



## MENNONITES AND U. S. WARS

In Virginia all the wars of America found some Mennonites who had a conscience against participation in war. During the Revolutionary War there were only a few Mennonites just beginning to settle in Rockingham County. However, during colonial days Mennonites had been located in Page County for decades. That is where most of the Rodes family were massacred when angry Indians came through because the white man had occupied the land.

There is no indication that the family tried to fight back or shoot the marauding Indians. By the time of the Revolutionary War, the German Revival Movement had affected Page County Mennonites and Martin Kauffman was a minister for a group called "Mennonite Baptists." Seemingly, the Mennonites and Baptists were merging. However, when the war came, the Mennonites were not comfortable with fellow worshipers who refused to adopt the nonresistant position of the Mennonites. So, as the story goes, many of the "Mennonite Baptists" pulled up stakes and migrated to central Ohio, south of Columbus. A few, including one minister moved across the mountain to the Linville-Edom area. His grave is at the Lindale cemetery.

During the Civil War, there are many familiar stories of Mennonite and Brethren young men trying to flee North and getting caught. Early in the war and late in the war young men had three choices—go and fight, flee North, or go into hiding. Many stories abound of them doing all three [yes, a number of young men, even church members, did go and fight], some because they did not have the privilege of paying the \$500 commutation fee that was possible during part of the war. When the fee for being excused was possible, quite a number went that route. Christian Good is one such example.

Elsewhere, in this issue, we reproduce his discharge from the army upon paying the fee. World War I posed a different problem. Conscientious objectors that were drafted were required to go to a military camp. There, it wasn't always clear how to take a stand or how far to cooperate—refuse to wear a uniform, or refuse to drill, etc. Some ended up doing kitchen duty. Late in the war it was possible to obtain farm deferments and work for a farmer who needed the help. Gerlof D. Homan, *American Mennonites and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Herald Press, 1994) is a very fine and comprehensive study. Some wars "have left serious scars," says Homan.

World War I tested Mennonites as severely as any. Perhaps at no other time has American patriotism been more intense and intolerant. Persons and groups who did not meet various tests of patriotism were often denounced and even physically harmed.

Things went fairly well at first at Camp Lee in Virginia that had more COs than some other camps. But in July 1918 a number of men refused to build a fence. For about two hours they were beaten, kicked and knocked around, then given the cold shower treatment. One of the COs was scrubbed with lye. The torture was cruel enough that the lieutenant involved got court-martialed. (pages 23, 115, 118)

Another very helpful recent study was done by Albert N. Keim and Grant M. Stoltzfus, in *The Politics of Conscience: The Historic Peace Churches and America at War, 1917-1955* (Herald Press, 1988). His book discusses the development of alternative service, particularly World War I and II, and finally what was called I-W service, beginning in 1952.

By that time Mennonites had strong programs going in voluntary service and PAX service

abroad, which also satisfied the universal draft that all young men faced.

Keim did another fine book: *The CPS Story: An Illustrated history of Civilian Public Service* (Good Books, 1990). In this one he focused particularly on World War II, which has been called the "Good War."

World War II was not an easy war for COs. It carried none of the ambiguity of the Vietnam War. . . . [It was] a clear case of good versus evil, freedom versus tyranny. On what possible basis could one choose not to fight against Hitler and the evil he represented? It was a hard call for many pacifists and most elected to fight the Nazis. (page 8)

It was a "hard call" for many Mennonites too. Approximately half of all Mennonites went into military service, some of them into noncombatant service. Says Keim, "Of 34,506,923 men who registered for the draft during World War II, only 72,354 applied for conscientious objector status. Of those 25,000 accepted noncombatant service in the army" [medical corps or any military work that did not involve actual combat]. Another 27,000 failed the physical health examination. Also, "a total of 6,068 were imprisoned for refusal to participate in any form of service. Of those, 4,441 were Jehovah's Witnesses" who claimed ministerial exemption (page 8).

The editor is aware of one unusual case where a General Conference Mennonite from Ohio, Adrian Amstutz, became a guard in the U. S. Penitentiary at Lewisburg, PA where several very conservative Mennonites from Lancaster County were incarcerated for refusal to serve in any capacity. When the grandfather of the two prisoners died, the GC Mennonite was given the job of accompanying them as their guard to the funeral of the grandfather! The Mennonite guard later joined the military.

Keim goes on to say that only 12,000 conscientious objectors chose to work under the CPS

program. Elsewhere in this issue we have the testimony of Dwight Hartman of Harrisonburg, VA, who was one of the 12,000. Records in the Virginia Conference archives include a number of lists of Virginia young men in CPS. Some of the lists number around 80 or more Virginia and West Virginia young men in many CPS camps spread across the country.

If anyone wishes to do more research, the Virginia Conference archives, which leases space from the EMU archives on the first floor of the library, has numerous files particularly for World War I and II. Anne Yoder, archivist for the Swarthmore College Peace Collection, recently visited the Virginia and EMU archival collections and listed collections she will include on the Swarthmore Peace Collection website. Following is a list of files from her list and some additional items put together by the editor who works with Virginia Conference archival records.

## Significant Records and Papers Archived Locally

### Rhine W. Benner Collection

(I-MS-55)

Mennonite minister and missionary in Job, WV, who was given a certificate of exemption from military service on Aug. 14, 1917, but then he and L. J. Heatwole were convicted of counseling Mennonites against buying war bonds. They were taken to court and each fined \$1,000.

### Harry A. Brunk Collection

I-MS-13)

Professor and author of two-volume *History of Mennonites in Virginia*. Included in this collection is a manuscript of brief retrospectives of experiences of CPS men and women from Zion and Trissels Mennonite churches in 1941-46.

### **Naomi Shank Brunk Collection**

(I-MS-48)

Scrapbook entitled "Memories of my days spent at the Civilian Public Service Camp #20, Wells Tannery [Sideling Hill] PA". Contains correspondence, photographs, postcards that document her role as camp dietitian and the work and activities of the camp, as well as the personnel and men in service there. She also spent time at the Mennonite General Hospital in Puerto Rico.

### **Civilian Public Service**

(I-F-1)

Official records of the Virginia Conference committee formed in 1942 to assist the large numbers of Virginia/West Virginia men who went to a variety of CPS camps. It contains a large amount of correspondence, the ledger books of payments made, questionnaires some of the men filled out, and a number of long lists of Virginia men—their home addresses and in what camp. Some lists include 80 or more men.

### **Mary Emma (Showalter) Eby Collection**

(II-MS-22)

Dietitian for CPS Camp #4 at Grottoes (VA); Includes correspondence, memorabilia and photocopy of diary while traveling to CPS camps as a consulting dietitian, and a scrapbook "Snatches of My Life at Grottoes."

### **Ernest G. Gehman Collection**

(II-MS-55)

Professor at EMS/EMC. He was very concerned at CPS allowing Mennonite COs to be influenced negatively by the ideas and customs of others, especially Fellowship of Reconciliation, and fears that CPS leaders may have supposed communist/socialist leanings. "Report of a Meeting Related to the Civilian Public Service Program, Called by the Executive Committee of the Virginia Conference, March 17, 1942."

### **Lewis J. Heatwole Collection**

(I-MS-1)

Bishop and correspondent to the local paper. File and manuscripts on Civil War experiences.

### **Chester K. Lehman Personal Papers**

(II-MS-31)

Dean, EMS/EMC. Peace Problems Committee Literature; Committee on Problems of Nonresistance.

### **John R. Mumaw Collection**

(I-MS-37 and II-B-4)

Minister and president of EMC. Correspondence to/from/about COs and their problems with Selective Service, particularly men enrolled at the time at EMS/EMC, 1941-48; Includes a folder of correspondence regarding the possibility of EMC hiring I-W men in 1952-53 and 1959.

### **Samuel H. Rhodes Collection**

(I-MS-18)

Virginia bishop. Includes material about Virginia Mennonite Conference's views on CPS, as well as lists of drafted and deferred Mennonites from Virginia during WWII.

### **Lewis P. Showalter Papers**

(I-MS-26)

Minister; CPS and peace material; CPS news; discussion of war and nonresistance

### **Timothy Showalter Collection**

(I-MS-6)

Bishop. Includes lists of draft age and/or registered Mennonite men in Rockingham County, ca. WWII.

### **John L. Stauffer Collection**

(I-MS-17)

Bishop and president of EMS. Correspondence with men serving in CPS in 1944-45, and Sanford Shetler pamphlet "The Civilian Public Service program: An Analysis and Evaluation of Its Origin and Present Operation;" I-W Evaluation Conference.

## Grant M. Stoltzfus Collection

(II-MS-29)

Background material, notes and manuscripts about his research into COs from the Revolutionary War through WWII; interviews with General Hershey, Louis Kosch and Kenneth McGill.

## Emanuel and Elizabeth Suter Collection

(I-MS-31)

Emanuel Suter diary when he took his family out of the Valley at the time Gen. Sheridan came through with the "burning," and their return to the Valley in late 1865.

## Henry D. Weaver Collection

(I-MS-35)

Ernest G. Gehman manuscript, "Regarding Our Unequal Yoke with Popular Pacifism."

## World War I Conscientious Objectors

(II-MS-26) One box that includes papers from the following men:

**David W. Basinger** - refused to wear uniform; furlough and discharge papers from Camp Sherman (OH), lists of men. List of COs imprisoned at Fort Leavenworth, KS

**Ward Edward Beery** - lists of COs at Camp Lee (VA)

**Aldine Brenneman** - at Camp Lee; refused to drill or do work for the military; diary.

**Asa M. Hertzler** - went to France to work for the Friends Relief Service; draft cards; also photographs of Camp Lee (VA)

**Lloy A. Kniss** - draft cards, induction notice, honorable discharge; photo of Kniss and other COs, Camp Sherman (OH), and published memoir *I Couldn't Fight*.

**Ernest H. Miller** - Camp Funston (KS) and Camp Lee (VA); sentenced to Ft. Leavenworth but only for 19 days. In 1919-21 served with American Committee for Relief in the Near East; memoir "Experiences of a CO in WWI"

**Adam H. Mumaw** - at Camp Zachary Taylor (KY); mistreated for his stance; includes

published booklet of names of COs at Camp Taylor; draft papers; memoir of being a CO  
**David H. Ranck** - Camp Meade (MD); photocopy of his 1917-18 diary

**Photograph of Camp Lee, VA at time of World War I**

## Christian Good Discharge from Confederate Army

Know all men by these presents: That I, Joseph T. Logan as deputy for sheriff Y. C. Hammon, Sheriff of the County of Rockingham has this day received of Christian Good a private in \_\_\_\_\_ Company, 145<sup>th</sup> regiment of Virginia Military the sum of Five Hundred and Four dollars in full release and discharge from all military duty of him, the said Christian Good during the present war between the confederate and United States, he the said Good having procured to me satisfactory evidence that he is a member of the Mennonite Church in regular standing therein, with his name duly recorded on the records of the said church thereof.

And further that the said Good is in possession of no real estate whatever except about two hundred dollars covering the full value of his interest in the real estate of his father after the payments of the debts of the estate. And the said Logan, Deputy as aforesaid agrees to execute any and all further writings of receipts which may be necessary to effectuate the discharge of the said Good from all military duty in due conformity with the late act of the legislature for the discharge of Tunkers and Mennonites from military on payment of fine and commission.

Given under my hand this 5<sup>th</sup> day of April 1862.  
J. T. Logan, Deputy, for Y. C. Hammon, S. R. C.

(I-MS-21, Box 4, VA Conference Archives)

## Dwight Hartman Goes to CPS (World War II)

Dwight was one of many Virginia Mennonites that spent time in one or several Civilian Public Service Camps (CPS) during World War II. He knew what he believed, that the pacifist views of the Mennonite Church were his. The questioning had come while he was growing up—and the answers had led to a solid conviction that life was sacred and war wrong.

In his immediate circle of friends and co-workers, he never felt isolated because Harrisonburg and Rockingham County had many Mennonites and Brethren—both historically peace denominations. He was never actually challenged as he'd heard several fellows had been.

He was already a pilot and flying could trigger thoughts of war as he soared above the clouds. He imagined what it might have been like to handle a P-38 or a British Spitfire or a Flying Fortress. Yet when he banked low over fields and barns and all the recognizable marks of man, he wondered how any pilot could deliver death so mechanically.

He endorsed the CPS program—a way to discharge his duty to the country without violating his religious principles. General Lewis B. Hershey, director of Selective Service, had vocally supported Peace Church leaders. Some draft boards, however, as well as prominent leaders and ordinary citizens, greeted the plan with overt hostility.

The local draft board grilled Dwight several times after he registered 4-E. They looked on conscientious objectors with less than favor, stubbornly insistent that they didn't understand why COs wouldn't agree to enter the armed services as non-combatants. Dwight repeated his position. "If I serve as a non-com, I release someone else to go out to kill. Directly or indirectly, I can't kill."

So, on Feb.1, 1944, he boarded a bus to go to Camp Sideling Hill at Wells Tannery, Pennsylvania

[Camp No. 20]. Dwight and Guy Miley went together and purchased their own tickets. Government had sanctioned CPS but provided no funds. Churches back home provided the funds and a meager allowance of \$10 a month.

Central committees from the three major Peace Churches (Friends, Brethren and Mennonite) had agreed to underwrite the entire program. Their pledge committed congregations to personal sacrifice, but also insured autonomy for managing the camps. And politically the move proved wise. Public sentiment was never aroused against CPS under the charge that tax monies supported "conchies."

His friend, Winston Weaver, had gone to CPS earlier and he reported back what to bring to camp by way of dress and work clothes and personal items. Do not bring a whole wardrobe, Winston had reported.

They arrived in time for dinner and he sat down with the other 150 men. Churches also donated the food. Ralph and Elizabeth Hernley, voluntary camp supervisors, tried to make Dwight and Guy feel welcome.

It was demanding labor for road crews. Early each morning the men climbed aboard big, cumbersome trucks for the jolting ride to the day's work site. Road upkeep was part of national security. CPS crews dug ditches, sloped banks, reinforced tunnel entrances on the turnpike and did whatever was needed.

Later Dwight was sent on detached service to Howard, Pennsylvania for six weeks hauling nursery stock. He was also assigned to work on the vehicles in the shop. The trucks used were a motley collection of any vintage, any make available. Dwight's prior experience at Harrisonburg Motor Express proved valuable.

Summer and fall brought forest-fire season to the Alleghenies and the men from Camp 20 made up fire-fighting crews from the ground. In Montana there were CO smoke-jumper units who parachuted to fight the fires. Dwight wished some of those critics who charged COs with

cowardice could see the risks taken by smoke umpers and fire fighters.

No car and hardly any money was a new experience for Dwight. He was dependent on friends to get away. On several Sundays he and friends managed to find recreation at Cowans Gap State Park near Mercersburg.

After seven months Camp Sideling Hill closed down. He went home for a leave before his transfer to Fort Collins, Colorado. He was unprepared for the arid, dirt-bound open spaces of the Colorado landscape, with only the distant panoramic view of the mountain range.

He found similar feelings in others from the Shenandoah Valley—John Paul Alger, Lloyd Hartzler, Hiram Heatwole, Paul Carr, Mark Martin, Guy Miley, Marion Rhodes, David Showalter and Henry Showalter, all of whom entered Fort Collins on September 29, 1944. All were equally dismayed at the inhospitable landscape and the shop with a slip-shod approach.

Dwight was assigned to the shop to do mechanical repair and upkeep. He also drew kitchen duty and helped prepare meals for the 178 men. While others dug ditches for irrigation, he worked harvesting sugar beets—stoop labor of the worst kind, and back breaking.

Days began with the shrill whistle at 6:15 a.m. After a hearty meal, all gathered for daily prayer and devotions. Then by eight o'clock the crew trucks were ready to roll. Much of the work at Fort Collins came under the general supervision of the Soil Conservation Service. That meant laying drainage tile, digging irrigation ditches, building fences, leveling land and even helping some farmers lay out contours.

Dwight faced drawbacks. His allergies interfered with sleeping and working, so he tried shots to counter their discomfort. But the wind never ceased blowing dust. Certain foods also compounded the problem.

Yet there were good moments. He could rent a plane at times to take fellows for rides. The Colorado landscape became a joy to see and he enjoyed excursions to places like Mt. Rushmore.

Evenings, there might be popcorn or a box from home as they enjoyed their favorite recreation—bull sessions. Religion, political issues, war news and race relations all came in for a thorough going-over.

Allergies plagued him. Finally, when the selective service doctor conducted the regular physicals, he told Dwight he had no business being there. He emphasized the need for special shots and an individualized diet beyond CPS's ability to provide. Dwight didn't argue when he immediately got a medical discharge!

He never regretted the price he'd paid for following his conscience. Like 12,000 others who rendered alternate service for their country, he had gained as well as given. Dwight had an inner peace that he had acted on conviction and never served the madness of war.

Used by permission. Abridged from *Connecting the Generations: A Biography of Dwight Hartman*, by Nancy Bondurant Jones, an excellent new book just out. The paperback is available from the following local bookstores for \$21.95.

Books of Merit, Dayton  
Downtown Books, Harrisonburg  
EMU Bookstore, Harrisonburg  
Harrisonburg Rockingham Historical  
Society Library, Dayton  
Rolling Hills Antique Mall,  
Harrisonburg  
Ruth's Books, Dayton/Bridgewater

It is a most interesting, very readable and well-illustrated life story of a native son of the Harrisonburg area.

## Lewis Strite at Camp 20

A letterhead in the archives indicates Lewis Strite as being business manager at Camp 20. In the letter to minister Lewis P. Showalter, Strite expressed appreciation for the contact that Virginia Conference maintained with "her boys in C. P. S. Camps."

## Congratulations to *CHRONICLES*

This brand new quarterly from the Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center really catches the eye!

It begins: "When Martin Burkholder began digging red clay from his field on what would 154 years later be Garber's Church Road, he could not have imagined that one day the house those brick became, would be moved to the top of the ridge riding on airplane tires and pulled by belching engines on tracks producing the power of 1200 horses."

It is the purpose of VBMHC to transform history into legacy, enlighten us about the past, and also to energize us to a contemporary witness to the ongoing invitation of Jesus to live our lives, says *Chronicles*.

The newsletter tells us what's happening and what's coming. You may want to note June 1 on your calendar and take part in John L. Heatwole's 3:00 p.m. "talk and walk" on "Folkways and Traditions of the Shenandoah Valley" that begins at Weavers Mennonite Church and concludes at CrossRoads, the new campus of VBMHC. Or

take in the drama "Jordan's Stormy Banks" about Civil War struggles. Dates: June 6-8 and 13-15 at Bridgewater College's Cole Hall. The drama is also scheduled for Lancaster, PA in late June and the Mennonite Church USA Assembly at Atlanta, GA in July.

If you haven't received your copy of Vol. 1, No. 1 of this most attractive newsletter, you may want to call the office at 438-1275.

**Did you perchance overlook renewal time or perhaps have a new subscription to suggest? [It does make a fine inexpensive gift!]**

Send renewals for 2003 (they run by the calendar year - January to December) to: **James Rush, 780 Parkwood Drive, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, or by phone (540) 434-0792 or by e-mail [rushj@emhs.net](mailto:rushj@emhs.net) Cost: \$10 per couple or \$6 for individuals**

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