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Editor:
Elwood Yoder

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Mennonites in Virginia during the Revolutionary War era

My Anabaptist ancestors arrived in Philadelphia in 1742. Within a generation of their arrival, the American Revolutionary War disrupted their agricultural lives, and the Yoders moved to western Pennsylvania to avoid the violence and uncertainty found in eastern Pennsylvania.

Other Anabaptists began migrating south into Virginia, even before the Revolutionary War. A list of 71 Mennonite men who signed a 1785 petition to the Virginia General Assembly reveals a wide array of Mennonite family names in Virginia. Read about the 1785 petition, and learn their names, in our feature article in this issue.

Sixty or more members of the Swiss Anabaptist Genealogical Society will attend their annual meeting at the Lindale Mennonite Church on April 17-18, 2026. I am looking forward to meeting historians and genealogists from across the eastern United States at this meeting.

During this 250th anniversary year of the United States' founding, I've been reading about the country's early years. I have become increasingly grateful for the religious freedom enjoyed in the United States.

Elwood Yoder, Editor



In this issue:

Mennonites in Virginia during the Revolutionary War era
By Elwood Yoder

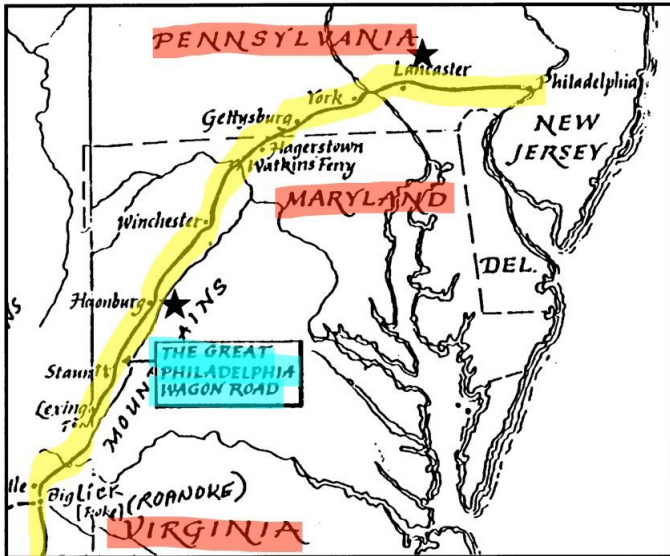
A Study of Dunker Hymnody
By Sam Funkhouser

The Legacy of George R. and Katie Wenger Brunk lives on at Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community
By Betty Brunk and Karen Brunk

Mennonites in Virginia during the Revolutionary War era

By Elwood Yoder

Mennonites in Virginia sought and found religious freedom during the Revolutionary War era, before, during, and after the War. The context in the late 18th century was the rise of Enlightenment values, especially the work and thinking of James Madison.



Map by James C. Landis, adapted by Elwood Yoder

It was the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road that brought streams of settlers into Virginia and as far south as Augusta, Georgia. From Philadelphia, the road went west through Lancaster, York, and Gettysburg, turning south through Maryland and Virginia. It was a busy road in the 1700s, with settlers and wagons streaming south and agricultural products and herds of animals rushing north. Road conditions varied from fair to nightmarish.¹

The Mennonite Blosser family brought a German-language Bible along that Wagon Road from Philadelphia to Harrisonburg. In 1776, Christopher Sauer Jr. printed a German-language Bible in his Philadelphia print shop. Because Sauer Jr., Brethren, was viewed as a Torie by the Revolutionaries, the patriots persecuted Sauer. They tore his shop apart, destroyed most of it, including his books. But a few of Sauer's German-language 1776 editions of Martin Luther's Bibles survived, including one donated by the Blossers to the Brethren & Mennonite Heritage Center.



German language Bible printed in Christopher Sauer Jr.'s Philadelphia print shop, 1776. Located at Brethren & Mennonite Heritage Center, Harrisonburg, Va. Photo by Elwood Yoder

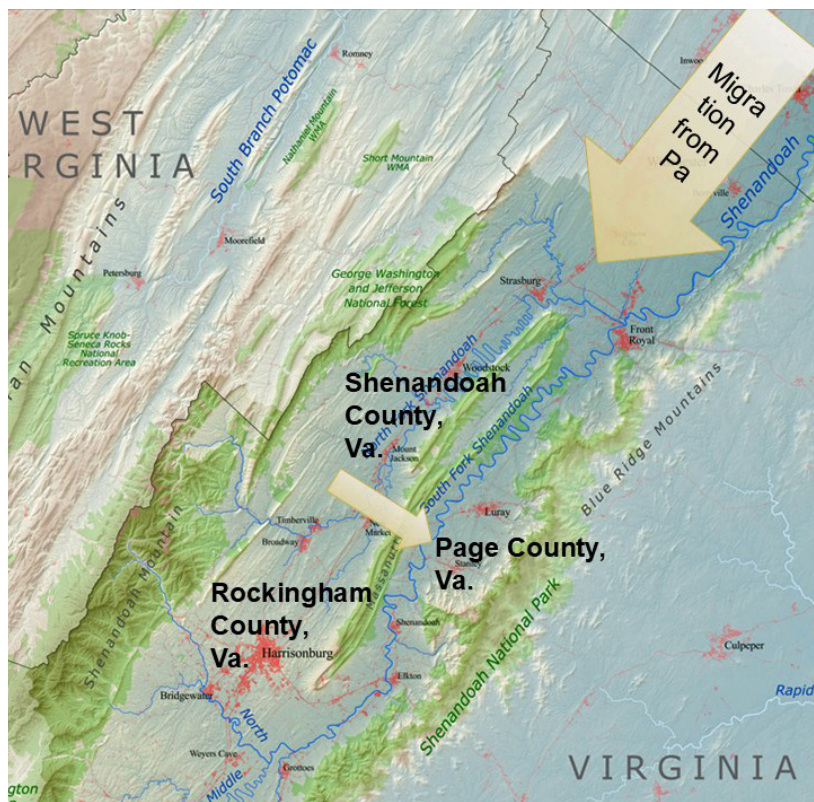
This Bible came into the Blosser family. Peter Blosser Sr., a Mennonite, may have purchased this book as a wedding gift for his son, Peter Blosser Jr., and his bride Magdalena Baer, who married in Shenandoah County, Virginia, in 1776. Or the elder Blossers may have handed it down to the younger Blossers later.

When Peter Blosser Jr. (1752-1835) and wife, Magdalena (1751-1843), moved from York County, Pa., to Shenandoah County, Va., and then across the Massanutten Mountain to Page County, Va., near Luray, in the 1760s, they found active resistance from the Baptists who lived there, who did not like their Anabaptist beliefs.

1. James C. Landis, "Pennsylvania Prequel: Wengers When of Lancaster: the early histories of brothers Joseph and Henry in Pennsylvania," August 2025, 9.

Page County Mennonites asked Peter Blosser Sr., a Minister, to come to Page County from Pennsylvania to assist Mennonite Minister Martin Kauffman, who lived in the historic White House Farm near Luray.² Built in 1760, the Kauffman House is still standing along the South Fork Shenandoah River at the eastern base of the Massanutten Mountain. In 2026, it is undergoing restoration.

Martin Kauffman and Peter Blosser Sr. did all they could to help prepare Mennonites in Page County not to participate in the Revolutionary War. Neighbors in Page were unhappy with the Mennonites, and at one point, a sheriff named Painter harassed them, forcing Peter Blosser Sr. into hiding. Another Mennonite, Jacob Hottel, also hid in the mountains to escape the draft.³



Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. Wikimedia Commons map, adapted by Elwood Yoder

Before the Revolutionary War

Approximately 30,000 Germans migrated to Pennsylvania in the 1700s, of whom about 4,000 were Mennonites, and 500 were Amish. They risked their lives in small ships and sailed across the Atlantic Ocean for land and freedom, but found conflict, War, and the churning of Enlightenment values. Barbara and Peter Blosser Sr., born in Bern, Switzerland, arrived in 1739. Almost four decades after the Blossers landed in Philadelphia, when Blosser Sr. was about 60, war between Britain and American revolutionaries disrupted their lives.

Mennonite migration into Virginia began in the 1730s with a steady trickle of families moving into the Shenandoah Settlement (Frederick and Shenandoah counties). Another group moved into the Massanutten Settlement in Page County near Luray. With the out-



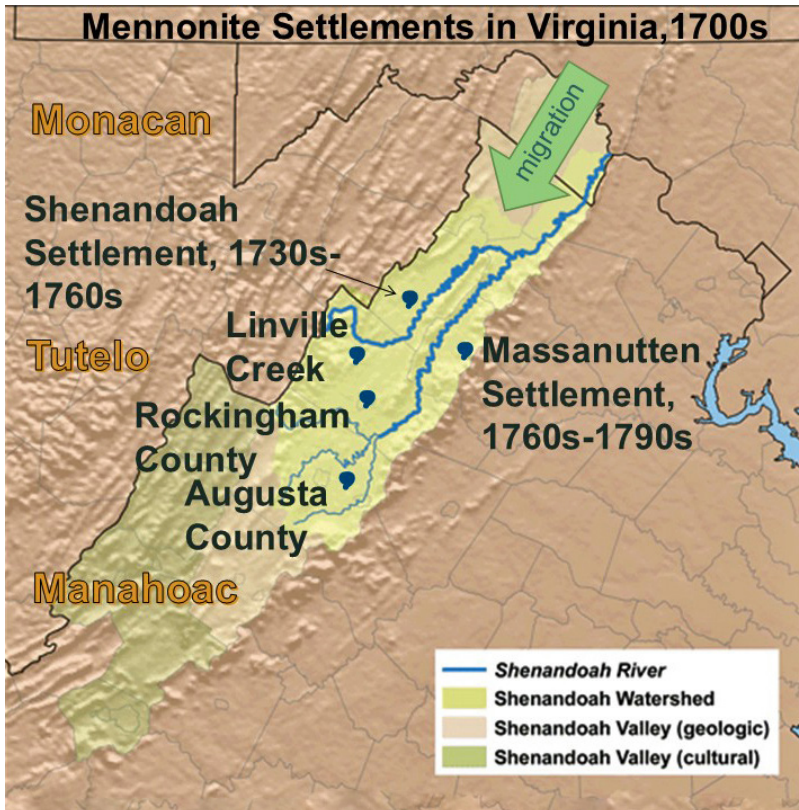
White House, near Luray, Virginia, built about 1760.
Photo by Elwood Yoder in 2018

2. Harry A. Brunk, *History of Mennonites in Virginia 1727-1900*, vol. 1 (Harrisonburg, Va.: H.A. Brunk, 1959), 27; *Shenandoah Mennonite Historian*, Vol. 18, No. 1, Winter 2011, 1-2.

3. Richard K. MacMaster, Samuel L. Horst, and Robert F. Ullé, *Conscience in Crisis* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1979), 293.

break of the Seven Years' War, or French and Indian War, 1754-1763, most of the 20-30 Mennonite families fled north after their communities were ransacked. From the perspective of the French and Indigenous people groups, the German-speaking Mennonite settlers were the same as the English-speaking British.

Precontact Indigenous groups, including the Monacan and Manahoac, lived in the Valley of



Base map from Wikimedia Commons, adapted by Elwood Yoder

Virginia long before European settlers arrived. When Mennonites migrated to Virginia during the 1700s, Indigenous people had lived in the region for many centuries. Along Linville Creek in Rockingham County is a burial ground for approximately eight hundred Native Americans.⁴ The work of surveyors marking land and claiming territorial rights caused the native peoples to fight back, especially during the French and Indian War (1754-1763), when Indians massacred Mennonite Preacher John Rhodes' family near Luray, Virginia, in 1764.

Inexpensive land brought many a younger son and his family to Virginia looking for a place to farm. In the 1740s, land cost about 25-30 shillings an acre in Lancaster, Pa., but in the Shenandoah Valley, an acre cost 1, 2, or 3 shillings.

In 1761, 1769, and 1772, Virginia Mennonites petitioned the Virginia House of Burgesses in Williamsburg for relief from militia fines.⁵ In 1772, the House of Burgesses exempted Mennonites from the payment of fines for not participating in local militia units. By the 1770s, the steady trickle of Mennonite immigrants to Virginia became a stronger flow with more families pulling their wagons up the Great Valley Road. Abraham Breneman and family moved from Pennsylvania to Rockingham County in 1770. Five years later, Jacob Brunk I (1734-1787) was granted sixty-nine acres on the south side of Brock's Creek by Patrick Henry, governor of Virginia.

The Mennonites and other dissenting religious groups provided a buffer between the eastern Virginia established settlements and the Indigenous peoples to the west. As one contemporary said, "the times were generally dismal during the war with the Indians on one side and the British on the

4. Gerard Fowke, "Archeologic Investigations in James and Potomac Valleys," Smithsonian Institution Bureau of Ethnology, Washington, D.C. (1894), 37-44

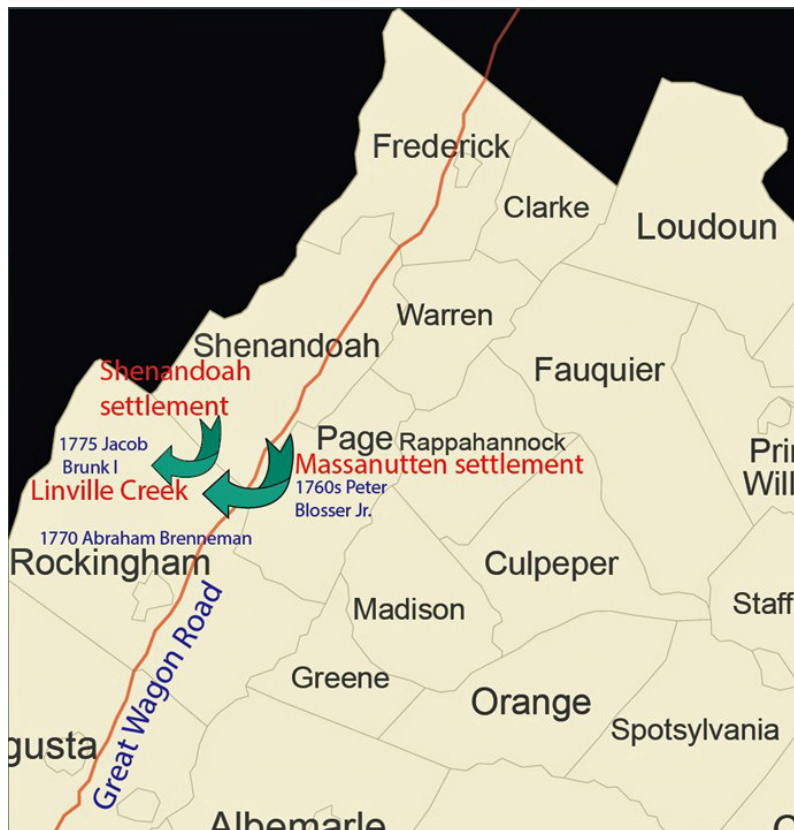
5. MacMaster, Horst, and Ulle, *Conscience in Crisis* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1979), 156.

other.”⁶

During the Revolutionary War

With a great degree of unanimity, members of the historic peace churches in the thirteen colonies refused to accept military service, to hire substitutes, or to provide weapons for others to use. Former Associate Professor of History at James Madison University, Richard K. MacMaster, concluded that 95% or more Mennonites supported the traditional teachings on nonresistance at the outset of the War in 1776.⁷ Martin Kauffman, from Luray, and a dozen other Mennonites stated that they would not raise their weapons in War, nor swear allegiance to the new Commonwealth.⁸

The Pennsylvania government was strict about the test oath, or attest, that every adult male had to take. Any man who did not take the test oath lost business opportunities and their civil rights until well into the 1790s. Virginia, however, adopted a very moderate test act in 1777, essentially a voluntary pledge. The Virginia General Assembly did little to persecute Mennonites in the Shenandoah Valley through the Test Act.



Shenandoah Valley in the mid-1700s, with contemporary county names. Map created by Elwood Yoder

When the British and Patriot militia exchanged the first shots of the Revolutionary War near Boston, Quakers and Mennonites were exempted from military service in Virginia without being required to pay a fine or other equivalent. But when neighbors protested about the injustice of exempting the peace people from militia duty, the Virginia General Assembly, which had moved to Richmond in 1780, ordered Quakers (Friends) and Mennonites to enroll in the militia.⁹ If they refused to muster or provide substitutes to fight in their place, they would be subject to fines and additional taxes.¹⁰ The order to enroll in the Virginia militia made them liable to be drafted into the

6. Robert R. Hewitt, *Where the River Flows: Finding Faith in Rockingham County, Virginia, 1726-1876* (Charlottesville, Va: Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, 2003), 76.

7. Richard K. MacMaster, Samuel L. Horst, and Robert F. Ulle, *Conscience in Crisis* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1979), 300

8. Hewitt, *Where the River Flows: Finding Faith in Rockingham County* (Charlottesville, Va., 2003), 71.

9. Richard K. MacMaster, *Land, Piety, Peoplehood: The Establishment of Mennonite Communities in America, 1683-1790* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1985), 256.

10. Steven M. Nolt and Elwood E. Yoder, *People of Peace: A History of the Virginia Mennonite Conference* (Morgantown,

The 71 Mennonite men who signed the 1785 Petition to the Virginia General Assembly were Jaebez Shuh, Benjamin Stickli, Samuel Bohem, Peter Stauffer, Jorg Westerberger, Johannes Hodel, Isaac Kauffman, Christian Andrich, Abraham Beydler, Abraham Stauffer, Tobias Meili, David Stauffer, Ulrich Stauffer, Daniel Meily, Jacob Ruff, Nicholas Biery, Abraham Biery, Johannes Rieff, Jacob Ebersole, Andreas Christ, Henry Wissler, Johannes Maschberger, Abraham Brannaman, David Brannaman, Valentin Faber, Johannes Faber, Peter Faber, Henrich Kagi, Matthia Snutz, Abraham Gochnaer, David Funkhouser, Johannes Fundhouser, Abraham Funkhouser, Christian Grabeel, Johannes Heisi, Jacob Gochnauer, Jacob Kauffman, Johannes Gochnauer, Abraham Schnitz, Jacob Neff, Jacob Kagi, Henrich Brumbaugh, Gorg Rothgeb, Jacob Bar, Peter Blaser, Christian Megert, Hans Megert, Abraham Rothgeb, Isaac Rothgeb, John Strickler, David Coffman, Jacob Ruffner, Christian Graff, Jacob Boehm, Christian Neff, Gabriel Seeger, Conrad Seiger, Christian Frey, Andreas Eby, Jacob Caufmann, Johannes Caufman, Jacob Bingerman, Abraham Neff, Balser Hupp, Peter Gut, Michael Gauffman, Henrich Scheng, Abraham Breneman, Heinrich Roth, Michael Scheng, and Peter Zedty.

Transcription from old English cursive script, very difficult to read and decipher, to contemporary English by Richard K. MacMaster in Conscience in Crisis (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1979), 333-334.

regular military and required them to furnish substitutes or pay a fine. They did not provide substitutes, however, so authorities seized their goods to pay the cost of hiring a substitute.

The underlying philosophy of the individual's place in society changed drastically from 1681, when William Penn established his peaceable kingdom in Pennsylvania, governed by Quakers. Enlightenment ideals included a desire for individual rights and representative government, so that when the Patriots won the Revolutionary War, Mennonites found themselves citizens of the United States rather than subjects of a king or monarch, as they had always been in Switzerland and Germany.

After the Revolutionary War

Petitions to the Virginia legislature were the primary catalyst for change in the Commonwealth from 1776 until 1865. On December 10, 1785, General Assembly records reveal that 71 Mennonites signed and sent a petition to the Virginia General Assembly.¹¹ They sought total exemption from Virginia's militia.¹² Twenty-three lived in Rockingham County, eleven in Page County, ten in Shenandoah County, and others in scattered regions of the Shenandoah Valley.¹³ Mennonites had been exempt from serving in the Virginia militia from 1772 to 1780. A militia bill passed in Virginia in 1780 removed the Mennonites' exemption from militia duty and enrolled conscientious objectors, once again making them subject to fines for failing to serve.¹⁴

PA: Masthof Press, 2025), 19.

11. https://rosetta.virginiamemory.com/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE2817254; *Members of the Menonist Church: Petition. N.p., 1785*. Print.

12. Steven M. Nolt and Elwood E. Yoder, *People of Peace: A History of the Virginia Mennonite Conference* (Morgantown, PA: Masthof Press, 2025), 19.

13. Richard K. MacMaster, *Land, Piety, Peoplehood: The Establishment of Mennonite Communities in America, 1683-1790* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1985), 134.

14. Richard K. MacMaster, "Mennonite conscience about taxes," *The Mennonite*, January 9, 1979, Digital Mennonite Periodicals, AMBS, 20-21.

“For conscience’s sake,” they explained in their 1785 petition, *“their forefathers came from a far country to America to seek religious liberty.”*¹⁵ They requested a cessation of penalties for not bearing arms that *“lay heavy on them.”* The Assembly gave in just a bit, exempting members of peace churches from personal service military duty, but retained the requirement that they pay a fine as an equivalent.

Abraham Brenneman, age 41, from a farm of about 800 acres along the Linville Creek, signed the 1785 petition. Abraham (1744-1815), with two wives fathered 15 children. However, most deeds and papers about the Brenneman’s farm were lost when the Rockingham courthouse records burned during the Civil War.

Along the Brenneman Church Road in Linville, next to the West Fork Linville Creek, Abraham Brenneman and his family built a mill from bricks made on site. When Brenneman finished his Mill in about 1800, the Virginia Mennonite center of gravity had shifted decidedly into Rockingham County. Brenneman’s mill ground grain into flour, hominy, and cattle feed, and served as a center for community life. During the Valley burning, Union soldiers set the Mill on fire, though the owners and neighbors were able to extinguish the flames. It is the only operating mill in Rockingham County built before the Civil War. Today, the Brethren & Mennonite Heritage Center owns the Mill.

Peter Blosser Jr., from Page County, was among the 71 who signed the 1785 petition. Blosser specialized in building and repairing wooden wheels for carts, wagons, and carriages, as well as making spinning wheels. In 1812, the Blossers and their adult children migrated further up the Valley into Rockingham County, where they built a large limestone house just south of Harrisonburg, which still stands to-



Portrait from Brethren & Mennonite Heritage Center, Harrisonburg, Va.



Brenneman-Turner Mill, Brenneman Church Road, Rockingham County, Va.

2026 photo by Elwood Yoder

15. Legislative Petitions of the Virginia General Assembly, 1776-1865, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va., Accession Number 36121, Box 291, Folder 76.

day.¹⁶

Peter Blosser Jr.'s son Jonas and Margaret Blosser lived in their limestone house when Union General Philip Sheridan's troops came to burn it during the fateful night near Dayton in October 1864.¹⁷ Given 15 minutes to rescue what he wanted from his house, Jonas retrieved his 1776 Bible and his 1814 *Martyrs Mirror*, both of which are in the collections at the Brethren & Mennonite Heritage Center. Three generations later, in 2006, the Blosser family donated their 1776 Bible to the Heritage Center. This Bible survived the Revolutionary and American Civil Wars and is the same age as the *Declaration of Independence*.

James Madison's life (1751–1836) almost exactly parallels the life dates of Peter Blosser Jr. (1752–1835). Madison, however, enjoyed money and a political life while Blosser was poor and scraped to make a living.¹⁸ When the 1785 petition from Virginia Mennonites came to the House of Delegates, Madison served a two-year term in the Richmond deliberative body. Madison had a keen interest in religious freedom. Though he was from the established church and a wealthy family, he recognized that the new United States must guarantee religious freedom for all. Madison knew of dissenting Protestant ministers in rural Virginia who had been verbally and physically assailed by their opponents.

During Madison's two-year term in the House of Delegates, when they considered the 1785 Mennonite petition, Madison wrote persuasively that religion should be left up to each person individually.¹⁹ Further, Madison persuaded the Virginia delegates to approve a "Statute for Religious Freedom," which enshrined the disestablishment of religion and tolerance for all believers, regardless of denomination.²⁰ Madison developed a framework for federalism, designed a system of checks and balances, and helped to write the *Federalist Papers*. In 1789, Madison penned the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

Because of Madison's work, Mennonites can drive in 19th-century horse and buggies, sing of their faith from a 19th-century *Harmonia Sacra* hymn book, and not pay taxes to support an established state church.

The First Amendment and the new Constitution emerged at an axial moment, a hinge time in world and American history. Mennonites and other dissenters in the Valley, and the people of the United States, had achieved freedom of religion.

16. Elwood E. Yoder, *How Firm a Foundation: A History of Weavers Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Virginia, 1827-2015* (Harrisonburg, Virginia: Weavers Mennonite Church, 2015), 2.

17. In 2026 the historic Blosser limestone house has nearly collapsed and appears beyond repair. It is on the Dairyman Specialty Company Inc. property on Rt. 42 south of Harrisonburg, Va.

18. S. H. Blosser, *Genealogical History of the Blosser Family as Known in America* (A. S. Kieffer & son, printers, 1903), 4.

19. *Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments*, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/01-08-02-0163>

20. Lynne V. Cheney, *James Madison: A Life Reconsidered* (New York, NY: Penguin Group USA, 2014), 105-110.

A Study of Dunker Hymnody

By Sam Funkhouser

Elwood Yoder asked me to write a little bit about my book, titled *In the Line of Duty: A History and Theological Analysis of Early English Language Brethren Hymn Books and Hymnals, 1791- 1884*, for this issue of *Historian*.

This book was published in 2021 but is based on a research project that I completed as a seminary student in 2012. At that time, I had discovered that, while there had been a significant amount of research and writing dedicated to the German-language hymnody of the Brethren, there had never before been a study devoted to the Brethren's English hymnody. Hymn books and hymnals are an excellent source for understanding a church's historical theology; when a new hymn book is published it usually reflects the culture and beliefs of the church at that time, or perhaps what the leadership of the church aspires for them to be, but then as it is used it also shapes the culture and beliefs of the church as its hymns are sung Sunday after Sunday, year after year.

The goal, therefore, of this book is to closely examine the history, development, and contents of the first five English-language Brethren hymn books and hymnals in order to better understand the beliefs of the Brethren and how they changed over a specific period of time. The study begins with *The Christians Duty*, which in 1791 was the first English-language Brethren hymn book, continues with the two books that were in use when most Brethren transitioned to using English as their primary language, and concludes with the two books that resulted from the major three-way Brethren schism of the 1880s: the old order (Old German

Baptist Brethren) hymn book of 1882 and the progressive ("Ashland" Brethren Church) hymnal of 1884. It offers a fascinating in-depth look, through the lens of hymnody, at the various ways in which the Brethren movement developed from the late 18th century through the late 19th century.

Why would this book be of interest to Mennonite readers? Perhaps for a few reasons. The Brethren (or Dunkers, or German Baptists) were the Mennonites' closest cultural and theological neighbors in America, so an examination of their history offers points of both similarity and divergence when compared with the Mennonite story. For example, the Brethren started singing in English earlier than the Mennonites did, and published *The Christians Duty* over fifty years before the first official English-language Mennonite hymn book was printed. The reasons for the Brethren's early adoption of English are examined in the chapter on *The Christians Duty*.

Another reason it may be of interest: the first ever Brethren hymnal (a book with words and printed music) was published in Singers Glen in 1872 by Benjamin Funk, son of Joseph Funk, and used *Harmonia Sacra* tunes. It was also condemned—not once, but twice!—by the Brethren's Annual Meeting, was never printed again, and was largely forgotten by history. The story about why this happened brings together not only Brethren and Mennonite history but also local Shenandoah Valley history.

The 307 page book is available for purchase at the Brethren & Mennonite Heritage Center, or it can be purchased directly from *The Brethren Encyclopedia* (the publisher). It can also be read or checked out at the Bridgewater College Library.

The Legacy of George R. and Katie Wenger Brunk lives on at Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community

By Betty Brunk and Karen Brunk

George R. Brunk was born in Illinois on Dec 31, 1871, where his family had moved following the Civil War. They moved further west, to Kansas, where the family experienced true hardship and loss. George was ordained there as preacher at 21 years of age, and Bishop at age 26. In 1900, Bishop Brunk came to Virginia for several months of visitation among the Valley Mennonite churches.

One night, at age 28, as he was holding a meeting at the Lindale Mennonite Church, he took notice of the young and beautiful Katie Wenger, who had gone forward to a designated place to get a drink for her mother. He knew immediately that she was to be his beloved. Only six weeks later they were married at the Wenger home on Greenmount Road and departed days afterward to return to Kansas. In 1910, they returned to Virginia, where they established their permanent residence.

They became parents to nine children. The children of George R. and Katie Wenger Brunk were scattered all over the Commonwealth, preaching and writing and editing and speaking on the radio and leading tent meetings.

Esther, the oldest, was a nursing supervisor and married to Henry Shenk, an orchardist in Denbigh. She and Henry moved to the Valley from Denbigh.

The eldest son, Truman, was married to Ruth Smith. He was

a bishop and orchardist in Denbigh.

Stella, married to Bishop and writer Ward Shank in Broadway, was well known for her handmade rugs. Ward also had an apple orchard.

Edna, a nurse and real-estate broker, was married to Arthur Hertzler, also a Realtor in Denbigh.

Menno was married to Sebe Harman, and he was a pastor in the Valley. Menno was a licensed poultry inspector and part-time farmer and painter.

George R. II was married to Margaret Suter. He was an ordained preacher and spent many years in tent evangelism.

Katie was married to minister and farmer John Shank in Broadway. Katie was a school teacher and co-administrator of Peggy Memorial Home in Jamaica.

Ruth, married to college professor Grant Stoltzfus, was a pastor and broadcaster.

Lawrence, the youngest, married Dorothy



From left, Roland Shank, Sandy Steiner, David Brunk, Betty Brunk, Karen Brunk, Ruth Stoltzfus Jost, and Paul Brunk.

Gary Smucker photo

Powell, always a loving and supportive wife. Lawrence owned a thriving poultry business in Newport News. He became song leader with the tent revivals in the early 1950 's and continued in ministry and business.

Who would have thought that all these years later, children of six of these Brunk brothers and sisters would be living on the VMRC campus? They are as follows:

Sandra, daughter of Truman, is married to Nevin Steiner, a builder. Sandra was a financial assessor and customer service rep. They live in Park Village.

Betty Shenk Brunk is a resident in Park Gables and was married to Truman Jr. Truman was a pastor and builder, while Betty was a social worker.

Rowland, son of Stella, was married to Thelma Trumbo. He was clinical psychologist and administrator of Philhaven Hospital near Hershey, PA. Thelma was an interior designer. Rowland lives in Park Place.

David, son of Menno, was married to Susan Leatherman. He worked in manufacturing and sales, and lives in Park Place.

Paul, son of George, was psychologist, professor, and psychotherapist. He is married to Joyce Erb, and they live in Park Gables. Joyce was an English teacher and later College professor.

Ruth, an attorney and daughter of Ruth Stoltzfus, is married to Attorney Timothy Jost and they live in Park Gables.

Karen, daughter of Lawrence, served in ministry to children and youth and as clinic nurse administrator in Jamaica, and lives in Heritage Haven.



About 60 members of the Swiss Anabaptist Genealogical Association will meet at Lindale Mennonite Church, April 17-18, 2026, for their annual meeting. The Association manages an online genealogical database, shares research, and meets in different Anabaptist communities each year. In addition to the meeting, members will tour open houses at historical sites in the Valley. While registration for the events' meals has closed, you can attend SAGA's meetings and lectures at no cost without registering for meals. Lecturers will speak in the fellowship hall at Lindale Mennonite Church.

Friday, April 17, 7 p.m.

“Anabaptist Underground Railroad,” by Karl Rhodes

Saturday, April 18, 9:00 a.m.–Noon

“Mennonites in Virginia: Families, Faith, and Outreach,” by Elwood Yoder, and **“Two Amish Mavericks”** by Loren Johns.

For more information, call Karl Rhodes at 804-747-7773.



Lindale Mennonite Church will host the annual meeting of the Swiss Anabaptist Genealogical Association, April 17-18, 2026. Since 1995, SAGA has held regional meetings, but this is the first time the meetings will be held in Virginia. SAGA has 550 dues-paying members from 46 states and 7 countries, with no paid staff, and 7.4 million online genealogical records. SAGA's website is at <https://www.saga-omii.org/index.html>. 2026 photo by Elwood Yoder

Officers of the Historians: Chair, James L. Hershberger; Treasurer, Norman R. Wenger; Secretary, Gary Smucker; Newsletter Circulation, James L. Rush; Gerald R. Brunk; and Editor, Elwood E. Yoder.

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The Shenandoah Mennonite Historian is published quarterly by the Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians, established in 1993. If you have an idea for an article for the Historian, contact the Editor at elyoder@gmail.com.

Past issues of the Historian, from 1994-2025, can be found at mennonitearchivesofvirginia.net. This site includes a link to over 1,650 photos related to Mennonites in Virginia.

An annual individual membership fee for the Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians is \$10.00 per year, which includes a subscription to the Historian. Additional family memberships are \$5 each. Send membership fees to James Rush, e-mail at jamesrush@comcast.net, phone 540-421-7890, or U.S. mail to James Rush, 421 Gravels Rd., Rockingham, VA, 22802.