

WELS Historical Institute

# Journal

Volume 26, Number 2  
October 2008



WELS Historical Institute  
**Journal**

Volume 26, Number 2  
October 2008

- 3 Proceedings of the 24th Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Wisconsin and Other States (Continued from the JOURNAL Vol. 26, No. 1)  
*Arnold O. Lehmann*
- 13 Apache Lutheran Mission Beginnings  
From the letters of John Plocher (Continued from the JOURNAL Vol. 26, No. 1)  
*David J. Plocher*
- 48 from the Editor...  
*Arnold O. Lehmann*

Editor: Arnold O. Lehmann

The *WELS Historical Institute Journal* is the official publication of the WELS Historical Institute, 2929 N. Mayfair Road, Milwaukee, WI 53222. Copyright 2008 by WELS Historical Institute.

The Cover  
Missionary John and Anna Plocher exploring peridot mines  
behind their San Carlos, Arizona home about 1895.

**Proceedings  
of the  
Twenty-fourth Convention  
of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Synod  
Of  
Wisconsin and Other States  
held in Green Bay, Wisconsin from June 4 to 9, 1874  
(Continued from JOURNAL, Vol. 26, No. 1)**

[Editor's note: These proceedings are not recorded day by day, but as subject matter.]

**II. Business Proceedings.**

**President's Report**

**C**ommittee-report: The undersigned committee takes the liberty to inform the Hon. synod of the following:

1. That we recommend to the Hon. synod that it acknowledge the doctrinal position in the president's report as its own and agree completely with it.
2. That the Hon. president be thanked by the synod for his faithful work and that all of his official acts be approved.
3. That we recommend to the Hon. synod that the portion of the report which concerns next year's synodical anniversary be given special consideration.
4. Since the other points of the report have been assigned to various committees, your committee takes the liberty not to bring these up here.

*C. F. Goldammer, H. Lieber, Ph. Koehler, Julius Krueger, Fr. Waldt*

Numbers 1 and 3 were discussed and adopted by a motion.

For the matter in No. 3 a special committee was named to make a report. No. 4 was likewise adopted.

**Acceptance of New Pastors and Teachers**

Committee report: The committee recommends that the Hon. synod accepts respectfully the following pastors: J. E. Wuebben, C. Thurow, J. J. Meyer, J. C. Lieb, W. Bergholz; and Candidate H. Eckelmann.

Also the acceptance of the teachers: J. Grother, R. Fritzke, H. Pautz.

The committee believes that it cannot recommend Pastor Heinrichs because the credentials presented were not considered to be complete. Also the committee could not resolve to recommend Pastor Stoeffler at this time.

Respectfully, your committee

*A. Hoenecke, F. Busch, Ph. Brenner, Jacob Grimm, J. H. Brockmann*

Resolved to accept the report of the acceptance of the recommended pastors and teachers.

Concerning Pastor Heinrichs, it was resolved to postpone his acceptance into the synod until the lacking credentials are presented. Also resolved not to consider the acceptance of Pastor Stoeffler at this time.

### Educational Institutions in Watertown

Annual Report of the Board of Control of our Educational Institutions in Watertown.  
Beloved Brothers in the Lord!

This year's report about our synodical institutions attaches itself to those in which, for many years now, the lack of joy and the absence of progress was no longer reported. If the groans of earlier years had value and were accompanied with blessings, we could not shut our eyes to the blessings which were there. Our joy over this had its reason and our thanks was our duty. We rejoice however with trepidation, which must always be, as long as the treasure is borne in earthen vessels; although we sang our hallelujah with muted voice, it still was there and we allowed it to be heard. Also in this year we allow it to the glory of God.

Already the circumstance, that in the present days, in which the billows of unbelief in the manifold forms and denominations within the Christian church are so great as never before, in which Beelzebub with his vermin buzzes about in the Church of Christ with frivolous derision of all godly doctrines, that in our institutions courageously and joyfully the godly doctrines of salvation are presented as the alpha and omega of all knowledge, must fill us with thanks to our God. As in the spiritually parched times the schools of the prophets in Israel were enlivening sources from which spiritual living and blessings streamed forth, so should we also with a glance at our institutions experience the confidence that they will prove themselves as a source of life and blessings for our Lutheran church, especially here in the west. If we look at similar institutions in our former homeland, of which many have become barren lands, in that theology studying youngsters find no nourishment for heart and soul, and as a result their number decreases conspicuously from year to year, and comparing thereby the large group to our high school, then we have the complaint that vessels fail us to accept this blessing of God. All in all we can only recognize the gracious hand and care of our God for this work of ours. He let us find men who have a warm heart for this work for God, whose insight and wisdom, whose clear perception inwardly and outwardly, whose practical hand and Christian command, tied with faithful and diligent work, have raised our institutions to the point on which they now stand. One did the planting and the other the watering, and God gave his blessings. But in the course of the past year we were not spared more unfortunate experiences than earlier. For if the serpent found its way into Paradise, why shouldn't it be found in such an institution? Their terrible deeds however were punished after they were brought to light, and God's good Spirit retained the proper control. Therefore we must humbly say: "Lord we are too unworthy of all of your mercy and of all of your faithfulness which you have shed on us."

Moving from these introductory thoughts to the special report, we now have the following matters to report to the Hon. synod:

The number of students was 174, thus 20 more than the previous year. Of these students 100 enrolled in the *Gymnasium* and 74 in the Academy; accordingly, we had 23 more in the *Gymnasium* and three less in the preparatory school than in the previous year. Of those in the preparatory school 60 belong to the Missouri Synod and 40 to ours and other synods, from last mentioned, 28 are preparing for the preaching and teaching ministry. If we count the 13 students of theology at the seminary in St. Louis, we have 41 youths who want to dedicate themselves to service in the kingdom of God.

If we compare the number of students with the space in our institution, it is clear to us that the separate rooms of the institution have to be overflowing and no new students can be accepted. Not only is there a lack of space for sleeping, but also classrooms, spaces to store apparatuses and utensils; likewise the dining room is so filled that no new students could find a place therein. For this reason already 20 ap-

plicants had to be rejected for enrollment. Several of these have been placed hopefully in reserve, and will return in the fall when entirely new applicants will definitely be rejected. This brings up the question: What should be done here and on what principles should the inspector of the institute handle the acceptance of new students? If no more room can be found, then in the fall only so many students can be accepted as will fill the vacancies of non-returning students.

The health situation of instructors and students was in general excellent; but even then, there were more cases of illnesses this past year than in the previous year. One suffered inflammation of the bowels, and another, who is disposed to this suffering, rheumatic fever and a third St. Vitus Dance, and several suffered the measles.

The accomplishments of the students were of happy results; for many the desire to seriously study was aroused and on the whole work was faithfully and seriously done. More attention was given to the study of natural sciences and bodily exercising; much equipment was purchased so that, relative to these points, the needs of the students were taken care of in a satisfactory manner. Likewise the curriculum was revised and expanded so that in the course of the next school year the various subjects should be better taught. Also the behavioral pattern on the whole was shown to be a good one; yet, as can be expected, several transgressions in this respect occurred and two students had to be sent home, one for excessive breaking of the Seventh Commandment and the other for constant foolishness. In the one case we have reason to hope that the proper confession has been made that he is now on the right path.

It also was shown that among several of the young people a spirit sought to penetrate them which goes hand and hand with pleasure seeking and avoidance of serious spiritual work. This point needs special consideration and it is greatly to be wished that in this respect also the parents will support the institution.

In regard to the faculty the Hon. synod is to be informed that at the beginning of the school year Teacher Smith stepped in to fill the place vacated by Mr. Kaltenbrunn at the end of the last school year. Accordingly, the faculty is the same size as last year, three German and three English teachers and indeed they work in their respective fields in excellent, never broken harmony, and with great attention, for which reason the fruits of their labor earn our recognition in great measure. Besides that, during spring Candidate Eckelmann from Hannover arrived here and worked as a substitute teacher in the institution during that term.

In regard to the theological professorship in St. Louis which is to be filled by us, the following is brought to the attention of the Hon. synod: In January our Board of Control received a letter from the Board of Control of the Institutions of the Hon. Missouri Synod, in which was recalled the agreement which at that time was made about our combined educational institutions and requested because of the dire financial condition in which the Missouri Synod found itself at the time, to now fulfill our obligation and send a professor to St. Louis as soon as possible, or, in case that we could not find a suitable man, to pay the salary of such a person. Since the Board of Control realized the position we were in, with a peek at the solvency of our synod, to pay the salary of a new teaching position, it found it necessary, together with the agreement of the faculty, to resolve the difficult sacrifice and place Prof. Brohm for disposition to St. Louis. The Board of Control received a second letter from the above mentioned Board of Control in which we were asked to release Prof. Brohm to go to the Springfield pro-seminary of the Hon. Missouri Synod; because there is no need for a new faculty position in St. Louis, and actually none from there could be transferred to Springfield. The Board of Control, since it could not do anything else, let the acceptance of this call up to Prof. Brohm; he however declared that he could not for conscience sake accept a call to the Pro-seminary in Springfield. After bringing this to the attention of the Board of Control of the Hon. Missouri Synod, we sent it a letter detailing the conditions of the stipulations of the agreement and showed that the practical results of the same made the fulfillment impossible for us, and therefore a revi-

sion of the stipulations seemed inevitably necessary.

The dormitory supervision, as in the previous year, under the leadership of the director of the Institute, was in the hands of Mrs. Pieper and indeed with faithfulness and devotion which deserves our supreme appreciation. Likewise we must happily mention the generosity of many of our congregations, as demonstrated by the donated collection of natural objects by Mr. Keller.

Money taken in for the school amounted to \$1443.00, \$307.50 more than last year. Also the fulfilled scholarships came to the amount of \$380.00.

How things now stand with the institute's treasury, let us look at the following annual report of the treasurer:

**Report of the treasurer of Northwestern University, receipts and expenditures from June 10, 1873 to June 1874.**

**Receipts**

In the treasury at the close of last year's report:	\$25.87
From Mr. Geo. Gamm, surplus from his treasury	96.53
School money from Prof. Ernst	1443.25
Scholarships money	135.00
Collected funds	2864.34
Percentage from hymnals	584.63
Total	<u>\$5149.62</u>

**Expenditures**

Professors' salaries	\$3554.16
Repairs	530.29
Room & Board for beneficiaries in St. Louis	256.20
Printing of catalogues	91.75
Miscellaneous	30.05
Total	<u>\$4462.45</u>
In the treasury	\$585.15
Outstanding fees	91.00

*R. Adelberg, treasurer*

**In Conclusion**

Even though, dear Brothers, numbers in God's kingdom are not everything, in that it relies more on the importance than on the amount; something it does show; a glance into our treasury, as well as for everything which lies before us concerning the current situation of our institutions, proves to us that we have a faithful House Father, at whose table we sat, and by whose hand we have lived. He has not let us be in want. He has because of prayers and understanding, not because of our merit or worthiness – and maybe many would have to add shamefully, also without our prayers – let his good gifts flow our way. And as he has so graciously cared for us, he likewise has greatly protected us, and has guided all misfortune and peril away from our Institutions and their occupants, or, when they were about to happen, he broke their strength and everything came out well. All of this demands our humble gratitude. Let us now put our

thanks in action in such a manner that we present our heart and hand with sincere petition and labor to the work; then we can trust his promise that our labors are not in vain in the Lord, and with a look to the future cast all cares on him, who up till now cared for us so graciously, and will continue to do so. His name be praised in all eternity!

*John Bading, Pres.*

*B. Ungrodt, Sec.*

**Committee-report: The committee assigned to report on the Board's report recommends to the Hon. synod:**

1. To agree most sincerely to the thanks for our God's Fatherly faithfulness, which in the past school year stood out so visibly.
2. To give our approval to the way the Board of Control handled its business in every case, and to it as well as to the professors to indicate our appreciation for their devoted and conscientious activity.
3. To sincerely give thought to secure room for the acceptance of students before the next school year.
4. To authorize the Board of Control to seek an early settlement with the Hon. Synod of Missouri concerning the placement of a professor in St. Louis.
5. To remind the congregations and pastors not to let down on the current zeal for the welfare of our institutions, since the existence of the same for the most part depends on support on the part of the congregations.

Respectfully, the committee

*Th. Jaekel, C. Jaeger, C. Reichenbecher, H. Benzke*

Nos. 1 and 2 were adopted by a resolution.

The synod recognized that No. 3, the lack of rooms, must be taken into consideration with the future situation of our relationship with the Hon. Synod of Missouri concerning the educational institutions, and the same holds for No. 4, and after much discussion and explanation from the Board it was resolved: to send knowledgeable representatives of our synod to deal with the Hon. Synod of Missouri in its next general meeting about this matter, and to show and represent the interests of our synod conscientiously and wisely.

Elected as delegates by the synod were Pastors Bading, Adelberg and Prof. Ernst.

Resolved in regard to No. 3 that the Board of Trustees be authorized if necessary to rent a house in the vicinity for accepting new students.

**Departure and Release of Pastors and Congregations from the Synod**

Committee-report: The committee which is to report on the departure and release of congregations and pastors from our synod recommends the following to the Hon. synod:

1. To ratify the action of the president in regard to the release of Pastor H. J. Haack.
2. To release both congregations in Coon Valley from synod membership because their dealings with Pastor Baarts, as well as the installing of Teacher Kussmann as their pastor cannot be ratified and the congregations appear to be unapproachable for instruction.
3. To strike the name of the St. Paul's Congregation in Dartford, Greenlake Co. from the synodical list, since the congregation no longer exists and its members have joined other congregations.

Respectfully,

*B. Ungrodt, P. Lucas, G. Hoelzel, G. Dornstreich, H. Grupe*

No. 1 of the report was adopted by a resolution.

After previous in depth dealings with the entire Northwestern Conference and by a visitation during the last year's synodical convention with Mr. Haack concerning doctrine and pastoral practices, it was shown that he is completely untrained for carrying out the duties of a pastor, and also according to witness material from both of his congregations and from the conference to which he belonged he showed himself to be untrained for the office of the pastoral ministry, the action taken by our Hon. president in the release of Mr. Haack be ratified.

No. 2 was amended to read that the Visitor investigate the matter of both congregations in Coon Valley and give a report on what he found.

No. 3 was adopted by a resolution.

#### **Auditing the Books of the Various Treasurers**

Committee-report: The committee for auditing the books of various treasurers within our synod takes the liberty to report the following to the Hon. synod:

1. The committee thoroughly examined the books and receipts of Pres. Bading and of Pastors Adelberg and Conrad and found them to be in good order.
2. It was especially surprising to your committee in auditing the books of Pastor Conrad to find that a disproportionately small amount was entered for the payment of the synodical reports.
3. Finally the committee takes the liberty to recommend the named treasury and bookkeeping administrators be given sincerest thanks by the Hon. synod for their tireless and unselfish work.

Respectfully,

*W. Schimpf, Albert Kluge, Aug. Kleinhans, A. Warnecke, Chr. Woelz*

Resolved to adopt the above report.

#### **Pastor Lange and the Congregation in Peshtigo**

Committee-report: The committee on the matter between Pastor Lange and the congregation in Peshtigo respectfully reports that it made an investigation on the complaint by the named congregation against Pastor Lange and found that Pastor Lange had sinned against the congregation, in that he accepted a call to another congregation without previously consulting his congregation. Pastor Lange admits his wrong doing and has asked the congregation in writing for forgiveness. Several other points in the complaint could not be verified, and Pastor Lange will send a pacifying letter to the congregation.

Respectfully,

*A. Adelberg, Ph. Brenner, J. H. Brockmann*

Resolved to adopt the report.

#### **Excuses of Absent Pastors and Teachers**

Committee-report: The committee on excuses of absent pastors, teachers and congregational delegates examined the excuse letters and checked the reasons and suggests to the Hon. synod:

1. Pastors C. Oppen, F. Kleinert, C. Popp, R. Baarts, J. Koehler, G. Denninger, W. Hass and Diehlmann be excused for their absences.
2. Teacher C. Brenner likewise be excused, concerning the other absent teachers, their respective pastors should seek the reasons for their absences.
3. To excuse the congregations of Pastors Guenther and Siegler because of the absence of their delegates and to apologize to the synod for the delegates' conduct, also to inform the other synodical congregations that the same action would be taken against them if this occurred in their congregations in

the future.

*A. Denninger, J. Killian, A. Liefeld, C. Heidenreich*

Resolved to excuse the named pastors except for Pastors Popp and Kleinert, to whom the president is authorized to express the censure of the synod, because of unjustified absences. After information was given concerning the absence of absent teachers, it was resolved to excuse them.

No. 3 was adopted by resolution.

#### **The Matter of Fire Insurance**

Committee-report on the memorial of Pastor Meyer, a member of the Illinois Synod, concerning the founding of an association of congregations within the Evang. Luth. Synodical Conference for the purpose of a joint insurance setup for damages to churches, schools and parsonages from lightening or fire the undersigned committee takes the liberty to report the following:

The proposed plan consists primarily in this, that all congregations, but only congregations of the Synodical Conference, should join in an association which will cover all damages to buildings of an individual congregation belonging to the association which are caused by lightening or fire. Each congregation should register a reasonable value of its property and if one suffers a loss as stated above, the other congregations must immediately cover the loss on the basis of the individual congregation's stated value of its property. If however by chance a congregation will not pay its dutiful contribution, it will simply not belong to the association any longer.

For support of this proposal it was indicated that the associations with which congregations are now insured, seek only their own interests, in addition also offer poor warranties, but this proposal shows the way how our congregations with their money can serve not unbelievers or heterodox, but their fellow believers, finally that the proposed organization will have sufficient funds, so that 15 - 16 congregations must lose their properties before the rest of them would have to pay the sum of 1½ per cent of their church property's value.

The committee sees itself in the position not to recommend this proposal to the Hon. synod. First, no need has been shown for such an organization in the past years because of a significant loss of church property by fire; Christian love has shown itself to be very far-reaching without all kinds of guardian care.

Secondly, should the suggested support serve as a work of Christian love, then an organization as the proposed one is wrong because love is not regulated by funds or percentages.

Thirdly, should this matter be looked at as a business, then it has no relevance with us as a synod, and is also not desired, since it then fails on all demanding warranties for an ensuing association.

Finally the doubt is not unjustified that the costs based on the proposed prospects are too high.

*Jacob Conrad, F. W. A. Notz, Theo. Brohm, J. Dahlke*

The above report was adopted by the synod.

#### **Acceptance of New Congregations**

Committee-report: The committee to report on the acceptance of new congregations recommends the synod to accept:

1. The Evang. Luth. St. John's Congregation in Town Gibson, Manitowoc Co.
2. The St. Lucas Congregation in Bay View, Milwaukee Co.

In regard to the congregation in Schleisingerville the committee recommends that the Hon. president of the synod be authorized to accept the named congregation into the synod as soon as it presents to the president a congregational constitution reflecting the Evang. Luth. Confession.

### The Synod's Twenty-fifth Anniversary Celebration

Committee-report: The undersigned committee takes the liberty to recommend to the Hon. synod the following proposals for acceptance:

1. As was recommended by the Hon. president, that at next year's synodical convention, to hold a jubilee festival in praise of the mercy and faithfulness of our God, with which He so richly blessed our synod for 25 years,
2. To accept the invitation of the St. Peter's Congregation in Milwaukee to hold next year's convention in its midst.
3. To tie the jubilee festival with the opening service and that the festival sermon be given by the Hon. president of the synod.
4. That on the Sunday during the synodical convention all of the Wisconsin Synod's churches in Milwaukee have a jubilee service.

Respectfully,

*C. Mayerhoff, W. Hagedorn, C. Gausewitz, Ph. Koehler*

Nos. 1, 2 and 3 were adopted by resolution. No. 4 was adopted with the addition, to recommend the adopted motion to the particular congregations. That besides St. Peter's Congregation in Milwaukee, also our congregation in Watertown sent a friendly invitation to the synod, to hold its convention in its midst, and it was resolved to thank it for the invitation and that this be reported to it by the delegates of the congregation.

### Care of Pastors' Widows and Orphans

Committee-report: The committee recommends to the Hon. synod the following points for adoption:

1. To give the present widows the same sum from the collections on hand from the congregations as last year.
2. To obligate all pastors and standing members of the synod for a personal contribution of at least \$5.00 for the coming year, and to contribute this during the first half of the synodical year.
3. In case the necessary amount for support is not completely brought in by this suggested collection, the amount lacking to be covered from the contributions of pastors' and standing members' newly to be established treasury.
4. To direct the caretaker of this treasury to immediately pay \$70.00 to the widow as soon as a verified notice of the death of a pastor, professor or teacher has been received. In order to get the amount for this treasury, each pastor and standing member should send \$1.00 to it within 30 days after having received the notice.

*H. Hoffmann, A. F. Siegler, J. H. Brockmann, B. Ungrodt, T. Gensike, H. Hoops*

No. 1 was adopted. Instead of the No. 2 and No. 3 proposals, it was resolved as follows: Each standing member of the synod should pay annually at least \$5.00 by January 1 of each year. The treasury resulting from these contributions should be under the management of an administrator [*Procurator*] and from this treasury each eligible widow should receive \$100.00 and each child under 14 \$25.00. The treasury, resulting from the congregational collections should remain with the president as at present, and the current and future widows be supported for their needs from it.

No. 4 was adopted by resolution.

Pastor Brockmann was named the administrator. Resolved, that if hereby this matter is temporarily without funds, a committee consisting of Pastor Brockmann, Prof. Ernst and Teacher Voss come up with a plan for next year, indicating instructions and regulations for the administering of the new treasury.

### The Matter of a Service Book (Agenda)

Committee-report: After an examination of the proposals from the various conferences about an Agenda for our synod, the committee believes it satisfies the needs and wishes of the synodical members with the following proposals:

1. The Agenda of the Hon. Synod of Missouri and other States is recommended for adoption.
2. The synod is to name a committee which should present for next year's synodical convention the following entries into the Agenda:
  - a) a revised worship service order, such as has been developed in most of the congregations of our synod.
  - b) the necessary formulas for frequent ministerial functions which are not included in the Missouri Agenda.
3. These entries are to be made known to the synodical members through the *Gemeindeblatt* before the next synodical convention, after which next year's synodical convention must make a final decision on acceptance or with amendments.

*C. Mayerhoff, August F. Ernst, R. Adelberg, Wm. Thielecke*

The proposals made in the report were adopted, and a committee working out the desired entries was named, consisting of Pastors Hoenecke, Mayerhoff, Ungrodt and Profs. Ernst and Brohm, and Pastor Adelberg was authorized to confer with the Synod of Missouri about the printing of the proposed elements.

### Election of Trustees

Since the term of office of a third of the Trustees has ended, the required vote was held, the result being that Pastors Bading, Ungrodt, and Mr. Keller were elected.

### Delegates to the Synodical Conference

The following were elected to be delegates to this year's Synodical Conference meeting: Pastors Bading, Adelberg, Hoenecke, and Messrs. Heidenreich, Kieckhefer and Woelz, and as substitutes, Pastors Brockmann, Meumann, Ph. Koehler, as well as Messrs. Geiger, Theilig and Hass.

### Gemeindeblatt

Pastor Adelberg informed the synod about the financial situation of the *Gemeindeblatt*, which showed that it would be in favorable condition if from the past years such a considerable number of subscription funds were not in arrears.

### Hymnal

The profits for the synod, according to the contract, from sold hymnals [*Gesangbuecher*] during the synodical year, 1873-1874, amounted to \$160.40, which amount Mr. G. Brumder, in accordance with his previous year's offering, doubled, so that it amounted to \$320.80. This amount was given by Mr. Brumder to the treasurer of the Board of Control of our institutions, Pastor Adelberg, on June 2.

### Seniorat

Pastor C. F. Goldammer, who is not only the oldest but also the most worthy member of Synod is given the title *Senior ministerii*.

### Synodical Proceedings

Resolved to have 1,000 copies of the synodical proceedings printed.

### Words of Thanks

Resolved to express the thanks of the synod to the congregation in Green Bay for the sincere hospitality shown to the synodical convention attendees and to the railroad association which offered the synodical members reduced travel rates.

### The Next Synodical Convention

God willing, the next synodical convention will be held in the church of the St. Peter's Congregation in Milwaukee, beginning on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday at 10:00 a. m.

After this resolution the convention adjourned at 6:00 p.m. with the Lord's Prayer.

God be praised for Everything!

Burlington, Wis. June 23, 1874

G. Thiele, Secretary

The parochial reports showed that the synod consisted of 64 pastors, 128 congregations, and 63 parochial schools.

## Apache Lutheran Mission Beginnings From the Letters of John Plocher

by David J. Plocher

(Continuation)<sup>1</sup>

The letters of missionary Johannes Plocher give a personal look into the beginnings of Gospel outreach by the WELS to the Apache Indians in Arizona. The reports cover his time there from 1893 through 1899. The first year at San Carlos was presented in the previous issue of the WELS Historical Institute *Journal*. During that year a site was obtained for the mission station at Peridot and services were begun at the nearby government school. Building plans for a residence and school were on the drawing board when the synod mission committee sent Plocher on a 90 mile horseback journey north over the mountains to explore the feasibility of starting a second mission station at Camp Apache.

Plocher returned home on July 21, 1894, and reported to Rev. G. Ph. Brenner, the mission committee chairman of the Joint Synod, concluding with these words:

*Considering all things, I do not know why we should not in time establish a station in Camp Apache. How? When? We will speak about that orally.*<sup>2</sup>

That discussion with Brenner and other members of the mission committee took place later that summer when Missionary Plocher returned to Oshkosh, Wisconsin, for his wedding. On September 24, 1894, Johannes Plocher married Anna Dowidat in a ceremony performed by her father, Rev. Christopher Dowidat, the mission committee treasurer.

### The new helpmate

After the wedding, Missionary Plocher came back to Peridot with his wife, eager to do the Lord's work together. The tent he had lived in the previous year gave way to a small three-room parsonage newly constructed of adobe material. The abrupt climate and dietary changes for Mrs. Plocher, however, took their toll. After three months, there is disappointing news to report to Chairman Brenner:

*During the past quarterly period it has pleased our dear God to let cross and affliction come into our mission. Barely did I arrive with my wife when she suffered from gall bladder fever.<sup>3</sup> For eight weeks I dared not leave the sickroom in order to take up my mission work. Finally the fever left and today [January 1, 1895] I can thank the Lord that he has at least sent sufficient strength to my dear wife that she can get up a bit. In several weeks I hope she will again be completely healed.<sup>4</sup>*



Anna and John Plocher  
1894 (A)

Plocher thanked God three months later for his wife's full recovery and for the dear friends who helped during this difficult time. Before long she was using her talents to gain the Apache's good will.



At present the Indians are very friendly with us. They are concerned about clothes for the school children. They bring material to my wife that she should then make them clothing. The children very often tear their clothing and come immediately with more cloth for new clothes. My wife is occupied with much sewing, almost overloaded, because without a machine, everything must be done by hand.<sup>5</sup>

Individuals of the synod and organizations sent gifts and donations in support of the mission directly to Plocher. He wrote back to them with thanks from the children. His letter of November 2, 1895, ended with this postscript:

*I still must tell you that my wife is exceedingly happy over the beautiful sewing machine arriving in good condition this afternoon.*<sup>6</sup>

Two months later he wrote: *My wife has put the new sewing machine to frequent use. She is really happy about it. The old one I have repaired and now the Indian women are trying to sew with it. One woman handles it quite well.*<sup>7</sup>

### Starting the Mission School

With his wife's health returned, Plocher devoted himself to starting the mission school. In January 1894 he had already arranged for construction of a school house. One classroom, 18 x 24 feet, was built of adobe. Benches for about 20 children were put together and school supplies ordered. Then on April 1, 1895 he wrote:

*With God's help I have so far succeeded in winning 13 children for the school. The children with the exception of two or three are between the ages of 5 and 9 years old. They are all anxious to learn, pay good attention, and appear not to be inclined towards evil. . . I do all instructing [elementary subjects and religion] in the English language except when by necessity I use words from the Apache language to clarify a matter. . . If the children from the beginning have learned to love the Bible stories, then it is so much easier to unravel the chief teachings of Holy Scripture with the catechism than if one begins to operate from the catechism. Until now I have had no need for books in the school. In San Carlos [government school] I obtained a cast off chart which was torn, but yet useable. This is our "Fibel" [primer to learn the alphabet]. Everything else is done on the blackboard and with chalk. After I have finished with the chart, no doubt the first reader will be next.*

*Till now I have had the children in school in the mornings five days a week. . . It is impossible in warmer temperatures to give full attention to subject matters in the afternoon. I also fear that the desire to learn might be lost. . . I myself use the afternoons to accomplish unscheduled things. Beginning next Sunday I will conduct Sunday school with the children after I have returned from San Carlos. Those Indians should be drawn to it who are more accomplished with English. What will happen, we will leave up to our heavenly Father.*

*If more Indians should decide to send their children to the school, I would like permission to buy lumber so that I can make the necessary desks, finish off a table and some shelves. It also would be good if I could get a hymnal for the Sunday school.*<sup>8</sup>

Rev. Brenner replied May 20, 1895, with questions seeking more information for the committee. Plocher responded on June 8:

*To point 4 concerning textbooks, I might say that it concerns only the accession of books for the [mission] station. All necessary books for San Carlos are provided by the state. For Sunday school purposes the children have an English Bible, for each child a copy, and Gospel Hymns Consolidated at their disposal.*

*The expenses for text books of basic subjects is spared for the honorable committee. At the instruction of the superintendent of Indian schools textbooks are to be interchanged in the Indian schools. All old and new books on hand are available for distribution to the school children. I was asked if I would like books also for our school children, since a similar provision for free distribution obtains. Since the books should not and could not be given to the mission, but to the Indians, I accepted this offer for my present and future pupils. The children or other Indians had to vouch to the agent for receiving such books and I signed as witness that the agent delivered the specific books to the children. In this manner the children each received their own books. Naturally, for the sake of order, I took custody of all books. It would have made for great disorder to have the children take the books home. Thus for the time being all is taken care of.*

*If I should conduct catechism instruction later on, then I would propose Rev. Dr. Erick Pontoppidan's Epitome of Martin Luther's Small Catechism, translated from the Norwegian by Rev. E. Belfour, Chicago, J. Anderson Publishing Company. This small booklet distinguishes itself by its simplicity through the use of short appropriate passages.*

*Concerning a hymnal for the station, I am not familiar with the English book of the Missouri Synod. I became acquainted in Watertown with the Sunday school book of the General Council. Likewise the other hymnals of this body and translations of German basic hymns are not to be disregarded. Will have copies sent to me for examination. Till now I have practiced with the children here several hymns which are familiar to me. They also sing the Lord's Prayer, composed by Baxter from Garlands of Praise. . . I own, in addition to the above mentioned Gospel Hymns, also The Hymnary which contains 646 hymns with music. . . Until a suitable book is suggested, I can wait.*<sup>9</sup>



An Apache camp about 1888 (B)

*Mr. Plocher: A boy whose name I did not get but who lives at Antonio's camp and is a nephew of Captain Jack came to me Saturday as a volunteer for school here. On questioning I found he was or had been going to your school and told him that unless you consented, I would not take him, as I told you before. Please let me know if he is in attendance, if you can keep him and what you think about him. Yours, Captain Myer, Agent.*

Plocher replied to Captain Myer the same day:

*Dear Sir: The boy lives with Captain Jack. This Indian brought the boy to my school in September, telling me at that time that he had adopted the boy, whose father and mother had died when the child was but a suckling, whereupon the wife of Captain Jack cared for the boy. Since September the boy has attended school very regularly, was here yesterday and today and has said nothing of his application for school at San Carlos. On speaking with Captain Jack about this matter, I learned that he knew nothing of the boy's asking you. Jack told me he wanted the boy to go to school where he had put him. I should keep him in my school. From all appearances it seems to have been not much more than a passing fancy of the boy wanting to go to school at Carlos. There is plenty of room for him in my school, and, if Captain Jack has any right to parental authority over the boy, it might be good to let him have his will with the boy, since in this case he would hardly do the boy any harm. Respectfully, J. Plocher.*

Plocher then commented to Brenner: *The boy has come regularly to school and the matter seems to have gone away.*<sup>11</sup>

At the end of the year 1895 Missionary Plocher reported that his school enrollment had increased to 18 with ten boys and eight girls, but drawing new pupils was extremely challenging. School attendance was often irregular. The entire number was present less than ten times, wrote Plocher. Usually 12-14 students were in attendance at any one time, which made the teacher's work quite difficult. Plocher explained:

*In the fall many Indians go to the mountains or to Camp Apache and they take their children along. Others leave their children at home, but when the parents are absent the children often think only of play and forget about school. No further difficulties came from the agent, but he always let it be known wherever he went that he did not very much care for our school.*

*Gaining new pupils is tied up with great difficulties. In general many Apaches have little concern for school education. Many are even bitter enemies of the same. After a person has lived here for a longer time and has insight into the local conditions, one will not be disposed to condemn the Indians without further thought.*

*Just speak with an older Indian who has had several children in school. He doesn't speak without careful thought about earlier times and the present lifestyle of fellow tribesmen and comes to the conclusion: "The white man has brought only misery to us. He has worsened our habits. The white man wanted to have my children and send them away to school. I gave them to him and now where are my children? Many did not come back and I hear they have died. Dear friend, look at those who for 8, 9 and 10 years went away to school! You yourself know they do not want to work, that we have to feed them. You can see how worse they are than we who never went to school. Who brought whoredom, gambling and deceit to us? Aren't the students when they come home from the East, found with our daughters at night? Do not the girls when they come back to their mothers in general go about and seduce our young men? Where do all the big illnesses come from?" Such and similar talking one hears from older Indians. That it is so difficult to sway the Indians to send their children to school is quite clear.*

Plocher had begun the above report with these words, *To the Lord alone is due all glory for that which in the past year I was allowed to carry out among the Apaches. When I recall with what difficulties*

*I was faced when I wanted to start a school, to be able to make a small beginning, how it then seemed as if Satan could again destroy this small group of children, how it was nevertheless granted us to celebrate Christmas with 18 children – for that I must say again and again: The Lord is with us, let us rejoice and put our trust in him. . . We thank our heavenly Father for everything and hope and pray that our God will also keep the Indians in mind in the new year, unchanged in love and grace.*<sup>12</sup>

One year later at the end of 1896 Plocher wrote about gains made in the mission school, and also some of the problems:

*Except for Easter, summer and Christmas vacations, and my absence during the week in February [his trip to Phoenix by way of Sacaton], the school was in session the entire year. The children are showing some advancement. The first class is reading the First Reader and the handwriting of several children is most satisfactory. Since September Bible stories were taught in the Apache language, and till now the children know the following stories: The birth of Jesus, the shepherds in the fields and in Bethlehem, the circumcision and presentation of Jesus in the temple, the wise men from the East, the flight to Egypt, the innocent children, return to Nazareth and the twelve year old Jesus. Besides that they learned about ten passages, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments and a part of the Christian Creed without the meanings. These in English and the Lord's Prayer also in Apache. Furthermore they can sing two to three verses of twelve different hymns. The conduct of the pupils has improved, likewise school attendance was more regular. The list at present shows 20 pupils.*

*Even so, the work in the school is in a way difficult and exhausting. Everything must be done at the school, since there is little parental help at home. The children bring their habits from home where they seem to do whatever their hearts desire. . . It is difficult for the children to concentrate on anything for any length of time. If some don't succeed at something right away, they are impatient and want to do something else.*

*I bought for the school a stove which was permitted me two years ago and paid \$96, \$3 for a stove pipe and \$4.50 for a 3/4 cord of wood. For Christmas this year, gifts for the school children came from Watertown, Oshkosh, Columbus and Fort Atkinson. Mr. Windmiller from San Carlos also made a contribution. After Christmas there came several English books and a large number of booklets, "Flowers and Fruits" in the German language, and several, "Pictures from Zoology" "for the little red children" from Mr. George Brumder, also clothing and a quilt from Pastor Harders. To the dear friends of missions, who have supported the work up till now so willingly, sincere thanks is expressed. To God be all the glory for everything.*<sup>13</sup>



*Peridot school, bell and house about 1900 (C)*

School children of the synod had collected money to purchase a bell for the mission school. Missionary Plocher wrote on April 1, 1897:

*To our very great joy the bell arrived here at the end of March. The dear children are sincerely thanked for their love for the Indians, which they have hereby shown. I worked on the stand and placed the bell upon it. Since I could find no appropriate wood for this purpose, I looked for branches up on the San Carlos River, brought them here and pieced them together. May God our heavenly Father permit this bell to ring daily as an exhortation to the Indians and us, that also they and we have in Christ a Savior and Mediator, and that the sound of the bell, the "speaking iron," call together all who have need of a Comforter.<sup>14</sup>*

The bell rang all the next year and a half successfully calling out and calling together, so that, at the end of the year 1898 Plocher reported to the mission committee:

*In our day school there now are 22 children on the list. School attendance, unfortunately, did not improve as much as desired. Parents of the children were busy with the building of the railroad for a long time and often 10-20 miles away from their home. So the children had to go along if they wanted to have something to eat. . . . Then also, many Indians went into the mountains for hay and wood, so it was not possible for me to make much progress with regular school attendance. If under such circumstances I might have sometimes doubted the suitability of a school, hardly anyone will blame me, especially if one thinks that many other Indians could not be reached because of lack of time.*

*Instruction, as before, is done in English except for Bible history. To teach the Apache language I no longer consider practical, nor purposeful, nor demanded, nor wise. We have other work to do and are unable for lack of time and strength to do our real mission work. Looking at it correctly, a missionary should conduct a school only: 1) If he is able also to preach the Gospel adequately to the adults and young people; 2) If there is enough time for study of the language, and, 3) If conducting the school does not conflict with the study of the language. Further examples about this matter I have referred to in earlier letters.*

*The government school will be moved within the next two years and should be built about three miles from here. They are now giving thought of building various day schools on the reservation. It could then happen that the supplies for our school would be withdrawn. After giving this consideration, however, looking to the future, I don't think the damage to our cause would be very great.<sup>15</sup>*

### Sunday school and preaching at San Carlos

Soon after arriving at San Carlos in October 1893, Plocher made contact with the superintendent of the government boarding school where over 100 Apache children were being educated while their parents lived scattered about in camps. He received permission to hold Sunday services there, using Bible stories and songs to bring the Gospel to pupils and adults alike. By the end of 1894 he reported that the agent was appearing to be more friendly. There were several teaching staff changes in the government school, which did not seem disadvantageous to him.<sup>16</sup> After getting his own mission school started, he wrote on April 1, 1895:

*In San Carlos things are advancing daily as in the past. We are studying the Old Testament and discussing the important passages. Presently we are at the giving of the Ten Commandments at Sinai. As in the past, each Sunday a Bible passage is memorized and is the basis for the sermon. Nothing more can be done there because I was much occupied here [with the mission school]. I did not want to begin any instruction during the week at that place [San Carlos] under the prevailing circumstances, inner differences and badly regulated school matters. In time our Lord will open a door for us.<sup>17</sup>*



*San Carlos government agency (left), military chapel (middle) and boarding school (right) where Missionary Plocher conducted Sunday services. Photo is from the 1920's before the Coolidge dam reservoir inundated this area. (D)*

Months later at the end of 1895 he reported:

*In San Carlos I again conducted worship services every Sunday. Whether this work will bear fruit at some time we will have to commit to our dear heavenly Father. The art and manner by which the scattered seed is systematically smothered by thorns and weeds is scarcely believed by anyone who has not experienced such things.<sup>18</sup>*

A year later, at the end of 1896, Plocher's report on the Sunday school services at San Carlos referred to the adult Indians and the challenges connected with that.

*During the spring, summer and part of last fall I preached with the help of a translator also to the adult Indians. But when the drinking bouts started so heavily, I could hardly get any listeners who would pay attention. Also the translator refused to translate for fear of inevitable mockery. So I discontinued this work for several Sundays to await an advantageous time. Shortly before the vacation, when the drinking slowed down, I resumed the work with the adults in this manner, namely, that I worked out at home with a translator what I wanted to say, and then presented it to the Apaches alone. . . . It might be good to continue working with the adults without an interpreter and use him only in the preparation of the material to be presented. An attempt at this could bring no harm. For interpretation services I laid out \$6.90 this past quarter.<sup>19</sup>*

Plocher's letters, in the meantime, touch on many items such as language study, Apache customs, building projects, trips to Globe, Phoenix, Camp Apache and Oshkosh. Not until April 1898 did he again report on his work at the government school.

*In the worship service at San Carlos I introduced the practice of presenting the sermon for the adults on the last Sunday of each month. Attending these services, besides the school children and the teaching personnel, were also some persons who are connected with the government agency. Preaching to some of these people, Indians as well as whites, is difficult. The word, cross, is to some an offense and to others foolishness, and if the command of our Lord were not there that it must be preached, one might simply let it be. Were it not for the Lord's promises, one might often doubt. But we do not want to set conditions for the Lord of the Harvest. The widely spread seed will at its time certainly produce its grain.<sup>20</sup>*

Plocher's faith in God's promised blessing upon the work was well founded. By the end of that year 1898 he reported:

*I preached on Sundays as usual in San Carlos, and also conducted Sunday school. Each last Sunday of the month I preached for the adults as in the past. These services were regularly attended by quite a few people, although one cannot get the God-deniers to come. Among the government workers, especially the school workers, it appears that increasingly more understanding of our cause is opening up. People who formerly worked against us, show themselves more friendly and are causing less and less friction. Since our Indians are so scattered, I could not preach to larger assemblies of them as before, and had to resort to discussions with individuals.<sup>21</sup>*

### The Apache language

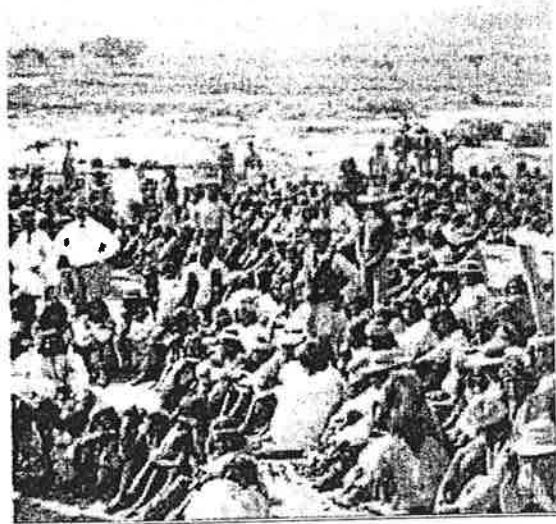
While the government schools taught English to the Apache children, Plocher recognized that the adults could be reached only in their native language. He was already conversant in German and English, and schooled in the linguistics of Latin, Greek and Hebrew while in college and seminary, but Apache was a whole new challenge.

Upon arrival at San Carlos in 1893 he observed that the Apache language was completely different from that of the other Indian tribes.<sup>22</sup> Yet he was determined to begin learning Apache immediately, even if he also must learn Spanish, since he observed that the Apache language contained many words and forms which stem from the Spanish.<sup>23</sup> He soon realized how much time and patience were required, especially when he became occupied with building projects and the hot summer temperatures made it almost impossible to study. He engaged an interpreter.

*As already reported, I have a helper since January 21, [1895] and we must pay him \$15 per month. He is most necessary for me in learning the language. In the school I do not make use of him very much, only if it is absolutely necessary. Meanwhile he worked hard to clean up and level off the grounds. He also was a great help when I cleaned the boundary line of the 9 acre plot of the heavy brush and thickets, and he must also help with putting up the fence. . . About his character I cannot say much. At first he came with evident signs of disorder in his lifestyle. Then I spoke with him which resulted in some improvement. After we have put the property in better order, I will see what else can be done with the helper.<sup>24</sup>*

Plocher wrote March 1, 1895, describing some of the difficulties he had discovered with learning the Apache language.

*I have not yet preached to the Indians in the Apache language. Imperfect speaking could cause more damage than good. If one wants to present the Gospel here, one must really be well versed in the lan-*

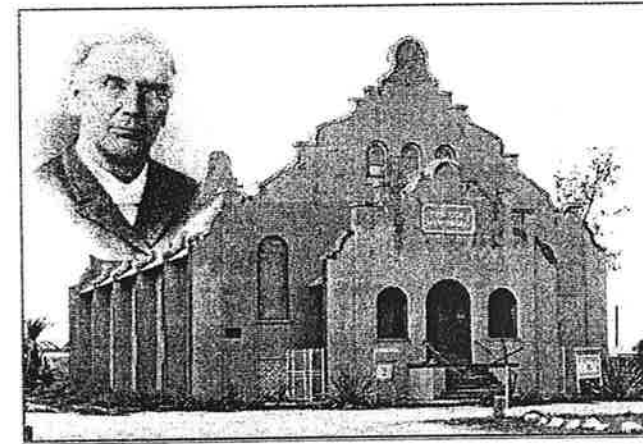


Mohave, Yuma, and Apache tribes at San Carlos awaiting rations in 1874 (DD)

*guage. Because the Apache thinks and becomes quickly involved in the art of dispute, that means an answer has to be correctly given and understood.*

*The learning of the Apache language is not an easy matter, as one might imagine. If you think and say that the Apache language lacks a vocabulary and is simple and weak in expressions, that comes from one either knowing absolutely nothing about the matter or from one who is just reiterating what others without any knowledge say.*

*Until now I have met no white person who has control of the Apache language. Yesterday Dr. Straub left San Carlos. This young man was in San Carlos as long as I have been here. Since he as the military physician had virtually nothing to do, he very often went on the hunt with the Indians. With the best government interpreters available to him, this young man, in part as a pastime and in part as ambition, hoped for acceptance by the Ethnological Institute in Washington to learn the Apache language. In spite of the fact that this young physician was highly gifted and had dedicated himself to this study almost as long as he was here, he still cannot follow the conversation of the Indian, and can only converse with the Indians on certain topics. I am saying this to you to give you a small glimpse of what it means to study the Apache language. You must always bear in mind that no preparations have been made for this.*



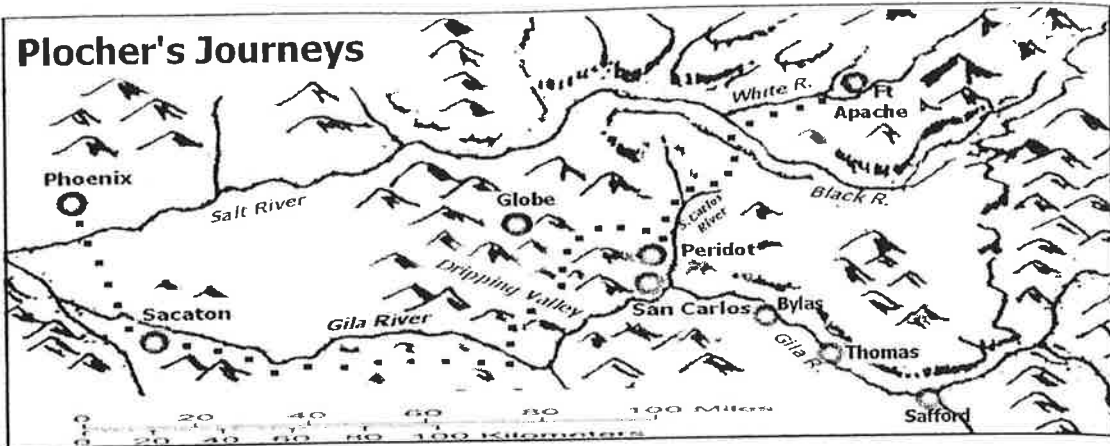
Rev. Charles Cook and his memorial church at Sacaton (E)

*If one hears that Missionary Cook speaks to so many Indians every Sunday in their language, one might easily express the wish that at our station something like that could also take place. But we have to keep in mind that in Sacaton everything did not happen all of a sudden. The church conditions there were different and the missionary there also had time to study the language. About this and many other matters I had the opportunity to have a discussion with Missionary Cook.<sup>25</sup>*

*The beginning of February [1896] I received a letter from a soldier named Brockmann. This young man comes from the congregation in Watertown. He informed*

*me that his company would be in Phoenix on February 19, and he would be very happy if it would be possible for me to give him Holy Communion. I answered immediately saying that was quite a distance for me, but I would come if he urgently desired it. I received then the answer that he would like to receive the comfort and peace with God in the Holy Supper.*

*Thereupon I hitched my horse to the two wheeled wagon on February 14 and drove 49 miles on that day. I found lodging with a rancher in Dripping Valley. I hoped to arrive in Sacaton on Saturday evening, but I had not given consideration to the roads. On Saturday, after I had gone 52 miles, the sun and moon set. There was nothing left for me to do but continue on the last 16 miles to Sacaton and commit myself to the protection of God under the open heaven. Since it was a rather cold night, I had to find some wood in the darkness and light a fire. Early Sunday at 9:00 a.m. I met Missionary Cook about a mile from Sacaton.*



He was in the process of driving with his two horses to a church about 9 miles away. After a mutual greeting he continued on to his church and I to Sacaton. The missionary's wife cordially received me. A bit later I visited the Sunday school at the government school. Then in the afternoon I attended an Indian worship service. Missionary Cook preached in the Pima language. In the evening there was an English service in the school.<sup>26</sup>

On Monday I gave my horse further rest. Tuesday I drove the 45 miles to Phoenix and looked up Mr. Brockmann yet that evening. After a longer conversation I gave him Holy Communion. On Wednesday I drove back to Sacaton and arrived home Saturday noon.

In spite of the fact that the trip was burdensome, from personal experience I learned that the work among the Indians is not ineffective. From my conversations with Mr. Cook I learned that one has to wait patiently for the time which our Lord has established, and that the study of the Apache language demands time, even if one has the best government volunteers, such as Cook had.<sup>27</sup>

When Rev. Brenner received the March 1 report, in his reply he apparently took exception to some of Plocher's remarks. Plocher quickly responded on April 16, 1896.

*It grieves me that you have made reference to those remarks about the learning of the language. I did not intend to make certain direct complaints. When one works here alone, then at times one becomes dissatisfied and just wants to speak out. So for once I have done that in writing. At the same time I wanted to challenge some of the generally wide spread views about the easy learning and deficiency of the Indian languages.*

*First, if a person seriously occupied himself with an Indian language, he learns that the Indian does not express himself in obscure and idle, abstract phrases. He speaks more definitively, presenting his thoughts so precisely that one understands exactly what he means. To learn this manner of expression is not at all easy for a non-Indian. Even if one has an interpreter, one has to translate the original words first, if he wants to progress.*

*This young man translated, for example, the English word dare [wagen in German] with the long word*

*"do-i-na-ha-de'-go-ilch-ta'-a-na-da-da-leh." In this particular word there appear various other words and could be translated: "I have no fear," or "I am not afraid, I will do what I want," or "I have made up my mind."*

*Deaf [Taub in German] = "bi-tshe-ye-a'-go-de" which actually says "He has no ears." Ink is transcribed: "Black water with which I write on paper" = 'to'-dlighi'ch li-na-al-tso's-wa-gad-sha-ha." School = "house in which it is reckoned (read) on paper (book)" = "us-na-al-ysa's-hos-ta'k."*

*Since the beginning of this month I have had a good interpreter, whom I use for religious instruction and also on Sundays in the school. He shows more interest in the school and translates more the spirit of the thing than the previous ones. Several children tell Bible stories in Apache very well.<sup>28</sup>*

Plocher wrote another letter in April 1896 about his language project:

*During February and March I again hired an Apache and paid him \$27 for both months. With him I reviewed a large portion of my vocabulary, a work which is very important. Because the beginner makes many errors, the Indians often like to play jokes and respond with incorrect words. I now have written down between 900 and 1,000 words and 500-600 sentences.*

*My translator informed me that he became a policeman. Since the unrestrained life of a policeman gives an Indian more freedom than I am inclined to give him, I let him go and will look around for another.<sup>29</sup>*

In July 1896 Plocher sent his quarterly report for the previous three months. By this time Rev. Paul Mayerhoff had accepted the mission committee's call to start up at Camp Apache, for which Plocher expresses thanks to the Lord for placing another worker in his field. He then updated Brenner on the language situation.

*After April 6 I tried once more with a young Indian, who served quite well up until about May 26. Then he said he wanted a vacation because it was too hot for him. I gave him freedom until July 1 under the condition that he must translate for me on Sundays. With this youngster as interpreter I preached every Sunday to the grown ups in the past quarter. Sometimes I had many listeners, other times only a few women.*



Interpreter Oscar Davis and wife (F)

*Since my interpreter does not want to work any longer for \$15 per month, and it is especially too much for him to do anything in the heat, I had to let him go. I offered him 75 cents for a half day on Sundays, but he said that was not enough for him. During his vacation he was the government interpreter and received \$1.50 to \$2.00 a day, and it appears he thought I should also give him that amount. I let the youngster go. Thus and also in other instances a good, happy hope and expectation came to naught. But the Lord our God certainly has his purposes for all and he also knows counsel and helps out those who put their trust in him.<sup>30</sup>*

Preaching to the adult Indians at San Carlos on Sundays had its own challenges. When heavy drinking bouts began to interrupt his services, as mentioned earlier, Plocher discontinued the work for a while. Instead he translated his messages at home with the help of an interpreter and then presented them by himself to the Apaches. At the end of the year 1896 he reported:

*With the help of an interpreter I translated into the Apache language twenty Bible stories, the Ten Commandments with the meanings of some of them, the First and Second Articles of the Creed with the meanings, the Lord's Prayer without meanings, a number of passages and a greater part of the Primer.*

*Furthermore in the past year, I have for my own purposes compiled a pocket dictionary of the Apache language, English-Apache. Then I began a dictionary on a larger scale.<sup>31</sup> In this I show all words with their word forms, compounds, variations, etc. Along with that, wherever possible, I added a sentence to each word form, in order to show how the word is used in the language. Then I went into the analysis of the words thereby to establish the basic form and the basic meaning of the word. The work on this dictionary takes a lot of time, but the related effort will not be in vain, for a person in this way gains a better insight into the language. Along with that the work will offer the material for a grammar.<sup>32</sup>*

### Exploratory trip to Globe

Back on May 26 of 1895, at the request of the mission committee, Plocher made a trip westward to Globe to explore possibilities for starting a station there. He was to contact some likely prospects whose names were given him.

*I borrowed from [Indian chief] Cassadore a good riding horse, my own is not in condition to make such a journey, and left the station at 5:00 a.m. About 9:30 after a 25 mile journey I arrived at the little town of Globe. I left my horse with a certain Mr. Bohse, whom I met here once earlier and who introduced himself as Pomeranian and Lutheran. After discussing with him all sorts of things, such as conditions in the village, etc., I gave him the reason for my coming. I noticed that the man had earlier been a church member and attended the Methodist Episcopal Church now and then "if they had something special" like a children's concert, but that he was ashamed to call himself a Christian. He then thought he might like to go with me to "the few Germans" who are in Globe, but then backed down even though I urged him to come along. I am giving you such an exact description so that you yourselves can make judgments of the situation to some degree, and would be less surprised when you hear what thoughts I have about carrying out your plan which you have informed me about.*

Mr. Bohse gave Plocher a few names of the Germans living in Globe, not really knowing what denomination they were. Plocher's visits discovered that most of them were Catholic or Protestant or Methodist or were getting along pretty well without attending church, although Mrs. Morton from Wuertemberg offered him space in her house if he ever came to preach in Globe. At 2:00 p.m. Plocher saddled his horse and was back home by 7:00 p.m. Then he asked:

*What impact did all this have on me? On my way home I reviewed the entire experience. Globe is a small town, has today a population of about 300. Business has been at a low ebb for a long time with prospects for recovery virtually slim or nonexistent. The [copper] mines have been closed already for more than a year, almost all workers have moved away and prospects for an early reopening of the mines does not exist. Material for starting a congregation is small in quantity and quality. The necessary interest is lacking. Would it be wise to send a man to such a place under such conditions? At least 800 to 1,000 dollars*



Globe, Copper City Arizona, about 1900 (G)

*[River] about 12 miles from [Ft] Thomas [a reference to Bylas]. If the dear brother were a bit fearful, he could settle first in Thomas and preach to the English there, and then go among the Indians. Thomas is at present the end of the railroad and it wouldn't be impossible to form a congregation there since it has no preacher yet.*

*The other place for establishing a station is Camp Apache. It would be better not to go first to Carlos, but save the several hundred mile railroad ride and go directly to [Camp] Apache over Holbrook, a station on the Atlantic and Pacific R.R. From here one has about 90 miles with the postal wagon to Apache. Also here several days of looking around would be needed to show the dear brother where one might begin.<sup>33</sup>*

Five months after the above letter, Plocher on November 2, 1895 sent information to Brenner with an urgent message about the synod's plans to send a second missionary.

*I experienced a few things last Sunday which may influence our establishing a place in Camp Apache, and consider it my duty to inform you about it. Last Sunday I met the chaplain of Camp Apache. From this man, an Episcopal clergyman, I learned that the Presbyterians were in the process of beginning in Camp Apache. Missionary Cook was asked by women from the East to survey the area. He gave a favorable report and as soon as the right man can be found, the work should be undertaken. The chaplain conducts services every Sunday afternoon also in the government school at Camp Apache.<sup>34</sup>*

That same month, on November 30, 1895, Plocher sent another letter, concerned about losing the area along the Gila River [Bylas], if the synod cannot move quickly. He then quoted from a letter he had just received from Poughkeepsie, New York.

*Rev. J. Plocher. Dear Sir: I understand that you are engaged in missionary work among the San Carlos Apaches. Can you give any idea as to the cost of the buildings or perhaps you have but one, which serves both for school and dwelling house at your mission, also cost of a well? And I should also like some idea of the cost per month of subsistence for a family of two or three persons. I make these enquiries as a member of an Indian Association and with a view to a possible establishment of a mission some time in the future among the Indians on the Gila River. By kindly answering these enquiries, when convenient, you will much oblige - Yours respectfully, Miss A.E. Cleveland.*

Plocher added the following comment: *If I am not mistaken, these are Baptists. A teacher and matron of the Carlos school, Miss R. Lee, made things impossible last year and was dismissed from government services. She remarked to me that she most likely would come back some time later. This woman is from Poughkeepsie, New York and is Baptist. Therefore my presumption is not without basis. The above mentioned do not seem to be associated with those who want to move ahead in Camp Apache [i.e. Rev. Cook and the Presbyterians].*<sup>35</sup>

As of March 1, 1896 the place along the Gila had not yet been filled by any other denomination.<sup>36</sup>

### Missionary Paul Mayerhoff to Camp Apache

The mission committee had been continually weighing the prospect of opening a second station at Camp Apache. The committee's desire for an update prompted Plocher's reply of April 1, 1895:

*What Camp Apache still needs, I can't say much about that. During the winter the connection between there and here is virtually nonexistent. I heard that the government school has little result, not because of the Indians, but the responsibility lies upon the officials and teaching personnel.*<sup>37</sup>



Rev. Paul Mayerhoff (H)

In the course of the next year the mission committee worked to secure a second missionary for the Apaches. Plocher was asked who he thought might be a good choice. He answered on March 1, 1896.

*If we want to do something this year in Camp Apache, someone has to be there by at least the first part of May. Concerning whatever persons are capable or incapable I do not like to give my opinion. That I have a higher opinion of Mayerhoff is not so. I have avoided voicing my opinion and consider that to be the best for me. If I give my approval for a call, it would be real easy later on to blame me if things did not turn out well, and likewise if I spoke otherwise. For this reason I withhold my opinions.*<sup>38</sup>

After the mission committee reached a decision, Plocher wrote on April 16, 1896: *I am very happy that finally someone is called to Camp Apache, and that Brother Paul Mayerhoff has accepted it. May our heavenly Father grant him very much courage and a strong faith, so that he not abandon the hope.*<sup>39</sup>

Three months later, July 1896, Plocher made this report:

*Towards the end of May [1896] Missionary Mayerhoff arrived with us and stayed here about four weeks. During that time he made himself acquainted with Indians, he copied the compiled dictionary of about 1,600 words, not 900-1,000 as previously reported, and familiarized himself with the local conditions.*<sup>40</sup> *Since we did not think it good for Mr. Mayerhoff to settle in Camp Apache proper, and no provision had been made for a tent, we made a smaller one from the remnants of my old tent. Since Missionary Mayerhoff informed me that it was the wish of the committee that I accompany him to Camp Apache, I made the necessary preparations, and on June 26 we went on our way accompanied by an Indian.*

*About noon on June 27 we arrived in Camp Apache. After we had finished with all the red tape, we went in the afternoon to find Chief Astsisse<sup>41</sup> (sic) [Alchise]. After going in several wrong directions we found him about 15 miles north of Camp Apache. I had met the man previously and we were cordially received*

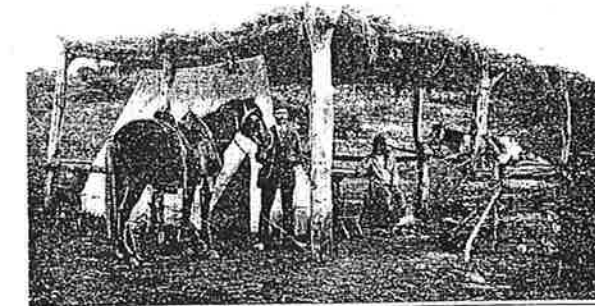
*and treated according to Indian fashion. We spoke well into the night. The following morning, Sunday, we met with the chief and other Indians. About noon we broke up and went back to the [government] school where we had hoped to be by 3 o'clock. The school clock, however, was an hour ahead and we arrived just as the Sunday school was over.*

*The same day we then went to the eastern branch of the White River and stayed there overnight in the open. Early Monday we saw there a piece of land which could be used for a settlement. Then we went back to Camp Apache, had a meeting with Colonel Powell, bought some provisions, and by evening were about 15 miles northwest of Fort Apache at Cedar Springs. Here we had a meeting with Chief Aschkinagathl (sic). Late the next evening we were on the upper portion of the Cibicue with Chief Kuli (sic). Mayerhoff stayed here for one day and went back in the company of a policeman. I stayed two days, since my horse was overcome with fatigue and we still had a long way to go. On July 4 in the afternoon I arrived here accompanied by my Indian. It was a longer way which I took on this journey, about 240 miles, and it is also a difficult way. I refrained from describing the journey, the experiences and observations, since Mr. Mayerhoff will make a better report. But I am prepared to report in greater detail if so desired.*<sup>42</sup>

A year passed by and Plocher's next mention of Camp Apache was in his letter of May 29, 1897. Before getting to the questions asked him about locating the mission station at Camp Apache, Plocher first explained a photograph he had sent to Pastor Brenner.

*I would have gladly sent you a photo of the school and the bell, but two women from San Carlos had photographed only the house and several other items, but not the school. So I am sorry I cannot grant your wish. These two women photographed for their own pleasure certain items here and in the area of San Carlos so they could have a remembrance of Arizona at a later time. They sent us that picture. That's how we came in possession of several pictures.*

*I am sorry about Brother Mayerhoff, that still no clarity has been established regarding the place where he should settle. I have refrained up till now to give you my judgment in this matter. Naturally I do not know the area as well as Brother Mayerhoff after touring the area must know it. The selection of a place should above all be determined by what purpose it must serve. If we are clear about this, ideas will soon fall into place.*



Missionary Paul Mayerhoff in temporary housing near Ft. Apache (J)

*If you now want to follow strictly the instructions which I at the time received from the honorable mission committee, then you are tying your hands as well as those of the missionary. It is my opinion that other conditions now obtain from those at the time the instructions were written. In Camp Apache the valleys are very small, often barely 50 feet wide. The creek often forces itself several miles through the rocks and then forms so-called box canyons. Then the*



Chief Alchise (I)

valley widens again where one or two farms of perhaps 2-20 acres of land can be established, and then perhaps a stretch of barren land, etc.

Along with this terrain there is the fact that 600 families are spread out over a large area. Add to this the fact that several families operate a small farm in four or five various places, and during the summer constantly move from one farm to the other. When, for example, on one farm after the corn is planted, they go to the next and there possibly hoe, then back to the first where it will be irrigated, then maybe up the stream to a third farm where planting will take place. For a change they go for a week 20 to 30 miles into the mountains where on an open space grass is cut, dried, and the hay is brought to Camp Apache and sold to the military. That's the way the Indians constantly move from place to place. During the summer a fair number of the Indians come together for a while, and soon spread about. In winter they move to more protected places and there set up their winter quarters. A great number come somewhat closer into the neighborhood of Camp Apache.

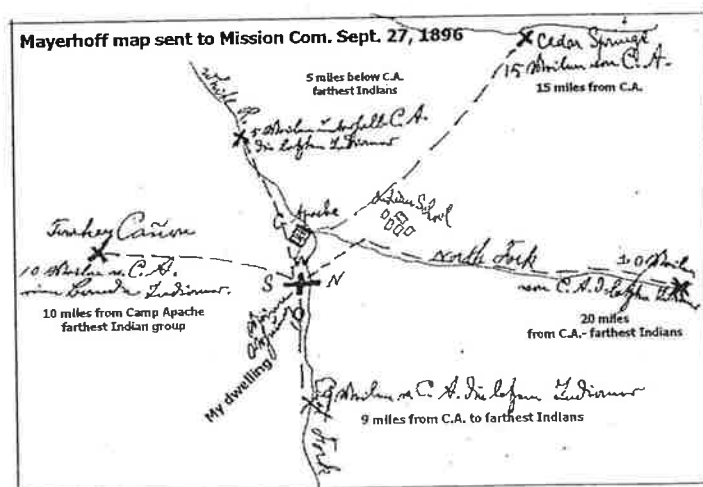
If one follows this accurately, then a person comes to the conclusion that under present circumstances, establishing a day school can hardly be given thought. It would be difficult, virtually impossible to get a sufficient number of children for regular school attendance. Then the missionary, if he has to conduct school, would be faced with a widely separated congregation. He either could not properly take care of the school or has to neglect the adults. That would be similar to a pastor having to conduct school along with serving two or three congregations. If a mission station should have a school and the missionary do justice to his work with those not in school, then a school teacher should be given to the missionary.

The building of such a mission school, if it is within 10 or 20 miles from the government school, is considered and treated as an opposition school by the government officials, never as a helper in the civilization efforts of the Indians. My previous letter should have made this clear to you.

I would therefore recommend in Camp Apache, regarding the selection of a place, not to look for a place to erect a school, but above all things, to be concerned about finding a possible central location for a dwelling for the missionary. Considering everything, the military reservation is the central place. Farther away makes it more difficult for the missionary to reach the Indian settlements. [Plocher described the possibilities for several miles in each direction from the military reservation.]

On the usual map there is nothing of the topography of the land to see. Brother Mayerhoff has not written anything to me about the selected place, but from what I can ascertain from the description by the Indians, it appears to be one of the two places which I pointed out to him last summer.<sup>43</sup>

If the thought of founding a school continues, then I would suggest a set-



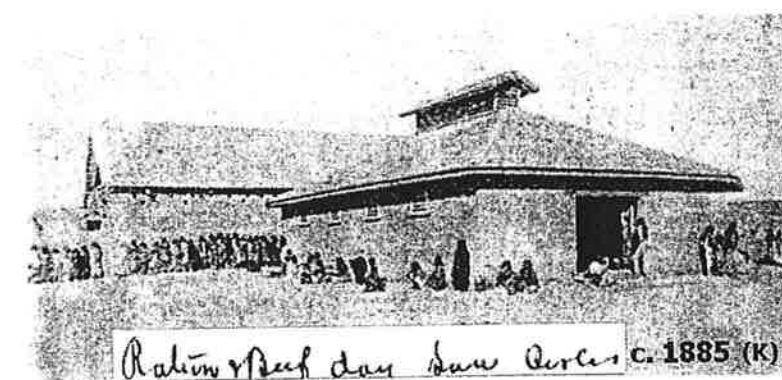
tlement in Cibicue, 40 miles from Camp Apache. A number of Indians are there, not too far apart from each other, and you are far enough away from the agency. This place, however, has the disadvantage of being completely cut off. At certain times of the year it can hardly be reached. One can drive over the mountain in a wagon during the summer, but in no way can you get to Camp Apache from there in the winter. I would be pleased if these lines help you in any way to answer your questions.<sup>44</sup>

### Apache culture and customs

Life on the Apache reservation was a completely new world for a white person who came from Wisconsin with a German Lutheran background. Plocher, however, learned the different customs of the Indians and sought to understand their ways. He also was witness to the culture clash which often became evident between the United States government and the subjugated Native Americans on the reservation. Plocher's report for the first three months of 1895 related some concerns.

At present the Indians are up in the air over the fact that this summer a railroad is to be laid through the reservation. Recently there was an unrest, so that the officials left the area for fear, but the storm appears to have simmered to some degree. I don't believe that it will become too serious. At present the Indians are very friendly with us. . . . Almost all Indians are unhappy at this time of the year because of things coming up short. The Indian is not usually accustomed to conserving. Several months before the harvest, supplies greatly diminish. If by selling wood or hay he then makes a few dollars, then that disappears in a short time. . . Since, however, the military post is almost gone with only about 20 to 30 men still here, that source of income for the Indians this year is virtually dried up.<sup>45</sup>

After returning from his trip to Sacaton, Plocher's March 1, 1896 letter made these observations comparing the people Cook worked among with his own.



The Pima Indians seem to be free of the vices which the Apaches practice so much. One hears nothing about a general drinking festival there. The conduct of those Indians in their church during the worship service was really exemplary. Also in their dress, etc. they show more orderliness. Being one fourth or one half dressed, as seen among the Apaches,

I noticed only toward the boundary of the reservation among such Indians who are not Christian. Missionary Cook told me, for example, that almost no [medicine dancing] is any longer practiced, and gambling and betting had virtually ceased. Also the government does not feed these Indians as is generally practiced. If our Apaches would no longer receive rations, then they would certainly care much more about their well-being. It would not be considered too difficult to make the Apaches self-sustaining. But the interest of those persons who are there to bring the Indians to this point is lacking. The government with their present system is drawing the Apaches into being lazy people. Even if farming here is not possible, yet the Apaches could very easily support themselves with cattle breeding, but the cattle companies



are against that. Instead of the Indian cattle eating the grass on the hills, the uncountable cattle of the whites graze the reservation. We do not want, however, to indulge in complaints, but place also this matter before our heavenly Father.<sup>46</sup>

Plocher observed the religious thinking of many Apaches. In his July 1896 report he commented on his Sunday preaching with an interpreter to adults at San Carlos and described the response he received.

*Sometimes I had many listeners, other times only a few women. The Indians indeed paid good attention, yet one cannot place too high a hope on this, because their common demeanor and custom bids the Indian to listen to the person who is speaking with him.*

*The impression I have gotten till now is this: The Indian considers himself as good and just, and it is not necessary for a person to speak to him about it. The woman, on the other hand, in the eyes of the man is the embodiment of all evil, and she must needs be preached to. It is necessary for her. The Indian [man] thinks and says, We already hear your talk.*

*Big and hateful enemies of the Gospel are the medicine men. It is no lie that these men have very great influence. They claim that they are in direct contact with God, that God speaks to them in dreams, sending them messages through birds or other messengers. These sorcerers and conjurers, those are the best names that can be given to medicine men, also say that it is not right to speak about God, as the Bible does. Nor dare one speak about departure and death, otherwise these could come earlier. If a person speaks, he should only dispense praise and humor, so that people be put into a good mood, that they enjoy themselves and express their well being with jokes and laughter. Under such circumstances, no one can deny that it is indeed difficult to proclaim salvation in Christ, to win the hearts and bring them to Christ. Besides that comes the old suspicion that I came only to get the children into the school. The school therefore presently is always still a cause for mistrust.<sup>47</sup>*



Go-Shono, Medicine Man (L)

More comments about Apache habits and ways were made in Plocher's year-end report dated January 2, 1897. He expressed greater understanding of the Apache and offered a defense when he felt that some of their customs were being maligned.

*It is necessary now to devote a few words about the Indians. Until now I have usually not written much about the Indians. I was led by the thought that it would take quite some time to get an insight into the habits and ways of a people who are so different from us in more than one way. I could not and did not want to adopt the worldly judgment which is so quick to be finished with the Indians. . . It is easy to come to false conclusions from being uninformed about the facts, which caused me for some time now to investigate certain questions more fully.*

*It is not to be denied that the Apaches, seemingly in every respect, are regressing year by year instead of going forward. Not only are they becoming poorer, but are also sinking morally. The blame is simply laid on the Indians themselves, and said that the nature of the Apache is thus endowed, and that as he has come into contact with civilization, he is capable of nothing. This, however, is mere conjecture and not proven.*

*Although the observation can be made that the Apaches do not work very much, this does not lead to the conclusion that they are altogether lazy. In spite of the fact that one sees that the women alone work in the fields, it is false to conclude that the men are the lazy ones. The fact is that there is very little for the Apaches to do. For years the fertile valleys, which are found in the white hills and their side hills through which deep rivers flow, were given them to cultivate. . . . Now the area along the Gila River above the reservation is being settled constantly by whites. More Mormons came and are still coming. Thus more water is drawn from the Gila because those Mormons use for their fields the water so necessary for the Apaches. Year after year the river is getting smaller and was dried up last summer in many places on the reservation. Consequently there was no water for the irrigation ditches at a time when it never rains. The heat quickly dried up the almost mature seeds and many very promising corn fields withered. When the rainy period came it was too late to replant the ground or there were no seeds to plant. One wonders why the Indians in spite of these experiences continue to plant their fields. Some get disgusted and do nothing. Who will blame him, if he has no hope of it getting better? Others leave their home in the Gila and start to rebuild in San Carlos. But that eventually will lead to the same result. Already in the past two years there was a significant water shortage in Carlos.*

*Why is it that the women do most of the land cultivation? Another reason can be found besides the so quickly concluded laziness of men. When the land was distributed, the family father had claim to a definite piece of land and also worked the same. Gradually, however, the women came to be possessors of the land and worked it. The family bond, the cohabitation of husband and wife, is different with the Indians from ours. What the husband brought to the marriage belongs to him and he has to care for it. What the wife brought belongs to her and she has to care for it. For example, the hut belongs to the wife, therefore she is responsible for its repairs. Concerning the horses which belong to the women or children, the husband has nothing to say. He dare not even ride them without the specific permission of his wife, if his own has occasionally lost itself in the mountains, or if he has lost the same in gambling. And for this the women are such terrible slaves of the men?! To each his own and each for his own is the rule.*



Apache woman farming (M)

*Also the children belong to the wife. If now dissension arises in the marriage, the wives simply leave or divorce. They have little patience with their husbands. The agent dissolves the union and often grants the land to the wife with the stipulation that she take care of the children. The husband is now without land. If the woman marries again, she brings the land with her to the marriage, but must take care of the children from the first marriage. If the man helps with the work in the field, the wife must give him a portion of the produce. Last summer, for instance, I bought grain from a woman who went into the mountains and told me to hang on to the money until she returns. She told me definitely that I dare not give any of the money to her husband who stayed home, because the grain grew on her land and not on her husband's. In order to keep the entire proceeds of their land for themselves, the women themselves usually work the one or two acres of land which they have.*

*The government now feeds the Indians, even in the middle of the week, more than they have had for quite a while. So why should the Indian now work much? Or better still, what should he do if he has nothing to do? Answer: Make the time as pleasurable as possible. And who would burden him with that? This natu-*

rally is talk from the Indian viewpoint. Idleness, however, is the beginning of all burdens. The less the Indian has to do, the more he gambles and drinks and spends the time with pleasantries. But he sinks deeper thereby, and the women are no exception.

Is there really not any work on the reservation for an Indian to find an honest income? Certainly, if the government and its representatives would resolve the matter. For each Indian a job could be created and regular work could be given the Apaches. It would make them self supporting within several years, yes, even fairly well off. But this can only happen through the government, since they have in their possession what this all requires.<sup>48</sup>

The local Apache Chief Cassadore had been friendly to Missionary Plocher from the beginning in March 1894 and had given his approval for the synod to acquire the land upon which the mission located. Cassadore had also volunteered to ride with Plocher on that exploratory trip to Camp Apache several months later. The chief was helpful to the mission in various ways. Then in April 1897 Plocher wrote:

*On the second of February our Chief Cassadore died from dropsy. He remained a heathen to the end. A new chief has not as yet been chosen.*<sup>48</sup>

Mrs. Plocher noted Cassadore's death in her diary and commented on the Indian burial rites that went on through the night for their chief.

*Old Cassadore died today. What a howling, crying and screaming they do. No one can understand unless they have once heard it themselves.*<sup>50</sup>



Apache dancers (N)

At this time Missionary Plocher reported to Brenner a few more observations about the Apache situation on the reservation.

*There appears to be an odd spirit in the world. Dissatisfaction and greediness is also noticeable on the reservation. There is always a movement to denigrate the reservation, to deplete the Indians of goods and possessions. How long will it take before the Apaches must leave and find another place for a home! Since the Apaches are not Indians with a treaty, Congress can at its pleasure cut them off from the reservation. The government*

*officials do absolutely nothing for the Indians. Instead they try ways to ruin their possessions as much as possible. It tears one's heart out when you see all of this and cannot help. We hope and believe that God's arm is strong enough to punish the evil doers, yet one must cry out sometimes, "Oh Lord, how long are you waiting?"*<sup>51</sup>

Already in the spring of 1895 there had been talk of the railroad being extended from Ft. Thomas, about forty miles east of San Carlos, through the reservation and on westward to Globe. Finally in the spring of 1898 the work began under protests from the Indians. Plocher wrote:

*We in San Carlos are at present in a time of uprising. A railroad is to be built and this caused such an uproar until the Indians were talked out. Since then \$8,000 was divided among the Indians, but that resulted in much dissatisfaction, for they wanted more. Others obtained intoxicating drinks from outside the reservation. You can imagine the results. Others were gambling with cards day and night and losing their money. These \$8,000 are no blessing for the Indians nor for our work. Our school also suffered from this general uprising [with the railroad going through the center of our property]. After the railroad is completed then maybe quiet will be restored. All the vagabonds from outside who came through the reservation and left a lot of smut with the Indians will no longer have it so easy with them.*<sup>52</sup>

Plocher's quarterly report for April, May and June of 1899 described some unsettling events on the reservation which created more uncertainties.

*On April 1 there was again an agent change. Captain Ritzins was promoted and Major Nicolson is taking his place as agent. This frequent changing is quite unsettling for our work. Each agent has different ideas on how the Indians should be managed and there will be more experimenting. . . . For two months now we have had an inspector here [at the government school]. Various persons do not have good consciences. Plans were voided then restored again. Cannot figure out what is going on since everything is in chaos.*<sup>53</sup>

## Buildings and grounds

The new adobe parsonage at San Carlos [Peridot] was ready to move into when Missionary Plocher returned with his bride to Arizona Territory in October 1894. The school house was also soon finished for the beginning of classes. It had been no easy task earlier to create the adobes for the house and school, as Plocher explained:

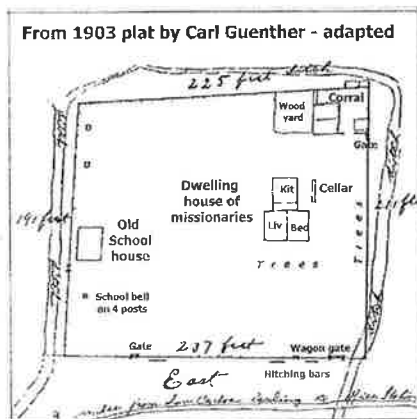
*As I returned from my [exploratory Camp Apache] trip, the people also arrived who were to make the adobes. I had planned to get the needed water for the adobes from the irrigation canal, but the agent crossed out that idea. He did not want to know anything about it. So the adobe builders first had to dig a well. They used dynamite for several days. The hole was about 20 feet deep, no water and hard rock. The adobe builders nearly despaired and were ready to quit. . . . I encouraged them but their spirit had sunk quite low. Over the noon hour I went to the well and dug about 1 ½ feet deep into the hard ground. I soon noticed that I was not too far from water, and look! shortly thereafter a small amount of water oozed out in a small vein. The sight of water in the midst of the rocks provided renewed energy. The people continued to work harder until the flowing water made it too difficult. We now have wonderfully cool water which does not have the bad taste that one finds here in wells in Arizona. Although the well is not overly productive, yet at this time of the year when wells around here are dried up, our well has about three feet of water, flowing at about 4 gallons per minute. The Lord be thanked for this precious gift. How fortunate it is to strike good water after having to be satisfied with less good, even bad water. For the digging of the well I paid out \$5.00 to the Indians, \$17.00 to the adobe builders, \$6.25 for the explosives and transportation.*<sup>54</sup>



Missionary Plocher family adobe home about 1897 (O)

Missionary Plocher was responsible for the maintenance of the mission property. He used his many talents at various projects to enhance their living conditions at the station. A privy was built along with a corral for a horse and cow.<sup>55</sup> He responded to Rev. Brenner's idea of insuring the structures, which he thought was superfluous and might offend others who considered insurance a sign of little trust in God's purposes and care, but he would certainly acquiesce to whatever the mission committee wanted.<sup>56</sup> There is no mention of any insurance claim ever being made, but reason for one surely arose after Brenner received Plocher's letter of November 2, 1895.

*This fall we had quite a bit of rain. Naturally the dirt roof of the school house suffered from it. Even though the roof was improved last spring, the summer and especially from the fall rains broke through and flowed in streams everywhere. I discovered there was too much weight on the roof, and they wanted to put more mud on it. I feared the entire roof would cave in. Something had to be done before the winter rains. Since it always takes a long time to get materials delivered here, I ordered the necessary material so that sheet iron could be laid over the dirt roof, without first notifying you and getting permission. Cost \$25 to \$30. This provided protection from water, so the walls would not also be washed away if we received heavy winter rains. Greater expenses later on would be avoided by doing something before that time. Excess heat from the sheet iron in the summer is not to be feared because the dirt roof remains. I would like to bring this matter to your attention, and if necessary, for the approval of the committee.<sup>57</sup>*



Missionary Plocher had the confidence of Rev. Brenner when it came to underwriting the cost of projects necessary for living at the mission station. He was careful, nevertheless, to keep Brenner informed and to obtain his consent, as is evident from this January 1896 letter:

*Last time I reported that I was planning to build a cellar, but because of the rainy weather and my helper went back to school, the cellar was left undone. I also have more work than I can handle. Meanwhile an Indian delivered the necessary stones, posts and wood for the cellar wall and roofing joists. It will take 2 to 3 days to complete the work, afternoons that is, because I conduct school in the mornings. I paid the Indians \$12 and ask the honorable mission committee's approval for this outlay. I must confess that I have tried this summer to complete things without Indian help.*

*Because of the great amount of all kinds of work, there remained for me very little time for language study and deeper study of theology. These two things should really be my chief work, but it is indeed not so. If during the daytime I completely tire myself out physically, there is no desire to do work in the evening. Besides, the effects of the climate here are altogether different from up north. One cannot with the best desire do things here which can be done in a northern climate. If I have a helper again, there will be more free time and less physical labor. Therefore I want to bring this to your attention.<sup>58</sup>*

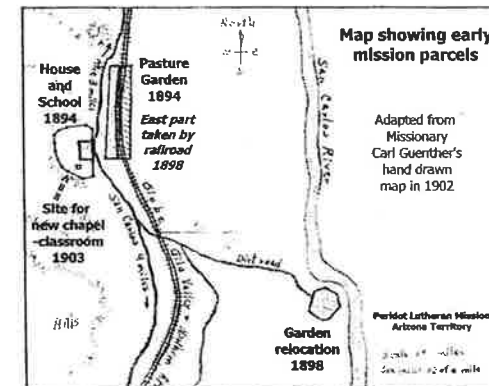
Part of Plocher's report at end of the year 1896 summarized the projects which took much of his time besides the ministry of God's Word.

*In addition to this work [his English-Apache dictionary], at the beginning of the year I built a cellar with*

*the help of an Indian. Later I changed the flat roof of the school house into a sloping one. Then I built a hen house with timber and posts I gathered six miles from here. The rest of the material I paid for out of my own pocket. Also the fence had to be repaired because cattle and horses had broken through. Some more land was cleared of brush, dug up and added to the garden. Around the garden I dug a ditch and wall 3 feet wide and 2 feet deep, so that in the rainy season the garden would not be flooded, as it was earlier. . . . One must also do his part with the upkeep of the irrigation ditch and dam. Garden vegetables are preferable to paying the high prices (a head of cabbage at 7 cents a pound). The fenced-in land is not sufficient for the horse and cow to graze the entire year. I cannot supply hay for the cow, so I must let the cow roam about certain months of the year and then each day look for it. This can take a lot of time because the cow roams often 3-5 miles away. Sometimes the cow cannot be found for days. That's why we lost a cow last summer in spite of all the searching. If an Indian carelessly leaves a gate open, one has the pleasure of seeking the cow on foot and then working perhaps several days until finding the horses. Since the frequent trips and longer stretches are too hard on one horse, since last summer I have two horses. I usually have to travel 20 to 35 miles on Sunday. We are 9 miles from the post office and grocery store . . . so the horses get much use.<sup>59</sup>*

The coming of the railroad had caused an uproar among Indians on the reservation, as mentioned earlier. The railroad also created a problem especially for the mission station, as Plocher described in his April 1898 letter:

*Since the railroad will go through the center of our property and would make it quite worthless for us, I approached the agent with a request to grant us a different piece. The agent accommodated us with a piece of land that can be irrigated. The disadvantage with the new property is that it lies about a quarter mile from the station. I will keep a portion of the old property for a pasture so the horses have some room to move about. To fence in this new land I spent \$31.67 on wire, staples and posts, which amount I submit to the honorable committee for reimbursement. I will myself put up the fence. I will see if the railroad company will grant us a reimbursement, although they are not required to do so according to the acts of Congress.*



*I have also made a rough estimate for a roof extension [veranda] for the east and south sides of our house. I told you about that in person last summer. My estimate for the material comes to 60 to 65 dollars. If this amount is agreed to, then I will build the roof extensions during the summer.<sup>60</sup>*

Plocher did not get the veranda built that summer because of other work which had to be done. He hoped to spend his free time building it during the first quarter of 1899, along with repainting the wood-work of the school and house, also clearing more of the land of stumps and digging an irrigation ditch with his horses and scraper. That, he added, if God granted him the health.<sup>61</sup>

In April 1899 Plocher reported that the long planned roof extension was completed and the new land was cleared. Then he, somewhat proudly, tallied up his mileage.

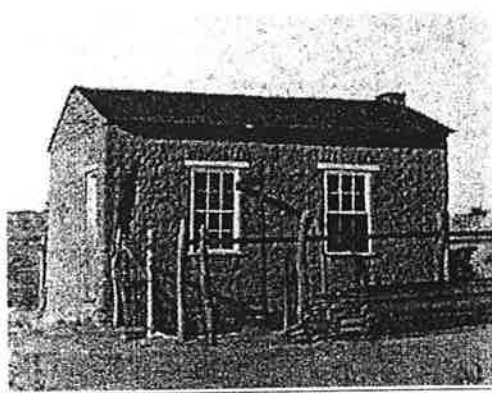
As the dear brothers have read in Warnecke's Zeitschrift that some missionaries are on the road so much and an example of 700 kilometers in 7 months was reported, surely many thought: How much are our missionaries on the road? I figured mine out and found that in the last year I traveled by horse and wagon over 2,200 miles, thus about 3,600 kilometers in 12 months, or 2,100 in 7 months.<sup>62</sup>

### Weather

The reader of Missionary Plocher's letters soon realizes from his comments that in this part of Arizona, a place which can be described as a valley in the high desert surrounded by higher mountains, the weather affects living conditions and the work being done there. This is clearly demonstrated by a few more excerpts covering several years.

[November 30, 1895] At present we are having cooler weather. The past few days quite a bit of snow fell in the mountains, and covered some of the hills which are about 800 feet above the valley. It stormed and rained heavily in the valley. My dear wife and I wish you [Pastor Brenner] and your family God's richest blessing for the coming Christmas festival.

[April 16, 1896] This evening a terrible storm passed through here. It grabbed the dirt roof of our school and carried it together with the woodwork, iron covering and everything for about 115 feet and let it fall just in front of the dwelling. My wife had just gone outside the door. She noticed the flying roof in time and got to the door before the heavy load could fall on her. Many of the metal plates are completely ruined, but the greater part of the roof is reusable. The chimney is also ruined. Will try to get the roof back in good order during the coming week. Up until now we have had really good weather, so that everything grew lusciously, then quite unexpectedly came a night frost. Our potatoes now are looking black instead of green.



School house after repairs (P)

[July 1896] Since the end of May a terrible heat wave invaded and the harvest also began. Regular school attendance could no longer be maintained so I started the vacation on June 1. . . . Because a storm blew away the school house roof, a new roof had to be installed. Instead of a flat roof, I wanted to make a slanted one. So I made the necessary adobes for the gable ends, cleaned up the better metal pieces as much as possible, removed the old dirt roof, took out the usable lumber and made from the old stuff a new roof. Since more cover material is needed than for a flat roof, I bought more metal. . . also an Indian helped me. . . thus the repair of the roof came to \$10.14 which sum I ask be reimbursed to me.

[January 3, 1897] We are, God be thanked, well and healthy. Cold weather came with the new year. On New Year's Day some snow even fell in the valley, but melted soon after. Wishing you and yours a blessed New Year, I remain with greetings, also from my wife  
— Yours bonded in Christ. Johannes Plocher

[April 1, 1897] The weather at present is very unpleasant. Night frosts unfortunately have hit us, which harm the early potatoes and the peaches. We had more rain this past winter than in previous years. The

meadows are therefor much better this year. But that will not last much longer, since the hot winds can quickly dry out everything. Soon we will see only sand hills and dried up brush.

### Reporting results

Expectations ran high. The synod and its mission committee prayed for Christ's Gospel to be immediately successful among the Apache Indians and hoped for many converts to Christianity. Missionary Plocher felt the pressure to perform, but he also knew and believed that he was just the farmer who sowed the good seed. The growth and the harvest were the Lord's doing. The missionary's task was to be faithful with the Word and to trust God for any results. Plocher's dedication to this goal is evident from the start. This is how his April 1, 1895 letter began after nursing his sick wife, Anna, back to health during the previous two months.

As often as the time approaches to make the quarterly report, the question of what I should say this time disturbs me. This is not because there is little or nothing to report, or because I have to report unpleasantness, or because I have to "make a report." My concern is, whether I report too little or too much, that whatever is reported may lead to misconceptions. As I have committed all things to our dear Lord up till now, I do so again this time. May that which is to be reported, be done to the honor of his name. May it serve purely and solely in the fervor of remaining steadfast in the work of the Lord. And let us be found as such who do not cast away their trust, but rather remain firm in reverent devotion to our Lord in love, faith and in all good works.<sup>63</sup>

After the next year and a half there still were no converts from among the Apaches to report. Yet Missionary Plocher's optimistic faith was not diminished. On January 2, 1897 he began his report to the "Honorable Mission Committee of the Joint Ev. Luth. Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan & O.S.:"

Honorable Sirs and dear Brothers in Christ! Since another year has happily passed, it is perhaps in place to give a small overview of the year. But before that is done, the love and mercy of our heavenly Father should be brought to mind. By his grace and patience alone were we able to carry out his work. To him, the Leader and Guide, the Power and Strength, praise and thanks above all things be expressed.<sup>64</sup>

Another year passed. The synod met in convention during that time. This was the first, though debated, mission adventure of the Joint Synod since its organization in 1892. What Rev. Brenner reported to the synod echoed Plocher's letters to him in trying to keep up synodical morale. It is in this context that Plocher wrote in April 1898:

With thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ we now dare again to look back on several months. Even if nothing of outstanding importance took place, if I also cannot point to results as much as I want to, God's goodness shows in that he did not send me away from his vineyard, but in contrast he granted me good health and gave me the usual strength to witness about the Lamb who carried the sins of the world.<sup>65</sup>

Still another year went by. Missionary Plocher continued preaching and teaching, traveling, researching, learning Apache language and customs, dealing with difficult government officials, gardening, maintaining buildings and grounds, enduring adverse weather and confronting illnesses, both his wife's and his own. There will be better news in a few months to come, but read now this report to Brenner and the mission committee dated January 1899.

*During the past quarter we were allowed to live under the gracious protection and help of God. In grace he saw our weaknesses, with love he surrounded us, with peace he made us strong enough to carry on his work, to extol his Son as the Savior. If we cannot refer to the number of converts as proof of such goodness of our Father, all of us are still obligated to praise and thank our God for that which he has allowed us to accomplish and do. . . . To the Lord be praise and thanks for his love, with which he carries, directs and leads the world still today.*

Finally the good news came for which everyone had long been praying. Missionary Plocher wrote in April 1899:



*Newly baptized by Rev. John Plocher on Easter 1899. Child Karl Plocher was held in their midst. (Q)*

*With especially happy hearts and thanks to Him who strengthens weakness, to Him who has chosen and sent us to proclaim the Gospel to the Apaches, I am allowed this time to report about the last quarter. Four young women have asked to be baptized – Sadie Nugaminary, Irene Joakla, Bessie Nauzlayay and Ivy Clark. . . . During the course of the baptismal instruction, however, it became evident that three of them were not yet ready to deny worldly lust, but one week before Easter they changed their minds. The maidens remained steadfast and it could be seen that they were serious with their action. On Easter Sunday during the service in the San Carlos school, after the four maidens had confessed their faith in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with the Apostles' Creed, they were baptized. We all certainly have joyful cause to praise and*

*laud His name, who has granted us not only to plant an acre, but also to let us see the fruit. I had hoped that Brother Mayerhoff would visit us for this occasion, but unfortunately swollen rivers blocked the way. . . . At present we are, thanks to God, well and healthy, and hope that the Lord will grant us further health and strength, so that his name be glorified and his grace be praised among the Apaches.<sup>67</sup>*

There was a follow up to the baptisms three months later detailing the faithfulness of the new Christians. In Plocher's final report of July 1899, preceded by a description of his and his wife's health status, he wrote:

*The [San Carlos] school was closed at the beginning of May. Our baptized Christians attended worship services and Sunday school regularly. Two of the young women had to be released from the school in San Carlos before the close because of tuberculosis. Since they live far from here, it unfortunately has been impossible in the past four weeks to speak with them. The judgment of the school personnel about our baptized is the following, that these girls are devoting themselves to a Christian conduct, though one cannot definitely know what is in their hearts.<sup>68</sup>*

One more fruit of Plocher's labor was reported in an 1899 letter from Mrs. Wright, superintendent of the San Carlos government school, sent to the newsletter editor of the Indian vocational school at Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

APACHE COUPLE MARRIED. ----- The following letter speaks for itself: SAN CARLOS, ARIZ., July 2, 1899. EDITOR HELPER, CARLISLE, PA: This morning occurred the marriage of Miss Alice May and Mr. Benjamin Mahseel, at the San Carlos Indian School, Ariz. The ceremony was performed in the presence of a small company of friends by the Rev. John Plocher, Lutheran Missionary, this being the first Apache Indian couple ever legally married on this reservation. The bride was for many years a student of Teller Institute, Grand Junction, Colorado, and of Denver High School. Since her return to her home she has occupied a position of assistant matron at the San Carlos School, where she has won a host of friends. The groom was a pupil of this school and for three years its efficient disciplinarian. They will continue to reside at the school where they are valued employees. (Mrs.) LYDIA HUNT WRIGHT, Superintendent.<sup>69</sup>

### In sickness and in health

At their wedding in 1894 John and Anna Plocher had promised marital faithfulness and love to each other. That included for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, until death us do part. During the next five years the two of them experienced their share of sickness and health. Anna's bout with gall bladder fever and her recovery were covered earlier in Plocher's letters of January and April 1895. Later his letter of November 2, 1895 mentioned his own health, how he suffered for two weeks with a heavy cold, but by God's grace was well again.<sup>70</sup>

Subsequent letters reported that they both were quite well and healthy or in fairly good health, thanks to God's gracious protection. These letters give no hint of Anna's pregnancy, even when she gave birth on the reservation to their first child, Margaret, on July 13, 1895. It was a difficult birth with her husband assisting, although his extant letters make no reference to it. Much later in an April 1, 1897 letter he informed Brenner that Anna was tolerably well and their little one enjoyed good health and gave them much joy.<sup>71</sup> No mention was made that Margaret had developmental problems, something which her parents quietly accepted also as the gracious will of their dear Lord.

There were two letters sent in April 1897 in which Plocher reported an accident that happened to him one day while going somewhere:

*I was hindered from work for quite a while because of a fall with my horse. The same reared up and fell backwards on me before I could get out of the saddle. . . . We have been healthy and well, with the exception of one accident, when the horse fell and landed on me, from which I am now fully recovered.<sup>72</sup>*

Two months later Anna's health became a concern. It was not yet time for the regular quarterly report, but on May 29, 1897 Plocher wrote to Brenner:

*In recent times we were not particularly well. The climate and our water do not at all agree with us. Anna especially is now suffering quite a bit. Her body strength is dwindling very noticeably. She was in bed during the week more than out of it. The doctor urged her already last year to leave Arizona, but we will attempt it some more yet. If she gains her strength so she can hold up for a trip.*



*Rev. George Ph. Brenner (R)*

she should go for a year back to Wisconsin and see if her health can be restored. I would like very much if the costs for a trip would be covered by the mission treasury, since I do not have enough money for a trip to Wisconsin. My salary has up until now just sufficed. I have saved nothing and could not do so with the best intentions. Please greet Grandma Grimm from us. Maybe it is still the Lord's will that she can see her great grandchild. To you and yours sincere greetings. I remain —Your, Johannes Plocher.<sup>73</sup>



Rev. Chr. Dowidat (S)

There were close family and personal connections. Grandma Margaret Grimm was the mother of Anna's mother, Louise Grimm Dowidat, who was the wife of Rev. Christopher Dowidat in Oshkosh. Jacob and Margaret Grimm in 1859 had donated the land upon which St. James Lutheran Church was built in Reedsville, Wisconsin. Its pastor at this time (1887-1907) was Rev. G. Philip Brenner<sup>74</sup>, the mission committee chairman. Plocher apparently did not know that Grandma Grimm had died earlier in March 1897, several weeks before he wrote.<sup>75</sup>

Missionary Plocher, with his wife and child, rode the train back to her parents' home in Oshkosh where Anna received the loving care of her stepmother, father, and sister Mollie. Her husband spent these months talking with mission committee members and others about work on the reservation. In September 1897 he returned to Peridot to work alone for the next nine months.

Again no mention is made in the official reports about any pregnancy, although the family was well aware of it, remembering the difficult birth of Margaret on the reservation. Then on January 16, 1898, little Karl Johannes Plocher was born, a healthy, "big, fat, baby boy," as his mother wrote in her diary.<sup>76</sup> She regained her strength and by March that year was ready to return to Arizona Territory with children Margaret and Karl. They arrived at Peridot on the day of her husband's 30<sup>th</sup> birthday, as recorded by Plocher in his report to Brenner in April 1898.

*I want to inform you that my dear wife is again with us since April 2. The gracious and kind God protected her and the children on the long trip, so that they arrived here worn out, but well and cared for.<sup>77</sup>*

Plocher's quarterly mission report written January 1899 had contained good news about his school enrollment growing to 22 pupils, and also about the adult audience at the San Carlos government school becoming more receptive to his preaching. Another paragraph in the report, however, was not so positive.

*If I seriously want to do the work in San Carlos, then on Sunday after I also conduct Sunday school at the [mission] station, my strength is not sufficient to preach very much. I cannot, unfortunately, last as long nor do as much as previously. Added to that, I suffered from rheumatism all last winter.<sup>78</sup>*

Three months later, on Easter Sunday in April 1899, Missionary Plocher had reported joyful news about his first baptisms after ministering there for six years. Before ending the report he indicated that all the family was well, and hoped that the Lord would grant them further health and strength.

But it was not to be so. In Plocher's final report to the mission committee for the months of April, May and June 1899, there is disappointment in his words.

*Of big deeds or achievements there is this time little to report. It has pleased the Lord during the past period unfortunately to take away our health. Because our strength has weakened, the work has necessarily suffered. Since the beginning of winter my dear wife was suffering off and on. The attending physician*

*could not define any specific illness. When the suffering increased in April and May, our military physician described it as "starvation of the heart."<sup>79</sup> It is a chronic blood impoverishment for which no medicine can be prescribed. Symptoms of the same illness appeared in me recently. It is the same suffering which afflicted me two years ago, but now seems to have advanced. In spite of all care we could not, under our climatic conditions, produce the necessary amount of blood. The result was emaciation, weakness after work — could not work longer hours, dizziness and other attacks.*

*The weight of my dear wife is now 95 lbs. against 115-120 earlier. My weight is several pounds lighter than in former years, 136 lbs. against the earlier 155-165. This illness is more common in the tropics and will usually attack persons who grew up in a colder climate or not in such dry atmosphere. Recovery can take place only in a favorable climate. If this change cannot be made, or if the person returns, then tuberculosis, because of incorrect treatment of cellular tissue, will usually be the result.*

*I am conscience bound to inform you of this so that one does not misjudge nor later make accusations. It may be that this will be looked at by some as a great disappointment. But he who placed us in this work has full right to remove us. And we want to be thankful to our dear heavenly Father that he has considered us worthy to work in this place in his vineyard. It is indeed necessary that you give thought to this matter immediately. Perhaps it would be best if you would send my successor, and sidetrack me to a less difficult place in the country so that the opportunity might be there, if possible, for us to have our health restored again. . . . Praise and thanks to the Lord for his guidance, which sometimes is difficult to understand. Yet we will put our trust at all times in his guidance. With friendly greetings — Yours bonded in Christ, Johannes Plocher.<sup>80</sup>*

The missionary reports of Johannes Plocher found by this writer in the archive file at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon have come to an end, except for a letter of August 25, 1899 in which Plocher accepted the call to be pastor of St. Peter Lutheran Church in St. Peter, Minnesota, and asked the committee for a peaceful release from the mission service so he could make arrangements to arrive in St. Peter by October of that year.<sup>81</sup>



Rev. John and Anna Plocher family at St. Peter 1901 (T)

## Conclusion



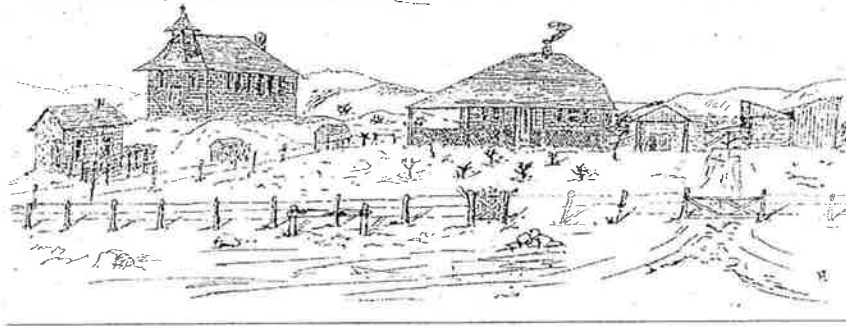
Missionary Carl Guenther (U)

Rev. Paul Mayerhoff came down from Camp Apache to fill the vacancy at Peridot for several months. Candidate Charles (Carl) Guenther from the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, was ordained January 31, 1900 and sent to be Plocher's replacement at Peridot. Teacher Rudolph Jens was sent to oversee the school and its students. By May 1900 the number of baptized souls had grown to fifteen. A new chapel-classroom was constructed of local tufa stone in 1903, as shown in the sketch below.<sup>82</sup>

God continued to bless his Word. Today, in 2008, the Apache Conference of WELS has grown to over 3,500 baptized members. For 115 years, God's people on the San Carlos and Fort Apache Indian reservations have heard the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ from a long line of faithful messengers. Much of their correspondence still lies tucked away in the synod archives, waiting to tell more stories of those who have followed the Lord's call to spread his salvation. This story of the synod's first foreign language missionary has now here been told.

Hopefully, it has provided a personal glimpse into the beginnings of the Apache Lutheran Mission, from the letters of John Plocher.

Tufa stone chapel-classroom built 1903 School and residence built 1894



Mission station at San Carlos (Peridot), AZ Territory (V)

## Illustrations

All of the maps in this article were adapted by the writer from maps which were originally hand drawn by the person credited on each map, namely, Rev. Paul Mayerhoff or Rev. Charles Guenther. Copies of their maps are in the writer's file. The map, "Plocher's Journeys," was designed by the writer.

- Anna and John Plocher 1894, wedding photo in writer's collection.
- An Apache camp about 1888, photo by A.F. Randall from website: [http://frontiers.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?hwp:7:/temp/~ammem\\_Zasp:](http://frontiers.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?hwp:7:/temp/~ammem_Zasp:)
- Peridot school and bell about 1900, photo in writer's collection.
- San Carlos government agency, photo in writer's collection.

- Mohave, Yuma, and Apache tribes at San Carlos awaiting rations 1874, photo by D.P. Flanders from website: <http://www.vintagephoto.com/reference/flanders/article.html>
- Rev. Charles Cook and memorial church at Sacaton. Church photo from website: [www.pbygrandcanyon.org/sacaton](http://www.pbygrandcanyon.org/sacaton). Inset of Cook from frontispiece of *Apostle to the Pima Indians*, by Minnie Cook, Omega Books 1976.
- Apache interpreter Oscar Davis, photo from *25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Indian Mission*, NPH, 1919, p.19
- Globe, Copper City Arizona, about 1900, from picture postcard in writer's collection.
- Rev. Paul Mayerhoff, photo from *25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Indian Mission*, NPH, 1919, p. 31
- Apache chief Alchise. 1906 photo by Edward Curtis from website: [www.firstpeople.us/photos/Alchise](http://www.firstpeople.us/photos/Alchise)
- Missionary Paul Mayerhoff in temporary housing near Ft. Apache, photo from *25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Indian Mission*, NPH, 1919, p.67
- "Ration and Beef Day at San Carlos" written on face of picture by photographer A.F. Randall about 1885 from website: <http://frontiers.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query>
- Go-Shono, Apache Medicine Man, photo of color painting by E.A. Burbank on 1905 cardboard drug advertisement from website [www.harvard-diggins.org/Burbank/index2.htm](http://www.harvard-diggins.org/Burbank/index2.htm).
- Apache woman farming, photo from website: <http://www.sonofthesouth.net/american-indians/apache-pictures.htm>
- Apache dancers, photo from website: <http://www.old-picture.com/apache-index-001.htm>
- Missionary Plocher family at adobe residence 1897, photo in writer's collection.
- School house after repairs, photo in writer's collection.
- Newly baptized by Rev. John Plocher 1899, photo in writer's collection.
- Rev. George Phillip Brenner, photo from *25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Indian Mission*, NPH, 1919, p. 5
- Rev. Christopher Dowidat, photo from *25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Indian Mission*, NPH, 1919, p. 6
- Rev. John and Anna Plocher family at St. Peter 1901, photo in writer's collection.
- Missionary Charles Guenther, seminary graduation photo in writer's collection.
- Mission station at San Carlos (Peridot), AZ. Sketch from pages of an unidentified German language publication which were found among the papers of Johannes Plocher. Copy is in the writer's collection.
- Mesa-top view of San Carlos River valley with Peridot Lutheran Mission on the right, 2005 photo in writer's collection.

## Endnotes

- This article is a continuation from the *WELS Historical Institute Journal* of April 2008, Volume 26, No.1, pages 24-41.
- Letter 6, August 7, 1894 written by Johannes Plocher after returning from his trip to Camp Apache. This and the following letters of Plocher were translated from the old German script by Dr. Arnold O. Lehmann
- The German "Gallenfieber" is here translated gall bladder fever or infection. Plocher's letter did not go into the details. Among several common causes of this illness are dietary choices and/or hormonal changes at the time of pregnancy. There are known herbal remedies such as certain vegetable juices, chicory, pear, alfalfa and barberry which help remove toxins from the gall bladder. <http://www.home-remedies.info/diseases/gall-bladder-disorders.htm>
- Letter 7, January 1, 1895
- Letter 8, April 1, 1895
- Letter 10, November 2, 1895

7. Letter 12, January 1896
8. Letter 8, April 1, 1895
9. Letter 9, June 8, 1895
10. Letter 11, November 30, 1895
11. Letter 11, November 30, 1895
12. Letter 12, January 1896
13. Letter 17, January 2, 1897
14. Letter 20, April 1897
15. Letter 23, January 1899
16. Letter 7, January 1, 1895
17. Letter 8, April 1, 1895
18. Letter 12, January 1896
19. Letter 17, January 2, 1897
20. Letter 22, April 1898
21. Letter 23, January 1899
22. Letter 1, October 19, 1893
23. Letter 2, November 6, 1893
24. Letter 8, April 1, 1895
25. "When Dr. C.H. Cook came to Sacaton on December 23, 1870, he labored twelve years before his first convert. Nineteen years later he organized the First Presbyterian Church of Sacaton on April 3, 1889." *From website: [www.phygrandcanyon.org/sacaton](http://www.phygrandcanyon.org/sacaton)*
26. "The Presbytery of Grand Canyon's mission began in late 1870 with the arrival of Charles H. Cook, a German immigrant and veteran of the Civil War. He was following God's call to teach the Pima Indians. The Rev. Cook's forty-three-year ministry lives on through the churches he founded and the school in Tempe that bears his name. Students from as far away as Alaska, Canada, and the Marshall Islands, as well as from most of the states, come to Cook College and Theological School for religious training and liberal arts studies. It serves as a link with the early days in the Southwest, recalling the great faith and determination required to build the foundation that supports the presbytery today. More than 130 years after Charles H. Cook's arrival, there are 70 churches in the presbytery, 7 of them started by Mr. Cook. There are 18 Native American churches, 1 African American church, 2 Hispanic churches, 1 Korean church, and 48 other congregations. All of them, along with fellowships of immigrant groups from Ethiopia, the Philippines, the Middle East, and Spanish-speaking countries, regularly bring the increasingly diversified 16,741 members of the Presbytery of Grand Canyon together to worship and praise God." *From website: [www.pcusa.org/missionyearbook/Mar/10.html](http://www.pcusa.org/missionyearbook/Mar/10.html)*
27. Letter 13, March 1, 1896
28. Letter 15, April 16, 1896
29. Letter 14, April 1896
30. Letter 16, July, 1896
31. A copy of John Plocher's handwritten English-Apache Dictionary is in the writer's file. The original manuscript is preserved at the Newberry Library, Chicago, in the *Edward E. Ayer Manuscript Collection*. Website: [https://i-share.carli.illinois.edu/nby/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?Search\\_Arg=plocher&SL](https://i-share.carli.illinois.edu/nby/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?Search_Arg=plocher&SL). Edward Everett Ayer (1841-1927), book collector, born in Kenosha, Wis., was a prosperous railway lumberman, who amassed a book collection rich in materials on American Indians, which he donated in 1911 to Chicago's Newberry Library. He helped found the Field Museum of Natural History and was its first president (1893-98).  
<http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Ayer%2c+Edward+Everett> How Plocher's manuscript

- came into Ayer's collection is still being researched. Robert Karrow Jr, a curator at Newberry Library, responded to this writer's inquiry regarding its provenance: "Edward Ayer's nephew, E. A. Burbank, was a very accomplished painter who spent a number of years in the west (at his uncle's expense) doing portraits of Indians. He painted several portraits in San Carlos in 1906; I wonder if he might somehow have acquired the manuscript for his uncle at that time? We have Burbank's considerable correspondence here, and it's possible that your grandfather or his MS is mentioned therein. I have a not-very-easy to use Word file of these and will see what I can find."
32. Letter 17, January 2, 1897
  33. Letter 9, June 8, 1895
  34. Letter 10, November 2, 1895
  35. Letter 11, November 30, 1895
  36. Letter 14, March 1, 1896
  37. Letter 8, April 1, 1895
  38. Letter 13, March 1, 1896
  39. Letter 15, April 16, 1896
  40. Mayerhoff soon learned about the unique dialect spoken by the Apaches around Camp Apache. He wrote on September 27, 1896 to the synod mission committee, "My work is limited [because of difficulties with the government], and consists really only of learning the language. I have used Plocher's vocabulary list very little. I have collected between 400 and 500 words and word phrases, of which I have most of them in my memory, but I am very clumsy with the language. The tongue is getting loosened up more and my vocabulary increases each day not only on paper but also in memory. The most difficult are the verbs." More than a year later on December 31, 1897 Mayerhoff reported, "With my language study I have been stymied [because he can find no translators and all the good ones are working for the government] in the past weeks since the return of Plocher. With Plocher I have noted down many words, especially verbs, but I could not enter many into my dictionary because I failed to try them out in practice. I dare not simply rely on this, that a word used by Plocher might also be used by my Indians." The letters of Mayerhoff are in the synod archives and copies in the writer's file. Translations from the old German script are by Dr. Arnold O. Lehmann.
  41. The spelling "Astsisse" apparently reflects how Chief Alchise's name sounded to Plocher. Paul Mayerhoff, in a May 2, 1897 letter, spelled the chief's name "Altsissae." Another spelling is "Alchesay," noted by Rev. Arthur Guenther in a speech at Show Low as reported August 30, 2005 in the White Mountain Independent's Online Edition: "Edgar Guenther [father of Arthur Guenther and missionary at Whiteriver 1911-61] met former Apache Scout and Medal of Honor recipient Alchesay during the flu epidemic of 1918-19. The Guenthers did what they could to nurse him and others back to health. Alchesay reciprocated by giving them land for a church. When it opened in 1923 Alchesay asked to be baptized. One hundred of his band were subsequently baptized."
  42. Letter 16, July 1896
  43. Mayerhoff wrote on May 3, 1897, "We continued until we came to the spur on which Plocher and I had ridden to Cibicue last year. I had planned to visit Plocher on this trip, but nothing came of it because the Salt River commanded a definite halt. It has already for weeks been a raging stream. Even our small brooks were barely passable the past 14 days."
  44. Letter 21, May 29, 1897
  45. Letter 8, April 1, 1895
  46. Letter 13, March 1, 1896
  47. Letter 16, July 1896
  48. Letter 17, January 2, 1897



49. Letter 20, April 1897
50. From Anna Plocher's diary in the writer's file, page 12
51. Letter 19, April 1, 1897
52. Letter 22, April 1898
53. Letter 24, April 1899
54. Letter 5, July 1894
55. Letter 7, January 1, 1895
56. Letter 9, June 8, 1895
57. Letter 10, November 2, 1895
58. Letter 12, January 1896
59. Letter 17, January 2, 1897
60. Letter 22, April 1898
61. Letter 23, January 1899
62. Letter 24, April 1899
63. Letter 8, April 1, 1895
64. Letter 17, January 2, 1897
65. Letter 22, April 1898
66. Letter 23, January 1899
67. Letter 24, April 1899
68. Letter 25, July 1899
69. Web site: [www.nanews.org/archive/1999/nanews07.032](http://www.nanews.org/archive/1999/nanews07.032) • *The Indian Helper- A Weekly Letter From The Indian Industrial School, Carlisle, Pa. - Vol. XIV. Friday, July 21, 1899 Number 39, page 4*
70. Letter 10, November 2, 1895
71. Letter 19, April 1, 1897
72. Letters 19 and 20, April 1897. Anna recorded the accident in her diary, page 15: "February 23: Mr. Davis [Apache interpreter] and John out hunting, John meeting with a terrible accident. Billie [their horse] got on hind legs with saddle and all on top of John flat on his stomach and all. Poor boy, how he suffered. Feb. 24: John pretty bad yet. Taught school for him."
73. Letter 21, May 29, 1897
74. Pastor Brenner's dates at Reedsville, Wisconsin are listed in that congregation's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet, page 10.
75. From family genealogy records in the writer's file.
76. Anna's diary, page 46.
77. Letter 22, April 1898
78. Letter 23, January 1899
79. "Starvation of the heart" was the military physician's term for Anna's health condition. The physician apparently explained the condition in the manner Plocher here described it. To go beyond this in terms of modern medicine leads to speculation. Their move from Arizona to a different climate and lifestyle, however, corrected the problem for the Plochers. They recovered their health and continued to serve the Lord in ministry at St. Peter's in St. Peter, Minnesota (1900-1906) and at St. John's in St. Paul, Minnesota (1906-1950). They had three more children, Walter (1900), Dorothy (1904) and George who died as an infant. Anna died September 10, 1939, at the age of 78. John Plocher died September 1, 1960, at the age of 92 and joined her again in heaven.
80. Letter 25, July 1899 (Final report to the mission committee for the quarter April, May and June 1899)
81. Mayerhoff reported to the mission committee on October 3, 1899: "I was in San Carlos between September 25 and 30 in order to visit Brother Plocher. Unfortunately I was four days too late, so I rode

further on and looked for the agent and visited the Indian school. The agent offered the highest praise for Plocher and his work. He pointed out to me what Plocher had already written, that he might possibly get three more men, a substitute for Plocher and two more for [new mission] stations along the Gila River, 5 miles and 18 miles from the agency. He would like this because of the school. I told the man what resolutions had been made and the results of calls sent out. He did not want to wait much longer since other church bodies had made applications if we did not and could not soon fill the field. Also the establishment of the school received praise over Plocher's enthusiasm and work, especially since beyond all that was said, both Missionary Plocher and Mrs. Plocher in their health situation showed true martyrdom."

82. Carl Guenther corresponded on May 2, 1902 with W.A. Jones, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, at Washington D.C. "And [we] request to be granted the right of adding the piece of land adjoining that which is now held by the [mission] society [of the General Synod of Wis, Minn, etc]. The piece of land spoken for is enclosed by smaller hills in a semi circle, being about four acres which would afford a good location for the new building." Guenther attached his detailed hand drawn map to his letter. Charles Guenther's letters (typed in English) and maps are in the WELS archives at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Copies also in this writer's file.



*Mesa-top view of San Carlos River valley with Peridot Lutheran Mission on the right (arrow). Looking southward are Martin and wife Jill Plocher. At the time of this 2005 photo, Martin was serving as principal of the school which his great grandfather, John Plocher, started in 1894. (W)*

### from the editor ...

A special thank you to David Plocher for the well researched and well documented article on his grandfather who was the first WELS missionary to the Apaches. As you may have noted, the article is not written in historical sequence, but in a topical style. Much work was put into the article, for which the writer receives the commendation of the editor. The editor would hope that others would submit such well written articles reflecting the history of our synod.

We also offer thanks and appreciation for their contributions on the Institute's Board to Mark Braun and Curtis Jahn who have asked that their positions be filled by other appointees. The new members will be named at the Institute's annual meeting this month.

Arnold O. Lehmann, editor  
800 Hidde Drive #203  
Watertown, WI 53098-3266

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: Single: \$15.00; Family: \$20.00 (2 votes but only one publication issue); Congregation, Library, Organization: \$30.00; and Student: \$10.00. Fees may be sent to the WELS Historical Institute, 2929 N. Mayfair Road, Milwaukee, WI 53222.

The board members are: Prof. Alan Siggelkow, vice president; Naomi Plocher, secretary; Duane Kuehl, treasurer; Prof. Robert Bock, Pastor Raymond Schumacher, Pastor Joel Pless, Clarence Miller, and Steve Miller. Advisory members are: Prof. John Hartwig, Dr. Arnold Lehmann, and Charlotte Sampe, curator.

**Correspondence may be sent to the editor:**

Dr. Arnold O. Lehmann  
800 Hidde #203  
Watertown, WI 53098  
Telephone: (920) 261-5546  
Email: [arnoldolehmann@charter.net](mailto:arnoldolehmann@charter.net)