



WennoGESpräch

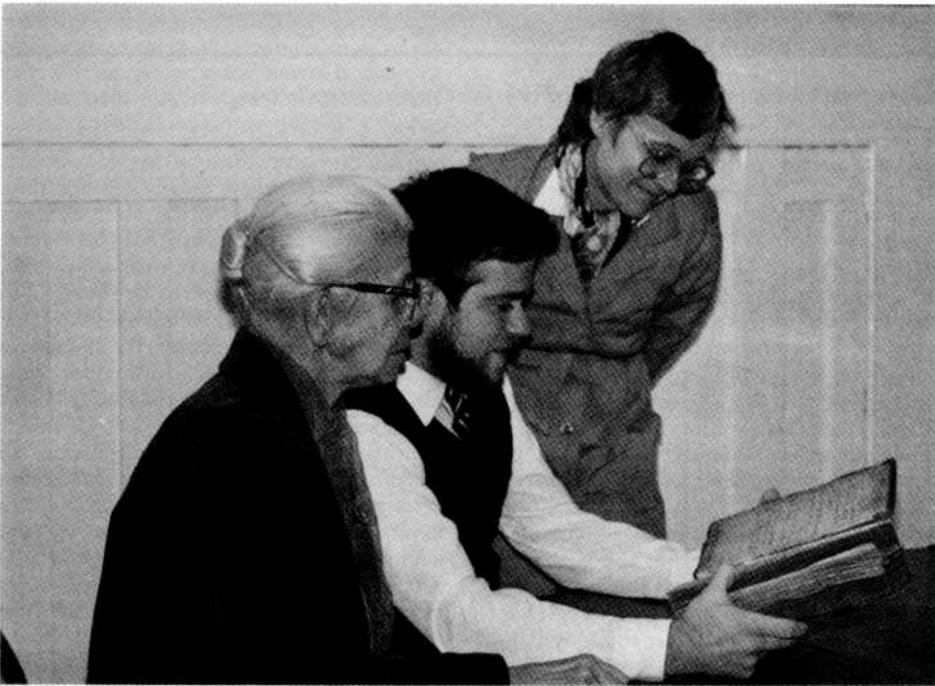
Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario

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Jacob Moyer's Mennonite church records: an interpretive sketch

by E. Reginald Good



Barbara Coffman, Reg and Kathy Good examine the Jacob Moyer Bible housed at the Jordan Museum of the Twenty, Jordan, Ontario. Barbara recalled the location of the Bible when Reg and Kathy, the MennoVan team for the Mennonite Bicentennial, were in the Niagara area. Reg discerned the import of the German handwriting in the Bible.

J.S. Hartzler and Daniel Kauffman reported in 1905 that "the time when the [Mennonite] church in Canada first began to hold conferences is given by those best posted in her history as about 1820."¹ That approximate date has subsequently been cited in numerous histories describing the origins of the present day Mennonite Conference of Ontario and Quebec. However, recently deciphered handwritten records in a Bible at the Jordan Historical Museum of the Twenty, Town of Lincoln, Ontario inform, in addition to other valuable information, that the first Mennonite conference in Canada actually was held in 1810.

It is the purpose of this article to analyze the reliability of the Mennonite church records discovered in the Bible through: 1) considera-

tion of the competency of the record keeper; 2) interpretation of the records at face value; and 3) comparison of these records with other documents.

The Bible which contains the records is inscribed with the following information (translated here from the German): "I, Jacob Moyer, bought this in the year of Christ 1799, for 6 dollars." The genealogical tables contained in the Bible are those of Jacob Moyer (1767-1833), his first wife, Magdalene (Bechtel) Moyer (1773-1816), his second wife, Catharine (Bechtel) Moyer (1776-1851), and his parents, Samuel Moyer (1734-1818) and Catharine (Kolb) Moyer (1773-1809).² Presumably, then, the owner of the Bible was Jacob Moyer around whom the genealogical tables center rather than, for example, Jacob

Moyer Jr. (1792-1831). A comparison of the handwriting in the Bible with other signed letters confirms this.³

Jacob Moyer immigrated to Canada in the autumn of 1799 with his wife and four children, all boys, in the company of at least five other families.⁴ They settled in the vicinity of the Twenty Mile Creek, now Town of Lincoln, where Jacob and his two friends — Amos Albright and Abraham Moyer — had scouted out land in the spring of the same year and had put down a \$40 deposit on 1100 acres of land.⁵ Jacob apparently bought the Bible inscribed with his name while still in Pennsylvania — it was a Christopher Sauer Bible printed in Germantown, Pennsylvania in 1776. The 1799 purchase date would indicate that Jacob had acquired the Bible specifically for transport to his new Canadian home.

A Mennonite congregation was organized at the Twenty in 1801 and Jacob Moyer was ordained preacher there in 1802.⁶ Five years later in 1807 he was cofirmed bishop.⁷ Moyer is the earliest known resident bishop in Ontario, and probably the only one there, until 1808 when Abraham Grove arrived in York County, having been confirmed bishop in Pennsylvania expressly for this field.⁸ Grove labored only in the York County district so far as is known, leaving to Moyer the oversight of congregations in other parts of Ontario and New York State. After Benjamin Eby was confirmed bishop for the Waterloo district in 1812, Moyer's charge was limited to the "Niagara" district which included the Niagara peninsula and Erie County, New York.⁹

The character and stature of Jacob Moyer within the Ontario conference was described in a personal letter to friends in Europe by Jacob Krehbiel in 1841. Krehbiel had known Moyer only since 1831, but had been deeply impressed by him. The letter reads:

"[Jacob Moyer] was the one to whom those came who were suffering or depressed or disturbed in their inner life and who gladly poured out their hearts to him to leave him again comforted or at least strengthened. Without the least self-interest he sought to serve everyone and won the love of all. His very countenance had something unusually attractive about it so that often people who had

come in strife with one another and had accepted him as the arbitrator (for his impartiality was recognized by all) were unable to offer the least resistance to his conclusions and left his presence reconciled to one another . . . I count it as of great value to myself to have known this worthy preacher in his lifetime."¹⁰

An independent biographical sketch of Jacob Moyer, written by A.J. Fretz in 1896, confirms Krehbiel's assessment.¹¹ Fretz writes that Moyer "earned the reputation of peacemaker in the neighborhood . . . [He] was a very fluent and earnest speaker, and a very energetic man in all his actions." Fretz adds that "Moyer was also a Home Doctor."

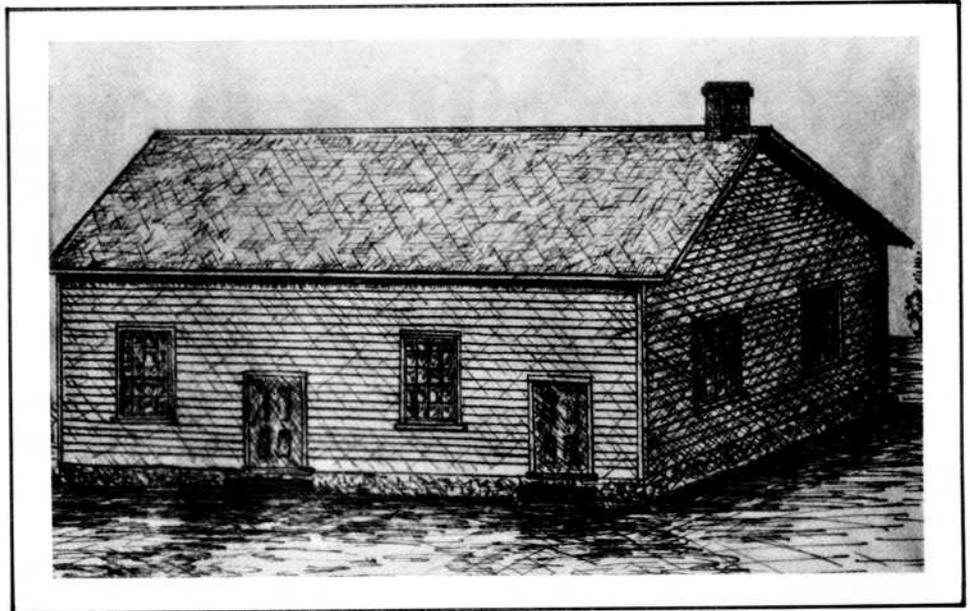
Jacob Moyer was then, by all accounts, a pillar of the Mennonite Church in Canada, he was widely respected and deeply loved. The fact that zodiacal signs are mentioned on only one of the genealogical charts in his Bible may also indicate that he was less superstitious than many persons of his time. He was in a position to have firsthand knowledge of events chronicled in his church records, and presumably he would have had the ability to record them accurately. A great deal of credibility can reasonably be placed in Moyer's handwritten notes.

Ordination List

The ordinations in Jacob Moyer's Bible are listed chronologically on a single page. It presumably covers only those ordinations performed by Jacob Moyer because the list does not include persons known to have been ordained by contemporary bishops Benjamin Eby (1785-1853) and Abraham Grove (1770-1836). The completeness of the list is questionable, however, because some names which one would have expected to see are not included.

For example, genealogist Ezra Eby wrote in 1895 that Martin Bear was "ordained in 1808 by Bishop Moyer of the Twenty," and until now this information has been considered correct.¹² But the fact that Bear is not included on Moyer's ordination list casts doubt on the matter. Perhaps Aaron Eby was right when he wrote in 1871 that Martin Bear "was called to the ministry several years after Benjamin Eby, and was the third preacher in the congregation in Waterloo."¹³ If so Benjamin Eby would most assuredly have performed that ordination because he would have been a bishop by that time, and would have had the duty to ordain persons such as Martin Bear who were chosen to serve in his district. Aaron Eby's history is riddled with apparent errors, however, (including the year for Benjamin Eby's ordination to the ministry which differs from that provided both in the Bibles of Benjamin Eby and Jacob Moyer), and one is therefore inclined to treat it with skepticism.¹⁴ A further complication is added by statistics contained in the *Ecclesiastical chart of Upper Canada*, (1828) which indicate that Martin Bear did not immigrate to Canada until 1817.¹⁵ At any rate, the date of Martin Bear's ordination is inconclusive, and available evidence allows a good chance that he was ordained by Benjamin Eby.

The name of Daniel Hoch, Jacob Moyer's stepson, is also absent from the ordination list,



Artist's rendition of the Moyer church. (From L.J. Burkholder collection, Conrad Grebel College Archives).

and this seems inexplicable. Aaron Eby reported that "about three months after the death of Jacob Moyer Jr., Daniel Hoch was chosen by lot as his successor in the ministry."¹⁶ Jacob Moyer Jr. died in January, 1831, indicating that Daniel Hoch would have been ordained in the spring of 1831. This is probably the ordination referred to in a letter from Jacob Moyer to Christian Herschi and George Zawitz at Black Creek, 3 May 1831.¹⁷ Moyer wrote that "we [in this locality] have decided to ordain a minister of the Word on Whitsuntide whom the Lord shall choose by lot. I should be glad if you could be with us then." The tone of the letter implies that Moyer intended to preside at the forthcoming ordination. The fact that this ordination is omitted from his records, therefore, leaves open the question of whether the Moyer ordination list is an exhaustive record of all ordinations he performed.

On the other hand, a number of names appear on the list which one would not expect to see. Benjamin Eby's ordination as preacher and confirmation as bishop are recorded here, for example. Hitherto considerable weight has been placed on an oral tradition which claims that Benjamin's brother, Peter, a bishop from Pennsylvania, rode to Ontario on horseback to preside on both occasions.¹⁸ This has led at least one historian to infer a tension between the Lancaster and Franconia conferences in Pennsylvania. Why else would Lancaster Bishop Peter Eby have risked his life crossing enemy lines in wartime (1812) to confirm a bishop, when Franconia-confirmed Bishop Jacob Moyer, resident in Canada, had the authority to perform such confirmation.¹⁹ The new information provided in the Moyer ordination list calls for a reconsideration of this oral tradition, and of the inferences drawn from it.

The ordination dates of Johannes Wenger and George Zavitz (1781-1858), preacher and deacon respectively, at Black Creek (Welland County) are also included on Moyer's ordina-

tion list. Previously there had been no evidence to indicate when these ordinations occurred. Moreover, the ordination of Johannes Morgenstern had not even been suspected. There are still a number of ordination dates, however, which continue to be shrouded in mystery and which one would have suspected the Moyer records to uncover. We have no ordination dates for Samuel Schwartz, for example, who was a preacher in the Rainham area by 1825 and a bishop there by 1839.²⁰ Likewise information relating to the ordinations of Christian Hershey, John Zavitz, Jacob Miller, Peter Sherk and others who we believed to have served in Moyer's district are not disclosed.²¹ Depending on the confirmation date of Samuel Schwartz as bishop, he may have been responsible for a number of these ordinations.

Information on names included in Moyer's ordination list appears to be substantially, but not totally, accurate. The only contemporary records with which they can be tested are those in the family Bible of Benjamin Eby, written in 1823. They give dates of 27 November 1809 for Eby's ordination as preacher and 11 October 1812 for his confirmation as bishop. The former date coincides with that recorded by Moyer, but the latter is one week earlier than the date on Moyer's list.

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Annotations of Annual Conferences

Jacob Moyer's annotations on Conferences appear scattered and random — the fact that there are only a few gives the impression that they are incomplete. Further, the first conference annotation must have been written long after the fact, or Moyer would not have been able to say that after 1810 conferences were held "annually." Possibly the other annotations were written later than the events they describe as well, increasing the chance of error in the record. Taken at face value, the notations indicate that from 1810 until 1832 the annual conference of Canadian Mennonite ministers (*Diener*) were held at the Twenty, except in 1821, when the location temporarily switched to "the Grand River."²² The date was always the second Friday of October except 1817 when it "changed" to the first Friday [of October.]

The only other extant record of Ontario annual conferences from this period is a description of one held in 1831, which tends to support the inferences made above. It was written by a recent immigrant from Germany, Jacob Krehbiel, who settled at Clarence Center, New York in Spring, 1831. Krehbiel had been a Mennonite preacher at Primerhof in the Palatinate before his emigration, and for this reason was probably invited to the 1831 conference by John Lapp, the Mennonite preacher at Clarence Center. On 20 December 1831 Krehbiel wrote to friends in Germany as follows:

"Our ministers meet annually from the congregations as we do at home. This year the meeting was held in Upper Canada . . . [at] place called Twenty Mile Creek in Clinton Township, Lincoln County. On Friday, October 14, the first meeting was held for ministers and bishops only. Then on Sunday the communion service was held, and on Monday another meeting which was attended by a large number of people. A great spirit of unity was manifested among the congregations, which have good and capable speakers for preachers. Around the meetinghouse at a short distance along the side of the windows, posts are set up where the horses are tied, because the meetinghouse, although not far away from the dwellings, nevertheless stands by itself."²³

There is no basis then, to challenge the individual annotations on the basis of contemporary documents. Further research may shed even more light on Jacob Moyer's notations.

Council Meeting Notes

Council districts were an organic level of Ontario Conference structure which correspond to the modern concept of congregation, and in the period under consideration constituted the geographic area served by one bishop. The ministers in each district generally "held council" among themselves prior to communion services which were held twice yearly. Hence the derivation of the terms "council meeting" and "council district."

The only completely legible council meeting notes among Jacob Moyer's records pertain to four meetings held in the Niagara council district in 1819. The first were held January 23, 24, and 25, and the fourth was held March 28.²⁴ A land petition signed by Bishop Moyer

7 April 1819 in the name of "the Mennonites (or harmless Christians) of the District of Niagara" must have been approved by the Niagara ministry, and discussions concerning its preparation may account for the seemingly frequent meetings held in 1819, particularly that of 28 March. Perhaps it was these special circumstances which motivated Moyer to preserve a careful record only of the meetings noted.

The 1819 petition prays that the Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada "will consider, how highly advantageous it would be to them and to the Province in general, were one half, or even any portion of one of the Townships now about to be surveyed, to be allotted for a term of eight or ten years, to be located by the Menonists only taking up the lots in regular succession — at the expiration of which period, would it not be entirely occupied, then the remainder to be at the disposal of the Crown to such settlers as might want to locate there." The petition further advises that if Mennonites were "scattered over a Township with persons of a different persuasion, the difficulty of their children attending their own school, which is High Dutch, the almost impossibility of settling among themselves a Minister of their own religion, will in time cause a total loss of all moral obligations, a carelessness respecting the peculiar tenets of their sect, and an insensibility to the dangers of their mortal souls."²⁵

This petition was dismissed with the resolution "that in future no lands be granted to persons who will not enrol themselves in the militia and bear arms in defence of the Province."²⁶

Conclusion

Bishop Jacob Moyer's Mennonite Church records make a significant contribution to our understanding of the Mennonite Church in Ontario from 1801-1831. Heretofore our primary sources of information have been scant indeed, and histories of the period have been written largely on the basis of hearsay. Now we have a few additional points of reference which will provide foundation for more extensive historical research in the future.

Notes

¹ J.S. Hartzler and Daniel Kauffman, *Mennonite Church history* (Scottsdale : Mennonite Book and Tract Society, 1905), p. 242.

² A.J. Fretz, *A genealogical record of the descendants of Christian and Hans Meyer* (Harleysville : A.J. Fretz, 1896), pp. 102, 159, 221-222; Gary and Ruth Bechtel, *Bechtel family* (Brantford : Gary Bechtel, 1981), p. 9; J. Hampton Hoch, *Hoch-High family in America* (S. 1. : Hoch-High Family Reunion, 1962), p.B-11.

³ Jacob Moyer, letter to Christian Gross or Heinrich Honsberger, 9 October 1826; Jacob Moyer, letter to Christian Gross, 3 October 1827; Jacob Moyer, letter to Christian Herschi and George Zewitz, 3 May 1831. Mennonite History Project files and L.J. Burkholder files, Conrad Grebel College Archives.

⁴ *Christian and Hans Meyer*, pp. 326-330.

⁵ Possibly an attraction to this vicinity was the presence of Mennonite families who migrated here from Bucks County, Pennsylvania earlier in the century. See John L. Ruth, *Maintaining the right fellowship* (Scottsdale : Herald Press, 1984), pp. 162-163. Jacob Moyer's mother was a Kulp, probably

related to the Kulp families who had taken up land in the area as early as 1786. See Gary M. Culp, "Dielman Kolb of Tincum Township, the father of the first Mennonites in Canada," *Mennonite historians of Eastern Pennsylvania*, II, No. 3 (Fall, 1984), pp. 3-11.

⁶ Aaron Eby, *Die Ansiedlung und Begründung der Mennoniten Gemeinschaft in Canada* (Milford Square, Pa. : J.G. Stauffer, 1872), pp. 8-10. Aaron Eby corresponded with Daniel Hoch, son-in-law of Jacob Moyer, from whom he presumably obtained this information. Aaron Eby, letter to Daniel Hoch 16 June 1871. That at least one ordination occurred in 1801 at the Twenty is confirmed in a loose note in Jacob Moyer's Bible pertaining to the funeral of Johannes Fretz. It states that Johannes Fretz, who had immigrated to the Twenty in 1800, had served as deacon for twenty-four and a half years. Fretz died 4 May 1826. See A.J. Fretz, *A brief history of John and Christian Fretz* (Elkhart : Mennonite Publishing Co., 1890), p.21.

⁷ *Mennoniten Gemeinschaft*, p. 10.

⁸ L.J. Burkholder, *A brief history of the Mennonites in Ontario* (Toronto : [Mennonite Conference of Ontario], 1935), p. 290.

⁹ A congregation was organized in Erie County, New York in 1828. *Mennonite Church history*, p. 238.

¹⁰ Jacob Krehbiel, "A few words about the Mennonites in America in 1841," trans. and ed. Harold S. Bender, *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 6 (1932), pp. 43-57, 110-121.

¹¹ *Christian and Hans Meyer*, pp. 221-222.

¹² Ezra E. Eby, *A biographical history of early settlers and their descendants in Waterloo Township* (Kitchener : Eldon Weber, 1971), p. 44.

¹³ *Mennoniten Gemeinschaft*, p. 23.

¹⁴ Benjamin Eby's Bible is located in the Archives of the Waterloo Historical Society, Kitchener Public Library, Kitchener.

¹⁵ Harold S. Bender, ed., "New source material for the history of the Mennonites in Ontario," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 3 (1929), pp. 42-53.

¹⁶ *Mennoniten Gemeinschaft*, p. 11.

¹⁷ L.J. Burkholder collection, Conrad Grebel College Archives.

¹⁸ Martin G. Weaver, *Mennonites of Lancaster Conference* (Scottsdale : Mennonite Publishing House, 1931), p. 49.

¹⁹ E. Reginald Good, "War as a factor in Mennonite economic policy," M.A. Thesis, University of Waterloo, 1984, pp. 14-21.

²⁰ Samuel Schwartz is listed as a preacher at Stoney Creek (Rainham) in 1825. See Bender, "New source material . . ." He was confirmed a bishop by 1839 because in that year he confirmed John Lapp as bishop at Clarence Center, New York. Benjamin Eby, letter to Jacob Hochstetter, 10 January 1848, Jacob Hochstetter collection, Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana.

²¹ *Mennonites in Ontario*, p. 277-314.

²² Perhaps this 1821 conference was the one which informants of Hartzler and Kauffman had in mind when they reported the first sessions of the Mennonite Conference of Ontario were held about 1820. Samuel S. Bowman, preacher at the Christian Eby Church, Berlin (now Kitchener), Ontario was Hartzler and Kauffman's primary link to these authorities. *Mennonite Church history*, p. 246. Because Bowman was a native and resident of Waterloo County, his information would naturally have contained a Waterloo bias.

²³ Krehbiel, "Mennonites in America in 1841."

²⁴ Moyer notes that on 25 January the traditional communion text, Matt. 18:1-8, was read, indicating communion was served then.

²⁵ Public Archives of Canada, Upper Canada Land Petitions, R.G.I., Ls, Vol. 340, "M" Bundle 12, #83.

²⁶ Public Archives of Canada, Upper Canada Land Petitions, M.G. 11, C.O. 537, Vol. 104, Land Book "K", Petition of Jacob Moyer.

The Jacob Moyer Bible: Translation of its contents

[The primary translation of the handwritten notes in the Moyer Bible, some on fugitive pieces of paper, was by Isaac Horst of Mount Forest, Ontario. We have used the modern spelling of the family name, "Moyer" rather than the original, "Meyer". The Bible is housed at the Jordan Historical Museum at the Twenty, Jordan, Ontario. - ed.]

Ordination notes (inside front cover)

1809 on 27 November Benjamin Eby was elected as minister and Jacob Schneider as deacon at the Grand River.

1812 on 18 October Benjamin Eby was confirmed as bishop at the Grand River in Upper Canada.

1814 John Wenger was elected as deacon at Black Creek.

1816 on 1 February John Morgenstern was elected as minister at Black Creek in Canada. In fall 1818 he defected and went west.

In 1820 in November George Zavitz was elected as minister at Black Creek in Canada.

In 1823 on Christmas day Jacob Moyer, Jr. was elected as minister. 1831 in February Jacob Moyer, Jr. fell asleep, in the Lord it is to be hoped.

Annual Conference notes (inside front cover)

The great meeting or conference of the ministers is scheduled for the 2nd Friday of October 1810, the first in Upper Canada, held annually thereafter.

1817 the conference date was changed to the first Friday at the Twenty.

1821 the conference of the ministers was again scheduled for the second Friday in October, this time at the Grand River.

Council meeting notes (back flyleaf)

1819 on January 23rd [council] meeting was held at Sugar Loaf at Christian Kneislis, text John 14:23.

On the 24th at Michael Sherks, text Luke 10:23-38.

On the 25th at John Wengers, text Matt. 18:1-8.

On March 28th meeting was held at Michael Sherks, text 1 John 3:1.

Bookplate (front flyleaf)

This book belongs to Jacob Moyer. I bought it in the year of Christ 1799. Cost 6 dollars.

John Fretz obituary (obverse of loose sheet)

John Fretz was 96 years, 1 month old. He had lived in matrimony 55 years, and raised 10 children, of whom 5 are still living. His descendants, including grandchildren and great grandchildren, number 96. Was 24½ years in the deacon's office. [He died 4 May 1826].

(Reverse of above sheet)

Book of Wisdom 3:1. "But the righteous souls are in the hand of God and no torment shall affect them."

Ch. 4, v. 1: "But the righteous, though he dies young, shall enter into rest."

Isaiah 57:2. "He shall enter into peace; they shall rest within their beds, each one walking in his uprightness."

Medicinal remedies (loose sheets)

Now a little for the — gout. Take one

quart of corn whiskey if you have it, in a bottle. Add a good handful of pulverized red pine knots, and press it morning and evening with half a ——. This has done much good. When it is all drunk off, more may be added.

For dropsy. Wild hazel, grated, and Solomon's Seal root, boiled well, Drink liberally.

Misc. text (loose sheet)

1st book of Moses 12: "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from they kindred, and from they father's house unto a land that I will show thee."

Celestial phenomena (back flyleaf)

In the year 1808, in the fall, a comet star with a pale streak stood for 5 or 6 weeks. Three and a half years later, that is in June of 1812, the war between, or of the United States against England and Upper Canada was declared and continued two years and a little over a half.

The fall before the war broke out, that is in the year 1811, another comet stood, more awful than the first, with a long, fiery streak. It was seen for 7 or 8 weeks in America.

In early summer of 1816 a strange sign appeared on the sun, namely a black spot, big enough for the natural eye. In the beginning it was the size of a penny, and later about like a shilling piece. It passed through the sun in 8 or 10 days, and about 2 or 3 weeks later it passed through the sun again, and 2 or 3 weeks later it passed through a third time. Smaller spots were also seen, invisible to the naked eye. May the Lord grant us grace to consider this before it is too late.

In the year 1819 a comet with a streak was seen again. It was first seen on July 3 not far from the North Star. It moved closer to the North Star until it could be seen the whole night. In the year 1821 another comet stood with a long streak beginning February 20. On December 22, 1823 another star appeared with a streak. In the year 1825, in September, a star appeared again with a long streak, but moved quickly towards the south. It disappeared within 3 or 4 weeks.

(Loose sheet)

Remarkable signs of the first world, which God in his great mercy revealed to the first world.

The sun frequently appeared very dim and dreary, the moon like blood. Great earthquakes, strong and dreadful gales, dark and cloudy days, often great heat and unproductive times took place. In addition there appeared dreadful comets which appeared to the world to be threatening with rods, besides all epidemics, fevers, deaths and other afflictions.

Letter from Joseph Bechtel

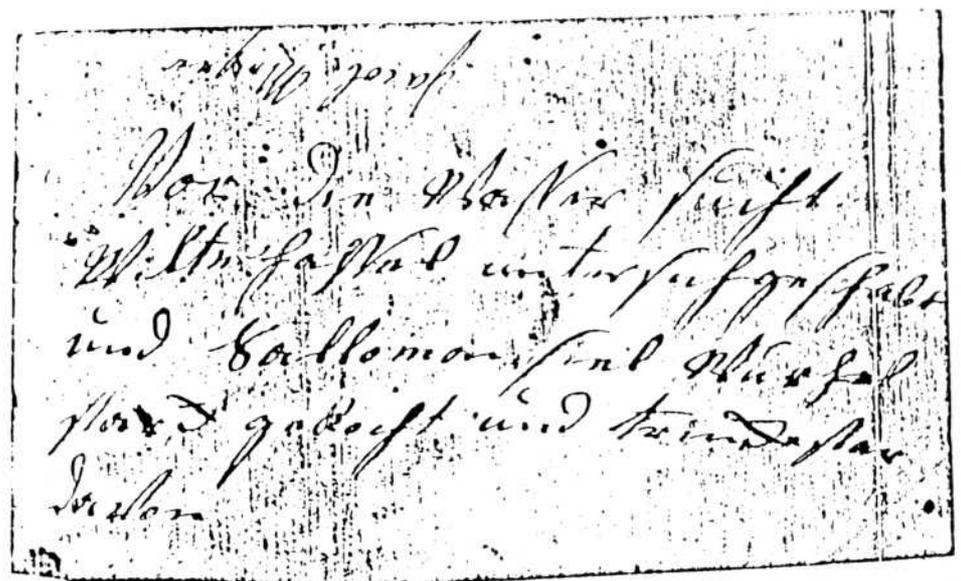
[Joseph Bechtel (1761-1838) was the first Mennonite minister at the Grand River. Little is known about him; he was quickly overshadowed by Benjamin Eby when the latter was ordained. This is a rare Bechtel-related item. - ed.]

Waterloo 12, 1822 August 12th

A peace-loving greeting and best wishes from me and my wife and children, to you beloved brother in Christ, Jacob Moyer, your wife and children, and Valentine Kratz and his family, Manassa Fretz and his wife, Samuel Moyer and his family, the widow of Dilman Moyer, Frey and his family, as well as all friends and beloved brethren and sisters in Christ into whose sight and hearing this simple message may come. May God's grace and blessing, the attendant power of His Holy Spirit — as protector and comforter in affliction, as teacher and guide through the desert of this world — be with you. Also a greeting to old Fretz.

Further, allow me to tell you that my family is generally healthy in body, although I am still quite weak in my abdomen. For four months I was in critical condition with severe abdominal pains. To the best of my knowledge a blood vessel burst in my stomach, so that a lot of blood gathered in my abdomen. I required continuous laxatives to prevent grangene from setting in. It was often very close, but it has stopped again, so that I have occasionally been able to attend meeting. The Lord only knows what the future holds. His will be done.

(Cont. on page 5)



Moyer's remedy for dropsy (Wassersucht): Grated wild hazel and Solomon's seal root boiled well, Drink liberally. Jacob Moyer's name is at top.

I hope this brief letter finds you in good health and well in all other respects, Lord willing. I would gladly have written more to you, but I was hindered so that I can't at this time. I had intended to write to you a little how it turned out about the road, because many have been offended by it. We would be very glad if you or several of you would pay us a visit. I must cut this short because of the time. Be committed to the Lord. May he prepare us for in eternal life in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Write to me again if you can. From you well-wisher.

Joseph Bechtel

Genealogical notations (loose sheets)

Samuel Moyer was born in the year 1734, the first day of June.

Samuel Moyer died August 8, 1818, aged 84 years, 2 mo., 2 days.

Catharina Moyer was born in the year 1735, the 12th day of June.

Catharina Moyer died in the year 1809 in December. [These are Jacob Moyer's parents]

If you would care to know how old each of you is, you can see it here:

In the year 1757, Fronica was born to us April 3. Fronica died in November, 1819.

In the year 1758 Isaac was born to us October 11, died 1824 in October.

In the year 1760 Elizabeth was born to us

December 10. Elizabeth died May 10, 1762.

In the year 1763 Christian was born to us March 27.

In the year 1765 Samuel was born to us July 8.

In the year 1767 Jacob was born to us November 24. [This is the owner of the Bible.]

In the year 1770 Abraham was born to us November 19.

In the year 1772 Dilman was born to us December 20, died November 26, 1812.

In the year 1774 Henry was born to us October 27.

[Below are the children of Jacob Moyer and his first wife, Magdalena.]

1792 Jacob was born to us — August.

1794 Samuel was born to us 16 October.

1796 Isaac was born to us 4 December.

1799 Abraham was born to us 8 April.

1801 John was born to us May 4.

1803 Christian was born to us 21 August, died 27 August 1804.

1806 15 June, Dilman was born to us.

1803 3 September, Henry was born to us in Aquarius.

1810 30 December, the second Christian was born to us.

1813 18 June, Joseph was born to us.

Magdalena Moyer, the mother of the above children, fell asleep in the Lord, as we fully

hope, 28 June 1816, aged 43 years and 3 months.

In the year of our Lord 1817 — I united the second time in matrimony with Catherine Hoch and she brought 6 children with her.

The first, Jacob Hoch, was born 25 January 1801.

The second, Anna Hoch, was born 21 November 1803.

The third, Daniel Hoch, was born 24 August 1805.

The fourth, William Hoch, was born 1 October 1807.

The fifth, Catarina Hoch, was born 15 October 1809.

The sixth, Barbara Hoch, was born 26 July 1811.

Jacob Bächtel, the father of this, my second wife, and grandfather of the above named children, was born into this world in January, 1732, died December 13, 1804, aged 72 years and 11 months.

Catharina Bächtel, the mother and grandmother of our above mentioned children, was born April 14, in the year 1735, died September 18, 1810. Was aged 75 years, 5 months and 4 days.

[Some other fragments of manuscript material are in the Jacob Moyer Bible, but have not yet been deciphered.]

Review

Maintaining the right fellowship : a narrative account of life in the oldest Mennonite community in North America by John Ruth (Scottsdale : Herald Press, 1984), 540 p. \$32.45

by Anne Millar

Fleeing persecution and heavy taxation, Palatine Mennonites chose to brave the perils of ocean travel and hardships of life in a new land rather than longer endure poverty and oppression in Europe. They were to make other choices as well. The reader follows John Ruth through three centuries, observing the struggles of a community to maintain its identity and to be true to the religious teachings of its forebears. The storybook (rather than dry detail) nature of this history draws and holds both the academic and non-academic reader.

We see Philadelphia as it first appeared, emerging from the forest in broken rows of unimpressive buildings, and as it appeared 100 years later when it was "the largest city in the British colonies" and beneficiary of German enterprise and industry. Beginning with the rush on the city of Rotterdam in 1709 (the year the Rhine froze over), we watch as wave upon wave of refugees leave of the country of their birth and seek shelter in Penn's Woods in the New World, where they have been told they will have "unlimited freedom and no poverty."

Surrounded by Welsh and English as well as other Germans, and by Baptists, Lutherans and Anglicans, they constantly made choices as to their loyalties and convictions. Ruth describes the early dilemmas when the choos-

ing of spiritual leaders was crucial to the continued religious heritage of the group — and the choices were difficult. In time the royal government cancelled the Germantown charter and reduced the privileges the Mennonites first enjoyed. The pacifist Quakers began to lose their political grip with profound consequences for the Mennonites.

Immigration was almost over by the middle of the 18th century. Some measure of success had been attained. A spiritual family had been transplanted and the Dortrecht Confession of the Netherlands, which required that "Christ be followed as well as praised," had been adopted.

But no sooner was immigration virtually complete when re-migration to South Carolina, Virginia and Western Pennsylvania began — followed by emigration to Upper Canada in the search for land, and even in loyalty to the British crown. The lists of family names will be recognizable to many of their descendants in Ontario. Canadian, as well as American, descendants, will find themselves looking back to the stories from Europe for their roots.

John Ruth also brings the story through the 19th and early 20th centuries. Disagreements constantly characterized the search for truth. The process of splitting, so common among Mennonites, began in Pennsylvania with the Revolutionary War when Christian Funk raised questions about loyalty to government. "The dynamics of a schism," says the author, "are a commentary on what a community finds important." This Funkite controversy

was later followed by the larger "Oberholtzer" split which led to the emergence of two confederences — "Franconia" and the "Eastern District," and reached into Ontario with John Oberholtzer's friend, Daniel Hoch. Ruth describes these splits in an objective way. He shows the frustrations of the progressives as they tried to put their understandings of mission into practice. He shows the concern of the conservatives for tradition and for a sound understanding of authority in the church.

There are many important names I have not mentioned like schoolmaster Christopher Dock and institute builder Abraham Hunsicker and evangelist John S. Coffman. John Ruth deals with them at length. But it is important to emphasize that the storybook atmosphere of the book is always maintained as the reader imbibes the overall principles. Sad stories are told, like the heroine Annie Funk, missionary to India, who gave up her place in a life boat when the Titanic sank. There are also the pleasant pictures, like the contented Pennsylvania Dutchman enjoying happy hours with his "Zither." The book is full of picture, maps, ships lists and charts to aid the reader.

Overall, John Ruth is successful in explaining the serious concern of leaders of the Mennonite fellowship for "keeping house" in the church, each in his generation, each for his own flock.

Genealogical Resources: Land Records

by Lorraine Roth

Although I consider family to be the most important resource for genealogical information, at some point one is likely to exhaust "Grandma's" or "Great Uncle's" memory. One also gets to the end of available written or printed materials which the family can supply.

There are several types of records which one can tap, but we will have to do some digging to find the information we want. One of these is land records. These are found in the Registry Office. Every county has one, and it is usually in close proximity to the Courthouse, but in a separate building. In Kitchener the Registry Office is located on the third floor at 200 Frederick (the south door). These offices are used extensively by real estate agents and lawyers working on real estate sales and are very busy places.

For the genealogist, the main purpose in working with land records is to locate and document the residence of one's ancestors and their families. One often has a general idea where people lived, but through these records one can obtain actual dates and exact locations. A few other items of genealogical interest may turn up in the documents as well.

The most common document found in connection with these records is the deed of bargain and sale. It gives the detailed land description and the date. In this document the "Grantor" is the one who sells the property, the "Grantee" is the one who purchases it. The wife of the grantor is probably given, because she is often required to sign. The man could buy property but not sell it, without his wife's consent — even in the nineteenth century.

The date on the deed of bargain & sale is usually the date when the grantor vacates the property and the grantee gets possession of it. If, however, you find that someone purchased a parcel of land on a certain date and several days later (or perhaps even on the same day) he sold it again, it does not likely indicate such a quick change of mind. It probably means that the original purchase was not properly carried out. It certainly was not legally registered. Hence, when he came to selling his property, he had to first legally purchase it. It is to check on these irregularities that we are still required to have property titles searched at the time of purchase.

Mortgage documents are almost as frequent as the bargain & sale, but do not add much to our genealogical data. They do, of course, indicate whether our ancestor had to borrow, or whether he had money to lend.

The most valuable document for the genealogist is the quitclaim deed. This is found only if the property owner dies. All the heirs and their spouses are then required to sign off their claim even if the property is sold to one of the heirs. This gives a complete list of all living heirs at the time of this transaction. It may also give the death date of the deceased property owner.

Wills and will probates, if land is involved, are also found in the Registry Office. These may also give a list of children's names and that of a surviving spouse. The will probate

will likely give the death date of the person whose will is being probated.

Deeds received by pioneer settlers from the Crown were called patents. The dates on these rarely indicate when the settler actually moved onto the property. He probably had to make some improvements to the property and prove his intention to live there before he would be given a patent. The value of this document is the distinction the recipient had of being the first European to have legal claim to that certain parcel of land. If that person happens to be our ancestor, we somehow share that distinction with him.

Now for the procedure. Since the registry office exists for the purpose of land transactions, it is set up to deal with specific locations. That means that you are expected to have a land description of the real estate you are researching. On one occasion I went to the office and asked for the book containing Baden. The attendant refused to serve me until I gave him a specific lot and concession number.

Perhaps a pause to explain lots and concessions is in order. When the Pennsylvania settlers came to Ontario they set about to survey the land in somewhat orderly fashion. A township map in Pennsylvania looks like a crazy-patch quilt. In Waterloo the lots were pre-surveyed in more or less equal size with four sides. The German Company Tracts comprised 150 lots in Waterloo, 130 lots in Woolwich. By the time they surveyed the German Block in Wilmot, they projected three roads in a westerly direction with lots between them. The roads became known as concessions with names. Lot numbers began at the German Company Tract and ascended to the western edge of the new settlement. When the northern and southern sections of Wilmot and the Township of Wellesley were surveyed, the concessions were given numbers. This system was used in subsequent surveys. The number of a lot and its location on a concession or a tract is a "land description."

Frequently the genealogist wants to search because he does not know the location. So, if that is not known, a little homework may need to be done before going to the Registry Office. If you are looking for the location of pioneer families, there are several early maps that are helpful. For 1805 there is a map of the German Company Tract (later part of Waterloo Township). Copies (9" x 12") are available at the Kitchener Public Library. The names on this map are those of the shareholders and not necessarily the settlers. However, this map along with the use of *A BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY OF EARLY SETTLERS AND THEIR DESCENDANTS IN WATERLOO TOWNSHIP* by Ezra E. Eby and revised by Eldon D. Weber should be very helpful in finding locations. For Woolwich Township a map believed to be drawn about 1807 was reproduced in *A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MENNONITES IN ONTARIO* by L. J. Burkholder (inserted between pages 42 and 43). This also gives the names of the shareholders rather than the set-

tlers. For the earliest settlement of Wilmot Township check the centre spread of 150 YEARS, SESQUICENTENNIAL OF THE AMISH MENNONITES OF ONTARIO, ed. by Dorothy Sauder. The 1861 Tremain maps of these three townships may also be very helpful. Copies of these are available at the library. One can also use the maps in the workroom at the Registry Office. If these maps do not turn up the name you are looking for, can a family member give you an approximate location? If you can get at least a general idea of the area, check the lot numbers (and concession if applicable) in that general area.

Fortunately, the Registry Office in Kitchener is set up to serve the historian as well as the real estate interests. The books containing the old transactions are on shelves in the workroom and can be used without asking for service at the desk. The township records are along part of the north wall, Kitchener records on a short section of opposing wall. Books are arranged under Wilmot, Waterloo, Woolwich, etc. For Waterloo and Woolwich the books are labelled G.C.T. No. 1-10, G.C.T. No. 11-20, etc. Waterloo also has the Crown Grants listed in two volumes. For Wilmot, there is an index in the front of the first book giving the volume and page numbers for the three middle concessions (Erbs Road, Snyders Road, Bleams Road) and Block A on the south and Block B on the north.

If you have a lot number for Waterloo or Woolwich or a lot and concession for Wilmot, you can very easily get to the precise information. If you have only an approximate location, look at all the lot numbers in the general area. If you have only the township, then settle down for an afternoon and simply scan the whole township page by page, volume by volume. It is not an impossible task.

What can you expect to find in these books? There will be a page or two for each lot number which will be given at the top. Some lots will have a few entries, others will have many. Each entry usually contains two names — the grantor (the one selling the property) and the grantee (the one purchasing it). Once you have found the name you are looking for, then look at the other items on the same line. Usually all of these items are included in the entry but sometimes not in the same order. The usual order is the instrument number at the left followed by the type of instrument. The types of instruments (or documents) usually found have been described above. The first date given is that on which the document was drawn up. The second date is that on which it was registered. That could be the same day, a lapse of a few days and in some cases a few years. On the right hand side of the entry are given particulars such as the number of acres, the amount of a mortgage and other remarks.

You may request for reading the documents relating to the person you are researching. Either on the work tables or at the service desk, there are request forms. On the top line

Waterloo Mennonite Brethren Church :

Twenty-five years of service

by Vic Hiebert

Although one can be skeptical of the work of a committee, the very first beginnings of Waterloo Mennonite Brethren Church were conceived in the Education Committee of the Kitchener M.B. Church in the spring of 1960. They felt a mission Sunday-school in Waterloo would be a worthwhile outreach, with a vision for a new church if it developed reasonably well.

In August of the same year a census of two public school areas was taken, and a report presented to the church council for approval. In October the Education Committee appointed Vic Hiebert, a Sunday-school teacher and proud native of Waterloo, to lead the new work. The committee also agreed Mennonite Publishing House (Scottsdale, Pa.) materials with the M.B. imprint be used in the work that would be named the Waterloo Mennonite Brethren Sunday School. A canvass of the prospects resulted in five pupils on opening day, November 13, 1960, at the Brighton Public School. It wasn't until March of 1961 that the enrollment increased to twelve. The rent for the gym/auditorium and two classrooms was a very reasonable fifteen dollars per week.

The fall of 1961 saw another increase of enrollment to nineteen and the beginning of a monthly family worship service for the children's parents. Families were personally invited each month by the leader, and members of the Kitchener church who lived in Waterloo were also invited to join the service. Rev. Wilmer Kornelson, principal of Ontario Bible School, was usually the speaker, and the late Rev. John Boldt, also an O.B.S. teacher, often sang at the services. By the end of 1962 enrollment had increased to twenty-five, and Sunday-school materials was changed to Scripture Press.

The Waterloo Mission Sunday School Study Committee was formed in the spring of 1963 to discuss the effect on the Kitchener church of a new Mennonite Brethren church in Waterloo. Fall, 1963 saw the beginning of an adult Sunday-school class with John Boldt as

the teacher. This had a considerable impact on the work — of the four mothers of Sunday-school pupils who attended this class two became Christians.

Weekly worship services began in 1964, and several families from the Kitchener church agreed to attend. This meant a large increase in Sunday-school attendance. But in spite of the many positive aspects of a strong regular nucleus of M.B. members, attendance of pupils from the community slowly decreased. Some adults who had attended the monthly worship services did not come to the weekly services. Organizationally the leader became the Sunday-school superintendent, and Arnold Baerg was appointed chair of a committee to oversee and lead the work.

During the next three years the speakers for the worship services were drawn from college students, teacher and local or visiting pastors. A choir was soon organized, and later a junior choir also formed. Later still the Kitchener congregation agreed to have a part time pastor for the Waterloo work if one could be found.

At a full membership meeting in 1966 the Kitchener congregation decided to cut the apron strings, and arranged for the organization of a separate church. Thus on January 1, 1967, the Waterloo Mennonite Brethren Church began with 43 charter members. Frank C. Peters conducted the organizational meeting on January 8th, assisted by Henry H. Dueck. The motto chosen by the new congregation is found in John 10:10: "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly."

In June of the same year Alvin Enns assumed the pastorate on a part time basis, also filling the role of chaplain for Mennonite Brethren students on behalf of the Ontario Conference of M.B. Churches. The congregation asked that he consider his task to be similar to that of a coach — guiding the group in their witness. The first baptism was conducted on October 29, 1967 in the Kitchener M.B. Church.

During these years the congregation struggled with issues relative to the direction in which

they should go. Should the church join the Ontario M.B. conference? Should they keep the word "Mennonite" in their name? What about church membership lists? Should they formulate a constitution? Should they have deacons, or should all members be responsible for the caring work? Generally traditional ways were accepted, yet a friendly atmosphere developed and an openness prevailed which resulted in good relationships among the members and adherents.

On a Sunday afternoon in June, 1972, the congregation gathered to break ground at 245 Lexington Road, a one hectare site purchased by the Kitchener church in 1964 as a building site in Waterloo. In April of the next year they began services and activities in the new facilities.

After Al Enns concluded eight years of service with the congregation, he left for a teaching position at Bethany Bible Institute in Saskatchewan. For one year the moderator, John Redekop, also served as interim pastor, until July of 1976 when Marvin Warkentin arrived from the Mennonite Brethren Seminary in Fresno, California.

In an attempt to reach into the community, the church has provided a midweek program of Pioneer Girls and Boys Brigade over the years, and several times has conducted a Vacation Bible School. More recently men from the recovery home at 174 King St. N. in Waterloo have been invited monthly to play volley ball. In October of 1982 a Scottish Day was held in an attempt to show the community we respected other traditions, and to tell them our God is the God of all nations and cultures. The Scottish speakers, the bagpipes, the food, including haggis, and the folklore also helped the congregation to understand and appreciate other traditions, and to love those people.

Sometime in 1985 the present congregation of approximately one hundred fifty members, and an additional fifty to seventy-five adherents want to celebrate the 25th anniversary of their beginnings.

I would like to become a member of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario. I will be informed of all Society events, will be eligible to serve on the various committees of the Society, and will receive *Mennogespräch* as part of my membership.

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ POSTAL CODE _____

ACTIVITIES _____

Memberships:
Student - \$3.00
Regular - \$10.00
Additional memberships
at same address
(one mailing) - \$5.00
Sustaining - \$15.00

Mail to: Secretary, Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario
c/o Conrad Grebel College
Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3G6