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Events

Friday, Sept 12: Book Auction, rare and used books, 6:30 pm at the Society

Sunday, Sept 14: “Down by the Old Millstream,” 50th Birthday Party; 3-7 pm

Monday, Sept. 29: quarterly meeting, 7 pm at Christian Aid warehouse in Hinkletown, “Inventor Joseph Shirk”

Saturday, Sept 27: field trip, “Native Americans in Lancaster County” (FILLED; will repeat in Spring ’09)

Saturday, Oct 4: Snitz Fest apple celebration, 1719 Herr House

Saturday, Oct 18: field trip, “The Newport Road Mennonites and Brethren”

Monday, Nov. 10: quarterly meeting, 7 pm, Ernst Bergin, former Minister of Finance for Paraguay, “Mennonites in Politics: Serving with Integrity”

Thursday, Nov. 27: Closed for Thanksgiving (open Nov. 28.)

Monday, Dec. 1: quarterly meeting, 7 pm, Mennonite Global History Project, a panel discussion

Friday, Dec. 12: Book Auction, rare and used books, 6:30 pm at the Society

Society Bridges the Past

Recently the Society received a one-of-a-kind model of the Hunsecker’s Mill covered bridge, which spans the Conestoga River in central Lancaster County. The eighteen-foot model, built 1-inch-to-1-foot scale, was painstakingly crafted by Leon H. Martin. The actual bridge, a local landmark, is the longest single span covered bridge in Lancaster County.

The model has been placed in our library. It took eight men to move the bridge from Martin’s home in Leola to the library last month. “We’re hoping it can remain here and continue to beautify our library space” said Steve Ness, librarian and archivist at LMHS said. “I’m guessing we’re not going to want to move this around any more than necessary.”

Martin, a retired mason, began construction of the model by building the bridge abutments of blue limestone and cement, which took eight months. Work then began on construction of the bridge itself, built exactly like the actual bridge, with Burr arches, X-braces, bottom cross joists, road planking, and floor guards shimmed up to allow water to escape. The bridge exterior is covered with batten siding and the roof with English cedar shake shingles.

The entire project took two years to complete and Martin thinks it

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Sept. 29 Meeting on Inventor Joseph Shirk

On Monday evening, September 29, the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society and Swiss Pioneer Preservation Associates will present a talk on Inventor Joseph Shirk at Christian Aid Ministries warehouse in Ephrata at 7 pm.

Joseph Shirk was known variously as an inventive genius, “one of the great American inventors of the 19th century,” according to one 1902 obituary, and as a humble Old Order Mennonite farmer who sought neither wealth nor fame.

Shirk worked as a farmer, carpenter, surveyor, printer, and manufacturer of various agricultural and domestic tools in 19th century Lancaster County.

Historian and genealogist, David Rempel Smucker, author of a recent biography entitled, Inventor Joe, will present an illustrated talk about Shirk’s life and accomplishments. Learn about Shirk’s unique contributions to local Lancaster history.

Christian Aid Ministries warehouse is located at 2412 Division Highway (Route 322, five miles west of the interchange with Route 222 in Ephrata).

Evening is free and open to the public. An offering will be taken to cover expenses. All are welcome.
September 19 and 20 Historical Meeting
The 2008 annual meeting of the Casselman River Area Amish and Mennonite Historian will discuss the life and family of Nicholas Keim, an early Amish Mennonite settler in Somerset County, Pa. Meeting will take place at the Mountain View Amish Mennonite Church, near Salisbury and St. Paul (formerly known as Keim), Pennsylvania, September 19 and 20. Event includes presentations and a bus tour to historical sites of the Keim family with genealogist James Yoder. The public is invited. For more information including schedule, contact Alice Orendorf at (301) 245-4326 or (301) 501-4326 or email at: abcd@juno.com; mailing address is Casselman Historians, P.O. Box 599, Grantsville, MD 21536.

September 21 Hymn Sing
An hymn sing will be held in the 1855 Alleghany Mennonite Meetinghouse, 39 Horning Road, Alleghenyville on Sunday afternoon, September 21, at 2 p.m. Dwight Groff will lead hymns from Life Songs #2. Please bring a copy of the hymnbook. (Some books will also be available there.) For more information, call (717)949-3475 or (610)777-3003.

September 27, Annual Meeting Brethren in Christ Historical Society
The annual meeting of the Brethren in Christ Historical Society will be held Saturday, September 27 at the Grantham Brethren in Christ Church. This dinner meeting will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the BIC Journal and is open to the public. The cost is $10 per person including the meal. Registration closes September 12. For more information call (717)766-7767 or email msider@messiah.edu

Fall Courses in Old German Script
The Mennonite Heritage Center in Harleysville and the Schwenkfelder Library and Heritage Center in Pennsburg, Pa. are offering courses in reading old German script. Learn to decipher centuries-old handwritten baptism certificates, records, and fraktur. Beginning September 11, six different sessions will be offered at each location, taught by Dr. Allen Viehmeyer, Associate Director of Research at the Schwenkfelder Library.

Society Bridges the Past - Continued from page 1

October 17-18 History Conference at Germantown Mennonite
“Germantown: Gateway to North American History” is the topic of a conference to be held October 17-18 at the historic Mennonite meetinghouse in Germantown (outside of Philadelphia). Keynote speakers are historians John Ruth and James Juhnke. Ruth will speak on the topic, “William Rittenhouse of Germantown,” and Juhnke’s topic is “Germantown Mennonites and the American Revolution: New Interpretations.” Other speakers will deal with colonial American topics.

The conference, organized by the Germantown Mennonite Historic Trust, commemorates the 300th anniversary of the formal organization of the Germantown church (1708-2008). Co-sponsors are the Mennonite Historical Society, the Mennonite Historians of Eastern Pennsylvania, and the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society.

For more information and registration contact the Germantown Mennonite Historic Trust, 6133 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19144. Email: programs@meet- inghouse.info

October 22, Talk on Native Americans of Lancaster County
W. Fred Kinsey III, Lancaster County’s expert on Native Americans, will provide a slide-illustrated overview of prehistoric Native America life in Lancaster County at the historical society of the Cocalico Valley, 7:30 pm at Eicher Art Center, in Grater Park, Ephrata. More information at www.cocalicovalleyhs.org

October 25 Boehm’s Chapel Historic Bus Tour
Visit historic sites of the United Methodist Evangelical, United Brethren and Mennonite faiths in Lebanon and Lancaster counties. This faith journey fosters appreciation for the roots of United Methodism. Tour from 8 am to 4 pm begins and ends at Boehm’s United Methodist Church in Willow Street, Pa. Reservations and information at (717) 872-4133 or execdirboehms@dejazzd.com

Fall Genealogy Conference in Virginia
The Virginia Genealogical Society and the Tidewater Genealogical Society are sponsoring their annual fall conference on Oct. 31-Nov. 1 in Newport News, Virginia. This year’s topic, “Hampton Roads: Gateway to Virginia,” features lectures on 17th century immigration, settlement, and migration patterns in the Hampton Roads area counties. More information at www.vgs.org
The Newport Road Tour

Join us on Saturday, October 18, for a tour of Mennonite settlements along the general route of the old Newport Road. The Mennonite families who settled on both sides of the Newport Road came sporadically after 1710.

Our Newport Road tour officially begins in the Lititz area. En route, we will drive by the Pennsylvania Farm Museum at Landis Valley started by the Landis brothers, the Benjamin Landis, Jr., family home and properties, and the Isaac Long Barn, where a series of revival meetings took place that led to the beginning of the Evangelical United Brethren (now part of the United Methodist Church).

After arriving in Lititz, we begin our walking tour of the 1744 Johannes Hess homestead, now owned by Clarke Hess. This home has been painstaking restored to its full splendor, and contains an outstanding collection of Pennsylvania Dutch artifacts, including fraktur, furniture, and other Mennonite folk art items. Next we will drive by the former Christian Eby family homestead along the Hammer Creek in Elizabeth and Warwick townships and note their descendants who attended the Hammer Creek Mennonite congregation. In addition, we will visit the tract of land owned and occupied by members of the Nicholas Erb family. Our morning will conclude with an hour-long visit of the Ephrata Cloister, picking with a box lunch from Isaac’s deli on the Cloister grounds.

In the afternoon we will drive through Groffdale, where descendants of Hans Groff, Christian Wenger and a small group of followers of Conrad Beisel initially settled. Next, we will tour the Muddy Creek library and museum, with its extensive collection of rare books including copies of the Ausbund songbook, Martyr Mirror, and Froshauer Bibles.

Afterwards we will travel along Peters Road to the Peter/Theodorus Eby tract along the Leacock and Earl Township border. After seeing the present-day Christian Eby restoration of the 1734 sandstone Peter Eby home, we will see the site of the old Dutch Mill and an old Eby cemetery located nearby. We find our way back to the Newport Road and then visit Hershey’s Mennonite Church, the Jacob Hershey farm located adjacent to the church, and the Peter Eby gravestone in the oldest graveyard further down the road from the church.

Finally, the tour will include the old Hess graveyard in Paradise Township, Bishop Isaac Eby’s farm, and Bishop Peter Eby’s old homestead near Gap.

Tour begins and ends at the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society. Upon our arrival back at the Society after the tour, participants visit the museum exhibit, “Decorated and Plain: A Mennonite and Amish Sampler” at no additional charge.

Experienced leader and retired teacher, Sam Wenger, leads this successful tour, a repeat from prior years. Tour runs 7:30 am to 4:30 pm. Cost is $55 for members, $65 for nonmembers, including lunch and admission. Contact Dorothy at the Society to register: phone (717) 393-9745 or dsiegrist@lmhs.org. (Your place is reserved once payment is received.)

50th Birthday Celebration, “Down by the Old Mill Stream”

Includes Hymns, Storytelling, Hayrides

In 1958, when the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society formed, the first jet passenger service began, the Supreme Court voted that school segregation was unconstitutional, and the cost to mail a letter was raised from 3 to 4 cents. Meanwhile some visionary leaders in Lancaster humbly organized the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society to collect artifacts and documents to safeguard a legacy that was in danger of being lost.

Today, most of us send more email than letters. Airplane travel is routine, and an African American is running for president. But the important role of the Society has remained constant: to preserve and deepen Pennsylvania German and Mennonite heritage, history and faith.

Come join us for a 1950s celebration to mark our 50th anniversary on Sunday, September 14, from 3-7 pm. We will honor our founders with a PowerPoint presentation indoors. The Society will also open for free museum and library tours.

- Continued on next page
Do you GAMEO?

One of the most comprehensive, reliable sources on the web for Mennonite history and information is GAMEO, the Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online at www.gameo.org. GAMEO (rhymes with Ram) is a free, web-based collection that makes available scores of Anabaptist-related (Amish, Mennonite, Hutterite, Brethren in Christ) topics at your fingertips.

GAMEO provides one-stop learning on subjects ranging from congregational descriptions, regional conferences, church-related institutions and significant individuals, to historical and theological topics. More than 1,200 people visit the GAMEO site each day.

The project’s initial goal – of putting on line the 14,000-plus entries of the Mennonite Encyclopedia, a comprehensive four-volume reference work on the Anabaptist-Mennonite movement published by Herald Press through 1990 – will be accomplished by the end of this calendar year. But the ongoing goal of updating and adding to the existing body of information for 21st-century readers and researchers is still very much in process.

Sam Steiner, GAMEO’s managing editor as well as librarian and archivist at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ontario, writes that this project “builds on the magnificent resource of the print Mennonite Encyclopedia but is not bound by space or time as are print publications.”

At Steiner’s invitation, Lancaster Mennonites have just formed a local GAMEO coordinating committee to oversee and add input related to Lancaster-area congregations, individuals and institutions. Paul Zehr has agreed to chair this group; he welcomes your ideas and assistance. Paul can be reached at (717) 299-6104 or at zehrpm@emu.edu.

GAMEO originated in 1996 as a project of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada and drew on an existing database of Mennonite congregations in Canada. Since then, GAMEO has gained the endorsement of four other partner organizations; these are the Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission, the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee, Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite World Conference.

The project’s vision is global; it includes content from North America and around the world.

(Directors Reflections)

Beth Graybill

I am always surprised by the variety of unique requests that come across my desk in any given month: the Canadian caller looking for an Amish source for horses for the mounted police, permission to bring in a film crew to videotape the singing of Old Order Amish and Mennonites (who reject photography), an invitation to provide names of Plain Mennonite women to participate in the TV reality show “Wife Swap” (where mothers trade places in their families for a week), the tourist who met a Martin family 10 years ago and is sure that we should be able to locate that exact family (from the hundreds by that last name in Lancaster today).

All of these callers are drawn by something in the faith, heritage and history of Lancaster County Amish and Mennonites. The longer I work here the more I realize what a tremendous treasure is this heritage that we hold in earthen vessels: “But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.” – II Corinthians 4:7

I was reminded of this treasure during a recent camping trip at the beach, when I realized just how little one needs to have a good life – faith in God, appreciation for natural beauty (wind, waves, sand, shade), the knowledge of who one is and one’s place in the world.

The Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society can offer that knowledge of and reflection on identity and roots so essential to self-understanding and a deeper faith. And this is, in fact, why many of you turned to us in the first place.

You understand how knowing your history and faith heritage deepens and enriches your life. And we are grateful that you trust us to offer this to you. Thank you for your donations that enable us to plan exciting educational initiatives like those described in this newsletter.

50th Birthday · Continued

This event is for everyone in the family: it includes free giveaways and refreshments courtesy of Herr’s, Kunzler’s, and Turkey Hill companies, hayrides for children, continuous storytelling and musical performances in a variety of styles from contemporary Christian music to a cappella hymns, 1950s trivia and a historical timeline, a history detective activity for children, antique costume and artifact displays with opportunity for photos of yourself in 18th and 19th century clothing, and a classic car and antique tractor exhibit.

We hope you will join us as we commemorate this history.

Excellent On-Line Resources

What you can’t find at the GAMEO site, you may be able to locate at these other two recommended web sites:

Amish Studies Web Site

The Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies at Elizabethtown, associated with senior fellow Donald Kraybill, has launched an Amish Studies web site. (Do a web search for “Amish Studies” and it will take

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Classes Offered in Pennsylvania Dutch

Recapture a piece of your Pennsylvania German family history or learn to speak with your Amish neighbors. Studying Pennsylvania Dutch helps you understand and appreciate the warm and colorful culture that is a hallmark of Lancaster County, in general, and of its Plain People, in particular.

This fall the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society is again offering classes in the Pennsylvania German dialect. We are the only educational institution in Lancaster County to offer these courses, and one of the few in the nation to offer in-class conversation with native Old Order speakers, for whom it is a living language.

The new class for beginners with no prior background meets Wednesdays starting Sept. 17. The Part Two beginners’ class, continued from the spring, will be held Thursdays starting Sept. 18.

Both classes meet from 7-9 pm and include dialogues and songs. In addition, the classes touch on the culture and way of life of the various groups of Pennsylvania Germans.

The intermediate/advanced class, for students with at least a year of previous study, meets Thursdays, 7-9 pm, starting Sept. 18.

John B. Martin, a native speaker of Pennsylvania German, returns to teach the intermediate/advanced class this fall. John is an experienced schoolteacher and song-leader among the Old Order Mennonites. He has taught German for many years and is the publisher of a songbook of German-English hymns. Since Pennsylvania Dutch is an everyday language for him, John is well positioned to bring in to the classroom real-life dialogues and conversation.

Keith (“Butch”) Reigart, fluent in Pennsylvania German and a native of York County, Pa., returns to teach our beginning classes. His ties to Pennsylvania Dutch go back to his early years growing up with Dutch-speaking grandparents in his household.

Butch was employed for more than 35 years as a foreign language specialist for the U.S. government and is fluent in several languages. This gives him a good grasp of the language learning process.

Classes meet at the Society, 2215 Millstream Road, just off Route 30, next to Tanger Outlets, across from Starbucks. Cost is $100 for members, $115 for nonmembers for a ten-week series. Call Dorothy to register at (717) 393-9745.

Recent Library Acquisitions - Continued from page 6


Philosophy/Psychology/Religion


Genealogy


History/Social Sciences


Historical map of Pennsylvania: with a history of Indian treaties and land titles showing the Indian names of streams, and villages, and paths of travel; the sites of old forts and battlefields; the successive purchase from the Indians; and the names and dates of counties and county towns with tables of forts and proprietary manors / edited by P. W. Sheafcr (1875) Ronald R. Wenning (2004). Lewisburg, Pa.: Wennawoods Pub., 2004. (F150 .P39 2004)


Art/Music


Singing at the fire [sound recording]: voices of Anabaptist martyrs. Newton, Kan.: Faith and Life Press, c1998. (CD SINGING AT)


Fiction/Film


