

ABRAHAM HARLEY CASSEL AND HIS COLLECTION

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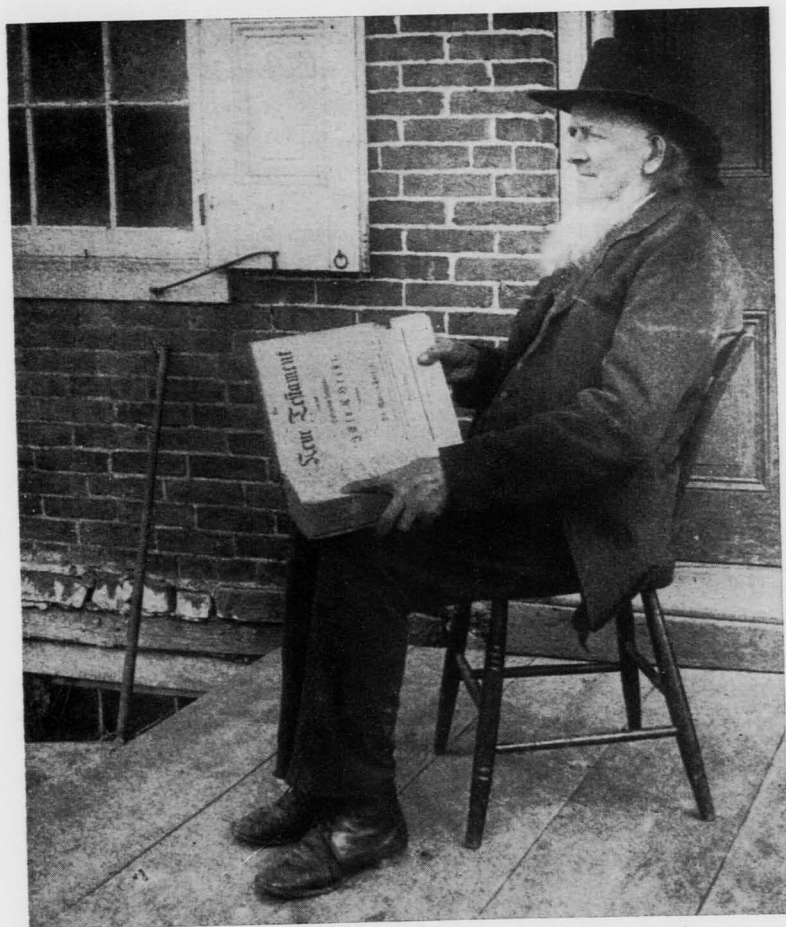
IN 1907 Martin G. Brumbaugh, then president of Juniata College and later governor of Pennsylvania, stated that "no man who attempts to write a history of Pennsylvania or of the German population of America can do so without coming to Huntingdon."¹ The basis for his assertion was the important Cassel Collection which he had obtained for the Juniata College Library during and after 1899. This represented a major portion of the extensive library built up during the nineteenth century by Abraham H. Cassel (1820-1908) of Harleysville. To understand how Brumbaugh's claim could have been made, it is necessary to look at the curious life of Cassel—called the "great antiquarian"—and at his unusual collection.²

Abraham Harley Cassel was born on September 21, 1820, in

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¹ *Juniata Echo*, XVI (1907), v, 73.

² Cassel's life has never been fully portrayed in print. For brief biographical sketches, see "Abraham Harley Cassel," in *Some Who Led: or Fathers of the Church of the Brethren Who Have Passed Over*, ed. by D. L. Miller and Galen B. Royer (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1912), 121-124; information supplied by Mrs. Elizabeth Rosenberger, Covington, Ohio; Samuel W. Pennypacker, "Abraham H. Cassel" in Moses Auge, *Lives of the Eminent Dead and Biographical Notices of Prominent Living Citizens of Montgomery County, Pa.* (Norristown, Pa.: the author, 1879), 324-328; Samuel W. Pennypacker, "Abraham Harley Cassel: An Appreciation," *The Pennsylvania German*, IX (1908), vii, 303-304; Edward W. Hocker, "Abraham Harley Cassel: A Biographical Sketch," *The Pennsylvania German*, IX (1908), vii, 304-307; Daniel K. Cassel, *A Genealogical History of the Cassel Family in America* (Norristown, Pa.: Morgan R. Wills, 1896), 74; and "Abraham H. Cassel," *Brethren Family Almanac* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1908), 21. Many Pennsylvania newspapers published accounts of Cassel's life and of his library; his own collection of these items is now in the possession of Mr. Roy C. Kulp, Chalfont, Pa. Mr. Kulp has written an article on Cassel based on these clippings which will be published in a forthcoming issue of *Pennsylvania Folklife*. Cassel's collected personal correspondence is on file at Juniata College. See also the A. H. Cassel Letters at the Schwenkfelder Historical Library, Pennsburg.



ABRAHAM HARLEY CASSEL HOLDING A SAUER BIBLE (1897).
Roy C. Kulp Collection

rural Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. The fourth child of Yelles and Mary Harley Cassel, he came of sturdy Pennsylvania-German sectarian stock, Mennonite on his father's side, and Church of the Brethren on his mother's. An ancestor of his father came with the first major German migration to Pennsylvania, the thirteen Mennonite-Quaker families who settled Germantown in 1683. His mother was a great-granddaughter both of Peter Becker, first Brethren minister in America, and of Christopher Sauer, Germantown printer, who published the first Bible in America in a European language. As an adult, Cassel was to be as proud of these ancestors as his humble nature would permit.

So sickly was Abraham at birth that the midwife solemnly predicted to the mother, "This child you will not raise!" Though Cassel lived to be eighty-seven, in one sense the midwife was right. Despite all of the strictness, even severity, which his parents could muster—and this was considerable—from an early age the son defied his father. Reprimand, ridicule, and the rod all failed to break his resistance.

The issue was the lad's mania for books and learning. The elder Cassel was conscientiously opposed to education. Yet his son, we are told in an autobiographical sketch, loved books from the cradle. "I might say the love of books was born with me, for from my earliest recollection . . . nothing attracted my attention so much as books; my parents used to say that when I was a mere Infant sitting in the cradle, or on the floor, that no plaything would interest me, except a book, but with a few old books, I would amuse myself for Hours, and even when sick, or in pain, they would quiet me above anything else."³

According to Cassel, his father wished to bring up his children in "Pious Ignorance." His position was, "If you give a child learning then you fit, or prepare him for Forging, Counterfeiting, or any other badness that he may choose to do, which an unlearned or ignorant one would not be capable of doing."⁴ Undoubtedly present though unexpressed was the fear of many of the German sectarians that schooling would bring contact with the

³"A few Facts and Incidents relating to the Life of Abraham H. Cassel written by request of M. J. Eshelman of Ill. and also for the Satisfaction [*sic*] of my Posterity" (MS in the Cassel collection of Juniata College), 8.

⁴*Ibid.*, 4.

“worldly,” and consequently divert the children from the plain tenets of their faith. They should, of course, learn enough to be able to read Scripture, but not more. As the father saw how quickly the boy picked up book knowledge, he considered the poor formal schooling available unnecessary, as Abraham could learn enough by himself.

An older sister helped him with the ABC's, and a sympathetic relative gave him some cheap tracts to read. He taught himself English with a pocket dictionary, but had trouble in pronunciation because he never heard the English language spoken at home. Seeing the wit and industry of the child, acquaintances of the family urged the father to relent and let him attend school. Finally the father gave in, saying to his son, “I tried to bring you up according to my conscientious convictions, but I see I can't, as you will learn in spite of all my opposition. Therefore learn, and if it leads you to evil, the fault is not mine.”⁵ The result was six weeks of school at the age of eleven—the only formal schooling Abraham H. Cassel ever received.

At home the struggle went on. His brief experience in school stoked the fires of his enthusiasm, and he spent every minute possible in reading whatever he could lay his hands on. Abraham wanted to stay up to read by the light of their only gas lamp after the others had gone to bed, but this was forbidden on grounds of economy. A storekeeper heard of this and gave the boy candles by which he could read. This was also forbidden. Abraham took his candles up to his unheated bedroom, wrapped himself in his covers and read. His father caught him at it, and he was forbidden to light his candles at the gas lamp. A Jewish peddler happened by who sympathized with the boy, and told him of a new invention to light candles—matches. On the next trip he brought some. Thus supplied, Abraham stealthily continued his reading in his bedroom, often reading all night.

The father tried to keep him so busy that he would have no time for reading. The result was a physical breakdown at the age of sixteen. No longer fit for farm work, he became a cabinet maker's apprentice, and then store clerk. His chance came when he was asked to teach school at the age of eighteen. (At another

⁵ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

place he gives the age as twenty.) For eight years he devoted himself to this congenial task, although the necessity of copying out all of the needed papers in the absence of uniform textbooks kept him busy from dawn to dusk. His thoroughness and zeal facilitated his success as a teacher; he was the first person in the township to make a living by teaching the full year.

At the age of twenty-two he married Elizabeth Rhoades, a half-orphan of English Quaker descent. His parents objected to the match; she had no dowry, he was a "book fool." This marriage would never last, and they did not intend to aid the young couple. Their first years were a harsh struggle financially. For the first and most of the second year of married life they were too poor, for example, to have meat in their diet. Then children came along, eight in all, and there was the mother-in-law to support.

Four years after the marriage, despite offers to enter commercial or public life, Cassel returned at his father's request to the family farm. Though admitting no real interest in farming, he chose this life because it gave him freedom, "I loved Innocence & ease of mind to read and study above everything else. And no calling appeared so well adapted—so Independent and free as farming. For, with the setting sun, My days work was gen'rally done, And then, without a thought or Care, Could to my much lov'd books repair."⁶

Though deeply religious and a leader among the German Baptist Brethren (Dunkers), he never became a lay minister despite repeated urging. He felt no call to be a preacher. He proved to be a successful farmer, however, and had attained a modest prosperity by 1869 when he turned the farm over to his son. Henceforth he could devote himself completely to his books.

Cassel's life would be of relatively little significance if it were not for the tremendous library he accumulated, once claimed to be the second largest private collection in America.⁷ He began collecting as a child. In his own words, ". . . by the time I could read, I had a perfect *mania* for books, and every penny that I could command was invested in books. Although I loved candy and sweet meats, as much as any child, I above all preferred books,

⁶ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

⁷ J. N. Rhoads, *A Thunderstorm* (Philadelphia: Ferris and Leach, 1904), 47.

and every scrap of printed matter was so carefully preserved, that I might say the foundation of my Great Library was laid before I was Eight years old.”⁸

Despite parental objection, Abraham managed to earn money for buying books as a boy by working for the neighbors on Sunday. Many he found and begged for. “. . . I searched many garrets and other out of the way places for such old, cast-off books and papers. . . .” A real opportunity came as a teacher. “I . . . had to board around with the scholars, in lieu of salary, as the custom then was, . . . and out of the fulness of the heart you know the mouth speaketh. Consequently, wherever I came my conversation would turn in that direction, so that I would everywhere see all the books they had, and beg and buy as many of them as I could; in that way my library still kept increasing.”⁹

After his marriage, funds were scarce, but the collecting went on. Undoubtedly his wife was called upon to use all of her store of Quaker patience and forbearance when needed dollars went for old books. In later years, wrote Cassel, “. . . after I had a little more money at [my] command I began to import rare and valuable books from every part of the civilized world, until I had many books and papers from Europe, Asia, and Africa; also from China, Japan and Hindostan. After I had still more money at [my] command I turned my attention towards early documents and rare colonial history, early printing, etc. until I was possessed of an almost enviable collection.”¹⁰ One hundred dollars was the highest price he suggested paying for any volume.

Extensive travels, often on foot, he made to locate rare books. One trip took him across the Mississippi, and was more than six thousand miles long. He wrote in 1867, “I have travelled thousands of miles and ransacked many old Bee Boxes and Flour Barrels in the garrets and Lofts . . . [and] have therefore amassed

⁸ “A Few Facts and Incidents,” 8.

⁹ “A Short Sketch of my Life and Library written to my Children at their request, Harleysville, Montgomery Co., Pa., June 12th, 1884” (MS in the Cassel collection), 1-2. The letter, originally published in the Mount Carrol (Illinois) *Mirror*, was reprinted under the headline, “Mr. A. H. Cassel. He Writes to His Children about His Library,” in the Norristown (Pa.) *Daily Herald*, August 29, 1884.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

an amount of matter that is almost Incredible."¹¹ Harold S. Bender, dean of the Mennonite seminary at Goshen College, who made an intensive search in 1924 for early Mennonite publications, wrote, "At places, too, other seekers had preceded me, especially in Pennsylvania. Governor Pennypacker and A. H. Cassel of Harleysville had been everywhere. . . ."¹²

The result of Cassel's indefatigable labors was a collection of some fifty thousand books, pamphlets, and documents, larger than many public and college libraries at that time. Unlike many collectors, Cassel studied all of his acquisitions, even teaching himself smatterings of foreign languages in the process. Indeed, his study was so intense that his eyesight gradually failed, until he became completely blind. Certainly an exquisite frustration this was—to be surrounded by thousands of books and to be unable to read them. They were all nicely catalogued, bound, and arranged. He knew exactly where to put his hands on any wanted bit of material.

Cassel had to build special quarters to house his library. A neighbor has penned her vivid impression of a visit to this *sanctum sanctorum* as a girl:

Neither shall I forget my first visit to his library. We passed up the old-fashioned back stairs, into the rooms containing his treasures. The first room was low, long and narrow; both sides [were] lined with drawers to the height of three feet. Above were bookshelves, extend-

¹¹ A. H. Cassel to Philip Boyle, July 29, 1867, Cassel Correspondence. Governor Pennypacker published a tribute to Cassel in acrostic form by "a litterateur of distinction" in *The Pennsylvania German*:

Alone he started at the break of day,
 Before the stars had set, and ere the sun
 Rose o'er the hill-tops to make plain the way.
 And wearied oft, he stopped and asked each one,
 "Had aught been heard of where his treasure lay?"
 At which the heedless answered, laughing, "Nay."
 Men sordid, said: "'Twere better to have done
 His search wherein no profit could be won."
 Cheered by fond memories of men long dead,
 At last in garrets where the spiders wove,
 Secure he found the "Christopher Saur," he sought,
 So, while the twilight gathers round his head,
 Each hour more precious grows his treasure trove,
 Like joys by some hard self-denial bought.

Quoted in Miller and Royer, *op. cit.*, 124.

¹² Harold S. Bender, *Two Centuries of American Mennonite Literature* (Goshen, Ind.: Mennonite Historical Society, 1929), vii.

ing entirely around the room, and up to the very ceiling. Down through the middle of the room extended a partition, lined on both sides with books clear to the ceiling. At one end of the room, by the little window, was a table, and that was always covered with books. The next room was almost as closely packed with volumes as the first. To me this was an impressive sight, and with a feeling of awe or fear, I walked on tiptoe between these corridors of books, not daring even to touch such treasures.¹³

A nephew, who incorporated Cassel into a piece of fiction in the character of a hermit, also described the library :

He did not exactly live in a cave, as a bona fide hermit should, or rather he did not live in an underground cave, but he had built himself a cave above ground—a cave of books; he had walled himself in with antique books. It was rectangular in shape, and was originally forty feet long, eight feet high and eight feet wide. It was literally walled up with antiquarian books and pamphlets. There were, however, two small, dingy windows, which the Hermit had grudgingly left for light.¹⁴

Martin G. Brumbaugh published a photograph of Cassel in his book-filled library-room. A later writer refers to this, describing him as having the "clear-cut, almost ascetic but gentle features of a patriarch, looking a little like Saint Jerome surrounded by his books."¹⁵ A warm description of Cassel was written in 1895 :

He has a combination of modesty and firmness, a certain simple eloquence of speech, which is made impressive by his earnestness, and to which is lent an added charm by a slight German accent, so that when by the fireside, he tells the tale of his familiars of old, the voice and manner, the figure clad in the plain habit of the Brethren, the clear cut features of the face, the kindly eye lit up with enthusiasm, the whitening hair and beard of the

¹³ Elizabeth D. Rosenberger, "Abraham H. Cassel: Part One—Pennsylvania's Greatest Antiquarian and Historian," *The Gospel Messenger*, XLVII (1908), xviii, 279.

¹⁴ Rhoads, *op. cit.*, 46; see also Earl F. Robacker, *Pennsylvania German Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1943), 131.

¹⁵ Anneliese Marckwald Funke, "The Library: The Cassel Collection," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXVII (1943), ii, 154.

speaker, so seem a part of the tale that he who listens must gradually yield to the charm and forgetful of time and place see the scenes of frontier life in the colonial days as an actual spectator.¹⁶

Cassel was willing to share in his writings the fruits of his long years of collecting, although he was always apologetic about the shortcomings of his German and English literary styles. In 1852 he began writing articles for the initial volume of the first Brethren periodical. His first published note to editor Henry Kurtz, in which he used the pen name of Alexander Mack, Jr., Theophilus, began with these words: "As I am a very extensive reader, and in possession of a library of at least 3,000 volumes chiefly of old and rare authors, to which but few of your readers have access, yet I find so many valuable gems in them, that I thought a few gleanings from them could not be unacceptable to your readers."¹⁷

He wrote thereafter many an article for this and other Brethren periodicals, meanwhile becoming known as *the* authority on early Brethren history. Most of the manuscripts for these articles are in the Juniata College files. Other items from his pen appeared in local Pennsylvania journals. Latterly, questions have been raised about the accuracy of Cassel's writing. He seems to have been not entirely free from the practice of embroidering his stories for better dramatic effect.¹⁸

Unlike many collectors, he was generous to a fault in making his collection and specialized knowledge available to other people. In fact, it is not so much in his own writings, but rather in the gathering and preservation of material especially having to do with the Pennsylvania Germans that his real contribution was made. Whether it was answering one of hundreds of requests for family information, or receiving the visit of a distinguished scholar from Oxford, his response was uniformly cordial.¹⁹ His close friend

¹⁶ Louise Levering Rieger Weber, "A Sketch of the Life of the Antiquarian Abraham H. Cassel," *Barritt and Co's Magazine*, 1895. (From an off-print in the Cassel collection; I was unable to identify the source further.)

¹⁷ *The Monthly Gospel Visitor* [sic], I (1852), x, 156.

¹⁸ See Gerhard Friedrich, "Abraham H. Cassel Invents an Anecdote," *The American-German Review*, IX (1942), ii, 19-20, 39, and "Did Christopher Sauer Meet George Washington," *Pennsylvania History*, X (1943), iii, 193-200.

¹⁹ Cassel has been credited with providing Whittier with the information for the poem "The Pennsylvania Pilgrim," but no correspondence on this has been found in Cassel's files; Rosenberger, *op. cit.*, 295.

and fellow collector, Gov. Samuel W. Pennypacker, aptly characterized the value of the collection and of Cassel's generosity:

Its chief value to the scholar, however, and its principal interest for the man of general culture, consists in the fact that it is a substantially complete, and almost the only collection of the early German publications of this country—books, pamphlets, and ephemera. . . . In fact, it may be said with substantial truth that to the patient research, and unwearied enthusiasm of this unassuming man, we owe the preservation of the history of the Germans of Pennsylvania. Seidensticker, Rupp, Jones, Weiser, Harbaugh, and others, have written meritoriously and ably, but away back at a farm house near Harleysville, in Montgomery Co., is the well from which the waters have been drawn.²⁰

Dr. Oswald Seidensticker, named above, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania who is credited with demonstrating to the world of learning the rich contribution of the Pennsylvania Germans to colonial culture, wrote this of Cassel: "The richest source for older German-American imprints is the library of Mr. Abraham H. Cassel, a farmer in Montgomery County, Pa., whose services on behalf of German-American bibliography and in the saving of many unique items I can hardly exaggerate. He permitted me the use of his library with gracious willingness."²¹

What has here been said of the history of the Pennsylvania Germans is even more true for the history of the Church of the Brethren. Indeed, almost any documentary material that was saved concerning the early history of the Brethren was saved by Cassel. Recognizing this, later historians of the church vied with one another to secure their material from him. M. G. Brumbaugh, the author of the first real history of the Brethren in 1899, wrote, "Bro. Abraham H. Cassel, of Harleysville, Pa., three score years ago, began the great task of collecting these fragments, and, with a zeal that knew no quenching, and an industry that has almost cost him his sight and his hearing, has clearly earned the right to be called the Historian of the church."²² After Cassel's death

²⁰ Pennypacker, *op. cit.*, 326-327.

²¹ Cited in German in Lillian Evans, "Oswald Seidensticker, Bibliophile," *Pennsylvania History*, VII (1940), i, 12.

²² *A History of the German Baptist Brethren in Europe and America* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Publishing House, 1899), xi-xii.

on April 23, 1908, Brumbaugh said in his vigorous way at the funeral, "No man ever lived, or is living, or will live, that will do for the Dunker Church what Bro. Cassel has done."²³

As he grew older, Cassel became more and more concerned about the disposal of his "world-renowned library" which, he asserted, "should by all means be carefully Kept together to the end of time. I have therefore Willed the Entire Collection for Posterity—under the care of the Church after my decease."²⁴ As we will see, he was Pennsylvania Dutch enough, however, to want to get an appropriate price for his valuable books. He soon found that no one institution was prepared to take the entire lot although its worth was recognized. Mt. Morris College in Illinois, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and Juniata College were to become the three main recipients of the Cassel Collection. Ashland College (Ohio) and Bridgewater College (Virginia) also received some of Cassel's books.

In 1879 the president of Mt. Morris College, J. W. Stein, began negotiations to buy a part of the library. The school had just opened and needed a library. Stein and his co-workers raised \$4,500 and Cassel sent 27,000 of his books to the Midwest. The Cassel Library was established in connection with the school. No sooner had the books arrived than dissatisfaction began to be voiced. The trustees and most of the donors of the money complained that the books were *old*—besides many were in German. They were of no use. They needed *new* books. Letters came back to Pennsylvania asking for permission to sell the "old and Curious" books in order to raise money to buy standard works.²⁵

In the middle of these transactions, Brother Stein, who had arranged the purchase in the first place, shocked the college and the church as a whole by leaving wife and family and running off with one of the students, a ward in his home. Cassel traced Stein's address in western Canada and wrote asking if he had some explanation for his startling behavior. In an impassioned twenty-five-page reply, the adulterous Stein described the chain of events leading to his plight and flight. It seems that the criticism over the purchase of the Cassel library had added the last straw to a

²³ Rosenberger, *op. cit.*, 327.

²⁴ A. H. Cassel to Philip Boyle, July 29, 1867 (Cassel Correspondence).

²⁵ J. W. Stein and D. C. Miller to A. H. Cassel, Dec. 24, 1879 ff. (Cassel Correspondence).

long list of grievances.²⁶ When Mt. Morris College merged with Manchester College in North Manchester, Indiana, in 1932, most of the Cassel books went to Bethany Biblical Seminary in Chicago. Today that institution has some 4,600 books and 12,000 pamphlets in their part of the Cassel collection.²⁷

In 1882 the trustees of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania purchased one thousand Pennsylvania imprints for \$2,500. (Cassel elsewhere wrote that they purchased two thousand items.²⁸) While not large, this part of Cassel's library was carefully selected and represents a superior collection in its field. The books have received excellent care in Philadelphia, where they are considered to be among the most valuable of the Society's holdings.²⁹

Most of the remainder of the library went to Juniata College, but the process was far from simple. As early as 1864 Dr. A. B. Brumbaugh, co-founder of Juniata College, visited Cassel, and wrote in his diary, "He has much material of immense value to the Church and to a Church school that should be founded." In 1877, one year after the founding of the Brethren's Normal School (later renamed Juniata College), he wrote Cassel, "That library almost haunts me and I long to be where it is. . . . It does strike me forcibly that it ought to be secured and placed in connection with the 'Brethren's School' at this place."³⁰ Cassel repeatedly offered his library for sale to the college, but was repeatedly answered that because of the great burden of raising money to run the institution, the collection could not be secured. They fully appreciated its importance, however.³¹

After M. G. Brumbaugh became president, the matter was raised again. In 1898 he urged Cassel to make the books available at a price the college could pay. "Here in the college vault the books you gave your life to gather can be preserved entire forever for the use of the young men who come to Juniata to prepare for

²⁶ J. W. Stein to A. H. Cassel, Sept. 7, 1884 (Cassel Correspondence). See also "An Amorous Pastor," in the *Chicago Times*, July 29, 1883, written some years after Stein had left Mt. Morris, when the matter became public.

²⁷ Bethany Biblical Seminary *Bulletin*, LXV (1957), i, 7.

²⁸ "A Short Sketch," 2.

²⁹ Funke, *op. cit.*, 152-160, and Hampton L. Carson, *A History of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: The Society, 1940), I, 437.

³⁰ C. C. Ellis, *Juniata College: The History of Seventy Years* (Elgin, Ill.: for Juniata College by the Brethren Publishing House, 1947), 82.

³¹ H. B. Brumbaugh and W. J. Swigart to A. H. Cassel, Dec. 28, 1891 ff. (Cassel Correspondence).

the work of the ministry. Thus long after you and I are laid to rest your books and MSS will guide the church and determine its policy and direct its progress. To me this is an inspiring thought." The college felt they could put up \$1,000 of the \$2,500 that Cassel asked, if the Church of the Brethren as a whole could raise the rest. The correspondence continued. On October 7, Brumbaugh wrote, "In the meantime please do not sell or loan any of the books till we (you and I) can talk it all over. I want to, with the Lord's help, plan to keep this Library for the Church."³²

Four months later, Brumbaugh arranged with Cassel to buy the collection personally to give it to the college for the Church of the Brethren. The price was \$2,500 which he proposed to raise by his lecturing and writing, while carrying dual responsibility as President of Juniata College and Professor of Pedagogy at the University of Pennsylvania. But all was not to go smoothly with the transaction. Soon after the purchase Cassel wrote a sharp letter accusing Brumbaugh of taking books which he had not agreed to sell. In a long reply Brumbaugh pointed out that he had purchased the entire collection, except for some new and personal items. Cassel's memory must be in error. Visits and letters seem to have cleared up the misunderstanding, for it is not mentioned later. In October, 1899, Brumbaugh wrote from Huntingdon that he was glad that the books were coming. He had arranged for their proper storage. Not all of the books were transferred to Juniata College at this time, however. The final payment on the purchase was made on December 24, 1901, after Brumbaugh's first year as Commissioner of Education for the United States in Puerto Rico.³³

With the building of the Carnegie Library at Juniata College in 1907, there was more appropriate storage space for the Cassel Collection which numbered 12,000 volumes and 4,000 pamphlets, plus documents. The fire-proof vault at the left of the entrance accommodated about 2,000 of the rarest books. Valiant efforts were made by the staff to catalogue the often obscure volumes, but many were never processed. The "Museum" was the depository for hundreds of Cassel books, as well as the small room under the vault in the basement. According to a later report, a librarian

³² M. G. Brumbaugh to A. H. Cassel, June 26 and Oct. 7, 1898 (Cassel Correspondence).

³³ M. G. Brumbaugh to A. H. Cassel, Feb. 6, Feb. 14, and Oct. 3, 1899 (Cassel Correspondence).

worked five years on cataloguing the collection. The method used was that followed by the Pennsylvania State Library.³⁴

As the mounting number of new books began to strain the facilities of the library, the little-used Cassel Collection (except for that part of it in the vault) began to be shifted about from place to place. Some minor Cassel items were evidently sold in the attempt to gain space. The collection received a new lease on life in 1939, when a twenty-four-year-old German scholar and refugee from Nazi Germany arrived to re-catalogue the vault collection. Gerhard Friedrich worked at the library from July 10, 1939, to June 29, 1940. Funds for this project came from the Oberländer Trust administered by the Carl Schurz Foundation. By exchanging books found in the vault with some in the Museum, Friedrich was able to increase markedly the number of Christopher Sauer and Ehrata imprints available.³⁵ He repaired and cleaned the books, and began a thorough job of identification and cataloguing. Complete cards for some sixty-six shelves of books were prepared.³⁶

He spent considerable time trying to pin down disputed points about some of the most valuable of the collection's holdings. The oldest and probably most costly item is the two-volume folio Bible known as the "Swiss Bible." The cataloguer was able to identify this as from the press of Johann Sensenschmidt of Nuremberg, sometime between 1476-1478. This makes it an incunabulum—one of the choice books of the dawn of printing produced before 1500. There are five other copies in the country—all at major libraries. Hand-illuminated capitals, other rubrication, and handsome woodcut initials make this well-preserved Bible an art lover's delight.

An early librarian writing about the 1634 King James Bible in the collection went on to say about another rare Cassel Bible: "The other book . . . is also a Bible, but older than the King James, having been published at Strasburg in 1527, and many a toil worn hand has held it reverently as though it were a holy thing, while a blunt forefinger traced the name of the former owner

³⁴ *Friends of the Juniata College Library*, XIV (1951), ii, 7; Librarian's Report, June 1908 (Juniata Library File).

³⁵ See also Gerhard Friedrich, "A New Supplement to Seidensticker's American-German Bibliography," *Pennsylvania History*, VII (1940), iv, 213-224.

³⁶ Gerhard Friedrich, "General Report Concerning the Abraham H. Cassel Collection at the Library of Juniata College, Huntingdon, Pa.," 7 pp. (Juniata Vault File).

written by himself, one Martin Luther." One hates to spoil a good story, but the fact is that there is no autograph by Luther. A Library of Congress expert wrote Friedrich that the marginal notes were most likely not in the hand of Luther.³⁷ Although Cassel wrote on the binding, "Luther's Autograph Bible," he did not mean by this that the Reformer had actually signed it, but rather he was giving the technical name to the Bible, part of which had been printed directly from Luther's *manuscript*.³⁸ The Bible remains, nevertheless, an extremely valuable and beautiful representative of the early printer's art.

In addition to the excellent Bible collection in many languages, the Cassel collection is especially strong in religious writings, reflecting the piety of the early Pennsylvania German settlers, as well as that of the collector. The major sixteenth-century Reformation parties are well represented, as are those of the radical Reformation, especially the Anabaptists and the Schwenkfelders. A unique copy of the 1539 Dutch work by Menno Simons on baptism is a good example of the first group. This spring a visiting researcher found an extremely scarce tract by the Anabaptist leader Balthasar Hubmaier. Among the seventy-five pieces of Schwenkfelder material are beautifully written manuscripts dating from the time when the writings of this contemporary opponent of Luther were forbidden publications.

Mystical and pietistic writers appear often. The works of Thomas à Kempis, Jacob Böhme, Johann Arndt, Gottfried Arnold, and Gerhard Tersteegen have been devotional classics for centuries and appear in edition after edition in several languages and varying places of publication. Later in time come the virtually complete collections of eighteenth-century Brethren materials, as well as the much-sought-after and expensive publications of the Ephrata Community in Pennsylvania. The latter range from small manuscript hymnals used by the famed Cloister choir to the massive *Martyr's Mirror*, the largest volume published in colonial America. This martyrology (one of the many collected by Cassel), three years in the translating, was printed in 1748.³⁹

³⁷ Sarah C. N. Bogle, "The Modern Organization of the Library," *Juniata Echo*, XVI (1907), v, 69; Dr. W. J. Wilson to G. Friedrich, Dec. 9, 1939 (Juniata Vault File).

³⁸ "A Short Sketch," 3.

³⁹ Lamech and Agrippa [pseud.], *Chronicon Ephratense*, trans. by J. Max Hark (Lancaster, Pa.: S. H. Zahm, 1889), 213-214, footnote 2; Bender, *op. cit.*, 3.

A particular aim of Cassel was to collect all of the publications of the Germantown press of Christopher Sauer and his descendants. While the Juniata part of Cassel's collection does not contain all of the Sauer imprints, it rivals others in the state in completeness. Recent additions to the Juniata College Library have strengthened the Sauer imprint collection markedly.⁴⁰

While the Cassel collection at Juniata College contains primarily religious and Pennsylvania German material, these by no means exhaust its stock. Students of most fields can find here items of interest among the books in English, Greek, Latin, Spanish, French, Armenian, and Chinese. Scientists would appreciate early treatises such as the first editions of Robert Boyle. There are early English and German literary classics. One of the first American educational treatises, composed by Christopher Dock in 1770, is here, as well as an example of the colorful *fraktur*, or ornamental penmanship in Gothic script, which he made for his students.

The first American religious magazine, early newspapers, and a great many early almanacs are on hand for the journalistically and historically minded. Of genealogical interest are such documents as a 1691 naturalization paper signed by the Germantown founder Pastorius and sixty-one others, or parchment deeds signed by William Penn and his sons. The first Pennsylvania and U. S. Senate journals are located here. Musicologists will find numerous hymnals from many denominations and eras. Autographs abound from Daniel Webster to Theodore Roosevelt.⁴¹

In recent years, many American libraries have become interested in and have built up holdings in the fields of interest of Abraham H. Cassel and Martin G. Brumbaugh. It may still be said, however, that the Cassel collection of Juniata College is an important repository of American and European materials, in some ways unique in the country.

⁴⁰ For Sauer publications, see Felix Reichmann, comp., *Christopher Sower Sr. 1694-1758. Printer in Germantown. An Annotated Bibliography* (Philadelphia: Carl Schurz Foundation, 1943), and Edward W. Hocker, "The Sower Printing House of Colonial Times," *The Pennsylvania-German Society Proceedings*, LIII (1948), 1-125. The W. Emmert Swigart Collection donated to Juniata College in recent years is rich in both Sauer and Ephrata imprints.

⁴¹ See also G. Friedrich, "The A. H. Cassel Collection at Juniata College," *American-German Review*, VII (1941), vi, 18-21.