

MATHILDE FRANZISKA ANNEKE (1817-1884): SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR AND SUFFRAGETTE

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Introduction

Mathilde Franziska Anneke (born April 3, 1817, in Hiddinghausen, Province of Westphalia, Kingdom of Prussia; died November 25, 1884, Milwaukee, WI, USA) was an entrepreneur, lecturer, educator, journalist, writer, and a newspaper editor. She was well educated and a free and independent thinker, interested in political and social reform on behalf of women in both the German lands and the United States. In addition to cultivating her professional, pedagogical, and literary endeavors, she was a wife and mother of seven children, three of whom survived to adulthood. She founded the first women's newspapers in the German lands and in the United States and is considered the most famous woman among the German "Forty-Eighters" who immigrated to the U.S. in the mid-nineteenth century.¹ She displayed a lifelong commitment to equal rights for women and joined the emerging Women's Rights Movement in the United States, becoming their most popular speaker in the Midwest. During her lifetime, she was well known and held in high esteem by the early leading feminists living in the northeast including Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) and Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902).² Anneke also advocated for women's education and established a girls' school, which gained a reputation for excellence among German-Americans in the Midwest and which she led for eighteen years until her death in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1884. Throughout her life, she spoke and wrote on improving the lot of women and viewed the amelioration of their social standing as a matter of human rights based on reason. She believed radical change to the political system would benefit not just women, but men as well. For this reason, she addressed both men and women in her lectures and writings and allowed boys to attend her girls' school. She did not live to see women gain the right to vote in either Germany or the United States, but her efforts to champion the rights, welfare, and betterment of women's lives, as reflected in her newspapers and girls' school challenged the existing system and had an impact on society decades after her death. Anneke died at the age of 67 and is buried alongside her second husband, Fritz Anneke, in the Forest Home Cemetery in Milwaukee where many other renowned German-American entrepreneurs are laid to rest.³

- 1 Cora Lee Kluge, ed., *Other Witnesses: An Anthology of Literature of the German Americans, 1850-1914* (Madison, 2007), 83. The "Forty-Eighters" were comprised of thousands of German immigrants who had participated in the failed European revolutions of 1848/49 and afterwards relocated to the United States.
- 2 Michaela Bank, *Women of Two Countries: German-American Women, Women's Rights, and Nativism 1848-1890* (New York, 2012), 1.
- 3 Her headstone is located in section 15, block 3, lot 2, grave 7 and the epitaph on her headstone reads, "We never knelt before false gods. We never shook in stormy weather. Instead we believed in the divinity whose love still builds tabernacles." *Trümmer und Epheu* is a novella written by August Konrad Gustav Pfarrius (1800-1884) and published in 1852. Pfarrius was a professor, writer, and popular poet from the Rhineland.

Anneke did not reap great financial rewards from her various entrepreneurial activities during her lifetime, including her newspapers and school, but financial gain was less significant to her than the social impact of her entrepreneurial activities. In this respect, Anneke can be viewed as a social entrepreneur. The concept was not recognized before the Social Entrepreneurship movement began in the 1980s when Bill Drayton founded Ashoka, an organization that promotes the notion that everyone can be a change-maker and make a positive difference in the world.⁴ Prior to Drayton's activism, social entrepreneurs were often referred to as humanitarians, saints, or simply do-gooders, individuals who made a significant impact by changing the way society approached social issues or viewed vulnerable populations that had been traditionally ignored, neglected, or intentionally disenfranchised. In the case of Anneke, she was an entrepreneur in the traditional, mainstream interpretation since she took significant financial risks in order to establish and operate newspapers and her girls' school. However, she did not make great profits with these enterprises and struggled to keep them viable financially. In contrast, she succeeded as a social entrepreneur by impacting the lives of her readers, students, and women everywhere. Her ideas and educational methods were radical at the time, but proved to be sustainable and influential. These ideas and methods, rather than her specific business ventures, constitute her entrepreneurial legacy.

4 "Ashoka: Innovators for the Public." <https://www.ashoka.org/team/drayton> (accessed March 2, 2014). Social entrepreneurs include: Susan B. Anthony, Florence Nightingale, Mohammed Yunus, Fabio Rosa, Maria Montessori, Saint Francis of Assisi, and John Muir, among many others.

5 Anneke began her memoirs when she turned fifty and translated "Levringhausen" as "House of the Larks." She remembered it as her "paradise never recaptured." Charlotte L. Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke* (Madison, 1998), 48. See note 2.

6 Manfred Gebhardt, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke: Madame, Soldat und Suffragette* (Berlin, 1988), 8.

7 "Westfälische Geschichte — Mathilde Franziska Anneke," http://www.lwl.org/westfaelische-geschichte/portal/Internet/finde/langDatensatz.php?urlID=598&url_tabelle=tab_person&url_zae_hler_blaettern=2 (accessed March 4, 2014).

Family Background

Anneke was the oldest of twelve children born to devout Catholic parents on her paternal grandfather's picturesque estate of *Oberlevringhausen* near Blankenstein on the Ruhr River.⁵ Her parents, Karl Giesler and Elisabeth Hülswitt Giesler, were members of the local nobility, and her father's godfather was prominent Prussian reformer Heinrich Friedrich Karl Freiherr vom und zum Stein (1757-1831). As a child, Anneke often visited Stein and his family on their estate of *Cappenberg*.⁶ The Giesler family was well respected by the community and Anneke's concern for the societal wellbeing of others can be traced to her grandfather, Franz Giesler. After the Napoleonic wars and ensuing years of hunger and privation, he alleviated suffering by ensuring that those living nearby had enough to eat. Anneke later described him as a "humanitarian man" (*menschenfreundlichen Mann*).⁷ Anneke's father was a tax assessor and king's counselor (*Domänenrat*) in the town of Blankenstein where they lived as of 1820. He was also a wealthy mine owner and was initially able to

provide well for his family.⁸ In 1830, the family moved to Hattingen. (The village of Blankenstein is now part of Hattingen.) Born after Napoleon Bonaparte's reign and defeat, Mathilde matured during the German *Biedermeier* period. She was nurtured and highly educated and showed an affinity for literature, reading, and art at a young age. The comprehensive, liberal arts-based education she received was typical for girls from a higher social status.⁹ She drew, painted, played the piano, and received a well-rounded education that included German language and literature, science, and mathematics.¹⁰ Her parents sent her to the town school in Hattingen, but she also benefited from private instruction until her father lost most of his fortune and the family's social status declined.¹¹ By 1835, he was facing bankruptcy. Failed investments in railroad stocks caused their standard of living to plummet and Mathilde, a dutiful daughter, agreed to marry Alfred Philipp Ferdinand von Tabouillot, a wealthy wine merchant ten years her senior, who in 1836 arranged to pay off her father's debt in exchange for her hand in marriage.¹²

Although she had enjoyed a happy, secure, and carefree childhood, the same cannot be said of her marriage, which she entered into at the age of nineteen. The marriage produced a daughter named Johanna (Fanny). However, it was not a happy one and Mathilde suffered from her husband's abuse and excessive drinking. She became a prominent member of Prussian-Westphalian high society until she divorced Herr von Tabouillot and lost her social standing.¹³ Anneke had left him a year after her wedding and soon after Fanny's birth in 1837, but was not granted a divorce until 1843. The divorce process lasted several years from 1838 until 1841 and it was determined that she was at fault for the failed marriage. She was, however, able to use her given name again and received custody of her daughter.¹⁴ Divorce at the time was still very unusual but was made possible by the Code Napoleon, the French civil code established in 1804 and adopted by many countries occupied by the French during the Napoleonic Wars.¹⁵ Her prolonged divorce enlightened her to the unjust laws, debasement, and harsh treatment of married women, which contributed to her lifelong battle for civil liberties and equal rights for women. Once on her own, she supported herself and her infant daughter by writing and contributing to women's almanacs. Anneke's early writings are conventional *Biedermeier* texts.¹⁶ She wrote religious poetry and published her collection of prose and verse as *Greetings from the Homeland (Heimatgruss)*. Although she found Catholic Church doctrine unjust and argued that it, along with laws designed

8 Fritz Anneke and Mathilde Franziska Anneke Papers. Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison. Henceforth FA&MFA Papers.

9 Gebhardt, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 12.

10 Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 9.

11 Martin Henkel and Rolf Taubert, *Das Weib im Conflict mit den Socialen Verhältnissen* (Bochum, 1976), 9.

12 *Ibid.*, 10.

13 *Ibid.*

14 "Mathilde Franziska Anneke," http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mathilde_Anneke (accessed March 1, 2014).

15 Henkel and Taubert, *Das Weib im Conflict*, 11.

16 Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 10.

to preserve men's interests, forced women into subordination, she found consolation in her faith and published two prayer books: *The Christian's Joyous Gaze at the Heavenly Father (Des Christen freudiger Aufblick zum himmlischen Vater)* and *The Lord is Present and Calls You (Der Meister ist da und rufet dich)*, the latter enthusiastically endorsed by Kaspar Maximilian Droste zu Vischerin, Bishop of Münster, who encouraged its use in parish schools.¹⁷

Anneke's literary and journalistic activity in the German lands was diverse. Over the years, she penned poetic writings and novellas, wrote for various almanacs and journals such as *Gartenlaube*, and submitted articles and poems to newspapers such as the *Kölnische Zeitung*, *Augsburger Allgemeine*, *Düsseldorfer Zeitung*, and *Mannheimer Abendzeitung*.¹⁸ She also succeeded in convincing well-known contemporary writers to contribute to her women's almanac (*Damenalmanach*), which appeared in 1842. She translated English-language novels into German and in 1844 completed a drama entitled *Oithono or the Consecration of the Temple (Oithono, oder die Tempelweihe)*.¹⁹ As a professional writer, she went by the name "Mathilde Franziska" and became a well-known journalist.²⁰ In 1846 she wrote a pamphlet entitled *Woman in Conflict with Social Conditions (Das Weib im Conflict mit den sozialen Verhältnissen)*, a passionate defense of women that is more reflective of her later work. In this brochure, she defended Louise Astor, who, like Anneke, had been encouraged to marry a wealthy man and who had later found herself in a "scandalous" position with regard to church and state for pursuing a divorce.²¹ The publication of this pamphlet, Anneke's first major essay concerning the improvement of women's social and political standing, not only gained her a national reputation, but also resulted in changes to laws in the German lands that dealt with marriage and divorce.²²

17 Albert B. Faust, "Mathilde Franziska Giesler-Anneke," in *German-American Literature*, ed. Don Tolzmann (Metuchen: Scarecrow, 1977), 172-78, here 174. Henkel and Taubert, *Das Weib im Conflict*, 12.

18 Rudolph A. Koss, *Milwaukee* (Milwaukee, 1871), under "Deutsche Frauen-Zeitung," <http://books.google.com/books?id=mD4VAAAAYAAJ&pg=PP1&dq=milwaukee+rudolph+a+koss&hl=en&sa=X&ei=VCFkUsCbjtSyygGlpYHGD&ved=0CC8Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=milwaukee%20rudolph%20a%20koss&f=true>. Anneke was still living when this monograph was published. The *Kölnische Zeitung* and the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung* were the most prominent liberal newspapers of that time. Henkel and Taubert, *Das Weib im Conflict*, 12.

19 Anneke's drama appears to have been influenced by the structure of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's play entitled *Torquato Tasso*. Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 10. Her play was performed and received as a success first in Münster and later in Milwaukee when it was staged in 1882 in honor of Anneke.

Charles Fechter, an actor, translated the play into English but it was never performed on account of Fechter's early retirement. Faust, "Mathilde Franziska Giesler-Anneke," 175.

20 Lillian Krueger, "Madame Mathilde Franziska Anneke: An Early Wisconsin Journalist," *Wisconsin*

Magazine of History 21 (1937): 161. Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 10.

21 Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 11.

22 Susan L. Piepke, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke (1817-1884): The Works and Life of a German-American Activist* (New York, 2006), 7.

In 1837, Anneke and her daughter moved to Wesel, a small garrison town in the Prussian Rhine Province, and two years later to Münster in Westphalia, where she sought intellectual stimulation and more journalistic opportunities. Her circle of friends included the writer and poet Annette von Droste-Hülshoff (1797-1848).²³ She joined a debating society called the “Demokratischer Verein,” in which she met her second husband, Captain Friedrich “Fritz” Anneke, a former Prussian artillery officer, whom she married on June 3, 1847.²⁴ Fritz’s socialist beliefs had led him to be dismissed from the military in 1845.²⁵ Members of the debating club met on Mondays and not only discussed societal conditions and liberal ideas but also literature and art.²⁶ Many were journalists who wrote for the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, edited by Karl Marx.²⁷ Mathilde and Fritz Anneke shared concerns regarding social justice, freedom from oppression, and equality. They soon moved to Cologne where Marx and others were politically active. Anneke had been the only woman to attend Marx’s debating club.²⁸ After settling in Cologne, they established a newspaper for the working class, farmers, and soldiers, *Die Neue Kölnische Zeitung für Bürger, Bauern und Soldaten*.²⁹ They adopted the motto of the south German democrats: “Prosperity, Freedom, Education for Everyone!” (“Wohlstand, Freiheit, Bildung für alle!”).³⁰ The Annekes supported the establishment of a republic in the Rhineland and after Fritz gave a “revolutionary speech” in Cologne before thousands of spectators, he was arrested on July 3, 1848. Later that month on July 21, Mathilde gave birth to their son Fritz.³¹ His birth certificate listed his father’s religion as Protestant, his mother’s as Catholic, and no religion for himself, which suggests Anneke did not necessarily abandon her Catholic faith, but rather objected to how it was practiced by church officials.³² The stress of her husband’s situation, caring for a newborn, as well as the summer heat, contributed to frequent illnesses during the summer of 1848. At the same time, Mathilde continued to edit the Annekes’ newspaper, publishing the first issue in September 1848 while Fritz was still imprisoned. She expressed her support for the revolution in the newspaper and replaced the furniture and carpets in her parlor with a printing press while Fritz was awaiting trial for treason.³³ When the authorities forced her to stop publishing the newspaper, she founded her own.³⁴

In September 1848, Mathilde Anneke founded and edited the first German newspaper for women, the *Frauen-Zeitung* in Cologne. At the time,

23 Annette von Droste-Hülshoff is best known for her novella “The Jew’s Beech” (“Die Judenbuche”), a murder mystery from 1842 that is never solved. Droste-Hülshoff provided three poems for Anneke’s almanac, *Products of the Red Earth* (Westfälisches Jahrbuch [1846] Produkte der Rothen Erde). Piepke, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 15.

24 Kluge, *Other Witnesses*, 83.

25 FA&MFA Papers.

26 Gebhardt, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 34.

27 Henkel and Taubert, *Das Weib im Conflict*, 13.

28 Kluge, *Other Witnesses*, 83. Bank, *Women of Two Countries*, 20.

29 Erhard Kiehnbaum, *Blieb Gesund, Mein Liebster Sohn Fritz: Mathilde Franziska Annekes Briefe an Friedrich Hammacher 1846-1849* (Berlin, 2004), 20.

30 Gebhardt, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 69.

31 Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 12.

32 Gebhardt, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 65.

33 Krueger, “Madame Mathilde Franziska Anneke,” 160.

34 The newspaper stopped publication as of June 1849 because the Annekes went to fight in the revolution. Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 13.

35 Henkel and Taubert, *Das Weib im Conflict*, 51.

36 There is some debate as to whether Anneke's women's newspaper should be considered a feminist newspaper. Maria Wagner refers to it as such, as does the Wisconsin Historical Society. "Mathilde Anneke," *Wisconsin Historical Society*, <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/topics/anneke/> (accessed August 10, 2013). Maria Wagner, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke in Selbstzeugnissen und Dokumenten* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1980), 10. Henkel and Taubert, as well as Gebhardt consider it more of a newspaper written by a woman.

37 Gebhardt, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 79-82.

38 Piepke takes up this debate between Gebhardt and Wagner in her book. She concludes that the disagreement concerns the definition of the word "feminist," which is a source of controversy even today. She decides to avoid calling Anneke a feminist but commends her for her journalistic achievements. Piepke, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 19-20.

39 Kluge, *Other Witnesses*, 83.

40 Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 15.

41 "The Making of Milwaukee," *Milwaukee Public Television*, <http://www.themakingofmilwaukee.com/people/historical.cfm> (accessed November 1, 2013).

42 Bank, *Women of Two Countries*, 15.

43 Schurz served as Anneke's clerk because he was unable to ride on the battlefield. Henkel and Taubert, *Das Weib im Conflict*, 126.

she was caring for eleven-year old Fanny and her newborn, Fritz. Given the strong influence of the Catholic Church in Cologne with regard to children's upbringing, she was careful not to antagonize the church hierarchy. She therefore dealt with questions and matters related to the education of children.³⁵ Still, she was concerned with women's equality and intended to further their cause through her newspaper.³⁶ Historian Manfred Gebhardt maintains that her publication was not a feminist newspaper in the strictest sense and that Anneke's purpose was to find another means by which to encourage both men and women to support the revolution once the Prussian authorities stopped publication of the *Neue Kölnische Zeitung*.³⁷ He asserts that Anneke was a political journalist and reported on the latest events, meetings, and arrests around Cologne. She also discussed the role of schools in society and churches' influence in the school system. Historian Maria Wagner argues that the aim of Anneke's newspaper was to promote women's rights, a stance which today would be characterized as feminist.³⁸ Anneke's newspaper was short-lived and she soon had to abandon it for her own personal safety. The second edition of the paper has been lost and Prussian authorities halted distribution of the final edition before it could be delivered.

A few months later, she and Fritz fought alongside insurgents in Baden in the 1848-1849 revolutions against royalist forces in the various German states. The Annekes challenged repressive regimes and supported democracy and their vision of prosperity, liberty, and education for all. Colonel Fritz Anneke had assisted with organizing artillery forces within the revolutionary army and retreated with them to Baden after defeats in clashes with royalist forces. In May 1849, Mathilde joined Fritz on the battlefield, riding horseback as his ordinance officer or unarmed orderly (*Ordonnanzoffizier*) during the day and staying by his side at night until the end of the campaign.³⁹ She also carried messages to and from command posts and sometimes rode long hours in dangerous territory, eliciting negative reactions on account of her being a woman.⁴⁰ Similar to many of the revolutionaries, the Annekes were free thinkers and idealists.⁴¹ The "Forty-Eighters" included educated professionals and progressive intellectuals from the middle class as well as many individuals from the working class who were financially destitute.⁴² Famed "Forty-Eighter" and German-American statesman, Carl Schurz (1829-1906), for example, served as Fritz Anneke's adjutant in the Baden campaign.⁴³ He later fought as a brigadier general in the Union Army in the American Civil War and went on to become a Secretary of the Interior and the

first German-American U.S. senator.⁴⁴ The German revolutions, however, were gradually suppressed and the insurgents were defeated by July 1849. The Annekes fled with their two children to France and Switzerland, and finally to the United States.⁴⁵ They initially intended to establish a democratic newspaper in Switzerland, but because they had no personal capital or access to credit, they decided to immigrate to the United States.⁴⁶ They never registered with the Swiss police and despite not having passports were able to board a freighter called the *Robert Parker*, which left Le Havre, France for the U.S. in October 1849.⁴⁷ After seven weeks at sea, they arrived in New York in mid-November of 1849 as political refugees. Despite offers to stay in New York, Fritz Anneke's cousin, Fritz Horn, persuaded him to relocate to Cedarburg, near Milwaukee, where he could establish a firm and work as a writer, commentator, or publicist.⁴⁸ The winters in Wisconsin were long and cold and Mathilde arrived ill after the long trip. They soon became disappointed with Cedarburg and decided to move to Milwaukee as soon as they could. Once they settled in Milwaukee in the spring of 1850, Mathilde initially admired the beauty of the surrounding area, but later complained about a lack of "really cultured associates."⁴⁹

Business Development

As soon as the Annekes settled in Milwaukee, Mathilde Anneke began traveling and speaking to large audiences about the German revolutions, literary topics, and the necessity of improving women's social standing and rights.⁵⁰ She continued these activities for the next ten years. For example, on April 16, 1850, she delivered a talk entitled "Political Events and Poetry in Germany" at the Military Hall in Milwaukee and later in 1859 she gave another speech on Thomas Paine.⁵¹ In August 1850, she gave birth to her second son, Percy Shelley, named after the radical English Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) who was married to Mary Shelley (1797-1851), a feminist best known for her Gothic novel *Frankenstein*.⁵²

44 Krueger, "Madame Mathilde Franziska Anneke," 160. Schurz shared other common interests with the Annekes. He immigrated to the United States and moved to Watertown, Wisconsin, in 1855. He studied and practiced

law in Milwaukee and edited and wrote for newspapers as well. His wife, Margarethe Meyer Schurz, founded the first kindergarten in the United States in Watertown in 1856.

45 Krueger, "Madame Mathilde Franziska Anneke," 162.

46 Henkel and Taubert, *Das Weib im Conflict*, 128.

47 *Ibid.*, 130.

48 *Ibid.*

49 FA&MFA Papers. See the Biographical Notes in Commemoration of Fritz Anneke and Mathilde Franziska Anneke assembled by Henriette M. Heinzen and Hertha Anneke Sanne in 1940, 27.

50 Faust, "Mathilde Franziska Giesler-Anneke," 176. During this time and for the next three years, Fritz worked on a railroad in Illinois, worked briefly as state librarian of Wisconsin, gave riding lessons, and lectured. FA&MFA Papers.

51 FA&MFA Papers. See the Biographical Notes in Commemoration of Fritz Anneke and Mathilde Franziska Anneke assembled by Henriette M. Heinzen and Hertha Anneke Sanne in 1940, 33.

52 Henkel and Taubert, *Das Weib im Conflict*, 132. Percy Shelley Anneke (1850-1928) became a successful businessman and was an investor in Fitzer's Brewery in Duluth, Minnesota. "Mathilde Franziska Anneke," http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mathilde_Anneke (accessed March 1, 2014).

Milwaukee attracted political refugees in the late 1840s and early 1850s and had a large and active German population that continued to speak German both at home and in public. Seventy percent of the population spoke German and laws were printed in both English and German.⁵³ The German cultural influence, including their sense of coziness or “Gemütlichkeit,” was so dominant in the social and intellectual life of Milwaukee that in the late 1840s, it was known as the German Athens of America, the cultural center of all things German.⁵⁴ German civic societies, music clubs and choral societies, theaters, hunting clubs, churches, breweries, machine shops, bakeries, and presses flourished, one of which was instrumental in helping Anneke publish her first newspaper in the U.S.⁵⁵ In March 1852, Anneke founded the first feminist newspaper published by a woman in the United States, *Die Deutsche Frauen-Zeitung* or the *German Women’s Times*. Anneke, a refugee with little personal capital or access to credit, was able to launch her newspaper with the assistance of the publisher and editor of the *Der Volksfreund*, who assumed the costs for typesetting, supplying paper for, and publishing the first edition.⁵⁶ When it appeared, another newspaper in Milwaukee *Das Tägliche Banner* welcomed its publication and ran the following on March 30, 1852:

The German *Frauen-Zeitung* edited by Frau Mathilde Francisca Anneke, née Giesler, and issued at the office of our *Volksfreund* has just made its friendly and promising appearance, and we hasten to heartily welcome the esteemed editor. The German *Frauen-Zeitung* will appear provisionally each month at the subscription price of \$1. Individual numbers cost 10 cents. The first number at hand is well gotten up and edited with especial care.⁵⁷

Later editions were published in the facilities of Milwaukee’s leading newspaper, the *Wisconsin Banner*, where German-speaking women, including Anneke’s eldest daughter, Fanny Stoerger, assisted with the publication as compositors or typesetters. They set and printed the newspaper and worked alongside male staff. As editor and publisher, Anneke focused on the intellectual and ethical elevation and equality of women with regard to their representation in social and political realms. In contrast to her earlier women’s newspaper published in the German lands, this one focused on themes related to the American women’s rights movement and reported on feminist activities.⁵⁸ She spent the rest of her life representing these ideals,

53 Gebhardt, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 265.

54 Kathleen Neils Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee 1836-1860: Accommodation and Community in a Frontier City* (Cambridge, 1976), 172.

55 Anneke wrote reviews of theatrical productions for the newspapers. FA&MFA Papers. See the Biographical Notes in Commemoration of Fritz Anneke and Mathilde Franziska Anneke assembled by Henriette M. Heinzen and Hertha Anneke Sanne in 1940, 33.

56 Koss, *Milwaukee*.

57 Krueger, “Madame Mathilde Franziska Anneke,” 165.

58 Gebhardt, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 163.

speaking and writing with conviction.⁵⁹ The motto of her newspaper included a quote by Friedrich von Sallet (1812-1843), which roughly translates as: “A woman is an unmoved, transparent sea, illuminated in its very depth by the eternal light, but whose surge has not tried, recognized, and felt itself in the driving and pressing labor, and self-motion, as a brook and stream and as a living force.”⁶⁰ The message of her publication and the deliberate decision to hire women, however, contributed to the demise of her newspaper in Milwaukee.

Anneke was a pioneering female publicist and journalist in a male-dominated industry. As soon as she had arrived in the United States, she had familiarized herself with Susan B. Anthony’s and Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s feminist writings. She had translated their articles and had tried, without success, to place them in German-language newspapers, which had contributed to her desire to establish her own.⁶¹ Some readers of her new newspaper viewed her with curiosity or admiration, while others saw her as a “shameless interloper” and questioned her motives.⁶² Her publication, which reflected the social justice and humanitarian ideals of the 1848 German revolutionaries, prompted male printers in Milwaukee to organize a local typographers union two months later on May 18, 1852.⁶³ Fearful and jealous of competition from women, the all-male union utilized social and economic pressure to safeguard members’ jobs. They asked the supervisors of printing firms not to hire women and to terminate those already employed, a maneuver that targeted Anneke and her female staff.⁶⁴ The printers attacked her newspaper and denigrated it as pious and petty, lacking substance and sophistication or *Bildung*.⁶⁵ Members of the German printers union saw Anneke as an “agitator” and demanded that “unauthorized interlopers” be fired.⁶⁶ Heated discussions followed and Anneke’s husband, Fritz, entered the fray, accusing the printers of hypocrisy and duplicity. The printer’s union claimed they were maintaining the social world order, *die Weltordnung*, when in fact they appeared only to support their version of order, one without women in the workforce.⁶⁷ They distanced themselves from women, denied them a sphere in which

» held in Seneca Falls, New York in July 1848. Over three hundred women and men attended, including Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and Frederick Douglass. The National Women’s Hall of Fame, “We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men and women are created equal,” <http://www.greatwomen.org/about-the-hall/our-history> (accessed November 9, 2013). Anneke later made contact with the leaders of the suffragist movement as well as with many of the women’s groups that developed in various states since the first convention.

62 Krueger, “Madame Mathilde Franziska Anneke,” 160.

63 Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee*, 188.

64 Krueger, “Madame Mathilde Franziska Anneke,” 166.

65 Koss, *Milwaukee*.

66 Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee*, 112. Koss, *Milwaukee*.

67 Krueger, “Madame Mathilde Franziska Anneke,” 166. The Catholic newspaper, *Der Seebote*, also maintained that Anneke’s newspaper was endangering the world order and attacked her motives before the first edition even appeared. Henkel and Taubert, *Das Weib im Conflict*, 134. Krueger, “Madame Mathilde Franziska Anneke,” 165.

59 Koss, *Milwaukee*.

60 Krueger, “Madame Mathilde Franziska Anneke,” 164-65. Krueger attributes this translation to Professor William Huth of Whitewater,

Wisconsin. Koss included the original German quotation in his monograph. Koss, *Milwaukee*.

61 Annette P. Bus, “Mathilde Anneke and the Suffrage

Movement,” in *The German Forty-Eighters in the United States*, ed. Charlotte L. Brancaforte (New York, 1989), 80. The First American Women’s Rights Convention was »

to work, and in the end helped to eliminate their means of earning an independent living.

In the face of the assault from the local union, Anneke attempted to sustain her entrepreneurial print venture by making it independent and, therefore, less susceptible to their pressure tactics. In the summer of 1852 she began a lecture tour to raise capital to establish a small, independent press. She hoped to secure more subscribers for her newspaper and create an organization of German women that would use her newspaper as its official organ in order to generate greater revenue from the publication.⁶⁸ She traveled to many large cities where typographical unions were present and spoke about the significance of her newspaper in hopes of securing more subscribers and greater funding. Speaking on behalf of women, she became one of their most popular speakers, especially in cities with large German populations.⁶⁹ It is noteworthy that she always included men in her plea for improving women's social and political standing. Her talks were sponsored by local German organizations such as the Turners (*Turnvereine*), Workers' Unions (*Arbeitervereine*), and Free Thought Communities (*Freie Gemeinden*).⁷⁰ The German-language press gave her full coverage wherever she spoke. On August 4, 1852, the *Wisconsin Banner* reported: "Frau Mathilde F. Anneke left on a propaganda tour in the interest of her *Frauen-Zeitung* on last Friday. She will visit Detroit, Cleveland, Buffalo, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Wheeling, etc. May the public extend to her a friendly welcome everywhere. . ."⁷¹

While Anneke was away on her lecture tour, her mother and sisters watched her children in Milwaukee since Fritz was on his way to New York where he intended to establish a newspaper and relocate the family.⁷² She raised the funds that she needed, however, much to the disappointment of Anneke's readers, she decided to shut down her print operations in Milwaukee after only seven months. She failed to establish the German women's organization that she had hoped

68 Bus, "Mathilde Anneke," 81.

69 Faust, "Mathilde Franziska Giesler-Anneke," 176.

70 The Turners or *Turnvereine* were gymnastics clubs that had originated in Germany in the early nineteenth century to prepare young men mentally and physically for resisting Napoleon's forces. They were also freethinkers and held liberal political views. German immigrants continued the tradition and established similar associations upon their arrival in America. See for example Turner Hall & the Milwaukee Turners, "History of the Milwaukee Turners," <http://www.milwaukeeeturners.org/about/history-of-milwaukee-turners> (accessed September 1, 2013). The Milwaukee Turners are Milwaukee's oldest civic organization and was founded by August Willich in 1853. Willich went on to become a general in the Union Army, as did at least seven other Turners. When the Annekes first arrived in Milwaukee, they joined the local Turners, sending their young son Percy to Willich's Sunday Turner classes. Mathilde, however, objected to the Turners' attitudes regarding the woman's role and societal position in which women were relegated to childrearing and kitchen work. She objected to their assertion that women lacked the mental »

» and physical capacities to pursue strenuous intellectual endeavors. Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 19. Thought Communities or *Freie Gemeinden* in the United States consisted of services and individuals who pursued reason,

enlightenment, and democratic ideals. They opposed superstition and blind obedience and advocated for rational thinking.

71 Krueger, "Madame Mathilde Franziska Anneke," 166.

72 Wagner, *Mathilde Franziska*, 76. Anneke's unmarried sisters, Johanna and Maria, had relocated to Milwaukee with their mother, as did Fritz Anneke's brother Carl. Piepke, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 48.

would be affiliated with her newspaper. The irony of the printers' reaction to her employing women to produce her newspaper in Milwaukee is that a decade later printers were forced to employ women due to a labor shortage during the Civil War. With male typographers volunteering for military service, local printers welcomed women into their print shops as compositors to keep operations running.⁷³ In this sense, Anneke was ahead of her time, not only for demanding women's right to vote and work, but also for recognizing the potential of women's contributions particularly in times of crisis and war. The German printers' union that had initially met periodically and had been instrumental in forcing her to cease publication in Milwaukee obtained permanent status at Local 23 of the National Typographical Union in 1859, the first labor organization in Milwaukee with a national affiliation.⁷⁴

Anneke moved her newspaper operations to the East Coast and began publishing her *Frauen-Zeitung* in New York City in October 1852. She subsequently published it as a semi-monthly periodical in Jersey City and then later as a weekly in Newark until 1855 when ill health forced her to close operations.⁷⁵ Before publication ended, she had two thousand subscribers and her readership extended to Texas and Brazil.⁷⁶ She often reported on the activities of the American women's movement and in one edition, she wrote a flattering article about Ernestine Rose, the Polish-American multilingual suffragette who often translated Anneke's talks when she spoke to audiences that included English speakers.⁷⁷ Anneke also assisted Fritz with the publication of the *Newarker Zeitung*, the political daily that he had founded and had financed initially with the revenue Anneke had earned on her lecture tour.⁷⁸ Both newspapers sold well and allowed the family to lead a comfortable life.⁷⁹

In September 1853, Anneke began attending suffrage conventions starting with a meeting held in New York City. Suffragists primarily consisted of white, middle-class women from the Northeast who, like Anthony, Stanton, and Mott, had been active abolitionists and social reformers.⁸⁰ They, too, were referred to as "agitators." Anneke was the last speaker of the convention held in New York's Broadway Tabernacle and was heckled by an angry crowd outside and inside the hall. Although the loud mob attempted to disrupt the convention and distract Anneke, she continued in her native tongue and spoke about the differences between women in the New and Old Worlds, about their similarities, and about the universal desire for women's

73 Krueger, "Madame Mathilde Franziska Anneke," 164.

74 Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee*, 112.

75 Krueger, "Madame Mathilde Franziska Anneke," 167.

76 Faust, "Mathilde Franziska Giesler-Anneke," 176. Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 20-21.

77 Anneke's paper profiled Rose in the only extant issue of her *Frauenzeitung*, which was published in New York as Number 7 on October 15, 1852. This issue also includes short stories, philosophical essays, a sequel to a serial story, an article written by Anneke about a region in northern Germany, and a review of a new women's drawing school. Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 21.

78 Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 24. Kluge, *Other Witnesses*, 83. Koss, *Milwaukee*.

79 Bank, *Women of Two Countries*, 70.

80 Bus, "Mathilde Anneke," 80-81.

rights. Ernestine Rose who shared Anneke's antireligious bent and radical vision of including women's rights within the broader social reform movement translated her speech.⁸¹ Rose, however, felt marginalized within the movement of the 1850s, whereas Anneke was praised and well received among the other women. Anneke was perceived as a "power among the Germans" and strove to defend the feminist agenda within the German-American community.⁸² Yet, Anneke had many other interests, which she cultivated at the same time. While in Newark and later in Milwaukee, Anneke opened her home to guests and led them in discussions about art, literature, and music, referring to this circle as a *Lesekabinett*. These gatherings resembled European literary salons in which guests enjoyed the company of others interested in sociability, culture, and refined conversation.⁸³

In 1853, Fritz's press published a limited run of Mathilde Anneke's memoirs of the Baden campaign, entitled *Memoiren einer Frau aus dem badisch-pfälzischen Feldzuge*.⁸⁴ The book begins with Anneke's departure from Cologne on May 20, 1849. Some historians maintain that Anneke was the happiest between the years 1852 and 1858 when the family was together and financially secure. During these years, Mathilde gave birth to twin girls, Rosa and Irla. However, Rosa died within a few months and Irla died at age three.⁸⁵ In 1855, Anneke gave birth to twin girls Hertha (later Anneke Sanne) and a second daughter named Irla. In 1858, tragedy and illness struck the family. Anneke's three-year-old daughter, Hertha, and her eight-year-old son, Percy, came down with smallpox, a very painful and infectious disease that spread through the city of Newark and within the Anneke family. Fritz suffered from a fever and Mathilde endured abscesses that led to headaches and a lame arm. The second Irla and ten-year-old son Fritz died of smallpox in March 1858.⁸⁶ Fritz Sr. did not trust the new vaccines and had refused to allow his children to be vaccinated against the fatal disease. His stance and the subsequent death of their children drove a wedge between the couple that could not be fully reconciled.

After burying four of their children in Newark, the family returned to Milwaukee in May 1858, where Anneke's mother, Elisabeth Hülschwitt Giesler, was now permanently settled.⁸⁷ Giesler did not have much formal education but Anneke was inspired by her and admired her greatly.⁸⁸ Relatives in Milwaukee offered the Annekes the opportunity to take over the operation of a café called the *Lindemannsche Sommerwirtschaft* in order to help the family financially. However, Mathilde Anneke was still mourning the death of her children, and

81 Bank, *Women of Two Countries*, 69.

82 *Ibid.*, 98.

83 Wagner, *Mathilde Franziska*, 128.

84 Faust, "Mathilde Franziska Giesler-Anneke," 176.

85 Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 24.

86 Gebhardt, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 303. Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 24-25.

87 Gebhardt, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 177. Anneke's mother died in December 1865 and had always been homesick for the German lands. Gebhardt, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 267.

88 Piepke, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 11.

she and Fritz declined the offer. Instead, the Annekes sold various wares on commission for the next year until Fritz left for Europe.⁸⁹ The family became close to Sherman and Mary Booth, who had invited them to stay in their home after a flood had destroyed their apartment in Milwaukee.⁹⁰ Sherman, editor of the *Wisconsin Free Democrat*, was an anti-slavery agitator and Mary became one of Mathilde's closest friends. In 1859, Fritz Anneke left the family to work for various American publications as a correspondent in Italy, where he covered the Italian war for independence.⁹¹ After Fritz's departure for Europe, he and Mathilde rarely lived together and they went their separate ways when it came to politics and pursuing their own interests.⁹² They often lived apart for long periods of time, corresponding instead.⁹³

Mathilde Anneke, Mary Booth, and their children went to join Fritz in Switzerland in 1860. However, he soon returned to the United States to serve as a colonel in the Union Army during the American Civil War (1861-1865).⁹⁴ Mathilde and Mary remained in Switzerland until 1865, possibly due to lack of funds to return immediately to the United States, and Mary translated many of Anneke's poems into English.⁹⁵ The Swiss interlude was a productive period for Anneke and in 1863 she published *The Haunted House in New York (Das Geisterhaus in New York)*.⁹⁶ Mathilde dealt with the topic of slavery and the war in her writings as well. The Annekes were Republicans and abolitionists. Many of the "Forty-Eighters" supported free, individualistic, and liberal thinking and opposed slavery and temperance policies.⁹⁷ Anneke wrote three novels about slavery and its horrors. One was entitled *Uhland in Texas* and is about a German-American community that refuses to conform to a slave society. The town is called Uhland and is named after Anneke's friend, the German liberation poet and literary historian Ludwig Uhland (1787-1862). In 1862, she published *The Slave Auction (Die Sclaven-Auction)* and *The Death of the American Colonel Elmer Ellsworth (Der Tod des amerikanischen Oberst Elmer Ellsworth)* in a journal called *Didaskalia*. *The Broken Chains (Die gebrochenen Ketten)* followed and was also published in Switzerland in *Der Bund* in 1864. Milwaukee's *Sonntags-Blatt Herold* or *Sunday Herold* published *Die gebrochenen Ketten* in their edition dated July 9, 1864.⁹⁸ She contributed to other publications as well including *Belletristisches Journal*, a periodical that published works of fiction in New York, and the *Illinois State Newspaper* or *Illinois Staatszeitung*.⁹⁹ Her articles provided income for Anneke, Booth, and their children, but also gave German-speaking readers an idea as

89 Gebhardt, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 178.

90 Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 25.

91 Bank, *Women of Two Countries*, 71.

92 Henkel and Taubert, *Das Weib im Conflict*, 126.

93 Wagner, *Mathilde Franziska*, 11.

94 Kluge, *Other Witnesses*, 85.

95 Faust, "Mathilde Franziska Giesler-Anneke," 176. Mary was married to Sherman Booth, an anti-slavery agitator and editor of the *Wisconsin Free Democrat*. FA&MFA Papers.

96 This work was published in Jena. During this time, she also wrote *Als der Grossvater die Grossmutter nahm* and *Uhland in Texas*. Faust, "Mathilde Franziska Giesler-Anneke," 176.

97 Bank, *Women of Two Countries*, 15.

98 FA&MFA Papers.

99 Faust, "Mathilde Franziska Giesler-Anneke," 176.

to what was happening in the United States. Living in Switzerland provided Anneke with the distance to reflect objectively on America and her experiences there in the 1850s.¹⁰⁰ Another story offered her readers a glimpse into her life near Lake Michigan in Wisconsin and the Native Americans living nearby. She published her story as *Memoirs of Lake Michigan (Erinnerungen vom Michigan-See)* in 1864 in the *Elberfelder Zeitung*.¹⁰¹ When her close friend Mary Booth died in May 1865, Anneke was devastated and returned to Milwaukee, where she settled permanently and founded a school for girls the same year.¹⁰²

In 1865, Anneke established an academy for girls called the *Milwaukee Töchter Institut*, which she led for eighteen years until her death. Because Anneke had written for the German-language newspapers in Milwaukee and was familiar with their readership, she knew that many middle-class, German-Americans would be interested in a school that offered the same classical, liberal arts, and humanistic education taught in secondary schools (*Gymnasien*) in the German lands. Public schools in the United States at the time did not offer German-language instruction or German literature courses and tended to focus on rote memorization rather than developing critical thinking skills.¹⁰³ Anneke recognized another problem with school choice in Milwaukee. In addition to offering no German-language instruction, the public schools were overcrowded. Private schools, on the other hand, did offer German instruction but were run by German-Lutheran and German-Catholic organizations. Anneke, like her fellow, liberal “Forty-Eighters,” rejected schools with religious affiliations and preferred those based upon secularism, bilingualism, and practical application of skills; principles that became the hallmark of Anneke’s girls’ school.¹⁰⁴

Anneke’s academy was both a day and boarding school and was attended by American and German girls.¹⁰⁵ Having experienced oppression, injustice, and inequity much of her life, Anneke ensured that her students became familiar with her ideals, most notably freedom and equality. There was a vast disparity in the education received by boys and girls in both the German lands and in the United States and she believed that girls should benefit from a rigorous education that prepared them to lead a productive and practical life outside of typical nineteenth-century women’s roles oriented toward “Kitchen, Church, and Children” (*Küche, Kirche und Kinder*).¹⁰⁶ Although Anneke emphasized self-discipline, order, and punctuality, she treated the girls in the boarding school like members of the family and gave it a home-like atmosphere. Anneke was able to employ a maid for the boarding school, which registered between six to nine boarders over

100 Piepke, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 102.

101 Kluge, *Other Witnesses*, 85. Milwaukee is located on the shores of Lake Michigan.

102 Bank, *Women of Two Countries*, 71.

103 Gebhardt, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 265.

104 Piepke, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 114–115.

105 Anneke’s letterhead from 1865 included both English and German versions. The letterhead read, “Milwaukee Töchter-Institut” and “Madam M.F. Anneke’s German, French and English Academy.” FA&MFA Papers.

106 Gebhardt, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 271.

the years.¹⁰⁷ Tuition for the boarding school remained the same over the course of the eighteen years the school existed, namely \$350.00 per year (approximately \$5,000 in 2011\$).¹⁰⁸ Before her school closed, one of her students described its history as follows:

In 1865, shortly after her return from Switzerland, Madam M.F. Anneke together with a highly educated pedagogical lady, Caecilie Kapp, who had accompanied her abroad, founded a young ladies' academy, having been requested to do so by many people in Milwaukee. This academy has since been called the Milwaukee Tochter Institut. About a year after the founding of the school, Miss Kapp accepted a call to teach in Vassar College, and Mrs. Anneke, laying aside her literary labors, continued the institute under many difficulties, and has ever since devoted herself to educating her own sex. The academy is conducted in quite a free religious way, and educates not only pupils from Milwaukee, but also young ladies from distant states. Her school maintains a high standard among educational institutions of its kind, pupils being instructed in all the important branches in the English, German and French languages. The greatest number of pupils has been fifty, and the teachers employed are experienced educators.¹⁰⁹

Initially and during the first year of operation, Anneke complained of the working conditions at the school, which required her to handle both teaching and housekeeping. She worked hard, but found little satisfaction. Students ranged from five to seventeen years of age, a range that remained consistent through the eighteen years in which the school was in operation. Nineteen girls enrolled the first year and after several years, Anneke allowed boys to attend first-level classes.¹¹⁰

107 FA&MFA Papers. See the Biographical Notes in Commemoration of Fritz Anneke and Mathilde Franziska Anneke assembled by Henriette M. Heinzen and Hertha Anneke Sanne in 1940, 186.

108 Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 38. This and all subsequent purchasing power

calculations are based on the U.S. Consumer Price Index series available on Measuring Worth, <http://www.measuringworth.com/uscompare/>.

109 Faust, "Mathilde Franziska Giesler-Anneke," 177. The original name of the school was the Girls' Educational Institution or

Mädchenerziehungsanstalt von Cäcilie Kapp. Gebhardt, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 265. The highest enrollment was sixty-five students. FA&MFA Papers. See the Biographical Notes in Commemoration of Fritz Anneke and Mathilde Franziska Anneke assembled by Henriette M. Heinzen and Hertha Anneke Sanne in 1940, 185.

110 Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 34. Twelve boys who had graduated from the Engelmann English-German Academy also attended her school for "finishing" and to complete their studies. Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 39. FA&MFA Papers. See the Biographical Notes in Commemoration of Fritz Anneke and Mathilde Franziska Anneke assembled by Henriette M. Heinzen and Anneke's daughter, Hertha Anneke Sanne in 1940, 185.

Tuition for the first class or “senior department” was 75 dollars per year, the second class or “intermediate department” cost 60 dollars per year, and the third class or “preparatory department” was 45 dollars.¹¹¹ The charge for the “preparatory department, younger grade” was 30 dollars per year (approximately \$427 in 2011 dollars). During the first few years in particular, Anneke struggled financially because few families could pay their tuition in a timely manner. She was patient in encouraging parents to pay more regularly.¹¹²

Anneke persisted with her new entrepreneurial venture despite experiencing constant financial difficulties and even provided a horse and carriage to take students to and from school. Her expenses always exceeded her income and Fritz was, for the most part, unable to assist her. He lived elsewhere and had to pay for his own lodging on a small income, but did provide financial assistance for extreme shortfalls or deficits.¹¹³ Without his help and that of others, she would not have been able to keep the school open. Anneke therefore supplemented her earnings by giving private lessons and cultural lectures, writing newspaper articles, and selling life insurance, in addition to her regular work.¹¹⁴ One of the primary reasons for her financial difficulties was that the tuition fees were low and she did not establish an optimal payment schedule. Perhaps, she had little business acumen, or she considered developing the human potential of her students as the primary mission of her enterprise and making a profit as a secondary motive. In this respect, she displayed the characteristics of a social entrepreneur focused on improving the lives of a population that traditionally had been undervalued and underestimated outside of the home, namely women. Anneke, however, was soon recognized as a successful teacher and her school gained a superior reputation among German-Americans in Milwaukee and the Midwest for its ethical, academic, and cultural standards. For this reason, and the fact that they could afford the \$350 tuition bill, many of Milwaukee’s successful businessmen such as the Swiss-American distiller Jacob Nunnemacher and German-American tanner and business leader Guido Pfister, sent their daughters to her school. Anneke’s supporters included women belonging to Milwaukee’s elite and affluent circles, such as the wives of the publishers W.W. Coleman and Moritz Schoeffler, the wife of Milwaukee Mayor Herman L. Page, and the wife of brewery owner Joseph Schlitz.¹¹⁵ Other parents included shop owners, attorneys, and merchants. Anneke used all the means and networks available to her to cover her expenses, and although she was only able to pay her assistants and teachers small salaries, they

111 FA&MFA Papers. Gebhardt, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 266. Approximately \$1,000, \$855, and \$641, respectively in 2011 dollars.

112 Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 39.

113 *Ibid.*, 39-40.

114 FA&MFA Papers. See the Biographical Notes in Commemoration of Fritz Anneke and Mathilde Franziska Anneke assembled by Henriette M. Heinzen and Hertha Anneke Sanne in 1940, 186.

115 Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 40-41.

continued to teach there because of the prestige associated with Anneke's school.¹¹⁶ In the fall of 1865, she even hired a physics teacher, an atypical and progressive hire for a girls' school at the time.¹¹⁷

The school year at Anneke's academy ran 280 days with Saturdays and Sundays off. The academy was originally located at 269 Ninth Street, but by the spring of 1868 the school's enrollment and influence had increased so much that Anneke moved the school to a larger building located at 472 Jefferson Street where it remained until 1874. This structure was across from a courthouse and had three floors, three balconies, and eleven rooms. In the summer of 1868, several mothers of her students formed an aid society called "Levana" to assist Anneke with fundraising for the school.¹¹⁸ The word "Levana" has Latin origins (Levana was the ancient Roman goddess of education) and means "to preserve." When the women formed the Levana Society, they had fifty members and elected Anneke as their president. Most of the members were from German families in Milwaukee and they made it their charge to raise enough money to build or buy a house so as to give the academy a permanent home. Their first soiree brought in 120 dollars (approximately \$2,000 in 2011\$) profit, which was used for teaching materials, maps, and books. In January 1875, another women's group called the Hera Society also fundraised for Anneke. Hera (named for the Greek goddess of family and home) included eighty German women from Milwaukee and their goal was to give Anneke's academy the prominence they believed it deserved by providing the financial means to hire more assistants.¹¹⁹ Fundraisers included musical soirees, theatrical performances, and student recitals, among other activities.

Coursework at Anneke's school included grammar, spelling, reading, writing, German language and literature, arithmetic, geography, history, and the natural sciences. Classes were taught in German and special subjects included French, English, Latin, music, and drawing. Anneke charged extra for music and drawing lessons, as well as for French instruction, and employed three to four teachers for the special subjects. They included well-known individuals who were distinguished in their fields, such as German-American painter Heinrich "Henry" Vianden (1814-1899) and musician Julius Klauer (1854-1907), as well as piano teachers who were professional musicians. She employed both male and female instructors, approximately half of which were of German descent.¹²⁰ Emphasis was placed on the liberal arts and the feminine or domestic arts such as needlework,

116 Gebhardt, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 185.

117 *Ibid.*, 266.

118 FA&MFA Papers. See the Biographical Notes in Commemoration of Fritz Anneke and Mathilde Franziska Anneke assembled by Henriette M. Heinzen and Hertha Anneke Sanne in 1940, 195.

119 Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 40. Gebhardt, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 272.

120 Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 37.

crafts, and cooking, subjects considered essential to the curriculum at other girls' schools, were not emphasized at Anneke's.¹²¹ Religious instruction, which was the primary subject taught in many schools at the time, was also missing from her curriculum.¹²²

Anneke believed that the transfer of knowledge took place both inside and outside the classroom. Instruction typically began in the morning and lasted until 1:00 p.m. Free tutoring was offered in the afternoon for students who were struggling academically. Others participated in music, needlework, or went on nature walks. Anneke took her students on strolls around Milwaukee, used nature as a resource, and included active games in their learning. She also taught and encouraged group work in which younger students learned from both the teacher and older students. She did not have benches in her school, but rather sat with her students at a large round table similar to the German university seminar system, a radical idea at the time in which both teacher and students were to be viewed as participants in the learning process.¹²³

Anneke taught German, literature, geography, mythology, geology, writing, reading, and esthetics, in addition to handling the administrative management of the school.¹²⁴ This included purchasing, preparing, and storing food for the students' meals, which were known to be both healthy and economical. She and her staff would drive to the local slaughterhouse with horse and buggy, purchase meat in large quantities, and salt, pickle, and spice it upon return to the school. Sauerkraut, vegetables, and butter were also stored in crocks in the cold cellar. Anneke's eldest daughter, Fanny Stoerger, taught "fancy work" at the school and became a favorite among the students.¹²⁵ Anneke's other daughter, Hertha, also worked there later on. Anneke's pedagogy consisted of some of the most advanced educational techniques of the time and when she died almost two decades later, the press had long since begun to consider her an "arbiter" of culture.¹²⁶ Literature, poetry, music, and art had always been of prime importance to her, and her students found her class discussions about culture and literature, whether *The Ring of the Nibelung* or Heinrich Heine's work, unforgettable.¹²⁷ She did not believe in report cards or examinations and implemented methods used by Friedrich Wilhelm August Froebel (1782-1852), the influential German pedagogue who founded the kindergarten concept and believed that each child was endowed with unique talents. Froebel also believed that the student should engage in the life around her

121 FA&MFA Papers. See the Biographical Notes in Commemoration of Fritz Anneke and Mathilde Franziska Anneke assembled by Henriette M. Heinzen and Hertha Anneke Sanne in 1940, 43.

122 Gebhardt, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 269.

123 Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 36-37.

124 FA&MFA Papers. See the Biographical Notes in Commemoration of Fritz Anneke and Mathilde Franziska Anneke assembled by Henriette M. Heinzen and Hertha Anneke Sanne in 1940, 185.

125 *Ibid.*, 180.

126 Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 7.

127 Gebhardt, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 297. Anneke referred to her literary activities as her "gladsome art" or "meine fröhliche Kunst."

and Anneke followed the same principles. Many of her students went on to lead engaged and productive lives in politics and education.¹²⁸

During this last phase of her life, Anneke participated in Milwaukee's vibrant German-American community, establishing and leading the Radical-Club of Milwaukee in 1872 and becoming an active member of a free-thought community or *Freie Gemeinde* as of 1867.¹²⁹ She wrote reviews of contemporary German theatrical performances and musical events and enjoyed seeing her play, *Oithono*, performed in the Milwaukee Civic Theater in 1882, two years before she died on November 25, 1884. According to the Wisconsin Historical Society, her drama might very well be the only successful nineteenth-century German tragedy written by a woman and performed in both Germany and the United States.¹³⁰ Anneke not only ran her girls' school for many years, but also remained committed to the American women's rights movement, returning to the movement in 1869 with even more enthusiasm than before her departure for Switzerland.¹³¹ She spoke at their convention in Milwaukee in 1869 and participated as a delegate of the women's movement to the United States Congress in 1870.¹³² Her last public appearance at the women's conventions was in Milwaukee in 1880. When she died four years later, numerous obituaries praising her accomplishments appeared in the German- and English-language press, both in the Midwest and on the East Coast. The *Illinois Staatszeitung* described her as one of the most significant German and German-American women and emphasized that the German-American press should be proud of her. She had served them well, despite the fact that few in the German-American community shared her radical views about women's rights. Her concern for human rights and humanity were noble.¹³³

As for Fritz Anneke, he survived the German revolutions of 1848 and the American Civil War only to die in a strange twist of fate on December 6, 1872. During the Reconstruction years, he had worked as a journalist in St. Louis and Chicago. He had been an editor and translator for the *Anzeiger* and other newspapers in St. Louis and wrote for the *Illinois Staatszeitung*. In 1872, he was in Chicago working as a chief officer for the *Deutsche Gesellschaft*, an agency that aided German immigrants, when he fell through a defective elevated sidewalk on a windy night and died instantly.¹³⁴

Social Status

Anneke's status varied depending on her life's circumstances and the perspective of different communities to which she belonged, such as

128 For example, Clara Thiele-Runge became women's state chair of the Progressive Party and a member of the board of regents of the University of Wisconsin, and Amalie Kremper founded a school in Chicago that adhered to many of Anneke's educational principles and was in operation thirteen years. Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 44.

129 Bank, *Women of Two Countries*, 16-17. Those who favored a "radical" democracy supported women's rights as part of an egalitarian society.

130 "Mathilde Anneke," *Wisconsin Historical Society*, <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/topics/anneke> (accessed November 1, 2013).

131 Bus, "Mathilde Anneke," 84.

132 Gebhardt, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 303.

133 *Ibid.*, 298.

134 Bank, *Women of Two Countries*, 71. FA&MFA Papers. One hour after authorities removed his body, another man named John O'Hara fell to his death at the same spot.

the local Milwaukee press who initially saw her as an “agitator,” the German-American population who questioned her partnering with nativist suffragists, and women’s rights activists who thought highly of her and sought her assistance in furthering their cause. She was politically engaged in her native land and continued to participate in public and political spheres once she arrived in America. As a young, slim, and tall woman, she was described as beautiful. As she matured in years and after the birth of her children, she assumed a more matronly figure and displayed a “majestic and impressive presence.”¹³⁵ She welcomed guests to her home and cultivated relationships with other women through transatlantic correspondence, journalistic publications, and advocacy for radical social change. Despite living a disrupted and unsettled life, she remained industrious, engaged, and productive until her death. Her prolonged divorce from her first husband and custody battle over their daughter, frustrations with the patriarchal institutions such as the Catholic Church and German state, and lifelong struggle to make a living altered her perspectives and prompted her to publish her political statements on behalf of all women.¹³⁶ She argued that women were due equal suffrage rights based on reason. The failed revolutions of 1848/49 played a major role in her decision to flee for the New World with her second husband.

Anneke, a leading feminist and social reformer of her time, is often overshadowed by native-born contemporaries such as Anthony and Stanton with whom she closely collaborated and was loyal friends.¹³⁷ Today, her name and entrepreneurial efforts as the editor and founder of the first feminist newspaper in the United States are for the most part unknown because her publication was printed in the German language and much of the secondary literature about her is in German. Writing in 1918, Albert B. Faust celebrated her accomplishments and published the following in the *German-American Annals*:

At the present time, when the legislature of every state and in fact, every home throughout the country is concerned with the question of equal political rights for women, it is fitting to call to memory the career of Mathilde Giesler-Anneke, for she belonged to a small group of pioneers in the woman’s suffrage movement at its very beginnings, about the middle of the last century. Susan B. Anthony mentions her repeatedly as her faithful colleague, who always untiringly responded to the call, year after year, in the unequal

135 Krueger, “Madame Mathilde Franziska Anneke,” 163.

136 Bus, “Mathilde Anneke,” 79-82.

137 The two other prominent German-American women involved with the women’s rights movement were Clara Neymann and Mathilde Wendt. Bank, *Women of Two Countries*, 14.

struggle for woman's rights, and even twenty years after the death of Mathilde Anneke recalled the services of her co-worker.¹³⁸

Faust's complimentary portrayal of Anneke provides a context and basis for comparison on several levels. He recognized her as a German-American woman who made noble contributions to the United States. He also compared her to other German-born women who were talented writers, recognizing that she appeared to lack the business acumen that made her German-American contemporary, Anna Behr Ottendorfer (1815-1884), a successful journalist and philanthropist. (Ottendorfer helped make the *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung* a major newspaper.) He argued that Anneke was as skilled as Therese Albertine Luise von Jakob-Robinson, who went by the name Talvj, (1797-1870), and Marie Hansen Taylor (1829-1925) but did not receive the social prestige and accolades due to her. Moreover, in comparison with those of her generation, Faust honored her contributions as surpassing those of both men and women because she advocated not just women's rights, but human rights such as freedom and justice. It was in the interest of reason, peace, and all mankind, that women no longer be suppressed.

Anneke's opinion with regard to women's rights and freedom differed slightly from that expressed by many American women. They believed, for example, that God was the ultimate judge while Anneke maintained that it was a matter of reason.¹³⁹ Anneke expressed these beliefs in a speech she gave at the Convention on the Rights of Women in Milwaukee in 1869. She also implored the participants not to confound the issues of temperance, suffrage, and nativism. Anthony and Stanton had asked Anneke to co-chair this meeting and it led to the organization of the Wisconsin Women's Suffrage Association.¹⁴⁰ Anneke did not believe it was rational to continue to deny women their natural and human rights and appealed to her audiences' sense of humanity. She also pointed out that there was no document or law that elevated the status of women over men, and yet there were several that perpetuated the falsehood that men were superior to women. A reporter translated a portion of her speech as follows:

There does not exist a man-made doctrine, fabricated expressly for us, and which we must learn by heart, that shall henceforth be our law. Nor shall the authority of old traditions be a standard for us — be this authority called Veda,

138 Faust, "Mathilde Franziska Gesler-Anneke," 172.

139 Bus, "Mathilde Anneke," 82.

140 *Ibid.*, 85.

Talmud, Koran, or Bible. No. Reason, which we recognize as our highest and only law-giver, commands us to be free. We have recognized our duty — we have heard the rustling of the golden wings of our guardian angel — we are inspired for the work. We are no longer in the beginning of history — that age which was a constant struggle with nature, misery, ignorance, helplessness, and every kind of bondage. The moral idea of the state struggles for that fulfillment in which all individuals shall be brought into a union which shall augment a millionfold both its individual and collective forces. Therefore, don't exclude women, don't exclude the whole half of human family.¹⁴¹

Anneke's reference to sacred scripture reminds the reader of the unjust treatment and prolonged divorce she suffered when confronting Catholic Church authorities about leaving an abusive husband. Lastly, one notes that at the time of his writing, Faust assumed that the reader knew who Susan B. Anthony was, which suggests Anthony had already been widely recognized for her efforts on behalf of women, whereas Anneke had not. The year was 1918, and the recognition of a German-American woman's contributions at the close of the First World War demonstrates how admirable Faust esteemed her efforts. He was both laudatory and strategic in honoring Anneke, recognizing that the nineteenth amendment to the United States Constitution, which guaranteed American women the right to vote, was being discussed at the time of his writing and that champions like Anneke had played a critical role in the early days of the suffrage movement. It was two years later, in 1920, that the amendment was ratified. For this reason and like Anthony, Anneke can be considered a social entrepreneur who made a system-changing impact on society.¹⁴²

Conclusion

As a German immigrant, Anneke's challenges in the New World were complex on account of her gender, professional aspirations in the male-dominated newspaper industry, and German-American identity. For example, the printer's union that organized in 1852 and had been instrumental in shutting down her newspaper the same year was indeed successful in protecting jobs held by men in the same trade. Still, she championed human rights and dignity in her journalism, lectures, and prose. She was more than a feminist, she was a humanist, believing that elevating the status and rights of

141 Faust, "Mathilde Franziska Giesler-Anneke," 173-74. *History of Women Suffrage*, eds. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Mathilda Joslyn Gage, vol. 2, 1861-1876 (Rochester, 1882), 392-94.

142 "Historical Examples of Leading Social Entrepreneurs: Susan B. Anthony (U.S.)," *Ashoka: Innovators for the Public*, https://www.ashoka.org/social_entrepreneur (accessed September 28, 2013). "Who Were the First Social Entrepreneurs? Susan B. Anthony," *PBS Oregon Public Broadcasting*, http://www.pbs.org/opb/thenewheroes/whatis/whatis_ss_2.html (accessed October 31, 2013). Social entrepreneurs concern themselves with human dignity, changing systems, and shifting mindsets. Their primary purpose is not to generate profit but rather to ameliorate the quality of life and to advance full citizenship for populations that have been neglected, marginalized, ignored, or denied access to civil and natural rights.

women was reasonable and in everyone's best interests, whether in Germany or the United States. The German-American community in general opposed the women's rights movement because they viewed it as nativist and in favor of temperance.¹⁴³ They took pride in their German identity or *Deutschtum*, and that included allegiance to their cultural heritage and traditional German industries such as brewing. Milwaukee, for example, was home to several breweries established by German-American beer barons such as Frederick Pabst (1836-1904), Joseph Schlitz (1831-1875), Jacob Best (1786-1861), and Valentin Blatz (1826-1894).¹⁴⁴ Milwaukee also had many beer gardens, beer cellars, bowling alleys, and family taverns where German-Americans socialized and enjoyed German beer.¹⁴⁵ Anneke, in contrast to many of the American suffragists, believed liquor consumption was a personal choice and not the sole cause of societal evils. She maintained that associating temperance with women's rights discussions was hurting the movement.¹⁴⁶ She had also sought to preserve her German heritage by the fact she chose to publish her newspaper and writings in German. Her main audience, therefore, was for the most part the larger German community and readership. When she spoke or lectured on the importance of women's emancipation, she typically spoke in German because she could better command her native tongue. Instruction was also taught in German at her academy and her stories appeared in the German-language press in the United States and abroad.

Despite frequent poor health, the painful loss of four children, and a long-distance marriage with Fritz, who often pursued his own interests elsewhere, she negotiated successfully personal and professional roles as a mother, wife, poet and writer, entrepreneurial educator, leading feminist in the women's rights movement in America, and active member of the German-American community.¹⁴⁷ Similar to other immigrant women who arrived in America unfamiliar with the country and language, her options were limited due to her gender, multiple familial responsibilities, and lack of financial resources and opportunities to earn a living other than through writing, teaching, and political rights advocacy. She had to make her own way and negotiate her own success in unfamiliar public spheres and business climates.¹⁴⁸ Although she was only able to make her newspaper financially viable for seven months in Milwaukee, she was able to sustain successfully her academy for eighteen years until her death.¹⁴⁹ Profit never motivated her; defending human rights and enhancing women's quality of life did. She, therefore, should not be judged on

143 The suffrage movement met with resistance from nativist populations as well. Bank, *Women of Two Countries*, 2.

144 Milwaukee's beer barons are also memorialized in the Forest Home Cemetery where the Annekes are buried. "Self-Guided Historical Tour," *Forest Home Cemetery*, <http://www.foresthomecemetery.com/what-makes-fhc-unique/people/> (accessed October 19, 2013).

145 Gebhardt, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 264.

146 Bus, "Mathilde Anneke," 83.

147 Bank, *Women of Two Countries*, 1.

148 Bus, "Mathilde Anneke," 88-89.

149 Anneke's school was located on the southeast corner of Jefferson and Oneida (now East Wells) streets in Milwaukee. Krueger, "Madame Mathilde Franziska Anneke," 164. She established it in 1865, and the address she listed on her Milwaukee Töchter-Institut letterhead was No. 269 Ninth Street, Milwaukee, Wis. FA&MFA Papers.

her lack of commercial success, but rather on the broader social and political influence and change to which her business activities contributed. She was a social entrepreneur in both spirit and impact. An alumna of her girls' school best summarizes that impact:

Those who have not known this great souled woman in her activities as educator. . . have not seen her most beautiful traits. All who had the joy of calling her Teacher have such reverence for her that they consider her the greatest factor in their lives. It was not only what she taught but how she taught. The driest subject became a live interest. She could kindle enthusiasm with irresistible power; yet the knowledge we gained was the least of what we took away from her. Our whole beings were permeated with all that was noble and pure. She gave us the indelible stamp of her beautiful spirit. To follow her we had to aim at the stars. Never can we thank her enough for the way of feeling and thinking that she impressed upon us.

Today, pupils of Madam Anneke are unmistakable. Whether surrounded by luxuries, or confronted by the misfortunes and poverty of an adverse world, the undaunted spirit that she instilled is paramount. We try to bestow the teachings of our beloved priestess upon our children. Her only living daughter carries her exalted, beautiful message into wider circles [. . .] and so the spirit of this great woman still flames in our generation to enrich and dignify life.¹⁵⁰

Anneke embraced both her German heritage and her life in her new homeland and worked to contribute to the education, wellbeing, and equality of woman in both her native and adopted homelands. She was the first immigrant woman to speak publically on behalf of the American women's suffrage movement.¹⁵¹ In the German lands during her youth, she lost social standing after a scandalous divorce and her participation in the German revolutions of 1848. However, by the end of her life in the United States, she regained a prominent position among the German-American community and within the women's rights movement. In 1931, the National League of Women Voters recognized her as one of the four Wisconsin pioneers in the suffrage movement and her name was inscribed on a roll of honor at their national headquarters.¹⁵² In the 1930s, she was considered one of the most influential women in the United States.¹⁵³ With the

150 Piepke, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 9.

151 Bus, "Mathilde Anneke," 87. Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 44.

152 FA&MFA Papers.

153 Brancaforte, *Mathilde Franziska Anneke*, 7.

outbreak of the Second World War, her name and legacy were for the most part forgotten on both sides of the Atlantic, only to be revived in recent years. Anneke is honored in Cologne and several streets are named after her. In November 1988, the German Federal Postal Service honored Anneke on a postage stamp in a series called “Women of German History” (*Frauen der deutschen Geschichte*).¹⁵⁴

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154 “Mathilde Franziska Anneke,” http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mathilde_Anneke (accessed March 1, 2014).

