

THE SAXON LUTHERAN MEMORIAL A CASE HISTORY IN PRESERVATION

Gerhardt Kramer

It was a cold, windy day in January 1958, but the bargain hunters were present and the bidding was spirited. The site was a farmstead hilltop with a view across the beautiful countryside to the towns of Frohna and Altenburg, Missouri. The occasion was a public auction of all household furnishings and supplies of Lina Bergt, who had died without a will on November 1, 1957.

Bergt had lived her entire 80 years on this 145-acre farmstead. She was a direct descendant of Saxon Lutheran immigrants who had followed their pastor, E. G. W. Keyl, from Germany to Perry County, Missouri, in 1839. Like other immigrants, the Bergts had been issued some land by the *Gesellschaft* ("society") shortly after their arrival, to which they later added acreage bought with their own funds.

Some of the Bergts' original property had been owned previously by an early "Yankee" settler. This settler erected a one-room unheated log cottage for a residence, one or two small log cottages for his slaves,¹

and a dogtrot log barn. The Bergts immediately added a two-story log unit to the residence and a double fireplace in between.

According to August R. Suelflow, "Evidence indicates that the two-story, log structure attached to the original cabin was used as a parish school and parsonage of the Frohna congregation in the late 1840s and early 1850s. The first pastor of the congregation, E. G. W. Keyl, a member of the Saxon immigration party, purchased his own land and built his own home while he served as pastor of the congregation. In 1847, however, he accepted a call to Milwaukee and Freistadt, Wisconsin, and sold his home and land. A portion of the Keyl property became part of the Bergt farm.

"As successor to Keyl, Christian H. Loeber was called as a candidate of theology. Since he was unmarried, the need for the construction of a new parsonage was not immediately pressing. The Bergt family, living close to the church at the time, invited the young bachelor pastor to share their humble log cabin with them. Hence Pastor Loeber lived in the present cabin, probably in the unheated attic, and also instructed the children in one of its rooms. Thus the log cabin undoubtedly is the oldest building used for parish purposes within the Missouri Synod."²

Soon after a board-and-batten lean-to was built across the east side to serve as kitchen, bedroom, and porch. (The lean-to was removed in

No one could write more authoritatively about the development of the Saxon Lutheran Memorial than the president of Concordia Historical Institute, Dr. Gerhardt Kramer, who has been intimately connected with the project from the beginning and whose personal involvement in establishing and maintaining the Memorial shows through in every line of his account.



The original Bergt home

the 1920s.) About 1870 a one-room frame cottage was added on the opposite side beyond the west porch for use by some newlyweds.³ Eventually, 1910-12, the larger frame section which presently gives the house its typical East Perry County look was erected.

At some time before 1900, the roof of the log barn was removed and a larger board-and-batten structure erected over and around it. Other outbuildings, including a grainery, bake oven, and privy, completed the complex.

Although in her seventies, alone, unmarried, and very ill,⁴ Lina Bergt continued to live on the premises without electricity or running water and took care of herself with the help of her neighbor, the Eugene Popp family. After Eugene Popp found her under the table one day, unable to get up, he began visiting her almost every day. On arriving on a Sunday afternoon, after an absence of only one day, Popp found Lina lying on the concrete back porch. She had gone out on Friday, lost her balance and could not get up or maneuver herself back into the house.

Popp took her to the hospital in nearby Perryville for a checkup. On leaving the hospital Lina spent 14 months in a local nursing home⁵ and was then taken to the Alvin Meyers in Frohna, who had the reputation of caring for needy people in the community. The Meyers cared for her until her death about a year later. While her house was vacant, many of Lina's priceless antiques were stolen.

Everything Is Sold

At the auction everything still remaining was sold to the highest bidders, most of whom represented antique shops and realized the value of the Bergt possessions. The walnut slab door to the attic was purchased by Lillian Zindell, Administrator of the Perryville Hospital,⁶ who gave it to the Missouri Historical Society in St. Louis on the condition that it be returned to the property if it ever was restored. (The door was returned years later.)

Also present at the auction was August R. Suelflow, Director of the Concordia Historical Institute in St. Louis. As early as 1953 he had called on Lina Bergt, whom he identified as

“the last descendant of the Saxon immigration.”⁷ He described the purpose of his visits as follows:

“I was at that time primarily interested in checking whether the Saxon immigration museum pieces could be made available for Institute use. Miss Bergt, then in her middle seventies, was kindly disposed and even indicated that she would mark certain of her irreplaceable heirlooms for [the Missouri] Synod’s historical depository. A few years later, Miss Bergt became ill and unable to take care of her own needs. During this period it was too difficult to pursue matters further.”⁸

The auction was not a happy occasion for Suelflow. He reported that he “felt inwardly depressed as I saw the many articles of homemade furniture, Saxon imports, homemade farmer tools and what not scattered to the four winds to the highest bidder.”⁹ However, Suelflow did buy a few items for the Institute and for himself.

Soon after the auction, the farm itself was sold. Prospective purchasers submitted sealed bids which were opened on the steps of the courthouse in Perryville. William Gruenwald of Perryville proved to be the successful bidder, and the farm with buildings became his for \$9,300.

Concordia Historical Institute Involvement

In the summer of 1958 I was waiting in the outer office of Raymond R. Tucker, Mayor of the City of St. Louis. With me were several fellow directors of the Landmarks Association of St. Louis, including Charles van Ravenswaay, Director of the Missouri Historical Society. Though we were to meet with the mayor on

other matters, van Ravenswaay, an authority on ethnic culture in Missouri, suddenly brought up the subject of the Bergt property in Frohna.

Van Ravenswaay knew that I had just been appointed to the Board of Governors of the Concordia Historical Institute. He therefore suggested the establishment of a memorial to the immigration of the Saxons to Missouri, and that the Bergt property was a natural. This property, he said, antedated and paralleled the history of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Besides, it was available for purchase and accessible by car.

As a result of this informal conversation, van Ravenswaay and I visited the site on October 1. Afterwards, van Ravenswaay repeated his sentiments for preserving all present buildings as a historical site in a letter to Concordia Historical Institute, which he concluded by saying, “I know of no similar preservation in the Middle West, and I believe it would be of interest—not only to members of your church but to the public generally.”¹⁰

On October 19, Institute Director Suelflow preached at Concordia Lutheran Church, Frohna. In his sermon he stressed the necessity and urgency of allowing the Bergt property to become a “stone of memorial” (cf. Joshua 4:7) in remembrance of God’s grace and mercy.

On November 8, van Ravenswaay, Suelflow, and I, along with several others, again visited the site. We discussed the purchase price with the owner, William Gruenwald, who quoted a figure of \$10,500 for the entire property minus approximately 15 detached acres

across a creek which had been sold to a neighbor. For a minimum of four acres, including all present buildings, Gruenwald asked \$6,000.

Concordia, Frohna, Backs Down

On February 1, 1959, Suelflow and I attended a voters' meeting at Concordia, Frohna, on invitation of the parish. The events of this and a subsequent meeting were later summarized by Suelflow as follows:

"A local committee consisting of Teacher Lester P. Golz, Eugene Popp (former administrator of the Bergt estate), and Erwin Dreyer had been appointed previously by the local Lutheran Laymen's League. Up to this point the congregation had no 'official' recommendations on the voters' minutes. Considerable enthusiasm seemed to be evident, also on the part of the ladies, who were invited to attend. Approximately 100 male voters and some 35 women were present.

"Mr. Kramer presented the technical aspects of the project and Mr. Suelflow the spiritual and sentimental. The result of the meeting was that the voters asked the L. L. L. committee to obtain a precise price of the entire farm and contact interested, adjoining farmers to ascertain whether the unneeded farmlands could be sold off. Not one word of opposition was spoken in the meeting. Serious questions were asked and considerable interest was apparent.

"The owner of the farm was also present in the meeting by invitation of the parish, which may have been ill-advised. When he was asked whether he would be willing to take an option on the place, enabling us to solicit funds for purchase and restoration, he almost belligerently

stated, 'No'; he wanted a definite word together with a contract within two weeks.

"In view of this, the congregation called a special meeting for February 16, 1959. At this meeting the committee reported that Mr. Gruenwald's price was \$11,000 and that he required a down payment of \$5,000, the balance to be let at interest of 5%. The congregation was to pay all the taxes, and the owner receive income from all the crops for 1959.

"Additional causes for the complete disintegration were: (1) The financial burdens of Concordia congregation; (2) The Gruenwald offer; (3) Two out of the three adjoining buyers 'backed out.' The result: the project was voted down. However, the committee was asked to continue to work on the project. The door is not completely closed."¹¹

CHI Tries Again

Earlier, in its meeting of January 26, 1959, the Board of Governors of the Concordia Historical Institute had appointed a committee to study the possibility of a Saxon Lutheran Memorial. The Board instructed its committee "to consult with the congregation at Frohna to stimulate the acquisition of the property."¹²

In the succeeding months it became increasingly evident that the Frohna congregation had lost interest in acquiring the Bergt property in its own name. As a result, the Institute committee began investigation of the possibility of acquiring it in the name of Concordia Historical Institute. It felt confident that contributions from interested individuals would be forthcoming, and so it proposed to continue discussions with the owner and to

promote a public information program designed to facilitate requests for financial support.

On March 9, 1959, I presented a check for \$167.47 to the Institute in the name of the Rev. Gotthilf Kramer family "for use in the purchase and/or restoration of the former property of Lina Bergt."¹³ This check had originally been received by the Gotthilf Kramers and their eight children in settlement of their portion of the Lina Bergt estate. When Kramer, a Frohna-born descendent of the Bergt family, died on January 7, 1958, his family decided to endorse and donate the check to the Institute. In his letter of acknowledgement, Director Suelflow indicated that the check represented the first actual monetary contribution received by the Institute "to the cause of establishing an historical monument honoring the Saxon immigration."¹⁴

In early summer 1959, Suelflow and I visited William Gruenwald in his Perryville home. We told him of the committee's hopes to raise the purchase price by popular subscription and that a tour of the area was being planned for November to help determine public attitudes toward such a project. Gruenwald assured us that he would give the Institute time until after the tour to determine if it could purchase all or part of the property and that in the meantime he would not sell it without giving the Institute first choice.

Such was not to be the case, however. For later that same summer we received word from the Perryville courthouse that Gruenwald had sold the entire property to his brother Theodore and his son-in-law, Raymond I. Steffens.

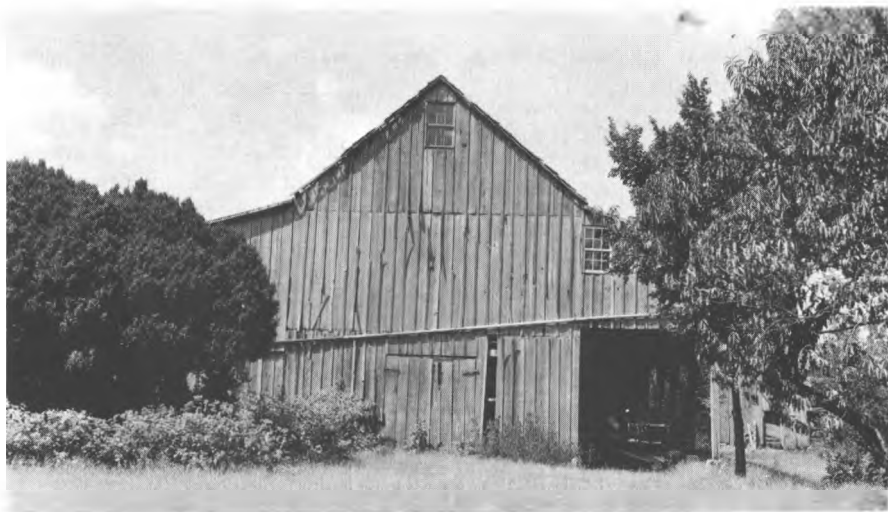
Nevertheless, a visit with the two new owners on August 25 proved promising. Both gave assurances that they had bought the property with the understanding that they would continue negotiations with the Institute until the end of the year. Specifically, they proposed to sell the buildings and 4 or 5 acres of land for \$5,000. They also approved a visit to the site as part of the proposed November 7 "Pilgrimage to Perry County" and offered their cooperation in helping to make the tour a success.

On October 14, the owners expanded their offer as follows:

"We have discussed the idea and want to help you as far as we can in preserving the old place. Our price on the different proposals is as follows:

1. Sale of buildings and approximately 4 or 5 acres—\$5,000.
2. Sale of buildings and approximately 10 acres—\$5,000 plus additional amount for the 5 acres depending how good they are for farming. This could range from \$50 per acre to \$125 per acre. Price to be set after the area is established.
3. Sale of the entire farm, less the area that lies separate from the farm, and is not connected to any part of the farm and has no access from this farm to this area. This area is approximately 7 to 8 acres—\$11,500.

"In addition, we would want farming privileges on the farm. We would want a lease for five years to rent all of the tillable ground and crop the land as we wish. On this lease, we would want it to be on a cash basis, being \$500 a year. The lease should also include the use of the barn to keep machinery in while



Barn on the Bergt property

working on the farm.

“We would consider deducting the cash rent for the five years from the sale price. This would mean \$9,500 for the farm plus 5 years free rent of all the tillable land.

“We would also want an option to renew the lease after five years. The provisions of the lease for the period after the first five years may or may not be different depending on the farm prices at that time.

“As we mentioned in the letter of August 28, we will need to know by January 1, 1960, if you want to buy part or all of the farm. Otherwise, we will go ahead with our original plans that we had when we bought the farm.”¹⁵

CHI Authorizes Purchase

Buoyed by this letter and by a growing number of contributions, the Institute committee decided to act. On October 27 it reported to the Board of Governors as follows:

“In view of the attractive offer made by the present owner of the property and in view of the generous contributions promised by friends of the project, (we recommend) that the Board of Governors of the

Concordia Historical Institute purchase the site and the surrounding acreage consisting of approximately 125 acres at the price of \$9,500. Further financial support is also anticipated from the school children of the [Missouri Synod’s] Western District, and the members of the Missouri District of the Lutheran Laymen’s League. Your committee further recommends that if contributions are not equal to the full purchase price, that it be empowered by the Board of Governors to borrow the necessary funds without interest to complete the negotiations.

“It further recommends that the deed to the properties be held by Concordia Historical Institute in carrying out the purposes of its constitution in Article I, paragraph 2C, ‘To collect and preserve articles of historical value,’ and Article III, ‘The better to execute these purposes, the Institute shall have the power to hold, purchase, lease, sell, exchange, and receive by gift or bequest all kinds of property, real and personal, and to do all things necessary to carry out the objects of this organization.’

"It is further recommended that the offer of the Lutheran Laymen's League of Concordia congregation, Frohna, Missouri, be accepted in supplying the necessary manpower, both for the restoration and maintenance of the buildings and site; furthermore:

"That a local committee of three be appointed to serve as assistants to the trustees of the project and to work under the direct supervision of the trustees."

While the Board considered these proposals, on Sunday, November 7, more than 400 persons from the St. Louis area participated in the "Pilgrimage to Perry County."¹⁶ This response gave renewed encouragement to the committee that its faith in this project had public support. The climax of the tour came at 3:30 p.m., when the participants gathered at the Bergt homestead to hear Milton Carpenter, Director of Revenue of the State of Missouri (later to become Treasurer of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod), read a proclamation signed by Missouri Governor James T. Blair Jr., declaring the homestead as "worthy of historical preservation."

On December 3 the Board of Governors of the Concordia Historical Institute resolved to "authorize the purchase of the Bergt property at Frohna, Missouri, for a sum totaling \$11,500, provided a minimum of \$3,000 can be paid in cash and the remainder on a loan basis."¹⁷ Although more than \$2,000 was collected in a period of four weeks, approximately \$850 more was needed by the time December 31 arrived.

As a result the owners were approached for an extension of time until March 1, 1960. The owners

agreed to the extension of time. However, they withdrew their agreement to sell the entire farm and instead offered to sell only about 15 acres for a price to be agreed on at a meeting scheduled in Frohna on January 30.

Participants in the meeting included Carl S. Meyer, Aug. R. Suelflow, Paul W. Kluge, and me, representing the Institute; Theodore Gruenwald, his son, and Raymond I. Steffen, representing the owners; and Lester P. Golz, Eugene Popp, and Erwin Dreyer, representing the Frohna parish. The meeting resulted in an agreement to sell the Institute approximately 11½ acres of the Bergt homestead at a total cost of \$5,300 with certain provisions.

At its meeting on February 29 the Board of Governors of Concordia Historical Institute approved purchase under this agreement. It also authorized its committee to proceed with the legal and financial arrangements necessary to consummate the deal by July 1, 1960.

Public Support

During this period of negotiations the program planned for generating public support of the project, including stories in the ST. LOUIS LUTHERAN and the St. Louis GLOBE-DEMOCRAT, elicited many evidences of interest and support. The project also had its critics, including Adolph A. Vogel, a retired Lutheran minister and a 45-year resident of Altenburg, Missouri, who spoke of "unproven suppositions which are not true." In his reply to Vogel's charges, Institute Director Suelflow stated the following:

"If the claim was made 'that the Bergt home was the first school in Frohna and the oldest of Synod,' it is

most unfortunate. The committee, which has been exploring the matter of the Bergt buildings, has been fully conscious of the fact that the school, which at one time may have been conducted in the log cabin home occupied by the Bergt family, certainly does not have the distinction of being 'the oldest of Synod.'

"But neither does Altenburg, as Pastor Vogel states. The oldest school in Synod, unless anyone else can top this, was the school conducted by St. Matthew's Lutheran Church of New York City, which was established either in 1752 or 1753. Since St. Matthew's is a member of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the credit of having the first school obviously belongs to our sister congregation in New York.

"The statement intended was that the present building undoubtedly is the oldest existing structure used for parish school purposes in this part of the country. There is evidence that the historical structure was used for educational purposes. We feel that the fact that a layman of the immigration opened his home for these purposes tells a better story to the spiritual descendants than would a building which was constructed solely for educational purposes.

"Whether any of the remaining log structures were at any time used as slave quarters or not cannot be proven at this time. We do, however, know that one of the early owners of a part of the present farm, a certain Thomas Twyman, stated in his will: 'I give and devise to my beloved wife, Susan Twyman, the three negro women that she owned when I married her (viz.) Latisha, Jemima and Margaret, and the increase of said negroes if any . . . and further it is my will that the balance of the

slaves be hired out annually for the term of three years . . .'

"Of course, if the two smaller log structures were constructed in the 1890s, naturally they were built by the Bergt family many years after slavery had been abolished. The fact remains, however, as one of the earlier histories of the parish states, 'the congregation was very small . . . located among a populace that spoke only English.' These original English settlers, antedating the arrival of the Saxons, had their slaves as the will amply testified."¹⁸

Final Purchase Consummated

The remainder of 1960 was used to prepare and process the many legal documents required to consummate the purchase. Fred Drews, attorney for the Institute, prepared a purchase contract which the sellers found unacceptable. This necessitated another meeting with the owners in Frohna on September 24. Besides Drews, Carl S. Meyer, E. H. Marting, Robert Imse, and Gerhardt Kramer represented the Institute, while Theodore Gruenwald, his son, and Raymond I. Steffen represented their own interests. Edgar Dreyer, owner of property at the county road, also attended to discuss an easement deed needed to permit access to the Bergt homestead.¹⁹

As a result of this meeting, Roscoe D. Moore of Perryville, attorney for the sellers, was requested to draft another purchase contract which would be more representative of the sellers' position. Moore was also retained by the Institute to examine the Abstract of Title on the Edgar Dreyer property and to record the easement deed after its execution.

The purchase contract was finally executed on February 11, 1961, in

Moore's Perryville office. The Institute was officially represented by Arthur C. Repp, president, E. H. Marting, treasurer, and Edgar Kluge, a governor. Also present from St. Louis were Aug. R. Suelflow and I. Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Gruenwald and Mr. and Mrs. Raymond I. Steffens signed for the former owners. E. L. Bickel, pastor of Concordia Lutheran Church, Frohna, and Lester P. Golz, principal of Concordia Lutheran School, represented the local congregation.

The Restoration

Once the property was acquired by the Concordia Historical Institute and officially named the Saxon Lutheran Memorial, efforts were made to begin restoration. On June 18, 1961, the Lutheran Laymen's League of the Frohna congregation met at the site to plan a schedule for restoration. Of the many who met that day, only a few returned for the first day of actual

work on August 5, 1961. By that date, incidently, a substantial contribution from Lutheran Brotherhood, a Minneapolis-based fraternal benefit society, had made the project virtually solvent.

It soon became apparent that Eugene Popp, as chairman of the local committee, was also to become the leader of a small but faithful group of local workers. Almost every Saturday from April through November for five or six years I visited the site to direct the restoration and help with the actual labor. Often I went alone, but sometimes some of my St. Louis friends would pack up their brown-bag lunches and join me to contribute a day of work. Such helpers included Robert Imse, wood specialist; Walter Johnson, carpenter; Jack Koehr, mason; William Eifert, sheet metal worker; and Herbert Wachter, painter.

In the meantime Eugene Popp enlisted the support of Rudolph "Rudy" Braeuner, Edger Dreyer, Edwin Dreyer, William Bock, Ray-



A Perry County pioneer home with local adaptation of *Fachwerk*.

mond Feiste, Theodore Gruenwald, Lester Golz, and Theophil Popp on a regular basis, and many others on an occasional basis. While the local volunteers' attendance varied with their farming responsibilities, Eugene Popp sacrificed his farming duties almost every Saturday to direct the work, especially on the log cabins.

He and Robert Imse were well versed in log construction. Fortunately, they could draw on a large supply of used logs that had been donated to the project. To replace a deteriorated log, the wall section above it had to be jacked up and a sound log slipped into place.

Only the log supporting the attic floor joists had to be cut new. Eugene Popp took care of this himself. He cut down a tree on his property and shaped it over the winter for installation the next season.

The exterior of the residential log cabin had originally been covered with weatherboarding, while the interior walls had been finished in plaster. This came as no surprise, for log cabins were not intended to be left in their natural form. The log cabin served as a quickly constructed shelter for the pioneer and his family, but as soon as time and funds permitted, the exterior and interior were covered for better preservation, insulation, and cleanliness.

Most of the early Missouri cabins were roofed with hand-split oak shingles. This, however, gave the rain water directed to the cistern a musty taste. When sheet metal became available for roofing, it was installed on many cabins, especially on that part of the roof from which the cistern supply was taken.

While the log cabin was being

repaired and reroofed with wood shingles, the rest of the structure was being prepared as quarters for a curator/custodian. To provide modern kitchen and bath facilities, water from the community well at the edge of town was piped in about 1,000 feet by Norman Werner. The house was wired for electrical service by Edgar Dreyer. A gas-fired, warm-air heating system was installed.

The weatherboarding on the 1870 and 1912 additions had not been painted since construction of the 1912 addition. The boards were dry, loose, and curled, and the nails could be pulled out by a fingernail. A lengthy process of applying a wood preservative, a coat of oil, a prime coat of white paint, and a finish coat of lead and oil was required to restore the exterior.

Among the financial supporters of the memorial was Paul Kluge of St. Louis. Besides unrestricted financial contributions, he paid for construction of the pond and for tree landscaping.

In later years Roy Striler, a retired St. Louisan, contributed two or three days a week for two years to the project. Before he died of a heart attack he was able to complete the exterior of the barn and install a split rail fence around the property and a slat fence around the house/garden.

Dedication

By the summer of 1964 work had progressed sufficiently to hold the service of dedication. The date chosen was October 31, the 125th Anniversary of the arrival of the Saxons in Perry County.

Oliver R. Harms, president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, preached the sermon from a movable pulpit erected on the lawn between the house and barn. Emil



Scene at the dedication, 1964

Bickel, pastor of Concordia Lutheran Church, Frohna, and Aug. R. Suelflow were officiants. Robert Bergt, a collateral descendant of Lina Bergt, brought the Concordia Seminary Cantata Chorus and Brass Choir from St. Louis to enhance the service.

It was a great day for rejoicing! The many years of dedicated effort by so many had resulted in preserving an important part of America's Lutheran heritage.

Walk-in History Book

The two log cabins, the grainery, and the barn are currently used for museum exhibit purposes. They contain thousands of household articles and farming implements used by the immigrants, including many home-made in the area. There is no admission fee to visit the Saxon Lutheran Memorial, but contributions to this "walk-in history book" are encouraged and indeed necessary.

The memorial is supported entirely by contributions. It receives no financial support from the Missouri Synod. A biennial bus tour, spon-

sored by the Institute and eligible for matching funds from the Aid Association for Lutherans, is one of the big money raisers, especially because all the food for the noon meal served in the Concordia School Hall in Frohna is donated by members of the parish.

On weekends during the tourist season, the memorial is staffed by local volunteer guides. On special occasions the hostesses dress in period costumes retrieved from their own attics. During 1977 a total of 27 bus loads of out-of-town guests, some from as far away as Fairmont, Minnesota, visited the memorial. Arrangements for a country-style noon meal can be made with either Concordia Lutheran Church in Frohna or Trinity Lutheran Church in Altenburg.

Curators

Part of the main Memorial residence is assigned as living quarters to the curator/custodian, who serves on a two-year contractual basis. In addition to free rent and utilities, the curator is provided with Blue Cross/Blue Shield

coverage, but receives no salary. He also receives 10% of all sales of materials provided by the Institute. A popular item is *Heritage of Cooking*, a collection of immigrant cooking and baking recipes, originally printed in 1965 and currently in its fourth printing.²⁰

To date three curator/custodians have served the Memorial. The first, Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Benaka, a lay couple, arrived in October 1964 but soon found the position not to their liking. At the end of summer 1965 they returned to their former home in southwest Missouri.

Next to serve were the Rev. and Mrs. Waldemar T. Goehring, who retired from the parish ministry to assume the post in April 1966. Unfortunately, Mrs. Goehring later fell and injured her hip. As a result the Goehrings did not renew their two-year contract, and retired to Perryville instead, where Mr. Goehring died on January 16, 1975.

The third and current curator family is the Rev. and Mrs. T. C. Predoehl. They also retired from the parish ministry after having last served dual congregations in Wisconsin. The Predoehls have completed eight years in service at the Memorial and are now in their fifth two-year contract. Since June 1, 1970, Rev. Predoehl has also served as interim pastor at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Wittenberg, Missouri.

A Living Reminder

What some local residents wanted to bulldoze into the valley is today a living reminder of the life and work of an early immigrant group. The complex of buildings erected from the 1830s to 1913 looked unsalvageable in 1958. Today, however, they are a historical attraction that each year brings about 4,000 visitors to see and live the history still evident in Frohna, Altenburg, and Wittenberg, Missouri, all towns related to the birth of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

The Saxon Lutheran Memorial is still unfinished. A prime need is a Visitors Center that can provide a place for orientation and space for public restrooms and a gift shop. If built large enough, this center could also serve as a covered outdoor museum for larger agricultural equipment now rusting in the open.

A total of about \$20,000 and thousands of hours in volunteer work have brought the Memorial to its current stage. But as many visitors will agree, the money and time was well spent. For the Memorial now stands as a credit to the East Perry County area, the State of Missouri, and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Notes

1. According to the Abstract of Title, Patents and Wills, some of the early owners held slaves on the property. Evidence indicates that either one or both of the small log cabins still existing may have been used as slave quarters prior to the arrival of the Saxons.
2. Aug. R. Suelflow, progress report letter to Edgar W. Kluge dated February 24, 1959.
3. According to the gravestone in the Frohna cemetery, Lina Bergt was born on December 9, 1877. So the one-room cottage added for the newlyweds in the 1870s could have been

for her parents.

4. Both her legs were so swollen she could not get around, and there was so much water in her lungs that she could not lie down. Therefore she spent most of her time in a rocking chair.
5. The Grace Crawford nursing home in Perryville was closed by the State of Missouri after a nursing home in Warrenton, Missouri, was destroyed by fire with the loss of many lives.
6. Lillian Zindell became acquainted with Lina Bergt during her stay in the newly opened Perry County Memorial Hospital in Perryville.
7. Aug. R. Suelflow, progress report letter to Edgar W. Kluge, dated February 24, 1959.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. Van Ravenswaay, letter to Dr. Suelflow dated October 13, 1958.
11. Aug. R. Suelflow, progress report letter to Edgar W. Kluge, dated February 24, 1959.
12. Minutes, Board of Governors, Concordia Historical Institute, January 26, 1959, p. 2.
13. Gerhardt Kramer, letter to CHI dated March 9, 1959.
14. Aug. R. Suelflow, letter dated March 13, 1959.
15. Theodore Gruenwald and Raymond I. Steffens, letter to Aug. R. Suelflow dated October 14, 1959.
16. Seven chartered buses were used. Several more were needed to accommodate the requests for reservations, but no more were available in the St. Louis area because of the Missouri University—Air Force Academy football game scheduled in Columbia, Missouri.
17. Minutes, Board of Governors, Concordia Historical Institute, December 3, 1958, p. 2.
18. A reply to Vogel by Aug. R. Suelflow.
19. A few years later, Edgar Dreyer deeded to the Institute an 82'5"-wide strip of land containing the access road to the memorial property. Ultimately the Institute deeded this and the remaining stretch of access road to Perry County for maintenance purposes.
20. Available for \$3 plus 50 cents postage and handling from Concordia Historical Institute, 801 De Mun Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63105. This publication was edited by the author with the assistance of Ernst Hiller. All profits accrue to the Saxon Lutheran Memorial's operations fund.