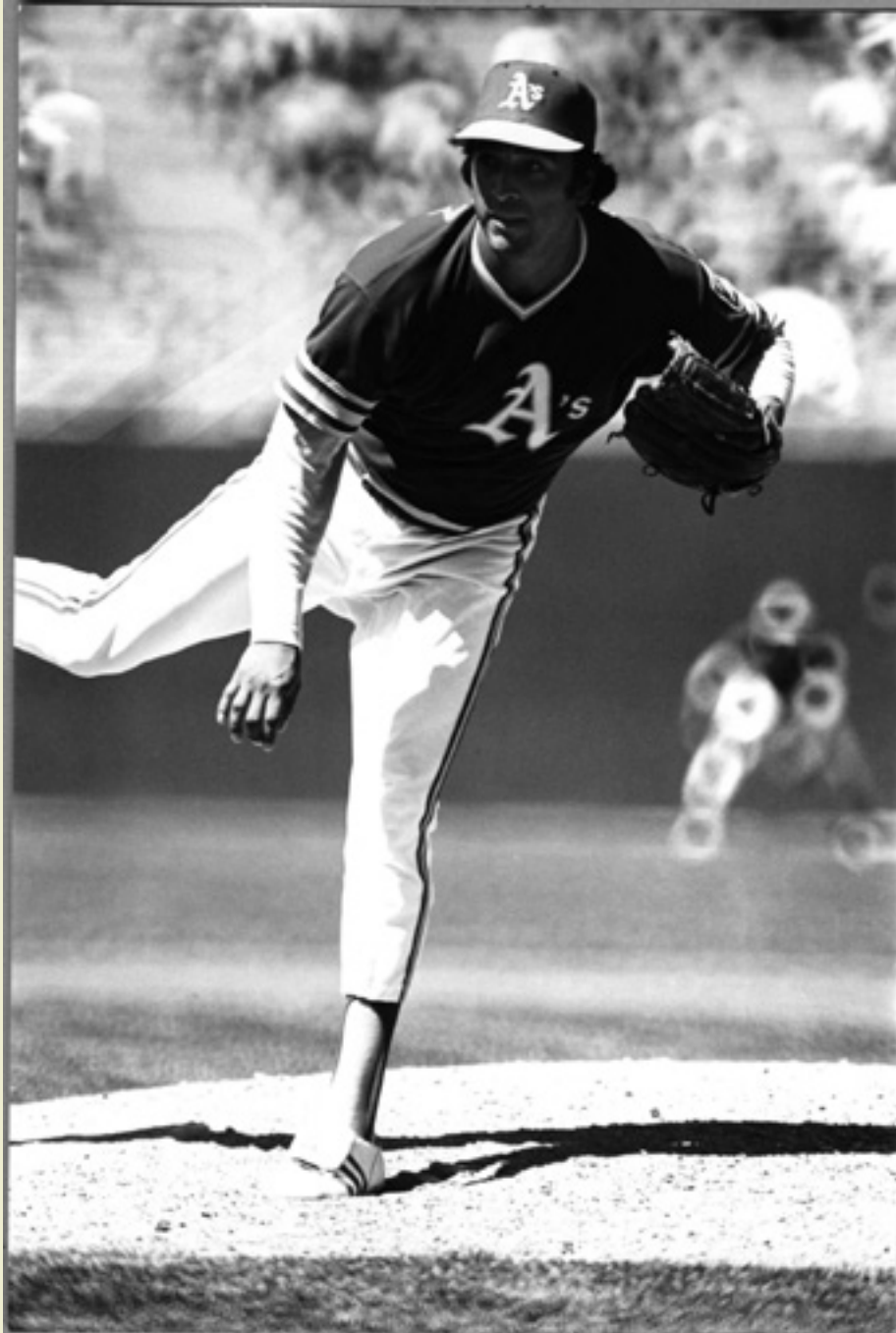


Kansas History

A Journal of the Central Plains

Volume 37, Number 3 | Autumn 2014



*A collaboration of the Kansas Historical Foundation
and the Department of History at Kansas State University*

A Show of Patriotism



German American Farmers, Marion County, June 9, 1918.

When the United States formally declared war against Germany on April 6, 1917, many Americans believed that the war involved both the battlefield in Europe and a fight against disloyal German Americans at home. Zealous patriots who considered German Americans to be enemy sympathizers, spies, or slackers demanded proof that immigrants were "100 percent American." Across the country, but especially in the Midwest, where many German settlers had formed close-knit communities, the public pressured schools, colleges, and churches to discontinue the use of the German language. Local newspapers published the names of "disloyalists" and listed their offenses: speaking German, neglecting to donate to the Red Cross, declining to buy liberty bonds, resisting the draft, or refusing to fly an American flag. A Kansas City Star article published on June 9, 1918, warned German Americans in the small Pottawatomie County town of Onaga that "word has gone out the German language is not to be spoken on the streets of

Onaga. There are enough patriotic citizens of the neighborhood to enforce the order and they promise to do it." Wamego mayor Floyd Funnell declared, "We can't hope to change the heart of the Hun but we can and will change his actions and his words." Like-minded Kansans circulated petitions to protest schools that offered German language classes and churches that delivered sermons in German, while less peaceful protestors threatened accused enemy aliens with mob violence. In 1918 in Marion County, home to a thriving Mennonite community, this group of German American farmers posed before their tractor and threshing machinery with a large American flag in an attempt to prove their patriotism with a public display of loyalty. In the midst of a nationwide backlash against their heritage and culture, these farmers might not have been responding to a specific threat, but it may not have been a coincidence that the nearby Mennonite-affiliated Tabor College was burned to the ground in April 1918.

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p. 130



p. 148



p. 164



p. 180

Language and Loyalty: 130
The First World War and German
Instruction at Two Kansas Schools
by Justine Greve

Microcosm of Manhood: 148
Abilene, Eisenhower, and
Nineteenth-Century Male Identity
by Peter M. Nadeau

The Early Life and 164
Career of Topeka's
Mike Torrez, 1946–1978:
Sport as Means for Studying Latino/a
Life in Kansas
by Jorge Iber

Under Moonlight in Missouri: 180
Private John Benton Hart's Account
of Price's Raid, October 1864
edited by John Hart

Reviews 200

Book Notes 207



Department of History

Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains is published quarterly through a partnership between the Kansas Historical Foundation and the Department of History at Kansas State University. The Kansas Historical Foundation serves as a fund raising, fund management, membership, and retail organization to support and promote the Kansas Historical Society, a state agency that safeguards and shares the state's history through the collection, preservation, and interpretation of its past. The Society's collections and programs are diverse and are made available through its library and museum in Topeka, historic sites and classrooms

across the state, and publications and web-based resources accessible everywhere. The Department of History at Kansas State University is especially well suited to the study of Kansas, agricultural, and environmental history. As a Land Grant school whose culture and economy have historically been shaped by the economy in the state, the history of Kansas holds a venerable place in the academic offerings of the University. Environmental History, with a particular focus on agricultural, water, and grassland issues in Kansas, has become increasingly more important to university research and curricula worldwide.

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The journal publishes scholarly articles, edited documents, and other materials that contribute to an understanding of the history and cultural heritage of Kansas and the central plains. Political, social, intellectual, cultural, economic, and institutional histories are welcome, as are biographical and historiographical interpretations and studies of archaeology, the built environment, and material culture. Articles emphasizing visual documentation, exceptional reminiscences, and autobiographical writings are also considered for publication. Genealogical studies are generally not accepted.

Manuscripts are evaluated anonymously by scholars who determine their suitability for publication based on originality, quality of research, significance, and presentation, among other factors. Previously published articles or manuscripts that are being considered for publication elsewhere will not be considered. The editors reserve the right to make changes in accepted articles and will consult with the authors regarding such. The publishers assume no responsibility for statements of fact or opinion made by contributors.

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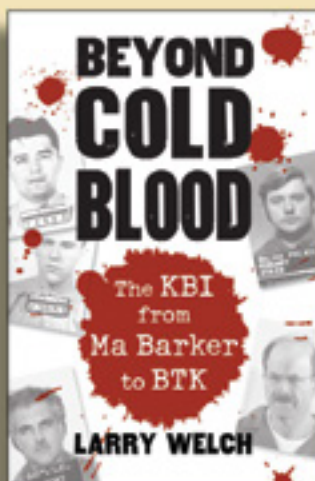
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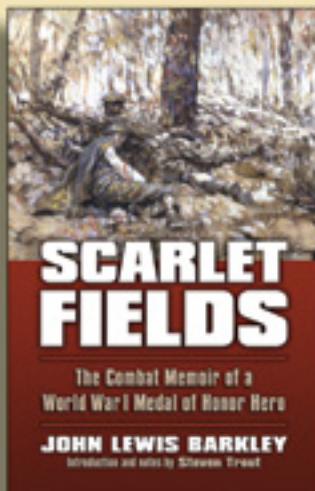
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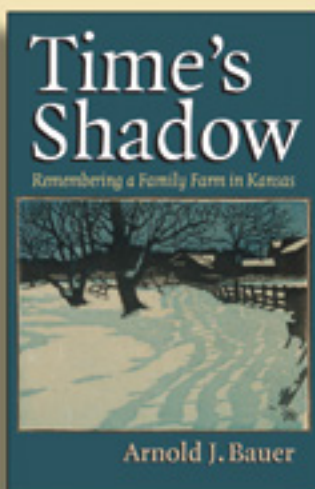
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