

Summit Township, Somerset County, Pennsylvania  
Biographies

Rev. William A Gring, A B

April 1863 > August 1865

The interim between the pastorates of Dr. Koplin was filled in part by the pastorate of Rev. W. A. Gring. While Mr. Gring was a man of good education and of considerable ability, he failed to impress his people as did his predecessor, Dr. Koplin. Perhaps his work was over-shadowed by the activities of the man who had won the hearts of the Wilhelms. The records of the church are silent concerning his work, and we are led to believe that it was largely of a routine nature, a matter of holding the fort until the return of Dr. Koplin.

Rev. William A. Gring, son of Rev. Daniel and Catharine Gring, was born at Paradise, Northumberland County, Pennsylvania, January 12, 1838. When he was about fifteen years old, he removed with his parents to Shrewsbury, York County, where he was confirmed, May 6, 1854. He received his preparatory training at McEwensville and Franklin and Marshall Academies. In 1856, he entered the Freshman class of Franklin and Marshall College and was graduated with his class in 1860.

Two years later, he completed the theological course at Mercersburg, and in October of the same year was licensed to preach by the Synod in session at Chambersburg. In 1863, he was commended by the Board of Visitors of the Theological Seminary and elected by the Synod as travelling fellow in accordance with the provision of the theological tutorship scheme. This honor he declined. He was ordained June 8, 1863.

The first Charge in which he labored was the Paradise Charge, known then as the Grantsville Charge, and his pastorate covered a period of two years and four months beginning in April 1863. From the Paradise Charge, he went to Harrisburg, where he had charge of a mission for over two years. We next find him located at Danville, where he was assistant to Rev. J. W. Steinmetz. Subsequently he served the Mount Moriah, Maryland, Charge for seven years, beginning in October 1869; the Sulphur Springs Mission in Bedford County, Pennsylvania, for five years; the Emmitsburg, Maryland, Charge from July 1881 for one year.

His health failing, he removed to Somerset County, October 1, 1882, and engaged as agent for the White Bronze Statuary and Monumental Works for two years. It was while thus employed that Rev. C. U. Heilman met him one day and inquired if he were not going to attend a certain meeting at Somerset, at which all the ministers of the Classis were expected to be present. Mr. Gring replied that he was going after other business, adding: "My work has not been acceptable unto the Lord, for he has silenced my voice".

The monumental business being distasteful to him, he returned to Maryland in October 1884 and located on a small farm about a mile from Frederick, where he died of consumption, February 8, 1889. He lies buried in Mt. Olivet Cemetery, Frederick.

Rev. Mr. Gring was married, November 20, 1873, to Miss Emma A. Stonebraker, and was the Father of two Daughters.



#### THE HAY FAMILY

Among the early settlers in the Brothersvalley Community were the Hay family. On the good ship "Sally" from Rotterdam, landing in Philadelphia, October 5, 1767, there were three brothers namely: Simon Hay, Frantz Hay and Valentine Hay. Two of these brothers finally settled in the neighborhood of Berlin, Pennsylvania and were among the first families of the Reformed Church.

Simon Hay was born at Zewi Brucken (meaning, two bridges) in Germany, near the borders of France, on the 18th

day of April, 1742, and died February 3, 1842, at the age of 99 years and 15 days. He was married to Anna Marie Shaver of near Hagerstown, Maryland. She died in the stone house in the village of Hay's Mill on March 19, 1818, aged 63 years, 3 months and 6 days. (born December 13, 1754).

Five boys and five girls were born to this union. Michael Hay, born Feb. 21, 1775, and died Sept. 30, 1840. He married to Elizabeth, a daughter of Ludwig Young. Both are buried on their home farm one mile north of Lavansville, Pennsylvania.

Jacob Hay, born March 30, 1777, married Elizabeth Louder and first settled where Wellersburg is now located and afterward moving to Millersburg, Ohio, where they raised a large family.

George Hay, born May 7, 1781, and died June 18, 1844. He married Mary Countryman who was born Sept. 21, 1789, and died March 14, 1872. Mr Hay is buried on the Peter S. Hay farm and Mrs Hay in Hay's Church Cemetery.

Susan Hay, born March 22, 1784, and married Jacob Baker, they emigrated to near Wooster, Ohio, where they reared a large family.

Mary Hay, born Aug. 16, 1786, died July 27, 1846, married Jacob Young who was born May 26, 1780, and died April 2, 1867. They settled 1 1/2 miles north of Lavanville where they reared a large family.

Peter S. Hay, born April 18, 1790, died May 4, 1845. He is buried on the Peter S. Hay farm. He married Elizabeth Walker, born Sept. 30, 1794, died July 8, 1880, and buried in the Hay's Reformed Church Cemetery. Peter owned the farm where his father first pitched his tent under a white oak tree.

Elizabeth Hay, born April 17, 1792, married George Weller who was born April 27, 1792. They settled on a farm on which the town of Wellersburg is now situated, and from this family the name is derived.

Eva Hay, born April 11, 1796, died Aug. 6, 1883, married George Gebhart, born Dec. 13, 1792 and died March 17, 1852. They settled on a farm in Milford Township and was the founder of Gebhartsburg. They afterwards located to Dayton, Ohio.

Catherine Hay, born Feb. 1798, married Samuel Miller of Addison Township who was born in 1800, and died Jan. 7, 1875. They resided in Addison Township.

On September 7, 1784, Pioneer Hay was warranted a tract of land containing over 500 acres in Brothersvalley Townshiip, now the home of Edison M. Hay and the E. E. Boger farms. Simon Hay improved over one thousand acres of land in Brothersvalley Township. He built the stone house in Hay's Mill in 1796, which is still standing and in good condition. The second Grist Mill was built in 1806, and continued operations until 1916, or 110 years. The first Grist Mill was built before 1800, and was later used as a fulling and carding mill.

The Pittsburg Historical Society considers Hay's Mill one of the outstanding buildings of Western Pennsylvania. In the Museum of Philadelphia is the old loom of Simon Hay with the date 1774.

These buildings are the oldest buildings connected with the Hay Family, in existence. The Fulling and Carding Mill has long since disappeared.

The assessment of Brothersvalley Township in 1796, states that Simon Hay owned 500 acres of land, 41 arces which were cleared. He owned two horses, two cows, a house and grist mill and was the third highest tax payer in the Township.

The late J. Oliver Hay of Jennerstown, Pennsylvania said he was born in the Stone House in Hay's Mill, Pennsylvania in 1851. His father, William Hay, had the Store and Post Office. David Hay was the owner and operator of the Grist Mill. John Holzhouer and William Wasmuth were the weavers and Herbert Hiber the tailor. In stature, Simon Hay was over six feet tall, strong and heavy built and could endure hardship equal to two common men. The Hay Family is one of the large and influential families of Somerset County.



#### "WILL" of SIMON HAY

In the name of God Amen. I Simon Hay of Brothersvalley Township, Somerset County Pennsylvania being weak of body, but of sound mind, memory and understanding. (praised be to God for the same). Do therefore make and declare this my last Will and Testament in manners following that is to say first and principally. I commend my Soul into the hands of Almighty God my Creator who gave it, and my body to the earth to be entered in a decent and Christianlike manner, and as to such remaining worldly estate, I dispose of the same in manners herein after mentioned. I have already given each of my children Sons and Daughters the sum of Fifteen Hundred Dollars in land, property and money, so as to make them all alike I aalso paid my sons for working over age a sufficient sum each. I have also given to my daughters considerable household furniture except my daughter Eva who is intermarried with George Gebhart. I therefore give and bequeath to my daughter Eva the sum of thirty dollars to be paid to her after mydecease, to make her equal with my other daughters, and as to the remainder of my estate, I give and bequeath the same to my sons---Michael Hay -- Jacob -- George Hay -- and Peter Hay and the children of my son Valentine Hay to be equally divided among them, the share which would come to my son Valentine is to be divided among all his children share and share alike. My reason why I give the remainder of my estate, to my daid sons is this viz--I considered that I have given my Real Estate to my said sons at to high a rate and they had to maintain me ever since and as long as I live and for that reason, I do bequeath my remaining household furniture shall be sold by public sale and the proceeds thereof together with the remainder of my Estate of whatsoever nature the same my be, shall all be equally divided amony my said sons --Michael -- Jacob --George -- Peter --and the children of Valentine so that the children of Valentine shall only get the one fifth part, after the thirty dollars are fist paid to my said daughter Eva. And lastly I nominate constitute and appoint my trusting friend George Walker Esq. Executor of this my "Last Will and Testament" hereby revoking and making void all wills by me at any time herebefore made -- Sign, Sealed, Published and Declared by the above Simon Hay as and for his last Will and Testament in the presence of us who have at his request and in his presence subscribed our names as witnesses.

#### PETER DEAL

MICHAEL HAY In witness where of I the said Simon Hay have hereunto set my hand and seal the 27 day of December 1837

#### SIMON HAY

In the Reformed Church in Berlin is a large circular memorial window with the name of Simon Hay and was presented by his Grandchildren.

In 1809, Francis Hay, Simon Hay and Jacob Keefer, Trustee of the Reformed Church, conveyed 40 acres of land to the Trustees of the Lutheran Church.

In the Reformed Church Cemetery is this Inscription on a marble slab:

In Memory of, Simon Hay departed his life Feb. 3, 1842

Aged 99 years, 9 months and 15 days

"Sickness long I endure.

Physicians were in vain.

'Twas God who pleased to give me ease

And free me from my pain."

This research and compiled information was by: E. R. HAY, MEYERSDALE, PA.

Submitted by: Lawson L. Duckworth for use on this website.





REV. CALVIN U. HEILMAN, A. M.  
Pastor of St. Pauls' Church in Meyersdale  
September 15, 1874 to October 30, 1884

In writing to one of the Churches, St. Paul said that he planted and Apollo watered. In a very similar sense it may be said that Dr. Koplín planted and Rev. Mr. Heilman watered. The pioneer work belonged to the former. The work of building up the membership in numerical strength, in spiritual attainments, belonged to the latter.

Rev. Calvin U. Heilman, son of George G. and Christina Heilman, was born at Heilmandale, Lebanon County, Pennsylvania, November 28, 1840. He was baptized February 17, 1841 and was confirmed October 6, 1855. His early schooling was received near his parent's home and for one year, from October 1, 1854, at John Beck's school, Lititz, Pennsylvania. He prepared for college the three following years at the Heilmandale Select School under the instruction of Mr. A. R. Kremer, and subsequently under the private instruction of Daniel Balabaugh, principal of the Annville Academy. At the beginning of the winter term, 1859, he entered the Freshman Class of Franklin and Marshall College, and was graduated July 30, 1862.

Two years later, he completed the course of theological studies in the Seminary at Mercersburg, and was licensed to preach by Eastern Synod in session at Lancaster. For three months, he assisted Rev. Henry Heckerman at Bedford, Pennsylvania, after which he became pastor of the St. Clairsville Charge, consisting of five congregations in Bedford and Blair Counties. In this charge, he was ordained to the ministry, August 19, 1865, and here he remained for six years.

Mr. Heilman resigned the Charge to accept the position of Financial Secretary of Franklin and Marshall College. While he was a forceful preacher and a thorough pastor, he was none the less a wise counselor and skillful financier. The College recognized in him a valuable agent of the Institution. In this capacity he secured over \$35,000 in money and subscriptions, and later was instrumental in obtaining for the College the Wilhelm Estate. After three years in the employ of the College, and likely at the suggestion of the College, he accepted a call to the Paradise Charge, in September 1874, serving for ten years. Just before leaving the Charge, of October 21, 1884, the ministerial brethren and their wives of Somerset Classis gave M. and Mrs. Heilman a surprise at their home. It was the occasion of their fifteenth wedding anniversary. The ministers of Elk Lick and many members of the Charge were in attendance. Rev. J. M. Schick, then pastor of Amity, Meyersdale, made an address in which he said:

'The Charge has evinced, throughout your pastorate, entire confidence in you, and so you have been set as a watch over them. They have in the past fully appreciated your kind watchfulness, but now that you are about to leave the, without any apparent good reason, they deem it necessary that in the future you be watched, and they desire to put a watch on you. They have appointed me to watch you.'" Where upon, Rev. Mr. Schick presented to Mr. Heilman a gold watch, the inside of the case engraved: "To Rev. Calvin U. Heilman from the Paradise Charge, October 21, 1884", on the outside of the case, the monogram, "C. U. H."

It was during this pastorate, that he had the assistance, in the work of the Charge, of Rev. George M. Zacharias, who was located at Grantsville and served in part the Grantsville and New Germany congregation, preaching

occasionally at Elk Lick and St. Paul's. As the arrangement was not very satisfactory to the south end of the Charge, it was discontinued after a year.

From November 1, 1884, for nine years he was pastor of the Waterstreet Charge, residing at Alexandria, Pennsylvania. November 11, 1893, he was settled by Mercersburg Classis as pastor of the Greencastle Charge in Franklin County. His active duties there continued till June 1895, when with the hope of regaining his health, he went to Petersburg, Pennsylvania, where he died July 24, 1895. He was buried at the Hill Church, Lebanon County, Pennsylvania.

During a ministry extending over thirty-one years, Rev. Mr. Heilman built five new churches, two parsonages, and repaired six other churches. He delivered 2,991 addresses, preached 4,537 sermons, baptized 1,403 persons and confirmed 1,074. He officiated at 198 weddings and at 348 funerals.

Mr. Heilman was greatly interested in his Alma Mater. He was a member of the Board of Trustees of the College from 1886 to the time of his death. He attended every commencement after his entrance to the College save the last, which, on account of failing health, his Physician forbade him. He served also as a member of the Board of Regents of Mercersburg College in its organization as an Academy for boys.

While at College he was a member of the Goethean Literary Society. He was a member of the Masonic Fraternity, and was also a Good Templar. He served as School director and for a time taught a public school when no regular teacher could be secured. For a time he was associate editor of the Messenger. He was a generous soul, using his wealth liberally for the help of those in need, especially of young men desiring to prepare for the ministry or other professions.

On October 12, 1869, Mr. Heilman married Mary D., daughter of George D. McIlvaine, of Gap, Pennsylvania. The children are Sarah, Alice, George McIlvaine and Mary Frances.

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REV. ABRAHAM B. KOPLIN, A. M., D. D.  
1858-1863, 1867-1873

Of the seven pastors of St. Paul's, Dr. Koplin will be longest and best remembered both for what he was and for what he did. He is remembered as one of the able ministers of the church, one whose whole life and energies were devoted to the cause of Christ. His fame looms large upon the horizon of events because he was a pioneer in an undeveloped field. Somehow the world loves to honor the memory of her pioneers, and Dr. Koplin is no exception to this rule of veneration. Other pastors may build with great show of success, but Dr. Koplin will ever be regarded as the Father of St. Paul's and the chief man in her History.

His first pastorate was in the Stoyestown, Pennsylvania, Charge, which lasted for two years. He came to Elk Lick as pastor of the Paradise Charge on December 5, 1858, and continued his work in this field until the fall of 1863. It was during the pastorate that he held preaching services in the D. Hay school-house, and then in the Mennonite Union, where the organization of a congregation was effected. It was at this time that the Wilhelms were admitted into the fellowship of the church, and the foundation for future work was laid. His pastorate was suddenly interrupted, however, by his acceptance, in the fall of 1863, of a commission to Defiance, Ohio. He did not remain long at Defiance, as he tells us in a letter that the work proved too arduous and the climate, too malarial for him, so that he resigned his commission in the spring of 1867 to accept a call to the Paradise Charge which he left three years and four months before.

It was during his second pastorate that St. Paul's Church was erected; and it was during this pastorate that the attention of the Wilhelms was directed to our Institutions at Lancaster. For six years he continued his work, building the walls of Zion, encouraging the weak, confirming the doubting and administering to the spiritual needs of a pioneer people.

In 1873, he left the Paradise Charge and for three years served Salem Reformed Church at Catasauqua, Pennsylvania. In April 1877, he became pastor of the church at Hellerstown, Pennsylvania, consisting of that place,

Saucon and Williams Township Churches. This was a remarkable pastorate in that it extended over a period of forty years, lacking two months, and that he continued to serve these people until his death at the age of nearly 82 years. At the time of his death he was the fifth oldest pastor of the Reformed Church in point of service, having labored in the Church continuously for over sixty years.

Dr. Koplin filled many posts of honor and responsibility within the gift of the Church. He was very highly respected as a man of great courage, high ideals and unbounded industry. He, though far advanced in years, was up to the time of his death work and on the floors of Classis and Synod.

During his active pastorate he was honored by his Church with election to positions of high responsibility, which duties he discharged with the same fidelity that characterized his pastoral work. Thus he was an officer of Classis and of the District and the General Synods. Franklin and Marshall College conferred upon him the degree of A. M. and Heidelberg University made him a D. D., in 1885.

Dr. Koplin was in a full sense the father of the Phoebe Deaconess Home, Allentown, Pennsylvania. He advocated the establishment of such a home long before it became an actuality. He preached, talked and wrote on the subject until the seed that he sowed bore fruit and the present handsome home is the harvest. He was the first President of the Board of Trustees and served in that office until his death. In this capacity he was in Allentown for the last time and he addressed the three deaconess students who were advanced in their grades, the exercise taking the form of a commencement.

Dr. Koplin was descended from Mathias Koplin, who migrated from the Palatinate to America in 1728 and settled in Mifflin County. Dr. Koplin's parents were Abraham and Rachel Koplin. He was born July 7, 1835 in Summit County, Ohio, to which place his father had moved from Pennsylvania. He studied in Summit Academy and Heidelberg Academy, the latter at Tiffin, Ohio, and from which he was graduated in 1855. He then studied theology and was ordained May 20, 1856.

Dr. Koplin was married to Miss Harriet a Custer, of Stoyestown, January 9, 1857, and she still survives at the ripe age of 86 years and is enjoying good health.

There are five children, Mrs. Orma, widow of Rev. Silas F. Laury, of Saylorburg; Emma B. widow of C. J. Gitt; Martha V., widow of Aaron Hostetter, of Hanover; Ida May, wife of W. H. Clark, of Plainfield, New Jersey, and Russell N. Koplin, Esq., of Hellertown, Pennsylvania.

Dr. Koplin was taken ill with pneumonia on February 22, 1917 and died on March 5th. Had he lived until July 7th he would have been 82 years of age. The funeral was held on March 8th, from his late residence at Hellerstown. Rev. George W. Richards, D. D., preached the sermon, taking as his text Romans 14:8.

Rev. Robert M. Kern, superintendent of the Deaconess Home at Allentown, in a very illuminating article in the Messenger, pays Dr. Koplin the following tribute:

"On February 21 in the afternoon the President of the Board, Rev. A. B. Koplin, D. D., delivered the address. He reviewed the work of the Deaconess, pointed out some of her graces and virtues and spoke words of encouragement and good counsel to the Deaconesses in training. Dr. Koplin, the first and only President of the Board of Trustees, is the founder of the Deaconess Home.

Dr. Koplin was better informed on the subject of the Deaconess than any other man in this section of the State, and was perhaps more thoroughly imbued than anyone else with the conviction that she has a tremendous sphere of usefulness, and that ultimately she will become an indispensable factor in the growing demands of the Church of Jesus Christ.

There wasn't anything that could in any way dampen his ardor. His zeal was an inspiration to everyone that came in contact with him. Difficult problems arise in the administration of the affairs of any institution, and when they did arise there was no mind that could cope with his in the proper adjustment of the same.

In addition to writing up the annual reports to the Synods and the Classes and performing the duties of President of Board of Trustees, he came up regularly every week and taught the Deaconesses, He was at this time teaching them Ethics. When we consider his age, his many duties in connection with his parish, comprising the three

congregations, and the frequent trips he made to the Phobe Home, he was indeed remarkably active. Nothing was too much trouble, ----no excuses."

NOTE: THIS INFORMATION WAS TAKEN THE THE BOOK "THE WILHELM AND THE WILHELM CHARGE"

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