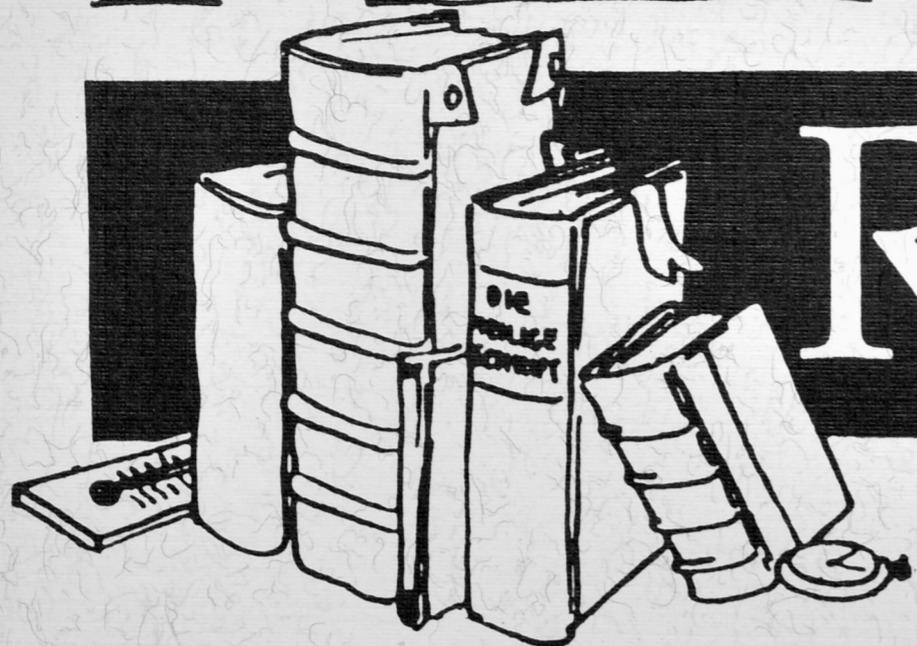


HERITAGE

REVIEW



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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 OAL are \$20 annually. Single copies of The Heritage Review are available.

The Finger of God

When Israel's children in Egypt land dwelled
Their cruel, hard slav'ry Jehovah beheld;
So Moses and Aaron were sent forth to see
If Pharoah would let Israel's children go free.

Great plagues then thro' Moses o'er Egypt land
Yet Egypt's magicians repeated the same; [came,
But when the lice crept from the dust and the sod;
Exclaimed the magicians, "The finger of God."

When God spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai,
The people could not touch the mount, lest they die.
The Lord gave His law on the mount where He trod,
Engraved on two stones by the finger of God.

Belshazzer the king made a feast for his lords,
They feasted and drank and their idols adored.
He saw on the wall, terrifying and odd,
His doom written out by the finger of God.

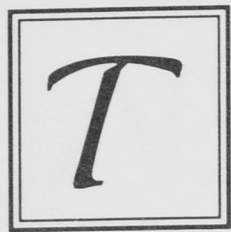
One morning to Jesus a woman was bro't,
Her captors promoted what Moses had taught;
But Jesus bent over and wrote in the sod,
Their conscience was smote by the finger of God.

The finger of God is still moving today,
Lord, help us to listen and hear what you say;
Lest we be condemned 'neath the great iron rod,
That ruleth the nations, the finger of God.

—Thomas Beachy

The Fatal Fire at Jonathan Masts in 1868¹

By Vernon Miller



he Daniel D. Erb family lived a mile southwest of Stevenson (Charm), Ohio, on the farm they bought in 1863 from Benjamin D. Miller.

It is now the Menno A. Yoder farm in the southwest quarter of Section 6.

On January 25, 1868, on a Saturday evening with a heavy blanket of snow on the ground, the Erbs bundled up to pay his aunt a visit. The young family of five: Daniel (31), Carolyn (25), Levi (5), Menno (3), and Daniel Jr. (1), did not realize what was to befall them later that evening as they drove the six wintry miles to the Jonathan Masts (DJH 2842).

The Masts were living at Troyer Valley, two and a half miles northeast of Farmerstown, on land owned today by John A. Troyer.

The Mast family was found at home. They were a family of five: Jonathan (31), Elizabeth (43), Mary (3), Joseph (?), and an adopted girl, Susan (1), the daughter of John Helmuth.

That evening at the Mast home around eight o'clock, the oil lamp showed empty. As the father refilled the lamp, young Joseph held a lighted candle and got too close to the explosive kerosene oil. Instantly the can exploded, which blew the fiery oil across the room. The clothing of the ten people present that evening caught fire, as did the heavy winter wraps and clothing stored in one portion of the room.

The elders who were able battled the blaze. Children were rolled in the snow on the outside. Daniel Erb heroically extinguished the flames consuming the store of clothing, then got everybody outside before going for help. The call of "Fire!" was heard by neighbors a half mile to the north. With snow eight inches deep, the trudge across the valley and up the steep hill was tiresome.

The situation the two families were found in was horrible. Hands and faces were badly burned. Some were unrecognizable. Mrs. Erb had severe burns on the hands, neck and face, resulting from her effort to extinguish the flames on her boys. As Mrs. Mast raised her arms, strands of flesh hung from her hands.

As the first three neighbors arrived, one went for the Shanesville doctor, while the others helped the injured back into the house and into bed.

Mr. Erb, in the meantime, was heading northwest, apparently in hopes of summoning Dr. Mast of Walnut Creek. He was leaving a trail of blood in the snow, and burned flesh from his hands froze to rail fences

that he crossed.

Arriving at the home of John Stuver (Paul R. Miller – Knerr farm), he was unable to go any farther or return to the scene of the tragedy.

At the grim scene of the disaster at the Mast home, it is said they were singing a German hymn as help arrived. Its equivalent in English would be:

*The clock does strike and means to say
That time has elapsed for me,
I've made another step this day,
Ever nearer my grave to be.
My Jesus thus reminds me so,
Because the hour I do not know,
When my time is at hand.*

*Even though if this be the last
Of my life's earthly hour,
So keep me in my faith steadfast,
Through your great suffering pow'r.
Another chance Thou givest me,
So let me like a Christian be,
Hon'r you and in death be blest.*

Jonathan Mast died around midnight. His son Joseph, who had been dutifully shining a light for his father, died the following day, Sunday. On Tuesday a funeral was held for the two.

Elizabeth Mast died February 8 in accordance to her cherished wish, with baby Susan Helmuth and Menno Erb being laid to rest in the meantime.

The remaining five recovered from the accident, although they carried scars for the remainder of their lives. Daniel Erb was cared for at the Stuver home for six weeks, at which time an enclosed bobsled was used to bring the four members of the family home again. It was eighteen months until Carolyn was able to do any work, and her hands would remain disfigured for the remainder of her life, with none of her fingers in perfect shape. Young Daniel Jr. was so badly burned on the scalp that no hair grew back. A part of his ear was also missing.

Twenty-one years later, in 1889, the Daniel Erb family moved to Hubbard, Oregon, where they resided for the remainder of their lives. Daniel, 78, died in 1915 and Carolyn, 76, died in 1919.

Sources: Descs. of Jacob Hochstettler, DJH p. 336; Cemetery Directory (Beachy), p. 41; Desc. of David Erb, p. 101; Memorial History of Emanuel Hershberger, p. 165.

¹ This article is an excerpt from a forthcoming history of Charm, Ohio.

Reminiscence from Bygone Times

By John Y. Schlabach

Written December 23, 1993, in his 97th year



When my grandfather, John Yoder, died in June of 1909, my brother Simon moved to the farm in 1911. He farmed for Grandmother until her death in 1923. Grandmother, Susan (Mast) Yoder, was born December 29, 1826 and died December 9, 1923, at the age of 96 years, 10 months, and 10 days. Her grandmother lived to the age of 101 years. My wife and I, with son Levi, moved to the farm in February of 1924. Simon then moved to the Snyder farm.

When Grandmother was a little girl, they had no apples, and the stars fell from heaven in 1833. About 1830 to 1840, a shoemaker went from house to house to make shoes. Hogs were dressed and taken to Massillon and sold for \$2 to \$2.50 per hundred pounds. The pay was partly in cash and the remainder in merchandise such as salt. Eggs were 3¢ per dozen, and butter 5¢ per pound. Cows were worth from \$8 to \$12 per head.

Farming implements were a wagon, a wooden plow and a shovel plow. Plows had wooden moldboards up to about 1860. They may have had spike tooth harrows. My father, John, related how they used a bushy tree for a harrow. They had log houses with no basement, but one room below. They smoked their meat in the attic. Travel was by horseback or they walked. They got cook stoves about 1848. Buggies were scarce before 1850. Reapers were first used in Ohio in 1860. My grandmother Schlabach showed us scars on her left wrist that she had gotten from harvesting grain with a sickle. Her son Crist was a frail child and she said that she cooked many a meal for the harvest hands with Crist tied in her apron. They began to use oil lamps about 1860. They began to can fruit about 1865.

Threshing machines formerly had web stackers. Father told me how it took five men to take the straw away from the web stacker to stack the straw. I helped thresh when one man cut bands with a knife and another fed the bundles into the machine by hand, and threshing machines were driven by steam engines. Grandfather used his horse power to run the threshing machine. Steam engines were dependable power, and steam whistle messages were convenient. A half dozen short toots of the steam whistle when the water supply in the steam engine was getting low told the water tank man to hurry. Two long, a short, and a long toot indicated travel on the road, which was usually given when they were on top of a hill. A number of long toots told the neighborhood that help was needed. Brand names of steam engines were: Reeves, Peerless, Gaar

Scott, Huber, Russel, and Aultman Taylor. Walter Burkey bought a gasoline tractor about 1920. Soon there were many different makes and some of them were of light weight.

Aaron Yoder of Kansas related that a well broken team of oxen were a good and handy team to plow with. I began plowing with a walking plow with a lead horse that was broken to the use of a single line. He could be guided with the single line without saying a word: a steady pull on the line would turn the team "haw" and a few short tugs on the line was the signal for a "gee" turn.

About 1885 cream was sold by the inch. The butterfat testing of milk and cream was not then in use. Cheese factories operated mainly from April to November. A good grade of cheese required having cows on pasture because the rennet they had then did not make good cheese when cows were on winter rations. There were no milk trucks nor feed trucks in 1924 when we came to the farm. In spring time Father sold hay that was baled with a baler powered by three horses. One man was needed to feed the baler, two men tied bales with wire, and one man weighed and stacked bales of hay.

In 1899 and on to about 1907, my father had walls built of sandstone. The sandstones were split in the woods and then hauled home. Then the stones were dressed by a mason and with a hand operated crane they were lifted and placed onto the wall. The first cement wall that I saw was made in 1909. Can we appreciate the ease and short time that is needed at present to build a house or a barn, with power saws, etc.? I was told that it was considered to be usual for a man to hew a log for a barn timber in one day. Our former Holmes Auditor, H. Gray, said that his grandfather had a stone house built under contract. The mason and carpenter work cost \$105.

In Father's time it was not unusual for a man to do feeding in winter for board and lodging. About 1910 the Berlin-Millersburg road was partly graded and hard surfaced. Farmers helped to grade and limestone was crushed and shipped to Millersburg and hauled with horses and wagons to the roadway. Main Street in Millersburg was not paved. In 1900, in case of illness, a doctor would see the patient at their home. Office calls were about 50¢. Generally livestock that was sold was taken to Millersburg, and shipped to Cleveland in freight cars.

Historical Profile

By Roy M. Weaver



Noah C. Borntrager (#3046 in DBH) was a widely known Amish bishop. He was ordained minister at age 23, on May 28, 1908, by bishop Cornelius Hochstetler. He was ordained bishop on May 7, 1911 by bishop William J. Yoder of Nappanee, Indiana, both in the Kokomo (Howard County), Indiana area. He lived in this area until September of 1947, when they moved to the Sugarcreek, Ohio community. On October 24, 1948, bishop Menno Beachy divided his district and Noah was given oversight of the East Barrs Mills district. On May 25, 1958, Eli N. Schrock was ordained bishop to take Noah's place. Noah died April 27, 1972. He had been ordained minister nearly 64 years.

Noah's parents were Christian J. Borntrager and Barbara Yoder. He was born February 5, 1883, in Holmes County, near Farmerstown, where Jacob J. Barkman now lives. Noah's mother died on November 2, 1893, when she was quite young and Noah was only 10. Noah then stayed with his grandparents, Valentine and Elizabeth Yoder, in Sugarcreek, until 1896. His widowed father then moved to Illinois with his four sons and must have married shortly thereafter. When he moved to Kokomo, Indiana in 1902 with his second wife, Amanda Stutzman, they had three more sons.

Noah and his wife, Katie Beachy, married in Howard County on December 6, 1904. Katie was born July 15, 1884 in Holmes County, to Benjamin and Anna Kauffman Beachy, who lived across from Holmes Lumber and Building Center, where Abe J. Hochstetler lived for many years. Noah and Katie had nine children:

Menno, born October 9, 1905, married Ellen Frey on November 15, 1928. Menno died June 11, 1992 at Holmesville, Ohio.

Jonas, born May 16, 1909, married Louella Yoder on June 1, 1931 at Plain City, Ohio.

Benjamin, born January 26, 1912, married Katie Gingerich on October 22, 1936 in Howard County, Indiana. He died February 12, 1986.

Henry, born March 3, 1917, married Katie Ann Diener on October 3, 1940 at Arthur, Illinois. An infant daughter, born and died September 28, 1920.

Anna, born September 14, 1921, is single.

Mary Ann, born March 4, 1929, married on June 21, 1953 to Jonas D. Miller.

Noah and his wife always enjoyed going to Holmes County while living in Indiana. On January 23, 1903, they attended a double wedding in Holmes County. The couples were: "One Arm" Joe J. Miller and Martha Stutzman; and Noah D. Mast of Kansas and Barbara Stutzman. Dinner was served in a small spring house on the Noah D. Stutzman farm near Farmerstown. This same year Noah helped drive a team and wagon to Geauga County for his aunt and husband, Jost K. Byler. They must have had an extended visit to Ohio. In December of 1923 they were in Holmes County again when Noah married two couples: Abe N. Millers and Abe J. Hochstetlers. Both were later ordained bishop. Noah was a cousin to Abe Hochstetler and to Abe N. Miller's wife, who was Abe's sister.

Noah's son Jonas relates that Noah and a church brother drove from Howard County to Nappanee, which was approximately 50 miles, over Sunday with one horse in an open buggy. Around 1920 Noah and son Menno drove to Warsaw, Indiana with two horses to fetch a two-horse spring wagon (surrey), which a blacksmith made for him there. Around 1941 they took the spring wagon, and with their daughters visited Jay County, which was approximately 40 miles, then to the next county north over Sunday, attending church in the Berne area.

Noah bought a small farm several miles northwest of Holmesville, Ohio in the latter 1940s, but never moved there. It appears as if he had considered that location for his home. There was a need for a bishop in this area at that time. The first Holmesville district was formed in 1945. The first bishop ordained in this area was Andy J. Mast, on May 11, 1951.

Habits

A habit is a sticky thing,
Much good or evil it can bring.
It finds a victim, holds him fast,
And keeps him in his vice-like grasp.

Bad habits grow with extra speed,
Muck like a healthy growing weed.
The roots grow deep, the stem grows stout,
How difficult to pull it out.

Good habits are a little slow.
They need a lot of care to grow.
If tended well, they grow more fair
Than any bloom a plant can bear.

Good habits help us all through life.
Bad habits bring us pain and strife.
Our habits, whether right or wrong,
Each day will grow more firm and strong.

Letters of Encouragement

By Henry L. Erb



udy J. Yoder, #5352 in D.J.H., #6893 in D.B.H., #1-1-3-12-7-3 in Peter Beachy III, and #292 in Descendants of Daniel Swartzentruber, Jr.,

was born on April 24, 1894 to Jonas S. and Anna (Swartzentruber) Yoder. He grew to adulthood on the home farm, located today on State Route 557 about halfway between Charm and Farmerstown, Ohio, and now owned by Jonas D. Yoder. In the year of 1918, at the age of 24, Rudy was working as a hired farm hand for Jacob J. Mast, who lived close to Mt. Hope, Ohio.

At that time, there was a war going on in Europe between the German-speaking nations, including Austria and Hungary, against the rest of the European nations. This war had started in 1914 after the murder of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo. In 1917 the United States, due to pressure from our European allies, entered the war. In May of 1917 Congress passed the Selective Service Act, which required all male citizens between the ages of 21 and 30 to register for military service. This act of Congress caused much concern and uneasiness among the so called plain communities in America. Will our young men and boys be able to stand up to the test of being a C.O. (Conscientious Objector)? Some boys were already drafted in 1917, taking the C.O. stand, and were treated badly by military personnel. By 1918, boys being drafted knew ahead of time that they would most likely be mistreated if they took the C.O. stand. But this did not deter them from doing what they believed was right, according to the New Testament teachings.

Rudy J. Yoder was one of those persons who, because of his age, was required to register. He received notice to report to the local draft board in Millersburg, Ohio on October 5, 1918. The train was there and waiting on that day as Rudy and his father arrived at the station. Rudy took a window seat and waved goodbye to his father as the train pulled away from the station. The train made stops at Mt. Vernon, Columbus, and Dayton, Ohio. Over 1900 draftees filled the coaches and they were in high spirits, but not Rudy Yoder. His heart was heavy and he shed tears as the train passed through St. Louis, Missouri, farther and farther away from home and friends.

The destination was Camp Jefferson at Jefferson City, Missouri. Upon arrival all the draftees lined up to register. Rudy, with a racing heart and shaking knees, approached the officer, placing both hands on the desk. Rudy told him that due to his religious convictions, he could not train with the Army: "Sir, I am a C.O. I would like to keep my faith and believe in God." The officer said, "We don't have time for your problems now," and motioned him to a chair along the wall. After the registration was all done, the officer came over, handed

him a tent number and directions where to find it, plus a few curt instructions on what to expect in the morning: "Be ready and obey your officer."

Early the next morning a loud whistle blew. Time to get up, get dressed and outside the tent in 15 minutes. After breakfast, "ATTENTION!" an officer yelled. Everybody snapped to attention, saluted the officer, and marching orders followed. This meant, both arms down by side, back straight, now step: right, left, right, left. Now left, right, left, right. If anybody missed a step he got a severe lecture. Here was Rudy Yoder, who wanted to take the C.O. stand, marching with the United States Army. That evening this was quite a burden on his conscience. So the next morning he didn't show up for marching practice but stayed in his tent. After this Rudy was mocked and a lot of derogatory remarks were made toward him. A few days later while taking a shower, his clothes were taken away. An Army uniform was waiting for him. He felt he had no choice but to wear it. The officers shipped his clothes back home. About a week and a half later his father, Jonas S. Yoder, and Moses Beachy of Farmerstown, Ohio arrived at Camp Jefferson asking to see Rudy Yoder. They also carried a bag containing the clothes which the officers had shipped home. It was a most joyful day for Rudy. The Army uniform was discarded and he put on his plain clothes again.

This now made the mocking and cursing much worse, becoming so bad that Rudy lost his appetite to eat or to even enter the mess hall. He ate very few meals in the next weeks' time. The days became long, the nights longer yet. It was only by reading in the New Testament and spending time in prayer plus reading and writing letters to and from home and friends, that he was able to endure. A soldier reported him to an officer, who then gave an order to the soldiers to desist from the mocking. Conditions improved somewhat after that.

One evening, three weeks after Rudy was at Camp Jefferson, two officers, with revolvers at their sides, approached him, and ordered him to come with them. They walked to the top of a small hill, where there was a concrete wall and a small cemetery with three recently dug grave mounds. "Here," the officers said, pointing to the three fresh mounds, "lie the bodies of three boys who refused to wear their uniforms and if you don't wear your, you will be the fourth one. The way things are now you are no good and nuisance to the U.S. Army. You have until 9:00 tomorrow morning to make your decision, but if you refuse again, we will shot you, bury you here, and your family will never find out what happened to you." With a heavy heart

(continued)

Letters of Encouragement *(continued)*

Rudy told them that his decision is already made, and if he was not worth anything, they could just finish him now. The words of Luke 12:4 came to his mind: *Be not afraid of them that kill the body, then after that have no more that they can do . . .* They were a comfort at this testing moment. This reply made the officers furious and one of them, waving his revolver, cursed and shouted at Rudy. The other officer had tears streaming down his face. That evening, reading in the New Testament was a great comfort to him. That night, trusting in the Lord, Rudy slept very well. Nine o'clock the next morning came and went. Nothing happened. It had proven to be an idle threat.

Several days later another officer tried a different approach. "Let me tell you something," he said, "There is just no way you are going to get a release; you might as well give in and serve your term in the Army, then you can go home and practice your religion, but it can't be done your way here in the Army." Once the officer saw that Rudy would not yield, he shook his head and walked off.

One evening one of his tentmates said that he wanted to take a picture of Rudy and he should come outside. Rudy refused, so the tentmate got some of his buddies over to help. They grabbed Rudy and started to carry him outside. Rudy let himself go limp, and the boys thought he had fainted. They called an ambulance and took him to the hospital. He spent three days there, mostly to be observed to see if he would get more fainting spells. Of course he didn't, so he was released.

One day two men arrived at Camp Jefferson headquarters, asking to see Rudy Yoder. The one was Jake Mast, the young Amish farmer for whom Rudy had worked before being drafted. The other man was Charles Hess, a Mennonite bishop and a director on the committee of Conscientious Objectors. Tears of joy rolled down their cheeks as they greeted each other. They asked Rudy how he was doing there, and he told them of some of the struggles he was facing. Charles Hess asked Jake and Rudy to pray for him as he went to see the head officer, but he received nothing but foul language. Only after Hess showed him a badge that he had received from the president of the United States, did the officer listen to him, and he promised Hess that he would send Rudy to another camp, where there were other C.O.s. After giving Rudy much encouragement and advice on how to remain a C.O., they departed. This was, Rudy later would say, the shortest day of all his days at Camp Jefferson.

The next morning after breakfast an officer told Rudy to report to headquarters. Wondering very much what would happen now, he entered headquarters. Inside he was told to report to the officers' room. Four officers were seated inside. One got up and started shouting and cursing at him, telling Rudy how he was no good and a nuisance to the U.S. Army, waving his arms, cursing and screaming. He became so angry, he jumped

up and down. Finally he ran out of steam. Handing Rudy some papers, he told him to get out and never come back. Walking back to his tent, a soldier approached him, asking what papers he had. Looking them over, they saw it was some money and transfer papers to go to Camp Taylor, Kentucky. Soon after, Rudy was on his way out of Camp Jefferson with memories he would never forget.

Rudy took the train to St. Louis, Missouri. While waiting in the depot, he met Jerry Yoder, an Amish boy from Oklahoma. Needless to say, they became quick friends. Next day, November 9, 1918, Rudy got off the train in Kentucky. Carrying his luggage, he walked the last seven miles to Camp Taylor headquarters.

Upon his arrival, the Lieutenant asked Rudy why he didn't want to fight. He got out his New Testament and they talked awhile. At Camp Taylor there were about 100 other C.O.s. Menno Diener from Illinois, Ezra Bontrager from Indiana, and Rudy became close friends, and their friendship lasted throughout their lifetimes. Adam Moomaw, a Mennonite from Smithville, Ohio, and William Yoder, Sugarcreek, Ohio, plus many others, were also there. On Sundays the C.O. boys got together to read scriptures and sing. Rudy was made assistant cook in the C.O. boys' mess hall, which was a job that he liked.

One night Menno Diener and Rudy awoke suddenly. (They shared a sleeping cot.) An awful racket was going on outside, cannons booming, rifle shots, people yelling and carrying on. Word passed that the war was over. But to get a quick release after the war was over was not as quick as a lot of boys thought it would be. It took some time to unwind the U.S. military machine. Finally on January 6, 1919 Rudy was released. Then home sweet home.

That summer Rudy again worked for Jake Mast. Jake pretty much let Rudy go ahead with the farm work, as J. J. Mast's wife had died of the flu on December 30, 1918 and also Jake was ordained a minister on November 10, 1918. Both of these incidents had happened while Rudy was away at camp.

Later that year Rudy married Elizabeth Schlabach. He then moved to her home place and started farming as her father, Joas Schlabach, had died in 1914. Elizabeth Schlabach was a descendant of the 1820 immigrant Christian Schlabach who had settled on this farm in 1827. (For more information on this farm, see Vol. 1 of Heritage Review.) Rudy and Elizabeth reared four daughters and one son during their life together.

During the 1930s Rudy started having trouble with his eyes. In 1939 one eye was removed. He then got a glass eye. Rudy often played jokes on little children by removing this glass eye and showing it to them in the palm of his hand, leaving some children in a state of bewilderment. Later he got ulcers in his other eye, finally losing all eyesight. During his last seven years he was unable to read or write. He became sick with cancer, and after being anointed, Rudy passed on to eternal rest on April 15, 1968.

Letters of Encouragement *(continued)*

These are some of Rudy Yoder's experiences. While Rudy was at camp, he received many letters from home, from neighbors, cousins, friends, etc. Most of these letters have been preserved. In them we can read of the concern that people had and showed when a loved one or acquaintance was drafted into the U.S. Army. One can also learn of the experiences of other Amish boys during this time. Most of the letters came from his parents, brothers, and sisters. His sister Lovina was already married at the time. Elizabeth (Lizzie) was 21 years old, Mattie 19, Amanda 16, Dan 20, Sam 15, Andy 14, Joseph 9, Levi 7, and Anna was 9 months old. Following are excerpts taken from these letters.

The first letter is dated October 8, 1918

Dear Rudy,

The sun is shining brightly this morning. The boys are gathering chestnuts. Mama is flicking your pants. Wonder what you are doing out there. We got your letter on Monday and were glad to hear from you, but sorry to hear that you are the only Amish. Mama says that you shall read in the prayerbook – page 96. I was at J. J. Masts on Saturday to get some potatoes and some of your goods. We have cleaned your buggy well. Hope to hear from you soon.

Sister Mattie

P.S. Joe (age 9) wants to write you yet.

Now I will try and write a few lines. Well, John Miller got a whipping in school, the sticks did fly. He ate chestnuts, and did not want to work his problems. We are looking about every hour that you are coming home. We caught three wild rabbits. Well it is mail time. So goodbye, from Joe J.

October 11, 1918 – Millersburg, Ohio

Dear Bro. Rudy,

Got your letter today, and truly was glad to hear from you, but was sorry to hear that you are the only Mennonite there. Just think, it is God's way, and God's ways are not our ways. How are they getting along with that disease down there? You can be glad you are not in Camp Sherman. That disease is awful down there. There are a few cases in Sugarcreek. Wonder if you got plenty to eat and a good bed to sleep. Did you eat that cheese I gave you? Wish I could give you some more. Last night I dreamed of you. Be sure and write us every few days, as I can hardly wait until I hear from you.

Adam Lovina

October 11, 1918 – Arthur, Illinois

Kind Friend,

Rec. your welcome letter yesterday and was real glad to hear from you. But I cannot at this time come to visit you, but would like to. I have to stay home and husk my corn. I guess you must try and be a good boy and I think God will guide you in the path of righteousness. About making fun of you, I would just make fun with them and not act as though you cared anything. Be a good boy and stand fast in your faith.

Jacob D. Schrock

No date

Well now I will rite you a few lines. I and Joe are going to school. Yesterday Joe and Eli Raber must sit in the school-house, they make some mischief. The boys went plowing this afternoon.

Levi Yoder (age 7)

October, 1918 – Sugarcreek, Ohio

Dear friend:

Rec. your letter yesterday and was truly glad to see that you did not forget me yet. If we trust in him who is the giver of all good gifts and that is the only help that we can depend on. I wonder if they have anything of that contagious disease out there. I heard over seven hundred died at Camp Sherman. I think that is fulfilling the scriptures as we read in Matthew 24. That word pestilence means a contagious disease. Last Sunday Em. Schrock and Sam Mast were in our church, they preached very interesting.

Your friend, Levi N. Miller
(neighbor)

October, 1918 – Millersburg, Ohio

Kind friend:

Will answer your welcome letter which I received yesterday and glad to hear that you are in good health. This morning I had fast day and I was reading my little Bible. I read some pieces in there that made me think of you. Matt. 11 – verses 28, 29, and 30. It fascies (?) my heart to read your letters, just write how you feel, that makes me think of my faults.

From me, S. S. Mast

October 13, 1918 – Millersburg, Ohio

Dear friend:

Sunday morning. Will answer your letter. Glad to hear that you had a safe journey. You didn't write how you are treated, but hope good.

Christian A. Garver is back from Camp. He was in church on Sunday. I went home with him. He can make some interesting talk about Camp life.

Your humble bro. in Christ,
Albert L. Stutzman

October 14, 1918 – Mt. Hope, Ohio

Dear friend,

J. J. Mast gave me two letters to read that they had received from you. Well, we all miss you very much since you are gone. All the churches and schools are stopped around here on account of this flu. Crist Garver is at home again. He can tell a fellow some things about Camp life. I guess he had some hard times to endure.

Well Rudy, you wrote that you had the blues awful bad and it is no wonder, but times will change again. We must always look on the bright side. There is rumor that the war would soon be over, which I hope it will. Well Rudy, the best advice I can give you is not to get discouraged, but always try and make the best of it you can. We will do all we can for you in the way of praying.

Your friend, Eli L. Stutzman

Letters of Encouragement (continued)

October 15, 1918

Kind friend Rudy;

Well Rudy, we got two letters from you on Monday, was very glad to hear from you, felt sorry to hear that you have a different suit on, but take it as it comes. That suit don't hurt you, because you did not put it on yourself. It don't hurt your belief.

Wonder if you got that box that we sent you. Hope it tastes good. We had church last Sunday. Jonas Swartznetruber was not there. He told Pre. Sam Mast that he won't come anymore. It is awful pity. It puts us in a bad shape.

Well they intend to make a preacher here in our church till next time. So I hope that God will give us a man that will try and help our church along so that we may live a better life and live up to what Christ said. So Rudy, you must not forget us, as we got something on hand. It is up to God. He knows best, who have to take part of this, I guess you know what I mean.

J. J. Mast

October 15, 1918

Kind friend Rudy;

Well, Rudy today I was at a place I never was before, at Jonas S. Yoders. I went over there to see about that furlough, I expect they will be at your place last of this week. We sent you a box of eatable things today. I hope you get it. Let us know right away what shape it was in.

Mrs. J. J. Mast

October 18, 1918

My dear bro. Rudy;

In the name of our Lord. We are all well. About the work, we are not working much at all. We are talking of you most of the time. I dreamed of you last night. Momma said, she can not dream of you.

You wrote only one letter since you left. Be sure and write me sometime, I can hardly wait from one day to the other to hear from you. I also read the letters you sent home. Oh, isn't it awful how everything goes. Just try and do the best you can. Did you hear from David Troyer and Levi S. S.

(Swartzentruber) lately? Guess they got some a hard time. Wonder where John J. Miller is by this time.

We are so afraid you might get that disease. It is awful. A few cases died in Millersburg and in Baltic. It is just taking a good start through here.

Well I hope you see Papa by this time. Oh we can hardly wait till he comes home. We all hope to hear some good news. All we can do is praying to the Lord for you. Hope you don't need to be at that place long.

From Lovina (sister)

October 20, 1918 – Fredericksburg, Ohio

Dear cousin Rudy,

Wonder how you are making it at Camp. I expect you don't like it very good. I don't think that is a very good place for a Christian people. I had to think pretty much of you these days. We heard that you have the uniform on. Last night I dreamed

that you were here, but you said that you had to go again.

From Andrew J. Hershberger

October 20, 1918 – Fredericksburg, Ohio

Dear cousin,

Wonder how you are getting along since you left home. Hope good but the way we heard you can't do as you think is nearest right. Hope God will guide us all in the right way.

Menno J. Hershberger

October 20, 1918 – Winesburg, Ohio

Dear cousin,

Rec. your letter last week. I am very sorry to hear that you are all alone, but still hope God is with you so you can make it through.

Crist Garber is in Stark Co. now, he has a furlough for 30 days. Ida J. Miller, Elizabeth L. Schlabach and I were in Stark Co. week before last. Elizabeth and I worked a week for Jacob Grabers. We picked up onions and got \$1.50 for one day.

Levi S. Swartzentruber and Lydia J. Shetler's man are out in Leavenworth, Kansas. One of them is to stay 10 years, the other 20 years. I think they don't feel very good. I heard Sam Yoders' Daniel and Simon M. Hershberger are there too, but I hope God is with them, so they can make it through.

I often thought we would never get it the way we had it before this war life. I don't care to have it anymore. On someway we didn't do what was right every time. I often thought already, this is a punishment from God for us. Crist Garver told me, he got his bottom kicked, but he had to take it as it came.

From Saloma A. Yoder

October 20, 1918 – Millersburg, Ohio

Rec. your letter yesterday and was very glad to hear from you again. Sorry, that you had a sore arm, but I guess a person will get a sore arm more or less from that.

I hear that you wear the uniform, write me a letter and tell me all about it. Read Romans 12 verses 14 to 18.

Albert L. Stutzman

October 21, 1918 – Fredericksburg, Ohio

To you my dear nephew Rudy:

We got a letter from your mother. She sent us your address, and tho't we should write you. I wonder if you have one of those committee reports which explains that interview which this committee had with Secretary of War Baker. I will enclose one. I know of one instance that a boy showed one of these to his captain. He read it all over, then said he would like to have one himself, from that on the boys were treated better. Now I hope we with you can live and stand steadfast in the teachings of our Savior and Redeemer.

From Joe P. Hershberger and wife

October 23, 1918 – Sugarcreek, Ohio

Dear brother Rudy,

We have the threshers today and Papa don't have time to write. We don't do very much, we are just thinking of you all the time. We hope it will go better before long. Oh, I guess

Letters of Encouragement (continued)

David Troyer and Levi S. Swartzentruber have some hard times. We heard they put him again in the guard house.

Well, David Yoder was here yesterday and we talked about your clothing. He tell of boys that they take their clothes, then the boys just put a blanket around them, then they give the clothes again. Mama said she believes if they take your clothing and you put that blanket around you, they will give your clothing again.

From sister Lizzie

October 23, 1918

Kind Brother:

We are sending out to you some chestnuts and cheese. Now let us know about those clothes, what you did. Pa write a letter for that man. So you can do just as you please, or which you think is the best.

Good by
(unsigned but Mattie's handwriting)

October 23, 1918 – Camp Taylor, Kentucky

Dear church brother,

That disease is in camp here. I heard 700 died, but last report was getting better. Five of the C.O. boys are in the hospital with the flu. Three are Amish, their names are Menno Brenneman, Samuel Smucker and Victor Stoll. They were getting better last I heard. Last week Gideon Bontrager got a dispatch that his wife has the flu. He got a pass for a week to go home. 43 C.O. boys here. We have reading about every evening. We get hikes about every day, sometimes they make us play football instead of hikes.

From John J. E. Miller

October 24, 1918

Beloved Brother;

Rec. your letter dated Oct. 22. I praise the Lord that the officers have been talking kindly to you. I think this is direct answer to prayer.

I will be glad to hear from you again after you are called before the officers. Write me then. Be very careful about your daily life, they will be watching as to whether you really are conscientious, or if you simply want to get out of going to war. Let every word you say be clean.

There is nothing that will help you like being able to give Bible for the position you take.

Lovingly, your brother,
J. M. Kreider

October 24, 1918 – Kokomo, Indiana

Dear Friend Rudy,

We have plenty of work. I have a boy from Camp Taylor. He is John Christner of Lagrange Co., Ind. He is furloughed till Nov. 15, 1918. Got a letter from Bro. Jake yesterday. He wrote that Reuben Eash died at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He had rheumatism and heart trouble. He was sentenced to prison for 25 years. Cousin Sam Mast of Ill. died at Camp Custer, at Battlecreek, Michigan. Well your pa and Mose Beachy stopped

here Sat. night and Sunday.

Yours truly,
Menno D. Mast

October 25, 1918

We got your letter yesterday about a furlough. I went to Millersburg in the afternoon. Till I was done talking to Burkey, the board wasn't in anymore, so I will go again today. I talked to Joe Keim and read him that letter. Burkey and they both say it sounds good that they find you sincere. They say that means that you stand up to what you say. Joe said he believes that if the board of inquiry finds you sincere, that is true to what you say and nothing false, he believes you will be furloughed out on a farm, and if you have the uniform on. But I would say, Keep on trying to get them off but do your best to keep true to what you say and keep the good side of your officers and pray to God that he will help you and we will do so too.

Well now I am in Millersburg and Burkey thought them blanks here ain't quite rite for farm furloughs. So I wrote Borkholder that he shall make his application right away by going out or sending you his application and you can hand it to your officer, but take care what you sign.

From Father

October 26, 1918

Kind brother,

Well I wonder if J. J. Mast and Algire find you. Wish you could come home with them. Oh, how glad we would be if we could see you come.

Simon P. Troyer is at Camp Sherman.

From Mattie (sister)

October 28, 1918

Kind brother,

Pa went down to Logan Co. to talk to that man. I expect J. J. Mast will come out last part of this week. Pa wants this man to go along. Today we got three letters from you and we noticed that you changed suits and had an awful time. We are so sorry about it, and hope it will soon go better for you. We heard that Levi Swartzentruber and David Troyer are sent to Kansas. They had an awful time. They put them in a box for 24 hours. They could not sit or lay down.

Sister Mattie

October 28, 1918

Your father intends to go this morning on the train to Logan Co. to see that fellow which you wrote us in your last letter. Your Pa got a letter from that feller last week. He said that he will help you out, but he wanted to know what the trouble was, so Pa went to see him and make arrangements to meet me in Columbus, Ohio, on Thursday evening, if it is God's will. Hope it is.

Let us take some comfort in reading his Word, which I think you did daily.

Christ Hershberger was sent to Leavenworth, Kansas. I pity them.

Well Rudy if it is the will of God I will give you a visit till

Letters of Encouragement (continued)

Friday of this week. We expect to come into St. Louis the time you did.

J. J. Mast Family

October 29, 1918

I was down to Mose Beachy about these matters which you had in your letter. Moses made a paper so I will send you that, and Moses said that you should use your own envelopes and paper because these other envelopes belong to the government. So it looks like you would be an uncombatant.

Now I heard that Levi J. H. (Hershberger) and Andy E. S. (Swartzentruber?) are arrested for \$500.00 each. Dan Byler bailed them out. I am sure we would pay that money too if you could come home then. Well I wonder what your captain say when the boys are so mean. We can hardly do anything without thinking of you.

We did not hear anything about arresting Pa. I think they just said so to scare you.

From sister Mattie

October 29, 1918

Kind Friend,

J. J. Mast left today for your place. Expect you will be glad to see him. On Sunday Levi Swartzentruber and I had some fun. We was out in the road talking. A buggy came, it was Eli B. Miller by himself. We just wondered where he wants to go. Levi had no hat on, but he jumped in my buggy and we went after Eli, we chased him about a mile. We didn't find out where he wanted to go. My mare throwed dirt so bad that when we laughed we got our mouths full of dirt. Ha ha. We had fun. Jonas Swartzentruber bought the Paul Sholly farm for \$150.00 an acre. He will sell his farm down here.

From your friend,
S. S. Mast

October 30, 1918

Dear Sir:

Well we were very sorry to hear that the boys had scared and used you so bad. But by studying over it we surely thought that it was God's will that you fainted or became unconscious. He knows how to help and to scare the bad boys, that they at least have to help you. Thank Him very much for it.

Well we are very glad that you didn't change clothes. Hope and pray that you can wade through all that comes before you, and keep steadfast.

Father

No date – Sugarcreek, Ohio

Mr. Corpal Smith:

Kind friend:

I got a letter from my son, Rudy J. Yoder, of your 16 co. Group 669. He wrote me that you would like to have a few gallons of chestnuts. We sold about all that we have to spare. But I will send you some anyhow and won't charge you anything for them. I will give them to you for a present for

being so kind and welcome to us when we were at the barracks to visit Rudy. Hope you and Rudy can get along alright.

Yours respectfully,
Jonas S. Yoder

November 1, 1918 – Nappanee, Indiana

Kind Friend Rudy:

A greeting to you. Your father wrote me that it might do good if I sent a furlough out. No date is put in and you just hold this furlough until you were before the board and they give you a chance to be furloughed. You try and hold yourself with this so no one else can get you. They will put in the dates to suit themselves. Hoping and trusting this will help you out.

Your friend,
Noah J. Borkholder

Author's note: Rudy was never furloughed out anytime.

November 1, 1918

Kind brother:

Ma said I shall write you that you shall not bother too much about signing your name, as Eli Yoder and Henry M. B. have signed. They say they are afraid they did too much, but they have it good where they are, so we think you come alright if we keep up praying. Got a letter from Noah Borkholder. He will put in a furlough for you as soon as he can. We noticed that the officers was sassy to you, for which we are sorry to hear.

From sister Mattie

November 3, 1918

Dear Cousin,

We were awful glad to hear from you, but were sorry to hear that you got such hard times, and I wonder if you got your clothes again or if you had to keep the uniform on. Well just now Brother Andy came home from your father's place. He says that you are in the hospital and haven't got the uniform anymore.

Anna J. Hershberger

November 5, 1918 – Hartville, Ohio

I am at home yet, and thank the Lord for it, but if the war keeps on I expect to be called before spring. There are no Amish boys from here at Camp yet. Ben T. Weaver, Enos J. Miller, Ben J. Troyer and William L. Sommers, all from Holmes Co., are furloughed here from Camp Sherman till November 15th. Crist Garver from Mt. Hope is also here furloughed from Camp Gordon. I visit him on Sunday. They used him awful. He said the only way a fellow can get through is to depend on God and pray for his help.

From John Schlabach

November 5, 1918

Dear brother:

Got your letter yesterday. Was glad to hear that you got your suitcase again, wonder if you got your blanket too or not. Mama said I shall ask if you need more clothing or if you want another blanket.

Your sister Lizzie

Letters of Encouragement (continued)

November 8, 1918

Dear brother:

I got a letter from Eli Yoder yesterday. He said that the board inquiry was there and talked to put them boys all together on a farm in South Carolina. Nobody had to go to Camp since you left.

From Bro. Dan

Author's note: On November 9, 1918 Rudy was transferred to Camp Taylor, Kentucky.

November 11, 1918

Dear brother:

We was awful glad to hear that you are now with the other Amish boys. Well today we heard the war is stopped. Hope it is so.

Sister Lizzie

November 12, 1918

Dear Brother,

Tuesday noon. Wonder if you heard that Jacob Mast got preacher on Sunday. Jacob Raber and Menno J. Troyer are to go get examined tomorrow. Perry S. Miller, Phineas M. Troyer and Sanford Keim got examined last week, but Perry and Phineas didn't pass.

Brother Dan

November 14, 1918

My Dear Brother Rudy,

Was awful glad to read that you met the other Amish boys. Wonder if you are in tents yet. You boys can come home before long as the report is the war is over. So we are hoping to see you soon. Be sure and stop in at our place, home from Millersburg, we will then take you home. I guess you are getting fat if your weight is 150 lbs. John Erb was home last week but did not go to church while he was here. Some people said it seems some of those boys are not thinking.

Sister Lovina

November 14, 1918

I will now write a few lines, it is Wed. night, 2 o'clock and I can't sleep. Was glad to hear that it goes better now. You wrote that we shall send your shoes. We don't know what to do, as they claim the war is over. We'll just send you a pair of old rubbers, you can shift a little till we get another letter. They were whistling and shooting about all day on Monday on account of the war being over.

From Father

November 16, 1918

We didn't hear anything from you the last two days. Wonder what's wrong. Simon P. Troyer came home this week on a furlough. He will work in Madison Co. Wonder if Dan Miller is in the guard house yet. Levi Raber told me yesterday why he is in there.

Brother Dan

November 16, 1918

Friend Rudy,

Rec. your letter yesterday. Since I visit you at Missouri barracks, I didn't write as often as I ought to. I did write you a letter about the time you left for Kentucky. I think you never got that letter. We have so much to think of what may become of us, we didn't write as often. I hope you will forgive us.

Well Rudy, I guess you heard that the heavy thing fell on me. First I thought it couldn't hardly be me. I always thought we have got a better man in our church than me. Found out that I didn't know anything about it. But God knows best. It is now 10 o'clock. I have been at it (writing) all morning and can hardly write, on account of getting my mind together. We are having lots of company, as the days and eves are long. I guess you would like to know who all had to take them books. I didn't expect to be one of them. They were Emanuel Miller, Abe Miller, John Miller, Dan Hershberger, Eli Mast, Alfred Yoder, Levi Raber, and Henry Mast.

J. J. Mast and Family

November 17, 1918

Kind brother:

Sunday eve. We didn't hear anything from you since Wednesday. Now if we don't get a letter today from you, I will send this letter to Dan A. Miller, then he can give it to you, because we don't know if you get this or not. Wonder if you are in the guard house or why you don't write anymore. Eli M. Troyer came home on a furlough.

Your sisters

To Dan Miller:

If you get this letter, hand it to Rudy if you can or write us if he is in the guard house, or what is the matter that he don't write anymore.

Jonas S. Yoder
Sugarcreek, O. R#2

November 20, 1918

Dear cousin Rudy,

Well I see you changed camps. I guess that seemed kinda good to you to see Amish boys again. Brother Levi and Andrew Schrock are in the workhouse in West Virginia as far as I know.

From Enos J. Hershberger

November 21, 1918

Dear Brother:

Abe N. Troyer went to Geauga Co. on a furlough. He works for Albert D. Miller. David A. Troyer says he likes his place pretty good at Leavensworth, Kansas.

Your sisters

Now I will write a few lines, about signing that payroll. I talked to M. M. Beachy about it. He said if it would be his boy he would tell him to sign, and turn it right over to the relief fund. If you can not turn it over there, maybe you must bring it along and we have to fix it here. But try and get a receipt for it wherever you turn it over.

Father

Letters of Encouragement (continued)

November 21, 1918

Dear Rudy,

Am very glad to hear that you are now in Camp Taylor, Ky. I wonder if Dan A. Miller is still in the guard house.

Levi N. Miller

November 24, 1918 – Winesburg, Ohio

Dear Nephew,

Yes, we have seen John Yoder, he was in church last Sunday. He looked kinda funny with his short hair. Pit Joe's Levi and Andy Schrock had a trial and have been in jail in Cleveland, and got transferred to Warrensville workhouse. They are now in hospital with influenza.

Ammon S. (Swartzentruber) is now in Ill. on a furlough. Emanuel D. Miller and Jacob Kline are at home for 1 month.

Delila Swartzentruber

November 25, 1918 – Arthur, Illinois

Dear friend,

Henry Beachy is still at camp. Boys that are here are Abe N. Miller and Roman A. Troyer from Sugarcreek, O. Ammon Swartzentruber is now out here too.

From Jacob Barkman

December 5, 1918

Seen in the Budget that Adam Moomaw of Camp Taylor is in Ind. on a furlough. He is working for Pre. Dave Christner. I wonder if you know him. Have you got clothes that you can make it or shall we send you some more? Let us know.

Mother

December 10, 1918

To you brethren in Christ:

We are looking for you every day to come to our place. So when you come home we want you to stay with us as long as you are single.

J. J. Mast and Family

December 16, 1918

Kind Friend,

Jacob Weaver and Abe N. Miller are now discharged. Some went back to camp again to get discharged.

Andrew

December 20, 1918

Dear Sir:

Rec. your letter yesterday. About coming home over Christmas, we would be glad if you could. Don't need to worry about the fare. I'll pay. About taking pay, I am afraid it would be best for the future if you could get off without taking it at all. Joe Keim said his boys didn't take anything. We sent you \$12.00 the first of the week. Hope you got it.

Father

December 30, 1918

Dear brother,

Wonder if you heard that J. J. Masts have the flu. Lizzie is awful sick with flu and lung fever. There are about 90 cases of the flu around.

Sister Lizzie

December 31, 1918

Mr. Rudy J. Yoder

Dear Sir:

I sent you a telegram this morning about the death of Jake Mast's wife. She died yesterday forenoon. The doctor thought she was better yesterday morning, but made a sudden change for worse. Funeral Wed. 10:00 A.M. The rest of Jake Masts are better except Eli. I sent the doctor out again for him.

B. B. Weaver

January 6, 1918

Dear bro.,

A few lines to let you know that we are pretty near over the flu. You said when you was at home that when you get back again, you ought to cook for yourself. I wonder how that goes. Dan A. Miller, Eli J. Yoder and Henry M. Beachy are at home now.

Sister Amanda

Correction

The last O.A.L. Newsletter (December 1993), in the report on the Ohio Amish Library open house, stated that the prayers found in *Güldene Aepffel* (1702, 1742, 1745) are perhaps the first collection of Anabaptist prayers. This is incorrect. A Dutch Mennonite bishop, T. T. van Sittert, compiled a similar book containing eighteen prayers, printed in 1664. A detailed description of this book is found in the December 1988 issue of *Family Life*, entitled "A Prayer Book older than *Die Ernsthafte Christenpflicht*," by David Luthy. The first edition of *Die Ernsthafte Christenpflicht* contained five of these prayers and later editions contain all eighteen. Also, since the Mennonite Encyclopedia was printed, five printings of *Die Ernsthafte Christenpflicht* were discovered before 1739: 1708, 1716, 1718, 1727, 1730.

Jacob Hutter's Letter to the Governor

I

ntroduction: The **Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren** records (pp. 137–141) the following letter which Jacob Hutter wrote in 1525 while

they were camped in the open fields after being expelled from their homes. The Hutterite community living at Auspitz in Moravia was expelled by the land owner, after which they moved to Schakwitz. After only a few days there, an order came from the king to drive them out here also. Although the local lord was sympathetic to the Hutterites, he feared the king's disfavor and, after much discussion with Jacob Hutter, told them to leave.

So they moved onto the open fields and "*. . . there they lay down on the wide heath under the open sky with many wretched widows and children, sick and infants.*" The

Chronicle gives the occasion for the letter as follows:

"While the Lord's people camped on Liechtenstein land near Tracht in Starnitz, they were denounced to the authorities and falsely accused of carrying guns. The governor sent his couriers to the camp to find out if it was true, but instead of muskets and spears they found many children and sick people. When Jacob Hutter pleaded with the governor's servants and told them the whole story, they requested that the community's ideas and intentions be conveyed to their lord in writing."

Jacob Hutter was not the beginner of those Anabaptists later called the Hutterites. He was a hatmaker by trade who provided unequalled (though a short, three-year) leadership when his people were faced with severe persecution and differences and abuses among themselves. Under his reforms, the Moravian Anabaptists became a strong brotherhood who called themselves Hutterites.

After the governor read this letter from the church, brought to him by couriers, he immediately sent his servants back with strict orders to arrest Jacob Hutter. Thanks to the foresight and presence of mind of the faithful, they did not find him in the house in Schakwitz, or among the people in the camp. This took place in 1525. However, on November 29 of the same year, Jacob was arrested and after much torture and cruelty was burned at the stake several months later for his steadfastness.

Following, then, is the letter he wrote in defense of their faith to the governor:

We are brothers who love God and his truth, we are true witnesses of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we have been driven out of many countries for the sake of God's name. We arrived here in Moravia, where we have been living together under the lord marshal through God's protection. To God alone we give praise forever.

This letter is to let you know, dear governor of Moravia, that we received the order delivered by your servants. We already answered you by word of mouth, as you know, and now want to do the same in writing. This is our answer: We

have left the world and all its wrong and ungodly ways. We believe in God the Almighty and in his Son, Jesus Christ, who will protect us from evil forevermore. We have given ourselves to God the Lord in order to live according to his divine will and keep his commandments in the way Jesus Christ showed us.

Because we serve him, do his will, keep his commandments, and leave behind all sin and evil, we are persecuted and despised by the whole world and robbed of all our goods. The same was done to all the men of God, to the prophets, and to Christ himself. King Ferdinand, that cruel tyrant and enemy of God's truth and justice, has mercilessly put many of our innocent brothers and sisters to death. He has robbed us of our homes and all our goods and persecuted us terribly. But through God's grace we were able to move to this country, Moravia, and have lived here for a time, recently under the lord marshal. We have not troubled or harmed anyone and have lived faithfully in the fear of God. Everybody will confirm this. But now even the marshal has given us notice and forced us to leave our houses and property.

So we now find ourselves out in the wilderness, under the open sky on a desolate heath. This we accept patiently, praising God that he has found us worthy to suffer for his name. Yet we feel great pain of heart for you, that you treat God's faithful children so cruelly. We cry to him about your hard-heartedness and about the enormous injustice that increases daily. Day and night we plead with God the Lord to protect us from evil, trusting in him to lead us through, according to his will and mercy. And God will surely do so; he is our Captain and Protector and will fight for us. The prophets Isaiah and Esdras foretold that all who turn away from evil, all who love God from their hearts, who fear and serve him and keep his commandments, are bound to be robbed and driven from their homes. This shows that we are God's children, fellow heirs of his glory, that he loves us and is pleased with us as with all the saints. Therefore we suffer all this quietly, and our hearts are comforted by his Holy Spirit.

But threefold woe to all who persecute, expel, and hate us without cause, simply because we stand for God's truth! Their condemnation and punishment is approaching and will overtake them with terror, here and in eternity. According to his holy prophets God will call the persecutors most terribly to account for the suffering and the innocent blood of his children.

Now since you have commanded us to leave

Jacob Hutter's Letter to the Governor (*cont.*)

without delay, we give you this answer: We know of no place to go. We are surrounded by the king's lands. In every direction we would walk straight into the jaws of robbers and tyrants, like sheep cast among ravenous wolves. Besides, we have among us many widows and orphans, many sick people and helpless little children who are unable to walk or travel. Their fathers and mothers were murdered by that tyrant Ferdinand, that prince of darkness and enemy of divine truth and justice. He also robbed them of their goods. These poor and weak ones are entrusted to us by God the Almighty, who commands us to feed, clothe, and house them, and in every way to serve them in love. So we cannot leave them behind or send them away—truly, may God protect us from ever doing that! We dare not disobey God for the sake of man's command, though it cost our life. We must obey God rather than men.

We have not had time to sell our homes and possessions. They were earned by honest, hard labor, by the sweat of our brows, and rightly belong to us before God and men. We also need time because of the sick, the widows and orphans, and the small children. Praise God, there are not just a few but many of these helpless ones among us, about as many as there are able-bodied people. Now, by God's will, we are out on the open heath, harming no one. We do not want to hurt or wrong anyone, not even our worst enemy, be it Ferdinand or anyone else, great or small. All our words and deeds, our conduct, our way of life, are there for all men to see. Rather than knowingly wrong a man to the value of a penny, we would let ourselves be robbed of a hundred gulden. Rather than strike our worst enemy with our hand—to say nothing of spears, swords, and halberds such as the world uses—we would let our own lives be taken.

As anyone can see, we have no physical weapons, neither spears nor muskets. No, we want to show by our word and deed that men should live as true followers of Christ, in peace and unity and in God's truth and justice. We are not ashamed of giving an account of ourselves to anyone. It does not trouble us that many evil things are said about us, for Christ foretold all this. It has been the lot of all believers, of Christ himself, and of all his apostles, from the beginning.

It is rumored that we took possession of the heath with so many thousands, as if we were going to war, but only a callow, lying scoundrel could talk like that. We lament to God that there are so few believers (which we truly are). We

wish all the world lived like us. We would like to convince and turn all men to this faith, for that would mean the end of warfare and injustice.

Next we would like to say that in our present situation we just do not know how we can leave the country unless God the Lord in heaven shows us where to go. You cannot simply deny us a place on the earth or in this country. The earth is the Lord's, and all that is in it belongs to our God in heaven. Besides, if we promised you to go and planned to do so, we might not be able to keep our word, for we are in God's hands and he does with us whatever his will is. Perhaps God wants us to remain in this country to test our faith. This we do not know, but we trust in the eternal and true God.

On the other hand, it is a fact that we are being persecuted and driven out, so we tell you that if the almighty God showed us enough cause to leave the country and move somewhere else, if he gave us good proof that this were his will, we would do it gladly, without waiting for any command from men. Once God's will about where we should go is clear to us, we will not hesitate. We will not and cannot disobey his divine will. Neither can you, even though you may think you can. God the Almighty may suddenly reveal to us, even overnight, that we should leave you. Then we will not delay but be prepared to do his will—either to leave or to die. Perhaps you are not worthy to have us among you any longer.

Therefore, threefold woe to you Moravian lords into all eternity! You have given in to Ferdinand, the awful tyrant and enemy of divine truth—you have agreed to drive those who love and fear God out of your lands. You fear a weak, mortal man more than the living, eternal, almighty God and are willing to expel and ruthlessly persecute the children of God, old and young, even the Lord's widows and orphans in their need and sorrow, and deliver them up to plunder, fear, great suffering, and extreme poverty. It is as if you strangled them with your own hands. We would rather be murdered for the Lord's sake than witness such misery inflicted on innocent, God-fearing hearts. You will have to pay dearly for it, and you will have no more excuse than Pilate, who also did not want to crucify and kill the Lord Jesus. Yet when the Jews threatened him (by God's plan), fear of the emperor made Pilate condemn an innocent man. You do the same, using the king as your excuse. But God has made it known through the mouth of his prophets that he will avenge innocent blood with terrible might on all who stain their hands with it.

Therefore you will earn great misfortune and

Jacob Hutter's Letter to the Governor (cont.)

distress, deep sorrow—indeed, eternal torment. They are ordained for you by God in heaven, in this life and forever. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we declare that this will certainly happen, and you will soon see that what we have spoken is God's truth. This we declare to you and to all who sin against God.

We wish you would turn away from evil and turn to the living God so that you may escape this judgment. How we long that you and all men may be saved with us and inherit eternal

life. For the sake of God we plead with to accept his Word and our warning and to take them to heart, for we testify to what we know and to the truth of God. We do this purely out of fear of God and because we love God and all men.

Now we entrust ourselves to the protection of the eternal Lord. May he be gracious to us and dwell with us forever, through Jesus Christ. Amen. As for you, may God the Lord allow you to understand his fatherly warning and chastisement, and may he be merciful to you through our Lord Jesus Christ. His will be done. Amen.

Translations from "Die Lieder der Hutterischen Bruder"

The following songs are from "*Die Lieder der Hutterischen Brüder*." For hundreds of years the Hutterites had no printed hymnal, such as the *Ausbund*. Their many songs were found in a large number of scattered manuscript hymnals. Elder Elias Walter compiled "*Die Lieder der Hutterischen Brüder*," printed in 1914, from these handwritten codices. The hymnal contains some songs that are also found in the *Ausbund*, but the most are not. The following translations were done by Elizabeth Horsh Bender, and are found in the *Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen College*.

No. 599

1.

"Come to me," says God's Son, "all that are now heavily laden and sorely burdened with sin, youth, aged, man and woman; I will give you what I have and heal your injuries.

2.

My yoke is easy, my burden is light, and anyone who willingly accepts them will escape hell. I will help him carry what is too heavy; with my help and strength he will gain (the kingdom of) heaven."

3.

The world would also like to be saved, if only there was not such severe pain that all Christians suffer; but since it cannot be otherwise, let everyone submit who wants to avoid eternal pain.

4.

Today man is beautiful, young and slender; lo, tomorrow he is weak and sick, and he must soon even die. Like the flowers of the field this beautiful world will likewise perish in a moment.

5.

The world trembles because of death; when one is lying in the final distress he at once wants to become God-fearing; one does this, another that. He completely forgot his poor soul while he was living on earth.

6.

And if he cannot live any longer he raises a great lament and now wants to submit himself to God; I fear indeed, that divine grace which he has always derided will hardly hover over him.

7.

His possessions do not help the rich man, brave courage does not help the youth; he must leave this in time. Even if anyone had the whole world: silver and gold and all money, he must still take his turn.

8.

No knowledge helps the learned, worldly splendor is all in vain. We must all die. He who does not prepare himself in Christ while he is living in the time of grace, and he must forever perish.

9.

Listen and take note, dear children, who are now committed to God: do not regret the effort, hold fast to God's holy Word; that is your comfort and dearest treasure, God will make you happy.

No. 46

A hymn by Anna Maler and Ursula Ochsentreiber, page 46. The "Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren," 1987, has this to say about these two sisters (p. 73): "In the same year, 1529, two sisters, Anna Maler and Ursula Ochsentreiber were sentenced to death for the sake of divine truth and drowned at Hall in the Inn Valley. They armed their womanly hearts with such manly courage in God that everyone was astonished at their steadfastness. Thus they witnessed to the truth in life and in death.

1.
It happened on Our Lady's Day,
When Christ gathered his lambs together.
He collected them quickly
At Milsz in the green forest.

2.
Then the wolf came running there
And scattered the lambs into the valley
They ran speedily
And cried to God with all their might.

3.
Their shepherd arrived there
Who proclaimed the Word to them clearly and plainly
He was already teaching them
May God ever give him his reward.

4.
Now do you want to know what happened?
He was clearly preaching the Word
With the Spirit of God,
As Christ fed his disciples on the mountain.

5.
So we are lamenting it to God of heaven
That man wants to banish God's Word.
In all the world.
The Word of God can never be purchased with money.

6.
Because we always refuse to purchase it with money,
We must leave wife and children – note well –
Because we refuse
To pay money to the priests.

7.
The gospel has now come into full daylight.
That is the great lamentation of the monks and priests,
A great grief.
They can never again be masters.

8.
God would no longer tolerate that.
To carry the gospel abroad to all the world
Does not seem good to them; they
Shear the lambs and suck their blood.

9.
Because they are making no progress in that,
They are inventing many lies:
That baptism is false which Christ taught
To his beloved disciples.

10.
Now note: they have made it up
And established infant baptism for money.
That seemed good to them.
For it they shed much innocent blood. Amen.

Peter Riedeman's Third Hymn

—written while in Hesse

1.
Thanks, honor and praise to God the Lord
Who has given us, to the praise of his name,
The light of truth,
And called us to a new life.
According to His will He stilled his wrath
And proceeded to fulfill his promise.

2.
To that end he gave us from heaven
The true Bread and life;
If we partake of it properly
It will make us pure in conscience,
And will not let God's heirs perish
And obtains from the Father our salvation.

3.
For that purpose the Shepherd was smitten
To bring us into the fold,
Who for awhile were going astray,
That we might be part of his flock.
He planted and watered the plant
So that our fruit may not perish.

4.
Thus He helps us out of our distress
And makes us into one bread with Him
If we believe in his name and yield
And entrust ourselves to him,
Suffer his work, and always carry it on,
Then we are limbs and members of his body.

(cont.)

Peter Riedemann's Third Hymn (cont.)

5.

For in his death Christ has won access to the Father
And left us his Word here on earth,
If we become like Him in his death
He will grant us a new life
That we may demonstrate His nature.

6.

Since in the Bread we are commanded to practice love
And serve one another for our correction,
We who are members of His body,
With a true heart and without frivolity,
He will dispel all our pains.

9.

Praise and honor be to God with His Son,
Through whom He has already chosen us
To be His children, as His Word says,
Through it he gives His peace to us
Who love communion with Him. Amen.

7.

For we are one loaf made of many kernels
And also one wine made of many grapes,
And have become one bread and one body.
We who eat of one bread demonstrate with this food
That henceforth we will praise Him with a single spirit.

8.

Let us live in His fear that He may add His blessing,
That we may properly partake of His wine
And be worthy to sit at His table
As His vine with all our life
To give Him praise, honor and glory.

Peter Riedemann's Fortieth Hymn

—written at Nuremberg

An instruction on how we are to start out on the way of the Lord and walk therein.

1.

By the Father is shown us life's walk on the right path,
not in the human manner. He has prepared the good
way and offers it to us through Christ: pursue it with
diligence.

2.

He who would walk on that road and through Christ
attain the goal must have divine love, well armed with
faith; but he who walks only in appearances is running
off to the side.

3.

The hypocrite is rejected by God, for he has no godliness
in his heart but only deception. He misleads himself and
many others who would build only on appearances.
These must believe and produce the works.

4.

Without faith no man can please God, as Paul testifies,
writing it to the Hebrews. Divine love is still the best,
more than any other which can be imagined. The two
(faith and love) must stay together.

5.

If one of them fails, the other is naught. Love will never
forsake faith; it fulfills the law, otherwise faith is de-
feated and dead where love does not fulfill its task. The
command is: Do the will of God.

6.

The Lord cures the barren tree. It seems to me, and it is
not an illusion, that he truly wants to have a fruitful
branch on the vine; but the one that bears no fruit the
Father cuts off.

7.

See to it therefore that your heart's attitude is right, and
note what is pleasing to God, if you do not want to
perish. Prove your faith by your faithfulness, let divine
love be your master—then you will inherit life.

8.

This therefore is the way to the kingdom, the middle
road likewise. Let no one teach you anything different.
In Christ you will find your complete salvation. May
this, child, be your good portion from now on and
forevermore. Amen.