

THE WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL MAGAZINE

VOL. 33

MARCH-JUNE, 1950

NOS. 1 AND 2

SEMINARIES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN FAMILY IN THE PITTSBURGH AREA¹

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THE LARGEST NUMBER of Presbyterians in the United States today is located in the Pittsburgh district where they are grouped into approximately 250 churches. Within this same area there is also the largest group of theological seminaries representing different branches of the Presbyterian faith, and they are all grade "A" graduate schools. They are the Western Theological Seminary, the Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary, and the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

Among American theological seminaries there is an accrediting scholarship agency just as there is for colleges and universities. Of the three seminaries in this area, the Western Theological Seminary and the Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary are both accredited schools. The Reformed Presbyterian Seminary is too small for accreditation, but its work is patterned after that of the accredited schools. To enter one of these seminaries a student must be a graduate of an accredited college and then complete three years of graduate study in the seminary. Both Western and Pittsburgh-Xenia

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also offer the advanced degree of master of theology, which represents an additional year's work. Western Seminary has had this latter degree as far back as 1880. It was the first seminary in the country to offer this degree.

The Presbyterian churches of early America likewise had high scholastic ideals. In the earliest days their ministry was trained in Europe (especially in Scotland) or students were assigned to study under ministers who were especially qualified for such tutorial work. One of the most famous of these teaching ministers in Pennsylvania was the Reverend John McMillan who trained about two hundred men and was later appointed professor of divinity at Jefferson College in Canonsburg. In 1721 the first chair of theology was introduced into an American college, i.e. Harvard. In 1784 the Dutch Reformed Church had a seminary professor and an instructor holding regular classes, but these were held in one of the New York churches rather than in a special educational building.

It was 1794 before a full-fledged Protestant theological seminary was founded in a building exclusively used for theological education. This was Service Seminary which was located near Pittsburgh in the hills just north of the junction of Routes 30 and 18. Service Seminary is the oldest strain in the Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary. It was a two-story log building containing a lecture and recitation room and a library on the first floor, with the second story serving as dormitory accommodations. Its professor was one of the best trained ministers in Scotland and he gave a full course of theological lectures. The library, like the professor, came from abroad. The Catholics, meantime, had founded a full seminary three years earlier at St. Mary's, Baltimore.

In the order of their genealogy the Presbyterian seminaries of the Pittsburgh district are as follows. Service Seminary of the Associate Presbyterian Church was founded in 1794. The Seminary of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church

was established here in 1825. These two schools continue on in the Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary of the United Presbyterian Church, which is the united church formed by the merger of these two denominations. The Western Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., was opened in old Alleghenytown in 1827. In 1838 the Reformed Presbyterians also established a seminary in Allegheny, but seven years later it was moved elsewhere and it was 1856 before it returned here for permanent residence. These seminaries will now be studied in detail but in the inverse order of their founding.

The Reformed Presbyterian Church in America authorized the founding of a theological seminary in 1807 and the school began operations in Philadelphia in May, 1810. It was in session intermittently in that city until 1836 when it was moved to New Alexandria, just east of Pittsburgh. Two years later that denomination planned for two seminaries, one in the East and one in the West. The western one was established in Allegheny that same year and two years later the eastern school was merged with it. In 1845, however, the seminary went to Cincinnati and four years later moved to Northwood, Ohio, where fine new buildings had been erected. After only two years there it suspended work and its students were assigned to study under the professors at Geneva Hall, in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania.

In 1856, the seminary was reorganized in Allegheny with two professors constituting the faculty. In 1872 the school was moved to Wilkesburg but objections were made to the move and the school returned to Allegheny the following year. Here the seminary was housed in a new three-story building located on North Avenue just west of Federal Street. This property was sold in 1922 and the school met in the East End Reformed Church until the following year, when the Joseph Horne home at 7418 Penn Avenue, Wilkesburg, was purchased. The school is still housed in this fine old mansion.

It has at present a faculty of four professors with Rev. R. J. G. McKnight, Ph.D., D.D., serving as president. Its student body averages about ten men. As the Reformed Presbyterian Church is a very small denomination with less than six thousand members in the United States, this seminary is sufficient to train its ministry.

Now let us turn to the history of the Western Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. When plans were made in 1810 for the establishment of only one seminary for the Presbyterian Church, it was already argued that there should also be another in the west. It was 1825, however, before the General Assembly authorized the establishment of a second seminary, patterned after the Princeton Theological Seminary, which should be located somewhere west of the Alleghenies.

Thirteen communities, most of them in Ohio, made financial proposals to secure the new school. Three Pennsylvania communities made their bids—Meadville, Harmony, and Alleghenytown. The last named offered \$21,000 cash and land valued at \$20,000. It also represented the largest Presbyterian population in the west. The committee in charge of founding the new seminary accepted the Allegheny offer, which was ratified by the General Assembly, although by the narrow margin of only two votes. On November 16, 1827, the first classes of the new school (called the Western Theological Seminary) were opened in the session room of the First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh. Two local pastors, Rev. E. P. Swift and Rev. Joseph Stockton, constituted the faculty and four students were the entering class.

In 1829 Professor Halsey of Princeton College was called as professor. His high scholastic ideals are seen in the following remark: "It is our wish that every student who finishes an entire course in the Seminary shall have critically read the whole New Testament in Greek and most of the Hebrew Scriptures." Some two thousand books were secured

in England for the library. President Andrew Jackson, who had served on the committee which chose Alleghenytown as the site of Western Seminary, now wrote a letter for Rev. Campbell, who was soliciting books abroad for the seminary; and it was this letter which was largely instrumental in securing the volumes. The students helped to erect the first building, which housed a chapel, classrooms, library, and rooms for eighty students. It was built on Monument Hill and was ready for occupancy on March 20, 1831. These first students kept down the expenses of board, laundry, and fuel below the rate of one dollar per week. This building was destroyed by fire in January, 1854, but a new building was erected two years later.

The early years of the seminary were very difficult. One writer says: "Every one of the first 25 years was a solemn crisis of life or death. Nearly every meeting of the board was held in the presence of an emergency." Not only were there hard times and a court battle over the land title of the seminary but the denomination itself split into Old School and New School. Furthermore, the rank and file of the church were losing faith in theological seminaries due to the action of several Eastern schools, where the seminary professors played false to their denominations.

After the Civil War the seminary entered on more happy days, and it is now one of the major seminaries of the Presbyterian family. Its present buildings are all modern. Facing Ridge Avenue at Brighton Road is Herron Hall, the towered gateway of which leads into a landscaped quadrangle. This building houses faculty offices and classrooms. At the rear of the quadrangle is Swift Hall where the library and chapel and other classrooms are located. When completed the quadrangle will have buildings on the east and west sides. The school's large dormitory, Memorial Hall, is located about a block west of the other buildings. It contains efficiency apartments, single rooms, dining hall, social hall, and gymnasium.

Next door to it is Lowrie Hall containing more apartments.

Western Seminary is staffed by six full-time professors and several part-time professors. The Rev. Henry A. Riddle, D.D., LL.D., is the president. During its one hundred twenty-four years of history over two thousand four hundred of its graduates have been ordained as ministers of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. Its last catalogue lists 64 students studying for the ministry besides 34 ministers doing postgraduate work for their master's degrees.

Western Theological Seminary has a special place of honor in its denomination because of its relation to the foreign mission program of that church. Indeed, the board of foreign missions of the Presbyterian Church originated in the Western Foreign Missionary Society of Pittsburgh which was under the direction of the professors of the Western Seminary; ten per cent of its students have gone to the foreign mission field.

The history of the Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary is much more complicated than that of the other two schools. It is the seminary of the United Presbyterian Church, a denomination which was created by a union of the Associate Presbyterian and the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Churches in 1858. The latter of the merging churches was in turn created by an earlier union of the Associate Presbyterian and the Reformed Presbyterian Churches in 1782, so the designation United Presbyterian is an appropriate name.

In this merger of 1782 two Associate Presbyterian ministers refused to join because the parent Scotch church had not been consulted. Their number was augmented by ministers from abroad and by a heavy Seceder immigration of the laity. Furthermore, they made many converts in the districts where they were located. As a result this brand-new Associate Church was strong enough and progressive enough so that within twelve years after its birth, it actually produced the first American Protestant seminary housed in its own build-

ing and with a professor devoting full time to teaching, and a resident student body. This was Service Seminary, mentioned above. That was in 1794, when George Washington was still President of the United States. The first professor was Dr. John Anderson who, although born in England, was educated in both the arts and theology in Scotland. He also served as literary editor of one of the Scotch publishing houses and was a writer in the theological field in both Scotland and America. The books for the new seminary also came from Scotland. Four of the six students in the entering class were graduates of Canonsburg Academy. The first school term was only four months in length. The professor's salary (including his income as a pastor when not teaching) was three hundred dollars a year.

In 1819 Dr. Anderson had to give up his teaching because of the infirmities of age. Two years later the seminary was removed to Canonsburg where the school was housed in the home of Professor James Ramsey until Jefferson College offered it classroom and library space. In 1834 a substantial brick building was erected for the seminary, and a second professor was added the following year. Eighteen men then constituted the student body and the term of study ran from the first of November to the end of March. In 1855 the seminary was moved to Xenia, Ohio, where it took the name of Xenia Theological Seminary. The student body was now twenty-six and the professors' salaries were up to eight hundred dollars a year.

The seminary history of the second branch of the United Presbyterian family is as follows. The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church founded a seminary in New York City in November, 1805. Dr. John M. Mason, one of the greatest educational figures in New York City, was the president. He also served as provost of Columbia College for five years. His associate, Rev. J. M. Matthews, was also a talented scholar who served as chancellor of the University of New York.

While traveling in Europe, Dr. Mason raised about five thousand dollars for books for the new seminary—a handsome sum for those days. The success of this school was largely influential in the founding of Andover and Princeton seminaries. In this New York seminary the course of study was completed in four years and the terms were seven months in length.

In 1821 poor health compelled Dr. Mason to resign. Without his name as an asset, the seminary's finances declined and this, plus a major split in the church at that time, caused the seminary to close. In 1829 the seminary was revived and moved to Newburg, New York, where in 1839 it was housed in a fine new stone building. In 1858, the same year in which the United Presbyterian Church was born, financial difficulties caused the school to close. It was revived in 1867, but again fell upon financial difficulties and was closed in 1878. Its president, Dr. James Harper, however, was transferred to the faculty of the Xenia Seminary in Ohio.

There was also a second seminary in this denomination. An Associate Reformed Synod had been formed in the West in 1820 and it began to plan at once for a seminary in the West. This school was established in Pittsburgh in December, 1825, with Dr. Joseph Kerr as professor. In 1833 the classes were moved over the river to Allegheny where the school has remained ever since. It was 1855, however, before this seminary was properly housed on North Avenue and Buena Vista Street. In earlier years it had held classes in church buildings. In 1899, the present seminary building was constructed. It is a five-story building containing chapel, library, classrooms, dormitory, and dining facilities. Some years ago the Boggs estate next door to the seminary was acquired and these buildings have recently been remodeled into nine apartments for married students.

In 1841, a third Associate Reformed Seminary was established, this time in Oxford, Ohio. The same year that the

United Presbyterian Church was formed, i.e. 1858, this Oxford Seminary was moved to Monmouth, Illinois, where it remained until 1874, when it was merged with the Xenia Seminary in Ohio.

Thus by 1874 all of the earlier seminaries of the United Presbyterian Church had been merged into two institutions, namely the Xenia Seminary in Xenia, Ohio, and the Pittsburgh Seminary in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Then all was quiet for almost half a century. But in 1920 the Xenia Seminary moved to St. Louis, Missouri; and in 1930 the United Presbyterian Church merged its two seminaries into the present Pittsburgh-Xenia Seminary. Funds, however, are now being raised to relocate the seminary in another section of Pittsburgh. The plans call for three large buildings on a ten acre campus. Over three hundred thousand dollars has already been banked for this project.

Since the merger one major educational move has been made—the creation of a school of Christian education, training women for full-time Christian service for such fields as directors of religious education, pastor's secretaries, and foreign mission service. These students must bring a college degree and at the end of a two-year course are given a degree of master of religious education. Another feature of the seminary's work which is internationally known is its archaeological research expeditions in Palestine.

The seminary has seven full-time professors and two part-time instructors. Dr. George A. Long is the president. Over a period of 154 years, the present seminary with its ancestors has graduated over three thousand students besides training many others of various denominations. At present there are sixty-nine students in study for the ministry and seven women working in the school of Christian education. There are also seventeen ministers working for the advanced Master's Degree.

No complete research study has yet been done on the his-

tory of the Reformed Theological Seminary. Professor F. D. McCloy, the librarian of Western Seminary, is now collecting material for an extended study of the history of Western Seminary. In the case of Pittsburgh-Xenia Seminary an excellent detailed treatise has been completed in a work entitled, "The History of the Associate, Associate Reformed, and United Presbyterian Theological Seminaries in the United States." It was submitted by Professor Raymond F. Brittain as his thesis for the degree of Ph.D. at the University of Pittsburgh.