Sixty Years of Perry Congregation

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.

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
the property with at that time.

After the minister had left the parsonage in Blue Valley and moved to Black Earth, the question was continually brewing until at a special meeting on Sept. 9th, 1861, Perry Congregation bought the Prindable farm of 60 acres for a parsonage. There were divided opinions as to whether Perry congregation should carry this burden alone, as is seen by the vote of March 3d, 1862, which however, ratified the former decision with 28 for and 20 against.

On April 4th the same year Dennis Prindable and wife gave to the trustees of our congregation a warranty deed on what has since been our parsonage for a consideration of $700.00. The

Perry’s First Parsonage

trustees giving a mortgage on the same land for more than half of the purchased price. (This mortgage has since been paid.) After the land had been bought the neighboring congregations were invited to buy part share in it, and to participate in the erection of the minister’s dwelling, but as there is nothing further on the records it must be taken for granted that they did not accept the invitation.

When we remember that this was the gloomy times of the
great Civil War, when there was not a home that did not fear for their loved ones at the front, many of whom already laid in their final sleep, under the scorching sun of the south. Others again still home, but ready to answer the bugle call when our beloved land needed them took all these sorrows and uncertainties coupled with the other hardships of a war-ridden country with high courage. Money of doubtful value and other difficulties incident to such times now gives to us a thrill of admiration as we think of our ancestors, who, besides going thru all these trials, found time and means to provide themselves with a church and a place of abode for their spiritual advisor.

A meeting of the congregation in January, 1863, decided to proceed with the building of a parsonage on the land previously bought, and to erect a log house 24x30. The logs were to be taken from the farm. The meeting accepted a loan of $100 from Rev. Brodahl, and elected Valquar Jensen and Ole Jørgenson Hastvedt as a building committee and superintendents of the work, specifying what part of the work each should oversee. Those present at the meeting then went in a body and staked out the first parsonage, which was situated where the barn is now located. Rev. Brodahl moved in as soon as the house was completed (in the summer of 1863) and lived there until his departure for Norway in 1868.

It is very easy to chronicle that a building had been erected and a farm had been bought, but the work involved in the building and the means to be found often causes many a heartache, worry, torment, and blister. This parsonage was no exception judging by the numerous subscription lists that crossed and recrossed each other’s trails, for the land, the buildings, the
fences for the farm and church yard had to be provided and paid for. But when the end is well, all is well, and when the toils and sacrifices of the past pass in review before our vision, they should teach us to work with renewed perseverance and vigor. History invariably points to that as the only true course to successful and worthy accomplishments.

After Rev. Brodahl’s departure, we notice the congregation in a meeting assembled on the 18th of May, 1868, instructed their delegate-elects to the “Synode-møde,” to urge Rev. A. Jacobson to accept the call from this charge. Rev. Jacobson accepted the call, and with his family lived in this parsonage during their entire ten years’ stay in Perry. From the minutes of that same meeting we read the following interesting paragraph: (2) “Prestegaards-bygningen skal males over tre gange med hvid farve, og dørene og vindues karmene indvendig med Ege Kolour.”

The buildings were quite badly damaged in the storm of May 23rd, 1878, but were repaired and slightly remodeled from time to time and were used as a parsonage until the present one was erected in 1893. It was further used by Rev. Voldal as a miscellaneous building for six years. Then it was sold to the sexton for two years’ service, who moved it into Daleyville where it is still being used as a dwelling.

CHAPTER X.
Rev. Abraham Jacobson

After Rev. Brodahl moved away the congregation sent a call to Rev. Otteson of Koshkonong to serve them temporarily, with the privilege of sending any of his colleagues to serve in his