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**Photo Harvest: Hispanic Mennonites of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, 1940-1970**

The Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society is looking for photographs relating to Hispanic Mennonites in Lancaster between 1940 and 1970. If you have photos you would be willing to share, e-mail them to communications@lmhs.org. Please include a caption saying who is pictured, what they are doing, when and where it was taken, and any other information you can provide.

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**What We Learned from Writing Our Nonfiction Books**

The Society is excited to host Shirley Showalter and Valerie Weaver-Zercher on February 24 at 7 p.m. at Mellinger Mennonite Church. They will share their experience as Mennonite women and writers. Showalter has recently released her memoir, “Blush: A Mennonite Girl Meets a Glittering World.” Weaver-Zercher authored “Thrill of the Chaste: The Allure of Amish Romance Novels.”

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**Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society** (USPS 882-020)
2215 Millstream Road
Lancaster, PA 17602-1499

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Beyond Preservation: Reflections of a Board Member

Darrell Yoder

Like many people in our peer group, my wife, Sylvia, and I are at a transition time in our lives. Our three children are all post-college and living on their own. Sylvia and I are hoping to be grandparents at some point, and we are starting to talk about downsizing our house. We are thinking about what our children will carry from us – both in family heirlooms that I call “stuff” and ways of thinking about life and the world that we value. At the same time, we are greatly enriched by the new perspectives that our children are bringing to us.

My parents are at a different stage in life but with some strong similarities to our situation. Instead of looking at being grandparents, they are looking at being great-grandparents. They are in their second downsizing and starting to think about moving to a nursing home or assisted living. Every time I go home to visit, I come away with family heirlooms that they have been faithfully taking care of and want to pass on to the next generation – things like dishes from Grossmommie and a set of hames from a harness that Grandpa John used. My mother has asked that her eightieth birthday celebration be a time for everyone to come home as she and Dad pass on the last of the family heirlooms. I’m starting to realize the weight of carrying the things of history as I wonder what my own children will value.

I’m grateful that there are organizations like the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society that provide a structure to help families to preserve the “stuff” of history. I wonder what my own children will value.

I began my teaching career in 1981 at Hinkletown Mennonite School. Each year a speaker sponsored by the Historical Society came to talk with the students on topics related to the mission of the school and the Historical Society. The program, Mennonite History Day, still continues and has reached thousands of students through the years.

One year Merle Good was the speaker. He told a story about how he and his brother played the “pull bag” trick on unsuspecting motorists. Merle had the students hanging on to every word of the story as he told how he was chased through the corn until he thought his lungs would burst. Finally, when he couldn’t run any further, he turned around and found out that it was his brother running behind him instead of an angry driver. When Merle asked his brother why he was chasing him, the brother said something like, “Well, you took off running so fast that I thought I’d better be running, too!” I don’t remember the point of Merle’s story, but I do remember that he was an ambassador for history that excited the children.

Continued on p. 3

Pies in the Mennonite Tradition

The Society will kick off its program of folk-art classes for 2014 with a demonstration and discussion of pies in the Mennonite tradition on Friday, January 10, 6 – 8 p.m. Register to see pies being made, and enjoy a slice or two with a cup of Lonely Monk Coffee. Tickets are limited, and can be purchased for $10 on a first-come, first-served basis by calling (717) 393-9745. The event takes place at LMHS.
Music Night Launches Lancaster Roots 2014

Joel Nofziger

Annual Music Night is launching the Lancaster Roots program for 2014. On Saturday, January 25, a concert featuring a wide variety of musical styles performed by four diverse groups will come to Neffsville Mennonite Church. From bluegrass to gospel and beyond, music night has something for everyone.

The Walking Roots Band, from Harrisonburg, Virginia, is an acoustic-Americana, faux-folk, blue-ish-grass, roots music group. Their Mennonite/Brethren heritage influences their three- and four-part vocal harmonies as well as the substance of their music. Their “Hymn Reclamation Project,” featuring old hymn texts set in new arrangements, has been well received; and their original folk music is toe-tapping, thought-provoking, and suited to audiences of all ages.

Cold Springs Road is the second new group to play at Annual Music Night. Reminiscent of another time and place, the music of Cold Springs Road evokes mystic and haunted moments in the American past. Ranging from the porches and churches of Appalachia to sea chanteys on the wharves of old-time Boston, their plaintive and poignant music style works to heal the sick at heart and welcome the prodigal.

The Urban Worshipers from Followers of Jesus Mennonite Church, Brooklyn, New York, are returning for an encore performance. Their diverse variety of musical styles, including Caribbean gospel, Latin gospel, traditional spirituals, and American music are informed by the unifying work of Jesus in a diverse urban culture.

A small ensemble composed of members of the Mennonite Heritage Chorale will round out the evening. This group, led by Harvey Fox, brings high-quality chorale music in the Mennonite tradition.

Annual Music Night starts at 7 p.m., at Neffsville Mennonite Church, located at 2371 Lititz Pike, Lancaster, Pa. Tickets cost $20 and $15 for students with school ID. Families of three or more, $15 each. Tickets can be purchased online at lmhs.org or by calling (717) 393-9745.
Our Developing Conceptions of Peace
Rolando Santiago

A dictionary derived definition of personal history might be a continuous, systematic narrative of past events that relate to a particular person, usually written as a chronological account. This definition resonates with me since I trained as an educational psychologist. In one part of this field, psychologists study how children grow and learn in the environments that nurture them.

At the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, we encourage people to explore their own histories by creating narratives of the events that have shaped them.

Jesus’ birth and life reminds me that personal histories are not just accounts of the events that shape a person. Personal histories display purpose. A personal history that is purposeful begins with God.

God sent his son to reconcile with a humanity gone astray, without purpose. Jesus’ life purpose was to show how human beings can reconcile with God and others. We are reminded of Jesus’ reconciling mission in Handel’s “Messiah,” where we hear the words of the prophet Isaiah, “For unto us a child is born … and His name shall be called … Prince of Peace.”

Psychologist and educator Ilse Hakvoort has studied how children develop their concepts of peace and the strategies they use to promote peace. She concludes that these concepts and strategies vary considerably from one culture to another, depending on the social environments in which children grow. In her research, she found that four themes emerged: communication, interpersonal relationships, human values, and nature.

I see these four themes embodied in the people who seek to follow Jesus’ way of peace. They practice healthy communication; they nurture interpersonal relationships; they value a just peace, stemming from God’s actions to reconcile with humanity; and they care for nature.

I ask myself: how have I embodied Jesus’ concept of peace? I am committed during Advent to review my personal history. I want to identify ways in which I have actively promoted a just peace. Will you join me?

Select Library Recent Acquisitions

Beachy, Lester. Our Amish values: who we are and what we believe. Lester Beachy, 2013 (BX8129.A6 B43 2013)


Beyond Preservation (Continued from p. 1)

I learned more about the educational role of the Historical Society when I purchased the book “Twas Seeding Time” by John Ruth from the Society’s book store. The book tells my story as a descendant of Swiss German Anabaptists. The ideas in the book dramatically changed how I taught history to my students and the stories that I told to my own children as they grew up.

When I was asked to consider being on the board of the Historical Society, the selling point for me was the vision of the Historical Society to include the stories and perspectives of many groups along with the Swiss German culture from which I come. Today we are blessed to live in a multicultural society with incredible richness and diversity, and one goal of the Society is to be a part of collecting and building on that shared history.

In 2010, Lawrence Chiles was one of the two speakers at our first annual Storytelling Night. I especially enjoyed his story of when his children prayed for a horse, and one literally appeared on their doorstep within just a few minutes. It turned out that an Amish businessman needed a place to tie up his buggy horse for a few hours, and he chose to knock on their door.

With his deep voice and chuckle, Lawrence told how that poor horse carried every kid for blocks around up and down the street all afternoon until the man came to reclaim his horse. I also remember his laugh when he told how the children couldn’t wait to ask God to send them the next thing on their list. After all, if you pray for a pony and two minutes later one appears, what might be next?

Speaking from the perspective of a board member of the Society, we aren’t exactly praying for a horse since we think we know where to find a few of those. Our prayer is that you will join us as we build on our mandate to be a gathering place where people can explore stories, ideas and legacies—for themselves and with each other. I would add “now and well into the future with the next generation, and the next and the next.”