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Heritage Horizons

...a memorial book was written in His *presence*, recording those who revered Him
and those who had the highest respect for His name...Malachi 3:16



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Point of View *by Lenore Lang*

Happy Spring to all of our readers! Here on page 1 we have some good comments from the Archives Director.

Page 2 tells of another important move all of 60 years ago.

On page 3 — a life that touched many in our NAB Conference.

Our Armchair Traveler has received a significant honor. See page 4.

NOTES FROM ARCHIVES DIRECTOR DR. JACKIE HOWELL

“With every deed
you are sowing a
seed,

though the harvest
you may not see.”

Ella Wheeler Wilcox



Evidences of “countdown to move” are all around in the Seminary community and in the spaces occupied by the Heritage Commission. Much of our preparation is the ordinary stuff of archives — inventories, sorting and protecting materials; placing them in archival boxes and creating labels. Another part of preparation is housekeeping — discarding materials that have no lasting value but which have accumulated over time.

We have begun several important processes to make the move occur in an orderly fashion. We are numbering all of our boxes and all of our shelving so that the destination of each box is known in advance. We are also measuring books for height so that the shelving is adjusted to accommodate the books before they are transported. *Der Sendbote* and several other conference serial publications will need more than the standard 11 1/4 inch height.

Our goal is to make the documents **that tell the story of God at work in the NAB Conference** organized and accessible to researchers and other interested persons. Over recent months, we have had the wonderful gift from our conference office of many materials (50-plus boxes!) that document the work of the Board of Missions, associations, women's materials and other ways that we work together to reach out to the world with the good news of God's love. What a treasure! Come and see. It is a joy.

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DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THE 1949 MOVE?

Many of you are aware that this summer the Seminary in Sioux Falls will be moving to a newly-completed building about six blocks from the present location. Sixty years ago there was a move also, not six blocks but many miles, from a different state, the State of New York.



The denominational paper, The Baptist Herald, carried news of this move in its issue of October 1, 1949 (page 4) in the words of Editor Martin L. Leuschner: “The city of Sioux Falls reserved its largest and most golden key of welcome for the General Conference of North American Baptist churches. This was done in the face of stiff competition from the Sioux Empire Fair and the big-top circus. In return, North American Baptists opened their hearts of appreciation and wonder to the beauty and civic advantages of the city.....Throughout the week the General Conference made the front pages of the daily newspaper, The Argus-Leader. Everywhere the welcome mat was rolled out for our conference people.

“As a result, the city of Sioux Falls made a wonderful impression upon North American Baptists...Against this background, the General Conference was definitely in a mood to welcome the favorable consideration of the relocation of the Seminary to Sioux Falls. The vote has been taken affirmatively and the sails of the Seminary ship have been set westward. There are still legal difficulties to be cleared and other complications to be ironed out. But the agreement has been signed. (see front cover.)” Indeed, the caption under that picture says it all: “Everybody’s Happy Over the Signing of the Seminary Agreement at Sioux Falls!”

Two months later, in the December 1st, 1949 issue of the Herald, (page 11) there came an announcement of a Seminary Building Fund campaign, with a goal of \$225,000. In today’s economy that amount of money might be looked on as “a drop in the bucket,” but in 1949 it was **huge**. The Campaign Manager, Mr. Arthur Schwerin of Burlington, Iowa was a knowledgeable money-manager, and he wrote the article to encourage North American Baptists to give.

His words: “As a denomination we are faced with a big task in raising the money needed for our new Seminary building in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Now that the decision has been made, it will be up to each member to do all he can to help attain the goal.

“When we stop to think that this is a ‘once in a life time’ expenditure, and not an annual expense, the outlook becomes brighter. I doubt if there are very many members in our churches today who have contributed anything to our past Seminary building program at Rochester, N.Y. This equipment has been a heritage from those who have gone before us. Should not we, likewise, leave a similar heritage for those who will follow us?

“....The total cost of the removal” (perhaps he meant of the move) “and for the new building is estimated to be \$425,000. Of this amount, there is approximately \$200,000 on hand, leaving the sum of \$225,000 to be raised.” In the days that followed, that money did come in and the Seminary building was built, debt free! What a wonderful testimony to the faithfulness of God’s people in doing what they could to build for — US! Now today’s people have the challenge of giving to another building, in the words of Arthur Schwerin, “to leave a similar heritage for those who will follow **us!**”

THE PAST AS PROLOGUE TO THE FUTURE

By John A. Siewert

In various ways, North American Baptist leaders have urged the denomination constituency to go farther and deeper in united service for Christ. Among those leaders was a man who is largely unknown to today's rising generation. His work as an enthusiastic team member was always encouraging and forward-looking.

Martin Leuschner was born in 1904 in Texas, grew up in California, prepared for the ministry at Rochester, NY, and was pastor of Philadelphia's Fleischmann Memorial Baptist Church. In 1935 he was called to be the editor of *The Baptist Herald*, the then twice-a-month NAB periodical that ranged from 16 to 32 pages. He served in that capacity until 1967. During those years he also held other concurrent positions such as promotional secretary for the denomination. These duties took him to over a hundred speaking engagements a year in NAB churches, youth camps and other gatherings. The writer still vividly remembers the moving pictures Leuschner showed over 50 years ago, of the NAB mission work among Native Americans in Western Canada. These were silent movies that Leuschner himself had taken. But he did such a good live "voice-over" that it was better than any professional studio-produced film.

Besides the *Herald's* current news, Editor Leuschner urged the older generation to write down their memories so they could be published and thus be available for future generations. For example, in 1935 he asked the only surviving daughter of Konrad Fleischmann (1812-1867) to share memories about her parents. In 1851 Fleischmann had called together a small group of German-speaking Baptists to the first conference that eventually became the North American Baptist Conference. Among other communications projects, Leuschner also started the *NAB Annual*. This enabled more extensive articles to be published such as one about the NAB's first missionaries to Cameroon, August and Anna Steffens. This was written by Steffens' nephew who was on his way to a career as a university history professor.

As one might guess, a good deal of the carefully written NAB history we have today owes much to the encouragement of Martin Leuschner. Those of us who were students at the Sioux Falls Seminary in the early 1960s remember how excited Dr. Leuschner would become when he talked about the "Denomination Room." This modest room had just been established in the then newly-completed library building and would be the start of bringing together historical information helpful in moving into the future. Others in the seminary and Sioux Falls community carried on the expanded the work so that today the NAB Heritage Commission's collections are in several rooms.

Dr. Martin L. Leuschner summed up his view of looking at the past as a stepping stone to a better future in a *Baptist Herald* editorial (emphasis his): "...the past, however interesting and meaningful it has been, is only prologue, to a greater and brighter FUTURE!"



THE ARMCHAIR TRAVELER

by Archivist Berneice Westerman



Just before my years turned to 85, I was enjoying myself with a delicious meal and lovely music shared with the Heritage Commission Board of Governor's members, in the Seminary's Rotunda. Nate Helling was designated to deliver some news and asked me to come up to the speaker's stand. I thought the reason might be a happy birthday song, since my birthday was the coming week. "But why would Nate do that?" I wondered.

However I did obey and went up to the front. Nate began to inform me that my name would be placed on the door of the Heritage Commission Conference Room. I simply did not know how to react: Cry? Laugh? Sit down again?

Next Nate told me that there would be a sign made that reads: "Berneice (Bee) Westerman Conference Room provided by Bee's Family and Friends in honor of her impact on God's Kingdom and her service to the North American Baptist Conference."

There was only one camera in the room so here you see the only proof that I have that it really happened. That 'almost ready to cry' look shows exactly my feeling of being overwhelmed. I was glad there was a speaker's podium to hold onto!

Later my brother Elmer said: "I thought it was a good idea when it was suggested to me." Then I knew it was not a family member who suggested it. I was very glad to know it was a friend. I will be completely convinced of the reality of it when I see the sign in its place.

Here is a picture that proves what has happened because of faithfulness. Come and see us in our new area on the afternoon of July 13th. For alumni and friends the celebration will be July 14th for most of the day.

If you cannot come at that time, remember that the Heritage Commission will welcome you at any time when you come our way. We will have a Norton Avenue entrance. Our address will be the same as the Seminary's address on Summit Avenue.

