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The Saxons Move to Perry County

A. The Reasons for Leaving St. Louis

When the Saxon Lutherans reached the metropolis of the central Mississippi Valley, then a town of some 16,000 inhabitants, their plans had not yet fully matured. Only one point seems to have been reasonably certain, namely, that they did not intend to remain in St. Louis. In the *Regulations for the Emigrants*, approved in Dresden on May 17, 1838, paragraph 4 reads:

"Place of Settlement. — The place of colonization in the United States of North America is to be chosen in one of the Western States in Missouri or Illinois or perhaps in Indiana."

And Paragraph 6 of the same document speaks of the

"Purchase of Land. — From St. Louis a commission of all the emigrants is to be elected for the purchase of a parcel of contiguous land. After what is necessary of this land for church, school, and community has been reserved, the remainder shall be parceled out to each settler according to his needs. These lands collectively shall be the village or town which is to be founded.

*"Outside of the community each one may buy as much land as he desires."**

On the basis of these paragraphs it is clear, therefore, that the leaders of the emigrants had not contemplated remaining in the city of St. Louis.

But there were other factors which gave further impetus to the idea of establishing the settlement of the immigrant Lutherans elsewhere. For one thing, the hostility of the Germans of St. Louis, many of whom represented a radical element in religion, was apparent almost from the beginning. As early as January 26, 1839, the German weekly *Anzeiger des Westens* carried the following editorial: "We must notify our readers of the arrival of the first two shipments (*Sendungen*) of the Stephanians—a total of about 300 heads. Very aged men and such as had in their home country lived in good circumstances are among them, who had been led to take the unusual step of an emigration in such advanced years of their life and one which was still more dangerous, namely, that of paying in their entire property for the flighty project of a community settlement, only by the false pretenses of their parsons (*Pfaffen*) that they could not be saved if they should die in old Europe. As things now stand, both the spiritual and the temporal affairs of the congregation are lying, practically without control,

* The German text has: "Von St. Louis aus soll durch einen Ausschuss saemtlicher Auswandernden ein Strich zusammenhaengender Laendereien angekauft werden," and this might be more exactly rendered: "From St. Louis a commission of all emigrants is to purchase a strip of lands in one parcel."

in the hands of the ministry, who enjoy the unconditional authority and obedience on the part of their sect." (*Schicksale und Abenteuer*, 38 f.) When some fair-minded person wrote to the editor, remonstrating against such an unfriendly reception of fellow-countrymen, an editorial definitely put him in his place. Nor did the *Anzeiger des Westens* change its tactics in later editions, although the editorial staff tried to justify its position in attacking what the paper termed the "ministerial tyranny" (*Pfaffentum, pfaeffische Uebergewalt*) to which the Saxons were said to be subjected. It is more than likely that the unaccustomed surroundings in the new country and the excessive sensitiveness of the immigrants aggravated the tension produced by the hostility of the German radicals and that the latter did not hesitate to transmit their animosity to others. A report has it that Pastor E. M. Buerger, who had come up on the *Rienzi* and arrived at St. Louis on January 18, at the time of the arrival of the *Selma* (February 19), warned its passengers not to associate with the unscrupulous element in the city. As a result of this well-meant warning Dr. Vehse and one of the ministerial candidates were insulted and stoned on a public street, and the name "Stephanist" became a shameful epithet. (*Schicksale und Abenteuer*, 45 f.)

Another factor that made it imperative for the Saxons to find a home for their group as soon as possible was the relatively high cost of living. From a number of reports we glean that the following prices prevailed during the early months of the year 1839: 1 bushel of Indian corn, \$1.10; 1 bushel of wheat, 1½ dollar; 1 bu. of potatoes, \$1.00 to \$1.50; 1 bu. of apples, \$1.50 to \$2.00; pork, about 12 cents a pound; beef, about 10 cents; butter 33½ cents; soft coal 25 to 50 cents a bushel. Clothing was said to be of a poor grade and cheaply tailored. One can readily see that the food bill of the colonists must have been very large. (Guenther, p. 51.)

Since the *Regulations for the Emigrants* stipulated the election or appointment of a commission to purchase land for the proposed colony, this matter was attended to very soon. It was in full agreement with the plans of the leader, Pastor Stephan, that this commission should act as soon as possible. A German physician of the city by the name of Gempp, who was very much interested in the welfare of the immigrants, offered some advice, which was considered very valuable by men like Dr. Vehse, one of the lawyers of the party. When the *Olbers* had docked at New Orleans, on January 20, the balance in the treasury had still been approximately 30,000 Spanish dollars, but this sum had meanwhile been reduced considerably by the expenses of the voyage up the river and the rather extravagant demands of

Stephan. Through the mediation of Dr. Gempp the colonists received an offer of a fine piece of land, the so-called Gratiot tract, on the Meramec River, and only about twelve to fifteen miles from St. Louis. The property embraced 15,000 acres, and the terms of sale were most favorable, with payments arranged at a convenient time.

Stephan opposed the suggestion, since he did not care to remain in such close proximity to the big city. So the commission finally recommended the purchase of a tract of land in the southeastern part of Perry County (with possibly a small section in Cape County). This tract consisted of 4,472.66 acres and was bought for \$9,234.25, the transaction being in cash. The deal was closed an April 8, 1839. An additional \$1,000 was paid to a Mr. D. Sullivan for the landing-place on the river. So the immigrants were now definitely committed to the colony in Perry County.

B. The Trip Down the River

At this point it may be well once more to enumerate the men who were at the head of the undertaking. *Martin Stephan* was the originator of the plan to emigrate and the acknowledged head of the immigrants, who had, by a formal declaration on board of the *Olbers*, elected him bishop of the congregation, or at least of the colonists on the ship on which he was a passenger. During the trip up the Mississippi, which in the case of the *Selma* lasted from January 31 to February 19, his fellow-passengers had signed a declaration in which they pledged themselves to accept and uphold the episcopal form of church government and to submit themselves, not only in matters pertaining to the Word of God, but also in those concerning the external conduct of the colony, to the direction of their bishop, Pastor Stephan. He was, therefore, the acknowledged head of the colonists.

The other leaders may be briefly named and characterized. *G. H. Loeber*, formerly pastor at Eichenberg, in Saxe-Altenburg, was next to Martin Stephan the oldest pastor among the immigrants. He became pastor at Altenburg, where he died in 1849. He was respected for his learning and loved for his gentleness and tact. *E. G. W. Keyl* had been pastor at Niederfrohna in Saxony. When the colony was established in Perry County, he headed the congregation in Frohna, later becoming pastor in Baltimore. He was known for his administrative ability. *Otto Hermann Walther*, who made the trip down the river with the first group of immigrants, afterwards returned to St. Louis to become the pastor of the "Saxon" congregation, which, three years later, adopted the name "Trinity." He was the poet of the immigrants and a deeply spiritual nature. January 21, 1841, he died of "*Schleim- und Gal-*

lenfeber." (*Lutheraner*, 1938, 188.) *C. F. W. Walther*, who very shortly assumed the leadership of the colonists, had been pastor at Braeunsdorf in Saxony. In Perry County he became the pastor of the congregation at Dresden, where he remained until he was called as the successor of his brother in St. Louis. *Theodor Brohm* was private secretary of Stephan; he had no charge in Germany. He was one of the founders of the college and its chief instructor till 1843. *Ernst Moritz Buerger* had been pastor at Lunzenau, in Saxony. He held a pastorate in Perry County, namely, at Seelitz; he later became a charter member of the Missouri Synod and afterwards held pastorates in various cities in the East. Candidate *Ottomar Fuerbringer* was one of the founders of the Altenburg college. His longest pastorate was at Frankenthum, Michigan. He was the profoundest thinker among the fathers of the Missouri Synod.

Among the leading laymen of the immigrants we find the two lawyers Doctor Vehse and Doctor Marbach, the merchant Fischer, also Gustav Jaekel (or Jaeckel), who, with Vehse and Fischer, was a member of the *Wirtschaftskommission*, a sort of executive board for the external affairs of the colony. Vehse writes (*Die Stephansche Auswanderung*, 36) that Doctor Gempp, the physician, who had already established a practise in St. Louis, had been willing to come down to the colony, "Wittenberg," but had apparently reconsidered his intention. This man had left a very lucrative practise in Germany at a ducal court.

In order to complete our list of the leaders, we might at this point insert the names of three other men. *Carl Friedrich Gruber* had been pastor in Reust, in the duchy of Altenburg. He had been associated with the Stephanist movement even in Germany, but he did not cross the ocean with the other colonists. He came to Perry County with 141 persons, on December 13, 1839, and assumed the pastorate at Paitzdorf. *J. F. Buenger*, a candidate of theology, had likewise been associated with the Stephanist movement in Saxony. He had planned to make the ocean voyage with the group, as he had led a section down the Elbe River; but when his mother was placed under arrest in Bremen, under a charge which was later cleared up, he was detained beyond the time of departure. He came to America by way of New York, landing there on February 18, 1839. He arrived in Perry County on the day before Pentecost, May 18, 1839. (*Schieferdecker, Geschichte Altenburgs*, 9.) Buenger was most energetic in the building of the log-cabin college and in digging the well located some sixty feet south of the cabin site. He also taught in the institution from the time of its opening, on December 9, 1839, till he followed the call as parish-school teacher in the Saxon congregation in

St. Louis, where he was inducted into office on August 2, 1840. A few years later he became assistant pastor of Trinity and then pastor of Immanuel, founder of the Lutheran Hospital and of an orphanage. The third man to be mentioned in this connection is *J. J. Maximilian Oertel*. This man had been trained at the Barmer Missionshaus, had come to New York, and had there become the spiritual head of a small congregation of about 95 souls, who decided to join the Saxon colonists. He must have been in St. Louis as early as April 24, since his signature appears under a letter of protest in the *Anzeiger des Westens* of April 27, 1839. From various references it appears that Oertel came to Perry County with his people together with Candidate *J. F. Buenger*. This so-called "Berlin group" moved to Johannesberg, approximately three miles from Dresden, and belonged to that parish. Oertel returned to New York and became a member of the Roman Catholic Church. (Koesterling, 17.)

But let us hear more of the transfer of the colonists from St. Louis to Perry County. The deal for the land was closed, as we have seen, on April 8, 1839. Two days later, on April 10, Mr. Christian Bimpage, the agent, together with Mr. Thierry, a surveyor, and a few carpenters and laborers arrived at Wittenberg Landing. On the following day they began the surveying of the land purchased for the colony and the erection of the crude cabins which were to serve as temporary homes for the colonists. The carpenters in Perry County received one dollar a day and the laborers fifty cents a day, plus meals and lodging. Mrs. Johanna Regina Heiner, the wife of Carpenter Carl Johann Christian Heiner, had been engaged by the land commission to do the cooking for the working-men. During the seventy days she served in this capacity she received forty cents a day, plus room and board.

Much had to be done in a very short time, for Stephan was anxious to get settled in the colony. In the Perry County tract one part, which had already been cultivated, was known as the Martin Farm, after the name of the owner. This name was regarded by some of the colonists as a good omen, since Stephan's given name was Martin, and it was proposed to make this farm the provisional seat of the episcopal government of the colony. Meanwhile the thirtieth anniversary of Stephan's ordination was celebrated in St. Louis, on April 13, in the lodging-place of Doctor Vehse. On April 27 the *Anzeiger des Westens* printed a letter in which the "Saxon" pastors defended Stephan against accusations and suspicions which had again been voiced in Germany. The signers of this letter, the pastors G. H. Loeber, E. M. Buerger, J. J. Max. Oertel, E. G. W. Keyl, and C. F. W. Walther, appeal to all "impartial and truth-loving readers" of the paper not to believe

the reports which had been given publicity in the *Anzeiger des Westens* on the basis of attacks published in Germany, which the writers branded as "European lies."

On April 26 Pastor Stephan, who had in the mean time lived rather luxuriously in St. Louis, left the city on the steamer *United States*. As Doctor Vehse relates, the bishop made such exorbitant demands upon the captain of the vessel on this trip, especially in the matter of food, that this official raised his rates to the other colonists the next month to a point where they could not accede to his charges for passage and food. (*Die Stephansche Auswanderung*, 16.) Among the men who accompanied Stephan were Keyl, O. H. Walther, Brohm, and the leading laymen Marbach, Gube, Soertzel, Nitzschke, Otto, Kluegel, Mueller, Schlimpert. Before leaving St. Louis, Stephan had commissioned Mr. Bimpage to send a consignment of fine wines to the temporary bishop's dwelling in Perry County, an order which again made a considerable dent in the much depleted treasury.

When the party arrived in Perry County, Pastor Stephan moved into his provisional quarters, but immediately made arrangements for the building of an episcopal palace whose frontage was to be seventy feet. At this time the immigrants still retained their unbounded confidence in him, as we see from a declaration dated April 29, 1839, and appearing in the *Anzeiger des Westens* of May 4. It is an unequivocal defense of Pastor Stephan and of all the other pastors of the group. It was signed by 24 elected representatives of the "Old Lutheran Congregation," and the names Vehse and Marbach appear at the head, followed by other prominent laymen, such as Jaekel, Gube, Barthel, Pfau, Tirmenstein, Winter, Palisch, Kluegel, Schlimpert, and others.

Just a little over a month after Stephan and the first group of settlers had left for Perry County, two further groups of colonists, practically all those who intended to settle in Perry County, left St. Louis. The trip was made on two steamers, the *Prairie* and the *Toledo*. The first of these boats reached the mouth of the Obrazo, or the Brazeau Creek, at the Wittenberg Landing, at 4 A. M. on May 29, while the *Toledo* did not dock until 5 P. M. on the same day. (Vehse, 18, 19.) About 200 immigrants, including the children, had remained in St. Louis. All the others were now in Perry County and the "Berlin group," which had joined them, just across the boundary, at Johannesberg, in Cape Girardeau County. Vehse relates that he immediately procured a horse and inspected the entire tract of land, concerning which Stephan had remarked that "it was even more beautiful than Palestine." Arrangements for the preliminary care of the colonists had been made, but they were by no means adequate,

as we shall presently see. The immigrants made every effort to become accustomed to conditions in a country which they must really wrest from the wilderness.

And just at this time certain facts became known, which came to most of the colonists like a bolt out of the blue sky. Certain accusations were preferred against their leader, among them such as pertained to his luxurious, almost voluptuous form of living, with specific sins connected therewith, and his dictatorial conduct. At first the confessions of the persons concerned were kept secret, but it was impossible to hush the matter up for any length of time. Doctor Vehse relates that, when he and the secretary of Pastor Stephan were informed concerning the accusations, he was in favor of bringing the accused to St. Louis and deliver him to the courts. But a prominent official of the city, by the name of Lane, advised against such a step, since he feared mob violence. The former pastor was therefore, on May 30, confronted with the accusations against him by a delegation sent to his dwelling in Perry County. Doctor Bimpage acted as secretary of the meeting. On May 31 the former bishop of the immigrants was rowed across the Mississippi, a certain teacher Mueller of the "Berlin group" being in charge. Landing was made on the Illinois side near the Devil's Bake-oven, since a room had been rented for him in a near-by farmhouse. The officials of the immigrants published a formal declaration and explanation of the action against their former bishop. It was dated May 27 and appeared in the *Anzeiger des Westens* of June 1, 1839. The Declaration of Deposition was signed by Pastors Loeber, Keyl, Buerger, O. H. Walther, C. F. W. Walther, and Oertel, by the laymen Vehse, Gube, Schlimpert, Palisch, and Sproede, by Edward Thierry and J. F. Gruenhagen as witnesses, and by H. Bimpage as secretary of the meeting. The statement appearing in the newspaper of June 1 seems to have been delivered to the office of publication before the *Prairie* and *Toledo* left for Perry County (with C. F. W. Walther and Keyl present, and O. H. Walther and Oertel already in Perry County). Fortunately a few fairly reliable reports seem to indicate that Stephan later came to a full knowledge of his sins and turned to his Savior in true repentance.

C. Hardships and Trials

The defection and removal of the man in whom most of the colonists had placed almost unlimited confidence created an enormous amount of confusion in Perry County as well as in St. Louis. A strange terror took hold of the immigrants; they felt that they were without leadership. They were again and again reminded of the fact that their former leader, who had for

decades preached the full truth of the Gospel and had shown to many of them the way of salvation, had made himself unworthy of the sacred office. Despair took hold of the people. They began to reproach their pastors for the conditions into which they had been led and hinted that these men had made common cause with their former bishop. In spite of all explanations and efforts to quiet the minds of people the excitement grew until most of the colonists were in the very depths of spiritual gloom. Many of them were persuaded that the entire undertaking had been sinful. They had been led to believe that they were doing God a service, and now it appeared that they were nothing more than a rabble and could no longer claim the name of a Christian congregation. It was openly stated that the pastors had done wrong in leaving their congregations in Germany, and therefore all their ministerial acts were under suspicion.

Finally the discussion reached this stage, that people said, till now they were under the impression that the congregation of immigrants was a true church, and now everything seemed to be thrown overboard what they had been taught to believe. Where, then, was certainty and salvation to be found? They were as confused as sheep that have gone astray and no longer are able to take firm steps. The poison of hierarchical error had entered their soul. Some of the people refused to attend services or to accept the ministrations of the pastors, saying that these men had left the congregations to which they had been rightly called and therefore had no authority to preach here in America. And they, on their part, did not consider themselves authorized to call pastors, since the Word no longer had full power because the man who had been their leader had been removed. Even the pastors suffered the severest qualms of conscience, for they likewise were no longer sure whether they could perform the work of their ministry according to God's ordinance. It really seemed that Satan might succeed in disrupting the colony completely and in plunging all its members into destruction and perdition.

Naturally this spiritual confusion was reflected also in the other relationships of the members of the colony. For instance, a board of management, which had been appointed, or elected, immediately after the deposition of Stephan, resigned within three weeks, their resignation of June 22 declaring that the division of the land, with which they had been entrusted, was being hindered; that impractical ideas and visionary plans were taking the place of sound business sense; that a budget was still lacking although the treasury had now dwindled down to hardly more than 2,000 dollars, while the physical needs of the colonists required about 500 dollars every two weeks; and that other evils had not been

corrected. Thus doubt, distrust, suspicion, had crept into the hearts of the colonists, and they found themselves unable to shake off the resulting lethargy. The chairman of this board, Doctor Vehse, left Perry County at the beginning of July absolutely disgusted with the whole situation. He left St. Louis on December 16 and returned to Germany, taking the *Johann Georg* out of New Orleans. On the way over he wrote a short account of the immigration, which served as a preface to his *Public Protest* against what he termed the "false, medieval-papistical, and sectarian system of church government." The latter document of 112 pages is dated November 23, 1839, and is signed by Vehse, Fischer, and Jaekel. At the end of the book Vehse offers copies of some of the pertinent documents which played such an important role in the history of the Saxon colony. His entire book, which shows deep study and an earnest endeavor to understand the truth, is a conclusive bit of evidence for the spiritual confusion which had taken possession of the Saxon Lutherans.

To gain a complete understanding of the desperate plight of the colonists, it is necessary also to consider the physical hardships of the first year, specifically of the late spring and early summer. A report brought to St. Louis during the first week in June stated that more than half of the colonists were obliged to camp in the open, where they were exposed to the heavy rains of spring and the bites of insects, which caused fever, while their effects were being ruined by the moisture and the food was often unfit for human consumption. A week later the report was published that there was still no adequate shelter for the colonists, but that 150 men were living in a sort of barracks which offered no shelter either against wind or rain. An effort was being made to erect enough log cabins for all the colonists, but the plan had not yet been carried into effect because the necessary draft-animals were lacking. Only 80 acres of the colony tract were under cultivation, and their money was almost exhausted.

In the opinion of the German people of St. Louis these conditions called for action. Accordingly, they held a meeting on June 10, in which they by formal resolution declared their sympathy with the fate of the colonists and appointed a committee of seven men who were to offer the colonists assistance. This assistance seemed to be required by the apparent impractical attitude of the Saxon leaders, who planned to build a village at the confluence of the Brazeau and the Mississippi, with a marketplace and rows of business houses along the river, with homes for the craftsmen on the side of the hills, and with schools and parsonages on the bluff. Meanwhile the majority of the approximately 500 people were living in tents, booths, and crude cabins. Food was

often rather scarce and was therefore rationed to the individual families, the staple kinds of food being rice and bacon.

A more hopeful note is found in letters written somewhat later in the year. From accounts given by Christiana Loeber we glean the following information, which she addressed to her brother Gottwert Friedemann:

"It is remarkable how God always helps us. Besides the fine weather that we enjoy, the Americans have a larger crop this year than they have had for quite a while; they say so themselves, with amazement. This prompts these people, who are mostly excellent men, to be helpful to us, supporting us with victuals and in other ways. Loads of apples and sacks of flour they donate to our people, and you may stay with them as long as you choose to gather supplies for the winter. I myself did this twice so far, but in return for the favor shown me I knitted and sewed for them. They appreciate this and repay one generously. They also like to employ the men and the young people of the Germans and even desire to marry them. But we ourselves have so many unmarried young men that not near enough girls are to be found in our congregations. . . .

"Oh, it is not hard at all to make a living here. I wish the sister of H. S. would get me one of those small spinning-machines, as they are not yet to be had here. Yarn is high, but cotton one can raise himself. I also had given to me a complete instruction for the culture of silkworms and the fabrication of silk. I should like to do this if only I had my own little house first. Mulberry-trees are so plentiful that they are used for manufacturing all kinds of woodenware. We ourselves have a churning-tub [of mulberry-wood] to take care of the milk of our two cows. Heinrich and Gotthilf have the two calves, and Martha, whose hair is bobbed, has a small dog. . . . We have thought with love and concern of all of your birthdays, and have celebrated especially yours, dear brother, in company with Rev. Walther, with a glass to your health. . . . Should other persons intend to emigrate, tell them there is much good land in this neighborhood and that twenty farmers who are living at one place a few miles from here will move to Illinois to join their church and to make room for our dear children." (*Ebenezer*, 17 f.)

We have a few words also from Mrs. C. F. W. Walther, the former Emilie Buenger. In her reminiscences she writes:

"I remember very well how we did our washing at the creek, how we cooked our meals in large kettles, and how we used to sing. Little by little we made our sheds comfortable and even began to visit one another. When the weather was good, the children had their school out of doors, using logs for benches. Services on Sundays were conducted in the open whenever the weather permitted."

D. The Saxon Settlements Established

We now come to the most cheerful and encouraging part of our discussion, for it is evident that by the late summer of the year 1839 the dark clouds of affliction were gradually being dis-

sipated and the sun of God's mercy was beginning to shine on the Saxon colony in Perry County. A letter dated September 30, by Pastor Gotthold Heinrich Loeber to his relatives in Germany, contains the following information on the congregations of the colony and on the circumstances in which the settlers found themselves at that time:

"We are now divided into *five congregations*, whose five ministers, however, form only one common ministerium. The elder Pastor Walther is in charge of the congregation which remained in St. Louis and is permitted to hold its services in the Episcopal church of that city. To this congregation belong chiefly tradesmen, who make a good living in the city and intend to lay some money by in order to acquire homes out here in the country with us. Many inhabitants of St. Louis come to our services there.

"In the congregation at *Dresden*, to which the Berlin group who live about one hour's distance away belong, the *younger Pastor Walther* is laboring. On the ground of this congregation at Dresden are several frame houses, built at the beginning, in one of which the three married pastors with their families live in rather close proximity, yet without being in one another's way. Pastor Walther lives together with Candidate Fuerbringer with the folks from Berlin who immigrated from New York.

"Opposite our house many families live together in a much larger, but also much airier frame house (here called a camp). These have not yet settled on their own tract of ground. In this camp we till now conduct our common services and also offer some scanty school instruction, until our college, which is not yet completed (that is, an institution of higher learning), also the church and school of the individual congregation is ready.

"Next to the congregation at Dresden is that of *Altenburg*, which has called me as shepherd of souls. This also includes the families from Plawena and Halle as well as several from Saxony, Dresden, Hannover, and New York. The location of our land is pleasant and healthy, but the soil is mixed and lacking in moisture. The better part of it has fallen to the lot of our dear Bernhard Schmidt, who for that reason is ready to share with others. Two farmhouses which were on the property and were purchased with the land will, at least for this year, have to be used for parsonages and teachers' dwellings, although a parsonage according to German custom, namely, a two-story house, is to be completed before winter, but may not become altogether dry. To this parsonage also sister Christelchen (Christiana Loeber) will move with us because as yet she could find no workmen for her own house, which is to be erected on her own property. My sister-in-law (Mrs. Brohm) is having a small house built on the boundary of Altenburg, near the college, since she has been requested to take over the board and care of the institution. But she, like all others who were without funds and had not paid into the general treasury, has received a parcel of land in the domain of our Altenburg congregation, which she incidentally or at a later date intends to use and also to build on it. Sixteen acres have been allotted to the church and school, among these the only piece of ground which has till now been brought under cultivation and fenced in.

"Next to my congregation is that of Pastor Keyl, namely, that of the people from *Niederfrohna*, which is still in the process of growth, but will, if God permits our good Gruber to land safely with his ship, in this very year receive a large increase in membership. We do not as yet know where the Altenburger people who are coming with him and will not join the relatives who are fully settled, will find a shelter; but there is no lack of space, although for the moment we are in need of good, healthy shelter.

"Toward the east from us, in the direction of the Mississippi River, the congregation *Seelitz* is located, where Pastor Buerger has been called. This congregation has the most fertile and well-watered bottom-land, but not the healthiest.

"Finally, there is also one of our groups at the *Landing-place Wittenberg*, a location which is very suitable, but for several circumstances is not being extensively used this year. Every Sunday services are held here, and school is conducted daily by Candidate *Schieferdecker* and a teacher.

"Even now every congregation has its judge and juror, in *Altenburg Bernhard Schmidt* and a certain *Grother*. The rebuilding of our homes has indeed been much delayed by the partial absence of money, by differences of opinion, and especially by sicknesses, so that the present cold September days have taken us by surprise. But the consequence has been that every one who can at all stir, is doing so with greater diligence; and since most of the houses, according to the American custom, are built of hewn logs which are piled up, while the small crevices between the logs are filled with clay, not so much time is consumed as in building a house in Europe.

"The sickness which has visited us, as it did all immigrants, is the cold fever [malaria?], which, however, in the case of most patients passes over without danger, but returns after a few weeks. I also have already had it two times and Henry three times; the other members of my family have not yet been stricken. One who does not get the fever is usually bothered by painful sores, which, however, soon go away. Where the fever was accompanied by a nervous condition, it was indeed associated with much pain, and some who had not taken the proper care of themselves have died with it. Our physician is the incipient *Doctor Buenger*, son of *Mrs. Buenger*, who also lives with us. I should like to remark that I personally after a few days of fever am very healthy and well and also have my subsistence. But I am obliged to run and work much. Some also of my *Altenburgers* have moved to neighboring farms, some even at some distance, for which reason the way to their homes is rather far. Unusual and unexpected problems and questions, which often are beyond my powers and gifts, must be solved, and in our congregation, which is accustomed to criticizing, the members know how to judge what belongs to an evangelical and true sermon; and still time and place is not suited to real study. An important but very gratifying piece of work for me was the preparation of sixteen adult members of the Reformed persuasion, whom I, on the fourteenth Sunday after Trinity, as the oldest of the ministers, in the presence of my brethren in office and of the entire congregation, had the pleasure of receiving as members of the Lutheran Church by confirmation, a celebration, which, according to my knowledge, the Lutheran

Church during the last centuries has not experienced. Also a few Catholics were among those who were received; but several were hindered by sickness in being received at this time.

"Therefore I beg you to be satisfied with the information given above. Have no fears for our sake with reference to Indians, wild animals, Mexican soldiers, etc., for these dangers have not touched us to date. May God help both us and you above all to fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. May He save and help you with us through Jesus Christ." (*Kinder- und Jugendblatt*, Vol. 64, 1936, p. 24 ff.)

Thus the colony was gradually established in circumstances which were favorable to both the temporal and, above all, the spiritual peace and development of the colonists. Churches were gradually erected as planned. The children of the colony were taught the fundamentals of the Christian faith and trained in many other useful branches of learning. Teacher J. F. Ferdinand Winter served as the teacher of the Altenburg congregation from May, 1839, to the year 1873. At Johannesberg Candidate Geyer taught school, at Frohna Magister Wege, till other arrangements were made. At Wittenberg the children were first taught by Candidate G. A. Schieferdecker and a teacher; then the school of the Altenburg congregation was used. In short, the Perry County colony came close to being what Walther considered an ideal group of congregations, with the church and the parish-school working together for the upbuilding of the kingdom of God.

P. E. KRETZMANN

Predigtentwürfe für die Evangelien der Thomafius-Perikopenreihe

Sonntag Cantate

Joh. 15, 1—11

Als Christus im Begriff stand, seinen Todesgang anzutreten, war er nicht um sich, wohl aber um seine Jünger besorgt. Er kannte die ihnen bevorstehende schwere Prüfungszeit. Darum tröstete er sie recht herzlich und seelsorgerlich und suchte ihnen wahre Freude mitzuteilen. V. 11, ermahnte sie zur Standhaftigkeit und Treue. Zu dem, was er ihnen damals zum Abschied sagte, gehört auch unser Text. Das ist alles auch uns vermeint und uns zugut aus Eingebung des Heiligen Geistes verzeichnet worden.

Wie Jesus seine Jünger ermahnt, in ihm als Reben am Weinstock zu bleiben
Er zeigt,

1. Wie selig sie in ihm sind
2. Wie sie in ihm bleiben.