

Genesis of the LCMS -Week 4: February 14, 2010 The Emigration to America

America: A Refuge for Christian Faith

[Walther's 1874 Synodical Address (Treasury of C.F.W. Walther, Vol. VII; p. 149f)]

America: The Land of Opportunity:

Life in Europe was economically and demographically locked and stayed, having little opportunities to advance and develop new fields of exploration and use of stores of natural resources. The America's were certainly the land of opportunity and there were many pamphlets circulating about the availability and relative cheap abundance of land and opportunity for those who could make the trip. Many 'immigration' handbooks were written include Gottfried Duden's book touting the new world, and especially Missouri for Germans.

[Walther's National Day of Repentance Sermon, 1849 (Treasury of C.F.W. Walther, Vol. V; p. 39f)]

Prussian Immigrations 1839; Pr. Grabau brings about 1000 immigrants from Prussia to America (Buffalo, NY; Wisconsin). Eventually 5-6000 would leave (also to Australia).

The Saxon Immigration

The Pastors: M. Stephan (61), G.H. Loeber (42), E.G.W. Keyl (35), Buerger (33), O.H. Walther (29), C.F.W. Walther (27), Ottomar Fuerbringer (28), Georg Albert Schiefferdecker, (24); plus several candidates for the ministry and a total of 700 emigrants.

May 17, 1838; "Emigration Code"; "Travel Regulations"

The chief management of all affairs fo the entire *Gesellschaft* shall be exercised by its primate, who accordingly will combine in his person the supreme authority in spiritual and civil matters. All arrangements for worship will emanate exclusively from him until the "Ecclesiastical Code" comes into existence after permanent settlement has been effected. (Suelflow p. 48).

Stephan was to be given privacy and only approached by the pastors aboard the ship.

Embarkation

| <u>Ship</u> | <u>Departure from Bremerhafen</u> | <u>Arrival in New Orleans</u> |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Copernicus | Nov. 3, 1838 | Dec. 31, 1838 |
| Johann Georg | Nov. 3, 1838 | January 5, 1839 |
| Republic | Nov. 12, 1838 | January 12, 1839 |
| Olbers | Nov. 18, 1838 | January 20, 1839 |
| Amalia | Nov. 18, 1838 | Sunk in the Atlantic |

Walther had an orphaned niece and nephew in their teens whom the Walthers wanted to bring to America. They illegally brought them to Bremen and entrusted them to J.F. Buenger's mother. Walther's brother-in-law had her arrested just after Walther had set sail on the *John Georg*. The poor woman was jailed and had to catch a later ship to New York to join the Saxons in Perry Co., MO.

On the Olbers... two small children succumbed to the perils of the journey...

On January 14, 1839 “Stephan’s Investiture”

In consequence of all this, therefore, we approach you with the reverend, urgent plea: accept, Reverend Father, also for the future the office of Bishop among us bestowed upon you by God, and grant that we may now already express with this name our unqualified confidence in your fatherly love and pastoral faithfulness toward us, and the assurance of our sincere complete and childlike obedience toward you.

The full statement was signed by all the pastors on board the Olbers with Stephan and was subsequently signed when the Olbers landed in New Orleans by all the clergy.

The “Confirmation of Stephan’s Investiture” was dated February 24, 1839 by the clergy, candidates and the 12 congregational representatives. Further adulation of Stephan was expressed in another document, the “Pledge of Subjection.” While Suelflow doesn’t say much about this or give a date for it, it seems this was drafted and signed some time later. Walther, however, reports in the May 31, 1845 issue of *Der Lutheraner* that he and his fellow pastor in St. Louis had not signed this document because he had by then “lost all confidence in Stephan.”

The company steamed up the Mississippi to St. Louis which was at that time a bustling, frontier town, which already had quite a large German speaking populace. The company bought almost 4500 acres of Government and privately owned land in Perry County for just over \$9,000. Most of the company stayed in St. Louis where many of them would stay (including Walther). But Stephan was in the group that went down to establish themselves in Perry County.

The Beginning of the End for Stephanism

In St. Louis, Pr. Loeber, preached a penetrating sermon on May 5, 1839 after which several women stepped forward, alleging sexual immorality with Martin Stephan. In the days following several other women stepped forward and alleged Stephan had also made advances towards them.

Walther was selected to go to Perry County and the colony was appraised of the problem. By May’s end a large contingent of the St. Louis group came to Perry County to settle. A committee was formed to ‘deal with the problem’ and summoned Stephan to appear. When he refused he was removed from office and ‘sent across the river’ to Illinois.

The Saxons were in a state of sever turmoil and highly divided.