

NOTES FROM THE
DEKOVEN CENTER ARCHIVES



ISSUE No. 3

FALL 2018

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Issue No. 3 – Fall 2018

In the second issue of our “Notes from the DeKoven Center Archives,” in March, we announced the addition of the Bardenwerper Collection to the documents housed in Taylor Hall. With this Fall 2018 issue we are pleased to share with our readers an even more significant development. In July the historical archives of the Diocese of Milwaukee were moved from storage at the Milwaukee County Historical Society (MCHS) to the DeKoven Center. The 46 boxes of documents and 10 ledgers represent information starting with early missionary times down to the 1960’s. They were moved to the Historical Society for safe-keeping in 1969 by the Rev. Robert Carroon who was archivist at MCHS as well as historiographer of the diocese. We are working diligently at processing this material for inclusion in our collection. This work includes preserving the sometimes very delicate documents as well as preparing detailed finding aids of their content. It is obvious that this material is a valuable resource for the history of the Episcopal Church in the upper Midwest.

Meeting “New” and Interesting Historical Figures

One of the special pleasures of working with the archives is coming across information about historical figures who are ‘new’ to us. We sometimes find documents written by these individuals, or stories written about them. As we process this new material we are more and more amazed at some of the fascinating people who have played a role in the religious life of Wisconsin. Here are the stories of two of these individuals.

Frederick Winslow Hatch (1789- 1860)

The Rev. Frederick Winslow Hatch, one of the original clergy in the Episcopal Diocese of Wisconsin, was called to be rector of St.

Matthew’s, Southport (Kenosha) in 1843. Prior to his call to St. Matthews, Hatch served different parishes in the East.

From 1820-1830 Hatch was rector of Christ Church, Charlottesville Virginia where Thomas Jefferson attended church. Hatch’s family lived 2 miles from Monticello; they would visit with Jefferson as he passed the house and wave to notables like General Lafayette, James Madison and other revolutionary figures on their way to see the former president. Jefferson’s grandchildren attended a small school run by Hatch. Over forty letters between Jefferson and Hatch are found in the National Archives. In one letter Hatch is invited to dine with Jefferson and General Lafayette.

In 1826 the Rev. Frederick Winslow Hatch read the Burial Office at the grave of his parishioner and friend, Thomas Jefferson.

Hatch also served parishes in the District of Columbia and Poughkeepsie, New York and acted as Chaplain of the U.S. Senate from 1833 to 1835. The first wooden frame church building was completed during Hatch’s time as rector at St. Matthew’s and a bell was added to the church tower – the first bell in the city of Southport and the third in the Northwest Territory. Departing Wisconsin, Hatch and family first went to St. Louis before eventually settling in Sacramento, California where he died in 1860.

Gustaf Elias Unonius (1810-1902)

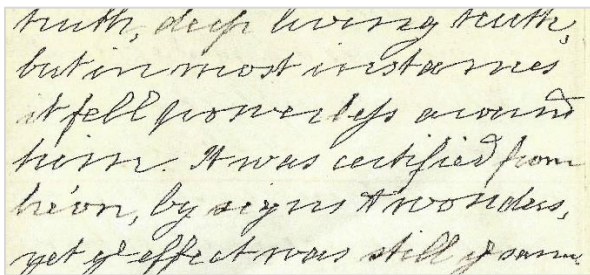
The first graduate of Nashotah House was Gustaf Unonius in 1845. He was ordained a Deacon by Bishop Jackson Kemper in that year and later a priest in the Episcopal Church. Prior to these events he had already led a very unusual life.

Unonius was born in 1810 in Finland where his Swedish parents were living. He graduated from Uppsala University in Sweden in 1830 and from Uppsala Law School in 1833. In 1841 he emigrated from Sweden to the United States and settled in Waukesha County. There he established a community known as the Pine Lake Settlement. He wrote many letters to newspapers in the Scandinavian countries

promoting the rich possibilities of pioneer life in Wisconsin. These letters attracted immigrants from Sweden and Denmark to the Midwest. Unonius felt that the Pine Lake community lacked a religious element to complement the Scandinavian culture. Although raised Lutheran, his friendship with James Lloyd Breck led him to study at Nashotah, be ordained, and then serve as pastor in Pine Lake.

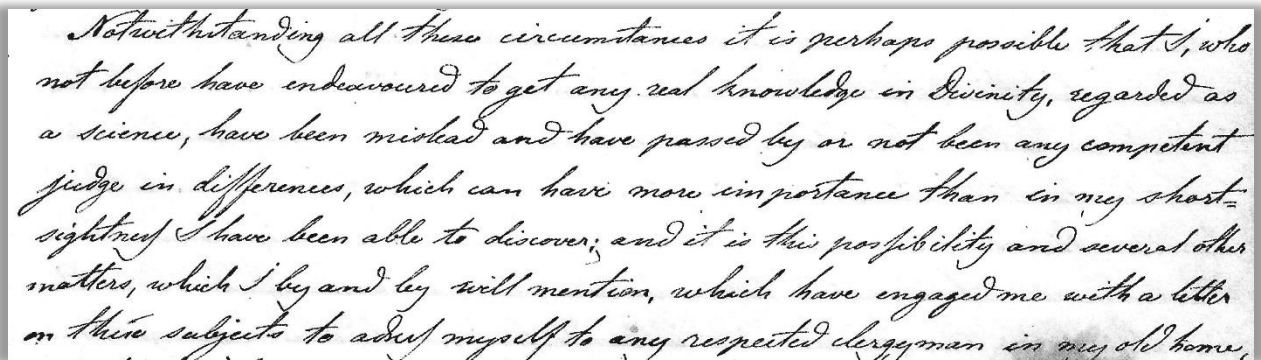
In 1849 Unonius founded the Swedish Episcopal Church of St. Ansgarius in Chicago. He returned to Sweden in 1858 and worked for the government, having been denied reunion with the Church of Sweden as a pastor. In 1862 he published a two-volume set of memoirs that contain stories of his life and travels in the United States. A deeply religious man, his writings are a reflection of his commitment to his faith and the people of Scandinavia.

One of the challenges of working with historical documents is reading the handwriting of the authors. Writings by these two individuals, Hatch and Unonius, present a marked contrast in penmanship. .



truth, deep loving truth,
but in most instances
it fell from lips around
him. It was certified from
him, by signs & wonders,
yet of effect was still the same.

Figure 1 Hatch Penmanship



Notwithstanding all these circumstances it is perhaps possible that I, who not before have endeavoured to get any real knowledge in Divinity, regarded as a science, have been misled and have passed by or not been any competent judge in differences, which can have more importance than in my shortsightedness I have been able to discover; and it is this possibility and several other matters, which I by and by will mention, which have engaged me with a letter on these subjects to address myself to any respected clergyman in my old home.

Figure 2 Unonius Penmanship

Another Historic Photo

As we indicated in our last issue, a photo with the subjects identified is a rare find in our collection. The following photo, "Four Graduates of Racine College who became bishops," demonstrates the important role that the institution played in the life of the Episcopal Church in the United States.

Pictured from left to right:

The Rt. Rev Samuel Cook Edsall (1860-1917)

After graduation from Racine College, Edsall practiced law in Chicago. He attended Seabury-Western Seminary, was ordained a priest in 1889 and was elected Missionary Bishop of North Dakota in 1898. In 1901 he became Bishop of Minnesota serving for 16 years.

The Rt. Rev. Joseph M. Francis (1862-1939)

After attending Racine College and Oxford, Francis was ordained a priest in 1866, beginning his ministry at All Saints Cathedral in Milwaukee. After serving a year in Whitewater, Wisconsin, he went to Japan to teach and take charge of the Cathedral at Tokyo. Francis became bishop of Indiana in 1902. During World War I he served as chaplain of Base Hospital No. 32 in France.

The Rt. Rev. Thomas Frank Gailor (1856-1935)

In 1876 Gailor received his B.A. from Racine College, where he was the valedictorian. During his ministry Gailor served the church in many capacities; he was the third bishop of Tennessee, the eighth chancellor of the

University of the South, president of the House of bishops, and president of the National Council of the Episcopal Church.

The Rt. Rev. Henry Douglas Robinson (1859-1913) Robinson obtained a B.S. ('84) and M. A. ('87) from Racine College. After graduation he served the School in many capacities; assistant rector of the Grammar School, headmaster of the Grammar School and in 1900, warden of the institution. In seven years he built the attendance to a level never before seen. He was elected Missionary Bishop of Nevada in 1908 and was consecrated at St. Luke's Church in Racine. Bishop Robinson is buried in Racine.



Sesquicentennial Year – Taylor Hall 1867/68 – 2017-18

The cornerstone for Taylor Hall was placed in June 1867. This was the fourth building erected on the Racine College campus. The first two, Park Hall and Kemper Hall, the anchors of the East Building, were begun in 1852 and 1857 respectively. James DeKoven came to Racine College in 1859 and in 1864 laid the cornerstone for St. John's Chapel which was dedicated in 1865.

In his personal journal, Father DeKoven describes the motivation and history of funding for the next building:

Isaac Taylor, one of our Trustees, is dead. He came to this country a poor lad and was a bootblack, then an ostler, and at last amassed a huge fortune I have often talked to him about building a Hall for the sons of the Clergy in connection with the College.

Although Isaac Taylor did not provide funds for the building when he died, his widow, Ermeline Taylor, did include such a gift in her

will upon her death just one year later in 1866. She left \$35,000 for the building and \$30,000 for an endowment to maintain it.

Father DeKoven provides this description of the day in June 1867:

The cornerstone of Taylor Hall was laid on the 22nd with great solemnities. . . . It was a lovely day. The grounds have never looked so charming as they do this spring. We have built a new barn and the old sheds are gone—brick walks have been laid, the garden is in capital order, the flower garden looks pretty and it is all beautiful.

The building was finished by December of the same year and was formally opened in January 1868. It became the college building and provided living quarters for several faculty members as well as 60 young scholars.

Seven years later, tragedy struck on the night of February 3, 1875. A fire broke out in a chimney and the building was gutted. It was a bitterly cold night with a strong wind; the temperature registered -20 degrees. Several employees suffered frostbite, but only one

student was injured when he walked on glass from a broken skylight.

Taylor Hall was quickly rebuilt with insurance money and funds raised by the citizens of Racine. The new building, which had a central heating system thus eliminating the need for stoves in each room, was finished by September of the same year.

Taylor Hall continued to function as the collegiate building until 1888 when the college closed and the institution became a boys' school. During the period 1922-1932 the campus served as a military academy under the direction of the Cushman family. From 1923-1929 they leased Taylor Hall to the National Center for Devotion and Conference of the Protestant Episcopal Church. This organization remodeled rooms and facilities for conference participants. (A more detailed article on this Center will appear in the next issue.)

In 1935 the Racine College campus was sold to the Community of Saint Mary which had used the buildings and grounds in 1933 and 1934 for a summer camp for girls. The sisters moved to Taylor Hall in 1938 and under the leadership of Sister Eanswith began restoration of the historic structures.

Since 1986 the DeKoven Center has functioned under the auspices of Episcopal diocese of Milwaukee. Taylor Hall serves as the guest house for conferences and retreats as well as the administrative offices of the Center.



Figure 2 Taylor Hall – West View (1872)



Figure 3 Taylor Hall After the Fire (1875)

Two Photos

Many photos are available of Taylor Hall.

One significant example are the above copies of stereoscope photos.

The top photo shows Taylor Hall in 1872. The bottom photo was taken in 1875 after the fire.

**The Papers and Art of Janet Robson Kennedy
1902 – 1974**

One of the more unusual collections found in the DeKoven Center Archives is the personal papers and artwork of Janet Robson Kennedy. Mrs. Kennedy was educated at schools run by the Community of Saint Mary, primarily Saint Katherine's in Davenport, Iowa and Kemper Hall in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Her ability as an artist was recognized early in her education and her talent was encouraged by the sisters. Although she entered the novitiate after completing her secondary education, she left before professing vows. She pursued her education at the Art Institute in Chicago and the Art Students League in New York City. She was a successful artist and exhibited her paintings in New York City, Chicago, St. Louis, and Miami Beach. Among other artistic endeavors, she designed figurines for the Hummel Company Germany. Her art work is most accessible to us through the greeting cards she designed. There are over 300 different cards in our collection. The Christmas card reproduced here is one of many she created throughout her career. A more complete collection of her Christmas cards will be on display in Taylor Hall throughout the holiday season this year.



“Grace before meals . . . “

Some of the more interesting stories from the annals of Racine College relate to food. The following story is found in the memoirs of an anonymous student who attended Racine College during the last years of James DeKoven's life. DeKoven often ate with the boys and insisted on certain standards.

The grace before dinner was sung by the students and consisted of the two verses, “The eyes of all wait upon Thee, O Lord,” etc., followed by the Gloria.

The heartiness with which the grace was sung was too often in proportion to the goodness of the dinner, “fish day,” or Friday, sometimes bringing a poor, emaciated grace sung by only three or four voices, while “pie days,” or Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday, was usually accompanied by a heart volume of pre-prandial thankfulness. But where there came a grace which fairly made the rafters ring and could be heard out across the campus and down the avenue, the remark was pretty sure to be made by the belated student approaching without, “Must be turkey and cranberry sauce today.”

A feeble, listless grace brought a shade of displeasure to the Doctor's face, but when it was too weak for endurance the bell would be

struck sharply at its close and “Sing the grace again” would be heard. Of course there would sometimes be a trifle of sulkiness and perhaps the second trial would be unsatisfactory, but it had to be sung over until it was evident that at least a majority had joined in it.