

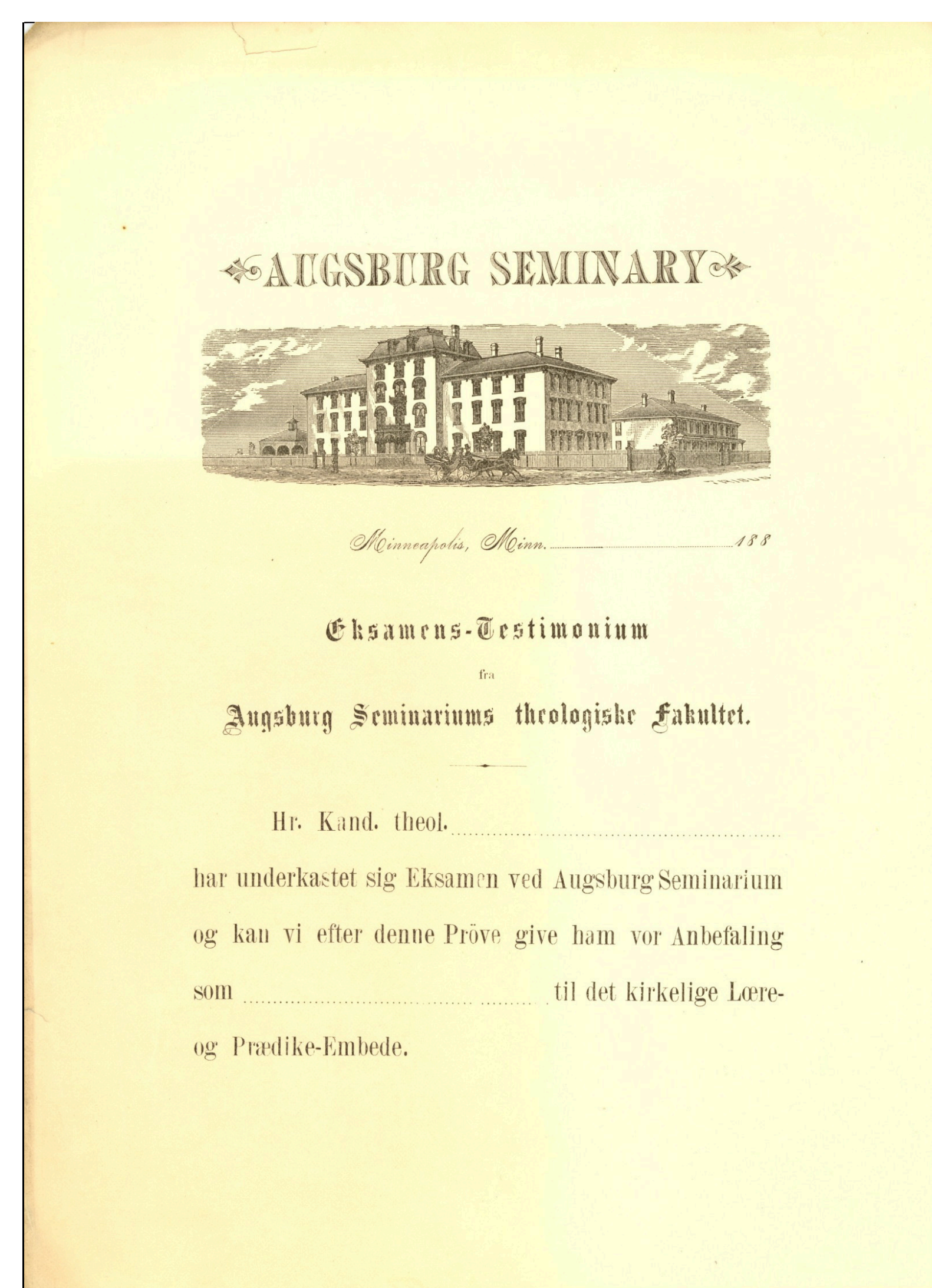
NEW LAND, NEW LIFE!

Norwegian Immigration in Minnesota: 1825-1925

Academies Evolve into Colleges

Lutheran pastors were in short supply in mid-19th century Minnesota. Pastors were community leaders. Seminaries were needed to educate new pastors.

Times were controversial with the Civil War on the horizon. In the new environment of religious freedom, Norwegian Lutherans debated the slavery and predestination issues, differing with their pastors. Lutherans split into synods, reflecting different points of view. By 1876, there were five major Lutheran synods in the U.S. Norwegian Lutheran academies (secondary schools) evolved into liberal arts colleges in Minnesota, to satisfy the growing demand for higher education for the children of Norwegian immigrants.



Augsburg Seminary diploma, Minneapolis, MN, 1880-1889.
Luther Seminary Archives, St. Paul, MN.



Main Hall, St. Olaf College, 1888.
Photo by Ole G. Felland. St. Olaf College,
Shaw-Olson Center for College History.



Luther Seminary Robbinsdale. Minnesota Historical Society



Concordia College, Moorhead. MN,
College Archives

- 1857 Concordia Seminary, a German Lutheran school in St. Louis, MO, where Norwegian immigrants sought theological training, was initially endorsed by the Norwegian Evangelical Synod, until NES withdrew support over the slavery issue.
- 1861 Luther College, in Decorah, Iowa, was established by the Norwegian Lutheran Synod. Its first President Lauritz Larsen recruited distinguished classical faculty scholars.
- 1872 Augsburg Seminary moved from Marshall, WI to Minneapolis. By 1897 the Lutheran Free Church supported Augsburg College
- 1874 St. Olaf Academy formed in Northfield, MN under Rev. Bernt J. Muus. By 1889, St. Olaf reorganized as a college with the United Norwegian Lutheran Church as sponsor.
- 1879 Red Wing Seminary was founded to train pastors for the Hauge Synod. In 1903, it added a college, and in 1917, merged with St. Olaf.
- 1884 University of Minnesota started a Scandinavian Dept., supported by Spring Grove Rep. Truls Paulson and Gov. Knute Nelson of Alexandria, a state regent.
- 1891 Concordia Academy began in Moorhead, MN, affiliated with the United Church. By 1914, it was the 4- year, liberal arts Concordia College.
- 1900 Luther Theological Seminary began at Robbinsdale, moving to northwest St. Paul, under the auspices of the United Church. In 1904, the Muskego Church, the first (1844) Norwegian church in America, was relocated to the St. Paul campus from southeast Wisconsin.