

WALKING WISCONSIN WOODS WITH EMINENT PIONEERS
With Special Reference to the Manitowoc Conference

"The Present is the Past rolled up for action--and
the Past is the Present unrolled for understanding"

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EFR 1501

AUG 15 1994

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"The Present is the Past rolled up for action--and
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Time was when one could not see the trees for the woods. Now one cannot see the woods for the trees! Let's see what has happened.

During the 1840s and beginnings of the 1850s the stream of German immigration flowed preferably into the beautiful land between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi, which now constitutes the state of Wisconsin. The settlers were mostly North-Germans, that felt drawn especially by the wooded, well-watered and healthy region. There-by was a large mission field given for the Lutheran Church in America.

The first to enter the work for founding congregations in the new territory were pastors from the eastern synods. However, since the controversies between them and the pastors of early Missouri soon broke out, the last of them followed shortly after. The differences of doctrine concerning church and government ("Kirche u. Amt") raged violently in the new territory. Since the pastors of the two factions could not take care of the enormous mission work, other preachers soon came along - missionaries, who were not in communication with either side.

One of the most prominent among them was Pastor Johannes Muehlhaeser of Rochester, New York. These independent pastors felt the pressing needs for synodical participation in the field. And soon four of these men with Muehlhaeser came together on December 8, 1849 in Milwaukee, for founding the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

This synodical body, under God, has grown to 413,000 baptized members in 50 states and three Canadian provinces. The Synod is doing Kingdom work and now reaching-out to the farthest outposts with almost 1200 preachers and more than 1500 teachers at work in the field.

I. Walking Into Wisconsin History

Carl Frederick Goldammer, a pioneer pastor arrived in Milwaukee in 1850 to join the founding fathers of the new Wisconsin Lutheran Synod. He was licensed to preach and sent to Newtonburg, Manitowoc County, to serve. At the 1851 synod he was ordained and admitted into membership. He served as secretary of the synod and was extending his efforts to Town Liberty and Manitowoc. A letter written from Milwaukee explains how the Lord led him to Manitowoc County and used his help for founding the conference.

" . . . Until now I have traveled about the country, preached here and there and could not decide in a hurry what I should choose. Experienced much which was disheartening, was forced to leave large fields where either shoemakers or sectarians are gaining entrance. Oh, it is a pity that no one cares about our German people. Last Monday I accepted a call to Manitowoc. They have organized a Lutheran congregation because of me. Because I couldn't reach a decision, I sent two letters, one of acceptance, the other refusing. They, however, didn't want to take the chance, but sent me another letter, in which they begged me more fervently than before to come to them. In the name of God I have decided to accept. . . ."

A Port of Entry

Twelve miles to the north at a port of entry, immigrants found their way along the harbor of Manitowoc and into the Wisconsin woods. German Lutherans came into the area back in 1847. Their objective was to settle in that part of Wisconsin which now centers around Newtonburg. They were seeking a better life for themselves and their children. Their God and church which they left in Germany, had not in his grace forgotten them in the Wisconsin woods and wilderness.

When Goldammer began walking Wisconsin woods he came into contact with various German settlers who pleaded for his services, establish a congregation among them and be their pastor. Some twenty families promised him wages of a dollar and a half per family and to share with him the necessities of life as they had them. Thus St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church of Newtonburg came into being under his leadership in 1851.

The Town of Newton was settled by Germans of various persuasions. Among them were Roman Catholics, Reformed and Lutherans from different sections of Germany. At this time the virgin forest still brought its hindrances to settlers. And the enemies that did much to hinder a congregation from getting established had to be conquered. Many a lost sheep strayed into the cunningly laid nets of the Methodists, and couldn't find his way out. Even so Lutheranism was beginning to flourish under the steadfast guidance of Goldammer - "the father of home missions" for the Wisconsin Synod.

He expanded his mission field westward into the Town of Liberty and founded Trinity Lutheran Church in 1853. The members spoke a variety of German dialects - but their faith was firm and strong. Their devotion to God's Word was genuine. Their services were begun in a blockhouse, that stood a mile north of the present church site. Walking Wisconsin woods was not easy. The virgin forest was thick, the paths rough, and poverty great.

The two congregations - Newtonburg and Liberty - shared the services of the same pastor. Goldammer drafted a constitution based on the Word of God and the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church, which was accepted in 1854. A throng of faithful members erected the necessary buildings for worship. A parsonage was built at Newtonburg with foresight preparation for a church. A house of worship was erected on the present site. For this purpose eight acres of land was donated by the John Roepke family with the hope that a school also be erected here in the future.

"The Rooster Churches"

Near-by, another congregation was organized south of Newton on highway 141. While it was at first a so-called "free" church organized by German settlers it was for a time served by Pastor Goldammer who had offered his services to them. The first church building was erected of wooden blocks. Later the Reformed people of Newton affiliated with Centerville. In 1854, for convenience sake, the Lipper settlement built its own log church on donated land. Both Ebenezer churches had identical constitutions. Later the two congregations separated. Newton became Peace or Salem-Ebenezer and Centerville became St. John-Ebenezer. Both built a new brick church - Salem in 1876, and St. John in 1877. Both churches placed the traditional metal rooster on top of their church spires and they were consequently called "the Rooster Churches." The rooster is a symbol of watchfulness and Peter's denial in Matthew 6:34.

When Kasper Pluess - one of Wisconsin Synod's early candidates sent to the Sheboygan area, was put in charge of a sizeable congregation in the city proper - he defected to the Reformed Lipp colony near-by. Pastor Goldammer found it necessary to go to Sheboygan to take charge of the orphaned flock.

A Century-Old Vacuum filled in Sheboygan

On December 13, 1959, the Lord led a small group of Wisconsin Synod Lutherans in Sheboygan to formally organize as a congregation, adopt the name Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church, and welcome their first resident and full-time pastor, Jerald J. Plitzweit. Preliminary work had been done in Sheboygan for more than a year among the people contemplating the founding of a congregation.

It was through the mission-minded pastor near-by at Cleveland - Elden H. Bode at the time, that Wisconsin Synod members in Sheboygan were gathered for services long overdue in the city of Sheboygan for worship.

Bode provided services for Calvary's first members for about a year before he was called to North Saint Paul, Minnesota. Preaching was continued by Pastor Kugler from Town Liberty, who took charge of this mission congregation. It was in the Fireside Room of the YMCA, 812 Broughton Drive, that the Calvary mission held services until the members received their own full-time pastor. During his four years in Sheboygan, Calvary built its first church.

A century-old vacuum concerning Wisconsin Synod activity which was nonexistent from Candidate Pluess until Candidate Plitzuweit was now remedied. Kasper Pluess was present at the founding of the Wisconsin Synod and was credited with serving four congregations in the Sheboygan area. He came from Europe to the synod without any papers of identifications. He received his license to preach and was sent to the vicinity of Sheboygan where he served but there was a discouraging report concerning him from his congregation in the city itself. His avarice ways caused offense. At the 1852 Synod his name was stricken from the record since he refused to defend himself against the charges against him and had applied for membership with the Reformed group in New York. "You have been weighed...and found lacking." Daniel 5:27.

Maribel Served as an "Affiliate" from Milwaukee

Maribel is located in the northwest part of Manitowoc County. It is made up of old Cooperstown village and Rosencrans settlers. St. John's Ev. Lutheran congregation was founded here by the Buffalo Synod, formed with scattered German immigrants in the area since 1854. The roots of these settlers were anchored in Germany. So-called "Old-Germans" would not bow to the union of the Reformed and the Lutheran confessions as commanded by the king of Prussia. They gathered around men like Pastor J.A.A. Grabau and Captain von Rohr and left their fatherland. Among them were the founding fathers of St. John's Church.

Pastor Carl Kuehn, from St. Paul's Church in Milwaukee came to Manitowoc County to gather these Lutherans into a congregation and affiliate them with Milwaukee as one parish. Every four to six weeks a pastor came to preach and attend to other spiritual needs of the congregation. A report by Pastor Kuehn reads in part as follows:

"August 15, 1855. My way from Manitowoc, a small city north of Milwaukee led through dense forests on unbeaton paths, first on foot with my traveling bag on my back, then later by a lumbering oxcart. In that way I finally arrived at the settlement and, to my surprise and delight saw the blessing the Lord had begun to shower down in the midst of the virgin forests. . ."

Whereas this congregation generously supported the synod's missions that supplied it with preachers for many years, it took some 34 years to get this former Buffalo group to join the Wisconsin Synod. St. John's congregation was officially accepted into membership in 1953.

Manitowoc gets its First Resident Pastor

The name "Manitowoc" resulted from a tradition among the Indians that a nondescript being was at various times seen at the mouth of the river. In a manner of speaking, Pastor Goldammer, too, at various times was seen at the mouth of the river. In his zeal for Kingdom work he was seen walking the distance of five miles to Manitowoc where a village charter was granted in 1852. At the request of a small group of settlers the missionary established the first German preaching base. Services were held on alternate Tuesday evenings on the corner of Washington and 7th Streets. These services were also attended by a number of strictly Reformed families, loosely affiliated with some congregations along the Green Bay road toward Sheboygan. After a year of walking Wisconsin woods the Missionary was able to purchase a horse and could now conduct services in Manitowoc every Sunday evening. After a year Pastor Goldammer was relieved from serving two of his country charges and could now devote more time to his field in the village. In 1855 he began to serve Manitowoc as its first resident pastor. Scarcely one year old by the grace of God the congregation was blessed with a resident pastor, had services every Sunday and a school, conducted in space limited to the front hall of the church, taught by the pastor.

A few months prior to Goldammer's coming to the village the group in Manitowoc had adopted a church constitution and organized as the "Ev. Luth. Trinity congregation of Manitowoc, Wis." The constitution was adopted Feb. 2, 1855 - signed by 71 family fathers. It acknowledged the Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism. However, when the congregation was incorporated on April 9th., the name was changed to the "German Ev. Lutheran Church." The same year produced the resolution to build a church. Building operations were completed in the spring of 1856. It is obvious that this must have been a pretentious building for a first church. Pioneer residents claim it is still serving as a residence on South 21st. Street. First German congregation later became the stepping stone for three more sister churches founded in Manitowoc Immanuel in 1927, Grace in 1940, and Bethany in 1944.

Henrysville Served as an "Affiliate" from Reedsville

It is interesting to note that a company of 500 Germans, coming - a portion of them - from Germany, the remainder from Pennsylvania, purchased land in the town of Eaton at Henrysville in 1854 and all were practical farmers. This area was served as an "affiliate" charge for over 30 years from Reedsville; later linked with Fontenow and developed with Denmark into a parish.

Extending the Scope of His Work Northward

From Manitowoc Goldammer was extending the scope of his work six miles northward to Shoto which is the Indian name for Two Rivers. He conducted Lutheran services here as early as 1855. The locality being sparsely settled, his services were held in widely scattered homes. At a site up the East River a tannery flourished and a village grew up around it. The village of Two Rivers was created in 1858. That same year Pastor Philip Koehler came to Manitowoc and also continued to serve the Two Rivers people. Here services were conducted in a school house until Emmanuel congregation was organized, Sept. 9, 1860. Lutherans came by boat up the river or on foot walking through dense woods to worship at the Tannery.

After 31 persons signed up for this newly formed parish in the hopes of a permanent church at this site, land was purchased and part of it was plotted for a cemetery. Later the Emmanuel congregation at the Tannery disbanded and its members affiliated with St. John's Church in Two Rivers. Neither the Tannery nor the village are any longer in existence, only the cemetery still functions as a private burial ground. Later Philip Koehler began preaching in the village of Two Rivers because the German Lutherans here wanted a pastor and a church of their own. Through his efforts St. John's church was organized on February 1, 1863. After the first pastor of St. John's Church of Two Rivers and vicinity was installed, uninterrupted services were begun, which by God's Grace have continued to the present time.

Kasson Served as an "Affiliate" from Reedsville

Christ Horn, one of four brothers acquired a large tract of land from the government at what is now Kasson. They cleared the land, erected and put into operation a general store and then a cheese factory - creating the community. Operational checks against existing history of the plant show this factory in continuous operation, ranking it among the oldest of its type in the state.

St. Bartholomew's of Kasson was a rural congregation with its church four miles north of Brillion. In 1858 four families, led by Fred Maertz, dedicated their homes as places of worship. It was not long before the congregation at Reedsville called a new shepherd. Carl Gausewitz, Sr., was ordained at Manitowoc and soon thereafter installed at Reedsville. He also took charge of the Lutherans in Town Brillion and Town Maple Grove. He came to Kasson to preach regularly every four weeks. He served here some four to five years inspite of difficult marches through the woods - often making the nine miles on foot. On the Sundays when he could not come, Fred Maertz held reading services as before. Eventually this congregation shared the same pastor with Trinity out of Brillion.

In 1866 a log church was erected at Kasson. Though small and unpretentious it served the steadily increasing congregation until the fall of 1900, when an imposing and attractive brick church was erected. Pastor Martin Sauer became St. Bartholomew's shepherd a few months prior to the dedication of the new church edifice on November 11, 1900. He was again in the pulpit for the 40th anniversary of dedication, on November 10, 1940.

Brillion was Founded from Reedsville

The first Lutheran worship service in Brillion was held on April 16, 1882, with Pastor Adolph Toepel from Reedsville in charge. They met in the home of a man by the name of Larzig. On May 7 of that year, sixteen men from Brillion and the immediate vicinity gathered in the Larzig home to organize Trinity Ev. Lutheran.

Met in Home of Ernest Lau

Since they had no place of worship one of the sixteen men, Ernest Lau, offered them a room in his home where services were held until the first church was built. Before the end of 1883 their own house of worship was completed and the congregation became a member of the Wisconsin Synod. Meanwhile, during the building period eight families from Kasson were received into membership by right of transfer because it was nearer to church for them. In 1887 the members of Trinity decided to call their own pastor and to build a parsonage. Pastor Gustav Denninger of Neenah was called, who served until 1893.

Build a New Church & Open a School

When it was apparent that the Brillion church was too small, a new building was erected and dedicated in 1902. Two years later a Christian Day School was opened in the remodeled old church building which then stood on the southeast corner of the church property. In 1953, after 50 years of service, the church was renovated and enlarged for proper use as it stands today. Martin Sauer served the two churches as one parish from 1900 until his retirement in 1942.

St. John & St. James Congregations Merged - Reedsville

Goldammer's mission journeys let him westward of Two Rivers to Reedsville. Nine heads of families gathered in the home of Martin Braats for the first public church service, December 8, 1857. A small house of worship was soon erected on land given by Jacob Grimm. When the pastor could not appear a reading service was conducted. Missionary Goldammer served this small group faithfully from Manitowoc during the year 1857-1858. He earned the distinction of being the pioneer Lutheran preacher of Manitowoc County. He remains a landmark of Synod, as do all the pioneers after him.

It was difficult for this preacher to travel with his little Indian pony and buggy through the woods. It took hours to cover the distance, since the road from Manitowoc was nothing more than a widened Indian trail. For two years the members worshipped in the parlors of private homes, where boards served as benches. In 1859 the small group erected a church building on the present property and called their place of worship the St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church.

In 1860-1861 the "Old Lutherans" of St. John on the west side of Reedsville, decided to dissolve. The majority members joined St. James congregation. On October 7, 1861, it was decided to incorporate under the name St. John & St. James Evangelical Lutheran congregation.

Pastor Philip Koehler from First German (1858-1867) Manitowoc, continued to serve here where Goldammer left off. He also used a horse to get around. One time the pastor stopped in at a member to have his horse cared for. The animal was to be fed, but would not eat. So this man wondered if the horse was sick. "No," said Koehler, "he is old and needs ground feed - he has no teeth." The man retorted, "he is a shaky old thing at best!"

Since these people were served from Manitowoc, the distance could hardly be covered in less than three to four hours - even with the aid of a better horse, the people at Reedsville were finally able to have their own pastor. In 1859 Carl Gausewitz, Sr., who had just arrived from Germany was called. During the first months he and his new bride lived with members, mainly with Jacob Grimm. In 1860 a block-house was built for a parsonage. Gausewitz remained in Reedsville for five years until he moved to Town of Morrison, (1859-1864).

Candidate Heinrich Jox sent to serve in Maple Valley

From their base in Sheboygan county the work of the Missouri Synod spread towards Manitowoc. As early as 1855, a young candidate of theology, Heinrich Jox, was sent to St. John's church to serve at Maple Grove. Jox was ordained May 24 and developed work in Manitowoc and in Town Morrison. In 1857 Jox founded St. Peter's congregation in T. Rockland at Collins. But he could not hang on for long. Soon his health began to break under the trying labors and the opposition he met in his field, and added competition from Wisconsin Synod men - forced him to resign in a few years. A pastor from Town Herman in Sheboygan county, then took over what was left of Jox's work, and most of this was lost to the Wisconsin Synod.

From Haven to Hika, Centerville, Cleveland

The founding of preaching stations and early congregations proceeded along Lake Michigan shoreline and inland westward. The name Centerville may no longer mean much to present day churchgoers of Cleveland, but the name Hika will be remembered as the village post office. Centerville is located halfway between Manitowoc and Sheboygan, from whence it derived its name. This point served as a link and landmark for early settlers coming into this area. The remains of the pier may still be visible along the lapping waves of the lakeshore-indicating the site where Saxon German settlers moved inland seeking the good land so richly covered with giant virgin trees to provide lumber for housing and to clear the land for farming. Here maple trees are still tapped, where a "Drop of sap is start of sirup."

In 1860 Pastor Philip Koehler came from Manitowoc and gathered fellow Christians into a Lutheran congregation from the lakeshore area. There was only a small group of new German immigrants served here and there in area schoolhouses. St. John's group was founded in 1860 at Centerville - a village called Hika that being the name of the local post office. St. Peter's congregation was located two miles west and one fourth mile north from Hika, also served for a number of years by the same pastor. The earliest settlers gained enough courage in their circumstances after the first year to build a nice log church. This made an awesome impression - especially from within. Their little tower was a constant witness of the unchanging mercy and faithfulness of God to the travelers going by on the boats of Lake Michigan. Once a frugal-minged settler asked: "But, pastor, why should we build a tower on our church when it is so costly?" He received the prompt reply: "Because the church should stand among our homes as a constant guidepost. With its mighty finger it should show you the way you should go - the goal toward which you should hurry."

For a few years St. John's congregation was served, but rather irregularly. In 1862 Centerville received an able shepherd in Pastor H. Quehl, who found 40 members to serve here. That year the congregation built a well arranged schoolhouse and in 1865 a parsonage was added for their first resident pastor who lived in Hika. When the people in the area were visited in their homes concerning the plan for founding our first college at Watertown, they were made willing beyond all expectation to support this program with a \$4,095 collection. For a time the congregation also supported a Christian Day School for training their children.

After several vacancies a candidate was called to serve this parish in the person of Francis Pieper (1875-1876). St. John's congregation of Centerville, Post Office Hika, issued a call with a salary of \$400 and residence and fuel. St. Peter's congregation, Town Centerville, pledged itself to pay \$100. However, barely a year and fourteen months later, in September 1876 Pastor Pieper was called to fill the vacancy at First German congregation, Manitowoc. His successor served here for about five years (1877-82), when he accepted a call to Racine. Thus this parish experienced six vacancies within twenty-seven years (1860-1887), which made Centerville the proving grounds in this early period of the Wisconsin Synod for finding men of experience to send out into strategic areas for preaching the Gospel.

After Pastor Philip Sprengling, Jr., was called to serve this area he faithfully performed his duties for the next forty-five years, 1888-1933, until old age compelled him to lay down his staff in retirement. Incidentally this Philip--son of J.Ph.Sprengling who served two St.Peter congregations one at Mosel and Haven respectively-- was from the Burr Oak Ev.Luth.Church, Mindoro, Wisconsin. He arrived immediately upon his graduation from the Synod's Theological Seminary in Milwaukee and was installed May 15, 1882. He was therefore a young man and the first American-trained pastor of this congregation.

When the time came for two historic congregations in Cleveland area to build another church, they united to build jointly for a new church in Cleveland and called it St.John--St.Peter congregation. The merger occurred in 1920.

St.Paul's of Millersville - Five Miles North of Sheboygan Falls

St.Paul's Ev.Lutheran congregation at Millersville of Town Herman, Sheboygan Co., was officially organized in 1862. For this historic event much credit is due the Reverend John Philip Sprengling - pastor from St.Peter congregation, Town Mosel in Sheboygan County, (1861-1865). He did missionary work in this community until 1866.

The property of St.Paul's Congregation lies on State Highway 42, five miles north of Sheboygan Falls. After the Green Bay Road was laid out and the land was surveyed more people began to settle in this community. Emigrant settled here to fell trees and walk the woods of Wisconsin.

The first move toward religious union was the laying out of a separate cemetery which lies near a school in section 2 of Sheboygan Falls Township, on County Highway J. In the early years, services were conducted in this schoolhouse and in the Millersville schoolhouse, two miles north, by several pastors of the Reformed Church. In the face of many hardships and adversities these men preached the word of God and instructed the youth as best they could. When the Lutheran Church concerned itself about fellow Lutherans in

this community and sent representatives to visit them --- the old settlers decided to abide by the faith of their fathers. The first regular service was rendered by Pastor John Philip Sprengling who was a resident pastor in the area since 1859. A document was discovered which states that six congregations were organized in 1860. St. Paul's of Town Hermon is mentioned as one of the six. Other facts bear witness to the fact that the congregation was founded in the early Sixties.

Zion Church of Louis Corners Comes into Being

In the early seventies and eighties different attempts were made to found a preaching station at Louis Corners, Town of Schlesswig- five miles northeast of Kiel. Such early efforts failed. Through an incident, by the grace of God, the seemingly impossible became a reality. A man brought his child to be baptized to Pastor Martin Denninger who served 48 years at Haven (1879-1927). At this baptism Denninger was asked to come and preach to the settlers in Town Schleswig. There were settlers living mostly of German extraction and loved their mother tongue, the German language holds an important place in this community. Pastor Denninger cheerfully answered the call to preach to these devout people. After canvassing this territory, the pastor from Haven found about 18 members. He began to minister to them and eventually organized Zion Ev. Lutheran Church, April 30, 1883. The services were held in the public schoolhouse for about a year, before the local people decided to build a church to worship in.

Trinity Church, Kiel, likewise Organized from Haven

The first Lutheran service conducted by the Wisconsin Synod in Kiel was held in the home of Julius Berndt. Later, services continued in the so-called "German Hall" on sixth Street, where the Masonic Hall now stands. After a year of services the little group organized a congregation under the name Trinity congregation, on August 29, 1905.

Although the congregation was organized by Martin Denninger from Haven (1904-1907) - he was soon succeeded by his son, George Dinninger (1907-1913), who served at Kiel for six years from Louis Corners congregation which had been in existence since 1883. Services at Kiel were not held regularly and the membership remained small. Ten years later the congregation consisted of about fifteen families. All services were held in German. There were times when this congregation was all but dead. New attempts were made to revive it. A site was purchased on July 28, 1918. It was decided to build a church with loans from Synod's Church Extension Fund. The joy over the prospect of having its own place of worship was soon turned to gloom. Members of the little flock left town to seek employment during the post World War I boom. When the time of dedication arrived the membership had dwindled to four families. Of these only one family and a widow contributed cash for the church. It took a lot of faith to face the future bravely. The congregation did not die, but survived all efforts to strangle it. The Lord had helped this little flock in need. The cornerstone was laid on September 8, 1918. The congregation now numbered about thirty families. It began to feel that in order to achieve stability and growth it ought to become self-supporting and have its own pastor. An appeal to the Mission Board resulted in such and he began his ministry in Kiel full time in 1921. A year later the present bell at Trinity Church at Kiel was installed in the church tower purchased from the St. Peter congregation of Centerville for \$60.00. Need one still ask: "Why should we buy a bell for the church tower when it is so costly?"

The Kossuth Congregation Served from Manitowoc & Maribel

Of the Wisconsin Synod congregations presently in the Manitowoc Conference ten, as indicated before, were founded in the twelve years from 1851 to 1863. Among them were First German, Manitowoc, and St. John's, Maribel in 1855, St. John-St. James, Reedsville, in 1857, St. Peter's, Mishicot, in 1861, and St. John's, Two Rivers, in 1863. Some of our Lutheran settlers also settled in the Town of Kossuth. They had a choice to attend church, as they were able, at one or another of the five churches closest to them. We are told of one couple who regularly walked the Wisconsin woods the three to four miles distance from Shoto to Rookwood to attend church services. Roads were few, dusty in summer, snowbound in winter, muddy in spring, and it soon became desirable to have a congregation in Kossuth Township.

Provisions were made for the erection of a small church. Two of the men subscribing to the constitution were not able to write and signified their assent by making three crosses. A small parcel of land was secured at an intersection of two roads in what today is the unincorporated village of Rookwood. Trees were cut from a woods, sawed into lumber by hand of members, and the lumber then carried on their shoulders to the site of the new church. It was a small, simple building, but it was a house of God, and it was here that the Word was preached and taught and the Sacraments administered for the next forty-eight years.

"The First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kossuth" was organized May 21, 1866. It is likely that Pastor Philip Koehler, who was nine years in Manitowoc (1858-1867), began preaching here and six pastors of 1st German after him, (1868-1880). Then three pastors from Maribel served at Rookwood (1880-1903). In 1902 Rockwood congregation united with St. Peter of Michico and was served as a Joint parish that has continued to the present time.

St. Peter congregation was organized May 20, 1861. The first service at Mishicot was conducted in the public school on cemetery hill by Pastor Goldammer of Manitowoc. He began preaching to a group north of Two Rivers which later developed into St. Peter's congregation at Mishicot. This village owes its origin to a sawmill located on the East Twin River, which afforded waterpower for early settlers. When the first church was erected for the Lutheran settlers, the saw mill operator donated 5000 feet of lumber for their project.

Mission Efforts Pressed Onward as far as Sandy Bay, Two Creeks & Kewaunee

The lumbering industry gradually went forward. Goldammer penetrated this area as far as Two Creeks, located twelve miles north of Two Rivers. While Philip Koehler was serving Two Rivers he also had charge of a vacancy at Algoma which he served whenever time permitted him to make the itinerary on foot, via Two Rivers, Two Creeks, Sandy Bay and Kewaunee.

Sandy Bay was founded in 1863, located four miles north of Two Creeks along Lake Michigan on highway 42, known as St. John's Church. St. Peter's congregation at Carlton 8 miles southwest of Kewaunee was founded in 1865. These two congregations were served for many years from Kewaunee. In 1932 Sandy Bay was switched to Two Rivers as an "affiliate" charge. In 1951, members of Sandy Bay that were still left of a dwindling congregation, voted to discontinue their church and concerned families were to join either churches in Kewaunee or Two Rivers for their spiritual needs.

The upshot of this was that some of these members saw a need to begin another congregation. After seeking proper advice and good counsel - with the help of the District Mission Board, a new congregation was founded. The meeting took place April 2, 1953, in a hall, then on the corner of 31st and Tannery Road, Two Rivers. On May 5, 1953, formal organization of the congregation took place. The name of the church was selected "Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Congregation."

Pine Grove Winds Up a Joint Parish with Shirley

"The Lutheran Church Community of Pine Grove", Brown County, was founded Nov. 1, 1877. The first minutes are dated March 1, 1882 and record only the names and time of each man toward cutting timber, most likely on the church property. The next entries are filled with describing cost of lumber and other materials for the church. It was decided to paint the church white. That seems to have completed the building of the church, in which no important change or addition was made for well over fifty years other than holding traditional services in the homes.

The pastor from St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Green Bay, was doing the preaching every two weeks. Later services were reduced to once a month during the winter months. A constitution was finally adopted in 1890 and served the congregation for the next 59 years when it was revised, (1899-1949). The congregation did not experience any exceptional growth. The list of souls totaled 151 as its peak and from 1901 on the membership experienced a steady decline. Much of this must be attributed to the proximity of Pine Grove to the city. The younger generations sought their employment in the shops and factories rather than staying on the farms, and by and large the growth of this congregation was largely affected. The advent of the automobile played a part in this decline also. Seven interval pastors from Green Bay served at Pine Grove for 56 years. A change in the parish arrangement was brought about in 1933. Due to the press of work, the last pastor was granted a release. Pine Grove was then served as an "affiliate" of Shirley for the next 36 years. This joint parish existed under four more pastors until Pine Grove membership dwindled to 38 souls and after 92 years in existence, it formally ceased to exist, Sept. 4, 1969.

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Shirley, Wis.

Immanuel Lutheran Church of Shirley traces its history to a migration of German Lutherans from Morrison to the Glenmore area prior to 1901. This soon prompted the idea of organizing a congregation here. The means of traveling 7 to 10 miles to church were not as convenient as today. On March 2, 1901 an exploratory meeting was held in the district schoolhouse which was then standing in Shirley. Of the fifteen persons present only one-third were ready to commit themselves when the time came to form a congregation. The organization of the congregation was effected by five families. Services were held in a district schoolhouse until a frame church was erected in 1902. This church served the congregation until July 25, 1965 when it was razed to make room for a new church and school. A parsonage was erected in 1914; the teacherage in 1955.

Pastors have served Immanuel during the early years at various times from Morrison, Maribel, and Greenleaf parishes. From 1928 to 1969, it was part of a dual parish with St. Paul's of Pine Grove. When that congregation disbanded in 1969, most of its members joined at Shirley. Since then, Immanuel has been a joint parish with St. Paul's of Greenleaf.

Immanuel's first parochial school, begun in 1916, was closed in 1939 because of the depression and the declining enrollment. In 1950 the school was reopened and in 1965 replaced by the present facility. The location of this parish is route 1, - ten miles south-east of De Pere.

Two Closely Knit Churches- Zion in Morrison and Wayside

Prior to the founding of the Zion congregation at Morrison the founding fathers met with protestants of the area in joint church services at Lark, where the group was served at first by an Evangelical pastor from Maple Grove. Because of doctrinal differences that arose the congregation was dissolved in 1862. The Lutherans of this dissolved group became the founding fathers of two closely knit churches - Zion congregation in Town of Morrison and the Zion in neighboring Wayside.

For ten years Zion congregation of Morrison was served by three Wisconsin Synod pastors coming from Reedsville. The first was Pastor Carl Gausewitz, Sr. (1859-1864). The first services were held in the home of members. On the site of the old cemetery where "Z" turns off from highway 32 corner, a humble but roomy log church was erected in 1863 with the forest primeval serving as background. Holding services here was often an arduous task for pastors to make the twelve miles from Reedsville either on foot - walking Wisconsin woods or on horseback when roads were rough and impassible. The farmers owning a yoke of oxen would take as many members to church as their wagon could carry for the Sunday services. Others simply were walking the Wisconsin woods in those formative years prior to horse and buggy conveniences. Sometimes the congregation waited in vain because of inclement weather or some other unavoidable hindrances for the pastor to arrive. Then an Elder of the congregation was expected to conduct reading services. Such was the arrangement made by the founding fathers in those primitive years.

The Morrison Zion congregation maintained a Christian Day School almost from the beginning of its history. It answered the purpose and the needs of their youth in the field of religion. A frame log school was erected to serve them with a student for six years (1866-1872) as the first teacher assisting the pastor.

From Goldammer to Gausewitz -- Reflections

As we reflect on past events of a pioneer group of early settlers - from the Goldammer to Gausewitz era - let us remember the humble circumstances of the first resident pastor at Morrison in 1862, under whose direction the founding of Zion congregation took place.

Pastor Carl Gausewitz, Sr., was living in a humble block-house at Maple Grove north of Reedsville - perhaps a dozen miles from Morrison. This was the first parsonage in the area built in 1860. Here a son was born to this pioneer Wisconsin Synod pastor on August 29, 1861 - namely Carl F.W. Gausewitz, Jr. In 1916 - fifty-five years later - he was destined to become the author of our official Catechism, adopted in German and English by the Joint Synod of Wisconsin and other States, as its official book of instruction for all our schools. The revision as authorized by the Synod was completed in 1956. This textbook of Christian Doctrine, in short, plain, simple form - sometimes referred to as "Our little Bible" - is still used in our congregations, or, at least should be - by almost 1200 pastors and more than 1500 teachers in the system. Here is an evaluation made from the Board of Education:

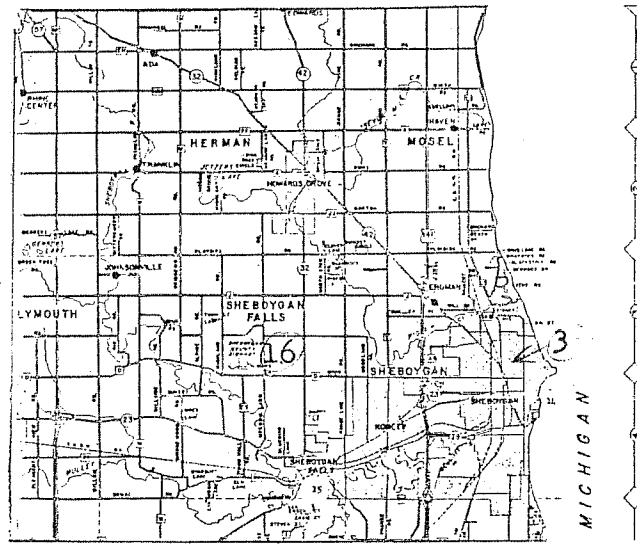
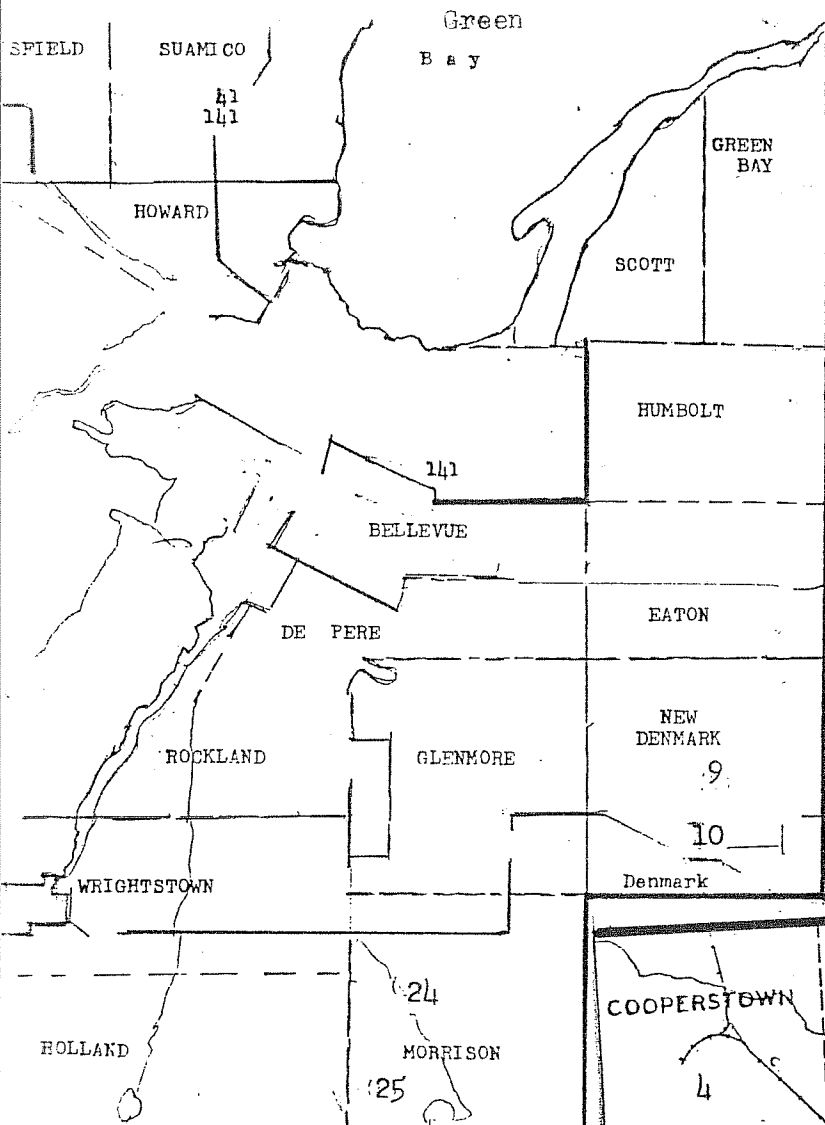
"The Gausewitz Catechism is a precious heritage of our Wisconsin Synod! The sainted author has by the grace of God found a way of conforming in question and answer to the confessional form of the questions and answers used by Luther in the En'chi-rid'i-on. Moreover, that is specifically characteristic in our Catechism and found in no other is the catechetical type of questions and answers, in contrast to the dogmatical presentation of other catechisms." F.W. Meyer

- Executive Secretary, 1935-

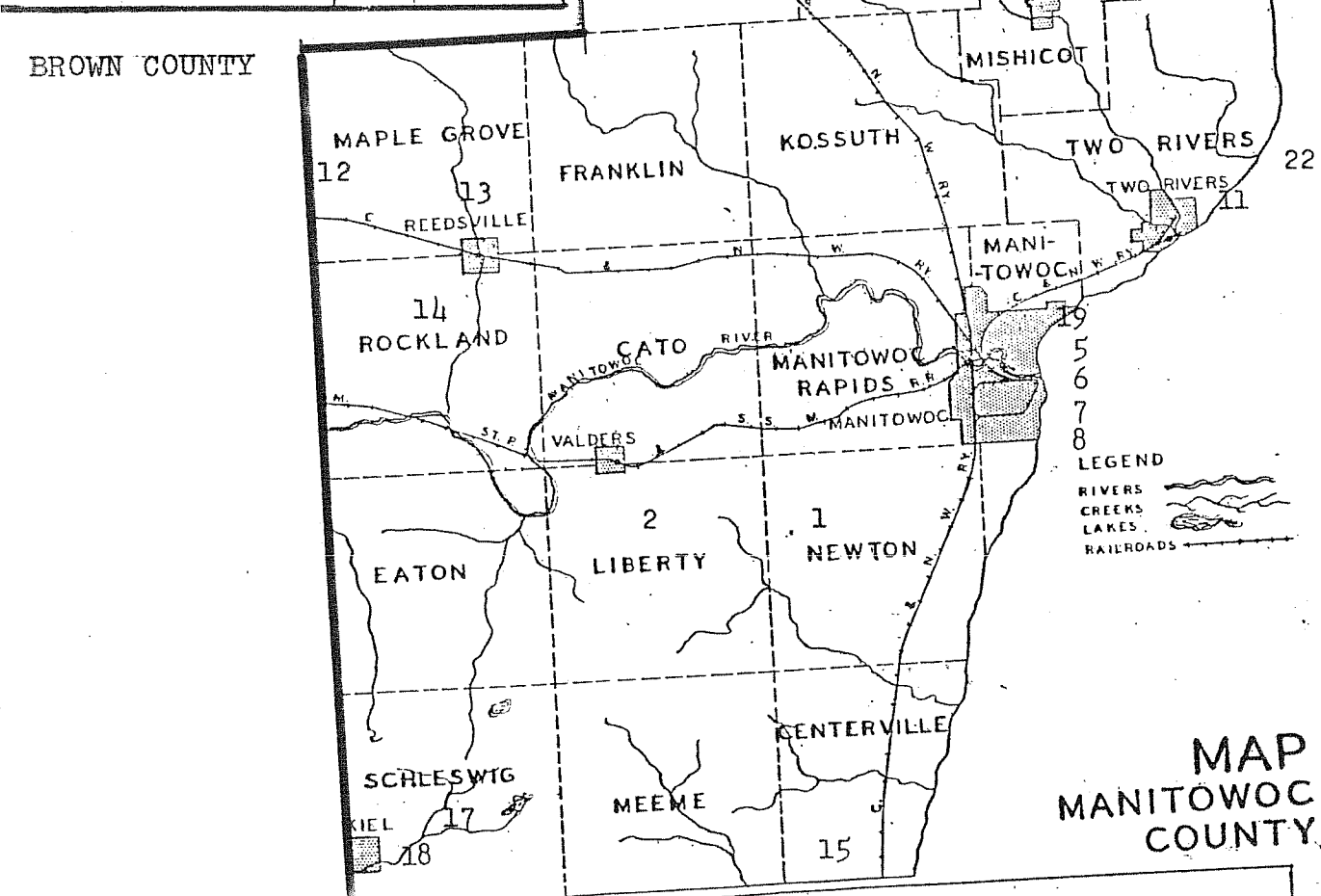
Energetic Mission Efforts Were Made Early as far as Two Creeks

Two Creeks area was the first to be visited and temporarily settled by white men in Manitowoc County. Boats made regular visits here to take on cargo for Milwaukee. Goldammer penetrated this area in his energetic mission efforts to gather his people as far as Two Creeks. Not long ago, in 1970, this section again was bustling with the construction of several power plants. Nuclear power was viewed as the way of the future. A little over a century ago, the Missionary from Manitowoc came here not ashamed to deliver a message more powerful than nuclear power, "for it is a power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth," Romans 1:16.

-July 29, 1984 Reading time 55 min.
Armin Engel, Jefferson, Wis.



Sheboygan County



LEGEND

- RIVERS
- CREEKS
- LAKES
- RAILROADS

MAP
MANITOWOC
COUNTY

acknowledged by 9/12/84

221 W Candise Street
Jefferson, Wis 53549
September 11, 1984

Dear James,

I take it that you received my article on the Manitowoc Conference - as I mailed to you shortly before Labor Day. This paper I am expected to deliver on Monday, September 17.

Enclosed you will find a composite sheet of additional information I prepared since I talked with you over the phone. This I hope will help the brethren to follow my story, "Walking Wisconsin Woods with Eminent Pioneers."

On the copy you have there should be added the following information concerning the Gibson congregation north of Larrabee: to wit on bottom of page 18 ---

St. John's Church, T. Gibson, is located two miles north of Larrabee on county trunk "Q". The formation began with the coming of Pastor Conrad Jaeger, who was called to serve Two Rivers and vicinity August 18, 1872. He visited in Town Gibson regularly conducting services in houses of prospective members. The formal organization of this congregation took place January 4, 1873. Later Jaeger moved to Gibson and served until 1881 when he was called to Centerville.

The above information was inadvertently omitted from the material I sent you. We can't do that - but must treat them all alike. I hope this can only add to your reading pleasure.

Armin