

in order for the board to become more familiar with the congregational life of the valley.

The Internal Revenue Service has approved the tax-exempt status for VBMHC. John Flora stated it was "one of the quickest IRS responses I have ever received to an application for tax-exempt status."

The board also approved making arrangements with Tim Lichty to be a consultant in the planning of the heritage center facilities and programs, as well as how to involve the community in the developments.

Al Keim's resignation from the board for the coming year was reluctantly accepted, and the board further conveyed to him their warmest thanks for the services he had given in the past several years.

The site/facilities committee is in the final stages of evaluating and selecting a site and will make a recommendation to the board at the next meeting scheduled for July 6. The board finally and regretfully decided that for various reasons it could not accept the generous offer that the Lantz-Eby Corporation made to VBMHC for 5 acres on Acorn Drive. As soon as the site has been selected, the finance committee will begin inviting support for the facilities and the programs which it will promote.

-Cal Redekop, Chairman

Peace Churches Faced Dilemma during the Revolutionary War

-by Samuel L. Horst

"All men having political power ought to be distrusted to a certain degree." These were words of that most unassuming and intellectual of the Founding Fathers, James Madison, who pondered deeply the dangers of the abuse of power and sought to devise a plan for a safe balance of the emerging factions in the new nation. He gave strong support to George Mason's Virginia Declaration for Rights in 1776 and influenced the insertion into this document the concept of "the free exercise of religion according to the dictates of conscience."

This young Anglican-reared Virginia leader became a leading advocate for the sectarian religious groups that pressed for the end of the Anglican establishment in Virginia. But how far did Madison's respect for freedom of conscience go?

The leading sectarian groups such as the Baptists and the Presbyterians supported the Revolution, for the most part. But how about the smaller sectarian groups that we refer to as the peace churches? They did not support the Revolution. Was Madison willing to condone their peculiar scruples against any participation in the military whether in war or peace?

Apparently, Madison was willing to do just that. In his draft of Article II for the Bill of Rights, which provided for the rights of states to raise their own militia forces, he included the provision that "no one religiously scrupulous of bearing arms should be compelled to render military service."

Even though this provision did not win congressional approval it is significant that this thoughtful patriot actually supported its inclusion. It is clear evidence that he was well aware of the presence of peace church peoples in Virginia and in the new nation at large.

The Peace Churches

In Virginia the peace church peoples consisted of Quakers (Friends), Dunkers (Tunkers, or German Baptists, now known as Brethren) and Mennonists (Mennonites). In 18th century Virginia they comprised a relatively small number, in contrast to their larger populations in Pennsylvania, with whom they had close family and church connections.

They had come from Europe out of various motives, but prominent among these was their desire to avoid participation in war and military service. Already during the colonial wars they had despaired of the increasing pressures on them to compromise their peace stand, and during the American Revolution their dilemma was intensified.

These peace church peoples were literally "a pain in the neck" to the active patriots who were impatient to oust the British and get on with their own political order. But these ardent patriots hardly had the support of the apathetic majority. In fact, there were

numerous cases of active mob resistance to the draft laws in the Valley and adjoining counties during the war. Neither these expressions of violent resistance nor the nonviolent opposition of the peace church peoples was loyalist-inspired.

During the Revolution

The peace church people faced a three-fold dilemma. In the first place, they had affirmed allegiance to the King of England and believed they must be faithful to that promise. Second, they abhorred rebellion against their rulers. Most primary was their belief in peace and non-violence and their opposition to war. These beliefs were grounded in their understanding of the Scriptures and their conviction that their Christian discipleship was to be practiced in daily life.

Their forebears had paid a heavy price to live out their faith. Now in America they faced new tests. In all of them loyalty to God must supersede loyalty to any government. Many refused to take the Virginia Test Oath. Some even refused to use the Congress and state currencies. Some refused to provide tax collectors information on their taxable property, since taxes were used to support the war. Petitions from local people who resented such stands were made to the General Assembly.

The most prevalent issue of confrontation, however, was that of militia service. Local revolutionary leaders in Frederick County reacted to the July 1775 law that exempted Quakers and Mennonites from militia service without requiring them to pay a fine and urged the Assembly to levy a fine or require a substitute. The Assembly then enrolled them into the militia but exempted them from musters. It did require substitutes and fines.

Local sheriffs were authorized to seize goods to pay for substitutes. October 1777 was a tense time for Frederick County peace church peoples. At this very time when the Assembly authorized seizures, 14 men were forcibly inducted into the militia and compelled to march with their company to the American camp near Philadelphia. Kept in line at sword's point with muskets tied to their backs, they refused food and water. Half of them dropped from exhaustion enroute. Seven survived the march and were discharged at General Washington's headquarters.

Meanwhile, in September a number of Quakers were arrested in Philadelphia and accused of being pro-British. Twenty of these men were exiled to Staunton, but after an appeal from the influential Quaker Isaac Zane they were imprisoned at Winchester from September 29 to April 17, 1778, during which time two of them died.

"May I ever remember the gracious dealings of the Lord with me during my exile," wrote John Pemberton that last day in his diary. The nearby Hopewell Meeting of Friends provided them with fellowship and care.

In the New Nation

To the peace church peoples the patriots' constant talk about liberty appeared inconsistent as their wagons were pressed into service and fines were levied on them. The war had sharpened their consciences and caused them to draw away from active participation in the political order. The problem of allegiance to the king, to whom they had promised loyalty and the problem of rebellion disappeared after the war. They were now careful to avoid political and social involvement. Mindful to excel in being good citizens, they tended to become "the quiet in the land" to a greater degree than before.

Opposition to slavery on the part of the peace churches is a matter of record. Quaker John Woolman's prediction that the preservation of chattel slavery in the new nation would result in war and calamity proved all too true. Mennonite ministers who visited Virginia from Pennsylvania urged their people to avoid slave holding. When Virginia Mennonites formed their own conference organization, the owning of slaves was soon forbidden. Even Baptists with Mennonite origins became known as the "Mennonist Baptist Church" in 1809 because, among other things, they refused to own slaves.

After the war the peace church peoples were more concerned about the avoidance of military involvement than ever. They had been exempted in May 1783 from the wartime penalties for their refusal to take the oath of allegiance. That statement belatedly recognized that the restrictions on them

were "greatly oppressive on these peaceable and industrious people of the community."

When Quakers were exempted from muster drills on condition that they produce evidence of church membership, Rockingham County Mennonites and Dunkards on November 2, 1784, asked for the same treatment. Other petitions were made in later years in the century.

Even Shenandoah County Mennonites who became Baptists in Martin Kauffman's Separate Baptist Church appealed for exemption from militia service. The strong winds of revivalism that wiped out the Mennonite Church in that area were not able to sweep away the sentiments against military service and slavery.

In Rockingham County, where Dunkers and Mennonites were concentrating in the late 18th century and throughout Virginia, the peace church people would face new challenges in the Civil War.

This article was one of a series commemorating the bicentenary of the United States Constitution, and it was published in the Daily News Record, April 2, 1987.

THE WEATHER

Rain

(Continued from the last issue)

An 86-year-old Rockingham County farmer, and others, claimed that if a chicken crows before midnight it would rain the next day. A popular verse also offers the same notion:

"If a rooster crows before going to bed,
You'll get up in the morning with a wet head."

The behavior of the woodpecker and the swallow are also associated with precipitation. It is believed that when the red-headed woodpecker goes to a pine tree, wet weather can be expected. A verse about the swallow is self-explanatory:

"If the swallow flies low,
It will rain and blow."

The sky offered several weather omens; it was a

common belief that it was sure to rain when the clouds came from the southeast or if there was a strong east wind. Any number of informants quoted the verse, "A red sky in the morning, shepherds take warning." Several substituted sailors or farmers for shepherds but the predictions remained the same. Similar verses were:

"Red in the morning
Shepherd's warning
Red at night
Shepherd's delight."



"Evening gray
Nice all day
Morning red
Wet weather ahead."



"A mockerel sky
Is never long dry."

In spite of the severity of a downpour, it was assuring to believe that "if it rains before seven it will stop before eleven."

On New Year's Eve, some residents used an onion to predict both the wet and dry months of the year ahead. The onion was hulled and cut in half. Twelve sections were separated, and placed in a line. The first represented January, the second February, etc. In each of the cup-like sections was placed a quantity of salt and in the morning, on the first day of the New Year the onion "cups" were examined. Those sections in which the salt was melted represented rainy or snowy months and those in which the salt had not melted were believed to indicate clear dry months. Some informants were of the opinion that this system gave a fairly accurate forecast.

A popular verse, quoted locally in both Pennsylvania German dialect and in English, implies the virtues of the cold rainy May:

"A cold wet May
Makes a barn full of hay."

Other Forecasting Methods

Some farmers place confidence in forecasting the winter weather by the condition of the corn husks. If the husk is thin the winter will be mild, but when the husk is thick the winter will be severe. One offered the following verse:

