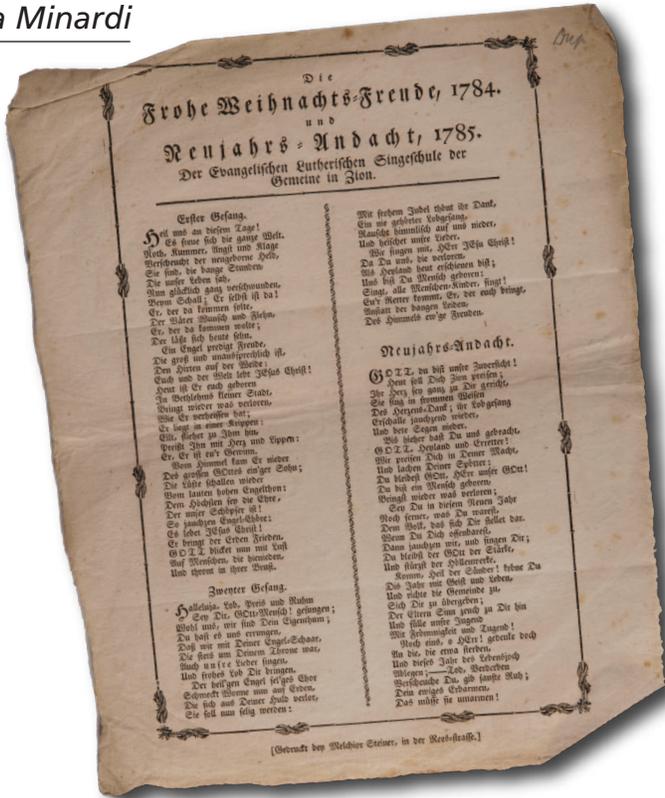




Hidden Treasures

by Lisa Minardi



Christmas and New Year's broadside from the Singing School of Zion Lutheran Church, Philadelphia. Printed by Melchior Steiner, Philadelphia, 1784. Collection of the Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia PHOTO BY GAVIN ASHWORTH

As we continue to sort through the backlog of uncatalogued material stored within our vault, many "hidden treasures" are coming to light. We highlight these discoveries from time to time on our Facebook page and encourage you to like our page in order to see the latest discoveries. One recent find is this broadside, printed for the singing school of Zion Lutheran Church in Philadelphia for Christmas and New Year's in 1784-85. It is titled *Die Frohe Weihnachts=Freude, 1784 und Neujahrs=Andacht, 1785 / Der Evangelischen Lutherischen Singeschule der Gemeinde in Zion* (translation: The Happy Christmas Joy, 1784, and New Year's Devotion, 1785. The Evangelical Lutheran Singing School of the Congregation in Zion). At the bottom, the broadside bears the imprint of Melchior Steiner located on Race Street in Philadelphia. The son of Rev. Conrad Steiner, pastor of the German Reformed Church in Philadelphia, Melchior Steiner apprenticed with the German printer Henrich Miller. After striking out on his own, he initially printed with Carl Cist, but they dissolved the partnership in 1781 and he continued on with his own printshop. A member of the German Society of Pennsylvania (est. 1764), Steiner printed a weekly German language newspaper as well as numerous books, pamphlets, and broadsides. He printed for a wide range of customers, including both the Lutherans and Moravians. He died in 1807.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Readers,

Despite being closed to the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 has been an exceptionally busy year at the Lutheran Archives. Our staff and volunteers continue to make good progress on cataloguing our backlog of unprocessed material stored in our vault. Linda Beck, our volunteer extraordinaire, has tackled organizing the records of several closed congregations that were already in our stacks. This included weeding out multiple copies of various documents and grouping like items into categories, then placing them in neatly labeled archival folders. Although time consuming, this process makes it much easier to find specific information and reduces the amount of space taken up in our vault to make room for additional records.

Sheila Joy, our associate archivist, has been busy preparing inventory listings and finding aids for various groups of church records in our holdings. She also continues to answer research inquiries, including requests for proof of baptism as well as genealogy queries from people looking to track down their ancestors. Sheila is also becoming an expert on how to use our PastPerfect collections management database, including how to import files and images so that we can start putting our collections online in the near future.

We were also blessed to receive a grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission to help us with the Ministerium of Pennsylvania collection, which includes the records of more than 200 colonial Lutheran churches along with Henry Melchior Muhlenberg's journals. This grant includes an inventory and cataloging of the entire collection as well as preparation of a detailed finding aid that will be shared online. It also includes funding for archival supplies to help improve the storage conditions for many of these rare, and often unique, manuscripts and other items. Melissa Bergoffen joined our team this summer as the project archivist for the PHMC grant.

To help us continue with these efforts and carry out our mission to preserve and share the archival history of the Lutheran Church in America, we need your support. Year-end contributions will help us to hire ULS students as archives assistants to aid in processing our backlog of material as well as to process the influx of records from newly closed congregations. Please consider making a generous donation to support the Lutheran Archives Center, either online at lacphila.org/donate or via check in the enclosed envelope.

Sincerely,

Lisa Minardi
Lisa Minardi
Executive Director

Thank you for your support!

Ministerium of Pennsylvania Collection Project

by Melissa Bergoffen, Project Archivist

In March 2021, the Lutheran Archives was awarded a Historical & Archival Records Care grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission in order to help preserve and make accessible the records of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States (MOP). I was hired as the Project Archivist to oversee this project, which includes inventorying and cataloging an estimated 10,000 records, assessing their condition, and creating a detailed finding aid to make the collection easily accessible to researchers. I am also promoting awareness of the collection and LACAP as a whole through our social media (Facebook and Instagram)

as well as our newly created blog (lutheranarchives.blogspot.com).

The Ministerium of Pennsylvania was founded in 1748 by Henry Melchior Muhlenberg. The MOP collection holds many records pertaining to the Ministerium's creation, such as its constitution, meeting minutes, and correspondence. It also contains Muhlenberg's journals, many church records, and other unique manuscripts dating from the 1700s to mid-1900s. You can learn more about the history of the MOP on our blog under a recent post titled "Lutheranism and the Ministerium of Pennsylvania: Its Beginnings to the Late 1700s."

I have been working with the MOP collection for just over three months now. My go-to tool so far is Google sheets, where I record information about each item such as its creator, title, dates, location, description, and condition. This information will later be transferred to PastPerfect, our collections management database, and then online to allow researchers to peruse our holdings. I also cross-reference each item with the spreadsheet version of the original card catalogue to ensure that all MOP items are accounted for. About two months into the project, we realized it was going too slowly, so to expedite the process, I



Melissa Bergoffen, Project Archivist, in front of shelves housing part of the MOP collection

stopped taking photos and writing such detailed descriptions. Another time-consuming step is removing old metal fasteners, such as rusty staples and paperclips, which we will come back to at a later date.

Although this project is still in the early stages, we are planning ahead for the future arrangement of the MOP collection and how best to organize all of its records. We are grateful for the opportunity to process the MOP collection in order to preserve and make its holdings more accessible to researchers. This collection is vital to understanding the history of Lutheranism in America due to its unique manuscript records of more than 200 colonial Lutheran churches—including births and baptisms, confirmation, marriages, and deaths—as well as pastoral and financial records. We thank the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission for awarding us a Historical & Archival Records Care grant to care for this collection, and all of our supporters for encouraging the work that we do!



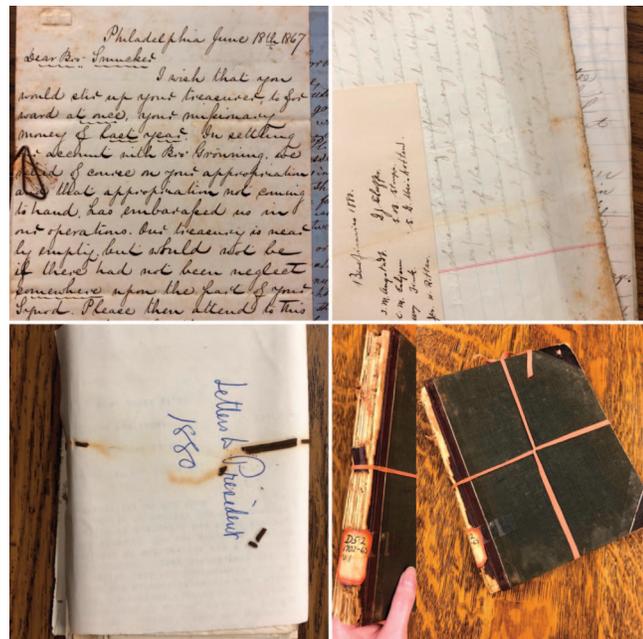
The MOP collection contains a broad range of items including minute books, correspondence, pamphlets, loose manuscripts, and even corporate seals. Tools that I use for processing the collection include a pencil, pH testing marker, staple remover, pliers, and measuring tape.

Highlights from Our Blog

by *Melissa Bergoffen, Project Archivist*

The following information is taken from our newly created blog (lutheranarchives.blogspot.com). As part of the MOP grant project, I am performing a conditions assessment of the items as I inventory and catalog them. This includes noting any preservation issues—from discoloration or the use of metal fasteners to mold or broken bindings—and rating them on a scale from poor to excellent condition. After this initial survey is completed, I will address the simpler preservation issues, such as unfolding creased documents or removing metal fasteners and rubber bands. Before tackling the more significant issues, we will consult with a professional conservator on how to handle more difficult repairs. To learn more about this topic, check out our blog post titled “Conservation: Preserving Archival Materials.”

Examples of preservation issues commonly found within archives (clockwise from top left): manuscript with a paperclip that has rusted onto the paper; mold and foxing on the edge of a document; a book whose spine is completely detached from the binding; and a stack of documents once held together by a rubber band, which has stuck to and stained the paper.



Church Records Listings Now Available Online

by *Sheila Joy, Associate Archivist*

We are very excited to announce that we have begun adding church record inventory lists and finding aids to our website, making our collections more accessible and discoverable to researchers across the globe. These can now be searched through on our website: <https://www.lacphila.org/collections>.

Soon after my arrival last year, I discovered the need to create user-friendly collection listings for the public. While there were existing inventory listings created, they were formatted in a

way only archives staff would understand and were not user-friendly for researchers. I also created finding aids for individual collections to provide more detailed information than an inventory listing. These will be continually updated and uploaded to our website as collections are processed. The inventory listings provide the title, description, date, and location of the physical items. This will help researchers to find what they are looking for and makes it easier for staff to provide relevant information or photocopies of material to researchers.

These listings would not be possible without the cataloging work undertaken by our predecessors. The original card catalog for our Ministerium of Pennsylvania Collection was created in the 1970s and had never been digitized until nearly 50 years later when ULS students Bridget Gautieri and Danielle McCleary entered all the information into a spreadsheet. Student assistant Courtney Smith created an additional spreadsheet to inventory collections that were received after the card catalog ceased to



Associate Archivist Sheila Joy works on preparing our reference library records to be imported into PastPerfect.

be updated sometime in the 1980s. It is amazing to see the timeline of collections listings—from card catalog to spreadsheet to PDFs and now our online collections management database: PastPerfect!

In 2022, we will begin cataloging all our collections into PastPerfect. We have already cataloged the Augustana Institute's objects and library books, and our reference library is just about finished. We are excited to share our PastPerfect database with you when it goes live, sometime in early 2022. Researchers will then be able to search our collections in a more robust way than through the finding aids on our websites. Be sure to follow along for updates and behind the scenes on our Facebook page by searching “Lutheran Archives Center” or on Instagram @lutheranarchives!



Screenshot of our webpage for the Pennsylvania Congregation Records holdings, with inventory listings available to view and download. To see all our church record listings available online, go to www.lacphila.org/collections

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

I recently went through a box of old Christmas decorations and, tucked among the various ornaments, I found one that I had purchased about twenty years ago from the National Archives in Washington, D.C. I had visited the National Archives during a Christmas vacation and found this Christmas ornament on sale. Every year I hang this ornament on my tree as a reminder, not simply of a fun family vacation to our nation's capital, but also as a reminder of our country's rich archival heritage. In 2026 we will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and the founding of the United States of America. During this Semiquincentennial, we will undoubtedly be reminded of the primary source documents that proclaim the foundation of our American democracy and are preserved within the National Archives' collection.

At the Lutheran Archives Center, we have an archival heritage that predates the founding of this country. Our archives preserve documents that date back to the very beginnings of what became the "American experiment." We are privileged to be the custodians of this rich archival heritage. We wish you blessings as one year comes to an end and as we prepare to begin another, and we invite your continued prayers and support for our archives throughout this coming year!

Respectfully,

J. Francis Watson
President of the Board