



Oak Leaves

Newsletter of the ELS Historical Society

Volume 4

Spring 2000

Issue 1

The Voyage To America

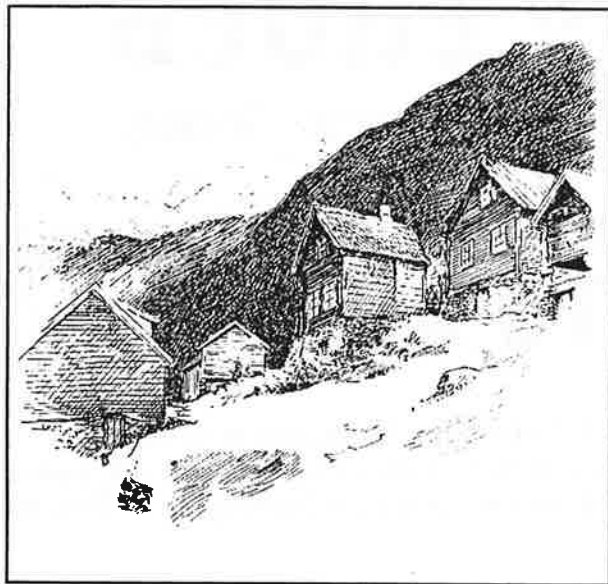
The year 2000 marks the 175th anniversary of Norwegian immigration to America. In 1825, the sloop *Restaurationen* sailed from Stavanger, Norway into New York harbor with twenty-five Norwegian immigrants aboard. In the decades following, over 700,000 more Norwegians would arrive in America.

The following is from the *Storlie Book*, a family history compiled by Martin Storlie of Spring Grove, Minnesota, in 1931. It describes typical experiences of those who left their home country to sail for America in the early 1850's. Though it is about emigrants from Norway, it could as easily be the experience of any of the thousands of people who left their home countries during this time to sail for *The Land of Promise*.

"*The Voyage to America in 1852*"

It was surely no pleasure trip that the brothers Knut and Ole Storlie undertook when they journeyed to America in 1852. First they had to provide food for at least twelve weeks on the ocean, as well as bedclothes, shoes, wearing apparel for a longer period of time, since they were obliged, in the new settlements to which they were going, to depend upon the products of their own hands. Then when they had provided themselves with the necessities for this journey, they had to hire someone to haul the many boxes of food and clothing the seventy English miles from Ness in Hallingdal to the coast town of Drammen, over the steep and poor roads, made worse by the spring thaws. Where there were small children, these rode upon the emigrant boxes, while the adults were obliged to walk. Having arrived at Drammen, the provisions were weighed, and, if they were not sufficient for twelve weeks, they were obliged to buy what they lacked in the city.

On board the ship which was to take them to America, the emigrants were obliged to make such arrangements as to cooking and sleeping as they were able. The kitchen or galley where the one hundred or more families were to cook their meals three times a day was a kind of shed built on the deck, about twenty feet long and twelve feet wide, with a door on one long side. This kitchen was covered with evergreen branches, except for an opening along the rear wall where the smoke could escape. Along the whole rear wall was a bin about two feet deep and four feet wide filled with sand, and on this sand bin the emigrants were to cook their meals three times a day. Every morning the head of the family was obliged to accompany the officer down into the hole of the ship, where water and fuel for the day were apportioned. This wood had to be split finer and securely hidden; if not, it probably could not be found when it was needed. The first to receive their wood and get it split had first chance at the kitchen in the morning.



Etching of a farm in Norway. Thousands of Norwegians left behind these homes for a better life in America. Used with permission from Vesterheim Genealogical Center, Madison, Wisconsin. From the July 1996 issue of *Emigration Review*.

A man from Ringerike, who emigrated in 1851, has given me the dimensions for the kitchen and a light on what happened every day. He says: "Let us go on deck to look at the kitchen and see the difference between that time and now [1931], see the hardships and the difficulties that our forefathers had to bear when they came to America in the fifties, compared with the conveniences and comforts the emigrants have today.

"The kitchen is already full of both men and women, old and young. Already there are numerous small fires lit along the whole sand bin, where the coffee pots stand steaming on the fire, ready to be taken off, to make way for others that are standing outside waiting. When one was ready, another took his place, so that a great deal of coffee was cooked in a short time.

"Many men had to act as cooks, because their wives were seasick. The sand bin looks like a miniature sea of flame, but the smoke is as thick as steam in a bath house, and cannot be made to pass through the opening in

the roof intended for that purpose. Among these cooks was an old woman who maintained that she would have been able to get rid of the smoke had they not used birch wood. But she had no power over birch wood, so it would have to do as it pleased. It was not only full of people inside the kitchen, but outside they stood in droves waiting for an empty place and whenever someone came out, as often happened, to blow his nose, wipe the tears or cough up some of the smoke he had swallowed, many of those standing around crowded in and asked for a place to cook.

"The ones that came in were not to be envied. Inside it was so full of smoke that they could not see one another and were obliged to go outside every once in a while to get a breath of fresh air. The women seemed to stand less than the men, and had to come out oftener for air, with their aprons around their heads and wiping their eyes. The men took it more calmly, and bent as low as possible, either sitting or squatting on the floor. One woman came out almost blinded by smoke and said, 'This is getting worse and worse. I don't believe a bit of smoke goes out of the opening that was made for it. I wish I were home again on the saeter in the mountains cooking prim. It was not so smoky there.' Another woman stood outside shivering, and said, 'I don't believe I'll get my pea soup cooked today either.' And poor woman she was right. The wind increased so that the ship began to roll considerably."

Like an inquisitive boy, the relator peeked in the door of the kitchen where his father was, and saw some of the cooks standing on their knees before the sand bin watching their ket-

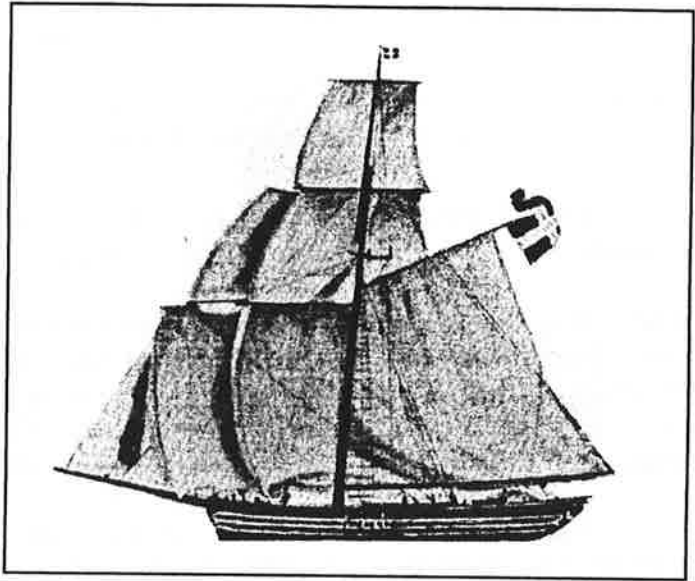
bles. Others sat on the floor to escape the smoke and still others were on their knees sucking in the fresh air through the cracks in the wall. Then there came a harsh voice that said, "Close the door, curly head, or the fire will blow the whole shanty and burn both it and us." Then gestures and faces showed clearly how it was to be in the kitchen that day.

Immediately afterward he heard an unusual cry from the kitchen and saw a cloud of steam and smoke rise up through the opening in the roof, and as soon as those in the kitchen could find the door, they came out like a swarm of bees, women with aprons over their heads crying that everything inside had tipped over. Everybody looked like chimney sweeps. However, they had to go in again to see the effects of the rolling of the ship. What a scene met their eyes. Empty kettles, burning coals, mutton joints and half cooked pea soup mixed with ashes, that skidded back

and forth as the ship rocked. Everybody tried as well as they could to gather their possessions of empty kettles and mutton joints that had gone astray; but the pea soup was stricken from the menu that day.

Such small catastrophes happened often on these rolling sailing vessels that brought people to America in those times and it is not at all impossible that the Storlie brothers experienced something similar. If a storm became so violent that it tipped the kitchen over, then the emigrants were crowded down into a room under the deck, with hatches closed, where they had to gnaw on a little dry food by the light of a few smoking oil lamps. That is, if they were able to eat at all in the foul air that filled the room.

From New York the journey was continued by steamship to Albany and from there by canal boat to Buffalo, a distance of three hundred and sixty three miles. These canal boats were drawn by one or two horses with a speed of two and one half to three miles an hour, so that the trip consumed twelve days. From Buffalo to Chicago or Milwaukee was a thousand miles over the Great Lakes by steamboat. From there the journey continued either by ox cart or by foot one hundred or one hundred fifty miles to their destination. The Storlie brothers traveled on to the Rock Prairie, Wisconsin settlement. In 1858, they settled permanently in Spring Grove, Wisconsin.



Artist's rendering of the *Restauration*, the sloop which carried the first Norwegian immigrants to America in 1825. The image is a reconstruction of the ship, based on other sloops the same size and from the same area. All original drawings and photos of the ship have been lost. Used with permission from the Norwegian Emigration Museum, Stavanger, Norway.



Submitted by Rev. Ron L. Mathison
New Germany, Minnesota

Lutherans and Immigration

The following is from the *History of Immanuel Lutheran Church* by Merle Schultz, 1995 (Immanuel Lutheran Church is located in Caledonia, Minnesota):

They came from the highlands, the lowlands, and the shores of the seas. They came with courage and hope for a better life in America.

The sailing vessels bringing them across the great Atlantic Ocean would battle a long and hazardous passage. Their provisions of dried beef, salted pork, pickled herring, cheese, butter, potatoes, dried peas, flour and sugar were some of the staples required for the sea crossing which could last four months. All their possessions were packed in wooden trunks for their forthcoming journey: cooking utensils, bedding, clothing, axes and saws.

Every family also cherished and carried with them a Bible and Hymnal in their native tongue. Each item brought along on the journey was given careful and painstaking evaluation. What they carried with them needed to see them through their long ocean crossing. These were also the tools which would help them carve out a new life when they reached this new land.

On their voyage they encountered high seas, storms, the heat of the summer or the cold of the winter. The voyage was difficult and often included illness and sometimes even death. Through these tests they relied on their faith as they ventured toward a new life in an unknown land.

About 40,000 brave Lutherans defied the odds and braved the conditions emigrating to North America in Colonial times. They came mostly from Germany and Scandinavia but also from Denmark, Slovakia, Finland and Iceland. Each of the different ethnic groups brought their own intellectual, social and theological concerns with them to their new home. Coming together as American Lutherans would prove to be a long and difficult task. Lutheran immigration continued steadily throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. Norwegian immigrants began arriving in the Midwest in 1839, settling in Wisconsin and Illinois. When Indian treaties were ratified in 1849, land in Minnesota and Iowa were opened for settlement too. New arrivals in great numbers crossed the Mississippi River.

Between 1850 and 1855 over 20,000 Norwegian men and women came to America. There was a marked slow down of immigration during and directly after the Civil War. There was another massive migration of Lutherans in the 1880's and 1890's. Many of these late arrivals settled in Illinois and Wisconsin. By the outbreak of World War I, 2,000,000 Lutherans lived in the United States and Canada, grouped into 22 different synodical bodies. By 1890, those who had been gathered into the Norwegian Churches were found primarily in three synods: Hauge's Norwegian Evangelical Synod in America (1846), the Synod for the Norwegian Evangelical Lutherans in America (1853) and the United Norwegian Lutheran Church in America (1890).



Submitted by Rev. Ron L. Mathison
New Germany, Minnesota

Books about the Immigrant Experience

Non Fiction:

The Diary of Elisabeth Koren 1853-1855 (Elisabeth was the wife of Norwegian Synod pioneer pastor, U.V. Koren). Norwegian American Historical Society (NAHA); Northfield, MN, 1955. Reprinted by the Norwegian American Museum and Luther College, Decorah, IA, 1978.

The Follinglo Dog Book: A Norwegian Pioneer Story from Iowa by Peder Gustav Tjernagel. University of Iowa Press, 1999.

In Their Own Words: Letters from Norwegian Immigrants. Edited and translated by Solveig Zempel. University of Minnesota Press, 1991.

Linka's Diary: On Land and Sea, 1845-1864. The diary of Catherine "Linka" Preus, wife of Norwegian Synod pioneer pastor H.A. Preus. Edited and translated by Johan Carl Keyser Preus and Diderikke Margrethe Preus. Augsburg Press, 1952.

Frontier Parsonage: The Letters of Olaus Fredrik Duus, Norwegian Pastor in Wisconsin, 1855-1858. Edited by Theodore C. Blegen. NAHA, 1947.

Wisconsin My Home by Erna Oleson Xan. University Of Wisconsin Press; Madison, Wisconsin, 1950.

Frontier Mother: The Letters of Gro Svendsen. Edited and translated by Pauline Farseth and Theodore C. Blegen. NAHA, 1950.

Fiction:

Giants in the Earth by Ole E. Rolvaag. First printed in the U.S. by Harper and Brothers, 1927. Reprinted by Harper/Collins 1991. First book of the epic trilogy about the trials of the Hansa family, who homestead in the Dakota territory. Compelling and rich in detail. A must-read.

Peder Victorious by Ole E. Rolvaag. Harper and Brothers, 1929. Reprinted by University of Nebraska Press, 1982. Second book of the Rolvaag trilogy.

Their Fathers' God by Ole E. Rolvaag. Harper and Row, 1931. Reprinted by University of Nebraska Press, 1983. Third book of the Rolvaag trilogy.

The Boat of Longing by Ole E. Rolvaag. Harper and Brothers, 1933. Reprinted with new material by the Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1985. From the fishing boats of Norway to the streets of 1912 Minneapolis, immigrant Nils Vaag makes his way in urban America.

Preserving your Photographs, Past and Present

by Rachel Vagts
Archivist,
Luther College, Decorah Iowa

Photographs provide some of the most enduring images of our lives. When we think of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, what first comes to mind is the photograph of Mrs. Kennedy watching Lyndon Johnson being sworn in, young John-John saluting his father's casket as it passed by. We also remember family celebrations by looking at old photographs.

Preservation is an important exercise. Whether you are trying to save family photos from several generations ago or deciding how to organize and preserve the seven rolls of film you took on your family vacation, there are several important things you can do to preserve the life of your photographs.

New photographs:

First off, remember that color photographs will not last forever. Although film has improved over the years, if you are particularly interested in preserving your images, it would be best to shoot them in black and white. Do not use Poloroid photographs for anything you are interested in saving. The image will fade much more quickly than any other photo format.

You will most likely want to store your photographs in an album. Do not use the

magnetic albums. The adhesive used to hold the photographs to the page is very damaging to photographs. Instead you can buy books made with acid-free paper and use photo corners or by albums with clear plastic pages. Make sure the plastic is polypropylene instead of vinyl. Vinyl gives off a harmful vapor that will shorten the life of your photographs.

You will want to retain the negatives to your photographs. Although new prints can be made from your photographs, it will lower the quality of the next generation print. It is always best to make copies from the original negative. Negatives may be stored in the sleeves they come in from the processor, or in plastic pages you can purchase from archival suppliers.

School photographs are often processed poorly and will degrade quickly from long-term exposure. Keep one copy on display and put one in a dark storage location.

You should also label photographs on the back. Use a soft pencil (6B) and write carefully. Be sure to have a clean, hard surface supporting the photo while you write and press very gently. Your pencil should be slightly dull so that you do not have to press into the photograph. Do not use ink or stamps as this will stain your image. For historic photographs, you may want to use acid-free envelopes to store them, marking on the outside of the enclosures. Make sure you label the envelope before you put the photograph in it. Labeling your photos will make it much easier for those enjoying your photographs years from now!

Historic photographs:

The same recommendations about new photos are true for older images. If you have a large collection, you may want to

store it in an archival box, using acid-free folders (these are available from archival suppliers). You may select a smaller number to display in albums using the same precautions listed above. Do not store your photographs in the attic or basement. Attics are prone to wide variations in temperature and basements can be damp.

If you wish to display your historic photographs, first make sure that they are

If photographs are already in a frame, look at them carefully. Any matting should be replaced and if the frame has a wooden back, that should be replaced as well. The wood can give off harmful chemicals that will degrade your photograph over time.

If you choose to display your photographs on a wall, you should choose one that does not get a great deal of direct sunlight. Also

*"Photographs
provide
some of
the most
enduring
images of
our lives"*



framed in a manner that will not hasten any damage to the image. Matting material should be acid and lignin-free. This should also be true of the mounting board. A non-adhesive method for mounting is the best. Many adhesives used will damage your photographs. A non-adhesive method is similar to using photo corners in an album to hold the photograph to the mounting board. The photo should be mounted so that it is not touching the glass. Glass or acrylic can be coated with a UV protection that will reduce the damage caused by light.

consider rotating the images you display so that no one image is exposed to continuous light all the time.

Scrapbooks:

If you are building a scrapbook, remember to select a book that is easy to open. The paper should be acid-free. Books from "Creative Memories" are acid-free. For more information, consult their product

(continued on page 10)

Change...

I graduated from Bethany Lutheran College ten years ago this month. When I first began my college career at that school in 1988, Bethany consisted of Old Main, erected in 1911, the gymnasium, built in 1959, and the "new" men's dorm and library, both erected in 1967. Four academic buildings, a heating plant built in 1964, the president's house and a couple of other houses for students to live in, nestled between neighborhoods at the top of McMahon Hill, the 211 Bethany steps leading down the hill to the rest of the world.

Old Main was where most of the classes were held. The chapel was attached, and in Old Main's basement was the cafeteria, bookstore, and the dark and musty student lounge we all called the "VV", short for Viking Village.

The library basement served as additional classroom space and housed the ELS Archives, in a very small, very chilly corner room.

The gym, next to the HUGE sward of lawn we called the *Bethany Beach*, was where many of Bethany's indoor events were held: sporting contests, intramurals, theater and band performances. Choir events were in the small chapel.

I recall my first day at Bethany, hauling my boxes of belongings up a rickety exterior Old Main fire escape on a windy and overcast January day, to third floor and my new living quarters. I remember cast and crew members packed together in the men's locker room of the gym during a performance of *The Matchmaker*, all of us knowing that we didn't dare flush the toilets until intermission, because the audience would hear it in the gym, and that

would be really tacky.

I remember windows in my dorm room being so non-tight that snow drifted in and melted on the radiator below. I remember girls running in the dorm and screaming, "Bats, bats!" Fearful of the little creatures with whom we shared our living space. The last day of painting class, held in what was supposed to be a storage room in the basement of Old Main, the cupboards, piled to the ceiling with stuff, made a creaking noise and came crashing down to the floor. Bethany Lutheran College. It was quaint.

And then things began to change. After many years with little alteration, the campus began to grow. The Bethany Beach became a big hole in the ground, soon to be the new fine arts center. One day in the fall of 1988, Theater Professor Sigurd Lee took some of us students out into the big hole, where the stage was to be, to get a picture for posterity. One of us kneeled, holding up a rock in one hand, gesturing, as Hamlet may have done while giving his famous "Alas, poor Yorick" speech. The rest of my time at Bethany, students walked around and through construction work to classes.

I was privileged to be among the cast of the very first play held in the new Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center. The play was Sophocles' *Antigone*.

During dress rehearsals in the almost-but-not-quite-finished theater, workers laid carpet and tended to other last-minute details. Once during rehearsal, I was called on stage for a scene. I quickly ran up the stage steps, forgetting that the workers had not yet laid carpet in that area. As I ran up the steps, I immediately stepped into a thick patch of glue. I unstuck myself and hopped up to the stage on one non-sticky shoe. Minutes later, carpeting went over

that very spot, and my footprint is forever a part of the building.

In just ten years, thanks be to God and the generosity of people who understand Bethany's purpose on this earth, the campus has changed immensely. New sports and fitness center (1995), Trinity Chapel (1996), Memorial Library (1998), Gullix-



Bethany certainly has changed... is it still Bethany?

son Hall (men's dorm, 1999), and renovation of just about everything else on campus. Soon, another building, for math and science, will be a reality. Soon, Bethany will be a four-year institution.

Bethany certainly has changed over the last decade. When I go back now, I have to search the campus for things that are familiar. The Bethany Gates don't welcome me as I drive onto campus. There are so many buildings I can't count them on one hand now (math was never my forte). I'll bet you can't crawl around on the attic rafters of Old Main and out onto the roof anymore. I wonder what's next?!!!

So many things have changed there. What about the really important things? Is it still Bethany?

I got out the newest Bethany Lutheran College academic catalog the other day and read: "*the college and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod are committed to the Holy Scriptures, the inspired and inerrant Word of God, as the sole authority for faith and life...the college confesses that through faith in Jesus Christ the individual receives the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Such faith is produced in human hearts by the Holy Spirit through the Word and Sacraments...The Christian faith governs the entire educational process at Bethany....Bethany aspires to produce students with a clear understanding of Christian vocation, which calls people to make the most of their God-given talents in whatever walk of life they may pursue.*"

Yep. It's still Bethany.



Editor

[Note: Next time you come to Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minnesota, take some time to look around the beautiful campus. It's your school, and wouldn't exist without your prayers and support. It is an important piece of our history. God willing, it will be an exciting and rewarding part of our future and the future of our children.]

Do you have a
story idea for
Oak Leaves?

Would you like to write one?

Please send your ideas to:

Robin Ouren
R3 Bx 53 St. Peter, MN 56082
(507) 246-5309
E-mail: heyrab@mnico.net

Guess Who?

Can you identify the people in the photo on page seven? How about the ELS church in the background? Answers in the next issue of **Oak Leaves**.

Found on a grave marker at Saude Lutheran Church cemetery, rural northeast Iowa:

*A patriarch with long grey locks,
Who old with honor grew,
A pattern for his children dear,
In life and doctrine true.
Upright - peace loving,
Trusting in God's care.
In Jesus sought he rest
And found it there.*

V.K.

Written by Reverend U.V. Koren as a tribute to layman John Landsverk

(Photos, continued from page 7)

list. Archival suppliers like Gaylord and Light Impressions also sell archival quality scrapbook kits.

Attach your photographs with archival photo corners. Try not to use any tape. Use a water-soluble, non-toxic glue stick to attach newspaper clippings. You should cut the clipping long enough so you can make hinges on either end, putting the glue just on those end pieces.

Make sure you identify the clippings, photographs, and other items you include. Unidentified materials are particularly frustrating to people using the books in future years.

Old scrapbooks should be kept together, but you may want to interleave the pages with sheets of acid-free paper. This prevents the acidity from newsprint and adhesives from staining other parts of the books. Store the books in a box to prevent them from attracting more dust and pests.

For more information, consult your local historical societies or these fine web sites:

**Iowa Conservation and
Preservation Consortium**
[http://www.uni.edu/petersog/
icpcmenu.html](http://www.uni.edu/petersog/icpcmenu.html)

**Minnesota Historical Society
Preservation Department**
[http://www.mnhs.org/preserve/treasures/
index.html](http://www.mnhs.org/preserve/treasures/index.html)

Note: For a list of archival suppliers who carry photo preservation materials, see page 5 of the Fall, 1999 issue of **Oak Leaves**.



Fourth Annual Meeting
of the
ELS Historical Society

Saturday, June 10, 2000
Bethany Lutheran College
Mankato, Minnesota

- 9:30 am - Registration & Coffee—Dining Center, Great Room
10:00 am - Devotion—Trinity Chapel
10:30 am - Presentations by congregations: *How we are preserving our History.*
11:00 am - *Dating Historical Photographs Using Women's Clothing, 1860s–1920s*
Laurann Gilbertson, Textile Curator, Vesterheim Norwegian American Museum,
Decorah, Iowa
12:00 noon - Luncheon in the Great Room
1:00 pm - *Y0, Y1K, Y2K and the ELS*
Dr. Peter T. Harstad, Executive Director, Indiana Historical Society
2:30 pm - Historical Society Business Meeting
3:00 pm - Coffee and Social Hour, Dining Center, Great Room

Cost: The noon luncheon will be served at a cost of \$7/person in the Great Room of Bethany Lutheran College.

Housing: For those who wish to stay overnight, synod convention housing will be available in the dormitories. The following rates for lodging will be in effect: Gullixson Hall (air conditioned)—\$15 per person per night, double occupancy (single—\$30). Teigen Hall (not air conditioned)—\$10 per person double occupancy (single \$20). RV Hookups are also available \$8 per night, no A/C. Sheets, pillow cases, and towels will be provided. Contact Mary Hansen, 507-344-7313.

Visitors: are welcome and invited to attend!

Registration: To assist with preparations: please return the Registration form prior to June 1. Or telephone 507-344-7354

I plan to attend the Annual Meeting of the ELS Historical Society. Please reserve _____ luncheon tickets.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Please return to ELS Historical Society, 6 Brown's Court, Mankato, MN 56001



Evangelical Lutheran Synod
Historical Society
6 Browns Court
Mankato, MN 56001

...the course of history

Pastor Walther C. Gullixson came to East Paint Creek Evangelical Lutheran Church, rural Waterville, Iowa in 1957. A month or two after his installation, while greeting people after a church service, he misnamed a lady. In his embarrassment, and unaware of the century-old custom of men sitting on one side of the church, and women and children sitting on the other, he remarked to the woman, "If you would sit with your husband, I would be sure to recognize you." The next Sunday, the woman sat with her husband, and within months the century-old custom was changed in that church. Not a word was ever said to Pastor Gullixson.

Oak Leaves is published periodically by the ELS Historical Society: 6 Browns Court; Mankato, MN 56001

Editor: Robin Ouren. Advisor: Rev. Craig Ferkenstad

Board of Directors: Erling Teigen (Chair), Joseph Abrahamson, Craig Ferkenstad, Norman Holte, Gerhard Lee, Albin Levorson, Amanda Madson, George Orvick, Marguerite Ylvisaker.

Oak Leaves welcomes articles of both synodical and local significance for publication. Articles may be edited for style, clarity, or length to allow for publication. Submitted manuscripts will be deposited in the archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

Membership

All membership renewals due **June 1**

Voting Membership:

\$10/year: individual

\$15/year: husband & wife

Associate Membership:

\$15/year: individual

\$25/year: institution.

\$5/year: student