

# SHENANDOAH MENNONITE HISTORIAN

Volume 1, Number 1

Winter 1994

Quarterly publication of the  
Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians

## New Historical Organization Formed

On October 2, 1993, following a continental breakfast in the West Dining Hall of Eastern Mennonite College, the Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians was inaugurated.

An ad hoc committee consisting of Laban Peachey, James Rush, and Linden Wenger had been chosen at an preliminary meeting in the fall of 1992 to look into the possibility of starting such an organization. Their recommendation for the establishment of a local historical group was accepted by those present at the October 1993 breakfast meeting.

In other business, the founding committee was asked to continue to provide leadership with the help of perhaps two more persons chosen from several that were nominated from the floor. From this list, Lois Bowman and Randy Shank accepted the opportunity to serve.

The purpose of the Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians, as the organization will be called, is to "bring together persons interested in Valley church history, to collect historical information about

churches, families and individuals, and to assist the church community and individuals to tell the story of their past", according to Laban Peachey, one of the founders.

Membership dues were set for 1994 at \$5.00 per couple and \$3.00 for single memberships. Charter memberships number approximately 60, however it is still possible to become a charter member if dues are received by March 15, 1994. Dues should be sent to Linden Wenger, 1570 Hillcrest Dr., Harrisonburg, Va. 22801. Persons who are not members of the Mennonite Church but who have an interest in local Mennonite history are

heartily invited to join also.

Activities planned for the year 1994 include a summer field trip of historical sights in Page County. An annual meeting is also being planned for the fall of 1994.

At present, plans are to publish a newsletter, "Shenandoah Mennonite Historian", quarterly. It will contain news items, a calendar of upcoming events, articles on Shenandoah Valley Mennonite pioneers, local genealogy, and other informative items. Articles to be considered for publication should be sent to Randall Shank, P.O. Box 870, Broadway, Va. 22815.

## Blosser Publishes "Watchful Pilgrim"

In August 1880, Abraham Blosser of Dale Enterprise in Rockingham County began publishing a newspaper. Called "The Watchful Pilgrim", it was "devoted to the interests of the Church of God known as the Mennonites, the exposition of gospel truth, and the promotion of practical piety among all classes".

It was first published as a monthly and contained twenty-four pages. Later it was reduced to sixteen pages. In 1883 it became a semimonthly publication containing eight pages of short articles by Mennonite writers, news items including schedules of church and conference meetings, obituaries, and a few advertisements and want ads. Cost of the paper was 50 cents per year, "ministers of the gospel half price". It was published until 1888.

Here are examples of several advertisements found in the May 15, 1887 issue.

Henry A. Mumaw, M. D.  
Homoeopathist Napanee, Elkhart Co.,  
Ind.. Speaks English and German.  
Chronic illnesses a specialty.  
Consultations in person or by letter.

### FOR SALE

Two steam engines, one a 20 horse-power, and on sills, in No. 1 order. The other is a 8 horse power, portable: with a good separator, all in good order. I will sell the above named machines at unusually low prices and make the payments to suit the purchaser. Come and see the property; or address

JACOB HILDEBRAND

Box 35, Waynesboro Va. For further information. March 15th, 1887.

P. S. April the 5th 1887 I will take five hundred dollars for my steam thresher (it is in good order) and make the payments to suit the purchaser, and seven hundred dollars for the 20 horse power engine; a discount of 30 percent allowed for cash.

## EVENTS OF INTEREST

FIELD TRIP TO PAGE COUNTY-

WATCH FOR MORE INFORMATION  
IN NEXT ISSUE

ANNUAL MEETING -

OCTOBER 1, 1994

# Preserving Photographs

# MENNO SIMONS HISTORICAL LIBRARY

Almost everyone has some photographs that they consider to be priceless. Although there are many ideas as to how best to preserve these, all of us need to have some guidelines to follow. The following information is excerpted from a pamphlet distributed by the Virginia State Library and Archives in Richmond, Virginia.

Photographs document history in a special way, and as we collect them, they complement our family papers, providing a graphic reality and a unique understanding of the past for us.

Like family papers, the amount of photographic material usually grows unwieldy and is often stored in cardboard boxes, drawers, and other inappropriate locations. Images are often unidentified and undated. Photographs, however, are a significant part of our past, and they document our history. Thus it is important to consider the organization and identification of your materials.

We recommend the following measures to extend the life of your photographs. These are measures designed to slow the process of deterioration. Any conservation practices should be done by a professional conservator.

*Minimize temperature extremes and fluctuations.* Ideals are no higher than 68 degrees and 35-40% relative humidity.

*Avoid storing in attics, basements, outbuildings, and places around water pipes* Such areas encourage the growth of mold and mildew.

The northeast corner of the top floor of Eastern Mennonite College's library is home to the Menno Simons Historical Library. With well-lighted work tables and even some upholstered chairs for just sitting and reading, time seems to pass quickly as one reads from family and church histories, peruses the magazines, or delves into the materials obtained over the years from local collections.

The friendly staff is glad to aid both the novice and the expert in the search for that one fact which has eluded discovery or that volume of information on a specific subject. Here is some additional information passed on to us by the MSHL staff.

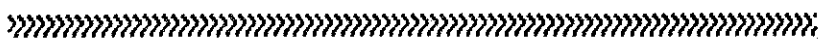
The major subjects collect-

ed in the MSHL are Mennonite, Amish and Anabaptist history and life and local Virginia history. This includes books on Mennonite and local genealogy.

You are all welcome to come and use these materials in the library (they may not be checked out). Hours are 10-5 M-F. Saturday hours are limited.

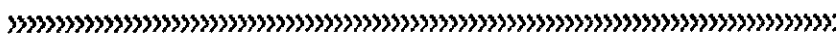
The MSHL also has a collection of photographs, including local Mennonite families and places of interest. Not all of these are identified. If you can help us name these mystery people, we have a small gift for you. The MSHL welcomes donations of old photographs or copies.

- Lois Bowman, Harold Huber  
432-4177, 432-4184



## Quick Quiz -Answers on last page I

- 1) Which of the following churches came into existence after 1880?  
a) Weavers b) Pike c) Zion d) Hildebrands
- 2) How many children did early pioneer Abraham Breneman have?  
a) 9 b) 11 c) 13 d) 16
- 3) Which of these locations was/ is in Augusta County?  
a) Coiner's Store b) Amberly c) Baker's Mill d) Cowan's Station



*Avoid light* Any light can fade the photographic image.

*Avoid food and drink while handling materials* Spillage damages the materials and also attracts insects and rodents.

*Avoid cardboard, wooden boxes, and wooden frames* Store and frame in acid-free, unbuffered, chemically inert materials.

*Avoid touching the emulsion surface* Hold prints and negatives by the edges.

*Avoid the use of pressure sensitive tapes, metal clips, rubber bands, and adhesives.*

*Avoid ballpoint and felt-tip pen notations* Identification is important, but use a soft pencil on the back of the photograph near the edges.

*Copy your important color images in black and white* Color will not last.

# Peter Burkholder Jr. 1783-1846

Peter Burkholder Jr. came to the Shenandoah Valley with his family as a young boy in 1790. They settled near Broadway in "The Brush" along Cedar Run just at the edge of what was to be the site of Trissels Mennonite Church. The Burkholder children grew up in a devoted Christian home and knew all the joys and sorrows of pioneer life. In 1798 Peter's mother Margaret Huber Burkholder was buried at the top of the hill. His father died in 1799 while on a trip to Pennsylvania and was buried at Groffdale Cemetery. Peter became an orphan at the age of sixteen.

Peter was active in the life of the Mennonite Church, and it was while on a trip to Greenbrier County in present-day West Virginia with Preacher Abraham Niswonger, that he met his future wife Elizabeth Coffman, daughter of Isaac and Esther Coffman. They were married Oct. 11, 1803. Peter Burkholder Jr. was ordained to the Ministry on Oct. 27, 1805, thus becoming the youngest man to be ordained in Virginia Conference.

Around 1818 Peter and Elizabeth moved their family to a large home several miles west of Harrisonburg. Their home served as a meeting place for Valley Mennonites for many years. Peter and Elizabeth were blessed with nine children, eight of whom grew to adulthood.

**Margaret** born Sept. 26, 1804 married Jonas Blosser.

**Esther** born Aug. 21, 1806 married John Hildebrand.

**Christian** born Nov. 30, 1807 married Frances Lahman.

**Abraham** born Feb. 20, 1809 married Susanna Simmons.

**Peter III** born July. 20, 1812 died at sixteen years.

**David** born Mar. 3, 1814 married Anna Beery.

**Elizabeth** born Oct. 10, 1815 married David Hartman.

**Martin** born Feb. 7, 1817 married Rebecca Shank.

**Mary** born Mar. 26, 1819 married Henry Rexrode.

Peter Burkholder Jr. was very influential in the growth and everyday life of the Mennonite Church in Virginia. He was an excellent speaker and an authority on Church doctrine. Peter was also a writer and his most influential works are included in the book Confession of Faith published in Winchester, Va. in 1837. Among these were a treatise Nine Reflections on the Holy Scriptures, and a twenty-two page discussion concerning his view on the subject of Predestination.

He served during a time of great change. The Church had grown to the extent that meeting in homes was not always possible. Meetinghouses were being built in the different areas, starting in 1822 with Trissels Mennonite Church near the plot where his mother was buried. In 1828 Peter spearheaded the building of Burkholders' Church near his home just west of Harrisonburg. It later became known as Weavers Mennonite Church, taking it's new name from Samuel Weaver, an early sexton and caretaker who lived nearby.

Other changes taking place included the call for services in

English and the formation of Sunday Schools. Peter often had to assume the role of mediator as these changes were taking place. Peter was considered a man of great wisdom and spiritual strength.

As to his physical appearance, L.J. Heatwole in the 1914 *Family Almanac* states, "He was a man of commanding presence, of medium height and wore a long flowing beard that had turned gray with the advance of years".

In the year 1835, following the death of Bishop Henry Shank, Peter Burkholder Jr. was called to the office of Bishop of Virginia Conference. He served the entire Conference until 1840 when Virginia Conference was divided into Upper, Middle and Lower Districts. Bishop Peter Burkholder then served the Middle District until his death December 27, 1846. The inscription on his tombstone reads:

"Aged 63 years and 4 months. The deceased was a diligent Minister of the gospel for 41 years, and a Bishop of the church of the Mennonites for many years."

Sources used:  
unpublished- Blosser Exercise Folio by S.H. Blosser in Ella Coffman Collection MSHL.  
By the Grace of God by Nancy Burkholder Hess.  
Mennonite Church History by J.S. Hartzler and Daniel Kauffman.  
History of Mennonites in Virginia 1727-1900 by Harry Anthony Brunk.  
Family Almanac-Year 1914  
Published by Mennonite Publishing House. Pages 20-24

# Notes & Queries

**Niswonger**- Does anyone know if Abraham Niswonger (1774-1846) and his wife Ann Shank(?-1846) had any children? \*\*\* Randy Shank, P.O. Box 870, Broadway, Va. 22815

**Wanted:** Information and photos of the 11th Mennonite General Conference held at Assembly Park, August 27-28, 1919. I have Gospel Herald article.\*\*\* Jim Rush, 780 Parkwood Dr., Harrisonburg, Va. 22801

**Photos Wanted:** I would like photos or copies of photos of EMS students using the train in front of Assembly Park.\*\*\* Jim Rush, 780 Parkwood Dr., Harrisonburg, Va. 22801

o become a charter member of the Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians and to receive future copies of this newsletter, send name and address and 1994 dues (\$5 per couple, \$3 for single) to Linden Wenger, 1570 Hillcrest Dr. Harrisonburg, Virginia 22801

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The "Notes & Queries" section of this newsletter is meant to be a forum whereby the reader can obtain information about Shenandoah Mennonite families and happenings. If you have a need for such information, send us a letter with your inquiry. We also will consider short notes which may be of interest to others.. Be sure to send your name and address so that others can reply to you. We will attempt to print as many queries as space on this page allows. Send to Randall Shank, P.O. Box 870, Broadway, Va. 22815

Quick Quiz Answers: 1) c 2) d 3) a