The Hymn: Would you tell us something of your background?

Dr. Ellinwood: I grew up in the White Mountains of New Hampshire in the town of Littleton where my dad had a hardware store and plumbing shop. I loved to work in it and always thought that’s what I’d do for my life’s career. About the only music in town was at three or four Protestant churches with small pipe organs. My own church was the Advent Christian Church which at that time had no organ. I was taking piano lessons and the organ appealed to me.

So by the time I was in high school I was so brash they couldn’t stand me more than a year at a time! I started playing in one church, then another. I was taking counterpoint, but that was all. I decided to stay around and discovered the school had purchased an 11th-century music treatise. Having had six years of Latin I did my master’s thesis on the treatise of Hermannus Contractus. The director, Howard Hanson, was so pleased he decided to have it published. That got me started in musicology in 1934. I didn’t want to work on another treatise, though Hanson wanted me to stay on and do a doctorate. One day one of the theory teachers asked me where he could find some of the music of Francesco Landini. I was working in the library and could discover only a few short pieces in books and articles, so I decided to do a doctorate compiling the collected works of Landini. This was in 1936. I then taught for three years at Michigan State University in theory, musicology, and orchestration. I had fun getting a Collegium Musicum started and delved into old music which you didn’t hear on the concert stage; today most universities have courses in this. But I found that if I wanted to continue to work in musicology I had to spend all my vacations in eastern libraries, for the material wasn’t readily available in those days. So I came to Washington to work in the Library of Congress, instead of teaching. That was in 1940, and I’ve been here ever since. I started working on Notre-Dame conductus but it was very slow going and there wasn’t much time for it during the war years.

I also had decided that, upon coming to Washington, I would not play a small church organ but would try to sing in the cathedral choir under Paul Callaway. This choir of men and boys has always been one of the best in the country. Dr. Callaway found I could sing counter-tenor so I enjoyed doing that for 35 years. I’d been drawn to the Episcopal Church ever since high school. When the Hymnal 1940 came out, Canon Charles Winfred Douglas formed a committee to produce a companion which the Episcopal hymnal had not had previously.

Canon Douglas died after a year or so and the mantle fell on my shoulders because of my connection with the Library of Congress. As a result I spent my spare time the next four or five years, with help from others, getting out the Hymnal 1940 Companion. The Hymnal 1982 Companion.

Ellinwood: It hasn’t been announced yet. Raymond Glover is general editor of the hymnal. The Hymn: Did you have any unusual experiences in researching materials for the Companion?

Ellinwood: Yes. I might add that many of the companions and handbooks of the time did not check original sources before making claims. So we pointed out to readers with an asterisk that we had seen the originals with our own eyes. This helped raise the quality of subsequent books.

The Hymn: This handbook is still in print after all these years.

Ellinwood: Yes, but there is a committee at work to produce a companion to the Episcopal Hymnal 1982 which will be published in June of 1985.

The Hymn: Who will be in charge?

Ellinwood: That hasn’t been announced yet. Raymond Glover is general editor of the hymnal.

The Hymn: Has the Church any future plans for a revised hymnal?

Ellinwood: No. There will be no new companion except the one to the Episcopal Hymnal 1982 which will be published in June of 1985.

The Hymn: What are you working on now?

Ellinwood: I am working on an annotated edition of the Hymnal 1940. It hasn’t been announced yet. Raymond Glover is general editor of the hymnal.

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The Hymn: What did you teach at Evergreen?

Ellinwood: Music history primarily. Also repertory. From time to time I've edited things from the medieval or renaissance period that we could use at the cathedral. About the time I finished the Companion, the Hymn Society set up a committee under Henry Wilder Foote (who had written an important work on the history of American hymnody) to work with a similar committee of the British Hymn Society in preparing a revision of Julian's Dictionary of Hymnology. That had some American materials when it came out, but didn't really cover the field well. When Dr. Foote's committee got to work they soon realized we needed a dictionary of American hymnody. Julian would never encompass all we had to provide. So we organized and began work. A lot of individual surveys had been done when Dr. Foote had to give it up. Again the mantle fell on me, around 1952. We continued as a committee, with a hymnologist from each of the major denominations and surveyed the hymnals they had brought out. Then the Society provided money so we could hire students during the vacations to index these hymnals.

The Hymn: Do you recall the other members of the committee?

Ellinwood: I have them listed in the preface of the DAH First-Line Index which is in the process of being published. We continued to work over the years, sometimes two or three people indexing at Princeton and Hartford as well as the Library of Congress, and later at Springfield, Ohio, St. Louis, and Fort Worth. We gathered individual hymnals elsewhere which people worked on. About 1954 a colleague in an adjoining section where I worked was widowed. One day I asked her what she did in her spare time. She said she played solitaire a lot. I said I could give her some better cards than that to play with. So Elizabeth Lockwood started taking hymnals from the Cathedral Library and indexing them herself. But as we got several thousand cards, we took the 1960 yearbook of the American Hymnological Congress, and set up numbers for the country, and set up numbers for each of those denominations. We weren't able to find hymnals for every one; some of them never did have their own hymnal. This is American hymnology, not just Christian hymnology, so we began with the A's—the Adventist groups, the Amish, etc. In the B's were the Bahá'ís and the numerous Baptists such as the Dutch River Association of Baptists and the National Baptists, the Free-Will, the Primitive, the Independent Order, Separate, Seventh-Day German Baptists, which included the Ephrata Community (an interesting 18th century monastic group)—these were among the others. Then there were the various Brethren groups, a hymnal from Buddhist churches and quite a group of Canadian hymnals. Hugh McKellar of Toronto has been a strong supporter and collaborator for the Canadian hymnals. Others were the Church of God in North America, the Swedish Baptists and the Unification Church of Sun Myung Moon. We said it was to be American in the full meaning of the word, so we also have hymnals from Latin America. Curiously enough, we've only had a few Orthodox hymnals since these churches don't use hymnals in the congregational sense associated with Protestant churches.

The Hymn: Would you comment on the tremendous scope of the project?

Ellinwood: In 1960, when Elizabeth was starting to code-number these cards, we took the 1960 yearbook of the National Council of Churches, which listed all the denominations in the country, and set up numbers for each of those denominations. We weren't able to find hymnals for every one; some of them never did have their own hymnal. This is American hymnology, not just Christian hymnology, so we began with the A's—the Adventist groups, the Amish, etc. In the B's were the Bahá'ís and the numerous Baptists such as the Duck River Association of Baptists and the National Baptists, the...

We have over 3100 hymnals which are not associated with a specific denomination.

The Hymn: Your hymnals are divided in files in both denominational and non-denominational collections.

Ellinwood: Most of the hymn singing, volume-wise, in America has been done in revival meetings, with evangelists like Sankey and so on. So we have over 3100 hymnals which are not associated with a specific denomination. Some were commercial hymnals put out by a publisher to a broad public. Others are the products of a particular revivalist. This was done by, for example, the Billy Graham Crusades. We have a hymnal from the Ethical Cultural movement and a number of hymnals for Jewish congregations.

The Hymn: I believe you have indexed hymnals in various languages as well.

Ellinwood: This was a surprising thing to me. In Michigan I'd run into Lutheran churches that had services in German as well as English. The extent of German hymnody in this country is enormous. You have the Moravians, the Mennonites, the Church of the Brethren, and the various Lutheran bodies, both German and others—Swedish, Norwegian, Danish. Theo. DeLaney, who at the time was Executive Secretary for the Missouri Synod Commission on Music and Worship, covered what he called the prairie hymnals, ethnic groups that had their own hymnals in those states. We have a number of French hymnals and one or two Italian ones from communities on the
east coast. There are Spanish hymnals from Latin America. Because of printing problems, and the fact that there is little or no relation save that of translation from languages already included, we have not indexed the few American hymnals published in non-Roman alphabets. Nor have we included hymnals in Hawaiian, Eskimo or American-Indian languages for the same reason.

The Hymn: I believe the total is something like 7800 hymnals.

Ellinwood: Yes, though I'm not sure of the exact number. They're all published in the Bibliography of American Hymnals that we got out last year.

It's been fascinating to see a classic hymn of Wesley or Watts that an evangelist would stick refrains on.

The Hymn: Is the cut off date 1978?

Ellinwood: The 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship is the last hymnal we put in. Around 1965 or 70 we decided we needed a cut-off date in order to get things edited and published. So we decided not to take any more of the gospel material after 1960 but would continue to take major hymnals. So from 1960 to 1978 coverage is more sketchy but with the more important denominational hymnals included.

The Hymn: What remains to be done?

Ellinwood: Because of the size of the project, all publication will probably have to be in microform. If funds are found for computerization, it could be on computer discs. Work has begun this past year on an author file which, when completed manually, can be filmed for distribution, paralleling the First-line Index. Some thought has also been given to bringing out a ten-year supplement. But it is time for the mantle again to pass on to a younger generation. The new DAH project director will need, and welcome, all the talented assistance which I have received over the years from many members of the Hymn Society of America. And so, in the words of the ancient Romans, "Ave atque vale."

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The Hymn: Will there be a way of locating these refrains?

Ellinwood: Yes. Through the editing process we began to sort these out. The cards we used were designed for us in the 50s by IBM, when modern computer work was still a dream. These punch-cards give the first line, the refrain, the title, the original first-line in case of translations and centos taken from longer hymns. On the right side of the card are the name of the author and, at the bottom, the translator. We hoped, and still hope, that these elements can be put on computer so each may be brought out. And, for refrains, it may be possi-