

SHENANDOAH MENNONITE HISTORIAN

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Randall Shank, editor

Summer Bus Tour Planned for Augusta County

This summer there will be a unique opportunity to find out about the Mennonite community of the Southern District from the 18th century. Formerly known as the Upper District, this was historically all the Mennonite churches of Augusta County.

On Saturday August 17, 1996, a bus tour will visit the two earliest Mennonite churches in this region, Hildebrand and Springdale Churches. Persons with a knowledge of this area will tell of early settlements and families such as Burkholder Coffman, Gochenour, Shank, Heatwole, Landes, Hildebrand, Kendig, Stauffer (Stover), Fauber, and others. The Grove family will be especially highlighted with a tour of the family cemetery.

We'll hear about the mission outreaches of the early churches, the histories of the Augusta Mennonite School and the Virginia Relief Sale, originally the Augusta Relief Sale, plus much more.

We plan to leave the IHS parking lot at 8:30 AM and return between 3:30 and 4:00 PM. The cost of this trip includes

lunch at Springdale and a comfortable ride on a Travel Mates air conditioned bus. Cost for members of the SMVH is \$16.50 and for non-members, \$18.50. The money is non-refundable after August 5. Invite your friends for

this 3rd annual tour.

For more information or to reserve your place on this tour, contact Jim Rush, 780 Parkwood Drive, Harrisonburg, VA, 22801. (434-0792)

Task Force to Look at Possibility of Heritage Center for the Valley

A task force has been appointed by the Executive committee of the Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians. The goal of this group will be to look at the possibility of starting some type of Mennonite tourist/educational center similar to those which exist in other Mennonite communities in both the United States and in Canada.

Over the past year there has been an increasing interest by some individuals and by the Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians to provide preservation and educational opportunities through some type of interpretive or museum/information center.

This center would serve both our local community and those who are traveling through our history filled area.

Members of this task force are Laban Peachey, chairman, Richard Early, Dwight Hartman, James O. Lehman, Daryl Peifer, Randy Shank, Sharon Harman, Joyce Hedrick, Ken Ranck, and Richard Showalter.

Some of the decisions facing this task force include fleshing out a statement of purpose, determining a preferred location, and working out the financial and administrative framework.

Menno Simons Commemorative Fraktur Now Available at Historical Library

In order to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the birth of Menno Simons in 1496, the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church has commissioned a fraktur by Roma Ruth, a Mennonite fraktur artist from Harleysville, Pa. The text was chosen by John L. Ruth, writer, filmmaker, and storyteller. Autographed and numbered copies of this fraktur are now available at a cost of \$25 from the Menno Simons Historical Library at EMU. Also available are notecards. Notecards are \$3 for four cards. A portion of the profits from the sales will be divided between Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians and the Virginia Mennonite Conference Historical Committee.

For more information or to obtain your copy or notecards, call Lois Bowman or Harold Huber at the Menno Simons Historical Library (540)432-4177.

Editor's Note

It was reported at the April meeting of the executive committee that we now number 164 members and that our treasury has \$1430.

Program at Bank Mennonite on John S. Coffman Well Attended

About 140 persons were in attendance at Bank Mennonite Church on the evening of March 26, 1996 to hear Susan Fisher Miller's presentation on the life of John S. Coffman.

Miller, of Evanston, Ill. was the recipient of the Harry S. Brunk Award given for research conducted at Menno Simons Historical Library and Archives.

Coffman's early life in Virginia as a farmer, and his later life as an evangelist with his home in Indiana were highlighted during a very enjoyable and educational evening.

Of special interest to local history buffs was a paper listing forty-four applicants for baptism at Weaver Mennonite Church in

1888 following a one week revival meeting. This paper was researched by Herman L. Burkholder and Ruth L. Burkholder and edited by David L. Burkholder. Names and ages of these converts were of much interest to some.

On the following day, March 27, 1996, many persons again met, this time over lunch hour at the Eastern Mennonite Seminary and listened to Susan Fisher Miller discuss Coffman's "The Spirit of Progress" speech which he delivered at the dedication of the Elkhart Institute in February of 1896.

At both meetings a time of questions aided in informing those present of particulars in the life of John S. Coffman.

Joseph G. Wenger

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Jacob (1798-1882) married Rachel Floyd. They were Lutheran then United Brethren. Jacob was a Minister in the United Brethren Church. Jacob and Rachel lived in Ohio and Illinois and spelled their name Winger. They had seven children.

Magdalena (1800-1876) married John K. Beery, son of John and Barbara Kagy Beery. John was a farmer and good businessman. They had fifteen children and lived near Edom VA.

Henry (1804-1888) married Anna Beery, daughter of John and Barbara Kagy Beery. He never united with any church. They had seven children and are buried at Lindale Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Joseph's descendants in the Shenandoah Valley are numerous, and in 1902 they erected a lovely white marble memorial in the Lindale Mennonite Church Cemetery, formerly Brennemens, where Joseph and Barbara are buried.

Sources used:

The Wenger Book by Samuel S. Wenger

A History of Rockingham County by John W. Wayland

Huber- Hoover History by Harry M. Hoover

-Janet M. Shank

Joseph G. Wenger (1747-1812)

Joseph G. Wenger, ninth son of Christian and Eve Graybill Wenger, was born August 8, 1747. He married Barbara Hoover in 1765. She was the daughter of John and Margaret Hoover. Barbara died in 1792. He then married Anna Hockman. Joseph died in May of 1812.

Joseph and Barbara were born in Pennsylvania, he was born in Earl Township and Barbara near New Holland. They moved to Rockingham County Virginia in 1785. They settled about six miles north of Harrisonburg. Joseph bought nearly 600 acres of timberland. Their buildings were situated near a fine spring. They were active members of the Mennonite Church. Joseph and Barbara had thirteen children and Joseph and Anna added five more.

Joseph's brother Henry Wenger, who married Barbara's sister Anna Hoover, also came to Virginia at the same time and settled several miles south of Harrisonburg. Henry and Anna had four daughters who married into Valley families. Descendants of Henry's are still prominent in the Valley with names like Early, Whisler, Sanger, Harshbarger, Burner, Hedrick, Shank and Wine.

Joseph G. and Barbara Hoover Wenger had thirteen children.

Eve who was born in 1768 and died at ten years of age.

Barbara who was born in 1772 and only lived four years.

John Thomas (1773-1839) was married to Frances Coffman, daughter of Isaac and Esther

Coffman. They moved to Greenbrier County West Virginia in 1796 where their last name is recorded as Whanger. Their son David C. Whanger was a Mennonite Minister. John and Frances had seven children.

Christian (1774-1806) married Anna Brenneman. They had three children. Their son Joseph B. Wenger was a Brethren Minister in Augusta County. Christian was killed by lightning at 31 years of age.

George was born in 1775 and no further information is given on him.

Mary (1776-1848) married John Bare. They had fourteen children and lived in Columbiana County Ohio where there was a settlement of Virginia Mennonites. Their sons John and Christian Bare were Mennonite Ministers in Indiana.

Barbara (1777-1850) was single and lived in Augusta County Virginia.

Joseph was born in 1779 and died in 1792.

Benjamin (1781-1865) married Mary Ann Mauck. Benjamin was a Mennonite Minister near Dayton. They had nine children.

Samuel born in 1782 died in April of the following year.

Christina (1785-1850) married William Reed. They had five children before they moved to Ohio in 1830. Both are buried in Indiana.

Anna (1788-1861) married Christian Coffman, son of Isaac and Esther Coffman. They had ten children and lived in

Greenbrier County, West Virginia. Christian and Anna's son, Samuel W. Coffman, was a Mennonite Minister and Bishop in Virginia.

Abraham (1789-1857) married first Mary Grove, then Anna Burkholder. They lived in Augusta County, Virginia. Abraham and Mary had five children, and Abraham and Anna had three more. Abraham was a Mennonite Minister in Augusta County VA.

In 1793 following the death of his first wife Barbara, Joseph married his second wife Anna Hockman. They had four children.

Joseph (1794-1865) married Barbara Beery, daughter of John and Barbara Kagy Beery. Joseph lost his father when he was eighteen years old and had to take over the care of the farm, his mother and his siblings. Joseph and Barbara had ten children. Their daughter Catherine married Isaac Grove a Mennonite Minister in Augusta County, VA. Joseph and Barbara's son Joseph H. Wenger was an avid historian and researcher who wrote histories of the Wenger, Beery and Geil Families.

Elizabeth (1796-1869) married Abraham Beery, son of Abraham and Magdalena Rife Beery. Elizabeth and Abraham lived on the Muddy Creek near Singers Glen and he was known as "Muddy Creek Abe". They had nine children. Their daughter Anna married David Burkholder who was a Mennonite Minister.

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Bare Who were the parents of Lydia Bare (Bair), born July 20, 1813 in Va. and died Aug. 17, 1893 in Ohio. Married Henry Gable, born Dec. 29, 1812, died Jan 10, 1887. David Miller, 2945 Sheldon Rd. , Snover, MI. 48472

Kindig Who were the parents of Barbara Ann Kindig, born November 11, 1828, probably in Augusta Co. Va.; died July 4, 1867 in Illinois, probably Woodford Co. Married December 22, 1849 to Samuel J. Grove,

To become a member of Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians and to receive future copies of this newsletter, send name and address and 1995 dues (\$10 per couple, \$6 for single) to:

Jim Rush, 780 Parkwood Drive, Harrisonburg, VA. 22801.

Notes & Queries

born circa February 16, 1825 in Augusta Co. , son of John Grove and his wife Elizabeth Groff (first cousins). Samuel and Barbara's children were Joseph Henry Grove and Mary Elizabeth Grove. The young family moved to Woodford Co. Illinois about 1858. After Barbara's death, Samuel married Mary Snyder in Woodford Co. Illinois. Samuel died September 9, 1886 at Cullom, Ill. Hope Lind, 28773 Gimpl Hill Rd. , Eugene, Oregon. 97402

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

Shank Who was the first wife of minister John (Hans) Shank, died 1852, son of bishop Henry Shank. John Shank moved to Columbiana County, Ohio around 1827. David Miller, 2945 Sheldon Rd. , Snover, MI. 48472

Blosser Can anyone tell me the parents of Timothy Quinlin Blosser, born October 29, 1849, died March 13, 1918. Timothy married Emm L. Comer, born July 1, 1863, died November 13, 1900. William E. Blosser, Rt. 4, Box 33, Harrisonburg, VA. 22801

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