

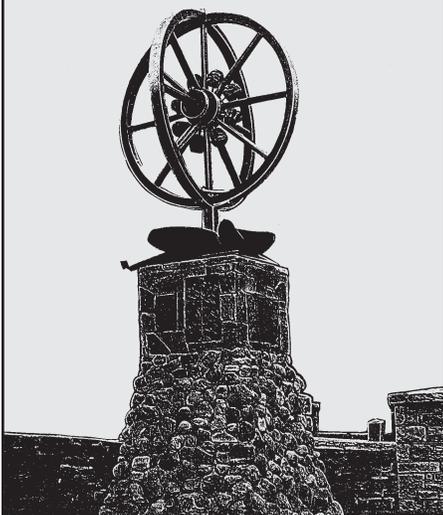
# Ontario Mennonite History

THE  
NEWSLETTER  
FOR THE  
MENNONITE  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY OF  
ONTARIO

VOLUME XXXVIII  
NUMBER 2

OCTOBER, 2020

ISSN 1192-5515



## Albert Christian Casper (Brown) Kennel: A Short Biography.

By Glenn Buck

The story of Albert Kennel's place of birth and his journey to Canada has been shrouded in mystery despite serious efforts by many family members to discover the facts of a beloved grandparent. Attempts to learn Albert's background have all led to dead ends. His offspring have all passed but his grandchildren recall him as a lean individual dressed in black from head to toe. He wore suspenders but his spare shoulders let them slip off too easily, so he had to wear a belt in addition. This habit earned him a reproach from Amish-Mennonite church leaders who deemed the wearing of a belt too worldly, no matter the reason. He is also fondly remembered as a man who reveled in teasing his children and grandchildren. Albert was fairly quiet most of the time but at family reunions or during visits he could be characterized as a joker. His teasing sometimes took the form of cheating at games or checkers.

Albert was born Albert Casper Brown, but nothing is known about his biological family or his early years in England. His daughter, Fanny, remembered his name as Albert Christian Casper Brown but that name is not found on any official document and the origin of the name Christian is unknown. Any record that exists in which his name is listed as Albert Brown reveals nothing about his biological parents nor is any mention made with respect to siblings.

Albert came to Wilmot Township and although no proof can be found, it is assumed that he came from England. He may have been born in London, Liverpool, Birmingham, or in any of the large English cities where poverty was endemic and living conditions for the impoverished were wretched. Although official documents are helpful, they sometimes must be viewed with some skepticism. For instance, a census worker who recorded facts of the Michael Kennel household in 1891 misspelled Albert's name (Alpert), erred on his date of birth (1880) and listed his birthplace as Canada; an official document is only



*Albert Kennel born 1878 in England,  
died 1960, Shingletown, Ontario.*

as accurate as the worker recording the "facts." It has long been thought that Albert may have been placed by the Annie MacPherson Homes, which had a group home and office in Stratford, Ontario. That was the case in 1883 when the home in Stratford was purchased—formerly the MacPherson Home was in Galt, Ontario.

There were over 100,000 children sent from Britain to Canada between 1869 and the 1930s to work on farms or to serve as domestic help in homes. The children were called British Home Children. Among the agencies involved in this migration of children were the Annie MacPherson Home and the Barnardo Homes. These agencies were paid by the government of England to transport children to either Canada or to Australia where the children would be settled in homes with families who were expected to care for them in exchange for their labour.

In Canada the agencies worked hand in hand with the Canadian government to augment the labour supply on family farms. Many of the children who migrated to Canada came from families

who were destitute, without work or any means of support. The families were unable to care for the children and so the parents sent them to Canada in hopes that the children would have a better life.

The agencies were supposed to take children from ages 7 to 12, but children as young as three or four years of age were sent to Canada. Parents who sent their children were hoping that their children could be educated in public schools and would receive better treatment than they would be afforded in England.

In many cases the children received very good treatment, but there are records which indicate that some were treated miserably and used as unpaid or slave labour. There is evidence that some children were transported without parental knowledge or consent.

The prevailing attitude of the time was that children from impoverished homes were genetically predisposed to be unworthy and were looked down on. For this reason, many of the children who migrated to Canada never became a part of the families who fostered them. Most of the children were labelled as orphans but, in fact, the vast majority had parents in Great Britain.

According to notes written by his daughter Lillian Kennel, Albert was born in 1878, but the place of his birth and his early circumstances are unknown. Albert was approximately five years of age when he arrived in Canada and went to live with an Amish-Mennonite family by the name of Kennel, who lived on a 100-acre farm situated one concession north of St. Agatha and three farms west of Notre Dame Drive. The head of the family, Michael Kennel, was a minister in the St. Agatha Amish-Mennonite congregation while his wife, Maria (Mary), was a homemaker.

The Kennel family included two older sons and two daughters who no longer lived in the Michael Kennel home. According to the 1891 census, Elizabeth Sander and Anna Sengpal also lived in the home and may have been British Home Children. Descendants of Albert have assumed he received good treatment at the hands of the family although there are some indications that he may have been treated unfairly by the older brothers from time to time.



#### ***The Family of Albert and Katie Kennel 1938***

*Front Row: L-R Katie (Erb) Kennel; Fanny Gingerich (holding Erma Gingerich); Reuben Gingerich (holding Ray Gingerich); Albert Kennel.*  
*Middle Row: L-R: Adeline Brenneman; Edgar Kennel; Lillian Kennel; Anson Kennel;*  
*Third Row: Joe Brenneman; Mabel Kennel; Florence Kennel;*  
*Reuben Kennel; Eileen Calvert; Ed Calvert.*

Albert rarely spoke of his early life to his children or grandchildren so the descendants are left to speculate about this portion of his life. He did share with his daughter-in-law Esther, that when he was a young boy at the Michael Kennel farm he was too small to see above the handles of the plow when he plowed the fields.

Living in the Kennel household Albert learned to do farm labour and attended school. We know that he was educated and learned to read and write in English. Like many Amish-Mennonite families of that era the language spoken at home was Pennsylvania German. Church services at that time would have been conducted in Pennsylvania German although the hymns and the Bible would have been written in High German.

Albert left the Kennel family and struck out on his own sometime after the 1891 census when he was just twelve to thirteen years of age. He did farm labour, helping with work on other farms. His pay would have been minimal, but he would receive lodging and meals as a farm labourer, his major occupation throughout his life.

As a young man Albert felt the pull to move west, as did many young people at the time. He established himself in Nebraska for about one year before returning to Ontario and Waterloo County. At some point Albert

met Catherine Erb, daughter of Joel and Barbara Erb. There are no stories told about how Catherine and Albert met but it is entirely possible they may have met at a church function. They were married on a cold, rainy Sunday February 25, 1906 in Wilmot Township by Bishop D.H. Steinmann at the Erb family home.

They purchased a home in Shingletown where they raised their family. At some point Joel and Barbara Erb purchased the house next door to Albert and Catherine in Shingletown. Esther Kennel, their daughter-in-law, recalls that Albert and Katie moved into the Erb home about 1950 and they lived there for the remainder of their lives. Their son, Anson and his wife Esther, purchased the home previously owned by Albert and Catherine.

The family assumes that Albert was known as Albert Kennel from the time he began living with the Michael Kennel family even though he was never officially adopted. In Ontario formal adoptions were not legal until 1921 but Albert seems to have been raised as a family member. His marriage certificate of 1906 lists his name as Albert Brown. The family assumes that he was persuaded to use his official name on the document because Bishop Steinmann who married them knew Albert was a foster child and convinced Albert to use his official name.



*Catherine (Katie) Erb born 1885, Ellice Township, Perth County, died 1982, Tavistock, Ontario.*

While some of the Michael Kennel family may have tolerated Albert assuming the surname name of Kennel, it is known that some family members were indignant that he had the effrontery to assume that name. There may have been some fear that Albert would attempt to claim a portion of the inheritance after the death of Michael and Maria (Mary) Kennel. (Albert did in fact inherit the family desk.) The hard feelings seemed to have prevailed among some family members for many years. One must also consider that negative feelings toward British Home Children, and indeed toward any orphaned/adopted person, were widespread throughout the English-speaking world. Catherine was frequently criticized for having “settled” for Albert when she “could have done much better.”

In spite of these hard feelings, one assumes that Albert had some positive relationships with the family, enough

that it induced him and Catherine to continue to assume the name of Kennel. When Albert and Catherine were married and had their first child, Mabel, Maria (Mary) Kennel came to visit, bringing a gift for the new baby. Albert and Catherine adopted the faith of the Kennel family and were members of Steinmann Mennonite Church in Baden where several of Albert and Catherine’s descendants are members today.

Albert and Katie raised their family in Shingletown, a tiny community on Bleams Road just west of Kitchener, Ontario. Albert plied his trade as a farm day-labourer for his neighbours and earned about fifty cents per day. Of course there were days when his labour was not required so his weekly pay fluctuated widely and winter work was especially difficult to obtain.

Unfortunately some days Albert was not paid for his work as there were times when the farmers needed help but were unable or unwilling to pay for it. There were days when Albert’s children sat in school or church with children whose parents owed money to Albert, but the family could say nothing for fear the debts would never be paid or that future work would be jeopardized.

Albert and Katie managed a large garden on their property to supplement their meager income. It provided enough produce to take to the Kitchener Farmers’ Market on Saturdays. They would rise about 4:00 a.m. to take their horse and wagon to the market where they would sell what they could.

At home Katie preserved their produce to be eaten throughout the year. To provide milk for the family Katie and Albert kept a cow that was allowed to wander throughout the area; this was a common practice in small town Ontario.

A family member would locate her daily and she would be led home to be milked.

Because meat was in short supply in their home, Katie and the children lived on a diet of fruits and vegetables so that Albert could have the protein he needed to fuel his body for the heavy labour of his working day. A meal for the family often included white bean soup with a layer of bread sprinkled generously with cinnamon as a topping.

In their senior years Albert and Katie derived the bulk of their income from the market garden. When old age pension was instituted it was difficult for them to collect because Albert lacked the formal documents required but was assisted by a friend of the family, Austin Zoeller so that Albert finally received a small pension.

***Albert and Catherine were married  
February 25, 1906.***

***Children:***

*Mabel Kennel 1909  
Adeline (Kennel) Brenneman 1911  
Fanny (Kennel) Gingerich 1913  
Reuben Kennel 1915  
Eileen (Kennel) Calvert 1917  
Edgar Kennel 1922  
Anson Kennel 1924  
Lillian Kennel 1926*

*This biography was compiled with extensive assistance from Selma (Gingerich) Webster, a granddaughter to Albert Kennel, who researched census reports and other public records. Some information is from the writings of Lillian Kennel, daughter of Albert and Catherine. Leighton Gingerich also assisted with researching on Ancestry.com and provided these family photos. Glenn Buck’s wife is a granddaughter to Albert and Catherine Kennel.*

***Ontario Mennonite History*** is published semi-annually by the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario, Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3G6, and distributed to all members of the Society. It is distributed free of charge to public libraries and school libraries in Ontario, upon request. Back issues available at [mhso.org](http://mhso.org).

***Editor:*** Barb Draper

***Editorial Committee:*** Bethany Leis, Marion Roes, Ruth Steinman, Harold Thiessen

Financial assistance from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture is gratefully acknowledged.

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

# Harold Carter: from Paddington, England to Perth County, Canada

By Fred Lichti

One of Harold Carter's happier memories of England was watching a large royal procession move through the streets of London with great fanfare and many horses. Based on his age and the timing of milestones in the British Royal family, he likely witnessed the coronation procession of King Edward VII (August 9, 1901), son of Queen Victoria.<sup>1</sup>

Harold was born May 28, 1898 in St. Mary's Paddington, London, England, the fifth child of William Harold Carter and Julia Maria Butcher. We can only imagine how much love and care he received as the only boy with four older sisters—Florence, Nellie, Miriam and Dorothy. In keeping with Anglican tradition, Harold was baptized as an infant. When he was about four years old, he remembered learning to sing hymns on his father's lap.<sup>2</sup>

When Harold was one year old, his mother died of tuberculosis and his father remarried. A half-brother was born to this marriage, but the child died in infancy. Harold's whole world changed in December 1904 when, at the age of 41, his father also died of tuberculosis.<sup>3</sup> Almost immediately his stepmother placed Harold and his sisters into a Barnardo Orphanage in London.

Born in Dublin in 1845, Thomas Barnardo converted to evangelical Christianity as a teenager. He felt a call to serve as a medical missionary in China and moved to London to study medicine. Barnardo was deeply moved by the poverty and plight of the children he saw while passing through the slums of that day and beginning in 1870 he opened numerous homes for destitute children. He also developed an immigration program which sent orphans and destitute children to Canada in the hopes that they would find a better life there. Barnardo believed his program was a win-win for both countries because it reduced England's burden of caring for the poor and provided Canada with much-needed English-speaking labour.<sup>4</sup>



*Harold and Christina Carter (seated) celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in 1969. Standing (from left): Bishop William Carter, Emanuel Carter, Ruth (Carter) Steckley, Joe Carter, LeRoy Carter.*

After five months in the orphanage, six-year-old Harold and three of his older sisters, along with 160 other orphans and homeless children, boarded the S.S. Bavarian and sailed for Canada. His oldest sister, 17-year-old Florence, had already been hired out to work for a London family and was not free to care for or go with her younger siblings. All contact with her was lost.<sup>5</sup>

As a wide-eyed six-year-old, Harold retained vivid memories of his trans-Atlantic voyage—good meals in the ship's dining room, spouting whales, large ice bergs, formal Sunday church services and burials at sea. Besides the sailor suit which he wore for the trip, his clothing and earthly possessions were placed in a little wooden chest that remains in the Carter family.

After three weeks on the Atlantic Ocean, on May 13, 1905 they landed in Montreal. Because one of the sisters was ill, all the siblings were put into quarantine. After she recovered, Harold and his sisters travelled by train to Stratford, Ontario, where they entered the Annie MacPherson House.

A Scottish evangelical Quaker,

Annie MacPherson (1833-1904) shared many of the concerns and aspirations of Dr. Barnardo. MacPherson founded a program called "Home Children" which arranged for poor and orphaned English children to be relocated to Canada and other colonies to serve as child labour. Her goal was to place the children in rural families who would provide for them in exchange for their labour. Of the approximate 100,000 "Home Children" who came to Canada from Britain between 1883-1919, 8,000 were received by the Annie MacPherson Home in Stratford.

Because the children were segregated by gender, Harold was only able to speak with his sisters through an outside fence. One by one as his sisters were sent to work for farm families in Aylmer, Galt and Port Huron, Harold lost contact with them.

Orphanages run on routine. Bedtime, wake time, mealtime and school time were regimented and on Sunday the children walked two abreast to the nearby St. James Anglican Church. Many times during the nine months that Harold lived at the Stratford orphanage,

strangers showed up after breakfast to choose a child. The children sat on small wooden benches, lined up in rows while the farmers walked up and down the rows, inspecting the children.

After almost nine months in the orphanage, on Feb. 17, 1906 Harold was the one chosen by a stranger. Harold told his children, "I really stared at this man because I'd never seen an Amish man before." The stranger with a bushy beard and austere clothing was 34-year-old Daniel S. Jantzi (1871-1952) from Topping, Ontario. The moment of his choosing was burned into Harold's memory. In describing the event later he said, "He walked up and down the rows. He stopped and looked at me, but continued to the end of the row. Then he came back, pointed at me and said, 'I'll take this one.'"<sup>6</sup>

Having spent his early years in cities, Harold noticed all the woods and swamps on their 18 km. buggy ride from Stratford to the Jantzi farm near Topping. Years later he remembered his feelings of dislocation. "What kind of wilderness am I being taken to?" he had wondered.

Imagine the excitement which Daniel's wife, Fannie (Kuepfer) Jantzi (1877-1914), felt when her husband returned from Stratford with a seven-year-old English boy, still dressed in the sailor suit which he'd received before leaving London. Harold never forgot his first night in the Jantzi home. He was put to bed in a stark, white-washed bedroom, upstairs in the two-storey farmhouse. All alone for the first time in his life, he later told his children, "I was really scared!"



*This trunk, 12.5 x 23.5 inches, came with Harold from England and held all his worldly possessions. It is still in the William Carter family.*

Many "Home Children" suffered exploitation but this was not Harold's experience for the Jantzis provided him not only with the necessities of life, but with love and belonging. Harold told his children, "She was like a Mom to me."

Like his father (Joseph G. Jantzi) before him, Daniel S. Jantzi was a deacon in the Old Order Amish Church and young Harold was immersed in the language, religion and culture of his adoptive community. English was the language of instruction in school but on the playground, at home and church, the Pennsylvania German dialect was spoken. Harold learned to speak the dialect and read the Bible, hymnbooks and devotional literature in German.

Because he was never officially

adopted by the Jantzis, inspectors from the MacPherson Home checked up on Harold from 1906-1915. Records indicate that he got along well with his foster parents and they genuinely cared for him. In a childhood accident, Harold broke his arm. His foster father made a special trip to the Topping Hotel to get a bottle of whiskey which was used as an anesthesia while the doctor set the fracture.

Harold attended the nearby S. S. #13 Mornington Public School (Topping) at the corner of Perth Roads 119 and 121 (Poole-Millbank Rd). Fellow classmates remembered the little English boy who came to school dressed in a sailor suit. Highly conspicuous in such clothes, Harold got a lot of unwanted attention until his foster mother sewed him regular

## **J. Winfield Fretz Publication Fund in Ontario Mennonite Studies Sponsored by the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario.**

Dr. J. Winfield Fretz was the first president of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario.  
This fund is named in his honour.

The fund is available to any individual or charitable, church or community-based organization that requires financial support for the publication of research as a book, film or other form of media.

Projects should illuminate the experience of Mennonites in Ontario.

Normally up to \$2,000 is available per project. Applications are accepted twice yearly, May 1 and December 1.  
More information: [mhso.org/content/fretz-publication-fund](http://mhso.org/content/fretz-publication-fund)

Amish clothing. As a ward of the crown, Harold was required to stay in school two years longer than his Amish peers. One wonders how this affected his thinking and contributed to the open mindedness and tolerance which earmarked his life.

In 1914 at the age of 44 his foster mother, Fannie, died and Harold soon moved on. He hired himself out as a farm labourer and worked for various farmers. Meanwhile, Daniel Jantzi married a woman 20 years his junior and they had 14 children.

After participating in the Sunday morning Instruction Classes led by the ministers, Harold was baptized into the Old Order Amish Church at the age of 18. He remained faithful to his baptism vows and church until death.

Although Harold had little ongoing contact with his sisters, when he made known his plans to marry Christina Kuepfer (1893-1981), his sisters paid him a visit. They tried to talk him out of his wedding plans saying, "We think that you'll be happier if you don't marry an Amish woman. Come and live with one of us." Although upsetting at the time, decades later his sisters apologized for their remarks and acknowledged that he and Christina had created a loving, stable home and enjoyed a blessed life in a caring community. They even noted that he alone of all their siblings owned his own house and property.<sup>7</sup>

On Nov. 25, 1919 Harold and Christina Kuepfer were married and lived in Milverton where Harold worked for fellow church member John R. Ebersol. Ebersol, who had invented the self-feeder for threshing machines, owned and operated Ebersol Farm Equipment in Milverton. In 1925 they moved onto a farm north of town and three years later, just before the onslaught of the Depression, they bought Christina's parent's farm. When many equally good farmers lost their farms during these years, the Carters were able to survive with the help of Christina's father who lived with them and held the mortgage.

Harold and Christina Carter had four sons, William, Emmanuel, Joseph and Leroy, and one daughter, Ruth. They were blessed with 23 grandchildren.

Harold and Christina had a strong faith in God. When making a major decision, Harold would acknowledge Divine providence by adding, "*Wann es der Herr sie Wille ist*" (If it is God's will). As members of the Old Order Amish Church they adhered to the dress code, restricted their use of technology, drove horse and buggy and faithfully attended bi-weekly worship services which were hosted in the homes, barns or shops of fellow church members. No doubt, they also took their turn to host church and following the three-hour service, provided a simple meal for the whole congregation.

Harold was a good singer and served the congregation as a "*vorsinger*" (song leader). While seated, he would announce the hymn number and lead the unison congregational singing from the *Ausbund*, a hymnbook without notes first printed in 1564 by the early Anabaptists.

At baptism, young males in the Amish tradition include a promise to participate in the lot ordination process, if nominated as a candidate by fellow church members. As an indication of the respect which Harold had in his community, he was more than once nominated for ordination. Although he never drew the lot, his oldest and youngest sons did. William was ordained as Minister (1959) and then Bishop (1964) of the Steckly District—thereafter named the Carter District until 1987 when the congregation built a meetinghouse and took the name Morningview Amish Mennonite Church. LeRoy was ordained a Deacon (1984) in the same congregation.

In addition to farming, Harold developed skills as a carpenter and served as "the Boss" at barn raisings. He directed the raising of 34 barns plus sheds and houses, mostly in the Milverton area but also from Palmerston to Tavistock. Teamwork and discipline are crucial in a safe and successful barn raising. Harold's son, LeRoy, attended a few barn raisings with his father and described it this way: "Dad would get everybody together for a little pep talk before the raising. He'd say, 'I'm the boss for this job and when I say "Yoel!" you push and don't stop till I

say "Stop!"' He always carried a square with him and he'd hold it up and say, 'If somebody doesn't listen to my orders, you'll get this!'"<sup>8</sup>

Harold's congenial personality and leadership skills were recognized by his community which repeatedly elected him as chairperson of the Amish Mennonite Fire and Storm Aid Union from 1950-1969. The AM Fire and Storm Aid Union was established in 1872 as an alternative to secular insurance companies and included a variety of Amish and Mennonite groups. Because of its diversity the Aid Union has struggled to remain united and flexible enough to meet the changing needs of its members.

For example, tensions arose in the Aid Union when the Amish Mennonite congregations sought coverage for their increasingly elaborate meetinghouses. When it appeared that the majority would vote down the inclusion of meetinghouses, historian Orland Gingerich says, "Harold Carter, himself an Old Order member, remarked that since they meet in homes and barns, which are insured, he thought it only fair that meeting houses (church buildings) also be insured."<sup>9</sup> Coverage was extended.

With constant innovations in agriculture and the increased acculturation of more liberal members, some Old Order Amish lobbied to withdraw from the Aid Union and form their own organization. Orland Gingerich credited "the vision, patience, and skillful leadership of Harold Carter" in helping the Aid Union navigate these changes and remain intact.

From their beginning in 1886, the tradition-minded members of the Wellesley-Mornington Old Order Amish congregations have demonstrated remarkable solidarity. While the change-minded Amish Mennonites have been a fractious group which divided and sub-divided in every generation, the Old Order Amish have experienced only one split since their inception. This division came in 1945 when some members pushed for the acceptance of tractors in their farming. In addition, there were tensions about church members who had moved beyond farming to operate

businesses and heavy machinery. In an amicable split which included the promise not to shun one another, 56 members withdrew to form a new district which would accept tractors and show more tolerance toward Amish entrepreneurs whose business ventures pushed traditional boundaries.

The Carter family joined the new group which continued to worship in homes, retained horse and buggy for travel and followed traditional Old Order Amish worship and cultural patterns. However, in a relatively short period of time this congregation adopted other

changes—public electricity, telephones, cars, a meetinghouse, English as the language of worship, a new hymnbook and a women’s sewing circle. They became part of the nonaffiliated Amish Mennonite churches and took the name Morningview Amish Mennonite Church. One wonders what influence Harold exercised in navigating the changes which came quite rapidly in this congregation.

After 33 years of farming and building barns and houses for others, Harold and Christina sold their farm to their youngest son and built a retirement

home nearby. On Oct. 26, 1972 Harold died at the age of 74 years. Christina died 9 April 1981. They are buried in the Edgcombe Amish Cemetery, west of Newton, Ontario.

In contrast to the losses and deprivation of his early life in England, Harold finished his course in comfort and contentment—the patriarch of a large, caring family and a respected member of his adopted church and community. Harold Carter left a legacy of leadership in barn raisings, mutual aid and resilience in the face of hardship.

<sup>1</sup> There were two royal processions in 1901, the funeral procession of Queen Victoria (Feb. 1) and the coronation procession of her son, King Edward VII (August 9). Because children of this era were not usually exposed to funerals, he would have more likely been taken to the coronation procession.

<sup>2</sup> Carter, John. “The Family History and Genealogy of Harold William Carter,” Unpublished Paper, 2004. In 2004 Harold’s grandson John Carter recorded the stories and anecdotes as remembered by the family. Most of the personal memories, anecdotes and quoted conversation included in this narrative come from John’s five-page document.

<sup>3</sup> Public Records Office, London. England.

<sup>4</sup> <https://torontoist.com/2014/08/historicist-dr-barnardos-children/>.

<sup>5</sup> Gingerich, Orland. Telephone conversation with Dorothy’s son.

<sup>6</sup> Carter, John. pg. 2

<sup>7</sup> Carter, John. pg. 3

<sup>8</sup> Carter, LeRoy. Telephone Interview. Nov. 23., 2019.

<sup>9</sup> Gingerich, Orland. *The Amish of Canada* (Waterloo: Conrad Press, 1972) pg. 67.

## Historical society plans new projects

*Mennonite Historical Society of Canada*

The Mennonite Historical Society of Canada (MHSC) met in Quebec on Jan. 17 and 18 and discussed several new projects, including a history book of Mennonites in Canada since 1970 and a cross-Canada celebration of the centenary of the arrival of Russian Mennonites in 2023.

Building on MHSC’s November 2018 history conference “A People of Diversity: Mennonites in Canada Since 1970,” the Society invited Brian Froese and Laureen Harder-Gissing to co-author a book on Mennonites in Canada from 1970-2020. Froese teaches history at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, and Harder-Gissing is Archivist-Librarian at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo.

Plans are proceeding for the Russlaender Centenary project. The main feature of the commemoration is a cross-Canada train trip in 2023, beginning in Quebec City with stops and events planned across the country. Participants can choose to be on all or any of the

segments of the journey or be involved when the travellers arrive in their part of the country.

MHSC also chose to recognize the migration of Mennonites from Canada to Mexico and Paraguay in 1922, the largest ever mass emigration from Canada. Events, exhibits and a conference are planned for 2022.

This year the MHSC award of excellence was presented to Lucille Marr in recognition of her contribution in research, writing and teaching about Mennonites and Brethren in Christ in Canada, her work on the executive of the MHSC and her role in the founding and ongoing work of the Société d’histoire mennonite du Québec.

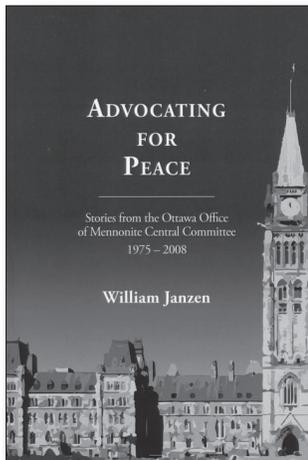
The Mennonite Historical Society of Canada brings together representatives of Mennonite institutions, archives and provincial historical societies to learn from each other and plan projects together. The Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (GAMEO) and the Mennonite Archival Image Database

(MAID) are two projects that have come out of MHSC providing excellent resources dealing with the history of Mennonites in Canada. Upcoming conferences include “MCC at 100: Mennonites, Service and the Humanitarian Impulse” to be held in Winnipeg Sept. 30 - Oct. 2, 2021 and “Mennonite-Indigenous Encounters in Time and Place” in Waterloo in May 2022.

The MHSC annual meeting in January 2020 was hosted by the Société d’histoire mennonite du Québec at Camp Peniel north of Montreal. The camp in the Laurentians is owned by the Mennonite Brethren churches of Quebec. MHSC members participated in the “Great Winter Warm-Up,” Mennonite Central Committee’s comforter project by knotting a prepared comforter.

The new executive of MHSC includes: Laureen Harder-Gissing, president; Conrad Stoesz, vice-president; Jeremy Wiebe, treasurer; Barb Draper, secretary; and Bruce Guenther, member-at-large.

# NEW BOOK



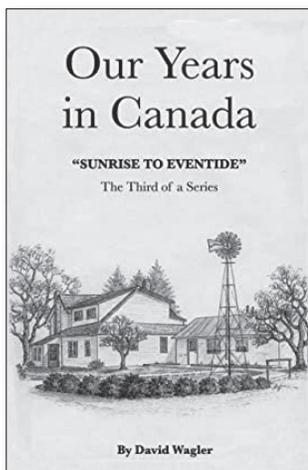
***Advocating for Peace: Stories from the Ottawa Office of Mennonite Central Committee 1975-2008.***

*William Janzen. Pandora Press, 2019, 170 pages.*

Bill Janzen was the first director of MCC Canada's office in Ottawa that opened in 1975. This book contains his reflections about the role and effectiveness of his ministry in 33 years of service. As well as bringing to the government's attention social concerns such as conscientious objection, capital punishment and abortion, he tried to encourage good Canadian foreign policy by encouraging development and peace work in places such as Vietnam, Cambodia, Israel and Palestine, Iraq and North Korea.

As part of MCC Canada, Janzen also worked on assisting the constituency when they needed help in dealing with government restrictions. The book includes a chapter on how the Amish and Old Order Mennonites reacted when the Ontario Milk Marketing Board declared milk had to be stored in electrically cooled in bulk tanks. Janzen assisted MCC Ontario in finding a compromise between the farmers who did not use electricity and the Ontario government. The largest chapter deals with his extensive work in helping Mennonites from Mexico, especially with citizenship issues.

# BOOKS WITH AMISH THEMES

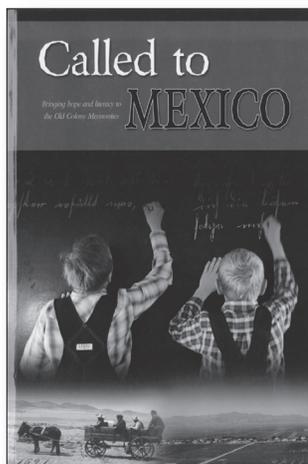


***Our Years in Canada.***

*David Wagler.*

*Wagler Books, Aylmer, Ont., 2015, 268 pages.*

This book is the third in a series Sunrise to Eventide by David Wagler, who was one of the early Amish immigrants to the Aylmer area in 1953. He provides an interesting glimpse into how this Amish group from Ohio settled in southern Ontario. In the Introduction Wagler writes: "In 2003, in recognition of Aylmer's 50th year for the Amish community, the church youth gathered all the Aylmer letters from copies of *The Budget* stored at Pathway's print shop. The focus was on the first ten years—1953 to 1963. These letters were photocopied and put into booklet form. From this booklet we have taken excerpts which we considered of general interest. The letters, printed in smaller font than the regular text, are interspersed throughout the book with memories of my own." The book is available from Living Waters Christian Book and Toy Store in Elmira, Ont., [www.lwcb.shop](http://www.lwcb.shop) or 1-877-595-7585.



***Called to Mexico: Bringing Hope and Literacy to the Old Colony Mennonites.***

*Old Colony Mennonite Support.*

*Napanee, Ind., 2011, 410 pages.*

In 1995 a group of eight Amish men from the United States travelled to Mexico to visit Old Colony Mennonites in response to a request from Mennonite Central Committee to see if these two traditional groups could assist each other. When the Old Colony Mennonites of Mexico were willing, an Old Colony Mennonite Support organization was formed in the U.S. In 1999, the Manitoba Colony school board asked for help with their education system and this became the major work of the Amish. Many schoolteachers spent time in Mexico, encouraging the teachers there to improve the children's reading and writing skills. This book is a collection of writings from a variety of people involved in this project. Although the story is about American Amish working in Mexico, many Old Colony families have connections in Ontario. The book provides some insight into Old Colony culture. The book is available from Living Waters bookstore at 1-877-595-7585 or [www.lwcb.shop](http://www.lwcb.shop).