



# Notes from the Farm

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## Chairperson's Report

By Sam Gingerich

Greetings from the Mennonite Heritage Farm. As you see for the first time in a decade, this column is being written by someone other than Bernadine Schwartzentruber. While she continues to serve on the Board, earlier this year Bernadine decided to step down from her position as board president to reclaim some time. As everyone knows, AMHA has benefited from the countless hours she dedicated as president to the many activities of the Association. If you see her, please do thank her for her leadership and continuing commitments to AMHA.

This year's annual meeting was held on April 24. Don Roggie and Paul Schamback were reelected to serve as board members, and the program was provided by Gordon Widrick, Joe Widrick, Carl Zehr, and David Zehr, who shared memories of their experiences in 1W/VS. We want to thank each of them for doing this.

Marie Swartzentruber was appointed to fill the seat vacated by the resignation of Harold Deveines in June.

The 30<sup>th</sup> Zwanzigstein Fest was held on Saturday, July 9. After a two-year break because of the pandemic, AMHA once again provided a fun-filled and educational day for visitors from communities throughout the North Country and the Adirondacks. Music was featured throughout the day with performances by Turning Point, the Adirondack Community Chorus, and Friends of God. In addition, there were opportunities for visitors to join in hymn sings during the day. The AMHA Hiking and Nature Trail was dedicated in the morning. This trail was made possible by a gift made in memory of Perry Steria, a former AMHA board member. As always, we thank the many volunteers, businesses for their contributions to this event, and the many donors for underwriting costs.

The Board continues efforts to develop the property. As mentioned in the last edition of *Notes from the Farm*, plans have been made to renovate the granary and to relocate a smokehouse to the farm. The AMHA Board has taken steps to purchase a storage building to store the tables, chairs, tents, and other materials stored in the stable. This will free up the horse stalls to become a more integral part of the barn. Plans have been completed for a pavilion, which will support Z Fest, allow for similar programming, and as a site for visitors. Finally, the Board is beginning to plan for the construction of the multipurpose sheep/horse barn that has been discussed for a few years.

The Board thanks the town of New Bremen for a grant of ARPA funds to offset losses incurred because Z Fest was cancelled for two years. These monies will be used to support the mentioned projects.

None of this would be possible without the volunteers and supporters who give of their time and their funds to support the mission of the Mennonite Heritage Farm. To each and every one of you, a heartfelt "Thank You."

## Z Fest 2022

By Bernadine Schwartzentruber

After a two-year hiatus, we welcomed visitors to our 30<sup>th</sup> Z Fest on July 9. Beautiful weather graced the day's events. Our new parking lot was filled to overflowing. For the first time, the admission was on a donation basis and generated just as much income as a set price. One highlight was the dedication of the nature trail in memory of Perry Steria, a former board member.

Many children took part in various activities. Here are some of their impressions:

Isaac Olmstead, age 10: I enjoyed making butter; and when we got home, I made some at our house. I also liked making bread and learning how to use the corn sheller.

Ada Olmstead, age 8: The goats, bunnies, and chickens were nice to play with. The bunnies were my favorite! There was a machine there that takes the corn off the cob when you spin the handle. That was fun to do.

Naomi Olmstead, age 6: I liked making bread and butter. The animals were fun to play with and pet! I liked listening to the lady talk about the house and hearing about the bees and their box. I liked the nature hike and the corn sheller.

Leo Olmstead, age 3: I liked going on the trail in the woods.

A parent shared the following: We came to Z Fest for the first time this year; and she (daughter) really enjoyed it so I think now she's quite interested in coming back. I was very impressed as well at how many activities there were to involve the kids!

The attendance was about 500. More local Mennonite families came for the first time, perhaps because it was not on the holiday weekend.

Our booth volunteers ranged in age from 12 (butter making) to 91 (sauerkraut making)! We are so grateful for the many people willing to help prepare the grounds, work at the booths, and to help with the post event tasks. Thank you!

The Z Fest Committee welcomes your suggestions and ideas to make the July 8, 2023, Z Fest even better!



## Legacy 500 Services Resumes

By Norman Moshier

Beginning in 2019, the Adirondack Mennonite Heritage Association planned and sponsored a series of guest speakers to present essential perspectives on the history and contemporary meaning of Anabaptism. Paul Zehr and Arnold Snyder were here in the summer and fall of 2019, respectively. Following a two-year interruption, the series resumed October 30-November 1, 2022, with guest speaker Dan Ziegler at the Lowville Mennonite Church. Dan has served as director of Spruce Lake Retreat, president of Rosedale Bible College, and now as director of a Methodist camp in central Minnesota.

When Dan and his wife Wendy first encountered Mennonites, they were drawn in by people who practiced what they said they believed. Coming from evangelical backgrounds, they began a journey to understand the what and why of this attraction. Some 30 years later, they describe the central answer to their search as “The Anabaptist Approach to Scripture.”

Dan defined Anabaptism as a way of interpreting (a hermeneutics)... “a simple yet profound approach to understanding and applying scripture.” He used the image of a three-legged stool to illustrate what he sees as the three essentials of this approach. The first and most important leg is “Christocentrism,” which he called the heart and genius of Anabaptism. The second leg is “faith in action,” living out one’s faith is emphasized over doctrine. The third leg is a “new covenant biblicism.” The Bible is the authoritative witness to the work and teaching of Christ and the apostles. Dan’s talks were an inspiring and important contribution to AMHA’s Legacy 500 series.

You can view Dan Ziegler’s presentations at the Lowville Mennonite Church YouTube or Mennonite Heritage Farm at <https://mennoniteheritagefarm.com/events.php>.

## New Entrance Drive

By Neil Keib

When the new parking lot was proposed in 2018, a new entrance drive was included in the project. In 2021, the parking lot construction commenced and after excavating the soil from the parking lot area and placing in the area the proposed entrance drive, it became apparent that there was not enough soil to complete the entrance drive phase of the project. At this time, a request was put out to the town of New Bremen that AMHA would accept any clean/suitable soil from their cleanup projects; however, no additional fill was delivered.

In mid-June 2022, a neighboring farmer stopped by the farm and inquired if we could use any fill around the farm. He had several hundred yards of soil he wished to dispose of after a recent addition to his dairy barn. Asking about the cost per yard, he informed to the effect “you haul it and it’s yours.” WOW, what a gift!

A local contractor was hired and the task of moving the soil, grading the area, and completing the entrance drive began on September 9. Over 350 cubic yards of soil was placed along with about 80 cubic yards of top soil. A 12” diameter x 30” HDPE culvert pipe was installed crossing the entrance drive and modifications to three (3) existing 4” diameter drain pipes. The entire area (8500 sq ft) was fine graded, seeded, and mulched with hay (15 bales) donated by a local farmer.



It is planned to allow the new entrance drive to settle over the winter to allow for maximum settlement. In the spring, the entrance drive will be topped with 6” to 8” run of crush stone over a layer of stabilization fabric. Also, edge markers will be installed along the north side of the drive.

When this project is completed in Spring 2023, the entrance drive will provide a second access to the farm buildings. It also provides the farmer (rents the crop fields) direct access to fields for plowing, planting, and harvesting.

AMHA thanks everyone who in some way made this project a success. Without your help and support, this and other AMHA projects could not be brought to a conclusion. Again, thanks for your support.

## Rachel R. Zehr—First Mennonite Nurse

By Susan (Grau) Rice

Rachel R. Zehr was born on July 2, 1878, to Michael and Catherine (Martin) Zehr in Indian River, NY. She was the tenth child out of 13 children; an aunt to my great-aunts, Kathleen and Charlotte Zehr. While I was growing up, Kassie and Charlotte mentioned their Aunt Rachel often. She had passed away before they were born, but their father Benjamin Zehr had spoken of his sister often while they were growing up. Looking back at some papers that Charlotte had in her files, she mentioned several times that education was very important to the family of Michael and Catherine. While Benjamin was growing up, his father Michael, was elected as a trustee of the local school in Indian River. His duties included hiring a teacher, seeing to building fires on school days and gathering supplies. Michael hired a Mr. Meeker to be the teacher at the Indian River school. As was the custom, the teacher lived with the person who hired him, so he lived with Benjamin, Rachel, and their siblings during the school year. Charlotte doubted that Michael had ever attended school or could read English. While Mr. Meeker was living with the Zehrs, he and the children taught Michael to read and write English, and this opened up a whole new world for him. He subscribed to “Cornell Journal,” published by Cornell University, where he learned more about beekeeping and grafting apple trees, which was a lifelong hobby of his. On long winter evenings, with a lamp to read by, Mr. Meeker would read to the gathered family. Out of Michael and Catherine’s 13 children, two daughters received further schooling to become teachers (Katherine and Anna), and Rachel received further training to become a nurse.



According to Charlotte's papers, Rachel received her nursing training at Faxton Hospital in Utica, NY. Charlotte often pondered how Rachel heard about nursing training at Faxton Hospital, living in Indian River. I think that shows how much Michael and Catherine valued education and 100 percent supported their children in continuing their education.

In the early 1900s, nursing was not looked upon favorably in the church. She was treating people of the opposite sex and had to wear a uniform. Due to these two things, she could not be a member of the Amish Mennonite church. Charlotte had been told while growing up that Rachel was afraid of catching typhoid fever while being a nurse and that is what she died of in 1908 in Utica. From what I have researched, she got sick in early September 1908 and passed away that November.

In the early 1900s, people corresponded through postcards. I have some of Benjamin's surviving postcards from that time. Here is some of the correspondence I found while researching Rachel's life.



From Nina Lehman (niece of Rachel's) to Susianna Lehman. The postcard has a picture of St. Luke's Hospital, Utica. It is postmarked Sept 28, 1908. "Dear Susianna, rec'd your card, glad to hear from you. This is the picture of the hospital where Aunt Ray is sick. She is better, but far from well."

From Lena Yousey (sister to Rachel) to Bennie Zehr. It is postmarked October 2, 1908. "Dear Brother, I am sitting by Ray's bed. She is a little better, don't twitch so much as she did. Saw her dr again yesterday, he said if nothing sets in, she will get a long alright he thinks. They have had a lot of different \_\_\_?\_\_\_ for her. She is still very sick and don't realize much, poor girl.

From Martha Chaffee (sister to Rachel) to Benjamin Zehr. The postmark is smudged and the date is unreadable. "Dear Ben – will be home Sunday if I can get there, am going to leave Utica today. Rachel is getting along fine, she said I could go home." Martha

From Lena or Martha (sisters to Rachel) to Bennie Zehr. It is postmarked Oct 26, 1908. (This postcard was postmarked from Beaver Falls. Katherine must have been down with Rachel in Utica and her daughter Nina was staying with Lena or Martha.) "Dear Ben, Simon said Father and Mother talked some of going to Utica on Tuesday. Now tell them not to go until they hear from Katherine. She will tell them when to come. Rachel seemed about the same when I came. She thought she was a little better. I have Nina here now, hope she won't get lonesome. It is pretty hard for Katherine but we will do the best we can and think too much of Rachel to care how our work goes at home."

Through several more postcards from those months, I learned that three sisters, Martha, Lena, and Katherine took turns staying in Utica with Rachel. It sounds like she would improve and then her condition would worsen.

On November 12, 1908, the *Journal and Republican* had the following article:

"The many friends of Rachel Zehr regret her untimely death. She had been ill several weeks with typhoid fever at Utica, at which place she died. The remains were brought here and funeral held from the home of her brother, John Zehr, on Tuesday of last week, interment at Kirschnerville." NOTE: She died November 2, 1908 (age 30).

Another article stated: "The sad news reached here Monday of the death of Miss Rachel Zehr, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. M. Zehr, of this place, who has been seriously ill for some weeks at St. Luke's hospital at Utica. She had been nursing in that city for some time previous to the time of her illness. She was a young lady possessing many fine qualities and noble character and was held in high esteem by her wide circle of friends. The bereaved family have the sympathy of the community in their sad hour of sorrow."

From Charlotte's paper, I have concluded that the family had a difficult time getting permission from the church for Rachel to be buried in the Amish Mennonite cemetery; but after reading her obituary, it looks like the family and the church came to an agreement on the topic.

If anyone has any information on Rachel, we encourage you to share with us what you know. As I mentioned previously, it is a wonder where a young girl living in Indian River had a dream to become a nurse. Once she had that dream, I wonder how she went about finding a school and making her dream come true?

## Individuals Who Lived 100 Years or More

The curator's office recently reflected on the number of individuals who have lived 100 years or more from the Lewis County Anabaptist community. Consequently, we asked family member(s) to write a tribute for the respective family member. More individuals will be acknowledged in the spring newsletter.

Congratulations to Arlene R. Yousey who celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on October 24! She is past Croghan Mennonite Church historian and author of *Strangers and Pilgrims History of Lewis County Mennonites*. (Books available to sell.) Arlene is truly recognized for the extensive collection of history donated to the Mennonite Heritage Farm in 2018. We are deeply indebted to Arlene for the tremendous amount of historical research that she has done on the Mennonite immigrant families plus many other topical notebooks, photo albums, and yearly scrapbooks since the early 1900s. Thank you and God bless you, Arlene!

### Tribute to Arlene R. Yousey by Mallori Norris—

Born on October 24, 1922, Arlene was the sixth of eight children born to Chris B. and Katie (Moser) Yousey. Growing up surrounded by relatives, family has always been a very important and formative part of her life. She maintained strong ties with her siblings (especially her sister Ellen) and extended family members while they were alive, and her nieces and nephews have fond memories of visiting “the Yousey farm” when they were growing up. As a single woman, Arlene hired out into a local home for many years and developed a long-lasting attachment to the children she took care of—Bill, Phyllis, and Elizabeth Dalton—with whom she still remains in contact today.

Her love of family and history coincided nicely with a desire to have a written history of Mennonites in Lewis County. After many, many hours of research, organizing facts and photographs, and making sure her details were as accurate as possible, she published *Strangers and Pilgrims* in 1987. A humble and quiet historian, Arlene usually prefers to inquire of others and discuss history and family rather than talk about her own accomplishments (including living to 100 years old).



Arlene's strong faith (encouraged in her from when she was little) and commitment to service led to her involvement in a variety of locations and activities, including Brookside Senior-Living Community, the Adirondack Mennonite Heritage Association, the Agape Shoppe, Bible school, Sunday school, sewing circle, and notably for many, sewing and tying many comforters donated to Mennonite Central Committee to be sent overseas. Her faith in Christ was seen recently in her response to a visitor asking how he could pray for her; her reply was, “That I will remain faithful always to Jesus.”

### To Mother, a Tribute by Nelson Schwartzentruber—

Born Christina Mae Martin in the town of Martinsburg on July 31, 1915, the youngest of five children, my mother joined her parents, three sisters and one brother. In ten short years, the family would be reduced to just four members. On December 27, 1920, the mother, born Barbara Streicher, succumbed to tuberculosis when my mother was just four and one-half years old. Less than two years later the oldest daughter, Bertha, also died of tuberculosis followed two years later by the second daughter, Grace.

Unable to properly care for the three remaining children, Mom's father, Andrew Martin, sought assistance from his siblings. My mom was shuttled among various relatives and occasionally being rejoined with her father, sister, and brother for short periods of time. When her sister Gertrude married in 1927, Mom lived with them until she married my dad, John Schwartzentruber, in 1934.

Purchasing a run-down farm in 1936, the young couple struggled financially during the Great Depression, working long, hard hours to build up the farm and eke out a meager living. My mother helped with farm work in addition to cooking, cleaning, and doing laundry in a house with no running water or central heat.

The financial burden eased during the booming years of the late 1940s and 1950s, and life became easier for Mom. In 1974, after celebrating their 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, they sold their cows and entered semiretirement and began to enjoy doing some travelling. But on May 24, 1976, my father died unexpectedly.

My mother was now faced with a life of widowhood. Having depended on my dad for 42 years, she now had to begin to make decisions on her own without his advice and input. But she rose to the challenge with strong determination and fortitude.

After struggling through the period of mourning following Dad's death, she settled into a comfortable life being aided by two of my bachelor brothers, Milford and Roger, who lived with her. But on November 27, 1978, Tiny awoke about 1:30 a.m. to a crackling noise. She found her kitchen ceiling on fire; and after waking my brothers and calling the fire department, she walked to the next-door neighbor's house, never to return to her home again. That winter was spent making plans for a new house, and she and my brothers moved into a new home in July 1979.

Life now became quite pleasant for Mom as she enjoyed her new home, her grandchildren, her church family, and the camaraderie she shared with the ladies in the Christian Women's Fellowship of which she was a member. But sadness again entered her life in 1985 when her second son, Allyn, died of asbestosis at the age of 48.



Through all of the sorrows and tragedies, as well as the happy times and joy, Mom's faith in God grew and sustained her. She never doubted God's wisdom and instilled in her children the same love for and faith in God.

The many years of hard physical labor on the farm took their toll on Mom's body. She suffered with arthritis and a pinched nerve making it impossible for her to walk without assistance. She was often in pain but complained very little. At the age of 96, she underwent gallbladder surgery; and while lying in her hospital bed recuperating, she entertained her visitors and the hospital staff by cracking jokes! She was an inspiration to everyone who knew her.

I am so grateful for her quiet patience and unfaltering love as she guided me through childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. But her greatest gift has been the way she led me into a relationship and a faith in the God who sustained her through 101 years of her life (died October 18, 2016) and the God I depend on even though my life has been far easier than hers.

#### **Tribute to Alice Lehman by Janice Crofoot—**

Alice Gladys (Bachman) Lehman was born on May 31, 1912, in the town of Croghan. She is the daughter of Joseph C. and Barbara M. (Virkler) Bachman. She grew up on a dairy farm and loved the horses, kittens, and dogs. She would drive one team of horses all alone for mowing, raking, and drawing hay. Alice milked the cows both mornings and evenings. Alice and her brother Frederick enjoyed several years as siblings before he died in a farm accident in 1923 at the age of 13. Alice remembered this as the saddest night of her life. She always had a spot of soreness in her heart, longing many times for a brother or sister.



Alice attended a one-room schoolhouse in Naumburg where her father was a trustee. She formed teams with the boys to play baseball. In 1926 she began high school in Carthage and graduated in 1930. She wrote an autobiography for a high school assignment under the title "Leaves." Here are a few excerpts from the paper. "I want to give my children every chance to succeed in this world – to teach them the right way. Whether a family is large or small there is always a bond of love between its members. I shall try to follow the steps of our Savior so that I can enter that eternal life as one of His children."

On October 15, 1935, she married Norman N. Lehman at the First Baptist Church parsonage in Carthage. Mr. Lehman died on December 6, 1982. Together with her husband, the couple owned and operated her parents' dairy farm on Route 126 in Castorland from 1940 until 1972. They have seven children, three sons, James, Sanford and Clifford (twins), four daughters, Geneva Virkler, Janice Crofoot and Janet Tuley (twins), and Elsie Herzig, 20 grandchildren (one deceased), and 27 great-grandchildren.

Alice was a member of First Mennonite Church, New Bremen, where she was active with the ladies sewing circle. She had a strong belief in the value of higher education, so for several years she had each college student's address and major posted on a bulletin board at the church, and she then faithfully remained in touch with each of them. She also volunteered at the Agape Shoppe, Watertown. Alice made comforters/quilts for each of her children and grandchildren. She enjoyed writing letters to and receiving letters from her family, friends, and neighbors. She also enjoyed canning, gardening, embroidery, bird watching, animals, and flowers. She taught each of us the value of hard work.

She was happy to be able to attend the high school graduation of her great-grandson, Zach Virkler, where she was honored for her age at 100. Alice died on November 6, 2014, at the age of 102. She never complained about her "lot" in life – she quietly lived out her faith in her own way.

## **Tribute to Anna (Herzig) Widrick by Gordon Widrick and LaVerne (Widrick) Terrillion—**

Anna Widrick was born August 28, 1912, the same year the Croghan Mennonite Church was built. She grew up on the Long Pond Road on a small farm with sheep and about ten cows. Veryle and Jane Lyndaker live there now. After Ma and Dad married in 1931, they bought the farm on the Erie Canal Road beside the Kirscherville Cemetery.

Dad passed away in 1988. Mom lived alone on William Street until she died December 12, 2013, at the age of 101. She was legally blind for the last several years but made out well living alone. One of the family would check on her every day, and she was always content...never complained. Ma always said of all the churches in this area there's no reason for anyone not to be able to go to church. (Gordon Widrick)

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I seem to have good many memories of my mother since we moved West away from most of our family. I do remember her complaining that my weekly letters were taking too long to reach her. We finally surmised that if I mailed them on Wednesday, they reached home much quicker. After Dad's death and Mom moved into her mobile home, she seemed to think she should stay there; but after some convincing, she agreed to come visit us in the West. I would usually fly to New York, and she would fly back with me. She seemed to really enjoy flying and would usually spend four to six weeks with us.

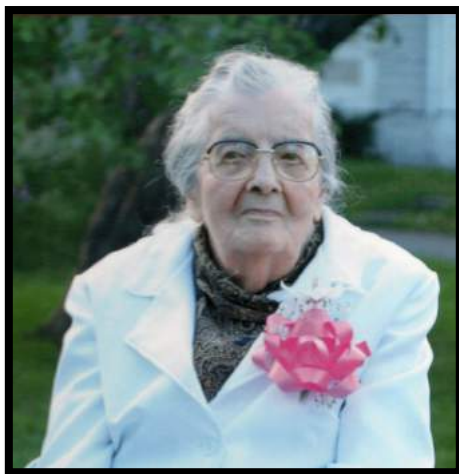
She and I spent quite a bit of time shopping at garage sales and often had to convince Mom that we could fit all her treasures in her suitcase for her return trip. We were always happy when we decided to drive her back to NY so we didn't have to sit on her suitcase to get it closed.

Mother always enjoyed going out to eat and was ready to try something new. She enjoyed camping whether it was close to home or to Yellowstone Park where a buffalo stuck his nose in our window, and we had to wait for him to move out of the road.

One year when Mom visited, she and I took a road trip through Oregon to the Pacific Coast. I remember convincing her to take off her shoes and stocking to stick her toes in the Pacific Ocean. We went through the tulip gardens in Oregon and down through the Redwood Forest. She loved all the beautiful flowers and was amazed at the huge trees.

Some of my cherished memories are taking her fishing in Montana even though there were no fish, going on a road trip to the Grand Canyon, Hoover Dam, and Las Vegas.

Mother never wanted Tom and me to move; but after her visits, she said that she would never have all the memories of our adventures because of her visits and neither would we. (LaVerne Terrillion)



## **Tribute To Our Mom, Anna (Roggie) Wagler by Lois Zehr—**

Mom was nearly in the middle of a family of ten from Andrew and Anna (Widrick) Roggie, born September 13, 1908. Her youngest brother, Irvin, was handicapped and she played a large part in his caregiving much of his life as he lived with her after Dad died. She outlived her whole family. After marrying Jacob Wagler June 14, 1932, they ran several farms and eventually purchased one on the West Road in Lowville, where they raised five children (in this order) – Edward, Mary Ellen, Lois (myself), Carol, and Glenn. Mom believed in being involved with the farm business, though she seldom did crop work or milked cows. She kept an organized household and made many of Dad's favorite foods (such as elderberry pie, which I didn't appreciate). She always loved gardening of vegetables, fruit trees, and flowers. In fact, in her 90s, she fell while watering flowers outside at Brookside and broke her hip, which required a partial replacement, as she desired to walk again.

We always had lots of music in our home. I will always reminisce when hearing the Chuck Wagon Gang, which we listened to on vinyl records. When I wanted a piano, Dad got special permission from Bishop Lloyd Boshart to have one. Mom loved music and taught us girls to sing alto at a young age.

We always attended church activities, and she taught Sunday school and vacation Bible school. She traveled Tug Hill to pick up children for VBS.

While on the farm, it wasn't unusual to have our grandmas, Uncle Irvin, or Aunt Molly living with us. In 1954, while Mom and Dad were in Watertown Christmas shopping, our youngest brother, Glenn, was killed on the road while sledding. Grandma Roggie was with us at the time. This grief was ever present with Mom, and while in her 90s since she couldn't see well, she asked me to write a letter of forgiveness to the driver. I always hoped he would respond.

After leaving the farm, Mom and Dad served in many ways. They spent a time in Ohio at Rosedale Bible School in food preparation. They also served at Beaver Camp many weekends. They loved to travel and flew to Colorado to attend the wedding of eldest grandson, Wayne Wagler. When Carla and her college roommate, Cheryl (Widrick) Steckly, wished to fly to Oregon to visit friends in 1981, Mom, Dad, Uncle Elmer, and Aunt Lola Roggie flew with them to visit relatives there. They also enjoyed many senior bus tours.

Mom pieced, embroidered, and hand quilted many quilts for us children and grandchildren while in their Maple Avenue home. While she was living at Brookside, she loved playing games each evening with her friends. After becoming 100, she wondered if God might have forgotten she was still here, and we know He watched over her every moment of 101 years, 1 month and 11 days (died October 24, 2009).

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## **Civilian Public Service (CPS) – Part II**

By Bernice Zehr

CPS owes its progress to some chief pioneers who worked tirelessly committed to the goals of alternative service for conscientious objectors. The Friends as a religious group took the lead with intervention in government policy. Paul C. French in 1939 wrote the book *We Won't Murder*, which analyzed the conscientious objectors' (COs) experience in World War I. As a writer and journalist, he had much experience with Washington and knowledge of persons of influence.

French represented the Historic Peace Churches (HPCs) in legislating for draft changes for COs. Their efforts were rewarded on September 14, 1940, when Congress passed the draft bill called the "New Selective Training Service Act." It allowed provision beyond just noncombatant service for COs. The definition for CO was broadened to include those who "by reason of religious training and belief had become conscientious objectors."

The HPCs, however, saw trouble down the road as local draft boards determined classifications. The program was to be run by Selective Service whose main job was conscripting fighting men, not COs.

The Selective Service, not wanting to deal with three separate religious agencies (Friends, Mennonites, and Brethren), insisted on the creation of the National Service Board for Religious Objectors (NSBRO) to be a clearinghouse for CPS matters. Selective Service was the ultimate arbiter for all CPS matters.

Eight members representing the three historic peace churches served the NSBRO governing board. On October 11, 1940, Paul French was elected as executive secretary, and he continued in that capacity through the war. M. R. Zigler (Church of the Brethren), with his skill of advocating for interdenominational cooperation, was elected as chairman. Orie Miller (Mennonite), with his MCC relief experience and serving on many boards and committees, became vice chair. Their assignment was "to handle all negotiations with the government on matters related to conscription." For the CPS program, NSBRO was answerable to the Selective Service.

NSBRO's assignment was to design an alternative service program. They were ahead of the government on this task as they had been working several years. The big problem they faced was getting funds to operate the program. Any money appropriated by Congress could only be used in government-operated camps. Most HPC groups rejected a program run by the government. The decision was made that the HPCs would finance the program. They hoped this would allow HPCs maximum autonomy in running their program. President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the executive order 8675 on February 6, 1941, and CPS was birthed.

General Hershey became director of Selective Services on July 31, 1941, and managed the draft system for the next 29 years. He generally favored the CPS program for solving the CO war problem. He preferred that COs serve in quieter and more out-of-the-way Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps. The pressure increased when options for humanitarian and social work projects were presented as this increased public contact.



Besides the two levels with Selective Service and NSBRO, each peace church had their own directorate. The American Friends Service Committee was located in Philadelphia, PA. The Mennonites used their relief agency MCC in Akron, PA, as a supervisory board of CPS. Eventually, more than 60 persons were located at Akron as administrative and support staff. The Church of the Brethren placed their CPS program under the Brethren Service Committee in Elgin, IL. Financially, they had difficulty as nearly half of the men in their camp units were not Brethren. Therefore, many of these non-Brethren men lacked adequate support groups to help with maintenance cost.

Beginning May 1941 through March 1947, the peace churches opened and operated 151 camps in 37 states and several countries with 11,996 men serving. Denominationally, Mennonites comprised the largest grouping with 4665 men, Church of the Brethren – 1353, Society of Friends – 951, Methodists – 673, Catholic – 149, Presbyterian – 192, etc. Over 1000 men were nonaffiliated denominationally.

The CPSers' day-to-day subsistence was the churches responsibility. Since MCC represented all Mennonite churches and had administrative staff, it was decided that contributions via goods and money would be funneled through MCC. A suggested operational quota per Mennonite was presented to each church and left up to participants' discretion. Churches were also encouraged to provide CPSers who had children and dependents at home. The churches' contribution of goods and money was approximately 3 million dollars to operate the camps under MCC direction

In World War II, men ages 18-45 years, single or married, were eligible for the draft. Eligible men were required to register with the draft board. A draftee would be sent a letter for date and location for a physical exam. If he passed the physical, he received the classification (1-A) for armed forces. If he failed the physical, he was classified as (4-F). To receive religious exemption (4-E) or noncombatant services (1-AO), the application was returned to Selective Service.

Local pastors and other congregants availed themselves to these men for counsel and assisting them through the draft process and sometimes accompanying them to their questioning before the review board. Eligible CPSers received government notice as to date and location of the camp they were to report to and their length of service time. Transportation cost was covered by government services. CPSers received literature from MCC regarding clothing and personal supplies.

The service charge for CPS was “work of national importance.” The first Mennonite camp began 1941 in Grottoes, VA. The camp was a former CCC camp, and the buildings were in great need of repair. MCC footed the bill of \$1400 for repairs and \$1100 for camp equipment prior to opening with more money spent later. On June 20, 1941, Sidney Schaefer, Amos Widrick, Menno Moser, and Ernest Steria were the first Lewis County CPSers to report. The work consisted of soil conservation, stabilizing gullies, planting seedlings, and diverting ditches, etc. Grottoes, like many other CPS camps, utilized abandoned CCC buildings as their first base camp; and CPSers continued the work initiated by the government in earlier years.



Inside barracks in Grottoes. Courtesy of Menno Moser, 1941.

Since many CPSers were from rural living with farming background, early projects featured these skills. Much of the labor was hard work involving menial and sometimes “meaningless busy work,” which increased frustration. Ednor Lyndaker noted “much of the work projects seemed rather purposeless, but the guys did what they were told.”

CPS camps were run with a shared control between the Selective Service and the church board (NSBRO). All work projects were supervised by government men employed by the federal government. NSBRO facilitated the day-to-day operations of the camp. Initially, camp directors were ministers sent by MCC and salary paid. This arrangement became too expensive and directors were then assigned to an inductee decided by education classification.

Camp directors were responsible for keeping monthly reports on each CPSer noting work time, behavior, leave time, illness, accidents, etc. These reports were sent to Selective Service. All assignments for the men had to be approved by Selective Service as were transfers, reclassifications, and appeals. Selective Service determined hours of work, holidays, and furloughs.

A nurse was assigned to each camp site to assist with health needs. Dieticians provided ongoing assistance with meal planning, recipes, coordinating nutritional plans, and arranging for food supplies.

Depending on camp location and proximity to local churches, arrangements were sometimes available for Sunday services and midweek studies. An educational director was assigned to each camp to help coordinate off-duty time. High school and college courses, studies in Mennonite history, crafts as well as libraries with reading materials were available. The CPS men were responsible for cooking, cleaning, and laundry at their camp. Surprise government inspections were made once per month for tidiness. Demerits could affect furlough option.

Camp life was on a strict schedule. The wake-up bell was at 6 a.m.; breakfast at 6:30 a.m. and also time for making up their cots, sweeping floor, and private devotions; boarded trucks for work at 7:45 a.m.; lunch at noon; work day ended at 5 p.m.; supper between 5 and 6:30 p.m.; free time between 6:30 and 9 p.m., which could include reading, sports, leather crafts, woodworking, classes, etc.; and curfew at 10 p.m. (could not be outside the barracks or would lose furlough days).

CPSers did not receive pay for their daily work. They were given a stipend of \$5 per month. The Army paid MCC \$15/month maintenance wage for each CPSer compared with the Army's \$50/month. CPSers were granted two weekends per month to be away. They were allotted 2.5 days each month for furlough. Vacation furloughs were usually allowed every four months equaling a one-week leave including travel time. CPSers had to pay their own travel. When traveling by bus, CPSers were designated to give up their seats for other travelers. This policy did not apply when traveling by train. CPSers were not granted time off for funerals or family events. Requests for furloughs were sent to the camp director and required approval by Selective Service. This time allowance was needed for processing.

## **Curator's Report**

By Rosanna M. Moser

Throughout this year, the archival office continued to catalog the ongoing collection of artifacts. For this season, we have completed about 160 accession items. The Spring 2023 newsletter will have a listing of the accessioned items deeded to AMHA in 2022.

Between August and October, the Mennonite Heritage Farm has had a number of activities with varied groups, such as Philip and Katie Moser reunion, neighborhood/volunteer picnic, luncheons, hiking/nature trail, etc. We are glad to have had the opportunity to host the following:

1. Lowville Middle School's Ignite Program – 14 students and 6 adults on August 1 for a full day, including the hiking/ nature trail.
2. Stewart's Shops sponsored the sixth children's full-day faires on Fine Arts – 36 students on August 2 AND Fiber Arts – 21 students on August 9.
3. Naumburg Mennonite Junior Youth – 26 children and 4 adults toured the farm and the hiking/nature trail on the evening of August 5. (See photo on page 11.)
4. Home schoolers – approximately 80 children and parents came for the afternoon on October 19.
5. Chamber of Commerce Leadership Academy – 25 adults toured on the afternoon of October 21.
6. River Valley Mennonite School Grade 6-8 students – 20 students and teachers on the morning of October 28
7. Beaver River Central School Grade 1 students – 62 students and teachers on the afternoon of October 28.

Besides the large number of Z Fest visitors and other group tours, the archival staff gave tours to approximately 105 visitors throughout this season. We are very glad that we could offer assistance to an individual from out-of-state recently to gain genealogy information on the pioneer Rudolph Virkler family. The archival office is open for anyone to do research and peruse the large holdings of genealogy and other reading material. The Mennonite Heritage Farm will reopen May 2023.

Please check out the "Videos" page periodically on the Mennonite Heritage Farm website for YouTube viewings. The May annual meeting panel discussion on 1W/V/S, the Moser/Moshier panel discussion held at the Z Fest, and the hiking and nature trail dedication are available for viewing.

The Virkler lettuce seed will be available on a donation basis again in the spring. The curator's office would appreciate hearing success stories of your growing the lettuce this past season.

Concluding with Dan Ziegler's final statement that drives the Anabaptist hermeneutic movement: "We believe that Jesus is who He says He is, that he meant what He says, and that He is talking to us." Lynn Miller



Naumburg Mennonite Junior Youth—  
 Left to right--Row 1: Courtney Pate, Elise Zehr, Adria Zehr, Hailey Zehr, Blake Noftsier, Noah Hoxie, Kenidy Moser, Shawn Moshier, Eli Zehr, and Collin Zehr.  
 Row 2: Zech Zehr, Heather Zehr, Alexis Zehr, Savannah Moser, Natalie Moshier, Clairissa Moser, Ethan Moshier, Caleb Moshier, Parker Schrag, Koda Moser, Josiah Thelander and Emilee Thelander.  
 Row 3: Liam Escudero, Isaac Roes, Hunter Moser, Daniel Noftsier, and Mason Zehr.

### Supporting AMHA

To support our various funds such as Endowment, Partnership, 20 for 10, and AMHA 2020 Vision, please call Don Roggie, treasurer (315-376-3076). A reminder to those who have access to retirement fund, your “Required Minimum Distribution” can be automatically transferred from your fund to AMHA tax free as a “Qualified Charitable Distribution.” It must go directly from the retirement fund to the nonprofit. We thank you for your prayers and financial support during these challenging times.

*NOTE:* The purpose of the “20 for 10 Fund” is to establish a support base committed to help offset heat, utilities, and insurance. Other fundraisers such as occasional bake sales, Z Fest, and special meals can then truly be fundraisers for ongoing projects. The fund enlists committed people to pay \$20 a month for 10 months per year. Participants can choose their months for payment.

**Wish/Donation List**

We are looking for 1988/1989 two-volume *Farney-Virkler-Zehr* genealogy books. The archival office welcomes your wedding program, if you have one to donate. We have very few in the holdings and wish to expand it.

### Amazon Smile Program

When you shop at [www.amazonsmile.com](http://www.amazonsmile.com), the AMHA Board of Directors asks you to support Adirondack Mennonite Heritage Association and Historical Society for your charity selection. Thank you!



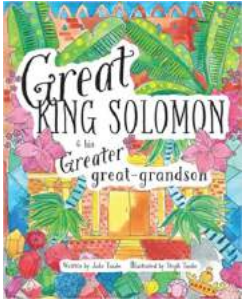
**Corrected Answer Key –  
Choral Group Members**

Left to right – front row: Edwin Moshier (director), Elton Moser, Ellis Moser, **Edward Roggie**, Azor Kennell, **Clayton Moser**, Simon Gingerich, Jr., and Donald Roggie.

Middle row: Arthur Zehr (Beaver Falls), Kenneth Erb, Elton Roggie (Carthage), Vernon Zehr, Emmanuel Kennell, Arthur Zehr (Indian River), Elton Erb, and Leonard Roes.

Back row: Elmer Roggie, Milton Lehman, Levi Zehr, Alvin Zehr, Jr., Mervin Good, Aaron A. Widrick, and Perry Farney.

AMHA welcomes the following NEW members: Lyle L. Lehman, Brian K. Long, Lois Lyndaker, Marilyn Lyndaker, Loren Moshier, Larry and Angela Noftsier, Kevin and Sue Roggie, Martha Steria, and Keith and Connie Zehr.



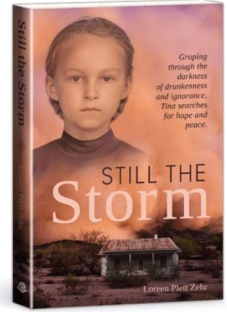
By Jake Taube

### New Books in Gift Shop

Please check for the complete listing of books/DVDs available at the website:

<https://mennoniteheritagefarm.com/post.php?pid=11>

You may email [info@mennoniteheritagefarm.com](mailto:info@mennoniteheritagefarm.com) or call 315-376-7822 for Christmas gift orders.



By Loren Plett Zehr

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  
Lowville, NY 13367

**For Sale:** John Deere A tractor  
Please call Neil Keib—315-571-8151

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