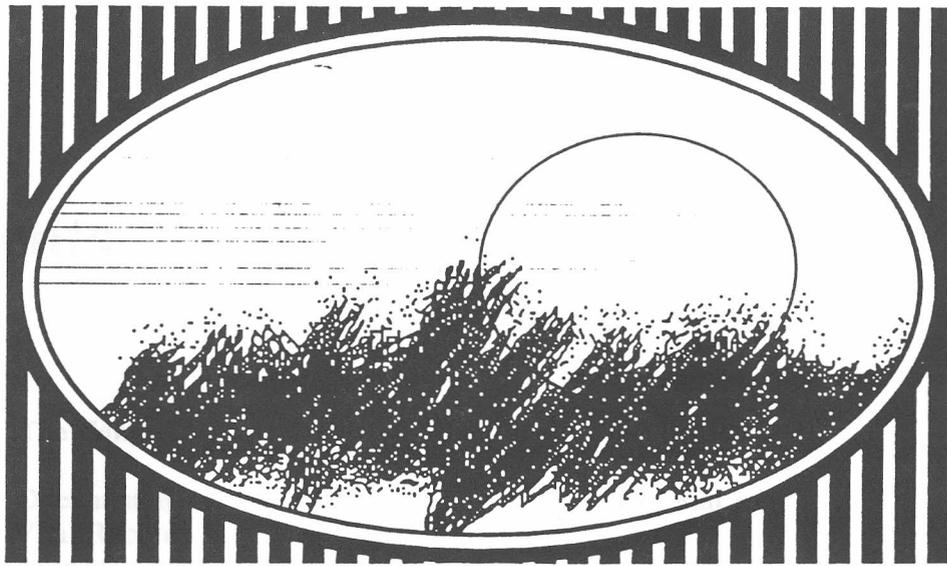


HERITAGE PRESERVATION:

A RESOURCE BOOK
FOR CONGREGATIONS

BY DAVID A. HAURY



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Preface

This volume is the companion to *Heritage Celebrations: A Resource Book for Congregations*, written by Wilma McKee and sponsored by the Historical Committee of the General Conference Mennonite Church (Newton: Faith and Life Press, 1992). *Heritage Celebrations* not only describes the theology behind celebrating our heritage but also provides numerous tips and examples of activities to use when planning a celebration. The availability of good documentation will enrich heritage celebrations and becomes indispensable to written histories of your congregation. Thus this second volume, *Heritage Preservation*, is provided as a means to further enhance the preservation and ultimately celebration of our rich heritage. Both publications emerged from the mandate of the Historical Committee to devise activities and produce resources which nurture heritage concerns in the congregational context.

Collecting and preserving the records which chronicle the life of your congregation are complex tasks, and these responsibilities are occasionally disregarded. It has become commonplace that certain congregational records should be kept and that every congregation should have an archivist to assist in doing so. However, guidance regarding this work has not been readily available. Denominational archives and historical committees have provided periodic assistance, but this resource book attempts to outline thoroughly and systematically the means to preserve the heritage of your congregation.

This guide also recommends that some

records of congregations should be placed in an archives either for safekeeping or for research purposes. Both the appropriateness of what might be housed in an archives and which particular archives might be used will depend upon the size of the congregation, the particular denomination, and perhaps even the location of the congregation.

Many have assisted in the preparation of this guide either by providing comments on drafts of the manuscript or through their pioneering efforts to preserve congregational records. In the former category fall the members of the Historical Committee of the General Conference who have supported this research and publication and archivists at several denomination archives who generously volunteered to comment on drafts of this manuscript, and in the latter category most notably are Melvin Gingerich, John F. Schmidt, and J. B. Toews whose labors in their respective denominations (Mennonite Church, General Conference, and Mennonite Brethren) preserved many of the resources for congregational history among North American Mennonites that survive today. I owe a debt to many archivists and historians, Mennonite and non-Mennonite, who have produced earlier outlines and manuals for congregational record keeping, but accountability for the errors and omissions in this resource book is mine alone.

David A. Haury, Chairperson
Historical Committee of the General
Conference Mennonite Church
November, 1993

Chapter 1

The Congregational Archivist: Who Should Keep the Records?

While every congregation should designate an individual as its “archivist,” the tasks related to creating, collecting, and preserving records may easily surpass the energies or talents of one person. Many congregations may prefer to select a formal historical committee and delegate the various responsibilities for creating and keeping records. Or the congregational archivist may informally designate a team to assist with this work. Pastors and church secretaries may also assume special roles. So may someone with a talent for taking photographs, telling stories, or using a computer. Volunteers may index newspaper clippings, membership records, or cemetery records. Others may collect and file bulletins, newsletters, yearbooks, special programs, and other publications. The checklist at the end of this resource book outlines the types of materials which may be created and collected. The congregational archivist should coordinate this work and assume ultimate responsibility so that significant areas are not neglected.

“Archivist” or “Historian”?

Many of the record creating and keeping tasks more accurately fall within the job description of a congregational “archivist” than of a “historian.” Many congregations

have traditionally used the historian designation for the role described in this resource book. Perhaps congregations could experiment with the “archivist” label, a term much better known today than thirty to forty years ago when the designation of a congregational historian became common. An archivist is the keeper of an archives, which consists of the old or non-current records of an organization with permanent value. Thus archives is not a technical term, but it simply refers to historical documents. While thousands of archivists are professionals and care for the records of large organizations, perhaps more archivists are amateurs and assume responsibility for the records of smaller organizations like a congregation. Throughout this volume the “archivist” designation will be used, but a congregation may wish to keep the more familiar “historian” label.

Nevertheless, it should not be assumed that the congregational “archivist” described in this resource book is the person to do research and write the history of the congregation—traditional roles for a congregational historian. In fact, these roles should normally be separated. Combining the research and writing work of a historian and collecting and preserving work of an archivist may limit the pool of those who best fulfill the range of responsibilities described in this resource book.

Selection of the Congregational Archivist

Delegating various tasks to more than one person may be both necessary and desirable. Moreover, especially in a larger congregation, a division of labor could be an important means of getting younger members of the congregation involved in heritage preservation.

In many cases congregational historians are long-term, elderly members, and they rely on their memory to verify events or tell stories of earlier generations. Sometimes they have become congregational archivists as well as historians by default. That little competition may exist to become the congregational archivist or historian is not a sign of disesteem; in fact, the opposite is true. The congregational historian as a repository of information and tradition holds great respect and even authority. Individuals with such knowledge are extremely valuable as means of preserving a congregation's heritage. They may make a great contribution during anniversary celebrations or writing a congregational history, but they do not necessarily need to be the congregational "historian."

If congregational "historians/archivists" do not assume an active role in creating and keeping records, their memory will pass away with them and their responsibility to provide documentation for future generations will not be fulfilled.

The congregational archivist does not need any particular training, but some skills are important. Organizational abilities and persistence or thoroughness are probably most significant. Nor is someone with an

academic background in history needed either as an archivist or historian. Ultimately enthusiasm about the past may be the top prerequisite for a successful congregational archivist.

Value of the Congregational Archivist

The congregational archivist should not simply organize and file away materials which happen to fall his/her way. On the one hand, one should aggressively pursue the existing records of the congregation's many organizations. On the other hand, one should play an active role in recommending to these organizations what records to create and what their contents should be. This proactive role also applies to printed materials.

The valuable records of the congregation may be scattered and disintegrating. Important events may not be documented at all. It is the responsibility of every congregation to select an archivist to insure the survival of its heritage.

The key to keeping the best possible record of a congregation's history and insuring that it is preserved and accessible is to involve several people with various talents in different roles. While one person or committee must ultimately be accountable, every congregation should assess its own situation. What resources and needs exist? The following discussion of documentation, meaning a strategy for determining which records to create and keep, should facilitate this process of analysis and the resulting assignment of responsibilities in each congregation.

Chapter 2

Documentation:

What Records Should be Created and Kept?

The documentation of important events in the life of a congregation should be a conscious process. Saving written records which the congregation creates in the course of its activities is the first and foremost concern. These records will be the foundation for interpreting the history of a congregation and the context for any other materials collected about that history. One may designate the most significant of these records as “vital.”

A. Vital Records

Vital records are those which are essential to the continued functioning of an organization and are those of which duplicate copies should be made. In a technical sense a congregation probably has no records which are truly “vital” in this respect. If a church building burns, destroying every record of a congregation, the congregation would most likely pick up the pieces and continue its life. It would face some inconveniences and undoubtedly its understanding of its heritage would be permanently weakened, but the congregation would continue to exist. In the case of many businesses, certain records are unquestionably vital. For example, few magazines could recover from the complete destruction of the list of their subscribers. Businesses always safeguard lists of customers—imagine the chaos if an insurance com-

pany lost all of the files on its policy holders. In the case of most congregations, some “vital” records would be impossible to replicate and extremely inconvenient to lose. Thus it is perhaps the most important duty of the congregational archivist to see that vital records are copied and that the copies are stored in a different location than the originals. The best place to deposit these copies (or perhaps even the originals) will generally be the designated denominational archives for a given region (see Appendix C for a list of regional archival centers).

Baptismal and Membership Records

Baptismal and membership records do not have the same significance to a congregation as customer lists do to a business. However, whether a congregation is twenty-five or two hundred fifty years old, the destruction of these records would be a grievous loss. Of course, older baptismal records have a major value for genealogical research, and knowing the date of baptism or church membership of an ancestor may have special meaning. Knowing the composition of a congregation at various points in time would often be valuable in writing a history. Membership records may be used to understand many subtle issues and can provide a gold mine for the historian. For example, has the age at which young people were baptized

changed over time and does this have theological implications? Photocopying or micro-filming baptismal and membership records are relatively inexpensive means of preserving a duplicate copy. A copy of these records should be placed in the denominational archives. In the case of older records, the original might best be donated or loaned to the archives for safekeeping. Most archives allow such records to be restricted and unavailable for use without permission if a congregation prefers to limit access to them.

Cemetery Records

Records of a congregation's cemetery fall into the same genre as baptismal and membership records. In congregations which have not kept or have lost their baptismal and membership records, cemetery records may have a similar significance for research purposes, especially for family history. They also possess a kindred sentimental value. Of course, as gravestones deteriorate an awkward confusion might develop if the written record of cemetery plots is lost. While most cemeteries are well kept, more than a few rural cemeteries have been abandoned. Then the records may be virtually all that survives in the long run. Cemetery records should also be photocopied or microfilmed. If they are not placed in an archives, a safety deposit box in a local bank would be an appropriate repository.

Legal Papers — Deeds, Mortgages, Abstracts, and Insurance Policies

A bank vault is undoubtedly the best location for the vital legal papers of a congregation. Included in this category are deeds, mortgages, property abstracts, and perhaps insurance policies. One may also have copies of bequests, annuities, or special

memorial or endowment funds. In fact, one should generally place the originals in the safety deposit box, and copies for reference purposes may be kept in the church building. Some congregations may have incorporation documents, including those of affiliated institutions such as retirement homes and hospitals. The role of the congregation in documenting its relationship with various organizations will be reviewed in the next section.

Constitutions and Minutes

Parallel to these legal documents are the official records relating to the organization and operation of the congregation. In the secular world these documents would also have legal status. Within a congregation, the constitution or charter and the minutes of the governing council or board and of congregational meetings may not generally have legal significance, but they have considerable historical value.

Did the earliest constitution discuss theological issues or take a stand on social concerns? Examples might be discussions of conscientious objection or, from the turn of the century, of secret societies. Did the charter members verbalize a particular mission that illustrated the nonresistance or another distinctive theological tenet of the congregation?

The minutes of a congregation can shed light on a host of issues which otherwise would remain forever shrouded in darkness. What controversies over various practices or ideas developed? Why were members excommunicated? More recent minutes or the accounts of certain issues may also be restricted from general use. On a more positive note, minutes will also reveal the efforts of a congregation in evangelism and charity. How were revivals organized or how were funds raised for a local ministry? A congre-

gation's constitution and governing minutes should also be photocopied or microfilmed, and, unlike the legal documents, they would be valuable resources for the denominational archives.

Budgets and Ledgers

While not technically vital records, a few other types of documents are best discussed within this category. Businesses have various financial and accounting records which are vital to their operation. A congregation may have budgets, ledgers, and reports which have both current and historical significance, but they are not essential to the continued functioning of the congregation. However, care should be taken to preserve duplicate copies of the most important financial records. This is taken for granted in many congregations since budgets and fiscal reports are often published. A second set should be stored outside the church building, and, again, the denominational archives may be an appropriate location for printed reports.

Architectural Records

Finally, the blueprints or plans for a church building merit special safeguards. Their significance in many instances will be more practical than historical. The lack of a complete set of blueprints can complicate many repairs or renovations. Unfortunately, older buildings, especially from the nineteenth century and earlier, probably were not built from an architect's drawings or the plans have rarely survived. In such instances, a congregation might consider hiring an architect or architectural student to create a set of plans and accompanying sketches or photographs thoroughly to document the building. Some congregations are in their

third or fourth building today, and having plans for their earlier buildings would help document their heritage. Congregations occasionally display models of their buildings in exhibits, and producing scale models from plans would be easier than from photographs alone. If only exterior photographs survive, then the plans would add to the understanding of the functioning of the inside of the building and thus of the activities of the congregation during a given time period.

B. Records of Organizations

Many organizations assist in carrying out the ministry of a congregation, and each of these groups produces records. Of course, every congregation is structured somewhat differently, and many factors, such as age, location, denominational affiliation, and special mission or theological emphases, will contribute to the number and types of committees and institutions of a congregation. Many more groups exist today than a century or even fifty years ago. Urban congregations may have institutions which would not be appropriate in a rural area and vice versa. Thus no congregation should be concerned if some of the organizations discussed in this resource book do not exist or if additional organizations do exist. The most important concern is that one should preserve records which document the activities of all groups which contribute to the life and mission of the congregation.

Church Council/Board and Deacons

While one may categorize only the minutes of the church council (board or cabinet) or congregational meetings as vital, the minutes of many other governing committees may have equal significance in terms of

describing key characteristics of a congregation's heritage. Common to most congregations are boards of deacons and deaconesses. In some cases, the deacons and church council may coincide. Today deacons may administer a separate budget with good financial records of their disbursements, but their role in providing mutual aid within the congregation and broader community have roots dating back centuries. Unfortunately, the activities of the early day deacons may be largely undocumented, and even today deacons may not keep careful accounts of their deliberations.

Trustees

Trustees are charged with the maintenance of the property and facilities of a congregation, including not only upkeep but also legal protection and documentation. In general, trustees keep good legal and fiscal records, but special care should be taken to insure that this documentation survives beyond immediate legal needs.

What Types of Organizational Records are Valuable?

How can groups within the congregation best be encouraged to keep and preserve records of their activities? First, minutes recording the dates, attendance, and deliberations of meetings should be kept. Second, a copy of these minutes should be deposited in the congregation's archives. The options regarding the location of and access to the records of the congregation will be discussed in the next chapter. Finally, other papers such as correspondence or printed programs related to a group's activities should also be collected and preserved.

Perhaps the most common failing today relates to the first concern. Many groups do

not keep good minutes. The opposite was true earlier in this century when problems related to preserving minutes often revolved around keeping track of the official hard-bound notebook which might contain several decades of meticulous minutes. A retiring secretary or chairperson might not take care that this one-of-a-kind record would find a proper resting place. It could be passed from one person to another, and when finally filled would end up in someone's attic or garage. Today such minutes are not collated together in a common notebook or may not be carefully recorded. The increasingly widespread usage of computers and photocopiers has in some ways aggravated rather than helped the situation. Copies are more easily and widely distributed, but no one may have the responsibility to keep an official set. This is especially true if the leadership of a committee changes hands frequently, as it may tend to do in congregations today.

Many Organizations have Valuable Records

A congregation may easily have two dozen or more organizations active in carrying out its mission. In the discussion above, the deacons and trustees served as illustrations, but other groups have documentation which is equally essential to a well rounded understanding of the life of a congregation. This resource book cannot list the records which may be unique to each of these organizations. Instead the congregational archivist or historical committee should develop a checklist of organizations and systematically insure that appropriate records from each group are being kept and forwarded to the archives. A sample checklist is included in Appendix B, and readers are encouraged to photocopy and adapt this list to their own situation. If the congregation collects annual reports from its various programs or organizations, then the compilation of this check-

list will be reasonably simple. Some of the more common organizations and committees to expect include:

- Deacons/Deaconesses or Spiritual Council
- Trustees
- Sunday School
- Youth Groups
- Small Groups or House Churches
- Men's and Women's Organizations
 - Single Adults
 - Retirement Groups
 - Quilting and Sewing
- Choirs
- Bible School
- Summer Camp
- Retreats
- Evangelical or Revival Meetings
- Mutual Aid Organizations
 - Mennonite Disaster Service
 - Mennonite Relief Sale
- Affiliated Institutions
 - Hospitals
 - Retirement Homes
- Community Outreach (this is only a small sample)
 - Inmate Ministries
 - Food and Clothing Banks
 - Shelters and Counseling Services
 - Pulpit Exchanges and Community Worship Services
 - Ministerial Alliance or Council of Churches
- Committees (both permanent and short-term)
 - Historical
 - Evangelism
 - Missions
 - Worship
 - Music
 - Food and Fellowship

Which Records are Most Important to Save?

Should every record of every organization be preserved forever? Limits exist to what materials have historical value and to the time and space available for preserving materials. Difficult judgments must be made, and the congregational archivist may wish to seek guidance from others when a historical committee does not exist. With very few exceptions the minutes of the business meetings of all of the aforementioned groups should be preserved. If those taking minutes are instructed to include both actions of the committee and some account of deliberations, then the minutes will be more valuable. The programs from a special event may be the most important documentation for some groups. In some instances the correspondence of a committee may have great value, and in other cases letters may be repetitive and routine with little value.

Some congregations are affiliated with major institutions, such as hospitals or retirement homes, or other community institutions which are separately incorporated, such as food banks or second-hand stores. In some cases, these organizations may have a separate archives. Then the congregation may be selective in keeping records which document its role in the organization. If the congregational archivist has a primary role in keeping the records of such affiliated organizations, then more care must be taken in developing policies and procedures. Often a denominational archivist should be consulted.

One final caution is necessary in appraising records—it may be useful to evaluate records not as to their current value but as to their potential uses. For example, the records of a committee may contain little information of historical value and thus should not be kept. However, the next secretary or treasurer for the group might create more thorough records. The congregational

archivist should not hesitate to call upon a group to provide better or different documentation of its activities. Of course, this situation may at times be delicate and require diplomacy. Nevertheless, persistence is a key to good documentation.

C. Publications

Bulletins, Newsletters, Yearbooks and Annual Reports

Published materials were unknown in most Mennonite congregations until the turn of the century although a few congregations published their constitutions in the nineteenth century. One exception to this statement exists and is generally overlooked in congregational archives. The exception is hymnals. It may not seem important to keep a copy of the current hymnal when dozens of copies are in the pews. Denominational archives or historical libraries have copies of Mennonite hymnals dating back several centuries. However, each congregation may wish to preserve a set of the hymnals it used with documentation of when transitions were made to each new edition.

Some congregations still print very little. One should use this resource book as a guide, not to what should be printed, but to what publications to keep and how best to preserve them. By the second half of the twentieth century it had become common for many congregations to print a variety of weekly bulletins, newsletters, yearbooks or directories, and even annual reports.

It is probably unnecessary to recount the significance of keeping such publications. In fact, the appropriate denominational or regional archives may request to receive copies of the above-mentioned publications, and because of their historical significance these publications should be treated like vital records with a duplicate copy stored at

a second location. Of course, since they are being printed and distributed in the first place, keeping multiple sets is not difficult or expensive. One may even consider keeping sets of bulletins, newsletters, and annual reports bound and accessible in the congregation's library while preserving duplicate sets in the archives for long-term documentation.

The task of the congregational archivist in preserving publications may seem relatively simple. However, week after week and year after year insuring that multiple copies are saved for binding or routed to the proper denominational archives or storage location in the church building will require constant attention. Moreover, the archivist may also choose to follow a more active role in collecting publications.

Newspaper Clippings

Do local newspapers carry obituaries of church members or announcements of engagements, weddings, or other special events in the life of the congregation or its members? Scanning newspapers and indexing and filing such clippings would be a major task. The larger the congregation, the larger the job. Using a computer for indexing would enhance the value of the clippings, but creating computer databases also results in additional long-term concerns. Computer software and hardware may require regular upgrades, and, of course, someone who knows how to use the "system" is required. Since newspapers are printed on acidic paper which deteriorates rapidly, each clipping should also be photocopied onto acid-free paper. Nonetheless, a comprehensive clipping program carried out over many years would be extremely valuable. Some of the information would not be duplicated by other sources. This resource could be created retroactively by volunteers either by clip-

ping an old set of newspapers or by making copies of articles from microfilmed newspapers.

Programs of Special Occasions

Relatively few congregations attempt to keep an exhaustive file of programs printed for special events. Included in this category would be "programs" printed for weddings, funerals, and anniversaries. Sunday school, Bible school, Christmas, and other special programs may also be published from time to time. This is another demanding area where the congregational archivist may require assistance from the pastor or other members of the congregation in order to gather this quantity of materials together. Filing and indexing such materials may also create problems in larger congregations. Again the congregational archivist has opportunities to move beyond a passive role to documenting the heritage of a congregation actively as it unfolds.

D. Ministerial Records

Undoubtedly the most difficult records, past and present, to collect are those of the pastoral leadership. Recommendations in this area may be subject to some debate, and several options are possible. Concerns will tend to focus not only on what records should be created by the pastor but also on where and to whom do they belong. Just as the Supreme Court and Congress have recently debated the ownership and disposition of the papers of the President of the United States, the congregational archivist and church council may have concerns about records created by their minister. The United States may have more success in keeping the papers of the president than a congregation does in keeping those of its pastor. Obviously the situations are not exactly

parallel, but similar issues exist in both cases.

Sermons

In some Mennonite traditions, for example in nineteenth century West Prussia, it was common for pastors to write down the full text of their sermons in small notebooks, and these sermons would be repeated numerous times in the pastor's home and neighboring congregations. This practice was transplanted to the United States, but it does not appear to have survived long into the twentieth century. In some Mennonite groups preaching was extemporaneous, and writing out a sermon verbatim was (and still is) virtually heretical. Obviously the existence of prepared sermons among Mennonite pastors today varies tremendously both according to the theology of the congregation and the personal preference of the pastor.

Some pastors read their sermons and may even print and distribute many of their sermons. Others prepare sermons but speak only from a rough outline. Still others expound on the Bible, speaking entirely extemporaneously. Only in the first instance is the possibility of saving sermons as a form of documentation a possibility. Tape recording sermons and saving (or even transcribing) the tapes is also a possibility, but this would be an unrealistic option for preserving a large quantity of sermons. Tapes do not last forever and are very difficult to use for extensive research. However, it may be possible to transcribe a small number of tapes each year. In fact, if done in a timely manner sermons which have aroused special interest could be photocopied and distributed for further review and discussion in this manner. Unless other arrangements are made most pastors when they move from one congregation to another will take the

only copy of each of their sermons with them.

When a pastor retires, the surviving sermons may be left in the archives of the last congregation they served, be donated to the denominational or another archives, or be left to heirs with other personal property and ultimately be lost or destroyed. None of these possibilities is entirely satisfactory to the various congregations served by the pastor (although the denominational archives could ultimately microfilm the sermons in order to provide a copy to each congregation). Should congregations avoid this situation by asking pastors who are moving on to another congregation to leave behind copies of their sermons? Yes, but if the pastor's answer is no, then the congregation probably can only ask the pastor eventually to donate the materials to an archives where they would be available for research or copying at a later date (unless an agreement was reached on this point when the pastor was called).

Having a fairly comprehensive set of sermons from a series of pastors over several generations would be a very useful resource for understanding the evolution of a congregation, documenting the changes in theology and reactions to events in a manner unavailable through any other sources. The congregational archivist will have little influence over the creation and survival of sermons, but if the pastor is writing out sermons verbatim, the congregational archivist would do no harm in asking for copies.

Pastor's Correspondence and other Papers

A similar situation exists with respect to other papers created by pastors. Unfortunately, this type of resource may be rather limited. Some activities of pastors do not result in written documentation-the quantity and value will depend on the individual

pastor. What is created may often be considered personal rather than the property of the congregation. Some materials of a confidential nature probably should not be preserved in the local congregation. However, exceptions exist, and congregations may wish to discuss with their pastor the preservation of some of their papers. For example, correspondence often provides valuable information and has little meaning outside of the congregation where it was written.

It is important to remember that it may be extremely valuable for the correspondence or counseling records of one pastor to be available to his/her successor. The congregational archivist or church council may wish to review issues related to the pastor's papers at the beginning of the pastor's term since waiting until the pastor retires or moves to another congregation could result in misunderstandings. Some of the pastor's documents probably should be restricted and confidential with very limited access, but they should be considered the property of the congregation, not the pastor's personal records.

E. Special Records

This final category of records includes primarily materials which must be created by the congregational archivist or others in the congregation who are assisting in the documentation of congregational activities. Undoubtedly the most valuable resource of this type is photographs. They are also the most difficult systematically to create, catalog, and preserve.

Photographs

Those who have searched in vain for good photographs to illustrate a congregational history book will most appreciate the signifi-

cance of commissioning one or more members of a congregation to take photographs of important events in the life of the congregation. This practice should begin with the church building with interior and exterior shots from various angles and different lighting. Obviously the process should be repeated when renovations or additions occur. Outside views should also be taken at regular intervals to show the development of trees or other changes in the landscape.

It may be necessary to find one or more volunteers to assist the congregational archivist with this photography. The congregational archivist may still play a major role in insuring that the needs for documentation are met even if the archivist does not wield a camera.

Some congregations today produce membership directories on a regular basis with photographs of individuals and families. While these are of some value, they rarely document groups or activities. The directories are often produced by a professional photographer, but cost will probably limit other photography to amateur volunteers within the congregation. Photographs of the various organizations mentioned above could be taken on a regular basis, annually if their membership changes every year. This could be an overwhelming task even in a small congregation, and the energies of the volunteer(s) may determine the extent of each congregation's photograph collection.

What priorities should be set in preparing a photo documentation plan? Some subjects for photographs are fairly obvious. Until fairly recently some congregations have found it difficult to locate photographs of pastors—especially during the period when they served in their particular congregation. While formal portraits are good for publication, photographs of pastors in the pulpit, performing baptisms, and during other church functions illustrate a broader range

of church life. Other groups such as deacons/deaconesses, church councils, trustees, and other committees should also be photographed. Most popular, of course, are photographs of children; for example, Sunday school classes, Bible schools, retreats, and choirs. The exhibit value of a fairly systematic set of such photographs is extremely high.

Above all, one should strive to document activities with photographs. Christmas programs are a good example. Today in some congregations a dozen parents may bring their video cameras to such events, but this may not be the best documentation for the congregational archives. Homemade video tapes may be of uneven quality, and video tapes are not permanent—the color will fade and eventually the images may be completely lost. Properly developed black and white negatives and photographs will survive indefinitely if properly stored. Photographs of church picnics, camps, retreats, and pot luck meals will show a congregation relaxing. The mission of the congregation may also be documented with photographs of members quilting, painting or repairing houses in the community, or operating a local food and clothing bank.

Photographs should be clearly identified and labelled. Otherwise they may become virtually useless. In the case of photographs, the most important concern is to encourage someone to take black and white photographs of various groups and events and to deposit these in the congregational archives. Color photographs, like video tapes, have a tendency to fade and are not a permanent medium. Color slides are somewhat better, and if properly exposed, processed and stored, slides may last almost indefinitely. However, black and white photographs have the best longevity, and, in most respects, the greatest flexibility and efficiency for usage and reproduction.

Oral History Recordings

A second type of special record somewhat similar to photographs is oral history recordings. Interviews with pastors and older members should be completed at regular intervals and will provide insights into the life of the congregation beyond what is available in traditional written records. The congregational archivist may become very innovative in determining whom to interview or the types of questions to ask. Although oral history usually focuses on the elder members of the community, the reactions of children to events should not be ignored. Various sources of questions for the interviews are available, and one may consult various resource books or the denominational archives for assistance. One may consult *Heritage Celebrations, A Resource Book for Congregations*, for a sample questionnaire.

A good interviewer will tailor questions to the situation and issues which are being explored. More depth and breadth to the interview may be especially important since it is difficult to determine what may be of interest to those listening to an interview several generations from now. As was the case with photography, the congregational archivist may simply coordinate a series of interviews and their preservation rather than conducting them alone.

A variety of books discuss interviewing techniques, equipment, tapes, and the preservation of tape recordings. Unfortunately, tape recordings, like videotapes, are not permanent and will fade away over time. If at all possible, some interviews should be transcribed, a job which is extremely tedious and will require many volunteer hours.

Tape recordings should not be limited to interviews. The congregational archivist may wish to coordinate the taping of special worship services or events—for example, such as a special anniversary service, a choir anthem, or a Christmas program. Having a

few sermons from each pastor on tape may be a valuable resource for an anniversary celebration.

Family Papers and Genealogies

The congregational archivist may also play a role in gathering together other special records, such as family papers. In some cases, artifacts or heirlooms from families may even be collected if the community has a museum or plans exhibits on heritage themes. Nevertheless, the need for this type of work will depend on the circumstances in each congregation, and, in a few instances, may even be discouraged.

It may be more appropriate for diaries, correspondence and other papers of members of the congregation to be deposited in a denominational archives, a local historical society, or another institution better equipped to preserve and provide access to them. It may still be possible to obtain copies for the congregation to keep and display. Most important, whether the papers of members of a congregation are preserved in the congregation or some other institution, the congregational archivist still may have a very significant role in encouraging members, especially older members, to select some repository for family materials which have research or exhibit value.

The congregational archivist should also seek out genealogies and family histories of members. These works should be deposited both in the congregational archives and sent to regional and denominational archives. Interest in genealogy is very strong and printed family histories should be widely disseminated and thus made accessible. One might also encourage the authors of such histories within the congregation to send their research notes to the denominational archives where others might make use of their labors.

Histories of the Community

The congregational archivist should always work with whoever manages the congregation's library (if one exists) to collect histories of the community and denomination. The congregational archivist should not have reservations about collecting printed materials which provide valuable context for the unpublished records.

Other Research — Indexing and Collecting

Finally, while the congregational "archivist" may or may not have a role in writing the history of his/her congregation, a responsibility for conducting research directly derived from the documentation activities may often exist. This research may be limited or extensive, a choice often left up to the archivist. For example, the collection of newspaper clippings, printed programs, and other resources was mentioned above. This work may result in the creation of valuable scrapbooks. A host of lists may also be created. For example, the archivist may keep a list of pastors with the dates that they served the congregation, of buildings with their dates of construction or renovations, and of deacons, trustees, or other committees within the congregation.

A computer may be helpful in this task of compiling and storing information; and, if one is available, the archivist may use a computer to compile extensive databases which would be very valuable for future heritage celebrations or written histories. A computer could be used to index membership records, including a list of charter members, with some basic information on each member. One might consider compiling a list of firsts—the date of the first worship service in each building or of the first sermon

by each pastor; the first piano or organ, the first paid pastor or female pastor, the first worship service in English, and so forth.

Some customs of the congregation may not be clearly described in any normal records. How have weddings or funerals changed over time? Have the ban or excommunication been applied differently? Do worship services, communion, or baptism vary from one generation to the next in either meaning or in almost imperceptible ways? The congregational archivist may even describe his or her perceptions of changes which have occurred during the years of their participation in the congregation, and, in doing so, create a record which is not duplicated anywhere else.

Records of Unpleasant Events

One may be tempted to discard records which provide information on disputes or divisions within a congregation or otherwise shed a negative light on the congregation. For example, some congregations now have materials which document sexual abuse by their leaders. Use and access of such records must be managed with care, but selectively destroying them could cause even more negative results. Some records, such as those related to a dispute over church property, may even have legal value, and destruction of such documentation may be a very serious matter. Unhappy events are rarely forgotten entirely, and having materials available to document the issues and discussions may be better than having no record at all. Do not destroy such records—they may be restricted or even sent away to the denominational archives, but permanently losing access to such materials compromises access to historical truth.

F. Summary

This resource book describes dozens of activities related to the role of the congregational archivist in documenting the life of the congregation. Some of these activities are virtually mandatory and others are clearly optional. Some may have been accomplished for many years and others may never be achieved. It is important to evaluate what has already been accomplished and whether additional effort would be worthwhile. One should not attempt to assume too many new responsibilities at once. The old adage may apply that it is better to do a few things well than to attempt too much and fail at everything. This outlook is especially important to keep in mind with respect to the preservation of the congregation's records. If materials are not adequately stored and disintegrate or if they are not efficiently organized and cannot be located, then it would be best to focus on keeping less but doing it well.

Chapter 3

Preservation: Where and How Should Records be Kept?

A. Facilities

While many church buildings designed in the last thirty to forty years will have a room designated as the church library, few congregations have adequate space for their archival records. In the rare cases where a vault exists, the lack of temperature or humidity control, the existence of water pipes, or the limited space available may defeat the purpose of the vault. Very few church buildings are designed with the protection of records as a major concern, and thus the duplication through microfilming or photocopying of vital records is strongly advised. Furthermore, the deposit of many congregational records in the denominational archives is highly recommended.

Denominational Archival Centers

Most of the complex issues discussed in this chapter—proper facilities, acid-free storage containers, and adequate description of records—are most easily resolved by turning congregational records over to an established archival center. While many congregations may wish to keep some recent records in their possession, older and less frequently consulted records may conveniently be deposited in the denominational archives.

The denominational archives will provide appropriate environmental conditions, stor-

age containers, and descriptions of materials. As indicated above, a congregation may restrict access to some records and should work with the denominational archives' staff to protect sensitive or confidential materials. Moreover, the denominational archives will not loan out the records of a congregation—a situation which sometimes occurs within the congregation and may easily lead to losing some important documentation. However, the congregation may request the return of some of its records for special occasions. For example, a congregation may desire to display an original constitution or membership ledger during an anniversary celebration. The denomination archives staff will provide recommendations regarding the transportation and exhibition of such materials.

Another option is for a congregation to place copies of its records in the appropriate archival center while retaining the originals in its possession. The denominational archives may provide recommendations regarding microfilming or photocopying of records. Since microfilming is often very complex, care must be taken in planning a filming project. Even photocopying materials in order to preserve them may require special considerations regarding the type of paper and level of reduction or enlargement.

Of course, limits may exist with respect to which records a denomination archival center is willing to accept and which records a

congregation is willing to deposit there. Distance may be a factor if the congregation is hundreds of miles from the archival center. A congregation may not wish to relinquish control of its records, especially if it does not have a tradition of working with the denominational archives.

Thus for a variety of reasons it is still likely that in some congregations numerous records will remain in the church building. Fortunately, a few simple and relatively inexpensive modifications may in many cases provide reasonably secure storage space for a congregation's records.

Fire

Unfortunately, every year or so one of the older Mennonite meetinghouses in North America burns to the ground, usually destroying all of the contents. Little can be done to avoid the impact of such tragedy on the historical resources of a congregation unless substantial quantities of records have been copied and/or deposited in the denominational archives.

Even a fireproof filing cabinet can contain only a small fraction of these records, and such cabinets cost in the neighborhood of a thousand dollars. Moreover, a fireproof cabinet (or vault for that matter) serves to protect materials more from water and minor blazes, and the structural collapse of a building during a major fire will easily destroy the strongest cabinet (or vault). Furthermore, a small vault or special cabinet may simply attract thieves who have been known to steal the entire vault and destroy the contents. Of course, many church buildings have survived for many generations, and the congregational archivist must preserve the records using the available resources, leaving concerns about natural disasters in other hands.

Security and Possible Hazards

The location of a suitable space for storing a congregation's records depends on several factors. Security should be the first concern. Vandalism and theft are a possibility in almost every community, and records should be locked away. Doors should be metal or solid wood with dead-bolt locks. Cabinets should be sturdy with padlocks and heavy hinges. Access should be rather limited even within the congregation. The most well-intentioned user of the materials may return items to the wrong place or may take items home and lose them. In general, the fewer keys the better, and it is best to have only a handful of individuals authorized to use the archives unattended. A smaller collection of records may fit into a locked cabinet or closet, while larger holdings may require the dedication of an entire room.

If it is unavoidable that the archives room must have multiple uses, then one must still be cautious in selecting the best space and devise policies to avoid unnecessary risks. Educate users of the room about the significance of the records and their security. The other uses of the room should be as compatible as possible with the archives. For example, a janitorial closet may contain supplies with fumes that can damage the records. Do not store records in a furnace room or in a room with paint and other volatile substances.

Other factors may also render a room unsuitable for the long-term preservation of records. Materials should not be stored directly under water pipes. Nor should they be adjacent to windows which could break during a storm. Windows and fluorescent lights also create high levels of ultraviolet light which severely fades records. Sunlight should never fall directly on records or even their storage containers. Records should not be left out under fluorescent lights for any extended period of time unless the tubes

have sleeves to eliminate ultraviolet rays.

Temperature and Humidity

Ironically basements and attics, undoubtedly the worst locations in terms of environmental conditions, are most often used to store records in many church buildings. It is extremely important to avoid both high and low extremes of temperature and humidity and also rapid fluctuations in these measures, and basements and attics are almost always conducive to the former. Ideally most records should be stored at about 68-72 degrees Fahrenheit and between 40-45% relative humidity. No congregation could or should maintain their building to these standards. Records should never be stored in an unheated or un-airconditioned attic as extreme temperature fluctuations will gradually disintegrate records. (Roofs also tend to leak first into attics). High temperatures over 100 degrees or low temperatures in the 30s may cause visible damage to more sensitive records such as photographs within a few years.

Basements have an advantage in often providing a relatively stable environment if the humidity can be controlled. Unfortunately, high humidities during the summer may prove more damaging to materials than any other single condition. Mold and mildew will grow on some types of paper, film, or bindings at as low as 60-65% relative humidity, especially if the temperature is high. Portable dehumidifiers provide some relief, but in an enclosed area they can raise the temperature dramatically. Moreover, if no drain is available, the dehumidifier must be emptied regularly. If a drain is available and is clogged or backs up, then the records on the floor may be flooded (a more general problem for basements in some areas). The coils on some dehumidifiers also freeze on occasion if temperatures fall below 65-68 de-

grees, causing the motor to run indefinitely with an increased risk of fire.

Basements do have a slight advantage over other areas in a building during the winter when the furnace system may reduce the humidity on other floors to 10-15%. However, extremely dry conditions are likely to harm photographs and negatives. A humidifier can solve some of these problems, but they are often not available.

An inexpensive gauge to measure humidity and temperature can be found for under ten dollars and will be accurate enough to measure extreme conditions which may cause immediate and short-term damage to a congregation's records. Record the information at least weekly and look for extremes or rapid fluctuations. While it may be impossible to change the mechanical systems of the building, a new room for the archives may be a possibility. Try to find a location which minimizes fluctuations and is as close to the ideals as possible.

Dispersal of Records

Congregations should be aware of one final special caveat regarding where to keep and not to keep records. Occasionally congregations disband for one reason or another. In these situations records should be offered to the appropriate denominational archives. They should not be parcelled out as souvenirs to the members to be dispersed and lost forever. It is equally unacceptable for a few families to take these records with them to their new congregation to be mixed with or lost among documents from a different group. It is very important to keep the congregation's records together and take appropriate steps to see that they are preserved.

B. Arrangement and Description

Finding a properly secured and controlled environment for the records is only one of two steps toward preserving the congregation's records. The congregational archivist has more dominion over the second step, "processing" the records. Processing is a non-technical term used by archivists to describe various activities undertaken in preparing records for storage and usage. "Processing" ranges from arranging and describing records to cleaning and filing them away.

Record Groups

Processing begins with arrangement. In the case of congregational records, arrangement is not a difficult task. Each of the types of records discussed in the previous chapter has an obvious order. Thus the key to keeping one's congregational records well organized and accessible is to separate each type of record into a distinctive group. Within each group the records are most commonly arranged chronologically.

Filing Techniques

Depending on the quantity of records, each such group of records should have its own file folder or box(es) containing a series of folders. Do not mix the records of one organization or committee with those of another. A few examples will illustrate appropriate organizational schemes:

1. **Folders:** Label a file folder with the name of each organization within the congregation from which one has some records. Do not fill folders beyond their capacity, normally one-half to three-fourths an inch (corres-

ponding with the creases provided by the manufacturer). If the materials from an organization occupy more than one folder, then one must select a secondary criteria for arrangement. For example, the first folder may contain minutes, the second folder the correspondence, the third the annual reports, and so forth. Within these secondary categories the arrangement should generally be chronological. Of course, if the minutes take up more than one folder, then each folder should contain the minutes from a specific time period.

2. **Chronological Order:** The sermons from a particular minister should be kept in chronological order. Each type of printed material, like annual reports, bulletins, and Christmas and other special programs, should be stored together as a group and in chronological order within the group.
3. **Alphabetical Order:** Some materials should be filed in alphabetical order rather than chronologically. Correspondence often requires a combination of both. For example, all of the letters received during a given year could be together in one folder, but filed in alphabetical order within that year. Various membership, baptismal, and cemetery records should also be filed in alphabetical order, or indexed if they are recorded in ledgers.
4. **Subject Files:** Most difficult to arrange are those materials for which subjects must be assigned by the congregational archivist or creator of the materials. Photographs are the best example of this situation, but scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, and other items will also fit this category.

Photographs

Photographs must have subject headings assigned, be labelled, and then be sorted according to those headings. Maintaining access to a large collection of photographs will consume a considerable amount of time. Photographs which are not identified are virtually useless, especially as time passes and the chance of identification diminishes. Record the nature of the event or occasion, names of all of those pictured, and the date. Do not write on the photograph with ink. While one may record some information on the back of the photograph in pencil, it is best to write on the acid-free sleeve or envelope in which the photo is stored.

Organization of the Records

Creating a good organizational scheme for all of the records possessed by the congregation at the outset will avoid many problems in the long-run. Consulting a professional archivist in the community or contacting one's denominational archives would be worthwhile before finalizing all of the groupings of records.

A well-organized archives should have its records both properly arranged and also conveniently described and listed. It is often appropriate to create an inventory of the file folders and to use this list to gain access to

the materials.

A card file with subject headings for each accessioned item may also serve as an indexing tool. Bound ledgers or large volumes can easily be arranged on a few open shelves. Smaller volumes may be boxed for their protection. Other items should be placed in acid-free folders and boxes (see below for more details on preservation).

Virtually any numbering and organizational scheme will face problems when records of a group or committee are still accumulating. In the first illustration on the next page, what should be done when the current folder of Deacons' minutes is full and a fifth one must be added? After another decade, the Deacon's records may fill the entire first box. Several options will help to alleviate these problems, but do not expect them to disappear entirely. It may be best to list folders without numbering them. Then additional folders may be added easily—especially if the list is on a word processor. If one can designate an entire box for a particular group of records, then perhaps a clear label on the box rather than a list of the folders will suffice. Moreover, reserve some empty space in boxes where one anticipates that the quantity of records will grow more rapidly. You do not want to re-box records on a regular basis. The system that works best will depend on both the initial quantity of records and the rate of growth.

The following sample gives the most common format for such a list:

<u>Box Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1		<u>Deacons</u>
	1	Minutes, 1910-39
	2	Minutes, 1940-59
	3	Minutes, 1960-79
	4	Minutes, 1980-
	5	Disbursements, 1910-49
	6	Disbursements, 1950-79
	7	Disbursements, 1980-
	8	Correspondence, 1930-59
	9	Correspondence, 1960-79
	10	Correspondence, 1980-
		<u>Historical Committee</u>
	1	Minutes, 1950-69
	2	Minutes, 1970-79
2	3	Minutes, 1980-

Another common format serves both as an accession list and an inventory:

<u>Accession Number</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Number of Items</u>	<u>Location</u>
1	5/93	Rev. Smucker's Sermons	27	Box 1, Folder 12
2	6/93	Photograph of Baptismal class 5/7/93	1	Box 2, Folder 13
3	6/93	Box of Records from Goering family	22	Shelf 1

C. Preservation

Prior to arranging and describing records, one must not only locate space and shelving to house the materials but also purchase various supplies such as the boxes and folders which have been referenced above. Obtaining "archival" quality supplies and following recognized procedures will greatly enhance the longevity of many records.

Acid-free Supplies

As a general rule all records should be stored in acid-free folders and boxes. The boxes and folders produced for most general commercial usage are acidic, and over a period of years will deteriorate and harm the records stored within. Proper storage containers are especially important for photographs and negatives. Photos may be placed in envelopes made of acid-free paper or mylar plastic. Mylar is more expensive, but it allows one to view and handle photographs without damage from dirt and fingerprints. Some traditional photo albums and plastic sheets for storing slides should be avoided since they are made of other types of plastic or vinyl which may harm rather than protect images. While discount and office supply stores may carry some archival quality products, it is important to be cautious and consult an expert or reputable dealer.

Archival supplies may also be ordered through a variety of vendors. Appendix D provides information on major vendors. Unfortunately, many archival supplies are more expensive when purchased in smaller quantities. One may wish to consult the denominational archives or archival institutions in the region such as a state historical society or university archives to determine if they resell supplies or will recommend a local source for supplies.

Acid-free paper is now readily available in

North America, and for many types of paper is only slightly, if at all, more expensive than acidic paper. However, one should especially inquire whether paper purchased for photocopying is acidic. This is extremely important if newspaper clippings and other materials are being copied for the sake of preservation. All important records and publications should be created on acid-free paper.

Filing Tips

As one sorts and files records, the congregational archivist may also take other steps to enhance the longevity of the documents. For example, one should remove rubber bands, paper clips, rusty staples, acidic binders and wrappers, and other materials which will cause materials to deteriorate. The importance of photocopying all items on newsprint has been mentioned. One may purchase and use plastic paper clips and carefully replace old staples with rust-proof staples. Another relatively new hazard is filing away records covered with post-it notes, the glue of which will accelerate deterioration just like rusty staples.

Documents should also generally be unfolded before they are filed away. It is especially damaging to fold and unfold a record which is consulted frequently. Special flat files in sizes large enough for maps and posters should be purchased for items larger than letter or legal size paper.

Handling Tips

How documents are handled, as well as how they are stored, may have a major impact on their survival. Special cotton gloves should be worn when examining photographs since fingerprints may result in permanent damage. While the heat and light from a photocopier will not damage a document

unless it is copied over and over, a lack of care while placing materials on the copier easily can tear or crease a fragile document. Of course, the bindings of books which are pressed flat on a standard copier are often severely damaged, and special copiers are available for copying tightly bound books.

Handling is also extremely important if documents are used in mounting exhibits. Making materials available for members of the congregation to see may be very valuable in enhancing an anniversary or other special event, but if improperly displayed the materials may be permanently damaged and unavailable for the next occasion.

Document Repair

One may consider taking especially rare and valuable items or materials requiring cleaning and repair to a professional conservator. Unfolding and flattening some items may result in additional damage if not done properly. In some instances materials may be de-acidified. Mending and backing fragile records with hand-made paper is also a possibility. These techniques may be very costly, but estimates may be obtained from a conservator. Never attempt to mend a document with any type of pressure sensitive tape. The repairs that are made with tape soon deteriorate and generally leave behind further permanent damage.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

This resource book approaches the work of the congregational archivist in collecting and preserving the records of the congregation in some detail. Some of the recommendations will not be appropriate for every situation. Congregations vary immensely not only in their age and size, two factors which govern the quantity of records, but also in their interest in their heritage. This level of interest may further influence both the foundation which has been laid for the current congregational archivist and the support that the archivist receives.

The information in this resource book should be sufficient to get started. For additional information, a brief listing of readings is included. For specific questions or technical assistance, one may consult the denominational archives or the staff at local and regional archives.

When in doubt, one should observe several general principles in the preservation of congregational records. First, always avoid expedients. Do not create a miscellaneous file (or pile) of hard to describe or file materials. Deferring decisions may make them more difficult.

Second, never do something that cannot be undone. Only a few decades ago archivists thought they had found an inexpensive

and quick means to protect documents and they permanently laminated thousands of items only to discover that lamination accelerated the deterioration of the documents and was virtually impossible to reverse. Writing an identification in ink on a photograph or document rather than preparing a separate label or folder is another example of an irreversible and potentially damaging expedient.

Third, never rely on memory as the basic guide to the existence or location of records. This is really the most dangerous expedient, and the failure to create appropriate labels and lists may severely handicap one's successors.

Finally and most importantly, balance goals and resources. Do not assume that this book mandates congregations to collect and preserve everything. Backlogs are the bane of archivists. Collect only what one can reasonably expect to arrange, describe, and store. In other words, keep only what one can control and use. Records which will rarely, if ever, be used should be discarded in many instances. One should set priorities and devote energies to those materials which will be of most value in preserving the story of the congregation.

APPENDIX A

Outline of Responsibilities

Basic responsibilities of the congregational archivist:

1. Encourage the creation and saving of appropriate historical records.
 - a. Identify the vital records, records of organizations, publications, ministerial records, and other special records which should be kept or created.
 - b. Arrange for a photographer to document events.
 - c. Tape record events or interviews with members.
 - d. Create lists or clippings files of special information which may prove valuable to future generations.

2. Arrange for the preservation of these historical records.
 - a. Find facilities and shelving to store the records.
 - b. Organize the records into usable groupings.
 - c. Process the records into acid-free boxes and folders.
 - d. Send appropriate materials or copies to the denominational archives.

3. Promote an appreciation of the congregation's past.
 - a. Mount displays of copies of photographs or documents.
 - b. Speak to groups within the congregation and otherwise serve as a resource about the congregation's history.
 - c. Arrange for individuals or groups to use the congregation's historical records.
 - d. Prepare articles on historic events in the life of the church or write a history of the congregation.

APPENDIX B

Documentation Checklist

Records to Keep

Vital Records

- Membership/Baptism
- Cemetery
- Legal—Deeds/Mortgages/Abstracts/Contracts/Tax Exemption/Property Appraisals
- Constitution/charter
- Minutes of governing council or board and congregational meetings
- Financial—budgets, ledgers, and reports
- Building—blueprints or plans

Records of Organizations

- Deacons/Spiritual Council
- Trustees
- Committees
 - Evangelism
 - Historical
 - Missions
- Sunday School
- Youth groups
- Men's and Women's organizations
- Choirs
- Bible school
- Retreats or evangelical/revival meetings
- Mutual aid society

Publications

- Bulletins
- Newsletters
- Yearbooks or directories
- Histories
- Hymnals used by the congregation
- Brochures
- Newspaper clippings—obituaries, weddings, programs
- Special programs—funerals, weddings, Christmas programs, etc.

Pastoral Leadership

- Sermons and pastoral letters
- Ordinations
- Correspondence

Special—records that should be systematically created/collected

Photographs—leaders and organizations, but mostly of activities

Diaries and family papers

Books—local and regional as well as family and denominational histories

Oral histories

Affiliated institutions—retirement homes, church camps, Mennonite Disaster Service, etc.

Other recorded events (audio and video)

Lists—scrapbooks to computer records

 charter members

 indexes to vital records—membership and baptism

 ministers—with biographical information

 buildings—construction information

 firsts—language changes, organ, bulletins, etc.—difficult to record such events as they happen

 customs—items not necessarily in normal written documentation—changes in worship services, funerals, weddings, communion, ban, excommunication, clothing, etc.

 record occupations of members

Disputes, divisions

Records to Discard

These records should be kept 1 to 7 years depending on legal and tax requirements:

Detailed financial records (check accountant for legal requirements)

 Invoices

 Petty cash records and cash receipt records

 Check stubs, deposit slips, cancelled checks, and bank statements

 Individual donation records and pledges

 Purchase orders, requisitions, and receipts for purchases

 Budget workpapers

 Expired insurance policies

Personnel records

 Payroll, W-2s, and other related personnel files

 Time cards

 Expired contracts

Routine correspondence

 Letters accompanying bills and payments

 Notification of meetings or events

 Envelopes

Mailing lists

 (keep membership lists, but not regularly updated address lists)

Other

 Travel plans, records, and arrangements

 Ballots

 Sunday school and other class lists

APPENDIX C

Denominational Archival Repositories

Mennonite Brethren

Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies
4824 E. Butler
Fresno, CA 93727

Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies
1-169 Riverton Ave.
Winnipeg, MB R2L 2E5
CANADA

Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies
Tabor College
Hillsboro, KS 67063

Mennonite Archival Centre – British
Columbia
Columbia Bible College
2940 Clearbrook Road
Clearbrook, BC V2T 2Z8
CANADA

General Conference

Mennonite Library and Archives
Bethel College
300 E. 27th
North Newton, KS 67117-9989

Mennonite Historical Library
Bluffton College
Bluffton, OH 45817

Freeman Academy Historical Library
748 South Main St.
Freeman, SD 57209

Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives
600 Shaftesbury Blvd.
Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4
CANADA

Rosthern Junior College Archives
Rosthern Junior College
Rosthern, SK S0K 3R0
CANADA

Mennonite Church

Archives of the Mennonite Church
1700 South Main
Goshen, IN 46526

Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society
2215 Millstream Road
Lancaster, PA 17602-1499

Juniata District Mennonite Historical
Society
HCR 63
Richfield, PA 17086

Menno Simons Historical Library and
Archives
Eastern Mennonite College
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Cumberland Valley Mennonite Historical
Center
Box 335
State Line, PA 17263

**Inter-Mennonite — General Conference
and Mennonite Church**

Mennonite Heritage Center
Illinois Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society
P.O. Box 819
Metamora, IL 61548

Mennonite Historians of Eastern Pennsylvania
Library and Archives
P.O. Box 82
565 Yoder Road
Harleysville, PA 19438

Oregon Mennonite Archives and Library
Western Mennonite School
9045 Wallace Road, NW
Salem, OR 97304

Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta
76 Skyline NE
Calgary, AB T2K 5X7
CANADA

Mennonite Archives of Ontario
Conrad Grebel College
Waterloo, ON N2L 3G6
CANADA

Brethren in Christ

Archives of the Brethren in Christ
Messiah College
Grantham, PA 17027

APPENDIX D

Vendors for Archival Supplies

Archival supplies are available from numerous vendors, and even various office supply stores have begun to carry acid-free products. Three of the major vendors which specialize in archival materials are:

The Hollinger Corporation, P.O. Box 8360, Fredericksburg, VA 22404 (800-634-0491).

University Products, P.O. Box 101, 517 Main Street, Holyoke, MA 01041-0101 (800-762-1165).

Light Impressions, P.O. Box 940, 439 Monroe Avenue, Rochester, NY 14603-0940 (800-828-9859).

For archival supplies in Canada one should contact:

Carr McLean, 461 Horner Avenue, Toronto, ON M8W 4X2 (800-268-2138).

Woolfitt's Art Supplies, 390 Dupont Street, Toronto, ON M5R 1V9 (416-922-0933).

Bury Media and Supplies Ltd., B5-4255 Arbutus St., Vancouver, BC V6J 4R1 (604-731-5838).

One may call any of these vendors to obtain their catalogs. Prices of similar products vary considerably, and the quantity being ordered has a major influence upon costs.

All of the major library supply catalogs also list a variety of acid-free archival supplies—for example, Highsmith, Brodart, Demco, and Gaylord. Copies of their catalogs are available at most public and academic libraries, and these companies, in general, are competitive when smaller quantities of supplies are being ordered.

If in doubt about what to order, consult a professional archivist in your community or your denominational archives. In some cases, larger archives found at a state historical society or university will pass along savings by reselling supplies which they have purchased in large quantities. In Canada one may consult with the Canadian Conservation Institute, National Museums of Canada, Ottawa, ON K1A 0M8 (513-998-3721).

APPENDIX E

Selected Readings

Perhaps the most often consulted manuals for archival practice are the Society of American Archivists' *Basic Manual Series* (2nd Series, 1990-). This series contains a number of volumes on specific topics, including *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts* (James M. O'Toole, 1990); *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts* (Frederick M. Miller, 1990); *Managing Archival and Manuscript Repositories* (Thomas Wilsted and William Nolte, 1991); and *Preserving Archives and Manuscripts* (Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler, 1993). These are good sources for additional information on topics such as description of materials or preservation techniques. These manuals are widely available and may often be borrowed through interlibrary loan, or one may order copies from the Society of American Archivists (\$25 each, plus postage, 312-922-0140).

For those interested in more details on archival theory and management several volumes may be recommended as general textbooks. The classic works in American archival theory are by Theodore R. Schellenberg: *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956) and *The Management of Archives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965). Schellenberg's works are mentioned, not because they would be of particular value to most congregational archivists, but because his background was Mennonite.

Several one volume surveys of archival techniques are also available: Kenneth W. Duckett's *Modern Manuscripts: A Practical Manual for Their Management, Care and Use* (Nashville: American Association for State

and Local History, 1975); Laura M. Coles, *A Manual for Small Archives* (Vancouver: Association of British Columbia Archivists, 1988); and Ann Pederson, editor, *Keeping Archives* (Australia: Australian Society of Archivists, 1987). One may consult the bibliographies of these works to obtain readings on more specialized subjects.

A few denominations have published guides to their archival holdings or brochures for congregational archivists, which also provide useful information on what to keep and how to keep it. Of special note are Edwin S. Gaustad's *Doing Church History - Your Own!* (Valley Forge: American Baptist Historical Society, 1991); Bill Summer's *Documenting the Spirit* (Nashville: Southern Baptist Convention, 1991); and David P. Gray's *Records Management for Parishes and Schools* (Bismarck: Diocese of Bismarck, 1986). The classic treatment of religious records remains August R. Suelflow's, *Religious Archives: An Introduction* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1980). This work is out-of-print and dated, and its relevance for congregational records is minimal.

Finally, one may also seek more detailed information on some of the various specialized areas touched upon in this volume. The best work on photographs remains Robert A. Weinstein's *Collection, Use and Care of Historical Photographs* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1977), and the best guide on starting an oral history collection is by Cullom Davis, Kathryn Back, and Kay McLean, *Oral History: From Tape to Type* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1977).