



# Shenandoah Mennonite Historian

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

## Amos (A. D.) Wenger and Annie Lehman Wenger

In our first feature article, James L. Hershberger reviews a book about the Amos D. and Annie Wenger family. James, who is Chair of the Shenandoah Mennonite Historians and pastor of Mt. Clinton Mennonite Church, provides an overview of the lives of the Wengers, through his review of a 2014 book.

Our second article, written by Norman Wenger, outlines a brief history of the Jacob Wenger house in the Linville area of Rockingham County, Va. Norman, the CEO of Rockingham Cooperative in Harrisonburg and Treasurer of the Shenandoah Historians, is descended from Jacob and Hannah Wenger. In his article, Norman mentions a Wenger baby that was passed around by Union soldiers on the Wenger farm, on the day of the great barn burning in 1864. That baby was Norman Wenger's grandfather. Norman is coauthor of the six-volume Unionist book series on the Civil War.

Evan K. Knappenberger and his research friends have rescued Virginia Mennonite Bishop Daniel Good's *Ordnung* from the dusty shelves of denominational archives. Take note of Knappenberger's outstanding article, with more details and translation on the Historian's website. See the web link on the back of this issue.

Blessings to all as you read!



Valley View Mennonite Church, Criders, Va., celebrates 140 years in 2020. Formed as a Northern District congregation in 1880, the church serves folks in the Criders and Bergton area of Virginia. Valley View's meetinghouse is pictured above left. H. Michael Shenk III is the Valley View pastor and he is a District Minister in the Virginia Mennonite Conference.

(Photos by Editor, February 2020)

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## A. D. & Annie: Stories, Letters, and Memories of A. D. Wenger and Annie Lehman Wenger, their families and their descendants

Book written by Lois M. Lehman and Rhoda E. Cressman, 2014<sup>1</sup>

Book Review by James L. Hershberger

*Scope of book:* This fascinating family anecdotal history book of 425 pages begins with the Wengers, Brennemans, and other Anabaptists who immigrated to Pennsylvania starting in 1717 and following years, then on to Virginia later in the century.

The central focus of this account is Amos Daniel Wenger (1867-1935) and Annie Wenger's (1878-1955) family and community life. But there is ample material on grandparents, parents, Amos (A. D.) and Annie's family, church and larger context in their formative years. It then moves on to their children and next generations. Many of the members of each generation have been involved in the public life of Lancaster and Virginia Mennonite Conference churches and educational institutions.

The book has many strengths. The authors describe many details and events that portray the commitments and Christian character of the Wenger family. They use primary sources such as letters to and from family members, interviews and other written material. Many of their sources come from women in the family. These sources provide for a rich and varied public and private descriptions of personalities, church, community and family life as it plays out in courtship, marriage, housekeeping, farming and gardening, raising children, family life, sickness, deaths, travels, the Civil War,

church life and practice, passing the faith to the next generation and much more. Other sources include church publications and periodicals of the day which provide details of the public lives of the men and some of the women, many of whom were involved as ministers, bishops, teachers, missionaries and other public leadership roles in the Mennonite Church in the US and abroad.

The book describes the lively faith and a keen sense of God working in the life that A. D. and Annie shared. The Mennonite Church was undergoing a clear revival in a love of Jesus, sense of sin, the meaning of salvation and a warm conviction of the kindness of God in the life of the believer, especially of young people. However, the Civil War tested this Mennonite world. A. D.'s parents shielded young men who deserted rather than fight in the Confederate cause. His father, Jacob, voted against secession but was forced into the Confederate army as his mother Hannah wept. Jacob told the confederate officer, "I will carry the gun...but I will be sure to aim it so it will not harm anyone." Because of his refusal to cooperate officers made him carry rocks from one place to another and then finally dismissed him for his refusal to cooperate.

Amos Daniel Wenger, born two years after the Civil War's end, grew up in his parents' home two miles west of Edom, Virginia. The Civil War stories told by his parents, neighbors and church family detailing the reality of cannons, battles disease, death and hunger made a deep impression on young A. D. He was afraid to sleep at night sometimes from the scare he felt from hearing the stories. He was shy also; at one point in his childhood

1. Lehman, Lois M., and Rhoda Garber Cressman. *A. D. & Annie : Stories, Letters, and Memories of A. D. Wenger and Annie Lehman Wenger, Their Families and Their Descendants*, 2014.

he climbed up a tree and into the second story window to his room to avoid the visitors in the living room. He did not like school in his first year but by the age of twelve he enjoyed his lessons. According to a sister he was taken with the beauty of Jesus' words in Matt 11:28, "come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest..." and believed that someday he would be a preacher. When he was nineteen he completed a four week teaching certificate but was still too shy to apply for a teaching position. Instead he worked on the family farm for several more years. When he was twenty-two, in 1889, he spent six weeks intensively reading the Bible, *Martyrs' Mirror* and the Mennonite *Dordrecht Confession of Faith* in a search for a real Christian experience for his life.

He also went west and worked for his sister, Anna and her husband for six months in Elida, Ohio. During this time, he asked for baptism and took this step of faith in God. From there he visited his brother in Iowa, and other family in Nebraska and Kansas. He taught school for a year in Garden City, Missouri, 1893-1894. He spent the summer at the Mennonite Home Mission and attended Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. He returned to Missouri to teach school and was ordained by Bishop David Kauffman and began preaching and holding revival meetings in local Mennonite churches, then in other Midwest states and as far away as Ontario, Canada. He noticed that many Mennonite youths were leaving the church and he decided to return east and settle into church work. He preached his way through Ohio and Ontario to Lancaster, Pa., arriving July 10, 1896. In the next year he preached over 350



Annie Lehman Wenger and Amos D. Wenger, an informal wedding photo taken around 1900.  
Photo from Sara Kreider's collection.

sermons! He inaugurated a new preaching style, leaving the usual German in Mennonite churches of the 1890's for contemporary English of the day. He used calm, reasoned speech, always with an invitation to accept Jesus as Savior at the end of the sermon.

He was also courting Mary Hostetter. She was born in Millersville, Pa., in 1868 in the farmhouse of Abraham and Catherine Hostetter. She was a precocious and only child. Her parents died before she was nineteen. She lived with extended family and felt the need for a Savior and was baptized in the church in 1888. She and A. D. met through her articles that appeared in *Herald of Truth*, a new Mennonite publication. They began writing and she visited him in Indiana in 1896. Their letters reveal frank discussions of their faith in God, love for revival in the church and searching if they were the right partners for each other. They were married July 1, 1897. Their honeymoon consisted of a two-month trip to the Pacific coast visiting Mennonite churches that A. D. preached in. They returned to Millersville to the home

that Mary had built. A. D. continued leading revival meetings in many churches for the next year. Mary however became ill with Bright's disease, kidney failure, during this first year. A. D. canceled all his meetings to care for her but she died July 14, 1898 just days after their first wedding anniversary. A. D. was devastated, writing later, "The shock was devastating...I ate and slept very little indeed for a week." About 2,000 people attended her funeral.

After her death A. D. took a fourteen-month trip around the world. He visited sites in Europe where the Mennonite church was born. He kept keen records of expenses (around \$1,000), itinerary, places and people he saw. He wrote his observations in a book called *Six Months in Bible lands and around the world in fourteen months*. Moral, practical and religious subjects are treated in harmony with the Bible. His observations show he became even more convinced God was calling him to preach for revival and renewal in the church and that the only hope for humankind was found in the promises of God for salvation through Jesus Christ.

Upon his return to Pa., March 11, 1900, he met Annie Lehman daughter of D. N. and Magdalena Lehman. Annie taught school and was active in the home mission movement in Philadelphia, teaching Sunday School and Bible meetings. After a short courtship they married September 27, 1900. Annie continued teaching school, taking classes to increase her educational certificate after their marriage. But two months later A. D. contracted polio and Annie stopped school in order to take care of him. The young married couple spent the next year dealing with and recovering from his polio that left him crippled in his legs.

They lived together for the next eight years in Millersville where Anne bore four children, ran the house and A. D. spent much of the time away conducting revival meetings as far as Alberta, Canada. While AD was gone for months at a time Annie was the sole parent for four small children. They decided A. D.'s long absences were unhealthy for the family and they needed a settled place and church. A. D.'s identity was as a revival preacher and did not fit well as a minister in a church. So they decided on a new start in a new church. A. D.'s brother had moved to Fentress, Virginia (now Chesapeake) and joined Mount Pleasant Mennonite Church, formed in 1905. They decided to join him there where they could farm and A. D. could preach regularly in the new church. In 1908 they sold the farm in Lancaster County that A. D. inherited from his first wife Mary and bought a farm in Fentress. It had an old farm house on stilts, full of fleas from the hogs that lived under the house. They grew potatoes and strawberries in the first years and then expanded into grapes. They shipped their produce as far as New York City. The authors use many letters between the Lancaster Lehman and Wengers families and A. D. and Annie's family members as well as diaries to detail the family, church and community life of the first twenty years in Fentress. A. D. served as pastor at Mount Pleasant Mennonite Church for thirteen years and served on the Board of Goshen College. In the early 1920's A. D. was called to the presidency of the new Eastern Mennonite School (EMS) in Harrisonburg, Virginia and the family established a home in Harrisonburg during the school year, returning to Fentress for two weeks at Christmas and each summer keeping the farm productive, preaching again in the church.

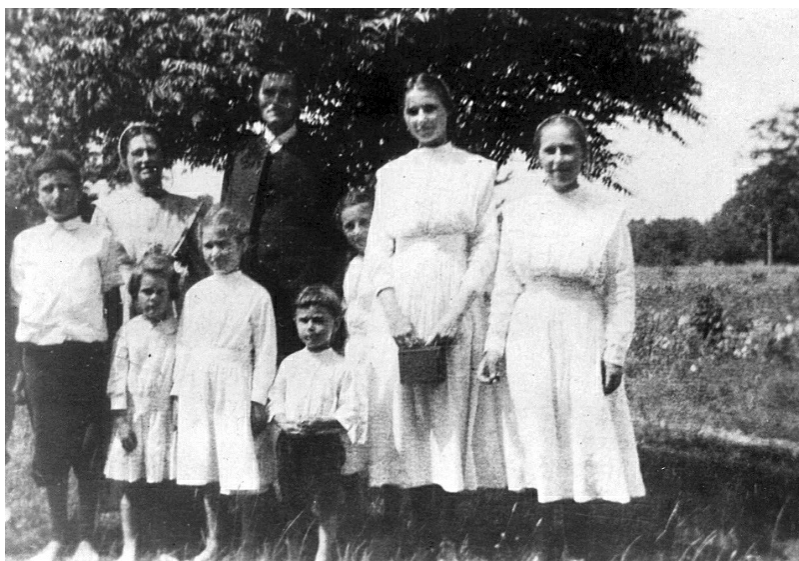
The book details life in Harrisonburg in the new EMS opportunities for education the Wenger children gladly embraced. It also names the difficulties and conflicts in the school and church over issues of plain dress, worldliness, millenarianism, musical instruments and how to allocate fund-raising geography between Goshen College and EMS as well as starting businesses to employ students to pay their tuition costs. A. D. served as president at EMS for thirteen years. In 1935 when he was sixty-eight he became ill and died within several days. The auditorium was full at his funeral with friends, family and church leaders. His body was taken to Fentress and buried in the church cemetery there. He was honored as an evangelist, youth leader, minister, education administrator, successful farmer, and a person of love filled Christian character.

Annie was a very busy woman. She bore eight children; one son Ralph, died as a baby. She ran a household including boarding students. This included cooking, keeping the wood stove going, doing laundry, the garden and many other tasks. After A. D. died she maintained the Harrisonburg home boarding more students another four years, then moved back to Fentress. She ran the farm and house there and spent time in Lancaster taking care of her mother. She was known as a person of great Bible knowledge, Christian faith, and a warm friend. In later years she lived with her children and died in 1955, buried beside A. D. in the cemetery at Mount Pleasant Mennonite Church.

Amos Daniel and Annie grew up in Lancaster Pennsylvania. But their lives spread

into Tidewater and Shenandoah Valley areas of Virginia. Three adult sons were ministers, schoolteachers and missionaries, three daughters married ministers or deacons, one daughter was a missionary for over fifty years. They lived and ministered in various places on the east coast of the US, in Canada and overseas in Ethiopia and Saint Croix.

Some suggestions for the book are in order. While the central family focus of the book is on A. D. and Annie Wenger it also describes their parents, grandparents and great grandparents as well as children and some grandchildren. A genealogical chart of both sides of the family would aid in keeping track of the large number of people, some with similar names in the various generations. There is a map of the Millersville and Manor township where A. D. and Mary lived the first four years of their married life. A map of where they lived in Fentress and Harrisonburg Virginia would also round out knowledge of the geography of their lives.



Amos D. and Annie Wenger family, about 1921. A. D. Wenger became president of Eastern Mennonite School in 1922.

Photo from Janet W. Yoder collection.

## If These Walls Could Talk Stories from the Jacob Wenger Home

by Norman Wenger

Whenever I visit an old pre-civil war home, I often consider, what if these walls could talk? There would be tales of joy as births and weddings occurred. There would be stories of terror and anger from the Civil War and there would most certainly be mention of great sadness and sorrow that occurs when family members and loved ones die. This would most certainly be true of the Jacob Wenger home that has been occupied by descendants of Jacob Wenger's father Joseph Wenger for 160 plus years.

Jacob Wenger purchased the land on which the Jacob Wenger home was built in 1856<sup>1</sup> from his Uncle, John Wenger. His Uncle John was also the builder of the house in 1857 or 1858 according to the recollections of his son Solomon who told his children that his sister Anna was the first to be born in the "new brick house."<sup>2</sup>

### Family of Jacob Wenger and Hannah Brenneman<sup>3</sup>

Jacob Wenger was born at Edom, Rockingham County, Virginia, June 4, 1829 and died July 22, 1879. Married March 13, 1853 to Hannah Brenneman, born April 9, 1834 and died May 17, 1919.

Their eleven children were:

1. Deed of Bargain and Sale from John Wenger and wife Anna to Jacob Wenger, 1 September 1856, *Burnt Deeds*, Book 29, p. 437, Rockingham County Clerk's Office, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

2. Edith Wenger Morgan, *Stories My Father Told Us*, (Privately Published 1942) p. 1.

3. Compiled by various Wenger Cousins, *The Wenger History; Descendants of Jacob and Hannah Brenneman Wenger* (Privately Published, 1970). Dates and Family Outline taken from this Booklet.

4. John L. Heatwole, *The Burning: Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley*, (Charlottesville, Virginia, Rockbridge Publishing an imprint of Howell Press, Inc., 1998) pp. 160-161.

Christian Wenger (1854 – 1863). Died during the Civil War at age of 9.

Barbara Wenger, (1855 – 1946), m. 1877 to Jacob Andrew Andes.

Solomon B. Wenger, (1857 – 1941), m. 1882 to Sallie J. Beery, (1855- 1883), m. 1886 to Belle Irene Gruely, (1857 – 1916), m. 1918 to Minnie Wampler Miller, (1866 - 1953).

Anna Wenger, (1858 – 1934), m. 1885 to Benjamin Brenneman. She was the first child born in the new brick Jacob Wenger home.

Lydia Wenger, (1860 – 1944), m. 1883 to Cyrus B. Showalter.

Adam Wenger, (1862 – 1945), m 1888 to Amanda Hess Rohrer.

Timothy J. Wenger, (1864 – 1956), m. 1886 to Mary Powell.

Amos Daniel Wenger, (1867 – 1935), m. 1897 to Mary Hostetter, (1868– 1898), m. 1900 to Anna May Lehman. A. D. Wenger was Mennonite minister, teacher and the second president of Eastern Mennonite School (now Eastern Mennonite University) from 1922 to 1935.

Samuel M. Wenger, (1870 – 1893).

Magdalena Wenger, (1872 – 1941), m. 1891 to John Geil Brunk.

Katie E. Wenger, (1875 – 1957), m. 1900 to George R. Brunk, (1871 – 1938). He was a Mennonite Bishop.

### Stories from the Civil War<sup>4</sup>

Jacob Wenger had been one of the few men in Rockingham County to vote against secession in the spring of 1861. In spite of threats of hanging, he voted his conscience and cast his negative vote. One of his neighbors said

that while most were in fear of the enemy's approach, Jacob Wenger said they should "roast turkeys for them."<sup>5</sup>

Probably the most terrifying day in the history of the Jacob Wenger family was in the fall of 1864 on the day of "the burning". As different parties came to burn his barn, Jacob showed them an affidavit stating that he voted against secession and thus was loyal to the Union. The soldiers would show their approval and ride away. This routine was repeated several times during the day and the barn was spared from destruction.

The nearby Brenneman's Mill was not intentionally spared, however. The mill was built by Abraham Brenneman around 1800 and was owned by George Shaver and his wife Hannah during this period. George was ill and Hannah age 77 had to face the burning parties alone. She rang an alarm for help which was heard by Jacob Wenger and his hired man who rushed to her aid and helped to extinguish the blaze.

During one visit by a group of Union Soldiers, a cavalryman noticed nine-year old Barbara holding her baby brother Timothy. The soldier dismounted and took the infant from her arms causing great alarm to Barbara and her mother Hannah. He then passed the baby to another soldier who held him for a moment and then passed him to the next one. When they each had taken a turn, the baby was returned safely to his sister by the first man and he explained that they were homesick for their own children.



The Jacob Wenger house, located at 4200 Linstead Farm Lane, Rockingham County, Va., about three miles north of Harmony Square in Harrisonburg, Va. The house was built in 1857. Peter and Bethany Versluis Fairfield, descendants of Jacob and Hannah Wenger, live in the house today. The front porch was added, along with a new roof, in 2015.

Photo from Bethany Versluis Fairfield, 2020

### **Marriage of Katie to George R. Brunk**

In June of 1900 Bishop George R. Brunk was holding meetings at Lindale church and while sitting on the platform waiting to preach, he noticed Katie Wenger who was getting a drink for her mother, Hannah. He decided to make a visit to the Wenger household the next day with preacher Christley Brunk and it must have been love at first sight for both George and Katie. After a courtship of less than six weeks they were married 8:00 a.m., Sunday morning, July 15, 1900 in the

5. Norman R. Wenger, David S. Rodes, Emmert F. Bittinger, *Unionists and the Civil War Experience in the Shenandoah Valley; Volume II*, (Harrisonburg, Virginia, The Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center and The Valley Research Associates, Printed by Penobscot Press, 2004) p. 271.



The historic Wenger house, Rockingham County, Va, near Greenmount Church of the Brethren and the Brenneman-Turner Mill. The house dates to 1857. This west porch was added in 2015. Occupants of the house are the Peter and Bethany Versluis Fairfield family.

Photo from Bethany Versluis Fairfield, 2020

parlor of the Wenger home by L. J. Heatwole with about sixty persons present. After the ceremony they attended preaching services at nearby Brennemens Church. Mother Hannah expressed her concerns that the couple were rushing things, but George told her that Adam and Eve did not have to wait long, and Katie added that neither did Isaac and Rebecca.<sup>6</sup>

### Death of Jacob Wenger

When Jacob Wenger died on July 22, 1879 at age fifty, Hannah was left with a household of eight children ranging from Anna age 20 to Katie age 4. Her first son Christian, died at age 9 during the Civil War. Daughter Barbara was married, and Solomon had left the year before to “go west.” Her older

daughters Anna and Lydia were certainly most helpful in those early years but nevertheless it must have been overwhelming to raise such a large family alone.

Hannah and the heirs of Jacob sold the farm to Barbara Beard, a niece of Jacob Wenger, in 1901. Barbara was the daughter of Jacob’s sister Mary Wenger who married Jacob Geil. Barbara Beard’s daughter, Jacie Beard Dovel, inherited the property in 1941 and she sold it to her brother Daniel in 1951.<sup>7</sup> The property stayed in the Beard Family until 2003 when various members of the family of Ruth Brunk Stoltzfus bought the property from Daniel Beard.<sup>8</sup> Ruth Stoltzfus was a granddaughter of Jacob Wenger. Currently the property is owned by Ruth Stoltzfus’s grandson, Peter Fairfield and his wife Bethany.

If only those walls could talk!



The Jacob Wenger house, in the Linville-Edom region of Rockingham County, Va.

Photo from Bethany Versluis Fairfield, 2020

6. James O. Lehman, *Lindale’s Song*, (Harrisonburg, Virginia, Lindale Mennonite Church, 1998) pp. 49-50.

7. Deed of Bargain and Sale from Jacie Beard Dovel, widow, to Daniel J. Beard, 17 January 1901, Deed Book 230, pp 514-515, Rockingham County Clerk’s Office, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

8. Deed of Bargain and Sale, 9 December 2003, Deed Book 2415 p. 647, Rockingham County Clerk’s Office, Harrisonburg, Virginia.



## Daniel Good's 1830's *Ordnung und Gemeinde Regel*—Newly Rediscovered and Translated Documents Shed New Light on 19th Century Virginia Mennonites

by Evan K. Knappenberger, with translations by John S. Umble and Lois Bowman Kreider<sup>1</sup>

Almost twenty years after the death of Bishop Daniel Good (1781-1850), his fellow Bishop and cousin, Jacob Hildebrand Jr. (1816-1899), found in Good's papers a handwritten manuscript that piqued his interest. It was a peculiar little document: a hand-bound booklet writ longhand in a flowing German script, the distinctive old Virginia German dialect that has since all but died out.<sup>2</sup> Here was an unassuming but important work of both ecclesial and historical interest—so in 1869, Hildebrand posted the document to Mennonite publisher John F. Funk in Elkhart, Indiana, asking that it be translated, published and distributed to Mennonites around the world.

Hildebrand saw something in Good's writing that he believed should be shared with the broader religious community. Unfortunately, for reasons that will never be known, Funk did not share the sentiment, and Good's *Ordnung* sat another fifty years in a box in Elkhart, where it was transferred after his death to the Mennonite Church archives at nearby Goshen College. There it was briefly rediscovered in 1958 by Professor John S. Umble (1881-1966) who partially translated it and advised Virginia

Mennonite historian Harry A. Brunk of its existence, just in time to be added to Brunk's 1959 *History of Virginia Mennonites*.<sup>3</sup> Back into a box it quickly went: too esoteric, too parochial to be of interest to a generation of religious historians working on much grander projects that sought to unify American Mennonites across geographic and ecclesial divides. Good's *Ordnung* was again little more than a footnote in the story of American Mennonism.

In 2018, while preparing historical research at the Mennonite Church USA archives in Elkhart, Philip J. Yoder and I stumbled upon Good's manuscript ourselves. Unlike Funk, we decided that it was of significant value, especially but not exclusively for Virginia Mennonites of all sects, many of whom can trace genealogical or church roots all the way back to Daniel Good himself. After enlisting the help of Lois Bowman Kreider and Elwood Yoder, the translation started by Umble in 1958 was finished in 2018, and is now for the first time being published as Jacob Hildebrand wanted it done in 1869.

*This article is a condensed version of a comprehensive academic historical analysis which is available for free on the Shenandoah Mennonite Historians website along with the complete translation of the Good *Ordnung* itself.*<sup>4</sup>

### Dating the *Ordnung*

As he was finalizing his doctoral dissertation at the University of Virginia in the late

1. Evan K. Knappenberger is an independent historian and author in Hardy County, West Virginia. He has an M.A.R. from Eastern Mennonite Seminary and a B.A. from Eastern Mennonite University. Translations of the original *Ordnung* were done by John S. Umble (1958), and Knappenberger and Lois Bowman Kreider in August of 2018. Kreider is a lifelong accomplished historian, librarian and Germanist at Menno Simons Historical Library, EMU.

2. Research into Shenandoah Valley German, which was a distinctive (and more "pure") dialect than Pennsylvania Dutch: Smith, Elmer Lewis, John G. Stewart and M. Ellsworth Kyger, 1962. *The Pennsylvania Germans of the Shenandoah Valley*. Pennsylvania German Folklore Society 26. 1-278. Also: William J. Pulte Jr., 1971, *German in Virginia and West Virginia*, in Glenn G. Gilbert (ed.), *The German Language in America*, 58-69. Austin: University of Texas.

3. Harry A. Brunk, *History of the Mennonites in Virginia*, Vol. 1., Harrisonburg, 1959.

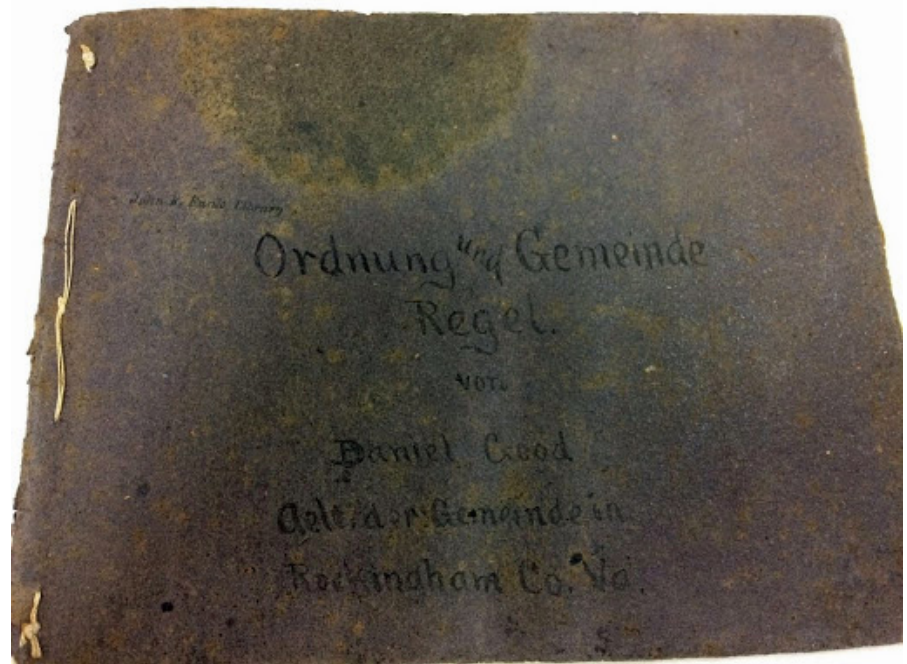
4. <https://mennonitearchivesofvirginia.net/>

1950's, Harry A. Brunk was informed by John Umble of the existence of the Good Ordnung. Arriving too late to fully exploit for his historical analysis, Brunk nevertheless attempted a brief discussion of the document and its import. Brunk and Umble safely dated the manuscript to 1850, the latest possible date for an elderly Bishop Good to have written it, given his death the same year. However the totality of their reasoning for their conservative dating is unclear. A careful consideration of the text itself—which Brunk did not have a chance to examine in person—consists of multiple strata, even addended pages of different species of paper, clearly marking it as a document which underwent a lengthy creation process. And because it includes a lengthy homily in the Old Shenandoah German language (a practice which began phasing out of Virginia Mennonite Conference churches in the 1820's) it is likely that the Ordnung was at least in part begun long before 1850.

### Dating the Ordnung

Good's document is more than a simple *Ordnung und Gemeinde Regel* (a worship resource with prayers, holy orders and rules). The bulk of the Good's text is a homily, something that he likely preached regularly at Mennonite churches and in private settings. It is of significant historical interest, and offers a window into the religious life of German set-

tlers in the Shenandoah Valley, as they interacted with their neighbors and their religion hybridized accordingly.<sup>5</sup> Theologically, Good's



Cover of Virginia Mennonite Bishop Daniel Good's *Ordnung und Gemeinde Regel* booklet from the early 19th century, now in the Mennonite Church USA Archives, Elkhart, Indiana.

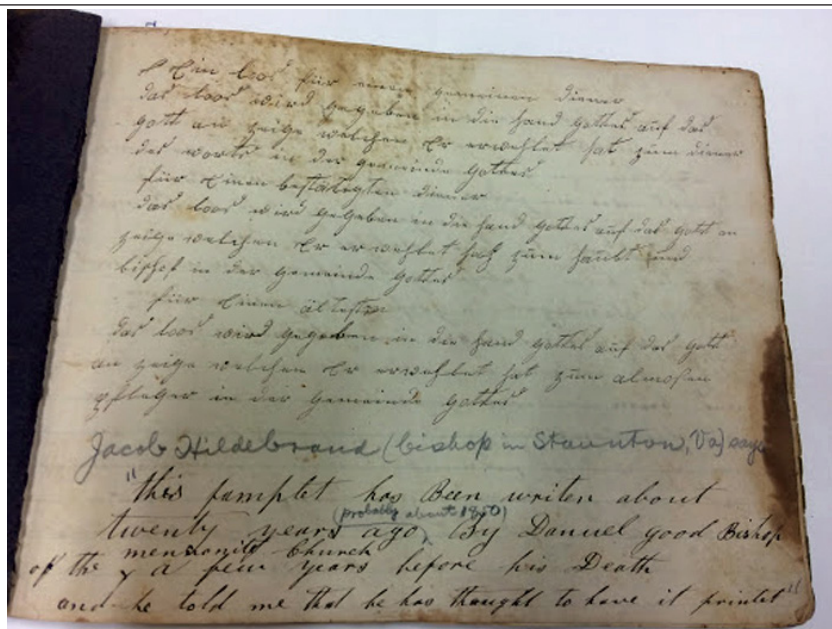
Photos by Evan K. Knappenberger.

sermon is peppered with examples of the kinds of theological ideas that were quite nearly more Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Brethren than what would strictly be considered Pennsylvania Mennonite.

There is also a lengthy poetic appeal and an original hymn, a kind of artistic homiletics which was not standard among Mennonite Ordnung. Whether Good utilized these poems in worship settings or simply used the final pages of his booklet as a space for creative religious expression is unclear, but it is unlikely that he would have composed them in his manuscript if he hadn't thought them worthy of some kind of preservation.

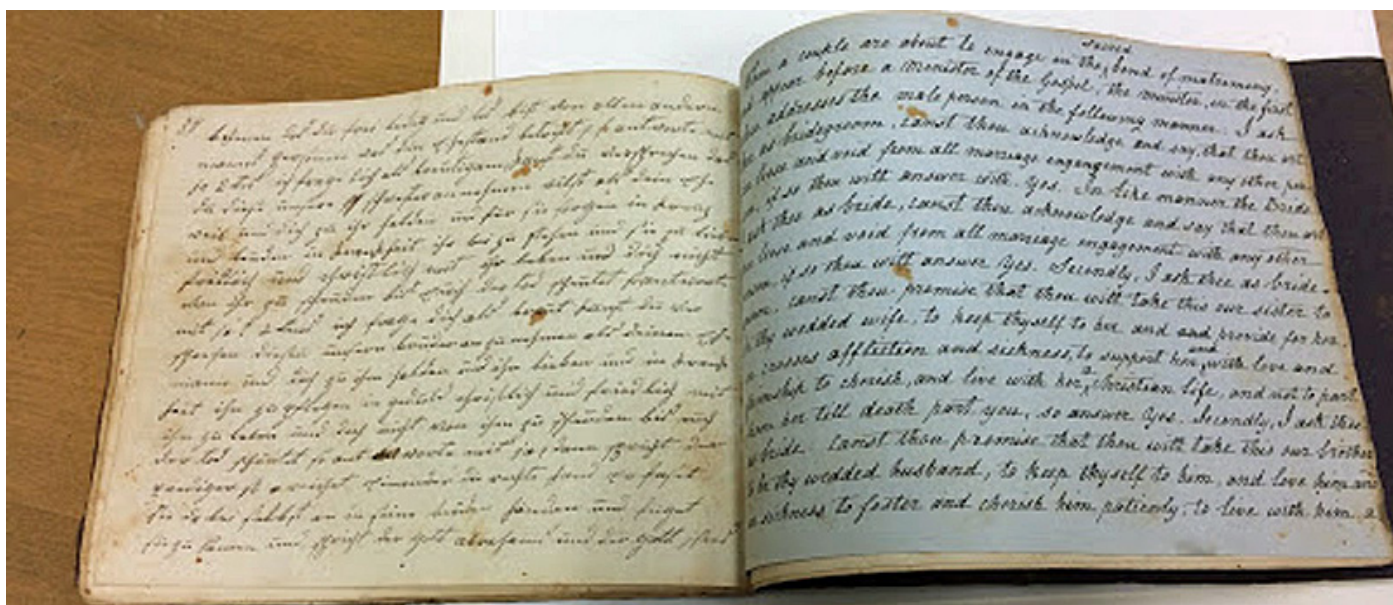
5. This is a theme that I have asserted in several articles in this paper-- interdenominational fluidity, and religious exchange among local Mennonites and other Protestants.

The world of Daniel Good is hard to imagine. He was ordained before the creation of Virginia Conference at a time when Mennonites in the Shenandoah were only starting to build churches and preach in English. Prior to this, the Goods would have worshipped in private homes in the German language since their arrival in the area in the mid 1790's. As the diasporic Mennonite community grew in Rockingham and Augusta counties, it grew apart from the Southeastern Pennsylvania Mennonite stronghold where religious authority was vested. A series of conflicts arose that by the 1830's was enough to persuade the Lancaster area Mennonite Bishops to hand over local control to Virginians. Daniel Good was one of those selected by lot to the first generation bishopric (along with the notable Peter Burkholder Jr.) and oversaw a formative era for his district and his home church, Trissels. The Good Ordnung provides a fascinating look into the mind of Daniel Good, and the times and religion from



The opening page of Daniel Good's *Ordnung* booklet, showing several historical layers of text.

which Virginia Mennonites grew. It should be of interest to local historians and German linguists as well as the many descendants of the Good clan and the Northern District of Virginia Mennonite Conference. And now, after nearly 175 years, it is finally being made available to the people for which it was intended.



Pages 33 and 34 of Bishop Good's *Ordnung* booklet show the stratified nature of the manuscript. Good provided both German and English versions of the matrimonial rites.



In its 185th year, the Virginia Mennonite Conference delegates met in session at the Waynesboro Mennonite Church, Augusta County, Va., February 1, 2020. Worship leaders included the Northern District Ministers H. Michael Shenk III (left) and Aldine Musser (right). Michael Shenk III also serves as Pastor of Valley View Mennonite Church, Criders, Va. In the center is Philip J. Yoder, Pastor of Crest Hill Community Church, Wardensville, W.Va., a VMC congregation. (Photo by Editor)

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 Gerald R. Brunk  
 Elwood E. Yoder, Editor

If you have an idea for an article or picture for the *Historian*, contact the Editor at [elyoder@gmail.com](mailto:elyoder@gmail.com).

All past issues of *Shenandoah Mennonite Historian*, from 1994-2020, can be found at [mennonitearchivesofvirginia.net](http://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.

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