



Notes from the Farm

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President's Report

By Sam Gingerich

This year the Adirondack Mennonite Heritage Association and Historical Society is marking its 35th Anniversary. In 1989 a group of forward-thinking individuals came together to form the Association, establishing AMHA's foundational 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."* As I reflect on the commitment and the work of these founders, I recognize that we, as a community, owe thanks to this group and to those who have served as board members and volunteers over the years. Thank you all!

Since its founding, the Association has retired the debt incurred when the farm was purchased, stabilized the house, barn, and granary, established an archival space to include the accession of hundreds of artifacts, and developed and delivered a wide range of programming every year. While these are the major accomplishments, those involved have created a vibrant site. Board members and volunteers have completed a range of goals that have established the Farm as an asset of the Anabaptist churches in Lewis County as well as the community at large. I know those who were involved in this work look back with satisfaction at what has been done.

The board believes that the Association is entering a new phase. As outlined, the organization has focused on stabilizing the facilities and developing archives and displays that tell the stories of the Anabaptists that settled this region. While these efforts will be ongoing, it is now time for the organization to become more outward facing in developing and implementing strategies that will bring more visitors to the Farm.

Because of the Board's commitment to making the site more accessible and welcoming for the community, a pavilion is being constructed. This year Z Fest focused on raising this facility in the spirit of a "barn raising." Preliminary site work was completed in May and early June so a group of volunteers could frame the building during Z Fest. This was done even though it was a cold and



rainy day. Because of the weather, the steel roofing was installed a few weeks later. The cement floor will be poured next spring. In addition, a generous gift from Jane M. Lehman, a single, retired elementary school teacher who taught in Castorland and Lowville schools, will allow AMHA to build a bump out that will house a small kitchen area. This will support food preparation and sales during Z Fest as well as families, church groups, and other community members that will use the space going forward. As noted earlier, construction of the pavilion project is supported by a significant gift from Susan (Taube) and Frank McVeigh in memory of the commitment of Sue's parents, Ralph and LaVeda Taube, to

AMHA and a grant under the Northern New York Community Foundation's LEAD Impact Program. A heartfelt thanks to everyone who has helped directly or indirectly with this project.

Once again, this summer the Farm was open on Saturdays allowing visitors more opportunities to appreciate the farmstead and archives. Ella Barker worked again this summer at the Farm as a docent and an archivist with support by a grant under the workership program administered by the Pratt-Northam Foundation. AMHA appreciates the support from the Foundation and the work done by Ella.

This spring Bernadine Schwartzenruber stepped down from the Board after 15 years of service. Bernadine served as president of the Board for 11 years, and she also led the Z Fest Committee. Her dedication to the Association and its activities are appreciated. If you see her, please add your thanks. At our annual meeting, we welcomed Eric Schwartzenruber as a new AMHA board member. Eric brings an appreciation for our shared history and the work we do. The Board recognizes its importance in shepherding AMHA forward as a mission-driven organization. We are always actively recruiting board members and volunteers from all our constituents. If anyone reading this is interested in working with us, please contact Rosanna or any board member.

Our biggest commitment in the next few years is the construction of a facility that will replicate the horse and sheep barn that was original to the property. Plans for this building are being finalized, timbers are being prepared, and we are actively fundraising. This facility will serve as a welcome center and gift shop. In addition, the building will have a small repair shop to support the Farm as well as display and meeting space on the second floor. Most importantly, the Board is developing strategies that will make sure this facility recognizes the initial board members and supporters, all who have made AMHA a reality. Initial plans have an estimated construction cost of \$350,000. While some donations of materials are already in hand and some money has been donated for this work, the Board believes another \$150,000-200,000 will need to be raised. If you are interested in making a donation or a pledge, please get in touch with us. Please feel free to call at your convenience if you would like to talk about this.

None of what AMHA does would be possible without your support. AMHA received a few significant donations during 2023 and earlier this year. We appreciate the generosity of members and friends. These gifts allow the Association to continue to stabilize and build out the farm, to develop the archives and our holdings, and to provide a range of programming. We offer a heartfelt thank you to all who support AMHA with their time, money, and talents. Most importantly, we appreciate your prayers for the organization.

Z Fest 2024

By Bernadine Schwartzenruber

In spite of a rainy day on June 29, Z Fest activities carried on as best we could. Perfect weather on Friday and a streamlined method of putting up canopies made the task much easier. Thanks to Eric and Hannah Schwartzenruber for organizing this project.

The volunteer men were busy raising the pavilion roof trusses and supports before 8 a.m.! They kept working in spite of the light rain and wind until noon. The actual steel roof was installed later by ten men on August 3. Thank you very much for helping with this pavilion project!



Indoor activities and demonstrations were enjoyed by the guests. The aroma of bread baking drew guests into the kitchen and on into the parlor where they watched the ladies do needlework. It was a relaxing and dry place to sit and visit. Many guests mingled in the barn loft to watch the workers demonstrating their various fiber arts skills. The "Friends of God" singing group, Virkler family storytelling, and acappella hymn sing were held in the barn stable. Several large posters in the barn and artifacts in the house display cases featured the Virkler family. Of course, some outdoor activities had to be cancelled. NOTE: The Virkler story telling is available for viewing on the Mennonite Heritage Farm website under "Videos."

We served about 140 barn-raising meals, including take-outs and about 80 hot dog meals. By noon the rain and wind increased making it challenging to serve the food in the food canopy. Many people commented on the delicious barn-raising meal.

Several children rang the newly installed dinner bell that came from the Ralph and LaVeda Taube estate. Thanks to Neil Keib for setting up the bell and pole near the house porch!

Over 250 visitors, including volunteers and out-of-state visitors from Alaska, California, North and South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Oregon, and Virginia, attended the rainy event. The canopies were taken down immediately after Z Fest to keep them from blowing down and were later dried and stored. The Z Fest volunteers look forward to 2025 when the new pavilion will be used for food serving and eating. Thanks again to all who volunteered and the guests who braved the weather to attend!

Legacy 500

By Norman Moshier

Naumburg Mennonite Church hosted Jeremy Miller from October 20-22 as the seventh guest speaker in the Legacy 500 series sponsored by AMHA. Jeremy is the current president of Rosedale Bible College in Ohio. Jeremy chose to speak about yieldedness, a topic of central importance to the 16th century Anabaptists. You can find the brief definitions he prefaced his talks with by searching yieldedness, Gelassenheit, and surrender at GAMEO (Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online).

Session I: Trusting Jesus with our Resources (Matthew 6:19-21)

Analyzing current American culture and the corrosive effects of greed, Jeremy asked two questions: where do we get our identity from, and are we willing to surrender our identity and resources to Jesus?

Session II: Surrendering to Each Other in the Body of Christ

Jesus' real purpose...He did not come to die just for our sins. He calls us to lives of discipleship (Matthew 16:24). He is interested in the entire reorientation of our lives, not just an escape from hell to get to heaven. This reorientation happens in the body of Christ. Jeremy emphasized that every Christian movement across history started when the people of God came together and ordered their lives in ways that were countercultural.

Session III: Counting the Cost of our Surrender to Jesus

Jesus invites us to a place of peace (I Peter 2). It is normal for believers to be viewed as a threat to the culture they live in; and in fact, they are. Jeremy emphasized that religious culture warriors have ruined our witness and pointed to the ways in which I Peter 2:9-10 calls us to our true identity. He said that persecution is normal and to be expected where believers have surrendered their allegiance to the way of Jesus.

In conclusion, Jeremy said that the hallmark of the believer is patient endurance. God uses weakness to transform the world...love your neighbor, bear the fruit of the Spirit, suffer patiently.

YouTubes are available for the messages at <https://mennoniteheritagefarm.com/post.php?pid=47>

Smokehouse Came To The Farm

By Neil Keib

A few years ago, Jane Yousey and Ned Nafziger offered to donate the original smokehouse of the Joseph B. and Catherine (Steria) Yousey homestead on the Croghan Reservoir Road to the Mennonite Heritage Farm. It was first planned to have the youth groups from several local Mennonite churches take down the smokehouse stone by stone, putting the stones on a trailer, and then transporting them to the Farm. Upon inspecting the smokehouse, it was determined that some of the stones were much too large and heavy to lift by two people...let alone one person. It was then decided to hire a local contractor to dismantle the structure. AMHA hired Rodney Mattis Excavating to do the removal; and on the morning of Monday, October 21, the work began. The first item on the list was removing an existing tree and brush on one side of the smokehouse. Next, the front wall was pushed in so the track hoe could remove the roof. Once the roof was removed, each side and end walls were taken down separately and transported to the Farm and placed in separate piles (photo on next page). Hopefully, the smokehouse can be rebuilt within the next year.



Some unique features of the smokehouse are as follows:

Foundation: After the smokehouse walls were taken down, it was discovered that there was no formal foundation for the walls. The only appearance of a foundation is that the walls were supported by just large stones laid inside a hand dug trench...no mortar, no concrete.



Wall Thickness: The smokehouse wall thickness was an average of between 20 and 21 inches.

Wall Design: The red granite walls were constructed with the exterior and interior stones encased in mortar. The center of the wall was filled with loose stones along with an occasional trowel or two of mortar.

Back Wall or End Wall: Inside the back wall was a small flue or smoke stack, approximately 9" square. This flue ran from the floor to the roof. About 4' above the floor was a slot approximately ½" wide x 12" long that was used for a damper to control the air flow when the smokehouse was operating.

Field Measurements: It was interesting when measuring the existing smokehouse that the entrance door measured 39" wide x 78" long; 1 meter wide x 2 meters high. The overall smokehouse measured up at roughly 10' wide x 13' long or 3 meters wide x 4 meters long. Did the builders use the metric system at the time of building it?

Stone Partition: In the back left-hand corner of the smokehouse, there was a stone partition measuring about 24" wide x 48" long x 36" high. It was first thought that this pit was a storage area for potatoes, turnips, squash, etc., but it is highly unlikely that this was the case. Another thought is it was used to place the ashes from the fire during the smoking process and later acted as fertilizer and/or for soap making.

Hand Dug Well: The farm needed a water supply to provide water for the farm animals and for household needs. The water supply was a hand dug well located between the house and barn near the smokehouse. The hand dug well was approximately 4' in diameter and 8' to 10' deep. The well walls were laid up (without any mortar) using existing stones that were plentiful around the area. When the well cover was removed to begin filling in the well, it was observed that the walls of the well were as straight and true as the time it was constructed. (See photo taken for documentation.) This writer was saddened to see this man-made structure buried. It was also noted that part of the water supply was a concrete watering trough near the well which was about 2' wide x 8' long and is still visible but in a deteriorating condition.



Historic Background To Smokehouse

By Jane Yousey

The smokehouse on the farm was likely built around 1889. Constructed from red granite, the stone was likely split from rock outcroppings on the property using sledge hammers and large metal wedges. Workers then shaped each piece with hammers and chisels. The Yousey family likely used horses or oxen to pull carts loaded with the heavy stone to the building site. The abundant local maple wood produced ashes with a high concentration of potassium carbonate that is ideal for making lye used in soap making.

Early pioneers often slaughtered animals in the fall after they had been fattened over the summer. The meat was salted and hung from rafters. The smoking process could take several days or even weeks, depending on how well done the meat needed to be. The red granite walls were especially effective at regulating heat. In prosperous years, the preserved meat provided this family of 13 with enough food to last through the winter and into the summer months.

Story to Share

Ralph E. Zehr (1928-2021) loved the outdoors, especially fishing and hunting. He shared this story multiple times over the years to his family and friends (as told by one of his friends Karl Smith).

As a young boy walking on his way to the McHenry Hill (Nick Henry) District No. 8 School on the Croghan-Belfort Road across from the Steiner Road, which was about 1.5 miles from his parents' (Eli and Mary Herzig Zehr) home on the High Falls Road, he would check his traps along the Murmur Creek. It was the most wonderful day if he would catch a skunk BECAUSE skunk skins were worth \$1. The saved primed skin would get more. When Ralph would get to school, the teacher said that he stunk so badly that he was sent home. Ralph could not believe that he got a day's wage for the skunk skin, and the teacher would send him home from school. He would always end his story with his hands wide open "Now how could you have a better day than that?"

Joseph Steria Farm Possession of 137 Years

By Diane Steria and Dorothy (Steria) Moser

The Steria homestead is located on the Kirschner Road about three miles from Croghan. The Steria farm started with Joseph Steria and Mary (Widrick) Steria in 1874. The farm was purchased from Mary's grandparents, Peter and Mary (Marie) Kennel Widrick.

Joseph and Mary started with four cows and without equipment. His father-in-law John Widrick helped him financially to get started. The barn was located directly across the driveway from the barn that is there today. Many times they received less than \$0.45 per hundred for milk. To help financially, Joseph at times hired out to help other farmers. One time he hired out to cut 18 acres of grain in eight days and received \$1.50 per acre. He was considered one of the best men around with a sickle. They had eight children: Annie, John, David B., Daniel, Katie, Laura, Rose, and Joseph, Jr.



Joseph and Mary Widrick Steria home. Courtesy of Diane Steria (great-grand daughter)
L-R Katherine, Rose, Joseph Jr, Mary Widrick Steria. Taken about 1900.

The farm was sold to their youngest son, Joseph Steria, who married Helena (Noftsier) Steria on January 6, 1916. They had 13 children: Elmer, Mildred, Ernest, Harold, Mabel, Laura, Pearl, Victor, Wilbur, Mary, Margaret, Joseph, and Walter. In June 1938, fire was discovered in the barn which soon burned to the ground. The cause of the fire was unknown. The barn was a structure of 40' x 75' with a wing 28' x 80' that sheltered 20 cows besides young stock and horses. Joseph stated that he will start rebuilding at once. He built a 38' x 98' barn with a silo. This barn still stands on the property today.

The farm was sold to son Ernest after returning home from military duty in 1945. Ernest was married to Dorothy Gadshaw. The family consisted of eight daughters: Verna, Betty, Jane, Diane, Bessie, Cindy, Gloria, and Dorothy. Ernest continued to add to the farm. He purchased the first tractor for the farm followed by more equipment and tractors.

The Kirschner Road at this time went through the neighbor's land of Jonathan and Catharine Martin to the Kirschner school house. The town of New Bremen asked Ernest if they could change the road to go through his land. Many loads of fill were brought to make the existing Kirschner Road connect to the Erie Canal Road. This road went through Ernest's farm land creating a small plot of land, which he later sold to Jonathan and Katherine Martin. They built their retirement home at this location, which is now owned by their youngest daughter Jane Martin.

In 1975 Ernest built on to the barn a 38' x 40' addition, a gutter cleaner, and a milk dumping station, which fed milk into a bulk tank. These improvements were a great help and saved time. The farm was approximately 60 head at this time.



Someone once asked Ernest, "So how do you farm it with all daughters?" He said, "Well, my girls are good workers, more gentle with the cows and equipment than boys would be."

The farm was sold in 1979 to Ernest and Dorothy's daughter Gloria and her husband, Earl Robert Zehr. The couple had one daughter Angela. They, like the previous family owners, continued to make improvements. In 1987, they built a 24' x 27' addition onto the barn, a 1680 square foot silo, a new garage, and a milking pipeline system. Tillable land of 26 acres was purchased on the Soft Maple Road. Life on the farm was busy for Earl and Gloria, but they tried to find a balance between farm work, family, helping a neighbor in need, and church involvement.

Earl became sick and the dairy of 70 head was sold. Approximately 20 yearlings remained on the farm. Earl passed away on December 16, 1994. Gloria sold the farm in 1998 to nephew Ceyril (Joe) Bush, who is a grandson of Ernest Steria. Ceyril is married to Juanita Roggie. They had two children, Derek and Nicole. In 1999 Joe built a 28' x 60' addition onto the barn. He enjoyed doing his own carpentry and mechanic work.

Our ancestors living on the farm had a commitment to the land, animals, community, and God. Despite the challenges, it was a fulfilling and satisfying way of life.

The farm was sold in 2011 to Joseph and Joanne (Good) Zehr. Their son Jeffery and wife Dawn Zehr occupy and operate the farm today.

Benjamin Z. and Emma (Martin) Lehman Family Farm Operated 103 Years

By Doris Lehman, Marilyn Shaw, Valerie Mohran, and Cindy Lehman Thomas



The homestead at 9295 Erie Canal Road, Croghan was purchased by Benjamin Z. (1892-1980) and Emma (Martin) Lehman (1894-1971) on March 15, 1915.

They had married in January of that year and lived with either Christian and Mary (Zehr) Lehman, Ben's parents, or Solomon and Barbara (Martin) Widrick, Emma's sister, until the purchase was complete. They bought the 137-acre property from Albinus and Romanus Keib, twin brothers, who had lived in a shed on the property until they were able to build the house that still stands there today.

Ben and Emma raised eight children on this homestead: Aletha M. (1917-1935), Reuben J. (1920-1939), twins Vernon M. and Vera M. (1921: Vernon died 1922 at 10 months and 10 days; Vera died 2015), Nevin B. (1926-2014), Myron C. (1928-1992), Niles W. (1929-1950), and Everett A. (1931-2015).

The aerial view of the homestead was taken when there was an old boiling shed on the property to the rear of the barn. It eventually collapsed and Everett burned it. The small shed between the house and the barn was the original shed the Keib twins lived in before the house was built. It became a chicken coop/hog pen.

Ben generally kept about 12 head of milking cows at a time. Once he sold the farm to his youngest son Everett in June 1957, Everett maintained 20 head of milking cows at a time. Ben and Emma remained on the farm for a year after the sale, then moved into a house in Kirscherville.

Everett and Doris raised their seven children Kathy (Bruce Chartrand), Marilyn (Allan Shaw), Valerie (Gaber Ahmed Mohran), Colleen (Norm Farney), Melanie (Sasha Stanistic), Lyndon, and Marcia (Gary Ashline) on this farm. Everett and Doris remained on the homestead until it was sold in June 2018 to Joseph and Joanne (Good) Zehr.



The cows were generally pastured in the fields surrounding the house and barn; but when that became chewed down, the cows were put out to pasture across the road from the house. When it was time to bring them in for milking, the children would stand guard on either side of the driveway to prevent the cows from wandering onto the grass. It became quite a nightly event.

In 1968 Everett sold his herd of milking cows but continued to board heifers for Wellington "Wimpy" Walseman for a few years. He then purchased and raised beefers.



Ben Lehman had several endeavors apart from farming as additional income for his family. He did some logging for Ben Zehr and his lumber company, Lehman and Zehr. Their team of horses were used to drag the logs out of the woods. Everett, as a youngster, had the job of walking the team of horses back out of the woods at night and home to the farm. In the winter, he would walk behind the team until he got tired and then would hop up on the neap until he got cold, then would walk again to warm up. Everyone worked very hard and found as many creative ways to stay warm while they worked as they could. Later, Everett had a truck to haul pulpwood for other loggers, but Ben only worked with the horses. (Ben's heavy horsehide coat that he wore in the woods was donated to the archives in 2017.)

Everett added a milk route to his endeavors and would collect the cans of milk from the nearby farms and haul them into Croghan for processing. When he was needed to help with the threshing, Doris would ride along with

Everett to collect the milk and deliver it to Croghan. Then she would drop him off to help with the threshing and would return the empty cans to the farmers. Again, everyone had a job and worked hard until all of it was completed. Ben owned a threshing machine and was hired to thresh for the nearby farms in the fall.

Ben and Everett had a boiling shed across the road from the farm and produced maple syrup as another endeavor. The shed was purchased from Gil Widrick in 1971 and was moved to its current site by raising it up onto blocks and backing their truck bed underneath. It was settled onto the truck and driven to its current location.

In addition to all of these endeavors, Ben and his sons were hired by the Croghan Mennonite Church to dig graves when needed. Everett continued digging graves for the First Mennonite Church of New Bremen well into adulthood.



Everett was very excited to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of his family's homestead on March 15, 2015. He felt this was quite a milestone and was happy to share this celebration with his sister Vera, his sister-in-law Donna Lehman, his children, and grandchildren.

Ben and Emma and their family resided and worked on this homestead for 103 years, leaving behind some indelible memories for the Lehman clan and the neighborhood for years to come.

Reflections on the Life of Wilburn and Elveira Roggie—71 Years

By Dolores (Roggie) Gingerich

My father Wilburn Meryl Roggie was born on April 12, 1926, to Menno and Leah (Moshier) Roggie. Wilburn had a twin brother, Wilford. He grew up on a small farm just outside of Croghan and attended school at Beaver Falls. At age 23, he started work at the J. P. Lewis Company Paper Mill, Beaver Falls. Wilburn was the head beaterman for 22 years before retiring after 39 years on November 1, 1988.

My mother, Elveira Dolores Lehman, was born on March 24, 1929, to Andrew and Mollie (Widrick) Lehman. Elveira had two brothers, Arthur, who died in infancy, and Richard. She spent the first years of her life near Copenhagen on a farm. When my mother was a teenager, her mother became sick, possibly complications from the Spanish flu; and she went to live with her Uncle Jacob and Aunt Anna Yousey. She was raised by them until her marriage. She gained another "brother" Clayton Yousey and "sister" Clara (Yousey) Moshier. Elveira's mother died at the age of 47. Her father Andrew later remarried Louise Snyder, and two stepbrothers, Leslie and Everett, were born to that marriage. Elveira's first job was at the Climax Manufacturing Company, Castorland, making boxes.



Wilburn and Elveira were married on October 20, 1949, by Rev. Lloyd Boshart at the Croghan Conservative Mennonite Church. Their attendants were: Elmer Moser, Wilford Roggie, Belva (Moshier) Lehman, and Adeline (Widrick) Kirch Zehr. They were committed in marriage for 71 years.

Three children were born to their marriage: Dolores, Calvin, and Joyce. We grew up in what I call a simple but happy life led by godly parents. We were taught the value of work, and the skills that would serve us well that our parents passed onto us.

My mother was only able to go to school until 11th grade. One of her goals was to get a high school diploma, so she took classes and passed her GED. She was proud of that accomplishment. Mother was a stay-at-home wife and mother while we were not yet in school. She then got a part-time job at the school cafeteria at Beaver River Central School. Elveira made some good friends there and loved the children going through the cafeteria line. She retired from that position in 1990. For a time, my father simonized vehicles as a side job in his driveway. I guess this was a way of expressing his love of cars.

My parents had a large garden that satisfied their needs with vegetables. They also enjoyed picking berries. A lot of canning and freezing was done. My mother very much enjoyed her flowers and flower gardens, sometimes supplying flowers for weddings. My father took pride in his lawn and trimmed bushes.



Wilburn and Elveira were caretakers of the Croghan Mennonite Church and cemetery from 1958-1985 (27 years). We children grew up contributing to this work. Church was like a second home to us. There were very few services that we missed. Elveira was Sunday school and summer Bible school teacher. She was also very active in the sewing circle.

In 2011, Wilburn and Elveira moved to the Brookside Senior-Living Community in Lowville. They resided there together until 2016 when Wilburn entered the Lewis County Residential Health Care Facility. He passed away on November 22, 2020. Elveira lived at Brookside three more years with some of that time under the care of caregivers. She passed away on November 20, 2023.

Wilburn and Elveira left a Christian legacy to their three children and spouses, 11 grandchildren, and 18 great grandchildren.

In sharing, I honor my father and mother because they are my parents. They would want to honor God. They did that by serving God, their church, their community, and their family.

Levi and Florence Zehr Celebrate 70 Years

Interview by Rosanna M. Moser

Levi, son of Chris and Martha (Moser) Zehr, and Florence, daughter of Aaron and Rosella (Moser) Erb, became acquainted with each other by attending young people's gatherings such as singings, games, harvest supper for older people, Sunday evening services, etc. Levi grew up attending the Croghan congregation, and Florence attended the Lowville congregation.

On Thursday, September 30, 1954, Levi Zehr and Florence Erb united in a morning marriage ceremony at the Dadville (Lowville) Conservative Mennonite Church. The couple came out of the anteroom and sat on the front bench along with the following unmarried attendants: Donald Zehr (brother of the groom), Rosemary Erb Moser (sister of the bride), Grant Noftsier (cousin of the bride), and Marie Zehr Yousey (sister of the groom). Rev. Leon Martin gave the wedding message "The Conditions for a Successful Life." Levi's cousin Joyce (Lehman) Moser (m. Ellis Moser in June 1954) used her shorthand skills to take notes, which were transcribed for Levi and Florence to have yet today. (At that time, the services were not recorded.) Lloyd Boshart, bishop, officiated the marriage ceremony with Levi and Florence standing on the platform with the bishop. After the vows were affirmed, the couple walked to the back of the church followed by the attendants and guests to greet the newlywed couple. Florence's Grandmother Erb was present from Canada along with two uncles and aunts and Canadian cousins.



Formal wedding photos were taken before the couple was married on September 30. The well-known studio at this time was Hurd's in Lowville.

A wedding reception for 175 guests was held at the Denmark Grange Hall. Floral arrangements were made for the tables. The menu consisted of scalloped potatoes, baked beans, mother's macaroni salad (chicken/peas/celery) Croghan bologna, cheese, sliced tomatoes, celery, carrot jello salad (square slice on a plate with salad dressing and maraschino cherry on top at each place setting). About five layered cakes were made for each of the varieties that included chocolate, cherry, and wedding date nut made by Anna Widrick Yousey and served with vanilla ice cream. Lorna Widrick Sirtoli made the white wedding cake. Levi carried the cake around the room to the guests, and Florence would cut a slice for each guest.

Florence made her white wedding dress and carried a white Bible and handkerchief. The attendants wore blue and yellow, respectively, and carried a white handkerchief. Half aprons were also made for the following single table waiters: Carolyn Lehman Henry, Loretta Lehman, Janet Lehman Roggie, Arletha Mayer Moser, Donna Moser, Eleanor Moser, Florence Moser Jantzi, and Mary Ellen Wagler Good. The "lemonade pourers" who also served coffee were Donald Moser, Leon Moser, Wilbur Moser, Newell Noftsier, Loren Widrick, and Norman Zehr.

Couples who worked in the kitchen were the following: Bill and Louise Litwiller (head couple), Clarence and Mable Mayer, Andrew and Emma Moser, and Jacob and Anna Wagler. Men who led in singing either at the church and/or at the reception were Menno Moser, Arnold Moshier, and Vernon Zehr. Florence and Levi chose not to have a reception with the young people as was the custom at that time. She felt that her mother had enough to do in organizing and preparing food with assistance from family for the noon meal.

Levi and Florence left late afternoon for a two-week wedding trip. They went to Cleveland, Ohio, to see a world series game between the Yankees and Giants. On Saturday night, they went to Grand Ole Opry in Wheeling, West Virginia. From there they visited Eastern Mennonite College, friends in Pennsylvania, and also Elmer Roggie and Norman Zehr, who were serving in 1-W at Farmhurst State Hospital, Wilmington, Delaware. The remaining time was spent in Canada via Buffalo to visit the Erb relation and also the annual International Plowing Match always held in late September in Ontario, which is the largest outdoor agricultural and rural expo in North America. The Expo was all mud because a hurricane had gone through this area.

Then it was going home to real married life to help in the dairy farm operation of his parents (Chris and Martha Zehr) on the Second Road. The farmhouse was a two-family home for about three years until a new retirement home was built. Levi and Florence lived in that home for about seven years. They took over the dairy farm operation in 1962 and had a milking herd of 55 cows and also ran a sugarbush in the spring. In 1965, the two couples switched houses. Levi and Florence are now living again in the retirement house original to Levi's parents. Stanley and his wife Carrie own the farm today.

Levi and Florence are blessed with the following four daughters and three sons and spouses: Twila (died of cancer August 2010) and Calvin Marolf, Dawn and Greg Waddell, Stanley and Carrie (Halko), Eva and Mervin Moser, Sidney and Elaine (Yousey), Melanie and Norman Roes, Roger and Lucinda (Moser). The couple has 23 grandchildren and 38 great-grandchildren.

Levi especially liked to hunt in the fall season. (At the age of 93 years, Levi got on his four-wheeler to hunt another time late October and shot a 5-point buck!) Florence has made and tied over 100 quilts. Florence said, "We took time for snowmobiling with family and had good time sledding with friends too. We are too old for snow sledding now! Tom and Beulah can't go." Levi's closing remark was "got married to stay married."



There was a large number of couples (14) married from the Mennonite congregations (Croghan, Lowville, and First Mennonite New Bremen) in 1954. Over the years, the group would often get together for socializing and eating out. They are as follows in order of marriage for the year: Lyle and DeEtta Zehr Moser (March 17), Richard and Jane Roes Widrick (April 10), Gilbert and Janet Widrick Zehr (May 26), Royal and Arlene Roggie Widrick (May 27), Ellis and Joyce Lehman Moser (June 10), Vernon and Maxine Widrick Nafziger (June 10), Alvin and Alice Roes Roggie (June 30), Homer and Pauline Zehr Myers (August 28), Mark and Violet Yousey Kennell (September 16), Levi and Florence Erb Zehr (September 30), Michael and Dolores Lehman Zehr (November 26), Howard and Marie Gingerich Snider (November 27), and Kenneth and Lila Gingerich Widrick (December 2).

The family hosted a 70th wedding anniversary open house reception for their parents on Sunday afternoon, September 29, at the Naumburg Mennonite Church fellowship room.

Former Lewis County Residents And AMHA Members Wed Over 70 Years

By Rosanna M. Moser

Elmer J. Lehman, son of Elmer Z. and Rosella (Roggie) Lehman, Sr. married Eileen F. Zehr, daughter of Rev. Elias and Martha (Widrick) Zehr, on August 29, 1953. The couple celebrated 70 years of marriage in August 2023. Eileen departed from the earthly life on May 20, 2024.

Elmer shared the following about their wedding with me in March 2018:

The wedding took place at the Dadville (Lowville) Mennonite Church at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, August 29, 1953. Leon Martin (pastor) had the sermon as we were involved with the outreach mission work of the local Conservative Mennonite Church at Pine Grove at the time. In those days, tradition was for the bishop to perform all wedding ceremonies, but Lloyd Boshart (bishop) was gone on a trip. Eileen's father, Elias, was given the honor of performing the ceremony.



We were members of the Mennonite youth chorus under the direction of Arnold J. Moshier. The choral group sang while sitting on the rear benches of the church two songs, not the balcony as desired. As a couple, we filed in the processional along with the unmarried attendants (Pauline Zehr Myers, Dolores Lehman Zehr, Homer Myers, and Floyd J. Zehr) while the youth group sang “Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us.”

We had an outdoor noon lawn reception at the Elias Zehr home on the West Road and later in the afternoon went to the Schantz studio to take photos before heading out for a two-week honeymoon. We did not have the traditional evening meal with the young people. The first service we attended after our marriage was Sunday afternoon, August 30, in the final meeting of the Billy Graham crusade in Syracuse. We then spent a week in cabins in Vermont and New Hampshire, and the second week visited friends in Lancaster County, PA, and in western New York (Alden area) for a total cost of \$125. Motels averaged \$5 a night, and we took our own little cook stove. Other couples who were married in 1953 are the following: Elton and Maxine Zehr Moser, Elton and Diane Lyndaker Roggie, and Norman and Phyllis Lehman Lyndaker.

Elmer and Eileen lived in a house trailer on his parents’ farm on the Brewery Road. After they were married four months, their trailer burned on New Year's Day plus a tool shed and garage. Their entire contents were destroyed in the fire, including wedding clothes and photos. Eileen made a duplicate white wedding dress/cape. The youth chorus gave Elmer funds to have another suit made, which he wore for several years. Elmer replaced it with a used navy-blue suit that was bought from a fellow student at Eastern Mennonite College. Elmer was ordained in that suit and wore it a number of times while on furlough from Costa Rica (never taken to Costa Rica). Schantz Studio replaced the wedding photos free of charge.

One year after their marriage, Elmer and Eileen volunteered for a two-year assignment with Mennonite Board of Missions to work at a children’s home in Aibonito, Puerto Rico. Upon their return, Elmer enrolled at Eastern Mennonite College and graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Bible and music, and Eileen completed her education with a bachelor’s degree in elementary education in 1960. After completion of their studies, they were appointed to a long-term missions and church planting assignment in Costa Rica with Rosedale Mennonite Missions in August 1960 with the clarification that Elmer had plans to take a year of studies at Eastern Mennonite Seminary. Elmer was ordained to the ministry on July 2, 1961, at the Croghan Mennonite Church. Two days later they set out on a four-week deputation trip to many of the Conservative Mennonite churches and flew to Costa Rica on August 22 to begin their missionary journey. They were the **first** couple from the Lewis County Mennonite churches to be a foreign missionary and also the **first** independently appointed overseas missionaries with Rosedale Mennonite Missions (Rosedale Network of Churches today). There are about 20 or more congregations in Costa Rica today.

While they were living in Costa Rica, they adopted five Costa Rican children (1961 to 1970). They are the following: Emily (Conrad) Mayer of Galloway, Ohio; Elnora (Steven) Widrick of Waxahachie, Texas; Erland (Nicole Weber) of Kingston, Jamaica; twins Melvin (Sandra Acosta) of San Antonio, Texas; and Marvin of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. They have nine grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Elmer and Eileen and family left Costa Rica in June 1983 and resided in Harrisonburg, VA, intending to take a two-year study leave and return to Costa Rica. Eileen earned a master’s degree in education and taught Weekday Religious Education in Rockingham County, and Elmer continued studies in the seminary. In 1986, he was asked to teach at Rosedale Bible College so they moved to Hilliard, Ohio, and continued part time with Rosedale Mennonite Missions until fully retired on June 30, 2006, after 45 years of involvement with RMM, including church planting and administrative duties. Eileen worked in the Hilliard City School district as a learning disabilities tutor and managed a MCC Country Closet Thrift Shop for ten years. Elmer also volunteered many hours at the thrift shop.



65th Wedding Anniversary

Locally, Elmer was installed in July 1999 as overseer of four New York churches (Croghan, Carthage, Lowville, and Pine Grove). In 2001, the Croghan congregation preferred a local overseer; Julius Moser was chosen as overseer at Croghan and Carthage. Elmer continued as overseer at Pine Grove and Lowville until 2011. During his terms as overseer between 2001 and 2008, Elmer officiated at the ordinations of Chad Atwood at Croghan, David Haldeman at Carthage, and Todd Waugh at Pine Grove.

The Association of Anabaptist-Mennonite Missiologists recognized Elmer and Eileen Lehman in 2010 for their contribution in the pioneer missionary service of 22 years in Costa Rica. Elmer said at this event, “By no means did we do this alone. God brings into the church persons of various giftings. God gave us the good gift of local leaders that emerged in the church, and we worked as a team and had a great time doing it.”

Elmer and Eileen have authored two books: *One Step at a Time - Our Missionary Pilgrimage* (2016) and *This is How it Happened* (2020). The books are available at the Mennonite Heritage Farm gift shop.

From the Desk of the Curator

By Rosanna M. Moser

AMHA appreciate the artifacts that continue to be donated. The archival office processed 185 accessions this season. A complete listing of the deeded donations will occur in the spring newsletter.

Stewart's Shops awarded AMHA the eighth grant to sponsor learning activities with children. Over a two-day period in late July-early August, we had a total of 65 children participating in painting, sculpting, embroidery, and making a quilt block. We are thankful for the following teachers who made this event a success: Diana Roes (painting), Kyle Zehr (sculpting), Pauline Lehman, Connie Roes, LeEtta Widrick, and Carolyn Zehr (embroidery), and Loretta Moser, Janet (Lehman) Tuley, and Berneda Zehr (quilt block).

A number of groups have visited the farm during our open season...Rittman tour from Ohio (Apostolic Christian Church), David and Veronica Zehr family, Delta Kappa Gamma (women's educational group), first graders from Beaver River Central School, and Leadership Academy. On July 26-27, the farm hosted the AARCH (Adirondack Architectural Heritage) workshop on "Restoring Wood Windows" with seven individuals. Two windows in the attic were used for demonstration of maintenance work. We had visitors use our parking lot overnight through Harvest Hosts. In addition, we had approximately 145 visitors between April and October besides the Z Fest attendees and other groups. We appreciate the growing interest of individuals using the archives for research in person and/or via online.

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>.

Cleaning Grave Markers

When time allows, Caroline Roes Virkler is maintaining the graver markers at the Croghan and Kirschnerville cemeteries in the spring and fall that are in great need of cleaning. She uses a "Wet and Forget" solution to spray and checks them out again the next season for any additional cleaning, if necessary. AMHA is appreciative of her time, kindness, and interest in heart to have the grave markers readable.

The solution is available at Steele's Ace Home Center, Buckingham Hardware, or Aubuchon Hardware. Simply follow the directions on the container, mix it up at home and take it to the cemetery in a sprayer. Spray it on the stone and walk away. It's as easy as that!

Supporting AMHA

To support our various funds such as Endowment, Partnership, 20 for 10, and AMHA 2020 Vision, please call Charlene Moser, treasurer (315-681-8938). 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.

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.

WELCOME — New AMHA Members

Lois (Gingerich) Bast, Amy Brubaker, John and Charlotte (Widrick) Frese, Janette (Lyndaker) Gallagher, David and Cindy Lapp, Temperance Lyndaker, Jane Martin, Fern (Stalter) McFadden, John and Sheryl (Lehman) Nesper, Eric and Hannah Schwartzentruber, Joyce (Brubaker) Trytten, Helen (Lyndaker) Unruh, Donald J. Virkler, and Jacob and Christy Waugh.

Wish List

- Volunteer to work with "Ancestry" in updating our Mennonite community genealogy.
- Engagement announcements and wedding programs.

Gift Shop

Here are a few suggested books for Christmas gifts, etc. available at the gift shop. You may call Rosanna Moser at 315-376-7822 or email info@mennoniteheritagefarm.com to arrange the sales.

Strangers and Pilgrims – History of Lewis County Mennonites (1987) by Arlene Yousey

Zehr History and Genealogy (2001) by Arletha Zehr Bender Yoder

Jacob and Catherine Zehr Roggie History and Genealogy (2015) by Arletha Zehr Bender Yoder

The Samuel and Lena Nafziger Roes Family (2023) by Caroline Roes Virkler

Aaron & Susan Jantzi (2023) by Mary Jantzi Smith

USED books – *Farney Virkler Zehr* - Vol. 1 and 11 (1989) and 1969 edition

We will have the Virkler lettuce seed again in the spring.

TRIVIA QUESTION

What Lewis County Mennonite couple was married the longest in the 1980s?

The first person who calls Rosanna with the correct answer will be given a free membership to AMHA for one year.

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.

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