

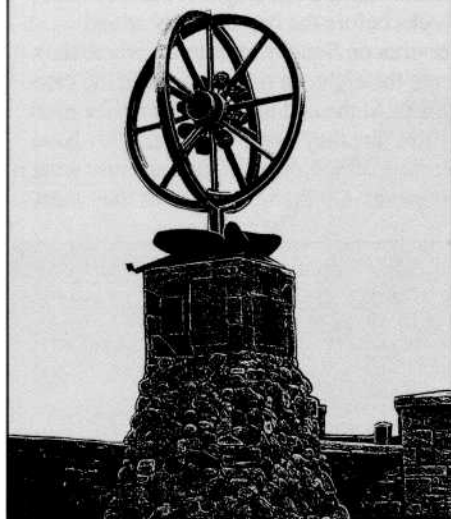
# Ontario Mennonite History

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## MY RELATIVES: Ultra Conservative Mennonites

by Charlotte Martin



*A farm near Linwood belonging to a member of the David Martin Mennonites. Large hip roof barns with roof 'chimney' ventilators are common.*

Mennonites, for different people, conjure up different images in the mind. To some, they are simply a religious group much like most other religious groups in Canada. To others, they are people with a strong social conscience who are involved in relief work in many parts of the world. To others still, they are very conservative people, farmers, who live without modern conveniences like electricity and indoor plumbing and cars. It is this latter image that best describes my relatives and ancestors.

I remember often hearing, as I was growing up, about the David Martin Mennonites, the group of ultra conservative Mennonites in which my mother was raised.<sup>1</sup> They are a small group of Mennonites who broke away from the Old Order Mennonites because the latter were becoming too worldly and who dissociated themselves from all Mennonite conferences. They live very simply in Waterloo County of Southern Ontario around the towns of St. Clements, Wallenstein, Hawkesville and Linwood.

The history of the David Martin Mennonites is the story of a people who believe that they should be in the world but not of it. They have struggled to put into practice what they believe the Bible to teach when it admonishes believers to "love not . . . the things that are in the world." Although I have often heard the stories about my mother's childhood in the David Martin group, they never seemed to have any connection or relevance to my

life. However, in studying the history of the David Martin Mennonites, I have started to understand my ancestry and the effects it has had on our family and on my own childhood. Their history is one of major church splits over seemingly minor issues followed by many excommunications and the cruel practice of shunning. It is the story of families being torn apart and alienated from each other for seemingly trivial reasons. It is the story of my maternal ancestry. The separation of my own family from the David Martin Mennonites reflects their general history which is a fascinating story of uncompromising splits and separations.

The David Martin group of Mennonites began in 1917 when my great-great-grandfather Minister David B. Martin, and his son Deacon David W. Martin, and another one of my great-great-grandfathers Minister Daniel Brubacher joined together and separated from the Old Order Mennonite group to which they previously belonged. One of the motivations for those who left was the issue of owning bicycles.

David W. Martin was a young man who had been a deacon in the Wisler section of the Old Order Mennonite church since 1913. At the time, bicycles were not allowed within the group but some men had them anyway. When they were told to put them away, they refused. David was asked to visit them and persuade them to give up bicycles, but he didn't want to do this unless he could use the ban on those

who still refused. The Bishop disagreed and thought that David wanted too much authority for a young man.

The ban is a form of excommunication and complete shunning of any who does not confess his/her sins. A sin could be anything from keeping company with someone outside the group to sitting in the wrong pew in the meeting house to disagreeing with a particular rule/tradition. Users of the ban believe that when people leave their church and are excommunicated, they are lost and will not enter Heaven unless they rejoin the group. Among the David Martin Mennonites, people who have erred are given the chance to confess in church before they are banned. The deacon calls on them individually and asks them if they confess before God that they have sinned and want forgiveness. If the person responds positively then he/she is able to sit back down and continue within the group otherwise he/she is put out of the church and turned over to Satan.

Apparently, the split between the Old Order Mennonites and the David Martin Mennonites also involved an issue with a government drainage ditch in the Three Bridges area near the Conestogo Church. The ditch went through the property of some of the Mennonites who were therefore supposed to help pay for it. The Old Order Mennonites thought they should simply obey the government and pay the price, but those who went with the David Martin Mennonites refused and a law suit followed.

It was as a result of these issues, in the spring of 1917, that David W. Martin left the Old Order Mennonites with his father, who had been a minister in the Wisler section since 1889. These men, with a following of about 45 members, wanted more rigid discipline and shunning. They had a fear that the Old Orders were becoming too moderate and tolerant and they wanted a more conservative leadership with an uncompromising stand.

The new group had no meeting house of their own. They held a meeting in the South Peel meeting house where both Davids had served regularly, but afterwards they were refused further use of the facilities. They started meeting in David B. Martin's home until July when they

united with Minister Daniel Brubacher. Daniel had been a minister in the Conestogo Old Order Mennonite Church since 1876, but he left it in 1909. The reason for his withdrawal is uncertain although there are some hints of a racy scandal involving his son. Since his departure, he had been holding independent meetings in his home.

Church leaders can only be men and are chosen in the David Martin group by lot, as in other conservative Mennonite groups. A day is set aside for members to choose candidates before the Bishop. The bishop then reads off the names, and the following Tuesday or Wednesday everyone comes together for the ordination. As many books as there are candidates are set aside in a private room. The deacon places a piece of paper in one of the books and hands them all over to another deacon or minister. This leader then mixes up the books and hands them on to the bishop who shuffles them again. By this time it is obviously impossible to know which book holds the paper. Each candidate takes a book from the pulpit where they have been placed and the bishop delivers a short prayer. The books are then handed, one by one, to the bishop who finds the one containing the paper. The candidate whose book held the paper becomes the new minister or deacon.

There are often three or four ministers as well as several deacons within one David Martin church. The deacon is a servant of the church who does not do any preaching but looks after finances and people in need and is also involved in some of the ceremonies. A man becomes a leader for his lifetime, whether he is good at it or not, and he cannot decline the leadership position. The leaders have never been to Bible School or Sunday School or had any formal Bible teaching. Many can hardly read German, the language in which all preaching is done. Their mother tongue is a German dialect known as Pennsylvania Dutch and they learn English at school but they do not know high German. It is therefore easy to understand how their teaching is not really based on scripture but rather dependent on traditions.

Minister David B. Martin, Deacon David W. Martin and Minister Daniel

Brubacher served as the new group's leaders, but the group was without a bishop. A bishop is needed to perform all the important ceremonies such as communion, baptism, marriages and funerals. He can only be a man who has already been a minister and has proven himself to be effective so that he can oversee numerous ministers and numerous churches. This problem was solved on Ascension Day of 1918 when Daniel Brubacher was chosen as Bishop. The David Martin Mennonites were now an autonomous group.

With their new Bishop, they were able to hold their first communion that spring, on 26 May, with a total of forty-eight members, all of whom are listed in the "General Records of the Orthodox Mennonite Church." Many of the original members did not end up staying with the David Martin Mennonites and only seven of David B. Martin's thirteen children remained a part of the group. This included my great-grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. John W. Martin, and their eleven children, the second oldest of which, twelve year old Lovina, became my grandmother. My great-grandfather Peter P. Martin, his wife Lydia Brubacher (daughter of Daniel Brubacher), and seven of their nine children, were also original members of this group although Lydia died 7 February 1918, before the first communion was held. Their son, my grandfather Peter B. Martin, was only fifteen years old at the time.

The following years brought many new members to the group as new people joined and young people were baptized, although funerals and excommunications also occurred. Baptisms are performed on young people, around the age of seventeen or eighteen, who have decided to make a personal decision to become a member of the church. The young people are given a catechism book which they are supposed to read although few can because it is in German which they are not taught to read. For six weeks before the baptism they attend services on Sunday afternoons where they learn the eighteen or so lessons in the catechism. At the end of each lesson they must affirm that they agree with what they have learned, although again, few are sure what it all means. On the seventh week they meet

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**Editor:** Brent Bauman

**Editorial Committee:** Linda Huebert Hecht, Lorraine Roth, Herbert Enns, Sam Steiner, Marlene Epp

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Inquiries, articles, book notices or news items should be directed to the Editor, Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario c/o Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3G6 TEL. (519) 885-0220, FAX (519) 885-0014

on a Saturday afternoon for a final lesson and then on the Sunday morning they are baptized. The baptism ritual is by pouring. The bishop cups his hands over the head of the kneeling member and the deacon pours water into his hands, which are then opened slowly, allowing the water to pour over the person's head.

During the first years of the David Martin group, the church continued to grow. In September 1918, Enoch Horst, one of the original recorded members, was made minister, and in October of the same year Daniel's son Menno Brubacher became a third minister. However, it was not until 6 July 1919 that meetings were held in their newly built meeting house east of the village of Wallenstein.

The meeting houses are all built exactly the same with the side of the building facing the road, although they can vary in size. At one end of the building there is a women's cloak room where the women take their babies if they cry, although diapers are changed in the main auditorium. There are separate entrances for men, boys, and women and girls which never varies except at funerals when the bereaved family goes out the door nearest to the cemetery. A funeral is also the only time when men and women, of the immediate family only, sit together on the front, back-less benches facing the long pulpit where the ministers sit. At all other times, the men and women sit on hard, unvarnished benches, with boards across the back for support, on opposite sides of the room facing each other and perpendicular to the pulpit. The girls and boys also sit opposite each other but facing their elders' benches and the pulpit.

Members do not generally attend church services every Sunday. There are

usually a couple or more churches within the group, overseen by the same bishop, which hold services on separate Sundays. Members attend services when they are held at the closest meeting house, unless they are going visiting. Services are held at one or two of the meeting houses one Sunday, at the other meeting house(s) the next, and nowhere on the third Sunday which is a day of rest when people can visit and relax. There are no Sunday Schools or Bible studies within the community. In fact, people are discouraged from reading the Bible themselves; it is only read by the bishop or ministers in church. My Grandma Lovina wrote in her journal, "We were always told not to listen to anyone outside the church or try to read anything about Spiritual matters on our own for it was so easy to be misled." However, it is very important to carry out all of the rules and traditions without deviating at all. A small song book with German hymns and the German Bible are the only books used. There are no musical instruments and singing is done in unison only, often with the minister reading one line of the song and the congregation then singing it.

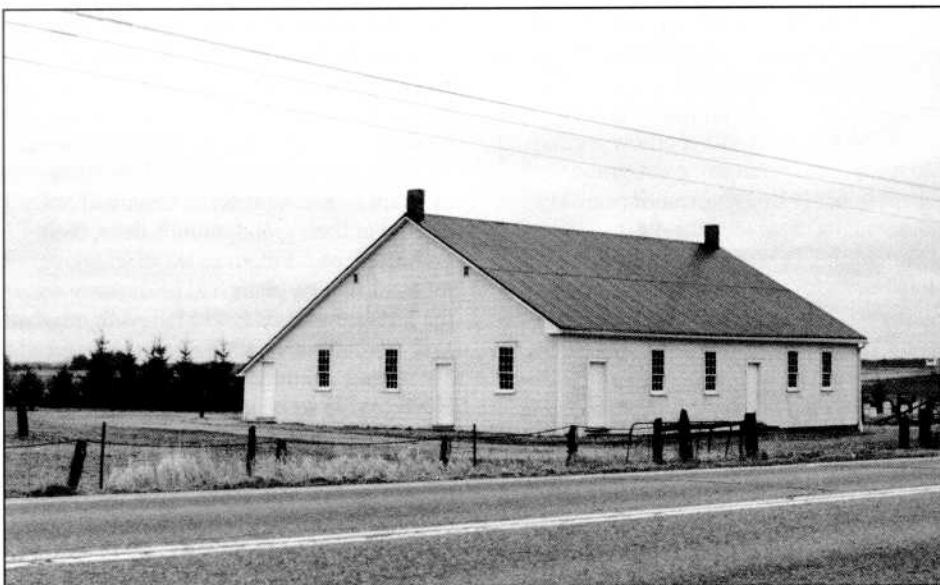
The year 1920 brought heartache for the David Martin Mennonite group with the loss of three of their early leaders. Minister David B. Martin died in April. That fall, Bishop Daniel Brubacher and Minister Menno Brubacher left the David Martin Mennonites taking a group of twenty-one members with them. Their withdrawal occurred after a disagreement concerning the shunning of outsiders. The Brubachers felt shunning should be more lenient and as a result found themselves being shunned. My great-grandfather Peter P. Martin was among this group to leave

along with two of my great-aunts and a great uncle who was too young to be a member. Although only seventeen years old, my grandfather Peter stayed with the David Martins when his father left because he was working on another member's farm. The David Martin group was again without a bishop and with only Deacon David W. Martin and Minister Enoch Horst as leaders. However, not all was bad that year since they also built a new Center Woolwich meeting house near St. Jacobs.

The group was not without a Bishop for long. In January 1921 Deacon David W. Martin advanced to Minister, in February his brother Solomon W. Martin was made deacon and, in March Enoch Horst advanced to the position of Bishop. On 16 July 1922, my Grandfather Peter B. Martin was baptized by Enoch Horst to become a member of the church. On 25 October 1922, Amos Bearinger, who had been taken in as a member in March of 1920, was chosen as a second minister. On 15 July 1923, my grandmother Lovina S. Martin also became a baptized member of the church.

It was around this time that my grandparents, Lovina and Peter B., began seeing each other. Peter was working on Lovina's parents' farm at the time, and since it is not proper for a couple going together to live on the same property, Lovina left her family to work elsewhere. Since marriages occur only within the group (unless a young person is willing to be excommunicated), couples generally know each other long before they begin dating or are married. As children they likely played together but, when they finished school they were suddenly considered adults, no longer allowed to run and play.

David Martin children attend public schools which they walk or take a bus to, unlike many conservative Mennonite children who attend private schools. They are generally considered to be good students although they do not join in field trips and tend to play alone. Their schooling only lasts until grade eight or age fourteen, whichever comes first. Higher education is considered worldly and therefore not permitted. Enjoying education is equated with laziness which is almost a cardinal sin. When their school days are over the girls begin to wear the clothing of women: ankle length dresses with one or two petticoats underneath, a shawl, apron and cape. Their hair is worn in a bun under a black bonnet. This is often a time of loneliness and displacement for the youth who are too old to be children but too young to fully enter the adult world of marriage and children.



Current meeting house east of the village of Wallenstein on Waterloo County Road 86.

Fifteen is the magical age when youth enter young adulthood and can become better acquainted with their peers through an activity known as the "time". The "time" occurs on Sunday evenings with as many as thirty or more young people who start the evening by getting together for supper at a member's home, often unannounced. After the chores are completed, the older couple retires for the night and the young people begin their activities. They sing German and English hymns in harmony, play games, and visit. The games are sometimes quiet sitting games but often become noisy with much hugging and kissing. The "time" usually ends with a "show" which consists of boys taking girls into a dark room and holding them on their laps to converse quietly and privately while those not involved pester them with flashlights. At the end of the evening, the boys take the girls home. It is usually not long before a young man decides who he is interested in. If the young woman is equally interested, he starts visiting her at her home on Saturday evenings every three or four weeks. At this time they are considered to be "going steady".

For a couple of years, during the time when my grandparents were dating, things went smoothly in the David Martin group with only a few members being excommunicated, most of whom later rejoined the group, and numerous baptisms. However, on 4 May 1924 Bishop Enoch Horst and Minister Amos Bearinger were excommunicated on the question of observing the ban. The group was again left with only one minister, David W. Martin, and one deacon, Solomon W. Martin.

On 17 August 1924, David W. Martin was made bishop by circumstance. My mother tells me that "Uncle David," the bishop at the time, was highly honored and that anything he said was taken as gospel truth; no one would question him. The group remained without a minister until 9 June of the following year when Martin B. Frey, who had left the Old Orders and joined the group in November 1918, was ordained. It was 15 December of that same year, 1925, when my grandparents Lovina S. Martin and Peter B. Martin were married.

When a couple decides they want to be married, they tell the bishop who announces it in church the three Sundays before the marriage occurs. On the last Saturday before the wedding (which occurs on a Tuesday or Thursday), the young couple personally invites all of their guests. Wedding presents are not a part of the custom. The only cost is small change given to the "hostlers," for looking after the guests' horses.

The wedding itself is in the bride's home and starts at nine o'clock in the morning, when the guests arrive, and lasts until almost midnight. Before the service the young people wait upstairs while married couples remain downstairs. Two of the youngest married men serve cookies and wine to all the guests after which the service begins. It generally lasts from three quarters of an hour to an hour. Dinner, usually including fowl of some kind, is prepared by several young girls appointed for the job and served immediately following the service.

After dinner, the young people again go upstairs but not without some fun from the hostlers who block the top of the stairs and demand money for the cooks. It becomes very playful as some young men try to wrestle their way through without paying, although many good suits have been torn during this activity. In the middle of the afternoon cookies, wine, candies and fresh fruit, as well as cigars for the men, are passed around. All the guests then remain for supper after which more cigars, candy and wine are once again enjoyed. The older couples generally head home shortly after supper while the young people stay for a "time." The newly married couple never goes on a honeymoon as that would be considered too worldly.

When my grandparents married they lived in Hawkesville and my grandfather worked as a day laborer. They had their first child, my Aunt Saloma (Sally), on 24 August 1928 and my mother, Leah, was born 22 May 1930. There are, of course, no baby dedications or baptisms within the David Martin group but babies are brought to church after six weeks, before which time they do not leave the house at all.

My mother Leah and her sister Sally were the first grandchildren for Mr. and Mrs. John W. Martin. My mother remembers being very close to them and going with her sister to visit them often. I remember a story from my childhood about a ceramic doll's head with a pillow stuffed into it for a body that my great-grandmother kept in her bottom bureau drawer. My mother had a great love for dolls so, when my grandmother received the doll's head in a bag of used articles, she saved it for my mother to play with. However, the Bible says, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath" and for the David Martin Mennonites that included life-like dolls, snapshots, and paintings. The doll's head did not stay around for long.

On 12 October 1930 Deacon Franklin Hauser was taken in as a member, giving the group two deacons, although he died

in February 1933 leaving the group again with only one. On 23 October 1934 my great-uncle Elam S. Martin, my grandmother Lovina's brother, was chosen as a second minister. Elam became a member on 9 August 1925 and five years later, on 2 November, he married Susy Bauman, who had recently been taken in as a member.

It was around this time that my grandparents began having doubts about their religious beliefs. Peter was working in a woodworking shop in Hawkesville and came into contact with people who believed that you do not have to earn salvation because it is a gift from God. He slowly began questioning everything he had believed and been taught. He read tracts and Bible verses he had not previously known existed. He would often secretly check the family Bible at home to assure himself that these verses were in fact there. In October 1937, he came to believe in Jesus Christ as his Savior and by the following June my grandmother accepted these beliefs as well. Lovina and Peter Martin, with their six children, began attending the Gospel Hall, a Plymouth Brethren church, in Hawkesville and were excommunicated from the David Martin church in August 1938. Their decision to leave was a severe one as they were shunned completely and were never allowed to see their family again. My mother was only eight years old.

Shortly after her parents excommunication, my mother remembers she and Sally once again visited their grandparents. It was a Wednesday night after school. They attended school in Heidelberg which was about 10 kilometers from their grandparents' farm between Linwood and Hawkesville. Therefore, they received a ride from the principal, Mr. Kenneth Williams, who lived in Linwood. He dropped them off at the end of the lane and was supposed to pick them up the next morning. My Grandmother Lovina was quite concerned about this visit but my Grandfather Peter thought that her parents couldn't possibly turn away their adored grandchildren. As soon as Leah and Sally arrived at their grandparent's door, their grandfather told them to leave and never return. Luckily, plans had been made for the girls to walk over to Manassah Weber's farm if anything went wrong. Mr. Weber attended the Gospel Hall in Hawkesville so he gave them a ride to the Wednesday night prayer meeting where they met their father and returned home. It is difficult to imagine how grandparents could so heartlessly turn away small children but it must be realized that they truly thought they were doing the right thing even though it was extremely painful for

them. Shunning had become such a strong part of the David Martin Mennonite history and traditions that even grandchildren could be turned away by their grandparents. My mother has always wondered what Mr. Williams thought the next day when he came to pick them up!

Very few members of the David Martin Mennonites have ever left the Mennonite faith entirely although many have joined other Mennonite groups. Therefore, my grandparents joining the Gospel Hall was something that had never been done before. My grandmother's younger sister Annie also left the David Martins to join a more liberal group of Mennonites and has since left the Mennonites entirely as well. Aunt Annie was baptized 17 July 1938 and excommunicated in the spring of 1941 for keeping company with a young man who was not from the David Martin group. He later became her husband. Her story is a very interesting one.

Aunt Annie remembers enjoying school and being in contact with people who did not belong to the same religious order as her. It was through one of these children that she first heard about Santa Claus who thrilled her, but her joy was quickly destroyed when she was informed that her church would have nothing to do with him. When she later heard about God through the same friend she believed that he was real but that her church would also have nothing to do with Him. This demonstrates how little Biblical teaching the children get and the importance of their traditions over personal spiritual growth. Everything is done according to the rules of the church. They do not learn how to make personal choices and decisions, or to have opinions because it is not allowed.

Of course, even after the excommunications of my grandparents and great-aunt, the David Martin group continued. On 29 May 1941, Samuel Horst, who became a baptized member on 7 September 1924, was chosen as a second deacon. The group continued with these leaders for some time and held their first services in the new Center Wellesley meeting house in July 1945. Deacon Solomon W. Martin died in February 1946. In the autumn of the same year a group from Virginia was taken in, including Minister Paul Shank. In 1952 Minister Martin B. Frey's son Manassah, who became a baptized member 2 August 1936, was made minister.

For numerous years the David Martin Mennonites lived on without any major disruptions. Baptisms and weddings, as well as funerals, were performed periodically. However, on 11 March 1956 catastrophe struck when minister Elam S. Martin was excommunicated. Apparently

he had the nerve to question his uncle the 'great' Bishop David W. Martin and they had a falling out. This was devastating to Mr. and Mrs. John W. Martin, Elam's parents, who had already lost two daughters to the outside world. Elam was replaced 8 May 1956 by Abraham Frey, another son of Minister Martin B. Frey. Then, on 23 December of the same year, Deacon Samuel Horst was also excommunicated and replaced on 12 March 1957 by Abraham Martin, son of the deceased Solomon W. Martin.

These two excommunications were followed by serious disagreements within the church and on 1 September 1957 twenty-eight members withdrew from Bishop David W. Martin to gather in the home of Emanuel Sherk who had become a baptized member of the David Martin Mennonites 15 July 1923. Before these 28 members left there had been approximately 180 members in the David Martin Group. My great-grandmother Mrs. John W. Martin died in August prior to the split which left her children broken into two groups, completely separate from each other. Again shunning was more important than familial ties. The remaining members of the David Martin group continued to grow over the years and remains even today, although more recent records for the David Martin Mennonites could not be obtained.

The David Martin Mennonites are generally known to be more aggressive than many Mennonites and do very well in small businesses. They are somewhat arrogant because of the security involved with their faith and depth of belief that their church is the only right one. In Wellesley Township, many of the David Martin young men have started "cottage

industries" because farming does not provide enough income for them to live on. However, there is a bylaw which states that agriculture must be the major source of income on farms and this is no longer the case for many of the Mennonites. For this reason, there is talk of subdividing the farms and giving one acre to each family for their home, barn and animals, and industry to get around this law. This would really make the David Martin Mennonite group a self-contained community and there is some concern about what would happen if more splits occurred within the church.

The David Martin Mennonites have, over the years, become much more modern than even the Old Orders who they originally left for being too worldly. Apparently they no longer even have Bishops in their churches. It is quite common for them to have computers and fax machines for their businesses, although the equipment must be run on generators. Many of them also have indoor plumbing and phones in their homes. They are even known to accept OHIP and Old Age Pensions which remains unheard of in most conservative groups. However, they still do not have rubber tires or bicycles which were issues when they first split. It seems that new conveniences which make business easier can be accepted but the old traditions must still be maintained. This includes shunning people like my mother and great-aunt Annie who left the group. Although Aunt Annie does try to visit some of her remaining siblings once a year, she knows that if she went too often the relatives she visits might get in trouble.

The twenty-eight members who left the David Martin group in 1957 joined Minister Elam S. Martin and Deacon Samuel Horst



*A small manufacturing factory near Hawkesville.*



*An existing small lot with a house and horse shed located outside of Wallenstein.*

plus twenty married couples and 17 single members, some of whom had been banned from the David Martin group earlier. Minister Peter Nolt, and a number of others from Pennsylvania, were also among this group. On 6 April 1958, Elam S. Martin was made Bishop by circumstance and the first communion of the Elam Martin Group was held. This group was much stricter than the David Martin group believing that members who falter should not be given a chance to make a public confession in place of excommunication. They also have their own private schools where children are taught to read German but still only attend until the age of fourteen.

All those from Pennsylvania, and some other of unknown origin, were shortly excommunicated, including Minister Peter Nolt, so that the group was comprised of members who had previously belonged to the David Martin Mennonites. This split was painful for all involved because families were literally ripped apart, unable to ever speak to each other again.

On 15 December 1959, Henry Bowman, one of the twenty-eight, was ordained minister. Numerous baptisms and weddings followed and new members were accepted. In 1962 the Elam Martin group became registered as the Orthodox Mennonite Church to distinguish itself from the David Martin Mennonites. On 24 June they held their first meeting in the new 13th Line meeting house. On 12 October 1965, Anson Hoover, excommunicated from the David Martin group in 1954, was ordained minister of the Elam group. There were few excommunications in the Orthodox group and many people were taken in, including a group in 1967 with Minister Noah Brubacher and a

group in 1970 with Minister Edward Martin. Many baptisms were also performed so that the group continued to grow to one hundred and eleven members by 1974.

At this time there was again serious upheaval in the church when sixty members joined together on 26 February in hopes of establishing "the lamp of righteousness and the truth of Jesus Christ once again into the assembly of believers." Shortly thereafter, on 17 March 1974, Minister Anson Hoover and his wife were accepted into the newly separated group and thus began the Hoover Mennonites who remained registered as an Orthodox Mennonite Church.

The main issue for the Hoover split, apparently, arose over disagreements about the wearing of beards by men. Bishop Elam S. Martin felt all married men should wear beards but those who joined the Hoover group felt it should be up to the individual. Many of the reasons for splits seem incomprehensible to me but it is important to remember that their beliefs are based on tradition and the decisions of their leaders, so it is difficult to resolve arguments. Forming new groups seems to be the only solution. The Hoover group remained relatively small and did not last very long. In 1976 minister Anson Hoover was banned, apparently for preaching the gospel too freely, that is, preaching about salvation by faith alone rather than with works.

Anson and Katie Martin, daughter of Emanuel Sherk and Mary Anne B. Martin, my Grandfather Peter's sister, were also included in this ban and later moved up to Barwick, near Fort Frances where they joined a conservative Mennonite group. However, they are currently in the process

of moving back to the Hawkesville area to help Anson's father "summer sausage Noah" with his business. Nicknames, like this one, are often used to differentiate Mennonites from each other because it is common for many of them to have the same name.

After losing their original leader, the Hoover group struggled on until 1986, by which time the group had grown to approximately 100 members, when increasing problems arose. Numerous people were excommunicated and others were no longer present at services. By the spring of 1987 approximately seventy of the previous members had rejoined with the David Martin group, including one of the deacons. Some of the members also returned to the Elam group, including the bishop and two ministers. Still others did not join the Elam or David group and were left without church fellowship. They still live exactly the same as before but they no longer have a church home. By April 1987, the Hoover group no longer existed but the reasons for its disintegration are unclear.

In 1974 when the Hoover group began, the Elam Martin group was broken hearted. Again families had been torn apart as the majority of their members left. However, they decided to continue with services and on 14 April 1974 communion was held with only forty-three members including Bishop Elam S. Martin, Ministers Edward Martin, Noah Brubacher, Henry Bowman and Deacon Samuel Horst. It was around this time that the group moved about one hundred kilometers north-west to the Gorrie area.

Again the church grew as new members were taken in and baptized, although Minister Noah Brubacher died in May 1977. He was replaced 9 May 1978 by John Sherk, an original member of the Elam Martin group who later, in October 1980, became the Bishop in office as Elam S. Martin was becoming too old for all that was required of him. 19 November 1985, Ephraim Weber, who joined the group on 2 April 1967, was ordained Minister.

By 1986, when the Hoover group began to disintegrate, there were approximately sixty members in the Elam group. As mentioned previously, some of the members from the Hoover group were then accepted back into the Elam group increasing the membership further. On 26 April 1987, there were seventy-nine members involved in the communion service, including, from the Hoover group, Ministers Jesse Bauman, Menno Brubacher and Bishop Amos Sherk, who quickly laid aside his bishop office but remained a minister.

The disintegration of the Hoover group left only one Orthodox Mennonite Church, again under the leadership of Elam S. Martin. However, in December 1987, Elam died at the age of 80 years, 7 months and 7 days. Even so, the membership grew and no one is known to have left the group, at least until 1991 when the Orthodox Mennonite Church records end. At that time, there were a calculated one hundred and twenty-two members. Further research revealed four hundred and fifty-four people in the church in 1996. However, two hundred and twenty-two of these were under sixteen years of age and, since not all the people aged seventeen to twenty would be baptized, there were less than two hundred and thirty one members. This is still an impressive growth from the one hundred and twenty-two members in 1991. The average couple who has finished their child bearing years have seven to twelve children and younger couples have one to seven.

Aunt Annie greatly enjoys visiting her relatives who belong to the Elam Martin group because she finds them very friendly and accepting of her. They remained much plainer than the David Martin group, using only white dishes and wearing mainly brown dresses; they have only one small mirror above the sink in the kitchen and do not seem to cut their lawns. They remain simple farmers without any modern conveniences like phones, electricity, and indoor plumbing.

In February 1996 my mother went with Aunt Annie to her Aunt Susy's funeral. Susy was the wife of Elam S. Martin, who started the Elam Martin group. She had 9 children, 85 grand children, and 125 great-grandchildren. My mother had not seen her aunt since her family left the Mennonites when she was only eight years old.

Funerals are very traditional and big affairs. All the relatives, and anyone who

knew the person well, attend the funeral which begins with a service at nine o'clock in the morning in the home of the deceased. The coffin is placed in the center of the sitting room. The service includes a short message, two hymns sung in the usual slow dirge-like manner, and prayer. At the same time, the girls from the neighborhood prepare a lunch for any who came by horse and buggy and therefore had to eat breakfast very early. The lunch always consists of buns, cheese and coffee. After lunch they go to the cemetery where they open the casket in the yard outside the cemetery gate, regardless of the weather, and everyone files past. The coffin is then lowered into the ground and four men immediately begin shoveling dirt into the hole while the people sing a hymn. When the job is finished the large mass files back to the meeting house for the main funeral service which lasts for about two hours. Two ministers preach with kneeling for silent prayer between the sermons and audible prayer at the end. To my mother's surprise, the first minister at Aunt Susy's funeral preached in English for the benefit of any non-German speaking neighbors and relatives. A hymn is sung following the sermons and then all are invited back to the home of the deceased for dinner. It is common for as many as 200 people to attend the meal. At aunt Susy's funeral there were two sittings, each with about 85 people, and all the food was prepared without electricity or running water.

It is amazing to think that I am only one generation away from this lifestyle and these strangers in our midst. I can not even imagine what it must have been like for my grandparents to leave their secure community of strong beliefs for the unknown outside world. As mentioned

previously, it is very uncommon for young people to leave the faith. When a couple marries, they are provided with a farm and the community ensures them safety. It is a place where they belong and never have to worry about making their own way in the world. If they leave, for whatever reason, they lose everything and are shunned completely without any basic training in how to survive outside the community. Even years after leaving the group, my grandmother Lovina would not even try to speak to her siblings if she passed them on the street because she realized they would still shun her.

There is definitely a certain appeal to a small, self contained group like the David Martin or Elam Martin Mennonites with their simple life and security. However, much heartbreak would also be involved with the splits and severe shunning. Personal growth would be almost impossible. I sometimes like to imagine what my life would be like if my grandparents had not had the faith to leave the David Martin Mennonites. It is truly amazing that I am where I am, with all the privileges I have been given such as going to University, considering that I come from such a distinct and conservative group of people.

## Endnotes

1. Much of the information in this article was gathered in conversations with, and writings by, former members of the David Martin Mennonites.

*Charlotte Martin is the winner of the 1997 J. Winfield Fretz Award for Studies in Ontario Mennonite History. She is a student at the University of Waterloo and wrote this essay for a Mennonite History course at Conrad Grebel College.*

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# SING IT AGAIN

## A Brief Survey of Two Centuries of Mennonite Church Music in Ontario

by Lawrence Martin and Mark Diller Harder

*When "Hymnal: A Worship Book" was published in 1992 it brought together many musical traditions. It also represented much of the history of music in the Mennonite church here in Ontario over the past two centuries. This is a survey of the influences made by the hymn books used by Mennonites in the past, which in turn will show how many of these hymns came to be in our current hymnal.*

### THE AUSBUND

Our story begins with the book used in our early Mennonite tradition, and which is still used in Amish Communities in Ontario and beyond - "The Ausbund." "The Ausbund" is the earliest Anabaptist hymn book. In fact, "The Ausbund" is the oldest Protestant hymnal in continuous publication and use today. This book, which dates from the Reformation, makes use of choral tunes and sixth century Gregorian Chants. It was brought to Ontario by Amish settlers. Earlier it was brought to America by early Swiss and Palatinate Mennonites, and was the first book published in America in 1742. It was used throughout the eighteenth century by Mennonites.

At the core of the book are 51 hymns written by Anabaptists who were imprisoned in the dungeons of Passau between 1537 and 1540. There's a strong theme of martyrdom and reliance on God. Often the hymn would tell a story of a particular martyr. One of the hymns we have in our 1992 Hymnal is #535 - "Who now would follow Christ in life." It comes from one of these stories, although the reference to the particular person is not in this translation. Its second graphic verse reads "Christ's servant follow him to death and give their body, life and breath on the cross and rack and pyre. As gold is tried and purified they stand the test of fire." Other "Ausbund" hymns in our current hymnal include the Felix Manz hymn "I sing with exultation" (#438), "The word of God is solid ground" (#314), and "Our Father God, thy name we praise" (#32).

On page 770 of "The Ausbund" is the hymn "O Gott Vater wir loben dich," the original German text for "Our Father God, thy name we praise." It is called the "Lobgesang" - or "Song of Praise" - by the Amish, and is the second hymn sung in every Amish service. A few years ago Mark had the privilege of going to an

Amish home near Goshen, Indiana for a Wednesday evening when some of the musicians of the church got together to practice the hymns for Sunday morning. What is now written down in our "Hymnal: A Worship Book" is an approximation of how this hymn would be sung. The original chorale tune has been embellished through a long aural tradition. A "forsaenger" sang the first word "O" on several syllables, and then we all came in on the word "Gott." The whole verse would take several minutes to sing. Mark was amazed by the powerful impact of this slow style of singing. There was a strong effort being made to preserve this tradition in the Amish community.

### DIE GEMEINSCHAFTLICHE LIEDERSAMMLUNG (1836 Benjamin Eby)

The story of Mennonite hymnals in Ontario begins with a hymnal published in 1836 under the direction of Benjamin Eby called "Die Gemeinschaftliche Liedersammlung." When Mennonites first came from Pennsylvania to Ontario they brought one of two different hymnals with them, depending on whether they were from the Franconia or Lancaster settlement. Now in Ontario, they couldn't agree to use the same book. In what might be called a shrewd political move by Benjamin Eby, most of the hymns in his new hymnal came from either the 1804 Lancaster hymnal ("Unpartheyisches Gesangbuch"), or the 1803 Franconia hymnal ("Die kleine geistliche Harfe der Kinder Zion's"), thus uniting the two groups under one hymnal. Does this sound somewhat familiar? This hymnal has been in continuous use since then, and is the present hymnal used by the Ontario Old Order Mennonites. Up until 1981 it had been reprinted seventeen times, always as a small black covered book easy to carry in your pocket.

These are a few sentences from the Preface of the first edition: "To all Godloving souls. Herewith appears the Lieder-Sammlung for the first time. However, it is by no means the intention to bring other hymn books into contempt; but since there is a need for hymn books in public worship, it is hoped through this Lieder-Sammlung to help to some extent. Since this work is intended to remain small, special concern was exercised dur-

ing the choice of hymns, only to include the most familiar, and with some, only the most stirring verses; quite convenient for travelers to carry, as well as to take along for use in public worship."

The hymnal is comprised of 222 German hymn texts in Gothic Print. There is no music included, but after each hymn it lists the melody usually used and the metre number. There are 37 different metres used, and each metre would have one or more tunes associated with it. Mark was helped tremendously in his research by a commentary by Isaac R. Horst, "Lieder Sammlung Commentary," where he lists translations of key words, all the authors and writes out all the tunes, which normally are known by aural tradition. It was fascinating going through the different tunes. These are unison melodies that have been passed down aurally for generations - sometimes altering the melody until it is hardly recognizable. For example, metre 18 (Geneva 42), which we know in the current hymnal as #176 - "Comfort, comfort ye my people," has no syncopation but several added notes and a different rhythm.

In fact, there are many hymns between the new "Hymnal: A Worship Book" and the 1836 "Die Gemeinschaftliche Liedersammlung." It is surprising how many common texts and tunes there are between the two hymnals. There are at least ten different tunes that we still use. Fourteen texts are the same and with five of those, we still use the same tune and text. We use the same music and text for hymns like: "Blessed Jesus, at your word" (#13); "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty" (#37); "Now thank we all our God" (#86); and "How brightly beams the morning" (#222). "O little children, gather" (#489) is one of the few hymns not from the German Chorale tradition. This is a hymn by Christopher Dock, an American Mennonite. Both the text and the music found in "Hymnal: A Worship Book" is what is in the 1836 hymnal.

Some common texts in both hymnals include: "O God thou faithful God" (#376); "From heav'n above to earth I come" (#205); "If you but trust in God to guide you" (#576); and "Out of the depths I cry to you" (#133). In "Hymnal: A Worship Book" hymn #22 is "Lord Jesus Christ, be present now." This text, "Herr Jesus Christ, dich zu uns wend" is #3 in





Benjamin Eby's hymnal. It's not sung, however, to this original syncopated melody. It uses the tune Old 100th - or the Doxology. In the 1969 "Mennonite Hymnal," this text is returned to its original tune.

In terms of the texts, it is surprising, but very few are actually Mennonite or Anabaptist texts. There is little influence of "The Ausbund." There are only two American Mennonites, Christopher Dock and Christian Herr, who have several of their hymns included. The majority of the hymnal comes from the Lutheran German Chorale tradition. The most common authors are Gerhard Tersteegen, Joachim Neander, Johann Heermann and Paul Gerhardt, familiar names if you like looking at all that small print at the bottom of hymnals. It is interesting that this German chorale tradition is basically lost in later Swiss Mennonite hymnals, and only returns in the 1969 hymnal with the General Conference influence.

### SINGING SCHOOLS

The winds of change were blowing through the Mennonite communities in the mid to late nineteenth century. Local Singing Schools were introducing change into church music by teaching four-part a capella singing, introducing new American and British hymns and folk tunes to replace the German choral tunes of earlier hymn books, and they encouraged the use of English in worship settings. By the winter of 1862 five churches conducted singing schools, and then gathered at the new Freeport United Brethren Church to sing individually and as a mass choir.

### LIEDER UND MELODIEN BUCH

While English was making its way into Mennonite congregations, a new German Mennonite book "Lieder und Melodien Buch" was published in 1895. It was used extensively in the Amish Mennonite Conference congregations until the 1930's.

### THE CHURCH & SUNDAY SCHOOL HYMNAL

In 1902 the first official English hymn book in the Mennonite church was published. "The Church and Sunday School Hymnal" contains 412 hymns and a German supplement of 50 hymns. In 1911 the book was published with a supplement. It used the shaped notes notation from the Singing School movement. Songs such as "For God so loved us - Gott iss die Liebe" (#167 WB) were sung either in English or German and reminds us of our two language heritage.

No hymn sing in an Ontario Mennonite congregation is complete without singing "Come, we that love the Lord" (#14 WB). This entered the tradition in the "Church and Sunday School Hymnal."

### THE CHURCH HYMNAL

In 1927 the era of "The Church Hymnal" was ushered in. Sunday School and worship services were now clearly separate institutions - a pattern it has taken us a hundred years to overcome. This is the book many of us grew up with, and it shaped our piety and theology. One song in "The Church Hymnal" - "Christ who left his home in glory" (#283 WB) - was composed by A.B. Kolb, a former Ontario

church leader. It is said that when he overheard the local Elkhart concert band, the beat of the bass drums gave him inspiration to writing the bass notes in the chorus part of the hymn. Bass singers were encouraged to produce a drum effect as they sang.

### THE MENNONITE HYMNARY

New Mennonite immigrants from Russia brought with them a new music tradition. Much of their music was memorized, or lined out as it was sung. In 1940, "The Mennonite Hymnary," edited by Lester Hostetler and Walter Hohman, continued the story of music in the General Conference Mennonite Church. This hymnal would have been used by Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite and Stirling Avenue Mennonite. It is fascinating to look at how the hymnal is organized. It is divided into seven books. The first 400 hymns, Book One, follow a standard format: Worship, God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Christian life, the Church, Missions, Home and Family, and Special Services and Seasons. Book Two are hymns for children. The rest of the hymnal is uniquely divided up by musical styles: Book Three are Gospel Songs; Book Four, a section following the liturgical year using Chorales; Book Five are Metrical Psalms; Book Six are Responses, Chants, Doxologies and Amens; and Book Seven are the Responsive Readings.

Book Four, the Chorales, is made up of about 70 hymns. "Holy God, we praise thy name - Grosser Gott Wir Loben Dich" (#121 WB) perhaps best represents the 1940 "Mennonite Hymnary." Many of the chorales come from the earlier German 1890 General Conference book "Gesangbuch Mit Noten." Russian Mennonites would have known these songs as well in various Ziffern books, where the notes are indicated by numbers or 'ziffern.' The hymnal's editors wrote that: "In all of our hymnody there is nothing finer than these Chorales. They are noble, dignified and powerful. The harmonies are rich and satisfying and especially effective when sung by large groups. They should not be sung in a dragging manner, and certainly not too fast. The Chorales permit of no sentimental or 'pretty' effects of shading. Choirs will find the Chorales, as well as many other hymns in the book, invaluable for special numbers to be sung as anthems. In our opinion, our church music would undergo distinct improvement if much of the anthem literature, now in use, were discarded and these great Chorales and hymns substituted for choir use."

## THE MENNONITE HYMNAL

In 1969 the first cooperative hymnal, "The Mennonite Hymnal" was published. It brought together the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church in a joint venture. These two denominations actually began work on a new hymnal independently and then realized they could join in their work. "The Mennonite Hymnal" brought together the best of the "Church Hymnal" and the "Mennonite Hymnary." It brought together the strong tradition of Watts and Wesley and the American folk tunes, with the German Chorale tradition and the Metrical Psalms, plus many other sources.

The above mentioned "Holy God, we praise thy name - Grosser Gott Wir Loben Dich" in the "Mennonite Hymnary" is chosen Hymn #1 in the 1969 "Mennonite Hymnal." I find it interesting that the hymn itself is a Catholic hymn based on the fourth century Te Deum. It's truly an Ecumenical hymn.

## HYMNAL: A WORSHIP BOOK

Published in 1992, "Hymnal: A Worship Book" is the Mennonite Church's current hymn book. Once again it was a joint venture. This time between the General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Church, and Church of the Brethren. Many new hymns grace its pages, such as #433 - "Go, my children, with my blessing." It is a Norwegian text by Juraslav Vajda set to a Welsh melody. Lawrence was a Publishing Agent for this book, and one of the exciting tasks was to find new texts and find the right music for it. But this hymnal also allows a congregation to get in touch with our rich musical tradition.

We would like to give special recognition to Lorna L. Bergey who provided much of the research for this essay. This was not meant to be a complete list of the music used in the Mennonite church over the past two centuries. We limited the scope to hymn books used in Mennonite

worship services. This means that music used in Singing Schools, Sunday Schools, Young People's Association, Evangelistic or Revival Meetings remain for another time. Also, books such as our "Life Songs" numbers 1 and 2, "Sheet music of Heaven," "Songs of the Church" and the many other supplements used over the years were not the primary focus of this study. But what this does show is that music was, and continues to be an important part of Mennonite life and worship, and "Hymnal: A Worship Book" is an integral part of that tradition.

*Adapted from the presentation given by Lawrence Martin and Mark Diller Harder at the fall Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario meeting November 1, 1997 at Breslau Mennonite Church.*

*Lawrence Martin is pastor at Breslau Mennonite Church. Mark Diller Harder is Music Director at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church and MCEC Student and Young Adults Minister.*

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## Book Review

Diane Zimmerman Umble, *Holding the Line: The Telephone in Old Order Mennonite and Amish Life*, (John Hopkins University Press: Baltimore and London, 1996).

Reviewed by Catherine Schlegel

The "telephone troubles," as experienced by Old Order Mennonite and Amish communities, serve to remind the rest of society that "the telephone is not merely a neutral instrument." Widespread social change in areas of communication and social interaction have occurred with the introduction of the telephone for society in general, as well as the Old Order.

The "world" has embraced the telephone to the extent that it has become an indispensable tool on contemporary culture with regard to social interaction and function. The Old Order, as communities with clearly marked distinctions from the wider culture, are deliberate in their attempt to understand the social significance of the telephone and its effect on community boundary maintenance.

The book reflects on the method and meaning of communication within Old Order communities. It documents the involvement, or lack of it, of the Old

Order with the history and implementation of the telephone, focusing on Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Included is an explanation regarding the significance of the telephone on 20th century Old Order life. At issue are:

- 1) the preservation of traditional patterns of communication and language.
- 2) the maintenance of a rural way of life.
- 3) the fracturing of the collective nature of work.
- 4) the centrality of the church community.
- 5) the influence of values not in the spirit of non-conformity and separation from the world.
- 6) the temptation to gossip and disrupt the social harmony of the community.
- 7) the pursuit of profit and personal pleasure resulting from individualism and pride rather than humility.

In response to the pro-telephone voices, the Old Order Amish have compromised

by establishing a network of community telephones, centrally located for the use of several families. This compromise has allowed the Old Order Amish "to hold to the old order of their forefathers." By "holding the line" on the telephone debate and resisting individual ownership of telephones, they have succeeded in keeping the telephone and thereby the "world," out of Amish homes.

The perspective of the Old Order Mennonites, illustrated by the collection of the papers of Bishop Jonas Martin, outlines the reason for the prohibition of telephone ownership by church leaders.

The debate concerning appropriate telephone use continues today. The rules are subject to continuing renegotiation as the Old Order face the challenges to their way of life posed by the telephone and its related technologies. Their discussions focus on what is necessary and what is appropriate with regard to telephone use. Behind this, is the ever-present concern of the impact of today's decisions on the next generation, framing the discussion as a "struggle of faith."

The book offers an excellent perspective on these particular faith communities' efforts to meet this "struggle of faith."

## Book Review

**"THOSE ENTERPRISING PENNSYLVANIA GERMANS, Canadian-German Folklore Vol. 13"**  
by The Pennsylvania German Folklore Society of Ontario, (Stewart Publishing, Markham, 1995, 253 pages.)

Reviewed by Brent Bauman

"The Pennsylvania German Mennonites of Waterloo County have developed a reputation for community living, hard work and for well organized, productive farms. They are almost as equally well known for being quiet, soft-spoken, and reserved about their beliefs, opinions, and accomplishments - especially when in contact with persons outside their immediate community." This is how the essay about farmer, innovator and agricultural commentator Roy M. Brubacher, "Eighty Acres are Enough," begins. This also describes the motive behind the compiling of this book by the Pennsylvania German Folklore Society of Ontario.

Mennonites are indeed known for being hard working and industrious, strong believers in the 'Protestant Work Ethic.' Because of this reputation, it is not surprising that "Those Enterprising Pennsylvania Germans" would be written. What is surprising is it took until the Society's thirteenth volume to cover the topic, but you can't do everything at once.

Though many of the essays dealt with farming or agriculturally based businesses, they did not limit themselves to only Mennonite farmers of Waterloo County for their investigation of this topic, but included a variety of enterprises. In fact it was not limited to only Waterloo County, but to all three original Mennonite settlements: Waterloo, Markham and the Twenty.

The volume is a collection of short stories, or vignettes, of our province's past. It is aided by a generous amount of photographs dispersed though out the book to help illustrate the many stories, and identify the principle characters involved. Because of this format, there are many different authors and styles pre-

sent, and it is not always clear who wrote some of the articles. Some are scholarly works, like "Three Schneider Pioneering Families" and "Reichard & Hallman Sawmills in Rosebank, 1828-1990" which include research and footnotes from outside sources.

Others are written by descendants of those original enterprising pioneers. In the chapter on "Marmills in York County, 1846" you can sense the pride for the family business coming through in the writing of the essay. In a piece on the "Baker Sugar Bush" there is a feel to the words that tell you they truly enjoy their work. In many of these types of articles humorous anecdotes are shared with the reader, leaving one with mental images such as livestock feed being shot across the room by malfunctioning equipment. Or you learn with the writer the skills needed to sell old limburger cheese that has 'past its prime.'

Some sections are simply portions of diaries written a century ago which are used as a window to see into the lives of past generations. It shows a life centered around work, family, church and community, and how they were often entwined.

As mentioned before not all enterprises started by those enterprising Pennsylvania Germans were farms. For early settlers other industries were just as important to their survival. It follows than that some of these settlers would start sawmills and flour mills. For others, side businesses were started to earn extra money to make ends meet, such as cheesemaking, maple syrup production and beekeeping. Many of these ventures grew into full scale businesses of their own, replacing the farm as their livelihood. In some circumstances businesses naturally grew out of the farm operation in order to market their produce, such as "The Old Oak Country Barn" built near Vineland Station by Michael Culp and Dean High to sell their fruits and vegetables.

This is a recurring theme in many of the essays, that people saw a need or opportunity, and took the necessary steps to meet it. Such is the case in the section on "Beef Rings" which provided fresh meat to people at a time when freezers

were rare or non-existent. When that situation ended, so did the beef rings.

A couple of things stand out as you read this volume. One is that many of the companies recorded in this book are quite well known locally and elsewhere. Names such as Maple Lane Dairy, United Breeders Incorporated (now Gencor), Bingeman's Park, Hybrid Turkeys, Kitchener Farmer's Market, Ontario Livestock Exchange and Hallman Organs all owe their beginnings and development to some enterprising Pennsylvania Germans.

The other is that many are also family businesses passed down through several generations. This is the case not only on farms that are so often worked by father and son and grandson, but also businesses like Byer Honey, Ratcliff Sawmill, Brubacher Auctions, Bingeman's Park, Cressman Meats and the many branches of Bowman/Bergey Cheese. All of these had parents and children working together, passing on the skills and trades from one generation to the next. Edward and Robert Bergey both write about working for their parents selling cheese. Though neither one stayed in the family business, they both share how they will never forget the valuable lessons about the importance of hard work and honesty, as well as the lessons they received in retail, marketing and customer relations.

This volume by no means could cover all the businesses began and developed by Mennonites and other Pennsylvania Germans. Even some of the stories in the book seem too short, and deserve more research and recording to tell the full story. I hope this book will inspire someone to do just that. For the rest of us, the book is enjoyable reading, and a good overview of a people whose impact on this province should not be minimized, and whose reputation seems to be well deserved.

*The book costs \$10, plus postage.  
Copies can be obtained from :  
The Pennsylvania German Folklore  
Society of Ontario  
1202-1414 King Street East,  
Kitchener, Ontario N2G 4T8*

## People and Projects

**RITTENHOUSE FAMILY REUNION** will be held July 17-19, 1998 to commemorate the 310th Anniversary of the arrival of William Rittenhouse in Germantown, Pennsylvania in 1688. Rittenhouse became the first Mennonite minister in America, and builder of the first paper mill at Philadelphia in 1690. The theme of the event to be held at the Adam's Mark Hotel, Philadelphia will be "Our Pennsylvania Dutch/Deutsch Heritage." Pastor Frederick S. Weiser, an authority on this topic will be the keynote speaker. Any Rittenhouse descendants, or persons interested in the history of the Rittenhouse family, are most welcome. Detailed information of reunion program/plans will be mailed to all who forward their name and address to: **LARRY RITTENHOUSE** 93 Rousseaux St., Ancaster, ON L9G 2W6 Telephone (905) 648-0564

**GOVERNOR GENERAL'S CARING CANADIAN AWARD** was received on December 12, 1997 by MHSO member Gertrude Bergey, a 21 year volunteer with Mission Services of London. The award honours selfless generosity and special contributions by people to their community and country. After 37 years in teaching, Gertrude responded to an invitation to become involved with Mission Services. Executive Director, Fred Haggland, paid tribute to Gertrude's long and faithful service. "She brought her expertise as an educator into our social service field and that has been very helpful."

In an interview by John Herbert, London Free Press Reporter, Gertrude indicated that soon after she became involved with Mission Services she discovered it was started by a group of Mennonites. "Since my father's people were Mennonite there was a large Mennonite connection in my family. I guess I became hooked right away because of that." Excerpt from The London Free Press article "Her second 'career' was caring."

**NAIRN MENNONITE CHURCH**, Ailsa Craig, will celebrate their 50th Anniversary from June 27 to 28. All are invited to the various events that include an open house, barbecue, campfire reminiscing and a worship service.

**TORONTO UNITED MENNONITE CHURCH** will celebrate their 50th Anniversary from June 13 to 14.

**CONFERENCE OF MENNONITES IN CANADA** will be holding their annual sessions in Stratford from July 8 to 12. Seven different tours are being offered, including the area's many Mennonite Historical sites, including original Mennonite and Amish settlements at Kitchener, St. Jacobs, Millbank and Aylmer. There are also tours of Six Nations Reserve, Conrad Grebel College and the House of Friendship. Most tours are from 2:30-8:00 p.m. Friday July 10 (supper included at an area Mennonite church). Tour guides include **SAM STEINER** and **GLENN ZEHR**. For further information check CMC Sessions information or contact Maurice Martin at (519) 662-1031 or 662-1577.

A conference was held May 7-9, 1998 in Abbotsford, B.C. "One People, Many Stories: Charting the Next Generation of Mennonite Historical Writing in the U.S. and Canada." It was sponsored by the Mennonite historical societies in Canada and the United States to celebrate the completion of the history series, "Mennonites in Canada" and "Mennonite Experience in America". Two people from Ontario presented papers, **MARLENE EPP** on "Masculinity and Conscientious Objection," and **LINDA HUEBERT HECHT** on "Photographs as a Source for the Historian: The Case of MCC Kitchener, The Canadian Office."

"EnGendering the Past: Women and Men in Mennonite History," a conference sponsored by the Chair of Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg in Manitoba is planned for Oct. 16-17, 1998. **MARLENE EPP** and **LINDA HUEBERT HECHT** are members of the planning committee. Both will be presenting papers there, Marlene on "Masculinity and Conscientious Objection," and Linda on "Shared Authority: Analysis of Female Leadership Roles in Profiles of Anabaptist Women." Other speakers include James Urry, Royden Loewen and Katie Funk Wiebe.

**GLENN H. BAECHLER**, compiler of **THE HISTORY AND GENEALOGICAL STUDY OF JOSEPH G. BAECHLER** ([Waterloo: Glenn H. Baechler], 1996, 229 pp.), traces the events and conditions surrounding the immigration of Joseph G. Baechler and his family from Lorraine, France, to Canada as well as his descendants to the present generation.

A new book by **LORRAINE ROTH**, **THE AMISH AND THEIR NEIGHBOURS: GERMAN BLOCK, WILMOT TOWNSHIP, 1822-1860** is being published by the MHSO in 1998.

**MARLENE EPP** was appointed as Editor of the "Conrad Grebel Review" as of January 1998.

**LAUREN HARDER-GISSING** has been appointed as the writer of the **STIRLING AVE. MENNONITE CHURCH'S** history in preparation for their 75th anniversary in 1999.

The **NITH VALLEY MENNONITE CHURCH** is writing a history of their congregation for their 25th anniversary in 1999.