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Celebrating Our Heritage

Cameron A. MacKenzie

In August of 1846 eleven weary travelers arrived in Fort Wayne, Indiana, from Germany. They had been sent by Wilhelm Loehe, pastor of the Lutheran church in Neuendettelsau, Bavaria, to receive training for the holy ministry and to assist in the great work of gathering the German immigrants into Lutheran churches in America. In Fort Wayne they were met by Wilhelm Sihler, the pastor of the Lutheran church there and Loehe's partner in this undertaking. Sihler welcomed the new arrivals, arranged for their housing, and, along with a teacher who had accompanied them, Karl Röbbelen, soon began to instruct them in his own parsonage. A new Lutheran seminary had begun.

Today, one-hundred-and-fifty years later, the institution they began is celebrating its founding and giving thanks to God for preserving it for so many years. To that end, this issue of the *Concordia Theological Quarterly* includes two articles devoted to two of the central figures responsible for establishing Concordia Theological Seminary, F. C. D. Wyneken and Wilhelm Loehe. The former not only began to train men for the ministry in Fort Wayne even before the seminary officially began but even more importantly aroused the German Lutherans to the significance of the work here in the American wilderness and encouraged many to support it. Among those who were moved to action by Wyneken's reports on the dismal situation of Lutherans in America was Wilhelm Loehe, who proceeded to recruit and train men himself for the work in America and then took the initiative in establishing a seminary right where the work was being done.

Of course, there were others who took part in this pioneering work. At a future time, we hope, articles on Wilhelm Sihler, the seminary's first president, and August Crämer, professor at the school from 1850 to 1891, will also appear. Nonetheless, it is hoped that the reader will find the two articles presented in this issue on Wyneken and Loehe interesting and perhaps even inspiring as Concordia Theological Seminary celebrates its one-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary.