

## FIFTY MEMORABLE YEARS AT ST. OLAF

Marking the history of the  
"College on the Hill" from  
its founding in 1874 to its  
golden jubilee celebration in  
1925.

BY  
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Northfield, Minnesota



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## INTRODUCTION

WITH St. Olaf commemorating its fiftieth anniversary, and Norsemens of America the hundredth anniversary of the first Norse immigration to this country, The Northfield News published a series of articles by Prof. I. F. Grose dealing with the background, the ideals and the fifty years' history of St. Olaf college.

Professor Grose was eminently fitted to write these sketches which show keen insight into the spirit of the Norse immigrant and appreciation of the part he has played in the development of his adopted land, and give interesting sidelights on St. Olaf's history. Mr. Grose was born near Kenyon in the parish served for forty years by Rev. B. J. Muus, the founder of St. Olaf. He was baptized by him; he grew up under his influence; and he has known from first-hand observation of the contribution of this pioneer clergyman to the educational and religious life of his people.

As a student Mr. Grose knew St. Olaf's beginnings. He attended the academy in 1877-78, when it was lo-

cated at the present site of the Congregational church, and in 1878-79, the first year on the hill. After his graduation from Luther college in 1886, he returned to Northfield as teacher until 1891, when he became the first president of Concordia college, another Norwegian Lutheran institution, in Moorhead nine years were spent away from this community, but in 1900 Mr. Grose returned to round out a quarter century of service as a professor at St. Olaf. He has seen the beginning, he has watched the growth and expansion, he has contributed largely to the life and development, and he has been inspired by the ideals and accomplishments of the college.

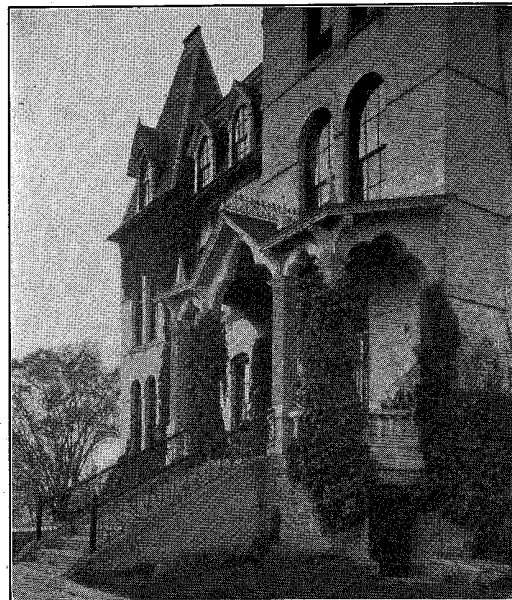


I. F. GROSE

His historical sketches represent an authentic and interesting contribution to the two celebrations of early June. Because of the interest aroused by "Fifty Memorable Years at St. Olaf," The News reprints the sketches in booklet form, presenting the entire series in full with illustrations of historical scenes and of men who contributed to St. Olaf's life and progress.

HERMAN ROE.

June, 1925.



ENTRANCE TO OLD MAIN  
(Built in 1877-78, occupied September, 1878)

## Fifty Memorable Years at St. Olaf

### CHAPTER I—*The background, life and ideals of the early Norse immigrant, and his contribution to America.*

The fiftieth anniversary of the founding of St. Olaf college occurred on November 6, 1924. The event was partially observed at the time. But in view of the fact that the Norse American centennial, commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of the beginning of Norse immigration to the United States of America, would be held in the twin cities from June 6 to 9, 1925, and in view of the fact that large numbers of people of Norse descent would arrive from all parts of the Union and Canada to participate in this celebration, and in view of the fact that many of these would also at that time embrace the opportunity of visiting St. Olaf college, the administration of the institution decided to postpone the official commemoration of the semi-centennial of the college to June 4, 5, and 6, combining this celebration with the dedication of the new building just erected and with the annual commencement for the academic year 1924-1925.

#### *Some Norse Minnesota Statistical Information.*

As The News has asked me to write a series of articles dealing with the founding and work and history of the college I feel such a series would be incomplete unless it be preceded by an article which attempts the task of furnishing a key for rightly understanding the class of Norsemen who came to America in the middle of the nineteenth century and felt the urge of establishing churches and schools in the localities where they settled.

It was in the latter part of the 40's, and in the 50's and 60's, that the Norsemen immigrated to America in

large numbers. Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa have a fair proportion of Norsemen. Minnesota and the Dakotas have a large number. We are told that at the present time one-fortieth of the population of the United States is Norse and that one-eighth of the governors are of Norse extraction.

Dr. O. M. Norlie, Luther college, Decorah, Iowa, submits the following statistics concerning the Norsemen or Norwegians in Minnesota. According to the census of 1920, they number 525,000, constituting 22% of the population of the state. With reference to occupation, he presents the following figures: Breadwinners 214,000, workers on farms 100,000, manufacturers and mechanics 40,000, persons employed in the transportation service 14,000, domestic service 14,000, clerical service 13,000, professional service 11,000, public service 2,000, tradesmen 20,000, farm owners (including 7,500,000 acres) 45,000, lumbermen 2,800, miners 2,000, blacksmiths 900, carpenters 4,400, stationary engineers 1,600, technical engineers 550, printers 300, machinists 300, bankers 1,000, insurance agents 450, retail dealers 5,400, editors 175, clergymen 600, professors 300, teachers 4,800, lawyers 500, physicians 600, dentists 300, nurses 600. The Norwegians in Minnesota have more than 1,000 congregations, 14 higher schools, 4 publishing houses, 8 hospitals, 4 orphanages, and 5 homes for aged. Remember these statistics apply to Minnesota only.

#### *Background of Norse Character*

The Norse pioneers came to this country to better their conditions economically and socially. This country

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promised them a brighter future than any that they could hope for in Norway. With rare exceptions, the Norse immigrants belonged to the poorer class. They were largely sons and daughters of ancestors who had been compelled to work hard all their lives to keep the wolf from the door.

"I don't recall the time when a child that I arose from the table feeling that I had had enough to eat, not because my folks did not want me to get enough to eat, but because they did not have enough food to go around to all the children unless they placed them on rations." A prominent Norse American merchant once spoke these words. He had been born and reared in Norway; then had left it for the United States, where eventually he became a prosperous tradesman.

Now I do not wish to convey the idea that all who emigrated from Norway to America had experiences as painful as did the man quoted. Far from it. Norway suffered from temporary financial depression undoubtedly as have other European countries, and his childhood possibly chanced to coincide with one of these depressions. The point I wish emphasized is, that a large number of our Norse pioneers left Norway to escape economic stress. Some had to borrow money to pay their passage across the ocean. They came to America with little or no material substance at their disposal.

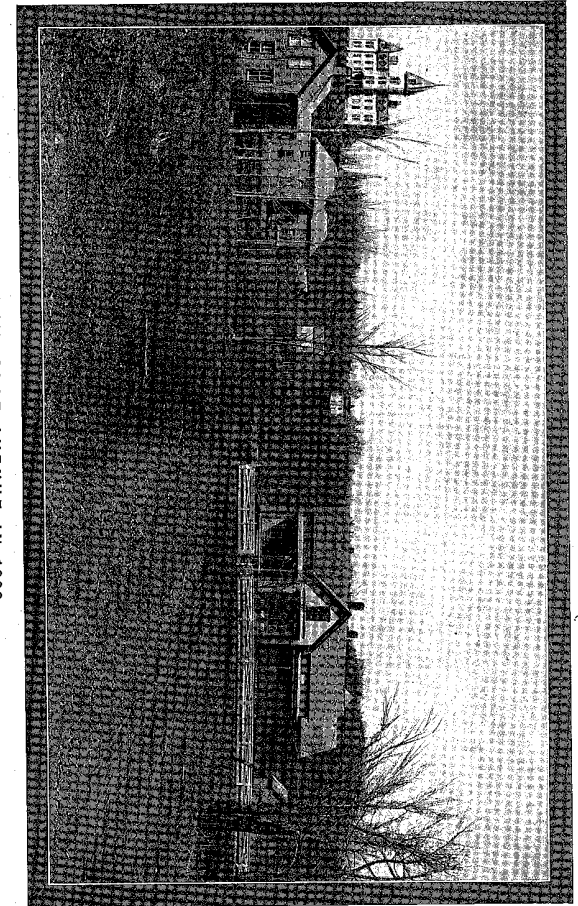
### *Class Distinction Prevailed*

The Norse pioneers came from a land which was, in no small measure, permeated by caste prejudices at the time of their departure. If the father was a tenant or peasant, the son and grandson were supposed to follow the occupation of their ancestors. A singular custom seems once to have prevailed in Norway. If the father's name was Ole Larson, his eldest son's name would be Lars Olson, and his eldest grandson's name again Ole Larson. These Ole Larsons and Lars Olsons were expected to occupy the same spot, the same farm, and the same

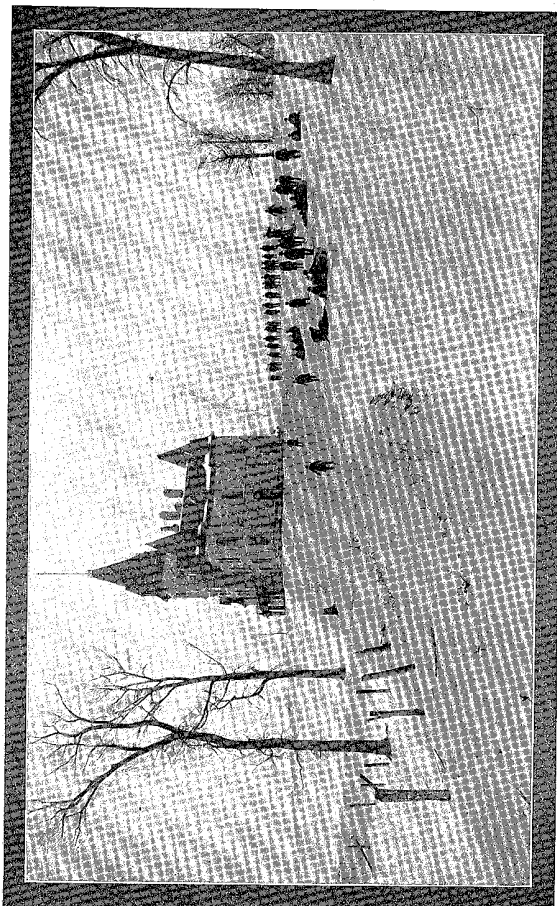
house successively down thru generations. The hope for the betterment of their material well-being and for the advancement of their intellectual and cultural pursuits was regarded as outrageous presumption and as the exclusive privilege of classes whose blood was supposed to have a bluer tint and whose brow was supposed to have a higher altitude than that of ordinary mortals. If the man bore the name of Mads Nelson and could hew the initials M. N. in the logs which he floated down the streams to the saw-mills, he was looked on as having reached the climax of intellectual achievements par excellence. If a lad attempted to learn the art of penmanship, he might be struck across the fingers by a wrathful parent who lectured him for entertaining an unholy ambition. Such accomplishments were supposed to belong exclusively to the clergy, the governmental officials and the privileged classes of leisure and wealth. The possession of a cow, a couple of goats, and a few sheep was often thought a fortune. Homemade woolen knit caps and socks, "wadmol" jackets, sheepskin kneebreeches, and wooden shoes formed no unusual attire. When they spoke of the world, the idea which most frequently lay uppermost in their mind was of their own valley enclosed by its mountain walls.

### *Love of Home a Dominant Trait*

And well might these men and women think so. For that valley was all the world to them. To them it was the dearest spot on earth. There they had been born, there they lived, and there they expected to die. Beneath the weather-beaten church, built perhaps centuries ago, in which their ancestors from time immemorial had worshipped, where they themselves had been borne to the baptismal font, where they had repeated the baptismal vow, where they oft in reverence and prayer had partaken of the cup of Holy Communion, and where they from as far back as they could remem-



ST. OLAF AVENUE IN 1888



OLD MAIN IN 1886

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her on Sunday mornings had listened to the divine message of infinite mercy and unspeakable love,—beneath the walls of that memorable old church lay the remains of their worthy ancestors, yes, perhaps even of father and mother. Again and again did the church bells solemnly ring out the chimes familiar to their ears from childhood. There were the nooks and scenes of childhood's pranks and childhood's pangs. There they had loved, and solemnized the sacred marriage vow. There they had enjoyed the sunshine and shadows of the shifting scenes of life. There were the green woods, where they on midsummer nights, light as day, engaged in rural amusements. There was the familiar fireplace around which the family circle together with relatives and friends on the long winter evenings used to listen to charming stories of fairyland, fatherland, and the heavenly land. Their valley, with its church, its low-roofed houses, its brooks, its waterfalls, its snow-tipped mountains; that valley, terminating on some briny fjord bordered with mysterious caverns and fringed with groves of pine, supposed to be peopled by sylvan nymphs and sprites and fairies, that valley was a part of the Norse peasants themselves. It was almost as dear to them as their life blood. No wonder that the Norsemen of the first half of the nineteenth century cherished an intense love for home. No wonder that they were pious, faithful, patriotic, loyal, law-abiding. That fact explains why you have seldom, if ever, heard of such a Norseman being an anarchist. The Norsemen had not been built in that way. They had not been reared in such a manner. Lawlessness was not a part of their blood. The nature of the Norse peasants was gripped by the sentiment: Be honest, do right, love your neighbor as yourself, honor the king, fear God, and fear nobody else nor anything else. Contentment was the flower that blossomed in their humble homes. The wealth of the rich they did not

covet, the honor of princes they did not envy. To live in peace with God and man, each under his roof-tree, was the highest pleasure of their lives. To them may fittingly be applied the words of Gray:

"Far from the madding crowds' ignoble strife  
Their sober wishes never learnt to stray;  
Along the cool sequestered vale of life  
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way."

### *The Call of America*

Norway was not far enough away, however, but that rumors reached the ears of the inhabitants dwelling therein, that far away across the mighty Atlantic was a land literally flowing with milk and honey. There happily class distinction was unknown. Native ability was recognized. Personal worth, not birth, made itself felt in public and private affairs. The poor man stood an equal chance with the rich. A man in the so-called humbler walks of life was not compelled to stand with his head uncovered and exposed to the pneumonia breeding wintry blasts because a road overseer or a township constable happened to pass by. The lad compelled to walk barefoot because he could not afford to buy the needed shoes and stockings might some day become a leader in thought. The boy required to drive the cows home on frosty autumn mornings, being only too glad to warm his naked feet on the spots from which the cows had just risen, might some day command the attention of congress or render decisions from the bench of the supreme court or exercise the functions of the chief magistrate of the country.

### *The Urge Obeyed*

These rumors produced a wonderful effect on the pensive imaginative Norse minds and stirred many Norsemen to action. They decided to break

with family traditions and ties and to make their way to this land of prosperity and plenty. They packed the few effects they had. Some borrowed money to pay their passage across the sea. They bade country and kin farewell, embarked for the promised land, and, after a long, tiresome, and disagreeable voyage aboard some sailship, finally reached the shores of this country.

#### *Early Hardships Blessings in Disguise*

In America the Norse immigrants soon discovered that Norway had dealt with them as would a wise mother. She had not, it is true, given them gold and silver, but she had bestowed upon them values of greater worth. She had given them healthy bodies, muscular arms, strong backbones, and hands that were not afraid to work. She had given them sound common sense and indomitable wills. She had nurtured in them hearts abhorring wrong and ever burning to do right, souls aglow with religious zeal and noble aspirations evidenced by the fact that they did not forget to take along the hymnary, the catechism, and the Bible when they started for America.

#### *Story of Many a Norse Pioneer*

The Norse pioneers who came to this country immediately proceeded to establish here permanent homes. This is the story of many an early Norse immigrant: As soon as he had arrived he immediately proceeded to perform whatever his hands found to do. As soon as he had earned enough money, he procured a yoke of oxen, an ox cart or a lumber wagon and made his way to the frontier, where he secured a claim and built a shanty or a shack or a sodhouse or a dugout on the sunny side of a hill, there to dwell till hard work, perseverance, good crops, and divine goodness would enable him to establish more commodious quarters. He lacked conven-

iences and comforts, some of which are today regarded as dire necessities. There was no physician to whom to go in an emergency; no minister of the gospel to care for his spiritual needs. He had thirty, fifty, one hundred miles, yes, even a greater distance to the place where he could dispose of his products and procure necessary supplies. Days were needed, if not weeks, to market a load of grain. Poorly clad, often drenched to the skin, bespattered with mud, compelled to camp out and lie down to sleep in such a plight, he might perhaps awake to find himself shivering with cold, his garments frozen and the ground covered with snow. No roads and bridges, he was forced to ford streams and wade across marshes and sloughs. He had to fight prairie fires. Blizzards sometimes caught him unawares. If overtaken by a snowstorm and compelled to wade in snow till his strength was nigh exhausted, he would sometimes as a last refuge dig himself into a bank of snow and thereby try to sustain the necessary warmth. It was not an unusual experience for him early in the morning, as he went out to do chores, to stumble across Indians who were lying asleep in the straw of his stables; nor was it an unusual occurrence for his wife to find that her actions in the kitchen were watched thru the window by the stolid face of a redskin pressing his nose flatly against the pane.

#### *Wise Leaders Point The Way*

Unacquainted with the language of the country, he was at a disadvantage. Believing everyone to be as honest as he was himself, he in the beginning became the easy victim of crooks, shysters, extortioners, usurers, and such other human sharks as made a prey of the early pioneers on account of their innocence and ignorance of the various pitfalls to which they were exposed.

When the Norse pioneers came to this country, they necessarily attract-

ed attention on account of peculiarities in language, dress, and manners. Some Norsemen thought they could remedy the situation by throwing away everything distinctively Norwegian and by assuming airs and ways which they thought distinctively American, no matter whether they were good, bad, or indifferent. Far-sighted men among them—such as Rev. B. J. Muus—noticed the danger to which their kinsmen were exposed and sought to take measures which would eliminate the danger. They sought to impress upon their Norse kinsmen that if they intended to be true to the American people, they must remain true to themselves. At the same time as they became good Americans, they should cling to all their national traits that were good and transferable. America both needed and wanted such traits. By permitting all nations to come to its shores, America thereby in reality laid the whole world under tribute to bring to it the best things it had, so that when these heterogeneous peoples were finally merged into one people, the American nation might become the best and noblest nation upon which the sun had ever been known to shine. America could not then help but become such, having been made the recipient of the most valuable contributions that each nation could give to the American people. America would then eventually represent the quintessence of the choicest ideals and the finest aspirations of every people and every nation.

#### *Suggestions Translated Into Action*

The Norse pioneers heeded these suggestions and obtained gratifying results. They possessed industry and thrift. They were eminent breadwinners, able wood choppers, faithful chorers. They cleared the land of brush and stumps and stones. They broke the virgin soil. They diligently sowed and planted and reaped. In time they built commodious dwelling

houses and storehouses and barns. Their brawn and bodily strength have been large contributing factors in making our Northwest, and particularly Minnesota, the garden spot of the earth.

But the Norse pioneers did not believe that man lived by bread alone. They had faculties to cultivate, yearnings to satisfy, and ideals to attain. So they founded institutions such as St. Olaf college, wherein their boys and girls, young men and women, could get a Christian education. They wanted their sons and daughters to be able to participate understandingly in the various affairs of life. They wanted them to master and enjoy the colors of painting, the forms of sculpture, the outlines of architecture, the harmony and melody of music, and the intricacies of language and literature and science.

The Norse pioneers believed in establishing churches. Church spires are in evidence wherever Norwegian Lutherans are found. Thousands of congregations have been established by them. The number of pastors among them, when counted, needs four figures to express the total number. These shepherds and bishops of souls announce the glad tidings of deliverance to those in spiritual bondage; they preach that the acceptable year of the Lord is nigh; they proclaim to sin-sick men and women that Jesus Christ by His atoning expiatory sacrifice has delivered them from the bondage of sin and all evil.

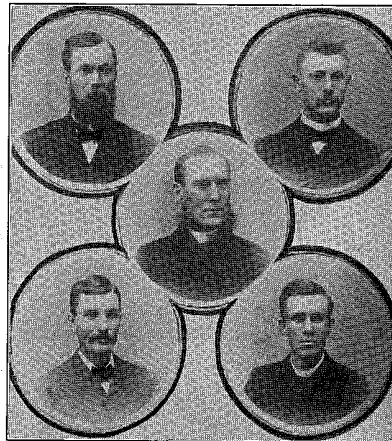
#### *The Norse Contribution*

In such and other ways have the Norse American pioneers and their descendants contributed to the upbuilding and growth of the material, intellectual, moral, and spiritual forces dominating the territory of the upper part of the Mississippi valley. I have therefore written thus frankly—and sympathetically—in a general way, about some of the men and women who have played no small role on this

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scene of action. For the celebration of the semi-centennial of St. Olaf college naturally creates in the reader, whoever he may be, a desire to learn something about the traits of the people being instrumental in the establishment and maintenance of this institution of culture and learning. It is well also for this and coming generations of Norse Americans to "look unto the rock whence they were

hewn." It is well for them to stop occasionally to look at the achievements and traits of the Norse American pioneers who have left the stage of action but who now by work they accomplished serve as a living exemplification of the scriptural injunction and promise: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."



ST. OLAF FACULTY IN 1886

O. G. Fjelland	Th. N. Mohn	H. T. Ytterboe
I. P. Grose	O. M. Kalheim	

## CHAPTER II—Bernt Julius Muus, the founder of St. Olaf College: His background and character, his great service to his people and adopted country, and his lasting memorial.

In writing about St. Olaf college, its founder and the other men prominent in its history, I might have gathered information concerning them from catalogs, church meeting reports, circulars, newspaper files, and even books. But the time, money, and energy needed for bringing many of these primary sources to light were not at my disposal. I have come across articles and sketches written by Professor O. G. Fjelland of St. Olaf College, by Rev. H. B. Klidahl of Minneapolis, and by Mrs. Anna E. Mohn, wife of the first president of St. Olaf college. I have found them helpful for several reasons: First, they helped to refresh my memory in regard to incidents I had forgotten but should remember as soon as reminded of them; secondly, they came to my aid in helping me verify matters which I had heard spoken of but which did not stand out so clearly in my mind that I could speak of them authoritatively; thirdly, altho the founder had been my pastor and altho the history of St. Olaf college and mine run parallel and at times intertwine, as I have spent more than half of a fairly long life at the institution, I nevertheless found facts in the articles mentioned that were unknown to me. I hereby acknowledge my indebtedness to these articles and authors for some of the facts and for the inspiration they have given me.

In my attempt to seek verification of some facts I thought I could use in my sketchy series, I discovered that the generation of men of affairs while I was a boy are all gone. "All are departed; all are gone, the old familiar faces." Many interesting facts particularly concerning Pastor Muus, seem to have gone with them. We realize, only when it is too late, that

many facts which would illumine the life and character of the founder and which should have been gathered long ago are gone forever. We never miss the water, it seems, till the well runs dry.

Dr. O. M. Norlie, a graduate of the college, is now doing for the Norse American Lutherans what should have been done years and years ago. He gathers volumes of statistics and data concerning Norse American Lutheran individuals, congregations, and institutions which will prove very useful to future men and women doing research work. I make use of him whenever I have an opportunity.

### Bernt Julius Muus, Founder of St. Olaf College

The Reverend Bernt Julius Muus was born in Snaasen in the diocese or bishopric of Trondhjem in Norway on March 15, 1832. Dr. Norlie gives his name as Bernt Julius Ingebrigtsen Muus. In accordance with custom in Norway, the son would attach to his own given name that of the father, adding to it the suffix "son." Not only among the peasants and tenants, but also, it seems, as in the case of Pastor Muus, even among the tradesmen, would the Norseman use this mode for indicating a patronymic. A similar practice once upon a time must also have prevailed, in portions at least, of the British Isles, as evidenced by prefixes "Mac" and "Fitz," each meaning "son." Each of these differs from the Norse in so far that it occurs as a prefix and not as a suffix to the name of the father. Take "Macaulay" as an instance. "Macaulay," we are told, is made up of "Mac" (son) and "Aulay" (Ole), meaning the son of Ole, or Oleson or Olson. "Fitz-steph-

en," "Fitz-patrick," and "Fitz-iver" will in like manner, when translated, mean Stephenson, Patrickson, and Iverson. Some one has tried to make me believe that the Polish "ski" means "son" and that in "Jan Paderewski" "jan" means "John" and "Pader" "Peter" or "Peder." Hence, when translated, Jan Paderewski would be "John Peder-son." Be that as it may. Ingebrigt, etymologically, consists of "Inge" and "brigt." "Inge" means "chieftain;" "brigt" or "brecht" or "brekt" or "brikt" or "bret" or "bert" means "bright" or "shining." Hence "Ingebrigtson" means son of the chieftain wearing a bright or shining armor. The name bears the marks of being a heritage handed down from the time when knighthood flourished in its height of glory.

#### *Birthplace Not Far from Stiklestad*

Muus's birthplace lies no great distance from Stiklestad where King Olaf or Olaf Haraldson fell in battle on July 29, 1030. St. Olaf college bears his name which was given the institution in honor of the king and the great work he accomplished. King Olaf fell, it is true, but the cause for which he died emerged triumphantly. His death virtually culminated in the introduction of Christianity thruout the whole of Norway. King Olaf possessed a large measure of initiative, aggressiveness, fearlessness, swiftness of action, persistence, and a steadiness of purpose which frequently caused difficulties in his path to dwindle away as tho they were negligible quantities. His zeal for Christianizing Norway swept away the practice of rendering sacrifices to Wodin and Thor and replaced it by the Gospel of the Crucified and Risen Christ whom the Norsemen have now worshipped and adored for nigh one thousand years. The mere fact that Pastor Muus gave St. Olaf college the name of his hero indicates that he wished the institution to promote the great cause for which King Olaf gave his

life till all mankind acknowledges God as its Father and Jesus Christ as its Redeemer. "Fram, Fram, Kristmenn, Krossmenn, Kongsmenn!" ("Onward Onward, Men of Christ, Men of the Cross, Men of the King"), was the famous King Olaf's battle cry that sounded and resounded in the battle of Stiklestad. Pastor Muus adopted it as the motto or slogan of the institution, omitting "Men of the King."

#### *King Olaf and Pastor Muus Buried in Same Place*

Shortly after the battle of Stiklestad had taken place, the friends of King Olaf secretly interred his body in a sandhill near the river where later the cathedral of Trondhjem was erected. In the cemetery surrounding the cathedral rest the remains of Pastor Muus. Norse Americans reaching Trondhjem in their travels invariably visit Muus's grave before they leave the city. When the St. Olaf college band toured Norway in 1906, Dr. J. N. Kildahl placed a wreath of flowers upon the grave of him to whom the college owes its origin. Rev. H. B. Kildahl says the grave is designated by a small slab placed horizontally over it whereon one reads the words:

"Bernt Julius Muus  
Born March 15, 1832,  
Died May 25, 1900."

At first sight it seems strange that no monument towers over his final resting place. Upon a second thought, however, the idea steals in upon one that the privilege is not given to every man as it is to Pastor Muus to have an institution like St. Olaf college stand as a monument proclaiming the wisdom and farsightedness and vision that he had in establishing a conservatory for the cultivation and preservation of the intellectual, moral, and spiritual values of his people and of the peoples with whom they would come in contact. We poor men and women who have not done anything notable really need monuments. That

### The Founder



REV. BERNT JULIUS MUUS,

founder of St. Olaf college, to whom Mr. Grose pays a significant tribute in the second of his series on the history of St. Olaf college.

is the only way whereby people can remember us, and then, perhaps, no one will take the trouble to notice the name engraved thereon, and even if he does notice the name, he sees simply a combination of letters meaning nothing to him. Men like Muus really do not need monuments. And yet I dare say, some day people will, perhaps, set aside Muus's wish in the matter and erect a monument to his memory worthy to have a place by the side of that most magnificent church edifice in Norway. Muus shunned display in life and the words he penned and had placed on that insignificant looking slab over his grave shows that so far as matters concerned him, he

wished the same attitude of mind to prevail after he had passed away as he had while he was living. Besides the college, Pastor Muus, unknown to himself, established a monument for himself in the heart of every one of his parishioners. It is a common saying that no matter where you today meet former parishioners of Pastor Muus, you will always find that they are staunch church people.

#### *Muus's Lineage and Education*

Pastor Muus's father was a merchant. But his genealogical tree shows that many of his ancestors had been clergymen. Some of them had lived in Denmark and some in Norway. The Muus name may be traced back to the beginning of the Reformation. His mother died during his infancy, and his grandparents took him into their home. He obtained a good, old-fashioned classical education. Having received the bachelor and master degrees, he took up the study of theology at the University of Oslo, which until last January first was called Christiania. In his early days he aspired to becoming a civil engineer. In deference to the wishes of his father, however, and in obedience to the requirements of the fourth commandment saying, "Honor thy father," he relinquished the dreams of youth and devoted his energies to the mastery of theology.

#### *Distrust of Self*

Distrust or depreciation of self became with him almost an obsession when he had finished his university career as a student. The presence of this trait in his character seems strange in light of his many subsequent achievements and in light of his subsequent masterful ability in maintaining leadership among men. It is strange to think that after having become a bachelor in theology, Pastor Muus refrained from applying for any position as minister of the gospel in the church of Norway because he har-



bored the feeling that any other applicant, whosoever he might be, would be superior to him in attainments and ought to get the appointment. He wanted to get into a position for which none else would apply. For this reason he seriously thought of going as a missionary to the Zulus in South Africa. Just then—in 1859—urgent appeals for ministers from the Norse American Lutherans reached Norway. Lack of pastors endangered their spiritual welfare.

### *Heeded the Macedonian Cry*

Pastor Muus heard of the need of his brethren and promptly decided to go to America. There he felt he could work in a field where no one else would care to go. He arrived in Holden, Goodhue county, Minnesota, seven miles east of Kenyon, where he delivered his first sermon on All Saints day, 1859. He remained in this place for forty years.

The Holden congregation became the headquarters for his church activities. Originally this congregation or parish included both Goodhue and Rice counties, the same territory now being served by ten ministers. Besides, he made extensive missionary tours into western and southwestern Minnesota. Dr. Nordlie states that the territory which Pastor Muus visited on these missionary travels covered an area of 15,000 square miles, an area comprising all of Denmark. This statement means that the territory thus covered by Pastor Muus had an area which was 3,000 square miles greater than that of Palestine occupied by the twelve tribes of Israel subsequent to the conquest of Canaan by Joshua. It means that this territory had an area three times as large as Connecticut, nearly twice as large as Massachusetts, and twelve times as large as Rhode Island. At one time he had twenty-eight preaching stations. Whenever he returned from these trips to his home base at Holden, he found an abundance of pastoral work awaiting

him. At the first service when he returned from one of these trips he baptized twenty-four children.

### *Resourcefulness One of His Characteristics*

In those days travelling had to be done on foot, by ox-teams, or on horseback. Railroads had not yet arrived in this part of the country. The wildest imagination never dreamt of horseless carriages or vehicles, excepting the wheelbarrow, and perhaps not even that was in use at the time. Horse teams in Goodhue county were as yet, perhaps, almost as rare as flying machines today. But defective or no transportation facilities at all, save his two legs, did not prevent Pastor Muus from visiting the Norse American Lutherans who had no pastoral care. He preached unto them the Word of God and administered the sacraments and organized congregations among them and made provisions for instructing the children in religion wherever he went. Roads were seemingly impassable at times, but Muus invariably reached his destination. Deep rivers, at times with banks overflowing, might intervene between him and the people he purposed to reach, but somehow Muus got across.

A young man coming from the colleges or universities today, ready to enter upon his lifework, thinks of the success he will make when surrounded by up-to-date accessories, aids, and helps of every description. Muus, however, had to accustom himself to doing things in the best way possible, having few or no accessories whatsoever at his disposal. When he came to Holden, he found no parsonage equipped with a hot air, hot water, or steam system of heat, with nickel-plated plumbing, with electric light fixtures and electric lights. He found no parsonage at all. It's a question whether he had kerosene lamps. Most likely he had to rely on tallow candles and dips. He had no church, much less

colored church windows, church choirs or pipe organ. He experienced difficulty even in finding a precentor. But under such circumstances Pastor Muus manifested that he was the possessor of much resourcefulness.

Pastor Muus found ways and means whereby to accomplish his purpose. In the spring following his arrival a parsonage was erected in Holden, wherein he dwelt till he resigned in 1899. In 1862, three years after his coming, he caused the erection of a church of such magnitude and usefulness that it served as a sanctuary for the Holden congregation until last summer. Then a new structure took its place, and 8,000 people were present at the dedication of the new church.

On his itineraries he would preach beneath the open sky whenever weather conditions would permit. Else he would utilize farm houses. Wherever log school houses were built, he would make arrangements for conducting divine services therein. Thus I remember that he conducted services in the Eysom school house three miles west from Kenyon as late as 1869. Gol's church, located a mile west from Kenyon, was being built that year.

If hymn-singing proved defective, he would get a group of people together some evening and teach them singing. He was no singer himself. He had no piano, or organ, or melodeon. But his resourcefulness did not fail him. He procured a "Salmondikon," a primitive one-stringed musical instrument whereon could be played the diatonic scale. He might spend a whole evening teaching the learners one tune or melody. But when he was thru with his evening's work, the members of the group knew the tune so as never to forget it.

If he thought that his parishioners needed information and instruction in regard to doctrines, particularly those relating to the way of salvation and holy living he would call meetings where the people could come together both to hear and participate in the discussion. He would sometimes require the children to be present at the

church services so that he could spend an hour catechizing them after he had preached the sermon while older people would remain in the pews listening to the catechization and thus again call to mind the fundamentals of Christianity which they had learned in childhood.

### *Religious Instruction the Safeguard of the Community*

Pastor Muus believed implicitly in the establishment and maintenance of religious schools. He believed that the grounding of the children and young people in the principles of Christianity would drive away the evils that seek to destroy the morals and virtues of the people. In connection with Christian education he loved to quote this passage found in Deuteronomy: "And these words which I command thee this day shall be upon thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

But teachers and school houses were frequently lacking. He would constantly be on the lookout for men coming into the settlement who had received a normal school training in Norway or who had had some experience in teaching. It was in this manner that he got in touch with the Kildahl family, two of whose sons were Dr. J. N. and Rev. H. B. Kildahl. The Kildahls, coming from Norway and having no definite destination in mind, arrived in Red Wing one day in 1866. They learned that a Norwegian prayer meeting or service was to be held in the city or village in the evening. They attended. After the meeting was over, they became acquainted with the preacher, who was no other than Pastor Muus. He learned that Mr. Kildahl was a teacher and Mrs. Kildahl a weaver. Pastor Muus needed a teacher and Mrs. Muus needed a weaver. So arrangements were made that the

Kildahl should accompany Muus to Holden the next day. Muus had a wagon with one spring seat. When Mrs. Kildahl learned that she was to ride in the same seat with Pastor Muus, she felt embarrassed at being thus honored. She then received her first lesson in American democracy.

School houses wherein parochial school might be held were not easily obtainable. Muus's ingenuity was equal to the situation. Altho the farm houses frequently had only one room besides a summer kitchen, he arranged for the conducting of parochial schools in the farm houses, a week or ten days in each farm house. The children could be seated around the dining room table. The housewife would go about her housework and prepare meals. When noon arrived, the school was dismissed, the table was set, the meal was eaten, the table was again cleared, and at one o'clock the school was again resumed and continued till four o'clock in the afternoon. As to results scholastically, they seemed as satisfactory as they were later when the children could get their schooling without being hampered by distractions caused by observing the activities of the housewife.

#### *Muus' Presence of Mind*

An unerring intuition assisted Pastor Muus in saying and doing the right thing at the right time. He conducted services in a farm house one day. All of a sudden he stopped in the middle of the sermon and said to the people: "This will have to do for today. Will all please quietly leave the room?" The people looked at him in bewilderment. "Please walk out quietly," he again said. They obeyed. Then Muus procured a lantern and invited the owner of the house to accompany him down cellar. There they found one of the pillars supporting the weight of the house had partly slid out of position. Pastor Muus had noticed the occurrence while preaching, but it had fortunately escaped the attention of the as-

sembled congregation. The pillar being properly and securely replaced, Muus asked the listeners to re-enter the house and finished the interrupted sermon and services. At another time, while preaching in a farm house also, he espied a prairie fire headed for the place of worship. He coolly stopped, being only half thru with his discourse, and told the man of the house to get his yoke of oxen and a plow. Having by plowing and other precautions properly safeguarded the house against the fire demon of the prairies invariably threatening the early settlers fall and spring, he resumed his preaching and concluded the remaining liturgical part of the services in the customary befitting manner. While eating dinner one day in a hotel in Faribault, Pastor Muus did as was his wont. He said grace before eating. A clerk in the neithery-nor-grass stage of life who did not know Muus but had an inkling the man was from Goodhue county, remarked to a chum in an undertone just loud enough for all the guests to hear: "I presume all say grace before a meal in Goodhue county!" "No," rejoined Muus in his usually slow but effective way; "No, not the swine."

#### *Manners and Appearance*

Pastor Muus led the simple life. This fact perhaps explains his unlimited capacity for work and endurance. He ate plain but substantial food, and in eating would come closer to the ideal of former U.S. chemist, H. W. Wiley than any man I know or have known. In dress, as in everything else, he avoided fuss and feathers. I scarcely noticed how he was dressed, excepting that I must have been impressed with his immaculate linen. He possessed a Websterian forehead. He wore a beard which, as I remember it, produced a silken effect, possibly for the reason that it was seldom trimmed. His small hands and tapering fingers were most beautiful. He was unobtrusive; he walked or rode as if engaged in deep meditation;

nothing seemingly disturbed his poise; his logic was usually unassailable; he spoke slowly, yet every word counted, particularly in debate where he was always a perfect master of the situation. He paid scant attention to the conventionalities combined with public speaking. To him the important thing in speaking was to have something to say that had been thought out clearly. A voice possessing a fairly distinct articulation should then be adequate to convey the idea evolved out of his own consciousness to the mind of the hearer. As likely as not while speaking he might lean his back up against a pillar or post and stand with his eyes apparently shut as if soliloquizing. And still he seemed to see everything. And this, too, altho he had only one usable eye, I have been told, having lost the use of the other watching an eclipse of the sun.

To the needy, sick, and penitent he displayed the tenderest of hearts. Their cause was his cause. Their sufferings were his sufferings. The talk which he privately had with the sick person to whose bed he was called, or to the confirmand just before the day he was to take the confirmation vow, concerning the value and welfare of his soul made such an impression upon the individual that he would not want to nor could he forget the wonderful beauty of the earnest message. But to the haughty, the proud, the impatient and ungodly he looked as if he were made of iron. He exercised church discipline. He looked upon the impatient sinner in the same light as does a surgeon upon a person needing an operation. He operates on him not to harm but to restore his health. In exercising church discipline, Pastor Muus, in this as well as in every other matter, followed the directions given in Holy Writ. These are the directions concerning church discipline:

"If thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone; if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear

thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church; and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the Publican."

Pastor Muus despised expediency and trimming and an inclination to shift or shirk responsibility. He persisted in always telling the truth no matter what effect his utterances might have upon his popularity. In the advocacy of a cause, he relied exclusively on its merits.

#### *The Motive Power in His Life*

In concluding this sketch, I wish to point to some of the things Pastor Muus stood for and believed. His beliefs furnish the clue to his work and life. He believed in the infallibility of the Bible. He believed in the eternity, self-existence, and omnipotence of God. He believed that God created the universe and all its laws, that God created man "and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." He believed that man was originally innocent but thru disobedience fell into sin and on account of his sinful nature thus acquired cannot by his own efforts be restored to the position he held before the fall. He believed that Jesus Christ is true God and true Man, who lived and suffered and died, rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of God the Father constantly interceding for mankind. He believed in the atonement of Jesus Christ, that "the blood of Jesus cleanse us from all sin." He believed that the Holy Spirit thru Holy Writ works upon, dwells in, sanctifies, and aways the hearts of all true believers. He believed that the Word and the Sacraments are the effective means of grace. He believed that man is justified by faith alone. He believed that God was his heavenly Father who guided and directed him on earth and would give him a place in

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heaven when he died. These and kindred beliefs sustained him in life, comforted him in death, and caused him to anticipate the bliss to be experienced by saints through the ages of eternity.

Desirous to share with his people

the blessings arising from cherishing these beliefs, he diligently labored among them as a minister of the gospel, organized congregations, established Christian elementary schools, supported Christian schools of higher learning, and founded St. Olaf college.

### Pastor Muus and Pioneer Travel

In connection with St. Olaf's recent semi-centennial celebration, this is an interesting picture of Rev. B. J. Muus, the founder of the school, and the method of transportation he employed in making his missionary visits in pioneer days.

Coming to this country in 1859, Pastor Muus served the Holden congregation in Goodhue county for forty years. Originally his congregation or parish included both Goodhue and Rice counties, the same territory now being served by ten ministers. Besides he made extensive tours into western and southern Minnesota. It has been said



that the territory which Pastor Muus visited on these missionary travels covered an area of 15,000 square miles. The News is indebted to Augsburg Publishing house for the use of the cut.

## CHAPTER III—Pastor Muus' idea culminates in the establishment of St. Olaf's School; Harald Thorson and other Northfield men become loyal supporters; President Mohn accepts call.

Necessity is indeed the mother of invention. Pastor Muus needed preachers, teachers, and in general educated men and women to render him assistance in the great work he was doing. How could he get such help? Luther college, Decorah, Iowa, established in 1861, gave men a classical education preparatory to the taking of a subsequent course in theology at the theological seminary, the German Lutheran Concordia seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, being temporarily used for that purpose. Pastor Muus therefore trained the members of his congregations to contribute money liberally both to the building fund and to the maintenance of Luther college. He was reported as having collected and sent to Luther college \$11,000 in one lump. He continually rendered it assistance in the early days. Muus was frequently quoted as saying: "The most edifying reading in the church paper is the part containing the report of contributions made for doing the work of the church." He thereby expressed a sentiment containing much more truth than appears on the face of it; that the sincerity of a man's Christian life may under certain circumstances be gauged by the size of material contributions he makes to the kingdom.

### The Growth of An Idea

But Muus also needed teachers for giving instruction in religion to the increasing number of children in his constantly growing congregations. He stressed the idea that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" and that if the children were to become good neighbors and law-abiding citizens as well as true members of the Christian church they must have the

truths taught them which would make them God-fearing men and women. He also felt the need of getting educated Christian men and women to assume leadership in the communities in which he was directly interested. But if he was to get such teachers and such men and women he must establish schools of higher learning.

The successful establishment and maintenance of such educational institutions depended upon the willingness of Muus's constituency to provide the necessary funds. The Norse pioneers had had their hands full in paying for their farms and for the equipment belonging to them and in gradually erecting dwelling houses and granaries and barns to replace the primitive abodes of people and stock. Muus kept in mind also that Rome was not built in one day, that educational institutions do not like Pallas Athena all at once leap into a full-equipped existence. So what did he do but start a school in the Holden parsonage in 1869. Rev. Axel Shelfveland, the present pastor, says he has run across records designating the school as Holden academy. Prof. Felland writes that the school began work with one teacher and three students, the teachers' name being Thorsten Jesme. I have tried to ascertain the names of the three pupils in attendance. Ole Huseth, Knut Groven, and Augon Brokke are three names that have been submitted, but I am not entirely certain that they are authoritative. Mr. Ole Huseth often attended the November Sixth celebrations at St. Olaf and playfully told me he regarded himself as one of the first students of St. Olaf college insofar as he had been a pupil of the Muus' school in the Holden parsonage, which, in his

### Close Corporation Formed

Northfield's enthusiastic October meetings, backed by the substantial pledges of the good citizens of Northfield, encouraged Muus so much that he felt justified in taking up the matters of forming a close corporation and of making arrangements for opening the school at the earliest date possible. He chose as fellow-incorporators Harald Thorson of Northfield, O. K. Finseth of Kenyon, K. P. Hougden of Holden, and Osmund Osmundson of Nerstrand, the five members consisting of one clergyman, one merchant, and three farmers. The articles of incorporation were signed in Lawyer O. P. Perkins' office (located in the lately vacated postoffice building, I believe) on the sixth of November, 1874. November "Sixth" is now written with a capital S by St. Olaf people for the reason that the day has ever since been observed as Foundation or Founders' day. I wish to quote the article setting forth the general purpose of the institution. It reads:

"The general purpose of the corporation is to give a higher education to pupils fifteen years of age or over and to preserve them in the true Christian faith as taught by the Evangelical Lutheran church, nothing to be taught in contravention with the Apostolic, Nicene, and Athanasian creeds, with the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, and with Luther's Small Catechism."

### Harald Thorson Financial Backbone

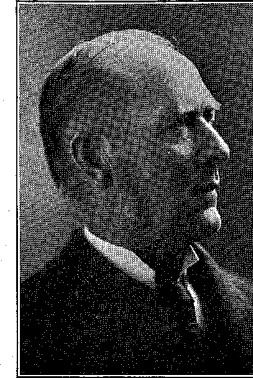
Harald Thorson proved to be the financial prop and stay of the institution on many occasions. St. Olaf was the apple of his eye. He subscribed \$2,000 in securing the school for Northfield. He was instrumental in procuring the old public school building. He selected the present beautiful site on the hill as the permanent home for the institution. One day in February, 1875, as Mr. Thorson and Prof. L. S. Reque, who was Prof.

Mohn's assistant, returned from a drive out to Pastor Quammen's parsonage in Christiania, they tied their horse to a tree near the present corner of St. Olaf avenue and Lincoln street and walked to the top of the hill, there being no wagon road to it at the time. Both unanimously agreed that no finer place could be found in the vicinity of Northfield for the location of an institution of learning than the spot on which they stood. Harald Thorson immediately secured the land. He was an active member of the committee having in charge the erection of the Main building, which was taken into use in September, 1878. He personally footed the bills accruing from tearing down the old buildings on the original site in town and from removing to the hill and putting the material into what for years was known as the "Old Ladies' Hall." Of late it has been called "Agony Hall," having been utilized by the music students. Mr. Thorson contributed \$10,000 to Mohn hall and \$100,000 to a science hall or similar building. When he died he bequeathed the major portion of his estate to St. Olaf college, it being valued at a million dollars.

### Rev. Thorbjörn Nelson Mohn Made Head of School

Pastor Muus selected Rev. Thorbjörn Nelson Mohn as the administrative head of the new school. Again we have an instance of Muus's sagacity or instinct to do the right thing. I have looked over the list of available men for the position at that time but have been unable to find any one better fitted for the place than Prof. Mohn. At the time he was being prepared for confirmation his strong mental and moral qualities impressed his pastor, Rev. H. A. Preus, the grandfather of ex-Governor Preus. Mohn's pastor urged him to attend Luther college. Economic barriers prevented him from entering college till he was of age, a time when most young men

### First President



REV. TH. N. MOHN,

first president of St. Olaf school and head of the college on the hill from 1875 to 1899. Due to his untiring effort and wise leadership St. Olaf survived during a critical period of its history and a solid foundation was laid for future growth.

today have finished their high school and college careers. Mr. Mohn serves as a good illustration showing that obstacles in the way of a determined young man who knows what he wants may simply strengthen his will power and urge him on to greater endeavor. Hindrances served him as stepping stones helping him to reach his destination. Altho born in Norway, he made use of the country schools after coming to America to such an extent that he was able to teach district school before entering college. He

finished academy and college in five years and accomplished this feat at a time when nothing but downright hard work would enable him to graduate. His capacity for getting results, his ability for grasping things, and his knack for manifesting good sound sense marked him as one who some day would become a permanent member of the faculty of his Alma Mater.

After graduating from Luther, he took a course in theology at Concordia seminary in St. Louis, whereupon he served as a pastor, first in Chicago, later in St. Paul. It was while Mohn was in St. Paul that he received the call from Muus to take charge of St. Olaf's school. The salary promised him was \$850 a year. A characteristic of the Luther college graduate who came under Dr. Laur. Larsen's influence was a willingness to go where duty called him without giving much thought to the salary he should receive for the work. President Mohn served as a living exemplification of this influence all his life. He was wrapped up in promoting the cause of Christian education and Christian living to such an extent that he seemingly forgot to pay attention to the salary he was getting. To see the cause for which he labored prosper was his reward. He desired having as many Norse Americans as possible acquire a thoro Christian education in order that they might be enabled to render service of the finest kind to home and church and nation.

### Opening of St. Olaf's School

January 8, 1875, marks the opening day of the institution. The day was used for dedicating the building and for registering the students so that they could begin classes the next day without loss of time. Pastor Muus, Prof. Mohn, and Rev. H. G. Stub were the speakers. Rev. Stub used as text the words: "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Dr. Stub will preach the baccalaureate sermon at

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the fiftieth anniversary of St. Olaf college, and it is reported that he will use for the occasion the text he employed when he spoke at the dedicatory exercises fifty years ago. Professor Mohn said that "the Christian religion is the first requisite for a nation's real prosperity." Pastor Muus gave utterance to these words: "Generation succeeding generation will perhaps receive its training in this school which today begins its work in a very humble manner. Here will be sown many a seed which will subsequently bear rich fruit. Many a seed may possibly here be planted which will develop into a large tree whose delightful shade will afford comfort to family, church, and state. Perhaps here will be built a citadel, a strong refuge, a defense against the wiles of the devil, who seeks to destroy our temporal and eternal welfare. I say perhaps; for our beginning is humble. It depends upon the blessings of God and upon the Christian understanding, willingness, and co-operative ability of our countrymen and brethren in faith as to whether this beginning shall bring disgrace or blessings upon us and upon unborn generations."

January 8 ushered in one of the heavy snowstorms of the winter, which prevented the people in the adjoining congregations from attending.

The total attendance of students

the first year was fifty. A number of the students came from Vang and Valley Grove and Holden and Kenyon. Those surviving have filled or are on the point of filling their three score years and ten. Here are their names: Marie Aaker, later Mrs. Theodore Bordson, Alexandria, Minn.; Sissel K. Haugen, later Mrs. A. T. Brandvold, Faribault; Esther Thompson, later Mrs. L. O. Rugland, Ashly; Guri K. Lie; Betsy K. Lie, later Mrs. G. N. Stelle, Bristol, S. D.; Martha T. Aabye, Kirsti T. Haugen, Theoline Sophie Vestly, Berit A. Hoverstad, Ella E. Skare, Marie Grinager, later Mrs. E. Engebretson, Princeton, Minn.; Anne Marie Hanson, later Mrs. H. P. Solstad, Fisher; Ingeborg Strandemo or Strondemoen, Peder K. Haugen, Edward J. Erstad, Silvert E. Grinde, Ingabrikt J. Hegvik, Nils P. Langemo, T. Langemo, Ole O. Romundstad, Ole S. Vesledal, Anders T. Ellingbo, Ole K. Ulsaker, Knut O. Bakko, Knut O. Bratvold, Erik H. Stenbakken, Tjostel A. Baanhus, Ole G. Opdal, Haakon O. Naeset, Erik P. Skajem, Knut O. Holten, Bernt J. Lie, Sievert E. Lie, Anders T. Aabye, Torger H. Brokke, Theodor Thorson, Christen O. Holen, Ole O. Hellerud, Hans H. Rinde, Andrew Anderson, Nils E. Grinde, Svein O. Braaten, Thompson, N. D.; Osten O. Bø, Guttorm A. Melland, Hans M. Hanson, R. O. Støve, Howard S. D.; Bersvend Johnson, Minneapolis; H. Holstad, M. Onstad.

## CHAPTER IV—Funds raised among Norse settlers save struggling school; doubts dispelled as "Old Main" is erected on Manitou Heights; early school days show contrast with present-day college.

Very few St. Olaf people, if any, until they read this story, are aware that October 26, 1876, stands out as a red letter day in the history of the institution. At least I did not know it until a few days ago when in search of historic material I stumbled across some secretary's minutes from that period. All that day till out in the night the members of the board of trustees fought over the proposition "to build or not to build" what now for years has been known as the Main Building. The gist of the discussion that took place in the meeting is a matter of record. Its readers can easily sense that some of the board members were discouraged, that they were even tempted to look upon the school as a failure, that the continuance of its maintenance might be construed as an interference with the success of the only school the church was under obligations to support at that time, and that the erection of the proposed building would be an unwarranted expenditure of people's means. Two of the members even made the statement that their opposition to the erection of the new building was with them "a matter of conscience," "en samvittigheds sag." They entertained doubts as to whether the time might ever come that the students would arrive in numbers large enough to fill the building which was to be erected. In reading the discussion, you get the feeling that some of the board members would have returned to their homes from the meeting with a sigh of relief if a motion had been adopted to the effect that as soon as practicable the corporation should be dissolved and the institution should be disbanded.

Such might have been the case but for the unyielding pertinacity and indomitable determination of Pastor Muus to continue the school and put up a building meeting adequately the demands of that period. Again he received the backing of Harald Thorson and Rev. N. A. Quammen. As in the summer or fall of 1874, so also now. The three men formed a triumvirate for pushing things. They decided to burn the bridges behind them and face the future bravely. They succeeded in persuading the board to authorize the erection of a new building. Pastor Quammen said he would try to collect \$2,500 for the accomplishment of the purpose. Mr. Thorson said nothing but undoubtedly cherished a mental reservation to the effect that he would come to the rescue should the institution reach a point where it sorely needed his help financially. Muus had already tried the metal of his parishioners belonging to the congregations of Holden, Vang, and Gol. The Holden congregation, strangely enough, was largely located in the township of Wanamingo; Vang in the townships of Holden and Warsaw, and Gol in the township of Kenyon. Muus had seized time by the forelock. Already in November, 1874, immediately after the formation of the St. Olaf corporation, and two years before the October 26th meeting he was hard at work making a house to house canvass in these congregations for funds to be used for building purposes. He virtually assessed the members. If a farmer owned 80 acres of land, he would ask him for \$100; if the farmer owned a quarter section of land, he would ask him to give \$200; and thus he would continue increasing the assess-

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ments in the ratio which the holdings of a farmer increased. Naturally the strongly developed individualistic tendencies of the Norsemen would not permit all of them to accede to Muus' suggestion, or, shall we say, demand. But many complied, and Muus put the cash that he thus obtained into the bank to draw interest till the time would come when it could be used for putting up the new building. What the amount thus collected totalled I don't know. I have been told it amounted to \$9,000. Anyhow the amount was large enough to warrant Muus in taking a firm stand for the erection of the proposed building. Members of Holden, Vang, and Gol congregations, unknown to themselves, were instrumental in saving the school from extinction. These congregations may have a notable history, but can they—or any congregation for that matter—point to an achievement greater than that of having been on instrumentality in preserving for posterity the present educational institution of both national and international fame, known as St. Olaf college? Alumnus C. K. Solberg or some other worshipper at the shrine of the poetic muse should here find inspiration for penning an immortal poem, each stanza ending with the rhythmic refrain, "Holden and Vang and Gol."

Fortunately, the names of the men who thus responded to Muus' solicitations by contributing to the erection of the Main Building have been preserved. As descendants of some of these men are constant readers of The News, I herewith reproduce their names:

**From Holden Congregation:** Ole Johanneson Bakken, Erik Erikson Severeide, Jens Knutson Broin, Abraham Simonson, Ole Nilson Kvernoden, Einert T. Wraalstad, Thyke Nilson Yangemo, John E. Wraalstad, Ole J. Erager, Ole J. Broin, Hans C. Westemoe, Christian H. Este, Hans H. Wikum, Lars H. Holmane, Andreas T. Rygh, Svien O. Nordgaard, Ole R. Bes-

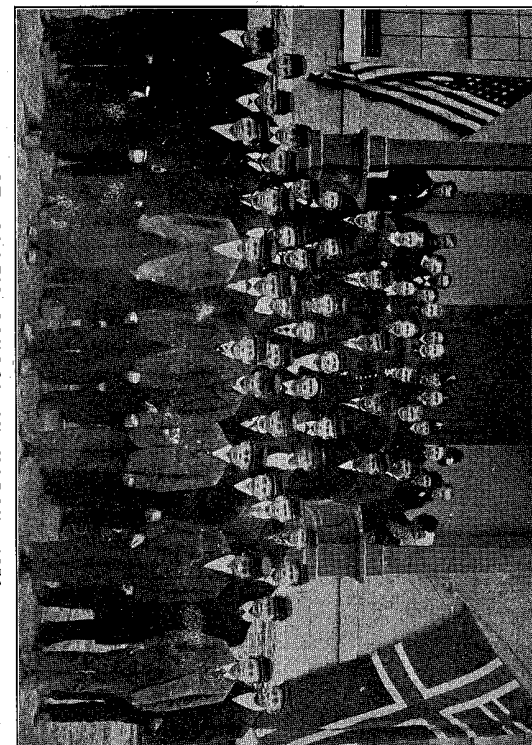
tul, Nils S. Kroken, Amund Christopherson, Martin O. Follingstad, Thorgrim G. Homme, Erik Monson Kvam, Jens T. Broen, Ole O. Follingstad, Ole O. Okland, Thor I. Loven, Nils J. Ottun, Aggrim Broin, Halvor Olson Huset.

**From Vang Congregation:** Helge Gulbrandson Bakken, Christopher Larson Lockrem, Haakon Kautson Holien, Lars Christopherson Soine, Anders Alfson Myre, Jörgen Jörgerson Ostrem, Even Syverson Brekken, Ole Knutson Holien, Helge Erikson Kasa, Ivar Thronsdon Ellingboe, Ole Olson Lysne, John Henrikson Svien, Knut Pederson Hougen, Peder Christianson, Hans Knutson Rauk, Peder Ingebriktson Bakke, Ole Olson Naeseth, Gudmund Knutson Norsving, Boye Knutson Norsving, Torger Thomasson Elton, Finkel Thorsen Grythe, Ingebrikt Johannesson Hamre, T. E. Lajord, Finkel A. Myren, Chr. J. Finstad, Anders T. Remmen, Johannes Svien, Ing-

### ST. OLAF'S SCHOOL IN 1879 (Illustration Opposite)

St. Olaf's Guard in front. Note that all the boys wear military caps. Teachers and girls in upper part of picture. At left, upper row, Prof. Lynne and Prof. Teisberg; last three at right, upper row: Prof. Mohn, Mrs. Mohn, and Baby Edward Mohn. In the picture are found Dr. N. B. Remmen of Chicago, Dr. Chris. Quevli of Tacoma; K. A. Finseth, cashier of the bank at Nerstrand; former state senator O. N. Grue of Kandiyohi county; Rev. J. T. Langemo, Edinburg, N. Dak.; Rev. O. T. Lee (deceased), Northwood, Iowa; Th. Larsen, Taylor, N. Dak.; Hon. L. L. Brusletten, Wahpeton, N. Dak.; Mrs. E. B. Steensland (Sophie Aaker), Madison, Wis.; Mrs. Tams Bixby (Clara Mues), formerly Red Wing. Prof. Grose, the writer of these historical articles, is also in the group, at the left, second row, second person.

ST. OLAF'S SCHOOL IN MARCH, 1879  
(See Opposite Page)



## FIFTY MEMORABLE YEARS AT ST. OLAF

vald Endreson, Nils Tostenson Prestegard, Nils Gunderson Lien, Nils J. Raabolle.

From Gol Congregation: Anders Knutson Finseth, Herbrand Knutson Finseth, Ole Knutson Finseth, Peder Halvorsen Odegaard, Sigurd Halvorsen Dokken, Frederick Grose, Peder Olson Naeseth, Ole Engebretson Bakke, Knut Thoreson Bakke, Halstein Thoreson Bakke, Ole Jorgenson Bakke, Stian S. Gledie.

To this list we find attached the names of Rev. Einar Wulfsberg, Albert Lea, and Rev. O. A. Mellby, New Richland, the father of Dr. C. A. Mellby and of the late Dean of Women, Miss Agnes Mellby.

The contract was let, building operations were begun, and on July 4, 1877, the cornerstone was laid by Rev. H. A. Preus, the president of the Norwegian Synod. A number of clergymen were present who were on their way back from Willmar where the annual meeting of the church had been held. President Strong of Carleton College, Hon. P. N. Langemo of Kenyon, Dr. Laur. Larson and Rev. V. Koren of Decorah were the other speakers.

### Last Year "Down Town"— Forty-Eight Years Ago

In the fall of that year I entered St. Olaf's School as a student. It gives me a shock almost, as I write this sketch, to have the idea brought home to me that nearly forty-eight years—nearly half a century—have gone by since I the first time came in direct contact with the institution. As has already been stated, the school occupied the present site of the Congregational church. Across Third Street east on the north side of the St. Olaf block, where now stands Mr. A. O. Netland's house, stood Carleton's ladies' hall, a building perhaps a trifle smaller than that wherein St. Olaf's School conducted its recitations. Farther back and to the left, back of

the present city library, loomed up a Carleton boarding establishment for men, in the student vernacular of that time known as Pancake Hall.

St. Olaf's small ground space presented scant opportunity for participation in sports. The land south of Mr. John M. Ellingboe's present residence on Division Street south served as an improvised baseball diamond, rarely used, and the part of Cannon River near Berg's present place formed the swimming hole. Many students took no exercise. They came from the farm and felt that they had had all the bodily exercise they wanted. Why should they hanker for it now? Some, not so much for hygienic as for economic reasons, got exercise by working for their board manipulating bucksaws and sawbucks and splitting, piling, and carrying wood. Everybody burnt wood in those days. It was the age of the wood stove. Railway companies used wood as fuel for running trains. The students lodged and boarded around town. The rooms over Becker's hardware store, then owned by Harald Thorson, were occupied by Prof. Mohn's family, which at that time comprised only Mrs. Mohn and son, Edward, at present a Twin City architect. Mr. Thorson's family had just vacated these rooms and moved into his large brick residence located at the foot of St. Olaf Avenue to the west of the tracks. It was customary in those days for families to occupy rooms over places of business. The rooms above Bierman's furniture store were occupied by Prof. Teisberg's family and school girls. The house just east of Scofield's "Cash N Carry" store on Fifth Street was a boarding hall with lodgings set aside for the exclusive use of St. Olaf students and conducted by the now sainted parents of Dr. J. N. and Rev. H. B. Kildahl. I looked at the house the other day and was surprised to find that as yet it had escaped being encased in a layer or coat of stucco, that unfailling youth renewer of houses which be-

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gin to show marks from the nibblings of the tooth of time.

The subjects taught, besides common school branches, were religion, Latin, German, Norwegian, algebra, and music. The four teachers were Th. N. Mohn (principal), A. K. Teisberg, Lars Lynne, and Ella Fiske. Miss Fiske taught us the rudiments of music. I still remember she drilled us to say that a musical staff consists of five lines and four spaces, that

the letters in the four spaces of the staff with G clef from the lowest space up spells fa-c-e, and that we should sometimes be sharp, never be flat, and always be natural. Prof. Teisberg gave me my first lessons in Latin and German. Prof. Lynne trained us to sing "Klara stjerna," "Brudefæden i Hardanger," "Lydt gjennem verdners rum," "Al himlen priser," and a number of other standard classical songs. Prof. Mohn was an inspiring teacher. He introduced me to the poetry of Longfellow, and I have had a fondness for it ever since. He talked enthusiastically about it. I liked his talks and read the poetry whenever I had a chance. The first two dollars that I saved were invested in a copy of Longfellow's poems, which occupies a prominent place in my bookshelf today. Mohn taught our class in religion. He must have spent weeks, if not months, in talking to us on the first chapter of Genesis. The result in my case is that materialism, pantheism, Darwinism, atheistic evolution, and various other pagan philosophic vagaries have never had any charms for me. I cannot conceive of matter, life, and man brought into existence without the Creator. I felt and feel extremely thankful to Prof. Mohn for having given us the course, as it helped and helps me today to retain my spiritual bearings. He made "Thus saith the Lord" a guiding principle in my life. And what he did for me, I am sure he did for all others who came under his beneficent influence in his classes of religion.

### St. Olaf's Benefactor



HARALD THORSON,

former Northfield merchant to whom the city is indebted for the location of St. Olaf college here instead of in Red Wing or some other city. During his lifetime he was St. Olaf's leading benefactor. At his death he bequeathed the bulk of his estate, valued at nearly one million dollars, to the college which he helped establish.

### First Year "On the Hill"

At the end of the school year 1877-78 Prof. Mohn expressed the desirability of having the returning students come back early in September for participation in the observance of an official moving day. It should serve as a connecting link between the last year the school was held in town and the first year it was conducted on the

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hill. When I returned in September, beginning the school year 1878-79, I found the teachers and the newly arrived students, instead of being scattered all over the town, occupying quarters under one roof in what we now call the Main Building. Many of the students were familiar with the practice of moving out of an old place into a new one. For the feelings which they experienced when they moved out of the old pioneer abode into some substantial frame or brick house at home were somewhat akin to the feelings they had when they exchanged the cramped quarters down town for the commodious building which had been placed on an elevation where it could not be hid. I dare say that the bulk of the students who attended the institution during the first thirty years of its existence, when they think of St. Olaf College, invariably see in their mind's eye the picture of that building which for forty-six years has stood on the brow of Manitou Heights facing the sunrising, seemingly as a guard over the destinies of Northfield. As one approaches the Main Building from the east, these words of the poet come to one's mind:

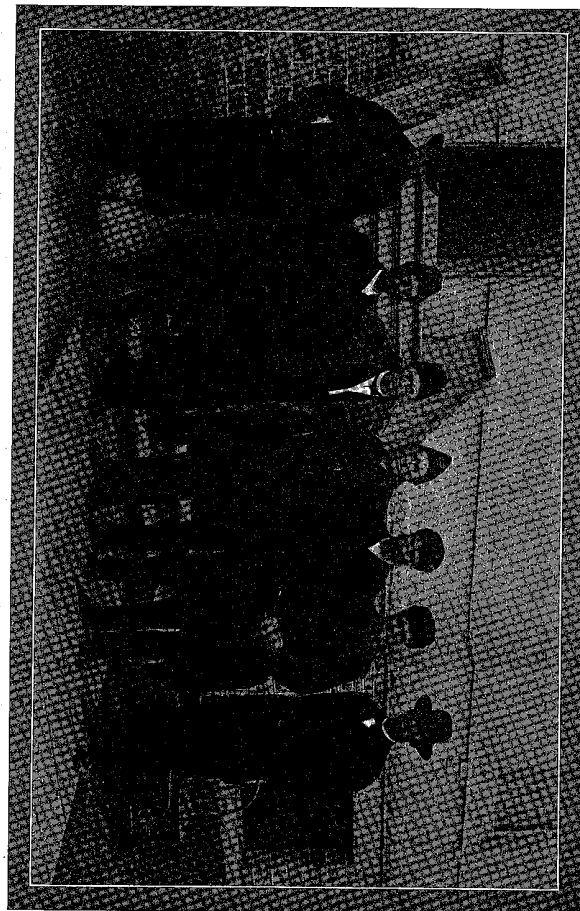
"This castle hath a pleasant seat;  
the air  
Nimble and sweetly recommends  
Itself  
Unto our gentle senses."

The grounds on the hill presented a torn-up appearance during the first school year, 1878-79. The tower had not yet been built; the porch on the east side had not been finished; stones, brick, mortar, stumps, pieces of scantlings and boards had not all been cleared away; sidewalks had not been laid. Grainfields occupied much of the land between the Longfellow school and the top of the brow of the hill. Huge woods grew to the westward and extended, we were told, to Mankato. The Main Building, incomplete as it was, held, potentially, all

the present buildings. The boys slept on the top floor and used the recitation rooms on the second floor as studies. Eight or ten boys occupied each study, and had one of their own number appointed "opsynsmand" (overseer, proctor). Stoves heated the rooms. The boys carried the wood, built the fire, swept the rooms, scrubbed the floors, and served as utility men in various other ways. Some bedrooms contained no stoves at all. And if they did, some boys would rather go to bed in a cold room than carry wood up long stairs and build fire. Rooms No. 7 and No. 8 were then one room, and served as assembly hall and as a place of Sunday worship for St. John's congregation as it had then no church. This room bore for years the name Music Hall. The perpendicular patches of plastering so distinct from the rest of the wall, now extending from ceiling to floor in many of our classrooms, reminding the casual observer of renovated antiquity, mark former partitions, now torn down, which divided the present larger classrooms into smaller apartments. No. 1 on the first floor, then containing four or five rooms, formed the embryo ladies' hall, as it housed most of the girls in attendance. The families of Prof. Mohn, Prof. Telsberg, and the steward also lived on this floor.

Devotional exercises or family worship were held in the dining room immediately before breakfast in the morning and at nine o'clock in the evening. I say "family worship," for we really felt as if we were a family. The dining hall was also the scene of our social gatherings. The first attempt at journalism at St. Olaf was made that year. The sheet was called "St. Olaf Essayist" and was written by hand and passed out among the students once a week. The boys wore military caps and organized a military company that drilled during the fall and bore the name "St. Olaf Guards." The total enrollment that

BOARD OF TRUSTEES, 1886-1890





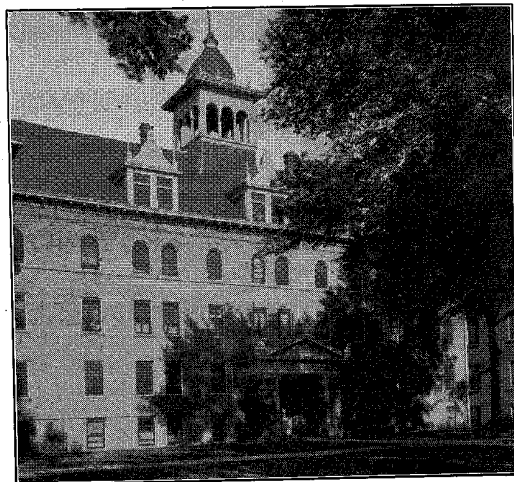
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year was 64. St. Olaf has now as many teachers.

It may interest the reader to know that ex-Congressman A. J. Volstead, who has attained a national reputation on account of the courageous stand he took when he put teeth into the federal prohibition laws and who has enriched the English language by the word "Volsteadism," was one of the students in attendance at St. Olaf's School the last year it was in town.

As I look back upon the two years I spent at St. Olaf's School as a student, I feel I got much out of them in spite of the unpretentious surroundings amidst which we worked. Magnificent buildings and expensive equipment are for many reasons de-

sirable. But if the student has the teacher, he will get as good results in our present Chemistry Hut as he will within the fine building soon ready for dedication. Prof. Mohn was a good teacher. He awakened in the student a thirst to know, a desire to learn, and an urge to think. He had a personality which makes one feel like adapting and applying to him what Garfield said about Mark Hopkins. A school or a college or a university is a place where I sit on one end of the log as a learner and Prof. Mohn on the other end as a teacher. He possessed the happy knack in teaching which could produce results without having to rely slavishly on accessories for the successful achievement of such results.



YTTERBOE HALL

## CHAPTER V—Built on the firm foundations laid by pioneer statesmen-educators, St. Olaf grew and blossomed into one of the greatest centers of learning maintained by the Norwegian Lutherans of America.

Much newspaper space has been given in these articles to the beginnings of St. Olaf college. I have done so deliberately. Few readers knew what the beginnings were. Few knew who made the clearings, tolled and milled, plowed and sowed and planted, made possible the fruition the many men and women now enjoy. Few knew the motives which impelled the founders to make sacrifices for building churches and schools and colleges. In my humble way I have sought to render homage to those to whom homage is due. The list is by no means exhausted. Far from it. But I nevertheless condense the occurrences of the last thirty-eight years of the institution into one installment. Not because the period does not contain abundant historic material for many installments but because most of it is comparatively fresh in the minds of most of the readers and therefore needs only to be mentioned in order to be remembered. I am free to confess that in writing I like to draw the line between those occupying and those having occupied the stage of life. I am also free to confess that some of the questions connected with the institution during those years at times reached such an acute stage that I am afraid in dealing with them lest I might unwittingly write things for which some one might lustily rap me across the fingers.

### Long List of Topics

Much could be said about the predestination controversy, the divinity school, the creation of the college department, the Augsburg strife, humanism, co-education, courses of study, bequests, radio station, college farm,

participation in the great World war; about college activities such as the band, the choir, the Luther league, prayer circles, mission bands, athletics; about building operations such as Ytterboe hall, college hospital, Manitou cottage, Steensland library, Hoyme chapel, Mohn hall, gymnasium, heating plant, president's residence, new administration building; about personalities connected with the making of the institution such as H. T. Ytterboe, O. M. Kalheim, Peer Stromme, J. N. Kildahl, O. G. Folland, L. A. Vigness, P. O. Holland, F. M. Christiansen, and L. W. Boe. Yes, President L. W. Boe—preacher, teacher, state senator, church organizer, administrator. He has been president of the institution for only seven years and has already to his credit the erection of the gymnasium, the heating plant, and the new administration building. The list of topics is long; but I shall touch only the high spots.

### Vigness St. Olaf's War President

President L. A. Vigness succeeded President Kildahl but preceded Boe in the presidency. Mention was just made of the three buildings erected during Boe's administration. During Kildahl's regime Ytterboe hall, Hoyme chapel, Steensland library, and Mohn hall were built. The Great War had just begun when Prof. Vigness assumed the presidency. The war caused a rapid increase in cost of building material and labor. Under such circumstances it would not be wise to push building operations, and President Vigness therefore left them in abeyance. And when we as a nation en-

tered the war, they were out of question. St. Olaf patriotism kept uppermost in mind the bringing of the war to a successful issue and bent all its efforts in that direction. President Vigness resigned before the war ended in order to accept the responsible position of executive secretary of the board of education, which supervises the activities of all the schools of higher learning belonging to the church.

### *Predestination Controversy Established College Department*

'Tis an ill wind that blows no man good. The predestination controversy arising in the Norwegian synod in the latter part of the 70's and continuing thruout more than the first half of the 80's was one of those ill winds, and St. Olaf college was the beneficiary thereof. It hastened the establishment of the college department. The question is, but for this doctrinal blast, would St. Olaf's school ever have become a college? The adherents of the party accused of having a leaning towards Calvinism were called "Missourians," because the ideas they championed were said to have had their genesis in the German Lutheran Missouri synod. Their opponents who were supposed to have leanings toward synergism bore the name "Anti-Missourians." The discussion of the question at issue was exceedingly difficult, the advocate being in danger of being dashed either against the Calvinistic Scylla or engulfed by the synergistic Charybdis. The controversy waxed so hot that a large number of "Anti-Missourian" congregations and ministers left the Norwegian synod in '86 and '87. The Norwegian synod retained the schools. Where should the "Anti-Missourians" then look for preachers and send their young people for getting a higher Christian education? They could not consistently continue sending them to the so-called

"Missourian" schools; if they did, they would supposedly expose their children to Calvinistic predestination influences; if they sent their children to other schools, they might be weaned away from the cherished religious and spiritual truths instilled into their hearts and minds at home and in church.

Muus again came to the rescue. He issued a call to the "Anti-Missourians" to hold a meeting at St. Olaf's school in September, 1886. The meeting was held. I always think of it as being much like the old Anglo-Saxon folk-moot. Indeed it was called "folke-møde," which means "folk-moot," an assembly made up of the leading "Anti-Missourian" clergymen and laymen from far and near.

They took up for consideration the three questions: First, should the "Anti-Missourians" form a new synod? Secondly, (which is really a corollary to the first), how could they operate effectively without being a synod? Thirdly, what should they do to obtain a recruiting station for ministers and to give their young people an opportunity of acquiring a Christian education in schools above the elementary grades? The "Anti-Missourians," in meeting assembled, reached the conclusion that for the present they would organize no new synod. There were already at least five Norse Lutheran synods in existence looking more or less askance at each other. The one would not goodnaturedly let the other play in his yard or slide on his cellar door. The "Anti-Missourians" adopted a conciliatory policy of procedure whereby their congregations would not form a new synod, but would seek to co-operate for a few years under the name of "Anti-Missourian Brotherhood." Meanwhile they would advocate a merger of the various Norse Lutheran synods into one synod. Their plan worked out gradually and eventually exceeded expectations. In 1890 the "Anti-Missourian Brotherhood," the Norwegian Danish conference, and the Norwegian Augustana synod amal-

gamated and formed an organization called the United Norwegian Lutheran Church of America. In 1917, twenty-seven years later, the Norwegian synod from which the "Anti-Missourians" severed themselves in the 80's, the Hauge's synod, and the United Lutheran church merged into one body now officially known as the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, numbering nearly half a million souls.

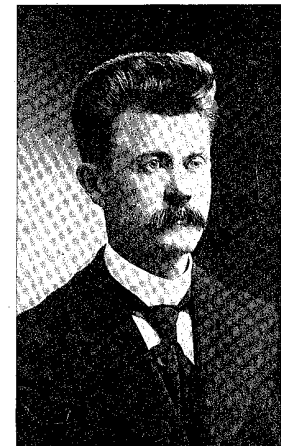
But back again to the proceedings of the "Anti-Missourian" folk-moot held at St. Olaf's school in September, 1886. "The Anti-Missourians" in that meeting also decided that they would support St. Olaf's school. They voted it an annual appropriation, secured the promise of the establishment and maintenance of a collegiate department, and obtained rooms in the Main building wherein they could conduct a divinity school. The proper St. Olaf authorities made arrangements in conformity with the folk-moot resolutions that had been adopted. The theological seminary was established, which thru a variety of changes has now become a part of the Luther Theological seminary in St. Anthony Park, St. Paul, Minnesota. Dr. F. A. Schmidt—two of whose sons, E. W. and F. G., are members of the present St. Olaf faculty—and Rev. M. O. Beckman, pastor near Kenyon, were appointed theological professors.

### *Muus Opposed to Fake- Bottomed Strawberry Boxes*

September, 1886, dates the beginning of the first freshman class at St. Olaf college. In other words, that date denotes the time of the establishment of the college department at the institution. Muus originally named the institution St. Olaf's school, not because he did not some day want it to be a college, but because he wanted the name to express facts as they existed at the time and not as he hoped they might be some time somewhere in a dim uncertain future. He did not be-

lieve in fake-bottomed strawberry boxes. He did not want the bottom board placed in the middle of the box but at the bottom and insisted that the strawberries in the middle and bottom of the box should be just as luscious and round and big as those on top. When the college department was established, the name of St. Olaf's school was changed to that of St. Olaf college. The diploma of the college is a copy of the one given to the liberal arts students upon their

### *His Efforts Won*



PROF. H. T. YTTERBOE, who in the late eighties and early nineties saved St. Olaf financially by hard work and ingenious effort in raising funds for current expenses.

graduation at Johns Hopkins university as far as wording and form and size are concerned. Before its adoption the college wrote the Johns Hopkins people in regard to the matter, thinking they might object to such a practice, but received in return the cheery assurance that they had absolutely no objections whatsoever. "Imitation," said the letter, "is the sincerest of flattery."

The teachers at that time were Th. N. Mohn (president), O. G. Felland, H. T. Ytterboe, O. M. Kalheim, and the writer. Miss Margaret O'Brien of Faribault taught music and was the preceptress. She later married Mr. E. T. Archibald. Prof. Felland is the dean of the faculty in regard to service. He has taken a picture of nearly every event of account at the college since his arrival in 1881. He is also a great lover of flowers and knows the pedigree and name of nearly every variety of peonies and irises and gladioli. When it comes to teaching, he has conducted classes in nearly every subject from penmanship to Greek and Hebrew. Prof. Kalheim possessed a Muusian brow. He was quick at repartee. It was customary for him to arise five o'clock in the morning in order that he might scan Homer, much of which he knew by heart, and read Ruskin aloud.

#### *Ytterboe's Undying Achievement*

Prof. H. T. Ytterboe was popular with the students. He was admired by the baseball fans for work on first base and for his batting and running. He saved the college during its critical six-year period in the 90's. In 1890 St. Olaf was accepted by the United church. This action caused dissatisfaction among some of the adherents of Augsburg seminary. Thinking that a rescinding of the resolution would pacify the Augsburgians, an annual meeting of the church passed a resolution annulling its previous action of

making St. Olaf college the college of the church. This action left St. Olaf without the adequate means for its maintenance. It was a matter of life or death for the college. In that critical moment Professor Ytterboe stepped forth and offered his services to gather money for the defrayal of the current expenses of the college till the day would come when the church might see its way clear to give the institution the necessary support for its successful operation. His services were accepted. For six long years he went from congregation to congregation, making a house to house canvass. He went on foot unless he could get some member of a congregation to take him around to the various homes by means of horse and buggy. Not only did Prof. Ytterboe procure the necessary funds for conducting the college, but he succeeded by his engaging personality and by his dissemination of information concerning the work and purpose of the college to win friends everywhere for it. This fact became very evident at the annual meeting of the church in 1899, when the meeting assumed obligations to sustain the college financially, and it has been doing so ever since, even at times contributing \$82,000 a year for paying the running expenses, an amount equivalent to an income from an endowment fund of \$1,370,000 loaned at 6 per cent per annum. When speaking about Ytterboe's achievements, we must always keep in mind that President Mohn was a strong man on the floor of the annual meeting when the matter of transferring the college to the church was up for earnest consideration. We must remember that President Mohn had for years and years maintained that the church should offer all its young men and women an opportunity to get a liberal Christian education based on Christian principles, in Lutheran colleges, where the saving of souls is made the prime aim; but the academic standard of these schools should be

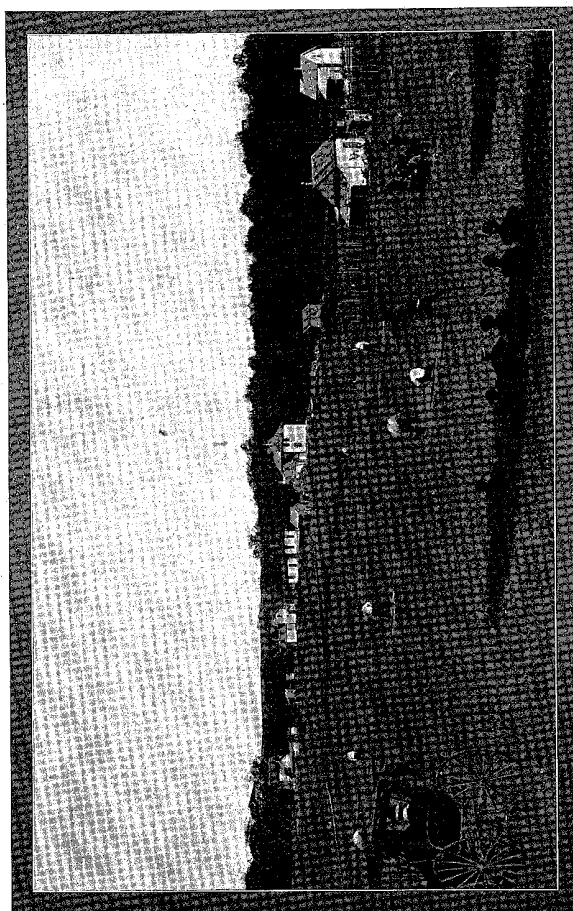
as high as that of any college in the land. He advocated this principle at all times and at all places whenever circumstances gave him an opportunity. Mohn and Ytterboe did excellent team work. The one supplemented what the other lacked.

#### *Globe-Trotter Stromme's Personality*

Peer Stromme is perhaps the most interesting personality that has been a member of the St. Olaf faculty. He was preacher, teacher, lecturer, author, journalist, globe-trotter; he made two trips around the earth. One Christmas eve he spent in the Plains of Bethlehem where "the shepherds watched their flocks by night." He took out his New Testament and read the story of the birth of the Christ-child aloud. He possessed a wonderful memory. He could quote to you page upon page of Dickens altho he had made no efforts to memorize what he read. He knew mathematics intuitively, so much so that he thought demonstrations of mathematical propositions just as unnecessary as if you sought to prove that  $2 + 2 = 4$ . He thought one should not try to prove what one already feels and knows and readily sees is true. No Norseman perhaps has known personally as many people of all ranks and conditions in life as did Peer Stromme. In his "Memoirs" he seems to know not only the individuals, but their genealogy, blood relationship, intermarriages, accomplishments and achievements, so that many an individual perhaps will turn to Stromme's write-up of himself to learn to know who he is. He was for years editor of the leading Norse paper in Chicago while Prof. Kalheim was the editor of another Norse weekly in the same city. The two were inseparably together whenever their duties would permit them to enjoy each other's company. They were an embodiment of Damon and Pythias,

of David and Jonathan. But in their papers and in politics they were opposites. Kalheim was a stalwart republican while Stromme was a dyed-in-the-wool democrat, and they made sharp thrusts at each other in the editorial columns of their respective papers for the political views they entertained. Stromme prided himself on his use of English. He was associate editor for a time of the Minneapolis Times, a morning paper. As I lived in Minneapolis at that time, I occasionally met him. Once I asked him if "That says itself" was English. "No, of course not," he answered; "that's a Norse idiom." I rejoined that his paper had used the expression a few days before in a leading editorial. Being in his office on Newspaper Row, we looked up the article in question. Sure enough, the expression stared him boldly in the face. He stared at it as if dumbfounded, then said "I didn't write it. I'll find out who did." A few days later he told me the sentence was good English. For it had been written by E. R. Johnstone, the managing editor, who claimed that neither by heredity nor environment had he been under the influence of the Norwegians. I thought: Supposing the expression had been written by a Norwegian what would Stromme then have said? Stromme was a popular member of the Chicago Press club. He wrote poems and books. His most popular book, "Hvorledes Halvor Blev Prest," ("How Halvor Became a Preacher") sought to do for Luther college what "Tom Brown's Schooldays" did for Rugby.

Just a few quotations from Stromme's Swan Song, written to "Normanden" in Grand Forks, on the staff of which he was for years a member: "This is most likely the last letter 'Normanden' will ever get from me. Maybe even before it's mailed, the news has reached you that I have crossed the river. I have suffered continually these last years. I am glad that I may soon be permitted to



THE FIRST CARLETON-ST. OLAF BASEBALL GAME, MAY 14, 1887

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die. I make no leap into the dark. Across, on the other side, things look good to me. 'There I need, no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give me light.' I believe on Him who came to the world to save sinners; and I cherish the meek, but sure hope, that also I for His sake shall inherit eternal life. I shall need mercy infinitely much; but there is infinitely much of it; so much in fact that there will be left more than enough for the rest of you also. . . . Two incurable diseases running a neck and neck race are trying

to see which one can get me first. And it doesn't matter much to me which one will win."

### Dr. Kildahl's Regime

Just as Rev. H. A. Preus discerned that President Mohn, while he prepared him for confirmation, had qualities which made him good college material, in the same manner did Muus discover that his young confirmand, John Nathan Kildahl, ought to go to college. When he had been confirmed, Muus one day visited his parents and told them that they should let their son go to college. His father was sickly and cultivated a forty-acre tract of land not paid for and felt therefore that he needed the boy's help on the farm. Muus did not give up the hope of getting the parents' consent and went out to see them again till they finally yielded to his wishes. Young Kildahl acquired both a classical and a theological education, and in 1882 was ordained to the ministry pursuant to a call from Vang and Urland, which he had accepted. He later went to Chicago where he made a phenomenal success both as a preacher and a pastor. His church auditorium was filled to overflowing and the people that could not get in on the ground floor would crowd into the basement where they could hear him, his voice having an unusual carrying power. The waiting room to his office in the parsonage was crowded with people who came to him with their various troubles, temporal and spiritual. He was very generous. Unscrupulous beggars would sometimes take advantage of his kindheartedness. Once a gang of Norse loafers who begged and used the money they got for liquor, systematically would send in a different member of the gang to beg for money. One day Kildahl said to one of them: "I don't know how much longer I can stand this giving." "That's what we've been wondering, too," answered the beggar. Many conversions took place during Kildahl's

### An Inspiring Leader



REV. J. N. KILDAHL,

second president of St. Olaf college, from 1899 to 1914, who was known and loved as a living exponent of vital Christianity. His fine, persuasive eloquence did much to build up the spirit and ideals of St. Olaf.

pastorate in Chicago and many men are in the ministry today as a result of his work.

When the church made St. Olaf college the college of the church, it elected Pastor Kildahl as president. He did not want the presidency. He felt that the ministry was his field. He wept when told he had been made president of the institution and for weeks refused to qualify for the office. Messages both oral and written poured in upon him in such numbers that he felt he had no choice in the matter. He eventually gave way to the pressure and became the second president of St. Olaf college. In the second year of his presidency, the college department of the United Church seminary in Minneapolis moved to St. Olaf college. From that time on until now St. Olaf has been growing. He secured Prof. Christiansen for music, and the band acquired such mastery of music that it made a successful tour thru Norway in 1906. The choir was trained to such degree of perfection that it made a triumphal tour thru Norway in 1913. The choir has since sung in the largest cities of this country and received praise from the critics to the effect that it ranks as the best choir of chorals and sacred music in the world. Dr. Kildahl secured Prof. P. O. Holland as business manager, resulting in the development of one of the finest dairy farms in the country. From it the college gets its milk, cream, beef, pork, and vegetables. Incidentally I may mention that the acquisition of the Thorson estate by bequest necessitated the supervision of a number of banks connected with the estate, but Holland conducted them successfully thru the recent years of economic depression characterizing the agricultural regions of the Northwest where these banks were located.

Dr. Kildahl, altho a classical student himself, changed the iron-clad Latin and Greek courses. First, he ran a classical-scientific course and a scien-

tific course parallel with the time-honored classical course. Then he adopted the elective system and finally the group system, which prevails today. Dr. Kildahl introduced the prayer meeting into the institution. It bears such names as prayer circle, morning watch, volunteer prayer clubs. Public and private prayer has since then found a constantly bigger place in the history of the institution. He always attended church on Sunday, both the morning and evening services. Before he died and was so weak he could hardly whisper, those standing near by his bed could make out that he tried to say: "Let your—lights—so shine before men that . . ." He preached always on the topics of sin and grace. He aroused the individual to see that he was a sinner, that he as a result needed forgiveness for his sins, and that this forgiveness could be obtained thru faith in Christ, that with forgiveness came salvation and eternal life, and that the consciousness of this blessed deliverance from sin and its consequences would imbue the heart of the sinner with a sense of profound gratitude to God manifesting itself in holy living and in consecrated service.

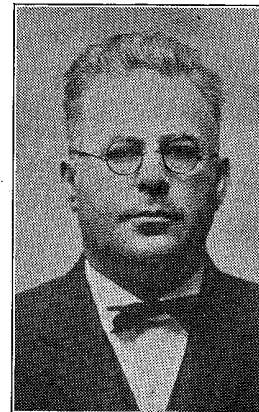
#### *Ideals Sought By Christian Colleges*

In conclusion I wish to quote here a peroration I use in one of my talks on Christian education. It goes something like this:

Besides ranking in scholarship with the best institutions of their kind in the land, our Christian colleges purpose to imbue the students with the spirit of Christ; they purpose to make them agencies, instrumentalities, servants, living representatives of Christ, doing what Christ would have done had he lived visibly in the communities of these men and women.

Moses was permitted to ascend the Mountain of Nebo and reach the top of Pisgah. He there got a view of

#### **Alumnus is Head**



DR. L. W. BOE,

the first alumnus to be elected president of St. Olaf. During his seven years of service, the gymnasium, heating plant, and new administration building have been added to the college facilities.

the whole extent of the Promised Land, to the north and to the south and westward as far as the Mediterranean sea. A land of milk and honey met his gaze. He saw the future land of his people—a people particularly set aside by God for the purpose of obeying His will and of making manifest unto the people of the earth His goodness and grace and power and majesty.

#### *A Vision We Should Like to Behold*

It would be a sight beautiful beyond description indeed, if you and I, like Moses of old, might be permitted to ascend some mountain elevation in this country, from the top of which our vision, if possible, might extend to the north and to the south, and to the east thruout this broad land, yea, as far as to the confines of Europe; and to the west to the coast, yea, as far as to the shore of Asia and to the chains of islands of the South sea. If we could behold such a vision, what should we see? We should see our country covered with fruitful fields, huge forests, rich mines, populous cities, and a network of railways. We should see continents bound together by ocean steamers and vessels which cross and recross the seas, promoting commerce and intercourse between the countries of the world. Such a sight would be inspiring indeed to behold.

But what additional inspiration would be given us if we knew that the farmers who sowed and harvested those fields were all under the control of Christ; if we knew that all the men and women and children of the cities were actuated by one motive power, and that that motive power was Christ; if we knew that the money kings of Wall street and the presidents and directors of railroad companies and steamship lines were under the energizing influence of Jesus Christ; if we knew that the uppermost and undermost and innermost thought of every individual in every part of the land was to let Jesus rule. If such were the case, what would be the result? Every vehicle whizzing along the highway, every reaper whirling into the field, every train roaring along the track, every vessel plowing the waves of the sea, would then solely be a servant of our Lord Jesus Christ. All forces—material, intellectual, moral, spiritual—would then unite in bringing forth one harmoni-

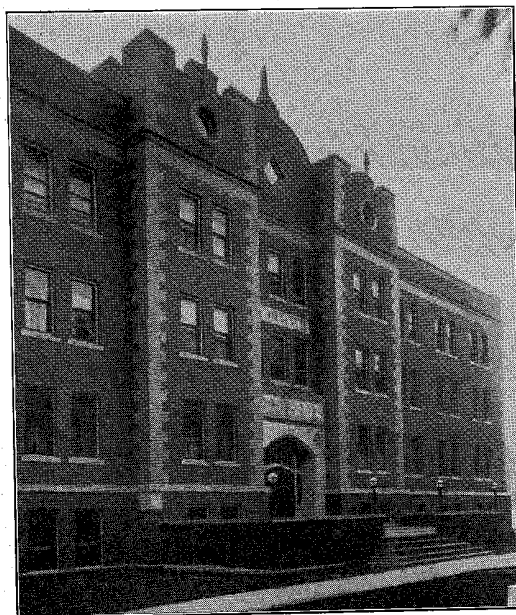
## FIFTY MEMORABLE YEARS AT ST. OLAF

ous song of prayers, praise, thanksgiving, and adoration unto the Lord God Omnipotent and unto the Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world.

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This thought is too great to be realized, I know; for our Christian schools, which should be instrumental in bringing about such an ideal condition, are so very few and so very weak. And even if they were many and strong, yes, as strong as the

strongest, the awful element of sinfulness of man looms up like an insurmountable barrier, hindering us from reaching the ideal. But we must remember that altho the ideal be unattainable, it is not unapproachable. We must ever keep it vividly before our mind and heart in order to get in closer touch with the divine law of helpfulness and service, and in order to comply better with the apostolic injunction to bear one another's burden's.



MOHN HALL