

Shenandoah Mennonite Historian

Vol. 12, No. 3 Quarterly Publication of the Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians Summer 2005

NOW WE ALL KNOW!

What is it we all know now?

1. The location of Brennemens Church which existed from 1826-1919.
2. The profile of Virginia Mennonite Conference Congregations. We include all churches, meetinghouses, preaching points and mission stations that were listed with a membership figure in the *Mennonite Yearbook and Directory* from its beginning in 1905 until the present directory. When the Virginia Conference churches or preaching points closed or left Conference, these dates are also noted. Since some were functioning before 1905, the *Yearbook* later listed dates of origin. This issue of the *Shenandoah Mennonite Historian* contains the list on pages 2-4. The same list appears for the first time in this summer's issue of the *Virginia Mennonite Conference Reports and Statistics*.

FIRST

Brennemans Church, which stood about on the dividing line between the old Middle District and what was called Lower District (now Northern District). Take route 42 northward from Harrisonburg and before you get to Edom, turn left on Brennemens Church Rd. Keep going on that road, but at the last farm on the right before you reach Grist Mill Rd., watch for a sign fastened to the wooden fence on the right side. Through the courtesy of Bill and Rachel Hinegardner (Rachel happens to be a descendant of the pioneer Abraham Breneman) they have permitted a sign to be placed that identifies where the Brennemens Church once stood.

Site of
BRENNEMANS
MENNONITE
CHURCH
1826-1919
Approximately 90 yards from the road

Profile of Virginia Conference Congregations

Name	Dates:	Started	Closed	Left Conf.	Name	Dates:	Started	Closed	Left Conf.
Sonnenberg, Kidron OH (joined Virginia Conf. 1952)		1821		1976	Mt. Hermon, Mathias, WV (changed to Mathias, 1973)		1900		
Trissels, Broadway, VA		1822			Auburn Union, Casanova, VA		1903	1923	
Pike, Harrisonburg, VA		1825		1972	Vaughn Schoolhouse, Lost River, WV		ca.1905	1946	
Springdale, Waynesboro, VA		1825			Stone House, Stone House, VA		ca.1905	1907	
Brennemans, Edom, VA		1826	1919		Mt. Pleasant, Chesapeake, VA		1905		
Hildebrand, Waynesboro, VA		1826		2001	St. Johns, Chrisman, VA		1906	1908	
Weavers, Harrisonburg, VA		1827			South Boston, South Boston, VA (changed to Ebenezer, 1933)		1907		1983
Bank, Dayton, VA		1849		2001	North Fork, Mouth of Seneca, WV		1908		1972
Powder Springs, Basye, VA		1860	1947		Quicksburg, Quicksburg, VA		1908	ca.1913	
Bethel, Job, WV		1865	1970		Brandywine, Brandywine, WV		1908	ca.1913	
Salem, Baker WV		1868		2002	Criders, Bergton, VA		1910	1983	
Hebron, Fulks Run, VA		1870			Bethany, Spring Creek, VA		1910		1972
South Fork, Oak Flat, WV		1870	1948		Laurel Fork, Wymer, WV (changed to Lambert, 1928)		1913		
Roaring Run, Onego, WV		1870		1972	Kinses Run, Lost River WV		1913	1930	
Mt. Clinton, Harrisonburg, VA		1874			Amelia, Amelia, VA		ca.1913	1916	
Kernstown, Winchester, VA *	ca.1875	1907			Tunis, Broadway, VA (changed to Bethel, 1927)		1913		2002
Valley View, Bergton, VA		1880			Alum Spring, Alum Springs, VA		1913	1917	
Mountain Top, Bergton, VA		1880	1961		Hoovers, Palos, VA		1913	1917	
Mountain Home, Criders, VA		1880	1955		Alexandria, Alexandria, VA		1913	1917	
Dry River, Lilly/Hinton, VA	ca.1882	1924			Doversville, Doversville, VA		1913	1929	
Pleasant Grove, Fort Seybert, WV	1885				Wolf Trap, Wolf Trap, VA		ca.1913	1929	
Zion, Broadway, VA	1885				Dry Fork, Harman WV (changed to Riverside, ca. 1935)		1913		
White Hall, Hopkins Gap, VA	ca.1886	1908			Peake, Hinton, VA		1915		1972
Swedlin Valley, Fort Seybert, WV	ca.1889	1950			Riverside, Fulks Run, VA		ca.1915	1957	
Concord, Knoxville, TN	1889				Mennonite Gospel Mission, TN (changed to Knoxville, 1967)		1917		
Union Chapel, Weyers Cave VA	ca.1890	1943			Eastern Mennonite School, Harrisonburg, VA. (changed to Park View, 1953)		1918		
Lindale, Edom, VA	1898				Spruce Mountain, Onego, WV		1918	1963	
Mabel Memorial Chapel, Harrisonburg, VA	ca.1899	1919			Stringtown, Stringtown, VA		1918	1920	
Warwick River, Newport News, VA	1899				Valley View, Stuarts Draft, VA (changed to Stuarts Draft, 1956)		1920		
Mt. View, Lyndhurst, VA	1899				Wine Spring, Milam, WV		1920	1957	
Bachman, Lost River, WV	ca.1900	1946			Woodland, Basye, VA		1920		
Italy, Whitmer, WV (changed to Horton, 1951)	1900	1974			Birch Grove, Whitmer, WV		1922	1927	
Gospel Hill, Fulks Run, VA	1900				Parleytown, Jenningson, WV		1922	1923	
Hinkle Mountain, Milam, WV	ca.1900	1946			Pennington, Harman, WV		1922	1935	
Providence, Newport News, VA	1900								
(transferred to VA Conf. 1996)									
Crest Hill, Wardensville, WV	1900								

Name	Dates:	Started	Closed	Left Conf.	Name	Dates:	Started	Closed	Left Conf.
Morning View, Singers Glen, VA	1923			2002	Mt. Jackson, Mt. Jackson, VA	1955			2003
Zion Hill, Singers Glen, VA	1925				(changed to Windhaven, 2000)				
Deep Creek, Chesapeake, VA	1927	1998			Mt. View, Hickory, NC	1955			
Huntington, Newport News, VA	1929				Stephens City, Stephens City, VA	1955			
Buckhorn, Mathias, WV	1930	1973			Pilgrim, Amelia, VA	1956	1958		
(changed to Mathias, 1973)					Osceola, Whitmer, WV	1956	1965		
Brushy Run, Onego, WV	1930			1972	Staunton, Staunton, VA	1957			
Cullers Run, Mathias, WV	1932	1964			Charlottesville, Charlottesville VA	1957			
Carr, Mouth of Seneca, WV	1933	1948			Deerfield Chapel, Deerfield, VA	1958	1967		
Crossroads, Broadway, VA	1934				Hickory, Hickory, NC	1958			
Beldor, Elkton, VA	1935				Brush Run,, Bartow, WV	1959		1972	
Broad Street, Harrisonburg, VA	1935				Hephzibah, Hephzibah, GA	1959		1972	
(terminated by Virginia Conference, 2003)					Big Springs, Luray, VA	1960			
Chicago Avenue, Harrisonburg VA	1935				Norge, Williamsburg, VA	1960	1968		
(changed to Harrisonburg, 1972)					Powhatan, Powhatan, VA	1961			
Toll Gate, Hinton, VA	1935			1972	The Tabernacle, St. Petersburg, FL	1961			1972
(changed to Rawley Springs, 1949)					(changed to First Mennonite)				
Mt. Hermon, Stanardsville, VA	1937			1972	Durham, Durham, NC	1970			
Bennets Run, Bergton, VA	1940	1949			Vest Mill, Winston-Salem, NC	1970	2002		
Temple Hill, Stanardsville, VA	1942			1972	(changed to Oak Hill, 1986)				
Lost Creek, Ophir, KY	1943	1955			Dayton, Dayton, VA	1972			2002
Burchetts, Relief, KY	1943	ca.1963			Community, Harrisonburg, Va	1973			
(changed to Paint Cliff, 1952)					Iglesia de Evangelico Completo	1976			
Sandy Bottom, Swift Run, VA	1946	1972			Washington, D.C./Hyattsville MD				
Elkton, Elkton, VA	1947			2001	Williamsburg, Williamsburg, VA	1976			
(changed to Cornerstone, 1990)					Northern Virginia, Fairfax, VA	1977			
Crockett, Crockett, KY	1949	ca.1963			Rocky Mt., Rocky Mt. NC	1977			
Ridgeway, Harrisonburg, VA	1949				(changed to Fellowship of Christ)	1993			
Smoke Hole, Upper Tract, WV	1949	1963			Asheville, Asheville, NC	1980			
Tuttle Ave., Sarasota, FL	1949			1972	Upper Room Chapel, VA Beach, 1980				
National Heights, Richmond VA	1951				VA (changed to Landstown, 1987)				
(changed to First Mennonite, 1954)					West Liberty, West Liberty, KY	1980			
Newtown, Sarasota, FL	1951			1972	New Covenant, Harrisonburg, VA	1981			1998
*Calvary, Newport News, VA	1952				Washington Community,	1981			
(moved to Hampton, VA, 1985)					Washington, D.C. (transferred to Virginia Conference, 1997)				
East Bethel, Greensville, VA	1952				Waynesboro, Waynesboro, VA	1981			
(changed to Greenmonte, 1957)					Christiansburg, Christiansburg, VA	1982			
Rehoboth, Schuyler, VA	1952				Faith, Cluster Springs, VA	1983			2002
Chestnut Ridge, Orrville, OH	1953				Dayspring Christian Fellowship	1984			1994
Mt. Vernon, Grottoes, VA	1953				Canton, OH				
Norview, Norfolk, VA	1953				Southeast Community,	1985	1992		
(changed to Word of Life, 1983)					Roanoke, VA (changed to Justice, 1989)				
Lanesville, Dry Fork, WV	1954	2003			Christ the King Fellowship	1986			1989
Lyndhurst, Lyndhurst, VA	1954				Crewe, VA				
Simoda, Riverton, WV	1954			1972	Cornerstone, Broadway, VA	1986			2001
Gladwin, Alpena, WV	1955	1965							
Hunting Ground, WV	1955	1963							
Lucas Hollow, Stanley, VA	1955			1988					

Name	Dates:	Started	Closed	Left Conf.
Raleigh, Raleigh, NC		1986		
Shalom, Harrisonburg, VA		1986		2005
Fredericksburg, Fredericksburg, VA	1987	1993		
Family of Hope, Harrisonburg, VA	1987			
Greensboro, Greensboro, NC		1988		
Jubilee, Richmond, VA		1988	1995	
Vietnamese Christian Fellowship Falls Church, VA	1988			
Christian Conquest Ministries Washington, D. C.	1988			
Harvest, Woodstock, VA		1989	1991	
JoySpring, Harrisonburg, VA		1989	1992	
Living Water, Harrisonburg, VA		1989	1992	
Church of the Mountains, Hillsboro, WV		1990	1998	
Cornerstone, Mt. Crawford, VA		1990		2001
Hope Christian, Richmond, VA (changed to Cornerstone, 1994)		1990	2000	
Jefferson, Warrentsville, NC		1990	1999	
Catawba, Hickory, NC		1991	1998	
Cornerstone, Waynesboro, VA		1991		2001
Cornerstone, Woodstock, VA		1991	1995	
Immanuel, Harrisonburg, VA		1991		

Name	Dates:	Started	Closed	Left Conf.
Cristocentro, Harrisonburg, VA		1994	1996	
Dove, Orrville, OH		1994		2003
Cornerstone, Port Republic, VA		1995		2001
Cornerstone Albemarle, Crozet, VA		1996		2001
Cornerstone, Charlottesville, VA		1996		
2001 Cornerstone Sun Coast, SunCoast, FL		1996		2001
Grace, Lacey Spring, VA		1997		
Dove, Chesapeake, VA		1998	2001	
New Beginnings, Bridgewater, VA		2001		
Calvary Community Chesapeake, VA		2002		
Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC		2003		
Calvary Community, Carrollton, VA		2004		
Hickory Hmong, Hickory, NC		2004		

1995 Calvary Community had 285 members and by 1997 Calvary Community showed 683 members. As of June 1, 2005, according to the membership list just received in the Archives, the number now stands at 1,515, the largest Mennonite church in Virginia and one of the largest in North America.

A significant number of churches had name changes during their history. These are usually named with the listing of the original church. Hence, for example, Harrisonburg Mennonite is noted under Chicago Avenue, and Park View is listed under Eastern Mennonite School.

Glendon Blosser's enormous knowledge and experience in church work was of great help. However, even with an expert like Glendon assisting, some assumptions needed to be made. Such assumptions along with possible errors in *Directory* sources means that there is a likelihood of factual errors. Please contact the editor, Jim Lehman, if you have solid information regarding incorrect information or omissions.

James O. Lehman/Glendon Blosser

It is acknowledged that the *Yearbook and Directory* may have carried some mistakes or date-wise it ran behind the actual facts. However, it served as the basic documentary source.* As noted on the cover, some will be recognized as having been preaching points, but if a membership was shown it was included.

*The Calvary Church, now of Hampton, VA is an example. Begun 1952, it first appeared in the 1955 *Yearbook* and through 1958 it was listed as Madison Avenue, Newport News. In 1959 it appeared simply as Calvary. In 1985 Calvary had 143 members. In the 1986-87 *Yearbook* there was a Calvary at Newport News (129 members) and a Calvary Community, Hampton, VA with 29 members. In 1988-89 Calvary, Newport News had 59 members and the other one 30.

Since 1990-91 there has only been a Calvary Community because the two churches merged. In

PAGE COUNTY MENNONITES:

A FRESH LOOK¹

Page County Mennonites had a checkered history, even as the county itself also did. First, that area was in Spotsylvania County until in 1734-38 it was a part of Orange County. In 1738-45 it became a part of Augusta County, followed by Frederick County (1745-72) and Shenandoah County (1772-1831). Finally, in 1831 it became Page County!²

The earliest source says that Mennonites came to the Massanutten colony near Luray in 1727.³ Coming from Switzerland and the Palatinate they came via Lancaster, PA. Michael Kauffman (1714-88) and Jacob Strickler (-1784) are named as the first ministers and their names appear in the 1830s. Harry Brunk names three additional leaders—Martin Kauffman, Sr. (-1749), Martin Kauffman, Jr. (-1805) and John Roads (-1764).

The same 1910 source says (p. 13) that up till 1800 “all ministers deacons residing in Virginia appear to have been ordained in Pennsylvania, and it seems that all matters of organization and oversight were vested” in that conference. “In short the church in Virginia was regarded but as the southern arm extending from the central or parent body of Mennonites in America.”

The new colony flourished economically on their farms. However, church life seems to have been rather traditional, perhaps even lacking in enthusiasm according to several Moravians who

visited the colony. In 1748 an itinerant Moravian paid a visit to the Massanutten settlement. He noted in his diary that most of the area people were “Menisten” (Mennonites) whom he labeled as being in “bad condition” in that “nearly all religious earnestness and zeal is extinguished among them.”

Another pietist Moravian about a year later described the community as a “dead place where their testimony found no entrance.” Another Moravian met the Mennonite minister John Roads. They discussed many things, he said. “By nature he (Roads) is a good pliable man, but without life.”⁴ Enthusiastic Moravian missionaries thought Mennonites needed something, but it is difficult to assess how serious the formalism of the Mennonites had become.

The 1750s and 60s brought some dreadful repercussion from the French and Indian War. Things had remained relatively calm until Braddock was defeated in 1755 by the French and Indians. George Washington, in charge of frontier defense, had his headquarters in Winchester. He saw many refugees fleeing northward.

Word filtered to the Massanutten Mennonite community of massacres on the other side of the Massanutten and southward. Eventually, the Indians also came to the area. By 1758 the John Stone and Jacob Holtiman families (likely Mennonite, says Brunk) were slain. In May 1758, 50 people were killed and many families fled to Pennsylvania.⁵

Minister Michael Kauffman, was now in Pennsylvania for some years. Seeing the plight of Virginia Mennonites, Kauffman, along with several brethren, drafted a petition to Dutch Mennonites requesting aid for the 39 families of Virginia (see copy of the petition in the Winter 2005 *SMH*). The Dutch responded with 50

¹ The Spring 1994 issue of *Shenandoah Mennonite Historian* featured Page County Mennonites and Martin Kauffman, Sr. This article deals with much not said in that issue.

² Mennonite Encyclopedia. (Scottsdale: Mennonite Publishing House, 1959), 105

³ *A History of the Mennonite Conference of Virginia and Its Work*. Scottsdale: Mennonite Publishing House, 1910), 12. Apparently this is where Harry A. Brunk got the date.

⁴ Harry A. Brunk, *History of Mennonites in Virginia*. Vol. I (Harrisonburg: pub. by author, 1959), 23.

⁵ Klaus Wust, *The Virginia Germans* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1969), 58-63.

pounds English Sterling or 78 pounds, 11 shillings, and 5 pence, Pennsylvania money.

The last Indian raid among the Massanutten Mennonites is known as the Roads massacre in 1764, when eight Indians and one white man accosted Preacher John Roads at his home, killing him and his wife and three sons. The house was set on fire before two sons and two daughters were led off as captives. Before long three of those four were killed also.⁶

Presumably, not all fled their homes or some returned from Pennsylvania, because a considerable Mennonite community was still to be found in the Massanutten colony in the 1760s.

THE PENNSYLVANIA REVIVAL MOVEMENT

Around 1760 religious repercussions of the Great Awakening of the 1730s began to make serious inroads into this Mennonite community. "New Light" preachers—converts of George Whitefield—came to the Shenandoah Valley. Mennonites found their faith and practice challenged. They became greatly agitated with the revival that was sweeping the land.⁷ Predictably, they turned to Lancaster for someone to counsel them in this new development.

In 1761 Bishop Martin Boehm (1725-1812), who had become the first Mennonite leader to become active in the revivalist movement, responded to the Virginia call. Here he "apparently encouraged emotional conversions among the perplexed Mennonites whom he encountered." (Sutter, 42). Boehm "inferred that

there was a lack of religious zeal and enthusiasm among Virginia Mennonites." (Brunk, 25).

Now the stage had been partly set for the next major influence on the Page Mennonites—the coming of the Baptists under the leadership of John Koontz, an unordained Baptist (Sutter, 44) who preached revivalism in German, thereby appealing to Mennonites in 1770.

Martin Kauffman, Jr., Mennonite minister and oldest son of Martin Sr. and nephew of minister Michael Kauffman came under the influence of Koontz. Among the first Mennonites to be rebaptized was Martin Jr., says one source.⁸ Martin Kauffman, Jr. then became a "Mennonite Baptist" preacher. The alarm was sent to Pennsylvania for help "to overturn the works of Satan," said the Mennonites.

From Lancaster came Preacher Peter Blosser with three or four colleagues to aid the Virginia Church. The delegation attempted to "persuade Koontz that Christians ought not go to war, hold slaves, or take legal oaths." Koontz, in turn, inquired about their religious experience and declared them "strangers to vital godliness." Neither side converted the other and Blosser and his colleagues returned to Pennsylvania without accomplishing their goal.

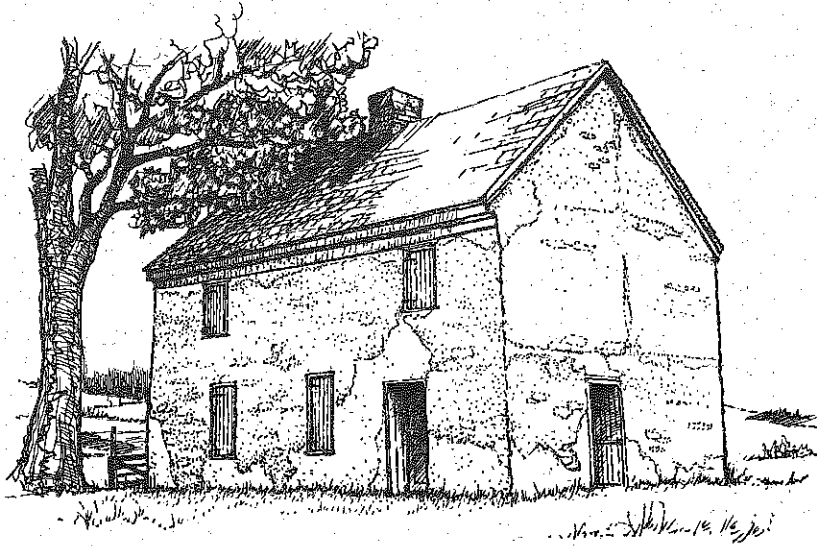
Martin Kauffman, Jr. became known as "Whitehouse Kauffman," because of the white house beside the south fork of the Shenandoah River in which he lived and where services were held on the second floor. The white house was built by 1760. In 1770 a Primitive Baptist Church was organized there when Kauffman and other Mennonites joined.⁹

⁶ Brunk, 34-35.

⁷ Brunk, 24; Sem C. Sutter, "Mennonites and the Pennsylvania German Revival," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 50(January 1976), 41-44. Martin Boehm later joined up with Philip Otterbein in revivalism. Mennonites excommunicated him in 1777 and he and Otterbein founded the United Brethren in Christ.

⁸ G. W. Beale, *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia* (Richmond: Pitt & Dickinson, 1894), 243.

⁹ Cathy Dagenhart Baugh, "The History of Whitehouse: Page County's Most Noted Landmark," Term paper, Historical Library, Eastern Mennonite University; Charles Fahs Kauffman, *A Genealogy and History of the Kauffman-Coffman Families* (York: Pub. by author, 1940), 516.



The White House, built 1760 by Martin Kauffman. It was a dwelling but the second floor was used for some years as a meeting place for "Mennonite Baptists" Situated on the flood plain not far from the Shenandoah River, hence huge floods have left their interior marks as high as second floor.

Sketch by Jon Gehman, 2005

Within a few years the American Revolution broke out and the Baptists took the oath of allegiance and joined the army. Martin Kauffman, Jr. and other former Mennonites took great offense at this. The Baptists pleaded for tolerance and freedom of conscience in what they called secondary matters. But Kauffman insisted that these principles were a central part of the Gospel.

Thus the church divided. Kauffman began holding services in the White House and eventually 60 or 70 people joined him. Koontz and the Baptists met in the building that has been variously called Mill Creek, Mauck, or Hamburg meetinghouse.

The new church at the White House was neither Mennonite or Baptist, says Harry Brunk, but was built around the personality of Martin Kauffman. However, Kauffman had some contact with Mennonites as he and Peter Blosser of Pennsylvania actively and strongly opposed participation in the Revolution. But by the end of the century many of Kauffman's followers had drifted back to the Baptist Church.

Finally in 1801 Kauffman and six families moved to Fairfield County, Ohio (not far from Columbus). There they established what a Baptist historian called "The German or High Dutch Church at Pleasant Run." (Sutter, 44, quoting David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America*, Vol. II (Boston: Massing & Loring, 1813), 261. Kauffman died four years later.

Harry Brunk claims that for most of the 19th century the thriving Mennonite community on the other side of Massanutten Mountain (Rockingham County) periodically had ministers go to preach to the dwindling remnants of the church in Page County. Most likely, Michael Kauffman, who had returned from Pennsylvania before the Revolution, but who had settled in Rockingham County (where he was likely the first Mennonite minister) had begun this tradition. Michael was buried at the Lindale cemetery when he died in 1788. His successors in the ministry may have made that trek until 1885 or 1890. Services were held infrequently at the Mill Creek Church, at the Elk Run Brethren Church and at "old mother Gochenours above Stony Man." (Brunk, 42).

Thus there are a few churches in which Virginia Mennonites were involved, which much greater explanation is given rather than include them in the list in this issue. Another example is the church that thrived a while in Greenbrier County, VA before the Civil War, but which is now in West Virginia territory. We hope in the near future to tell the story of that community that produced Bishop Samuel Coffman as well as the wife of Bishop Peter Burkholder, and mother of Bishop Martin Burkholder.

James O. Lehman

SECOND MENNO ROUND TABLE: PLEASANT VIEW CHURCH



The second meeting was held at Mt. Pleasant Mennonite Church southeast of Dayton on May 14. Norwood Shank led the group in a question and answer discussion format on the beliefs and practices of this church affiliated with the Weaverland Mennonite Conference of Pennsylvania.

Of particular interest to the group was the discussion on how church leaders are chosen by lot. Richard Weaver and Lloyd Horst told very moving stories about their personal experiences of being chosen by lot years ago. Both gave testimony of how they felt God's call.

Mt. Pleasant was built in 1990. Before that, the congregation met in a small brick church east of Mt. Crawford. Mt. Pleasant began in the mid-1950s. The members drive cars but because of its worship format and the lack of Sunday school it is considered to be Old Order Mennonite. For years it was nicknamed "Black Bumper Church," but this is no longer true and present generations dislike the label. Membership has varied over the years and presently stands at about 140.

Many of those in attendance (15 to 20) had not attended the first Menno Round Table at Lindale earlier this year. It seems that these small groups held several times a year at various places and with different topics will involve a greater number of members and can cover more topics than an annual meeting. Hopefully, even more members will become involved as these meetings continue.

Norman Wenger

NEXT ROUND TABLE:

VALLEY BRETHREN-
MENNONITE HERITAGE
CENTER

August 13, 9:00-11:00 at 711 Garbers Church
Road (next to the new High School)

"ALL YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE
HERITAGE CENTER AND MAYBE MORE

Discussion Leader: Al Keim, CrossRoads

Volunteer Superintendent of Buildings and
Grounds

Host: Elroy Kauffman

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

October 29: Harvey Yoder will guide a tour to the Beachy Amish Community in Green and Madison counties. Our tour bus will leave soon after noon and return after an evening meal at the Oak Grove Church. Details in the next *Historian*.

Jim Rush

SHENANDOAH MENNONITE HISTORIAN

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