

# Early Historical Record of Zion Lutheran Church, Manheim, Pa.

By REV. J. F. KNITTLE, Ph.D.

It was Solomon, the King of wisdom of Israel, who, in reviewing his life, declared that "Of the making of many books there is no end," and we might apply that statement today and say that of the writing of things historical there is no end. But history is not to be ignored, nor is it to be set aside and regarded as possessing no value. To many people this is a fascinating subject and organizations have been formed to perpetuate the study of history and to preserve for posterity these records, which become more valuable as time passes. For such a purpose this Historical Society has been organized. The work it has done in various fields to preserve the history of our great county is its best asset.

Our county is not only rich in historical matters relating to the development of the industrial life in its various phases, but also has made its valuable contribution in the realm of invention, education, statesmanship and the spiritual. This latter is to be seen in the history of the various denominations that have had their origin and development here. Perhaps our pioneers were more devoted and consecrated to this phase of the life of Lancaster County than may be manifest today. To them their faith, their Bible, their spirit of Christianity was a deep reality. By these they lived and wrought and died. Upon these things they pillowed their heads at night and in the hour of death found peace and comfort. It is indeed well to recognize this fact. We are happy to know that the church is a recognized part of the rich historical life of Lancaster County.

Lutheranism had an early start in our county. Into that phase of the subject we will not enter. We will confine our paper to that which relates only to the early history of one congregation—that is, Zion Lutheran congregation, Manheim, Pa. That part of the history of this congregation which relates to the "Festival of the Red Rose" and Henry William Stiegel, is well known and has been presented to this Society before. Our task shall be to confine this paper to the first Church Record Book or Register which covers a period of seventy years from 1771 to 1841.

It has been the happy privilege of the present pastor to serve this historical congregation for twenty-eight years. During this time he has made a comprehensive study of its history. He has spent much time in research and in the translation of this first Record Book from the German script, in which it is written, into English. This work of translation occupied a period of almost three years, the work being done only at intervals when time from regular duties of the pastorate permitted. Though it was a tedious work because of the various kinds of handwriting in which this book is written and

also because of certain local expressions that are found in the book, yet it was an interesting work and one in which the writer of this paper felt he was rendering a service to his congregation in order to give them the contents and value of this first book, containing the early records of this pioneer congregation.

This first Record Book was imported from England. It bears in its paper the watermark of the English crown. On the inside of its cover is indicated the price paid for the book, namely, eleven shillings. During the passing years this old book has naturally been in many hands. Some of its pages have been removed; by whom this was done, we do not know. Perhaps by some souvenir hunters. And with the removal of some pages has gone also some historical data, such as names of those found in the lists of members and some of the business transactions.

Because of limitations in both time and space, it will be impossible to give any detailed account of the contents of this book. We shall therefore confine ourselves to a recital of that which we may consider the high lights of the book, setting forth its arrangement, contents, classifications, parts of its Constitution and By-laws and some of its business transactions. We believe that such a recital will serve our purpose to set forth its historical value.

The Title Page sets forth the following:

CHURCH BOOK  
THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CONGREGATION  
AT MANHEIM, LANCASTER COUNTY, PA.

Contents:

1. The Baptisms
2. The Confirmations
3. The Weddings
4. The Burials
5. The Communicants
6. The Church rules, together with the order of business of the Elders and Trustees and the parishioners, are herein set forth, began in an orderly manner, in the year of our Lord, 1771.

By

Frederick Augustus Conrad Muhlenberg, Pastor Loci.  
Manheim, 6th day of May,  
1771.

The Preface to the book is of interest and we give it in its entire scope. It appears under the Latin caption, "Pro Notitia," translated "For or In Behalf of Knowledge."

"Inasmuch as the congregation of this place desired to succeed and also was now and then in confusion, and until this time there was no orderly church book maintained. Therefore, finally,

this arrangement is here set forth anew, by the help of God, because of necessity, an orderly Church Book, which was adopted in the month of May, 1771, and was presented by John Ludwig Truckenmiller, as a voluntary gift, for which he paid 11 Shillings."

This is then closed with another Latin phrase, "So quod testatur," translated "Which is hereunto Witnessed."

Signed—F. A. C. Muhlenberg, Pastor Loci.

Next in order follows the Church Discipline or Church Constitution at **Manheim, 1771**. This is set forth in three chapters or articles. Chapter I, concerning the Pastors and school teachers, for in those early days the school teacher was closely allied with the church and often was under the supervision of the officials of the church. This chapter has thirteen sections and let me assure you that they are interesting to study. The first section sets forth the duties of the pastor. He is to preach on Sunday and on Festival days; at funerals and other solemn occasions. He shall base his preaching on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets and the unaltered Augsburg Confession, and shall declare the same publicly, purely, clearly, intelligently and edifyingly. He was also to conduct a prayer service in the church. (This service is rapidly becoming eliminated from our churches today. But our forefathers believed in prayer. It still has power. Blessed is that congregation that still has time for such a service.)

The Holy Communion shall be administered at stated times to all such as prove to be worthy after the service of Confession, and the sick shall be visited and also have the Holy Supper administered to them. The Catechism shall be taught both publicly and privately and also in the local school it shall be taught.

An interesting feature was the fact that annually, following the meeting of Synod, a general report was to be forwarded to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Europe. Annual congregational meetings were to be held for the transaction of all business relating to the congregation. The pastor must attend all annual conventions of the church, and only with very good and valid reasons can he be excused. No preacher or student, who is not approved after legal manner and called and ordained after the Evangelical Lutheran Constitution, shall be placed in his position as pastor.

In case of a vacancy, the congregation shall proceed to call a pastor who stands well with the union of Ministers. The manner of extending a call to a pastor is of interest. The Elders shall first consider this matter very carefully before God and shall vote for such a man out of the Ministerium, who may appear before the congregation and preach a trial sermon, and then permit the congregation to question and vote if they will accept this man as their spiritual leader and can retain him if two-thirds of the church council and communicant membership of the congregation agree and the vote be just. And should there be no election and no candidate to be found, then the official

Board shall write to the Ministerium of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Europe and call a man.

Another interesting item was the order of procedure against a pastor whose life, conduct or example was not in harmony with God's Word. If he be found guilty, the following proceedings were to be followed: (1) The Elders of the congregation shall place before the pastor the complaints and observations of worthy witnesses and if found guilty, he shall be admonished to better living, but if such admonition shall not help, then shall (2) the entire Church Council assemble and shall go over the accusations again and if this shall not avail, then (3) this matter shall be taken before the annual or special session of Synod by the President of the Synod and the entire matter thoroughly considered and if found guilty, he shall be suspended from his office and excommunicated, and a thorough report thereof made public, and the vacant congregation shall proceed to call another Pastor.

Chapter II of the Constitution has to do with the Government of the Members of the Congregation. To show the high conception that was held by our early Fathers in matters spiritual, let me quote the opening paragraph of this second chapter: "To all classes, love: Protestants, Evangelical Christians, English, Swedish and German Nations, (the inherited custom of this country, who more or less disintegrated from the high Church) have found it necessary to choose a certain number of able citizens and steadfast men out of their midst, which the Trustees of the Congregation have named for this purpose; (1) Because the real estate of the church and school first was bought from one or another of the naturalized citizens as an inheritance and personal property from the children's children and shall be given over and entrusted by such through a declaration of a number of faithful men for the congregation. (2) By order of such it shall be voted, that without exception, all the buildings and belongings pertaining to the official service of the church, this or that Protestant order be established and remain as true for all time whereto they of the surrounding country shall find justice and special safety and support."

Then follows a section which relates to the election of Trustees, the number of which shall be four. From the membership of the congregation these men shall be selected and placed before the congregation for their vote. One interesting item in this section is the fact if one desires to decline and not accept the office, he shall not be excused without paying into the church Treasury not less than twenty shillings in current money.

Following Scriptural example in the matter of a division of service among others, the early church acted upon this principle. In this congregation a committee of two men was selected from the official Board whose duty it was to hear all petty matters and to adjust differences between the members and to see that all debts and interest were decreased annually and to witness naturalization papers and other legal papers relating to the good standing of the congregation. This committee was also to prepare the annual report of the congregation and to place it before the congregation for their action.

But when more important action must be taken on matters pertaining to the welfare of the congregation, then the entire Church Council must be called together by public announcement by the Pastor on Sunday and the time and place announced and no member is to be absent.

Chapter III of the Constitution has to do with the Membership of the Congregation. To give you an insight into the high standard set for the membership, we quote the following: "Whoever is an orderly parishioner of our Evangelical Lutheran Church, and has a voice through voting and desires therein to serve an office, he must according to the commandment of Christ: (1) Be baptized. (2) Partake of the Lord's Supper. (3) Must not become manifest or walk in the way of the flesh, but walk in a Christian manner and conduct an honest business. (4) Sign the church discipline and live conformable thereto. (5) Be able to give his free-will offering and gifts for the support of the church and school and teachers according to love, be it little or much, if it be only a drink of cold water. (6) To perform his duties with obedience and to allow himself to be set right by the Church Council or Pastor when he has made an error. (7) To conduct himself before God and the magistrate, the Elders and Teachers in Christian love."

The Constitution is then brought to a close by this paragraph: "This above church discipline shall remain permanent in our Evangelical Lutheran Congregation at Manheim and shall be legal until two-thirds of the Church Council with the consent of two-thirds of the regular congregation, because of necessity and advantage find something herein to better, to add thereto, or to take therefrom, as all of this is declared by our hand and signature."

Manheim, 1771.

Next in order follows a list of the Pastors who served the congregation from 1771 to 1841. We herewith present their names and years of service: (1) Rev. Frederick Augustus Conrad Muhlenberg, 1771 to 1778. (2) Rev. John Daniel Schroeter, 1778 to 1782. (3) Rev. Frederick Valentine Melsheimer, 1783 to 1789. (4) Rev. John David Young, 1789 to 1790. (5) Rev. John Frederick Ernst, 1802 to 1805. Rev. Ernst died heart-broken and lies buried in the cemetery adjoining the church he so faithfully served. For delivering a patriotic oration on July 4, the church council locked the door of the church against him. (6) Rev. William Henry Scriba, 1807 to 1810. (7) Rev. William Beates, 1810 to 1828. (8) Rev. J. Frederick Ruthrauff, 1828 to 1832. (9) Rev. Peter Sahn, 1833 to 1835. (10) Rev. C. P. Miller, 1836 to 1841. Let me add, that during the history of the congregation of 168 years, but 26 pastors have served it.

Following this recorded item of interest, we find the list of the first Church Council. They were, Trustees: Henry William Stiegel, Peter Ereman, Wendel Marzall, Henry Wehrly. Elders: Peter Brehm, Peter Fisher, Matthew Kammerer, Ludwig Truckenmiller.

On Dec. 6, 1778, an election was held to elect the successor to Henry William Stiegel, who removed from the congregation to Warwick Township.

William Smith was elected, and also at the same time three new Elders were elected. There appears an interesting notation to the effect that because of a very severe winter many members were unable to attend services, and that no meetings were held until March 12, 1780.

At a meeting of the congregation held on April 9, 1780, the Treasurer presented his report and showed that he had in hand the sum of £1733, 19 Shillings and 1 Pence, or \$8669.58.\* In another report there appears, under the same date, another Fund to the amount of £2459, 13 Shillings, 8 Pence, or \$12,298.28. Just what these Funds were used for, is not definitely stated, but it is interesting to know that liberality for the spiritual interests of the community was very evident.

That these folks believed in carrying out the letter of the law as well as enforcing the law, is seen by the following item which I quote. We will mention the name involved for we are sure that there is not any one present who may know the one referred to.

“Adam Riess, who, according to paragraph II, in a meeting held in the Lutheran School House, under date of March 12, 1780, was elected teacher, was removed from office by the congregation because of certain known facts, and in his place Matthew Kehster was elected, who was duly installed on Trinity Sunday.”

Also on the same date, we find another custom that not only prevailed in this early day, but which also continued to be the order of procedure until about thirty years ago in the present congregation. We refer to the annual election of the pastor. The official action reads as follows: “The members of the Church Council were ordered to find out, because the Pastors year was about expired, if they, the Congregation, would again accept him as heretofore and so declare their satisfaction on a certain day.” In a following entry we read that the pastor was again elected for another year.

One recorded item of business, the first of its kind thus far recorded, but to which similar reference is made in the years following, is the meeting of the Church Councils of four congregations for mutual benefit and profit for all concerned. These four congregations named are Manheim, Mt. Joy, Elizabethtown and White Oak. From the record it appears that these four congregations must have received, at least some services from the one pastor, because certain items of expenses, such as rent for a house for the pastor and also for furniture, were apportioned to each of these four congregations. I quote one such item: “The assessment is to be as follows: For Manheim, £2; for Mt. Joy, £1 — 5 S; for Elizabethtown, £1 — 7S — 6D; for White Oak, £1 — 7S — 6D.”

It is also interesting to note the manner in which agreements were effected when building or repairs were to be made. They evidently believed

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\* The valuation of the pound here given is high for the Revolutionary period; probably, the sum should be based on \$2.60 or \$2.75 per pound.—Ed.

that the best manner of procedure was to have everything in writing. So I again quote from the record:

"Manheim, Pa., on this 26th day of August, 1780, an agreement was effected between the Evangelical Lutheran Congregation on the one hand, and on the other hand, Henry Whorley and Philip Bretz, carpenters, as follows: namely, It is agreed in the name of the congregation to build a board (or frame) church,—for each pannel, 3 S., lawful money; Cornish 146 feet, each foot, 1 S., wainscot, 100 feet at 20 S., lawful money, or the equivalent thereof. The above we promise to complete one after the other, to which we are both witnesses."

Signed for the Church Council  
Wendel Martzall, Matthew Kistler,  
Michael Schaeffer, Frederick Truckenmiller.

Signed for the Carpenters  
Henry Whorley, Philip Bretz.

Then a similar agreement was entered into between the Church Council and John Flory and Andrew Shell, carpenters, to make the pews for the church at \$2.00 each, lawful money. This was signed as the other agreement.

When disaster or misfortune overtook any of the congregation, aid was extended to all such as is seen in the record of an offering which was received on May 20, 1781, in behalf of Leonard Hirsch, because he had sustained a loss by fire. The amount received was 19 S — 4 D. (\$4.64).

There appears also on the record an entry with reference to the election of a school teacher, Frederick Miller, a Hanovarian, who agreed to teach six months for the sum of 21 S., (\$5.04) for each child.

That the erring and impenitent were dealt with is manifest by the following recorded item: "On January 1, 1782, there was conducted a Holy Communion service for all who were absent at the last service. The number of Communicants was 37. The offering was £1 — 12 S. — 3D., (\$7.94) and the offering received during the Christmas season was 23 S., (\$5.52). There was also discovered this day, among the above 37 communicants, a certain sinner, Catharine Mildten, who was doing better according to her public confession of her sin and who had promised to the congregation to do better, and had made an apology to the congregation and the scandal had ceased. She was again herewith restored to the fellowship of the congregation. "Jesus receive her in the fellowship of the congregation."

One of the most startling entries in this record book is the following, which if carried on today would surely become a source of much serious debate. We can best set this before you by quoting as it appears in the old record book.

"On the 21st Sunday after Trinity, for Henry W. Stiegel, the following benevolent tickets were issued to be chanced off for the Lutheran church, so

that if anything shall come therefrom it shall be devoted to the best interests of the church. And Mr. Stiegel's vote shall be reckoned with that of the Church Council." Then follows the list of the tickets and the numbers thereof. And this also bears the signature of Pastor, F. A. C. Muhlenberg.

But we cannot tarry any longer on the various recorded items of interest which reflect the work and service of this congregation. A very complete account is given of the receipts and expenditures of monies, and of their business transactions. This is carried on and recorded to the year 1815. Let us now turn our attention to some other interesting items, which also give us another view of the work of this congregation.

For the period of time covered by the list of Baptisms, we find that from 1771 to 1849, that 1010 children were dedicated to God in Baptism. This is indeed, a very strong indication of the belief and practice that was observed by these people. Early in life their children were thus dedicated to God. A very complete record was maintained. The date of the birth of the child and the date of Baptism; the name given the child; the name of the parents; the names of the sponsors; and the year. It is interesting to note the given names of the children; such as Catharine, Barbara, Magdalene, Elizabeth, Anna Maria, Susan, and Margareta for the female children. For the male children, such names as John, Peter, Samuel, Henry, Abraham, Philip, and Andrew. Perhaps there are not many church record books to be found with a more complete list of Baptisms.

Next we come to the list of Confirmations which is also quite complete. The total number of Confirmations as listed is 437. Here we have given the name of the one confirmed; the age, which runs from 13 to 25 years; the names of the parents; the year; and then some thing that to us today is not only very unusual but exceedingly interesting, that is, there is recorded after each person his or her traits of character. Let me assure you that this is very interesting and also rather amusing. Let me just indicate some of them, as follows: Very pious; Gentle; Diligent; Carefree; Good; Honest; Studious; Illustrious; Devoted; Ingenious; Moderate and Ordinary. Just how the good pastor, who recorded these characteristics, arrived at them, we are not told. I am wondering what we as pastors would write today of our candidates for confirmation? The largest number confirmed in one year was 63, in the year 1814. The smallest number was 14 in the year 1776.

Under the section of the Weddings, we find that during this period covered by the book, that 97 weddings were solemnized. However, in the section of the book covered by the list of weddings, we find that pages have been cut out of the book covering the years from October 16, 1782, to March 9, 1807. For every marriage, there was issued a proclamation for three times before the wedding took place. If both contracting people were single, it was so indicated; if one was a widow or widower, it was also indicated. We also note that these people came from Warwick, Mt. Joy, Donigal, Raffo, and Lebanon townships. We also find reference made to Earl, London-Derry, Hempfield and Cocal. townships. No doubt the latter is our Cocalico today.



In the list of burials, we find that for some reason or other the record was not as carefully kept as were other records. The record only covers the period from 1771 to 1810, and the number recorded is 86. However, these records are quite complete. We find the name given; the date of death; the age in years, months, weeks, days and in one instance the hours are also given. Also, according to the prevailing custom, the cause of death is stated, such as cold, cough, convulsions, hemorrhage, sidestitches, asthma, dropsy and consumption.

A very careful record was kept of the communion services. The names of each communicant participating in the service is recorded. The first Holy Communion service was held on the third Sunday in Lent, 1771, when 27 persons partook of the sacrament. In this first year four such services were observed with the total number of communicants being 151. The largest number of communicants at any one service was on Pentecost, 1779, when 109 received the sacrament. The period covered by the Communion seasons is from 1771 to 1841. In some instances, it is recorded that some of the members failed to commune and the reason is stated, as follows: After the wife's name, is recorded the husband did not commune because he was a trouble maker; or that he does not attend; or that he was wicked. When any one communed who was a member of another congregation, that fact is also stated.

And in conclusion, it may be interesting to note some of the names of these people who lived and wrought in the early history of our county, names which are still familiar in the county and some of which stood for outstanding achievements. Such names as Fischer; Hoffman; Naumann; Bartruff; Ehrmann; Klein; Gross; Truckenmiller; Dutt; Spahr; Martzall; Brehm; Weller; Spickler; Schaeffer; Becker; Bassler; Dissinger; Flory; Schmidt; Martin; Heinzelmann; Mellinger; Young; Brosey; Yetter; Ritter and Lehman. In these names we recognize many which prevail today.

Thus we have endeavored to set before you, in a rather fragmentary manner, the Early Historical Record of Zion Lutheran Church, Manheim, Pa. While our county is rich in historical events in one phase or another and all have contributed to its development, we trust that we shall never forget the part which the church and its spiritual interests have shared in this "Garden Spot of the World."