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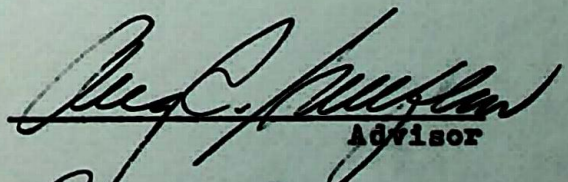
**MINNESOTA MISSIONARY--MINISTER:
A BIOGRAPHY OF HEINRICH JULIUS MUELLER**

**A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Historical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity**

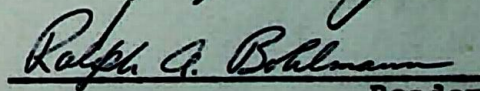
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August 1963

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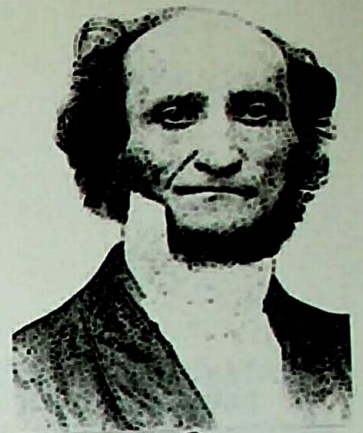
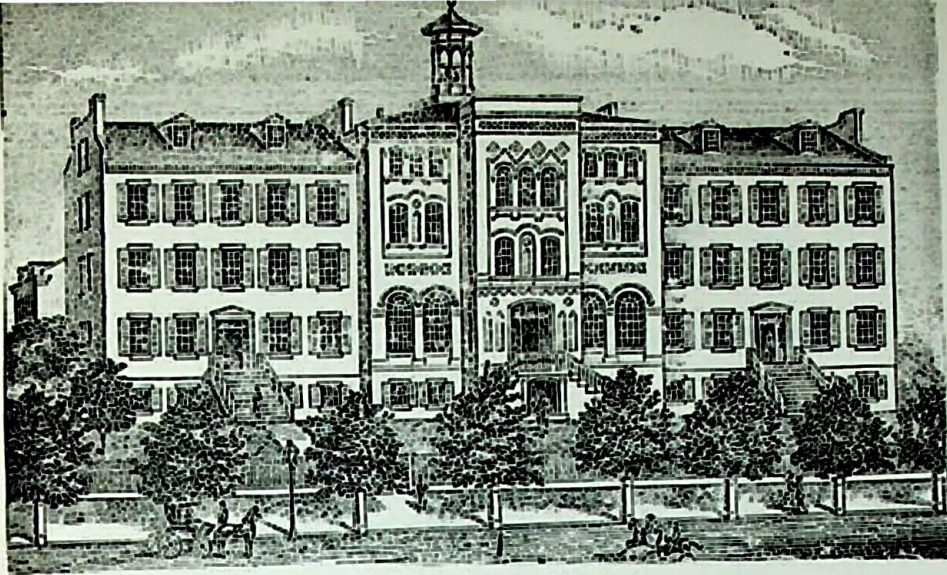
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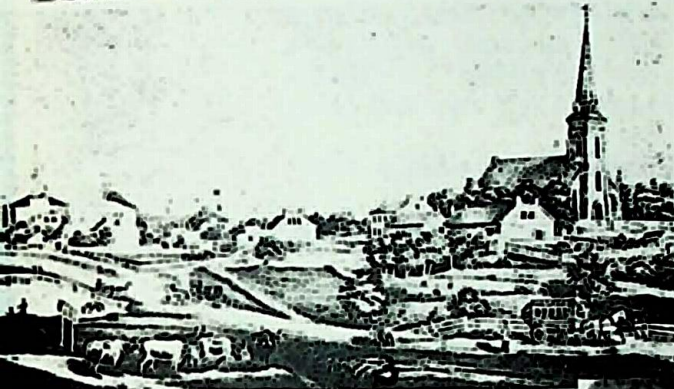
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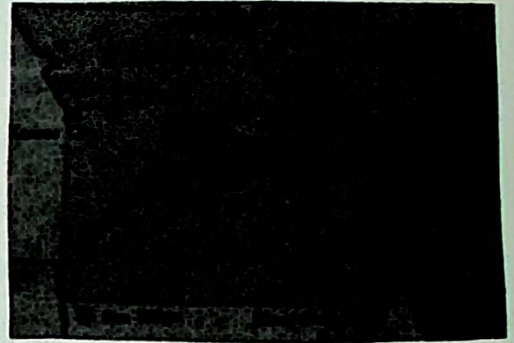
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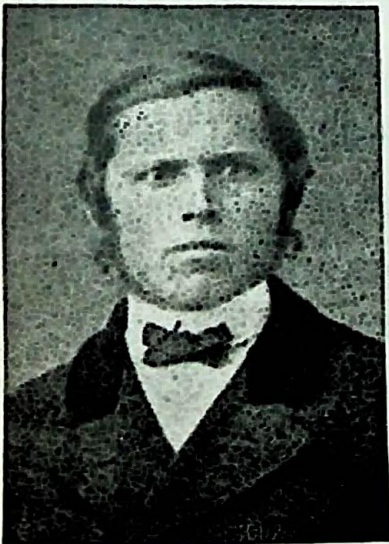
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Rev. H. J. Mueller



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It seems almost incredible that . . . Pastor H. Julius Mueller, who came to Willow Creek in 1870, pioneered more than 30 congregations and explored the southwestern part of Minnesota as far south as Le Mars, Iowa, by horse and buggy and on foot. Often he was gone for a month, and neither his wife nor his congregation knew where he was or when he would return. These examples could be multiplied a hundred times. May their example inspire us to ever-greater service to our Lord!¹

This quotation from the official booklet of the Centennial of Missouri Synod Lutheranism in Minnesota, 1856-1956, introduces us to the man and his work. It also gives us a motive for writing and compiling this brief biography of Heinrich Julius Mueller.

It is with a deep feeling of respect for my great-grandfather and a desire to praise the God whom he worshipped and proclaimed that I undertake this brief biography. So far as I know, this is the first extended attempt at writing a biography of this pioneer Minnesota missionary. There are several very short biographies extant, but I found no extended works available. My grandfather often mentioned that his father was humble and did not look for publicity. This is quite evident from the paucity of material available on this man. After quite a thorough search through the records and

¹ Lutheran Church--Mo. Synod, Minn. District, Centennial of Missouri Synod Lutheranism in Minnesota, 1956.

books available at The Concordia Historical Institute and The Concordia Seminary Library in St. Louis, Mo., bits of information have been garnered here and there. The writer is indebted to many pastors and relatives in Minnesota who supplied still more information.

In an attempt to be objective, and because of the rather small amount of source material available, I shall make a number of quotations during the course of this thesis from many and varied sources.

CHAPTER II

EARLY DAYS IN GERMANY AND EMIGRATION TO AMERICA

Very little is known about the early background of Pastor Mueller. We are only told in several accounts that his parents were deeply pious and religious people. He was born on December 12, 1837, in Teyndorf, Hannover, Germany.

Heinrich Julius received his teen-age schooling in Teyndorf. After his confirmation, he was sent to learn a trade--that of a teamster.

His Sundays were spent in Hermannsburg attending every service and meeting conducted by the mission-minded head of the Hermannsburg Missionshaus--Ludwig Harms and his brother and others who staffed mission movement there. Leaving the teamster trade he attended the Hermannsburg Missionshaus and was prepared for the mission-ministry in Africa.¹

The Concordia Cyclopedia gives us the following information concerning the Hermannsburg Evangelical Lutheran Missionary Society.

founded by Pastor Louis Harms (b. 1808; d. 1865) at Hermannsburg, Germany; formerly connected with the unionistic North German Missionary Society. Candidates were given a religious and industrial training. The first eight missionaries and a colony of laymen were sent out in 1853 on the ship Candace. Louis Harms was succeeded by his brother Theodor Harms. Since the World

¹ Martin H. Mueller, "Letter from Pastor Martin H. Mueller, Pequot Lakes, Minn., to Henry C. Mueller, St. Louis, Mo.," dated Nov., 1962, presently filed in the library of Henry C. Mueller.

War the field of this society in India was turned over to the Lutheran Joint Synod of Ohio. The property is still held by the Mission Trust of Southern India. In South Africa the work of the society was not disturbed by the war.²

The Cyclopedia tells us further that,

Harms, Georg Ludwig Detlev Theodor, better known as Ludwig Harms; a Lutheran minister; b. at Walsrode, Hanover, 1808; d. at Hermannsburg, Hanover, November 5, 1865. In 1834 he founded a missionary society in Lauenburg, which affiliated with the unionistic North German Missionary Society at Hamburg. Called as his father's assistant to Hermannsburg in 1844, and succeeding him in the pastorate at Hermannsburg in 1849, he founded the Evangelical Lutheran Hermannsburg Missionary Society. After a preparation of four years twelve missionaries, accompanied by eight colonists, were sent out in 1853 on the Candace, which landed in Natal, Africa. In the following years other missionaries were sent out to India, Australia, and New Zealand. . . . At his death, in 1865, Louis Harms was succeeded as Director by his brother Theodor Harms, who, in turn, after his death in 1885, was succeeded in office by his son Egmont Harms. Theodor Harms separated himself from the state church of Hanover, taking his mission with him. A division in the forces resulted, and a new missionary society was organized. Since the death of Theodor Harms a working agreement with the state church has been effected.³

These quotations give us the background of the founding and the fathers of the institution where H. J. Mueller received his theological and perhaps secular training. In order to understand the historical and theological climate from which this institution grew, we must review a bit of German and

²"Hermannsburg Evangelical Lutheran Missionary Society," The Concordia Cyclopedia, edited by L. Fuerbringer, Th. Engelder, and P. E. Kretzmann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927), p. 21.

³"Harms, Georg Ludwig Detlev Theodor," The Concordia Cyclopedia, edited by L. Fuerbringer, Th. Engelder, and P. E. Kretzmann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927), p. 21.

European Lutheran history. If the following did not affect Heinrich Mueller directly, it no doubt affected him at least indirectly through his instructors and environment.

When in 1648 the Treaty of Westphalia had ended the Thirty Year's War, the immediate effect was a release of suppressed emotions, and Germans of all ranks joined with Martin Rinckart in singing "Now thank we all our God." But ere long the realization that the war had produced nothing but moral and economic decay led to general disillusionment. Some Protestants found balm for their wounded souls in Pietism, a movement which refused to argue about theological distinctions, but stressed practical Christian charities and intensive personal piety.

The majority of educated people, however, turned to Rationalism, which became the dominant mode of thought during the eighteenth century in England, the American colonies, France, and Germany, as is well illustrated in the writings of Alexander Pope, Benjamin Franklin, Voltaire, and Gottsched.

.....

Many clergymen looked upon taking holy orders as the means of gaining economic security and social standing. They performed their clerical duties in a perfunctory manner, while they concentrated their energies on social life, scientific agriculture, or literary activity.

Curious were the sermons these clergymen preached. The familiar verse in the Gospel for Christmas Day "And they came in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger" gave one preacher, who evidently was an enthusiast for scientific dairying, the inspiration to discourse on the advantages of stall feeding. In a Good Friday sermon, another preacher took advantage of the words of Pilate "What I have written, I have written" to expatiate on the desirability of making one's will in writing.

.....

After 1800 new religious leaders did arise in England and in Germany. They vigorously protested against governmental control over the Church; they sharply criticized Rationalism and Pietism as being merely two

forms of subjectivism; they pointed their followers to the historic past of the Church and its doctrinal statements, or confessions, to find certitude in religion. . . .

On the Continent it produced the Confessional Movement in the Lutheran Church of Germany, Holland, and Scandinavia, dating from 1817.

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In 1817, for the three-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation, he /Claus Harms/ published Luther's Ninety-five Theses, along with ninety-five of his own, which he offered to defend.

In his Thesis No. 50 Harms declared that "the Confessions of the Lutheran Church give us a correct interpretation of the Bible, but at the moment the Church is in a sad state. . . . Reason is running wildly through the Church, driving Christ away from the altar, throwing God's Word out of the pulpit, mixing slime with holy water in the baptismal font, erasing the superscription over the confessional, and driving the priest out of the sanctuary."

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Adherence to Confessionalism was to lead thousands of faithful men and women down the via dolorosa of persecution and exile. Commenting on the emigration of the Old Lutherans, Max von Boehn exclaims:

"Germany was to behold the strange drama of seeing the same government, on the one hand, welcome exiled Tyrolese and, on the other hand, drive out the most conscientious and competent of its citizens into exile, because it would not grant them the right to follow their conscience in matters of religious faith."⁴

The main emigration of the Old German Lutherans to America took place during the decade 1838-1848.

⁴Ralph Dornfeld Owen, "The Old Lutherans Come," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XX (April, 1947), 4-9.

It was out of this theological and political turmoil that Mission Societies such as the Hermannsburg Missionshaus were born. It was into this environment that Heinrich Julius Mueller was born. But here we see a blessing of God in disguise because the turmoil was a refining blast furnace which purified Lutheranism and gave it the renewed zeal to preach the Gospel to every person.

Approximately 20 years after the founding of the Harms' institution, H. Mueller enrolled there and after completing his training to do mission work in Africa, he prepared to leave his native land. We see here a man of faith, who would give up everything, including a fiancé, to witness to the heathen about Christ.

God turned Heinrich Julius from the African mission fields to those in Minnesota, U.S.A. through a most strange happening.

Upon finishing his studies and training--he and others left to sail to Africa via Hamburg. Arriving at Hamburg too late to board the ship--he and another Hermannsburg graduate, Heinrich v. Dagefoerde, decided to board the next sailing ship for North America--"Ja", so he was assured, "da giebt's auch viele Heiden" -- Von Dagefoerde went directly into Wisconsin to preach Christ and Heinrich Julius Mueller decided to go to Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, to take post-graduate work under Dr. C. F. Walther. . . .⁵

This strange working of God leads us into the next chapter of the history of the North Star Missionary.

⁵Mueller, op. cit.

CHAPTER III

CONCORDIA SEMINARY, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, 1869-1870.

Again, few facts have filtered down through the century concerning H. Mueller's days at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. We can only paint a broad portrait of the situation into which he stepped after sailing from Hamburg, Germany. In order to do this, we will make three strokes with the brush of history. First, a stroke of St. Louis history; secondly, the Civil War and Missouri; thirdly, Concordia Seminary in St. Louis.

When H. Julius Mueller arrived at St. Louis, it was already quite a thriving metropolis in the center of America. We are told that,

in 1763, the territory west of the Mississippi, with other American possessions, was ceded by France to Spain, but the latter did not take possession until 1770. The first settlement was made in 1764, and the village was named in honor of Louis XI of France. A year later it was made the capital of Upper Louisiana. It remained under Spanish control until 1800, when it was receded to France, and in 1803 it became a part of the United States by the purchase of Louisiana. Following this, settlers rapidly crossed the Mississippi River, and Saint Louis began to increase in population. From the start it was a center of trade and supplies, and as the country to the west and south continued to be settled, the town increased in importance. A large number of Germans early settled in the city, and their influence on its business and institutions has always been strong. During the Civil War Saint Louis contained Union and Confederate sympathizers, though the former were in the majority. After the close of that conflict the city continued to grow and prosper. Its business interests

have always been conducted on a solid financial basis and after the most conservative methods.¹

As was indicated above, the Civil War had a profound effect upon St. Louis because it was in the middle of the war. Several skirmishes were fought within its limits.

The importance of these battles and other battles in

Missouri is shown by the following article.

The border states of Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland and Delaware were of immense importance to both parties, and steps were immediately taken to secure control of them. They at first remained neutral, but they later joined the Union cause

The first real military movements of the war occurred in the western part of Virginia Meantime, the State of Missouri was being saved to the Union by the activity of General Lyon, and in spite of a severe defeat at Wilson's Creek, in which Lyon was killed, the Federals under General Curtis drove the Confederates from the territory.²

Naturally, Concordia Seminary and its student body were affected by the Civil War. Dau says,

The outbreak of the Civil War had its effect also upon the St. Louis institution. Up to this time the course of the humanistic Gymnasium, that preparing the pupils for the study of theology proper, had been given under the same roof with the work in theology. But in 1861 the Gymnasium, the college section of the institution, was moved to Fort Wayne, Indiana, while the theoretical seminary remained in St. Louis under the presidency of Prof. Walther. At the same time, the so-called practical seminary, which had, for a decade and one-half, done good work in Fort Wayne, was united with the St. Louis Seminary,

¹"St. Louis," The New Practical Reference Library, edited by Charles H. Sylvester (Chicago: Hanson-Roach-Fowler Co., 1916), Vol. IV.

²"Civil War," The New Practical Reference Library, edited by Charles H. Sylvester (Chicago: Hanson-Roach-Fowler Co., 1916), Vol. II.

the transfer taking place under the direction of Prof. A. Craemer. . . . the year 1875 marked the transfer of the practical seminary from St. Louis to Springfield.³

The physical surroundings which Heinrich J. knew as a student are shown on page iv. So far as this author knows, there is only one or very few lithographs of the physical plant of Concordia Seminary in 1870. A picture of Concordia Seminary and Holy Cross Church, 1870, from a rare lithograph in Theodore Graebner's collection is found on Plate 10 of his book, Concordia Seminary, Its History, Architecture, and Symbolism. The picture on p. iv is very similar to the above-mentioned picture; however, the school of 1870 had only two stories on the two wings. The "evolution" and the uses of this building are described very succinctly by Graebner:

A few years later the congregation at St. Louis donated several acres of ground as a building site, subscribed over \$2,000 in cash donations, and assigned to the college, profits from her hymn-book and from her cemetery. Building operations soon commenced, and on the eighth of Nov., 1849, the corner-stone of the college building was laid. At this time Pastor C. F. W. Walther was called as professor of theology. A building of liberal dimensions was erected. The south wing of this new building was dedicated in 1850; two years later, when the place had already become too strait, the north wing was built. In 1857-58 the middle section was built, and thus the new seminary was completed.

We reproduce [see illustration, p. iv] a lithograph showing the institution as it appeared in the 60's and 70's of the past century (a third story was later added to the two wings). The Main Entrance led into the chapel, used by Holy Cross Congregation for many years.

³W. H. T. Dau, Ebenezer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1922), p. 233.

To the right, as you view the picture, Professor Graemer lived on the first floor, students on the second. To the left, Dr. Walther lived on the first floor, Professor Lange on the second. The second floor in the central portion was occupied by lecture-halls which were at the same time living-rooms for the students. Their bedrooms were on the third floor. In the basement were the kitchen and the dining-halls. In the small house to the right lived the caretaker and, for a time, Professor Baumstark. . . . ⁴

With this careful analysis of the building where Mueller probably lived and most certainly studied, we turn to the faculty from whom he learned more about the Word of God. To the Missourian's ear, this faculty sounds like the hall of fame. They included four men: C. F. W. Walther, D.D. (1849-1887); F. A. Graemer, (1861-75); E. A. Brauer, (1863-1872); E. Freuss (1869-1871). Such staunch Christians must have had a profound effect upon the theological outlook of H. J. Mueller. The intimacy of a small school and faculty must have strengthened their influence upon him. During this period of American Lutheranism, the Mo. Synod wielded the Word and the Confessions in opposition to an anti-Confessional, and often anti-Scriptural, movement. This movement was more pronounced in the rest of Protestantism; however, anti-Confessionalism made a dangerous impact upon much of American Lutheranism, also.

⁴Theodore Graebner, Concordia Seminary: Its History, Architecture, and Symbolism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1926), pp.16-17.

We now turn to two of the leading Confessional theologians of the time, Dr. C. F. W. Walther and F. A. Craemer. These men did much to mould H. J. Mueller into a staunchly Confessional and Scriptural Lutheran theologian. Dr. C. F. W. Walther was

the most commanding figure in the Lutheran Church of America during the nineteenth century. . . .

He arrived at St. Louis in February, 1839, and shortly afterwards he took charge of the pastorate at Dresden and Johannisberg in Perry Co., Mo.; he gave his active support to the founding of the log-cabin college at Altenburg and for a time served as instructor. The sad task of unmasking the leader of the Saxon emigrants, M. Stephan, fell to his lot, and it was he who, in the ensuing confusion, brought light and peace to the disturbed consciences of the people. In eight theses he established (April, 1841) the Scriptural doctrine of the Church In April, 1841, he became the successor of his older brother, Otto Hermann, in the pastorate of the St. Louis congregation

In 1844 he began, with the financial backing of his congregation, the publication of the Lutheraner, which served to bring together faithful Lutherans in various sections of the country. In the conferences of 1845 and 1846, in which the question of organizing a confessional Lutheran synod was discussed by a number of pastors and a draft for the constitution drawn up, Walther took a leading part. Upon the organization of the Missouri Synod, in 1847, he was elected its first president, serving as such until 1850 and again from 1864 to 1878. On the removal of the Altenburg college to St. Louis, Walther was elected professor of theology, serving in Concordia Seminary from 1850 until his death and retaining general supervision over the congregation. As theological professor and president and leader of synod he labored indefatigably and succeeded in firmly grounding it on the Word of God and on the Lutheran Confessions;⁵

⁵"Walther, C. F. W.," The Concordia Cyclopedia, edited by L. Fuerbringer, Th. Engelder, and P. E. Kretzmann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927), p. 21.

This is only a skeletal outline of the contributions of Walther to American Lutheranism.

The other man who influenced Heinrich Julius Mueller, especially in the area of missions, was Friedrich August Craemer. Here is a colorful scholar, professor, and missionary, if there ever was one! F. A. Craemer was

b. in Klein-Langheim, Bavaria, May 26, 1812; studied theology in Erlangen, 1830-32; member of a Patriotic Student's Society, he was sentenced to imprisonment following the Frankfurt Insurrection of 1833; proved innocent in 1839, but remained under police surveillance; studied Old and Modern Greek, Ancient and Medieval German, French, and English; in Munich, later, again theology, particularly the Formula of Concord; 1841 tutor to the son of Count Carl von Einsiedel; after two years tutor of the children of Lord and Lady Lovelace in England, the latter a daughter of Lord Byron; tutor of German language and literature at Oxford. The university being dominated by the Tractarians, he severed his connection with it. The Notruf of Wyneken took him to Pastor Loehe, who found him to be the man needed as leader of the men he was on the point of sending to America to found a mission colony there. He traveled through Northern Germany in the interest of this work; was ordained by Dr. Kliefoth in the cathedral of Schwerin, April 4, 1845. Founded the mission colony at Frankenmuth, Mich., labored for five years as pastor and Indian missionary; upon the advice of Loehe he identified himself with the founders of the Missouri Synod. On the death of Prof. A. Wolter he became president and professor of the Practical Seminary at Fort Wayne When the seminary was combined with the Theoretical Seminary at St. Louis, in 1861, Prof. Walther and he, for a while, constituted the whole faculty. For the sake of the large number of Norwegian students enrolled he took up the study of their language. In 1875 he went with the Practical Seminary to Springfield, Ill., as president and chief instructor His labors of forty-one years in the seminary were highly successful, for he knew how to instil, by word and example, his burning zeal into the large classes that sat at his feet⁶

⁶"Craemer, F. A.," The Concordia Cyclopedia, edited by L. Fuerbringer, Th. Engelder, and P. E. Kretzmann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927), p. 21.

Close association with Harms, Walther, and Craemer inspired H. J. Mueller considerably during his preparation for the ministry.

Of course, seminary life in those days had its lighter moments, as it still has. A seminary mate of Heinrich, Dr. E. G. Sihler, gives us a few amusing incidents in the life of the average 1869-1870 seminarian.

And now of St. Louis, 1869-1872, a time when the Mississippi ferry was still the only mode of crossing the famous stream. Dr. Preuss gave several quite brilliant lectures before the synod and returned to St. Louis as professor of divinity there. His facile pen soon was much in evidence in Lehre und Wehre and Lutheraner, as well as in the Abendschule, of which he soon became editor. He was then some thirty-six years old and very clever, I mean adroit, and one who could marshal his resources at any given point with puzzling celerity.

.....

In many of its aspects it was a curious and somewhat incongruous world into which we entered in the autumn of 1869, odd, too, the variety of inhabitants domiciled in the old building with its north and south wings. In the latter lived Dr. Walther and his family, likewise Professor Brauer and his large family, of which the greater number were boys. The oldest, Albert, was doing his Prima work at Fort Wayne. In the north wing resided Professor Craemer, the chief divinity professor of the Praktisches Seminar. Mrs. Craemer, as at Fort Wayne, was the directress of general economics and head of the food department for the entire student-body. There was a team of horses also, if my memory serves me right. The country congregations still furnished a goodly part of the supplies through the lady's untiring exertions and tours of collection. We always celebrated her birthday with some formal function of honor and some expression, through a present, of our respect and gratitude. But in this poor world no adequate expression was then, or perhaps has ever been made of that which Missouri owes to that consecration and that service. Thus, too, it was possible that the entire Kostgeld for the academic year in that era was much less, I believe, than fifty dollars.

Andacht (with some readings from Luther in the morning) involved a roll-call. The student who rang the matutinal signals uniformly acted for the sluggards, by tolling the second monition for an unconscionable length of time to give space for a very hurried toilet and a rush to seats in the grosser Lehrsaal. The organ-playing and the superb concerted delivery of our grand chorals as now done must not be expected from that more primitive era.

.....

During the earlier part of 1870 great changes in building, particularly in providing entirely new domiciles for Professors Walther, Brauer, and Preuss, gained both more living and more sleeping-room for the student-body.

.....

I said above that the inmates of the old Seminary building (1869-72) were somewhat incongruous. What do I mean? First, there were the Theoretischen from Fort Wayne Of the Praktischen some were natives, who first had to go through the Proseminar, but in addition there were two groups: first those selected and prepared by Pastor Brunn at Steeden, Nassau, and the Hermannsburger of Louis Harms, author of Goldene Aepfel in silbernen Schalen.⁷

The author's evaluation of these men, which included Mueller, is interesting.

I had a high regard for their maturity and spiritual sincerity. In this respect they were far more mature than we Fort Wayne men. Pectus facit theologum, which means something greater than emotion or homiletic declamation or mere doctrinal correctness. The Norwegians exhibited in some of their men exceptional specimens of physical strength and soundness, such as Lars Reque; also their glee-club sang Norse songs with a blending of voices and an exquisite delivery, the charm of which still lingers in my memory. They lived apart, over Teacher Erck's, and held rigidly aloof from certain convivial habits with which among us, birthdays were celebrated, somewhat sub rosa.⁸

⁷As quoted by Dau, op. cit., pp. 257-260.

⁸Ibid., p. 261.

Undoubtedly, Heinrich Julius attended the dedication ceremonies of the forerunner of today's Concordia Publishing House.

In February, 1870, the first printing house (Conrad Erbe chief typographer), a modest brick structure on the seminary grounds, was dedicated: Feeder schools and publication, great and essential factors for growth and life of the Church, consistently devised and developed by that eminent man, Dr. Walther, and his coworkers, whose memory we all honor!⁹

This, then is the portrait of St. Louis and Concordia Seminary, upon which Heinrich Julius Mueller is one of the figures--learning--preparing for the God-given tasks ahead of him.

⁹Ibid., p. 263.

CHAPTER IV

MINNESOTA--MINISTRY--MARRIAGE--MISSIONS

Missionary Mueller's first parish was the most fruitful of his ministry. This ministry extended from his home in Willow Creek, Minnesota to the entire southwestern part of Minnesota and into adjacent parts of Iowa and South Dakota. This work was done between the years 1870-1886.

Pastor August R. Suelflow of the Concordia Historical Institute informs us concerning the mission opportunities and problems of the infant Missouri Synod.

The heavy German immigration to the American frontier was known to the leadership of the Missouri Synod. The chief question concerned itself with the outreach. With its theology and established institutions, how could these needs best be met? Trained clergymen who could be used as "Traveling missionaries" were not available. Every possible man had been placed into congregations. In addition, many of these congregations comprised of recent immigrants who had depleted their personal funds could not easily support an aggressive mission program requiring a considerable outlay. With a lack of men and money--a constant cry in every convention for more than 50 years--some solution had to be found. The difficulty was increased since many immigrants moved into the new frontier on a helter-skelter basis, attracted by the prospect of good soil and by relatives and friends.

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Also, German-speaking Protestants who generally were farmer-preachers or footloose persons made terrific inroads. At times, "vagabond clergymen" deceptively announced that they were "Lutheran." Frequently, the Lutheran immigrant was thus lost to his church. Something had to be done.

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For the Methodists and Baptists, frontier mission work did not pose too serious a problem. The "circuit riders" were simply sent out into the wilderness and the "farmer-preacher" came to preach and to gather congregations. But for Lutherans and Anglicans, an acute problem existed. This was especially true of the Missouri Synod with its emphasis on the supremacy of the congregation and its prerogative in issuance of a call. "Synod" was no more than an advisory body. Initiative was to be vested in the local congregation. For this reason, Synod officials at first were reluctant to establish certain "official" commissions or committees. No doubt dating back to Stephanism, a fear of delegating too much authority existed in the minds of many. In addition, it was also considered theologically impossible to "send" a pastor into a settlement. Of course, there are some notable exceptions. Yet, Synod concensus was that the settlement must issue a call, or at least a request, so that the initiative and supremacy of the group would be safeguarded.

At best, the "missionary" became a surveyor who could use all the powers of persuasion at his disposal in order to convince the settlers to issue a call¹

We shall see that this custom was very much alive in Minnesota. The Pastors G. E. Ahner and Henry Sprengler and many others would have worship services with neighboring settlements and then have this group organize into a congregation and call a pastor. As we shall also see, Pastor Mueller was instrumental in getting more men into the field, through such means, during his ministry in Willow Creek and Southwestern Minnesota. This saga in this messenger's life begins with the announcement in Der Lutheraner, as translated:

¹"Historic Patterns of Lutheran Settlement and Outreach," Fifteenth Yearbook, Lutheran Education Association (River Forest, Illinois: Lutheran Education Association, Spring, 1958), pp. 28-30.

On the 8th Sunday after Trinity, August 7, 1870, Candidate H. J. Mueller, who was trained for the ministry in the Hermannsburg mission house and in part also in our practical seminary at St. Louis, Mo., was successful in passing his examination and on orders of the honorable praesidium of the northern district was ordained and installed by the undersigned with the assistance of the Norwegian pastor, T. H. Dahl, in his congregation at Willow Creek, Blue Earth county, Minn. The Lord bless this worker in His vineyard and bestow upon him rich rewards in his arduous task!

G. E. Ahner

Address: Rev. H. J. Mueller,
Vernon Centre, Blue Earth Co., Minn.²

With this exclamatory blessing, Pastor Ahner invoked upon Pastor Mueller the power of God to travel by every possible means to the area indicated by the map which follows. Several of Mueller's biographers say that he was instrumental in establishing between 30 and 50 congregations in this area. Where there is definite documentation, I have included the name of the present day town where a congregation was begun largely through his efforts.

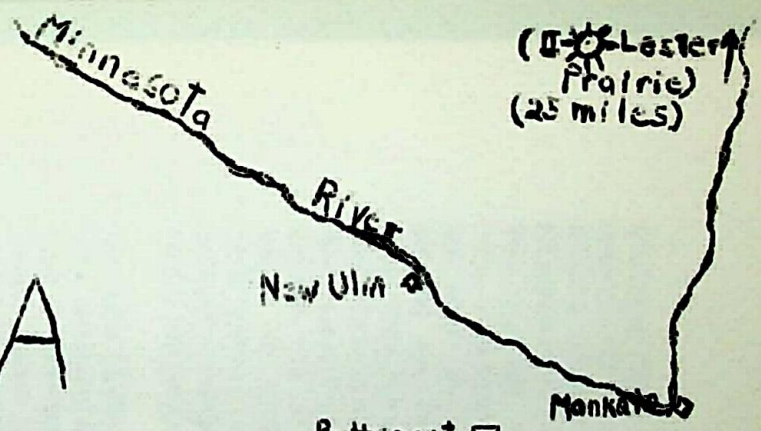
Now that we have discussed his mission to southwestern Minnesota in an introductory manner, let us return to the discussion of Minnesota, the state and the church. Once again we must look at the history books for a minute before we delve into the actual work of H. J. Mueller.

The wonderful ruling of divine providence over peoples and over His church is vividly presented to us for our admiration and adoration when we reflect on the great

²Der Lutheraner, XXVII (August 7, 1870), 12. The German quotations in this thesis have been translated by Prof. Philip Schroeder.

MINNESOTA

SOUTH
DAKOTA



(II) Lasters
Prairie
(25 miles)

Butternut □
Lake Crystal ○
Garden City □

Vernon Center ○

Lewisville ○
Truman ○
Amboy ○
Willow Creek

Fulda ○

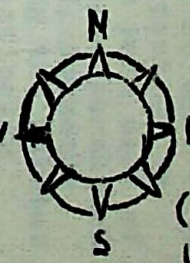
Hardwick ○
Luverne ○

Brewster III
Worthington ○
Town Rest ○
Okauchison
Lakeland
Fairmont ○

Sioux Falls ○

IOWA

- - Congregation Organized by H.J. Mueller
- - Settlers served by H.J. Mueller
- ☀ - Homes of H.J. Mueller



Antrim and Long Branch not included (Locality Unknown)

Le Mars
(20 mi)
↓

Spencer ○

things the Lord has wrought in Minnesota and the Great Northwest in the comparatively short span of time since the founding of our synod in 1847. At that time Minnesota was not yet placed on the map, part of it belonging to the Wisconsin Territory, the part west of the Mississippi belonging to the mighty area purchased by the United States from France, in 1803, commonly known as the Louisiana Purchase, including the Dakotas and Montana. This vast area was then practically uninhabited. At the junction of the Minnesota and the Mississippi Rivers small settlements had been established, known as St. Anthony Falls, Mendota, and St. Paul. There were no railroads Here roving bands of Indians had their hunting grounds, and besides them only white adventurers, hunters, and trappers ventured into this vast expanse

In the year 1854 Synod divided into four districts. In the meantime, 1849, the Minnesota Territory had been formed, and a stream of settlers poured into this section, among them also Germans. But no pastor of our Synod had yet trod Minnesota's soil. This is noteworthy in order to appreciate the comparative youth of the Minnesota District and its church work; and it is an incentive for the praise and grateful recognition of the wondrous things the Lord has wrought in this vast area temporally and spiritually, truly a miracle before our eyes, unparalleled in history, when He settled a mighty sector of an entire continent and simultaneously gave His true Church a glorious period of growth and development here.

Following the treaty of Traverse des Sioux in 1851 between the United States and the Dakota Indians, the settlement of the Minnesota Territory, admitted into the Union as a State in 1858, received a strong impetus. According to this treaty all lands occupied by the Dakota Indians west of the Mississippi, above and below the Minnesota River, and far into the western prairies, were relinquished to the United States. Settlers quickly availed themselves of this fertile land so that the population mounted from 6,077 in 1850 to 150,037 in 1857. German immigrants settled in ever increasing numbers in the Counties of Ramsey, Carver, Stearns, Scott, Sibley, Brown, Le Sueur, Nicollet, Wabasha, Washington, Goodhue, Dakota, Blue Earth, Wright, Hennepin, and Winona.

The Homestead Law of 1862 offered new and highly attractive opportunities for immigrant settling. About this time the first stretch of railroad was completed between St. Paul and St. Anthony Falls, and forged ever farther westward

over the State. Consequently immigration left the waterways and pushed deeper into the interior of the land. Up to the '70's railroads had penetrated in various places to the border of the Dakotas, while in the southwest the railroad had reached Worthington in the year 1871. This information is pertinent at this place for the proper orientation regarding future mission opportunities among immigrant Lutherans.³

The railroad was a significant asset to the ministry of H. J. Mueller as he often travelled by rail to the west from Willow Creek. Nevertheless, the bulk of his travelling was done by horse and by foot.

Now that we have quickly scanned the rapid growth of Minnesota as a state, let us turn to specific instances of early Lutheran pastors in Minnesota.

In the year 1855 three Lutheran pastors came to Minnesota. They were William Thomson of the General Synod, Wilhelm Wier of the Buffalo Synod, and Matthew Mallinson. The latter man later became affiliated with the Minnesota Synod.⁴

Next, let us review the occasion for the beginning of mission work in Minnesota by the Missouri Synod.

At the 8th Convention of Synod, assembled in St. Louis in 1854, the Board finally proposed to Synod the election of a commission to visit the Chippewas of Minnesota and to make an intensive study of mission opportunities there. But the plan of the Board was, for the time being, tabled by Synod

³H. Meyer, The Planting Story of the Minnesota District of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and Other States (Minneapolis, Minn.: n.p., 1932), pp. 9-10.

⁴Ibid., p. 11.

In May, 1856, the second Convention of the Northern District assembled in Trinity Church, the mother church of our Synodical congregations in Detroit. This District Convention was of vital importance and great significance for our Mission in Minnesota

The establishment of missions in Canada, California, and Minnesota was discussed

The District concluded that the Minnesota Territory had first claim on its spiritual care and resolved to commission a pastor of the District to undertake an exploration of Minnesota, if possible during the same summer. The selection of the man was left in the hands of the President of the Northern District.

The idea of exploring Minnesota for the establishment of a new Indian mission was partially responsible for this plan. Pastor Ferdinand Sievers was entrusted with the execution of Synod's project. With the permission of his congregation Pastor Sievers, accompanied by the Indian missionary Miessler and the interpreter Gruet, left that same summer of 1856 for Minnesota, to study the mission opportunities and conditions there

Pastor Sievers wrote a comprehensive report on his exploration tour in the Minnesota Territory The first part of this report deals with the proposed foundation of a new Indian mission in Minnesota The second part describes Pastor Sievers' activity in the interest of immigrant brethren of the faith, and is here presented in full, because of its historical importance.⁵

In . . . 1857, the candidate for the ministry, Frederick William Kahmeyer, a graduate from our Seminary in Ft. Wayne was obtained for mission service in Minnesota.⁶

We must quickly skip over the next eleven Missouri Synod missionaries in Minnesota to get to the thirteenth missionary, the subject of our biography.

As previously stated, the area of Missionary Mueller's work was southwestern Minnesota. Therefore, let us look at a

⁵Ibid., p. 15.

⁶Ibid., p. 32.

brief condensation of the history of this region.

In the fall of 1700, thirty-two years before George Washington was born, Pierre Charles Le Sueur was exploring southwestern Minnesota

The first official examination of southwestern Minnesota was made by Major Stephen H. Long whose party travelled up the Minnesota River, half of his men on foot and half on horseback, in 1823 The next important penetration into southwestern Minnesota was made by Joseph N. Nicollet and John C. Fremont in 1838

During the month of August, 1862, the most barbarous Indian massacre in frontier history took place in Minnesota. The entire Sioux nation of 7,000 united in the uprising and 2,500 braves went on the war-path under the command of Chief Little Crow. From the Lower Agency near Redwood Falls they swept across the Minnesota River slaughtering family after family. Within a few days they had ruthlessly murdered over 400 whites and many more were taken prisoner. Entire counties were depopulated as these Indians fought under the advantageous situation created when most of the young white men left to fight the Civil War . . . 303 (of the Indians) were condemned for murder and massacre and the remainder were given prison terms of from one to ten years for pillage and robbery. When President Abraham Lincoln commuted the death sentence for all but 39 of the condemned Indians the sentiment of the State turned bitterly against him The execution took place at Mankato on December 26, 1862,

During the first few years after the Indians uprising southwestern Minnesota was practically deserted except for the soldiers who patrolled the frontier to protect the settlers further east from the Sioux bands of Wahpeton and Sisseton that had fled to the prairies of Dakota where they wandered about for several years after the uprising.

The intense fear of all Indians created in the settlers delayed the settlement of southwestern Minnesota considerably. It wasn't until about 1870 that this rich farming country had built itself back to the point where it was ready to flourish again.⁷

⁷Richard J. Bowe, editor, "God's Country," Historical Album of Minnesota (Minneapolis, Minn.: Historical Publications, Inc., 1957).

It was into the Minnesota of reconstruction and rehabilitation from the Indian uprising and the Civil War that H. J. Mueller brought his first wife. She was the "girl who was left behind." Probably shortly after passing his examinations at Concordia, he sent an urgent plea to Maria Hemsoth to come be his helpmeet. She did so without delay and they were married in Chicago in 1870.

Shortly after they established their home in Willow Creek, Minnesota, the stark prairie life claimed the beloved Maria with her first new-born child. With deep grief, Pastor Mueller laid his beloved and the child whom he never knew to rest in the prairie.

The Willow Creek Diamond Anniversary booklet of 1945 pictures their final resting place with this caption under the picture.

The cemetery, south of the church, was laid out as soon as the congregation was organized. Mr. Samuel Henslin donated one acre of his land for this cemetery. At a later date it was enlarged. Mrs. H. J. Mueller, wife of the first resident pastor at Willow Creek, was the first to find her resting place at this cemetery.⁸

Pastor Mueller knew that it was not good to be alone.

Therefore,

God directed the missionary to win the hand of the daughter of Heinrich von Dagefoerde, classmate at

⁸[F. J. Mack], Diamond Anniversary Booklet of St. John's Ev. Lutheran Congregation, Willow Creek, Minn. (Mankato, Minn.: Mankato News, 1945), p. 19.

Hermannsburg and shipmate to North America.⁹

On Oct. 9, 1872, the Rev. Mueller was married at Madison, Wisconsin to Dorothea von Dagefoerde, daughter of Rev. Heinrich von Dagefoerde. To them, four sons and five daughters were born.¹⁰

This wedding must indeed have been a balm for this man's soul. He had not only lost his first wife and child, but a fierce fire had taken everything he called his own. The newspaper release commemorating his 100th birthday anniversary stated that,

The Rev. Mueller encountered one of the hardest tests for a young pastor. Fire destroyed the first mission church at Willow Creek he had erected with the help of pioneers.

He was teaching children in the church when the fire broke out in the living quarters on the second floor. He and the children barely escaped death on the cold, stormy autumn day. Of this experience, he once said: "When it was over with, there I stood in my house clothes, without hat or cap or other wraps, holding in my hands the books I had used in instructions. The next moment I was down on my knees in the open prairie thanking God for having saved my life and that of my pupils, asking Him to give us strength, which He did. The following day we continued our instructions in a neighbor's humble home. I had lost everything I called my own."¹¹

Through a process of logical deduction, without detailed data, we assume that Pastor Mueller brought his new bride to a temporary residence 14 miles north of the fire-ravaged

⁹Martin H. Mueller, "Letter from Pastor Martin H. Mueller, Pequot Lakes, Minn., to Henry C. Mueller, St. Louis, Mo.," dated Nov., 1962. Presently filed in the library of Henry C. Mueller.

¹⁰"Mueller Centennial," Fairmont, Minn. newspaper, Dec. 12, 1937, p. 1. Original release presently filed in the library of Henry C. Mueller.

¹¹Ibid.

Willow Creek residence. We read in Der Lutheraner of Oct. 1, 1872, the following bit of information which leads to this conclusion.

Veraenderte Adressen:

Rev. H. J. Mueller
care of F. Heidel
Lake Crystal, Blue Earth Co., Minn.¹²

If this conclusion is correct, it must have been with mixed emotions that the Muellers began their married life. Great joy over their union, tinged with the ominous clouds of smoke and death.

Unfortunately, we have little information about the life-long partner and helpmeet of the Reise-prediger. Her son, Pastor Martin Mueller of Pequot Lakes, Minn., gives us the following brief bits of information about this pioneer lady.

After the new parsonage had been built, the Muellers moved back to Willow Creek. The young bride faced a winter which was similar to the one of the previous year.

. . . . In January of 1872 severe snowstorms hit this entire countryside. Railroads were blockaded and the incessant storms prevented their reopening until April. The winter of 1873 was just as bad. Many lives were lost by those unfortunate enough to be without shelter when one of these violent storms occurred.¹³

Of just such a situation, Martin Mueller tells us.

¹²Der Lutheraner, XXIX (Oct. 1, 1872), p. 8.

¹³Bowe, op. cit.

One winter as "Mom" Mueller was at home alone a week or three with the children--an early winter blizzard raged over the Willow Creek country. For several days she got to the well and the fuel shelter. Then one afternoon she was blinded by the cutting snow and lost her sense of direction and thinking she was returning back to the house she was headed out toward the storm-whipped prairie. Only by an act of God she found her way back to the wash-line and her beloved home. What she must have lived through only she and God knows ¹⁴

Mueller continues,

. . . . Dorothea von Dagefoerde (Mueller)--a wonderful, resourceful woman, often alone for three and four weeks with the growing family at Willow Creek parish house--a mile or three from the nearest house. What all was a credit to her love and courage to make her husband's Reise-prediger forages a success--God alone knows! ¹⁵

We can hardly imagine the hardships this lady underwent.

Besides the primitive living conditions, the family of nine, the lengthy absences of her husband, she also took care of still more children! Pastor Mueller would often bring children back home with him, after one of his journeys, in order to instruct them for confirmation in the faith.

Along with the hardships must have gone many joys on the long winter evenings with so many children in the house. A rather humorous event concerning two of the daughters of Heinrich and Dorothea was told this author by Mueller's daughter-in-law, Mrs. H. F. C. Mueller of Minneapolis, Minn.

One evening Clara and Marie were playing and got into a little "spat". In the process Clara got "spitting mad" and

¹⁴Op. cit.

¹⁵Ibid.

spat at Marie. Her aim was poor, however, and the spittle landed on the family Bible. Marie ran with the Bible to her father, who promptly punished Clara for such disrespect for the Bible.

I believe this little incident once more shows H. J. Mueller's deep respect for God's Word and something also about his discipline. Several of his biographers mention that he was kind-hearted, soft-spoken, but that he was firm and even harsh when it was a matter of Biblical principle.

We have touched lightly upon the Minnesota Mueller's marriages. Now let us turn to the real meat of this biography, which is the beginning of missions in southwestern Minnesota.

the Lutheran settlers near Blue Earth had been served by the traveling missionary at that time, Pastor A. E. Winter, and after his removal to Wisconsin, by Pastor Rennie of Courtland. In 1868 the congregation, organized in TOWN EMERALD, near Blue Earth, called ministerial candidate G. E. Ahner as its pastor, who was ordained and installed there by Pastor K. F. Schulze on July 26th of that year, the 7th Trinity Sunday.

This congregation became the starting point for missions in southern Minnesota and one of the missions of its planting is that at WILLOW CREEK. Under the care of Pastor G. E. Ahner this mission soon began to thrive, organized itself, into the St. John's Congregation in 1870, and called the ministerial candidate H. J. Mueller as its pastor. He served this congregation until 1886, but from it the Word of God sounded forth into many Lutheran settlements in southwestern Minnesota, due to the tireless zeal of its pastor, and thus this congregation became the mother congregation of many congregations in this part of our State, especially in MARTIN COUNTY. The congregation also served the District in this respect that it was host to the Synodical convention in 1889 and 1897. Of Pastor Mueller's mission tours through the southwest of the State we have, we regret to say, but few authentic records, but they are chronicled in the missions founded by him and his co-workers. Though he did not establish as many missions as Pastor Vetter, yet

Pastor Mueller was, unquestionably, one of the most zealous and successful missionaries in Minnesota

After two years Pastor Ahner moved from Blue Earth to Nicollet, and from that time on this ever-growing mission field was served by the three pastors, G. E. Ahner, K. F. Schulze, and H. J. Mueller. Beginning with October, 1873, these three men regularly journeyed through the entire southwestern Minnesota. On horseback, on foot, and by wagon they explored the entire region about Hersey (now Brewster), Worthington, Luverne, and between-lying places as far west as the Dakota border, for brethren in the faith. Soon seventy families were under their care. The original places rapidly grew in strength; Rost numbered more than twenty families already. The mission in southwestern Minnesota looked very promising. Then came the years of the grasshopper scourge and the entire mission work sustained an almost deadly blow.¹⁶

Minnesota Centennial chroniclers fill in some of the details on this dreaded scourge.

Many of the hardy settlers here had their subsistence swept away by prairie fires and hail storms but they had the determination to fight through their adversity. The crop of 1872 was about average, and the settlers felt encouraged, glad that their fortunes had been cast on the prairie of southwestern Minnesota.

In the spring of 1873 a large crop was planted after every effort had been expended in preparing the soil and procuring the seed. A promising harvest was apparent and all felt that they would soon be rewarded for their past privations. But early in June that year a vast army of grasshoppers descended on this entire southwestern corner of the state and devastated nearly all standing crops before laying their eggs for another year's scourge. Appeals to the charitable brought provisions and clothing from all parts of the state. In January of 1874 the legislature appropriated \$5,000.00 to help relieve the region and another \$25,000.00 was granted to purchase wheat seed. The following spring the wheat was sown but as soon as it appeared above the ground the grasshopper eggs began hatching and a second year of suffering had started. By early June the ground was covered with the wingless hordes; again the crops were almost completely destroyed. Towards

¹⁶ Meyer, op. cit.

the end of June their wings began to develop and each day about noon the sky would be dark with the insects leaving thousands of desolate acres behind as they migrated. Contributions again came into this region and these farmers prepared for another crop--thus they were able to remain on their homesteads.¹⁷

As we have already noted, the winters of 1872 and 1873 were equally devastating with their howling blizzard gales. Throughout this period of physical and spiritual suffering of the 1870's, Missionary Mueller brought not only the hope of the Christian Gospel, but God led him to heed Jesus' injunction, "If you have done it unto the least of these, my brothers, you have done it unto me." Along with the spiritual food, he brought supplies and medical aid to these suffering sod-house dwellers. We are told that,

During the 1870's, the Rev. Mueller assisted government agents in distributing supplies to stricken Minnesotans during the dread seven-year locust plague

To the sick and suffering too far removed from competent medical care he ministered freely from his first-aid-kit.¹⁸

Despite the severities, or perhaps because of the testing of God,

still in 1874, the Lutherans in Rost resolved upon calling a ministerial candidate, but their request could not be granted; many of the settlers forsook their homesteads within the next three years, and now the calling of a pastor was out of the question. During these dismal years the Pastors Mueller, Schulze, and Ahner maintained this entire field by their regular service, the field, however, dwindling to seven places with a few souls.¹⁹

¹⁷Bowe, op. cit.

¹⁸"Mueller Centennial," Fairmont, Minn. newspaper, Dec. 12, 1937, p. 1. Original release presently filed in the library of Henry C. Mueller.

¹⁹Meyer, op. cit., p. 83.

Without any detailed accounts of the mission journeys of these men, we can only give a few statistics which are found in the Parochial Berichte of the Northwestern District. We keep in mind that these are flesh and blood and soul statistics of the people involved in the crises which we have described and the joys which only Christian family life can bring. The following are listed behind the regular statistics for Pastor Mueller's home congregation at Willow Creek.

1875--Also 2 daughter congregations: 71 souls, 5 births, 62 communicants, 3 deaths.²⁰

1876--Since October, 1875--Also 3 daughter congregations with 27 families and 6 preaching stations.²¹

1877--Also 3 daughter congregations with 32 families and 7 preaching stations served with Pastor Schulze and Pastor Ahner.²²

1879--Also 3 daughter congregations with 32 families.²³

1881--Also 3 daughter congregations with 34 families.²⁴

The three Filiale listed were at Fairmont, Lake Crystal and Antrim, Minn. The seven Predigtplaetze are not mentioned anywhere, but they must have been far-flung locations because these Reise-Frediger traveled up to 150 miles south and west from their home bases.

No doubt, such men as these could tell hundreds of anecdotes

²⁰Mo. Synod, Northwestern District, Proceedings, 1875, p. 67.

²¹Mo. Synod, Northwestern District, Proceedings, 1876, p. 70.

²²Mo. Synod, Northwestern District, Proceedings, 1877, p. 76.

²³Mo. Synod, Northwestern District, Proceedings, 1879, p. 75.

²⁴Mo. Synod, Northwestern District, Proceedings, 1881, p. 87.

concerning their trips among the settlers. One humorous anecdote which comes to us via the Rev. Martin Mueller originates in a prairie sod-house.

On another mission foray the Reise-prediger landed in a pioneer Lutheran home at night-fall. The evening meal took its course normally, but when bed-time came there was only the one living-cooking-sleeping room. There was only one bed of sacked corn-leaves and that was for father and mother. The children were on straw-corn bags, feather beds and pillows. But where would the Reise-prediger sleep? "Well," so said the man and the woman nonchalantly agreed, "the bed is big enough for three"--der Prediger on the wall-side--the Herr Papa in the middle and the gute Haus-Frau held on to the other side until the new day dawned!²⁵

Such a one-room sod house was the typical dwelling of most of the early southwestern Minnesota settlers. These were sometimes built above ground and at other times hollowed out of the prairie. The Historical Album of Minnesota shows a picture of such a settler and his home (see illustration, p. iv). The explanation tells us that,

This homesteader was photographed with his oxen in front of the sod house he built from nothing but a few pieces of wood and the fertile prairie soil between Jackson and Fairmont. These homes were not uncommon during the first few years it took for a settler to realize some income from the rich soil in this region. These sod houses had dirt floors, the roof was made of sod and hay and the walls were made of stakes and latticed willow branches reinforced with mud. These humble abodes must have been quite a shock to the English farmers who settled in the area around Fairmont in the 1870's--most of them were graduates of Oxford and Cambridge. . . .²⁶

This last statement makes it evident that many of the people with whom Pastor Mueller dealt were highly educated.

²⁵Op. cit.

²⁶Bowe, op. cit.

The only other factual material concerning the actual work of H. Mueller outside of his own congregation at Willow Creek was garnered by Pastor Douglas A. Laub of Lake Crystal, Minnesota. We recall that this congregation was one of the daughter congregations of Willow Creek parish and that the Rev. and Mrs. Mueller lived there for a short time during the early days of their marriage. Pastor Laub relates,

I found, in our files, a large old record book begun at the time H. J. Mueller began his pastorate here. Someone with very excellent German penmanship recorded the record of official acts into this book, perhaps from earlier books, of Mueller and the next pastor.

This book yields the following information:

RE: BAPTISMS

There are 47 baptisms done by Mueller and one "Nottaufe" (the name of the administrant is not given) from Sept. 25, 1870 through March 5, 1886. The births and baptisms, with 5 exceptions, always occurred in the same place, such as Butternut Valley, Lincoln Township, Lake Crystal and Garden City, . . . all places within about 10 miles radius of Lake Crystal. (Could this have indicated they were usually performed in the home, or at a local chapel? Were the others (5) performed at a church in another township?)
 27

In reply to my question about the identity of F. Heidel with whom the Muellers lived, Pastor Laub replied,

As close as I can trace information regarding F(ranz) Heidel in the records is as follows: on Sept. 19, 1875, Mueller . . . baptized Gustav Eduard Franklin Heidel, b. Sept. 6, 1875. Franz's wife was Wilhelmine, geb. Teske. The Baptism was at Lake Crystal

²⁷Douglas A. Laub, "Letter from Pastor Douglas A. Laub, Lake Crystal, Minn., to Henry C. Mueller, St. Louis, Mo.," dated Nov. 2, 1962. Presently filed in the library of Henry C. Mueller.

It is interesting to note how soon after birth the children were reborn. A glance over Mueller's records show that most baptisms were quite prompt after birth; seldom administered later than three weeks or a month after birth and often a few (1 or 2) to 10 days after birth.

RE: CONFIRMATIONS

Mueller confirmed 11 children and no adults
All these confirmations were performed in Willow Creek about 14 miles south of Lake Crystal in the country

RE: HOLY COMMUNION REGISTRATIONS

Mueller celebrated Holy Communion between Sept. 15, 1872 and Sept. 12, 1886. Average attendance at Holy Communion seems to be slightly more than 10. The extremes in attendance were 18 and 2 These statistics point out the rationalistic influence upon our Lutheran Church which is still felt in so many of our congregations today, including this one.²⁸

Other than the information from the Northwestern District Proceedings and the letter from Pastor Laub, there seems to be little information available about the other two congregations and the seven preaching stations. Probably, more information could be located in the church records of the Fairmont and the Antrim congregations.

The only other information which I was able to find comes from the newspaper release of 1937, Pastor Martin Mueller, Dr. Thiele's article in the Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, and H. J. Mueller's obituary by Pastor H. Meyer. This material is printed here with very little comment, for it is self-explanatory.

His [H. J. Mueller's] first duties took him to the mission field at Willow Creek in Blue Earth County, Minn., where his nearest neighbors in the ministry

²⁸ Ibid.

were more than thirty miles distant to the north and east. In his territory of some 150 miles south and west, he learned that he was the first Christian minister to visit some of the pioneer communities.

Summer and winter, not complaining, he walked countless miles to preach among the scattered settlements and bring the word of God to the humble in sod hovels and wind-blown shacks, south into the Spencer, Iowa and west into the Sioux Falls, South Dakota territories

The Rev. H. J. Mueller exemplified the typical trail-blazing, pioneer mission worker. Where trains, horseback and ox-cart could not take him he walked 29

Martin H. Mueller, his son, relates an incident which must have been a harrowing experience for his father.

On one of the trips to the southern section of Minnesota, Missionary Mueller elected to travel by train and had arranged to have a member of the Town Rost mission group meet him at Hershey (now Brewster). When nobody showed up, Missionary Heinrich Julius decided to go on foot. It was middle of December when he hung his carpet-bag on the walking cane and struck out in the general direction of the Rost Town Settlement. But the short December day turned so soon into night--and no settlers anywhere--losing his trail he trudged along and finally came to some fall plowing and figured that somehow at the end of the furrows he would get to the sod or possible humble abode of a settler and shelter for the night. His prayers were answered in a pin-pointed, God-directed manner. The furrow he had elected to follow and stepped out of came to an abrupt end. In the dark of night he stumbled onto an obstruction--a fence post?--No! It fell over and out came a man from nowhere to see why the stove-pipe of his underground "sod-home" had made breathing impossible--and there was great joy when a member of the Rost Town Lutheran group met his beloved Reiss-prediger. And now . . . what do? The underground shelter of the pioneer tiller of the soil was not large enough for one more human, and there were no neighbors in the vicinity who might help out with a bed. Three miles away was the only frame house

²⁹"Mueller Centennial," Fairmont, Minn. newspaper, Dec. 12, 1937, p. 1. Original release presently filed in the library of Henry C. Mueller.

of the whole settlement, the John Meister home. So, the team of oxen was hitched up and the beloved Reise-prediger was driven through the dark night to another surprised member of the mission for safe shelter.

Again, on another trip to seek and find and hold: in the swirling snow the Reise-prediger came to the edge of a settlement of German Lutheran pioneers and out of the nowhere he stumbled into the top of an underground stove-pipe, heating the family in the rugged home. Again the reception was cordial and he stayed until the storm ceased.³⁰

Mission journeys such as described above were continued for 7 years. Pastor H. Meyer explains why these trips were discontinued.

During these dismal years the Pastors Mueller, Schulze, and Ahner maintained this entire field by their regular service, But this arrangement could not be maintained indefinitely. Each of the three pastors had fully enough work in his own parish; the trips into a region 150 miles distant in some instances, at times removed them from their congregations for weeks, and the youth in these mission places grew up without thorough instruction. Hence, the Pastoral Conference resolved to engage a travelling missionary for southwestern Minn., and to request his support from their own congregations, as long as necessary. The mission places agreed to this plan and a call was issued especially by the Lutherans in Rost and the present Delafield, whereupon they were assigned candidate A. Daeschlein as their pastor. He was ordained and installed in his mission field by Pastor K. F. Schulze in Aug., 1877³¹

This rather ingenious method of obtaining a travelling missionary for southwestern Minnesota is worth noting. By having these congregations issue the call to A. Daeschlein the sovereignty and initiative of the congregation, in matters of calling a pastor, was preserved. The principle was upheld

³⁰Op. cit.

³¹Op. cit., p. 83.

and southwestern Minnesota had a qualified travelling missionary.

As was indicated previously, itinerant sectarian preachers were a big problem to the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod. At the grass-roots level these "preachers" were a problem for Pastor Mueller also. Dr. Thiele says, in the Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, that,

Mueller, a kindhearted man, was inflexible in religious matters, taking the position "It is written." To a sectarian missionary at large, he once said: "We don't want you to cause any disturbance and want you to know that Psalm 139:21ff. applies to you." His church council took the same position. In attendance at a meeting held by the itinerant preacher the chairman responded to that man's welcome by saying: "We forbid you to enter our homes and to try to mislead our families while we are in the Blue Earth River area cutting fuel for the winter."³²

The following excerpt from Dr. Thiele's article tells us of some of the fruits which the Lord harvested from Missionary Mueller's sowing of the Word. It affords us with an appropriate ending to this chapter.

One of the great loves of Pastor Mueller was the parochial school. He established schools wherever he could in his mission fields. Many a child came to the parsonage to live in order to receive schooling and religious instruction. Ere long the first teacher was called. He was Candidate Karl Vogt. He became the instructor in the first school District (at Willow Creek). In 1881 a second teacher, Carl Froehlich, was called for the second school district. The classes in this second school had temporarily been instructed by H. Zenke. This arrangement made it possible for Pastor Mueller to go far beyond former limits in gathering small groups in various

³²Gilbert A. Thiele, "Glimpses of One Hundred Years of Missouri Synod Lutheranism in Minnesota," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XXIX (Fall, 1956), 93-94.

parts of southwestern Minnesota and portions of Iowa and South Dakota. Besides his growing congregation at Willow Creek he served alternately Saint John's, Antrim, Minn., organized in 1886; and Lake Crystal, reorganized in 1945. St. Paul's, Fairmont, Minn., owes its organization in 1883 to this zealous missionary. Candidate Meese was the first resident pastor. Mueller can be credited directly with the organization of the following additional churches: St. Paul's at Fulda, 1886; St. Paul's at Amboy, 1887; Zion, daughter of the church at Antrim, organized in Lewisville, 1906; St. John's, North Branch, 1870; Saint Paul's, Truman, 1900; Town Rost, eight miles southwest of Lakefield, 1885, where Mueller ordained and installed Theodore Brinkmann; St. Matthew's, Worthington, 1881; Trinity, Brewster, 1886; Zion, Hardwick, 1892; Sioux Falls, S. Dak., Zion, 1898; First English, Spencer, Iowa, 1892; Heron Lake, where, however, he did not organize a parish.³³

³³Ibid., pp. 92-93.

CHAPTER V

MINISTRY AND MEETINGS

This chapter is a logical, rather than a chronological, division from the previous chapter. Chapter IV related the work done outside the Willow Creek Parish. Chapter V will tell us of the work done within the Willow Creek Congregation. Therefore, we go back in history from 1886 to 1870. Here we submit pertinent material from the Diamond Anniversary Booklet of St. John's Ev. Lutheran Congregation of Willow Creek, Blue Earth County, Minnesota (1870-1945). Also, because Heinrich Julius Mueller was a delegate at the founding of the Northwestern and the Minnesota Districts of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, I include some pertinent findings from these District Proceedings.

For background material, we quote pertinent sections from the history of St. John's congregation.

The purpose of this Anniversary Booklet is to bring and keep in remembrance the many-fold spiritual blessings which the good Lord had bestowed upon St. John's Congregation during its 75 years of existence. Unto His name be all glory and honor and praise!

The beginning of St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church dates back to the year 1866. The first settlers came at the close of the Civil War locating in Pleasant Mound township, Blue Earth County, from Wisconsin, and many came direct from the province Posen, Germany

By hard work, stringent economy, and careful budget balancing these sturdy settlers have made out of those wide open spaces a beautiful section of the country with fine residences, commodious barns, well drained and cultivated fields, well kept groves and stock that will

top any market in the nation, consistent blue ribbon winners.

The first settlers were Christ and Carl Schwarz and John Krinke, coming from Wisconsin in search of better land. They arrived in June, 1866 in covered wagon by ox team. Impressed by the possibilities this land offered, they sent word to their relatives in other parts of the country and urged them to join them . . .

While these early settlers were building homes and improving farms and thus under God enjoyed steady temporal prosperity, never a complete crop failure during 75 years, they were also mindful of their spiritual needs. The closest Lutheran pastor was the Rev. G. E. Ahner of Emerald Township, near the town of Blue Earth, to whom they applied for services, and who served them faithfully once a month.

Rev. G. E. Ahner served till 1870, the year in which St. John's Ev. Lutheran Congregation at Willow Creek was organized. After the organization had taken place the first resolution was to call a resident pastor in the person of Rev. H. Julius Mueller, who came to the United States in the year 1869.¹

Only four years after this group of settlers had gathered for worship, Pastor Mueller came to serve them as their first resident pastor.

Pastor Mack continues,

A building to serve as parsonage, church and school was erected on the Wm. Schwarz land (now owned by Arnold Urban). The combination building was destroyed by fire in 1872. The fire was noticed first by school children. Very little of Rev. H. J. Mueller's household goods was salvaged from the fire, which spread very rapidly, and one of the eyewitnesses, Mr. Ed. Luedtke at Fairmont related that the loss of the building was at that time terrific, and he can still see Rev. Mueller kneeling on the ground in prayer with his pupils standing around him. Inasmuch as Rev. Mueller had lost his wife through death within his short stay until then, we may well understand the hardships he went through the first two years at Willow Creek.

The loss of the combination building by fire did not discourage the congregation to build the same summer, but this time two buildings were erected, church and parsonage, mostly from rough lumber. Part of that church can be still seen at the Reinhardt Zarn farm. The lot, on which

¹[F. J. Mack], Diamond Anniversary Booklet of St. John's Ev. Lutheran Congregation, Willow Creek, Minn. (Mankato, Minn.: Mankato News, 1945), p. 3.

the church and parsonage was built in 1872 was deeded over to the congregation by Christian Witt and wife, Wm. Schwarz, Emil Luedtke and Aug. Urban acting as Trustees.

The rapid growth of the congregation made it necessary to build a larger church. Thus a spacious church was built on the same lot, one half mile north from the first church. This church was built in 1886, 30 x 70 ft. with a church steeple at the height of 103 feet. A Pipe Organ was installed in 1895. The church as it stands today in its pleasing appearance is a worthy contribution to this community. The cost of the church building in 1886 came to \$8,000. The 15th of November in the year 1886 it was dedicated and served ever since the numerous members of the congregation.²

It is interesting to note that Pastor Mueller did not stay around long to "enjoy the fruits of his labor." The new church was dedicated on November 15, 1886 and six weeks previously, he was installed at Lester Prairie, Minn. on October 3, 1886. This again shows us his bold and perhaps somewhat impetuous nature.

As Dr. Thiele stated previously, Pastor Mueller was always interested in parochial school education for his young parishioners. This is well-documented by the following article from the Anniversary Booklet.

The founders of St. John's were well aware of the necessity of providing a Christian training for their children. For that reason we find that as soon as the congregation was organized, the children were provided with a Christian teacher who had the saving of their souls as his first interest. That first teacher was Pastor Mueller who taught the children in the basement of the church. For some years this proved to be satisfactory but as time went on a change became necessary. Due to the fact that the distance to school was too great for some children, it became necessary to divide the

² Ibid., pp. 3-4.

congregation into two districts and erect a school building in each district. This was done in or before the year, 1884.

Since records of the early history of our school are not at hand, much of this information may not be exact as to date. In all probability the records were destroyed in the fire which razed the first church building. However we are certain that the first school building was erected in 1884 on the site of the present building. Mr. Carl Vogt was the first teacher. He was succeeded by Mr. Paul J. Trupke who served until 1902.³

.....

Under Pastor H. J. Mueller school District No. 2 was organized in the year 1881.⁴

During the period from 1881-1945, 12 male teachers served this district. Eight male teachers and two lady teachers served the other school, District No. 1. In District No. 2, Mr. Henry Zenke and Teacher Carl Frohlich taught during the tenure of H. Mueller.

Pictures of several of these teachers, of the original school buildings and of the 1886 church are included in the anniversary booklet.

The following section from the Diamond Anniversary Booklet reminds us once again that the Lord is responsible for all good and good works. Especially the latter part of the following excerpt applies to H. Mueller.

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: . . . there is so much cause to do so for all the grace and mercy which the good Lord has bestowed upon this congregation during its 75 years

³Ibid., p. 8.

⁴Ibid., p. 10.

of existence. During this period the Lord has granted His people the Word and Sacraments which had been preached and taught in all its truth and purity and administered according to Christ's institution, by which many, many souls were brought to the true and saving faith and as blessed Christians entered into a blissful eternity. The labor in the Lord by faithful pastors and teachers and members, was signally blessed, the congregation grew into one of the largest in the southern part of Minnesota, and it, too, became the feeder of the surrounding sister congregations, Vernon Center, Amboy, Lewisville, Antrin, Fielden, and also of the newly organized congregation in Lake Crystal which was originally served from Willow Creek.⁵

Next, we include an exciting bit of folk-history. It involves Mr. Albert Urban who received his elementary and Christian education from H. Julius Mueller in the basement of the original church. He was later married in the Willow Creek Church with Mueller performing the ceremony.

Prior to the Indian outbreak in 1862 he [Albert Urban] came to Minnesota with his parents and settled near Ft. Ridgley. It was at this point on the fateful Aug. 18, 1862 that Mr. Urban, then a lad of 6 years, together with his mother and three sisters were captured by Little Crow's Sioux Indians, and were held captives until set free at Camp Release at Montevideo.

It was during the fall of 1910 that a Mankato newspaper met Mr. Urban and he gave the following interview in regard to being captured by the Indians:

"A reporter did you say, well, perhaps you would like a true story," said Mr. Urban as he smiled and pushed back his hat from his forehead and displayed a livid scar over his left eye. "This" said Mr. Urban, "is a keepsake I carry from the Indian outbreak in 1862, when our home near Ft. Ridgley was attacked by Little Crow, while father was at work in New Ulm in a wagon shop. My mother and three sisters and myself were captured, but my oldest brother managed to get away. My mother had to carry one three year old girl on her back and my eleven months old sister in her arms as the Indians forced us along when they went farther west.

⁵ Ibid., p. 12.

"My mother was not ill treated, strange though it may sound, and now when I look back through the years I can realize that owing to the fact that we were driven from place to place in custody of the Indians for over six weeks, as they had to dodge the soldiers, we did not fare as badly as we might have, when one takes into consideration that we were captured by savages.

"Oh, the story of the scar on my forehead, did you say? Well, at that time I was a boy but six years of age, but though I am a man now going on 56 years, I can still shut my eyes and see the whole terrible ordeal as plainly as if it were yesterday. After being in captivity for several days I was stripped as naked as the day I was born and ran naked with the Indian children and other white children in captivity.

"Whether the Indians were testing my nerve with the view of adopting me in their tribe or not I am unable to tell, but they took it into their heads, that is, the best bow and arrow shots in the tribe, to place pieces of bark on my head and shoot the same off. Being then but a mere child I was terribly frightened and several times one day my knees nearly wilted under me, and I would have fallen had not some of the Indians prodded me with their knives to make me understand that I had to stand up straight and still.

"It may be that I stirred and now I don't wonder that I did, or it may be that the archer aiming his arrow at the piece of bark on the top of my head shot low. However this may be, it was then I received the 'stamp of Minnesota,' which I will bear to my grave. The point of the arrow struck me on the forehead and knocked me out, and I stayed that way for three days, but you see" said Mr. Urban with a smile, "I came out of it all right or I would not be telling you how I came to be bearing this mark."

Another incident in the life of the lad, when captured by the Indians may be of interest, since he was only 6 years old then. When they were taking him to their camp they came to a place where they had to ford the Minnesota River. The Indians stripped him naked, threw him into the river and told him to go ahead and cross. Albert could not swim and had never been in a lake or river before. Luckily for him, however, the Indians were driving a herd of cattle across the river. He caught hold of the tail of a cow and was dragged ashore.⁶

⁶ Ibid., p. 21.

A picture of the hanging of thirty-nine of these Indians at Mankato, Minn. on December 26, 1862, is found in the Historical Album of Minnesota, published in 1957 (see illustration on p. iv). It is only fair to add here that some Minnesota historians point out that these Indians were led to this uprising by the graft involved in their food and supply allotments, which led to starvation and hunger for thousands of them.

The Sioux Uprising and the Civil War took place in the same decade that H. J. Mueller came to St. Louis and Minnesota. We wish merely to re-emphasize the troubled and tumultuous times during which he spread the Word of peace.

We will now look at another facet of Pastor Mueller's church interests. A quick check of the Northwestern and Minnesota Districts' proceedings indicate that he was vitally interested in the synodical and district program of the church. He was present as a delegate at the founding of the Northwestern District in 1875 and also the commencement of the Minnesota-Dakota Districts in 1882. He also attended many, if not all, of the other District conventions during his nearly half-century of labor in the Lord's vineyard. A more careful examination of these early records might reveal many details involving H. Mueller. However, only a cursory glance reveals the following information.

Concerning the founding of the Northwestern District, we find that,

the Northern District Synod approached the General

Synod, assembled in Fort Wayne, 1874, for a division of the District, recommending the combining of the States of Wisconsin and Minnesota into a new District, while Michigan and Ontario continue as the Northern District. Synod adopted the recommendation of this division and formed the new Northwestern District, comprising Wisconsin and Minnesota.

About a year later, July 7, 1875, the Northwestern District was organized in the church of Pastor C. Strasen of Watertown, Wis.

The record of the members from Minn. is as follows:

Present, Voting Pastors:	Absent, Voting Pastors:
Buerger, E. M., Hart	Cloeter, O., Afton
Herzer, J., Minneapolis	Fischer, H., Benton
Horst, J., Hay Creek	
Rolf E., St. Paul	Absent, Advisory Pastors:
Schaaf, G. P. A. Town Utica	Boesche, G. E., Watertown
Schulze, K.F., Courtland	Friedrich, W., Waconia
	Johl, F.W., Claremont

Present, Advisory Pastors:

Ahner, G.E., Nicollet	(Also Listed: Present, Teachers, 3
Barth, G., Minnesota Lake	Present, Lay Delegates, 6:
Caemmerer, A., Mountville	Absent, Lay Delegates, 2:
Boernecke, C., Danville	Accepted as Members, Pastors, 9:
Kolbe, F.G., Henderson	Accepted as Member, Teacher, 1:)
Kollmorgen, C., Atwater	
Krumsieg, Th., Arlington	
Maeurer, Ch., Belvidere	
<u>Mueller, H. J., Willow Creek</u>	
Raedke, H., Carver	
Sippel, A., Potsdam	
Sprengeler, H. F., Elysian	

We include here some interesting notes from the first convention of the Northwestern District. H. J. Mueller was present as an advisory pastor because his congregation at Willow Creek had not yet joined the Missouri Synod. In the

⁷ H. Meyer, The Planting Story of the Minnesota District of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and Other States (Minneapolis, Minn.: n.p., 1932), p. 71. Italics mine.

convention proceedings, we read about the opening and organization of the Northwestern District.

After a morning worship service with sermon on July 7, 1875 in the church of Pastor G. Strasen of Watertown, Wis. by Pastor Herzer on I Corinthians 12: 27, the meeting was opened with the regular liturgical order. Pastor H. C. Strasen, as former vice-president of the Northern district, out of which came our present northwestern district and which had formerly been a part of the Northern district, took the chair and called upon Pastor Kuechle to read the roster of names.⁸

That there were some very practical problems discussed is indicated by the following excerpts from the proceedings.

The second subject of the doctrinal discussions had to do with: . . .

6. Theses, on the owning or operating or visiting drinking rooms (saloons) on the part of members of a Christian congregation.⁹

At the conclusion of these theses, there is an interesting note added by Pastor Henry Sprengeler.

The situation of the pastors in the larger cities with respect to the owning (operating) and visiting drinking rooms (saloons) on the part of the members as well as the wish of his colleagues for a treatment of the problem motivated the essayist--without special assignment--to present his paper. The saloon problem in the larger cities is becoming more and more acute. Formerly drinks were sold in grocery stores; later tables were placed, and finally special drinking rooms were built. This is the genesis of the saloons which opened early and closed late and seemingly were open on Sundays as well. But not alone the building of such rooms but also the patronage of such rooms on the part of some church members in the larger cities, especially, caused the pastors more and more concern.¹⁰

⁸Mo. Synod, Northwestern District, Proceedings, German ed., 1875, p. 3. The German quotations in this thesis were translated by Prof. Philip J. Schroeder, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.

⁹Ibid., p. 48

¹⁰Ibid., p. 50.

Other, perhaps more important, business handled in this progenitor convention is discussed as follows:

1. The issuance of schoolbooks was discussed.
2. Concerning inner missions, we are informed that an entirely new mission field had been opened in Dakota.
3. Conference and visitation districts were set up. Minnesota was to be divided into two such districts, a southern and a northern, separated by the Minnesota River.
4. Proper protocol for pastoral conferences was adopted.
5. Delegates for the upcoming synodical convention were elected.
6. The "General Building Treasury," was discussed. The Northwestern District president made reference to the printed report of the Synod's financial position.¹¹

It is rather doubtful that H. J. Mueller had a strong influence upon these proceedings. There are two reasons for this statement: (a) He was a relative newcomer to this District, five years; (1) His comparative youth, 38 years; (2) His short tenure in the office of the ministry, five years; (b) He was only an advisory pastor because St. John's of Willow Creek had not officially joined the Northwestern District.

Nevertheless, as a member of this assembly, he was probably referred to by other pastors. Undoubtedly he was an eyewitness to an historical event whose effect thoroughly permeated the whole of Missouri Synod Lutheranism in Minnesota,

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 56ff.

Wisconsin, the Dakotas, and adjacent parts of Canada.

We continue our snap-shots from Minnesota history with an event which transpired in the third convention of the youthful Northwestern District.

One can only surmise what Heinrich Mueller's feelings were on the following issue which was brought up at the third convention of the Northwestern District. He must have taken a stand because this involved his alma mater in Hermannsburg.

In the February issue of the Hermannsburg Mission journal of 1875 Pastor Harms wrote an article under the heading "My sainted brother and his writings"

"In my biography of my blessed brother I pointed out that in a number of points he had deviated from correct doctrine and I still maintain it. In the teaching of Jesus' descent into hell he did not teach correct doctrine. In the doctrine of the Sabbath he failed in proper documentation. To be sure I still say that these deviations do not touch the fundamental doctrine of Justification, they contain no salvation-endangering errors--I might say these deviations were oddities held by many another true Christian. So I hold that these are peculiarities when some Christians hold that it is a doctrinal norm that the Pope is Antichrist, because such norm cannot be substantiated by a clear word of Holy Writ and this is necessary for such norm, or, that it is a doctrinal norm to call all interest-taking a mortal sin.

"When Hermannsburg missionaries who were sent to America after but a short time send me a listing of errors taken from my brother's writings so I credit that to their ignorance, which, to be sure is no credit to Hermannsburg, but not to America either

"Luther remains Luther despite his expressions in de servo arbitrio, despite expressions on the James epistle."

After the publication of the aforementioned number of the Hermannsburg Missionsblatts the sainted pastor, F. Wyneken, wrote a reply in the Lutheraner issue of June 15 of the same year (1875). The reply, written as a challenge, was couched in respectable but convincing words. We anticipated a recantation regarding the expressions on Luther and, of course, of those respecting ourselves. We waited in vain. Pastor Harms did not reply--

ignored us. We could not be satisfied with this state of affairs, especially not if we were to continue in our cordial relations with and support of the Hermannsburg mission. We expected a satisfactory reply. As it did not come to our northwest district on the occasion of a meeting on foreign missions, in our earlier gathering in Minneapolis, Minn., it was resolved that someone should be appointed to write to Pastor Harms in the name of the district and that such document be signed by the president and secretary of the district. This was done. Upon this document, which was supported by members present as to its form and content, and of which document it was agreed that it was written in a restrained and humble tone, we received from Pastor Th. Harms, in place of the hoped for explanation, the report that he allow himself the privilege of referring us to Pastor Brauer of St. Louis as he (Pastor Harms) preferred to deal with him on the controverted matter at least for the present, and that he hoped he would not get into the spirit in which our writing at some points had fallen.

Although our District Synod was not too disturbed that Pastor Harms had by-passed it, it felt constrained, because of the importance of the matter, to express regret that Pastor Harms had declined to reply directly to these weighty questions about which they had in all humility and deference asked for a reply. Or was this to be considered inconsequential that Pastor Harms openly repudiated appeals of earlier Hermannsburg students who had pointed to doctrinal deviations in the writings of the sainted L. Harms? And further, that Pastor Harms called the clear doctrine of Scripture and our Confessions, that the Pope is Antichrist, and the clear Scripture doctrine that usury is sin oddities, Luther's classic writing: "That the free will is nothing," which in our confession because of the therein contained thorough exposition of the doctrine of free will, has been highly praised and commended, as also his suspicion of Luther's expression on James, and finally our faithful and with blessing endowed honorable colleagues who received their first preparation for the ministerial office at Hermannsburg have been ignored and seriously hurt because in their private correspondence they had recalled the L. Harm's writings.

Although in directing us to Pastor Brauer in St. Louis, Pastor Harms is guilty of the very fault with which he charges us--this we could have overlooked, as we stated previously. The fact, however, that Pastor Harms' answer as sent to Pastor Brauer was in no way satisfactory.

(The reply of Harms was of such a nature that it was incumbent upon Pastor Brauer to reply with a defense Gegenschrift), we could not overlook. And in order, then, not to be a partaker of other men's sins our Synod felt compelled to submit by unanimous resolution the following declaration. "Under the circumstances in which we find ourselves we can as Synod no more collect financial aid for the Hermannsburg mission nor can we send monies collected by others for this mission."¹²

This dispute over doctrine and the resultant action must have alienated Heinrich Mueller from his Hermannsburg heritage. Along with the training which he received at Concordia Seminary and his years in America, this decision must have "Americanized" him more thoroughly.

The following "snap-shot" shows us that Pastor Mueller was held in quite high regard by his fellow pastors. At the age of 40, he was chosen as substitute delegate to the Synodical Convention in 1878. This information is garnered from the Northwestern District Proceedings.

We find that the "Advisory Pastors," those not officially members of the Northwestern District, were divided into conferences. The group to which Mueller belonged was composed of the following pastors: Ahner, Mueller, Friedrich, Krumsieg, Janzow, von Brandt, and Streckfuss. These pastors chose G. E. Ahner as delegate and H. J. Mueller as alternate delegate to the Synodical Convention of 1878.¹³

¹²Mo. Synod, Northwestern District, Proceedings, German ed., 1877, p. 3.

¹³Ibid., p. 80.

Next, we turn to another milestone in the history of Minnesota Lutheranism which was influenced by H. Julius Mueller. This milestone was the founding of the Minnesota and Dakota District. His congregation at Willow Creek was received into membership in the new Minnesota and Dakota District. As a voting member of this first convention Pastor Mueller had a direct influence upon the formation of this body.

The third Delegate Synod held in Ft. Wayne, Ind., May 11-21, 1881, was a memorable Synod. The Predestinarian Controversy which had disturbed the congregations of Synod during the past years was terminated by the adoption of the well-known Thirteen Theses The rapid development of our mission, especially, as well as the strong increase of congregations in Minnesota and Dakota inevitably urged the forming of a new Synodical District here. Circumstances forced the issue. Hence, Synod passed the resolution: "Resolved to grant to the congregations in the States of Minn. and Dakota the formation of a new District under the name: The Minnesota and Dakota District of The German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States."

Pursuant to this resolution the newly formed Minnesota and Dakota District was organized at its first convention, June 15-21, 1882, in the church of Zion Ev. Luth. Congregation in St. Paul, Minn., Rev. E. Rolf, Pastor

Membership of the New District

A. Present were:

a. Voting Pastors:

Closter, O., Afton
 Dubberstein, A., Wykoff
 Fackler, J., Osseo
 Friedrich, W., Waconia
 Horst, J., Hay Creek
 Johl, F., Hart
 Kollmorgen, C., Atwater
 Kothe, D., Utica
 Kretzschmar, H., Mountville
 Krumsieg, Th., Benton

Landeck, A., Hamburg
Mueller, H. J., Willow Creek
 Rolf, E., St. Paul
 Ross, C., Arlington
 Schaaf, G. P. A., Claremont
 Schatz, C. F., Blue Earth
 Schmidt, K., Rochester
 Schulenburg, J., Iosco
 Schulze, K. F., Courtland
 Sievers, F., Minneapolis
 Vetter, H., Fairfield

.....

New Members Received

.....

C. Congregations:

1. St. John's Congregation at Willow Creek,
Pastor H. J. Mueller
2. St. John's Congregation at Dryden,
Pastor H. Kretzschmar

Summary of Delegates at the Founding of the District:

a. Voting Pastors, 21	Total Pastors, 49
b. Advisory Pastors, 28	Grand Total, 83 ¹⁴
c. Teachers, 13	
d. Lay Delegates, 21	

We include some notes of interest from the first convention of the Minnesota District.

After the honorable General Synod assembled at Ft. Wayne (1881) had approved the formation of a special probably means new synodical district for the states of Minnesota and Dakota the Synodical members from those states held their first annual meeting June 15-21 (1882) in the congregation of Pastor E. Rolf at St. Paul, Minn. On June 15 the Hon. Pres. of Gen'l. Syn., H. C. Schwan preached at a morning service on Psalm 127,1.2. In the afternoon the synod was opened with an address and annual report by Pres. C. Strasen. Ten sessions were held, of which

¹⁴Meyer, op. cit., pp. 110-112. Italics mine.

six were devoted to doctrinal discussions and four to business matters. Pastor R. F. Schulze served as chaplain. During the convention sermons were preached by Pastors Streckfuss, Kolbe, Landeck and Horst.¹⁵

We note that Dr. Francis Pieper often spoke at Northwestern and Minnesota District Conventions. Probably his old student, H. J. Mueller, talked with him in an informal way, due to the small size of the conventions.

In addition to Pres. H. C. Schwan and Pres. C. Strasen the following were registered and given a word of welcome:

1. Prof. Fr. Pieper, who upon invitation of Synod led the doctrinal discussions.
2. The Pastors: Peterson from the Hon. Norw. Synod; Heuer, Suehl, Wendt, Grabarkewitz, Tirmenstein from the Hon. Minn. Synod.¹⁶

In an article entitled, "Inner Missions in S. W. Minnesota," we read,

The congregation in Rosehill appealed to Synod for subsidy in the amount of \$300.00 for church building. After verifying the needs and having noted that the Hon. Wisconsin District had promised \$200.00 for the purpose, it was resolved that our District donate the remaining \$100.00. In the event a surplus resulted as a result of the collections, the surplus amount was to be placed into the treasury for Inner Missions.¹⁷

This resolution indicates the district's cognizance of the need in the southwestern part of Minnesota, in which H. J. Mueller labored.

¹⁵Mo. Synod, Minnesota District, Proceedings, German ed., 1882, p. 3.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 25.

From such humble beginnings, this district divided five more times in order to spread the Gospel more effectively to this area. The following is taken from a report prepared by Arnold F. Meyer for the 1963 redivision. It graphically portrays how the combined efforts of such men as H. J. Mueller, under God's guidance, brought forth abundantly. This report closes our chapter on "Ministry and Meetings."

DISTRICT DIVIDES AGAIN

- Pertinent Information Re District Division -

- This is the 7th time that a division is taking place since the year 1854 when the Synod began dividing into districts. In that year the Northern District was one of the four original districts to be formed seven years after the beginning of Synod in 1847. This district included the Minnesota Territory.
- 1875 The Northwestern District, which included Minnesota and Wisconsin, separated from the Northern District and organized at a convention in the city of Watertown, Wisconsin.
- 1882 Synod resolved on the formation of the Minnesota and Dakota District in 1881. The newly formed district was organized at its first convention, June 15 - 21, 1882 at Zion Lutheran Church, St. Paul, Minnesota.
- 1906 Synod resolved on the formation of the South Dakota District in 1905, leaving North Dakota, Montana, and the Canadian mission fields in the mother-district as of the year 1906.
- 1910 The North Dakota-Montana District was organized this year. The Canadian provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan remained with the Minnesota District.
- 1921 The Alberta-British Columbia District was formed in 1921. (Up to this time Alberta had been part of the Minnesota District)
- 1922 The Manitoba-Saskatchewan District branched off from the Minnesota District in the year 1922.

1963 Forty years later there is to be, God willing, another division with the Minnesota North forming a new district and the Minnesota District continuing as Minnesota South.

How wonderfully God has blessed these divisions may be seen from the following membership figures as of the year 1961:

North Wisconsin . . .	62,787	communicants
South Wisconsin: . .	96,154	communicants
Minnesota:	133,518	communicants
South Dakota:	21,624	communicants
North Dakota:	19,392	communicants
A.B.C. District: . . .	14,837	communicants
Manitoba-Sask.: . . .	12,654	communicants
Montana District: . .	7,868	communicants ¹⁸

¹⁸Arnold S. Meyer, "District Divides Again,"
A mimeographed sheet presented to the delegates at the
1963 Minnesota District Convention. Presently filed in
the library of Henry C. Mueller.

CHAPTER VI

The Settler Becomes Settled: 1886-1920, Age 49-82

This chapter title may be a misnomer because the restless and living Spirit of God which calls a man to the ministry does not allow him to really settle down. However, Henry Julius Mueller spent the last thirty years of his ministry in more established congregations and more settled settlements.

This last chapter deals with his fruitful labors in the Lester Prairie and Brewster parishes. Even in his retirement at age eighty, we shall see that God gave him the strength and stamina to serve as assistant pastor in Lakefield, Minn.

For this last chapter we shall depend almost exclusively upon the congregational histories of the Lester Prairie and Brewster congregations.

Lester Prairie: 1886-1899, Age 49-62

Der Lutheraner announces that,

With the approval and directive of the Hon. Pres. Sievers the Rev. H. J. Mueller was installed in the congregation at Bergen, McLeod County, Minn. [Later became known as Lester Prairie]¹

The author is entirely and sincerely indebted to Pastor and Mrs. H. J. Mueller for moving to Lester Prairie, for it

¹J. S. Hertrich, "Ordinationen und Einfuehrungen," Der Lutheraner, XLII (Oct., 1886), 157. The German quotations in this thesis were translated by Prof. Philip J. Schroeder, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.

was there that his grandfather, Pastor H. F. C. Mueller, met his life's mate. Mrs. Mueller (II) is the beloved grandmother of this writer. She is still enjoying life to its full in Minneapolis, Minn., at the age of 80 plus some.

Because Grandfather Mueller is now deceased and Grandmother will not object, please allow me to include an amusing little anecdote concerning the courtship and engagement of this couple.

Heinrich Frederick Charles and Mathilda went to parochial school together under the tutelage of Pastor H. J. Mueller, H. F. C.'s father. During this period, Heinrich, Jr. and Mathilda began a friendship which was to endure for about sixty years. When Heinrich, Jr. left for Milwaukee to begin his preparation for the ministry he wanted to make sure that no one would steal Mathilda from him. Therefore, without the knowledge of either of the parents, they became secretly engaged to be married. Such an engagement was strictly verboden by the synodical schools at Milwaukee, St. Paul, and St. Louis, which Grandfather attended. For a period of seven years, and perhaps longer, they kept their engagement a secret from everyone except themselves. After this seven year, secret engagement, upon Grandfather's graduation from St. Louis, they were married and lived together to celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary fifty years later.

Two histories of the Lester Prairie (originally Bergen, McLeod County) congregation were made available to this writer. In the files of the Concordia Historical Institute we find the

Kurzgefaszte Geschichte der Evangelisch-Lutherischen St. Peters-Gemeinde bei Lester Prairie, Minn., Verfasst von W. Baumhoefener, Pastor, published for the Fuenfzigjaehrigen Jubilaeum (1871-1921), which was celebrated on 28. August 1921. Pastor William L. Erb, the present pastor of this congregation, furnished a copy of the 75th anniversary booklet of this congregation.

We have taken excerpts from these two histories and have amalgamated them into one history which pertains to this biography. We quickly review the events from 1856-1888, from the histories of this congregation, because they are necessary for understanding the situation into which Pastor H. Mueller moved.

The beginning of Lutheranism in our community reaches as far back as 1856, when Lutheran pioneers of Wisconsin sought greater opportunities farther west and came to the fertile soil of the Minnesota territory.

While in the neighboring county of Carver the early Lutheran pioneers of the sixties enjoyed the service of a pastor, had the blessings of the spoken Word, and received comfort and encouragement from fellow-christians in existing congregations (Hamburg, Benton, Waconia, Carver, and Young America), the early Lutheran settlers of the Lester Prairie community were at this time truly as sheep without a shepherd.²

The Methodists, of course, had long been active among the Germans; before ever a Lutheran pastor entered the area. Methodist circuit riders had called on William Lueck in 1859 and worked in the area for a full year, at times with great zeal. It is a blessing of God that

² [B. Streufert], Diamond Anniversary of St. Peter's Ev. Lutheran Church, Bergen Township, McLeod County, Minn. (n.p., 1946), p. 5.

this whole region did not fall prey to this sect. The Chief Bishop of His Church saw to it that especially in the critical time (1865), just as it appeared that the work of this sect would be crowned with lasting results, a Lutheran pastor arrived in the area. On Dec. 17, 1865, Pastor Henry Sprengeler (died Oct. 18, 1903, in Mankato, Minn.) was installed in Hamburg, Carver County. In March, 1865, William Lueck applied to him for the baptism of a child and on that occasion spoke of the situation of the settlers in the area. Pastor Sprengler then came to the area in the summer, visited the settlers and exhorted them to remain true to the Church of the pure Word and promised them that he would, in the future, take care of their spiritual need to the best of his ability, which he faithfully accomplished. During the Summer and Fall of 1865, he repeatedly conducted services in Hollywood, Carver County. For the most part his hearers came on foot to hear the Word and receive the Sacrament.³

The seventy-fifth anniversary booklet puts a slightly different interpretation on Pastor Sprengler's visits, saying that he came to the peoples' homes, rather than that the people came to Hollywood. Undoubtedly, both of these statements are true and are not mutually exclusive.

Rev. J. Horst and Rev. V. Both served the parish when Pastor Sprengeler accepted a call to another parish. Pastor Streufert says that,

Rev. J. Horst of Waconia served 3 years When, however, he accepted a Call into another parish, his successor--Rev. B. Both--continued to serve the same small flock together with his own established congregation.⁴

Both Pastors Horst and Both had to resign their positions at Lester Prairie because of poor health. Therefore, Pastor

³W. Baumhoefener, Kurzgefasste Geschichte der Evangelisch-Lutherischen St. Peters-Gemeinde bei Lester Prairie, Minn. (n.p., August 28, 1921), pp. 6-7.

⁴Op. cit., p. 6

Sprengeler (from his new parish) again took over the duties of this group of Lutherans.

It was on May 7, 1871 on Cantate Sunday that Pastor Sprengeler here organized a congregation in the home of Gottlieb Thiel. Upon the advice of the pastor a congregational constitution was adopted.⁵

From this little episode we can see how the pioneer missionaries expanded the influence of the Lutheran Church in Minnesota. They would work together in establishing new congregations, have the congregation establish itself under a constitution, and call another qualified man into the field.

Pastor Streufert continues,

Thirteen families expressed their willingness to organize and thus became the charter members: Gottlieb Thiel, Christopher Schmalz, Gottlieb Schmalz, Wilhelm Lueck, Christoph Paul, August Krienke, Carl Kruse, Johann Villwock, Wilhelm Bahnick, August Seefeldt, Herman Oelke, Ferdinand Emme, Daniel Milbrath.

Several notable resolutions were passed at this first meeting. Resolved: 1. To organize under the following name: "The German Evangelical Lutheran St. Peter's Congregation of Bergen Twp., McLeod Co., Minn."⁶

The fiftieth anniversary booklet gives us the interesting detail that, "The name Bergen was adopted despite the residence of most members in Town Winsted because here there was a post-office name Bergen in the home of a farmer."⁷

We continue with another "notable resolution."

⁵Baumhoefener, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

⁶Op. cit., pp. 6-7.

⁷Baumhoefener, op. cit., p. 8.

3. To call a pastor jointly with the organized congregation at Hollywood and to offer the new pastor \$100 a year plus the necessary vitals. (The Hollywood congregation had offered to grant the new pastor the same remuneration plus a dwelling place. He was to reside in their midst.

Candidate Friedrich Boesche of St. Louis Seminary received the Call and accepted the same. On Aug. 13, 1871, he was ordained and installed, in the morning service at Hollywood and at Bergen Twp. in the afternoon. At this time St. Peter's congregation consisted of 76 souls, 38 of whom were adults

However, with the rapid development of this community and the influx of Lutheran families, it became necessary for them to provide for another place to worship. This plot of ground was also to be used as a cemetery, and serves as such to the present day. On Sept. 18, 1874, the congregation resolved to erect their new sanctuary, a structure 18 feet wide and 20 feet long. Every member was to furnish several logs, \$5.00 for the purchase of the necessary lumber and furniture, and help erect the building. . . . their house of worship was dedicated Nov. 12, 1874, Rev. Sprengeler, the founder of the congregation, delivered the dedicatory sermon.

With the completion of the parsonage in the spring of 1880 the congregation felt that they were now ready to call their first resident pastor. Thus in April of the same year the congregation extended a call to Rev. Wilhelm Ruediger of Wykoff, Fillmore County, Minn. . . . Rev. Ruediger accepted the Call and was installed July 11, 1880 by the former pastor.

Rejoicing over the blessing of a resident pastor they wished to preserve this heritage for their children's children, the church of tomorrow. Whereupon in the same fall, September 19, 1880, they resolved to open a Christian Day School. The church building was to serve as school room and a few pews were to be equipped as writing desks. In October the school opened with 30 children, Pastor Ruediger serving as teacher

by 1884 the congregation numbered 63 voters, 320 communicants, and 453 souls. The future seemed bright.

In 1884 a diphtheria epidemic swept this community, taking the life of many a child in the homes. This caused these early Christians to consecrate their lives

all the more zealously unto their Lord.⁸

God placed a big challenge before Pastor Mueller wherever he went. A few short months before he came to Lester Prairie a controversy arose which split this once-flourishing congregation. We shall quote this episode in its entirety because it has a direct effect upon H. J. Mueller.

As often the most damaging storms follow upon the sunniest days, so there broke out a storm over the congregation which shock it to its very foundations, leaving wounds which were not healed for many a year For a number of years previous to the breaking of the storm there had been severe tensions between the Synods of Missouri, Wisconsin, Minnesota on the one hand and the Ohio Synod on the other.⁹

The anniversary booklet explains that this controversy arose over the Bible doctrine of predestination.

In this critical time the opponents succeeded in attracting 19 members to their party. The group organized a congregation and in the course of the summer, 1886, erected a church directly opposite our own--On the north side of the street (on the knoll north of the cemetery)--The new St. Peter's and St. Paul's Congregation, however, did not grow no more members were to be gained from the remaining faithful 44.¹⁰

This rather fantastic opposition church "On the north side of the street" literally moved into town. The breach eventually healed. However, this was not done miraculously. We shall see how the Rev. Mueller worked in this difficult situation.

⁹Baumhoefener, op. cit., p. 14.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 14.

Pastor Baumh^ofner relates this turn of events,

upon receipt of some two lots by donation, the church building was placed on a freight car and brought to the newly organized town, Lester Prairie, where the lots were located. Soon, though, most of the members returned to our church and the church in Lester Prairie is the edifice of our large sister congregation. Thus God again made all things turn out for good.

During the crises of the year 1885 the congregation lost its constitution--the former secretary of the congregation refused to return it and the trustees were compelled to obtain a copy from Hollywood. In order to avoid future difficulties of this nature, the congregation resolved on April 26, 1886 to incorporate. After, Pastor Streckfuss of Young America had translated the document into English. The document bears the date May 8, 1886. It is recorded by the Register of Deeds in Glencoe and the Secretary of State in St. Paul.

On March 15, 1886 Pastor Ruediger submitted to the congregation a call he had received from the congregation in Lydia, Scott County--the congregation approved his transfer and at the beginning of May he moved to his new parish.

During the vacancy the congregation was served by Pastor J. Hertrich of Hollywood. On May 24, 1886, the congregation called Pastor Henry J. Mueller of Willow Creek, Blue Earth County, Minn. He accepted the call and was installed on Oct. 3, the Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity, by Pastor Hertrich.

The distressing circumstances were not conducive to happiness, but despite them Pastor Mueller went to work in the name of his Lord to restore peace and order. His simple and mild approach soon gained him the confidence of the people. In the very first meeting after his arrival the important resolution was voted to build a new church the following summer. Many factors were conducive to the project. The old log church was not large enough to hold the people, and it was desired to have a separate building for a school--the old church could serve in this capacity for a number of years. Nor did the congregation wish to remain behind the opponents of the Ohio Synod whose beautiful church looked with disdain upon the log structure. Then, too, in 1886 the Great Northern Railroad Company purchased the road in front of the church and laid its rails. This made it difficult to get to the church. For the right of way the Railroad paid \$150.00.

In the October Meeting it was resolved to build the new Church west of the parsonage (now the teacher's residence) on the five acre site. Later it was agreed to purchase an additional acre east of the cemetery from Albert Thiel, for \$100.00.¹¹

Pastor Streufert adds this detail:

In the same year, namely the fall of 1886, a building committee was appointed: Wm. Kuhlmann, Wm. Seemann, Robert Schmbach, Fred Stolp, Fred Hermann and Gustav Matthews. Architect A. F. Ganger and contractor August Liebetrau were engaged. Upon their recommendation the congregation resolved to erect a frame building, 32 x 54 with a tower 100 feet in height.¹²

"On Jan. 4, 1887 it was decided that the size of the church was to be the same size as the one in Hollywood."¹³

This statement indicates a certain amount of false pride and un-Christian competition. My contention is further bolstered by the fact that in a controversy and split, as in 1886, neither party is completely devoid of guilt caused by pride. These two facts plus a previous statement justifies this opinion completely, viz., "Nor did the congregation wish to remain behind the opponents of the Ohio Synod whose beautiful church looked with disdain upon the log structure."

We shall see some possible results of this pride and competition which will be noted later in this chapter.

We continue with the building of the new church structure.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 14-16.

¹² Op. cit., p. 10.

¹³ Baumhoefener, op. cit., p. 16.

On June 6, 1887 the corner-stone was laid. For the occasion Pastor Landeck of Hamburg preached on Eph. 2, 19-22. The building program progressed rapidly and by November the structure was complete. It was a beautiful work, done in good taste and solidly erected, actually the most beautiful Lutheran Church in a large area. The payments, too, down to the last cent \$3,285 had been made. On November 7, 1887 on the Twentieth Sunday after Trinity the new edifice was dedicated. Pastor Mueller spoke the dedicatory prayer and Pastor Kolbe of Howard Lake preached for the morning festival service; and Pastor Streckfuss of Young America preached in the afternoon--and thus after difficult times peace and gladness were again in evidence and the congregation felt stronger than ever in its history. There was a notable increase in membership in the succeeding years. In 1889 and 1890 twenty-three new members were added--in large part such as had returned from the Ohio Synod congregation.

As the number of school children grew with the congregation--seventy one in 1890--it became more and more apparent that a larger and more sanitary facility was needed. At a meeting on April 5, 1891, the Pastor presented the matter.¹⁴

Whereupon the congregation provided more adequate facilities by erecting a new school 26 x 46 x 14 during the summer of 1891 at a cost of \$800. The young people solicited the necessary funds for a bell. By Oct. 11, 1891, St Peter's congregation was the proud possessor of another beautiful building, dedicating it on that day to the Lord's service. Rev. Dreyer of Glencoe delivered the dedicatory address.¹⁵

"Fredrick Herrmann purchased the old log building for \$5.00 and used the logs for a horse stable. Sic transit gloria mundi."¹⁶

This small section of the gloria mundi wasn't really very glorious; however, much living and worship had gone on within its walls. It was in this log shelter that the congregation

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 17-18.

¹⁵[Streufer], op. cit., p. 11.

¹⁶Baumhoefener, op. cit., p. 18.

had worshipped for many years. Here, also, before and after the building of the new church, the pastors held classes daily.

As was mentioned previously, Heinrich F., the son of Pastor H. J. Mueller, and his young wife-to-be, received their elementary education here under Pastor Mueller. In talking to Grandmother Mueller, this writer found out a little about the daily routine of this pioneer school.

A large segment of each day was devoted to the religious instruction of the future confirmands. This consisted largely of memorizing as many hymns as possible, studying Bible History, reading from the Bible, and memorizing Luther's Small Catechism. During the Lenten Season, services were held every Thursday morning.

In addition to the religious instruction, the students were taught Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic. When Pastor Mueller was unable to conduct his classes, his daughter Clara would substitute for him.

This tradition of being a pastor-teacher has continued for four generations. Son, H. F. C., besides his regular parish duties, taught parochial school for twenty four years. Grandson, Henry William Frederick, taught for two years at the Oneida Indian Reservation in Wisconsin on his vicarage. Great-grandson, H. C., has taught parochial school for three years before completing his education for the ministry.

Let us include two short anecdotes before we continue with the congregational history. As was mentioned, previously,

the train went directly through the parish property. Several days before her confirmation, Mathilda (Mueller) tried to take the train into Lester Prairie from Bergen. The train was stalled on the parish grounds by heavy snow drifts. Therefore, Mathilda was forced to stay at the pastor's house until her confirmation.

She was confirmed one year before her beau, Heinrich F., although she was three days younger. The congregation had a rule that the confirmand must be fourteen years old. However because Mathilda was nearly fourteen, she was confirmed early in order to save her many trips from Lester Prairie.

One can only imagine what feelings of elation Heinrich felt at having his friend stay at his home and his chagrin at having to follow her by a year in his confirmation.

From this personal glimpse at Pastor Mueller and his family, we return to the congregational history.

In the spring of 1892 the congregation resolved to grant the pastor a teacher (student-help) because of his ever-increasing duties within his large parish. This resolution was, however, not carried out because of the great loss which the congregation suffered August 5, 1892. Lightning struck the steeple of the church and caused the complete destruction of the building.

The benches, altar, pulpit and other removable furniture were fortunately saved. The loss thus not a total one, especially since the building was partially covered by insurance. This fact encouraged our forefathers to rebuild their church. On October 30, 1892 they resolved to re-erect their house of worship at the same place and according to the same plans under the direction of the following building committee: Wm. Machemehl, G. Matthews, F. Stolp, A. Bahrke, Wm. Kuhlmann, Wm. Seemann, F. Emme, and Albert Thiel. The contract was given to August Liebetrau.

By the end of May the outward structure had been completed.¹⁷

But a new misfortune struck in the form of a wind-storm which moved the rear section (west) one foot away from the foundation wall and loosened the entire structure. But despite much difficulty the structure was again placed on the foundation.¹⁸

As was indicated previously, one cannot help but wonder if the Lord was not chiding His children by fire and windstorm for their pride and anger during the building of the new buildings and their split over predestination.

nevertheless under the Lord's blessing also this building project was brought to a successful conclusion at a cost of \$3,178.00. With songs of praise the congregation could enter its new church-home October 18, 1893.¹⁹

As so often happens, there is unity in a Spirit-filled mission which disintegrates into disunity when a congregation becomes too institutionalized. A second controversy with which H. J. Mueller had to deal broke out in 1898.

Soon after the dedication a controversy developed relative to a fraternal society problem. Four members residing in Lester Prairie secretly joined the Ancient Order of United Workmen.

All admonitions were fruitless and the congregation had to excommunicate seven members. No further trouble developed, due in part to the organization of an opposition congregation of the Unierte Kirche in 1898 at Lester Prairie with which these people became affiliated.²⁰

¹⁷ [Streufert], op. cit., p. 11.

¹⁸ Baumhoefener, op. cit., p. 19.

¹⁹ [Streufert], op. cit., p. 11.

²⁰ Baumhoefener, op. cit., pp. 19-20.

From 1886 to 1896, Pastor H. Julius Mueller taught in the parochial school without any aid. This was done in addition to the pressing responsibilities of a large congregation and a large family. This situation called for some relief. The fiftieth anniversary booklet explains the situation and the results.

For a Christian congregation to be correctly constituted it is necessary to have a school. Such a project calls for personnel to devote full time to teaching--this duty is primarily the responsibility of the pastor. Our congregation was well aware of this and resolved in the Fall of 1896 to provide an assistant to help the pastor with the teaching ministry. The first helpers were students from the seminaries. William Strothmann, Henry Schmah and Fredrick Bode faithfully and successfully assisted in the work from 1896-1899.²¹

Pastors Baumhöfner and Streufert relate the close and the results of the Rev. Mueller's work at St. Peter's.

In early April 1899 Pastor Mueller, after thirteen years of work with great blessing and in most difficult times, received a call from congregations in and near Brewster, Nobles County, Minn.²²

Rev. Mueller asked for his peaceful dismissal. During his almost thirteen years of service in Bergen Twp., the days were trying but surely blessed. The congregation had grown from 47 to almost 100 voting members; the number of baptized souls had increased from 340 to over 600.²³

²¹ Ibid., p. 20.

²² Ibid.

²³ [Streufert], op. cit., p. 12.

Brewster: 1899-1917, Age 62-80

Once more, Der Lutheraner alerts us to a change of address and an installation.

By order of the Honorable President F. Pfothenauer, Pastor H. J. Mueller was installed in his congregation in Brewster, Minnesota, by C. F. Malkow on Ascension Day. (May 11, 1899)²⁴

Mr. Ivar Martinson, the president of the Brewster congregation, supplies the only information which we could obtain, for which we are most grateful. One of the items is from a booklet published for a special celebration on October 15, 1950. The other item is a clipping from another booklet of unknown origin. The latter follows the former chronologically, so they shall be presented here in that order.

Seventy-five years after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 the lands some distance from navigable rivers such as is found near Brewster were gradually being settled. From 1800 to 1900 the population in the Great Plains grew from five to seventy-five million. Immigration in Minnesota started in the middle of the century and reached one half million at the time the first settlers here arrived. The railroad played a very important part in this movement. It was invented only about forty years before it reached Brewster in 1871 and was then already transcontinental. When the Rev. F. Sievers came to Minnesota from Michigan to further Indian missions and home missions in 1856 he came as far as LaCrosse by train. April 22, 1872 the village site was dedicated, the county having been created fifteen years before.

.....

²⁴"Ordinationen und Einfuehrungen," Der Lutheraner, LV (May, 1899), 100.

During the twenty years before the church was built services were conducted in home, the Heiser store and the old school or creamery building.²⁵

The history of the Ahner-Schulze-Mueller mission journeys is then related. Because we dealt quite thoroughly with these journeys in Chapter Three, we shall continue with the succession of pastors who served Trinity, Brewster.

The first pastor of the South-west Minnesota Mission was Rev. A. Daeschlein installed by Rev. Schulze in 1877 to serve Brewster, Delafield, Rost, Fulda and neighboring places. Due to an accident in 1881 he resigned and died shortly after. The next pastor would have resided at Rost Twp. but the exact location wasn't determined till later, so Rev. C. W. Nickels lived at Delafield. He was succeeded by J. F. Rubel who served fourteen stations during his pastorate there. Rost Church was organized that year and they received their first pastor M. V. Schneider. The next two pastors there, H. Hanneman in 1888, and Theo. Maeze in 1889 served Brewster from there and several went there from here for confirmation. Before this the confirmation took place at Delafield and the 1892 class went to Rost.

Before Pastor Rubel left for Milwaukee in 1891 another laborer was placed into the field. Robert Gaiser was called to serve Rost and Brewster in 1890. While here he organized Ewington and Worthington. To help build the church in Brewster in 1893 he received aid from Cleveland, the home of his parents, and Messrs. H. Pinz and J. Kaufman went to relatives and friends in Carver County for help. They had moved from there twenty years before. During the pastorate of his successor further expansion occurred so that other congregations were added. Rev. C. F. Malkow came to Rost in 1894. In 1895 the Okabena congregation was organized, it was also the year that Trinity received its first resident pastor.

With the assistance of the Minnesota and Dakota District, Trinity and Ewington formed a separate parish . . . The

²⁵ [Edwin Friedrich], October 15, 1950 History of Trinity Lutheran Church, Brewster, Minn. (n.p., Oct., 1950), pp. 2-3.

first pastor in this new parish was F. Brasch. At that time a parsonage was built, the upstairs of which also served as a school room for four years. In 1899 Pastor Brasch moved to Fulda. . . . 26

We now turn to a brief resume of the last seventeen and one half years in the active ministry of H. Mueller. Although the information is scanty, it is obvious that even in his old age he remained very active and true to his calling.

the Rev. H. J. Mueller of Lester Prairie, Minn., was called and installed May 11, 1899. Pastor Mueller had served the congregation in the early 1870's as one of the three missionaries who came to this part of the country. He thus now returned to the scene of his early labors. Pastor Mueller faithfully ministered unto his flock for 17 1/2 years until old age forced him to resign the office he loved. His pastorate was marked by a steady and sound development both internally and externally. In the year 1902 the debt of the congregation was paid off and the following year, 1903, the church was renovated and a new school house, 16 x 30, erected. The school was dedicated in September, 1903. All this was done with a comparatively small membership. Our fathers showed a warm interest in their church. May we, the children, emulate their example!

The year 1908 marks another important milestone in the history of the congregation. Up to this time throughout the years the congregation had received aid in the form of a subsidy from the Minnesota District of the Missouri Synod, but in 1908 the congregation decided with God's help, to become self supporting. Thus the year 1908 marks the date when the congregation became independent and bore her own burdens.

August 7, 1910 was a red letter day for the congregation. On this day the members of the congregation, friends, relatives and brother pastors of Rev. Mueller gathered in the church to celebrate the 40th anniversary of his entry into the ministry. Pastor O. Cloeter, a lifelong friend of the jubilarian, preached the anniversary sermon, and Pastor Ristau, a son-in-law, composed a poem in honor

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 3-5.

of the occasion. One year later on July 16, 1911, the congregation celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. Pastor F. Brasch of Fulda preached the sermon in German in the morning and P. H. Bauman of Luverne, Minnesota, and G. S. Schmidt of Rushmore preached in the afternoon. At the twenty-fifth anniversary the congregation numbered: souls, 263; communicants, 145.

In the fall of 1916 Pastor H. J. Mueller resigned due to advanced age and retired to Lakefield, Minnesota. . . . Rev. Mueller gave unstintingly of his gifts and talents to the congregation, and his faithful, yet unobtrusive service has, under God's gracious guidance, played an important part in the growth and development of our congregation. His life has been closely identified with that of our beloved church. May his memory ever be cherished by us.²⁷

A bit of nostalgia creeps in at this point. In the

Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly we read,

Pastor Mueller retired from the active ministry in 1918 (cn., 1916), leaving Brewster. On the evening of the farewell Sunday the town band and several hundred townspeople led by the mayor gathered in front of his home, asking permission to give him a friendly serenade. Mueller of course granted his permission. After the music the mayor addressed the 79-year-old pastor: "Father Mueller, you have been with us more than 18 years. By unanimous consent young and old respect you highly. We always call you the good old gentleman. So do the children. And everyone greets you courteously. We all wish you well in your new home at Lakefield."²⁸

²⁷ "Unidentified clipping sent from Ivar Martinson, Brewster, Minn., to Henry C. Mueller, St. Louis, Mo., Nov., 1962." Presently filed in the library of Henry C. Mueller.

²⁸ Gilbert A. Thiele, "Glimpses of One Hundred Years of Missouri Synod Lutheranism in Minnesota," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XXIX (Fall, 1956), 94.

Lakefield: 1917-1920, Age 80-82

After eighteen hard-fought years, this Spirit-driven man "retired" to Lakefield, Minn.

The pastor had built himself a home at Lakefield for his old age. He continued to help, whenever it was necessary, in the local pulpit. He and his faithful wife rest in Immanuel Cemetery west of Lakefield, on a hillside where he probably rested overnight in a dugout on one of his mission trips, for this is approximately the location where a pioneer settler received him after he had walked over 16 miles that day carrying two heavy grips, although the snow lay practically a foot deep on the level.²⁹

He retired only a few miles from the parish of his chief biographer and personal friend, Rev. H. Meyer of Rost Township. Pastor Meyer was on various synodical boards, Minnesota District President, Vice-President, and Official Historian at different intervals during his life.

We are deeply indebted to this Pastor Meyer who wrote the official history of the Minnesota District, the obituary for Der Lutheraner, and preached the German sermon at Pastor Mueller's funeral.

A phrase from the above-mentioned H. Meyer's Golden Anniversary and from the obituary which he wrote brings to mind an interesting detail from the life of H. J. Mueller.

These phrases are:

In those first years while he was at "Rost" he (H. Meyer) was also always ready to be one member

²⁹Ibid.

of a minister's quartet of singers, which sang in our vicinity.³⁰

And, " . . . 18 anwesende Pastoren sangen am Grabe den Gegenruf . . . " from the obituary.

H. F. C. Mueller, the son of H. J. Mueller often stated that his father had a fine tenor singing voice until the time of his last illness. He sang in a ministers' octet during his retirement at Lakefield.

Pastor H. J. Mueller's obituary is included at this point. It is intended to be a summary of this thesis and a closing tribute to this man of God.

The dean of the Minnesota District Clergy, P. H. J. Mueller died on March 14 at Lakefield, Minn. in the faith in his Savior whom he had confessed and preached for nearly 50 years. He was buried on March 17 midst a large gathering of people. After a brief service in his home at which the Pastors A. Paul and G. Kohlhoff officiated his body was taken to church. The undersigned preached in the German on Luke 12, 42-44. Dr. Abbetmeyer preached in the English on Matthew 10, 32. P. A. Paul, pastor of the deceased, officiated at the grave and 18 pastors sang the response at the grave. The sainted pastor was ill only a short time. Three days before his passing he was still busy with his customary duties. A lung fever was the cause of his sudden passing--With the death of P. Mueller a richly blessed ministry came to its end--Henry Julius Mueller was born on Dec. 12, 1837, at Teyndorf, Hannover. After confirmation he learned a trade. Then he became greatly moved by the enthusiastic preaching of P. Ludwig Harms at Hermannsburg--it was through this preaching that there was awakened in him a love for the ministry of Missions. He entered the Missions institution at Hermannsburg in order to prepare for service in Africa. The Lord of the church ordered it so that

³⁰ Golden Anniversary of the Ministry of H. Meyer
(n.p., June 11, 1939)

Mueller with 16 other candidates were sent to America. He entered our seminary at St. Louis and studied for a year under the direction of the Professors Walther and Craemer to prepare for the Ministry. After passing the necessary examinations in the year 1870 he accepted a call to Willow Creek, Minn. This congregation was at the time an advance station for the large Mission fields of our church in Minnesota. From this station he worked with great zeal and unusual self-denial in the areas just being opened for settlement in Southwest Minnesota. He was inspired by the real spirit of pioneer and missionary--no distance was too great, no task too taxing, no wilderness too hazardous, no settlers too distant, no soul too unimportant. Missionary journeys were often made on foot and in watery areas barefooted with bag and boot in his hands--and the Lord blessed his servant. In many areas he scattered the first seed for later flourishing congregations. In this area there are now more than 30 pastors with their congregations and preaching stations. Along with the physical and spiritual efforts he also had to contend with enthusiasts of all kinds. Among these were the messengers of the Evangelical Association who tried with great zeal and unction to draw Lutheran settlers into their fellowship. People soon became aware that P. Mueller "sat in the Scripture and the others alongside of it." His most troublesome opponents admitted that P. Mueller was a man of piety. Along with his far-flung missionary activities P. Mueller also worked hard for the edification of his congregation in Willow Creek, conducted school and instructed adults. In the 16 years he served the congregation it flourished richly.

In 1886 he accepted a call to Lester Prairie, Minn. Here, too, he worked with noticeable blessing for 12 1/2 years. During this ministry a former opposition congregation joined with his own congregation and thus his congregation was numbered as one of the larger parishes in Minnesota. The work here became too arduous and he accepted a call to Brewster, Minn., where he served a parish for 17 1/2 years. About 4 years ago the advance of age with its weaknesses moved him to retire. He then moved to Lakefield, where he served as assistant pastor.

Other congregations, too, availed themselves of his services which he so freely gave. P. Mueller was twice married; in 1870 to Marie Hemsoth, who soon died. Then in 1872 he married Dorothea Dagefoerde at Madison, Wis. and found in her again a true helpmeet. Nine children

were born to this union of which three preceded him in death. Two of his sons are in the parish ministry. One son, formerly a teacher in California, preceded the father in death. Surviving are his widow, two sons, four daughters, three sons-in-law, two daughters-in-law and 24 grandchildren. His age was 82 years, 3 months and 2 days.³¹

Two well-known quotations strike this writer as being a proper conclusion to this work. The first reminds of Christian Warfare and the Communion of Saints of those who have gone before us.

A noble army, men and boys,
The matron and the maid,
Around the Savior's throne rejoice,
In robes of light arrayed.

They climbed the steep ascent of heavn'
Thro' peril, toil, and pain.
O God, to us may grace be giv'n
To follow in their train!

(The Lutheran Hymnal, No. 452, st. 4)

The multitudinous blessings which the Lord has poured upon the descendants of Pastor Heinrich Julius Mueller remind one that the Lord says,

I, the Lord, thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments. (Ex. 20:5,6)

³¹H. Meyer, "Todesanzeige," Der Lutheraner, LXXVII (March, 1920), 171.

APPENDIX

Descendants

Not only did The Triune God bless the missionary labors of this man, but He blessed Pastor Mueller with a large family which has almost countless descendants. Not only has God blessed these descendants richly, but He has also called several of them into the holy ministry. At this time, we shall take a brief glance at "the descendants" with special emphasis upon those men who have followed their great-grandfather, grand-father, and father into the ministry of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

The union of Henry Julius Mueller and Dorothea von Dagefoerde in Christian wedlock was blessed with five daughters and four sons.

Two sons, Theodore and Ernest and one daughter, Dorothea, preceded their parents in death. Mrs. Mueller died in 1921.

The other children are: Mrs. Clara Mueller (now deceased) and Mrs. Lydia Ristau of St. Paul, Mrs. Marie Schulz of Fairmont, Miss Louise Mueller . . . (now living with Rev. Martin Mueller at Pequot Lakes, Minn.)

Among the twenty-nine grandchildren are three pastors, the Rev. Arnold Schulz . . . (presently at Wymoning, Minn.), the Rev. H. W. Mueller . . . (presently at rural Waterville, Minn.) and the Rev. R. T. Mueller of Bouton, Iowa.¹

¹"Mueller Centennial," Fairmont, Minn. newspaper, Dec. 12, 1937, p. 1. Original release presently filed in the library of Henry C. Mueller.

Without making an attempt to follow the family tree any further, we can estimate that there are approximately ninety to one-hundred great-grandchildren and at least ten great-great-grandchildren.

So far as this biographer knows, six descendants of this Missouri Synod pioneer have entered the ministry of this church. The following is a brief sketch of these men.

Two sons

The Rev. Henry Frederick Charles Mueller

Attended Concordia College of St. Paul and Milwaukee; graduated from Concordia Seminary St. Louis--1904; Served parishes at Kimmswick, Mo., 1904-1907; Stewartville, Minn., 1907-1928; Missouri Valley, Iowa, 1928-1944; What Cheer, Ia., 1944-1948; died, Sept. 22, 1956 in Minneapolis, Minn., at the age of 77 after a ministry of 44 years.

The Rev. Martin H. Mueller

Attended Concordia College, St. Paul, Minn., 1907-1913; graduated from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1916; Served parishes at Madison, Minn., 1916-1921; Council Bluffs, Iowa, 1921-1943; Lutheran Student Pastor at Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa, 1943-1949; Cleveland, Ohio (Holy Cross), 1949-1955; S. St. Paul (Emmanuel) 1955-- Retirement in Pequot Lakes, Minn.

Three grandsons

The Rev. Henry William Frederick Mueller (Father, H.F.C.)
Graduated from Concordia Seminary, Springfield, Ill., 1932: Served parishes at River Sioux, Iowa, 1933-1942; Livermore, Iowa, 1942-1949; Frazee, Minn., 1949-1953; Waterville, Minn. (St. Peter's) 1953-?.

The Rev. Renatus T. Mueller (Father, H.F.C.)

Graduated from Concordia Seminary, Springfield, Ill., 1933: Served congregations at Clarinda, Iowa and Liberty Center, Ohio, on vicarage, 1930-1934; Bouton and Perry, Iowa, 1934-?.

The Rev. Arnold Albert Henry Schulz Parents, Albert F. Schulz and Maria nee Mueller Schulz) Graduated from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1929: Served parishes at Round Lake and Sioux Valley, Minn., 1929-1936; Osseo and

Anoka, Minn., 1936-1956; Lake City, Minn., 1956-1958;
Wyoming, Minn., 1958-?.

One great-grandson

Henry Charles Mueller (Father, H.W.F.)
Graduated Concordia High School, St. Paul, Minn., 1953;
graduated Concordia Junior College, St. Paul, Minn.,
1955; graduated Concordia Teachers College, Seward, Neb.
(B. S. in Ed.; Lutheran Teacher's Diploma) 1959: Taught
in Lutheran Schools; Deshler, Neb., 1957-1958; Janesville,
Minn., 1958-1960; vicared at Red Lake, Ontario, Canada,
summer, 1961; Ebenezer, St. Louis, Mo., 1961-1962.
Presently enrolled at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Mo., to graduate Aug., 1963, God-willing.

A bit of family tradition may interest the reader. It
is a family tradition for the oldest son of the oldest son to
be named Heinrich or Henry. This tradition has been handed
down for five generations and God-willing, will be continued
into the sixth generation. Beginning with Heinrich Julius,
the succeeding "Heinrichs" have been led by the Holy Spirit
into the ministry of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.
These men are Heinrich Frederick Charles, the oldest son of
H. J., Heinrich William Frederick, the oldest son of H. F. C.,
and Henry Charles, the oldest son of H. W. F.

May these descendants give all glory to God for His
unbounded grace and blessing. May this paper serve to cause
all of us to renew our worship of and service to our Creator,
Redeemer and Preserver!

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