

WELS Historical Institute
Journal

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Cover photograph: Dr. William Schweppe.

Foreword

A GOODLY SHARE OF OUR PAGES in this fall issue of the *WELS Historical Institute Journal* is devoted to writings which were never intended for publication: excerpts from the daily journal of our first world missionary; a letter from one of our pioneer pastors pleading for his fiancée in Germany to make haste to join him in America; and an autobiographical sketch by a distinguished clergyman intended for his family. All were written in that intimate way one adopts when none but loved (and charitable) ones will ever read it, when your words will be spared the critic's eyes. I would like to say a word or two about each one.

The excerpts from Dr. William Schweppe's daily log, which he maintained during his first year in Nigeria, form the bulk of this issue. The introduction to the log, written by Prof. Ernst Wendland who edited the excerpts, introduces to another generation this remarkable man. It is irrelevant to the great sweep of history that he loved palm oil chop. But it reminds us that those who toil in far-off places and under incredibly difficult circumstances are like unto us — of flesh and blood consisting.

Dr. Schweppe has been referred to as our first *overseas* missionary. The Apache Indian Mission, opened in 1893, was not an *overseas* mission. The "Poland Mission" — as it was called — headed by Pastor William Bodamer of our synod, was adopted by the synod in 1923, sixteen years before the Schweppes left for Africa. But the Poland Mission was not a world mission field. The Poland Mission, staffed by pastors educated in Germany with the exception of Director Bodamer and fanning the embers of confessional Lutheranism among the German population of Poland, was comparable to the Lutheran free church movement in Germany. So Dr. Schweppe's title is secure.

The Meyeriana was uncovered by retired pastor, Henry G. Meyer, grandson of Pastor Johann Meyer (1840-1884) and son of Prof. Johannes Peter Meyer (1873-1964). The letter of Pastor Johann Meyer to his fiancée gives us an informal glimpse of life in a parsonage in the 1870s, 20 years after the founding of the Wisconsin Synod.

The short autobiographical notes by Prof. Meyer were found in his files after his death. The sketch of his life was written in the modest style which was Prof. Meyer's trademark. Unmentioned are matters which shed light on his exceptional gifts and the respect with which his synod vested him: president of Dr. Martin Luther College, president of the seminary, vice president of the synod and peerless teacher of dogmatics and the exegetical art to seminarians.

I hope that these intimate glimpses into the lives of some of God's most fruitful servants of a former generation will uncover similar material in family archives.

James P. Schaefer

Dr. William Schweppe: Fifty Years Ago in Nigeria

Ernst H. Wendland

THE FIRST OVERSEAS MISSION VENTURE in which the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod was involved came about through its membership in the Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America, when work was begun in 1936 among the Ibibio tribe in Nigeria, Africa. Dr. Henry Nau, the pioneer missionary of this undertaking, arrived at Ibesikpo, Nigeria in April of that year. His exploration followed an appeal from Jonathan Ekong, a Nigerian student at Greensboro, North Carolina, who had been sent by his tribe to America to find a church body that could teach them the word of God. Ibesikpo was located in a rain forest area about sixty miles inland from Port Harcourt.

Dr. Nau's favorable impressions and experiences, recorded in detail in his book *We Move Into Africa*, resulted in the sending of two missionary families, the William Schweppes and the Vernon Koepers, and Nurse Helen Kluck, to carry on the work begun by Dr. Nau. Thus William Schweppe became the first pastor of the WELS to serve overseas in a world mission.

Following his graduation from the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Schweppe had served for three years in a dual parish in Wisconsin, his only pastoral experience prior to his overseas work. His marriage to Leola Roesler took place in the month before their departure to Nigeria, marking the beginning of more than thirty years together in foreign service. In 1958 Missionary Schweppe was awarded an honorary doctorate by Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, in recognition of his many years of distinguished work in the cause of overseas missions.

Fortunately we have a detailed and an extensive record of Dr. and Mrs. Schweppe's early experiences in Nigeria. From the day he left Southampton, England on the first trip overseas and through much of his first year of service Schweppe kept a daily log of his activities. He did the same on an eventful return trip to America in 1939, a trip that was interrupted by the outbreak of World War II while en route and which lasted three months in all. The information from Schweppe's daily log has been augmented by voluminous correspondence from both Dr. and Mrs. Schweppe to family and friends in the U.S.A., a correspondence which an appreciative family had the foresight to preserve.

Excerpts of this information, particularly entire sections of Dr. Schweppe's daily log, have appeared in print nearly a half century ago in the following periodicals: *The Tri-Parish Caller*, La Crescent, Minnesota ("News From Africa," March-April, 1938); *The Northwestern Lutheran*

("Day By Day For Week Ending Saturday, November 27, 1937," April-May, 1938); *Der Lutheraner* ("Aus der Mission und fuer die Mission," September, 1939); *The Northwestern Lutheran* and *The Lutheran Witness* ("Returning From Nigeria," March, 1940).

What has *not* as yet been published are some of the very first impressions of Schweppe as these were recorded in his daily log when first arriving at his Nigerian field of labor. In this, the fiftieth anniversary year of these events, it is our privilege through the cooperation of Mrs. Schweppe, who has made this log available, to get a glimpse of these first impressions.

As one reads about them one can only imagine what it must have been like for a young married couple, with no overseas experience, living in a totally different culture and environment, confronted almost daily with situations seldom if ever encountered by people from another continent, separated thousands of miles from family and friends, going without many of the daily comforts of life previously enjoyed, accepting all this as resulting from a call from the Lord to share his gospel of salvation with people desperately in need.

Schweppe's daily log begins with his departure from Southampton, England on March 31, 1937. (The trip by ship from New York began on March 14, 1937.) After brief stopovers at the Canary Islands, Freetown in Sierra Leone, Takoradi and Accra in Ghana and Lagos, Nigeria, the Schwepes continued on from Lagos on the SS William Wilberforce, landing in Port Harcourt on April 24, 1937. (It is interesting to note in passing that the journey to Port Harcourt from New York took nearly six weeks. Today one can travel by air between the same two places in less than twenty-four hours!)

It is on this day of landing in Port Harcourt that we take up the daily log of Schweppe repeating interesting excerpts from ensuing days just as he recorded them.

Saturday, April 24, 1937

Arrival

By daybreak our ship was headed up the Bonni River for Port Harcourt. At 9 o'clock Port Harcourt came into view, and at 9:30 a.m. we eased into port. We were all out on deck straining our eyes for Dr. Nau, but he wasn't to be seen. Vernon Koeper and I went to the Elder Dempster Shipping office in the hope of finding a note for us there, but there was no word. We walked back to the ship, and it was hot! Just when we got back, Dr. Nau appeared with smiling face around the corner. We were all much relieved. After proper greetings we went about getting our personal baggage lined up for shipment to Aba — and found that the customs officer would not permit our goods to be moved. Finally, after producing our slips from Lagos everything was arranged, but it was now after 12 o'clock noon and there was no chance of having our things catch the baggage train which was scheduled to leave for Aba at 2:30 p.m. Africa isn't in such a hurry! We decided to turn our baggage over to the Elder Dempster people and have them send it to Aba, which was the nearest town to our new home with a railroad station. [The baggage actually didn't arrive in Aba, 50 miles from Port Harcourt, until May 1.]

We had dinner on the Wilberforce, then piled into Dr. Nau's station wagon and were off for Nung Udoo. Our road took us first to Aba. The entire way



Dr. and Mrs. William Schweppe
ready to leave for Nigeria, March 1937

was bush — beautiful, but bound to become monotonous. We arrived at Aba about 3:30 p.m. and soon were again on our way, just forty more miles to Nung Udoo. The scenery was about the same, perhaps a little wilder as we went along. Dr. Nau pointed out a place along the way where only four years ago one of our members found the roasted head and leg of a man — oof! Cannibalism!! But Dr. Nau assured us that we were in no danger.

We stopped briefly at Uyo, about ten miles from Nung Udoo, and about five miles further on at a place called Obot Idim, where the new home is located to be occupied by one of us. What a home! It is entirely native built. The walls are mud, the roof thatched. A photograph will tell the story! Here we were greeted by the band, the student body and the teachers of the Central School, located just across the road from our future home. It showed that the people really appreciated our coming, and it touched all of us deeply.

We spent the evening at the home of Dr. Nau, who told us about the work and some of his experiences. We have a great task before us, but with the help of God we hope to be equal to it. Dr. Nau has had many extremely unusual experiences; a person can hardly believe it! But we are here and have seen enough to know it is possible.

Dr. Nau took us to a small, three-room hut located in his back yard, where we found three mothers with their twins. It's a sight one cannot forget. Dr. Nau told us that in the past year he had saved 12 sets of twins here. Yet in spite of it all, four sets were killed, one right here in the hut. It is hard to believe some of these things but here they are right before us. [According to African tradition the birth of twins is abnormal and therefore an indication of witchcraft. Mothers are according to native law and custom expected to abandon their twins at the time of birth.]

It doesn't require much to see that the work here will be enormous. We have already 32 congregations under our care, numbering thousands. And it is just a year ago today that Dr. and Mrs Nau arrived here at Nung Udoo!

Sunday, April 25, 1937.

The First Sunday

At about 9 a.m. Dr. Nau and I went to the Abak Ibiaku Uruan church for services, about 14 miles from here. In this service Dr. Nau baptized nine, married six couples, and gave communion to the nine who had been baptized and had their marriages consecrated. These are all members of the church who had not been baptized and who were married after the custom of the people — which means just living together. Dr. Nau has a busy schedule of instruction and has baptisms, marriages etc. almost every Sunday.

The churches are very crude buildings — mud walls, thatched roofs and homemade benches. No floor, of course, but it's their place of worship; they are satisfied and as we can see the word is just as powerful in them as in our elaborate buildings at home. We see many crude sights, but it's their way, and we are rapidly becoming accustomed to it. We are gradually getting an idea of the enormity of the work here in Africa. The field is indeed white unto the harvest.

The food here is, of course, different from our food in America. We do, however, have many things and we shall never starve. Eggs are plentiful and cheap — three to four cents a dozen. Sugar, canned milk, flour etc. can be bought at a store in Uyo. Fruit is also very plentiful and very cheap —

oranges, pineapples, pawpaws, coconuts, peanuts grow in abundance. In fact, we shall have our own bananas and pineapples on our lawns.

In a conference with Dr. Nau we decided that I am to live at the new home at Obot Idim. I am to be in charge of the Central School and also of the 16 churches in that part of the country. The Central School has an enrollment of about 250, with nine teachers. In a very short time we expect the school to become fully accredited by the government and also to receive a government grant. As soon as our personal effects get here we shall move. Miss Kluck will live with us for the present.

Monday, April 26, 1937

Getting Acquainted

Dr. Nau left at daybreak for some instruction class. That, of course, seems strange to us. Here in Africa people will come any time of day or night, preferring early morning or later in the evening, for instructions so that they can take care of their work during the day. A strict schedule means nothing to the African. He eats when he's hungry and sleeps when he's tired, wherever that happens to be.

At 7 a.m. a group of representatives from the various churches in the area aroused us with a great commotion. They came to bid us welcome and to bring gifts, which consisted of a goat, chickens, yams, eggs and fruit. It shows they are surely glad we are here. Many are able to speak some English. That will make the work much easier, at least until we learn the language.

At our home at Obot Idim we shall have a well, the first and only one in Ibesikpo land. The Africans at first questioned Dr. Nau's sanity when he told them to dig into the ground for water. He insisted that they go ahead, and at 35 feet they struck the sought-for liquid. It created a sensation. The news spread like wildfire and people came by the hundreds to see that strange thing. No one here has ever gone down so deep into the ground for water. Even the District Officer came to inspect the well, and the government may now take things in hand and sink more wells.

At 10:30 a.m. we all piled into the station wagon and drove to Ituk Mban, about ten miles from here, where the Methodist hospital is located. It is a fine place and it is comforting to know that there are good medical facilities so near at hand. The doctor in charge, Dr. Maurice, is a fine English gentleman, much interested in our work. He asked us to have dinner with him tomorrow evening.

After supper we called on Nyung Etim Udoo, one of the most prominent and best native workers in our church. He has a very fine home, which stands out far above the rest. It was at his home that the three men of the survey committee stayed two years ago.

We were told that a large leopard was seen on the road about thirteen miles from here, just last night. They are quite common in these parts.

Tuesday, April 27, 1937

A Sumptuous Meal

At 7:30 p.m. we all went to keep our engagement with Dr. Maurice and his palm oil chop. This is one African dish that surely appeals to my palate. We shall never have to starve in the tropics, I see that clearly. The dish contains palm oil, yams, chicken, rice, coconut, bananas, pineapples, peanuts and



The house at Obot Idim



Nurse Helen Kluck
with Edet (Eddie)

what have you. I have no idea how it's put together, but it hits the spot. [Dr. Scheppe never lost his appetite. One recalls later years in Zambia when missionary families would get together for a sumptuous meal at some special occasion, when Bill would relax after the meal and declare, "Oh these poor suffering missionaries!"]

Friday, April 30, 1937

A Newcomer Arrives

Congratulations are in place! Today Leola and I were presented with a fine, healthy seven-pound boy. This is really true! An African mother gave birth to a child, and almost immediately afterward died. The father's brother along with another man came to the mission house and explained the situation. The people here know nothing at all about artificial feeding; Dr. Nau was afraid that if we did not take it in hand the child would be killed, since they did not know how to handle the situation. It was simply a matter of our taking the baby or permitting it to die.

So now we have a baby, but not as yet a home of our own in this strange land. His African name is Edet. We call him "Eddie," and are already growing fond of him. He is a very nice baby and seems to be thriving under our care. The people here do not clothe their babies at all; they are allowed to lie on the floor, naked, and are fed each time they cry. We had no layette ready, of course, but have managed very well with some pieces of white cloth and an old pair of pajamas. The cloth has been torn into convenient-sized squares, and the pajamas are used for covering. The baby sleeps in a wooden packing box and drinks diluted canned milk from a teaspoon. Maybe some day he'll be a great missionary in Ibesikpo! [The Scheppe's kept Edet for much of their first year in Nigeria, later on placing his care into the hands of Nurse Kluck. Mrs. Scheppe's correspondence has frequent references to the child and his care, and no doubt this helped considerably in her orientation.]

Sunday, May 2, 1937

A Big Sunday Service — The First Mail

We went to church services with Dr. Nau at Afaha, the largest church of our mission. It was really an inspiration. There were between 400 and 500 people present! The service was very orderly, very devotional. Dr. Nau baptized 18, consecrated the marriages of two couples, and will hold communion services there this afternoon for about 200 communicants.

We had our usual palm oil chop for noon dinner. What a redeeming feature of Africa!

After dinner I took Dr. Nau and party to Afaha for communion services and then continued on to Uyo to get the mail. We all received several letters, and it surely seemed good to hear from home. Those were the first real letters we had received from the U.S. since leaving some two months ago. Among my letters was one from Erv Scharf. I hope there will be letters for us every mail day, which comes every two weeks. I know that I shall not be able to write as many as I should because of the amount of work which shall rest upon me, but we shall do the best we can. [Actually the number of letters which Dr. and Mrs. Scheppe wrote during their first tour in Africa, letters which were preserved by family and friends, is nothing to be apologetic about. One must marvel over

how many were written in spite of the extremely heavy workload. A missionary's evenings, however, are fairly free, and correspondence plays a big part in his life because of separation from home. Incidentally, the "Erv Scharf" referred to is Rev. Ervin Scharf, professor emeritus of Northwestern College, Watertown, Wisconsin, an old friend from college days.]

Monday, May 3, 1937

Spare That Refrigerator!

Went to Obot Idim, the new home, to unpack some of our goods. The greatest job was to uncrate the refrigerator, which was practically ruined by its fall into the hold of the ship.

Came back to Nung Udoe and wrote a letter to the board, informing them regarding the refrigerator. Perhaps they can collect from the steamship company. But in the meantime what are we going to do about refrigeration? [Dr. Schweppe took care of that question himself in the ensuing days, as he relates in his log, by taking the entire refrigerator apart, having some braces made by a local blacksmith — a job which could be done in 15 minutes but which took over a week to finish — finally getting the appliance together and in working order ten days later. One remembers Dr. Schweppe telling the story later in Zambia, how his heart sank when he saw the box plunge into the hold of the ship in Southampton, England. A kerosene-powered refrigerator can mean the difference out in the bush between eating foods as one has been accustomed for many years, or having the constant worry of things spoiling in the hot African climate. Fortunately the repair job was a tremendous success.]

Thursday, May 6, 1937

Problems! Problems!

Left early with Dr. Nau for communion instruction at a place I can't for the moment remember. No one can hold that against me; it will take some time before all the names stick. Anyway, after the instruction one old gentleman brought a tale of woe. He had three wives, he said, and when he heard that it was wrong to have so many, he dismissed the third one. But she was not satisfied to be sent away. She came back and threatened the two remaining wives. The result was that the remaining two also left. The old man is now left alone; he had three wives, and now he has none. What's to be done? Dr. Nau asked that the threatening wife be brought to a meeting next Thursday. We shall see what happens!

Friday, May 7, 1937

Arriving at a school 25 miles northwest of Nung Udoe in a much wilder territory we saw some headmen, children of the school, and the teacher waiting for us. The teacher complained that the children refused to come to school because they had no slates on which to write. . . . Dr. Nau soon had the matter settled. He lined up the children, sent for a good stick and had the headmen and fathers dish out a good whipping. It was very effective; the children all promised that they would be back in school henceforth. How would that method work in the U.S.A.?

Saturday, May 8, 1937

At a meeting at Afaha with the headmen to discuss disciplinary matters another interesting case came up. A man said that about ten years ago he was forced into polygamy even though he did not want to take a second wife. Like Jesus, however, he "did not refuse to take the cross upon himself." Now, after ten years, he has gotten used to the idea of another wife and it would be very hard for him to give up this cross which he has taken upon himself. He pleads for patience.

While there an African came to us and asked what he should do about his baby daughter, just five days old, who refused to feed. We drove out to his place as far as we could go, walking the last two miles along a narrow path into the bush. Finally we arrived at the dingy old mud hut. They were just bathing the baby in some dirty water with leaves and whatnot in it. I'm surprised that these babies live! Many don't. These people know absolutely nothing about artificial feeding. We brought the baby back for Nurse Kluck to take care of. [One can see how many of the problems encountered even during these first days of Dr. Schweppe's ministry in Nigeria had to do with polygamy. The missionaries who had first brought the gospel to these parts took no disciplinary action in dealing with this problem. The Lutheran Church, insisting on the principle of "one man, one wife," as a result ran into many difficult situations and cases in this matter. Today in this same area the problem does not exist in the congregations supported by the WELS, thanks to the fact that these men "held the line."]

Monday, May 10, 1937

The School Situation

Dr. Nau and I left in the morning for Afaha, where we visited the elementary school which most of our congregations maintain. It is important that we keep in touch with the African teachers in these schools. Dr. Nau gives them a weekly schedule, telling just what material must be covered. Since these schools are also subsidized by the government, the government also requires that we inspect them regularly.

A word about these schools. Of our 32 congregations all but about five have their own schools. In this respect they put many of our congregations at home to shame. Of course, conditions are much different here. For one thing, there are no real public schools. The public doesn't seem to have much interest as yet in education. But here we see the influence of the gospel. All our people want schools and go about establishing them as soon as they can. It doesn't mean a great outlay of money. The average teacher's salary is about 14 shillings a month, or in our money \$3.50. And yet it is a lot for these people.

Most of the teachers have very little education; none of them can boast of what would be the equivalent of an eighth grade education at home. As yet we must get most of our teachers from outside our church. This condition we hope to be able to remedy in a few years. All of our churches together maintain a so-called Central School, a boarding school of which I am to be in charge. Here we plan to bring in the best men and train them ourselves.

Every week Dr. Nau drills the teachers in the catechism and in Bible history stories. It isn't the ideal situation, but results are being obtained.

As to the schools themselves they must be seen to be appreciated. They are built of mud, with thatched roofs, open on either side. The seats are made of bamboo entirely, with bamboo poles laid across a bamboo framework and braced by bamboo uprights, fastened with raffia. This makes for a sort of corduroy type bench, not too comfortable to be sure. There are no desks. A few boards painted black serve as blackboards, and a small sack of sand fastened to one corner of the blackboard serves as the eraser. There is no floor in the building other than mud, packed hard. Life in the school goes on much as it does at home, except that most of the children wear the same suit every day, which is mostly the suit God gave them at birth. The children are very orderly and have a capacity for learning. [This description of Dr. Schweppe sheds light on a situation which developed in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Nigeria, whereby the mission or church "managed" a school system in conjunction with the government, a church-state relationship which is foreign to our U.S. way of thinking but taken for granted in colonies of Europe. As we see, it was either do this or have no schools, a situation which prevailed in Nigeria for many years. As the church grew and also wanted to train its own teachers, the system became quite expensive to maintain, resulting in criticism on the part of later missionaries who felt that this system worked against establishing an indigenous church which could support itself. One can see, however, how the early missionaries felt they had no choice. — A similar situation arose when the WELS began a mission operation in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia). In the Sala area the mission "managed" about 18 elementary schools. For a time Dr. Schweppe served as manager of schools after coming to this area, and did an excellent job. When it became clear, however, that the mission did not have the resources to train its own teachers and could not exercise discipline over them without government approval, Dr. Schweppe was one of the first to recommend that we turn the schools back to be managed by the government, a step which the later Zambian government welcomed. Churches in Nigeria are still very much in the "school-management" business, and many of the congregations with which we are in fellowship today in Nigeria are still urging us to become involved in this kind of program.]

Tuesday, May 11, 1937

Getting Settled in Our New Home

In the morning I went to Obot Idim and put the finishing touches on our refrigerator, and generally got things ready for entry into our new house. After noon lunch we packed our belongings at Nung Udoe and migrated to our new place of residence. This is really an important day for us, for we are now more or less on our own. As soon as our car arrives we'll be completely on our own. Next Monday as part of my assignment I am to begin teaching at the Central School which is also located at Obot Idim.

It will be some time before we will be fully settled, but we have made ourselves comfortable. Pancakes were our first meal in our new home. Our cook must still learn to make larger portions! We have two houseboys and plan to engage a garden boy next week. You see, we live in class! The houseboys must keep the house clean, do the dishes, set the table, make the beds, carry water, and run errands as we see fit. The garden boy will keep the

lawn in shape, plant shrubbery and flowers, clip the hedge when we get one, put petrol into the car and keep the car clean when it gets here and what have you. We pay each one seven shillings six pence per month (\$1.87) and they board themselves. They live in their own little huts next to our house, where they also do their own cooking. We send our laundry out every Monday through a laundry boy who comes to our house and picks up the dirty clothes, returning them clean on Saturday. This costs us five shillings per person per month (\$1.25). From this one can see that conditions are altogether liveable in Africa! [The use of house and yard servants, strange to Americans, is a way of life in Africa. People who do not make use of them are looked upon as being peculiar. Cooking from scratch, lack of all sorts of labor-saving appliances, different ways of gardening in a year-round growing season, the extremely low pay scale — all combine to make this an accepted way. The system by no means relieves the housewife of responsibilities. Just managing the whole business can be quite a chore, especially when the servants are not experienced. The low pay scale is also a part of it. To go contrary to it by paying more has a way of upsetting the whole economy.]

Nights do not go on uninterrupted. Last night, for example, the twin babies gave us an impromptu concert. Then some goats came to our window and made a noise as only goats can. At the same time about a block from our house a group of Africans were making whoopee with their drums and weird songs. This between four and five in the morning. We'll have to get used to it, for every night drums can be heard, sometimes far away, sometimes nearby. Also, our baby Eddie is getting rather cranky at night. He just about eats us out of house and home, and then we only give him half of what he wants. He is now very black, and a more precocious baby you never saw! At one week of age he can raise himself up on his knees when placed on his stomach. He can hold his head up and can turn himself completely around in his box. We are beginning to suspect that he will cut his teeth next week!

Wednesday, May 12, 1937

We Celebrate Coronation Day

This was a big day throughout the British Empire. The king's coronation had its reverberations way down here in Ibesikpo! A holiday was declared for all the schools, and a big celebration arranged at Uyo. We, of course, as good British subjects had to take part. What a celebration it was! It made us forget for a time that we were in the wilds of Africa.

About 2,000 school children marched in a parade to the celebration grounds. We estimate the entire crowd at about 6,000. Promptly at 9 a.m. the British standard was raised to the tune of "God Save The King," followed by an address given by the District Officer. Then a hymn was sung and a short religious service followed. A special stand was erected for the whites of this community, labeled "For Europeans." We managed to slip into this category. You see, we're all good Britons now! To our right another stand had been erected for the various chiefs of the tribes. They were all there, with more regalia than King George will ever hope to wear. The rest of the publicum had to remain outside the fence.

After the service the various contests between the schools got underway. It reminded us very much of our county fairs at home. They had races of all descriptions — pole vaulting, jousting and what have you. I was enlisted to act as one of the judges for some of the events.

We had received an invitation to have lunch with the District Officer, and so at noon he took us to his home. Here is what we had: Vermicelli soup with onions, delicious fish, curry and rice with meat, and floating island pudding, followed by coffee in little cups. We felt quite honored to have the privilege of having lunch with the highest British officer on Coronation Day! [During colonial times and some years thereafter, with whites as such a minority, it was not uncommon for missionaries to be invited to occasions where they could meet important dignitaries. In Zambia, for example, those on the mission staff would at times be invited to the American embassy at the reception of VIPs. I remember shaking hands with Vice President Hubert Humphrey, Secretaries of State Rogers and Kissinger and others, even serving as personal guide to Mrs. Rogers in a tour of the International School in Lusaka. At one of these gala occasions I remember Missionary Charles Found being mistaken for the Swedish ambassador. We regularly played tennis with the ambassador from Holland.]

In the afternoon there were native dances, performed by the cream of Ibesikpoland. Only movies can picture them. One big chief posed for me. We shall have to see what the camera did with him. The dances were interrupted by a heavy downpour of rain. Fortunately for us there was a building near at hand, and as whites we had first chance. The rain lasted for about an hour, and we all went back to the field for a continuation of festivities.

At 7 p.m. we were served sandwiches and drinks at the home of the Superintendent of Education who lived nearby. At 8 o'clock the fireworks got underway. Oh, yes, they had fireworks, and they were very good, something like we used to have at our county fairs. About 9:30 we pulled for the shore.

It was one day that made us forget we were in Africa!

Saturday, May 15, 1937

Stuck in the Mud

It rained — and did it rain! The skies were simply relentless in sending us their downpour. People in the U.S.A. hardly know what real rain is. About 9 a.m. Vernon Koeper came with the car — and got stuck in our front yard. The rain had somehow washed out a hole under the surface of the ground, and when the car got over that hole, it just went down. With the help of about ten Africans we finally managed to get it out. I guess it must have been quite a sight to see us out there, barefoot, working in the downpour. But people just can't be fussy here in Africa. The rain lasted until noon, and by evening the roads were pretty well dried.

Sunday, May 16, 1937

Circuit Riding by Bicycle

Preached twice today, in the morning at the Ikot Rikot church and in the afternoon at Ikot Osom. I went to both places by bicycle, about a three mile trip through the bush to each of them. The circuit riders of days gone by had nothing on us. We have to do a lot of bicycling here, and does it make the perspiration roll!

I'm getting just a little more used to speaking through an interpreter. It isn't as good as speaking directly, but it's the best we can do for the time being. Coming home towards evening there was the most beautiful sunset — and a Sunday dinner of palm oil chop waiting. Africa has some wonder-

fully redeeming features after a day of hard work. [It's interesting to note that in just a few weeks after arrival on the field Dr. Schweppe was on a regular preaching schedule, relying on interpreters through which to communicate. In the earlier years of African mission work relying on interpreters was pretty much an accepted way of doing things, rather than to have sufficient manpower on the field so that beginning missionaries could learn the language of the people before being put on a regular preaching schedule. This was most unfortunate. Very often the missionary never did get a chance to learn the language thoroughly, resulting in a serious handicap as far as the overall work was concerned.]

Monday, May 17, 1937

A Typical Weekday Work Routine

Had my first instruction class at the Ikot Oduot church at 6:30 a.m. What a nice early start! By 8 a.m. I was all through. Africans prefer to come to these classes early in the morning, so that they have the rest of the day for farming and marketing.

Dr. Nau then picked me up for a meeting at Afaha with members of the Methodist mission regarding the polygamy question. They failed to show up.

At 10 a.m. I went to the Central School for my first class there. I have two classes to teach and am busy there until noon. I'm very well pleased with the response of the pupils. I teach the upper classes, who are able to work in the English. I must say that in intelligence and in Christian understanding they do not rank far below the standard of our older elementary pupils in the States. When they become adults we can expect a real Lutheran church here in Africa. We are working toward that end. [A visit to one of these congregations today, hearing the people participate in the service, observing how they conduct their own business, practice Christian discipline and stewardship, conduct their own organizations, have their own preachers and teachers would certainly indicate that Dr. Schweppe's end was wonderfully achieved.]

In the afternoon I was kept busy with callers. Some had this problem and others that. Some merely said, "We salute you!" Well, we let them salute, and soon they go their way. Others we simply cannot send away.

There is much clearing to be done here on the Obot Idim property. We planned to leave it out on contract, and now the various "contractors" are coming with their bids. It's wiser here to hire by piecework than by the hour. They set their bids up pretty high, purposely, hoping for an argument. When none is forthcoming, they turn away crestfallen, only to return later with a lower bid. One man said, "It is the custom of our people to put it high, so we can argue."

In the evening I walked about three miles through the bush and had instructions at Ikot Akpan Abia. There were about a hundred present. Back around 10 p.m., all in and all wet. This is Africa!

Tuesday, May 18, 1937

We Help Each Other

Had a pretty tough night trying to fight ants most of the night. Something will have to be done or they'll walk away with us!

In the morning Dr. Nau came and we had a little conference. The proposition is this: the Methodist hospital, located about fifteen miles from here, finds itself short of a nurse. They have asked us to help them out by having Miss Kluck work there for about three months until they can get relief. She is to take charge of the hospital until their nurse returns from furlough. Since all of our patients go to that hospital, and since it will be an opportunity for Miss Kluck to obtain some first-hand knowledge regarding her work, we decided that she should go. The religious question will not enter in, and it is not a case of unionism. She will be able to come here every week and take care of her regular women's classes during this time.

I really enjoy my work teaching at the Central School every morning. I've started a special confirmation class. During devotions the children sang several songs. The Lord surely blessed these people with voices! One drawback is that we have no piano or organ. One of those portable organs would be just the thing. Perhaps some ladies aid back home would like to put a stamp on one and send it out to us.

Wednesday, May 19, 1937

Adult Literacy? . . . Rain . . . Night Classes

Went to the Ikot Oduot church at 6:30 a.m. for special communion instruction. I had difficulty in making some of the things "anschaulich" [clear, understandable], especially in regard to the means of grace. Some of the old "nas" and most of the women had difficulty in grasping the material. An idea struck me — I would make the thing clear to them by means of the blackboard in the school, which was hurriedly then transported to our place of instruction. When I was all through and asked if my explanation was clear now, some of the headmen reminded me of the fact that most of them could not read! What now? I told them that the ladies must learn to read, that everyone must know how to read and that this should be taken care of as soon as possible. At least that part of my dissertation went to their hearts. It was scarcely fifteen minutes after the instruction class when the headmen filed in and asked how soon classes might be arranged for teaching the women how to read! We are going to take care of them.

Another heavy rain right after dinner. If we do not soon get the palm-leaf mats we ordered we'll have to get a boat. Our roof leaks in ten places now!

In the evening my interpreter Daniel and I cycled to Ikot Akpan Abia for an instruction class. The people are responding very well in these hour and a half long classes at night. There were about a hundred present — and they are learning something. I wish I could really describe one of these instruction periods. Imagine yourself walking into a mud building, with no floor, being greeted by the light of one lonely lantern which is placed on the instructor's table. It makes one feel just a bit uncanny! Then to hear voices coming from various parts of the church. Occasionally you do get just a glimpse of the whites of someone's eyes. Then the aroma! Even their best friends don't tell them! You never know just how many are present until you walk out of the building. But once outside the people storm about us. As we cycled the three miles back late in the evening the moon was shining, and it was really beautiful pedalling along the narrow path of the bush between palm trees and bamboo clusters.

Thursday, May 20 to Wednesday, May 26, 1937

A Weekly Agenda of Activities

Note: By this time Dr. Schweppe was getting settled into a weekly routine, one not so much marked by unusually different experiences, but unusual in the heavy workload carried on by a man who had so recently arrived on the field. The week is summarized by omitting Dr. Schweppe's observations and simply indicating the work schedule which was followed.

- Thursday* — Early morning instruction at Mbikon; church discipline cases.
Central School instruction classes at 10 a.m. until noon.
Early afternoon deskwork interrupted by frequent callers with requests.
Evening instruction class at Ikot Rikot; 100 in attendance.
- Friday* — Meeting at Ikot Akpan Abia with headmen to discuss church matters, followed by inspection of the school.
Visit to school at Ikot Rikot and at Mbikon and at Ikot Osom.
Tested children at each place in the catechism and listened to teacher complaints.
No class at Central School because of special work assignment.
Afternoon class in Efik with Daniel.
Meeting with Dr. Nau and Central School headmaster.
Tending to practical chores in evening: bicycle repair; food cupboard.
- Saturday* — Emergency roof repair at 5:30 a.m. due to heavy downpour.
Meeting at Mpikon at 8:30 a.m. with Dr. Nau to settle disputes.
Central School singing classes at 10 a.m. until noon.
Afternoon shopping at Uyo market (bananas are 16 for two cents!).
Evening instruction class at Mberebe with Dr. Nau. 150 in attendance.
- Sunday* — Morning service at 10 a.m. at Mpikpon.
Afternoon service at Ikot Oduot. Both services filled to overflowing.
Supper with Dr. Nau and the Koepers at Nung Udoo.
- Monday* — Instructions at 6:30 a.m. at Ikot Oduot. 40 preparing for confirmation.
Meeting at 8 a.m. with contractors who are clearing bush.
Central School instruction classes from 10 a.m. till noon.
Afternoon Efik class in Efik with Daniel.
Evening instruction class at Ikot Iko canceled because of rain.
- Tuesday* — No early instruction class, but several callers with requests.
Central School instruction from 10 a.m. till noon.
Evening instruction classes again canceled because of heavy rain.

Wednesday — Early morning instruction at Ikot Oduot in spite of rain. 40 present.
Central School instruction classes from 10 a.m. till noon.
Afternoon weekly teachers' meeting from 2 to 5:30 p.m. at Central School.
Evening instruction classe at Ikot Akpan Abia in spite of rain.

[This may give some idea of the routine which was established early on. Dr. Schweppe apologizes that most of his meetings had to be confined to churches closer by, rather than to the outlying areas of his parish, for two reasons. It was the height of the rainy season and his vehicle had not as yet arrived. Except for those trips made with Dr. Nau he and Daniel had to rely on cycles, and even at times making trips on foot. If not drenched by rain, he was often drenched by sweat. One wonders that Leola, his bride of several months, could manage to survive when seeing her husband so little. Her letters indicate, however, that she never lost her positive attitude. Her biggest concern was that her husband would break down under this load, which became considerably worse when Dr. Nau returned to the U.S. and the Koepers also had to go back for health reasons.]

Thursday, May 27, 1937

Marital Problems

Went to Mpikon with Dr. Nau. After the instruction period a new palaver was brought up for settlement. This was the case of man who had been living with a woman for four years, but did not want to have his marriage confirmed by the church because the woman did not bear any children.

This case indicates the African view of marriage according to tradition. There is no formal marriage ceremony of any kind. Marriage simply consists in paying so much money to the family of the girl and taking her home. The arrangement for payment is the important thing, worked out between the families through representatives. Payment can be made in one lump sum — or on the installment plan. If the woman does not satisfy for some reason or other, the man can send the woman home by paying six shillings to the native court, also demanding repayment of the bride-price. At present the going rate for a woman is twenty pounds (\$100.00). For the better ones the rate may be higher. The women themselves have nothing to say.

The greatest reason for dissatisfaction with a woman is her inability to have children. It is a large family that makes a man great in this country. Although among Christians this situation is being changed, we find so many cases still in need of being dealt with, as this case at Mpikon.

Friday, May 28, 1937

Snakebite — in More Ways Than One

While at Uruan for instruction classes I met Dr. Nau who had with him a boy just having been bitten by a snake. The boy looked bad, but we rushed him to the hospital and hope he can be taken care of there.

These snakes are vicious creatures. They say the bush is full of them. They are about four inches in diameter and from five to six feet long. Dr. Nau killed one right next to our house shortly before we arrived.

It has been said that the Africans are especially afraid of snakes because they believe that snakes contain the souls of human beings. When a snake killed a human being also dies according to their superstition. In this case, however, I had my doubts about this belief. After Dr. Nau had killed the snake the people were right there to carve out several steaks for eating!

Saturday, May 29, 1937

A Very Sad Situation

During the night we were told that a woman was very sick and that we should come. So when Dr. Nau came to call for me for instruction classes at Mberebe, we first went to see about the sick woman. I shall describe as best I can what we found, although I shall have to tone it down a little since it is impossible to write all the facts. They are not to be described and scarcely to be believed!

Back deep in the bush we were taken to the house, to the darkest and dingiest room one can ever imagine. In one corner were the goats and chickens. In the other corner right on the floor was kindled a little fire which gave off the only light there was. In the center of the dirt floor was the woman. Her only clothing consisted of a piece of cloth half the size of a towel thrown over her body. About a week ago she suffered a miscarriage, and as far as we could tell everything was left right there. She had not been cleaned or washed in any way, and there she lay among the bloody issue! She was in terrible pain, no doubt because of internal infection.

What was to be done? The Lord gives strength where needed, or I doubt if I could have managed anything at all in the circumstances. We simply went to work. There wasn't a piece of cloth that we could use, so my handkerchief had to do. When we had cleaned her up a little we placed her on a clean mat for the night. She was scarcely in a position to be moved at the time, so we decided that we would try to take her to the hospital if possible on the following day.

After finishing our instruction classes we stopped by to see the patient again. She begged us to help her. We supplied her with some aspirin for the moment, but could do little more. One reason why this woman was in such desperate circumstances is because of the superstitious belief that a woman who suffers a miscarriage is under a curse. This case is not an uncommon one. We are confronted with similar situations nearly every day. If anyone thinks that man by nature still possesses the image of God — or that the happy-go-lucky African, for that matter, is still living in some sort of primal bliss — he should spend just one week in Africa. That will clear him up on this point.

Sunday, May 30, 1937

Not a "Day of Rest"

Today was a public holiday — but not for us. I cycled to Afaha for the morning service. After the services Leola met me down the road with soap, washcloths, towel etc. We continued on to our patient of the day before. When we got to the hut we found that they had taken her outside and had laid her on the dirt without a stitch of clothing. It was a pitiful sight — I cannot describe it! I made them get banana leaves and mats for her, and then we proceeded to give her a bath, perhaps the first one she has had for

years. This must be part of the work in Africa — but it is really a privilege to be of such singular service to suffering people. We sent a runner to Nung Udoe to have someone bring the car. In early afternoon the car arrived and we took the patient to Ituk Imbam.

Then I cycled about six miles in the hot sun to Mberebe for the afternoon services. During the services it began to pour. Fortunately Dr. Nau was in the neighborhood, so he drove to the church to get me.

When we got back home there was an African waiting at the house, who asked us if there was something we could do for a woman who had been laboring in childbirth for two days. One of those days!

Tuesday, June 1, 1937

Frustrations — Compensations

Early this morning Dr. Nau called for me. We had decided to call on our northern churches. He came so early that I didn't have time to eat breakfast. We drove to Mbiabon, about ten miles beyond Uyo. The people were not assembled yet, so we decided to go to another church five miles farther on. The teacher was to have cycles ready for us, but didn't. The pathway is impassable to travel by car, so we started out on foot. When we arrived at the church, no one was there. Finally after about a half hour the headmen began to straggle in. It turned out that everyone there was a polygamist, and that they had lied to us about this matter. They maintained that they only wanted the ministrations of the Lutheran church because they thought it would permit polygamy. Dr. Nau made short work of it all. He simply withdrew and told them we would close the school. Now I have one less church to look after.

In the meantime the teacher had come with the cycles so we peddled our way back to Mbiabon, where the headmen of our two churches in that vicinity had now assembled. We arranged for instructions for both churches on Friday evenings.

We continued on another ten miles by car to Ikot Osom. Arrangements were made to hold instructions in the two churches in this area on Saturday mornings. These are the churches farthest removed from where I live, so I shall drive up to this area on Friday afternoons, take my cot, food and interpreter with me and camp Friday nights in the church. On some weekends I shall have to stay over also on Sundays in order to hold services there. Things are done a little differently here in Africa. The work, however, is intensely interesting. My schedule is just about solid now from six in the morning until ten at night. It doesn't give one much time to worry about the rigors of the climate!

Dr. Nau and I got back at 2 p.m. I had had nothing to eat and nothing to drink but the milk of one coconut. Dinner tasted good, I can assure you. Palm oil chop — that great redeeming feature of Africa! It's a dish I can live on.

At 3 p.m. I had my confirmation class at Central School and after that practiced with the school choir. These people have such wonderful voices!

After an early supper I set out by cycle for Ikot Osom and held instructions for about 60 people. When I got home, bed felt mighty good!

[And so the daily log continues. Meetings, instruction classes, palavers, sick calls, repair jobs — morning, afternoon, evening — an incredible schedule. And yet it seems that Dr. Schweppe thrived on this, and on the palm oil chop!]

Two Letters

The relatives and friends of Dr. and Mrs. Schweppe must have sensed immediately that the letters they were receiving from Nigeria were worth preserving. Many of the letters from those first years were duplicated and circulated among the relationship. They contain much additional information pertaining to those pioneer years, often in greater detail than that which Dr. Schweppe found time to put down in his daily log. They also give a more personal view at times of how each of them felt about the changes experienced in the new life overseas.

What follows are two samples — one from Mrs. Schweppe (Leola) to her parents, written shortly after they moved into their new house at Obot Idim, the other from Dr. Schweppe (Bill) to his brother, written sometime later. Leola's letter reflects that indispensable quality of a missionary's wife in being positive about changes and taking things as they come. Bill's letter shows his great sense of humor, also an indispensable trait for anyone living overseas.

From Leola

June 10, 1937

Dear Mother and Dad,

I must write and tell you how much we have enjoyed your letters. I wish to thank you also for the card. It seems so good to be remembered when so far away.

First feel assured that we are both well and happy. It is not nearly as bad as some people seem to think in the United States. We also worried and wondered before we got here — and it is much better than we had ever expected.

The climate is wonderful. When the sun shines brightly it is very hot, but when it is cloudy we wear no hat outside. It hasn't been over 90 and it is usually 85 degrees. Last Monday we had a wind and rainstorm. It was so cool that I wore my jacket towards evening. We have had to use covers every night. Recently it has been raining about every other day. We catch the rain water because we feel it is cleaner than spring water. Two or three men walk about four miles for water every day. In a few weeks we hope to have our pump so that we can get water from the well. I suppose we will have to keep a lock on the pump, otherwise the curious people will pump the well dry. Every day people walk past the house to see it. When the well was being dug, many people thought it surely was foolish to even think of getting water so deep in the ground. You can imagine how surprised they were when we struck water.

You were wondering about our food. We have a large dish of pineapple two or three times a day. We like them very much. We also have so many bananas that sometimes some spoil on us. Just now oranges are rather scarce, but in July there will be plenty of these again. We have been having a glass of clear orange juice every morning. Limes grow here too, and they say that nearby are also some grapefruit trees. Other native foods we can buy here are okra, peppers, coconuts, peanuts, eggs and chickens. This time of year eggs and chickens are higher in cost because it is the time for setting hens. Now we buy three eggs for two cents, but before they were four for two cents. In the store we can buy canned vegetables, lard, sugar, tea, flour, cornstarch, jam

and just about everything we need. Here at Uyo groceries are about twice as much as they are at home. Things are much cheaper in Port Harcourt, but it does not pay to drive 100 miles for a few groceries. When we do go to Port Harcourt, we try to stock up for a month or so.

Our house is larger than the one at Nung Udoe, in fact much larger than I expected. Our main living room is as large as I expected the whole house to be. We have a large bedroom, a large bedroom for Nurse Kluck, a kitchen and a bathroom. Which reminds me — at Nung Udoe Mrs. Koeper found a snake in the bathroom last Saturday night. I hope one doesn't decide to come into our bathroom! We have four windows in the house (with shutters but no screens). There is a porch around the entire house. The walls are of mud. The roof is thatched. It has leaked several times so new mats were put over the holes.

This is my birthday and the first night Bill has free to write to the board. It seems so good to have him spend a night at home for a change. He surely is kept busy from early morning until night. But it is good to be kept busy. The time passes more quickly.

I forgot to mention about the furniture we have in the house. In the dining room we have two small, round, reed tables and six reed chairs. We also have two large wooden tables, one to eat from and one for Bill's books. There is also a small table for the typewriter. In the bedroom we are using a shipping crate for a place to hang our clothes. We will want a wardrobe made as soon as we can. We have a very nice bed, but it still seems awkward to crawl under the mosquito netting. We have our card table, chairs, trunks and a home-made dresser (of boxes) in the bedroom. In our kitchen we have four large open shelves, a large table, refrigerator (which works good now!) and our stove. On the floor we have mats made by the Africans. I am making curtains for the windows. I wish we had a calendar and more pictures because the walls are so bare.

We have a regular little crybaby [Eddie] in the house. First we overfed him, and now he thinks he must be picked up every time he cries. At times he is so nice, and then he is so naughty.

We made a little garden a few weeks ago. I planted popcorn, sweetcorn, beans, peas, radishes and beets. Bill planted melons. Everything except the beets came up, but Bill said something is eating the leaves of the plants. It is too late in the season for corn and tomatoes. Next year we hope to plant things early.

I planted a few flowers and am waiting for someone to make flowerbeds so I can plant some more. The morning glories and cosmos are up. We also have a large canna in bloom. We have different kinds of flowering shrubs and shrubs with colored leaves that are very pretty.

I hope everyone is well, and please don't worry about us. It is much more pleasant here than we ever expected.

With love,
Leola and Bill

From Bill

February 7, 1939

Dear Brother,

Your "newspaper" arrived some time ago, and we surely enjoyed it. You have the gift of saying a lot on a little space. I wish I had a little more of that.

I am not going to be able to write a long letter. You see, we are still being kept more or less out of mischief.

We enjoyed very much your description of your new house. You mentioned everything but the cost. Perhaps it's best not to think of that. Just the same I'm interested. You see, with all my other activities I also became a builder. I was also interested in reading about the comforts of your new house. When Leola and I get back to the States you had better resign yourself and your comforts to a couple of bums for at least a month.

Your description of your house makes me wonder if we ever described ours. At any rate it puts me in the mood to do so. So here goes.

First of all, you remember Dad's old slogan: "There is no better security on earth than the earth itself." As a true and faithful son it is but right that my house should not only rest on, but be made of this "security." Only I find now that the slogan doesn't hold quite so true in the case of houses. Just today we had a downpour of rain and several of the walls have begun to melt away!

The thing was built by the people here before we arrived, and no one needs to look twice to become convinced of that. There is not a straight line in it! We have offered a prize to anyone who could find one. We still have our prize. I asked the people why they made no effort to make things plumb and straight. They replied: "Look at the clouds and the trees. Does God make them straight?" Well, what would you answer?

We kept still, of course, and made ourselves at home. At first it wasn't so easy to do this. In fact we felt pretty strange. Imagine walking into your new house and finding the walls about a foot short of the ceiling. The roof, I should say, because there is no ceiling. In surprise I remarked about this, but Dr. Nau assured us that we would appreciate this feature during the hot weather. We did — until one night there came a rain squall, and we had to get up to move the bed.

The roof, too, is African motif, made entirely of palm-leaf mats. Again we were told not to worry because it's supposed to be the coolest roof by far. We found that to be true — until one night up came another squall, which caught the mats, lifted them up, and there we lay in bed looking up into the sky. Since then we have learned how to anchor them.

We don't make a point of catering to having roomers in our house, but nevertheless we do not occupy our house alone. It is upstairs — in the roof — that our roomers keep themselves. I have never been able to find out just how many. They come out at night and crawl up and down the walls to catch the bugs which have previously been attracted by the lights. At first we minded them a lot, but it is surprising how friendly one can become with lizards. Our cats like to catch them, but we now present that because we like to have them around. They keep Leola company when I am gone at night, and also they destroy thousands of pesky insects. But one night I wish you could have been here. Leola was sitting at the table reading. All of a sudden — plop! One of our good friends fell down from the ceiling right on the paper she was holding in her hands!

We cannot speak of double sinks, or electric stoves, or breakfast nooks, or fireplaces like you can. However, we can speak of an oil burner. It gives us our light at night. Also we can speak of plenty of outlets — only in our case they act more as inlets. They let in the bugs at night. We have no glass, you know, in fact, glass is practically unknown in these foreign parts.

We soon got tired of looking only at mud walls. You can imagine there is not much inspiration in that. So we decided on some interior decorations —just to make the place more cheerful. But mud will not take paint, or rather, it takes too much. Besides, who has the paint? So we decided to whitewash. We bought some, mixed it up, and put it on. It worked fine. Our walls became as white as snow. But we were unfortunately not so well acquainted with the ways and the appetites of our other roomers — the termites. They love whitewash prepared any way at all. So they got busy on our nice white walls — and what a mess! There was only one thing to be done, and that was to plaster the walls again with mud.

That's life in a native house in Africa; but really it isn't so bad as it may sound. For one thing, we always feel like we are out camping. If only we had a river near at hand! Then, too, we do not have to be so careful about bumping the wall — except in the bathroom while taking a bath. If we happen to stoop over and bump the wall — well, you know how mud is when it gets wet. We just have to take our bath all over again. So, you see, we really get a kick out of our new house! But enough of this foolishness.

I suppose you are by now settled in your new house. With all its comforts, however, it would take the termites about two months to level it if it were here. We must do all our permanent building with cement. Lumber must be specially treated, and the treatment repeated every few years. We have a chance to buy a house at Eket, about 30 miles from here. It has a lot of materials in it. I'm going to see if I can make a deal to have a trucker haul the materials over here. If I can get everything for about 125 pounds we'll make the deal and use the material to begin our seminary.

As you can gather, the board wants me to begin a seminary for the training of African workers. Although I'm very much interested in this work and feel it is very important for our development here as a church, I never had any intentions of becoming a professor — unless they would give me about six months' time for study before taking up such work.

Well, I guess I've wasted enough of your time. Let's hear from you soon. Regards to the entire Schweppe clan.

Brother,
Bill

[One final comment — with Leola's willingness to adapt and Bill's sense of humor, how could they miss!]

Professor Ernst H. Wendland, who served in Zambia, Africa from 1962 to 1978, is retired but still teaching part time at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.

“My beloved Metta!”

The following letter was written by Pastor Johann Meyer who had emigrated from Germany with his friend Pastor Wilhelm Hagedorn and had arrived at President Johannes Bading's home on Christmas Eve 1870. Johann was writing to his fiancée, Metta Behnken, in Bading, Germany.

There is no record of the exact date when Metta arrived in the United States and came to Wisconsin, but it was sometime in the spring of 1871. On May 30 of that year, one week after her 29th birthday, she and Johann were married in Neenah, Wisconsin by Pastor Wilhelm Hagedorn.

On February 27, 1873, God blessed the couple with the first of seven children. They named this son Johannes Peter Karl who became known in the Wisconsin Synod as Pastor/Professor Joh. P. Meyer.

Two of Metta Behnken's brothers also came to America. One, John Behnken, operated a lumberyard in Lake Mills, Wisconsin. The other, Pastor George W. Behnken, for health reasons moved to Texas where he served in the ministry until his early death in 1888. It was the latter's son, John W., who served as president of the Missouri Synod from 1935 to 1962.

The letter was translated from the German by Professor Armin W. Schuetze of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis. (Sometime later “Metta” became “Meta.”)

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever.

Winchester, Feb. 6, 1871

My beloved Metta!

You perhaps are becoming impatient and dissatisfied about my long silence. If you are, I cannot blame you, for a whole month has passed since I wrote my last letter. But if it is truly bad of me that I made you wait so long, I must heartily beg your pardon. You no doubt have also experienced it that there always is so much to do when one arrives at a new place.

The last letter I wrote at Brother Haak's. I stayed there almost three weeks. There I wrote to you that I would go to Neenah and Brother Hagedorn to Winchester. But while we were at Brother Haak's there were some changes so that the two of us made an exchange and now Brother Hagedorn is going to Neenah and I here to Winchester. I am very happy that it turned out that way because I would much rather live in the country than in the city.

Winchester lies in the woods so that I rightly call myself a bush preacher. The houses here are fairly far apart, for here in the woods in America each one buys himself a place and builds his house on it so that he has his land close around his house. But you will make big eyes when you see the castle of an American *Bauer* (or farmer as he is called here). In some houses there is only one room; hall, kitchen, sitting room and bedroom are all in one. Large trees are chopped down and laid on one another until the wall is high enough; then a small roof is placed on it and the house is finished. But when they have been here for a longer time and have earned more, then also beautiful houses are built.

My house is also such a log house, built of large blocks of wood; but there are nevertheless several rooms in it (but you should not picture it to yourself as a stately parsonage like in Germany). When I go from the road through the door, I step immediately into the living room. The door into the house and into the room are one and the same door. To the right in the room there is first of all a bedroom and then beyond that another little room which now is my study, and in which I am now sitting and writing these lines. It is very small, about 10 to 11 feet long and seven to eight feet wide, but I am very comfortable in it.

If you go straight through the large living room, you get to the kitchen and to the right of the kitchen there is another small room. That is all the room downstairs. Then upstairs there is a small room and a room to store all kinds of things. There you see, that is our house; to be sure, not large and beautiful, but I believe that we can _____ [?] if we only have something.

Besides the house I also have a barn in which there is a place also for a cow and horse and a woodshed [?]. Then I have a garden of six acres (an acre is a little more than a *Morgen* in Germany). The church is close to the house, but it looks deplorable, just like a sheepbarn over there, but I will soon get a better one, for next summer something new is to be built.

Besides this congregation I have three others and may get a fourth on top of it, so that I will have five churches where I must preach. Here it is just the opposite from Germany. While there in some congregations two to three pastors serve, here one pastor has several congregations. Now you must not imagine that a congregation in the woods is as large as the congregations in Germany are. For example, this congregation in Winchester has about 13 to 14 families. But that is also the smallest. The others I have are considerably larger.

My predecessor here was Pastor Wiese, who also had studied in Hermannsburg at the mission house and then went to Africa. There he worked for a number of years as missionary but about three years ago came to America. But last spring toward Pentecost he already died. Since then there has been no preacher here, but occasionally another pastor preached here.

The wife of the deceased Pastor Wiese now still lives in this house and also looks after all my needs so that I don't have to worry about anything but to carry out my ministry. Oh, the poor woman has gone through a hard year; the faithful Lord severely afflicted her. Her husband and two children the Lord took from her through the pox, and she herself had the pox so that she was near death.

She still is far from being better; her face still looks terrible; it can take till summer before everything is properly healed. Nevertheless, she is very cheerful and patient in her severe suffering, so that I often marvelled at it. For it certainly isn't easy to lose husband and children and then many months to lie alone without any human help or encouragement because everyone is afraid of being infected. She still has one child, a boy of four, and a servant girl who has to do the work.

I also believe she will stay here until you come, which I am glad about. If she would not be here I wouldn't know what to do. I would have to board with other people and it would be much more inconvenient for me. To keep house as a bachelor I do not have time. Therefore I beg you, hurry as much as possible to come here.

But I would like to ask one more thing: how is it with your sewing skill? When you are here, you will have to make everything yourself, your clothes and also my pants and vests [?], for those things are too expensive here. If one wants to have pants or vest [?] made, it costs about two dollars for labor, and that much a bush pastor does not earn here. So learn as much as possible about sewing.

You don't have to bring too many things along, only a featherbed, for it is very cold here in winter, still colder than in Germany, and feathers are expensive here, but cotton things don't bring along. Cotton goods are as cheap here as over there; but it is different with silk and things of that kind; that is much more expensive here.

Then, Mrs. Pastor Wiese said I should write to you to bring along good knives. Here you don't get any knives that are sharp. How large my salary here will be I don't know as yet, but I believe it will be enough that we can get along well. I think when you come I will already have a horse and wagon. At present the people still come and get me.

Every Sunday I have to preach twice. In the morning in one church and when it is over I quickly eat and go up to five miles to another congregation. There I have to preach in the afternoon. The most distant congregation is about 10 to 11 miles from here, only if I should also get the fifth congregation, that one is supposed to be 15 miles from here, so three to four German miles. So you see here in America one has to travel about and besides has to be everything, pastor, schoolteacher and janitor. That is why you must excuse me if it takes longer for me to get at writing.

Today I started confirmation instructions, which I expect to have the first three days of each week. The children here are so very stupid, so that they don't know anything at all. Many can't even read properly as yet.

On the 20th of January I arrived here and on Sunday, January 22, I preached my trial sermon here and in St. Peter congregation and on the next Sunday, the 27th[29th], in Zion and St. John congregations. Last Sunday, February 5, I was installed here by Pastor Spehr. Brother Hagedorn was installed, I believe, a Sunday earlier. We are 18 English miles apart.

Now, dear Metta, I must close. Only hurry to come here. I think you will like it here. Our garden is also waiting for you. You will not have to be afraid that there will be a lack of work. So far everything is still going well with me and I hope the same is true of you. So farewell until we meet again. Greet all those who ask about me. Soon I hope to get a letter from you.

With warm greetings I remain your ever loving,

J. Meyer.

My address is:
Rev. J. Meyer
Winchester
Winnebago Co.
Wisconsin
North America.



Pastor Johann Meyer and his wife Meta,
with son Johannes Peter Meyer
who was the oldest of their seven children

Obituary of Pastor Johann Meyer

*Translated into English by Pastor em. Henry G. Meyer,
grandson of Pastor Johann Meyer, from the "Gemeindeblatt"
of December 15, 1884, by Prof. A. Graebner, editor*

ONCE AGAIN ONE OF OUR BROTHERS has been called out of his labors in God's harvest field into the rest reserved for the saints of light. And after having stood at his grave, our first responsibility must be now also to give some information to others who were close to the brother now fallen asleep as colleagues in the ministry and to such who otherwise were near and dear in this life—give them some details concerning his life and his blessed departure as well as concerning the committal of his earthly remains to the slumber in the grave.

Johann Meyer was born at Giersdorf in the state of Hanover on April 20, 1840, and on the 29th of that month received Holy Baptism. When he was confirmed on April 13, 1854, his pastor gave him as memory verse the words of Luke 11:28 — "Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it." His mother had not lived to see the day of his confirmation; already as a twelve-year-old lad he had seen her depart this life. Also his father soon followed the mother into eternity. Thus our departed one already early in life was taken by God the Lord into the school of crosses, from which he has been dismissed only now. We find him as a cross-bearer also in his first years of adulthood in the "Missionshaus" [seminary for missionaries] at Hermannsburg, where he was being prepared for service in the church.

Already then tuberculosis had manifested itself in him, which consumed his physical strength; indeed, his condition was such that for one whole winter season he could not pursue his studies and those who knew him were of the opinion that he would never reach America, the land where he so earnestly desired to serve the Lord as a preacher. Yet, man's thoughts were not God's thoughts. In the year 1870 Candidate Johann Meyer started out for America, and yet before the end of one year, on holy Christmas Eve, he with his friend P. Hagedorn¹ arrived at the home of President Bading.² On January 20, 1871, he was installed as pastor of the congregation at Winchester, Wisconsin. Four months later he established his own household; on May 30th, in Neenah, Wis., he was married by Pastor Hagedorn to Anna Meta, nee Behnken, now his surviving, grieving widow. This marriage, in the course of the years was blessed with seven children: Johannes,³ Sophie, Heinrich,⁴ Louise, Anna, Hermann,⁵ and Meta. Three of these: Sophie, Louise and Anna, preceded their father into eternal bliss; the youngest little daughter⁶ is only eight months old.

For nearly six years the deceased administered the pastoral office at Winchester. His physical weakness made his work doubly difficult; never-

theless, to the glory of God, he was permitted to experience that God's strength is made strong in the weak.

In the fall of the year 1876 he received a call from the congregation at Caledonia, Wis., in whose midst he arrived on October 3rd, and on the following Sunday [October 8] was installed in his office by Pastor G. Denninger.⁷ Here again, plagued with great physical weakness, he labored under God's blessing. His parishioners were drawn towards him in fervent love and they praised particularly his geniality with which he was a faithful pastor to them; the bitter tears which old and young shed at his coffin bore witness to the grateful attachment with which his congregation was devoted to him.

So, then, the good congregation also practiced patience with the infirmity of its pastor, which often made it necessary that fellow pastors and students from our seminary had to come to his aid and do a part of his work for him. Often it appeared as though his tired body would now have to hasten to its final rest; but then again there came times when things went better and he could administer his office in church and school with minor interruptions. In the summer of this year, however, the illness again grew worse. On the 11th Sunday after Trinity⁸ he still preached; it was to be his last sermon. When on the next Sunday his congregation celebrated its mission festival, he was very weak. Week after week passed, and he was not getting better. The old church year was passing away; almost at the same time, also his time of life and suffering in this vale of tears. True, on the first Sunday in Advent he did perform one more official act: the baptism of a little baby. Also, he had received the registrations for Lord's Supper for the next Communion. On Monday he got up once more, but he noticed that his end was near. Still his thoughts were about his pastoral duties; he gave his household instructions in regard to several entries that needed to be made in the church records. Then, however, he turned his thoughts entirely to his imminent departure. He expressed the wish that his dear brother Waldt, who had been a faithful pastor to him on his sickbed and had served him the holy Lord's Supper — that he [Waldt] might preach the funeral sermon for him. With ardent devotion he prayed:

O happy day and yet far happier hour,
When wilt thou come at last,
When fearless to my Father's love and pow'r,
Whose promise standeth fast,
My soul I gladly render?
For surely will his hand
Lead her with guidance tender
To heav'n, her fatherland.

To this prayer he added the request to his nephew, our student Gieschen,⁹ who was present at the deathbed, that he might read to him all of that beautiful hymn "Jerusalem, thou city fair and high"; devoutly he listened as this was being done; and when the hymn was finished, he once more expressed his ardent desire soon to join his voice in the songs of praise of the heavenly hosts. "I am going home," he said a little later; "pray for me for an early blessed departure out of this misery." His sighing was heard; in the afternoon of December 1, 1884 at half past three o'clock, he fell asleep quietly and peacefully.

On Thursday, December 4th, we bedded down to rest in the grave the soulless body, with Christian honors. Synodical brethren of the deceased who were present were Pastors President Bading, Jaeckel, Waldt, Streissguth, Gausewitz, Hinnenthal, Professor Notz and the undersigned.¹⁰ In one of the rooms of the parsonage stood the coffin with its beloved body, whose peaceful countenance reminded one of the word of the Psalmist: "I am lying altogether and sleeping in peace." In this room the funeral service began with the hymn "All men living are but mortal," whereupon President Bading read a Scripture lesson and spoke a prayer.

Then we proceeded into the church, which was completely filled by the congregation assembled in solemn earnestness. Pulpit and altar were covered with mourning crepe; also otherwise there were mourning decorations put up. After the hymn "For me to live is Jesus" had been sung, President Bading read the altar liturgy. Then followed several stanzas of the hymn "Farewell I gladly bid thee" and thereupon Pastor Waldt preached a gripping sermon on the text John 17:11. With the singing of the rest of the previous hymn the funeral service in the church came to a close.

After a last farewell look the congregation accompanied the body to the open grave, which was ready outside in the cemetery behind the little church. Here the congregation sang the burial hymn "This body in the brave we lay" and Pastor Jaeckel read a word of Scripture and a prayer. Then the casket was lowered into the grave, and with the singing of the last stanzas of the previous hymn the funeral service was concluded.

But one day, when he, the Son of man, will come in his glory, then also the corruptible which they have laid to rest there in the cemetery at Caledonia will put on incorruption; the mortal will put on immortality (Cf. 1 Corinthians 15:53). May God some day also grant each of us a blessed end and graciously take us out of this vale of tears to himself in heaven. Amen.

G. [Prof. A. Graebner]

ENDNOTES

¹Pastor *Wilhelm* Hagedorn, whose wife Sophie, nee Bakeberg, later was one of the sponsors of Johannes, oldest child of Johann Meyer.

²President Bading's first name was Johannes; he was pastor of St. John Ev. Lutheran Church, 8th & Vliet, Milwaukee, Wis.

³Johannes, known as Joh. P. or John P., born Feb. 27, 1873, died Nov. 10, 1964, served as pastor and as professor in the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod for 68 years (the last 44 of these as professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary), married Lydia nee Reinke; children: John F., Henry G., Arnold C., and Lydia.

⁴Heinrich, known as Henry F., born Oct. 2, 1875, died July 16, 1961, served as Christian day school teacher in the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod (the last approximately 40 years at Saron Ev. Lutheran School in Milwaukee, Wis.), never married.

⁵Hermann, known as Herman E. or Herm. E., born June 30, 1881, died April 4, 1920, served as pastor and professor in the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod (the last five years of his short life as professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, then located in Wauwatosa, Wis.), married Laura nee Quandt; children: Herman J., Gerhard, Lora Marie (Mrs. Berch Henry), Louise (Mrs. Emil Malesevich) and Frederick.

⁶Meta, like her sisters, died as a child: 1884-1885.

⁷Very likely *Gustav* Denninger of Neenah, Wis., who later (1887-1893) served in Brillion, Wis., uncle (?) to teacher Paul G. Denninger (born 9-21-1873; died 5-14-1953); who was the father of Christian day school teacher George Denninger of St. Paul Ev. Luth. School, Cudahy, Wis., (1903-1987).

⁸In 1884 the 11th Sunday after Trinity was as early as August 10 (if there were 27 Sundays after Trinity that year) or as late as September 7 (if there were only 23 Sundays after Trinity).

⁹Henry Gieschen II (1866-1926). At the time of his death he was pastor at Jerusalem Ev. Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, Wis. He was the son of Johann Meyer's sister Catherina (1834-1922), who had married Hermann Gieschen I (1835-1883).

¹⁰Identification of these pastors:

President Johannes Bading	St. John, 8th & Vliet, Milwaukee
Theodore Jaeckel	Grace, Milwaukee
C. F. Waldt	First Lutheran, Racine
Wilhelm Streissguth	Friedens, Kenosha
Carl Gausewitz, Sr.	St. John Kilbourn Rd., Town of Oakwood
W. Hinnenthal	St. Paul's, Franklin
Prof. Eugen Notz	Ev. Lutheran Seminary, Milwaukee
The undersigned "G" is	Ev. Lutheran Seminary, Milwaukee
Prof. A. L. Graebner	

Professor Joh. P. Meyer: An Autobiographical Note

IN THE NORTHWESTERN PART of Germany lies the Prussian province of Hanover. Formerly it was a kingdom, which for over one hundred years was connected with England in the person of the ruler. King George III, against whom the thirteen colonies in America fought their war for independence, was from the House of Hanover. Under his rule a project was undertaken for reclaiming wide tracts of wasteland in Hanover.

Among others there was the large stretch of marshland known as the Helweger Moor, covering more than 10,000 acres. As early as 1785 the suggestion was made to bring this land under cultivation. People were encouraged by the success of a similar undertaking that was carried out in 1750 in the so-called Teufelsmoor. In 1792 a beginning was made in the Helweger Moor. As inducements to colonists the government offered freedom from taxes for a specified number of years, also exemption from military service, in return for the hardships which living on the wastelands entailed. Among the volunteers that were accepted was one of my ancestors on my father's side.

My father used to tell us children how the colonists, in order to drain off the water, dug deep ditches. With the longest poles that they could find, which they pushed into the marshy soil, they were unable to reach bottom. By digging peat, bottom was reached in certain spots after a number of years. My father, who was a boy of school age about 55-60 years after the first settlement on the Helweger Moor was started, used to tell us that in school the children of his neighborhood had an advantage over children from other districts when in winter they staged snowball battles. Around his home they had dug down to the bottom of the peat bog, so that the boys in summer could find stones to throw and thus were better prepared to handle snowballs in winter.

Peat was needed for fuel. About 35 years ago I read an article in a German magazine on the Helweger Moor in which the statement occurred that at the present rate of consumption the peat deposits would last for about another hundred years, but, the writer remarked, people were not greatly concerned. It was so from the very beginning. My father [Pastor Johann Meyer] told us that in his early youth someone remarked: Our children and grandchildren and their children will have peat enough, and that is about as far as our concern goes.

In 1849 Ludwig Harms, pastor in Hermannsburg, founded a mission house in his home community. The purpose was to give young men both a theological and an industrial training for service in mission fields in Africa. In 1865 Ludwig Harms died and was succeeded by his brother Theodore in conducting the mission house. In 1866 my father enrolled, with the intention

of going to Africa. Instead, he was persuaded to come to America because of the great shortage of Lutheran pastors in this country, to look after the spiritual welfare of the many German immigrants. He landed in Milwaukee on Christmas Eve 1870.

He was followed by my mother, his bride-to-be, in the spring of 1871. Soon after her arrival they were married and lived in Zittau, a small village not far from Neenah. There my father served several congregations (sometimes as many as five) with Zittau as headquarters.

My mother's home was in the village of Baden on the Weser River, where a small tributary, the Aller, joins the Weser. (This is not the Aller which you find on maps of Germany, but a smaller stream known as Little Aller or Old Aller.) My father's father was the owner of a freighter which plied the Weser. That was at the time when railroads began to be built. He hauled material for railroad construction. Some of his friends warned him that thereby he was helping to build up competition for himself. He realized that, but realized also that railroads were there to stay. So he shrugged it off with the remark: You must pick the apples when they are ripe.

As far as my training is concerned, I attended parochial and district grade schools, Northwestern College at Watertown, and our theological seminary, then located in Wauwatosa.

I served congregations at Beaver Dam, together with Trenton Township and Fox Lake; and later one at Oconomowoc, all in Wisconsin. I served as instructor at Northwestern College, Watertown, Wisconsin and at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota, and came to our theological seminary in 1920.

At that time the seminary had suffered a severe loss. The president, Prof. John Schaller, and my brother Herman had died in short succession. They were the two younger members of the faculty, while the two older members, Prof. J. P. Koehler and Prof. Aug. Pieper remained. Prof. Wm. Henkel, who entered the faculty together with me, died at the same time when our seminary was moved in 1929 from Wauwatosa to its present site in Mequon. Since Prof. Koehler dropped out of the faculty at the same time, there were only Prof. Pieper and I left. The vacancies were filled by calling Prof. F. Brenner, who died since, a number of years ago; and Prof. M. Lehninger, who is now living in retirement. Also Prof. Zich, who came to the seminary in 1931, died just a few months before Prof. Brenner's death. Prof. A. Schaller, a son of the former president J. Schaller, met with an accident when on icy roads his car skidded into the path of an on-coming train. Our seminary sustained another loss when about a year ago Prof. A. Voss suddenly departed this life. The faculty, which 36 years ago consisted of four men, has in the course of our stay in Mequon been increased to seven.

Our aim is and remains to prepare ministers of the church, particularly as pastors for our congregations, by giving them a thorough theological training on the basis of the Scriptures, in accordance with the confessions of the Lutheran Church.

J. P. Meyer, 1956



Joh. P. Meyer

The Preservation of Historic Buildings

Helena Ehlke

AS WELS PEOPLE we have inherited from our founding ancestors quite an impressive wealth of beautiful church buildings, with their accompanying contents such as stained glass windows, church furniture (altars, baptismal fonts, lecterns, pulpits, canopies), linens and altar hangings, communion and baptismal ware, etc. For earlier generations of WELS members historical conservation and preservation of their inheritance was not often a very urgent issue because nothing was very old. But today, while we still have left among us some beautiful architectural treasures and artifacts from the beginnings of our synod 137 years ago, it is time to become aware of and educate ourselves to proper conservation and preservation of those investments we inherited.

Becoming better informed stewards of the historical treasures passed down to us is not in conflict with any biblical principles. If we would inherit a large sum of money we would not think it more Christian to throw it away or see it as a bother. We would think the right thing to do would be to keep it and care for it by perhaps investing some of it for future increase and for future generations. Similarly, much of the art and architectural wealth we have inherited from our WELS ancestors can be cared for and will increase in esthetic, historical and financial value if it is preserved in its original integrity.

Often it is less expensive to do the right thing in conservation than it is to do the wrong thing. More damage has probably been done both in our synod and outside it, by well-meant but ill-informed or ill-advised spending of funds to "fix" or redo some feature of a church or its physical contents when perhaps the best would have been to leave it be at little or no cost.

When people do become interested in historic preservation and perhaps would like their church to be both structurally sound as well as look true to its historical period, they may end up having to spend more money to undo the "redecorating" blunders of the past, while it may cost them little or nothing to properly clean areas of the church that have been left alone and thus still maintain their original integrity. Even if a church decides to hire a church decorator or art conservator to work on its building or its belongings, the old saying *caveat emptor* definitely applies. The church decorator or art conservator may have little knowledge of art history and little sensitivity to historic visual esthetics, and may not be able because of his lack to preserve properly the historic beauty and value of the original period.

People go to specialized colleges and graduate schools to study all facets of historic restoration, conservation and preservation. This includes art history,



Zion Lutheran Church
St. Louis, Michigan

studio classes in art of different media, comprehensive studies of materials (wood, leather, stone, metals, etc.) and their varying chemical properties, and how various other chemicals (solvents, paints, varnishes) act and react with one another. Very few of us in WELS have or can get that type of knowledge for historic preservation, so how can we be "knowledgeable buyers" when we may want to take care of our beautiful church buildings and their contents?

For starters we could take a look at the code of ethics established by the American Institute for Conservation. "In order to minimize deterioration and prevent maltreatment to art works, conservators adhere to a set of ethics and principles agreed upon by the American Institute for Conservation, the professional organization of conservators. Regardless of the simplicity or complexity of a treatment, this Code of Ethics is closely followed. Wooden object owners should also adhere to these ethics in their attempt to preserve and maintain their collections. The four major concepts are: maintaining the integrity of the object; employing tested, stable, reversible materials and processes; providing documentation of treatments; and maintaining up-to-date knowledge."

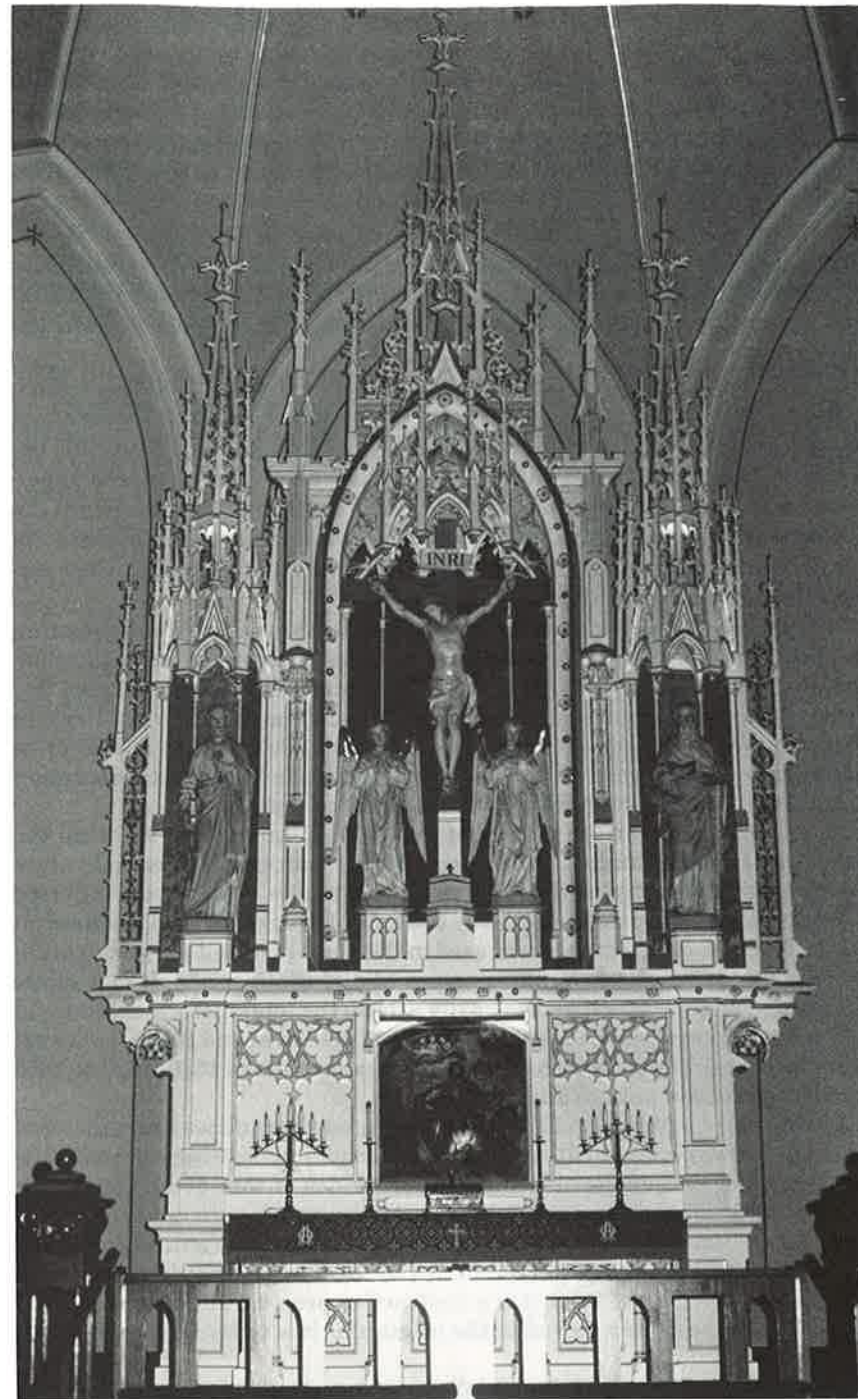
The above statement is from a short and interesting book which is a good introduction to basic principles in all types of conservation. Other sample quotes from that booklet, which can be simple guidelines to us here, are "respect for the esthetic, historic and physical integrity of the object must be placed uppermost. As much as possible of the original or historical character and components must be preserved." And, "original paint is a valuable and important part of a wooden object and should be preserved. Due to the complex composition of painted objects, owner treatment other than careful dusting is not recommended." Other simple, useful guidelines are to be found throughout the book.

You may also direct questions or express an interest in these matters to the WELS Historical Institute, Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 2929 North Mayfair Road, Milwaukee, WI 53222.

When any "fixing up" needs to be done at church, keep in mind it's not a matter of "redecorating" as you may do in your own home. Tastes change and what was liked in home decorating in 1900 you may not like in home decorating in 1950, and the 50s' style you may not like in 1980. So if money permits, you can enjoy redecorating your home in line with your changing tastes. But in the case of "fixing up" a historic WELS church built around 1860 or 1900 (or 1920 or 1950 for that matter), the attitude is different than that of redecorating a home.

Even if your congregational purse would permit, it is not being a thoughtful caretaker for future generations to redecorate your church building according to transient tastes. "Respect for the esthetic, historic and physical integrity of the object must be placed uppermost." For example, even though personally 1900 tastes may not be your favorite style of decorating, if your church building dates from 1900 try to preserve and maintain what those ancestors from 1900 gave us according to their tastes. (But you can go home and decorate your own home any way you like!)

This is because pastors and members, holding their services in a particular historic WELS church building, will be there for longer or shorter periods



St. John Lutheran Church
8th and Vliet Streets, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

of time and then die or move on. So the historic WELS churches can only be preserved and maintained if individuals will agree to maintain the visual appearance of the church and its contents, as much as is possible, according to the esthetics of the date it was built. When structural features of the church building have to be fixed to make it safe for members, the structural improvements can usually be made and still keep intact the visual integrity of the original period of the church building.

As stated previously, it usually costs less anyway to simply keep the church looking as it was when originally built, than to have recurring bouts of redecorating churches to satisfy changing tastes (which tastes ironically will eventually circle back to the original esthetics somewhere down the road).

In the 1950s, for example, in many churches and public buildings, there was a surge of "redecorating" to current tastes which blatantly disregarded basic principles of historic preservation. The principle of "respect for the esthetic, historic and physical integrity of the object must be placed uppermost" was usually unknown or disregarded. It was popular to throw out the old because it wasn't their own current personal taste. Many elaborately carved wood items from many churches at that time were discarded permanently and irretrievably.

All this was usually done with the best of intentions and by well-meaning but ill-advised people. It was also popular to paint over the old with colors pleasing to the current fashion, which often included painting over gold leaf areas permanently and irrevocably. That's what happened in the 1950s in many churches and public buildings, and that 50s' attitude is still to be found. So *caveat emptor* if you are interested in the historic conservation and preservation of your WELS physical inheritances.

In proper conservation, it is often very subtle things that make all the difference in either maintaining the esthetic, historic and financial values of objects or in destroying those values. For example, objects from different periods in art history can be dated by the tone of the gold or gold leaf used on them. The tone of brown pigment used in the glaze layers of the gold-leafing process varies with the changing tastes of different periods. It is a subtle thing such as that which dramatically affects the total historic esthetics of art objects. A very knowledgeable collector of medieval and Renaissance art objects can tell you if a gilded bronze clock was made in 1580, 1620 or 1650 just by the tone of gold gilding on the clock.

For example, artisans in 1900 who gold-leafed altars chose a certain tonal value of brownish pigment to put in the varnish glaze which protects the gold leaf. Because of the different esthetic tastes of that decade, a church built in 1980 would choose a different tone of brownish pigment or choose to use no brownish pigment at all. That choice would give an entirely different esthetic feeling. If an object, gold-leafed in the tone of 1900, is redone with gold leaf in the tone of 1980, it is a destructive process, and eventually the object will have to be restored to the original if it is to be right — again at more expense.

Much better esthetically, financially and historically to preserve the original with gentle care. The varnish and brownish umber colored pigment put in the glaze over the gold leaf around 1900 is part of the esthetic of that

period. It gives a warm and glowing sheen to the gold leaf of 1900 which is part of the esthetic value of the period. Bright and shiny gold leaf may be more in tune with the esthetic values of the 1980s.

As art objects (metals and woods found in churches) age, they naturally take on soft, warm, glowing patinas. Those patinas become an important part of the esthetic and financial value of a piece. Thus overcleaning has to be guarded against, since once a patina, built up over 50-100 years, is removed, it is impossible to get that same quality back into the piece.

The investments we in WELS inherited from our ancestors with careful preservation will continue to increase in esthetic, financial and historic value for future generations.

(The title of the book cited in this article is "Preserving Your Investment — Care and Maintenance of Furniture and Wooden Objects" by Mark A. Williams, published in 1983 by Furniture Conservation Services, Haverhill MA 01830 and can be obtained from Winterthur Museum, Winterthur DE 19735.)

Helena Ehlke is an instructor in the Education Dept. at the Milwaukee Art Museum, and is a member of Grace Lutheran Church in downtown Milwaukee.

Materials Donated to the WELS Archives

January 1985 — November 1987

The individual, congregation or organization listed before each item is the donor.

1985

- January Rev. Herbert Kesting, Mishicot WI: 1 box of books.
Rev. Duane Tomhave, Brookfield WI: 1 box of German books.
Mr. James Sonnemann, Mankato MN: 1 box of congregational anniversary books.
- May Rev. Henry Paustian, Watertown WI: 7 volumes of *Die Abendschule*.
- June Mr. James Sonnemann, Mankato MN: Mementos of Milwaukee Lutheran Teachers' College.
- July Rev. Robert Sievert, West St. Paul MN: Pictures, slides of NWC.
Mrs. I. J. Habeck, Milwaukee, WI: Pennant, NWC Class of 1924.
- August Rev. John F. Henning library: 3 boxes of books, synodical proceedings.
- September Rev. John H. Martin library: 1 box of books, letters.
- November Prof. H. C. Oswald, St. Louis MO: WLS Chorus programs, pictures, clippings.
Prof. David Kuske, Mequon WI: Records, WELS Commission on Christian Literature.
- December Mr. Fred Knuettel, Milwaukee WI: 3 books.

1986

- March F. Uplegger family, Phoenix AZ: St. Louis Edition, Luther, vols. 8-14.
Rev. and Mrs. Winfred Nommensen, Mequon WI: Private communion set.
Mrs. Alvina Herrmann, Eau Claire WI: German Bible printed in Russia.
- April Rev. Henry Meyer, Milwaukee WI: Meyer family documents. 6 bags of books, papers. 1 box of WELS, LCMS periodicals.
Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee WI: 1 box of *Book of Hymns*.
- May Mrs. M. J. Nommensen, Juneau WI: Numerous WELS Proceedings.
Rev. Mark Birkholz, Thornton CO: 1 box of pamphlets, tracts, booklets.
Rev. Martin Birkholz, North Mankato MN: 2 boxes of Lutheran Collegians records.
Rev. Elton Huebner, Milwaukee WI: WELS Board of Trustees correspondence.
Mrs. Emma Fenske, Boulder CO: 4 boxes of papers of Prof. R. A. Fenske.
- June Rev. Armin Engel library: 4 boxes of books, periodicals, pamphlets.
Rev. Alfred Walther, Milwaukee WI: 1 box of WELS reports, etc.
Mr. Duane Weaver, Big Bend WI: Map of Lutheran churches in Milwaukee.

- July NPH, Milwaukee WI: Bound 1985 WELS periodicals.
- August Mr. James Sonnemann, Mankato MN: WELS Bethany Student Association records, pamphlets, periodicals, clippings.
- September Rev. Alfred Walther, Milwaukee WI: Books, periodicals, service folders.
Mrs. Victor Voecks, via Prof. A. J. Koelpin, New Ulm MN: 4 boxes of books, some from library of J. Bading.
Rev. Gerhard Geiger family, Roscoe SD: NWC mementos, correspondence, clippings.
Mrs. Marion Schmidt, Milwaukee WI: 1921 Milwaukee Synodical Conference Reformation service folder.
- October Mrs. John Metzger, Grafton WI: WELS booklets, service folders, clippings.
Rev. Marvin Otterstatter, Milwaukee WI: German books.
Donor unknown: 2 loose-leaf notebooks with WELS Mission Board reports, ca 1920-24.
Mr. Adolph Fehlauer, Milwaukee WI: Board for Parish Education booklets.
Rev. Howard Henke, Kalamazoo MI: 4 books (library of Pres. J. Brenner).
Mr. James Sonnemann, Mequon WI: Combination pipe-reed organ from St. John, Town Ridgley, Nicollet Co., MN.
- November Rev. Herbert Prah, Eau Claire WI: Reed organ from St. John, Hay Creek (R.R. Augusta) WI.

1987

- January WELS Board for World Missions, Milwaukee WI: 12 enlarged photos of Latin American field.
Rev. Daniel Malchow, New Berlin WI: 13 synodical reports, proceedings.
- February Rev. William Fischer, Brookfield WI: Papers re Rev. E. Mehlberg—Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mankato MN protest.
- March Rev. Raymond Haase, North Mankato MN: 1876 Wisconsin Synod Proceedings.
- April Prof. Carleton Toppe, Watertown WI: 1 box of books pamphlets.
Mr. Harold Bartz, Sleepy Eye MN: Documents on history of St. John, Sleepy Eye MN.
- May Miss Severa Sauer, Milwaukee WI: Books, periodicals, pamphlets from Sauer family.
- July Mrs. Linda Johnson-Less, Lockport IL: 1 vol. *Lutheran Witness*, 1890-92.
Mrs. M. Perschbacher, Wauwatosa WI: 3 boxes of books, periodicals, pamphlets of Pastors Heinrich, Philip, Adolph von Rohr.
Rev. Arnold Schroeder, Wauwatosa WI: Mementos, pictures, etc. of Milwaukee Institutional Ministry.
NPH, Milwaukee WI: Bound 1986 WELS periodicals.
Mrs. Ruth Woldt, Milwaukee WI: Rev. Walter Kleinke, correspondence, photos, mementos.
- August Prof. Wilbert R. Gawrisch, Mequon WI: 1 box German books.
Mr. Herbert Blum, Neillsville WI: Book of centennial year service folders of St. John, Neillsville WI. History, photo of Prof. J. P. Koehler's home in Neillsville WI.
Rev. Wayne Rouse, Elgin ND: 2 boxes of Dakota-Montana District records.
- October WELS Board for World Missions, Milwaukee WI: 145 enlarged photos of various foreign mission fields.

Mrs. Bernice Kuhn, Waukesha WI: Plate commemorating dedication of the 1905 NWC dormitory.

Mrs. Margaret Lehninger, Wauwatosa WI: Picture of 1920 Synodical Conference delegates.

Prof. Cyril Spaude, Watertown WI: Recordings of 1987 WELS Convention.

Mrs. Renata Luttrup, Hartford WI: 9 German books.

Mrs. Virginia Funk, Streator IL: Rev. Philipp Hoelzel books, papers, documents.

Rev. Philip Pitt, Russellville AR: Document regarding protest of Mr. George Taepke, Dearborn MI, clippings.

Dr. Philip von Rohr Sauer, Bemidji MN: Ordination certificate, autobiography, obituaries of Pres. Philip von Rohr.

November Rev. Wallace Gaulke, De Pere WI: 3 German books.

Prof. James Schneider, Prairie du Chien WI: 3 photos of Friedens Lutheran Church.

In addition, about 20 congregational anniversary and dedication booklets also were received. If we have inadvertently neglected to list some donation you are aware of, please let us know.

Prof. Martin O. Westerhaus
WELS Archivist and Historian

Monetary Donations to the WELS Historical Institute

May 1987 — September 1987

Memorials are indicated by names in parentheses.

May	1987	Mrs. and Mrs. Henry Spiegelberg	\$15.00
		Rev. and Mrs. James R. Connell	\$5.00
June	1987	Erna Speckin	\$5.00
July	1987	St. John's Lutheran School, So. 68th St., Milwaukee, WI	\$292.08
August	1987	Rev. Adalbert F. Schultz	\$10.00
		Dr. Arnold H. Dysterheft	\$15.00
September	1987	Marie L. Affeld	\$5.00
		Rev. and Mrs. Edward C. Renz (Arthur J. Kenning)	\$10.00

If we have neglected to list any donations, please let us know.

Rev. Roland Cap Ehlke, President
WELS Historical Institute

WELS Historical Institute New Memberships

HUSBAND/WIFE

Varnum, Rev. and Mrs. Neil R.

Gumm, Rev. Alan W.

Haag, Rev. Keith R.

Hahm, David E.

Palenske, Rev. Carlton H.

Stuebs, Rev. Martin T. Sr.

Suelflow, Rev. August R.

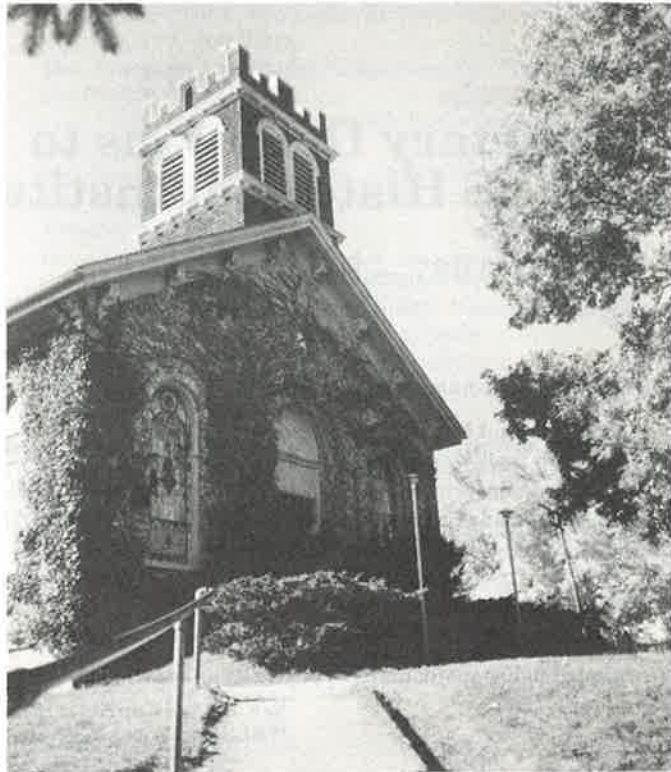
Wildauer, Martin

INDIVIDUAL

Dysterheft, Dr. Arnold H.

Frey, Rev. Edwin A.

WELS Historical Institute memberships follow the calendar year, January 1 to December 31.



Tours of Salem Lutheran Landmark Church

Located at 6814 N. 107th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Numbers in parentheses indicate number of people in each tour.

- June 3, 1987 Jerusalem Church, Milwaukee, WI (17)
- June 10, 1987 St. John's School, Goodhue, MN (36)
- June 27, 1987 First German Church, Manitowoc, WI (18)
- July 8, 1987 St. John's Church and Emmauel Church, Montello, WI (49)
- Aug. 10, 1987 Mrs. Janice Kauth of St. Paul's, Tess Corners, WI and Mrs. Elvira Herrmann of St. Mark's Church, Eau Claire, WI (2)
- Aug. 11, 1987 Trinity Church, Elkton, SD, and Immanuel, Ward, SD (11)
- Aug. 24, 1987 St. John's, Edgar, WI and Zion, Rib Falls, WI (4)
- Sept 13, 1987 Salem Church, open house for members on their Education Sunday, 107th Street, Milwaukee, WI (200)
- Sept. 26, 1987 WLS and DMLC, students (3)
- Oct. 14, 1987 Adults (4)

To arrange a tour, please contact: Mrs. Evelyn Schafer, W145 N7336 Northwood Dr., Menomonee Falls WI 53051. Phone 414/251-4093.



The seal of the WELS Historical Institute depicts Salem Lutheran Landmark Church, built in 1863 on the site of the "birthplace of the Wisconsin Synod." (Salem now serves as the museum of the Wisconsin Synod.) In 1850 the Wisconsin Synod was born; in 1981 the WELS Historical Institute officially came into being. The German inscription is a reminder of the Synod's German roots. The words mean "Remember the former time." The cross reminds us of Jesus Christ, the Lord of all history.

WELS Historical Institute Board of Directors

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|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
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