

The Formative Years of the Inspectorship: 1865-1915

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In the early years of Northwestern, a quandary faced the school that would not be resolved for fifty years. Over that period of time the world was changing, the churches growing, and the Synod developing into a confessional church body. Unfortunately, many mistakes were made along the way. But God, in his grace, still managed to accomplish his will in spite of human error. For many a man was trained for ministry and those men brought many a soul to faith. Today, we can praise God for his amazing grace during these years.

Drawing heavily upon the research and eyewitness accounts of J. P. Koehler and E. E. Kowalke, this paper will examine the office of Inspector as it developed over fifty years. It will also help the reader to get to know the men who served their Lord by caring for his lambs. J. P. Koehler described the inspector in this way. “The position requires a man of unusual personality and talents.”¹ We shall see how the men who served measured up.

The Founding of the School

At the break of the Civil War in 1861, there was a growing concern in the Wisconsin Synod about the training of future pastors. Congregations were starting with no one but itinerant pastors, if any, to serve their spiritual needs. The German Mission Societies were

¹ J. P. Koehler. *The History of the Wisconsin Synod*. St. Cloud, Minnesota: Sentinel Publishing Company, 1970; p. 119.

sending pastors, but eventually, they would not be able to send enough or even fund enough pastors to meet the growing needs. Training pastors in the seminary in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, was not the option it used to be. It was far from Wisconsin in location and growing further away from confessional Lutheranism in doctrine. The pastors who did serve were referred to by some as of “motley character.”² And increasing attacks by Missouri caused strained relations. “Missouri looked upon Wisconsin as being so unorthodox as to be scarcely worthy of the name Lutheran, and Wisconsin people were repelled by the rough handling they were receiving in Missouri publications.”³

All of these factors and many more contributed to thoughts among Wisconsin members of building its own ministerial education school. And so, in 1865, Northwestern University was founded in Watertown, Wisconsin. The school was designed to house a high school age academy, a collegiate department and the synod’s Seminary. Dr. E. Moldehnke was salaried by the Langenberg and Berlin Mission Societies, becoming the sole professor of the Seminary. Prof. Adam Martin was called and became the sole professor of the college, its president, as well as supervisor of the dormitory.

In the years ahead, funding would be sought from the Mission Societies, but the funds rarely reached the Synod. The United Church of Prussia would not allow all of the funds to be sent to such a church body as the Wisconsin Synod which was moving towards confessionalism and away from the unionism so popular in Germany.

² *ibid.*, p. 119.

³ E. E. Kowalke. *Centennial Story*. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1965, p. 14.

Dr. E. Moldehnke (1865-1866)

Moldehnke was staunchly Lutheran, which is surprising considering his education at the rationalistic Halle University. While there, he was private secretary to Prof. Tholuck, the foremost supporter of Lutheranism in Germany. Moldehnke was sent to America by the Langenberg/Berlin Mission Societies as an itinerant pastor, serving some 22 congregations. He continued to carry out this ministry even while serving as head of the Seminary in Watertown. It is evident that while serving the school, he still felt a loyalty to the societies that sent him, making numerous trips. In fact, there is “every indication that Moldehnke’s heart was in missionary work and not the classroom.”⁴ His loyalty and love for mission work would come into play during his year as Seminary professor.

Prof. Adam Martin (1865-1869)

Adam Martin was also born in Germany but emigrated to America early in his life. He was raised and educated here in the States, graduating from Hamilton College in Clinton, New York, and Hartwick Theological Seminary in Brooklyn. His upbringing in America made him tend toward American ways of education. In fact, he spoke English by preference.

He came to Northwestern on recommendation by Moldehnke having been called to serve as sole professor, president, and supervisor of the dorm. At the school’s dedication service, he was one of the speakers. He expressed his desire to make Northwestern a great university to be ranked among the most respected in the land. He expressed his desire to create a university that served the community and helped raise the educational levels of

German immigrants. These views earned him the respect of the local newspaper editor, a Mr. Ballou. "Professor Martin's address was an able finished production, admirably written, eloquent and practical in its bearings. It was much above the ordinary merits of addresses on such occasions. He is a remarkably pleasant and impressive speaker and displays fine oratorical talents."⁵ Incidentally, Martin's speech was in English, unlike the others.

In 1869, for reasons which will be discussed below, Martin resigned. He went on to serve a professorship at Gettysburg College until his retirement in 1898.

Adam Martin was ambitious, sincere, and a man of vision. But his views on education and theology were in conflict with the confessionalism of the Wisconsin Synod.

Dorm regulations of 1865 and following

Not all of the university's students came from the Watertown area. Some of them needed to be housed and supervised. To keep the students in line, rules were necessary.

- Students were admonished to devote themselves as Christians to their work and purpose.
- Students were to attend church on Sundays at the Synod church in Watertown, St. Mark.
- Sundays were to consist of no unnecessary activities and there was no need to study. In fact, studying was discouraged.
- Students were to rise at 5:00 a.m. during the summer and 6:00 a.m. during the winter.
- Chapel followed a half-hour later.
- breakfast was at 7:00, dinner at 12:00, and supper at 6:00.
- Bedtime was 10:00 p.m.
- Free periods were 7:00-8:00 and 5:30-7:30.
- All other hours students were to be in classrooms or studyrooms.
- Students were not to leave the campus without permission.
- each week a student served as proctor:
 - waking the students.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 51.

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 34.

- checking that all were in bed.
- enforcing order in the rooms.
- Students were to make their own beds.
- Students were to provide firewood for their rooms and the kitchen.
- Students were to work around the building and grounds according to their assignment by the Board of Trustees.
- If there was a shortage of food in the kitchen, students were to go out into the countryside and solicit food from the local farmers.

source?

These were just some of the rules that weighed heavily upon the students and as a result, caused problems.

Dorm Problems

There was very little direct supervision by the early inspectors. Most of the supervision was entrusted to the older students. At first the “older students” were seminarians. But when the seminary was later moved to St. Louis, the “older students” were merely upperclassmen. This privilege was perhaps naively bestowed, not allowing for consideration of the sinful flesh. For it was thought that since most of the boys were studying for the ministry, it could be safely assumed that they would be models of behavior no matter what their ages. Since most students were of high school age, the rules were designed for them. Older students felt like they were being treated like children and chaffed under such stringent rules. Problems began to arise. In fact, discipline problems resulted in two expulsions in the first year. This may not seem like a large number. But considering that the two constituted a third of the student body, puts the number in the proper perspective. One student later returned. The other did not.

The “stringent rules” mentioned above, however, were just part of the contributing causes. Some parents saw the school as a reform school and sent their miscreant children.

Other students were sons of rich and prominent merchants in Milwaukee and Chicago who were not necessarily Wisconsin Synod, much less Lutheran. The Northwestern many can still remember had an enrollment limited to those who expressed at least an interest in entering the ministry. But in those early years this was not always the case. Further, the dormitory was overcrowded. This problem was relieved when a new dormitory was built. But all of these were contributing factors to the problems that were resulting.

The number of disciplinary problems was surprisingly high. And yet the Synod and Board felt that the duties of supervising could be added to the duties of one of the faculty members. But problems became so great that Moldehnke talked of resigning and Martin asked to be released of his supervisory duties.

The Board, hearing the reports of disciplinary problems, saw the only solution to be the calling of an inspector by the start of the 1866-1867 school year to relieve Prof. Martin. All agreed that an additional professor who could serve the seminary as well as fill the new position of Inspector could be found in Pastor Adolf Hoenecke.

The Office of Inspector

The term and function of this position was not known in America. Its origins are from the German high school/college institution known as the *gymnasium*. The Inspector's duties were to preserve order in the dormitory as well as to act as a sort of father to the students who were away from home and staying in the dormitory. At Northwestern the inspector was *in loco parentis* to students whose average ages ranged from 13 to 23. In fact, until 1956, the vast majority of the student body lived under one roof, almost like one family under the care of its father. The Inspector ate with the students, lived with the students, slept with the students.

He was literally surrounded by students all the time. Hoenecke, as well as those who followed him, carried a full class load along with the inspector duties - an obvious overburdening that was overlooked. Fortunately, this situation was later changed.

Adolf Hoenecke (1866-1869)

Hoenecke was born and trained in Germany. He was sent by the Berlin Mission Society to serve the congregation in Farmington, Wisconsin. Since Farmington was near to Watertown, Pastor Hoenecke would come regularly and teach drawing to the students at Northwestern. After accepting his call, he continued in this capacity. He served as the first real Inspector of Northwestern, called specifically for the purpose. Under Hoenecke, discipline and order were restored.

His contributions to the school were great but one of the most important was his constant appeal for support of the school to the Synod. He accomplished this through the *Gemeindeblatt* of which he was editor. Hoenecke accepted a call to St. Matthew congregation in Milwaukee in 1870 and later served as professor and president of the Wauwatosa Seminary.

Conflict

When the Board called Hoenecke to restore discipline, it was rumored that Moldehnke took it as a slight on his abilities. Though he was not responsible for the supervision of the dormitories nor was he in any way slacking in his teaching and administrative duties some say he seemed to resent the calling of an additional theological professor and inspector. Others would argue that it was desire to return to his itinerant missionary duty full time. In any case, resisting all pleas to remain, Moldehnke tendered his resignation and left.

But that was not the end of problems for the growing faculty. In 1868, as the Synod grew closer to confessionalism and away from the unionism of the eastern Lutheranism, there was pressure to leave the unionistic and practically unconfessional General Council. President Martin, educated in eastern schools and dreaming of greater things for the college through unity, threatened to resign if the Synod withdrew. It did and he did effective September of 1869, the following year.

It was during this period that Prof. Martin was teaching classic works to the students in an extracurricular class. The Board demanded that they be translated into German for the students. Martin refused, insisting on English. After further complaints from parents and faculty and more arguments with the Board, he was relieved of teaching ancient languages already in 1868. But he was asked to remain. He did so, agreeing to abide by the Board's stipulations.

But Martin failed to do so. Already in April of 1869 Board President Bading reported that Martin "did not possess the necessary qualifications for the position, that especially in recent periods he had not carried out his office with proper faithfulness and the institution had in consequence suffered severely."⁶ As a result, Martin was dismissed at Easter. He agreed and asked only for his salary through September, his original resignation date. This was granted by the Board. His release from the Synod was granted in May of that same year.

Prof. Lewis Thompson stepped in and replaced Martin, serving as the acting president of the college with Hoenecke as head of the seminary. In some ways a blessing, a small pox epidemic broke out at the school, canceling classes for the remainder of the academic year and

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 58.

giving Thompson a chance organize and fill the vacancy on the faculty left by Martin. A. F. Ernst was called for that very purpose.

A. F. Ernst (President 1871-1919, Inspector 1869-1872)

Ernst was born in Germany in 1841. The son of a German pastor, Ernst followed in his father's footsteps. He first completed his *Gymnasium* training at Celle before studying theology and philosophy at the University of Goettingen. He taught for year in the *Gymnasium* of Clausthal and emigrating to America in 1863. He served congregations in Brooklyn and Albany over the next five years. It was during his time in Albany that he came to know Pastor Adelberg of St. Mark in Watertown.

Adelberg, serving on the Board, suggested Ernst's name to fill the vacancy left by Martin. Ernst accepted the call and arrived at Northwestern at only 28 years of age, being installed in August of 1869, and remained on faculty until his retirement at the age of 81. Initially he co-chaired the faculty from 1870 until 1871. ^{At} that time he assumed the presidency from Acting President Thompson. He held the office for nearly fifty years. Of course with the presidency came the inspectorship left vacant by Hoenecke in 1870 and had also ^{in obsolud} part of Thompson's duties.

During this time of transition and change, Ernst became an anchor. Kowalke makes these remarks about his predecessor as president of the college, "He remained a symbol of authority - the patriarch of the flock, as his nickname, 'The Old Man' or 'Oley,' implied."⁷

Ernst was professor of Greek, Latin, German, history, philosophy, logic, and psychology. All of these were with Seniors. Though he was not a drill master, he strove to

“arouse interest in the rhetoric, philosophy, or logic of whatever piece was under discussion,”⁸ constantly attempting to instill a desire to learn. In the dormitory, he was not a strict disciplinarian and was able to take the pranks of the students in stride.

Ernst retired in 1922 and was called home in 1924 - “a scholar, a great teacher, a devout Christian.”⁹

In 1872, however, Ernst was just getting his feet on the ground. With three years of teaching and one year of the presidency behind him the school’s attention turned to solving professor housing problems. Homes were built so that professors wouldn’t have to live in the dormitory with their families. In the earliest year of the academy a young boy was struggling for the first time with his languages. His name was John Philip Koehler. ^{The} And-Synod was still trying to fulfill its end of the arrangement for seminary training with Missouri. Since capable men were scarce it was difficult to fill the Synod’s professor slot at St. Louis. When a capable man was suggested, it was agreed by both sides that his talents were of greater need in Watertown. And so, Northwestern issued a call to F. W. A. Notz.

F. W. A. Notz “The Old Doctor” (Inspector 1872-1887)

Notz was born in 1841 in Germany, the son of a Wuerttemberg pastor. He, too, was a *gymnasium* student, studying in the Muhlenberg school. Later he attended the Protestant Convent School at Maulbronn and received his doctorate from Tuebingen. He arrived in America in 1866, starting his teaching career as a private tutor for a Georgia planter’s family. He worked for the family for two years before becoming professor of classics and German at

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 124.

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 124.

the Pennsylvanian Allentown College. It was at this time that he heard about Northwestern, its system and the confessionalism to which its Synod held. In an attempt to show his appreciation, he sent the library a number of rare, valuable books. He also served at Muhlenberg College.

Because of his skills and previous interest, he was called to Northwestern in 1872. At ^{the request of} Director Ernst's request who gladly relinquished the duties, Notz was made Inspector. Along with the Inspector duties he carried a full class load, teaching primarily Hebrew and Greek. He remained active on the faculty for the next forty years. Along with Ernst, these two men were chiefly responsible for shaping the course of studies and policies for the developing college.

Prof. Notz was good-natured and inclined to be lenient yet wise in the ways of the students. Often, he enjoyed the pranks they pulled as much as the students themselves. One particular story describes a rather Pauline situation involving a rope and a basket. In class he was well loved, but often the object of fun. He had a weak spot for snuff and occasionally attempted to sneak a pinch during class. He would stand in the back of the room and take out a pinch while the students had their heads in their translating. Knowing that this was happening, the students began their game. One of the back row students would stare at him so that he wouldn't be able to sneak the snuff. Notz would direct him to get his nose back into the text, but then another student would pick up the vigil. Eventually, Notz would give up and drop the pinch to the floor. Perhaps this kind of ribbing which the professor endured was why

⁹ *ibid.*, p. 124.

these words can be found on the back of a picture: “Prof. Notz (Old Docs) – 1907 – May the venerable sage live long and be happy, for ever and ever - -”¹⁰

Prof. Notz’ health began to deteriorate in 1911, forcing him to take a leave of absence and ultimately to retire in 1912. In retirement he served on the board of regents for the University of Wisconsin. He was called home in 1921.

Mixed Blessings

On December 29, 1874, the “new dorm” burned to the ground. By God’s grace, no one was hurt. It was Christmas vacation and none of the students were staying at the school. School continued in January housing students with private families. The replacement dorm was ready to be occupied by the following September and stood for nearly 100 years.

The mid 1870’s brought a growing enrollment but also increasing discipline problems. Many of the same factors, which Hoenecke was able to suppress, ten years prior, were again cropping up. Hoenecke, of course, had the maturer seminary students to help maintain discipline and did not require strict intervention. But Director Ernst was opposed to any type of school discipline that reminded him of Prussian regimentalism. Prof. Notz implemented in^{an} inadequate system which he brought with him from his training at Maulbronn. Compound these factors with poor conditions and situations for energetic young men, and problems will be imminent. Aside from the professors and students who lived in the 1875 dorm, all time was spent in the *Kaffeemuhle* classroom/dormitory/ cafeteria/library/office building. There was no gymnasium, no athletic teams, no recreation rooms, the campus was a pasture not an athletic

¹⁰ picture, archives, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

field, no provisions were made for any activities outside of studying, attending classes, eating, and sleeping. It was a breeding ground for trouble.

One particular instance was referred to above involving Inspector Notz. Some students who lived on the upper floors desired some food late at night. It would be impossible for them to leave the building down the stairs without raising the inspector. Using the fire escape ropes, they let one of their fellows down in a basket to go in search of food. He was to give the rope a tug when he was successful and they would bring him back up. After a short time, there was the tug. But while they were pulling up the significantly heavier basket, they saw their fellow student come around the corner, arms laden with food. It was discovered that Inspector Notz was ascending the building in their basket. What else would apprehended students do but let go of the rope. The story ends there. Kowalke chalks the story up to legend but this author has heard the story told from other sources as well.

In 1877, students from donated second grade lumber built a “turning hall.” It was used for military drills and gymnastics (parallel bars etc.) but wasn’t good for much else. Unless the weather was just right, students had to find recreation in the dormitory. This 1877 gymnasium was later expanded in 1883.

In 1880, the disciplinary situation had become so grave that the Board passed a resolution in September for the faculty to formulate dormitory regulations. The faculty, however, failed to produce. In February of 1881, the Board delegated former inspectors Hoenecke and Ernst, present Inspector Notz, Synodical president Bading and local Pastor/Board member/part-time professor Adelberg to formulate regulations. They, too, failed to produce. The Synod, then, in convention in June, called on Notz to draw up regulations by the adjournment of the convention. He complied. But the faculty was still concerned about

discipline and discussed the use of corporal punishment. Though rare and reserved for extreme cases - serious infractions compounded by lying - "floggings" by members of the faculty had been taking place and continued to do so, on record, until late in the 1890's. Students on each other, however, continued this practice. The faculty also sought greater assistance from parents in the disciplining of their sons.

Shared Responsibility

After carrying out inspector duties for 13 years, Notz needed help. In 1885 J. Henry Ott and William Weimar, recent graduates from the Class of 1885, were called to assist Notz. Notz became a sort of inspector-in-chief. Ott and Weimar, however, couldn't recall seeing Notz in the Dorm after they were appointed - 13 years had been enough.

J. Henry Ott and William Weimar

The two boys entered Northwestern literally at the same time. Weimar approached Ernst's desk to register in 1880, a tall dark young man in line behind him. Weimar described his previous education and stated that he needed Latin, asking to be placed in the Quarta class. Ernst agreed and entered him. The young man behind spoke up and said, "If this young man can do it, I think I can too."¹¹ Ernst agreed and entered him. The two young men took identical courses - 3 years of Latin in their Quarta year - and graduated together. Because they were somewhat older than their classmates and showed remarkable abilities, were both called as full professors to the faculty after graduation.

J. Henry Ott (Professor 1885-1939, Inspector 1885-1888, 1899-1903)

Ott was born of Swiss immigrants in Tell City, Indiana. Initially he learned the printer's trade, working as a typesetter in Nashville, Denver and St. Louis. A friend who was attending the Seminary in St. Louis, a graduate of Northwestern, persuaded him to complete his education in Watertown. Ott took his suggestion and made the journey to what would become his *alma mater* and his home for the rest of his life. Ott later studied at the Universities of Berlin and Halle, obtaining his doctorate.

Dr. Ott possessed a keen mind and a love for languages. Slowly he built up the library, cataloguing more than 1800 volumes at the start. From time to time along the way he helped with inspector duties. "Of no one who ever served on Northwestern's faculty can it be said more truthfully that he gave of himself completely and ungrudgingly to the school that had called him into its service."¹² Dr. Ott retired in 1939 and was called home in October of 1945.

Weimar (Professor 1885-1903, Inspector 1885-1888, 1899-1903)

Prof. Weimar carried on the tradition of sound mathematics set by Prof. Amos Easterday, his predecessor. He remained on the faculty until 1903 when he retired to a fruit farm in Yakima, WA. Through the years, he helped with inspector duties, was leader of the school band, and was an instructor of gymnastics. He was called home at age 81 in San Mateo, California.

¹¹ Kowalke, p. 129.

¹² *ibid.*, p. 129.

Under Ott and Weimar, there was reform and liberalization of rules established as far back as 1865.

Blue Laws - rules pertaining to Sundays

- The rule abolished which required all students but upperclassmen to attend the Sunday School at St. Mark - the kindergarten to eighth grade Sunday School.
- all students were to assemble in the morning and be led to church by a professor
- It was predetermined where one could sit - main floor or balcony.
- There were no games or noise on Sundays.
- There was no studying, either - no record of this law ever being broken.

Other Regulations

- No loud noise of any kind including whistling and musical instruments, during the strict study hours - changed to merely an observance was expected of the study times and bedtimes.
- No:
 - burning fluids
 - gunpowder
 - fireworks
 - firearms
 - intoxicating drinks
- No tobacco of any kind allowed on campus. This was commonly broken and was not effectively carried out. Though petitioned by students to smoke after 9 p.m. the faculty refused to give in.
- No visiting taverns, eating houses, or saloons where intoxicating drinks were sold. This rule was consistently violated though never argued by students. Even they understood the dangers of temptation in such places. Further, there is no record of punishment ever inflicted for drunkenness. There is, however, record of punishment before faculty because of: "visiting a saloon on Sunday instead of going to church, bringing beer into the dormitory, frequently visiting saloons."¹³
- No attending balls.
- No attending theaters.
- No swimming or skating on the Rock River. This rule met with the approval of the students. Two members of the faculty would test the warmth of the water in summer and the strength of the ice in the winter in order to give the OK. There is no record of infractions, but, in spite of the precautions, a few accidental drownings occurred over the years.
- No express rule outside of scripture, but there was to be no stealing. Unfortunately, hardly a year passed where some student didn't succumb to the temptation and was expelled. The stealing that did occur was usually confined to the dorm but occasionally a student was caught shoplifting in town.

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¹³ *ibid.*, p. 97.

Ott and Weimar did an admirable job, but being not much older than the boys, having little experience and Notz tired of the position, a new man was needed. The call was issued to a young pastor and talented pastor, John Philip Koehler.

John Ph. Koehler (Professor 1888-1900, Inspector 1888-1894)

Koehler was born in 1859 in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. He was a graduate of Northwestern from the class of 1877. He studied under Walther and Stoeckhardt in St. Louis. ^{H_e} And was called to teach the classics and history along with the inspector duties. His health, however, was not at all equal to the strain and he asked to be relieved of inspector duties in 1894 at the encouragement of his doctor. He remained on the faculty as professor.

But his wide command of the classical languages and a keen understanding of history (both of the world and of the Christian Church) made him a candidate for professor at the new Seminary. ^A And after a year on horseback in Arizona cleared up his health and strengthened him, he joined the theological faculty at the Seminary in Wauwatosa in 1900.

A brilliant intellect, Koehler was ^{invaluable?} instrumental to our synod in so many ways over the years. But in the late 1920's, he became embroiled in the Protest'ant controversy. The result was that he left the Seminary in 1930 and ultimately left the Wisconsin Synod. He was called home in 1951.

A Fresh Start

When Koehler arrived, he found that the Inspectorship had suffered since the days when he walked the halls. The dormitory was filthy, unsafe, and neglected -

“slivered, softwood flooring with open cracks militated against cleanliness,”¹⁴ dark closets between the corridors and study rooms invited accumulation of junk and filth, furniture handed down from student to student was in all styles and in various stages of disrepair.

As a result, Koehler initiated reform. He had iron fire escapes attached to the dormitory rooms. He installed uniform furniture (desks, chairs, iron bedsteads). Closets became wardrobes and bookshelves. Hardwood floors replaced the old. And all of it was completed over a four year period. Though paid for by private donors, students paid a rental fee for the furniture and a fine assessed the students for any undue damage.

The result was that students appreciated the new order and exercised more self-discipline. However, there were still problems. Koehler, a strict disciplinarian with firm convictions about supervision in the dormitories, clashed with the students and with the Board itself. He enforced a militaristic discipline of strict order in study rooms and on campus. He kept underclassmen under the supervision of upperclassmen, a system he would later help to change. The students accepted the discipline but not the authority of the upperclassmen.

In 1892 Koehler pushed for a separate dormitory even devising his own plan to pay for it. But a new seminary was the project of thought in Synod. And so the faculty decided to take on its own project of building a new central heating plant for the campus. Koehler’s plan for funding a new dorm was implemented to pay for the new heating plant. The matter was entrusted to his hands. There were a few problems and some squabbling over the outcome.

¹⁴ Koehler, p. 188.

All was eventually settled. “But the inspector [Koehler] was made to feel the odium of failure thereafter.”¹⁵

Disaster

On July 30, 1894, during a severe summer thunderstorm, a bolt of lightning struck the *Kaffeemuehle*, waking Director Ernst and the campus steward. They rushed out to see the *Kaffeemuehle* in flames. All efforts to save the building were in vain. Within a short time, the building was engulfed and destroyed. One doomsayer in the crowd commented that the fire would mark the end of the Wisconsin Synod.

By God’s grace he was wrong. The school bounced back, making do with what facilities remained. The 1875 dorm became the classroom building. Students were housed in the student-built gymnasium of ‘77. It was tight quarters what with 100 dorm students in a space 30’x70’. Inspector Koehler had a walled off cubicle at one end while the boys slept on cots.

All seemed to be working well during the construction of the new building. Fall was especially fine. But the winter was bitterly cold with two straight weeks of -20 degrees. The gymnasium had been poorly and amateurishly constructed with little between the sleepers and the elements. There was no connection specifically stated but a report of the Board to Synod in ‘95 mentioned that “the health of the students was not as good as usual in the preceding year. Two had died and five others had to return to their homes.”¹⁶

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 188.

¹⁶ Kowalke, p. 108.

But the problems did not end there. With the problems in discipline, the inadequate and unhealthy quarters, and the strains of the school's situation, Inspector Koehler's mental health dangerously declined to the point of near nervous breakdown. As mentioned above, at the advice of his physician, he resigned his inspector duties. Until this point in 1895, the inspector had lived in the dorm with his family, surrounded by students. "It is no wonder that J. P. Koehler asked to be relieved of the inspector's duties on the plea that his nerves could no longer take the strain," defended Kowalke.¹⁷

With no one to carry out the inspector duties, Ernst asked for volunteers to take over. Once again, Ott and Weimar stepped up to the task until a replacement could be found. A call was issued and in that same year a new, separate house was built for the new inspector, Otto Hoyer.

Otto Hoyer (Professor 1895-1905, Inspector 1895-1899)

Otto Hoyer was born in Hamburg, Germany, in 1849. He emigrated to America early in life, graduated from Northwestern in 1872 and entered the St. Louis Seminary. He served congregations in Neenah, Wisconsin, and St. Paul, Minnesota, before being called to the presidency of Dr. Martin Luther College. He served there from 1885 to 1893. He was then called to be Professor of Theology at Michigan Lutheran Seminary. He served there only two years before being called from Michigan to serve as inspector. He labored in the task for a number of years before giving up the duties. He continued, however, to teach Latin until he was called home in November, 1905. According to Koehler, Hoyer was not suited for the

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 113.

position. As a result his health declined. He asked to be relieved of the duties. His request was granted, but he was asked to remain with assistance until a new man could be found.

Revelation

It was at this point that Synod began to realize the necessity of finding the right man for the job. It called for one who possessed the strength of personality and health to maintain good order and to serve for a significant length of time. The Board thought they had found the man in August Pieper. But while in negotiations with him, the dormitory was in chaos due to Hoyer's absence and ill health. 1899-1903 was particularly problematic. This was due to frequent changes in inspectors, assignment of authority to young men who were only slightly older than the young men whom they governed, overburdening of the inspectors with routine work and dorm supervision over and above classroom duties. Further, the antipathy which existed between the students and Mr. Heinbockel, the steward, "who assumed an authority over the students to which he was not entitled,"¹⁸ resulted in all out disrespect, vandalism, and wild behavior.

Transition

Between 1899 and 1903, Hoyer, John Meyer, Ott, Weimar, and Hans K. Moussa were all active inspectors. Ernst gave glowing reports of success in the dorm:

Behavior of the students was good and there were no serious disciplinary cases.

Both new and old students displayed a magnificent spirit and a gratifying openness and

sincerity of attitude. All students behaved in a Christian manner; before bed they read their Bibles, and in the infirmary they conducted devotions. The abuses of former years have been corrected.¹⁹

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A rosy picture was painted, but Koehler had his doubts. Even Kowalke encourages the historian to take the report with a grain of salt. After all, Ernst always looked on the bright side and was probably trying to restore confidence in the control of the school.

In 1900, as has been mentioned, Koehler left for the new Synod Seminary in Wauwatosa. Hoyer took his place on the faculty. A vacancy, then, existed including a need for a full-time man to serve as inspector. The Board tried calling Pastor Martin Eickmann, but he declined the call. From 1901 to 1902, Director Ernst (with the help of Edward Lembke - an 1890 graduate serving as a schoolteacher in Milwaukee - and later Herman Frank - a 1901 graduate) was asked by the board to temporarily take over. He did so. Students would later speak with respect of Frank as a teacher and disciplinarian. But he was never given the full respect of the faculty since had not yet completed his seminary education. Still seeking Hoyer's replacement, the Board called John Meyer. Meyer would go on to serve as professor and president of DMLC and later serve as professor and president of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

Meyer was called to the inspectorship with the idea that he was to have the help of H. K. A. Moussa. Neither was up to the task and faced problems. Moussa was "chummy"²⁰ with the students and had no discipline, often taking a "passive attitude even though a riot would

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 134.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 136.

take place right in front of his door.” Meyer was strict. The two were played against each other by the students who directed their frustrations at Meyer. Moussa undermined Meyer’s authority and Meyer became the bad guy. After only a few months Meyer suffered a breakdown and resigned his inspector duties. Moussa was left in charge. John Meyer resigned from the faculty in June. Though asked to continue on as professor, Meyer accepted a call to teach at DMLC

With Moussa in charge, however, problems were abundant. The disciplinary situation became so severe that the Board intervened. Even the former President Bading and the current President Von Rohr addressed the student body. It quickly became necessary to call first full-time inspector. This man was to devote all of his energy to the office. In this case, it meant literally. A call was again issued to Eickmann. This time he accepted.

Martin Eickmann (Inspector 1903 -1915)

Eickmann was born in September of 1859 in Friedersdorf, Brandenburg. At the age of seven he emigrated with his parents to America. They arrived in New York but soon moved to Fond du Lac and later to Nebraska. He entered Northwestern where his instructors quickly observed his abilities and conscientiousness. He graduated in 1879, entering St. Louis later that year. He graduated from the Seminary in 1882 and served congregations in Center, Wisconsin, and Menominee. It was while he was serving this congregation that he received the call to Northwestern a second time. He accepted this call to devote all energy to inspection, becoming the school’s first full-time inspector. But it was with heavy heart that he left parish ministry.

²⁰ Koehler, p. 226.

In this office he was well known and loved by many. He was deeply pious, kind, cheerfully looked on the pranks of the boys with humor but was conscientious to a fault. Ultimately, the pranks became excessive and the job took its toll.

A Man for the Job

There were problems right from the start. In 1903, the Board banned a football team for the school. Only baseball in April, then, offered some type of physical release for the students. But in 1904, Eickmann went to bat for the students and managed to convince the Board to reinstate football. Further, the 1877 gymnasium was in disrepair and not suitable for anything anymore except military drilling. To resolve this problem Professor Eickmann encouraged a growing idea of Milwaukee alumni to build a new gymnasium for the college. This was later built in 1912 and stands to this day.

For the first two years Eickmann inspected the 1875 dorm. It was crowded. He had no assistant. And yet, according to the Board's 1908 constitution, "The Inspector shall have charge and control of the Executive Committee, of the dormitories, turning hall, and athletic field. He shall, subject to such further rules and regulations, as the Board may provide, act in a parental position for all inmates of said buildings and of all students while in said buildings, turning hall and athletic field."²¹ And this situation was for one man to handle.

He did, however, have the mixed blessing of monitors. These monitors were upperclassmen appointed one to each study room and one or more to each bedroom. They were to maintain quiet and good order, acting also as floor monitors. But an unreliable monitor was more detriment than help. And the responsibility ultimately lay with Eickmann, a

heavy burden, indeed. This was a practice dating back to Koehler's inspectorship. In fact, Eickmann told Koehler that the disciplinary problems and stress of his job were as a result of Koehler's system. *source?*

Overcrowding prompted Eickmann to prod Synod for a new Dormitory in 1904. The 1875 dorm was too small and packed to capacity. As it was more than twenty students were already housed off campus. Further, the dorms were terribly outdated with outdoor bathrooms and no bathing facilities. However, "Synod was not much moved by this lack of physical conveniences, because most of the constituents of the college had exactly the same accommodations at home."²²

But parents were concerned that efforts were not being taken to maintain good health. This following a 1903 winter particularly rife with colds, sore throats and other sicknesses, led the Synod and Board to consider a new facility. Eickmann and Ernst presented the needs of the school and an appropriate design to the Synod in Milwaukee. The final building largely followed their ideas and was built in 1905 at a cost of \$50,000.

After new dorm was built, crowding was eased but routine work of the inspector increased. He lived in a house directly attached to the dorm. Now "he was in closer touch with his work but at the same time never out of sight or hearing of the proper and improper activities of some two hundred boys."²³ Indeed, under Eickmann, the inspector duties can be seen to be daunting and exhausting tasks, indeed. By design he was a father figure to the boys. This position was taken literally so that the inspector was held responsible for the health, welfare, morality and academic progress of the boys under his care. "Being utterly

²¹ Statutes of the Board of Trustees of Northwestern University, 1908; Archives, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

²² Kowalke, p. 141.

conscientious, Professor Eickmann did attempt to be the paragon that many parents and pastors expected him to be.”²⁴

At six each morning, he would wake the students by going room to room, often making 2nd and 3rd trips to those who were particularly heavy sleepers. He tended to the sick. He taught his high school class. He conducted chapel each evening. He made rounds during study hours, accounting at least once for every student, sometimes more so for particularly errant students. For it was expected by the Synod and the Board that every student be at his desk studying during the appropriate times. And if not, the Inspector was to know where he was. Further, it was expected that the dormitory be kept quiet for those who wished to study. This, too, was the duty of the Inspector with the not always reliable help of the student monitors. Eickmann would head for home about midnight, leaving the student monitors in charge. But even there he couldn't rest until he knew that every student under his care was safely back in the building. Kowalke, a student under his care and later a colleague on the faculty, makes this observation of Eickmann's inspectorship,

The inspector's day began before six o'clock in the morning and continued until late at night, frequently until midnight. The routine of making rounds and climbing stairs could be terribly wearing, and since he ate his meals with the students and lived under the same roof, he was constantly on call...It was not the serious infractions that finally wore down Professor Eickmann's body and spirit, but rather the constant pin-pricks, the deadly routine, and the lack of rest. What helped him to carry on for twelve years without assistance was his understanding of boys and his sympathy with their problems, his sense of humor, and above all his unwavering confidence that the Word of God, which was so much a part of the student's life, would work its wonders on their hearts and minds.²⁵

²³ *ibid.*, p. 153.

²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 154.

²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 155.

Professor Eickmann stuck to the task all alone until he was worn out ~~worn out~~. A particular “evil”²⁶ caused him to expel a student. He suffered a stroke during the night and was called home on June 2, 1915, at the age of 56. A *Gemeindeblatt* article read, “He never wished himself anything better, as to live and die in the service of his Lord. His widow and seven children mourn his death. With them the college and the whole Synod mourns. For that everyone knows who knew him: he was *an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!* John 1:47.”²⁷

Aftermath

Eickmann’s death following upon the resignations of 3 successive Inspectors who had found the strain of the office more than they could handle, made the Board and the Synod realize that a different system was needed. One suggested system was that each member of the faculty serve for a week, alternating in the inspection duties. Ironically, the other suggestion came from J. P. Koehler, the former inspector, whose former system was a contributing factor to the problems. In Koehler’s plan, the president of the college would head a staff for the dorm. The staff would consist of three tutors who would supervise and live on each of the three floors. The tutors would do all of the routine work of supervising and preserving order. They would have limited responsibility and authority, referring the more serious cases to the president and through him to the faculty. The three tutors would be seminary graduates, chosen by the president and faculty of Northwestern and assigned by the Synod’s assignment committee. In addition, tutors would have limited teaching or tutoring assignments. When not

²⁶ Koehler, p. 226.

²⁷ Juli 15, 1915. Lauf. No. 1211, pg. 209; translation from the Armin Engel Collection, Archives, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

teaching during class times, the tutors would have opportunity for personal study, time not easily found in parish ministry, and therefore would be an opportunity desired by graduates.

Koehler's plan was accepted and implemented for the 1915/16 school year. One change was suggested by the faculty - the calling of an Inspector to head the Dorm staff so as not to further burden the President of the college. This change, however, was not made until 1935. Koehler's system, with this one change and minor adjustments along the way, has continued to operate ever since.

We have seen that not every man who served in the position measured up to Koehler's necessary characteristics, including Koehler himself. But yet the training of ministers of the gospel continued. We can only marvel at how our heavenly Father guided and preserved his church throughout these years. For time and again he turned blessing to good. Time and again he protected the lives and welfare of his people. Time and again he brought about success to the school. Time and again he blessed his people with a love for him and his Word. For his blessing upon the inspectors during this period of development we are truly thankful.

To God be the glory!

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