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## **Secondhand Memories: The Springfield Class of 1942**

**Cameron A. MacKenzie II**

My father—the original Cameron A. MacKenzie—was a great storyteller, and one of his favorite subjects was Concordia Theological Seminary, which he attended from 1935 to 1942 when it was located in Springfield, Illinois. So when ideas for celebrating the seminary’s 175th anniversary (2021) were being solicited, I thought it would be entertaining and perhaps instructive to resurrect his stories along with recollections from other offspring of members of the class of ’42. My fellow recollectors are the children of my father’s classmates: Charles Looker,<sup>1</sup> Frank Pies,<sup>2</sup> and Edward Werner,<sup>3</sup> as well as my own brother and sister.<sup>4</sup> Without them, this project would have been impossible.

Moreover, it is also important here at the outset to realize that the stories related here are just that—stories, and secondhand ones at that. They are not just made up, of course, but memories are fallible. Moreover, I have not tried to establish the accuracy of each and every one of them, although from time to time I have run across primary sources that confirm the things that our fathers told us. More importantly, I have provided historical background to the stories, or, to put it another way, I have used our memories of their stories as a stage upon which to present the seminary’s story during the same period of time.<sup>5</sup>

First of all, there is the year that it all began, 1935. And one of my father’s stories about the seminary during that year turned out to be completely accurate; namely, that at its convention in the summer of that year, the Missouri Synod decided to close the Springfield seminary. But the vote was so close—266 in favor, 265 opposed—that two days later, they took up the question again and reopened the seminary, this time by a vote of 283 to 256. Springfield was back in business—at least

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<sup>1</sup> David and Mark Looker.

<sup>2</sup> Frank Pies II.

<sup>3</sup> Kathy Werner Graumann, Rachel Werner Little (niece), Priscilla Werner Jurkovich, Timothy Werner, Dan Werner, Ruth Werner Stuhr, Paul Werner (deceased), and Rhoda Werner Thorell.

<sup>4</sup> Ross and Jean MacKenzie.

<sup>5</sup> In what follows, I have distinguished between what is a “story” and what is based on either primary or reliable secondary sources.

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for a while. Serious efforts to close the school occurred again at the synodical conventions of 1941 and 1944. So the class that entered in the fall of 1935 spent their seminary years at an institution that might not make it to their graduation.<sup>6</sup> But it did.

So what was going on? Why was Springfield's future so uncertain? From one perspective, the answer was rather simple: the Depression. The economic situation of these years affected the seminary in many different ways. Salaries were cut,<sup>7</sup> funds for a new administration building kept failing to arrive, and, worst of all, graduates could not find calls. And that was true of St. Louis, too.

In the first couple of years of the Depression, the synod did all right in placing the candidates produced by the seminaries. Although there had been a surplus of twelve (out of 136) in 1930,<sup>8</sup> the very next year, *The Lutheran Witness* reported that of the candidates available (including those from the previous year), all had been taken care of but one.<sup>9</sup> But in 1932, the bottom dropped out: There were no calls for 110 candidates (out of 167 graduates). And it got worse. The synodical convention of that year made it mandatory that after completing their second year, all seminary students had to give up their studies for a year in order to get some experience in church work. While it may have slowed down the accumulation of excess candidates, that decision certainly did not end it. By 1935, there were about 300 of them,<sup>10</sup> and about 350 by 1939.<sup>11</sup>

At that time, St. Louis Seminary President Ludwig Fuerbringer, writing in *Der Lutheraner*, the synod's German-language counterpart to *The Lutheran Witness*, bemoaned not only the glut of candidates but also the breakdown of the system used before the Depression. Calls would be gathered throughout the year and then each spring candidates would be matched up with places according to abilities and needs. Now, complained Fuerbringer, men were graduating without calls and then working at jobs in the church, for example, teaching or assisting pastors, until a pastoral position arose to which they were then called because they were locally available

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<sup>6</sup> For the numerous attempts to close the seminary through the course of its more than one hundred years in Springfield, see Erich H. Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets: The Anatomy of a Seminary 1846–1976* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989), 168–183.

<sup>7</sup> Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets*, 144–145; Walter A. Baepler, *A Century of Grace: A History of the Missouri Synod 1847–1947* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), 307–308, who indicates that in 1932, the Board of Directors imposed a 25 percent reduction in salaries for all synodical employees, including professors. Nonetheless, in spite of this and other cost-saving measures, the synodical debt was well over a million dollars by October of that year.

<sup>8</sup> *The Lutheran Witness* 49 (June 10, 1930): 199.

<sup>9</sup> *The Lutheran Witness* 50 (June 9, 1931): 203.

<sup>10</sup> Baepler, *A Century of Grace*, 277.

<sup>11</sup> Ludwig Fuerbringer, *Der Lutheraner* 95 (September 26, 1939): 327–329.

and/or someone knew them.<sup>12</sup> This was still pretty much the case in 1942, when after graduation, my father returned to his home in Detroit. At first, he did supply preaching, and then he taught school at a parish which, a few months later, called him to assist a much-his-senior pastor. He was ordained in February 1943.<sup>13</sup>

Given the excess number of seminary graduates already accumulating by 1935, a decision to close Springfield made some sense. But there were also reasons not to do so, and one of these was maintaining a way into the ministry for men who were “more mature” and had a “distinctive life experience,”<sup>14</sup> presumably different from the typical seminary student of the time who had begun to study for the ministry when just thirteen or fourteen years old. It is important to remember that by 1935, the great majority of those who were entering the ministry of the Missouri Synod began their preparation with six years of pre-seminary education (equivalent today to high school and two years of college) at one of several prep schools that stretched from Bronxville, New York, to Portland, Oregon, before attending the seminary in St. Louis for three years (plus, of course, that mandatory year off in the middle).<sup>15</sup>

But Springfield was different. It accepted older students<sup>16</sup> into a seven-year program (three pre-seminary and three seminary years, plus that one year off doing church work that today we call “vicarage”)—and it survived the crisis of 1935. Therefore, my father and eleven others entered the seminary in the fall of that year.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Fuerbringer, *Der Lutheraner* 95: 327–329.

<sup>13</sup> The October 1942 issue of *The Springfielder* reported that five men had permanent calls and three more were either “stationed at” or “had charge of” congregations, six had temporary assignments as assistants or teachers, two were preparing for mission work in China, and one was doing supply work in Detroit. The last mentioned was my father. See “Class of 1942,” *The Springfielder* 6, no. 1 (October 1942): 11. According to *Personnel Records of the Clergy of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Both Active and Inactive* (St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Statistical Bureau, 1964) Microfilm 474 in CTSFW library, Charles Looker was ordained on June 27, 1943; Frank Pies in June 1942 (at the Convention of the Finnish National Ev. Lutheran Church); and Edward Werner on August 16, 1942.

<sup>14</sup> Ludwig Fuerbringer, reporting in *Der Lutheraner* 91 (1935): 232, said that among the arguments in favor of Springfield was that it was “jetzt noch wünschenswert und nötig sei, namentlich für Studenten in reiferem Alter und mit besonderer Lebensführung.”

<sup>15</sup> You can see just how “regular” the St. Louis way was into the ministry from the number of graduates at each seminary—1930: SL 111, Sp 26; 1931: SL 141, Sp 22; 1932: SL 138, Sp 29; 1933: SL 63, Sp 20; 1934: SL 110, Sp 23; and 1935: SL 153, Sp 11. These numbers come from the *Statistical Year-Book of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States*, 1930: 176; 1931: 178; 1933: 168; *The Lutheran Witness* 51: 212, 230; 52: 216; 53: 245; 54: 220, 258; and *Der Lutheraner* 89: 214.

<sup>16</sup> The 1935–1936 *Catalog*, 14–15, says applicants must be between 18 and 25 and must have completed two years of high school or else otherwise demonstrate “mental maturity sufficient to meet this standard.”

<sup>17</sup> According to Charles Looker’s “Retrospect,” *The Springfielder* 5, no. 8 (May–June 1942): 12. The 1935–1936 *Catalog*, 7, lists two additional students but footnotes one as “Left the institution.” The other is missing from the listing published in the 1936–1937 *Catalog*, 16.

Of those twelve, seven graduated in 1942 along with ten additional men who had joined the class along the way. They came from different parts of the country, of course, but apparently all were raised as Lutherans<sup>18</sup> with the exception of my father, who was only partly raised as a Lutheran. His father was a nominal Presbyterian and his mother a Roman Catholic who, however, sent her son to a Lutheran day school in Detroit. He persisted in his Catholicism all through grade school, but with his mother dead, his father indifferent, and the Lutherans basing their teachings on the Bible while the Catholics did not even try to, he formally joined the Lutheran Church in June 1935,<sup>19</sup> and within a few months, upon the advice of his pastor, was off to Springfield.

Well, not quite. One of his stories was that he spent a week at the prep school in Fort Wayne, where he was supposed to start high school all over again but this time learn the necessary languages. This meant that my father, who turned nineteen in the summer of '35, was going to classes with youngsters just out of grade school. Furthermore, Fort Wayne was organized as a military academy so that Dad was supposed to take orders from the "officer" who ran their dorm room—a lad some years younger. And he could not take it. The president of Fort Wayne suggested he go to Springfield, so he did. Two of the three others whose secondhand memories I am depending on also had brief encounters with prep schools—one with Winfield, Kansas, but being away from home as a young ninth grader was a bit too much<sup>20</sup>; and another with Milwaukee, but being taught in German was way too much.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, prompted by their pastors, they still hoped to become pastors, and the Springfield system let them try.

Another member of the class of 1942 entered the seminary in 1937. This was Joseph Werner, the cousin of Edward. The story of how he decided to come is quite extraordinary but again demonstrates the capacity of Springfield to accept men as prospective pastors whose path to the seminary was an unusual one. According to the Werner recollections, Joe Werner was fixing his car one day when the jack gave way and he was pinned under the car for hours, hardly able to breathe. He prayed

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<sup>18</sup> This is an argument from silence. During the school year 1941–1942, the student journal *The Springfielder* published a paragraph or so on each of that year's prospective graduates. Only with respect to my father (5, no. 4 [January, 1942]: 4) do the descriptions include anything about a non-Lutheran background.

<sup>19</sup> According to his diary, my father's confirmation took place on June 6, 1935. He kept a small pocket diary for some of his seminary years. It is now in the possession of my brother, Ross MacKenzie, of Dearborn, Michigan. The entries are brief and only occasional; nonetheless, they sometimes give us a little insight into what was going on in his life at the seminary as will become evident later in this paper.

<sup>20</sup> Werner recollections.

<sup>21</sup> Pies recollections.

fervently and ended up making a promise that if God would help him, Joe would dedicate the rest of his life in service to him. Right after that prayer was uttered, Joe's sister found him, and immediately after being rescued, he called his cousin to ask about getting into the seminary. Springfield was open to men like Joe, and after graduation, he accepted a call to a small church bordering the Winnebago Indian Reservation in Walthill, Nebraska, where he served his Lord all forty-three years of his ministry.<sup>22</sup>

The Springfield years were good ones for my father. He spent six years on campus and formed several fast friendships.<sup>23</sup> The Lutheranism that he took into his ministry of thirty-two years was that which he learned at Springfield. But it was a much different institution from what it has now become. For example, both students and teachers spent much more time in the classroom than they do today. For first-year students, the 1935–1936 *Catalog* prescribed twenty-four contact hours a week.<sup>24</sup> More than six years later, the 1941–1942 student journal *The Springfielder* reported that second-year seminary students were still spending twenty-three hours in class each week (down from twenty-four in the first semester) and post-vicarage students only eighteen (but with lots of term papers).<sup>25</sup>

My father had a rather strange story about the seminary curriculum in his second year. The school changed its program. Now students had to have two years of high school before they could enter.<sup>26</sup> They would no longer have three years of pre-seminary and three of seminary. They would now have four years (freshman through senior), a year of vicarage, and then a graduate year. As my father remembered it, however, the changes meant that *his* class had to do both the new and the old curriculum in their second year. Personally, I was never clear as to what exactly this meant. Even so, the May–June issue of the 1942 *Springfielder* included a

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<sup>22</sup> In addition to the Werner recollections, see also Joseph Werner's obituary online: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/13034400/joseph-george-werner>. Accessed November 22, 2020.

<sup>23</sup> The Werner recollections included this comment and anecdote (in which I played an unwitting role), "Friendships forged at the seminary were cherished throughout life. On our parents' honeymoon in April 1947, our father stopped to visit his good seminary friend, Cameron MacKenzie, and to introduce to him his beautiful and talented new bride, Luetta Grotelueschen Werner. At the time of their visit, Pastor MacKenzie's wife was pregnant with their son, Cameron, who is now professor at the seminary."

The offspring of all four of my "storytellers" have made the same observation about friendships forged at Springfield. But my own father also remembered that one member of his class told him on graduation day that he hoped he would never see any of his classmates again!

<sup>24</sup> 1935–1936 *Catalog*, 11–14. This figure does not include choral singing or Missionary Society, both of which were also required.

<sup>25</sup> *The Springfielder* 5, no. 5 (February 1942): 5.

<sup>26</sup> That would change again in 1941 when high school graduation or its equivalent were required for admission. See Walter A. Baepler, *A Century of Blessing, 1846–1946* (Springfield, Ill: Concordia Theological Seminary, n.d.), 35.

“Retrospect” by Charles Looker on the experience of his class during that year that verified what my father had recalled: “1937 found the class still intact . . . despite the rigors of having taken two years in one.”<sup>27</sup>

But not only the students were kept busy attending class. Faculty likewise spent many hours in the classroom. In 1936–1937, for example, the regular faculty averaged nineteen or twenty classroom hours a week, except for the homiletics professor who averaged only sixteen. Even the president was scheduled to teach eight hours a week.<sup>28</sup>

Remember, too, that professors were covering many subjects, both pre-seminary and seminary, and that there were far fewer teachers than would be true today. The 1935–1936 *Catalog* lists eight professors, including the president, plus one assistant.<sup>29</sup> The May–June 1942 issue of *The Springfielder* pictures *nine* faculty, now including a Finnish professor, plus one assistant. Of the eight from 1935, only two were different—H. B. Hemmeter had replaced H. A. Klein as president, and Clarence Spiegel<sup>30</sup> had replaced F. E. Mayer.<sup>31</sup> The 1938–1939 *Catalog* indicates the variety of subjects being taught by various professors. Walter Baepler,<sup>32</sup> for example, taught all the undergraduate English courses and the Humanities course, and at the seminary level, all the church history courses. Martin Coyner<sup>33</sup> taught all the undergraduate science courses, but Greek and exegesis at the seminary level. The

<sup>27</sup> C. M. Looker, “Retrospect,” *The Springfielder* 5, no. 8 (May–June 1942): 13.

<sup>28</sup> “Courses Taught 1936–37,” 1937–1938 *Catalog*, 14.

<sup>29</sup> 1935–1936 *Catalog*, 5.

<sup>30</sup> Spiegel served at Springfield as a professor and (later) counselor to married students from 1938 to 1975. Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets*, 218. According to the Pies recollections, Spiegel taught the Lutheran Confessions to Frank Pies and about thirty years later to Frank Pies II and recalled to the latter his “pleasant associations with your devout father.” Like Pies, Spiegel was very concerned about Christian outreach, communicating the gospel to those who had not yet heard it. Pies himself was quite active in the seminary’s Mission Society.

<sup>31</sup> *The Springfielder* 5, no. 8 (May–June 1942): 28.

<sup>32</sup> Baepler came to Springfield in 1936, was chosen president in 1953, and died while still in office in 1958. *Christian Cyclopedia*, s.v. “Baepler, Walter August,” <http://cyclopedia.lcms.org/display.asp?t1=B&word=BAEPLER.WALTERAUGUST>. Accessed March 12, 2021. He was one of my father’s favorite teachers. They had a common interest in history, and Baepler had served many years in Canada before coming to Springfield. Baepler was also faculty advisor for *The Springfielder*, in which my father was heavily involved. My father’s diary also indicates that Baepler was friendly and considerate. All this made a powerful impression on him when Baepler joined the faculty early in 1936. See MacKenzie diary entries for January 20, January 21, March 13, March 19, April 16, 1936; and April 29, 1937.

<sup>33</sup> Coyner taught at Springfield from 1928 to 1960. Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets*, 218. See his obituary at <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/123096222/martin-henry-coyner>. Accessed March 12, 2021.



other exegete, Frederick Wenger,<sup>34</sup> taught German to the undergraduates. This was also true of Walter Albrecht,<sup>35</sup> who taught dogmatics as well as German. The homiletics professor, Richard Neitzel,<sup>36</sup> taught only at the seminary level, but in addition to preaching he also taught catechetics, methods, philosophy, logic, psychology, and missions.<sup>37</sup>

The quality of instruction was not always the best. This was unfortunate since one goal of the curriculum was to equip students for teaching, because, as the Catalog put it, “many of our graduates must teach school also.”<sup>38</sup> One professor was remembered for conducting class simply by reading the textbook during the entire period, pausing from time to time only to say, “Underline that last sentence I read.”<sup>39</sup> Another man (or was it the same?) was so oblivious to what was going on in the classroom that students in the back got away with cooking and consuming an entire meal.<sup>40</sup>

Still, there were several professors whom the men clearly respected. One of them was Professor Richard Neitzel, the homiletics professor. These Springfield men became good preachers, and Neitzel was responsible for their training. My father’s diary for 1939 records what may have been his first experience at preaching publicly. In January, the men drew lots to determine the order in which they would preach. Werner and Looker drew lots one and two respectively; my father was number sixteen and did not get his turn until May 10 (Pies’s turn came in April). Apparently, the men would be preaching not only in front of Neitzel and their own class but also the “senior” class<sup>41</sup> since my father comments in his diary that the preaching of one of his classmates had been criticized too harshly by the seniors.

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<sup>34</sup> Wenger taught at Springfield from 1923 to 1960. Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets*, 218. See his obituary at <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/61037221/frederick-samuel-wenger>. Accessed March 12, 2021.

<sup>35</sup> Albrecht joined the faculty in 1927 and remained active until his death in 1961. Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets*, 218. See his obituary at [https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/139811196/walter-william\\_frederick-albrecht](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/139811196/walter-william_frederick-albrecht). Accessed March 12, 2021.

<sup>36</sup> Neitzel taught at Springfield from 1918 until his death in 1951. Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets*, 218. See his obituary at <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/83465793/richard-c.-neitzel>. Accessed March 12, 2021.

<sup>37</sup> 1938–1939 *Catalog*, 14.

<sup>38</sup> 1935–1936 *Catalog*, 3. By the time the seminary was celebrating its hundredth anniversary, its Catalog was stating that its graduates met the requirements for an Illinois elementary school certificate (1945–1946 *Catalog*, 10–11). See also Baepfer, *A Century of Blessing*, 36.

<sup>39</sup> My father’s *Triglotta* (the Book of Concord in three languages that was a synodical standard for many years) from his seminary years is heavily underlined. In fact, he himself used that same technique (along with a lot of discussion, however) when teaching catechism class to prospective confirmands.

<sup>40</sup> Looker recollections.

<sup>41</sup> In 1938–1939, the senior class would be the graduating class of 1941. My father’s class was the “junior” class in 1938–1939.

The day before it was his turn, my father submitted his manuscript to Neitzel. At this point, his diary records the following, “Practised [*sic*] sermon twice. Gave copy to Prof. Neitzel. Preached to Riedel. (heard his) *et* later to Charlie Looker, Schmiede, et Winter.” Then, on the day of, “Arose at 6:30 a.m.<sup>42</sup> Preached sermon to Rodenbeck at 7:30 a.m. At 10:15 A.M. prepared to preach. Classmates wished me well. Mounted rostrum at 10:20, preached, finished at 10:37.” Apparently all that practice paid off, for the entry goes on to record what look like favorable comments from his listeners, “Good sermon, interesting, conversational delivery, pleasant voice.”<sup>43</sup> He was off to a good start.

Edward Werner recalled a quirk in the professor’s own homiletical style that provoked an amusing response from his students.<sup>44</sup> It seems that Neitzel began a demonstration of good homiletical style with the words, “This is how you preach a sermon.” But before he actually began, he took out his handkerchief and blew his nose. So, when it was their turn, every man in the class dutifully mimicked his professor by taking out his handkerchief and blowing his nose before proceeding. Obviously a prank, but the professor got a chuckle out of it, too.

Neitzel could also be tough, especially with unethical behavior. One recollection concerned a student who feigned fainting in the midst of his sermon in order to conceal his lack of preparation. It did not work, and Neitzel had him removed from class.<sup>45</sup> On another occasion, a student stunned his classmates by preaching a really good sermon. Unfortunately for the student, he stunned Professor Neitzel also. The professor recognized it as one that had been written by someone else. That student, too, was removed from class.<sup>46</sup>

It is not exactly clear to me under what conditions the seminary would expel a student, but they did do so, at least in 1935–1936. The catalog for that year footnotes a student’s name with “expelled.” Still another was listed as “dismissed.”<sup>47</sup> Speaking of discipline, one of my father’s earliest memories of Springfield had to do with a school assembly in which one of the students made a public apology for violating the rule against getting engaged or married before graduation. I do not recall, however, my father’s commenting on what happened next. Perhaps he did not

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<sup>42</sup> That in itself shows how important the event was to him. He was notorious for staying up late and *not* getting up early. Another of my recollections is that he once received a standing ovation from his fellow students for showing up in the dining hall for breakfast.

<sup>43</sup> MacKenzie diary entries for January 6, April 19, April 27, May 9, and May 10, 1939.

<sup>44</sup> Werner recollections. The recollection did not include the name of the homiletics professor, but since Neitzel was the only regular teacher of the subject, it was most likely he.

<sup>45</sup> Pies recollections.

<sup>46</sup> MacKenzie recollections.

<sup>47</sup> 1935–1936 *Catalog*, 6–7.

know. But, on the basis of what I came across in the seminary archives, it is possible that he may have been permitted to graduate but was not recommended for a call.<sup>48</sup>

In a case like this, the faculty clearly took the initiative, but apparently, lesser infractions of the rules were punished by a student disciplinary committee. In March 1939, my father's diary records a prank that went awry, as a result of which he had to wash dishes for a week.<sup>49</sup> A disciplinary council consisting of three fellow students imposed the penalty. I remember my father saying that such punishments were known as *Strafarbeit* ("punishment-work").<sup>50</sup>

Going away to school is challenging for young people for many reasons, including roommates. Although my father did not have a lot to say about his roommates in the first year, it certainly was an odd mix: my father, an anglophile with strong family ties to Canada, a native German, born in Budapest, and, as my father used to put it, "a full-blooded Winnebago Indian." The student body was, of course, mostly German American,<sup>51</sup> but there were also a few Slovaks and Finns, each group from a church body with which the Missouri Synod was in fellowship. In fact, in 1938, in agreement with the Finnish National Evangelical Lutheran Church, Springfield added a Finnish professor to the faculty, Alexander Monto. But it was not only his ethnicity that distinguished him from his colleagues. He was also a layman with academic degrees from the University of Chicago and had been a superintendent of schools in the Philippines before coming to Springfield.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> The Looker recollections contain essentially the same story. In looking through the correspondence of seminary President H. B. Hemmeter in 1936, I came across what might be the "rest of the story"—the case of a student who had apologized for getting married and had graduated, but had not been recommended for a call. He wanted to be recommended for a call and his home pastors were pleading his case, but Hemmeter reported that the faculty said no. The pastors then asked to talk personally with the faculty about it, but unfortunately, I did not come across any additional material pertaining to this case. However, the *Personnel Records of the Clergy of the LCMS* indicate that the student was later ordained (March 20, 1938) at his home church almost four years after graduating. Apparently, the faculty changed their mind. Of course, it is possible that this student and the one remembered by my father and Charles Looker were not the same man. See letter from M. Wagner and Alvin E. Wagner (Forest Park, Illinois) to H. B. Hemmeter, October 1, 1936, and Hemmeter's two responses of October 17 and December 2, 1936.

<sup>49</sup> March 2, 1939.

<sup>50</sup> My father's diary has several references to doing work around campus (most from his first year), and, as I recall it, such labor was a routine part of student life and not punishment for infractions of the rules. See his entries for January 6, January 15, January 18, January 22, February 8, March 20, May 16, and June 6, 1936; February 6 and March 20, 1937; and February 8, 1939.

<sup>51</sup> Technically, that was not true of Frank Pies. Biologically, he was Polish and Irish, but when very young, he had been adopted and raised by German Lutherans.

<sup>52</sup> Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets*, 149; and H. B. Hemmeter, *The Springfielder* 2, no. 1 (October 1938): 9. Monto taught at Springfield from 1938 to 1960. Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets*, 218. See also <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/183041216/alexander-monto>. Accessed March 12, 2021.

As it turned out, the presence of Finnish students proved especially providential for Frank Pies, who became friends with the Finns. In fact, as an upperclassman he helped Gerhard Aho (class of 1945) with sermon outlining. Years later, Gerhard Aho would join the faculty as a professor of homiletics.<sup>53</sup> More importantly, after graduating, Pies was invited by Gerhard's father, Gustaf Aho, then president of the Finnish Church, to serve in that church body. Of course, it meant mastering Finnish, but he did it. His wife probably helped because she was a Finnish woman from Calumet, Michigan.<sup>54</sup>

Perhaps the biggest challenge for my father and many of his fellow entering students in 1935 was language, the German language. In 1937, *The Springfielder* reported that "few students here today have a speaking knowledge of German; hence, English is now the principal medium used for all instruction."<sup>55</sup> But two years earlier, German was still the primary language in several classes even though many (most?) did not really understand it. Perhaps it was the class of 1935 that finally provoked the change. Of the four students whose memories I am relying on, only Edward Werner was fluent in German—reading, writing, and speaking. He used it extensively and effectively for many years ministering to Missouri Synod Lutherans for whom it was still their mother tongue.

The others were not so fortunate, although by the end of their Springfield years, they, too, were capable of preaching and praying in German. That was one of the things they had *learned* by the time they graduated, but that first year was pretty bad. Charles Looker used to say that if the seminary had not changed to English the next year, he would have left.<sup>56</sup> These students would sit through classes in which they understood little or nothing. Then later in the day or evening, upperclassmen would tutor them in English. My father recalled especially his experience of learning Latin

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In November 1941, *The Springfielder* (5, no. 2:10–11) indicated that a few students were meeting regularly to develop their skills in Spanish and others in Finnish.

<sup>53</sup> Gerhard Aho taught at the seminary from 1960 to 1987. See Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets*, 218; and David P. Scaer, "Gerhard Aho," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (October 1987): 243–244.

<sup>54</sup> Pies recollections. Pies was pastor at Salem National Evangelical Lutheran Church in Detroit from 1943 until his death in 1978. Salem was a congregation in the Finnish Synod that merged with the Missouri Synod in 1964. See the *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, s.v. "Finnish Lutherans in America," online edition. [http://cyclopedia.lcms.org/display.asp?t1=f&word=FINNISH\\_LUTHERANSINAMERICA](http://cyclopedia.lcms.org/display.asp?t1=f&word=FINNISH_LUTHERANSINAMERICA). Accessed November 23, 2020.

<sup>55</sup> "Our Modern Curriculum," *The Springfielder* 1, no. 1 (November 1937): 4.

<sup>56</sup> Looker recollections. In spite of his challenges with the German language during that first year, Charles Looker actually ministered to German prisoners of war at the end of World War II when he was pastor of St. Mark Lutheran Church in Provo, Utah. One of those prisoners returned home and became a pastor himself. He wrote a letter of thanks to Charles Looker for his pastoral care during his internment.

by means of German when he understood neither. After Latin class had met a few times, one of his classmates told him that the professor was getting upset with him for never responding when called on. But when my father protested that he never had been called on, his friend answered, “Well, who do you think he means when he says, ‘Herr Máckenzie?’” So the next day, when the professor said, “Herr Máckenzie,” my father did respond, but his answer was incorrect. The professor said, “Nein,” so he responded by reciting #9 and was promptly thrown out of class.<sup>57</sup>

In fact, my father became infamous for his struggles with the German language, and even I can remember his friends from Springfield days recalling his speech on “Die Katze” that was so simplistic that even Professor Baepler was doubled up from laughing so hard.<sup>58</sup> Nonetheless, as I said before, my father and his classmates who entered the seminary not knowing the language ended up being able to use German in their ministries.<sup>59</sup>

The change to English was not a simple one for the professors. In 1938, President Hemmeter felt the need to remind them that the Board of Control had mandated the move to English, so they needed to implement it fully.<sup>60</sup> Earlier in that school year, one student described what was happening in some classes, “Where the German texts are still in use, the . . . professor usually begins his lecture in German, but when he sees the blank look on our faces, he hastens to translate his statements into English.” Of course, a full solution to the language problem included providing English-language texts, and this was beginning to happen. That same student, for example, reported that Frederick Wenger was providing his students with English notes on Isaiah and 1 Corinthians.<sup>61</sup>

In systematic theology, Walter Albrecht rose to the challenge by becoming the first to translate Pieper’s *Christliche Dogmatik* into English. By 1941, his work was being mimeographed and sold by the student-run Concordia Supply Company,<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> MacKenzie recollections.

<sup>58</sup> MacKenzie diary entries for March 19, April 29, and May 1, 1936.

<sup>59</sup> Even so, German was definitely on its way out at Springfield in the 1930s. One student remarked on how cheaply German classics were selling at the book auctions: sixty cents for “a twenty-eight volume set of Luther’s Volksbibliothek.” See “E[mil]. G. J[aech]. Meditates,” *The Springfielder* 1, no. 4 (February 1938): 3.

<sup>60</sup> Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets*, 129–130.

<sup>61</sup> W. Hintz, “A Junior Seminarian’s View of ‘Our Modern Curriculum,’” *The Springfielder* 1, no. 2 (December 1937): 10.

<sup>62</sup> Each year, students assembled as the “Coetus” to choose their officers and to select colleagues whom they would pay to run the Concordia Supply Company. Vernon Harley, the manager of the company in 1937–1938, provided a brief overview of the operation in the February 1938 issue of *The Springfielder* 1, no. 4 (pp. 9–10). The company regularly advertised its wares in that journal as well. In the very first issue (November 1937, p. 14), they summarized their offerings as “typewriters, fountain pens, jewelry [!]” and listed a number of books. They also solicited books for book auctions, which they apparently held quite often. Four years later, their ad in the same

where you could buy books, snacks, and sundries as well as play ping-pong. Theodore Engelder from the St. Louis faculty purchased copies for his classes.<sup>63</sup> A few years later, however, when the synod's Centennial Anniversary Committee decided to sponsor an "official" translation, Albrecht's version was consulted but did not become the version that Concordia Publishing House still sells today. Albrecht, however, did contribute volume four of the work, the index.<sup>64</sup>

Besides the German language, the entering class of 1935 also had to deal with the tragic death of the president—or "director," as the seminary head was frequently called—in December 1935. After thirteen years in office, Henry Klein and his wife were both killed in a traffic accident.<sup>65</sup> A moving tribute to him appeared in the January 14, 1938, issue of *The Lutheran Witness*. Written by his longtime colleague at the seminary, William H. Behrens,<sup>66</sup> it described Klein as "unassuming, likable, and unaffected," a gifted churchman but one who "hated vanity and self-aggrandizement." Behrens described Klein's attitude toward the students as that "of an amiable and affectionate father" who "tried ever to bear in mind that the students were his fellow-Christians, and he would often emphasize the necessity of so considering them."<sup>67</sup> My own father, of course, had just a couple of months' acquaintance with him; but in his diary, he described him as "beloved."<sup>68</sup> I do not recall his ever saying too much about him, but I do recall his telling me that Klein's

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journal (5, no. 1 [October 1941]: 16) still listed typewriters and jewelry along with books, but now added, "toilet articles, sporting goods, confections, cold drinks, pastries, hamburgers, cigarettes, and tobacco." Nevertheless, they were selling sandwiches, hamburgers, and hot dogs in 1938, at least in connection with their book auctions. See *The Springfielder* 1, no. 4 (February 1938): 2.

<sup>63</sup> The article "Two German Classics in English," *The Springfielder* 1, no. 4 (February 1938): 2 reported that Albrecht had been working on his translation of Pieper for a year and a half. In November of 1941 (5, no. 2: 10), it commented on Engelder's order; and in December (5, no. 3: 12) of that same year, it indicated that the second edition of volume 1 was now available as well. In *The Springfielder* 5, no. 5 (February 1942): 15, the Concordia Supply Company advertised that all three volumes were available for \$3.50 a volume. Professor Albrecht, *The Springfielder* 4, no. 5 (February 1941): 10–11, himself described the work that went into it and the help he received from Professor Behrens regarding the English idiom and from students who helped with typing and proofreading (among them my father).

<sup>64</sup> "Preface" in Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 4 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950–1957), vol. 4: *Index*. Another professor who was involved in preparing materials for the quickly Americanizing Missouri Synod was Richard Neitzel. In 1938, *The Springfielder* 1, no. 5 (March 1938): 11, reported that six students were proofreading and another was helping the professor deal with correspondence having to do with the "new" catechism.

<sup>65</sup> Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets*, 145.

<sup>66</sup> Behrens taught at Springfield from 1924 until his death in 1943. *Christian Cyclopedia*, s.v., Behrens, William Henry, <http://cyclopedia.lcms.org/display.asp?t1=B&t2=e>. Accessed March 12, 2021.

<sup>67</sup> *The Lutheran Witness* 55 (January 14, 1936): 13.

<sup>68</sup> His diary entry for January 6, 1936, reads in part, "Memorial Day for our beloved president, the late director Klein."

nickname among the students was “Daddy,” and in a brief editorial published in *The Springfielder* the year after his death, the writer refers to him as “Daddy Klein.”<sup>69</sup>

Klein’s successor was H. B. Hemmeter. In September 1936, he was installed and remained in office until his retirement at the end of the 1944–1945 school year. Hemmeter also had a nickname among the students, but it wasn’t “Daddy.” It was “Blimp.” Apparently, he did not inspire the same affection as did his predecessor.<sup>70</sup> Now, of course, the students never called him “Blimp” to his face, but my father came close. He did so over the phone. Here’s the story. When the students returned after Christmas break in January 1938, they found something new in their dormitory, a phone—part of a seminary system that connected their dorm directly to Hemmeter’s office.<sup>71</sup> So a bunch of them started fooling around in the hallway, mimicking Hemmeter (mimicking professors is, I believe, still a staple of student behavior). And my father was going right along but decided to add a new twist. He picked up the new phone and said, “Hello, Blimp. How’s it going, you old . . . ?” To their surprise and to my father’s horror, Hemmeter’s voice rang out in response, “Who said that? What’s going on there, men?” Immediately, they all scattered to their rooms; and when the president himself arrived promptly to investigate, no one seemed to know anything about it.<sup>72</sup>

Incidentally, this episode occurred in the seminary dormitory, Craemer Hall. Compared to almost all the other buildings on campus, it was practically brand new. According to Heintzen, eight of the thirteen seminary buildings in use in 1935 dated back to the nineteenth century.<sup>73</sup> But Craemer Hall had been completed just six years earlier in 1929 at a cost of \$95,000. It consisted of three stories and a basement. There were nine rooms to a floor, and four students to a room with showers and lavatories on each floor, thus providing housing for 108 students in all. The

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<sup>69</sup> *The Springfielder* 1, no. 2 (December 1937): 14.

<sup>70</sup> My father’s diary (January 15, 1939) records an incident in which fellow “students made a gigantic snow replica of ‘Blimp.’”

<sup>71</sup> The dormitory was Craemer Hall. When I took a couple of summer classes at Springfield in 1975 and was staying in Craemer Hall, my father sent me a floor plan of the dormitory along with the names of his classmates written into the rooms in which they lived! The phone system is described in “Late Flashes,” *The Springfielder* 1, no. 3 (January 1938): 16.

<sup>72</sup> Pies recollections. My father used to tell a slightly less colorful version.

<sup>73</sup> Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets*, 144, 151. My father called the Springfield campus “a dump.” It was in bad shape. In his reminiscences, Clarence Spiegel recalled that when he began teaching in 1938, he “dreaded . . . to bring any of his visitors out there to show them the campus. It was just too sad of a place.” He goes on to describe deplorable conditions in some of the oldest buildings. See the transcript of *Rev. Clarence W. Spiegel Memoir* SP43 in the Archives/Special Collections in the Norris L. Brookens Library of the University of Illinois at Springfield. This is based on an interview of Spiegel conducted by Norman Langhoff in 1981.

basement included meeting rooms, a faculty and board room, a recreation room, a lecture room, piano rooms, an orchestra room, and storage space.<sup>74</sup>

Now, of course, when that many mostly young men live together, pranks and hijinks are bound to happen. Some are mainly funny. Charles Looker recalled a fellow student (probably underage) who somehow managed, at great pains and expense, to buy a bottle of whiskey. He entered the dorm with the bottle tucked into the waist of his trousers, but on his way up the stairs slipped and fell forward. When he felt something wet, he looked up and said aloud, "Please Lord, let it be blood!"<sup>75</sup>

Others pranks were not quite so funny. Frank Pies used to tell the story of one student's playing a trick on another in the dining hall. When they all stood for the prayer, the one removed the chair of the other so that when he sat down, he landed on the floor. Everyone was laughing, that is, until the man started crying out in pain. The injury was serious; he was paralyzed for life. The perpetrator was extremely grieved and begged forgiveness from his classmates. It was granted, but all learned a powerful life lesson.<sup>76</sup>

It wasn't only the students who recognized that President Hemmeter was a strong personality. Shortly after his retirement, Neitzel wrote to the man who became Hemmeter's successor as president, G. Christian Barth: "We knew that we could not get anywhere as long as our former president [Hemmeter] sat in his armchair and ruled with an iron hand."<sup>77</sup> This confirms an anecdote involving the Finnish professor, Monto, who was overheard by Frank Pies confronting the director. "Who do you think you are, God?" To which Hemmeter immediately responded, "That's right. Around here, I am God." So much for collegiality.<sup>78</sup>

On the basis of these scattered remarks, one should not conclude that Hemmeter's administration was deemed a failure by either students or faculty. Quite the contrary. In 1942, when the seminary celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of Hemmeter's ordination, the faculty thanked him for the energy with which he tackled problems, especially having to do with the physical plant: "You were always looking into the future. When one task was nearing completion you were already planning other improvements."<sup>79</sup> They went on to mention things large and small: the reconstruction and renovation of the old administration building into a new one

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<sup>74</sup> B. Selcke, "Dormitory Dedicated at Springfield Seminary," *The Lutheran Witness* 48 (June 11, 1929): 203.

<sup>75</sup> Looker recollections.

<sup>76</sup> Pies recollections.

<sup>77</sup> R. C. Neitzel to G. Chr. Barth, October 27, 1945.

<sup>78</sup> Pies recollections.

<sup>79</sup> "Congratulatory Messages," *The Springfielder* 5, no. 7 (April 1942): 3.



“with pleasant classrooms and a beautiful chapel,” as well as “the removal of unsightly barns and shacks.”<sup>80</sup>

Another of Hemmeter’s achievements was his establishment of Donation Day in 1937. Each fall, the seminary invited the women of the Central Illinois District to campus with their gifts of food and cash for the school. The turnout for the first one was about a thousand women with enormous amounts of food. *The Springfielder* reported 4,000 quarts of canned fruit; “an almost endless row” of jellies and preserves; bushels of apples, pears, and potatoes; bags of sugar and flour; sacks of vegetables and nuts; pumpkins and squashes; and over \$400 in cash. In appreciation for such generous support, the faculty wives and the women of the Springfield congregations put on a lunch for the seminary guests, and afterwards the seminary prepared a program of edifying messages, musical performances, and humorous skits. It was an enormous success and was repeated every year thereafter.<sup>81</sup>

But this also brings up the issue of food. What did the students have to say about the food? This was one of my father’s great grievances—not so much for what was donated by the ladies each year—although the dining hall served stewed tomatoes so often that he ended up hating them for the rest of his life. In *The Springfielder* (December 1936), President Hemmeter himself answered complaints about the quantity of meat being allotted to students. The director insisted that those with a sedentary lifestyle should eat less meat, not more.<sup>82</sup>

This ties in with one of my father’s criticisms—one day of the week, they had no meat at all. Instead they consumed their protein in the form of cottage cheese, made all the more “palatable” by drenching it in Karo syrup. But they did have pork roast regularly, so that should have been all right; but it was cooked and served with

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<sup>80</sup> “Congratulatory Messages,” *The Springfielder* 5, no. 7 (April 1942): 3. The entire April issue was dedicated to Hemmeter. The renovation of the administration building was quite an achievement. The synod appropriated \$179,000 at both the 1926 and 1929 conventions for a new building, but the money never arrived. The Depression arrived instead. See the 1926 *Proceedings of the Synodical Convention*, p. 38; and 1929 *Proceedings*, p. 39. Also Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets*, 151–152.

According to Raymond Witt, “The Administration Building,” *The Springfielder* 3, no. 8 (May–June 1940), 21–22, Hemmeter finally succeeded in obtaining \$30,000 for a major remodeling of the old building, which included lopping off the entire third floor and cupola but also making significant improvements in the classrooms and the chapel, including a new organ that was the responsibility of the students. For details on the organ, see the article by Frank J. Schultz in that same issue of *The Springfielder*, pp. 18–19. Earlier in 1940, Witt wrote a description of “The Chapel,” *The Springfielder* 3, no. 5 (February 1940): 3–4, that described the wretched condition of the chapel and organ before the remodeling.

<sup>81</sup> *The Springfielder* 1, no. 1 (1937–1938): 6–7. According to *The Springfielder* 5, no. 2 (November 1941): 7, my father was the chairman of that year’s Donation Day general committee.

<sup>82</sup> President Hemmeter’s statement also reprimanded students who bolted their food or gorged themselves, presumably at the expense of others. H. B. Hemmeter, “Gossip and Grub,” *The Springfielder* 1, no. 2 (December 1937): 6.

the skin, bristles and all. But my father's greatest grievance was the complete lack of variety. There was one menu for each day of the week, and that's what they had week by week for the entire year and, I suppose, year after year. But my father also recalled that at least once in response to students' requests for a little variety, Hemmeter inquired of the railroad to see if they had salvaged any canned goods that the seminary could get at a discount, and they had—hot tamales, canned hot tamales. They were terrible, but at least they added some spice to the menu.<sup>83</sup>

All four of the men whose stories I have collected had part-time jobs. Given the era, that seems natural and probably typical. In July 1935, *The Lutheran Witness* printed an announcement from the seminary that included the amount that students would have to pay for the year.<sup>84</sup> Apparently, there was no tuition, but room and board was \$104. Additional fees in the amount of \$12.50 were due at the beginning of the year (for a total of about \$2,235 in 2020 dollars).<sup>85</sup> Six years later when my father's class was beginning its final year, the expenses were \$140 for room and board and \$12.50 for additional fees. This time Hemmeter's announcement in *The Lutheran Witness* also included "sundry expenses, including books," approximately \$100 for a total of \$252.50 (or about \$4,603 in 2020 dollars).<sup>86</sup> Still no tuition, and still quite reasonable by today's standards.<sup>87</sup> My father's job was quite prosaic—stock boy at the A&P grocery store. Charles Looker worked at the Illinois State Library.<sup>88</sup> Both Frank Pies and Edward Werner worked on campus—Pies as a gardener/groundskeeper and sometime chauffeur for Hemmeter, and Werner, turning a hobby into a job, as seminary photographer.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> MacKenzie recollections, confirmed in part by references to "hot tamales," "for which even Esau would not have sold his birthright." Diogenes Dimwit [!], "The Weather," *The Springfielder* 5, no. 4 (January 1942): 12.

<sup>84</sup> *The Lutheran Witness* 54 (July 30, 1935): 274.

<sup>85</sup> This figure is based on taking \$1.00 in 1935 being equal to \$19.18 in 2020 according to the online source DollarTimes. <https://www.dollartimes.com/inflation/inflation.php?amount=1&year=1935>. Accessed November 23, 2020.

<sup>86</sup> According to the DollarTimes, \$1.00 in 1941 would equal \$18.23 today.

<sup>87</sup> *The Lutheran Witness* 60 (July 22, 1941): 258–259.

<sup>88</sup> H. H. Rogers, the Assistant State Librarian, included a brief piece in *The Springfielder* 3, no. 3 (December 1939): 5–6 that offered the resources of the Illinois State Library for students who "were digging up material for debates, talks, or sermons."

<sup>89</sup> According to the Werner recollections, Edward Werner made enough at his job to pay his seminary expenses. He also recommended photography to others in a brief article under "Our Hobbies," *The Springfielder* 1, no. 6 (April 1938): 14. My father took it up some years later in connection with his vicarage at Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Detroit.

For a small student body (109 resident students in 1935–1936; 115 in 1941–1942),<sup>90</sup> there were all kinds of groups and activities, from forensics<sup>91</sup> to fencing,<sup>92</sup> from ping-pong<sup>93</sup> to music appreciation.<sup>94</sup> There were Slovak and Finnish language clubs,<sup>95</sup> and a Student Lyceum Association.<sup>96</sup> There was also student government that involved many students and discharged numerous responsibilities.<sup>97</sup> A major

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<sup>90</sup> The 1935–1936 figures are from that year’s catalog, 6–7. The figures for 1941–1942 are from *The Springfielder* 5, no. 8 (May–June 1941–1942): 23–28.

<sup>91</sup> In October 1939, *The Springfielder* (3, no. 1:9–10) reported that the Extemporaneous Club had organized and that “debates” were “often high points of their meetings.” But in the next two school years, the reports indicate a Forensics Club (or Rostrum Club) organized for debate, especially on the national college question for the year, and looking forward to an All-Concordia Tournament in St. Louis in March. See *The Springfielder* 4, no. 3 (December 1940): 13; 5, no. 2 (November 1941): 13; and 5, no. 3 (December 1941): 15.

<sup>92</sup> Fencing was announced in the very first issue of *The Springfielder* (1, no. 1 [November 1937]:11), apparently for the first time. It was again encouraged in *The Springfielder* 2, no. 6 (March 1939): 16.

<sup>93</sup> In *The Springfielder* 1, no. 4 (February 1938): 10, the manager of the Supply Company wondered “what the students would do after meals without that ping pong table?” But in 1941, *The Springfielder* 5, no. 2 (November 1941): 13–14, refers to a tournament played on ping-pong “tables.” It looks like interest had grown. See also *Springfielder* 3, no. 2 (November 1939): 12–13.

<sup>94</sup> The Music Appreciation Club was organized in November 1940 in order to meet weekly and listen to classical music recordings. Professor Behrens, who himself had a collection of such records, commented on the composer and the piece listened to. D. Schumm, “Music Club,” *The Springfielder* 4, no. 3 (December 1940): 13.

<sup>95</sup> For the Slovaks, see *The Springfielder* 5, no. 1 (October 1941): 14; for the Finns, see *The Springfielder* 5, no. 2 (November 1941): 11.

<sup>96</sup> The March issue of the 1938 *Springfielder* 1, no. 5 (March 1938): 6 mentioned the creation of an Open Forum group that was meeting biweekly for presentations, lectures, and conversation on subjects of interest to the students. On one occasion, Pastor Paul Schulz talked about participation in civic groups and about praying with non-Lutherans or other Lutherans without unionism. Professor Behrens talked about religious conditions in Germany and Spain. A few years later, C. Schleicher reported in *The Springfielder* 4, no. 2 (November 1940): 11 about the student government’s appointment of a Lyceum committee to set up a program of presentations by synodical representatives and local professionals (doctors, journalists, radio men, and the like) as well as educational films. In 1941–1942, my father was chairman of what was then called the Student Lyceum Association. *The Springfielder* 5, no. 2 (November 1941): 10. That year they put on a musical Christmas service that included Slovak and Finnish vocalists. *The Springfielder* 5, no. 4 (January 1942): 5.

<sup>97</sup> From reading *The Springfielder*, volumes 1–5 (1937–1942), supplemented by entries from my father’s diaries (slim as they are), one can easily see that student government was responsible for much more than is true today. Officers and student council members were elected by the student body annually (assembled as the Coetus). There is a description of the election process for the student council in a letter by C. W. Brueggemann in *The Springfielder* 1, no. 7 (May 1938): 14–15. Student government was in charge of *The Springfielder* and the Concordia Supply Company; student discipline (of course, not for the most serious infractions); tending sick students; on-campus mail delivery; managing the dining hall, library, and reading room; providing an organist for chapel; organizing work details on campus; appointing managers for different sports; and raising and lowering the flag. The names of students who were filling the various offices for the school year appear on the masthead of the first issue of *The Springfielder* in 1937 and 1938 but, unfortunately, not in subsequent years. Charles Looker was on the student council in 1938. In

source of information about all the activities was the student journal *The Springfielder*, itself an important student activity.<sup>98</sup> “Published monthly by the students” of the seminary, its first issue arrived November 1937. It is not clear to me how it was funded, but my guess is that it did so fully apart from the seminary budget. It carried many advertisements from local businesses<sup>99</sup> and sold subscriptions for \$1.00 a year, directed especially to alumni. Accordingly, it regularly covered alumni news along with seminary news and bits of gossip, usually humorous. Articles and editorials covered a wide range of subjects,<sup>100</sup> and Hemmeter himself used it to share concerns and ideas with the students.<sup>101</sup> Baepler was the faculty advisor or “consulting editor” during this period. At some point during each year, the journal published pictures and biographies of the graduating class. Besides all this, issues included poetry and art, often by the students themselves.

*The Springfielder* reported extensively on extracurricular activities. As one might expect at a seminary, the Mission Society was a very active student group. According to the 1935–1936 *Catalog*, its purpose was “to fill the students with the proper missionary zeal and enthusiasm.” Meeting every Friday afternoon, it sponsored lectures and discussions on missionary work. Students themselves were encouraged to do mission work in and around Springfield. For example, the November 1937 issue of the journal reported that students were bringing the word to people at two sanitariums, the county poor farm, two homes for the aged, and the local jail. They had also canvassed Waverly, Illinois, and later two upperclassmen were holding services there. At meetings of the society, they would then discuss their experiences and talk about methods and challenges. The Mission Society also produced a half-hour radio program on the local station each Sunday evening that included a homily by faculty, pastors, or upperclassmen, and music provided by students—organ, choral, instrumental, and solo. A group that sang regularly was

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1941–1942, he was secretary-treasurer of his class. See *The Springfielder* 5, no. 3 (December 1941): 4–5. Frank Pies was class president in 1937. See *The Springfielder* 5, no. 4 (January 1942): 4.

<sup>98</sup> The masthead of the first issue (November 1937) included eight students; by May–June of 1942, that number had grown to eleven. My father was actively engaged with *The Springfielder* throughout his seminary career. He had a meditation on Christmas in its second issue, and he became news editor in 1939 and editor-in-chief in 1941.

<sup>99</sup> It carried twenty-five ads in the first issue and eighteen in the May–June issue of 1942.

<sup>100</sup> Volume 3, 1939–1940, ran a very interesting series of “biographical glimpses” on each of the faculty members.

<sup>101</sup> Hemmeter did not write in every issue of *The Springfielder* but often enough on a variety of topics. So, for example, in January 1938 (1, no. 3: 8–9), he had a list of complaints about students—everything from bad manners to skipping church. In November 1941 (5, no. 2: 3), he refuted the idea that somehow Luther was responsible for Hitler. In the last issue of every year, he included some final thoughts and a parting word to the graduating class.

called the Radio Choristers (in 1941 consisting of a dozen men and another student who directed them).<sup>102</sup>

Music was a major extracurricular activity. Besides the Choristers, there were also a seminary band and a chorus, as well as many individuals who sang or played instruments.<sup>103</sup> In the descriptions of the seventeen graduates of 1941–1942, eleven of them included some form of music in their activities. In 1941–1942, all four of my “sources” were connected with the Seminary Chorus, three of them as first tenors (Looker, Pies, and Werner<sup>104</sup>) and my father as “Publicity-Director.” By that time, Fred Precht<sup>105</sup> was in his second year at the seminary and had the chorus practicing three nights a week. Under his direction, the forty-man ensemble made several appearances round and about Springfield (including three in Chicago). In April 1942, they traveled 1,700 miles from Springfield to North Tonawanda, New York, and back again in order to present twelve concerts in eleven days. Earlier that year, the chorus performed on the Lutheran Hour, the first time ever for the chorus on a national radio station. H. W. Gockel, Assistant Executive Secretary of the Lutheran Hour, called their rendition of “Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling” one of “the highlights” of that year’s Lutheran Hour.<sup>106</sup>

Sports were also popular among the students, and the seminary provided many opportunities for competition both within the institution and with other schools and groups (e.g., the Walther League or the St. Louis seminary).<sup>107</sup> At two extremes were boxing and ping-pong, but there were students enough for each.<sup>108</sup> Students organized in different ways to play touch football.<sup>109</sup> Track is also mentioned in the

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<sup>102</sup> 1935–1936 *Catalog*, 5, and *The Springfielder* 1, no. 1 (November 1937): 5 and 5, no. 3 (December 1941): 6–7. In 1941–1942, Frank Pies was the treasurer of the Mission Society.

<sup>103</sup> In the first two volumes of *The Springfielder*, a student was listed as “organist.” Thereafter, students continued to appear prominently as organists for special occasions and services. The journal discontinued that listing, but one student, Frank J. Schulz, was the organist for special occasions at the end of 1940.

<sup>104</sup> Edward Werner also played both piano and organ. In one of his diary entries (May 5, 1936), my father recorded that he “played violin with Werner” (presumably playing the piano).

<sup>105</sup> Precht served the seminary 1940–1943, 1944–1968, and 1972–1976. LCMS Board for Communications, February 7, 2003, <https://archive.wfn.org/2003/02/msg00098.html>. Accessed March 12, 2021.

<sup>106</sup> *The Springfielder* 5, no. 1 (October 1941): 13; 5, no. 3 (December 1941): 7; 5, no. 5 (February 1942): 7; 5, no. 6 (March 1942): 7; and 6, no. 6 (March 1943): 10.

<sup>107</sup> In October 1939, *The Springfielder* 3, no. 1 (October 1939): 13–14 reported on softball games played among the students and between the seminary and the Central Illinois Public Service Co. In *The Springfielder* 4, no. 7 (April 1941): 14, the reporter promoted the upcoming baseball game against St. Louis by recalling the very narrow loss of the year before (in which “Eddie” Werner scored a run).

<sup>108</sup> According to the Werner recollections, Edward Werner was an excellent boxer. Before entering the seminary, he won the district championship in Norfolk, Nebraska, and then went on to participate in the regional tournament in Sioux City.

<sup>109</sup> See *The Springfielder* 2 (November 1938): 13; 3 (November 1939): 12; 5 (October 1941): 14.

pages of *The Springfielder*.<sup>110</sup> Some sports were taken more seriously than others in that student government took responsibility for them and appointed a manager for each. But which ones could change from year to year. Baseball, basketball, softball, and tennis continued to have managers year after year, but in 1937 so did swimming and fencing, while the very next year, both of those were gone, replaced by track and horseshoes.<sup>111</sup>

My father was not especially athletic, but his diary records his taking part in fencing a couple of times and boxing at least once.<sup>112</sup> Frank Pies was the player/manager of the softball team in his final year.<sup>113</sup> Edward Werner was an excellent athlete, and his children remember his telling them how he used to train himself on Nebraska farm roads, where running uphill made running on a level track or court very easy. On the seminary baseball team, Werner was known for his skill in stealing bases, and in basketball, he easily outran many taller players on the way to the basket. He was also on the tennis team at Springfield.<sup>114</sup>

The seminary had tennis courts and fields for softball and baseball; but they had to rent a swimming pool,<sup>115</sup> and they had no gymnasium at all. So to play basketball, participants had to scurry all over the city to find space, but somehow they managed. In 1941, for example, twenty to twenty-five students turned out for daily practice. The manager arranged with the Knights of Columbus to use their gym for four games scheduled with other schools, but for practices they looked for “any place large enough to accommodate the boys.”<sup>116</sup>

So the seminary needed a gymnasium and, indeed, this was one of Hemmeter’s goals. The first issue of *The Springfielder* cried out, “How much we miss a gym of our own!” and the next issue reported that the Board of Control had tasked the director with moving forward on the project, at an approximate cost of \$20,000. But this was one ambition for the school that Hemmeter could not achieve. Although in March of 1938 he reported optimistically about gifts and pledges of over \$5,000, he

<sup>110</sup> According to *The Springfielder* 2, no. 1 (October 1938): 12, and 5, no. 1 (October 1941): 14, the student government appointed “managers” for track in 1938 and 1941. According to *The Springfielder* 1, no. 6 (April 1938): 6, the seminary hosted the Central Illinois District Walther League on May 30, 1938, for a field day.

<sup>111</sup> *The Springfielder* 1, no. 1 (November 1937): 11, and 2, no. 1 (October 1938): 12. For other years, see also 4, no. 1 (October 1940): 4, and 5, no. 1 (October 1941): 14.

<sup>112</sup> MacKenzie diary entries from January 18, 19, and 20, 1939.

<sup>113</sup> *The Springfielder* 5, no. 1 (October 1941): 14. From *The Springfielder* 1, no. 1 (November 1937): 11, it looks as if student government was responsible for renting such facilities.

<sup>114</sup> Werner recollections.

<sup>115</sup> At least in 1939–1940, from the Knights of Columbus (*cooperatio in externis*). See “Swimming,” *The Springfielder* 3, no. 3 (December 1939): 9–10.

<sup>116</sup> “The Athlete,” *The Springfielder* 5, no. 1 (October 1941): 14.

also told of a synodical rule that prohibited the seminary's soliciting funds from anyone except its alumni and three of the synod's districts (Central Illinois and the two Iowa districts).<sup>117</sup> For at least a couple of years, the seminary catalog included a picture of the proposed gymnasium on the back cover.<sup>118</sup> But in 1941, they were still far short of the goal. *The Springfielder* reported that alumni and students were trying to raise money again. They had \$7,000, and the students had acquired pledges of \$1,500. But the gym had a new name, the Student Center Building, and a new price tag, \$50,000. It was still a long way from becoming a reality.<sup>119</sup>

When Hemmeter retired (1945) and then died (1948), it still hadn't been built. A gymnasium—the first in the seminary's more than one-hundred-year history—was finally dedicated on September 10, 1950.<sup>120</sup>

In the summer of 1935, my father had written to President Klein for information about the seminary and, in particular, whether the education there would equip him to “become a minister” or would he also have to go to St. Louis! In his response, Klein assured my father that the Springfield “course [of studies] is so arranged as to give our boys [!] all they must have in order to make them successful pastors” [emphasis original].<sup>121</sup>

And that was exactly the reason—the only reason—for the synod's establishing and maintaining Concordia Theological Seminary in Springfield, Illinois: to prepare pastors. Buildings, whether new or old, were not the main thing, nor were student activities or even classroom learning, and certainly not pranks and hijinks, even if fun to recall over and over again to your offspring. No, what mattered was ministry, pastoral ministry, faithfully preaching and teaching the gospel that people needed to hear and believe. And that was the end result of the Springfield experience for Looker, Pies, MacKenzie, and Werner, to each one of whom our Lord has already said, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”

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<sup>117</sup> *The Springfielder* 1, no. 1 (November 1937): 11; 1, no. 2 (December 1937): 13; and 1, no. 5 (March 1938): 6.

<sup>118</sup> The 1937–1938 *Catalog* and 1938–1939 *Catalog*. There may have been more, but they are not in my possession.

<sup>119</sup> Cameron A. MacKenzie, “Re: Student Center,” *The Springfielder* 5, no. 4 (January 1942): 2–3.

<sup>120</sup> Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets*, 165.

<sup>121</sup> Cameron A. MacKenzie to President H. A. Klein, August 8, 1935, and H. A. Klein to C. MacKenzie, August 10, 1935. Originals in seminary archives.