



# Shenandoah Mennonite Historian

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Editors: Harold D. and Ruth K. Lehman

## Park View Mennonite Church A Congregational History

The congregation at Park View Mennonite emerged out of the beginnings of Eastern Mennonite School. From the first term in 1917 Sunday services were held in the school chapel in the Old Park Building. As the school developed, successive chapel locations were provided until the present C. K. Lehman auditorium in 1944. In each place the congregation included students, faculty members and their families, and community neighbors who chose to attend.

From the earliest years Virginia Mennonite Conference provided ministers on a weekly circuit basis to preach at Sunday worship services. Geographically and politically the congregation stood on the boundary line between the two bishop districts, known then as the Middle and Lower districts. With a different minister each Sunday and bishop oversight alternating year by year, the congregation experienced a variety of leadership. In 1943 the school appointed its first college pastor, John R. Mumaw.

In the next ten years there was increasing interest that a formal congregation be organized to serve the more permanent members of the community. On November 29, 1953 John L. Stauffer, bishop and past president of the college, called a meeting to organize the Park View congregation, which began with a charter membership of 56. Ira E. Miller, college dean, was called as its pastor along with college pastors, Myron Augsburg, Paul H. Martin, and Don Augsburg, for the next ten years. Sunday meetings during the school year were directed by the college pastor, while Ira Miller took responsibility during vacation periods and for midweek services.

By 1963 Park View became part of a new Harrisonburg District formed by Virginia Conference. A constitution was drawn up and accepted by the congregation. In June 1965 B. Charles Hostetter was ordained as the first bishop in the new district.

The burning issue between 1963 and 1968 was: "Should the Park View Church disengage itself from the college both in program and in place of worship or should we become more fully integrated as a college congregation with the possibility of building a facility on the campus which would accommodate the college and congregation jointly, as Goshen College had done." Meanwhile with the help of Ira Miller in the Wednesday evening meetings a strong Park View Church identity and mission began to develop. Eventually disengagement seemed the way to go. We began planning for a separate facility to be built on land in North Park View, donated by Frank Harman and Clayton Shank.

Harold Eshleman was installed as pastor at Park View early in January 1967, with Ira Miller serving as associate pastor. The new pastor took leadership in the church building project and in organizing us for congregational life in the new building. The present Park View Church facility was dedicated on May 12, 1968. We now were truly on our own, no longer sheltered by the strengths of the college program.

On August 4, 1974 Don Augsburg was installed as pastor at Park View, dividing his services between the congregation and the seminary. Don helped us take more responsibility as lay-members for doing the work of the church.

see Park View, p . 2.

## From the President:

It's an honor to serve you as president of the Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians. My Shenk family roots are in Virginia--Denbigh since the early part of this century and the Luray area in the 1700s (and western Ohio in between); I haven't lived in Virginia very long.

I was born in Harrisonburg only because my parents were in college at the time (1950). I came back to Eastern Mennonite as a student myself in 1969. Much later (1991) I came back here to settle, maybe for good.

What a rich Mennonite heritage we have here in the Valley! And yet, we are apparently the largest Mennonite community in North America without a heritage center. The Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians are working to correct that. Watch for ways that you can be involved.

Steve Shenk

## From the Treasurer:

Receipts for the 1st quarter of the year totaled \$410.00. Supplies and Newsletter expenses totaled \$145.00, leaving a net income of \$265.00 for this fiscal year.

(Donations will be accepted; send to Virginia Mennonite Conference designated for the Historians, 901 Parkwood Drive, Harrisonburg, VA 22802-2498.)

Elroy Kauffman

Park View, from p. 1.

Owen Burkholder became our first fulltime pastor in 1981. As Park View's program has grown in recent years we have added to our pastoral staff, Shirley E. Yoder Brubaker as associate pastor, and Shirlee K. Yoder in pastoral care. During Owen's tenure the congregation reviewed its goals, restructured its organization, and enlarged its facilities for worship, education and fellowship. The new building and renovations were dedicated on September 17, 1995.

After Owen Burkholder transferred to a leadership role with Virginia Mennonite Conference, Edward Stoltzfus served as interim pastor. On September 1, 1996 Phil Kniss, formerly pastor at Community Mennonite, was installed at Park View following a sermon by Overseer Wayne North. Out of a restatement of Missions, Goals and Objectives Park View purposes increasingly to "minister God's healing and hope to each other and to the world."

Harold D. Lehman

## From Executive Committee minutes:

Cal Redekop presented a "Site Plan, Option 3" which had been prepared by Eby-Hatcher showing the proposed location of a Heritage Center.

Cal Redekop and Dwight Hartman have had continuing discussions with several Mennonite entrepreneurs regarding possible interest in establishing a restaurant and motel in the vicinity of the proposed Heritage Center.

A Heritage Center Steering Committee of a dozen persons has been appointed. They will supervise the work of a Facilities Committee and a Program Committee as planning develops further for the Heritage Center.

A proposal is being considered to bring the Martyrs Mirror Exhibit to Harrisonburg in 1999.

## From the Editors:

We would like to feature regularly a congregational history in the Historian. Congregations to be featured in coming issues will be Lindale (1898) and Morning View (1923). Whether or not your congregation is celebrating a special anniversary, we would welcome an historical sketch (recommended 500-600 words). Send to:

Harold D. Lehman  
1068 College Avenue  
Harrisonburg, VA 22802

## ANNOUNCING Lindale Mennonite Church Centennial Celebration

Saturday evening, August 15th: Program of vignettes and music, tracing our first 100 years.

Sunday morning, August 16th: Two-hour worship service of celebration. Former pastor reflections and looking to Lindale's future, by current pastor, Loren Horst. For further information, contact church office -- 833-5171.

Rebecca Leichy

A tour featuring the church histories of Trissels (175 years old) and Lindale (100 years old) is being planned for August 15, 1998. Possible schedule will feature Trissels before lunch and Lindale after lunch. The evening you will want to enjoy Lindale's food and drama.

Mark this event on your calendar. Details in the July Historian.

James Rush

# Book Review

Linden M. Wenger, Fifty Years in Northern District of the Virginia Mennonite Conference. 1997. 128 pages. Paper, \$8.00. (Book may be secured from author or Sword and Trumpet Office).

Linden has written his personal memoirs, covering his early spiritual pilgrimage and fifty years of service in the ministry for the Northern District. He includes a brief overview of his many involvements in the Virginia Conference. He was secretary for ten years. He was also active in many Mennonite churchwide boards and committees.

Born in 1912, Linden's childhood home was near Edom along Route 42, with family roots deep in Virginia history. The shadow of the Civil War was still hanging over the Valley. Much of his church life centered around Lindale where he was carried the first time he attended. Linden presumes that is the way it will be the last time.

In 1945 Linden, his wife Esther, and small son moved into the parsonage at Mt. Herman on Route 259, fifteen miles west of Broadway, Virginia. It was really a "parsonage farm" owned by Virginia Conference. They were expected to provide most of their own support with a few sheep, cows, and a house of broiler chickens. These pastoral years are described as "idyllic life . . . in the hills." There were two more children, bringing the family to five.

During the last of these years, Linden commuted to seminary in Richmond, Virginia, to better equip himself to serve his people. But Eastern Mennonite saw the gifts of this native son. After a summer at Princeton, New Jersey, where he studied Hebrew, Linden began teaching at Eastern Mennonite College.

In 1955 the Wenger family moved to Harrisonburg. He continued pastoring at several churches in Northern District while teaching. In 1959 Linden was ordained bishop by lot at a district meeting at Trissels Church.

Linden retired from full-time responsibility in 1985. He further describes an active life in Northern District and in Virginia Conference until 1995, bringing his ministry in Northern District to 50 years.

Fifty Years in Northern District is an excellent, readable description of church life from World War I times until the present. The author attempted to be

historically accurate, but his main purpose was to show how he saw and experienced the church through a lifetime, covering more than three-quarters of the 20th century.

Between the first chapter, "Childhood Memories," and the last chapter, "My Legacy," are many references and short stories of the way the world and the church were in earlier decades. The memories come to life as the author gives his response to many events: his disappointment in the instruction he received at baptism, spittoons under the minister's bench, teaching Sunday school in the mountain schoolhouses to name a few.

The book gives an excellent discussion of the role of the bishop at mid-century and how Linden worked within established patterns, teaming with other bishops. It is also clear that over the years he led in reshaping the office of bishop to better serve the needs of his congregations.

The author also gives his candid judgments about the strengths of district church life, as well as his opinion that he felt some of the leaders were too strict in certain lifestyle requirements for church members. He believes more flexibility and adapting to local settings would have served the church well.

In an exhibit Linden gives ten biographical sketches of Northern District ministers of the early 1900's. These are drawn from childhood memories and youthful impressions. It was the person and manner of these ministers that influenced Linden's life, rather than their sermons.

Throughout these memoirs the reader senses that Linden and Esther were fully dedicated to Christ and his church. Esther always walked beside Linden, much involved as a partner in the ministry team. They were intent on following God's leading and on serving in whatever way the church called.

These fifty years of ministry spanned five decades in a time of great social and cultural change. Linden kept clear his own theological position and his personal faith, yet he found ways to work with people representing diverse views and approaches to church life. His focus on the message of Christ and His gospel enabled Linden to steer a clear course in these times of change.

Laban Peachey

## Notes and Queries

### From Pennsylvania:

A number of names in the article "Henry Shank (1758-1836)", SMH, Summer 1996, remind me of the close connection between many of the Mennonite families in Lancaster County PA and in Virginia.

Surnames familiar in Lancaster county, are BARE, BRENNEMAN, BURKHOLDER, FUNK, GOOD, MARTIN, MILLER, SHANK, SHOWALTER, WEAVER, and WENGER. Surnames not so well known here are BLOSSER, BRUNK, and HEATWOLE.

What I am suggesting is that from time to time you may wish to share with your readers the names of the sojourners, the dates and the area they left "up north" to settle in Virginia in yesteryear.

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## Membership

To become a member of Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians and to receive future copies of this newsletter, send name and address and 1998 dues (\$10 per couple, \$6 per single) to:

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