Martyrs Mirror Witnesses 350 Years

Commemorating the 350th anniversary of the first printing of the Martyrs Mirror in 1660 in the Netherlands, the Historical Society and the Swiss Pioneer Preservation Associates of Martindale will cosponsor a June 7, 7:00 p.m., public meeting at the relief warehouse of Christian Aid Ministries, 2412 Division Highway (U.S. Route 322), Ephrata.

Historian and translator James Lowry of Hagerstown, Maryland, a Martyrs Mirror scholar, will relate stories from the text, as well as stories of its Dutch compiler, Thieleman van Bragh, and its illustrator, Jan Luyken, a noted Dutch Mennonite artist.

Amos B. Hoover, a local Mennonite church leader, will also speak about the editions of the book through the centuries, and Swiss Anabaptist martyr Hans Haslibacher.

The evening will include singing a hymn about Haslibacher.

The 1660 Martyrs Mirror is a 1,290-page tome describing the lives and deaths of hundreds of women and men, beginning with Jesus Christ and members of the Early Church through Anabaptists from the Netherlands, Belgium and other European countries. One hundred and three etchings by Luyken were added for its second edition, published in Amsterdam in 1685.

To an unfamiliar audience, a book titled “The Bloody Theater...of Defenseless Christians” may seem sensational and exploitive, but historically, it has been used as a devotional text.

“Jan Luyken’s pictures do depict a number of very gruesome things,” Lowry said, “and that is his take on the text, but if you read the text, the bulk of the book isn’t taken up with torture.

Interrogations and doctrine, yes, but not torture.”

Although first printed in the Netherlands, the book became very popular among the Swiss Brethren in Switzerland and Germany “because they could regard this literature as reliable,” Lowry said. “It confirmed their martyr tradition. Here was a record of people who had believed the same way they did and died for it.”

In America nearly a century later, German immigrants turned to the Martyrs Mirror to strengthen their pacifist beliefs in the throes of the French and Indian War. In 1748-49, Franconia Conference Mennonites commissioned Peter Miller of the Ephrata Cloister to translate it into German, and the Cloister print shop produced 1,300 copies. It was the largest book printed in the Colonies at that time.

The Martyrs Mirror’s first English edition was also printed in Lancaster County, in 1836-37. It remains in print today.

The June 7 meeting will emphasize not only the historical background of the book but also its current relevance. Is it practical to love one’s enemies? Why do good people resist authority? What beliefs are worth dying for?

Lowry has authored several books on the Martyrs Mirror and Reformation-era Anabaptists, including The Martyrs Mirror Made Plain (1997), Hans Landis: Swiss Anabaptist Martyr in Seventeenth Century Documents (2003), and Documents of Brotherly Love: Dutch Mennonite Aid to Swiss Anabaptists, 1635-1709 (2007).

Society Receives Grant for New Novel

The Schowalter Foundation, Newton, Kansas, awarded Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, in cooperation with author Ken Yoder Reed, $10,000 toward the research and writing of a major new historical novel on Swiss German Mennonites coming to America in 1710.

“It’s a big story,” Reed said. “It’s the story of religious harassment in Switzerland and South Germany, ocean trips, buying land, building a home in Quaker Pennsylvania, and the crisis of faith when their threatened neighbors challenge Mennonite farmers to contribute to the French and Indian War effort.”

Reed is known for two previous novels, He Flew Too High (Wine Press, 2009), the story of a 1950’s church split, and Mennonite Soldier (Herald Press, 1975), the tale of a family conflicted by World War I, which was reissued in paperback in 2009.

The immigration story of Swiss German political refugees is largely untold. The Schowalter grant will help to fund Reed’s initial research.

The Schowalter Foundation was created in 1954 to support programs developed by three Mennonite denominations: General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Church, and the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite. It makes grants to nonprofit agencies two times a year.

Reed lives in Milpitas, California. His books are available through the Society book store and his Web site: www.kenreed.com.

What’s Inside

- Lancaster Roots 300 Events
- New Online Resources
- Community Events
- Other Society Events
- Director’s Reflections
**“Lancaster Roots 300”**

**Calendar of Events**

This renowned, sixty-voice boys’ choir from Germany visits Mellinger Mennonite Church on their United States tour.

**Heritage Trail Bike Ride and Walk**
Saturday, August 28

Bike from the eastern edge of Lancaster County to Willow Street, or walk the length of the original Pequea settlement (from Strasburg to Willow Street). Enjoy refreshments at journey’s end at the 1719 Herr House. This event is a fundraiser for recreating a Native American longhouse on the grounds of the Herr House: $20 to bike; $10 to walk.

**Snitz Fest and Heritage Day**
Saturday, September 18, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

This Pennsylvania German community celebration features costumed interpreters demonstrating Colonial-era arts, crafts, and farming at the 1719 Herr House, including hands-on activities and traditional foods. This year’s free event is underwritten by Willow Street Mennonite Church.

**Pennsylvania German Cooking Traditions**
Monday, September 27, 7:00 p.m.

Phyllis Pellman Good, author of numerous regional cookbooks, will discuss Amish foods and foodways at Trinity Lutheran Church, Lancaster, Pa. Another recognized expert on early Pennsylvania German foods and cooking will also speak. Free.

**Public Acknowledgement and Commemoration of Native American Legacy**
Saturday, October 9
10:00 a.m., event in downtown Lancaster

Lancaster followed by time for lunch; 2:00 p.m. dedication of Native American longhouse site and celebration at the 1719 Herr House. Both events are free.

**Historic West Lampeter Township Driving Tour**
Saturday, October 16, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Self-guided driving tour to historic sites in the vicinity of the 1719 Herr House with interpretive guides at each stop. Adults $8; children 7-12 $4; children under 7 free. Begin at the Herr House.

**Native Americans of Lancaster County**
Monday, November 1, 7:00 p.m.

A panel of experts will discuss the history of Native Americans in and around Lancaster three hundred years ago. A free public meeting at Lititz Moravian Church.

**Opening reception, Second Annual Show and Sale of Pennsylvania German Folk Art**
Friday, November 19, 6:00-9:00 p.m.

Show of quality reproduction folk art at Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society continues, Tuesday-Saturday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., through December 31. Admission is free; art is for sale.

**Christmas Candlelight Tours at the 1719 Hans Herr House**
Friday, December 3, 6:00-8:30 p.m.; Saturday, December 4, 5:00-8:30 p.m.

Theme: “Three Hundred Years of Christmas Traditions.”

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Henry Benner holds up an illustration of Native American longhouses during “Native Americans in the Susquehanna Valley”, a Lancaster Roots 300 bus tour on May 7. According to archeological evidence, for hundreds of years, between two and six thousand Indians constantly lived along this now-rural stretch of the Susquehanna River in Washington Boro.
Other Historical Society Events

Field Trips: The Society will sponsor four additional trips in 2010.

- Because of high interest, a fourth Port to Paradise trip has been added on July 24. Members $85; nonmembers $95.
- On August 16, Daniel Ness will lead a group trip to the Schwenkfelder Library and Heritage Center in Pennsburg, Pennsylvania. In addition, participants will also attend the historical Goschenhoppen Folk Festival. Members $65; nonmembers $75.
- On October 16, Henry Benner will host a "Fall Foliage" historical trip through Juniata and Snyder Counties. Participants will learn about the history of the rivers, their role in logging, canals, and other colonial transportation. The group will visit the restored Joseph Hostetler homestead and grave site as well as a nearby museum of restored John Deere tractors. Also featured will be the restored 1869 Richfield ("Brick") Mennonite Meetinghouse and the adjoining Juniata Mennonite Historical Center. Members $85; nonmembers $95; lunch included.

- A third 1710 Pequea Settlement tour has been added on November 6. Members $40; nonmembers $50. For reservations, contact Peggy Erb: (717) 393-9745 or perb@lmhs.org.

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Volunteers are needed for the Herr Family Homecoming on July 17 and the Snitz Fest and Heritage Day on September 18 at the 1719 Herr House Museum.

- July 17: Storytellers or persons who would like to submit a first-families story for telling; persons to conduct games; parking lot attendants; quilters for the quilting station.
- July 17 and September 18: Teams of horses to pull a converted wagon to convey the experience of riding in a Conestoga wagon. (Wagon is provided.) Persons who can assist should contact Peggy Erb at (717) 393-9745; email: perb@lmhs.org.

Periodicals for Sale

The periodicals listed below will be available for sale until July 1, 2010:

- Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society, 1908-1947, various issues; 1916, 1918, 1919, some complete sets. Cost is $3.50/year; $.50/issue.
- Sword and Trumpet, 1944-2006. Cost is $2.00/year or $.25/issue.
- The Genealogical Helper, 1967-1998 bound (each year has two volumes); $3.00/volume.
- The Magazine Antiques, 1962-2007; soft cover, $1.00/issue.
- The Builder, 1960-1977; bound copies, $3.00/year.

The above will have shipping and handling added to the cost of the books. Any individual or institution interested in purchasing any of these items should contact Peggy Erb at (717) 393-9745 or perb@lmhs.org. Credit cards or checks are acceptable payment.
Community Events

**Martyrs Mirror exhibit** is currently on display in the lobby of the Young Center at Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania. Open until June 30, it tells the story of the various editions of this volume on Anabaptist martyrs in recognition of the 350th anniversary of its first publication, in Dutch, in 1660. Mennonites in Pennsylvania had the *Martyrs Mirror* translated into German and printed at the Ephraim Cloister. The largest book printed in Colonial America, it became influential, especially among the Amish, but also among Mennonites and Church of the Brethren readers. The exhibit is open weekdays between 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Phone: (717) 361-1470.

**The Kolb, Kulp, Culp Family Association** will hold its 83rd Annual Reunion at the Lower Skippack Mennonite Church, June 13th, 2010 at 12:30 pm. All are invited to join us for lunch and program. Nancy Roan with Joanne Kinter will bring examples from their collection of aprons representing nearly 300 years in the Berks-Montgomery County area. The Salford Village Singers will sing. Bring your pies for a pie contest. For information and reservations, contact Ruth Knapp Oberholtzer at 209 S. 5th Street, North Wales, PA 19454, (215) 699-3940 or ruthoberho@aol.com; or e-mail Grace Freed Muscarella at gracefreed@aol.com.

**The New York Chapter of Palatines to America** will present “Celebrating Our German Heritage” on the tercentenary of the arrival of the Palatines in 1710. This 2010 PalAm National Conference will convene at Holiday Inn, Fishkill, N.Y., on June 18-19. Tours of historic Palatine sites, single-track presentations on German genealogy, national membership meetings, a banquet, and a luncheon constitute the two-day program. Further registration information is available from chairman Joseph Lieby at jlieby@hvccrr.com.

**The Laux/Loux/Loucks/Laufs/ Lauch Reunion**, commemorating the tricentennial of the family’s arrival in America, will convene June 25-27 in York, Pennsylvania. Further details on the reunion appear at www.freewebs.com/300th, and information on the growing family tree at http://lauxfamily.tribalpages.com. Contact Ginger Loucks: (574) 292-5498 or gloucks@verizon.net.

**Director’s Reflections**

By Ed Longenecker

Much of my work experience has been with health and human service organizations and coming to the Historical Society is a unique change in perspective. It’s like going to a wide angle camera lens and getting a different world view. It is like taking on a new language.

Here’s a simple example: Not knowing Native American history well, I thought “longhouse” was a mis-spelling of “log house”.

For over a year now, plans have been underway to build a Native American longhouse on the grounds of the 1719 Herr House. Lancaster County’s oldest building will soon be joined by a type of building that’s even older—one that existed before Pennsylvania itself.

For many of us, learning another group’s history is like learning a new language. There can be some misunderstandings, some embarrassments, some mistakes. But the learning can also be enriching and fun.

One learning opportunity will be on Saturday, June 12. The Lancaster County Food Festival at the Herr House will feature diverse cuisine from many different food traditions of Lancaster County. Families are invited. Several different musical groups will perform. This event is also a fundraiser for building the Native American longhouse.

It is refreshing to see Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society celebrate “Lancaster Roots 300” with Lancaster County at large. In doing so, we acknowledge many different people and cultures that call Lancaster County home.

Although I stumble here and there, I am enjoying this new language of history. And, it is exciting to think that we may soon have a new “historic building” to visit in Lancaster County.

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**Stauffer Mennonite Church homecoming** and a Lehman reunion will convene at Stauffer Mennonite Church, 790 Bachmanville Road, Hershey, Pennsylvania, on the weekend of June 26-27, 2010. The homecoming program will begin with a June 26 cemetery tour at 2:00 p.m. On June 27, 9:00 a.m. Sunday school and worship, followed by lunch, 1:30 p.m. sharing of memories; 5:00 p.m. dinner; and a 6:30 p.m. hymn sing. Everyone who ever worshipped at Stauffer and descendants of Bishop Hans Lehman’s (ca.1702-1776) son Jacob Hege Lehman (1722-1796) and Catharine Longenecker, who founded the church, are invited. R.S.V.P. with contact information to singchorale@hotmail.com or (717) 533-9423.

**Annual reunion of Ranck/Rank/Ronk/Runk family**, July 16-18.

- **July 16, 6:30 p.m.**—Buffet dinner at Yoder’s restaurant in New Holland. Reservations suggested.
- **July 17, 9 a.m.**—Gathering at Ranck’s United Methodist Church, 700 Ranck Road, New Holland, Pa. 10:30 a.m.—sharing time with John P. Ranck & Arthur Lawton: “Our Moravian Heritage”. Noon meal served by Ranck’s church; reservations required. 2 p.m.—Program at Lititz Moravian Church & Cemetery. 5 p.m.—Buffet dinner at Lititz Family Cupboard Restaurant; reservations suggested.
- **July 18, 10:15 a.m.**—Church service at Ranck’s United Methodist Church.

For information or to reserve meals call Elizabeth Buckwalter at (717) 738-1637.

For more details, visit www.ranck.org

**Alleghany Mennonite Meetinghouse:** The annual outdoor historical and inspirational meeting will be held at the Alleghany Mennonite Meetinghouse, 39 Horning Road near Alleghenyville, PA on July 18, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. John L. Ruth, author, historian and speaker from Harleysville, PA will speak on “The Heritage of a Pleasant Place”. David Sauder will be the song leader and the “Joyful Men” will provide special music. Please bring your lawn chair and a Church and Sunday School Hymnal to this service. For more information, call (717)949-3475 or (610)777-3003.
Library Adds Online Resources
By Steven L. Ness

The Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society library has, in the last several months, made some progress in the effort to place more information on its Web site, www.lmhs.org. There are two basic reasons for moving this direction. First, expectations have increased for organizations to take information to the researcher rather than expecting the researcher to visit in person. Second, a strong online presence increases the visibility of Society collections specifically and of the Society as a whole. While the progress has been modest, it is important to note the following resources that are now available online.

Cemetery Transcription Listing
The library owns more than 2,500 cemetery transcriptions from Lancaster and other counties, states, and countries, listed by cemetery name, location, source, and religious denomination. A listing of cemeteries for which the library has at least a partial transcription is now available online. The listing, in spreadsheet format, may be downloaded and sorted by name, location, source, and other categories. Cemetery transcriptions vary in terms of quality, format, and comprehensiveness since they were gleaned from many different sources. Each person doing cemetery transcription work has his or her own method of and reasons for recording the data. Some transcriptions contain names and dates of every headstone; some include other tombstone inscriptions; and some include genealogical data. Some records may be very incomplete because of personal interest in only a few surnames or because of the physical condition of the stones remaining. It is always wise to consult or compare multiple cemetery records to check for accuracy.

Obituary Index
Obituaries are a valuable source of genealogical and personal information but can be difficult to locate without an index. The library holds a large collection of obituary clippings and death records from local newspapers and other sources. The 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. An index of these various records is now available online in four PDF files, arranged alphabetically by surname of the deceased. Each file provides the name of the deceased; year, month, and day of death; age; and usually the source of the obituary. Some entries include date of newspaper as well.

Words of Cheer Letter Index
An index of letters (and their authors) published in Words of Cheer is now available on the Society's Web site. The index appears in spreadsheet format with columns for name of letter writer, town or city, state or province, date of birth or year of age, name of Sunday school attended, name of Sunday-school teacher, and date of issue in which each letter appears. This indexing project began in November 2008 and the first installment includes the years 1921 (the year of the Historical Society's earliest bound copy) to 1932. Work continues on issues of succeeding years. Prior loose issues will eventually also be indexed.

Words of Cheer was a Mennonite periodical published for children. Dr. Henry A. Mumaw began to publish it in April 1876. Mumaw sold it to the Mennonite Publishing Company, Elkhart, Indiana, in 1878. In 1908 the paper was sold to the Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania. It continued until 1970. (It was succeeded by another periodical, On the Line, which ran from 1971 to 2005 for the same age group.) Words of Cheer was distributed not only to individual subscribers but also in bulk to Sunday schools for distribution to children who attended. The paper contained stories, articles, poems, puzzles, and children's letters. Most children who wrote letters were between six years to early teen years. Besides sending greetings to other readers, children gave simple information about themselves, their family, their school, their church, and sometimes their local community. Letter writers would tell their age and birth date and would invite others who had the same or a near birth date to write to them. Many friendships were thus launched. Editors of the periodical often gave short, friendly responses to each letter and also encouraged correspondence between individual children. Besides Words of Cheer, other Mennonite-published periodicals for younger readers included beams of Light and Youth's Christian Companion. However, these latter periodicals did not include correspondence from readers.

To view these resources, interested persons may visit the Society's Web site at www.lmhs.org and view the links for new site features at the bottom of the home page. Copies of the original records may be accessed by visiting the library or by requesting copies by mail or e-mail. Requests for an estimate of the cost or for more information should be sent to the library by e-mail: library@lmhs.org mail: 2215 Millstream Road Lancaster, PA 17602 or telephone: (717) 393-9745

Society librarian Steve Ness shows a 1630 German Bible to third-graders from the Kraybill Campus of Lancaster Mennonite School.

Third-graders from the Kraybill Campus of Lancaster Mennonite School get acquainted with some "off-line" resources: the Society library's genealogical card file.
Recent Acquisitions
By Steven L. Ness

Philosophy/Psychology/Religion


Biography/Genealogy


History


Music/Arts


Language/Literature

