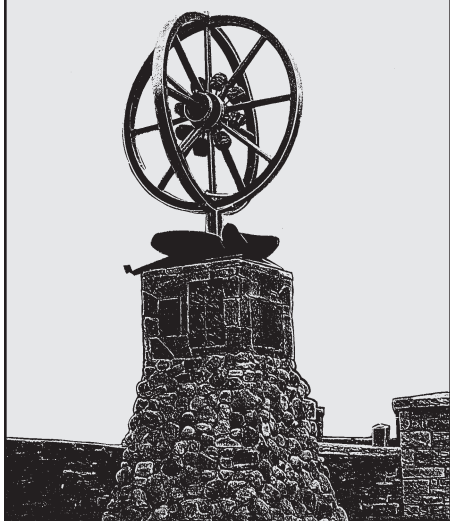


Ontario Mennonite History

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Conestoga Wagon Gets New Cover

by Marion Roes

In 1807 Abraham Weber made the trek from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, to the Waterloo area, walking beside his covered wagon and in company with other pioneer families. The wagon, which was built around 1790, somehow survived life on the farm and in 1913 George Musselman donated the old Weber wagon to the Waterloo Historical Society (WHS) museum. At that time the museum was located in the basement of the then-Berlin Public Library. George's wife Hannah Good was a descendant of Abraham Weber and his wife Elizabeth Cressman. (The family genealogy can be viewed at www.generations.regionofwaterloo.ca.)

In 1960, when the WHS donated its artifacts collection to the newly-established pioneer village at Doon, the wagon was moved to there from the basement of the library (through a window!). In 1995 the climate-controlled Waterloo Regional Curatorial Centre, close to the pioneer village, became its home.

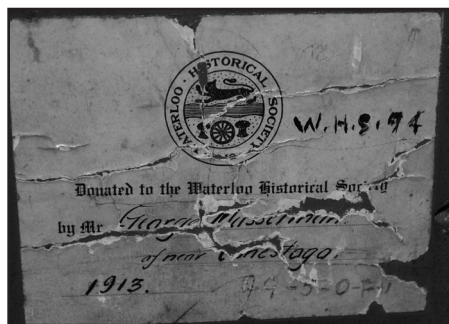
The cover of the wagon did not survive. Perhaps it was made into linen bed covers or curtains. However, a cover was needed because the covered wagon would be one of the permanent exhibits planned for the new Waterloo Region Museum. This museum is now the gateway to Doon Heritage Village at 10 Huron Road, Kitchener. (It is at the crossroads of the Huron Road and the Galt to Elmira Line of the Grand Trunk Railway

which is inside the building.)

Museum staff and regular volunteers searched for appropriate material and purchased 100 year-old linen. Then they spent hundreds of hours preparing the material, taking measurements, checking and rechecking size and fit using prototypes of the covered wagon which had been constructed for just a few dollars. A design was produced and with much trepidation the first cut was made. Volunteers from the community were invited to sign up to sew a little or a lot. August 4 was the last

day that volunteers from the community worked on the cover and some stayed to see that, indeed, it did fit the wagon! This exhibit—and others—will be ready for the opening on November 12 and 13. There will be information about the opening in the media and at www.waterlooregionmuseum.com.

Sewing even a few stitches on the antique linen was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity—and a privilege. My own Lichty ancestors would have walked beside a similar wagon when they moved to Canada in 1822, according to Ezra Eby's *A Biographical History of Waterloo Township*.



The plaque on the wagon has the logo for Waterloo Historical Society and reads, "Donated to the Waterloo Historical Society by Mr. George Musselman of near Conestogo, 1913."



The completed new linen cover is draped over the wagon frame. (Marion Roes photo)

Mannheim Mennonite Church marks God's faithfulness for 175 years

by Ferne Burkhardt

Mannheim Mennonite Church is not a building; the "church" is the people. The building where the church meets every Sunday for worship and other activities is located at 1494 Bleams Road, just east of the Bleams and Regional Road 12 intersection. It is not really a Mannheim community church. The "church" is scattered from New Hamburg to Baden, St. Agatha, Waterloo, Kitchener, Cambridge, Ayr and New Dundee along with a few people from Mannheim.

For years, Mannheim has tended to draw people from outside the neighbourhood and also to incubate and nurture people and then send them off, often to church and institutional leadership positions. In the last few decades, Mannheim church people have gone to B.C., Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec, Florida, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and currently to a MEDA (Mennonite Economic Development Associates) assignment in Tanzania. Membership currently is about 100, including people who maintain some connection but are not present. Average Sunday morning attendance is about 55 with a high percentage of seniors, many of whom can no longer attend regularly, very few children, and a middle age bulge.

The church's history dates back 175 years.

"A [church's] history is a curious and mysterious mixture of the human and the divine... It is the story of God at work in the world through God's people," says former pastor James Reusser in his foreword to the church history book, *Full Circles*, published as a 150th anniversary project in 1986. The title suggests recurring themes in the story: responding

to urgent needs; welcoming strangers including refugees and people from other faith traditions; lay leadership; innovation; recycling; working with other churches in the area; and—big surprise—dissension within the congregation, several times around pastoral leadership. There have been many "full circles," sometimes narrowing, constricting, threatening to choke the very life of the congregation. Then again, the circle widens, pushing out the edges, embracing the new and the creative gifts within the group and experiencing the freedom of new spiritual growth.



The stone structure, built in 1853, was known as Latschar Mennonite Church. (Mennonite Archives of Ontario photo)

But when and how did it all begin?

Mannheim is in Wilmot Township, which was incorporated in 1825 and was once part of what was designated the "German Block." Mennonites first came from Pennsylvania in 1786 to what was then Upper Canada, then to Waterloo Township in 1816. As land became scarce there they moved to what was described as "bush life in the wilderness" of Wilmot to domesticate this land. About the same time, German Lutherans from Germany and Switzerland came to what is now Mannheim, and Amish from the Alsace/

Lorraine area bordering France and Germany came in the early 1820s, settling west of Bleams and Road 12. These sojourners, with both commonalities and differences, became neighbours, helping one another to create new homesteads.

Mennonites developed a reputation for being hard-working and financially shrewd, "keeping the Sabbath and everything else they got their hands on," as someone once quipped. They were primarily farmers, but the pioneering Moses Bowman family started a cottage cheese-making industry. It continued through four generations until great-granddaughter Jessie Milne and her

husband Howard Bearinger, now at Nithview Home, gave it up about 1950.

Those early settlers organized a church in 1836, 10 years earlier than the Mannheim Lutherans. Several other Mennonite churches began in the area between 1830 and 1850: Detweiler in Roseville (1830), Blenheim, now disbanded (1839), Geiger, now Wilmot, (sometime before 1842), Weber, now Pioneer Park, (1842) and Shantz (1849). People first met in homes but in 1836, when Jacob C. Hallman was

ordained Mannheim's first minister, the church was officially launched.

Not until three years later was the first log meetinghouse built, running parallel to the road, on the lowest level of the current site. It was named "Latschar Mennonite Church" because the acre of land where that building was constructed was purchased from Isaac Latschar. It was paid for in British pounds, equalling about \$4.20. Several additional land purchases and "swaps" have occurred over the years. The name was changed to "Mannheim Mennonite Church" in 1969.

In 1853, a stone structure on the same

foundation replaced the log building. About 25 years ago, the late Mel Shantz, a long-time member who lived next to the church all his life, dug out a rock from the remnants of that first foundation. The stone was donated to Waterloo North Mennonite Church to incorporate into its new building's wall of stones. The stones came from other church buildings in the conference as symbols of solidarity.

Mannheim's brick building dates back to 1908. A new front entrance and back lobby were added in 1923. By the late 1970s, the building no longer met the needs of the congregation. In 1968, two years after local schools were consolidated and Mannheim's school was closed, the church purchased the two-room schoolhouse at the top of the hill next to the church building. It worked well for Sunday school classes, Vacation Bible School, youth gatherings, women's groups, social events and more. However, using two building, separated by a hill that was muddy in spring and icy in winter, was less than ideal. And the old building in the hollow was developing structural and moisture problems. What would be a good solution?

It took two years of discernment and planning for the church to figure out that a fancy new building was out of character for Mannheim while recycling what already existed was not. "Recycling" and "innovation" were in Mannheim's DNA but when a member of the church first floated the idea of moving the church building up the hill and attaching it to the school structure the notion was considered creative—but crazy!

Such a move would be more radical than any recycling or innovating that had yet been attempted. Nevertheless, the church decided to forge ahead.

In 1980, the front and back additions were demolished and steel girders were punched through the basement windows of the double-brick church building. Resting on the girders, it was jacked up, gradually turned 90 degrees and literally rolled up the hill and attached to the school building at the top. That project slowed down the traffic along Bleams Road and caused a great deal of shaking of heads as travellers observed a large brick building, apparently suspended in the air, moving to a slightly different spot on the hillside with each passing day. The move was the topic of

many conversations and even news stories in the local media.

Attaching the old building with its worship space to the school building rather than renovating or replacing both of them at much higher cost proved to be a good decision. The church family did a lot of the physical labour. Even the children were part of a bucket brigade, scooping out the dirt under part of the school building to create a full basement. Women spent a regular quilting day chipping mortar off bricks from the demolished parts of the original building so the bricks could be reused.

But the church is not buildings; it is people. For the first 100 years, pastors were called out from the congregation, often chosen by lot. Since 1946 they have come from elsewhere. Mannheim has had 16 different pastors, including three interim pastors. In 1976, both the congregation and Mannheim's first seminary trained pastors, Jim and Helen Reusser who had served city churches until then, experienced a culture shock! Jim recalled the first annual congregational meeting held about one month after they came. He said, "It was informal, there were few pieces of paper and no votes. It blew my mind!"

In 1985, Helen Reusser was ordained at Mannheim, its first woman pastor and only the third woman to be ordained in the conference, another rather radical move. While Helen's ordination created some dissension in the congregation at the time, the church welcomed women as interim pastors twice since then and currently is being well served by Pastor Ruth Anne Laverty. Mannheim also shares a marginal time youth pastor with three other local congregations.

In an earlier era, deacons were also called out from the congregation and



*The 1908 building as it appeared in the 1960s.
(Mennonite Archives of Ontario photo)*

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ordained. But there have always been, and continue to be, strong lay leaders. In 1956, administrative leadership passed to a Church Council made up of laymen; yes, for the first years it was all men. Within a few years, Jessie Bearinger joined the council as treasurer for many years and several women have since served as church chair. A budget system was introduced in 1965 and elders to assist the pastor were first named in 1977. About 140 years after it began, the church decided it needed a constitution, which was adopted in 1977. A key component of the constitution, which has had a couple of updates, had to do with decision-making. Mannheim seldom votes, choosing rather to make most decisions by a form of consensus. Perhaps more important than the constitution document itself was the process that produced it. Process is valued at Mannheim, although for some members process tends to be taken to excessive lengths sometimes.

Worship at Mannheim has also had many changes. Worship services, first conducted in German, changed to English about 1907 and biweekly services became weekly in 1926. For the past thirty or more years, lay people have led worship and preached, not only to fill in for part-time pastors but also because the variety of members' gifts are valued. Many excellent song leaders have kept congregational singing important. Singing is mostly a cappella, one way for everyone to contribute to corporate worship. The sanctuary is acoustically very alive and singing is exceptional, something that surprises and inspires visitors to the small congregation. A piano provides accompaniment to learn new songs and for some more contemporary music, but traditional, unaccompanied hymns predominate. Occasionally there will be a guitar and understated drums or other instruments. For some special occasions an impressive orchestra including four or five violins, a couple of cellos, recorders,

a clarinet and piano, all from the church family, delights the congregation.

A Christian education hour (or three-quarter-hour, since visiting in the foyer takes precedence over getting started on



*In the 1980s Mannheim moved its building and attached it to a former school.
(Mennonite Archives of Ontario photo)*

time!) has classes for children, youth and adults. Adult classes in turn may focus on Bible study or explore a specific theme that relates to Christian faith and life, or the class may spend time in guided personal reflection on the passage of scripture that will be the basis for the morning's sermon.

Fellowship is a strong Mannheim characteristic. In fact, in the 1980 recycling/renovating project, creating a large gathering space adjoining the sanctuary was a deliberate plan. The congregation enjoys almost monthly potlucks, a summer retreat weekend at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp and several small groups meet more or less regularly. A recent venture is an effort to build a partnership with a tiny Mennonite congregation in London, England.

Among recurring themes is responding to urgent needs. Early in the 20th century, Mannheim women sewed for destitute victims of the revolution in Russia. For several decades the church donated food and clothing to mission workers' families and it helped resettle East Asian refugees—"boat people"—in the 1970s. Responding to victims of hurricanes or other losses and supporting Mennonite Central Committee, House

of Friendship and other agencies in their relief, service and development work continue to be expressions of care. The church also welcomes strangers who have moved here. In fact, only about fifteen

people who regularly are at a Sunday morning service were born and raised and have spent their entire lives as part of the Mannheim church family. Almost as many have come from other faith traditions.

Another theme that comes around from time to time is working with other churches in the area. It began in the early days, working with Mannheim Lutherans. It happened again in the mid-20th century when people from both denominations teamed up for Vacation Bible School and Thanksgiving

services. Current examples are sharing a youth pastor with three other area Mennonite churches and participating in the New Dundee Ministerial.

If by some miracle, Moses S. Bowman, Mannheim's second pastor and the progenitor of six generations of people who have been part of the church family, could return some Sunday morning, he would be bewildered. The wild forest he knew has gone. So has the stone church where he preached. In the sanctuary, he would not find women seated on the left, men on the right, old people in the "Amen" corners and ordained men on the bench behind the pulpit. Nor would he find a hook on an overhead rack to hang his black hat. A colourful banner on the wall and flowers or candles on the communion table might distract him, and hearing a woman delivering the sermon would stop him in his tracks. But if he listened, he would know that God's word is still being shared, that the circle of ministry continues, its arc expanding and embracing rather than excluding. Hopefully he would see Mannheim as a people fully aware of God's faithfulness and endeavouring faithfully to build God's kingdom.

Quilt art: Encounters along the Grand

By Barb Draper

The Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario commissioned Judy Gascho-Jutzi to create a quilt art wall-hanging depicting the early Mennonite settlers in the Grand River valley and their relationship to the native people who lived here. Judy called her fabric art “Encounters Along the Grand” and completed it in time for the Mennonite Church Canada assembly, held at the University of Waterloo in July, 2011. The quilt art was on display in the worship space during the five days of assembly.

Sometime last year, Neill and Edith von Gunten, the directors of MC Canada Native Ministries, saw a quilt art piece done by Judy Gascho-Jutzi and dreamed of having such a piece on display at this summer’s at assembly. They asked the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario about commissioning the artwork and were delighted when it all came about.

Judy talked about this project in a seminar. This wall hanging is all done with quilted fabric and it took her months to put together. First she needs to think about it and search for fabric for quite a while, she said. She began sewing in January and worked hard to finish it for early July.

The right-hand side has a towering black walnut tree trunk in the foreground while the Grand River flows through the background. The black walnut was valued by the early Mennonite pioneers. Other symbols of Mennonite presence are the pioneer tower, a log cabin, and a Conestoga wagon with crops and animals around it. On the bottom left is a traditional log cabin quilt square. Judy was delighted to find fabric that was all over 100 years old to make the quilt square.

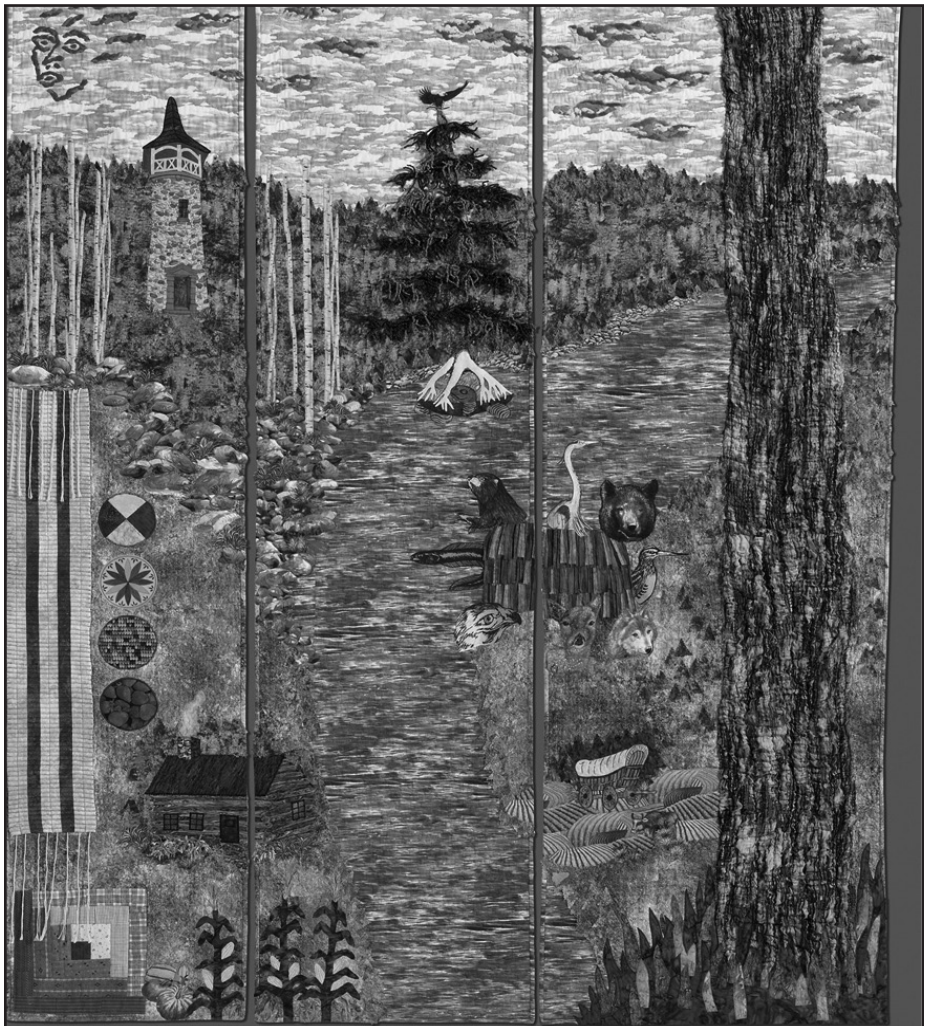
Native symbols are the large wampum belt on the left-hand side, the medicine wheel beside it, the long-house, the pine tree, and the nine clan animals. The white pine was considered the tree of peace; Judy put it on the turtle because native tradition says that North America is shaped like a turtle. The tree’s roots point in four directions. Corn, beans and squash were called the “three sisters” by the aboriginals and they remained important crops for the Mennonite pioneers.

Judy also talked about how she gets a three-dimensional effect in her work. She was delighted to find just the right colour light-weight fabric for the bark of the walnut tree. She sewed it onto cotton waffle cloth that

shrinks to give it a puckered effect. She also did some stuffing and sewing to make it look authentic. Grandmother moon, in the sky, as well as the clouds are made with dryer lint. The branches of the white pine are made of drapery trim. The two-row wampum belt is made with drapery piping to represent the beading that a real belt would have been made of.

Someone asked Judy why she made it in three sections. Judy shrugged and said that it just felt right. She had to learn about native culture to make this piece and she had to let the project speak to her. Neill von Guntun said the three sections make it into a kind of Mennonite wampum belt. A native wampum belt is a symbol of peace because the lines do not cross.

A photo does not do justice to this work of art. It will hang at Conrad Grebel in the future, although it may need to wait until the latest building project is completed, so be sure to find time to take a closer look someday.

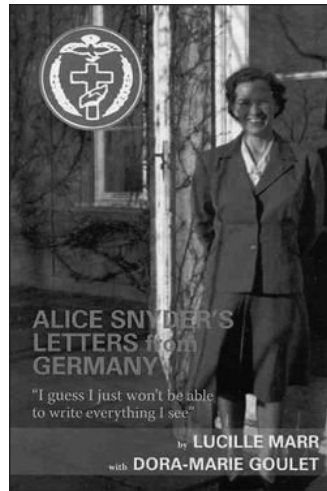


Judy Gascho-Jutzi created this fabric art, *Encounters Along the Grand*, in 2011.
(Photo courtesy of Judy Gascho-Jutzi)

Letters home give rare glimpse of MCC post-war relief work

Alice Snyder's *Letters from Germany*.
Lucille Marr with
Dora-Marie Goulet.
Pandora Press, Kitchener ON, 2009, 262
pages.

Book review by Ferne Burkhardt



In February 1948, Alice Snyder, a 29-year-old farm girl, left peaceful Waterloo County, Ontario to serve with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in occupied Germany. Two years later, in a letter home, she wrote: "One does many things here they would never do at home."

Service was nothing new for Alice. She and her mother Ida had operated a "Cutting Room" in their home, cutting and sewing garments and sorting and packing clothing for MCC. When the operation moved to downtown Kitchener, Alice took charge. She developed a strong connection to MCC's refugee work but when given an application form for service in Germany, Alice tossed it aside. Then she reconsidered. Soon she was sailing to Europe.

From February 1948 to May 1950, during the peak immigrant flood from Russia and Poland into Germany, Alice worked in Neustadt in the French Zone in southern Germany, in Hamburg in the British Zone in northern Germany, then back in the south to Kaiserslautern and Bad Dürkheim.

Alice served as matron at MCC centres with their surges of visiting MCCers, "big shots" from North America and others. She managed household staff, cleaned, shopped, cooked (15 at the table was normal but sometimes there were 70), conducted sewing classes, distributed food and clothing, visited homes and refugee camps and learned to speak German. She was "mama" in three different homes that housed 50 poor, under-nourished and often sick children for three-month periods to nurture them back to health. With parents, social workers and officials, she determined which children to accept.

Despite an unimaginable work load, Alice found time for fun: skiing down

Swiss mountains, holidaying in Italy, meandering through picturesque villages and countrysides, hiking to a mountain top for an Easter sunrise service, taking photos, visiting churches and friends and enjoying numerous parties and car and train trips.

Early on Alice wrote, "I guess I just won't be able to write everything I see." But from the moment her ship docked in Amsterdam, she documented her activities in meticulous detail in weekly letters to her family, to whom she was devoted. One can sense her breathless excitement with words scrambling for space on the page as they pour from her pen (later from a typewriter which she blamed for the mistakes). She paid no heed to political correctness in describing people, work habits, homes or religion nor to proper spelling and grammar. The errors, which editors wisely did not correct, add to the charm of these delightful letters.

Alice's mother had the foresight to preserve the letters which allow readers to follow a young woman's growing independence and confidence as she shoulders new and unexpected responsibilities. They also provide an unusually candid and unsophisticated glimpse of MCC's relief work in post-World War II Germany and on the country's reconstruction and healing.

Archives Update

Building Project

The Next Chapter campaign to raise funds to renew and expand the Mennonite Archives of Ontario and the Library at Conrad Grebel University College is receiving generous support. Many donors have seen this as an opportunity to honour volunteers in our community who have made a significant contribution to preserving and promoting Mennonite history and culture.

Lorna Bergey Archivist's Office -

Family and friends have raised over \$63,000 in order to name the new archivist

office in Lorna's honour. Lorna was a long serving volunteer archivist, writer and active member of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario.

Richard and Shirley Schiedel Archives

Processing Room - The family of the late "Dick" Schiedel have donated \$100,000 in honour of their parents' avid interest in Mennonite history. Dick was an active member of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario and the Pennsylvania German Folklore Society of Ontario.

Lorraine Roth Archives Reading Room -

Gifts to name the reading room in

honour of Lorraine are being solicited.

A fundraising dinner on October 13 will be held in Tavistock and Lorraine will be present to receive tributes to her work as a historian and genealogist for the Amish and Mennonite communities. The goal is \$75,000 for this project.

Enoch B. and Elizabeth (Brubacher) Martin -

Descendants of this couple are making donations in their honour for archives equipment. Enoch was the historian for the St. Jacobs Mennonite Church and had an

Commemorating the War of 1812

by Jonathan Seiling

In recent months it has become difficult to drive through the Niagara region or read a local Niagara newspaper without noticing the array of preparations for the bicentennial celebrations of the War of 1812. Commemorative events will also happen throughout the bordering states, and other regions of Ontario.

Although these events are explicitly aimed at boosting tourism, they also aim to tweak the historical consciousness of Canadians and Americans, as we collectively reconcile that we were once embattled in a mutually destructive war that benefitted no one.

So, how shall Mennonites remember or commemorate the War of 1812?

This question will surely be answered differently by those of various religious commitments, and especially those of us whose ancestors were present in Upper Canada during those years.

The events aim to attract a cross-section of visitors, but battlegrounds and re-enactments seem to have the highest profile. Even the story of Laura Secord is only meaningful within the context of commemorating the victories of the British-Canadian-First Nations armies against the invading Americans.

This focus on the military aspect of the war is at odds with the fact that the official mission of the commemoration is to celebrate peace. The stated intent is generally to appreciate that the Canada-U.S. border has, for the most part, enjoyed two hundred years of non-combatant activity. Yet rather than giving an ear to those pioneers of peace and non-

resistance who actually resisted the war, it is a rehearsing of battles that remains the main focus. Perhaps a remorseful lamentation on the very existence of war would hardly be an effective way to boost tourism.

The Quakers, Mennonites and Brethren in Christ present in Upper Canada during the War of 1812 suffered due to their pacifist convictions. They were pioneer conscientious objectors, thanks to a provision granted by Governor Simcoe and the Upper Canada Assembly in 1793. Although granted official exemption from militia duty, these historic peace church settlers experienced the ravages of war on many levels. Their stories are largely being ignored, or simply lost in the discussion of the valour of the soldiers.

In May 2010 an historical commission, called the 1812 Bicentennial Peace Committee, was organized under the auspices of Mennonite Central Committee Ontario (MCCO), with members from all three historic peace churches. This group has been preparing for alternative commemorations to highlight the experience and raise the profile of conscientious objectors in the War of 1812. Web pages devoted to the upcoming events are being developed to be available by the end of 2011 on the MCCO website (check back soon at: <http://ontario.mcc.org/>)

Each historic peace church has prepared a text and location for a historical marker. These markers will inform their respective constituents and

express this legacy to the public in a way that hopefully draws the attention of tourists. The Committee has also been planning for public events to raise awareness of the experience of COs during the War of 1812 with tentative plans for the unveiling of the three markers.

One historical marker will be located at the Bertie Church (Brethren in Christ) in Stevensville, near Fort Erie. The Mennonite marker will be attached to the stone wall surrounding the Mennonite Bicentennial Monument (1786-1986), adjacent to the cemetery of The First Mennonite Church, Vineland (the structure featured on the cover of this newsletter). The Quaker marker will appear near the peace garden at Rennie Park in Port Dalhousie.

In addition to these historical markers, I am currently working on a short history with the title, *A Different Call of Duty: Quakers, Mennonites, Brethren in Christ and the War of 1812* to be published in the coming year.

There are some speaking engagements being arranged for 2012 related to this theme. One event that may be of interest is the Grand River Heritage Workshop, Friday, Feb. 17 in the South Dumfries Community Centre, St. George (near Brantford), including the topic "Mennonites and the War of 1812." Also, the storyteller, Mary-Eileen McClear, will be including a story about Elizabeth Bechtel in an upcoming performance. For details see: <http://www.thestorybarn.ca/>.

~ Continued from page 6 ~

active interest in Mennonite history. Over \$14,000 has been donated.

Overall the fundraising campaign has achieved almost \$3.8 million which met the minimum goal of \$3.7 million target. The task now is to reduce the budgeted \$1 million mortgage prior to construction which is slated to begin March 2012. Visit www.grebel.uwaterloo/building for more.

Archives Update

New Acquisitions

Thanks to the generous offer of time from two student volunteers, several important collections are being processed. The Mennonite Central Committee and Conference of Historic Peace Churches file lists are now available on our website. The personal collections of Osiah and Fern Horst and Reuben Detwiler have

been added to the Archives. We have also received student help to scan photographs from the early years of Conrad Grebel College. Over 370 of these photographs are now viewable on our website at grebel.uwaterloo.ca/mao. Follow the link to the "Photographs & Slides" page and search for "conrad and grebel" to take a trip down memory lane.

People and Projects

Publication of Lorna Bergey's writings

The J. Winfield Fretz Fund of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario has provided \$2000 to the Waterloo Chapter of the Pennsylvania German Folklore Society of Ontario for publication of a book of the selected writings of Lorna Bergey. For over 30 years, Bergey prepared and presented research on Mennonites in Waterloo Region, becoming one of the area's most respected historians. Dr. J. Winfield Fretz was the first president of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario. The fund is available to any individual or charitable, church or community-based organization that requires financial support to assist in the publication of research—in book, film, or other form of media—that illuminates the experience of Mennonites in Ontario. Deadlines for submission are the 1st of May and the 1st of October. See www.mhso.org for further details.

*This plaque recognizes the contribution to local history by
Lorna (Shantz) Bergey (1921-2008)
who was inducted into the Waterloo Region Hall of Fame
(Waterloo Region Museum) on May 15, 2011.*



Erb Street anniversary celebrations

Erb Street Mennonite Church is celebrating 160 years from when the first meetinghouse was built at the corner of Erb Street West and Fisher-Hallman Road, Waterloo in 1851. The congregation started meeting at David Eby's in the mid-1830s. Joanne Bender, Waterloo, was commissioned by Erb Street's Worship and the Arts Ministry to compose and write a cantata. Along with other instrumental pieces and an intergenerational choir, the cantata, titled "Cantata 160" will be performed Sunday, November 20 at 7 pm. Everyone is welcome to attend. A free will offering will be taken and refreshments served afterwards in the Fellowship Hall. Join us at 131 Erb Street West, Waterloo, 519-886-3570. www.erbstchurch.ca

Lancaster on Facebook

Lancaster Historical Society invites everyone to join them on Facebook at www.facebook.com/lmhs.org to see photos, videos and recent news. If you have a Facebook account, you can support the Society by clicking the "Like" button. The 1719 Hans Herr House, Willow Street, PA has a Facebook page at www.facebook.com/hansherr.org. Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, 2215 Millstream Road, Lancaster PA 17602, USA, 717-393-9745.
www.lmhs.org
www.facebook.com/lmhs.org
Lancaster Roots
www.lancasterroots.org

Tribute to Alice Koch

(February 1, 1913 - August 7, 2011)



*Alice Koch
(David L. Hunsberger/
Mennonite Archives
of Ontario photo)*

The Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario has lost another long-time member. Alice (Nahrgang) Koch served on the MHSO board for 27 years from 1973 to the year 2000. For eleven of those years (1981-1992) she served as president. It was during her term as president that this newsletter was begun.

Alice was born to Menno and Amelia (Bergey) Nahrgang in 1913, attending Biehn Mennonite Church (now Nith Valley). She was married to Lester Koch and raised ten children on a farm near Haysville. Lester died in 1993.

Education was always important to Alice. She graduated from the University of Toronto and taught elementary school for eight years before her marriage.

Alice's mother was the very first president of the Ontario-wide women's sewing circle (also known as the Mennonite Women's Missionary Society) from 1917 until 1936. Alice followed in her footsteps and also served as president from 1970 until 1974 when it was called the Ontario Women's Missionary and Service Auxiliary.

Although she was not a charter member, Alice was a staunch supporter of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario. She also supported the work of Mennonite Central Committee Ontario and worked for 25 years as the volunteer supervisor of Material Aid at 50 Kent Avenue in Kitchener. She was very experienced in making durable school kit bags and she sewed hundreds of comforters for MCC.

Alice was very interested in history. She served as historian for the Nith Valley congregation and wrote a history of the congregation as well as an autobiography entitled "A Time for Memories." She also wrote articles published in *Mennogespräch*, the forerunner of *Ontario Mennonite History*. The church and the Mennonite community benefited greatly from Alice's many years of service.