

THE LUTHERAN (MISSOURI SYNOD) CHURCHES  
IN LEE COUNTY, TEXAS

(Continued)

By Rev. G. Birkmann, Retired.

The Ebenezer Church  
at Manheim.

This is virtually the same organization as the Ebenezer church founded 1876 on San Antonio Prairie. For it happened so that after the Lincoln church was well under way, the older Ebenezer church or congregation saw that it would be best for them to change the location and build a new church and parsonage some three and one half miles southwest in the direction towards Paige, where the church would be more in the center of the members.

Pastor Jacob Kaspar had at the end of 1889 accepted a call to Cypress, Harris County, and the Ebenezer congregation was temporarily served by Rev. L. Ernst of the nearby St. John's church, Lincoln. Pastor Ernst advised and directed Ebenezer in their new plan of selling their old property and acquired another site and build a new home for their services at Manheim. Mr. Theo. Tonn gives me a list of names of members at that time. They were in part: Mr. Aug. Birnbaum, Henry Koslan, Theo. Tonn, Aug. Behrendt, Karl Schulz, Aug. Meissner, Andr. Kieschnick, and Aug. Pihlack. The new church which included some rooms for the pastor and his family was dedicated in the fall of 1890. Revs. G. Birkmann and Ernst preaching, and Rev. Wenzel was the first pastor of Ebenezer in Manheim. Wenzel had joined our Synod only a short while before. He says in a report to Synod that there were in his congregation 97 communing members, 225 baptized members, 37 voting members, and the enrollment of pupils was 41.

After three years Wenzel left and Rev. Gesterling was his successor who remained for only two years. Then, in 1896, Rev. C. W. Rische was called who served for ten years, and by efficient work in church and school and through his kindly intercourse with his people the church was helped greatly.

After him Rev. Streckfuss was the minister for several years, and in 1910 Rev. L. Heinemeier took the charge at Manheim, remaining ten years. In 1921 Rev. Rische returned to Manheim, and was heartily welcomed by his former people. He is still there. According to late statistics the congregation now numbers over 320 baptized members, 184 communing, and 54 voting members. In 1909 a new church house was built.

The Church at Lexington.

The writer was asked to preach to a number of people in and near Lexington already 47 years ago. We began our services on Christmas 1885 in the Germania school house some two or three miles west of the town of Lexington. I shall mention some few names that I happen to remember: Martiel, Seelke (two families), Rabe, Drews and his sons Fritz, Wm. and Charles, and Mr. L. Gest, who was Mr. Drew's son-in-law, Marquardt, Schiller, Meinhardt, John Hester's family living close by also attended, and others. We had no organ, but those people were good singers, and altogether they seemed to like coming to our meetings. The room was generally well filled, and I never had more attentive hearers than these people from near Lexington. I enjoyed driving to the Germania schoolhouse on Sunday afternoons to meet them. They knew I would never fail to come, not in the worst of weather, and even when the Middle Yegua was up, nearly out of banks, or when the bottom was under water. I will not go on telling this kind of experiences, lest one might think more of me than I deserve.

I once had a class of catechumens in the Germania schoolhouse. ~~them twice a~~ week, Bible stories and Luther's Catechism, and as we had no organized church at that

time in Lexington; I confirmed them in my church before my people in Fedor. There were nine catechumens, Charles Seelke (our former county tax collector) was one of them, and his sister (now Mrs. Geo. Marquardt) and one other Seelke, and two Pasemann girls, and the girls of Mr. Schiller, also two of Mr. Meinhardt. This was a great occasion, not only for our people at Lexington, but also for those of Fedor, who were now more hopeful as to the usefulness of my labors near Lexington.

In 1891 an organization took place of those families who wanted to constitute a congregation, they subscribed to some articles of agreement which we called our constitution, and decided to build a church in Lexington, the name of the church to be St. James'. The new building was dedicated in Dec. 1891. Rev. Ernst and Rev. Gresens preached German, Rev. Krenke of Giddings English. A band of musicians from Serbin under the leadership of Wm. Wagner furnished our music.

The first pastor of St. James' was Rev. Paul Schroeder (2 years, the next Rev. L. Heinemeier (from 1897 to 1899), Kupfernagel (1 year), Jacob Mueller (from 1902 to 1904), 1905 Rev. Hellmann was pastor, and he was succeeded by Rev. G. A. Obenhaus in 1908 to 1916. Rev. Hellmann was recalled in 1916 serving three years, after him Rev. E. J. Steyer was the pastor for ten years. The present pastor is Rev. Kautz. Thus we see this church has been suffering some from frequent change in the pastorate and also from want of new accessions. There is, however, good reason to believe that it is now on a firm basis and under good leadership, having a faithful pastor and members of much experience.

**The Church at Loebau  
(Rev. C. Durow)  
and Dime Box.**

The Loebau church was first called Jerusalem church, and had Rev. Mgebroff of the Texas Synod for its pastor. However, in the beginning of the year 1896 Rev. G. P. A. Schaaf was called as pastor of Loebau. He was a member of the Missouri Synod, the congregation also becoming a member of this connection. They then also changed their name and are now called Christ church. Schaaf was a man of much learning, and a lover and student of arts, particularly that of architecture. The fine Immanuel's church in Giddings was built after designs by Rev. Schaaf. He left for St. Louis after three years, taking with him his tremendous library which cost him nearly a hundred dollars for freight.

After Schaaf, Rev. Huger was the minister at Loebau from 1899 to 1905. He was followed by O. Bahr, from 1906 to 1909 and then Rev. Durow was called who is still serving at Loebau. The congregation has had a considerable growth in membership, being numerically almost as strong as the church at Lincoln (St. John's) which is but five miles distant.

A new church was dedicated at Loebau in the spring of 1917. The week-day school under the direction of Mr. Wendland has an enrollment of 61. Rev. C. Durow has been doing faithful and successful work in Loebau for about 23 years.

The Lutheran congregation at Dime Box, served by Rev. Durow, consists of ninety baptized and sixty communicant members.

There also is a small Lutheran congregation in the neighborhood of Green's Creek, about 8 miles south-east of Giddings. This was first served by Rev. Buchschacher of Warda, but in 1895 a pastor Greif, Jr., was called, who remained one year, and was succeeded by Rev. A. Wenzel (until 1900). Rev. F. W.

Lammert was next pastor, serving until 1903 and in a later date Rev. Almar Mueller was called who stayed with the church for quite a number of years, until the end of 1916. Since that time the church at Green's Creek has had no resident pastor. Pastor G. W. Fischer much of the time does the ministerial work, also Rev. Lugenheim, retired, and at present Rev. Eifert of Warda is preaching in this church. For many years students from theological seminaries have been teaching school and preaching at Green's Creek.

**Summary Statement Concerning the Churches (Mo. Synod)  
in Lee County, Texas, for the year 1931.**

Name of Church	MEMBERS					Contributions	
	Baptized	Communicants	Voting	School Enrollment	Valuation	Outside	Home
Serbin, St. Paul's .....	740	460	165	131	\$25000	\$1622	\$3109
Fedor, Trinity .....	500	314	97	101	10000	1257	3034
Giddings, Immanuel .....	749	530	117	95	18000	2305	4643
Lincoln, St. John's .....	500	246	73	72	10000	855	2014
Manheim, Ebenezer .....	326	184	54	67	10000	443	1517
Lexington, St. James .....	180	114	28	22	4900	109	800
Loebau, Christ Church .....	464	227	53	61	6500	188	1049
Dime Box, Trinity .....	90	62	17		500	71	181
Green's Creek .....	88	51	14	19	400	5	400
<b>Totals.....</b>	<b>3637</b>	<b>2188</b>	<b>618</b>	<b>568</b>	<b>\$85300</b>	<b>\$6855</b>	<b>\$16747</b>