be maintained in the face of a pressing need for clergymen and an obvious lack of interest in establishing a school to educate them?²⁴

The foremost problem, one which soared above all these questions, was the language barrier. The authorities of the German Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium in Pennsylvania and Adjacent States²⁵ officially rejected the thought of abandoning their founding father's idiom or mixing it up with a foreign language. The ministerium believed that any change threatened the integrity and identity of the true church. Many conservatives argued that their teachings only existed in the German language, and that the truths proclaimed by Luther could never be adequately translated.²⁶

In 1797, the ministerium flatly resolved that no English Lutheran congregation would be recognized in a place where an Episcopal organization already existed. In fact, the resolution recommended that the English-speaking population worship with the Episcopalians rather than form new Lutheran branches.²⁷ When a minority in Philadelphia during the years between 1804 and 1807 demanded the introduction of English, the ministerium constantly declined the appeal, claiming that "it must remain a German-speaking ministerium."²⁸

This ministerial attitude may not be judged as simply stubborn or blind. Early experiments in introducing English into bilingual communities during the 1790s had led to schisms and the formation of separate, exclusively English congregations.²⁹ It appeared that in church these two groups—like oil and water—did not mix. Consequently, Lutheran authorities undertook everything to keep the German element apart from the "American melting pot."

Alerted by the obvious encroachments of the English language among its own ranks, in the 1790s the Lutheran Church in Virginia ordered its congregations to establish local German grammar schools.³⁰ In North Carolina, German preachers dissuaded their parishioners from contracting marriages with settlers of Scottish or Irish descent, in order that "German blood and the German language be preserved."³¹ The same advice was given by pastor Arnold Roschen to his congregation in South Carolina who warned the Germans:

Such mixed marriages are generally unhappy, and sometimes occasion murder and homicide, [because] . . . the English in these regions belong to no religious denomination, and do not permit their children to be baptized, nor send them to school.³²

Dangerous as false religions seemed, German Lutheran leaders were even more concerned about a growing religious indifference.³³ "[R]eligion is one of the objects which occupies the least of the attention of the American people," witnessed a traveler in the late 1790s in Virginia.³⁴ And another contemporary noted the natives' open hostility, their indolence, and their widespread addiction to liquor:

Indeed, throughout the lower part of Virginia . . . the people have scarcely any religion, and in the country parts the churches are falling into decay. As I rode along, I scarcely observed one that was not in ruinous condition with the windows broken, and doors dropping off the hinges and lying open to the pigs and cattle wandering about the woods.³⁵

Paul Henkel, initially open to bilingual preaching,³⁶ remarked that many English audiences favored Methodism, Deism and Anabaptism to Lutheranism—if they were concerned about religion at all.³⁷ But mostly he was frustrated that they did not show any interest, as happened to him in 1794 in Hot Springs, Virginia, where "it was difficult to make an impression upon the English speaking people as the most of them were there seeking pleasure and were not interested in the Gospel. They had come from Old Virginia" [i.e., Tidewater].³⁸

Germans like Paul Henkel concluded that use of the English language was indicative of irreligion and immorality. Henkel's observations were representative of the general trend in the Lutheran Church to keep itself apart from the "alienated" English element, and by doing so to preserve its proper German faith and doctrine.³⁹ Henkel deplored that in the Virginia Valley "the English language is making strong encroachments, and the people are influenced by worldly goods, greed and other vices."⁴⁰

Henkel, along with most German Lutheran leaders, did not welcome the "Great Revival in the South." This awakening started in Kentucky in 1800. In 1801, it swept over the border to North Carolina, and, by the following year, encompassed Virginia, both Carolinas and Georgia.⁴¹ Although the movement was led by English-speaking denominations, notably the Methodists, it attracted a number of both Lutherans and unchurched people of German descent. It is noteworthy that the revivals appealed especially to young people who formed the largest part of the population in most southwestern territories and who had been increasingly disenchanted by the church's traditional

rituals.⁴² These young people came mostly from families of small farmers and had little education and few pretensions.

After Paul Henkel had encountered a number of the revivalists in North Carolina in 1801, he decided to move to the frontier where "the superstition and unbelief is still very dominant among Germans."⁴³ Frontier pioneers had urged Paul Henkel to "take an Inclination to come again for hir there is some of our cuntrey and also of the English Denomenation tha has a great Desior to Heer your Opinjon of the Salvation of their Soles."⁴⁴

In Paul Henkel's descriptions the Germans emerged increasingly as the sober, decent conservatives, while the English appeared revivalist, fanatical and brutal. "The English were ready to attack me," he reported from a revival camp in North Carolina in 1801.⁴⁵ In the same state he noted five years later:

Yesterday I was the first preacher who had been at Brush Creek The first sermon was for the Germans, during which all were quiet and very attentive After this followed an English sermon. But what shall I say to the assembly? Some of them are even drunk and others look very dissolute.⁴⁶

Though after 1805 the awakening rapidly declined, the fear it had stirred among the conservative authorities of the Lutheran Church did not abate. The explicit individualism of the movement, the exaggerated emotionalism, and the interdenominational unionism went much too far for the tradition-oriented Lutherans. English-speaking religious groups became more suspect than ever, and the only means to shelter Lutheran belief against their influence was the barrier of the German language.

Henkel's diary notes in the following years emphasize increasingly this moral and behavioral difference between his German and his English audiences. An Ohio entry in 1808 bears witness to a strange image of the English-speaking population:

Today a number of Germans assembled, and also English people, but more English than Germans. The English people are mostly Methodists; the women are lean and consumptive-looking creatures. Each one has her pipe with her in her mouth, smoking incessantly before and after the service.⁴⁷

For Paul Henkel these English were nearly another race, and their influence on the Germans was especially dangerous when they "requested the Germans to allow me to preach in English."⁴⁸ Henkel himself more and more rejected the country's dominant language. When in 1806 Ohioans desired to hear him preach in the English tongue, he grumbled: "O perverse people! If you are invited you will not come, and now we are overrun with you! Nevertheless I

must preach to you too, so as to get room to continue my instruction of the young."⁴⁹

Clearly, the language issue had become an increasing dilemma. On the one hand Paul Henkel and his colleagues had to preach English in order to reach the young German population. On the other hand they knew that introducing the English idiom in church meant opening themselves to American religious influences. Numerous times Paul Henkel accused the Germans of being "not only very much inclined to the language and customs of the English speaking people, but also to the doctrines of the Presbyterian Church."⁵⁰ Many experiences taught him that the language transition caused severe identity problems for many settlers. "I found an example of how foolishly many of our Germans act in regard to being German," he observed in 1808:

This woman and her husband were Germans, but the woman after coming here did not want to be German any longer, spoke English only with her few small children. But now that she was sick and had to think of death, English had no significance for her Ever since her sickness began her desire has been to hear a German minister.⁵¹

But when eventually, in 1810, the Lutheran Ministerium in Pennsylvania changed its language policy and officially allowed bilingual preaching,⁵² Henkel had to overcome his anti-English bias. Gradually the officials accepted that the English language entered their church not only from outside, by English people interested in Lutheran doctrine, but much more from inside, by the next generation preferring the English to the German idiom. To satisfy the needs of both generations, bilingual services became a necessity.

As Paul Henkel concluded in 1811, to bring the "Word of God" to the bilingual settlements he had to use a vocabulary both language groups would understand. "I also preached in English so plain and clear that the Germans could understand the sermon as easily as the English speaking people . . . the Germans allowed themselves to be persuaded to have the service wholly in English."⁵³

To support Luther's language and doctrine on the frontier, Paul Henkel and his sons Solomon and Ambrosius established a printing press in New Market in 1807. Though the entrepreneurs planned to print religious and schoolbooks, their first major project was a weekly paper, the *Virginische Volksberichter und New Marketer Wochenzeitschrift*. "Meinen und vieler Wohlwünscher Erachten gemässt ist solches höchst notwendig," explained the young editor, Ambrosius Henkel, to his subscribers, "weil sich eben kei-deutsche Presse unter uns befindet [sic]."⁵⁴ With this newspaper, the Henkels hoped to support the German cause even among those Germans who did not belong to their church.

The quite primitive four-page paper provided its readers with international and local news. Little attention was given to the German states,⁵⁵ because the *Volksberichter* clearly despised the "rotten Germany" for its politically unstable condition:

Wärest Du jetzt in Deutschland, so würdest Du kaum Deinen Bekannten mehr kennen; der verderbliche Krieg hat alles verändert und verdorben. "O mein Vaterland! O mein Vaterland! wie tief bist Du gesunken."⁵⁶ So rufen jetzt noch die wenig übrig ehrlich Söhne Hermanns, und seufzen im Stillen: "Ach wären wir nur bey unseren Deutschen Brüdern in Amerika."⁵⁷

But the article "Etwas für die Deutschen," written in summer 1808, was the earliest public effort in which Paul Henkel accused German settlers of neglecting their mother tongue. In this commentary Henkel claimed that assimilation in commercial life and material eagerness were the real driving forces behind the Germans' transition to the English language. Many German merchants, he said, shifted to the English tongue, because their clients were English.⁵⁸ Henkel also accused German-speaking parents of failing to insist on the use of their mother tongue at home and in school. The neglect of a basic bilingual education would split families, he prophesied. This should be prevented by the most rigorous means:

Ihr sagt ja wir können unsere Kinder nichts deutsch sprechen machen. Sprechen wir deutsch zu ihnen, so antworten sie uns englisch. O elende Ausflucht! . . . gesetzt daß deutsch sprechen eurer Kinder trüge euch des Jahrs nur 20 Thaler ein, . . . so wundert mich ob ihr dieselbe nicht mit der Ruthe würdet deutsch antworten machen.

The author vehemently rejected the accusation of being anti-English:

Ich gestehe dass ich glaube, dass redliche und wahre Christen unter ihnen gibt, das manche gute Bücher unter ihnen seid . . . aber dies alles ist bey mir noch keine Ursach dass ich meiner Muttersprache, den deutschen Gottesdienst und Schule verachten sollte.⁵⁹

After all, Henkel concluded, English books could never compete with the distinctive Lutheran literature which existed in the German language.

However, the German newspaper did not prove to be a lucrative enterprise. Due to a lack of subscribers it was abandoned after eighteen months with the bitter comment: "Aus welcher Ursache unsere Deutsche in unserem Staat die Zeitung so gering schätzen, weis ich nicht."⁶⁰ The young editor simply had to accept that German settlers preferred the much more

professional German papers published in the Middle States to Henkel's amateur product, or even switched to periodicals in English.

But the Henkels were extremely successful with their religious and educational publications in the German language. Between 1806 and 1857 the printing office sold thousands of German religious pamphlets, hymn books, catechisms, readers and schoolbooks, some of them bilingual.⁶¹ Paul Henkel's son, David, translated "English pieces," written by his brother, Philip, and even attempted a bilingual grammar.⁶² The underlying purpose of these German and bilingual publications was to develop the moral and religious aspects of life as well as to train children and adults in the basic knowledge of German.⁶³ But as the many business reports of Solomon Henkel point out, right from the beginning he sold many more English than German copies.⁶⁴ The young generation of most German families, even if they spoke German at home, clearly preferred to read their hymns and prayers in English. In 1835 the press stopped publishing German books altogether.⁶⁵

A German school established at New Market between 1805 and 1813 by Paul Henkel and his sons Philip, Ambrosius and Andreas was unsuccessful, too. The project failed due to a lack of students and support from the local congregation which could not agree on the language in which the children were to be taught.⁶⁶

The further the inevitable linguistic transition process developed during the first two decades of the nineteenth century, the more openly Lutheran officials tried to defend the German tongue. It became increasingly clear that the question of language reflected the larger question of "peculiar doctrine" based on a centuries-old Lutheran tradition. Should the doctrine be preserved by the use of German or was its time over? Young Germans were increasingly attracted to English denominations not because of "doctrine," but for social reasons. Nevertheless, the ministerium was convinced that the sloughing off of the German language was inseparably connected with the complete abandonment of Lutheran faith. In 1811 it founded a widely distributed magazine named the *Evangelisches Magazin*, with the explicit purpose: "dadurch einen starken Einfluß auf das deutsche Wesen [zu gewinnen], um dem Geist des Denkens, des Lebens und Webens diejenige Richtung zu geben, die er in diesen gefahrvollen Zeiten haben sollte."⁶⁷ This organ deplored incessantly that the time had come "in welchem sich die Glieder von der Gemeinde verliefen, weil in der alten Kirche bei weitem nicht genug Raum war und unterschiedliche . . . entweder daheim blieben oder die englischen Kirchen besuchten."⁶⁸

In an 1812 issue, the journal attacked "den Dienst untreuer Lehrer" in official English schools and churches: "Versehen es die Kinder in etwas, so werden sie sclavisch gehalten und durch Zucht mehr erbittert als gebessert Daher werden sie vierzehn und mehr Jahre alt und können kaum lesen." Those children who did learn how to read were bombarded with most

"unzüchtige Schriften," for they would only study "Romane, Liebesgeschichten, geile Poesien, und andere solche Mißgeburten einer verderbten Phantasie."⁶⁹

But one year later even the most fervent advocates of the German idiom suggested bilingual instruction and described German as principally a "religious language."⁷⁰ Thus, the role of the German language increasingly resembled that of Latin during the Middle Ages: the English-speaking churchgoer encountered it as an artificial, unintelligible, and strictly liturgical language. German was no longer a means to bring the work of God to the common man, as Martin Luther had demanded. It became a distinct feature of a particular religious faith, and an artificial protection against the influences of English religious groups. In fact, since the continuation of German services privileged a certain linguistic group of the population, it was a measure against those who spoke only English.

At that point it was obvious to everybody that the final language battle would be decided in the church. Many clergymen encouraged their communities to oppose the transition to the English as the clerical language. The vast number of letters from German-speaking ministers and settlers in the Henkel correspondence demonstrates an increasing concern. In Tennessee a congregation vehemently forbade Philip Henkel from preaching a single word in English.⁷¹ In South Carolina the people told the young catechist David Henkel: "Dein Vater hat gesagt daß wir die Deutsche Sprache nicht verlassen sollen, und deswegen sollst Du nicht Englisch predigen."⁷² In North Carolina the clergyman Johann Rausch planned "eine Stadt auszulegen für den Gebrauch der Deutschen Gegend Dasselbst."⁷³ The Virginia Synod distributed thousands of copies of a proclamation among the Germans, "mit der Erwartung daß unsere deutschen Mitbrüder dadurch aufgemuntert werden, mit . . . Sorgfalt an der Aufrechterhaltung ihrer Muttersprache zu arbeiten."⁷⁴

Nevertheless, in 1815 clergymen described the decline of their language in an *Ansprache an die deutschen Einwohner Virginiens* as follows:

First evangelical teaching gradually disappears, and our children grow up without hymns, without prayer, without catechism, and therefore without religious instruction; for you know that nothing of the sort is done in the English schools Next we gradually lose our German customs, diligence, and thrift, replacing them with English styles which frequently degenerate into pride, laziness and extravagance And finally, through neglect of our mother tongue, we lose our majestic hymns, prayerbooks, and edifying literature—an unspeakable loss.⁷⁵

And another author lamented even more explicitly:

Man vertauscht die alte deutsche Offenherzigkeit und redliche Treue, mit [englischer] Verstellung, Complimente, Spiel und Scherz;

die freye ungekünstelte Ansprache, und Händeschütteln, mit tiefen Vergnügungen Das väterliche Erbe geht auf Putz und Kleiderstaat, auf annehmlichen Hausschmuck, . . . auf Haarkräuseln und die Veränderung der Mode.⁷⁶

Yet, the majority of the Henkels' written communication with other German Lutheran ministers and even their closest kinsmen was conducted in English. Paul Henkel and his uncle John discussed family matters exclusively in English. Paul seems to have been much more familiar with English than with German writing rules.⁷⁷ His imperfect German writings demonstrate that his education in literary German had been scant. With little experience in writing contemporary German, he copied the style of the old scripts of the Reformation, notably Luther's.

Solomon Henkel, although familiar with German writing, could only converse in English with his uncle Moses, as well as with his cousins.⁷⁸ Ambrosius Henkel, the first editor of the *Virginischer Volksbeobachter*, began the transition to English, when, in 1810, he wrote to an old school friend: "I have tried to write to you in the english tongue[.] I always wrote in german, which makes me in the english young."⁷⁹ Many German-written letters reveal an "Anglicized" use of grammar, names and word choice. Correspondents often changed script and language in the midst of a paragraph.⁸⁰

But most striking is the following extract from a letter written by Paul Henkel's most gifted son, David Henkel, to his father in 1815.

Dear beloved,

. . . The reason why I write at this time to you in the English language is because I can express my real and warm sentiments better, and also convey my ideas in a nobler manner. Though you may think it is mere pride and vanity, to chose a strange language for this purpose and that it would be more becoming to chose my mother language. To which I answer: if I am proud in doing this, equally the same I may be in making choice of my mother tongue, and rejecting or despising a neighboring tongue, which too often is the case; this originates from a superstitious self-love; this might indeed shine (if I were always to write in German) a mere pretence to forced humility.⁸¹

David Henkel, licensed as catechist at the age of seventeen in 1812, became known as the most intellectual and eloquent orator among southern Lutherans.⁸² Initially, his missionary zeal lead him to accept the linguistic transition. In his Carolina congregations he observed that "there is a general will for the English Christian Catechisms" and he promised that "thousands could be sold." To his brother Solomon, the book printer, he wrote that he "had to dispense with the German Hymnbook, in order to get the English

established. The English is of greatest value. I advice you not to print any more German Hymnbooks."⁸³ Consequently, he explicitly preferred to preach and correspond in English, and he strongly encouraged the new generation:

die Englische Sprache richtig zu lernen, es ist wahrlich kein Hochmuth darin es zu thun: sondern eine heilige Pflicht; weil in ganz Amerika mehr sind die selbige Sprache verstehen, als die unsrige. Würde man sagen daß es aber nicht so viele [Englischsprachige] von unserer Kirche hat, als unter den Deutschen . . . desto nothwendiger ist es daß wir sie [die englische Sprache] predigen um Glaubensgenossen zu unserer Kirche zu machen.⁸⁴

To his conservative parents, this must have been a veritable heresy.⁸⁵ But his brothers, though never expressing themselves as fervently as young David Henkel, silently took the same direction. They accepted that the New World's first language was English. They preached and wrote bilingually, regarding it as a part of their ministerial task.⁸⁶ In this attitude they stood for the new American generation, on which the historian Marcus Hansen comments:

Eight years of American Revolution, ten years of political uncertainty from 1783 to 1793, nineteen years of European turmoil, and three years of American involvement—these years comprised a period during which immigration was hardly more than a trickle. A society accustomed to constant infusions from abroad found time to adjust itself to a condition where its people were homeborn and homebred. It is one of the fundamental facts of American history that after 1815 signs of nationalism, lacking before, became conspicuous.⁸⁷

Gradually, this spirit of American nationalism entered the ranks of the Lutheran clergy. Until 1818, this denomination had been unable to organize their institution along national lines as an American church.⁸⁸ Stronger than ever before, conservative Lutherans stuck to their strictly separatist German tradition and adherence to the *Confessio Invariata*. To adapt to the American environment with its emphasis on tolerance and unionism, the church now faced painful doctrinal modifications. Moreover, the Lutheran denomination had not yet established a central governing body. In 1818 there were four Lutheran organizations in the United States: Pennsylvania (1742), New York (1796), North Carolina (1803) and Ohio (1818).⁸⁹ Though these synods had cordial relationships with each other, exchanged minutes and gave voting representation to recognized members of other synods, they acted independently from each other. Their ninety-eight ministers were serving congregations in expanding fields.⁹⁰ Many of them sought permission from the synod to which they belonged to form a synod of their own. Ultimately, the

idea of a "General Synod" was born, since many concerns were supraregional and could not be addressed by district organizations.⁹¹

One of the major proponents of an American Lutheran Church was the clergyman Gottlieb Shober. Although coming from a Moravian background, he was counted among the foremost spokesmen of the Lutheran Church in North Carolina. Shober had written a book in which he strongly promoted some un-Lutheran and unionistic ideas: "I see nothing to prevent a cordial union [of all Lutheran synods]; and how happy would it be if all the Churches could unite, and send deputies to a general meeting of all [Protestant] denominations."⁹²

In 1819 Shober reported to the Ministerium of Pennsylvania that "a plan had been agreed upon which had been printed, setting forth how all the Synods could join in one General Synod."⁹³ The outline for this organization suggested that its body be composed of delegates from all existing synods who were to have equal privileges and votes as members of the body. Crucial was section four setting forth that "the General Synod has the exclusive right with the concurrence of a majority of the particular synods" to introduce new books for church services and "improve" the liturgy.⁹⁴ The ministerium adopted the *Plan-Entwurf* by a vote of forty-two to eight.⁹⁵

But shortly afterwards opposition arose among the Lutheran clergy in the country. Isolated from the latest theological discussion in the eastern centers of the church, southern conservatives severely criticized this modern doctrinal laxity and American unionism. They did not want to give up Lutheranism as it had been taught for nearly three hundred years in order to join the American melting pot.⁹⁶ "Ist es möglich daß wir, die wir in einem Republikanischen Lande, wo Freyheytt unser Motto ist wohnen? und doch durch Hierarchie ge . . . [illegible] seyn solen?"⁹⁷ "Nein!," they replied, "[w]ir sind keine Sklaven unter Europäischer Herrschsucht; wir sind freye Amerikaner."⁹⁸ But even as "free Americans" they wanted to keep their European distinctiveness which was anchored in "the teachings, doctrine, and polity of the Word of God, as set forth in the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church."⁹⁹

Shober's most vocal adversary in North Carolina was David Henkel. He and his orthodox minority claimed that "no Christian Synod can have legislative powers, consequently have no right to make rules for churches. All rules . . . are provided in the Scripture; therefore, every body of men, who make rules for the Church are in opposition to Christ."¹⁰⁰ The conservatives objected to majority rule in the church and to the fact that the Bible and the sacred *Augsburger Konfession* had not been mentioned in the *Plan-Entwurf* for the general synod.¹⁰¹

Additionally, at that time David Henkel was on bad terms with his Lutheran superiors in Pennsylvania who had continually refused to ordain him as a minister because of his young age. Seventeen-year-old David Henkel had been licensed as catechist in 1812 by two ministers but not at the annual

meeting of the ministerium in Pennsylvania. This was common custom, born out of the twin forces of constant need and the shortage of ministers. When the ministerium met in 1813, it renewed David Henkel's license, but added "[t]hat after this it should no longer be the custom to allow two ministers the privilege or power, to authorize a young man to preach and baptize."¹⁰² Each year the authorities had added a clause like this to the granted petition. When David in 1816 reached his majority, he was disappointed at not receiving his ordination. Instead, the zealous young candidate was charged with excessive championship of Lutheran doctrine, discord within his own congregations, and resentment from the communities in his area. Finally, David Henkel was ordained by his elder brother Philip in 1819, but the synod claimed this act to be void. However, David refused to accept the ministerium's authority and did not even seek to be restored to membership.¹⁰³

These events—David Henkel's personal feud with the ministerium combined with doctrinal debates and the establishment of the general synod in 1820—made the Henkels unwilling to seek any compromises. In summer 1820, the Henkel clan—with members in Virginia, Tennessee, Ohio, and both Carolinas—severed relations with all existing synods to form its own "German Evangelical Synod of Tennessee."¹⁰⁴ This name was selected to distinguish the new synod from the others, and to express its peculiar championship of the historic Lutheran confessions; the name was not meant to refer to just one group of congregations in a limited geographical area. Most of the members of the new synod lived outside of Tennessee. Paul Henkel who resided in New Market at that time drew many local congregations into the new synod. Many unaffiliated organizations followed suit.¹⁰⁵

Up to this point the entire dispute had concerned exclusively doctrinal and organizational matters. But now the old and yet undecided language question arose again. The constitution of the newly founded general synod had abandoned the pre-eminence of the German language,¹⁰⁶ arguing that it "has sometimes been said, as Lutherans we ought to adhere to the standards of the Lutheran church. This is perfectly true and just, if the standards of the Lutheran church in America be intended."¹⁰⁷ These "standards in America" implied, naturally, the English language.

Trying to find additional arguments against the general synod, the Henkels together with many conservatives now revived the argument once employed by the ministerium of Pennsylvania. They reproached the progressive *Generalisten* that in giving up its language Lutheranism would by no means remain distinctive from any other doctrine. Paul Henkel accused the unionists of trying: "das Englische zu befördern so dass alles in selbiger Sprache geschehen soll. und anstat, dass solches den Anfang zu dem Taussend jährigen Reich machen soll, macht es, den Anfang zur Taussend jährigen Schwärmerey."¹⁰⁸ This contention must seem paradoxical since even David initially had so wholeheartedly confessed his preference for the English tongue.

Nevertheless, the insistence on the German language became a formidable weapon for the promoters of the conservative wing and the German Tennessee Synod. In its first resolution the synod designated German as the official language of its conventions. English-speaking Lutherans could not have a seat and vote until they had properly learned the synod's official language.¹⁰⁹ Services were conducted in German; minutes were kept in German. Any English pamphlet, leaflet, or announcement was deliberately ignored. In his English-language paper *Carolinian Herald of Liberty*, David Henkel emphasized that

there is no minister belonging to this Synod who is not a master of the German tongue, and there are some who understand the English very imperfectly The reason why we wish to preserve the knowledge of the German language is . . . because the most of our theological books are written in the German which contain our doctrine. Luther was a German, and the most of his works are only extant in that language. They never were translated in the English tongue, and if they were to be, they would lose much of their original beauty, which is the case in the most of translations. If knowledge of the German is lost, the peculiar doctrines of our church will be forgotten in another generation.¹¹⁰

The linguistic argument, once so forcefully argued but then modified by the Pennsylvania Synod, was now revived by the new church body. The founders feared that the supporters of the English-speaking national synod served as "Vorläufer" who had "dem Antichrist eine Bahn gemacht."¹¹¹ "The Anti-Christ will not, cannot get into power, without a general union, which is not effected by a divine harmony of godly doctrines; but by common temporal interest and the power of a majority."¹¹² Again, the abandonment of Luther's tongue was viewed as an essential ingredient of the "ungodly conspiracy." English was the language of the Anti-Christ, the black sign on the foreheads of the devil worshippers. Correct German speaking and writing, on the other hand, was not "ein bloser Genieschwung, . . . sondern ein göttliches Zeichen, welche[s] den Mensch zum halben Engel macht."¹¹³ While the Prince of Darkness swore in English, the heavenly angels sang in German.

The paradox of the Henkels' promotion of the German idiom becomes even more obvious if one considers that many of their pamphlets supporting the German cause were written in English, in which English Lutherans were urged to shift to Luther's vernacular. Having made a complete reversal on the language issue by 1819, David Henkel now fervently insisted on "die Deutsche Sprache fortzupflanzen, nicht nur bey Deutschen, sondern auch bei Englichen."¹¹⁴ The English population should be enthused for the beauty and picturesque qualities of the German style, which was so different from the boring and dry American writings.¹¹⁵ Preachers should exclusively teach in

German—even if the audiences did not understand it. To push forward linguistic instruction, David Henkel proposed to discount rates on German primers, to recreate German Sunday schools and to found a teaching organization, called the Deutsche Gesellschaft.¹¹⁶ "Sobald unsere Deutsche Gesellschaft in diesem Staat [North Carolina] zu Stande kommt . . . so werden viele Deutsche Bücher gebraucht. Wir müssten dan Deutsch Englische Wörterbücher verkaufen."¹¹⁷ How different that sounded from David Henkel's earlier urgent demands of 1815 to stop publishing German books and to accept the language shift!

But in a democratic country where the people determined the course of worship, the traditionalists were not able to force free congregations to be instructed in a foreign and strange language to follow their weekly services. Philip Henkel's frustration in 1824 is significant:

Wir rühmen uns hier in Tennesse mit einer ganz Lutherischen Conferenz aber wann unter allen Deutschen in ganz Tennessee nur ein einziger Jüngling sollte gefunden werden der in das Lehramt treten sollte, so wäre nicht einer zu finden, der nur so viel wüßte daß er ordentlich Deutsch lesen könnte und alle zusammen, würden sich kein Haar breit darum bekümmern.¹¹⁸

Though the Henkels must have been aware of the hopelessness of their stubborn linguistic attitude, it took them a few more painful years to accept their defeat openly. As late as in 1826, Philip fanatically exclaimed:

Es muß eine ganz Deutsch redende Synode bleiben . . . Nur so lange als die Deutschen durch Ihre Sprache von anderen unterschieden bleiben, halten Sie zur reinen Lehre und wann Sie auch dieselbe nicht wissen oder verstehen, Sobald Sie Englisch werden, müssen Sie mit vielen Argumenten Dazu getrieben werden und das geschieht selten.¹¹⁹

In effect, during the first years, the disputes were mostly carried on in German. Makeshift English translations of Lutheran writings were needed only when the debates swept beyond the borders of the German communities. In spite of their "German-oriented policy," the Henkel press made a great effort to promote Lutheranism in the English language. In 1827 they published some of Luther's sermons in English, followed seven years later by the Augsburg Confession. In 1841 the press printed Luther's *Smaller Catechism* and, two years later, an English liturgy. Their endeavors culminated in the 1851 publication of the famous *Book of Concord*. The Henkel press probably issued more Lutheran theological works in English than any similar institution in the world during the nineteenth century.¹²⁰

Though the German Synod with its adherence to the traditional Lutheran doctrine stood apart from the General Synod until 1925, it was not able to keep its German exclusiveness for even another decade. In 1826, one wing of the Tennessee Synod nearly seceded when, after many passionate discussions, the synod adopted the English language as official form of speech for the regular meetings. As a consequence, for a time two synodical conventions, one in German and one in English, were held, but officially the feud was settled to the advantage of the advocates of the English language. As early as 1825, the synod published its minutes for the first time in English. Although German records were distributed until the mid-1850s, the records that were published from the mid-1830s onwards were clearly translations from an English original.¹²¹

As the last German-oriented Lutheran organization in the southeastern states, the Tennessee members finally accepted what their English-speaking adversaries had predicted twenty years earlier. If Lutheran authorities stubbornly stuck to Luther's tongue, their English-speaking children would prefer to switch to another congregation which might even be antagonistic towards Lutheran beliefs. Quite simply, not enough people cared about speaking German any longer. Moreover, the German Lutherans' zeal for linguistic separateness prevented many English-speaking believers from joining the organization. To preserve Luther's doctrine in the New World, Lutherans had to give up speaking German. After all, survival of the Church and not of the language was the foremost consideration.¹²² Once the Henkels and their colleagues had accepted this fact, their emphatic interest in the language issue faded away. Instead, they now undertook the effort to Anglicize the faith of the Lutheran Church by translating its confession and theology into the English language. Although many pastors continued to preach in German, the Henkels' later correspondence after 1827 does not indicate a continuation of the heated debate. Silently, the writers shifted from German script to Latin script and to the English language.

Unfortunately, there are considerably fewer private records left after 1825, when the head of the clan, Paul Henkel, died. But scattered examples give a humorous impression of the Henkels' "split tongue." A letter from the merchant Solomon David, Paul Henkel's grandson, who in 1839 inspected the market conditions at New York, is one moving example:

I presume that I will purchase them in Phil unless I can do better in this Market (was gelt ich zu schären habe, ihr wiset wohl wie viel) money makes the mare go (wo mann nicht bekannt ist) ich gedenke die Bücher und Papier in Phil. zu kaufen fur Cash, as they are much cheaper, there, than in Baltimore, ich habe sie genau gepreiset at Hogan & Thompson's Booksellers and Stationers, in North fourth street Phil.¹²³

It is not necessary to understand the content of this report—the linguistic confusions speak volumes. By 1840, the language battle was decided and the Henkels' cause was lost.

But, interestingly enough, they were not losers. Since the new generation had regarded German not primarily as a cultural heritage but as a temporary tool to save Lutheran doctrine, they could easily abandon it once their initial cause was won. Since they themselves belonged already to the Americanized generation, they could eventually reconcile their European faith with the American spirit, regarding one as an expression of the other. Luther's doctrine flourished because his language died.

In 1851, the Henkels, in the preface to their English version of the *Unveränderte Augsburger Konfession*, nicely summarized the argument for the use of English:

The descendants of German Immigrants in America, have never cultivated the language and literature of their fathers with due interest; many of them are unable to read German . . . the larger portions of Lutherans in America, are accustomed to read the English language only, and consequently have never had an opportunity to appreciate the value of their Symbols In a land of freedom . . . where the generous spirit of political wisdom encourages the exercise of reason . . . we believe that the doctrines of our Church will ultimately be reclaimed.¹²⁴

Not a single word was uttered about "deutsch-lutheranische Besonderheit," "europäisches Erbe," or the "antichristliche englische Sprache." On the contrary, Germans were reproached for having neglected their language, whereas the English never really had a chance to find access to Lutheran truth. "That these [Lutheran] doctrines and those principles of immutable truth are congenial with the tastes and feelings of the American mind, we may fearlessly deduce from recent facts."¹²⁵ Luther's doctrine, the Henkels finally agreed, had become an expression of the American mind. And as such it did not need a German dictionary.

By 1840, most congregations had solved the language problem by resolving to keep the church records in English while promising to continue German preaching as long as needed. German church services increasingly were only held in rare instances, such as on holidays, in little rural churches, or in the family.¹²⁶ After 1840, only two Lutheran preachers in the South fervently opposed an English ministry. One was the Reverend Nicholas Schmucker (1779-1855) whose congregation in Shenandoah County was so weak that the charge in 1846 was taken away from his control. The other one was the Reverend Jacob Stirewalt (1805-69) whose congregation in Hawksbill, Tennessee, demanded regular German services and Sunday school lessons as late as 1841. Similar aspirations were recorded in what was called "Germany"

in Brock's Gap, Rockingham County, Virginia. Here the last Lutheran pastor who preached occasionally in German to old congregations was Henry Wetzel (1815-90), successor of the German-born pastor Martin Sondhaus.¹²⁷

It must be added that the shift to the English language did not include the disappearance of the peculiar German dialect. Again, English only replaced German as the official and literary language. The dialect, on the other hand, remained the popular form of speech among Germans in many rural communities long after the official transition had been completed.¹²⁸ Even if the church council decided to switch to English services, even if it was obvious that literary German had become useless in public, families and friends would not give up the use of their proper dialect. They would even teach the dialect to the next generation. In 1852, travelers in Virginia still remarked on the common use of dialects, and the *Baltimore Mirror* of 1866 wrote about the Shenandoah Valley that "in many portions the German language is yet the vernacular."¹²⁹

Naturally, the continuation of the spoken German became a matter of personal view, once school and church had abandoned its literary form. Often their strong accent exposed Germans to mockery, and the "dumb Dutch" became increasingly identified with backwardness. Still in 1921, the historians Abraham Funkhouser and Oren Morten outraged the dialect-speaking Valley Germans:

Here are more than a thousand people, who, in conversing among themselves, seldom use anything else than a corrupt jargon now reduced to a very few hundred words. Not only have these words lost their grammatical terminations, but the commonest idea can hardly be expressed without some help from English words. The people who use it as home talk can neither understand standard German nor read the huge German Bibles purchased by their great grand-parents. Because of this devotion to a useless form of speech, the dwellers in these valleys are superstitious as well as unprogressive. It holds them back from entering into the full spirit of American life and American institutions.¹³⁰

Written sources, such as church records, letters, and other documents give the impression that in the 1850s, after a trying period of bilingualism, the transition was definitely over. Dialect studies, on the other hand, reveal that a variety of German was spoken in these former frontier areas as late as in the 1960s.¹³¹

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Notes

¹ Wilhelm Walther, *Luthers deutsche Bibel: Festschrift zur Jahrhundertfeier der Reformation im Auftrage des Deutschen Evangelischen Kirchenausschusses*, 2d ed. (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mitter und Sohn Königliche Hofbuchhandlung, 1918), 46.

² William-Sumner and Minnie Wyatt Junkin, *The Henkel Genealogy, 1500-1960* (New Market, VA: Henkel Family Association, 1964), 15-21.

³ Ammon Stapleton, "Rev. Gerhard Henkel and His Descendants," *Pennsylvania Germans* 4 (April 1903): 244; Theodor Graebner, "Paul Henkel, An American Lutheran Pioneer in Mission, Organizations, and Publishing," *Concordia Historical Quarterly* 5 (2 July 1932): 58.

⁴ My inquiry deals principally with the decline of Luther's original standard German. Dialects, on the other hand, have been recorded on the former colonial frontier as late as 1962. However, they were restricted to oral conversation, never written out and never accepted as official language. J. Stewart and E. L. Smith, "The Survival of German Dialects and Customs in the Shenandoah Valley," more. *Report of the Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland* 31 (1963): 68. See also Klaus Wust, *The Virginia Germans* (Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press, 1969), 111, 187.

⁵ Paul Henkel, "Daybook and Tagebuch," (1760-98) translated by Eugene Van Ness Goetchius, M.A. thesis, University of Virginia, 1948, p. 6. The original, written in German script and language, is located in the Krauth Memorial Library, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, PA. This and all following German and English quotes are given verbatim. In cases where the original was not available but only an English translation (as in the case of this quotation), the English version is mentioned.

⁶ Paul Henkel, "Tagebuch," 4.

⁷ Paul Henkel, "Tagebuch," 5; (1781) 16.

⁸ In 1785 the Lutheran pastor Christian Streit was ordained to the parish of Winchester, VA. William E. Eisenberg, *The Lutheran Church in Virginia 1717-1962* (Roanoke, VA: Trustees of the Virginia Synod, 1967), 74; Wust, *Virginia Germans*, 131.

⁹ Wust, *Virginia Germans*, 136.

¹⁰ Compare John Wayland, "The German Element in the Shenandoah Valley," Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1907; Eisenberg, *Lutheran Church*, 55, 71.

¹¹ At that time, clergymen functioned both as teachers and ministers.

¹² Paul Henkel, "Tagebuch," 25.

¹³ Paul Henkel, "Tagebuch," 25, 44. Paul Henkel (and later all his sons) knew the Luther biography by heart. Even his robe was an exact imitation of the monk's cowl.

¹⁴ Paul Henkel, "Tagebuch," 44, 64 and passim; Eisenberg, *Lutheran Church*, 76-78. See also Christa Klein's comment on "Lutheranism," in Charles H. Lippy and Peter W. Williams, eds., *Encyclopedia of American Religious Experience* (New York: Scribner, 1988), 433: "In fact no other religious groups with a tradition of educated clergy had as many 'irregular pastors,' that is, men who began to preach and administer the sacraments without benefit of license or ordination according to accepted procedures."

¹⁵ Paul Henkel, "Tagebuch," 1785 (during his first trip to North Carolina), 64, 66 and passim. At that time, Paul Henkel's brother Moses had already completely converted to the English tongue. In 1785, he became a Methodist preacher and henceforth insisted on keeping even his family correspondence in English (most of Moses Henkel's letters are located in Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, henceforth cited as UVA).

¹⁶ Paul Henkel, "Tagebuch," 68, 104-9.

¹⁷ Eisenberg, *Lutheran Church*, 75.

¹⁸ William E. Eisenberg, *This Heritage* (Winchester, VA, 1954), 86.

¹⁹ *Journal of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia* (Richmond, 1792), 53 (the House followed this suggestion two years later). The German "Hochsprache" (literary German) became an important ingredient of politics at the end of the eighteenth century. "Congressmen from the Valley . . . owed much of their success in political life to their knowledge

of German. Other political candidates who were not familiar with the German language had their pamphlets transcribed and they frequently used interpreters when addressing the people in the Valley towns and villages." Stewart and Smith, "German Dialects," 66. See also Wust, *Virginia Germans*, 109-20: "Bilingual Politics."

²⁰ The German edition of 1795 comprised the revenue law, the executive law, the law governing the fees of officers, the law of descent, the law concerning wills, and the law regulating conveyances. *Journal of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia* (1794) 96, 111, 175; 7C 424, 454-55; see German edition: *Akten welche in der General Assembly der Republik Virginien passirt worden sind*, transl. Gustav Friedrich Goetz (Philadelphia: Carl Cist, 1795). See also Wust, *Virginia Germans*, 113.

²¹ See example in Wust, *Virginia Germans*, 116.

²² G. D. Bernheim, *History of the German Settlements and of the Lutheran Church in North and South Carolina: From the Earliest Period of the Colonization of the Dutch German and Swiss Settlers to the Close of the first Half of the Present Century* (Philadelphia: The Lutheran Book Store, 1872), 271. E. Clifford Nelson, *The Lutheran Church in North America*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 85-89.

²³ Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1950), 322-25.

²⁴ Nelson, *Lutheran Church*, 95.

²⁵ This name indicates the institution's strong tie to its German heritage. In 1789, this label had been selected by the Lutheran authorities explicitly for the purpose of replacing the former "Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium in North America" and to emphasize its German origin. The word German was not deleted from the Ministerium's Constitution until 1892. H. E. Jacobs, *A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States*, American Church History Series, vol. 4 (New York, 1893), 309-15.

²⁶ Nelson, *Lutheran Church*, 96.

²⁷ Nelson, *Lutheran Church*, 92.

²⁸ Quoted in Nelson, *Lutheran Church*, 96. However, one decade later the convention had to review this harsh resolution, when they suggested the establishment of separate English congregations in order to fulfill the incessant appeals of the English population. Nelson, *Lutheran Church*, 96-97. Robert Fortenbaugh, "The Development of the Synodical Polity of the Lutheran Church in America, to 1829," Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1926, 87.

²⁹ Nelson, *Lutheran Church*, 96.

³⁰ Christopher Dolmetsch, *The German Press of Shenandoah Valley* (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1984), 57.

³¹ William Gehrke, "Transition from the German to the English Language in North Carolina," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 12 (Jan. 1935): 19.

³² Report of Rev. Arnold Roschen to the Helmstaedt Mission Society, 28 May 1789, quoted in Bernheim, *Lutheran Church in North and South Carolina*, 332.

³³ John B. Boles, *The Great Revival, 1787-1805: The Origins of the Southern Evangelical Mind* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1972), 10-16.

³⁴ Duc de La Rochefoucault, *Travel Through the United States of North America . . . In the Years 1795, 1796, and 1797* (London, 1799), 2:50.

³⁵ Isaac Weld, *Travels through the States of North America, and the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, during the Years 1795, 1796, and 1797* (London, 1799), 101, 118.

³⁶ Paul Henkel, "Tagebuch," 66, 91, 97. William J. Finck, "A Chronological Life of Paul Henkel from Journals, Letters, Minutes of Synod, etc.," New Market, VA, typescript copy (1935-37), 45, 164 (courtesy of Klaus Wust). This is an unpublished assemblage of data arranged chronologically from 1790-1825, gathered and translated from Paul Henkel's German and English assets as well as from other printed matter concerning this period. The original typescript is located in the archives of the Historical Society of the United Lutheran Church Lutheran Seminary, Gettysburg, PA. There exists a huge number of cordial letters to Paul Henkel from

many Reformed, Episcopalian, Presbyterian and even Moravian clergymen—a clear proof of the Henkels' religious and linguistic openness.

³⁷ Finck, "Chronological Life" (1791), 10; (1796), 25.

³⁸ Finck, "Chronological Life" (1794), 20.

³⁹ The whole unexplored West (i.e., Virginia, including counties now in West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana) was later to become Paul Henkel's and his sons' parish.

⁴⁰ Finck, "Chronological Life" (4 April 1807), 181. Although Paul Henkel made this statement in 1807, it refers to the 1790s.

⁴¹ Boles, *Great Revival*, 22, 24-34, 88.

⁴² In 1804 the percentage of the population under sixteen years amounted to 49% nationwide, 54.5% in Kentucky and 55% in Tennessee. Boles, *Great Revival*, 45.

⁴³ Letter of Rev. Paul Henkel to an unidentified "most beloved Co-worker," 8 Jan. 1810, The Henkel Collection, The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA. Translated by Rev. Becker, Kansas City.

⁴⁴ Letter from John "Ober" or "Starz" (hardly legible) in Sullivan City, TN, to Paul Henkel, Abbots Creek, 27 July 1803, Handley Library, Winchester, VA (henceforth cited as HL). This petitioner, obviously desiring a German minister, wrote his application in English. Thus, even if he was of German origin and spoke a German dialect, he had to write in English.

⁴⁵ Finck, "Chronological Life," 75. Homer M. Keever, "A Lutheran Preacher's Account of the 1801-02 Revival in North Carolina," *Methodist History* 7.1 (1968): 38-55. The study gives a detailed account of Paul Henkel's revival experience.

⁴⁶ Finck, "Chronological Life" (17 Aug. 1806), 143.

⁴⁷ Finck, "Chronological Life" (21 June 1808), 205.

⁴⁸ Finck, "Chronological Life," 96.

⁴⁹ Finck, "Chronological Life" (28 July 1806), 132.

⁵⁰ Finck, "Chronological Life" (10 July 1808), 217. Here, one may easily add the name of any other English-speaking denomination to the "Presbyterian Church."

⁵¹ Finck, "Chronological Life" (16 June 1808), 204.

⁵² Bernheim, *Lutheran Church*, 97.

⁵³ Finck, "Chronological Life" (22 July 1811, Second Creek, NC), 267; (8 Dec. 1811, Ohio), 276.

⁵⁴ *Virginischer Volksberichter und New Marketer Wochenzeitschrift*, 7 Oct. 1807, microfilm in Duke University, Durham, NC. Actually, several efforts had been made to establish a German press in the Valley, but none was so successful as the Henkels'. See, e.g., Klaus Wust, "Bilingual Printers in Maryland and Virginia," *Report of the Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland* 32 (1966): 24-37.

⁵⁵ *Volksberichter*, 6 Jan. 1808, 3; 1 June 1808, 1 and passim.

⁵⁶ At this time Napoleon was just conducting his most successful campaign through Europe.

⁵⁷ "Aus Deutschland," published letter, *Volksberichter*, 1 June 1808, 3.

⁵⁸ Most Germans, once they were involved in Anglo-German commerce, anglicized their names. Fuchs became Fox, Reys became Rice, Zimmermann became Carpenter. Robert Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier: Perspective in the Early Shenandoah Valley* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1977), 130; John Wayland, *The German Element in the Shenandoah Valley*, 98.

⁵⁹ *Volksberichter*, 19 Oct. 1808, 1-2. See for further comments Alton R. Koenning, "The Henkel Press: A Force for Conservative Lutheran Theology in Pre-Civil War Southeastern America," Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1972, p. 76. Note how anglicized Paul's German appears in both excerpts.

⁶⁰ Ambrosius Henkel, *Volksberichter*, 7 June 1808, 1. The paper nevertheless enjoyed a considerable circle of readers. The subscriber list 1808/09 mentions 357 regular supporters located in various places far beyond the Virginian frontier: e.g., Hanover, PA, Salisbury, NC, Franklin, OH, etc. (the list is located in UVA, #5001-c). But a letter from an unidentified

preacher in Franklin informed Paul Henkel: "Ich habe . . . den Versuch gemacht, um etliche Subscribenten zu sameln, aber sie sagen sie können sie nicht lesen" (12 March 1808, HL).

⁶¹ During the winter of 1811-12 alone, the press printed 1,500 catechisms, 2,500 primers and 2,500 hymnbooks, all in German, in addition to other printings. See check list in Dolmetsch, *German Press*, 124-42. Lester J. Cappon and Ira V. Brown, eds., "New Market, Virginia Imprints, 1806-1876: A Check List," 1942, UVA.

⁶² The only witness of this purpose are some references in a few family letters (see, e.g., letter from David Henkel in Lincolnton to his brother Andrew in New Market, 1811, HL) and a broadside: *Proposals by Ambrose Henkel & Co For . . . A German and English Grammar, or a Grammatical System of the Two Prevailing Languages of the United States . . . by David Henkel* (New Market, VA: Ambrose Henkel, 1812). The more the Henkel children of the fourth generation were involved in the linguistic battle, the less clear their positions became: David already had "to translate" the English writings of his brother Philip!

⁶³ Paul Fisher, "The Henkel Press. A Factor in Early Education in Virginia," *American-German Review* 7 (1941): 30-34; Koening, *Henkel Press*, 77-84. John Stewart, "Ambrose Henkel of New Market: A Brief Analysis of His German Primers," *Madison College Bulletin* 25 (1967): 57-68. See also Mary Ann L. Williamson, "History of the Henkel Press and the Impact on Children's Literature," Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1977.

⁶⁴ Letter from Solomon Henkel in New Market, VA, to Paul Henkel in Point Pleasant, OH, 19 Dec. 1811, HL: "[W]ir verkaufen dan und wan ein teutsches . . . Die Englischen aber kaufen sie herlich sie konten kaum warten bis sie fertig waren." Similar comments appear throughout the entire Henkel correspondence.

⁶⁵ Dolmetsch, *German Press*, 130, 131.

⁶⁶ Since the evidence concerning the existence, location, curriculum etc. of this school is very scarce, there does not exist a published study about it. Yet, in 1986, Nancy Stewart made a private, short inquiry, "The German School in New Market," TMS, Broadway, VA, 1986, from which the above information stems.

⁶⁷ *Evangelisches Magazin* (Oct.-Dec. 1811), Microfilm in UVA.

⁶⁸ *Evangelisches Magazin* (Jan.-March 1812): 106.

⁶⁹ *Evangelisches Magazin* (July-Sept. 1812): 194, 196.

⁷⁰ Nelson, *Lutheran Church*, 99.

⁷¹ "Minutes of the North Carolina Synod, 1815," in Gehrke, "Transition from German to English," 14.

⁷² Letter from David Henkel, Saluda, SC, to his parents in Point Pleasant, OH, 13 Jan. 1813, HL.

⁷³ Letter from Andreas Henkel in Point Pleasant, OH, to Paul Henkel in New Market, VA, 12 Dec. 1813, HL.

⁷⁴ Letter from Daniel Kurtz to Paul Henkel, 13 Oct. 1814, UVA.

⁷⁵ Daniel Kurtz and John George Lochman, *Ansprache an die deutschen Einwohner Viginien* (n.p., 1815), 5, transl. in Nelson, *Lutheran Church*, 97. The original was not available at the time when this study was finished.

⁷⁶ *Evangelisches Magazin* (Oct.-Dec. 1813): 70.

⁷⁷ A good comparative example is the private writing from Paul Henkel to Solomon Henkel in New Market, VA, 20 Sept. 1812, HL. Though the letter itself is written in German, its appendix contains a long self-composed English poem.

⁷⁸ Correspondence of John Dreher, Saluda, NC, to Paul Henkel, 1811-12, HL; Paul Henkel to John Henkel, Hanover, PA, 1810, James Madison University Library, Harrisonburg, VA, (henceforth cited as JMU); Moses Henkel, Gideon, Silos, Jehr, and Saul Moses, Jr. (cousins) to Solomon Henkel, New Market, VA, 1800-40, UVA.

⁷⁹ Letter of Ambrosius Henkel, New Market, VA, to John Youngman, Hagerstown, PA, 10 Oct. 1810, JMU.

⁸⁰ E.g., letter from G. Schober, Salem, NC, to Ambrose Henkel, New Market, VA, 10-11 March 1814, JMU. Interestingly the writer changed from German to English when he started

talking about a business. When the authors wrote in German they used the "Sütterlin script." This was current in their mother country until World War II. But once they switched to English they fell back on Latin letters.

⁸¹ David Henkel to his elder brother Solomon Henkel in New Market, VA, 1 Jan. 1825, UVA.

⁸² Eisenberg, *Lutheran Church*, 133; Junkin, *Henkel Genealogy*, 242.

⁸³ Letters from David Henkel to Solomon Henkel, New Market, VA, 28 June 1815, and 29 Oct. 1817, UVA.

⁸⁴ Letter from David Henkel, Lincoln County, NC, to Solomon Henkel, New Market, VA, 15 July 1815, HL.

⁸⁵ David's mother does not seem to have been familiar with English at all. Junkin, *Henkel Genealogy*, 240. The authors quote from a deed of land made in 1819: "And all [witnesses] signed in English except Elizabeth Henkel, wife of Paul Henkel, who signed in German."

⁸⁶ Innumerable letters in the different Henkel collections prove the initially neutral attitude of the fourth generation until ca. 1817.

⁸⁷ Marcus L. Hansen, *The Atlantic Migration 1607-1860* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1961), 71.

⁸⁸ Fortenbaugh, "Synodical Polity," 214, 230.

⁸⁹ The parantheses indicate the years of foundation.

⁹⁰ Bernheim mentions 85 ministers concluding that there were 57 ministers in the Synod of Pennsylvania, 21 in North Carolina, and 7 in New York. *Lutheran Church in North and South Carolina*, 429. Fortenbaugh, who refers to the roll of the Pennsylvania Synod of 1818, counts 98 ministers including even those ministers who had gone out into the new Ohio Synod. "Synodical Polity," 147.

⁹¹ Fortenbaugh, "Synodical Polity," 101-3, 147, 214, 230.

⁹² Gottlieb Shober, *A Comprehensive Account of the Rise and Progress of the Blessed Reformation of the Christian Church*. Quoted in Bernheim, *Lutheran Church in North and South Carolina*, 434.

⁹³ Quoted in Fortenbaugh, "Synodical Polity," 102. See also Eisenberg, *Lutheran Church*, 154.

⁹⁴ Fortenbaugh, "Synodical Polity," 150.

⁹⁵ Fortenbaugh, "Synodical Polity," 149.

⁹⁶ The complicated and often contradictory problematic nature of confessionalism and unionism in the Lutheran Church during this period has been examined by a number of religious historians. The Henkels' role in the course of the events has been best illuminated in Richard H. Baur, "Paul Henkel, Pioneer and Lutheran Missionary," Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1968, 126-94. See also B. H. Pershing, "Paul Henkel: Frontier Missionary, Organizer and Author," *Lutheran Church Quarterly* 31 (1934): 125-51.

⁹⁷ Letter from Andreas Henkel, Somerset, NC, to his parents in New Market, VA, 11 Jan. 1820, HL.

⁹⁸ Letter from David Henkel, Lincoln County, NC, to his brother Solomon, New Market, VA, 9 Aug. 1811, UVA.

⁹⁹ Socrates Henkel, *The History of the Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Synod, embracing an account of the causes, which gave rise to its organization; its organization and name; its position and confessional basis, object of its organization, work development, and various session, its policy; and its future* (New Market, VA: Henkel & Co., 1890), 22.

¹⁰⁰ *Report of the Transactions . . . of the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Tennessee, Ninth Session, etc., also the Constitution which was then adopted and ratified etc. 1828* (New Market, VA, 1828), 19.

¹⁰¹ The outline's entire name was "Plan-Entwurf zu einer Central-Verbindung der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche in den Vereinigten Staaten von Nord-Amerika" (Baltimore, 1819).

¹⁰² Quoted in Eisenberg, *Lutheran Church*, 133-34.

- ¹⁰³ Eisenberg, *Lutheran Church*, 132-36.
- ¹⁰⁴ Fortenbaugh, "Synodical Polity," 116. Socrates Henkel, *Tennessee Synod*, 25.
- ¹⁰⁵ S. Henkel, *Tennessee Synod*, 1-42.
- ¹⁰⁶ Fortenbaugh, "Synodical Polity," 101-3, 147, 214, 230.
- ¹⁰⁷ Samuel S. Schmucker, *The American Lutheran Church, historically, doctrinally, and practically delineated in several occasional discourses* (New York: Arno Press, 1969: reprint of the 1851 edition), 189.
- ¹⁰⁸ Letter from Paul Henkel, New Market, VA, to Charles or Andrew Henkel, 1819, HL.
- ¹⁰⁹ Fortenbaugh, "Synodical Polity," 116.
- ¹¹⁰ David Henkel, *Carolinian Herald of Liberty, Religious and Political; or, a Testimony against Attempted Measures, Which in Their Nature are Calculated to Lead to the Establishment of Popery among Protestants . . .* (Salisbury, NC: Krider & Bingham, 1821), 43. Koenning, *Henkel Press*, 52. See also *Report of the Tennessee Synod 1821*, quoted in: Fortenbaugh, "Synodical Polity," 113.
- ¹¹¹ Letter from Rev. Jacob Laros, Eaton, OH, to Paul Henkel, New Market, VA, 2 Aug. 1821, HL.
- ¹¹² *Report of the Transactions, of the Second Evangelical Lutheran Conference, . . . Tennessee, the 22d. of October 1821* (New Market, VA: Henkel Press, 1821), quoted in: Fortenbaugh, "Synodical Polity," 178.
- ¹¹³ Written in 1815, this quote originally refers to David Henkel's judgement of the art of writing and speaking in general—but five years later he was to incorporate the language in this statement. Letter from David Henkel, Lincoln County, NC, to his brothers Andrew and Solomon, New Market, VA, 15 July 1815, HL.
- ¹¹⁴ Letter from David Henkel, Lincoln County, NC, to his brother Solomon, New Market, VA, 27 Jan. 1820, UVA.
- ¹¹⁵ Letter from David to Solomon Henkel, New Market, VA, 3 Oct. 1820, UVA.
- ¹¹⁶ The whole plan of this society, consisting of nine articles, is developed in a letter by David Henkel, Lincoln County, NC, to his brother Solomon, New Market, VA, 7 April 1820, UVA.
- ¹¹⁷ Letter from David Henkel to his brother Solomon, New Market, VA, 18 Dec. 1820, UVA.
- ¹¹⁸ Letter from Philip Henkel, Tennessee, to his father Paul, New Market, VA, 17 Dec. 1824, HL.
- ¹¹⁹ Letter from Rev. Philip Henkel, Greene County, TN, to his brothers Solomon and Ambrosius Henkel, 20 Nov. 1826, HL.
- ¹²⁰ Alton R. Koenning, *Henkel Press*, 234, 239.
- ¹²¹ Wust, *Virginia Germans*, 140.
- ¹²² Fortenbaugh, "Synodical Polity," 120-22. S. Henkel, *Tennessee Synod*, 30. Wust, *Virginia Germans*, 140.
- ¹²³ Letter from Solomon David Henkel (1815-74), New York, to his father Solomon, New Market, VA, 4 April 1839, JMU.
- ¹²⁴ Preface of the *Book of Concord* (New Market, VA: The Henkel Press, 1851), 3-5.
- ¹²⁵ Henkel, ed., *Book of Concord*, 5.
- ¹²⁶ Wust, *Virginia Germans*, 140.
- ¹²⁷ *Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Winchester* (VA, 1843), 10; *Bericht von den Verrichtungen der Evangelischen Lutheranischen Tennessee Synode, 1841* (New Market, VA, 1841), 9. References in Wust, *Virginia Germans*, 141.
- ¹²⁸ Wust, *Virginia Germans*, 188.
- ¹²⁹ Quoted in Wust, *Virginia Germans*, 188.
- ¹³⁰ A. P. Funkhouser and O. F. Morton, *History of the Church of the United Brethren Virginia Conference* (Dayton, VA: Ruebush-Kiefer Co., 1921), 90.
- ¹³¹ See Stewart and Smith, "German Dialects," 66-70.