



Oak Leaves

Newsletter of the ELS Historical Society

Volume 8

Spring 2004

Issue 1

Storytelling as Teaching

By Mark O. Harstad

The June 2004 program of the annual meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Historical Society focuses on storytelling.

Four people will reenact storytelling from family history, synod history, and immigrant history. We will see and hear events that affected lives of immigrant pastors and laypeople in Wisconsin and Iowa from the mid-1800s into the mid-1900s.

Reminiscences from four families will take us back in time to see life through the eyes and memories of our forebears.

The Crossing and Early Settlement Period: Stories of the Lee and Reque Families from Koshkonong Prairie in southern Wisconsin.

Arrival of Pastors from the Old Country: Scenes from the diary and letters of Elisabeth Koren. Her husband, Ulrik Vilhelm Koren, was the first resident Norwegian Lutheran pastor west of the Mississippi. He served several congregations in northeast Iowa and southeastern Minnesota.

A New Generation is Born in the New Land: Vignettes from the boyhood of Peder G. Tjernagel, Story City, Iowa.

Transition to the Twentieth Century: Reminiscences of Gladys Tolander, Waterville, Iowa, one of the earliest settlements west of the Mississippi.



Wedding dress of Julia (Lee) Reque, aunt of Sigurd Lee, now in the Ottesen Museum

Some of her stories will be retold at the annual meeting.

Storytelling is a topic which has received some attention in educational circles in recent years. Janice McDrury and Maxine Alterio, authors of a recent publication entitled *Learning through Storytelling in Higher Education*, make the case for the effectiveness of storytelling as a pedagogical technique in higher education.

The third chapter of their book is entitled “Storytelling Developments”. In it the authors have pulled together a number of statements on the nature and purpose of storytelling from a variety of sources. These statements provide much food for thought on the important niche occupied by storytelling across the ages and across cultures. (The quotations are provided here without documentation. Those who are interested in tracking down the source of a particular quotation can do so through the above-mentioned book.)

“Storytelling is a uniquely human experience that enables us to convey ... aspects of ourselves and others, and the worlds ... that we inhabit. Stories enable us to come to know these worlds and our place in them given that we are all, to some degree, constituted by stories: stories about ourselves, our families, friends and colleagues, our communities, our cultures, our place in history.”

“Narrative is one of the fundamental sense-making operations of the mind, and would appear to be both peculiar to and universal among human beings.”

“Storytelling is as much a part of human nature as breath and the circulation of blood.”

“Storytelling is simply there like life itself.”

“Storytelling deals not just in facts or ideas or theories, or even dreams, fears and hopes, but in facts, theories, and dreams from the perspective of someone’s life and in the context of someone’s emotions.”

“Storytelling might well be considered a solution to a problem of general human concern, namely, the problem of how to translate knowing into telling, the problem of fashioning human experience into a form assimilable to structures of meaning that are genuinely human.”

“Storytelling is a form of everyday theorizing.”

“Storytelling can help us understand by making the abstract concrete and accessible.”

“Storytelling is one of the most fundamental means of making meaning; as such, it is an activity that pervades all aspects of learning. When storying becomes overt and is given expression in word, the resulting stories are one of the most effective ways of making one’s own interpretation of events and ideas available to others.”

“Through knowledge and through our stories about our knowledge, we bring a sense of our own identity into focus.”

“Storytelling enables us to impose meaning on chaotic experiences and, in the process, to find our own voice. Stories also play a significant role in moral development and make accessible the themes of connection and care.”

Mark Harstad is professor of Hebrew and Religious Studies at Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, MN.

Two Diaries



Else Elisabeth Koren

Linka Preus

The wives of two immigrant pastors kept diaries that were later published. The *Diary of Elisabeth Koren, 1853-1855* has been reprinted and is still available. *Linka's diary, on land and sea, 1845-1864* is out of print at this time, but can sometimes be found in local libraries and in used book stores. Both are great examples of storytelling as teaching history.

Embracing the Synod (True “Nørsk”)

By James M. Braun

It was in seventh or eighth grade that with my legendarily poor penmanship I scrawled “Evangelical Lutheran Synod” in the back of my catechism at the direction of my Pastor. He was telling our confirmation class about other Lutheran church bodies and mentioned this one in particular as being one of the few in fellowship with us in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, a fact which teen-aged-me promptly forgot. For a while, at least.

It was eight years later that I recalled what my pastor had told me about the ELS *as well as* something he had mentioned about the school he had attended in Minnesota: Bethany Lutheran College. That tidbit of information came back to mind because, having decided to begin pre-seminary training and having spent my whole scholastic career in a co-ed environment, I was decidedly against attending the all-male Wisconsin Synod preparatory college in Watertown, Wisconsin. Thus it was on account of Pastor LeRoy Ade (who I understand was the first to “graduate” from the Mequon Program at Bethany in which I enrolled) that I began my journey from “agnørsticism” toward True “Nørsk.”



Pastor James Braun at a confirmation service

It was at Bethany that I began to get a taste of the Scandinavian culture that permeates much of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and which the ELS Historical Society seeks to preserve. Though early on I wasn't enamored really with *any* aspect of Bethany, the ELS, or Norwegian Lutheran culture (except for coffee at exam time), as time went on much of what I hold dear today began to clamor for my attention in a Minnesota-nice kind of way.

- The Scandinavian Lutheran hymnody I was introduced to in the Bethany Chapel; most notably during Choir concerts and Chaplain Teigen's Hymn Sings. “SIX-FIFTY-SIX!” Someone would shout out and a beautiful four-part rendition “Behold a Host” would arise from the throats of students and faculty gathered there.
- The reluctance on the part of my faculty advisor and others to encourage me to attend Bethany Seminary instead of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. These were the same men who, when I was later released from the “Mequon Program” immediately stuck out their hands with a hearty “Welcome to the ELS!”
- The Little Norwegian Synod history I learned working part-time in the archive room in the basement of the old Memorial Library.
- Attending services at Mt. Olive which – along with chapel - was sort of an “ELS 101” for me liturgically having *never heard* chanting, *never been* individually absolved and *never seen* a cassock and surplice before.
- Attending pre-sem night at Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary for the Christmas parties where many of the Christmas carols were sung in what I thought were “tongues” ... and which WERE!

- The many ELS friends I made and whom I still hold dear (even if I don't write or speak to them often enough).
- The remarkable theological training I was blessed to be able to receive both from the college and seminary faculties which taught me the value of our Lutheran heritage first and the ELS's *Scandinavian* Lutheran heritage second.

Having been thus infused over the better part of a decade in Mankato, I was assigned to a parish in the southern Oregon city of Klamath Falls whose 1½ year pulpit vacancy ended with my arrival. They were a nearly new congregation to the ELS and despite more than a few visits from President Orvick (which to this day they remember fondly!), they had little in the way of a real, consistent connection to the synod.

One of the first Bible Class series I conducted related to the history of the ELS. (Something which for several weeks I regretted as early on we got into a protracted discussion of the doctrine of Election *well* before I was hoping to.) Also, in order to give *some* kind of flavor of the ELS to southern Oregon, I introduced the use of the opening and closing prayers from the *Bugenhagen* order of the Divine Service to the beginning and end of *The Lutheran Hymnal's* "Common Order" so that, when members went back to Mankato for the Synod Convention, they might find at least *one* thing which was familiar to them. Along with that, over the next few years I began to include more and more of the Scandinavian hymns from the *Lutheran Hymnary* which were not in *TLH*. In this way at least *some* of the liturgical and hymnic heritage of the "Little Norwegian Synod" began to become part of that of Christ Lutheran Church.

In light of this, when it came time for our congregation to host the post-Easter circuit rally we invited Pastor Mark DeGarmeaux to give a presentation on liturgy and hymnody. His "earth-moving"¹ production made an im-

pression on the members of our congregation and the rest in attendance. The next day, after a discussion with Pastor DeGarmeaux centering on a new ELS hymnal, we committed ourselves to purchase enough of them when published to fill the pews and then some. Not only that, but along with Parkland Lutheran Church of Tacoma, Washington, Christ Lutheran memorialized the Synod Convention to produce what became the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* ... a hymnal which has resided in the pew racks in our sanctuary since it was first published.



Altar at Easter — note the Hardanger fair linen made by Kris Braun and JoAnn Teigland who also made one for Trinity Chapel at Bethany Lutheran College

With the coming of the *Hymnary*, we began to use more and more of the Scandinavian hymns *as well as* regular, monthly use of the *Bugenhagen* order which is fully chanted. Hymns such as *My Heart is Longing*, *The Sun Has Gone Down* (sung every Good Friday) and others make regular appearances in the liturgy of the Divine Service, something which — along with the old Lutheran "favorites" — has markedly enriched the worship life for members and visitor alike.



Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary logo

¹ There was a small earthquake tremor during one of the sessions.

It was more than just these hymns and prayers, though, that brought us more “integrated” into the ELS. It was also the theology which the Synod publicly professes and the way it was professed which was the most effective in bringing Christ Lutheran Church closer and closer to her sister congregations in beliefs, teachings and confessions. It is in the ELS as St. Peter enjoins us in his first letter (3:15,17): **But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always [be] ready to [give] a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. For [it is] better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.**

This is *not* the “Why do you beat your head against a wall?” “Because it feels so good when it stops” kind of theology and practice we self-mockingly apply. Rather, it is a theology of hope proclaimed from a position of humility under the cross of the Crucified One

which has drawn me and the congregation I serve ever closer to both the faith and the “spirit” of the ELS and the old Norwegian Synod ... and it is something for which we give thanks often and in many ways to our merciful God and Father through our Savior Jesus Christ.

There are plenty of churches and church bodies which do many of the things done in our ELS in the sense of honoring our traditions. Sadly, though, many of them have departed from the “One Thing Needful” to which – thanks be to God – our Synod is yet continually drawn through the Gospel in the precious Word and holy Sacraments, and it is by these that I and Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church of Klamath Falls, Oregon, have been brought ever more closely into the fellowship known as the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. ❀

James Braun is pastor of Christ Lutheran Church in Klamath Falls, Oregon.



Christ Lutheran Church, Klamath Falls, Oregon

“The Thirteen”

Continuing a series of biographies on the founders of the ELS

Thirteen pastors and representatives from their congregations gathered at Lime Creek in 1918 to reorganize the Norwegian Synod, which later became the ELS.

In order to become more familiar with the history of our Synod, we will continue printing biographies and stories about these men. Here is a brief listing and short biography for each of the thirteen.

These short biographies are mostly taken from *Who's Who Among Pastors in all the Norwegian Lutheran Synods of America 1843-1927*, published by Augsburg Publishing House in 1928. This book was considered a third, updated edition of *Norsk Lutherske Prester i Amerika*.

Special thanks to Rev. Paul Madson of the Synod Archives for additional research.



Christian Anderson was born April 7, 1874, in Grant County, MN, to Christen Anderson and Karen Margrethe (Harvigsen). He attended Luther College 1890-96 and Luther Seminary 1896-99. He was pastor in Genesee, ID, and Minneapolis, MN. He served on various synodical boards, was Synod vice-president 1922-26 and president 1926-30.

He was married to Inger E. Wulfsberg in 1900. She died in 1922. He married Bergine Sofie Livdahl in 1927.

Christian Anderson died January 10, 1959.



Lauritz Seman Guttebø was born October 7, 1881 at Lake Park, MN, to Rev. Kjøstel Larson Guttebø and Kari (Peterson). He attended Bode Academy 1894-95, Luther College 1895-1901, and Luther Seminary 1901-04. He served as pastor in Chicago, IL, Story City, IA, Waterville, IA, and Deerfield (Koshkonong) and Eau Claire, WI.

He married Anna Emelie Vangsnes in 1905.

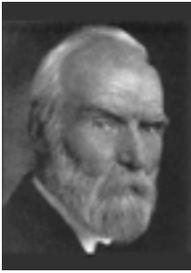
Pastor Guttebø died August 12, 1947.



Emil Hansen was born April 26, 1880, in Norman County, MN to Østen Hansen and Matthea (Lerud). He attended Park Region College 1896-97, Luther College 1897-1903, and Luther Seminary 1903-06. He served as pastor in Warren, MN, Forest City, IA, Scarville, IA, and Mayville, ND.

He married Anette O. Anderson in 1908.

Pastor Hansen died March 16, 1956 in Sioux Falls, SD.



Bjug Harstad* was born December 17, 1848 at Valle, Sætersdalen, Norway, to Aanong Tellefson and Torbjørg (Kittelsen Harstad). He attended Luther College 1865-71, and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO 1871-74. He served as pastor in Mayville, ND and Parkland, WA. He was temporary professor at Luther Seminary 1889-90, synod president 1918-21. He was the founder of Franklin School, Gran Boarding School, Bruflat Academy, Pacific Academy [now Pacific Lutheran University]. He also served as pastor in San Francisco, CA, Los Angeles, CA, and Farmington, MN.

He married Guro Svendsen Omli (Omlid) in 1877.

Pastor Harstad died June 20, 1933.



Henry Ingebritson* was born October 29, 1876, in Hamilton County, IA, to Haagen Ingebritson and Anna (Romsdahl). He attended Luther College 1896-1903 and Luther Seminary 1903-1906. He served as pastor in Fir and Skagit County, WA, Fowler, MT, Lake Mills, IA. He was synod vice-president 1925-36.

He married Ella Henrietta Thompson in 1907.

Pastor Ingebritson died in 1962.



Lars Peter Jensen was born April 20, 1858 in Møen, Denmark, to Jens Chr. Jørgensen and Mette Kristine (Strandskov). He immigrated in 1871, attended Luther College 1875-1878, Albert Lea MN High School 1878, taught at Riceland MN 1878-1880, attended Luther College again 1880-82, and Concordia Seminary, Springfield, IL, 1882-84. He served as pastor in Denver, CO, Albert Lea, MN, Latimer, IA, Linn Grove, IA. He lived in Mankato MN 1914-20, serving as field secretary for Lutheran Ladies' Seminary Red Wing 1914-15, Bethany Lutheran College 1915-17, and the American Lutheran Education Association 1917-1919. He was then pastor in Marshfield, OR, from 1920.

He married Anna Louise Wilson in 1884. She died in 1919.

Pastor Jensen died in 1933 in Hendricks, MN.



George Oliver Lillegard* was born April 23, 1888 at Calmar, IA, to Lars O. Lillegaard and Ansoph (Kaasa). He attended Bode Academy 1901-03, Luther College 1903-08. He taught at Willmar Seminary 1908-09. He attended Luther Seminary 1909-12. He served as pastor in Holmen, WI, was missionary in Kwangchow, Honan, China 1912-15, attended Minnesota University 1915, and University of Chicago 1916-18. He attended Nanking Language School in China for a five-year course. He then served as pastor in Chicago, IL, then

again missionary in Ichang and Shihman, Hupoh, then Wanhsien, Szechwan, China. He then served as pastor of Harvard Street Lutheran Church in Boston, MA, for 24 years before finishing his ministry teaching at the seminary.

He married Bernice Onstad in 1920.

Pastor Lillegard died in 1965.



John (Johannes) A. Moldstad was born April 14, 1874 at De Forest, WI, to Anders J. Moldstad and Johanne Karine (Berg). He attended Luther College 1888-94, Wisconsin university 1894-94. He taught at Luther Academy in Albert Lea, MN 1896-97, was president of Clifton College 1897-99. He attended Wisconsin University 1899-1900. He was a merchant in De Forest, WI 1899-1903. He attended Concordia Seminary, St. Louis 1903-06. He served as pastor in Chicago, IL, was synod vice-president 1917-22.

He marriage Ethelyn Holverson in 1920.

Pastor John A. Moldstad died June 4, 1946.



Guttorm Pederson Nesseth* was born August 26, 1867 at Minneola, near Zumbrota, MN, to Peder N. Nesseth and Ingebor (Nustad). He attended Lutheran College 1882-87, St. Olaf College 1887, Luther College 1889-90, and Luther Seminary 1891-94. He served as pastor in Duluth, MN, Weme, near

Fosston, MN (7 congregations), and Clearbrook, MN.

He married Bertha O. Moen in 1899.

Pastor Nesseth died October 17, 1937.



Holden M. Olsen was born April 11, 1875 in Herscher, IL, to Rev. Anders Christian Olsen and Anna (Risetter). He attended Luther College 1890-96, Chicago University 1896-1901, and Harvard University 1911-12. He taught at Peoria, IL, 1902-03. He attended Concordia Seminary 1903-06. He served as pastor in Madison, WI, and was president of Bethany Lutheran College 1925-29.

He married Guida Constance Winden in 1911.

Pastor Olsen died in 1931.



Christian Nelson Peterson was born July 17, 1864 in Sherburne County, MN, to Nels Peterson Grindheim and Martha M. (Johnson). He attended Luther College 1880-86, and Luther Seminary 1886-89. He served as pastor in Forest City, IA, Norway Lake, MN, was president of Sioux Falls Normal School, was pastor in Effington, SD, financial secretary of Willmar Seminary, and pastor in Hibbing MN, New London, MN, and Fertile, MN.

He married Anna Sophie Sander in 1889.

Christian Peterson died June 8, 1936.



Jacob Ellingson Thoen was born May 14, 1864 near Decorah, IA, to Elling Nilson Thoen and Anne Sophia (Brekke). He attended St. Ansgar IA High School, St. Olaf School 1881-83. He taught public school and farmed. He attended Luther College 1887-92, and Luther Seminary 1892-95. He was pastor in Hemingford, NE, Wells, MN, was president of Luther Academy in Albert Lea MN, farmed near Griebrok, was pastor in Oklee, MN, and Amherst Junction, WI.

He married Caja Christiane Wulfsberg in 1895.

Pastor Thoen died in 1947 in Mankato, MN.



Augustinus Jensenius Torgerson* was born November 27, 1870 in Worth County, IA to Rev. Torger A. Torgerson and Dina (Anderson). He attended Luther College 1886-88 and 1889-90, Ind. Normal School 1890, and Luther Seminary 1891-94. He served as pastor at Silver Lake near Lake Mills, IA, Renville, MN, Lake Mills, IA, and Somber congregation near Northwood, IA.

He married Ingeborg M. Pedersen in 1895.

Pastor Torgerson died February 14, 1963.

Some of these men are well known to us; others less familiar for various reasons. Previous issues of *Oak Leaves* have articles on some of “The Thirteen” and other influential Synod personalities. We will continue this series in upcoming issues.

A listing of articles from previous issues:

At Lime Creek:

Ingebritson, August 1997 (Vol 1, #3) by Paul Anderson

A. J. Torgerson (and father T. A. Torgerson), Winter 1889 (Vol 1 #4) by Alf Merseth

Bjug Harstad, Autumn 1998 & Winter 1999 (Vol 2, #3 &4) by Peter Harstad

L. S. Guttebo, Fall 1999 (Vol 3 #3) by Robin Ouren

G. Nesseth, July 2002 (Vol 6 #1) by Valborg Nesseth

George Lillegard, Annual Meeting 1998 (Vol 2, special) by Sig Lee

Presidents:

Norman Madson, Spring 1998 (Vol 2, #1) by Norman Madson

H. M. Tjernagel, Spring 1997 (Vol 1, #1) by Craig Ferkenstad

Others:

Justin Petersen, Summer 1998 (Vol 2 #2) by Wilhelm Petersen

M. K. Bleken, Spring 1999 (Vol 3 #1) by Craig Ferkenstad

Paul Ylvisaker, Fall 2000 (Vol 4#3) by Richard Newgard

Paul Anderson, Annual Meeting 1998 (Vol 2, special) by Paul Anderson

C. U. Faye, Annual Meeting 1998 (Vol 2, special) by Norman Holte

From the Old Synod:

U. V. Koren Vol 1 #1-4 by H. A. Preus

Dietrichson picture in Vol 3 #1

John Maakestad (Suttons Bay, MI) Vol 3 #2 by Ron Pederson

Mrs. T. A. Togerson, Spring 2001 (Vol 5 #1) by Erling Ylvisaker

Mrs. Johannes Berg (wife of the “founder” of Rock Dell)

Thomas Johnsen Vol 2 #2 by Craig Ferkenstad



From the Archives: “Name it!”

Can you identify this item from the archives? These were common in the old Synod. Maybe you have a story to tell about this item. Let us know so we can continue to share the history.



This photo (from the last issue) shows Rev. Johannes Ylvisaker and Rev. I. B. Torrison.

Johannes Ylvisaker was a professor at the Norwegian Synod's Lutheran Seminary and was the author of *The Gospels*, a commentary still used by our synod's pastors.

I. B. Torrison was pastor of First Lutheran Church in Decorah, Iowa, and until the time of the Austin Agreement was a leader of the minority opposed to the merger of 1917.

Send us your ideas, articles, and suggestions for **Oak Leaves**. We welcome information and articles on church anniversaries, and articles of Synodical and local significance.

In the next issue: Report and Reflections on the Annual Meeting
The Thirteen – continuing the biography series
Lakewood Lutheran Church, Lakewood, Washington

Announcing the
Eighth Annual Meeting
of the
ELS Historical Society

Saturday, June 19, 2004
Bethany Lutheran College
Mankato, Minnesota

Theme: *Understanding Our Heritage
through the Stories Handed Down from Our Forebears*

in the Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center

Saturday, June 19

- 9:30 am - Registration & Coffee
10:00 am - Opening Service (Silber Hall in the Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center)
10:20 am - Welcome and Presentation:
Storytelling as History. – How to Collect Oral History.
Reenactments, readings, and reflections from pioneer letters and diaries.
10:30 am - Session 1
(25 minute presentation followed by 20 minute discussion period)
11:15 am - Short Break
11:30 am - Session 2
(25 minute presentation followed by 20 minute discussion period)
12:15 pm - Luncheon
*Cost of \$9 to be paid at the meal, also covers expenses for coffee breaks.
Please make reservations for the luncheon through eteigen@blc.edu*
1:30 pm - Session 3
(25 minute presentation followed by 20 minute discussion period)
2:15 pm - Short Break
2:30 pm - Session 4
(25 minute presentation followed by 20 minute discussion period)
3:15 pm - Business Meeting
3:30 pm - Coffee

Topics for the Four Sessions

- A.** The Crossing and Early Settlement Period:
Stories of the Lee and Reque Families from Koshkonong Prairie
B. Arrival of Pastors from the Old Country:
Scenes from the Diary and Letters of Elisabeth Koren
C. A New Generation is Born in the New Land:
Vignettes from the Boyhood of Peder G. Tjernagel
D. Transition to the Twentieth Century:
Reminiscences of Gladys Tolander

For further information, contact Erling T. Teigen, eteigen@blc.edu
or 507-344-7325 (office) or 507-388-8327 (home)

Oak Leaves
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Robin Ouren, Marguerite Ylvisaker.

Oak Leaves welcomes articles of both Synodical and local significance
for publication. Articles maybe edited for style, clarity, or length to al-
low for publication. Submitted manuscripts will be deposited in the
archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

MEMBERSHIP

All membership
renewals are due **June 1**

Voting Membership:

\$10/year: individual
\$15/year: husband & wife

Associate Membership:

\$15/year: individual
\$25/year: institutional
\$5/year: student

Lifetime Membership:

\$200