

## TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, SAUK RAPIDS

FRANZMYER, WILBUR; OSTERMAN, VICTOR; KRIEG, OSCAR

This tape covers the personal background of Wilbur Franzmyer, Victor Osterman, and Oscar Krieg. It gives descriptions of early church history, and also refers to the Missouri Synod.

INTERVIEWERS: John LeDoux and Al Nielsen

DATE: July 18, 1979

SUBJECTS COVERED: Tape 1 Side 1

012 PERSONAL BACKGROUND - Wilbur Franzmyer, Pastor.

- 012 Wilbur Franzmyer was born in Rosemount, Minnesota and grew up on a farm. Parents were long time members of the Lutheran Church.  
 019 He came to Sauk Rapids in 1969. Parents were born in the Twin Cities.  
 028 He went to Christian Day School in Rosemount, attended Concordia College in St. Paul and also Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri.  
 034 His first assignment was in Plentywood, Montana for two years and Culver(?), Montana for five years.  
 039 He came to Slayton, Minnesota, for five years, then to Hibbing, Minnesota in 1961, and in 1969, came to Sauk Rapids.

056 PERSONAL BACKGROUND - Victor Osterman, Pastor.

- 056 Victor Osterman was born in May 16, 1903, near Brownton, Minnesota in McLeod County, attended Christian Day School and a public school, Concordia College in St. Paul and Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, graduating in 1927.  
 074 He became missionary-at-large in Revelstoke, British Columbia, Canada, for one year.  
 080 He went to a congregation south of St. Paul, not South St. Paul. In 1949, he came to Sauk Rapids, retiring in 1969.  
 105 He gives a description of his first call to a congregation in Revelstoke.  
 145 The means of transportation was anything but a car, usually a boat.  
 160 He visited each settlement at least once a month.  
 180 He got married during his second year of missionary-at-large assignment.

190 PERSONAL BACKGROUND - Oscar Krieg, ~~Pastor~~

- 190 Oscar Krieg was born on May 8, 1898 in Big Stone County in western Minnesota, near Chokio. His mother was born in Wisconsin and his father came to the United States from Russia in the 1900's. He was Russian of German Descent. He came to Nicollet, Minnesota, directly from Russia.  
 222 In 1905, the family came to Sauk Rapids. His father was a miller by trade but farmed from 1892 to 1905 in a tree plant farm.  
 233 The father came over in May, 1890, from Russia.  
 240 The father knew no English, but hired out to a farm family for one and one-half to one and three-quarters of a year, near Nicollet, Minnesota

- 250 Krieg's father and another man went to St. Peter to work for an Irish family for one year.
- 260 The father and a cousin, who was a pastor, <sup>rode horses</sup> ~~horsebacked~~ from St. Peter to Johnson, Minnesota. The cousin had been called to Johnson, where he stayed for a year and one-half.
- 270 Both came to Sauk Rapids. Languages spoken in the area were Polish, Russian, German and Slavic. At church he spoke in Polish, German and English, each Sunday later on in his ministry.
- 275 Oscar Krieg came to Sauk Rapids at the age of seven in 1905.
- 278 Krieg describes Sauk Rapids in the early 1900's, with the streetcars, the streets and the very primitive sidewalks.
- 300 Krieg describes the mills built in 1908.
- 308 The area of the milling imports came as far away as Mankato in southern Minnesota and the Pembina area in North Dakota. Mendota was the oldest and Sauk Rapids was the second oldest in the state. Sauk Rapids was at the end of the railroad line.
- 332 Osterman tells of knowing Krieg's father, and his winning first prize in the state of Minnesota for his flour. Krieg's father was a highly respected citizen and churchman.
- 375 Krieg attended district school first, two years in a parochial school, two grades in public school in Sauk Rapids, and high school and junior college at Concordia College in St. Paul.
- 400 He went into banking, independent insurance and income tax preparation. He prepared some of the first income tax forms in the state of Minnesota. He retired in January, 1978, at the age of 80.
- 424 There were a number of mills in the area until World War I, when most of the mills went out of business.
- 450 Osterman said lumbering and the sawmill business was very active in Sauk Rapids until 1912-13. Krieg describes more on the sawmill business, and about the logs that floated down the river.
- 493 Miles Lumber Company became part of St. Regis Paper Company in Sartell.
- 510 Next to Weyerhaeuser, St. Regis is a very big company.
- 525 People came from Albany to found the Trinity Lutheran Church. Some of the <sup>predecessors</sup> ~~predecessors~~ were Reverend Auerbach, Reverend Agatha and two other reverends.

SUBJECTS COVERED: Tape 1 Side 2

005 CHURCH HISTORY

- 005 Pastor Von Brant had organized a congregation at Albany.
- 010 The combined areas for the pastor included Holy Cross in St. Cloud, Trinity Lutheran in Sauk Rapids and St. John's in Popple Creek.
- 017 In 1897, Pastor Agatha continued at Popple Creek along with the Trinity Lutheran Church. In 1907-08 St. John's in Popple Creek gets its own pastor.
- 037 Trinity is an amalgamation of the German Lutheran Church.
- 052 In 1899, the Polish congregation in Popple Creek merged with Trinity.
- 070 In 1897, the Polish congregation in Sauk Rapids belonged to the Evangelical Synod of North America, became vacant and requested Rev. Agatha to converse in the Polish language, which he agreed.
- 073 Out of this Polish congregation sprang the Polish St. Johns Lutheran Church, which organized in January 22, 1899. This is not to be confused with the Polish congregation in Popple Creek.

- 088 There was a consolidation of the two congregations, the Polish Church and the German Lutheran Church. Pastor Agatha conversed in both the Polish and German language.
- 097 In 1917 services in the English language emerged.
- 112 Polish reading services was held every Sunday until 1948-49.
- 124 Services were conducted on a sliding scale, German with Polish, German with English and Polish with English for a number of years. Then English became the first service every Sunday, with the second service in Polish and German alternating every Sunday.
- 128 There were confirmations in Polish until 1912. After this, they were either German or English.
- 153 There were more Polish than German members in 1949, about 60%.
- 168 United States quotas on German immigrants was low, but there was no quotas on the Polish immigrants following WW I.
- 180 English speaking services for some of the congregation met in the Episcopal Church and after a bit became larger. Soon after English was incorporated into the Sunday services by Pastor Agatha.
- 190 Pastor Pedski conducted the Polish reading services until late 1948-49.
- 200 The younger people began to attend the English services. They were of German and Polish origin. The older members attended their own services, German or Polish.
- 240 The transition from foreign language services to English was very smooth and gradual. In 1926, the last group of people were confirmed in German, but were instructed in English. The Germans held on more stubbornly to their language than the Polish.
- 270 There were no special services for German like the Swedish special services.
- 284 Swedish politics entered more into the church whereas with the Germans it was not prevalent.
- 320 The list of churches in Sauk Rapids were the Congregational Church, Swedish Mission, Methodist Church and the Episcopal Church. The Catholic Church came in about 1914-15 and had their first services in the Episcopal Church.
- 337 The Congregational Church became the Presbyterian Church later on.
- 345 There was a mixture of people in the Catholic Church, such as the Austrian, Polish, German and English.
- 353 St. John's Cantius Church in St. Cloud had Polish services, but haven't had any now for many years.
- 360 The changes in the church over the years is the social activities are not centered around the church as in earlier years.
- 405 There were stables near the church in the area of the skating rink and the back of the school were the stables.
- 410 Following the excavation of the school in 1972-73, a large cistern was found under where the girl's washroom was. The well was in back of the house.
- 427 There were differences in the congregations of Franzmyer and Osterman. Much depended on the makeup of the congregation, whether it was rural or urban, laboring or non-laboring class.
- 495 Franzmyer believes that Sauk Rapids has a willingness to change. People in isolated area have a more worldwide view than people in the cosmopolitan center. It has become more progressive with the acquisition of the computer. Women are asking for the right to vote in the church. These are a few of the changes in recent years.

SUBJECTS COVERED: Tape 2 Side 3

004 CHURCH HISTORY

- 004 Roots in the rural church is much deeper than in an urban church.
- 050 Church council type of government is dominant and the membership of the congregation decides on the issues of the church. The vote for women will be decided in October.
- 058 The change is so gradual that you are really not aware of it.
- 065 The local congregation is supreme. Resolutions are formed by the body at large, but may be rejected by the local congregation. They are autonomous.
- 079 Within the Missouri Synod, each church has the same autonomous relationship as Trinity.
- 084 A delegate is sent to represent us at the convention and the resolutions are passed. In order not to follow these resolutions, we must have a very good reason. However, we will not be kicked out, if we don't.
- 094 Teachings are very tight, but administration is very loose. Each congregation has its own holdings, can leave the synod whenever it wants to, could sell its own property.
- 105 Trinity is not like the Catholic Church, where the land could go back to the church. Every bit of property that Trinity owns, that's Trinity's.
- 113 The Missouri Synod is affiliated with people of German background.
- 155 The Missouri Synod started in the mid 1800's. Other synods are amalgamations and do not have the cohesiveness that Trinity has.
- 176 Trinity keeps its original teachings, but uses modern methods, like much of the Missouri Synod members.
- 200 Trinity is the most progressive in Methodology than other churches, but have not changed our doctrine.
- 214 In January, 1974, in St. Louis, 45 of 50 professors at Concordia College walked off the job and wanted to start their own school. Now it is back to full strength. It was left with four professors and less than 100 students. College professors refused to teach that the Bible teachings was true, that the Bible contained truth, but also man's teachings. They also wanted academic freedom. The Missouri Synod got in trouble with the accreditation agencies. Now the school is accredited with a fine library.
- 245 The Luther Research, which comes out of St. Louis, is recognized worldwide.
- 255 In 1967, nationwide, twelve men met and agreed that the church had to go back to its original standings. In 1969 a new president was elected. These twelve people came from the United States and Canada, from all four corners.
- 280 The Missouri Synod is the only church body to still say that we believe the Bible to be God's word. Southern Baptists are going through the same thing, and the same with the Roman Catholic Church. In 1928, the Presbyterian Church was hit, but hit us last in 1960's.
- 318 In 1973, this was the worst as far as protests, or reading of the Vietnam war dead, for example.
- 327 Out of 6,000 plus congregation, we lost about 100.
- 345 The Missouri Synod believes the woman becoming deacons within the parish is contrary to scripture. They could serve in other positions.
- 370 There is more commitment among the young people and more support.

- 440 People are coming to St. Cloud, move to Sauk Rapids and attend church here. This is changing.
- 495 Many people do come here from St. Cloud for various reasons, like the banks and the post office. They don't have to stand in line as long.
- 515 There is a problem with drinking. AA, Alanon and various treatment programs find Sauk Rapids as very resistant to these efforts.
- 548 Franzmyer's average day at church begins at 8:30 to 9:15 with confirmation class, 9:15 to 12:00 with office work and the remainder of the day in private communion, study, visitations and classes.

SUBJECTS COVERED: Tape 2 Side 4

002 CHURCH HISTORY

- 002 Franzmyer's average day begins at 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. From September to May, the average week could be 80 hours per week, with less in the summer. Teaching about 12 hours per week, hospital work about 8 hours per week with sermon preparation, funerals, marriage, baptism and counseling. He is the First Vice President of the District and on the District Board of Directors for the synod, conducts a summer school for the seminary out of Fort Wayne, Indiana.
- 024 The easiest weeks are Christmas and Holy Week. People do not come in as much and some of the meetings are dropped.
- 035 There is more emphasis on counseling, such as alcohol abuse and marriage.
- 052 Marriage counseling takes on the average about six hours.
- 080 Participation is very minimal in civic and political activities, such as the late 1960's involvement in war protests.
- 096 The Missouri Synod has tried not to make political statements.
- 118 Historically the vast majority of the pastors feel that they should not influence the government in any way.
- 146 People who attend church in Sauk Rapids, live in surrounding areas including St. Cloud and Sartell.
- 160 The population of Sauk Rapids will soon be 6,000. In 1975 it was 5,535. Sartell is now growing rapidly. A new church will be built on 10-13 acres, south of the high school in Sartell. Next will be a church at Rice.

180 PERSONAL BACKGROUND - Wilbur Franzmyer

- 180 Wife's name is Delores Schimdt from West St. Paul. Oldest daughter is 28 years old, is married and teaches mathematics at Apple Valley, graduated from St. Cloud. The second daughter is Hope, age 22, just graduated with a degree in Electrical Engineering from the U of M. and works for Control Data. The youngest daughter is 21 years old, will graduate from St. Cloud State University with a degree in Business Management. The father is still alive and is 85 years old.

204 PERSONAL BACKGROUND - Victor Osterman

- 204 Wifes name is Lucy Wehmuellex. They were married in September, 1928. Oldest daughter is married, studied to be a nurse, has 3 boys and lives in Minneapolis. The youngest is also married, is a teacher, no children and lives in White Bear Lake. Parents are not living.

230 PERSONAL BACKGROUND - Oscar Krieg

230 Was married in 1933, at the age of 35 years. Wife's name was Esther Bey, who passed away February 3, 1973. They had three children. The oldest is a daughter, is married, has three children and was a designer before she was married. A son entered the armed services at the age of 18, retired in 1974 and entered the University of Sacramento. He began a second career at the age of 41. He teaches Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate and Land Use at the University of Sacramento as a member of the faculty.

250 CHURCH HISTORY

250 There are more and more smaller group meetings in homes, like bible studies, and also bible luncheons for men and women.  
292 The spiritual phenomena is going back into the home.  
300 May break with ALC and join the Wisconsin Synod in the near future.  
370 End of interview.