

The second body having done work among the Norwegian Lutherans in Iowa is "Hauge's Synod," which has fourteen pastors and thirty congregations, with a membership of 5,866. They have a higher institution of learning,—Jewell Lutheran College, at Jewell.

The third body is "The United Norwegian Lutheran Church of America" having in this State fifty-two pastors and one hundred and six congregations, with a membership of 28,060. They have a higher institution of learning—Waldorf College at Forest City, an orphans' home at Beloit, and are building an old people's home at Decorah.

This gives us a total of ninety-one pastors and one hundred and eighty-six congregations, with a membership of 47,426, three institutions of learning and two institutions of mercy, among the Norwegian Lutherans.

The greater part of our Church is found in the rural districts in the north half of the State, where the woods and prairies have been changed into fertile farms and peaceful homes for the thousands of honest laboring men and women who came to this country with love for hard work and a longing for a full religious liberty, and with minds and hearts made strong by that gospel given to us in the days of reformation.

SWEDISH LUTHERAN CHURCH IN IOWA.

BY JOSEPH A. ANDERSON.

When the Swedish immigrants of the century just past came to these shores, and found abodes in various parts of our Union, some also settled on the virgin soil of Iowa. A band of Swedes, firm in the faith of their fathers, made a home for itself on the hills and in the valleys of Jefferson county. The colony there founded was called New Sweden, a name bespeaking the love of the settlers of the heritage which they possessed. In 1848, but two years after this commonwealth received its statehood, a Lutheran congregation, the oldest of the now mighty Augustana Synod, was there organized. This congregation was not a result of any pastoral care and influence exerted upon the colonists since coming to this

country, but was organized upon the initiative of the people themselves. Not until 1849 did a clergyman arrive from Sweden, and he located in our sister state to the east. Since no ordained shepherd could be secured, the New Swedeners, if I may coin the word, chose one of their own number as their spiritual head. The one chosen was Magnus Frederick Hokonson, a pious and modest man, whose portrait should be found within the walls of the Historical Department of Iowa. He was ordained in 1853 and labored in the church for forty-five years, all of which time he remained within the State, and in its soil he was buried.

It was not until two decades after the New Sweden congregation was founded, or in 1868, that Iowa became a Conference within the Augustana Synod, organized eight years earlier. Then there were Swedish congregations at New Sweden, Munterville, Madrid, Stratford, Burlington, Lansing, McGregor and Swedesburg. Until 1870 some of our Norwegian brethren were associated with us. The church at Decorah, where Luther College now is, was then in the Conference as was also a Norwegian congregation in Story county. In 1868 the following pastors, besides Hokonson, served with the State: Hakan Olson, Bengt Magnus Halland and Carl J. Malmberg. The first became president of the new Conference. Rev. Halland later founded the large Swedish settlement in Montgomery and Page counties and thereby did much not only for the church but for the material development of our State. The Conference membership in 1868 was less than one thousand souls. The following year witnessed a great influx of Swedes and the Conference, and more especially its pastors, strained every nerve to secure the people for God and the church. In 1868 three congregations were organized and the following year two, one of which was the First Church of Des Moines. The earliest churches were in the southeastern part of the State. Then a few were organized in the north and eastern portions; later the south central and central, then the southwestern and finally northwestern and northern parts of our State beheld Swedish Lutheran settlements and congregations. The names of the following

pastors, who as presidents of Conferences or otherwise did so much toward the churching of the Swedes should be mentioned: O. J. Siljestrom, M. C. Ranseen, C. A. Hemborg and John Tellsen.

The history of our Swedish Lutherans of Iowa might be summed up in the words: Faith, instruction, work, financial sacrifice, prayer, worship and success under the providence of God, to whom be the glory. At first the problem was how to secure church homes for the immigrants. Later the problem has been, how to make the children, born and reared in the new fatherland, loyal to the fathers and lovers of their church. The problems have been and are being solved. We have now a membership of 20,000 souls or more, that compose eighty-one congregations, of which seventy-five have their own churches, and are served by forty-four pastors.

The Swedish Lutheran population gathered into our congregations is most numerous in Webster county with over 2,100 members. The more populous counties are as follows in the order given: Montgomery, Buena Vista, Boone, Woodbury, Polk, Des Moines, Wapello and Page. We have congregations from McGregor to Shenandoah, Keokuk to Akron, Council Bluffs to Davenport.

The property value of the local congregations is \$820,000. The Conference as such holds property to the amount of \$225,000. The Conference's property consists of an orphanage at Stanton, which began its noble work in 1882; a Home for the Aged at Madrid which received its first guests in 1906; The Iowa Lutheran Hospital, which was dedicated in March, 1914, (only some two months ago) and is located in the Capital City.

Within very recent years the Conference has contributed over \$50,000 toward the endowment of Augustana College and Theological Seminary, located at Rock Island, Illinois, and therefore separated from us geographically by the Mississippi. This institution, the Conference, as a part of the Augustana Synod, partially owns and controls. Hence we have needed no institution of learning within the confines of the Conference.

It may be said, in all modesty, that the Iowa Conference of the Augustana Synod has attempted to do its share toward the upbuilding within our State of a strong Lutheran Church, whose membership shall help to make this commonwealth second to none in these United States, which owes its liberty under God, in a great degree, if not wholly, to Martin Luther.

OVERLAND ROUTE.

There are two principal starting-places for this route, St. Joseph, Mo., a few miles above Fort Leavenworth, and Council Bluffs, a short distance N. of the entrance of the Platte into the Missouri. The road from Council Bluffs for 800 miles up the N. side of Platte River is the best natural one in the world. The elevation is less than 12 feet to the mile. The water coming from the highlands is fresh and cool. Grass is abundant, and on the river bottom two weeks earlier than on the route over the plains from St. Joseph, on the other side of the river. Timber, "buffalo chips," and mineral coal are found sufficient to supply travellers. The large amount of travel to California, Oregon and Utah makes it a great national thoroughfare. Over 100,000 souls have already travelled this road since the discovery of gold in California. The passage from Council Bluffs can be safely made, with wagons drawn by mules or oxen, in from 60 to 90 days, at an expense of not over \$100 for each passenger. If emigrants conduct themselves properly, no danger need be feared from any Indian tribes through which the road passes. All necessary outfits and supplies can be had at Kanessville and Council Bluffs. An accurate General Directory has been published by J. H. Colton, 86 Cedar Street, New York, and a Mormon Guide, by Mr. Clayton, which will give the emigrant all necessary information. The forts of the American Fur Company and of the United States are usually prepared to render any aid needed by travellers. Aid has also been furnished at the California end of the route at the expense of the state of California.

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N. B. The distances from St. Joseph are about 128 miles greater. The distance of Council Bluffs from New York, via Chicago, Dubuque, Galena, Cedar Rapids, and Fort Des Moines, is 1,511 miles.

Hayward's *Gazetteer of the United States of America*, 1854, p. 851-2.

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