

## CHAPTER VIII.

### Rev. Peter Marius Brodahl

We have now noted that the first thing that the congregation did after its organization was to send a call to Norway for an ordained minister. The other congregations undoubtedly took up similar actions. Records show that this first call was issued thru the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, most commonly known as "Den Norske Synode," which was organized the year before at Koshkonong by six Norwegian ministers then in America.

We have also seen how these congregations had struggled with the erection of a joint parsonage, while ours had already started the building of a spacious church. They were getting along with the sparse visits of the neighboring ministers whose fields were already too large to be efficiently managed, and



Rev. Brodahl. Born in Norway Sept. 1st, 1822. Teacher and klokkar until 1856 when he came to Perry and vicinity, serving as minister until his re-turn to Norway in 1868. He also served as minister in Norway until his death, Feb. 13th, 1906. In 1848 he married Johanne Caline Hoff, who died in Perry, 1867. In 1872 he married Johanne Marie Bull, who survived him.

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whose visits would always make a few days' journey. We need not wonder then that interest ran so high when the blessed news spread that Rev. P. M. Brodahl had arrived at Koshkonong on his way to the Blue Mounds settlements to be their regular minister. In all probability there has never since been such a general rejoicing, such tender and thankful feelings, which seemed to permeate the very souls of the entire community with true Christian love, as was manifested at the installation service of Rev. Brodahl. People from far and near came to attend this service, which was held on the 20th day of July, 1856, under the large trees near the schoolhouse, one fourth of a mile east of Daleyville. Surely then the pioneers had reason to rejoice on such a rare occasion as this. Rev. Brodahl was a man of a pleasant personality, an eloquent preacher, but what pleased the pioneers the most of all was the fact that they now had a minister of their own.

At his first service the following were baptized: Ole V. Jenson, Anne Hellikson Forli, Targe Daley and Gunild Hiline Erickson.

Rev. Brodahl held eight more services in Perry during the balance of the year 1856, including "Alle Helgens Dag," together with "Menigheds Möde" on Nov. 3d, Thanksgiving day, confirmation on December 19th, and Christmas day. In 1857 he held twenty-two services in Perry, most of them being conducted in the old log church. By this time the new parsonage in the town of Blue Mounds had been brot to completion and was now ready to be occupied by the new minister who moved there with his family. This became his home for nearly four years. From here he moved temporarily to Black Earth, where

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he stayed for nearly two years, after which he returned to Perry making his home with Halvor Halvorson Piper, from whom he had rented a few rooms until the Perry parsonage would be ready for occupation.

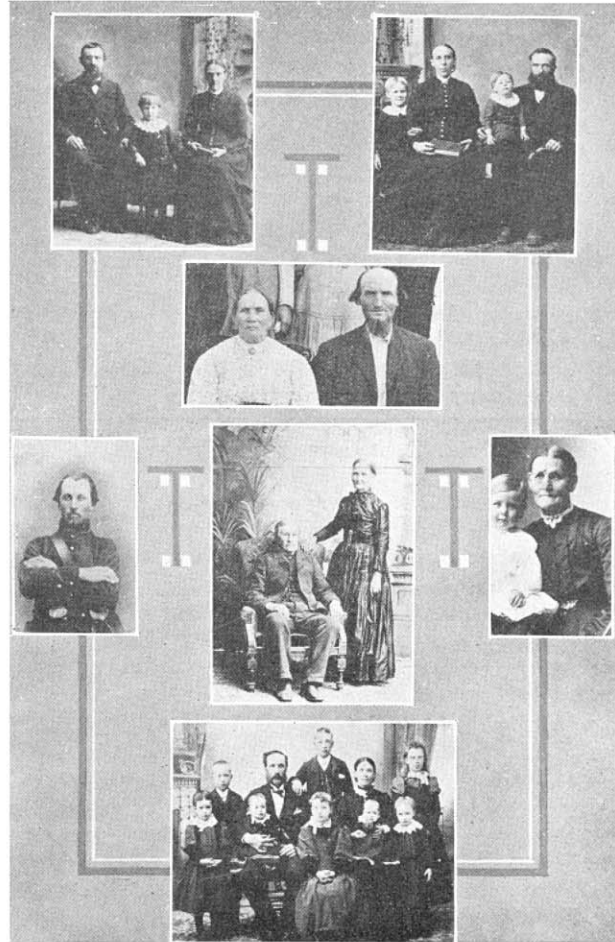
Rev. Brodahl was in Perry not only for its services but took an active part in its various "Menigheds Möder," church building, and all other activities. When the five years of his call had elapsed he was again called by the Board of Trustees for an indefinite time, an action which received the unanimous approval of the congregation. Rev. Brodahl however, wished to resign; his resignation was accepted November 18th, 1867. The reason he assigned for this move was his impaired health, believing that the cooler climate of his Mother Country would at least partly restore it. Thus it came about that he preached his last sermon in Perry on May 24th, 1868, after which he returned to Norway, having spent twelve years of active service in this locality.

Rev. Brodahl's path in our midst was not all strewn with roses; his field of labor was large and the country was comparatively new. In many ways his work was that of a missionary, organizing congregations, and working among the scattered settlers. Nor did he confine himself to those of his own nationality, but labored among the German Lutherans as well, baptizing their children, and reading to them the messages of Truth. "Preste Kallenderen" asserts that Rev. Brodahl served as many as twenty-one congregations at one time, but whether this is authentic or not we do not know. But we do know that his charge was large from the records which states that on

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Aug. 29th, 1859, the following change was proposed, namely, that Perry, Wiota, Primrose (Green County), and Springdale, should form one parish, while Vermont, Blue River, Spring Green, Richland, Big Hollow and others, should form another.



Mr. and Mrs. Ole Kittleson Stolen, Mr. and Mrs. Juul Knudtson Hovrud, Mr. and Mrs. Thor Kittleson Stolen, Peder Dalby, Mr. and Mrs. Iver Berg, Mrs. Peder Dalby, Mr. and Mrs. Kittle Kittleson Stolen and family.

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That which caused the severest strain between Rev. Brodahl and his people was undoubtedly the slavery question in the early sixties. When we reflect on the intensity of the situation in times of war, and on the strength of the opposition to slavery among the northern people, we do not wonder that the people were thoroughly aroused when a majority of the pastors of the "Norske Synode" including Rev. Brodahl, declared that the holding of slaves was in and by itself not an absolute sinful relation according to the Bible. This teaching was not an expression of sympathy with slavery on the part of the ministers, but was first voiced in response to a public inquiry concerning the Biblical doctrine on this point. The answer however, brot on a storm of protests and criticisms, in the face of which the ministers defended their action on the ground that the Bible, and not they, prompted the answer to the inquiry as given. It mattered very little how convincingly this view was presented as "it would not down with the people." At our time a matter of this nature might seem unimportant, but at that time it was an exceedingly pertinent question which had set the feelings of the people to a white heat.

About six of our members withdrew from the congregation on December 29th, 1862, and immediately applied for membership in the congregation served by Rev. J. N. Fjeld. Their stay with this congregation was hardly any more satisfactorily than with the first as on the fourth of April, 1863, the Board of Trustees deposed of their pastor on the very same charges.

While our fathers rejected the doctrine on slavery, that we refer to it here, it seems that they had no animosity toward the

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Synode. As at a special meeting on March 30th, 1863, the Perry congregation sent an invitation to the Synode to hold its annual meeting with them. The same action was again taken the following year. And finally on April 5th, 1865, four days before the surrender of the Appomattox Court House, she sent in her application for admittance with only two dissenting votes. Our application was accepted at the annual meeting of the Synode, and we remained a member of that body until our congregation withdrew therefrom during the "Naadevalg Striden" on July 9th, 1887.

Rev. Brodahl's farewell sermon is described as a masterpiece of eloquence and pathos. During the twelve years of his pastorate he had shared with his people both joy and sorrow. They had been taught to love and respect each other as only hardships and trials can teach. And surely Rev. Brodahl must have had his share of trials as four of his children were called to a "Better Land," and on March 22nd, 1867, his beloved helpmate, Johanne Caline Brodahl passed away in death, all of whom rest beneath the green sod in our cemetery. No wonder then that he declared he should never forget Perry and its people.

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### CHAPTER XI

#### Perry's First Parsonage

The first indication on the written records showing that Rev. Brodahl was not satisfied with the parsonage in Blue Valley was at a special meeting in Perry. At this meeting a motion to buy the "Dotty Farm" to be used as a parsonage was defeated by one vote. This meeting was held on August 29th, 1859, and the reason assigned against its purchase was the lack of means to buy