Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage

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In This Issue

Hanspeter Jecker

Allan A. Garber

Paula Holtzinger

Carl C. Garber

Hanspeter Jecker has been teaching at the Bienenberg Theological Seminary (now Bildungszentrum Bienenberg, https://de.bienenberg.ch/) in Liestal/Switzerland, from 1982 to the present. He mainly taught historical theology and ethics and continues to head the Center for Anabaptist Theology and History (*Fachstelle für täuferische Theologie und Geschichte*).

Jecker is also president of the Swiss Association for Anabaptist History (*Schweizerischer Verein für Täufergeschichte, https://mennonitica.ch/) and coeditor of its year*book, *Mennonitica Helvetica*. The author of several books and numerous articles, he resides at Fulenbachweg 4, CH 4132 Muttenz, Switzerland, near Basel and can be contacted by e-mail at hpjecker@gmail.com.

Allan A. Garber is a graduate of McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, and practices law in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, where he resides with his wife, Kristie, and four children. He has published several books and articles on the Garber family. The second edition of his most recent book, *To God Alone the Honor: The Pioneer Mennonite Families of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania,* appeared recently. Some of his favorite hymns are "Come, Thou Fount of Ev'ry Blessing," "I Owe the Lord a Morning Song," "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah," and "In the Rifted Rock I'm Resting." E-mail: agarber59@gmail.com.

Paula Holtzinger graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Peace and Conflict Studies from Messiah College in May 2018. Upon graduation she served with Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) Service and Learning Together (SALT) program with their Lebanon/Syria team as an emergency-response assistant, working to provide support to its Syria Crisis response. Prior to graduation from Messiah College Paula also served with MCC in another capacity as the student representative for MCC's East Coast Board for a year and a half. During her time at Messiah College she was very involved in service and antiracism efforts on and off campus, especially through the Agape Center for Service and Learning and as an Amigo Scholar with the Multicultural Scholarship Programs. E-mail: pholtzinger17@gmail.com.

Carl C. Garber, born in West Liberty, Ohio, spent most of his career as a chemist. After having lived in many different places (Alberta, Canada; Wisconsin, Delaware, and New Jersey), he now resides with his wife, Sharon, in Lititz, Pennsylvania, only about five miles from where his father grew up. He enjoys research into the family history of both his father's and his mother's ancestry. He also enjoys joining with his brother, Allan A. Garber, in investigating details about the early history of Mennonite immigrants to Lancaster County and their families. Consequently, he finds it a great privilege and blessing to volunteer for the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society and learn more about his predecessors' faith. E-mail: csquaredg@me.com.

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ON THE COVER

The 1719 Herr House, oldest house in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, stands near the town of Willow Street. Its steeply pitched roof reflects medieval Swiss German architecture *(photo, Joel H. Nofziger).*

This article sheds light on the age, origins, family relationships, and connections for the most important protagonists of the Anabaptist Herr/Zherr family before they fled into the German Kraichgau (1671–72) and later emigrated to Pennsylvania.

The Swiss Origins of Pioneer Settler Hans Herr in Pennsylvania: Myths, Legends, and New Insights[1]

By Hanspeter Jecker
Translated by Anne Augspurger Schmidt-Lange

Introduction

Some of the key figures of Anabaptist beginnings in North America were already well known through extensive activities in Europe when they decided to emigrate overseas. That is the case, for example, with the Anabaptist teacher Bendicht Brechtbühl (1666-1720) from the Emmental in the canton of Bern, who, because of government persecution, had first fled for several years to the Kraichgau in Germany before deciding in 1717 to undertake the transatlantic crossing to Pennsylvania. He was very well known already in Europe, and that status contributed significantly to his reputation as "outstanding Swiss leader and pioneer" of the Mennonite Church in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, which persists to this day.[2] For Hans Herr it is completely different. In Switzerland he is, so to speak, unknown, even among those interested in Anabaptist history. But in the early history of the Swiss Anabaptists who had immigrated to North America and in the historical awareness of his numerous descendants, Hans Herr is an even more central figure than Brechtbühl. Some even speak of a "Hans Herr myth." "Over the years he became the Moses who led the persecuted Mennonites out of captivity into the promised land of Pennsylvania."[3]

The 1719 Herr House in Willow Street, Pennsylvania, frequently referred to as "the Hans Herr House," was built, not by Hans, but by Christian Herr *(photo, Hanspeter Jecker).*

The significant role attributed in North America to Hans Herr himself and the entire Herr family, not only for Mennonite history but also for the entire early history of European colonization in Pennsylvania, can also be seen very well in the activities of the 1719 Herr House & Museum in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, which have been considerably expanded during the last few years.[4]

The relevant standard reference work for Anabaptist Mennonite history, the *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, writes the following concerning Hans Herr:

> Hans Herr (17 September 1639-21 January 1725), with his wife Elizabeth Kendig, at the age of 72 brought his family across the Atlantic to free them from oppression in Europe, settling near Willow Street in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in the fall of 1710. Seven children, Abraham and Samuel of Manor, Christian, John, Emanuel, Henry, and Maria, the wife of Bishop Benedict Brechbill, living between Lampeter and Strasburg, also settled within the second decade of the 18th century in Lancaster County. This family was a real asset in establishing this colony in the backwoods of Pennsylvania. Herr was their spiritual leader and

1. This is a slightly revised version of Hanspeter Jecker, "Die Schweizer Anfänge von 'Pionier-Siedler' Hans Herr in Pennsylvania: Von Mythen, Legenden und neuen Einsichten," *Mennonitica Helvetica* 41 (2018): 35-58.

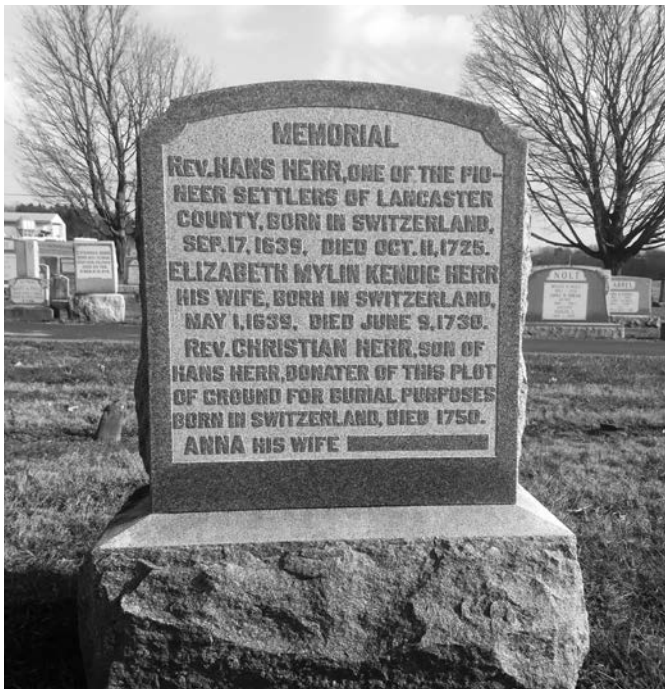
2. This according to Christian Neff and Ira Landis in the article "Brechbill, Benedikt" in *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, vol. 1 (1953), 411f. See https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Brechbill,_Benedikt_(1665-1720). On the prominent significance of Brechtbühl for the early history of the Mennonites in Pennsylvania, see the monumental standard reference work, John L. Ruth, *The Earth Is the Lord's: A Narrative History of the Lancaster Mennonite Conference* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2001), especially 149-52, 158-62, 186-95, etc., and now also Hanspeter Jecker, "Bendicht Brechtbühl (1666-1720) of the Emmental: Anabaptist Teacher, Bridge Builder, and Border Crosser," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 89, no. 3 (April 2015): 405-66.

Lintel date stone of the 1719 Herr House: "A.D. 17·CHHR·19" *(photo, Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society).*

> for 14 years stamped his guiding principles deeply upon this new foreign colony. His son Christian signed the 1725 edition of the Dordrecht Confession (published at Philadelphia in 1727) and built the Christian Herr house in 1719 along the Conestoga Road, the oldest dwelling and church house west of Germantown, sometimes erroneously attributed to his father.[5]

This brief biography from the year 1956 is based on older accounts, some oral and some written, whose historical accuracy was not always proven beyond a doubt. For this reason the place of European origin for the Herr family was sometimes given as Saint Gallen,[6] but mostly as Zurich territory.[7] The family is said to have first found asylum in the Palatinate and in the Kraichgau before some family members emigrated to America in the early eighteenth century. What is surprising is that, despite many uncertainties, the information mentioned above has continued to be used over and over up to the present, whether in print media, online in web pages, or also, as a matter of course, on memorial markers.[8]

However, in the last several years and decades—at least among experts—there has been growing awareness that much of the information in the older accounts of the origin, life, and work of Hans Herr was probably very speculative or based on misidentification of individuals. It became more and more apparent that—as was the practice at that time in the Herr family as with others—the same first names were used over and over. In a family with so many children this led to innumerable Hanses, Christians, Abrahams, et cetera, over the years. The span of about forty years, which the Anabaptist Herr families had spent in the Palatinate and in the Kraichgau after fleeing from Switzerland and before the beginning of their emigration to Pennsylvania, was fully sufficient for this multiplication of first names—and led to numerous misidentifications and much confusion. Often it was not clear whether one was dealing with the father or the



The Hans Herr memorial marker in the Willow Street Mennonite Cemetery *(photo, David Schrock).*

son, a nephew or a cousin, an uncle or a grandfather. Hypotheses based on these unclear relationships contributed significantly to the myths and legends which arose around the pioneer settler Hans Herr. In any case, however, it is well known that repeating uncertain or even incorrect information dozens of times does not do anything to make it more accurate.

Things are made more difficult by the fact that up to now we hardly know to what degree the Herr family also may have suffered from wartime events in the Kraichgau and their numbers possibly have been reduced. Shortly after the arrival of the Anabaptist refugees from Bern, it is well known that the Franco-Dutch War broke out (1672-78), followed by the *Pfälzischer Erbfolgekrieg*, known in English as the Nine Years' War, War of the Grand Alliance, or War of the League of Augsburg (1688-97), and the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-14), which also seriously affected the Kraichgau. One example is the battle near Sinsheim on June 16, 1674.[9]

Because of growing awareness of these problems, in recent years North American researchers have begun intensive discussion, first on the question of whether the

3. Steve Friesen, *A Modest Mennonite Home* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1990), 110.

4. See https://hansherr.org/. On the term "pioneer settler" see the programmatic book title by Henry Frank Eshleman, *Historic Background and Annals of the Swiss and German Pioneer Settlers of Southeastern Pennsylvania* (Lancaster, PA, 1917).

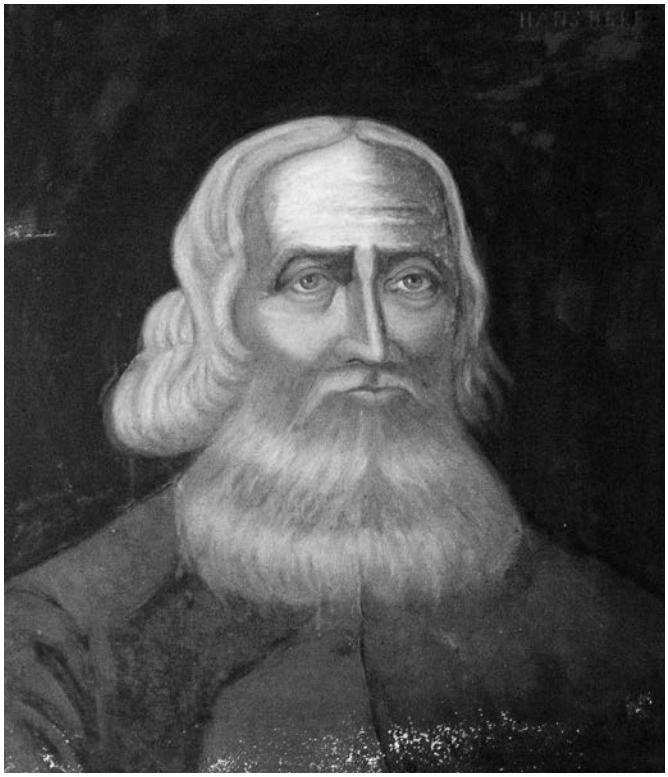
5. Ira D. Landis, "Herr, Hans," in *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, vol. 2 (1956): 712. See https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Herr,_Hans_(1639-1725).

6. As in Ira D. Landis, "Herr Family," in *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, vol. 2 (1956): 711f.

7. As in Theodore W. Herr, *Genealogical Record of Reverend Hans Herr and His Direct Lineal Descendants*, 3rd ed. (Lancaster, PA, 1994), 1, and 1st ed. (1908); also many other versions of the story based on this work, although Herr offers hardly any proofs for his assertions. Even the richly illustrated brochure, *Pequea Settlement 1710: Self-guided Tour: Initial Sites of Lancaster County, PA*, edited by Samuel E. Wenger and published by the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society in the year 2010, is based on this information.

8. For examples of web pages, see the English-language Wikipedia entry for Hans Herr, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Herr, or a genealogical forum, https://www.geni.com/discussions/145238. The Hans Herr memorial in the cemetery near the Willow Street Mennonite Church counts as the most important historical marker: https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/6812531/hans-herr#view-photo=14165523.

9. On the conditions of life and work, including those for the Anabaptist immigrants into the Kraichgau after the Thirty Years' War, see Frank Konersmann, "Zur Kontinuität und zum Wandel der Agrar- und Sozialverhältnisse im Kraichgau (1636-1806)," in Diether Götz Lichdi, Bernd Röcker, and Astrid von Schlachta, eds., *Schweizer Brüder in fremder Heimat: Mennoniten im Kraichgau* (Bolanden-Weierhof, Germany: Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein, 2018), 145-60.



***Hans Herr* (1895). This painting by Leon von Ossko (1855–1906) is based on a work by John Funk (1755–1831). The original is owned by the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society** *(photo, Joel H. Nofziger)*. **Further information about the painting appears in Friesen, *A Modest Mennonite Home*, 112–13.**

pioneer Hans Herr ever actually traveled to Pennsylvania himself or whether perhaps only his sons made this long and difficult journey. A second question was whether perhaps this older Hans Herr, if he did actually travel to America himself, might have come in 1717 and not in 1710. And finally, as a third issue, there was the question of whether this man, who is celebrated as a highly honored patriarch and bishop, ever exercised a function in congregational leadership in the New World at all.[10] All of this has led to even the web page of the 1719 Herr House & Museum concluding, "Little is actually known for sure about the Herr family genealogy prior to the Hans Herr after whom the Hans Herr House is named."[11]

This is not and should not be the place to go through the entire biography of Hans Herr. This article is only intended to help explain the beginnings of the Herr family in Switzerland, which up to now have been almost completely shrouded in darkness. Along with this, there is the hope that with this contribution, impulses can be generated to find answers for those open questions associated with the later stay of the Herr families in the Kraichgau and in Pennsylvania.

First Cracks in the Older Version of the Hans Herr Biography

Almost without exception, the older literature was based on the assumption that the Herr family probably must have its roots in the canton of Zurich. The basis for this assumption was the fact that most of the Herr families, both in the Kraichgau and in Pennsylvania, were closely connected to Anabaptists proven to have originated in the canton of Zurich. It was thought to be a known fact about the pioneer settler Hans Herr himself that he was born somewhere "in Zurich" on the 17th of September, 1639, and married Elisabeth Kündig, the daughter of Hans Kündig and Johanna Meili.[12] Both the Kündigs from Auslikon near Pfäffikon and the Meilis from the Stallikertal near Affoltern were known to be Anabaptist families from Zurich territory.[13] In addition, on the one hand, the Herrs were together with Zurich Anabaptists on their voyage to America on the *Mary Hope* in the summer of 1710.[14] On the other hand, when the first larger group of Anabaptist colonists from the Kraichgau settled in the fall of 1710 on the Conestoga River and Pequea Creek near today's city of Lancaster,[15] the members of the Herr family were again close neighbors of families with roots in the canton of Zurich: besides the aforementioned Kündigs and Meilis, there were among others also the Funcks from Mettmenstetten and the Baumanns from Hirzel.[16]

When researchers initiated a more detailed study of the files in the Dutch archives, which document the decades-long aid given by the *Doopsgezinden* (Dutch Mennonites) to the Swiss refugees in the Palatinate and the Kraichgau, a few cracks and gaps began to appear in this biography, which had seemed at first glance to make complete sense. On the lists of persons who were helped by the Dutch Mennonites in early 1672, the following names appear among others on the list for Mannheim:

> Christen Herr 30 Jaar Grietgen Lötscher 28 hebben [text missing] waer van 1 in Zwitzerlandt hebben 1 kafbet en 1 deken [. . .]
>
> Hans Herr by 20 Elsbet Lotcher syn vrou 22 Jaar geen kinderen dese luyden konen sich met Linnen weven noch wel ernerhen.

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10. On this see the overview on the way this story has been told over time and the extensive considerations in Friesen, *Home*. As an example of the way a change in thinking has begun to be seen on genealogical web pages as well, see Eric Christensen, "The Elusive Life of Hans Herr," https://ericroots.wordpress.com/2016/03/12/the-elusive-life-of-hans-herr/. On the question of a "Hans Herr congregation" see also the recently published article, Allan Garber, "To the Church at the Hans Herrs," *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage* 41, no. 4 (October, 2018): 130-31.

11. See https://hansherr.org/home/faq/.

12. Herr, *Record*, 1. See also regarding this several critical remarks in the afterword to the 3rd edition (1994) by Carolyn C. Wenger, "Corrections and Supplemental Data," 786-89. See also the information about the Herr/Herr families in Richard Warren Davis, *Emigrants, Refugees, and Prisoners*, 3 vols. (Provo, UT, 1995).

13. Hans Ulrich Pfister, "Die Auswanderung der Zürcher Täufer in der Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts," in Urs Leu and Christian Scheidegger, eds., *Die Zürcher Täufer, 1525-1700* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2007), 247-76, here 252 and 263.

14. See the letter of this emigrant group of June 27, 1710, sent from London to Amsterdam, in which they thank the *Doopsgezinden* [Dutch Mennonites] for their financial support. In addition to a "Hans Herr" and "Christen Herr," the letter is signed by Martin Kündig, Jakob Müller, Martin Oberholzer, and Martin Meili. Stadsarchief Amsterdam [SAA], 565 A 2253, printed and translated in James W. Lowry, ed., *Documents of Brotherly Love: Dutch Mennonite Aid to Swiss Anabaptists*, vol. 2, *1710-1711* (Millersburg, OH: Ohio Amish Library, 2015), no. 45, 240-43. On the voyage of the *Mary Hope*, see the report of the Bernese Pietist and Reformed pastor Samuel Güldin (1664-1745), who was on the same ship, in the archives of the Franckesche Stiftungen in Halle/Saale, D 42, 697-738. On the whole story, see also Andreas Mielke and Sandra Yelton, "Samuel Güldin and the Mennonite Voyage of 1710," *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage* 33, no. 2 (April 2010): 2-45.

[Christens Herr, 30 years, Grietgen Lötscher, 28, have [missing text] of which 1 is in Switzerland. They have 1 mattress made of chaff and one blanket . . .

Hans Herr, about 20, Elsbet Lötscher, his wife, 22 years. No children. These people can feed themselves from their linen weaving.][17]

A second list makes it clear that Christen[18] and Hans Herr were apparently brothers. In the list for distribution of goods to the Swiss Anabaptist refugees in Mannheim, we find the entry for

Christen heer

To him and his brother (*an hem en Sÿn broeder*) for necessities of both households 100 rixdollars . . .

also for travel money 6 f[lorins?] 14 stivers . . .

the 2 sisters for clothing 8 rixdollars . . .[19]

On the basis of these two documents it becomes clear that:

1. As far as ages are concerned, Hans Herr was probably considerably younger than was thought up to now: everything points to a birth year of 1652 (instead of 1639!), and for his brother Christian a birth year of about 1642 should be assumed.

2. Since at least one of the two marriages with the Lötscher women must have taken place before they fled Switzerland, the place of origin of the two wives (to be discussed below) might give a clue to the possible place of origin of the two brothers.

Unfortunately, the lists of Swiss refugees kept by the secretaries or scribes of the Dutch Mennonite aid organization do not give any information about the origins of these Anabaptists, most of whom were from the canton of Bern.[20] But anyone who is somewhat familiar with the history of Swiss Anabaptists will immediately suspect that the two Lötscher women may possibly be connected to the well-known Anabaptist Lötscher (Lörtscher) family from Latterbach in the Simmental in the Bernese Oberland.[21]

The Clues Lead into the Canton of Bern: The Lötschers from Latterbach

In fact, it is not all that difficult to confirm this suspected connection to Latterbach using documents in the *Staatsarchiv* (state archives) in Bern. But first some background is necessary. The three siblings—Hans, Melcher, and Anna Lötscher, who were taken to the Orphanage prison (*Waisenhaus*) in Bern in December of 1666 because of their Anabaptist beliefs—came from Latterbach in the Reformed church parish of Erlenbach in the Simmental.[22] Because they were still young and perhaps could yet be brought to "the right path," the government officials decreed that they should be regularly visited and instructed by Bernese Reformed pastors. Officials in the jurisdiction of Wimmis were told also to have a closer look at the father of the three siblings, Hans Lötscher Sr., because he also seemed to have Anabaptist inclinations. If necessary, he also was to be arrested and sent to Bern.

Eight months later the document sources report that Hans and Melcher Lötscher were apparently able to flee from the prison.[23] On August 24, 1667, the officials in the *Oberland* were ordered to pay close attention in case the escapees returned to their home and imprison them again as soon as possible. Following this, the two must have soon been arrested. A known letter [or copy of a letter] written by Hans Lötscher in prison was dated September 26, 1667; in it he included notes about Anabaptists who had been executed in Bern,[24] which he reported that he

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15. In the context of the discussions about the "Doctrine of Discovery" and the disregard for the rights of the indigenous population, the Anabaptist Mennonite colonization in North America has also been evaluated critically. See on this the relevant online study document https://dofdmenno.org/study-guide/ and the extensive bibliography contained in it, and as a brief overview the document by Sheri Hostetler and Ken Gingerich, "Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery," https://doctrineofdiscoverymenno.files.wordpress.com/2015/06/dismantling-the-doctrine-of-discovery.pdf. On the topic in general, see Robert J. Miller, *Native America, Discovered and Conquered* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006), and Birgit Englert and Barbara Gärber, eds., *Landgrabbing: Landnahme in historischer und globaler Perspektive* (Vienna: New Academic Press, 2014). On the role of William Penn and his early contacts with Mennonites, see Ruth, *Earth*, 113-22.

16. On the history of the 1710 settlement of Anabaptists from the Kraichgau, see Ruth, *Earth*, especially 143-84, and also Anne Augspurger Schmidt-Lange, "Anabaptist Prisoners Deported from Bern in 1710: Connections to Ritter, Michel, Ochs, von Graffenried, North Carolina, and the Pequea Creek," *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage* 36, no. 3 (July 2013): 74-93, as well as the detailed listing of the distribution of land in Wenger, *Pequea Settlement* (cf. footnote 7). On the Zurich roots of early North American immigrant families see also Jane Evans Best, "Anabaptist Families from Canton Zurich to Lancaster County, 1633 to 1729: A Tour," *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage* 17, no. 4 (October 1994): 16-23.

17. SAA, 565 A 1196. Printed in Lowry, *Documents*, vol. 1, no. 42, 454-55.

18. In the older Swiss source documents "Christen" is the usual form of the first name "Christian."

19. SAA 565 A 1198, and Lowry, *Documents*, vol. 1, 506-07. Lowry assumes the "two sisters" were the wives of Christen and Hans Herr,[2] but the "two sisters" could also have been the single sisters [or sisters-in-law] Anna and Salome Lötscher, who were in Mannheim with them. The families of Christen and Hans and their wives had their larger payment in cash, which would have covered the wives' clothing expenses. This is an additional payment. I thank Anne Schmidt-Lange for this remark. Concerning Anna and Salome Lötscher, see below.

20. However, it is possible to place most of the Anabaptist refugees named in the 1672 lists in a geographic location within the canton of Bern by comparing them with documents from that time period in Bernese archives. For a few initial examples of such placement, see Hanspeter Jecker, "Vom Bernbiet in den Kraichgau: Zur täuferischen Migration aus der Schweiz im späten 17. und frühen 18. Jahrhundert," in Lichdi, Röcker, and von Schlachta, *Schweizer Brüder*, 29-42. For a general overview on the history of later Anabaptism in Switzerland, see John D. Roth, "Marpeck and the Later Swiss Brethren, 1540-1700," in John D. Roth and James M. Stayer, eds., *A Companion to Anabaptism and Spiritualism, 1521-1700* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007), 347-88, esp. 375-84.

21. See Adolf Fluri, "The Lötschers of Latterbach," trans. Eunice Latshaw Ross, *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage* 26, no. 3 (July 2003): 2-13; also Delbert L. Gratz, "Latscha (Latschar, Lachat, Lörsch, Lörtscher, Latschaw, Leutscher, Lötscher) Family," in *Mennonite Encyclopedia* 3 (1957): 297; see http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Latscha_(Latschar,_Lachat,_Lörsch,_Lörtscher,_Latschaw,_Leutscher,_Lötscher)_family. Leo Schelbert, "Eighteenth Century Migration of Swiss Mennonites to America, *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 42 (July 1968): 163-83, here 181, suspects that the place of origin is the Emmental but without documentation. In original document sources in Bern the name "Lötscher" sometimes also appears as "Lörtscher." In this article the uniform spelling of "Lötscher" will be used.

22. Staatsarchiv des Kantons Bern [StABE], A II 465, 343f. For the location in the canton of Bern of the places named below, see map on page 76.

23. StABE, A II 467, 137.

24. On this see the careful and nuanced considerations in Hans Rudolf Lavater, "'Was wend wir aber heben an . . .' Bernische Täuferhinrichtungen, 1529-1571: Eine Nachlese," *Mennonitica Helvetica* 37 (2014): 11-63, here 16-18.


NOTA.
Es ist bey dem Ende dieser hochteutschen Auflage in die Hände kommen ein Auszug, welchē Hans Lörsch bey unvermutheter Gelegenheit aus dem Thurn-Buch zu Bern geschrieben, und von Christian Kropff aufgehoben worden, u. lautet, wie folget:

Abgeschrie
ben aus
Hans Lör-
schiß Brief
da er zu
Bern ist
gefangen
gewest den
26. Tag
Herbstmo-
nat 1667.
und ist an
der Ketten
wegge-
führt wor-
den, auf
das Meer,

Left: The beginning of the marginal note from the letter by Hans Lörsch (Hans Lötscher) in the 1748 [and later] Ephrata (PA) edition(s) of the *Märtyrerspiegel* (Martyrs Mirror) and, right, the end of the [marginal] note in the 1780 Pirmasens edition *(Dokumentationsstelle des Schweizerischen Vereins für Täufergeschichte, Bienenberg, Liestal, Switzerland; photo, Hanspeter Jecker)*.

had copied from an excerpt from the *Turm-Bücher* (prison record books).[25] Parts of this letter made their way into the 1748 and 1780 German editions of the *Martyrs' Mirror*.[26] After what was apparently a longer period of imprisonment, Hans and Melcher Lötscher were among the six men who were brought under military escort via Lugano and Bergamo to Venice in March 1671 to begin their punishment by serving as galley slaves.

A look at the Reformed church record books of Erlenbach shows the family relationships of this Lötscher family, which was very clearly important in Anabaptist history in the canton of Bern. The parents, Hans Lötscher and Anna Kammer from Latterbach, were married in the Reformed church of Erlenbach on January 21, 1633, and had seven children baptized there between 1634 and 1657.[27] The three siblings mentioned above who had become Anabaptists—Hans, Melcher [Melchior], and Anna—are the three oldest children of that couple.[28] But even more important for our purposes is the fact that among the four younger children of this couple—in addition to the two youngest, Salome and Abraham—two daughters named Margreth and Elsi [Elsbeth/Elisabeth] are listed. And their baptism dates fit excellently with the ages of the wives of Christian and Hans Herr as we have found them in the record of personal identities in the Kraichgau in the Dutch Mennonite aid lists.[29]

Something else can be noticed: during their visit to the Palatinate and the Kraichgau in the year 1672, the Dutch Mennonite aid delegation corresponds with two Anabaptist preachers at the Ibersheimer Hof near Worms. Named as an Anabaptist preacher besides Hans Cunrad Ekley (Egli)[30] was a Hans Löcher or a Hans Loscher.[31] There have been speculations in the literature on the subject that there might possibly be a connection to the Bernese Lötschers of Latterbach. But since the younger Hans Lötscher from Latterbach was still on the galleys in 1672, there is the question of whether this preacher at the Ibersheimer Hof could have other connections to the similar-sounding name "Lötscher."[32] Questions about the origins of this preacher at the Ibersheimer Hof must probably remain open for the moment.[33]

On January 14, 1674, the Bern government turned to its *Amtmann* (regional administrator) in Wimmis because of the death of the father, Hans Lötscher, from Latterbach. The government officials asked about his financial circumstances in order to calculate the inheritance portions of the brothers Hans and Melcher, who had left the country, and to be able to confiscate them.[34] The later request of the siblings to have this inheritance portion paid out was rejected on April 28, 1674.[35]

Unfortunately, the entries in the *Ratsmanual* (book of minutes of the Council of Bern) do not say which of the siblings had interceded with the Bern officials. It can be assumed, however, that the youngest brother, Abraham, was among them, because he is the only one who we know stayed in Switzerland and continued to operate the farm inherited from the parents, which was apparently quite large. But in his family Anabaptist thinking lived on. In 1693 at the latest, even before his early death at the age of only forty-four,[36] he, together with his wife, Madlena [Magdalena] Schmid, was suspected of having Anabaptist ideas because both of them had not

25. In Bern the *Turm-Bücher* (literally: "tower books," prison record books) contain written entries for all of the court hearings in criminal cases which reach a conviction: the preliminary examination, the main court hearing, and the verdict.

26. Tieleman Jans van Braght, *Der blutige Schau-Platz oder Märtyrer-Spiegel der Taufs-Gesinnten oder Wehrlosen Christen, die um das Zeugnus Jesu ihres Seligmachers willen gelitten haben, und seynd getödtet worden, von Christi Zeit an bis auf das Jahr 1660;* first German edition (Ephrata, PA, 1748), 939; second German edition (Pirmasens, Germany, 1780), 813. On this see also Lavater, *Berner Täuferhinrichtungen*, 16-20.

27. StABE, KB Erlenbach 1, 397.

28. The baptism of Hans took place on June 29, 1634 (StABE, KB Erlenbach 1, 174); of Melchior on February 16, 1640 (StABE, KB Erlenbach 1, 198); and of Anna on May 7, 1643 (StABE, KB Erlenbach 1, 210).

29. The baptism of Margreth took place on May 31, 1645 (StABE, KB Erlenbach 1, 224); of Elsi on October 14, 1649 (StABE, KB Erlenbach 1, 237); of Salome on October 16, 1653 (StABE, KB Erlenbach 1, 252); and of Abraham on August 30, 1657 (StABE, KB Erlenbach 1, 267).

30. On the numerous Anabaptist Eglis originating in Canton Zürich, see the information in Hans Rudolf Lavater, "'. . . Von mir Hans Müller, der Arm, das sich Gott über unß alli erbarm!' Zürcher Täuferakten des 17. Jahrhunderts in der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek München (Cgm 6083)," *Mennonitica Helvetica* 32/33 (2009/10): 109-87, list of persons, 186-87.

31. SSA 565 A, 1196; Lowry, *Documents,* vol. 1, no. 42, 454-55.

32. An Anabaptist "Hans Lescher" is documented in Schimsheim near Alzey in Rheinhessen in Germany, in the Palatinate at the time; and in 1685 in Gaiberg, south of Heidelberg in the Kraichgau, a "Rudolf Loscher" is also documented. Notable is that Christian Herr, probably the brother of Hans Herr, the later pioneer settler in Pennsylvania, was living not far from him, in Mauer, at the same time. On this see Hermann Guth, Gertrud Guth, Lemar Mast, and Lois Ann Mast, *Palatine Mennonite Census Lists, 1664-1793* (Elverson, PA: Mennonite Family History, 1987), 12, 15. It is questionable whether there was any family relationship between the Ibersheimer Hof preacher "Löcher" and Ueli Locher, the Anabaptist from the canton of Bern who also appears on the same refugee list, but that should also be examined. Ueli Locher came from the farm Lengholtz [Längholz] in the Reformed church

attended worship services for a long time.[37] Following this, the Reformed pastor in Erlenbach presented them with a copy of Georg Thormann's *Büechli vom Theüfferthum* [literally: "little book about Anabaptism"], the well-known large book of several hundred pages (!). According to entries in the minutes of the *Chorgericht* (parish morals court) this was so that they could study it and recognize the many errors of Anabaptism.[38] This manner of proceeding, which was completely unusual for a *Chorgericht* in the canton of Bern, indicates that the court members respected the Lötscher couple since they considered them capable of engaging in discussion, able to reflect upon controversial topics, and read and study voluminous texts.[39]

After the death of the father, Abraham Lötscher, in the year 1701, the Anabaptist beliefs in this family became more and more evident so that it is hardly surprising that his widow, Madlena Schmid, could be found along with several of her children, some of whom were already married, in the group of almost four hundred Bern Anabaptists who left their homeland to travel toward the Netherlands as part of the *Grosser Berner Täufer-Exodus* (great Bern Anabaptist exodus) in 1711. Compared to the funds brought along by all of the Anabaptist refugees in the great Bern exodus, the sums of money brought into the Netherlands by Madlena Schmid and her family were the highest of all. This confirms the considerable wealth of this family.[40]

All of these events and facts make it clear that through their marriages to two women from the Lötscher family of Latterbach, the brothers Christian and Hans Herr had bound themselves closely to what was probably one of the most influential and well-known Anabaptist clans in Bernese territory at the time.

One thing more must be mentioned here about the amazing web of relationships the Lötschers had within the Anabaptist community. In documents from the year 1690, Abraham Lötscher appears several times as purchaser of various pieces of land being sold by a certain Ulrich Amman, tailor in Oberhofen on the Thunersee but born in the parish of Erlenbach.[41] This Ulrich Amman is none other than the brother of Jakob Amman and together with him the key figure in the beginnings of the Amish Anabaptists.[42] There is more: according to one of the documents, Abraham Lötscher was apparently Ulrich Amman's brother-in-law. Unfortunately, up to now I have not been able to find out the name of Ulrich Amman's wife.[43] Regardless of that, what is certain is the highly significant web of relationships within the Anabaptist community that the Lötscher family was part of and into which the two Herr brothers were drawn through their marriages.

Do the Herr Brothers Also Come from the Canton of Bern?

If the two wives of Christen and Hans Herr come from the Simmental in the Berner Oberland, it is easy to suppose that the origins of the two husbands might not lie too very far away from there.[44] For years I have carried this idea with me while doing my own research in archives in Bern, but I had never explicitly set out to do special studies with this focus. I had hoped more for

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parish of Rüderswil. His property was confiscated in the fall of 1671. StABE, B III 194a.

33. There is probably a connection to Jonas Lohr, the Anabaptist preacher in Offstein, who played an active role in the confrontations with the developing Amish movement. See Isaak Zürcher, "Die Ammann-Reist Kontroverse," *Mennonitica Helvetica* 10 (1987): 3-74, here 31, 34, 36.

34. StABE, A II 481, 83; see also A II 481, 215.

35. StABE, A II 482, 36.

36. See the pastor's relevant note on this with his baptism entry. StABE, KB Erlenbach 1, 267.

37. Kirchgemeindearchiv Erlenbach, Chorgerichtsmanual Erlenbach 2, 58 (July 23, 1693). Abraham Lötscher and Madlena Schmidt had married in Wimmis (!) on November 5, 1680 (StABE, KB Wimmis 4, 203) and later had eight children baptized as Reformed in the church in Erlenbach: Emanuel on September 16, 1681 (StABE, KB Erlenbach 2, 35); the twins Abraham and Susanne on February 14, 1686 (StABE, KB Erlenbach 2, 48); Isaak on January 27, 1689 (StABE, KB Erlenbach 2, 57); Jakob on February 28, 1692 (StABE, KB Erlenbach 2, 65); David on June 17, 1694 (StABE, KB Erlenbach 2, 72); Salome on January 14, 1697 (StABE, KB Erlenbach 2, 79); and Hans Rudolf on October 26, 1699 (StABE, KB Erlenbach 2, 89). Shortly after the baptism of his youngest brother, the oldest brother, Emanuel, married Anna Andrist on December 11, 1703 (StABE, KB Erlenbach 2, 294).

38. Georg Thormann, *Probier-Stein, oder Schrifftmässige und auß dem wahren innerlichen Christenthumb hargenommene gewissenhaffte Prüffung deß Täufferthums* (Bern: Andreas Hügenet, 1693) [VD 17 missing]. On Thormann see Rudolf Dellsperger, *Die Anfänge des Pietismus in Bern* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), especially 28-70, and Res Rychener, "Der Probier-Stein," *Mennonitica Helvetica* 14 (1991): 27-50.

39. On the situation for Anabaptists at the time, see John S. Oyer, "Bernese Mennonite Religion at the Time of the Mennonite-Amish Division," in John S. Oyer, "*They Harry the Good People Out of the Land:" Essays on the Persecution, Survival and Flourishing of Anabaptists and Mennonites*, ed. John D. Roth (Goshen, IN, 2000), 83-108.

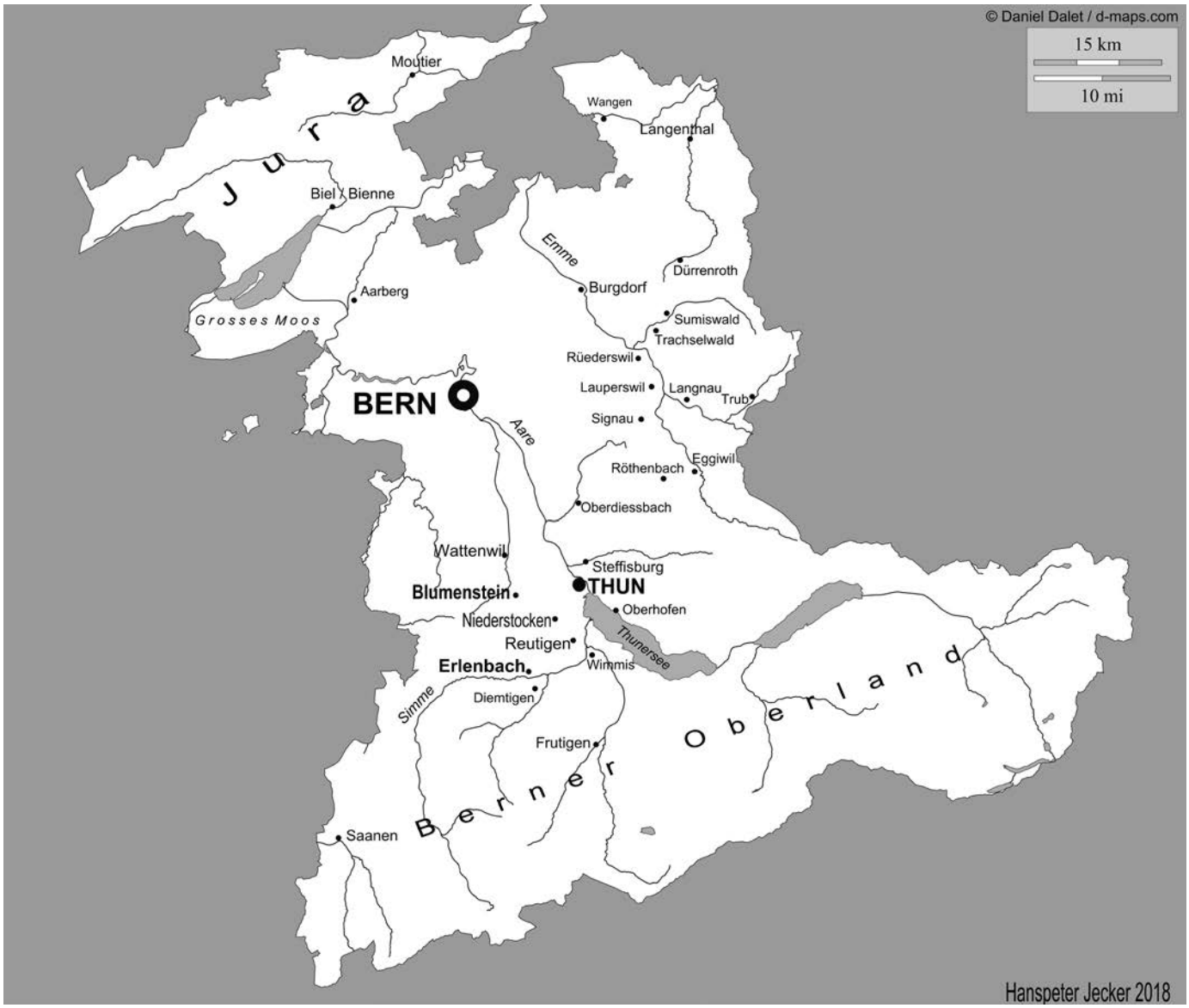
40. SAA 565, A 1218, also A 1343 and A 1396. On the whole event see Hanspeter Jecker, "Der Grosse Berner Täufer-Exodus von 1711," *Mennonitica Helvetica* 34/35 (2011/2012): 115-74. On the members of the Lötscher families who left Switzerland in 1711, most of whom settled in the Netherlands near Groningen in Friesland and who soon changed their name to Leutscher, see Steven Blaupot ten Cate, *Geschiednis der Doopsgezinden in Groningen, Overijssel, en Oost-Friesland* (Leeuwarden, Netherlands, 1842), 184-86; also Hendrik Leutscher, *Genealogie Leutscher: geschiedenis van een oorspronkelijk Zwitserse familie* (Haren, Netherlands, 1985).

41. StABE, Bez Thun, A 371, 138 and Bez Thun, A 372, 79f.

42. On the early history of the Amish in Switzerland, see Hanspeter Jecker, "Das Dordrechter Bekenntnis und die 'Amische Spaltung,'" in Lydie Hege and Christoph Wiebe, eds., *Les Amish: origines et particularismes, 1693-1993* (The Amish: Origin and Characteristics), proceedings of the international colloquium at Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines, France, August 19-21,1993 (Ingersheim, France: l'Association Française d'Histoire Anabaptiste-Mennonite, 1996), 202-25; also, Hanspeter Jecker, "Die Entstehung der Amischen—Ein kurzer Abriss über den Stand der Forschung," *Mennonitica Helvetica* 26/27 (2003/2004): 215-22, and Hanspeter Jecker, "Heinrich Funck—'der Mann, den sie gebrandmarkt haben,' oder: Was hat das Zürcher Täufertum mit der Entstehung der Amischen zu tun?" in Leu and Scheidegger, *Zürcher Täufer*, 277-314.

43. On the important role played by Ulrich Amman in the controversies primarily initiated by his older brother Jakob Amman in the years after 1693, see Zürcher, "Amman-Reist Kontroverse." On the beginnings of the Amish (Anabaptists), see Robert Baecher, "Amman, Jakob," in *MennLex* and the literature listed there, in *Mennonitisches Lexikon* 5: *Revision und Ergänzung*, Hans Jürgen Goertz, ed., 2010-2016 (digital edition: http//www.mennlex.de/doku.php?id=art:ammanjakob. Ulrich Amman must have left the canton of Bern by 1709 at the latest since from then on he appears in Neuenburg territory—first in Bussy, then from 1710 on in Peseux, where he can be documented as late as 1733. See Hanspeter Jecker, "Die Entstehung der Amischen (1693ff.)—Chronologie und Hintergründe des Zerbruchs eines kirchlichen Transformationsprozesses," *Mennonitica Helvetica* 42 (2019) (forthcoming).

44. Now and again speculation as to whether the Herrs might originate in the canton of Bern shows up in the literature, as for example in Steven M. Nolt, "Tracing the Weave, Discerning the Patterns: Remembering Three Hundred Years of Lancaster Mennonite History," *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage* 33, no. 4 (October 2010): 2.



Map of places and regions within the borders of today's Canton Bern mentioned in this article *(courtesy, Hanspeter Jecker)*

that well-known chance event which sometimes lets someone find the tiny needle in the huge haystack just when they were not especially searching for it. It was indeed this kind of "chance," which led me to find this after many years.

In doing further research on members of the Anabaptist Zehr family from the Stockental near Thun,[45] I came across some widely differing spellings of this and other similar names in the original documents. In addition to "Zehr," here and there "Zher" and "Zherr" appeared, sometimes also "Zherren" and "Heer" or "Herr," which caught my interest. I went back and checked sources I had analyzed earlier, this time paying attention to these nuances. I also studied documents from all of the villages and Reformed church parishes around Erlenbach in the Simmental as well as from the area around Ober- and Niederstocken near Thun. In this phase the central object of the search was to find baptisms of two siblings with the family name Zehr, Zher, Heer, or Herr, in which a Christian was baptized about 1642 and a Hans was baptized about 1652. The focus was directed primarily to the parishes where Anabaptist presence could already be documented—namely, Erlenbach, Därstetten, and Diemtigen in the Simmental and Reutigen, Thierachern, Amsoldingen, Blumenstein, and Wattenwil in the immediate vicinity of the Stockental.

Lo and behold, after quite a bit of work and longer searches, I actually found those baptisms in the church record books of Blumenstein.[46] This result was not completely surprising. Although Blumenstein did not play a role in Ernst Müller's standard work on Bernese Anabaptists,[47] since then a few connections of Anabaptists to Blumenstein have become known and have been presented briefly in relevant research publications. Probably the greatest response came from the announcement of the discovery of a *Täuferversteck* (Anabaptist hiding place) in Blumenstein, which Eduard Bähler, Reformed pastor in Blumenstein from 1895 to 1913, made public in a short notice in the year 1905.[48] This hiding place had been discovered in the year 1705 in the course of a series of conflicts between the Reformed pastor in Blumenstein at the time, Abraham Mäuslin,[49] and Anabaptists in his village.[50] Already more than four decades earlier, in 1663, it had been reported to the Bern

government that several households in Blumenstein were also contaminated by Anabaptism. This report did not name names so it is unfortunately not clear which persons or families were suspected [of having Anabaptist ideas].[51] It can be assumed, however, that possibly as early as 1663 attention had been drawn to persons who had some connection to the Anabaptist hiding place that was not discovered until 1705.[52] Among these Anabaptist persons in Blumenstein in the 1660s there may have been—as will be shown—members of the Herr family as well.

The Anabaptist Herr Family of Blumenstein

After these introductory remarks about some of the general connections of Anabaptism to Blumenstein, we come back to the previously mentioned search for the baptisms of two siblings with the name Zehr, Zher, Herr, or Heer, in which a Christian was baptized about 1642 and a Hans was baptized about 1652—and back to the comment that exactly that could be documented in the Reformed church parish of Blumenstein.

On May 5, 1644, in Blumenstein a Christen (Christian) was, in fact, presented for baptism by the parents, *Hans Heer und Elsbeth Bürcky*.[53] It was, of course, extremely satisfying to see a baptism for a Hans for exactly the same parents, *Hans Heer und Elsbeth Bürcky,* entered on January 27, 1650.[54]

The church at Blumenstein, Switzerland, home of the Herr/Zherr family. This small village lies about six miles west of Thun. Anabaptism found its way to this Reformed parish by the early 1660s *(photo, Hansjörg Kägi)***.**

45. On the history of the Anabaptist Zehrs from the Stockental, see Lorraine Roth, *[Introduction to] Zehr Immigrants from France to Canada and Lewis County, New York* (Waterloo, ON, Canada: L. Roth, 2009). See also Joseph Peter Staker, *Amish Mennonites in Tazewell County, Illinois (including Woodford County*) [vol. 3] (2018), 5-24, https://www.tcghs.org/AmishPart3.pdf. Nieder-Stocken, the part of the village from which the Zehrs appear to come, belonged to the Reformed church parish of Reutigen. In a report on its own *Täufergut* (funds confiscated from Anabaptists), the church parish of Reutigen lists the inheritance of an Anabaptist Peter Zehr from Niederstocken, part of which had come to the church parish through a Christen Schütz from Blumenstein (StABE, B III 196, 73; see also B III 191, 281-82.) Since the church record books for Reutigen do not begin until the year 1698, it is difficult to find out more details about the family of this Peter Zehr. Anabaptist Zehrs first appear in 1703, and actually with a "Peter Zehr," on a list in Markirch (Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines) in Alsace in France (Archives Départmentales Haut-Rhin, E 2014). Research up to now seems to have missed the fact that this Peter Zehr, who obviously had some connection to the aforementioned Christen Schütz, did leave behind some traces in church record books in the canton of Bern—not in Reutigen, but in Steffisburg. In the village of Steffisburg, known for its numerous connections with Anabaptism, he married Barbara Schütz on July 8, 1687 (StABE, KB Steffisburg 15, 101).

46. On this see Anne Marie Dubler, "Blumenstein," in e-HLS. See http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/d/D521.php. In addition to the persons named in the following, the names Zher, Zehr, Herr, Heer, and Heri also appear in the church record books of the neighboring Reformed church parishes of Thierachern and Reutigen.

47. Ernst Müller, *Geschichte der bernischen Täufer* (Frauenfeld, Switzerland, 1895). In English translation: Ernst Müller, *History of the Bernese Anabaptists*, trans. John A. Gingerich (Aylmer, ON, Canada: Pathway Publishers, 2010).

48. Eduard Bähler, "Aus den Chorgerichtsmanualen von Blumenstein," in *Blätter für Bernische Geschichte, Kultur und Altertumskunde* 1 (1905): 320. See also Ulrich J. Gerber, "Ein Täuferversteck in Blumenstein bei Thun," *Mennonitica Helvetica* 13 (1990): 77-78, as well as Paul Hostettler, "Wie der Pfarrer von Blumenstein dem Täuferversteck an seinem Ort auf den Sprung gekommen ist." See http://www.kirche-blumenstein-pohlern.ch/dokus/Kirche_4.pdf.

49. Abraham Mäuslin [Müsli] (1648-1726) was the Reformed pastor in Blumenstein from 1684 to 1725; see Carl Friedrich Ludwig Lohner, *Die reformirten Kirchen und ihre Vorsteher im eidgenössischen Freistaate Bern nebst den vormaligen Klöstern* (Thun, 1864/67), 67, and other genealogical information on the web page "Berner Geschlechter," http://www.bernergeschlechter.ch/humo-gen/family.php?database=humo&id=F27262&mainperson=I70522.

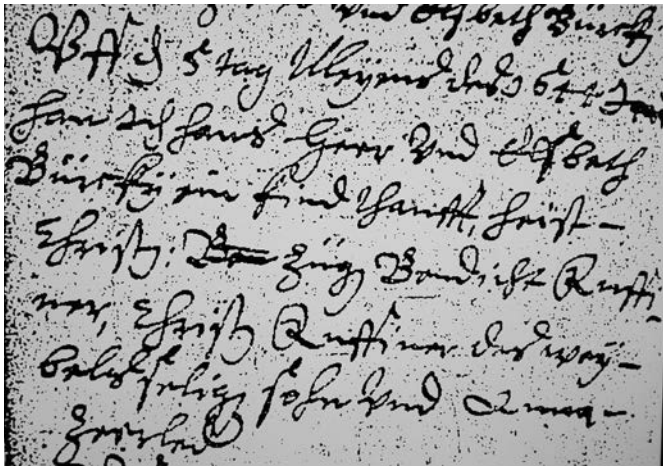
50. The hiding place, described in the original documents as the *Täuferloch* (Anabaptist hole), was located in the house in which the *Alt-Statthalter* (retired regional government administrator) Peter Wenger and his wife, Katharina Wyler, lived in 1705. For years they—together with their daughters Anni, Elsi, Babi, and Leni—had been a source of aggravation to the government and the pastor because of their Anabaptist *Widersetzlichkeit* (contrary behavior, disobedience) (StABE, KB Blumenstein 3, 7). In the documents the hiding place is described as so "that in the lower side room at the front toward the windows in the corner there is a real *Täuferloch* (Anabaptist hole), covered with a board and with a wool blanket spread over it, through which the Anabaptist *Gesinde* (people, with a pejorative implication) slip when they notice that someone is looking for them and wanting to catch them; through this opening you get into a closed-off little side cellar because there were thick boards stacked against the walls, on which one could climb up into the *Stube* (front room) and back down and hide; or if they were being searched for up there, they could escape through the cellar in the manner of the *schalckhafften Täuffern* (tricky Anabaptists)." (StABE, KB Blumenstein 3, 7). English translation: ASL.

51. StABE, A II 456, 172.

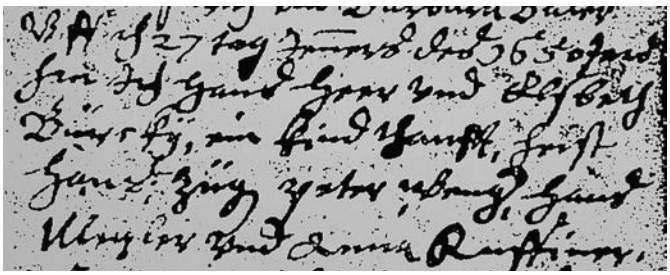
52. The renewed attention paid by the government officials to local Anabaptism, which led to the discovery of the Anabaptist hiding place in 1705, is documented in the records beginning in the summer of 1700. At that time Reformed pastor Abraham Mäuslin began his detailed entries in the *Chorgerichtsmanual* (minutes of the local church morals court) concerning the growing presence of Anabaptism in the village. In the entries between 1700 and 1705, besides Peter Wenger and his wife, Katharina Wyler, and their daughters, primarily several members of various Ruffener families are mentioned as Anabaptists (living in the Allmend am Rain, in the Arnetsmühle in Lochmessbühl). Explicitly mentioned in the contemporary source documents as expelled Anabaptists are, in addition to Ueli Ruffener from the Allmend who was probably expelled in early 1704 (StABE, KB Blumenstein 3,8), only Jakob Thönen, who had already been expelled half a year earlier (Gemeindearchiv Blumenstein, Schachtel [carton] "Alte Schriften"). On the other hand, in a financial survey in 1729 there are several entries listed for the *Täufergut* (fund of confiscated Anabaptist property) of Blumenstein, which still amounted to 1,893 *Pfund*, but unfortunately without an indication about from whom, when, and how much had been confiscated (StABE, B III 196, 77).

53. StABE, KB Blumenstein 2, 94 (Baptism witnesses: Bendicht Ruffiner, Christen Ruffiner, *des Weibels seligen Sohn* [son of the late bailiff], and Anna Zeerleder.)

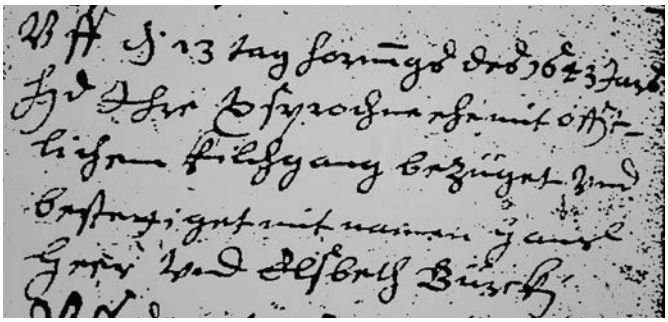
54. StABE, KB Blumenstein 2, 103 (Baptism witnesses: Peter Wenger, Hans Metler, and Anna Ruffiner).



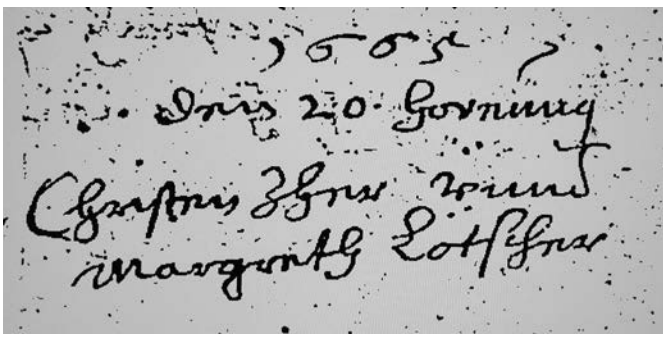
Baptism entry for Christen (Christian) Herr, May 5, 1644 *(StABE, B III 196, 77)*



Baptism entry for Hans Herr, January 27, 1650 *(StABE, KB Blumenstein 2, 94)*



Marriage entry for Hans Herr and Elsbeth Bürki [in Blumenstein, February 13, 1643], *(StABE, KB Blumenstein 2, unnumbered page)*



Marriage entry for Christen Zher and Margreth Lötscher [in Blumenstein, February 20, 1665] *(StABE, KB Blumenstein 2, 277)*

With this it became clear that there is the greatest possible likelihood that the brothers Christen and Hans Herr came from the small village of Blumenstein, a little less than ten kilometers (about six miles) west of Thun and that they were baptized in the Reformed church in an idyllic setting at the foot of the Stockhorn and Gantrisch Mountain ranges. It was exactly there that the parents had married on February 13, 1643,[55] and three more of their children were baptized: a Barbara on October 31, 1647, a Madlen on December 25, 1653, and an Ueli on January 27, 1656.[56]

The facts became completely clear when even the marriage of Christen Herr (now, however, spelled as "Zher"!) and Margret Lötscher was found in the Blumenstein church marriage records; it took place February 20, 1665.[57]

It is not very surprising that the marriage of the younger Hans Herr and Elsbeth Lötscher is not listed in the Blumenstein church marriage records because from 1666 on, at the latest, the government was focused on the ever-more-Anabaptist-oriented activities of the Lötscher clan, which probably led to the two young Herr-Lötscher couples distancing themselves increasingly from activities of the Reformed church.

Whether with or without the help of the Lötschers, Anabaptism seems to have also found its way into Blumenstein in the early 1660s as some other archival documents show. Many years ago I had noted some interesting passages in the *Chorgerichtsmanual* (minutes of the church morals court) for Blumenstein, and they became more relevant now.

On March 3, 1666, the pastor at the time, Michael Ritter,[58] entered the following information-filled report in the book of minutes:

> Selbiges tags ist dem Hans Zher, so auch chorichter, für gehalten warum er zu lasse, dz sein wib, so der Teüfferÿ ergäben, noch ihr Sohn und sonis wib in selbige seckt zieche. Uf welches er, Hans, sagt, Er sig ihr nit Meister; uf dz sind unser 3 zu sim Hus komen und in aller fründlikeit die 2 junge Ehlüt bereden wellen zu unser Versamlung; weil es aber nit fruchten mogen, ist ihnen ufschůb gäben innert 14 tagen verdenck zů nämen und wider in unseren gots dienst sich zůbegäben oder aber widrigen fals sine gründ uf papir an wyssen.
>
> [On the same day, Hans Zher, also a *Chorrichter* (member of the church morals court), was questioned as to why he allows his wife, who is devoted to Anabaptism, to

55. StABE, KB Blumenstein 2, unnumbered page (double page between double pages 268-69 and 270-71!)

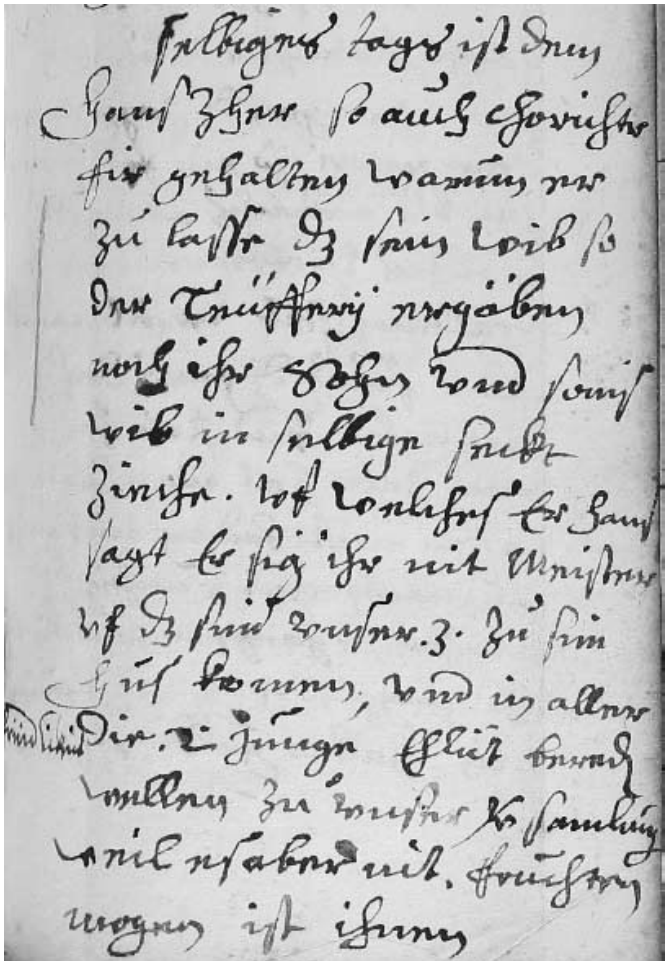
56. StABE, KB Blumenstein 2, 99, 107, 111. On October 23, 1676, a Barbara Zher—perhaps the one named here?—married a Jacob Tenne (Thönen), possibly the Anabaptist mentioned in footnote 52 (StABE, KB Blumenstein 2, 282).

57. StABE, KB Blumenstein 2, 277.

58. Michael Ritter seems to have been a convert who was originally from the canton of Valais. After serving as pastor in Goldiwil near Thun, he became the Reformed pastor in Blumenstein from 1660 to 1684. Lohner, *Kirchen*, 66, 272, and Emil Bloesch, *Geschichte der Schweizerisch-Reformierten Kirche*, vol. 1 (Bern, 1898): 438.

59. Kirchgemeindearchiv Blumenstein, CGM Blumenstein 1, 149f. English translation by ASL. Comment by HPJ: "he, Hans, said he was not [his wife's] master," meaning he could not tell her what to do, with some implication that his wife would not allow him to tell her what to do.

60. CGM Blumenstein 1, 150. The recorded date 18 Hornung (February) is certainly an error by the writer! Unfortunately, there is noth-



The first proof of Anabaptist beliefs in the Herr (Zher) family, in the *Chorgerichtsmanual* (minute book of the church morals court) of Blumenstein, [entry for March 3, 1666] *(Kirchgemeindearchiv Blumenstein, CGM Blumenstein 1, 149)*

> draw her son and the son's wife into the same sect. To which he, Hans, said, he was not her master; after that 3 of us went to his house and in a very friendly way tried to convince the 2 young married people to come to our meeting [church service]; but because it did not seem to be successful, they were given a reprieve of 14 days to think about it and either decide to come to our worship service or, if not, to submit their reasons on paper in writing.][59]

On March 18, 1666, Hans Zher was questioned again but did not express any hope there would be a change in the attitudes of his people, after which the *Chorgericht* decided to wait until Easter to see if those misguided ones might come to communion after all.[60] From the point of view of the pastor who was writing the minutes and becoming increasingly frustrated, this reprieve was given completely "unnecessarily (*zum uberfluss*)" and was further evidence that the members of the *Chorgericht* had once again prevented a stricter disciplinary action by their sympathetic attitude.

Although I had earlier transcribed "Hans Zher" correctly but casually interpreted the name as Hans Zehr, now the connection with the history of the Herr and Lötscher families was clearly evident. The son and his wife, of whom they were speaking here, were none other than Christen Herr from Blumenstein and Margret Lötscher from Latterbach. The latter was known to have grown up in an Anabaptist environment, and the fact that *Chorrichter* (member of the church morals court) Hans Zher's wife, Elsbeth Bürki, was also an Anabaptist had naturally given an additional impetus to the family's tending in an increasingly Anabaptist direction.[61] It is highly likely that Elsbeth Bürki, who obviously showed a great deal of self-confidence, was probably one of the group of suspected Blumenstein Anabaptists, of which the Bern government had already heard in 1663.[62]

Four years later, on June 16, 1670, *Chorrichter* (member of the church morals court) Hans Zher was questioned again because he "had [taken on] some of the flavor of his people's Anabaptism (*etwas geschmags vo seins volcks Teufferÿ hate*)." Apparently he himself had missed attending worship services and communion. He was also seen picking cherries one time during the Sunday sermon. In addition, he was accused of being unenthusiastic and "unconscientious" in his work in the *Chorgericht*. Since he was an old man and had promised to mend his ways, the pastor noted with an undertone of disapproval that he was fined only half a *Gulden* (florin, gold coin) by the *Chorgericht*.[63] Apparently the government persecution, which had hit the Anabaptist Lötscher family of Latterbach especially hard since the mid-1660s, did not fail to affect Margret and Elsbeth Lötscher and their husbands, Christen and Hans Herr, in Blumenstein. In late 1671 it became clear that in the future the Bern government would not hesitate to sentence young Anabaptist men to the galleys.[64] The two

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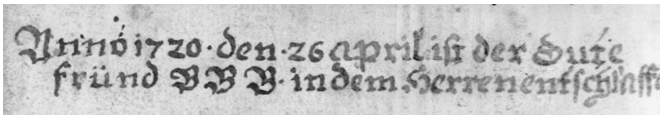
ing more about any results of this later in the minutes of the morals court.

61. Unfortunately there is no information to be found in the Blumenstein records I know of up to now about the origins of Elsbeth Bürki and about the exact place the Zher family lived in Blumenstein. On August 3, 1671, a fifty-eight-year-old Anabaptist woman named Elsbeth Bürki was imprisoned in the *Waisenhaus-Gefängnis* (Orphanage prison) in Bern. Could this possibly be the mother of the two Herr brothers from Blumenstein? (StABE, B VII 54, 93f.) In the seventeenth century Anabaptist Bürkis lived especially in the Reformed church parish of Oberdiessbach near Thun; there were also a few in the area of Langnau in the Emmental.

62. See page 76.

63. Kirchgemeindearchiv Blumenstein, CGM Blumenstein 2, 165. Unfortunately, the age of the father, Hans Zher, is not given. If he was actually quite elderly in 1670, it should be considered whether his marriage to Elsbeth Bürki in 1643 was possibly not his first marriage. In fact, there is a marriage of a Hans "Heer" and an Anna Niergart on January 9, 1632 (StABE, KB Blumenstein 2, 268). A Hans "Heeren" and an Anna Niergart had an Anna baptized on June 8, 1634 (StABE, KB Blumenstein 2, 75); a Hans "Heeren" and Anna Niergart had a Margret baptized on August 16, 1635 (StABE, KB Blumenstein 2, 79); and a Hans "Heer" had a Barbara baptized on January 26, 1640 (StABE, KB Blumenstein 2, 87). There are no later baptisms for children of these parents in the Blumenstein baptism records. Had Anna Niergart possibly died shortly after this, and could the widower Hans Heer/Herren/Heeren be the same man who married Elsbeth Bürki in 1643? That would mean that Christen and Hans Herr had three half sisters: but Barbara would have to have died before 1647 because that was the year another Barbara, who would have been her sister, was baptized. See left, page 78.

64. The background for this increased strictness in punishment can be found in some events in the Reformed church parish of Eggiwil in the upper Emmental. After officials who had been sent to this known "Anabaptist nest" to track down suspected persons were beaten severely by the local population, on February 25, 1671, the *Teutsch-Seck-*



The only notice of the death of Anabaptist teacher Bendicht Brechtbühl/Benedict Brackbill (1666–1720) appears in the New Testament of "land agent" Hans Herr (d. 1756), owned by the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society: "In the year 1720, the 26th of April, [our] good friend BBB fell asleep in the Lord" *(photo, LMHS).*

older brothers of Margret and Elsbeth had experienced this themselves. The four young married people must also have known the third man from the Simmental who was shipped off to the galleys in Venice in the spring of 1671, Peter Herdägen[65] from Erlenbach, as well as Hans Wenger, who shared his fate.[66]

All of this was more than enough to give Christen and Hans Herr and their wives good reasons to join the great stream of refugees in the late fall 1671 and to leave their homeland along with hundreds of other Anabaptists from the canton of Bern. All the more so as Christian Herr at the time of their escape seems to have already served as a *Diener der Notdurft* (deacon) in the Anabaptist congregation.[67] As far as it is known up to now, the two young Herr families seemed to have settled first in Mannheim. This location in a city itself or in the immediate vicinity is very unusual for the members of this Anabaptist refugee group from Bern in early 1672. Even more unusual is the fact that the two Herr families joined in the purchase of a house [in Mannheim], about which the Dutch representatives writing the report do not omit to note that "Swiss brothers [had] bought a house for Rxd 230 *(Zwitzerz broeders een huys gekocht hadden voor Rx 230—)."*[68]

Daniel Wenger and his wife, Susanna Schmid, who were named first and were apparently also wealthy,[69] were probably instrumental in this house purchase as were also likely the "knife maker (*messemaker*)," Abraham Rinoldt, and his wife.[70] Later at least Christen Herr's family seems to have left Mannheim and settled at Mauer in the Kraichgau.[71]

This is not the place to follow the trail of the two Herr families in Mannheim and the nearby Kraichgau further and to attempt to find answers to the many open questions. This short article certainly does not undertake to examine the complex situations which caused individual members of the Herr family, which had grown greatly by 1710, to leave the Kraichgau and emigrate to North America at different times, by different routes, and with different groups of emigrants and caused others to remain in the Kraichgau.[72]

Conclusion

At the end of this study of the beginnings of the Anabaptist Herr family in Switzerland, the following new insights should be noted:

1. The brothers Christen [Christian] and Hans Herr did not come from the canton of Zurich, as has been generally assumed up to now and as is engraved on many a memorial plaque, but from Blumenstein in the canton of Bern.

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elmeister (canton treasurer) and the *Venner* (very high level political and military officials representing guilds and the parts of the city of Bern) recommended setting an example with a very strict disciplinary action. In order to give everyone a shock, "some of the worst Anabaptists (*etliche der Bösten Täufferen*)" were to be "sent to the galleys (*den Galeeren zugeführt*)," the others taken to Aarburg to await the same fate and there forced to work (StABE, B VII, 350, 65ff). On March 1, the *Kleiner Rat* (small government council of Bern) joined in this recommendation: now serious action should be undertaken so that the people would see that Bern was serious about this. Mandates should now finally be strictly enforced and the ten most stubborn Anabaptists imprisoned in the *Waisenhaus* (Orphanage prison [in Bern]) be shipped off via Lugano and Bergamo to the Venetian galleys. Then they would see what effect this had on all the others (StABE, A II 474, 415ff., 426.) On March 8, 1672, it was finally decided that as a first step up to twelve Anabaptists should be sent to the galleys for two years (StABE, A II 474, 440ff.) The departure, which had been planned for March 16, actually seems to have taken place one day earlier (StABE, A II 474, 459f).

65. Like the Lötschers, Peter Herdägen also came from Latterbach. He was married to Margret Mattli and had two children baptized in Erlenbach: a Peter on June 22, 1668, and an Elsbeth on August 6, 1669 (StABE, KB Erlenbach 1, 306, 310). By February 8, 1669, he too was a prisoner in the Bern *Waisenhaus*. There he was to be held separately from the *Täuferlehrer* (Anabaptist teachers) and regularly visited by Reformed pastors in order to convert him [back to Reformed views] (StABE, A II 470, 271, 279). After he was shipped off to the galleys in March 1671, his single sisters, Lisbeth (32) and Ursel (37), decided to flee Switzerland. They appear in 1672 on the Dutch Mennonite aid lists as refugees on the Birkenauerhof (SAA 565 A, 1196 and 1199, and Lowry, *Documents,* vol. 1, no. 42, 444-45.) On January 18, 1673, Peter Herdägen's wife submits a *Supplikation* (special request) to the Bern government (StABE, AII 478, 380); a decision on that is not known. On April 11, 1673, Bern wrote their *Amtsmann* (regional administrator) in Wimmis, responding to his question about whether he should send the brother Gabriel Herdägen, also an Anabaptist who had left the country, and his two sisters, Ursula and Elisabeth, money from the sale of their small farm (StABE, A II 479, 137). In a letter dated May 22, 1673, Bern approved sending the three shares [of the proceeds] after it had become clear that all three of them were living in the Kraichgau in Germany on farms owned by the von Venningen family in Weiler near the [*Burg* (castle)] Steinsberg and intended to stay there. Peter Herdägen's share, however, was confiscated by Bern (StABE, A II 479, 292-93, 454, and B VII 1883).

2. The wives of the two Herr brothers also did not come from the canton of Zurich but were from the *Berner Oberland* (Bernese Oberland), from Latterbach near Erlenbach in the Simmental in the canton of Bern.

3. The two wives, Margret and Elsbeth Lötscher, came from a family that already in Switzerland played a significant role through their Anabaptist connections in the *Berner Oberland* from as early as 1660—and probably beyond that both in geographical area and in time period. [73]

4. As far as can be seen from the original document sources, Anabaptist thinking came into the Herr family primarily through women: first through Elsbeth Bürki, the wife of *Chorrichter* (member of the church morals court) Hans Herr Sr. and the mother of the two Herr brothers, then through the two wives of Christen Herr and Hans Herr Jr., women from the Lötscher family. This underscores the role of women in Anabaptist history (also) in Switzerland, a role that has often been unrecognized in research up to the present time and has been studied much too little.[74]

5. Hans Herr—often referred to as "the pioneer" in works from North America—is considerably younger than has been assumed up to now. Earlier research usually gave his birth year as 1639, and that must now be corrected to the date 1650.

It remains to be seen how much these corrections to the body of facts are able to generate new impulses to enrich the research into the history of Anabaptists in the Kraichgau [in Germany] as well as into the beginnings of Anabaptist settlement in Pennsylvania. It also remains to be seen how much the new insights presented here may make certain adjustments necessary when it comes to honoring the history of Hans Herr and his family in the context of celebrations of the three-hundredth anniversary of the 1719 Herr House & Museum. □

Abbreviations

CGM	*Chorgerichtsmanual* [minute book for the *Chorgericht*, local church morals court]
KB	*Kirchenbuch* [church record book]. (Almost all of the church record books for Canton Bern are in the Staatsarchiv Bern and since 2017 have been available online.)
MennLex V	*Mennonitisches Lexikon*, Bd. 5: *Revision und Ergänzung*, ed. Hans Jürgen Goertz, 2010-2016 (digital edition: http//www.mennlex.de)
StABE	Staatsarchiv des Kantons Bern [state archives of the canton of Bern] (in Bern)
SAA	Stadsarchief Amsterdam

66. This Hans Wenger was probably the Anabaptist from Kirchdorf (about three miles northeast of Wattenwil) who had been imprisoned and examined in Bern as early as August 1660 (StABE, B III 112, 1137ff.). It is unclear what connection he may have had to an Anabaptist of the same name, Hans Wenger from the [Reformed] parish of Wattenwil, married since June 27, 1662, to Verena Krebs and the father of several children. Even in the baptism entry for their first child, Hans, on September 13, 1663 (StABE, KB Wattenwil 1, 18), he was described as a "very disobedient Anabaptist (*sehr ungehorsamer Wiedertäufer*)." Any connection to Daniel Wenger, who fled to Mannheim with the Herr brothers, is also unclear (StABE, B III 120, 245, and SAA 565 A, 1196, and Lowry, *Documents,* vol. 1, no. 42, 454-55). On Daniel Wenger, see footnote 69.

67. Lowry, *Documents,* vol. 1, 416-18. On the larger context of refugees and emigration out of Switzerland in the *Frühe Neuzeit* (Early Modern period), see André Holenstein, Patrick Kury, and Kristina Schulz, *Schweizer Migrationsgeschichte: Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Baden, Switzerland: Hier und Jetzt, 2018), especially 123-34.

68. Lowry, *Documents,* vol. 1, no. 42, 454-55.

69. Daniel Wenger and Susanna Schmid were married on May 2, 1662, in Wattenwil (StABE, KB Wattenwil 1, 257). On June 10, 1663, he is named in a list of Anabaptists from the [Reformed] church parish of Wattenwil, together with his brother Christian, who was also imprisoned in Bern because of his faith, and Christian's wife, along with his eighty-year-old mother and a widowed sister (StABE, B III 120, 245).

70. The knifemaker Abraham "Rinoldt" is listed, together with his wife, who was often sickly ("*veeltyds zieckelyk*") (SAA 565 A 1196, fol. 10, and Lowry, *Documents,* vol. 1, no. 42, 454-55). It can be seen from document sources in Bern that this must be Abraham Renold and his wife, Veronika Meyer, from Aarau. He is identified as an Anabaptist in documents in Bern a short time later, when it became known at the end of October 1672 that he, as the eldest son, had apparently successfully received a *Legat* (an inheritance) in Aarau a short time before that. His brother Samuel [Renold] lodged a complaint in Bern because Abraham had recently moved out of the country as an Anabaptist. The Bern government listened to him, agreed with him, and promised him the inheritance in the case that the brother did not distance himself from the Anabaptist faith. Further, Aarau was scolded for not having immediately arrested the Anabaptist. Because Abraham Renold had apparently had the gall to walk around freely in the city, Bern sent an order to *Bauherr* (member of the council which oversaw spending on construction for Bern, also in charge of procuring military equipment) von Diesbach to arrest the Anabaptist immediately. A sharp criticism was also sent to the [Reformed] pastor in Lüsslingen in Bucheggberg in Solothurn territory because, as Abraham Renold's brother-in-law, he had assisted the Anabaptist in receiving his inheritance. Nothing is known of an arrest of Renold, however. By 1674 at the latest, possibly after the death of his wife, Renold probably returned to Aarau on his own free will (StABE, A II 478, 94f). The brother-in-law of Abraham Renold mentioned here is apparently Niklaus Meyer, the brother of his wife. On the family relationships of the Renolds and the Meyers, see also the web page "Berner Geschlechter," http://www.bernergeschlechter.ch/humo-gen/family.php?database=humo&id=F59401&,aom %5Berspm=O170082.

71. In 1685 a Christen Herr is listed as living at Mauer (Guth, *Census Lists*, 15). Richard Warren Davis, *Emigrants, Refugees, and Prisoners,* vol. 2 (Provo, UT, 1995-97), 30, hypothesizes that in 1709 Christian Herr and Margret Lötscher are living in Mauer (with their 27-year-old son Hans) and that Hans Herr and Elsbeth Lötscher (with a 20-year-old son Emmanuel) are living "possibly nearby," as well as a 36-year-old Abraham with an unnamed wife (and the children Abraham [9], Rudolf [8], Barbara [6], Elisabeth [4], and Christian [1]); also a 29-year-old Christian Herr with a 24-year-old (wife?) Anna Herr (and son Hans [1]); also a 31-year-old Hans Herr with a 29-year-old wife(?) Veronica Herr (and son Hans [7] and daughter Veronica [4]); and finally a 27-year-old Isaak Herr with an unnamed wife (and son Heinrich [1]). Unfortunately no documentation is given for this information.

72. In the Kraichgau the family name of the Zher/Herr family from Bern often became Hörr/Hehr, or Heer. On this see Hartmut Arthur Glück, "Familiäre Verflechtungen, dargestellt anhand der genealogischen Stammtafeln," in Lichdi, Röcker, and von Schlachta, *Schweizer Brüder*, 193-232, here 212-13. Davis, *Emigrants,* vol. 3 (1999): 138-44, assumes that most of the descendants of Christen Herr stayed in the Kraichgau while most of the descendants of Hans Herr emigrated to North America.

73. The fact that the Herr family in North America obviously played a significant role in Anabaptist circles and was among the leadership groups there is also illustrated by the fact that the only notice of the death of the Anabaptist teacher Bendicht Brechtbühl is written in the New Testament of a Hans Herr. See Urs B. Leu, *Die Froschauer-Bibel und die Täufer/ The Froschauer Bibles and the Anabaptists* (Herborn, Germany: Sepher Verlag, 2005), 32, 105. See also Jecker, "Brechtbühl," 150.

74. See the overview by Sigrun Haude, "Gender Roles and Perspectives among Anabaptist and Spiritualist Groups," in Roth and Stayer, *Companion to Anabaptism and Spiritualism,* 425-65.

How Pennsylvania Mennonites came to enjoy the "rights of Englishmen" without having to swear the oaths of loyalty, supremacy, and abjuration

"Who for Conscience Sake Cannot Swear at All": The Quest of the Lancaster County Mennonites for Naturalization

By Allan A. Garber

On August 10, 1717, over three hundred Palatines from what is now southwest Germany arrived at Philadelphia aboard three large sailing ships.[1] Most of the immigrants were Swiss Mennonites led by Benedict Brechbühl. Throughout their history the peaceful Mennonites had lived as "strangers and pilgrims" in an alien and hostile world.[2] Fiercely persecuted in their beloved Swiss homeland, they were grudgingly tolerated in the Palatinate, where their agricultural skills were desperately needed to restore the land that had been ravaged by the Thirty Years' War. Remarkably, twelve years after their arrival in Pennsylvania, many of these Mennonite refugees came to enjoy the "rights of Englishmen." But not without a struggle.

James Logan, secretary of the Provincial Council, was apprehensive about the large influx of German-speaking immigrants to Pennsylvania. Shortly after their arrival in 1717, he wrote: "We have of late a great number of Palatines poured in upon us without any recommendation or notice, which gives the country some uneasiness, for foreigners do not so well among us as our own people."[3]

Logan's concerns were echoed by Pennsylvania's new lieutenant governor, Sir William Keith. When he met with the Provincial Council on September 17, 1717, Keith observed with alarm that "great numbers of foreigners from Germany, strangers to our Language and Constitutions, having lately been imported into this Province, dispersed themselves immediately after Landing, without producing any Certificates, from whence they came or what they were."[4] The governor was concerned that "this Practice might be of very dangerous consequence, since by the same method any number of foreigners, as well Enemys as friends, might throw themselves upon us." As a result the Council ordered

> all those who are already Landed . . . to Repair within the space of one month to some Magistrate . . . to take such Oaths appointed by Law as are necessary to give assurances of their being well affected to his Majesty and his Government.[5]

The Provincial Council was aware of the Mennonites' refusal to swear oaths. The Council's solution shows remarkable forbearance and tolerance. The Council resolved:

> Because some of these foreigners are said to be Menonists, who cannot for Conscience sake take any

1. John L. Ruth, *The Earth Is the Lord's* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2002), 95, quoting a letter from Dielman Kolb.

2. This phrase captures the Anabaptist belief in separation from the world. Amos B. Hoover, "A Tear for Jonas Martin," *Muddy Creek Review* 2 (2011): 9.

3. John F. Watson, *Annals of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, PA: E. L. Carey & A. Hart, 1830), 472.

4. *Colonial Records of Pennsylvania,* vol. 3 (Philadelphia, PA: Jo. Severns and Co., 1852), 29.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. *Pennsylvania Archives*, ser. 2, vol. 19, 624. The perils of "aliens" owning land were genuine as illustrated by the case of Hans Brand, who was "an alien born under the allegiance of the Emperor of Germany." Hans died intestate in 1728, but because he "was not naturalized in Great Britain or Pennsylvania," his lands were escheated to "the proprietaries" of Pennsylvania. Deed C-1-3, Lancaster County Archives, Lancaster, PA.

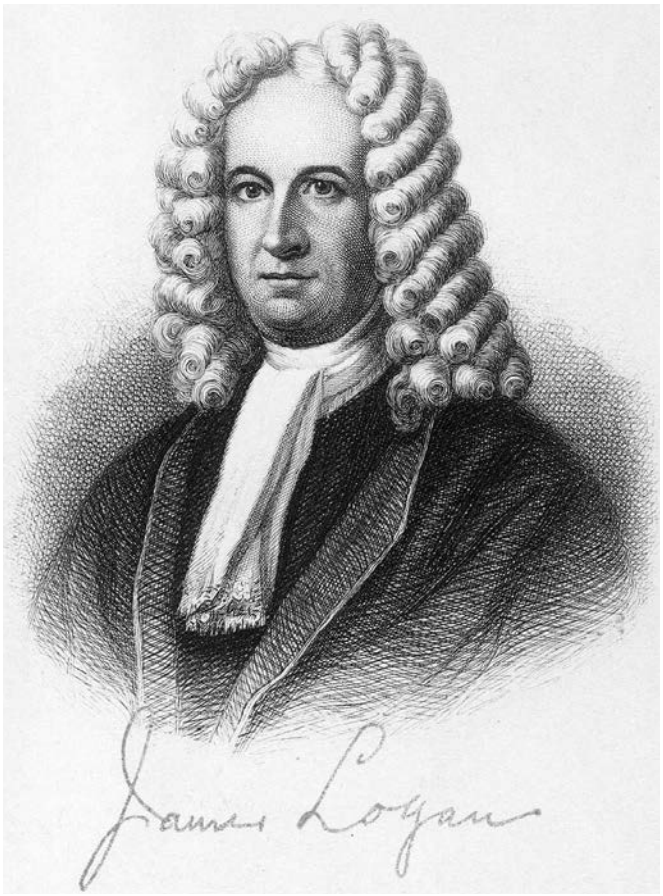
> Oaths, that those persons be admitted upon their giving any Equivalent assurances in their own way and manner.[6]

Two months later, on November 22, 1717, Martin Kendig, Hans Herr, and Hans Funk appeared in Philadelphia before the Board of Property to purchase lands "near Conestogo and Pequea Creeks" on behalf of their "Countrymen that are lately arrived in the Province."[7] The issue of citizenship came up. The commissioners inquired of Kendig and company whether "they understood the Disadvantage they were under by their being born aliens, that therefore their Children could not inherit nor they themselves convey to others the Lands they purchase."[8] The Mennonites answered that "inasmuch as they had removed themselves and families into this Province, they were, notwithstanding the said Disadvantage, willing to purchase Lands for their own Dwelling."[9]

The commissioners, mindful of "their business to sell and dispose of the Proprietors' Lands to such as would purchase it," reminded the Mennonites of a law that had been previously passed under the reign of Queen Anne "enabling Divers aliens, particularly named therein, to hold and enjoy lands in this Province." The commissioners were referring to the *Naturalization Act* passed by the Pennsylvania Assembly on September 29, 1709, which gave eighty-two inhabitants of "high and low Germany," who had come to Pennsylvania about "five-and-twenty" years earlier (Mennonites from Germantown), the rights of free and natural-born British subjects.[10]

Pennsylvania colonial law did not exempt Mennonites from having to take the oaths that were required for naturalization.[11] As a result a petition drafted in 1706 on behalf of the Mennonites, probably by Daniel Pastorius, contained the following request:

> And Whereas there are among Your Peticioners Certain Mennists who (& their Predecessors for above One Hundred and Fifty Years Past) according to their Principle and Profession of Christian Religion Can't take an Oath - Your Petitioners likewise Pray that Provision may be made for them therein as in the like case is made for the People called Quakers here.[12]



James Logan (1674-1751) was a member of the Provincial Council from February 1703/04 until July 1739. He served as mayor of Philadelphia from October 1722 until October 1723 *(image, Wikimedia commons)***.**

In late September 1709 the Pennsylvania Assembly honored the Mennonites' request without debate.[13] Upon making "the declarations and test by law appointed **instead of the oaths** of supremacy," the Mennonites named in the 1709 *Naturalization Act* were able to hold the lands they had purchased "as if they had been natural-born subjects of this province."[14] [emphasis added] They

9. Ibid.

10. *An Act for the Better Enabling of Divers Inhabitants of the Province of Pennsylvania to Hold and Enjoy Lands, Tenements and Plantations in the Same Province* (1709). *Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1897), 2: 297.

11. The forms for the Oaths were prescribed in 1 George Stat. 2, chap. 13, *An Act for the further security of His Majesty's person and government, and the succession of the crown in the heirs of the late Princess Sophia, being protestants; and for extinguishing the hopes of the Pretended Prince of Wales, and his open and secret abettors,* in Danby Pickering, ed., "The Statutes at Large from the Twelfth Year of Queen Anne, to the Fifth Year of King George I," vol. 13 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1764), 187. The **Oath of Allegiance** was straightforward and is still used in Canada: "I do sincerely promise and swear that I will bear true and faithful allegiance to [name of monarch], so help me God." The **Oath of Supremacy** renounced the authority of Roman Catholicism and other foreign powers: "I do swear . . . and declare that no foreign prince, person, prelate, state or potentate hath or ought to have any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within this realm." The **Oath of Abjuration** declared that "the person pretended to be the Prince of Wales" (i.e., James III, son of deposed King James II) "hath not any right or title to the crown of this realm."

12. J. M. Duffin, ed., *Acta Germanopolis: Records of Germantown, Pennsylvania, 1691-1707* (Philadelphia, PA: Colonial Society of Pennsylvania, 2008), 490.

13. *Pennsylvania Archives,* ser. 8, vol. 2, 902. Earlier that month "Francis Daniel Pastorius, and several other *Germans,* did, in behalf of themselves, and of all the *Germans* named in the Bill, return thankful acknowledgements to the House, for their Care in making so good a Progress as they understood was done about the said Bill, and desired the Continuance of the Assembly's Care therein." *Pennsylvania Archives,* ser. 8, vol. 2, 893.

14. *An Act for the Better Enabling of Divers Inhabitants of the Province of Pennsylvania to Hold and Enjoy Lands, Tenements and Plantations in the Same Province* (1709). *Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1897), 2: 298.

were now able to sell their lands and bequeath them to their children. It must be emphasized that the 1709 *Act* was not a law of general application. It applied **only** to the individuals who were specifically named in the *Act.*

With the success of Pennsylvania's 1709 *Naturalization Act* in mind, Pennsylvania's commissioners, optimistically as it turns out, advised Kendig, Herr, and Funk on November 22, 1717, that a "like advantage could be obtained for those amongst themselves" who were of "good report" if a petition were presented to the Pennsylvania Assembly." The Mennonites were pleased with this advice and inquired as to when such a sitting of the Assembly would be held.[15]

The commissioners' recommendation launched a ten-year political struggle by the Mennonites for naturalization as British subjects. Naturalization would open the door for them to be able to sell their lands and to pass them on to their children. A stable land base was crucial to the long-term viability of the young settlement.

Pennsylvania's 1709 *Naturalization Act* mirrored a pro-immigration climate in Great Britain, which resulted in the British Parliament enacting a naturalization law of general application for the first time in English history. In 1708, under the reign of Queen Anne, the British Parliament passed the *Act for the Naturalization of Foreign Protestants* whereby all Protestants "taking the oaths, and making and subscribing the required declarations" could be naturalized.[16] Catholics were excluded. The British *Naturalization Act* remained in force for only three years—long enough, however, for thousands of German-speaking refugees from the war-ravaged Palatinate to be naturalized.

The British *Naturalization Act* was repealed after the 1710 election, when a Parliamentary investigation into the 1709 Palatine immigration revealed that the British government had spent one hundred thousand pounds on behalf of the Palatine refugees. The British House of Commons resolved that the expenditure was

> an extravagant and unreasonable charge to the kingdom, a scandalous misapplication of the public money, tending to the increase and oppression of the poor of this kingdom, and of dangerous consequence to the church and constitution in church and state.[17]

A British Parliamentary committee uncharitably described the Palatines as

> a parcel of vagabonds, who might have lived comfortably enough in their native country, had not the laziness of their dispositions and the report of our well-known generosity drawn them out of it.[18]

Unfortunately, antiforeign sentiment in Great Britain spilled over into Pennsylvania as evidenced by Governor Keith's address to the Provincial Council on September 17, 1717, and James Logan's 1717 letter, quoted previously. By 1717, the first year of Governor Keith's administration,

> the influx of foreigners had become so great, as to alarm the assembly, who dreaded their settlement on the frontier. . . . every attempt to naturalize foreigners was received with coldness. Even the Germans, whose industry and utility were proverbial, could not remove the prevailing jealousy.[19]

During the 1721 session of the Pennsylvania Assembly, "a considerable number of Palatines" presented to the Assembly a broad and expansive petition, "praying leave for their Naturalization, and to be exempt from swearing and bearing arms."[20] The petition was given a second reading during the 1721-22 session of the Pennsylvania Assembly.[21] It was ordered that "Leave be given to bring in a Bill accordingly."[22] However, no bill was introduced.

Evidence of their motives is lacking, but we can surmise that the proposed bill went too far for many members of the House. There was no legal precedent for an exemption from bearing arms, notwithstanding the pacifist beliefs of the English Quakers. And Naturalization was always problematic. The power to extend the "rights of Englishmen" was jealously guarded by the British Parliament.[23] As for the swearing of oaths, the Mennonites were partially protected by a law enacted in 1715 by the Pennsylvania Assembly, which gave those who "for Conscience sake could neither take nor administer an oath" the right to give evidence in legal proceedings, and to hold public office, based on their "solemn affirmation."[24]

However, the 1715 law did not apply to the oaths required for naturalization, which was the pressing issue for the Mennonites. The 1721-22 session of the Pennsylvania Assembly ended with the Mennonites making no progress on any of these fronts. Three years later, during the 1724 session of the Assembly, "people born under the allegiance of the Emperor of Germany" presented a petition that "they may be enabled, by a Law, to buy and hold Lands."[25] The petition was presented to the House, read, and tabled. The next morning, the petition was read the second time, and debated. The House was skeptical. After some time debating the bill, the House resolved that the petitioners were required to bring certificates, under the hands and seals of judges, "signifying what lands they hold, and of what conversation they are reputed, and also have taken the Oaths of Affirmations and Declarations of Fidelity and Allegiance, together with the Profession of their Christian belief."[26] No further progress was made.

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15. James Kettner, *The Development of American Citizenship, 1608-1870* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 70.

16. 7 Anne, chap. 5, *An Act for Naturalizing Foreign Protestants,* in Danby Pickering, ed., "The Statutes at Large from the Second to the Twelfth Year of Queen Anne," vol. 11 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1764), 444. James Kettner, *The Development of American Citizenship, 1608-1870* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 70.

17. *Parliamentary History,* vol. 6, 100, quoted in Walter Allen Kittle, *Early Eighteenth Century Palatine Emigration* (Philadelphia, 1937; reprint, Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1976), 183.

18. Quoted in Marilyn C. Baseler, *"Asylum for Mankind": America, 1607-1800* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 52-53.

19. Thomas F. Gordon, *The history of Pennsylvania, from its discovery by Europeans, to the Declaration of Independence in 1776* (Philadelphia, PA: Carey, Lea & Carey, 1829), 186.

20. *Pennsylvania Archives,* ser. 8, vol. 2, 1383.

21. Ibid., 1388.

22. Ibid.

23. Marilyn C. Baseler, "*Asylum for Mankind,"* 61.

24. *An Affirmation Act for Such Who for Conscience Sake Cannot Take an Oath* (1715). *Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1897), 3: 39. A similar act was passed on May 31, 1718, which provided that "all manner of crimes and offenses … shall and may be inquired of, heard, tried

Of note, the Pennsylvania Assembly did in 1724 enact a law which modified the forms of declarations and affirmations which could be used instead of the oaths of allegiance and supremacy. However, this legislation, by its terms, applied **only** to "the people called Quakers" and thus was of no assistance to the Mennonites.[27]

Meanwhile, Governor Keith had a change of heart towards the "Germans," which may have been politically motivated.[28] During the 1724-25 session of the Pennsylvania Assembly Governor Keith "was pleased to say" that he was "preparing a Bill for Naturalization of certain *Palatines*, which he would lay before the House" the next day.[29] The following morning Governor Keith, by his secretary, presented the bill to the House and delivered "a message in writing, which was read."[30] That afternoon, the bill was "read the first time and ordered a second reading."[31] Again the members of the House were skeptical. The next day, after a long debate, the House resolved that the "Foreigners" were required to produce the certificates which they had required in May of the previous year. If such certificates were produced by August of the following year, that "may induce this House to proceed on the said Bill."[32] Governor Keith advised the House that he would "draw up something in writing to lay before the House relating to the Bill for Naturalization of Foreigners."[33]

True to his word, on the morning of August 10, 1725, Governor Keith sought the attendance of "the Speaker and the whole House immediately at the Courthouse" for a speech he was about to deliver. Keith then gave an impassioned plea on behalf of "some Protestants from the Palatinate and other parts of Germany."[34] He reminded the members of "the graciousness of his Majesty the King of England" by ratifying "the late Act of our Assembly for the further Ease to Persons of scrupulous and tender consciences."[35] Governor Keith was referring to the 1715 *Act* of the Assembly giving those who "for Conscience sake could neither take nor administer an oath" the right to give evidence in legal proceedings and to hold public office, based on their "solemn affirmation."[36]

Governor Keith continued:

> Surely so great an Example from the Throne, must contribute very much to raise and confirm in our Minds, that universal Charity, Forbearance and brotherly Love, which we always ought to be exercising towards one another; and this leads me to put you in mind of a Bill, which now lies before you, in Behalf of some Protestants from the *Palatinate* and other Parts of *Germany*, who having a great Desire to enjoy equally with us the inestimable Benefits of an English government, . . . have transported themselves and their Families from *Europe*, at considerable Charge, in order to settle in this Province, **and have besought me, in the humblest Manner,** to procure for them, by your Assistance, the common Privilege of Naturalization [emphasis added].[37]

The House was not persuaded. After some debate the House advised the governor "that the House are no ways inclined to proceed any further upon the Bill, except such Foreigners first qualify themselves **as the Law in those Cases directs**."[38] [emphasis added] Quakers were exempt from swearing the oaths of allegiance and supremacy. Mennonites were not.

The Mennonites then abandoned their goal of naturalization and adopted an approach which would not require them to swear an oath. During the 1725 session, unidentified persons "late of low and high Germany" introduced a petition for a bill that would allow them "to hold and enjoy Lands, Trade and Merchandize."[39] We know from later proceedings that the authors of the petition were Wendel Bowman, Martin Mylin, and Benjamin Hirschi.[40] But yet again, no progress was made.

The year 1727 marked the beginning of heavy German immigration, which would continue until the American Revolution.[41] James Logan and others feared that, left unchecked, a German colony would result.[42] In a letter dated November 25, 1727, addressed to John Penn, Logan complained: "We have many thousands of foreigners, mostly Palatines, so-called, already in ye

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and determined by judges, justices, inquests and witnesses, qualifying themselves according to their conscientious persuasions respectively, either by taking a corporal oath, **or by the solemn affirmation allowed by act of parliament to those called Quakers in Great Britain,** which affirmation of such persons as conscientiously refuse to take an oath, shall be accounted and deemed in the law to have the full effect of an oath in any case whatsoever in this province [emphasis added]." *An Act for the Advancement of Justice, and More Certain Administration Thereof* (1718), sec. 3, *Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1897), 3: 199.

25. *Pennsylvania Archives,* ser. 8, vol. 2, 1568.

26. Ibid.

27. *An Act Prescribing the Forms of Declaration of Fidelity, Abjuration and Affirmation, Instead of the Forms Heretofore Required in Such Cases* (1724). The *Act* begins with this preamble: "Whereas divers statutes have been made concerning the affirmations or declarations allowed instead of oaths to the people called Quakers . . ." *Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1897), 3: 427.

28. In 1722 Keith had invited the Germans from New York to Pennsylvania, allegedly to strengthen his political influence. He was later accused of wanting to form an independent province west of the Germans towards Ohio. See John F. Watson, *Annals of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, PA: E. L. Carey & A. Hart, 1830), 475, and William Thomas Johnson, "Some Aspects of the Relations of the Government and German Settlers in Colonial Pennsylvania, 1683 - 1754," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies,* 11 (April 1944): 85 and 90.

29. *Pennsylvania Archives,* ser. 8, vol. 2, 1672.

30. Ibid., 1673.

31. Ibid., 1674.

32. Ibid., 1675.

33. Ibid., 1676.

34. Ibid., 1695.

35. Ibid.

36. *An Affirmation Act for Such Who for Conscience Sake Cannot Take an Oath* (1715), *Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1897), 3: 39.

37. Ibid.

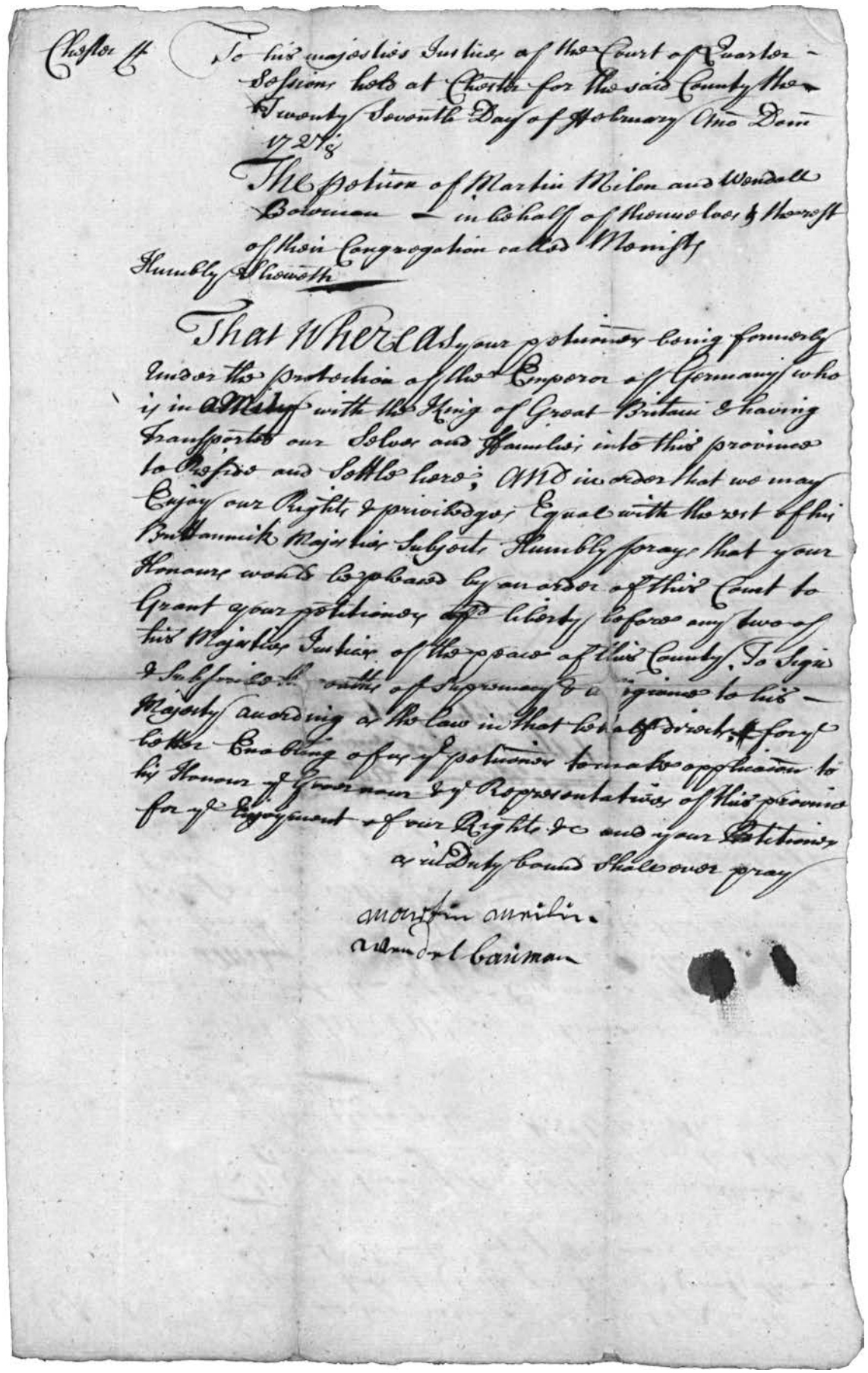
38. *Pennsylvania Archives,* ser. 8, vol. 2, 1696.

39. Ibid., 1717.

40. *Pennsylvania Archives,* ser. 8, vol. 3, 1870.

41. Ralph Beaver Strassburger, *Pennsylvania German Pioneers: A Publication of the Original Lists of Arrivals in the Port of Philadelphia from 1727–1808,* ed. William John Hinke (Norristown, PA: Pennsylvania German Society, 1934).

42. William Thomas Johnson, "Some Aspects of the Relations of the Government and German Settlers in Colonial Pennsylvania, 1683-1754," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 11 (April 1944): 90.



Chester ss

To his majesties Justices of the Court of Quarter-Sessions held at Chester for the said County the Twenty Seventh Day of February Anno Dom 1727/8

The petition of Martin Meilen and Wendall Bowman in behalf of themselves & the rest of their Congregation called Menisty

Humbly Sheweth

That Whereas your petitioners being formerly under the protection of the Emperor of Germany who is in Amity with the King of Great Britain & having transported our Selves and Families into this province to reside and settle here; AND in order that we may Enjoy our Rights & priviledges Equal with the rest of his Britannick Majesties Subjects Humbly pray that your Honours would be pleased by an order of this Court to Grant your petitioners free liberty before any two of his Majesties Justices of the peace of this County, To Sign & subscribe the oaths of Supremacy & Allegiance to his Majesty according as the Law in that behalf directs & for so better Enabling of your petitioners to make application to his Honour the Governour & Representatives of this province for the Enjoyment of our Rights &c and your petitioners as in duty bound shall ever pray

Martin Meilin.
Wendel Bauman

English petition in 1727/28 by Martin Meilin and Wendel Bauman to the Chester County Court of Quarter Sessions that they and their fellow Menists be allowed "to sign & subscribe the oaths [changed to "qualifications" when approved] of supremacy and allegiance to his Majesty" before any two justices of the peace *(photo, Allen A. Garber)*.

Country, of whom near 1500 came in this last summer." He falsely stated that "many of them are a surly people, divers Papists among them, and ye men generally well arm'd." Of the Palatines and the Irish, Logan claimed "Both of these sorts sitt frequently down on any spott of vacant Land they can find, without asking questions; the last Palatines say there will be twice the number next year."[43]

That same year Pennsylvania's new lieutenant governor, an eighty-two-year-old ex-soldier named Patrick Gordon, received a representation concerning the Mennonites who had settled in what is now Lancaster County. According to the representation, "a large number of Germans peculiar in their dress, religion and notions of political Governments, had settled in Pequea, and were determined not to obey the lawful authority of Government; that they had resolved to speak their own language and to acknowledge no sovereign, but the Creator of the Universe."[44]

On January 27, 1727/28, an ominous motion, which did not bode well for the aspirations of the German-speaking Mennonites, was brought before the House. The motion claimed with alarm that:

> great Numbers of *Palatines*, for several Years by past, have been imported into this Province, where they have, without any Authority or Pretence of Right, settled themselves upon the Proprietary's Lands, as well as those of private Persons, to the great Prejudice and Disquiet of the Inhabitants of this Province, . . . and that many of the said *Palatines* have refused to yield obedience to the lawful authority of this Government; and further, it is reported that some Thousands of Palatines are expected to be imported into this Province the next Summer.[45]

A motion was made "that the House should take the same into their consideration, and make some Provision for preventing the ill Consequences that may attend such great Importation of Foreigners, who are Strangers both to our Laws and Language."[46] The House ordered William Webb, Samuel Hollingsworth, and John Carter to "make diligent Enquiry into the Premises, and inform the House thereof at their next meeting."[47] The House then adjourned until April 15, 1728.

The rise of xenophobia may have spurred the Mennonites into action. In February 1727/28 Martin Mylin and Wendall Bowman petitioned the Chester County Court of Quarter Sessions that they "and the rest of their Congregation called Menists" be allowed "to sign & subscribe the oaths of supremacy and allegiance to his Majesty" before any two justices of the peace.[48] The Mylin and Bowman petition, written in English, was clearly drafted by someone familiar with British colonial law and practice.[49] Curiously, Bishop Hirschi did not sign this petition.

Surprisingly, when the Mylin and Bowman petition was presented in court, the "oaths" were changed to "Qualifications." On February 27, 1727/28, the Court of Quarter Sessions considered the petition of "Martin Milen and Wendall Bowman, Two of the People called Palatines in behalf of themselves and their Countrymen, to Sign and Subscribe to the **Qualifications** of Supremacy, Allegiance and Fidelity to his Majesty King George with the Confession of Faith according to the Law of Great Britain [emphasis added]."[50] The court then authorized Justices Henry Pierce and George Aston to attend upon the Palatines "the first day of April next at such place in this County as they may think most convenient" as an adjourned session of court.[51]

Rather than require several hundred Mennonites travel to Chester, which was a long day's journey from their farms in what is now Lancaster County, Justices Henry Pierce and George Aston agreed to travel to the home of Martin Mylin and hold a session of court there with the Mennonites.

It took about one month to spread the word and organize the large gathering. On April 1, 1728, a crowd of more than two hundred "long-bearded Swissers" gathered at the home of Martin Mylin. One can imagine the conversations that took place the night before around the campfires of the dozens of tents pitched at Mylin's farm. Such a large gathering of Mennonites had never occurred before in Penn's Woods.

Significantly, the document which the Mennonites signed on April 1, 1728, did not require them to swear an oath. Instead, they signed a declaration that "Wee . . . do Sincerely promise and Solemnly declare before God and the world that wee will [be] true and faithfull to King George the Second."[52] The Declaration also contained this statement of belief:

> Wee profess faith in God the Father and in Jesus Christ his eternal son, one God blessed forevermore, and do acknowledge the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be given by divine inspiration.

The next day, on April 2, 1728, Justices Pierce and Aston certified that they "mett at the House of Martin Milens in Conestogoe" on April 1 and that "the Respective **qualifications** [had been] taken and Subscribed" by the persons named [emphasis added].[53]

The question which now begs for an answer is this: By what legal authority did Justices Pierce and Aston exempt the Mennonites from having to swear the oaths of loyalty and supremacy required for

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43. *Pennsylvania Archives*, ser. 2, vol. 7, 96.

44. Quoted in I. Daniel Rupp, *History of Lancaster County* (Lancaster, PA: Gilbert Hills, 1844), 194.

45. *Pennsylvania Archives*, ser. 8, vol. 3, 1869.

46. Ibid.

47. *Pennsylvania Archives*, ser. 8, vol. 3, 1870.

48. The Mylin and Bowman petition to the Court of Quarter Sessions is reproduced in its entirety in Barbara L. Weir, "Mennonite Naturalization," *Mennonite Family History* (hereafter *MFH)*, 8 (July 1989): 112. Chester County Court of Quarter Sessions, "Indictment Papers," February term, 1727/28.

49. The drafter of the petition may have been Patrick Baird, secretary to the governor and clerk of the Pennsylvania Council. In 1728 he drafted a petition on behalf of the Palatines living at Tulpehocken. *Colonial Records of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Jo. Severns and Co., 1852), 3: 322.

50. Docket, Court of Quarter Sessions, 138, Chester County Archives, West Chester, PA.

51. Ibid.

52. A complete transcription of the Declaration is in Barbara L. Weir, "Mennonite Naturalization," *MFH* (July 1989): 113. A list of the signatories is in Barbara L. Weir and Laurie A. Rofini, "German Qualification for Naturalization in Pennsylvania, 1728," in *Pennsylvania German Roots across the Ocean*, Marion F. Egge, ed. (Philadelphia, PA: Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania, 2000), 33.

53. The judges' certificate is reproduced in its entirety in Barbara L. Weir, "Mennonite Naturalization," *MFH* (July 1989): 113.

naturalization? As stated previously, the 1724 law enacted by the Pennsylvania Assembly modified the forms of declarations and affirmations which could be used instead of the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, but that law applied only to the Quakers.[54]

A badly damaged document in the Chester County Archives provides the answer. Justices Pierce and Aston reported that because the subscribers were of the "Protestant Religion, yet dissenting from the Church of England and for conscience sake cannot swear at all," the subscribers "in all humble manner" obtained their qualifications "by the statute of the first of ye King William and Queen Mary, chapter 18."[55] The justices were referring to a statute passed by the British Parliament forty years earlier after the Glorious Revolution, which deposed King James II, a Catholic, and brought in William and Mary as monarchs. The 1688 statute, called *"An Act for exempting their Majesties protestant subjects, dissenting from the Church of England, from the penalties of certain laws,"* made orthodox Protestant dissent legal and spelled out the rights of Nonconformists.[56]

Section 13 of the 1688 *Act* contains this preamble: "Whereas there are certain other persons, dissenters from the Church of England, who scruple the taking of any oath." The section then provides that "every such person shall make and subscribe the aforesaid declaration, and also this declaration of fidelity following, viz:

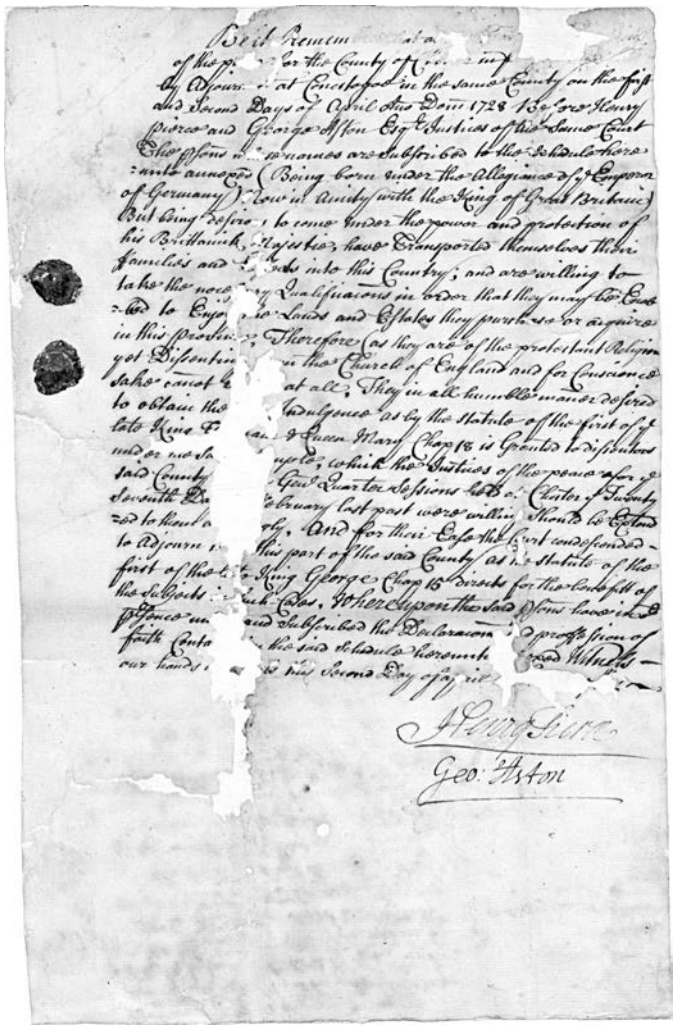
> I A.B. do sincerely promise and solemnly declare before God and the World, that I will be true and faithful to King William and Queen Mary . . .

The 1688 *Act* also required the subscribers to profess their Christian faith in these words:

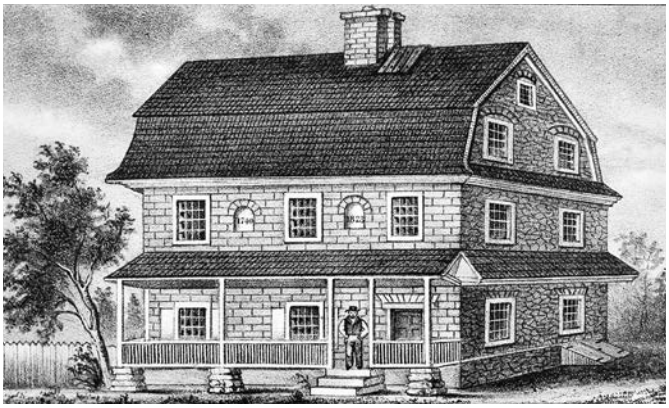
> I A.B. profess faith in God the Father and in Jesus Christ his eternal son, one God blessed forevermore, and do acknowledge the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be given by divine inspiration.

We do not know whether Justices Pierce and Aston, who almost certainly were Quakers, took judicial notice of the 1688 legislation on their own or whether the Mennonites had the benefit of brilliant legal advice. Of one thing we may be certain: the *Declaration of Loyalty* and the *Profession of Belief*, which the justices took with them to the home of Martin Mylin on April 1, 1728, were taken **word for word** from the 1688 British statute. Someone who was sympathetic to the cause of the Mennonites reached back forty years into British legislative history, decided to use the 1688 statute, and then wrote in longhand the *Declaration of Loyalty* and *Profession of Belief*. Justices Pierce and Aston carried this document with them to Conestoga and had the Mennonites sign it on April 1, 1728.

Now that Justices Pierce and Aston had certified that the Mennonites had taken and subscribed to the qualifications, the ground was prepared for their naturalization as British


Geo: Aston

In this document from the Chester County Archives, Justices Pierce and Aston explain the legal justification for allowing the Mennonites to affirm rather than swear *(photo, Chester County Archives)*.



Martin Mylin built this sandstone "mansion" in 1740, about twelve years after the 1728 meeting with Justices Pierce and Aston at Martin Mylin's farm. Mylin's 1740 house also served as a place for meetings on various occasions *(image, I. Daniel Rupp,* History of Lancaster County, *opp. p. 286.)*

54. *An Act Prescribing the Forms of Declaration of Fidelity, Abjuration and Affirmation, Instead of the Forms Heretofore Required in Such Cases* (1724), *Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1897), 3: 427.

55. Document in Naturalization Petition file, Chester County Archives.

56. Anno 1 W. & M., *An Act for exempting their Majesties protestant subjects, dissenting from the Church of England, from the penalties of certain laws,* in Danby Pickering, ed., "The Statutes at Large from the First Year of K. William and Q. Mary to the Eighth Year of K. William III, vol. 9 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1764), 19.

subjects. The last and final step was to obtain the blessing of the Pennsylvania House of Assembly. However, when the House reconvened two weeks later, on April 15, 1728, the first item of business was not a bill for naturalization. Instead, the House considered "The petition of Wendal Bowman, Martin Meiling and Bendick Hearsay in behalf of themselves, and others called Menists . . . [praying] Leave to bring in a Bill to enable them to hold Lands, and trade in the said Province."[57] The petition was read and ordered to "lie on the table."

Later during the 1728 session Webb, Hollingsworth, and Carter gave their report to the House. Fortunately, the previous claims regarding the Palatines had been exaggerated. Webb and others reported:

> We have made diligent Enquiry into the Behaviour of the *Palatines,* that have for several Years past been imported into this Province, and are informed, by Persons of very good Repute, that considerable Numbers of those *Palatines* have purchased, and honestly paid for the Lands they are settled upon, as well as the Proprietary's Lands as what they have purchased from other Persons: and that they behave themselves very respectfully to the Government, and pay their Taxes and Assessments very readily; and they are, for the most Part, **a very sober and honest People, both in their religious and civil duties** [emphasis added].[58]

But then came the news which no doubt alarmed the English-speaking members of the Pennsylvania Assembly:

> We have also made Enquiry concerning the Number of Palatines expected to come over hither, and can learn of Certainty; but have some Reason to believe, from the Report we have had, that there are great Numbers of them shortly expected.[59]

A motion was then made "that the great Importation of Foreigners into this Province of late, who are the subjects of a foreign Prince, and who keep up amongst themselves a different Language, may, in Time, . . . be of dangerous Consequence to the Peace and Quiet [of this Province]."[60] The motion carried in the *affirmative*. The 1728 session of the House ended with no further progress for the Mennonites.

During the 1728-29 session of the House, two petitions came before the Assembly. First, a petition of "diverse Germans" for their naturalization, and second, the petition of "Wendal Bowman, Martin Meilin and Benedick Hearsey" to hold lands and trade, which had been presented previously to the Assembly.[61] Both petitions were tabled and given second readings. The qualifications of the "Menonists" were read to the House, but no further progress was made.[62]

On November 4, 1729, more than a year and a half after the Mennonites signed the "Loyal Qualifications" at the home of Martin Mylin, a petition was prepared on their behalf and forwarded to Governor Patrick Gordon.[63] On January 16, 1729/30, Governor Gordon recommended passage of a bill to naturalize the Mennonites by delivering the following message to the House:

> Upon Application made to me, in behalf of several *Germans*, now Inhabitants of the County of *Lancaster*, that they may enjoy the Rights and Privileges of *English* Subjects, and for that End praying to be naturalized: I have made Enquiry, and find, that those, whose Names are subjoined to a Petition, which will be laid before your House, are principally such, who many Years since came into this Province, under a particular Agreement with our late Honourable Proprietary, at *London*, and have regularly taken up Lands under him. **It likewise appears to me, by good Information, that they have hitherto behaved themselves well, and have generally so good a character for Honesty and Industry, as to deserve the Esteem of this Government**. … I am therefore inclined, from these Considerations, to favour their Request and hope you will join with me in passing a Bill for their Naturalization [emphasis added].[64]

The petition was read and ordered to "lie on the table." The Naturalization Bill was read the second and third times and finally passed on February 14, 1729/30.[65] The bill was not considered by the Crown but became law by lapse of time, in accordance with the proprietary charter.

The *Preamble* to the Act noted that the new British subjects, "divers Protestants, who were subjects to the Emperor of Germany," had

> contributed very much to the enlargement of the British Empire and to the raising and improving sundry commodities fit for the markets of Europe, **and have always behaved themselves religiously and peaceably**, and have paid a due regard and obedience to the laws and government of this province [emphasis added].[66]

The *Naturalization Act*, by its terms, applied only to those who had arrived in Pennsylvania between 1700 and 1718. Thus, only 106 men were naturalized from Lancaster County, even though about 230 had signed the *Declaration*.[67] Judging by their last names, seventy-five per cent of the men who were naturalized from Lancaster County were Mennonites.

Curiously, a significant number of Mennonites, including prominent leaders such as Martin Kendig, Bishop Martin Bär, Bishop Johannes Bauman, Wendell Bowman, Bishop Benedict Hirschi, and Preacher Benjamin Landis were **not** naturalized in 1729/30 even though all of them were unquestionably present in Pennsylvania by 1718, and all had signed the 1728 *Declaration* at the home of Martin Mylin.

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57. *Pennsylvania Archives,* ser. 8, vol. 3, 1870.
58. Ibid., 1875.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid., 1875-76.
61. Ibid., 1925.
62. Ibid., 1926. See also 1929 and 1930.
63. Gary T. Habecker, ed., *Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Quarter Sessions Abstracts (1729-1742)*, Book 1 (Hershey, PA, 1986), 3-4.
64. *Pennsylvania Archives,* ser. 8, vol. 3, 1985.
65. *An Act for the Better Enabling Divers Inhabitants of the Province of Pennsylvania To Hold Lands And To Invest Them With The Privileges of Natural-Born Subjects Of The Said Province* (1729/30), *Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1897), 4: 147.
66. Ibid.
67. Barbara L. Weir and Laurie A. Rofini, "German Qualification for Naturalization in Pennsylvania, 1728," in *Pennsylvania German Roots across the Ocean*, Marion F. Egge, ed. (Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania, 2000), 33.

The omission of Wendell Bowman and Bishop Hirschi is especially significant since they, along with Martin Mylin, had petitioned the Pennsylvania Assembly for years for a law that would allow them to hold lands and pass them on to their children. Of the three men, only Martin Mylin was naturalized. Why did Bär, Bauman, Hirschi, Landis and so many other Mennonites sign the *Declaration of Loyalty* and then choose not to be naturalized?

A 1755 petition to the Pennsylvania Assembly, signed by thirteen Mennonite "Elders" from Lancaster County, including Bishop Hirschi, offers some insight.[68] The petition suggests that when the Mennonites were naturalized, they had unwittingly sworn an oath of allegiance to the King of England:

> It is a matter of deep concern to your petitioners when we reflect on the Naturalization Oath, that it was administered to us, when we first arrived in this Country; it being exceedingly repugnant to the Articles of our Faith, and our consciences not able to comply with the tenor of it.

The petition then explained what went wrong:

> At the time we were qualified, when Naturalized, none of your Petitioners were acquainted with the English tongue; and **we quickly found**, **the Translation of the Oath into Dutch,** to be very wrong; which was done by some of our own people, who presumed to instruct us into the Nature of it, but was not capable themselves to conceive the meaning of the same . . . [emphasis added].
>
> Therefore, we confess and acknowledge with Grief of Heart, that by so doing we have Transgressed against the Lord our God, by not more Strictly examining the nature of our Qualification before we were qualified; and that we Omitted the comparing the Translation with the Original in a word by acting so implicitly.

Perhaps some of the Mennonites who signed the 1728 *Declaration of Loyalty* at the home of Martin Mylin believed, albeit mistakenly, that they had sworn an oath ("we quickly found the Translation of the Oath into Dutch to be very wrong") and as a result decided not to proceed with naturalization one year later.

The 1755 petitioners were also concerned that by having declared (or sworn) their loyalty to King George II, they had committed to defend him with "Sword in Hand." The petitioners said they were willing "to pray for the King, that he may have a long and prosperous Reign," but they could not "take up Arms in order to defend our King, our Country or our Selves, . . . even Life it Self." Their position, they believed, was "agreeable to what we think is the mind and Will of our Lord Jesus." The 1755 petition was signed by:

Hans Schantz	Hans Meier	Jost Mosser
Abraham [Reiff][69]	Christian Wenger	Benni Landis
Jacob Graft	Ulerich Rott	Jacob Mardi
Benss Hirschi	Carli Christofel	Jakob Böhm
Mardin Behr[70]		

Without a naturalization bill of general application, applications for naturalization in both Pennsylvania and Great Britain continued to be evaluated on their individual merits and were approved on a name-by-name basis in specific legislative acts.

Three such *Acts* were passed in Pennsylvania during the 1730s; but without an exemption from swearing the oaths, the participation of Lancaster County Mennonites was minimal.[71] No Lancaster County Mennonites are listed in Pennsylvania's 1730-31 *Naturalization Act.* However, two Mennonites from Philadelphia County who had family ties to Lancaster County Mennonites were naturalized in the 1730-31 *Act*: Johannes Buckwalter and his father-in-law Daniel Longenecker.[72] Pennsylvania's 1735 *Naturalization Act* resulted in only one Lancaster County Mennonite being naturalized: Jacob Leman.[73] Similarly, the 1739 *Naturalization Act* found little traction with the Lancaster County Mennonites. Only two were naturalized: Durst Buckwalter and Hans Groff.[74]

Meanwhile, in Great Britain the financial prosperity of the Pennsylvania Mennonites was advanced as an argument in favour of a naturalization bill of general application. Supporters of this legislation noted that many Palatines "had gone to Pennsylvania, where their kind reception had convinced 'Numbers of their Countrymen to join them.'"[75] The German immigrants had enriched Pennsylvania so greatly, argued Josiah Tucker, "that an Estate in Land, which might be purchased for 100 £ Sterling before their arrival, cannot now be had for *Three Times* that sum; so greatly have they increased the Wealth and Property of the Landed Interest."[76]

On June 1, 1740, after a moratorium of more than thirty years, the British Parliament passed a naturalization bill of general application—the landmark

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68. Richard K. MacMaster with Samuel L. Horst and Robert F. Ulle, *Conscience in Crisis* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1979), 90-93.

69. The name was originally transcribed as "Abraham Reist" in ibid., 93. There is no known "Abraham Reist" who in 1755 could have been a Mennonite "elder." R. Martin Keen, Lancaster, PA, believes that "Abraham Reist" should be "Abraham Reiff." This makes eminent sense because Deacon Abraham Reiff was living in Lancaster County at that time.

70. These "elders" are identified in Allan A. Garber, *To God Alone the Honor: The Pioneer Families of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania,* 2nd ed. (Lititz, PA: Carl Garber, 2019), as follows: Hans Schantz (SHNTZ B), Abraham Reiff (RFF 3), Jacob Graft (GRFF B1), Benss Hirschi (HRSH A2), Jakob Böhm (BOHM), Hans Meier (MYR D), Christian Wenger (WNGR C), Ulerich Rott (RUTT B), Carli Christofel (CRST), Mardin Behr (BAR E), Jost Mosser (MSR B1), Benni Landis (LNDS B3), and Jacob Mardi (MRTN B).

71. *An Act for the Better Enabling Divers Inhabitants of the Province of Pennsylvania To Hold Lands And To Invest Them With The Privileges of Natural-Born Subjects Of The Said Province* [1730-31], [1735], and [1739], *Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1897), 4: 219, 283, 326.

72. *An Act for the Better Enabling Divers Inhabitants of the Province of Pennsylvania To Hold Lands And To Invest Them With The Privileges of Natural-Born Subjects Of The Said Province* [1730-31], *Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1897): 4: 219.

73. *An Act for the Better Enabling Divers Inhabitants of the Province of Pennsylvania To Hold Lands And To Invest Them With The Privileges of Natural-Born Subjects Of The Said Province* [1735], *Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1897), 4: 283.

74. *An Act for the Better Enabling Divers Inhabitants of the Province of Pennsylvania To Hold Lands And To Invest Them With The Privileges of Natural-Born Subjects Of The Said Province* [1739], *Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1897), 4: 329.

75. James Kettner, *The Development of American Citizenship, 1608-1870* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 73.

76. Josiah Tucker, *Reflections on the expediency of a law for the Naturalization of Foreign Protestants* (London, 1751), pt. 1, 64, quoted in James Kettner, *Development,* 73.

Naturalization Act—also known as the *Plantation Act*. This legislation allowed aliens who had resided seven years or more in "any of his Majesty's Colonies in America" to be naturalized provided they swore oaths of allegiance to the King and professed their belief in Christianity before a judge in open court.[77] The applicants were also required to submit a certificate, signed by two witnesses, that they had within the previous three months taken the Sacrament "in some Protestant and Reformed Congregation within this Kingdom of *Great Britain,* or within some of the said Colonies in America."

Significantly, the 1740 *Naturalization Act* exempted Quakers from taking oaths. No such exemption, however, was extended to the Mennonites. As a result, no Mennonites were naturalized in Pennsylvania in the years 1740, 1741, and 1742.[78]

Pennsylvania's colonial government eventually came to the aid of the Mennonites and other Protestants who "conscientiously refuse an oath." On February 3, 1742/43, the Pennsylvania Assembly passed into law an act for naturalizing "Foreign Protestants" who "Not Being of the People called Quakers, Do Conscientiously Refuse the Taking of any Oath."[79] The *Preamble* to the act noted that "divers persons . . . have been induced to settle in this colony" and "although otherwise qualified" according to the tenor of the 1740 *Naturalization Act,* "are not of the people called Quakers and do conscientiously refuse to take any oath and are thereby disabled from partaking of the benefit British subjects in this colony enjoy."[80] The Act then permitted "all persons being Protestants" who "conscientiously refuse an oath" to "make and subscribe the declaration of loyalty and the profession of his Christian belief" in the same form which the 1740 *Naturalization Act* "directed to be done and performed by the people called Quakers."[81] This legislation, at long last, opened the door for the Pennsylvania Mennonites to enjoy the "rights of Englishmen" without having to swear the oaths of loyalty, supremacy and abjuration.

The Mennonites' response to the new legislation was swift. In the spring of 1743 a small group of Lancaster County Mennonites were naturalized: "Martin Kindig, John Kindig, Jacob Graff and Jacob Sessenning."[82] By September of 1743 the number of Lancaster County Mennonites who were naturalized increased four-fold: "Henry Kendrick, Jacob Boyer, Rudolph Stoner, Andrew Musseman, Jacob Harnest, John Byer, Samuel Byer, Ulrick Hoover, Jacob Hoover, John Kingry, Rudolph Behme, Jacob Rhora, John Rohra, Peter Leman, and Christian Hoover."[83]

In 1747 the British Parliament, following the precedent set by Pennsylvania, amended the 1740 *Plantation Act* to allow "Foreign Protestants who Conscientiously Scruple the Taking of an Oath" to affirm rather than swear.[84] Not everyone was pleased, however, with this development. In contrast to the British Parliament, which favorably described the German settlers as a "quiet, sober and industrious people,"[85] Pennsylvania Governor James Hamilton was quite bitter toward "that unhappy Act of Parliament which invested [the German settlers] with the rights of Englishmen before they knew how to use them."[86]

The 1747 amendment to the *Plantation Act* is of assistance in dating the well-known promotional tract which Johann Rudolf Ochs (1673–1749), a Swiss engraver working in London, wrote "to German and Swiss Mennonites to settle beyond Pennsylvania and Virginia." It states, in part:

> Considering the Christians who under the name of Baptists or Mennonites, here and there in Germany and Switzerland, are oppressed in their freedom of conscience, and must suffer so much hostility from their opponents that they are forced to live scattered and restricted in the freedom to follow their religion, let it be known:
>
> Be herewith informed that (a) all who desire to enjoy the freedom of their faith and to conduct their divine service in accordance with their conscience and to be freed from all persecution, that (b) now land in America bordering Pennsylvania and Virginia has been declared open for settlement by the royal government in England for German and Swiss people who are not Roman Catholic. It is a big country with enough space for easily a hundred thousand families.
>
> People shall have the freedom to live there just like [other] foreigners, according to their beliefs, and without swearing oaths [of allegiance] and [only] pledge that they shall be loyal and obedient to the king like [other] regular subjects. They shall own their own land with the same rights as if they were born subjects, and they shall be able to exercise their religion without obstacles and according to their liking, just like the Calvinists and Lutherans.[87]

The assurances given in the last paragraph of the Ochs invitation are clearly inconsistent with the state of the law as it existed in 1717. These assurances could only have been made after Britain's *Act* allowing "Foreign Protestants" to affirm rather than swear came into force in 1747.[88] □

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77. 13 George 2, chap. 7, *An Act for Naturalizing such foreign Protestants and others therein mentioned, as are settled or shall settle in any of His Majesty's Colonies in America,* in Danby Pickering, ed., "The Statutes at Large from the Ninth to the 15th Year of King George II," vol. 17 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1765), 370.

78. Giuseppi, M. S., *Naturalizations of Foreign Protestants in the American and West Indian Colonies* (London: Publications of the Huguenot Society of London, 1921; reprint, Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1979), 13-18.

79. *An Act for Naturalizing Such Foreign Protestants As Are Settled or Shall Settle Within this Province, Who, Not Being of the People Called Quakers, Do Conscientiously Refuse the Taking of any Oath* [1742-43], *Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1897), 4: 391. The legislation was passed with no evidence of debate: *Pennsylvania Archives,* ser. 8, vol. 4, 2824 (first and second reading); 2827 (third reading and passed).

80. Ibid., 392-93.

81. Ibid., 393.

82. Giuseppi, *Naturalizations of Foreign Protestants,* 19-22.

83. Ibid., 25.

84. 20 George 2, chap. 44, *An Act to extend the provisions of an Act made in the Thirteenth Year of His Present Majesty's Reign, Intituled An Act for Naturalizing such foreign Protestants and others therein mentioned, as are settled or shall settle in any of His Majesty's Colonies in America to other Foreign Protestants who Conscientiously Scruple the Taking of An Oath,* in Danby Pickering, ed., "The Statutes at Large from the Ninth to the 15th Year of King George II," vol. 19 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1765), 143.

85. Ibid.

86. Benjamin Franklin to Peter Collinson, May 9, 1753, quoted in Marilyn C. Baseler, *"Asylum for Mankind,"* 64.

87. Quoted in Andreas Mielke, "A Mennonite Legend of 1717," *PMH* 34 (October 2011): 10-11.

88. Mielke dates the Ochs invitation to the 1730s. Ibid., 13.

Mennonite Central Committee recognizes and responds to racism.

Tracing the Trajectory of Racial Engagement within Mennonite Central Committee, 1985–2005

By Paula Holtzinger

Overview and Argument

Following the events in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) published a statement denouncing the ideologies of white supremacy and rejecting its violence in all of its manifestations, "including white racism, white silence, white fragility and white privilege," as it continues its legacy of inflicting trauma on people of color.[1] The statement continued by indicating that all such movements and rhetoric were in stark contradiction to the gospel of Jesus and that MCC's peace stance requires them to stand in solidarity with those striving for racial justice through nonviolent means. Following Jesus, according to MCC, calls for the dismantling of racism and white supremacy through active efforts as part of their discipleship.[2]

Beyond reproaching these heinous acts of hate, MCC also acknowledged its own shortcomings in responding quickly and adequately in the face of historical violence against people of color and the pursuit of racial justice. Moreover, they offered repentance for their "hesitancy and even blindness, which exacts an ongoing physical and spiritual toll on our sisters and brothers of color and leads to spiritual and moral decay for white people."[3] While this response in light of the events of Charlottesville may not seem extraordinary for those familiar with the values and identity of the organization as it is today, the acknowledgment of hesitancy and blindness and the reference to moral decay on behalf of white people would have been more unexpected just a few decades ago.

Recent scholarship has examined the origins of engagement with issues of race within the Mennonite Church and Anabaptist tradition in North America, beginning to some degree during the Civil Rights Movement.[4] The primary focus revolved around analyzing the church's historically white and Euro-American majority identity and the construction of racial consciousness and white identity formation due to tensions with people of color. Unfortunately, as Mennonites drew attention to the church's whiteness, MCC originally remained largely silent about its own organization's white identity.[5] This essay thus seeks to determine how MCC's approach to engaging race and racism developed over time and how its racial consciousness transformed in response to shifting demographics and an increasingly diverse constituency.[6] It asserts that MCC's engagement with matters of race underwent a substantial transformation from reluctance and color-blindness towards racial reconciliation and, most recently, into active antiracism efforts.

As the constituency of MCC experienced significant shifts, white MCCers were confronted with the power and privileges associated with their racial identity, and people of color amplified pressures for greater representation in leadership and opportunities within the organization. As these conflicts intersected, MCC's racial engagement bent towards a trajectory of building beloved community.

Literature Review

The mid-twentieth-century confronted Mennonites in North America with complex questions of identity and ideology. Existing literature by Leo Driedger and Donald B. Kraybill, Perry Bush, and Paul Toews analyzed components of this process but ignored race entirely.

Driedger and Kraybill addressed one of the foundational questions of identity and ideology

1. Andrew Wright, "Statement on white supremacy and racism." Mennonite Central Committee U.S., August 18, 2017. (Accessed February 17, 2018. https://mcc.org/stories/statement-white-supremacy-racism).

2. These efforts include dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery, understood as the socioeconomic and racial consequences of European settlers against indigenous communities in the U.S.; confronting racial disparities amidst mass incarceration against people of color; and resisting immigration policies targeting and fragmenting Latino communities while advocating for just and humane responses to the root causes of migration and extending antioppression work within its own staff, boards, and constituencies through antiracism training and practices of accountability

3. Wright, "Statement on white supremacy and racism."

4. Tobin Miller Shearer, "Whitening Conflicts: White Racial Identity Formation within Mennonite Central Committee, 1960-1985." In *A Table of Sharing: Mennonite Central Committee and the Expanding Networks of Mennonite Identity*, 215-38 (Telford, PA: Cascadia Publishing House, 2011), 218.

5. Ibid., 224.

6. These shifts and growing diversity go beyond ethnic and racial demographic changes and include but are not limited to new ecumenical influences and inter-Mennonite relationships, theological debates between fundamentalists and progressives, quietism to activism, the rise in servant activism, the emergence of a younger generation building on mid-twentieth-century reconstruction of Mennonite history, and the expanding relief, development, and peacebuilding work of MCC globally to both Anabaptists and those outside the Anabaptist tradition alike. These shifts will be explored and expanded upon later.

regarding Mennonite peace convictions in their book *Mennonite Peacemaking: From Quietism to Activism*.[7] The authors discussed how, for many years, North American Mennonites lived in rural communities outside the cultural mainstream, practiced a doctrinal belief in separation from the world, and their culture had been shaped by years of persecution in Europe. These circumstances thus kept many Mennonites from participating in the larger social order. However, many Mennonites began facing confrontation about the complacency of their peace convictions. At the same time, ecumenical influences grew: through inter-Mennonite interactions, theological debates between fundamentalists and progressives, and the rise of peace activism. The interplay of these influences consequently impacted the shift from quietism to activism.

Bush provided a thorough investigation of the shift from quietism to activism in his book *Two Kingdoms, Two Loyalties: Mennonite Pacifism in Modern America*.[8] His work examined changing attitudes away from isolation, separation, and nonresistance to more active involvement. He strongly emphasized the war as a major catalyst in this change. While these works provided important insight into the shift from quietism to activism and discussions around peace convictions and loyalties, they largely left issues of race untouched.

Toews expanded on much of Driedger and Kraybill's foundation in his work *Mennonites in American Society, 1930-1970: Modernity and the Persistence of Religious Community*.[9] He analyzed how the realities of World War I, the modern industrial complex, and the new popularity of pacifism brought into question whether reconciliation was beyond the church's boundaries. He extended his discussion to focus on how the birth of the Civilian Public Service, servant activism, and the expanding ministries of relief, compassion and voluntary service at home and abroad signaled changes in Mennonite identity. While Toews touched on various issues and forces at work in the identity and ideological shifts taking place within the Mennonite Church, he did not give much attention to ethnic or racial demographic shifts that happened nor their influence on transforming identity and ideologies.

MCC service worker Pauline Sawatzky (back, right) from Pawnee Rock, Kansas, is pictured with coworkers in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1962. Sawatzky was given a desk and typewriter in the office of Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference when she arrived in Atlanta in May 1961. Sawatzky joined the group at Mennonite House, sharing daily-life experiences and doing the work of peace and reconciliation in the divided South *(photo, MCC)*.

Although Driedger and Kraybill, Bush, and Toews ignored race entirely, works by Hubert L. Brown, Felipe Hinojosa, and Tobin Miller Shearer (also referred to in this paper as Jody Miller Shearer) focused primarily on questions of racial identity within the Mennonite Church. Brown's *Black and Mennonite: A Search for Identity* drew attention to racial and religious identity tensions within the denomination. He addressed the question of whether it was possible to be black and Mennonite at the same time. He claimed that rather than following their doctrine of nonconformity, Mennonites had accommodated themselves to society's dominant culture and became "white-oriented."[10]

More recently, Hinojosa's work *Latino Mennonites: Civil Rights, Faith, and Evangelical Culture* examined Latino/as and their experiences in the Mennonite church.[11] Hinojosa analyzed the history, development, and impact that Latino/as had on the church. He argued that collaborative movements by Latino/a and African American Mennonites "compelled white Mennonites to reconsider their relationship to American society, politics, religious activism, and their own racial identity."[12] As Latino/as joined African Americans in forming the Minority Ministries Council, Hinojosa argued, they moved from being thought of as "marginal missionary projects to central political players," consequently disrupting the black-white binary that dominated discussions on race in the Mennonite Church.[13]

White Mennonite leaders pressured Minority Ministries Council to disband with promises of integration into all facets of church leadership, according to Hinojosa. Integration instead meant assimilation of traditional, white understandings of Mennonite culture and theology onto Latino/as and African American Mennonites. Moreover, the disbanding of Minority Ministries Council fractured the rising black-brown coalition and interethnic activism.

Latino/a Mennonites were no longer marginal; while overall membership declined in the church, racial-ethnic minority membership rapidly rose. In addition, discussion of peace and nonresistance in the church revealed uneven social positioning of white, black,

7. Leo Driedger and Donald B. Kraybill, *Mennonite Peacemaking: From Quietism to Activism*. (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1994).

8. Perry Bush, *Two Kingdoms, Two Loyalties: Mennonite Pacifism in Modern America*. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).

9. Paul Toews, *Mennonites in American Society, 1930-1970: Modernity and the Persistence of Religious Community*. Mennonite Experience in America, vol. 4 (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1996).

10. Hubert L Brown, *Black and Mennonite: A Search for Identity* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1976).

11. Felipe Hinojosa, *Latino Mennonites: Civil Rights, Faith, and Evangelical Culture*. Young Center Books in Anabaptist & Pietist Studies (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014).

12. Ibid., 205.

13. Ibid., 209.

Rosemarie and Vincent Harding (center) listen to the translation of one of the speeches at the second All-Christian Peace Assembly in Prague, Czechoslovakia, June/July 1964. The Hardings attended as part of a month of travel and presentations to European Mennonites.

Vincent Harding was one of five MCC staff who attended the conference, sponsored by the Prague-based Christian Peace Conference, which brought together church leaders from eastern Europe and other parts of the world to discuss theological and social issues. MCC Peace Section organized the delegation and felt it was an important opportunity to engage in witness and discussion with Christians from communist countries.

Vincent Harding was program director in the Atlanta (Georgia) Mennonite Service Unit. Vincent and Rosemarie Harding were stationed in Atlanta, Georgia, in October 1961 as peace and service workers with a mandate to search for ways in which the peace witness might come alive in the midst of America's racial conflict *(photo, MCC)***.**

and Latino/a Mennonites vis a vis race. Furthermore, Hinojosa contended that white Mennonites often attempted to distance themselves from institutional racism by stressing their own experience of religious persecution in Europe but were blind to the racism, exclusion, and ethnocentricity of their missiology and theology.[14]

Readers familiar with Shearer and his work know that his voice has been one of critical importance on racial identity development and antiracism in the Mennonite world. His 2010 publication *Daily Demonstrators: The Civil Rights Movement in Mennonite Homes and Sanctuaries* addressed how movement leaders, particularly Martin Luther King Jr. and Vincent Harding, rebuked Mennonites for not showing up for their brothers and sisters. Shearer examined how amid this movement white Mennonites were forced to confront whether their commitment to racial equality was as serious as they claimed. He traced the transformation that took place during this era as Mennonites confronted their own civil rights struggles and came to accept integrated communities and congregations. Although these works by Brown, Hinojosa, and Shearer provided much-needed analyses of racial identity development within the Mennonite Church, their studies focused on the broader denomination and did not look at MCC specifically.

As a coalition of Anabaptist churches MCC, in many ways, reflected the broader Mennonite context but also had its own unique dynamics. Works by Nancy Heisey and Tobin Miller Shearer examined dynamics within MCC. In MCC's publication *Unity amidst Diversity,* Heisey wrote about race, ethnicity, and gender within the organization.[15] She expressed that people of non-European descent were often hidden within the MCC records and little effort was made to keep a record of MCC workers' racial background until 1984. She articulated that the organization took steps towards becoming more proactive and aware of racial dynamics but still had a long journey ahead.

Shearer's work examining white identity formation within the organization from 1960 to 1985 argued that Mennonite scholars in general seldom examined whiteness studies, but historians of MCC, in particular, bypassed racial dynamics in such a way that "made both black and white racial experience invisible."[16] He posited that while other Mennonite institutions, such as Mennonite Disaster Service, took steps towards addressing "white racism within ourselves" throughout the 1960s, MCC shifted programmatic placement into urban communities of color through pre-existing service programs instead of changing their racial profile.[17] Shearer discussed how during the seventies and eighties MCC took more initiative to diversify and work toward racial reconciliation and, as this change occurred, more attention was brought to the power and privilege experienced by white MCCers. Thus, according to him, MCC made improvements in engaging issues of race and racism through its initial steps of affirmative action and shifting the "racial agenda" to MCC U.S.[18]

Despite these existing studies, the continuing shifts within MCC over the past few decades have gotten little attention. Although Shearer provided a thorough investigation of the 1960s through the 1980s, by nature of the timeline of his study he was not able to examine the trajectory during the time of the most monumental changes. This essay examines how MCC programs and engagement with race and racism have been affected by the ever-increasing demographic changes and sociopolitical polarization of the nation from the 1980s to the 2000s, picking up where Shearer left off. It will further expand upon his work to analyze the developments in programs for staff and constituents implemented during these decades and their effectiveness. Additionally, it will explain how MCCers of color, white allies, and MCC U.S. functioned as key catalysts in directing MCC's efforts in addressing racial injustices.

1985–1990: Reluctance, Relationships, and Initial Racial Reconciliation

Although scattered references to racism existed in earlier years, MCC did not identify racism, in and of itself, as an issue to address until the late 1980s and early 1990s. During the early 1980s MCC U.S. initiated

14. Ibid.

15. *Unity amidst Diversity: Mennonite Central Committee at 75: MCC and the 20th-Century North American Mennonite Experience* (Akron, PA: Mennonite Central Committee, 1996).

16. Shearer, "Whitening Conflicts," 217.

17. Ibid., 221.

18. Ibid.

programs geared toward people of color, such as the Minority Concerns Program and the Urban Ministries Program, but the focus was programmatic, and analyses of racism within the organization had not yet begun. For instance, in 1980 MCC U.S. launched an "urban thrust among minorities" by emphasizing partnership with urban constituent churches in which they committed to working with these churches to face the needs of their communities. An MCC U.S. report for the annual meeting that year noted that they prioritized urban minority work because they recognized "minimal non-white personnel involvement in MCC's worldwide activities" and desired greater involvement with minority concerns.[19] MCC, therefore, enacted a new hiring initiative "specifically identified for minority recruitment."[20] However, tensions surrounded implementation of this initiative because of concerns about the equity of positions, salary, and opportunities for advancement for the new hires.[21]

As MCC hired more people of color, the programs for people of color expanded. For example, by 1985 Pleas H. Broaddus Jr., an African American administrator hired a few years prior, became the director of the Office of Urban Ministries. He initiated several new programs: an Urban Community Development through the Summer Service program, an Inter-Mennonite Program for Alternatives in Careers Training, and a forum for urban concerns.[22] Broaddus's influence went beyond programmatic expansions and improvements as he also played a key role in broadening the representation and connections with people of color on MCC boards.[23] Additionally, Broaddus prompted MCC to begin honoring the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday in 1986.[24] Despite these initial affirmative action steps and programmatic shifts to emphasize working with minorities, up to this point MCC was otherwise reluctant to address the issue of racism or name it for that matter.

MCC also responded to racial conflict by sending more white MCC service workers into urban minority areas. While in some regards sending more white people to serve in these communities intensified conflicts, it also moved some white service workers to recognize racial disparities and call attention to such inequalities. Jody Miller Shearer provides one such example of a white MCC service worker who ministered in an urban minority area and came to recognize racial disparities and inequalities.[25]

Shearer worked as a program coordinator for MCC in New Orleans for six years. In a March 1989 newsletter he wrote passionately about the outrageous disparities between black and white rates of poverty and income, incarceration, infant mortality, illiteracy, and unemployment that he witnessed. He asked how to move beyond "white-filled pews, white-filled friendships, white-filled ethnocentric agendas" toward what a Mennonite worker in Atlanta, Georgia, called "'a life that is a witness to the truth that our God is color blind.'"[26] He also declared that those who desired to bring racial reconciliation to their personal relationships, church, and workplace needed to learn "to move beyond models of charity and paternalism to structures of equality, inclusion and sensitivity."[27] His piece focused on the importance of building relationships and partnerships between the "us" and "them" in order to bring about change and healing.

Shearer's notion of a color-blind God and the emphasis on racial reconciliation through interracial relationships reflect the predominant approach taken by MCC up to this point in addressing racism. This approach is evident in how the staff responded to a call from the MCC Peace Section in 1989 to draft an official statement on racism for the organization.[28] Hubert Brown identified drafting the statement as an urgent task and argued that racism was becoming a more overt issue yet again in the United States, but MCC did not take action to create a statement "because staff felt that it should grow out of more intentional relationships with people of color."[29] Thus, even though MCC increased representation of people of color and programs for minorities, the racial reconciliation on their radar did not seem to move past a personal level.

1991–1995: Journey to "Broadening the Vision" and Damascus Road

As MCC continued recruiting more people of color, MCC U.S. programs and influence grew. Meanwhile, more white MCCers encountered and built personal relationships with people of non-European descent through increased service to communities of color and working with staff of color. At the same time, white MCCers increased their racial awareness. This awareness provoked great productivity and efforts toward dismantling racism for some, but others pushed back against these efforts. Nevertheless, MCC took considerable steps toward increasing their efforts to dismantle racism in the following five years.

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19. "U.S. Program Report to MCC U.S. Annual Meeting," Chicago, IL, November 21-22, 1980, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Records and Library, Akron, PA.

20. Shearer, "Whitening Conflicts," 227.

21. Ibid.

22. During the summer of 1985 a total of sixty minority youth participated in the summer service program, which was a partnership between MCC U.S., the Office of Urban Ministries, and participating minority communities. Inter-Mennonite Program for Alternatives in Careers Training was an effort on behalf of MCC U.S. to "provide technical training to minority youth as an alternative to educational opportunities they might find in military service." It also helped to address the disparity of minority youth who were unemployed. The forum gave Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches the opportunity to voice and address "urban concerns, including agenda of minority groups." J. Wilmer Heisey, "MCC U.S. Report to Afro-American Mennonite Association Assembly," August 15-17, 1985, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Records and Library, Akron, PA.

23. Shearer, "Whitening Conflicts,"227.

24. Ibid., 228.

25. Also referred to as Tobin Miller Shearer in other parts of this essay as he underwent a name change at an unbeknownst time.

26. Jody Miller Shearer, "Behind the Bars of Racism: A Commentary from New Orleans," March 10, 1989, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Records and Library, Akron, PA.

27. Ibid.

28. The MCC Peace Section was founded in 1942, but over time morphed in various directions: the International Peace Office, then into the present Planning, Learning, and Disaster Response Department (PLDR). Krista Johnson, comp., "Where is the peace?" Intersections: MCC Theory and Practice Quarterly 1, no. 1 (winter 2013): 1-3. (Accessed February 12, 2018. https://mcc.org/media/resources/734).

29. Lynette Meck, "A Timeline Identifying Efforts to Dismantle Racism in MCC," memorandum to MCC U.S. Executive Committee, Executive Council, MCC/MCC U.S. Damascus Road Teams, May 16, 1996, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Records and Library, Akron, PA.

Some noteworthy advancements toward more active efforts for racial justice within the organization include the approval of the official Equal Opportunity Employment statement in 1991, the commissioning by MCC U.S. Peace and Justice staff for Shearer to develop written materials on racism, a racism audit, chapels on racism awareness, the proposal of an internal accountability committee, prejudice-reduction workshops, and the appointment of the Racism Awareness Desk in 1993.[30] Additionally, some staff called serious attention to the organization's homogenous and exclusionary structure. For instance, James Logan of MCC Community Ministries delivered a chapel criticizing the "collective egoism" that made their "predominantly homogeneous racial and ethnic power group" in Akron, Pennsylvania "less able to guide (in new ways) and to check its selfish impulses."[31] He posited that this egoism prevented them from enjoying a critical mass of people other than those of Euro-North American descent. In response the listening committee proposed that MCC examine its exclusionary structures and act to move "beyond good intentions" to become more inclusive in both programming and educational efforts and signify their repentance. These efforts began to help move MCC past good intentions.

But these efforts were not entirely well-received. Amid these discussions on diversity, Berry Friesen, MCC's director of administration, asked whether MCC aspired to be anything other than a reflection of their constituency. He noted that MCC's structure intentionally reflected the dominance of European peoples as this demographic made up the bulk of the churches and conferences they represented. In response to this disagreement, Bill Loewen, a member of MCC's Executive Council, proposed that the definition of diversity used should include conference affiliation, Canadian or American nationality, gender, and "race/ethnicity."[32] Loewen thus appointed a task force to develop a diversity strategy to reflect the definition of diversity he had proposed. Later MCC's Committee for Diversity submitted a "Strategies for Diversity" document to the Executive Council. This document included strategies in the following areas: recruitment, hiring, work environment, accountability, and education.

Again, some staff pushed back against these efforts. For instance, John Lapp, the Executive Director of MCC, expressed that the MCC Executive Committee had "serious reservations" about enumerating diversity regarding staff selection.[33] The Executive Council also decided not to undergo a racism audit.[34] After further discussion, Personnel received instructions to implement the "Strategies for Diversity" document, and the Executive Council suggested a "monitoring group" that would report to them twice a year, consisting of Personnel Department staff and staff from other parts of the organization. This series of events featured an emerging trend: MCC staff of color and white allies proposed efforts to more actively promote racial justice, some white staff pushed back against these efforts, and some white staff acted as allies, collaborating with staff of color to continue to press for progress. MCC U.S. typically hosted this collaboration.

Despite MCC's affirmative action efforts and the "Strategies for Diversity" plan, some staff still questioned whether people of color were being successfully included in MCC's organizational culture, and they criticized MCC's "devastating legacy of non-inclusiveness." Discussions around the location of MCC headquarters not being representative nor inclusive to minorities caused further contention.[35]

Lynette Meck, MCC U.S. Executive Director, responded to such criticisms and discussion by drafting the "Broadening the Vision" statement. This document attempted to describe MCC constituency changes and name issues needing attention in response to such changes. It called for MCC U.S. to "act deliberately on matters of racism and reconciliation" and expressed reasons this work was so important.[36] While some staff supported broadening MCC's vision and racial reconciliation work, this document was not adopted by the Executive Council.[37]

Upon MCC Community Ministries' recommendation to add a new service unit in an urban, under-represented location in efforts to work at "Broadening the Vision," MCC U.S. Executive Committee voted to close the existing Atlanta unit.[38] Events leading up to the creation of "Broadening the Vision" and the reactions to implementing this vision continued to showcase the aforementioned pattern emerging within MCC: staff of color and white allies worked together to push for further efforts towards racial justice, and other white staff pushed back.

In response to the Executive Council's refusal to adopt "Broadening the Vision," representatives of MCC's multiethnic staff proposed that MCC expand its mission statement to incorporate their understanding of the "soul and substance" of "Broadening the Vision."[39] Logan also responded to the Executive Council's refusal to embrace the work of "Broadening the Vision" by calling it "institutional backlash."[40] Additionally, around the time "Broadening the Vision" came out, several staff of color filed reports of racial harassment at the Akron headquarters; accordingly, staff created a racial harassment policy.[41] Despite continued meetings discussing affirmative action policies and implementation, no people of color were included in the process, which garnered strong criticism from Shearer. Thus, despite MCC's efforts at implementation

30. The publication of *Enter the River: Healing Steps from White Privilege toward Racial Reconciliation* and *Challenging Racism* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1994) were a result of this appointment.

31. Meck, "A Timeline Identifying Efforts to Dismantle Racism in MCC."

32. It is important to note that Loewen did not speak of race and ethnicity separately as this indicates a general lack of understanding and consciousness of the differences between the two terms. Ibid.

33. In a second response to the same document John Lapp wrote, "I do not believe diversity is the central mission. Rather, the issue is commitment to a vision of ministry and service. I believe the 'acids of modernity' are eroding this passion and concern, so the real issue is whether there will be a peoplehood left to legitimate and support MCC." Ibid.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

37. Lapp wrote that instead of adopting the "Broadening the Vision" document the Executive Council would: "1. Ask the Damascus Road team to be prepared to know how to remove barriers to full participation by people of all ethnic and racial groups in MCC; 2. Then form a task force to design processes and policies which enable people from all ethnic and racial groups to participate in all dimensions of MCC; 3.

of affirmative action and the "Strategies for Diversity" and "Broadening the Vision" documents, staff of color continued facing barriers to inclusion and integration.

In response to this critical feedback from staff of color and white allies for racial justice, Meck and Lapp invited staff of color in the Akron/Ephrata headquarters area to share their input on issues relating to affirmative action. Upon personnel administrator Angel Ocasio's request on behalf of the staff of color, someone outside MCC facilitated the meeting. This fact is significant to note as it exemplifies that staff of color clearly did not feel their voices would have been heard otherwise.[42] Continued exclusion, evasion, and reluctance to embrace options to work at implementing "Broadening the Vision" factor into Logan's comments about "institutional backlash" within MCC.

Consequently, Meck wrote "Some Quotes and Thoughts on Racism, Sexism, Broadening the Vision and Affirming Action." In this piece she outlined her hopes that MCC's efforts went beyond token efforts of diversity and that the vision for the organization genuinely to have "a broad representation of races and ethnicities, with men and women equally dispersed in leadership and support positions throughout the organization" would materialize.[43] She articulated that this vision had deep roots in Scripture and that MCC had the conceptual tools and the motivation, but its methods and efforts needed to continue becoming bolder in order to achieve this.[44]

Some MCC staff and constituents continued to push for dismantling racism and promoting antiracist activity as a result of all of the institutional pushback and perceived backlash. Linda Gehman Peachey, codirector of MCC U.S. Peace and Justice Ministries, proposed a gathering to promote antiracism activity. Shearer and Regina Shands Stoltzfus, staff associate for Urban Peacemaking with MCC, contacted constituents to plan a conference that became known as "Restoring Our Sight." Held in Chicago, the conference drew together twenty-five MCC U.S. and MCC binational staff as well as another 225 participants.[45]

Following the conference, Shearer and Stoltzfus met with Joseph Barndt, one of the main speakers from the conference and the cofounder and director of Crossroads Ministries.[46] Together they planned a model for further training for interested constituents, and their collaboration established the Damascus Road Anti-Racism Process.[47] This training process aimed to "equip participants with the theological, educational, and organizational antiracism skills necessary for the process of transformation in their own institutions."[48] While this moved MCC in the right direction, its antiracism journey still had a long way to go.

1996–2000: Trouble along the Damascus Road

Even though MCC made strides in its antiracism efforts, it was not immune to shifts and tensions happening in the broader Mennonite world; in fact, it was a dynamic microcosm of such strains. The continued animated dialogue between Friesen and several other MCC Executive and U.S. staff exemplifies one such tension—the widening gap and polarization of more conservative and traditional Mennonites and more progressive Mennonites.[49] For example, Friesen expressed continued issue with the way both "Broadening the Vision" and Damascus Road seemed to be "laden with the pedagogy of guilt," claiming that the language of "white privilege" was "strongly identified with 'political correctness,'" which was a serious problem for a "generally conservative constituency."[50] This sociopolitical and theological tension and polarization represented only a portion of the conflict.

Correspondence between Friesen and Meck expressed another tension that MCC faced, as did the broader Mennonite world— "the gulf between urban and rural America."[51] Meck wrote that urban America represented the diversity in the church and that rural America represented "more of the traditional, homogeneous grouping."[52] This situation added to the challenge of "Broadening the Vision," forcing organizers to deal with racial divisions compounded by the urban-rural divide and the traditional-progressive polarization.

In addition to these tensions, other issues influenced the situation, too, such as the controversy regarding the approaches and methods to dismantling racism within the organization. Friesen often articulated that he focused on the mission of MCC to bring people

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Explore the ideas of a "fellowship program to provide work opportunities within MCC for persons of other than European ethnic origin"; 4. Schedule a meeting with multiethnic staff no later than fall of 1996 to review progress on the items above." Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. Their understanding included identifying demographic changes in the constituency, the need to invite the growing racial and ethnic groups into the work of MCC, the acknowledgment of the reality of the barriers to people of color in MCC, the commitment to dismantling these barriers, and the "integrity from modeling racial reconciliation" within their constituency; ibid.

40. Ibid.

41. By 1995 the MCC U.S. Executive Committee approved an official racial harassment policy for implementation in response to the reports of harassment.

42. Meck, "A Timeline Identifying Efforts to Dismantle Racism in MCC."

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. Those who gathered included Eastern Mennonite University, the General Conference on Home Ministries, Goshen College, MCC, Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries, Mennonite Board of Missions, and the Waterford Mennonite Church.

46. Crossroads Ministries, now Crossroads Antiracism Organizing and Training, is an organization committed to providing trainings and consultation for institutions striving to dismantle racism and oppressive systems.

47. The name "Damascus Road" refers to "the process of transformation that Saul experienced (Acts 9:1-31)." Lynette Meck, "The Damascus Road Project," memorandum to Rich Garber, January 2, 1996, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Records and Library, Akron, PA.

48. Meck, "The Damascus Road Project."

49. The emergence of Christian Aid Ministries was a result of more conservative constituents who did not feel that MCC was "user-friendly" anymore and decided to form their own organization, which then competed against MCC. Lynette Meck, "Broadening the Vision," memorandum to MCC U.S. Executive Office, July 5, 1996, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Records and Library, Akron, PA.

50. Berry Friesen, "March 15 Script of White Privilege," memorandum to Michael Bade and Jody Miller Shearer, April 19, 1995, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Records and Library, Akron, PA.

51. Lynette Meck, "Broadening the Vision," memorandum to Berry Friesen, July 26, 1996, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Records and Library, Akron, PA.

52. Meck, "Broadening the Vision," memorandum to Berry Friesen, July 26, 1996.

together under the identity of their faith. He believed Damascus Road training hindered the unification of people as it reinforced "racial thinking," which he argued was unproductive and heightened experiences of marginality of people of color.[53] In April 1996 debates over antiracism training and education reached a critical point as Friesen diametrically opposed naming MCC a "racist institution."[54] He proposed methods focused on building relationships across racial barriers, which echoed MCC's initial approach primarily fixated at the personal level, although he noted he did not "aspire to a color-blind MCC."[55]

Friesen so strongly disliked naming MCC's institutional racism and consequent programs and training, in fact, that he asked for an exemption from Damascus Road training and reached out to other scholars seeking alternative approaches.[56] Several other staff members shared similar sentiments as Friesen. In correspondence they shared their belief that MCC had "embraced a flawed approach to reconciliation" and were "interpreting the world through the lens of racial politics."[57] A staff member also communicated with Meck, voicing her feelings that there did not seem to be "room in MCC U.S. for acceptance of diverse opinions on racism" or "on the approaches for dismantling it."[58] Friesen and others strongly opposed the Damascus Road approach for dismantling racism, and they opposed naming MCC a racist institution.

Friesen and others exhibited what the scholar Robin DiAngelo called white fragility. According to DiAngelo, white fragility is "a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves."[59] In other words, white fragility is a reduced psychosocial stamina produced by racial insulation. This concept of racial stress triggering defensive moves is a very similar notion to that of Logan's comments on the perceived "institutional backlash" by white MCCers. As MCC began drawing attention to racism present in their personal and organizational lives and attempting to integrate staff of color into their organizational culture, some white MCCers became defensive, which in this case manifested itself in a heightened exclusion of the staff of color.

Consistent with critical race theory, the concepts of white fragility and white backlash affirm that "race" is socially constructed by whites in order to promote the supremacy of their interests and comfort. Consequently, whites have been conditioned by society to understand their privilege and identity as normative and therefore do not respond well when this is disrupted. Not all whites respond with white fragility, white silence, or white guilt though; some instead cultivate a critical race awareness and work to become antiracist allies and advocates. Throughout MCC's journey to becoming an antiracist organization, it experienced both white fragility and white advocacy in response to its antiracism efforts.

The pushback, backlash, and calls for unity without first examining the power, privileges, and institutional racism within the organization by white MCCers, such as Friesen and others, frustrated other MCC staff. Iris de Leon-Hartshorn, director of MCC U.S. Peace and Justice Ministries, noted that until they could openly dialogue about power and come to terms with individual and structural sin, there would be "no conversion experience."[60] She also proclaimed that talking about similarities could not happen until they also examined differences. She argued that the dominant culture needed to recognize differences if they truly sought dialogue because many people of color had no interest "in being assimilated into the dominant culture."[61] Others shared her frustrations with this pushback.

Shearer expressed possibly the most outspoken disappointment with the white fragility of some MCCers and provided a great example of an antiracist ally. He wrote that he was "disturbed" that white people had such a "platform for critique" without any real sense of "accountability to people of color."[62] Furthermore, he articulated that Damascus Road was "about the business of creating a new community where power is shared equally."[63] He contended that since reconciliation is, by necessity, initiated by the victim, not the oppressor, people of color needed to lead this process.[64]

Shearer argued that Damascus Road examined the nature of oppression and identity, the history of racism, and the intricacies necessary for institutional change. Consequently, it treated racism as a principality and

53. Berry Friesen to MCC Executive Council and MCC Damascus Road Team, March 31, 1996, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Records and Library, Akron, PA.

54. Friesen said that "somehow we must be confronted by history and acknowledge the power of color to have shaped each of our lives without succumbing to the false narrative of race reasoning. If we fail, we can expect endless political wrangling and increased polarization. We will fail if we insist that MCC is a racist institution and that all white staff are racist and all other staff are not. And we will fail if we use the language of race representation to describe ourselves, if we claim color as our first identity and our faith as secondary, or if we fall into the error of believing our ways of perceiving, thinking and doing are fundamentally different because our skin colors are different." Berry Friesen, "Crossroad Anti-Racism Training," memorandum to Lynette Meck, April 3, 1996, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Records and Library, Akron, PA.

55. Ibid.

56. Berry Friesen to Glenn C. Loury, May 28, 1996, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Records and Library, Akron, PA; Berry Friesen to Lawrence Yoder, December 20, 1996, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Records and Library, Akron, PA.

57. Berry Friesen to staff member, November 1, 1996, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Records and Library, Akron, PA.

58. Staff member to Lynette Meck, December 12, 1996, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Records and Library, Akron, PA.

59. Robin DiAngelo, "White Fragility." *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy* 3 (2011): 54-70. http://libjournal.uncg.edu/ijcp/article/view/249/116.

60. Iris de Leon-Hartshorn, "Response to 1/6/97 Memo," memorandum to Lynette Meck, Berry Friesen, Ron Mathies, Brenda Wagner, Rich Garber, and Tobin Miller Shearer, January 7, 1997, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Records and Library, Akron, PA.

61. de Leon-Hartshorn, "Response to 1/6/97 Memo."

62. He continued to share his thoughts to Friesen's stark criticism by saying that "Yes, the DR raises race consciousness. We white people have been allowed to ignore it, render it irrelevant, belittle it in a thousand ways for our entire lives . . . Your criticism seems to indicate far more about your inability to come to terms with your privilege as a white person than it does about the process itself." Tobin Miller Shearer, "Your Comments on Damascus Road," memorandum to Regina Shands Stoltzfus, MCC Bi-national Damascus Road Team, MCC U.S. Damascus Road Team, Richard Garber, Brenda Wagner, James Logan, Carolyn Schrock-Shenk, and Ron Mathies, January 9, 1997, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Records and Library, Akron, PA.

63. Shearer, "Your Comments on Damascus Road."

power and necessitated repentance on both an individual and institutional level.[65] In response to Shearer, Friesen wrote that Damascus Road had "become the yardstick for measuring the commitment" of support for these antiracism efforts and that most MCCers were "found wanting."[66] Therefore, while Shearer functioned as an antiracist ally and catalyst for progress and more active efforts within the organization, Friesen's criticism and actions representing white fragility, often hindered progress.

Organizational culture reports also provided critical feedback about MCC's progress in their antiracism efforts. A 1999 report identified that while MCC talked considerably of justice and peace "in the name of Christ" as well as family, a "noticeable absence of language for three areas: race and ethnicity, conflict, and power" existed.[67] Furthermore, the report expressed a discrepancy between MCC's formal writings and its everyday language and actions in addressing these areas, as it did so very clearly on paper, but ignored them on a regular basis. Since MCC lacked the "knowledge and language for dealing with these issues," the voices of people of color went unheard.[68] This type of situation lends itself to the danger of tokenism.[69] Thus, even when MCC gave people of color a spot at the table, due to the homogeneous Swiss German culture, they were not truly embraced or given the opportunity to share their opinions.[70]

MCC's internal organizational culture report spoke to this tension of exclusion, indicating that a basic assumption existed within the organization that MCC's demographics primarily consisted of "white, Germanic Mennonites with Anabaptist roots."[71] This assumption appeared alongside a deep sense of pride in the roots and history of the Mennonite tradition. Thus, newcomers struggled to fit in with those roots and had a difficult time becoming part of the "family."[72] MCC's inability to deconstruct the implicit ethnocentrism in its organizational culture and its struggle to successfully integrate and appreciate MCCers of color garnered considerable criticism.

Despite the criticism, the report expressed a sense of hope. As organizational demographics continued to change, MCC became "younger and browner," reflecting the demographic change of the local church.[73] The report also commended the director of personnel for including people of color in new positions in creative ways and stressed the necessity of incorporating them well. Since organizations are prone to retain those that conform to the existing organizational culture and reject those that do not, successfully integrating the younger and browner staff was even more significant. As the representation of people of color continued to increase and confidence in their successful integration and inclusion grew, MCC left a period of heightened tensions behind and entered a period of hope and progress.

Sharon Williams (far left) sings, Leo Hartshorn (center) plays the guitar, and Conrad Moore (right) plays the keyboard during the opening session of the Damascus Road conference, "Damascus and Beyond: Seeking Clearer Sight, Bolder Spirit," held in Atlanta, Georgia, in March 2005.

Damascus Road used trainings about systemic racism to organize teams to work on dismantling racism in their own institutions or congregations. In 2005 Damascus Road was developing a system of chaplains and organizers in order to better nurture teams and link them together (photo, MCC / *Matthew Lester)***.**

2001–2005: Preparing to Move beyond Damascus Road

In the following few years, Damascus Road leadership and implementation experienced various changes. Brenda Zook Friesen and Conrad Moore became the new co-coordinators of Damascus Road in 2001. Together they implemented some of these changes, such as increasing the number of trained leaders to meet the growing interest from Brethren in Christ and Mennonite congregations and constituents.

Additionally, León-Hartshorn, Shearer, and Stoltzfus coauthored the book *Set Free: A Journey toward Solidarity against Racism*. In the book they discussed how racism shaped their identities and the joys and challenges of working together in antiracism work with

64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. Berry Friesen, "U.S. Executive Committee Decision," memorandum to Ron Mathies and Lynette Meck, June 15, 1997, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Records and Library, Akron, PA.
67. J. Nathan Corbitt, et al., "1999 Organizational Report Card," Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Records and Library, Akron, PA.
68. Ibid.
69. Tokenism is the practice of making only a symbolic effort at inclusion, especially regarding underrepresented groups in order to give the appearance that there is equality within a workforce, group, or institution.
70. "It becomes evident that the voices of people of color are not heard, in part, because either no one is listening, or there is not the opportunity for discussion based upon the desire for peace at any cost. When people of color are referred to, it is generally in the context of the poor and disenfranchised of the two-thirds world." J. Nathan Corbitt, et al., "1999 Organizational Report Card."
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid.

MCC U.S. Damascus Road as a multiethnic team.[74] They also emphasized the difference between "internalized racist oppression" and "internalized racist superiority;" they used the former to describe how people of color are affected by racism and the latter to describe how racism affects white people.[75] In addition to the value that they each offered in their individual chapters, their collaborative chapters of what people of color need from white allies and what white people need from people of color in solidarity relationships provided a great tool for reflection and discussion for moving forward.

The Anti-Racism Table gathering also contributed to changes and improvements sought in MCC's approach to antiracism work during this time. The Anti-Racism Table arose as a merger between the former Damascus Road committee and members of the Racism Awareness Program reference group. It served as a sort of advisory council for the Damascus Road co-coordinators. Since Damascus Road spent a lot of time addressing the institutional level up to this point, the Anti-Racism Table suggested shifting the program focus to concentrate on working more with Anabaptist congregations and youth.

The Anti-Racism Table recommended better resourcing for Damascus Road teams and bringing teams together for shared learning, support, and networking.[76] Other reflections on the training program addressed how the language of "antiracism" framed the work by motivating an appeal for fighting evil and injustice. Consequently, the Anti-Racism Table proposed positively framing the vision as working toward racial justice instead.[77] Reflections and collaboration made possible by the Anti-Racism Table brought about growth and a new vision for the Damascus Road program.

Other important developments in the Damascus Road journey included a proposal from the Damascus Road advisory group to make Damascus Road its own nonprofit organization entirely, the inception of the "Fire and Clay" and "Set Free" retreats, and the "Damascus and Beyond" conference.[78] "Fire and Clay" was a spiritual retreat for "internalized racist superiority," designed for those who had already undergone the initial training and sought a deeper understanding of their role as white people in antiracism work. A retreat called "Set Free" was also planned for those journeying towards wholeness and liberating themselves from "internalized racist oppression."[79] Moreover, in 2005 MCC held a conference celebrating the ten-year anniversary of "Restoring our Sight" and the birth of Damascus Road. A total of 125 people came together for the conference titled "Damascus and Beyond: Seeking Clearer Sight, Bolder Spirit" to celebrate all that had been accomplished thus far, examine where they had failed, and to plan for where they needed to go.[80]

The organizers of this conference acknowledged that Damascus Road had not been without controversy, but they hoped it sparked healthy discussion in the church about racism as over fourteen hundred people participated and some fifty antiracism teams were formed in the ten years of its existence. Stoltzfus noted though that "more important than numbers is an acknowledgment that working against racism is the work of the church."[81]

Participants and other speakers at the conference stressed the critical importance of the church's active role in this process as "the task of dismantling racism remains enormous."[82] At the conference Tracy Baton, an African American woman who served as a leader and member of Pittsburgh Mennonite Church, shared that Damascus Road was one of the few places she "heard white people say that racism is a white person's problem," name racism as a sin, and claim that white people were the ones that needed to deal with it.[83] Phil Brubaker, a training coordinator for the MCC U.S.

John Powell of Buffalo, New York, pins a square of cloth onto a piece of fabric as part of the first night of the Damascus Road conference, "Damascus and Beyond: Seeking Clearer Sight, Bolder Spirit," held in Atlanta, Georgia, in March 2005 *(photo, MCC /Matthew Lester)***.**

74. The idea for the book stemmed from the fact that they felt that Shearer's *Enter the River: Healing Steps from White Privilege toward Racial Reconciliation* provided a great tool for white people, but there were not many materials for people of color interested in this work.

75. Rachel Beth Miller, "Three Authors Collaborate to Explore How Racism Shapes Identity." July 20, 2001, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Records and Library, Akron, PA.

76. "Anti-Racism Table (ART) Annual Gathering," Westside Mennonite Church, Buffalo, NY, May 3-5, 2002, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Records and Library, Akron, PA.

77. Judy Zimmerman Herr, "Debriefing from February 22-24 Damascus Road Training," March 1, 2002, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Records and Library, Akron, PA.

78. The proposal to transition Damascus Road into its own organization was finally realized in 2012 and Roots of Justice was established and continues to serve as the institutional home for the continuing work of Damascus Road. "Damascus Road's Transition Out of MCC US." Roots of Justice (blog), November 14, 2012. http://dev.rootsofjustice training.org/aboutus/transition-from-mcc-us/.

79. "Fire & Clay' Examines Racism's Effect on White People," April 2003, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Records and Library, Akron, PA.

80. Phil Brubaker, "Original Proposal for the Conference," memorandum, June 22, 2004, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Records and Library, Akron, PA.

81. Marla Pierson Lester, "Damascus Road Anti-racism Program Celebrates 10 Years of Work," January 7, 2005, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Records and Library, Akron, PA.

82. Marla Pierson Lester, "Damascus Road Anti-Racism Program Celebrates 10 Years of Work," March 18, 2005, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Records and Library, Akron, PA.

83. Ibid.

A Damascus Road analysis training, held in Newton, Kansas, in December 2008 for Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church USA executive leadership. The trainers were Conrad Moore, Brenda Zook Friesen, Yvonne Platts, and Pam Nath. The MCC U.S. Anti-Racism Program (ARP) provided Damascus Road antiracism trainings and workshops for various groups across the nation in 2008. ARP, a program of the Office on Justice and Peacebuilding, worked to liberate people from the system of racism through educating, organizing, and drawing attention to spiritual identity *(photo, MCC /Ken Gingerich)*.

Anti-Racism Program, also shared his reflection and constructive feedback. He articulated that "you can't educate racism away. Because racism is a structural reality, dismantling racism takes structural change, not just change of mindset."[84] Thus, education was key but insufficient in and of itself.

Brubaker's sentiments reflect MCC's continued trajectory toward a more active, holistic approach to antiracism work that addressed the personal, structural, and spiritual levels. To identify racism as a structural reality, call for structural change, and posit that antiracism efforts cannot be reduced to education and interethnic personal relationships illustrate quite a significant change from the original approach MCC took to dealing with racism by focusing predominantly on the personal and interpersonal level.

Conclusion

MCC's approach to engaging race and racism has transformed from one of initial avoidance and resistance toward reconciliation, and most recently into active antiracism efforts. As the constituency of MCC experienced significant shifts and people of color continued amplifying pressures for representation and leadership opportunities, white MCCers' became aware of their racial identity and the power and privileges that they held because of it. MCC's antiracism journey has been one of many struggles and setbacks as those in power do not easily give up their power, but there have always been voices talking about God's desire for a beautifully diverse, multicultural kingdom in which all of creation live together in unity but not uniformity. Throughout this journey MCC U.S. served as a primary catalyst for change; not only did MCC U.S. invite people of non-European descent to the table but it made sure their voices were heard.

MCC U.S. facilitated collaboration between staff of color and white staff as they worked closely alongside one another. Despite pushback from other staff, key players within MCC U.S. continued pushing for increasingly active antiracism education and efforts. The fruits of their labor, especially "Broadening the Vision" and Damascus Road, paved the way for the type of antiracism work and antioppression education that one can find within MCC today. These efforts include but are not limited to the intercultural development index, antioppression training, specific programs, and strategic goals set to dismantle white supremacy and create a more just and equitable institution, church, and society.

In a time where intense polarization and identity politics are so prevalent, the "beloved community" that Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King Jr. spoke about is needed now more than ever. The church must wake up and heed the call to be peacemakers, agents of reconciliation, and ambassadors of love, light, and hope. MCC, as a coalition of Anabaptist churches, has a special role, commitment, and obligation to act as a leading voice and example for all its constituents, partners worldwide, and the church universal. Moreover, other traditions and institutions, especially predominantly white ones, stand to learn from MCC's journey. □

84. Ibid.

Addendum to the 2018 Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society Anabaptist Survey: Detail of the Old Order Mennonites

By Carl C. Garber

In the January 2019 issue of *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage*[1] a new survey of all the Anabaptist conferences and churches in the United States was reported with a total of a little over six hundred thousand members. This was about one hundred thousand more members than had been indicated by Mennonite World Conference data as of June 2018. The January report presented only the grand total of all the Old Order Mennonite groups as follows:

Conference: Old Order Mennonites Total

Source of Information: Membership based on historical annual growth rate of three percent applied to 2015 data.

Members 2018: 25,650

Congregations 2018: 171

Total 2018: 57,713

The table below breaks out the details leading up to the total reported above for Old Order Mennonite churches. This data was based on a 2015 summary of the Old Order Mennonite churches provided by personal communication from Edsel Burdge, Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies, Elizabethtown College.[2] To the 2015 data an estimated annual growth rate of 3% was applied to predict the 2018 membership. This annual growth rate was determined from the reports listed in footnote 1, which go back to 1990.

This approach was checked by comparing the predicted population for Groffdale Conference to the actual population counted from the 2017 *Groffdale Directory*, which showed a total of 24,060 from 4,677 households. Using 2.25 people/member (per Kraybill, et al., *Anabaptist World USA*, 2001),[3] the population of 24,060 corresponds to about 10,693 members in 2017, which is about 6.1% more than the 10,078 members in 2015 or about a 3% increase per year over the two years from 2015 to 2017. The Groffdale Conference membership for 2018 in the table below of 11,012 is exactly 3% greater than the membership for 2017 of 10,693.

By similar analysis a growth rate of 3.5% was determined for the Amish over the past century. Both of these annual growth rates are much higher than the current estimated annual growth rate for the United States population as a whole, which is only 0.6%.[4]

Old Order Mennonite Conference (alphabetical sort)	2018 Est. Membership	Est. Number of Congregations
Groffdale (Old Order) Mennonite Conference	11,012	61
Meadow Springs Old Order Mennonite Church Conference	316	4
Ohio-Indiana (Wisler) Mennonite Conference	1,011	7
Old Order Mennonite Church (Hoover)	437	5
Old Order Mennonites, Wenger (Virginia)	328	2
Reidenbach Old Order Mennonite Churches	405	19
Stauffer Mennonite Church	2,196	18
Unaffiliated Old Order Mennonite congregations	245	5
Virginia (Old Order) Mennonite Conference	546	4
Weaverland Mennonite Conference	9,154	46
U.S. Total	25,650	171

1. Carl Garber, "2018 Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society Anabaptist Survey," *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage* 42 (January 2019): 24.
2. Edsel Burdge, personal communication, April 2018.
3. Donald B. Kraybill, C. Nelson Hostetter, *Anabaptist World USA* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2001)
4. https://www.multpl.com/us-population-growth-rate/table/by-year, site visited July 17, 2019.

Research Tips

Readers are invited to share new research findings or photocopies of relevant heirloom or family records in their possession. Mail: Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage, *2215 Millstream Road, Lancaster, PA 17602-1499; electronic mail: lmhs@lmhs.org.*

BER/BERR/BEAR/BARE: The following three-generation Bear family record comes from a Bible in possession of Muddy Creek Farm Library, Ephrata, Pennsylvania. A copy of the record was shared for Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society files. Information in brackets comes from secondary sources.

B Ber, ["Old"] Heinrich, Dec. 5, 1663-[inv. Mar. 11, 1731; Earl Twp., Lancaster Co., Pa.]
B1 Elizabeth *(Ellsspett)* Berr, b. Sept. *(Herbstmonat)* 15, 1690
B2 Heinrich Berr, Nov. *(Wintermonat)* 24, 1694-[inv. Dec. 26, 1738; Earl Twp.]
m. [____ ?] 14, 1717, Barbara Eby *(Ewÿ),* [d. ca. 1744] [dau. Durss Eby and w.(1)]
B21 Anna Bear, b. Sept. *(Herbstmonat)* __, 1718
B22 Martin *(Mardÿ)* Bear, May 16, 1721-[wp. Mar. 13, 1793]
m.[(1)] Jan. 1, 1744, Rebeccka [Landis], Oct. 10, 1725-bef. May 3, 1809
[dau. John Landis Jr. (d. 1771) and Anna Good]
B221 Elizabeth Bear, Nov. 4, 1746-bef. Nov. 18, 1792
[m. John Witwer, Aug. [ca. 4], 1739-Mar. [ca. 18], 1824]
B222 Mary *(Marrÿ)* Bear, Jan. 15, 1749-[Aug. 27, 1819]
[m. John Beshour, Jan. 1748-183_; Jonestown, Pa.]
B223 Martin Bear, Sept. 3, 1751-[ca. 1786]
[m. Eva Myers]
B224 Hannah Bear, Dec. 11, 1754-[aft. 1782]
B225 Sarah Bear, b. Nov. 2, 1757
[m. Adam Brandt]
B226 Magdalena Bear, Oct. 2, 1762-[Jan. 11, 1824]
[m. Sebastian Bower, Jan. 21, 1757-Oct. 16, 1840]
B227 David Bear, Feb. 19, 1767-[Mar. 25, 1848; Earl Twp.]
[m. Barbara Kneisely, Apr. 7, 1772-Oct. 23, 1847]
B228 Anna Bear, Jan. 24, 1773-[Nov. 5, 1852]
[m. John Kling, Jan. 2, 1767-May 18, 1847]
B229 Andreas Bear, Dec. 26, 1785-[May 7, 1860]
[m.(1) Elizabeth McCullough, d. Sept. 26, 1822]
[m.(2) Margaret McCullough, d. Aug. 28, 1844]
B22 [Martin Bear m.(2) June 19, 1788, Freany/Veronica Neff, d. aft. 1792. Note: Lancaster Courthouse Deeds G-5-431 (1827) and H-5-218 (1827) indicate that Rebeccka was the mother of seven children, but the Bible record lists all nine children above in the same hand and without reference to another mother. Martin's m.(2) appears in the records of Trinity Lutheran Church, Lancaster, vol. 3, 223.]
B23 George *(Ÿorg)* Bear, b. Feb. 1, 1723; [Earl Twp.]
[m.(1) Magdalena]
[m.(2) wid. Christina Grove, widow of Samuel Grove]
B24 Henrich Bear, Nov. *(Wintermonat)* 1725-[1771; York Co.]
[m.(1) Mary Moyer]
[m.(2) Elizabeth]
B25 Jacob *(Ÿacob)* Bear, Jan. 1727-[inv. Sept. 29, 1786; Earl Twp.]
[m. Elizabeth Catherina, d. 1798]
B26 Barbara *(Bublÿ)* Bear, b. Whitsuntide/Pentecost *(Pfingstag)* 1729
B27 John *(Hansleÿ)* Bear, b. Feb. 12, 1731
B28 Christian Bear, Dec. 31[*letzten thag*], 1733-Apr. 17, 1795; Heidelberg Twp., York Co.
[m. Elizabeth]
B29 Michel Bear, Mar. 12, 1736-[July 4, 1809; Adams Co.]
[m. Catherine Treichler, 1741-Jan. 24, 1825]
B2a [Elizabeth] Bear, b. May 18, 1738
B3 Anna Berr, b. Sept. *(Herbstmonat)* 30, 1697
B4 Jacob *(Ÿacob)* Berr, Jan. *(Ÿänner)* 28, 1705-[1736; Earl Twp.]
[m. Barbara Hiestand, who m.(2) Hans Jacob Summy]

EBERLY: The following Eberly family Bible record appears in the surname files of the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society:

Eberly, Heinrich [Henry B.], Mar. 16, 1809-[Nov. 19, 1864; killed at a raising at Henry Shirk]
s. Samuel [F.] and Catharine [N. Bear] Eberly
m. July 26, 1828, Anna Gärman, b. Oct. 12, 1807
dau. of Adam and Catharina Gärman
Heinrich and Anna were received into the Reformed church Nov. 12, 1836, by Rev. Thomas Leinbach
1. Heinrich Eberly, b. Sept. 20, 1828
2. Elizabeth [G.] Eberly, b. Nov. 16, 1830
[m. Cyrus Miller, Oct. 14, 1826-Mar. 27, 1908]
3. Samuel [G.] Eberly, b. Feb. 15, 1832
4. Catharina [G.] Eberly, b. Feb. 10, 1835
[m. Sam Gockley]
5. Johann Adam Eberly, June 6, 1837-[Dec. 26, 1923]
[m. Eliza Frankhauser, Nov. 11, 1841-Oct. 13, 1928]
6. Anna [G.] Eberly, b. June 15, 1839
[m. William M. Crouse, Aug. 10, 1828-Dec. 30, 1907]
7. Sarah [G.] Eberly, b. Oct. 26, 1840
[m. Michael Grimes]
8. Peter [G.] Eberly, Oct. 24, 1843-Sept. 1, 1847
9. Maria [G.] Eberly, b. May 16, 1845
[m. Curtis Fry]
10. Liman [Lyman G.] Eberly, b. Oct. 7, 1848
[m. Sallie/Margaret H. Gerhart]
11. Amanda [G.] Eberly, b. Dec. 28, 1852
[m. John Swigart]

HIRSH: The following family record was found in the papers of the late Clarke E. Hess and is on file at the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society. Information in brackets comes from secondary sources.

Hirsh, Joseph, [Mar. 24, 1777-Nov. 21, 1832]; cordwainer, Rapho Twp.
m. June 9, 1801, [Magdalena Metz, Mar. 8, 1779-Apr. 15, 1867]
1. Catherina Hirsh, b. July 7, 1802
2. Elizabeth Hirsh, Feb. 26, 1804-[June 1, 1863]
3. Magdelena Hirsh, Oct. 25, 1805-[Sept. 7, 1822]
4. Margretha[/Rebecca] Hirsh, Oct. 2, 1807-[Oct. 20, 1884]
[m.(1) Christoph Hoffman]
[m.(2) John Gochnauer, Aug. 24, 1793-Jan. 21, 1858]
5. Christian Hirsh, Mar. 9, 1810-[May 25, 1897]
6. Heinrich Hirsh, b. Sept. 11, 1812
7. Maria Hirsh, b. Mar.1/[Feb. 28], 1815
8. Anna Hirsh, [Dec. 14,] 1812-[Mar. 10, 1847]
9. Joseph Hirsh, b. Nov. 6, 1824

Book Reviews

To God Alone the Honor: The Pioneer Mennonite Families of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, 2nd ed., by Allan A. Garber. Morgantown, PA: Masthof Press, 2019. Color photos. 663 pp. Softcover. $55. ISBN: 978-1-60126-629-3.

The title of this book, *To God Alone the Honor,* is a translation of the German phrase *Gott allein die Ehr* that Martin Mylin wrote in the *Ausbund* he donated in 1744 to "the Church at the Hans Herrs."

To God Alone the Honor documents the family relations of the pioneer Mennonite families who settled in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, beginning with the first immigrants who arrived in 1710, and ending with the "Mennonite Swissers" from the Jura who arrived on the *Phoenix* in 1754.

The first sixteen pages following the Introduction lay the historical foundation for the genealogies in the remainder of the book. High-quality color photographs, illustrations from the *Martyrs Mirror*, and maps interspersed with the genealogies make the book attractive. Excerpts from the writings of Menno Simons and articles on various subjects add depth to the content. Some of these include Keeping the Faith during the Revolutionary War, Interconnected Families, Wheatland Mills: The End of an Era, Bernese Anabaptists Sought Refuge in the Jura Mountains, and others.

Family surnames are listed in alphabetical order according to code designations such as BRBK for Brubaker and MRTN for Martin. A four-page index of 115 code names assists in finding a surname quickly. Some of the surnames include Bear, Buckwalter, Burkholder, Cassel, Doner, Eby, Erb, Good, Groff, Groh, Herr, Hess, Hershey, Kauffman, Kindig, Landis, Lehman, Mellinger, Metzler, Musselman, Nolt, Nissley, Oberholtzer, Reiff, Sauder, Stauffer, Sensenig, Weber, Wenger, Yordy, Zimmerman, and many more. Short biographies of each immigrant include documented information on their arrival, where they settled, and other details. Depending on when the immigrant arrived, the outline includes children, grandchildren, and occasionally great-grandchildren.

The strength of *To God Alone the Honor* is the copious footnotes containing added details and identifying sources for primary documents such as wills and deeds. Unlike unsourced genealogies, which are simply a compilation of secondary sources, the author included many sources to document his work. The footnotes in this book make it credible and are also a valuable resource for family-history researchers. Some footnotes fill half the page and add pertinent information about the person, connections to other immigrants, or other details.

The second edition contains more than eight hundred additional footnotes and ten new families as well as many additions to the families published in the first edition. Two pages of the most important additions and corrections to the first edition are included at the back of the book as well as three pages of cemetery locations.

Genealogical research is an ongoing work and never completely finished. The amount of accurate research in *To God Alone the Honor* is outstanding, but a few pioneers require further research. Some blanks for wives, women's maiden names, marriage dates, et cetera, remain but may not be possible to fill. A question mark before a person's name indicates that the information is an undocumented assumption. These should be viewed with caution and not repeated as fact until confirmation is found.

Achieving one hundred percent accuracy in genealogy is a difficult task, and the size of this book increases the difficulty. Many widely circulated errors published in earlier research have been corrected in *To God Alone the Honor*. However, a few errors have been repeated from secondary sources. It is always best to research from primary sources and verify secondary sources before accepting them.

Over all, *To God Alone the Honor* is a reliable resource for family history researchers. Allan Garber has achieved a high level of accuracy in the monumental task of identifying the pioneer Mennonite families of Lancaster County. The book is destined to become a classic.

H. Romaine Stauffer,
Bernville, PA

German Language: Cradle of Our Heritage: Struggles with Language Change among Mennonites, by Amos B. Hoover. Ephrata, PA: Muddy Creek Farm Library, 2018. 311 pp. $65.00. Hardcover. Color and black-white illustrations, index.

This volume, long on the author's to-do list, finally became reality in 2018. Orphaned at the age of three and reared by grandparents, Amos Hoover grew up with loyalty divided between English and Pennsylvania German. His maternal grandfather, David W. Burkholder, played the role of foster father, and his paternal grandfather, Deacon Benjamin F. Hoover, along with various uncles and siblings plus his own wide reading, whetted his appetite for Old Order Mennonite history.

This volume is a study of the importance of the Pennsylvania German/Pennsylvania Dutch language and the struggles to maintain it in a modern English environment as witnessed and interpreted by the author. He focuses special attention on its affect on people, on Anabaptists in general, and Old Order Mennonites in particular. The most severe language problems in the Mennonite church developed by the 1880s after two generations had received instruction in the English language in some areas of Lancaster County. More conservative families held on to German in the home and made an effort to teach and read it. However, many families who spoke Pennsylvania German at home could no longer read or understand the written German. Consequently, English gradually came to be preferred by many for the Sunday-morning worship services. As the traditional language was abandoned, the changes fostered numerous divisions based on religious boundaries and cultural differences.

Gradually as Mennonites spoke, read, and thought in English, major literary losses occurred; however, sometimes the language shift occurred quickly, in only one generation. Some of this German literature was translated into English after several generations or in some cases *(Golden Apples)* only after several centuries. Rarely were traditional hymns carried along. By accepting the King James version of the Bible, eventually members

Wie schee muss der Himmel doch sei/ How Beautiful Heaven Must Be

Translated by Butch A. Reigart

Mir lese im Wadde der Waahrheit,
Vum Himmel as Heemet der Freien,
Wu die Seeliche wandele in Glaarheit,
We schee muss der Himmel doch sei!

Datt gebt 's ken Drauere un Leide,
Ken Feind un ken Dod kummt datt nei,
Geschtillt iss fer immer des Verlange,
Wie schee muss der Himmel doch sei.

Der Schtrom des Lebens datt fliesset,
Fer all die wu datt gehne nei,
Wu Yesus die Seinen datt griesset,
Wie schee muss der Himmel doch sei.

Der heilich Gesang datt ertoenet,
Mit Engel in dem seelich Verein,
Es Lamm watt datt ewich gekroenet,
Wie schee muss der Himmel doch sei.

Chorus:
Wie schee muss der Himmel doch sei,
Des Heem wu ken Scheide watt sei,
Der Hoffende refet dem Mieden,
Wie schee muss der Himmel doch sei.

We read in the Word of Truth,
About heaven as the home of the free,
Where the blessed walk in clarity,
How beautiful [indeed] heaven must be!

There's no mourning and [suffering],
No enemy and no death enters there,
Stilled forever is [all] longing,
How beautiful [indeed] heaven must be.

The river of life flows there,
For all those who enter there,
Where Jesus welcomes his own,
How beautiful [indeed] heaven must be.

The holy singing resounds there,
With angels in blessed union,
The Lamb will be crowned there for eternity,
How beautiful [indeed] heaven must be.

Chorus:
How beautiful [indeed] heaven must be,
The home where there'll be no parting,
The one who hopes calls to the one who's weary,
How beautiful [indeed] heaven must be.

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could no longer read their German Froschauer or Luther Bibles. Some large English-language Bibles continued to include the Apocrypha, but smaller Bibles did not. Thus, they lost a portion of their traditional Scriptures such as Sirach and Tobit, used especially for weddings. Other literary losses in the change to English included devotional and sermon books such as the pietistic Jacob Denner book, the allegorical *Wandering Soul,* and prayer books (*Ernsthafte Christenpflicht* and Habermann).

Divided into eight sections, this compendium chronicles language change from Pennsylvania German to English through examination of the changes that occurred in the Mennonite church but concentrates primarily on the Weaverland Conference Mennonites. It also includes subtle changes among even more conservative Old Orders who still use Pennsylvania German most consistently.

Part one consists of an introduction to and history of language transition among Mennonites. The author points out that the English or German one learns from a textbook in school is more standardized "while the inherited language passed on by word of mouth is more likely to tell the history of a family or a people (p. 26)." Further, "you are a product of the language you speak (p. 28)."

The book contains personal interviews, notes, observations on language-related issues, colorful illustrations of favorite and relevant fraktur, and contextual notes. In addition, the author covers language issues mentioned in previously published and unpublished documents. He devotes a short chapter to summarizing the literature lost to the church in the language transition and highlights the decades of greatest change, 1880 to 1927. Also included are short biographical sketches of contributors to this study, a bibliography of related Pennsylvania German material, and an index.

Why has the author taken a major portion of his lifetime to document these language changes? It would seem that the Groffdale Conference of Old Order Mennonites, who still most actively retain German in daily life and in worship, could benefit most from this volume, which for them may well become prophetic. For those groups and individuals who have already made the transition in part or in full to English, he obviously continues to have hope that appreciation for German will be retained as well as the accompanying Anabaptist expressions of life and faith nurtured over the centuries by this particular body of religious literature. These pages deserve thoughtful reading by speakers of both German and English.

—Carolyn C. Wenger,
Ephrata, Pennsylvania

Recommended Reading

Orders:
Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society
2215 Millstream Road
Lancaster, PA 17602–1499

Phone: (717) 393–9745
Fax: (717) 290-1585
E–mail: shop@lmhs.org

Call for shipping charges and to place a book order. Prices are subject to change without notice.

Baecher, Claude, et al. ***Testing Faith and Tradition.*** Global Mennonite History Series. Europe. Edited by John A. Lapp, C. Arnold Snyder. Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2006. 323 pp. (paper). $11.95. ISBN: 978-1-56148-550-5.

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Müller, Ernst. ***History of the Bernese Anabaptists***. Translated from the original German by John A. Gingerich. Edited by Joseph Stoll. LaGrange, IN: Pathway Publishers, 2010. 490 pp. (hardcover). $10.00.

Weaver, Lisa, and Elizabeth Miller. ***Let the Children Come to Me: Nurturing Anabaptist Faith within Families***. Telford, PA: Cascadia Publishing House, 2018. 61 pp. (paper). $19.95. ISBN: 978-1-68027-013-6.

Weaver, Lisa D., and J. Denny Weaver. ***Living the Anabaptist Story: A Guide to Early Beginnings with Questions for Today.*** Telford, PA: Cascadia Publishing House, 2015. 112 pp. (paper). $19.95. ISBN: 978-1-68027-004-4.

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