



# Notes from the Farm

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## Notes From the Farm

Sam Gingerich

The year 2022 was successful for the Adirondack Mennonite Heritage Association. I would like to acknowledge and thank board members, staff, and the hundreds of volunteers and friends who are supporting the mission of AMHA. Because of all of you, the house and the barn are now stabilized, and these will stand into the future. Clearly, the AMHA Board is committed to the renovation/stabilization of existing historic buildings at the farm as it fulfills its mission to preserve and share our collective heritage.

There were a number of significant facilities' projects initiated and completed this past year. The North hiking and nature trails in the woods were completed and these were dedicated in the memory of Perry Steria during Z Fest. A split-rail fence is being built to define the trail to the woods. The new 80-space parking lot was completed with the addition of fine stone topping. Posts were installed to create a lined walkway from the parking lot to the house. Similarly, the area in front of the dairy barn was cleared and a second access driveway, including drainage, was built. This will be finished later this year.

In the house, a new handrail and stairs were constructed to the cellar. Window blinds were added to the parlor and South bedroom. Additional outside work included repair of the swing set, replacement of windows in the milk house, and hanging a bat house on the South side of the granary.

Looking forward, plans are in place to relocate a stone smokehouse from the former Joe B. Yousey farm on the Croghan Reservoir Road to the Heritage Farm later this year. In addition, the Board has decided to build a small pavilion with construction beginning this year to be completed next year. The Board has also decided to remove the garage later this summer. This building was not original to the farm, and it simply is no longer stable. A storage building has been purchased, which will hold materials now stored in the garage as well as the stables, freeing that area up for displays and other activities. Finally, a number of small projects are planned for 2023 including:

- Start the South hiking/nature trail to include the installation of posts and markers.
- Add padding to the posts in archival basement.
- Ceiling/wall renovations to large bedroom, enclosed porch, and ministers' room.

The Board is also looking toward the future. In 2024, significant renovation/stabilization work is planned on the granary. This will support Z Fest and other group activities at the farm.

Finally, initial plans are being developed for a facility that will replicate the horse and sheep barn that was original to the property. (More information is in the newsletter). In addition, several smaller projects are planned to maintain and improve the house, barn, and the grounds.

The Board is committed to making the site more open to and welcoming for all members of the community. None of this is possible without your support. AMHA received a number of significant donations during 2022. We appreciate the generosity of members and friends. These gifts are allowing the Association to continue to stabilize and build out the farm as well as to provide a range of programming. We offer a heartfelt thank you to all who support AMHA with their time, money, and talents. We will continue with our fundraising efforts focusing on the horse and sheep barn.

The AMHA board is creating an investment policy that will include the establishment of a formal Endowment Fund to secure a healthy financial future for our organization in the coming years. This will provide an avenue for contributors who want to include AMHA in their estate planning. Our treasurer, Don Roggie, can assist you in this planning.

### **New Board Members**



**Jim Rush**

I, Jim Rush, (remarried to Beth Steria) have 43 years of high school teaching (history) experience and 16 years of camp leadership. My committee/board experience includes the Virginia Mennonite Historical Committee and founding board member of Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians, secretary, 1992-present. I serve as church historian for Zion Mennonite Church, Broadway, Virginia, and worked with MCC Booksavers of Virginia.

From my first marriage, I have two children (Amy, Harrisonburg; Jon and Marj Herr Rush and three grandchildren of Lowville).

It is with great interest to serve on the AMHA board of preserving history (lifetime genealogy and researcher), transcribing documents, and conducting interviews.

I, Marie Schneider Swartzentruber, was born and grew up in Lewis County. In my growing up years, I attended Croghan Conservative Mennonite Church and presently attend Naumburg Mennonite Church. I attended Goshen College and later worked in the Beaverite office before marrying Glenn Swartzentruber and moving to Connecticut in 1965.

Over the years in Connecticut, I was involved in a local Baptist church as secretary, Pioneer Girl leader, Sunday school and vacation Bible school teacher, and led ladies' Bible studies before moving back to New York in 2021. For over 25 years, I was employed at CIGNA Insurance Company as medical underwriter and UTC Retiree Account Administrator.

I enjoy working in flower and herb gardens and pruning trees and hedges. This activity gives me much peace and opportunity to meet with my Lord as I work. I enjoy the quiet countryside at the Mennonite Heritage Farm and promoting the special history we share as Mennonite Christians.



**Marie Swartzentruber**

### **Zwanzigstein Fest 2023** Bernadine Schwartzentruber

“Come Home to the Olde Farm” is the theme for the 31st Zwanzigstein Fest to be held on Saturday, July 8. This year we are working with a Croghan group who are planning a three-day “Come Home to Croghan” event for that weekend. Tentatively, there will be a shuttle bus from Croghan to the farm.

The purpose of the Zwanzigstein Fest is to preserve, celebrate, and accurately portray our religious and cultural heritage in Lewis County. Since 1991, the Heritage Farm has provided the site for visitors to learn about our Anabaptist faith legacy and rural life of years past through stories, exhibits, tours, demonstrations, and fundraising venues such as food and crafts.

A few changes are being planned that more closely align the day's events with the purpose as stated above. Instead of having a silent auction, marketplace, and antique booth, our goal is to focus on opportunities for guests and volunteers to interact and enjoy the Mennonite Heritage Farm. Throughout the farm, you can view the archival displays, tour the house and archival area, see the varied demonstrations, enjoy singing/music, hear storytelling with the "Widrick" family, conversations occurring about the Anabaptists, and visiting with friends and acquaintances.

A ticket system will be in place for the varied food purchases. A ticket booth will sell tickets for the food booths except baked goods. The food booths will post the number of tickets needed per item of food or meal. So, if an item costs \$3.00, the volunteer sells three \$1.00 tickets. We believe this will be more efficient for both guests and volunteers.

There will be many activities for children. A visitor (Rhoda Gilbert) from last year stated:

In the summer I like to go to the Z Fest with my cousins. I really like holding the fluffy bunnies and petting the soft goats. I also love to watch the little bees make honey. The music is so nice, and I love to sit and listen to it.

Enjoy a hike through the trail in the woods. Weather permitting, there will be horse and wagon rides through the woods and to the cemetery. So, plan to join us for a "homecoming" to the farm on July 8!



### **Horse/Sheep Barn to be Re-erected** Neil Keib

One of the original buildings that once stood at the farm is to be re-erected. That building being the horse/sheep barn was erected in 1874 along with the main dairy barn. It is believed that the two buildings were built from materials salvaged from an off-site building. This assumption is based on the fact that some of the main posts and beams were hand hewed while others were saw cut. Also, there are several additional joint and tendon pockets from a former building that were not used when erecting these buildings at the farm.

By the early 2000s, this barn became in disrepair; and in 2017, as advised by AMHA's insurance carrier, the building was razed. On May 23, 2018, the Croghan Fire Department performed a controlled burn of the original horse/sheep remains. Because the building was one of the oldest buildings on the farm, the board proposed to replace it in the near future. In Spring 2019, the original site was cleared of all debris and clean fill was placed to raise the existing grade by approximately two feet.

The new horse/sheep barn will be approximately the same size, 26' wide x 31' long with an eave height of 14' 6". Also, it is planned to add a workshop and storage area to the East end of the building. Size is to be determined. The new building will not be sheltering horses or sheep but will serve as an admission and information center, gift shop, and display area on the first floor. The second floor will consist of a meeting room/activity room. The planned workshop and storage area will be attached to the East end of the building and possibly two rest rooms.

The new building will be constructed in much the same way as the original building, that is, post and beam style with joint and tendon pockets fastened together with wooden pegs. The building will be wired for adequate lighting and convenient outlets for audio/visual and other electronic equipment.

A fundraising campaign will be launched soon, and it is planned to start construction in the foreseeable future.

## Acquisition Report

Rosanna M. Moser

A total of 123 accessions were completed in 2022, which is a total of 2768 accessions since 2010. We are indebted to the many individuals for the historic artifacts that continue to help tell the story of our Anabaptist Mennonite faith throughout the various buildings and displays. NOTE: In the event that you do not see an artifact listed that you donated, they are in the holding shelving.

Here is a summary of the major artifacts catalogued over the past year:

Chartrand, David and Beverly (Yousey)...Crock (25-gallon), bark peeler, and logger boots original to Menno Yousey.

Cobb, Sundena (Jantzi) on behalf for the estate of John and Ellen Lehman Widrick...Glass butter churn and doll.

Farney, Duane...*Apostolic Christian Churches and Ministers* - 2022 directory.

Gingerich, Simon, Sr...Wooden barrel (nails).

Jantzi, Lowell...Wooden bowl and vegetable cutter original to Alma Zehr Jantzi; photo collection original to Doris Schaefer Jantzi.

Keefer, Eulene (Lehman)...German vocabulary cards original to Jacob and Adah Steria Lehman.

Keener, Donna (Zehr)...Wedding reception background décor original to Elias and Martha Widrick Zehr.

Kennell, Mark...Sunday school attendance record original to Mark Kennell.

Knechtel, Adeline (Zehr)...Child's rocking chair and crib with straw mattress original to Alvin and Vera Moser Zehr.

Lehman, Doris A...Genealogy of "Daniel M. & Veronica (Lichti) Gingerich Descendants."

Lehman, Elton...Collection of photos from estate of Rosina Lehman and sheep shearing machine.

Lehman, Gary...Archival collection from library of Ralph S. Lehman.

Lyndaker, Gay (Noftsier)...Butter mold and book entitled *First Steps for Little Feet in Gospel Paths* original to family of John N. and Anna Yousey Lyndaker.

Lyndaker, Lois...Knitted gloves original to Anna Susanna Zehr Lyndaker.

Lyndaker, Phyllis (Lehman)...Poem entitled "The death of Wilbur Zehr," paper entitled "The Life of a Church Leader, Christian M. Nafziger" written by Norman Lyndaker, document on life of Catherine Widrick Lyndaker, and collection of poems written by Phyllis Lyndaker.

Lyndaker, Shirley...Collection of CPS photos and handwritten CPS notes original to Ednor E. Lyndaker.

Lyndaker, Temperance...Bridal book and souvenir handkerchief original to Julius and Avis Lyndaker Moser.

Lyndaker, Wilbur and Florence (Widrick)...Serving bowl original to Rebecca Nafziger Sauer and hymnal entitled *Songs of the Church* original to Wilbur Lyndaker.





Mast, Titus...Book entitled *Conservative Mennonite Conference 2018 Annual Report and Directories*.

Mayer, Aaron...Notebook original to Clarence and Mabel Widrick Mayer holding 1952 and 1962 conference meals and wedding meal information for their children.

Mayer, Wilfred...Collection of photos (meat processing, in particular, 1967 MCC meat canner) original to Clarence and Mabel Widrick Mayer.

Moser, Kathleen...Collection of constitutions for Conservative Mennonite Conference, photos (estate of Andrew and Emma Widrick Moser), and book entitled *History of the Conservative Mennonite Conference 1910-1985*.

Moser, Rosanna M...Miniature egg beater, child-size foot form, corn husker shucker, StoryCorps transcripts, CPS newsletter article written by Arthur A. Lyndaker and online statements re: accident and the cause of his death while in CPS, genealogy notebook "Daniel and Lena Roggie Moser," Naumburg Mennonite Church directories (1973 to 1999), CD – Master's Men quartet, and "History of Son Light Mission LaColline, Haiti" document compiled by Rosanna M. Moser.

Moser, Virginia (Roes)...Handwritten document by Christian M. Nafziger (bishop); collection of summer Bible school photos, book entitled *Words of the Bible A Bible Dictionary*, three Sunday school attendance certificates, wooden box, and notebook with dates of social events, births, marriages, and deaths original to Mary Nafziger Roes.

Moshier, Dorrance and Janet (Miller)...Signature 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary quilt original to Ezra and Clara Yousey Moshier.

Moshier, Loren J...Cradle crib original to family of John W. and Anna Moser Moshier and genealogy "Joseph M. Moshier Family History & Genealogy 1832-1995" edited by Loren Moshier.

Ovando, Lila (Moser)...Mattress, pair of stocking holders, photo collection, historical correspondence on early ministry, and throw embroidered signature pillow original to Nina Lehman Moser (Jacob).

Zehr, Pearl A...Depression glass platter original to Vera Moser Zehr.



Roes, Cathi (Widrick)...Wedding dress original to Mary B. Zehr Lehman and framed photos (two) of Chris W. and Mary Zehr Lehman family; half apron and knitted bonnet original to Barbara Martin Widrick; comforter original to Anna Moser Moshier; woven bedspread original to Jacob and Anna Widrick Yousey; footstone warmer or soapstone, possibly original to Joseph B. Yousey; two comforters, child's skirt, and Croghan cemetery records original to Ezra and Clara Yousey Moshier; and suit coat original to Ezra Moshier.

Roes, Stacie (Widrick)...Leather/wooden bureau/trunk in possession of Anna Herzig Widrick; collection of dinnerware dishes original to Anna Noftsier Noftsier (Joseph).

Roggie, Donald and Janet (Lehman)...Photo original to Janet Lehman Roggie.

Roggie, Lynette (Roggie)...Dresses (two) original to Alma Zehr Widrick.

Roggie, Mary Ellen (Gingerich)...Collection of choral group photos.

Roggie, Richard and Delores (Jantzi)...Photo collection of Christian and Anna Kennel Jantzi family.

Rubar, Dorothy (Noftsier)...Hymnal entitled *Tabernacle Hymns Number Three* original to Paul F. Ebersol.

Smoker, Muriel (Lyndaker Fisher)...Knitted stockings original to Mary B. Zehr Lehman; baby sweater set (knitted/crocheted) and table scarf (embroidered) original to Adah Lehman Lyndaker; wedding dress and shoes, wedding photos, embroidered (two) and crocheted (two) doilies, and toddler skirt original to Muriel Lyndaker Fisher Smoker; baby shoes original to Debra Ann Fisher Miller.

Steria, Robert and Lillian (Nafziger)...Wooden groover (homemade) original to Chris B. Yousey.

Tuley, Janet K. (Lehman)...Wooden sap spigots original to Chris W. Lehman.

Virkler, Alton and Geneva (Lehman)...Ledger book original to Chris W. Lehman, "Hans Zahler Ancestry," grief notes relative to Scott Regan Hostetler, and 2018 *First Mennonite Church New Bremen* directory.

Wade, Gladys (Schrag) on behalf of Levi and Esther Gingerich Schrag family...Woven blanket from the Christian L. and Veronica Moyer Gingerich family, possibly to Christian's mother, Veronica Litwiller Gingerich.

Weaver, Anna Mae (Forrester)...Station milk can original to Charles and Kathryn Jantzi Forrester; plate original to Anna Lehman Jantzi; watch original to Sara Lehman.

Widrick, Arlene (Roggie)...Commentary original to John W. Roggie and photo.

Yousey, Jane and Nafziger, Ned...Collection of photos and brass plate (property of Joseph B. Yousey).

Zehr, Carl and Lois (Wagler)...Book entitled *Three Years in the Rockies – CPS*.

Zehr, Janet (Widrick)...Book entitled *This Side of 60* and wedding nightgown original to Anna Moser Widrick.

Zehr, Joseph and Malinda (Zehr)...Collection of school-related certificates original to Joan L. Gingerich Zehr.

Zehr, Keith and Connie (Troyer)...Child-size commode and vegetable seed planter from estate sale of Gilbert and Esther Roggie Lehman.

Zehr, Llewellyn...Correspondence original to Mary Yousey Moser.



### **Tribute to Delia Zehr Martin** Janet Martin Brouty, Daughter



My mom, Delia Inora Zehr, was born on October 3, 1913, to William and Flora Zehr Zehr in the village of Croghan on the Zehr homestead, which is now owned by Jim and Joyce Zehr. She was born the 8th child of 12 children, born 1 year and 4 months after her triplet sisters, Dora Kloster, Dorothy Kloster and Doris Hill. She was a devoted wife to her husband, Melvin Martin; a loving mom to her children Mary Lou Roggie (Milford), Janet Brouty (Gerry), Jim (Betty) Martin and John Martin. Also, a precious grandmother to Renee Roggie, Randy Roggie, Kristine Porco, Travis Brouty, Tracy Donham, Tammy Atwood and Matthew Martin. She is a cherished great-grandmother to Ben Roggie, Isabella Porco, Pietro Porco, Giovanni Porco, Liliana Porco, Luciano Porco, Emma Donham, Becca Donham, Joshua Donham, Nathan Donham, Micah Donham, Lanya Donham, Sofie Donham, Christopher Donham, Brandon Atwood, Tara Martin, and Kadin Martin.

Born and brought up on a large farm, my mom knew what hard work was. She was up early in the morning to milk cows and do chores before school. I often heard stories that milking and chores were done before they

walked to school with no exceptions. Then walking home after school to get their clothes changed and go to the barn again. There was no "lollygagging" around. Ten minutes from when they got home, they were expected to be in the barn or Grandma would come looking for them.

Mom spoke with such love about helping to care for Grandpa's team of horses after a long, hard day of work in the woods. It was of highest priority each evening to brush down the horses, feed them well, and even provide a treat to these animals that worked so hard to help their family survive.

Mom would tell how she and her sisters helped knit wool socks in the evening during the winter. They all wore long, black wool socks so they would help Grandma knit them. How my mom loved and appreciated her one dress that was made by a seamstress in the village that was worn only to church. Her mom made all their clothes of dark colors.

Mom would talk about Sunday afternoon when all the town kids came to the farm, and they played ball out in the field behind the barn. Then, in the winter, they would slide down the barn bridge. Oh, what fun they had. I can still see the excitement in her smile talking about Sunday afternoons. Their home was the gathering spot for the "town kids" as she called them.

Mom often talked about being a sister to her triplet sisters. She was one year younger than them. There were so many people that came to see them and would fuss over them and bring them gifts. Mom always felt left out and unnoticed as did the other children in the family. I think, as little children, it was beyond them to understand the excitement over the triplets. No gifts for the other kids, which was so hard for my mom. Even as the triplets got older, it seemed to Mom that they were always the center of attraction.

When Mom was in her early twenties, she was a nanny for DeWitt LeFevre in Beaver Falls. They had two daughters, Diane and Marcia. She loved her job with them and often told how well they treated her. She would talk about going to NYC with them on the train. Once they were in the city, she would be alone with the girls in the evening while the LeFevres went out. Since Mom was shy and from a small, little country town, the big city was overwhelming and even scary to her.

She married my dad, Melvin Martin, on March 7, 1940. After their marriage, they moved to Norfolk, where they worked in a paper mill. They lived in Norfolk for a couple of years when Grandpa Martin wanted them to come back home and take over the farm. The farm was later owned by Harold and Velma Lyndaker up past Belfort. Later they bought an old school house and moved it to Belfort where they built a beautiful home. This is the home I was brought up in.

Mom had several jobs to help support our family. Three of her uncles lived with us until they passed. They were Grandma Zehr's brothers. She babysat several children and was the laundry lady for Jim and Tony Lewis in Beaver Falls. I will always remember living in a spotless, clean home even though Mom had so much to do.

Mom and Dad purchased the Croghan Island Mill in December 1969. They were there together every day until January 22, 1976, when my dad passed away from an aneurysm. She continued to work alongside her son-in-law, Gerry Brouty, who had helped Dad and Mom to get the mill going. Jim and John then followed, working in the business with Mary Lou doing the office work. Mom's goal and determination was to see Dad's dream come true. Mom was 62 years old when Dad passed. She loved being at the mill every day doing a man's job until she fell and broke her hip in April 2013 while putting lumber through the sticker machine. She was 99 years old at the time. She never missed a day going to the mill. She glazed thousands of windows along with putting thousands of boards through the planner. If she wasn't busy helping the guys, you would see her with a broom in her hand cleaning up sawdust and sweeping it into the blower in the floor. The mill was always so clean when Mom was there.

Mom was meticulous also in keeping a clean house, doing her laundry with an emphasis on ironing and taught me to do the same. Still at 99 years old, she vacuumed before going to the mill each morning, and yes, still ironed. The values she held dear in her life were priceless. Mom was the hardest working and most loving Mom a daughter could have.

Her grandchildren were her pride and joy. She always had time for them, and they always put Grandma first and had time for her. They loved spending time with her at the mill as she taught them so much about hard work and how to LOVE people. She had the patience of “Job” to work with them and taught them how to glaze windows. No one could ever glaze windows like Mom. Customers would love to stand and watch her at this skill that no one else had.

The many hard years of physical labor took a toll on Mom's body. She had very painful hips and knees and a back full of arthritis; however, she never gave up and complained very little.

Through all her sorrows in life, she had many happy, joyous occasions and her faith and love for God grew. She taught us to trust in the Lord to get through life. She was a young widow just getting to the season of life to enjoy time together with her husband, retire, and not work so hard. When Dad passed, she dug in harder than ever to make his dream come true at the Croghan Island Mill.

She taught me how to love the partner I chose for life through good and bad. Mom was always such an inspiration to me. I will be forever grateful for her love, kindness, and patience she showed, not only to me and my family, but to her entire family.

I always felt that after Dad passed, she was not only Mom and Grandma, but also Dad and Grandpa to her family as she tried to fill that void of her loss and ours. She never thought of herself first but always thinking and caring about her family's loss.

My prayer is to be the most like Mom that I can be. Her love was unconditional, and her smile was priceless. I will always be so very grateful to God for the Mom he chose for me. She never complained about her lot in life but lived her life with love and faith. Mom went to her heavenly home late in the evening on January 6, 2017, at 103 years. Love and miss you, Mom, Janet

### **Tribute to Our Father – Joseph Nafziger**

Arlene Nafziger Zehr – My father was born in Kirschnerville on July 14, 1898, son of Bishop Christian and Anna Moser Nafziger. Father was a kind and gentle man with a great sense of humor, but he was a strict man.



No was “no.” I remember my sister Mary and I had gone to a neighbor without permission while my parents went to Lowville. Needless to say, when they got home, no girls were home. But he knew where we were. My father met us on the road with a broom. We never did that again. My parents took many a tramp in and gave them food and overnight lodging. I had a wonderful home and parents.

Doris Nafziger Roggie – My father was ordained deacon June 27, 1943. My grandfather decided farming was better on the other side of Black River. So, they bought a farm on the West Road where he and his brother Menno grew up. Father met and married my mother, Rose Widrick, daughter of Daniel and Fannie Moser Widrick, on October 16, 1924. At this point, they bought a dairy farm across from the Whetstone Gulf, where we grew up as a family of Elmer (m. Gladys Yousey), Arlene (m. Anthony Zehr), Mary (m. Nelson Roes), and Doris (m. Merlin Roggie). Sidney, son of Elmer and Gladys, and his wife Beth and family own the farm today.

My father really liked his bees. Mother did not like them, and they did not like her! I used to help him extract the honey in the honey house. Just ignore the bees and they would not bother (much). We also had an apple orchard, plums, pears, berries, and grapes.

Grandpa built a house in Martinsburg, where he and Grandma lived together for four years. Shortly after her death in 1933, Grandpa moved in with Menno and Marie at the home farm on the West Road. My father then bought the house and had renters live in it for about 20 years. When my parents sold the farm to Elmer and Gladys in 1953, we moved to the Martinsburg home.



We had a large garden and sold vegetables at a roadside stand. My father liked to peddle food. They would dress out chickens, and on Saturday he would go to Lowville with his eggs and the chickens for people who ordered them. He also took apples to a cider press. We would can gallons of cider. Away he would go peddling cider and honey. He also like to pick berries. We spent many a day picking blueberries. He went the last time at 100 years old (photo at right).



Father enjoyed traveling. He went to Europe three times and visited his cousins. He had a love for Haitian people, especially the children. My father went to Haiti for 12 winters.

My precious mother died December 16, 1974, age 70. Father stayed in the home for a while and then moved in with me for ten years. He liked to eat out and would make sure that we were in Lowville around noon so we could eat at McDonald's. We had a special bond together...a special love as daughter and father. He was the most wonderful father one could have. He passed away at 102 years in May 2001.

## **Cemetery Project - Part II**

Janet Zehr and Rosanna Moser

While checking all the data on our cemetery markers, I (Janet Zehr) spent a lot of time sitting on benches and tombstones in the Croghan and Kirschnerville cemeteries. As I gazed over the cemeteries, I realized all the time and labor that is expended on the care and maintenance of the grounds to keep them neat and attractive.

The suggestion was made to give recognition to those who have contributed so much effort through the years to maintain our cemeteries. With the help of available records, research by a number of people, conversations with the cemetery committee and current workers, we have endeavored to list the individuals who have worked faithfully to keep our cemeteries in good condition. They have given honor to our loved ones who have passed on to their eternal home in caring for their earthly resting place while we all wait for the resurrection of our bodies promised by our Lord Jesus.

We acknowledge that the cemetery committee members of all the Mennonite churches over the years have been very much involved with the maintenance plus many other individuals, including young children and youth, involved with digging graves and maintenance. It is our hope that we have listed most of the people who have worked through the years; but if anyone knows of an individual we have omitted, please share the information with the curator's office.

No date is documented when there was a need for a cemetery in the Amish Mennonite community, but a plot of land owned by the pioneer Michael Zehr was allowed in the village of Croghan, which is presently owned by Jim and Joyce Zehr. Robert Zehr has been a caretaker of the Zehr cemetery since 2014.

John Moser (pioneer) donated a piece of farm land for the Kirschnerville Cemetery about 1870, which was deeded in 1874 at a purchase price of \$5. Barbara Hirschey Noftsier was the first burial in September 1871 (no stone), according to oral records per Veronica Roggie (niece of Joseph Noftsier). Her husband Joseph Noftsier died in January 1871 and is buried at the Zehr Amish Cemetery.

A plot of land (ninety-four hundredths of an acre) was purchased from William and Flora Zehr in June 1923, which is part of the Croghan Mennonite Cemetery. This cemetery had its first burial in 1924, who was Arthur Lehman, infant son of Andrew and Mollie Widrick Lehman; first adult burial was John Lehman in 1925.

Arlene R. Yousey states the following in *Strangers and Pilgrims* (p. 142): The year of 1937 is unique in that no one within the brotherhood died.

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With a combination of Arlene Yousey's research in *Strangers and Pilgrims* (pp. 138 and 143), annual meeting minutes, and recorded cemetery committee notes for Croghan and Kirschnerville cemeteries beginning in 1942, here is the compilation of caretakers (lawn mowing and maintenance) and grave diggers.

## Kirschnerville and Croghan Mennonite Cemeteries:

Philip Moser and his sons, John R. Moser, Jacob Moser, and Joseph C. Moser, Benjamin Z. Lehman, Chris L. (Christian) Lyndaker, Benjamin F. Zehr, and his brother Joseph Zehr were caretakers **and** grave diggers in the earlier years. In addition, it has been learned that relatives of the deceased would be responsible for the digging of the grave and/or find someone to do it.

Caretakers between 1940 and 1957 include John B. Moser, David Steria, Jacob Widrick, and Solomon Widrick. According to the cemetery records, the first payment to the caretakers was in 1947. Cemetery records from 1958 to the present provide the following names: Wilburn Roggie (1958-1985), Ira Zehr, Jim and Karen Widrick Moshier, Scott Moshier, Jim Zehr, and Peter and Melody Zehr Monnat (1997 to present).

Grave diggers (manual labor) include Benjamin Yousey, Lloyd Zehr, John Martin, Stanley Jantzi, Matthew Moser (2005-2022) and Larry Noftsier (1996-2004; 2023 to present).

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Here are reflections by the children of Wilburn and Elveira Roggie, Delores and Calvin. Their parents were also custodians and janitors at the Croghan Mennonite Church (longest serving family to our knowledge).

The oldest daughter, **Delores Roggie Gingerich**, m. John Gingerich, writes the following:

My parents, Wilburn and Elveira Roggie, also mowed and maintained the cemetery next to the church and the Kirschnerville Cemetery. Most of the work was done by my father, but the rest of the family helped. In later years, both Calvin and Joyce mowed. I did not mow that I can recall.

My father was very fastidious about what the cemetery looked like, especially before a burial and Memorial Day. I remember having to move memorial pieces away from stones and then putting them back. I also would help with hand trimming around stones with scissor trimmers. Not sure if my father had a rider mower at first, but probably not. He probably used a walk behind (push mower) until a rider was purchased.

At the Kirschnerville Cemetery, all the mowing was done with a walk-behind. The grave stones were of different sizes and not always in good repair. The back of the cemetery was also on a slope.

Sometimes we had a picnic lunch under a tree outside the fence in front of the cemetery.

One of the things that intrigued me were all the gravestones for children and infants. As I have read some church history, I now understand better why that was.

Being custodians of the church and cemeteries, this gave our family an appreciation for our church and what it takes to keep up a place of worship. It was a way for my parents to use their gifts and contribute to the work of the church.

My younger sister Joyce did lawn mowing on the cemetery next to the church. Joyce also shared that she had had her first driving lessons in the church parking lot. (All of her siblings likewise practiced in the church parking lot.)

**Calvin Roggie** writes the following: I began helping my father mow the cemeteries as I was able to operate a walking mower. Later, I would mow the cemeteries by myself.

The Kirschnerville Cemetery was smaller but harder to mow. The cemetery is surrounded by trees so fallen branches had to be picked up and thrown on a pile before mowing could begin. The rows of grave markers were uneven and many of the oldest, wooden markers had rotted and laid face down in the grass. Some of the oldest, simple stone markers had also fallen over. We never used a riding mower on this cemetery.

After the cemetery was mowed, we drove home very slowly at first...admiring our work.

## Why Become an AMHA Member and/or What are the Benefits?

- To affirm and support the preservation of our Mennonite heritage, to share our unique Christian faith story, and to keep intact artifacts of the Lewis-Jefferson County Amish Mennonite settlement.
- To receive the annual *Plowman's Journal* and *Notes from the Farm* (twice a year).
- To afford a 10 percent discount on books and merchandise at the Heritage Farm.
- To have voting privileges at the annual meeting.
- To be assured of great fellowship and bond of working together in the fulfillment of enlightening future generations.

----- Cut Here -----

### ADIRONDACK MENNONITE HERITAGE ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(Valid Through April 30, 2024)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Renewal \_\_\_\_\_ **NEW** \_\_\_\_\_

Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Category (Select One)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Individual \$15 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Married Couple \$25 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of the corporation is to (a) preserve our Mennonite Heritage (based on its Anabaptist origin of 1525), (b) share our unique Christian faith story with our world, and (c) keep intact artifacts of the North Country Amish Mennonite Settlement.

Affirmation:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, affirm that I am in agreement with Adirondack Mennonite Heritage Association's purpose and shall do my utmost to support the organization in accomplishing these goals.

Please make checks payable to AMHA [501(c)(3) organization].

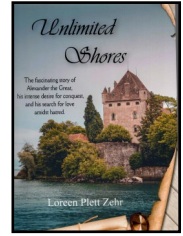
Mail check and application to:

Adirondack Mennonite Heritage Association  
Donald Roggie, Treasurer  
4491 Boshart Road.  
Lowville, NY 13367

## New Book — Gift Shop

*Unlimited Shores* by Loreen Plett Zehr - The fascinating story of Alexander the Great, his intense desire for conquest, and his search for love amidst hatred.

Visit <https://mennoniteheritagefarm.com/> for other books available at the gift shop.



## From the Desk of the Curator

The archival office welcomes your engagement announcement and wedding program. The Virkler lettuce seed is also available at the Heritage Farm on a donation basis. Office hours are Monday and Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. We are looking for a volunteer to work with “Ancestry” in updating our Mennonite community genealogy.

We welcome visitors from June until the end of October on Monday and Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in July and August; other days by appointment.

AMHA has been awarded a Stewart's Shop grant to again offer the children's activities (fine and fiber arts) in August. More information in the church bulletins at a later date.

The Adirondack Mennonite Heritage Association operates under the nonprofit charter granted by New York State. Your tax-deductible gifts will help secure the future of AMHA and give you a part in preserving the homestead and the Lewis County Mennonite story.

Send checks to:  
Adirondack Mennonite Heritage Association  
Donald Roggie, Treasurer  
4491 Boshart Road  
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