



Shenandoah Mennonite Historian

Volume 30, No. 1

Winter, 2022

Published by Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians
Elwood E. Yoder, Editor

A quarterly periodical dedicated to the history and culture of Mennonites in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, USA

Thirtieth Volume of the Shenandoah Mennonite Historian

With this issue of *Historian*, we begin our thirtieth volume of publication. Founders of our organization in 1993 who serve as officers today include James Rush and Lois Bowman Kreider. In July 2021, Virginia Moyers Martin passed away at the age of ninety-nine years. One of Virginia Martin's daughters gave me an almost complete set of *Historians* dating back to the first issue. Virginia had lived in the Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community for her last twenty-seven years and had carefully saved each issue of *Historian*.

Thank you for subscribing to the *Historian* and for being a member of the Shenandoah Mennonite Historians. We are an unincorporated organization of volunteers who seek to explain and tell the story of Mennonites in Virginia. The *Historians* organization publishes a quarterly journal, holds an annual meeting, and conducts tours and lectures. Pass this issue on to others and encourage them to subscribe!

Join the *Historians* on March 29, 2022, 7:00 p.m., at Mt. Clinton Mennonite Church, to hear author Jo Anne Kraus discuss her Herald Press book, *Holy Experiment: The Warwick River Mennonite Colony*. See more details inside this issue.

Above, Trissels Mennonite Church, Broadway, Virginia, will celebrate a bicentennial of the church in 2022.

Photo by Wayne Showalter, September 2021



Musicians performed "For the Beauty of the Earth," at the 2021 Trissels Mennonite Church annual Thanksgiving Day morning worship service, Broadway, Va. For several decades, Trissels has hosted the Northern District Churches of the Virginia Mennonite Conference for Thanksgiving Day services. From left, Philip J. Yoder, Jared Stutzman, and Briana Miller.

Photo by the Editor, November 25, 2021

IN THIS ISSUE:

- 'OUR' PETER GOOD, BY THE NUMBERS: HOW ONE FAMILY GENEALOGY CAME TOGETHER, BY DAVID L. GOOD
- THE FARM ON ROUTE 42 NORTH, BY GARY SMUCKER
- HISTORIANS' LECTURE BY JO ANNE KRAUS
- PEGGY JONES BOOK, BY ELWOOD YODER
- FANNIE SWARTZENTRUBER CHALLENGES SEGREGATION, BY ELWOOD YODER

‘Our’ Peter Good, by the Numbers: How One Family Genealogy Came Together

by David L. Good

One way to write a family history is to begin at the beginning. Fair enough. But inevitably, as with this family history, the strategy prompts a question: Which beginning?

When various family members set out to compile a genealogy of the Good line that settled in the Shenandoah Valley about 1800, they were hardly starting from a base of zero. During the period when they were taking on their project – on and off from at least the 1920s through the early 1990s – there had already been a continuous Good presence in the valley for well over a century. A fair number of siblings, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and cousins still were readily accessible to one another, and others who had moved away still corresponded regularly through family “chain letters” beginning in 1903.

The Dayton branch of the family got things started. Dr. DeWitt R. Good did much of the preliminary research and organizational work before his death in 1928. Warren R. Good continued to collect and collate information in the early 1940s, and finally Carter V. Good and Gene Ann Good Cordes expanded the scope of the project beyond the Valley and then polished it into an anecdote-rich, forty-nine page history in 1986.¹ However, these countless hours of detective work by a cadre of genealogy buffs in the family left certain questions unanswered about the Goods before they

went to Virginia. Most compelling among the questions: Who was our first Good ancestor to arrive in America, and how and when did he/she get here?

Carter and Gene Ann had tentatively identified the presumed progenitor of the Valley Goods as one Peter Good (Peder Gut), perhaps a Mennonite, who had arrived in Pennsylvania from Europe in the early 1700s. They suggested that Peter came from the Swiss canton of Zurich with two brothers and four sisters “about 1717 or earlier.”² Acknowledging “a possible source of confusion in the records” of Pennsylvania’s Lancaster County, Carter and Gene Ann cited the presence of two Peter Goods, one a farmer and the other a tailor, in the same area at about the same time. Peter the tailor died in 1745. Peter the farmer died and had his will proven in 1754; Carter and Gene Ann were satisfied that this will tied in directly to the Goods who left Lancaster County headed for the Shenandoah.³ Consequently, they settled on “our farmer Peter” as the family ancestor.

However, their work did not take note of additional research indicating that Peter the farmer was the same Peder Gut who had come over on the ship Molly in 1727, settling in Lancaster County. A few years before Carter and Gene Ann Good released a slightly revised version of their family history in 1993, the link between “our” Peter and the ship Molly’s Peder was proposed by Jane Evans Best and Howard C. Francis in a much-referenced article, “Six Good Families of Early Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.”⁴

2. Ibid., 4.

3. Ibid., 6.

4. Jane Evans Best and Howard C. Francis, “Six Good Families of Early Lancaster County, Pennsylvania,” *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage*, Vol. XII, No. 3 (Lancaster, Pa.: Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, July 1989), 11-28.

1. Carter V. Good and Gene Ann Good Cordes, *The Good Bishop Daniel and Deacon Dan in the Shenandoah Valley: Good Family in Rockingham County, Virginia: Part I* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1986, 1993). Carter and Gene Ann had contemplated a Part II, but it did not materialize.



Carter V. Good, 1897-1997.
Photo from David L. Good

After the passage of another quarter-century, it can be reported that compelling information establishes the Molly's Peder Gut as "our" Peter – the one whose will was proven in 1754. The way this information came

to light illustrates an important principle of genealogical research: if you have a family roots mystery you really need to put to rest, somebody will just have to start poking through old records. But here's the thing: It doesn't have to be you. That's not to say you should just whisk through genealogy web sites or be satisfied with copying a random stab at a family tree. But if you're lucky enough to happen onto somebody who has done the work – really done the work – and is willing to share the source material, hardly anybody is going to accuse you of cheating. This is basically what happened to us: we stumbled onto somebody else's work online, somebody else who happened to be a middling close cousin.

The sleuth who made the connection between the Molly and "our" Peter was Donald I. Good, a computer science PhD who had worked out the genealogy of his own branch of the Goods and cited numerous primary sources on his website.⁵ Among other evidence, Donald presented signatures of Peter's (see image) from his 1727 immigration, his 1728 naturalization and his 1753 will; all clearly

appeared to have been rendered by the same hand, thus substantiating Peter's links to later generations. Further, the Best-Francis positioning of Peter Good (GC) as the seminal ancestor in America has stood up unchallenged – while other corrections of their work have been suggested here and there – through vetting by such a noteworthy source as the Guth Gutt Good Newsletter.⁶

Donald described his conclusion this way: "My opinion is that those three signatures were made by the same guy, and they connect him from his arrival on the Molly to his will. If someday, someone can provide convincing evidence to the contrary, good for them. I'll adopt the new evidence and change my opinion and my story about Peter. History doesn't change, but what we know about it absolutely does!"⁷ There's no secret to Donald's methodology – he was an absolute stickler for primary sources. "Fussing with sources is a bloody pain," acknowledged Donald, a fifth cousin of mine who shared Peter Good and Peter's son Jacob Good with our branch of the family. "It's time-consuming, painstaking work, but it's necessary for professional quality history. . . The fundamental question about every work of history, of whatever flavor, is 'Why should I believe this?' The answer comes from how well documented it is."⁸

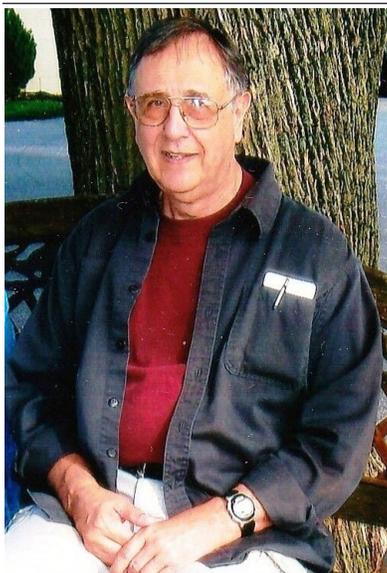
If the success Donald had in nailing down our Peter Good stands as a testament to the importance of consulting the right sources, we might suggest that thinking about something hard enough can sometimes pay off, too. That apparently is how our remarkable uncle Warren R. Good came up with a numbering

5. dgatx.com/family/Good/hs.html; for notes on Peter Good signatures, see Chapter 4.

6. guthguttgoodarchives.com

7. Donald I. Good, in an email to David L. Good on May 18, 2013.

8. Ibid.



Donald I. Good, 1942-2017.
Photo courtesy of Weed-Corley-Fish
Funeral Home North - Austin, Texas. ca
2017

system showing how Peter Good is related to the rest of us.

There's a confounding array of genealogical numbering systems, many of them with little to recommend them aside from familiarity stemming from years of widespread usage.

Perhaps the most universally accepted system is known as Sosa-Stradonitz or Ahnentafel, in which the number 1 is assigned to oneself or another individual, the number 2 to the father, 3 to the mother, and so on down the generations. The system is easy to understand and computer-friendly, although it does not allow for the incorporation of future generations into the system. Also widely accepted are the Register and Record systems, both of which designate the progenitor or other individual by the number 1 and children by lower-case Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, etc.). However, both systems suffer from being overly complex and leave no room for newly discovered descendants.

The numbering method we'll examine in more detail – because it's essentially the one utilized by Warren, as well as by Best and Francis – is the Henry System, pioneered by Reginald Buchanan Henry.⁹ This is a descending system, that is, one that begins with the progenitor or other individual and works its

way forward to more recent generations. As described in Wikipedia: "It can be organized either by generation or not. The system begins with 1. The oldest child becomes 11, the next child is 12, and so on. The oldest child of 11 is 111, the next 112, and so on. The system allows one to derive an ancestor's relationship based on their number. For example, 621 is the first child of 62, who is the second child of 6, who is the sixth child of his parents. . . . When there are more than nine children, X is used for the 10th child, A is used for the 11th child, B is used for the 12th child, and so on. In the Modified Henry System, when there are more than nine children, numbers greater than nine are placed in parentheses."¹⁰

A potential drawback to the Henry System is that its accuracy depends on knowing the birth order of sets of siblings down through the generations. Another, alluded to at the beginning of this introduction, is that the starting point is entirely arbitrary. Even though Warren and Best/Francis favored the Henry System, they used different starting points and therefore came up with different numerical designations for each individual in their family trees. Carter and Gene Ann picked up Warren's designations. Our subsequent recognition of the Molly's Peter Good as "our" Peter, as the true progenitor of the line in America, helps resolve the disparity between the dueling numerical designations – we're using a slightly tweaked version of the Best/Francis arrangement, which goes back to "our" Peter, that is, two generations more than Warren did. The Best/Francis article designates the Molly's Peter Good as GC and proceeds as follows through our branch of the family:¹¹

9. Reginald Buchanan Henry, *Genealogies of the Families of the Presidents* (Rutland, Vt.: The Tuttle Company, 1935).

10. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genealogical_numbering_systems

11. Best and Francis, 18-21.

GC Peter Good
 GC2 Jacob Good
 GC22 Jacob Good
 GC228 Daniel Good

It is hardly surprising that the valley-centric Warren [above] began his 1940s numerical designations instead with the second Jacob (GC22), who moved from Pennsylvania to Virginia about 1795 and to the Shenandoah in about 1800. Four decades after Warren's work, Carter and Gene Ann carried over the same numbering, rather than resetting with Peter (GC). Though they also begin their version of the Henry System with Jacob, Warren and Carter/Gene Ann do not assign him a number or letter, instead identifying Jacob's son Daniel Good with the number 6, then adding two more generations.¹² However, their designation of Daniel as the sixth child of Jacob appears not to have recognized two earlier-born siblings and would therefore have required a revision in any case.¹³

Beyond Warren's exercise of assigning numerical designations to members of the first several generations of the Virginia branch of the family, there's a much more interesting aspect of his examination of numbering systems: we can reasonably speculate that Warren actually may have come close to working out what came to be known as the Henry System before Henry himself did. Warren was the author of an article in the *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* arguing for a genealogical numbering system that today might be described as a Modified Henry System; his article was published in 1942, seven years after Henry's pioneering book.¹⁴

12. Good and Cordes, 16.

13. dgatx.com/family/Good/hs.html

14. Warren R. Good, "A Number System for Genealogies," *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*, Vo. III, No. 3 (Scottsdale, Pa.: Historical Committee of Mennonite General Conference, September 1942).

In pointing out the deficiencies of other numbering systems, a *Bulletin* editor described Warren's work as "a new method" that "is simple and reliable."¹⁵ Warren called it "a natural numbering system" that "gives cross references, generation, complete descent in the line, and relationships, all in a single number."¹⁶ He further noted: "Some progress toward the number system described here has been indicated in a few published family histories but, so far as I know, none of them embodies more than one or two of the many advantages that are inherent in the system. It is suggested that genealogists feel welcome to make full use of the plan."¹⁷



Warren R. Good, 1900-1977.

Photo from David L. Good

Warren advocated a couple of procedures that stand as departures from what we now know as the Henry System. The first was using parentheses around numbers when more than nine children were born, a modification also noted in the Wikipedia article cited here. (For consistency's sake, we're adhering to the Best/Francis pattern of designating children in especially large families as "0" for the 10th, "a" for the 11th, "b" for the 12th and so forth.) Warren's other wrinkle – which we're happily adopting because it makes a long string of numbers much easier to read – is to insert a hyphen as a separator after each set of three

15. *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*, Vo. III, No. 3 (Scottsdale, Pa.: Historical Committee of Mennonite General Conference, September 1942), p. 3.

16. Warren R. Good, 1.

17. *Ibid.* 3.

numbers.¹⁸ Using this device, the numbers for the descendants of Daniel Good (GC228) in my particular line are as follows (I'm GC228-622-53):

GC228 Daniel Good
 GC 228-6 Henry Good
 GC228-62 Daniel Henry Good
 GC228-622 Jacob S. Henry Good
 GC228-622-5 Raymond Early Good
 GC228-622-53 David Leon Good
 GC228-622-531 Christopher Lohela Good
 GC228-622-531-1 Jesse Owen Good
 GC228-622-532 Leslie Sandford Good
 GC228-622-533 Marcelle Jones Good
 GC228-622-533-1 Felix Reino van Pelt

There remains one unspoken question, of course: Why did Warren and his unnamed editor claim to be offering a new system when its publication date came several years after Henry's book made the original version public? Plagiarism?

Highly unlikely. Had he known of Henry's work, Warren most assuredly would have understood that he could hardly pass it off as his own (even if he had wanted to) an idea previously proposed in a book examining such a high-visibility topic as presidential genealogy. He was, after all, an academic (as was Carter).¹⁹ The likeliest explanation is that, as he labored on his family genealogy, he was immersed exclusively in Mennonite publications, and neither he nor his editor, many decades before

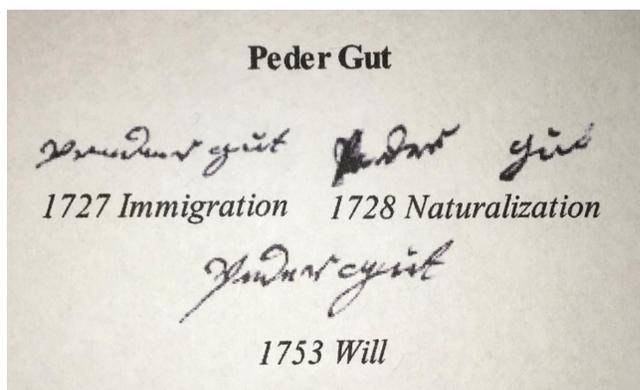
the internet age, had a clue that Henry's book even existed. So, as we're acknowledging the work of our computer-savvy cousin Donald I. Good,²⁰ as well as all the researchers, correspondents and others who helped make it possible to trace the Goods back as far as we have thus far, let's also credit Warren R. Good with an epiphany that may have been nearly contemporaneous with Reginald Buchanan Henry's – one that put him within a few years of qualifying as the namesake of . . . the Good System of genealogical numbering!

David L. Good (the writer of this article) first became interested in genealogy in 2002 when he stumbled onto – and bought – an 1804 Mennonite hymnal whose original owner was a four-times-

18. Ibid., 2-3.

19. Warren R. Good was a longtime professor in educational psychology at the University of Michigan, as well as a senior editor of *Education Digest*, among a long list of editing positions; he also was author of several books and many articles. He had a B.S. from the University of Virginia and an M.A. from the University of Michigan, in addition to graduate studies at the University of Chicago and the U. of M. Carter was a professor of education at Miami University and later dean of the School of Education and dean of Institutional Research at the University of Cincinnati; he was also the author of more than a dozen education textbooks. He had a B.A. from Bridgewater College, an M.A. from the University of Virginia and a PhD from the University of Chicago.

20. Donald I. Good died in 2017 at age 74. Relevant links from his dgatx.com website were disabled soon thereafter.



great-uncle also named David Good.

This article is part of a seventy-five page project Good subsequently wrote as an update/supplement to a family history produced by relatives in 1986. Copies of the supplement are available in the Menno Simons Historical Library at Eastern Mennonite University and in the Heritage Museum Genealogy Library of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society, Dayton, Va. (Rocktown History).

A retired Detroit News reporter and editor, David L. Good has served on the Dearborn (Michigan) Historical Commission since 2003, including four years as chairman. He also spent seven years as volunteer editor of the commission's quarterly journal, which won two awards from the Historical Society of Michigan under his tenure. His 1989 biography of longtime Dearborn mayor Orville L. Hubbard, **Orvie: The Dictator of Dearborn**, has been designated by the University of Michigan's Population Studies Center as one of twenty-one "landmark studies" of residential segregation published since 1943.

A U. of M. journalism graduate (B.A., M.A.), he lives in Dearborn with his wife, Janet; they have three children and two grandsons. email: dgood42@yahoo.com.

Editor's note: find two articles (Spring 2020 and Fall 2020) by David L. Good in the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Newsletter. Both articles are about his Good ancestry, and can be read at <http://rocktownhistory.org/newsletters/>

Jo Anne Kraus to speak about Warwick Colony

The Shenandoah Mennonite Historians will host Jo Anne Kraus to speak about her recent book titled *Holy Experiment: Warwick River Mennonite Colony, 1897-1970*.

This meeting will take place March 29, 2022, 7:00 p.m., at Mt. Clinton Mennonite Church west of Harrisonburg, with Kraus in attendance. If you want to join via Zoom, send an e-mail to jimhersh254@gmail.com (James L. Hershberger) to receive the Zoom link. There will be opportunity for questions and comments.

See the Spring 2021 *Historian* for a three page article about Kraus' book.

Jo Anne Kraus (right) will speak March 29, 2022. All are invited.

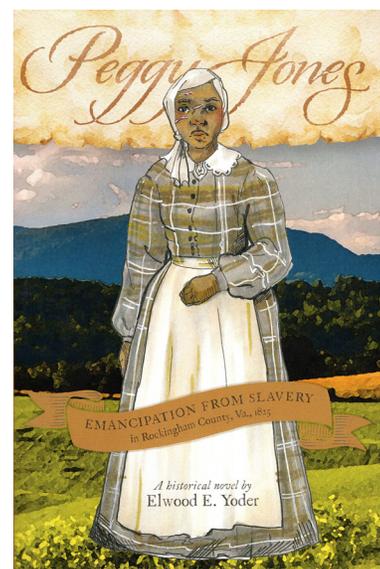


The Editor of *Historian* recently published *Peggy Jones*, a historical novel about an enslaved woman from Harrisonburg who struggled to receive her emancipation.

A work of historical fiction, the book is based on eleven lines from an emancipation document written by the Clerk of Rockingham County Court.

The setting is 1825, and in the book you will read about Joseph Funk, Sally Hemings, Peter Burkholder Jr., and Dolley Madison.

You can purchase the 328 page book on amazon.com by typing "Elwood Yoder" in the search box. Or contact Elwood at elyoder@gmail.com to purchase a copy in Harrisonburg.



The Farm on Route 42 North, Rockingham County, Va.

by Gary Smucker

J. Harvey Yoder saved the letters Frances Yoder Smucker, his daughter, wrote to him. Many of the letters he saved went to his second home on Myrtle St. in Sarasota, Florida or to his home in Denbigh, Virginia.

Frances wrote the letters from their farm. In 1944 Frances and Dan Smucker Jr., and Verna and Dan Smucker Sr., bought adjoining farms three miles north of Harrisonburg, Virginia. The farm of Dan and Frances was forty-two acres spread over two hills. There was a double-crib style barn with a modified A-frame roof. There were two cribs for animal feed separated by a breezeway with doors on both ends with a loft above for hay. The loft had two openings on the east side—a door at the floor level and a double door at the apex of the roof. There was a sliding door that gave access for a vehicle to back up to. During the time the Smucker family used the barn, the sheep used the north crib area and the cows used the area to the south. During the early years there was a pig pen in the breezeway area.

Until 1962 there was a milk cow for milk and cream. Milk, butter, smearcase (cottage cheese), and occasionally ice cream came from the milk of the cows. The sheep were sheared for the wool. The farm provided beef, lamb, and pork for the family at various times. There were chickens for eggs and meat in the chicken house. There were white Chinese geese and multicolored Muscovy ducks roaming in the area around the barn.

The house faced east, but across the road

was a hill covered with cedar trees. The amazing ‘million-dollar view’ was to the west toward the Allegheny Mountains and overlooked Shenandoah Valley farms spread on the hills to the mountains.

The house was a simple white clapboard ‘I house’ style home. If you take a tour of the original house, it is a very short one. Stepping from the front porch to open the front door, the living room is to the left, the dining room is to the right. There is a stair case in front of you. There is a landing at the top of the stairs with two steps on either side to the two bedrooms. Under the staircase there is another passage between the living room and dining room with the notorious coat closet where coats are more often tossed in rather than carefully hung on hooks under the stairs.

The kitchen was built to the back of the dining room with a door to the back porch. Northwest of the back door was the cistern which was filled by rain water and accessed by a hand pump. Across the wooden porch was the smoke house which was used for storage not curing meat. The smokehouse was given the nickname “The Shanty” because of its shabby appearance and lack of paint.

Heat was a kerosene stove in the dining room. Water for drinking, cooking, and laundry was from the cistern by the hand pump. The toilet was an outhouse at the back in the garden. Cooking and water heating was on an electric stove in the kitchen.

Over the years many improvements were made to the house.

--A new outhouse was built on the south side of the garden.

--A concrete springhouse was made over the

spring at the corner where Willow Run Road joins Route 42. A pipe was laid up the hill from the springhouse to the house for about 250 yards. At about the halfway point in the pipeline, a concrete block pumphouse was built which housed the electric pump that pumped the water to the house.

--'The Shanty' was moved to a new location between the house and the barn.

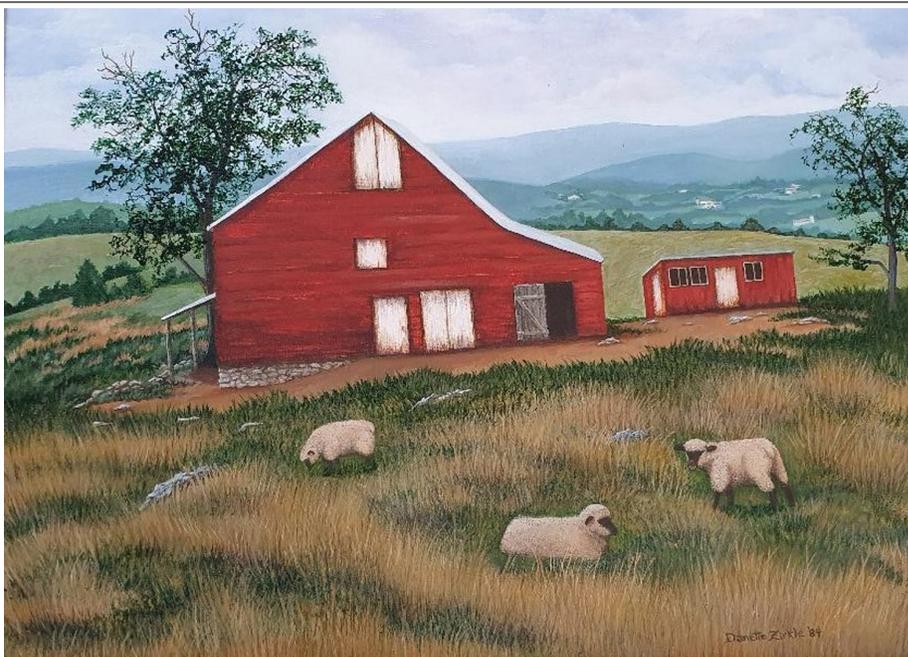
--Additions were made to the house including a room for an indoor bathroom south of the kitchen and a back porch was built over a new concrete cistern west of the kitchen.

--A picture window looking to the west was made in the living room to take in the 'million-dollar view'.

-- The roof was raised over the kitchen and bathroom and a bedroom was added upstairs. In 1952 the kitchen was expanded, and two rooms were added on the north side on the ground floor.

The family grew during these years as well. Elwood Dale was a handicapped child, Gary, Jean, Helen Jo was also a handicapped child, and Karen.

Dan and Frances were busy people during this time period. Mennonite pastors were expected to be self-supporting. He was a pastor and worked as a body man. Frances had three children in diapers after their fifth child was born. There was the new baby and the two handicapped children who needed diapers. Both Dan and Frances worked to support the farm.



The barn and chicken house on the Smucker farm, painted by Danette Zirkle in 1984 looking to the west.

Gary Smucker collection

Each of them thrived on a busy life; and they lived, cooperating to run the home and provide for the family, with a sense of humor as the letter below to Dan about the thistles shows. One of the ways Frances relaxed was writing letters to her family. She loved receiving letters as well and often mentions in her letters "Write soon."

Following are short excerpts from a longer letter Frances wrote to her father. Most of the information for this article are from similar letters Frances wrote:

September 8, 1947

Dear Papa,

Morris doesn't say much how he likes school. (Frances' brother, Morris, stayed with Dan and Frances, while he attended Eastern Mennonite College). He hasn't started with his classes yet. He wasn't satisfied with his schedule, and he went early this morning before classes started to change it. He stays here at night and takes five meals (noon) a week at the college starting today.

I see Gary [2½] and Jean [8 months] have turnip seeds spilled all over the kitchen floor. Gary is

calling it his party.

Love,

Frances

Thistle plants were a scourge which Frances hated on the farm. Thistles spread across the fields and yards. It is thought that the seeds came from poultry feed ingredients shipped from the Midwest. Frances decided to try a different tactic to get her busy husband to cut the thistles so she wrote the tongue-in-check letter to tease him into cutting the thistles.

The children could not wait until they could take off their shoes and walk barefoot for the rest of the summer. Sometimes Frances said they had to see the first robin before they could take off their shoes. But at times a robin showed up while the weather was still cold, so adjustment had to be made to the guideline. The children occasionally got permission to go to school with bare feet. By the end of the summer the feet had callouses so they could run across gravel with no shoes.

The thorns of the thistles were painful when the children stepped on them in bare feet. When the children were older, they were often assigned to the chore of chopping out the thistles. Cutting thistles had to be completed before they flowered, because then it was too late after the seeds sailed away on the fluffy parachutes and spread thistles over the fields and gardens.

To: Mr. Dan Smucker Jr.

From: Mrs. Dan Smucker, Gary, Jean, Jo Jo, and Karen.

October 1958

This petition is hereby raised by us to inform you it is your duty as father and homemaker to do

something about these thistles bordering the yard and garden. Your wife has chopped hundreds of them in the yard so the children will walk to the barn or sand pile or driveway. Your son refuses to mow the back yard because of thistles sticking his feet. It is energy wasted to shovel out thistles with thousands of them smiling mockingly through the fence, waving happily in the sunshine and breeze as we labor. Therefore, fulfil your duty as father and homemaker and preacher with the "old man" buried.

Fannie Swartzentruber Challenges

Segregation

by Elwood Yoder

During the 1944 semiannual communion service at the Gay Street Mennonite Mission in Harrisonburg, Va., Fannie Swartzentruber became frustrated with the segregated restrictions imposed by the Virginia Mission Board. Initiated by Eastern Mennonite School students in 1936, and operated by the mission board of the Virginia Mennonite Conference, Fannie and her husband Ernest were matron and superintendent of the Gay Street Mission from 1938 to 1945.

By 1944, when Fannie became upset with segregated communion, African Americans had joined the Gay Street church as members. However, the Virginia Conference segregated the observance of communion, footwashing and used the holy kiss along racial lines. Fannie's friend Rowena Lark, an African-American, had helped with the summer Bible School program, teaching and supporting the Swartzentrubers in their work. Fannie could not accept that Rowena Lark used a different cup to drink from during



Rowena Lark, left, with Fannie Swartzentruber, and Homer and Nancy Swartzentruber, 1939.

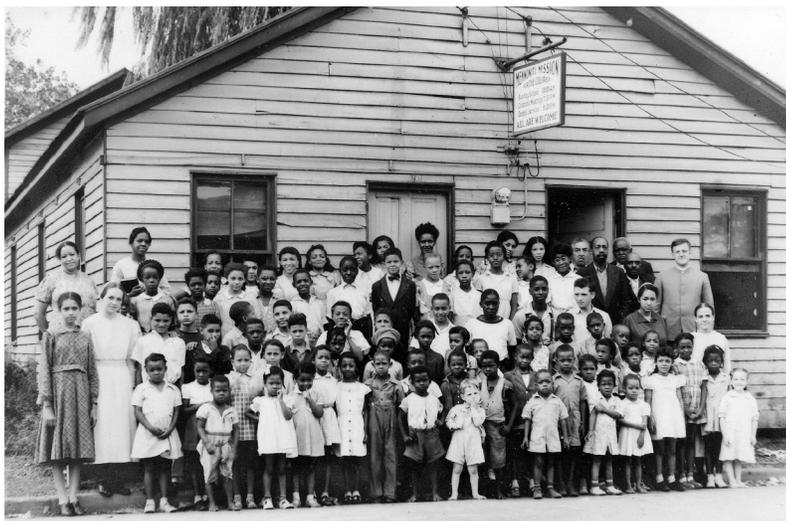
Photo from *Missionary Light*, 1961

communion.

After being patient since beginning their work in Harrisonburg six years earlier, Fannie went out the door of the Gay Street Church and walked four miles to their farm north of Harrisonburg. Fannie took her young daughter with her on the walk home. Never again, she told her husband, would she sit through such a segregated service. Ernest had joined his wife's protest by not greeting whites who came to the mission with a holy kiss since church rules prevented him from greeting African American brothers with the holy kiss. The following year, 1945, the Virginia Mission Board replaced Ernest as superintendent. Fannie's matron position had been as a volunteer. Fannie, Ernest, and their children moved back to their home in Delaware, but in 1952 they moved to Schuyler, Virginia, to help establish the Rehoboth Mennonite Church.

In the past decade, three scholarly books have told this seminal story in mid-twentieth century Virginia Mennonite history. In reading former Professor Nathan E. Yoder's outstanding history book about the Conservative Mennonite Conference, I learned the story in the context of the Swartzentruber's Conservative Conference Delaware roots, which is why Nathan Yoder used the story. Professor Donald Kraybill couches his excellent account of Fannie Swartzentruber's protest in how Eastern Mennonite School students helped start the Gay Street Mission and volunteered to help. Students from Harrisonburg wondered about overseas missions during the 1930s and insisted on missions among African Americans in Harrisonburg. Nathan Yoder and Donald Kraybill acknowledge the work of Tobin Miller Shearer in *Daily Demonstrators*, 2010. Shearer interviewed a son of Ernest and Fannie Swartzentruber, and he received details from Vida and Harold Huber, leaders at the Broad Street Mennonite Church. In 1945, this mission to black children moved from Gay Street to Broad Street.

Fannie Swartzentruber's challenge to segregation occurred in a church on Gay Street in Harrisonburg in the fall of 1944. It is unknown how many noticed Fannie bolt out the church door with her daughter in tow. Ernest finished the communion service and drove the family car home. Decades later, Tobin Miller Shearer dug the story out of Conference Archives and interviews. Fannie's statement against segregation is a timely story that challenges us to speak for justice, work for equality, and act when necessary.



The sign on the building says "Mennonite Mission for the Colored." Children and teachers at Gay Street Mission, Harrisonburg, Va., about 1940. Fannie Swartzentruber is on the left.

Photo from Virginia Mennonite Conference Archives



The Trissels Mennonite Church cemetery (above), Broadway, Va., dates to the late 1700s. The oldest identifiable marker in the cemetery is of Margaret Huber Burkholder, who was buried in 1798. At the bicentennial of the church in 2022, a sixth generation descendant of Margaret Burkholder attends and is an active participant in the church. Hundreds are buried in the cemetery. As a part of the Trissels bicentennial events in 2022, Eunice Geil Showalter, from Trissels, will lead a cemetery walk and talk tour July 10, 2022, and all are invited to attend. Bicentennial events begin with a sermon from the Editor on May 1, 2022, 10:30 am, and a *Harmonia Sacra* singing at the church in the evening of May 1. You are invited.

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

Officers of the Historians: Chair, James L. Hershberger; Treasurer, Norman Wenger; Secretary, James Rush; Lois Bowman Kreider; Gerald R. Brunk; and, Elwood E. Yoder, Editor

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

All past issues of *Shenandoah Mennonite Historian*, from 1994-2021, can be found at mennonitearchivesofvirginia.net. This site includes a link to over 1,600 photos related to Mennonites in Virginia, provides a way to subscribe to *Historian* online, and connects readers to the Editor's history blog.

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 jameslrush@comcast.net, phone 540-434-0792, or U.S. mail to James Rush, 780 Parkwood Drive, Harrisonburg, Virginia, 22802.

Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians
780 Parkwood Drive
Harrisonburg, VA 22802