HENRY MELCHIOR MUHLENBERG’S EARLY LABORS IN PENNSYLVANIA: 1742-1760

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IT IS not often that the historian studying the colonial records of Pennsylvania is fortunate enough to have at his disposal the published or unpublished diaries of the people who were the principal contributors to the early development of the state. In the more outstanding cases we have of course such works as the complete writings of Benjamin Franklin and the copious biography of David Rittenhouse published in 1813 by his nephew and intimate friend, William Barton. Through such sources may be gained a keen insight into the mentality of the leaders of the colonial and the Revolutionary period of Pennsylvania history as well as an understanding of the significance of their achievements. If all who strove to build up a civilization in the wilderness had left diaries and journals, what priceless source material would the historian of Pennsylvania have at his command!

We are under a heavy obligation to Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, the “patriarch” of the American Lutheran Church. From an early period in life he kept a record of his daily activities, meticulously jotting down notes on happenings which to him appeared important, although in themselves they may not have exercised much influence over the course of events in the world’s progress. His diaries contain not only statements regarding baptisms, confirmations, marriage, and burials at which he officiated, a dry narrative of visits paid to and by him, and various philosophical musings, but also much valuable light on the social, economic, and political conditions prevailing in Pennsylvania and other regions where he traveled and labored as a minister of the gospel. His journals, considered as a whole, form a significant document relating to the history of Pennsylvania from his arrival in 1742 until his death forty-five years later.
Muhlenberg's diaries have been the basis of many books and articles, all of which contain published fragments. W. J. Mann's *Life and Times of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg* (1887), still the standard work on this subject, is written almost wholly from manuscript source material. In 1881 Wilhelm Germann of Bavaria published his edition of the pastor's autobiography, *Heinrich Melchior Mühlenberg, Patriarch der Lutherschen Kirche Nordamerika's Selbstbiographie, 1711-1743*, which was supplemented by the editor's numerous critical and explanatory notes. Biographies of secondary importance include *Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, Patriarch of the Lutheran Church in America*, by the Reverend William K. Frick (1902), and *Memoir of the Life and Times of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, D.D., Patriarch of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, by M. L. Stoever (1856). Extracts from Muhlenberg's journals appear in the above works and in Scharf and Westcott's *History of Philadelphia* (three volumes), Hocker's *The Fighting Parson of the American Revolution: A Biography of General Peter Muhlenberg* (1936), and other books dealing with Pennsylvania history. Muhlenberg's complete writings were not published, however, until very recently.

In 1942 in commemoration of the bicentenary of Muhlenberg's arrival in Pennsylvania the Evangelical Lutheran ministerium of Pennsylvania and adjacent states printed volume one of *The Journals of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg*, translated by Theodore G. Tappert and John W. Doberstein. The importance of this authoritative edition of Muhlenberg's works, which will be issued in three large volumes, can scarcely be overestimated. Historians of Pennsylvania for many generations will no doubt find themselves constantly turning to the *Journals* for contemporary source material relating to numerous phases of colonial and Revolutionary Pennsylvania. It is through this publication that the general reader as well as the Pennsylvania student can for the first time gain a thorough understanding of Muhlenberg's mighty undertaking. Events of the middle of the eighteenth century can, as it were, be observed through Muhlenberg's own eyes. As a study of the most difficult period of the patriarch's missionary work in America the present monograph is based for the most part
on the Journals, supplemented by other sources and authorities.¹

Heinrich Melchior Muhlenberg was born on September 6, 1711,² at Einbeck, a town on the Ilm River, in the electorate of Hanover, in Germany. He was the seventh child and fourth son of Nicolaus Melchior Muhlenberg (1660?-1723), a member of the town council, a deacon of St. Maria's Church, and by occupation a brewer and shoemaker,³ by his wife, Anna Maria Klein-schmidt, daughter of a retired army officer.¹ He was a subject of Elector George Ludwig of Hanover (Brunswick-Lüneburg), who in 1714, when Henry Melchior was three years old, succeeded his cousin Queen Anne as ruler of Great Britain and Ireland.

Muhlenberg received his early education in the German and Latin school in his native town, successfully passing the first three classes, or grades. After having been instructed in Christian principles by the chief pastor (Oberpfarrer) Benckhard he was because of his father’s death put to hard work, but in his spare time he studied the organ under Herr Alberty and mathematics under Herr Kuhlmann. In his twenty-first year he took up Latin and Greek under the rector Johann Joachim Schüssler. For a brief period (1733-34) he studied and taught in the schools at Clausthal and Zellerfeld in the Harz Mountains, and later he returned to Einbeck. Meanwhile King George II (formerly Elector Georg August of Hanover) had established the University of Göttingen, at which young Muhlenberg desired to pursue his work. Through the interest of the members of the Einbeck Council—his father’s former colleagues—and by means of the money scraped together by his widowed mother he was enrolled at the university

¹In this article the primary sources of information will be designated as Journals, Selbstbiographie (Germann’s edition), and Halle Reports (Oswald’s translation of the Hallesche Nachrichten).

²Muhlenberg’s birth record in the parish register for 1711 may be translated thus. “September 6, Herr Nicol[aus] Melchior Mühlenberg, Citizen, Brewer and Deacon at this Church, had a young son baptized, named Melchior Heinrich.” Selbstbiographie, Germann’s notes, p. 183. It will be observed that he was given the name of Melchior Heinrich, which he later reversed to Heinrich Melchior.

³The extant church registers of Einbeck, the oldest of which date only from 1700, refer to him as “Brauer und Schuhmacher.” Nicolaus Melchior Muhlenberg died on January 27, 1723, at the age of 63 years, from a stroke of apoplexy. Germann in his notes to the Selbstbiographie gives (p. 183) the year as 1729, which appears to be an error.

⁴Journals, vol. I, p. 1. Muhlenberg’s mother died on December 29, 1747, at the age of 72 years and 3 months. Selbstbiographie, p. 192; Germann’s notes.
on March 19, 1935, as the one hundred and fortieth student. His professors were: of logic, Samuel Christian Hollmann; of Hebrew and mathematics, Andreas Georg Wählner, who, he tells us, “received unusual applause because he now and then played tricks during the lectures, which delighted the depraved young men”; of Greek, Johann Matthias Gesner; and of theology, the celebrated Dr. Joachim Oporin, who, we are assured, was “praised and highly respected by all because of his thorough scholarship and exemplary life.” In 1736 Muhlenberg and two other theological students established an orphanage for the instruction of poor children at Göttingen, an institution that is still in existence.

In 1738 young Muhlenberg was sent to the famous Lutheran university of Halle through the assistance of two noble friends, Count Heinrich XXIV of Reuss-Schleiz-Gera and Count Erdmann Heinrich von Henckel-Donnersmark of Pölzig. Here he first came into contact with the beneficent influences of Pietism, the principles of which, laid down about 1670 by Philip Jakob Spener as a revolt against the strait-laced and dogmatic government of the Lutheran Church, presented religion as a thing essentially of the heart, not of unalterable doctrine. The tenets stimulated a study of Scriptural writings, encouraged the holding of prayer meetings and pastoral visitations, and promoted education, the establishment of schools and orphanages, works of charity, and missionary activities. These Pietistic teachings remained with Muhlenberg through the remainder of his life and were apparent in his early work in Pennsylvania.

In 1739, after he was ordained pastor at Leipzig, the capital of the electorate of Saxony, Muhlenberg became deacon at Grosshennersdorf, in Upper Lusatia (Lausitz), and inspector of the orphanage school there, a position received through the in-

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7 *Journals*, vol. I, p. 3.

8 For biographical details concerning Muhlenberg’s professors see Putter’s Versuch einer akademischen Gelehrten-Geschichte von der Georg-Augustus Universität zu Göttingen, vol. I (1765). An account of Oporin is given also in the Allegemeine deutsche Biographie.

fluence of Heinrich XXIV of Reuss. In 1741 in reply to a book by Balthasar Mentzer, general superintendent of the duchy of Calenberg, he wrote a defense of Pietism, his only work published during his lifetime. On September 6 of that year (his thirtieth birthday) he was a guest at Halle of his friend Gotthilf August Francke, son of the great Pietist leader, August Hermann Francke, who extended to him a call to go to Pennsylvania. This he accepted by letter on October 18.

The great source for the history of Lutheranism in Pennsylvania at that time is the Hallesche Nachrichten, a series of reports from the Lutheran clergymen in the province, written chiefly by Muhlenberg, Brunnholz, and Handschuh and published at irregular intervals in parts, the first in 1744 and the last in 1787, when the whole collection appeared in two bound volumes with an introduction by Dr. Johann Ludwig Schmulze, ordinary professor of theology and philosophy at Halle. From these Halle Reports we learn that the early Lutherans of Pennsylvania were without teachers or regularly ordained pastors. "Therefore their children for the most part, grew up in their ignorance without instruction, wherever the parents themselves were incapable of leading them to some knowledge of God and divine things. Such persons, indeed, were not wanting, who from selfish motives offered themselves as teachers. But experience taught that such not only cared little for the souls of the hearers, but that they also, by their bad life and example, only did the more harm—the disorder of the congregations thereby ever becoming greater and more sad."

Conditions became so critical that by 1733 pleas were sent to Germany and England for assistance in building schools and churches and for the appointment of competent teachers and pastors. These appeals received sympathetic attention from the German chaplain at the court of George II, the Reverend Friedrich Michael Ziegenhagen, pastor of the Lutheran Castle Chapel in London, and also from Dr. Francke at Halle. There were in-

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11 Carl H. Kraeling, "In Quest of Muhlenbergiana," The Lutheran Quarterly Review, April, 1929, pp. 183-184.
evitable delays, however, and it was eight years before the authori-
ties of the Lutheran Church were in a position to send an able young clergyman to take charge of the situation.

On December 17, 1741, Muhlenberg left Grosshennersdorf, and after a brief visit at Einbeck with his mother he arrived in England on April 16, 1742. He spent two months in London with Dr. Ziegenhagen and departed for America in June aboard the packet boat *George*. The voyage took over 14 weeks; the passengers would have died of thirst if two passing English vessels had not supplied them with water. Arriving at Charleston on September 21, 1742, the religious leader proceeded to the Salzburger colony at Ebenezer, Georgia, for a brief consultation with the Lutheran pastors there, Boltzius and Gronau. He embarked from Charleston on a small vessel on November 12 and thirteen days later at the end of a stormy passage up the coast landed in Philadelphia. On December 28 he presented his credentials to Deputy-Governor George Thomas of Pennsylvania, who received him with greatest kindness.

Muhlenberg immediately plunged into the task that lay before him. His first places of worship were a barn or carpenter shop in Philadelphia, a barn at Providence (now Trappe, Montgomery County), and a partly completed church at New Hanover, thirty-six miles from Philadelphia and ten from Providence. In 1743 the corner stones for churches at Philadelphia and Providence were laid, and in 1747 the New Hanover church was completed.

In this connection there is an interesting report dated July 8, 1744, by the Reverend Johann Philipp Boehme to the synods of North and South Holland. The Reformed clergyman related that his group and the Lutherans had formerly shared in common a dilapidated old house in Philadelphia at an annual rental of £3, finally raised to £4, "which we must now pay alone, for the Lutherans have built a church there of 70 by 48 feet." After commenting that besides this the Lutherans had put up a stone church of fifty by thirty-eight feet at Providence he stated:

They now have four ministers. Regarding the circum-
stances of one of them, Mühlenberg by name, I learn that

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14 *Journals*, vol. I, p. 75.
15 Jacobs, *op. cit.*, pp. 219, 221.
his people give him what they can, he receives this on account, and the remainder he receives from London, whence he was sent hither. I have no acquaintance with the others, but it appears that they prosper. It also looks as if this Church, in case we are left without aid, would be able to do us considerable injury, for some young men are known to me whom they have won.

We are indebted to Muhlenberg for a valuable account of living conditions in the proprietary province of the Penn family. In a letter to a certain theologian on August 12, 1743, the pastor wrote:

'Money is scarce, but the land is so rich in all kinds of produce, that it may be said to flow with milk and honey. On the one side we still have the Indians or heathen, on the other side we have the sea.'

As respects climate, Pennsylvania is for Germans the best country in America. In the country the houses are not together, like the villages in Germany, but there are always several thousand acres in one tract, whereof one man sometimes owns 500, 400, 300, 200, 100, 50, 20, or so and many acres. Such a region is at first all a forest. When it is settled it is called a township. Certain roads are then opened which lead towards the city of Philadelphia. If one travels on the road, he travels constantly in thicket or forest, with here and there a house several miles apart, standing near by the road. Most of the houses however stand remote from the highway. In the country are various rivers which quickly rise and fall again. They are without bridges over them, but one must ride through them and sometimes also cross them with a boat. When I travel from Philadelphia to the country congregations, I must always cross three streams. In the winter they are frequently dangerous.

Some of the dangers to which Muhlenberg was exposed are described in his diaries thus:

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28 The others referred to were assistants who came from Germany in 1774, namely: Peter Brunnholz, Johann Nicolaus Kurtz, and Johann Helfrich Schaum.


30 Muhlenberg seems to have entirely overlooked New Jersey as Pennsylvania’s eastern neighbor and the Delaware River as the boundary between the two provinces.

A heavy rain began to fall during the past night and continued steadily during the day. I had promised to be in New Hanover to hear confession, but scarcely knew how to get through. They gave me a strong horse with which I was able to plunge through and reach New Hanover. Arrived in New Hanover about two o'clock, but had to remain there longer because the water rose so high that we were unable to reach the church.

In the month of December a great snow fell and the winter set in with such vengeance that I was scarcely able to attend to my ordinary pastoral duties in the congregations and outparishes committed to my charge. The snow lay much deeper that I ever saw it in the Harz Mountains of Hannover, where the winters are generally pretty severe.

Pastor Muhlenberg arranged to spend one week a month with each of his three congregations (Philadelphia, New Hanover, and Providence, or Trappe), teaching the children during the week and preaching on Sundays. Since Germantown, then several miles from Philadelphia, had a Lutheran church but no regular pastor, he included that community among his charges. After Peter Brunnholz came from Germany to be his chief assistant, the work of the four parishes was divided, Muhlenberg taking Trappe and New Hanover, and Brunnholz Germantown and Philadelphia.

From the very beginning of his ministry in America Muhlenberg was forced to endure calumnies. His earliest opponent was the celebrated Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, the Moravian bishop who was then in Pennsylvania endeavoring to unite all the German Protestants in the province into an evangelical union—a project which was unsuccessful. The pastor had a bitter quarrel also with Christopher Sauer, concerning which he wrote in his report to the Lutheran authorities in Germany on March 6, 1745:

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21 Ibid., vol. I, p. 120. 1746.
The German printer here, named Christopher Sauer, had sought up to that time, both in private and in public, to make both myself and my office odious. His reason was that I had, as a matter of conscience, advised my congregation to be very cautious when they purchased any of the Bibles which he had lately printed, and carefully to examine whether he had not interpolated some notions of his own, for he is wont to embrace every other opportunity, in his almanacs and in his newspapers, to traduce the Lutheran Church.

As Muhlenberg did not deny the accusations, Sauer's charges must have been substantially correct. Muhlenberg's enemies even forced a woman of low repute to bring charges of a most serious nature against the pastor, but upon examination in a court of law she confessed the conspiracy and was required to make public apology to each of his congregations.

But if he made enemies, Muhlenberg was also fortunate in his friendships. He was on friendly terms with the Mennonites and even preached in the Mennonite meeting house in Germantown in 1745. One of his most intimate friends was the noted Reformed clergyman Michael Schlatter, whom he called Slatter in his diaries. His first meeting with him took place in 1746, when Schlatter visited the Lutheran religionist to discuss matters affecting their two denominations. "His Reverence received me with all possible affection and brotherly kindness," Schlatter later wrote, "commended himself and his brethren to our friendship, and desired that we might dwell together in neighborly amity and peace; which fellowship has also been preserved sacred and inviolable during the whole time I have been in Pennsylvania, so that one may well desire that such traces of harmony might also be found in Germany." Muhlenberg's opinion of Schlatter is well summed up in an entry made in his diary on Tuesday, July 28, 1752: "At six o'clock in the morning the Reformed Pastor Slatter

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2 The time of the arrival of Muhlenberg's three assistants.
came to my house and embraced me in keeping with our old unfeigned friendship."\(^2\)

The reader will already have observed that the early German clergymen in America continually compared conditions in America to those in Germany, never to the latter country's credit. Such references are significant reminders of the reasons, chiefly economic, why the Germans sought by every possible means to escape from their homeland and seek a refuge in the New World, where everyone was afforded an opportunity to make a fresh start in life. For instance, in discussing the affairs of his assistant, Kurtz, Muhlenberg wrote in his report for March 6, 1745:

He raises his own fowls and capons. In the winter he teaches about thirty or forty children, but this work only lasts for half the year, because the country people cannot spare their children during the summer. He receives 5s. per quarter for each child. When he baptizes a child he is paid 1s. for recording it. When he conducts a funeral in my absence, whether of a child or an adult, he receives 5s. to 8s., according to the circumstances of the people. He can live as does a nobleman in Germany. . . .

I have to say, Reverend Fathers, that if a preacher or catechist has not been thoroughly converted in Europe, we can entertain but poor hopes for him in Pennsylvania, for the condition of affairs in this free, strange country is such that one may be very easily seduced into carnal indulgence and dissolute habits, and for young beginners especially it is actually dangerous.\(^2\)

The pastor more than once remarked on the "dissolute habits" of Pennsylvanians.

For some time after Muhlenberg came to America, his financial condition was precarious. Members of the Philadelphia congregations did not contribute enough during the first and second years to pay the pastor's house rent; "they were involved in the burdensome expensive process of building," stated the clergyman in his report for 1746, "and they were always pleading that they had written our dear Fathers that the first year's salary of the preachers who were to be sent should be paid out of the collection

from Europe." New Hanover supplied £11 to buy a horse, but Providence (Trappe) furnished nothing the first year, "because there, too, they were engaged in the burdensome task of building."

"In the first and second year," the minister continued, "I became so out at elbows through much traveling that I was put to the necessity of borrowing £16 sterling for underclothing and outer garments." When his first horse was worn out, Muhlenberg had to buy a stronger animal for £13 sterling. "I had hardly ridden the nag four times to Philadelphia in the terrible heat of summer when he collapsed," he said, "so I had to buy a large rough cart horse for £8 sterling." The second year he paid £6 sterling for house rent in Philadelphia and £4 sterling for a saddle and bridle, "and the consequence was that I was in debt for at least £60 sterling."

Muhlenberg had as his primary concern education. Wherever he went, he founded schools for children, but youths and adults too received instruction from him and his aides. "Some of the parents brought their children to me," he wrote on Monday, January 10, 1743. "Things look pretty bad when children seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, and twenty years old come with their A-B-C book. Yet I am happy that the children have such great eagerness to learn something."30

The religious leader's educational activities were not confined to Pennsylvania. The situation in the neighboring province of New Jersey was equally critical. The people of the Raritan valley appealed to Muhlenberg for aid, and when he visited them in 1757, he found appalling conditions—"no school worthy of the name, youngsters growing up uneducated, the former pastor a hissing and a byword for neglecting the school and even his own children, and for fighting with the teacher."31 The pastor set to work with his customary energy, and by the time of his second visit to the region (in 1758) proper educational instruction was being given. He himself conducted a small theological school at New Germantown (then in Hunterdon but now in Somerset County, N. J.), and his successor, the Reverend Paul Bryzelius, a Swedish clergyman who was pastor at New Germantown and Bedminster from 1760

to 1766, continued the work of fostering religious education.\textsuperscript{33}

In 1748 Muhlenberg acted as arbiter in quarrels between the Dutch and German factions in the Lutheran Church in New York, and in 1751 and 1752 he served as preacher in that city.\textsuperscript{34} In August 1748, he presided over the first meeting of the Lutheran Synod of Pennsylvania.\textsuperscript{35} Meanwhile he was undergoing a novel experience. He wrote in his diaries that it was his intention to remain a bachelor all his life long, but the members of his congregation would not have it so. The young parson was considered quite a matrimonial catch by members of his congregation, who fondly linked his name with one or another Pennsylvania German Fräulein. At length public sentiment prevailed, and on April 19, 1745, the pastor married Anna Maria, the young daughter of Colonel Conrad Weiser. He never had occasion to regret his matrimonial alliance, for his wife remained a faithful consort and lifelong helpmate. Eleven children—six boys and five girls—were the result of this union, and thus was established one of Pennsylvania’s most distinguished families. Three sons who chose the ministry as their profession became prominent in other fields: Peter won fame as a Revolutionary War general and a congressman; Frederick A. C. achieved distinction as first speaker of the United States House of Representatives; and Henry E., who unlike his brothers remained a clergyman, received his chief note as a botanist.

Especially interesting are the glimpses which Muhlenberg affords us of the interest taken in political affairs by the Pennsylvanians of his day.

During the past year [he wrote in 1748] a great deal has been conjectured and said about a hostile attack by the Spanish and French. Consequently there are two chief parties here among the English and they have entered into a violent newspaper war before the Spaniards and the French have come. The Quakers, who are the foremost party in this province, have on their side the German book publisher Sauer, who controls the Mennonites, separatists, Anabaptists, and the like with his printed

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., p. 94.
\textsuperscript{34} Jacobs, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 251.
\textsuperscript{35} Helen E. Pfatteicher, A.B., \textit{The Ministerium of Pennsylvania} (1938), pp. 22-23.
works and lines them up with the Quakers. All of these
speak and write against the war and reject even the
slightest defense as ungodly and contrary to the command
of Jesus Christ. The church party has the English book
publishers on its side, and they maintain in speech and
printed word that defense is not contrary to God's com-
mand, but right and necessary in accord with the laws of
nature. This party makes use of the preachers of the
Episcopal and Presbyterian on its side. The latter party
held several lotteries and used the proceeds to build a
fortification on the coast; they have organized for de-
fense, dividing up into companies and regiments which
drill at regular times. Our pastors' collegium has been
sharply watched to see which side we would turn to. We
said, however, that we had been sent to preach to our
people repentance to God and faith in the Lord Jesus,
and hence we could not mix in political affairs unless we
had express orders from our highest or provincial gov-
ernment; accordingly we remained silent.\textsuperscript{56}

This passage has a particularly modern tone; there were inter-
ventionists, isolationists, and neutrals two centuries ago, it seems.

During the past seventy-five years we have come to think of
Prussian militarism as a system typical of German life and
thought and as an upsetting influence in world affairs. Such an
idea was not held by our eighteenth-century American ancestors.
Then Prussia was our friend; during the Seven Years' War she
was our active ally, and during the Revolutionary War her king,
Frederick the Great, was sympathetic toward our cause. In the
seventeenth century France under Louis XIV had been the great
European terror, and in the eighteenth she was the foe whose
power Great Britain and her American colonies sought to curb.
The American interest in foreign affairs is summed up by Muhlen-
berg in his diary for Tuesday, October 30, 1759, when he was
living in New Jersey:

In New Germantown we had a solemn service of thank-
giving for the glorious acts of God which the most gra-
cious and omnipotent Lord of Sabaoth has done, in short
succession, to the unspeakable consolation of His Pro-
estant Church that was sitting in ashes. Namely: (1)

\textsuperscript{56} Journals, vol. I, p. 212.
The victory of His Highness, Prince Ferdinand.\(^7\) (2) Admiral Boscawen's\(^8\) victory over the French fleet of Toulon at Algarve. (3) The glorious victory of His Royal Majesty of Prussia over the Russians at Kunersdorf. (4) The marvelous victory over the French at the conquest of the capital city of Canada, called Quebec.\(^9\)

The American colonies must have received a false report of the battle of Kunersdorf, for on Saturday, November 10, 1759, the pastor wrote, “In the evening I saw in the New York Gazette the sorrowful news of the defeat of His Majesty of Prussia at Kunersdorf.”\(^40\)

Muhlenberg quite unconsciously demonstrated his warm-heartedness in his journals, which are never without the human touch. On May 26, 1762, he wrote that he had been visited by the widow Krebs, who wished to pay for the funeral sermon of her late husband, “but I refused it because she is a poor widow.”\(^41\)

Again, on Saturday, August 21, 1762, Michael Zeh, chirurgeon, offered five shillings as grave fee for the burial on the previous day of his child. “He was rather angry,” relates Muhlenberg, “because Mr. Handschue\(^42\) asked him whether he intended to pay him or me for the funeral expenses. For my services I took nothing because he shaves me.”\(^43\) Incidentally it is interesting to note that surgeons (chirurgeons) and barbers were the same.

Pastor Muhlenberg himself performed a variety of duties. He ministered not only to his Lutheran parishioners but also to members of other faiths; his diaries contain frequent allusions to services for Presbyterians, Reformed, Episcopalians, Catholics, and so on. He wrote obituary notices of the people he buried and identified their former homes in Germany wherever possible. His character sketches did not always redound to the credit of the deceased. George Otto’s (or Ott’s) “chief fault was an inclination toward drunkenness but God, in His compassionate love, cast him on a sick-bed for several weeks and delivered him as a brand from

\(^{37}\) Ferdinand, Duke of Brunswick, Prussian field marshal who won the battle of Minden, Aug. 1, 1759. It was a brilliant victory.

\(^{38}\) Edward Boscawen, British admiral.


\(^{41}\) Ibid., vol. I, p. 521.

\(^{42}\) Handschuh, one of Muhlenberg’s Lutheran colleagues.

the fire";\(^4\) and Michael Krebs "had ruined himself by hard work and strong drink, was bedridden for about four months, was visited frequently by us preachers, and was also given Holy Communion by me."\(^{45}\)

On October 19, 1760, the Pennsylvania Synod (now Ministerium), which had lain dormant for several years, was revived at Muhlenberg's home at Trappe. The German pastor was elected president of the organization.\(^4\) In the eighteen years since his landing on American shores Muhlenberg had placed the American Lutheran Church on a firm and lasting foundation. The next year (1761) he removed with his family to Philadelphia to take personal charge of the congregations there and to provide for the advanced education of his growing sons. He remained in that city until the outbreak of the Revolution drove him once again to his old home at Trappe, where he passed quietly away on October 7, 1787. Three days later he was laid to rest in the churchyard of the Augustus Lutheran Church at Trappe amid the homage of the parishioners. Among the mourners was his old friend the Reverend Michael Schlatter.\(^4\)

Muhlenberg is known as the patriarch of the Lutheran Church of America not because he founded the church in this country—for Lutherans had settled in New Netherland and built churches over a century prior to his immigration—but because he established a church organization.

He was strong in body and richly endowed in heart and mind [says Lars P. Qualben], dignified and magnetic in his personal appearance, endowed with unusual tact and adaptability, pleasant and cordial in his relations with men, capable of speaking Latin, Dutch and English fluently besides his native German, trained in the German School of Pietism in its best days, a scholarly theologian and a firm Lutheran, and possessed with remarkable powers of organization and administration—these characteristics made Muhlenberg the Patriarch of the Lutheran Church in America.\(^4\)

\(^{42}\) Harbaugh, op. cit., pp. 347-349.
\(^{43}\) Lars P. Qualben, Ph.D., Th.D., *The Lutheran Church in Colonial America* (1940), pp. 204-205.