

Archivist's Report 2019

For considering the flood of statistics involved and the difficulty there is for those who wish to enter upon the narratives of history because of the mass of material, we have aimed to please those who wish to read, to make it easy for those who are inclined to memorize, and to profit all readers. (2 Maccabees 2:24-25)

Diocesan and parish archives are required by the Canons of the Episcopal Church, and are organized under through the guidelines published by the Episcopal Church archives in Austin TX, along with recommendations from National Episcopal Historical Association.

BACKGROUND OF THE ARCHIVES OF THE DIOCESE

While there have been archives in the Diocese of New Jersey from the days of our first bishops, the beginning of a formal plan and staff for such an endeavor began with the efforts of the the Revd Canon Laurence D. Fish. Larry had worked alongside Fr. King, who famously wrote and published the history of the diocese for the U.S. bicentennial in 1976.

Files and other memorabilia were collected and stored in the basement 808 West State St. in far less than ideal conditions. Eventually, part of the Matthews Conference Center was established to better store archival materials, especially those particularly susceptible to the vagaries of humidity and temperature.

Canon Fish brought to the position a strong sense of the church's and diocese's history, a vacuum cleaner like ability to acquire important new materials, and a graceful and clear writing style that gave freshness to what could be conceived of as rather musty material.

After Canon Fish's death in 2010, Canon Cynthia McFarland, who was already serving as Diocesan Communications Director had Archivist, Historiographer and Register added to her portfolio. Cynthia continued updating the existing databases (adding one listing confirmations), began the process of culling through the papers and other correspondence of all of our Bishops, and did some valuable primary source research on the lives of the Rev'd John Talbot and the Rt. Rev'd George Washington Doane. Under her direction, many of our Diocesan journals were digitized and made available on-line. Tragically, Cynthia died in 2013, and her two assistants, Mary Ann Jensen and Paula Morgan died within a year of each other. I was appointed Archivist by Bishop Stokes in 2014. We also had the support of Allie Graham as Assistant Archivist for a year.

MATERIALS PRESENTLY KEPT IN THE ARCHIVES

Books: There is a library of parish histories, the Episcopal Church, historic hymnals and prayer books, and biographies and collections of writings from prominent New Jersey Clergy in our collection.

Files:

1. Clergy personnel files. Records of active, retired and deceased clergy, along with files of those no longer in the ordination process.
2. Correspondence and official acts of our bishops. Includes letters dimissory and some personal effects and items of historical interest, such as the signatures of those attending electing conventions.
3. Bishop Banyard's church files: We have the files our VIIth Bishop kept of his correspondence and visitations to our congregations during his episcopate.
4. Non-published parish histories. Often a part of landmark anniversaries, many are mimeographed or photocopied sheets.
5. Bulletins from Diocesan events. Such as conventions, consecrations and landmark anniversaries.
6. Materials from Diocesan organizations (e.g. Episcopal Church women, Girls Friendly, Altar Guild, the Evergreens, St. Mary's Hall / Doane Academy, etc.). Includes newsletters, treasurer's reports, and regular publications.

7. Architectural plans: blueprints, architectural renderings and floor plans of churches and diocesan headquarters.

Photographs: Includes historic black and white photos of churches (exterior and interior), clergy and lay leaders, photos that appeared in Via Media and other publications, photos of diocesan events, and a large collection of historic postcards.

Periodicals: Includes magazines and other regular diocesan publications, along with runs of the Historical magazine of the Episcopal Church and the Episcopalian (bound).

Extinct parishes: All extant records of churches that are no longer in existence, and include parish registers, registers of church services, Vestry minute books and treasurer's reports.

Multi-media.

1. Video tapes of major diocesan events and of television programs that included diocesan churches.
2. Audio tapes and phono records: Includes recordings of diocesan events and oral histories.
3. Microfilm: Colonial records of Christ Church Shrewsbury.
4. CDs/DVDs: Video and still photos of diocesan and parish events.

Data bases: There are both on-line and printed data bases with basic information on congregations, including dates of origin and clergy. Included in this category are a series of card files which index the contents of files and a list of books in the collection.

The Treasury: The archives are storing the ecclesiastical hardware of extinct congregations including chalices and patens, candlesticks and other brassware, missal stands, home communion sets, crosses, etc.

The Bishop's Closet: Vestments of all types are available, including cassocks, surplices, albs, stoles, chasubles and altar linens.

Miscellaneous ephemera: Includes commemorative plates and plaques, ordination certificates, vestments and linens, along with Prayer Books and other things saved from closed churches.

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Accomplished in 2019:

- answered over 90 inquiries,
- continued digitizing of 80 years of Confirmation records,
- held open houses in two closed churches
- took the lead in emptying the sacred items of two churches
- distributed vestments to clerics and churches in need in our Diocese
- completed the planning for Ancestry.com's digitization of our diocesan records.
- began detailed indexing of the extinct congregational records
- received the collection of Bishop Councill's sermons.

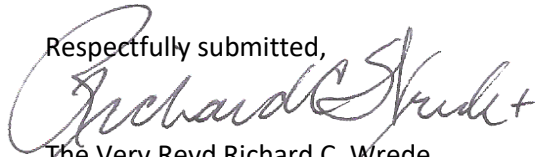
In 2020 I will continue to offer the archival services to the Diocesan Staff and community. We are the repository of the records of 60 extinct congregations and have a number of requests for transfers and baptism records.

The two major projects I hope to complete in 2020 is the scanning and digitizing of all our Parish Registers by Ancestry.com. I have been desperate to get this project completed before we have another 'Sandy' event and more priceless records are lost forever. The other one is to scan and convert to pdf format the ser-

mons of the Rt. Rev'd George E Councell. We received his sermons and the background research from the Councell family over the summer and I will be requesting volunteers to scan the sermons so we can make them available on-line. And of course, Ancestry.com.

It should be a great joy for all our people that the resources located in our Diocesan archives preserve a treasure which catalogues the glorious 300 year history of our branch of the Church of Jesus Christ and ensures that this story will not be lost to time. We are in many ways the Diocesan attic, but the Archives are so much more. By providing outreach to individuals and congregations, services for our clergy and churches, and serving as a resource for sharing our inspirational story of faith through these three centuries, our collection is what gives context to our rapidly changing church and world. *'We are your stewards, O God. Guide us in your Grace.'*

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Richard C. Wrede". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and a small cross at the end of the last name.

The Very Revd Richard C. Wrede
Canon Archivist, Diocese of New Jersey