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Steve Ness, Librarian and Archivist

Did you know that in addition to the wealth of information available at the library and archives, we also make a select group of resources available through our website? In an attempt to meet the needs of our constituents—especially those who live at a distance from Lancaster—a few years ago we began the process of making certain library and archival resources available electronically through our website.

Some resources are free to the general public, including indexes for our quarterly journal, “Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage” (“PMH”), and obituary- and property-record indexes. Others are restricted to members of the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society and require a user name and password. Some resources are electronic versions of resources in hard copy at the library; and some, such as the indexes and genealogical databases, are only available through the website. Currently there are four categories of online resources that are restricted to members—genealogical databases, obituaries, “PMH” issues, and surname files.

1. Since 2008 volunteers and staff at the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society have been compiling a database of genealogical information from various sources. A significant portion of the records are abstracted from genealogical articles which appeared in “PMH”, including the Readers’ Ancestry feature. The LMHS database currently contains more than 104,000 names and is growing.

Celebrate African Mennonites

Celebrate the Anabaptists of Africa with the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society in preparation for Mennonite World Conference. This event on Monday, May 4, beginning at 7 pm at Manor Brethren in Christ Church, showcases Mennonites and Brethren in Christ communities in Africa through a panel discussion, music, and food.

Rolando Santiago, director of the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, says, “This will be a time where we can celebrate the history of a sample of African Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches and the culture in which they are embedded.”

The evening will feature four panelists with deep connections to African Anabaptism: Nelson Okanya, Phil Thuma, Tilahun Beyene, Bukhosi Ndlovu, and Jacob Shenk.

Okanya, currently president of Eastern Mennonite Missions, is a native of Kenya. Prior to starting his presidency, he served as lead pastor at Capital Christian Fellowship in Lanham, Maryland.

Thuma grew up a child of Brethren in Christ missionaries in Zambia and returned there as an adult, working as a doctor and health researcher.

Beyene, of Ethiopia, serves as coordinator for the International Missions Association and works to raise support for the Meserete Kristos Church College.

Ndlovu grew up in Gwanda, Matabeleland South, Zimbabwe and joined the Brethren in Christ while attending Mtshebezi Secondary School.

Shenk has worked with the Brethren in Christ churches of Zimbabwe since 1958. He first taught with Brethren in Christ World Missions. Since then he has worked as a pastor, overseer, farm manager, and more. He is currently the regional administrator for Brethren in Christ World Missions in southern Africa in addition to part-time assignments in Zimbabwe.

Mamo Dula will moderate the evening. Dula was born in Ethiopia and encountered Mennonites when he moved to the eastern part of the country in search of education. He attended the Nazareth Bible Academy, a Mennonite school, and joined the Meserete Kristos Church—the Anabaptist church in Ethiopia. A retired pharmacist, he currently lives in Lancaster, Pa., with his wife Mary Ellen.

The program will be interspersed with African music, led by Marcy Hostetler. The evening will end with light Ethiopian refreshments provided by Hiwet Legeta Mennonite Church.

Manor Brethren in Christ Church is located at 530 Central Manor Road, Lancaster, Pa. This event is free and open to the public.

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Online Resources

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2. The library holds a large collection of obituary clippings and death records from local newspapers and other sources. Obituary clippings come chiefly from the “Lancaster Intelligencer Journal” and are complete from 1970 to the present. Earlier records are much less complete but extend into the late 1700s. Members may access images of nearly all of these obituaries and death records through the website.

3. “PMH” focuses on the historical background, religious thought and expression, culture, and family history of Mennonite and Amish-related groups originating in Pennsylvania. Additional features include genealogical tips, readers’ ancestry, queries, Pennsylvania German dialect stories, and book reviews. LMHS members can now view all back issues of “PMH” online.

4. Arranged alphabetically, the surname files include newspaper announcements of anniversaries, marriages, and obituaries; correspondence between researchers and staff; family Bible records; family-history notes; and other miscellaneous items pertaining to a given surname.

To learn more or log in, visit www.lmhs.org, and choose Online Resources from the menu under the Research heading. To become a member of the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society and use these resources (and much more!), call (717) 393-9745, or join online. Please note that joining online does not provide instantaneous access to the restricted content. Please contact us if you are already a member and would like the current log-in information.

Planned Giving Takes Care of You and the Society

Scott Sundberg, Director of Development

Gift annuities, charitable remainder unitrusts, charitable bequests, and donating IRAs are all advantageous ways that you can provide for the future of the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society. These planned gifts are a great way to take care of yourself and take care of the Society.

Planned giving involves providing for a future gift through your financial and estate plans. The Society welcomes gifts made through different planned-giving arrangements, which can:
- Provide for you or your loved ones
- Entitle you to charitable income and/or gift or estate-tax deductions
- Enable you to leave a legacy for the Society

Some planned gifts provide a way to invest assets so the donor receives benefits/income during his/her lifetime, then bequeaths any remaining funds when the person is gone, also known as gift planning or deferred giving. Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society uses Mennonite Foundation (an affiliate of Everence) to administer planned charitable gifts. If you would like to learn more, contact the Society, (717) 393-9745.

Planned giving is an essential part of an estate plan. There are tax advantages associated with planned giving as well, which can be considerable for large estates. We hope you’ll consider the Society in your planned giving.

The Society depends on the generosity of donors like you to keep its mission alive.

Music in the Orchard at the 1719 Hans Herr House

Music in the Orchard returns to the 1719 Hans Herr House & Museum for another summer full of music. Bring a picnic dinner, or purchase food from OCB Bakery and Java Junction, and listen to local artists perform. Shows begin at 6 pm and last approximately two hours. Tickets cost $5 per person, children under 12 are free; no advance registration is required.

The first concert of the season is Saturday, June 13, featuring Sopa Sol. Featuring Frances Crowhill Miller and Daryl Snider, Sopa Sol produces an organic blend of modern and traditional music. Opening for them will be Donna Nomick and Saint Eloise.

Two weeks later, on June 27, Marty Shaugnessy and The Stars Are Spies will take to the orchard band shell with their timeless sounding balance of alt-country, roots rock, and singer/songwriter. Matt Wheeler and Vintage Heart will open the evening.

The final performance, on August 15, will feature Silver City Rodeo, a seven piece band who pulls from a diverse sound for their performances, from blues and folk to country and indie rock. Justin Angelo and The Experience will open with their melodic, breezy sound.

For more information, visit http://www.hansherr.org/events-2/music-in-the-orchard/ or call (717) 464-4438.
Essence of World Anabaptism

Mennonites and Brethren in Christ in the south central region of Pennsylvania will host sisters and brothers from around the world on July 21-26, 2015, at the sixteenth Mennonite World Conference Assembly at the Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg, Pa.

Reading the volumes of the Global Mennonite History Series is one way to learn about the history and life of Mennonites and Brethren in Christ from five areas of the world: Latin America, Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America. Is there a unifying theme that captures the essence of Anabaptists in each continent? Let’s give it a try.

In “Mission and Migration” (2010), Jaime Prieto suggested that Anabaptist communities of Latin America were influenced by the impulse of mission efforts of North American Mennonite and Brethren in Christ missions and also by migrations of German-speaking immigrants from Canada and Russia seeking religious and ethnic freedom.

In “Anabaptist Songs in African Hearts” (2006), Pakisa Tshimika and Doris Dube argue that singing and dancing is expressed differently across African cultures. It is a tool for welcoming strangers and aliens to celebrate a common faith in Christ.

In “Churches Engage Asian Traditions” (2011), Takanobu Tojo said that the future of Asian missions is to overcome global-market economics and go about the work of shalom, the kingdom of God, and the development of the family of God as the way of the cross.

In “Testing Faith and Tradition” (2006), Alle G. Hoekema and Hanspeter Jecker proposed that all European Mennonite groups should define together an identity in the midst of many other Christian denominations, both evangelical and ecumenical in orientation, within a society that is secularized, multicultural, and multireligious.

Then, in “Seeking Places of Peace” (2012), Royden Loewen and Steven M. Nolt suggested that a challenge for North American Mennonites is to follow a distinctive calling to be faithful disciples of Jesus in daily life in the midst of one of the most technological and industrial societies in the world.

To learn more about world Anabaptists, you may order the books of the Global Mennonite History Series at (717) 393-9745, or at lmhs.org.

Annals of Conestoga Valley Listed for May Auction

David Sander, Used-Book Sales Manager

“Annals of Conestoga Valley,” by Mast and Simpson, is one of the featured books in the May 8, 2015, book auction. The auction will be held at the Society headquarters, starting at 6:30 PM.

Another attraction is a fine copy of “The Earth Is the Lord’s” by John L. Ruth. Bound volumes of “Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage,” “Mennonite Family History,” and “Evangelical Visitor” add some extra interest to this sale.

Two four-volume sets of “Mennonite Encyclopedia” will be sold. Genealogists will be interested in Gingerich and Kreider’s “Amish and Amish Mennonite Genealogies.”

“Building on the Firm Foundation,” by Edsel Burdge and Samuel Horst, is an excellent history of the Mennonites in Franklin County, Pa., and Washington County, Md. Another good regional history of Mennonites and Amish is “Mifflin County Amish and Mennonite Story, 1791-1991” by S. Duane Kauffman. These outstanding titles, as well as many others, make this a significant sale.

The entire sale catalog can be accessed at lmhs.org. Information can also be obtained by calling (717) 393-9745. Mail-in bids are accepted through 4 PM, Thursday, March 12. No absentee bids under $10 will be accepted.

Folk Art Fun for Kids

The 1719 Hans Herr House & Museum is introducing a new program introducing traditional Pennsylvania German skills: Folk Art for Kids and Adults. This series features five classes, each designed for a child and an accompanying adult to learn together. Each lasts between two and a half and three hours and costs $25 per pair. To register, visit www.hansherr.org or call (717) 464-4438.

Three of the classes are designed for girls, ages ten and up, with their dolls and an adult mentor to create an item to take home. On Wednesday, June 17, from 9 AM until noon, they will learn about fraktur and Scherenschnitte. The second class is Wednesday, July 15, from 9 AM until noon, where the class will focus on tape weaving. The third and final class of the set is on Wednesday, August 19, from 10 AM until 1 PM, teaching hearth cooking in the Herr House, followed by a tea party. For each class in the set, registration is due the Friday before the class.

On Saturday, August 22, there will be two classes. From 9 to 11:30 AM, children and their adult mentors can learn wilderness survival skills, including fire-starting. That afternoon, from 12:30 to 3 PM, a second class will be taught on blacksmithing.

Community News

Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies


Leatherman Descendants

The Leatherman Reunion will be held Saturday, June 13, 2015, from 3 to 8 PM. Come enjoy the fellowship at Finland Mennonite Church, 1750 Ziegler Road, Pennsburg, Pa. For more information contact, Joe and Darlene Renno, (215) 723-8474, or Glenn and Kathryn Leatherman, (215) 234-0658.

Risser Family Reunion

You are cordially invited to attend the Risser Family Reunion on Saturday, June 13, 2015, at the Elizabethtown Fairgrounds in Elizabethtown, Pa. For more information check out www.risserfamily.com, or call Keith Risser, (410) 531-6880.