

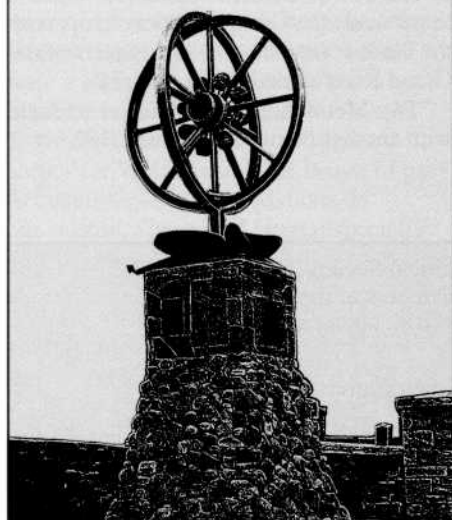
Ontario Mennonite History

THE
NEWSLETTER
OF THE
MENNONITE
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY OF ONTARIO

VOLUME XIV
NUMBER 2

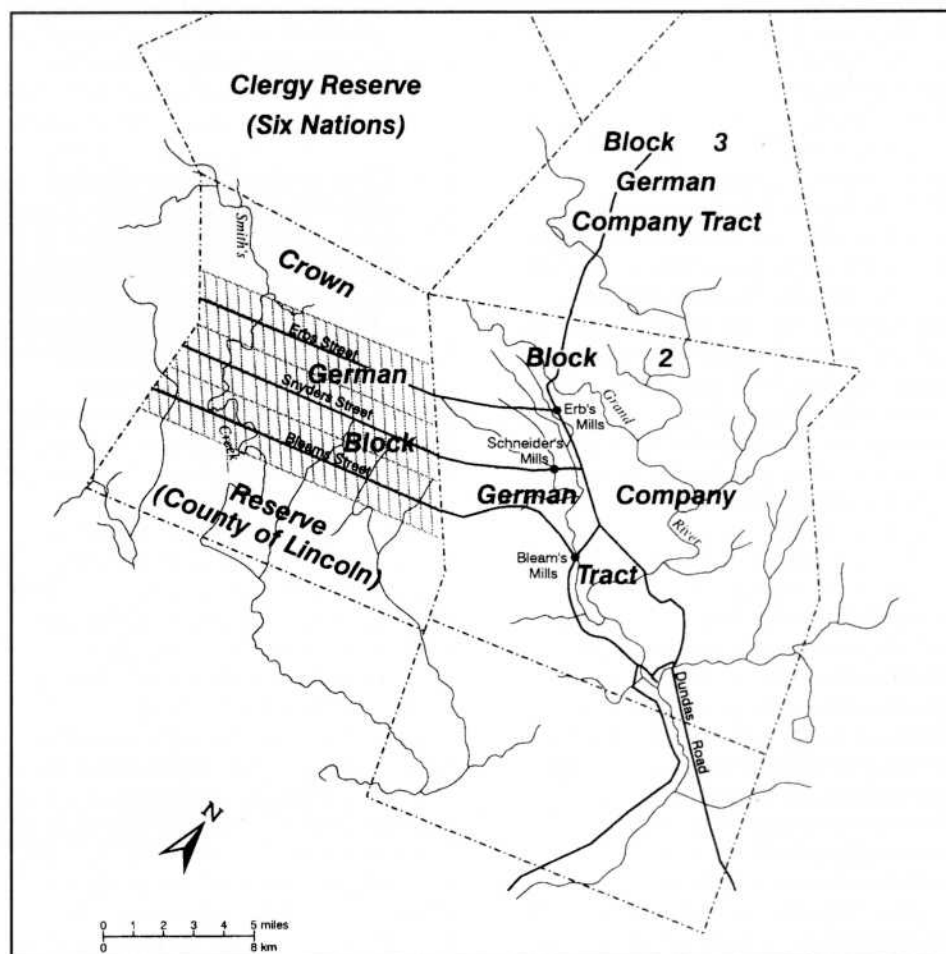
SEPTEMBER 1996

ISSN 1192-5515



The Settlement of the German Block in Wilmot Township, Upper Canada

by ANN HILTY and LORRAINE ROTH



Upper Grand River Settlements.

This historical account of settlement in Wilmot Township had its genesis in 1986 when Professor Harvey Dyck of the Department of History, University of Toronto, suggested that I might be interested in seeing some Mennonite-related papers in the University of Toronto Archives. Dyck had learned of these documents from a former student, Robert Macaulay, who was then working at the Archives. Following Dyck's lead, I examined the documents with the help of Macaulay. The papers turned out to be a portion of the records of University land sales, originating in the Office of the Chief Accountant. Specifically, they dealt with sales of land in Wilmot Township, Waterloo County, to Amish Mennonite immigrants and other German-speaking persons.

Study of the records led me to prepare a paper on the settlement of the German Block, which I presented at the Mennonite

Experience in America Conference VI held at Bluffton College, November 5-7, 1987. I left Toronto in 1988 to take up work at Bluffton College and have not pursued further the topic of the settlement at Wilmot. Fortunately, Lorraine Roth was able to develop the paper into its present form and, with assistance from Reg Good, to find and incorporate extensive complementary documentation from other archival collections.

I should like to thank Harvey Dyck and Richard MacMaster for encouraging me to work on this topic and Robert Macaulay for assisting me in my initial research. Staff members of the University of Toronto Archives were very helpful, earlier to me and more recently to Lorraine. We also thank Reg Good for his interest and help in preparing the article for publication.

Ann Hilty

The early history of Wilmot Township is closely bound up with the story of Christian Nafziger, a key figure in the settlement of the Amish Mennonites in this community. According to the story, Nafziger left Amsterdam on Christmas Day in 1821, sailed to New Orleans, made his way up the Mississippi and then to Pennsylvania in search of land for himself and his Amish Mennonite co-religionists. In Pennsylvania, he was advised to go to Upper Canada where land was still cheap.¹

When Nafziger arrived in the Waterloo area of Upper Canada in the summer of 1822, he found a Mennonite settlement with about 21 years of development. The Mennonites, who had come from various counties in Pennsylvania during these years, were more than willing to assist him and any potential immigrants he might bring with him. No doubt, this thriving community, with its promise of employment as well as aid and support for the new settlers, appealed to Nafziger and gave him the confidence that this was the end of his search.

The government of Upper Canada, on the arrival of Nafziger, was only a few years older than the Waterloo settlement, and the province was still very much in need of settlers. Upper Canada was governed by means of a hierarchical system of which the lowest level was the provincial legislative assembly and the highest level the King of England. Between these were the legislative council, the executive council, the lieutenant governor of Upper Canada (with headquarters in York, now Toronto), the governor of the Canadas (in Quebec), the colonial office in London, and the British parliament (Choquette: 1984, 20). Justices of the peace were appointed to represent and serve the people at the local level. This system was often inefficient, especially in the context of a population scattered over a large land area and a society as yet somewhat unstructured. Although the Mennonites and Christian Nafziger may not have understood the system, they would find themselves face to face with several officials representing these offices in the years to come.

In an effort to generate revenue, the government had devised a system of reserves. Every seventh lot in a given township was to be reserved for the Crown and another seventh lot for the Church – the Church of England, of course. Since counties such as Lincoln in the Niagara Peninsula were settled before this system was established, several large blocks of land were set aside in other parts of the province (Gates: 1968, 3; Craig: 1963, 34 and 35). Two such reserves were adjacent to the west side of Mennonite settlements in Waterloo and Woolwich townships. Present-day Wilmot Township was a Crown Reserve for Lincoln County (known as the Lincoln Reserve) while present-day Wellesley and Peel Townships were a Clergy Reserve for the Six Nations lands. Reserves caused a great deal of dissatisfaction among the settlers in general, but those large blocks of unsettled lands next to the Mennonite settlements were particularly annoying to that group of people.

After Christian Nafziger's arrival, a "committee" of Canadian Mennonites drafted a petition, which was dated August 30, 1822.² In this petition, Jacob Moyer (Bishop) and Isaac Wismer of the township of Clinton (Niagara Peninsula) and Jacob Erb of the Township of Waterloo requested that the government set apart, for the "sects called Menonist, Tunkers, and Quakers, about one hundred thousand acres adjoining the Townships of Waterloo and Woolwich". Since the entire Crown Reserve for Lincoln County was 62,000 acres in area (Armstrong: 1985, 148) and what was later the German Block occupied only the central part of this, the request for 100,000 acres probably indicates that the petitioners hoped for the opening up of the Clergy Reserve for the Six Nations lands, as well.

With this petition in hand, two or three of the Mennonites accompanied Christian Nafziger to Niagara, where government was temporarily meeting. Nafziger presented his story to the Executive Council on September 4, 1822.³ The Council's response was somewhat vague, encouraging foreign Protestant settlers, but

giving no pledge for specific lands. A meeting with Lieutenant-Governor Sir Peregrine Maitland several days later may have been more reassuring.⁴

Not having received complete satisfaction from the king's representative in Upper Canada, Nafziger returned to Europe via London in order to obtain a promise of land from the colonial office. According to tradition, he also had an audience with the king—who would have been King George IV.⁵ This episode is not inconsistent with Nafziger's personality and background. Many European Mennonites, including the Amish Mennonites, were used to dealing directly with nobles and rulers such as Maximilian of Bavaria, whose lands they frequently leased and worked.

While Nafziger was back in Europe, preparing to migrate with his family and encouraging others to do so as well, the Mennonites in Upper Canada continued negotiations with the government. Their petition of August 30, 1822, had indicated their preference for land adjoining Waterloo "as it is immediately near their brethren of the same Persuasion," but the response of the government to this petition, though not entirely negative, was not what had been hoped for by the Mennonite applicants. The lieutenant governor did not intervene in the matter of location, but indicated to the Executive Council that he would concur "in any recommendations in their [the petitioners'] favor which the Committee may feel disposed to make."⁶ It is unlikely that either Maitland or the Council fully appreciated the wish of the Mennonites to settle near each other. On October 16, 1822, the Council recommended that the Townships of Proton and Melancthon be kept open (reserved) for eighteen months from this date. Proton Township, in the present Grey County, and Melancthon, in the present Dufferin County, lay further to the north. The Council apparently hoped to persuade the German settlers to open up the lands comprising the headwaters of the Grand River (Good: 1994, 261-71).

Two Mennonites and a Quaker returned with another petition in January, 1823.⁷

Ontario Mennonite History is published semi-annually by the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario, Conrad Grebel 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.

Editor: Reg Good

Editorial Committee: Linda Huebert Hecht, Lorraine Roth, Herbert Enns

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 College, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3G6 TEL. (519) 885-0220, FAX (519) 885-0014

They noted that they had received the communication informing them that the Townships of Proton and Melancthon had been set aside for them; they observed, however, that settlement of those townships would be slow in its progress for several years, because of the great expense and labour required to open roads from Waterloo, crossing large swamps, etc. They renewed their request for a township closer to Waterloo, and mentioned again that they were especially

of the uncertainties in these negotiations reached Christian Nafziger in Europe; if he did hear about them, he was not deterred from encouraging emigration. He had, after all, received the personal assurances of "His Royal Highness!"⁸

On February 4, 1824, another petition from Jacob Erb and others was received by Lieutenant-Governor Maitland, reminding him that in 1822 he had promised to recommend that grants of 50 acres should be made on roads to be laid

remainder of the lot – that is, the other 150 acres – could then be purchased at a "reasonable" price, initially twelve shillings six pence per acre (sometimes stated in dollars as \$2.50). What constituted a "reasonable" price, however, was destined to be a bone of contention.

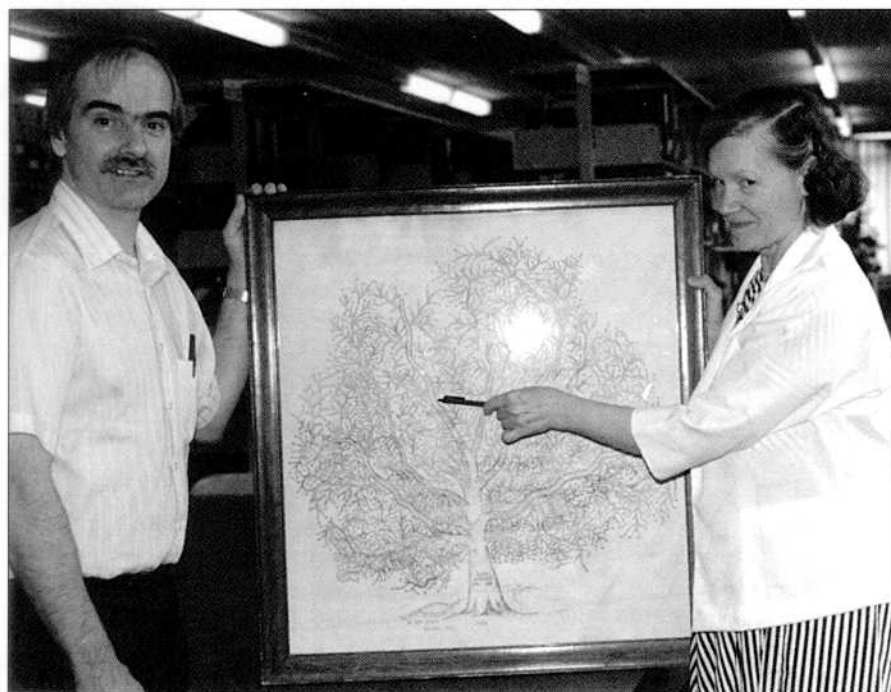
During the next several years Amish Mennonites and other immigrants continued to arrive. Residing temporarily in Waterloo, they began to clear their lots and build their cabins. Many of them had to work for the farmers in Waterloo in order to earn cash needed to pay the survey fees and other expenses, thus delaying work on their lots in the new settlement. The Amish Mennonites, the largest single contingent, came from several locations in Europe. Among them were the following names: Bender, Boshart, Brenneman, Erb, Farni, Gingerich, Goldschmidt, Honderich, Jutzi, Lichti, Nafziger, Oesch, Ropp/Rupp, Roth, Schwartzentruber, Steinmann, and Zehr.

A number of Mennonites from Waterloo also laid claim to lots, but several of them were in no hurry to perform their settling duties, also retarding the development of the settlement. Among these claimants were Biehn/Bean, Bowman, Cressman, Detweiler, Eby, Erb, Schantz, and Schneider. Yet another group of claimants were the Boesiger, Christner, Geiger, and Steiner families, who came from France, but were also Mennonite, rather than Amish Mennonite. Many related families settled in Allen and Putnam Counties (Bluffton and Pandora), Ohio (Gratz: 1953, 147).

There were also a number of claimants from a wide variety of religious backgrounds who found their way into the new settlement. Among these one finds the following names: Bettschen, Davis, Hamacher, Strome, and Wildfong.

The settlement of Wilmot turned out to involve a number of difficulties in addition to the relative poverty of the settlers and the hard work required to clear the land. The principal one was the result of the German Block having been turned over to King's College as part of its endowment. King's College, the forerunner of the University of Toronto, had received its charter in 1827. As an endowment, it was granted almost 226,000 acres of leased Crown Lands (Craig: 1963, 184). The proceeds were to be used for the support and growth of the college.

The German Block was transferred to the College on January 3, 1828. In August of the same year, the settlers received a communication from the Bursar of King's College, stating the terms under the new ownership. Due to the special arrangement made by the government with the German



Sam Steiner (left) and Ann Hilty (right) examine a copy of the Daniel Steiner family tree by Sam Geiger, 1906. Ann points to a branch of this family which settled in Wilmot Township.

interested in lands directly west of Waterloo. We may note that the writers of this carefully worded petition did not actually turn down the offer of the townships in the north, just in case these would be the only ones they could obtain.

The petitioners on this occasion brought forward another factor that led them to ask for lands near Waterloo: these Reserve lands, lying in a "wild" state, were a source of annoyance to the inhabitants of Waterloo and Woolwich Townships because they are "a great harbor for Wolves and other beasts of prey, frequently making depredations on our...Cattle, Sheep, and Hogs, especially Sheep – an animal of primary importance to us...."

The Executive Council, however, did not recommend for the time being a reserve for German settlers other than Proton and Melancthon, and asked for a year's time before making a decision on lands west of Waterloo. The possibility of leasing Reserves was mentioned.

We do not know whether or not news

out through the block of Crown Reserves.⁹ There were now, said the petitioners, "a great number of Persons ready to settle on said Roads". On this occasion, the petitioners were successful. Maitland brought to the attention of the Council a letter from the Colonial Office in London authorizing the opening of roads through the Reserve.¹⁰ The Council agreed to the terms proposed,¹¹ and shortly thereafter the Reserve was surveyed in preparation for settlement.

Three parallel roads were surveyed from Waterloo—one west from Erbs Mills, another one from Schneiders (or Snyders) Mills, and the third from Bliehms (or Bleams) Mills. The settlers called these "Oberstrasse," "Mittelstrasse," and "Unterstrasse." Each full-size lot was 200 acres in area. Each settler who fulfilled the settling duties was to receive 50 acres free, paying only the Patent and survey fees. The settling duties consisted of opening the road in front of the lot, clearing ten acres of land and constructing a house of sufficient size. The

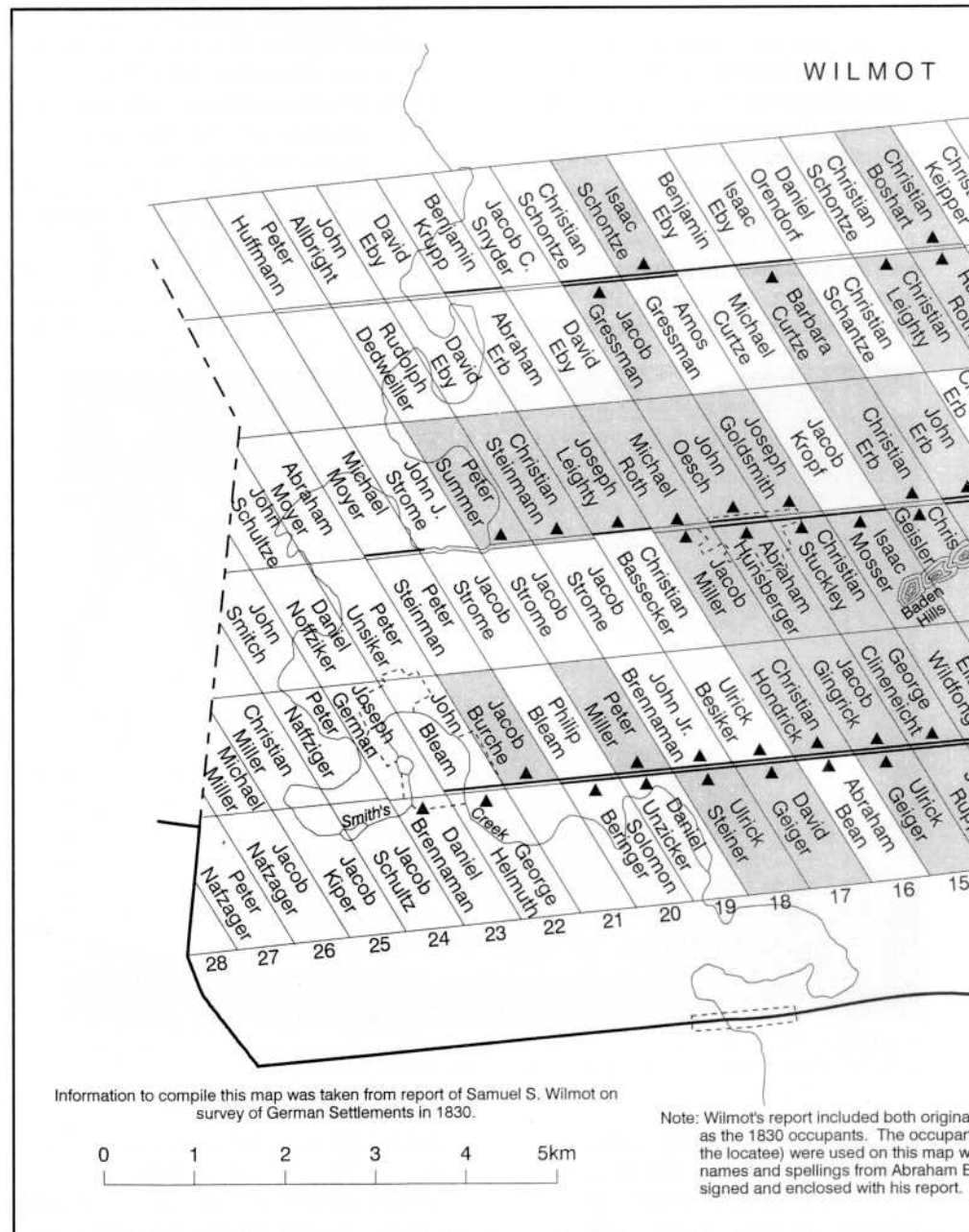
settlers, they would be granted the privilege of purchasing their lands at twenty shillings (or four dollars) per acre.¹²

A delegation of settlers immediately headed for Government House at York. They left a letter written in German, dated August 25, 1828, probably composed by Peter Nafziger, "as Elder Minister of the said congregation," and also signed by Christian Boesiger (a recent Mennonite immigrant from France), Christian Erb (a Waterloo Mennonite), and Christian Nafziger (the Amish Mennonite leader of the migration). The letter opened with the statement that Christian Nafziger had petitioned "The Royal British Government" and was granted by "His Royal Highness" the Township of Wilmot. It then went on to deplore the new terms stated by the college; that if they did not buy the 150 acres at four dollars per acre, they would also lose the right to a patent for the 50 acres. The writers claimed that this price and these terms were out of the reach of the settlers, and unless they were moderated, the settlers would have to abandon their land.¹³

The letter was later translated by the deputy provincial land surveyor, John Goessman, who originally surveyed the German Block. Goessman added his own comments, saying that some of the settlers were about to begin making preparations to leave, but he had "persuaded them not to leave their habitations – and never to mistrust the British Government –."¹⁴

A much longer letter, written in English by a lawyer or scribe for Christian Erb and Christian Nafziger as representatives of the group, presented in greater detail the complaints of the settlers. The meetings of Nafziger with the lieutenant-governor and with the colonial office are recounted. With the assurances received from these officials, they wrote, Nafziger "proceeded to Germany to carry these glad tidings to many of his poor Countrymen; some of whom were ready to emigrate, and others are yearly making their best exertions to follow." They argue that the price now asked for the land is even higher than "the price current in the country", they raise again the possibility that numerous settlers "may be obliged to leave their adopted homes", and, finally, remind His Excellency that "poor German families have left their country and their friends, confiding as all nations do, in the honor of the British Government."¹⁵

As Lieutenant-Governor Maitland retired from the office not long after these petitions reached him, the matter was left for resolution to his successor, Sir John Colborne. Colborne, after making enquiries of the Commissioner of Crown



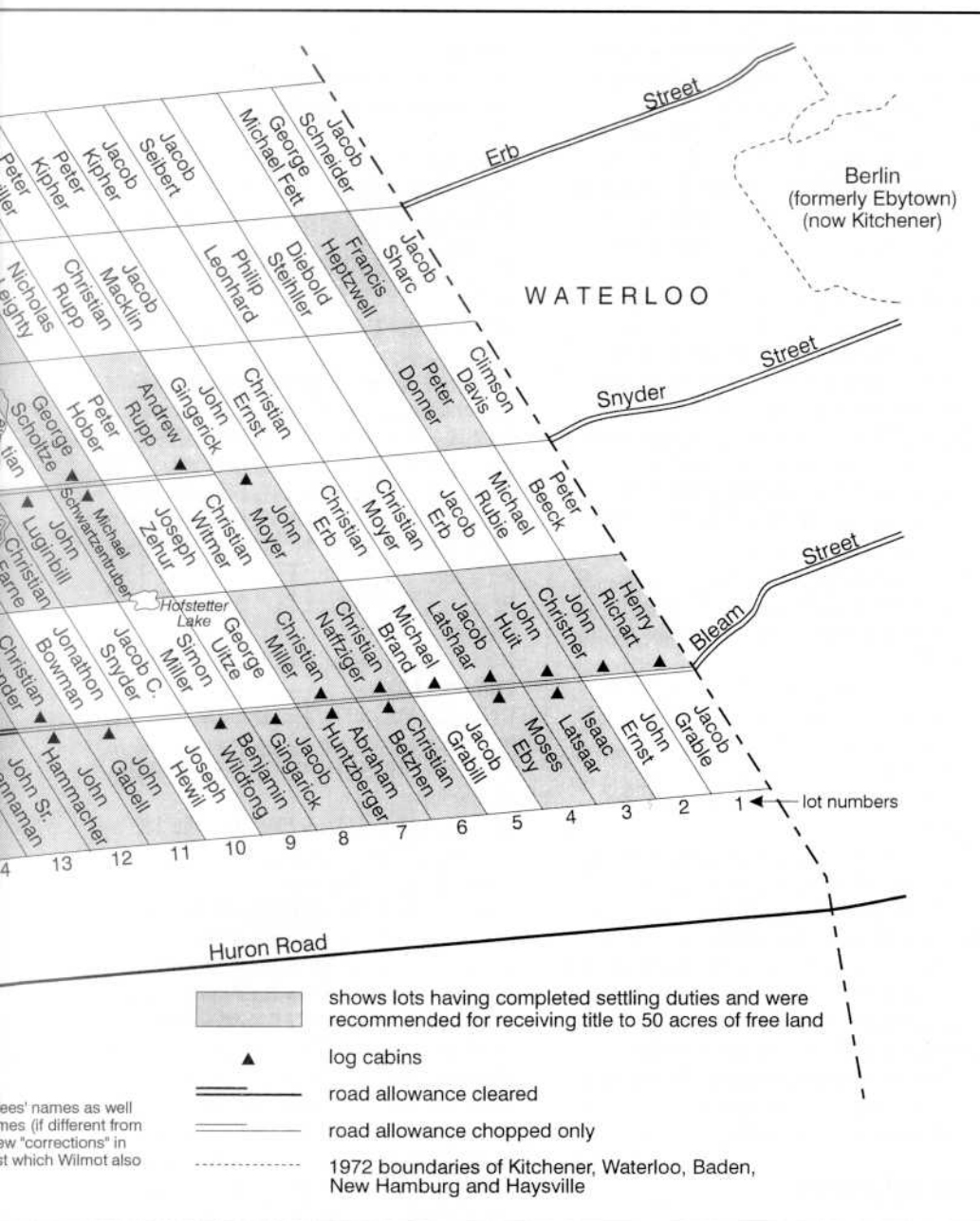
The German Block in 1830.

Lands, notified the College Council that he found the claims of the German petitioners to be valid – claims, he added, that he thought were "totally forgotten at the time the land in Wilmot was made over to the College Council for the support of the University."¹⁶

Before making a decision regarding the claims of the settlers, the Executive Council engaged Deputy-Surveyor Samuel Street Wilmot to make an actual inspection of the settlement. Wilmot filed his report on February 11, 1830. In addition to a detailed list of the settlers, their claims, and their improvements (or lack of them), he pointed out some of the difficulties faced by the settlers and recommended clemency. He supported the contention of the settlers that clearing and

cultivating enough land to support their families required all their effort during the first few years of settlement. He indicated that the settlers in Wilmot were distressed that the College had set the price of land at 20 shillings, instead of the twelve shillings six pence that they had been promised; he recommended that the original price be adhered to.¹⁷

On March 12, 1830, the Executive Council, having taken into consideration Wilmot's report and the lieutenant-governor's recommendation in favour of the settlers, stated that patents would be issued to those who had established their claims and that the College would sell the additional 150 acres of land attached to the lots of actual settlers for twelve shillings six pence per acre.¹⁸ This decision, most



Based on *Sesquicentennial* (1972: 26-27).

welcome in some respects, left undecided the fate of those who had not completed the settling duties at the time of Wilmot's report.

In further discussions on July 5, 1830, the Executive Council maintained that the settlers had neglected "to carry into effect their proposal in its true spirit" – that is, they had not fulfilled all the duties stipulated in the agreement.¹⁹ The chief problem, apparently, in the eyes of the Council, was that some settlers had cleared space for the road while others, their neighbours, had not; obviously, no actual road existed until all settlers on any one line of lots had cleared and prepared the space. Some of the settlers, having different priorities than the government, had built houses before clearing the road.

And, for the actual settlers, matters were made more difficult by several speculators, such as the Erbs and Ebys, some of whom made no attempt at road clearance.²⁰

The Council stated that the delay of these last-mentioned settlers was "unreasonable". "Granting such an indulgence to those who are actually resident is going about as far as it is proper to go," said the Council. "With respect to all those Lots which Mr. Wilmot found to be unoccupied in February 1830, the Council considers that there is no longer any claim upon the Government in respect to them...."²¹ As one might expect, this opinion of the Council brought forth yet another petition, praying for an extension of time, from 36 worried settlers in

Wilmot.²² The petitioners said that they were not aware of any time fixed for performing their settlement duties, that they have made many improvements since Wilmot's inspection in February, and that they are "very desirous to have said lands to live upon".

In September of 1830, the government did order that all of the settlers be allowed to purchase at twelve shillings six pence per acre.²³ The difficulties, however, continued. It took a great deal of correspondence appealing to the "promises held out by Government to Christian Nafziger....and others' until the deeds both for the fifty acres of free land [and] for the remaining purchased acreage were received."²⁴

No doubt, this fracas with the College – in addition to the cold weather mentioned in some stories – influenced some of the settlers to move to Ohio (Smith: 1983, 58). Bishop Peter Nafziger, who became known as the "Apostle," and Joseph Goldschmidt, who had been ordained a minister in the Wilmot settlement, were the most notable among these (Mennonite Encyclopedia, s.v. "Goldsmith, Joseph;" Kauffman: 1937, 259).

In the century and a half since the events related above took place, the descendants of these people have prospered in Ontario. Their contribution to the agricultural development of western Ontario far outweighs, even perhaps trivializes, the slowness of the first generation in the construction of roads and the clearing of the land. Their group memory has dealt generously with the government of Upper Canada; although we find mention of difficulties in obtaining deeds and some recollection of dealings with a college in Toronto, these occupy a small portion of their history as presented by themselves. All accounts of their past take instead as their key note one event: in the year 1822 Christian Nafziger, a poor farmer from Bavaria, paid a visit to the lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada and to the "King" of England.

Ann Hilty is librarian at the Mennonite Historical Library, Bluffton College, Bluffton, Ohio. She received her M.L.S. at the University of Toronto.

Lorraine Roth is an independent scholar based in Waterloo, who is engaged in documenting the Amish Mennonite families who settled in Canada from the 1820s to the 1850s. She is preparing a source book of the settlement of the German Block in Wilmot Township, to be published by the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario in 1997.

Notes:

(For complete references, see bibliography).

- 1 NAC, RG1, L1, Land Book "L", pp.262-63, Executive Council Minute, 4 September 1822, tells Christian "Gnoffenker"s story; UTA, Wilmot, file unit 1, petition of settlers in Wilmot Township, 25 August 1828, German original and John Goessman's translation and comments; NAC RG1, L3, "G" Bundle, Vol. 15, No. 42, pp.kkk-mmm, petition of Christian Nafziger, 25 August 1828; Canada Museum (Waterloo Township, Upper Canada newspaper), May 6, 1836 obituary of Christian Nafziger, translated from German in Guth (1995: 312 and 313). The story of Christian Nafziger, as recounted in his obituary, has been paraphrased many times in subsequent published accounts of the settlement of the German Block in Wilmot Township.
- 2 UTA, Wilmot, file unit 1, petition E13, No.19; NAC, RG1, L1, Land Book "L", 1821-24, p.278.
- 3 NAC, RG1, L1, Land Book "L", 1821-24, pp.261-63.
- 4 UTA, Wilmot, file unit 1 an undated (1828) letter. See note (15).
- 5 See note (1); NAC, RG5, A1, Vol.91, pp.50557-60, translation of a letter from Peter Nafziger and others to John Goessman, dated 16 November 1828, which Goessman translated and forwarded with a cover letter to John Colborne. In his cover letter Goessman stated that Christian Nafziger had applied to the Duke of York.
- 6 UTA, Wilmot, file unit 1, letter dated 14 October 1822, attached to petition E13, No.19. See note (2).
- 7 UTA, Wilmot, file unit 1, petition E13, No. 27, dated 14 Jan. 1823. It included the signature of Peter Lossing, a Quaker from Norwich Township in Oxford County, interested in land settlement.
- 8 See note (1).
- 9 UTA, Wilmot, file unit 1, petition E13, No.42.
- 10 UTA, Wilmot, file unit 1, Extract of letter from Earl Bathurst, dated 12 October 1822, attached to petition of February 4, 1824.
- 11 UTA, Wilmot, file unit 1, Council's response to petition of February 4, 1824; NAC, RG1, L1, Land Book "L", 1821-24, p.559; NAC, G Bundle 15, No 42a-b.
- 12 NAC, G Bundle 15, No. 42vvv, letter from Jos. Wells, Bursar of King's College to German settlers in Wilmot, dated 5 August 1828.
- 13 UTA, Wilmot (Sheet 6): Letter in

- German dated 25 August 1828; NAC, G Bundle 15, No. 42kkk-mmm.
- 14 Ibid., Goessman's comments to the letter of 25 August 1828; NAC, G Bundle 15, No. 42mmm.
- 15 UTA, Wilmot, file unit 1, letter to the lieutenant governor from Christian Erb and Christian Nafziger, undated, but assumed to be August or September, 1828.
- 16 UTA, Wilmot, file unit 1, letter from the lieutenant governor's office to the College Council, 27 October 1829; NAC, RG1, L3, Vol. 208a, G Bundle (1826-1829) 15, No. 42bb-cc .
- 17 UTA, Wilmot, file unit 2, Samuel Street Wilmot's Surveyor's Report of February 11, 1830; PAO, MS 658; NAC, G Bundle 15 (1826-1829), No. 42,t-v
- 18 NAC RG1, L1, Land Book "O", p. 199; Minute of Council, 12 March 1830, reproduced in Sesquicentennial, p.25.
- 19 UTA, Wilmot, file unit 2, Report of Council, 5 July 1830; NAC, RG1, L3, Vol. 531 (1829-31), No. 35.
- 20 Wilmot's report, see note (17).
- 21 Report of Council, 5 July 1830, see note (19).
- 22 UTA, Wilmot, file unit 1, petition dated 15 July 1830; NAC, RG1, L3, Vol. 178, "E" Bundle 16, pp. 19-19c, 19f, 19o-q.
- 23 UTA, Wilmot, file unit 1, Minute of Council, 2 September 1830 concerning petition of 15 July; NAC, RG1, L1, Land Book "O" (1829-31), p.311.
- 24 PAO, RG1 C-IV - Wilmot, Misc. Wilmot Township Papers, #1-44, Box 535 - Folder 11; quoted in Sesquicentennial, p.23.

BIBLIOGRAPHY**Archival Sources:**

University of Toronto Archives (UTA):
Records of the Office of the Chief Accountant, A68-0010/047, A68-0010/049, A68-0010/050, Wilmot, Papers relating to German Settlers. There is also some miscellaneous correspondence alphabetically (author) and by year (beginning in 1851) in Group A, A68-0010/001ff. The documents used in this article are all from A68-0010/050 (Box 50) which contains three file folders (file units).

Provincial Archives of Ontario (PAO):
Wilmot [Township] Map, C-47
Land Registry Record, MS 658, Reel #522*
Abraham Nelles Papers, F 543, MS 502
Crown Lands:

RG1, CB-1, Survey Diaries and Field Notes
RG1, C-IV - Wilmot, Misc. Wilmot Township Papers, #1-44, Box 535, Folder 11
RG1, A-II-1, Vol. 1, Report Book Crown Lands Department, 1795-1799
RG1, A-I-1, letters received, surveyor general
RG1, A-I-2, Surveyor general's letter-books
MS 30 R#8 - Book 40, Vol. 1, pp. 262-264

National Archives of Canada (NAC):

Upper Canada Land Petitions:
RG1, L1, Land Book "J", Film #C-99
RG1, L1, Land Book "L", Film #C-103**
RG1, L1, Land Book "N", Film #C-104**
RG1, L1, Land Book "O", Film #C-104**
RG1, L3, Vol. 178, "E" Bundle 16, Film #C-1889
RG1, L3, Vol. 208(a), "G" Bundle 15, Film #C-2032*
RG1, L3, Vol. 340, "M" Bundle 12, #83, Film #C-2201
RG1, L3, Vol. 527, "W" Bundle 11, Film #C-2953
RG1, L3, Vol. 531, "W" Bundle 16, Film #C-2956*
RG1, L3, Vol. 533(a), "W" Bundle 18, Film #C-2958
Upper Canada Sundries:
RG5, A1, Vol. 45, Film #C-4604
RG5, A1, Vol. 71, Film #C-4614
RG5, A1, Vol. 90-91, Film #C-6866
RG5, A1, Vol. 94, 96, 97, Film #C-6868
RG5, A1, Vol. 98, 99, Film #C-6869
RG5, A1, Vol.108, Film #C-6873
RG5, A1, Vol. 114, Film #C-6874
RG5, A1, Vol. 137, Film #C-6881
*Copies of these microfilms are in the Conrad Grebel Library and Archives.
**Copies of these microfilms are in the the University of Waterloo Library.
(Government Records Department)

Census Records:

Gore District Census, Reels 4 & 5
These reels contain census and assessment records for Waterloo Township for the years 1816 to 1840, with some years missing. Records for Wilmot Township cover 1831 to 1840 with a few years missing. All Wilmot records are on microfilm Reel 5, but some Wilmot settlers were earlier found in Waterloo Township. Copies of these microfilms are in the Grace Schmidt Room at the Kitchener Public Library.

National, every person, census records have been made since 1851. These are available on microfilm up until 1891. The Grace Schmidt Room at the Kitchener Public Library and the Wilfrid Laurier

University Library have complete sets for Waterloo County. Conrad Grebel College Library and Archives has copies for the years 1851, 1861, and 1871.

Published Sources:

Armstrong, Fred H. *Handbook of Upper Canadian Chronology and Territorial Legislation*. Rev. ed. Toronto and London: Dundurn Press, 1985.

Burkholder, L. J. *A Brief History of the Mennonites in Ontario*. [Toronto]: Mennonite Conference of Ontario, 1935; reprinted in 1986 by the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario. Chapter X, by Jacob R. Bender, is entitled "The Amish Mennonites in Canada."

Choquette, Robert, et al. *Ontario, An Informal History of the Land and its People*. Toronto: Ontario Ministry of Education, [1984].

Craig, Gerald M. *Upper Canada, The Formative Years, 1784-1841*. The Canadian Centenary Series. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1963; reprint 1993.

Dictionary of Canadian Biography. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966-1990, I-XII (s.v. "Goessman, John", "Nafziger, Christian", and "Lossing, Peter").

Gates, Lilian F. *Land Policies of Upper Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968.

Gingerich, Orland. *The Amish of Canada*. Waterloo: Conrad Press, 1972.

Good, E. Reginald. *Frontier Community to Urban Congregation, First Mennonite Church, Kitchener 1813-1988*. Kitchener: First Mennonite Church, 1988.

Chapter 4 is particularly relevant to the Amish story.

Crown-Directed Colonization of Six Nations and Metis Land Reserves in Canada. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Saskatchewan, 1994.

Good discusses the offer of Indian lands at the headwaters of the Grand River (the townships of Proton and Melancthon) to the Mennonites, including the Amish, on pp. 261-71.

Gratz, Delbert L. *Bernese Anabaptists And Their American Descendants*. Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1953.

Mennonite Cyclopedic Dictionary . . ., Daniel Kauffman, editor. Scottdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1937.

The Mennonite Encyclopedia. Hillsboro and Newton, Kansas, and Scottdale, Pa., 1955-1959.

Sesquicentennial of the Amish Mennonites of Ontario: 150 Years. Edited by Dorothy Sauder with historical survey by Lorraine Roth. [Waterloo]: Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario and Western Ontario Mennonite Conference, 1972.

Smith, Willard H. Smith. *Mennonites in Illinois*. Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1983.

People and Projects

The position of associate archivist was terminated at *Conrad Grebel College*, effective July 1996. **Reg Good**, who held the position since January 1991, is now seeking employment in the areas of historical research and archival management.

Catherine Schlegel gave a paper on "*AM Fire and Storm (Insurance): A Case Study from an Amish Mennonite Settlement in Canada*" at an academic conference on Church-Related Institutions in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, 13-15 June 1996.

An article by **Reg Good** on "*The Alleged Rape of Elisabeth Johnson*," Waterloo Historical Society Annual Report 83(1995), pp.22-28 includes a petition from fifty-one inhabitants of the Township of Wilmot, dated November 14th 1840, which contains many Mennonite and Amish Mennonite names. The petition was addressed to the Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Upper Canada, Sir George Arthur, praying for the apprehension of an alleged rapist "named Jacob Cak-ke-sep, also known by the name of 'Cook-a-din-na,' and supposed to belong to the Chippawa tribe." It resulted in a Proclamation issued by Arthur,

offering to pay a reward of twenty-five pounds "to any person or persons, who shall cause the said Ka-Ka-Sep, otherwise called Jacob Cook-a-din-na, to be taken into custody, and brought before one of our Justice of the Peace, to answer for the said crime."

The Ontario Historical Society Fred Landon Award for the best regional history in the last three years was presented to **Elizabeth Bloomfield** for her book, *Waterloo Township Through Two Centuries*. The award was made in Ottawa at the Ontario Historical Society annual meeting on May 2, 1996. This award-winning history is now out of print.

The Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario is sponsoring a promotional dinner for **Theodore Regehr's** new book, *Mennonites in Canada, 1939-1970: A People Transformed* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996). It will be held at Breslau Mennonite Church on 7 December 1996.

Marlene Epp has completed her doctoral dissertation at the University of Toronto entitled "*Women Without Men*." It recounts stories of women who emigrated from Russia in the 1940s.

The editor of *Ontario Mennonite History* can now be reached at the following e-mail address: mhs@watserv1.uwaterloo.ca.

The 1996 winners of the Ontario Mennonite Historical Society's **J. Winfield Fretz Award** for studies in Ontario Mennonite history are Catherine Schlegel (first place, Undergraduate/Local History Level), Andrew Bean (second place, Undergraduate/Local History Level), Krista Taves (first place, Graduate Level), Sherri Martin (second place, Graduate Level). **Catherine Schlegel** described "The Women of East Zorra: An Alternative View of the Canadian Amishwoman's Experience." **Andrew Bean** analyzed "Diaries as a Source of Swiss Mennonite Social History in Waterloo County, 1885-1935." **Krista Taves** wrote about "Dividing the Righteous: Soviet Mennonites as Cultural Icons in the Canadian Russian Mennonite Narrative, 1923-1938." **Sherri Martin** studied "Footwashing at the Floradale Mennonite Church: A Changing Ritual or Continuous Pattern?"

Book Review

by Orland Gingerich

Proceedings of the Conference: Tradition and Transition, An Amish Mennonite Heritage of Obedience, 1693-1993, edited by Gordon Oyer. Metamora, Illinois: Illinois Mennonite and Genealogical Society, 1994.

The volume begins with two brief reports of conferences also held celebrating the three hundredth anniversary of the beginning of the Amish church. One in Elizabethtown College, USA, the other in Saint-Marie-aux-Mines, France. This is followed by a chapter outlining some of the complex issues and tensions among Swiss Mennonites which led to the division among the Swiss, indicating that the Amish were not solely the cause.

The drama by Steve Nolt, "Keeping House", attempts to portray what was a major factor in the dispute. Keeping the church pure from entanglements with the world. This is followed by a chapter on the "Swiss Brethren (Mennonite) Responses to the 1693 Schism", in which Leonard Gross traces some of the Dutch Mennonite influence among the Swiss who had migrated to Alsace and South Germany as one of the root causes of the differences. On the other hand, more recent research indicates that while Jacob Ammann was the original instigator of the division, only

a few years later the moderating influence of Uli Ammann and others was responsible for an Amish emphasis on congregational vs. ministerial authority very evident to this day in Amish church life.

A paper by Neil Ann Stuckey Levine traces the further development and consistency of the Amish Ordnung as left on record by the Essingen Amish Conference of 1779. Included in this chapter are the names of people attending, congregations represented and maps. The Stuckey paper is followed by the input by four people outlining stories of migrations, both in Europe and North America. A change of format is recorded next with an attempted "simulation" of an Amish Mennonite conference (ministers meeting) held in Illinois in 1865. While an interesting exercise, I am not certain we portrayed the nuances of that event very well. Next is a somewhat fictional account presented by Jeff Gundy of a Joseph Yoder, school teacher, farmer and critic of Amish preaching and ideas, finally excommunicated mainly for his universalism and emphasis on the love of God.

Also recorded in the account is a tour of three Amish settlements in Central Illinois, with accompanying comments

along the way and a map and chart detailing the various Amish/Mennonite groups. The final paper entitled "Mennonites' Amish heritage: Imprint or Burden?" by Theron Schlabach emphasizes the highly variegated Amish and the fact that most of the Mennonites in the midwest and western states are of Amish descent. Schlabach considers this heritage an imprint, not a burden.

In a closing meditation given at the conference Robert S. Kreider shares some musings as a result of his experience of the event. In twelve brief paragraphs ending with a note of gratitude for the Amish, their contribution and our need to learn from them concludes the proceedings.

From this reviewer's point of view, no doubt biased, is that the conference highlighted the fact that past histories of the so-called Amish division have tended to be lopsided, similar to the histories of the Reformation which tended to put all Anabaptists in a rather bad light. The Amish mystique, the fact that the Amish have been both at the forefront of change as well as the most traditional remains a fact. One problem the conference did not resolve is when does one cease to be Amish.

Book Notes

Sam Steiner, author of *Lead Us On: A History of Rockway Mennonite Collegiate* (Kitchener: Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, 1995), 372 pp. traces the history of Rockway from its inception in 1945 to 1995.

Kathleen Kenna, author of *A People Apart* (Markham: Thomas Allen and Son, 1995), 64 pp. documents contemporary Old Order Mennonite life in Waterloo County, Ontario. Profusely illustrated with photos by Andrew Stawicki.

Paul Toews, editor of *Bridging Troubled Waters: The Mennonite Brethren at Mid-Twentieth Century*

(Hillsboro, Kansas: Kindred Productions, 1995), 296 pp. explores change and modernization that affected Mennonite Brethren during the second world war and its aftermath (1940-1960). Contributors include T.D. Regehr, John Redekop, Calvin Redekop and Gloria Neufeld Redekop.

Bruce Emerson Hill, author of *The Grand River Navigation Company* (Brantford: Brant Historical Society Brant Historical Publications, 1994), 134 pp. describes the use of Six Nations' Funds for financing the construction of locks and dams along the Grand River in the early 1800s. Abraham Erb, a Mennonite from

Waterloo Township, and Peter Lossing, a Quaker from Norwich Township, were among the early proponents of the project.

Donald B. Kraybill and Steven M. Nolt, authors of *Amish Enterprise: From Plows to Profits* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 300 pp. trace the rise and impact of Amish micro-enterprises. They offer surprising insights into the cultural transformation of a plain people who are becoming increasingly entangled in the economic web of modern life.