

Section C

THE WORK OF THE HISTORIAN IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

What makes a church or presbytery historian?

That's a good question. It is hard to see where the office fits into the Ephesians 4 list of God's people-gifts to the Church.

If you have been chosen church or WIC historian you probably have one or more of these qualifications: You are a warm body. You have a servant's heart (and trouble saying the word "no"). You have some degree of interest in what has happened in the past.

Now that you are in the job you have only a vague idea of how to proceed. Since this is the case you put off the work until it just has to be done. Then you will pull whatever is at hand together and send it off to the archives, vowing never to get stuck with this job again. What good does it do, anyway?

So let's start with some assurances:

1. **You are not alone in your dilemma.** Churches with historians, more often than not, choose someone with your problem. That's why we have taken the time to write this guide. It has two purposes: One is to get you started with confidence. The second is to grow with you if you want some advanced help later.
2. **Those reasons you were chosen as a historian are the main qualifications.** Other skills may help, but it is best if you are a warm body and not a pew warmer, if you have a servant's heart, and if you are interested. Some folks just can't get into this sort of thing. God has given them for other reasons. That's how a church is built.
3. **And about Ephesians 4. . .the church historian is in verse 12.** Leaders are given to prepare God's people for works of service. Works of service build the body so we may reach unity and maturity. You are in service. The more you put into it, the greater its potential to stimulate unity and maturity. The odd thing is that the historian doesn't really serve the memory of the past, nor, primarily, the church of today. Your ministry reaches out to edify the church of our grandchildren.

Job description for a beginning historian:

Particular church/mission church:

1. **Collect or assign someone to collect two copies of all bulletins and newsletters.**

Don't depend on your own memory. Put a wire or plastic basket by the copy or mimeo machine. Ask whoever does the copying to automatically drop two copies into the basket as they finish each job. The goal is for this to become so routine everyone does it without even remembering why.

Use large, office-quality baskets, placed where they will be easy to see and reach. People will more likely use professional-looking baskets than makeshift cardboard boxes. Collect at least once a month and check for missing issues. Remind the forgetful.

2. **Collect or assign someone to collect two copies of membership directories, flyers and other items.**

Even small churches should have some sort of baskets or mail slots for each officer and committee chairman. Most churches mail a lot of things that could be distributed in a central spot. If the church doesn't have a system, ask for one. It may seem a bother at first, but later the pastor and staff will love it.

One of those mail slots will have your name on it. When the secretary does a mailing, or distributes anything, important or not, your basket gets two copies. Again, it becomes unthinking routine, and all you have to do is collect the mail.

Don't try to scrounge around for things months old. That's drudgery. If you receive everything automatically you only will have to discard what is useless. Aim for two of everything. Some things need to go to the PCA Archives, but the church also needs a set. Some copies are better than others. Some may be needed later and not returned for some reason. A spare is cheap insurance.

3. **Collect materials from all boards and committees.**

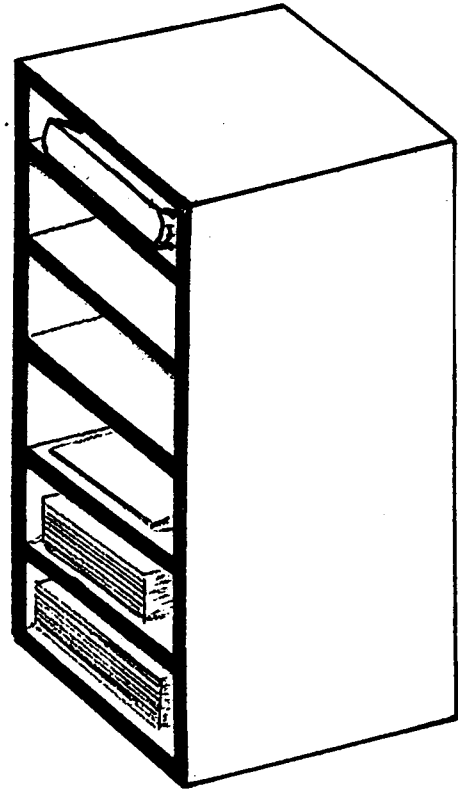
Everything that originates from the copy machine, the mimeograph and the church secretary is covered. Finding the rest is harder. You will never collect everything, but skim cream when it is at hand. Regularly survey bulletin boards, looking for items of interest. Casual glances in trash cans have been known to mine gold. Ask every committee secretary and chairman and ministry of the church to put you on their mailing list. Ask that passed-out items be put in your mail slot in the office. And keep your own mailing/telephone list and contact all organizations once every three months, to see if you know all that is going on.

THE WORK OF THE HISTORIAN, page C-3
Job description for a beginning historian:
Particular church/mission church:

3. Organize all the materials you collect as you collect them.

The last thing anyone needs is a second income tax season, sorting through a mound of papers two feet high that has collected all year. Instead, buy more large office baskets. Better, have a handyman friend or husband build a stand with a series of slots large enough to hold 11-by-14-inch papers. The stand should resemble the sketch at right. It is easy to build and can be attractive.

Think how many slots you need to keep papers organized. Add a few more in case the need grows. Store your Historian's Handbook in one slot for easy access. Allow at least five inches between dividers on the slots. Stain the wood if you wish, but, more important, coat it with several coats of polyurethane seal. The reason for this is described in the Preservation section.



As things are collected sort the correspondence, bulletins, newsletters, and other items into their slots. Unfold everything so it lies flat. It is better to get things before they are folded. With items in sequence remember to turn them face down during sorting. This will save having to arrange them later.

Take time to read through materials. It may be amazing what all is happening in the church.

4. Keep a record of events as they happen in a notebook.

This book is designed to insert into a large loose-leaf notebook. At the front or back we suggest inserting section dividers and a quantity of lined paper. Label a section "Session," and others "Deacons," "Sunday School," "VBS," "Day School," "Worship," "Special Events," etc. As you hear of things, jot them down. After events, write about them.

At the end of the year you will be amazed to find how much of the writing is finished. . .painlessly.

THE WORK OF THE HISTORIAN, page C-4
Job description for a beginning historian:
Particular church/mission church:

Different things will be collected in each section.

Under the Session section, the clerk can provide a verbal or written report each month of new members and news of interest. Do not ask for minutes. They are not public record, and to show them could compromise trust the church has placed in the session. The minutes are not that interesting or enlightening, anyway.

Remember for your record that a person is a non-communicant member of the church from the moment of baptism. A person is a communicant member from the moment he or she is examined and approved by the session, not the date of public reception.

From the session collect statistics, financial reports, resolutions, tips on general news developments that may need to be written, and reports of major church programs and projects. Keep a close friendship with the clerk of session. He's the proper source for such things.

From the diaconate collect financial and benevolence information, reports of gifts and bequests, work days, capital improvements and plans for projects.

From the various committees, collect minutes and handouts, statistical reports, general news, and trivia. Details gleaned will make the history more interesting and informative.

From all groups, collect photos, drawings, and other art and place it in envelopes marked by source.

5. Organize the work.

On pages 5-8 of this section are most of the things you will be looking for, either as church or WIC historian. They are set up in a format that may be copied and used each year. There are three things to notice about this list:

--It should be planned around a calendar year. Historical reporting is (historically?) built around a calendar year, though you might think of your work as starting in March, after the previous year's history is written and sent.

--It assumes you will not do all the collecting yourself. Make assignments. Then spend more time seeing that they are completed.

--Not every category on the list will be used. You may also come up with some needs not on the list. Be creative and fit the list to your own needs.

CHURCH HISTORY PLANNING CHECKLIST for the year: _____

STATISTICS/Financial:	Person Responsible:
_____ Budget, including receipts, expenditures, reports.	_____
_____ Special projects/funds, financial reports.	_____
_____ Major purchases.	_____
_____ Benevolences, including missions expenditure and a general report by the Diaconate.	_____
_____ Graph comparison with previous years.	_____

STATISTICS/Personal:

_____ New members. List dates and how received (Letter of transfer, Profession of faith, etc.). _____

_____ Dismissals. Note churches receiving dismissed members and members removed from roll for nonattendance, or who are excommunicated or suspended. _____

_____ Membership or Inquirer Class role. _____

_____ Births. Include full name, date, hospital, parents' names. _____

_____ Baptisms. Include full names, date, parents' names. _____

_____ Marriages. Include date, full names, parents' names and home cities officiating minister, and witnesses. _____

_____ Deaths. Photocopy obituary. Would a short biography be appropriate, stating how this person served the Lord and His people? _____

_____ Average Worship and Sunday school attendance. _____

_____ Graph or chart comparing this year's growth with the past and noting changes in the type of growth. Did industry bring in new families? Did growth result from increased outreach or a new location? Are births down because the congregation lacks young couples? In what age group are you growing? _____

NAMES, Church staff/officers:

_____ Teaching Elders.	_____
_____ Ruling Elders.	_____
_____ Deacons.	_____
_____ New officers, including a brief biography.	_____
_____ Office staff.	_____
_____ Musicians.	_____
_____ Committee/Task Force members.	_____
_____ Youth leaders.	_____
_____ Sunday school teachers by quarter, noting subjects or grade levels taught.	_____
_____ Bible study leaders.	_____
_____ Vacation Bible School staff, noting areas of responsibility.	_____
_____ Day School/Preschool staff.	_____
_____ Evangelism team members.	_____
_____ Persons who provided floral arrangements or other services not usually recognized.	_____

**THE WORK OF THE HISTORIAN, page C-6
CHURCH HISTORY PLANNING CHECKLIST, 2**

**Person
Responsible:**

NARRATIVES:

- ____ Significant community events. _____
- ____ Significant church events. _____
- ____ Major projects or initiatives of the congregation. _____
- ____ Congregation/corporation meetings. _____
- ____ Special worship services (Include program). _____
- ____ Special events (Include announcements, program). _____
- ____ Special musical programs (may be included
in a report by music director or minister). _____
- ____ Guest speakers, and preachers. _____
- ____ Receptions/parties. _____
- ____ Holiday happenings. _____
- ____ Miscellaneous. _____

NARRATIVE, Christian Education:

- ____ Report by Christian Education director
or a general overview. _____
- ____ Significant news of year. _____
- ____ Films, workshops, conferences. _____
- ____ Vacation Bible School. _____
- ____ Camp/retreats. _____
- ____ Presbytery-sponsored events. _____
- ____ Day School or Preschool. _____

NARRATIVES, Miscellaneous:

- ____ Missions work. _____
- ____ Women In the Church (See WIC History Checklist). _____
- ____ Interviews with interesting, or significant people. _____
- ____ Sports and activities. _____
- ____ Other things to cover. _____

**THE WORK OF THE HISTORIAN, page C-7
CHURCH HISTORY PLANNING CHECKLIST, 3**

EXHIBITS:	Person Responsible:
_____ Bulletins (either a full set or large sample).	_____
_____ Special service bulletins and programs.	_____
_____ Mailings to members.	_____
_____ Financial statements and other handouts.	_____
_____ Newsletters.	_____
_____ Day School memorabilia and publications.	_____
_____ Church Directory. Churches without a directory may simply wish to list members' addresses in their church history. Be sure to note communicant and covenant members.	_____
_____ Brochures, pamphlets and promotional literature.	_____
_____ Photocopies of print media advertisements and scripts from radio ads.	_____
_____ Samples of tracts and other pieces used in evangelism.	_____
_____ Photocopies of newspaper stories about the church or its members.	_____
_____ Invitations to weddings and other occasions such as 50th anniversaries involving members.	_____
_____ Details and sketches of future building projects.	_____
_____ Correspondence on significant church issues.	_____
_____ Photographs.	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Church Checklist Form

This publication may be photocopied without permission from the PCA Historical Archives. Additional copies may be obtained by writing the Archives at 12330 Conway Road, St. Louis, MO 63141.

HOW TO USE THIS CHECKLIST

The Church History Planning Checklist compiles ideas from several churches. No church will use every item.

Photocopy the original and use as needed each year. Mark those which seem to pertain to your church. Check off as gathered.

Use the space at right to delegate information-collecting jobs. A good church history is the work of several people, drawn together by an editor. Don't be afraid to try new ideas.

Review and update your list once a month, reminding those compiling the information.

Arrange material as you wish. This checklist is not intended to suggest a specific order.

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH (WIC) HISTORY PLANNING CHECKLIST

For the year: _____

STATISTICS:	Person Responsible:
_____ Budget, including receipts, expenditures, reports. _____	
_____ Special projects/funds financial reports. _____	
_____ Major purchases. _____	
_____ Benevolences, including missions expenditure and a general report by the Treasurer. _____	
_____ Average meeting attendance. _____	

NAMES, officers:

_____ Ruling Elder liaison to WIC.	_____
_____ Officers.	_____
_____ Committee/Task Force members.	_____
_____ Bible study leaders.	_____
_____ Presbyterial officers.	_____

NARRATIVES:

_____ Significant news from meetings (Avoid recopying
minutes). _____

_____ Guest speakers. _____

_____ Special programs. _____

_____ Receptions/parties. _____

_____ Activities. _____

_____ Conferences/workshops. _____

_____ Reports of projects. _____

_____ Committee Reports (List those you have). _____

_____ Presbyterial events effecting local WIC group. _____

_____ Miscellaneous. _____

Job description for a beginning historian:

Particular church/mission church:

Planning a workable, successful year as church historian is not that difficult. Set up a schedule on a desk or wall calendar for next year. Some jobs should be planned every month, perhaps on the first or last Sunday and Monday to make it easy to remember:

Sunday:

- Pick up all materials from your office and copy machine collection baskets.
- Check all bulletin boards for news.
- Jog the memories of those who have assignments.

Weekday:

- Organize everything collected.
- Make a list of information you find that you need.
- Call those you may have missed on Sunday and call those who can provide information or collect it.

Note: Touch base with everyone who is collecting something for you at least once every few months. Some people may need to be called monthly. As soon as they have information get it from them and put it in your files so you will know it is sufficient and so it won't be lost.

Below is a plan for the first 15 months of a new church historian's work. It begins with the calendar year when the historian may be starting his or her responsibilities. Remember that, while you collect and organize material on a January-to-December year, your cycle begins after you send in the previous year's history:

JANUARY: Start by not worrying about all that hasn't been done in the past. Catch-up can come much later. You are only thinking now about what is going on TODAY. Make a copy of the Church Historian's Checklist and mark those things that need to be collected. Start out with what MUST be collected. Wait six months or a year to get more detailed. Stake out the important areas of church life to cover. Write down names and telephone numbers of the people in charge. Ask them, members of the committees, or others close to the work to keep you informed and collect materials for you. These assignments take a little time to set up, but make your work much easier. Also, start a list of upcoming events, set up the collection points discussed earlier, and seek out someone who takes photos to help with that department. Approach the session about a small appropriation for acid-free paper, office supplies and some film and developing costs for the photographer.

THE WORK OF THE HISTORIAN, page C-10
Job description for a beginning historian:
Particular church/mission church:

February: Finish setting up contacts and talk to those who have assignments. Informal contacts will help them remember, especially at first. Don't be frustrated when busy people forget. Give them room to back out. It is better to find someone else than to use people who come to see you as an irritation. Look for areas of ministry not being covered.

MARCH: You likely won't have much from the previous year to send to the Archives. A few bulletins and newsletters, and a report of the annual meeting is a start, though. Send any materials you wish at any time of the year.

APRIL or new quarter: Note changes in educational curricula or teachers. Check on Bible study groups to see if your information is current.

MAY: The day school year is ending. Can you get photos and arrange to take non-current files during the summer.

JUNE: Update list of all graduates of high school and college from the church. Do you know what summer events are being planned? Ask someone to take photos at these events. Is any organization on a July-June fiscal year? If so, arrange to receive copies of year-end reports.

JULY or new quarter: Check curricula. Make notes of the changes in worship and other schedules brought on by the summer and vacation schedules. Record information on guest speakers. Bible School and summer outreach plans need to be covered. The calendar year is now half over. Review the checklist. Is anything not being recorded?

AUGUST: People are busy or gone. Don't expect much help.

SEPTEMBER: New projects often begin as summer winds down. See if you are receiving information and photos on it all. Do you need to order acid-free paper or other supplies? Is there anything you need to ask the Session to give in financial help?

OCTOBER or new quarter: Update Christian education information. The youth program for fall is underway. What is happening? Holiday programs are being planned. Do you know what will be going on from Reformation Day through New Year's? Can someone can take photos? How about general church photos? Start a picture file for church organizations. October is a good time because people are between summer vacations and holidays.

THE WORK OF THE HISTORIAN, page C-11
Job description for a beginning historian:
Particular church/mission church:

NOVEMBER: Day school programs are in production. Thanksgiving means special events. The end of the year is also approaching. Make a special effort to remind the people who are collecting things for you.

DECEMBER: The congregational meeting and year-end reports need to be collected. Holiday photos are needed. Go over the checklist to see what remains to be done.

JANUARY or new quarter: Begin the next year's collecting schedule and see what Christian education changes have been made. Make a new church checklist and update the names and phone numbers of those who are collecting for you. Make new assignments for the next year. Assemble any remaining information needed from last year, and read it over. Plan and organize the material.

FEBRUARY: Write the history for the previous year. Set aside time so there will be as little pressure as possible. Have someone else proofread and edit. Could it be made more interesting? Is it accurate? Does it reflect the year as well as it should. When it is done give it to the session for review and final approval. You and the clerk of session should sign the last page.

MARCH: Mail the previous year's church history to the PCA Archives if it is ready. The March 31 date suggested in our material is a suggested deadline. Its purpose is to encourage historians not to get behind. File last year's notes and papers according to the categories in which you collected them. Deposit these files in a safe place approved by the Session.

Wasn't that easy? You are probably getting pretty good at this and you are ready to expand your horizons a little bit. Please find some way to share the history you wrote with the congregation, perhaps at a fellowship meal. It might be a good occasion for the Session to get feedback from the congregation on what was and was not accomplished. It also should challenge the members and help them see more of the big picture of their life and ministry.

The Historical Archives has a brochure-length description of this process, "Writing Church History: A Guideline for Local Church Historians." This book is more detailed and replaces our brochure. You may wish copies of it, though, to give to elders and others who will be gathering information for you. It will give an overview of what you are doing. Use the order form in the Sources and Resources section to receive as many as you wish.

GROWING IN THE WORK OF A CHURCH HISTORIAN

By the time the first church history is sent to the Archives you may have decided that the work is just not for you. There is nothing wrong with that. Your gifts may lie in other areas. On the other hand, the first year is the hardest, and you may find the work far more rewarding in succeeding years. As you continue you will have an opportunity:

- To learn from the mistakes of your early efforts.
- To learn the individuality and unique contributions of the congregation. If all you gain from your work as a church historian is an appreciation of what God is doing in your midst, that is great gain.
- To become a resource on the church and its heritage.

For a beginning historian the danger is to try to do it all at once and burn out. For the more advanced historian the danger is to be satisfied with beginning efforts. Start modestly and continually try to improve.

Add to your work each year. One such plan for doing so is shown below. Think through what your church needs and develop your own set of goals.

- YEAR 1:** Aim at producing a creditable church history using the checklist. Include a section of statistics, narrative to tell what happened (see the Collecting and Writing Church History section), and pictures. Don't try to make it too long.
- YEAR 2:** Polish your techniques as a church historian this year. Prepare more complete statistics and a well-written, more elaborate narrative section. Work on giving a top-quality description of the congregation today. An outline of such a history is on C-13 and C-14.
- YEAR 3:** With the help of others, try one of the special ideas in this book. Think ahead to a future celebration and lay some plans. Do some research on the past to begin to tell the story from the beginning. Or do an oral history project.
- YEAR 4:** This year might have two special projects. First, try to continue what was begun in Year 3. It may be an ongoing project for years. If not, plan something else. Second, train someone else to be church historian next year so you don't get stale and so other people can be involved. You can still do something. You may end up taking it back in a year or two. Share the work, though, and let someone else be in charge of it.

**SAMPLE CHURCH HISTORY OUTLINE:
Arden (NC) Presbyterian Church, 1982**

Section 1: Staff, officers, committee chairmen.

Section 2: Major events (withdrawal from PCUS).

A. A summary or "lead" paragraph introduces the history and highlights one or more major events to be covered.

The year 1982 was a memorable one in the history of Presbyterian Church. The Lord greatly blessed our church in many ways. Our congregation, led by its Pastor and Elders, took a step of faith and conviction by seeking and obtaining dismissal from Asheville Presbytery and the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) and joining Western Carolinas Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA).

B. A statement of the situation leading up to this event and steps taken, in chronological order.

C. Exhibits are included. In this case they include a copy of the letter from the Session to the church, a copy of the resolution dissolving the relationship with the PCUS, and the bulletin for the service of reception into the PCA.

D. Notation is made of those who helped the church during this narrative.

Over several months, the Session of Arden Presbyterian Church had studied and prayed about the relation of our church to the PCUS. In February, 1982, the Session sent a letter to the the church members informing them of the controversial issues before the PCUS. In order for the entire congregation to be better informed of the proposed new Chapter 6 in the Book of Church Order that deals with church property and with the proposed union of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, two ministers from Asheville Presbytery were invited to speak to our congregation on Sunday night, February 28, 1982. The Reverend LeRoy Secrest, Pastor of Kenilworth Presbyterian Church in Asheville, spoke in favor of the proposals. The Reverend Jerry Robinson, Pastor of Brevard-Davidson River Presbyterian Church in Brevard, spoke against the proposals.

A fact sheet was prepared by the Session for our members regarding the departures from the absolute authority of Holy Scripture of both the PCUS and the UPCUSA. Another letter was written by the Session to the congregation recommending that its proposed resolution regarding this congregation's relationship to the Presbyterian Church in the United States be adopted. . .

THE WORK OF THE HISTORIAN, page C-14
SAMPLE CHURCH HISTORY OUTLINE, continued

Section 3: Other major events of the year.

- A. Narrative with lead paragraph.
- B. Committees and others involved in the work.

Section 4: Growth.

- A. Statistics.
- B. Membership classes.
- C. Members received and dismissed.
- D. Births, with date and parents' names.
- E. Baptisms, with date and parents' names.
- F. Marriages, with names, dates, and parents' names.

Note: When listing parents, include mother's maiden name.

Section 5: Christian education.

- A. Teachers by quarter.
- B. Special events.
- C. Youth leaders and committee members.
- D. High school and college graduates.
- E. Vacation Bible School.
 - 1. Narrative.
 - 2. Staff.

Our church had a successful Vacation Bible School during the week of July 26-30. . . Attendance averaged 130 per day. The attendance at the picnic on the last day of VBS was 225 persons. The total offering of \$158.34 was designated to purchase six goats for Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, Children's Home in Bhogpur, India. . .

- F. Films shown and educational programs sponsored.

Section 6: Other ministries.

- A. Benevolences.
 - 1. Narrative.
 - 2. Missionaries, groups supported.
- B. Choir.
 - 1. Narrative.
 - 2. Description of choral presentations.
- C. Adult activities.
 - 1. Narrative on tournaments, retreats, sports teams.
 - 2. Fellowship groups and clubs noted.

Section 7: Pastoral staff.

- A. Call of new assistant pastor, narrative.
- B. Exhibits.

Section 8: Annual meeting of the Congregation/Corporation.

Section 9: Miscellaneous.

- A. Events and worship services, including guest speakers.
- B. Flower memorials.

ORGANIZING AND PREPARING A CHURCH HISTORY

Annual church histories tend to follow a standard format: statistics, narrative, and then photos, drawings, and other items. This works well, and standardizes church histories. It is, though, only one format. You are writer, and editor. You have editorial control (Christian liberty if you prefer) over non-essentials. Use your own judgment, making sure your account is clear and complete.

There are a few essentials.

1. Include a cover or title page with the name of your presbytery, the name of the church, its address or at least its city, denominational affiliation, and date:

**CENTRAL GEORGIA PRESBYTERY
CHAPEL-IN-THE-GARDENS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, PCA.
GARDEN CITY, GA.
1984**

2. Repeat this information (minus the presbytery name) in the top left corner of EACH page, along with a page number or description. If a page becomes separated there should be no doubt of its origin:

**CHAPEL-IN-THE-GARDENS
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, PCA
GARDEN CITY, GA.
BAPTISMS
1984**

**church
city
page number or description
year**

3. On the last page or on another sheet the history must be signed by the historian and the clerk of session. A presbytery WIC history must be signed by the clerk of presbytery.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Dorothy H. Elliott
WIC Historian
Chapel-In-The-Gardens
Presbyterian Church, PCA**

**Lawrence R. Harris
Clerk of Session
Chapel-In-The-Gardens
Presbyterian Church, PCA**

THE WORK OF THE WOMEN-IN-THE-CHURCH HISTORIAN

The story of women's work in Reformed churches hasn't been kept and told until now. As women's rights has become a by-word of the liberal church, the women's movement is being covered, but from an edited, subjective perspective. This area of church history needs to be covered by conservative, objective analysts. It also must be collected.

As WIC historian for a local church you are in one of two categories. One is ideal: There is a church historian for your congregation, and a WIC historian. The other is common: There is not much interest in the church at large, but WIC has an historian.

In the first category your tasks are clear-cut:

1. Using the information on the previous pages, and following the format of the WIC Historian's Checklist, collect and prepare a WIC annual report.
2. Help the church historian on behalf of the WIC group.
3. Aid communication between church WIC and presbytery WIC in history projects. If presbytery does not have an active history program, a local church WIC historian is in a good position to encourage starting one. Help is available from the PCA Archives, and from the area VIP Historian, if you have one.
4. Represent the PCA Archives at church and presbytery WIC.

If the church has no historian or an inactive program, try to start one. Present the need and the work of a church historian to the group. Plan a similar presentation for the session.

Remember that ancient proverb, though: "She who ask for new work in the church will soon be doing it."

If there is little interest now in a full-fledged church historian, are there things that could be collected or sent to the Archives anyway? Collect these materials, because someday the church will be looking for them.

As Women-In-the-Church historian,

- Go beyond meeting minutes in writing your annual report. Write a summary of a speaker's comments after each meeting and describe each WIC project. Keep handouts. Write about mission works.
- Keep non-current files for the WIC group.
- Write a back history of WIC for your congregation.
- Begin an oral history project.
- Organize a cookbook, quilt, or other crafts project which highlights the heritage of the church.

THE WORK OF THE PRESBYTERY WIC HISTORIAN

This guide has continually stressed that a church historian can be a unique ministry to the church, an agent for analyzing the past and the present and suggesting directions for the future.

That is never more true than in the case of the presbytery WIC historian. The work can be accomplished with little enthusiasm or commitment. All this person must do is keep an account of the meetings and write an annual report of activities. Many never get beyond the basic secretarial aspects. In the PCA, however, the presbytery WIC historian is the only person charged with covering the church from a regional or presbytery perspective. Someone may have an interest in researching the presbytery's story, or noone may. There is no counterpart to the church historian at the presbytery level.

So the work can be as creative and comprehensive as you wish to make it. Think over what has been said in this section about the church historian. Change the word "church" to "presbytery."

There is probably a great need for:

- Materials which see area churches as a unit.** Why did the presbytery form as it did? Are boundaries clear, or is an area apart from any PCA outreach? If so, why? Was there ever a Reformed work there? Why did churches spring up where they did? What sorts of people make up presbytery? What Reformed groups are represented?
- Accounts of men and women who have served or are serving these churches.** The presbytery WIC historian is an ideal person to start a teaching elder biography or oral history program where none exists. As noted earlier, the story of the Reformed women's movement needs to be collected and told. What sources are available in area churches?
- Encouragement for local WIC groups to take an active interest in their own church's history.**
- Someone to represent the PCA Archives at the presbytery level of WIC.**
- Someone to organize and sponsor a church history seminar or workshop with someone from the Archives staff.**

The need for active presbytery programs is more acute than in the local church, particularly in areas where churches are some distance apart. Presbyterians become fragmented when they are not true to their biblical principles. If churches do not think of themselves as built around the presbytery, dependent on the larger body, the unity of Christ's body suffers.

Any program designed to study and celebrate the Presbyterian connections is an antidote to congregationalist independence.

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THE WORK OF THE PRESBYTERY WIC HISTORIAN, continued

The situation of each presbytery is different, just as that of each congregation is unique. Here are some general ideas for the presbytery WIC historian which might apply:

1. **Make sure you are collecting all presbytery WIC material and writing good reports first.**
2. **Keep non-current WIC files.** Develop a good filing system and ask the local WIC and church historians to send copies of church histories. Use them to write a presbytery history summary occasionally.
3. **Write a back history if necessary.** Much of this may be done by pulling together the work of others, with the cautions noted in the Harvesting Church History section.
4. **Read as much as possible on the settling and development of the presbytery area communities. Become a resource.**
5. **Organize a program at the presbytery WIC once a year.** A speaker might be good one year, followed by a workshop, a slide presentation on area historical sites or a tour the next.
6. **Keep a small stock of acid-free paper and other supplies for the local church historians in case they run out with three more pages to go.** If you do, make sure the church historians know about it.
7. **Work with the VIP Historian, if there is one for your area.**
8. **Keep encouraging churches to collect and write church histories.**