

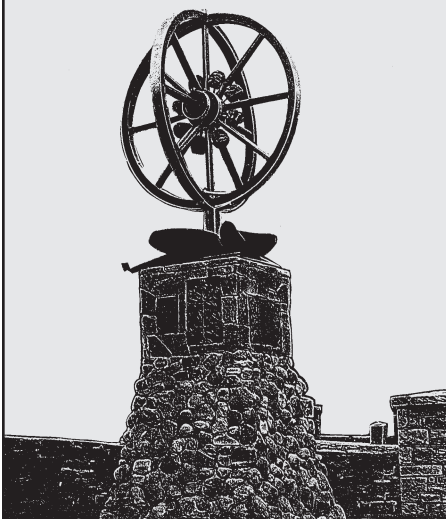
Ontario Mennonite History

THE
NEWSLETTER
FOR THE
MENNONITE
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY OF
ONTARIO

VOLUME XXXVII
NUMBER 2

•
OCTOBER, 2019

•
ISSN 1192-5515



Growing up on the Community Farm of the Brethren

By John Entz and Christina Entz Moss

John Entz reflects on his childhood experiences, noting that it is a “subjective look, using the perspective of a child with some later adult reflection.” It was first published on the Anabaptist Historians website.

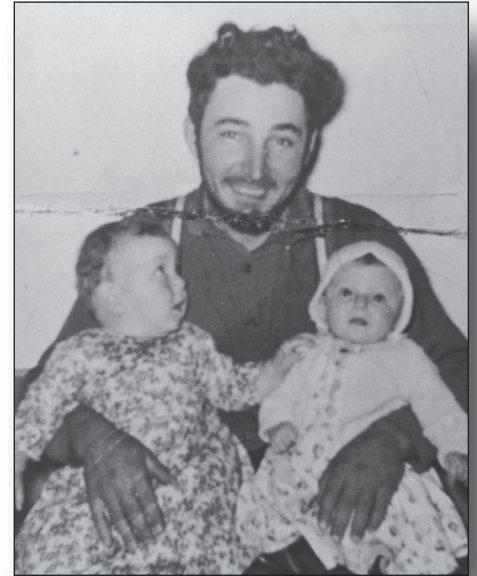
Introduction

by Christina Moss

My father turned 60 last year and so we sorted through old photos in order to create a slideshow for his surprise party. In sorting through the few photos we were able to gather from his childhood, I was reminded again of how foreign his upbringing would have been to many of his contemporaries. My father, John Entz, was born in Big Bend Colony, a Lehrerleut Hutterite Colony near Cardston, Alberta, and he spent most of his growing-up years in the Hutterite-adjacent Community Farm of the Brethren near Kitchener, Ontario.¹

The Community Farm of the Brethren was founded in 1939 (and established at its present location in 1941) by Julius Kubassek, a Hungarian communist turned Nazarean, who became fascinated with the Hutterite communal lifestyle and commitment to apostolic Christianity. He and his followers lived for a year in West Raley Hutterite Colony in Alberta before leaving (with material support from the Hutterites) to form a new community in Ontario.² Although the Hutterites formally severed ties with Kubassek in 1950, my father and his family, who joined the Community Farm of the Brethren a decade later, continued to view themselves as part of the Hutterite tradition. The Community Farm was the subject of a 1967 CBC documentary by filmmaker Chip Young entitled *A Song for Brother Julius*.

The Hutterites, like their Anabaptist counterparts, the Amish and Old Order Mennonites, are a fairly separatist group, although their degree of engagement with the world, uses of technology, acceptable education levels, and other such details vary from colony to colony. Unlike the Amish and Old Order Mennonites, the Hutterites practice a form of Christian



My father (left) with his Uncle George and his cousin Helen in Big Bend Colony in Alberta. The photo was taken around 1959, before my father and most of his family left for the Community Farm of the Brethren in Ontario.

In Hutterite colonies, all infants under the age of two wore dresses, regardless of gender.

communism; they hold lands and most goods in common as a community, they share communal meals, and they divide the labour of running a large farm amongst themselves.

The Hutterites have not generated the same level of cultural fascination as the Old Order Mennonites or, in particular, the Amish—there is no cottage industry of Hutterite romance novels—but in recent years a few memoirs, and documentaries have brought attention to aspects of Hutterite life in North America.³ In the interest of adding to this growing genre, I asked my father to share memories and reflections on his upbringing and the lessons he learned as a child about Anabaptist identity and practice.

The move from Big Bend Colony to the Community Farm of the Brethren

by John Entz

I was born into a Lehrereut Hutterite colony near Cardston, Alberta. (The Hutterites are the longest-lasting of the communal Anabaptist groups—the foundation of the movement was the description of the community of goods in the earliest church in Acts 2 and Acts 4 and 5.) Uncle John had entered into a dispute with the leadership of the colony, calling into question their faithfulness to Hutterite teachings, which resulted in his complete excommunication (*Ausschluss*). When his father and brothers (my grandfather and uncles) objected that they ought to have taken my uncle's concerns seriously instead of resorting to excommunication, they also were excommunicated, together with their wives and children.

Our family was in a slightly different position, as my mother was Uncle John's sister; she was married to a man who had not associated himself with Uncle John. My aunt Sarah was in a similar position. When Mom and Aunt Sarah were tainted by their family ties, which they refused to renounce, they were also put into *Ausschluss*, but their husbands were not. This made for a very uncomfortable situation in the colony, as there was a large segment of the colony under excommunication but refusing to leave.

At that point, my grandmother's sister and her husband, both members of a colony near Kitchener, Ontario, approached my uncles and grandfather and extended an invitation to move to Ontario. (This colony was composed mostly of people who were not from a Hutterite background—my great-aunt Elizabeth was the exception. The Hutterites basically bought the land for them in Ontario to get them out of the way.) In order to get out of a very difficult impasse, they accepted. My Dad and Uncle George, Aunt Sarah's husband, remained behind with the three oldest boys (then six and seven years old), while Mom with her daughter and

the four youngest boys (the youngest less than one month old) and Aunt Sarah with her two daughters and a few months pregnant with another child went to Ontario, to Community Farm of the Brethren.

Economic activity

Community Farm, as it was commonly known, had originally been about half-a-dozen farms with a combined area of around 1,500 acres or 7 sq. km. About a third of it was river bottom or bushland. On the remainder, after the influx from Alberta, 120 people (including close to 50 children) ran several farm-related industries.

Uncle Joe and Uncle John, together with a couple teenagers, ran the dairy barn, with a milking herd of close to 100 Holsteins. They also took care of the beef herd, mostly Holstein steers. Alex Bago, Great-Aunt Elizabeth's husband, ran the large market garden with the help of the women and school-age children. We had regular weekend chores during the school year and a daily routine six days per week in the summer from the time we were 9 or 10.

Many men worked in the normal routine of planting and harvesting crops, cutting hay, plowing, cultivating and fertilizing the land. (We used almost exclusively "natural" fertilizer from our extensive barns.) Another man was in charge of the mechanical repairs of all the machinery, with a few younger men to help him as needed.

Still another man, with help from a couple of teenagers, was responsible for the industry for which the farm was probably the best-known in the area, the large goose herd, with around 1,500 laying birds and another 10,000 or so young meat birds. During the late summer and fall, all available hands would slaughter the geese and any other meat birds (ducks, chickens, turkeys) in the large abattoir on the farm.

The meat would then be stored in a



Students at the Community Farm of the Brethren school, which ran until eighth grade. My father is seated in the middle, reading. Photo from about 1962.

massive walk-in freezer, as big as a small house with two or three large rooms. The "greaseless geese" (so called because large quantities of fat were removed during the killing process, to be used for other things, like cooking) provided the staple of the well-known stall of the Brethren at the Kitchener Farmers' Market for many years. They also sold seasonal fruits and vegetables, baked goods, pillows and comforters made from goose down and feathers, and anything they could think of that would sell.

Still another man ran the massive water boiler which provided steam heat for all the buildings on the main farm, and some steam power in a few places. He also ran the massive backup generator in case of a power failure, making sure it was cleaned and fueled up in case of need. Since that was not really a full-time job, he was also responsible for the one hour of religious instruction before the school day started and another hour after the school day ended for the school-aged children.

The women mostly worked on a six-week rotation, one week in the kitchen in teams of about four or five providing the meals, one week where they baked several days to provide the farm with fresh-baked goods as well as a substantial part of the market sales, and the other four weeks doing whatever work was in season: gardening, slaughtering birds, canning, regular large-scale cleaning, as well as running



Children's mealtime at the Community Farm of the Brethren. Photo from about 1962.

their respective households.

The farm secretary, chief cook, chief baker, child-care providers (daycare was provided from a very early age by three or four young unmarried women), and the running of the salesroom for feather and down products by the wife of the farm's Chief Operating Officer were more or less permanent positions. This gives a good, though not necessarily exhaustive, idea of the daily economic running of the farm.

Religious observance and daily life

We were first and foremost a religious community, and our lives centred around religious observance. We had two preachers, a father and son, both named Fred Kurucz, though we called the older one *Nander Bacsi* (Hungarian for Uncle Fred). It was his task to look after the community's spiritual life.

The day began with a loud steam whistle calling the adults to breakfast, which began and ended with prayer.

You had better make sure you ate when you had the chance, because the second prayer signalled the end of the meal. All meals were gender-segregated, except for the preschoolers. When the men and most of the women went to their work, the children came in to eat. For adults, mealtime silence was largely habit and necessity, with children, it was enforced with corporal

punishment—you were not allowed to talk between prayers except to ask for food in the rare case when it was not within reach.

After breakfast the children went off to one hour of religious instruction before school, followed by the morning school routine. In mid-morning, the steam whistle would call all the adults who could come to a coffee break. It was still segregated, but it was the only "meal" where you could chat with your neighbours and workmates.

At noon, lunch was served to the adults first, then to the children, followed by a rest break. At one o'clock, the routine would continue, with adults going to work and children to school. At three o'clock, the steam whistle would call the adults to an afternoon coffee break, then back to work. Shortly after, school would finish for the day, followed by another hour of religious instruction for the kids. Then at five, the children would eat supper, followed by the adults just before six. After supper

and some time to clean up from the day's work, there would be a church service from seven to eight o'clock on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

The weekday church service routine was invariable: a song from the *Zion's Harp*, the sanctioned hymnbook, a lengthy sermon, a lengthy prayer on your knees (the preacher did the praying), followed by a second hymn, then dismissal.

Because Uncle Joe was the dairyman, his day began early, and he was often tired in church. He sat with his oldest son, who also worked in the dairy and struggled to stay awake, and each one had a pin with which he had to poke the other if he fell asleep. Occasionally both would fall asleep at the same time, to the great entertainment of the kids sitting nearby.

Saturday afternoon was bath time, so Sunday would find you reasonably clean and in your best clothes. After breakfast, around 9:30, the steam whistle would call all except the cooks and maybe a couple other essential workers to church. There the routine was slightly different: one song, followed by a long sermon by the younger Fred Kurucz, followed by prayer, also by Fred, followed by a second sermon by *Nander Bacsi*, long but not as long as the first, followed by a second hymn and dismissal, about 90 minutes all told. The younger Fred was the usual preacher; he was also the man in charge of the mechanical shop. *Nander Bacsi* preached more rarely, but we children liked him because his sermons were shorter and followed a fairly regular pattern.

Sunday dinner was followed by a quiet afternoon, where we were not allowed to play any games, but were expected to sit quietly and rest, and, most importantly, allow our parents to rest.

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.

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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

After supper, there was a second service, which involved one hour of singing songs from the *Zion's Harp*, or, very occasionally, a second hymnbook, called the "Red Hymnbook" because the cover was red. It had shorter songs; some songs in the *Harp* ran to 15 or 20 verses.

Religious life centered very much on the fact that we were a visual representation of the community of goods, but the day-to-day life was very bland and monotone. Of course, this description centres around the early days (basically until I was in eighth grade). There were many changes during my teen years, as we moved further away from our roots. But this was the community we moved to when we left Alberta.

Lessons learned about Anabaptist faith and identity

Our lifestyle had a lot to do with absorbing Anabaptist teaching from a Hutterite perspective. Something I struggled with for a very long time was that we saw ourselves as the true people of God. Everyone else was considered to be on a lower level, as far as holiness and Christian living were concerned. As Uncle John put it, we were the "new Israel." God had become somewhat dismissive of His first covenant people Israel, and modern Christianity in general, and had set us up as the new covenant people. From my reading of at least the early Hutterite teachings, this was often more or less implicitly assumed, if not actually explicitly taught.

Our visible communal life was, we were convinced, God's ideal for His Church. I am still convinced in my heart that this is His ideal, but not just as a visible outward expression. He intends us to "be members of one another." Two of the strongest images of the Church for us were the one-body ecclesiology most fully developed by Paul, and the family of God. And in our interdependent lifestyle and in the sharing of goods, that is what we were living out.

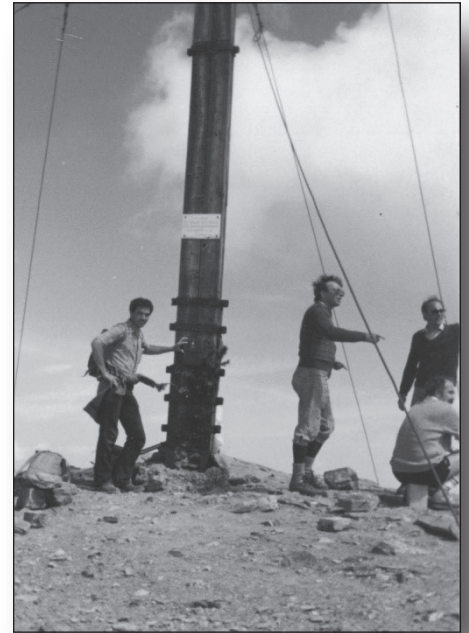
And yet, in an ironic way, we were just as individualistic as the culture around us, except our "individual" was the community we belonged to. This was

exacerbated by our isolation, both from the culture immediately around us, and our physical distance from the broader Hutterite context. And our particular community was made up of outsiders. Being part of a larger community than just our own microcosm might have mitigated our unconscious and unquestioned sense of superiority. Then again, it may have made it worse.

The other aspect of Anabaptist life among that branch of the movement was a strict devotion to pacifism. They called it non-violence, but there was some corporal punishment being practiced that went sort of over that line. We were very strict about that. I remember once playing cops and robbers behind the school, pointing a stick at other kids and yelling "bang, bang!" I was so intent on the game that I never noticed the sudden silence of the other players, which should have warned me of the presence of an adult. I was grabbed from behind and "whipped good," an ironic form of discipline for enforcing non-violence.

One of the young men from the Community, the son of the older preacher and brother of the younger one, left the farm and joined the Kitchener Police. (This was before we arrived in 1960.) He was permitted to visit his family, but they were uncomfortable with his choice. We imbibed our commitment to pacifism with our daily bread—I am still very uncomfortable holding a gun, even for hunting

Another thing we taught very strongly was that only adults could get baptized and become church members. This was so strongly ingrained that Grandma and Katie *Basel*⁴ had to get special permission from the head elders of the Hutterite Church to join a baptism class and be baptized at age 19. The usual age for girls was between 21 and 24, and for guys between 23 and 26. Some of the guys would likely have waited longer, but baptism and membership were required for marriage. That was why Grandma and Katie *Basel* jumped the gun, since baptisms were only performed once a year and they did not want to wait another year. We thought it was odd that the conservative Mennonite congregation



My father (left) on a trip to Austria in 1986, in search of his Hutterite roots.

attended by Carol Grove, my teacher for grades 6 to 8 in the farm school, regularly baptized teenagers.

We took very seriously the call to be "separated from the world." It is ironic that the word "Pharisee" means "the separated ones." In the eyes of people around us, we were the epitome of the idyllic Christian life, to the extent that CBC filmed a documentary on the Farm in 1967, but the fuse that shortly after exploded the Farm was already lit. We hid it so well from the people outside that we could even convince ourselves that the conflict was not really there.

One of the aspects of very conservative Anabaptism is that the "holy life" can easily be codified and lived entirely apart from a real relationship with God. The hunger and thirst after righteousness that Christ promised to fill cannot be filled apart from a relationship with Him. Anything outside of that quickly becomes a stagnant cistern rather than living water springing up inside us. There is real beauty in Anabaptist thought and practice, but aside from God, it rapidly dies! There are some places where it is alive and really connected with its source; if you can find a community that embodies that, latch onto it.

Conclusion

by Christina Moss

My father left the community in the early 1980s to study mathematics and education at the University of Waterloo.

Today, he works as a substitute teacher in New Brunswick and attends a Baptist church. As for the Community Farm of the Brethren, after several splits, only a very few members of the community remain, and most of my family has left.

Most of the buildings, however, are still standing, and the community still maintains some very minimal farming operations as well as the gift shop my father mentioned.

¹ For more information on Big Bend Colony, see “Big Bend Hutterite Colony (Cardston, Alberta) by David Decker and Bert Friesen in *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*. For *Lehrerleut*, see “Lehrerleut” by Harold S. Bender in GAMEO.,

² For information on the Community Farm of the Brethren, see *Hutterite Society, 2nd edition* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997) by John A. Hostetler and *The Hutterites in North America* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010) by Rod Janzen and Max Stanton.

³ Mary-Ann Kirkby, *I Am Hutterite: The Fascinating True Story of a Young Woman’s Journey to Reclaim her Heritage*, (Thomas Nelson, 2010), the 2013 BBC documentary *How to Get to Heaven with the Hutterites*, and the controversial 2012 National Geographic reality television series *American Colony: Meet the Hutterites*.

⁴ *Basel* is a Hutterite German term for Aunt. It was used to refer to mature women in Hutterite colonies.

Russlaender Centenary Committee begins its work

By Royden Loewen, interim RCC chair

The largest Mennonite immigration in Canadian history took place in 1923 and following years, when 20,000 so-called Russlaender Mennonites arrived in Canada from war-torn Soviet Union.

To commemorate this migration, the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada set up the following committee to provide leadership: Richard Thiessen and Cheryl Isaac from B.C., Ted Regehr from Alta., Jake Buhler and Judie Dyck from Sask., Ingrid Riesen, Aileen Friesen and Royden Loewen from Man., Marlene Epp and Henry Paetkau from Ont., and Luke Martin from Que.

At its inaugural meeting on Nov. 15, 2018, the Russlaender Centenary

Committee (RCC) committed itself to remember this migration in all its dimensions. Those aspects include the suffering from war and famine, the uprooting and stress-filled transplantation, the reliance on religious belief and the joy of finding a new homeland. But the committee will also consider this migration with respect to Canada in the 1920s, acknowledging that the immigrants came as settlers and thus farmed lands once the homeland of Indigenous nations. It will also recognize that other would-be immigrants—African Americans, Chinese, Jews—were not welcome at the time. Finally, the RCC will also remember those who stayed behind in the Soviet Union

and endured the terror and uprootings of the 1930s and 40s.

The RCC will oversee events in 2023 across the land, with events planned for places such as Montreal (Que.), Vineland and Kitchener-Waterloo (Ont.), Winnipeg (Man.), Rosthern (Sask.), Taber (Alta.), and Abbotsford (B.C.).

The Committee, under the leadership of Ingrid Riesen of Winnipeg, plans a special train trek from Montreal to Rosthern, with stops in Ontario and Manitoba. Talks have also been held with MCC Canada on how to use this year of celebration as a way of paying forward, with a special linked campaign for MCC Canada’s refugee program.

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

Life in the Detweiler Neighborhood in 1867

By Sam Steiner

Based on a talk given during Doors Open at Detweiler Meetinghouse on September 16, 2017.

The Roseville Community and its Mennonite connections

This part of Waterloo County in North Dumfries township was settled by the 1820s, and early landowners included Mennonite family names like Detweiler, Bricker, Clemens, Fried and Snyder, as well as non-Mennonite families like Werig, Renwick, Perrin, Becker and Tillie.¹

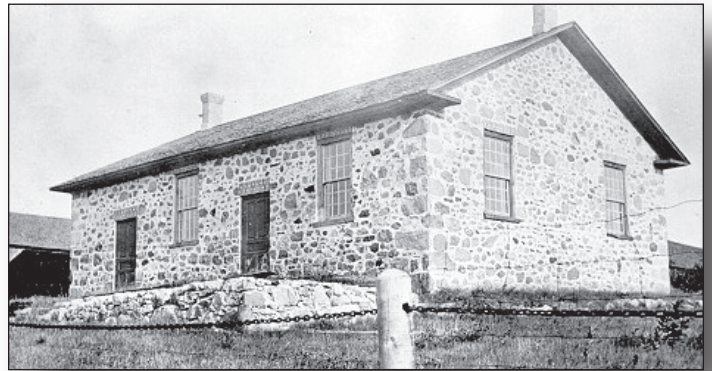
By 1867, the little village of Roseville, according to the Waterloo County Directory of that year, included about 175 persons in a total of 24 households.² Farms surrounded the village, as can be seen on the Tremaine map of Waterloo County that was created in 1861.³ This map marks the Detweiler meetinghouse as a “Menonist” church with a graveyard.

One of the few people who worked in the village was Christian Kaiser (1799-1883). He was a blacksmith and cooper, located at the northeast corner of what is now Roseville Road and Fisher-Hallman Road. He was a Lutheran who had come originally from Germany.⁴ Although some sources say he built the log house there, census records suggest he didn’t arrive in Roseville that early. He was one of the trustees of the Lutheran Church built in 1852 across the road, where the United Brethren church is now located. His son, Fred, was also a blacksmith in Roseville.⁵ Christian is said to be buried in the Detweiler Meetinghouse cemetery.

Jacob B. Clemens (1826-1900) ran the hotel in the village, on the northwest corner of Roseville Road and Fisher Hallman Road. He was the son of Henry Clemens (1802-1876) who came to Canada around 1820 and married Nancy Bricker from Blair. Jacob is listed as an innkeeper both in the 1861 and 1871 censuses. Sometime between those years he switched from being a Mennonite to Lutheran. Perhaps his trade had something to do with the switch, as Mennonites were becoming sensitive to the use of alcohol during that time. His father, Henry, who had been a deacon in the Detweiler Mennonite Church, later in life became a member of the Evangelical Association after he had a conversion experience (the Evangelical Association was a group that later became part of the United Church of Canada).⁶ Jacob is buried in the Detweiler cemetery.

Yet another entrepreneur in downtown Roseville was James Barton (1833-1885). He had a Scottish background and operated a sawmill, just east of the former United Church, and it was still operating when he died. It employed eight or nine local residents and produced a significant quantity of lumber and shingles. He identified himself as Presbyterian or Church of Scotland.⁷ James is buried in this cemetery.

Some of the other businesses in Roseville in 1867 included a cider mill, a general store, a shoemaker, a wagon maker, and a butcher. Very few of the folks who operated businesses in town



*The Detweiler meetinghouse as it appeared in 1855.
(Photo from Gameo.org)*

were Mennonites. Even those who had “Mennonite-sounding” names like Moses E. Gingrich (1822-1897), who ran the general store, were part of congregations like the Evangelical Association or United Brethren, who were known for their more emotionally satisfying religious lives.⁸

The village also built a new school building in 1867, following two earlier schools in the community. It served the community until 1973. It then became Roseville’s community centre at the intersection of Roseville Road and Fischer-Hallman Road.⁹

Most, but not all the farms surrounding the village of Roseville, were owned by Mennonites. The non-Mennonites tended to have a Scottish or English background.

David Bricker (1814-1897) lived just east of the village on a large farm. He had a family of 14 children, though not all survived to adulthood. By 1861 he had a meetinghouse—the Hallman Mennonite Meetinghouse—on the eastern edge of his property.¹⁰ Across the road from David were the farms of his older brother, John Bricker (1805-1871), and John’s son, Benjamin Bricker (1825-1907). It was said of Benjamin when he died in 1907 at the age of 82, that he had always lived within a half of a mile of where he was born. John and Benjamin were also farmers.¹¹

Adam Unger (1801-1889), came from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, with his family in 1812. In 1824 he married Margaret Hallman, a daughter of Benjamin Hallman, who also operated a farm east of Roseville on the south side of the Roseville Road. Adam and Margaret set up farming next to her parents. In 1847, he donated land for a church and cemetery that became known as the Hallman Mennonite Meetinghouse, though the second church building was built across the road on David Bricker’s land in our map.¹² Adam and Margaret’s oldest son, John, became an early postmaster in Roseville. Although Adam remained a Mennonite all his life, son John became a

member of the United Brethren sometime between 1861 and 1871.¹³

Another farmer, Benjamin Rosenberger (1806-1880), was located on the northwest corner of Fisher-Hallman Road and Roseville Road. His father, Jacob, was said to have sold the first business lots for the town from a corner of his property.¹⁴ In the 1861 census Benjamin was a Mennonite, but by the 1871 census he was a member of the Evangelical Association. We are seeing a trend here—families of Mennonite background leaving for other denominations, especially in the 1860s!¹⁵

Finally, I want to mention three other families with special significance for the Detweiler meetinghouse. Two were sons of the founding minister of this church, Jacob F. Detweiler (1778-1858). Jacob R. Detweiler (1807-1885) and Enoch R. Detweiler (1818-1874) had farms between this church and Roseville on the north side of the Roseville road. Late in life Jacob left the Mennonite church and joined the Methodists. Enoch became a minister of this church in 1859, a year after the death of his father. Enoch's relatively early death in 1874 cut his service short.¹⁶

On the south side of the Roseville Road between the church and the village, in 1867 the land belonged to Samuel Snyder (1801-1887). Samuel came to Canada from Pennsylvania with his parents in 1806. In 1825, he married Mary Detweiler (1806-1874), a daughter of minister Jacob F. Detweiler. In 1830 Samuel Snyder sold an acre of land for use as a church, school, and cemetery. No school was held here, but this was the beginning of the Detweiler meetinghouse.¹⁷

The immediate environs around the village of Roseville were dominated by Mennonite farmers, though if you move beyond that close circle, you immediately encounter non-Pennsylvania German names. This tells us that Roseville was the edge of Waterloo County's Mennonite community. Westward into Wilmot Township there were more Mennonites, but south or east or even a little north, there was a dearth of Mennonites.

Mennonite faith in 1867

Mennonite families in the Roseville area had three meetinghouses to choose from in 1867. The Detweiler meetinghouse was built in 1855, though a log meetinghouse had been on this site since the 1830s. Prior to that time, Mennonites would have worshipped in homes until the number of supporting families was adequate, and had the financial means, to construct a meetinghouse.¹⁸

The Hallman meetinghouse east of Roseville had a similar history, with a log meetinghouse in the 1830s, followed by a brick meetinghouse built in 1856. It is not clear through the haze of history why two meetinghouses from the same group of Mennonites were built within three kilometres of each other, especially since Mennonite worship services were held in this community only two Sundays a month, and on those Sundays, it alternated between the Hallman and Detweiler meetinghouses.

We can speculate about power struggles between extended

Detweiler and Hallman/Bricker families, but ultimately, we don't know the reasons. The Hallman meetinghouse closed in 1890, and Mennonite worship of this group shifted only to the Detweiler meetinghouse.¹⁹

There was also a third meetinghouse option in 1867, located about three kilometres southwest of this meetinghouse in Oxford County. This was a "union" meetinghouse that was shared by the Evangelical Association, the United Brethren, the Methodists, and the New Mennonites.²⁰

The New Mennonites resulted from a division in Canada West's (Ontario's) Mennonite community in the late 1840s and early 1850s. Traditionally Mennonites placed primary emphasis on faithfully following the teachings of Jesus as they understood them to be expressed in the New Testament. They did not spend a lot of time on doctrinal details, but believed faithful living reflected a true Christian. They trusted that God would look kindly on their faithfulness when they died.

Some other denominations, sparked by the Methodists, wanted a more emotionally satisfying faith experience. They wanted a more joyful faith, combined with a firm confidence that God had forgiven their sins, and that they would know they were going to heaven when they died. They encouraged emotional conversion experiences that would help to confirm the validity of these beliefs. They held prayer meetings that would feature emotional testimonies about those conversion experiences, along with extemporaneous praying even by persons who had not been identified as congregational leaders. These testimonies would also be made by women. Some German-speaking denominations arose that followed this approach, including the United Brethren in Christ and the Evangelical Association.²¹

These groups began to flower in the 1830s in Upper Canada/Canada West. Locally there were cholera epidemics that took many lives, including those of Jacob and Polly Rosenberger, who could be called the founders of Roseville. These natural disasters and other world issues led many church goers of many backgrounds to seek this more satisfying religious experience.²²

Some Mennonite ministers were also attracted to the more emotional denominations and incorporated some of these



The tombstone for the founding minister of Detweiler meetinghouse says, "To remember Jacob Dettweiler who died Aug. 5, 1858 at the age of 79 years, 8 months and 13 days." (Mennonite Archives of Ontario photo)

teachings into their churches, including things like the lively prayer meetings, though they also wanted to retain specific Mennonite teachings like pacifism.

Ultimately, these leaders were forced out of the traditional Mennonite church when it refused to accept these changes. When these leaders organized as a separate denomination in 1850 they called themselves the New Mennonite Church of Canada West. Ultimately this group became part of what we today call the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada. That's a story for a different day. The Roseville area New Mennonites would have met at the Union Meetinghouse one Sunday a month. One of their ministers in 1867 was Samuel Schlichter, who had been ordained as a minister in the traditional Mennonite Church and lived near New Dundee but left for the New Mennonites in the mid-1850s.²³

The more traditional Mennonites were deeply affected by the approaches taken by the more emotional denominations, even though they rejected their approach. The traditional Mennonites read some of the same books that the New Mennonites and United Brethren read, were beginning to sing some of the same hymns, and began to accept some of the changes advocated by the new groups, such as the temperance movement, which spoke strongly against the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Indeed, through the late 1860s there were numerous efforts to reconcile the traditional Mennonites and the New Mennonites, but ultimately, they failed.

Within the home, some Mennonites would have begun to use English, though in rural communities like Roseville, Pennsylvania German likely remained dominant in 1867. Some families would have begun to incorporate family worship, with Bible reading and use of a prayer book into their daily routine, but many would not. There was prayer at meals, but it was silent. The family's religious library was limited to the Bible, a hymnbook or two, the Martyr's Mirror, and perhaps a devotional book or two, depending on the inclination of the family.

The Roseville Mennonites would have sung from a hymnbook compiled by Bishop Benjamin Eby in the 1830s. It contained only words, with notes as to the tune to be used. A man from the congregation with musical gifts would have started to sing the chosen hymn, with the rest joining in. Singing was in unison.

The order of worship would have been similar to Old Order Mennonite worship today, especially if more than one minister was present. The service began with a hymn or two, announced by the minister. Then the deacon read a chapter of scripture. If multiple ministers were present, one gave a short sermon, maybe 15 minutes or so. After this everyone knelt for a silent

prayer. Following the prayer, a minister or bishop gave the main sermon, which would tend to be a verse-by-verse exposition of the scripture that was read earlier. This was a longer sermon, 45 minutes or more in length. Following the sermon, all the ordained men had opportunity to give a brief comment or affirmation of the sermon. This demonstrated that the leadership of the community was unified in its thinking. Following this, the congregation again knelt for prayer, this time led audibly by the minister, ending with the Lord's Prayer. Another hymn was sung, followed by a benediction by the minister. After the benediction, any important announcements would be made, perhaps about a financial need in the community, a report on an issue of church discipline, or some other matter of common interest.²⁴

Two religious rites would take place in the meetingplace once or twice a year. Both were led by the bishop, the highest ordained leader, for the cluster of congregations in the area. At the beginning of 1867 there were two bishops to cover all the Mennonite congregations in Waterloo County. Later in 1867 a third was ordained for the northern part of the county. For the Roseville area in 1867 the bishop would have been Henry Shantz, who lived just south of Benjamin Bricker's farm, south of Roseville. He would have worshipped in this building when he was not away on bishop business elsewhere.²⁵

Each spring and fall, communion services were held at each congregation. This service was an affirmation of being in good relationship with the church and with fellow members. If you were under discipline for some misdeed—perhaps financial difficulties or pre-marital sex—you would not be allowed to participate in communion until you had confessed your misdeed. If there was conflict within the church community, communion might be postponed for six months or more.²⁶

The second rite was that of baptism. This was an annual event, if there were baptismal candidates. Mennonites believed that persons should not be baptized as infants or children but should be adults before choosing to be part of the church. Many baptisms in the era under discussion took place after marriage, when a couple were in their 20s.²⁷ Bishops also performed weddings, but not in the meetinghouse. Weddings took place either at the home of the bishop or at the home of the bride.

The local New Mennonites would have retained most of the worship practices exercised by the Mennonite that used the Detweiler Meetinghouse. A later division in the 1870s that the New Mennonites joined took that group in a direction that resembled the Methodists in its polity. That division has been widely written about elsewhere.

¹ E. Reginald Good, *Detweiler : Detweiler's Meetinghouse : a history of Mennonites near Roseville, Ontario*. Roseville, Ont.: Detweiler Meetinghouse Inc., 1999: 10-11; Andrew W. Taylor, *Our yesterdays : a history of the township of North Dumfries, Ontario, Canada, 1816-1952*. Galt, Ont.; The Township, 1952: 16.

² *Gazetteer and directory of the county of Waterloo (1867)*: 150.

³ Tremaine's map of the County of Waterloo, Canada West. Toronto: Geo. R. & G.M. Tremaine; Public Archives Canada, National Map Collection) <http://maps.library.utoronto.ca/hgis/countymaps/waterloo/index.html>.

⁴ "Christian Kaiser." Waterloo Region Generations. Web. 31 August 2017.

<http://generations.regionofwaterloo.ca/>.

⁵ Roseville walking tour, 2015. Web. 1 September 2017.

<http://www.northdumfries.ca/en/thingstodo/RosevilleWalkingTour.asp>. See this tour for suggestion that Kaiser built the home in 1822. Census records suggest most of his children were born in Germany.

⁶ "Jacob B. Clemens." Waterloo Region Generations. The inn burned down in the early 1900s.

⁷ "James Barton.." Waterloo Region Generations; Roseville Walking Tour.

⁸ 1871 Census of Canada. 16 November 2012. Web. 29 August 2017. <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/census/1871/Pages/1871.aspx>.

⁹ Roseville Walking Tour.

¹⁰ "David Bricker." Waterloo Region Generations; Tremaine's Map.

¹¹ "John Bricker." Waterloo Region Generations; "Benjamin Bricker." Waterloo Region Generations.

¹² "Adam Unger." Waterloo Region Generations.

¹³ "John Unger." Waterloo Region Generations.

¹⁴ Reg Good in *Detweiler* says the name Roseville, come from Jacob Rosenberger. Other writers have credited an Englishman by the name of Rose, who offered the name. See also Roseville Walking Tour and Taylor: 114.

¹⁵ "Benjamin Rosenberger." Waterloo Region Generations.

¹⁶ "John R. Detweiler." Waterloo Region Generations; "Enoch R. Detweiler." Waterloo Region Generations. See also Good, *Detweiler*.

¹⁷ "Samuel Snyder." Waterloo Region Generations.

¹⁸ Good, *Detweiler*; Samuel J. Steiner, *In Search of Promised Lands: a Religious History of Mennonites in Ontario*. Kitchener, Ont.: Herald Press, 2015, pp. 78-81.

¹⁹ Good, *Detweiler*, 17.

²⁰ Good, *Detweiler*, 31. The Mennonites who met at Hallman and Detweiler were members of the Mennonite Church of Canada (later Mennonite Conference of Ontario). That was the more traditional group described in this essay.

²¹ The background of the renewal movements is discussed in Steiner, chapter 1.

²² Steiner, 100-105.

²³ Steiner, 108-122

²⁴ Steiner, 79-80; Isaac R. Horst. *A separate people : an insider's view of Old Order Mennonite customs and traditions*. Waterloo, ON ; Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2000. Print.

²⁵ "Henry Shantz." Waterloo Region Generations; Good, 27-28;

²⁶ Krahn, Cornelius and John D. Rempel. "Communion." Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online. 1989. Web. 22 September 2017. <http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Communion&oldid=144050>.

²⁷ Bender, Harold S. "Baptism." Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online. 1955. Web. 22 September 2017. <http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Baptism&oldid=130456>.

Detweiler Meetinghouse gets a new roof

The Detweiler Meetinghouse, built in 1855 near Roseville, Ont., was restored in 1993 as a historical representation of a Mennonite meetinghouse of the mid-19th century. It is used for a variety of events, including musical concerts, historical worship services and weddings.

The Detweiler Meetinghouse Board recently replaced the 25-year-old roof since it had deteriorated badly, partly due to raccoon families making nests. On the advice of the North Dumfries Historical Preservation Society, the new roof is made of metal that simulates cedar shingles which will last many more years than

cedar shingles. In the old days, cedar shingles were made of old-growth trees and were more durable than those made of young-growth cedar trees.

The Detweiler cemetery continues to be used by the community and the Board is working at the possibility of enlarging it. Although the new roof has now been paid for, financial resources are depleted, and donations would be gratefully accepted.



More information about the meetinghouse is available on the website at www.detweilermeetinghouse.ca.

New meetinghouse for Old Orders in Elmira

By Barb Draper

Through the summer of 2019, the Old Order Mennonites have been building a replacement meetinghouse outside the town of Elmira on Tilman Road beside the Elmira North parochial school. They hope to have the new meetinghouse, to be named Springfield, ready for use by the end of the year.

For the past 165 years the congregation has gathered in the meetinghouse on Church Street in Elmira, but a few years ago medians with curbs were added to that part of Church Street, making it very awkward for horse-and-buggy traffic on Sundays. The curbs prevent buggies from using the shoulder of the road and signs tell drivers not to pass buggies because the median does not leave enough space. When the farms that had been behind and to the west of the meetinghouse became part of a housing development a few years ago, the Old Orders began looking for an alternate place to meet.

When the original West Woolwich meetinghouse was built in 1854 it was in the country as what is now the town of Elmira was a young and very small community. It wasn't until the late 1840s that local farms were being occupied.

The Mennonites built a small frame building and painted it white. By 1880 there were so many Mennonite families living in the area that the building was expanded even though another meetinghouse a few miles away (North Woolwich) had been added to the meeting schedule. Although there had been a division in the Mennonite community in 1889, the Old Order population in the area continued to grow and another addition was added to the building in 1908.

Since 1939 this meetinghouse has been shared between the Old Order Mennonites and the Markham-Waterloo Mennonite Conference. In 1975 the building was renovated down to the foundation. The new structure was made of buff brick and is slightly larger than the building it replaced. According to the *Mennonite Reporter* (Mon. June 23, 1975 page 1), demolition of the building began on June 2, 1975 and one week later the brick structure was almost complete. In three weeks the new brick building was ready to be used.

It is not clear what will happen to the old meetinghouse in Elmira. Perhaps, like the Martin's meetinghouse in Waterloo, it will continue to be used by the Markham-Waterloo group.



The West Woolwich meetinghouse as it appeared in 1930. (Mennonite Archives of Ontario photo)

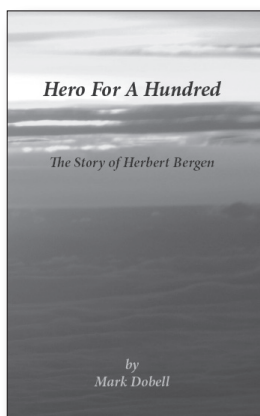


The Elmira meetinghouse, made of brick, replaced the old frame building in 1975. In recent years new housing developments have completely surrounded the meetinghouse and cemetery. (Photos by Barb Draper)



A new meetinghouse for the horse-and-buggy group has been constructed on Tilman Road (Township Road 10), north of Elmira, Ontario.

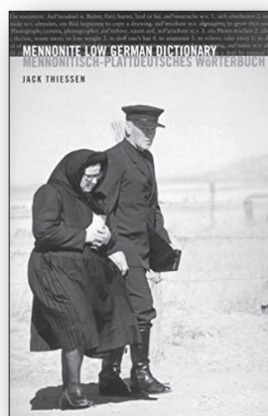
NEW BOOKS



***Hero for a Hundred:
The Story of Herbert Bergen.***

Mark Dobell.
People's History Publications,
2019, 62 pages.
Call 905-468-5277 or
email: php.notl@gmail.com.

Herbert Bergen helped many displaced Mennonites escape from the Russian zone to the American sector in Berlin immediately after the Second World War. He was interviewed in later years by the author.



Mennonite Low German Dictionary: Mennonitisch Plautdeutsches Wörterbuch, Revised Edition.

Jack Thiessen.
privately published, 2018,
520 pages.

This is an updated and revised version of a Low German dictionary first published in 1977 and 2003. It is available through CommonWord bookstore in Winnipeg, 1-877-846-1593.



**“Part of the Authority Structure”:
An Organizational History of Mennonite Indian Residential Schools in Ontario”**

by Anthony G. Siegrist in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review* Jan. 2019, Vol. XCIII, No. 1, pages 5 - 38.

The Northern Light Gospel Mission began working in northwestern Ontario in the early 1950s. Siegrist writes a history of the Poplar Hill residential school and how it came to close in 1989 after allegations of excessive corporal punishment.



On My Own: A Journey from a Mennonite Childhood.

Hildegard Margo Martens.
Anderson Publishing, 2018,
324 pages.

Martens grew up in southern Manitoba, the daughter of Mennonites who fled from Russia in the 1920s. She tells the story of how she chose to leave behind the cultural and religious expectations of her community to find an independent life in Toronto.

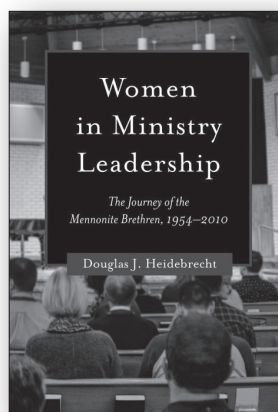


Engaging with Life.

Ruth Bender Zehr.
Privately published,
2018.

Ruth reminisces about experiences in her own life as well as events

from her local and global community. The chapter titles include: An engagement with life locally; The impact of MCC; An awareness of life globally; Searching a being greater than self; Valuing our heritage; and Health issues. Zehr previously published two volumes of stories collected from residents at the Nithview Community in New Hamburg.

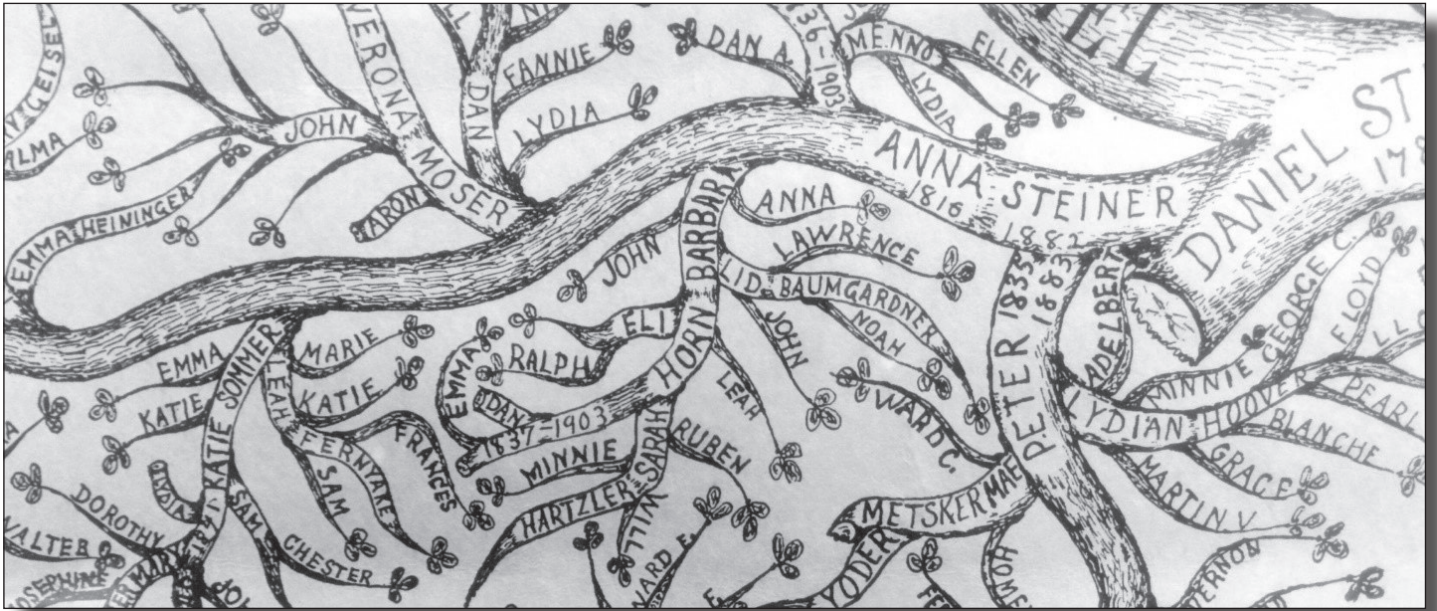


Women in Ministry Leadership: The Journey of the Mennonite Brethren 1954-2010.

Douglas J. Heidebrecht.
Kindred Productions and the Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission, 2019, 326 pages.

For many decades, the Mennonite Brethren in Canada and the United States have been discussing whether or not it is appropriate for women to hold positions of ministry leadership in the church. This book follows that complex and ongoing conversation.

New genealogy exhibit



Part of the Steiner family tree that hangs outside the archivist's office.

A new exhibit at the Mennonite Archives of Ontario showcases painted family trees, hand-drawn charts, and other ways Mennonites have visually remembered family. It is located in the gallery on the third floor of Conrad Grebel University College near the library.

The exhibit is called *Growing Family: Design & Desire in Mennonite Genealogy*. Inspiration for the exhibit came to archivist Lauren Harder-Gissing as she observed reactions to a large hand-drawn family tree that hung outside her office

for years. “People would come by and stare at it, absolutely fascinated,” she recalls. “Most had no connection to the family, but there’s something about these works that has universal appeal.”

The exhibit runs until May 2021. Admission is free. Tours are self-guided; guided tours and additional programming are available upon request in advance to the archivist. More information is available at uwaterloo.ca/grebel/growingfamily.

Mennonites Studies Conference

The Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies is hosting a “Mennonites and Anthropology: Ethnography, Religion, and Global Entanglements” conference at the University of Winnipeg on Oct. 25-26, 2019.

The conference will include a series of presentations and a keynote address by James Urry, “Mennonites, Anthropology and History: A Complicated Intellectual Relationship.”

Admission is free. For more information visit www.thectms.org.

Future conferences include:

2020 MCC at 100: Mennonites, Service and the Humanitarian Impulse

2021 Indigenous Mennonite Relations at Conrad Grebel University College

2022 Mennonite Migration to Mexico Centennial

2023 Russländer Mennonite Migration Centennial