

GENEALOGY OF SOME GERMAN EVANGELICAL CHURCHES IN CINCINNATI, OHIO

Compiled from Cincinnati City Directories and various Church Records and Histories by Robert C. Rau 10 Feb 1992

Rev. Behm (Germ Methodist) 1810-1811

Log schoolhouse, 4th & Main

|

Dr. Dreher, 1814

|

1814

GERMAN LUTHERAN & REFORMED CHURCH

Joseph Zaeslein

1814-1817

Arch bet Broadway & Ludlow

|

Jacob Guelich

1818-1820

|

Ludwig H. Meyer

1820-1835

3rd bet Broadway & Ludlow (1824)

|

6th bet Walnut & Vine (1832)

H.W. Lauer

1835-1837

|

|

Wilhelm Moellmann

1837-1838

|

(1839)

(GERMAN

PROTESTANT

ST. JOHNS)

F.M. Raschig

1839-1841

|

|

August Kroell

1841-1874

NORTH GERMAN

LUTHERAN CHURCH

Walnut & 9th

Wilhelm Moellmann

1838-1840

|

F. Wilhelm Seib

1840-1844

|

Henry Suhr

1844-1855

-----1832

UNITED PROTESTANT EVANGELICAL

GERMAN ST. PETERS CHURCH

Philipp Hauser

1832-1841

|

Elm, above 3rd (1832)

13th & Walnut (1834)

|

N. Niemann

1842-1843

|

F. Becher

1843-1845

|

M. Schaad

1845-1850

|

G. N. Hoffsuemmer

1851-1861

-----1841

ST. MATTHAEUS

Elm bet 12th & 13th

Philipp Hauser

1841-1843

|

|

F.M. Raschig

1843-1873

|

Elm bet 15th & Liberty (1863)

	-----1845		
		GERMAN EVANGELICAL	
12th & Elm, (1868)	Wm B. Rally	ST. PAULS CHURCH	Edward Speidel
	1855-1856	2nd, b Vine & Walnut	1861-1867
		Casper H. Straeter	
	Carl Heise	1845-1846	
	1856-1858		H.W. Pohlmeier
J. Carl Scholz		Robert Clemen	1867-1887
1875-1884	Carl Tuerck	1846	McMicken & Main (1875)
	1858-1882		
		Carl F. Goebel	-----1890
	(1879)	1847-1851	Emil Schmidt PHILIPPUS
Hugo G. Eisenlohr	(THIRD GERMAN	15th & Race (1851)	1890-1902 McMiken & Ohio Ave
1884-1931	PROTESTANT		Jacob Pister
	CHURCH)	Adolph Gerwig	1890-1907
		1851-1856	
	Henry Haeffner		Emil Baum
(1924)	1882-1923	Gustave Eisenlohr	1903-1906
(ST. JOHNS		1857-1879	F.L. Dorn
UNITARIAN)			1907-1922
	Carl L. Grauer	Edward Voss	
Julius F. Krolfifer	1923-1935	1879-1910	Walter W. Bunge
1931-1955			1922-1923
	(1927)		
320 Resor	(THIRD	Andrew Nemenz	Disbanded
Clifton (1952)	PROTESTANT	1910-1924	1918
	MEMORIAL		
Clarke D. Wells	CHURCH)	Paul C. Bekeshus	--1888
1956-1966	Ohio & Calhoun	1924-1948	Independent
	Clifton (1928)	----- -----	German Evangelical
		1948	Protestant
David G. Sammons	Wesley J. Runk	ST. PETER & PAUL	St. Peters Church
1967-1977	1935-1952	Queen City & Ferguson	Elm & Findlay Sts.
		J. Peter Wagner	H.W. Pohlmeier
Robert S. Lehman	Herman J. Helfrich	1948-1966	1887-1901
1978-79	1953-1982		
		Donald J. Barthelmeh	W. Norman McFarlane
Paul L. Herrou		1966-1983	1973-1983
1979-1987			
	Walter F. Crosby	Robert W. Bonham	Gregory D. Smith
Richard S. Hasty	1982-	1983-	1983-
1987-1988			George T. Siddall Jr.
			Assoc. 1985-1990

When the first settlers arrived in Cincinnati in 1788, only one or two Germans were among them, and in the early years only a few Germans came. Therefore the first church congregation in Cincinnati, which was founded in 1790, was not German, but was an English Presbyterian church. Not until 1810 do we find a record of a German preacher, a Methodist by the name of Behm, in Cincinnati. However, he had no success in founding a church. Four years later, in 1814, a Moravian missionary named Joseph Zaeslein, from Switzerland, arrived in Cincinnati and founded the first German congregation, the German Lutheran and Reformed Church.

Approximately 60 to 80 people belonged to this congregation, including not only various German Protestants, but also German Catholics. Under Zaeslein the congregation members worshipped together in peace and harmony. However, Mr. Zaeslein unfortunately died suddenly in 1817, and the young congregation had to seek a new leader. It was not an easy task, and after a while an educated layman, Jacob Guelich, from Hamburg, agreed to fill the position. However during these times the congregation members had begun to quarrel. These quarrels were primarily between the Swabians and Non-Swabians, the South Germans and the North Germans. As time passed, the congregation grew, but the quarreling also increased. Finally, in the year 1820, during a congregational meeting to discuss the building of a new church, the quarreling and fighting became so heated that the floor of the old wooden building in which they met collapsed under their stamping feet, and the quarreling brethren were plunged into the basement, reunited. With that Mr. Guelich resigned.

As a successor, Ludwig H. Meyer, a North German, came to the congregation, and now everything was again in harmony - for a while! In 1824, under Mr. Meyer, the growing congregation built a brick church on Third Street, between Broadway and Ludlow, and the congregation increased further as more Germans immigrated to Cincinnati. However, after a few years, strife again appeared in the congregation. In 1832 the congregation moved again into a new church building, on Sixth Street, and in that same year the first split in the congregation occurred. At this time a group under Rev. Philipp Hauser left and founded the United Protestant Evangelical St. Peter's Church. At first this new congregation met in a building on lower Elm Street, and then in 1834 built a church on the corner of 13th and Walnut Street, in the "Over-the Rhine" district. In 1875 this St. Peter's congregation built a large church on the corner of Main and McMicken Streets.

But now back again to the German Lutheran and Reformed Church on 6th Street. After the separation of St. Peter's congregation, things were still not in order. Serious strife and rivalry still existed between the North and South Germans in the congregation, until finally in the year 1835 Mr. Meyer also resigned his office and was followed by H. W. Lauer. However, after only two years the heat was too great for him, and he also resigned. Now, in 1837, after a heated vote, Wilhelm Moellmann, from Osnabrück, was elected to fill the preacher's office. He immediately discovered the great difficulties in the congregation, and wanted to resign. However, in the year 1838 a solution was finally achieved. After several meetings it was decided to separate into two different congregations, with the one group now being the South Germans, who would keep the old church building, and the other group being the North Germans, who would receive a sum of money. Pastor Moellmann went with the North Germans, and this group, the third German congregation in Cincinnati, took the name "North German Lutheran Church." As early as 1839-40 they erected a church on Walnut Street between 8th and 9th Streets. The South German group, who now called F. M. Raschig as pastor, took the name "German Protestant St. John's Church."

The constitutions of these two congregations both contained interesting provisions. In the constitution of the North German Lutheran Church was a stipulation that no one could be elected to the church council who did not have a good command of the Low-German (North German) dialect. In the constitution of St. John's Church was a stipulation that not more than three persons from any one province of Germany could be elected to the church council, but that all North Germans together counted as one province.

In 1841 St. John's Church changed pastors, and August Kroell arrived. He was a liberal man, and under him peace and harmony finally came to the congregation. Under his 33-year leadership the congregation grew very large, until a new and larger church building became necessary. In 1868 the congregation moved into their beautiful church on the corner of 12th and Elm Streets, in the "Over-the-Rhine" region. In the following years the congregation continued in their liberal leanings, and in 1924, under pastor Hugo Eisenlohr, this first German congregation in Cincinnati joined the Unitarian denomination. Today this congregation is the St. John's Unitarian Church in Clifton.

Now we turn back again to St. Peter's congregation, which had been founded as the result of the first split in 1832. After only nine years, in 1841, a group split off with their founding pastor, Philipp Hauser, to form another church. This new congregation, the fourth German Evangelical congregation in Cincinnati, took the name St. Mattheus, and built a church on the east side of Elm Street between 12th and 13th Streets, in what is now Washington Park in "Over-the-Rhine." After two years, in 1843, Mr. Hauser left his office, and was followed for a period of 30 years by pastor F. M. Raschig, formerly from St. John's congregation. This St. Mattheus congregation reached a high point in the late nineteenth century, moving further north on Elm Street between 15th and Liberty Streets in 1863, and finally to a church on the corner of Liberty and Elm Streets in "Over-the-Rhine" in 1877. However, in 1890, a large group under their pastor, Jacob Pister, split off and founded yet another congregation. This

congregation is today's Philippus United Church of Christ, and is still at its original location at McMicken and Ohio Streets in "Over-the-Rhine." After the split, St. Matthaues continued to decline, until it was disbanded in 1918.

Now we must turn our attention back again to the North German Lutheran Church. Pastor Moelhnann, who had founded the congregation, and who had dedicated the church on Walnut Street early in 1840, died suddenly in May, 1840. Now came a sequence of successors of rather short duration. One of these was Heinrich Suhr, who was elected to the preacher's office in 1845 instead of his rival, Robert Clemen. This election led to another split, because the supporters of Clemen went their own way, and founded the German Evangelical St. Paul's congregation, the fifth German church in Cincinnati. However, on account of low salary, Mr. Clemen did not remain with the new congregation, and they also had a succession of short-duration preachers. After five years, during which the young congregation met in an old building on 2nd Street, they moved in 1851 into a new church on the corner of 15th and Race Streets in "Over-the-Rhine." Here they remained until the year 1948.

Finally, with the arrival of Gustav Eisenlohr (father of Hugo Eisenlohr who was later pastor of St. John's Church) in 1857, and Eduard Voss in 1879, lasting stability came to St. Paul's congregation. Likewise, in 1858 stability also came to the North German Church with the arrival of Carl Tuerck, followed by Heinrich Haeffner in 1882, as preachers. In 1879 the North German Lutheran Church had changed its name to the "Third German Protestant Church," and again in 1927 to the "Third Protestant Memorial Church." Today it is the Third Protestant Memorial United Church of Christ in Clifton.

Now we again turn back to St. Peter's congregation, founded in 1832. This congregation also had a succession of rather short-duration preachers, until Heinrich W. Pohlmeier arrived in 1867. He served this congregation sincerely, until in the year 1887 he was not re-elected to his office. The result was that many people left St. Peter's congregation, and under Pastor Pohlmeier founded a new congregation. This congregation took the rather long name "Independent German Evangelical Protestant St. Peter's Congregation," and met in a church on the corner of Findlay and Elm Streets in "Over-the-Rhine" until 1901, when their pastor died. After Pohlmeier's death the "Independent St. Peter's Congregation" disbanded.

And now we come to the last chapter of this history. After the departure of Pastor Pohlmeier from St. Peter's congregation, a number of other preachers followed, including Ewald Haun in the year 1893 and Hans Haupt in the year 1910, both of whom remained for rather long periods. However, as time passed, not only most of the members of St. Peter's congregation on McMicken Street, but also the members of St. Paul's congregation on Race Street, moved out of the Cincinnati "Basis," and the two congregations became smaller and smaller. Therefore, in 1948 these two congregations merged into today's St. Peter and St. Paul United Church of Christ, and this congregation moved into a new church on Queen City Avenue in Western Hills.

This completes our history of the first German Evangelical church in Cincinnati and its successors. We have seen how a single small church produced a large family of churches, and how four of these churches remain today. Many other German origin churches in Cincinnati and vicinity are also related to this church family.