

Restored interior of the first Norwegian Lutheran Church in America, built on Norway Hill in 1843, now preserved on the campus of Luther Seminary, St. Anthony Park, Minneapolis, Minn. Photo courtesy of Augsburg Pub. House, Minneapolis.

THE CHURCH

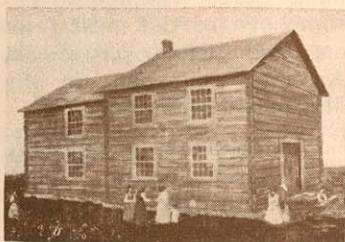
on

NORWAY HILL



Photo by Malme.

Woven through the early history of the community which lies all about Heg Memorial Park, like a shining golden thread through the dark fabric of hardship, disease and privation, is the steadfast devotion of this little band of Norwegian pioneers to the faith of their fathers.



THE FIRST NORWEGIAN LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

Reproduced from an oil painting now preserved in the present church. The painting is signed "Gausta". It was presented to the congregation by Jeremiah Fries. Photo by Malme.

men's place of worship had been reared there, they made

pilgrimages to this spot which they had so long looked upon as holy ground.

Halvor Nelson Lohner supervised the construction. Ole Hoganson had charge of shingling the roof. All other settlers, young and old, assisted to the best of their ability. Halvor Lohner's first born son, Ole Lohner, was the first child to be baptized at the massive walnut baptismal font.

Back in the homeland, interested friends and relatives aided the labor of the settlers with prayers, and with money. Within the year they had called Claus L. Clausen to become their spiritual leader. This first pastor of the first Norwegian Lutheran church in America was a young Danish immigrant. The first deacon was Peter Jacobson, whose great-grandson, Clarence Jacobson, now occupies the farm home of which the first old parsonage is still a part.

Rev. Clausen was succeeded in the pastorate of the old church by Rev. H. A. Stub, who preached his first sermon in this church and who saw the dreadful sieges of cholera bring sorrow and death to every family in his entire congregation. In 1849, Rev. Stub's son, Hans Gerhard Stub, destined to become one of the most famous and gifted pastors in America, was born in the Muskego settlement.



REV. CLAUS L. CLAUSEN

First pastor of the first Norwegian Lutheran church in America.

Reproduced by Charles Studios from a picture in American Lutheran Biographies, published in 1890, by courtesy of Hans Bendickson.

The founders of Norway Hill church became known as the "Singing Congregation" because their hymns could be heard ringing out as they came up the hill to worship, and again as they returned home.

For twenty-five years the families comprising this first congregation came to this simple rugged structure to partake of "the bread of Life and the living waters" which gave

them the strength and courage necessary for the continuance of their settlement.

In 1869 the old church was taken down and the present structure was erected on the same site. After standing neglected on a farm nearby for many years, the old church was finally removed to the campus of Luther Seminary at St. Anthony Park, Minneapolis, largely through the efforts of Hjalmer Rued Holand, historian, now of Door County. Here it was carefully restored and is being preserved as a hallowed memorial.

In June of 1939, on the occasion of the one-hundredth anniversary of the founding of the settlement, the present church was honored by a visit from Crown Prince Olav and Crown Princess Martha of Norway.

In 1943, all Norse Lutherans in America will celebrate the centennial of the founding of the first Norwegian Lutheran Church in America by the pioneers of Old Muskego on Norway Hill.

Fourteen pastors have served the Norway-Muskego congregation since 1843.

Rev. H. C. M. Jahren, the present pastor, who was called to the community in 1928, works unceasingly to preserve and promote the great memories surrounding his church and his pastorate.



REV. H. C. M. JAHREN
Present Pastor of the church on
Norway Hill.