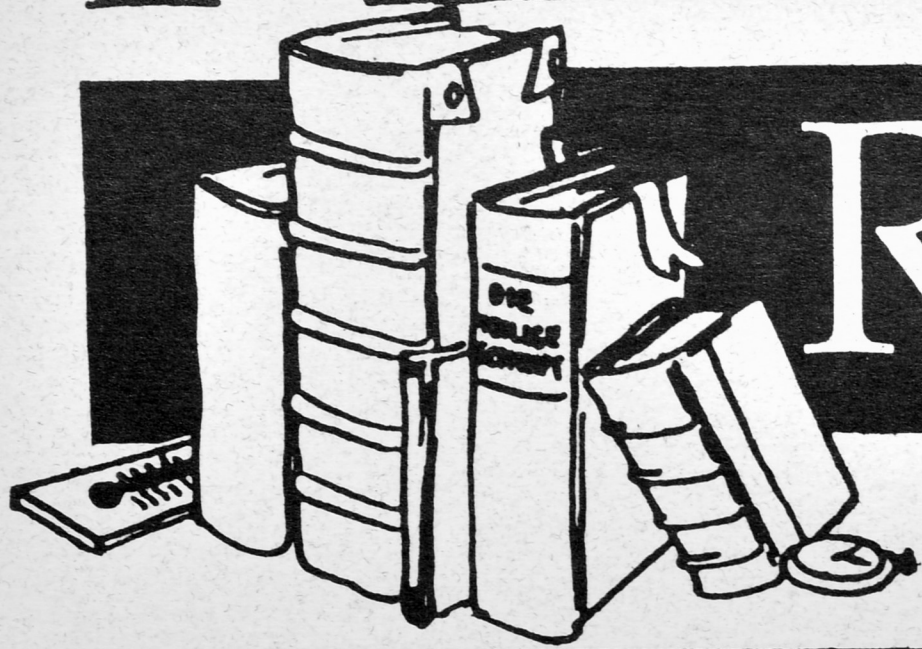


# HERITAGE

## REVIEW



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### THE SWISS BRETHREN

Poem by George Schwertfeger \*

1. Of men who ask after Christ,  
Come to me, I can tell you,  
For I know quite a few,  
They are called Anabaptists.  
These constantly teach  
Only from the Word of God.
2. All their teachings and precepts,  
Are directed toward peace,  
As Christ has commanded,  
They follow this unreservedly.  
Only among them, there alone,  
Does one find pure doctrine.

The Heritage Review is an annual publication of the Ohio Amish Library, 4292 SR 39 Millersburg, Ohio 44654. It is intended to provide information, past and present, about the Amish and Mennonites, especially in Ohio. We invite articles and information. Memberships to the Ohio Amish Library are \$20 annually. Single copies of The Heritage Review are available.

\* The German original of this interesting poem was printed in the April, 1929 *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 151-154. A variant copy from an unknown source is at Ohio Amish Library. Nothing certain is known about the author-teacher, George Schwertfeger, beyond that he was not an Anabaptist. The manuscript used in the *MQR* was copied by Jonathan Zook of Fairfield County, Ohio in 1890 and given to his nephew Jonathan Zook of Ligonier, Indiana. It is not known where he got it. The date of writing is probably 1812 or 1813, based on the following: Jacob Kipferschmidt, mentioned in verse 10 as "awaiting for his reward," died in 1813. Jacob Klopfenstein began writing his almanac, as mentioned in verse 14, in 1812. This poem is quite positive in its portrayal of the *Täufer*. Many of the men named in the poem were leaders of Amish congregations in various places. The writer says he knew most of the Anabaptist leaders from Switzerland to Holland, and attended their worship services frequently. This translation was done by Edward Kilne.



3. I have often been to their services,  
Where many notable, wealthy lords  
Found themselves because of curiosity,  
On Sunday at the hour of worship.  
Here it is preached without pomp,  
As the disciples of Jesus also did.
4. I saw how they break bread,  
And pronounce a blessing over the wine,  
Then how they wash each other's feet.  
Not forgetting Christ's teaching.  
They do their duties as Christians,  
And do not forget the least [teachings].
5. Baptism is administered like as  
The disciples of Christ kept it.  
They baptise only adults,  
And not little children.  
They keep it as it is commanded,  
And not as the Antichrist does.
6. Pride and fashionable attire,  
Are not to be considered among them.  
The beard they do not cut off,  
They carry it to the grave.  
Red, yellow, and green silks,  
Do the women all shun.
7. The wives are faithful to their husbands,  
And until one dies, neither is free.  
Concerning fornication and adultery,  
One seldom hears it reported among them.  
The young ladies know nothing of diseases,  
That creep in among the daughters in the  
cities.
8. Such hospitality and well-doing,  
Though one goes far and wide in the world,  
Will he seldom indeed find,  
As with an Anabaptist.  
They treat everyone as a guest,  
Though they know him or not.
9. The ministers and preachers all,  
Are chosen with free choice.  
Everyone gives his vote,  
For whom he believes is best.  
And if they have equal votes,  
The lot must then be cast.
10. Who in Salm does not know,  
The elderly, graying Kipferschmidt?  
What a powerful preacher  
He has been for many years already.  
Now he soon awaits the reward,  
In heaven's throne so high.
11. There in the region of Lothringen,  
Is Christian Engle well known.  
How he, to the praise of God,  
Is able to preach so well.  
Christian Gerber also  
Preaches as is the practice.
12. The most educated that I know,  
Is named Joseph Stalter.  
And if six dozen priests would come,  
They could not take anything from him.  
His dwelling place is at Zweibrücken,  
Where he is loved by all.
13. I know also a very learned man,  
Johannes Freuenberger is his name.  
In Basel he is well known,  
In the northern part of Switzerland.  
He preaches so fine and beautifully,  
That it could not be better.
14. At Belfort lives Klopfenstein,  
Who indeed carries a golden star [medal],  
Which he received from Emperor Napoleon  
As reward for being a [good] farmer.  
He does well in making almanacs.  
But you must not laugh at him.
15. Christian Gingerich on the Wallenrath,  
Also has a worthy name,  
And thereto, can preach well,  
Because he is a brave man.  
He is not timid in all this,  
Since he's had this ministry for a long time
16. The Bildhauer farm is in Alsace,  
Where there lives a good Christian.  
His name is Joseph Fritz,  
He is a man of understanding and skill.  
Men know quite far and wide,  
What courageous people these are.
17. Yet another I cannot neglect,  
For he is a courageous man;  
Michael Engle he calls himself.  
Brandelfinger you have known well,  
There in Buetscher-land;  
He is well-known to everyone.
18. Yet many more could I name,  
Whom I all know well.  
In Lothringen, Alsace, Breisgau,  
In Switzerland, Palatinate, and Wetterau.  
From Switzerland up to Holland,  
I am acquainted with most of them.



19. The one who has written this poem,  
Is indeed not an Anabaptist.  
He has sung their praises,  
As well as he was able to succeed.  
George Schwertfeger is his name,  
You already know him as a schoolteacher.

20. You know well this teacher of books,  
Who can teach the children well.  
Not only German and French,  
But also other languages, plus Latin,  
He can teach your children,  
If you hire him through the winter.

## OUR HERITAGE, A Kurtz Family History

by Andy L. Miller

In the year 1887, just south and east of Walnut Creek, Ohio, on the farm owned today by Bishop Henry C. Beachy, there lived a family by the name of Daniel Y. Kurtz (OAG 3200). On the morning of June 2, 1887, a son Ben was born to them. He was their fourth child and the first son.

Several years later the Kurtz family moved to the Farmerstown area, onto the farm known today as the Jacob Barkman farm. One of Ben's childhood buddies was his neighbor, Noah Stutzman. Noah's parents lived at the end of the Kurtz lane.

Father Dan Kurtz apparently did some farming, but as a sideline he hauled lumber to the Baltic train depot with his team and wagon, and also brought the mail along back from Baltic. This may have been a winter-time job. I am not sure whether he already did this when they were living at Walnut Creek. It would seem more logical that he did this from the Farmerstown location. (Some of this information I am trying to recollect as it was related to me by my Uncle John. Maybe someone has more information on this.)

In the year 1900, the Kurtz family moved to Geauga County, Ohio because the milk prices were better there. While there, the circumstances of the family changed drastically. On December 4, 1902, the oldest daughter, Amanda, married Noah O. Hershberger. On December 25, 1902 their son John died. On January 11, 1903 their daughter SarahAnn died. On August 30, 1903 the father Dan Kurtz died and left a family of eight children at home. They were not at all a well-to-do people. Two months later they had an auction. After they sold everything, they had no home left, but still had debts to pay, that were not covered by the proceeds of the sale. So we see that in short order they had a wedding, three funerals, and an auction, (with no place left to live). This all happened in less than one year's time. The younger son, Andy, wrote: "Dear Mother! how often she cried!"

After the auction was over the neighbors came together to decide how to help this poor widow. The decision was not an easy one, but one thing was obvious- the poor widow would not be able to provide for this growing family. There were a few more Amish families living in the area, but they also had nothing to spare. (To give us a bit of an insight on conditions in that county during those times, it is said that Bishop Gid Troyer from Charm visited Geauga County. When he came home he told the home church that if you could span a tent over Geauga County, you would have a "poor-house." This probably was some years later.)

The decision was to place some of the children into other (non-Amish) homes. So Ben, 16 years old; Andy, 8 years old; and one of the girls (I am not sure which one) were placed into such homes. The poor widow and the children who were with her had to move frequently. Often the places she could rent were dirty and often times alive with bed-bugs. Each one would work wherever they could find work. My mother (Ben's daughter) told us that she never saw "Mommy Kurtz" laugh out loud. She felt it was because of all the sadness and hardships she faced in her life. The way they could tell she was laughing was when her belly was shaking.

Now I will focus more on the life of the oldest son, Ben. A year or so later, they moved close to Canton, Ohio, apparently onto a farm. I remember both my grandfather Ben and his brother Andy say they used to set bottles of milk on William McKinley's porch. Sometime during the course of the events, Grandpa Ben worked on a carpenter crew with Dan Kurtz, building houses in Canton, Ohio. I remember him telling us on what streets they build the houses, but I do not remember the names of the streets. I believe this Dan Kurtz was cousin of Grandpa Kurtz's father, Dan. This Dan had a son named Mose, who lived in Berlin, Ohio during the last years of his life. As all of us grandchildren knew, Grandpa Kurtz's carpenter tools were something that no one else used except Grandpa. When he was finished working at the end of a day, they were cleaned,



oiled, and wrapped in neat rags and put back into the tool box. What he did, he did right.

During the time Ben worked for Dan Kurtz, Dan got Texas fever, and Grandpa got it too. He talked to his Mother about going to Texas and also his girlfriend, Lizzieann Troyer. His mother said, "You are of age, I guess you may go if you promise to come back." Lizzieann gave her consent with some stipulations. Ben used to tell us how he would hitch a ride on the train that went by the place he was staying in Texas, to go see Lizzieann. There was also another young man, I recall that his name was Mose Coblentz, who also got the Texas fever. The day came when Dan's family, Mose Coblentz, and Grandpa Ben boarded the train for Mission, Texas, located on the Texas-Mexico border. They had big plans for Texas, and were going to raise cotton.

Train travel then was no comparison with today's train travel experience. Toward the end of the first day of traveling, Dan's family, as well as the other passengers, became restless and grouchy. Dan got his harp [harmonica] out and began playing songs. Everyone calmed down. Then the conductor came and passed the hat for a collection. From then on, whenever the people became restless, the conductor came around and would say, "Kurtz, play your harp!" Each time he would pass the hat. Interestingly enough, by the time they arrived at their destination, Dan had earned his trip to Texas by playing his harp. This happened between the years of 1909 and 1911. Whenever Grandpa would start telling the wild Texas stories, after we each had our peppermint candies, we grandchildren would sit around his rocking chair as close as we could without getting hit as he rocked away. The goose pimples would rise and our hair stand straight up, or so it seemed. So much for Texas.

After two years Grandpa did come home and Lizzieann was impatiently waiting for him. They had their wedding on January 11, 1912. Lizzieann died only seven years later, on January 20, 1919, at childbirth. Two months later, on March 20, 1919, their infant daughter Lydiann died. Now Ben was a widower with four children.

He married the second time on March 9, 1920 to Mary Miller and she died September 6, 1923 after only 3½ years of marriage. So in less than twelve years after his first marriage, he had two wives, and one daughter in the grave. On April 11, 1926, another daughter, Maryann, a twin to Katieann, died. He told his cousin (Menno Malinda), that he doesn't think he will ever

marry again. He was very strong of will, but also a very discouraged man. Now he was a widower with five children. His mother, referred to as "Mommy Kurtz" moved in and helped out a lot during these hard times. But a few months over nine years later he did marry the third time, on December 22, 1932, to Mattie Wengerd. They lived together in matrimony until July 21, 1955. Mattie was a very good step-mother. He married a fourth time to Emma Miller, who outlived him.

Another thing that I need to add is Ben's diligent respect for the Lord's Day. My mother used to tell us that Saturday at 3 p.m. was always the time to begin getting ready for Sunday. Even if they were putting up hay, when 3 o'clock came, they stopped. Then they would clean the cow stables. All the isles in the barn had to be swept, all the animals given clean bedding, and sufficient hay had to be thrown into the hay hole, so all they had to do on Sunday was to feed the animals. As soon as the milking was done, everyone took their bath. Then they would sit on the porch, ready in case company would come. It is a known fact that Grandpa Kurtz's would be one of the very first buggies to appear in church on Sunday morning. And in the winter time, when the church services were held in the houses, you could depend that he was sitting at the wall end of the bench right under the clock.

As I write this, I am aware that I am skipping many details. Most of what I have shared is what either my Grandfather Ben, my mother, my aunts, my Uncle John, and Great-uncle Andy Kurtz have shared over the years. It is very easily possible for someone to remember some of these things a bit differently, and I wish to grant that privilege. And there are many more memories flooding my mind.

As I ponder over these experiences of our forefathers, it makes me realize in a new way again, that many opportunities in life are a gift to us because of someone else's choices. Grandfather Ben would have had ample opportunity to marry a young girl from the Protestant people he was placed with as a boy. He would have had opportunity to marry a Mexican young girl. I have reason to believe that the prayers of his mother at home and the prayers of his girlfriend Lizzieann kept him from yielding to those possibilities. The question is, What are we leaving to our posterity?

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## WEAVER FAMILY HEIRLOOM

by Roy M. Weaver and Edward Kline

Many family heirlooms, handed down from generation to generation, are things like a piece of furniture, a Bible, dishes, or maybe a pocket watch. The heirloom we want to review here is a record book, the ledger of John E. Weaver (1875-1945).

The record book has 500 pages, and nearly all of them have something written on them. It contains literally thousands of names, found in ordination records, lists of deaths and funerals, records of marriages, and accounts of calamities such as fires and accidents. In addition, there are accounts of weather, as well as a number of poems and historical records. The excerpts from the journal which we give here are more or less of general interest. The wealth of names in the journal may contain information for someone doing a family genealogy or other research. For this we have a xerox copy of the ledger at Ohio Amish Library which may be examined.

John E. Weaver (OAG 4595) was the son of Elias Weaver (OAG 925) and lived near Mt. Hope, Ohio. He began writing the ledger as a young man. The earliest entries are for events in 1880, when he would have been only 5 years old. The last entries were made shortly before his death on June 21, 1945. After his death the ledger was passed on to his son John J. Weaver. John J. Weaver then gave it to his niece, Mrs. Roy M. (Fannie) Weaver on October 8, 1991, four months before his death on February 8, 1992. The original is now with the Roy Weaver family and a copy at Ohio Amish Library.

### Ordination Records

The book contains ordination records from 1878 to 1944. Following are a few records from the time period of 1878-1908. There are approximately 200 ordinations in this list.

*Abe S. Yoder, fall of 1884- bishop June, 1914*  
*Eli A. Troyer, May 12, 1898- bishop May 16, 1930*  
*P.V. Yoder, in Tenn., fall of 1892*  
*Jacob. J. Stutzman, May 14, 1899*  
*Bishop, spring 1911*  
*John B. Miller, fall of 1901*  
*Noah P. Beachy, May 9, 1878*  
*R. M. Troyer, fall of 1903- bishop, May 13, 1925*  
*Joni Troyer, Oct. 23, 1887- bishop, May 5, 1899*  
*Emanuel Schrock, fall of 1906*  
*bishop, Oct. 13, 1922*  
*Sam J. Beachy, Illinios, fall of 1906*  
*Wm. E. Beachy, Oct. 11, 1908*

*Peter W. Swartzentruber, Oct. 11, 1908*  
*ordained in Geauga Co.*  
*Benj. J. Yoder, Oct. 22, 1908*  
*bishop, Oct. 15, 1922*

The last six ordinations listed are all from 1944 and are as follows:

*Amos S. Miller ("Pepper Amos"), May 9, 1944*  
*Dan E. Troyer, May 9, 1944*  
*John E. Miller, Deacon<sup>1</sup>, May 9, 1944*  
*John D. Miller, fall of 1944*  
*Henry Schlabach, fall of 1944, died about*  
*one month later.*  
*David L. Raber, fall of 1944*

The following two entries record ordinations that were unusual by Amish standards:

*On Oct. 16, 1926 they wanted to ordain a deacon in the Sam J. S. Miller district. The lot fell on Eli. E.M. Gingerich. For some reason they never finished [the ordination].*

*Moses E. Mast (1844-1927) was not ordained by lot exactly in the usual way. Since the other ministers in this district were rather aged, at the time of the council [meeting], before he was ordained minister, it was agreed that if the lot falls on a young man, if he fulfills his first appointment faithfully, and if the ministers and the members agree that he is capable of filling the bishop's office reasonably well, then he could be appointed bishop. They did so, and ordained him to take the place of the older bishop. He was ordained minister May 6, 1883, and bishop, May, 1888.*

### Death Records

The greater part of the ledger is made up of death records, from 1870-1940. John records deaths in his home community as well as in numerous Amish settlements across the nation. He records deaths in Indiana, Johnson Co. Iowa, Aurora, W. Va., Somerset and Lancaster Pennsylvania, and other places. Locally he included not only Amish people, but also non-Amish who were well-known in the community, grouping these together. A few interesting entries are:

*April 6, 1936. Rev. Jonas Swartzentruber died very suddenly at the home of Pete Gingerich where he had eaten dinner. Shortly after dinner Jonas and Pete had put their overcoats on, ready to go the Wooster. While Pete went*

1. John was deacon in the "Abe Troyer Church."



to the barn to get the horse, Jonas sank down. They asked him if he wants to go into the house or in the buggy. He said, "In the buggy." Before he got into the buggy he sank down a second time and died as soon as they got him into the house. He was first married to Carolina Yoder, sister to Bishop Abe Yoder, for 26 years. His second marriage was to Dela Troyer, with whom he was married 20 years and 4 days. His age was 70 years, 13 days. Services were by Simon Schlabach and Pete Gingerich, and was buried in the Sam Yoder grave yard. <sup>2</sup>.

May 9, 1939. Rev. P.V. Yoder of Hadley, Pa. He was born at Sugarcreek, Ohio. His age was 72 years, 1 month, and 7 days. He was married to Lizzie D. Troyer (one of my school-mates). Services by Bishop John A. Stoltzfus of Lancaster, Pa. and preacher Lewis Eichorn of New York. He was ordained to the ministry about 46 years ago, and lived in Tennessee at that time. He served with the Old Orders for a while, then with a few members, started a church something between the Old Order and Mennonites. This is where the Peevees originate, on account of the name P.V. <sup>3</sup>.

Feb. 22, 1835. Jacob (Yokkli) Miller died at the age of 80 years and 6 months. <sup>4</sup>.

Nov. 30, 1852. Jacob Miller, son of Yokkli Miller, died at the age of 65 years, 11 months, and 19 days. His wife Dorla died May 22, 1879, aged 87 years, and 2 months.

Sept. 15, 1881. Joel Pomerene of Millersburg, died at the age of 55 years, 8 days.

Dec. 8, 1892. Dr. P.P. Pomerene of Berlin, Oh. died at age 60 years, 2 months, 21 days. The coffin was carried by six of his sons.

Feb. 25, 1896. Dr. Leander Pomerene of Berlin died, aged 23 years, 3 months, 7 days.

March 11, 1896. Dr. Joel Pomerene, Mt. Hope, died at 28 years of age.

Dec. 23, 1897. Julius Pomerene died at age 62 years, 5 months, and 28 days.

Sept. 24, 1904. Elizabeth Pomerene, widow of P.P. Pomerene, died at 63 years old.

Feb. 5, 1907. Melvin Pomerene died at Seattle, Washington.

March 21, 1927. Daniel Crilow of near Millersburg. Married to Lydia Kline, sister to Ed.

2. Jonas helped start the "Swartzentruber-Sam Yoder Church."

3. The Pleasant View Conservative-Mennonite Church, northeast of Berlin, was known as the "Peevee Church" soon after its beginning.

4. Jacob (Yokkli) was the first settler in the area, coming in 1808, from Somerset, and settled northwest of Sugarcreek. He was bishop and preached the first sermon in the area.

May 12, 1915. Katie, wife of Moses B. Beachy of Walnut Creek, Oh., died at age 56 years, 5 months, 17 days. She was the mother of 17 children. On the 11th of May she was burning straw in a truck patch and her clothes caught fire. She was burned to a crisp from the knees to the chest. It is estimated there were over 1000 people at the funeral.

June 8, 1923. Wm. R. Bodine, better known as "Trilby." He painted mail boxes, buggies, etc. He died suddenly at Daniel C. Yoders. He had been running after his horse, and on returning to the Yoder home, sat down on a chair to rest and fell forwards and died. He was about 60 years old. <sup>5</sup>.

Jan. 25, 1919. Daniel S. Yoder, son of Bishop Samuel Yoder, died at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He had been sent to Camp Taylor, Kentucky. In June, 1918 he was transferred to Kansas. He was about 22 years old.

Jan. 18, 1901. In the morning, about 5 o'clock a house owned by Joseph Weirich and occupied by the Ben E. Miller family caught fire. The fire awoke the four oldest children, who slept upstairs, and they called for help. The fire had gained such headway that they could not get down the stairs. Ben and his wife jumped up and grabbed their two youngest children, who were downstairs, and made a narrow escape. The call from the children was in vain, and they suffocated in the smoke. They remained in the house as it burned down. Parts of their bodies were recovered, burned to a crisp. A number of people gathered at the scene, but were too late to save anything. The bodies of the four children were laid in the same coffin. Sundays before this happened, another of Bens' children had been buried, aged a little over 6 years old. The four children who were burned were: Geneva (15 years 7 months), Eli (12 years, 5 months), Mabel (10 years, 9 months) and Belva (8 years, 6 months).

August 27, 1918. Boiler Explosion. Dan C. Miller was killed by a boiler explosion, (where Joni Millers live.) As they were getting ready to thresh, the engine exploded. Dan and his son were standing on the steps on the side of the engine, repairing something. It threw Mr. Miller onto the barn floor. They think he went down through the roof. It tore one of his legs off, throwing it over the barn. He asked what happened, and where the boy was. He died in 1/2

5. See Heritage Review No.3, 1993, for more information on Bodine



hour. The boy was torn in two and thrown 350 feet, killed instantly. His name was Albert.

March 25, 1935. Deacon Jake M. Beachy, son of Moses M. of Farmerstown. He was born near Walnut Creek and died near Trail at the age of 37 years, 10 months, and 29 days, after one week's illness of pneumonia. He married Cora N. Miller on Jan. 31, 1918 and was ordained deacon on May 14, 1933.

1937. Silvanus Schrock, son of Jacob E. Schrock was killed almost instantly while trying to fix a gas engine at a cider press. The press was owned by Emanuel E. Schrock and operated by Joe Coblentz and son. The operators could not start the engine so they called on the owner who was very busy just then. He said they should get Silvanus, since he was a close neighbor and very skilled in such labor. After he got the engine started, the governor was not in shape, and it ran too fast. This broke a home-made pulley on the line-shaft. A piece of the pulley hit Mr. Schrock and killed him. <sup>6</sup>.

May, 1940 Walter F. Andrews, widely known auctioneer, died in Canton Hospital shortly after an operation. Peritonitis had already set in. He had 22 sales scheduled for May, and had just returned from the east a few days before. He was to be in Chicago to conduct a large sale the same day he had surgery. He leaves a wife, two sons, one daughter, and also parents, brothers and sisters, and a great many acquaintances. He was known by most of the people in this and the surrounding counties, as well as other states. He was a member of the United Brethren Church of Beach City. He was 53.

A number of entries record that the people died from operations for appendicitis. In that era appendicitis could easily prove to be fatal.

Feb. 17, 1931. Anna D. Miller (Zook) died in the hospital while undergoing an operation for appendicitis. She was born Jan. 5, 1877 and was aged 54 years, 1 month, and 12 days when she died. She married Henry Zook on Dec. 17, 1896.

Dec. 23, 1930. Catharina Coblentz died after an operation for appendicitis. She was born Feb. 18, 1914 and was 16 years, 10 months, and 5 days old when she died.

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1. Silvanus was married to Nora, daughter of Mart J. Miller. She later married Joe Wingard of Shipshewana, Indiana.

## Weather Reports

Following are reports of weather conditions for a number of years. Conditions for many more years are mentioned.

1845. Wheat froze.

1849. Wheat froze on June 5.

1846. Good wheat harvest.

1874. On Jan. 7, 8, and 9 a great amount of timber was broken down by ice.

1875. Frost on Sept. 20.

1880. Good wheat harvest.

1885. On Sept. 6, 9, 10, and 11 the corn froze.

1885. Wheat was killed by flies.

1897. Good wheat harvest.

April 19, 1901. It commenced to snow and blow. It drifted so that East-West roads were blocked and were impassable for six days. The snow remained until May 1-7. Some children went barefooted before the snow was gone.

1930. There was an exceptionally dry summer all over Ohio, and also other states. Wells and springs that had never gone dry before, went dry. In some places the government hauled water in big trucks for long distances to water stock. In places the farmers cut trees so cattle could eat the tops to keep from starving. 1931, 1932, and 1933 were also very dry. It took a long time for the entire earth to be again refilled.

Feb. 1929. A heavy storm or blizzard and a little rain passed through northern Holmes County. It uprooted big trees and unroofed buildings. It was a very nice and warm day until about 3 p.m. There was a farm sale at the Bishop Sam E. Miller's place. The storm stopped the sale for about ½ hour. Some ran for the barn and some for the house. It unhooked a few barn doors and the poultry houses were all blown open before they got to sell them. The piece of timber [woods] just west across the road was nearly all blown down. A piece of the neighbor's timber just across the county line was not damaged much. A horse hitched to a buggy was tied to the fence. After the storm it was still tied to the same post, but the horse and buggy were on the other side of the fence. A shed was blown over and knocked Andy N. Hershberger under it so that he died the same evening. I think he was unconscious all the time until he died.

The winter of 1942 and 1943 was a real old-timer. Winter set in in early November and remained very cold for almost 5 months. it



was below zero in March. The roads were often drifted, and there was lots of ice on the roads. One could have seen snow almost the entire winter. At different times it changed enough to melt the main bulk of the snow for just a day or so, then it turned colder, almost like before. A lot of people were caught with their husking and shredding [not done]. Some corn stood in the fields until April.

The winter of 1944 and 1945 was exceptional, called by the old folks "an old timer." The main part of the earth was not froze very much. Enough snow came so suddenly that it froze only where the snow blew away. Our [water] pipe was froze so that it was closed for a good while. It started snowing the first week in Dec., and was nice dry fall weather until then. After it began to snow, it also started blowing and drifting the roads. Often the roads were unpassable. Snow plows went Sundays, if they could, and often during the night. Sometimes they were snowed under and laid off for a few days. [This was] because they could not get out either direction until the storm passed over. Then sometimes they had to shovel [their way] out to get started. There was lots of sleighing and sledding. Farmers made temporary sleighs and sleds. Lots of pipe was bent and buggy beds set on them for sleighs. One could see December snow until sometime in March. Some big cities had trouble having coal delivered on account of the snow drifts.

#### Accounts of Fires

April 5, 1870. Elias Weaver's house burned down. They built a new one that summer.

May 27, 1870. Elias Miller's house burned down.

Oct. 8&9, 1871. Chicago was destroyed by fire.

March 10, 1874. Michael J. Miller's house burned

Nov. 25, 1879. Isaac Wengerd's house and barn burned down.

July 1, 1889. There was heavy rain and Daniel Hochstetler's barn was struck by lightning and burned.

July 14, 1898. Solomon S. Miller's barn was struck by lightning and burned.

June 12, 1902. Joseph S. Miller's barn was struck by lightning and burned down. On July 1, 1902, they raised a new barn.

June 16, 1902. In the night of the 16th the Garver Brothers Store in Strasburg burned down.

July 2, 1902. In the night of the 2nd, Jonas P. Beachy's barn was struck by lightning and burned. On July 31 they raised a new barn.

July 9, 1902 Henry Hochstetler's barn was struck by lightning and burned. Jacob Boley lived on that farm. On July 25 they raised a new barn.

Oct. 20, 1902. Moses A. Kauffman's barn burned.

April 11, 1905. Joseph B. Weaver's house caught fire and part of it burned.

July 29, 1905. Jeremiah J. Miller's barn was struck by lightning and burned down on Sept. 13 they raised a new barn.

1905. David E. Miller's barn burned. The fire was started by a spark from a [steam] engine while grinding. This is where Mart Schlabach now lives.

1905. David M. Yoder's barn burned. The fire was started by the spark of an engine while shredding fodder. This is where Abe C. Schrock now lives.

1905. Sam J. Miller's spring house burned, which had been built only shortly before.

1905. Simon D. A. Troyer's barn burned.

July 16, 1907. The Myers Bros. Store in Berlin burned down.

July 31, 1907. A big fire in Killbuck destroyed much property.

Aug. 12, 1907. Sol Y. Schlabach's barn was struck by lightning and burned.

1917. Christian D. Yoder's barn burned. It was struck by lightning.

March 1919. Abe H. Kauffman's boys were playing in the barn with matches and burned the barn to the ground.

1921. Simon E. Troyer's barn burned. Some claim the fire was started by boys burning bumblebees.

1924. Sam B. Weaver's barn burned, struck by lightning. A new barn was built that summer.

1920. Ben P. Miller's barn was struck by light-



ning and burned. Shortly after the fire started, Ben fell over, dead. This is where Dan J. Miller lives.

1935. Deacon Monroe M. Miller's barn burned. It is thought the fire was caused by over-heated grain or hay.

1921. Eli M. Yutzy's barn burned. It was struck by lightning. A new barn was built that summer.

Nov. 30, 1937 Abe M. Miller's (Mike Abe) barn burned. The fire started while shredding fodder. The barn was 195 feet long with a straw shed.

Aug. 29, 1940. The Catholic Church at Calmoutier burned.

May 22, 1941. Andy J. Miller's barn burned, while Andys were in church. They raised a new barn on June 14, 1941.

1941. In early summer Sam P. Schrock's furniture shop burned. The fire started at the kiln at the rear of the building.

July 27, 1941. Rob R. Troyer's barn burned, north of Berlin. It was struck by lightning. It was replaced by August.

Sept. 3, 1941. John D. Miller's barn, near Fredericksburg, was struck by lightning and burned. A new barn was raised on Sept. 25, but it was exceptionally stormy, almost too stormy for a barn raising.

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The following statement of faith is given after mention of "Questionnaire Form 47 for Conscientious Objection to War." Apparently it was submitted to the government with an application for C.O. status, during W.W.II.

#### **Declaration and Certificate of Membership of the Old Order Amish Mennonite Churches**

Not to go to war nor to learn the art of war has been one of the doctrines of membership of the Old Order Amish Mennonite Church from its beginning nearly three centuries ago.

The Mennonites, in a conference in the city of Dort in Holland, on the 21st day of April, A.D. 1632, exhort in union, all brethren in all places, to hold themselves guiltless and to take no part in war and bloodshed whatsoever. And this same Confession, being adopted at a conference at Onenheim on the 4th of February, 1660, was afterwards unanimously adopted by all the Old Order Amish Mennonite Churches. After the emi-

gration to the United States in A.D. 1683, the same Confession was adopted at a conference in Conestoga, near Morgantown, Pa. and was translated to the English language and put into print at Philadelphia, Pa. in 1727.

Our doctrines and teachings are such, as to be far from being enemies to the government. But we are a peace-loving people. "See that none render evil for evil unto any man, but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men." I Thessalonians 5: 15.

Since that time the government of the United States, in its just dealings with its citizens, has so graciously provided for the free exercise of conscience on this matter. We have not taken part in the Revolution nor Civil War during these past years. And in the future our stand and opinion regarding military practices will remain as before.

#### **Historical Records**

Following is a brief account of pioneer Christian Yoder's coming to the Walnut Creek Valley, found on page 155 in the ledger. More information concerning him is found in the following: Leroy Beachy, "Settling the Valley," in *Amish in Eastern Ohio*, (German Culture Museum, 1990); and Betty Miller Jeschke, *Amish Pioneers of The Walnut Creek Valley*, (Atkinson Printing; Wooster, Oh. 1977.)

#### **Christian Yoder**

Christian Yoder married a Hersberger daughter [Anna], and was a deacon. He moved from Pennsylvania [Somerset Co.] to Holmes County, Ohio, and settled in the Walnut Creek Valley. He came with a wagon and had to cut trees and shrubs all the way through from Sugarcreek. He arrived at his destination on May 6, 1810, in the evening. [The site] was all woods and not a shrub was removed when they arrived. The next morning the first thing he made was a dough tray (backmühl). This was the first piece of furniture that we have certain knowledge of [being made here].

His son Yost was the first white baby born in Walnut Creek Twp., and some claim in the county. Yost Yoder was born Nov. 8, 1810. Bishop Moses Miller (Gla Mose) was born Jan. 11, 1811. He was the second white child.

Rev. Jacob J. Miller (Yokkel) and his brother Henry moved here in the spring of 1808 from Somerset County. Jonas Stutzman, ("White Stutzman" because he always<sup>7</sup> dressed in white) moved here in the spring of 1808 and was single

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7. In his later years Jonas dressed in white.



then. Two years later he took a wife in Stark. Co. Ohio.

Christian Yoder moved to the farm now occupied by Henry A. Kauffman, <sup>8</sup> near Walnut Creek. Rev. Jacob Miller and Henry Miller, his brother, settled close to Sugar Creek. All the first settlers moved from Pennsylvania on wagons through the woods and were well surrounded by Indians.

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The following account in the ledger gives no indication of who its writer is or where John Weaver got the information. It concerns the controversial Moses Hartz shunning in Lancaster, Pa. in 1896-1897. The writer was probably J.D. Gingerich and the writing his 1912 paper, "Influential Church History." In it is mentioned the 1877 division in the Conestoga Valley, when the "meeting house" Amish Mennonite Church formed. The *meidung* (shunning) surrounding the Hartz case played a role in the later development of the Beachy Amish churches. John Mast later (in 1950) wrote a booklet entitled, "Facts concerning the Beachy Amish Division of 1927," relating the information in the "old manuscript." For more information on the Hartz case and the things mentioned in this writing, see: Elmer S. Yoder, *The Beachy Amish Mennonite Fellowship Churches*, (Diakonia Ministries, 1987), 102-108.

#### An Old Manuscript

The following are some facts gleaned from an old manuscript in the hands of John Mast, bishop in the meeting-house church in Conestoga Valley, Lancaster Co., Pa., which was handed down to him by his father, from a record he had gathered and made.

During his lifetime, in 1852, there was an Amish congregation at this place of about 52 members. The first controversy raised was that our ministers should withdraw from all ministers who had, or worshipped with ministers who had meeting houses, Sunday Schools, or baptised in the water [though not by immersion]. These three points were the issue which the Pequea and Millcreek ministers wanted us to agree to. But we did not consider it right to submit to such a decree, even though we did not have any of these things at that time. This was in the year of 1876. In 1877 Sam Yoder of Mifflin County, Pa. and John Stoltzfus of Tennessee came and held communion for us and ordained John P. Mast as bishop. There were about 90 or 100 members at that time. All the preachers

communed with us but one, Moses Hartz, who did not want to be one of the seceding party. For a time he held with the Pequea and Millcreek churches and a few of the Conestoga members who were minded as he. So there were two separate groups from that time on.

But after a lapse of about 25 years, he also came over to our church, under very strange circumstances. It seems that his son, Moses, was a millwright and in the milling business. This gave rise to some dissatisfaction. He was engaged as an expert in building in mill machinery in other mills for a mill furnishing company. He was not of the same mind as the ministers in regard to church rules. He withdrew and quietly went to the Mennonites for which he was excommunicated, without even the consent of all the ministers. Moses Hartz, the father, would not shun his son, for which his office as minister was revoked. But still he would not consent to shun his son just for joining the Mennonites. After several years of contention, he made application to come over to our church, which at first was refused. It was requested that he first make peace with his own church, which he could not do without doing that which his conscience forbade. Finally after a lapse of one year and two months, or over two communions, he was taken in as a lay member with a full consent of our church. Thereupon the old church passed the ban upon Moses Hartz and his wife Lena for going to our church.

This action of the old church caused trouble among our brethren. Some said it was wrong for us to take Moses Hartz into our fellowship. So in order to bring about peace and harmony in our church, as well as a better feeling in the old church toward us, Fred Mast of Holmes County [Ohio] and Crist Stuckey of Fulton County [Ohio] were called to investigate the whole matter. After hearing all the circumstances, the church was asked if they would give their consent to give Moses Hart and his wife their choice either to go to the old church and make peace with them, or take what Mast and Stuckey would [require] of them. The church consented. After hesitating a while, they [Moses Hartz and his wife] chose the latter. Whereupon they were asked to go upon their knees and make confession, which they did in the following manner:

Stuckey asked them, "Kannst du bekennen dass du diese Strafe verdient hast?" (Can you confess that you have earned this punishment?) Moses said, "Ja, mannigfaltig." (Yes, manifoldly) Lena, his wife, said, "Ja, wenn es Gottes Wille

8. Eddle E. Miller now lives on this farm, on CR 135.



so ist." (Yes, if this is God's will.) There were many tears shed while the old couple were on their knees. Hereupon Fred Mast and two brethren went to the bishop of the old church in Conestoga and told them what was done, which pleased them very much. The Bishop and his son came over to J.S. Mast and confessed the same.

It seems that the ministers of the Pequea and Millcreek districts were not first consulted, and [they] set this bishop back at their next communion. Then he called a conference of all the ministers in Lancaster County, who belonged to the old Amish church. All were present, about thirty in number, except David Beiler. All seemed satisfied with the work done in the meeting-house church concerning Moses Hartz and his wife, and held communion to that effect

When the old churches held their next conference in 1897, David Beiler <sup>9</sup> was present. Through his influence the work which Mast and Stuckey had done was upset and Moses Hartz and his wife were put back into the ban, where they are now held by the old church. Now it can be seen that all the old churches in Lancaster County were satisfied not to avoid Hartz and his wife any longer, except David Beiler, and held communion to that effect.

The question was raised about what course to take if any more similar cases should come up. The advice from Mast and Stuckey was that if no flagrant sins stood against such members, to take them in. Such advice has since been followed.

The attitude of the old churches has caused about 40 families, or about 100 members, to withdraw from the old churches. After several years of contention, they organized a separate church, which is causing much bitter feeling. This seems to be spreading to other churches in the west. It also seems to be a fact that there are many people who desire to know the truth [about the matter], never having learned just how this trouble was brought about and how it originated.

These facts have been gathered from the most reliable source possible, and have been approved by members of the old church as being substantially correct. By a number of

requests these statements are now being sent out so that the truth may be known. Jesus says, "...and the Truth shall make you free." John 8:32. After we know the truth or the facts of the case, we should then be able to decide which is nearest to the Gospel truth, and according to the teachings of our faith, especially the 16th and 17th articles. These tell us very clearly whom to excommunicate and whom to avoid. So let us be careful not to fall to extremes on either side, but follow the teachings of God's Word, rather than the precepts of man.

#### Observations of the writer.

A few comments and observations by the writer who made these extracts from a manuscript of about 20 or more pages, closely written on long folio or foolscap paper: Not out of envy or ill-feeling toward any one, but out a desire for justice, that the truth may be known by all who may read this statement. Much of this manuscript goes on describing some interesting events which do not concern the Moses Hartz affair. So all else was omitted but what had a direct bearing on this present controversy.

Some may ask what kind of a man this Moses Hartz was, that so much strife and ill-will could originate from one man. I will only give my own experience and impressions about this man. I had a desire to see him. I came to his home as a complete stranger about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. He was sitting on the porch smoking his pipe. I was invited into his room which is perhaps a 12 by 14 apartment of a larger house, where his son Jacob and family and their son-in-law live. [The apartment had] a few chairs (two, I believe), one old rocking chair, a small table, a cot, and a very old Bible with coarse print. (He is not able to read ordinary print.) This Bible is very cumbersome so they have arranged it on a frame so he can sit close by and turn the leaves at pleasure. It seems he spends a great part of his time here or on his knees at the cot, where I found him later when I entered the room for something I had left there. He is 93 years old and his head and beard are as white as snow. He is hard of hearing, quite intelligent, and can relate many interesting incidents of his early manhood and privations. He went as a teamster from Pittsburg to Philadelphia and seems to live more in the past than in the present.

Among other things, he said that he is ready for the call. (I do not know why he is left here so long. He does not seem to have any ill-feeling toward anyone.) I could not help but

9. This David was the son of the old bishop David Beiler. He was a minister.



envy or covet his childlike simplicity and firm faith in a just God, like a ripe apple ready to be plucked whenever the Master should make the final summons.

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**A FUNERAL POEM**

1. *My God, I am now at the time,  
That I will step into eternity,  
How will then, in yonder world,  
It be found to stand with my life?*
2. *Soon they will carry my body to the grave,  
Where it will have its rest.  
Where will my poor soul enter in,  
Where will it indeed find a rest?*
3. *My life I have, day and night,  
Brought about in much pain.  
The time was often long for me,  
With so much care and stress.*
4. *But now I thank my God,  
Who delivers me from this distress.  
My poor spirit has indeed very often,  
And for a long time, hoped for this hour.*
5. *Now I journey forth to yonder world,  
Where my destiny for me is determined.  
What I now have attained here,  
That will be my lot there.*
6. *O God, what is it that I did,  
That I did not sooner begin,  
To obey your voice?  
Then I would have been as I should be.*
7. *You have so often called me,  
And I have turned from you.  
O God, what shall I say,  
My conscience now accuses me.*
8. *Oh, if I had acknowledged this sooner,  
And wisely put my time to use,  
So that I now can enter in,  
Where all the holy angels are.*
9. *O God, please have patience with me,  
And do not reckon to me my debts,  
Take my hand in your hand,  
And be merciful to me at my end.*
10. *Have compassion on me, O faithful God,  
Do not forsake me in my needs.  
Take me to yourself into heaven,  
And make me as I should be.*
11. *Thus I will now and for all times,  
Even in the blessed eternity,  
Sing to you with all the angels.  
Praise, honor, and thanks for ever and ever.*
12. *Now I will make my parting,  
I say, Good night to all of you,  
And commit myself to my Creator,  
He will be my faithful helper.  
Amen.*

This poem was written by Christian Heibel [probably not Amish or Mennonite] in Somerset Co., Pennsylvania in 1817. He lived to be 81 years old. It was copied by Jephtha Miller in 1853, and again copied by Catharine Yoder, wife of Christian Yoder, in 1914.



# OLD CHRISTMAS

## Why Is This An Amish Holiday?

by Vernon J. Miller

The January 6 holiday is known as Epiphany, The Twelfth Night, or Old Christmas. Each term has its own special meaning for that date.

Epiphany has been held as the day when Christ was born, the day when the wise men, in search of the Christ Child, found him in Bethlehem, and the day of the baptism of Jesus.

The Twelfth Night relates to the twelve days of Christmas, from Christmas Day on December 25 to January 6. It is still observed in some countries, including England, as well as in some places in America. (Hence the song, "The Twelve Days of Christmas.") Apparently the twelve days result from the Julian/Gregorian calendar change from the 16th century.

Old Christmas, held by the Amish as a day to honor the birth of Christ, is regarded as a rightful way to reverently adore His birth following the merriment and celebrations so often associated with Christmas Day on December 25. However, more reasons do exist, since Old Christmas is related to early calendar discrepancies and changes made to correct them.

The Egyptians are recognized as the first to adopt a calendar. In 46 B.C. Julius Ceasar improved the calendar, which became known as the Julian Calendar. He established a 365¼-day year with a leap year every four years to compensate for the ¼ day. After 1500 years, there was an awareness that this was not accurate enough. The yearly seasons, or date held for the sun to be above the equator, the equinox, had shifted.

To make corrections, a Roman Catholic leader, Pope Gregory XIII, ordered a calendar change in 1582. Ten days were eliminated and what was to be October 5, 1582 became October 15. This realigned the sun with the calendar. However, to keep it accurate, the leap years on the century years that could not be divided by 400 would not be years with 366 days, but rather 365. Thus the years 1600 and 2000 would be leap years, but not 1700, 1800, or 1900.

This change was not immediately accepted by all the countries. The Roman Catholic countries soon adopted the Gregorian calendar, but various German nations did not do so until 1700. Great Britain and the American Colonies began using this calendar in 1752. In some places in eastern Europe and Russia, it was not fully adopted until much later, in the 1900s, and Old Christmas is still observed in many of these areas.

When the Gregorian calendar was introduced, our Anabaptist forefathers were already not in agreement with the Roman Church on such issues as infant baptism, swearing of oaths, and non-resistance. During this time period they were also severely persecuted by the state church authorities. Undoubtedly a new calendar that would alter the date of the birth of the Christ Child appeared unacceptable to them.

The shift in dates put the old day for Christmas on January 4, and on the new style calendar Christmas was on December 25. A later shift, when 1700 was not a leap year, brought Old Christmas to January 5. Again in 1800, the day moved forward to January 6. Thus the twelve days of Christmas came into being. Another day change could have been made in 1900, but with Old Christmas now being on Epiphany or January 6, it was decided by most people to leave them on the same date. However in some countries, for example Ukraine, Old Christmas is still celebrated on January 7.

The Anabaptist view to observe Old Christmas was upheld throughout the years and became an accepted practice among the Amish and Mennonite descendants. By concluding the Christmas season with a special day of fellowship, fasting, services, family gatherings, or dinner, it is hoped that the Son of God can be honored in a humble and lowly spirit, relating to His humble birth in Bethlehem.