



"LIKE A SEED THAT IS SOWN"

An abridged history of
Michigan Lutheran Seminary — 1885 - 1982

by

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1982

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library
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"LIKE A SEED THAT IS SOWN"

The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches. Mt 13:31-32

In the above passage, we have a very apt description of the history of Michigan Lutheran Seminary. A school whose beginning and existence were like that of a mustard seed when compared to the schools of its time. But a school which under the guiding hand of the Lord grew into a healthy tree and a strong branch of the Kingdom of God.

So let's go back now to the original seed. Back to the beginning of Michigan Lutheran Seminary and through the "time-lapse photography" of the written page, watch Sem grow.

PART I — THE PLANTING

1885 - 1907

The year is 1885. The Michigan Synod had been in existence for twenty-five years already. During this time, the Michigan

Synod had been content to fill its pastoral needs with men sent over from Germany. This neglect at starting their own school to train pastors had caused serious problems, because among the men sent over from Germany were "unfaithful and incapable men, who by their life and teaching brought disgrace and great harm to the synod, and thereby caused the synod to fall into disrepute."¹ As a matter of fact, in its first ten or twelve years of existence, about one-third of the Michigan Synod's pastors had defected to the United Evangelicals.²



CHRISTOPH LUDWIG EBERHARDT
First Itinerant Missionary and
"Father of Michigan Lutheran Seminary"

This need to train their own pastors did not go unnoticed, however. Rev. Christopher Eberhardt, then president of the Michigan Synod, realizing the need for "home-grown" pastors, "set about almost single-handedly, to remedy the problem."³ In 1884, at the synod convention, and following rousing encouragement from Pres. Eberhardt, the synod resolved to seriously consider the question of training its own workers and to do it as quickly as possible.

This resolution was carried out even faster than expected, when Rev. Alex Lange of Remus, Michigan, volunteered his services as an instructor. In the spring of 1885, a few young men announced their intentions to study for the holy ministry. Following this announcement, Pastor Lange was authorized to begin his work.

The fast start continued as Mr. George Heimerdinger offered

a roomy, two-story brick building for the synod's use. This building was located in Manchester, Michigan, and served as the new home of the fledgling Michigan Lutheran Seminary. (MLS).



The First Michigan Seminary at Manchester

School was officially opened in August of 1885 and in 1886 the Michigan Synod voted to consider the school its own and officially called Pastor Lange as director and professor. The school opened with six students, gaining two more in October as well as in 1886. (Of these ten students, five entered the ministry.)

Only two years had passed before MLS needed to look for a new home, since the Manchester building was offered for only two years. A number of congregations hoped to have the seminary move to their community and even offered special promises if it would move their way. Originally, in 1886, Adrian was chosen, but at a special meeting of the synod at Lansing, Saginaw was chosen as the new location for the seminary, because of financial reasons. The official minutes give no reason for the location change. However, Eberhardt's notes mention that the synod would save @\$3,487 by moving to Saginaw instead of Adrian. Such a savings — a \$1,000 more than the total synod collection — indeed had to influence the decision to a great

degree, as well as Eberhardt's presence in the Saginaw area.

Several sites were offered in Saginaw, but eventually a lot of two and three-quarters acres, which Eberhardt donated himself, was selected as the new location for MLS. (In 1892 Pastor Eberhardt added another acre to the lot.) Construction was started just two months after the site was chosen and the groundbreaking was held on April 30. The entire cost of the building, equipment, barn, etc. amounted to \$8,871.61. The building was not quite completed and some equipment was lacking, but dedication of the building took place on Sunday, August 28, 1887, while the synod was in session at Saginaw.



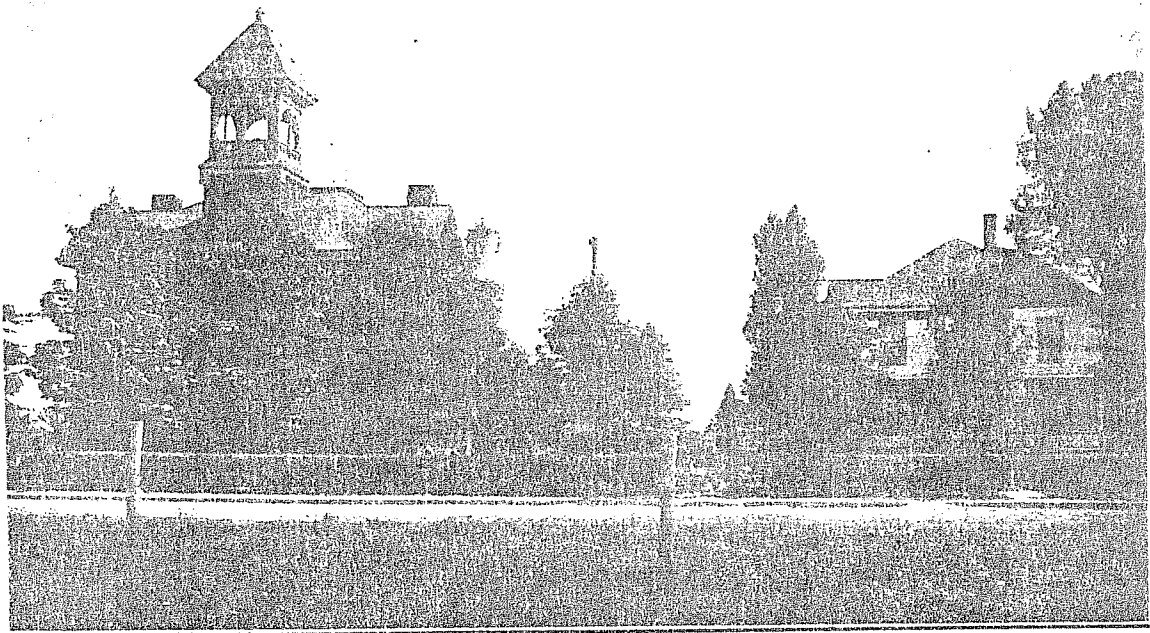
Michigan Luth. Seminary, Saginaw, Mich.

The building, later to become known as "Old Main," served many purposes at this time. Besides being the recitation hall, it also served as the dormitory, refectory and residence of the director. Director Lange and his family were the first to move in and on September 20, with fourteen students in attendance, the opening service took place.

The course of study at this time was to cover seven years (though many were called into the field before completing seven years.) The curriculum consisted of ancient languages, exegetical theology, dogmatics, pastoral theology, homiletics, mathematics, English and music. Basically, the same classes now taught at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary were the classes taught at this time.

Being a young school, MLS did surprisingly well through all the changes of location and buildings, especially when these changes were coupled with changes in the faculty. Director Lange was removed from his position when it became apparent that there were doctrinal differences between him and the synod. Lange was succeeded by Pastor F. Huber, who was at that time also assisted by Rev. Eberhardt. (Unfortunately, the Sem lost a very valuable friend, when Pastor Eberhardt died on April 27, 1893.) Pastors B. Merz and Wm. Bodamer assisted Huber in the teaching as well as Teacher Sperling. Under these circumstances, through all the changes, the Sem prospered and quietly progressed, especially in the years 1887 - 1892. Director Huber then accepted a call to be pastor at St. Paul's

Church in Saginaw and was followed by Otto Hoyer of New Ulm, Minnesota. It was during Director Hoyer's tenure, that the director finally was given his own residence. (Up to this time the director and family had to live in the recitation hall.)



Recitation Hall and Residence of Inspector at Saginaw, Mich.

But the peaceful existence of the Seminary was soon to end as some unexpected problems arose in the early 1890's. In 1892, the Michigan Synod had been accepted into the Synodical Conference and had also merged with the Minnesota and Wisconsin synods. With this last merger, Michigan had agreed to support the activities of the Joint Synod and also discontinue their theological department by converting their Seminary into a preparatory school. This condition of the

merger was not well received by all of the members of the Michigan Synod, especially, the members of the Seminary faculty. They wished for a temporary continuation of the theological department at Saginaw. This was not an acceptable compromise, and as discussion over the matter began to take on partisan colors, a split of the Michigan Synod from the Joint Synod occurred in 1896. (This split also involved a split with the Synodical Conference.) Eventually, those leaders in the controversy which led to the split, left the Michigan Synod and a reestablishment of past relations was sought beginning with 1900. By 1906, there was a mutual acknowledgement of wrongdoing which then brought the two groups back together.

In the meantime, the Seminary suffered. The heart of the controversy seemed to have taken the greatest beating. The majority of the Sem's distress occurred during the administration of Director F. Beer. (Beer succeeded Pastor Linsemann, who had resigned in 1902.) At first, Director Beer's acceptance of the position was viewed with great expectations, because he was known as a gifted teacher and knowledgeable dogmatist. The expectations, however, were unrewarded. Soon after, the enrollment which until 1902 had always been @ twenty, was now never more than twelve. By the school year of 1906-1907, the number of enrolled students had dwindled to eight. "In May, 1907, Director Beer reported that only seven students remained. Soon after that session of synod four more students declared that they were leaving; two were graduated and a single student was left ... the net result of all this was the

closing of the school on August 10, 1907." ⁴ In this somber and saddening way, Michigan Lutheran Seminary closed its first era.

But how did it happen? Why did it happen? Very little is really known about the reasons for the decline in attendance, which eventually led to the closing of the school. But what is known, is that during the problems between the various synods, there was a lack of control over the Sem's administration. Director Beer seemed to have taken a dictatorial position at the Sem. "As nearly as can be determined...it was an unevangelical attitude on the part of the director toward his students, a tendency to enforce a very rigid, almost Prussian military discipline, a lack of understanding of American youth. His relation to his colleagues likewise became more and more strained. This manifested itself, among other things, in his refusal to participate in the final examination of a student in 1905, although members of the faculty and the examination committee were present. He refused to deal in person with the board of control that had been instructed by the synod to adjust matters. In consequence of all this the board finally, on August 19, 1907, declared that the seminary was closed, and the office of director ceased to exist."⁵ As a result therefore, except for the housekeeper and her family, the seminary grounds stood vacant. The empty grounds served as a sobering testimony to the destructiveness of personal pride and self-will, for it was this attitude which forgot the foremost purpose of the school, namely, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done."

1909 - 1920

Without a doubt, the closing of the Seminary was the Lord's way to start anew. A way to start the school with a new goal, under new leadership, for a new time. In August of 1909, the Michigan Synod once more allied itself with the Joint Synod of Wisconsin. It was then resolved that the seminary in Saginaw was to be reopened as a preparatory school (Progymnasium). A new board of control was elected consisting of Dr. A. F. Ernst, President F. Soll, Pastor K. Machmiller and also Pastor J. Westendorf and Wm. Bodamer of the Michigan Synod. If possible, it was decided to open the new school in the fall of 1910. Some renovation of the buildings was necessary and taken care of in the summer of 1910. Along with the improvements, the purchase of another piece of property was authorized, which eventually was purchased in 1911 at the cost of \$900.00. (cf. Appendix I)

Under this situation, the only problem which would eventually cause some dismay was the question, "Who is going to pay the bills?" The Michigan Synod owned the physical plant, while the Joint Synod operated the school. It became a constant battle for the director to have one or the other decide what was their responsibility and who would pay. Other than that, the project of starting and maintaining the school proceeded smoothly.

The plans moved along so smoothly in fact that a director was urgently needed to run the school. From a list of candidates, Rev. Otto J. R. Hoenecke from Bethel Church in Milwaukee

was called to serve as director. He was a unanimous first ballot selection, to which he himself commented, "which [the first ballot nomination] did not mean much, since there was absolutely no scramble for the position, but rather the opposite."⁶ Dr. Ernst and the rest of the Board of Control politely pressured Rev. Hoenecke to accept — convincing him of the urgent need that the school start immediately, that there wasn't sufficient time to call another man, and that there were fifteen to twenty boys waiting to enter the school at once. With this encouragement, Rev. Hoenecke obtained his release from Bethel congregation and accepted the position of director of the new "Progymnasium" of the Michigan and Joint synods.

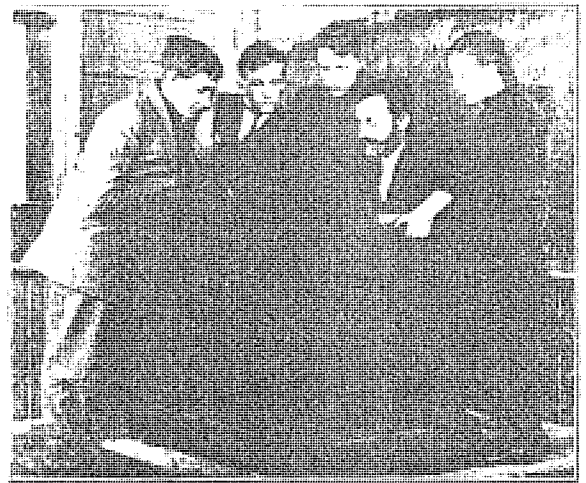
With little splash or publicity, the new school opened on September 13, 1910, with two board members, a few neighboring pastors and friends and only five (yes, five, not fifteen or twenty) students in attendance. (There were less than twenty-five people total.) Little preparation had been done for the opening except for the renovating of the recitation hall. As a matter of fact, so little preparation had been done, that the school had not officially been given a name. This was soon remedied when on the proposal of Dr. Ernst, the old name, Michigan Lutheran Seminary, was retained for historical and especially sentimental reasons. How often this sentimentality has been questioned is beyond counting. This may have been one time when practicality would have been the more appropriate direction to take. But as some argue, the

Latin word from which "seminary" is derived is "seminarium" which means "nursery-garden or seed-bed." And really, what better name for a school that is the seed-bed of workers for the Lord's Kingdom.

Nonetheless, when Eberhardt's old school bell with the inscription, "ORA ET LABORA" (pray and work), rang out again after three and a half years of silence, the sound was greeted with joy and also some mixed emotions. Yet, although it was all happening in a very small way, still like a mustard seed, this was the beginning for MLS — the beginning of something really big.

PART II — THE SEED GROWS

Classes at the new "Progymnasium" began on September 12, 1910 with, as had been resolved by synod, one class, the Sexta (ninth grade) class. There were only five students enrolled, one of which was Director Hoenecke's daughter. One student left after about six weeks so that for the entire year the enrollment stood at four. How depressing that first year could have been, especially when three out of the four students got sick at the same time and only one could show up for classes. As depressing as it could have become, the future made everything look



Director Hoenecke and Student Body of 1910

much brighter. According to all indications, 1911 would see a much larger enrollment. In anticipation of this increase, the Board of Control authorized that another class be started (Quinta, or tenth grade) and that a second instructor be called who would also serve as the inspector or dean of boys. When the Board's first call was returned to them and little time was left before school, the Board asked the Joint Synod to elect a teacher for the school. They elected Pastor Adolf Sauer of St. Louis. Pastor Sauer began his long and faithful career at MLS with the opening of the 1911 -12 school year.



PROFESSOR ADOLPH
HERMAN SAUER

This time the enrollment predictions were correct and the advance preparations of getting another instructor were not in vain. The second year's enrollment exceeded all expectations with fourteen new students (at this time referred to as "scholars"). This brought the total up to eighteen. Now the old recitation hall, which throughout the first year was next to empty with only four students, was once again bustling with life. "Old Main" was being used for classes, as a dormitory, refectory, quarters for the Inspector, and as a dwelling for the housekeeper and her family. [The housekeeper, Mrs. Dora May, along with here father, is a story all her own. Having served the Seminary since 1896 — and being caretaker during the three silent years— "Mutter May" had helped countless boys through illness and homesickness. She served faith-

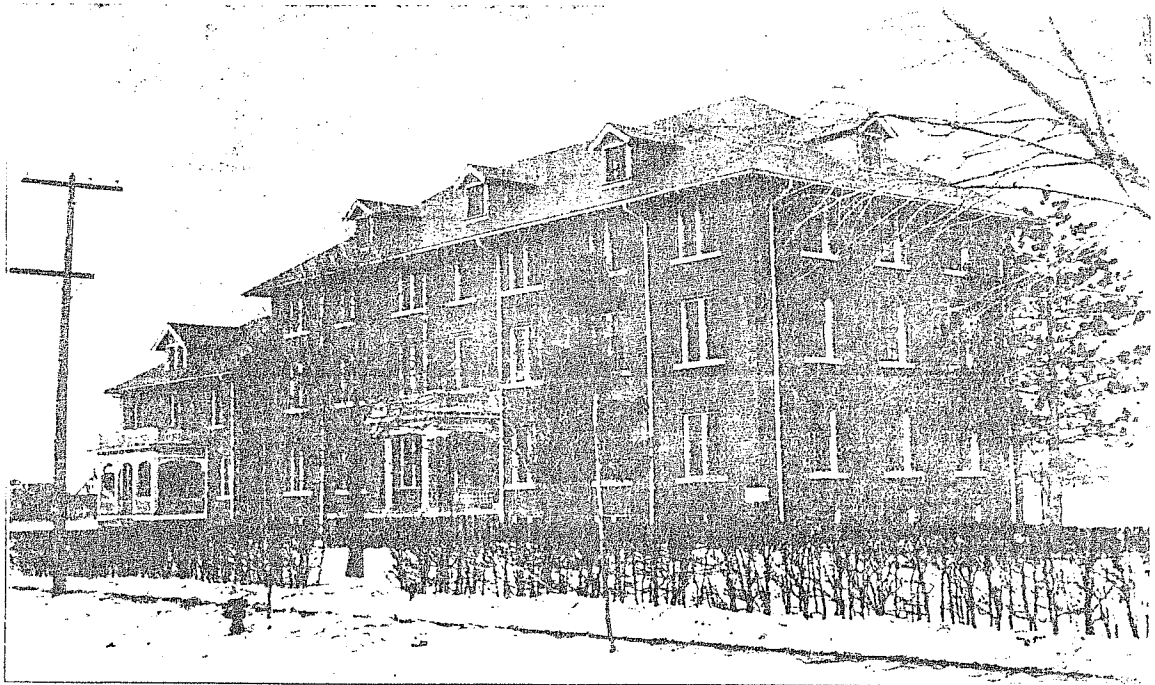
fully in this capacity until she retired in 1929, at which time she continued on solely as the school nurse.]

It was truly a joy to see the Seminary doing so well already in its early years. This joy was somewhat bittersweet since continued success of the school would mean that overcrowding would soon be taking place. The future enrollment figures practically guaranteed that this would happen. In answer to this problem, the Michigan Synod, at its 1912 meeting in Lansing, seriously considered the erection of a boys' dormitory, with a residence for the inspector attached. (This was a matter for the Michigan Synod, for as before mentioned, they were in charge of the physical plant of the school, while the Joint Synod was in charge of the administration of the school.) Sketches prepared by Director Hoenecke and Rev. J Westendorf were found to be practical and the synod accepted them and voted to spend up to \$25,000 for their construction.



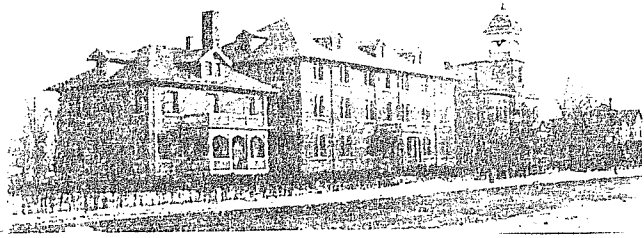
Wohnung des Inspektors und neue Schülerwohnung.

The inspector's residence was started first in 1912 and completed at a cost of \$5,120. The dormitory was constructed for \$19,914. Both were of solid brick construction. The dormitory was a three story building, 40 x 88 feet, and built to accommodate fifty students. Originally it had a small gymnasium which later had to be converted into study and bedrooms (1946). (For some students, this conversion may have been a blessing, since there were military drills held in the gym three times a week and all resident students were obliged to attend.) The new building was supplied with all types of



Residence of Inspector and Dormitory at Saginaw, Mich.

"modern improvements." The dorm contained a reception room, three music rooms and a well-equipped bathroom. It was heated by steam and lighted by electricity. A hallway also connected the dorm to the inspector's residence to permit him a full-time supervision of the students living in the dorm.⁷



On September 14, 1913, the new building was dedicated. Pastors J. Gauss, H. Heyn, G. Wacker and the Director officiated

at the dedication services. It should be noted that this dedication showed that the small seed of Michigan Lutheran Seminary was indeed growing. As was commented at the thirteenth Biennial Convention of the Joint Synod, "The dedication of the new dormitory was an important event in the history of our MLS. This, our youngest educational institution, is in prosperous condition."⁸

Along with this "prosperous condition" also came the need to amend the original resolution of the Joint Synod. Originally, MLS was started on the premise that it would serve as a three year "Progymnasium." Now, however, the request came through the Board of Control, that a fourth class (Tertia or twelfth grade) be added. This fourth class would then make the Sem a full high school according to the American system. The request was accepted by the Joint Synod and MLS became a full high school in the school year of 1913 -1914.

In order to make the proposal of an additional class more attractive to the Joint Synod, the faculty had agreed to get along without the aid of an additional professor for some time. So, until the coming of Professor Ehrenfried Berg in 1920, the four classes at the Sem were taught by the three men of the faculty (Hoenecke, Sauer, and Henkel). This feat was accom-

plished without detriment to the scholars by the combining of some classes, such as eleventh and twelfth grade Latin and also ninth and tenth religion. By alternating classes by year, such as one year zoology and the next botany, etc. the faculty was also able to handle the heavy teaching load. The enrollment for the 1913-14 school year reached 31 students.

The end of that particular school year, 1913 - 14, was indeed a most significant one, since it closed with the commencement of the first graduating class of the new Michigan Lutheran Seminary. On June 16, 1914, the first graduating class received their diplomas. The class numbered only six boys and one girl, and since this was such a propitious occasion, it is only fitting that the names of the entire class be listed. The graduating class of 1914 consisted of Theodore Binhammer (eventually, professor at Northwestern College, Watertown, Wisconsin), Walter Bodamer (pastor at Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin), Leo Kaesmaeyer (pastor at St. John's in Frankenmuth, Michigan), William Krichbaum (died while a student at NWC), Gustav Schlegel (pastor at Mobridge, South Dakota), Carl Schmelzer (pastor at Riza, Michigan) and Hilda Hoenecke, (teacher at St. Paul's, Saginaw). This first graduation was held in the gymnasium of the dormitory. The gym served well for this particular graduation, but this was the only time that it was used for this purpose. Graduations after this year were usually held at St. Paul's in Saginaw (just down the street from the Sem).

All the members of the class participated in this historic event. There were Latin, German and English orations, a German

and English poem, and piano selections were all included in the program. Director Hoenecke delivered the address while Rev. J. Westendorf spoke the prayer and the benediction. June 16, 1914, was truly a red letter day for Michigan Lutheran Seminary. A day when the small seed showed not only growth, but also its first fruits.

It wasn't long after, that the joy of that first graduation was replaced by a concern over the enrollment decline. Following the high enrollment of 1913 -14 (31 scholars), there was a steady decline in enrollment for some years. (cf. Appendix IV) In a 1916 meeting of the Michigan Synod this condition was confronted by electing four men to serve as a "recruitment committee" for the school. These men were to try to instill interest in the congregations and to work to increase the attendance of the school, as well as, to secure support for indigent students. (And some think that WELS recruitment is something new?!) Pastors F. Krause, J. Wacker, J. Westendorf, and C. Strasen were asked to do this work for that year. The work of this "recruitment committee" and the efforts of Director Hoenecke helped both to squelch the rumors of the need to close the Sem as well as to increase the enrollment. Following the decline of 1914 - 16, there was a steady increase in the enrollment, which except for some fluctuations has been the general trend up to the present.

Now, however, came the need to streamline Sem's system. The major steps in this streamlining were undertaken by the Joint Synod itself.

1. MLS was to maintain a four year high school course. No longer would boys without eighth grade diplomas be accepted. (Septima class). Those whose parents have no parochial school available at home will be placed into the area parochial schools and boarded at the high school.

2. Parallel classes in which the English language is the medium of instruction were to be arranged for those who are not able to follow instruction given in German.

(Along with these changes, the Joint Synod also granted Sem an additional professor and tutor. This helped to a degree in relieving the undermanned faculty and to provide the necessary manpower to handle the above changes in the course of studies.)

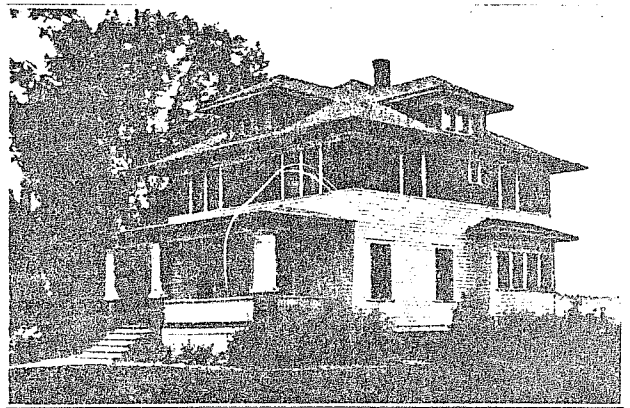
While these changes were taking place (1917) there was one other concern MLS had. An amendment to the Michigan state constitution was proposed whereby all children, ages 5 - 16, would have to attend public schools in their own districts until completing the eighth grade. This would have directly affected Sem, by destroying the religious background available through the parochial school system. Fortunately for the Sem and for Michigan, the proposed amendment was defeated at the polls in 1920.

1920 - 1930

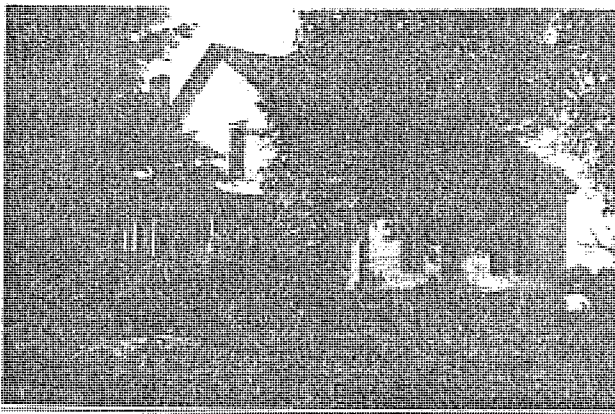
To maintain the high standard of education now established at MLS, it was necessary to make plans for the future, so as not to let this progress stagnate. A lay-out of the future of the school had to be considered and a course of action pursued. In reaching for these goals it was deemed advisable to attempt to purchase additional land in the vi-

cinity of the school so as to sufficiently enlarge the campus. Once authorized by the Joint Synod, this action was undertaken and a piece of land, one acre, was purchased from one of the neighbors, Mr. Frederick, for the cost of \$2,000. Another parcel of one and a half acres was negotiated for, but the owners were not willing, on account of family reasons, to part with the property at that time. (This parcel was later purchased in 1921 for the price of \$2,500.) This additional land acquisition was also paralleled by the building of a house for Professor Berg, and improvements in the recitation hall.

Professor Berg's house, a 30 x 32 frame house, was built at a cost of \$9,500 and was completed at about Christmas. The house was located southeast of the other professors' homes on Court Street. (cf. Appendix I)



Prof. Berg's Residence — 1920

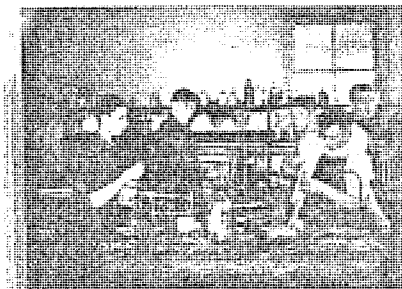


Prof. Hoenecke's Residence — 1894



Prof. Sauer's Residence — 1912

The improvements on the recitation building proceeded along very nicely. A new laboratory was set-up, which included new work tables and various other fixtures needed to meet the requirements of the new course of studies.



Chemistry Laboratory

(Turn to page 23 for - diagram)

All of these physical improvements were also met by curricular improvements, brought about mainly by the addition of Prof. Berg to the faculty. Prof. Berg's joining the faculty meant that the average workload of 35 recitations a week per professor would now be down to 29 hours. This enabled the men more personalized teaching and relief from the heavy workload. With the addition of Professor Berg, the course distribution went as follows: Prof. Sauer — English and science, Prof. Wente — history and German, Prof. Berg — mathematics, German and English, and Director Hoenecke — Latin and Greek. The changes both in curriculum and faculty as well as the campus all contributed toward the report,

All indications are that the field, especially among our English speaking countrymen is rapidly becoming white for harvest...We at Saginaw have room for more students and now have the necessary number of teachers to take care of them.⁹

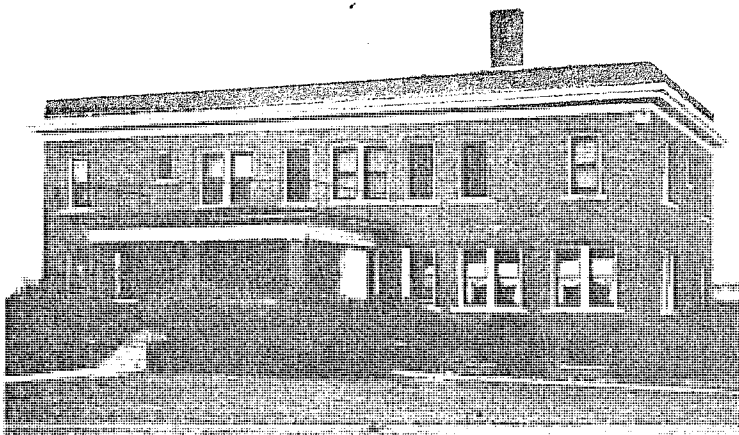
You could say that 1920 really set the trend for the entire decade — a trend of growth in enrollment, personnel, and facilities. Beginning actually in the school year of 1918 -19, Sem experienced a steady and healthy growth in its enrollment (Appendix II). This increase continued at such a

pace, that it was soon realized that new facilities, or at least enlarged facilities would be needed to accommodate all the students. This need was slyly kept before the people of synod by Director Hoenecke's "off the side" remarks in his reports to the Northwestern Lutheran. September, 1921, "The opening was held in the 'largest classroom' and the room was crowded."¹⁰ September, 1922, "The classroom in which the daily devotions are held (although during the last year we have acquired quite a little experience in packing it) proved to be too small for the visitors and students, and the adjoining dining room of the students had to be used in connection with it."¹¹ The Lord's abundant blessings seemed to be crowding the little school right out its doors, but these difficulties were all met through the means of expansion.

In 1923, the Joint Synod granted MLS - \$30,000 to build a refectory. Work was begun in August of 1924 and despite encountering some difficulties with the carpentry work, the job was completed with little delay and at a very reasonable price. The total project cost only \$23,500 (mainly because of a building slump in Saginaw at the time) which was well under the \$30,000 allotted by the synod.

The dedication of the new refectory took place on January 25, 1925. The cold January weather limited any extensive celebration, although many friends and visitors did come and participate in the celebration. (Nearly the entire first floor was filled with guests.) At this dedication, the refectory was declared to be the "most beautiful and best building" at

the Seminary. The building was 63 x 32. In the center of the basement was a large laundry room and on either side a boiler room, and fruit and vegetable cellar.



The Old Dining Hall

Above the laundry

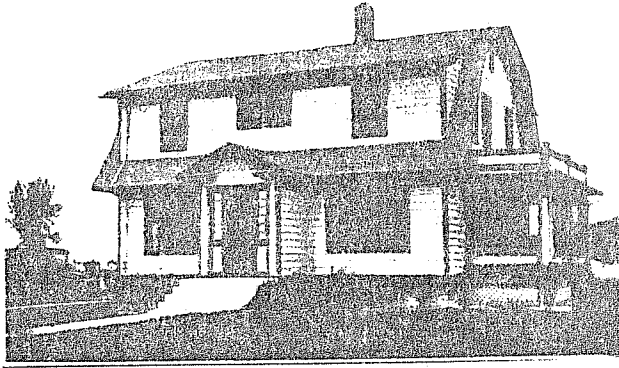
room was the kitchen (32 x 16½). The kitchen was "well-equipped" with all kinds of "modern conveniences," such as a dumb-waiter, dishwasher, electrically-cooled refrigerator, bread slicer, etc. To the left of the kitchen was a pleasant dining room (32 x 26), and to the right of the kitchen, the housekeeper's living room, the pantry and store room. The right wing of the second story



was reserved for the housekeeper and her help. Above the dining room were sick rooms. This hospital section had a separate entrance from the outside, and if

necessary, could be isolated from the rest of the building.

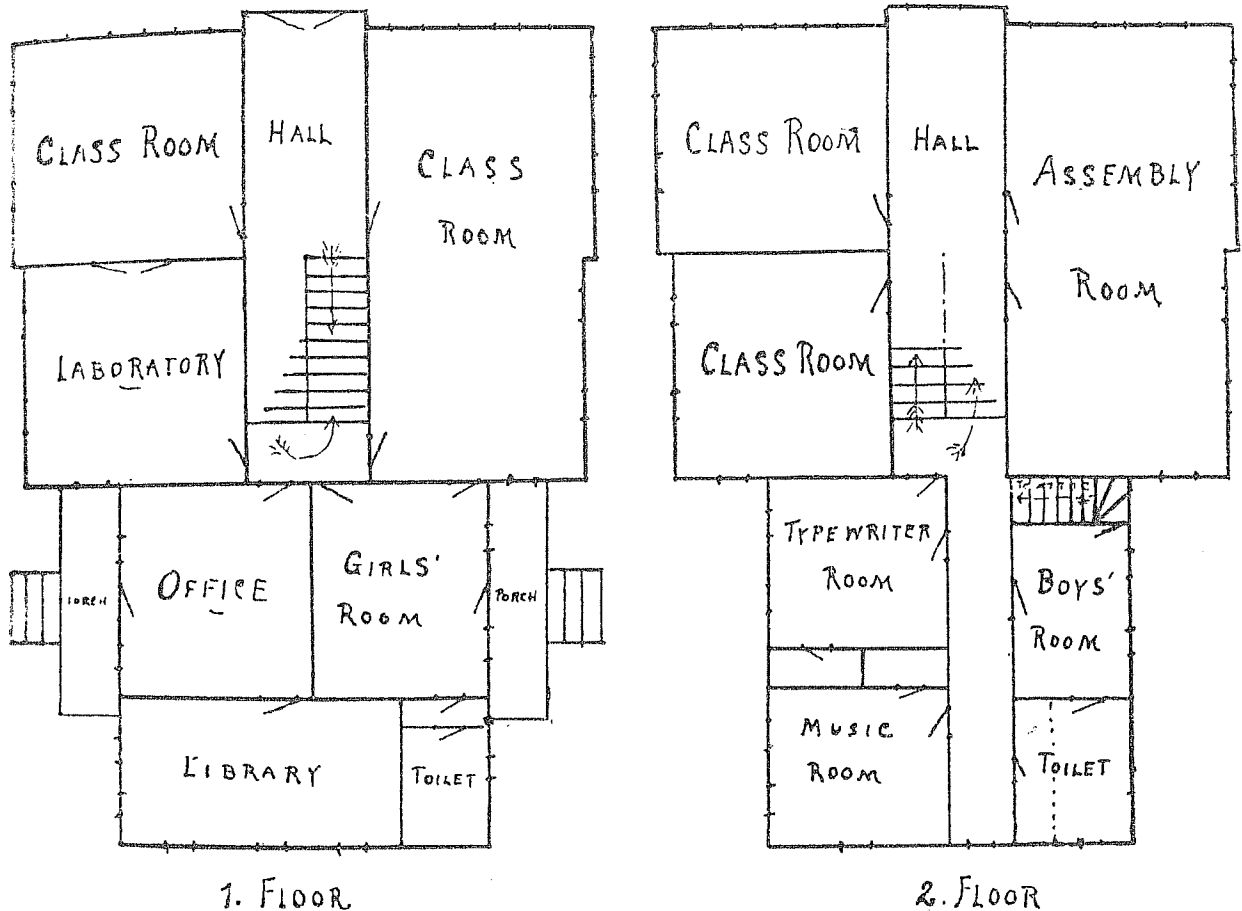
At the same time as the refectory was being erected, a house was built for Professor Schaller, next to Professor Berg's.



Prof. Schaller's Residence — 1924

The house was partially planned by Professor Schaller, himself, and was built at the cost of \$7,800.

Apart from all the new buildings that went up at this time, the renovation of the current structures continued well into 1925, especially with the remodeling of Old Main. Various improvements were needed in the Recitation Hall and their undertaking became feasible following the completion of the new refectory. The dining and kitchen areas



RECITATION HALL MICH. LUTH. SEMINARY

were now used for school purposes and a couple of rooms were joined in order to make larger classroom space. These changes made life not only a little easier at Sem and more conducive to education, but they assured the fact that the Lord's blessings would not be turned down and that those wishing to enter His work would have opportunity to do so.

1925 seemed to be a bumper year for "firsts" at MLS. Maybe it was something in the air or something else, but whatever it was, it effected many first time occurrences. 1925 was the first year that a field day was held on graduation day. This field day consisted of track and field events among the students and became an annual tradition. It eventually developed into a full day of activity topped off by the student vs. alumni baseball game. Now ordinarily, one "first" per day would be enough, but on June 19, 1925, not only was the First Annual Seminary Field Day conducted, but following the commencement exercises, the first Michigan Seminary Club meeting was held in the Recitation Hall.

The MLS Club was an organization of the alumni and friends of the seminary. Its chief aim was to help create interest in the school throughout the entire Michigan District. At the inaugural meeting, officers were elected: Rev. Karl Krause ('15), president; Rev. Bernhard Westendorf ('15), vice-president; Miss Hilda Hoenecke ('14), secretary; and Mrs. Roy Fisher ('16), treasurer. (The meetings were enjoyed by all who attended and were often ended with a Gemütlichen Abend.) The aid this organization has given the school throughout the years, both through the loyalty of its members as well as its gifts, have proved

to be a great asset to the Seminary. Many thanks are owed to the MLS Club, later to be the MLS Booster Club.

In the years following 1925, many other firsts occurred, mainly in the enrollment. Every year was expected to bring more scholars than ever before. Except for the 1926 - 27 school year, this was the case until in 1928 it could be reported when sixty scholars were enrolled, "This is the greatest initial enrollment in the history of the institution and four more than the greatest total yearly enrollment up to the present time."¹² Hardly could they believe that this trend would continue into the 1930's.

Along with this excellent enrollment came some encouragement from the Michigan District which to some may have had overtones of what caused the problems in old Theological Seminary. In the 1928 Michigan District Sessions, it was hoped,

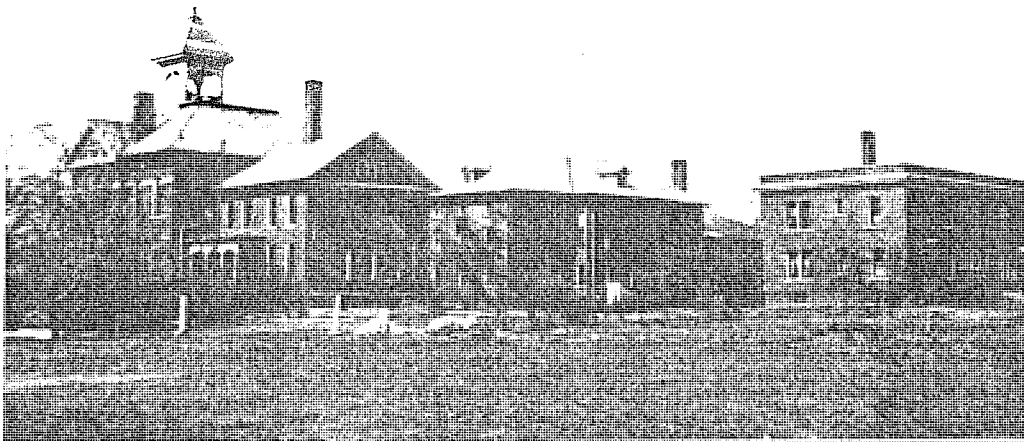
We would like to see it [MLS] grow into a full college. We are convinced that such a step would rebound to its future well-being. The calling of a fifth professor would be desirable, and would be the first step toward a collegiate department. This would abolish the tutor system which in the opinion of the writer and many others is not a desirable system.¹³

This, however, was the only mention of such a plan and the idea seemed to fall off without comment.

Again in 1929 another "highest-ever enrollment" was reached with 75 enrolled students. With such progress being made in the enrollment, the Michigan District was authorized to gather the necessary funds to build a new gymnasium, and when the synod's budget could handle it, call a fifth professor.

These were both urgent needs since space was already limited at the school before the high enrollments and studies had shown that the faculty at the Sem was teaching a greater number of hours than either of the other two college faculties.

With the enrollment running high and the hopes for the future looking bright, the twenties closed peacefully for MLS. The decade was closing with a new record high of 75 students and the MLS Club voted to furnish the school with bleachers and new athletic equipment. It was good, too, for the Sem to be settling in now. That little seed started in 1910 with only four students, now twenty years later boasted an enrollment of 75. It had started with one building and one professor. Now, there were seven buildings and four professors. The seed was now a young tree. But with the next decade, its roots would be tested and tried, its foundation would have to prove secure and strong.



View of Michigan Lutheran Seminary from the Athletic Field

1930 - 1940

This decade of the thirties can easily be summed up in three words, "The Great Depression." As anyone, who lived through that time can tell you, the depression affected everything. The Seminary was no exception. Starting with the '32 - '33 school year, the enrollment at MLS started taking a downward plunge. In many cases the extra financial burden of sending children to a private school proved too costly, while one of the main threats to MLS was the cry of "over-production." Since not all of the candidates of the Theological Seminary had immediately received calls — rumors of over-production soon spread like a plague. These rumors were so effective, that even enrollment on the high school level was affected. Word was out that MLS was a waste of money and energy and that the Joint Synod could easily get along without it. But the fruits of MLS showed this way of thinking to be both impudent and ungrateful for the Lord's blessing.

As of 1935, the silver anniversary of MLS, 410 students had enrolled in the school. Of these, including the class of 1935, 211 graduated with 67 of those entering into the service of the church as pastors and teachers in Christian Day School. 28 other graduates were still students at the various synod colleges and seminaries. These figures were without mistake, ample reward on the part of God for the money invested and utilized at the Seminary.

It would not be fair to classify all of the thirties as

"lean" years. The peaceful close of the twenties spilled into the thirties for the first couple of years, so that you might say the MLS was still on a roll from the twenties. Attendance in 1931 was 80 and in 1932 it reached another all time high of 81. All was right with everything. It was a good time. The commencement of 1932 was typical of the atmosphere of the time.

The field day events on June 15, 1932, were to begin earlier than in the past years and were to end at 4 P.M. with the meeting of the MLS Club. Former friends had been encouraged earlier, "Bring your lunch for dinner and supper, the institution will furnish coffee. We shall try to make everything as convenient as possible for our guests. Refreshments will as in former years be on sale on the campus."¹⁴ As it turned out, June 15 was a beautiful day and the report went, "A great number of former students and many friends... some from quite a distance had gathered to spend the day on our lovely campus and have a chat with former schoolmates."¹⁵

As reassuring as the appearances may have been on that fine June day, by the next September, the depression was making its presence felt. Enrollment went down by nearly twenty. The fact that at the 1933 graduation, nearly all the graduates planned to continue, "if times and means permit," showed the effects the depression was having. With this being the situation, it was feared that history would repeat itself and there would eventually be a shortage of workers in the church.

Even the planning aspects of the school were suffering because of the fact that many were not registering until the last possible moment. The 1933 -34 year had no definite announcements until just days before the opening.

The Depression also made it necessary for the physical plant of the Seminary to be efficiently maintained and in some cases renovated. By doing the work themselves, the regular maintenance staff was able to avoid high improvement costs. During the years of low enrollment, the third floor of the dormitory was closed for economic reasons and not opened until 1937, at which time it was redecorated at little extra expense. In this situation, one might wonder how the Sem was able to make it financially, especially in the way of operational expenses. Well, as has been noted, doing the necessary repair work with the regular help or volunteer help, closing the third floor of the dormitory and soliciting food-stuffs from the local congregations, as well as very closely scheduled budgets, kept the Sem above board financially.

Through it all, MLS was able to maintain its integrity, and was blessed with being able to celebrate its 25th anniversary on June 9 and 10, 1935. Yes, amid the grey of the depression, there was still joy in the Lord's blessings. And as was noted in a special banquet held in honor of Director Hoenecke, there was a special thanks due the Lord for providing MLS with competent and faithful men to guide it. The Lord preserved the Sem for His purposes. And He didn't just preserve the school, but the message and purpose of the school. Namely,

that MLS gave its students a threefold preparation: "to prepare for life and service of their fellowman, for the entrance of the higher schools of our synod and subsequent ministry of the Gospel, and for the future life and the eternal praise of God."¹⁶

1940 - 1950

Following the troubled thirties, MLS was due for a rebound. It had showed its soundness and was now gearing up for the more prosperous post-Depression years. Though the people of this time were still skeptical of the future — Sem looked forward to new heights and continued success. Enrollment would rise and every year would figure to be better than the one before.

The early part of the decade proved to be a time of quiet growth for MLS. A time when grandfathers would see their grandchildren graduate from the same fine school which they attended as youth. (The graduation of 1942 had two such instances.) It was a time when the MLS Club would predict and enrollment of over 100 for 1942 -43 and they would only be two years off. A time when the Seminary school year could be completed by saying, "The school year that is now coming to an end was on the whole a quiet year and the assigned tasks could be well accomplished."¹⁷

But along with this quiet growth came the age-old problem of over-crowding. The growing enrollment was pushing the school's facilities to the limit, and a brief look into the possible

future numbers showed no let up. As it stood, the Sem's success was starting to hurt. A hopeful solution to this situation came in 1941, when in its meeting in August at Saginaw, the Joint Synod instructed the Board of Regents of MLS to prepare plans and specifications for a combined new recitation hall and gym. (The latter had been asked for for over a decade already.) The board carried out the Synod's resolution and presented a plan, drawn by D. Kimball of Saginaw, to the Synod and informed them that the project would cost about \$200,000. However, the Synod took little notice of the plans, acted as if the Board of Control had overstepped its authority and did nothing to raise funds for the buildings.

But the enrollment kept increasing. In 1944, the 35th year of existence for the Sem, the enrollment surpassed the 100 student mark. With this new high, and the outlook for more in the coming years, the building projects became vitally important. A special meeting of the Joint Synod was called for in January of 1945. The message it heard was one of urgency.

We dare wait no longer! Now something must be done. Michigan Lutheran Seminary at Saginaw, Michigan, has outgrown its modest buildings. We must enlarge and add a new structure if we do not want to turn away the young people seeking entrance to this school. We would become guilty before God if we did such a thing, guilty of spurning His blessings. If they come to us, we must provide room for them. Our prayers to God to send us young people willing to prepare for work in the church, demand that we accept them when they come to us and provide room for them. An administration building is sorely needed to provide adequate class room space for the constantly growing classes. At

present there are no facilities to take care of the ever-increasing number of girls. Living quarters must be provided for them. Add to this a gymnasium where the students can exercise to keep themselves physically fit and you have a picture of the needs of Michigan Lutheran Seminary. It will require a sum of \$250,000. 18

To this plea, the Synod responded by authorizing a million dollar collection to be taken, of which \$300,000 would go to the Sem for the necessary improvements. In the meantime, makeshift measures were taken to ease the situation. These measures included converting the gym in the dormitory into studies and bedrooms, installing an emergency classroom and recreation room in the basement of the dormitory, converting the first floor recreation room into more studies, the library in the Recitation Hall into a classroom, and erecting a portable building in back to serve as a gymnasium. These conversions were undertaken immediately in April of 1945, but because of the building restrictions imposed by WWII and the lack of the necessary funds, the permanent structures were not able to be started. Along with all this, the Sem was also granted a sixth and seventh professor as well as permission to make a twenty foot addition to the refectory. What started out as a seemingly quiet decade, seemed to become more hectic than a bride's house on the day of the wedding.

With sufficient facilities or not, the enrollment kept growing: 142 in 1945, 152 in 1946 and so on. War conditions still did not permit the necessary building to go on, however.

Not even the addition to the refectory could be started and the original allotment of \$13,000 needed to be raised to \$20,000. When the war ended though, the building offering became a thank-offering, and with the easing of building restrictions, the addition to the refectory was started on September 2, 1947. The project was completed by May of 1948 at a cost of \$18,890.58. Not only did this new addition ease the shortage of space in the refectory, but it also permitted the second floor of the refectory to be transformed into a girls dormitory. At first, only ten girls were able to be housed there and the rest of the girls had to be housed in private homes neighboring the school.

Through all the delays, the over-crowding, the housing arrangements and what have you, the forties closed pretty much as they had begun, with the comment being made in 1948, "The year has been a quiet year without any disturbances. For the first time in years, we were able to carry on our work with a full staff of full-time teachers."¹⁹

A few highlights of the forties which otherwise might be overlooked through all the confusion of the building programs were: The producing of a technicolor movie produce throughout the 1942 - 43 school year, done by Rev. Edgar Hoenecke, along with Rev. Theodore Sauer. This film which offers excellent footage of the Sem during this time was used as a recruitment tool throughout the Michigan District.

Crossing the 100 mark in enrollment in 1944.

The addition of three new professorships to the school faculty.

The untimely drowning of Dr. Einar Anderson, the Dean of the boys and music director, in August of 1949.

And finally, the celebration of Director Hoenecke's 50th anniversary in 1943.

All of these highlights and changes continued to prove God' gracious blessings upon the Sem and His loving guidance over all of its activities.

1950 - 1960

Many of the changes which were only hoped for in the last decade, would become reality in the fifties. The forties which at times became aggravating because of the lack of action and ability in alleviating the over-crowding problems, proved to be the perfect antithesis to the fifties, when a great deal of action would be done. In 1950, it was written in the North-western Lutheran,

There are two more matters of general interest worth mentioning. The one is of a depressing nature; the other is of a joyful nature. In some cases we are now being forced to accept applications on a provisional basis because the boys dormitory is already reserved for 82 students, 11 more than the dormitory was originally designed. This will also create a problem in our dining hall with its limited facilities...On the other hand, on the joyful side there is this report. Work on the long awaited new building was begun almost three weeks ago, and the work is progressing satisfactorily. It is to be completed by June 1951. ²⁰

How joyful that last news was!! Already some applications had had to be returned for lack of space. Even using the best possible class divisions, there were still seven classes with

only six rooms, so that the refectory also had to be used as a classroom. But with the laying of the cornerstone, it was evident, that help was on the way.

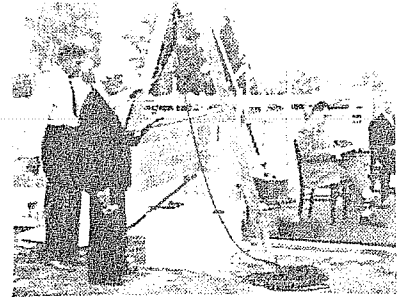
Throughout the planning years, President Hoenecke's picture had always appeared super-imposed over the "proposed new building of Michigan Lutheran Seminary." (This was one of the two major



Pres. O. Hoenecke — Proposed New Building, Michigan Lutheran Seminary

drawings done by the architect, although it ended up not being the one chosen.) It was only fitting then that Professor Hoenecke place the

cornerstone into its position. This "cornerstone laying" took place on October 1, 1950. About 700 people were in attendance. The work went along at a fine pace, so that less than one year later, the people could all return for the dedication of the new administration - gymnasium building.



Prof. O. J. R. Hoenecke ready to lay the cornerstone for the new building

On September 9, 1951, under blue skies, the long awaited administration building was dedicated. Rev. John Brenner, president of the Wisconsin Synod, conducted the service. The one difference between this service and the dedication service, was that not only did the 700 return, but 900 more for a service attendance of 1,600. An estimated 3,500 people took

advantage of the fine weather and toured the building during the open house...

Brenner delivered the sermon in which he pointed out the dangers of educational principles to the Scriptures and stressed the need of Christ-centered instruction.

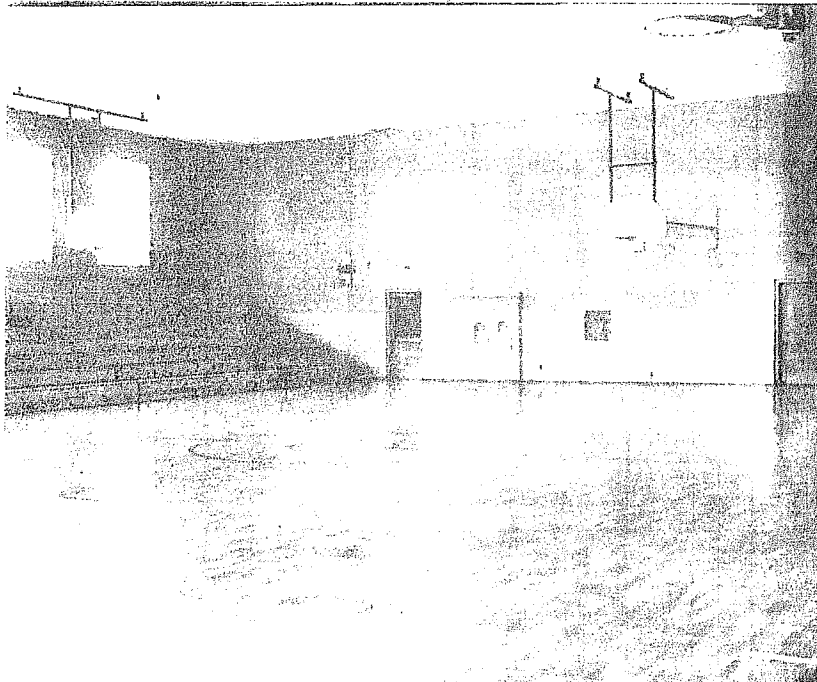
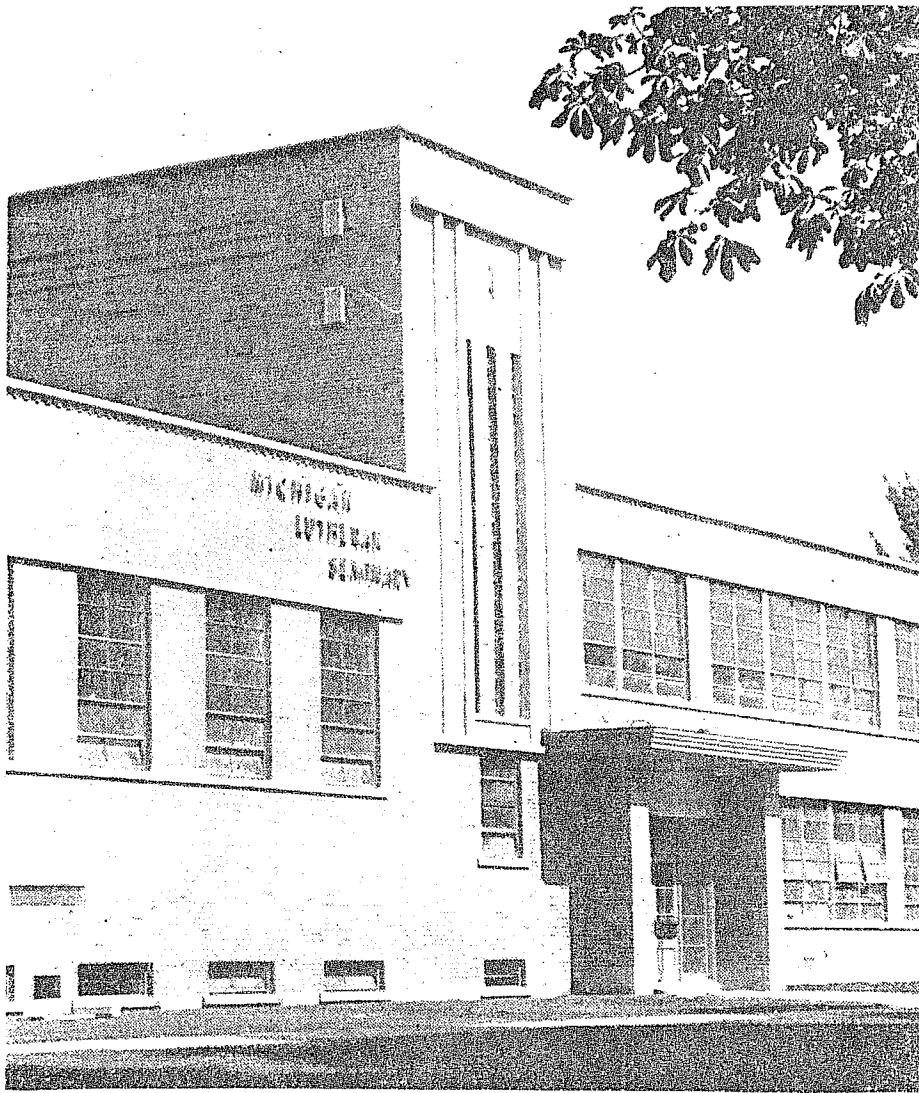


Rev. John Brenner, Synod President, presenting keys of new building to Prof. Conrad Frey, President of Michigan Lutheran Seminary.

... They saw a building which was erected with an eye to instructional efficiency, health, safety, and economy. Its design is simple; its form and mass plain; its spirit inviting and attractive. It is constructed of steel and reinforced concrete with cinder block and brick exterior and stone trim.

The dimensions of the building are 215 ft. \times 102 ft., two stories in height. The southeast wing of the building contains the classroom units; the northwest wing contains the gymnasium-auditorium units.

The southeast wing has six classrooms, a library, a room for typing instruction, chemistry laboratory, physics laboratory, science lecture room, student meeting room, offices and toilets. Floors in the corridors are of rubber tile with terazzo border. Classroom floors are of asphalt tile. The lobby, vestibules, corridors, toilets and auditorium have a tile wainscot for five feet above a terazzo base. Built-in metal corridor lockers provide storage for the wraps and books of students living in town. Acoustical plaster was used on the ceilings. Doors, millwork and wood trim are of selected oak with light driftwood finish. All available wall space was utilized for built-in shelving, drawers and cases. A vacuum steam heating system and gravity and mechanical ventilating systems insure proper heating and ventilating for the entire building.



GYMNASIUM

The northwest wing of the building contains the auditorium-gymnasium, the stage-assembly, locker rooms, dressing rooms, kitchen, boiler room and storage rooms. This portion of the building can be closed off for independent use by folding steel gates. The auditorium-gymnasium, featuring a "floating floor," acoustical tile ceiling and a built-in public address system, provides comfortable seating for over 1,200 when used for general assembly purposes, or for over 600 when used for basketball games. Permanent folding type bleachers have been installed against the back wall of the floor area, providing a basketball playing court of 80 ft. X 45 ft. Two cross-court practice floors were made possible through the erection of four swing-up baskets. The stage is large enough to serve as assembly room for the student-body. It is equipped with flame-proofed cyclorama and curtains. The tower room on the second floor provided an excellent space for the installation of an organ with speakers to the assembly as well to the auditorium.

Much of the modern equipment could be obtained, including a Hammond organ, because of special gifts and memorials from individuals and congregation. To them we again express our most hearty thanks.

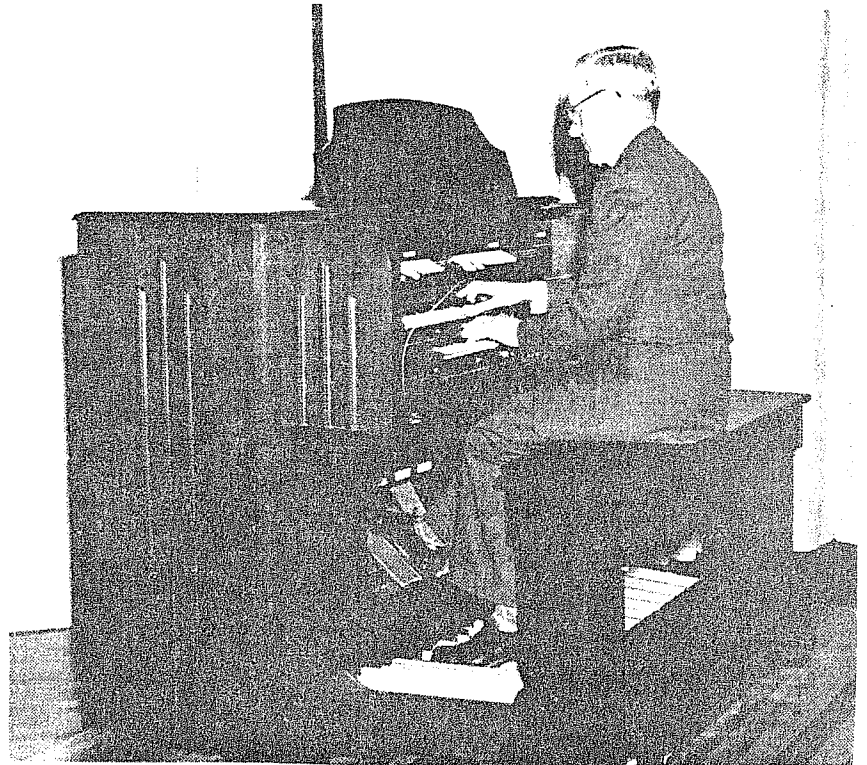
The morning following the dedication, the 1951-1952 school year was opened formally with a service in the auditorium. The 173 students, many of their parents, friends and pastors from the area heard the sermon delivered by Pastor S. E. Westendorf as he urged the students not to underestimate the value of the Christian training they were receiving. In this service the two new tutors, Paul Eickmann and Philip Strohm of our Theological Seminary, were introduced to the assembly.

While last year's enrollment of 157 was the largest in the school's history, the 173 students this year established a new enrollment record. We are happy to note again that the majority of the new students is studying for work in the Church. As has been pointed out in other articles on Michigan Lutheran Seminary, that reflects the devoted efforts of our pastors and teachers to win promising young people for full-time service in the Lord's Vineyard.

CONRAD FREY.

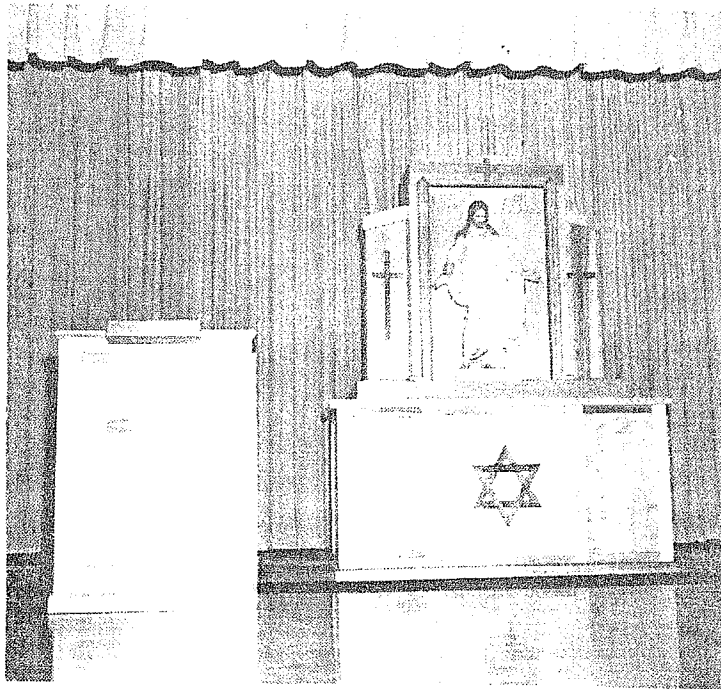
One of the most important blessings of the new administration building was the fact that there was now a facility for conducting daily chapel services which could be more devotional and meaningful. Up until this time, chapel had been conducted in an over-crowded classroom which was hardly conducive to meditation. Now, the chapel services could be patterned after a regular church service with prayers, hymns, responses, and daily sermonettes. An anonymous gift of \$7,000 from a lady member of the Synod made the purchase of a very fine organ possible.

This purchase, along with the construction of a beautiful altar and pulpit by the maintenance man, Mr. Robert Kaschinske offered a truly devotional atmosphere for the students to wor-



ship in. This may seem as only a minor blessing in comparison to the blessing of the building itself, but with it it could be said,

There [MLS] the student virtually begins his day with the Lord by means of morning chapel. Morning chapel is not merely the time for a per-



God's abundant blessings by prayers of invocation and thanksgiving. Then to complete the day, the daylight hours end with another chapel service.²¹

With the convenience of the new administration building and all the opportunities it offered, there was still over-crowding in the dormitory and especially in the dining hall. The dining hall had been inadequate for sometime already. The kitchen was no larger than a good-size farm kitchen (29 x 15). In this small kitchen, @500 meals were prepared and served to @190 people, daily! The meals were all prepared on a 4 x 6 cooking range and a 3 x 6 work table. (An area originally designed to serve only 82 people.) In order to provide more space, several of the baking and cooking units were placed two rooms away from the kitchen. The dining room was also very small. Originally designed to serve only 70 comfortably (now only one-third of the student body) the students were fed, "prison-style" on long tables covering the width of the floor. Even with these

functory reading of a Scripture lesson and possibly a hasty prayer. Chapel is conducted like a regular service with hymns, responses, prayers, and a brief sermon, based on God's Word and designed to nurture faith. After the chapel service the entire course of study that a student will follow during the day, is designed to do the same thing—whether it be in religion, Social Studies, the sciences, or whatever the classes may be. When the physical needs of the body are met at mealtimes, there too the student is reminded of

arrangements, meals had to be served in shifts, to the classes.



A practical view of our students ready for dinner

This emergency condition had been in effect since 1949 and grew steadily worse with each increased enrollment.



An original request for an addition to the refectory was withdrawn in 1951, until the completion of the Mobridge building project was accomplished.

In 1953, relief was finally on the way. The Synod voted to erect a new dining hall and kitchen, attached to the old refectory. The

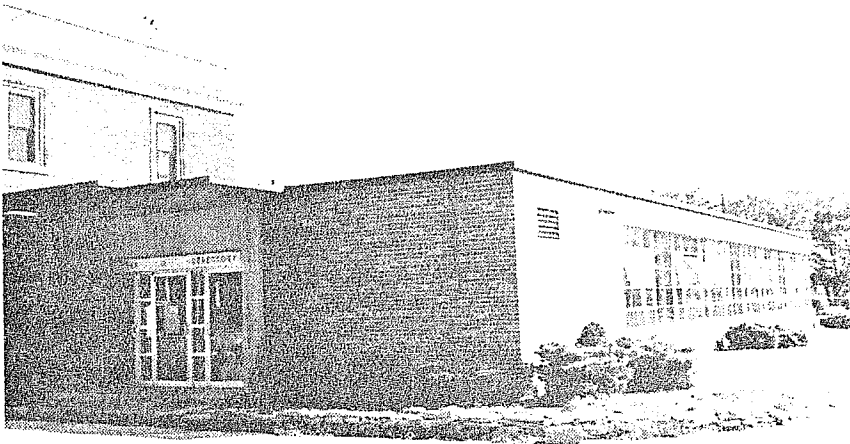
work began promptly and the building was erected at a cost of \$136,000. On September 12, 1954, the new building was dedicated. Although the opening of school had to be postponed



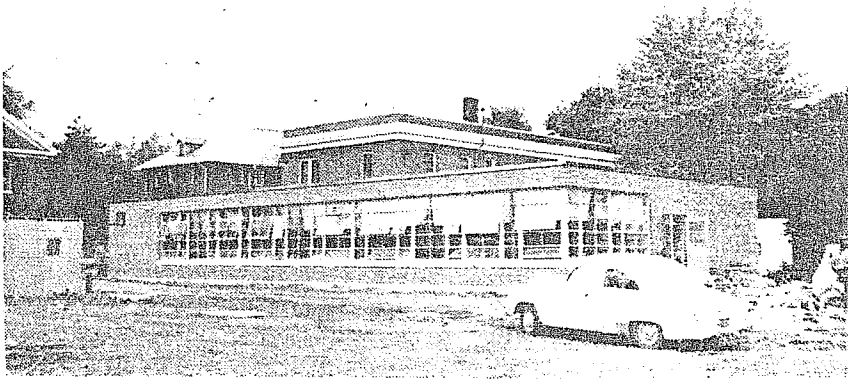
INTERIOR VIEW OF REFECTORY

a week for all of the cafeteria to be completed — it was well worth the wait. The Lord had again answered the prayers and needs of His school.

Just prior to the building of the new dining hall, was



The New Dining Hall — Erected in 1954



EXTERIOR VIEW OF REFECTORY



Girls' Dormitory No. 2 — Purchased in 1951

the purchase of a large frame house to serve as a girls' dormitory. Up to 26 girls had been accommodated on the second floor of the old refectory, but more room was needed. Though the purchase of this house did not solve the entire problem, it was of great help in relieving the overcrowding.

The improvements to the facilities proved to be a boon for the school. Except for a few minor fluctuations in the enrollment, the number of students kept increasing every year. Finally, in 1955, it was thought that the peak en-

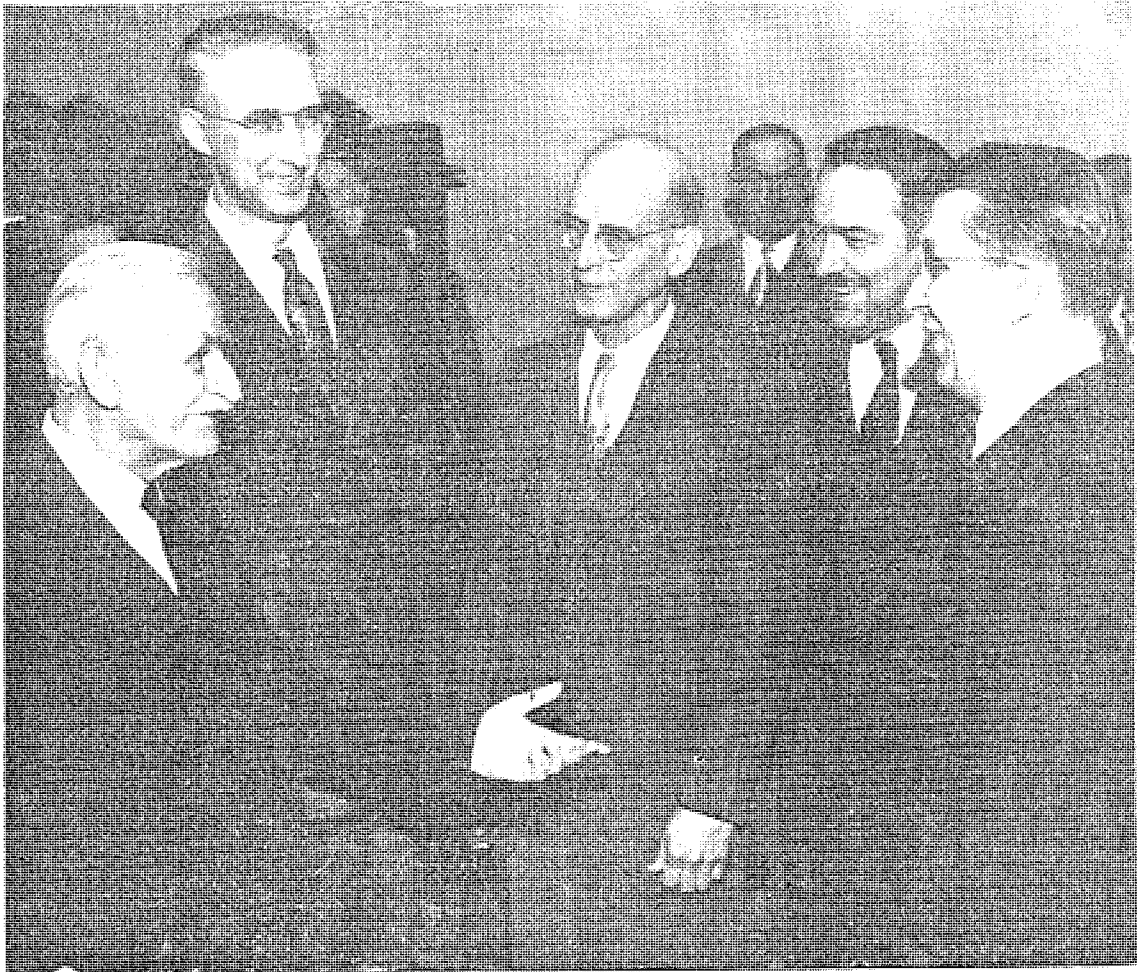
rollment was reached. In that year, there were 299 students enrolled, with the largest freshmen class ever attending (92). At this point it was understood,

We are trying to keep the enrollment within the 300 figure. It is our belief that a school of this kind cannot operate properly with an enrollment much greater than that. The personal contact, so vital to a boarding school operating on a secondary level is an impossibility when the student body becomes too large. For that reason, there is no thought of expansion now, nor will there be in the future. Even with the number of students in attendance now we are not operating as efficiently as we would like to. The class divisions are much too large for intensive work, especially in some branches. ...On the other hand, we are grateful for the large enrollment since it should mean that larger numbers of our young people will be entering the service of the church. 22

This opinion, though theoretically sound, proved to be idealistic at best, for not only didn't the enrollment stay below 300, but by 1960 it had reached 344.

By now, the history of MLS must seem to nothing more than a history of numbers and buildings. But this should not be the case. The history of MLS is a history of blessings. Blessings in enrollment, in facilities and especially in men. The members of the faculty had changed quite a lot over the years, but one face remained the same. One man could look back, all the way to 1910 and say that he was there teaching the first four students. This man was Director Otto J.R. Hoenecke. He was the "rock of Gibraltar" for the Sem. He served as the "national guard and Red Cross" when Sem needed help the most. Above all, he was faithful to his calling of training young men and women in the true Word of God.

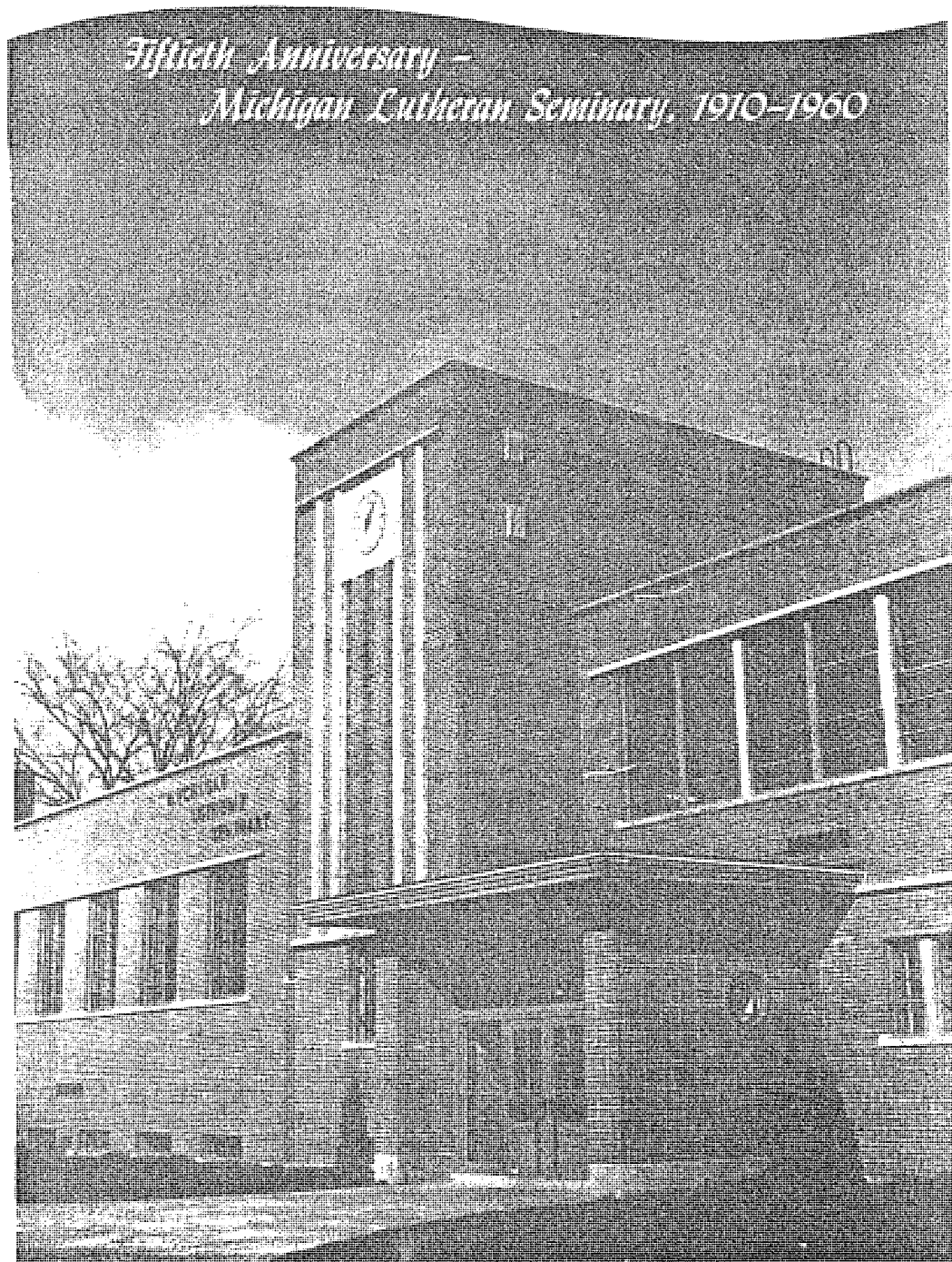
In 1950, an era ended. For in 1950, Director Hoenecke retired from his call as Director of the school and handed over the reigns to another gifted man, Rev. Conrad Frey.



Prof. Otto J. R. Hoenecke, retiring president, congratulates his successor, Pastor Conrad Frey (right). Behind them (left to right) are Pastors R. G. Koch, Oscar Frey, and O. J. Eckert, who officiated at the installation

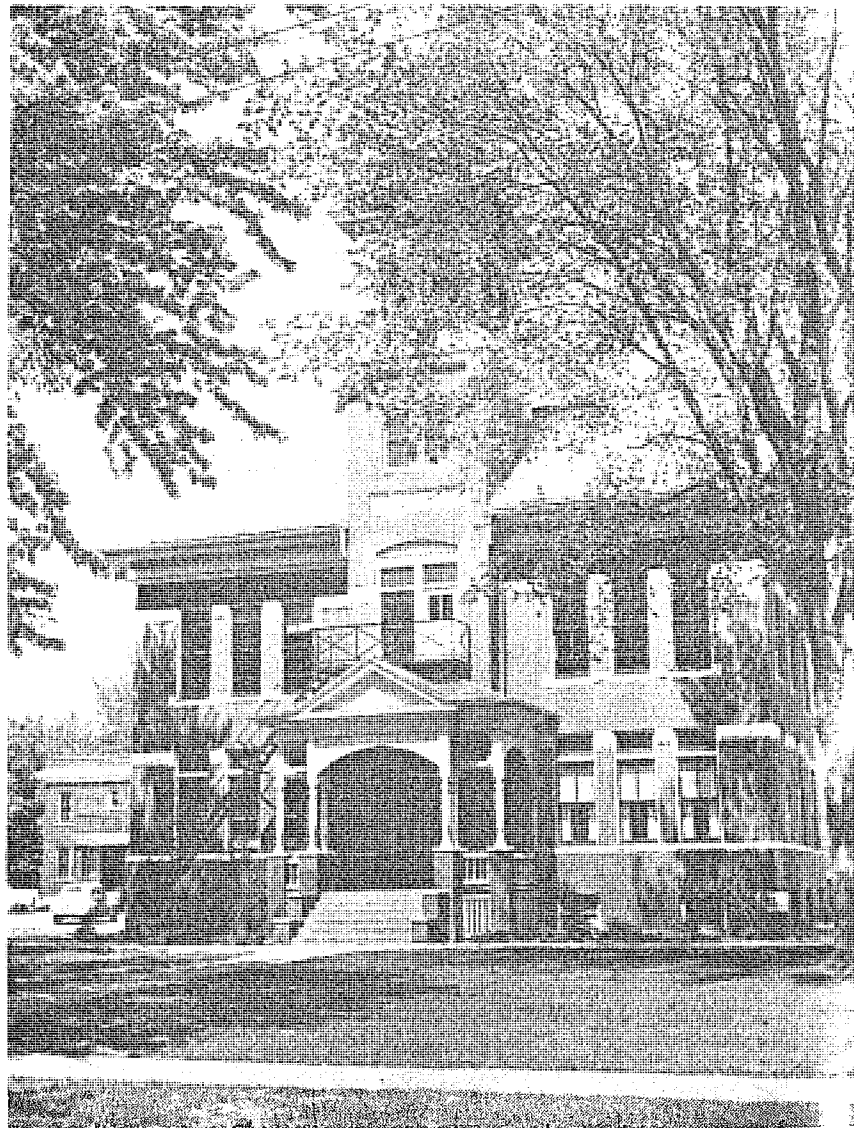
If ever a man proved to be the right man, at the right time, Director Hoenecke was that man. Without a doubt, he was one of God's "special" blessings to the Sem.

PART III - THE SEED MATURES

1960 - 1970

Yes, fifty years had passed since four students huddled around Professor Hoenecke's desk. Fifty years and bounties of blessings. 1960 marked the "Golden Anniversary" of Michigan

Lutheran Seminary, and to be sure, as retired Professor Hoenecke looked around, it just wasn't the same place. Oh, its purpose was the same, the message it taught the same, but it was almost all different now. The area that use to be farm land bordering the school, was now residential city; the buildings were all new, it just wasn't the same. Only one landmark remained. A landmark that had seen many a soul nurtured in God's Word. That landmark was "Old Main." "Old Main" had served



Old Main, M. L. S., Saginaw, Michigan

as a dormitory, classroom, refectory, and home. It had seen

lean years (even being closed for three years) as well as, seeing and feeling the squeeze from overly-abundant good years. Yet, Old Main, too, had served its time and now needed to be replaced. With the plans prepared for a large new addition to be built on to the administration building, Old Main had to be torn down. On February 21, 1963, the last remnant of the original "Progymnasium," met the wrecking ball. According to the



Saginaw News Photo

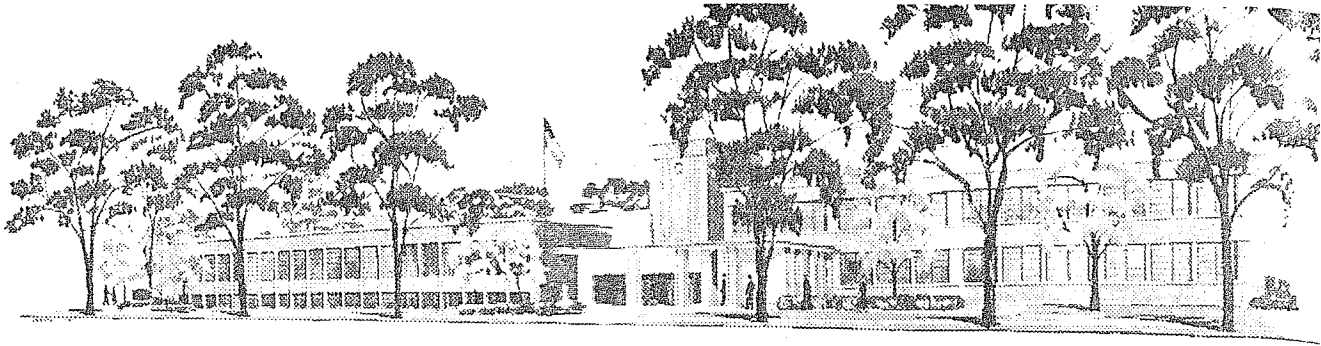
The tower of Old Main comes toppling down



The old gives way to the new

Saginaw News, Old Main didn't go down without a fight, for the reporter wrote, "A sturdy cable attached to a bulldozer brought down the tower of Old Main at Michigan Lutheran Seminary....The old tower proved nearly indestructible until workmen weakened it at strategic points."

To replace Old Main, the Synod had authorized an addition to the current Administration building. The addition was



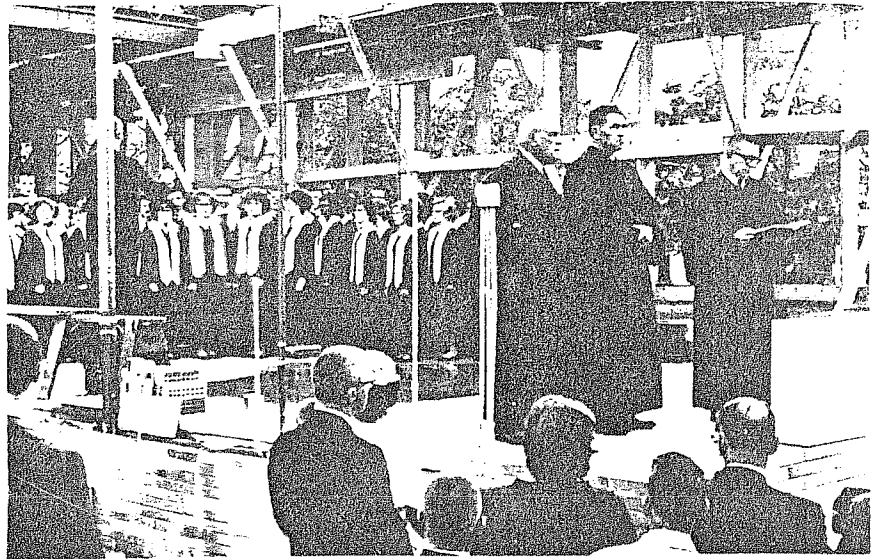
CLASSROOM and STUDENT UNION addition to the ADMINISTRATION BLDG for MICHIGAN LUTHERAN SEMINARY - Egoine, Michigan

KARL KRAUSS JR.
architect
Lansing, Michigan

After Enlarging and Remodeling, Michigan Lutheran Seminary Building Will Look Like This

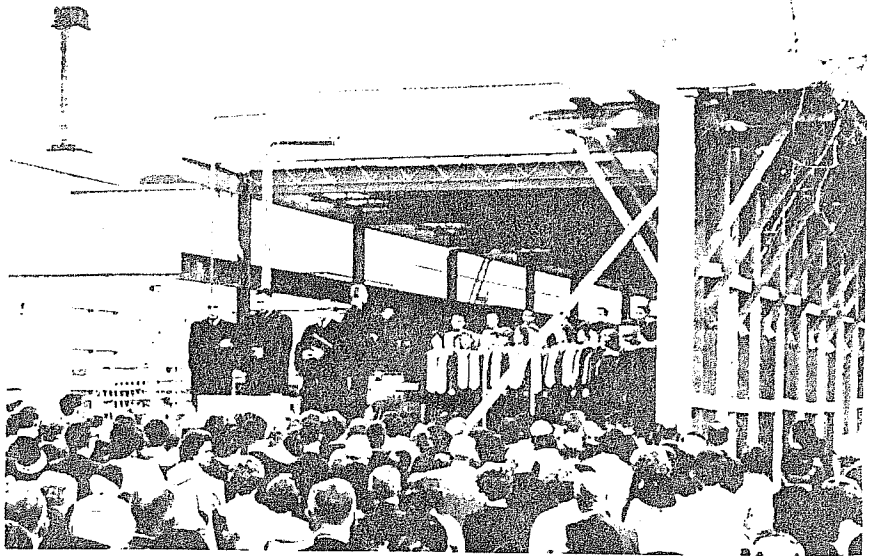
scheduled to provide the space of a second building. It would replace the lost facilities of the Old Main, and would provide a library, additional offices, and enlarged faculty room, student lounge, two science rooms, music room, and piano practice rooms. The addition would cost @ \$431,000.

The cornerstone laying took place on October 30, 1963. 800 friends of the Sem witnessed the historic event. Among those attending, were retired Prof. Hoenecke, Mrs. Martha Waidelich, who was



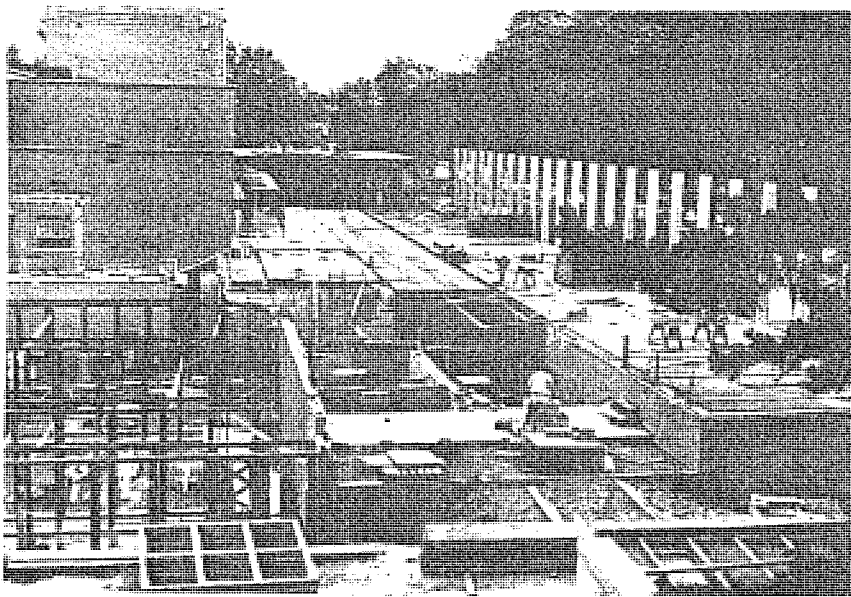
PARTICIPATING CLERGYMEN at the MLS cornerstone-laying. (L. to R.) Pastor Karl Krauss; Pastor Emil Kasischke, chairman of the Board of Control; President Conrad Frey.

a 10 year-old girl when she saw the cornerstone laying of the now defunct Old Main. This was in 1887, on land which her family had owned. The main speaker of the day was Rev. Karl Krauss, of the class of 1915. January 15, 1964 was the



AN OVER-ALL VIEW at the MLS cornerstone-laying on October 20.

predicted completion date for this fine addition to the training grounds of the Lord's kingdom.



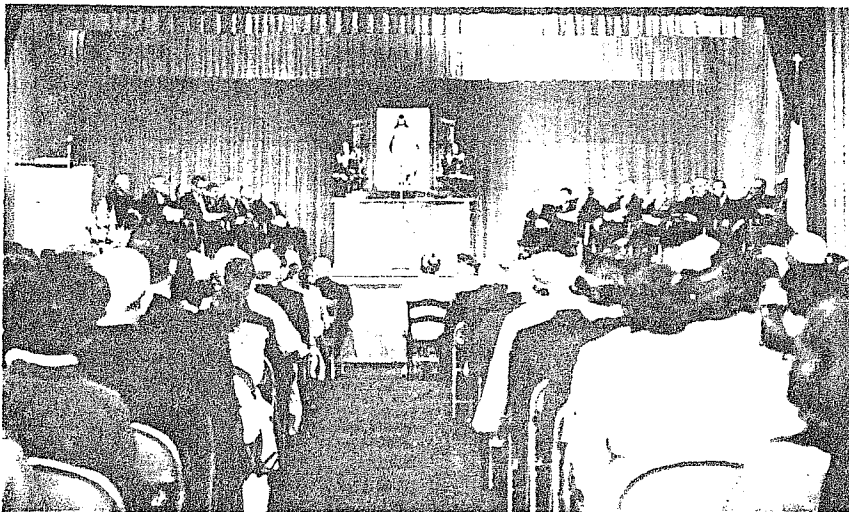
Building Moves Ahead at Michigan Lutheran Seminary

Work proceeded quickly on the new building, although the predicted date of completion proved to be just a bit early. Shortly before Easter, 1964, the Sem family experienced the thrill of moving into the new library, science

rooms, music suite, and student union.



PASTOR EMIL KASISCHKE, chairman of the Board of Regents, read the rite of dedication for the large new addition at Michigan Lutheran Seminary. He was flanked by Professor C. Frey, president of MLS (left) and Synod President O. Naumann.



OFFICIATING CLERGYMEN, MEMBERS OF THE BOARD AND OF THE FACULTY, and Prof. O. J. R. Hoenecke, president emeritus, occupied the platform. Even the large stage area behind the curtain was filled by the overflow audience.



MICHIGAN LUTHERAN SEMINARY DEDICATION

On Sunday, April 19, 1964, some 2000 people thronged the Michigan Lutheran Seminary campus at Saginaw to join in celebrating the formal dedication of the new addition to the Administration Building.

After President C. Frey and Board Chairman E. Kasischke officiated at dedicatory rites, Pastor O. Naumann, Synod president, addressed the assembly. He based his encouragement and exhortation on the passage in Luke 19:26: "Unto everyone which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken from him."

Festival song was provided by the school's Concert Choir and by a mass chorus of 400 voices from area congregations, both directed by Prof. R. Bame.

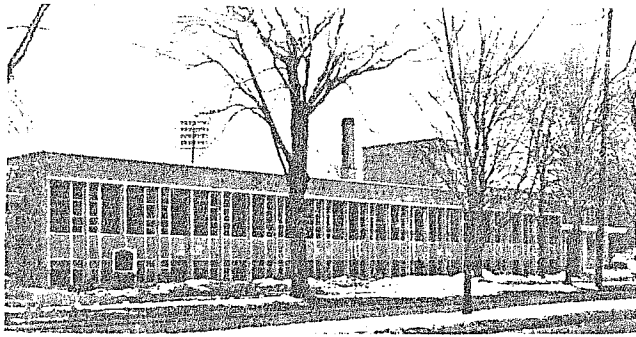
An interested and interesting participant in the dedicatory service was the Rev. O. J. Hoenecke, head of the school from 1910 to 1950 and now living in retirement at Saginaw.

The building project, costing \$425,000, provides a music suite, library, two science rooms, a student union with lounge, lunch, game, and meeting facilities, extra classrooms, an enlarged administrative unit, and a guidance center. The architect is Mr. Karl F. Krauss, Jr., of Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin.

The Lord God and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod have been good to Michigan Lutheran Seminary. The school will show its heartfelt gratitude by endeavoring to use faithfully what has been given and what it now has in the preparatory training of future pastors and teachers who will serve Him who came to seek and to save that which was lost.

E. C. FREDRICH

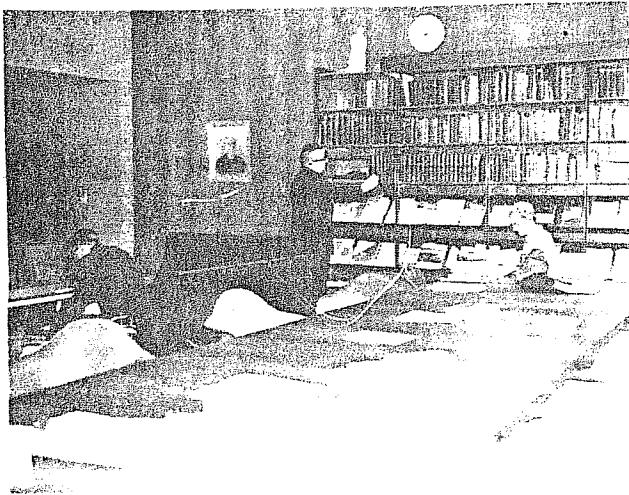
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ALMOST FILLED, AND PEOPLE STILL POURING IN! — That was the situation in the MLS auditorium well before the time of the service. It is estimated that more than 2,000 people attended the service.



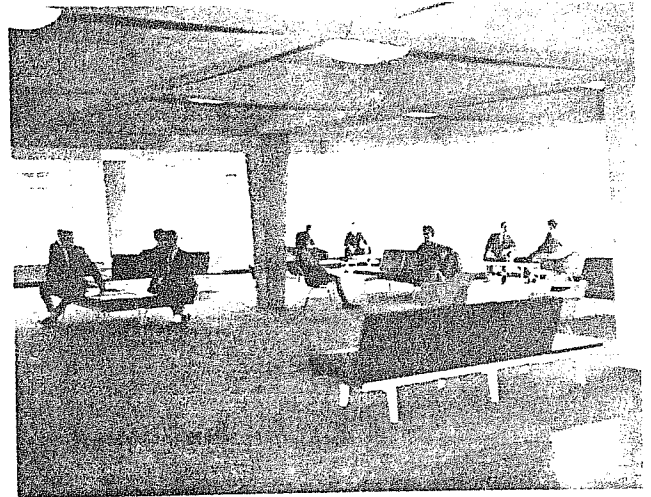
THE ENLARGED ADMINISTRATION BUILDING



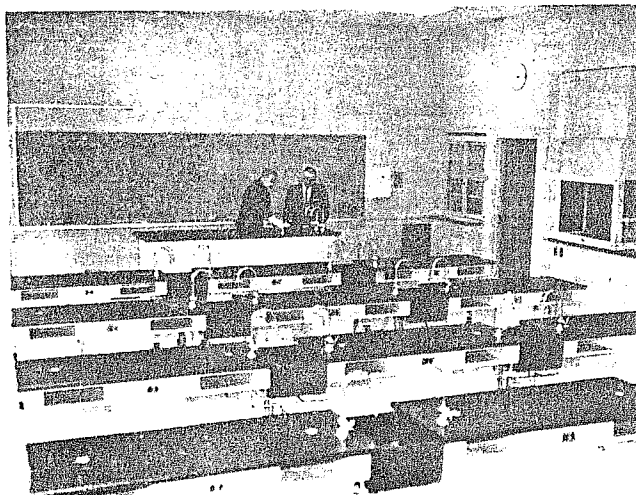
PRESIDENT CONRAD FREY in his new office at MLS.



THE FACULTY ROOM in the new addition at Michigan Lutheran Seminary is spacious and efficient.



THE STUDENT UNION provides something that has been felt as a need for a long time. Note the generous amount of space allotted for this facility.



THIS CHEMISTRY LABORATORY will furnish the kind of facility our students need.



THE MUSIC REHEARSAL ROOM will be used by various musical organizations. Music classes will also be conducted here.

There remained yet, one change for the Seminary of the sixties, and that, as in the past, was a change in the faculty. Particularly, a change of presidents. In 1966, President Frey accepted a call to Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minnesota. A call was then extended to Professor Martin Toepel to fill Frey's vacancy. He accepted the call and became the third president of Michigan Lutheran Seminary.

#### 1970 - Present

In a way, the sixties and seventies were very parallel decades for MLS, since in both decades, something old had to be torn down to make room for something new. In 1963, Old Main was toppled to make room for the administration addition. The seventies on the other hand saw the boys' dormitory (Hoenecke Hall) also bite the dust to be replaced by a new dormitory.

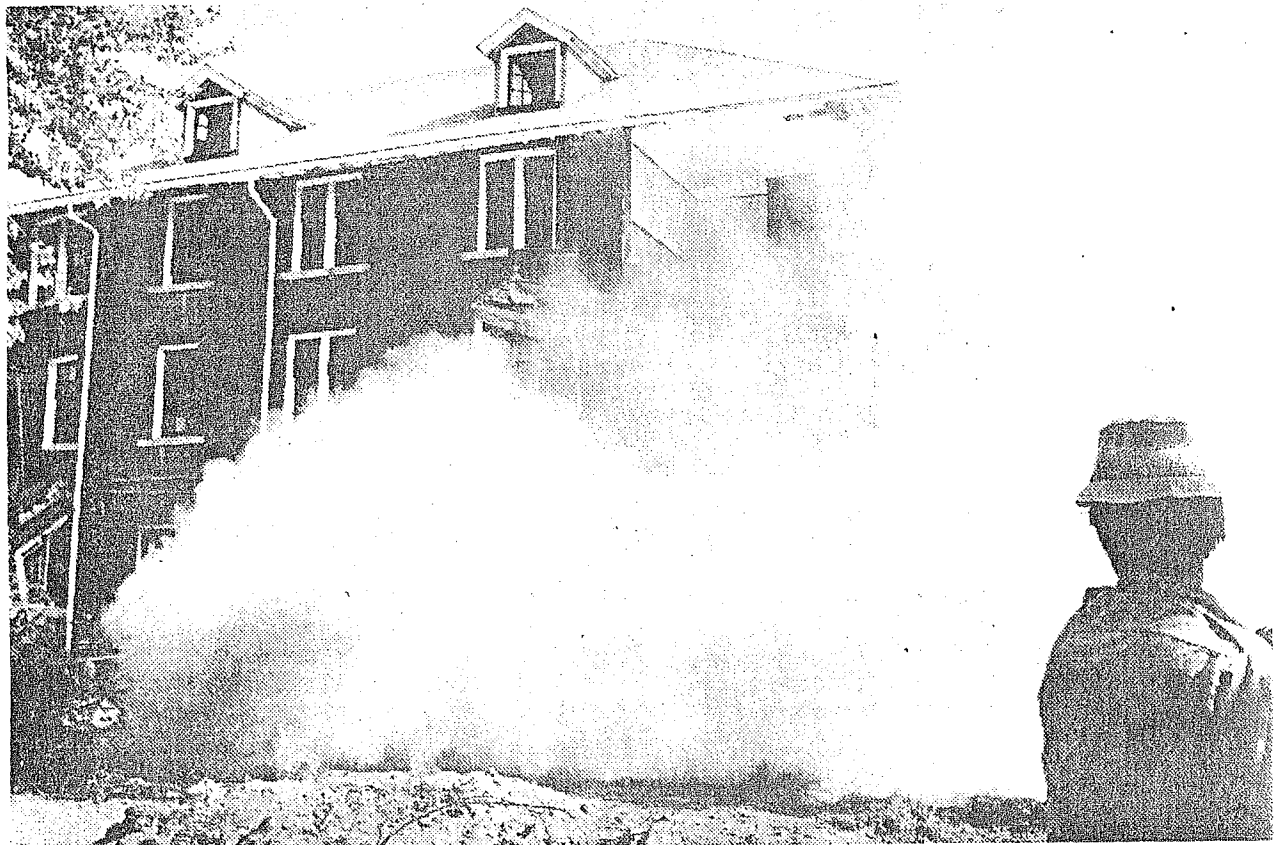
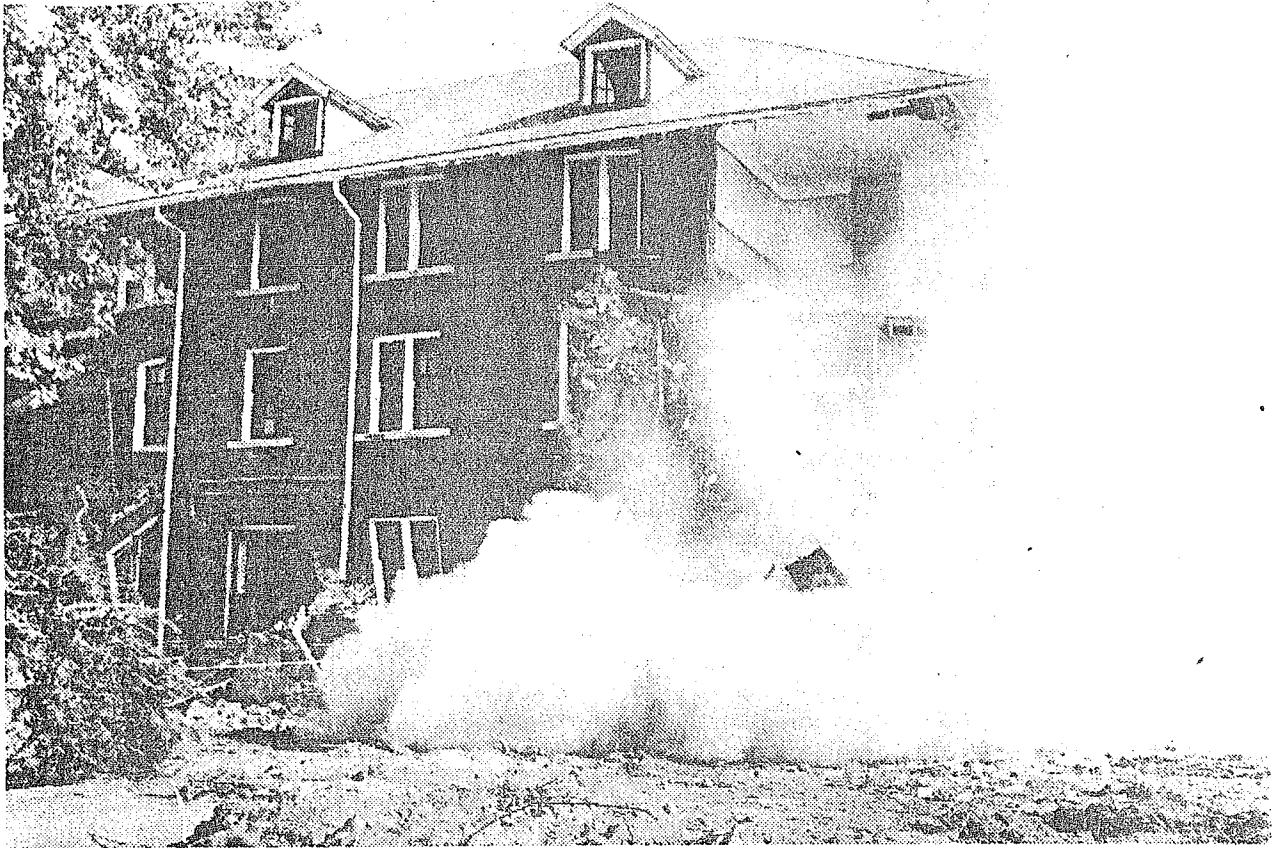
Hoenecke Hall had needed replacement for a long time since for years the structure was serving beyond its capacity. Finally, in 1973, the Synod authorized up to \$2,000,000 in loans to be obtained to construct a new dormitory. To provide housing during the construction of the new dormitory, emergency housing had to be arranged, and so the "Plywood Palace" was created. The "Plywood Palace" consisted in the converting of six classroom areas on the second floor of the administration building and the lower level game room of the student union in housing units. These areas housed 110 male students, with @ 8 to 20 quartered in each section. Over 50 girls were housed in private homes and 100 girls were housed in three converted dorm homes.

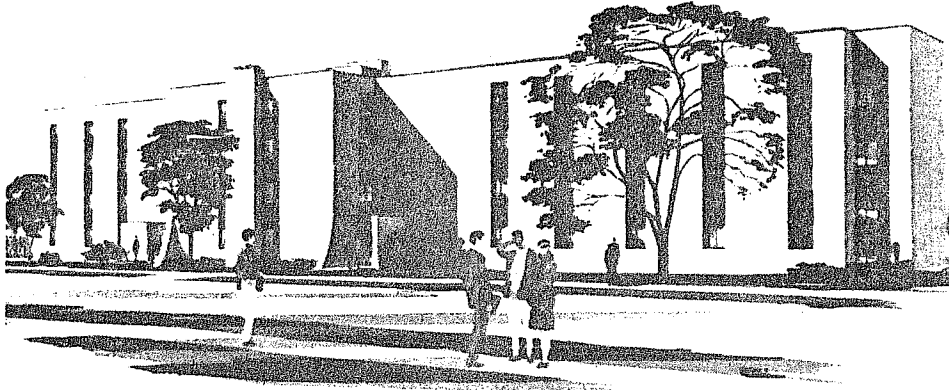
Five relocatable classrooms were purchased to replace the space used to house students. For the first two months of the school year, however, these units were not available for use, as a result that classes had to be held anywhere possible, i.e. gymnasium, stage, library, and student union. By November, the portable units were in use.

Demolition of half of the old refectory (in more recent years, Girls' Dorm I) was done in July. A cement block wall closed up the remaining portion which is now being used as a kitchen stock area. All the utility lines had to be rerun for the kitchen-dining hall. A more permanent solution would eventually have to come about to solve the crowded kitchen conditions and replace the antiquated equipment.

Inevitably, Hoenecke Hall, was torn down in 1975. Many watched as it went down, and surprisingly there wasn't the usual cheering, but more of a quiet acknowledgement that an old friend was leaving.







The architect's concept of the dormitory facility now under construction at Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Michigan. The new dormitory will house 346 students. Completion is expected in the spring of 1976.

In September a special meeting of the Synod's Coordinating Council was called to consider what course of action to take when the bids for the new dormitory facility were much higher than expected. The Synod's Board of Trustees authorized that bids be accepted up to the sum of \$2,450,000. This meant that \$120,000 had to be cut from the low bids. Actual demolition of the maintenance building, Hoenecke Hall, and the attached dean's residence began immediately after the final bids were approved.

#### Groundbreaking

Sunday, October 6, 1974, was a joyous occasion on campus as the groundbreaking was held for the new facility. The Rev. Robert Voss, executive secretary of the Synod's Commission on Higher Education, addressed the assembly on the basis of II Kings 4: 8-10, using as his theme, "Beds and Desks for the Successors of the Prophet Elisha." He pointed out that even as the Shunammite woman had provided for the Prophet Elisha, so the gifts of love of WELS members through the 125th Anniversary Grace Offering were being translated into physical facilities at MLS as a preparatory school for future pastors and teachers.

Construction of the dormitory facilities began immediately. The full basement will provide for laundry, exercise, multi-purpose and storage rooms in each of the two separated portions of the building. It is hoped that the basement space may also be used in the near future to alleviate several other crowded conditions on our campus. This is feasible since two basement walls have large window areas that overlook an extension of our present spoken garden area.

#### Four-Story Dormitory

The design of the four-story structure is similar to a cross with an offset crossbar. The front of the building faces Hardin Street. One section provides 60 rooms to house 151 boys. The other has 78 rooms, providing housing for 195 girls. The two portions of the facility and the main lounge of each section are

totally separated. An office for the Dean of Students will have a separate outside entrance in the wing nearest our present classroom building.

Unusually mild winter weather has enabled the construction to proceed with only a few delays. The decking covering the entire basement was in place by the end of December. The laying of the exterior tan-brick facing and the interior cement-block is progressing well. The target date is the spring of 1976.

#### Other Needs

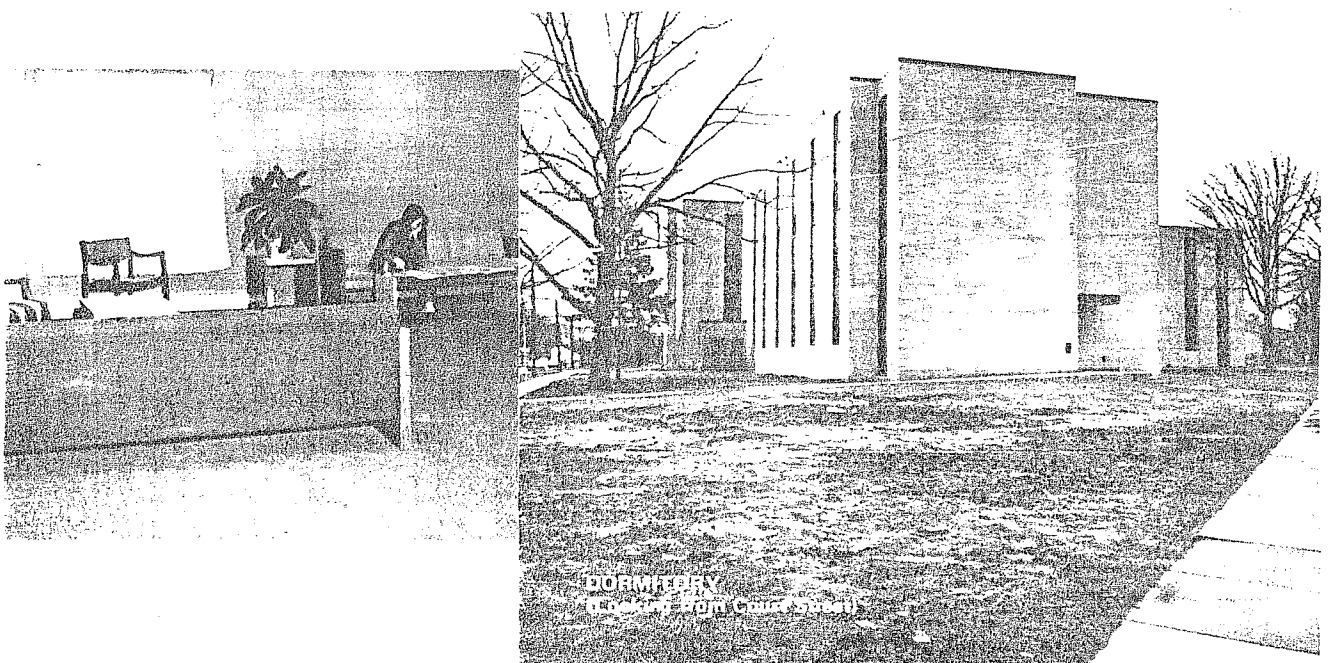
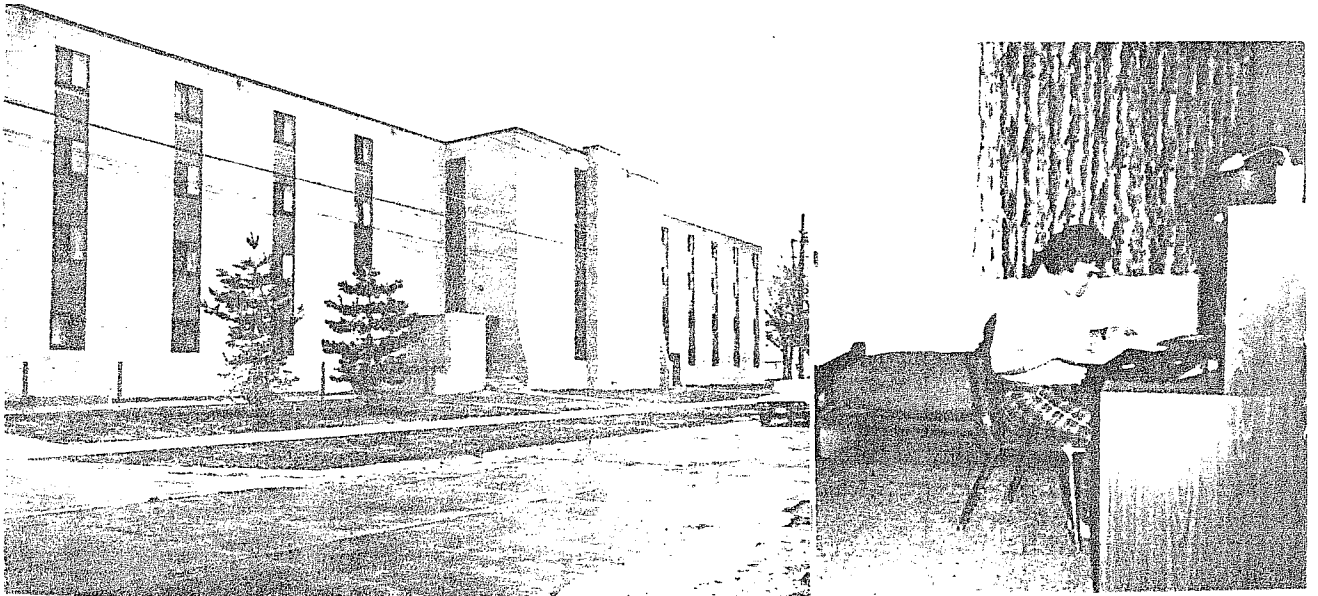
Several important items had to be deleted to get the cost of the facility down to the approved \$2.45 million. Only the first-floor hallway, the main lounge areas, and a few office areas will be painted. All student rooms, the upper-floor hallways, and the stairways will remain unpainted. An additional \$25,000 would be needed to restore the painting contract for these areas. Furnishings could be ordered for only 290 of the 346 student areas at a cost of just under \$500 per student. Some additional lounge furnishings are also needed. These additional furnishings would cost another \$50,000. All special gifts and memorials to the Seminary are being designated to help supply these important items before the new dormitory facility is completed.

By the Grace of God, during the past few years, Michigan Lutheran Seminary has been supplying more freshmen to our Synod's colleges than any other preparatory or high school. Through the 125th Anniversary Grace Offering WELS members are showing their thanksgiving for the blessings God showered upon our Synod during the past 125 years. A large part of the Grace Offering is being used to cover the cost of the new dormitory facility on the campus of Michigan Lutheran Seminary. Thus, through the members of the Synod, God is answering our prayers and providing for these much-needed facilities. Thanks be unto God! We pray that this new facility will better enable us to serve the Lord in preparing workers to proclaim His Gospel message in all its truth and purity.

Prof. J. Birkholz



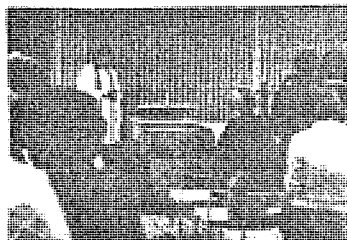
With the building of the new dormitory, the late seventies could almost be called the "Dedication years." For by purposeful planning, the new dormitory was to serve also in the capacity of the refectory, when finances were available for such a move. So on January 4, 1976, a much needed and desired project, that of the new boys' and girls' dormitory was dedicated. Officiating at the ceremonies was President Oscar Naumann of the Wisconsin Synod. Finally, after decades of waiting, MLS had its new dormitory.



Another dedication was soon scheduled, and that was the dedication of the new dining hall and kitchen in the basement of the dormitory. On May 18, 1980, although it had been in service for an entire semester, a formal dedication service was held for the new facility. The new kitchen and dining hall, authorized in 1979, includes large windows, seating for 200-240 people, sound-absorbing panels on the walls, and a very modern and well-equipped kitchen that can service to meal lines at once.

With the move of the dining hall to the dormitory basement, the old dining hall was available for use. With a little work and a minimal cost of under \$5,000, the old dining hall was converted into a Chapel-Assembly building. This, too, was dedicated on March 3, 1980. The remodeling included boarding up some windows and paneling one long wall, hanging some drapery and dividing curtains, and changing the lighting to flourescent. All in all the changes make this building very usable for the many activities planned for it.

As seems to be the case in the last three decades, there was also a change of presidents. President Toepel retired from his position in 1978 and was succeeded by Dr. John Lawrenz. Again the Lord's hand can be seen not only in providing adequate facilities for His sheep, but also able shepherds to guide them.



One might think that MLS is now completely settled in as far as its facilities. It has ample dormitory and kitchen space, it has enough classroom space, yet with all this, there is still one need, and that is for a larger gymnasium facility. Among the various problems with attaining this addition (outside of finances) is the fact that the Sem campus is quite limited as to its acreage. Anymore additions or building would just about wipe out any athletic practice areas. All these things have been considered and a seemingly workable plan has been drawn up. As has been the case throughout Sem's history though...there will be some wait for this improvement until finances can cover the expense.

So looking back over the whole spectrum of Sem's history, you see a school that is dedicated to a purpose, yet a school that has changed drastically over the years. But has it changed? Really? No, not really. For just as a mustard seed that is planted will change and need more space to grow, so Sem, like a seed that is sown, has merely grown and flourished and matured under God's grace. The history doesn't end here... for as long as there is an MLS, there will be a history, the history of the small seed which through the grace of God bears abundant fruit for His kingdom.

ENDNOTES:

1. Centennial Committee, Continuing in His Word, p. 185.
2. Ibid., p. 87.
3. Starr, "God's Special Gift...," p. 6.
4. Centennial Committee, op. cit., p. 189.
5. Ibid., p. 190.
6. Hoenecke, The History of Michigan Lutheran Seminary, p. 7.
7. MLS Catalogue, 1918 -1919 school year, p. 7.
8. NWL, Vol. 2, 1915, p. 141.
9. NWL, Vol. 7, 1920, p. 60.
10. NWL, Vol. 8, 1921, p. 334.
11. NWL, Vol. 9, 1922, p. 318.
12. NWL, Vol. 15, 1928, p. 316.
13. Ibid., p. 234.
14. NWL, Vol. 19, 1932, p. 167.
15. Ibid., pp. 219 - 220.
16. NWL, Vol. 8, 1921, p. 334.
17. NWL, Vol. 30, 1943, p. 172.
18. NWL, Vol. 32, 1945, p. 21.
19. NWL, Vol. 35, 1948, p. 189.
20. NWL, Vol. 37, 1950, p. 269.
21. NWL, Vol. 40, 1953, p. 251.
22. NWL, Vol. 42, 1955, p. 332.

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