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Events

Monday, March 3: Society quarterly meeting, 7 pm, Mellinger Mennonite Church. James Lowry, translator and writer of the recently published book, *Documents of Brotherly Love: Dutch Mennonite Aid to Swiss Anabaptists, 1635-1709*, will be our speaker. At the meeting, David Rempel Smucker, one of the book’s editors, will discuss its contribution to genealogical research.

Täuferyahr 2007 and Amazing Surprises

by Joanne Hess Siegrist

Four good friends sit outside Emmental’s Show Dairy in Affoltern, Switzerland. Pictured from left to right are Maja Burkhalter – an organizer for the Amish exhibit at this site; Joanne Hess Siegrist – USA liaison chair for Swiss Täuferjahr 2007 [Anabaptist Year 07 in Switzerland]; Elise Davis Kägi – an organizer for the Amish exhibit; and Ruth Leuenberger-Moser, of the Reformed Church, a long time Swiss hostess for Mennonite-Your-Way visitors. Photo credit: Don Siegrist, 2006.

Around the time of the first communication to Dutch Mennonites in Amsterdam from suffering Swiss Anabaptists (see below), Rembrandt painted these portraits of Pieter Sijen and his wife, Marretje, Dutch Mennonite friends and patrons in Amsterdam, 1633-4, according to art historian Jaap Van der Veen. Given Rembrandt’s Mennonite connections, he likely would have known about persecution of Swiss counterparts in the faith. For more information about Rembrandt’s ties to Mennonites, contact us for a paper delivered last fall by Dutch scholar Piet Visser on this subject.
March Quarterly Meeting - Continued from page 1

an MA in Classics from the University of Chicago and has taught on Fulbright fellowships in Pakistan and Austria. The author of many scholarly articles and three previous books (the Martyrs’ Mirror is another area of research for him), Lowry is a member of the Washington County, Maryland and Franklin County, Pennsylvania, Mennonite Church. Lowry will discuss the joys and challenges of doing this work over the last decade. He has been supported by the US-based Amsterdam Archives Committee through the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society.

Täuferjahr 2007 - Continued from page 1

brought something totally different. While hosting Swiss guests in our home, visiting in many of their homes, and networking for Täuferjahr 2007 we experienced wonderful one-on-one exchanges with members of the Swiss Reformed Church. These bright, warm, energetic, alive Christians held deep pain as they discovered the ways their church had treated Anabaptists (or Täufer, in German) from 1525 through the early 1800’s. We heard their requests for forgiveness and healing. In their church communities, we learned more about their quest for reconciliation and new life.

For me personally, these were holy, profound hours, and soon I was working on helping to plan and publicize Täuferjahr 2007 events. In the process I experienced plans fitting together in surprising, timely ways and amazing contacts falling into perfect order.

This past July, while flying from the USA to Switzerland, I couldn’t sleep a wink because I felt a personal need to write about the 20 miracles I experienced while working on Täuferjahr 2007. Here are just two of these stories:

Reist Family Connections

October 8, 2005, and it was time for our big Reist Reunion, something that had not happened for more than 25 years. We middle-age folks wanted to finally honor our senior relatives for their great reunions of the 1950’s & 1960’s. By necessity, I was double-booked that weekend, for it was the only time to host four Swiss guests including Peter Opitz, a history professor at Zürich University specializing in Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575), an early leader in the Swiss Reformation.

As we approached the weekend we learned a big surprise – Peter’s mother was a Reist from Dürenroth, Switzerland, the exact village where our Reist family line originated! [Peter Reist (c. 1702-1743) and wife, Anaclore Boyer, were 1724 Anabaptist immigrants to Lancaster County, Pa., who began our Reist homestead of 540 acres in Penn Township, Manheim, Pa., with a 1734 warrant and a 1738 patent from William Penn’s sons.] From our Swiss visitor, Peter Opitz, we also learned how the regular path to school for Peter’s wife, Elisabeth, was directly beside Trachselwald Castle, the place where Anabaptists were imprisoned and tortured. (Nine months later we walked those same paths with Elisabeth, following in the footsteps of our earlier Täufer relatives.)

- Continued on page 3

The Pennsylvania German Society is holding its annual meetings on June 6-7, 2008 in conjunction with the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies, Elizabethtown College, which is commemorating 300 years since the founding of the Church of the Brethren. Pa. German Society is looking for scholarly papers that examine issues relating to the Church of the Brethren to be presented at the conference. Possible topics include:

- Continued on page 3

issues pertaining to Church members; the relations between Brethren and other Pennsylvania Germans; religion among the Pennsylvania Germans; comparisons or relationships between Church and Plain Sect Pennsylvania Germans. Contact Dr. William W. Donner (610-683-4249 or donner@kutztown.edu) for more information or to submit an abstract of no more than 500 words by February 22.
**Täufferjahr Art Print.** After months of deliberations we learned that the Emmental’s Show Dairy would sponsor Liz Hess as their commissioned artist. Immediately, Liz and I began to brainstorm on a variety of themes for an art print. We wanted a significant symbol for Täuffer history yet also something that contemporary folks would be glad to display. What could it be?

After scores of fruitless ideas and just as we came up to the deadline, we discovered a marvelous photograph of Trachselwald and Die Furgge mountain. (Die Furgge is also the title of a best-selling German book of historical fiction about the Anabaptists by well-known Swiss writer, Katharina Zimmerman, now in its 6th printing since initial publication in 1989.) In the photograph, Trachselwald’s peaked roof pointed directly to the highest mountain peak. Additionally, it showed lovely landscape that was inviting as well as a true sample of the Emmental’s tremendous scenery.

Liz made the commissioned painting with this view in mind. Color prints are available for sale at the Society. Then, on July 28, 2007, as she and I toured Switzerland’s Emmental, we together drove to a hillside by Gammenthal. There we saw this exact view and we thanked God for the miracle of finding it. [To find this viewing spot in the Emmental, (which matches the commissioned painting by Liz Hess), travel south from Weier towards Sumiswald. Turn right at the small town of Gammenthal. A roadside sign points to Rüegsbach and Newegg. Cross the railroad tracks and head up the hill. Go around 2-3 bends in this road. At the third bend, note a roadside bench on the left side. Stop, relax, and enjoy this marvelous southeast view (the best timing is afternoon or early evening sun). Pray that the second Swiss Reformation will come to this “dry, and thirsty land.”]

In closing, I share a special prayer as an encouragement for new connections with Swiss folks as they visit in the USA and/or for folks during upcoming visits in Switzerland. This prayer and 15 or 20 related new resources (art, books, drama, and music) at the Society library will surely contribute towards understanding Täufferjahr’s amazing surprises.

**Upcoming Tour: Colonial Churches of Lancaster County**

Lancaster County’s first permanent settlers were the Mennonites in 1710, but many other religious groups soon followed and established sizable populations in the area. This tour is a look at the oldest congregations of the several denominations that developed in colonial Lancaster County.

The tour scheduled for Saturday, May 17, will leave the Historical Society at 8 am and return approximately 4:30 pm.

We will begin in the city of Lancaster and visit St. James Episcopal Church, Trinity Lutheran Church and St. Mary’s Catholic Church. From Lancaster we will travel north to Lititz and tour the church (pictured below) and other buildings in the Moravian community. We will eat our packed lunches in the the Lititz Springs Park. We will then make our way to Leola to visit the Conestoga Church of the Brethren and continue to the old Leacock Presbyterian Church near Gordonville. The tour will end at Heller’s Salem United Church of Christ near Leola.

At each church a congregational historian will meet the group to provide input about the history of the congregation and its current ministries.

The tour director will be Daniel L. Wenger, who is retired from teaching local history, government and world cultures at Lancaster Mennonite High School. He led the first edition of this tour in 2006 as well as a tour of Lancaster city for the Historical Society. He recently co-led a tour of the Mellinger and Stumptown Mennonite congregations settlements.

Cost is $75 for nonmembers, $65 for members. Call Dorothy at the Society to register.
Upcoming Tour:
Dutch Anabaptists in New Amsterdam (New York City), 1610 to 1775

Come along on a journey of learning and adventure to retrace the colonial history of early Dutch Mennonites in present-day New York City. As we review the settlement’s connections to Mennonites in Philadelphia and their relations with local Blacks and Indians, we will try to answer the question, what became of the Dutch Mennonites who settled in New Amsterdam in the 1600s?

Join us on Saturday, June 14, from 6 am to 10 pm. Travel in comfortable coach buses with breakfast and supper stops en route. Experienced guide Daniel Ness leads this tour, a

50th Birthday Celebration: Annual Meeting, May 17

Join us on a lovely Saturday evening in May to mark the Society’s first half-century with our banquet and annual meeting. The strains of music and the bubbling aroma of a chocolate fountain will greet you in the foyer of the Lancaster Mennonite School dining room, where our meal will be catered this year.

We are delighted to confirm the participation of the Mennonite Children’s Choir of Lancaster as our special musical guests. The children in grades 2-8 will be joining us for this performance. This versatile group sings music from around the world.

John Ruth – Mennonite minister, author, filmmaker and heritage tour leader – will be this year’s featured speaker on the topic, “Personalities and Perspectives in the Story of the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society.”

John has been connected with the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society through the years, most intensely during the writing of the Lancaster Conference Mennonite history, The Earth Is the Lord’s, when he was known to sleep overnight in our archives, letting voices from the past speak to him. Last year John authored, Forgiveness: A Legacy of the West Nickel Mines Amish School. John also directed the award-winning PBS documentary, “The Amish: A

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People of Preservation.”

We hope that you will join us for this special birthday celebration, which will include a historical timeline and PowerPoint photos like the one above. Cost for the banquet is $16.50 per adult and begins at 6:15 pm on Saturday, May 17. All are welcome. Plan now to attend.

Cost is $99 for nonmembers, $89 for Society members, and includes a buffet dinner. Call Dorothy at the Society to register.

Library Catalog Now Online!

To search the library's catalog from home or anywhere you have an Internet connection, go to http://catalog.lmhs.org or visit the Society’s website (www.lmhs.org), choose the Library link, and click on the icon to search the catalog. While not a complete list of what is available (we are still adding to it as the online catalog is under construction) we wanted to let you know that the bulk of it is now available for your browsing.

Paid Summer Internship for College Students

If you attend a Pennsylvania state college, you may be eligible to work at the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society through the summer work-study or community service program of PHEAA (the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency). You earn real wages and gain real-life experience at our thriving local historical society working in our archives, library, museum and book operations. For more information, email director@lmhs.org or check out the PHEAA web site at http://www.pheaa.org/workstudy/index.shtml#students
Several years ago, at my son’s school, instead of exchangding Valentines the children celebrated Friendship Day, an afternoon of stories, songs and games about the power of friendship.

This season, as we are looking back over our 50-year history as an organization, I am celebrating the friends of this Society who have made possible our work and ministry for half a century. Those who went before us passed on a deep commitment to following Jesus. They sustained our identity. They nurtured our faith. We owe them a debt of gratitude.

And we are also indebted to new friends of the organization, 40 of whom joined as first-time members last fall. As one wrote, “I am very excited with my new membership and hope to be visiting often. I find the resources in your library truly amazing. Not to mention how friendly and helpful your entire staff has been.”

Organizations like ours exist because of such shared connections, new friends and old, past and present.

Mennonite World Conference president Nancy Heisey wrote recently about the African practice of “ancestor worship.” For African Christians, Jesus Christ is the Great Ancestor whom they seek to imitate.

In similar fashion, we want to honor and emulate our ancestors for their faithfulness while recognizing that they, like us, had all too human flaws. Goodness as well as failure is part of every generation. But their struggles, stories, and challenges can be a part of every generation. But their struggles, stories, and challenges can instruct and enliven our present.

As novelist Sue Monk Kidd has written, “Stories have to be told or they die, and when they die, we can’t remember who we are or why we’re here.”

We value your faith and friendship as together we seek to remember who we are and where we come from.

The Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society appreciates our hard-working board. Above, secretary, Vernon Good, at work at a recent meeting. Below, Becky Gochnauer, 1779 Hans Herr House director, chats with long-term board member, Marvin Sauder.

Spring PA. German Classes - Continued from page 6

chase at the Society. The instructor will provide additional materials to supplement the text, including short dialogues, songs, proverbs and jokes, as well as very simple homework assignments. Those completing the introductory class will have a basic grasp of the language, its vocabulary and essential elements of grammar, for simple conversation and basic reading with the aid of a dictionary. Individuals who have had no previous Pennsylvania German instruction should enroll in the introductory course.

The intermediate/advanced class is designed for students with experience studying Pennsylvania German or for those who have lived at one time or another in a Dutch-speaking environment. Through this class, students will expand their Pennsylvania German vocabulary and conversation skills and will be able to read almost anything written in the language. Students with prior Pennsylvania German experience or those who have some speaking ability and would like to become literate in Dutch may take the intermediate/advanced class.

April 18-19 Genealogy Conference: CSI meets Roots

Crime scene investigators routinely rely on DNA and forensic evidence to solve a crime; genealogists can use similar tools to trace our roots. Join renown keynote speaker, Colleen Fitzpatrick, author of two books about forensic genealogy, on this journey to discover how DNA and forensics change the way we research family history.

This year we are back again in the comfortable surroundings of Lancaster’s Eden Resort Inn. Saturday events include a plenary address by Colleen, morning and afternoon workshop sessions (choose four), a deli lunch buffet in the courtyard, time to browse dozens of genealogy vendor tables, and a three-course dinner banquet at 6 pm featuring Dr. Erik Puffenberger of the Clinic for Special Children in Strasburg, Pa., discussing genetic research in the Lancaster County Plain community.

Veteran workshop leaders Jane Davidson, genealogy enthusiast, and Ross Baughman, journalist/genealogist, will be joined by Stephen Morse, of San Francisco, Ca., leading a workshop on “One-Step” web-pages for genealogical searches. In addition, a representative from Family Tree DNA, the premier DNA testing organization for family historians, will be on hand for DNA sampling on site.

Optional Friday events include a day-long research trip via comfortable motor-coach to your choice of three archival sites in Washington, DC, and an evening auction of rare and out-of-print books at Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society.

Brochures are available from the Society or on our web site at www.lmhs.org. This year’s genealogy conference is not to be missed!
New Instructors Enliven Spring Pennsylvania German Classes

“Pennsylvania German heritage is a treasure ... the Pennsylvania German dialect makes the ‘Keystone State’ unique.”

– Dr. Michael Werner, 2007 Pennsylvania German lecturer at Franklin & Marshall College

As a student of Pennsylvania Dutch put it recently, learning the language helps you understand and appreciate the warm and colorful Pennsylvania German culture that is a hallmark of Lancaster County, in general, and of its Plain People, in particular.

Beginning the second week in March, the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society will again be offering ten-week language classes for beginning or intermediate/advanced students of Pennsylvania German. 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.

Keith (“Butch”) Reigart, fluent in Pennsylvania German and a native of York County, Pa., will be teaching our Introductory class. His ties to the Pennsylvania German dialect 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. His formal education includes a B.A. in German from the State University of New York and an M.A. in Russian from Middlebury College, Vermont. This gives him a good grasp of the language learning process.

Since returning home in 2006, Butch’s primary focus has been on the preservation and processing of a unique collection of Pennsylvania German audio recordings for use by students of the dialect, in addition to teaching dialect classes in York County. He has many Dutch-speaking friends, including Old Order Mennonites and Amish, in Lancaster and Berks counties. We are delighted to have Butch teaching the Introductory course this spring.

John B. Martin, a native speaker of Pennsylvania German, will be teaching the Intermediate/Advanced class. Interested and outgoing, John is an experienced schoolteacher and songleader among the Old Order Mennonites. He has taught German for many years and is the publisher of a songbook. Since Pennsylvania Dutch is an everyday language for him, John is well positioned to bring in to the classroom real-life dialogues, conversation and stories unique to the Lancaster County Plain People. John is an asset in the classroom, and we are glad to welcome his teaching for our more experienced students.

Due to overwhelming local response, the Introductory class is now full. However, Butch has agreed to teach a second Introductory class on Thursday evenings. It will meet at the same time as the Intermediate/Advanced class taught by John Martin, and there will be some interchange between classes, at points. Introductory Class-B will be held on Thursday evenings from March 13 to May 15.

The Intermediate/Advanced class will be held on Thursday evenings from March 13 to May 15. Both classes meet from 7-9 pm at the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, 2215 Millstream Road, Lancaster. (We are located just off Route 30 East near Tanger Outlets.) Cost is $100 for members, $115 for nonmembers.

The introductory class will use as its basic text, Introduction to Pennsylvania German, which provides a gentle entry into the language for beginners. Accompanying CDs allow the student to work on pronunciation and basic phrases at home. The textbook and CDs are available for purchase.

REGISTRATION FORM

2008 Introductory Class-B

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2008 Intermediate/Advanced Class

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$ _______ enclosed for registration(s)

Name(s) ______________________________________________________

Address ______________________________________________________

City ____________ ZIP ____________

Phone ______________________ Email ______________________

Contact Dorothy Siegrist at the Society, 717-393-9745 for more information

Checks payable to: Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society 2215 Millstream Road Lancaster, PA 17602-1499

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