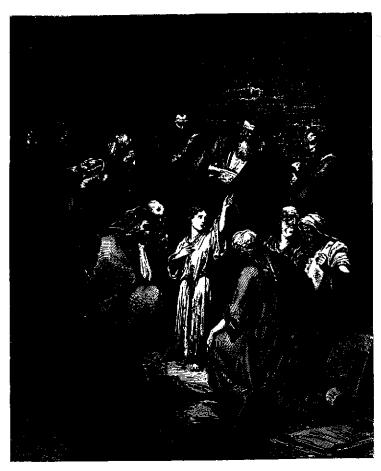
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Oberlin Hymn Makers

With its unique combination of conservatory of music and liberal arts college, Oberlin College has provided a variety of voices for the ongoing chorus of congregational song.

Mary Louise Van Dyke

n "scientific" tunes and gospel songs, in strictly rhymed and metered texts and free-flowing poetry, in psalm paraphrase and social statement—Oberlin hymn makers have expressed the Oberlin spirit since the college's beginnings. In all their hymn making is a touch of the Oberlin tendency to plant one foot firmly in the past while using the other to change the present.

Emily H. Miller, Class of 1857, a college and university administrator, wrote a hymn, "Rallying Song," for young temperance crusaders. Caroline Goodenough '18, a missionary in Natal, raised the consciousness of her contemporaries to racial and social injustices in Africa with her hymns. And clergyman William Watkins Reid, Jr. '47 responded to a resolution to impeach President Nixon in 1973 with his hymn "God of our common life." The vignettes that follow explore the activities of these and other Oberlin hymn makers.

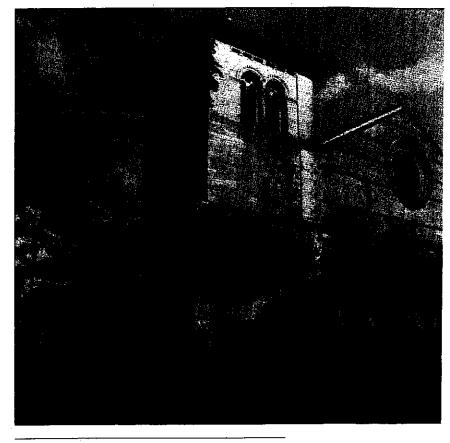
The First Oberlin Hymn Makers

Perhaps the earliest Oberlin graduate to use the persuasive power of hymn singing was George Nelson Allen, Class of 1838. His Oberlin career included roles as teacher of sacred music, professor, principal of the Preparatory Department, professor of geology and natural history, and secretary and treasurer of the college.

Foremost—from 1838 to 1864—Allen was a teacher of music at Oberlin, where he founded Musical Union and the Oberlin Choir. He printed much of the ensembles' music from hand-carved blocks of cherry wood.

A hymn sung earnestly and musically had potential to bring the singer nearer the Holy Spirit, Allen believed; so he brought out Oberlin's first hymnal in pocket size to enable faculty and students to join in hymn singing throughout the daily college routine.

Many early nineteenth-century American hymn writers balanced the newly emerging styles of camp-meeting and singing-school tunes with European models. (At Oberlin, the "correct" German ideal persisted, and the conservatory course ultimately was based on the Leipzig curriculum.)



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Allen's 1844 tune Maitiand, written to Thomas Shepherd's "Must Simon [Jesus] bear the cross alone," was constructed to conform to his teacher Lowell Mason's blueprint for "scientific" music. It expressed enough distinctive flavor, however, to be given the name Western Melody by some hymnal editors of the day, including Henry Ward Beecher. With Allen's tune and his added third stanza this hymn is still a favorite.

Joshua McCarter Simpson, a free black citizen from the Zanesville, Ohio, area, was on campus from 1845 to 1848. Simpson was one of the most prolific early creators of antislavery songs. As the author of "Freedom's Cause" (sung to the tune for "We won't give up the Bible") he has been included in Jon Michael Spencer's collection *Unsung Hymns by Black and Unknown Bards*. A copy of Simpson's first published works, *Original Anti-Slavery Songs* (1852), is in the Oberlin College Library Special Collections.

Early Oberlin Women Hymnists

Emily Clark Huntington Miller (1833-1913) became renowned in academic and literary circles. Often described as "that slightly built but strong-willed" woman, she edited several leading magazines and produced 20 volumes of novels, poetry, and children's stories. As she moved into ever widening circles, her hymns reflected her involvement in missionary societies, Sunday School, Chautauqua, and the temperance movement. Thirty-six of her texts appeared in hymnals of her day.

In reflections written for her fiftieth Oberlin reunion in 1907 she recalled the ugliness of the campus and continued: "What mattered such mundane considerations while President Finney discoursed to us in the class-room and flashed the terrors of the law above our heads from the pulpit, while tender-hearted Dr. Morgan wept impartially over his own shortcomings and ours?"

In 1871 Miller was one of a group of women who founded Evanston College for Ladies with Frances Willard as president. Later (1891-98) she was dean of women and professor of English literature at Northwestern University. Through her deanship "she always believed that women should be considered as part of the general student body, without special treatment and rules on account of sex," according to her obituary in the Northwestern Christian Advocate.

Miller was influential in founding the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). Though not in the forefront of the movement, she delivered temperance lectures and wrote a column for the WCTU newspaper, in addition to writing "Rallying Song." Both Oberlin and Northwestern awarded her honorary degrees.

Four generations of Oberlin students claim lineage to Caroline Leonard Goodenough (1856-1946). Over a century ago this woman was a true "daughter of Oberlin" in her independent think-

ing, staunch support of equal rights for women, and sentiments against slavery and war.

In her book *Highlights on Hymnists* Goodenough recalled her first train journey from Bridgewater, Massachusetts, to Oberlin. "It was a great step into the unknown to me, and my whole life since then has been shaped from that event from which grew my marriage and my career in African mission work."

What was this Oberlin—between 1873 and 1877—that shaped her life? The enrollment had passed the 1200 mark; John Mercer Langston's nomination of Lucy Stone for the 1871 commencement speaker was opposed by many faculty members who considered a woman inappropriate; President Fairchild led Oberlin in celebrating the passage of legislation giving the vote to blacks; and visiting lecturers Goodenough may have heard included Bret Harte, James W. Riley, Ralph W. Emerson, Horace Greeley, and Henry W. Beecher.

Goodenough's diaries indicate that she was in touch with many of the best hymn writers of her day, including B.D. Ackley, Homer Rodeheaver, and Oberlin alumnus H. Augustine Smith. Hymns fill the 14 volumes of her poems, many of which were published in Oberlin. Her harmonizations are correct by textbook standards, with an occasional hint of tone painting. In the texts Goodenough expresses her faith that the human race is progressing toward peace and justice.

Whether written from the comforts of the old homestead in Bridgewater or from the 35 years in Africa she described as "lonely and sore troubled," a trace of social vision is apparent in all her writings. Her poems from America lampoon statesmen, picture gloomy worlds of children of the city streets, or celebrate unselfish service, while those from Africa grieve over the inequities and injustices suffered by African women. Her husband, Herbert Delos Goodenough (class of 1877) in a small booklet about Zulu hymns published in Cape Town in 1909 warned of forcing African hymns into English meters.

By the time Caroline Goodenough's *High-lights on Hymnists* went to press in 1931, Anna Louise Strong '05 had become an international figure, and Goodenough could not conceal her admiration as she wrote of Strong in her book: "She made journeys to China and Japan but her chief labor has been in Russia where she went in 1921 to assist in famine relief under the Friends. ... [She] has organized a paper called 'The Moscow News' for which she is managing editor with a staff of ten people. ... She considers it her job to promote friendly relations between the United States and the U.S.S.R."

Gene Claghorn includes Strong in his Women Composers and Hymnists (Metuchen, New Jersey, and London: Scarecrow Press, 1984). (Although her poem "The City of God" is strophic, the metrical scheme varies with each stanza; to my knowledge it has not been set to music).

Strong's other claim to fame—coming long before her multi-faceted career began—was staked when she compiled with Edna Barrows the first Oberlin College Song Book.

After graduating from Oberlin, Strong traveled abroad as a journalist, newspaper reporter, correspondent for Hearst newspapers in Eastern Europe, lecturer, and writer, notable for her newsletter *Letter from China*, published between 1958 and 1970.

Mary Ann Temple Bell came to Oberlin from Vicksburg, Mississippi, in 1877 as a preparatory-school literature student. Later she taught in the Vicksburg schools. Her setting for F.M. Davis's "Come, join the army" was published in 1906.

Mary (May) Whittle Moody came to Oberlin to receive training in music in 1888. She co-edited with Charles Alexander the *Northfield Hymnal No. 3*. Her setting of her father's text "Moment by moment," copyrighted in England and America on the same day in 1893, became immediately popular all around the world.

The success with which Lucy Rider, Class of 1872, integrated several careers makes her a forebear of today's double-degree students. Having earned M.D. and M.A. degrees 15 and 32 years after graduating from Oberlin, she taught chemistry at McKendree College while gaining international recognition as one of the most influential leaders in the Methodist church. She authored several books, including one with an introduction by Dwight L. Moody; edited a collection of 136 hymns titled Everybody's Gospel Songs; served on the faculty of Northfield Seminary; and for many years held the principalship of the Chicago Training School for Missions, which she and her husband, Josiah Meyer, had founded. Of her dozen or more published hymns still sung, a favorite is "The Lord bless thee," written in 1884.

Two Evangelists, an Entrepreneur, and an Editor

Daniel Sidney Warner, widely acclaimed evangelical preacher and founder of the Church of God movement, attended Oberlin briefly in 1865. Of his 273 published hymns, several are translated into foreign languages.

Sisag Krikor Emurian '01, an Armenian immigrant, fled the Turks in 1896. Arriving in America, he borrowed money to get to Oberlin, where he planned to realize his dream of becoming an opera singer. But, once there, President Henry Churchill King persuaded him to enroll in Oberlin's theological seminary instead. After earning his Bachelor of Divinity degree this singing clergyman made several evangelistic tours of Ohio and New York churches. As a composer-preacher he published a booklet containing his own gospel songs in 1913; one of the most popular was "God's best for me."

H. Augustine Smith (1875-1952) was one of

Oberlin's entrepreneurial alumni, carrying religious song and drama to the wider world in the form of festivals and water pageants, two of which were produced at Chautauqua. The largest was planned for Kansas City in 1922 at Christmas time, when he was to direct "a large proportion of the entire population of the city," according to "News of the Alumni" in the November 1922 Oberlin Alumni Magazine. A profile of Smith in the May 1923 OAM noted that probably his greatest pageant was "The Light of the World," which was given in Tokyo as well as in the United States.

Smith held directorships of the Department of Hymnology at Chicago Theological Seminary, Department of Fine Arts of Boston University, and Department of Music at Chautauqua. He did editorial work on several hymnals, including *The Army and Navy Hymnal* and the *American Youth Hymnal*. Always the educator and ever ready to encourage appreciation of the new, he incorporated into *The New Church Hymnal* 100 hymns and tunes never published before in America.

Before his graduation from Oberlin in 1925, Rob Roy Peery (1900-1973) was awarded the Ohio State prize in composition. A church organist and college teacher, he also worked as musical editor of *The Etude*, editor-in-chief for Theodore Presser Company publishers, and associate editor for Lorenz Music Publishers. For many years he was a member of the Committee on Church Music for the United Lutheran Church in America. He was one of the earliest members of The Hymn Society of America, and his settings of texts by several authors appear in many hymnals.

Influences From Other Cultures

R. Nathaniel Dett '08 did much to bring the African spiritual to the attention of the world. Dett (1882-1943) was one of the first blacks to earn an Oberlin conservatory degree; in 1926 he was the first African American to be awarded an honorary Mus.D. degree from the college.

Dett enjoyed a distinguished career as teacher and composer, studying with Nadia Boulanger in Paris in 1929, founding the Hampton Institute School of Music, and teaching at Lane College, Lincoln Institute, and Bennet College. He published two sets of arrangements of spirituals: Religious Folk Songs of the Negro and The Dett Collection of Negro Spirituals. He took a prominent part in advancing musical education for African Americans in the United States, was president of the National Association of Negro Musicians from 1924 to 1926, and received awards for both music and literature from Harvard University, Eastman School of Music, and the Harmon Society.

His best known oratorio is *The Ordering of Moses*, based on the spiritual "Go down, Moses." Some of his arrangements of spirituals are published in *Lift Every Voice and Sing*. Dett's hymn "My Lord, my God, I am undone," previously

unpublished, is included in Unsung Hymns by Black and Unknown Bards.

Another alumnus who widened the dissemination of spirituals was William Grant Still '20. After leaving Oberlin Still studied with the French composer Edgard Varèse, who helped him develop his own style of composition. Still went on to gather honors, commissions, and fellowships that brought him worldwide recognition, including an honorary doctor of music degree from Oberlin in 1947. A bibliography of his works includes *Twelve Negro Spirituals* and 24 arrangements of Negro spirituals.

Philip Frazier '22 (1892-1964), a native American, came to Oberlin from the Santee Indian School, Santee, Nebraska. Native Dakota congregations continue to use his hymn "Many and great" during occasions of communion, birth, and burial. During his student years he sang with the College Glee Club, often appearing in full Native American regalia. Following his graduation from Oberlin and from the Chicago Theological Seminary, he was ordained and spent his life in missionary work among the Dakota, Osage, and Kickapoo peoples. Oberlin awarded Frazier an honorary degree in 1960.

Though not a Sioux by birth, Frances Densmore (piano major 1884-87) was adopted by Chief Red Fox. Her analysis of 600 religious songs from the Chippewa and Teton Sioux tribes was published in 1918 and reprinted by the Smithsonian Institute in 1993.

The Reverend William Kaina '63, returning to his native Hawaii after graduation, coordinated the work that produced *Na Himeni Haipule Hawaii* in 1972. Also known as the *Sesquicentennial Edition Hawaiian Hymnbook*, the volume contains hymns from many ages and nations in addition to Hawaiian hymns in print for the first time.

Inspiring and Inspired

Dosia Carlson '52 is an inspiration to the differently abled. The day before she was to enter high school Carlson was hospitalized with polio, and her dreams of becoming a missionary in China were shattered. She went on from Oberlin to seminary, was ordained, earned a doctorate at the University of Pittsburgh, and served on the faculty at Defiance College from 1960 to 1974. Moving west, she became founder and director of the Beatitudes Center for Developing Older Adult Resources in Phoenix. She was named Arizona's Woman of Distinction for 1989 and has won the Antoinette Brown Award for outstanding women clergy. Her hymns—published in at least 12 major hymnals and widely sung throughout America and other countries—highlight her autobiography, God's Glory.

The music of Calvin Hampton '60 is well known and often performed by church organists and choirs today. George Calvin Hampton (1938-1984)

taught at Salem College, North Carolina. While director of music for the Parish of Calvary/St. George's, New York City, he played the celebrated Midnight Concerts at Calvary every Friday. His hymn tunes are found in many hymnals. Twenty of them, set to various texts, were published in *The Calvin Hampton Hymnary* (Chicago: G.I.A., 1980).

Hampton once described his approach to writing hymn tunes: "My motivation as a composer arises from a desire to share with other people ideas which inspire me....First, of course, one must be possessed of inspired ideas, and second, one must have the technique to put those ideas into such a form as will make their magic available to other ears....When a hymn text is given to me, I read and reread it until I have a sense of what mood I would like to maintain. Mood, translated into musical terms, can be established by something as small as a chord sequence, a rhythmic pulse, an accompaniment figure, a melodic curvature, or any combination thereof....The melody and harmonies must be able to bear four or five repetitions without becoming redundant-the tessitura must be considerate of the number of stanzas untrained voices are being asked to endure-and there must be enough places to breathe!...Like the artist who is always sketching to improve his visual sense, the hymn-tune writer must always be honing his ability to be both succinct and significant."

Uniting Body, Mind, and Spirit

In her lifetime involvement with sacred movement Margaret Taylor's emphasis has turned from performance to working with people who have no training, in dance. Following her graduation from Oberlin in 1930 Taylor did graduate work at the University of Chicago, where she was a member of the chapel's dance group. She wrote *Hymns in Action* to encourage congregations to find meaning in the hymns they sing. About her recent book, *Children Dancing Today's Challenges*, in which she shares her ideas for experiencing hymns in simple ways, she says: "It is just a small candle in a dismal time."

"Perhaps the swing of emphasis away from preponderance of verbalization is needed," she has written, "to bring balance to...worship. The early forms of faith were not something spoken, but something done."

The newly published hymnal for children coedited by Nancy Moore Roth '58 and her husband, Robert, reflects Nancy's lifelong pursuit of the unity of body and mind. We Sing of God is an outgrowth of her classes in creative movement and music, which she has taught young children since 1967.

In the teacher's guide to the hymnal the couple writes: "We live in a culture full of the complexities bequeathed us by Greek dualism, the Enlightenment, the printing press, and television, to

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name just a few culprits. We long for unity of heart and head....To sing is to use more of the brain—both the verbal functions of the left hemisphere and the non-verbal, musical functions of the right hemisphere." To sing, they say, is also to use more of the body's energy, to rediscover one's earliest experience as a human being, and to rediscover the roots of the human race.

After graduating from Oberlin's College of Arts and Sciences with a major in music, Roth studied ballet in Cleveland and New York, earned an M.Div. degree cum laude from General Theological Seminary, and in 1981 was ordained an Episcopal priest.

Having recently left New York City, where she had been teacher of Christian yoga at Trinity Church, Wall Street, Roth lives in Oberlin, where she is associate priest of Christ Episcopal Church and serves as Interim Rector at St. Andrew's parish in Elyria. Her recent publications are a book and tape, A New Christian Yoga and The Breath of God

Exploring the Power of Hymns

The Reverend William Watkins Reid, Jr. '47 believes that a hymn can persuade or teach, and that it has influence beyond written words. He recalls that sixteenth-century Catholic leaders complained that the people sang their way into the heretic's (Luther's) church.

Reid often chooses hymns for his congregation in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, with that history in mind. In October 1973, during a meeting of the Methodist General Board of Church and Society, his committee drafted a resolution for the impeachment of President Nixon. As a response to the resolution, Reid wrote the hymn "God of our common life," which was sung on the steps of the Capitol to a group of U.S. Representatives. In the hymn, references to Nathan and King David in the phrases "God of prophets bold" and "Kings of the right" contrast with references to Elliot Richardson, Archibald Cox, and William Ruckelshaus in lines directed to men who take laws into their own hands.

Reid was commissioned by the Methodist Hymnal Committee to contribute texts for its 1989 hymnal, and two are included in the publication. Another commission was for a hymn celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Pennsylvania Council of Churches. And "O God and Father of us all" was written for the first National Council of Churches conference on church and social welfare

Charles Spivey '48, pastor of Coppin Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC) in Chicago, was a member of the committee compiling the AMEC *Bicentennial Hymnal*. The committee's purposes and goals, he says, were to improve the quality of the 1954 hymnal, to expand the content, to meet the need for hymns and liturgies that are ecumenical, nonsexist, and

contemporary without losing the values to be found in previous editions of the hymnal, and to include hymns used in AME churches in South Africa and the Caribbean.

"Hymns lift up vital aspects of Christian faith, life, and experiences in both a collective and...highly personal, intimate way....Hymns relate us to the past and its faith as incentive and reassurance of the validity of our own faith," Spivey says.

Continuing the Tradition

Marjie Hawthorne '44 has taught organ, piano, and music theory at Iowa State College, Ames. A church organist in many cities over the years, from 1968 to 1974 she was a member of the Hymn Committee commissioned by the Fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ. She is a business-systems analyst with IDS Financial Services Incorporated in Minneapolis.

Hymns and anthems of Grietje Terburg Rowley '46 have been winning entries in competitions. Her hymn "Be thou humble" appears in the 1985 Hymns of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Other published works include children's songbooks, cantatas, piano pieces; and many of her piano and vocal works have been performed.

Verolga Nix '55, winner of numerous musical awards, co-edited *Songs of Zion*, the first black song book published by the United Methodist Church. Nix arranged 52 of its 250 hymn tunes. Scholars have called *Songs of Zion* one of the major church musical resources published in recent years. Nix has composed and arranged over 150 songs, including two volumes of spirituals and the oratorio *Voice of Soul*. She is a Philadelphia music teacher, pianist, vocalist, choir director, seminar leader, and consultant in church music.

Fred Steen '55, '57 is minister of the Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Oberlin. He began his musical training as a youth in San Antonio and sang in the Fisk University Choir before being chosen as one of two in his class at Fisk—from which he graduated in 1951—to come to the Oberlin Seminary.

His appreciation for all kinds of hymns, developed in his earlier experiences, was reinforced by his studies at Oberlin, where the interdenominational focus exposed him to an even wider variety of church song.

In 1976 and 1982 he served on national boards to prepare *The Progressive Baptist Hymnal* and its successor, *The New Progressive Baptist Hymnal*. In speaking of guidelines the boards used in choosing hymns for the hymnals, Steen says that African American congregations need a balance of European "objective" hymns and "subjective" hymns that speak to the oppressed, the hurting.

Organist and choirmaster Roy F. Kehl '58 is assistant organist at Alice Miller Chapel of Northwestern University. As a member of the Standing Commission on Church Music of the Episcopal Church from 1981 to 1985 he helped compile *The Hymnal 1982*, chairing the Plainsong Subcommittee of the Hymn Music Committee and researching hymn-tune names. His hymn tune Haskin is in *Cantate Domino*, a hymnal published by the Chicago diocese in 1979.

John Ferguson '63 has received national acclaim for his preparation and playing of hymn festivals. A review of his recently published *Hymn Harmonizations, Book IV* quotes Ferguson's admonishment to organists to "lift hymn singing out of the mundane and into the exalted." Ferguson was music editor of the 1974 *United Church of Christ Hymnal*. He is Elliot and Klara Stockdal Johnson Professor of Organ and Church Music, Director of the St. Olaf Cantorei, and minister of music to the student congregation at St. Olaf College.

Lee Seaman Spear '68 has done extensive research into the early nineteenth-century vocal music of the Harmonist Society located near Pittsburgh. This group's community worship included many hymns and chorales.

James Curtis Gertmenian '69 came to Oberlin from South Pasadena, California. After receiving the M.Div. degree from Union Theological Seminary he held pastorates in UCC and Presbyterian churches. His hymn "In the brilliant sunlight" was selected for publication by The Hymn Society in 1994. Other hymns of his appear in Newsong, in Banquet of Praise, and in The New Century Hymnal (1995). He is at present the Senior Minister of Norfield Congregational Church in Weston, Connecticut.

Calvin Taylor '70 is widely known as a recording artist and has published many piano and organ arrangements of hymns as well as hymns of his own. Even though he and his wife have a publishing firm in Kentucky, his concert tours demand much of their time.

David Hurd, '71 is professor of church music and organist at General Theological Seminary and on the organ faculty at the Manhattan School of Music. Hurd served on the Episcopal Church Standing Committee on both the Hymn and the Service Music committees and was vice-chair of the commission for six years. Two sets of his hymn arrangements have been published by G.I.A., The David Hurd Hymnary and Supplement to the David Hurd Hymnary. Seven original tunes and many accompaniments, arrangements, and harmonizations of his appear in The Hymnal 1982.

In *The Hymnal 1982* is a chant composed by Jerome Meachen '51.

Also in *The Hymnal 1982* are two compositions by Ray Urwin '72. One is a setting of a fraction anthem, and the other is a setting for the canticle based on the First Song of Isaiah. Urwin composed the canticle tune as a wedding gift for friends married at St. John's Cathedral, Wilmington, Delaware, when Urwin was organist and choirmaster there. He is a member of the Commission

on Liturgy and Music of the Los Angeles Diocese and director of music, St. Francis Episcopal Church, Palos Verdes Estates, California. Three of Urwin's tunes, Penton, Alleluia Me Face, and Kidder are published in *New Songs of Rejoicing* (Selah Publishing Co., 1994).

Four collections of hymn descants and accompaniments by Scott Withrow '53 have been published (Laurel Press, G.I.A., and Abingdon).

Two nineteenth-century gospel hymns arranged by Caroline Arnold '58 were premiered in Washington, D.C., June 2, 1988, by The Congressional Chorus.

Danny Kleinman '57, known for his backgammon books and bridge columns (Miss Lonelyspades), published a collection, *I Sing the Poet Acoustic*, in 1986. He continues to set his own texts and those of William Blake and Robert Herrick in a style appropriate for cantor and choir or congregation.

For her Ph.D. from New York University in historical musicology Alice Caldwell '78 researched the development of Moravian liturgical music. Her articles on that topic have been published in *The Moravian Music Journal* (1989-90) and in *Communal Societies* (1989). The first complete edition of *Christian Gregor's Liturgies of 1791* contained texts for congregational singing, which Caldwell has subdivided by their hymn or chorale treatments. She points out the importance of hymns and chorales to the Moravian liturgy from its beginning.

Also "alumni" by virtue of honorary degrees received from Oberlin are Katherine Bates (Litt.D. '16) and Ferdinand Q. Blanchard (Hon. '19). Bates's "America the Beautiful" has grown in popularity since it first appeared in the Fourth of July issue of *The Congregationalist* in 1895. Blanchard, one of Cleveland, Ohio's most widely known clergymen and civic leaders, wrote several hymns that were published in many collections.

Professor Emeritus Daniel Moe is a renowned composer of contemporary hymns and liturgies. His tune Troen is in *The Hymnal 1982*.

These and unknown others through their music-making and language skills honed in the practice rooms and classrooms of Oberlin College, have helped open new doors in hymnody.