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Events

Tuesday, March 10 (Note Change of Date): quarterly meeting, 7 pm, Julia Kasdorf and Duane Kauffman on Rosanna of the Amish at Strasburg Mennonite Church

Friday, March 13: Book Auction, rare and used books, 6:30 pm at the Society

March 11-12 thru May 13-14: Pennsylvania German classes resume

April 10: Society closed for Good Friday

Sunday, April 19: Volunteer Appreciation tea for 2008-2009 volunteers at the Society

Friday, April 24: Book Auction, rare and used books, 6:30 pm at the Society

Saturday, April 25: Lancaster Family History Conference at Eden Resort: “Roots on the Move-Stories of Immigration”

Saturday, May 2: Port to Paradise field trip

Saturday, May 9 (Note Change of Date): Annual Banquet meeting at Weaver’s in Adamstown

Quarterly Meeting on Rosanna of the Amish: Fact and Fiction

Join Mennonite poet, writer, and Penn State professor, Julia Spicher Kasdorf, for a panel discussion on “Fact and Fiction: Reconsidering Rosanna of the Amish,” on Tuesday, March 10 (note change of date) at 7 pm at Strasburg Mennonite Church. Kasdorf will be joined by historian and genealogist S. Duane Kauffman, author of Milfill County Amish and Mennonite Story 1791-1991 and a recent Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage article (see July 2008) about Rosanna author, Joseph W. Yoder. Pennsylvania German linguist, Joshua Brown, who co-edited with Kasdorf the re-release of Yoder’s 1920 classic, Rosanna of the Amish: The Restored Text, in 2008, will also speak.

Classes Offered in Pennsylvania Dutch

This spring the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society is again offering classes in the Pennsylvania German dialect. Recapture a piece of your Pennsylvania German family history or learn to speak with your Amish neighbors. We are the only educational institution in Lancaster County to offer these courses.

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.

The new class for beginners with no prior background meets Thursdays, starting March 12. The Part Two beginners’ class, for those with one semester or more prior experience in Pa. Dutch, will be held Wednesdays, starting March 11. Both classes meet from 7-9 pm and will be taught by Keith [“Butch”] Reigart. Butch’s interactive teaching style includes dialogues, grammar, Pa. Dutch songs, contemporary usage, a history of the language, and cultural practices of the Plain People who speak it.

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 German and Russian, as well as Pennsylvania Dutch.

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.

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Joseph Yoder purported to “tell the truth” about the Amish of Big Valley to correct stereotypes about the “dumb Dutch” that were common during the first half of the 20th century. Outsiders praised Yoder’s “record of fact reading like fiction” that offered the first realistic view of the Amish. Yet how do we account for the errors of fact that Kauffman has documented in Yoder’s text?

This panel will discuss the truths and misrepresentations in Rosanna of the Amish, and how reading literature can serve historians. The Amish specialty, half-moon pies, associated with

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WHAT’S GOING ON

History Contest
The Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee invites student scholars at the high school, college and university, and graduate school and seminary levels to submit research papers on topics related to Mennonite and Anabaptist history for competition in the John Horsch Mennonite History Essay Contest.
Cash prizes ($100, $75, and $50 for 1st, 2nd and 3rd) are given in each category. Papers should be written during the 2008-2009 academic year. Subjects may include congregational and institutional histories, biographies, literature studies, and explorations of theological, cultural, and social movements among Mennonites and related groups.
Submission deadline is June 15, 2009. For more info or to submit a paper, visit www.mennoniteusa.org/history.

Fastnachts program at Mennonite Heritage Center
Mennonite Heritage Center, 565 Yoder Road, Harleysville, PA., invites the public to the program, “Fastnachts, Doughnuts and Other Cakes,” presented by Alan Keyser on Fastnacht Day, Tuesday, February 24, 2009 at 12 noon. Keyser, renown Pennsylvania German historian, will cover the whole subject of doughnuts as they were used for celebrating various occasions throughout the year. Fastnacht Day, the day before the Lenten season begins, was the day that Pennsylvania German cooks used up the fat in the household before fasting for Lent. More information is available from www.mhep.org or at (215) 256-3020.

Annual Genealogy Conference in April: “Roots on the Move!”
Stories of immigration will be the theme of the 30th annual Lancaster Family History Conference on Saturday, April 25, at the Eden Resort Inn, 222 Eden Road, in Lancaster, PA. Keynote speaker will be Barry Moreno, director of the Ellis Island Memorial Library and author of many books on immigration, including, Children of Ellis Island (see photo)
The one-day conference, which this year includes a banquet luncheon in the courtyard, is co-sponsored by the Lancaster Mennonite and Lancaster County Historical Societies. Brochure is available online at www.lmhs.org or phone us at (717) 393-9745 for more information. Cost is $100 for members. To register on-line, visit: www.lancasterhistory.org. The genealogy conference is preceded by an optional, all-day Friday bus tour to Ellis Island ($75), and a free Friday evening auction of rare and used books from 6:30-9:00 pm at the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society (our research library will also be open that evening). This book auction includes more than 400 lots of local and national genealogies and histories. (Auction catalogs are available online at www.lmhs.org) Join us!

Volunteer Recognized
Elizabeth Wenger pictured below with Volunteer Coordinator, Peggy Erb, regularly helps sort, file and store in archive boxes the bulletins from Lancaster Mennonite Conference and Atlantic Coast Mennonite Conference congregations. Elizabeth previously worked 46 years for Farmers First (now Susquehanna) Bank as head bookkeeper and adjustor. In her third year of volunteering, Elizabeth says, “I like history, and always thought if I did volunteer work anywhere, it would be here at the Society.” Elizabeth is experienced with bulletins; for 40 years, she has edited, typed and duplicated the bulletins for Metzler’s Mennonite Church, her home congregation. She may be one of the few people who has a computer, printer, copy machine and folding machine in her spare bedroom.

Classes Offered in PA Dutch
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Quarterly Meeting - Continued from page 1

the book and its setting, will also be available for sale at the event. Kasdorf published the biography, Fixing Tradition: Joseph W. Yoder, Amish American, in 2002. She is the author of two books of poetry: Sleeping Preacher (1992) and Eve’s Striptease (1998). Her collection of essays, The Body and the Book: Writing from a Mennonite Life (2001), will be released in paperback this spring. This event takes place at Strasburg Mennonite Church, one of six Lancaster congregations where Yoder led summer singing schools in the early 20th century. Strasburg Mennonite is located on Route 741 south of Lancaster, between Lampeter Road and the town of Strasburg, Pa. (address is 1514 Village Road in Strasburg.)

Instructor Keith “Butch” Reigart

Elizabeth Wenger (left) with Peggy Erb.
Society Plans May 2 Field Trip:
From Port to Paradise

A slow, rough, tiring, wagon ride through the forest from the last vestiges of civilization (in Philadelphia) to the wilderness of what would become Lancaster County. This was the end of a long journey from Europe to paradise for many of our immigrant ancestors. Come along for an examination of their experiences and a retracing of the routes from Port to Paradise.

After six or more harrowing weeks at sea, our ancestors walked uncertainly onto firm ground at the port of Philadelphia. Philadelphia was a bustling harbor where ships arrived carrying immigrant peoples and cargo from Europe and departed back to Europe with riches from the new lands.

Our tour to the port begins in Lancaster, following Indian trails that later became roads to take produce and products from Lancaster farms to market in Philadelphia. En route we pass historic taverns, which provided food and lodging for travelers, and other houses dating to the mid-1700s or earlier.

Upon arriving in New Jersey we board a ferry to cross the Delaware so that we, too, can step ashore and experience what it was like for our ancestors to arrive in America by sea 300 years ago.

After our boat ride, we walk to the site of the courthouse to be registered and sign an oath of allegiance to the King of England. (In those days only men registered, as women and children weren’t considered potential rebels!)

From there we visit the reconstructed City Tavern for a colonial dinner featuring Martha Washington’s Turkey Pie. Along the way we note historic buildings and important sites dating to the early 1700s.

(Seven miles northwest of Philadelphia lay the village of Germantown, which had grown up in the 1680s, home to the very first settlers from German lands. Except for the small Herr-Kendig-Meylin group of 1710, most Lancaster-bound immigrants bypassed Germantown and bought wagons, oxen, hardware, and tools in Philadelphia for the trip to their new homes on the Western frontier.)

After our exploration of 18th-century Philadelphia, we begin our return to Lancaster, noting important sites of early white settlement en route. At Exton we tour the colonial Zook (Zaug) House, which served as a frequent overnight stop in later years. The western half of our route, from Coatesville to Willow Street, was originally the Great Minquas Trail, an Indian path, later known as the Conestoga Road.

Finally, we arrive at the 1719 Herr House in Willow Street, Lancaster County’s first permanent settlement and the Pennsylvania German immigrants’ paradise. A free tour of the house is included at the end of the day. By this time we will have gained an understanding of the rigors and excitement of the journey from port to paradise and an appreciation for the heritage we value.

Experienced tour guide, Daniel Ness, leads this journey from Lancaster and back along the old

Tour lunch: colonial dining in Philadelphia

Save the Date: Old Order Mennonites Tour, May 23

On Saturday, May 23, retired history teacher, Henry Benner, will lead a Society field trip entitled, “Exploring Horse- and- Buggy Mennonites of Lancaster County.” Offering unique access, this tour will meet with Old Order Mennonite spokespersons and visit their businesses and historic sites in northern Lancaster County. Reserve the date; detailed information coming in the April newsletter.

Colonial Zook (Zaug) House
Recently, I have been thinking about the importance of having a people and a place to belong to. As friends have moved to urban areas or overseas for service, my own family has stayed put in Lancaster County, close to our roots. While I am sometimes tempted to think of leaving home for some exotic setting as the true calling, remaining close to the roots of our family history is an equally important calling.

Closeness to our roots can be figurative or literal. Only about half of the Society’s members live in Pennsylvania; the rest of you are scattered across the country but with family roots, interest, or Pa. German heritage that ties you to Lancaster County. These connections to our geographic or family roots and faith legacy can be a powerful source of identity and belonging, especially important in times of economic strain and dislocation.

In a recent retreat, Society staff members reflected on the ties of history, heritage and faith that bind us to the mission of the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, a vision which is broader than those of us with Pennsylvania German roots.

In January, the Society convened a group of Native Americans to help us look at the ways in which we can commemorate Indian friendship and ties of mutual respect that aided our Lancaster Mennonite ancestors in settling Lancaster County 300 years ago, while acknowledging our role in Indian displacement. This year’s Mennonite History Day speaker in area schools, Henry Benner, will tell some of these stories. We are also fundraising for a commemorative site and recreated Indian longhouse at the 1719 Herr House, for which we invite your support.

Like many charitable organizations, we, too, are feeling the pinch, as our donations were under budget this year. But in times like these, we know our members look for good value and strong connections to a people-hood beyond themselves, which the Society offers.

Last month, we inaugurated a president who campaigned on a message of hope. So as we contemplate future opportunities we, too, look forward in hope and anticipation to finding new ways to tell the stories of friendship and respect, among and between peoples.

That Good Volunteer Feeling

Greetings to you! We at the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society are in the process of organizing and expanding our resources to make them more accessible to our patrons. We are seeking individuals who may have an interest in assisting us in various areas of the Society. In most cases, willingness to learn is the main criteria! (Training will be provided where necessary.)

Volunteer opportunities include:

• Assisting patrons in the library (see below);
• Entering genealogy and membership data in the computer;
• Scanning documents and photographs to make them available on line;
• Sorting books for our annual summer Bookworm Frolic;
• Helping with mailing parties;
• Assisting in property maintenance tasks at the Society and at the 1719 Herr House;
• Serving as a tour guide at the 1719 Herr House (April-September).

The benefits of volunteering at the Society are many. These include the opportunity to interact with interesting people who care about history, the good feeling that you get from helping others, a small discount in our bookstore, and invitation to attend the annual volunteer tea.

Serving is an opportunity that gives meaning to life. Please give Peggy Erb a call at the Society at 393-9745 or email her at perb@lmhs.org if you would like more information or would like to come in and talk about volunteering. Thank you!

Library Volunteer Opportunity

Deepen your interest in family, church or local history by volunteering in the Society's library. We are looking for volunteers to assist at the reference desk on a regular basis. The work involves orienting patrons to the library and its resources, helping visitors to find information in the library and archives, and answering research questions at the reference desk. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn while volunteering, with experienced staff available for back-up. Help is needed on Tuesday afternoons, Wednesday mornings, and Saturdays. Familiarity with computers or willingness to learn would be helpful. For more information, contact librarian Steve Ness at sness@lmhs.org.

Calling College Students

Earn real wages and get job experience by working at the Society this summer. We are looking for several summer interns to work at organizing our summer used book sale, helping customers in our book store and library, working with museum curation and artifact conservation, assisting in the archives, and helping give museum tours. Students must be enrolled at a Pennsylvania college or university and eligible for financial aid from their school for the Society to access the state funds available for us to hire them. Contact Beth at director@lmhs.org for more information.

Recent Library Acquisitions

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Music


Joyfully onward I move [sound recording] : Harmonia Sacra singing from Elkhart, Indiana. [Harrison, Tenn.?] : John Lamb, c2006. (CD JOYFUL)

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Donations to the Society

Recently the Society was delighted to receive several gifts to our museums and archives.

This fall the 1719 Herr House museum was pleased to receive an original, 18th-century Christian Herr deed from Donald and Patricia Herr of Lancaster, pictured on display, which had previously been on exhibit. We recognize the Herrs’ generosity, as descendants, in finalizing this Herr family gift.

Donated fraktur shown by Mary Jane Hershey (left) to curator Carolyn Wenger.

Hiram and Mary Jane (Lederach) Hershey of Harleysville, Pa., recently donated a number of library and archival items to the Society, including several pieces of fraktur. These books, papers, and artifacts, for which we are most grateful, add immeasurably to our collections.

Finally, the Society hosted a group of David C. Esch descendants over the holidays (pictured below). The group, some of whom had never before met in person, stays connected through a circle letter to descendants. Genealogist Del Yoder (back row) had gathered the group together for the occasion of reviewing family genealogy and donating an 1874 Esch letter to the Society’s archives. The Society is happy to host such gatherings of descendants.

May 9 Annual Banquet: Writing Amish Family Stories

Join us on Saturday, May 9 (note change of date), at 6 pm, for our annual meeting and banquet being held this year at Weaver’s market and banquet hall in Adamstown, Pa., just north of Ephrata. This year’s topic is “How Research in Family History Can Shape Your Identity.” Ervin Stutzman, Eastern Mennonite Seminary dean and author of the books about his parents, Emma, A Widow among the Amish and Tobias of the Amish (2007 and 2001, Herald Press) will speak to this theme.

Stutzman will be joined by Old Order Amish writer, Linda Byler, from south-central Pennsylvania. Byler authored the seven-part series of Lizzie books, based on her own childhood, which have been described variously as an Amish “Little House on the Prairie” series, and as the realistic Amish answer to Beverly Lewis’ fictionalized Amish accounts. Both Byler and Stutzman will speak about the pleasure and challenge of writing Amish family stories.

The evening will include special music and a traditional Lancaster County feast of fresh fruit, lettuce with bacon dressing, rolls, ham loaf, homemade mashed potatoes, vegetable medley, lemon sponge or cherry crumb pie, mints, and beverage. This delicious, home-cooked menu will be served at Weaver’s banquet facility in Adamstown, where all food is prepared fresh and on site for our full enjoyment.

Tickets to the free program and banquet are $16.

Weavers is located on Route 272 at the intersection with Route 897 in Adamstown (2610 North Reading Road, Denver, if using mapquest), one mile north of the turnpike exit off Route 222 North (map available at www.weavermarkets.com/).

Duplicate Periodicals for Sale

It’s a new year and the library is in the process of organizing our publications. We have many duplicate periodicals and are offering them for sale. These include:

- **Music Messenger**, 1967-1979; cost $1.25/year or $.25/issue.
- **Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society**, 1908-1947, various issues; 1916, 1918, 1919 complete sets; cost $3.50/year or $.50/issue.
- **Sword and Trumpet**, 1944 to 1980; cost $2.00/year or $.25/issue.
- **Mennonite Family History**, 1983 to 2005; cost $3.50/year or $1.00/issue.
- **Youth Messenger**, 1964-1969; cost $3.00/year.
- **Mennonite Meeting Calendar**, 1945-1968; cost $.50/issue.
- **Christian Monitor**, 1911-1953 (not all years complete); cost $3.00/year.
- **Mennonite Living**, 1954-1973; cost $3.00/year.
- **Mennonite Historical Bulletin**, 1940-1973; cost $3.00/year (not all years complete).

If you are interested in purchasing any of these items, please contact Peggy at (717) 393-9745 or perb@lmhs.org. Credit card or check is accepted as payment (shipping extra). Newer historical organizations may want to take advantage of this offer to broaden their collections.

Don and Patricia Herr with Christian Herr deed.

David C. Esh descendants gather in the library.
Recent Library Acquisitions

Philosophy/Psychology/Religion


Biography

Bergen, Ernst. Jumping into empty space : a reluctant Mennonite businessman serves in Paraguay’s presidential cabinet. Intercourse, PA :


Genealogy/History/Social Sciences


Language/Fiction


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