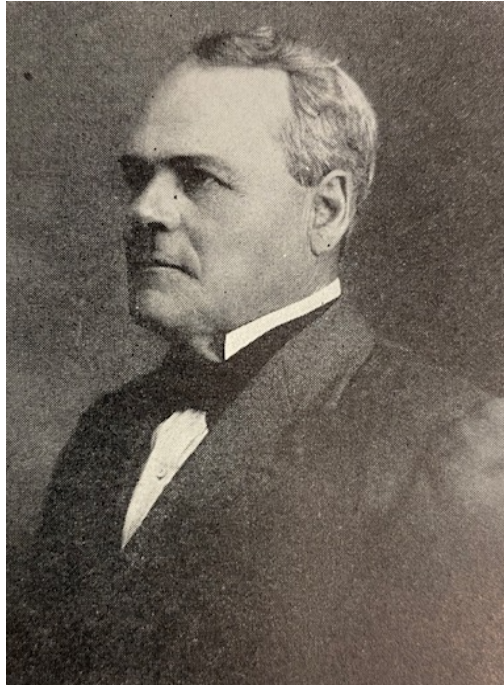


HENRY MIXTER PENNIMAN
(23 June 1851 – 2 August 1937)



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In 1895, Berea College hired Rev. Henry Mixter Penniman, an ordained minister of the Congregationalist denomination. Rev. Penniman had applied and had interviewed for, had received an offer of, and then accepted the position of “Assistant to the President,” William Goodell Frost at the time, “to raise funds for [the institution].” Penniman’s appointment carried a two-fold title: “Assistant to the President” and “Professor of Christian Evidences.” Rev. Penniman assumed his duties at Berea College in the academic year of 1895–96.¹ He later also served as Assistant to the President in Field Work for President William James Hutchins.² Although Penniman retired from the College in 1922, he continued to serve as Assistant Emeritus to President Wm. James Hutchins in Field Work for several additional years.³

Penniman’s family came from New England. His father was Dr. James Penniman. Penniman’s mother, Ann Eliza Houghton, from Amherst, Massachusetts, gave birth to Henry Mixter Penniman on 23 June 1851 in New Braintree, Massachusetts.⁴ Henry had earned three academic degrees. He took the B.A. degree from Brown University, graduating from there “with honors” in 1874. He also held an M.A. degree from Brown University and an M.A. degree from Andover Newton Theological Seminary.⁵ Henry Mixter Penniman and Caroline Fobes married in Boston, Massachusetts in 1873. The Pennimans had one surviving child, a daughter: Grace Allen Penniman. After the death of Penniman’s first wife, he married Ms. Flora Hidden in August 1911, who also subsequently preceded Henry in death on 4 January 1929.⁶

Prior to his work at Berea College, Penniman had served as a Congregationalist pastor in three churches: First Parish Congregational Church in East Derry, New Hampshire (1884–89); Tabernacle Congregational Church in Chicago, Illinois; and First Congregational Church in Keokuk, Iowa.⁷ Although Penniman held an academic title at Berea College, “Professor of Christian Evidences,”⁸ he spent the vast majority of his time traveling, delivering sermons in churches, as well as speaking with both individual potential donors and groups of people about the character, distinctive mission, and needs of Berea College. Edward A. Parker, in a letter of recommendation for Penniman to President Frost of Berea College, described Penniman as “a man of energetic mind, transparent honesty, and earnest benevolence,” as well as both “careful in his plans for doing good” and “resolute in his execution of [those plans].”⁹

In his role as primary fundraiser for Berea College, Penniman met many people and made many friends for the College, successfully and richly advancing the institutional mission. In 1932, in an article about Penniman, the College stated that perhaps Penniman’s “most outstanding achievement was winning for the College the loyal and lasting friendship of Mr. H. D. Woods of Newton, Massachusetts.”¹⁰ Indeed, Penniman and Woods themselves developed a lasting friendship. As a result of their friendship and the high esteem in which Woods held Penniman, in 1920, prior to Penniman’s retirement in 1922, Woods donated funds for an endowment to support a named professorship in honor of Henry Mixter Penniman.¹¹

At Penniman’s funeral in 1937, William James Hutchins, then president of Berea College, described Penniman as “the slave of Christ.”¹² Walter George Muelder, an important North-American theologian in his own right,¹³ who began his own teaching career at Berea College and later serving as Dean of the Boston University School of Theology (1945–1972), also spoke at Penniman’s funeral. Muelder described Penniman as “a great servant of education,” “brilliant as a theologian,” but emphasized that, even more, Penniman “was a servant of his Christ and his God,” “essentially a campaigner for his God.” Muelder concluded his eulogy with a wish that genuinely demonstrated the high regard in which the larger College community held Penniman: “... may his confidence in the Eternal be the consolation of those who remain to mourn his passing.”¹⁴

ENDNOTES

¹ *Bulletin of Berea College*, new series, no. 6 (November 1908) (Berea, Kentucky: Berea College Printing Department, 1908), 14; and *Catalogue of Berea College: 1897–98* (Berea, Kentucky: Berea College Press, 1897), 7 (Special Collections and Archives, Hutchins Library, Berea College [Berea, Kentucky]); and *The Berea Alumnus*, vol. 2, no. 3 (September 1932): 5.

² *Bulletin of Berea College (and Allied Schools): August 1919*, new series, no. 41, *General Catalog: 1919–20*, 2d edition (Berea, Kentucky: Berea College Press, 1919), 16; and *Bulletin of Berea College and Allied Schools*, new series, no. 42, *General Catalog: November 1921*, 2d edition (Berea, Kentucky: Berea College Press, 1921), 19 (Special Collections and Archives, Hutchins Library, Berea College [Berea, Kentucky]).

³ *Bulletin of Berea College and Allied Schools: General Catalog November 1923*, new series, no. 52 (Berea, Kentucky: Berea College Press, 1923), 14; and *Bulletin of Berea College and Allied Schools: General Catalog, 1932–33*, new series, no. 87 (Berea, Kentucky: Berea College Press, November 1932), 167 (Special Collections and Archives, Hutchins Library, Berea College [Berea, Kentucky]).

⁴ *The Citizen* (Berea, Kentucky: 5 August 1987), page 1 (Special Collections and Archives, Hutchins Library, Berea College: Record Group No. 9.36, Box 1/1; Record Group – Faculty and Staff; Subgroup – Henry Mixer Penniman, File RG 9.36, 1/1: “Henry Mixer Penniman Biographical” [Berea, Kentucky]).

⁵ *The Citizen* (Berea, Kentucky: 5 August 1987), page 1 (Special Collections and Archives, Hutchins Library, Berea College: Record Group No. 9.36, Box 1/1; Record Group – Faculty and Staff; Subgroup – Henry Mixer Penniman, File RG 9.36, 1/1: “Henry Mixer Penniman Biographical” [Berea, Kentucky]).

⁶ *The Citizen* (Berea, Kentucky: 5 August 1987), page 1 (Special Collections and Archives, Hutchins Library, Berea College: Record Group No. 9.36, Box 1/1; Record Group – Faculty and Staff; Subgroup – Henry Mixer Penniman, File RG 9.36, 1/1: “Henry Mixer Penniman Biographical” [Berea, Kentucky]).

⁷ *The Berea Alumnus*, vol. 2, no. 3 (September 1932) (Berea, Kentucky: Berea College Press, 1932), page 5 (Special Collections and Archives, Hutchins Library, Berea College [Berea, Kentucky]). Also see “First Parish Congregational Church: United Church of Christ” (“History,” “The Pastors”) (<https://fpc-ucc.org/history/the-pastors/>).

⁸ The College consistently had offered versions of the course, “Evidences of Christianity,” since the inception of the school: see *First Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Berea College (1866–67)* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Gazette Steam Printing Office, 1867), 13 [Special Collections and Archives, [Berea College Catalogs, Berea / 378.7691 / B48C / 1866–92], Hutchins Library, Berea College [Berea, Kentucky]); *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Berea College (1867–68)* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Elm Street Printing, 1868), 16, 19 (Special Collections and Archives, Hutchins Library, Berea College [Berea, Kentucky]). The College later offered an initial, though vague, description of this course: “Evidences of Christianity — a study of both external and internal evidences, with lectures and course of readings” (*Bulletins of Berea College: Announcements for Collegiate and Academic Departments: 1902–03* [Berea, Kentucky: College Press, May 1902], 40; Special Collections and Archives, Hutchins Library, Berea College [Berea, Kentucky]). As collegiate curricula developed, the College later changed the name of this course to “Apologetics,” which the College described similarly: “a study of the grounds of Christian belief,” “[e]xternal and internal evidence” (*Bulletin of Berea College: College and Academy Announcements*, new series, no. 14 [1911–13] [Berea, Kentucky: Printing Department of Berea College, April 1911], 56). (The latter description includes titles of required textbooks: Fisher, *Manual of Christian Evidence*; and Smythe, *The Old Documents and the New Bible*; Special Collections and Archives, Hutchins Library, Berea College [Berea, Kentucky]). At that time, the College listed this course in the philosophy curriculum of the Collegiate Department (*Bulletin of Berea College: The College Catalog 1911–1912*, new series, no. 16 [May 1911] [Berea, Kentucky: Printing Department of Berea College, 1911], 56 [Special

Collections and Archives, Hutchins Library, Berea College [Berea, Kentucky]). After the College had re-organized and had consolidated its teaching of curricula in studies of religion (Christianity) and philosophy under the “Department of Religious Education,” the College listed the course (either as “Evidences of Christianity” or “Apologetics”) in the curricular category of “Philosophy of Religion” (one of five subcategories of curricula in the Department) (*Bulletin of Berea College and Allied Schools: General Catalog [August 1921]*, 1st ed., new series, no. 46 [Berea, Kentucky: Berea College Press, 1921], 75; Special Collections and Archives, Hutchins Library, Berea College [Berea, Kentucky]). For some time, John G. Fee himself had held the similar title: “Professor of Evidences and Biblical Literature” (*Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Berea College: 1890–91* [Richmond, Kentucky: Climax Printing Company, 1891], 4; Special Collections and Archives, Hutchins Library, Berea College [Berea, Kentucky]).

⁹Edward A. Parker (Andover, Massachusetts), Letter of Recommendation for Henry Mixter Penniman to William Goodell Frost, President of Berea College (16 October 1895), page 1 (Special Collections and Archives, Hutchins Library, Berea College: Record Group No. 9.36, Box 1/2; Record Group – Faculty and Staff; Subgroup – Henry Mixter Penniman, Folder RG 9.36, 1/2: “Henry Mixter Penniman Correspondence” [Berea, Kentucky]).

¹⁰ *The Berea Alumnus*, vol. 2, no. 3 (September 1932) (Berea, Kentucky: Berea College Press, 1932), page 5 (Special Collections and Archives, Hutchins Library, Berea College [Berea, Kentucky]).

¹¹ *Berea College: The General Catalog Issue (Announcements, 1940–41)*, New Series, No. 117 (Berea, Kentucky: Berea College Press, 1940), 50 (Special Collections and Archives, Hutchins Library, Berea College [Berea, Kentucky]). The first reference to this new professorship, however, occurs a full twenty years after its establishment.

¹² *The Citizen* (Berea, Kentucky: 5 August 1987), page 3 (Special Collections and Archives, Hutchins Library, Berea College: Record Group No. 9.36, Box 1/1; Record Group – Faculty and Staff; Subgroup – Henry Mixter Penniman, File RG 9.36, 1/1: “Henry Mixter Penniman Biographical” [Berea, Kentucky]).

¹³ See the following publications: Walter George Muelder, *Foundations of the Responsible Society* (New York, New York: Abingdon Press, 1959); Walter George Muelder, *In Every Place a Voice* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Women’s Division of Christian Service, Board of Missions, Methodist Church, 1957?); Edgar Sheffield Brightman and Walter George Muelder, *Historical Outline of the Bible* (Berea, Kentucky: Berea College Press, 1936); Walter George Muelder, *Moral Law in Christian Social Ethics* (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1966); and Paul Deats, Jr., ed., *Toward a Discipline of Social Ethics: Essays in Honor of Walter George Muelder* (Boston, Massachusetts: Boston University Press, 1972).

¹⁴ *The Citizen* (Berea, Kentucky: 5 August 1987), page 3 (Special Collections and Archives, Hutchins Library, Berea College: Record Group No. 9.36, Box 1/1; Record Group – Faculty and Staff; Subgroup – Henry Mixter Penniman, File RG 9.36, 1/1: “Henry Mixter Penniman Biographical” [Berea, Kentucky]).