



8-2013

MS-143: Frederick Weiser '57 Papers

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MS-143: Frederick Weiser '57 Papers

Description

A large portion of the collection contains documents related to the management of the Pennsylvania German Society. It includes correspondence from fellow Directors, Committee Chairs, Society members, authors and researchers; as well as memos, minutes, and financial records from various Society committees. A portion of the Society- related papers include documents, pamphlets and sources relating to Society events, issues, and special interests.

Smaller portions of the collection have personal scrapbooks, photos, and postcards of Weiser's travels in Europe, the United States, and his time at Gettysburg College. Some others are related to the Lutheran church and early German immigrant culture.

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Keywords

Pennsylvania German Society, Gettysburg College, Lutheran Theological Seminary, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Biglerville, Pennsylvania German

Disciplines

Cultural History | History of Religion | Social History | United States History

**Guide to the
Frederick Weiser '57 papers**



**Gettysburg College, Musselman Library
Special Collections & College Archives**

**Stephanie Bowen
August 2013**

MS – 143: Frederick Weiser '57 papers

(13 cubic feet)

Inclusive Dates: 1932- 1954; 1960-2000

Bulk Dates: 1967-1992

Processed by: Stephanie Bowen

July 2013

Provenance

Frederick Weiser '57 donated four boxes of his papers in Dec. 2007. These boxes included papers from his years as Editor of the Pennsylvania German Society's publications. In October 2008, he donated another two boxes of Pennsylvania German Society papers. Shortly before his death on January 26th 2009, he donated six boxes of personal papers, scrapbooks and photographs.

Biography

Rev. Frederick Sheely Weiser '57 was born in Hanover, PA on November 25 1935, the son of Donald Koehler Weiser '24 and Elizabeth Kathryn Sheely Weiser. Weiser attended Glenbard Township High School, Glen Ellyn, IL. and graduated in 1953. Weiser graduated from Gettysburg College in 1957 with a degree in history. During his time at Gettysburg, Weiser was a brother of Phi Kappa Psi fraternity. He wrote for the *Gettysburgian* and the *Spectrum*. As a senior, he was Editor-in-Chief of the *Spectrum*. A strong academic student, Weiser earned the John Alfred Hamme Prize and Anthony Di Palma Award. He was a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Society and other honor societies.

Weiser attended the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg from 1957-1960. While a Seminarian, he served as a Lecturer for the Department of Biblical Literature and Religion at Gettysburg College. After Seminary, he was the Assistant Pastor at Grace Lutheran Church, Lancaster from 1960-1964. Weiser spent a diaconal year (one year of church-based humanitarian work) at the Evangelical Lutheran Diakonissenanstalt (a church-based hospital for the elderly and disabled) in Neuendettelsau, Germany. He spent the following year as the Supply Chaplain at the Lutheran Home in Germantown, PA. Weiser continued his education at the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, where he earned a Masters of Sacred Theology in 1966. From 1966-1971, Weiser was the archivist for the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg. In 1971, Weiser became the pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Biglerville, PA where he served for nineteen years.

Weiser was an avid researcher of Pennsylvania German genealogy, and Lutheran history. He published many books and genealogies including "Village in a Glen," "Serving Love- the Early History of Lutheran Deaconesses in American," "The Weiser Family," and "Love's Response." He was an active member of the Pennsylvania German Society. Weiser served the Society as a Director for thirty- four years (1958-1992) and Editor-in-Chief of the Society's publications for twenty-five years (1967-1992).

Organization History:

Founded in 1891, the Pennsylvania German Society is “the organization which provides an authentic interpretation of the origin, history, and way of life the Pennsylvania Germans, wherever they may be found” (The Pennsylvania German Society, What is the Pennsylvania German Society?). The Society states a three-pronged purpose: for charity and education, for research into elements of Pennsylvania German history and culture, and for the preservation of Pennsylvania German material culture through “theses, addresses, music and other articles” (The Pennsylvania German Society, What is the Pennsylvania German Society?). In order to preserve PA German heritage, the Society publishes multiple books and anthologies on all aspects of PA German culture: history, architecture, religion, agriculture, etc. The Society also publishes a quarterly journal *Der Reggeboge (The Rainbow)* which contains short articles, reports on Society activities, and announcements of coming events. In 1966, the Pennsylvania German Society merged with the Pennsylvania Folklore Society. In 1984, the Society moved its headquarters from Breinigsville, PA to the Daniel Boone Homestead in Birdsboro, PA. The Society’s current headquarters is in Ephrata, PA.

Scope and Content Notes

The bulk of the collection spans Weiser’s years as Editor of Publications (1967-1992). A large portion of the collection contains documents related to the management of the Pennsylvania German Society. It includes correspondence from fellow Directors, Committee Chairs, Society members, authors and researchers; as well as memos, minutes, and financial records from various Society committees. A portion of the Society- related papers include documents, pamphlets and sources relating to Society events, issues, and special interests.

Seven scrapbooks display postcards from Weiser’s travels across Europe and the United States. A majority of the postcards are from Lutheran churches in Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Serbia, etc. Pictures of European cityscapes, countryside’s and museums are common. All of the postcards from the United States are of Lutheran churches. Two scrapbooks contain photos, programs, and certificates from Weiser’s years at Gettysburg College.

The smallest section of the collection includes documents pertaining to Weiser’s personal interests and research. Correspondence, articles, pamphlets and primary sources related to the Lutheran church, genealogy, and German culture are dominant. Many of the primary sources are photocopies of 17th or 18th century German documents. A small selection of Weiser family images is included.

The strength of the collection lies in the large period of Pennsylvania German Society activity covered by the Weiser’s papers. The correspondence gives a sense of the issues before the Society and how attitudes changed over the years. The correspondence also gives insight into the politics of leadership and Weiser’s relationship with the Society. For instance: letters from 1992 remained unopened. It is possible that Weiser stopped opening PA German Society mail because of a growing conflict between

President Druckenbrod and Editor Weiser about the direction of the Society, more specifically the Publications Committee. Many earlier and unopened letters (now opened) from the Society/Druckenbrod aggressively demand that Weiser concede to reorganize the Society's publications. While the collection does present a selection of the Society's activity, it is not a comprehensive Pennsylvania German Society collection. Any records prior to 1932 or after 1992 are not included; there is also a gap in the record from 1955 to 1960. The collection is a representation of Weiser's years with the Society.

Language presents an issue. A few correspondence, pamphlets, newspaper articles and sources are in German. Most of the postcards are in the native tongue of the visited country (German, Swedish, Dutch, Icelandic, etc.) therefore determining the exact location and context of the postcard is difficult. Many of the photo-copied primary sources are hand-written in German, and have not been translated. Additionally, other pamphlets and newspaper articles are written in Pennsylvania German. This dialect is not spoken outside of the Pennsylvania German community. The dialect is primarily spoken; hence there are few spelling standards to assist in translation.

Finally, most of the photographs in the collection are not labeled. Weiser's Gettysburg College scrapbooks are only partially labeled and contain no contextual information.

Series Description

The collection is divided in to two Series:

Series I- The Pennsylvania German Society

1. Administration -contains Society invitations and advertisements, membership lists and biographical information, and financial records.
2. Events- provides documents relating to the Society's annual meetings, Centennial celebrations, seminars and tours.
3. Correspondence- Weiser's correspondence as Editor and Director during 1968-1992. The letters are sorted alphabetically.
4. Board of Directors & Committees- contains minutes, memos and various correspondence provided to Weiser as a member of the Board of Directors. Also contains minutes and memos from other committees: executive, marketing, long range planning.
5. Publications- includes minutes from the publications committee, copyright paperwork, publishers quotes, Society publications and samples of works rejected by the Society.
6. Subject- shows a selection of brochures, newspaper clippings, and sources related to Pennsylvania German culture, such as art, poetry, maps, diaries, etc.
7. Pennsylvania Folklore Society- includes the correspondence, articles and publications related to the Pennsylvania Folklore Society.

Series II

1. Souvenirs- contains scrapbooks of postcards from Weiser's travels around Europe and the United States; as well as scrapbooks from Weiser's years at Gettysburg College

2. General – includes personal documents such as calendars, letters, and family photos. The photograph of Weiser escorting the Eisenhower's into the Chapel at Gettysburg College can be found here.
3. Church Records and History- a selection of articles, notes, correspondence, and lists related to genealogy research or congregation history
4. Lutheranism- contains information pamphlets about the Lutheran church as well as articles and chapters pertaining to Lutheran history and education.
5. Organizations- includes newsletters, correspondence and pamphlets from organizations Weiser belonged to, worked for or supported.
6. Projects- a selection of Weiser's research projects. Each discernible project has its own sub-category of this sub-series:
 1. Church Record Inventory
 2. German Ministers
 3. Synod Archives
 4. Paper Reviews
 5. Translations/Transcriptions
7. Subjects- contains primary sources, articles, lists, inventories and notes on Weiser's personal interests; includes a small section on Lincoln.

Folder List

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- 1-2b Finances
- 1-3 Form letters
- 1-4 Inventories and Lists
- 1-5 Membership- Bio's- Board
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- 2-17 Gehret, Ellen J.
- 2-18 Glass, Joseph W.
- 2-19 Glatfelter, C.,H
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- 3-2 Schwenkfelder Library

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Travel Scrapbooks (2)

Box 9

Travel Scrapbooks (2)

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Travel Scrapbooks (2)

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Note: Collection housed in Knouse.