



THE AUGUSTANA HERITAGE NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2

SPRING 2002

NUMBER 4

Greetings

from Bethany College

Greetings from the Bethany College campus and the Lindsborg, Kansas, community!

We are looking forward with great anticipation to hosting the 2002 National Gathering of the Augustana Heritage Association.

The Augustana Lutheran Church played a key role in the development of Bethany College, and we are proud to participate in an honoring of that rich heritage. During the life of the Augustana Synod, Lindsborg and Bethany College hosted seven national conventions of the church. We are hosting the 2002 Gathering as a wonderful opportunity to serve both the ELCA and the people who remember one of its predecessor bodies - the Augustana Synod. We believe many mutual benefits will arise from the Augustana Heritage Gathering 2002 in Lindsborg, and we hope each participant will find it to be an enriching experience.

Augmented by the input from a larger regional advisory committee, an energetic local steering committee is creating a meaningful and inspirational program. Guidance from the national leaders of the Association has been outstanding and the scheduled offerings, along with the local attractions and hospitality, should provide an exceptionally memorable event.

The extensive program will provide opportunities for you to hear fine choral and orchestral music, including excerpts from Handel's Messiah oratorio, to see outstanding visual art, to take part in inspirational worship and hymn singing, to choose from among a variety of workshop sessions, to see informative displays and exhibits, to make purchases for your personal library, to learn more about missions, to tour historical sites, to take part in various reunions, if applicable, and to enjoy good food and fellowship.

We look forward to having you as our guest!

Paul K. Formo, President

Dr. Paul K. Formo became the 12th president of Bethany on July 1, 2001. Prior to joining the Bethany College community, he served as Provost and Dean of the College at Dana College in Blair, Nebraska. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in music from Luther College, Decorah, Iowa; a Master of Arts in Music and a Doctor of Musical Arts in Conducting from the University of Iowa. He served in a variety of musical positions at Eastern New Mexico University, University of Texas, William Penn College, and the University of Iowa. He has produced several music and administration related publications and papers and has been active in community musical and service organizations throughout his career.

From 1985-1993, he was music professor and Dean of the Conservatory of Music at Capital University in Columbus, Ohio. In 1993, he moved to Dana College to serve as Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College.

He has had consulting experience at Susquehanna University, Valparaiso University, and two years ago was on the Bethany campus assisting in the development of a new general education program. He is a member of the Vocation of a Lutheran College Conference Planning Committee and a Life Member of the American Choral Directors Association. In October 1999, he received the Luther College Distinguished Service Award. Dr. Formo and his wife, Pat, have two grown children and two grandchildren.



DR. PAUL K. FORMO

Volume 2, Number 4
Spring 2002

Co-Editors

Arvid and Nancy Anderson

Designer

Terri Nielsen

**Please direct any newsletter inquiries
or manuscripts to:**

Arvid and Nancy Anderson
1234 Colonial Ave.
Roslyn, PA 19001
(215) 887-1224
arvinanc@aol.com

**For general information regarding
the Augustana Heritage Association,
please contact Ruth Ann Deppe:**

AHA
1100 E. 55th Street
Chicago, IL 60615-5199
(800) 635-1116 ext. 712

Published by:

Augustana Heritage Association
1100 E. 55th Street
Chicago, IL 60615-5199

AHA

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The purpose of
the Augustana Heritage Association (AHA)
is to define, promote and perpetuate
the heritage of the
Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church.

CONTENTS

Cover	Greetings from Bethany College
3	Bethany's Tradition in a World of Tomorrow Editorial by Arvid E. Anderson
4	A Fond Look Back by Lois Fisher Okerstrom
9	A Chance Encounter in Surahammar, 1992 by Carl W. Bloomquist
16	Augustana Heritage Experiences at Bethany College by Ernest Bergeson
22	News & Announcements

Bethany's Tradition in a World of Tomorrow

EDITORIAL BY ARVID E. ANDERSON

The colleges, seminary, and social ministry institutions which have their origins in the Augustana Synod will likely be among the most vital sources of Augustana heritage in the 21st century and beyond. Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas, where the AHA Gathering will be held in June 2002, is a radiant example of that heritage into the future.

Emory Lindquist, president of Bethany College from 1943-1953, and well known historian, is the author of "Bethany in Kansas, a History of a College" (1975). He spoke about the early leaders: Pastor Olof Olsson who came to the Lindsborg area as leader of Swedish immigrants from Varmland in 1869, and Pastor Carl Swensson under whose leadership Bethany College was founded in 1881.

Lindquist concludes his history of Bethany with a picture of the vision Bethany has always had into the future. He says, "...Swedish residents...wrote to relatives and friends in the homeland that America and this area was indeed 'framtidlandet', 'the land of the future'...The founders often used the familiar Swedish word, 'Framåt!' 'Forward!' to express their belief about the college in the world of tomorrow. This imperative, 'Forward!' is still valid. Faith in God and in the Bethany idea will enable succeeding generations to write additional glorious chapters in Bethany's history." (p. 283-4)

The three main articles in this issue of the *Newsletter* are written by Bethany College graduates. Each explores some aspect of Bethany's tradition and Augustana heritage, and brings that tradition and heritage forward into today's world with a view toward tomorrow.

Lois Fisher Okerstrom's autobiographic article has its launching as a student at Bethany College. She takes that Bethany tradition and vision into the world, as pictured on the cover of Okerstrom's book, "Mosaic," where she tells the story of Africa which became her "world". Her rich experiences as a missionary in Tanzania and Ethiopia make her overwhelmingly thankful, as she exclaims, "Thank you, God, for the great honor to have been called and to have served your church in Africa." The worldwide vision of the Augustana Church which Lois experienced at Bethany and in

Africa has contributed significantly to the strong global mission emphasis today in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

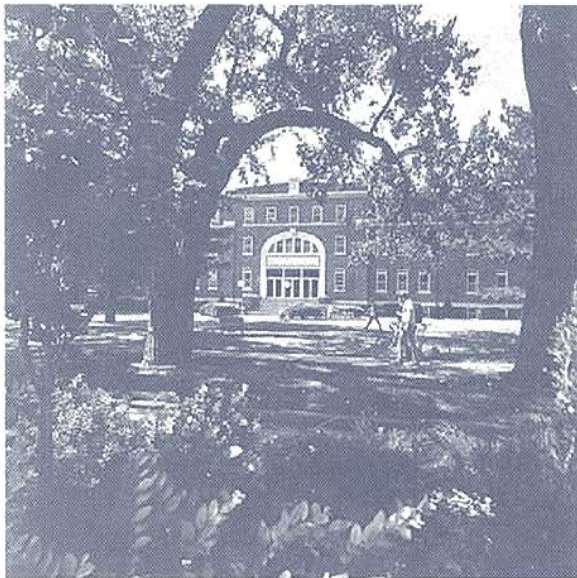
Carl W. Bloomquist takes us deep into the Swedish tradition from which the immigrants came to places like Lindsborg. In his article, "A Chance Encounter in Surahammar, 1992," Bloomquist searches the heritage through a genealogical journey into his family tree in Sweden. Along the way, he visited the grave stone of Lars Paul Esbjorn, one of the founders of the Augustana Synod, who returned to

Sweden later on. The search goes back more than 500 years, generation by generation. Along the way, Bloomquist makes some surprising discoveries even into the time of the Reformation in Sweden. It is from Swedish roots like these that Augustana was born. The heritage continues to yield fruits into the 21st century among all of the people and institutions of that heritage which stands side by side with many other traditions in the life and mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Ernest Bergeson, a 1942 graduate of Bethany, tells the account of how he left the urban east coast for Lindsborg, Kansas. He credits his "Augustana Heritage experiences" at Bethany as

the beginning of his preparation for the ministry which began at the end of the Great Depression. Not least in his college experiences which prepared him for ministry was his involvement in the Gospel Team which toured throughout the West. His "world of tomorrow" launched at Bethany was a life long ministry in congregations from Seattle to Massachusetts. Bergeson's story could be the outline of the experiences of hundreds of Augustana pastors who found their vision for mission in one of the church colleges and then to Augustana Seminary in preparation for the ordained ministry. That same vision for ministry and service has come into the 21st century through the Lutheran Church in America and now the ELCA.

Dr. Paul K. Formo, president of Bethany College, in his greeting on the front page of the *Newsletter*, extends his warm greeting to all of us: "We are looking forward with great anticipation to hosting the 2002 Gathering of the Augustana Heritage Association...We look forward to having you as our guest". At the Gathering on June 20-23, 2002, we will experience Bethany's tradition "in a world of tomorrow." **AHA**



PRESSER HALL, BETHANY COLLEGE

A FOND LOOK BACK

Bethany College in the 1940's

by Lois Fisher Okerstrom

An Editorial Preface: Lois Okerstrom's article has its source in her recently published book: "Mosaic - Remembrances, Rewrites, Reflections." Okerstrom has been involved in the writing of two major contributions to the history and remembrances of the Augustana heritage. In 1998, she and Gloria Cunningham were the compilers, and Lois was one of the editors of "Touched by the African Soul," "a collection of short stories, written by 62 missionary women who recall their adventuresome years in Tanzania." It is published by Quiet Waters Publications, Box 34, Bolivar, MO 65613, and is available in its 2nd edition from the publisher for \$20. It was announced in a recent AHA Newsletter.

Lois Okerstrom's second writing project is "Mosaic," which is a fascinating autobiographical account starting with the family history of her paternal and maternal roots. Her parents were married at the Swedish Lutheran Church in Topeka. Lois is a very engaging writer with great clarity and careful attention to detail as she tells of her childhood, college days at Bethany, four terms as a missionary in Africa from 1952-1970. Three terms were in Tanzania, one in Ethiopia.

In the Prologue to "Mosaic," she tells her readers: "This is the Mosaic of my life, its backdrop and personal odyssey from the heartland of the American continent to both its coasts, then to another beloved continent where large pieces called Ethiopia and Tanzania form a big chunk of the design. Come with me on the journey."

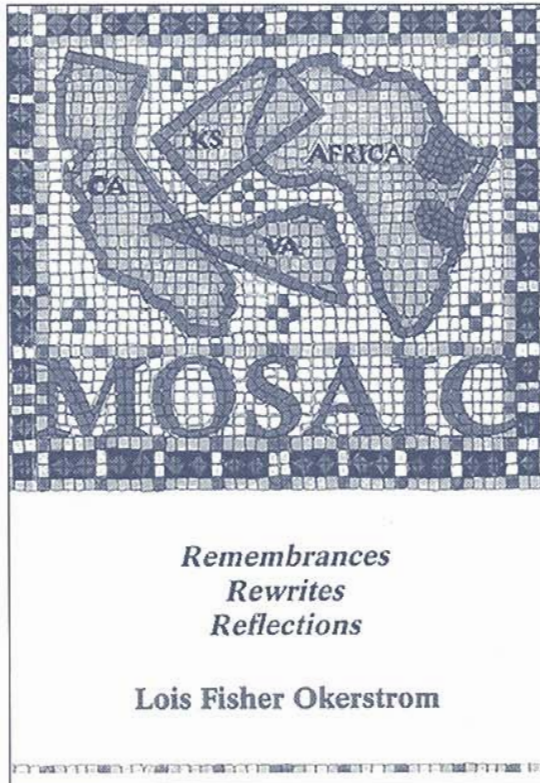
It must be added that one of the most warm and enticing stories comes in the last section of the book: "Life as Mrs. Roy Okerstrom, 1971-1999." It is a beautiful narrative of love and marriage. Roy died in 1999. Lois concludes her last chapter of the story: "Last but not least, is Roy, the very gentle and gener-

ous man with whom I was privileged to share life for twenty eight years. From my heart upwelling with gratitude, "Thank you, Lord."

I urge Newsletter readers to accept Lois Okerstrom's invitation: "...Come with me on the journey." It is 271 pages of a life journey that, once you begin the journey, you will recognize a writer with professional skill in communication, who is making a significant contribution to assuring that the Augustana heritage lives on into the future.

The book is available from Mrs. Lois F. Okerstrom, 6906 Wilson Way, El Cerrito, California 94530-1854, at a cost of \$18 per copy.

In her Newsletter article which follows, "A Fond Look Back - Bethany College in the 1940's," she makes the connection between Bethany College and the Augustana Heritage Association Gathering at Bethany in Lindsborg on June 21-23, 2002. Bethany belongs to the Augustana Heritage, and of Bethany she testifies: "Were it not for Bethany I would never have been in Africa...For it was at Bethany that the Christian message had become real, personal and a dynamic that reached down into bone and marrow and heart." The article is excerpted from a section of "Mosaic" pp.82-100, College Days 1944-48.



It was one of the first days of our "History of Civ" (Civilization) class. We were all freshmen. Our very challenging professor was also the president of the college.

He taught history as well because he loved history. He called the roll alphabetically: "Anderson, Benson, Carlson, Danielson, Erickson, Fisher, Gustavson, Hanson, etc." After a week of this sort of roll call, all of the Andersons, Bensons, Larsons, Olsons and Swensons said, "This will never do. How did 'Fisher' get in there? Lois, from now on, you will be Fisherquist." The professor paid little heed to this suggestion; he did not change the roll call.

Bethany College in the 1940's was actually not quite this homogenous, but at times it seemed so. It certainly seemed that way to me in that freshman history class.

This coming June many of you will gather in Lindsborg and at Bethany College for the Augustana Heritage Gathering...a very special place for the 2002 Augustana Heritage event. I was not born in Lindsborg; I didn't grow up there. But how glad and grateful I am that Lindsborg and Bethany are a big part of my heritage.

Today, after many visits in the intervening years, although there are some changes, I find Lindsborg and Bethany to be the same inspiring place. They are truly as one, having the same kind of wonderful people that they had long years ago. Travel with me to take a fond look back more than fifty years ago.

A DREAM FULFILLED

Attending Bethany College was a dream fulfilled! I had long wanted, hoped, and dreamed of being a student there. A scholarship made it possible, and, in September of 1944, I was off by train to Lindsborg. I can remember packing a trunk which was sent as freight on the train.

One of my very first vivid memories of Bethany College has to do with what was then Lindsborg's "tasty" water. It had a definite flavor, and at the fountain by Old Main it also had "color." That ancient fountain was "rust" in both color and taste. In the King Oscar brand of coffee used in Lindsborg, its color became faintly green. For washing clothes, the water was equal-

ly bad. White blouses became yellow. The water was hard; suds were possible only if one used LOTS of soap. To shampoo our hair, the girl students pumped rain water in the basement laundry room of the dorm.

The Old Main building (doesn't every Lutheran college have one?) was an institution in itself, and students either loved it or hated it. Built in 1886-87, it housed "almost everything" :

cafeteria, a museum, liberal arts classes, men's dorm, and on the fifth floor, the science classes and lab. Climbing five flights to biology class perhaps kept our bodies biologically healthy. A distinctive chapel extended through the second and third stories, providing a balcony from which Dean Deere would carefully check the required daily attendance of each student. Yes, we had assigned seats.

Sad as it was, Old Main was by the 1960's deemed unsafe, and in 1968 this landmark old building, which had loomed large on the landscape of the Smoky Valley, had to be razed. I'm glad I was long gone from Lindsborg when that happened.

At the beginning of that freshman year, I wrote my parents: "Assignments are heavy. My roommate and I studied Friday night, almost all of Saturday and Saturday night. We have such a dinky little table for studying, so we went uptown and purchased a card table...By the time Sunday afternoon arrived, we couldn't look at another book, so we hiked out to Coronado Heights, about five miles. You can see for miles from up there - the trees and the different colored fields of farmland."

The strong ties between the college and the town were seen in the Annual Recognition Service at Bethany Lutheran Church where Bethany College was founded. We marched there for the service and then back to the campus carrying torches, forming a circle around the statue of the founder, Dr. Carl Aaron Swensson.

Looking back, the very different economic times evidence themselves immediately. The college needed students. There were very few men; they were off in the military in World War II, so Bethany College was wonderfully inexpensive. My total bill when I registered in January 1945 came to \$89.75, which

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after paying, I had exactly \$4.34 left in my bank account. The local Lindsborg dentist charged me what I thought was quite an exorbitant fee for two long sessions, \$15.00.

In spite of the dinky study table, the small rooms and the old age of the women's dorm, Lane Hart Hall was a place to be loved and enjoyed! College, I soon learned, was not only for study, but also for having fun. And that we did have in Lane Hart Hall, especially on *third floor*! First floor was too close to the housemother, second floor seemed to have only very quiet and hard-studying students, but third floor was for having fun. Oh, yes, we did study, a lot, but I soon found a group of fun friends who, like myself, forever a "night-owl", did not wish to go to bed at 10:00, the appointed hour for "quiet". Down to the kitchen in the basement to make fudge or popcorn or, if not that, snacks in the room of crackers, peanut butter and dill pickles, our superb late-night combination.

One night we got most of the dorm to do a "dorm sneak." We went down the outside fire escape, walked to the Smoky Hill River and had sodas and hot dogs. When we got back we sang "Home Sweet Home" and "Come Out Wherever You Are" to the dorm mother, right under her window. She declared she had not known we were gone!

While there were some formal extra-curricular activities, the majority of activities in those war years were simple, costing nothing or very little but very much fun. There was a Wild West party with wood fences and hay spread on the gym floor, games and skits, and chili and coffee served in tin cans. There were many picnics and wiener roasts "down by the river" at the Old Roller Mill. There were hamburger fries and watermelon feeds in the same place or in the park on Main Street. There were birthday parties in the dorm when we would hide packages in obscure places. One time two sisters strung toilet paper all the way down the hall with messages on it, clues for finding my gift from them. There were walks in the country; occasionally tennis on the courts next to the dorm; full breakfast fixings taken out to cook a few Saturday mornings on Coronado Heights. One of Lane Hart's bonus places was a flat porch off second floor. It was a favorite spot in the spring as we studied and worked hard on getting a tan before going home at semester's end.

From the dorm, we migrated to another wonderful source

of social activities as well as spiritual inspiration and nurture, Lindsborg's churches. They hosted singspirations on Sunday evenings as well as worship, of course, on Sunday mornings. On campus there were many music recitals and stunt nights, also "free." Occasionally we traveled by bus to Salina (58 cents) to shop. Even going to Lindsborg's small downtown on Main Street to eat was special.

It was in our sophomore year that, Faye Rasmussen, a classmate who had become a really close friend, and I made arrangements to room together. We quickly became interior decorators, and did a complete renovation of our room on third floor. Because Lane Hart was a very old building, we were free

to make almost any changes we wished. We "Kem-Tone" painted the room aqua, varnished the floor, and painted the dressers, mirror frames and radiator off-white. We purchased curtains and rugs. We found orange crates in the grocery store for making bureaus and nail kegs at the hardware store for stools at the bureaus. It looked beautiful, we thought, and were quite proud of ourselves. We had fun and wonderful friends on each side of us. Though a World War was raging across the globe, we felt safe and happy in our room in Lane Hart Hall.

LIFE AT BETHANY DURING WORLD WAR II

There were many reminders that World War II was on. There were almost no young men in our freshman and sophomore classes. The few that were there were almost without exception pre-seminary students, exempt from military service. I wrote to my parents on November 29, 1944: "Please send my sugar ration book or at least some stamps. I'm going to attempt making fudge in the dorm kitchen; I want to send some to Adrian for Christmas." My brother in the army was at Ford Ord, California.

Another time, April 1945, I asked my parents: "Are you still having a hard time getting toilet paper? If so, I could send some; they have it at the store here. How about soap? Have you been able to get any black pepper yet?" It is strange to recall now that these common items were so scarce.

There were various drives for war funds. The World Student Service Fund was one of the big ones, participated in by both students and faculty. Teachers polished shoes; students had sacrificial meals of rice only. At a faculty auction, one girl

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student paid \$3.50 for the privilege of going to coffee with the president, Dr. Lindquist. The college chaplain took someone for a ride on his bicycle. The New Testament professor spoke briefly on the sex life of a mothball! How privileged we were to have *fun* events when the boys who would have been students during those years were in Europe or the Pacific fighting the war under very dangerous situations.

CHRISTIAN EMPHASIS DAYS AND SPIRITUAL LIFE

A big event took place that first February which had a great impact on my life: Christian Emphasis Days, an annual event on the Bethany College campus. The two speakers were Mrs. George Anderson, a missionary from Tanganyika, and the Rev. Maynard Force, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Minneapolis. These two dynamic people shared for three days in speaking on the theme, ONE WAY, ONE WORD, ONE WORLD. There was an opening rally in Messiah Church, chapel talks and Bible studies, an all-school banquet, and a closing rally at Bethany Church. Keen interest was sparked campus-wide and a real sense of spiritual awakening was apparent. Undoubtedly some of my later interest in Africa was initiated by Mrs. Anderson's inspiring talks. Never had I heard God's Word spoken so clearly, personally, and forcefully as it was by Pastor Force.

The distant, far-away God whom I had heard about since infancy, somehow now through His Word and the Holy Spirit's nudging became real, close and needed. He offered a quiet, gentle invitation: "Come now, sit down, let's talk together and become acquainted." (Is. 1:18) God became a Divine Friend who forgives, who lives, and who is always present. Goals and motivations for life were changed as of that time.

Some students may have chafed at the required chapel attendance regulation. I, however, now found myself soaking up the wonderful truths of God's Word as expounded in this daily special time, enlarging both mind and spirit. Dr. Lindquist's penetrating chapel talks with their typical phrases of "the abiding values" of the Christian faith "reaching across the decades" played a significant part in spiritual growth and still

linger in memory. The same favorite hymns he chose from the green Augustana "Junior Hymnal" were sung often and resonated to some part of an English major's poetic inner self. "Abide in Thee, in that deep love of Thine" (No. 244)...down, closely down, as living branch with tree, I would abide, my Lord, My Christ, in Thee." An even more poetic choice was "Still, still with Thee, when purple morning breaketh" (No. 225)... "Alone with Thee, amid the mystic shadows, The solemn hush of nature newly born; Alone with Thee, in breathless adoration, in the calm dew and freshness of the morn."

A more forthright, direct style came another year in the chapel talks as given by religion professor, Dr. Emmet Eklund, a different approach which also built a sturdy spiritual foundation. The highlight of that first spring in Lindsborg was surely

the privilege of singing in the soprano section of Handel's "Messiah" as given by the Bethany College Oratorio Society, a tradition that began at almost the very beginning of the college's founding and continues to this day. Practicing twice weekly beginning in January, we were ready for renditions on Palm Sunday afternoon and Easter evening. The artistry and dedication of this choral group of 350 or so is well-known. To me it was pure inspira-



MESSIAH ORATORIO, PRESSER HALL

tion and joy to sing in it, and especially to have been a part of this chorus when still directed by its long-time conductor, Dr. Hagbard Brase.

The summer before my senior year, I was asked by Rev. Philemon Smith, pastor of Bethany Church, to remain in Lindsborg and serve as his parish assistant. Here again, Lindsborg and a "Bethany" provided helpful foundations, with the varied responsibilities of my task furnishing good preparation for later parish work. That summer four of us shared the upstairs in the "Sahlin Home." These Lindsborg hosts were most gracious, but it was a very hot summer and second-floor rooms with no air conditioning meant that more than one night we moved sheets and pillows down to the adjoining park and slept outside.

Because of the war, Hyllningsfest, the Swedish festival

honoring the pioneers of the community, was not celebrated in Lindsborg during the years I was in college. However, one Swedish custom was. One year, as dorm president, I had the privilege and fun of being Santa Lucia. The day started off at 5 a.m. when the dorm officers went into each room singing carols and handing out hot coffee, or apple cider and cookies. We dressed in sheets and I wore a wreath of burning candles on my head. We were not exactly properly outfitted, but good enough to serve the purpose and unintentionally to frighten some of the freshmen girls of non-Swedish background who in their drowsy state thought we were trying to put them on fire! This was offset by one who thought she was in heaven hearing the angels sing.

At the time of graduation, the war was over and jobs were plentiful. Bethany College sponsored vocational guidance days, and in March of that year, Dr. Wilton Bergstrand, youth director of the Augustana Lutheran Church, and a youth-oriented pastor from Illinois were at Bethany to direct these days. My original intent had been to teach high school English, and I was interviewed, offered and pondered several positions. Dr. Bergstrand and Dr. Eklund enthusiastically counseled me toward parish work. But in the end, it was the Spirit's leading in my mind and heart, and Eklund's affirmation, which led me to accept a call to teach weekday religious education in the public schools in the Shenandoah Valley of far off Virginia.

Graduation at last! Leaving Bethany College and many good friends, as well as the delightful town of Lindsborg was not easy, but as graduates we all looked forward to new ventures. We knew that many of the friendships would last a lifetime. I felt and still feel extremely privileged to have spent four years in this special place. They were happy, growing years, changed my life totally, and have enriched it beyond measure.

In 1998, it was time for my fiftieth class reunion at Bethany College. At an alumni dinner, it was a humbling experience to be given an "Alumni Award of Merit for Distinguished Service." As I reflected on the pieces of my life's mosaic, those pieces seemed to telescope into three biggies that God had designed and put together: Bethany College, Africa, and my husband Roy. I realized that Bethany College was the genesis of the other two. Were it not for Bethany I would never have been in Africa, and I would never have been in the place where I met and married Roy. For it was at Bethany that the Christian message had become real, personal and a dynamic that reached down into bone and marrow and heart. Here it became life-changing, molding motives and altering goals. Here it was that the person of Jesus Christ became alive, needed, and an integral part of my life, a directing, loving Lord to be dealt with, consulted, joyfully obeyed and worshiped.

After Bethany came two states on opposite coastlines of America, as I first taught in weekday religious education in Virginia and then served as Youth and Christian Education

Director in a Lutheran parish in California. Four years later came AFRICA, the continent which gets in ones blood and bone, and ever after affects your personal relationships and friendships, as well as what you think about, pray about, and how you live. I cannot imagine my life without Africa and the incredible people there who have so significantly enhanced my life. **AHA**



LOIS FISHER OKERSTROM

Lois Fisher Okerstrom was born and raised in Topeka, Kansas. She is a graduate of Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas, with a B.A. degree in English Literature. Additional studies were taken at Scarritt College in Nashville, Tennessee and Pacific Lutheran Seminary in Berkeley, California.

Lois taught week-day religious education in the state of Virginia and then served as Director of Christian Education and Youth Work in Berkeley. She

went to Central Tanzania as a missionary teacher under the Augustana Lutheran Church in 1952, teaching at the school for missionaries' children, and later serving as Turu Literacy Secretary. Following three years in Ethiopia at the Lutheran World Federation's Radio Voice of the Gospel, Lois returned to Tanzania where she was Director of the Student Wives Study Program at Makumira Lutheran Theological College.

After her return to the U.S. in 1970, Lois married Roy Okerstrom of Berkeley. Roy died in 1999. She lives in El Cerrito near San Francisco where she is active in church and hiking activities. She was co-compiler and chief editor for "Touched by the African Soul," a book of stories and experiences of 62 women who served on the Augustana field in Tanzania from 1940-1990. Lois received the Bethany College Alumni Award of Merit for Distinguished Service in 1998. She says, "I count God's call to serve in Africa as one of the greatest joys and privileges of my life. Tanzania's people, its language, and its culture will always have a very big place in my heart."

(Editorial note: Our congratulations to Lois in a special way for this news from her: "As of Christmas 2001, I was engaged to marry Amel Olson, and we will be married on March 16, 2002". Congratulations indeed to Lois and Amel!)



a **Chance Encounter** *in* **Surahammar 1992**

by Carl W. Bloomquist, *Augustana Seminary 1949*

It was a beautiful day. I was driving from Vadstena to Uppsala -- two ancient Swedish towns with historic religious significance -- after just attending the year-end celebration of the 600th anniversary of St. Birgitta's canonization.¹ One year earlier I had been in Rome to attend the first ecumenical service at St. Peter's Basilica honoring this Swedish saint.² Now I was on my way to Uppsala.

But somewhere along the route I had a strange urge. Little did I know what a pronounced influence this impulse would have on the retired years of my life. My sudden desire was to see the town where my mother was born. I realized that it was just a nostalgic whim. I had been to Surahammar a few times before and knew that the house where my mother and grandparents had lived was no longer standing. The same was true for the Bruk where my grandfather worked for sixty-five years making wheels for train engines. He has always been my hero,

the ultimate blue-collar worker. So why was I here again to see this small, tidy town?

The old wooden church was still standing, but no one has been allowed in since the structure was damaged by fire many years ago. So I decided to check out the contemporary altar painting in the new church. It was here that the pastor approached me and I told him my mother had emigrated from Surahammar to America.

"What was your mother's name?" he asked.

"Signe Dahl."

"We have some Dahls who are members," he said.

"Can't be any of ours," I replied, "We have none left here."

He made a telephone call which proved me wrong: There was a Margareta Dahl, married to Nils-Axel Collin, and she was indeed a second cousin. Upon discovering this, naturally,

we had to stop by for coffee and buns. Margareta and I did much of the talking, getting our relatives identified with the three Dahl brothers. Nils-Axel was very quiet, but as I left his home, he made a startling remark: "Carl, do you know that you have many famous relatives?"

During our coffee repast, he had mentioned spending time at the archives researching his own family. It now appeared that he had looked into the Dahls. I asked Nils-Axel to send me some of his findings. Within a two-week period I had the names of a three-generation family. Now what I had was an old record concerning my mother's roots. It was a copy entitled: Finnish Preachers at Nikolai Church in Stockholm.³ (I have since learned that this church had a mission for Finnish speaking members.) The first pastor for this group was:

Ericus Matthiae Hwitt, circa 1563-1565

Under his name there were two short paragraphs. The first mentioned he was born in Film, a town Northeast of Uppsala. He died in Skeptuna April 30, 1591. He was the son of a blacksmith at Osterby, Matthias Hwitt and wife Kirstin N.N.⁴

The second paragraph stated he owned a house on Slottsbacken, which is near Nikolai Church and the palace. He began his ministry in Skeptuna in 1564. He married in Nikolai May 15, 1563 with N.N. the Fifth Sunday after Easter.

Matthiae Hwitt's Children

Cecilia, married father's successor, Petrus Cassiopaeus Dotter, married Israel Achrelius in Österåker. Progenitor for noble family von Acrel.

Elisabeth, married Pastor Samuel Erici in Värmdö. Both buried in altar area.

Erik, pastor in Markim and Orkestra

Gabriel, pastor in Vada and Angarn

The Hunt Begins

Now I had some names. Two things were in my favor as I began searching. First, I was moving forward rather than backward. The second was the *Herramine*, which are books containing information about every church and pastor in the lifetime of the Church. Assuming that the Augustana Archives would have copies of these volumes, I discovered that just one person in the country -- noted genealogist Nils William Olson -- had the complete set. I heard he was planning to leave them to the Archives. So, I wrote Mr. Olson and requested a number of items about the above listed names.⁵ His response piqued my desire for more information. I also wrote personal letters to pastors seeking additional data from the parishes. But the National Archives proved to be my best sources. In no time, over two hundred names of relatives had been documented.

This list was to proliferate when the time came for me actually to visit the sites and to study at the archives in

Uppsala and Stockholm. Four trips in a six-year period uncovered at least 14 generations, with some 1,200 people as well. There was the usual assortment -- farmers, merchants, soldiers, clergy, artists, nobility, and more than enough rogues and knaves.

Nils-Axel Collin was correct in saying there were many important personalities descending from the early leaders of the Swedish Reformation to the Dahl family of today. Seventeen archbishops and 33 bishops are identified, as well as leading scholars at Uppsala. There were times I would chase down special leads hoping to find a direct Augustana connection, like when I found a pastor relative named Eric Wahlstrom, but no relation to the professor we had at Augustana. But the many great characters I discovered, from the bold and arrogant to the pious and humble, illustrate our common pioneer Augustana tradition. The vignettes I share in this article bear on that great tradition.

So I hope you enjoy the little tidbits that came my way worshiping in a church; searching in the archives; standing in a cemetery; sitting in a prison cell; visiting an old house; touring a museum; discussing members of the family with those who have written theses on them; conducting three marriages of relatives; and baptizing the youngest member at a font where six generations received the Sacrament. I do not hesitate to identify my sentimentality with the journey to my roots. Some of these names, places, and events I learned about at Augustana. This same sense of awe has been with me on each trip.

Reformation Period

At the heart of the Reformation in Sweden are two sons of a blacksmith from Örebro: Olavus Petri, born in 1493; and his brother Laurentius Petri, born in 1499. Both were destined for greatness: Olavus became one of the greatest personalities in Swedish history: Laurentius would reign as the first evangelical Archbishop of Sweden at Uppsala. It was at this juncture in my search that I had to review the history of Sweden from the Stockholm Massacre in 1520 to the Uppsala Council in 1593.⁶ I studied the list of relatives, and those associated with them, who lived in this same era. The expression for these folks is "släkt til släkt" (relative of a relative).

Olavus and Laurentius had been students at Wittenberg, as were Laurentius Olai Gestricius of Stockholm and his younger brother Martinus Olai, bishop of Linköping. He married the sister of Olaus Medelpadus. The daughter of Olaus became the first wife of Archbishop Laurentius Paulinus Gothus. The uncle of Laurentius was the second evangelical archbishop who married the first archbishop's daughter. Another Wittenberg-trained pastor who was part of this Reformation period is Archbishop Petrus Keniccius. Adding all these names I had a formidable roster of supporters for the orthodox Lutheran position.

All of them had their problems with the early kings even though they were clergy with great influence. Even Olavus Petri was imprisoned by King Gustaf Vasa for telling the King he should not confiscate the treasures of convents and churches for his own use. Olavus was under sentence of death until his brother, Archbishop Laurentius Petri, arranged for the people of Stockholm to pay a huge fine in gold. When King Johan III tried to force his liturgy on the church, other family members suffered. One was Olaus Medelpadus who had risen to be the Dean of the cathedral at Uppsala. Both he and Petrus Kenicius were placed in a castle prison. Kings Erik XIV and Karl IX had strong Calvinist beliefs which relatives opposed.

This turmoil led to the historic meeting at Uppsala in 1593, an event which is still celebrated every year. This was no ministerial or parliamentary session; it was a General Council. After weeks of deliberations, the Decree was subscribed to by 14 senators, 7 bishops, 128 noblemen, 137 government officials, 1,556 clergymen, mayors of 36 cities, and affixed with the seals of 197 counties.⁷

There was a special satisfaction for me to read again Conrad Bergendoff's, "The Church of the Lutheran Reformation."⁸ This esteemed Augustana theologian cited new names I had found in my family search. In my current fantasy, I am sitting in his office seeking more information about Petrus Kenicius, Laurentius Paulus Gothus, Haquin Spegel and Jesper Swedberg. These are the men he singled out for recognition in shaping the nature of the Church in Sweden.

Great Mother in Dalsland

She was my greatest find, and without a doubt the most pivotal person in the family. I found her by luck. Her name was in my files for a couple years, but I didn't seek her out until my last day at Uppsala. I asked the archivist to type the three words on my 3 X 5 card "Stormor-Svea Rike" into her computer. Her answer was that Svea Rike was a magazine, which contained an article about a woman named Stormor in its 1930 edition. The article contained a diagram of Stormor's progeny. Appended to the article was a list of some 200 couples who stood in a direct line. The list contained some familiar non-Swedish names such as Count Leo Tolstoy the Younger.⁹

Margareta Han-Dotter Burea was born to a clergy family in Säbrå, Ångermanland in 1594. She would grow up to be called "Stormor I Dalom" (Great Mother in Dalsland). She was beloved by all. She was remarkable not merely by the size of her family, but because of what her progenies were able to achieve in their lifetimes. Today they would number in the thousands. Among them are many prominent and talented figures in Swedish history. Their ranks include scholars, artists, writers, military leaders and government figures, bishops and archbishops, dozen of lesser clergy, nobility and bour-

geoisie, merchants and industrialists.¹⁰

How did this come about? It does not sound very romantic, but most likely Margareta's was an arranged marriage between clergy families. I base this on my own observations of the vast number of clergy who found their mates in neighboring parsonages. Here we find 16-year-old Margareta Sabrazynthia (surname taken from her locale) becoming the third wife of the Leksand church pastor, Elov Engelberti Terserus. He was a man forty years her senior. Margareta had three children with Terserus; and when he died in 1617, she married his successor, Uno Trolius. Uno was the stamfader (progenitor) of those who would carry the noble name of Von Troll. Records for all the nobility can be found in books known as Svenska Adeln Attartavlor. Interestingly, Stormor's mother came from nobility and bears the number #614. The Von Troll number is #2035. According to the records Stormor had eleven children with Terserus and Trolius.

It Bordered on Nepotism

A striking fact concerning these early Reformation and post Reformation clergy was their very conspicuous practice of following family members as leaders in the same parish. Here is the information about the family in Oster-Aker recorded in the Herdaminne¹¹ as an example:

1. ERICUS OLAI Born 1507 - Pastor in 1560. Died 1591 - His name was Helsingus - Son changed it to Acrelius - Progenator of family.
2. ISRAEL ERICI Born 1540 - Pastor at Ununge 1575. Here 1590 during father's lifetime. Died in 1627.
3. OLOF ISRAEL Born 1569 - Became pastor here in 1627 - Died 1646. Left two sons - Israel and Johan.
4. _____ (When Olof died his widow married Laurentius Bylonis who was born in 1602 followed Olof Acrelius and died in 1674.)
5. JOHAN OLAI Born 1634 - Son of 3 - Pastor herein 1676. The record also indicates he associated with well known Swedes such as Count Gabriel Oxenstierna and Field Marshall Gustaf Baner. Johan died in 1711.
6. JOHANNES Born in 1676 - He was vice pastor here in 1708 - Died in 1718. It is in this last record that we find a name of a wife of any in the Acrelius family. Johannes married Sara Gahm with whom he had three sons. As a widow, Sara married Johannes' successor Anders Chytraeus.

On this record one could suspect nepotism. However, when I toured this church, I could better understand why any family would desire to serve it and live in its parsonage. My findings about this family which comes into ours by marriage continues with the three sons of Johannes and Sara. The oldest son, Johan, received royal recognition for his work with the Admiralty as a ship builder. The middle son, Israel, was a doctor of theology and the prost of the Swedish colony in

Delaware. His monumental "History of New Sweden" is still our best source for that early Lutheran establishment on our East Coast. The youngest son, Olof Acrel, was Sweden's first surgeon; and the founder of the nation's first hospital. When one looks at the vast medical complex, called Sirafimer in Stockholm, it is difficult to imagine it started as an eight bed institution for all of Sweden and Finland.

The Pension Question

As a grateful recipient of a pension plan begun in 1865 with the first death of an Augustana pastor, I was interested to see the various ways the Church of Sweden took care of this situation in the early evangelical years. Prior to the Reformation, the Roman Church had its own approach.

During the new era there was no set plan. Some pastors were allowed to live "tax free" in homes they had acquired. Those who opposed the Kings, especially King John III, had their pensions cut off. It was far more difficult for the widows. There are records indicating that these widows could not possibly live on a reduced pension and complained about the situation. One of my relatives, Ericus Sernander, had his heart set on getting a call to the parish of Stora Skedvi. However, a widow "pensionär" refused to move out of the parsonage. After some negotiations, Eric agreed to marry the widow even though she was fifteen years his senior. His only condition was that the parish provide him with his own "narrow room and bed" in order that he would have "peace and quiet". Ericus Sernander got his room and bed, but there is no record he received his peace and quiet.¹²

Latin Names

At first I had no trouble with Swedish names. I knew the custom in Sweden of using a patronymic system in which children are named after their father. The son of Nils Olsson would have the surname Nilsson; the daughter would be called Nilsson. However, the extensive use of Latin names really baffled me. A great number of clergy followed this Latinized form. I had relatives with names like Acrelius, Aurivillius, Benzeliu, Calmarinius, Dalekarlu, Edeniu, and Keniciu. The last was an archbishop who was the son of Konik

Olofson. He selected the surname as a latinized version of his father's name. Another archbishop, Erik Benzeliu, took his surname from his birthplace of Bensbyn in the northern parish of Lulea. Many of the funeral orations were delivered in Latin. Indeed, the Latin Mass was still used in Lund cathedral almost two hundred years after the Swedish "Hogmass" was introduced in Stockholm. The use of Latin demonstrated its importance to the learned class even after the Reformation, which is more remarkable.¹³

Biskopskulla

One day my itinerary included some churches west of Uppsala. One of my stops was at Balingsta where a young clergy couple was assigned. After seeing the church I asked

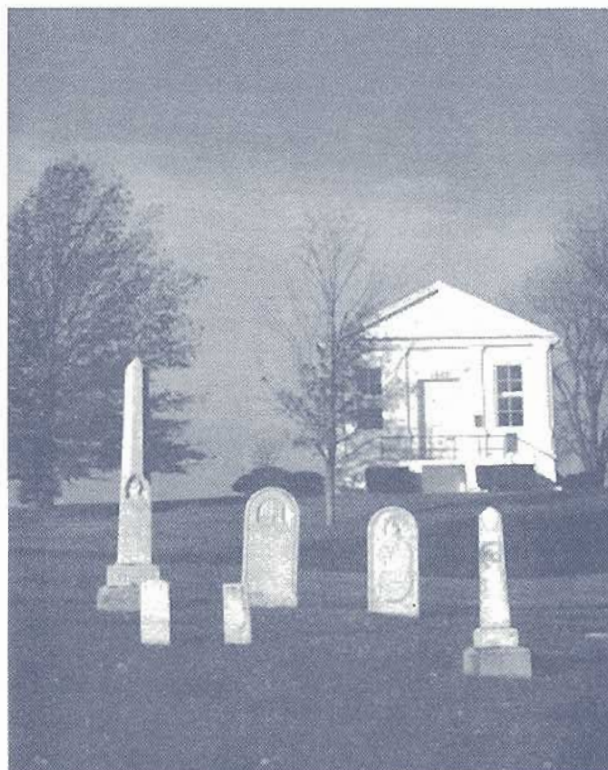
directions for Västeråker. The woman told me it was a part of their parish, and she let me have the key to enter. Upon returning the key, I told her I was on my way to Biskopskulla where a relative's grave is located in the pulpit area. This started a conversation about the church. It was then that she told me she was to be the guest speaker at the annual celebration of Eric Jansson Settler's Day. This awakened memories of Dr. Arden's dynamic lectures about Eric Jansson and the commune of some 1,000 people at Bishop Hill in Illinois. I shared the story of Esbjörn's struggle at nearby Andover. As tactful as possible, I asked if she was to tell the sad story of the demise of Bishop Hill. It certainly wasn't the story of a "local boy making good in America."

The communistic project lasted less than 15 years and came to a quick

end when M. Root, the enraged husband of Jansson's cousin, assassinated Eric Jansson. She told me she could see the subject excited me. My reply was that after fifty years I still remembered Arden's lecture. The irony is that Bishop Hill is a museum today. The church started by Esbjörn at Andover is still in existence and meets regularly. Augustana's first pastor came to America, indirectly, because of Jansson.¹⁴

Jenny Lind

During my many trips to the State Archives in Stockholm I became acquainted with staff member Goren Blomberg who provided so much information to spur me on in my search. One day I asked him for records from Klara Church in central



JENNY LIND CHAPEL, ANDOVER, IL

Stockholm. When I mentioned Klara Church, he gave me a copy of a recent find he had made. As soon as I read it, I realized it was one of those "historical gems" with an Augustana twist. The record for October 6, 1820 reads:

Baptized by Rev. Tunelius, Johanna Maria Parents unknown

The mother is said to be 27 years old. Witnesses were the Midwife, Ekebon and a Miss Lindahl.¹⁵

Another notation was added to the same page of the parish record on March 2, 1835, attesting to the fact that Johanna Maria was the daughter of one Jonas Lindh and of the widow Anna Maria Fellborg. This was signed under oath by Brita Christina Ekebon, midwife; and witnessed by the Rev. J.E. Lindblad. Two years later, the Swedish Nightingale made her professional debut at age 17.

When Jenny Lind came to America on September 1, 1850, she received one of the most boisterous welcomes given any visitor from Europe. The New York Herald Tribune featured her on the front page with four columns. By spring of 1851, Lars Paul Esbjörn started a trip to the East seeking funds for mission work among the Swedes. Other Lutherans in Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York received him with great kindness and small offerings. He missed seeing Jenny Lind in Philadelphia, but managed, with great difficulty, to have an audience with her in Boston. The result of the hour long visit was \$1,500.00. Before meeting her, Esbjörn had raised only about \$700.00. Now the first Augustana churches could be built at Andover, New Sweden, and Moline. The building at Andover was called the Jenny Lind Chapel.

Lars Paul Esbjörn

This native of Halsingland has the esteem of being the pioneer ordained Swedish Lutheran pastor to serve the Swedish immigrants. He was the organizer of the congregations at Andover, Moline, Galesburg, and Princeton in Illinois. Those who have an appreciation of our Augustana heritage venerate his name, especially ones who sat under professor G. Everett Arden in his Church History classes.

On a crisp fall morning, I drove to Östervåla and stood by the graveside monument where Lars Paul Esbjörn awaits the Resurrection. While there I remembered my classmates, professors and other colleagues in our Augustana tradition. I took a picture of the monument which became my Christmas card that year.

In reviewing my files of family clergy, I discovered that members were pastors in Delsbo where Esbjörn was born, and in Hille where he served his second parish. On June 11, 1832, he was ordained at the Uppsala Cathedral by Archbishop Carl Von Rosenstein, an orphan boy adopted by the Aurivillius branch of my family tree. How's that for having pre-Augustana roots!¹⁶

We never had a Bloomquist who was a pastor, but we did have a family member who was the beneficiary of some close friends of Esbjörn. Erik Bloomquist served twenty eight days on bread and water at Langholmen prison for the drunken fight with his army buddy at Järva Krog. Upon his release, Samuel Owen took him under his wing. Owen and Esbjörn were zealous temperance leaders. Indeed, Esbjörn also had some court action against him. He stopped parishioners on the road in Hille and emptied the contents of a keg of whiskey in the ditch. He was very unpopular and received many threats of violence. However, in his first report to the American Home Missionary Society, he tells about organizing a temperance society "of 43 members."

The Role of the Parsonage

The first copy of a clergy family from the Herdaminne revealed a family of five children. Both sons followed in their father's footsteps and became pastors. The three daughters all married pastors. Now follow this down into the third and fourth generations and one can understand how the number of "preacher's kids" was compounded.

Dr. Al Wessen, a member of the faculty of Brown University, has shown an interest in writing a book about the careers of Augustana pastors. Using Dr. Conrad Bergendoff's "The Augustana Ministerium 1850-1962," he discovered that just less than 10% of the graduates from the Seminary came from the parsonage.¹⁷ The decade of the 1940s had the largest number when 19% were ordained. My class, 1949, had nine of the 23 candidates who followed their father's profession. In addition, two members of the class married daughters of the parsonage.

This was the same penchant I noticed among the early clerical family in my tree. It was not unusual to see the sons become pastors, and the daughters marry pastors. It may be that these folks lived in that narrow milieu and did not seek other fields of endeavors. This changed dramatically when I got closer to the 19th century.



GRAVESTONE OF LARS PAUL ESBJÖRN

Inter-marriages

In examining the various families it became evident that there were many marriages which resulted into an interesting lineage. The example here of my family covers the same time frame as the Augustana Synod, roughly 110 years. It starts with the marriage of two bishops' children Matthias Steuchius and Anna Terserus. Their son Jonas marries the daughter of Archbishop Haaken Spegel. Now Jonas also has three sisters who catch the "clerical love bug." Elisabeth married Bishop Asp of Harnosand; Birgitta marries the Dean of Linköping, Thomas Ihre; and Maria who marries Bishop Nils Barchaeus of Vasteras. Then going into the next generation we find the daughter of Dean and Birgitta Ihre marrying Bishop Andreas Rhyzelius.¹⁸

If you are so moved to use Bergendoff's, "The Augustana Ministerium 1850-1962," you could outline a multi-generation list of your own. The following I drew up from our Augustana tradition. There are many more. One of our pioneer couples Jonas Swenson and Maria Blixt have a son Carl Aaron Swenson, founder of Bethany College. Carl and Alma Lind's daughter Sophia marries Swen Claus Vestling and their son Victor is the fourth generation. Gustaf Brandelle was the president of the Synod. He and his wife Lydia had a daughter Rosalie who married Waldo Ekeberg. Their son Waldemar married Carolyn Johnson. A son, Joseph, represents the fourth generation.

Others which were of personal interest to me were Johan Seedoff, vice president of the Illinois Conference, whose daughter Gerda married Leonard Kendall, president of the Minnesota Conference. Their son John, president of Gustavus Adolphus College, married Joanne, daughter of professor John Milton. James Ford was a third generation pastor following grandfather John and father Reuben. His wife Marcia Sodergren could trace her posterity through C.W. Sodergren, Carl J. Sodergren and Carl H. Sodergren, a fourth generation member. There were many people of our tradition who could glory in the fact that they kept it "all in the family."¹⁹

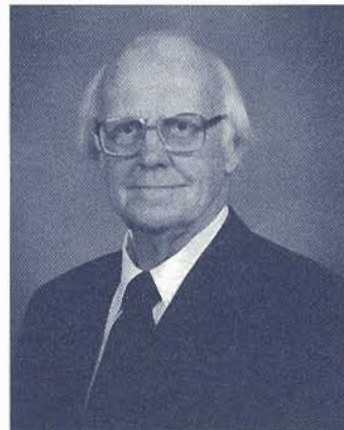
Uncovering our Roots

The chronicle of Swedish history is well recorded in many annals, rolls, tables and documentation. They pertain to the government, church, military, nobility and down to the household records. There is no room for stale, dumb "Ole and Sven" jokes here. Each place where there are records, one finds two traits: a systematic file; and a most enthusiastic archivist. In Uppsala, I was basically on my own, having learned the system. In Stockholm and Linköping, I got extraordinary assistance from Anna-Johanna Von Platen of Nicolai Church and Karen Bruse. But my "main man" is Goren Blomberg of the Stockholm Archives. We have become

close friends. Most of my material concerning the archbishops, bishops, and churches served by relatives came from him. If I find a new name, or have a question, I'll get the answer back even though he is now in retirement.

For readers interested in finding information about their family roots I would like to share these tips: Use the Swedish name. Dates of birth, baptism, or wedding are helpful. Towns of birth can perhaps be a part of a larger parish. (My father was born in Ojebro. His records are stored at Herrberga Church.) All records up until 1890 can be found in regional archives. After that the records are in the parish church. There are eight regional archives covering the whole geographical area of the country. In addition, the following archives are also important for genealogical research: National Archives, Archives for Foreign Affairs, The House of Nobility, Royal Swedish Military, Emigrant Institute, and Emigrant Register.

It is to be noted that one of the purposes of the Augustana Heritage Association is "To promote archival activities that preserve the heritage of the Augustana Synod, and to encourage scholarly research on the heritage of the Synod." AHA



CARL W. BLOOMQUIST

Carl W. Bloomquist was born in the shadows of Emanuel Lutheran Church in Hartford, Connecticut. After graduation from Hartford Public High School, he traveled to the Midwest and graduated from Luther Junior College and Bethany College. In 1994, He received the Bethany College Alumni Award of Merit. He studied at Augustana Seminary in Rock Island, Illinois. Upon ordination, he served two mis-

sion congregations in Natick, Massachusetts and Miami, Florida. He was called to Pilgrim Church in Warwick, Rhode Island where he served for forty years.

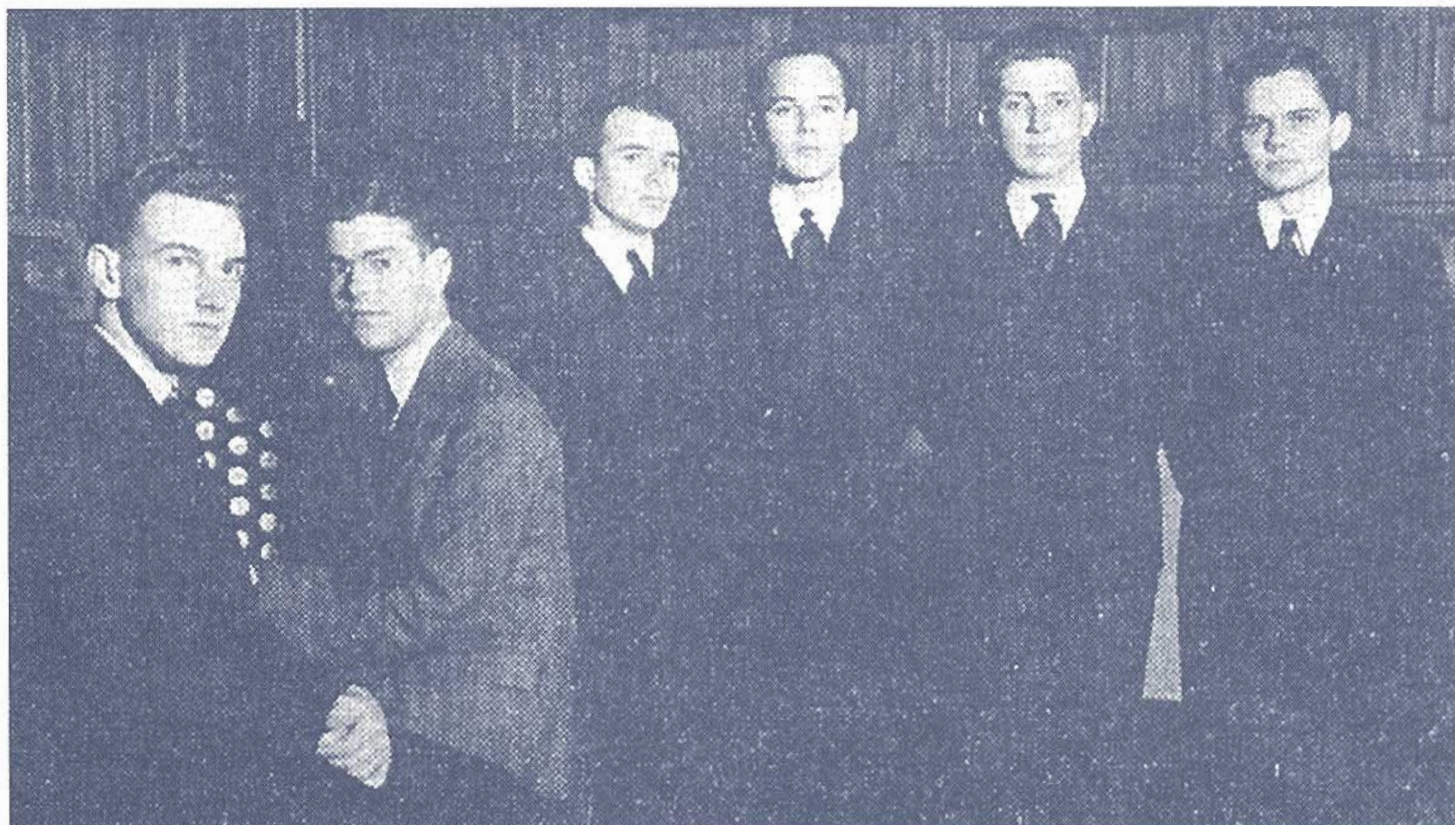
He continues to serve on the Board of Directors of the Lutheran Social Services of New England. He has served on the Boards of the New England Historical Society, Upsala College, New England Synod, and the Scandinavian Home of the Ages. In 1999, he was awarded the LSS Heart Award. His book, "Oh...Before I forget" celebrated the forty year ministry at Pilgrim Church. His book "Nazi Swastik and Luther Rose" received an award from the Concordia Historical Institute of St. Louis, Missouri. His novella "Erik och Anna Lena", the story of his great, great grandparents will be published soon. Since retirement, Pastor Bloomquist remains an avid traveler and genealogist.

(The artwork found on the first page of this article is from the new church in Surahammar. The artist, Nils aron Berge, a native of Surahammar, took 12 years to complete this piece. It was started in 1944 and wasn't finished until 1956.)

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10. Fredrika Bremer, I Dalarna (1845); Ivva Uppstrom, Stormor I Dalom (1919); S. Soderhielm, Stormors I Dalmon Moderne (1952); F. Wernstedt, Stormor I Dalmon and Bishop Jacobus Zabrazynthus (1953); Svea Rike Urval, Register (1930).
11. Herdaminne for Öster Åker.
12. Herdaminne of Stora Skedvi.
13. Change at Lund came under Bishop Benzeliuss' term.
14. Personal conversation with the speaker for Eric Jansson's Day; Oscar Olson, The Augustana Lutheran Church in America; Everett Arden, Augustana Heritage.
15. Record from Klara Church about Jenny Lind. Accounts by Olson & Arden about Jenny Lind. Reference by Olson about George Scott who helped relative Eric Bloomquist.
16. Visit to Ostervala. Also Herdaminne records about Esbjorn.
17. Lunch with Dr. Al Wesson of Brown University; Bergendoff The Augustana Ministerium 1850-1961.
18. A fourth generation in my Swedish family.
19. I found a couple of Augustana four generations. Use Bergendoff's Herdaminne and see what you come up with.

Augustana Heritage Experiences



THE BETHANY GOSPEL TEAM: ERNEST BERGESON, JOHN HANS, CHARLES KINGRY, ELMORE CARLSON, JACK JUERGENS AND WILLIS OLSON

Lindsborg is for me a symbol of Augustana. My grandfather, Pastor Axel P. Bjorkman, was received into the Ministerium and ordained in Lindsborg, Kansas in 1904. He came from Sweden in 1902 where he took his theological training and was an evangelist for the "Lasare" movement, a lay Bible Study and mission minded group. He was called to serve in Dover, New Jersey. As a boy I remember his visits to our home in Westerly, Rhode Island, when I would accompany him on long walks through Wilcox Park. He often spoke in glowing terms of that beautiful little bit of Sweden on the plains of Kansas: Lindsborg. He put into my young mind a desire to go there some day. He planted the seed that gave me no hesitation in accepting Dr. Emory Lindquist's telegram offer to come to Bethany for my college days.

It was in this community where my grandfather's descriptions came to full reality for me. I came to see a place that was the fruit of immigrant farmers from Sweden settling in the

Smokey Hill Valley with great faith and determination. I was told of how they sacrificed to build Bethany by mortgaging their farms to provide a school for their children's education. Here there developed a great musical heritage as evidenced in the "Messiah" festival that was noted nation-wide. The vision of Dr. Carl Aaron Swenson whose statue stood in front of Old Main seemed still to hover in spirit over this place as sacred ground. There was great interest in art among these settlers. There were the noted wood carvers who had taught us their talents to depict their neighbors. Birger Sandmen is noted as one of the great painters of the plains.

Central to all this was the Bethany Church that guided the spiritual life of these people. I recall in particular how steeped they were in one of the old Rosenius psalms. There was never a meeting held that Dr. Bergin would not have everyone sing, "O Jesu, Bliv Nar oss....". The English translation became, "O Shepherd, abide with us, care for us still, And feed us and lead

at Bethany College

By Ernest Bergeson

us and teach us Thy will; And when in Thy heavenly fold we shall be, Our thanks and our praises we'll render to Thee." That verse exemplified Augustana piety.

For Lindsborg and its symbol of faith and piety I am eternally grateful to God. The experience of being in that place in the formative years of my life brought forth from me a deep sense of spirituality that I could have gotten nowhere else. When Old Main was torn down, I remember searching for a piece of the brick that I now have as a cherished memory of this Augustana symbol on the plains of Kansas.

Pre-seminary training in my Augustana heritage

Three things that have become ever more precious in my memory of pursuing the goal of becoming a pastor in the Augustana Lutheran Church are: the Pre-Sem Club at Bethany College, the Bethany Home and Foreign Missionary Society, and the VENIA CONCI ONANDI that the Church issued to students to serve in limited pastoral roles.

Bethany's Pre-Sem Club met regularly for a meal together at the college cafeteria. Often we had ordained pastors address us on the importance of the calling to the Holy Ministry. During my days at Bethany, I recall Pastor Carl Segerhammer speaking in a most dynamic way, giving us a sense of the mission of the church to bring men and women to believe in Jesus Christ. I also recall Dr. Alfred Bergin, Pastor Nels Olson, and Dr. G. A. Dorf. Keynote speakers came to the campus for Religious Emphasis Week. Among them were Dr. Siersbeck of

temporary supply. The spark of ecumenism was kindled too for we were also asked to preach in Methodist, Mission Covenant, Presbyterian, and Baptists churches in the area.

Home and Foreign Missionary Society

The Bethany Home and Foreign Missionary Society on campus stirred us in its call to mission. We here heard of the Danielsons in Tanganyika, Africa, as well as those who had gone out to India and China. Through this Society, the Home Mission Board of the Church asked for volunteers to do survey work for a new mission in Wichita. We must have been a dozen persons who went door to door seeking out the unchurched as well as those of Lutheran background. This society also fostered a gospel singing quartet that toured to raise money for the mission work of the Church. There was also an official document, Venia Conci Onandi, that was given to a student when a congregation called him to serve as student pastor. The Augustana Synod in 1887 established guidelines for giving such authority to a student. The conference president would issue such a document on a year to year basis.

Touring With the Bethany Gospel Team in 1940

In 1940, I was elected president of the Bethany Home and Foreign Missionary Society succeeding Emmet Eklund. I organized a tour for the Gospel Team in June and July 1940. It would take the Quartet to 12 states and traveling 10,000 miles. We gave programs in British Columbia, Canada and in the

*For Lindsborg and its symbol of faith and piety
I am eternally grateful to God.*

Dana College, Dean Hewitt Vinnedge of the Salina Episcopal Cathedral, E. Stanley Jones, and Kirby Page.

Being part of the Pre-Sem group gave us the privilege of preaching our first sermons on Conference Sunday when the Kansas Conference Convention was held over the week-end, and the pastors would be away from their congregations. There were opportunities to fill the pulpits in many of the small congregations who were without pastors or needed a

states of Kansas, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and Nebraska. Our purpose was to awaken support for the mission outreach of the church, and to raise funds to support the foreign mission work. Members of the quartet were Charles Kingry, Elmore Carlson, Jack Juergens, and Willis Olson. The accompanist was John Hanson, a music major, and I was the speaker for the group.

The Society also sent out musical groups on weekends. In the annual report for the Society, I noted that: "We find that 90 churches have received us, two chapel exercises were conducted, eight institutions of mercy visited, two Bible Camps attended and three radio appearances made. In all, 109 pro-

place with a domed building on a hill, and Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, with its cathedral like building, in the shadow of the capital, I sensed my call. My spiritual formation included an "inner call" on my confirmation day to the Holy Ministry. I was confirmed at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

I had a number of experiences that grounded me firmly with the assurance that God's providence was at work in me.

grams to the glory of Christ our Savior have been presented."

The missions that received support from the Society during the year were: Home Missions- Mariadahl Children's Home, Cleburne, Kansas; Immanuel Deaconess Institute, Omaha; Bethphage Mission, Axtell, Nebraska. Foreign mission support went to: Agnes Christiansen in India, two tent band workers in China; and the Luther League Conference in Rockford, Illinois for its missions work. The Society also had a group which built an altar for the College chapel, which at that time had only a stage and pipe organ.

While I was on the tour for June and July, I had faith in the providence of God to help me in August to at least get enough money together from work to start school in the fall. My prayers were answered when I was recruited by the Home Missions Director in New England, Dr. Henry Hokenson, to do a house to house survey in Torrington, Connecticut. There was a Swedish Ladies Aid that met in the Episcopal Church that expressed interest in establishing a Lutheran Church. I went house to house asking about peoples' church connection. I was chased by dogs, had doors slammed in my face, and was welcomed with open arms by many, especially the Jewish homes. This earned me enough to make a down payment on my tuition and start my junior year at Bethany.

During Sundays, I also conducted a Lutheran worship service for any who would come. They were held in the French Congregational Church in Torrington. There had been a Bethany Lutheran congregation organized in 1899 but had never had a building. Finally, in 1955, there had been enough growth for this mission congregation to build. Perhaps in some small way my work in that month of August 1940 helped that happen.

The Story of My Call to the Ministry

When I was a boy growing up in Westerly, Rhode Island, Providence was the big city and the capital. It was at that

in New London, Connecticut. I had a number of experiences that grounded me firmly with the assurance that God's providence was at work in me.

It was near the end of the Great Depression, and I had only \$150 in savings for college. I wrote to five of our church schools asking if I could be assured of some way of working my way through. Three wrote discouraging letters and one did not answer. However, at Bethany College, when its president Dr. Pihlblad was laid up from an automobile accident, Dr. Emory Lindquist as vice president took over. He was prompted to telegraph me that there would be a job for me in the cafeteria. Why my letter intrigued Dr. Lindquist could only have been an act of God's providence.

Having finished my freshman year owing the college money, and with none to buy a bus ticket home, I recall being on my knees praying, "God, you got me out here to begin studying for the ministry. If you want me to serve in this way, please show me what I should do now." A classmate came by and asked for help to the bus depot with his trunk. As we hiked downtown, Dr. Russell Nelson, pastor at Emanuel, Hutchinson, Kansas, met us. Here are his words, "You're Bergeson, aren't you?" I replied, "Yes." Then he said, "You preached at Emanuel on Conference Sunday, and the congregation was very impressed with your sermon, I have accepted a call to be a missionary to China and will leave August 1st. The congregation asked me to contact you to see if you would be interested in taking over as student pastor when I leave." Here was a providential partial answer to my prayers. Then what happened was for me the complete answer. I came back to the dorm and was met by Emmet Eklund who asked, "Ernie, what are you doing this summer?" I told him what had just happened and that I still did not know what I would do for June and July. He then asked, "Would you be interested in going out to Ogallah as student pastor for those months?" I then knew my prayers were being answered in ways I had not

even considered when I was praying on my knees by my bed.

My First Student Pastorate, Emanuel Lutheran Church, Ogallah, Kansas

I believe that God wanted me at Emanuel, Ogallah, to further teach me what providence really means and to trust in it implicitly. My transportation to western Kansas was by hitch-hiking. After arriving, I had no way of getting around in the congregation and was without a driver's license even if I could get a car. One farmer came to me and said he had a Model A Ford I could use. I told him I had not had any driving lessons. He got me into the Ford and told me what to do, and I drove down the gravel road, which satisfied him that I could handle it. He then took me to Wakenney for a license. When the farmer told the clerk that he had come to get a license for our student pastor, the clerk said, "Well, we'll have to ask him the standard question, Do your Drink, since Kansas is a dry state." My quick, No, was all he needed and I filled out the application form. He never asked if I could drive or to have a driving test.

The same farmer also taught me to be aware of the sounds on the prairies. There were the constant sounds of the hoards of grasshoppers that covered the land and highways. It was hard to keep the windshield of the car clean because of them. Their noise could often block out other sounds that spelled danger. I remember walking out to the wheat fields one day, when the farmer grabbed my arm and said to be silent and listen. We quietly stepped forward to the sound of a rattle. It was a snake which could have struck with his fangs. The farmer aimed his shovel and cut off the head of the snake. This was a lesson in how helpless we are without help from others who providentially keep us from harm. I kept the rattles from that snake's tail for many years as a remembrance of that occasion when I was saved from a rattler's venom. While serv-

indoctrination by my confirmation pastor. Nevertheless Dr. G. A. Doff, president of the Kansas Conference, issued me an official license to preach for that summer of 1939.

I spent a week at a time in the farm home of a different family and got to know people well in this way. While staying with one family at the time of wheat harvest, I learned a lesson in what faith in God's providence can mean. We had Sunday evening services at the church, and on this particular Sunday the dark clouds were gathering. We were hit with a severe thunderstorm with much hail. When we returned to the farm, we saw the wheat field just pulverized by hail. This was in a day when crop insurance was not even thought, and the Rural Electrical Administration had not come to many of the farms.

I will never forget that evening. The farmer gathered his family around the dining room table by kerosene lamps, got down the family Bible and read from one of the Psalms, perhaps Psalm 46. It had to do with God providing for our needs. He offered prayers, after telling his family that the coming winter would be difficult, and they would have to wait until next year to plant again. In his prayers, he expressed faith that God would see them through the hard times ahead. I had never seen such great faith in a person until that evening.

Thus the days I spent as student pastor at Emanuel in the prairie became the foundation for my faith in God's providence. I came to know the kind of faith it takes to sing that old hymn, "Where He leads me, I will follow."

My Second Student Pastorate at Hutchinson, Kansas

Having completed two months in western Kansas, I moved to the big city of Hutchinson where again I was to serve an Emanuel Church. Here I had a room with the Valine family. I had no car but there was a city bus. Most of the members lived near the church, but a number were farmers

*I came to know the kind of faith it takes to sing
that old hymn, "Where He leads me, I will follow."*

ing as pastor of Peace Church in Seattle, my office was broken into and ransacked. One of the things taken was the little box with the rattler tail.

I was also overwhelmed by the fact that I had only one year of college with a couple of Bible courses and a good

near town. One of the members was a superintendent at the salt mines, and I had the opportunity for a tour of the mining operations. It was very different from when our Gospel Team stopped in Leadville, Colorado and stayed at the home of the mine superintendent. We convinced him to take us to the

silver mine. That experience was like crawling through gopher tunnels which was rather frightening. In contrast, the salt mines were spacious rooms of rock salt. I managed to get a large piece for my rock collection.

I ate my noon meal each day at a Greek restaurant downtown where I had the opportunity of rubbing shoulders with the town's people. I was able to buy a monthly meal ticket for \$3.50 which entitled me each noon to the soup of the day and the main course and dessert.

After a month of preaching and teaching Sunday School, I made my way back to Lindsborg. Since the college had a rule that student pastors could only take a regular assignment every other Sunday, I could not continue every Sunday after September, but took turns with other students. With the shortage of available students for preaching, it turned out that I found myself also preaching the Sundays I was supposed to be off.

I remember one of those Sundays being called upon to preach at the Methodist Church in Lindsborg. Dr. Kleibege, my sociology professor, was in the congregation. He embarrassed me by quoting me the next day in his lectures. I wanted to crawl under my desk since I knew I would get a ribbing by my fellow students. However, he was most complimentary with what he called my insight.

Much of my hands-on training for being a pastor took place before I was matriculated at Augustana Seminary. This is part of my Augustana heritage that I cherish. It was all a part of the spirit of Augustana life that shaped me and gave me a rich lifetime of service in the Church.

The ecumenical glimpse that I became exposed to in college was only strengthened by studying under Dr. Conrad Bergendoff, Dr. Eric Wahlstrom, and Dr. A. D. Mattson. They helped me envision what I have sought to bring to fruition in my ecumenical outreach to non-Lutheran Christians both liberal and fundamentalist. I can rejoice now that I had some small part in what is taking place today in the ability to declare "full communion" with those who are faithful to the Gospel but in a little different way. Our Augustana heritage has thrust us into the mainstream for the fulfillment of our Lord's prayer that "they all be one, as He is in the Holy Trinity."

Called to Intern at Bethany Church in Lindsborg

At the end of my junior year at Bethany, I was approached by Dr. Alfred Bergin who suggested that I come and be his intern until he retired in January. I told him that I just didn't have the training to fulfill such a position. He only said, "I've heard you preach, and I think you can do the job." He finally convinced me to meet with the board at the church for his proposal. This I did, and before the evening ended, I was hired as intern since the seminary had refused to send one due to a shortage of students and the fact that Dr. Bergin was retiring.

As the school year ended, I moved out of the dorm and into the parsonage next to Bethany Church. Here I had a large bedroom with a desk and the church's mimeograph. The mimeographing of programs was the intern's job. Dr. Bergin had the propensity to call on his interns at a moment's notice,

The seminary experience only gave me a greater understanding of what our task of mission is all about.

There was in Augustana a deep sense of the inner call of God to the Holy Ministry that led to the call of a congregation for which I have always felt given in a most providential way. My ability to serve as an ordained pastor in Mason City, Iowa; in a mission congregation in Seattle, Washington, and in three congregations in Massachusetts before retirement was all made possible more significantly by this early training than it was my seminary days. The seminary experience only gave me a greater understanding of what our task of mission is all about.

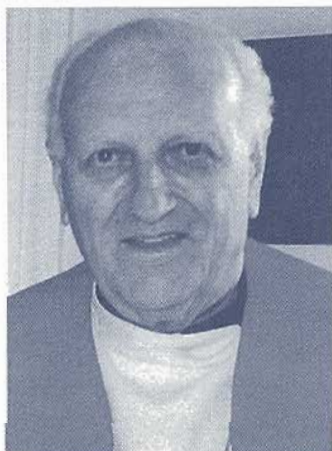
and you were expected to have something up your sleeve whenever he chose to call on you. I remember the very first time that he did this. I really made a mess of things not really knowing what to say. From that time on I always had something prepared on which I could speak extemporaneously.

When I think of it now, I am utterly amazed at having the gall to get up in the pulpit of the largest church in the area and preach to many who would be my teachers during the week. But somehow, by the grace of God, I survived the experience. It was also a real learning experience for me as to what life in

the parsonage entails. I still remember Dr. Bergin's daughter Esther preparing and serving meals and the devotions Dr. Bergin led at supper time. I came to know one of the great patriarchs of the Augustana Church during these days. He was a very kindly person but at times could be very firm and demanding.

I remember the Sunday when Dr. Sierbeck was the preacher, having been at the college during the week for Religious Emphasis Days. His sermon got a little long, and he came into the sacristy as the congregation was singing a hymn. He said to Dr. Bergin, "We had better cut out the closing prayers and just have the benediction." This made Bergin angry as I had never seen him before, and he declared, "Who do you think you are, coming in here and trying to tell me how we should run our services?"

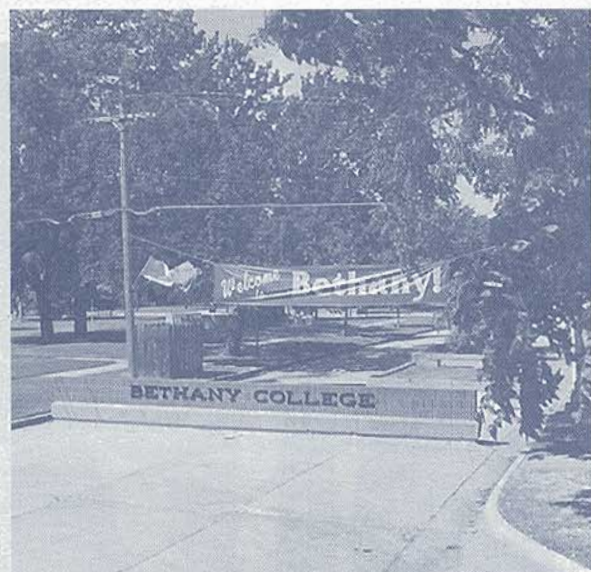
Dr. Bergin became known in the community for the way he often thought in Swedish and literally translated into English, which came out to be most comical at times. In all, he reminded me of my stately grandfather pastor who exemplified the dignity with which the office of the Holy Ministry was held in our Augustana heritage. **AHA**



ERNEST BERGESON

Ernest Bergeson was born in Deep River, Connecticut; he graduated from Bethany College, and Augustana Theological Seminary. He was ordained in 1945 and served as pastor of the following Lutheran congregations: Emmanuel, Mason City, Iowa; Peace, Seattle, Washington; Bethel, Auburn, Massachusetts; First, Waltham, Massachusetts. He served as Dean of the Western Mass. District of the New England Synod and was active in numer-

ous community, service, and church organizations and committees. He was a long time member of the Massachusetts Commission on Christian Unity. He has continued to do supply preaching and has been honored for his long time service in the Kiwanis Club. He and his wife Martha live at 28 Alder Lane, Harwich, MA.

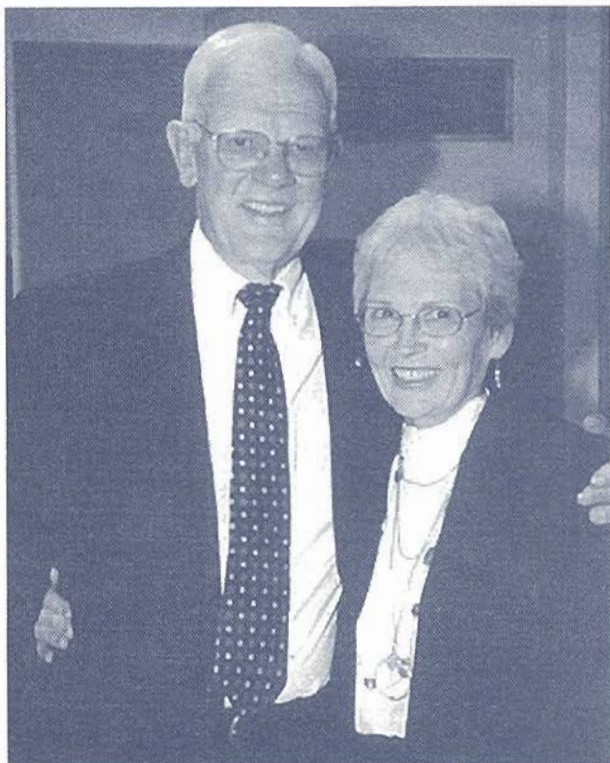


2002 AHA GATHERING LINDSBORG, KANSAS

JUNE 21-23

(CONTACT INFORMATION ON BACK COVER)





HERB AND CORRINE CHILSTROM

A Special Birthday Party

On Sunday evening, September 16, 2001, Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Minneapolis was the setting for a party for Herb and Corrine Chilstrom in celebration of their 70th birthdays. The celebration was in the form of a "Festival of Lessons and Hymns". It was attended by all of the Chilstrom family and many friends. It was arranged by their children Mary and Christopher. There was a splendid spirit of oneness. The service was led by the Rev. William Heisley, pastor of Mt. Olive congregation. Music was led by Paul and Helen Baumgartner, David and Susan Cherwien, Mark Sedio and Tim Strand. A reception followed the service. Herb and Corrine were greeted by their many friends. A CD of the Festival is available from Christopher Chilstrom, 5448 First Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55419. Donations may be made to the "Vision for Mission Fund of the ELCA." **HAPPY BIRTHDAY, HERB AND CORRINE CHILSTROM!**

Editorial note: Herbert Chilstrom was the first bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Augustana Heritage Association. Corrine is an ELCA pastor.

90th Anniversary Celebration - Trinity Lutheran Church, Moline, IL

During 2002, Trinity congregation is celebrating its 90th anniversary through a series of events and activities. Jane Tiedge is chairperson of the planning task force, and has written a book: "A Look at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church - A Time to Remember, Reflect and Reconnect As We Journey into God's Future." Its 225 pages include over 100 photographs and drawings. There is no charge for the book; it is a gift to the congregation.

A congregational luncheon will follow Trinity's Reformation Service on October 27, 2002 at Centennial Hall on the campus of Augustana College. A butterfly release on Ascension Sunday, May 12, 2002; a special Lenten Devotional book, and 90th birthday party in July are all a part of the celebration.

News from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Dr. James Echols, president, announced in August 2001 that "The seminary continues to make exciting progress on its Campaign for Worship and Spiritual Formation. At the May 2001 board meeting, the design for the new Augustana Chapel at LSTC was unveiled, as the project's liturgical consultant, Jeffrey Lipton, described its features as well as the materials to be used. A comprehensive campaign of \$5.5 million has been approved by the board...The unveiling of the chapel design marks the beginning of the campaign's public phase. To date \$3.2 million has been received and/or committed in support of this important project."

Dr. Echols also announced that on September 4, 2002 LSTC will celebrate its 40th anniversary. Current plans call for the celebration to extend throughout the 2002-2003 academic year. More details will be forthcoming.

Editorial note: The AHA Newsletter will carry a special article in the next issue written by Harold Skillrud, member of the AHA, who was first president of the Board of LSTC in 1962.

Letters and Articles for the Newsletter are Always Welcome

Letters to the editor, and articles for the Newsletter may be sent any time to the editors whose mailing address is on page 2. Articles previously received have not been forgotten. It is a matter of scheduling. When received, the articles are always acknowledged and will be scheduled as they fit the themes which emerge for particular issues of the Newsletter. Letters to the editor will always appear in the upcoming issue. We encourage comments, reactions, and challenges to articles as they appear.

NEW PUBLICATION

The Swedes of Greater Brockton

Written by James Benson and Lloyd Thompson, it is described as "the first formal history of the Swedish population of this region (New England) of America." It covers the period of 1844 to 1957, and includes some 240 photographs received from families throughout the region and from other archival sources. It is published by Arcadian Publishing and can be ordered from the Thompson Marketing Groups, 88 Till Rock Land, Norwell, MA 02061. The cost per book is \$19.99 plus \$1.90 for handling. The phone number is 781-826-4042.



Twenty Four People Travel to Sweden

On September 10, 2002, a group of 24 people left for a two week stay in Sweden. The trip was coordinated by Donovan and Dorothy Palmquist. The purposes of the tour, sponsored by the Augustana Heritage Association, were to recall Swedish history and heritage, become more acquainted with modern

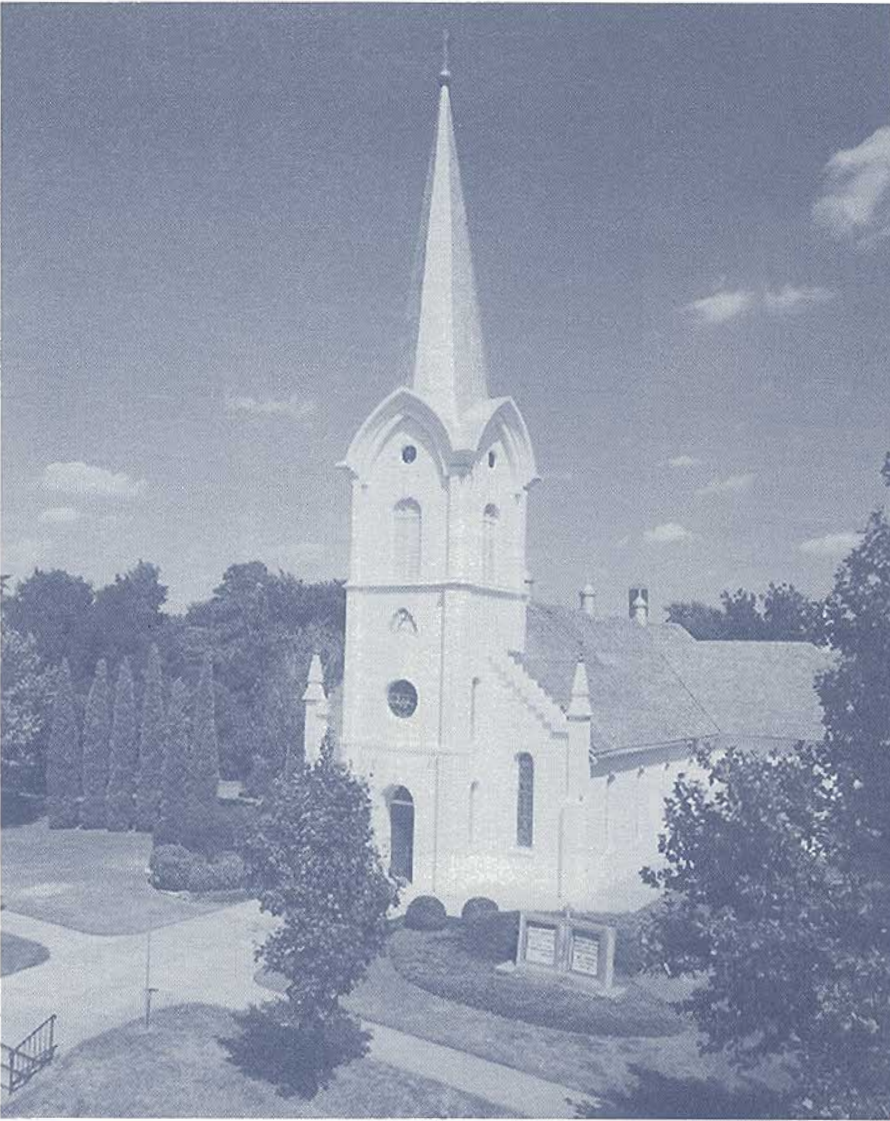
day Sweden and the Church of Sweden, and to be enriched in faith and life.

Don and Dot Palmquist described the event this way: "It was a time of remembering the heritage of faith in which we were raised and renewing contact with the land, the people and the church from which our ancestors came. On September 11, we were informed of the terrorist attacks in the United States. At Lidingö Kyrka, where the American congregation worships, Pastor Mary Philipson led us in a Eucharist reminding us of our heritage and our hope in the Christian Faith as we remember the past, live the present and face the future."

At the end of the trip almost all members of the group wrote their reflections and reviews of the experience. Much appreciation was expressed for the rich and meaningful opportunity to learn and enjoy the events and people they met in Sweden. One person recalled the experience on September 11th, when "we all felt embraced by love generously shown by our Swedish friends and colleagues." Another spoke about Sunday, September 16 when "we worshiped in Swedish at a little country church in Sunnemo, Varmland from which Olof Olsson left for pioneer preaching in Lindsborg, Kansas"

THE AUGUSTANA HERITAGE ASSOCIATION

1100 East Fifty-Fifth Street Chicago, Illinois 60615



BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH, LINDSBORG



A Reminder About Registrations for AHA Gathering at Lindsborg, June 21-23

Registration forms and information have been sent to all members of the Augustana Heritage Association. Registrations postmarked before May 15 are \$160; those postmarked after May 15 are \$170. In case you have not received a registration form, please call A. John Pearson at 785-227-2302 or email him at PearsonJ@BethanyLB.edu.

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