

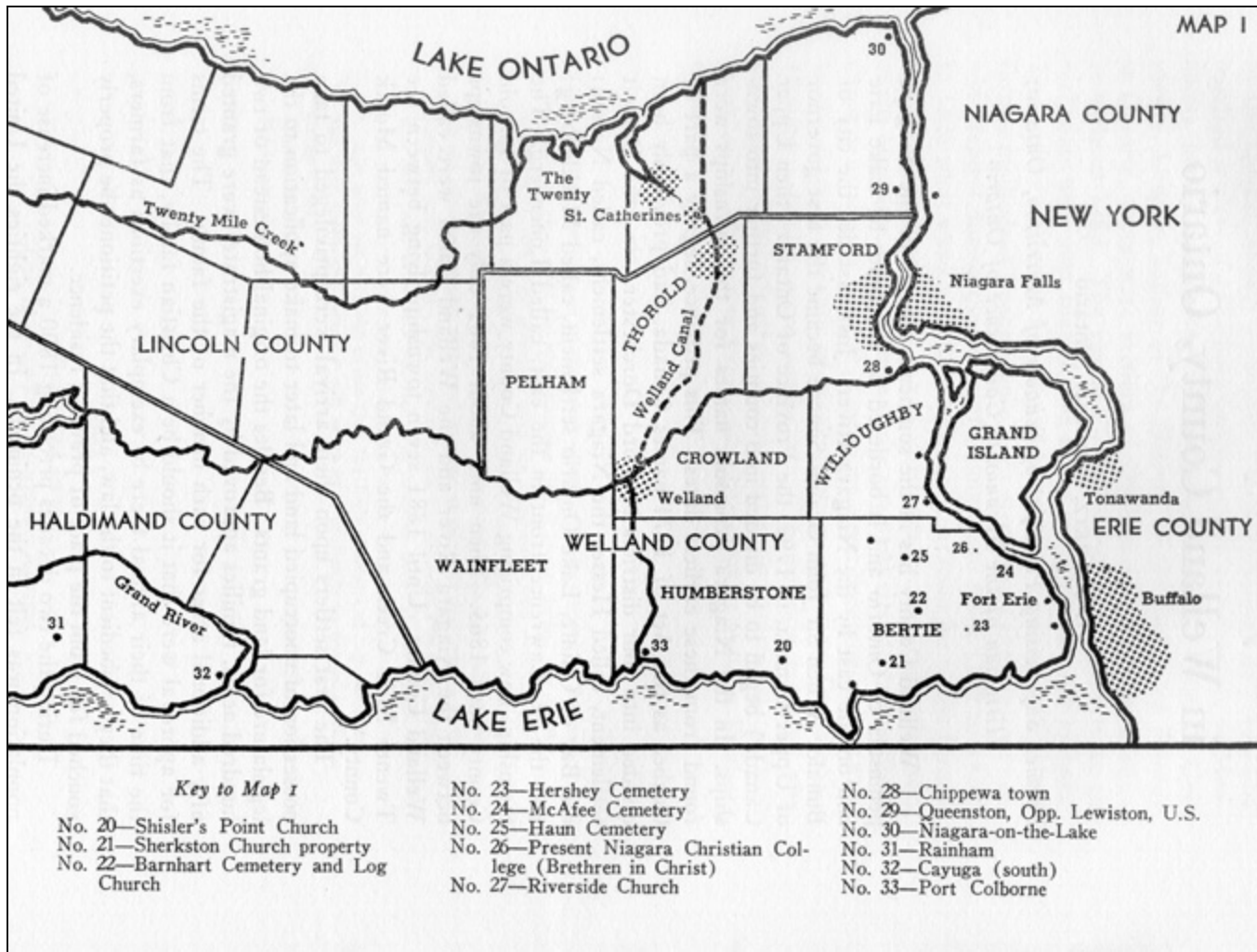
## **The Early History of the Mennonites in Welland County, Ontario**

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Welland County lies in the southeast portion of the Niagara peninsula of Ontario and is bordered on the south by Lake Erie and on the east by the Niagara River. Just east lies the city of Buffalo. When Sir John Graves Simcoe became the first governor of Upper Canada, in 1792, the Province of Ontario (then Upper Canada) began to be divided into counties and further into townships. In the Niagara peninsula names for the townships were found from these earliest dates. This province, legally a part of Quebec as the Act of 1774 names Canada, had previously been divided into four districts by Lord Dorchester, viz., the Detroit settlement, called Hesse; the Niagara settlement, called Nassau; the Bay of Quinte, Lake Ontario settlement, called Mecklenberg; and the St. Lawrence front in the east, called Lunenburg. The townships now comprising Welland County were a part of Lincoln County until 1865. Then until about 1881 only the townships between the Niagara River and the Welland Canal were called Welland County. Until 1881 seven townships lying between the Twenty Mile Creek and the Grand River were named Monck County. (See Map 1.)



The first settlers upon their arrival were privileged to take possession of unoccupied land and later to make application to the legislature for land grants. Besides the original homestead of two hundred acres, families approved by the magistrates were granted fifty additional acres for each member of the family. The terms for approval were that it should be a Christian family, that from the time of their arrival there be exemplary exertions as farmers, that they be obedient to the law, and that the petitioner be properly vouched for from the place of previous residence.

During the two decades preceding 1800 a marked increase of population was felt in the peninsula. In the eighties the United Empire Loyalists formed the greater group of these pioneers. In the northern townships next to Lake Ontario, particularly, this was the case. To the Lake Erie townships there came a migration of Quakers as early as 1783, who traveled by ferry across Niagara River from

Buffalo Creek and Black Rock to Canadian territory at Fort Erie. By 1792 settlements of these families were found at Black Creek, in Bertie Township; and at the Short Hills in Pelham Township. A comparison of early immigration to eight townships northwest of Fort Erie is interesting. Bertie Township granted 34,347 acres of land; the heaviest immigrations were in 1796-98 and 1801-03. Humberstone Township granted 24,629 acres of land; the heaviest immigrations were 1797-98 and 1801-02. Willoughby Township granted 18,069 acres of land; by 1798 over two thirds of it was taken. Pelham Township granted 39,031 acres of land; the heaviest immigrations were in 1797-98. Wainfleet Township granted 30,882 acres of land; migrations were chiefly in 1796-97, 1802, and 1809. Stamford Township granted 22,881 acres of land; the heaviest immigrations were 1796, 1798, and 1801. Crowland Township granted 19,986 acres of land; the chief immigrations were in 1797 and 1802. Thorold Township granted 24,190 acres of land; the heaviest immigrations were 1796-98, 1801, and 1803.

The American Revolutionary War (1775-83) had brought weighty questions to the attention of Mennonites in Pennsylvania. Would they still be granted the same religious liberties after independence as were enjoyed under the British Crown? Was it right to pay war taxes? On the principle of non-resistance they were unanimous, though they were under suspicion for not arraying themselves against the British in the Revolution. The westward movement from Pennsylvania which followed brought into Canada numbers of Mennonite families. The immigration before 1800 was stronger into Canada than to the settlements south and west of the lakes. Doubtless, one reason for immigration to Canada is found in the "Exemptions from bearing arms as under the ancient Government of British States" given by Governor Simcoe to the members of the Society of Friends, May, 1792, and in the next year granted to Quakers, Mennonites, and Tunkers. ( From Part 1, The Military Laws, Public Library, Niagara Falls, Ont) Those who came to Ontario showed their preference for British laws and British freedom. (From *Papers and Records*, Ontario Historical Society, Vol. XXIV.) Though they were often called Loyalists, the time of their arrival did not coincide with that of the Loyalists who were of British extraction.

### *Evidences of Early Settlements*

That Mennonites were early settlers in Canada is shown by the "Memorial of the Inhabitants at Sugar Loaf" which states

That near 100 families are now settled in that quarter (round the point called Sugar Loaf above Fort Erie) on lands not yet surveyed subject from this circumstance to the many inconveniences attending their situation, particularly to disputes about Limits and Encroachments the one on the other.

Therefore most humbly supplicating your Excellency will have the goodness to order a Survey to be made of their lands with such dispatch as you in your wisdom may see fit. Newark, March 30, 1793. Signed Abrm. Laing, Joel W. Morris, Wilson Doan, Eliza Doan, Nathan Havens, Jos. Havens, Azaliah Schooley, Jehoida Schooley, John Harret, John Cutler, Peter Carver, Amos Morris, Jas. Wilson, Samuel Wilson, John Braley, Wm. Cook, Asa Schooley, Christopher Richards, Jas. Edsall, Daniel Forsyth, Michael Shark, Jas. Edsall, Christian Troyer, Jason Millard, Dan Millard, Heart South, Thos. Millard, Titus Doan, Enos Doan.

Endorsed: That Direction be given by ye Surveyor Gerl. to carry it into Execution as soon as possible.

Read in Council, 10 July, 1793. (*Ibid.*, (46), 126.)

Among these petitioners are names of Mennonites and Quakers who settled about Sugar Loaf Point some fifteen miles west of Fort Erie. In the following extracts taken from Ontario Historical Society, Papers and Records, Vol. XXIV, Parliament Buildings, Toronto, Ontario, we shall notice other names of Mennonite ancestry.

(a) I hereby certify that Jacob Sevitz came into this Province in the year 1788, his family with him.-John Warren, J. P. Jacob and wife Catharine, Elizabeth, George, Mary, Barbara, Henry (5 children). Endorsed: Rec'd. 25 April 1797.

Recommended for 300 acres family land.

(b) Jacob Sevitz came in 1788 with his wife and five children and had received 200 acres in the Township of Wainfleet. Before Apr. 1797 he never received any family lands.

(c) Abraham Neaff came in 1790-to Humberstone Township (Sugar Loaf). Abraham Neaff petitioned for Lot 29, Sugar Loaf East, now Humberstone. Petition rec'd July 12, 1794, granted if vacant."

(d) Petition of John Troyer who came from Pennsylvania 1789, permitted by Colonel Hunter to settle on any un-located land in the Province. He went to Long Point Bay, sixty miles west of the Grand River and purchased an improvement for fifty pounds (un-surveyed land). Rebellious Americans took away all he had before coming to this province to enjoy peace under His Majesty's Good Laws.

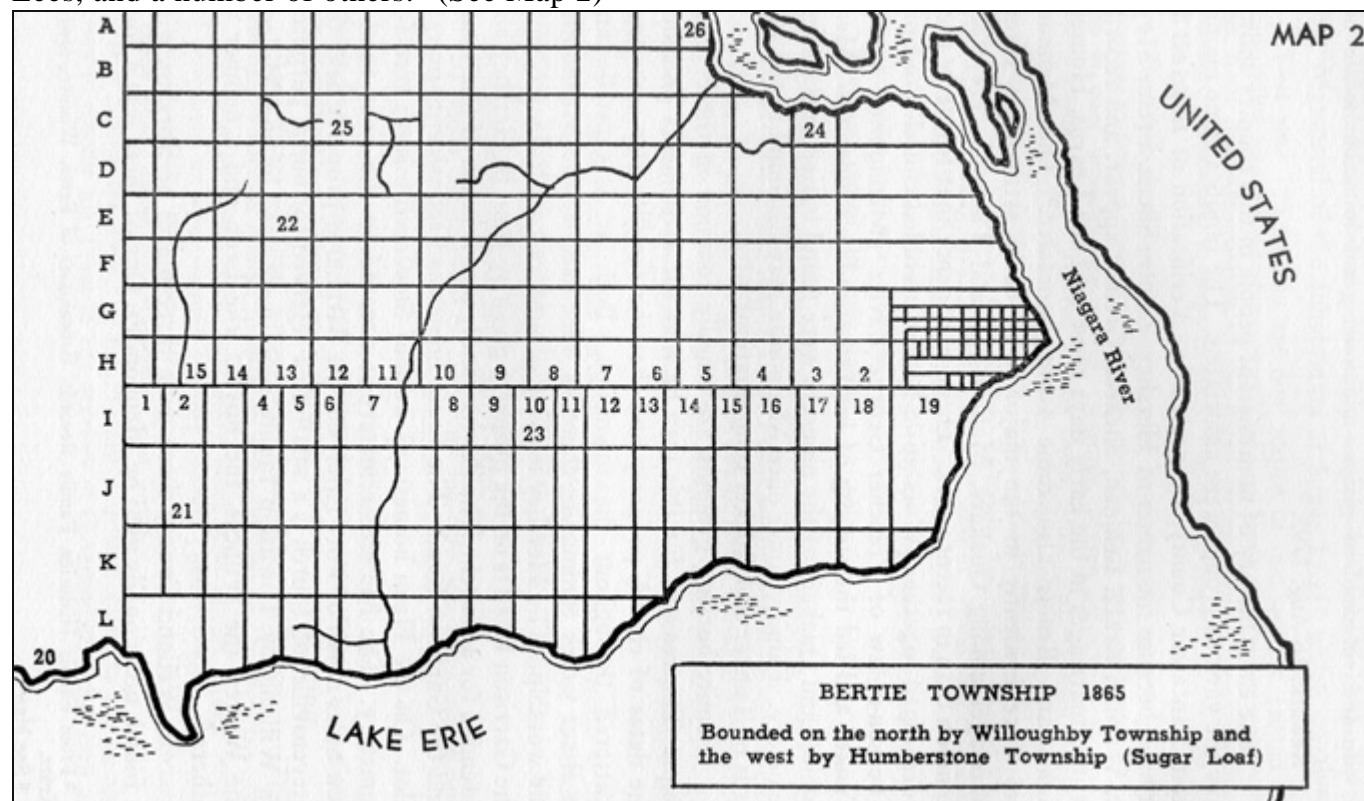
It is against the Tenets of his Profession to bear arms, he has no objection to employ his Team in any services of Government, either civil or military.

(e) Petition of Christian Troyer, who came 1789 with his brother John, settled in Long Point Bay under the same Order with his Brother. A wife and six children-prays-additional grant to accommodate his family. Newark, 18 Aug. 1795.

The early history of non-resistant people in this country shows how the various groups were associated. The families came mainly from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Verification of this fact is at hand because the names of Hershey, Zavitz, Sherk, Fretz, Moyer, Wismer, Kratz, Lehman, Shearer, Greiner appear, and records of intermarriages in the early days show that the Learns, Houses, Neffs, and Beams also came from Lancaster. (From Family Histories, Family Records, Genealogies of Fretz, Wismer, Moyer, Kratz.) The Mennonites were evidently in the majority in early settlements. Intermarriages among Quakers, Mennonites, and Tunkers were more common than in recent years. There is evidence that formerly they worshipped together. Worship in homes preceded church erection. The son-in-law of

Preacher George Zavitz (Mennonite) was a Tunker and led the singing of his father-in-law's meetings. Mennonites and Quakers of the pioneers were found buried in the same cemetery. Family names once Mennonite may be found in the records of Tunker and Quaker congregations later.

Family burying grounds are usually common in these townships. The reasons for this may be that the settlements preceded the dates of church property and that the families also were well scattered throughout the townships. Both at Stevensville and at Black Creek community churches were used by the Mennonites for worship. The Hershey burying ground east of Ridgeway near the Garrison Road is on the property given by John B. Hershey and intended for a church. The Zavitz family plot is north of Sherkston and the Garrison Road. The Fretz homestead set aside its private plot. On the Haun homestead west of Stevensville is an acre for cemetery. The McAfee cemetery is situated on the river road a few miles north of Fort Erie. On the Barnhardt property near the Stevensville log church is a small area reserved for burial purposes. In Willoughby Township family plots were used by the Millers, the Waites, the Willicks, the Boyers, the Lees, and a number of others." (See Map 2)



PROPERTY HOLDERS IN BERTIE TOWNSHIP 1865, bearing family names of Mennonites, Tunkers, and Quakers

*Key to Map 2*

- A-15-M. Beam; Samuel Beam.
- A-14-W. Near; M. Wilhelm; M. Sour; W. Haun.

A-13-Henry Stoltz ; A. Barnhart ; G. Eberly.  
A-12-G. House; Peter Schisler.  
A-11-Peter Winger  
A-10- Richard  
A-9-Adem Beam  
A-8-L. Krafft; J. Krafft; J. Morningstar.  
A-7-Martin Everts  
A-6-E. Miller; Jacob Miller.  
A-5-Jacob Miller (dot-Niagara Christian College)  
B-16-Henry Beam  
B-15-Henry Beam; Peter House.  
B-14- P. Barnhart ; G. Eberly ; Jacob House (dot-Log Church)  
B-13-Geo. Eberly  
B-12-Geo. Eberly  
B-11-Peter Schisler  
B-10-Kirkpatrick  
B-9-J. Winger; Conrad Schisler; S. Morningstar  
B-8-A. Beam; M. Neas  
B-7-J. House; J. Miller  
B-6-Andrew Miller; Edward Miller  
B-5-Edward Miller; B. Miller  
C-16- H. Johnson; Benj. Winger  
C-15-Jacob Sider; Abr. Winger  
C-14-Abr. Sider  
C-13-Nelson Haun; Wilson Haun  
C-12-B. Beam; Michael Baker. (dot Stevensville)  
C-11-M. Climenbaga ; B. Barnhart ; B. House  
C-10 - D. Sider  
C-8-Zimmerman ; H. C. Anger  
C-6-Evertt Miller; J. Anguish  
C-5-B. F. Miller; J. Schisler ; David Schisler  
C-4- Ed. Hershey; Ben Hershey  
D-16- W. Johnson  
D-15-J. Fretz; S. Fretz  
D-14- Eli Danner ; C. Sherk  
D-13-Michael Baker; Martin Baker  
D-12-Michael Baker  
D-11-M. Climenhaga; D. Barnhart; P. Barnhart; Benj House  
D-10- D. Climenhaga  
D-9-J. Winger; Jos. Seal  
D-8- John Miller  
D-6-J. Boyer  
D-5-Ed. Hershey  
D-4-Hershey  
E-15-C. Sherk; John Sherk

E-14- D. Fretz; J. Sherk; B. Sherk  
E-13-J. Carver; P. Barnhart  
E-12-J. Strohm; Robert Johnson  
E-11-N. Steele  
E-10- J. Krafft  
E-9- Jos. Seal; Henry Near  
E-8- John Miller  
E-7-J. Emerich  
E-4 - Peter E. Miller  
E-2- Forsyth  
F-16- C. Bither  
F-15-Andrew Sherk; J. Sherk  
F-14-Peter Learn J.P.  
F-13-Jonas Beam  
F-11-Isaac Huffman  
F-10- Dr. McMicking  
F-9-Geo. Schrigley  
F-4-Peter E. Miller; B. Troup  
F-3-Wm. Dunn; M. Morris  
F-2-John Warren; Henry Wintermute  
G-16-S. Zavitz ; S. Fretz; J. Fretz  
G-15-S. Zavitz ; S. Fretz; J. Fretz; W. M. Church  
G-14- R. Learn; (Sherks Cemetery) J. Zavitz  
G-13-John Zavitz, Jr.  
G-9-Isaac Huffman ; G. Huffman  
G-7-Peter Cregar; Broch Lee  
G-5-Mary Whitemute  
G-4-G. Hershey  
G-3-J. B. Hershey  
G-2-J. B. Hershey  
H-16- N. Sherk  
H-15-J. I. Zavitz ; 'I. Zavitz ; P. Learn  
H-14- J. Zavitz ; N. Zavitz ; H. Zavitz  
H-13-J. Zavitz; A. Johnson; (mill.)  
H-12- R. Wilson; A. Johnson  
H-11-P. Anger  
H-10- J. Anger  
H-9- Ben Sherk  
H-8-Conrad Jansen  
H-7-P. Jansen; J. Jansen; J. Jansen  
H-5-Henry Troup ; Philip Troup  
H-1-Fort Erie town  
I-1-Fannie Zavitz ; P. Zavitz  
I-2-M. Zavitz ; A. Learn  
I-3-Joseph Cutler

I-4- Josiah Bearss  
I-5-J. Adam Barnhart  
I-7-Mrs. R. Hershey; J. Yoka; George Hoffman  
I-8-J. Cuttler  
I-9-J. D. Hershey; Enos Disher  
I-10- J. H. Hershey; Philip Nigh  
I-11-S. Winger; Jacob Jansen  
I-13-Richard Graham; J. P.  
I-14-Richard Graham; J. P.  
I-15- John Hershey  
J-1-A. Schooley ; J. Sherk; L. Doan  
J-2-Elias Morningstar ; A. Learn  
J-3-B. Sherk, Jr.; I. Schooley  
J-5-Alex Haun ; Wm. Anger  
J-7-R. Wilson; J. J. Moore; A. Wilson; J. Sherk  
J-8 - John Cuttler  
J-9-J. B. Hershey  
J-10- B. Johnson  
J-13-J. Wintemute  
K-1-Jonas Sherk  
K-2-D. Sherk  
K-3-J. B. Schooley  
K-5-Abram Sherk  
K-6- P. Sherk  
K-8- John House  
K-9-Alex Haun  
K-10-James Haun  
K-11-A. Haun  
K-12-D. Wintemute  
L-1-John Neff  
L2- Benj. Sherk, Jr.  
L-3- John Sherk  
L-4-James Haun  
L-5-Matthias Haun  
L-7-Isaac Haun ; Jacob Clous  
L-8- John House  
L-9- Alex Haun  
L-10-James Haun

In Welland County there were three places of worship, with a fourth occasionally used by Mennonites. One of these was a community church on the McAfee cemetery property; another was the Riverside Church north of Black Creek; the third was the log church west of Stevensville used principally by Mennonites. The main center of worship was the church one mile east of Sherkston. (See Map 1 and 2)



It is clear that soon after the deed of property was received in 1828, by the Mennonite minister and deacon, who were trustees for the congregation at Sherkston, a log church building was erected. This became the first Mennonite house of worship in Bertie Township, and served for about thirty years. The Willoughby Church at the Niagara River, seven miles south of Chippawa, nine miles south of Niagara Falls, was erected by public subscription in the community in 1827. (Subscription Record Willoughby School and Church.) It served as church and school for many years. The Mennonites, being in the majority among those religiously inclined, used it most regularly.

Below is the deed of the Sherkston church property.

A memorial to be registered according to an Act of Legislature of the Province of Upper Canada of a Deed of bargain and sale bearing date the 15th day of May in the year of our Lord, 1928, and made by and between SAMUEL SHERK of the township of Bertie in the county of Lincoln in the district of Niagara and province of Upper Canada, of the one part, and George Zavitz of the said township yeoman and Peter Sherk of the township of Humberstone in the county of Lincoln district and province aforesaid yeoman of the other part.

Whereby said Samuel Sherk for and in consideration of twenty pounds of current money to me by the said George Zavitz and Peter Sherk in hand paid and the receipt thereof is acknowledged and confessed and have granted, bargained, sold, aliened and confirmed unto the said George Zavitz and Peter Sherk and their heirs forever.

All and singular that certain piece or parcel of land lying and being situated in the township of Bertie in the county of Lincoln the district of Niagara and the Province of Upper Canada.

Being composed of part of Lot number 35 in the first concession of the said township of Bertie, containing by admeasurement two acres which said two acres are butted and bounded as follows . . . (which said piece or parcel of land is to be reserved by the said George Zavitz and Peter Sherk and their heirs for a burying ground for the Mennonite Society forever).

To have and to hold the same with the appurtenances freed and discharged from all encumbrances whatsoever.

Unto the said George Zavitz and Peter Sherk and their heirs to the sale and proper use benefit and behoof of the George Zavitz and Peter Sherk and their heirs forever.

Which said deed of bargain and sale is witnessed by Joseph Sherk yeoman of the township of Bertie aforesaid and Isaac H. Johnston, Schoolmaster, of the township of Humberstone aforesaid.

In the memorial thereof is hereby required to be registered by us the Trustees thereby named.

Uniting our hands and seals at Humberstone aforesaid the day and year first above written signed and sealed in the presence of Joseph Sherk, H. Johnston, George Zavitz, Peter Sherk

### ***Pioneers and Early Settlers of Welland County***

In Bertie Township the earliest Mennonite pioneer was Jacob Sevitz who came in 1788. The next year came John and Christian Troyer who continued their journey more than a hundred miles west to Long Point on Lake Erie. Among the hundred names listed for grants of land in 1793 are Peter Carver, John Braley, Enos, Titus and Wilson Doan, and Benjamin Hershey who came from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in 1795.

(L.J. Burkholder, *Brief History of the Mennonites in Ontario*, Markham, Ont., 1935.) Abram and Christian Hershey came at about the same time. The father of Benjamin Sherk born in Bertie in 1796, came from Lancaster County. Peter Zavitz appears to have been an early pioneer also. Other names appearing before 1800 are Mathias Horn (rare spelling, Haun, Hahn), Philip Bender, and Abram Wintemute. After 1800 there came into Bertie Township, George, Benjamin, and John & Peter Wintemute, William Haun, Jacob Haun, Frederic House, Jacob Johnson, David Bearss, John Barnheart, Peter Learn, and Jacob and Benjamin Morningstar.

The settlers coming into Humberstone (Sugar Loaf) Township before 1800 were James and Frederic House; John, Abram, and Jacob Neave (Neff) ; Jacob and Adam Bowman; and Jacob Huffman. After that came John and Henry Neaffe, John and Christian House, Joseph and Moses Doan, Joseph Haun, Jasper Shirk, and Christian Kniseley.

Those seeking land grants before 1800 in Wainfleet were Christian, Henry, and Samuel Sevitz ; Abram and John Overholt ; and John Martin, who obtained theirs about 1809.

In Willoughby Township Abram Beam, John Shoup, Martin Beam, and John Winger came earliest. Those given grants in 1802 and later were Christian Shoup, John Sherk, George House, Henry Huber-Bowman, and Jacob Miller.

In Pelham Township in 1794 Peter Simmerman and his associates obtained grants of two-hundred-acre farms near the Twenty Mile Creek. Martin Overholt and Jacob Miller also settled there before 1800; and Peter Weaver, Philip Miller, and John Bowman came soon after.

The leader of the Bertie congregation from an early date was George Zavitz. He was a son of the Jacob Zavitz who came to Canada in 1788. This minister (d. 1858) was held in high esteem by his followers who called him "the peacemaker." His leadership was recognized in both the Black Creek and the Sherkston congregations. Co-labourers in Sherkston were his brother John and his son-in-law John Hershey. (See Map 2)

John Zavitz (1798-1872) was a minister of amiable disposition, seventeen years younger than George. After the death of George, he took a leading part in the guidance of the little flock at Black Creek, though he lived in Bertie. Since he performed baptisms and marriages, he was regarded as bishop by a number of those who remembered him. This is not fully verified since other ministers at Black Creek are said to have baptized at the river. John Zavitz sometimes preached in English. His sermons were appealing because of his sincerity in manner and presentation. (See Map 2.)

John B. Hershey (1816-1904) was most active in his ministry for the Mennonite Church during the life of George Zavitz. The congregation at Bertie was under the supervision of Bishop John Lapp after the death of George Zavitz. The home of John Hershey was open to the ministers from Clarence, New York, who came occasionally and also attended the semi-annual meeting. Many a Scriptural discussion continuing late into the night is credited to these men. Doubtless they did not have the advantages of church periodicals then to help them in points of doctrine. (See Map 2)

Hershey lived on a farm east of Ridgeway and gave the land for the cemetery. (See Map 2.) His intentions were to have a church built there, probably in the sixties at the time of the erection of the brick church at Sherkston. His plan lacked support and never developed. He used English in his preaching. Later in life, however, he was quite inactive as a minister. His closing years were spent with his daughters at Fort Erie until his death in 1904.

The first deacon at Sherkston was probably Peter Sherk. We learn of him first as a trustee of the church property in 1828. He is thought to have been a man of decided influence and renown in his time. Upon his death in 1853 his son Benjamin succeeded him to the office of deacon. Benjamin Sherk (1836-68) served the congregation during a period of comparative strength.

Before 1860 the first log church was replaced by a brick meetinghouse. The labours of George Zavitz had tended toward peace during the years preceding his death in 1858. It was unfortunate that after the close of his life the seeds of discord began to be manifest. Early experiences in the

new church found John Zavitz advanced in years, and a feeling favouring the leadership of John B. Hershey was not strong enough to be unanimous.

Bishop John Lapp, an active minister at Clarence Center, New York, east of Buffalo, had served many times in the Bertie congregation. By agreement in the Sherkston congregation he was requested to assume the responsibilities of leadership. That he was deeply concerned for the welfare of this group is shown by his call in the Herald of Truth, March, 1865, for pastoral help. The letter reads as follows:

Harris Hill, Jan. 31, 1865

To John F. Funk

Now there is a place for anyone who is thus changing his residence, or has been thrown out of a situation and a home by the above-mentioned recent calamities in Virginia, at Shirk's Crossing in Canada, about 12 miles from Buffalo, where he would be very welcome and acceptable indeed. There is a small congregation of Mennonite brethren there, who have as yet no minister but are longing for a man to break them the bread of life. I believe if such a man who has the gift of God to speak, both in the German and English language, should settle there, that through the Grace of God the church would increase very fast.

They have a good comfortable brick Meeting-house, a fine situation, and a fruitful soil; and I know they would be very thankful if some such one should move there, and they would also be willing to assist him if he was in need of it. Should anyone desire to visit the place in view I would be very happy to go with him. I live 16 miles north-east of Buffalo, and one and a half miles north of Harris Hill in Erie County, N.Y.

John Lapp

It is known that John Lapp served west of the river in the capacity of bishop in 1864. Appointments for the autumn communion had been made for John M. Brenneman, Indiana, to be present at Clarence, Erie County, New York; Bertie, Welland County, Ontario; Cayuga, Haldimand County, Ontario; and the Twenty, Lincoln County, Ontario. Circumstances prevented Brenneman's coming and Bishop Lapp proceeded to conduct the special services at each of the appointments. At Sherkston it was a midweek service. Lapp's intense interest in this congregation and in the families west of the river was constant during the remainder of his life. It was not only at the special occasions semi-annually, but at frequent intervals that he served the church here. His last public service was conducted in this county. While called to take charge of a funeral at Black Creek, he became seriously ill, and death followed at his home a few days later.

As seen in an earlier record, Bishop Lapp endorsed the use of the English language. This was not generally granted by the conference of Ontario before 1890. However, there was a continuance of German preaching in Bertie long after the language was out of general use in the community. This has been given most frequently as the reason for the decline in the church. Also the decade of dissension and the break which took form at the Twenty in the Annual Conference of 1889 had their effect in the remotest congregations. In Welland County, Jonas Zavitz, Abram Sherk, and a few other families preferred the conservative viewpoint. The ministers Nelson Michael and Gilbert Bearss with the greater part of the congregation in Bertie favoured the action of the conference for a more general use of English preaching, and of Sunday schools and evening

services. As there was only this one place of worship in Welland at that date, the membership was weakened by the division of 1889.

## *Cemeteries*

### 1. SHERKSTON CEMETERY

To the historian, Sherkston cemetery is of vital importance. A century of records, fairly representative, is found here. This has been the chief place of burials for the Sherks and many other leading families of that period. The location was suitably chosen, being on a particular elevation. Among names and facts found on the markers are these:

George Zavitz died May 4, 1859, aged 45 yrs. 2 mo. 20 da.

Frances, wife of George, died Jan. 25, 1885, aged 62 yrs. 1 mo. 20 da.

Peter Sherk, born Aug. 15, 1791, died Nov. 22, 1863.

Sophia, wife of Peter, died Dec. 20, 1895, aged 82 yrs. 1 mo. 2 da.

John Zavitz died March 30, 1872, aged 74 yrs. 1 mo. 30 da.

Nancy, wife of John, died May 16, 1882, aged 79 yrs. 1 mo. 29 da.

Peter Sherk, born May 1, 1814, died June 11, 1889.

Rebecca, wife of Peter, died 1856.

Fanny, wife of Peter, died 1873.

Benjamin Sherk died Feb. 12, 1901, aged 83 yrs. 10 da.

Benjamin Sherk died Dec. 19, 1873, aged 77 yrs. 10 mo. 3 da.

Esther, wife of Benjamin, died July 11, 1879, aged 77 yrs. 9 mo. 5 da.

Abraham Sherk died June 22, 1906, aged 81 yrs. 7 mo. 22 da.

Elizabeth, wife of Abraham, died June 4, 1894, aged 65 yrs. 24 da.

George Storm died Jan. 5, 1879, aged 74 yrs. 8 mo. 18 da.

Eve, wife of George, died Dec. 4, 1884, aged 77 yrs. 10 mo. 5 da.

Jacob Zavitz died Aug. 17, 1888, aged 79 yrs. 11 mo. 10 da.

Peter Zavitz died April 26, 1864, aged 88 yrs. 3 mo.

George Zewitz, born Aug. 18, 1781, died March 1, 1858.

Esther, wife of Abraham Leib, died Aug. 31, 1864, aged 66 yrs. 5 mo. 16 da.

### 2. HERSHEY CEMETERY

It appears evident that at first this area was used as a family plot. Before 1860 it was intended by John B. Hershey that a church should be built on this property, then a part of his own farm. It seems to be the principal place of burial for the Hershey family. The following are names from the markers here:

Benjamin Hershey, born in Lancaster County 1776, came to Canada 1795, died Nov. 26, 1831.

Abraham Hershey, born Aug. 24, 1770, died Jan. 26, 1856.

Margaret, wife of Abraham, born April 4, 1771, died May 22, 1857.

Christian Hershey, born Oct. 11, 1768, died March 10, 1845, aged 76 yrs.

Mary, wife of Christian, born Dec. 19, 1771, died Jan. 30, 1854.

Rudolph, son of Benjamin of Lancaster, died young.

Rudolph, son of Benjamin (Junior), died young.

John B. Hershey, preacher, died May 29, 1904, aged 88 yrs. 3 mo. 15 da.

### 3. CEMETERY NEAR THE LOG CHURCH ON THE BARNHART PROPERTY

Within a small enclosure one-half mile west of the Log Church near Stevensville are a few tombstones lying among undergrowth. The names inscribed are:

Magdalena, daughter of Abraham and Magdalena Barnhart, died April 8, 1860, aged 5 yrs. 1 mo. 1 da.

John Carver died July 14, 1868, aged 60 yrs. 7 mo. 12 da.

Catherine, wife of John Carver, died Sept. 15, 1892, aged 88 yrs. 4 mo.

Elizabeth, wife of John Barnhart, died Jan. 30, 1849, aged 69 yrs. 3 mo. 4 da. I Jno. 1:7.

Sarah E., daughter of Benjamin and Rhodah J. House, died Sept. 16, 1865, aged 6 mo. 3 da.

### 4. HAUN CEMETERY

Near the west limits of Stevensville on the Haun homestead is a family cemetery in which are a number of graves. Among them are:

Maria, frau von Adam Luckas, died March 13, 1859, aged 23 yrs. 7 mo. 6 da.

George Eberly died Feb. 24, 1870, aged 61 yrs. 5 mo. 18 da.

Julie Ann Aberly died Sept. 14, 1877, aged 70 yrs. 1 mo. 2 da.

Nelson Haun died June 19, 1876, aged 27 yrs. 1 mo. 2 da.

Nelson Haun died June 13, 1878, aged 72 yrs. 1 mo. 28 da.

Mary, wife of Nelson, died July 4, 1888, aged 75 yrs. 4 mo. 12 da.

John H. Haun, born Sept. 11, 1841, died July 4, 1922.

Sarah Haun, born May 13, 1848, died Aug. 12, 1915.

Nelson Haun died Feb. 15, 1879, aged 69 yrs. 4 da.

George Haun died Aug. 9, 1891, in his 50th year.

Also several descendants of Mathias Haun with deaths close together as though a scourge had struck young children among them.

## 5. RECORDS IN MCAFEE CEMETERY, BRIDGEBURG

Benjamin Hershey, born May 13, 1794, died June 17, 1872.

Abraham Hershey, born Nov. 5, 18'11, died May 13, 1858.

Elizabeth Baxter, wife of Abr. Hershey, born July 12, 18'11, died Feb. 11, 1882.

John Miller died April 13, 1844, aged 82 yrs.

Christiana, wife of John Miller, died Aug. 15, 1842, aged 71 yrs.

John Palmer died Sept. 13, 1'819.

William Miller, born 1835, died 1892.

Children of E. and Margaret Lee.

Jacob Miller born July 11, 1795, died June 28, 1870.

Son of Abr. and Elizabeth Hershey died April 11, 1838.

Clarissa, wife of H. Hershey, died July 25, 1852, in 25th year.

A German inscription-warde geboren 1741, gestarben 1820.

Other names: Everitt, House, Howse, Gonder, Booth, Haskins, Wood, Murray, Glinnick, Chudley, Erch, Hendershot, Raymonds.

### *Early Ordained Men in Welland County*

Gilbert Bearss was born July 4, 1848, of a Bertie Township family. His wife was Louisa Jane Doan, whom he married in 1869. She was born in 1848 and died in 1932. In 1885 he was ordained to the ministry of the Mennonite Church. Though he was not a fluent speaker, he endeavoured to serve faithfully in his calling. For the active part of his ministry he lived in Bertie and served at Sherkston. Later for a number of years with his family he farmed near Vineland. In 1917 he returned to Sherkston where he maintained a small home until in recent years when he has been at home with his daughter in the city of Welland. The family was of Re formed Mennonite and Quaker ancestry. His brother and a near descendant became outstanding ministers in the Church of the Brethren. Brother Bearss has given useful aid in the church in Welland County. In his preaching he used English only. In his family were two sons and one daughter. (Burkholder, 291.)

*Benjamin Hershey* was born in 1826. He was a brother of "Doctor" John B. Hershey. In marriage he was united to Magdalena Dausman who was born in 1809. This union was blessed with seven children. In 1844 he was called to the ministry in Bertie Township. In 1850 he moved with his family to Elkhart County, Indiana. He then lived for some time at Sterling, Illinois, where he was ordained bishop in 1870. Later he moved to Missouri when the colony was opened at Clarence. He organized the congregation near Cherry Box. Here he lived until his death in 1888.

*Christian Hershey* was a pioneer minister in the Welland field. He is recognized as fellow minister with George Zavitz in a letter by Bishop Jacob Moyer in 1831. Whether he was the pioneer Christian who was born in 1768 and died in 1845, or whether he was eldest brother of Bishop Benjamin has not been verified.

*John B. Hershey* was born Feb. 14, 1816, a son of Benjamin Hershey of Lancaster County. He was married to Salome Zavitz, a daughter of Preacher George Zavitz, in 1840. He had two sons and three daughters. He was twice married. During his active career he lived on a farm at Fort Erie, and later at the Hershey cemetery. He was a great reader and somewhat of a scholar. Some time after middle life he is said to have withdrawn from the ministry of the Mennonite Church.

He practised the doctoring of cancer until as an aged man he declined to continue this service. He died in 1904. His funeral was conducted by a cousin, Benjamin Hershey, who, though not ordained, preached locally, moving later to Dresden, Western Ontario.

*Nelson Michael* was born in 1843 and was ordained to the ministry in 1875. He was a stout man, clean-shaven, and of quiet disposition. He preached English only, and his efforts were faithful though given with difficulty. His wife was Sarah Sherk, who was born in 1845 and died in 1906. They had a family of several children. He always lived near Sherkston on his farm, where he died in 1923. The Michael ancestors were Lutheran.

*Jacob Miller* was born Feb. 21, 1772. His wife was Barbara Hershey. They came from York County, Pennsylvania. A German Bible now in possession of a descendant was printed in 1776. It shows purchase by Jacob Miller, Maryland, 1787. In 1804 he became a pioneer on the River Road seven miles south of Niagara Falls, and bought a farm of several hundred acres. To this he added two farms east of the Grand River in Waterloo County. He was a minister of the Mennonite Church. Whether his ordination took place before or after his immigration to Canada has not been verified. He had a family of five children, two of whom lived on the Waterloo property. It is said that he made frequent trips on horse back to preach in Waterloo County. Barbara Hershey was born July 27, 1771, and died Aug. 10, 1840. Jacob Miller died Aug. 3, 1841. He lies in the Miller cemetery on the property. His will has been preserved and bears valuable historical data. (Burkholder, 91.)

*Peter Sherk* was born Aug. 15, 1791, and died Nov. 22, 1853. His deacon appointment according to the list of 1828 was before that date. He was twice married and had a family of nine sons and two daughters. The name of his first wife is not known. His second wife, Sophia, was born in 1813 and died in 1895. One daughter was the wife of Jacob Zavitz, an active Mennonite of Bertie, and the other was married to a Stump in Indiana.

*Peter Sherk* was born May 1, 1814, and died June 11, 1889. He was ordained a minister for the Mennonite Church at Bertie but declined to serve. He is reported as son of Deacon Peter Sherk. This man was first married to Rebecca Bearss, who died in 1856. His second wife was Fanny Sherk. She died in 1873. He was then married to Magdalene, daughter of Henry Miller and widow of John Emerich. She was born in 1826 and died in 1903. See burials in Sherkston cemetery.

*George Storm* was born April 18, 1804, and died Jan. 5, 1879. His wife was Eve Beam. She was born in 1807 and died in 1884. There was a large family of children. He was an amiable active deacon at Sherkston. In appearance he was slim and tall and clean shaven.

*Martin Weaver* was born April 1, 1814, and died Oct. 17, 1887. In 1846 he was married to Susan Miller (1822-1902). Their family consisted of four sons and a daughter. Probably before 1870, he was ordained a minister by Bishop John Lapp by lot. He was a man well informed in the

Scriptures but never preached. The homestead was on the River Road near the Riverside Church north of Boyer's Creek. He was among the last of the Mennonites in the Riverside community.

*Joseph Willick* was one of three brothers who came from Germany to Canada as Roman Catholic conscientious objectors to military service. Two of the brothers became Mennonites. He died July 8, 1872. In 1833 he married Esther, daughter of John Boyer. He homesteaded on the Sodon Road, two miles south of Chippawa. There were six sons and five daughters in their family. He was a deacon in the Mennonite Church. He was known for great-heartedness and gentle disposition. The home was noted for its hospitality. Services were frequently, if not regularly, held in the immediate community and in his home. (Burkholder, 47.)

*Samuel Lapp* was a deacon who early moved to Freeport, Illinois, where his brother, Martin, was a minister. His wife was Esther Hershey, eldest daughter of Benjamin Hershey of Lancaster.

*George Zavitz* was born Aug. 18, 1781, and died March 1, 1858. He and one sister were children when their parents, Jacob Zavitz and wife, came to Bertie from Lancaster. His ordination was about 1825. He was married shortly after 1800. It is known that there were two daughters. He was an active father in Israel, winning the name of peacemaker in the church. The German language was used by him in preaching.

*John Zavitz* was born Jan. 31, 1798, and died March 30, 1872. His wife, Nancy Harris, was born in 1803 and died in 1882. He was a son of pioneer Jacob Zavitz. The time of his ordination is not known. He preached English and was a gifted speaker. In appearance he was short with curly hair. There were several children. Whether he was a bishop is not fully verified, but he conducted baptisms. He was particularly faithful in the care of the Black Creek Riverside Church. After his death that congregation declined in membership.

*Jonas Zavitz* was born March 26, 1846, and died Jan. 17, 1920. In 1868 he was united in marriage to Mary Knisley. There were four sons and two daughters in the family. He united with the Mennonite Church in 1877. About 1880 he became a deacon of the church. He was gifted as a song leader and in later life used the English language in his exhortations. The families of Jonas Zavitz, Abram Sherk, and Frank Beam were the latest adherents of the Old Order Mennonite element in Welland County.

*Benjamin Sherk* was born Feb. 28, 1836, and died Sept. 24, 1868. He was a son of Deacon Peter Sherk. The date of his ordination as deacon is not known. His wife, Esther, was born in 1801 and died in 1879.

*John Wenger* was recognized as a deacon of the Mennonite Church in 1819 when Bishop Groff of Markham sent alms money for a needy brother in Bertie. It is conclusive that this was not John Winger, founder of the Brethren in Christ (known as Tunkers in Canada) as this organizer was not among the Mennonites who transferred their membership with the growth of the Brethren in Christ Church. John Wenger evidently lived in the Black Creek settlement north of Bertie Township.

It is conclusive that the harmony of the congregation in Bertie was not repeatedly disrupted to the extent that it was at the Twenty, yet there were influences being exerted there that did not prove strengthening to the organization. Some time in the fifties Daniel Hoch of the Twenty was



invited to do evangelistic work in the churches of the peninsula. His labours among them were at least sufficiently general to bring him recognition. Nothing is known of a definite immediate organization resulting. Evangelistic efforts by the Methodist society had been fairly regular for some years previously. Young people of Mennonite homes were among the interested attendants at those special spiritual assemblies. The foundations of what came to be strong religious bodies were laid in this manner. Particularly was this true with the Methodist, the United Brethren, and the Evangelical Societies of the Niagara peninsula.

### *Other Mennonite Groups*

#### 1. THE MENNONITE BROTHERS IN CHRIST

Evidently the ministerial efforts of Daniel Hoch of Lincoln, John Steckly of Markham, and Menno Bowman of Waterloo left some results in Bertie Township. Some are of the opinion that the latter man had a greater influence here than Hoch. Hoch's followers, after the sixties, were absorbed into the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church which in 1875 organized the scattered dissentive Mennonite groups of Ontario into one society. Titus Sherk, one of the earliest resident members of this persuasion, says the work began early in the seventies with ministers from the Twenty responsible for its care. The active period of growth, according to Elder Goudie, who was resident pastor about 1891, was during the years from 1890 to 1900. The organization is said to have been effected by the aid of Preacher Daniel Brenneman of Indiana who laboured for a brief time at Sherkston. There were two houses of worship in use. One was north of Garrison Road, known as Siders, near the home of Preacher John Sider. The other church stood at the lake shore near Schisler's Point. In its services continued for the longer time. It was disposed of, about 1900, to the Brethren in Christ. Organized work was then discontinued as only a few families remained.

#### 2. THE REFORMED MENNONITES

This organization took rise after the years of immigration. The first settlement of this sect was made east of the Niagara River in Erie County. The organizer, Bishop John Herr, made his first visit to this colony in 1833, and in the same year received seventy persons into church fellowship at Humberstone, the township west of Bertie. Here the main church in Ontario was organized at that time. The early church leaders ordained at that time were John and Abram Stoner, and deacons Benjamin Morningstar and Jonas Sherk.

#### 3. GENERAL CONFERENCE MENNONITES

While Daniel Hoch of the Twenty was a leader with J. H. Oberholtzer and others in the organization of the General Conference Mennonites, yet we cannot attribute to him, chiefly, the leadership of its interests in Welland County. Jacob Krehbiel, grandson of the bishop of the Mennonites in Erie County, New York, was ordained minister of the Mennonites at Clarence Center in 1872. Severing his old relations he soon became a leader in the western New York General Conference Mennonite group. His ministry frequently, for some years regularly, brought him into Welland County. He preached at the Log Church used by Mennonites, west of Stevensville, with occasional appointments in other Bertie Township churches, and at Black Creek. About 1880 Jacob Krehbiel severed his connection with the Mennonite Conference of Ontario. The regularity of his preaching in Ontario still continued, and a group known as the Krehbielites were worshipping at the Log Church. Then a church was built in

Stevensville by this body. Abraham Johnson, Jacob Danner, Jacob House, and Peter Eberly became leading supporters of the movement. It is said that the two former were appointed minister and deacon in the new organization. However the new church did not flourish for long. Krehbiel's interest east of the river drew him to the General Conference Mennonites with whom he united. A congregation was established near his home at Clarence Center. This church received the greater part of his interest in his declining years.

Jacob Krehbiel sold the church at Stevensville to a private owner some time before his death, and it was converted into a dwelling. In 1928 a part of it was made into a chapel and rented to the Church of God.

#### 4. THE OLD ORDER (WISLER) MENNONITES

The six or more families who held the more conservative position after the Wisler division of 1889 had only one leader, Deacon Jonas Zavitz. At no time had there been a resident minister among these. Preaching services were held when ministers from the Twenty, in Lincoln County, or from South Cayuga in Haldimand County, came to fill appointments. This did not serve sufficiently to assure the life of the congregation. As the older members died, the numbers declined. Since then little, if any, work has been done by the Wisler Conference, in Welland County. For several years there has been no membership.

##### *Mennonite Leadership in Welland County, 1870-90*

There is said to have been an ordination of a minister, Peter Sherk (1814-89), to serve in this period of the church. It is also asserted that this man, though ordained, never was active in his office because he felt himself unequal to the calling. Martin Weaver, a resident of the Black Creek neighbourhood, is reported as ordained to the ministry for the Mennonite Church about 1865. It is said that Weaver never filled an appointment in the pulpit, feeling his incapacity. However, he was a wise counsellor with a knowledge of the Word of God and a good neighbour and visitor. Lack of leadership in these ways was part of the cause for decline in the Mennonite membership of Welland County. Peter Storm (1804-79) was the deacon responsible for the work from the death of Benjamin Sherk, 1868, until his death. He was an active and a very congenial man. Nelson Michael (1843-1923) was ordained to the ministry for Sherkston in 1875. He was a devout Christian of Lutheran parentage who found preaching a laborious task. It was on behalf of this brother that conference planned for concerted action toward financial aid. Three brethren were appointed, one from the Markham district, one from the Waterloo district, and one from the Welland district, to act as trustees. A subscription was raised by members of the Mennonite Church to which Nelson Michael contributed some four hundred dollars for the purchase of a farm for himself. The conference subscription amounted to more than a thousand dollars. The plan was that the minister could use the farm during his life and leave it to the conference, or he could pay off the loan and own the farm. This money he repaid to the trustees of the conference, who were then to dispense with it among needy ministers at the direction of conference.

##### *1837-Papers of Michael Gonder*

*Taken from the Memorandum of Assessment for Willoughby Township*

Peter Sailer	Mennonist	over 16-f1 m3	under-f3 m2
Jacob Morningstar	Mennonist	over 16-f2 m2	under-f4 ml
John Beam	Mennonist	over 16-f4 ml	under-f2 m2
David Waggener	Mennonist	over 16-f4 m2	under-f2 ml
Martin Sheup	Mennonist	over 16-f4 ml	under-f8 m3
John Boyer	Mennonist	over 16-f4	under-f0 m2
John Barnhart	Mennonist	over 16-f2	
Martin Cider	Tunker	over 16-f1 m0	under-f2 m4
Henry Glimehage	Tunker	over 16-f1 m0	under-f2 ml
Abraham Flag	Mennonist	over 16-f1 ml	under-f2 m2
Benjamin Morningstar	Mennonist	over 16-f1	under-f2
Adam Neigh	Mennonist	over 16-f1	under-f5 m2
Nicholas Neigh	Mennonist	over 16-f1	under- ml
Jacob Barnhart	Mennonist	over 16-f1	under-f4 m3
Peter Pickhart	Mennonist	over 16-f1	
George Werner	Mennonist	over- fl	under-fl
John Baker	Mennonist	over- f2	under-f3 m3
Abraham Beam			
Martin Lapp	Mennonist	over- fl.	under-f 1 m3
Jacob Miller, Senior	Mennonist	over- f2	
Jacob Miller, Junior	Mennonist	over- fl	under-f4 m2
Samuel Danner	Mennonist	over- f3 m2	under- ml
Magdalena Whisler	Mennonist	over- fl m2	under-f4 ml
Abraham Lapp	Mennonist	over- f2 m2	
Herbert Lee	Mennonist	over- fl	under-f2 m3
Isaac Lapp	Mennonist	over- fl ml	under- m3
George Blily	Mennonist	over- fl	under-fl m3

Township of Willoughby-County of Lincoln

Papers of Michael Gonder held in custody at the Museum and Archives, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

In this table "f" denotes female and "m" male.

#### EARLY SUNDAY SCHOOLS

In a subscription list of 1824, of thirty-five names contributing money and materials for a school and a meetinghouse, 60 per

cent of them were Mennonite. This building was located in Willoughby Township on the River Road between Chippawa and Black Creek. Of some twenty-eight pounds sterling collected, one fourth of the amount was needed for the purchase of the stove. A Sunday School Society was organized in 1826, only about forty years after the founding of Sunday schools by Robert Raikes in England. This is the earliest known participation of Mennonites in Sunday-school work in Canada and possibly in North America. This same society in the same year organized the Willoughby Library with rules and regulations for operating. The first books were purchased in Buffalo under date of Sept. 8, 1826. By resolution in 1827 the schoolmaster was permitted to become a teacher of the Sabbath School. According to the rules it was open to the denominations of the community. Jacob Miller, a Mennonite minister and pioneer on the River Road, was said to have been the first preacher for the Mennonites. "Papers and Records" of the Ontario Historical Society state that at the time of settlement there were many adherents of Mennonites. This still held true in 1837 as shown in the assessment lists of Willoughby. Elias Sherk bought land adjacent to this church and school about 1858. He donated land for a church and the log building was taken away and a frame structure erected. See Burkholder's Brief History of Mennonites in Ontario (p. 49) for cuts. Later Sunday schools conducted in the Riverside Church during the sixties were interdenominational. Navy island being opposite in the Niagara River became the favourite spot for the annual Sunday-school picnics. The widening of the Niagara Boulevard early in the present century made it necessary to move the church and dismantle it.

#### OTHER EARLY RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

*The Ebenezer Church*-This was a German sect who located along the Niagara River north of Black Creek about the middle of the nineteenth century. Their settlement was known as Kabletown, being located on the river front of the Kable farm. They were an exclusive group worshipping in their homes. They kept the Lord's day with puritanic strictness and regularly devoted Wednesday afternoon to prayer, devotion, and singing. They were famed for their singers. Their dress was plain with aprons and white caps worn by the women.

Their chief industry was cotton manufacturing. Ebenezer blue cotton was an article of high quality. In their dealings they were strictly honourable. Trade was chiefly with one another. The names of Shell and Hindeman are reported among them. Their tenure extended to the seventies. Then as unexpectedly as they came it is said they took their leave by ship up the Niagara River. The point of destination is given as Iowa. Communication was maintained for some time from Amana, Iowa. The Amana group in Iowa was a colony settlement.

*The Miller Society*-This term was applied to a group of worshippers in Bertie Township who conducted services for a time north of Sherkston. This body may have been affiliated with the Miller Church west of Clarence town across the river. Pioneer John Strickler had a church built on his property near Clarence, N.Y. His son-in-law by the name of Miller preached there.

*The Sauer Church*-It was situated in the lower part of Willoughby Township near the Sodom Road. It represented a small group of families who worshipped independently of any organized denomination during the seventies and eighties of the last century.

*The United Brethren Church*-It is said that this organization separated from the Mennonites in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, on account of restrictions, and that the Reformed Mennonites separated from the United Brethren on account of liberties. In Willoughby and in Bertie townships the name of their founder, Boehm (Beam), is a common family name. Organized congregations, active and strong, are now found in Bertie Township at Stevensville, at Fort Erie, and at Sherkston. A church formerly in Willoughby near Black Creek has closed. Family names correspond,

in part, with those of the Mennonite faith. Doubtless many Mennonite young people a few generations earlier, seeking activities not found in their home church, had swelled the ranks of these U.B. congregations. These are not of the particular conference of U.B. that have merged with the Evangelical organization in Ontario.

*The Church of God*-Jacob Krehbiel of the General Conference Mennonites sold the church at Stevensville before his death, to one who converted it into a dwelling. In 1928 a part of it was remade into a chapel to be used by the Church of God. By 1931 this organization bought the building and carried on church and Sunday school regularly with a membership of 40 in 1934.

*The Brethren in Christ*-known as Tunkers in Canada, were fortunate in having their founder, John Winger, as one of the residents in Welland County. He effected the organization of the Stevensville Church some years earlier than the founding of the Mennonite Church in Sherkston. The assessment record of 1837 showed two Tunker families in Willoughby. The centre of membership has been in Bertie with a forward experience of growth over the years. For the more remote families living south near Lake Erie a church at Shisler's Point was used. In 1931 the Mennonites sold their church at Sherkston to the Brethren in Christ with burial privileges reserved at the cemetery.

*The Quakers, or Friends*-A family by the name of Schooley of the Quaker Society came into Bertie Township in 1789. The hundred settlers of 1793 bore Quaker names as frequently as Mennonite names. According to Professor Dorland, Western University, London, author of the History of the Society of Friends in Ontario, there were settlers of Quakers crossing into Canada as early as 1783. The two chief settlements in these parts at an early date were near Black Creek and in the Short Hills of Pelham. The Society organized for themselves monthly meetings after their former methods in Pennsylvania. The strength of the organization was greatest during the years of immigration from 1790 to 1820. In 1828 what was known as the Great Separation led to the formation of the Orthodox and the Hichsite groups. A progressive sect of the organization took form in the city of Welland. In the Black Creek area regular First Day meetings were discontinued by 1876. In the years of strength midweek meetings and First Day schools (Sunday schools) were conducted. The Friends extended the privileges of their Sunday schools and their cemeteries to their neighbours. Mennonite names may be found in Pelham Friends' cemetery.

This presentation of an historical sketch of early settlers in Welland County is given with the understanding that it is not perfect nor wholly complete. It has to do primarily with the Mennonites who were comparatively numerous in this part of Ontario in pioneer days. It has been the product of more than twenty-five years of research. The collecting of data should have been begun earlier while more of the near descendants of the pioneers were with us. This manual is due for the benefit of those living who have contributed fact material. The compiler here extends his sincere appreciation for the help of these upon whom he has had to call. This booklet goes out with the desire that the high standard of our ancestors and their thrift and industry will serve as a challenge to the generation living today.

March 28, 1953 J. C. FRETZ Kitchener, Ontario.

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