

THE REV. KARL FRIEDRICH GOLDAMMER'S PIONEER ENDEAVORS
IN THE VILLAGE OF MANITOWOC

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library

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"The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." Matthew 13:31,32.

As it is everywhere in the world where the Kingdom of God is built, so it was in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. At first there was a vast wilderness virtually untouched by settlers in the early 1800's in this area. In the beginning there were primarily Indians in the Manitowoc-Two Rivers area, as Colonel Abraham Edwards mentions:

In 1818 he, with seven expert canoe men from Green Bay paddled along Lake Michigan. At Twin Rivers and Manitowoc the shore of the lake was lined with Indians; near Manitowoc many were out in canoes spearing fish.¹

When reciting historical matters about Manitowoc, it is necessary that mention be made of these early Indians. These Indians lived here in a dense forest which existed prior to written history of the area. This forest was the home of countless animals. Indians found their food and clothing in the forests around their villages situated near the river flowing out into Lake Michigan.

Many of the early explorers we know were French explorers and Jesuit missionaries. These men usually kept somewhat accurate records of their work. Manitowoc, being somewhat out of the beaten path is seldom mentioned in these early accounts. Though there is no record that Marquette and Joliet stopped at Manitowoc or Two Rivers, they must have landed at many spots along the Wisconsin coast on their trip back to Chicago. It was in the year 1673 that they set out to map the shoreline from Green Bay to Illinois.

About a hundred years later, in the 1770's, the first written record of Manitowoc County was made in a book called "*A Voyage on Lake Michigan*", written by Samuel Robertson, a trader. In it he spoke of an Indian settlement at "Twin Rivers", some distance north of Milwaukee.² A few years later, in 1795, a man by the name of Jacques Vieau was sent out by the Northwestern Fur Company, from Mackinac, to establish trading posts at various points on Lake Michigan. This Jacques Vieau, or Jean Beau, as the Indians reportedly called him, was accompanied by his wife Angeline, his three eldest children, and a clerk. So Jean Beau then would be the first officially recorded white trader in Manitowoc County.³

The first actual settler in Manitowoc County was a man by the name of Jacob W. Conroe, who in 1835 bought several hundred acres of land. Though this was a number of years later, it is worth noting for the land he bought was located in what is now the town of Manitowoc Rapids. There he built a mill and began one of the earliest local trades.

One source claims that settlements did not spring up until 1836 when the rumor of a gold strike near Anhapee (Kewaunee) was spread.⁴ This claim I find unsupported.

The acclaimed pioneer and founder of the village of Manitowoc was a man by the name of Benjamin Jones. This man formed a "Manitowoc Land Company" in Chicago with the single purpose of settling and exploiting the land around the Manitowoc River.

Benjamin Jones was of hardy stock, the kind that makes the best of pioneer timber. He was a native of Massachusetts and was born July 24, 1795. When but sixteen years of age he fought in the ranks of the War of 1812 and performed

valiant service for his country. He was married in 1825 and in 1833 left his eastern home, and journeyed west to the growing town on the lake known as Chicago, where he built a house, later to be used by him both as a residence and store. In this he placed a stock of merchandise. As time wore on he invested surplus earnings in land which, when turned into cash, made a considerable sum of money. This, as has been already told, was paid for Manitowoc land, some two thousand acres and, as a result, Benjamin Jones became the pioneer of Manitowoc and its founder.⁵

In the years between 1848 and 1850 there was a large influx of German immigrants into the area of Manitowoc. The unrest in Germany preceding the Revolutions of 1848 had caused a large emigration from that country to America. The disastrous results of that movement exiled many more. Wisconsin, more than any other western state, benefitted from this. Milwaukee became the gateway through which this emigration in masses passed into the interior of the state, especially moving up along the lakeshore. And so Manitowoc has become a distinctively German community. As early as 1850, at the very beginning of this emigration, more than one-third of the nearly four thousand persons in the whole county were German.⁶ This very rapid growth consisted for the most part of farm laborers and tradesmen. Among these people were also a fairly large number of professional and literary people. These men were commonly known as the "forty-eighters".⁷ These men were idealists and rationalists and were not at all equipped to handle the struggles of the settlers' life. However their influence did act as a prod for the betterment of conditions.

According to the records, the first German settler was George Dusold, a shoemaker from Manitowoc Rapids where he worked the year before in 1847. He made himself a self-appointed committee of one to greet the first arrivals from the Fatherland.

He met them at the recently government-constructed southside pier

in his shirt sleeves, a clay pipe in his mouth and carpet slippers on his feet, conducted them to his little hotel, then located in the middle of the block on Jay Street, between Sixth and Seventh streets, and made them feel more at home by conversing with them in their native tongue.⁸

It was in this same year that this enterprising man purchased the entire block on which today stands Schuette's store, the Police Station, City Hall, and the new Village Square shopping center for the grand amount of fifty dollars. In those early days there were hard times in the town as well as in the country. There was little ready money, although I suppose the same can be said for most beginnings. The things which were produced by these early settlers were sold for the necessities of life.

Up to 1847 the principal means of livelihood of the settlers was lumber and fish. Gradually, however, many of the settlers began to turn their attention to the fine land in the area. The Germans are credited with first efforts in this direction, in producing corn, wheat, oats, and other cereals the land was well able to produce.

Manitowoc, from the earliest days, was fortunate in the people who came here. Almost without exception they were people who were looking for a community in which to work, live, grow, and rear their children. The pioneers raised large families of eight to 16 or more children who aided them in clearing the land and who in turn became owners of farms which their parents carved out of the large tract which they first settled. These early pioneers were here to make permanent homes. They came to escape religious and political persecution, and to better their economic status. They came vowing to make this new settlement a land of freedom and opportunity for themselves and their children.⁹

It is interesting to note the population changes which took place, not only in the village but in the entire county during these years. Falge, a historian of Manitowoc, has this to say:

In 1846 the population of Manitowoc county was said to be 629; this was doubled in 1847. In 1850 it was 3,702; in 1860 it was 23,000, among whom was a large proportion of Germans. Probably the first group of North Germans to settle in the county were a body of men from Holstein, whom Frederick Borchardt, a native of Saxony, met in Detroit and induced to go to Neshoto, where there was a sawmill belonging to the Stringham Company, by whom he was employed. Some of the people located in Neshoto, others in Mishicot. This was about 1847. The next German settlers were mostly from Saxony and Rhenish Prussia. Between 1848 and 1850 a large number of Mecklenburgers and Pomeranians located in the county. There are said to be about five thousand families of this class in the county, together with the Hanoverians and Oldenburgers, who are known as Mecklenburgers, from the fact that the majority came from Mecklenburg-Schwerin. These people belong to eleven or more Lutheran congregations. The locations were about as follows: The town of Maple Grove and the adjoining town of Cato, Franklin and Rockland contained about eighty or one hundred Pomeranian families. In Reedsville there were a number of West Prussians, while in the city of Manitowoc and scattered through the county, were the Mecklenburgers and Hanoverians.¹⁰

And so it was that these families of German heritage came to Manitowoc to make a life for themselves. Undoubtedly when they arrived here they gave little thought to anything but survival of the body. Yet as the Word of the Lord does not return void, and has its beginning like a mustard seed, we must agree that this was also the beginning of the growth of God's Kingdom in Manitowoc. The heavenly seed of God's Word was sown from parents to children, from family to family, in the hope that the Lord God would put his blessing upon it. So it came to pass that souls began to gather together for worship services as early as 1848.¹¹

Our Synod was not unaware of the need of these souls and the countless others throughout our state who as yet did not know their Lord. In the Synod's minutes of May 28, 1850 the following remark is made in closing:

Am Abend wurde in der Ministerialversammlung besonders darauf aufmerksam gemacht, dass wir in unserer letzten Zeit sehr noetig haben, in Einheit des Geistes mit einander zu kaempfen, in Kraft der Gnade gegen den immer mehr ueberhand nehmenden teuflischen Unglauben in Wisconsin.¹²

To supply the needs of the growing population which had few, if any, Shepherds, our Synod had to rely on the old Mission Houses in Germany for manpower. These Mission Houses had courses of study which were intended to equip its students to deal more with the practical side of mission work than any other area. It was in such a Mission House that the first spiritual leader of the city of Manitowoc had his training. According to Koehler's history, he had a difficult time.

The Reverend Karl Friedrich Goldammer was born in Ursperg, Saxony, on February 9, 1821. He entered the Rheinisch Mission House at Erlangen in 1846. However after spending a few years there he withdrew because he couldn't master the foreign languages required for a study of theology. This is a factor worth noting in attempting to understand Pastor Goldammer's actions in Manitowoc. Yet despite his withdrawal from the Mission House, Koehler tells us that he was further trained, examined and given a good report. I do not know where Koehler found his facts on this matter, but we will accept it as true. Pastor Goldammer came to America in 1850.

In the minutes of our Synod (quoted earlier) which were photographically reproduced by Professor Erwin Schroeder of Northwestern College, I found what is titled "*Statuten der ev.-luth. Synode von Wisconsin*" immediately following the minutes of May 28, 1850. Following these "Statuten" there is the minutes of the June 15, 1851 meeting. Because of their location, I am not sure of the date of these "Statuten". Nevertheless, the point I wish to make is that in the "*Schlussartikel*" of the Statuten the following is found:

Wir, die Unterzeichneten, erklaren hiermit, dass wir diese Synodal- und Ministerialordnung als die Grundlage unserer kirchlichen Verbindung ansehen und verpflichten uns

vor Gott und gegen einander, unser Verhalten als Glieder dieses Koerpers nach derselben einzurichten.

<i>John Muehlhaeuser</i>	<i>Gotthilf Weitbrecht</i>
<i>John Weinmann</i>	<i>Jos. Daniel Huber</i>
<i>Wilh. Wrede</i>	<i>Johannes Jacob Elias Sauer</i>
<i>Kasp. Pluess</i>	<i>Philipp Koehler</i>
<i>Karl Friedr. Goldammer</i>	<i>Wilhelm Streissguth</i>
<i>W. Buehren</i>	<i>G. Reim</i>
<i>Conrad Koester</i>	<i>Christian Starck</i>
<i>Jacob Conrad</i>	<i>Gottlieb Fachtmann</i>
<i>Johann Bading</i>	<i>Julius Hoffmann.¹³</i>

Note the signature of Pastor Goldammer. Prior to the Schlussartikel, in Article VI, point 9, there are listed two questions which were asked of those who were to be ordained and given assignments in our Synod:

1) Glauben Sie, dass die Fundamentallehren der Heiligen Schrift in den Glaubensartikeln der unveraenderten Augsb. Konf. und den uebrigen ev.-luth. Bekenntnisschriften rein, wesentlich und richtig enthalten sind? 2) Sind Sie auch fest entschlossen solche als Lehrnorm in Ihrem wichtigen Amte zu handhaben und stets denselben entsprechend zu lehren? Ist dies Ihre aufrichtige Gesinnung, so sagen Sie: Ja, mit Gottes Hilfe.¹⁴

So it would seem that the Reverend Karl Friedrich Goldammer would have answered "yes" also to these questions. Pastor Goldammer was accepted apparently as a leading member of Synod. This I have concluded by tracing his name through the early minutes of our Synod and its Conferences. In fact, in the June 6, 1852 meeting he was elected Secretary:

Ferner ging die Versammlung zur Wahl neuer Beamten ueber. Es wurden fuer die folgenden zwei Jahre gewaehlt P. J. Muehlhaeuser zum Praes., Hr. P. C. F. Goldammer zum Sekr. und Hr. P. W. Wrede zum Schatzmeister.¹⁵

It was President Muehlhaeuser of the Wisconsin Synod who had sent Goldammer to originally canvass the area in Manitowoc County known as Newtonberg. There Goldammer met with a group of Lutherans and saw their need for a pastor. Falge, in his book with a section entitled "Chronology of Manitowoc County", lists the year 1851 with the remark: "First

Lutheran congregation organized by Rev. C. F. Goldammer in town
Newton."¹⁶

A letter of Pastor Goldammer's was discovered in Germany in
1948. It was written from Milwaukee under the date of January 15,
1851. It was addressed to the wife of the Inspector of his old
Mission House. In it he explains how the Lord led him to Manitowoc
County to serve the Germans who had settled at Newtonburg and vicinity.

Dear Mrs. - - - -

I received your welcome letter on the 17th of December,
last. I was very much pleased by it. It was the only letter
which reported in any detail about the House and the brethren
there. I have left my good stationery in Manitowoc, but I
have cut a piece from my dear Jettchen's letter, of which you
will receive a part. 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
dishearting, 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 sealed 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. I shall write
soon, when I have arrived there, to the Society. Greet the
Inspector, the students, and all who live at the House, and
all other friends.

The grace of the Lord be with us all in these last evil days.

Yours sincerely,
Carl Fr. Goldammer.¹⁶

Sending two letters as Goldammer did would not be considered standard
procedure today. Yet the Lord's will was done.

Records show that Pastor Goldammer came to Manitowoc village very
early in his ministry here. Although the roads were few, dusty in the
summer, snowbound in the winter, muddy in the spring, he served the

families gathering for worship in the village every other Tuesday. The Reverend Karl Machmiller, not noting a date, remarked that *"Pastor Goldammer wagte es nicht, mit diesen wenigen Familien sogleich eine Gemeinde zu organisieren, sondern betrachtete Manitowoc als einen Missionsposten."*¹⁷

In the village of Manitowoc, among the families who were gathering for worship were strict Reformed Lutherans. There were also the many "Mecklenburger" and "Hannoveraner".¹⁸ The services were at this time held in the evening in a district schoolhouse located on the corner of Washington and 7th streets. Although the services commonly celebrated the Lord's Supper, the reformed families in attendance always refrained from participating in it. The following year a horse was purchased and Goldammer was able to conduct services weekly.

Growth in the village of Manitowoc brought a demand for a new place of worship. So in the spring of 1853 a lot on the corner of Marshall and South 10th streets was purchased as a site for a future church building. The plot of land was purchased for \$110, and it was deeded to two men, Godfried Melzner and Johann Riederich, called *"Trustees der vereinigten luth. und ev. Kirche in der Village Manitowoc, Wis."*¹⁹

A few months before Goldammer accepted the call to the village of Manitowoc the group in the village adopted a church constitution and was organized under Goldammer's direction as the "Ev. Lutheran Trinity Congregation of Manitowoc, Wisconsin", on February 7, 1855. In April of the same year, when the congregation was incorporated, the name was changed to "German Ev. Lutheran Church". And in 1860 the name was again changed

to its present "First German Ev. Lutheran Congregation in Manitowoc, Wisconsin".²⁰

The constitution of this congregation which was adopted February 7, 1855 and signed by 71 family heads had an interesting article which I would like to point out. This constitution, in its second article contained the statement "that no preacher of the congregation in his official acts may use the rite of the Old-Lutheran Church."²¹ As Pastor Koeniger points out, this addition was made to attract the Reformed element of the Village to the services. Falge, in his book under the heading "The Church", states that "the first organized society of the German Reformed denomination in Manitowoc county occurred in the town of Newton in 1851, at which time a church was built, which was for three years served by Rev. Goldammer."²² It seems likely that Falge was referring to St. John's congregation in Newtonberg. From his comment it would appear that little distinction was made between Lutherans, particularly by those outside of the Lutheran church. Yet considering the constitution developed and adopted by Pastor Goldammer for First German Congregation, and Falge's remark, it would seem to indicate that there was some practise of unionism in Goldammer's early career. It is difficult to make conclusions with a scarcity of facts. Perhaps Goldammer for a time catered to the Reformed families with the intention of leading them to sound Confessional Lutheranism.

Pastor Koeniger remarks that "the Reformed were not deceived by the liberalizing statement of the constitution and the addition was dropped very early in our history."²³ No date is alluded to, only this remark by Koeniger is found.

In 1855 the lot on 10th and Marshall was sold for \$400 and a lot

on 8th and Marshall streets was purchased from a Samuel Hinkly, of New York. Building operations were completed by the spring of 1856. Our Synod was invited to convene in Manitowoc in the same year, and so on May 18, 1856 during the Synodical Convention the church was dedicated. Just prior to this, in 1855, in order to correct the liberal statement ^{which had been removed} in the constitution[^], the following Article 35 was added:

Es muessen dem aufzunehmenden Gliede die wichtigsten Artikel der Kirchen-Ordnung vorgelesen werden, darnach hat dasselbe folgende Fragen gewissenhaft zu beantworten:

1. *Glauben Sie, dass die Bibel Gottes Wort ist?*
2. *Glauben Sie, dass der Mensch zu allem Guten untuechtig und zu allem Boesen geneigt ist?*
3. *Glauben Sie, dass der Mensch allein durch den Glauben an Jesum Christum, aus freier Gnade durch Christi Verdienst, gerecht und selig wird?*
4. *Bekennen Sie, dass der Christ durch Wirkung des Heiligen Geistes erneuert und sein Leben geheiligt werden muss, da ohne Heiligung den Herrn Niemand sehen kann?*
5. *Und verpflichten Sie sich, dass Sie nach Kraeften dazu beitragen wollen, was zum Wohl der Gemeinde und zur Ehre des Reiches Gottes gereicht?*²⁴

So steps were taken in the right direction, perhaps in lieu of the upcoming convention.

First German Congregation was richly blessed by God. It was not even a year old and it already had a resident pastor, services every Sunday, and a school. Pastor Goldammer labored faithfully and diligently. His labors were made fruitful by a gracious God, and I am sure those original 71 family heads would have said a loud "Amen!" to this. In every way the Reverend Karl Friedrich Goldammer was the pioneer German Lutheran preacher of Manitowoc County and village. He was also the instrument of God's grace in founding many other congregations both prior to his work at First German and after leaving on August 1, 1858 after having accepted a call to Burlington, Wisconsin. The remembrance

of this pioneer pastor shall always remain in the hearts of those whom the Lord calls into His Church in this lakeshore city. May we always hold him in honor and esteem for he was a man sent by the Lord with a Message to a people who were sitting in great darkness.

ENDNOTES

- ¹Falge, Dr. Louis. History of Manitowoc County, Wisconsin. Chicago: Goodspeed Historical Association Publishers, 1911-12. p. 28.
- ²Manitowoc County Centennial Committee. Story of a Century, 1848-1948. Manitowoc: Centennial Committee Publishers, 1948. p. 3.
- ³Falge, Dr. Louis. Op. Cit., p. 31.
- ⁴Manitowoc County Centennial Committee. Op. Cit., p. 4.
- ⁵Falge, Dr. Louis. Op. Cit., p. 34.
- ⁶Ibid., p. 216.
- ⁷Ibid., p. 350.
- ⁸Ibid., p. 350.
- ⁹Manitowoc County Centennial Committee. Op. Cit., p. 9.
- ¹⁰Falge, Dr. Louis. Op. Cit., p. 37.
- ¹¹Koeninger, Rev. L.H. 100 Years of Grace. Publisher not indicated: 1955, p. 8.
- ¹²Proceedings of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 1849-1857 & 1858-1869. Reprint from Northwestern College's "Black and Red", Photostatically copied, 1965. p.2 (pages not numbered).
- ¹³Ibid., p. 12
- ¹⁴Ibid., p. 9
- ¹⁵Ibid., p. 14
- ¹⁶Koeninger, Rev. L. H. Op. Cit., p. 7-8.
- ¹⁷Machmiller, Rev. Karl. Fuenfzigjaehrige Jubilaeum der Ersten Deutschen Evang. Luth. Gemeinde zur Manitowoc, Wisconsin am 7. Februar 1905. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1905. p. 1.
- ¹⁸Koeninger, Rev. L.H. Op. Cit., p. 8
- ¹⁹Machmiller, Rev. Karl. Op. Cit., p. 1.
- ²⁰Koeninger, Rev. L. H. Op. Cit., p. 9.
- ²¹Ibid., p. 10.
- ²²Falge, Dr. Louis. Op. Cit., p. 171.
- ²³Koeninger, Rev. L. H. Op. Cit., p. 10.
- ²⁴Machmiller, Rev. Karl. Op. Cit., p. 4.

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