Student Commentary
from Union Seminary

Union Seminary was the first permanent educational institution of the Evangelical Association. The school opened in New Berlin, Union County, in January 1856. Except for 1863-65, when it closed for the Civil War, the school has operated continuously at various locations and exists today as Albright College. The seminary originally, like most such institutions of its day, was what might be best described as an advanced high school. It gradually increased its academic offerings and standards and was incorporated in 1887 as Central Pennsylvania College. In the 1894 denominational split, the college followed the Central Pennsylvania Conference into the United Evangelical Church.

In 1902 the United Evangelical Church merged Central Pennsylvania College into Albright College at Myerstown. In 1928 the Evangelical Church merged Albright College into the former Evangelical Association’s Schuykill College at Reading – and the Albright name was retained. The New Berlin site is now occupied by an elementary school and marked by a commemorative plaque.

The following 1867 letter from Union Seminary was written by Addison Long, the great-grandfather of State College district superintendent Patricia Woolever. It is part of a collection of similar materials that have been handed down in Rev. Woolever’s family. The Chronicle thanks the family for permission to publish the letter in this collection of nineteenth century correspondence that honors Dr. John H. Ness.

The letter is presented without interrupting comments. The appendix of referenced personal names provides insights into the individuals mentioned in the document.
Miss Adeline Huber  
Oregon P.O.  
Lancaster County, Pa  
May 12, 1867

Adeline,

I received your letter last evening. I found that you had been waiting on my report, but we did not get them yet and I think we will not get them before the session closes. And I found also that you got your reader but not your chemistry book. I do not know whether I said anything to Westheaver about which chemistry book you want – the large one or the small one. I don’t think that you said anything. Which one shall I order? You said you thought I paid two dollars and a half on the books, but I only paid two dollars.

I am rooming in the seminary yet, and I like it right well up here – and I got good boarding, too. We get cooked eggs pretty nearly two or three times every week. We have four teachers and about sixty students. Some of the students are getting pretty wicked sometimes. Hoffman was away for a few weeks, and they were cutting up sometimes like everything. One day when we were down in the lower room reciting, they unlocked our room and went in and upset our bed. When we went up they were standing outside watching us, what we will do. But we just left the door stand open until Rohland came up. He said we shall try to find out who it was. We told him that there were only seven up yet when we were down. He then called them into his room that evening yet. He asked them who it was, and they told him. Three of them acknowledged it right away, that they had done it. But the other one denied it. He said that he did not help, but he could not come out of it. The next day they were brought before the faculty. Those which acknowledged it got excused, but they got a lot of demerits for it. The other got suspended from classes until Hoffman came. Hoffman went to him when he came and said he may take his classes again.

Mr. Hoffman got married to Miss German last Thursday two weeks. She lives in New Berlin. Last Thursday they came home. That evening at about half past nine o’clock, we students went together and went down and serenaded him. Some of us got an old piece of tin, and a stick which we hammered on it. Some got an old bucket and horns. When we came down, they were down with the band already – but they could not play any more, as our old tins and horns made too much noise. Hoffman came out and called us into the house. We went in and there we got cakes and lemonade. Then we went to the seminary again.

Enclosed you will find my photograph. Yesterday four weeks, nine of us went to Lewisburg to get our photographs taken. I got sixteen for a dollar.

I must come to a close for this evening. It is now six o’clock.

Addison Long  
New Berlin  
Union County, Penna.
Appendix: Names Given in the Letter

**German, Lizzie C.** – a staff member at Union Seminary. She was a teacher in the Primary Department 1860-61, and the preceptress 1865-67. The former was presumably a position teaching the youngest students, and the latter a position having responsibility for the female students. The 1865-66 Union Seminary catalog, which lists Miss German as the preceptress, records that there were “84 gentlemen and 29 ladies.” Within a few years, however, principal Hoffman appears to have made the seminary and all-male institution – and put his new wife out of a job.

**Hoffman, Francis C.** – a member of a family that was prominent in the Evangelical denomination. Hoffman originally came to Union Seminary when it was founded in 1856 to teach the “English branches and bookkeeping.” He had completed his high school education and received the A.B. degree from Central High School in Philadelphia while his father was presiding elder of the Philadelphia District. He was president of Union Seminary from 1865 to 1869. These were difficult years for the seminary, caused in part by the Civil War. The institution had been closed from 1863 to 1865, and it escaped being sold only because of the personal intervention of Rev. Martin J. Carothers. It re-opened in 1865 without a charter and with a severely reduced field of patronage, but Francis C. Hoffman was an able instructor and leader. He guided the school through the troubles, partly by dropping Greek and Latin from the curriculum and advertising the institution as “An English and Scientific School for Young Men.” This decision was not popular with the trustees, however, and led to his resignation in 1869. Francis C. Hoffman was the son of Rev. Francis Hoffman (1806-1894). In 1833 the elder Rev. Hoffman was living in Orwigsburg and serving Union Circuit. Finding it inconvenient to travel to and fro, he removed his family to Mifflinburg – accomplishing, so far as is known, the first removal of a preacher to his charge within the Evangelical Association. The stories of Union Seminary and the Hoffman family can hardly be told apart from each other. The brother of Francis C. Hoffman was the Evangelical preacher and noted gospel songwriter Elisha Albright Hoffman (1839-1929). He graduated from Union Seminary and married Susan Orwig, an 1862 graduate of Union Seminary whose father W.W. was president of Union Seminary from its beginning in 1856 until he was elected a bishop in 1859. It is also interesting to note that Francis C. Hoffman came close to being the first foreign missionary of the Evangelical Association. Yaekel’s *History of the Evangelical Association* notes that in 1859 “Frederick W. Heidner and Francis C. Hoffman were sent into a preparatory school for the purpose of preparing them for work among the heathen.” In 1861 the General Board of Missions resolved that a heathen mission be established in India and selected Heidner and Hoffman as the missionaries, but in 1862 it was decided they should not enter the mission field before studying medicine. In the end, these brethren were never sent out – the denomination’s missionary efforts at this time apparently were a little premature.
Huber, Adeline – the recipient of the letter. She was a friend, but not romantic interest, of Addison Long. There is no explanation as to how the letter ultimately settled in the family of the writer, and not in the family of the recipient.

Long, Addison (1849-) – the writer of the letter. He is a part of the Long family in whose barn Otterbein and Boehm, co-founders of the United Brethren denomination, first met in 1767. When Hans, the original Long immigrant and builder of the barn died, three of his sons inherited land in the immediate vicinity: John (1730-1817), Isaac (1742-1802) and Benjamin (1748-1823). Isaac was the owner of the barn in 1767, and Addison is descended from John.

Rohland, I.H. (1846-1893) – an older student and dormitory assistant at Union Seminary. He went on to become a prominent minister and presiding elder in the Pittsburgh Conference of the Evangelical Association. Very active in the institution’s alumni association, in 1890 he was elected his conference’s representative on the school’s board of trustees.

Westheaver – unknown, but he was definitely not on the faculty at Union Seminary.

1853 Bellefonte ME Church at High and Penn Streets, see article on page 86