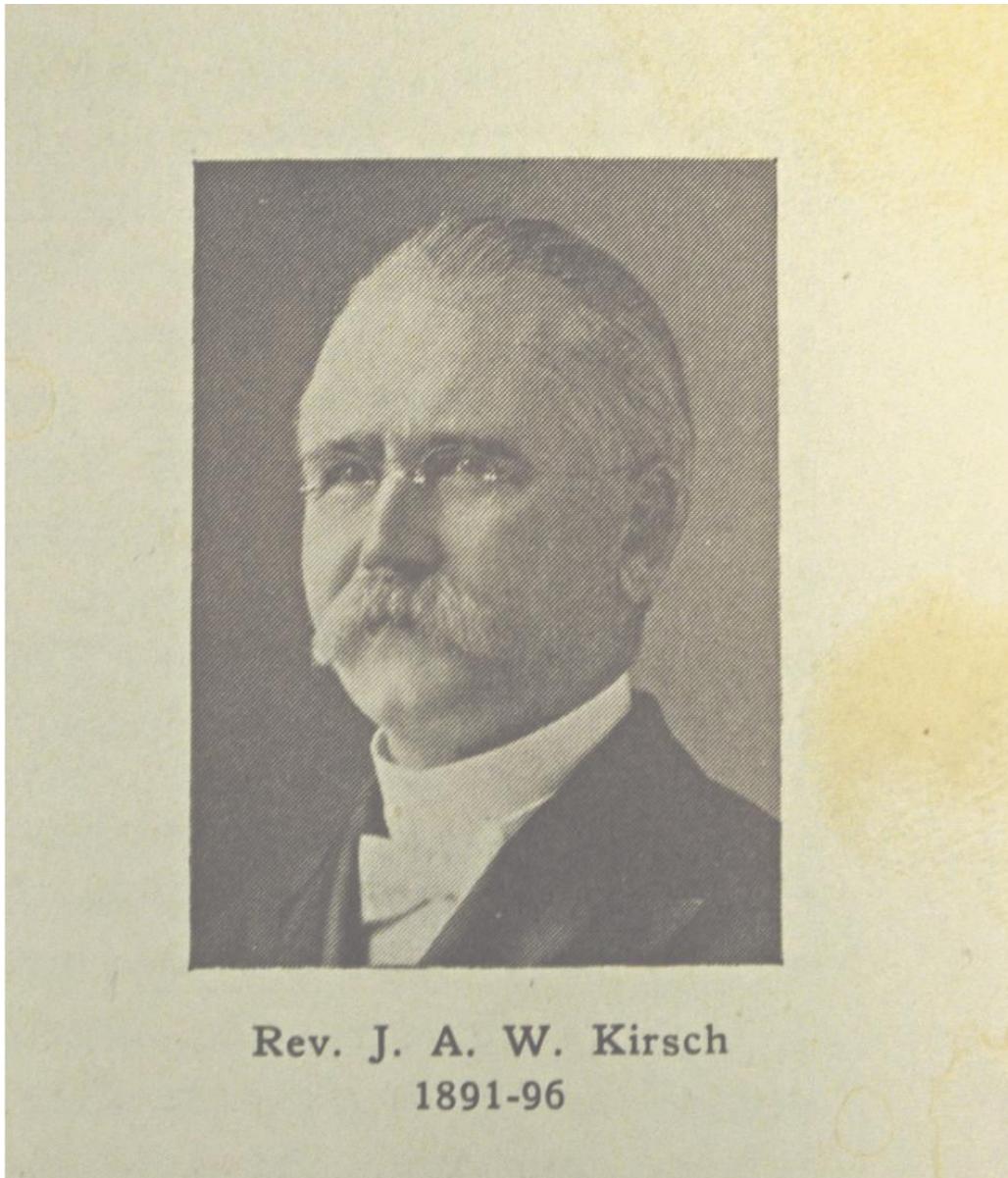


Voices from the past

Today is Jan. 6, 2018, I wondered what Grandma Barshied wrote in some of her diaries for this day. I chose on at random — 1936, when I was six years old. The entry for Jan. 6, 1936 was “cloudy, snow PM, washed, handsome Rev. Kirsch died, 52 eggs.” The ministers name came back to me. Not from here but from Berea, Kentucky. About the time I started at Fort Klock in 1954 I became more interested in historic pageants. On that year, as Fort Klock was being rescued from ruin, we had a flag raising that we called our first Fort Klock Pageant. Pageants were not new to me even in 1954 since I had my interest stirred by the Indian Pageant at Ticonderoga in the late 1940’s. You say, “What has that to do with Berea, Kentucky and Reverend Kirsch?” At that period of my life I did not get to travel far. However I heard of several outdoor pageants in the South.



The first one my wife and I saw was the Indian Pageant at Cherokee, South Carolina. Another attended was at Kilty Hawk. The one I now address was at Berea, Kentucky. Berea is a well-known college town. We arrived early for the outdoor drama about Kentucky being divided against itself in the Civil War. Rather than sitting, waiting for the drama to start I went to the souvenirs stand on the grounds. There were a large selection of brooms and brushes made from broom corn. I approached a middle-aged clerk. My question was, “Is broom corn grown here?” The answer was yes. Then I stated that once much was grown in our section of New York

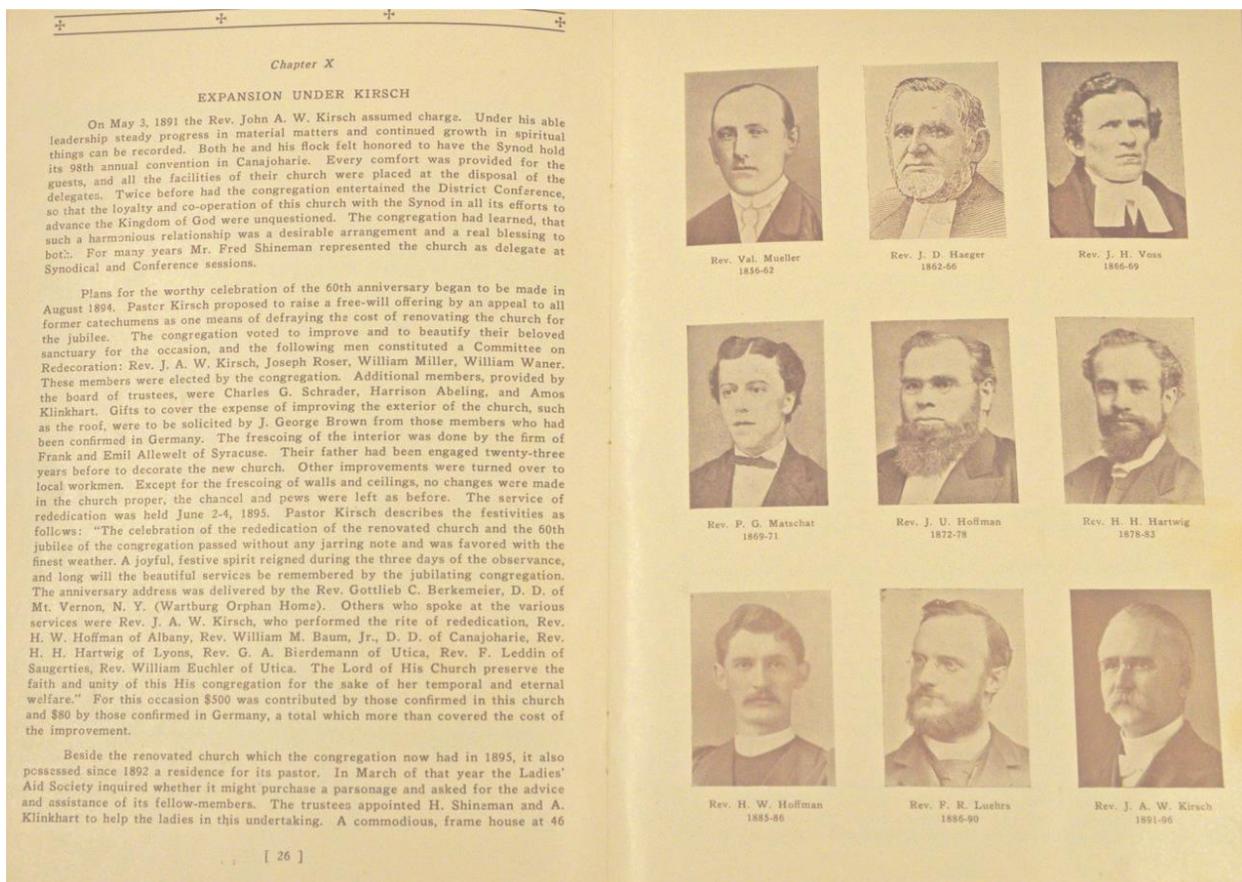
State. The clerk asked where in New York I lived. My answer was, "A small village in the Mohawk Valley I'm sure you never heard of; Canajoharie." He then asked my name. When I said Barshied I got a real surprise.

The clerk said, "I stayed over night with your grandfather and grandmother and also with your Shineman relatives." I asked how that was. His reply was, "My name is Kirsch and my father was the minister of St. John's Lutheran Church where all of your relatives belonged." Because of his age, I thought he must be a professor. It was years later that I found out the truth. He was another student who had been in the military in WWI. I never saw Reverend John A.W. Kirsch's son again. Like old minds and stacks of paper things get lost. So did his obituary, the story of the Berea Pageant and the fact that his first wife died in Canajoharie, and his second came from Canajoharie was afterward learned. Their final resting place is within sight of my own cemetery plot in the Canajoharie Falls Cemetery. The Berea Pageant long ago ceased to exist except in an old man's aged mind who remembers a chance encounter many years ago.

Skip Barshied, Stone Arabia

Addendum: The last word on Rev. Kirsch and Family received from Berea College.

The man I met years ago was Frederick W. Kirsch. He was born in Canajoharie in 1896. He enrolled in Berea College at the age of 45 in 1941, graduating in 1946.



His father was Rev. John A.W. Kirsch born in Germany in 1865 and died in Canajoharie in 1936. He served St. John's Lutheran Church from 1891 to 1896. His wife died at Canajoharie in 1892. Rev. Kirsch's second wife was Canajoharie native Wilhemina Hammersmith who passed away in 1941.