



Shenandoah Mennonite Historian

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NEW DOCUMENTS FROM HILDEBRAND CHURCH

Recently discovered documents from the Hildebrand family collection reveal new information about three different Virginia Mennonite Conference events in the late 19th century.

Carol Moser reported in a 2013 lecture at Hildebrand Mennonite Church that the Curator of the Washington County Mennonite Historical Library, Hagerstown, Maryland, found new information about Conferences from 1873, 1879, and 1886. These documents were discovered in a wooden box that was nearly thrown out in the mid-1990s. Carol and others have been reading the materials collected from four generations of Hildebrands, including many records from Virginia Mennonite Conference Bishop Jacob Hildebrand (1816-1899).

Highlights from the Conference records in this box include information from the Conference that met at Hildebrand Church in April, 1873. The published minutes of the Virginia Mennonite Conference indicate that no records have been found for the 1873 meeting, though now, with these recently discovered primary sources, we have details about that Conference that met in the first

Hildebrand building in Augusta County, Virginia.

Another record from the 1879 Virginia Mennonite Conference gives great detail about that Conference, none of which has been heretofore known. Though Bishop Hildebrand's handwritten notes don't say, presumably the Conference was held in the Hildebrand Church, the second frame meetinghouse, built in 1877. We publish both sets of "minutes" from these two conferences in this issue of Historian.

Finally, a ten page essay written by Bishop Jacob Hildebrand reveals new information about the intensity of debate over the mustache that took place in the 1886 Virginia Conference meeting.

We print these new sets of "minutes" so that future chroniclers of Virginia Mennonite Conference records will have information for such needed updates.

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1873 & 1879 VIRGINIA MENNONITE CONFERENCE

The Washington County Mennonite Historical Library, Hagerstown, Maryland, holds over 1,500 separate items from the Hildebrand family collection. These items were placed in the Library in the mid-1990s.

From the work of Carol Moser, the information presented here represents handwritten details from Bishop Jacob Hildebrand regarding the Virginia Mennonite Conference of 1873. The information is in Hildebrand Collection Box 1a Item 7e.

Many thanks to Carol Moser who read the 19th century script, typed them, and supplied them to James L. Rush, who shared them with the Editor.

The Second Edition of the Virginia Mennonite Conference Minutes, 1950, indicates that no records have been found (p. 12) for the 1873 meeting. With Carol Moser's work and the preservation efforts of other historians, the information printed below can now be included from that spring Conference.

In 1873 President Ulysses S. Grant began his second term in office, Reconstruction was still in effect, an economic depression struck the U.S. economy, and Levi Strauss received a patent to make copper rivets for denim pants that he was producing.

On the next page we feature the 1879 minutes of Virginia Mennonite Conference, from Bishop Jacob Hildebrand's collection. The official Virginia Conference records indicate that "no records" are available for 1879. These notes from Bishop Hildebrand's collection provide new detail and information. These are not official minutes, rather they are personal notes, hence the poor English and lack of attention to standard writing conventions. The spelling, punctuation, and sentence with line below is seen here as it appears in the original documents.

Carol Moser lectured on these materials April 14, 2013, a CrossRoads Heritage Center event, at the Hildebrand Mennonite Church, Augusta County, Virginia.

Conference at Hildebrands

April 25th 1873 met at 10.

Present: Bishops Hildebrand and Coffman

Ministers: Daniel Heatwole, Joseph Driver, D. H. Landes, John Evers, Abram Shank, Christian Brunk, Isaac Grove, J. R. Hildebrand

Deacons: Fred Rodes, P. Blosser, D. Good, J. Landes, M. Shank

115 hymn sung, 10 chapter Hebrews read, then prayer and admonitions by the bishops, then ministers spoke as usual. Another earnest admonition given by the bishops on the importance of ministerial duties. ~~1st subject if a complaint comes against the church.~~

Decided that next conference to be held on the last Saturday in September at the Bank Church.

Jacob Hildebrand Box 1a Item 7b Conference Minutes April 25, 1879

Friday April 25th 1879

met at 10 o'clock

Bishops present
Jacob Hildabrand
Samuel Coffman
Abraham Shank

Ministers present
J. R. Hildabrand
Isaac Grove
Daniel Heatwole
Gabriel Heatwole

Deacons present
Fred A. Rodes
Daniel Good
Jacob Landes

Pete Heatwole
Samuel Weaver
Joseph N. Driver
D. H. Landes
A. B. Burkholder

Lay members
Jacob Harshbarger
John Landes
Michael Showalter

John Geil
Christian Brunk
Solomon Beery
Samuel Shank

125th Hymn Sung 12 chapt of Romans Read Prayer then 5th chapt of Paul to Timothy
Read and admonitions By the Bishops They stated That at the council meetings Peace and
union was Expressed Throughout with but few exceptions
ministers Spoke in Rotation as usual

Intermission

met. 1st subject of ordaining Deacons in Augusta discussed and nothing made of it
2nd Subject Shall it be allowed for a brother to Serve as Road master. Left over
3rd Subject Is a brother allowed to peddle all kinds of Books. Decided that he is not. al-
lowed to Sell only the Bible and new Testament and all Books published by the consent of
the church or are examined by a committee of the Church

Saturday April 26

met at half past 8 o'clock 189th Hymn Sung 25th chat of matthew read then Prayer Re-
marks were made and admonitions given by Bro. Coffman on the duties of ministers
2nd subject of yesterday first taken up and vote taken whether any objection to a brother
Serving as Road master under the present Law. No objection
Subject of School Trustees taken up decided that This be left as it is, that is there is no ob-
jection to a brother acting as Roadmaster or School trustee if there is no oath required

Concluded by Prayer and Singing

Next Conference to be at the Pike church on last Friday in September

HILDEBRAND MENNONITE CHURCH

Located along Hildebrand Church Rd., Augusta County, Virginia, the Hildebrand Church traces its origins to 1826. In 1877 members at Hildebrand Mennonite Church began using a new building, located across the road from the cemetery. The church left the Virginia Conference in 2001. In 2014 the meetinghouse is under the management and ownership of the CrossRoads Heritage Center, Harrisonburg, Virginia.



The photo above shows the interior of the Hildebrand Mennonite church, 2009. Elwood E. Yoder photo

The photo to the left was submitted by Marion Weaver, a Mennonite historian from Augusta County, Virginia. The photo was taken at Hildebrand Mennonite Church in about 1983.

Below: Hildebrand Mennonite Church sign; Cemetery marker for Bishop Jacob Hildebrand, 1816-1899, in the Hildebrand cemetery across the road from the meetinghouse. Elwood E. Yoder photos



There are five feature articles in the *Shenandoah Mennonite Historian* about Bishop Jacob Hildebrand in 19th century Augusta County, Virginia. Former Editor James O. Lehman wrote these past articles in 2011, 2009, 1996, and 1995. The articles can be accessed online at http://mennonitearchivesofvirginia.net/Shenandoah_Historian.html.

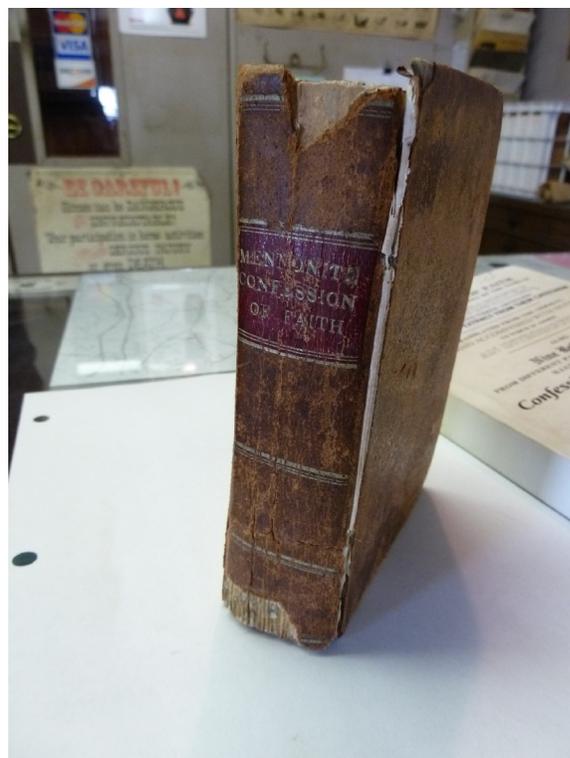
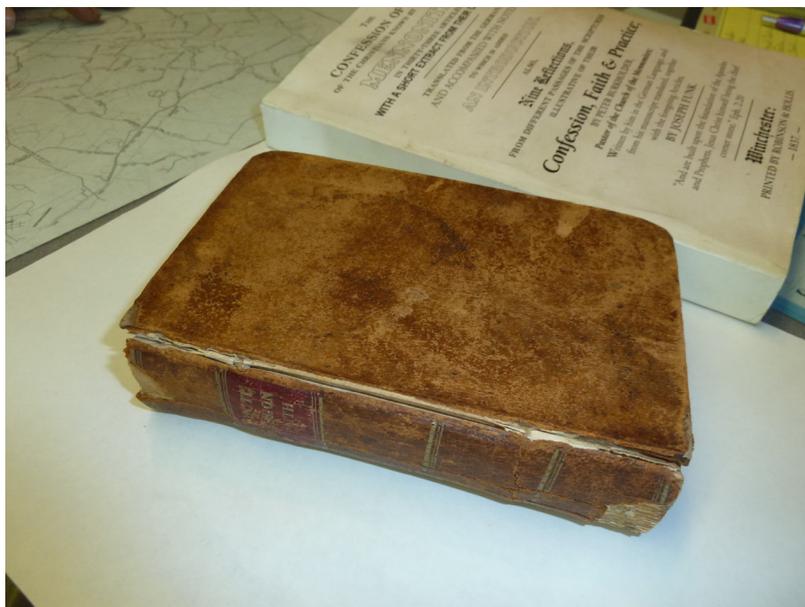
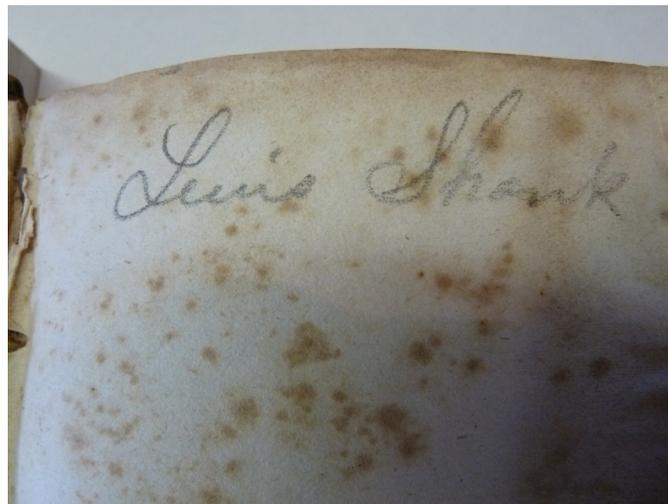


LEWIS SHANK'S *CONFESSION*

Daniel E. Burkholder, from Dayton, Virginia, showed the Editor a copy of Mennonite Bishop Lewis Shank's 1837 *Confession of Faith* recently during a visit to Burkholder's Buggy Shop.

Daniel E. Burkholder bought the small 1837 *Mennonite Confession of Faith* at auction. Inside the *Confession* he found Bishop Lewis Shank's signature.

Confession of Faith in Thirty-Three Articles, 1837, is a seminal book in the early history of Virginia Mennonites. Written by Bishop Peter Burkholder, Jr, an ancestor of Daniel E. Burkholder, the *Confession* is out of print today. Pictured behind the *Confession* on Burkholder's Buggy Shop counter is a facsimile of the book, a scanned copy produced and sold on the internet for 21st century consumers.



Occasionally while digging in archives, the researcher is surprised and pleased with a newly discovered document or photograph. Having written extensively about Virginia Mennonite Bishop Lewis Shank in the Zion Mennonite Church congregational history book, 2010, and while conducting research for the forthcoming Weavers history book, the Editor found this wonderful photo of Bishop Lewis Shank.

The only known photo of Bishop Shank had been a grainy copy of a picture that portrayed him in less than complimentary terms. This photo of Bishop Shank (1855-1942), in his prime, while serving the congregations of the Northern District and preaching in many other churches, reveals the human side of the generous, moderate, and considerate Bishop. Lewis Shank and his wife Mattie Shank (1856-1934) served widely in mountain churches and Valley home base congregations. Shank served Virginia Mennonite Conference as minister for 59 years, with 41 years of those years as Bishop.

Lewis Shank was the fourth in a line of five Shank family Mennonite Bishops in the 19th and 20th centuries: Bishops Henry Shank, Michael Shank, Abraham Shank, Lewis Shank, and J. Ward Shank.

On one of many preaching circuits to the north and east of their home in Broadway, Virginia, a mountain family served Mattie and Lewis some food that Mattie was suspicious of and thought that Lewis should not eat. She kicked him under the table, only to discover that she had kicked the wrong man!



Bishop Lewis Shank, in an undated photo, from the collection of Naomi Shank Brunk, I-MS-48, Virginia Mennonite Conference Archives, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

This photo can also be viewed at MennoniteArchivesofVirginia.net. Search in the Album entitled "Elwood Yoder Photos," or <https://flic.kr/p/hATACu>

EMALA MEETING

On March 8, 2014, a crisp Saturday morning in Lancaster, Pa., twenty-three historians, archivists, and representatives from a variety of historical associations gathered at the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society for a meeting of the EMALA.

The Eastern Mennonite Associated Libraries and Archives is an association of libraries, archives, and historical societies in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. EMALA meets three times a year and each group is asked to pay an annual fee. Virginia Mennonite Conference paid \$50 to EMALA in 2013. Edsel Burdge, Jr. serves as chair and Benjamin K. Beiler is Treasurer.

The group gathered to conduct business but also to learn about DACS, a set of standards for describing personal papers, archives, and manuscript collections. DACS, or Describing

Archives, a Content Standard, was developed by the Society of American Archivists.

Colleen McFarland, Archivist for Mennonite Church USA, led the group in exercises aimed at teaching participants the rudiments of archival description. McFarland spoke about how archives are arranged, how hierarchies within groupings of items are established, and the need to be consistent with descriptive principles within an archive.

Participants to the one day workshop came with their own copies of *Describing Archives, a Content Standard*, from the Society of American Archivists. McFarland used the book to lead participants through the process of arranging materials in an archive. Participants were then put together with a partner and McFarland gave each pair a set of materials to process, including devising titles, formulating dates and extents, evaluating a Finding Aid for DACS compliance, and describing collections. McFarland reviewed Library of Congress standards and highlighted Authority names as established by the LOC.

During a report over the lunch hour, McFarland reported on a digitizing project being conducted by the Anabaptist Mennonite Digital Collaborative. The Mennonite Library and Archives at Bethel College, Kans., the Menno Simons Historical Library, Va., and the Hesston College Library, Kans., along with Mennonite Church USA Archives, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Ind., and the Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen, Ind., are sponsoring the project. Initial goals are to digitize the *Gospel Herald* (1908-1998) and *The Mennonite* (1885-1998) for free worldwide access on the internet. The digitizing will be done in 2014-2016.

The next meeting of EMALA will take place on July 26, 2014, at the Mennonite Historical Association of the Cumberland Valley, Chambersburg, Pa.



Sign along busy U.S. Route 30, Lancaster, Pa., March 8, 2014. Photo by Elwood E. Yoder



Colleen McFarland spoke to the Eastern Mennonite Associated Libraries and Archives meeting, March 8, 2014, at the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, Lancaster, Pa. McFarland is Director of Mennonite Church USA Archives.

Photo by Elwood E. Yoder

The *Shenandoah Mennonite Historian* is published quarterly by the Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians, established in 1993.

Officers of the Historians:

Chair, Jim Hershberger

Treasurer, Sheldon "Pete" Burkholder

Secretary, James Rush

Lois Bowman

Gerald R. Brunk

Elwood E. Yoder, Editor

Forthcoming *Historian* Topics in 2014:

- Sesquicentennial of the Shenandoah Valley Burning, 1864, two articles and poems
- Book review of *Conscience in the courtroom : history of the Mountain View Mennonite school system, Dayton, Virginia, 1968-2006*, by Daniel E. Burkholder

If you have an idea for an article or picture for the *Historian*, contact the Editor at elyoder@gmail.com.

Past issues of the *Shenandoah Mennonite Historian* can be found in PDF format at http://mennonitearchivesofvirginia.net/Shenandoah_Historian.html

The photo of Hildebrand Mennonite Church on page one was taken by the Editor in 2009.

Cost of an individual membership is \$6.00 per year, or \$10 per couple. Send membership fees or inquiries to James Rush, e-mail jamesrush@comcast.net, phone 540-434-0792, or U.S. mail 780 Parkwood Drive, Harrisonburg, Virginia, 22802

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