

# Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage



Volume I, Number 2

April 1978



## Contributors to This Issue



J. Spencer Overholser



Walter Klaassen



David L. Sauder

**J. Spencer Overholser**, a native of and former schoolteacher in North Dakota, found his eastern Pennsylvania roots soon after he moved east in 1950. Trained in chemistry at Jamestown College (North Dakota), where he received his BS degree in 1937, he served as a food chemist and later as a United States Food and Drug Administration inspector. He spent a total of twenty-three years with the United States Patent Office as a patent examiner and later as a supervisory patent examiner.

Mr. Overholser has spent many of his efforts in community service and church work in Maryland and is currently an active member of Friedens Lutheran Church in Oley, Pennsylvania. In 1961 the Boy Scouts of America awarded him the Silver Beaver, and in 1973 the United States Department of Commerce bestowed on him a bronze medal. Since 1956 he has served as president of the Overholser Family Association, which meets annually in August at Terre Hill, Pennsylvania. He is a life member of the National Genealogical Society, the Lancaster County Historical Society, and the Maryland Historical Society and also holds membership in numerous other historical organizations, including the Mennonite Historical Associates.

**Walter Klaassen**, recent editor of *Mennonite Quarterly Review* and director of the Institute of Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies at Conrad Grebel College, presented this article as a lecture at the March 7, 1977, meeting of the Mennonite Historical Associates at Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Born at Laird, Saskatchewan, he received his BD degree in church history in 1957 from McMaster Divinity School and his PhD degree in 1960 from Oxford University. He wrote his doctoral dissertation on "Word, Spirit or Scripture in Early Anabaptist Thought." After teaching at Bethel College in Kansas, he served at Conrad Grebel College from 1964 to 1971. Since 1974 he has been professor of history at Conrad Grebel College. He has also lectured

at various schools in New Testament, church history, German literature, Renaissance and Reformation history, and historical theology. He is co-editor of the Classics of the Radical Reformation series and is also executive secretary of the North American Committee for the Documentation of Free Church Origins.

He has published Anabaptist-related articles and book reviews in numerous United States and Canadian professional journals and has authored the following books: *What Have You to Do with Peace* (1969); *Anabaptism: Neither Catholic nor Protestant* (1973); and *The Writings of Pilgram Marpeck*, an English translation and annotation (in cooperation with William Klassen) currently at the press. He has also completed a manuscript on *Anabaptism in Outline*, a collection of topically arranged sources in English translation. He has also begun research for a book-length volume, *Eschatology and Millennium in the Radical Reformation*.

**David L. Sauder**, principal of Ephrata Mennonite School since 1969, wrote this article in preparation for a booklet he is editing on the history of the Metzler community. It will be published this summer in connection with the 250th anniversary of the congregation and the twentieth annual meeting of the Lancaster Mennonite Conference Historical Society. He serves on the planning committee and is also an MHA member.

In addition to his teaching responsibilities in music and social studies, he sings with and sometimes serves as soloist for the thirty-member Ephrata Cloister Chorus, organized in 1959 and best known for its interpretation of original Cloister music of the mid-1700s. Interested in song leading and in church music, he has directed the Ephrata Area Mennonite Chorus since 1963. A member of the Metzler Mennonite congregation, he is a son of Bishop Amos H. Sauder of the Groffdale District and a brother of Marvin R. Sauder, one of the Lancaster Mennonite Conference Historical Society board members. He is the father of three children.



## STAFF

*Editor*  
Carolyn L. Charles

*Copy Editor*  
Lloyd Zeager

*Language Consultant*  
Noah G. Good

*Designer*  
Jan Gleysteen

*Layout*  
Thomas Hershberger

*Editorial Council*  
Leonard Gross  
Amos B. Hoover  
John S. Oyer  
Martin E. Ressler  
John L. Ruth  
Grace I. Showalter  
Roy M. Showalter  
Wilmer D. Swope  
Robert F. Ulle

# Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage



Volume I, Number 2

April 1978

## IN THIS ISSUE

- The Terre Hill Oberholtzer Family 2  
*by J. Spencer Overholser*
- Metzler Mennonite Congregation, 1728-1978 9  
*by David L. Sauder*
- Mennonites and War Taxes 17  
*by Walter Klaassen*
- Notes and Queries 23
- Book Reviews 24

## THE COVER

This house, erected by Martin Oberholtzer (d. 1833) in 1795 for himself, stands immediately east of Route 897 on the eastern edge of Terre Hill in East Earl Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Situated near one of the better springs in the area, it is inhabited by Earl H. Zimmerman, who still uses the free-flowing spring water for refrigeration purposes.

*Photo credits:* front cover, pp. 2, 3, 7, J. Spencer Overholser; p. 4, Historical Society of Pennsylvania; p. 9, Marvin R. Sauder.

*Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage*, successor to *Mennonite Research Journal*, is the quarterly magazine of the Lancaster Mennonite Conference Historical Society, 2215 Millstream Road, Lancaster, PA 17602. It focuses on the historical background, religious thought and expression, culture, and genealogy of Mennonite-related groups originating in Pennsylvania. Printed by Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pa. Second-class postage paid at Lancaster, Pa. and additional mailing offices.

Single copies, \$2.50 each. Regular, annual membership, \$10.00; subscription, \$5.00. Address changes, including old and new addresses, should be forwarded to Lancaster at least six weeks in advance.

Direct editorial mail to 2215 Millstream Road, Lancaster, PA 17602. The editor will be pleased to consider unsolicited manuscripts and photographs sent for publication but accepts no responsibility for manuscripts not accompanied by return postage.

Copyright ©1978 by the Lancaster Mennonite Conference Historical Society, 2215 Millstream Road, Lancaster, PA 17602.

ISSN 0148-4036

*Questions remain regarding the Terre Hill Oberholtzer line, but the author presents what researchers have thus far compiled in hopes of finding new leads.*

## **The Terre Hill Oberholtzer Family**

*by J. Spencer Overholser*

In the Weaverland Mennonite Cemetery on a hill about one and one-half miles south of Terre Hill, Pennsylvania, stands a gravestone inscribed as follows:

In  
memory of  
**MARTIN OBERHOLTZER**  
who was born March  
the 25th A.D. 1764.  
and died the 2nd  
of October 1833.  
aged 69 years 6 months  
and 7 days.

When I first saw this grave of Martin Oberholtzer, I did not know how I was related to this ancestor. My father had been born at Terre Hill. However, after teaching school a few years in Lancaster County, he moved west, taught school in Minnesota, and later homesteaded in 1899 in central North Dakota, where he spent his remaining years. I was born and reared in North Dakota and knew nothing about Lancaster County or Pennsylvania except what my father told me about the Pennsylvania Dutch area as I grew up.

When I moved from the Midwest to Maryland, I traveled occasionally into Pennsylvania and began to put some of my knowledge of Lancaster County into perspective. At such times, whenever I saw Martin's tombstone, I would, of course, notice the adjoining stones. The one on the right, that of his wife, reads:

IN  
memory of  
**ELIZABETH**  
Wife of  
Martin Oberholser  
Born  
February 8th 1766  
Departed this life  
August 8th 1854.  
Aged 88 years  
& 6 months.

The stone on the left, that of his son, reads:

In  
Memory of  
Martin Oberholzer  
born March 25 A.D.  
1800  
and died April  
9. A.D. 1836.  
aged 36 years-14 days.

Such variation in spelling even among members of the same family is not uncommon in genealogical research.

### **I. E. Oberholtzer**

After I had begun researching my family background and had become familiar with some genealogical research methods, in 1957 I received a letter from Mrs. Isaiah E. Oberholtzer of Trotwood, Ohio, asking whether I had any interest in some genealogical material which her deceased husband had collected and compiled. She then mailed the material which I now have in my possession. Rev. Isaiah Ebersole Oberholtzer (May 11, 1883-July 29, 1956) had collected names and dates of thousands of persons in the Oberholtzer line on which I am currently doing research.

Son of Christian W. and Elizabeth Ebersole Oberholtzer, I. E. Oberholtzer was born near Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania. His mother, a daughter of the Mennonite minister Peter R. Ebersole (1822-1899), died when her son was two and one-half years of age. His father married for the second time a Brethren woman. At the age of twenty-one Isaiah joined the Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren. In 1910 he graduated from Juniata College, then taught at Daleville College in Virginia for two years. Deciding to enter the ministry, he attended Garrett Bible Institute, then



**I. E. Oberholtzer**



The town of Oberholz, east of Wald in the canton of Zurich in Switzerland, may be the area from which the Immigrant Samuel Oberholtzer family emigrated.

Yale Divinity School. In 1916 he secured his master's degree from Oberlin College. On September 8, 1915, he married Elizabeth Waybright, and in August 1916 they both went as missionaries to China, where they spent the next twenty-two years. They returned to the United States in 1938, and he served as pastor in Indiana and Ohio until he retired in 1952. He died at Trotwood, Ohio.<sup>1</sup>

As a result of his research, I. E. Oberholtzer concluded that the first Oberholtzer in his line was Samuel Oberholtzer (Samuell Owerhoulster, Samuel Oberholts), who arrived on the ship *Molly* at Philadelphia on September 30, 1727.<sup>2</sup> No one has been able as yet to determine the place from which Immigrant Samuel emigrated in Europe. Because of religious persecution many Mennonites fled from Switzerland into the Palatinate area of Germany and thence down the Rhine River to obtain passage to America.

### Oberholz in Canton Zurich

Researchers frequently have assumed that their Mennonite ancestors inevitably followed such a course. George R. Oberholzer, for example, writing about the Oberholztzers, makes such an assumption: "The Oberholztzers are undoubtedly of Swiss origin. The family is represented in at least one canton of Switzerland (Zurich) to this day." He further states that a Samuel came to Pennsylvania

who, in the Spring of 1727, with his family, made the tedious journey down the Rhine. For he was held up at the boundary of every Principality, and made to pay some tax or other. In ten days or two weeks he had run the gauntlet and, landing at Rotterdam, took passage on the ship *Molly*, captained by John Hodgeson, for America. The boat stopped at Deal, England for additional supplies and after the usual voyage of from six weeks to three months, she touched at Philadelphia with the cargo of 300 men, women and children, all from the Palatinate or Switzerland. All men over fourteen years of age signed papers of allegiance on landing, and then the party scattered to the four winds.<sup>3</sup>

He undoubtedly referred to the above 1727 Immigrant Samuel, but how did he know that *all* the passengers

came from the "Palatinate or Switzerland"? Another genealogist typically assumed the following:

It is likely their names are derived from that of the ancient German town where ancestors of the family may have dwelt in olden times. It was a more or less general custom to name citizens after the towns, as is instanced in the Oberholztzers, who were first known in Oberholtz, a town of the Wald in Switzerland.<sup>4</sup>

From what area of Switzerland did the Oberholztzers migrate? I would like to believe that they did come from the village of Oberholz, located just a few miles east of Wald in the canton of Zurich and nestled high in the mountains in a beautiful setting. An Oberholzer family lives in that village now, but I have been as yet unable to determine that Immigrant Samuel did come from this area.

### Immigrant Samuel

Immigrant Samuel must have squatted on approximately 195 acres until Conestoga Manor officially opened for settlement after the Penn estate was settled.<sup>5</sup> Later he purchased from Michael Baughman 207 acres in Manor Township, Lancaster County, "within the Mannor of Conestogoe," on May 26, 1746,<sup>6</sup> which was just two years before his death. This tract lay immediately northeast of his unsurveyed and unpatented land.

We know from his will that he had a wife, Elizabeth; at least two sons, Martin and Jacob; and more than one daughter. Immigrant Samuel's will, the original of which appears in German, follows in modernized translation:

<sup>1</sup>A Friend, "I. E. Oberholtzer," *Missionary Visitor* (October 1916): 319-320; *Gospel Messenger* (October 6, 1956).

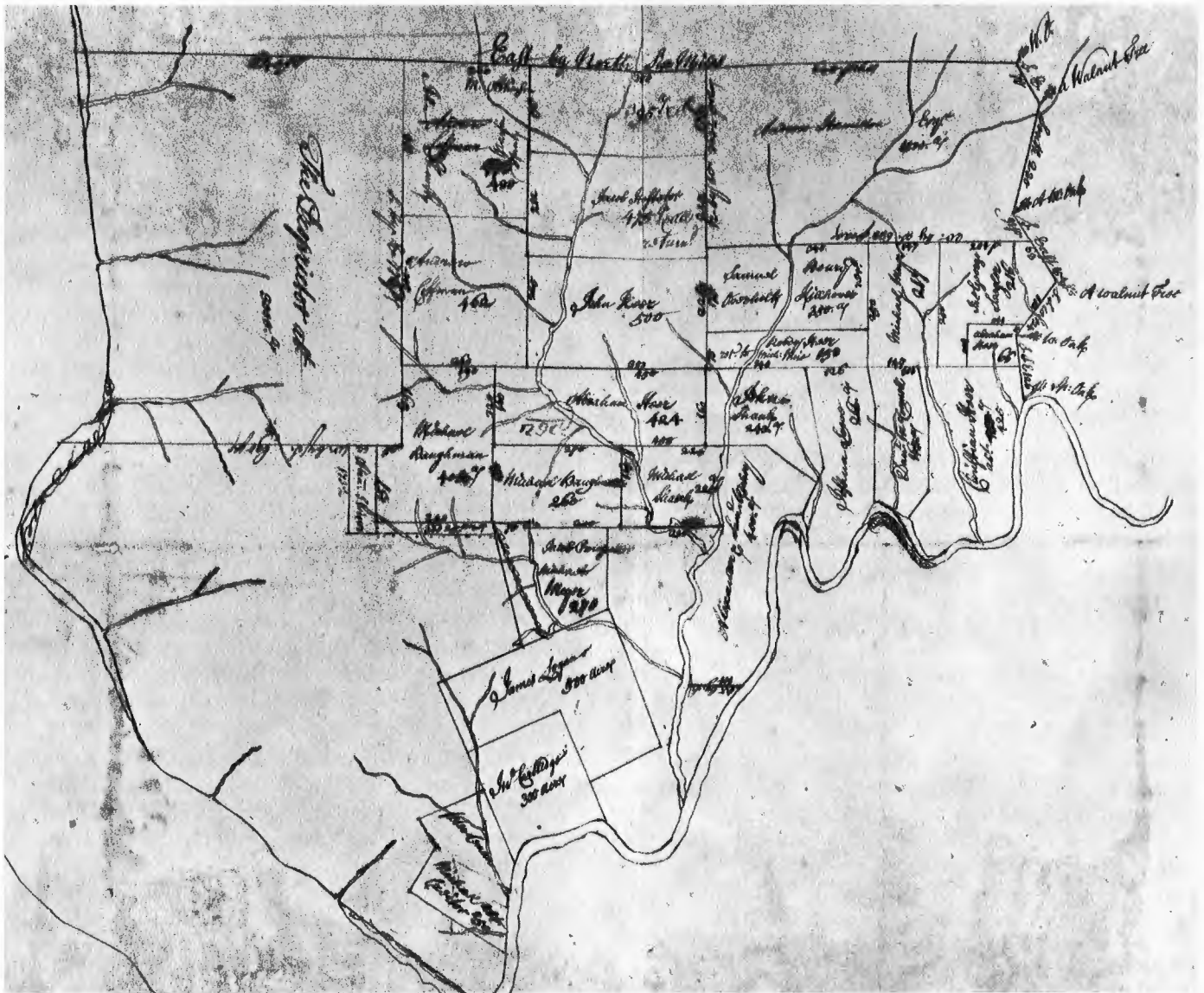
<sup>2</sup>Ralph Beaver Strassburger, *Pennsylvania German Pioneers: A Publication of the Original Lists of Arrivals in the Port of Philadelphia from 1727 to 1808*, ed. William John Hinkle (Norristown, Pa.: Pennsylvania German Society, 1934), 1:12, 14.

<sup>3</sup>G. R. Oberholtzer, "Notes on the History of the Descendents [*sic*] of Samuel Oberholtzer" (typed manuscript). In possession of author.

<sup>4</sup>H. Frank Eshleman, *Historic Background and Annals of the Swiss and German Pioneer Settlers of Southeastern Pennsylvania*. . . (Lancaster, Pa.: 1917), p. 60. See also "Report on the True Character, Time and Place of the First Regular Settlement in Lancaster County," *Papers Read Before the Lancaster County Historical Society* 14 (February 4, 1910): 41; Leo Schelbert and Sandra Luebking, "Swiss Mennonite Family Names: An Annotated Checklist," *Pennsylvania Folklife* 26 (Summer 1977): 16-17.

<sup>5</sup>H. Frank Eshleman, "Old Conestoga Neighbors," *Papers Read Before the Lancaster County Historical Society* 19 (October 1, 1915): 292 and facing page. Eshleman lists a Samuel Overholtz on his map of old "Conestoga," which shows the earliest settlements on the Conestoga River for the approximate period of 1715 to 1729. The John Taylor Papers of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, available on microfilm at Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pa., were evidently his source of information. For Taylor Papers surveys and drawings of Samuel Oberholtzer's property see microfilm frames 2350, 2374, 2376, 2377, 2389, and 2398.

<sup>6</sup>Deed B-1-428-431, Lancaster County Courthouse, Lancaster, Pa.



The above map from the John Taylor Collection in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia shows the first tract of land on which Samuel Oberholtzer squatted in Conestoga Manor.

I, Samuel Overholzer, being very sick and weak in the body and knowing that it is appointed for all men once to die and do order this my last will and testament in following manner and form. It is my will and I do order that all my just debts and funeral charges be paid and satisfied. And it is my will that my plantation shall be equally divided between my two sons Martin and Jacob and it is my will that all my estate shall be equally divided among all my children and my two sons that shall have my plantation shall pay to their sisters the full [?] share, all in equal shares and it is my will that my beloved wife Elizabeth shall be provided of my said plantation as long as she remains a widow and a guardian to the land.

Witness by Jacob Carey [Early?], Henry Killhafer

his  
Samuel X Overholzer  
mark

Lancaster Co. Then personally appeared Henry Killhaver and Jacob Sill [Null?] and on their solemn affirmation

declared they were present and saw and heard Samuel Overholzer, the testator within named, sign his name and declare the writing within to be his last will and testament and that at the doing thereof he was of sound mind and memory to the best of their knowledge.

2d May 1748<sup>7</sup>

Immigrant Samuel died on May 2, 1748.<sup>8</sup> His estate was not settled until June 10, 1758, probably upon the death of Elizabeth, his wife. At that time Jacob received ninety-five acres,<sup>9</sup> including a mill property and some

<sup>7</sup>Will Y-2-118, Lancaster County Courthouse, Lancaster, Pa.

<sup>8</sup>Administrator's bond to Elizabeth Oberholtzer and Martin Oberholtz for Samuel Oberholtz, deceased, May 2, 1748, and Inventory of Samuel Oberholtz, May 2, 1748, Oberholtzer Vertical File, Lancaster County Historical Society, Lancaster, Pa.

<sup>9</sup>Deed M-1-272, Lancaster.

unpatented land, and Martin received the majority of the 207-acre tract.<sup>10</sup> On May 1, 1759, Jacob and Catharine Oberholtzer transferred the fifteen-acre mill property to Martin.<sup>11</sup> On March 21, 1761, David Herr received a patent for the initial, unpatented Oberholtzer land.<sup>12</sup>

Immigrant Samuel had the following children: Jacob, married to Catharine; Martin (d. 1767), married to Elizabeth; Elizabeth, married to John Steinman; Ann, married to Philip Yenoway; Magdalena, married to Henry Musselman; and "Fronia" or Veronica.<sup>13</sup> Except for Jacob and Martin I have no information on the children of Immigrant Samuel other than that listed above.

On July 2, 1761, Jacob Oberholtzer purchased 126 acres in Warwick Township from Jacob Good,<sup>14</sup> and in 1767 he purchased two tracts from the patentee, Christian Huber.<sup>15</sup> These lands lay at the intersection of Hempfield, Manheim, and Warwick Townships. Jacob died in Manheim Township in 1806, according to his will.<sup>16</sup> Martin, an ancestor of both I. E. Oberholtzer and me, died intestate in May 1767.<sup>17</sup>

### Martin Oberholtzer Descendants

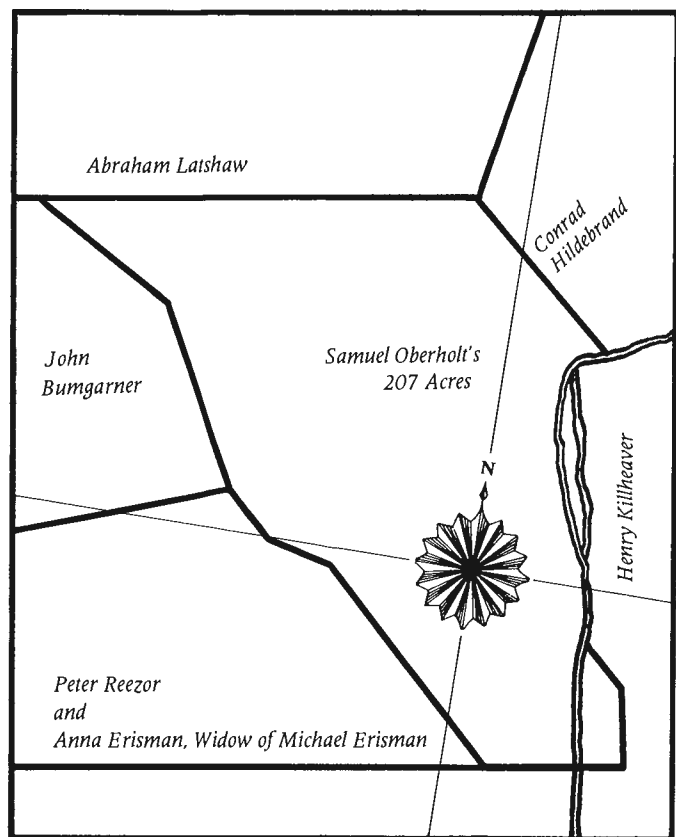
Martin Oberholtzer (d. 1767) married a certain Elizabeth and had eight children: Jacob; Christian; Mary (m. Jacob Kilheffer); Samuel; Anna; Elizabeth; Martin; and Magdalena, who died young and unmarried.<sup>18</sup> In 1775 the six children who had not reached their majority approved guardianship as follows: Christian and Maria (Mary) chose Jacob Oberholtzer of Warwick Township; Samuel and Anna chose Jacob Frick; and the court appointed John Kilheffer as guardian for Martin and Elizabeth, who were under fourteen years of age.<sup>19</sup>

The remaining portion of this article consists of information researched principally by I. E. Oberholtzer on the third and fourth generations. For the third generation I have included information on only the three married brothers—Christian, Samuel, and Martin—because I. E. Oberholtzer did not include information on the sisters. All three married brothers were Mennonites. Jacob died unmarried.

I have decided to include the following information despite the possibility of errors so that other researchers will have some sort of reference guide. Because I do not have all the notes of I. E. Oberholtzer but usually only the results of his research, I do not know the documentation for some of his work. Therefore, the following information should be used with discretion. Some descendants of Immigrant Samuel Oberholtzer may perhaps become interested in providing further documented information on especially the first three generations.

#### *Rev. Christian Oberholtzer*

Mary Huber (Hoover), first wife of Christian Oberholtzer (Jan. 28, 1753-Nov. 14, 1822), came from



In 1746 Immigrant Samuel Oberholtzer purchased from Michael Baughman in Manor Township 207 acres, most of which eventually went to his son, Martin Oberholtzer (d. 1767).

the Lititz community and died about 1800. Her sister, Barbara Huber (Apr. 12, 1755-June 19, 1835) married Joseph Witmer; another sister, Esther Huber (May 1, 1775-Sept. 30, 1857), married Peter Lehman, an ancestor of Mennonite minister Samuel L. Oberholtzer (1859-1931) of the Risser circuit; and a brother, Samuel Huber, remained in the vicinity of Lititz. On August 18, 1783, Abraham Whitmore and Elizabeth, his wife, and

<sup>10</sup>Deed A-2-625-629, Lancaster.

<sup>11</sup>Deed M-1-272, Lancaster.

<sup>12</sup>Patent AA-1-296, Land Grant Office, Harrisburg, Pa.

<sup>13</sup>Deeds M-1-272 and A-2-625, Lancaster.

<sup>14</sup>Deed M-1-385, Lancaster.

<sup>15</sup>Deed M-1-118, Lancaster.

<sup>16</sup>According to Will I-1-377, Lancaster, Jacob Oberholtzer of Manheim Township died and left a widow, Catherine, and the following children: Jacob; Mary, m. John Schumacher; Ann, m. Jacob Ober; Catharine, m. Michael Ober; Magdalena, m. Philip Shoemaker. Jacob (d. 1806) also owned land in Lurgan Township, Franklin County, Pa.

<sup>17</sup>Intestate Records Book 1, p. 498, Lancaster County Courthouse, Lancaster, Pa.; Inventory of Goods of Martin Overholzer, May 20, 1767, Oberholzer Vertical File, Lancaster County Historical Society.

<sup>18</sup>Miscellaneous Book, 1768-1772, p. 192, Lancaster County Courthouse, Lancaster, Pa. See also Deed A-2-625, Lancaster.

<sup>19</sup>Miscellaneous Orphans' Court Book, 1772-1776, p. 251, Lancaster County Courthouse, Lancaster, Pa.



Joseph Whitmore and Barbara, his wife, all of Rapho Township, granted a deed to the above Christian of Manheim Township for 103 acres of land on which Minister Samuel L. Oberholtzer of Mount Joy Township later lived.<sup>20</sup> On June 30, 1794, Christian bought fifty acres more to add to the first acreage.<sup>21</sup> The children to his first marriage follow:

1. Esther  
m. Abraham Longenecker
2. Anna, Feb. 28, 1783-Dec. 7, 1842; buried in Campbelltown farm cemetery  
m. Daniel Longenecker, Dec. 3, 1778-Oct. 6, 1822; Campbelltown farm cemetery
3. Elizabeth, July 20, 1784-Oct. 28, 1835; buried at Chambersburg  
m. Jacob Stauffer, Mar. 4, 1773-July 3, 1843; buried at Chambersburg
4. Mary, Jan. 13, 1787-Oct. 25, 1846; buried east of Chambersburg  
m. Christian Frey, Sept. 1, 1785-Aug. 10, 1873; buried east of Chambersburg
5. Samuel,<sup>22</sup> Mar. 12, 1788-Oct. 9, 1854; Oberholtzer Schoolhouse Cemetery  
m. Veronica Longenecker, Apr. 8, 1789-Aug. 9, 1863
6. Christian, June 12, 1790-Oct. 18, 1847; Campbelltown Cemetery  
m. Elizabeth Weitzel; went west with son Samuel and died in the West
7. Magdalena, Oct. 11, 1795-Oct. 22, 1864; Mount Annville Cemetery on David Shank plot  
m. Abraham Shank, June 2, 1790-July 31, 1839

8. Rev. John,<sup>23</sup> Dec. 28, 1797-Jan. 13, 1866; Campbelltown Cemetery

m. Catharine Nissley, Sept. 22, 1795-Sept. 19, 1852; Campbelltown Cemetery

Supposedly Christian Oberholtzer found a new wife, named Anna, near Campbelltown. By 1802 he bought from Martin Thomas a plantation known in 1931 as the Brandt farm.<sup>24</sup> He made his last will on May 10, 1821. His second wife must have died about 1844 because the estate was settled in 1845. I. E. Oberholtzer supposed that he was a bishop in the Mennonite church, but the Lancaster Mennonite Conference Historical Society can substantiate only his service as a minister in the circuit of Lebanon and Dauphin Counties.<sup>25</sup>

### Samuel Oberholtzer

Samuel Oberholtzer (1755-1822), an outstanding churchman, lived most of his life in Warwick Township.<sup>26</sup> He purchased this farm in 1791.<sup>27</sup> For many years the Mennonites held services in his home and about 1800 built a log house in his woods for worship and school purposes. It was the first church in Rothsville ("Rabbit Hill") and the first Mennonite meetinghouse in the present Hess-Landis Valley and Hammer Creek Districts.<sup>28</sup> Before this time houses and barns were evidently used.

To replace the log building, the Mennonites about 1856 erected a brick structure, which came to be known as the Hess meetinghouse, about two miles northwest of the old Oberholtzer home. (In 1883 Jacob

<sup>20</sup>Deed H-27-417, 418, Lancaster.

<sup>21</sup>Deed W-2-6, Lancaster.

<sup>22</sup>*Biographical Annals of Lancaster County Pennsylvania Containing Biographical and Genealogical Sketches of Prominent and Representative Citizens and Many of the Early Settlers* (J. H. Beers & Co.: 1903), p. 926.

<sup>23</sup>In a cemetery about a half mile south of Campbelltown, Londonderry Township, Lebanon County, Pa., is buried Minister John Oberholtzer (1797-1866). According to M. G. Weaver in *Mennonites of Lancaster Conference* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1931), p. 214, he was ordained in the summer of 1826. Meetings were evidently held in his home, for the membership was probably scattered in both Lebanon and Dauphin Counties. (Another old Oberholtzer Cemetery lies east of the Shirksville Mennonite meetinghouse in Lebanon County. An old schoolhouse may have stood here at one time, but we do not know of its serving for Mennonite worship services although these Oberholtzers probably were Mennonites.)

The earliest known record of this worship center appears for 1826 in a record book kept by Deacon Henry S. Nissley of the Kraybill congregation and now filed at the Lancaster Mennonite Conference Historical Society. According to this note, Bishops Peter Eby and Christian Nissley, grandfather of Deacon Henry S. Nissley, held communion at "Oberholtzer" on November 9, 1826, for twenty-five persons (p. 210). In an 1837 letter to the Manheim District Bishop Jacob Hostetter (John Brubaker and Michael Gingrich to Jacob Hostetter, June 8, 1837, Hist. Mss. 1-193, Archives of the

Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana; available at Lancaster Mennonite Conference Historical Society on microfilm), Minister Michael Gingrich (later bishop) referred to a meeting at John Oberholtzer's house. The phrasing could refer either to a meetinghouse or to a home. If it refers to a meetinghouse, then perhaps Oberholtzer and Stauffer were the same congregation as M. G. Weaver suggests (p. 219).

According to the 1854 *Calendar of Mennonist Meetings in Lancaster County, Pa.*, and the 1857 meeting calendar, services were being held here every four weeks. This practice continued at least until 1872, when the location was listed as "Overholt's." However, it no longer appeared by 1879 but was replaced by listings for Krall and Light.—Editor

<sup>24</sup>Deed A-349, Lebanon County Courthouse, Lebanon, Pa.

<sup>25</sup>Deacon Henry Nissley Record Book, p. 140; Weaver, *Mennonites in Lancaster Conference*, pp. 214, 276.

<sup>26</sup>Will N-1-213, Lancaster; Will X-2-498, Lancaster.

<sup>27</sup>Deed M-2-607, Lancaster.

<sup>28</sup>On August 27, 1803, Samuel and Christiana Oberholtzer granted 154 perches to John Shrantz (also Frantz in the deed) and John Hess, members and trustees of the "Religious Society of Mennonites," for the "free and uninterrupted use and Privilege of a Certain Spring of Water . . . near the Same premises" (Deed L-9-271, Lancaster). The deed stipulated that if the Mennonites should at any time in the future cease to "keep their Meetings" on these premises "and the School Should likewise be neglected or entirely aban-





This house, one of seven which Martin Oberholtzer (d. 1833) gave to his children, went to John Overholser (1793-1875). Located on the southwestern edge of Terre Hill south of Lancaster Avenue, the road from Terre Hill to Hinkletown, it is presently owned by Titus M. Weaver.

Bollinger owned the Samuel Oberholtzer homestead.) In 1819 Samuel Oberholtzer bought the Stack farm immediately north of Reistville, Lebanon County. The family burial plot is located north of Rothsville on the south side of the present Rufus S. Musser farm.

done by the neighbours," the land would revert to the original owner or his heirs upon payment to the contributors or their representatives for the full, appraised value of the buildings along with other improvements on the premises.

This meetinghouse may be the Lititz location referred to as "John Hess's" on an 1813 list of preaching appointments for Lancaster County as found in the Martin Mellinger Collection at the Lancaster Mennonite Conference Historical Society (See also Harold S. Bender, "Preaching Appointments for Bucks Co. Visitors in Lancaster Co. in 1813," *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* 5 (September 1944): [1]) because no known record exists of the use of John Hess' home for worship services. Christian Risser (d. 1826) of the Hammer Creek circuit evidently also served here as well as a Deacon Burkholder, who has not been clearly identified. Services at the Oberholtzer Schoolhouse evidently ceased about the time the Hess meetinghouse was erected in 1856. At present only an incorrect marker and the remaining cemented cemetery, surrounded by a wall, survive.—Editor.

<sup>29</sup>Will U-1-843, Lancaster. See also Deeds L-9-274, P-5-154, and Will P-1-201, Lancaster. The latter will on page 201 evidently erroneously says Christiana married *Christian* Oberholtzer, but on page 202 it says she married *Samuel*.

<sup>30</sup>*Biographical Annals of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania*, pp. 447, 991, 1006.

Samuel's children to both marriages follow:

m. (1) Anna Wissler

1. Elizabeth W., Aug. 14, 1785-  
m. Joseph Weber

2. Barbara W., Jan. 14, 1787-

3. Anna W., July 24, 1788-d. by 1850  
m. Peter Musselman

4. Magdalena W., Apr. 3, 1791-  
m. Benjamin Lehman

m. (2) Christiana Resh,<sup>29</sup> d. 1850

5. Mary, July 2, 1794-  
m. Samuel Landis; Jefferson Township, Montgomery County, Ohio

6. Christian,<sup>30</sup> Feb. 11, 1799-Dec. 23, 1881; buried in Groffdale Mennonite Cemetery  
m. Anna Hess, Oct. 6, 1800-Sept. 12, 1870; Groffdale Mennonite Cemetery

7. Esther, Nov. 6, 1800-  
m. Christian Hostetter

8. Samuel, Dec. 25, 1802-June 10, 1875; Hess Mennonite Cemetery

m. Martha Hess, July 17, 1805-Apr. 27, 1861, dau. Mennonite Minister John Hess (d. 1830) of the Hammer Creek District-Esther Hershey; Hess Mennonite Cemetery.

9. Jacob, Feb. 4, 1805-Mar. 13, 1865; Heidelberg Brethren Cemetery, Lebanon County  
m. Susanna Bollinger, May 29, 1811-Mar. 21, 1878; Heidelberg Brethren Cemetery

10. Catharine, Dec. 3, 1806-  
m. Samuel Shirk

*Martin Oberholzer (d. 1833)*

Martin Oberholzer (Mar. 25, 1764-Oct. 2, 1833)<sup>31</sup> was three years old in 1767, when his father, Martin, died. In 1791 or 1792 he married Elizabeth Frantz (Feb. 8, 1766-Aug. 8, 1854), daughter of Jacob Frantz of Millerstown. Both of them were buried in the Mennonite graveyard at Weaverland and were members of that church.

Martin's oldest brother, Jacob, received a double share of the estate and held the old homestead until all the brothers and sisters except Martin had come of age. He then sold the homestead to Jacob Kilhaver, their brother-in-law. In 1785 Martin released his part of the estate for £236, 6s. (\$1,118), which constituted his inheritance when he started out in life. In 1790 Martin Oberholtzer and Jacob Kilhaver bought 115 acres in Manor Township for £500, at the rate of £60 per year, but Martin soon sold his share.

In 1792 he bought from his brother-in-law the mill property near Brownstown for £2,300. Here his oldest son, John, was born on February 28, 1793. After living here for several years, he sold his property and mill to John Royer for £4,600, an amount double to what he had paid to purchase the property.<sup>32</sup> He then purchased a farm near Terre Hill, moved there in 1795, and built the large stone mansion which bears the mark on the gable, "M. O. 1795." He lived here for the rest of his life. He had four distilleries on the farm, and the revenue from that source amounted to more than that from the farms. Products of the distilleries were hauled to Philadelphia, where they were exchanged for store goods.

Each married son and son-in-law received a farm.<sup>33</sup> Five of the seven farms he eventually owned were located on a hillside near Terre Hill, and on each was a never-failing spring of water. One farm and mill was located near Martindale and one, in Pequea Valley near the former Baldwine store in the Cains area. He owned a large tract of land, between 500 and 600 acres, in East Earl Township. Thus he became a successful businessman and farmer. Martin's children follow:

1. Anna, Oct. 15, 1788-Aug. 28, 1875; buried in Terre Hill Cemetery  
m. Hetzel Sterk,<sup>34</sup> Feb. 27, 1795-Apr. 24, 1866; Terre Hill Cemetery
2. Elizabeth, Nov. 14, 1790-Dec. 17, 1859; Terre Hill Cemetery  
m. Samuel Watts, Apr. 6, 1789-Sept. 6, 1860; Terre Hill Cemetery
3. John,<sup>35</sup> Feb. 28, 1793-Jan. 24, 1875; Terre Hill Cemetery  
m. Margaret (Peggy or Beckie) Kurtz, June 4, 1804-May 1, 1880; Terre Hill Cemetery
4. Christian, 1798-Apr. 24, 1884<sup>36</sup>; Cains Cemetery, Salisbury Township  
m. Susanna Kurtz, 1805-1860; Cains Cemetery

5. Martin, Mar. 25, 1800-Apr. 9, 1836; Weaverland Mennonite Cemetery
6. Jacob, June 4, 1802-Jan. 11, 1871; Terre Hill Cemetery  
m. Phoebe Weaver, Dec. 24, 1816-Aug. 25, 1864; Terre Hill Cemetery
7. Samuel, d. by 1836
8. Rev. Isaac, May 22, 1807-Jan. 31, 1875; Terre Hill Cemetery  
m. (1) Mary Landis, July 1812-Jan. 1848; Terre Hill Cemetery  
m. (2) wid. Mary Zern ("Polly Spatts"), Mar. 5, 1823-Aug. 25, 1897; Terre Hill Cemetery
9. Daniel, Feb. 13, 1811-June 15, 1875; Terre Hill Cemetery  
m. (1) Anna Landis, d. 1843  
m. (2) Mary Lichty, Nov. 20, 1821-Sept. 6, 1894; Terre Hill Cemetery

During the summer of 1835 itinerant preachers of what became known as the Evangelical Association first visited the neighborhood of Fairville (Terre Hill). Jacob and Isaac Oberholtzer and their sisters, the wives of Hetzel Stirk and Samuel Watts, with their families soon afterwards contributed most of the money to organize a congregation in Terre Hill. It was at this time that the practice of distilling ceased on the Oberholtzer farms. Isaac became a well-known local preacher who served his church faithfully until his death.<sup>37</sup>

In conclusion I again want to remind readers that except where I have provided documentation, a possibility of error exists. I hope some descendants of Immigrant Samuel Oberholtzer will become interested enough in genealogy to do further research on this line and to provide further documented information, especially on the first three generations.

---

<sup>31</sup>Will Q-1-469, Lancaster; release given in Deed F-6-293, Lancaster.

<sup>32</sup>Deed Z-2-241, Lancaster.

<sup>33</sup>Charles E. Overholser, *An Account of the Oberholtzer Family with Special Reference to the Descendants of Daniel Overholser 1811-1875*. . . (n.p.: [1906]), pp. 3-4. This booklet, however, errs on the early generations.

<sup>34</sup>The tombstone spelling is Stirk.

<sup>35</sup>John, Isaac, and Jacob spelled their names Overholser; Christian spelled his Oberholser.

<sup>36</sup>I. E. Oberholtzer's original manuscript gives Christian's dates as August 8, 1806-September 1, 1877. The newly replaced tombstone says 1886, but I have a picture of the older tombstone. The "4" was apparently misread for a "6" when the new one was made. My second cousin, Robert Oberholser of Freehold, New Jersey, has a statement from the deputy register of wills at the time the will was probated giving April 24, 1884, as the death date (not the probate date).

<sup>37</sup>Franklin Ellis and Samuel Evans, *History of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, with Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men* (Philadelphia: Everts & Peck, 1883), p. 819; Charles E. Overholser, *An Account of the Oberholtzer Family*, p. 6.

*On June 24-25 the Metzler congregation will host the annual meeting of the Lancaster Mennonite Conference Historical Society in conjunction with its 250th anniversary commemoration.*

## Metzler Mennonite Congregation, 1728-1978

*by David L. Sauder*

Looking back two and one-half centuries, we sometimes find it difficult to make definitive statements, but history does provide us with some interesting information. Pennsylvania functioned as an English colony administered by the sons of William Penn. George Washington, the nation's first president, was not born until 1732. Meanwhile Hans Herr, his family, and coreligionists had established a Mennonite settlement on the Pequea Creek in 1710. Hans Groff began the Groffdale community about six miles southeast of the present Metzler meetinghouse. To the east in 1723 the Webers began the Weaverland settlement. Christian Wenger and his wife, Eve, came to America in 1727 and within a year settled along Groff's Run, west of the Hans Groff tract and only several miles south of the site which would become Metzler meetinghouse.

At the same time the German Baptist Brethren were also moving into this general area. Their minister, a controversial pietist named Conrad Beissel, would soon leave them and establish a monastic religious community called the Ephrata Cloisters in 1732. Beissel's charisma attracted not only members from the German Baptist Brethren but also Hans Rudolph Nägele, a Mennonite minister from the Groffdale settlement. Nägele lived at the Ephrata Cloister as Brother Jehoiada until his death.<sup>1</sup>

In studying the history of the Metzler congregation, we must understand the background and growth of the Groffdale congregation. From the beginning both shared the same ministers and deacons, and both were part of the Groffdale-Weaverland District of Lancaster Mennonite Conference. Because it began first, the Groffdale congregation could be termed the parent church. This congregation erected a meetinghouse in 1755, but Metzler did not build until 1827. Most of its early leadership came from Groffdale. Later the members would cooperate in many ways—for example, worshipping together in each other's building, sharing evangelistic meetings, and working together in summer Bible school. Today, however, the two congregations exist separately, but both constitute part of the Groffdale District.



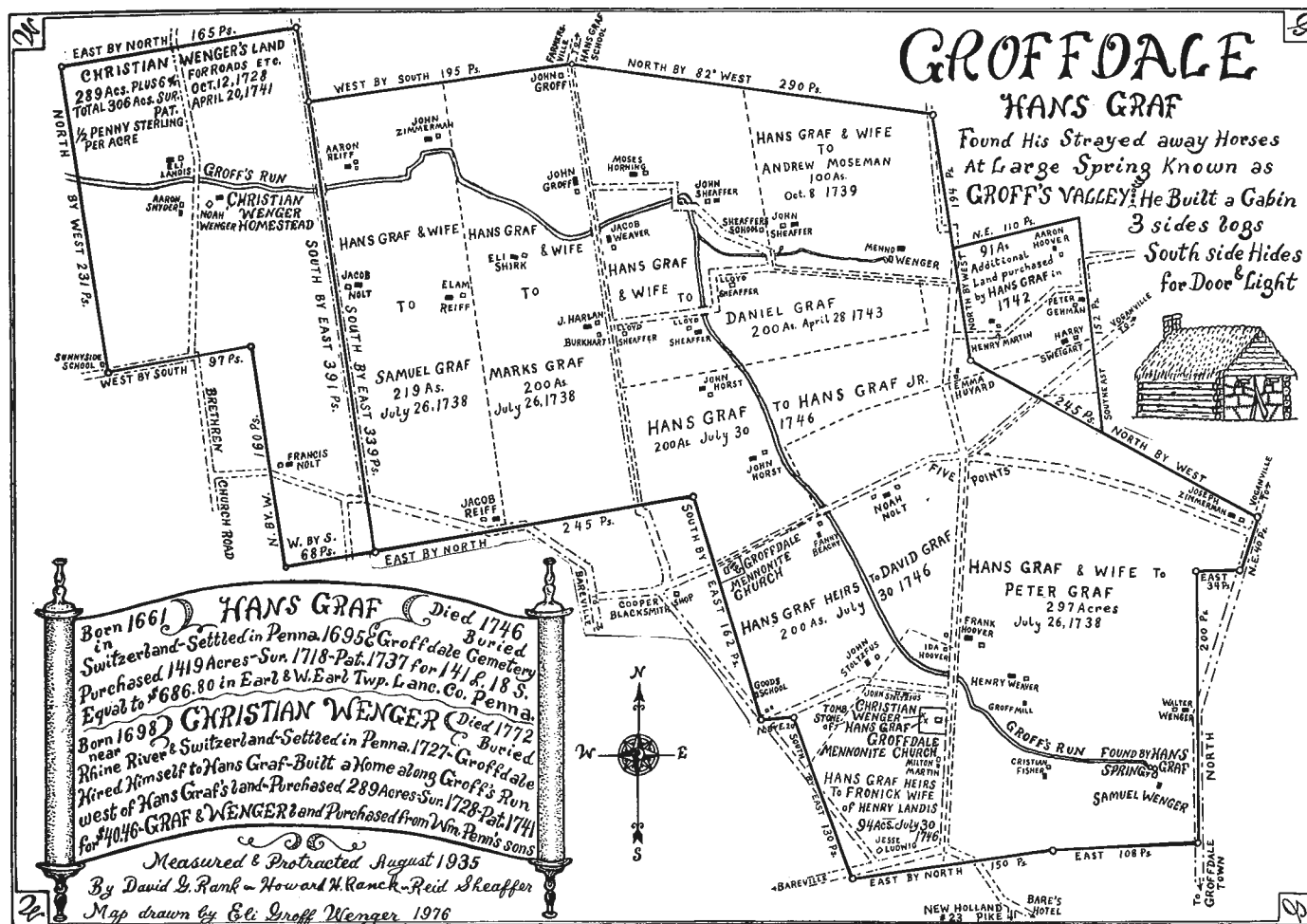
Metzler Mennonite meetinghouse as it appears today stands opposite the cemetery and beside the schoolhouse on Metzler Road in West Earl Township.

To set a date for the beginning of the Metzler congregation is speculative because Metzler like many other Mennonite congregations held worship services in homes before meetinghouses were built. In the opinion of former historians Ira D. Landis and Dr. Charles Spotts, because Mennonites followed the practice of worshipping in their homes, a congregation began as soon as Mennonite settlers arrived in the area. If we follow this line of reasoning, Metzler's founding

---

<sup>1</sup>Martin G. Weaver, *Mennonites of Lancaster Conference Containing Biographical Sketches of Mennonite Leaders; Histories of Congregations, Missions, and Sunday Schools; Record of Ordinations; and Other Interesting Historical Data* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1931), pp. 123-125; Julius Friedrich Sachse, *The German Sectarians of Pennsylvania, 1708-1742: A Critical and Legendary History of the Ephrata Cloister and the Dunkers* (Philadelphia: Author, 1909), pp. 100-101, 119, 120; Julius F. Sachse, "The Registers of the Ephrata Community," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 14 (January 1891): 391.





This map of the "Groffdale" Hans Groff (d. 1746) patent in southern West Earl Township shows the neighboring Immigrant Christian Wenger (d. 1772) land on the west. Hans Rudolph Nägele's two patents adjoined Hans Groff's land on the south.

date would be 1728, the year Christian Wenger settled in the area.

Christian Wenger, a September 30, 1727 immigrant,<sup>2</sup> served as a minister and probably conducted worship services in the homes of settlers among the Groffdale group and among those who lived outside the Groffdale settlement. Hans Rudolph Nägele moved there as early as 1721 and became the first known Mennonite minister to live in the Groffdale area. He evidently lived along the Farmersville Road only a short distance north of present Route 23. Because of the absence of meetinghouses at this early date, he would have conducted services throughout the Mennonite settlements in the Conestoga Valley area. How long did Nägele preach for the Mennonites before he joined the German Seventh-Day Baptists? Beissel, while serving as leader of the German Baptist Brethren, lived on Nägele's land. Beissel apparently began living there about 1725 and may have stayed there until 1732, when he moved to a site now known as the Ephrata Cloisters. His break with the German Baptist Brethren came in 1728. We cannot be certain how or when Nägele ended his association with the Mennonites. Probably he left

sometime between 1725 and 1732.<sup>3</sup> Hans Peter Summey and Christian Wenger provided leadership for the Mennonites after Nägele left their fellowship. The latter may have been ordained to take his place, for he was serving as a minister at least by 1748.<sup>4</sup>

Another minister in the early Groffdale settlement

<sup>2</sup>Ralph Beaver Strassburger, *Pennsylvania German Pioneers: A Publication of the Original Lists of Arrivals in the Port of Philadelphia from 1727 to 1808*, ed. William John Hinke (Norristown, Pa.: Pennsylvania German Society, 1934), 1:14.

<sup>3</sup>Weaver, *Mennonites of Lancaster Conference*, p. 124; Sachse, *The German Sectarians of Pennsylvania*, p. 189; *Chronicon Ephratense; A History of the Community of Seventh Day Baptists at Ephrata, Lancaster County, Penn'a*, by "Lamech and Agrippa", trans. J. Max Hark (Lancaster, Pa.: S. H. Zahm & Co., 1889), p. 33.

<sup>4</sup>"Brother Hantsch Visits the Mennonites—A Moravian Missionary Diary of 1748," trans. and ed. Don Yoder, *Pennsylvania Dutchman* 3 (November 1, 1951): 6. See also Will J-1-338, Lancaster County Courthouse, Lancaster, Pa. The courthouse cannot locate the original; however, a photograph of the document appears on page 94 of John E. Fetzer's *The Men From Wengen and America's Agony: The Wenger-Winger-Wanger History*. . . (n.p.: John E. Fetzer Foundation, Inc. of Michigan, 1971).

was Martin Groff,<sup>5</sup> brother of Pioneer Hans. He settled west of New Holland in Earl Township. He, too, would have preached in the homes of Mennonite settlers at Groffdale and in surrounding areas. This Martin Groff and the sons of Hans Groff built the Groffdale meetinghouse in 1755.<sup>6</sup>

### First Settlers

Metzler Mennonite meetinghouse is located in West Earl Township. The name of Earl comes from Hans Groff's German name, *Graf*, meaning Earl in English. The first landowners in the vicinity were not Metzlers but, according to the patent map of West Earl Township, Elias Moyer, Sr., and his wife, Barbara. Their patent was issued in 1744. Adjacent to their land lay a tract patented by a Martin Martin and his wife, Ann. Deeds in the Lancaster County Courthouse indicate that Elias Moyer, Sr., may have also purchased Martin Martin's tract. (The name Moyer appears with varied spellings, including Meyer or Myer.) Moyer had at least two sons, Peter and Elias, Jr.

According to deeds in the Lancaster County Courthouse, the father sold tracts of land bordering the Conestoga Creek to both sons. Peter bought 170 acres in 1760 (probably the Martin Martin tract), and Elias, Jr., bought a tract of land in 1761. The deed states that this property included a grist mill and sawmill and refers to Elias, Sr., as a miller.<sup>7</sup> (Many people today remember the large mill that once stood along the Conestoga River less than a mile south of the meetinghouse. Known as the Rupp Mill, it stood in the same general area as Elias Moyer's earlier mills. Isaac Burkholder built the latter mill, but a later owner dismantled it in 1975.<sup>8</sup> Isaac Burkholder served as a trustee at Metzler.)

Peter Moyer (Meyer) and his wife, Elizabeth, sold land in 1786 to Jacob and Maria Metzler, the first Metzlers in the area. The Moyer (Meyer) family seems to have held a prominent place in the area throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A Christian Meyer, Jr., served as a trustee for the Metzler congregation in 1827. Daniel Meyer served as a trustee from at least 1864 to 1890. In 1864 three Meyer or Myer farms lay in the vicinity of Metzler meetinghouse.<sup>9</sup> However, today no Meyer families hold membership in the Metzler congregation. Some of the later Meyers are buried in the Metzler Cemetery, but the burial places of the early ones are unknown.

Another important Mennonite settler in the Metzler area was Jonas Nolt, who moved there from Hempfield Township in 1793. He lived on a farm north of the meetinghouse site near present-day Akron. Many Mennonites from the Metzler and Groffdale congregations, as well as from the Old Order Mennonites, descend from him. He is buried in the Metzler Cemetery. The Nolt family history lists the descendants of Jonas' three sons—John, Jacob and Jonas. (John moved one mile east of Voganville, closer to the Groffdale area, but Jacob and Jonas continued to live in the Metzler area.<sup>10</sup>

Jacob was serving as trustee when the congregation built its first meetinghouse.

### Arrival of the Metzlers

In 1786 thirty-one-year-old Jacob Metzler and his wife, Maria (Hess) Metzler, moved to West Earl Township. They bought a seventy-acre farm from the aforementioned Peter Meyer. On this farm the Metzler meetinghouse and cemetery would eventually be established. Jacob and Maria married in 1781 and lived in Warwick Township before moving to their new location.<sup>11</sup>

Jacob (1755-1814) was a son of Bishop Valentine Metzler (1726-1783), who evidently immigrated to America in 1738 and married Anna Nisli (Nissley) in 1749. When Anna's father, Jacob Nissley, died in 1752, she and Valentine bought the Nissley farm, located along the Conestoga Creek somewhere in the general area of the RCA plant on the outskirts of present-day Lancaster.<sup>12</sup>

Jacob Metzler and his wife, Maria, had one son, Jacob, and eight daughters, three of whom died before adulthood. The first of these died in 1790 and was buried in a plot on the Metzler farm. Some of the other children and the parents were eventually buried there in what would become the Metzler Cemetery.<sup>13</sup> The meetinghouse, built a generation later, bears the same name.

We know little about the religious life of the people during these early years, but the limited information seems encouraging. Both Bishop Christian Burkholder and Preacher William Westheffer reportedly preached in private homes in the Metzler community.<sup>14</sup> On other occasions the Mennonites in this community would cross the Conestoga and worship at the Groffdale meetinghouse, built about 1755. Bishop Burkholder, by his preaching and writing, showed great concern about the spiritual welfare of the young people.<sup>15</sup> With the group

---

<sup>5</sup>Deed U-3-342, Lancaster County Courthouse, Lancaster, Pa. Because he was a grantee in this first deed, he probably served as an ordained leader. In the eighteenth century ordained leaders frequently served as trustees.

<sup>6</sup>*Mennonite Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Groff (Graf), Hans," by Ira D. Landis.

<sup>7</sup>Deed H-1-354, 355, Lancaster.

<sup>8</sup>"Old Mills in Lancaster County," ed. Ira D. Landis, *Community History* (Community Historians Annual) 3 (December 1964): [14-15].

<sup>9</sup>H. F. Bridgens, *Bridgens' Atlas of Lancaster Co., Penna.* (Lancaster, Pa.: D. S. Bare, 1864), Plate 11.

<sup>10</sup>Enos N. Zimmerman, *Nolt's Family History, 1771-1969: Containing Over 3700 Families* (Gordonville, Pa.: Gordonville Print Shop, 1970), pp. 3-5, 1080-1081.

<sup>11</sup>Metzler family Bible now in possession of Mrs. Fred Hertzog, 229 South Market Street, Ephrata, Pa.

<sup>12</sup>Weaver, *Mennonites of Lancaster Conference*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>13</sup>Metzler family Bible.

<sup>14</sup>Weaver, *Mennonites of Lancaster Conference*, pp. 128, 132.

<sup>15</sup>Ira D. Landis, "Bishop Christian Burkholder of Groffdale, 1746-1809," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 18 (July 1944): 145-161.

growing in numbers, the brethren must have discussed the need for a meetinghouse.

### First Meetinghouse

After the deaths of Jacob (d. 1814) and Maria (d. 1826), their only son, Jacob, assumed ownership of the Metzler farm. This Jacob married Barbara Shirk. They proceeded in 1827 to sell land to the "Society of Mennonists" for a meetinghouse and cemetery. The land for the cemetery included the Metzler family graveyard. Jacob Nolt, Christian Meyer, Jr., and Henry Stoner served as the first trustees. According to specific instructions in the deed, only Mennonites could serve as trustees. Non-Mennonites could be buried in the graveyard, but no non-Mennonites could preach in the meetinghouse except for funeral occasions.<sup>16</sup>

Only twenty-eight by thirty-four feet, this nearly square building typified Mennonite meetinghouses of that time. Donations ranged from \$2.00 to \$40.00 to meet a total cost of \$420.24.<sup>17</sup> The fifty-five people who made contributions may indicate the size of the congregation at that time.

The Metzler congregation was part of the Groffdale-Weaverland bishop district. Groffdale and Metzler meetinghouses lay at the western end of the district. The Mennonites also built a small meetinghouse, which became known as the Pike meetinghouse, along the main road, presently U.S. Route 322, leading from Hinkletown to Blue Ball. According to M. G. Weaver, Groffdale, Metzler, and Pike formed a circuit and shared the same ministry.<sup>18</sup>

### Stauffer (Pike) Mennonite Schism

The circuit arrangement continued until around 1846 when a serious problem arose in the Groffdale congregation. The basic issues centered around church discipline and the practice of "shunning" disobedient and unrepentant church members. Unlike their Amish brethren Lancaster County Mennonites did not observe this practice though Menno Simons did favor it. However, some of the Groffdale area Mennonites must have felt some silent sympathy which came into the open at this time regarding this practice.

The initial incident involved a Groffdale couple accused of "harsh and cruel treatment of an orphan girl adopted into their family."<sup>19</sup> Although the people involved made confessions, about one-third of the members, including two of the Groffdale-Metzler-Pike ministers, Jacob Stauffer and Jacob Weber, thought more discipline was necessary. Certainly the case had many implications, and party spirit, rumors, and personality clashes all created havoc in the brotherhood.

The local bishop, Jacob Zimmerman, and all but one of the bishops of Lancaster Conference signed an edict or plan of reconciliation and presented it to the Groffdale congregation. Forty-eight people reportedly did not accept the bishops' plan. This group then formed a new congregation, led by ministers Jacob Stauffer and

Jacob Weber. The Groffdale and Metzler people permitted them to assume ownership of the Pike meetinghouse—thus the name, Pike Mennonites. Their official name is Stauffer Mennonite Church, named after their minister, Jacob Stauffer, who wrote a lengthy position paper explaining the new group's beliefs and practices along with his views on how the spiritual life of the Mennonite Church had declined.<sup>20</sup>

The lone bishop who sympathized with the seceding group was the Juniata District bishop, Jacob Brubaker, who with a small group of Mennonites started a sister church in Snyder County. He thus became the Stauffer Mennonites' first bishop. The Stauffer Mennonites have since then divided into two main parts, the Stauffer and the Weaver groups, whose main difference is the extent to which they practice shunning. Both groups still use the Pike meetinghouse but worship on separate Sundays.

How this sad event affected the Metzler congregation is uncertain, but the loss of two of their three ministers must have proven difficult. The remaining minister, Joseph Wenger, was nearly eighty years old at the time of the division. His son Benjamin was deacon at that time. Metzler and Groffdale continued to operate as a circuit in which services were held alternately at the two places. This practice continued until 1945, when each congregation began to conduct services at each place every Sunday.

The Metzler members made no changes on the original building until 1864, when they erected a fifteen-foot addition. They also purchased eighty-five perches of land from Jacob and Barbara Metzler and added it to the original plot. The trustees at this time were Daniel Meyer, Jacob S. Metzler, and Isaac Burkholder.<sup>21</sup> Congregational growth must have necessitated the larger building. This time eighty-one persons subscribed to the building fund. Fortunately, these lists of subscribers have been preserved and can be read today. The 1864 list included eight grandsons of Pioneer Jonas Nolt. The 1864 addition cost \$526.23 and donations amounted to \$636.78.<sup>22</sup> The congregation used the

---

<sup>16</sup>Deed F-5-552, Lancaster. Copy of this and other deeds in possession of Daniel Sauder, Route 2, Ephrata, Pa.

<sup>17</sup>Church statements of donations and expenses in possession of Daniel Sauder, above.

<sup>18</sup>Weaver, *Mennonites of Lancaster Conference*, p. 133.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 377.

<sup>20</sup>[Jacob] St[au]ffer], *Eine Chronik oder Geschicht-Büchlein von der sogenannten Mennonisten Gemeinde* (Lancaster: Johann Bär und Söhnen, 1855). See also "Denominations Originating in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania," ed. Charles D. Spotts, *Community History* (Community Historians Annual) 2 (December 1963): 25-26.

<sup>21</sup>Deed K-9-39, Lancaster. Jacob S. Metzler was the son of Jacob and Barbara Metzler and the grandson of pioneers Jacob and Maria Metzler. Isaac Burkholder, mentioned earlier, was the miller who built Rupp Mill.

<sup>22</sup>Church deeds in possession of Daniel Sauder, above.



extra money five years later, in 1869, to put new shingles on the roof of the original structure. This improvement cost an additional \$60.05, and again the congregation raised the funds by subscription. The donations were small, and the list included only thirty-two people. One additional expense item of interest was \$4.50 paid "to Isaac Burkholder for firewood hauling and serving." A wood stove apparently heated the old meetinghouse.

Other projects for which money was collected included a rail fence in 1870. This involved thirty-five locust posts and twenty-four rails. The dimensions suggest that it was built around the cemetery. Twenty-nine people contributed \$33.40. In 1873, subscribers contributed money to build a "shed of 75 feet long and to repair the old shed." Forty-five people donated \$340.12. In 1874 the cemetery was enlarged by twenty-three perches. The deed states that Jacob S. Metzler and his wife, Mary Ann, sold the land. This was the third Jacob to live on the original Metzler farm. Thirty-two people contributed \$80.69. In 1885, seventy-five more feet was added to the sheds, which were probably the ones still standing as recently as 1952.

During the years of 1874 and 1875 members of the Metzler congregation helped a number of Mennonites from Russia who arrived in America at that time. Many of these immigrants needed assistance to get established in their new country. Metzler people, along with many other eastern Mennonites, showed loving concern for these brothers and sisters. Metzler collected \$457.00, a significant sum for those days. Of this money \$132.58 was paid back. In 1887, when \$5.25 was paid back to six Metzler members, then deceased, the money was placed in the church treasury.

Up to this point the Pennsylvania German (Dutch) dialect was the common language of the people. All public schools taught English after 1834 so that by the mid-1800s all the young people spoke it. In fact, all written records available today for the congregation appear in English. Nevertheless, the worship services continued to be conducted with singing from German hymnbooks and scripture reading from the German Bible. The early settlers sang from the *Ausbund*, a collection of hymns first published in Europe in 1564.

In 1804 Lancaster Conference published the *Unpartheyisches Gesang-Buch*, which was used extensively by the Mennonites of Lancaster County in the 1800s. The Metzler congregation also used this hymnal, a copy of which still rests in the Metzler pulpit. In 1881 the trustees bought nine songbooks for \$11.25. Although not described, these books must have been German and were possibly new copies of the *Unpartheyisches Gesang-Buch*. Noah H. Mack remembered that "at the close of each service, the hymnbooks (all German) were gathered and set on the singer table. They were rather short in number. At the next service, these books were handed out to those who would reach out for one when the books came along."<sup>23</sup>

The change from German to English singing must have occurred about 1890. A committee which included schoolteacher Noah H. Mack purchased six dozen copies of the English *Hymns and Tunes*,<sup>24</sup> published by Mennonite Publishing Company in 1890. English singing was controversial. Some controversy existed regarding English singing among some of the Groffdale-Weaverland congregations but evidently caused no problems at Metzler. Perhaps Noah Mack's influence helped the brotherhood to accept this innovation. However, because some Metzler people did withdraw with Bishop Jonas Martin only three years later, the matter of English hymnbooks may have contributed to their dissatisfaction.

## Old Order Mennonite Division

The Old Order Mennonite division occurred nearly a half century after the Stauffer (Pike) division. Unlike that division the Old Order Mennonite division in 1893 took place in the eastern part of the Groffdale-Weaverland District, but at least some Metzler people joined the seceding group. During the latter decades of the nineteenth century, concern grew regarding church innovations, especially the beginning of Sunday schools and the change from German to English services. In 1872 the Wisler division, which followed a more conservative course, took place in Indiana and Ohio. In the Groffdale-Weaverland District some interest arose in starting a "Wisler Church."

The local bishop, George Weaver, led the members who opposed Sunday schools in Lancaster Conference. However, many people considered him "a strong factor in Conference work" who was "favorably known over the entire Conference."<sup>25</sup> After Jonas H. Martin became bishop, he could not keep the district unified. As problems arose, he sided with the more conservative element. At the fall session of Lancaster Conference in 1893, he announced that he could no longer work in harmony with Conference. As a result the Conference revoked Martin's bishop charge, and he with most of the Weaverland area ministry started a new group known as the Weaverland Conference Mennonites.

Metzler members must have possessed strong feelings about this division. Both ministers, Joseph Wenger and Elias Nolt, remained, but the Groffdale-Metzler deacon, John H. Martin, joined the Weaverland Conference. A serious controversy arose at Metzler and Groffdale when the congregation discovered that the

---

<sup>23</sup>Noah H. Mack, "A Brief Sketch of the Effort in Sunday-School Work in the Groffdale-Metzler's and Other Districts During the Earliest Stages Thereof," 1946 (mimeographed manuscript). In possession of author. Cf. Noah H. Mack, "The Earliest Stages of Sunday Schools in the Groffdale—Metzlers District," *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* 29 (1968): 5-7.

<sup>24</sup>Church statements in possession of Daniel Sauder, above.

<sup>25</sup>Eli D. Wenger, *The Weaverland Mennonites Including a Biography of Bishop Benjamin W. Weaver with Excerpts from His Diary* (n.p.: 1968), pp. 19-20.

seceding deacon had taken with him from the cemetery trust fund about \$2,000, which was then claimed by the seceding group. Some members of Lancaster Conference hired a lawyer and initiated legal proceedings.

The congregation appointed three brethren to study the matter. One of these was Noah H. Mack, a public schoolteacher who was serving at the Metzler school at the time and who worshipped with both Metzler and Groffdale congregations. Mack felt strongly that a lawsuit should be avoided at all costs. On one occasion he went early to the school and in the basement prayed earnestly about the matter. At a Sunday morning service at Metzler when Mack was to report to the congregation on the matter, he was so overcome with emotion that he wept and could not make the report. He felt certain that God did not want the brotherhood to take legal action, but he also felt that he should not lead a personal crusade about the matter. Eventually he turned the matter into God's hands, and in a short time the court case was withdrawn. In the end events worked out according to Noah Mack's wishes, but he found the whole matter a "hard and bitter" trial. He felt that many Groffdale and Metzler people considered him a troublemaker because he so strongly resisted the movement to regain the money.<sup>26</sup> Later he was ordained a minister and a bishop for the Metzler people.

### Sunday School

In 1871 Lancaster Conference passed a resolution favoring Sunday schools. However, not until after the 1893 division did Metzler and Groffdale begin a Sunday school. Some believed that Sunday school was necessary to reach the young people, many of whom did not become Christians until they were adults and married. Noah H. Mack wrote that "most of the daughters of Mennonite people were unconverted and dressy." Some older folks were unhappy about the "dressy" girls' coming to services, but they could not see the value of getting these young people under the influence of gospel preaching. Mack also wrote:

The young people and some not so young, not knowing the German, took no part in the singing and usually stood outside, weather permitting, and then coming in when preaching would begin. With this condition and manner of service having existed for many years, one can well understand why the interest and spirit had dwindled to so low a degree.<sup>27</sup>

Many people saw Sunday school as a means of solving this problem. Consequently, in the spring of 1896 Sunday schools began at both Metzler and Groffdale. Noah Mack superintended both schools, but all the other officers in each school were different. The Metzler Sunday school consisted of a total of about 115 scholars, teachers, and officers. It was conducted that first six months on alternate Sundays. However, the Sunday school created a new problem: the meetinghouse was too small.

### New Meetinghouse

Metzler congregation had used the 1827 frame and log church building for seventy years. No photographs seem to exist of this first building, which was probably painted white. Some have compared its appearance to that of the old Indiantown meetinghouse before the latter congregation built a front addition. Inside the benches sat perpendicular to each other in the style of many old Mennonite meetinghouses.

In the spring of 1897 the congregation razed the old meetinghouse and constructed a forty-by-sixty-two-foot structure on the same site. The congregation purchased more land, this time from Barbara Metzler, daughter of the third Jacob Metzler. Noah Mack served as secretary of the building committee, a duty giving increased evidence of the young man's leadership in the congregation. Abraham Stoner, Samuel Metzler (later ordained deacon), and John Sauder, the sexton, served as trustees at this time. The first service in the new meetinghouse was conducted on August 1, 1897. Speakers on that occasion included Bishops Jacob N. Brubacher of Mount Joy and Tillman Erb from Kansas.<sup>28</sup>

During construction of the new building, Sunday school continued in the nearby schoolhouse on alternate Sundays. For a number of years it closed during winter. As late as 1905 Gideon S. Eberly wrote that the Sunday school was not "evergreen" and that he hoped and prayed that the time would be "fast coming when it will be."<sup>29</sup> About 1920 the congregation dug a basement under the meetinghouse to make improved Sunday school facilities for children.

### New Church Activities

The twentieth century brought many changes in the congregation. Revival meetings, called "series of meetings," began as early as 1912. Simon B. Landis of Elizabethtown conducted these meetings. The first Sunday school meeting was held on Saturday, June 7, 1913. Sunday school meetings continued biennially. The third one took place in 1917. A brochure announcing this meeting informed interested persons of convenient transportation via the nearby Ephrata and Adamstown trolley. Sunday school meetings later became known as harvest and Sunday school meetings, and still later, harvest and Bible meetings.

As early as 1909 efforts were being made to start a singing school. A sewing circle began in the early 1930s. Gospel Stewards, a youth organization, began in 1948

---

<sup>26</sup>J. Paul Graybill, Ira D. Landis, J. Paul Sauder, *Noah H. Mack: His Life and Times, 1861-1948* (Board of Bishops of the Lancaster Mennonite Conference, n.d.), pp. 30-33.

<sup>27</sup>Mack, "A Brief Sketch."

<sup>28</sup>Weaver, *Mennonites of Lancaster Conference*, p. 152.

<sup>29</sup>G. S. Eberly in *Herald of Truth* 42 (April 23, 1905): 117.

with projects such as cultivating a "Lord's Acre," singing in local homes, and conducting services in the Pottsville prison and in various convalescent homes in Philadelphia. From 1962 to 1967 the youth conducted a Bible school in a children's home near Pottsville, Pennsylvania. In 1971 Metzler congregation, having shared summer Bible school with Groffdale for many years, began to conduct its own school.

Metzler also helped to begin four other congregations. Members from Metzler and from the Hammer Creek District began a congregation in Ephrata and erected a meetinghouse there in 1901. In the early years the Metzler-Groffdale ministry shared with the Hammer Creek District the responsibility of conducting services. Preacher Benjamin G. Wenger served the Ephrata congregation as well as Metzler and Groffdale. In 1905 Samuel Metzler was ordained specifically for Metzler and Ephrata. In later years Ephrata identified with the Hammer Creek District.

In 1939 families from the Metzler, Groffdale, Stumptown, and Hess congregations began Sunday school and preaching services at Carpenter, an unused meetinghouse near Brownstown. These interested workers believed a gospel witness should be established there. Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities assigned several ministers to preach there until Michael N. Wenger was ordained. Today he and David M. Weaver share the ministry at Carpenter.

A few years later, in 1943, another empty church building in Hinkletown provided an opportunity for growth. Esther Mellinger Bair from the Metzler congregation started a Sunday school there. Other members from surrounding Mennonite churches joined her. The Groffdale District ministry assumed responsibility for preaching services until Warren S. Good was ordained in 1947.

In 1948 Metzler shared with other churches in the Groffdale District in establishing a church in Palo Alto near Pottsville, Pennsylvania. Metzler members assisted in conducting summer Bible school, witnessing at the Pottsville prison and at a county rest home, and distributing gospel literature.

Today the Metzler congregation continues to worship in the 1897 meetinghouse. They extensively renovated and made a twenty-two-foot addition to the rear of the building in 1952. This with improvements in the basement provided additional Sunday school facilities, rest rooms, and a balcony for additional seating. However, the congregation continues to grow. In 1977 the congregation appointed a committee to study the crowded condition of Sunday morning services and the need for improved Sunday school facilities.

Metzler presently includes 266 members. Amos H. Sauder, bishop of the Groffdale District, formerly served as a Groffdale-Metzler minister. The present ministers at Metzler are Roy B. Martin, ordained in 1965, and Richard E. Buch, ordained in 1969. Paul H. Weaver, ordained in 1944, serves as deacon.

## Ordained Leaders

Following is a list of men who have served as ordained leaders for the Metzler congregation.

### *Bishops*

**CHRISTIAN BURKHOLDER** (1746-1809), Groffdale District minister, 1770-1780; bishop, 1780-1809. Born in Switzerland, he came to America with his widowed mother at the age of nine years. He showed great concern for the spiritual life of the church and especially the young people. He also wrote a hymn, "Christus ist voll Kraft und Liebe" (Christ is full of love and power), the first hymn written by a Mennonite in Lancaster County.

**HENRY MARTIN** (1741-1825), Weaverland District minister, 1770-1809; bishop, 1809-1825. His work as a bishop often took him into other districts.

**JACOB ZIMMERMAN** (1784-1856), Weaverland District minister, 1812-1815; bishop, 1815-1856. He was bishop when the Stauffer (Pike) Mennonite schism occurred.

**GEORGE WEAVER** (1818-1883), Groffdale-Metzler minister, 1846-1854; bishop, 1854-1883. The church greatly increased under his leadership. He opposed Sunday school, but many considered him a strong churchman.

**JONAS H. MARTIN** (1839-1925), Weaverland District minister, 1875-1881; bishop, 1881-1893. He founded and led the Weaverland Conference Mennonites.

**BENJAMIN W. WEAVER** (1853-1928), Weaverland District minister, 1899-1902; bishop, 1902-1928. He served as bishop after Jonas H. Martin seceded in 1893.

**NOAH H. MACK** (1861-1948), Groffdale-Metzler minister, 1900-1919; bishop, 1919-1926. Noah Mack assisted Bishop Benjamin W. Weaver. He resigned his position in 1926 to assume leadership as bishop in the York-Adams District. However, he continued to live in the Groffdale District area.

**JOHN M. SAUDER** (1864-1939), Weaverland District minister, 1895-1926; bishop, 1926-1939. He was the last bishop of the combined Groffdale-Weaverland District.

**MAHLON WITMER** (1893-1975), New Holland minister, 1934-1939; bishop, 1939-1975. During his term as bishop Carpenter, Hinkletown, West Chester, and Palo Alto began as congregations in the Groffdale District.

**JOHN S. MARTIN** (1908-1964), Groffdale minister, 1949-1962; bishop, 1962-1964. An assistant to Bishop Mahlon Witmer, he died unexpectedly after serving only two years.

**AMOS H. SAUDER** (b. 1912), Groffdale-Metzler minister, 1940-1964; bishop, 1964 to present.

### *Ministers*

**HANS RUDOLPH NÄGELE** (d. 1765). He served as



minister from about 1721 to at least 1724. He joined the Ephrata Cloisters by 1732.

**HANS PETER SUMMEY, SR.** Born in Europe, he came to America on September 28, 1733<sup>30</sup> and settled in Earl Township.

**MARTIN GROFF** (d. *circa* 1760). He was a grantee in the first Groffdale meetinghouse deed in 1755.

**CHRISTIAN WENGER** (d. 1772). He was ordained before 1748. A 1727 immigrant, he lived west of Hans Groff between Brownstown and Farmersville.

**MARTIN HUBER** (*circa* 1725-1785). He is mentioned in the list of ministers for Lancaster Conference who in 1773 signed a letter to the Holland Mennonites.<sup>31</sup>

**CHRISTIAN BURKHOLDER** (1746-1809). minister, 1770-1780; later ordained bishop.

**CHRISTIAN HORST** (1755-1837). He was ordained by 1813<sup>32</sup> and farmed in Earl Township on part of the original Hans Groff tract.

**JOSEPH WENGER** (1766-1851). No record of his ordination exists, but he was ordained minister before 1840.<sup>33</sup>

**ABRAHAM BURKHOLDER** (1768-1840). See deacon listing.

**WILLIAM WESTHEFFER** (1785-1851). Ordained about 1810 and moved to Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, in the 1820s. He did not come from Mennonite background.

**JACOB WEBER** (1796-1861), minister, 1830-1846. He withdrew in 1846 and joined the Stauffer (Pike) Mennonites.

**JACOB W. STAUFFER** (1811-1855), minister, 1840-1846. He also withdrew and became the founder of the Stauffer (Pike) Mennonites.

**GEORGE WEAVER** (1818-1883). He was ordained minister in 1846 immediately after the Stauffer (Pike) Mennonite schism and was later ordained bishop.

**ABRAHAM MARTIN** (1799-1889), minister, 1847-1889. When he died at the age of ninety-one years, he was the oldest minister in Lancaster Conference.

**JOSEPH E. WENGER** (1829-1907), minister, 1857-1907. For a half-century he served as an outstanding leader.

**ELIAS W. NOLT** (1824-1900), minister, 1868-1900. He ardently supported the Sunday school movement.

**ESAIAS B. WITMER** (1856-1937), minister, 1895-1937. He lived close to the Metzler meetinghouse near Diamond Station. He had a long ministry of over forty years.

**NOAH H. MACK** (1861-1948), minister, 1900-1919; later ordained bishop.

**BENJAMIN G. WENGER** (1875-1942), minister, 1908-1942. He preached also for the Ephrata congregation.

**BANKS S. WINEY** (1858-1918), Metzler-Groffdale minister, 1910-1918. He was ordained for the congregation of Graybill Mennonites in Richfield, Juniata County, Pennsylvania, in 1892 and moved to the Groffdale area in 1910.

**ELI G. SAUDER** (b. 1888), minister, 1920-*circa* 1970. He retired from the ministry and presently lives at Landis Homes near Lititz, Pennsylvania.

**AMOS H. SAUDER** (b. 1912), minister, 1940-1964. He is presently the Groffdale District bishop.

**PAUL S. WENGER** (1905-1964), minister, 1949-1964. His father was Preacher Benjamin G. Wenger. His widow, Bertha Wenger, lives in Akron.

**ROY B. MARTIN** (b. 1933), ordained in 1965. He is one of the present ministers

**RAY M. GEIGLEY** (b. 1939), minister, 1966-1968. Ray resigned his ministry at Metzler to accept the pastorate at Locust Lane, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He is presently a minister for the Frazer congregation.

**RICHARD E. BUCH** (b. 1946), ordained in 1969. Richard shares the present ministry with Roy B. Martin. He is a seventh-generation descendant of Pioneer Jacob Metzler.

### *Deacons*

(?) **WENGER.** A Deacon Wenger was serving the Groffdale area in 1813.<sup>34</sup> However, we have not yet been able to determine exactly who he was.

**ABRAHAM BURKHOLDER** (1768-1840). No date of ordination on record. He was ordained to be a minister but requested instead to be a deacon.

**BENJAMIN WENGER** (1808-1874). No ordination date is known, but he was ordained by 1846, for he sided with Minister Joseph Wenger (1766-1851) in the Stauffer (Pike) schism controversy.

**ABRAHAM G. KINDIG** (1808-1882). No ordination date known. He lived in West Earl Township west of Vogansville.

**JOHN H. MARTIN** (1827-1911), deacon, 1878-1893. He withdrew and joined the Weaverland Conference Mennonites.

**MICHAEL W. NOLT** (1839-1933). He was ordained in 1894 after the 1893 division.

**SAMUEL METZLER** (1857-1940), deacon, 1905-1940. He was ordained for Metzler and Ephrata.

**AMOS SAUDER** (1875-1954), deacon, 1931-1954. His son is Bishop Amos H. Sauder.

**PAUL H. WEAVER** (b. 1912), ordained 1944. For over thirty years he has served faithfully.

---

<sup>30</sup>Strassburger, *Pennsylvania German Pioneers*, 1:127, 129, 130.

<sup>31</sup>John C. Wenger, *History of the Mennonites of the Franconia Conference* (Telford, Pa.: Franconia Mennonite Historical Society, 1937), p. 404

<sup>32</sup>Martin Mellinger Collection, Lancaster Mennonite Conference Historical Society, Lancaster, Pa. See also Harold S. Bender, "Preaching Appointments for Bucks Co. Visitors in Lancaster Co. in 1813," *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* 5 (September 1944):[1]

<sup>33</sup>Samuel and Abraham Martin to Jacob Hochstätter, June 30, 1839, Jacob Hochstätter Collection, Hist. Mss. 1-193, Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana. Microfilm available at Lancaster Mennonite Conference Historical Society, Lancaster, Pa.

<sup>34</sup>Martin Mellinger Collection.

*The author traces the history of the war tax issue in the several branches of Anabaptism and its descendants and suggests some responses to that background.*

## Mennonites and War Taxes

*by Walter Klaassen*

In considering the question of payment of taxes for war, we first need to survey the broader context of Anabaptist views on and attitudes to government. Anabaptists did not speak unanimously either on their attitude to government or on payment of taxes for war. Thus if we desire the guidance of the sixteenth century, we need to choose between alternatives or else arrive at our own decisions in light of current problems.

### Anabaptist Views on Government

The Anabaptist view of government can be understood only by means of the Anabaptist version of the doctrine of the two kingdoms. This doctrine is an old idea, coming first from Augustine and continued by various thinkers in the Middle Ages and later, especially by Luther during the Reformation. Basically it meant that there were two kingdoms, the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of earth, the spiritual realm and the material realm, Pope and emperor. Luther spoke about the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world, and the Anabaptists spoke likewise with minor modifications. Menno Simons wrote about the kingdom of Christ or peace and the kingdom of Satan or strife. He saw all of life divided between these two totally contradictory forces locked in mortal struggle. Church and government roughly corresponded to these two kingdoms. He saw the one characterized by peace, forgiveness, patience, persuasion, and love, and the other dominated by vengeance, force, violence, fear, and hate. The two kingdoms thus operated by two distinct sets of rules.

We can summarize the Anabaptist view of government in three points:

(1) Government, belonging to the kingdom of strife, is, nevertheless, instituted by God. That is true regardless of the kind of government, benevolent or tyrannical. Peter of Cologne at the Emden Debate of 1578 possibly represented all Anabaptism on this point: "The God of heaven established all the kingdoms of men. For there is no authority except from God."<sup>1</sup> Government functions to support and promote good and to punish evil. Most Anabaptists seem to have agreed that government had the right to use force and even capital punishment upon evildoers. Some, including Menno Simons, rejected capital punishment.

(2) God created government because of human sin, the Anabaptists asserted, even though it was not originally in His plan. When man fell and no longer allowed himself to be governed by God's spirit, God needed to institute external coercion to keep man's life and society from being totally destroyed. Peter Riedemann's statement may articulate the Anabaptist position:

Governmental authority hath been ordained by God because of the turning aside of the people, in that they turned away from him and walked according to the flesh. . . . For this reason, after the flood, he ordained governmental authority for them to be a rod of anger and vengeance of God, to shed the blood of those who have shed blood. . . .

Thus it is evident that governmental authority is not of grace but is given in disfavour and anger, and that after the turning away of the people. Since they forsook God and followed the flesh, flesh had to have dominion over them. . . .

Therefore the government is a picture, sign and reminder of man's departure from God.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of its institution by God and in spite of its relatively good and positive function, Anabaptists saw government as belonging irrevocably to the realm of law, coercion, and vengeance. Luther referred to this negative function of government as the left hand of God.

(3) As the Schleithem Confession stated, government is, therefore, "outside the perfection of Christ." This simply meant for most Anabaptists that Christians could not participate in government. Such participation involved coercion—the use of violence, killing, and vengeance—all of which were forbidden the disciple of Jesus. One could not be a magistrate and a Christian at the same time. One would have to choose to be either one or the other.

This negative assessment of government, especially of the individual magistrate, always bothered Protes-

---

<sup>1</sup>*Great Debates of the Reformation*, ed. D. J. Ziegler (New York: Random House, 1969), p. 341.

<sup>2</sup>*Account of Our Religion, Doctrine and Faith Given by Peter Riedeman of the Brothers Whom Men Call Hutterians* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1950), p. 104.

tant and Catholic contemporaries of the Anabaptists. Thus they had to defend themselves frequently. One argument used against them was that in the Old Testament one could find examples of godly men who had been kings and governors. Why was it not possible now? True, agreed the Anabaptists, but the coming of Christ had changed all that. God's people now had a new revelation under which all coercion and vengeance was excluded. Jesus had spoken God's last word that one ought to love one's enemies. Even some Anabaptists, however, were not satisfied with that. Balthasar Hubmaier very emphatically stated that a Christian could be a magistrate.<sup>3</sup> Rothmann argued similarly in Münster.<sup>4</sup> The majority insisted that a Christian could not participate in coercion, vengeance, and violence. The statement of Pilgram Marpeck in his work entitled *Verantwortung* (Defense) may express this point for the majority. Marpeck himself was a professional civil servant for most of his life as an Anabaptist.

The kingdom of Christ is not of this world. For this reason no true Christian may administer and protect cities, countries nor people as an earthly lord. Nor may he use force for that is the function of earthly and temporal rulers but never of true Christians under the cover of the faith in Christ. . . . No one can serve two masters, that is the king or emperor in the worldly magistracy and Christ in the spiritual heavenly kingdom.<sup>5</sup>

Thus while Luther said that a Christian should act as a magistrate because of brotherly love, the majority of Anabaptists insisted that because of love they could not function in government. Either one was in the government and then no Christian, or one was in the church and then no magistrate.

Their opponents charged, and still charge, that those Anabaptists who refused to participate in government were irresponsible. By their action they abdicated their obligation to support order and civilization. However, the Anabaptists had chosen to be part of the kingdom of Christ and the realm of peace. Rather than being concerned for individualistic salvation, they sought identification with a new community, with a new nation and people having its own institutions and its own ways of dealing with sin and disorder. They belonged to a counter- or para-culture. Much of life continued to overlap with the kingdom of the world, at which points they felt obligated to cooperate and to support the worldly institutions. However, they did not feel responsible to preserve an order which was passing away and with which they were basically out of tune. They put all their energies into the new community, one which had the promise of final victory and extension beyond human history. For their core values the kingdom of Christ was determinative.<sup>6</sup> They could not allow a penultimate institution, established to deal with man's evil, to confuse and compromise their basic loyalty. They knew too well the tendencies of governments to become demonic, to be no longer friends but

foes of civilization. We have experienced that in full measure in the twentieth century.

Anabaptists also saw the church, the company of committed believers, as the decision-making body. In this context their theology developed. Here they struggled with issues and reached decisions. Here they together studied the scriptures and reached consensus. In this community they found the source of encouragement and support for their nonconformist stance. Here they moulded both their thought about government and their attitudes to government. The church, the kingdom of God, represented their ultimate loyalty.

## Anabaptist Attitudes on Government

We can identify various ways by which the majority of Anabaptists expressed their attitudes toward government.

(1) They all counseled obedience to government except when its orders were contrary to God's will. They did not give ultimate loyalty to government because it was a penultimate institution. It was not an ultimate master. Leonhard Dax in a confession written in 1568 urged that every Christian must be obedient to government. "But when the government tries to make us submissive and obedient in things that are contrary to or in conflict with the righteousness of Christian and evangelical truth, we ignore its order and commands out of the pure fear of God."<sup>7</sup> Peter Riedemann wrote:

For the conscience hath been set free and is reserved for God alone, that he and no human being may be lord of the same and rule over, teach and direct it whithersoever it pleaseth him. Therefore wherever the government presumeth to lay hands upon the conscience and to control the faith of man, there it is robbing God of what is his.<sup>8</sup>

On the other hand, they gave meticulous and humble obedience in those areas not touching conscience. Anabaptism allowed for no anarchism and had no thought of doing without government or of overthrowing it forcefully. Anabaptists also support the government's function of upholding law and order. They

<sup>3</sup>Balthasar Hubmaier: *Schriften*, ed. G. Westin and T. Bergsten (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1972), p. 441.

<sup>4</sup>*Die Schriften Bernhard Rothmanns*, ed. R. Stupperich (Münster: Aschendorfsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1970), pp. 277-278.

<sup>5</sup>*Pilgram Marpeck's Antwort* . . . , ed. J. Loserth (Leipzig: Carl Fromme, 1929), pp. 303-304.

<sup>6</sup>Compare with Hans von Campenhausen's discussion of similar issues in the early church. If he is correct in his interpretation, then Anabaptism with the exception of Hubmaier and Rothmann would be a faithful copy of the early church before Constantine. See Hans von Campenhausen, *Tradition and Life in the Church*, trans. A. V. Littledale (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), pp. 160-170.

<sup>7</sup>Leonhard Gross, "Leonhard Dax's Encounter with Calvinism, 1567/68," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 49 (October 1975): 331.

<sup>8</sup>*Account of Our Religion*, p. 103.



clearly granted the government that right and, as was mentioned earlier, this included the exercise of violence and coercion. One Anabaptist said:

Since the majority of this world will not follow God and his spirit, they must be governed and coerced by the sword. [The government is there to ensure] that the rascals and knaves or children of this world who do not wish to be pious will nevertheless adopt a gallows-piety, and be tamed with a bridle and spurs, otherwise no one would be secure either on the road or at home and the world would be covered with blood.<sup>9</sup>

Riedemann said in fact that government used the sword to kill and that it justifiably did so.<sup>10</sup> Menno Simons even allowed the government to deal repressively with false teachers who led people astray. He thereby handed his persecutors a justification for persecuting him.<sup>11</sup>

(2) Anabaptists always readily admonished the government to carry out its mandate according to the terms of its institution. They made many eloquent statements, beginning with Hubmaier's call on the magistrates to exercise their power and mandate justly with a minimum of violence and oppression and continuing to Menno's appeal to rulers:

O highly renowned, noble lord, believe Christ's Word, fear God's wrath, love righteousness, do justice with widows and orphans, judge rightly between a man and his neighbor, fear no man's highness, despise no man's littleness, hate all avarice, punish with reason, allow the Word of God to be taught freely, hinder no one from walking in the truth, bow to the scepter of him who called you to this high service.<sup>12</sup>

In this way in all love, without force, violence and blood, you may enlarge, help, and protect the kingdom of God with gracious consent and permission with wise counsel, and a pious unblamable life.<sup>13</sup>

They also spoke to government in the ringing denunciatory blasts of the prophet when they saw that it was not living up to its mandate, especially when they felt the weight of its oppression. Jacob Hutter in a letter to the vice-regent of Moravia in 1535 provided one of the best examples of this stance:

Woe, woe unto you, O ye Moravian rulers, who have sworn to that cruel tyrant and enemy of God's truth, Ferdinand, to drive away his pious and faithful servants! Woe, we say to you! who fear more that frail and mortal man than the living, omnipotent and eternal God, and chase from you, suddenly and inhumanely, the children of God, the afflicted widow, the desolate orphan, and scatter them abroad. Not with impunity will you do this; your oaths will not excuse you, or afford you any subterfuge. . . . God by the mouth of the prophet, proclaims that he will fearfully and terribly avenge the shedding of innocent blood, and will not pass by such as fear not to pollute and contaminate their hands therewith. Therefore great slaughter, much misery and anguish, sorrow and adversity, yea, everlasting groaning, pain and his hand against you, now and eternally. This we announce to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, for verily

it will not tarry, and shortly you shall see that we have told you nothing but the truth of God, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and are witnesses against you, and against all who set at nought his commandments.<sup>14</sup>

Anabaptists, therefore, felt a clear responsibility to government. They saw and carried out their duty to hold governments to the mandate which they had from God and to remind them when they departed from it.

(3) Anabaptists considered it appropriate to pay taxes and dues to governments without complaint because governments needed such levies in the exercise of their mandate. Peter of Cologne articulated this view at the Emden debate in 1578:

We are taught that we are to display our subordination in humility and obedience to the authorities under which we are set and, by God's grace, earn our bread under its benevolent protection. Therefore we ought never to refuse to pay the taxes, tributes, and tolls which are its due, as we are taught.<sup>15</sup>

The Anabaptists normally pointed to Jesus and the apostles as their examples in obedience on this point. They argued that they ought to pay the government its due, but nowhere was stated a clear definition of the parameters within which such dues were payable. No doubt they left the matter unclear because the New Testament itself did not carefully define which taxes were legitimate and which were not. Because the limits were not established, they obeyed the command to pay. The majority of Anabaptists, therefore, paid taxes as a clear obligation without any reservations.<sup>16</sup>

Only one segment of Anabaptism, the Hutterites, made some distinctions and identified limits at one point. They regarded these limitations as contingent upon what they considered to be the legitimate functions of government. For these legitimate functions they should pay taxes without complaint or resistance. When, however, taxes were used for purposes which proceeded from the government's own arrogance and were, therefore, in opposition to their God-given func-

---

<sup>9</sup>Hans Joachim Hillerbrand, *Die Politische Ethik des oberdeutschen Täuferturns* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962), p. 14n.

<sup>10</sup>*Account of Our Religion*, p. 104.

<sup>11</sup>*The Complete Writings of Menno Simons, c. 1496-1561*, ed. John Christian Wenger, trans. Leonard Verduin (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1956), p. 193.

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

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

<sup>14</sup>Clyde L. Manschreck, *A History of Christianity* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1964), pp. 86-87.

<sup>15</sup>*Great Debates of the Reformation*, ed. D. J. Ziegler, p. 341.

<sup>16</sup>We do know, however, that the Hutterites severely criticized the Swiss for this attitude. See Lydia Müller, *Glaubenszeugnisse oberdeutscher Taufgesinnter* (Leipzig: M. Heinsius Nachfolger, 1938), p. 265; A. J. F. Zieglschmid, *Die älteste Chronik der Hutterischen Brüder* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cayuga Press, 1943), p. 357.

tion, such taxes were not to be paid. Among these taxes were dues to the hangman and taxes for war. Said Klaus Felbinger in 1560:

When however the government requires of us what is contrary to our faith and conscience—as swearing oaths and paying hangman’s dues or taxes for war—then we do not obey its command. This we do not do out of obstinacy or pride, but only out of the pure fear of God.<sup>17</sup>

These Anabaptists, then, saw no difference between actual participation in war and paying taxes for it.<sup>18</sup> They explained that in the New Testament this exception was not made because at that time peace prevailed and the government did not use taxes for war and killing.<sup>19</sup>

In summary, the majority of Anabaptists held both a positive and a negative attitude toward government, and this produced a considerable amount of tension. They saw government as necessary for the preservation of order so that the gospel could be preached and man could make his living without interference. To the degree to which this was accomplished, the government’s function was a positive one.

However, because government was instituted to restrain those who did not respond to God’s spirit and understood only the language of coercion and violence, such persons had to be dealt with in that fashion. The Anabaptists saw that as contrary to the spirit of Christ; consequently, government could not be Christian. To the degree that it functioned on a sub-Christian level, it expressed and was itself under the wrath of God. However, because the Christian or disciple was under grace, he could not function in the magistracy. Except for Hubmaier and Rothmann, who in Protestant fashion attempted to redeem the magistracy, the majority of Anabaptists consigned government to the wrath of God in spite of its positive function. All Anabaptists knew, because it operated outside the perfection of Christ with methods which were ultimately destructive, government could become demonic, even a so-called Christian one. They could, therefore, never be optimistic about government, even about a so-called Christian one.

On the question of the payment of taxes they were ambiguous. Most Anabaptists apparently stood ready to pay all taxes without asking questions although they must have known that some of the taxes they paid were used for war. Evidently they felt no responsibility for funds once out of their hands. Only the Hutterites took a consistent stand by saying that there was no difference between participating in war personally and paying indirectly for its prosecution.

The prevailing Anabaptist view on war taxes as reflected by the Swiss and the Dutch in the sixteenth century continued through succeeding centuries up to the present. For the sake of order I shall separate the Mennonite strands into Swiss-German and Dutch-German and discuss them separately.

## Swiss-German Mennonites and War Taxes

We know little about payment of war taxes among Swiss-German Mennonites during the seventeenth century. We may justifiably assume, therefore, that the tradition which had been normative from the beginning continued—that is, that Mennonites paid taxes without asking about their use. We know the government levied taxes for exemption from military service on Palatinate Mennonites in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and we have no indication that they did not pay. Those who remained there also apparently continued to make the demanded payments. Eventually all Palatinate Mennonites abandoned resistance to participation in the military as well. However, we may not properly conclude that this happened because they were prepared to pay taxes for war.

Hutterites from the sixteenth to the twentieth century have insisted that Christians ought not to pay taxes for war or other destructive purposes and have suffered much for this belief. Today they face the problem that frustrates all who have a conscience about paying war taxes: modern governments for the most part do not levy special war taxes and can, therefore, challenge any withholding of tax money with the argument that the calculations are not accurate.

Of more immediate interest is the story of the Mennonites who moved from Switzerland and South Germany to North America. There they encountered successively the Revolutionary War (1775-1783), the War of 1812, the Civil War (1861-1865), World War I (1914-1918), World War II (1939-1945), and the Vietnam War (1964-1975). The story of the payment of taxes for war among the Swiss in America is ambivalent in two ways. First, they have never held a unanimous position on the question; secondly, scholars disagree in their interpretation of the evidence as to how much or how little resistance the Swiss offered on the payment of taxes for war.

Donald Kaufman refers to the refusal by Mennonites along with Quakers to pay taxes during the Indian Wars of 1755 but gives no evidence for it.<sup>20</sup> The big test evidently came during the Revolutionary War when those who refused to participate actively were required to pay a tax or send a substitute. The judgments on

---

<sup>17</sup>Robert Friedmann, “Claus Felbinger’s Confession of 1560,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 29 (April 1955): 147. See also Hillerbrand, *Die politische Ethik*, p. 72.

<sup>18</sup>Zieglschmid, *Die älteste Chronik*, p. 522.

<sup>19</sup>Hillerbrand, *Die politische Ethik*, p. 71n. Hillerbrand’s reference here is not accurate.

<sup>20</sup>Donald Kaufman, “A Chronology of Wars Reflecting the ‘Anabaptist’ Response to Taxes,” mimeographed paper read at Conference on War Taxes in Kitchener, Ontario, 1975, p. 3. His book, *What Belongs to Caesar?* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1969), does not mention Mennonites in this connection.

what actually happened vary at this point. Donald Kaufman leaves the impression that Mennonites refused to pay because the money was used for war.<sup>21</sup> Melvin Gingerich says that the majority of Mennonites in eastern Pennsylvania opposed payments and also leaves the impression that they did so because the money was used for war.<sup>22</sup> Even Richard MacMaster implies that all the preachers and a great many other Mennonites in eastern Pennsylvania opposed payment of these taxes because they were used for killing.<sup>23</sup>

Historians usually cite the case of Christian Funk, one Mennonite minister who counseled payment of the tax, to show that the majority opposed payment. They also imply that Mennonites opposed payment because the moneys were used for war purposes. Apparently Funk himself provided the information of extensive resistance in his book, *Mirror for All Mankind*. He reported that "the majority of the ministers in the western part of Montgomery County were opposed to the payment of a new war tax" imposed in 1777.<sup>24</sup> Why did they refuse, especially since their ancestors in the Palatinate had paid without resistance?<sup>25</sup>

The most recent treatment of the subject by John Ruth sheds considerable light on the issue.<sup>26</sup> According to Ruth, many did indeed oppose payment, and Christian Funk did indeed represent an exception. However, the clear conclusion of Ruth's treatment is that they objected to payment not because the tax was used for war purposes but because it was levied by what they considered to be an illegitimate government. Payment would be an act of disloyalty because they had given their allegiance to George III.

Peter Brock presents a picture of Mennonites who initially opposed payment but who paid the taxes willingly once they saw that there was no alternative. In fact, they also rendered extensive service to the revolutionary cause in the form of furnishing horses and wagons and serving as teamsters for provision trains. Brock, therefore, supports the conclusion reached on the basis of Ruth's work: they opposed payment because they had pledged loyalty to George III, and the government levying the tax was not a legitimate government.<sup>27</sup>

These facts help to explain how Mennonites, who several generations earlier in Europe had not objected to paying taxes used for war, now did object. They also explain why these same Mennonites did for the most part pay the tax when faced with imprisonment and the loss of their possessions. Christian Funk was acting in entire accord with past Mennonite practice when he counseled payment. The Quakers, on the other hand, clearly objected to paying the tax because it was used for war purposes.

In the War of 1812 the Mennonites of Waterloo County, Ontario, all of them recent emigrants from Pennsylvania, provided for the British services of teamsters, horses, oxen, and wagons. They did so under duress: they objected because of economic reasons and

the conviction that such mandatory service was a violation of their claim to religious freedom. They did not object primarily because such noncombatant service contributed directly to the hostilities.<sup>28</sup>

During the Civil War the question arose again. However, now the question of legitimate or illegitimate government did not pose a problem even though Mennonites found themselves on both sides of the conflict. In the Union, Mennonites secured exemption from military service upon payment of a fee, and in a less organized way, in the Confederacy as well. In both instances the tax was paid even though it was clear that the government used the money to hire a substitute. This stance was consistent with their historical readiness to make such compromises.

The situation among the Mennonites of Swiss origin in World Wars I and II receives virtually no attention from Donald Kaufman no doubt because virtually nothing has been written on it thus far. By then the issue no longer concerned special taxes but more specifically the purchase of war bonds. Although detailed published evidence appears to be lacking, J. C. Wenger writes that considerable numbers of Mennonites bought liberty bonds albeit under pressure. "They probably placated their consciences with the thought that if the Government needs money it is the duty of a Christian to support his Government, and the responsibility for the expenditure of the money devolves upon the Government, not on the Bond purchaser."<sup>29</sup> However, some clearly opposed all purchase of such bonds. Again, therefore, while they showed some resistance and heart searching, Mennonites acted consistently with their past. After World War II the two streams in North

---

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 4-6.

<sup>22</sup>Melvin Gingerich, *Service for Peace: A History of Mennonite Civilian Service* (Akron, Pa.: Mennonite Central Committee, 1949), pp. 2-3.

<sup>23</sup>Richard K. MacMaster, *Christian Obedience in Revolutionary Times* (Akron, Pa.: Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section, U.S., 1976), p. 18.

<sup>24</sup>Christian Funk, *A Mirror for All Mankind*, quoted in C. Henry Smith, *The Mennonites of America* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1909), p. 255.

<sup>25</sup>Richard K. MacMaster's statement that "the refusal to pay war taxes had taken deep roots in the Mennonite tradition by 1777" (*Christian Obedience in Revolutionary Times*, p. 18) is nowhere supported by the evidence.

<sup>26</sup>John L. Ruth, *'Twas Seeding Time: A Mennonite View of the American Revolution* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1976).

<sup>27</sup>Peter Brock, *Pacifism in the United States from the Colonial Era to the First World War* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 259ff. This conclusion is supported by Willard Hunsberger, *The Franconia Mennonites and War* (Peace and Industrial Relations Committee of Franconia Mennonite Conference: 1951), p. 18.

<sup>28</sup>Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada, 1786-1920: The History of a Separate People* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1974), pp. 100-106.

<sup>29</sup>John C. Wenger, *History of the Mennonites of the Franconia Conference* (Telford, Pa.: Franconia Mennonite Historical Society, 1937), pp. 74-75.

America began to flow together in statements and action on the war tax issue.

### Dutch-German Mennonites and War Taxes

The Dutch and North German Mennonite story is similar to that sketched above for the Swiss. It begins in the Netherlands, where the Anabaptists already in the sixteenth century, upon achieving toleration, paid a tax to the government in lieu of military service. They did it in full knowledge that the tax was used for military purposes. They specifically said, "It does not burden our conscience."<sup>30</sup> They rendered special services for the support of the fatherland's efforts in its wars even after the tax was abolished. The only thing they would not do was to participate directly in the killing.

The Dutch as well as some Swiss and South German Anabaptists continued this readiness to pay taxes for military purposes when they migrated to the delta of the Vistula River in Poland. We know little about the history of this colony on the question of war taxes during the sixteenth century. By the early seventeenth century Mennonites in Danzig were doing what the brethren in the Netherlands were doing: paying a fee in lieu of military service. Again this money was clearly designated for hiring others in their place. In fact, supplying two substitutes became the rule for Mennonites who wished to be exempt. This also was done without protest except on economic grounds. Elsewhere in the area they were either totally exempt or they had to pay fees according to the size of the congregation.

In 1772 the whole area became Prussian. The Mennonites now had to make a single annual financial contribution in lieu of exemption. This money was soon designated for the support of the military academy at Culm. During the Napoleonic wars the Mennonites contributed large quantities of food, clothing, and footwear as well as money over and above the required sum. All this they did as an expression of appreciation for exemption as well as to ensure continuation of the privilege. During the nineteenth century most Mennonites in Germany gradually abandoned nonresistance, and the problem of taxes for military purposes disappeared.

The thousands of Mennonites who in 1789 and successive decades migrated to Russia did so to escape the military situation in Prussia, where they feared the ultimate loss of the privilege of exemption. The Russian government guaranteed them total exemption forever. Nevertheless, during the Crimean War Mennonites assisted the Russian war effort by extensively transporting medical supplies and wounded soldiers.<sup>31</sup>

In the early 1870s Mennonites became aware that in Russia, too, they would no longer receive exemption. To avoid this dilemma, many of them migrated to United States and Canada in 1874 and subsequent years. Both governments gave assurances of exemption, and no problems developed until World War I.

Then the issue of contributing financially to the war

effort in the United States emerged in the drive to buy liberty bonds. At this time a few descendants of Menno who had for centuries made payments in lieu of service refused to comply. Pastor John Franz of Bloomfield, Montana, said: "We cannot buy war bonds, because that makes war possible. Using our money to make it possible for others to be killed would be just as wrong as going into the army and killing a man ourselves."<sup>32</sup>

Others argued that war bonds were a form of taxation and therefore should be paid because the New Testament called on Christians to pay taxes. Most Mennonites finally bought bonds but did so under protest and with a bad conscience. However, the Holdeman Mennonites, for example, took a clear stand against buying bonds.<sup>33</sup> Mennonites in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba took a definite stand against war bonds but raised large sums of money for the Red Cross. They contributed \$500,000 for relief under the last war bond campaign.<sup>34</sup>

### Post-World War II Streams

In World War II the issue of taxes did not arise because by then tax dollars for military purposes became impossible to distinguish from the rest of one's taxes. Beginning soon after World War I, a renaissance of interest in Mennonite history occurred. The work of John Horsch, C. H. Wedel, C. Henry Smith, and H. S. Bender drew the attention of Mennonites to their heritage related to the rejection of killing and their vocation as peacemakers. The cultivation of the peace witness, enhanced by work in Civilian Public Service camps and through Mennonite Central Committee work in Europe after World War II and expressed especially through the Puidoux Conferences and the Concern Group, sharpened the consciences of many Mennonites in the United States and Canada on the meaning of faithfulness to Christ in relation to the state as well as in the Christian vocation of reconciliation. In 1950 a joint Mennonite statement declared: "We cannot compromise with war in any form. . . . We cannot therefore participate in military service in any form. We cannot have any part in financing war operation or preparation through war bonds."<sup>35</sup>

In the late 1950s an awareness grew among Mennonites in the United States that they were participating in preparation for war by paying taxes, a large percentage of which was used for armaments. The

---

<sup>30</sup>Peter Brock, *Pacifism in Europe to 1914* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 167-169, 185.

<sup>31</sup>Kaufman, "A Chronology of Wars," p. 9.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>33</sup>James C. Juhnke, *A People of Two Kingdoms: The Political Acculturation of the Kansas Mennonites* (Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press, 1975), p. 105.

<sup>34</sup>Kaufman, "A Chronology of Wars," p. 14.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 15.



question became more acute during the Vietnam War. Someone estimated that in 1968 North American Mennonites alone contributed more funds for war through taxes than the United Nations' total budget for peace purposes.

In response to this some Mennonites in the United States have for some time made token protests against paying taxes for war by withholding tax money but making it available to Internal Revenue Service through their bank accounts. Others have tried to live below the taxable level and have thus avoided payment of moneys for war purposes. Church organizations have also been questioning the deduction of tax revenue when much of it goes for armaments. A more long-range course of action is the work toward the World Peace Tax Fund Act, first introduced in Congress in 1973. Though it will not stop the spending of money on violence and killing, it could be a witness to the consciences of many people.

### Closing Reflection

The witness of the sixteenth-century Anabaptists appeals to many Mennonites today. If on this question of war taxes we would follow their example, we would simply pay our taxes without complaint or objection and be finished with the matter. As we have seen, Mennonites have followed that normative course of action most of the time. In adhering to our heritage, however, we do not simply accept as normative the ways of our ancestors just because they were our ancestors and did it that way. Jesus, the Lord, stands as our ultimate authority and through His Spirit can reveal new understandings on old questions. The renewed interest of

Mennonites in the question of war taxes is a healthy sign that new listening is taking place and that a new sensitivity to old issues is developing. However, the present situation is new, too. Never before have we faced the reality of our tax money's being funneled to such a degree into instruments of unimaginable destructiveness. "New occasions teach new duties," says a hymn that speaks appropriately to this problem. Perhaps a critical situation has finally captured the recurring, uneasy conscience of Mennonites about paying money for war and has forced them to consider a more radical position.

As a Canadian citizen I do not find paying taxes for war to be an immediate concern as the percentage I pay for the military through taxes is less than twenty-five per cent of what Mennonites in the United States pay. Besides, the nature of the Canadian military is different from the American. However, if I lived and worked in the United States, I would certainly be greatly concerned about it. Many of us are also so conscious of deep involvement in a system and an economy that takes the necessity of armaments and a military establishment for granted and so conscious of our implicit support of it by partaking of its benefits that we would find it difficult to isolate this one issue on which to concentrate our objection. Others of us would say that one must start somewhere to register disagreement with it. All of us take such comfort in our high standard of living that we are not very eager even in our better moments to jeopardize that comfort by doing something radical. We need to continue to search for the best ways to witness on the question of war and the war economy. Whatever the Spirit leads us to do we should do.

---

## Notes and Queries

*Send to the editor for possible publication your notes and queries on research items connected in some way to Pennsylvania Mennonitism and its related groups. Entries should be typed or clearly written in 100 words or less; those published will be indexed with the magazine. Please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope when requesting information from persons listed. Let the PMH community keep in touch with you local historians, students, and others actively engaged in research and writing or interested in such research.*

—Editor

Mennonite historians from across North America at a second conference on "The Mennonite Experience in America" at Bethel College in October 1977 looked ahead to 1983, the 300th anniversary of the coming of Mennonites to the New World. A ten-member ad hoc planning committee nominated Theron F. Schlabach of Goshen College as overall editor for an inter-Mennonite book on **Mennonites in America, 1683 to 1983**. Principal writers are Richard K. MacMaster of Virginia,

Theron F. Schlabach of Indiana, James C. Juhnke of Bethel College in Kansas, and tentatively Paul Toews of Fresno Pacific College in California with the assistance of Rodney Sawatsky of Conrad Grebel College in Ontario. Using an interpretive social and cultural approach, the series will treat Mennonite developments in the context of larger national developments and cultural trends. Firm financial commitments will have to be on hand during 1978 if the project is to progress. Inquiries concerning the project may be addressed to:

Theron F. Schlabach  
Goshen College  
Goshen, IN 46526

Gwendolyn F. Bobb recently assumed a newly created position as coordinator of historical resources for the Church of the Brethren. Included in her responsibilities is full-time management of the **Brethren Historical Library and Archives**. In 1977 the

Brethren Historical Committee—David B. Eller, Herbert Hogan, Donald F. Durnbaugh, and Gwendolyn F. Bobb—prepared two attractively designed pamphlets, "Guide for Local Church Historians" and "Guide to Research in Brethren History." The Committee is sponsored by:

General Services Commission  
Church of the Brethren General Board  
1451 Dundee Avenue  
Elgin, IL 60120

We have recently formed a Pennsylvania chapter of Palatines to America for the purpose of locating the origins of immigrants and for identifying the ships on which they arrived and their places of settlement in America. Any MHA members interested in this field of research and desiring to affiliate with the group may feel free to contact me.

—Dr. John A. Fritchey II  
Camp Hill Plaza Apartments  
106 November Drive  
Camp Hill, PA 17011

In the cemetery of First Mennonite Church, Canton, Ohio, stands a tombstone with this inscription:

M. HENRIETTA BUCHANNAN  
DIED  
Dec. 17, 1855  
Aged  
30 ys. 6 mo. 19 da.

This is the single, tangible evidence in the tradition that this stone marks the burial site of an illegitimate daughter of James Buchanan, fifteenth president of the United States. I have collected some materials on this story but do not know of any serious research on the family.

The mother of Henrietta Buchanan, according to tradition, was a daughter of Mennonite parents who had earlier lived on a farm owned by James Buchanan in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Buchanan, then a

member of Congress, arranged with a congressman from Ohio to have this family with their pregnant, unmarried daughter move to a farm near Canton. I would appreciate more information on this story.

—Samuel S. Wenger, Esq.  
Route 2  
Paradise, PA 17562

My thanks go to Martin H. Brackbill, 2650 North Second Street, Harrisburg, PA, 17110, for the first known proof aside from tradition that the youngest son of the original Christian Hershey (d. circa 1720) was "Salunga" Andrew (d. 1792), not "East Petersburg" Andrew (PMH 1 (January 1978), 9). In Ledger B, page 17 of the Land Office records at Harrisburg, payments were made under Andrew Hershey's name for his 1732 land (the 300-acre tract near Salunga) by "his Brother Benjamin" and also by Herman Long.

My article also confused the later life and children of Maria Hershey (1782-1857), daughter of Christian Hershey (d. 1800). She married John B. Kauffman (1776-1829) and probably lived on the south side of present State Street. A cousin John Kauffman (1773-1829), whose wife Anna (later remarried to John Brubaker), lived at the site of what is now Amanda's Antiques.

—David R. Johnson  
Box 67  
Arendtsville, PA 17303

I am seeking parents of Ann Neff, who married Jacob Snyder about 1770 in Lancaster, moved to Washington County, Maryland, and died in 1818. I am also interested in more information on the Jacob Snyder line. His father, also Jacob Snyder, died in Lancaster County in 1754.

—Austin H. Montgomery, Jr.  
2105 Maple Street  
Morgantown, WV 26505

---

## Book Reviews

**The History, Adventures, and Pilgrimage of John Engelsinger of Brotherstone Road**, by James H. Lehman (Elgin, Ill.: Brotherstone Publishers, 1977-78. 18 issues. Illustrations, paper covers. \$15.00).

In the mail today came the third installment of *The History, Adventures, and Pilgrimage of John Engelsinger of Brotherstone Road*. As was the case with the first two installments I had received, I read it at once, for once I had begun, I could not let them alone. Somehow non-fiction has been my "bag." But now I sat down and devoured Installment Three—of a piece of fiction.

Author James H. Lehman, who also wrote *The Old Brethren*, has chosen for reasons not entirely persuasive to me to issue *John Engelsinger* in eighteen installments, one per month. It is a "novel" idea but not a desirable one in my opinion. I am annoyed by needing to wait weeks between installments. I like to read more rapidly than this allows; I prefer to read straight through if I am sufficiently captivated as I am in this case. Therefore, I am frustrated when I read twenty-eight pages, then must put the story on "hold" for another month.

Lehman is a talented storyteller with a gift for apt turns of phrase, just enough detail, continuous movement, terse conversation, and constant ability to convey the feel of the situation. The story has a rural Brethren context of the recent past that is in many ways like the Mennonite one; thus my identification is deep and immediate.

Lehman very poorly disguises at times, and perhaps deliberately so, the names of people and places. After all, "where Old Grays Road passes over the Colesrill Pike on its way to East Henrysburg" sounds like a deliberate attempt to stimulate one into thinking of Graystone and Colebrook Roads near East Petersburg, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Amos Knacker is no stranger to any congregation, nor is Mrs. Busselyoder when "bussel" (bustle) is so obviously what she does, and "Yoder," who she is. But who is the lovable pessimist named Grizzlebliss who takes such a leading part in the story?

I urge this novel upon my fellow Mennonites even though I have been able to read only one-sixth of the book. A subscription costs \$15.00 but will supply the entire story no matter when the subscription begins, provided it is soon.

Lehman warns his readers in Installment Three that he has included some profanity, and he explains to his Church of the Brethren (and Mennonite) brothers and sisters why he has felt compelled to do so. He represents these words by only the first letter, a few blank spaces, and occasionally a last letter. Perhaps he is wise to be discreetly honest rather than to put forth a false front in entirely omitting such language.

Lehman writes with a gifted and sure touch and catches much of the essence of the Anabaptist tradition though with a Brethren flavor. Let us as Mennonites admit that our convictions are not as consistently lived as professed. True, our goal always exceeds our grasp, but our claims are inextricably mixed with miscellaneous motives as well. I really wonder whether this story is not, after all, autobiographical. The problem for many will be to decide whether it is the story of the author's experience or their own.

New subscribers should contact Brotherstone Publishers, 450 Hoxie Avenue, Elgin, IL 60120. This would make a fine gift. A church library could also subscribe if the librarian has adequate ways of lending installments and keeping them together as the installments accumulate.

—Gerald C. Studer

**Stauffer-Stouffer-Stover and Related Families**, by Richard E. Stauffer (n.p.: 1977. 275 pages. Softbound, \$17.50).

This unique genealogy will serve as a most valuable and welcome volume to anyone researching Stauffer, Stouffer, or Stover families. Instead of concentrating on one specific family line, the author has compiled a

source book on the early Stauffers living in Pennsylvania. It also includes descendants living in other states. Unfortunately, however, this volume includes no index.

Beginning with a concise history of the Stauffer family in Europe before emigration, the book gives a biography of Daniel Stauffer, father of Hans (John) Stauffer, as well as biographies on most of Hans Stauffer's children. Daniel Stauffer lived in the town of Thun in the canton of Berne, Switzerland, in the 1600s. Hans Stauffer (b. 1655), Kinget (Heistand) Reif, and their four children migrated to America in 1710. A personal account of their trip to America as well as notes recorded from 1685 to 1708 in a diary by Hans Stauffer add authenticity to this history.

After arriving in Philadelphia, the family settled near Valley Forge, Chester County, Pennsylvania. The Stauffer children later moved to Berks, Lancaster, and Montgomery Counties. Informative historical and genealogical data is given on these families and their children as well as on other Stauffer immigrants. Names of over 2,000 Stauffers, Stouffers, and Stovers appear in the book.

The author has done exhaustive research. He has searched census records in detail for 1790, 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880 for all Stauffers living in Berks, Bucks, Carbon, Chester, Lancaster, Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton, Schuylkill, Snyder, and Union Counties in Pennsylvania. In a spot check through some of the census indices, I found that he has included all listed Stauffers, Stouffers, and Stovers with as much information as federal census records contain. This compilation will save many Stauffer researchers considerable time and effort in searching the census records.

Another valuable compilation in this book is a section titled "Stauffers, Stouffers, and Stovers in the Civil War." Arranged in alphabetical order by surname, nearly 120 Stauffers who served in the Civil War between 1861 and 1865 are listed. The author extracted this information from the military service records and the pension application records, available only at the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

The book also includes data on Stauffers in the Indian wars and in the Spanish-American War of 1898 as well as Stauffers living in Philadelphia in 1868 and in 1877. Information on families related to the Stouffers includes Carl, Danner, Dorney, Meitzler, Schantz, and Zeisloff. The author details the history of Henry and Sarah (Walbert) Stauffer, his great-grandparents, and their descendants to the present day. Copies of the book are available from Richard E. Stauffer, Box 54, Old Zionsville, PA 18068.

—Lois Ann Zook

## Genealogical Books for Sale at the Lancaster Mennonite Conference Historical Society 1978

- Cassel, Daniel K. *A Genea-Biographical History of the Rittenhouse Family and All Its Branches in America, with Sketches of Their Descendants. . . .* Vol. I. Philadelphia: Rittenhouse Memorial Association, 1893. 272pp. \$36.00.
- Davidson, Jane L. S. *Christian Schmucker: A Colonial Pennsylvania Farmer*. Downingtown, Pa.: Chester County Trade Talk, 1976. 106pp. \$6.00.
- Doane, Gilbert H. *Searching for Your Ancestors: The How and Why of Genealogy*. New York: Bantam Books, 1974. 212pp. \$1.95.
- Graybill, Henry Benner. *The Life Story of Joseph and Susan Graybill*. Lancaster, Pa.: Heralds Printing Service, 1974. 84pp. \$1.50.
- Groff, Clyde L. and George F. Newman. *The Eby Report, Volume I, Number 1*. Sharon Hill, Pa.: Cardinal Print., 1975. 134pp. \$7.00.
- Groff, Clyde L. and George F. Newman. *The Eby Report, Volume I, Number 2, American Bi-Centennial Issue*. Sharon Hill, Pa.: Cardinal Print., 1976. 165pp. \$7.00.
- Hostetler, Paul V. *Bishop Jacob Hertzler and His Family*. n.p.: 1976. 70pp. \$5.50.
- Kready, Norman B. *Genealogy of the Kready Family from the First Emigrant to This Country Down to the Present Time. . . .* Gordonville, Pa.: Gordonville Print Shop, 1976. 178pp. \$8.00.
- Kreider-Greider Annual Genealogy Reports (Set of four issues). 1929-34. 16pp. \$26.00.
- Landis, Dorothy K., ed. *Report of the Thirty-Fifth Reunion of the Landis-Landes Families Held at Perkasio Park, Perkasio, Bucks County, Pa., August 7, 1954*. Allentown, Pa.: Holben-Printing, 1956. 55pp. \$2.00.
- Newman, George Frederick. *A Preliminary Report on the European Aebi-Eby Family*. Glenolden, Pa.: Tri-County Composition, 1974. 24pp. \$1.00.
- Reist, Henry G. *Peter Reist of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and Some of His Descendants*. Revised reprint of 1933. Gordonville, Pa.: Gordonville Print Shop, 1977. 118+pp. \$2.50.
- Zook, Lois Ann. *Who Begot Thee: Descendants of Jacob Brubaker of Snyder County, PA*. n.p., 1976, 302 pp. \$7.25.

Orders filled on a first-come, first-served basis while supply lasts. All prepaid orders sent postpaid. Pennsylvania residents add six per cent sales tax.