

Oak Leaves

Newsletter of the ELS Historical Society

Volume 1

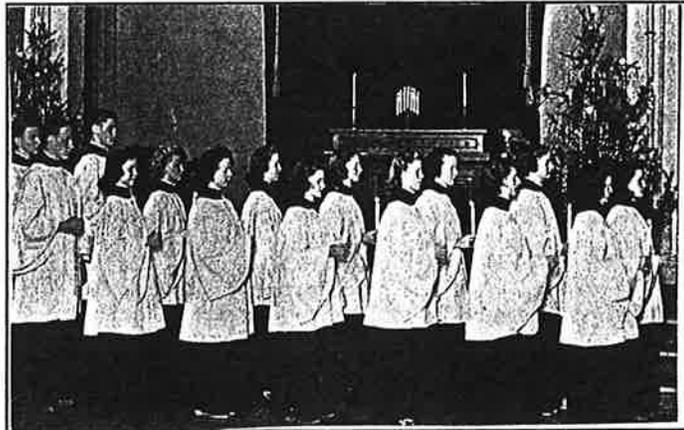
Autumn 1997

Issue 3

Christmas at Bethany 1951-56

A good corn crop! My dad, Otto Tjernagel, needed the income for tuition money, not so much for my brother Sven, who paid his own way to Bethany High School and College, but for me. Ever since my sister Milly was a senior there, I wanted to attend Bethany too, but money was scarce and I wasn't old enough to borrow funds as Milly had courage to do. When dad saw the good crop, he let me enroll that summer of 1951. I studied the catalogue for hours, choosing my subjects, courses which would prepare me to teach in a Christian Day School.

I arrived with one cardboard suitcase holding every stitch of clothes I owned. Roommates had been assigned, one being my cousin Grace. After moving into Room 210, I was ready for my first of six good years at Bethany.



Imagine one brick building becoming almost my total world for six years. Only ex-GIs, called post-grads, were allowed cars, so we rode the bus or walked where we wanted to go. There was no television until my classmate's dad donated a used set, Bethany's first TV. Our classes could be reached without stepping outdoors. Letters from home were pushed under our doors every morning. Plain meals were cooked and served in the dining room. One phone for boys and one phone for girls filled our needs, and a canteen supplied treats for those who could afford the extra dimes and nickels.

Dormitory living, classes and music became my focus, with music taking high priority. I was born loving music; my earliest memories include melodies. These memories of Christmas at Bethany, therefore, are filled with music memories, especially of the Bethany Choir.

Choir tryouts were scheduled for the second day of school. The enrollment was about 180, and over 100 would try out for the 80 positions. We walked up a few steps to the "crow's nest" where Mr. Fremder shared an office with Mr. Honsey. For our tryout, first we sight-read a simple melody starting on middle C. "C D E C E; G octave C B A; A G G G E G; G F D B C." Next he played a melodic minor scale. We listened, then sang it back to him. This was easy because I played scales in piano lessons. The tryout lasted only a few minutes. We also listed our music background. Now to wait.

Two days later, a crowd gathered around a bulletin board in the hall near the lobby; the choir list was posted. There were 80 elated students and many sad faces. I was fortunate to be one of four [high school] sophomores to be chosen.

Practices began immediately. An hour and a half was scheduled for noon break. Choir members ate fast, then rushed to the chapel for a 45-minute practice.

For us choir members, Christmas began very early at Bethany because of the need to learn the music. Those who were not in choir were at such a disadvantage, I thought. But each student and faculty member had the blessed opportunity for worship with singing during the Advent season. Chapel services were held each morning and evening except Saturday and Sunday mornings. We students were not forced to attend chapel, only

highly encouraged.. This encouragement included our deans checking our rooms (and closets and showers and tubs) for missing worshippers. We could usually see who planned to skip chapel, because they would arrive a little later than others, followed by a men's or women's dean.

Chapel always began with hymn singing accompanied by Mr. Fremder, Miss Loberg or an advanced organ student or pianist. During Advent we sang Christmas and Advent hymns. I was not familiar with The Lutheran Hymnal used at Bethany. Our synod church still sang from the black Lutheran Hymnary. Thanks to strict Christian Day School teachers, usually vicaring student pastors, Sven and I memorized many hymns Thursday nights to be recited Friday mornings. This hymnal in chapel made me nervous. The melodies stopped and started and did not seem to fit the beat. I also missed some Scandinavian favorites that were not included in the predominantly German Lutheran hymnal.

But I sang anyway. Sometimes, because the change in rhythms and melodies bothered me. I would softly sing the Hymnary way under my breath. Mr. Fremder played organ music as we left chapel. I would stay and listen because I was not in a hurry to reach the canteen as most were.

Every theologically trained professor and the seminary students took turns

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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.

preaching for us. I doubt if any of us realized what marvelous Christian training we were receiving. The professors who preached spent many hours on the chapel talks, little eight-minute sermons specially written for us students.

Chapel talks are like good meals. you don't remember every good meal you ever ate. You only know you needed all those meals to sustain your health and life. I remember one Advent sermon in particular. Mr. Rudolph Honsey preached on Tuesdays. He knew the Bible, especially the Old Testament, and from him I learned Old Testament prophecies concerning the birth, life and death of Jesus.

I learned how the Gospel could be found in seemingly obscure passages, and how important it was to study every part of the Bible, even the "begats." Often, for evening chapel, the speakers would read long Bible sections with no sermon. They read well. To this day I like to listen to the Bible being read, not reading along myself.

We were expected to dress appropriately for chapel, meaning we girls changed into dresses or skirts. Jeans, slacks or shorts were not allowed. That was fine with me because I never cared much for jeans. To me, jeans were worn for string-bean picking.

By the first week in December, our music was ready for the Christmas Concert. Mr. Fremder served as the organist at Immanuel Lutheran Church, a Wisconsin Synod congregation in Mankato [today: CLC]. Our concerts were usually held there. We sang from the balcony with Mr. Fremder playing and directing from the organ. He would

wave his hand or nod his head, get us started, and play beautiful accompaniments for our carols. Since all our tour music was sung a cappella, the accompanied music was a nice contrast. It also gave us a repertoire of music we could later use in our churches and schools.

It might sound like the only people who sang at Bethany were those in the choir. But that was not the case. Everyone sang every day in chapel. Plus there was another set of risers, permanent risers, which many singers used in December. These singers were not necessarily choir members, but anyone who wanted to sing Christmas carols in the evening before the lights went out. Study hall began at 8:00 p.m. Some actually studied, sort of forced into the situation with a dean walking up and down the hallway checking rooms. I was not your ordinary student because I did enjoy learning Norwegian vocabulary and writing English essays. But for those who did not see the necessity of too much book learning, the 9:45 p.m. bell was a welcome end to books, and the beginning of 30 minutes of quick fun. The canteen opened briefly for the candy lovers, and the boys who were lucky enough to have found girlfriends had about 15 minutes to visit with them. The rest of us gathered on these permanent risers, the steps leading to the girls' dorm from the library.

By this time of the year, the Social Committee had transformed the lobby into a Christmas room of sorts. During my first December, everything was a surprise to me. I was elated when I got up early one morning to do my kitchen-

continued on page 6

Ingebritson's Attic

The Lime Creek Lutheran Church parsonage has many interesting stories to tell about the first pastor who lived there. Pastor Henry Ingebritson had lived in the parsonage of Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Lake Mills, Iowa from 1911 to 1917. However, when the majority of Our Savior's congregation was persuaded that the doctrine of predestination was not important and voted to join the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America, (NLCA) Pastor Ingebritson was forced to move. The majority of the Lime Creek Lutheran Church (the other church in this parish) was also of the same opinion, but when Pastor Ingebritson refused to compromise on the doctrine, one after the other resigned from the congregation and stormed out of the church. Too late they realized that they might have voted to have the congregation join the NLCA and take the property with them, but no longer being members they could not vote. This is when the minority in Lake Mills and the remnant of the Lime Creek Church built the parsonage near the Lime Creek Church.

The attic of the parsonage still held a few things from the Ingebritson era 35 years ago. For example, there was an old viola. It lacked a string or two, but it could still sing of the musical ability of this man. He had been a gifted singer in his younger days when the viola was a part of the church's orchestra. One can dream of the worship services accompanied by an orchestra! Good music as well as good corn grew in northern Iowa and southern Minnesota!

Then there were a couple trays of movable type. The printing press had disappeared, but here was evidence of the patience of the artist. Printing was not done by pressing some keys to form the words, sentences and paragraphs. Each letter of each word was picked up out of the tray and placed upside down and from right to left in the press tray. Spacers were inserted between the words so the lines would come out even. Then ink was rolled on and one sheet of paper at a time pressed and laid out to dry as the next sheet was similarly printed. Times have changed!

But now it is time to climb back down the narrow stairs and leave Ingebritson's attic behind.



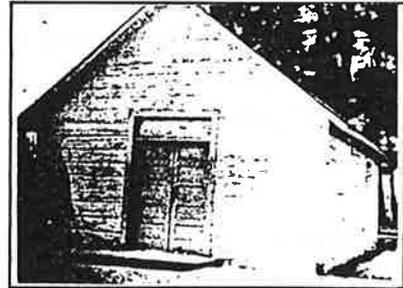
Pastor Henry Ingebritson (1876-1962) was the host pastor for the re-organizing convention of ELS in 1918 at Lime Creek, Iowa. He served as president of the ELS 1936-41.

submitted by the Rev. Paul G. Anderson who served as pastor of Lime Creek and Lake Mills Lutheran Churches, 1961-66

Gran Lutheran Church Celebrates 100th Anniversary

Sunday, July 13, 1997 arrived as a beautiful, bright sunny day for the 100th Anniversary Celebration for the oldest log church in Clearwater County, Minnesota. The celebration was hosted by the Clearwater County Historical Society.

A short program was given. A highlight of the program was music presented by Beatrice Hole playing the Psalmodikon, a one-stringed instrument. Hole has traveled extensively to entertain with the Psalmodikon.

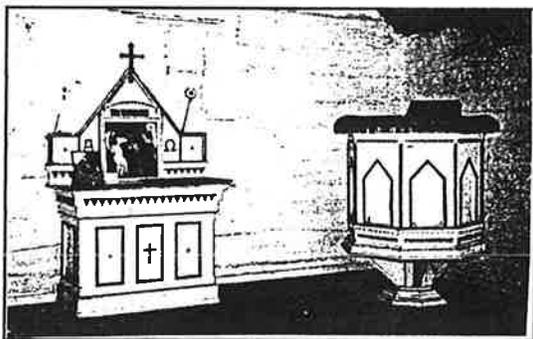


Photographs and artifacts were on display for the people to enjoy. The descendants of the late Mr & Mrs Old Ysen, charter members, were in attendance.

In 1895 Pastor G.P. Nesseth was called to serve as pastor in the newly opened mission fields of Northern Minnesota. The first Worship Service was held at Gran in that year. Services were held in the various homes of the people.

At a meeting held on April 15, 1897 a decision was made to build a church with donations of \$18.50 and 4,000 square feet of shingles. On July 13, 1897 the church building was completed.

Pastor Nesseth served the congregation until the time of his death in 1937. The congregation continued its existence until 1953 when its members helped form Our Savior's Lutheran Church (Bagley, Minnesota).



A daughter, Valborg Nesseth and a son-in-law, Tom Jackson, both of Bagley, Minnesota were in attendance. Also in attendance were members of following pastors' families: Helen Guldborg (Fosston, Minnesota), daughter-in-law of the Rev. G. Guldborg Sr. and Signe Carlson (Austin, Minnesota), daughter of the Rev. U.L. Larson.

To keep the church in sound condition for future years, several renovations have been made.

The picture on the altar, which was on display at the celebration, was painted from the original picture by Carl Erling Guldborg, son of the late Rev. G. Guldborg.

The altar, pulpit, and baptismal font are on display at the Clearwater County Historical Society museum at Shevlin, Minnesota.

Since 1974 the Gran Church has been listed on the National Registry of Historic Places. Throughout the years of its existence, the congregation always was affiliated with the Norwegian Synod and the ELS.



Submitted by Helen Guldborg

breakfast job and discovered a lighted tree in the lobby. Our lights were not on yet, so coming down from a dimly lit dorm to see bright lights was nice. Besides, I was a bit lonesome for home about this time of year. It was my task to trim our tree, and who would manage to find the tree if I wasn't home?

This real evergreen tree was tall. I think the lights were run from the center light in the lobby so no cords were lying about for stumbling. Since the tree lights took the place of the lobby light, the atmosphere was right for sitting on the steps and singing. Sometimes the steps were full, sometimes only a few arrived. We sat and sang the old familiar carols, known to everyone, not just Lutherans. One voice would start the carol and we'd join in singing until we didn't know the next verse. Then someone else would start another.

Most of our Christmas singing was done in English, with a bit of Latin thrown in at times. Maybe there was even a Latin Club. I don't know because I did not study Latin. I studied Norwegian. Mr. Honsey taught a small high school class and a college class. He even organized a "Norse Club" to which many Norwegian and non-Norwegians belonged. I recall only two Norse Club events. They took place the same day. We met in the classroom where Norwegian was taught, and sang Norwegian hymns and songs. That was not easy! Even though we were learning the language, singing the hymns was hard because there were too many words we did not know. This singing was only the prelude to the real important event which followed. We prepared a lutefisk supper for the student body!

That first year, I was a bystander, doing what I was told, and serving the food. This supper was held in the rec. room adjacent to the dining room. We set up tables and chairs, decorated the room with Norwegian colors and flags, and fed about 75 people. My second year, Mr. Honsey put me in charge of preparing the lutefisk. At home, my cooking skills had not developed at all, and I was extremely scared of my new assignment. I think Mrs. Monrad Gullerud made the lefse; I know we students did not have to master that skill.

The night of the supper arrived, and I headed for the kitchen armed with dishtowels and a kettle of boiling water for the "fish." I had no sense at all about skinning or cutting it in pieces before cooking. I laid each swollen, stinky piece of cod in a dishtowel, tied knots so the fish could not escape, and plopped into the boiling water. Somehow it cooked satisfactorily, and we served our 75 lutefisk-loving people. I was amazed at how many students, even Germans, honestly liked the Norwegian delicacy.

After the tables were cleared and we had cleaned the room, we decided to go sledding. Of course we had no sleds, but we had spied cardboard in the kitchen. Small pieces make good sleds. Some of us carried our "sleds" to the point, Bethany's property adjacent to Highway 14 [today: Madison Avenue], where the tennis courts and baseball field were located. A steep hill, covered with long dead grass and a small amount of snow seemed right for sliding. I was bashful about many things, but not about sliding. I jumped on my cardboard sled, let out a yell, and down I went. The hill was almost straight up and down, so I

flew down, with my sled turning around so I was going backwards with no control whatsoever, unable to stop even if I tried. I hit the bottom of the ditch sitting backwards, and my head cracked into the ditch during my sudden stop. I could have been killed. The rest of the kids saw me and wisely decided not to go down the hill. We all left, never to try that foolish stunt again.

A gift exchange was organized by the social committee. They cut apart a student body list, put all the skinny slips of paper in a collection basket, and one day after chapel, waited for us outside the chapel doors. We took one name. The faculty and small administration staff were included.

A gift exchange took place the night before we went home for vacation. Very few went home early or skipped classes to do so. Unexcused absences were serious business. The last evening, we had a nicer supper than usual, and wore our best clothes. And best clothes reminds me of the frantic sewing that went on before Christmas.

When the kitchen was cleaned after supper, a job done exclusively by students, we went upstairs to the chapel for the annual Christmas Pageant. This took the place of a chapel service. Participants in the pageant were chosen by the Social Committee. While a student read the Christmas Gospel, Mary, Joseph, and the Angel Gabriel, the shepherds, the wise men all appeared on the tiny stage in the front of the chapel.

After the pageant, we returned to the basement of the rec. room for our party. We played Bunko and exchanged the gifts we brought.

A long table near the kitchen door was decorated with Norwegian colors, the reason being that the Norseland Lutheran Church Bethany Auxiliary supplied the festive lunch. These dear ladies baked cookies and lefse for the entire student body. The lefse was on two plates, cut into very small pieces, and rolled up tightly. I'd never seen this kind of lefse. Mom made a flat bread type of lefse; it needed softening in damp towels before serving. This lefse was freckled, made from potatoes. I chose one piece, found a place to sit and took a bite. "Feeda," as we said at our house when something did not taste right. There was no sugar on the piece. I did not know that one plate of lefse was sugared and the other was not. The punch was poured by two girls seated at the table. They wore red vests, white blouses and black skirts, and looked like Norwegians. In later years, I was one of the those Norwegian girls; I borrowed a red corduroy vest from a girl down the hall. I soon made my own red vest and wore it many years.

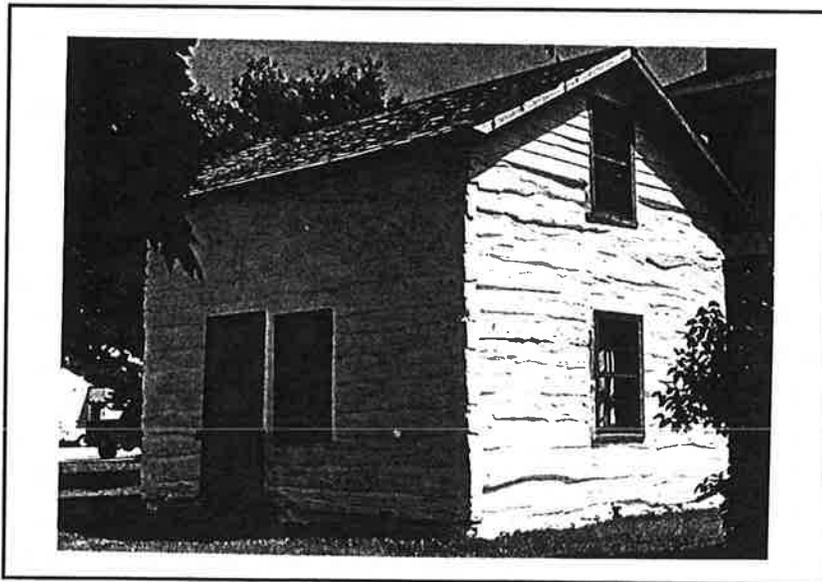
This party night was unique for one more event. The lights stayed on in the dorms! Everyone needed to pack, and candles were not good light for that. Besides, candles were against the fire marshal's rules. Some students stayed up all night just for fun. I considered them "the wild ones." We went to bed in our room, but very late. Early in the morning, at 6:30 a.m., a special chapel service was held. I seemed to remember it was a candle-light service, but I'm not sure. The town students were all encouraged to attend too, and could stay in the dorms if they wished. We choir members wore our robes and sang special music. One year we sang a

descant with the hymn *All My Heart This Night Rejoices*. Since breakfast followed the service, and everyone was already up, I had to hurry to the kitchen to be ready for the entire student body. This was one day of the year we served sweet rolls. Toast was the usual order of the morning, and not everyone came down to eat. The dining room was full this last morning; excitement ran high because we were all going home for two weeks. Arriving home was such a treat.

The last year Dad drove me to catch the bus, he was not feeling well. I did not realize how ill he really was. He died of congestive heart failure two years later in 1958. We got into the car, drove silently to Albert Lea, and as I was to get out of the car he said, "And now you're going home." He was right. Bethany was my other home.



written by
Amanda Madson



Cabin of Erik & Helene Egge as it stands today on the grounds of the Norwegian-American Museum in Decorah, Iowa. Pastor & Mrs. Koren lived here 1853-54. A parsonage was built, at Washington Prairie, in 1854 and was destroyed by fire in 1872. A second parsonage was constructed the following year.

U.V. Koren A Biography

We continue with the Biography of the Rev. U.V. Koren written by Pastor H.A. Preus of Calmar, Iowa for the June 1951 issue of the ELS Clergy Journal. Pastor Koren was born in Norway in 1826. Arriving in 1853, he was the first Norwegian pastor to live west of the Mississippi River. In 1855 he was chosen secretary for the Norwegian Synod; was a member of the church council from 1861; vice-president of the Synod, 1871-1876; president of the Iowa district, 1876-1894; from 1894 until his death in 1910, president of the Norwegian Synod. On Christmas Day, 1903, he delivered his 50th Christmas sermon before the congregation at Washington Prairie, Iowa where he had resided continuously throughout his long term of activity.

Koren was pledged in his letter of call to preach God's Word as set forth in the Lutheran Confessions and was to use the Norwegian Ritual. Every third week he was to spend working in one of the three divisions of the parish. Three weeks after his arrival he had a congregation meeting to divide Little Iowa [congregation] into school districts and sections for deacons to oversee; and [a commission was elected] to select locations for churches or meeting halls. In passing we might mention that Koren selected the most outstanding or high spots for churches, as at Washington Prairie, Calmar, Painted Creek, Stavanger - all of which may be seen for miles around. A month later a meeting was held to draw up a constitution. He had little to go by except a sheet of paper with a few rules he had gotten from A.C. Preus. And some of these rules he didn't consider satisfactory for use. Then he turned to his old friend Thron Lomen and told him that he (Koren) was young and inexperienced and wanted Lomen who was an old experienced head to correct Koren whenever he saw anything amiss. And Lomen promised, and did so.

Here Koren was located about four days' journey from the nearest brother pastor and without books and with no experience. But he had to be on the go continuously. For transportation he had a sleigh with runners and shafts all in one - two hickory poles on which a little platform and box. It was fastened together by wooden pegs - not a nail in it. His first wagon was for one horse, had wooden axles and linchpins, without springs under the box. His harness was made of material for bedding [sic].

When Koren came riding in these contraptions and put up at a tavern and asked the hostler to grease the wagon, people would look at him as if he were a tramp and would like to tell him to grease up his own poor excuse for a wagon. He had no fur coat nor buffalo robe, so he froze aplenty. When going about outside of Little Iowa, he would put up for the night with some parishioners, always well received, and thus learned to know his people well.

Koren thought it was a pity that Norway should lose these fine people, the farmers of his parish. They were a different type of people from those he had associated with in the cities of Norway. These farmers were the cream of the earth as far as character was concerned. Koren never found any better. They were the genuine article, and showed more sincerity, godliness, industry, willingness to make sacrifices, greater honesty, and were less demanding than he had ever observed in the supposedly upper classes in Norway. Of course, he encountered some less desirable characters, some hypocrites, some cranks, some drunkards, some given to eye-service, etc. Some of the farmers and their wives he regarded as such genuine pearls that he considered it a great undeserved honor to be their friend. As a class Koren regarded farmers as superior in character to all others. It saddened Koren to see that these people didn't seem to miss Norway. When he asked one man if he didn't he said, "No sire, there was too much rock there." A little later he admitted that the tyttebaer (lingen berries) he missed, for they were good for the health.

Though living in primitive circumstances these farmers always welcomed the pastor and gave him lodging. They might have to tell him to climb the ladder upstairs where a bed was made up for him. There Koren might see the starlight through the cracks in the roof, or wake up with snow piled on his covers. Or the sheet, if any, might be frozen stiff from his breath.

Some people stress the hardships experienced by the pioneer pastors. But Koren thinks that pastors on the mission fields today may experience more hardships and unpleasantness, because the pioneer pastors were received with such genuine joy and confidence, which seems more rare today. Indeed, it was hard to sit in the cold winter with all the wraps on with the back to the stove and to sit and write a sermon with ice-cold fingers; or to sit in a room full of little tots and try to write notes for a sermon while it might rain outdoors and with no room upstairs. But Koren must have a new sermon for every service. He recalled what Pontoppidan had said in a pastoral letter about warmed-over food for the people. So he wanted to give them the best possible. At first he wrote his sermons in full; but later under the increasing load of work, he had to limit it to outlines. He had no respect for the pastor who was ready to "spiel off" a sermon on a moment's notice.

When he got his library, he began reading Luther in sermonizing, and he did so for ten years. In the presence of such a giant as Luther, Koren said a man must feel very small, if he has any sense; and his "methodus heroica" could not be imitated. He held that we could learn of Luther to use simple plain language instead of high-faluting, bombastic language which may be considered eloquence and oratory.

In connection with Communion, Koren requested of his people to make him aware of any that were unworthy of receiving it. He didn't want all the responsibility himself. The church attendance as a rule was good, and absence was readily noticed. The order of service was simple. Often in the pioneer home where service was conducted, the red immigrant chest served as altar and pulpit. All these primitive conditions were wholesome for a young pastor, as it was apt to set the One Thing Needful in its true light.

Services were sometimes conducted in a school-house, a store, a barn, or in the woods. For instance, Koren was to install the first pastor at Highland Prairie. The service was to be in the largest log house there. When they assembled the house was full of just women. The men were outside. Koren said, "That would never do." So he asked how far it was to Øverland's Woods. It was about two miles. "Hitch up," he said. So off they went to the grove and had the installation there.

There was a keen desire for the Word of God among the people. Often Koren got letters from people urging him to come and preach to them where they had no pastor. People traveled, often by foot, great distances to hear the Word of God preached.

While Koren was out on his trips, his wife remained at home. There was not much housekeeping under the circumstances. So she would make calls on the people not too far away. Considerable time was spent with correspondence and day-books, or in sewing and knitting.

After three months at the Egges, Korens were obliged to move and got lodgings at the Sørland home where they slept upstairs, and in the daytime were with the family downstairs. Here they were for three months and then had to move again. This time to an elderly couple, Erik and Guri Skaarlia, who rented their little hut to Korens, while they moved into their old claim hut. This was the first private residence Korens had. There was room enough for a bed, a table, two chairs, and a stove. But they had no stove. When they got one they let it stand outside protected from the rain by some boards. Mrs. Koren states in her diary that when they moved into the Skaarlia house, their household goods consisted of a coffee grinder, a "tvare" (a pronged stick for stirring mush), and four tin cups. He didn't know how they had gotten these. But then they possessed a \$20.00 gold piece.

At first they had no bed, so they slept on a straw-tick on the floor. In his first illness, Koren lay on this makeshift bed. He had a bilious fever, which some folks claimed he had gotten from over-exertion and from drinking ice-cold water, when he was too warm. There was no doctor to be had. His wife nursed him for a month, when he was able to get out and

walk a bit to the place where logs were piled up for a parsonage.

In 1854 a pastoral conference was held in Wisconsin. Synod meetings were held every other year, and such a meeting was due at Spring Prairie in 1855. Koren took his wife along over the same trail they had traveled on the year before. They had one horse and his old rickety buggy. One umbrella served for protection against rain and the hot sun.

A cholera epidemic was on in Wisconsin. Koren said, he saw grandfather Preus [Note: the author of this article, was a grandson of the Rev. H.A. Preus] and a Mr. Zuolner of Austin, Minnesota go about among the people preparing the dead for burial, and caring for the sick, when no one else would do so. After visiting several pastors, the Korens headed for home, but the 8th of September they were tied up for several days by a snowstorm covering that section of Wisconsin. Such an early snowfall had not been experienced there in over fifty years.

When they had let on this journey the parishioners had promised to have the parsonage ready for them on their return. But when they came back there the house was far from finished and had no doors or windows. Koren told the trustees that now he must needs travel among the people at Pained Creek and Turkey River. And it would take several weeks; and if by that time the house was not finished, he would have to take his wife back to Wisconsin. The people promised to have the house finished. After three weeks they returned and gazed at the house only to find there were yet no doors there.

Again they had to resort to Egges, who welcomed them, though the house was full of workmen. They could sleep upstairs. When they got up there, Koren said he saw tears in his wife's eyes for the first time. Never before had she complained, and she chided herself for not bearing up better. But she had reason to be troubled. It was late in October, and in the early December their oldest daughter was born. The following day, after their return, the got

doors on the new house. And in the afternoon they moved into their new home. And happy were they. Sunday morning a friendly man came walking about a mile, carrying a coffee pot well covered and some milk so they could have something hot. Then Koren went off to church, but his wife remained at home that day.

Little by little order and system were brought about in the congregations. The people readily acknowledged that it was their duty to maintain the Word and the Sacraments among them. It was more difficult to get them to see the need of several congregations banding together in a Synod in order to preserve the Means of Grace and do more effective work in a wider sphere. It was for this purpose that the Norwegian Synod had recently been organized. It was by the help of other congregations that this parish had been able to get Koren as its pastor.

Koren argued thus for joining the new Synod at a congregation meeting at the Thron Lomen home. But to little avail. It was something new they had not heard of before. "What was a Synod?" "Does it put a burden on us?" Koren's arguments didn't move them. They were cautious and had to take their time. Then Thron Lomen made a sign to Koren and walked out unnoticed by the crowd. A little later Koren excused himself and went outside, Lomen said to Koren that his arguments were good and Lomen agreed with Koren; but it was new to the people. Let them think it over for a while. Then I think, they will come around to your viewpoint. Koren thanked Lomen and followed his advice. And it wasn't long before it turned out as Lomen had foretold.

And so they joined the Synod and sent delegates to the Synod meeting in 1855. In 1857 they had the Synod meeting at Washington Prairie. Koren had hoped that all the Norwegian Lutherans would join one Synod. But it was not to be so. Later on Koren wrote a pamphlet, "Why Is There No Church Unity Among the Norwegian Lutherans in America?"



To be continued ...



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TO

ELS Historical Society and
the ELS Department of History and Archives

There has been some confusion regarding these two organizations.

The Department of History and Archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod was established by resolution of the Synod in 1970. An Archives committee chosen by, and operating under the supervision of the ELS Board of Trustees is responsible for the collection and preservation of historical and archival material and artifacts and for the publishing of "articles, both scholarly and popular, of historical interest in Synodical publications."

This committee was not replaced by the ELS Historical Society. It remains intact under the supervision of the ELS Board of Trustees which approves its budget and appoints the individuals who serve as archivists.

Upon the recommendation of the Archives Committee, the Synod in 1996 approved the organization of an historical society. The ELS Historical Society was officially organized on June 14, 1997. It has its own Board of Directors and officers and is supported by dues paid by the members. It does not replace the Department of History and Archives. Rather, it will supplement the work of the Archives Committee by creating interest in the history of our congregations and Synod at the local level by its members reading, writing, and publishing articles of historical interest. This is being accomplished now through the publication of Oak Leaves and through congregational displays at its annual meeting and at the Synod convention.

Norman Holte