

WELS Historical Institute

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1. Johannes Strieter, Raconteur of Past Reminiscences  
*Nathaniel J. Biebert*
  
- 16 E. H. Jonas 1872—1875  
*Leon Raether*
  
- 18 C. C. Lieb 1875—1877  
*Leon Raether*
  
- 20 Looking Back  
*John M. Brenner*

Editor: John M. Brenner

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Cover picture  
Johannes Strieter

# Johannes Strieter, Raconteur of Past Reminiscences

## Part 1: Youth and Immigration to Michigan

by Nathaniel J. Biebert

It was the very first headline of the very first page of the Monday paper: “Aged Church Organizer Celebrates Jubilee.” The subtitle read: “The Rev. Johannes Streiter, 90 Years Old, Knew Wausau as ‘Big Bull’—2,000 Evangelical Lutherans at Berlin<sup>1</sup> Hold Greatest Religious Gathering in History of County.”<sup>2</sup>

Actually, his last name was Strieter, not Streiter (the article itself got it right). And he was 80 years old, not 90.

But few cared about those details. It was the man himself that drew so much attention.

The article adoringly described him as “sincere and sympathetic,” with “jocose laughter” and narration “animated by a lofty spirit.” “He was modest and when told that the press wished to be informed of his early experiences in ‘Big Bull,’ he laughed heartily and said that he was a poor old man and therefore was of no interest to newspaper readers.”

The reporter noted that in his opening sermon for the fiftieth anniversary occasion, the retired Pastor Strieter “spoke so distinctly and so interestingly, that the entire assemblage listened attentively to his good words.” The subsequent sermon by Rev. Philip Samuel Estel was “not as clear as that of the senior reverend.” Although Pastor Strieter had “partly lost the faculty of hearing, [he] is in full possession of his other faculties and as a raconteur [*sic*] of past reminiscences has but few rivals.”<sup>3</sup>

Past reminiscences—Strieter had plenty of them to recall and retell about the eight congregations participating in that celebration,<sup>4</sup> and plenty more besides. Six years before this anniversary, he had done his best to put many of these reminiscences to paper at the insistent pleading of his relatives. The resulting autobiography was edited and published by his brother-in-law in 1905.<sup>5</sup> This article begins a series in which we will follow the life of this immigrant storytelling pastor, with special focus on his work while living in Marquette County, Wisconsin. In the state of Wisconsin alone, Strieter’s ministry directly influenced at least 20 congregations, and indirectly influenced many more.

Johannes Strieter was born between 1 and 2 a.m. on September 9, 1829, in the market town of Affalterbach, Kingdom of Wuerttemberg. He was the youngest of seven children (the eighth died in her infancy) born to Johann Jacob and Maria Katharina née Wiesenauer. The baby boy was baptized and given his name on September 11.<sup>6</sup>

Johannes’ father was at first a shepherd, then a farmer. He was a devout Christian, known even among the less religious of the villagers as their “prayerman [*Beter*].”



*The baptismal font, dating to 1778, at which Johannes was baptized.*

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He held family devotions three times each day. In the morning he read a chapter from the New Testament; those of us who could read also had to have the book in front of us and each one also had to read several verses. At midday he read from the Old Testament and in the evening from a devotional book...

He also had the custom that, when the prayer bell tolled, he would remove his cap, fold his hands, and pray with his family loud and in chorus: "Lord Jesus Christ, with us abide, for round us falls the eventide."

Both of his parents liked to sing. His mother would sing hymns almost continuously at the spinning wheel, and Johannes could often hear his father singing, "Christ, the Life of All

the Living."

Johannes was a lively and curious boy. He once got into a shoving match with his sister Margaretha while watching some distant fireworks. He ended up shoving her right out the window. "She fell headfirst, one story down onto a stone slab. Father brought her up seemingly dead. But she soon came to again."

Another time he got stuck in a clay pit up to his waist while trying to find the source of some distant gunfire. A stranger had to help him out.

Another time, on the way home from the Affalterbach school, which he attended for one year, he got distracted by the music coming from one of the two inns in town. He left his siblings and went inside. He saw people dancing (an activity strictly forbidden in the Strieter household) and musicians playing on an elevated platform. "An old codger was playing the bass viol... I clambered up and sat down next to [him] and kept peering in at the gaps in order to find out where the sound was coming from." But soon his detour was discovered and he had to face the real music at home. His father questioned him, then laid the boy over his knees. "[He] took his small leather cap off and counted on my backside with it."



*The Evangelical Church of Affalterbach today*

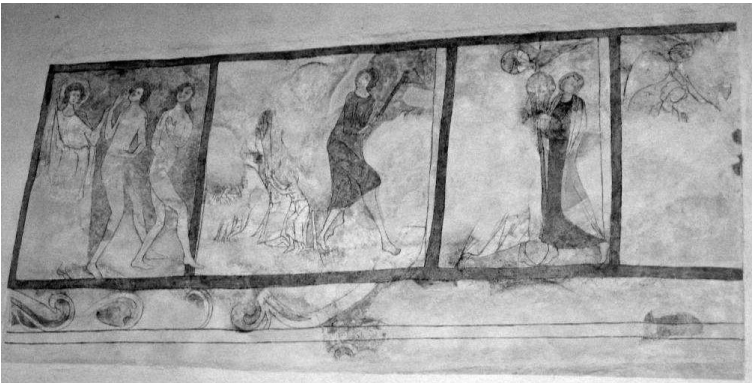
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*A model of the church in Affalterbach as it used to look, possibly including the schoolhouse*

Johannes did avoid the blackthorn beatings given to misbehaving students at the school itself, and in spite of the trouble he did get into, he “was always the favorite with [his] siblings.”

The family’s pastor was M. Carl Gottlieb Goetz [GAYTS].<sup>7</sup> According to Strieter, he was “a very strict, moral man, but a rationalist.” “When he visited a sick person, he would tell him that he should overcome all pain with manly strength.” The pastor’s wife, however, was pious and would read the New Testament to those who were seriously ill after her husband had visited them. When Jacob



*An old, restored fresco on the north wall of the sanctuary in the Evangelical Church of Affalterbach. It appears that this fresco once encircled the sanctuary, depicting important stories from the Bible. Whether it was visible when Johannes attended church there is unknown.*

Strieter accidentally stabbed himself in the side with his knife, Pastor Goez's wife saved his life by bringing some olive oil and instructing Maria how to use it in a hot press to reduce the swelling.

In 1837 Jacob decided to emigrate to the United States with his family, specifically to Ann Arbor, Michigan. Pastor Goez tried in vain to dissuade him by showing him the "very turbulent" Lake Erie on a map. "My father related this to us, but cheered us up by saying, 'Our dear Lord God is also on the water.'"

After taking a leaky covered wagon with a drunken coachman to Bremen, they boarded an old barque (three-masted ship), the *Leontine*, in Bremerhaven and set sail for New York.<sup>8</sup> Strieter's description of the sea voyage is worthy of reproducing in its entirety:

We were off and so too began the seasickness. My poor mother almost never left her bed. We had sailors' fare. We had black, tough hardtack. On the upper deck there was a walled-in firestove on which a large kettle was stored. The cook handed it over for cooking every day. If the girls did not feel well, then the young men did the cooking. They had beans which were put in the water in the kettle, along with a nasty piece of salt pork. Then they were cooked. The beans on the bottom were burnt, and those above them were hard. And then there was the grease on top, as thick as a finger. When midday came, then the people came with bowls and took their portion. ...

My sisters took our portion of pork raw, then they roasted it well and filled an entire metal tub [*Blechstipich*] with it and brought it over to us. They broke the hardtack into pieces with the hammer, put the fragments in a bowl and poured hot water over them and melted them, and thus made a good soup that we could eat.

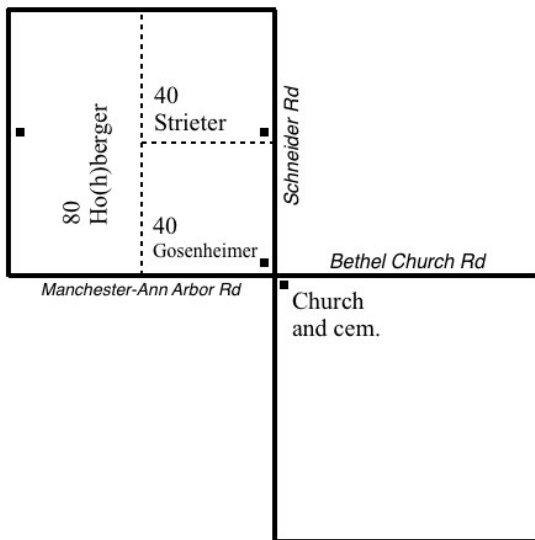
We had a good trip. No one died; in fact, a little girl was born, who was baptized Leondine.<sup>9</sup> Only once were the hatches closed on account of a storm. There was one time during the night that something slid past against us and our ship tipped way over to one side. In the morning the captain<sup>10</sup> - he was still rather young, a short and most delightful guy - told us: "Another ship was sailing toward us and would have just about drilled us into the ground." From then on the young men had to blow a signal. They had a long brass reed available and they positioned themselves at the front and one of them blew until he was out of breath, then the second one blew, then the third and so forth, the whole night through, in order to warn the other ships to stay away from us.

On Sunday it was always quiet. My father would go onto the deck; everybody gathered around him. Even the sailors had to be quiet. The captain

would lean against a mast. There a hymn would be sung, and my father would read a sermon from Ludwig Hofacker and would pray.

They arrived safely in New York on July 24, 1837.<sup>11</sup> There they took a smaller ship to the Erie Canal, a canal boat to Buffalo (“The canal men were really nasty”), and a steamer across Lake Erie to Detroit. They were uneasy about the “very turbulent” lake Pastor Goetz had warned them about, “but the water was completely tame.” From Detroit they traveled by horse and wagon to Ann Arbor, then west to Scio, where there was a large settlement of Wuerttembergers and where the family spent the winter in the log house of a tailor named Carl Mueller. (Carl later married Strieter’s oldest sibling, Rosina.) In the middle of the settlement, “the frame church stood on the one corner, the parsonage on the other corner, “the frame church stood on the one corner, the parsonage on the other corner, and behind the church lay the cemetery.”<sup>12</sup>

In the spring of 1838 - Johannes was now eight years old - they moved about seven miles south to the town of Freedom in Washtenaw County, Michigan. There his father purchased 40 acres of woodland for \$100 and began building a log house on the west side of what is today Schneider Road about a quarter-mile north of Bethel Church Road. Until the house was finished, the Strieters lived with the Gosenheimer family, their neighbors to the south. Once the house was finished, Jacob began clearing some of the land for farming. Johannes and his older brother Jacob Friedrich, who was 14, helped their father as best they could.



*A diagram of the square mile in Freedom Township in which the Strieters lived and worshipped. Solid lines represent roads; dotted lines represent property division, and small squares represent either a house or a church.*



“There was not a church there. Service was held in a log public schoolhouse, a mile or so east of us.”<sup>13</sup> The Lutherans in the entire area were served by Rev. Friedrich Schmid, who had arrived from the Basel Mission Institute in 1833 around age 26.<sup>14</sup> “Parson Schmidt [*sic*] preached for us in the schoolhouse and had many preaching stations.” He would eventually organize nearly 20 congregations. “One time after the sermon he stationed my father in front of himself and delivered an address, then my father knelt down, and the parson consecrated him. From then on my father preached 5 Sundays and Parson Schmidt on the 6th.” Jacob also taught school for three months each winter, but received no pay for either position.

In the fall of 1840, the German Evangelical Bethel Congregation was organized. At the same time an acre “up at the intersection” was deeded to the congregation for a cemetery and a log church was erected there.<sup>15</sup>



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*Bethel United Church of Christ, formerly German Evangelical Bethel Church, and cemetery, where Johannes Strieter’s parents are buried*

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Johannes had an “absolutely outstanding teacher” for several terms at the already-mentioned public school, a man named Jerry Cramer. He was “very strict, but also kind and fair.” One time he showed his students a lead medal that looked like a half dollar. He told them, “Whoever does not miss a single word in spelling this evening, gets this thing around his neck and may take it home until tomorrow.” The students were arranged according to their past performance. Johannes was positioned opposite Lilly Allen at the head. “Whenever a word was given to me, she would look at me, expecting me to miss it, but I didn’t miss and now I received the thing around my neck. How proud I was, and with what pleasure I showed my lead thing to my parents and siblings.” He also attended school under his father for three winters.

One time his father sent him on an errand through the woods to the west. On the way, Johannes and his dog had a suspenseful confrontation with a black

bear. Another time Johannes almost drowned in Pleasant Lake to the north while bathing with his brother, who rescued him. Another time Johannes raced his horse against his brother's on the way back to the stable after a trip to the waterhole. They had nothing in their hands but the halter strap, and Johannes suddenly realized that the low stable door was still open. He was going too fast to jump off. "In front of the stable door there was a tall manure pile. Before I came to it, I forcefully shouted, 'Ho!'" The horse stopped abruptly, sending Johannes into the air head-over-heels. Next thing he knew, he was lying on his back on the manure pile with his head toward the horse.

Johannes was confirmed by Pastor Schmid in the spring of 1843 at Salem in Scio. The classes leading up to it were also apparently held there. "They did not last very long. When it was time to start, we children sat in our place, Mr. Parson would come in, say an *ex corde* prayer with his eyes half-closed and turned toward heaven, and then begin. With his hands behind his back he would walk up and down the aisle and talk. ... He never did ask anything from the catechism, never posed one question. In general he did nothing but talk, and towards the end I learned a couple psalm verses and some hymn verses from Hiller."<sup>16</sup> The questions and answers in the back of the catechism (*Württembergischer Kinderlehre*) were assigned for confirmation. "There were enough for everyone to answer two. Whoever was good at learning learned them all; whoever was bad at learning learned the two questions and answers that would come up at his or her turn." Their confirmation hymn was also assigned.

On the actual day of confirmation, the class first went to Pastor Schmid's house. "There he gave us a serious speech: We should not fall away. He would be able to see it in our eyes if we had fallen away. We cried emotional tears as we solemnly resolved that we would not fall away. He went away, soon came back, and his knees were dusty; he had apparently been praying on his knees."

The confirmands then followed the pastor to the church. There they were seated around the altar. After singing their hymn, they were quizzed on their questions. Then they knelt down in front of him individually and received their blessing and commemorative passage. Johannes' passage "was not a complete passage from the Bible, but [Pastor Schmid's] own words that were based on a Bible passage." Pastor Schmid served strips of ordinary bread, broken in half, at the Lord's Supper and he put one of the two drinking glasses filled with wine in each communicant's hand to drink from him- or herself. "I don't remember anything else about any confession and absolution. No one announced for the Supper. Later I saw a Catholic woman go to the Supper with everyone else."

## **The Mission Synod**

Around that same time Pastor Schmid founded the so-called first Michigan Synod, or Missionary Synod of the West, together with Pastor G. W. Emmanuel Metzger of Liverpool Township, Ohio, and Pastor Johann Georg Cronenwett of Woodville, Ohio.<sup>17</sup> They took in a number of young men to train as missionaries

to the Native Americans. Specifically, Schmid “wanted to start a mission among the Chippewas in Huron County, on the eastern shore of Huron or Saginaw Bay.”

One of the synod’s budding pupils was J. F. Auch, who married Johannes’ second oldest sister Dorothea. He “left his farm and went to attend the university in Ann Arbor. Later he ran to Schmidt every day to learn theology from him.” In June of 1844 Auch “was festively ordained...to bring the Word of Life to the Indians.”<sup>18</sup> Pastor Metzger delivered the sermon for the occasion. “Candidate Auch told me afterwards that he had seen Metzger drinking a bowl of punch before he went to church. The sermon certainly fit the description—a crude rant against the Catholics. As he preached, the spit flew out of his mouth.”

That fall Auch arrived in New Fairfield, Canada, near present-day Moravian-town, Ontario, to learn the Chippewa language from the Moravian missionaries there. In June of 1845 he was sent with two other men to Sebewaing, Huron County, Michigan, where the synod purchased 80 acres for their mission. By November 21 they had erected a mission house.<sup>19</sup>

## **Vocational Uncertainty**

Jacob Strieter and Pastor Schmid both encouraged Johannes to train to become a missionary too. A Mr. Keith from Manchester, Michigan, had already pressed Jacob to let him take Johannes under his wing and train him to go into the general store business, and Jacob had refused him. Jacob had explained to his disappointed son, “Nothing good will come of it. Deceit sticks between buyer and seller like a nail in the wall. There you will turn into a worldling on me and will too easily get lost eternally on me.” One gets the sense that the devout Jacob saw the Michigan Synod and its missionary training program as a golden opportunity for his son.

But now it was Johannes’ turn to refuse. “I had no desire for that. Schmidt was repulsive to me, especially since people commonly spoke about his greed. I worked the field with my father.” For a while he also worked with his brother-in-law Johann Killinger in his smithy and in his field,<sup>20</sup> and even thought about learning the blacksmith’s trade, “but it was not the will of our dear God. I got very sick with typhoid and had to go home.”

His days with his parents were numbered. “My sainted mother was sick for a year; she suffered from gout. She died on October 4, 1847, at age 56. 10 months later, on July 27, 1848, my father died at age 60. He was only in bed for two days.” Both of them were buried in the Bethel cemetery. Johannes was 18 years old. For a year and a half he worked on the farm with his brother, but he decided to pay his sister Dorothea and brother-in-law J. F. Auch an extended visit up in Sebewaing in January of 1850.

## **The Coming of the Franconians**

What exactly Johannes intended with the visit is not clear. Was it nothing

more than an extended visit? Was he revisiting the idea of becoming a missionary, perhaps with his late father's wishes ringing in his ears?

The synodical scene had also changed by that time. Johann Konrad Wilhelm Löhe was a confessional Lutheran pastor in the village of Neuendettelsau in Franconia, Bavaria, from 1837 until the end of life. From 1841 to early 1843 Friedrich Conrad Dietrich Wyneken (who will make a somewhat surprising appearance in Strieter's reminiscences in a subsequent article) had traveled around Germany pleading the cause of the spiritually needy Lutherans in America. From his small village Löhe answered Wynken's plea in a big way. One of his men, Wilhelm Sihler, sent over in 1843, founded what would become Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana, in September 1846. Löhe sent another man, Georg Wilhelm Christoph Hattstädt, in 1844. He sent two more, Friedrich August Crämer and Friedrich Johann Carl Lochner, in 1845.

Hattstädt ended up helping out Pastor Schmid by taking over one of his more distant congregations in Monroe, Michigan. Hattstädt wrote: "Thus it was my opportunity to organize three congregations in the fall of 1844... Within the same year I joined the small Lutheran Synod of Michigan of which Pastor Schmid of Ann Arbor was president."<sup>21</sup>

In a letter dated December 21, 1844, Pastor Schmid wrote:

I received as co-worker a brother from the Dresden Mission Institute this fall, who took over for me my distant congregation in Monroe. Actually, he was sent there from Columbus. Inwardly he is stiffly Lutheran, which is not desirable for effective work in a community of Lutheran and Reformed Germans, most of whom do not know the meaning of Lutheran or Reformed. For the precious gospel embraces all, and there is but one Savior for all, and we preachers will not find it necessary to concern ourselves with questions, judgments, etc.; we need only to stand firm and teach in the conviction of the Lutheran symbolical writings, without asking whether this person is Lutheran or Reformed.

In a postscript he added: "Today I received word from Brother Hattstädt of Monroe that the brothers in Bavaria wish to send help to our mission. Do not publicize what I have written about Hattstädt of Monroe."<sup>22</sup>

The following year, Schmid wrote in a letter dated November 21:

In a very surprising but very pleasant manner, brotherly participation and help was offered us from Bavaria, without any request on our part or knowledge thereof. The Lord arranged to have real help from the old fatherland in our Indian mission, which in this part of the world has received very little support up to this time.

A small colony of believing souls, with their own preacher, arrived here this past summer in order to work as a mission colony among the Indians, and

to be as a light to them. They occupied a fitting location on the Cass River in Saginaw County, buying a piece of land which I had selected before their arrival. There is also a piece of land for the mission. Thus they have experienced the first hard beginnings in faith.

Reverend Mr. Löhe, who wrote us concerning the whole matter, expressed his wish and the wishes of many other participating friends, namely, to spread the kingdom of Christ also among the poor Indians. In doing this, he asked nothing of us so far that would be contrary to our conscience and conviction. Pure teaching and adherence to the Lord and the Holy Sacrament[s?], according to the creed of our Evangelical Lutheran Church, is his condition, with which we, who for many years [*sic*] have founded a Lutheran synod, are in agreement, convinced that so far our Evangelical Lutheran Church has remained pure and true in our teaching and the administration of the Holy Sacrament[s?] according to the Word. We were and are Lutherans in what concerns our teachings and administration of the Sacraments, adhering to God's holy Word, and in doing so we have never been led into controversy here with either the Reformed or the Lutherans.

As far as forms and customs are concerned, we shall continue to love them and will put incidentals in their relation to the great main things, and I would never like to render judgment of any sort about our brothers who call themselves Evangelical; rather would I praise them in their midst at the door of the Lord.<sup>23</sup>

The small colony on the Cass River was Frankenmuth, and their preacher was Friedrich August Crämer.<sup>24</sup> According to Strieter, Hattstädt, Crämer, and Lochner traveled to Ann Arbor to hold a conference with Pastor Schmid. "Schmidt made a very Lutheran impression and uncompromisingly professed his loyalty to the symbolical books of the Lutheran Church." So they established fellowship, which Hattstädt had apparently done already, "and the mission [in Huron County] was to be run jointly, for Crämer was also doing mission work among the Chippewas."

Pastor Schmid also trained J. F. Maier and sent him to work with Auch in the Huron County mission. "Meyer [*sic*]...mostly served the station in Shebeyang [Shebahyong]."<sup>25</sup> Since fellowship was established between the Michigan Synod and the Franconians, "Missionaries Auch and Meyer now entered into close brotherly fellowship with the Franconians and held conferences with them." More confessional Lutheran Franconians followed. Frankentrost was founded in 1847 and Frankenlust in 1848.<sup>26</sup> All of these Franconian colonies were closer to the Michigan Synod mission in Huron County than Pastor Schmid was, and so the staunchly Lutheran Franconian pastors exerted a strong influence on Missionaries Auch and Maier.

The German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States - what we know as the Missouri Synod - was formed in late April 1847 in Chicago

by 12 congregations, 22 pastors and two pastoral candidates. C. F. W. Walther was elected president and *Der Lutheraner* was made the official publication of the synod, with Walther as editor.<sup>27</sup> From the beginning, Walther and the Missouri Synod attracted many of the pastors sent by Löhe. The year before the synod's founding, Sihler and Lochner had held a conference with Walther and other Saxon ministers at St. Louis to discuss the synod's formation. The names of Sihler (voting), Crämer (voting), and Hattstädt (advisory) appear in the "Register of the preachers and congregations of this synod" in the proceedings of that very first convention.<sup>28</sup> Later in 1847 Dr. Sihler's seminary in Fort Wayne was deeded to the new synod. Lochner's name appears in the Register in the proceedings of the second convention in 1848.<sup>29</sup>

In his letters to the inspector of the Basel Mission Institute, Schmid gives no hint of any strife until April 29, 1851:

For nearly eighteen years I have served numerous congregations here with the holy Word and Sacrament, in which there are Lutheran and Reformed from the homeland. Yet I have never had to experience the slightest criticism on the part of the Reformed because of teachings and creed. As far as church practice is concerned, I maintain everything according to our Württemberger church, except that we from early times did not have Communion wafers. If the divine truth is proclaimed in a godly and powerful manner and the pastor lives in the strength of the gospel, then the truth-loving and the truth-seeking people of both confessions can get together through the strength of the Word, and this will also occur without any attempt to force a union. For that reason there are, I think, many in the congregation here whose parents were Reformed, but I am not certain of it. I do not inquire about it, for they are united and happy with and through the proclaimed word of the cross and the holy Sacraments. Firmness in our teachings and in the creed is required here, and if this exists, then the Spirit of the Lord will be with his Word... As far as the rigid Old Lutherans are concerned, with whom I have come into contact without learning to know them, I respect their sound teachings, but these people are mostly lacking in living faith, and for that reason there is so little love and so much harshness toward others. Their rigid ceremony and their strong condemnation of others are terrible things to me. I find no good fruit here, and despite the fact that a great deal is said about church, church life and church activity suffer.

I could not join this synod [the Missouri Synod], out of conviction. We too had a synod among us here, but it lacked firm foundation and therefore collapsed. Some wanted an organization strictly Lutheran, others not so strict, and as a result a lengthy paper was drawn up but when one wanted to follow its path, the wind blew it away. ...

That we have erected a mission here and that we have already worked a year among the Indians with blessing in this state is already known, and that our missionaries joined the Old Lutherans and that they demanded from us what we couldn't do, you probably also know. Thus we had no choice but to turn over the mission with its missionaries to the Old Lutherans, and thus our mission endeavor is restricted.<sup>30</sup>

Strieter's recollection of the separation was as follows. After fellowship had been established between the Michigan Synod and the Franconians,

It wasn't too long before Schmidt separated from the Franconians and went his own way again. Indeed, the Franconians were decried as half-Catholic: They burned candles at the Lord's Supper; the parson chanted at the altar; he turned his back to the people; he made the sign of the cross. Especially the sign of the cross was regarded as the living Satan. Missionaries Auch and Meyer, however, remained with the Franconians. In 1847 our synod, the Missouri Synod, was called into being in Chicago, and now the Franconians joined this synod, including Missionaries Auch and Meyer. Thus the mission in Sebewang and Shebeyang came into our synod.

Pinpointing Schmid's theological position is difficult. He certainly seems to have breathed an evangelical spirit, and it seems that the early Missourians could have learned something from him in this regard. But the Missourians' charge against Schmid of doctrinal duplicity is also hard to refute. In the final analysis, Schmid made too big a deal out of the Missourians' ceremonies (something Schmid himself said in his November 21, 1845, letter that he did not want to do) and his accusation against these early Missourians for lacking a living faith is unfounded, as evidenced, among other things, by Strieter's autobiography.

When exactly Missionaries Auch and Maier joined the Missouri Synod is not clear, though it seems to have occurred after June 1849, when the synod held its third convention, but before Strieter's visit to his brother-in-law Auch in January 1850. Auch and Maier are included in the Register in the proceedings of the fourth convention in 1851.<sup>31</sup>

## **Turning Point**

So with the "repulsive" Pastor Schmid out of the picture at the mission in Huron County, perhaps Johannes was that much more willing at least to check out what being a missionary was like. He packed what he needed for the visit, set his bundle on his back, and headed north.

I marched from Ann Arbor to Saginaw. There my brother-in-law picked me up with the sled. Saginaw at that time had one street along the river, one inn, one store, several liquor dens, and a row of small houses. Lower Sagi-

naw, now Bay City, also had one small street along the river, one liquor den where people could also buy all sorts of small and sundry items, and a small number of small houses. But there was a large sawmill nearby, and on the connecting path to Upper Saginaw another very large one, and on the east side of the river, now East Saginaw, yet another large sawmill. My sister had no children. She had a mishap with her first delivery. They were very happy to see me.

The experience would prove to be a turning point in his life, and 1850 one of the most memorable, eventful, and enjoyable years that he had.

## End Notes

1. This refers to the town(ship) of Berlin in Marathon County and should not be confused with the city of Berlin in Green Lake and Waushara Counties, where Pastor Strieter also regularly preached when he lived in Wisconsin.
2. "Aged Church Organizer Celebrates Jubilee," *Wausau Daily Record-Herald*, vol. 3, no. 833 (15 August 1910), p. 1. The county referred to is Marathon County, Wisconsin.
3. *Ibid.*
4. St. Paul, Naugart (WELS; mailing address Athens); Trinity, town of Berlin (WELS; mailing address Merrill); St. John, town of Hamburg (LC-MS; mailing address Athens); St. Paul, town of Hamburg (now independent); Salem, town of Hamburg (now defunct; cemetery remains); Grace, town of Maine (WELS; mailing address Wausau); Zion, town of Maine (cemetery remains); and St. John, town of Scott in Lincoln County (since combined with Zion to form Faith, town of Maine [LC-MS; mailing address Merrill; cemetery remains).
5. *Lebenslauf des Johannes Strieter, Pastor Emeritus, von ihm selbst erzählt und geschrieben* (Cleveland, OH: F. M. F. Leutner, 1905). The published autobiography was translated into English by his son Carl, and Carl's translation was reproduced through the efforts of two of Johannes Strieter's grandsons, but the translation is abridged and English was not Carl's first language. The Wisconsin chapters were separately translated by Orlan Warnke, but it too is abridged and inaccurate in places. At the time of writing, I am 3/4 of the way finished with a retranslation of the autobiography on the basis of the published book and Strieter's original manuscript. (Visit [redbrickparsonage.wordpress.com/tag/lebenslauf-des-johannes-strieter/](http://redbrickparsonage.wordpress.com/tag/lebenslauf-des-johannes-strieter/) to learn more.) The Concordia Historical Institute graciously made a digital copy of the manuscript available to me at a greatly discounted price, for which I hereby express my deepest gratitude.
6. Unless specially noted, all biographical information is taken from Strieter's autobiography. The stone font at which Johannes was baptized is still in use at the Evangelical Church of Affalterbach, whose records confirm the dates and time given in the autobiography.



7. He was pastor in Affalterbach from 1818 to 1837 ([www.evangelisch-kirche-affalterbach.de](http://www.evangelisch-kirche-affalterbach.de); accessed 26 July 2015).
8. Strieter says that there were two ships ready in the harbor, a beautiful new barque named *Louise* and an old brig (two-masted ship) named *Leondine*, which his family was forced to board in disappointment. However, the passenger manifest cited in endnote 11 identifies the ship that the Strieters took as “Barque Leontine.”
9. Rf. previous endnote. The passenger manifest lists a Leontine Math as the 20-day old daughter of the 43-year-old Cathariena (*sic*) Math, a maidservant by occupation. This would date Leontine’s birth to July 4, 1837.
10. G. Johansen; rf. endnote 11.
11. [tinyurl.com/leontinemanifest](http://tinyurl.com/leontinemanifest) (accessed 31 January 2017). The manifest misspelled Strieter as Streiter.
12. Today this is the beautiful Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church (WELS); rf. [salem-annarbor.org](http://salem-annarbor.org).
13. This became known as the Kuebler District schoolhouse (Frederick Schmid, Jr., “The Life and Labors of Friedrich Schmid,” trans. Emerson E. Hutzel [my personal files; given to me by a member of Salem, Ann Arbor], p. 3).
14. Cf. *WELS Historical Institute Journal*, vol. 2, no. 1 (Spring 1984), pp. 12-13, and vol. 3, no. 2 (Fall 1985), pp. 22-25.
15. Today this church is Bethel United Church of Christ. Cf. Schmid, Jr., *op. cit.*
16. Strieter is referring to Philipp Friedrich Hiller’s *Geistliches Liederkästlein* (Small Treasure of Spiritual Songs).
17. In the *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, this synod’s founding is erroneously dated to 1840. In a letter dated April 1, 1843, Pastor Schmid prefaces the founding of the synod by saying: “For nine years I have been here and labored in the part of the vineyard of the Lord assigned to me without my joining a Lutheran synod...” (“The Schmid Letters: A translation of letters written between the years 1833 and 1879 by Pastor Friedrich Schmid, Pioneer German Missionary, from Ann Arbor, Michigan, to his Seminary in Basel, Switzerland,” trans. Emerson E. Hutzel [my personal files; given to me by a member of Salem, Ann Arbor], p. 67).
18. “The Schmid Letters,” *op. cit.*, p. 71.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 73,74.
20. Strieter says that Killinger had 20 acres of land near his smithy. The 1856 and 1864 plat maps for Washtenaw County show a J. Killinger with about 30 acres of land about a half mile east of Bethel Church on the south side of what is today Bethel Church Road.
21. Schmid, Jr., *op. cit.* This conflicts with Strieter’s autobiography, which says that Metzger was “the head of the Michigan Synod.”
22. “The Schmid Letters,” *op. cit.*, p. 72.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
24. A Historic Site sign outside of St. Lorenz Evangelical Lutheran Church on West

Tuscola Street in Frankenmuth tells the story of Crämer and the city's founding. The St. Lorenz property also marks the site of the former Chippewa mission there.

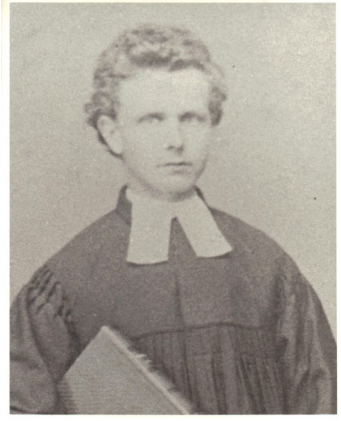
25. The Shebahyonk mission was located on Saginaw Bay near the mouth of the Shebahyonk River, today called Shebeon Creek, about seven miles north of Sebewaing.
26. All the names the Franconians gave their settlements were personalized paraphrases for God. Frankenmuth means (*Source of the Franconians' Courage*; Frankentrost means (*Source of the Franconians' Comfort*; and Frankenlust means (*Source of the Franconians' Joy*. Today Frankentrost is a small unincorporated community about eight miles east of Saginaw, identified by Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church (LC-MS) on the southwest corner of MI-46 and Mueller Road. The location of Frankenlust is marked by St. Paul Lutheran Church on the southwest side of Bay City on the southern corner of Westside Saginaw Road (MI-84) and Ziegler Road.
27. A. L. Graebner, *Half a Century of Sound Lutheranism in America: A Brief Sketch of the History of the Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: CPH, 1893), pp. 20,21.
28. *Der Lutheraner*, vol. 3, no. 24 (July 27, 1847), p. 133.
29. Mark Bliese of the Concordia Historical Institute, personal email (1 February 2017).
30. "The Schmid Letters," *op. cit.*, p. 77.
31. Mark Bliese, *op. cit.*

# E. H. Jonas 1872 - 1875<sup>1</sup>

by Leon Raether

**E**dward Heinrich Jonas was born on February 25, 1844, at Neustadt am Rübenerberge, Hannover, Germany. He was both baptized and confirmed at the Liebfrauen Church of Neustadt. He began his preparations for the ministry at the Hermannsburg Lutheran Missionary Seminary at Hermannsburg, Hannover. While a student at the seminary, he met Emma Christine Leveler, and they became engaged on March 27, 1869.

He came to America in 1871 and completed his pastoral training at Concordia Lutheran Seminary in St. Louis. At the 1872 convention of the Wisconsin Synod, held in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, he was received into synod membership. On June 22, 1872, he married Emma Leveler at Trinity Lutheran Church in Sheboygan. Shortly thereafter he began his ministry at St. Paul's in Ahnapee (Algoma).



*Pastor Edward Jonas*

Pastor Jonas' early ministry was quite richly blessed. He was vigorous and youthful and the congregation grew spiritually and numerically. The congregation built a new combination parsonage and school in 1874 in response to the increased enrollment of pupils under Pastor Jonas' instruction as teacher of the parish school. However, the establishment of the Sons of Hermann Lodge, founded in Ahnapee and in Forestville in 1873, would soon prove to be a major stumbling block to Pastor Jonas and his ministry as well as a divisive force within St. Paul's congregation.

As both pastor and president of the congregation, Rev. Jonas supported the synod's position that lodges and other so-called "secret societies" were unchristian organizations and faithful members of the Synodical Conference of the Wisconsin and Missouri Synods could not, in good conscience, be members. St. Paul's passed a resolution to that effect in 1874.

A major problem was that Pastor Jonas was good friends with several of the dissenting members. In fact, in March of 1875, he entered into a business partnership with two former members as bookkeeper for their new enterprise, a factory for the production of window sash, doors, blinds, and moldings being built on the site of the original parsonage on Navarino Street. Caught in the middle of the lodge controversy, Pastor Jonas announced his resignation on May 21, 1875. Newspaper accounts of that time stated that Pastor Jonas intended to remain in Ahnapee as a business partner. The factory remained in business only a short

time. One of the partners died suddenly in the summer of 1875, and the other major partner decided to sell.

Pastor Jonas severed his ties with the Wisconsin Synod, and ultimately the Jonas family moved to Sheboygan. In 1877, Pastor Jonas accepted a call to First German Lutheran Church of Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, a congregation that had left the Wisconsin Synod in the midst of the lodge controversy. Although the congregation ultimately affiliated itself with the Iowa Synod, Pastor Jonas never became a synod member himself. His ministry in Beaver Dam was quite successful. The congregation grew in numbers to the point that a new church was built and dedicated in 1893.

Between the years 1900 and 1902, Mrs. Jonas and two of the Jonas children, young adults, all died. Crushed by the effects of these deaths, he retired in 1902 and moved to Providence, Rhode Island, to live with his son, a professor of German at Brown University. Occasionally Pastor Jonas preached at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, in Providence. Pastor Jonas died there on March 10, 1907 and was buried in Beaver Dam's Oakwood Cemetery with members of his family.

## Endnote

1. Mr. Leon Raether wrote a biography of every pastor who has served at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Algoma, Wisconsin, for the congregation's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2012. We plan on including a selection from time to time in the *Journal*. The brief biographies give insight into the lives of some of the unsung pastors whom the Lord of the Church used to serve and build the congregations of the Wisconsin Synod. We thank Mr. Raether for allowing us to share his labor of love with a wider audience.

## C. C. Lieb 1875 – 1877

by Leon Raether

Carl (Charles) Christian Lieb, son of Christian Conrad and Eva Rosina Waghenshals Lieb, was born May 18, 1837 in the town of GÜGLINGEN, Neckar Kreis, in the German province of Württemberg. He was baptized May 24, 1837 at St. Mauritius Church in GÜGLINGEN. He was also confirmed in that same church. It is not currently known where he received his theological training.

In 1866 he immigrated to the United States, quite possibly at the request of the Evangelical Synod of North America, a church body that was comprised of a mix of members of Lutheran and Reformed backgrounds. He married Emilie Rudolphine Henke, born in Czarnikau, Province of Posen, and daughter of Christoph Friedrich Henke and Johanne Caroline Faburch Henke. At the time of their marriage in 1867, the Henke family was living in Nekimi Township, just south of Oshkosh, Wisconsin. In the year 1867 Pastor Lieb also organized the New Bethel Evangelical Church in the town of Black Wolf, also located in Nekimi Township. He served that congregation until the year 1871.

Pastor Lieb was also instrumental in organizing First Lutheran Church of Oconto, Wisconsin. Prior to Pastor Lieb's arrival there in 1873 as a traveling missionary, Lutherans in the Oconto area had been occasionally served by a Methodist pastor from Green Bay. When Pastor Lieb offered to organize a Lutheran congregation, the Oconto Lutherans gratefully accepted. Immanuel Ev. Lutheran Church, as it was originally called, was formally organized on January 1, 1874. Both Pastor Lieb and the Immanuel congregation were accepted into membership in the Wisconsin Synod at its convention held at First Lutheran Church of Green Bay, June 4 to 7, 1874. Pastor Lieb continued to serve Immanuel until July of 1875.

At the recommendation of Wisconsin Synod President Johannes Bading, St. Paul's of Ahnapee (Algoma) called Pastor Lieb on July 19, 1875. He was installed by Pastor Jaeger of Two Rivers on the 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity, September 19, 1875.

Upon his arrival at Ahnapee it was agreed that his annual salary would \$400.00 and that he would teach the parish school four days per week. Upon his recommendation, confirmands were to attend Bible class for two years after confirmation, an English arithmetic series was introduced into the school as well as an English reading series and two more double school desks were purchased because of increased enrollment. The congregation



*C.C. Lieb*

passed a resolution in 1877 that school would recess for the months of July, August, and September so that children could assist their parents with field work on family farms.

However, Pastor Lieb was alarmed that so few children attended church services. He urged parents to bring their children along to worship services.

Pastor Lieb organized the congregation's first Mission Festival in 1876. It was celebrated in conjunction with St. John's of Rankin and Emanuel congregation of Forestville in the grove opposite the John Jonas farm north of Ahnapee on today's Wolf River Road. The guest preacher was St. Paul's former pastor, Rev. Bernhard Ungrodt. He had previously served as a missionary in South Africa prior to coming to Ahnapee in 1867.

An *Ahnapee Record* newspaper account published just after Christmas 1876 made mention of the Christmas Eve service at St. Paul's. The church was bedecked with greenery and featured a large Christmas tree adorned with candles. The children of the congregation presented the story of Christ's birth with songs and recitations.

The ongoing lodge controversy exacted a toll upon the success of Pastor Lieb's ministry at St. Paul's. He realized that, given the fact he was not willing to compromise on the issue of secret societies, the congregation's problems were beyond the scope of his ability to effectively deal with them. He tendered his resignation and left St. Paul's in mid-October of 1877 and also resigned his membership as a Wisconsin Synod pastor. At a meeting held on October 21, 1877, the congregation resolved that, until another pastor could be found, "*Lesegottesdienste*" or lay-led services would be conducted.

From northeastern Wisconsin, the Lieb family moved to the area around Detroit Lakes, Minnesota. He served as a traveling missionary in that region, and in 1880 was living at Perham, Ottertail County, Minnesota. He was instrumental in founding St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran of Perham, a congregation which ultimately joined the Missouri Synod.

In 1883, Pastor Lieb and his family moved to Chattanooga, Tennessee. He and members of his family were some of the founding members of First Ev. Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, in 1887. It does not appear, however, that Rev. Lieb actually ever served as its pastor. Pastor Lieb and his wife formally took up membership at First Lutheran in 1889. In his obituary it is stated that Rev. Lieb was active in organizing and assisting immigrants in the Chattanooga community.

Pastor Lieb died on January 13, 1918. His funeral was conducted at First Lutheran Church. He is buried, along with his wife, in Forest Hills Cemetery at the foot of Lookout Mountain, in Chattanooga.

# Looking Back

By John M. Brenner

## 25 years ago – 1992

- The Feasibility Study Committee reports that the 1991 convention proposal to reduce the number of prep schools from three to two (one in Wisconsin and one in Michigan) and to combine Northwestern College and Dr. Martin Luther College on the New Ulm campus is feasible. The committee also suggests an alternate solution to the 1991 resolutions—combining NWC and DMLC on an entirely new campus, possibly in the area of Madison, WI, the Fox River Valley, or Milwaukee. These metropolitan areas would have 20+ Lutheran elementary schools and area Lutheran high schools in a fifty-mile radius for teacher training. A newly built campus could be asbestos free, handicapped-equipped, and energy efficient with nearby air transportation to serve the synod for generations. The estimated cost of a new campus is \$30-40 million.
- The WELS Conference of Presidents reports that there will be a “low key” observance of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Federation of the Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan synods. Articles will appear in the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* and the *Northwestern Lutheran*. Some special liturgical materials will be provided for the anniversary Sunday, November 1, 1992.
- The Hymnal Project Committee announces that *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal* is on schedule to be presented at the synod convention in August 1993 and distributed to congregations for use in Advent. The *Worship Leader's Manual* is on schedule to be published at the same time as the hymnal.
- The Board for Home Missions reports that since July 1, 1991, three congregations reached total self-support, two congregations reached interest subsidized status (receiving no operation subsidy), three new missions reached mission status, seven missions were granted resident manpower, two multi-cultural missions were being supported, one mission was disbanded, and three exploratories were discontinued. There are currently thirty-four exploratory fields.
- The Board for World Missions reports that Missionary Kirby Spevacek, mission worker Gary Miller, and Pastor Harold Essmann completed eight-weeks of exploratory journeys in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), including Romania and Bulgaria. Their recommendations will suggest how and where we might bring the message of God's forgiveness in Christ to the vast commonwealth, covering eleven time zones with a population of 300 million people.

- The WELS Conference of Presidents reports that the “Lift High the Cross” offering, authorized by the 1989 synod convention is in its final stages. Gifts and commitments as of April 20, 1992, total \$16.6 million.

## 50 years ago – 1967

- John Theodore Mueller, who served from 1920 to 1964 as professor at Concordia Seminary (Saint Louis), dies on April 15. He was the author of *Christian Dogmatics*, a one volume epitome of Francis Pieper’s three-volume *Christian Dogmatics*.
- The first worship service is held in Taiwan on May 11. The service is led by Mr. Wong Liu Diu Hun, sent to follow up on the Voice of Salvation broadcasts from the Wisconsin Synod mission in Hong Kong.
- The Synodical Conference, founded in 1872, dissolves. The Wisconsin Synod and the ELS officially left the Conference in 1963 leaving only the Missouri and Slovak synods as members. The Slovak Ev. Lutheran Church became a district of the Missouri Synod in 1971.
- The Lutheran Church of Central Africa begins publishing *The Lutheran Christian*, a church paper for the LCCA.
- WELS Commission on Inter-Church Relations publishes the confessional statement, *This We Believe*. The first printing of 10,000 copies quickly sells out. A second printing of 25,000 is made. The CICR contemplates having the document translated into other languages.
- Six essays on Luther’s 95 Theses are presented at the Wisconsin Synod convention in Saginaw in commemoration of the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation: 1) History of the 95 Theses before and after 1517 by Elmer C. Kiessling; 2) The 95 Theses—a Document of Protest by Theodore Hartwig; 3) Roman Catholic Remnants in the 95 Theses by Henry F. Koch; 4) The 95 Theses—A Triumph of the Gospel by Siegbert Becker; 5) The Roman Catholic Doctrine of Repentance in 1517 and in 1967 by Martin W. Lutz; 6) The Relevance of the 95 Theses for 1967 by Edward Zell.
- The synod in convention changes the name of Dr. Martin Luther High School to Martin Luther Academy (New Ulm). The synod changes the name of Milwaukee Lutheran Teachers College to Wisconsin Lutheran College (closed in 1970).
- The convention authorizes the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> professorships at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon.
- The proposed secondary education program at Dr. Martin Luther College is held in abeyance. The convention asks DMLC to report all pertinent facts concerning the program to the next synod convention.



- The synod in convention recognizes a wide realm of contacts in church and state relation that lie in the area of adiaphora. It urges all church supported schools contemplating government aid to
  - avoid any aid that would hinder our Christian schools from carrying out their objectives;
  - avoid any aid that would lead to dependence upon the government and would undermine Christian stewardship;
  - avoid any aid that would bring with it improper government control;
  - avoid any aid that would jeopardize our unified Christian education.
- The Board for Home Missions reports that in the last year of the biennium there were seventeen new mission congregations, eighteen new exploratories, seven congregations had reached self-supporting status; through the Church Extension Fund twenty-two houses of worship were built and fourteen groups were able to purchase land.

### **75 years ago – 1942**

- The Missouri Synod informs the other members of the Synodical Conference that it would resume negotiations with the American Lutheran Church in spite of tensions in the Synodical Conference concerning these negotiations.
- The Lutheran Academy for Scholarship was organized in Chicago.

### **100 years ago – 1917**

- The Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, and Nebraska Synods merge to form the Ev. Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, and Other States. The synod is organized with six districts: Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Northern Wisconsin, Southeastern Wisconsin, and Western Wisconsin. Gustav E. Bergemann is elected president.
- Justus Heinrich Naumann, president of the Minnesota Synod and father of future Wisconsin Synod president Oscar J. Naumann, dies on February 5.
- Superintendent Gustav Harders of the Apache mission dies on April 13. Harders penned the classic mission novels *Yaalahn* and *Dohaschtida*. These books were translated into English by Henry and Alma Nitz and published by Northwestern Publishing House.
- Laymen on a planning committee for the celebration of the Quadricentennial of the Reformation, call for the union of the General Synod, General Council, and the United Synod, South. The proposal results in the formation of the United Lutheran Church in America (ULCA) in 1918.

- The United Norwegian Church in America, Norwegian Synod, and Hauge Synod merge to form the Norwegian Ev. Lutheran Church in America (later called the Evangelical Lutheran Church). The theological basis of the merger is the compromise agreement called the Madison Settlement or, in Norwegian, *Opgjør* (settlement). The merger unites 92 percent of Norwegian Lutherans in America. Thirteen faithful pastors and congregations that refuse to go along with the merger form the Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church, later renamed the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS).
- The National Lutheran Commission for Soldiers and Sailors' Welfare is organized on October 1 to provide for spiritual ministrations for those in the armed forces. This organization is a forerunner of the National Lutheran Council founded in 1918.
- American-Norwegian Lutheran theologian, professor, and author Johannes T. Ylvisaker, dies on October 10. He is best known in our circles for his harmony and commentary on the Gospels: *The Gospels: A Synoptic Presentation of the Text in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, with Explanatory Notes*.

### **125 years ago – 1892**

- The Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan Synods form a federation called The Ev. Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, and Other States at St. John's on 8<sup>th</sup> and Vliet Streets in Milwaukee. On the last day of the convention the delegates travel to 60<sup>th</sup> and Lloyd streets in Wauwatosa to lay the cornerstone for the new seminary building.

### **150 years ago – 1867**

- President Streissguth declines re-election. John Bading is elected president in his place to begin his second tenure as president of the Wisconsin Synod.
- The Wisconsin Synod in convention goes on record against secret societies and all doctrinal unionism. The synod, nevertheless, justifies receiving support from the unionistic mission societies: "As long, however, as there are still Lutherans in the respective Union state churches who have the pure preaching of the gospel and the right administration of the sacraments, and as long as they protest against the Union foisted on them as wrongly committed and continued against the Lutheran church, we can no more than thankfully accept the loving offices of the united societies as the agencies through which workers come to us to serve in the Lutheran church here, from those Lutherans who remain members of the state church but ever keep alive their protest."
- Stephen Klingmann replaces Friedrich Schmidt, the pioneer Lutheran pastor in Michigan, as president of the Michigan Synod.

- John Muehlhaeuser, the founder and first president of the Wisconsin Synod, dies on September 15.
- The Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan synods become founding members of the General Council.
- Charles Philip Krauth, professor at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and president of the General Synod, dies on May 30. He was the father of the great confessional Lutheran theologian, Charles Porterfield Krauth, a founder and leader of the General Council.
- A colloquy between the Missouri and Iowa synods is held in Milwaukee November 13-18, on the matter of “open questions.” Wisconsin’s Adolf Hoenecke is present as an observer and privately sides with Walther and Missouri.
- Christian Friedrich Spittler dies on December 8. Spittler helped found the Basel Mission Society and founded the St. Chrischona Pilgermission. Basel and St. Chrischona sent several men to America who served as pastors in the Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota synods.

### **175 years ago – 1842**

- John Christian Frederick “Father” Heyer arrives in Guntur, India, to begin Lutheran mission work. He is the first Lutheran missionary sent from America to a foreign field. In 1860 Heyer helps found the Minnesota Synod and becomes its first president.
- In response to Friedrich Wyneken’s *Notruf*, describing the spiritual conditions of Germans in the Midwest, Wilhelm Loehe of Neuendettelsau, (in Franconia, Bavaria), sends two “emergency men” to Ohio. The next year Loehe begins publishing *Mitteilungen aus und ueber Nord-Amerika* (News out of and about North America) to gain supporters, funds, and future missionaries for America.

### **200 years ago – 1817**

- Claus Harms, a pastor in the city of Kiel in Schleswig-Holstein, publishes a new edition of Luther’s 95 Theses together with 95 theses of his own attacking the religious rationalism of the day as well as the Prussian Union. The publication of Harms’ theses marks the beginning of the confessional revival among Lutherans in Germany.
- Frederick William III of Prussia on September 27, announces the union of the Reformed and Lutherans into one evangelical congregation at court and among the military at Potsdam in celebration of the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation. He appeals for voluntary union between the Reformed and

Lutherans throughout Prussia and smaller states. This is the first in a series of decrees which results in the forced union of Lutherans and Reformed that becomes known as the Prussian Union. Eventually “Old Lutherans” (those who were opposed to the Union) form free churches in Germany or emigrate to America and Australia.

- Nicolai Grundtvig, at the time still a confessional Lutheran, writes a fifth stanza for “Ein Feste Burg” (A Mighty Fortress). In English translation, the stanza is eventually set to a tune by Fritz Reuter and becomes known as “God’s Word is Our Great Heritage.”



The WELS Historical Institute was given formal approval by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) in convention in 1981 to organize for the purpose of collecting and preserving historical data and artifacts that are related to the various periods of Lutheranism in America, especially of the WELS. In recent years the synod took over the responsibility of maintaining the archives. The Institute maintains a museum and publishes a *JOURNAL* and *NEWSLETTER*. Membership is open. Fees are as follows, which include the subscription fees: Individual: \$20.00; Husband/Wife: \$25.00 (2 votes but only one publication issue); Congregation, School, Library, Corporation: \$40.00; and Student: \$15.00. Fees may be sent to the WELS Historical Institute, N15W23377 Stone Ridge Drive, Waukesha, Wisconsin 53188.

The board members are: Prof. Robert Bock, president; Mr. Daniel Nommensen, vice-president; Mrs. Naomi Plocher, secretary; Mr. Ryan Haines, treasurer; Mr. Duane Kuehl, Prof. Joel Pless, Mr. Steven Miller, Prof. James Korthals, Rev. Joel Leyrer, Prof. Aaron Palmer, Rev. David Dolan, Mr. Kenneth Artlip, and Mr. Carl Nolte. Advisory members are: Mrs. Susan Willems, synod archivist, Prof. John M. Brenner, and Ms. Charlotte Sampe, designer and museum curator.

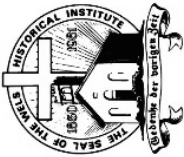
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