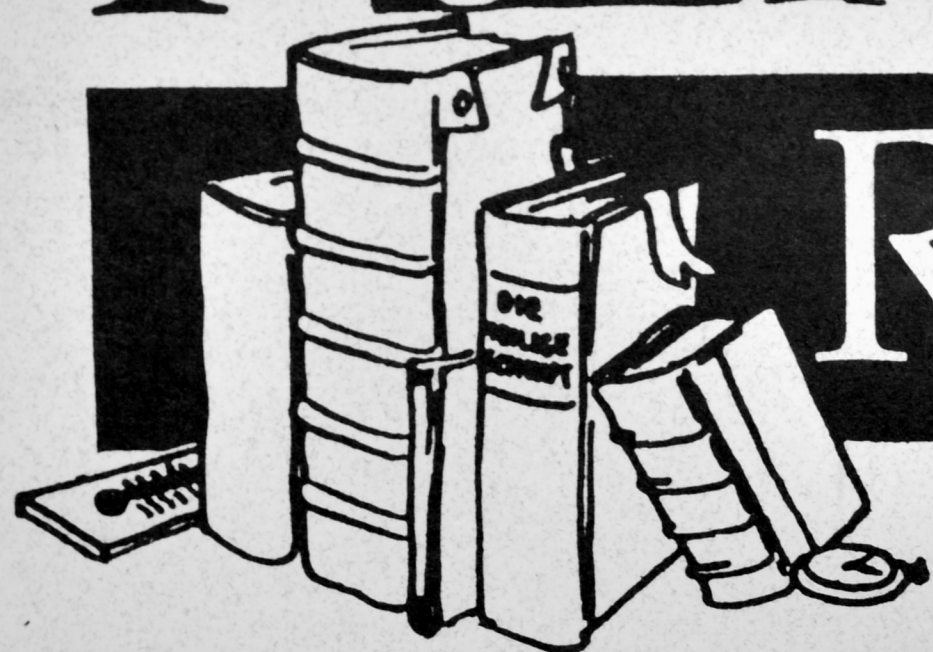


HERITAGE



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IN THIS ISSUE...

	Page
THE JOHANNES HOLLY BIBLE.....	1
GLIMPSES OF THE AMISH CHURCH IN HOLMES COUNTY, OHIO, 1917-1922, And Report of a Ministers' Meeting in 1922.....	2
RESEARCH NOTES Letters Pertaining to the Sam Yoder Division....	11
EVENTS LEADING TO PASSAU.....	14

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 JOHANNES HOLLY BIBLE

-by Leroy Beachy

When Joshua Yoder appeared in Ohio in 1818, he had come afoot. This was not too unusual for a single man who was younger, but since Joshua had already turned 26 in that year, his not coming on horseback may indicate an early disregard for earthly possessions, a characteristic that followed Joshua, "the Amish tramp," through his lifetime.

The fact that a family tradition says our ancestor walked every step of the way from Davidsville, Pa. to the Walnut Creek settlement is a strong indicator that he was single when he came; women were seldom expected to walk that far. The ages of his children appearing on the 1820 and 1830 censuses would insist, however, that his marriage to Catherine Kauffman must have taken place yet in 1818 or no later than very early the following year.

Added to the effort of every step on the pioneer's trail was a twelve pound burden strapped onto Joshua's broad back: a family heirloom, the Johannes Holly Bible. Joshua (YR2354) had become heir to the Bible by virtue of being born the eldest son of David Yoder (YR235), as David had before him; David being the eldest son of Christian Yoder's (YR23) second marriage, to Barbara Holly.

"The Johannes Holley Bible" was first published in the Budget in 1985 under the series "Unser Leit."

The tradition of passing the Bible on to the eldest son continued in the Yoder family for six generations. Joshua passed it on to his oldest son, Moses (YR23542); Moses to his oldest son, David; David to his oldest son, Solomon; and Solomon to his oldest son, Menno.

The tradition came to an end when Menno S. Yoder, known to many as "Shittlich (Shaky) Menno," died, a bachelor, in 1974. After several years in the care of another Yoder descendant in Holmes County, the Bible was transferred to the descendants of Menno D. Yoder in the Hutchinson, Kansas area, where it was well-preserved for many years. Menno D. was the second son of David M. Yoder.

In 1996 the Bible was in the possession of Abe W. Yoder in the Hutchinson area. Ohio Amish Library had been formed for a number of years, and several family members felt that rather than decide who would get the Bible in the next generation, it should be placed at Ohio Amish Library. Thus the Holly Bible's long journey—beginning in the Palatinate of Germany, across the watery expanse to Philadelphia, a number of years in Berks Co. and on to Somerset Co., through the wilderness on the back of a stalwart young man to Holmes County, on to the plains of Kansas and back—has ended. It now has its home in Holmes County again, where it spent most of its time in America. The Bible can be seen at OAL upon request.

The Bible is the 1531 Froschauer edition. To really appreciate the antiquity of this Bible we need only to remember that it was printed within five years of the deaths of Grebel, Manz and Blaurock, those Zurich martyrs whom we regard as the founders of the Anabaptist movement.

The reasons for calling it the Johannes Holly Bible are that it evidently came to this country with Johannes, an immigrant of 1750, and the fact that when he had the book rebound in 1740 he had his name, "Iohannes Hole," tooled in the leather of the back cover, and the date, "1740," on the front cover.

The conspicuousness of the 1740 date on the cover was once the cause of an error which seems a bit humorous. Menno S. Yoder used to tell of how, when his father was in care of the Bible, The Budget ran a contest sometime in the 1920's, to see who could come up with the oldest

Bible. Solomon won a free year's subscription to The Budget on the assumption that his Bible was printed in 1740. What he did not realize, was that his Bible was already 209 years old when it was rebound in 1740.

A number of notes, in German script, scrawled on the top, bottom, side, and center columns throughout the book, reveal something of the Bible's former owners. The earliest note translates in part as follows: "Michael Schultz is my name. Rohrbach is my father's home place. I was born legitimately at Landau. Michael Schultz from Insheim, in the year of our Lord, 1662." Landau, Rohrbach, and Insheim all lie within 4 miles of each other in the German Palatinate. Mühlhofen, long the home of Holly families, also lies in the immediate vicinity, 1½ miles from Rohrbach.

Another side column note in a different hand says twice, "Hans Michael Schultz from Insheim." Of a top margin note which was partly trimmed off when the Bible was rebound, only the words, "Insheim, in the year of our Lord, 1680," remain. A bottom margin note in the same handwriting, which is also partly trimmed away, reads, "On the 15th of December, the year of our Lord 1712, my (son) John Schultz was born into the world and was soon on the same day... baptised."

Another note in an entirely different hand records another Schultz birth, indicating the day and the hour, but forgetting to name the year: "The 3rd of March, George Michael Schultz was born into the world around 6 or 7 o'clock."

From the above notes we learn that the Bible was in the hands of the Schultz family for at least 50 years and that the Schultz's claim to a legitimate birth must be understood in the context of the Anabaptist presence in the community. Since a marriage performed by an Anabaptist minister was not recognized by many governments, the children of such a marriage were considered illegitimate. The fact that an illegitimate child could not legally obtain an inheritance nor own land, amplified the problem of the Anabaptists. Whether Michael Schultz was meaning to say in his statement that he was not an Anabaptist, or whether he was insisting that as an Anabaptist, his birth was after all, in the sight of God, legitimate, is anyone's guess. We can be certain, though, that the father of the infant baptized in 1712, was not a dedicated Anabaptist.

Eight notes scribbled throughout the book

were written by a George Henry Schosser. With his notes, the date 1732 appears 3 times and the place name, Insheim, 5 times. The largest of his notes reads, "George Henry Schosser of Insheim was born into the world in the year 1719." There is nothing to indicate whether the Schossers were Anabaptists or not.

The next dated entry is a note which says, "This Bible is mine, John Holly is my name. Heaven is my fatherland, 1745." We know, however, by the date on the cover that John was in possession of the Bible as early as 1740. Of how he acquired the Bible, we know nothing. One could guess, of course, that possibly either John's wife or his mother had inherited it from the Schossers, and that the Schossers, in turn, had gotten it from the Schultzes. But only God will ever know.

It is interesting that while the Schultzes and Schossers were naming earthly homelands, Holly, in true Anabaptist fashion, realizing perhaps that he could not inherit any of it, insists instead that his fatherland is Heaven!

Far more important than these random scribbles are the careful family records appearing on the Bible's front and back flyleaves. On the rear leaf, Johannes Holly lists the names and birthdates of 10 children. Fifty years later, his grandson, David Yoder, used the front leaf to record his family in similar fashion. He also records 10 children. Thousands of Amish and Mennonites descend from these two early families.

A reproduction of Johannes Holly's family record appears below. Because of the Bible's fragile binding and the stained and faded condition of the flyleaf on which the record appears, it was impossible to make a satisfactory photocopy of the page. But by tracing the handwriting with a quill point through onion skin paper, a quite accurate reproduction of Holly's handwriting was made, showing the light upstrokes and heavy downstrokes of his quill pen. In the following German transcription a diagonal (/) appears at the end of each line in Holly's script. The lack of using capital letters and punctuation was not uncommon for that day.

den 26 jener 1739 ist mier eine docher /
geboren die heist magtlena / den 17 abril 1741
ist mier eine / docher gebohren die hies bewy /
den 1 herbst monat 1742 ist / Mier eine docher
in die welt ge- / bohren Worten die heist freni /

den 12 abril 1743 ist mier ein / Sohn gebohren
der heist hanes / den 6 wein monat 1745 iahr /
ist mier ein Sohn gebohren der / heist hannes
johannes holly / bin ich genant im himmel ist
mein / unser vatter lant---/ den 27 winter
monat 1746 / ist mier ein Sohn in die welt /
gebohren Worten der heist mit / dem namen jacob
/ den 27 haimonat anna 1747 / ist mier ein
dochter in die welt / gebohren die heist hiett /
1751 den brachmonat ist mier ein / Sohn
gebohren und ist auch gleich gestorben / 1754
den 12 dezember ist miehr / ein Sohn in die welt
gebohren Worten / der heist davit 1757 den 31
mertz ist mier eine / docher gebohren die heist
freni /

Den 26 jener 1739 ist mier eine docher
geborene die heist magtlena
Den 17. abril 1741 ist mier eine
docher gebohren die heist bewy
Den 1 herbst monat 1742 ist
Mier eine docher in die welt ge-
bohrene Worten die heist freni
Den 12 abril 1743 ist mier ein
sohn geborene der heist hanes
Den 6 weinmonat 1745 iahr
ist mier ein sohn gebohren der
heist hannes johannes holly
bin ich genant im himmel ist
mein vatter lant ---
Den 27 wintermonat 1746
ist mier ein sohn in die welt
gebohren Worten der heist mit
dem namen jacob
Den 27 haimonat anna 1747
ist mier eine docher in die welt
geborene die heist hiett
1751 den brachmonat ist mier ein
sohn gebohren und ist auch gleich
gestorben 1754 den 12 dezember
ist miehr ein sohn in die welt
gebohren Worten der heist davit
1757 den 31 mertz ist mier eine
docher geborene die heist freni

Following is the list of Johannes Holly's children translated into English: On the 26th of January, 1739, a daughter was born to me called Magdalena; On the 17th of April, 1741, a daughter was born to me called Barbara; On the 1st of November, 1742, a daughter was born into the world to me called Veronica (Franey); On the 12th of April, 1743, a son was born to me called

John; On the 6th of October, 1745, a son was born to me called John; John Holly is my name. Heaven is my Fatherland; On the 27th of January, 1746, a son was born into the world to me called by the name Jacob; On the 27th of July, 1747, a daughter was born into the world to me called Hettie; In 1751, in June, a son was born to me and soon died; in 1754, on the 12th of December, a son was born into the world to me called David; In 1757, on the 31st of March, a daughter was born to me called Veronica.

We know that at least three of these children became married and reared children. C.Z. Mast, in his book, Annals of the Conestoga Valley, tells us concerning the first daughter, Magdalena; "She was married to Bishop Jacob Mast whom she survived by 12 years and died on Oct. 26, 1820." Mast also fills us in on the last daughter, Veronica. Of her he says, "Fanny Holly, another daughter...married Joseph Johns, who became the founder of Johnstown, Pa."

Although Mast named the father of these sisters Michael Holly, we know from this record that his name was Johannes, or John. The second daughter, Barbara, is believed to have been the second wife of Christian Yoder (YR23), who began the tradition of passing the Bible to the eldest son in the Yoder family. The very fact that the Bible passed from the Holly family to the Yoder family at this point is strong evidence of this union.

It seems a bit strange that in a family of ten children, we know of only three that found marriage partners. We notice immediately, however, that three of these ten could never have been married because they died very young. The son born in 1751, the first native American in the family, died so soon after birth that he was not named.

Also because there were two sons in the family named John and two daughters named Veronica, we know there were two other infant deaths. Interestingly, the Hollys were one of those early families that followed the practice of naming the next child of the same sex same as the infant that had died before. In another family we know of three successive sons named Peter!

Perhaps there was a problem of premature births in the family. Notice that the first John, born only 4½ months after the first Veronica, could certainly not have lived long in those days.

This brings us to another interesting problem. The son, Jacob, born in January, 1746, apparently survived, or else the son named David should have been the second Jacob. But how could he have survived if he was born seemingly less than four months after the second John?

For the answer to this question we must give recognition to the calendar change that took place in the 1700s. Prior to this the Gregorian calendar used in European countries was arranged quite like it is today, except the new year began on the 25th of March. England officially changed New Year's Day to Jan. 1 in 1752. Although the change came somewhat earlier to the German states, the common folks clung for some time to the "old style" calendar.

This means that for us who are used to having the year change on Jan. 1, the easiest way to get birthdates prior to the change, straight in our heads is to add a year to the births occurring from Jan. 1 to March 26. This would make Jacob's birth year 1747 in our way of thinking, and thus give ample space between his birth and that of the second John.

The other birthdate that would be affected by this rule is Magdalena's. Moving her date up one year to 1740 still allows extra space between her and her sister, Barbara.

Now, although the calendar year change eliminates the squeeze for Jacob's birth, it now puts the squeeze on the next child, Hettie. It allows exactly 6 months between the births of Jacob and Hettie, which without some explanation, seems far too tight. However, a close look at some peculiarities in Hettie's birth entry tied with other information may, indeed, offer a plausible solution, which though quite complicated, may be intensely interesting to some.

First, it is quite noticeable that the three-line entry announcing Hettie's arrival, is written in a much lighter hand than the other 9 entries. Johannes' writing is done with a very heavy hand. Applying more pressure on a quill point while writing, causes extra wide downstrokes, as is evident in his handwriting.

The difference in the writing between Hettie's entry and the others is in fact far more noticeable in the original than in this tracing. Notice too, that whereas Holly's writing style is rather cramped and torturous, Hettie's entry is in a far

freer and more open style. Another dissimilarity is that while Johannes spells daughter, "docher" for the other 4 daughters, in Hettie's entry it is spelled "dochter."

Another is that Hettie's entry is the only one in which the latin word, anno (here misspelled "anna"), precedes the year date. Still another difference is that whereas the proper feminine article "eine," appears in the other daughters' entries, Hettie's recorder mistakenly used the male article, "ein." The three line entry for Hettie also uses more space than the four line entry for Jacob just preceeding it in Johannes's hand.

What to make of this? If we should think that there is evidence that Hettie's entry was written by a different person, what logical reason might there be? One possibility that may seem a bit awkward at first but may yet be the only apparent solution, is that Johannes's wife may have died shortly after the birth of Jacob and that within 6 months he was remarried to a widow whose husband had died at about the same time as Johannes's wife and who after their marriage gave birth to a daughter from her first husband.

This would mean the birth had occurred within the new union and should be recorded with the other children, yet Johannes could not have recorded her as his child. Was Hettie's birth recorded by a second wife who could say, "...ist mihr gebohren," and whose entry in her handwriting accounts for the difference in choice of words, spelling, and style of writing?

If this solution seems a bit strange, we may remember that if Johannes had been Hettie's father, she, rather than the 10th child should have been the second Veronica!

Is there any outside information that would support the idea of a second marriage of Johannes Holly? There may be! In his book, Biographical Records of Wayne and Holmes Counties Ohio, (Beers, 1889), Seth Troyer is quoted as saying that his "Great grandfather Michael Troyer was brought to this country between the years 1745 and 1750 when a boy of probably 8 years of age by his stepfather, Holly." Had Seth given us stepfather Holly's first name, it would have been a tremendous shortcut for us, but since he did not we can only compare what we can learn about the immigrant Michael Troyer with what we can learn about Johannes Holly to see if it would fit for Johannes to be Michael's stepfather.

With handed-down information such as Seth is giving us, it often works out that with several facts of authentic information there will be one or so accompanying, oft-repeated statements that can be proven wrong. In this case it is Michael's age, "probably 8 years."

Since we learn from other sources that Michael's first son was born in 1753, we assume he was born no later than 1733, which would make him quite a bit older than 8 years on arrival; old enough in fact, that he should appear on the ship's list when his Holly stepfather came. Every male of 16 years or older was required to sign.

On the ship, Brotherhood, which arrived in Philadelphia on Saturday, Nov. 3, 1750 with 300 passengers aboard, there appears a block of apparently Amish signers, including the surnames Burcky, Lichty, Miller, Mast, and Kauffman. Among the dozen and a half Amish signers, appears the name of our Johannes Holly. The signature is unmistakable, matching very closely his signature in the 12th line of his family record.

Farther down the list, next to each other, appear the names of Andreas Holly and Michael Holly. Upon seeing these signatures together, they are so much alike, in comparison to the differing signatures around them, that it is evident that they were written by the same hand. And by the same hand that had written the Johannes Holly signature farther up the list! The cramped handwriting and the use of no capital letters, identical to the script in the Holly family record, makes these three signatures stand apart from the others. Does the likeness of these three signatures mean that Johannes Holly was signing for two stepson brothers who were unable to write?

Indeed, several authors have stated that Michael Troyer was accompanied by a brother named Andreas when he arrived in America. C. Henry Smith in his book, The Mennonite Immigration to Pennsylvania, when mentioning the names of the Amish on the November 3, 1750 list, winds up the list with Michael and Andreas Troyer, although he says in a footnote they do not appear on the passenger list. Apparently he was not aware of the Holly connection. His reason for believing they were on the ship is revealed in another footnote. Speaking of the Mast family which was on the same ship, he says, "One of the sisters, Magdalena, married Michael Troyer, who came on the same ship as his brother Andreas as

a young boy."

Is there any other source that might give us reason to think that the immigrant Michael really did have a brother Andreas? There may be!

When the Rev. Harvey Hochstetler published his classic, Descendants of Jacob Hochstetler, Moses K. Troyer of Walnut Creek furnished the Troyer notes found on pages 960 and 961. He claims he "has given considerable time to the study of the Troyer family." The puzzling thing about these notes is that the immigrant credited with the children which we know are Michael's, he names as David. Also in a footnote is a list of five brothers, Michael, Andreas, Abraham, Joseph, and David, attributed to Michael. Did the fathers of these two sets of children somehow get switched around?

In Harvey Hochstetler's second book, Descendants of Barbara Hochstetler and Christian Stutzman, on page 13 reference is made to an "old ancestor Bible" in which the Troyer "family record is shown." In an interview with the late centenarian, Al Troyer, he informed me that his father Mose K. had borrowed this Bible and had gotten information from it on the early Troyers which he furnished for Hochstetler's book.

It is tempting to think that in this Bible Mose K. had found both the list of 12 children which appear under DBH 9179 and the list of five brothers which appear under the DBH 9179 footnote. Further, it is tempting to think that he also found reference to a David Troyer as a family head rather than to have to conclude that the phrase, "David Troyer had children," which he placed before the list of 12, was a pure fabrication of his. Could it be that Mose K. mistook the list of 5 brothers as being part of the larger list of 12 and that he simply moved the phrase to the larger list?

Obviously, what we would need is to see the Bible flyleaf from which Mose K. Troyer took his information. But that is too late! In the early 1970s a serious effort was made to locate the Bible. When it was finally found in a distant city, no family information remained, but one flyleaf had been neatly removed by a sharp knife! Apparently Mose K. had done that before he returned the Bible to its owner. When Mose K's spinster daughters were then contacted to see if they might still be in possession of their father's collected papers, they said they had burned a

large box of their father's papers less than a month earlier! Their excuse for burning them was that many of the papers were in German script which no one could read. Only God knows what went up in smoke that day!

It must be admitted that by now we have extended ourselves quite far. What would happen if we would project ourselves a bit farther and assume that the immigrant Michael Troyer was one of the 5 sons named in the DJH 9179 footnote and that the sons are there named in proper order? Would it still fit for Michael to have been Johannes Holly's stepson?

First, if the Michael and Andreas Holly of the ship's list are assumed to really be the brothers, Michael and Andreas Troyer, we know they would have had to have been at least 16 and 17 years old in 1750 in order to be required to sign. This would mean Michael could have been born no later than 1733 and Andreas in 1734. If their mother had married Johannes Holly in the summer of 1747, that would leave a 12 year span for the births of the remaining 3 sons, or an average of a little over 3 years between each child from Andreas to Hettie. Notice in relation to this, that the last 4 children on Johannes's list which would have been born to this second wife of his, are again spaced at an average of a little over 3 years apart. Compare this with Johannes's first 6 children from his first wife, which average less than a year and a half apart.

Again, in view of the consistent 3 years spacing of the rest of Michael's mother's children, we could move Michael's probable birthdate from 1733 to 1731, which would make the space between him and Andreas consistent with the others. It would also make Michael 21, rather than 19 years of age in his probable marriage year of 1752.

Having come thus far with the suggested second marriage of Johannes Holly to Michael Troyer's mother without running into anything that would prove otherwise, we should perhaps, turn back and take a look at something we passed by that may need some consideration. Would a man really take another wife within 6 months of the death of his first wife? And would a widowed woman really marry again while yet with child of her former husband?

Perhaps in our day, in our setting, neither of these would be very likely to occur. But let us

imagine ourselves projected back over 200 years into a situation in which even living within an intact family, the pressures of the inability to own land, the exorbitant taxes and ridiculous rents, the special fines and fees and whatever else was imposed upon those who followed the narrow way, would make life very difficult, at its best. Add to this the woes of a father with 4 motherless children ranging from a 6-year-old to an infant, and the problems of a mother with 5 growing, fatherless sons, and being pregnant besides. Perhaps in such a situation the widower and the widow needed each other desperately and such social niceties, as we would be concerned about, were lightly regarded.

Another question that may need some thought: If Michael and Andreas are thought to have been Johannes's stepsons, why did their names, which he apparently signed for them, not appear immediately after his? Here again we must rely on some guesswork, but the size of the combined family—ten children plus father and mother—would suggest that more than one passenger compartment was needed to accommodate them. Whether the 5 Troyer brothers stayed in the additional quarters or how they were divided, we do not know, but even though their name spacing indicates up to nine unit numbers between them, their quarters may still have been close together.

Another deduction could be made concerning the three alike signatures: Over a fourth of those required to sign on the Nov. 3, 1750 ship arrival were unable to write their own names. In such cases the ship's captain wrote their names to which the person would affix an "x" or if he was able, an initial or two. Since Michael's and Andreas' names appear in Johannes's hand, rather than that of the ship's captain, strongly indicates a responsible relationship. If Michael and Andreas had been cousins or even brothers of Johannes, he would almost certainly have left the signing of their names to the ship's captain.

One final act about Michael Troyer which is legally recorded, must be considered to see if this too would fit in with what has been proposed so far. On Sept. 18, 1803, Michael, now in his 70's, drew up a will which was probated on April 4, 1807. Among the detailed instructions is a clause bequeathing to his surviving widow, "the money which I am to get from my sister."

His not needing to name her indicates that he had only one full sister. The fact that he mentions

no specific amount is a strong indicator too that she was still living and that he was steering his widow to what he expected "to get" after his sister's death. The fact that he was expecting a post mortem inheritance from his sister tells us, of course, that she had always remained single or was, less likely, a childless widow.

The idea of one sister fits perfectly to be the Hettie, born in 1747. Besides, I am quite certain that I had seen in an estate settlement docket in the Bedford Co., Pa. courthouse, the name Hettie Holly listed several times as buyer in the auction. Not realizing the importance this name could have in the future, I failed to record it. If it does not appear in Michael's docket, it may possibly be found in the docket of either John Miller (ML2), or his son John (ML22), both which died in the same vicinity and within a few years of Michael.

Some researchers who have struggled with the supposed date irregularities in the Holly family record have concluded that Johannes recorded his childrens' births all at one time, long after they were born and made several mistakes in recording their year dates. However, considering the calendar change, a premature birth or two, and a second marriage as we have, there seems no further need to question Johannes's credibility. Besides, there are several clues within the record that indicate intermittent recording, maybe not each child individually, but at least not more than several at a time.

Besides Hettie's entry which has been discussed the most notable break shows in the 12th, 13th, and 14th lines where Johannes writes, "John Holly is my name, Heaven is my Fatherland." Certainly if he had known at that point that there would be five more births to record, he would not have been so wasteful with space. As it turned out, he barely had room to squeeze the last few in. The use of the year date to begin the last three entries is so different from the prior ones that it seems quite evident that these were not recorded at the same time as the earlier ones.

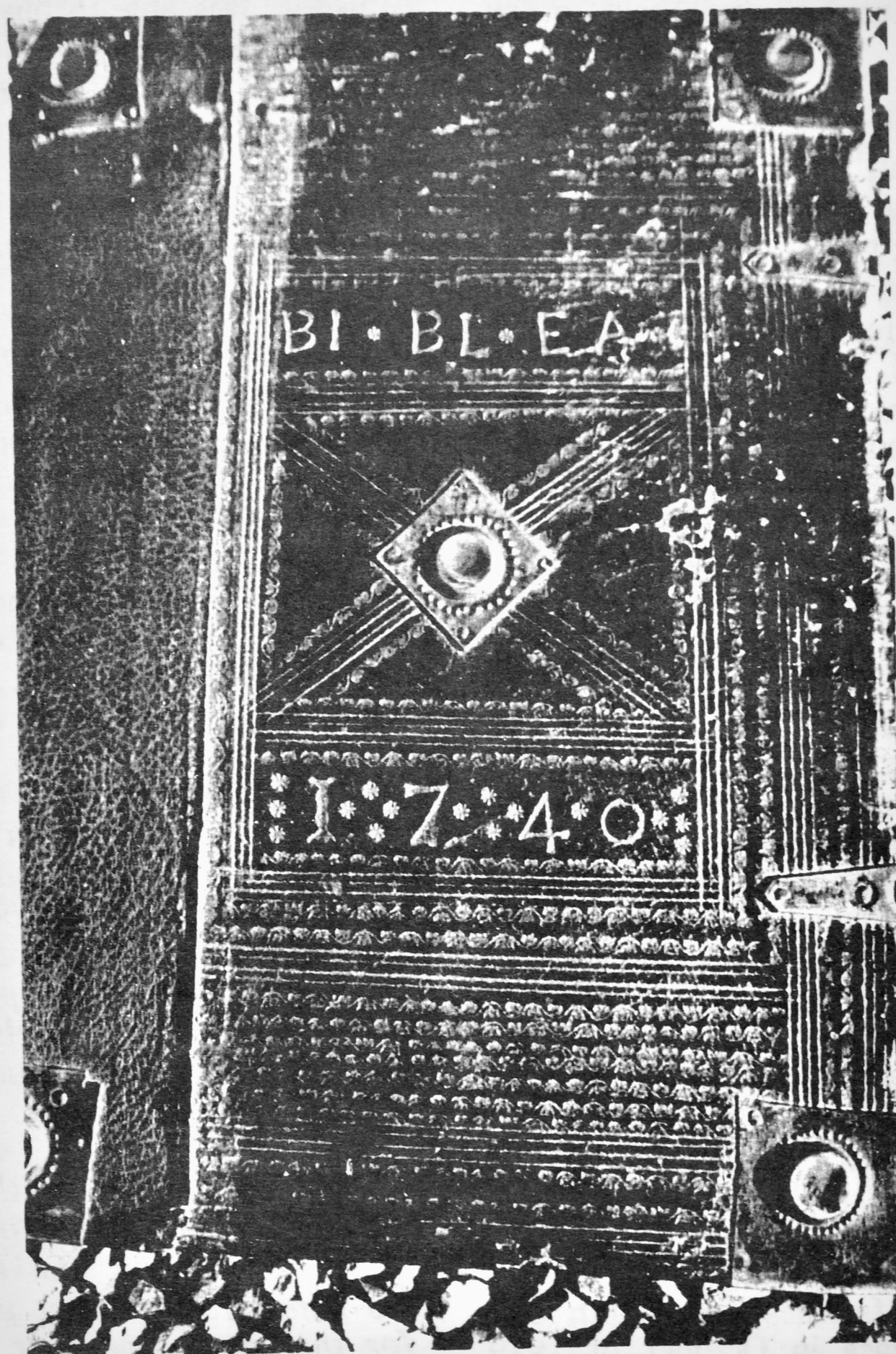
Two more items written in the left side columns will interest the Holly, Yoder, and Troyer descendants. The first line translates, "On the 19th of February my Franey (Veronica) died in 1769." This entry is in Johannes's handwriting and since we know that his last daughter, Franey, was married to John Schantz about ten years after this date, this Franey must have been his wife.

If we can accept the Holly-Troyer connection as outlined above, then this Franey would have been Michael's mother, the former Mrs.(David?) Troyer. This provides us with her given name and death date. The second line is in a different hand and is signed in the third line, "David ioder" (Yoder). David records Johannes's death: "On the 3rd of May my grandfather died in 1783."

This David Yoder, grandson of Johannes Holly and son of Christian Yoder (YR23), used a front flyleaf to record his ten children. The

fourth child, Joshua, the first son in the family, is the person who brought the Holly Bible to Ohio where it remained for about 160 years.

Following is David's list of ten children and their birthdates: Barbara, April 11, 1787; Lizzie, Aug. 17, 1788; Franey, Aug. 25, 1790; Joshua, April 20, 1792; Sarah, June 15, 1794; Caleb, Feb.(day missing) 1797; Joel, Nov. 27, 1799; Susan, July 12, 1805; Catherine, May 26, 1808; David, Nov. 5, 1811.



THE 1531 FROSCHAUER BIBLE
WHICH JOHANNES HOLLY BROUGHT TO AMERICA

GLIMPSES OF THE AMISH CHURCH IN HOLMES COUNTY, OHIO, 1917-1922, AND REPORT OF A MINISTERS' MEETING IN 1922

by Roy M. Weaver

In the time period of 1915-1922, there arose differences of opinion among the Amish in the Holmes-Wayne Co. area concerning avoidance of members who leave the congregation, and some points of the *ordnung*. The bishop of the more conservative faction was Sam E. Yoder. He was born in 1872, ordained minister in 1903, and ordained bishop in 1904. He died in 1932. Numerous ministers' meetings were held to try to resolve these issues.

Because of the controversies, the years of 1917-1922 were difficult years for the bishops and ministers of the Holmes Co. Amish congregations. We have record of two ministers' meetings in 1917,¹ one in 1918 held at bishop Abe S. Yoders,² one in 1919 held at Isaac I. Millers,³ and one held November 29, 30, and December 1, 1922, which this is a report of. The parting of the Sam Yoder group, today called the Swartzentrubers, and the main group of Amish districts became final then.

Sam and his ministers felt the *Ordnungs Brief* approved in 1917⁴ should be followed more closely, and he discouraged his ministers from communing with the main group. I believe this is why he stopped communing with Ben Yoder, one of his ministers who moved to the Orrville area in 1918. Ben's daughter told me her father agreed with Sam's conservative views, but not with his withdrawing from the main group.

In 1919 Sam Yoder had a following of 107 families in two districts. Then a matter came up concerning Sam's daughter, who was accused of immoral conduct. Many strongly felt Sam was too lenient in dealing with the matter, and this caused a division. Half of the families in the two districts formed a separate group, with Dan Wengerd as leader, and with 54 families remaining with Sam and 53 families going with Dan Wengerd. This took place in October of 1919

and the Dan Wengerd group held their first church service on Oct. 19, 1919 at Solomon Millers, east of the Ashery (north of Mt. Hope, Ohio).

Several years ago a Martyr's Mirror which had belonged to this church, was sold at a public auction. Leroy Beachy, local historian and book collector, was able to buy it. On the front flyleaf Dan Wengerd wrote the following (in German):

On Oct. 19, 1919 Sam Yoder's church split throughout the two districts. Sam withdrew with 54 households from 53 households. Then Sam Yoder kept the songbooks in the two districts, 24 in number. And so this book was left for our church.

Daniel M. Wengerd

Note that they had 24 Ausbunds and one Martyrs Mirror for two districts consisting of 107 households! Not very many in the church service would have had access to a songbook.

The 1919 ministers' meeting was held on account of these differences between Sam Yoder and Dan Wengerd, and likewise the 1922 meeting, which is the subject of this article. Following is a translation of a copy of the original report in German:

Report of a Ministers' Meeting in Holmes Co, Oh. held Nov. 29, 30, and Dec. 1, 1922, concerning the circumstances between the Sam Yoder and [Dan] Wengerd churches or people.

There were 53 bishops and ministers present from Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, and Pennsylvania. Samuel Yoder and his ministers were also invited but did not want to have anything to do with the meeting.

On the first day of the meeting, after openings and prayer, five bishops were chosen to direct the meeting. But because Sam Yoder and his ministers were not present to give grounds for the reason for their withdrawing from Dan Wengerd and four ministers and 53 families, therefore the opportunity was given to Daniel Wengerd to give the reasons they were not agreed with Sam Yoder and do not hold communion with him. Then these five main points were presented:

1.) First, that Sam does not want to

1. See *Heritage Review*, (Jan. 2002), vol 11.

2. There exists a list of 81 bishops and ministers attending a meeting at bishop Abe S. Yoders, dated 1918.

3. See *Heritage Review*, (Feb. 1995), vol. 5

4. See *Heritage Review*, (Jan. 2002), vol. 11.

commune, nor allow his ministers to commune with the other churches, according to the understanding of the ministers' meeting in 1917. (see footnote 1.).

2.) Secondly, that he renounced communing with Ben Yoder without counselling with the church about it.

3.) Thirdly, that he did not carefully investigate and discipline his daughter's conduct.

4.) Fourthly, because he did not bring to light that he received compensation for his deceased son. [His son died while in an Army camp and was sent home in a coffin, which was not to be opened.]

5.) Fifthly, because of his wife not abiding in her calling.

But because neither Sam nor his ministers were present to answer for themselves, it was decided by the assembly to invite Sam again. He was requested by the counsel of the ministers to come and give reasons for his withdrawing from the Dan Wengerd people.

So the five presiding ministers were sent to him for this purpose. But he was not willing to come or give reasons. His ministers, except one, were also there. They gave to understand that there was a way for the Wengerd people to attain peace. The above response was brought before the assembly the second day, and it was concluded by them that the Wengerd ministers go to Sam and his ministers in the afternoon with the intentions to seek peace. And the five presiding ministers were to go along and also the three ministers who already in 1919 had examined the Sam Yoder and Wengerd ministers

Thursdays, Nov. 30, the above ministers went to Sam and his ministers. Sam agreed to a discussion with the Wengerd ministers, but no one else was to be present. He gave the Wengerd ministers to understand that the only way for them to attain peace was for them to call his things right and then give themselves under his church's counsel. This they did not agree to do.

Then the five bishops went to Sam and his ministers again and had a lengthy conversation with them. They did not agree at all to bring their things to light and discuss them, and also did not want the three who had examined them earlier (in 1919) to be present.

The above was presented to the assembly on the third day, and after much counselling, those ministers present were agreed to the following decisions:

Because Sam Yoder went ahead with communion and counselled with half of the church concerning the other half, and was not willing to

have the differences examined, and is still not willing to have the controversies brought to light, therefore we consider his above mentioned working unscriptural. Therefore we consider it inappropriate to continue to have fellowship with him, or to give him the kiss of peace at this time, unless he agrees to have the controversy thoroughly examined.

For those who are banned by him and want to join the Wengerd church, it is advised that they should seek peace where they lost it. It also is advised that those of Sam's church members that are not agreed with him anymore, and desire to go to the Wengerd church, should patiently wait a while, and see how things will turn out further on.

Because not in all of the churches has it been worked so far yet according to the "Ordnungs Brief" of 1917, that the Wengerd people can be wholly agreed to have communion with those churches. Therefore it is advised that bishop Eli Beiler of Geauga Co. help them hold communion and the other Holmes Co. bishops help with marriages and other necessary things according to the circumstances, where it can be done in peace.

Many consider Sam Yoder's outward visible standard to be praiseworthy. The opportunity is always open for him to make peace with the other churches.

The names of the five presiding bishops:

Daniel Bitschi	Arthur, Ill.
Johannes Schmucker	New Haven, In.
Wilhelm Yoder	Nappanee, In.
Christian Kaufman	Middlefield, Oh.
Benjamin F. Beiler	Ronks, Pa.

The following list of names is included in the report of the ministers' meeting.

Holmes Co. Ohio, Nov. 29, 1922

The names of the ministers who were present at the ministers' meeting.

Lancaster, Pa.

Gideon K. Stoltzfus-bishop

Ben F. Beiler-bishop

Johannes Beiler-bishop

Jacob Lapp

Gauga Co. Ohio

Eli Beiler-bishop

Christ Kaufman-bishop

Daniel Beiler

Jacob Beiler

Andreas Gingerich

Marshall Co. In.

Wilhelm J. Yoder-bishop

Monroe Hostetler

Adams Co. In.
 Joseph Swartz-bishop
 David Wicky
 Jacob Swartz
Allen Co. In.
 Johannes Schmucker-bishop
 Peter Schmucker
Howard Co. In.
 Johannes Gingerich- bishop
 Andy Miller
Defiance Co. Oh.
 Moses Coblentz- bishop
Douglas Co. Ill.
 Daniel Beachy- bishop
 David Blank- bishop
 Andreas Mast- bishop
 Henry Mast
 Joseph Schrock
Stark Co. Oh.
 David Schlabach- bishop
Holmes Co. Oh.
 Noah Beachy- bishop
 Mose Mast- bishop
 Andreas Mast- bishop
 Jacob Stutzman- bishop
 Samuel Miller- bishop
 Ben E. Troyer- bishop
 Mone (Emanuel) Schrock
 Ben E. Yoder
 Daniel Yoder
 Jonas Beachy
 Johannes Miller
 Daniel Miller
 Enos Mast

Bill Beachy
 Gideon Troyer
 Samuel J. Mast
 Jacob Mast
 Joseph Miller
 Emanuel Miller
 Samuel L. Mast
 Jonas Coblentz
 Joseph P. Miller
 Daniel Wengerd
 Daniel Yoder
 David Gerber
 Johannes Hershberger
Wayne Co. Oh.
 Eli J. Miller
 Menno Mast

-Author's Note-

The above report and information found in the Martyrs Mirror which had belonged to the Dan Wengerd church are the basis for the following corrections to an earlier article by the author.

In the article, "An Account of a Church Division in Holmes Co. in 1922," in Vol. 5 of the *Heritage Review*, (Feb. 1995), the date in the title should be 1919 instead of 1922. The fifth paragraph refers to a ministers' meeting held in 1922 at Isaac Millers. The date for this three-day meeting is not clear, but is probably around October 1, 1919, and it was requested to help resolve the differences, not with the main group, but between the Sam Yoder and Dan Wengerd groups. The first time the Dan Wengerd group had services was not in 1922 but on Oct. 19, 1919.

RESEARCH NOTES

Letters Pertaining to the Sam Yoder Division

-by Edward Kline

In the summer of 2006, a collection of letters was given to Ohio Amish Library which had belonged to Wilhelm (William) Yoder, who was bishop in Nappanee (Marshall Co.) Indiana in the early 1900s.

Numerous letters in this collection make reference to, or pertain to, the issues related to Sam Yoder and the resulting division. Perhaps one of the most interesting points that can be gleaned from these letters is the attitude of various individuals and the overall sentiment concerning the issues.

Several letters allude to the fact that Wilhelm had come to Holmes Co. several times prior to the 1922 meeting to work with the problems, although they do not give dates. Wilhelm was frequently asked to help mediate in church matters in Amish communities across the country. The letters relate at least 8 such calls to various congregations.

The following excerpts from letters written to Wilhelm Yoder shed further light on several aspects of the Sam Yoder (Swartzentruber Church) division. The other four bishops who

presided at the 1922 meeting (as mentioned in the preceeding article) are frequently mentioned: Daniel Beachy, Johannes Schmucker, Christian Kaufman, and Benjamin F. Beiler. It appear these bishops continued to work together after the 1922 meeting to make decisions.

The first excerpt is from a letter from Jonas Swartzentruber, who was a member of the "Klein Dafit" congregation in the beginning of the controversies, but later joined Sam Yoder.

August 7, 1913

...The weather is warm and dry, very dusty, although the corn looks pretty good, or better than what I think it does in the spiritual fields, namely in the church. I feel it doesn't look good, as it looks like it would divide in 3 parts...

The next letter was written by Jacob Lapp, a minister from Ronks, Pa. He attended the 1922 meeting, but this was written in 1916.

October 21, 1916

...Beloved brother, I would like to have your advice on a very serious matter. The circumstances in Holmes Co. are well known to you. Recently I received two letters from Jonas Swartzentruber and it is very thought provoking how things are going there. Sam Yoder had communion in his two congregations, Mose Mast and Abe Yoder held theirs together, Joni Troyer had his alone, Noah Beachy didn't know how far he would come. The "Klein Dafit" church, because they do not have a bishop and not being agreed, probably cannot go on for this time. Oh how sad, I don't think it would have come to this if they would have followed the advice which you helped give to the two churches. The serious matter for us here is that it appears that Abe Yoder wants to visit the East, maybe come to us. I believe both sides made mistakes, still I believe Sam wants to keep himself by the Word, but I can't say this for Abe....The question is, what shall we do with him when he comes to us? Should we fellowship with him and grieve those who want to do right and weaken their position or on the other hand, grieve Abe and help create a division by not fellowshiping with him? I would be glad for your opinion soon.

In another letter a little over two months later Jacob Lapp relates:

Jan. 3, 1917

....Well, Abe Yoder didn't come. I don't know why. He was in Somerset and I heard he preached in the church house. He was also at Lewis Beachys in Maryland. I think he was received in

peace. I just don't know what will happen in Holmes Co. I recently received four letters from there and it appears that they all went with Abe Yoder except Sam Yoder and his ministers and those in the "Klein Dafit" church. But Joni Troyer does not feel good about it. He is burdened and troubled. He thinks till everything is finished, he will end up with Sam Yoder.

The following two excerpts are from letters written by Daniel Beachy, one of the five bishops, after the 1922 meeting:

Feb. 13, 1923

John Schmucker...writes that he heard that Sam Yoder is threatening to send the bann after those members who leave his church and go to the Abe Yoder or Wengerd churches. I also received a letter from Abe Yoder saying the same. Both want advice. So what do we say-maybe it would be best to wait till Sam actually does this then we will have a witness for it. I suggest to send two of their ministers to Sam, telling him they want to go with him to see his fellow ministers and talk about the members that are in the bann. They should ask what they did, and if he says they were disobedient, then ask in what way. Then ask Sam if he would lift the bann if they are received with the same words that he uses. If Sam and his ministers do not say anything or give no reason, then I think they could be received out of the bann and received as full members, if Sam has no scriptural grounds. This should not harm the members nor the church if Sam wants to practice avoidance against them.

Some think Sam should be disciplined in some manner, but I would not like to help discipline him or his church. He has a big church and I would be afraid it would cause much unrest and maybe another division. I think the matter will be exposed with time. I heard that Lawrence Co. thinks a lot of Sam.

You can write and spell well, so write your opinion and if you see something in my letter that you think is upbuilding, you can use it. If we five can be agreed and sign a letter to send to Abe Yoder or Noah Beachy, then we can see if the bishops are all agreed...

March 2, 1923

....I am agreed with what you wrote and thank you for it. I want to send it on to J. Schmucker this morning. Your letter took long to get here. My wife wants to go to town, so I must hurry. I heard D.J. Plank say, If he had any part in the Sam Yoder affair then he would have asked to

silence Sam Yoder or take his ministry away. I asked him if we didn't tell him the matter is very greivous to us, and we want all of them to help us...He said, I want to be patient. My wife is ready. Farewell.

The following is the main part of a letter written by Wilhelm Yoder to Daniel Beachy, in response to Daniel's request . The letter was later signed by Daniel Beachy and Johannes Schmucker. A note on the back also says, *...Ben Beiler and the Geauga ministers wrote letters back with this copy saying they think it right and good counsel. The Holmes Co. bishops also met and were agreed with it. The letter was apparently returned to Wilhelm after the others approved it.*

Feb. 25, 1923

First, for me I would not like to do anything with Sam Yoder or his church. I don't think he would accept it as we do not fellowship together. Now we gave the counsel at the ministers' meeting that the members which Sam Yoder put in the bann should make peace in Sam's church, and if they afterwards want to go to the other churches to do so as peacefully as they can. I have thought already that it would be good and would also free the ministers and churches in Holmes Co. if D.M.Wengerd, Abe Yoder and some other ministers would go to Sam Yoder and his ministers and ask them if they are going to put those members in the bann who leave his church and go to one of the other churches. If they say that they will, then ask them to give a scriptural reason for this. If they cannot give a sound or scriptural reason, then tell them we are not going to heed such a bann. If then some of Sam's members want to become members elsewhere then those ministers should go to Sam right away to see if they are at peace and if there was anything against them outside of their leaving. If not, then I would say to receive them in peace as members. If Sam and his people put them in the bann and shun them, I don't think that it will hurt them or the church. I believe if Sam wants to work in this manner then he will have so much trouble in his church and much more than he wants, for I can't see that that will work out. But I want to wish him the best. However I want to make it clear that if members are out of order or lead an evil life or go to a higher church with whom we do not fellowship, then I would be agreed with Sam to hold the shunning on such people. These are my thoughts and counsel as far as I understand it at this time.

The following excerpt was written to Wilhelm by Daniel Wengerd from Fredericksburg, Ohio. The letter was written several years after the above letter, and shows that it had had not entirely solved the problem.

April 25, 1926

...I sent back the letter which you had written. We did everything that was asked of us therein with great care and effort. That letter was confirmed by a ministers' meeting in Geauga Co. and another in Holmes Co. Sam Yoder's people are saying all kinds of things about us, how we receive people here. The Geauga ministers have checked these things out twice already and found them empty. Because these people come over to our churches, they hold them in disobedience. Saul was in disobedience because he did not use the bann in the way God had told him to. This is what we and the whole ministers' meeting held against Sam Yoder, [his use of the bann].... Is one brought into disobedience for being obedient to the united decision of the ministers' meeting? They asked Sam to come and give his reasons for his actions, instead he put the meidung on those members who united with the ministers' meeting decision- one weak minister against 21. Those members who come over to us from Sam's church are as faithful as any of our or Sam's members. ...Samuel did not say to Saul, because you were disobedient to me (as Sam Yoder says), but he said, because you were disobedient to the voice of the Lord...If I have to keep the meidung against a faithful people who keep their covenant diligently, in order to appease a people who are disobedient to the Word of God. then I would be agreed with those who do not let the Word of God judge. The Word is the truth and who is out of the truth hears his voice.

The last excerpt, from Abe J. Miller of Applecreek, Ohio relates Dan Wengerd's sickness and his wife's death. Dan died Dec. 13, 1935.

January 24, 1933

...Preacher Dan M. Wengerd's wife was buried last Friday and Dan is sick in bed but better now.

EVENTS LEADING TO PASSAU

-by John J. Overholt

(Editor's Note: The late John Overholt had a great love for singing and the hymns of the early Anabaptists. He studied and wrote much about these hymns, found in the *Ausbund* and other sources. He wrote the following as an explanation why Anabaptists came to be imprisoned in the "Oberhaus" in Passau, located on the confluence of the Danube, Ilz, and Inn Rivers in Germany near the Austrian border. The original and oldest collection of songs in the *Ausbund* (songs 81 to 131) were written by these imprisoned Anabaptists. It is known that the Münster episode triggered persecution in Moravia, where these Anabaptists came from, forcing them to flee. As they fled, they were arrested at Passau.)

The year was 1535. Menno Simons was 39 years old. He was still preaching in the Roman Catholic Church in Witmarsum, Holland. Martin Luther was 52 years old. 1100 years had passed since the death of Augustine, 1200 years since the Emperor Constantine, uniter of church and state, breathed his last and 721 years since the death of *Karl der Grosse* (Charlemagne).

In 1535 the huge cathedral which *Karl der Grosse* built for the Catholics in Zurich, Switzerland, the *Grossmünster*, was 800 years old. Ulrich Zwingli, Reformed Church reformer and preacher at the *Grossmünster*, was now in his grave already four years, having died as he had lived and taught-on the battlefield, a violent death with the sword!

The reorganized Anabaptist church at Zurich was now 10 years old, and was a regrouping and re-establishing of the ancient Anabaptist church rather than its beginning, as uninformed historians were to write with much certainty 400 years later. The original leaders, Grebel, Manz, Blaurock, and many others had gone home to be with Jesus - numerous of them dying martyr deaths by fire and drowning.

Fierce persecution had driven the Brethren into surrounding localities and countries. Numerous Brethren found their way to Moravia and there, under the early leadership of Gabriel Ascherham, whose followers were called Gabrielites; and Philip Plener, whose followers were called Philippites, Anabaptism began to flourish there for a time. A third group, which was later

to assume the name of Hutterite, after Jacob Hutter, also resided in Moravia at the time. Dissension between these three groups eventually brought Jacob Hutter on the scene. This was two years before 1535. Hutter was a strong leader, resolving the differences between the groups and emerged as shepherd of the strongest group which was in time known as the Hutterites, still known today for their practise of communal living, or community of goods. The Philippites, noted above, need to be kept in mind, because we owe to them today yet a most unusual and significant gift! But we are ahead of our story.¹

In Ulm, Germany, a man was living who influenced the above Hutterites, Jacob Hutter, and others to have all things in common-that is, communal living. He did it through writing a book. Yes, a very influential book- in fact, the most influential book for all Anabaptists, next to the Bible. In 1535 this book was only four years old, but was already beginning to influence the above 39-year-old Roman Catholic priest, Menno Simons of Holland. Menno did his homework thoroughly and with the Bible and the above book, he developed and acquired a true sense of history, theology, and eschatology, that is, the doctrine of last things and the coming of the Lord. It is interesting to think that there might never have been a Mennonite and later Amish Church if Menno had not done his homework with the Bible and the correct accompanying literature.

The book is called *CHRONICA, ZEITBUCH UND GESCHICHTBIBEL*. It was written in 1531 at Strasbourg, France. The author was Sebastian Franck, formerly a priest, a Lutheran pastor, and finally a spiritualist. Frank was never an Anabaptist but was close to them and had no sympathy for Catholicism and Protestantism. Franck (1499-1543) apparently was frightened by the Anabaptist concepts of brotherhood, discipline, and discipleship. Franck, however, aside from his beliefs and doubts, was a great chronicler and historian. In his writings gives a very fair (and rare) picture of the Anabaptists.²

1. See "The Philippite Bretheren and Passau," in *Songs of the Ausbund*, Ohio Amish Library, (Carlisle Printing, 1998)

2. For a translation of Franck's account of the Anabaptists, see the *Heritage Review*, Vol. 12, Feb. 2003.

The *Chronica* has three parts: 1.) From Adam to Christ; 2.) History of Emperors and Temporal Events; and 3.) Church History of Popes and Related Events. Franck faithfully chronicles the tyranny of the state churches in persecuting the Anabaptists. The so-called Holy Roman Empire, largely brought about by *Karl der Grosse* (742-814), in time renewed the old laws of oppression of the emperors Gratian, Valentinian II, and Theodosius I (A.D.413) concerning the capital crime of rebaptism, punishable with death, (and in the case of the aforementioned emperors, concerning the exclusive right and authority of the Catholic Church.)

It is interesting to notice here that in 1535 the memory of the Peasants War (1525), was only ten years old and the horror of that experience as it affected the Anabaptists was that the old hollow charges of heresy (punishable with death), were giving way to the charge of sedition (rebellion). So in 1535 the political atmosphere was charged with much uncertainty and an event was about to explode on the public scene that was to place the existing state church authorities, both Catholic and Protestant, in a state of fear.

The event that was about to take place in the public eye, and would be the most publicized, heralded, and talked-about event of the day, and would affect the good name and reputation of the quiet Anabaptists for generations to come—in fact, would still be a scandal of proportion in certain uninformed circles even to the present hour—the event was the insurrection at Münster in Germany.

The whole Münster episode could be related in short that misguided, fanatical, religious people conceived a plan to liberate themselves from the oppression of the day and set up a "New Jerusalem" in keeping with Old Testament directives, a "kingdom of God," and a "New Israel." Jan Matthys was the new "king" but was soon killed in a foray against the Catholic authorities. He was immediately replaced by Jan van Leyden. The new regime was characterized by such practices as polygamy and community of goods. Enthusiasts of the baser sort flocked to Münster, and when a traitor in the city helped the authorities to enter, the siege was broken. Many people were killed in the battle that ensued. Catholic authorities again resumed control.

The year was 1535. In a dungeon in

Strasbourg, France there sat a preacher who was not an Anabaptist, but who had deeply influenced Anabaptists both of the violent, militant insurrectionist type such as the Münsterites, and the quiet Anabaptist type who observed the Schleithem Articles—the Magna Charta of the early Swiss Brethren. The violent types which Hoffman influenced were the above Münsterite "kings" Matthys and van Leyden; the quiet type was the above 39-year-old Roman Catholic priest, Menno Simons.

Melchior Hoffman (1495-1543), was an unusually gifted man—an eloquent preacher, a fearless witness for the Lord, a prolific writer, a serious religionist. He had one consuming failing—he misunderstood prophecy. He apparently knew little of eschatology, the doctrine of last things. He was a bold man—in the Strasbourg prison he informed the Protestant authorities that they had best be careful—and pointed to the example of Zwingli, who had to pay with his life for the blood of one man, that of the Anabaptist Felix Manz. But before we bear down too hard on Hoffman for his radical chiliastic views, let us remember that he was born a few years too soon, and apparently never had access to the above chronicle of history—the *CHRONICA*—as his later follower, the Roman Catholic priest, Menno did. Hence his eschatology had apparent reason to be in question.

Hoffman's unbridled fantasy, his inconsistent interpretation of Scripture, his fanatical view of the end-times, his setting of the date of the return of the Lord, his belief that the chiliastic kingdom was imminent, his belief that he was one of the "two witnesses"—that he had the confirmation that he was Elijah—all this eschatological fantasy was not lost on his eager students, including the "kings" Matthys and van Leyden! Only one serious student failed to get hooked on the fiction/fantasy emphasis—that was Menno.

Menno Simons, the priest, did his homework well. He learned his eschatology and roundly rejected all the chiliasm of Hoffman the teacher. In fact, while priest, Menno wrote a letter to Jan van Leyden (before the Münster fiasco) pointing Jan to a higher way! Only in the incarnation doctrine did Menno follow Hoffman. Menno too believed that Jesus took his flesh not from Mary but out of her! Here Menno will need to be excused—he apparently had no safe reading material in this regard. (See Menno's Complete Works for van Leyden's letter.)

The year was 1535 and Menno Simons was completely shaken by the Münster uprising. Time and space for detail are lacking here, but Menno counted the cost. He saw the Melchiorites as sheep without a shepherd. In January of the following year, 1536, Menno stepped out of the Roman Catholic Church and assumed leadership of the scattered souls who in time comprised his church and denomination.

In 1535, both Catholic and Protestant authorities were frightened. Hysteria reigned in the minds of some. For example, during the reign of the "kings" Matthys and van Leyden in Münster, state church authorities were taking all precaution. The last thing they needed was a replay of the Peasants War (1525) and the eruption of more Münster "New Jerusalems."

So, small wonder then, that on the 22nd of April, 1535, the administrator Ernst of the Passauer Bishopric, in Passau on the German-Austrian border, gave the order that no Anabaptist in his dominion was to be given hospitality—a job, fellowship, or food—and that all border crossings would be closed immediately to Anabaptists and guarded very closely. As Ernst put it, he was attempting to remove the danger, *die Gefahr einer Ansteckung mit der Täuferischen Sekte*. (The danger of kindling or infecting his area with the Anabaptist sect.) Ernst's "hospitality" was an evident "mark of the beast" (Rev. 13:7) in the consensus of the Anabaptists.

On August 14, 1535, 50 days after the fall of Münster, there walked into this Passau bear-trap of political hysteria, seven men, five women, and three children. They immediately were locked up in the *Oberhaus* Castle as political disturbers. As time would soon tell, the authorities, after the lock-up, literally "threw the key away"! The prisoners would soon be joined by others until their number would be sixty. Some would never leave, a few would be released or escape. Persecution in Moravia had driven them from their homes in the first place, and they were on the way home to Germany. Now, for years, Passau would be their earthly abode!

In this select company, accompanying the Aug. 14 group was their newly ordained bishop, Michael Schneider, ordained by Philip Plener of the Philippites in Moravia. A true man of God, Michael was destined to help in the writing of the wonderful hymns, 52 in number, that would form the nucleus of the great hymnal, the

Ausbund (selected collection), which would for 400 years be a major worship aid in Mennonite, and especially Amish, churches throughout the world. Michael Schneider himself wrote eleven hymns. He was a true poet of great depth of feeling and spirituality.

Another of the Passauer poets and song composers was Hans Betz, who was arrested on September 24, 1535. Betz was even more prolific than Schneider, writing 24 hymns, of which eleven are still sung regularly in Amish worship services. Betz apparently had *Meistersinger* training and his hymns are fervent and theologically well grounded.

Michael Schneider, Hans Betz, and the other writers of the *Ausbund* have left a great spiritual legacy to the church of Jesus Christ. Eternity will reveal the lives that have been touched for good, throughout history, by this noble group of defenseless Christian martyrs in the castle at Passau. We pay tribute to Michael Schneider, Anabaptist bishop, and Hans Betz, *Meistersinger*, as representatives and teachers of true Christian belief—a belief that has stood the test of time and will stand until the day of our Lord Jesus. All glory to God!

The fate of imprisoned Anabaptists at Passau is not entirely known. A number, such as Hans Betz who died after two years in prison, died from the tortures and hardships they endured. It is not known if Michael Schneider died or was released, but evidently some were released, bringing out with them the rich legacy of hymns which today are still a source of blessing to many. These 52 hymns were first printed in 1564 in a separate volume.