

THE REPORTER

of the Historical Society of the Evangelical and Reformed Church

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Volume 4

FALL, 1961

Number 2

RECENT ACQUISITIONS AT THE LANCASTER ARCHIVE

Herbert B. Anstaett, Librarian

Many significant additions¹ made to the growing collection of archival material were as follows: The original pastoral records of John Wesley Pontius (1846-1927) in one volume, covering the years 1877-1897, while pastor of the Cochran and Martinsburg, Pennsylvania, churches (Paul Reid Pontius); two volumes of church records of Abbey Church, Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, the one containing baptismal records for 1804-1832, 1845-1849, 1866-1867, communicant lists for 1817, 1845-1853, 1866-1867, and other documents; and the other, the consistory minute book for 1870-1877, begun by David Dunn, the grandfather of David Dunn, the Society's President, reflecting something of the controversy that led to the establishment of Central Seminary (Robert Nace); original church records of Pleasant Valley, Rockingham County, Virginia, St. Mark's, 1892-1936 (discontinued), and Rockland Mills, Virginia, St. Paul's, 2 volumes, 1853-1934, with a few entries including 1937, and 1949-1959 (sketchy), with brief minutes of the annual congregational meetings, 1950-1956 (discontinued), and Buckeystown, Maryland, St. John's, 1882-Apr. 22, 1917 (discontinued), and records of near Libertytown, Frederick County, Maryland, Union Chapel, 1869-1929 (discontinued) (Frederick D. Eyster, now deceased, for the Synodical Council of Potomac Synod); a microfilm of the session records, Brick Church (German), Alamance County, North Carolina (Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina, T. H. Spence, Executive Director); a microfilm of church records of a Lutheran pastor, Joseph A. Roof, 1835-1877, mostly in Iowa and Ohio (Mrs. Genevieve M. Dolle); a typewritten, carbon copy of the records of deaths kept by Jones Detwiler, 1850-1900 (original book in possession of Boehm's Church, Whitpain Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania) (Maurice J. Nielson); the original Minutes, June 26, 1864-December 11, 1881, (probably a complete set) of the Teachers' Association of the German Reformed Sunday Schools of the City of Reading, later known as the Sabbath School Association of the German Reformed Church (of Reading) and later the Reformed Sunday School Association (Warren A. Breisch); the original draft of a report presented to Synod in 1827 on the building in connection with the Seminary then located in Carlisle, Pennsylvania (J. Stuart Prentice); four manuscript volumes of lecture notes, copies by students of John W. Nevin and E. V. Gerhart at Franklin and Marshall College, and Thomas G. Apple at the Woman's College (Hood) (Melvin T. Hamm); and a microfilm of the six volumes of records of the Otterbein Reformed Church, Baltimore, Maryland, 1785-1860, the historical church

served by Philip William Otterbein (1726-1813), founder of the United Brethren in Christ Church, now known as the Evangelical United Brethren Church (purchased).

Brig. General Hugh Cort, USA Retired, presented the manuscript diaries of his father, Rev. Cyrus Cort (1834-1920), in twenty-eight volumes, February 20, 1853-December 12, 1919. Cyrus Cort was a graduate of Franklin and Marshall College, Class of 1860, and the Theological Seminary, then located at Mercersburg, in 1862. He served congregations in Iowa, Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania, was author of various books and pamphlets about early pioneer days of the nation and the Reformed Church, was a member of General Synod for many sessions, and a member of a committee to form an interdenominational group which later became the National Council of Churches. At the same time, General Cort gave the manuscript diaries of his brother, Ambrose Cort (November 8, 1873-July 22, 1856), in three volumes, December 1, 1888-February 1892, covering most of his first year at Mercersburg College in 1888, and Franklin and Marshall from 1889-1892. The volumes have been added to the collection of manuscript diaries, which includes such notable Reformed Church ministers as Henry Harbaugh, E. V. Gerhart, J. Spangler Kieffer, and William Rupp.

Mrs. Raymond Savicool Cope and her brother Clarence T. Moyer made a joint gift of six items. Worthy of particular mention were: Emeline Herman's church membership certificate, March 28, 1847, in German, signed by C. G. Herman "Ev. Reformierten Prediger"; Oscar C. S. Herman's membership certificate, March 11, 1866, signed by J. S. Herman, his father; Oscar Herman's original license to preach, handwritten, dated June 4, 1872; and a resolution dated September 8, 1873, on the death of Oscar C. Herman, adopted by the teachers and members of the Reformed Sunday School, Kutztown, Pennsylvania. Larry Philip Leonard sent eleven typewritten pages of historical items pertaining to Andrew Loretz, Jr. (1762-1812), and his family, including an abstract of the settlement of Rev. Loretz's estate, as found in the Lincoln County Courthouse, Lincoln, North Carolina, and a copy of two articles published in the local newspaper about the Loretz house that he built, and about his daughter Catherine who married John Motz, a member of Daniel's Reformed Church.

Mrs. Mae Friday Ashbrook, a member of the Board of National Missions for twenty-nine years, and an organizer of the Women's Union of the "E" Church and the Women's Guild of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, presented through the courtesy of Herbert F. Reichert, her collection of speeches, in seventeen manila envelopes and two looseleaf notebooks; minutes of meetings, historical

¹ Donors in parentheses at the end of gifts.

sketches, etc., in all fifty-three items, mostly pertaining to missions, the Women's Union and the Women's Guild.

An unusual gift was received from Roy R. Schmid, the working papers and a typewritten copy, along with the printed copy, of Lebanon, Pennsylvania's, St. John's *One Hundred Years, 1860-1960*, the working papers containing more material than was printed. Mrs. Daniel J. Wetzel, widow of Rev. Wetzel, donated thirty-four miscellaneous volumes and pamphlets not owned by the Society, thus continuing gifts Rev. Wetzel made from time to time, principally his collection of editions of the Heidelberg Catechism and other catechisms.

Nevin E. Schellenberger enriched the archives of Goshenhoppen Classis by depositing the original Minute Book, 1862-1873, and original Parochial Reports, Credentials, Statistics, etc., 1866-1873. He also presented a Completed Report of the Peace Commission, printed, with original signatures of the Commissioners representing the different Synods of the Reformed Church, dated December 3, 1879. The gift also included the following: Working copies of the sections of the report, a printed letter dated Harrisburg, Pa., August, 1880, addressed to "My Dear Brother:", enclosing thumbnail biographical, printed sketches of the names of the Peace Commissioners, with the printed signature of Rudolph F. Kelker; and a four-page folder of *History of the Peace Movement in The Reformed Church in the United States*, prepared by Elder Benjamin Kuhns of Dayton, Ohio, a member of the Peace Commission.

In January 1961, Braynard E. and Mrs. Kurkowski, through the courtesy of Fred Kurkowski, presented a carton of material relating to the Evangelical Synod of North America, including five pamphlets, five bound volumes of four periodicals, two scrapbooks consisting almost entirely of photographs of churches arranged by Districts, and three group photographs, also ten printed items about the Reformed Church, including two group photographs. Elvin J. Groff gave a typewritten, carbon copy of his Master of Sacred Theology thesis, 1960, entitled *The Reformed Church in Chester County before 1800*.

An acquisition received last year from Alfred G. Sandrock, but inadvertently omitted from the annual report, included: The bound manuscript Minutes of Wyoming Classis, Eastern Synod, covering the first eighteen annual meetings, 1887-1904, and the thirtieth to thirty-second meetings, 1916-1918; the complete manuscript record in one volume of the Classis' Board of Trustees' Meetings, 1890-1940; Milton, Pennsylvania's, St. John's Church Missionary Society records books, 1919-1941, in three volumes; Scranton, Pennsylvania's, Second Church (now closed) documents, including the Minute Book, 1931-1946, and receipted bills, leases and communications.

Frederick S. Weiser brought in his compilation of twelve pages, 1961, in mimeographed form, entitled *Parochial Registers for Lutheran Congregations in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, 1729-1960*, a guide to the genealogical resources in the parish records of baptisms, marriages, and burials, as well as to translations and copies in print and in public institutions.

Frederick George Livingood, author of *Eighteenth Century Reformed Church Schools*, (published by

the Pennsylvania German Society in 1930) presented thirty-three items from his library, religious and historical books, principally about the Reformed Church. John B. Ranck gave *Das Kleine Davidische Psalterspiel* (Ephrata, Salomon Mayer, 1795), through the courtesy of Lady Lillian Wanless. Dobbs F. Ehlman, Executive Secretary of the Board of International Missions, sent in for the Archives' large undated blueprint maps, published by the Board of Foreign Missions, of Japan and of China, showing locations and extent of the Mission Field of the Reformed Church in the United States.

Glade Church, Walkersville, Maryland, through Frank A. Rosenberger, placed on deposit the following communion articles: silver pitcher, two offering plates, private communion set consisting of a chalice and a bread plate. Sheldon E. Mackey, Secretary of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, continued an established practice of sending a copy of each of the printed Synod Minutes as issued. As usual, the Lancaster Theological Seminary supplied a complimentary subscription of its publication, *Theology and Life*, Bela Vassady, editor, begun in February 1958 and now in its fourth volume.

SYNOD HISTORIANS ARE ACTIVE

Synod historians, according to reports coming to us, are active in fulfilling the responsibilities of their appointed task. Like bees gathering honey in the fields, these historians acquire materials within the scope of their synodical areas and from time to time dispatch them to our archives. We are grateful for their alertness and dedication.

One of the specific duties of Historians is to supply sketches of recently deceased ministers of the Church. We report with satisfaction that this obligation is fully complied with by some. Some synodical presidents have also come to our aid.

However it is just as discouraging to have to report that the response in this area leaves much to be desired. Several years ago we began a file of this material, which now includes information on forty-eight ministers, also two laymen and four wives of ministers.

The *Yearbook* for 1960 lists fifty-eight deceased ministers of the denomination for the year 1959 alone. Where are the biographical data for these faithful servants of the Lord?

Perhaps we must search for a more effective method to make our files as complete as possible under the circumstances. It may be that all we need is a greater degree of sensitivity to the importance of possessing this information.

Guy P. Bready's typewritten compilation of *The Fathers of the Reformed Church*, an invaluable tool in the hands of researchers, ends with December 31, 1941. Except for the few sent in and some collected by the Society's staff, the file from 1942 to the present is far from complete. If someone could spend the time in collecting the sketches missing from the file, enough material would be available for the compilation of several more volumes.

Let all those concerned, therefore, apply themselves with zeal and leave this part of the Church's heritage properly assembled for convenient, future use!

ARCHIVAL SERVICES

Inquiries from all directions come in almost daily to our archives at Lancaster and Webster Groves. These have to do, as a rule, with genealogical data or biographical accounts of deceased ministers. For the most part the biographies are needed for publications in connection with the celebration of church anniversaries.

Our members will be interested to know the policy that is pursued at the Society's Lancaster Central Archive and Library, where Miss Elizabeth C. Kieffer is the designated Archivist of the Society. Service is given without cost to the inquirer. Free genealogical research, however, is limited to one hour. Beyond that, Miss Kieffer charges a modest fee for further prearranged searching.

One of the recent services of the Society was the free distribution to members of an essay entitled "Genealogical Resources of the Historical Society of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, Fackenthal Library, Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pennsylvania." This essay was prepared by Miss Elizabeth C. Kieffer and read in part at the annual meeting of the National Genealogical Society. It was reprinted from the *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*, volume 48, no. 3, September 1960, pages 113-126.

The essay *inter alia* contains a list of 150 Church Records and 30 Pastoral Records owned by the Society in the original or in transcription, including microfilm holdings with the microfilm reels number. The publication of this list has increased the use of this collection in an amazing manner. One hundred and thirty-seven microfilm reels alone were made available to fifteen persons. Several of the rolls circulated three times in a recent month.

George H. Bricker and Herbert B. Anstaett, responding to a request from the Executive Committee of the Eastern Chapter of the Society, cooperated in sending a package of books pertaining to the history of the Church to each of the twelve Synods in the East and to Southern Synod. These books were put on display by Synod Historians, who took orders for them at their Spring Synod meetings.

An illuminating example of the kind of service engaged in is the following. Last October Mrs. Leonard Garland of Turlock, California, asked for information about Sarah Brinker who died at Lisbon, Ohio, in 1877. Our research led us to a lengthy obituary in the *Christian World* which was sent to her in typewritten form. In her acknowledgement Mrs. Garland remarked: "It is so nice to know that one's ancestors and their families were such wonderful Christian people." The obituary revealed that Miss Brinker had left \$6,000 as an endowment for the support of the pastor of St. Jacob's Congregation of the Reformed Church, Columbiana County, Ohio, \$1,500 to the Board of Beneficiary Education of the Theological Seminary at Tiffin, Ohio, and a similar bequest to the Seminary at Lancaster.

SOME FACTS ON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

The number of our members has been steadily rising for the past few years. At the time of going to press we can report 434 annual and 145 life members or a total of 579.

At the end of December 1960 the total membership was 507. Today's figures indicate an increase of about 9%, with the year not completed. Four years ago the roster totalled 192 (125 annual and 67 life). We are hoping that this year we shall exceed our membership of 1960, which at that time was the largest in the Society's history. All Synods are represented.

The most successful solicitation of memberships, outside the Lancaster office, was made by Donald J. Ely, Historian for East Pennsylvania Synod. We commend him for his outstanding work. Of the 58 pastors in the Synod 52 are now 1961 members, including one life member. Rev. Ely spoke personally to his fellow clergymen, sent out two communications—in some instances three—and in several cases he telephoned them.

Since June 4, 1960, 21 persons became life members as follows: Laverne R. Dauderman, Frederick D. Eyser, Merle U. Fox, Nevin R. Frantz, Robert M. Gast, Charles F. Greevy, Jacob W. Grether, Grant E. Harrity, J. Clark Hayes, Channing R. Jeschke, Nevin L. Kershner, Wilmer H. Long, Clarence B. Marsteller, Raymond M. Naylor, M. S. Jan Ports, Henry Reifschneider, W. D. Reimert, Archie C. Rohrbach, Rudolph G. Schade, Francis S. Scheirer and Mark G. Wagner.

We note with sadness the death of Frederick D. Eyser, life member, and of Matthew McNeary, J. Otto Reller and Herman S. Shelley, annual members.

NEWS IN BRIEF

- On May 31st the Rev. H. Y. Saito, Pastor and Stated Clerk of the Nippon Kirisuto Kyokai (The Presbyterian and Reformed Church in Japan, Omori Church) visited our archives at Lancaster. He used the occasion to research our materials in preparation for his study of the origin of American missions in Japan. His chief interest was to obtain information on the life and work of Rev. Ambrose Gring, the Church's first missionary to Japan, 1879.

- Our Society was represented by Miss Elizabeth C. Kieffer at the Pennsylvania State University Institute of Pennsylvania Life and Culture, June 22-24, 1960. She also represented us at the Society of American Archivists at its annual meeting in Boston, October 4-6, 1960. She availed herself of the opportunity at the same time to visit the Congregational Library and the Congregational Christian Historical Society Headquarters located in Boston.

- The president of the Society, Dr. David Dunn, has sent us greetings from The Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, California, where he and Mrs. Dunn will spend the current academic year. Dr. Dunn has retired from the chair of Church History at the Lancaster Theological Seminary. His present assignment in "retirement," as he reports, is "to introduce the E and R Church" on the west coast. His address is 1798 Scenic Avenue, Berkeley 9, California.

- Fifty-five volumes of the *Reformed Church Messenger* and the *Messenger* have been bound for use at the Archives in Lancaster. These volumes cover the years from 1867 to 1923. This completes the binding of the entire series from 1832 until the merger of the *Messenger* and *Advance* to form the *United Church Herald* in 1958. Its predecessor, the *Magazine of the German Reformed Church*, from November 1827 through 1831, in four volumes, will be rebound later.

• A budget of \$10,000 was adopted by The Congregational Christian Historical Society at the Providence Annual Meeting to be met by 1962. On April 27, 1962, the Society will celebrate its decennial at Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Center, Massachusetts.

• Guest book registrations for the past year at the Lancaster archives, for all types of use, included persons from 12 states and the District of Columbia. One visitor came from Germany and another from England. Several confirmation classes also visited our depository.

• In accordance with a practice begun in 1958 the Christian Education Press, Fred D. Wentzel, Director of Publications, and Helen E. Groninger, Sales Manager, again deposited a copy of each item published during the past year.

• Several Synods are gathering together files of their Synod Newsletters and/or newspapers and depositing them at our archives. We commend them for their zeal and urge all others to do likewise. Much valuable source materials are in danger of being lost during the transitional period in which the United Church of Christ finds itself at present.

THE ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Historical Society of the Evangelical and Reformed Church was held on June 9, 1961, at Eden Theological Seminary, Webster Groves, Missouri. This was preceded by a meeting of the Executive Committee. Dr. David Dunn presided at both gatherings.

Reports were made by the following:

1. Dr. Charles Spotts, treasurer, presented a financial report for the past year as well as a budget proposed by the biennium, 1962-63.
2. Dr. Lowell Zuck reported that the Western Chapter had met in May, 1960, when Dr. Josias Friedli read a paper.
3. For the Eastern Chapter, Dr. Dunn reported the transactions of the Spring meeting in Lancaster on June 6, 1961, in connection with the Commencement exercises of the Seminary. At this time Professor J. S. Prentice read a paper on "The Genesis of the Seminary," which was a section of his larger research project dealing with the history of First Reformed Church, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.
4. The Rev. Frank W. Snider, representing the Southern Chapter, reported growth of membership and other activities in his area.
5. Dr. William Toth reported as editor of *The Reporter*.
6. The Librarians of the Archives, Dr. Carl Schneider at Eden Theological Seminary, and Professor Herbert B. Anstaett at Franklin and Marshall College, reported as to the status of the Archives, acquisitions of the past year, and the progress of current enterprises.

The Eastern Chapter communicated a proposal which had been adopted at the meeting of the chapter on June 6, 1961, at Lancaster, Pennsylvania. It was requested that the Society "overture the synods of the church to send the synodical appropriations, currently allocated to the treasurer of the denominational Society, to the treasurers of the regional chapters." The objective in mind is to have synodical contributions within the orbit of a chapter go directly to the work and program of

the chapter. Any surplus at the end of the fiscal year should revert to the general treasury of the Society. The proposal was unanimously adopted.

Dr. Zuck read fraternal greetings from the Congregational Christian Historical Society. The general consensus emerged that the time had come to establish some conversations and, perhaps, closer connection with this society in view of the consummation of merger proceedings and the launching of the United Church of Christ. The nature of the approach to establish this relationship was left in the hands of the Society's Executive Committee.

The invitation of the Southern Chapter to hold the 1962 meeting somewhere within the bounds of Southern Synod was heartily accepted. The centennial meeting of the Society will be held in Lancaster during the Spring of 1963. Dr. Spotts was designated to read the paper on this festival occasion.

The featured speaker at this annual meeting was the Rev. August R. Suefflow, S.T.M., who is the director of the Concordia Historical Institute. This institute is the official central historical depository of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The address centered around the problems faced by all archivists as to what to collect in the way of local church records and materials on the activities of any denomination and its various agencies. He emphasized that his organization followed a dual pattern. Anything beyond the local congregational level is preserved in the central archives; all other material of local significance is retained by local or synodical archives. The central archives, however, include material related to institutions like hospitals, Children's Homes, Old People's Homes, etc.; likewise, the biographical material of ministers, teachers, and professors in denominational institutions.

GREETINGS FROM THE WEST COAST

Although we flew out on August 29 in just five hours, the "heartland" of the Evangelical and Reformed Church seems at times "a long way off." Perhaps one reason is that so few people to whom we talk—and they are very genial folks who have given us a gracious welcome among them—seem to know much, if anything, about our denomination: its origins, its history and its present activities. This impresses me all the more with the importance, yea urgency, of the task to which our Historical Society has long set itself, viz. to record the story of our forefathers and of those who down the years to the present day have been carrying out the mission of our communion. Our heritage, i.e., what we bring into the United Church of Christ, if known and understood, ought surely to inspire us and others not only to continue but to redouble our labors for God's Kingdom on earth. May God guide and strengthen us in this enterprise!

DAVID DUNN, *President*

October 2, 1961

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past.

T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*, "Burnt Norton."