

The Old Lutheran Emigrations from Pomerania
to Wisconsin

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outline

Old Lutheran Emigrations from Pomerania to Wisconsin

Thesis statement: With this paper I hope to demonstrate that the Lutherans who emigrated from Pomerania in 1839 and 1843 did so out of deep religious conviction and that this conviction had a tremendous impact on the history of American Lutheranism.

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Old Lutheran Emigrations from Pomerania to Wisconsin

In 1839 and 1843 two large groups of Lutheran emigrants left Germany. In the years before, between, and after, many thousands of groups and individuals sailed the ocean, coming to America from Germany. There were probably hundreds of reasons to emigrate. This paper will be look at the emigrations of 1839 and 1843 because they were two of the largest. The emigrants left Germany for reasons of conscience. They hoped to find freedom of worship in America. Their deep religious conviction was the cause of the emigration. It was a conviction that had a tremendous impact on American Lutheranism.

This paper will concentrate specifically on those groups who settled in Washington County, Wisconsin in the villages of Freistadt and Kirchhayn in 1839 and 1843.

The story of the emigration really must begin with their king, Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia. The king instituted a union of the Reformed and Lutheran churches in his realm into one "Evangelical" church. This union was not to be either strictly Reformed or strictly Lutheran, but was to unite on the ground that both had in common. In theory, then, the nod would not be given to either the distinctly Reformed or the distinctly Lutheran doctrine. They could unite under the Augsburg Confession and ecumenical creeds, although neither a quia subscription to the creeds nor the Unaltered Augsburg Confession were specified. This would already be a compromise to Lutheran confessors.

In 1817, the three hundredth anniversary of the Reformation,

the two churches were united by the state. By 1821, the king had done enough work on a new agenda to publish it. He claimed that, by combining the Reformed and Lutheran agendas, he was actually coming closer to the original liturgies of Luther than what was presently used (1). In 1830, the anniversary of the Augsburg confession, the Lutheran church was outlawed. Protests of the confessional Lutherans were not very loud at first, but later incidents we will look at would spur the Old Lutherans into active protest against the union (2).

An examination of the king's early actions makes it appear to me that he had a noble purpose in mind for his kingdom. Unity of all Protestant Christians in his realm would present a united front against the Catholics. It would, he hoped, end the polemics and bickering between the two groups. He was concerned about the rationalism that was taking over Europe's churches. In addition to his political purposes, the king was bothered that, because he was Reformed and his wife was Lutheran, the two of them could not receive Holy Communion together (3). His motives seem to be pure, but his understanding of union as a political action rather than agreement with the truth was totally objectionable.

While it may not have been wrong for the king to hope for unity, his efforts were misguided. While for the majority of Prussian citizens it probably made little or no difference whether they were called "Calvinists" or "Lutherans" or "Evangelicals," the king made it binding also on those who held strongly to their beliefs. His plan to merge the state churches would probably have worked had he allowed for continued freedom.

Opposition to the Prussian Union

Because of his worthy goals King Friedrich could not understand why there was opposition to his plan. The more protest there was, the greater his zeal for enforcing union became. This is demonstrated by some of the earliest protests.

In Silesia, southwest Poland on today's maps, opposition began early. Dr. Johann Gottfried Scheibel, professor at the University of Breslau and dean at St. Elizabeth's Church, sought an audience with the king when the king planned to visit Breslau. The King refused when he heard the meeting was to be about Scheibel's conscientious objection to the Prussian Union. He said, "It is not a question of conscience. The duty of a subject is to obey the orders of his king" (4).

Scheibel and his supporters then appealed in writing, refusing to accept the forced union. He was joined by two other University professors, Henrick Steffens and Eduard Huschke. Judge von Haugewitz wrote a pamphlet saying that the Prussian Church Union broke the constitutional guarantee of religious toleration and freedom. One thousand parishioners joined Scheibel's protest. In 1831 he asked for permission to use the Wittenberg agenda for a joint Reformation service. When his request was denied he went ahead with his plan and was suspended from the ministry (5).

General government repression continued. "Old Lutherans," as they were now called, were prohibited from holding separate services. Clergymen who rejected the Union liturgy were suspend-

ed. If they did not recognize their dismissal they were arrested and imprisoned. Churches and church buildings belonging exclusively to Old Lutherans were confiscated or forcibly removed from their congregations (6).

One such incident is especially worthy of comment because of the uproar it caused. In Hoenigern, a small town near Breslau, Pastor Kellner was involved in protesting the Union. The authorities demanded a meeting with "the pastor and the elders of the congregation." A clerical error changed the wording to "the pastor, elders, and the congregation." The delegation, expecting to meet with ten or fifteen leaders, were greeted by two thousand church members. The delegation interpreted this misunderstanding as a hostile uprising and rode away (7).

Kellner was summoned to appear before United Church authorities, but he refused to go. He was suspended and thrown into prison. For fifteen weeks the Hoenigern congregation refused to let the newly-appointed union pastor into the church building. They set up what we today might call a "sit down strike," erecting wooden shelters and picketing around the clock while singing hymns (8). On December 23, 1834, Four hundred infantrymen and one hundred mounted soldiers with two cannons arrived with the new pastor. The new pastor gave repeated orders to surrender the key, an order the parishioners ignored. Finally the soldiers intervened; the cannons were loaded. With the flat side of their swords the soldiers broke through the crowd and the church door (9). The new pastor entered and read the union service to an empty church.

Far from putting an end to protest, the Hoenigern incident added fuel to the fire. Opposition to the Union spread when details were broadcast in places like Mark Brandenburg, Posen, and Pomerania.

In contrast to the churches in Silesia, the Pomeranian Lutherans were, up to this point, not very vocal in their opposition. Many of the Pomeranian separatist groups were opposed to the Union for other reasons than purely confessional Lutheran ones. This would change, however, through contacts with men like a tailor from Breslau named Fleck. In 1837 Fleck visited a Pomeranian Old Lutheran congregation meeting in Bruessow. Hearing this, the members of the congregation questioned how the government, which had always welcomed groups seeking religious freedom, could oppress the church in Silesia. They felt sympathetic to the cause, and Fleck helped them become more solid in their Lutheran confessions by arranging for them to receive confessional Lutheran publications and doctrinally pure Lutheran sermon books. Confessionalism in Pomerania prospered (10).

Revivalism, with its emphasis on lay leadership and pietism was very strong in Pomerania. In fact, there was a strong presence of pietistic conventicles. Many of the lay leaders of the conventicles found themselves sympathetic to the Lutheran cause. One such lay leader in the district of Kammin, began to study the Augsburg confession on his own in 1835. He brought several conventicle circles into the Old Lutheran church (11).

Although not all conventicle groups turned to the confessions, some still wanted to join the emigration societies. There were strained relations between the Lutherans and conventicle

groups because of the Lutherans' refusal to create new unionism, the very cause they were actively fighting. A healthy understanding of Luther's teaching kept them from becoming infected once again with pietism.

Many early critics of the Union challenged the authority of the state to decide religious matters, condemning the Union with their battle cry, "Nicht uniert, sondern ruiniert!" Not united, but ruined (12).

The Lutherans for the most part felt it was their responsibility to stay in Prussia, endure persecution and hardship, and work toward Lutheran church recognition. This feeling was to change when a shoemaker from Breslau named Zuengler wrote a letter which has become known as the "Buffalo Letter." Written from Buffalo on October 6, 1835, Zuengler's letter reached Breslau in December. It was copied and circulated widely in many Prussian provinces, including Pomerania. Zuengler's letter, although predominately religious in tone, spoke realistically yet glowingly about life in America. He especially praised the religious liberty he was enjoying. While encouraging those with religious reasons for emigrating, he also gave poor farmers and craftsmen material reasons to go (13).

By May of 1836, the emigration spirit had a firm presence in the Kammin district. On May 25, the first mass applications were received from Old Lutherans in Kammin. The stated reason for requesting emigration was purely religious (14).

During this time also, the Old Lutherans were organizing their protest movement. In April, 1834, a group of Old Lutherans

met in Breslau, Silesia, to set up a temporary organization of a synod. They wanted to make a formal appeal for the historic rights of the Lutheran church. The participants in this synod were imprisoned (15).

They did not quit. In the Spring of 1835, the first general synod was held in Breslau. In flagrant disregard to the government, several candidates for the ministry who refused to be ordained into the Union church were ordained into the Lutheran church. An underground movement in which secret services would be held at night was organized. Traveling ministers would serve the congregations who requested it. Old Lutheran congregations in Pomerania also began to join the Breslau Synod (16).

Divisions were quick to come about within the Breslau Synod, however. Most of the clergy were against emigration, saying they all had a duty to God and to their fellow Prussians to stay, to "testify to the truth," because "the earth is the LORD's and everything in it." Matthew 21:22 was interpreted to be a directive to stay and pray fervently for recognition and an end to the persecution of the Old Lutheran church. On the other hand, several pastors and many lay people followed scripture passages which they said made emigration an obligation. "When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another" (Matthew 10:23). "The earth is the LORD's," therefore also America (17).

Meanwhile, a group of Silesians emigrated to Australia. Some of their descendants are still members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia. Some of the Silesians who planned to sail to Australia, but were denied permits, sailed to America

in 1839. Some followed von Rohr's group to Freistadt (18).

Preparations for Emigration

We might say the emigration movement caught on in spite of government opposition. But it might be more accurate to say it grew because of the opposition. Owen wrote, "Opposition made them courageous. Many more clergy and laymen came out openly and declared their adherence to the old faith" (19). Opposition to the movement served to make emigration more appealing and in many instances even inevitable.

The law-abiding Old Lutherans, loyal subjects of the king, were forced to do things which made them criminals in the eyes of the state. They began to hold conventicles. They chose lay leaders not approved by the Union Church. They were served by outlaw pastors. They were conscience bound to protect the identity of other Old Lutherans, even when questioned by officers. When the government required all children to attend Union schools, they refused (20).

The government oppression began in earnest at that point. Old Lutheran schools were closed. Teachers who continued to hold classes after closure were imprisoned. Parents who continued to protest against the Union schools and sent their children to other teachers were fined heavily (21). When they refused to pay, the fines were doubled. Finally, some of them had their chattels sold at auction, leaving them homeless.

Most of the Old Lutherans had to deal with the fact that they were extremely impoverished. This was true before opposition came, but even more so after. Pastor Wilhelm Iwan, who in

the 1930's and 40's extensively researched the emigrations with materials which were destroyed in the second World War, quotes from a letter from Meseritz, Posen, sent to the Lord Lieutenant von Flottwell in February, 1836. The letter is typical of Old Lutheran requests for emigration permits and reflects both the spiritual motivation for emigration and the dire financial need in which they found themselves.

High, noble lord: The evangelical Lutheran congregation in and around Meseritz humbly requests permission to emigrate. The long standing opposition we have endured until now because of our faith and service to God, which has now been renewed against us, has made us want to leave our beloved Fatherland where it is no longer possible to serve the God of our fathers. We cannot change our faith or confession. And since we have no hope of indulgence in our fatherland, we are presuming to request travel money. Having been reduced to beggars by the year-long persecution, it is impossible for us to get the emigration funds together. We humbly request 1) that we, with the present members of the Lutheran congregation and our wives and children, be allowed to go to America; and 2) that exemption be made possible for those of us who still have a military obligation.

The number of souls might be over one hundred. We would not fail to make a complete list of emigrating persons. This is the last request we will make your highness. Your recognized goodness offers us hope, and in the event of a favorable hearing, to bless you also in a foreign land (22).

Many of the prospective emigrants, far from being opportunists, expressed their willingness to part with all their possessions for the sake of the gospel. Undoubtedly, however, because of influences like the Buffalo letter, some of them fully expected to regain what they were giving up and receive more when they got to America.

Pastor Iwan's history states that "the development of their emigration is really nothing more than an unbroken chain of appeals" (23). After the Councilor of Kammin held back permits

to emigrate, an appeal was made directly to the king explaining the dire straits in which the Lutherans found themselves:

One and a half years ago our Councilor von Voeltz promised us that we would receive our permits so we sold our properties and were firmly committed to leaving our home country so we could serve God according to our church's confession. The Stettin government informed us that we must have a clergyman, and we have elected Pastor Grabau and we have his assurance that he will serve us. In spite of all this, the councilor turns us away, demanding stipulations he himself makes impossible. For example, he demands affidavits that we have paid our taxes and at the same time forbids our mayors from making such affidavits (24).

During the time of this persecution, dissension, and division, some interesting relationships were developing among the leaders of the movement. Pastor Scheibel of Silesia had been one of the first to mention the idea of emigrating. Scheibel convinced Pastor Johann Grabau to emigrate. Pastor Grabau had been one of the outlaw pastors. After being thrown into prison for many months, released, arrested again, broken out of prison in 1837, fleeing to Pomerania, traveling incognito for a time, and battling serious illness, Grabau was convinced to emigrate. He wrote in a letter to his mentor, Scheibel, in February, 1838, "I do not want to stay in Prussia after all resorts have been exhausted and the highest authority has rejected toleration." He wrote again in March, 1838, "It is one's duty to leave" (25).

Another interesting relationship was between Heinrich von Rohr and Grabau. Perhaps no one else gave up as much for the cause as did von Rohr. Grabau apparently had deep respect for him. Von Rohr looked upon Grabau as a spiritual father. In 1837 von Rohr helped to break Grabau out of prison, perhaps even saving Grabau's life. After the emigration Grabau trained von Rohr and ordained him a Lutheran pastor in New York.

Von Rohr had an interesting encounter with the Saxon group which emigrated to Missouri. Von Rohr had hoped both groups could get together, for financial reasons as well as for the strength of the group. But when Stephan, the leader of the Saxons, made it clear he must re-ordain all of the Prussian pastors von Rohr and his party saw potential for problems for this group in America. He said that he considered them to be upright Christians, although misled, and he warned them against the consequences of such blind obedience (26).

As was mentioned earlier, the story of the 1839 emigration is one of applications for permits, rejections, appeals, delays, decrees, and finally acceptance. It would be impossible to follow the paper trail of all the emigration societies, so we will look at a few individuals who attempted to get through the government's bureaucracy and obtain the necessary papers. Iwan's treatment contains the best information available, along with a few isolated documents which will fill in gaps.

Early on in the process, officials in the government estimated that very few of the Old Lutherans would actually take the great leap of faith and leave for America. In the circuit of Usedom-Wollin there were 151 people in 1836 seeking emigration permits. By 1837 approximately seventy of them had left without obtaining their permits. This proved to be an action which hampered the efforts in Pomerania, as the government cracked down much harder on the Old Lutherans (27).

One step in the foot-dragging process was the appointment of special commissions to hear each individual case. The

prospective emigrants had to answer many questions about their motives, provide proof of their financial means to emigrate, and demonstrate that they had a clergyman who would go along. The motives, especially, were Councilor von Altenstein's concern. He wanted to advise the applicants of their errors:

To this end the government has to appoint a special commissioner,...and this commissioner must question every self-employed person 1) on his reasons to emigrate, 2) how the decision came about and 3) the means of carrying out this decision. The commissioner must at the same time not only do his utmost to warn the prospective emigrants and convince them of the misrepresentation of the advantageous conditions existing abroad, but he must also try to influence the misguided by spiritual exhortation. A suitable clergyman must assist the commissioner in this. This will also be a means to determine... the source of the inducement to emigrate.... A report on any success must be submitted and the decision on the applications is to be postponed until a decree to this effect has been issued from here (28).

We can see that, although through these proceedings many requests for emigration permits were issued, the government still held the position that the emigration was to be made as difficult as possible. This did, indeed, discourage many would-be emigrants, but a large number even at this time left the country illegally (29).

When the commission made its report to the king they reported that they could not reject the emigration if the legal requirements were complied with. The king issued a decree, then, which stated as much (30). From that point on, then, the harassment and legal entrapment was carried out by district, circuit, and village administrators. The king claimed he did not have a part in this, but it seems unlikely that he would have totally ignored the situation with all the direct appeals made to him and with his strong opinion against the emigration. He appears to

have secretly encouraged his councilors to keep as many of the would-be emigrants in the kingdom as possible.

While the government in general was very reluctant to help, there is one noteworthy exception. In Usedom-Wollin, Councilor von Fleming was sympathetic toward the Lutheran cause. He put in a good word for these "morally good and peaceable citizens." He wanted the government to change its policies in order to allow them to worship as they wished. For sticking up for the separatists he was called an "Unklarer kopf," a bone-head. His opinions were not heeded by the king, who followed the advice of von Altenstein and von Voeltz. Even so, in the midst of the emigration, he made contact with his vice-councilors in Wollin that the Old Lutherans should be given safe passage and not be harassed. They were even to be given police protection so they would not be plundered by those who misunderstood them or even hated them and their cause (31). He stood by his promise of protection even against other officials.

Not all the emigrants were fortunate enough to have the good will of their regional councilors. The congregation around Kammin complained about the restrictive conditions Councilor von Voeltz was imposing. He was so afraid of Lutheran dissidents fleeing his region that he severely limited their freedom of movement. Even those with legitimate business in other towns were refused permission to travel. When the congregation appealed to the king, the king ruled that von Voeltz was guilty of imposing unnecessary conditions upon his people. Many of the restrictions on travel were lifted (32).

In the early months of 1839, things began to look up for the

emigrants. Emigration permits, such as the one for Christian Heckendorf and others in Fernowsfelde, were finally approved in May. Most of the other emigrants also received favorable answers at that time. The emigrants reasoned with the authorities that, if they were indeed misled fanatics, the government would do well to get rid of them. If they were right-minded, honest citizens they had the right to leave if they so wished (33).

Iwan says that the government's sympathetic motive of preserving these people from unknown dangers on the sea and a strange land is not to be believed. "One can deduce a two-faced attitude on the part of the authorities toward the Lutheran emigrants, especially those out of Pomerania in 1839 (34).

As if this government two-facedness and persecution were not enough, in the early months of 1839 the whole emigration seemed to be coming apart because of the illness of one man, J. A. A. Grabau. They needed him to accompany them as clergyman, but he was in prison and suffering from a serious ailment, possibly pneumonia. Action was taken to have him released and housed in a private residence under surveillance, and he quickly recovered (35). The Lord once again was watching out for them.

We have already seen that these Old Lutherans were highly dedicated to their faith, but a closer examination of their actual motives is in order.

Modern analysts, especially in Germany, will insist that the majority of the Old Lutherans left their homeland for material reasons. This is not the case. In letters preserved from that time various reasons are given, but uppermost in their minds was

the conviction that they were forced to emigrate by government repression of their religious beliefs. In a letter from Freistadt in 1843 from Johann Pritzlaff, we can see a great testimony to the faith. However, he also expressed his delight in the material opportunities offered to him here, as well as the freedom he enjoyed (37). Material reasons for emigrating cannot be denied, but above all it was a love of the truth which led to the emigration.

Prussian and German historians have always considered that the leaders of the Old Lutherans deluded the majority of the emigrants. This report came to the king:

that the introduction of the new Liturgy led to a Union and that this Union attacked the Lutheran faith left no doubt that the leaders had proceeded according to a plan, and the ordinary man had been induced into making an application by the widespread misleading reports of easily-attained prosperity in foreign lands and the threat to the well-being of their souls.... Those misguided individuals must be legally prevented from carrying out their resolve to emigrate (38).

These questions were posed to the prospective emigrants by the commission to determine the legitimacy of their motives:

1. Could they prove that their pastor had deviated from the doctrines of Luther in his sermons and teaching?
2. Had they been pressured by the consistory in regard to their beliefs and meetings?
4. Had they sought instruction from their ministers or other experts concerning the Union and new Liturgy?
5. What displeased them about the Liturgy, and what appeared un-Lutheran about it?
6. What were their criteria in judging this?

These and other questions were posed to them in order to determine their pure motives. Remember that most of the emigrants were not theologians. Not only were they not theologians, but the government had actively resisted their efforts to be taught by theologians. They were unprepared to answer these deep

questions, so the answers given were often not convincing to the authorities. But the fact that they persevered in spite of this and other obstacles at least showed that their convictions were strong, even if their knowledge of the differences between Reformed and Lutheran teachings was not adequate.

There are still differing opinions about the motives of the emigration today. Iwan notes:

There were, however, also a few persons there who for very profane reasons, a desire for adventure or clever calculation, used the favorable opportunity to obtain a cheap voyage abroad. But these few hypocrites cannot change the overall stamp of the emigration body. Neither can the few obvious "sinners" who were present in their number. But there were people who welcomed the presence of such people in their midst to obscure the otherwise uniform religious picture (39).

We cannot for the above reasons say the emigration had anything but religious motives for the majority. A priority was placed in transporting religious materials and worship implements to the new home. Those who were opportunists quickly distanced themselves from the rest of the party. These especially stayed in the cities. The large groups who stayed close to their spiritual leaders, who quickly organized new congregations and asked for pastors, who formed parish schools, and who remained confessional Lutherans in America must be sufficient proof for the groups' overall sincerity.

Religion drew these people together and provided the strength of conviction to persevere. Economic and social reasons undoubtedly added practical thrust. But everyone who analyzes the emigrations must agree that the welfare of their children, both spiritual and temporal, was important to all these emigrants (40).

To understand the emigration and for an example of someone who gave up so much for his convictions, Heinrich von Rohr serves very well. Von Rohr became the leader of the group who went to Freistadt. Later he returned to New York and was ordained to serve as pastor there.

Von Rohr must have been typical of Prussian army officers. His family had roots for centuries in the Prussian army. He was trained with the single purpose of being an army officer. Religious convictions played an insignificant role in his life. When he was 32, von Rohr decided to get married. Marrying an Old Lutheran, he was converted to Christianity and Lutheranism by the sermon that was delivered at the ceremony. Von Rohr took up reading Lutheran writings as a pastime and became quite well versed in Luther and the confessions. He began to associate with the theological students rather than his old military comrades. But he suffered many heartaches; losing his first wife, then his young son. These trials only drove him closer to the Lord and the people who could share with him the comfort of the gospel (41). When he married again, this second wife gave him a daughter. They refused to allow a Union pastor to perform a baptism, instead going secretly to one of the Old Lutherans. This act of defiance cost him his military career in 1837.

Living off savings and gifts, the von Rohrs moved in with a widow. Cholera spread through the house and the hostess and Mrs. von Rohr died. Julie, his daughter, was the only family he had left. Heinrich became an avid collector of Lutheran writings.

Most of these were available very cheap, but to Heinrich they were precious. Most of them were taken to America but some burned in a warehouse fire in Buffalo.

Besides collecting books for the Lutherans, von Rohr provided strong leadership. In 1837 he and another layman, Friedrich Mueller, arranged for the escape of Pastor Grabau from prison. They hid him away until 1838 when both were captured. Again, both spent time in prison. Von Rohr deserves the greatest share of the credit for organizing the emigration. He traveled extensively to gain members for the party and to solicit funds for it from wealthier Lutherans. Until the day of departure, von Rohr energetically promoted emigration and helped it run smoothly.

One incident serves to show his good heart and strong back in a striking way. When the first settlers came to Freistadt there were no roads to Milwaukee. There was only one team of oxen to help fell trees and build houses. The winter of 1839 came early, and many of the settlers were caught without having permanent shelter and suffered through it in close quarters or in primitive lean-tos. Christmas was fast approaching and the settlers were running out of food. Von Rohr walked the 18 miles to Milwaukee and back. Carrying well over eighty pounds of food, he ensured that the settlers would have a feast for Christmas (42). We owe God great thanks for men like Heinrich von Rohr.

In contrast to the steady personality of von Rohr, we look at Pastor L.F.E. Krause. He had gone in 1838 to make preparations for the emigration in America. Depression ensued when he was not welcomed in America with open arms as he had expected.

arms. Even the Old Lutherans already there were reluctant to place their trust in him. The weather did not agree with him. He returned to Germany in 1839, very shortly after the large contingent arrived with Grabau. Back in Germany he again asked to serve Old Lutherans there. Soon, however, he became disillusioned with the whole thing, turned himself in to the authorities and informed on many of the pastors who were performing "illegal" services. Also during this stay in Germany his fiancée decided not to marry him.

Again experiencing a change of heart, Krause repented and asked once again to serve the Old Lutherans. The Breslau Synod officials would not let him serve in that capacity, so when in 1841 he received a call to serve the Lutherans of Milwaukee and Freistadt he quickly decided to return to America. His temper, high strung nature, and depression-prone personality caused problems wherever he went (43). Iwan states that it is too bad Krause didn't remain in Germany because of the dissension and strife he caused in America (44).

The Great Emigration of 1839

Keeping in mind the varied objectives and personalities that existed among the leaders, and the regional differences between the Silesians and all the Pomeranian provinces, it can be seen what an enormous task it must have been to weld together all the emigrants into a single emigration society. But that is what Grabau and von Rohr were able to do. Von Rohr personally visited almost all the congregations in which there were emigrants. In 1838 a number of ground rules had been drawn up, after consulta-

tions with the congregations' elders. These were the plans:

- 1) As long as we are on our native soil, we must continue to hold worship services and be ready to suffer for the confession of our faith;
- 2) We must try to get permission to emigrate, but in cases of necessity we are justified in fleeing even without a permit;
- 3) We will plead with the king to release Pastor Grabau from prison to serve as our clergyman;
- 4) We wish to take along every other pastor and candidate for whom the emigration has become a matter of conscience;
- 5) By February four deputies are to be elected; two from Pomerania and two from Saxony/Thuringia and the Mark (45).

These proposals were presented to the congregations, and von Rohr was authorized to contact Krause and Stephan to see about joining together with the Silesians and Saxons. The Silesians remained separate because of an obligation they had to an Englishman Angas. Since they had reneged on their contract with him, Grabau demanded they make restitution to Angas. The overtures to Stephan fell apart because of Stephan's arrogant insistence that he must reordain the pastors from the Prussian group.

On February 15, 1839 the four deputies met in Berlin. Those elected were a sailor Martin Krueger, farmer David Helm, Captain von Rohr and a musician Wilhelm Bortfeldt. They decided upon the following principles and regulations to be submitted to the congregations and Pastor Grabau:

- 1) We do not believe it is in accord with Scripture to make our purpose and goal the formation of a separate congregation as recognized by the civil authorities.
- 2) We hold it to be sinful to demand community of property. The Lord direct our hearts to attain the same end through free will contributions motivated by love....
- 3) With the money in the congregation's fund..., the transport to New York and the poll tax will be paid for all members who are at this time written down in our lists. With the amount left over we can take along several poor families.
- 4) From this it follows that in or near New York City or

the next larger city where work can be found for all without means, the congregation must make its temporary residence and establish church and school as its first priority....

5) Only members of the Lutheran Church may be accepted into the society. They must furnish favorable testimony from the elders that they have been faithful members and lead an inoffensive life. Of those who do not yet belong to the church, only those may be accepted who have sought membership and sincerely believe they must go to a place where they can come to the true faith through the pastoral ministry. Such people who want to join us and have no interest in the church may be accepted only as Christian charity and wisdom permit.

6) The present elders are recognized as elders in the united congregation.

7) With the money on hand the Erfurt and Magdeburg congregations can take five additional families, Kamminers eight more, and Berlin sixteen. No binding promise can be made to anyone who has no funds until all congregations agree that these conditions are acceptable (46).

In provision number two we can see the lessons von Rohr learned from the Saxon group. This emigration did not therefore have the problems subsequently experienced by the Saxon group in Missouri (47). Stephan assumed total control over all moneys. Many poor choices and bad investments could have been avoided if he had been held accountable. All money was held in the common trust so the Missouri Saxons were left impoverished by the time Stephan's mismanagement was addressed. Besides this, the total confidence they expressed in him as their leader in all matters, both spiritual and material, was broken by charges of immorality.

Von Rohr and the other agents showed great political ability and foresight in their plans. They were accepted by all the congregations. Plans could now go forth in earnest.

In the early months of 1839 a trickle of emigration permits came through. Plans were for the different congregations to rendezvous in Hamburg on May 1. Most of the emigrants had to

leave their homes without permits, with only the assurance of the authorities that the permits would soon come through. Almost all of them did get their permits before departing Germany, although a few did manage to sneak through without them. Some were turned away at the port and had to return home greatly disappointed.

One final event brought the government's attitude toward the emigration again clearly to light:

The climax came when in the summer of 1839 one thousand Old Lutherans from the provinces of Silesia and Saxony passed through Potsdam on the way to Hamburg and America. The government censors ordered the papers to suppress the news. The minister of justice, von Mueller, and minister of the interior von Rochow, joined by the crown prince, urged the king to rescind the order. But the king was under the spell of Baron von Altenstein and he refused (48).

The news would have been big, and many sympathizers would undoubtedly have come to the Old Lutherans had the government allowed them publicity. Never before had over a thousand people fled Prussia for religious reasons at one time. The emigrants came from many regions; the numbers of the emigrants from each of the provinces was 570 from Pomerania; 313 from Saxony; and 91 from Mark Brandenburg. The groups converged on Hamburg by coach. Some slept in inns. Some pitched tents and some boarded in private homes. The police kept close tabs on their movements.

In Hamburg 265 Silesians met them and begged with the leaders to join their group. This was permitted as they all had permits and financial means to pay for the trip (49).

One future settler in Freistadt, Carl Pritzlaff, wrote a letter from Hamburg on June 28, 1839. He furnishes some details about this leg of the trip:

As of today we have been in Hamburg for four weeks. We will go to Hull in the steamship, from there to Liverpool in steamboats, and then board a sailing ship and probably land in Philadelphia (50).

Another of Pritzlaff's letters, this one written in 1842, shows that the plans were changed at the last minute. Instead of sailing to Philadelphia they sailed to the port of New York City. He gives some interesting details about the trip:

You know that I began my journey on May 16, 1839; I said good-bye to you with many tears and painful sadness as I began my emigration to America. Fourteen days after we left home we arrived safely in Hamburg. We waited there for a full month for the fellow countrymen and church members who had to stay in Stettin because of their passports. The last day we were in Hamburg I wrote a letter to you... On May 31 we traveled by steamship to England and in three and a half days landed in Newcastle. On the third day after our arrival there we rode by train to Carlisle and from there on a steamship to Liverpool. From here we boarded a large three masted sailing ship, and on July 11 began our journey across the sea (51).

Each step of the journey was fraught with toil and trouble, but this was all taken in stride as part of travel. Layovers of weeks and even months in some cases, days of coach and steamship travel and finally a three month transatlantic voyage must have severely tested the resolve of all the emigrants. A letter preserved by Iwan from Ernst Schmidt adds details about the trip to Liverpool:

We were on a steamboat. The storm raged on. Seasickness attacked us without warning and only a few were spared. An added distress was the fearful racket of the engine, the greasing of the machinery, and the fumes from the coal. The storm pressed against us until we fortunately made it to England. The 130 mile trip took all of 36 hours. The people there were very friendly (52).

How refreshing it must have been to meet friendly people! The English furnished them with free lodging and special treat-

ment especially after finding out they were fleeing religious persecution in Prussia.

Five ships left Liverpool. Pastor Grabau was on the Echo. Also leaving were the Georgina, Alfred, Republik, and the Britannia. The Echo encountered heavy storms, so Grabau did not arrive until several weeks later than the other four. In Hamburg a group of Pomeranians and Silesians had separated themselves from Grabau. They sailed on the Caroline. This one encountered the most severe weather, surviving a "hurricane" the likes of which the captain said he had never seen.

Some details have been preserved about the crossings. They vary greatly concerning the comfort level and experiences at sea, but one thing can be said about life on board all the ships: Spiritual life and prayer were a high priority. Only a few of the ships arrived in New York with the same number of passengers with which they had left Liverpool. There were many deaths and even a few births. The ship on which Pastor Grabau and Ernst Schmidt traveled, the Echo, was the latest to arrive in New York. Schmidt wrote that they experienced storm after storm. There were, however, happy days on board. Elders led devotions in the morning. The pastor led them in the evening. By the time they reached New York, however, two adults and three children had died. The Schmidts had a son just before docking, but he died soon after birth (53). In spite of these problems their faith in God supported them.

Worship life on board the ships provided stability to the people and daily reminded them of the religious spirit of their

emigration. Worship was simple and frequent. "Those that played musical instruments would take them along to accompany the hymn singing for worship services" (54). Scripture and the catechism were read aloud and hymns were sung from memory or from the hymn books that were taken along.

On board the ships provisions were plenteous. Everyone had all the bread, or "ship's biscuit," he could eat. There was for the adult men two grams of brandy daily. Women and children had all the milk they could drink. Black coffee, dried fruit and salted pork rounded out their diet. This was not too much different from the diet the Pomeranians were used to at home.

It was a great relief and joy, however, when the ships found port at New York. Ships were quarantined for several days before the passengers could disembark. In most cases the emigrants were processed and information on each person recorded. What a happy day it must have been to finally unload baggage and passengers.

The majority of the party stayed very briefly in New York. Cost of food and boarding were very expensive. They did not wait in the city but traveled to Buffalo, most even before Grabau arrived. The wealthy ones took steamships upriver to Albany. Most made the trip on freight barges. From Albany the wealthier immigrants took the train; the vast majority took canal boats along the Erie canal. This was by far the slowest and possibly the most uncomfortable part of the trip. It was hotter than these Pomeranians were used to. They had to transfer their belongings at every lock. They sometimes had to get out and help the horses pull the boats along the canal.

The immigrants had to deal with ridicule because of their Prussian dress and their low German dialect. To make matters worse, there was only one among them who could speak English, a former Catholic priest named Justiniani who had come to New York in 1838 (55). He was invaluable in keeping the groups together and protecting them against the swindlers who were searching for opportunities to take advantage of them seemingly at every turn.

Arriving in Buffalo, the immigrants were finally somewhat settled. Now each had to decide where to go from there. Captain von Rohr decided to go on to Wisconsin without waiting for Pastor Grabau to arrive. We do not know why he left so soon, especially since Grabau's intention had been to proceed to Wisconsin with the majority of the party. Perhaps von Rohr wanted to get on before winter set in. It does not seem that there was any kind of disagreement between them up to this point. Von Rohr left with about forty immigrants who would settle in Wisconsin. He did not do this for selfish reasons. He had comfortable quarters in Buffalo, provided to him free by a wealthy German merchant (56). Again he gave up a lot for his fellow immigrants by leaving to help clear the forests and build cabins in Wisconsin.

Finally Grabau and the Echo arrived. In his first sermon on American soil, Grabau began with the words, "Heil du Amerika! Die Kirche kommt zu dir!": "Hail America, the Church has come to you!" (57). This is very revealing about the attitude of Grabau, and probably the whole group. They were not coming to America looking for a free lunch. They recognized that they had something to offer the American people, namely their faith. They

were willing to work to support themselves and contribute to the culture and well-being of their new home.

It would have been interesting to follow the path of von Rohr and the mostly Pomeranian group that left with him to go to Wisconsin. Unfortunately this is one part of the journey about which no one has written. Von Rohr tells us nothing and it seems those who went to Wisconsin would just as soon forget the journey and get on with their work. No letters seem to have been written and nobody seems to have family traditions except that Iwan says they went by way of the Great Lakes (58). We know nothing until their arrival in Milwaukee.

Forty-three family units composed of 192 persons came to Milwaukee in October of 1839. They were mostly the wealthiest among the immigrants, although Iwan tells us they took some of the impoverished brothers along to help with the settlement (59).

While their families remained in Milwaukee, von Rohr, August Radue and Martin Schoessow went to find land in Washington county, later Ozaukee county. They spent several weeks surveying and plotting out the land. It was bought from the government for \$1.25 an acre (60). The land was parceled into forty acre plots and land was assigned by lot. The first log cabin constructed in Freistadt belonged to von Rohr.

The first winter in Freistadt was a hard one. Four feet of snow overtook them, and with no roads to Milwaukee and no horses, and having had no time to grow food for the winter, there were many hardships involved in getting supplies and food. To make matters worse, word came from out east that no more organized migrations to Wisconsin were planned and Pastor Grabau had to

stay in Buffalo to serve the majority there since Pastor Krause had returned to Germany. Von Rohr was clearly their leader, upon whom they depended for his knowledge and energy. When in 1840 he returned to Buffalo to study for the ministry under Grabau it was a tough blow for the Wisconsin pioneers. They were left on their own, but they thrived even under these conditions (61).

In 1841 Pastor Krause came from Germany begin his ministry in Freistadt. He occupied the new parsonage in June, 1842. On November 7, 1843, the congregation resolved to build a stone church building. The congregation furnished all labor and the church was built for a total of \$78 (62). All this took place in the midst of a nasty controversy over Church and Ministry.

The controversy was heightened by the spirit which drove the Pomeranian and Saxon emigrations, Anti-unionism. These were people who took their confessions and church discipline very seriously. The first schism occurred when Pastor Grabau insisted that the Silesians make restitution with Angas. It has already been mentioned how the Silesians had contracted with Angas to ship them to Australia. When they broke the contract they had not paid the initial fee which was supposed to be nonrefundable. Angas had some contact with the emigration society and Grabau assured him he would get the money. When he found out the Silesians had no intention of paying Angas, Grabau took it on himself to call for their repentance and demanded that they make restitution. The Silesians did not see it this way and thus the division occurred. Most of the Silesians separated themselves from the Pomeranians and Saxons. They felt Grabau was out of line.

The spirit of confessional separation easily slid over into divisiveness. Grabau's firm convictions easily gave way to a loyalty to a legalistic opinion which caused strife among the brethren. There was also a stubborn attitude among the Silesians as they broke off their association.

With this problem out of his hands Grabau now turned his attention toward another problem he saw, namely the fact that laymen had been performing pastoral acts in the Milwaukee and Freistadt congregations. They had expected to be served by a pastor, but when none came, and after months of waiting, the congregation did not want to wait indefinitely for worship and the sacraments. They asked the elders to serve them with Word and Sacrament. Their schoolteacher, Joachim Lueck, was elected by the elders to serve as interim pastor. They considered this an "emergency" situation.

They wrote to von Rohr to ask whether this was proper action. This letter was answered by Grabau in a pastoral letter, or "Hirtenbrief," which answered no. In it he reproved the congregation for taking the ministry into its own hands. Grabau asserted that no one may serve as pastor unless properly called.

To be properly called, for Grabau, meant having the approval of the body of pastors of the church. The point which Grabau wanted to emphasize was that a group of Christians were not really free to select anyone from their midst to serve them temporarily as pastor (63).

This position was accepted by the majority of the members after Krause's arrival. They were just happy to finally have a pastor. But subsequent problems with Krause divided the congregation again. Grabau, Krause, and, surprisingly, von Rohr, insisted upon the congregation's duty to obey their pastor in all

things. A heartbreaking division occurred. The next pastor led the majority into the Missouri Synod, although a smaller number remained with the Buffalo Synod. Resentment lingered for many years. The minority built a separate church building which was used until the 1860's when the congregation was reunited as a Missouri congregation. Walther called Grabau's doctrine a return to Romanism with its emphasis on hierarchy and the rule of the priest (64).

The Emigration of 1843

While much had happened among the Old Lutherans who emigrated in 1839, there were also many developments in Prussia. Within a year after the first great emigration party had left European soil, King Friedrich Wilhelm III died. His son, Friedrich Wilhelm IV, had been much more understanding of the Old Lutherans and their emigration. He was troubled at the hard-line attitude of his father and his toleration of their persecution. One of his first acts was to issue an edict of toleration. All Old Lutheran pastors were freed from prison. Although the Lutheran congregations would be allowed to exist separately they would not be totally independent. They would still be required to pay the tax to support the state church. They would still have to have their pastors approved by the consistory. They would still be under the authority of the united consistory. They could worship openly but not in churches with steeples. Lutheran children had to attend Union schools if they wanted to have confirmation certificates which were necessary for employment (65).

For the most part, the Lutherans were satisfied. The Bre-

slau Synod officially accepted the terms of this Toleration Decree, and opposed any further emigration. Of course, they would continue to protest certain aspects of the Decree, but fleeing to America was not to be encouraged.

Two pastors were very vocal in their opposition to the Union and the Toleration Decree. Pastors Ehrenstroem and Kindermann continued to promote the idea of emigration.

Karl Wilhelm Ehrenstroem was a tall, imposing figure with a fiery, eloquent style. He had been imprisoned eight different times while serving the outlawed Lutheran church. He was released in 1841 by the Toleration Decree, but his suffering for the sake of the Old Lutheran confession gave him an aura of holiness. People flocked to hear him. He drew crowds of a thousand people when he preached in some cities. When he served in the village of Wallmow almost everyone left the Union church to join the separatist movement. In that village the Union church stopped holding services because nobody came (66).

Ehrenstroem became increasingly vocal in his criticisms of the Breslau Synod. "He accused the Synod of betraying the Lutheran confessions and being false to the Word of God" (67).

The other leader of the 1843 emigration was Gustav Adolph Kindermann. Kindermann had become a Lutheran pastor in 1837, serving as a traveling preacher among the Old Lutherans in the Ueckermark region. In March of 1841 he was caught and imprisoned, but his imprisonment lasted only two days before he was freed by the Toleration Decree (68). He was not the charismatic figure Ehrenstroem was, but he held his conviction just as strongly that the Breslau Synod was wrong in accepting the terms

of toleration. In 1842 the synod sent deputies to negotiate with them. Ehrenstroem and Kindermann refused to negotiate with the deputies and resigned from the synod. They did, however, continue to serve their congregations and persuaded many more people to emigrate (69).

This emigration was not organized as thoroughly as the one in 1839. Most of the emigrants were left on their own to raise enough money to travel and get permits. There was hardship in selling their possessions as many sold all their property; land, livestock, and anything else of monetary value. What could not be sold was given to relatives. Buechsel says what a compromising position this put the Lutheran emigrants into and how their impoverished condition was overcome through some generous fellow churchmen:

It was inevitable that these people should emigrate. Now, in 1843, the government tried to prevent them from going. It refused passports to those who could not show that they possessed sufficient means for transportation. In response, four farmers pledged \$20,000 to care for their poorer associates. In February of 1843, in the village of Wallmow alone, 150 persons secured passports (70).

During the period from May, 1843, until the departure date on June 4, emigration permits finally arrived. There were heart-rending farewells again, especially since sons of military age could not secure passports but had to remain behind. Many families were broken up, including married couples where one felt conscience bound to stay and the other felt conscience bound to leave (71).

The 1843 emigration was particularly hard on the Old Lutherans remaining behind in Prussia. Iwan quotes a letter written by

Superintendent Mila from Kammin to the consistory in Stettin concerning their departure,

We are going through most sorrowful days witnessing the departure of many members of our congregation. A considerable number of those dissatisfied with the present state of the church left last Wednesday and many others will follow them the day after tomorrow (72).

Iwan says that the emigrations seriously threatened the existence of the Old Lutheran Church in Prussia. 352 members left the district of Kammin, leaving only 163 "dissidents" (73). These were, certainly, dark and painful days for them as they saw their friends, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters and fellow churchmen sailing to America. Most would never see each other again.

After such painful farewells both congregations prepared to sail to America. The congregation from Kammin, composed of Pomeranians, was led by Kindermann. The congregation from the Ueckermark was led by Ehrenstroem (74). Although they traveled together, each group kept its own identity and remained independent of the other.

A total of seventeen sailing ships crossed the ocean carrying Old Lutheran emigrants in 1843. Of these we have fairly extensive accounts of the trips for the barks Arab, Rainbow, and Marianna.

The perils of this crossing were also striking. Some excerpts from Wilhelm Woltmann's diary kept on board the Marianna show the Christian spirit that prevailed among these people in spite of adversity.

June 20: On May 28, 1843, early at 4AM we left Wuschewier by mail stage coach for Berlin and on May 31 went on to Hamburg. Devotional reading services were regularly held

mornings and evenings. By God's grace we reached Hamburg on June 8. Embarkation aboard the Marianna began on June 17. Left Hamburg this morning at eight o'clock. Another ship carrying Lutherans from Pomerania also left port.

June 27: Brother Steinborn's oldest daughter died at 1 A.M. At dawn we sailed between the coast of France and England, entering the English Channel. Calm sea and warm.

June 28: By daybreak we were nearing the Atlantic. Between 9 and 10 A.M. we committed Brother Steinborn's daughter to the sea with hymns and prayers, beginning with a devotional reading. We sang from the Bollhagen hymnal, "Got Lob die Stund ist Kommen..."

July 2: Unfavorable, violent wind.... Devotional reading service was held below deck this evening. The steerage hatches are battened down for safety.

July 8 and 9: Head wind. On the 9th we held our morning devotional service in the steerage quarters. At 3:30 P.M. brother Mueller's ten month old daughter passed away.

July 10: Fair wind and good weather. In the forenoon after early divine service, Brother Hohne's baby boy born shortly before leaving Berlin was baptized by his father because of the child's ill health. We sang verses from the Breslau hymnal number 1523 "Let the Children come to me." Then we read from Luther's Catechism after which we sang "Christ Unser Herr zum Jordan Kam." The child received the name Christian Traugott. In conclusion we sang hymn 1531 "Selig wer mit Recht Kam." In the afternoon, toward evening, we interred Brother Muller's baby....

The diary continues, mostly with weather updates and reports of the deaths of four more children. The Marianna arrived in New York on August 8. Those on the ship seem to have settled in and around Lebanon, Wisconsin. There is no other record of the Marianna than Woltmann's diary.

The Rainbow account, from a letter written by Johann William, contains similar experiences. He relates how violent storms caused upheaval of people and baggage. He talks about the poor water, seasickness, and the deaths of three children (75).

The Bark Arab had a much more difficult voyage. About half way to New York, a violent Atlantic storm came up which destroyed

the mast and rudder. With no way to steer the ship they were totally at God's mercy. They had to ration food until it was all gone. On the day they ran out of food they held a communion and prayer service, hugged each other and kissed each other good-bye in the hope of all meeting in heaven. When all seemed lost, they were met by a ship which towed them into New York Harbor. Before they went on shore they knelt on the deck, thanking God for bringing them safely to America (76).

Their experience in New York shows that not much had changed there in four years since the 1839 group passed through. They were unaccustomed to the big city noise, and only remained there one or two days before going on to Buffalo.

Upon arrival in Buffalo they were greeted with open arms by the Lutherans there. Von Rohr arranged accommodations in the houses of Lutherans there and in empty warehouses. During that late summer and early fall 1600 immigrants passed through Buffalo. Ehrenstroem's congregation founded three settlements near Buffalo. Kindermann's congregation followed him on to Wisconsin. (77).

Von Rohr again provided valuable information, especially to Kindermann's group. Travel accommodations were made and via the Great Lakes the congregation arrived in Milwaukee. About a thousand immigrants came with him. In Milwaukee they split up into three main divisions; one group settling in Lebanon, one founding the town of Cedarburg, and another founding the town of Kirchhayn. Kindermann served all three groups while living at Kirchhayn.

The name Kirchhayn means "Church woods." This was and is an

appropriate name for the settlement because of the dense forest which had to be cleared for farming and building. Koehler says that Kirchhayn was the name of one of the home hamlets in Pomerania. This was now "home" to this group of Old Lutherans.

Several things stand out in the settlement of Kirchhayn and the establishing of the church. These are characteristics shared by other Old Lutheran settlements as well. The first is a concern for the Word of God. Even while giving their full time to clearing the land, building homes, and growing food for sustenance the church came first. Regular services were held in homes until a log cabin church could be built. Pastor Kindermann served faithfully until his death on Easter Sunday, March 23, 1856. The congregation had been very generous to him.

During that first winter a call was issued to Teacher Carl Stiemke. He had taught the children aboard his ship, the Proteus, during the transatlantic voyage. Church and school both prospered under the caring and able leadership of Kindermann and Stiemke.

The Kirchhayners also displayed a care for the land. They allotted eighty acres to the church and school and determined that much of the land would remain virgin woods. The rest of the settlers' land was cleared so that farming could take place.

They also showed a noble concern for the poor. Those settlers who did not have enough money to make a down payment were loaned money so that all of them could buy land. Food and shelter were generously provided to those who still had no means of support. Indeed a Christian concern was evident in these pioneers (78).

Lasting contributions of Old Lutheran settlers

The Old Lutheran settlers made many contributions to the culture, the region of Milwaukee, the Wisconsin Synod and American Lutheranism. The importance of these settlements for the growth of Milwaukee and its vicinity is even recorded in the Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Arts, Sciences and Letters.

It reads in part:

The year 1839 brought the first installment of immigrants from Germany and Norway. The effect of their arrival with gold and silver wherewith to buy land was electric.... Whereas Milwaukee had been in financial depression before, now all doubts about the future were dissipated.... The first German colony arrived in 1839.... They encamped on the lakeshore south of Huron Street. The men went about in a business way, examining the government plots in the land office, and having ascertained by all means in their power where lands well watered and timbered could be purchased, they entered lands bounding on the Milwaukee River between Milwaukee and Washington (later Ozaukee) counties. The majority of the immigrants went on to Mequon and there formed the Freistadt colony, a name chosen, no doubt, to commemorate their newfound freedom; some settled in Cedarburg also, while a few remained in Milwaukee (79).

That the first Lutherans who came to Milwaukee bolstered the economy was important for later Lutheran groups who also came. Milwaukee became a strong magnet for them and a thriving city in which to make a living. It has proved itself to be a strong center for Lutheran growth much as St. Louis and Buffalo. It serves as a strong center for the Wisconsin Synod to this day.

Even leaders of the "American" brand of Lutheranism shared a high opinion of these Old Lutherans in spite of the many differences between them. In 1961, retired Gettysburg Seminary president Dr. Wentz praised the immigrants:

This rush of Lutheran immigration from Europe deposited on American shores a new generation greater than the entire Lutheran population of the Republic at the time of its birth. Some of these newcomers were imbued with a double portion of the spirit of confessionalism, a fiery zeal for the whole body of Lutheran doctrine and an intense degree of pious ardor that gave the extraordinary power of propogandism (80).

This quotation shows another positive influence the Old Lutherans exerted on the religious scene, namely a fiery zeal for the Lutheran confessions. When the majority of American Lutherans were turning toward pietism with its subjectivism, the Old Lutherans resisted that pressure. Old Lutherans like C.F.W. Walther brought the synods later joining in the Synodical Conference into a sound Biblical understanding. The son of Heinrich von Rohr, Phillip, later became president of the Wisconsin Synod and helped to steer the Synod through some turbulent years. Like his father, Phillip von Rohr possessed great gifts, and he used them to the glory of God and for the good of the Church.

The Old Lutherans were not afraid of separating themselves from those who theologically differed from them. That was what the emigration was all about, after all. Now that they were free to worship as they wished they were not at all hesitant to declare their beliefs openly and separate from those who disagreed.

On the other hand they were not afraid to join with others who shared their common faith and practice. They brought a desire to be united with all like-minded Christians. Keeping the true church united in faith was the desire of the emigration societies formed in Germany; it was also the desire of every congregation to join a synod which held to pure teaching.

They brought courage to stand by their beliefs. Without

their influence it is hard to imagine that confessional Lutheranism would have or could have survived. They provided strength in numbers to rally around other confessional Lutherans, including those who came out of the European Mission Societies and brought the Wisconsin Synod into a strong confessionalism.

Ralph Dornfeld Owen wrote that the Old Lutherans exerted an influence "far beyond their numerical strength."

The Old Lutherans found the Lutheran church in this country timid and apologetic. They have done much to make it confident and aggressive. In defending the right of minorities to enjoy freedom of conscience, including the right to maintain religious day schools, the Old Lutheran groups have rendered a service to the maintenance of constitutional government in the United States (81).

The Old Lutherans were not the first to promote or establish Christian elementary schools, but they did much to popularize them and strengthen them. In resisting the intrusion of the state into parochial schools they have helped preserve the separation of church and state that the constitution guarantees. Most of the Old Lutheran congregations set up parochial schools almost immediately; many are still in operation today.

Above all, the Old Lutherans had a love for the Word and its truth. If the Lutheran church is to remain strong and true to God's Word it must not give up this legacy left us by the Old Lutherans.

end notes

1. Westerhaus, Fall 1989, p. 253.
2. Boehmke, p. 1-2.
3. *ibid.*, p. 2.
4. Owen, p. 10.
5. Clemens, p. 21
6. *ibid.*, p. 21-23.
7. Camann, 1991., p. 17-18.
8. Owen, p. 11.
9. Camann, 1991, p. 17-18.
10. *ibid.*, p. 20.
11. Clemens, p. 25-26.
12. Owen, p. 12.
13. English translation of Zuengler's letter in Camann, 1991, p. 92-94.
14. Iwan, Vol. 1, p. 55.
15. Owen, p. 11.
16. *ibid.*, p. 12.
17. Clemens, p. 21.
18. Freistadt, p. 61-62. Christian Gierach, Sr. and his family originally intended to go to Australia in 1838. But an illness of one of the children forced them to wait, and they went to America with Grabau's group. After a time in Buffalo they settled in Freistadt. Christian Gierach, Sr. is my great-great-great-great grandfather.
19. Owen, p. 11.
20. *loc. cit.*
21. *ibid.*, p. 19.
22. Iwan, vol. 1, p. 54.
23. *ibid.*, p. 19.
24. *loc. cit.*
25. *ibid.*, p. 136.
26. Camann 1839, p. 22. quoted from von Rohr "Kirchliches Informatorium," XVII No. 1, p. 8.
27. Iwan, vol. 1, p. 129.
28. *ibid.*, p. 65f.
29. *ibid.*, p. 129f.
30. *ibid.*, p. 67f.
31. *ibid.*, p. 129f.
32. *ibid.*, p. 132f.
33. Heckendorf "Petition to expedite emigration permits" in Bernal, p. 9. Heckendorf was a part of the group that joined Pastor Kindermann leaving Buffalo in 1843 to settle in Kirchhayn.
34. Iwan, vol. 1, p. 134.
35. *ibid.*, p. 140.
36. Freistadt, p. 3f.
37. *ibid.*, p. 24.
38. *ibid.*, p. 67f.
39. Iwan, vol. 1, p. 27.
40. Camann , Uprooted, p. 29f.
41. Freistadt, p. 14f.
42. *ibid.*, p. 17.
43. Iwan, vol. 1, p. 160.

44. *ibid.*, p. 168.
45. *ibid.*, p. 137f.
46. *ibid.*, p. 138f.
47. *loc. cit.*
48. Owen, p. 12.
49. Camann, 1839, p. 22.
50. Freistadt, p. 22.
51. *ibid.*, p. 23.
52. Iwan, vol. 1, p. 169.
53. *ibid.*, p. 170.
54. Camann, Uprooted, p. 31.
55. Iwan, vol. 1, p. 150.
56. *ibid.*, p. 172.
57. Schley, p. 37.
58. Iwan, vol. 1, p. 173.
59. *ibid.*, p. 181.
60. Suelflow, Roy A., History, p. 7f. August Radue became one of the elders in Freistadt. In the absence of a pastor during 1840 he performed marriages, baptisms, and distributed the Lord's Supper. The congregation was reprimanded for this by Grabau in the "Hirtenbrief," but he repented and joined under Krause. Radue was my great-great-great grandfather.
61. Iwan, vol. 1, p. 183f.
62. Corrigan, p. 11. Among the leaders of the building program were August Radue, Ernst Friedrich Hilgendorf and Michael Bellin, all ancestors of my grandmother, Gertrude Radue Riemer.
63. Suelflow, Roy, A Plan for Survival, p. 24.
64. Freistadt, p. 11.
65. Camann, Uprooted, p. 24.
66. *ibid.*, p. 25ff.
67. Buechsel, quoted in Owen, p. 19.
68. Camann, Uprooted, p. 33f.
69. Buechsel, *op. cit.*
70. *loc. cit.*
71. Camann, Uprooted, p. 40.
72. Iwan, vol. 1, p. 135.
73. *ibid.*, p. 134.
74. Koehler, p. 31.
75. Camann, Uprooted, p. 40.
76. *ibid.*, p. 41.
77. Koehler, p. 31.
78. Breitzkreutz, p. 8ff.
79. Buck, "Pioneer History of Milwaukee", quoted in Freistadt, p. 16.
80. Boehmke, p. 9.
81. Owen, p. 3f.

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