

THE ADVENTIST HERITAGE CENTER, AND A TRIBUTE TO ITS FIRST CURATOR

AUSS has periodically published articles dealing with rare source materials in the Adventist Heritage Center in the James White Library of Andrews University. The immediately preceding article in this issue is the latest example, and more will be forthcoming.

The purpose of the present brief note is to describe in very general terms the history and nature of the Center and to give tribute to the person who, more than anyone else, has made the Center a true archive and depository for a substantial quantity of rare and irreplaceable materials. This is Louise Dederen, whose service as curator spanned a quarter of a century, from 1966 to 1991. The *AUSS* editorial staff owes her a debt of gratitude for the assistance she has given us on numerous occasions.



LOUISE DEDEREN

While the Seminary was located in Washington, DC (prior to its two-stage move to Berrien Springs in 1959 and 1960), various materials pertaining to Adventist history and heritage were collected and a number of other valuable items acquired. Included in the latter category are two tracts by Martin Luther dated 1520, which had been purchased for the Seminary by LeRoy Edwin Froom during the 1940s. In the early 1960s the accumulation of rare documents was significantly increased, and although such materials were placed in the James White Library (mainly in a small closet-like "heritage" room in the basement), the Library had no proper "special collections" section. Nor was there any efficient procedure for making the resources available to qualified readers and researchers. A growing concern over this situation led the University administration in 1966 to develop the small basement quarters into a "Heritage-Room" archive which would be open to the public. Mrs. Mary Jane Mitchell, the Library Director, hired Mrs. Dederen to take charge of organizing the materials and enlarging the holdings.

For more than a decade this facility was indeed a "room," for aside from a limited amount of additional space for stacks, storage, and display cabinets, all functions of the new archive were cared for in just one room. Not only did Mrs. Dederen make the operations of this room very efficient in spite of the cramped conditions, but she also exercised an extraordinary capacity for reaching out to acquire further valuable materials—so much so, in fact, that there was a phenomenal growth in the resources. Although during its first decade of existence, the archive obtained a limited amount of additional space, the need for a substantial amount of further space soon became serious, even desperate. Fortunately, when the library building was enlarged in 1978, the facility benefited by having its floor space more than doubled (from 1,639 square feet to 4,089 square feet). Modest further expansion occurred during the next several years, including the addition of a 21-by-20-foot room made available when the Institute of Archaeology and the Archaeological Museum (now the Horn Archaeological Museum) moved, in 1982, to a three-story building more appropriate for its varied functions. In 1987, the Heritage Room was appropriately renamed the "Adventist Heritage Center."

This Center currently occupies a 5,195-square-foot section on the basement floor of the James White Library's south wing. Now sufficiently spacious to accommodate a variety of operations, the Center has a reception and office area; several display areas; expanded quarters for document files, and for regular stacks that now include two units of electrically movable compact shelving; a 770-square-foot fireproof vault

containing two further units of electrically movable compact shelving; and a reading room that presently has eight carrels, five desks, and a large reading table.

The display facilities include the George B. Suhrie Bible Room, which is used for displays of various Bibles and other religious publications (from among the items in a large Bible collection donated by Suhrie himself, and from among similar materials provided by other donors or acquired by purchase). Another room houses a number of artifacts having special importance in Adventist history (such as the sextant and the two-volume log-book from the ship *Pitcairn*, a vessel used in the nineteenth century for missionary work in the South Pacific), and a collection of Adventist evangelistic advertisements, props, etc., spanning some 150 years.

Among items of considerable general interest (in addition to the materials already mentioned) are several extremely valuable Bibles or Bible sections, such as those donated by Dr. Chester J. Gibson from his Wurker Collection (see the opening paragraph of the preceding article in this issue of *AUSS*), and an excellent copy of the complete first part of the first edition of Martin Luther's German translation of the OT (the Pentateuch, 1523). The latter was received as a gift from Mr. and Mrs. James C. Trefz of Silver Spring, Maryland, who subsequently also provided most of the funds for the purchase of a collection of some forty Reformation-era tracts (more than half of them by Luther and the rest by his contemporaries). Further items of interest are a copy of the first Dutch edition of the proceedings of the Council of Dort, which I had been able to secure, and three volumes of a four-volume Latin Bible containing Nicholas de Lyra's commentary, and published in Strassburg in 1492.

Among the Center's other holdings of considerable importance are a substantial collection of books, pamphlets, magazine and newspaper clippings, etc., on "Women in Church and Society," which was provided, and is continually updated, by Leona Glidden Running, Seminary Professor Emerita of Biblical Languages; and collections of source documents, such as those accumulated by LeRoy Edwin Froom in preparing his massive four-volume *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1946-1954). In addition, the Center has issues of almost all Adventist periodicals printed in numerous printing houses throughout Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America. In many cases, the periodical runs are complete.

In the early 1970s, when the Theological Seminary and School of Education of Andrews University began offering doctoral programs, a

decision was reached to assemble in the Center a complete set of Ph.D., Th.D., and Ed.D. dissertations written by students in those schools. Although the James White Library has copies of such dissertations in various other locations, this is its only location where a complete set is available in the same place. Also kept in the Center are numerous lesser theses, research projects, and research papers covering a wide array of topics in religion, education, social studies, the humanities, the history of religions, and missiology.

Reference must be made here to Mrs. Dederen's valiant effort to secure collections that are as complete as possible of published works by Andrews University faculty, an endeavor in which she fared especially well with regard to teachers in the areas of special interest to *AUSS*. During her tenure she also brought together the largest extant collection of Adventist hymnals and enhanced the Center's visual-aid holdings. Among the latter is a set of more than 500 color slides of Reformation sites prepared by Jacques Frei, Mrs. Dederen's brother-in-law, who resides in Switzerland and is an especially knowledgeable and experienced guide for Reformation tours.

Since her retirement on July 1, 1991 (concurrently with that of her husband, Dr. Raoul Dederen, as Seminary Dean and Professor of Systematic Theology), Louise Dederen's successor, Jim Ford, has continued the work that she began. To him, too, we owe a debt of gratitude for his help to, and support of, *AUSS*. We thank him especially for the assistance that he has given for the current issue of *AUSS* by making readily available, on several occasions, the three Saur Bibles featured in the preceding article.

In closing, I must reiterate that Mrs. Dederen's achievements during her twenty-five years of pioneer service as curator of the Heritage Room and of its successor, the Adventist Heritage Center, are immeasurable. Ford reports that even in the year of her retirement, she spent a great deal of time in the "collecting and partial organization of personal collections and other miscellaneous series of records" (from Ford's Adventist-Heritage-Center "Annual Report" for 1991). Shortly before her retirement, her outstanding work was given special recognition when, on February 24, 1991, she received the John Nevins Andrews Medallion, the University's highest faculty award for academic excellence and noteworthy service.

We at *AUSS* are deeply indebted to Louise Dederen for the outstanding service that she has rendered to our journal. In my own behalf and in behalf of the editorial staffs, both past and present, who have so richly benefited from her quarter of a century of curatorship of the special collections of the James White Library, I say "Congratulations, Louise," and "Many, many, many THANKS."

Kenneth A. Strand