

2. A PROLONGED VICARAGE

After I had completed two years of study at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis in 1931 each one of us had the option to continue and complete our final year or to apply for a year of vicarage or experience in the field. Like quite a few others in my class I chose to spend a year in the field. The assignment I received was to teach school at Trinity, Bear Creek, Wis. The salary was \$70 per month and involved primarily teaching in their one room school.

I remember that I traveled by train from my home near Lincoln, Nebraska and arrived at the Bear Creek station somewhere close to midday. I immediately encountered a problem. The pastor took me 4-5 miles west of the village but I was going east all the while. This problem with directions I had to struggle with all the while I was there. In fact, I still have a turned-around sense of direction in that area, even though I know what is correct.

Trinity was a rural church with its own parochial school, which was attended for the most part by pupils in the upper grades so that they could get their confirmation instruction as part of the school curriculum.

When school began the first week in September I had 35 pupils, of whom 23 were in the 7th & 8th grades. The pastor helped get organized for the beginning, which included traveling to a Lutheran bookstore about 25 miles away to purchase the supply of textbooks, which were then sold to the pupils. Since we were given no special training at the Sem for teaching in a classroom, much less in a classroom with 6 grades as I did, I had to gradually feel my way into procedure from day to day. To help with this I visited with a few public school teachers in the area to gather ideas on procedure. The course of study and basic requirements for graduation were spelled out in the textbooks we had and the directions from the County Supt. office. For the rest I gathered some ideas from the pastor and worked out my own schedules.

Since I enjoyed spending time on the playground with the children as much as possible, it was easy to develop a close relationship with them. Occasionally someone tried to take advantage of the intimacy we developed, but we solved that problem when it arose and moved on from there.

I remember one incident that took place in the crowded room of 5 rows of single desks. The pupils began to cut up old inner tubes into small bits and then use the point of their pencils to shoot them at each other when I wasn't looking. One day a pupil, about whom I had been warned before school started, shot one of those bits of rubber at me while I was writing something on the chalkboard. It hit rather soundly just next to me. So I stopped and sat down at my desk to watch the whole room, which had become noticeably quiet. Soon that pupil's head moved out into the aisle from his seat in about the center of the room. He turned red from ear to ear when our eyes met. So I asked, "Louie, did you shoot that?" He admitted that he had. All I did was say to him, "Don't ever try anything like that again. When we went back to our work. It's interesting that he was the one pupil who continued to send me birthday cards for a number of years after he graduated and even a few years ago asked to visit with me when we happened to be visiting friends near his home.

It's interesting how you bring with you certain traditional procedures that you recall from your own school days. This doesn't always agree with local customs or procedures. I recall being severely reprimanded by the pastor regarding my plan for the Christmas Eve service. In my home congregation the children had gathered before and around the altar for their group singing. When my group was going to do that, I was sharply told that this was totally inappropriate, that only the pastor and other officiants were allowed in the chancel area, even though there was no altar rail or other line to show where the chancel area began. After this clarifying incident the rest of our rehearsing

was done with the pastor's wife who served as the church organist.

Since the school was heated with wood it was my job to get there early enough each morning to start the fire and get the room warm for the beginning of the day and then to fire up regularly to keep it comfortable. The other janitorial duties were also mine, such as sweeping the floor each afternoon and otherwise keeping the room neat. Often a few of the pupils wanted to do the teacher a favor and offered to help with these tasks. Someone was usually assigned the task to bring in the day's supply of wood and to bring pails of water from the parsonage pump to fill the water cooler, which was standard equipment in any classroom in those days. To keep drinking as sanitary as possible each pupil was asked to provide his or her own collapsible drinking cup.

Most of the pupils walked the one to four miles to school in all kinds of weather unless they happened to catch a ride on cold mornings with the horse-drawn milk wagons or small trucks that were used to deliver the day's milk to the cheese factory each morning about a mile west of the school. In very bad weather the parents would try to arrange for a ride for their youngsters.

I was fortunate to get a boarding place with a member of the school board who lived a little more than half mile from the school. They charged me \$20 per month and that included washing and ironing my clothing.

On one Saturday I was invited to the home of one of my pupils for his birthday. There was a fairly large family and he was next to the oldest of the children. They were in rather poor circumstances and yet wanted to celebrate as best they could. I still recall how at the dinner table the bowl of potatoes was passed to me and then to the father, who then passed the bowl on to the rest together with a fork for mashing the potatoes to prepare them for the gravy to follow. Most of the family then ate their meal with a spoon, for seemingly they had only a few forks. Despite the limited equipment it seemed to be a happy family.

One time it seemed that a couple of older boys had brought with them a bottle of wine but were afraid to bring this all the way to the school. So they stashed it beneath a culvert as they came near to the school. Somehow this fact leaked out when they had left it there overnight, hesitating to take it home. So we managed to confiscate the bottle and never said any more about it. The perpetrators did not dare to say anything either.

Came Halloween and some youth in the community stuffed the small entryway of the school with cornstalks. So when I arrived I asked the pastor whether he could use them around his chicken barn for winter comfort. Since he showed me where they could be put, I had the earlycomers carry the cornstalks to the designated place and said nothing more about the incident. Many months later a chance remark by one of the youth in the community indicated who had stuffed the entryway that night. Then we had a good laugh about it.

It so happened that the pastor's daughter was a pupil in school in the 6th grade so that anything that happened in school during the day was sure to get the notice of that household. While the pastor didn't say much about specific instances, he developed his own general impressions. This came out when near the end of the term the board was discussing the question of rehiring the teacher for a second term. He took a negative attitude because he felt that my more relaxed method of discipline was sure to show itself when it came time for the 8th grade pupils to take the county-prescribed exams in a set number of subjects to qualify for the 8th grade diploma. The board, however, supported me for a second term and I was vindicated before the pastor when the 8th graders had an excellent record in the county exams. From that time on he was much more supportive.

My assignment there also included preaching occasionally, especially in the holiday season. Also when I was not busy in the local parish I was free to accept a preaching date at some neighboring church. When this happened infrequently my hosts where I boarded were generous in providing transportation in their Model T roadster. In spring I had accumulated

enough money so that I could buy a car of my own. I found what seemed to be a good buy at a generous Lutheran dealer at Embarass, about 20 miles away. It was a 1928 Essex with a rumble seat - that's a seat that is normally hidden in the trunk compartment but folds up and out when needed.

Since I had played on the Seminary basketball team the village team was anxious to have me play with them. A local fellow sponsored the team and arranged for the necessary uniforms, even to the point of elaborate sweat trunks and jackets. How he managed this we never knew, but about a year later we learned that he could do this with funds that he had embezzled at his place of work. But this took us to surrounding communities for games. Some places had fine gyms but in Bear Creek our games were played in what was called the old opera house - quite a cheese box - but it served the purpose. On weekends we often played in tournaments, where our team won a number of times. I recall one occasion where we had won on Friday and Saturday nights and were to play in the championship game at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday. However, I was on schedule to preach that Sunday and that included a 2:00 p.m. service in the village church, where the pastor also served. This was about 7 miles from the site of the championship game. Even some of the parishioners remarked that I had never preached so fast and concluded a service so rapidly as on that day. For at the close of the service one of the faithful team followers was waiting to take me to Clintonville Armory for the 3 o'clock game, since I had no car of my own as yet. The story had a happy ending in that we did win the championship in that tournament as well.

After the first school year ended I made a trip to my home in Nebraska, thinking of spending the summer there. However, the Depression had hit so hard in that part of the country that it was impossible to find even a day's work in the surrounding farm community. No one had any cash to pay for a day's wages of 50 cents to \$1. So after about a month I returned to the Bear Creek community and found some jobs helping farmers in haying time at 75 cents per day plus meals. Also I had a couple opportunities helping a farmer who did repair work on storm-

damaged buildings for an insurance company at the grand wage of 10 cents per hour plus meals.

This, of course, was possible since I was rehired for a second term. Because of the hard times the board explained that ordinarily they offered a \$10 per month increase when a teacher stayed a second year. However, because of economic conditions they considered keeping me at the same salary as in the first year was equivalent to a raise. I do recall that before the year ended the congregational treasurer did have difficulty paying that amount regularly on time.

Since I needed some kind of income for the remainder of the summer when August came around, my wife's uncle offered me a job on his threshing crew. That crew moved from farm to farm, threshing the oats and barley and occasionally a little wheat. He had a son my age and they also provided me with lodging. The job paid \$1 per day as we worked from near daybreak until almost dark. Each farmer had gathered the bundles from their fields in July and either stored them under cover in one driveway of his barn (almost all barns had basements for the livestock and then an incline into the hay storage level) or stacked them near the barnyard. The threshing crew's task was to provide the machine and the manpower to pitch the bundles into the conveyor of the threshing machine. Sometimes the machine was situated in the alternate driveway and the straw was blown over our heads into the haymow behind us. You can imagine the dust that this created. Our meals were furnished by the farmer at whose place we were working at the time. On some days we had breakfast at one place, had moved on to a second small farmer's place by noon and ended the day at a third place where we had our evening meal. At some places, where larger acreages were farmed, we may have spent a full day. But this small income kept me going until the school year was to begin again.

The beginning of the second school year went more smoothly, since I had learned the ropes from previous experience. Besides, I had gathered some useful helps by visiting a public school when we happened to observe a religious holiday such as Ascension Day and their school

was in session. I remember one notably capable and efficient teacher at that time was a cousin's wife of later years. She was most helpful in showing me how she managed a school room full of pupils in all eight grades.

During the first as well as the second year I was expected to be a leader of the youth group. This involved conducting some of the Bible study sessions and in guiding the group in their monthly recreation programs. The youth at that time were usually quite happy to spend an evening playing a variety of what we would call parlor games or table games such as "Cootie", ending with a lunch furnished by two or three of the participants on a rotating basis. This kind of entertainment was also common at birthday parties which the youth arranged in their homes.

Also the youth enjoyed raising some funds by planning, preparing and performing a play or several one-act plays. It fell to my lot to direct such plays with my limited training and experience, remembering that I had not been able to participate in such activities in my home community because I had been away from home and at a Synodical high school or college from the time I graduated from the 8th grade, leaving home at the age of 13. This kind of undertaking usually involved 4-6 weeks of preparation and rehearsals, resulting in short nights of sleep for longer periods of time. Since there was no hall at church or in the community where such plays could be presented, we usually had to rent the so-called opera house in Bear Creek. Once we did present a play in the nearby public school which was larger than ours and could seat more people.

One community activity that took place frequently in the fall season was the husking bees. When a farmer filled his silo with corn stalks that were still green or shortly after a killing frost, he would precede the corn binder, walking thru the field and breaking out the ripe or barely ripe ears and throwing them in rows that had already been cut. Then when silo filling was completed he would pick up this corn that had dried somewhat in the field and bring it under cover for further drying. Then at the husking bee his neighbors would be invited to help him husk this corn for storage in a crib

where it finished the drying process and was gradually used for mixture in ground feed for cattle or fattening feed for hogs. These husking bees were quite a social event as neighbors sat and visited on the piles of corn as they husked it to help one another. The evening always ended with a lunch of sandwiches and cake in the house. The next husking bee was usually announced at the cheese factory as farmers delivered their milk there for the daily cheese-making process, often only in the morning of the day when it was planned for that evening.

Since I had a means of transportation during the second school year and we had some capable young softball players, we were anxious to challenge a few other neighboring schools for a game. Since parents were busy and could not take time to assist I ended up getting a trailer hitch for my Essex and borrowing a grain wagon with enclosed sides and hauling my team and some spectators to other schools. No one thought of or seemed concerned about liability then. The pupils long remembered some of these outings.

Also I recall the audacity to suggest a change in the congregation's schedule of services at their annual meeting without first discussing it with the pastor. But what disturbed me was that on alternate Sundays there was a German service and no English service, even though the pastor had only English services in the mission church he served in the village. This meant that I was struggling against odds in teaching God's third commandment about worshipping Him regularly when on alternate Sundays there was no opportunity for my pupils to worship. I mentioned this concern in the open meeting and wondered whether it wasn't possible to have both an English and a German service on the so-called German Sundays. Surprisingly this suggestion met with more ready acceptance than I had dreamed possible. Not long afterward this kind of schedule was adopted and continued as long as the need for German continued. Occasionally even I had to take a turn at conducting services in both languages, which was no easy task for me.

Then during my second year I discussed my concern with the pastor about those children in

the congregation who lived at more distant locations and could only come to the church school during the years of confirmation instruction. Those children had no opportunity for any religious instruction, since a Sunday school was not considered in a congregation with a school. Besides the church had no basement and there was no other place where more classes could meet at one time. The village mission church did have a Sunday school. The result was that I offered on my own to conduct a kind of Sunday school on Saturdays in two public schools in the area that served the congregation. I had one session at 9 a.m. and the other at 10:30 each Saturday during the school year. I was surprised at the response by the parents and children in the areas served by these schools. Even non-members or members of other Lutheran churches in those communities shared their children for this kind of religious training. Obviously this developed many friendships that are still recalled by people who participated as children more than 50 years ago.

At the end of my second year the situation at the seminary was not very encouraging. The 1933 graduating class received very few calls that spring, leaving more than a hundred graduates ready to go "but left idle in the marketplace." Therefore, when the school board offered to keep me on for a third school year I was ready to keep on "working" rather than face a similar possibility of no call a year later. However, economic conditions had worsened so that I had to wait a month or more for my final pay check. Also the pastor had learned that the seminary had suggested "using" second year students rather than have them discontinue their studies and become lost to the church. They even suggested putting them to work somewhere at \$50 per month as one possibility. Therefore, he urged the congregation not to rehire me but to get a replacement at that lower salary. After considering the alternatives I expressed a willingness to take the required cut in pay if they wanted me to continue. Graciously my boarding hosts were willing to reduce my board cost from \$20 to \$16 per month, in proportion to my lower income. So when my 8th grade graduates again fared commendably in their

county examinations I concluded the second year and was looking forward to a third.

During that summer I don't recall traveling to my home at all. But I had some kind of job most of the time that summer. Maybe it was putting a new shingle roof on some farmer's barn or shed. Together with another man we contracted to paint the local church, including the 40-foot high steeple. We devised a method whereby one of us would manage and guide a rope that was fastened around the upper part of the steeple with the other end fastened around the waist of the one who was painting, just in case of a false move, to keep from sliding to the concrete 40 feet below. We succeeded in completing our task without mishap.

Some of my time was also taken up working with the farmer whom I mentioned before, who had gathered equipment for repairing storm-damaged buildings for an Appleton insurance company. We had some interesting jobs confronting us. Maybe an 80-foot long barn had been pushed partly over by a storm. So we worked with a system of hooks and block and tackle to pull this barn, section by section, back to where it should be and then put in adequate bracing to keep it straight. Of course smaller sheds were easier to put back to their original shape. One problem we frequently encountered was an empty stave silo that had been completely blown over. A crew of 3 of us could put such a silo back in place from foundation to roof at less cost to the insurance company than for them to pay the farmer the amount for which it was insured. Of course, we got the magnanimous sum of 15 cents an hour plus meals. But that was no bad wages compared to the \$2 per day that was paid to unemployed people working on WPA projects, because they had to board themselves.

That summer I also played with the local baseball team, usually somewhere every Sunday afternoon. Then during the week on at least one evening many of us played with a fast-pitch softball team as well. With opportunities for work most of the time plus the evening and weekend activities the summer season passed by quite rapidly.

An interesting feature of congregational management at that time, in the light of today's emphasis on stewardship, was their method of financing the operation of the church programs. This was a quite common procedure in churches in rural communities at that time. Some board or committee had set up a kind of equalized taxation system. Considerations that suggested what any member's expected "dues" should be were such things as the size of the farm a man operated, whether he was an owner or a renter, or whether only the wife and children were members. I recall that married men's "dues" ranged from \$12 to a top of \$30 per year. For single, unmarried men it was just \$3 per year. This list of expected "dues" and the amount paid each year was then part of an annual printed statement. If anyone felt that his assessment was unjust, he could once a year make an appeal for an adjustment to the appointed review committee. This was their approach to "proportionate giving." This procedure may have been partly suggested by the method of determining real estate taxes and reporting on their payment. The more one owned or the higher value of his land, this served to determine the amount of his tax liability. Then at the township's annual meeting a printed report of taxes paid or still due was distributed. Seemingly this procedure of the "world" was in a way carried over into the financing of the church. The regular Sunday offerings, small as they were, helped to keep the church property in comfort and repair. Offerings for Missions were gathered on special occasions, especially on the annual Mission Festival. These were outside of the regular support of the church. I also recall that some congregations appointed special "collectors" who reminded members about payment of their "dues". Is it any wonder that two generations later we still have a major task in training our congregations in proportionate giving?

The annual Mission Festival, as well as the usual school picnic, were commonly held in a wooded plot near the church, either owned by the congregation or by one of the members. There seating for an open-air church service was set up as well as a building or shed for a concession stand. Also tables were set up for serving the noon meal for which there was

usually a small charge to gather some extra cash and to keep out "free loaders". The Bear Creek church had organized a band some years earlier and this group provided the accompaniment for the hymns as well as some entertainment during the lunch period and into the afternoon. For the Mission Festival there was usually a second service in the afternoon. Since the noon meal was served you can understand that people from neighboring congregations and the community would come to enjoy the fellowship opportunity this provided and also why these occasions came to be called "mission feasts" by some people. However, there was one problem that arose in connection with these occasions, that was whether the church should sell and serve beer as a refreshment item. This was occasioned by the fact that at times someone from the community or the church would imbibe too heavily and create a disturbance. Naturally this could become an offense in the community and besmirch the church's reputation, regardless whether the offender was a member or not. For the school picnic the pupils usually also put on a short program of song, recitation or skits in the afternoon, followed by some games or contests for the children of all ages. These games were usually planned and managed by the school board.

Being in a rural community one of the required subjects for the 7th and 8th graders was agriculture. In this subject I learned from both the books and the pupils, since I had grown up in a mostly grain-farming area and knew nothing about Wisconsin dairy farming and the necessary crop rotations to supply feed for dairy cattle. Also because of the heavier snow in winter the book showed how to build roads to avoid heavy snow drifts from blocking passage in the winter. But the knowledgeable boys helped to keep me on the right track and even at times disagreed with the textbook's author.

When I began the third year of teaching the preparations for the first day of school were easier than in the preceding years. Also it so happened that I had only four 8th graders and they were all girls. All of them were good students so that I needed only to give them assignments and check on their progress. For the most part they helped themselves. In fact,

one of them was an excellent speller and became the county spelling champion in the spring of the year.

I remember that when spring came and the time came for taking the county exams it was quite warm outside, so that on at least a couple of the days we chose to correct the exams outdoors where it was cooler on the shady side. There I recall that in the subject of physiology one question in the exam was: "Name a disease of the teeth." When I read one answer that said "Diarrhea" I could not keep from laughing. When I shared this, all of us had a good laugh about the error.

One incident I recall in this year was the first date I had with Edna, my wife. It was in early October and we were arranging rides after the church service for going to the fall youth rally. When I asked her to ride with me she hesitated until one of the other girls agreed to ride with us. When I brought her home that evening, I had learned that the next day was her birthday. So I invited her to go to a movie with me the next evening to celebrate the occasion. She agreed and that was the beginning of our courtship days.

Soon afterward she found a housekeeping job in Neenah and later in Oshkosh, the city where one of her friends also worked and where her older, married sister lived. This meant that if we were to see each other, I'd have to travel the 50 miles on a Sunday afternoon and travel back later that evening. It so happened that a severe cold wave blew in early in December to cause a sudden drop in temperature. We had spent the evening together and on the way home I was running short of gas. All along the way I found no service station open anymore to replenish my supply until I was about 15 miles from home. By that time there seems to have been a little water that got into the gas line out of the very bottom of the tank. The result was that about 2 or 3 miles out of town my gas line froze up. I could see no farmer's lights anywhere near and I hesitated to walk in the cold wind and possibly encounter a vicious watch dog in the darkness at the nearest farmhouse to boot. So I stayed in my car and kept thumping my feet on the floor to keep them reasonably warm.

Also I did not dare to fall asleep, lest I rally freeze up. This I kept up until about 4:00 am when a farmhouse about 1/4 mile away was lighted up. It so happened that they ran a small dairy business and had to milk their cows early so that they could make their deliveries at the expected early hour. So I walked the distance and introduced myself at the door and explained my problem. The farm wife graciously invited me in to warm myself at the fire while she and her husband went about their milking. At a reasonable time I phoned the family I boarded with to explain my failure to arrive back home. So after he had finished his milking he came to tow my crippled Essex home. In the meantime the gracious hosts near New London had provided me with a warm breakfast insisting that I be their guest. I still think of their hospitality with gratitude whenever my travels take me past that farmhouse.

Obviously that Monday in school was a difficult one. I did not dare to sit down at my desk during any recitation period lest I immediately fall asleep because I had gone more than 36 hours without any sleep. Apparently the pupils noticed that something was wrong. At the end of the day one of them dared to ask what the problem was. Soon after school closing I went home and meant to take a nap before supper. However, I slept so soundly that my hosts were unable to awaken me and I slept thru until my usual rising time the next morning and didn't even wake up enough to take off my clothes to crawl into my night clothing. But I have often thanked the Lord for enabling me to keep awake in the bitter cold that night.

Later the same month of 1933 we encountered another sudden blast of cold air. It was on Christmas Eve. Earlier that day the ground had thawed. But the temperature dropped steadily all day. Everything still went fine for the Christmas Eve service. After the service I was invited to Edna's home. When I was going to leave close to midnight, my car would not start. Her brother got out of bed and went out to try starting his new Chevy. It too refused to start. Finally it was decided that I better stay overnight and that we'd try to start the car with a team of horses the next morning. There was no empty bed left in their home so I was put up

on the old-style contoured couch in the dining room. It was rather short for me and her father had a good laugh the next morning when he got up to start the fire or stir up the fire in the wood stove. My feet hanging over the edge amused him so much. Since I was scheduled to preach that morning it was important that I get on the road rather early. I think that was accomplished by pulling my car in high gear with a team of horses until it started and kept running on its own. Her brother's new car wouldn't start by that method. So he pulled it into the barn floor to let the body heat from the cattle gradually warm it up. Of course, the old maid living across the road from their home had quite a gossiping field day in telling about the vicar staying at the neighbors overnight.

No other incidents of that third year come to mind. My 8th graders again passed their exams with flying colors that spring. And I was offered the teaching job for an unprecedented 4th year. However, the dean of students at the seminary thought that it was high time for this student to return to the campus and strongly discouraged my vicarage extension. So I yielded to his urging and began to plan my return to the seminary in fall.

However that summer I again spent at a variety of jobs in the Bear Creek area. Since there had been several heavy storms in that area in May and June, there was quite a demand for the kind of repair work for the insurance company that I had been involved with before. In fact, my former boss even asked me to serve as his record keeper and errand boy. At home he was as frugal as he was for the insurance company. I recall that he even roasted his own barley and used it to make a type of weak coffee. But we had several larger buildings to put back into their original shape so he hired an experienced barn builder - a man who had planned, framed and raised 300 timber frame barns - to add to our crew. It was a delight working with him and I learned quite a bit from him relative to building.

I recall one major undertaking that faced us. A large, fairly new barn had been pushed sideways by a storm, leaving a gap of a foot or two between the leaning block wall and the dirt

filled in for the driveway to the haymow. Otherwise the building was in tact. We ended up using jacks at the end of poles on the opposite outer wall as well as on the inner wall on the driveway side, gradually moving all of them after we had dug a trench along the driveway for clear movement. We spent about two weeks at this project, but succeeded in getting the barn and its basement upright again as it had been originally. Obviously this cost much less than replacing the whole structure from ground up. While we were working there I recall one noon wondering how we would enjoy the chicken to be served. At about 11 we saw the housewife outside catching and butchering the chickens which were to be on the table at about 12. When dinner time came they could have been roasted or fried a little longer but we managed to make a meal of what had been prepared.

Later in the summer more were added to the crew to bring it to seven when we were asked to repair a group of buildings, silos and tobacco sheds in southern Wisconsin. One of our group was Edna's brother. When we got to the first job and drove into the yard the owner wanted to know who was the boss of the crew. Knowing that his next question would be, "How are you going to straighten and fix that 120 foot tobacco shed, only one end of which was at its original location and that had a part of its roof torn off?", since no one had a ready answer for that question even our boss didn't want to acknowledge his identity at first. However, there was enough variety of experience in our group so that we found a fairly simple way to straighten out the man's building and repair the other damage. I won't attempt to describe the procedures here. Thus there were many other jobs in that area before we were finished with our assignment three weeks later. Since by this time economic conditions had improved and the insurance company was actually saving money with our combined knowledge and skills, the crew insisted that the boss should raise our pay to 35 cents per hour. Since he couldn't very well carry on his work without us, he agreed that the insurance could afford it. Also on this trip he had asked me to use my car to pull his four-wheel trailer full of equipment and make any necessary trips for supplies. For this he

paid me a fixed amount per mile. This helped to add to my resources for the coming school year at the seminary.

I recall one incident that involved our barn builder of long experience. The two of us were assigned the task of replacing a roof on a silo. We had heavy planks across the top of the silo on which we stood to do our building. Since he was a faithful Catholic we frequently got into a religious discussion. Our subject at that spot nearer the sky that day happened to be "heaven" while we sat there awaiting some material to be sent up to us. We thought that was an appropriate subject at that height.

At another tobacco shed project our crew had eaten dinner at the farmhouse as prepared by the housewife, for which she was paid by the insurance company, as was usually the case. As we were taking a little rest in another shed that was mostly empty, our frugal boss wanted to get a cheap chew of tobacco. So he pulled a small chunk of tobacco leaves out of a bale lying there to satisfy his desire. About an hour later he had asked me to make a trip into town for some lumber supplies, because lumber yards didn't deliver in those days, but while I was in town to also get him some brandy to settle his upset stomach. He wouldn't acknowledge what had upset it but those of us who had seen him get his "cheap" chew knew full well what was the cause.

With lighter moments like that to shorten our long days of usually 10-12 hours the 3 weeks went by quite rapidly. I recall that one Sunday when we had stayed over without planning it beforehand Edna's brother and I went to church in our overalls since we hadn't brought other clothes with us.

Soon after these jobs were completed I had to get ready to return to the seminary. I had to drive to my home to pick up some things from there that I would need and to take things there for storage during my final year.

One other incident comes to mind that transpired during this period. Edna began her housekeeping job in Oshkosh at the \$5 per week rate, plus room and board. Gradually

more and more was expected of her by her employers, who together owned and operated a corner grocery store that made deliveries. This included occasionally helping with the clerking and then adding the regular mopping or scrubbing of the store's floor. This latter chore was more than she could handle. So she quit the job. The couple and their two girls of school age liked her and her cooking so they hated to see her leave. But after she was gone a week they urged her to come back. Then she could lay down the conditions under which she would return. For one thing the store scrubbing was out. Even with the lighter work load they increased her pay to \$7 per week. So she continued there for a year or two longer.