

## **The Historical Society of the Bible Fellowship Church April, 2014**

Our denominational thoughts are turning toward our 131<sup>st</sup> conference to be held on April 28-30 at Pinebook Bible Conference. The 31<sup>st</sup> conference met 100 years ago at the Bethlehem Church on October 15-19, 1914. The following is the summary of that conference I have written for this year's yearbook.

### **Annual Conference – 1914**

The church on Laurel Street stood waiting. Pastor W. S. Hottel, one of the rising stars among the preachers, was there to make sure everything was in place. The kitchen staff had planned their meals and were ready to provide the best hospitality they knew how to prepare. For the 31<sup>st</sup> time since they had become the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, the preachers and delegates were meeting to take care of the business of the Pennsylvania Conference. Two years earlier the General Conference had met in this same church but now the Annual Conference was was meeting to focus on Pennsylvania. Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Thursday, October 15, 1914. 8:00AM.



**Bethlehem Church with W. S. Hottel  
insert, ca.1913**

They had much to encourage them: a church building in Stroudsburg; new parsonages in Quakertown and Walnutport. The building in Norristown had been sold giving them \$705 to use for the Goodman Street church in Philadelphia. A lot was being considered for a building in Sunbury. A school house had been donated in Harleysville and pews had been given to fill it. Successful tent meetings had been held in York, Lebanon, Broadway (NJ) and Sunbury. Missionaries were serving in Chile, Argentina, Venezuela, Tibet and Turkey. Mizpah Grove, the center square of the denomination, was coming along nicely. A preacher's dining hall had been finished. The chestnut trees affected by the blight had been cut bringing another \$36.00 when the poles were sold. A fire had threatened the east side of the camp with its piles of lumber but quick action on the part of the fire department had spared them.

They began as they always did with prayer, singing and preaching. Chairman H. B. Musselman read from Philippians 2 and “made a very earnest and profitable address concerning the importance of the business before this body.” Recording secretary H. K. Kratz began his note-taking. The roll was called. 42 answered when their names were called. The first three pews were designated the bar.



**H. K. Kratz**

Much of the early part of their meeting was taken with routine business. Committees were appointed for such things as worship, statistics, communications, finance, and quarterly conference records. Their insistence on order and accountability show as nearly everything would be reviewed and evaluated during the conference.

The oral reports of the pastors were begun. Each man would give an account of what had taken place under his ministry in the past year. Each wanted to praise God by speaking of victories and advances in the battle with the wicked one. He was given ten minutes to tell his story. Whether pride and self promotion entered into these reports is known only to the Lord. The temptation to give a report that gained the admiration of brothers must have been great. A good report would bring head nods of affirmation. The reports began in the first meeting, Thursday morning, and continued throughout Thursday afternoon. The oral reporting would take between 3 and 4 hours. It is easy to imagine the end of the Thursday afternoon meeting came with an unspoken sense of relief.

The Thursday afternoon session ended with agreement to meet in the basement at the call of the chairman. Basement meetings were a clue they had things to talk about free from the requirement to keep minutes. The discussion could be a bit more open. Sometimes, frank discussion was good but not just everyone could be privy to that sort of discussion. The Thursday night session did not begin until after 9:00pm so they spent a couple of hours talking about their issues without offering a written clue at this point of the content of their deliberations.

Saturday brought a focus on foreign missionary work and efforts. They dissolved themselves into the Committee of the Whole which allowed freer discussion without all the parliamentary demands. The missions work was still relatively new and issues of personnel and finances could be controversial. The death of Fred R. Bullen of Venezuela was noted. Bullen died of a fever. His name has been covered in the sediment of passing years. It is sobering to be reminded of the price paid by these

servants of the Lord. He is unknown to us today but His memory is fresh in the mind of the God who sent him.

Sunday afternoon was the high point of the conference. Special arrangements were made for people across the conference to come. They made a thorough report.

All the services on Sunday were held in the High School Auditorium which has a seating capacity of over seven hundred which was well filled throughout the entire day. Members from nearly every Appointment were present at these Services. The Forenoon Services opened at 9:30 A.M. with a Song Service after which Presiding Elder H. B. Musselman of the Bethlehem District preached the Conference Sermon, basing his remarks on Matt. 24:41-45. The sermon was a clear definite and positive exposition of the call, duty and work of the Christian Ministry.

It was a forceful and pungent presentation of the truths that bear weightily upon the success of the pastors, and will bear fruit in the lives of those that heard it. The Afternoon Service opened at 2:15 P.M., with a Song Service after which W. G. Gehman, Presiding Elder of the Mt. Carmel District, preached a sermon on I Sam. 18:1, and I Sam. 20:30-31. This discourse was fraught with Bible and full of practical truths and spiritual advice; and no doubt will have an effect upon the hearers for good to the glory of God.

The Evening Services opened at 7 P.M., with a Song Service, after which W. S. Hottel, the newly appointed Pastor preached a very inspiring sermon, basing his remarks on Mark 6:45- 52. The sermon was full of practical and dispensational truth, presented in a very forceful manner and brought inspiration to all that heard it. The quartettes and choruses rendered a number of excellent, inspiring and spiritual selections which were heartily enjoyed: and greeted with shouts of praise. The services, we are certain, will not soon be forgotten, and have proved a rich and glorious blessing to the different ones in attendance as well as to the work throughout the entire Conference. This Conference, without a doubt, goes down in history as one of the best and most blessed we ever had.

In a somewhat unusual way, they recorded some things that had been stirring among them. Articles in the denominational magazine, The Gospel Banner, had struck a nerve or two with them. Perhaps it was these issues that had taken them to the basement for discussion on Thursday evening where they could say what they were really thinking. Some of their discussions presage of our more recent concerns.



**H. B. Musselman and family**

SPECIAL RESOLUTION  
Adopted by the Pennsylvania Conference

Relative to remarks made concerning certain articles which have appeared in the Gospel Banner from time to time during the past, be it

Resolved, That the Pennsylvania Conference wishes to put itself on record unanimously as standing for the personal, pre-millennial, imminent coming of the Lord. In view of this fact this Conference stands for a clear cut separation on a Scriptural basis from all the popular modern reform movements whether religious, political or moral. While we admit and keenly realize that there are a great many prominent evils existing and operating in the world and all around us we hold that according to the Scriptures God's plan is to save an elect people and prepare them for His coming, through faith in Jesus Christ alone, and not through reformation, prohibition, or the educational institutions of the present day, which, with a very few exceptions are strongly inclined towards higher criticism, agnosticism, materialism and infidelity.

This Conference believes in a Divine call of God to the Ministry. We believe that the Scriptural and essential qualifications to this call are soundness in conversion, completeness in consecration, being filled with the Holy Spirit, having a love and burden for souls.

We believe that a thorough application and devotion to the prayerful study of God's word in accordance with Paul's exhortations to Timothy is of infinitely greater value in the making of an efficient minister and a successful instrument in the hands of God to carry on His work, than an elaborate college education.

We believe that when a man abides in faithfulness in the divine call, he will find so much work to do all around himself, that he will never find time to engage in any occupation or trade or profession with the purpose of financial gain.

Resolved, That a type-written copy of the above be handed to the Chairman of the Annual Conference,

Resolved, That the old Quarterly Conference Records and Class Records that are not needed be sent to the Secretary of the Annual Conference to be preserved at the discretion of the Executive Board, who shall have charge of these records. These books shall be sent to the Secretary during the second week of November next.

One more special matter drew their attention. They had been experiencing some frustration with the Sunday School lessons they were receiving. A number of pastors and delegates had met during the camp meeting at Mizpah Grove on August 21 where a discussion had taken place. That discussion ended with a petition to be presented to the Conference. It was time to take matters in hand. A semi-authorized meeting had been held in September. They laid it all out.

Matter relative to Sunday School supplies was now taken up. The following resolutions were passed by the undersigned, the Presiding Elders and Pastors of the Pennsylvania Conference of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, assembled together at the Allentown Division Camp Meeting, at Mizpah Grove, on August 21, 1914.

Resolved, That we as a Conference are in favor that the Union Gospel Printing Company publish Sunday School Supplies as follows, if they can see their way clear.

Scholars' Quarterlies of two pages per lesson.

Teachers' Quarterlies of four pages per lesson.

We recommend that the prices shall not be higher than those of the "Light and Life" series.

Resolved, That we elect a Publishing Committee of five which shall furnish the copy for the lessons. This Committee was then elected as follows:

Chairman, H. B. Musselman; W. G. Gehman, W. S. Hottel, E. N. Cassel and C. H. Brunner.

H. B. Musselman, P. E.; W. G. Gehman, P. E.; E. N. Cassel, W. S. Hottel, C. H. Brunner, F. M. Hottel, E. T. Shick, J. G. Shireman, R. L. Woodring, W. J. Fretz, H. K. Kratz, J. C. Roth, J. F. Barrall, B. Bryan Musselman, R. Bergstresser, O. S. Hillegass, E. E. Kublic.

On September 21, this Committee met at the residence of Pastor W. S. Hottel, at Allentown, and made definite arrangements, that W. S. Hottel should write these lessons, and that C. H. Brunner should write one column for each lesson in the Teachers' Quarterlies.

Resolved, That we ask all our Sunday Schools to get all their supplies from the Union Gospel Printing Co., also that they order them not later than November 1st.

On Monday afternoon, they voted to adjourn. The venerable William Gehman led in prayer. They sang together, "God Be With You 'Til We Meet Again." They signed the minutes, both pastors and delegates.

The 1914 Annual Conference was over. If the pastors and delegates were told about the meeting held one hundred years later, they would rejoice but they would hardly believe what they heard.

---

LeRoy Wilcox has been hard at digging out family history again. This time, we hear about the Seifert Family. A. L. Seifert was the last to serve as District Superintendent and the first of our directors at Pinebrook Bible Conference.

## THE SEIFERT FAMILY AND THE BIBLE FELLOWSHIP CHURCH LeRoy Wilcox

A ship left Rotterdam, Netherlands, in 1751 carrying immigrants from Germany and bound for Philadelphia. Named BROTHERS, it was captained by William Muir and arrived in Philadelphia on September 16, 1751. One of the immigrants was Johannes Seyfarth (Seifert), whose two brothers had come to America two years before, one settling in Warren County, NJ and the other in Berks County, PA. Also on board the BROTHERS were some future neighbors such as J. Jacob Ziegenfuss. A descendent of J. Jacob, Clara Ziegenfuss, married Richard Woodring, who served as a pastor in our Conference as well as his son, Allen. Richard's daughter, Dora, married Rudy Gehman who also served as a pastor. Their son, Richard, and his wife Florence, are retired missionaries now living in FL.

The surname is a variation of Siegfried, which is derived from the German words *sigu* "victory" and *frid* "peace". It has been spelled in various ways but the name Seifert became the established spelling.

Johannes came to America from Grosse-Borwin, Germany, sailing as a Redemptioner. A Redemptioner was a person who secured passage on a ship on credit by becoming an indentured servant. The indentures were sold at ports of entry. The emigrant bound himself to be sold into service by the master or the owner of the ship for a stipulated time. The indenture was a contract by which one person sold his services as servant or tradesman to another for a specified number of years in order to pay a debt. After the Redemptionist fulfilled his indenture, he could be called a yeoman, or freeman. Johannes, after becoming a yeoman, purchased land in Bucks County in what is now Springfield Township, named for the many springs which abound in the land. Information about the land that became the Seifert farm is not certain as to size but in 1743, by virtue of a warrant dated May 8th, land called "Moldavia" was surveyed to John Moffitt. In 1755 Moffitt sold to Jonathan Carr and in 1762 Carr to William Baker. In 1773 Baker sold to William Trappe. In 1786 William Trappe sold to John Siford (Seifert) and a farm was established. Seven generations of the Seifert family owned and operated the farm for over 200 years. At times the farm grew cows, horses, pigs, and chickens; corn, oats, wheat, and hay; and apples, strawberries, and vegetables.

Johannes was married to Maria Sarah Christein and a son, George, was born in 1777. He married Sarah Werner and a son, Joseph Warner Seifert, Sr. was born in 1830. The Seifert family farm was divided in half in the 1850s. The half that passed to Joseph Warner Seifert, Sr. became known as "The Old Homestead." He passed the farm to his son, Joseph E. Seifert, Jr. in 1890. The younger Joseph married Emma Jane Lear, with whom he had two children who lived to adulthood: Harry Luther and Anna. Harry married Ethel M. Ruth on April 03, 1926 and they had three children: Harry Luther, Jr., Paul Joseph and Sylvia. For many years, the Seifert family operated a farm stand at the Bethlehem City Market on Third Street in South Bethlehem, PA, selling garden produce and chickens. Harry L. Seifert, Sr. turned the Seifert farm over to his sons, Harry L. Seifert Jr. and Paul Seifert in 1962 and the Old Homestead became a

dairy farm only. The specialty of the Seifert dairy was pure bred accredited Guernsey cows that produced Golden Guernsey milk. Harry L. Seifert Sr. died in 1965. The brothers were awarded a sign in 1989 from the Bucks County Cooperative Extension for keeping the farm in the family for over 200 years.



Another son of George and Sarah Werner was David, born in 1833. He married Margaret Sloyer (one of many marriages between the Seiferts and Sloyers) and a son, Marcus, was born in 1883. He married Emma Schmidt and worked at the Bethlehem Steel Company. Marcus died on June 23, 1916 and his obituary states, "Marcus Seifert, of South Bethlehem, died today in the Allentown Hospital from injuries received Tuesday night, when an auto in which he and Henry Nicholas were racing another machine struck a train on the Reading Railway at a crossing. Nicholas died on the way to the hospital. Their machine hit the train with such force that the rear wheels (sic) of a freight car were derailed." He left five children, one of whom was Evelyn. She married Sterling Paulus in November of 1939 and they became members of our church at Bethlehem. Sterling died in 2002 and Evelyn died in 1989. Both are buried in Memorial Park in Bethlehem. Marcus and Emma are buried in Union Cemetery in Hellertown.



Seifert family (Rear) George M., Sarah, Preston II, Alavesta, Noah  
Front: Marcus, Eliza, David W., Margaret (Sloyer), Stella c. 1895

Johannes and his son, Johannes II, served in the Revolutionary War under Captain Anthony Lark in First Company, Fourth Battalion and fought in the Battle of Brandywine. Johannes II married Dorothea Raub and a son, Leonard, was born in 1803. He married Catharina Reichert and a son, John, was born in 1825. He married Elizabeth Sloyer and a son, Thomas Henry, was born on June 23, 1859 near Springtown. He married Ida Agnes Hess, also born near Springtown. Thomas was a carpenter but learned the undertaking trade with his brother Isaac at Hellertown, and after following his undertaker vocation in Easton and Raubsville for twelve years, settled in Springtown in 1897. His property was located on a three-acre tract of land that included two houses fronting on Main Street. He conducted business in the Seifert Funeral Parlor located in one house and in the morgue located in the rear section of the adjoining house. The business was operated with his son John B. Seifert. In 1928 they purchased an abandoned church building on the corner of Church Street and Lower Saucon Road in Springtown and manufactured the Springtown Burial Vault. The business later became the Felix Hammerstone Burial Vault Company. Concrete burial vaults were piled about on the grounds in front of the building. The building was demolished in the 1980's and a private residence now occupies the site.

The abandoned church building had been erected by Abel Strawn and dedicated on September 15, 1885 as the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church. A white picket fence surrounded the building and inside, on the front wall, a stone plaque proclaimed (in German script), "Holiness is the embellishment of this house forever." Several articles were written in the Springtown Times about the church meetings and it was always called "St. Paul's Mennonite Church". The reason for this is not known. The church thrived for many years but then began to decline. In 1923 our Conference placed it under the control of our Coopersburg church but in 1924 the church was not listed in the Conference minutes. The last pastor listed was Richard Woodring. The church produced two Christian workers, William James Fretz and George A. Campbell. William was saved in a Revival meeting at Springtown and later moved to Bethlehem, where he was baptized by the pastor of the Bethlehem church, Adam Gehret. William became a pastor but later left the ministry and taught in the Sunday School at Bethlehem. George Campbell, a Civil War veteran, was saved under the ministry of Jonas Musselman at Springtown. He too moved to Bethlehem and became a pastor, serving until his death in 1911.

Johannes II had another son, Johannes George, born in 1792. He married Elizabeth Bachman on June 05, 1814 and a son, Jacob, was born to them. He married a woman named Rebecca and a son, Sylvanus, was born in 1851. He married Cecelia Roth and a son, Clinton, was born in 1877. He married Leticia Rush and a son, Stewart, was born on August 7, 1904. He married Margaret May Williams of Bethlehem, daughter of Oscar and Amelia (Schnell) Williams. Margaret's sister, Claire, was joined in marriage to Forrest Yeakel by the pastor of our Bethlehem church, Franklin M. Hottel, on April 04,

1931. Their son, David, married Naomi Schueck on August 27, 1960. Naomi, daughter of Henry and Edna (Hertzog) Schueck, attended Berean Bible School and Bob Jones University. She died in Locust Grove, VA on December 25, 2011 and is buried in the Cedar Church Cemetery in Allentown with Forrest and Claire. Naomi's sister, Leah, married Wiley Gehman, son of Timothy and Marie (Baus) Gehman. Wiley and Leah are members of our Cedar Crest Church in Allentown.

In 1951, during the ministry of Pastor Norman Wolf, it was noted that a young woman from our Conference, Olive Rawn, would be leaving for the mission field and was in need of dresses. Mrs. Wolf, with her own money, bought some material and Margaret (Williams) Seifert opened her home for a place to make the dresses, as well as quilts and other needed articles. Asked to form a society, she declined as she felt it would be too much responsibility. On February 19, 1952, a missionary from Africa spoke at our Bethlehem church and told of his work at a leper colony there. He related how his wife, after a busy day, had to wash all the bandages at night. Margaret, unable to sleep that night, called Pastor Wolf the next day and agreed to begin a women's missionary organization. At prayer meeting that evening the announcement was made and a meeting was planned for the next morning. A Women's Missionary Society was formed with 23 members and they began making bandages and hospital gowns. They also made quilts and canned fruit for the Home for the Aging, located in Center Valley and canned fruit and vegetables for the flood victims in 1955. Clothing was collected and prepared for our missionaries. The news of this organization reached our other churches and they too began forming societies. Thus the Bible Fellowship Women's Missionary Society owes its beginnings to Margaret (Williams) Seifert and our Bethlehem church.

A daughter of Stewart and Margaret, Elaine, married Robert Beswick in a candlelight ceremony at our church at Bethlehem. Born May 29, 1927, she died in August of 1978. Robert, born on February 1918 died on February 04, 1984. Although they were living in Irvington, NJ, both are buried at the Memorial Park Cemetery in Bethlehem. A daughter, Faye, married Roger Zimmerman of our Bethlehem church and his sister, June, married Donald Matz, also of our Bethlehem church and a very active member. June died in 2000 and Donald in 2011. They also are buried at Memorial Park.



Wedding of Robert and Elaine. Pastor Paul T. Stengele is standing on the left, next to Eleanor Gehret, later the wife of Arden Gackenbach.

A daughter of Clinton Seifert, Sylvia, married Stanley Bachman, son of William and Elsie (Young) Bachman. His sister, Arlene, was joined in marriage to Lyman Heller of our Bethlehem church by the pastor, Franklin M. Hottel, and their son, LeRoy, served as a pastor in our Conference. Retired, he continues to serve as an Assistant Pastor at our Lebanon church. Stanley's brother, Harrison, married Catherine Custer on October 16, 1936, the marriage performed by our Bethlehem pastor, Paul T. Stengele. Catherine died in 2012 at the age of 97.

Another son of Jacob and Rebecca was Jacob R., who married Eleanora on September 22, 1873 in Bethlehem. Three children, all sons, were born to them, Erwin Francis being the second. He married Maude Ella Campbell but she died in 1928. He then married a widow, Martha Jane Yost nee Harter. Martha was born in Ashfield, Carbon County, on February 06, 1878 and later came to Northampton County. She met a man named Phillip Yost and they were married in South Bethlehem on July 05, 1897. He died in October of 1923 and she then married Erwin Seifert. They became members of our Bethlehem church but Martha became a widow again when Erwin died on March 19, 1943. She became a resident of our Home for the Aging in Center Valley in December of 1956. After the Home and Farm there were sold the residents were moved to the Bible Fellowship Church Home in Nazareth, where she died on March 19, 1969. She and Erwin are buried at the Union Cemetery in Hellertown.

Another son of Johannes II was Johannes III, born in 1791. He served in the War of 1812 in the 14th Co., 1st Rifle Regiment. Johannes married Elizabeth Trey and they had a son, Samuel, who married Angeline Weber in 1853 and a son, Llewellyn, was born in 1858. He married Katherine Thomas of NJ and a son, William was born on May 3, 1891 in Hackettstown, NJ. William moved to Phillipsburg, NJ and married Delia Tress. He served in World War I as a corporal with the 78<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in France and was wounded. His wife, Delia, was a daughter of Edward F. Tress of Bethlehem,

PA. Edward had a son, Chester, who married Elda Moyer and they had three children, one of whom is LeRoy Tress, who married Jean Horvath on November 30, 1957. LeRoy (known as Lee) and Jean are active members of our Bethlehem church where Lee sings with the men's trio. Another son, Kenneth Tress, married Edna Houser and moved to Delaware County. He was a member of our church at Wallingford and went to be with the Lord on July 10, 2011.

Frederick Seifert, born on January 11, 1806, resided in Upper Saucon Township and married Catharine Mack, daughter of Tobias and Catharine (Wentz) Mack. A daughter, Mahala, born on May 24, 1845, married Jacob Shelly and three children were born, Mary being the second. She married a member of our Coopersburg church, Joseph Fackenthal. Disturbed about something concerning William Gehman, credited with being the founder of our Conference, he wrote a letter of complaint to the Conference but did not sign it. Annual Conference determined that the letter was slanderous and a committee was formed that discovered Joseph to be the writer. After a hearing he was expelled from membership. Nevertheless, when he died on November 22, 1898, he was buried in our Coopersburg cemetery. Frederick and Catharine Seifert as well as Jacob and Mahala Shelly are also buried in our Coopersburg cemetery. Mahala, a member of our Bethlehem church, died on February 16, 1934 at the home of her granddaughter in Bethlehem. After Joseph's Fackenthal's death, Mary married a widower, Joseph Moyer, and became a step-mother to his three children, Ida, Harold and Hilda. Joseph and the family had moved to Bethlehem from Springfield Township and became members of our Bethlehem church. Each of the two daughters married future preachers from the church. Ida married Franklin M. Hottel and Hilda married Allen Woodring. Franklin later became a pastor at the Bethlehem church and his son, Winfred, also served as a pastor in our Conference,

The son of Jacob and Mahala, Charles, was married to Annie Schaffer by H. B. Musselman in Allentown. She died on March 22, 1893 and he then married Agnes Lichty, but that marriage was not performed by one of our pastors.

A son of Johannes III was David, who married Elizabeth Heffler. They had a son, Edwin, who was born in 1867. He married Arvesta Stoneback in July 1887 and they had nine children, Thurston being the fourth. He was born on December 17, 1892 and married Carrie Hinkle. A daughter, Eleanor, was born on February 16, 1918 but Carrie died of pneumonia on December 12, 1918. Eleanor married Stephen Frank Buddock and four children were born to them, Stephanie being the third. Stephanie graduated from Berean Bible School and later married a Berean Bible school graduate and missionary from our Quakertown church, Charles Mann. They served for several years in the Congo region of Africa but after native uprisings returned home and became actively involved at our Quakertown church. Charles went to be with the Lord on March 08, 2013 but Stephanie remains in the Quakertown church actively serving the Lord.

In 1932 the Bosworth Brothers began holding meetings between Allentown and Bethlehem. Many Hungarians from Miller Heights were converted at these meetings and with the assistance of an Ebenezer member, Robert Jones, a church building was erected. Called the Miller Heights Tabernacle, it later became a Home Mission church of our Conference. When our Bethlehem church relocated to Bethlehem Township the Miller Heights church closed and merged with our Bethlehem church. The Buddocks were members at Miller Heights.

After Carrie's death, Thurston married Beulah Mae Sloyer of Lower Saucon Township on May 09, 1920. When the Bosworth Brothers began holding meetings in 1932 the pastor of the church Thurston was attending told the people not to attend. Thurston and his family did attend, however, and the pastor at our Bethlehem church, Franklin Hottel, invited the Bosworth's to hold meetings there. The Seiferts attended these meetings also and joined our Bethlehem church (Ebenezer), where Beulah became active in the Women's Missionary Society. Three children were born to Thurston and Beulah, one being Arlington. He met a young woman at Ebenezer named Ruth Gehret, granddaughter of a former pastor, Adam Gehret, and they were married on May 02, 1947 by Pastor Norman Wolf. A sister of Ruth, Eleanor, married Arden Gackenbach on July 27, 1947, again by Pastor Wolf. Arden continues as a member at Bethlehem, where in earlier days he served on the church board and as a delegate to Annual Conference. Eleanor, who played the organ for over 35 years and also once led the choir, went to be with the Lord on June 15, 2004.

Arlington, born in March 16, 1921, graduated from Hellertown High School, class of 1938. After graduation he worked for Stark Brothers Ribbon Company and then worked five years as an apprentice/machinist at Bethlehem Steel until drafted into the U. S. Navy. Following Honorable Discharge, he moved to Durham, NC, and was employed by Roadway Express as chief dispatcher and office manager. Sensing God's call to enter the ministry he graduated from what is now Cairn University. Arlington served churches in Philadelphia, Harrisburg, Hatfield, Allentown and Stroudsburg and was the founding pastor of the Pocono Bible Fellowship Church. He negotiated with the Crawford Family for the purchase of Pinebrook Bible Conference and served six years as director. After leaving Pinebrook, he and his wife owned and operated Buena Vista Retreat and Conference Center, Newfoundland, PA for 15 years and then retired to Shangri La, Newfoundland, PA. He died on August 28, 2012 at his home. Ruth died on September 19, 2009 and both Memorial Services were held in our Bethlehem church. They are both buried at our Zionsville cemetery.



Arlington's brother, Delbert, who also served in the U. S. Navy, died on December 15, 2009 and his wife, Doris (Moyer), died on February 24, 2013. Both were members of our Coopersburg church where Delbert served as an Elder, delegate to Annual Conference and Sunday School teacher. Both are buried at Memorial Park in Bethlehem. A sister, Celestine Seifert, lives in Rockville, IL.

Members of the Seifert family and extended families have been a blessing in various ways in our Conference and especially in our Bethlehem church. We thank God for the Seifert family.

---

The Evangelical Mennonites were formed when Mennonitism and revivalism collided. In Pennsylvania, this collision was occurring during the decade of the 1850's as pre-Civil War revivals were heating up. Eventually, the Evangelical Mennonites merged with like minded Mennonites from the Mid West and Canada to form the Mennonite Brethren in Christ. Later, what had been the Pennsylvania Conference broke away to form what is today the Bible Fellowship Church.

The connections between these groups of Mennonites were based on a network of relationships between people in these various groups. Many of our organizational contacts are based on relationships in which common interest were discovered and bonds formed.

Daniel Hoch was a leader in Canada. The following article from Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online will introduce you to him.

### **Hoch, Daniel (1805-1878)**

*Daniel and Margaret Hoch Source: Mennonite Archives of Ontario (1990-12.16); photograph by G. F. Maitland*

Daniel Hoch (High): farmer, minister and denominational found: born 24 August 1805 in Lincoln County, Upper Canada to Daniel Hoch (11 April 1773-22 November 1818) and Katharine Bechtel Hoch (14 April 1776-6 February 1851). He was the second son and fourth child in a family of six children. On 20 December 1826 he married Margaret Kratz (23 February 1808-13 April 1875), the daughter of Valentine Kratz. They had 13 children.



Hoch was a farmer, and had no formal education beyond the elementary grades. On 22 May 1831 he was chosen by lot and ordained by Bishop Jacob Moyer as minister in the local Mennonite Church (MC) congregation at "The Twenty." According to his later testimony, at the time of his ordination he was a lost sinner, and believed for some years he had committed the "unpardonable sin." He eventually had an experience that

gave him assurance of his salvation sometime before 1838 when he "became by grace assured of the remission of all my sins."

With his new understanding of salvation, Daniel Hoch began to preach a message to his congregation of renewal through personal conversion. With this revitalized message Hoch also introduced prayer-meetings, family worship and prayer before meals. There is relative silence about Hoch's ministry into the 1840s, though obvious tension existed within the body of pastoral leaders at the Twenty, which now also included Bishop Jacob Gross (1780-1865, ordained after the death of Bishop Jacob Moyer, Sr. in 1833) and two of Daniel's stepbrothers, Preachers Dilman and Abraham Moyer. Gross and Hoch, along with Deacon Jacob Albrecht, favored incorporation of some renewal forms learned from the Evangelical Association, though Hoch remained a staunch Mennonite in his overall thought.

The two factions in the congregation began to worship separately in 1848, making full use of the three available local meetinghouses. At the time of the Canada Conference annual conference meeting in May 1849, which was held at The Twenty, Benjamin Eby announced the silencing of Daniel Hoch, Bishop Jacob Gross and Deacon Jacob Albrecht. Jacob Gross and a portion of the congregation soon joined the Evangelical Association, a step away from the Mennonites that Daniel Hoch completely rejected. Hoch did not favor use of the mourners' bench or any form of open communion. Daniel Hoch's relationship with his former colleague Dilman Moyer became bitter, and was not resolved before their deaths in the 1870s.

After a failed reconciliation with the conference, Daniel Hoch led the formation of the New Mennonite Church of Canada West. He became associated with John H. Oberholtzer, who ordained Hoch as a bishop on 5 October 1851. Daniel Hoch was an early supporter in the formation of the General Conference Mennonite Church, and chaired the 1861 session of that conference. He also maintained cordial relations with the Evangelical Mennonites, who split from Oberholtzer's East Pennsylvania Mennonite Conference in 1857.

In the 1860s and early 1870s Daniel Hoch's own relationship with the New Mennonite conference suffered. He did not attend all the annual conferences, and on occasion the conference reprimanded him for the abrasive language used in his public writings. He was still, however, acknowledged as an important leader in Mennonite renewal, and his support was sought by renewal leaders in other Mennonite communities. Eusebius Hershey, Jonas Schultz, David Gehman and others of the Pennsylvania-based Evangelical Mennonites sought Hoch's endorsement and visited him whenever traveling to Canada. Even John H. Oberholtzer visited Hoch in his home as late as 1875.

In 1869 one last effort was made at reconciliation between the New Mennonite Church and the Canada Conference. The plan was not accepted, and soon other renewal activity in Ontario overtook events, and hopes for reconciliation were not revived. Without Daniel Hoch's intransigent position that his relationship to Dilman Moyer needed resolution before any conference reconciliation, it is quite likely reconciliation would have taken place at this time, at least in Waterloo County. This would have had an unknown impact on subsequent renewal efforts within the Ontario Mennonite community. The New Mennonite Church merged with the Reforming

Mennonite Society in 1875 to form the United Mennonites of Canada, Michigan, Indiana and Ohio.

Daniel Hoch's own New Mennonite congregation at Jordan gradually dwindled. His older brother and co-minister, Jacob, died in early 1876, and no other New Mennonite preacher remained in the community. Eventually Daniel Hoch's poor health ended regular New Mennonite services at The Twenty, probably in the early 1870s. By the time Hoch died on 13 August 1878, he appeared to be isolated from his church community. His funeral was conducted by Evangelical Association ministers, a supreme irony considering his explicit personal rejection of Evangelical Association theology at the time of the division in 1849.

Despite his abrasive style in dealing with conflict, Daniel Hoch was a leader steeped in Mennonite theology, who tried to embrace a level of spiritual renewal that would serve a Mennonite church he believed was weakened by a focus on tradition and dress regulations.

---

The following letters are reprinted to show the interaction that was taking place as noted in the article above. A special thanks to Ardis Dreisbach Grossjean who called them to my attention and to the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario for allowing me to reprint them here.

The letters are written during the times of greatest turmoil for the Evangelical Mennonites. They give some of concerns and feelings about the controversies that had been brewing.

These letters are translations commissioned by the Mennonite Historical Society and contain notes and some typos. I have "prettied" them up by making some corrections and leaving out the translation notes. However, I think the intent and meaning of the letters are preserved and clear.

In the fall of 1857, an ultimatum had been given that the protracted meetings being held by William Gehman and others should be abandoned. William N. Shelly was one of those who stood with Gehman while trying to minimize the growing division. The following is his letter.

*Baumannsville October 12, 1857*

*Much loved brother,*

*In Christ, I grasp the pen to write you in love. Firstly, my soul wishes you all the grace of God and say the peace of Jesus passes all understanding protect us and you for heaven and eternal life in Christ Jesus. Amen. And next a heartfelt affectionate and friendly greeting to you dear brother and sister as well including all others who as brothers and sisters in Christ walk according to an evangelical rule, peace and blessing and grace from heaven be called down upon these through Jesus Christ.*

*Then also we let you know that we, God be praised, are all well and wish that this letter will find all of you will also which is what we wish for you with all our heart. Furthermore I inform you how matters stand. You have known for some time that the majority confirmed bishops decision and acknowledged it as evangelical and since I had recalled my name it was my first question as to how to prove that the essay was evangelical. I have done this sufficiently and excessively with evidence of proof from God's word. And while I was reading the Scripture texts, some held their heads together and scoffed saying that I likely did not have the Spirit of meekness. Dear brother, I have taken some of their previously adopted principles concerning meetings of prayer and exposed them and brought them to light in the presence of a full house.*

*Dear Brother, I wish that I could speak with you an entire day, I would have much to tell you; but I will only explain to you briefly in keeping with an agreement with brother William Gehman, and I write on behalf of many others with joy, that they have obligated me to write to you and inform you: Firstly, that I and brother Wm Gehman and brother David Henning as minister and brother Jacob Gottschall as chairman now are separated from them for no other reason (than) that we cannot be subjugated to their pharisaical essay concerning prayer meetings.*

*And secondly, because we also believe that most must first be converted if they will be received into the fellowship.*

*You do know, my dear brother, how this matter was handled.*

*Thirdly, it has become my duty to write you that you send me your order as soon as you possibly can we not knowing a better way except to be one heart and one soul with you.*

*And as soon as we have your order then I will determine a time as we agreed upon in my Father land and place this order before all our praying brothers and sisters for examination so that we can enter into contract and oneness with you as one heart and one soul, since we have no doubt that it will not happen in the manner because recently I spent two weeks in my Father land and held meetings 10 times and see such souls that came to the faith in Lord Jesus recently and some not so recently and these seek their refuge completely in us and I have read your letter to a number of our praying brothers and sisters and all of the said Yes and Amen.*

*And God is being praised that we (have been freed) from beneath the oppressive yoke because we again feel as free agents as far as we know about man's rules because there are some souls who were baptized by Oberholtzer in unbelief and these are not satisfied that way and have already notified me and I feel that after intensive*

*investigation and testing these should not be denied and if they want to enter the Jordan then I am already to fulfill with joy the command of Jesus to them upon their faith according to God's word.*

*Therefore, I must hurry to the conclusion in the joy-filled hope that you will as soon as possible write me an educational and encouraging letter, including the order to send us. Be you all commended to God and His grace from your unworthy but sincere brother and sister in Christ Jesus united.*

*Daniel and Markata Heigh*

*William N. and Anna Schelly*

David Gehman was a significant leader in the Evangelical Mennonites. While he did not serve as a preacher, he was a faithful layman who served a number of years as the secretary for the conferences. He too corresponded with Hoch to share his thoughts and feelings.

*Hosensack, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania, July 29, 1860*

*Daniel Hoch, Beloved brother in the Lord.*

*I feel myself indebted to write to you. I received your loving encouraging letter from the 4<sup>th</sup> of May after considerable time. All of us were, praise God, greatly encouraged anew to serve our Savior in all seriousness and to work out our soul's salvation no matter what the world may think or say, whether she approves or not.*

*O beloved brother, I rejoice always when there is someone who has the courage to confess his Savior in all circumstances before God and man, (and to do so) fearlessly regardless whether the evil world or hypocritical in-name Christians approve or not. There we read Revelation of John 21:8.*

*Those who are too cowardly to do the will of God and of our Savior Jesus Christ, those who want to compromise with these or those and say that one must be accommodating, one should not take things so seriously. O how readily (or soon) does he (who has once received peace with God and through our Lord Jesus Christ) add up again, so that the way must be broader. Now the world or name-Christians begin again to love Him and say, by way of illustration: See! Now he is no more so foolish.*

*O dear brother, that is a very bad sign (for him) who still wears, be it on the forehead, hand or elsewhere the picture of the beast, or a sign he shall drink the wine of the wrath of God. As one who throws away the weapons of Christianity, be counted as standing*

*great in her sight, and enjoys the compliments (honor) of the world that is the sign of the image and of the mark of the beast.*

*O beloved let us deny, faithfully and conscientiously. Let us bring death to the old Adam, so that the new man can grow and increase through the grace of our Lord Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.*

*Our Pentecost Conference as concluded in brotherly love. Brother E. Hershey of whom I wrote to you was present. He preached two sermons blessed by God, especially the Sunday morning one. Yes, we might almost say that the place where they gathered was shaken. The love of God was poured out in abundance. On Pentecost Sunday afternoon we celebrated the Lord's Memorial Supper where we had blessed times. Monday after noon we had council meeting. Present were: ministers David Henning from Mt. Bethel, Northampton Co. Pa, Jacob Gottschall from same place chairman, Wm N Schelly, Henry Diehl, Wm Gehman, Jonas Musselman (ein Jungling) Abraham Kaufman (ebenfalls ein Jungling) aber beyde Jos Schneider von Springfield chairman and my smallness. Those were the counseling members.*

*Also most of our fellowship were present. I had almost forgotten to report our dear brother, young, preacher Abraham W. Stauffer now still in a single state, a special instrument of the Lord, was also present. This loving dear brother is presently working with bro Long at the Union Tabernacle.*

*The loving brother Hershey has become one with us. Likely it was his hopeful wish, was also mine, as generally the wish of almost all Brothers and Sisters. However, as I already reported earlier he had served among the United Brethren in Christ for approximately 16-17 years as itinerant preacher. Approximately two years ago he was requested and received from their Council honorable discharge. This was confirmed in writing. His reasons for this step were mainly: firstly, the rapid spread of pride; secondly, the massive appropriations for High Schools and Seminary; thirdly the baptism of Children, etc. Since then, however, Brother Hershey has travelled, preached wherever her was invited and has, I am confident, only sought to win and establish families in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We have souls among our youth in whose life he has been God's instrument, leading them to peace with God through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Recently he has occasionally travelled through Lancaster, Dauphin Centre, Berks, and other counties gathered congregations or flock, predominantly, among those of United Brethren congregations, which have begun deeper own. Now when he joins us all these gathered one shall be considered as gathered flock in union with us. O how he has admonished us to walk in humility and lowliness as a Reformed Mennonite fellowship if we want to be worthy to carry the*

*name Mennonite. This should be visible on the outside as a mark to convince the world. Although he did not look only upon the outside or visible matters, however Spirit and Life in the inner man and than first to convince the world.*

*In this he had the support of all Brothers and Sisters if we wanted to grow as a fellowship and in souls for the kingdom of Jesus Christ. However there was a point which the Union postponed for the time being to use footwashing as an instrument of grace. He was prepared to put it away completely as he personally was concerned, but because of his gathered flocks, he did ask to permit him, or to speak a 'yes' to footwashing in freedom of conscience, that who whoever requested its use would be permitted or have the freedom to use it. However, brother Gehman was somewhat hesitant (reluctant) and fearful it could cause disunity. Others, however, wished for it hopefully. I must admit, honestly, he is a dear brother to me and has also been a great blessing to me, for my family and community. I must confess, he left me Tuesday morning. The separation was deep and sincere. I read him my letter to you. He and I promised to attend the next Conference in late Fall and try once more. For the time being we want to entrust this matter in prayer to God. As He leads, we shall be satisfied.*

*Dear brother, I have written broadly, admitted, I have not succeeded well. I have not yet written to Br. McNelly, but plan to write him son. We are already happy that we can hope to see your faces once more on this side of the tomb. When you come, write us the time and where you plan to arrive.*

*Your brother, David Gehman*

*P. S. Would to visit with you. J. H. Oberholtzer traveled to Iowa. I am committed to see my soul's salvation, that of my family and her eternal salvation shall be more and more my endeavor. There is much that I would write you, but now I must close. We are all well, including Brother Heinrich and Family, as well as all brothers and sisters as much as I know. Recently I underwent surgery from the doctors. They removed a tumor from my mouth (Maul) and took out part of my bridge for teeth. God be thanked all is well, if all remains as is. Also heartfelt greetings to you and your family, to the dear brother Jacob Hoch and family, to bro Wm Hoch and family, to the dear brother Jacob Albrecht and family and his son and family. I commend you to God and his grace through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. Pray for us, we will pray for you in our weakness.*

On November 5, 1861, the Evangelical Mennonites met for another of their conferences in Haycock Township, Bucks County, Pennsylvania. At that conference, they accepted Dr. Jonas Schultz as an advisory member who was entitled to take part in the

conference. Schultz was a medical doctor who became a preacher. Later, he became a teacher at the Mennonite school in Wadsworth, Ohio. The week prior to this conference, he composed the following letter to Hoch.

*Clayton, Berks Cty., Pa. October 30, 1861*

*Honorable Daniel Hoch. –*

*Dear and much appreciated brother in Christ Jesus our Lord. First, you and your and all God's children in your neighborhood a heartfelt greeting. All of you and me I heartily wish the grace of God in Christ Jesus and grasp quickly the pen to write to you the following report.*

*A dear brother, name Hershey, of whom you well may have already been reported, was once a member of the 'Vereinigten Mennoniten' and served as preacher among them. Later he wished for himself that out of certain reason, that, as far as I know, assured him of an honorable release, did leave that.*

*When he traveled and visited among us, he established a relationship and considerable testing of each other with the "Evangelische Mennoniten" and this led to the step that brother Hershey joined the Ev M F.*

*Because he was or seemed to be motivated by a missionary spirit so I asked him one or twice this past summer whether he would not have the joy to visit Mennonite Canadian Land. It seems that the decision to make a visit to Canada has ripened since he has send word to me that he was planning to go. Till next Sunday Nov 3 he will likely arrive in Upper Milford. The meeting in Flatland has been set for Nov. 5 and then immediately after as I have heard it he wants to leave. Has he written you? [?] Yes, then all is alright, if not then I wanted you to know this in advance. I regret that I cannot report definitely the day he leaves so that you could register request in advance. Should I get to see him on Sun then will we discuss the matter definitely and I will if not all possible and a report immediately. As far as I am aware Brother Hershey is an honest humble child of God. And I believe with assurance that he visits you for only our reason, he has set his eye on the well being of souls. May God who knows everything direct all matters so that his honor and truth will be promoted and his blessing richly dispensed. As God wills my most modest self will likely accompany the brother to Canada. How will I rejoice to once again see my friends. The brother Gehman, Schelly, etc. are all well.*

*Your humble brother in the Lord.*

*Jonas Schultz*

*Another sincere greeting to your family.*

I welcome your questions, comments and general input.

Dick Taylor  
723 South Providence Road  
Wallingford PA 19086

Retaylor723@gmail.com

These Mizpah Memories probably pre-date most if not all of our current readers.

