

Samuel H. Hertzler

Reverend Samuel Hoffer Hertzler was born on 24 September 1853 on a farm near Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania to William and Mary Ann Hoffer Hertzler.<sup>1</sup> He attended both Palatinate College, now Albright College, and Millersville State Normal School.<sup>2</sup> However, he often reverted to teaching himself at home. On 14 December 1873 he married Anna Shenk and they then had a son, William, on 3 October 1877.<sup>3</sup> 1884, his brothers, Aaron and Isaac, opened a department store.<sup>4</sup> In 1891, he joined his brothers in owning and running Hertzler Brothers on the corner of North Market Street and East High Street where they sold clothing, dry goods, groceries, queensware, boots and shoes, and ready-to-wear clothing.<sup>5</sup>

Hertzler was called to the ministry of the Church of the Brethren in 1897 and remained there until 1930.<sup>6</sup> He was elder-in-charge or presiding elder and a part-time minister from 1912 until 1930.<sup>7</sup> Hertzler spent a lot of time reading. Whenever he had free time, he would pull out scripture, articles, or magazines to read. Through his reading, he became very well educated in terms of scripture. This led to him becoming an elder of several churches. He was almost solely responsible for the growth of his congregation, allowing it to become one of the largest congregations in the region.<sup>8</sup>

There was one committee in which Hertzler was selected numerous times: the Standing Committee. This was because of his ability to understand where each side was coming from and come up with a fair compromise.<sup>9</sup> When discussions and arguments became heated, it was often Hertzler who took it upon himself to calm everyone down.<sup>10</sup>

In 1898, at a meeting, Hertzler spoke up and said the town needs a well-managed school. On 6 March 1899, Hertzler, along with the rest of the location committee formed to determine the location of the college, took a tour of Mountville where they were offered six acres for free, but no reaction to this offer was recorded.<sup>11</sup> On 4 April 1899, the committee met in Hertzler's home to discuss the possibilities for the location of the college and the next day announced the college was to be organized immediately.<sup>12</sup>

A Locating Committee with the purpose of finding a location for the college as well as creating the constitution and a set of by-laws for the college was established officially on 20 April 1899, at which time Hertzler was nominated and elected Treasurer.<sup>13</sup> 24 May 1899, the committee met in Roanoke Virginia to vote on the location of the college from the four options of Ephrata, Elizabethtown, Mountville, and Pottstown with Elizabethtown being selected after the fourth ballot showed unanimous support for it.<sup>14</sup> He was nominated for the Board of Trustees and on 16 June 1899 was elected Treasurer with a three year term.<sup>15</sup> On 16 September 1899, Hertzler signed the charter for Elizabethtown College along with Joseph H. Rider, Benjamin G. Groff, J. H. Eshleman, and Simon P. Engle.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Hertzler, Samuel Hoffer," in *The Brethren Encyclopedia*, ed. Donald F. Durnbaugh (Philadelphia: The Brethren Encyclopedia Inc., 1983), 600-601.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> John Hertzler, *A Brief Biographic Memorial of Jacob Hertzler : and a Complete Genealogical Family Register of his Lineal Descendants and Those Related by Inter-marriage, from 1730 to 1883* (Salem, MA: Higginson Book Co., 1999), 179.

<sup>4</sup> Jean-Paul Benowitz, *Images of America: Elizabethtown* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2015), 32.

<sup>5</sup> Richard K. MacMaster, *Elizabethtown: The First Three Centuries* (Elizabethtown, PA: Masthof Press, 1999), 133.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 234.

<sup>8</sup> *History of the Church of the Brethren: Eastern Pennsylvania, 1915-1965* (Lancaster: Eastern District of Pennsylvania, 1965), 253.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 253.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 254.

<sup>11</sup> Ralph W. Schlosser, *History of Elizabethtown College 1899- 1970* (Elizabethtown, PA: Elizabethtown College, 1971), 7.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>15</sup> Chet Williamson, *Uniting Work and Spirit: A Centennial History of Elizabethtown College* (Elizabethtown, PA: Elizabethtown College Press, 2001), 22.

<sup>16</sup> Schlosser., 22.

During the first few meetings of the Board of Trustees, it was decided the members needed to reach out to local churches for funds. At this point, Hertzler and Rider were given the task of asking the Chicques, Mountville, White Oak, West Conestoga, and Tulpehocken churches for financial aid.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, Hertzler and Rider were appointed to secure articles of agreement from Groff for the purchase of grounds for the college.<sup>18</sup> On 15 August 1899, Hertzler presented a draft of the charter to the board and was appointed to suggest revisions and determine the final wording of the document.<sup>19</sup> On 18 October 1899, he was appointed to the building committee and ordered to invite bids and plans as soon as possible.<sup>20</sup> This same day, Hertzler, Jesse C. Ziegler, and George Falkenstein met in Ziegler's home to discuss what type of college building was needed, the location of the building, the ventilating and heating systems, and the necessity of a fire proof vault.<sup>21</sup>

The next meeting was held 14 December 1899 in Hertzler's home where the architects and bids for construction were decided in addition to the final location of the college building being set.<sup>22</sup> Also, in December, Hertzler advanced to second degree minister in the Church of the Brethren.<sup>23</sup> In April 1900, Hertzler expressed support for I.N.H. Beahm as Principal of Elizabethtown College by seconding the motion created by T.F. Imler.<sup>24</sup> On 1 August 1900, the first college catalogue was finalized, with Hertzler listed as the Business Manager of the college. On 2 October 1900 during a meeting of the Board of Trustees held in Hertzler's home, Hertzler was appointed to the committee given the responsibility of securing a loan for the completion of the college building.<sup>25</sup> On 8 January 1901, Hertzler became a special Bible teacher who would teach a Bible Term in the chapel.<sup>26</sup> On 4 March 1901, Hertzler gave the opening scripture reading and directed prayer at the dedication of Alpha Hall.<sup>27</sup>

In 1904, Hertzler was appointed to a committee designated with the task of investigating the cost of a second building and on 7 April 1905, drawings for the building were approved and they set out to secure funds for its construction.<sup>28</sup> They raised so much money and needed so much space they decided to build two buildings and Hertzler was selected for the committee to name them.<sup>29</sup> One was named Rider Memorial Hall for the generosity of Joseph Rider in donations to build it and the other, which was built first, was officially named Alpha Hall on 5 March 1906.<sup>30</sup> On 20 October 1904, Hertzler was ordained as an elder in the church and selected as assistant elder to the church.<sup>31</sup>

In 1916, it was decided laboratory science buildings were necessary and Hertzler was appointed to the committee in charge of creating plans for its construction, which was finished by 29 August 1916.<sup>32</sup> This building was funded largely by the Gibble family and was so named the Gibble Science Building.<sup>33</sup> The college quickly grew and soon enough, it was decided additional buildings were necessary. Hertzler and Falkenstein pushed to rush the job of constructing new buildings by asking Groff to hire more plasterers.<sup>34</sup> Hertzler and Falkenstein closely watched the construction of the new buildings including measuring the rooms for carpet, furniture, etc.<sup>35</sup>

In 1919, Hertzler became chairman of the board of trustees for the Southern District.<sup>36</sup> On 26 January 1924, Hertzler was appointed to the committee tasked with discussing the acceptance of another term of

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>23</sup> S. R. Zug, History of the Church of the Brethren of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania (Elizabethtown, PA: Church of the Brethren, 1915), 397.

<sup>24</sup> Williamson, 29.

<sup>25</sup> Schlosser, 37.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>31</sup> Zug, 409.

<sup>32</sup> Schlosser, 66.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>34</sup> Williamson, 42.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 67.

presidency with H. K. Ober.<sup>37</sup> In 1930, Hertzler influenced the board not to close the college in times of financial trouble by stating “we did not start this college with a view of quitting”, boosting spirits and saving the college.<sup>38</sup>

From 1918 until his death in 1936, he served as second chairman of the board of trustees.<sup>39</sup> On 22 January 1929 during a board meeting regarding collegiate sports, Hertzler was placed on the committee regarding the institution of collegiate basketball.<sup>40</sup> Hertzler died on 7 March 1936, leaving behind a legacy as “Uncle Sam” the preacher, church administrator, and friend.<sup>41</sup> In 1972, Founders Hall was christened with a wing named for each man who was influential to the founding of the college, including Hertzler.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Schlosser, 90.

<sup>38</sup> Williamson, 127.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>40</sup> Schlosser, 148.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

<sup>42</sup> Williamson, 262.