

Bishop John Seybert Papers
1805-1992



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1805-1992

3.95 cubic feet

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The purpose of this finding aid is to help you understand the nature of this collection and to assist you in the retrieval of material from this collection. The following pages contain a brief biographical history of the person, or persons, who created or collected these papers, followed by a general description of the collection in the scope and content note. If more detailed information is warranted then series descriptions also appear. The container listing appears last and is the listing of material in each box, or container, of this collection. To request material you need to turn to the container listing section. It is essentially a listing of file folders, or artifact items, in the collection. Each folder, or item, has a call number associated with it. Each folder also lists the inclusive dates of the material in the folder. On the material request form list both the call number and the folder, or item, title. Use a different line for each folder, or item, requested. When your request sheet is complete, or full, bring it to the archivist and the material will be retrieved.

Biographical Note

John Seybert (1791-1860), American minister and pioneer bishop of the Evangelical Association, was born near Manheim, Pennsylvania, on July 7, 1791. In 1804, his parents joined the followers of Jacob Albright, founder of the Evangelical Association. After a remarkable conversion on June 21, 1810, John Seybert united with the Albright People at Manheim. He entered the ministry in 1820 and became an ardent builder and first bishop of the church Albright had founded. Seybert's diaries (eighteen volumes) yield these amazing figures: 175,000 miles (horseback, 1820-1842; one-horse wagon, 1843-1860); and 46,000 pastoral visits. He saw the church grow from one to eight conferences. On the eve of an epochal era of expansion in the late 1830's, as a bachelor minister, he declared his desire to be found at the front. In 1838, organized missionary societies arose through his inspiration. He was president of the parent society when elected bishop in 1839. Forthwith he directed the attention of his workers to the German settlements of the Northwest Territory. With the dearth of German reading material in the west, Bishop Seybert in 1842 loaded his wagon at the publishing house in New Berlin, Pennsylvania, with an order of 23,725 volumes, charged to his account, and delivered these books to ministers in Ohio and westward. The fruit of Seybert's labor was in evidence throughout the church in his time. From New York to Iowa, his wagon carried him and his books. His journeys ended at a revival meeting appointment at a church near Flat Rock, Ohio, where he died on January 4, 1860. He is buried in the church cemetery.

Scope and Content Note

This collection centers primarily on Seybert's journals. The original journals are written in German and are incomplete. Of the eighteen total volumes that Seybert compiled, only ten volumes have survived. They are volumes 2, 4, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18. In 1956 the Reverend J. G. Eller translated all volumes into English and this translation was microfilmed. The typescripts of chapters 16 and 17 are located at the end of the journals series.

Most of the journal entries are laconic with a few entries being the exception to the rule. What these journals do illustrate is the far reaching itinerancy that Seybert followed during his ministry. Other records would include a class book for the Canaan District (Pennsylvania) which was compiled by Seybert in 1825 and a constitution and subscription for the Manheim church which Seybert wrote in 1826. This is the very same church in which Seybert was originally converted.

Seybert's keen interest in church architecture can be found throughout the journals as well as in the holograph file. Photographs, flyers, a biography written by Andrew Gramley, and a letter dated April 23, 1853, that Seybert wrote to Daniel Bertolet are situated in the biographical file.

Seybert's traveling trunk (circa 1844), writing desk, and saddle bags round out the collection. The trunk is eighteen inches in length, eight and one-half inches in height, and nine and a half inches in width. The exterior covering is made from an animal skin with leather trim, a brass handle on the top of the lid, and hasp with locking mechanism. The interior of the trunk is lined with newsprint from 1844. On the interior top of the trunk lid is an identification card that states: BISHOP SEIBERT'S TRUNK. I Rebecca Ocker of Troxelville Snyder, Co., a grand-daughter of the sainted Rev. Philip Smith do present this little trunk to Albright College as a token of my interest in the same. When a little girl of a few summers I saw the sainted Bishop carry this trunk and heard him preach with wonderful power from the text, "TOD, WO IST DEIN STACHEL?" If this trunk had a mouth to talk, what wonderful things it could divulge! Rev. P. Smith resided about one mile west of Troxelville and his home was a stopping and preaching place for the Bishop. He traded this trunk on a saddle-bag, during one of his annual visits to my grandfather's house. Secured for Albright College Dec. 26, 1904. by Rev. A. D. Gramly (pastor). The trunk is in poor condition.

The writing desk measures eighteen and three-quarter inches in length, five and three-quarter inches high, and nine and three-eighths inches wide. The outside is a cherry laminate with an ivory knob to open the desk. The interior contains compartments in the front which held various writing implements. There is a felt cover located behind the compartment section. When lifted reveals a storage space for paper. A label on the velvet cover reads as follows: First writing desk of Bishop Seybert who presented it to Rev. Solomon Neitz in appreciation of his great interest and success in the soul-winning for Christ's Kingdom.

Seybert's leather saddle bag is thirty eight inched long and fourteen and a half inches wide. It is in poor condition. A typed note pasted on the left saddle bag reads as follows: "This saddle bag and dress outfit of Bishop John Seybert, was left at the home of Mr. and Mrs. David Fisher, of Manheim, Pa, by Bishop Seybert, between the years 1855 and 60. He was usually entertained in the above home when he came to Manheim to preach. At the death of Mr. and Mrs. David Fisher, these mementoes were given to their Daughter, Susan, who married John Fisher. After their death, they were handed down to their daughter, Louise, who married William McCauley. After the death of Mrs. McCauley, these relics came into the possession of Mrs. McCauley's daughter Edith. Thro [sic] her pastor Rev. I. E. Johnson, of Manheim, Pa. they have been transferred to the 'Historical Society' and she wishes them placed in their room at the Publishing House. A very brief history of these articles as they were associated with life and labors of the late Bishop John Seybert. Signed and dated I.E. Johnson May 24, 1920."

Arrangement

Material has been arranged in the following manner.

JOURNALS.

BIOGRAPHICAL.

Related Material

Records of the United Methodist Publishing House

Daniel Bertolet Papers

GCAH Microfilm HS-66

GCAH Microfilm UM-162

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions on this collection.

Use Access

Detailed use restrictions relating to our collections can be requested from the office of the archivist at the General Commission on Archives and History. Photocopying is handled by the staff and may be limited in certain instances. Before using any material for publication from this collection a formal request for permission to publish is expected and required.

Preferred Citation

When citing material from this collection please use the following format: Direct reference to the item or its file folder, Bishop John Seybert Papers, United Methodist Church Archives - GCAH, Madison, New Jersey. Do not make use of the item's call number as that is not a stable descriptor.

Index Terms

Subject Terms

Geographic Terms

Indiana
Ohio
Pennsylvania

Subject Names - Person

Bertolet, Daniel
Gramley, Andrew

Genre Terms

Artifacts
Diaries
Transcripts

Occupation Terms

Bishop
Minister

Table of Contents

Journals	4
Biographical	4

Container List

Journals

Call Number	Folder Title	Date(s)
1584-5-3:1	Journal: Volume 2 (German) - June 3-May 25	1822-1825
1584-5-3:2	Journal: Volume 4 (German) - March 19-August 8	1827-1828
1584-5-3:3	Journal: Volume 9 (German) - March 25-April 7	1839-1841
1584-5-3:4	Journal: Volume 12 (German) - April 7-November 21	1841-1843
1584-5-3:5	Journal: Volume 13 (German) - November 3-March 2	1843-1846
1584-5-3:6	Journal: Volume 14 (German) - March 4-December 3	1846-1847
1584-5-3:7	Journal: Volume 15 (German) - September 29-October 27	1847-1851
1584-5-4:1	Journal: Volume 16 (German) - October 1-September 18	1851-1855
1584-5-4:2	Journal: Volume 17 (German) - September 19-October 5	1855-1859
1584-5-4:3	Journal: Volume 18 (German) - October 5-December 28	1859
1584-5-4:4	Journal: Volume 16 (English) - 1851-1855: J. G. Eller, Translator	1956
1584-5-4:5	Journal: Volume 17 (English) - September 19, 1855-October 5, 1858: J. G. Eller, Translator	Undated

Biographical

Call Number	Folder Title	Date(s)
1584-5-4:6	Class book - Canaan District	1825
1584-5-4:7	Constitution and Subscription List for Manheim Evangelical Church	1826
1584-5-4:8	Holographs	1817-1924
1584-5-4:10	Retraction	1858
5044-3-1:1	Artifact: Writing Desk	Undated
5044-3-2:1	Artifact: Traveling Trunk	1844
5044-3-3:1	Artifact: Saddle Bags	Undated
1584-5-5:1	The Doctrines and Disciplines of the Methodist Episcopal Church	1805
1584-5-5:2	Memorial Scrapbook	Undated