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Editorial

Fourscore and Ten

OUR SEMINARY has its eye on 1971, the 125th anniversary of its founding. However, a significant milestone along the way claims our attention at this present time—the 90th anniversary of the school in Springfield, Illinois.

This occasion recalls among other things the peripatetic existence of the seminary. Its first home was Fort Wayne, Indiana, where it was founded through the efforts of Pastor Wilhelm Loehe of Neuendettelsau, Bavaria, to train emergency pastors and teachers. This was in 1846. Shortly thereafter, this "practical" seminary was deeded to the young Missouri Synod as its first seminary. By resolution of Synod, the seminary in 1861 was combined with the "theoretical" seminary in St. Louis. Seven reasons marshalled in support of this move ranged from pooling of faculty resources to saving money. In 1875, again by resolution of Synod, the "practical" seminary was moved to Springfield. Overcrowding at St. Louis and academic disparity apparently influenced this third migration.

A brief *Bekanntmachung* in *Der Lutheraner* (XXXI, August 1, 1875, No. 15, p. 119) announced the opening of the seminary in its new location on September 1 and also included this bit of practical advice:

Entering students are reminded to provide shirts, underclothing (*Leibwaesche*), bed covers, pillow, sheets, towels; also a mattress, desk, chair and wash basin. The latter items may best be procured locally.—A. Craemer [President].

Dr. Walter A. Baepfer, in his centennial brochure of the seminary (*Century of Blessing, 1846-1946*, pp. 20-24) relates some of the details of the transfer:

In Springfield, Illinois, stood the building of the Illinois State University, erected in 1854 by the North Illinois Synod on land donated by the Enos family of Springfield. The land was given to the trustees of the institution with the proviso that it be used for educational purposes only and that in the event of its not being used for educational purposes for the period of one year it revert to the original donors or their heirs. The school, operated first by the North Illinois Synod, later by the Synod of Central Illinois, had to contend with so many difficulties, that in 1869 the trustees decided to close the institution, and dispose of its property, and liquidate its indebtedness. In 1870 it passed into the hands of the Pennsylvania Ministerium. Dr. Passavant used the building for an orphanage until 1873, when his synod resolved to sell the property. It was offered to the Missouri Synod, but the men

approached in the matter did not consider themselves competent to act. Pastor J. F. Buenger of St. Louis, Missouri, succeeded in interesting a number of members of Trinity Lutheran Church, Springfield, who organized "The Evangelical Lutheran Female College and Normal School Association" and bought the property for \$6500.00. However, neither the Female College nor the Normal School materialized.

The authorities of Synod saw in the building at Springfield a solution for the problem in St. Louis. Since the "Association" in Springfield had made a number of payments on the property and since the building had to be used for educational purposes, the pro-seminary of the practical seminary was provisionally transferred to Springfield on January 4, 1874 . . .

On September 1, 1875, Prof. Craemer transferred the practical seminary to Springfield. Including the 29 students in the pro-seminary division, 113 students were enrolled the first year, of whom 53 came from the Missouri Synod, 19 from the Norwegian Synod, 2 from the English Conference, 3 from the Wisconsin Synod, and 3 from the Illinois Synod, and the rest from Germany.

Frugality, bordering on parsimony, as well as simplicity characterized the school for years, an austerity promoted in the interest of training a self-denying ministry, but then unduly perpetuated for many years in the forms of antiquated buildings and very limited operating funds. Another significant theme in the seminary's 90-year history in Springfield is the struggle for survival. The question of the seminary's usefulness raised in 1881 and again in 1896 was intensified in attempts in 1926, 1935, 1941 and 1944 to close the institution. The seminary not only survived each crisis, but emerged stronger from each test. A third major strand woven into its history is that of academic maturation. At one time the completion of the eighth grade was required for entrance to the pro-seminary, a division now abolished. Today the normal requirement for entrance to the seminary is the bachelor's degree. Academic standards generally conform to those of the American Association of Theological Schools in which the seminary holds associate membership.

Throughout the years the seminary has responded to the needs of the church in a changing world. It has furnished some 3500 pastors trained in orthodox Lutheranism and practical theological skills, a mighty host of faithful witnesses. Its historic role was to train men who could not find a place in the regular "system" of ministerial training. In recent years this very flexibility has enabled the seminary to respond readily to American higher education and thus provide the Synod with an agency for receiving dedicated men from college and university campuses, as well as a number of maturer men of diverse vocational experience, who desire to prepare for the ministry. The impressive appearance of the campus today seems almost to belie the hardship and struggle of earlier

years. On this occasion of the 90th anniversary of our seminary in the city of Springfield we humbly acknowledge the abundant blessings which God has bestowed upon this school of the prophets. Our purpose will continue to be to serve Him and His church faithfully. To His gracious care we confidently commend the future of "Springfield."

E.H.H.