

The E. Arnold Sitz Papers

An Inventory



Archive of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
Mequon, Wisconsin

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The E. Arnold Sitz Papers

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Collection Level Description

Title: The E. Arnold Sitz Files

Dates: 1909-1981

Extent: 54.5 centimeters of textual records

Biographical sketch:

Erdman Arnold Sitz was born on August 27, 1893, at New York Mills, Minnesota, the son of August J. Sitz and his wife Anna, nee Pankow. He was baptized on August 28, 1893. His father ran a hardware store and implement business in the little village. His mother was a Pankow from the Lebanon, WI area, one of the pioneering families of the WELS.

After grade school, Sitz attended Northwestern Preparatory School and College in Watertown, WI. While there he became known by his friends as “Tois,” because of a now-unexplained incident in one of his Greek classes. He received his BA from there in June 1914. From there he attended and graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Wauwatosa, WI in June 1917. While there he studied under the “Wauwatosa Theologians”: J.P. Koehler, his future father-in-law, John Schaller and August Pieper.

In June 1917, Sitz was assigned to the newly organized Martin Luther Ev. Lutheran Church in Oshkosh, WI. He was ordained and installed by Rev. Chr. Dowidat. He served briefly at Martin Luther until the fall of 1917, when he resigned due to health reasons.

In December 1917, he arrived in Tucson, AZ. At that time he found employment with the Southern Pacific Co., working as a machinist helper in the local shops and then as a brakeman. Later in 1918, he worked as a cow hand on the Walter Williams Ranch in the White Mountains near Tucson.

In March of 1919, the Wisconsin Synod Mission Board asked him to serve as a missionary on the Apache Reservation at Whiteriver, AZ, in relief of Pastor E. E. Guenther, who was suffering from influenza. Sitz served there six months while Guenther recovered and in the process learned Apache and became familiar with the reservation. The Mission Board asked him to stay and he served Carrizo Canyon, Whiteriver, Cibecue, East Fork and Canyon Creek.

In the fall of 1923, Sitz accepted the call to serve as assistant pastor to Pastor William F. Beitz at Grace Ev. Lutheran Church in Tucson. In December 1924, Pastor Beitz accepted a call to a parish in Wisconsin. At that time, Sitz accepted the call as the pastor of Grace. He served there until April 1972, as their pastor.

On February 6, 1925, Sitz married Miss Frieda Koehler of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, and daughter of Prof. J.P. Koehler of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. The couple was blessed with eight children—two sons: Arnold and Ronald and six daughters, Angeline, Marietta, Luce, Ileana, Dorothea, Charlotte and one daughter who passed away in childhood, Theoline.

During the 1940s and 1950s, Sitz served as a major voice for the organization of the Wisconsin Synod congregations of the southwest. With the organization of the Arizona-California District in 1954, Sitz was elected as its first district president. He served in that position until 1966. As James Schaefer wrote in his 1989 obituary for Pastor Sitz, “His devotion to the district in which he had spent his entire ministry—save one year—was passionate and legendary.”

During his ministry, Sitz served on the Wisconsin Synod’s Commission on Inter-Church Relations, Committee on Constitutional Matters and various other synodical committees. In 1961, during the 75th anniversary celebration of the founding of the University of Arizona, the university awarded him a gold medallion and cited him as an “Arizona Pioneer, devoted public servant, and Christian leader.”

Sitz lived out his retirement years in Tucson, ever remaining closely attached to Grace in Tucson. In the early morning hours of July 15, 1989, E. Arnold Sitz passed away and joined his Savior in the eternal rest at the age of 95. He was the second oldest living alumnus of Northwestern College at the time of his death. As Schaefer wrote, “He lived through much of the WELS 20th century history and made some of it.” His funeral services were held July 23, 1989 at Grace, Tucson.

Custodial history:

The collection was held since the time of Sitz’s death at the home of Rev. Victor and Ana [Sitz] Prange in Janesville, WI. The papers were collected after his death in 1989 and sorted at the Prange home. In the fall of 1997, the Prange family donated the collection to the Archive of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Some correspondence between Sitz and Rev. William F. Beitz, concerning the Protes’tant controversy, was placed into the Protes’tant files in the Archives by Norb Manthe. Information supplied by Sitz’s grandson, Rev. Peter M. Prange.

Scope and Content:

The collection is made up of materials created by and collected by Rev. E. Arnold Sitz. The collection reflects the life of an active man involved in the life of his congregation, his district and his synod. Many items point to his role as the outspoken voice of a group of congregations far distant from the main body of the synod. Many also point to the role he played as a defender of sound biblical doctrine amidst the turmoil of the controversies of the 1950s and 1960s.

The collection consists of the following series:

- Series 1: Apache Indian Mission documents
- Series 2: Various essays, letters and reports
- Series 3: Cases dealt with during pre-Arizona-California District years
- Series 4: Prote’s tant Controversy documents
- Series 5: Grace Lutheran Church, Tucson, AZ documents
- Series 6: Correspondence
- Series 7: Arizona Mission District documents
- Series 8: Southeastern Wisconsin District documents
- Series 9: Correspondence and documents on the Synodical Conference fellowship controversy
- Series 10: Milwaukee Lutheran Teachers’ College documents
- Series 11: Miscellaneous documents
- Series 12: Photos and News clippings
- Series 13: Synod—Committees and Dealings
- Series 14: Sermons
- Series 15: Bible Translations documents

Source of supplied title: Title based on the provenance of the records.

Arrangement: See appendix A for arrangement of the folders in the boxes.

Restrictions: None.

Accruals: Additional correspondence, held by Rev. Peter M. Prange, will be added to the collection at a later date.

Series level description

The E. Arnold Sitz Papers

Series 1: Apache Indian Mission documents

Dates: 1939-1955

Extent: 1 folder, 1 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of correspondence and reports concerning the *Apache Scout*, the nursery at East Fork, the Paul Schliesser case, called workers leaving or entering the mission field, and other facets of the Apache Mission. Primary correspondents are R. H. Zimmermann, Hilpert L. A. Engel, Apache Lutheran Review Committee, and John W. Brenner.

Series 2: Various essays, letters and reports

Dates: 1922-1981

Extent: 4 folders, 7 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series primarily consists of essays, sermons and reports delivered at Arizona and Arizona-California pastoral conferences, primarily during the 1940s through 1960s. Included in this series are also a number of letters written by Sitz to the *Tucson Daily Star*; proceedings of conferences in 1922 and 1981; notes and drafts for various presentations and papers by Sitz; correspondence to the *Northwestern Lutheran*; and the drafts and work by Sitz for an essay on Calvinism written around 1946-47.

Series 3: Cases dealt with during pre-Arizona-California District years

Dates: 1938-1948

Extent: 7 folders, 2.5 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of correspondence dealing with six different cases, primarily cases concerning individual calls: Eugene Hinderer Case (1942-44), O. Hohenstein Case (1948), A. P. C. Kell Case (1944), and F. Stern Case (1941) The Arthur C. Krueger Case (1938) deals with salary issues. The Nogales Case (1948) deals with the decision to open a mission field in Nogales, Mexico or not.

Series 4: Protes'tant Controversy documents

Dates: 1928-1933, 1976

Extent: 4 folders, 1.5 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of correspondence dealing with several aspects of the Protes'tant Controversy, primarily the J. P. Koehler case and the Beitz paper. Most of the correspondence is in German and most of the correspondence is in fair to poor condition.

Series 5: Grace Lutheran Church, Tucson, AZ documents

Dates: 1938-1948

Extent: 5 folders, 3 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of correspondence dealing with issues over Arizona mission experience by WELS or LC-MS; correspondence concerning Missionary Stern between Sitz, L. H. Koeninger and I. P. Frey; correspondence concerning issues with the Flowing Wells, AZ mission based out of Grace in Tucson; and proceedings and correspondence from congregational meetings of Grace (1942-46), particularly dealing with close communion and other fellowship practices.

Series 6: Correspondence

Dates: 1920-1981

Extent: 65 folders, 20 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of correspondence concerning a wide variety of topics, issues and areas of concern. This series is organized by correspondent. The condition of some correspondence is in poor condition. The primary correspondents included are: Theodore A. Aaberg, Chr. Albrecht, Carl F. Bolle, John W. Brenner, John F. Brenner, Adolph C. Buenger, Robert W. Christman, Walter Diehl, Harold H. Eckert, Kurt J. Eggert, Paul E. Eickmann, Charles Found, Werner Franzmann, Edward C. Fredrich, Conrad Frey, I. G. Frey, I. P. Frey, John Gauss, Wilbert R. Gawrisch, Joel C. Gerlach, Ralph E. Geror, E. Edgar Guenther, Irwin Habeck, Robert C. Hartman, Wm. Henkel, Paul Hensel, Paul Heyn, Gerald Hinz, Edgar Hoenecke, Heinz R. Hoenecke, Frederick G. Knoll, Herbert P. Koehler, L. H. Koeninger, Norris Koopmann, E. E. Kowalke, Karl Kurth, Richard Lauersdorf, Carl Lawrenz, Lloyd H. Lemke, J. P. Meyer, Carl H. Mischke, Oscar J. Naumann, Paul Neipp, Leonard W. Newman, Theodore F. Nickel, H. C. Nitz, Marcus Nitz, F. W. Noack, *Northwestern Lutheran*, Paul Peters, Joel Prange, J. A. O. Preus, Henry Rosin, E. E. Ryden, Wm. F. Sauer, James P. Schaefer, Armin Schuetze, *Tucson Daily Citizen*, F. Uplegger, Robert J. Voss, Robert Waldschmidt, and Raymond H. Zimmermann.

Series 7: Arizona Mission District documents

Dates: 1936-1952

Extent: 4 folders, 3 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of correspondence and documents dealing with the status of the Arizona mission to white congregations, primarily in the Phoenix/Tucson area. There are documents dealing with the call for a missionary-at-large and correspondence concerning issues dealt with by the Arizona Mission District Visitor. The growth of this mission district eventually led to the creation of the Arizona-California District in 1954.

Series 8: Southeastern Wisconsin District documents

Dates: 1930-1946

Extent: 3 folders, 2 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists primarily of correspondence with the SEW District Mission Board, which was in charge of the Arizona Mission District. Primary correspondents are Wm. Mahnke and O. B. Nommenson. There is also some documents from the 1946 District Convention.

Series 9: Correspondence and documents on the Synodical Conference fellowship controversy

Dates: 1953-1977

Extent: 6 folders, 4.5 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of correspondence, essays, notes and other documents dealing with the fellowship controversy between WELS/ELS & LC-MS. Four folders contain notes and essay drafts on ecumenism, church fellowship, the history of the Lutheran Confessions and the "high church" movement. One file contains a wide array of statements by the Norwegian Synod/Evangelical Lutheran Synod issued during the primary time of the controversy (1955-59). The largest file contains correspondence and documents from Sitz's time on the WELS Commission on Doctrinal Matters. These cover the period of WELS history dealing with the Common Confession, the Saginaw Convention, the Protests of the late 1950s and the break with LC-MS in 1961.

Series 10: Milwaukee Lutheran Teachers' College documents

Dates: 1964-1965

Extent: 1 folder, 0.5 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of correspondence dealing with the issue of a second teachers' college, which would be located in Milwaukee.

Series 11: Miscellaneous documents

Dates: 1931-1977

Extent: 1 folder, 0.5 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of miscellaneous documents from Sitz's ministry. A majority of the documents are hand-written notes concerning a variety of topics.

Series 12: Photos and News clippings

Dates: 1909-1962

Extent: 1 folder, 0.5 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of a number of photographs of early Arizona-California pastoral conferences and district conventions, as well as other photos. There are also newspaper articles written by or collected by Sitz.

Series 13: Synod—Committees and Dealings

Dates: 1923-1973

Extent: 8 folders, 8.5 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of documents from Sitz's work on several synodical committees or in connection with the Home Mission Board. The largest portion of documents and correspondence come from his work on the Commission & Advisory Committee on Doctrinal Matters from 1960-1973. Included also are documents from his time on the Spiritual Welfare Commission, which ministered to WWII soldiers; documents from the 1935 Synod Convention; documents dealing with the English version of the Synod Constitution and with the budget. Also included is correspondence with the Home Mission Board.

Series 14: Sermons

Dates: 1956-1975

Extent: 1 folder, 0.5 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of outlines and sermon notes from a number of sermons preached by Sitz.

Series 15: Bible Translations documents

Dates: 1974-1979

Extent: 1 folder, 0.5 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of correspondence written to the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary faculty and other groups conducting Bible translation during the mid-1970s. About half of the correspondence is hand-written letters or notes concerning the NIV or other contemporary translations.

Appendix A

The E. Arnold Sitz Papers
Arrangement

Box 1: Folders 1-92

Box 2: Folders 93-112

Series 1: Apache Indian Mission documents
Folder 1

Series 2: Various essays, letters and reports
Folders 2-5

Series 3: Cases dealt with during pre-Arizona-California District years
Folders 6-12

Series 4: Protes'tant Controversy documents
Folders 13-16

Series 5: Grace Lutheran Church, Tucson, AZ documents
Folders 17-21

Series 6: Correspondence
Folders 22-85

Series 7: Arizona Mission District documents
Folders 86-89

Series 8: Southeastern Wisconsin District documents
Folders 90-92

Series 9: Correspondence and documents on the Synodical Conference fellowship controversy
Folders 93-98

Series 10: Milwaukee Lutheran Teachers' College documents
Folder 99

Series 11: Miscellaneous documents
Folder 100

Series 12: Photos and News clippings
Folder 101

Series 13: Synod—Committees and Dealings
Folders 102-110

Series 14: Sermons

Folder 111

Series 15: Bible Translations documents

Folder 112