



Notes from the Farm

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President's Report

Sam Gingerich

Greetings, as I reflect on the activities of the Adirondack Mennonite Heritage Association (AMHA) this past year, it's apparent that we continue to be driven by our mission: *"The mission of the Adirondack Mennonite Heritage Association is to collect, record, interpret and share the cultural heritage of the Anabaptists of Northern New York from the 1830s to the present."*

This year's Zwanzigstein Fest (Z Fest), our signature activity, was an opportunity for families and community members to explore the holdings of the Association displayed in the archives and around the Farm. In June, AMHA sponsored a community hymn sing at Beaver River Central School with plans to continue these, with one at Lowville Academy and Central School in 2024 and one at Carthage Central School in 2025. In addition, there have been programs for school age youth throughout the summer, and school groups have visited this fall. Throughout the year, we have welcomed families and friends to tour the Farm.

Legacy 500, our program which brings Anabaptist thought leaders to our community, continues to provide a unique perspective of our Anabaptist heritage, a key part of our mission. The purpose of Legacy 500 is to provide an opportunity to reflect on our heritage of the faith while considering who we were, who we are, and who we want to become. Please join us as these programs continue in anticipation of the 500th Anniversary of Anabaptism in 2025.

The Board continues to commit to making sure the Farm and the Association are open to our many publics. In addition to our regular Monday and Wednesday times this year, the Farm was also open Saturdays during the summer allowing visitors to the community more opportunities to appreciate the farmstead and archives. We expect to continue this into the future.

I'd like to acknowledge Ms. Ella Barker who worked at the Farm this summer as a docent and an archivist. Ms. Barker, a 2023 graduate of Beaver River, now attending Mt. Holyoke College, MA, was supported by a grant under the Workership Program offered by the Pratt Northam Foundation. AMHA appreciates the support from the Foundation and the work done by Ella.

This spring we welcomed Jacob Waugh as a new AMHA board member. In addition to his appreciation for our shared history, he brings a wealth of experience in retail management, which is proving beneficial to the board. At our annual community picnic, we took a few minutes to thank Harold Deveines, Neil Keib, Paul Schamback, and Janet Zehr, all of whom dedicated their time as board members. The Association is grateful for their service.

In many ways, this highlights one of the challenges facing the Association. The Board recognizes its importance in shepherding AMHA forward as a mission-driven organization. We are actively recruiting board members from all our constituents including Anabaptist-related churches in the region. If anyone reading this is interested in serving on the Board, please contact a board member. As a note, we recently changed the bylaws so we can meet by zoom which would allow individuals outside of Lewis County to serve. Similarly, if you have suggestions, please pass along the names of those who should be considered for board membership.

Individuals who are Harvest Host members with RVs or campers may use our parking lot for one overnight without cost. Harvest Host members are required to visit the site and give a donation and/or make a purchase at the gift shop. A recent visitor posted this review on Harvest Host website: "...We had the whole place to ourselves. HUGE gravel parking lot surrounded by grass, corn fields and trees. This place was one of our favorites so far! So quiet and peaceful." He made a drone video that may be seen on our website.

The Board acknowledges the number of significant memorial donations we continue to receive. As these gifts come to fruition, we will continue to recognize the individuals and families behind these contributions. In this light, visitors may have noted that a set of trees, five (5) maples and two (2) oaks, were planted on the south side of the farm lane to the woods. These seedlings were offered after the funeral service for Lewis Schweitzer and have been planted in his memory. More recently, a maple tree was planted on the west side of the Z Garden. This tree was donated by the family of Grace and Elmer Steria in recognition of their cousin, Marilyn Zehr Mayer (Wilfred). The family asked that the tree be planted in a location that will insure it provides shade for visitors. The Board welcomes other donations such as this that recognize those who reflect Anabaptist values as they touched us during their time with us.

Most importantly, the success of AMHA is based on our dedicated staff and the many volunteers who give freely of their time. Your monies in support of AMHA is appreciated. To discuss funding options, please call Don Roggie, treasurer (315-376-3076). A reminder to those who have access to a 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. To each of you, we thank you for your prayers and financial support during these challenging times.

New Board Director



I, Jacob Waugh, have been a store manager at Tractor Supply Company since 2019, first at the Lowville store, then at the Carthage store, where I earned the 2021 Region 2 Store Manager of the Year award. I am currently back at the Lowville location and have been in retail since 2006 with both Lowe's Home Improvement and Tractor Supply Company. Other board activities include being a trustee at Pine Grove Mennonite Church, now Living Hope Ministries since 2018.

My wife Christy was from Ohio, and we have been married for 13 years. My parents are Elon and Mary (Zehr) Waugh, and my mom's parents are Earl and Norine (Moser) Zehr. I grew up on the Joseph Moser homestead across from the Mennonite Heritage Farm.

I graduated from SUNY Oswego with a degree in US History and enjoy working on genealogies and watching documentaries. My experience in various levels of retail management will be a benefit to help guide AMHA in the future.

"The Heart of a Servant"

Bernice Zehr

Through the years, AMHA has been blessed by the services donated by Pearl A. Zehr and Ralph and LaVeda Taube. Their servant styles appear to have been choices made early in life, gifted throughout, and extending well beyond retirement.

On Sunday afternoons, I enjoyed visiting Pearl first at her ranch style home in Croghan and later in "real retirement" at her Brookside apartment. Pearl had a way of bridging the gap of our 23 years, and I soon discovered she did the same with many others. Her residences had open doors to her siblings, nieces and nephews, colleagues, etc. An evening was easily spent "teeheeing" about growing up in her family of 19, EMC days, and accounts of learning from her first graders.



It was Pearl who taught me the importance of volunteering and suggested AMHA could use my talents for programming, etc. Mentoring was at the forefront as she continued to share and inspire. Her best teaching style was invitation and doing. To Pearl, involvement was a choice, and time was a gift to be given. Well into her nineties, her interest in AMHA continued, and she kept up to date. While using a quad cane, she still felt she could bake something for our upcoming bake sale. I suggested she be exempt and mentioned that she, Phyllis Lyndaker, Joyce Moser, Luella Moshier, LaVeda Taube, and many others had already baked their way through paying off the farm mortgage. I stated, "Pearl, now it's our turn." She smiled, but I noticed the wheels were turning. It was the same wheels that inspired her to share the Bible passage Joshua 4:1-7 for an AMHA board meeting. She desired that generations to come would likewise be inspired to remember God's faithfulness. Norm Moshier and Evan Zehr were inspired by her sharing at that meeting, and it provided the catalyst for the theme of 20 stones (20 families) and thus Zwanzigstein (Z Fest).



Likewise, through volunteering, I came to know Ralph and LaVeda Taube. While readying for Z Fest at the Heritage Farm, I would frequently hear a lady call outside through the back door, "Ralph." I would hear a response from Ralph and see him head to the house or another building. He might be back to fetch a ladder or a tool from a vehicle. This went on a good share of the day. At one point, I ran into Ralph and stated, "Ralph, I think if I were you, I would hide and play gone." Ralph twinkled, broke into a big grin, and took off to do the next job. This scene would represent itself in many ways over the next years. Ralph would problem solve most anything and pleasantly worked quietly and methodically.

I learned more about them as LaVeda planned bake sales and would contact me about baking cookies. Bake sales were held on a small table in the entryway to Tops store.

I volunteered one Saturday. It was winter time and cool. Ralph disappeared for a while into the store. He came back and handed a warm deli package to LaVeda. She brightly beamed, peeked inside, and said, "Oh, Ralph, thank you. It looks good." It was pizza for two and obviously Ralph was still in touch.

Later, I joined the AMHA Board and was able to spend more time with Ralph and LaVeda. I enjoyed stopping by their home and chatting. "Won't you come in," LaVeda would say. It didn't seem to matter what she had been doing or planned to do, she had time. I heard my mom say that someone had called her. She could not think of her name as she stated, "Oh, you work with them. You know them." I discovered it was LaVeda calling my mom to share a friendly chat.



Board meetings would consist of planning events and then trying to find people to volunteer and carry through. It was not unusual to observe a nonverbal communication between Ralph and LaVeda. She would place her hand sweetly on Ralph's arm, look into his eyes, and Ralph might nod. LaVeda would say, "I think we could do that. Ralph and I will do that together." They would then follow up with more questions and details. I wasn't sure who did what; but with the consent, it was as good as done.

AMHA has been blessed by these talented people who chose to regift. They left to me their legacy of time, friendship, and loving example. Thank you!

Z Fest 2023

Bernadine Schwartzentruber

Beautiful weather welcomed about 365 visitors/volunteers to our 31st Zwanzigstein Fest "Come Home to the Olde Farm" on July 8. Out-of-state visitors were from Florida, Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and Saudi Arabia. This year's event was coordinated with the Croghan Home Days. The Heritage Farm had a float as part of the Croghan parade on the evening of July 7.

Children enjoyed activities such as bread baking, cookie making, butter making, and best of all, tasting their creations! To decrease the work load, we eliminated the silent auction, marketplace, and antique booth. This freed up space in the barn for other booths that did not need canopies. We want to focus more on providing a relaxing place for visitors to interact and chat with others.

A new storage shed contains the canopies and accessories that were in the horse stalls in the barn. The dessert booth was moved to a canopy. This opened up the milk house for visitors to enjoy. Eighteen (18) people helped churn ice cream which entitled them to a free dish! A food ticket booth eliminated money handling at the four (4) food stations. A new ramp with hand rails built by Neil Keib at the show wagon was much appreciated by the singing groups. The completed driveway by the barn made it very convenient for the singers to park near the show wagon.

One disappointment was the cancellation of the horse wagon rides through the woods. A mother bear and two cubs were spotted in the area prior; and for safety reasons, the rides were not offered.

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 2024 event even better! We have set the date of June 29, 2024, for the next Z Fest and plan to have a "barn raising" to erect a pavilion. If you have photos of barn raisings within the Mennonite community, the archival office welcomes the donations.

The Widrick panel interview, consisting of LeEtta (Lyndaker) Widrick and Loren Widrick led by Bernice Zehr, is available in audio YouTube on the website: <https://mennoniteheritagefarm.com/events.php>

Curator's Report

Rosanna M. Moser

We appreciate the artifacts that continue to be donated. The archival has processed over 200 accessions this season. A complete listing of the deeded donations will occur in the spring newsletter.

We archive obituary cards, funeral/memorial programs, welcome wedding programs, and especially interested in learning to know the time frame for formal wedding invitations (also donations) first used in the Mennonite community, which is believed to have been after 1945. The archival office is holding the Conservative Mennonite Conference/

Rosedale Network of Churches' records (committee reports, etc.) held in Lewis County up to 1992 and wish to acquire same for 2004, 2014, and 2023. A bookcase would be greatly appreciated to hold our growing library.

For seven years, AMHA has received a grant from Stewart's Shops to sponsor learning activities with children. Over a three-day period in early August, we had a total of 50 children participate in painting, sculpting, embroidery, weaving, and craft classes. We are thankful for the following teachers who made this event a success: Diana Roes (painting), Kyle Zehr (sculpting), Pauline Lehman, LeEtta Widrick, and Carolyn Erb Zehr (embroidery), Aila Birk (weaving), and Loretta Moser, LeEtta Widrick, and Berneda Zehr (craft).



A number of groups have visited the farm during our open season...Rosedale Network of Churches, home schoolers, BRCS first graders, ARC – Oneida and Lewis Chapter, Leadership Academy, out-of-state visitors from the Apostolic Christian Church, etc. In addition, we had approximately 95 visitors between May and October besides the Z Fest crowd. We appreciate the growing interest of individuals also doing research in the archives.

The two-volume *Farney Virkler Zehr* books (1989) are available online at <https://www.familysearch.org/en/>. You will need to join Family Search (free), if not already enrolled. Here are the direct links to the two volumes:

<http://www.familysearch.org/library/books/idurl/1/365633>

<http://www.familysearch.org/library/books/idurl/1/372574>

If anyone is interested in the 1933 edition of the *Farney Virkler Zehr Families*, we have a used book available in the gift shop.

One can view past *Notes from the Farm* on the Mennonite Heritage Farm website under “News” or at <https://mennoniteheritagefarm.com/post.php?pid=14>.

Legacy 500 – Anabaptist Personalities

Norman Moshier

Lynn Miller was the spring guest speaker April 23-25 in the continuing series sponsored by the Adirondack Mennonite Heritage Association. The purpose of this series is to illuminate our reflections on the 500th Anniversary of Anabaptism coming in 2025, to stimulate our vision for the future, and deepen our present walk of faith.

Lynn Miller is known to many of us for his work as an ‘itinerant pastor’ teaching and preaching the theology of stewardship across the Mennonite church. Lynn, who is something of a personality himself, spoke about several slices of Anabaptist/Mennonite history through the lens of key personalities. The first session focused on Conrad Grebel and Michael Sattler...Swiss and South German Anabaptism.

Grebel was attracted to Ulrich Zwingli’s reform in Zurich. When Zwingli deferred to the city council and did not follow what Grebel and several others saw to be the clear teachings of Jesus, they moved ahead. Infant/adult baptism was a central point of disagreement. Grebel did not baptize his infant daughter and then on January 21, 1525, he and several others baptized each other. Lynn described this as “the beginning of the believers’ church; ...the first time since Constantine there was a baptism on confession of faith.”

Michael Sattler was a Benedictine prior who left the order and began relating with the “Swiss Brethren” in Zurich. He was instrumental in writing the *Schleitheim Confession of Faith*. Some central themes of this confession were mutual discipline, the Last Supper, separation from evil, the sword/the way of nonviolence, and the oath. “We don’t worship a creed, but the person of Jesus Christ,” said Lynn, “We believe Jesus meant what he said and was talking to us.” While Schleithem didn’t unify everyone, it made clear what was the center of Anabaptism.

The second session focused on the Netherlands and the low countries through the life of Menno Simons and also on the history of the *Martyrs Mirror*. Menno was a Catholic priest who over time became a converted Anabaptist. He became an important leader, a gifted pastor, and called for a biblical base in “leading the flock.” He was one of few Anabaptist leaders who died a natural death. In 1660, Thieleman J. van Braght published *Martyrs Mirror* containing accounts of the imprisonment and execution of many Anabaptists. In describing the history of the *Martyrs Mirror* publication of this book, Lynn emphasized how suffering has been part of our theology.

The final sessions focused on “division and struggle” ...” the search for the pure church.” Here Lynn reviewed the history of “The Golden Age” of Dutch movements as well as Jakob Ammann and the Amish division. Finally, Lynn presented an overview of the movement of Mennonites/Mennonite Brethren from the Vistula Delta to Ukraine to Canada. Through this period, they struggled with self-governance, wealth, and the issue of self-defense. Lynn emphasized that Jesus resisted evil but did it in a nonviolent way. Lynn’s practical and personal approach to this history was very inspiring.

Cemeteries—Part III

Rosanna Moser and Janet Zehr

This is a continuation of acknowledging individuals who have been actively involved in varied responsibilities of Mennonite cemeteries.

First Mennonite Church New Bremen Cemetery – 1943 to present: Grave diggers (manual labor): Ben F. Zehr, Perry Farney, Wilbur Moser, Everett Lehman, Eric Grau, Andy Grau and Zachary Virkler (July 2013 to present). Written records for cemetery lawn care includes the following from 1962 to the present: William Lehman, Ezra Lehman, Randy Schweitzer, Kenneth Lehman, Noel Lehman, Lester Bauman, Donald and Carol Clemens, Walter Zehr, Jay Zehr, Warren Lyndaker, Alton Virkler, Gregory Virkler, Eli Watkins, Shawn Rice, and Landon Rice. Since the beginning of the cemetery in 1943, the people who dig the graves get paid for their services. The first burial was an infant son of Ezra and Clara Roggie Lehman whose birth and death was on Thanksgiving Day, November 26, 1942;

Clara died a few days later after the baby was born (December 2, 1942, age 39). She had complications during childbirth.

Naumburg Mennonite Cemetery had its first burial in September 1998 (Robert J. Brown). The cemetery committee did the lawn care until about 2007. Subsequently, Larry Noftsier took over until 2017; Allan Roggie started in 2018. The graves are opened with a backhoe due to clay soil. Jim Marolf and Rod Mattis were responsible until 2018. Stanley Jantzi and sons have been responsible since 2019.

Crystal Light Mennonite Cemetery had its first burial in May 1984 (Timothy Burkholder, deacon) at the original New Bremen cemetery (established in 1972). The first burial in the cemetery established in 2016 behind the present Crystal Light Mennonite Church is Anthony R. Zehr in April 2017. The trustees make the decisions for seeing that the grave yard/lawn is maintained, and the cemetery committee for the grave digging.

Denmark Mennonite Cemetery was established when the Hope Mennonite Fellowship and cemetery relocated from the Number Four Road, Watson, to Route 26, Denmark, in September 2016. The first burial was in 1978 (Cynthia Hess).

Shekinah Mennonite Fellowship Cemetery was established in 2004 and has no burials to date.

Kirschnerville Cemetery. Pioneer John Moser donated a piece of land for the cemetery in 1870, which was deeded in 1874. **MORE NOTES:** Additional strips of land (ca. 1925) were assumed donated by neighbors, Philip Moser and Solomon Widrick. Acreage for the present cemetery is one acre plus another three acres donated by Dale Moser that is outside the chain link fence for the total property.

From cemetery written records since 1995, we acknowledge the longest serving members on the Cemetery Committee (Croghan and Kirschnerville Cemetery) for their dedication and commitment to date: John Zehr, Jr. (27 consecutive years), Roger Zehr (21 consecutive years), and Gary Widrick (19 years).

Peter and Melody Monnat and family, thank you for the excellent maintenance of the Croghan and Kirschnerville Cemetery since 1996 (27 years to date).



Tribute to Grandma - Barbara Mary (Virkler) Bachman

Compiled by her Grandchildren



Barbara Mary (Virkler) Bachman was born on December 15, 1877, in the town of New Bremen on Riverside Farm next to the Illingsworth Bridge (presently home of Rodney and Joanne Dicob). She was the oldest of eight children of Joseph J. and Anna Farney Virkler. On December 25, 1902, she married Joseph C. Bachman in Lowville and settled on the Bachman family homestead farm in Naumburg. Grandpa and Grandma had the following two children: a son, Frederick, who died at the age of 12 in a farm accident, and a daughter, Alice. In the early 1940s, the farm was taken over by their daughter and son-in-law, Norman Lehman. Grandpa passed away on August 1, 1954.

She had the following seven grandchildren: Geneva (Alton) Virkler, Janice (Robert) Crofoot, Janet (Frank) Tuley, James (Donna) Lehman, Elsie (Gary) Herzig, Sanford (Gay) Lehman, and Clifford (Cathy) Lehman. Grandma had 19 great-grandchildren as well. Five sisters, two brothers, her son-in-law Norman, and a great-grandson, Kurt Virkler, predeceased her.

Farming was a way of life for her as she was raised on a dairy farm, and her husband was a farmer. She said “All these years of working on the farm helped me to get to this age. I would hate to think of how many cows I milked in my lifetime.” Later in life, she would often remark on how wonderful the scent of freshly cut hay was and how the process of cutting and storing hay now was so different from when she was a child. Unlike her siblings, Grandma never learned how to drive a car. (Maybe she was most comfortable just driving horses!) Grandma looked forward to the threshing season when farmers from the neighborhood would get together to assist with threshing on each other's farms.

They kept hens for many years and once a week would deliver eggs to their regular customers in Carthage. Frequently, customers requested dressed chickens, so they started selling them in addition to eggs. It took a lot of work to butcher and pluck the chickens in order to get them ready for sale.

Grandma had a very large garden and canned many vegetables as well as fruit, beef, chicken, and pork. Grandma and Grandpa often went berry picking. The berries were then canned or used to make jams and jellies. She enjoyed taking care of her numerous flower beds. She made desserts on a regular basis and shared them with her daughter and family (who lived next door), so baking was done almost weekly or daily. She enjoyed preparing dinners for large gatherings of relatives and friends. Her specialty dishes (and favorites of her grandchildren) included homemade noodles coated in bread crumbs, chocolate mayonnaise cake with fudge frosting, and “sinkers” (deep-fried glazed donuts).

Grandma enjoyed writing and receiving letters from her family, friends, and neighbors. She took great pleasure in reading; and even as her vision deteriorated in later years, a magnifying glass kept her up to date on the latest news! Grandma kept a diary on a daily basis in which she noted the weather, everyday activities, and world and national events, especially those related to presidential elections. She often said, "We should pray for our President."

For a number of years, Grandpa Bachman served as trustee of the small rural school close to Naumburg, where he was in charge of both hiring teachers and writing their paychecks! Grandma helped to maintain and clean the school building. Teachers occasionally spent a period of time living in their home due to housing or transportation issues. Grandma had a keen interest in education and was always curious about what her grandchildren were learning or doing in school.

On Christmas Day in 1904, Grandma and Grandpa were baptized outdoors at Naumburg Evangelical Baptist Church (now Apostolic Christian Church), of which she was a member for 79 years. (Apostolic Christian churches typically have two services on Sundays with lunch served in between.) When it was Grandma's turn to serve, she frequently baked multiple loaves of raisin bread to go with her homemade jams and jellies.

Grandma was mentioned on NBC's *Today* show on her 105th birthday. Her 104th birthday was marked by author Dudley Danielson's dedication to her of his book *Lewis County U.S.A.*

Our grandmother instilled in us the value of hard work, a love of church and family, and a faith in God. She died on February 7, 1984, at the Lewis County General Hospital at the age of 106.

Tribute to Our Mom, Mildred Anna (Farney) Zehr

Sue (Zehr) Matuszczak and Ginny (Zehr) Trobert

Mildred was born on May 4, 1915, on a farm in the town of New Bremen, daughter of Clinton and Anna (Hofer) Farney. She grew up in a large extended family and was always close to and enjoyed her siblings, Howard, Everett, Marie, and Robert plus many cousins and aunts and uncles. There was no electricity, but the Farney farm had generators and was a gathering place for family and neighbors to listen to the events of World War II on the radio in the parlor. Marine PFC Calvin Farney, her first cousin, was killed on Iwo Jima at the age of 19. Two of Mom's great-grandchildren, Abby and Mike Eisel, are the fifth generation to live in the original Farney farmhouse on the VanAmber Road, and the radio is now next door in Tom and Linda Zehr's home. Tom and Linda own the Farney farm and live in a new house next to the farm house. The farm land is beautiful with huge crops of corn, potatoes, pumpkins, wheat, apple trees, and vegetable gardens flourishing.



Mom attended the one-room school house on the VanAmber Road through eighth grade. For the first two years of high school, she took the train from New Bremen to Lowville staying with her Aunt Mary for the week. Her father would pick her up on Friday and bring her back to the farm. School buses took over for the train when she was a junior. Mom graduated from Lowville Free Academy in 1933. She was the only member of her graduating class to attend the Bicentennial Celebration of Lowville Academy in 2009 and rode in the parade with Harold Tiffany in his Model T. Following her graduation, Mom continued to live on the farm to care for her mother, Anna, who died from a stroke in 1937 and to keep house for her father and brothers. She also worked as secretary to the manager of Upstate Telephone Company for ten years. Mom took several train trips, including a trip with her sister and cousins to NYC for the 1940 World's Fair.

Mom married our father, Frederick Jonas Zehr, Sr., after the war on May 25, 1946, at St. Stephen's Catholic Church in Croghan. Our father was a Sergeant in the Army during WWII and was overseas for 36 months. They lived in the Shinbourne house on Main Street in Croghan until 1951 when they purchased a home and small farm on the Swiss Road. Our father worked at the Latex Paper Mill in Beaver Falls as well as maintained the farm. Mom was a kindhearted and wonderful mother to their six children, Fritz, Sue, Tom, Ginny, Jeff, and Cindy. In 1959 they purchased a dairy farm on State Route 177. Mom's life centered on raising her children and homemaking. She helped with many of the farm chores and maintained the financial records for the farm. Aunt Marie, our mother's only sister, was always there to help Mom with us kids, celebrate holidays, and many just ordinary days. It was a huge loss to Mom, her brothers, and all of our family when she died at the age of 48.

Mom and Dad sold the farm to Tom and retired to their home on Shady Avenue, Lowville. They remained active taking care of their home and yard, gardening, and transporting elderly persons to medical appointments for Office for the Aging. Mom was happy to babysit their young grandchildren whenever needed. They enjoyed spending the holidays with their children and grandchildren, visiting family and friends, and taking car rides on country roads in Lewis County. Our parents had a long life together filled with much love and happiness.

They celebrated 54 years of marriage and had 13 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren, and 8 great-great-grandchildren. After our father passed away on May 10, 2000, Mom was able to remain in her own home for the rest of her life. Mom passed away peacefully at home on March 6, 2018, at the age of 102 with family at her side.

Mom enjoyed cooking (especially baking), needlework, sewing, crossword puzzles, playing cards and family gatherings. She and Dad always had a vegetable garden, and Mom froze many vegetables and canned tomatoes every year. Mom sewed many of our clothes when we were little, knit and crocheted many hats, mittens, afghans, and prayer shawls through the years. She especially loved playing euchre from the time she was 6 until she was 102. Tuesday night was official "card night" for years, and there was always lots of laughter, teasing, and fun. Of course, euchre was never limited to "Tuesday," and there were games anytime there was a gathering, including many of the grandchildren, who learned to play.



Mom was a communicant of St. Peter's Church, a member of St. Therese's Guild and West Lowville Home Demonstration Group. Mom and Dad were wonderful people who loved and were so very proud of their family. We were so blessed.

"Family ties are precious threads
no matter where we roam,
They pull us close to those we love
and draw our hearts toward home."

Civilian Public Service (CPS) – Part III

Bernice Zehr

On October 15, 1941, Bishop (Jr.) Jacob Gingerich united Ednor Lyndaker and Fannie Widrick in marriage at the Lowville Amish Mennonite Church. One week later on October 23, Ednor traveled to Sideling Hill Camp #20 at Wells Tannery, Pennsylvania, to begin a two-year CPS assignment. Forty years later upon recall, Ednor jokingly reported, “I spent my honeymoon in Pennsylvania with 60 other men. Fannie didn’t have a honeymoon.”



The men who had arrived at Sideling Hill Camp in early October became quite ill due to water problems. Ednor noted, “The camp was not quite ready for inductees.” Things had improved when Ednor arrived. Work consisted of digging ditch by hand. Pole holes were to be 36” deep but were revamped to 30” due to the land fill, which was mainly shale. Their work also consisted of working on the Pennsylvania turnpike. Following the December 7 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, all of the inductees’ time was changed from two-year assignments to “the duration of the war.” At a later date, inductees were given two-year assignments.

Five months after his Sideling Hill arrival, Ednor received word that his mother-in-law, Rachel Widrick, had died March 28, 1942, at age 48 with complication of diseases. Fannie was the oldest in her family. At home her siblings were the following: Saviera (Sally), age 19; Arthur, age 18; Barbara, age 16; Arlene, age 12; and John, age 8. After Fannie’s marriage, she had remained at home to assist the family. Ednor was given furlough to attend the funeral.

Spiritually, CPS was a growth time for Ednor. He noted, “I found the Lord in CPS.” Libraries were provided at the camps, and he spent several hours most evenings reading and researching. He also worked in a woodworking shop at camp. Woodworking was new to him. He built a nightstand for his belongings; and with that initial skill, he went on to make another out of black walnut and oak to be sent home to Fannie. On September 23, 1942, Ednor and Fannie were blessed with a first-born son, Milford.

Ednor was allowed furlough trips home approximately every four months. Transportation cost was individually borne. The seven-day furlough also encompassed travel time. Ednor quickly learned that travel via train vs. bus, although more expensive, was the superior option as buses took local routes and frequent stops ate up precious time. Sideling Hill Camp and other places in Pennsylvania were prime choices, especially for married men with families close by as it provided easier contact.

Ednor’s brother Arthur entered CPS December 30, 1942, at Sideling Hill Camp. Arthur became frustrated with the day-to-day menial hand labor. For several years, he had run a successful logging camp around Croghan and was an experienced manager and equipment operator. Art questioned the CPS motto of “doing work of national importance” and felt his daily contribution was not adding up. He even questioned if he should switch his endeavors to the armed forces. The two brothers had many discussions. Ednor encouraged Art to become involved with neighboring churches. In the process of attending local churches, Arthur met Lillian Beiler from Ronks, PA, and struck up a friendship.

In the spring of 1944, Ednor was transferred to a camp at Bellefonte, PA, for 11 months, where he was involved with planting trees for wild life use and collecting seeds. It was during this time that he slipped carrying a roll of wire. He was bent over backward injuring his back. He was fitted for a brace and worked in laundry and the kitchen at the camp.



Ednor Lyndaker

Art was transferred to Hill City, South Dakota, on April 10, 1944, where land was being cleared to build a dam. Here he was able to exercise his logging and large equipment skills and reportedly enjoyed his time at the camp.

Sideling Hill camp closed Fall 1944, and Ednor spent the next seven weeks at Camp #33 at Fort Collins, Colorado. He petitioned for a transfer to Maryland because of his desire to be nearer home as the birth of his second child was expected in December. Ednor's transfer to Clear Spring, Maryland, began November 15, 1944, where his job was to do lawn maintenance. Upon arriving in Maryland, he met Nevin Lehman, a new CPSer from home who claimed Ednor as a godsend because Nevin stated, "I had a really bad case of homesickness."

On December 24, 1944, Ednor received word that his daughter Shirley was born and was granted a five-day furlough to return home, which he did. Just prior to leaving for New York, he had received a letter from Arthur announcing that wedding bells were in the plans for Lillian and him. He requested that Ednor be a part of the wedding party and petition furlough time for April 1945. Art and Lillian had made a trip to Northern New York so Lillian could meet Art's family. The couple met with approval.

Soon after Ednor's return back to Maryland, he received word that his brother Arthur was killed in a tree accident in South Dakota on January 8, 1945. Art was obtaining some firewood for the camp with the bulldozer when he was struck by a tree. Initially, he was responsive but hurting. He died on the way to the hospital. Ednor was granted five days advanced furlough to attend the funeral in New York. With the advanced furlough, he was unable to return home and see his daughter Shirley again until she was six months old.



Meanwhile, Ednor's back problems were worsening. He was seen by an orthopedist in Baltimore, Maryland. Ednor was found to have congenital malformation and also a disc problem. Surgery was performed at Johns Hopkins Hospital on September 8, 1945, with a bone graft from his left hip for fusion to bone in the lower portion of his spine. Now it was Fannie's turn to travel, and she stayed with Ednor for six weeks. He was casted from shoulders to knees and released at eight weeks. The camp director allowed him to pack his belongings, and Ednor arrived home Thanksgiving Day 1945. The war ended the fall of 1945.

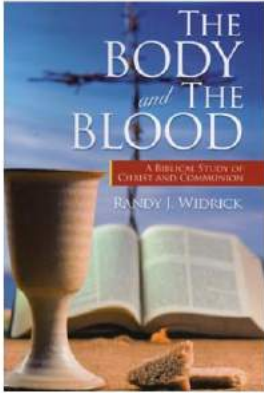
As with any major life event, there is an afterglow. I spoke with Milford Lyndaker, and he recalls the first Sunday they went to church after his father's return home. Milford said, "I sat with my dad in church, and I cried through most of the service. I still remember the day. I was three years old, and I really didn't know my dad. I remember I wanted to sit with my mother." He also said, "Dad admitted that he didn't know what I was going through in those early years." Albert N. Keim notes in his book *The CPS Story* on page 97 that "among those most victimized by this situation were the dependents of COs. Over one-third of all men in CPS were responsible for dependents. The pressure on many of them was inordinate."

Ednor was advised by the orthopedic surgeon to pursue light work upon returning home so his back could heal. Previous to CPS, he had worked at logging jobs in the woods. Ednor chose to work at a local mill. His supervisor was Carl Kuhl, who Ednor described as "very understanding." Difficulty, however, erupted from Ednor's coworkers who were very unhappy with his conscientious objector (CO) status, which made problems at work. Ednor met with his supervisor and decided to quit, wishing not to instigate further issues. Ednor then returned to work in the woods. Milford felt that this greatly jeopardized his healing process.

With a 40-year review of CPS, Ednor stated the following: "During CPS one needed a strong devotional life. I learned perseverance through digging post holes in very tough ground. I learned to stand on my own two feet. I spent a lot of time in the library studying. I learned to get along without money and learned what is essential."

On December 21, 1945, Ednor was officially discharged from service. Ednor's initial two-year CPS assignment with extension to "duration of the war" expanded to a service of 4 years, 1 month, and 21 days. Isaiah 64:4 states, "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waited for him." Waiting for God, trusting and renewing their faith was an experience for Ednor and Fannie. Now they could continue to engage their family side by side. Speaking of CPSers, Milford Lyndaker's wife Carolyn stated, "They left a rich legacy." 11

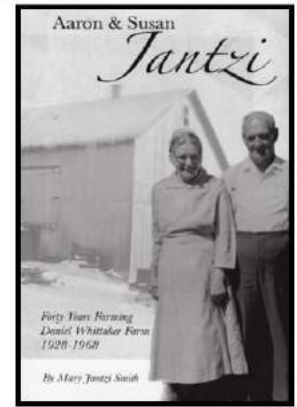
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Make every day Thanksgiving day! At table bow your heads and pray and give your hearts to God above in gratitude for all His love. Edgar A. Guest

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