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Presbyterian Historical Society

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Clockwise from near right:

The Board of Publication
821 Chestnut Street,
Philadelphia, Pa.



The Presbyterian House
386 Chestnut Street



The Board of Publication
and Sabbath Work
1334 Chestnut Street



Presbyterian Historical
Society
1229 Race Street

Witherspoon Building
Walnut at Juniper

Presbyterian Historical
Society
425 Lombard Street



Sites of the Historical Foundation



Left:
The Texarkana
National Bank
Building,
Texarkana, Texas



Right:
The Assembly Inn,
Montreat, N.C.



Left:
The Historical Foundation,
Montreat, N.C.

Below:
The museum room at the
Historical Foundation.



From String-Wrapped Bundles to Cubic Feet: The Development of the Archives in the Presbyterian Historical Society

by Kristin L. Gleeson, Frederick J. Heuser, Jr. and William B. Bynum

THE PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL Society's library and museum were created shortly after its founding in 1852. Its formal archives program, developed more than a century later, has become the society's greatest achievement in the last twenty-five years.¹

Historical Background—Philadelphia

Challenged by participation in a Society of American Archivists meeting in Raleigh, N.C., in the early 1960s, the PHS's executive director, William B. Miller, and research historian, Gerald Gillette, visited the headquarters of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (UPCUSA) at 475 Riverside Drive, New York City. They conducted an informal survey of the records situation in the church's major offices there, and explored the possibility of establishing an archival program. Already aware that the Board of National Missions (BNM) had inadvertently destroyed one hundred twenty-five years of its records during an office relocation, Miller and Gillette became extremely concerned when they learned that the records of the Board of Foreign Missions (BFM) faced a similar fate. During the late 1950s, a retired missionary had reviewed

the foreign mission correspondence since the board's creation in 1837 to about 1910, and had selected a sampling for microfilming. Once filmed, the original correspondence was discarded along with other valuable records that were not filmed. After several years of work, approximately 300 rolls of film had been produced under board auspices. Now in the mid-1960s the board's successor, the Commission on Ecumenical Missions and Relations (COEMAR), was preparing to continue the filming program. The post-1910 BFM correspondence was being sorted for filming and disposal. While the project reflected both valiant effort and good intentions by COEMAR staff, it demonstrated little expertise. The COEMAR staff was convinced to discontinue the project and to transfer the remaining sixty to seventy cabinet files, covering the period after 1910, to the Presbyterian Historical Society's Philadelphia office.

Miller and Gillette were alarmed at what they found in this visit to the offices of the denomination. In some cases, valuable records had long since been discarded. In other cases, veritable gold mines of information were neglected or forgotten in basements or warehouses.

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For instance, in a visit to the Neptune Warehouse, they discovered the long forgotten records of the Women's Missionary Society of the Cumberland Church, as well as drawers of useless cancelled checks several decades old. A subsequent visit to the BNM central file room made possible a quick assessment of its records and transfer agreement the day before that operation was to be abolished. Other discoveries were more humorous, such as the following memo from an anonymous church official regarding his housing at the forthcoming General Assembly: "Because I *snore* loudly, I am requesting a single room while I am at General Assembly."² This 1961 note was discovered in the early 1980s after having been filed in a New York office for more than twenty years.

Prior to the mid-1960s, the society, as the Department of History of the UPCUSA, (DOH) had sporadically collected some important national agency records. However, following Miller and Gillette's frequent sojourns to "475," the society officially offered its services as an historic repository for the denomination's national records. By promoting the permanent administrative and historical value of many of these records, Miller and Gillette ultimately saved much of the denomination's documentary heritage. The fruits of their labor were apparent. By 1968, the society had received nearly nineteen tons of records from New York. By 1972, an estimated fifty tons of records had been acquired from the church's boards and agencies in both New York and Philadelphia.³

The large scale transfer of board and agency records thus marked the beginning of the society's archives program. These materials complemented the miscellaneous manuscripts, records, and publications that had been randomly collected by the society's library staff over the years. While these materials richly documented the changes which had occurred in the denomination since

the turn of the century, their acquisition would also have a significant impact upon the role that the society would play within the denomination. Hence, the development of the society's archival program clearly marked a turning point in its history from that of a "learned society" to an administrative service agency of the UPCUSA.

Two areas that were directly effected by this transition were the society's staff and its physical plant. Evaluating and processing such huge quantities of material required professional expertise. Accordingly, the society's leadership looked to the federal government's National Archives in Washington, D.C., as a model. Following the Second World War, the National Archives was faced with the challenge of evaluating thousands of cubic feet of New Deal and World War II agency records. To meet this challenge, the federal government established an archives and records management program that would serve as a model for both profit and nonprofit institutions in the future.⁴ Beginning in the 1960s, the National Archives offered an intensive, two week training course on archival practices and procedures. While several of the society's staff had already attended this course, the sizeable transfer of the agency files clearly necessitated that additional staff gain this expertise.

The benefits of this newly acquired expertise were apparent within a short period of time. By 1972, over one hundred record groups had been processed, representing 900 cubic feet of material. The amount of unprocessed records, however, still consisted of several thousands of cubic feet. Two years later, the society received another large shipment of records, this time from the National Council of Churches (NCC) offices in New York. Originally encompassing more than twelve hundred cubic feet of space, the NCC archives consumed the last available space in the society's rela-

tively new facility on Lombard Street.⁵ In order to accommodate this growth, it was imperative that the society's facility be expanded. Completed in time for the one hundred twenty-fifth anniversary of the society's founding, a joint building project with St. Peter's Episcopal School and the Old Pine Street Church provided additional storage space in the new community center facility. This new archival annex, immediately adjacent to the society's building, was designed to house 33,000 cubic feet of records.⁶

By the early 1980s the archives staffing pattern had remained unchanged from what it had been in the late 1960s. While retirements and resignations resulted in the securing of more professionally trained and experienced archives staff, by 1987 it was evident that additional staff would be required to handle the more than 10,000 cubic feet of records housed in the annex, as well as to administer the denomination's records management program. Two events in the late 1980s resulted in this much needed staff increment. Following the administrative and programmatic merger of the Department of History with the Historical Foundation of the former Presbyterian Church in the U.S. in 1988—which resulted in the society assuming responsibility for more than five thousand additional cubic feet of archival records in Montreat, N.C.—two additional archives staff positions were secured for the society's Philadelphia office. In that same year, the denomination's relocation to Louisville, Ky., made possible the hiring of a records manager to administer that program in the new denominational headquarters under the administration of the archives department.⁷

Besides the increase in archives staff that occurred during the 1980s, significant changes were also evident in the manner in which the society's archival collections were administered as well. The new staff developed archival prac-

tices and policies that reflected the standards of the national professional organization, the Society of American Archivists. These practices included documenting the legal transfer and ownership of personal papers; standardizing control and access practices so that even unprocessed records could be located with ease; and application of more rigorous conservation methods. This increased professional management of the society's archival collections made possible the publication of *A Guide to Foreign Missionary Manuscripts in the Presbyterian Historical Society*, compiled by Frederick J. Heuser, Jr., in 1988.

While the thrust of the archival program focused upon the identification and preservation of the denomination's historical records, the society's leadership realized as early as the mid 1960s that the national church generated huge amounts of temporary records that all too frequently cluttered up file cabinets and consumed expensive office space. In order to resolve this dilemma, the society's leadership again looked to the federal model for guidance. Some society staff were allowed to participate in records management workshops conducted by the General Services Administration in Philadelphia.

The establishment of a records management program, similar to the one established by the federal government after the Second World War, could accomplish three objectives. First, it could ensure that the church's documentary heritage would not be discarded, as had been the practice too frequently in the past. Secondly, a records management program, if run effectively, could generate considerable cost savings by reducing storage costs. Finally, a records management program could provide national staff with better control over their temporary records, thereby increasing office efficiency.⁸

With these goals in mind, staff from the society attempted to preach the mer-

its of records management to national office personnel, first in Philadelphia and later in New York. Unfortunately, the "good news" of records management frequently went unheeded by well-meaning, but usually over-worked church officials. On some abstract level, these officials believed that records management offered the kind of salvation needed to cope with the information explosion that began after World War II. They quickly became believers in, but not practitioners of, records management.

For more than two decades, with mixed results, the PHS staff attempted to make believers out of non-believers and practitioners out of believers. The society's biggest handicap was one of visibility. With most of the UPCUSA offices located in New York by the mid-seventies, it was impossible for the Philadelphia-based staff to maintain the kind of presence requisite for an effective records management program. Equally crucial was the lack of continuous administrative support for records management at the church's highest levels. Ironically, during this time of UPCUSA hesitancy, PHS staff were loaned as consultants to the NCC, the Episcopal Church and the Southern Presbyterian Church to help initiate their archives and records management programs.

The decision to relocate the new Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) offices to Louisville provided the society's staff with a unique opportunity to convince the new denomination that records management was in its own best interest. The creation of a new position of records manager for the Louisville office by Stated Clerk James Andrews was a crucial first step in realizing a cost effective records management program.⁹ By 1991, it is estimated that this program has saved the denomination in excess of one million dollars.

Since the creation of the archives and records management programs more than twenty-five years ago, the society

has continued to be faithful to its mission of preserving the church's documentary heritage. With its excellent facilities in Philadelphia and Montreat, the society continues to serve an ever increasing clientele both within the church as well as the community at large.

Highlights of the Philadelphia Collections

Broadly speaking, the archival collections in Philadelphia contain the official records of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its thirteen predecessor denominations, with the exception of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S., whose archival records are housed in the regional office in Montreat, North Carolina. Reference to the Montreat collections is made later in this article.

The denominational records maintained in Philadelphia document the work of General Assembly boards, agencies, and units from 1789 to the present. Reports, minutes, correspondence, photographs, and legal records of judicial commissions detail the development of the national church as it evolved. Because of the denomination's connexional nature, official records from synods, presbyteries, and congregations constitute an important part of our documentary heritage and include minutes, reports, and legal records from these bodies. The story of individual Presbyterian congregations throughout the United States is reflected in session minutes, registers, trustee records and records from the various women's organizations within the particular church. Finally, because Presbyterians have been leaders in the ecumenical movement during the last century, the legacy of their involvement with the ecumenical community is richly documented in the records of the American Sunday School Union, the Federal Council of Churches, and the National Council of Churches, all of which are contained in the society's archives.

In addition to the official records, the contributions of individual Presbyterians constitute an important part of the church's heritage. Personal papers from former moderators, stated clerks, missionaries, ministers, and lay leaders illustrate the diversity of ministries that have enhanced the life and mission of the denomination.

Generally, the society's archival collections date from the early eighteenth century and reflect the vast panorama of American Presbyterianism. Early presbytery minutes, for example, document the experiences of the first American Presbyterians. The papers of William Tennent, Jr. and Gilbert Tennent, participants in the Old Side/New Side controversy and the Great Awakening, provide insight into this period. Charles Beatty's diaries recount both his and George Duffield's ministries to Native Americans and "distressed inhabitants of the frontier in the mid-eighteenth century, as well as "distressed Presbyterian Ministers."¹⁰ Francis Alison's speeches and correspondence with Ezra Stiles, president of Yale College, as well as sermons and correspondence of Samuel Davies and Aaron Burr, Sr., illuminate the experiences of other pre-Revolutionary War Presbyterians.

Presbyterians played an active role in the politics of the American Revolution, so much so that the War for Independence was sometimes referred to as a "Presbyterian war."¹¹ Collections documenting this period in American history include the papers of Elias Boudinot, a lawyer and businessman who served as President of the Congress under the Articles of Confederation, and the papers of Isaac Snowden, Jr., a Philadelphia merchant and trustee of the General Assembly.

Throughout much of the denomination's history, the conflicting themes of order versus ardor have characterized the American Presbyterian church's historic development. Beginning with the

Great Awakening and continuing to the present, theological controversies have done much to reshape our denominational landscape. With the advent of the Second Great Awakening in the early nineteenth century, for example, these tensions gave rise to the formation of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and are documented in a variety of judicatory records.

As a result of the 1906 reunion of the majority of the Cumberland Church with the parent Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., the society holds the most extensive collection of national, regional and local Cumberland records available. The continuing impact of revivalism and the conflict over voluntary versus denominational mission organizations helped produce "Old School" and "New School" divisions that were reflected in the official church records, as well as in private papers such as those of Artemus Bullard. Bullard, a New England minister, supported the Sunday school movement, corresponded with Lyman and Catherine Beecher on a variety of issues, and became active in home mission and temperance work. The records of Lane Seminary document Lyman Beecher's involvement with that institution from when he was called to its leadership in 1832. The papers of New School theologian Albert Barnes further illuminate New School positions on slavery, theology, and temperance.

The Civil War produced yet another division within the "Old School" denomination, as churches in the South seceded to form the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America (PCCSA). Church judicatory records document these troubled times, as do the papers of John Palmer Finley who served a congregation in Missouri during that conflict. The papers of Alexander Taggart McGill evidence his involvement with the General Assembly and contain correspondence with his son who served in the Civil War.

The American Presbyterian church

considers itself a missionary church with every member a missionary. The dominical pronouncement, "Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," was a major concern of American Presbyterian men and women from the rise of the nineteenth century missionary movement to the present day. The church's institutional fulfillment of this biblical injunction has changed dramatically over time, reflecting its differing evangelism emphases and methodologies over the centuries.¹² The extent of the commitment to evangelism is richly documented in the various home and foreign mission records in the society's archives.

The mission work of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (PCUSA) and its successors was neither restricted to one group of people nor to the geographical bounds of the continental United States. Efforts among Native Americans date from the seventeenth century to the present. One of the society's richest collections documenting work with Native Americans is the American Indian Correspondence Collection. These records, which date from 1832, consist of letters written to the Board of Foreign Missions by missionaries working among various tribes throughout the United States. Late nineteenth and twentieth century work with Native Americans is documented in the records of the Board of Home and later National Missions records.

Mission work beyond the continental United States was conducted under auspices of the Western Foreign Missionary Society, and by its successors, the BFM and then by COEMAR. The early years of the board's work is documented in the area secretaries' files and in the papers of Eliza and Elisha Pope Swift and John and Walter Lowrie. The area secretaries' files, which consist of correspondence, reports, minutes, and photographs from the mid-nineteenth century until the 1970s, contain the richest account of the church's mission work

in Africa, India, Persia (Iran), Mesopotamia (Iraq), Syria/Lebanon, China, Japan, Chosen (Korea), the Philippines, Siam (Thailand), Laos, Mexico, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, and Venezuela.

Personal papers from former missionaries offer valuable supplement to official documentation and additional insight into the mission experience. Collections from mission physicians, educators, and evangelists consist of correspondence, diaries, journals, and photographs. The richness of these materials documents the missionary experience from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day.¹³

The scope of the Presbyterian Church's nineteenth and twentieth century home mission work was broad and involved ministries to diverse indigenous populations. Following the Civil War, the PCUSA launched the Committee of Missions to Freedmen (later the Board of Missions to Freedmen) that resulted in the establishment of schools and churches for African Americans. Work with Hispanics and Native Americans in the southwest and with the peoples of Alaska commenced during the same time. These experiences are detailed in the records of the Board of Home (later Domestic or National) Missions. The papers of Sheldon Jackson, which consist of diaries, journals, correspondence, and photographs, document his work with indigenous peoples in the Northwest, Southwest, and in Alaska.¹⁴ Home mission work with the inhabitants of Appalachia and other rural areas, with migrant workers in the Northeast and Northwest, and with recently arrived Chinese, Japanese, Hispanic, and Italian peoples are also extensively reflected in the Board of National Missions collections.

Foreign and domestic mission records also offer an important source of documentation of the work of American Presbyterian women in missionary move-

ment. Like other reform movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the women's missionary movement attracted large numbers of women whose idealism was religiously inspired.¹⁵ By 1915, there were more than three million dues-paying members.¹⁶ In the PCUSA, women raised millions of dollars for missions that supported the recruitment of female missionaries, the construction of schools and hospitals, and the publication of nationwide periodicals, such as *Women's Work For Women*. Congregational, presbyterial, synodical, and national level records, as well as the papers of women missionaries, provide a rich source of documentation for this aspect of women's history. Women's struggle for equality within the church is also recorded in General Assembly minutes and in the papers of Lois Stair, the first woman moderator of that body.

The ecumenical record of the American Presbyterian church is amply documented in a number of important collections. Mission records from both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries evidence this work both in the United States and overseas. The records of the American Sunday School Union, whose membership and leadership was largely Presbyterian, demonstrate both the comity and conflict characteristic of nineteenth century church development on the frontier and in America's urban areas.

On the other side of the nineteenth century Protestant ecumenical emphasis, was the rather heavy involvement of American Presbyterian leadership in the nativist movement, an important aspect of which was anti-Roman Catholicism. This too is covered in the society's records. Important sources for documenting twentieth century ecumenism are contained in the records of the Federal Council of Churches and its successor, the National Council of Churches of Christ. Social programs which promoted race relations, welfare work, the peace

movement, and other subjects are extensively documented in these collections.

The Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy, which emerged by the end of the nineteenth century, symbolized the continuing conflict of order versus ardor which has characterized the denomination since its origins. How this conflict was played out in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is documented in church records and in the papers of such Presbyterians as Cumberland Presbyterian minister G.W. Shelton; Union Seminary, New York, professor Charles Briggs; Princeton Seminary professor John Gresham Machen; and radio evangelist Carl McIntire.

During and following the Second World War, Presbyterians, like other American Christians, attempted to reconcile the reality of global warfare with the principles of the Christian gospel. Presbyterians supported the quest for a just and durable peace during World War II and a called for a postwar establishment without hatred and revenge. The records of the Department of War Services and the Wartime Services Commission illustrate how the church attempted to deal with the victims of global conflict: servicemen, their widows, wives and families, Jewish refugees, and other displaced peoples. The church's support of those individuals for whom conscientious objection to military service was a moral imperative is documented in the records of the Federal Council and National Council of Churches and other collections commencing with World War II through the Vietnam era. The denomination's efforts to assist in the post World War II recovery took many forms and is detailed in the records of the New Life Movement and the Restoration Fund, which by 1952 had collected twenty-three million dollars.¹⁷

By mid-century, many Presbyterians could no longer reconcile their Christianity with the racial injustices that plagued the United States. General As-

sembly records detail the emerging struggle for civil rights in the 1950s, particularly in the official and personal papers of Stated Clerk Eugene Carson Blake. In the 1960s, the denomination's position on civil rights was articulated in the records of the Commission on Religion and Race (later the Council on Church and Race), the Board of Christian Education, the Board of National Missions, COEMAR, and through its involvement with the National Council of Churches.

In 1983, the Presbyterian Church in the United States and the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. reunited after almost a century and a quarter of separation. With this long awaited reunion, the predecessor denomination's two historical agencies in Philadelphia and merged into one administrative agency, thereby significantly expanding the resources which document the Presbyterian experience in America.

Historical Background—Montreat

It might be said that what is now the Department of History (Montreat) began with a bundle of manuscripts, for it was Samuel M. Tenney's discovery of seminary notebooks by theologian Robert L. Dabney in a Houston bookstore in 1902 that inspired the organization of the Presbyterian Historical Society of the Synod of Texas.¹⁸ In 1927 that society became the official historical agency of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) and moved to Montreat, N.C., under the new name "Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches."

Before the move to Montreat, collection efforts concentrated on printed materials. Nevertheless, the society acquired a few noteworthy manuscript collections during this period. Among them were papers of Abner A. Porter, Thomas E. Peck, and Daniel Baker. Tenney did not intend to limit the collection to the PCUS, for among the earliest archival

records deposited were minutes of several Texas presbyteries of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.¹⁹

After the collection became an official denominational repository, its archival and manuscript components grew rapidly through donation, deposit, and occasionally purchase. In the years 1927–1937 the Historical Foundation acquired such important manuscripts as the John Craig autobiography, the J. William Flinn collection, the Alexander J. McKelway collection, and papers of William H. Ruffner, Anna C. Safford, Thomas Smyth, James G. Snedecor, James H. Thornwell, and John Leighton Wilson. In the same period about 150 congregations, from almost every state covered by the PCUS, deposited their minutes and registers with the Foundation. A few manuscript volumes of synod and presbytery minutes, along with many printed minutes, were also received. Some of the latter were transferred from the PHS to Montreat during this same period. Besides PCUS records, the Foundation acquired records of the present Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church and minutes of some Cumberland Presbyterian congregations and presbyteries.²⁰

Many other records arrived through the unique Local Church History Program, which began in 1930. The original goal was to encourage women to record their part in the life of the church in the form of a typed annual report from each congregation. Tenney expanded that idea by encouraging the women's historian of each congregation to record all of its activities, not only those of the Woman's Auxiliary. The program grew rapidly under Tenney and his successor Thomas H. Spence, taking up 950 large binders by the time the Historical Foundation moved into new quarters in 1954. Although Spence's description of the program as "One of Christendom's Major Historical Endeavors" was a trifle exaggerated, the annual historical re-

ports provide a primary account of local church life unmatched by any other denomination.²¹

More conventional archival collections also grew significantly during Spence's long tenure as director (1940–1969). In 1943 he published a checklist of General Assembly, synod, and presbytery minutes in the collection. By 1950 the Foundation held 4,300 volumes (printed and manuscript) of General Assembly, synod, and presbytery records, including, Spence claimed, minutes of “more than 95 per cent” of synod meetings held in the South since 1788. Microfilming began in 1958, and by 1965 almost all minutes of PCUS synods and presbyteries had been filmed in a General Assembly–financed project said to be the first such comprehensive effort by any Reformed denomination. Although acquisition of records of the national boards of the PCUS does not appear to have been a high priority in the Foundation's early decades, manuscript minutes of several boards found their way into the archival collections. Foreign mission records were more sought after, and a respectable number of mission minutes were acquired by the 1960s.²²

Under Spence's leadership the Foundation continued to acquire important personal papers. Among noteworthy collections accessioned by 1960 were those of Robert F. Campbell, Samuel R. Houston, Walter L. Lingle, and John M. Wells.²³ Important additions during the last years of Spence's directorship included papers of Frank A. Brown, George W. Harlan, D. Clay Lilly, James W. Marshall, the Morton family, and Benjamin M. Palmer.²⁴

In the first few years after Kenneth J. Foreman, Jr., succeeded Spence as director, the Historical Foundation faced a major expansion of its archival mission. Systematic records management in the PCUS began in 1970 with the Board of World Missions, and the 1972 re-

structuring of the denomination mandated that all General Assembly boards and agencies send their “records and other archival material” to Montreat.²⁵ Staff from the Philadelphia office served as consultants to PCUS staff in Atlanta and Montreat to facilitate this restructuring. Because of this mandate, the Foundation's already crowded building was filled to overflowing within a few years. Montreat's first archivist, Lannae Graham, was hired in 1974, but little headway could be made in processing or even providing access to these valuable archival materials until more space was available.²⁶

While General Assembly level records accumulated faster than they could be processed, personal papers in the collection began to receive long overdue attention. Lannae Graham and her successors Jane Britton and Robert Benedetto gradually made headway against a large volume of collections whose locations had been known only by one or two staff members. Over a period of years, archivists and assistants re-housed the manuscripts in acid-free boxes and folders and produced written descriptions and finding aids. The completion of Freeland Hall in 1982 provided room for easy access to the collections and eventually for personal manuscripts to be housed separately from archival materials.

These efforts culminated in Benedetto's *Guide to the Manuscript Collections of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.* (1990) which brought together descriptions of the full wealth of Montreat's holdings of personal papers as well as notes on related holdings of other institutions.²⁷ As the former Historical Foundation—now the Department of History (Montreat) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—continues to collect significant manuscripts of Presbyterians in the South, new descriptions can be incorporated in the database that was set up when the guide was compiled.

With the manuscript collections under thorough intellectual control and physical order for the first time, the Montreat staff was able to devote more attention to the archival collections. Among these was the most important and surprising discovery of denominational records in recent years: over seventy volumes of World Missions minutes, "lost" for fifteen years, which arrived in 1988 after being rescued from an Atlanta warehouse.²⁸ The archives continue to acquire congregational records, along with the remaining records of former PCUS presbyteries, synods, and General Assembly agencies.

Highlights of the Montreat Collections

Archives and manuscripts in Montreat span three centuries. Though the great majority of collections date from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there are some noteworthy manuscripts from the eighteenth century, such as the autobiography of John Craig, first "settled" Presbyterian pastor in western Virginia; the journal of Samuel Houston, recording topics of sermons by several Virginia ministers during the Revolutionary War; and sermons and catechetical notes of John Newton, early Georgia minister. Important papers of the early nineteenth century include those of the Hoge family, ministers and educators in Virginia and Ohio, and the Morton family. Both families were connected with the early days of Union Theological Seminary in Virginia.²⁹

Later theological educators in the PCUS tradition are well represented in the manuscript collections. Sermons, articles, lectures, and correspondence of James H. Thornwell, Robert L. Dabney, Thomas E. Peck, John L. Girardeau, Robert A. Webb, Thomas Cary Johnson, J. McDowell Richards, and others reveal how they interpreted the faith. Records of the Board of Christian Education and its predecessors (1866–1973) document PCUS efforts to educate laity and minis-

ters. Related to the theme of Christian education is a large archival collection of "Young Peoples' Material" dealing with the youth organizations of the church, ca. 1910–1960.

Education in general has been a traditional Presbyterian concern. Papers of educators include those of Henry Ruffner, president of Washington College (Va.), and his son William Henry Ruffner, minister, geologist, and Virginia's first Superintendent of Public Instruction; Robert H. Reid, founder of two schools in Reidville, S.C.; and Sam B. McLane, president of the Texas–Mexican Industrial Institute. The archives hold records of schools including Oklahoma Presbyterian College (Durant), Silliman College (Clinton, La.), and Bellewood Seminary (Anchorage, Ky.).

Presbyterian education has traditionally fostered a well-defined theology, but differences in theological interpretation have played a prominent role in denominational history. Collections at Montreat spotlighting some of these controversies in the South include papers of Robert Y. Russel regarding the Independent Presbyterians of the Carolinas; the Samuel J. Baird Papers and Francis McFarland Papers, with valuable information on the Old School–New School schism; the James Woodrow and J. William Flinn collections of material on the issue of evolution in the 1880s; the James McDowell Richards Papers, including correspondence regarding several heresy trials in the 1920s and '30s; and records of the Ad Interim Committee on a New Confession of Faith (1969–1977).

Regardless of theological battles and scholarly treatises, the sermon is probably the most influential medium for transmitting Christian doctrine. Besides those in collections mentioned earlier, the manuscript holdings include sermons of Daniel Baker, Benjamin M. Palmer, Joseph Ruggles Wilson, Kenneth G. Phifer, John A. Redhead, and many others.

Southern Presbyterians' involvement

in issues beyond their own church is demonstrated by early nineteenth-century records of interdenominational benevolent associations such as the Liberty County (Ga.) Female Cent Society and several Virginia societies whose minutes are in the Isaac N. Naff Collection. Twentieth-century social and ecumenical activity is represented by papers including those of John M. Wells, whose correspondence documents early twentieth-century relations between the PCUS and the Federal Council of Churches, the Alliance of Reformed Churches, and the PCUSA; B. Hoyt Evans, member of the PCUS/Reformed Church in America union committee in the late 1960s; Carolyn Beaird, member of the PCUS/UPCUSA reunion committee; Walter L. Lingle, who did much to awaken the denomination's social conscience; D. Clay Lilly, who organized church and society conferences in the 1920s; and Alexander J. McKelway, leader in the movement against child labor. Records of the Board of Christian Education and papers of its executive secretary Edward D. Grant include much about the PCUS response to political and social issues from the 1930s to the 1970s.

The topic of social action, especially in the South, naturally leads into the question of race relations. Many collections deal with African Americans and the church from the days of slavery to recent decades. The archives hold the early records of Zion Presbyterian Church (Charleston, S.C.), the first Presbyterian church in the South intended primarily for blacks. Records of the Committee of Colored Evangelization, the General Assembly's Committee on Negro Work, and the Division of Negro Work of the Board of Church Extension chronicle PCUS activity with African Americans. Notable manuscript collections are those of Oscar B. Wilson, James G. Snedecor, and William M. Sikes, who were faculty members at Stillman Institute and promoters of the African Ameri-

can work of the PCUS. Other racial-ethnic groups are also represented. Papers of Bella M. Gibbons, Cyrus Kingsbury, and Solomon Hotema, among others, deal with Native Americans in Oklahoma, as do the significant Ebenezer Hotchkin Collection and the records of the Choctaw Mission and Indian Presbytery. Mexican American work of the PCUS is detailed in collections including the papers of Walter S. Scott and George W. Crofoot.

Women's experience is documented in the Local Church History Program mentioned earlier, in the records of the Board of Women's Work and its predecessors and successors, in the minutes of synodical and presbyterial women's organizations, and in the large Women of the Church Synodical and Presbyterial Collection in the archives. Significant personal papers of Southern Presbyterian women include those of Emma E. Sibley, one of the founders of the PCUS national women's organization; Janie W. McGaughey and Evelyn L. Green, executives of the Board of Women's Work; Jane Evans Elliot, whose diary chronicles forty-five years of everyday life in the nineteenth century; and many others, some of whom are mentioned elsewhere in this article.

Some collections were assembled by historians of Presbyterianism in particular areas of the United States. Notable among these are James W. Marshall's monumental collection on Alabama Presbyterianism and the Robert S. Sanders Papers dealing with portions of Kentucky. The papers of William S. Red and of the Tenney family have much material on the church in Texas. The Robert L. Neely Collection is an unpublished manuscript history of the Synod of Memphis; Neill R. McGeachy's papers include research material for his history of Concord (North Carolina) Presbyter; and John R. Herndon's papers include material for a proposed history of Abingdon Presbytery in Virginia.

One of the crucial eras in national as well as regional history, the Civil War, is covered in the Southern Assembly Collection documenting the organization of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America, and in papers of PCCSA founder James H. Thornwell, PCCSA moderator James A. Lyon, Charleston minister Thomas Smyth, *Southern Presbyterian* editor Abner A. Porter, minister-refugees John Edwards and Robert Q. Mallard, Confederate Army chaplains Ephraim H. Harding and Henry M. Smith, Confederate soldier Samuel F. Tenney, Union soldier Cary M. Marriott, and Virginia housewives Annie G. Baker and Kate Stine.

Among the denominational records surviving from the Civil War period are those of the Executive Committee of Home Missions, beginning in 1861. Records of the Board of National Ministries, the committee's successor, include such items as the extensive files (1956–1973) of James L. Doom, the board's church architecture consultant. Missions and church extension in the United States are also documented in papers such as those of George W. Harlan of Missouri, Edward O. Guerrant of Kentucky, Robert F. Campbell of North Carolina, and denominational executive Samuel L. Morris, as well as the collections dealing with racial-ethnic minorities mentioned earlier.

Montreat's collections also include much on missions in other lands. In the archives are records of the PCUS Executive Committee of Foreign Missions (later Board of World Missions) beginning in 1892, and of missions in China (beginning 1868), Japan (beginning 1888), Korea (beginning 1903), and Congo/Zaire (beginning 1899), among others. The Foreign Missions Committee began compiling biographical information on missionaries about 1890. Among the manuscript collections is a large "Missionary Correspondence Collection" consisting of letters from all major PCUS

mission fields, 1929–1983, which may be supplemented with microfilm of the same type of correspondence dating back to 1916. Important papers of individual missionaries include those of Kate Bias Cowan in Brazil; Frank A. Brown, Anna C. Safford, and Wade H. Venable in China; Alonzo L. Edmiston, Eugene R. Kellersberger, William M. Morrison, and William H. Sheppard in the Congo; Margaret M. Archibald, Vernon A. Crawford, Lyle W. Peterson, and Langdon C. M. Smythe in Japan; John S. Nisbet, John F. Preston, William D. Reynolds, and Martha Ingold Tate in Korea; and Hubert W. Brown, Hervey L. Reid, and William A. Ross in Mexico. Papers of important foreign mission administrators include those of John Leighton Wilson (incorporating his correspondence as a pioneer missionary in West Africa before the Civil War), Samuel H. Chester, and Egbert W. Smith.

Though historians tend to concentrate on the international and national roles of denominations, most believers experience the church only at the congregational level. With session records of over 1,000 congregations ranging geographically from Maryland to New Mexico and chronologically from 1743 to the present, Montreat's collections are well suited for the study of Presbyterian history "from the bottom up." Session records are invaluable to students of family history; social historians also find them useful, especially the detailed reports of trials for moral offenses often found in early session minutes. With archival records from the congregational to General Assembly levels and manuscript collections dealing with all aspects of the life of the church, the Montreat office remains the premier institution for the study of Presbyterianism in the South.

NOTES

¹In 1925, the Presbyterian Historical Society (PHS) was adopted by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. as the Depart-

ment of Historical Research and Conservation, a name later changed to the Department of History (DOH). From that time, the Society's manuscript and archival collections have been administered by the Department of History staff. For purposes of brevity, the term "society," in this article, will refer to the Department of History (Philadelphia and Montreat) as well as to the Presbyterian Historical Society. Information regarding the development of the archival program was obtained primarily through interviews with William B. Miller and Gerald W. Gillette.

²Records of the Office of the General Assembly, Department of the Stated Clerk.

³PHS, 121st Annual Report, 1972, 4.

⁴For more treatment on this, see Wilmer O. Maedke, Mary F. Robek, and Gerald F. Brown, *Information and Records Management*, 2nd edition (Enrico, California: Glencoe Publishing Co, Inc., 1984), chapter 2.

⁵PHS, 120th Annual Report, 337; 121st Annual Report, 271f.

⁶PHS, 125th Annual Report, 795.

⁷PHS, 137th Annual Report, 130.

⁸*The Presbyterian Key* 45:1, 1ff.

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰Guy Klett, ed., *Journals of Charles Beatty, 1762–1769*, (University Park: Penn State University, 1962), foreword.

¹¹James G. Leyburn, "Presbyterian Immigrants and the American Revolution," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 54:1, p. 24.

¹²Frederick J. Heuser, Jr., "Culture, Feminism, and the Gospel: American Presbyterian Women and Foreign Missions, 1870–1923," Ph.D. dissertation, Temple University, 1991, p. 1.

¹³For a more comprehensive review of archival foreign mission records see, Frederick J. Heuser, Jr., *A Guide To Foreign Missionary Manuscripts in the Presbyterian Historical Society*, (Westport, Ct.: Greenwood Press, 1988).

¹⁴Gerald W. Gillette, "Native American Research Materials in the Presbyterian Historical Society," *American Presbyterians*, 65:3, 234.

¹⁵Heuser, "Culture, Feminism and the Gospel," p. 244.

¹⁶Patricia Hill, *The World Their Household: The Woman's Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation, 1870–1920* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1985), pp. 3f.

¹⁷James H. Smylie, "American Presbyterians: A Pictorial History," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 63:1 & 2, p. 209.

¹⁸Thomas H. Spence, Jr., *The Historical Foundation and Its Treasures*, rev. ed. (Montreat, NC: Historical Foundation, 1960), p. 1.

¹⁹Inventory of "Original Tenney Collection, 1926," Accession Records, PC(USA) DOH (Montreat).

²⁰Mary McWhorter Tenney, "A Partial Survey of the Manuscript Church Records and Papers in the Historical Foundation...1937," Accession Records, Montreat; compare 1926 inventory cited above.

²¹Ruth D. See, ed., *Local Church History Program, Historical Foundation, 1930–1980* (Montreat: Historical Foundation, 1980), not paginated; "Growth of History Far Exceeds All Records of Past," *Historical Foundation News* (hereafter *HF News*), April 1952, p. 4.

²²Spence, *Survey of Records and Minutes in the Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches* (Montreat: Historical Foundation, 1943), p. 7; *HF News*, April 1950, p. 3; "Certain Minutes Available on Film," *ibid.*, April 1965, p. 1; "Microfilming," *ibid.*, July 1965, p. 3; "The Foundation and Other Agencies of the Church," *ibid.*, January 1961, p. 2.

²³Spence, *Historical Foundation and Its Treasures*, p. 74.

²⁴"Brown Papers at Foundation," *HF News*, October 1968, p. 1; "The Year 1964," *ibid.*, April 1965, p. 4; "Morton Family Papers Rich in Virginia History," *ibid.*, July 1961, p. 1; "More Palmer Manuscripts," *ibid.*, January 1962, p. 1.

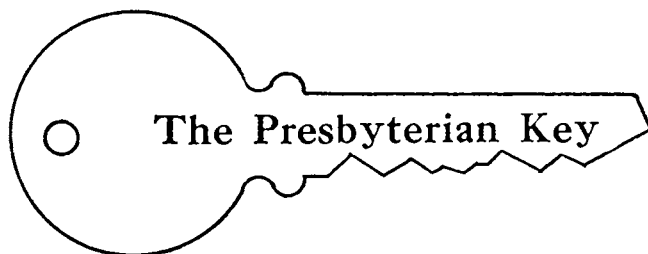
²⁵"Report to the 1971 General Assembly," *HF News*, July 1971, p. 5 (Note: this report was not published in General Assembly minutes); Presbyterian Church in the U.S., *Minutes of the General Assembly*, 1972, pt. 1, pp. 39f., 101, 194.

²⁶"Historical Foundation Appoints New Archivist," *HF News*, Winter 1981, p. 1.

²⁷Robert Benedetto, *Guide to the Manuscript Collections of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1990).

²⁸"Foreign Mission Records Recovered," *HF News*, Spring 1988, p. 3.

²⁹Descriptions of archival and manuscript collections are based on Benedetto's guide, and on information from the Montreat staff.



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