



News from the

EVANGELICAL AND REFORMED HISTORICAL SOCIETY

September 1971

Volume 1, No. 3

THE 108th ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY

The 108th Annual Meeting of the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society will be held in First United Church of Christ, 48 Centre Avenue, Schuylkill Haven, Pa. on Saturday morning, October 16, beginning at 9:00 a.m.

First Church was founded in 1831. The pastor, the Rev. G. H. Nice, and the Consistory invited the Society to hold their annual meeting there as part of the congregation's 150th anniversary celebration.

The annual business meeting to hear the reports of the officers and transact such business as may be before the Society will be held at 9:00 a.m. A fellowship period with refreshments will be provided by First Church. At 10:30 a.m. the Rev. Dr. James E. Wagner, former president of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, will read a paper on "Congregational Records-Adequate, Accurate, Cherished, and Cared For." He has just completed a comprehensive history of Christ Church, Norristown, Pa.

The Executive Committee of the Society will meet on Friday evening, October 15, at 7:30 p.m. at the Necho Allen Hotel, Centre and Mahantongo Streets, Pottsville, Pa. 17901. Those who desire to stay overnight should make their own reservations directly with the hotel.

The annual meeting is open to all members and friends of the United Church of Christ. We would be very happy if all pastors would put an announcement in their church bulletins concerning the Society meeting.

PUBLICATION DATES OF THE NEWSLETTERS

Both the Congregational Christian Historical Society and the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Societies as well as the Archives of the United Church of Christ at Lancaster are sponsored agencies of the Historical Commission of the United Church. A five dollar membership entitles a person to voting membership in both Societies and entitles him to receive the Newsletters from both Societies. The editors of the Newsletters have agreed that the Congregational Christian Historical Society Newsletter will be published during the months of January, May and October and the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society Newsletter will be published in March, September and November.

Publication during alternating months will help keep our members better informed about the work of the two Societies and of the Historical Commission.

Both editors solicit articles of historical interest, especially reports of anniversary celebrations of local congregations.

EIGHTH ANNUAL HISTORICAL TOUR OF PENNSYLVANIA SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE

The Eighth Annual Historical Tour will be held on October 9, 1971 and will visit churches in upper Bucks County. The tour will leave from Trinity (Springfield) Church at Pleasant Valley, then to Trinity Church (Great Swamp) at Spinnerstown, Trumbauersville Church; First Church, Quakertown; St. Peter's (Tohickon) at Keelersville, and conclude at the Red Hill Church at Ottsville.

Last year over 100 persons joined in the tour of the churches of eastern Berks County. For further details of the tour, write to Mr. Charles H. Price, Jr., 214 South Main Street, Telford, Pa.

A WORD ABOUT HISTORICAL FIELD TRIPS

Historical field trips are proving very successful in some parts of the church. The Eastern Chapter of the Society and planned a chartered bus field trip to Old First Reformed Church in Philadelphia in August, but had to cancel because not enough reservations were received. Perhaps our announcements were sent out too late.

The editor would like to know of other historical field trips that have been held in various sections of the denomination. If you are interested in organizing and/or supporting field trips, please write to the editor.

THE ARCHIVES OF LOCAL CHURCH RECORDS

The archives hold many of the records of our earliest churches in Pennsylvania and surrounding states. Some of these are of churches that are no longer in existence. Most conferences have been faithful in sending us the records of congregations that have been recently dissolved. Many consistories have voted to send us their church records for safe-keeping.

The Society urges all local churches to deposit their old records with us. They are stored in a fire resistant, humidity-controlled, locked section of our library. We would emphasize that such records can remain the property of the congregation by their official action. The staff of the archives will search such records on deposit for verification of baptisms, marriages and deaths, etc. when requested to do so.

When such records are received an inventory of them is sent to the donor as well as a statement under what conditions they were received.

Please send us your old records for safe keeping and preservation.

THE STATE OF OUR FINANCES? BAD!!

During these past months every Newsletter has something to say about finances, whether it comes from industry, education, the stock market, or the church! Well, your Society shares the same experience as all others. During the month of August, the treasurer had to take \$600.00 from reserve funds to pay the bills. On September 7 he did receive the quarterly gift of \$1,604.07 from the United Church of Christ. That should get us through the calendar year. All gifts are greatly appreciated.

DEACON'S BENCH FROM BEAM CHURCH

A deacons' bench that was used in the old Beam Reformed Church near Jennerstown, Somerset Co., Pa. in the 1840's was presented to the Society by Mrs. Charles B. Korns of Sipesville, Pa., through the auspices of the Rev. and Mrs. Merle U. Fox. The bench which is about four feet long is typical of the rural church furniture of the early part of the nineteenth century. Mrs. Fox is a descendent of the Beam family which founded the church.

HAVE YOU FOUND ANY OLD CHURCH RECORDS LATELY?

Two weeks ago we received a package and a letter from Dr. Henry Young of the History Department of Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pa. Back in the 1930's Dr. Young and the editor were college mates. The letter informed the editor that Dr. Young had purchased for 10¢ at a used-book store two small composition books that contained the minutes of the Church Aid and Missionary Society of the St. Peter's (Ray's) Union Church for the years, 1901-1910. He thought the Historical Society might like to have them.

We graciously acknowledged them but imagine our surprise when we discovered that we had the records of that congregation and these two minute books filled a gap of the records of the Aid and Missionary Society!

You never know when church records will be found, and how important they may be. Search the attics of your parsonages, your churches; yes, even the second floor of those rural stables that have been remodeled into modern garages. You may find some important church records!

INVENTORY OF DUPLICATES OF REFORMED CHURCH PUBLICATIONS

Over the years the Historical Society and the Philip Schaff Library have accumulated hundreds of volumes of books written by Reformed Church pastors, theologians, professors, missionaries and historians. Many of them deal with the Mercersburg Theology controversy. All are out-of-print, and some are in great demand by libraries and researchers.

During the past several months an inventory has been taken of these duplicates and the Society hopes to offer for sale such duplicates that are not needed. Future issues of the NEWSLETTER will list books that are available for sale.

WE HOPE WE WILL SEE YOU AT THE ANNUAL MEETING IN SCHUYKILL HAVEN, PA.

PLEASE SEND US YOUR COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS. Address them to:

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