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### The Loehe Colonies in Saginaw County, Michigan

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THE LOEHE COLONIES  
in  
SAGINAW COUNTY, MICHIGAN

1845 - 1854

A Thesis submitted April 15, 1936  
for the Bachelor of Divinity degree

by

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## I. PREPARING THE WAY

It is perhaps significant that the parish of Pastor William Loehe in Neuendettelsau, Germany, was dedicated to Saint Nicholas of Myra. Tradition of the Church honors him as a benefactor of the poor and a guardian of children. And here in this quiet little village Loehe was to carve for himself a prominent niche in Lutheran history as he emulated the good saint with works of spiritual mercy toward his "Pfarreskinder" in America.

The pastor of Neuendettelsau, a powerful preacher and an intensely spiritually-minded man, would, of course, win the lasting gratitude of the Lutheran Church<sup>spiritually</sup> for his fearless testimony to the truth in a day of rationalism, for his institutions of mercy and zeal in the Cause. But most of all his heartfelt sympathy went toward the missionary efforts of his homeland. Shortly after he had entered his pastorate August 1, 1837, the eyes of the mission-minded began to turn toward America. There, too, Loehe directed his attention.

Up to this time Lutheran efforts in the new-born nation had been largely confined to the Eastern shores. Such established church bodies as the General Synod, and the Pennsylvania Ministerium were scarcely able to care for their own ever-increasing numbers. As immigration moved westward, the native-born, hard-working missionaries could not keep pace. Many new settlers in the Mid-West were therefore left without spiritual ministrations or were forced into sectarian folds. It was only natural that the stranded church-folk of the frontiers sent up frantic pleas for pastors. And their cries for help found strong articulation in the voice of Friedrich Konrad Dietrich Wyneken. A highly educated and sincerely Lutheran man, he had heard of the great spiritual destitution of American Lutherans already in Germany. A deeply-felt Gospel consciousness impelled him to go to their aid. It was while journeying through northern Indiana and Michigan as a missionary of the Pennsylvania Synod that he began to realize the tremendous need of the people.

Burning with conviction he penned a stirring appeal to the Lutheran Church

at home. In Staden a missionary society took it up and issued "An Appeal for Aid for the German Protestant Church in North America." It contained Wyneken's portrayal of the unspirituality he found in the cities and the godlessness among the scattered settlers. The number of these "heathen" was growing rapidly year after year. The need for pastors was imperative, and to Germany went the call, "Help, in the name of Jesus Christ, help!"

Loehe was at a conference in Erlangen when he read the "Appeal". Its message struck a responsive chord in his heart. Through the editions of 1841 of the Noerdlingen "Sonntagsblatt", edited by his friend Pastor <sup>J. F.</sup> Wucherer, Loehe gave the "Appeal" wide publicity under the heading "Eine Ansprache an die Leser". With striking rhetoric he entreated his readers, "For Jesus' sake, take hold, organize speedily, do not waste time in consultations! Hasten, hasten! The salvation of immortal souls is at stake!" A tangible response came forth at once. Loehe reports: "On that appeal there were so many gifts sent in, partly to me, partly to the editor of the "Sonntagsblatt", that we soon had gathered a sum of 600 gulden." Soon solved was the problem of the fund's employment. The activity of a newly-organized "Society for North America" in Dresden interested Loehe and Wucherer; "for," says Loehe, "we had no desire toward an independent effort." Thus was the foundation of a great missionary endeavour laid.

The next step was to prepare men. One Adam Ernst, a cobbler's apprentice of Oettingen, had read the "Appeal" and offered his services. The Dresden Society sent him to Neuendettelsau for training under Pastor Loehe. "Thus," remarked the latter, "compelled from without, we did that which we had not intended to do." Another volunteer, laborer George Burger of Nordlingen, also enrolled as a prospective schoolteacher in the United States. Loehe in a letter to a Hannover friend called them "two particles of salt for a crumb of God for several messengers of faith in North America." (Eichner, p.61).

By 1842 Loehe considered his pupils ready for practical experience. Embark-

ing August 5 at Bremen, the two emissaries arrived in New York September 26. "That was the beginning of the American mission, which since then has won such an unexpected expansion and has had such a blessed result. At the arrival of the emissaries of Loehe a hundred years had passed since the "Patriarch of the Lutheran Church in North America", Heinrich Melchior Muehlenberg, had set foot on American soil." (Deinzer, III,4-6). Directed to the Ohio Synod's center, Columbus, they journeyed across the country. At first they had intended to serve as school teachers. But the need for pastors was so much greater, that first Burger, then Ernest, studied theology at the Columbus Seminary.

Meanwhile support of Loehe's movement gained momentum in Germany. In the summer of 1842 Wyneken returned for his health and aroused still more enthusiasm. Loehe himself, together with Wucherer, began the publication of a monthly paper entitled "Kirchliche Mitteilungen, aus und ueber Nord Amerika!" As the editors stated on the title page of the initial issue (1843), "these pamphlets give information concerning the situation of the German Lutheran Church in North America, as well as concerning the support and improvement of the same <sup>by</sup> ~~from~~ the fatherland." Their purpose was "to arouse active interest in the spiritually helpless and abandoned position of our brethren on the other side of the sea." Through this publication, which had a circulation of about 7000 people, he kept his supporters informed on the progress of the work and incidentally bequeathed in it an excellent account of his American Lutheran work. It served as a rallying center for his loose organization, which included Dr. L.A. Petri and Provincial Counsellor Karl von Maltzan among its ever-increasing numbers.

When Loehe saw that pastors, not teachers, were the prime necessity, he undertook the preparation of men for the ministry. By 1844 he had made 8 preachers ready in his own home, and they were straightway sent to America as "Nothelfer". Baumgart and Dr. Sihler arrived in 1843. A year later Pastor Hattstaedt, Teacher Schuster, and Colporteur Zwerner followed; the same fall, Saupert entered the

Columbus Seminary, while Dr. Hunger and Candidate Schmidt joined the other Loehe men in the field. Others sent in 1845 were Craemer, Romanowski, Lochner, Detzer, and Trautmann. Most of the men at once allied themselves with the Ohio Synod, whose seminary Loehe helped with contributions and books. The way was now cleared for the next step.

## II. THE FIRST SETTLEMENT

### Preparation

As a mission-minded man Loehe was interested <sup>also</sup> in the spiritual condition of the predecessors to the American citizens - the Indians. Becoming acquainted with Missionary F. Schmidt of Washtenaw County, Michigan, through correspondence, he printed a report of the latter's activities among the Redmen in his "Kirchliche Mitteilungen" of 1843, no. 6. He agreed with the conclusion reached by the "Kirchenzeitung" of Pittsburgh (1842, 16) that not only Christian love but Christian duty obligated the settlers to supply those, whom they had supplanted, with the Gospel. From this time on frequent articles appeared in his paper on the Indians, as he sought to arouse his constituents to action in this field also. The hope was expressed in a letter of a friend, printed in the "Mitteilungen" of 1844 (no. 1), that both inner and outer mission work could be accomplished in America. "Would it not be possible," comments Loehe's <sup>correspondent,</sup> "for the Lutheran Church of Germany to turn a part of its strength and activity to the heathen of the West?" He depicted them as a noble, strong, gifted race, a little stubborn and emotionless, but very much mistreated by the Europeans. Christianity was the only means by which they could be elevated from barbarism. Since their natural habitat seemed to center especially in Michigan and Indiana, perhaps an <sup>n</sup>Indian mission school could be attached to the Columbus Seminary. Thus the candidates, some of whom might even be Indians, would be acquainted with Indian customs and language.

All of this made Loehe thoughtful. To him, however, a separate seminary

seem'd best, although the Columbus students could also be instructed for Indian work. "It is and remains the best policy," he concluded, "when the mission activity can be performed out of the midst of established congregations. Such congregations are then mission colonies." Herein lay the germ of a developing idea. He needed more information on the possibilities of extended Indian mission work first. Therefore he instructed his "Sendlinge" who embarked in Bremen June 18, 1844, P. George and W. Hattstaedt, to report on the project.

Although Michigan was at first not in Loehe's mind as a possible locale for his work, Hattstaedt accepted a call to Monroe, Michigan, because that congregation could <sup>not</sup> get <sup>a candidate</sup> ~~none~~ from the hard-pressed Columbus Seminary. After establishing himself here, he surveyed the territory. Under Pastor Schmidt the Michigan Synod had organized as a confessional group and was already sponsoring the work of Missionary Auch among the Indians. This was pleasant news to Loehe, who was encouraged at home, too, by the evident attention the Dresden Society members were directing towards this mission effort. He wrote Pastor Schmidt at Ann Arbor offering his full support. With much enthusiasm Schmidt replied in a letter of March 6, 1845: "With thanks to our Lord we accept your brotherly hands, dear brethren, and as brethren in Christ we extend ours across the sea to you. Joined in one faith, active in one love, acknowledging and holding fast one truth - we make the sacred matters of Jesus' mission among the Indians our common affair of conscience and honor. May the heavenly High Priest Himself add salt and fire to our sacrifice." (Mayer, p. 10).

Steadily, ever more clearly, Loehe's plan evolved. Already in his first volume of the "Mitteilungen" (1843, 10) he intimated the nature of his scheme. As he later said, "The greatest misfortune of our German brethren in the faith in America is their separation and scattered condition in all possible

regions and places". (K.M.1847,5). His dream now was to have Lutheran emigrants go in groups and settle on land which he would buy in large amounts and resell to them at the lowest possible rate. A little later he thought that, instead of a special Indian mission, it would be best "if the mission could be exerted out of the midst of established congregations" (K.M.1844,1). Therefore he conceived the idea "to found a mission colony among or in the neighborhood of Indian tribes, at which the heathen could see Christian living, while the Christian faith was preached to them" (From a resumé in K.M.1848,p.83). Strictly speaking, the idea was not new. A missionary in India had written to his supporters in Germany, asking if such an arrangement could not be made to aid his work. Moreover, a wealthy Roman Catholic in Maryland had recently bought 58,000 acres of land which he intended to resell in lots to incoming German Catholics. (K.M. 1845,1). Nevertheless, the plan was an ingenious one and apparently the best way to deal with the mission problem. The Michigan pastors agreed. In a letter of 1844 Pastor Schmidt reported that the conference which met at Hattstaedt's congregation would welcome such a colony and would seek a suitable site. Since there were few Indians left in southern Michigan, it was decided that a survey trip should be made through the region in which Auch was working. "Such a colony of believing souls can become a good salt among the Indians," Schmidt added. He stressed the necessity of a knowledge of English on the part of the colony pastor, because the Indians could only be approached through English-speaking Indians or interpreters. (K.M.1845,5).

In the first issue of the 1845 edition, Loehe's "Mitteilungen" was able to state: "In the whole past year no single report has come over here from the other side which could have discouraged us, even if we had been of small heart. On the contrary, what we have wished over here...that the next letter at all times already assured us. Our few hands full of noble seed have borne swift fruit in the sowing of the virgin forests on the other side." The inner



mission work in America was enjoying evident success. Energy could now be exerted <sup>toward</sup> ~~in~~ the "outer mission" project. At last in the "Mitteilungen" of 1845,5 he announced the actual fulfilment of his plan. "On April 20 a little group of Franconian country-folk embarked from Bremerhaven on the ship Caroline under Capt. Volkmann for America, with the intention of settling as a mission colony among the Indians of North America."

### Emigration

A propitious turn of events was eventually responsible for the ~~the~~ culmination of Loehe's patient efforts. Lorenz Loesel, young servant in the Loehe household, converted by his master's ministrations, was moved by the frequently-expressed hopes for a missionary colony in America. Talking over the matter with friends, he found a large number were ready to make the sacrifices necessary to begin such a settlement. Most of the volunteers were country-folk or laborers from Rosstall and Altmuhlthal, whom Loehe had known for years. "No earthly necessity forces them out of the fatherland, to which they would much rather cling with true love," he said (K.M.1845,5). "They have here altogether enough, a part have a rich prosperity. Throughout, nothing prompts them but the thought - at once humble and sublime - of founding a starting point (Ausgangspunkt) and an entering place (Eingangspunkt) for the heathen mission in the wilderness of the new world."

To head the expedition Loehe chose his man wisely and well. He was a middle-aged candidat~~e~~ of philosophy (NOTE ONE) named Friederich August Craemer, whom Loehe called "an able man who had become wise through study and fierce battles of life" (K.M.1845,5). Born May 26, 1812 at Kleinlangheim in Unterfranken, he had studied theology in Erlangen (1830-1832). As a member of the Patriotic Students' Society he was sentenced to imprisonment following the Frankfort Insurrection of 1833, but was proven innocent in 1839. Having studied Old and Modern Greek, Ancient and Medieval German, French, and English, he was

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selected by England's Lord and Lady Lovelace as a family tutor. Although he began a promising career as an instructor of German at Oxford University, he severed his connection with the school because of the activity of the Tractarians. In 1844 he was attracted to Neuendettelsau and intrigued with the idea of working in the American mission field. Loehe at first thought of sending him to become a professor at the Columbus Seminary (Letter to Ernst, Sept. 6, 1844), but he then realized that in Craemer he had the ideal head for his mission colony. Gifted with an uncommon strength of character and will, yet ~~yet~~ a sincere and self-sacrificing Christian, Craemer displayed all of those qualities necessary to make him a leader of the Church.

During the winter of 1844-1845 the little group of prospective colonists assembled each Saturday and Sunday in Neuendettelsau to discuss the establishment of the mission, the Church's doctrines, and liturgical forms. In these meetings they drew up and studied 88 paragraphs of "Church Ordinances of the German Lutheran Mission Congregation of Frankenmuth". Although there were rules included which later proved unfeasible, e.g. that the congregation of Frankenmuth ("the courage of the Frankonians", the ~~the~~ adopted name for their congregation) should at the same time be a political community; everyone who could not be a member of the church would have to withdraw from the territory; still the group always maintained its essential principles. Two statements were stressed: that the congregation held "without reservation to all the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church in the Book of Concord of 1580", and that its pastor and teachers would have to abide by the same "not only 'quatenus' but 'quia'", according to their inmost convictions. (Mayer, p. 15.16). It is noteworthy that these statements were evidently written into the paragraphs with the full knowledge and consent of the group's guiding adviser, Loehe. Strangely enough, it was the congregation that would abide by them eight years later and the adviser who would ~~depart~~ depart from them widely.

After the colonists had thus established themselves as a mission congregation, they extended a formal call to Candidate Craemer. He, together with four other graduates of Loehe's "training school", i.e. Edward Romanowski, Friedrich Lochner, Adam Detzer, and Jacob Trautmann,- all designated for work in Ohio and Michigan fields - subscribed to Loehe's "General Instructions for our Friends in America" on February <sup>14<sup>th</sup></sup>, promising adherence to the Book of Concord, <sup>Concord</sup> Craemer then proceeded ahead of the colonists to Schwerin, where he was ordained by Dr. Kliefoth on April 4. "It was a stirring moment", writes Lochner in his biography of Craemer, "when at the ordination the communion of the ordinand closed according to churchly custom, and at the crossing over <sup>spoke</sup> of the ordainer, to the one kneeling before him, the words of the angel to Elias, 1 Kings 19, 7: Arise and Eat; because the journey is too great for thee." (Mayer, p. 19).

Next day the colony left Neuendettelsau. "Ringing in their ears was the admonition of Pastor Loehe to dwell together in unity, to keep nigh unto God, and to convert the Indians to the Christian religion". (Mills, History of Sag. Co.). At Bremen that evening Craemer was solemnly installed ~~as~~ pastor of the Frankenmuth congregation, and after the services he signed its ordinances. Boarding the ship Caroline, under Capt. Volkmann, they bade farewell to a land which most of them would never see again, and set sail on April 20 for a significant chapter to American Lutheran history.

Adventure befell them almost at once. The wind shifted after an hour, and the boat was blown onto a sandbank. While it was stuck fast, Pastor Craemer married five betrothed couples as his first official act and delivered a brief address. Toward noon next day the ship proceeded on its course, as the passengers received their first ~~attacks~~ <sup>s</sup> of sea-sickness. Because of the adverse winds, the captain headed around Scotland and left the last sight on land behind on April 29. On the following day came the first of six heavy storms. All but a few voyagers were taken sick until the storm abated May 4th, and

In this rolling and pitching a certain Detzer (K.M. 1845, 9.10) reports "one could find no place on the whole ship where one might have rest." Water poured over everything above decks, tumbled everything below. With five men to a hammock (Coje) there was little sleep at night. Early on May 14, between 2-3 a.m., as the boat glided along without lanterns in a foggy night, it crashed into another with a terrific noise. Amid the cries and confusion many prepared for death, but the captain reassured them that only the bowsprit of their town vessel and the bowsprit and a mast of the ~~other~~ had been broken. When the scare had subsided, it was discovered that an ailing young man had died in the excitement. Two days later he was committed to the waves with appropriate burial ceremonies by the pastor.

Throughout the journey Craemer proved the wisdom of Loehe's selection of a spiritual leader. He held regular services each Sunday on the quarter-deck, and the candidates led the daily morning and evening devotions. Pious Capt. Volkmann not only ordered them not to be disturbed but even provided a little room for worship. The spirit of the congregation was being firmly molded by the tribulations under the pastor's watchful care. When small-pox struck the passengers, he ministered to them until he too fell victim to the pestilence. Two men and two children died of the disease. One of the ~~unfortun-~~ates was the ~~2~~<sup>6</sup> year old child of the Haspels, of whom Loehe wrote (K.M. 1845, 7): "Blessed be the first deceased who with its death seals the earnestness of our love for the lost sheep of Jesus across the ocean."

On the morning of June 6 came the welcome news that land was sighted. <sup>With</sup> 50 days of rough weather behind it, the Caroline headed for New York harbor June 7. The sight of the city <sup>the</sup> next morning as the sun shone down on the trees and buildings was good to see. It was Sunday - the third Sunday after Trinity, for which the Church had long ago appointed the parable of the lost sheep as the lesson. With thankful hearts the passengers fell on their knees and sang

"Allein Gott in der Hoeh" and prayed the Lord's Prayer. For two days then the ship lay at anchor until the quarantine officers approved of the health conditions on board the Caroline. On Monday, June 9, (NOTE TWO) the passengers disembarked at Castle Gardens. Cramer's commentary in his June 12 letter was that "the trip will always be written deeply on the souls of all who took part."

While customs matters were adjusted, the emigrants spent three days full of strange experiences in a strange land, visiting especially the members of Pastor Theo. Brohm's Lutheran congregation. Here too Pastor Craemer followed Loehe's advice and was married on June 10 to Miss Dorothea Benthien of Achim, who had proved herself a capable and self-sacrificing nurse on the voyage. At 7 o'clock in the evening of June 12 the colonists boarded the steamboat Knickerbocker for Albany - a boat which impressed them "as one of the most beautiful in the world." After a pleasantly uneventful trip, they landed at Albany next morning and left almost immediately on the 1:00 p.m. train for the west. About an hour out of the city their train collided head-on with another, just as the colonists were singing the second verse of the hymn, "Nun danket alle Gott". The crash was terrific, the cries ear-splitting, and all hope was lost. However, though many were cut by flying glass, none of the passengers was seriously injured. Since the accident had quite demolished this means of transportation, much debate ensued among the Frankenmuthers as to how they should proceed. The majority voted for the ~~road~~, and at 8:00 that evening they took another train for Buffalo, where they arrived at 9 p.m. next night. By slow stages they finally reached Monroe, Michigan. Here Hattstaedt and his congregation swung wide their doors and took the home-sick travellers to their hearts.

In preparation for the coming of the colonists Pastor Schmidt and Missionary Auch had been busy selecting a suitable site for the new settlement. Their choice fell on Saginaw County, 135 miles north of Monroe by land, where they <sup>prepared to</sup> purchased 680 acres for \$1400 on the Cass River. Having discussed the

matter with Schmidt, Pastor Craemer returned to his flock in Monroe in order to begin the trek to the new location. The first stop was with Pastor Winkler's newly-founded congregation in Detroit. Joining them here, President Schmidt helped arrange for transportation of the party to Saginaw Bay on the sailing vessel Nelson Smith, captained by Mr. Munson. In August, 1845, they said goodbye to Schmidt and Winkler, with whom they entrusted their money, as the boat headed for the Saginaw River. After nearly a week ~~the~~ ship entered the Saginaw River and proceeded five miles to Lower Saginaw (Bay City), a small fishing village. When the wind died to a whisper at this point, the voyagers waited patiently three days but were finally obliged to drag the boat up the river by hand. As they neared Saginaw City, Missionary Auch came out in a canoe to greet them. He had prepared a house in the city for their stay until the purchase of the land was completed, and once again the emigrants disembarked in a strange place. There is no doubt that "the Germans excited great curiosity among the French and English pioneers on account of their peculiar clothing and strange language". (Mills).

Under the guidance of Auch and the surveyor who was to plot the site, Craemer with a few of his men <sup>trudged through the woods</sup> to one of the selected locations. They found it a pleasant place. Fourteen miles (five hours) from Saginaw, twenty miles from Flint, it lay in a thickly timbered region on high, rich, and rolling ground. Six miles away was the English village Tuscola with a flour- and sawmill. The Cass River, which bordered the site, would provide a fine highway to Saginaw and could be used for floating timber to other settlements. Especially impressive to the mission-conscious men was the fact that a village of Chippewa <sup>Indians</sup> could be easily reached by boat only twenty miles up the river.

While Auch return to Detroit by rail for the money left with Winkler, the settlers arranged to buy somewhat over one square mile of property at \$2.50 an acre. 70 acres of land were reserved for the mission and church; the rest

were to be apportioned as soon as the surveying had been completed. "To start a settlement in that wilderness was no holiday affair." Everything here was foreign to the experience of the emigrants - the land, the people, the customs and language. "No one," wrote one of the colonists, "can have an adequate conception of the appearance of a North American landscape. There is no path through the forests. Through brush and extensive morasses, over fallen trees which form the only passageways, through the swampy land, the way leads to the settlement. A dead silence reigns in these woods...After one has waded, climbed, <sup>m</sup>stumbled almost to the point of exhaustion, one comes in view of the colony."

#### Building a Home

Two blockhouses were to <sup>be</sup> erected first. About August, the men left the womenfolk in Saginaw and set out to clear the land. Unaccustomed though they were to this sort of labor, they gallantly fell to with their axes, gradually making a little progress in the warm summer sun. The pastor, who also helped in the manual work, reverently conducted morning and evening services each day. Despite the attacks of fever - a feature of the region that became as troublesome as it was inevitable to the Saginaw settlements, - ~~two~~ crude buildings were ultimately erected after several arduous weeks. One, the company-hut, measuring 30 feet long, would serve to house the five married couples (the Martin Haspels, Lorenz Loesels, John Webers, John Lists, John Pickelmanns) and the two single men (John Bernthal and John Baierlein). Although it was still uncompleted and had a leaking roof, no doors nor windows, and a decidedly <sup>drafty</sup> interior, the last stretch of the colonists' long trek was undertaken to bring the household goods and women-folk to Frankenmuth. Using the yoke of oxen Weber and Haspel had purchased, the men piled women and goods on a sturdy cart and blazed a trail through the forests to the colony. "And the settlement," remarked a letter-writer, "what a doleful sight! A cleared space surrounded by a rough rail fence. In the center of it a miserable cabin built of rough

hewn logs. The most poverty-stricken village in Germany contains palaces compared to this."

But to the colonists this was home. Very soon they made the company hut weather-proof and finished work on the other building. The blockhouse had three rooms - a church hall, the study of Pastor Craemer, and the living room of the pastor's family. Here the first Christmas services in the new land fittingly dedicated the building. Here too Craemer held daily morning and evening services ( a custom continued until 1852) with celebrations of Holy Communion every Sunday. On January 1, 1846 the little congregation rejoiced at the hanging of its two prized bells from a tree near the church. They bore an inscription which was at the same time a description and prophecy of the colony: "Concordia (1580). Res Parvae Crescunt".

Well was the name chosen by Loehe suited to the efforts of his colonists. "Frankenmuth" - the courage of the Franconians indeed! They were to need the courage of faith and hope in the next few difficult years!

### III. EXPERIENCE AND EXPANSION

#### Moulding a Unit

Loehe expected "great things" from this project which was so close to his heart. In March he informed Pastor Ernst: "Our little colony, which will hereafter build itself up greatly, if God grants His blessing, embarks from Bremerhaven to establish a settlement amongst the Indians of Michigan, where possible in conjunction with Ann Arbor, which can become the center of great things... The Lord will turn all things according to His purpose." In a May 21 (1845) letter he remarked to Ernst that 1800 florins had been set aside for Frankemuth. "You will have much to do with the colony," he added. "Have patience also with Craemer... His congregation consists in my opinion of very brave people."

Pastor Ernst made his first visit to the new Loehe project that fall. From his station in New Dettelsau, Ohio, he journeyed to Frankemuth with Teacher



Conrad Schuster, who was prepared to assist Craemer. Their arrival on Oct. 10 could not have been more timely. Not only was the pastor sorely stricken with the fever, but his congregation was split over the planning of the village. Some wished to build it all around the church, as in Germany, with the farms radiating out from this center. Such was Loehe's original wish. Missionary Auch and others, however, advised the settlers to follow the American custom of building the houses in the midst of individual plots of ground, which should be laid out side by side along a central road. The dissatisfaction that ensued was augmented by the general feeling of pessimism among the people. So wearing had been the hardships of the frontier life on them that some even lodged complaints against their neighbors and pastor with Loehe himself. The two visitors were therefore very necessary ~~to~~ arrange the affairs of the colony satisfactorily and <sup>to</sup> bring them news, comfort, and inspiration. In a letter to Ernst dated January 29, 1846 Loehe expressed his thanks for the Ohio <sup>pastor's</sup> beneficial Michigan visit. He also urged that while German mission contributions sent to the emissaries were not to be applied to the support of Frankenth except in its Indian missionary work, the Loehe men should aid the colony in every possible way.

Loehe seemed pleased with the progress of the colony. In his "Situation" With spirits buoyed up again and <sup>with</sup> an increased consecration, the Frankenthers too were thinking of their prime purpose - the conversion of the heathen. The settlers were now living in harmony. Pastor Craemer could therefore turn his attention to possible work among the Chippewa Indians. Already during the temporary stay in Saginaw City he had made an approach to them with Missionary Auch. An Indian school was contemplated, with perhaps 100 prospective pupils ready for enrollment. Two other German missionaries, Dumser and Senke of the Michigan Synod, had attempted mission work in nearby Sibiwaing, but since Dumser fell sick, there was, as Craemer wrote (K.M. 1845 p. 11), "no house

and no school, no one who cares for the household of the brethren (the missionaries), no proper interpreter, no good land to buy, and if we had land, no one to build on it." But Cramer's own mission field seemed to have a future. Certainly few other missionaries had such favorable circumstances to surround their work. Here was the congregation ready not only to afford sustenance and moral support to Craemer, but anxious to abide by their Christian principle, laid down in their Bible and regulations, ~~of~~ <sup>to</sup> let their light shine before men that these benighted heathen might see their good works and turn to glorifying the Father in heaven. Moreover, Loehe was willing to surrender practically the entire project to the supervision of the Michigan Synod and the good judgement of the Frankenmuth people. He well knew that control by a Committee across the sea would but interfere with the progress of the work. As a final encouragement, Craemer had the example of Missionary Auch, who <sup>now</sup> ~~took~~ <sup>took</sup> over the Sibiwaing station and began to erect a missionary hut there.

In the spring of 1846 the colonists drew lots for their sites. As they built their homes, they acquired cattle and other necessities of farming. The people were taking a fine, good humored interest in their new existence.

#### Adding Needed Strength

Loehe seemed pleased with the progress of the colony. In his "Mitteilungen" of 1846 (no.6) he was ready to comment approvingly on the receipt of a Letter (dated February 2) from Craemer: "Beginnings are always hard. At any rate, however, all is in proper order in Frankenmuth at present...That the location of the colony is advantageously selected, there can be no doubt. All agree in this. Craemer says, 'The location of our settlement is excellent - a fine land, a beautiful river favorable for a mill and grass crops, already a street running through (i.e.) the land; from East to West in American fashion, and only an hour and a half from the post road and post station, from which it is but three and a half hours to Saginaw...'"

The new settlement was so appealingly described by the colonists in their letters to friends at home that another large group of German citizens were impelled to follow the trail blazed by the Frankenmuthers. Loehe himself, as he repeatedly asserted, tempted no one to leave home for his colony. Many he advised not to emigrate. Nevertheless in March a party of 90-100 more prospective colonists left for the settlement. They, too, had a very rough crossing of seven weeks, during which water almost gave out. One child died, another was born before they finally arrived in New York May 9. Here two of the seven "Sendlinge" of Loehe who accompanied the party, Christian Lehmann and Johann L. Flessa, were invited by Craemer's letter <sup>received in New York</sup> to work with him <sup>in</sup> the Saginaw Valley. Thus, with the addition of these Lutherans from the fatherland, Frankenmuth increased in strength and in its ministry. Few of the newcomers were adept at the backwoods life and ~~un~~accustomed to farming, but their good spirit made up for their deficiencies. Though now a sizable village, Frankenmuth still had to improve in its produce and construct its own mill. However, if much remained to be done, Loehe <sup>nevertheless</sup> rendered a favorable report on the year of 1846 (K.M. 1846, 11): "The congregation members are satisfied. They cling with sincere affection to their pastor <sup>and we have</sup> not been able to discern the least sign of discontent in ~~over~~ a year ~~in the letters~~ <sup>to</sup> the Germans of the homeland which have come to our attention."

Since the original church <sup>hall</sup> was no longer large enough to <sup>accommodate</sup> Frankenmuth's population, a new edifice was obviously necessary. Therefore more land was cleared to the west of the parsonage in August, and a modestly pretentious little building was constructed. Attacks of fever delayed the work, but the first Lutheran Church in the Saginaw Valley was ready for its members by Christmas time of 1846. "It was a blockhouse (42 feet long and 26 feet wide, with three windows on each of the long sides and the en-

trance on the west side, without stove or chimney), which was dedicated through prayer, sermon, and holy communion, to the service of the Triune God" on second Christmas Day. (Mayer, p.45).

A birth and a death - those lasting ties which bind a people to its soil - made Frankenmuth a new, lifelong home to the colonists in this same year, 1846. On July 30, the first white child of the community, John Pickelmann, was born; August 28 the eight-days-old child of the Lorenz Loesels died. With the beginning of its vital statistics Frankenmuth was more than a name, - ~~more~~ <sup>more</sup> than a colony. It was a ~~proper~~ <sup>permanent settlement</sup>. And thus, without railroad facilities, boats, or the attractiveness of manufacturing and trade booms, "the town grew in strength and prosperity; grew in favor with God and man; grew out of its own soil under the pluck and industry of those hardy, honest, and God-fearing people, who worked diligently and unceasingly six days a week and went to church on Sunday." (Mills.)

#### Pursuing a Purpose

Loehe had stated in his "Mitteilungen" that "Frankenmuth has an interest for us only in so far as it is a starting place for Indian missions." The greatest attraction of the new colony for him was not its possibilities as a settlement but its effectiveness among the heathen. Craemer was conscious of this fact and worked diligently from the very first to make the colony a real mission station. But the task was a hard one. The Indians had been so mistreated by the whites that they were always suspicious of any approach. To make mission work still more complicated, it was necessary to use an interpreter, and the best one available to Craemer was a half-breed named Jim Gruet. Nevertheless, the tireless pastor managed to gain entrance among the neighboring tribes. By living among them he became well enough acquainted with their language to understand their needs and hold little services with his interpreter at three stations. He found them

an expressionless people, given to a dualistic conception of a universal Supreme Being and an evil spirit. The latter they worshipped and feared especially, while their hope of immortality seemed to include little more than the "happy hunting ground" awarded faithful warriors. Though the Word of God made little outward impression on them, they were attentive listeners to Craemer's sermons. With admirable persistence he kept working until he was able to persuade an old Indian to settle in Frankenth with his family. A little school was begun with this nucleus. By the end of June eleven children were enrolled, a 16 year old boy was baptized, and prospects were encouraging. Craemer stressed religious instruction, of course, but he added practical lessons in cleanliness, etiquette, and good housekeeping. While Mrs. Craemer undertook the latter ~~branches~~, he taught Christian fundamentals, English, German, and singing. When Flessa arrived, he made a welcome addition to the faculty, having once taught school in Germany. "There has been at least on the part of the Lutheran Church a small beginning made toward an Indian mission," remarked Loehe (in "Heiden Mission, July 2, 1846),"and until now one may nourish the hope for good results without hesitation." He pointed out that not only was the mission colony plan a successful venture but that under the proper <sup>guid-</sup> guidance of a ~~large~~ American synod it could accomplish still more and be <sup>redup-</sup> ~~reduplicated~~ <sup>Seminary</sup> elsewhere. It was even his fond hope that the new practical <sup>benefit</sup> Seminary his men had recently established at Fort Wayne, Indiana, could be of <sup>benefit</sup> to the project. "This Seminary," he wrote, "can also become wholly useful for the education of missionaries to the heathen." Heretofore the men trained in Germany were not prepared for such work. But "the institution in Fort Wayne will perhaps have all the advantages of a German mission institute <sup>and</sup> and in addition all the advantages of immediate survey of the situation, only a little distance from the field of labor among the heathen, with possibly

a knowledge of the language of those heathen."

Hindered by natural forces and physical ailments, Craemer's work found interference in an unexpected quarter also. The Methodists, who had been working among the Indians before the arrival of the Frankenmuthers, were indignant at the ~~entrance~~ <sup>accustomed</sup> of another church body. They had been so accustomed to staging revivals and merely trying to educate the Indians to white men's habits that the patient religious instruction of Craemer angered them. Some who had even used Christianity as a guise for their exploitation of the heathen began to circulate slanderous stories of the Lutherans. The pastor they accused of trying to lead the Indians captive to a foreign power. And the red-men were gullible. Sometimes the school stood empty, especially during Craemer's absence on a mission journey. The interpreter, who was paid \$25 a month, became incompetent. Sickness among the Indians and whites connected with the Frankenmuth ~~institution~~ gave it a bad name. But the mission effort went on. On ~~the~~ third Christmas Day of 1846, just after the dedication of the new church, three heathen were baptized - a 17 year~~old~~ youth named Abuiquam, renamed Abraham, whom Craemer hoped to train as his interpreter; Abuiquam's 16 year old sister, Magdalene; his younger sister, Anna. The service was quite impressive. Teacher Flessa and Pastor Craemer spoke, sang hymns in the native tongue with the youngsters, "and the whole celebration was intended to be of such a nature that the Frankenmuthers would feel most strongly reminded of the special purpose of their settlement." (K.M. 1847,3). Fourteen days later Magdalene died, and the Indian mission's first soul joined the host of heaven.

When the Dresden emissary Baierlein, trained as a missionary for India but ready to become an Indian missionary, joined Craemer at the beginning of 1847, the work gathered momentum. Craemer reported in a letter of Jan. 18, 1847 that he now had several children of the Pamasike band in his school, among them the gifted son of the chief. Other children promised to enroll

as soon as favorable weather returned. Up to this time very little money had been turned over to the support of the mission - so little that the pastor was still vainly asking for a saddle-horse to carry him on his long trips. Loehe in the "Mitteilungen" of 1847 (no.3) therefore called for help. It seems the mission society members were somewhat doubtful about the whole procedure even yet. What if the United States government pushed the <sup>tribes</sup> out of this section, ~~should~~ <sup>in case</sup> the Christian Indians refuse to accept civilization? What would happen to the mission then? Loehe answered, "The missionaries will go with the exiles, if they find a state (i.e. to dwell in); that is self-evident. The colonists can go along or stay, as they please. But Frankenmuth has not once been spoken of by the inhabitants as unfavorable for mission purposes". Craemer, he added, ought to know.

#### IV. ENLARGING THE SCOPE

##### An Economic Project

When Loehe planned Frankenmuth, he had in mind only its usefulness as a mission colony. It was his hope that "Frankenmuth might become the first of many another mission colony..or mission congregation." He spoke of reduplicating this settlement in Wisconsin, Indiana, and Missouri. "I wish that all congregations of the Lutheran confession might recognize their call to be mission congregations for the Indians," he said (Die Heiden-Mission, p.19). But he soon began to recognize the importance of another feature of colonization. The lack of pastors in America, the scattered condition of the people, and the resulting godlessness among <sup>former</sup> the Lutherans troubled him. Even as he was considering the problem, the pressure toward emigration from Germany increased. People landed in America, trekked west, lost contact with the Church. One solution was necessarily simple. For those who were already across the sea, send pastors - as many as possible. But could not this fatal

scattering be prevented before the emigrants left the homeland? Perhaps the Lutherans could be assembled in groups under the leadership of a pastor, and when they arrived in the United States, they could all dwell together in spiritual security. The idea intrigued Loehe. Gradually the Indian mission purpose faded into the background of his plans, and his new settlements took on a definitely religio-economic aspect. They were to be assembly-points for Lutheran congregations. And Michigan, with its well-established nucleus, seemed favored by circumstances and nature to become the locale of a scheme which could have become very significant in scope and magnitude.

Evidently Loehe wrote Craemer concerning the possibility of locating such colonies near Frankenmuth, for the latter made noteworthy suggestions in a letter of January 18, 1847. A piece of property near Flint, 3000 acres of fine land about six miles from Frankenmuth, could be purchased for \$1500. Describing it, Craemer said, "I know of no more favorable site in our neighborhood to which to bring another Lutheran congregation than this. And it is truly necessary that we expand the Church here, if it is to win any place at all." Ann Arbor and Toledo were not as well qualified at the time, their pastors being just able to carry on. Detroit had a congregation divided over Winkler's actions, and <sup>was</sup> in no receptive mood for additional Lutherans. Craemer added that the most necessary prerequisites for the new congregation would be a solid organization, ability to support its pastor, and unity.

In a reply (NOTE THREE) of 1847 Loehe agreed to Craemer's proposal - "provided the colonization is only seen from the side of its purpose to save souls." Already without his advice four families left for Frankenmuth and were to be taken under Craemer's wing. Loehe himself had worked out his plan in detail. He had thought of two colonies - Frankentrost ("comfort of the Franconians") and Frankenlust ("desire of the Franconians"). For the former, three thousand acres were to be bought in one plot and so divided that there



would be a village in the center with some 50-60 lots radiating out from the hub like spokes. Each inhabitant was to have his own land. As the settlement grew, it could expand to the edge of the 3000 acres. Thus, perhaps, the scattering which had proven detrimental in Frankenmuth could be prevented here. Out of the sale of lots, 6000 gulden would be realized, from which the expenses were to be taken. Since the land would cost \$1500, there would be 2250 gulden left. With this Craemer was to buy 60 acres for a church site, one acre for the parsonage. Taking 100 gulden out of the remaining 2010 to be given Craemer's new-born child in payment for the pastor's trouble, the 1910 gulden should be used to purchase a location in the neighborhood for Frankenlust. After these lots had been sold there would be a permanent "wandering capital" with which new settlements could be purchased and resold to incoming Lutherans at reasonable rates. This "Colonizationscapital" was an ingenious idea. <sup>The money would accumulate</sup> It ~~arose~~ from the little tax placed on each lot bought. Loehe hoped that in a few years <sup>the fund</sup> ~~it~~ would make a tidy profit for itself, which could be turned back to the colonists' benefit. He and a friend were to undertake this on their <sup>responsibility</sup> own, using only the money designated for the purpose by contributors. By way of proper order, he added that the new pastors were to serve as presbyters for Craemer as long as their people were under the latter's <sup>colonists</sup> pastorate. "For colonists there will be no lack," <sup>he predicted.</sup>

The first sketched of the plan had been made in the fall of 1846. A little group of Frankentrosters, who were to "comfort" the Frankenmuth <sup>colony</sup> and "comfort" themselves with the courage of the Word, had as their leader Johann Heinrich Philipp Graebner, 28 year old pupil of Loehe from Bavaria, acquainted with his teacher's work since 1839. The colonists, who were in general driven from the homeland by the rationalism and laxity of the German church, gathered some 6000 gulden (\$4000) for the purchase of the new site, and sent it to Craemer. Because of unforeseen complications, they <sup>separated</sup>

into two sections. The first, leaving Bremerhaven on April 18, 1847 on the Creole, arrived in New York June 12. Two days later they started out by boat to Albany, by train to Buffalo, by ship to Detroit, which they reached June 20. Finally, on Wednesday, June 24, they had their first glimpse of Frankenmuth. Meanwhile Candidate Graebner's party could not leave Germany until April 21 (22?). Their ship Hermine dropped anchor in New York harbor June 1, so that they were able to arrive in Frankenmuth June 11, nine days ahead of their friends in the other group.

Unfortunately, the money did not reach Craemer in time to purchase the original 3000 acres, and the site was sold to another buyer before the colonists came. The people were sorely disappointed. They had expected everything would be ready for their settlement. Enthusiasm waned. Some wished to settle in Frankenmuth, others saw various locations which <sup>attracted</sup> attracted them. Craemer was appalled at the thought of Loehle's prime purpose being frustrated. Earnestly he admonished the newcomers of their obligations and of the folly of scattering. Wissmüller, leading the second contingent into Frankenmuth at this point, spoke the sentiment of the more pious-minded: "We have come here with the thought of building a new Lutheran congregation... and this determination we will not give up as long as there exists a means for our carrying out the intention." Thus, although the colonization capital had to be temporarily shelved, the original plan was carried out.

Under the leadership of surveyor Peach, the pastors and certain young men sought a suitable location. A site of 2000 acres was found 7 miles northwest of Frankenmuth and 8 miles east of Saginaw, through which a fine <sup>stream</sup> stream of good water ran. On July 22 the purchase was made at 77¢/an acre.

The first building of Frankentrost was a 14x24 foot shelter for the workers. As soon as enough ground had been cleared, blockhouses were <sup>erected</sup> erected on lots placed north and south of and east-west road. Here too the specifi-

cations of Loehe had to be abandoned, for the surveyor advised the American plan as less expensive and time-consuming. The church and the parsonage were placed in the center of the village, with 56 acres set aside for the former, 40 for the latter. By the end of October the twenty-four families which had bought property here were nearly settled for the winter. Organization of the congregation, called Immanuel Lutheran Church, was effected shortly, and on Sept. 5, 1847 Craemer ordained and installed Graebner as its pastor. He held his first services at the end of October in the Munker home, formally completing the first colonization foundation of Loehe's new plans.

#### Relationships with Synods

One of the earliest official acts passed by the newly-organized congregation at Frankentrost was an application for membership in the Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States. St. Lorenz Church (Frankenmuth) was already a member, and the procedure was simple. But behind the action of Frankentrost was an interesting story of the relationships of the Franconians with large church organizations.

From the very first, Loehe's emissaries worked with the Ohio Synod, organized in 1818. To its Seminary in Columbus had gone not only Loehe men but Loehe money and support as well. Its main attractions to the Neuendettelsau pastor were its strict adherence to the confessions and its preservation of the German language. He was especially pleased when the Synod at Zanesville in 1844 unanimously voted to keep the Seminary German. "Therein," remarked Loehe later (K.M. 1845, 2), "we were to see a beginning of the fulfillment (of our wishes), because the English administration (<sup>Richtung</sup>) (<sup>doctrines</sup>), as far as it conducts itself on the other side, has unquestionably proven itself dangerous for the pure doctrine." It was not narrowness which compelled him to take this stand. He knew full well that the Lutheran doctrine

could be taught in other languages than German just as well. But he could point to fearful examples of the English influence in the American Lutheran Church. It seemed that an independent English Lutheran congregation "quickly became something else." The English preachers may have been better educated, but they did not cling to the German Lutheran theology and literature. They had few translations of Lutheran writings in English, and the influence of sectarian literature was soon disastrous. Therefore he was anxious that his emissaries "look sharply to the German element for the sake of the Church, and rather found one purely German synod of their own than any longer belong to such as yielded to the English influence." (K.M. 1846, 4.5).

But Loehe's expectations of the Ohio Synod were disappointed. In 1845 it decided to make the Seminary at Columbus half English, half German. This action indicated the trend. At once the Loehe men drew up a list of complaints against the practice of the Synod. Not only was it turning the Seminary English despite its constitution, but it did not require of its pastors an oath of adherence to the 1580 Concordia, and its formula for the Lord's Supper had Reformed inclinations. Unionistic tendencies were evident among the members. When the Synod refused to consider the protests, Loehe's men withdrew.

Meanwhile, Frankenmuth's Craemer, Monroe's (Mich.) Hattstaedt, Toledo's Lochner, and Denbury's (Ohio) Trautmann were having similar difficulties in the Michigan Synod. All Loehe men, they had naturally followed the contact between their teacher and Pastor Schmidt of Ann Arbor, who was <sup>president</sup> president of the Synod. At that time they could easily become members because its professed adherence to the symbolical books left nothing to be desired. Craemer had worked very harmoniously with Synod's Missionary Auch and other pastors, and Franconian Lutherans supported Synod's work at Sibiwauing. To the latter station came Rev. H. Dumser, of the Basel Missionary

Institute, ordained in Germany but not bound to the symbols of the Church. When he began to declare with impunity that an unconditional adherence to them would have strained his conscience, Loehe's men raised their mental eyebrows. Moreover, they discovered that several "mixed" congregations (Reformed and Lutheran combined) as such were being served with Word and sacraments by the Synod. In June, 1846, Craemer, Lochner, Trautmann, and Hattstaedt laid a protest before the Synod assembly, demanding a house-cleaning. When this was not forthcoming, They formally submitted their resignations from Synod in a document of June 25, 1846. Thus, all of Loehe's men were cut loose from the vitally necessary synodical ties. The question before them now was, Which way shall we turn?

One little group of Lutherans had caught Loehe's eye long before these events. They were the Saxons in Missouri, who had just gone through the confessionally purifying "Stephanistic" episode. Hattstaedt, on leaving for America, had been charged with the duty of investigating the present Saxon stand. Unable to fulfill the appointment, Hattstaedt was relieved of it by Ernst and Sihler, who at once began correspondence with Rev. C.F.W. Walther in St. Louis. They were overjoyed to find among his people a kindred spirit.

On September 13-18<sup>(1846)</sup> the Loehe men met at Cleveland to decide what should be done. Some 16 pastors who were present agreed that the conservative position would have to be upheld. Only Loehe men absent were Craemer and Saupert. Frankenmuth's pastor, sick with the fever again, wrote a fine testimony of his fellowship to the assembly. Two definite steps were taken: a formal letter of resignation was sent to the Ohio Synod (cf. K.M. 1846, 1), and a friendly overture was made to the Missouri Saxons. Loehe was now happy: "Our efforts are crowned with success. A bold step is taken. God help it further!" (K.M. 1845, 9.10.)

In May, 1846, Sihler, Ernst, and Lochner journeyed to Missouri to discover possibilities for steps toward organizing a synod. The result was a list of "Vorlagen" or doctrinal statements which C.F.W. Walther and the Loehe men drew up to be approved at a meeting in July at Ft. Wayne, Indiana. Having finally severed connections with the Michigan Synod in June of this year, Craemer was free to attend the Ft. Wayne conference together with some 15 other pastors. On his way <sup>up</sup> ~~down~~ the Maumee by canal-boat he met Dr. Walther for the first time, and was deeply impressed. When the conference decided to organize on the basis of the Vorlagen, Craemer signed the new constitution and left to persuade his congregation to join the Synod of Missouri, Ohio, & Other States, to be organized in Chicago next year.

Frankenmuth seriously considered the matter, expressed its approval, and appointed Johann Bernthal as its first delegate. Together with Bernthal, Craemer next spring headed by boat for Chicago. Ice at Mackinac delayed <sup>their</sup> their progress, but they arrived in Chicago April 30, in time for the actual organization. Flessa, who later in the fall left Frankenmuth for a school in St. Louis, and Craemer were accepted as members of the new Synod. Because of his close association with the Indian missions, Craemer was also named secretary of the mission board of the Synod, and ordered to seek Loehe's approval of Synod's supervision of Frankenmuth missions.

In his letter to Loehe, dated August 17, 1847, Craemer described the status of the station. With a new interpreter (at \$25 per month) he had visited chiefs Sanaban and Pemasike, and won back the confidence which the Methodists had ~~tried to~~ destroy. Pemasike was now ready to become a Christian. Meanwhile his own school had grown to 17 Indian children, from 18 down to 4 years <sup>old</sup>, who were proving rather expensive in that they ate 17 pounds of meat a day besides requiring clothes. Baierlein afforded real help. He was now able to read Indian, and each Sunday he held a children's service with

with the aid of the interpreter. A new house was being contemplated for him, the interpreter, and the school. Regarding Synod's interest in the work, Craemer wrote: "My proposition, that station Frankenmuth would like to be taken into Synod and would like to be placed under its supervision, was received with joy... We await only your written..or verbally stated consent to put the whole matter in effect."

#### V. PROPITIOUS PROSPERITY

##### Making Dreams Practical

With Frankentrost now well established, Loehe's men could turn to the fulfillment of the other project originally included in the colonization scheme. "Missions" was the ~~the~~ key-word for Frankenmuth; "keep Lutheran emigrants Lutheran" was the foundation of Frankentrost; the third colony was to have a social aim as a "poor settlement". There were many young couples in Germany at this time who were unable to own ~~the~~ property, <sup>which</sup> the government required before they could marry. Consequently, they often began households illicitly, without the formality of a wedding ceremony. These horrible conditions Loehe earnestly sought to correct. By assembling the couples desirous of emigrating into one large group, he would settle them near the other two villages in the Saginaw Valley.

Loehe evidently discussed the matter with Craemer by correspondence. In a letter of August 18, 1847 the Frankenmuth pastor reported himself still anxious to carry on the development of "the colony for poor betrothed persons, which with joy I would like to see come into being." He had chosen one of several fine locations for such a settlement. It lay in a beautiful region on the Tittipawassi River, about 25 miles from Frankenmuth and 11 miles above Saginaw City. As a particular asset to this location, the tribe of Chief Sanaban was only 6 miles away, while the two

rivers which formed a junction at this point were much used by Chief Pamasike's people. Here the missionary could rest on his trips among the Indians.<sup>3</sup> In fact, so taken up with the site was Craemer himself, that he said he would have placed Frankenmuth there, had he known of it when he arrived. In reply to these arrangements Loehe expressed his approval as long as "the land would not be more expensive than in Frankenmuth." Craemer responded (Feb. 18, 1848) that as Indian Reserve Land it would cost approximately \$2.50 an acre but was well worth the price. Since the "wandering capital" had not yet been put into effect, it would be applied here.

During this time Loehe was grooming a young candidate of theology for the pastorate of the new flock. He was Ferdinand Sievers, formerly assistant pastor at Husum, Hannover, who had determined already in 1847 to devote himself to the cause of American Indian missions. Arriving at Frankenmuth several months ahead of his group of colonists, to make arrangements for them, he found the selected site greatly to his satisfaction. While he waited for the settlers to arrive, <sup>he</sup> served Craemer as "pastor vicarious", particularly in Saginaw City, where the organization of a congregation was being contemplated.

Again, however, plans miscarried. When Loehe's "capital" of 5000 Gulden (\$2000) reached him, he made another trip to the location of Frankenlust before ~~he~~ purchasing it. What had appeared to be excellent dry land now proved unmistakably swampy and unfit for colonization. Reluctantly Sievers turned to a region which had before attracted his attention. It was situated between two arms of the Squaquanning River, 3-4 miles from Lower Saginaw, about a mile and a half from the Saginaw River. Although the new site not very favorable to Indian mission work (despite the many neighboring tribes) because of the activity of the Methodists,



Sievers bought 645 acres of this land and waited for his colonists.

Apparently plans went awry again. Perhaps the betrothed couples were too poor even to join the "poor colony". At any rate, the small group which finally assembled itself under the name of Frankenlust included few such folks as Loehe had intended.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, they were entitled to membership in any "poor colony", and they set sail for America in the spring of 1848. Sievers met the ship in the Saginaw River on June 21. Together with the men of the party he plodded to the new home-site. Impressed with the amount of work to be done as well as with the beauties of the location, they prepared to erect their homes. Several weeks later the first services were held in Frankenlust, and on Reformation Day four couples were married. The church building, an unpretentious structure which cost \$350, was finished July 3. Next day the colonists celebrated America's Independence Day by moving into their new homes. Dividing into two sections, the seventeen settlers travelled from Saginaw by scow and wagon to the youngest of Loehe's colonies. Like its neighbors, Frankenlust too joined the Missouri Synod, *as soon as it was organized.* ~~and~~ Then Loehe decided to withdraw his "colonization capital". He felt ~~it~~ it had failed of its purpose. Moreover, with the Danish blockade preventing further emigration for the time being, there was little hope for adding more settlements. Sievers was alarmed. He quickly wrote his teacher, asking him to give the "capital" an added lease on life. The Frankenlust land had cost more than expected, and the people were too poor to repay it very rapidly. Moreover, not much was left after 1080 gulden had been sent to the practical seminary in Fort Wayne and four lots in Saginaw were purchased at \$400 for the prospective Saginaw congregation. Thus far <sup>57/100</sup> 725 and 57/100 acres of land had been bought for Frankenlust at \$1813.92 and 1/2, *which* of which 230 and 1/4 acres were resold to colonists for \$575.62 and 1/2. For the church the tip of the land between the two rivers was obtained at \$150.

Because of such financial emergencies Loehe was willing to extend the time of his "capital." In a letter to his Neuendettelsau friend dated August 11, 1848, Sievers predicted of his people: "Frankenlust will have a significant future, according to human outlook, and if the religious atmosphere remains consecrated, the people here can then lead a truly quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and uprightness. May the Lord help to this end!"

Two Years of Development (1848+1849)

At the end of July (1848) the new colony entertained its first pastoral conference. Here the Saginaw pastors considered a call sent Sievers by the Lutheran congregation of St. Charles, Missouri, but their conclusion was that the struggling young settlement needed him more. His usefulness as an Indian missionary was also becoming evident. Having bought 38 acres of the original site selected by Craemer for Frankenlust, he had turned it over <sup>to</sup> the Chief Shaonbese and <sup>had</sup> begun work there. Baierlein would assume the real duties when a start had been made. Finally, Sievers would have to continue his practice of serving the Saginaw congregation every two weeks until a full time pastor could be called.

All of the young candidate's activities nearly came to an end rather suddenly, however. In September an epidemic laid nearly ~~all the~~ <sup>every</sup> inhabitants of his village low. Two men died, including one member. Sievers himself was dangerously ill for a month, but recovered under the ministrations of Frankenmuth's Dr. Koch, to be installed by Pastors Craemer and Graebner on October 31, 1848.

Reports from the other congregations for the year 1848 were somewhat more cheerful. Frankentröst, a sizable little village of 30 families or 102 souls, was thriving. Graebner had baptized five, confirmed two. Each day he held services in his dwelling, which had a room neatly arranged as

a church, with 9 benches, an altar and a pulpit. Some land was cleared and corn and potatoes were planted in good black earth. The site had a decided advantage over Frankenmuth in its pure well water. Craemer, however, also gave a good account of his congregation's condition (K.M. 1848, 10). Quite accustomed to the climate now, the people were leading a sound German church life, uninfluenced by the English customs and errors of their neighbors in Tuscola. The two pastors were thus confidently able to leave their charges for a brief trip to the Synod assembly in St. Louis that summer.

With the baptism of the 19th child, the mission too was carrying on its work in a commendable manner. Since the arrival of Teacher Pinkepank, most of the native children attended both their own school and the German institution at Frankenmuth, where they learned to sing German songs and read the catechism. The mission school was Craemer's greatest joy. "He who beholds all of this with sympathetic eyes must rejoice over it from the bottom of his heart and thank God that He has made us worthy to be tools of His mercy for these poor children", he wrote (Mayer, p. 53). But the work among the tribes themselves faced a more hazardous existence. Godless Indian agents tried to influence the Indians against the Lutherans by lies and threats. Their allies in this mean business were the Methodists, who used every excuse to slander the missionaries. Finally, through the intercession of a God-fearing agent, the redskins were partially reconciled, and regular visits were made to tribes on the Swan, Cass, Pine, and Belle Rivers. Missionary Baierlein, still a Dresden man but not unwilling to join the Missouri Synod, proved to be of inestimable assistance to Craemer in the mission school. By August, 1848, Chief Pemasike on the Pine River gave his permission to the missionary to erect a schoolhouse there and instruct the old and young of his tribe. Through the interpreter Baierlein preached them

a sermon to about 70 of them that fall. With the aid of six Frankenmuth men a dwelling was built for the missionary and his wife, and the new station, Bethany or "House of Poverty", became the chief mission post. Auch in Sibiwailing reported less success because of the interference of the Methodists.

Loche's resumé of the year in the "Mitteilungen" (1848,10) had every right to sound exultant: "Thus now a fine beginning has been made... We acknowledge it/openly that we recognize that region of Michigan where our colonies are prospering as a very fitting place of refuge (Zufluchtsort) for the German element." Although he still maintained that "we have sought to entine not a single person who is now in America, either by fine speech or deception, to his emigration-determination...we have dissuaded many, persuaded none" (K.M.1848,10); yet he frequently expressed his happiness that ~~so~~ many colonists desired to join his projects. He therefore had arranged in 1848 for a candidate to be stationed in Bremen~~haven~~, that the prospective colonists might receive spiritual ministration and experienced advice for emigration.

The year 1849 was a critical one for the Indian missions. With no roads and much adverse weather, the pastors found it difficult to minister to their red-skinned friends. Stumbling into the stations, they never knew what sort of reception would be accorded them. Sometimes the~~tribes~~ were out roaming the forests, or they were stupified by the drinks obtained from whiskey-sellers, who plied their trade among them. In his Bethany blockhouse Baierlein held services for about 40 stolid Indians, who seldom revealed the results of his preaching. The children were more responsive. Christmas of 1848 was celebrated in the school with 19 native youngsters singing the old hymns in their own language. The missionary had managed to translate these, a reader, the catechism, the New Testament, and portions of the psalms and <sup>Isiah</sup> ~~Isiah~~ into their tongue, and <sup>this factor</sup> ~~they~~ helped

his work considerably. By the beginning of 1849 he could number some 20-24 pupils as the nucleus of a future Bethany congregation. When five of them announced themselves ready for baptism, Craemer performed the rite on January 18, bringing the total baptized to eleven. The first adult, who was the chief's daughter, was not prepared until the end of the year. Since the church-personage, which had been used until this time, began to prove too small, Baierlein, without money but relying on God's providence, built a log church adjoining his dwelling. He was quite proud of it, for it boasted six windows, a tower, an altar, a pulpit, and even a 104 pound bell in a nearby tree - all at the cost of \$230. Twice each Sunday the Indians were summoned to services by the bell, once on Wednesday, once on Friday, and each morning and evening devotions were conducted here. Whereas the services had previously been marred by the chattering of the Indian women, the playing of the children, and the smoking of the men, now a reverent attitude was displayed, as Baierlein led them through Loehe's own order of service in the Indian language. With Christian worship, Christian baptisms, weddings, and funerals influencing them, the Indians became more stable in their living, forsook their magic, their whiskey, and their ~~going~~ to cultivate the land in a civilized manner.

At the end of May, 1849, Craemer, Sievers, and Baierlein ~~had~~ journeyed to Fort Wayne for the Synod meeting. Concerning this assembly of 36 pastors and 12 delegates Sievers later wrote to Loehe (July 31, 1849): "What strength I took along from this synod for my official and faith life I cannot tell you, worthy friend." Here the Board of Heathen Missions recommended the mission at Frankenmuth and surrounding territory to Synod's care. "In spite of very adverse circumstances, both internal and external, the station by God's protection and assistance has not only held its own

but has become more firmly established and has even spread out. Its influence now extends to three bands and may shortly reach a fourth" (C.H.I.Q., II, 4, 100f). Craemer's school now numbered about 17, some having followed Baierlein to Bethany. Several Indians had begun to settle into the agricultural life of Frankenmuth also. The Synod therefore decided to request Loehe and the Dresden Mission Society for permission to take over the mission in Michigan. That same year the Missouri <sup>Synod</sup> Board received a document signed by the Collegium of the Society <sup>at Leipzig (the Dresden group's successor)</sup> and Pastor Loehe, formally transferring the station to the Synod. Loehe "did not offer the slightest objection to this suggestion since he had long regarded the station as the property of Synod." The German brethren stipulated, however, that the Bethany station be included, and asked for frequent reports from Baierlein and the Frankenmuth mission. "May the merciful God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ give to the German Lutheran stations in Michigan grace and His richest blessing, for the sake of Jesus Christ! May He vouchsafe to them, in the Synod of Missouri, Ohio, & Other States, a wise and strong nurse; and may He prosper what Synod undertakes for the benefit of the heathen! Amen!" (C.H.I.Q., II, 4, 103) - such was the statement which severed a strong cord binding Loehe and his colonies. (NOTE FOUR)

Missionaries Baierlein and Auch, now dissatisfied with the Michigan Synod, resigned and applied for membership in the Missouri Synod. Their exit from ~~the former~~ Synod so depleted its ranks, that President Schmidt conferred with the Saginaw pastors, returning from Fort Wayne, on the <sup>surrender</sup> of Sibiwaing and ~~Shiboyank~~ stations to Missouri also. The official transfer was made shortly thereafter.

Meanwhile the colonies found 1849 a prosperous year. By this time Frankenmuth had more than 38 dwellings and 175 souls, with <sup>and</sup> its own flour <sup>and</sup> saw mill, a merchant, a physician (DR. Koch), and all necessities. When

Synod's Vice President W. Sihler visited it, he praised it highly as a model community. Yet an eyewitness commented (Niederlassungen, p.7): "Frankenmuth is beautiful, but still more beautiful is Frankantrost." From the first village to the second was a two-hour journey on a fairly serviceable road. Here the houses were built in a row along the main street, with the church in the middle, presenting a very pretty sight to the traveller. At the beginning of 1849 there were more than 30 families or 102 souls in the village, most of whom were poor workers for the older settlements and for Flint concerns - an influence Loehe did not like because of its characteristic English practices. The third colony, Frankenlust, was having a more difficult time. When the Danish blockade of German ports shut off the stream of emigration, the little settlement seemed destined for a stunted growth. Nevertheless, its inhabitants erected a new church and parsonage, hoping for a better future. Furthermore, pastor Sievers was optimistic about Frankenlust's "daughter congregation" in Saginaw City. With \$125 at hand for building, he had purchased lots in a suitable location for a church, "because he was certain that here a German Lutheran congregation could establish itself, and that many brethren in faith would come here from the south of Michigan into this productive little city" (Niederlassungen, p.12).

Still thinking of Loehe's contemplated "poor bridal colony", Sievers in the spring of 1849 with Craemer's consent made a surprise move by purchasing 1592.73 acres of new land for \$1194. Loehe had known of the plan, of course, for Craemer in correspondence with him (July 31, 1848) had indicated there was a fine location between Tuscola and Frankentrost obtainable "for the purpose of a colony for poor bridal couples". ~~It lay~~ on the Cheboygen River. Since Sievers was able to obtain it when he realized an unexpected sum from the sale of a large plot of Frankenlust land, he acted

quickly. Loehe, recording his reaction in *Niederlassungen*, p.12f, remarked, "We received the news first when all was finished; but because, apart from this, we had become more courageous, we could give our subsequent approval with that much more of a light heart." The "wandering capital" <sup>revolving</sup> was now in operation, and Loehe looked about for those young couples who were too poor to marry under German laws, warning that "it is not in the power of the backer of the plan to open an asylum full of poor people; our poor must at least have as much as is necessary to be able to obtain land and position." But they were welcome to property at low rates, to be repaid at their convenience. During the spring of 1849 their leader, Candidate Ernst Ottmar Cloeter of Bayreuth, preceded them to serve Sievers as "pastor vicarious" in Saginaw City, where a congregation had been <sup>organized</sup> since January 29, and prepare the way for the new colony of Frankenhilf.

With three settlements, a prospective fourth, a growing congregation in Saginaw, and active mission stations, Loehe could well remark that "the German-Lutheran colonization and church in the county of Saginaw has made a not wholly insignificant beginning... This industrious life and <sup>work</sup> fabrication (*Weben*) of the Lutheran Church can have only a good influence in that region, and we join thereto the hope, looking to the Father of mercy, that the pastors and teachers there will win one victory after another" (*Niederlassungen*, p.14.15). Not only did Craemer and Sievers now begin an "advertising campaign" for their fine locales among the emigrants in Germany (cf. *Niederlassungen* p.15f), but Loehe himself could not help recommending the physical and spiritual advantages which his foundations offered.



VI. THE CRISIS BEGINS (1850)The Weakening of the Chain

In his "Mitteilungen" of 1850 (no.1) Loehe expressed a prophecy which ultimately came true in an unpredicted manner: "The colonization and its spiritual conduct (Leitung) is by far the most important point for the Lutheran Church of North America: perhaps it will be recognized in wider circles! Perhaps the hopes will reach fulfillment which we were permitted to hold anno 1849! Perhaps, I say - for here we stand at a matter, an important matter, which He alone can effect who turns the hearts as the waterbrooks."

It was in 1850 that the first of two final links between Loehe and the Saginaw Valley were forged. Like the second, it proved indirectly to be the cause for the ~~weakening~~ of the chain. But at this time Loehe still had high hopes. In the spring of this year several couples of Franconian and Swabian origin left Germany [April 19 (22?)] under the leadership of Candidate Herman Kuehn to colonize the "poor bridal colony", Frankenhilf. Arriving in New York May 19, they proceeded to Detroit. Here the party split up. Some were attracted by the opportunities of Michigan's largest metropolis; others turned to friends in Monroe. The few who did reach Saginaw County found the established colonies more to their liking than the hardships of creating a new settlement. As a result only the family of a refined gentleman named Gottlob Ammon, Swabian in origin (the other colonies were all Franconian), remained true to the original determination of the group. With the help of a few friends he began clearing a plot of ground on the Frankenhilf site in June 1850, and, August 1, Pastor Kuehn delivered a dedication sermon in the first dwelling.

Since the "colony" was small and poor, and Kuehn himself was sick and destitute, it was decided that he should accept a call elsewhere. Craemer

served the Frankenhilf settlers until a third family came. An appeal for a permanent pastor caused Loehe to send Pastor J. Deindoerfer, who arrived in 1851 with a small addition to the settlement. On the second Sunday in Advent, 1851, he held his first service, marking the beginning of a new congregation. Though the site was attractive, Frankenhilf never did achieve its purpose as a "poor bridal colony". It was a disappointed Loehe who had to admit (K.M. 1851, 3.4), "We must for the time being drop the thought of a poor colony." But he added, "Courage and wisdom are shown by our friends nevertheless in carrying out the same plan at a different place, namely in the City of Saginaw.."

He referred to the start of the final Saginaw Valley project - the one which would mean the end of his activity in this territory. Cloeter, "a man of unrecognized practical talent", as Loehe described him, was the promoter of the new scheme. He too admitted that he believed "the foundation of a poor colony in the woods for the moment out of the question and impossible." The older colonies, after their hardest years were over, described backwoods life too romantically and idealistically for the emigrants. When they were faced with a reality which involved carving their homes out of an unwilling wilderness, they lost courage and chose to build in the established communities. On the other hand, thought Cloeter, large, busy Saginaw had decided advantages for colonization. Why could not settlements spring up around it as suburbs? As <sup>to</sup> the city itself, "if there is anywhere a suitable place for a poor colony, it must be Saginaw." With the help of the local congregation and the Saginaw Valley settlements, a "Pilgerhaus" or inn for <sup>poor</sup> emigrants could be <sup>maintained.</sup> advantageously.

The idea was an old one with Loehe. Consul Fleischmann of Stuttgart, interested in the colonization of Michigan, had proposed erecting his own

depots for emigrants in the same manner. In his 1850, no. 10 "Mitteilungen" Loehe outlined the "Pilgerhaus" plan in some detail. It was to provide a temporary home at small cost for the emigrants until they chose their home sites, and would include a hospital (Saginaw Valley's fever was by this time notorious), offer spiritual ministrations, and afford help in divers manners. The new feature of his plan was a seminary (later, for teachers) which would supply the region. Here the students could live and study under a rector, then do practical work among the colonies. Besides using the "House" as a depot for Lutheran books and tracts, Loehe hoped ~~to add~~ <sup>to add</sup> some time <sup>whole</sup> a school for boys and girls. At the <sup>beginning</sup> <sup>he</sup> had figured on locating the institution on a separate section of land near the colonies, to be purchased with the <sup>proceedings</sup> "wandering capital" and used for building up the surrounding territory into another community. But on the advice of his American representatives, the last idea was dropped. Instead Cloeter proceeded to search for a suitable location in Saginaw. Meanwhile Loehe, not quite satisfied with this city, inquired of Rev. G. Schaller of Detroit's Trinity Church as to the possibilities for founding such a "Pilgerhaus" in his city. When it was discovered that the cost there would be 25,000 florins, Loehe agreed that Saginaw, a natural center of German immigration, seemed best suited for the purpose.

In the summer of 1852 a large frame house was erected in this city near the landing dock. To start the school Loehe sent Rev. G. M. Grossmann (ordained aboard ship) with five students. It is significant that in a letter to Walther the Neuendettelsau pastor added, "Thus then Grossmann and five students go to Saginaw with the express instructions, and the direction for teacher and pupils to join the Synod of Missouri in the most intimate manner". The party arrived in July of that year, and "the first Protestant and first Lutheran teachers seminary in North

America" began in a store, the "House" not being quite ready for occupancy.

Then another of Loehe's dreams was frustrated. The "House" did not serve its purpose as an emigrant station, for newcomers found a welcome with relatives and friends until they bought their lots. Well might the idealistic and hard-working pastor of Neuendettelsau cry out in exasperation, "Nothing has gone as we wanted it to go!" Yet his added remark was also true: "But all has gone in such a way that success and blessing attended our work."

### The Loss of a Link

Indian mission work during this period was gradually losing ground. Reports on the aspect of his "foundations" in the Saginaw Valley which was nearest Loehe's heart were anything but encouraging. With the entrance of Auch into the Missouri Synod, station Sibiwaiing came under its supervision also. It consisted of 80 acres of land, a dwelling, and a schoolhouse with 8-16 pupils. The neighborhood contained about 100 Indians (1850), unchristianized and poor prospects. Despite Auch's hard work they persisted in their bestial pagan orgies. At Shiboyank Missionary Maier, now also under Synod's direction, had gathered about 40 souls to his six acres of land. A small church erected there on August 30, 1850 seemed to have little effect on the wicked life of the surrounding tribes. When he <sup>was</sup> drowned ~~drowned~~ in 1850 (1851?), the congregation, though suffering a serious blow, exhibited its love for the Gospel by calling upon Synod's Board for help. Auch finally accepted their call, and he trained his assistant Roeder to care for the Sibiwaiing station. Entrenched in a new blockhouse in the settlement, he courageously resisted attacks internal and external at the hands of fanatics, a former interpreter, and a slandering former assistant, Sinko. Meanwhile, Roeder conducted school and tried to build the nucleus of a congregation at Sibiwaiing, but the mission had to be abandoned 1853.

Attempts to hold Shiboyank were futile also. Since the Indians were moving away, Synod in 1853 decided to ask the remaining few people to join the Bethany station. They were made suspicious of their old friend, Missionary Auch, by the Methodists and others, however, and the whole tribe rejected Christianity despite Auch's tearful admonitions. The missionary was then called to the little congregation of German settlers at Sibiwaiing.

It had been the frequently expressed hope of the missionaries and of Loehe that the Indian stations would serve as settlement sites for immigrants. Thus perhaps the natives could profit by the Christian example of their white brothers. But it is doubtful if such a plan would have been feasible. Craemer's Indian school had a sickly appearance around this time, and it died when he left Frankenmuth for Fort Wayne. The only station which had real hopes of survival seemed to be Bethany - a purely Indian congregation for many years. Although the whiskey-sellers tried to divert his people, Baierlein gathered 15-20 Indians in 1851, plus 8-10 children for his school. With the aid of assistant E. Miessler he built it up to 50 souls in 1852. Then the station received a mortal blow. Baierlein, who was serving in Michigan only until place could be made for him as a missionary to India, was recalled to his original duty by the Leipzig Mission Society in 1853. To accept the call was difficult under the circumstances. But Miessler was now about ready to assume full charge, and Baierlein reluctantly departed May 19, to the great grief of his faithful Indians.

The new missionary was more fortunate than his brethren at other stations. His people were acquainted with the Old and New Testaments in their own tongue, as well as <sup>with</sup> church prayers and hymns. He had a log church and parsonage worth about \$1100, and a congregation of 60 souls.

Synod in 1853 decided furthermore to give him Roeder as assistant, <sup>to</sup> en-  
large the station with more land to prevent the encroachment of civiliza-  
tion, and <sup>to</sup> concentrate its support in Bethany. By way of pious celebration,  
the congregation held its first communion service that Christmas.

By 1854 this station was the only one left. With the abandonment of  
Indian work at Sibiwaiing, Bethany, too, declined. Hopes that several prom-  
ising youths could be trained for work among their own people were disap-  
pointed. Indian agents prejudiced the congregation against their pastor,  
while Methodist half-breeds confirmed the sinners in their wickedness.  
Many prospective members, seeing the general falling away of so-called  
Christians, changed their minds. Because Miessler could no longer afford  
to distribute gifts as Baierlein had done, he lost his people's confidence.  
For a time there seemed to be an upturn in the station's fortunes, but  
the Indians gradually returned to their old habits and morals. In 1859  
the United States government gave the coup-de-grace, when it ordered all  
Indians without legal title to move to Isabella County 25 miles away.  
Although the Bethany Indians each had a parcel of ground 30-40 acres  
large, they did not own the title. Consequently, with some reluctance  
the whole congregation moved, leaving Miessler an empty schoolhouse and  
a handful of members as mementoes of his arduous efforts. An attempt  
was made to organize the former Bethany members at Mt. Pleasant, in  
Isabella County, but it failed very shortly. In 1868 the station at Bethany  
was formally abandoned also.

With the loss of the original purpose for which Loehe had undertaken  
the Saginaw Valley colonization foundations, the Neuendettelsau "inter-  
national missionary" began to lose interest in his projects. The blame can  
be placed on natural conditions, on the advent of the white men with  
their worldliness, greed, and exploitation; on the dastardly insidiousness  
of

of the Methodists; and on the moving of the tribes. Whatever the cause, of the downfall of Indian missions, ~~they~~<sup>they were</sup> responsible also for severing a strong link which had once bound the colonizer with his colonies.

### Tension on the Ties

Loehe once wrote (K.M.1853,12) that with the surrender of his Saginaw stations to the Missouri Synod, something died between him and his projects. This was largely true, for when his supervision became unnecessary, the heart went out of his gifts and support. The colonies themselves were beginning to live independently of their founder.

When Craemer was called away from Frankenmuth, Loehe's affections became still more strained. But, even if he felt that some one else would have filled Craemer's new office just as well, the talents of the gifted colony pastor were needed in Fort Wayne. The practical seminary there, which Loehe men had begun with the separation from Ohio, and which was taken over by Missouri in 1847, needed a man to take the place of the deceased Prof. A. Wolter in 1849. Craemer was proposed as a candidate in March, 1850. The five years of his faithful and consecrated service at Frankenmuth had won him an adding place in the love of his people. For a long time, therefore, they were reluctant to let him go. Because of his excellent acquaintance with the Indian tongue, his pastorate in Frankenmuth was especially valuable. But, acceding to the will of the Lord, they released him, and in November, 1850, he left a sorrowing congregation for Fort Wayne. In his place Pastor Karl August Wilhelm Roebbelen of Liverpool, Ohio, was installed May 2, 1851. Also a Loehe man, he was a deeply spiritual pastor and a powerful preacher, with an infinite knowledge of the Word and capacity for prayer. At this time the Indian school was dropped at Frankenmuth, and, because Roebbelen was a sickly man, the

daily morning and evening devotional exercises were replaced with morning services on Wednesdays and Fridays. Rendering much needed assistance to the ailing pastor were Teachers Pinkepank and Flessa.

The outward development of Frankenmuth went on rapidly. In the fall of 1846 there had been little over 100 souls in the settlement; in 1847 there were 153 (48 voters, 25 white school children, 21 Indian-children); in 1848 the number increased to 203 souls (60 voters); in 1852 records showed 345 souls (93 voters; 42 school children). The old blockhouse church, now much too small, gave way in 1852 to a frame building 74x40x24 feet, simple and unadorned, yet the first churchly edifice in the settlements. By 1859 the souls numbered 860, so that an organ could be afforded. The town itself during Roebbelen's first years comprised some 80 blockhouses, and a few frame buildings. The inhabitants now had mills, three merchants, its own post office, good streets, and communication with Bridgeport by plank road. On January 3, 1854 the Frankenmuth citizens organized as a township, elected George Schmidt supervisor, and A. Ranzenberger clerk. At this time, too, the village moved a mile away from the church to center itself about the busy little mill and dam.

Frankentrost, not so scattered as its sister congregation but undeniably poorer, grew in natural and physical strength also. Organized as a township in 1851 to obtain a road to Saginaw from the state, its next year (1852) added to its churchly prestige by erecting a 28x40 foot blockhouse church edifice. On Sundays, festivals, and each morning and evening the worshippers were summoned here by the sound of a horn, so that, though poor in material wealth, the congregation was rich spiritually under the ministrations of Rev. Graebner. In October, 1853, the latter accepted the third call extended to him by St. Peter's Church, Roseville,



Michigan, and another tie to Neuendettelsau was broken. Succeeding him, Pastor H. Dicke of a new private settlement called Amefith, was installed Feb. 8, 1854 by Pastors Roebbelen, Sievers, and Cloeter.

Frankenlust, Loehe's favorite colony, had been called by him (Neueste Nachrichten) "the most significant among the Franconian colonies without doubt, as concerns the outlook of the future and the location." It boasted of a modest little church, <sup>28x24 feet,</sup> dedicated for the use of the 16 Frankenlust households on Nov. 21, 1849 as "St. Paul's Lutheran Church". Sievers, who had received a call to Saginaw but decided to remain with his congregation, still served its needs faithfully. With some of the most beautiful land of the region obtainable at \$2.50 per acre, the settlement attracted more and better colonists during the early '50's than did the other sites. By 1851 it consisted of more than 30 households and 24 dwellings. In 1854 the number had grown to 50 households.

Frankenhilf, last of Loehe's Saginaw Valley colonization projects, now numbered 12 families (1852) and was testing its own wings preparatory to independence. In Neueste Nachrichten, p. 14, Loehe said, "It was originally intended to become a place of refuge for poor Franconians. Hence the name. The present pastor also will in no way take hold of the thought of its being a "poor colony"." Under "the present pastor", Deindoerfer, it was really a Swabian settlement, now so prosperous as to be contemplating its own church, for which 40 acres of land had been purchased at \$33. Two serious calamities threatened it, however. One was the conflict which disturbed the congregation when Deindoerfer and a few Frankenhilf settlers left for Iowa in September, 1853. The other was the proximity of Cheboygen, a godless colony of 20-25 families from Westphalia. Nevertheless, through the ministry of Roebbelen, then through ~~Franken~~<sup>pastor</sup> Dicke, Frankenhilf carried on creditably, so that by 1854 it comprised 20 pious families.

Optimism seemed to be the prevailing spirit in two other projects which came under the supervision of the Loehe men at this time. At Amelith, an independent effort undertaken by Sievers' father-in-law, "Bergrath" Koch of Braunschweig, a blockhouse had been erected and a mill begun for the immigration which the sponsor anticipated. The settlement, spread over 5000 acres, had a road and several settlers already in 1852. It was ~~Mr.~~ Koch's hope to make this colony particularly attractive to married couples, whether they were members of the church or not. In this respect Amelith differed in its essential purpose from all the other colonies, which had been founded to further missions or preserve Lutheranism among the emigrants from Germany. But, through Koch's advertising booklet of 1851, "Die deutschen Colonien in der Naehc des Saginaw Flusses", the settlement grew to 30 families in 1854, and was well served for a time by Rev. P. Dicke, later pastor of Frankenhilf and Frankentrost.

Although Amelith indicated a decided trend away from the plans and purposes of Loehe, the congregation at Saginaw City was neither in nor out of them. It just grew. Frankenlust's Sievers, largely responsible for its splendid progress in his two years of bi-weekly visits, felt constrained to decline its call because his colony needed special attention. But the Saginaw church, larger than Frankenlust already in 1850, had to have its own pastor, and on November 30, 1849 Cloeter was installed here.

Such was the status of the Loehe foundations and their offspring in the Saginaw Valley that Diehlmann, a theological visitor, wrote May 21, 1850: "In churchly aspect these colonies indeed have a great advantage over our congregations in Germany... Such congregations which have placed themselves on the basis of the Lutheran confessions, are, because this took place out of free conviction, very lovely witnesses of churchly life and churchly ordinances; they obey the Word for the Word's sake, for here throughout

no external governmental force rules." The region had become a rallying point for German Lutheran immigrants. Like a bulwark it stood out against the unionism and Reformed practices of the day, offering serious-minded Lutheran people the invaluable advantages of German Lutheran theology and spiritually -inclined neighbors. Of this achievement Loehe was very proud. But if the year 1850 began auspiciously in an aura of high hopes for the Neuendettelsau pastor, the succeeding months impressed him ever more surely that times had indeed changed. With the passing years one after another of those factors which necessitated a close communion between Loehe and his American "Pfarreskinder" was removed. Withdrawing to the reminiscences of days that were said would never be again, Loehe could well remark with a sad yet portentous tone, "It is no more as in 1843."

## VII. THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

### At the Crossroads

There were more than just natural causes behind the gradual separation of Loehe and his American foundations. Pastor and "people" held definitely different views of certain eternal verities. These were, <sup>particularly</sup> the office of the ministry and the confessions.

That such a divergence on important Lutheran tenets could have arisen at all is surprising enough. In his instructions to the very first of the colonists Loehe emphasized the necessity of standing firm on Luther and the Book of Concord, even if he himself fell away. From his theological and pedagogical candidates he exacted the promise: "Should another conviction <sup>ever</sup> come to you in some point - which God forbid - then you will apply yourself with all earnestness and industry to arrive at the foundation of truth, and you will lay down your office of the ministry if you have

sought in vain to show your agreement again with our Concordia" (Mayer, p.65). So seriously did the early settlers take this admonition that even the Frankenmuth bell with its "Concordia (1580)" inscription proclaimed their loyalty to the Lutheran confessions every time it rang. When the Loehe men were studying the possibility of union with the Saxons in Missouri, their old teacher wrote in 1846: "Unity on the basis of the Concordia of 1580 is the chief thing"; and he assured them that they had "full liberty to join with the Missouri Synod", adding that he would do likewise were he in America (Mayer, p.66). At first he had no comment to make on the constitution of the new Synod, which he printed in the "Mitteilungen" of 1847, no. 7.8. Nor did he raise objections to the congregational constitutions of his colonies (K.M. 1848, 11.12), which were approved by the Synod.

But his true opinions had either not yet been formulated clearly or were reserved in the background until he felt the time for their expression had come. Certain it is that in his writings of the early 1840's peculiar statements appeared at intervals. His private correspondence became especially frank from 1848 on, for Sievers said in a letter of July 31, 1849: "I know you are not satisfied with the democratic element of the constitution, as you call it; but I must confess that in the light of Holy Scriptures, namely Acts, I do not know what I should reject of the grounds of an organization, such as this Missouri Synod is." This same year <sup>Loehe</sup> he published his "Aphorisms concerning the New Testament offices and their relation to the congregation", in which his departure from the confessional basis of these points became apparent. Regarding the Missouri Synod situation he <sup>expressed</sup> wrote (K.M. 1850, 8) his regret that "no pastor is sure of his congregation." The principle of the Lutheran Church in America "which pains us most" was "this all-too-great mobility (Beweglichkeit)

in the churchly situation, which hinders so very much the building of a sure and solid churchly institution...In that they (Mo.Synod) derive the office (i.e. of the ministry) from the spiritual priesthood of all Christians and recognize a power transferred by the congregation and so teach, they themselves lay in the hands of their congregations that democratic superiority which is never good (nimals taugt)" (ib.). He feared that then if the sheep could depose and reject their shepherd, they would become shepherdless despite any number of faithful shepherds. "The strong intermixing of democratic, independent, and congregational principles in their (Mo.'s) constitution is doubtful and deplorable," he felt (Ebenezer, p.150). Accustomed to a state church in Germany and very dependent on the ministerial emissaries for the success of his American work, he was inclined to believe the assertion of the universal priesthood of all believers was "amerikanische Poebelherrschaft". He thus denied the privileges of the Office of the Keys to all Christians, <sup>and</sup> the transference by the congregation of its rights to a pastor called to administer them. While refusing to admit that the office of the ministry is derived from the spiritual priesthood of all believers, he argued that the Church as a whole, not the individual congregation is the means of the Lord's call. This led him a step farther. Ordination seemed to him more than a church ceremony attesting the validity of the call. And another step was inevitable. Missouri's stand, he had to admit, was orthodox. "That which in conducting the congregation is democratic in the life of the congregation, is guarded with the authority of Luther and the symbols," he said (K.M. 1850, 11), though he felt obvious disadvantages in this course were being overlooked. Much as he "honored the symbols and Luther", he expressed regret that he had not fought against that which he thought was wrong in the Mo. constitution from the very beginning (K.M. 1850, 11). A

little later he revealed the position this stand forced him to take. To him the revelation of truth was not wholly complete, so that no church could claim doctrinal completeness. The Lutheran confessions were therefore not binding in every instance. Besides these departures from Missouri's position, he recognized in a sermon on Phil. 3, 7-11 the hope of a first resurrection and a millenium (Kirchliches Handlexikon, 312).

Despite his differences, Loehe was willing at first to abide "as in opposition, so also in love and peace" with Missouri and his men in that Synod. Matters became more serious in 1851. Through the "Lutheraner" published by Walther in St. Louis as Missouri's official organ, the controversy was described, with the correctness of the Synod's stand and the error of Loehe's clearly outlined. Since by this time Loehe was being called "Ketzler" in American Lutheran circles (K.M. 1851, 3.4), President Wyneken, Vice President Sihler, and other Loehe men engaged their benefactor in earnest correspondence, seeking to settle the trouble "in such a way as was heart-winning and a testimony of grace," as Loehe said. But he was insistent that "it depended only on our brethren themselves on the other side, <sup>whether</sup> ~~if~~ the old relationships, clarified and made firm through the trial of a doctrinal controversy, should continue further or not". Hoping that the matter would be amicably settled, he was ready to carry on the work he had been doing in Michigan and the Mid-west in conjunction with the Synod.

As a sincere effort to solve the difficulties, Missouri at its 1850 convention invited Loehe to attend the next year's assembly in Milwaukee. When he was unable to appear, Synod expressed its approval of Walther's "Kirche und Amt" articles and decided to send the latter and Wyneken to confer with Loehe personally in Germany. The commission arrived in Hamburg September 12, just when Deindoerfer was preparing to lead Loehe's

last mission group to Michigan. At the conference with the Neuendettelsau pastor on October 7, 1851, the commission found him a humble, God-fearing man, pleased with their coming and anxious to help effect a satisfactory conclusion to the controversy. Of this meeting Walther reported in the "Lutheraner" that although some points still remained unsettled, "still we can assure the dear readers now already, with joyful confidence, that a oneness in truth and love has been reached through God's clemency and grace". He felt that "we have again in him the old intercessor, not only before God but also before men; the bond is again drawn closer." Similar expressions on the part of Loehe seemed to indicate a permanent postponement of the threatening separation. But ominous clouds of dissension still hovered over the relationship between Loehe and the Synod.

#### A Difficult Farewell

The many Lutherans of Saginaw Valley who had been benefitted by Loehe were happy that peace seemed again restored. They turned with interest therefore to the activity of Loehe's men in Saginaw City. It was here, where the teachers' seminary was just getting established, that the *last scene* of the sad little drama was *enacted*.

There were marked differences between this undertaking and the other Michigan projects. From its inception it had been under the supervision of the Bavarian Society instead of that in Dresden and Leipzig. Loehe's explicit instructions were that the institution should not be given over to Missouri until a lasting agreement was made in the controversy. *Besides,* *over,* Loehe felt that with the surrender of his other projects, his influence had been almost entirely discounted. And there the seminary stood - a tangible protest to the Missourian position. Significantly, its director, Grossmann, refused to join the Synod. "To him," said Loehe (K.M. 1853, 12), "the difference, seen from its practical results, appeared too great.

so that he with an opposite conviction could not fit himself into the whole Synod as a teacher." His close associate, Pastor Deindoerfer of Frankenhilf, had become a member in 1852, but he, too, soon found his opinions opposed to Synod's stand. The third of the little group of pastors especially interested in the seminary was Pastor Cloeter, who not only served as instructor for a time but was the spiritual guide of the school. When, however, he realized that these two co-workers followed strictly in Loehe's doctrinal footsteps, he withdrew his services at the institution.

An anomalous situation now arose. Here were Deindoerfer and Grossmann, called in the midst of the Saginaw pastors and brothers brethren in the faith, yet holding divergent views on important doctrines and not belonging to the same parent body. In order that unity might be restored, the Missouri pastors invited Loehe's men to discuss their position in the spring conference of 1853. But "they declared they could only then live with us (Mo.) in complete church fellowship, when their opinions with regard to the differences in the teaching of our Synod and the statements made by Pastor Loehe in his new "Aphorisms" would be taken up (aufgehoben)" (Wie Stehen Wir, p.6). In reply the Missouri men stated that their objecting friends should not be bound by a "new authority" but by the symbolical books. Love and Christian church ordinance demanded that brethren of one faith in one place should unite. Therefore, the Loehe men, not the Missouri pastors, faced the prospect "either of accusing us of a false teaching or coming with us in church concord (Kirchenverband) on the basis of the symbolical books." It was recommended that the differences be debated at the next meeting.

The simplest solution would have been to have the Loehe men visit the next Synodical convention in Cleveland. Since neither of the two men



went, however, Synod sent its President Wyneken to Saginaw. He at once delved into the matter publicly and privately, but "the one fruit was that they recognized they were able to remain in our region only if they attached themselves to our Synod" (Wie Stehen Wir, p.7). Wyneken then wrote to Loehe that he would either have to surrender the seminary to the Synod or give it up; under present circumstances it had to be considered schismatic. The "entweder-oder" irked Loehe, and he seriously considered a separation at last.

Meanwhile, at neither the Frankenlust conference that summer nor the later meeting in Saginaw City would Grossmann and Deindoerfer appear for discussion on Scriptural grounds. They were awaiting Loehe's wishes. He had been in close contact with Grabau the previous year, but, while the latter's Buffalo Synod held a position on the controverted questions similar to his own, he believed it went too far toward episcopalianism. Consequently, yielding to the insistence of his two Michigan representatives, he reluctantly assented to a definite break with Missouri. On August 4, 1853 he penned his farewell message to the Saginaw Valley pastors of the Missouri Synod. Arriving just when they were in conference at Saginaw, it <sup>provided the</sup> ~~was~~ fitting climax to a swiftly moving series of events. Loehe had written it on paper rimmed in black, "because this letter is in another sense a sort of farewell and death letter (Sterbebrief) for me." And its tone was indeed funereal. "Today," he began, "not my heart but my hand takes leave of the colonies." His feelings toward them were the same; he was still anxious to extend his affectionate blessing. But he hoped "that no misfortune may come upon you on account of your wrong, unholy, and ill conduct toward us." Perhaps because they had different teachers now, they could afford to reject the admonition of their old master. Nevertheless, he accused them of inverting the expression "cujus regio, ejus religio,"

for they would not grant fellowship to his men, although they agreed in the chief points. Wistfully, Loehe pointed out that they had taken his support, his scholars and people and money - "now we can move on." But, "when we finish our work, that does not mean we will not exhibit love and faithfulness toward you any longer...Your temporal and eternal well-being will be dear to us...All that a heart full of compassion and fidelity toward you can inspire, we shall do; but our mission work among you is at an end." In parting he bestowed his benediction: "Peace be with you (pastors) and your congregations. The Lord and His Spirit destroy in you all that upon which He frowns and give you what pleases Him."

With all ties completely severed, he had hoped that his men could continue working side by side with Missouri activities. But this was obviously impossible. His men turned their faces toward Iowa - a region where Missouri had not as yet established itself. While Grossmann made preparations to move his school, Deindoerfer returned to Frankenhilf. The situation here was confusing. Some time previously Loehe had decided to turn the whole remaining "colonization capital" into Frankenhilf's treasury, to be used for the aid of immigrants as a "Hilfscapital". Furthermore, the congregation here was not yet a member of Synod. The pastor, encouraging them to follow the new Loehe migration, discovered the majority sentiment favored remaining with the other colonies and Missouri. Only the original settler, Gottlob Ammon, and a few families were ready to move with the pastor. Deindoerfer resigned his position and together with Ammon made a tour of inspection in Iowa, determining upon St. Sebald as the new colonization center.

The "<sup>resolving</sup>wandering capital" was liquidated then, the "Pilgerhaus" sold, and at the end of September, 1853, twenty colonists, including two of the seminary students and Pastors Grossmann and Deindoerfer, left for

Detroit on their way to Iowa. With the departure of the party by boat, the work of Loehe in the Saginaw Valley was formally completed. It was just eleven years since his first emissaries had embarked by ship for his initial American labors. In the "Mitteilungen" of 1853, no. 8, he fittingly closed a great chapter in American Lutheran history: "We are a society for inner mission," he told his readers. "The mission is not something permanent; it is like a pilgrim. When it has established its blessing at one place, it moves on and carries that blessing also to other regions... Now we are through in Saginaw; therefore we travel on.. Our Saginaw seminary, our colonization capital will wander... God bless Saginaw-land! God bless our brethren, our emigrated church-children and church-goers, the noble congregations and pastors! May they grow into many thousand times thousand, and prosper in the blessing of God, until the Lord comes! Amen."

#### CONCLUSION

Despite his ultimate drift from true Lutheran orthodoxy, the value of the service of Wilhelm Loehe to the Lutheran Church of America is inestimable. He was the first to approach the problem of Lutheran emigration in a systematic and satisfactory manner. His emissaries preserved the Lutheran heritage in a critical period of laxity and godless tendencies. Through the confessionalism of his pupils first steps were taken toward the organization of the Missouri Synod. And many of the names which are written large in the pages of American Lutheran history could only have appeared, humanly speaking, through his efforts.

It was in the Saginaw Valley, however, that Loehe's influence was felt most deeply. If state historical records speak admiringly of the conservatism, thrift, and good citizenship of these settlements, it is

because such principles were instilled by Loehe. If Synodical reports recommend in word and figure the unstinting support, the piety, and the churchly-mindedness of these congregations, it is because the seed which Loehe sowed bore fruit. If the very histories of the colonies record a stubborn allegiance to the Lutheran symbols, even when Loehe himself joined opposing ranks, it is because he taught them to abide faithful to the Scriptures and the confessions.

A separation ~~was~~, of course, had to come. The growing independence of the Saginaw Valley projects, the <sup>apparent</sup> failure of almost every one of Loehe's pious plans, and his own changed attitude toward the fundamental basis upon which the colonies were built, made the parting of the ways inevitable. But the noble reality to which his high idealism was reduced under God's mysterious Providence must be credited to Loehe. His prophecy in parting was: "Without doubt the Missouri Synod will have on the northernmost boundary its finest stations" (K.M. 1853, 8). The general fulfillment of that prophecy today stands as a lasting tribute to the prophet.

NOTES

Note One, page 7 - Mayer calls Craemer a candidate of theology. The Jahrbuch names him candidate of philology.

Note Two, page 11 - June 9 given by Detzer. Craemer is evidently in error when he calls the landing date June 12 in a letter of June 12, 1846 to Loehe, for the chronology would be considerably upset with the latter reckoning.

Note Three, page 22 - The Concordia Historical Institute's copy of this letter is dated January 18, 1847, but according to Deinzer's comments it is really the answer to Craemer's letter of January 17, 1847.

Note Four, page 36 - At this time the maintenance requirements of the stations were: \$217 for Frankenmuth (\$150 for the interpreter); \$242 for Bethany for half a year. Total annual cost was \$918. At the receipt of the document of transfer Synod authorized a letter of acknowledgement and expressed the hope that Loehe would continue his support.

Note Five, page 56 - According to K.M. 1853, 12, Loehe believed the "capital" was no longer needed in Saginaw County colonization but would serve as a helping fund for newcomers in Franken-hilf. When the separation came, he hoped to concentrate his men and support at Frankenhilf. Although he believed he had a special right to this colony, his advisers concluded it lay in Missouri's sphere of influence and belonged properly to the Synod.

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