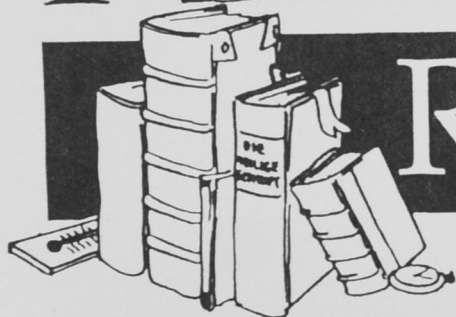


# HERITAGE

## REVIEW



VOLUME 25  
November 2017



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*The Heritage Review* is an annual publication of the Ohio Amish Library, 5798 CR 77 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. Membership to the OAL are \$25 annually. Single copies of *the Heritage Review* are also available by contacting the Library staff.

### *Martyr Stories*

Persecution is often viewed as a hindrance to the growth and development of the church. No one of us desires to be persecuted, but when it does happen God has faithfully supplied the grace and courage to face those hard times. It is often in times of persecution that the greatest acts of faith are seen. It is also true that when persecution diminishes that Christians often need to work harder to keep, or recover, the original vision of Christianity.

Martyr stories became one of the central ways in which the vibrant faith of the early Anabaptists was communicated. Both the *Ausbund* and the *Martyrs' Mirror* reflect how these stories are key to understanding the early years of the movement.

For that reason, The Ohio Amish Library has a large display of these two items. They are on display not only because they are important and valuable, but also because they remind us of the vibrant faith and the price that our forefathers paid for that faith. And the need to constantly evaluate our own lives to see if our faith could withstand the same kind of tests.

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# The Ohio Amish Library

2017 marks thirty-one years since The Ohio Amish Library was organized (1986), for the purpose of collecting, preserving and archiving Anabaptist, Amish, and Mennonite related things such as histories, devotional books, genealogies, and articles. In addition, the collection has grown to include personal papers, letters, and other archival material. The Library has had over 700 acquisitions in the last three years. Most significant are a 1790 European *Ausbund* in very good condition, and the 1749 “Gun Wad” *Martyrs’ Mirror* featured in this issue of the Heritage Review. A number of Bibles belonging to early settlers, and two collections of letters, one from WWI and one from WWII, have been catalogued and archived in this time. In addition, for the first time the Library has been staffed full time over the last year. We are grateful for Adam Hershberger and Wayne R. Miller for their efforts in the Library.

This issue of the Heritage Reviews focuses on three recent acquisitions to the Library. Adam Hershberger’s article focuses on the “Gun Wad” *Martyrs’ Mirror* and its history and connections to this area. Wayne R. Miller writes a short explanation of the way that the pages of these books may have been used by the revolutionary Army. In addition, Miller has translated and footnoted an article by William Franklin Hochstetler that was recently discovered at the Swiss Church near Trail, OH. In the final article, Marcus Yoder focuses on the *Ausbund*, and the significance of the development of the martyr theme in the songs. We are grateful for their significant contribution to the work of recording our history.

The last few years we have not asked for membership renewals. The operating costs continue to rise. We appreciate everyone who is able to renew their membership for \$25 a year. This does not apply to those who have exchange memberships with us. OAL is a non-profit organization so all donations are tax-deductible. We welcome donations of any size to assist in the work of the Library.

In keeping with its aim to encourage understanding and appreciation for our Anabaptist heritage the formational committee of the Library (see page 20) undertook the task of translating the songs of the *Ausbund* from German to English. This work developed into two books, *The Songs of the Ausbund*, Vol. I & II, which are still in print and available. In addition, the publishing arm of the Library worked with author and translator, James Lowry in the printing of three volumes of early Anabaptist literature. A complete listing of books published by the Library may be found inside the back cover of this edition.

In 2013, after being approached by representatives of the Amish & Mennonite Heritage Center (Behalt), the OAL board decided to accept an offer for the two organizations to pool their resources to advance the work of both organizations. The Center undertook a fund drive and our local community took interest and a 2,400-square foot addition was built to house the Library. In addition to housing bookshelves and a common area, there is also classroom space, and a vault with display windows to house the more fragile and valuable items. The vault provides a temperature and humidity controlled area to keep these items from further damage.

The Library was completed and dedicated in April, 2016 with a special open house event. The Center staffs the library so that researchers, scholars, and the community can access these items that reflect our past. The Library is open to its members and the community, although appointments are preferred so that we can prepare any items for your use. In addition, the Center assists in the publication, writing, and public presentations in the Library.

We believe that this partnership furthers the cause of both organizations and allows the Library to be staffed and the work of the Library to continue forward.

May God bless you for your efforts, assistance, and gifts to further this important work.

Co-editors,

Marcus Yoder & Edward Kline

## A Gun Wad Martyrs' Mirror

By Adam Hershberger<sup>1</sup>

It is hard to believe that pages from the *Martyrs' Mirror*, found in many Amish and Mennonite homes since its first printing, were once used to wrap powder and ball into rifle cartridges and shot at other humans. This is in direct opposition to what the stories of faith under pressure and trial were originally collected for. The books are often passed down from generation to generation and soon turn into precious family heirlooms. Each unique copy share history with larger stories of faith, suffering, and life, as the families that owned them engaged their world. In one such incident, pages from this large book were used by the American Revolutionary soldiers in their fight for independence from the British Empire. This unlikely story is the focus of this article.

The *Martyrs' Mirror* was compiled by a Dutch Mennonite, Thieleman J. van Braght in 1660, in Dordrecht, Netherlands. He used several martyr books that had been published earlier, and various other sources to collect the stories in the *Martyrs' Mirror*. The first edition of this book was published in 1660 and the second edition was printed in Amsterdam in 1685. The second edition included 104 woodcut etchings by the artist Jan Luyken. Both editions were in the Dutch language and were funded by the Dutch Mennonite Church.

The first American edition of the *Martyrs' Mirror* was printed by the Ephrata Cloister in Pennsylvania in 1748/49 in German. Mennonites from Pennsylvania wrote to the Dutch Mennonites in October of 1745 asking for assistance in translating and printing the *Martyrs' Mirror*. They were concerned that the war between England and France would test their nonresistant faith, and a German translation of the *Martyrs' Mirror* could help to strengthen their Anabaptist heritage. They did not get a reply until three years later. By that time, the Mennonites in Pennsylvania had found a printer that was willing to translate and print the

massive volume. One of the men at the cloister, Peter Miller, was given the assignment of translating it from Dutch into German. In all it took three years of constant work to translate and print the *Martyrs' Mirror*. The first part was completed in 1748, and the second in 1749. The Cloister printed between 1,200 and 1,300 copies. It was about 1,500 pages long, and weighed about thirteen pounds after it was bound. It was the largest book printed in Colonial America prior to the Revolutionary War.<sup>2</sup>



A picture of the cover on this book. Note the metal plates and corners that indicate the work of the binder.

When the Revolutionary War began in 1775, there were several hundred unbound copies of the *Martyrs' Mirror* still at the Ephrata Cloister. At this time, books were not bound until they were sold. The purchaser would either pay the printer to bind them, or they would find someone else to bind their manuscript. Sometime in 1776, the Continental Congress became aware of the amount of printed paper at the Ephrata Cloister. There was a significant shortage of paper during these years since armies used paper to make cartridges, and wadding for their guns. They sent two wagons and

<sup>1</sup> Adam Hershberger works at the Ohio Amish Library and the Amish & Mennonite Heritage Center. He lives with his parents and siblings near Mt Eaton, OH. Adam loves history and Genealogy, reading, and spending time with his family.

<sup>2</sup> David Luthy, *A History of the Printings of The Martyrs' Mirror*, Pathway Publishers, 2013.

four soldiers to retrieve the paper. The soldiers took about 375 copies of the *Martyrs' Mirror*; while they were confiscated, Congress did pay for the unbound copies.

Only two primary sources of this event exist. Peter Miller included it in a footnote in the 1786 history of the Ephrata Cloister:

*This book eventually had an extraordinary fate during the Revolutionary War in America. Because there was a serious shortage of all war materials and also paper and it was betrayed that there was a large quantity of printed paper at Ephrata, an arrest was immediately made upon it. Many protests were raised against this in the settlement, and it was alleged among others that this might result in harmful consequences because the English army was so nearby. They were resolved not to give up anything voluntarily but that all would have to be taken by force. Thus, two wagons and six soldiers arrived, seizing the martyr books but correctly paying for them. This caused great offense in the land, and many people felt that the war would not end favorably for the country because the testimonies of the holy martyrs had been quite maltreated. At last, however, some judicious persons bought back what yet remained of them.*

For years this was the only information of the event until 1985, when the 1748/49 *Martyrs' Mirror* owned by Joseph von Gundy was discovered. In the front flyleaf was written in the German script of the time:

*This book was printed in Ephrata in Lancaster County, Earl Township-I should have said Cocalico Township. It was seized by Congress in 1776 and taken unbound to Philadelphia. Approximately 150 or a few more were made into cartridges and shot against their elder British brothers, making a murder book out of it until their own conscience told them it had not been printed for such a*

*purpose. Then the Government made a pronouncement to the lovers of this volume that if they would repay them their money and the cartage, they could have back the remaining books. This we did, sending them payment in 1786 when Congress money was worth so little that this book unbound did not cost me over four shillings and six pence or half a dollar and ten pence. Thus, 175 books were returned, many of which were no longer complete and also damaged which I myself saw. But I was lucky that this copy is not lacking a single page. As it is here, it cost me \$1.60. So much for this report. By me Joseph von Gundy, born in the last week of June, 1751. My father's name was Peter von Gundy. My mother was Verona; her maiden name was Farny.<sup>3</sup>*

Earlier this summer a 1748/49 edition of the *Martyrs' Mirror* was brought to the Ohio Amish Library by a local man, Nelson Schlabach. In evaluating the book, it was soon discovered that it was not complete and contained only the second part of the original *Martyr's Mirror*. It had a flowery, wallpaper-like material inside the front cover that was adhered to the leather cover as an



The title page and the unique interior binding of the "Gun Wad" *Martyrs Mirror*

interior binding. This wallpaper-like binding is a significant marker, and gives some indication of

<sup>3</sup> David Luthy, *The Ephrata Martyrs' Mirror: Shot from Patriots' Muskets*, Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage, January 1986

its history. This is the same binding as in the Daniel Martin *Martyrs' Mirror*, which David Luthy has discovered is the same as is in the school booklet that was printed in Ephrata by Ludwig Hocker in 1786. It had never been used before this point. The binding in Martin's *Martyrs' Mirror* exactly matches that of the Schlabach *Martyrs' Mirror* dating the binding to, or after 1786. One could argue that perhaps it was rebound in the 1780s. The problem with this argument, is that most bindings lasted for well over a hundred years, and this is only 37 years after print.

In addition, some of the pages in the Schlabach *Martyrs' Mirror* were missing, out of order, or included twice. The first 400 pages are included, and in correct order; except that pages 365-366 were torn out. Pages 401-496 are missing, as are pages 801-864. But pages 801-816 are included after page 872. After page 816 is 841. There are no more missing pages after that, but pages 865-872 are included twice. In all there are 121 missing pages, and 8 duplicate pages. The argument that perhaps the pages were torn out is not conceivable upon close examination of the binding, and the fact that the volume also includes duplicate pages.

Six out of the thirteen copies that Lloyd Weiler of Muddy Creek Farm Library suspected were "Gun Wad" *Martyrs' Mirrors* (bought back by the Mennonites), include only the second portion of the volume.<sup>4</sup> One of the thirteen had the first and second half switched around. In 2010 at a *Martyrs' Mirror* research seminar that many of the 25 leading *Martyrs' Mirror* collectors and scholars attended, no one had seen a two-volume set of the 1748/49 edition. Weiler concludes, "...that partial volumes and other incomplete bindings are *Martyrs' Mirrors* returned from the American Patriots rather than a two-volume set." He further added that many of the suspected reclaimed *Martyrs' Mirrors* were bound in simple leather binding with little, if any of the metalwork common in large books at this time. This is the only clue that is not found in the Schlabach

*Martyrs' Mirror*. It has metal plates in each of the four corners, and a diamond-shaped metal plate in the middle. There are two leather hinge straps on each end of the spine, but the leather clasps have broken off. Some of the leather has also started to chip off. Except for these few blemishes of time, it is in excellent condition.

On the title page is written in the handwriting of that era, "S. C. Miller 1900". On another of the blank pages in the back is "Albert Miller Benton, Ohio, January 27, 1909." Also, very faintly, "Jacob Troyer." All of these were written in pencil. There are several words written in German that are not decipherable to this time. Nelson Schlabach said that the book was owned by his grandparents, Jeremiah Schlabach (1873-1936) and Lydia (Raber) Schlabach (1878-1952). What then is the connection between Albert Miller, who signed it 1909, and the Schlabachs? How did the *Martyrs' Mirror* get from Albert Miller to Jeremiah Schlabach? After searching through the genealogical databases, there is an S. C. Miller.<sup>5</sup> Samuel C. Miller was born in 1866 and died in 1926. He married to Sarah Raber, a sister to Lydia, the wife of Jeremiah Schlabach. He also had a son Albert. If this was the same Albert who signed his name, "Albert Miller, Benton, Ohio, January 27, 1909" he would have been 18 years old. Census records reveal that in 1910, the family, including, a son named Albert, were living in Salt Creek Township, Holmes County, Ohio; the township



The page is where Albert Miller's signature is found

<sup>4</sup> Lloyd Weiler, *Redeemed: The Martyrs' Mirror of 1786*, Muddy Creek Review, 2015.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.saga-omii.org>



that Benton is located in.

In *Samuel C. Miller Family History*, it states that Albert was “an expert at playing ball and some big teams were interested in him.” But his father, Samuel C. Miller, did not allow it. Albert later moved to Iowa and married. He later became a Minister in the Mennonite Church. Perhaps Samuel C. Miller thought that in giving the *Martyrs’ Mirror* to his son Albert, who wanted to play for a “big” ball team, it would help persuade him to keep his Anabaptist heritage. It is also significant that Samuel C. Miller’s father, and both of his wife’s parents died in 1900. Since he signed the *Martyrs’ Mirror* in 1900, it would make sense that he got it at one of their estate sales or as an inheritance. Perhaps Albert took the *Martyrs’ Mirror* with him to Iowa, sometime around 1913. If so, how did it get from Albert in Iowa to Jeremiah Schlabach in Holmes Co, Ohio? There are several different ways that it could have gotten to Jeremiah Schlabach. Albert could have returned the *Martyrs’ Mirror* to his father, and Jeremiah could have simply bought it at Samuel’s estate sale in 1926. He likely was present, since his wife was a sister to Samuel’s wife. Samuel or Albert could also have simply gifted it, or sold it to Jeremiah, their brother-in-law and uncle, for any number of reasons. This seems to be the only scenario that fits the signatures in the book.

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THE WAR WOULD NOT END  
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BECAUSE THE TESTIMONIES OF  
THE HOLY MARTYRS HAD BEEN  
QUITE MALTREATED.***

This *Martyrs’ Mirror* has had a unique journey. It was printed in 1749 in Ephrata, Pennsylvania, where it sat unbound for nearly thirty years. It was

then seized by the Continental Congress sometime in 1776, and taken to Philadelphia. Here pages were removed and used in the manufacture of cartridges, or as wadding in cannons and guns. In 1786 it was bought back by the Mennonites, and bound in leather with the unique wallpaper-like binding and sold. We know little about the next 124 years until 1900 and the above-mentioned names. Sometime in that period it traveled from Pennsylvania to the Ohio frontier. A Jacob Troyer may have owned it during this time. S.C. Miller had it in 1900. Albert Miller signed it on January 27, 1909. If Jeremiah Schlabach owned it, as is thought by his grandson Nelson Schlabach, then he acquired it sometime between 1909 and his death in 1936. It was then given to his son Jeremiah Wyman Schlabach, who in turn gave it to his son, Nelson Schlabach who brought it to the Library.

On the inside, it contains many accounts and testimonies of Anabaptist martyrs standing firm, and being faithful during times of trial and persecution. Many lessons and examples of living and dying for Christ can be read inside its covers. The slightly worn covers and missing pages attest to a story and history as much as the stories inside the covers. What stories could it relate? Of Ephrata, and its journey to Philadelphia, and then its return to the Mennonites. Of traveling through the Pennsylvania wilderness, and on to the Ohio frontier. Of the many times it was read by different Amish and Mennonite families as they recounted their faith heritage, before finally being brought to the Ohio Amish Library, where it is now on display for this generation, and the world, to hear its story. It is truly a jewel of the past which we can appreciate in the present and future.

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Editor’s Note: *The “Gun Wad” Martyrs’ Mirror is on display at the Ohio Amish Library. Photographs are property of OAL and may not be used without permission.*

## The “Gun Wad” Cartridge

When a new recruit enlisted in the Continental Army, his health was carefully checked out to determine whether he was best suited for the artillery or the musket units. They looked at his overall size and built, but most important was the health of his teeth. It was the teeth that qualified or disqualified him for the musketry infantry units.

For a recruit to quickly load his flintlock musket he needed good teeth. He had to hold the paper cartridge between his teeth. The paper cartridge (gun wad) contained the powder and the musket ball (bullet) to load the gun. With the cartridge firmly held between the teeth, the recruit would tear off the top of the multiple folded paper. He would pour a small amount of that powder onto the pan of the gun (primer powder) and pour the rest of the powder into the front end of the musket barrel. Next, he would push the paper cartridge with the musket ball still inside (gun wad) into the front end of the barrel and ram it down the barrel with a ramrod. The gun was now ready to fire.

The gun wad cartridge served the same purpose as a rifle or shotgun shell does today. It contained the primer, powder and the bullet. The difference was that the top of the cartridge had to be ripped open (hence the good teeth) in order to pour a little primer powder into the pan which would be struck by a piece of flint to create a spark when the trigger was pulled. That spark traveling through a small hole into the barrel ignited the larger amount of powder in the barrel propelling the bullet out towards its target. The gun barrels were smoothbore thus the effective range was only 75-100 yards.

The guns couldn't be fired without this paper to make the cartridges. It is thus easy to understand why our Amish and Mennonite ancestors were so upset that the Martyrs Mirror paper was confiscated to be used to create more pain and suffering of which the cartridge paper already speaks so much about.

-Wayne R. Miller



*Cartridge box with paper cartridges, Valley Forge Nat'l Park, Photo by Wayne R Miller*



*Musket with pan open for primer powder, Valley Forge Nat'l Park, Photo by Wayne R Miller*



# The “Sweitzer Gma” of Trail, Ohio

## The 1896 Time Capsule

By Wayne R. Miller<sup>1</sup>

In the spring of 2015, Faith Christian Fellowship decided to rebuild their church house foundation. The church meets in what is known as the “Old Swiss Church” on Holmes County Road 168, a few hundred yards east of State Route 515 near Trail, Ohio. While workers were removing the old sandstones from the foundation, they came across one that was engraved 1844 and 1896. Inside the sandstone was a tightly sealed copper box, a time capsule from 1896.

The German Reformed Church of Walnut Creek, or “Sweitzer Gma” (Swiss Church) as it was locally known, was founded in 1844 by a group of 24 Swiss families from Bern, Switzerland. In 1896, the church decided to replace the 1844 church structure. Some of the older members remembered a wooden time capsule box had been placed in the cornerstone of the original building. In 1896, members eagerly looked forward to seeing the contents of this 1844 box, only to discover all its contents had turned to dust except for five Swiss coins. With this disappointment in mind, they constructed an air tight sealed copper box and placed the five surviving coins along with an 1895 German Bible, songbook, Heidelberg Catechism, 1896 calendar, church Ordnung book, and three German Reformed newspapers. Also include was a 24- page and a 20-page letter hand written in the German script. The former was written by Reverend Carl Hartman and the latter by William Franklin Hochstetler.<sup>2</sup> These items were discovered intact and in excellent condition at the 2015 renovation.

William Franklin Hochstetler, along with his father, Elias, were members of the Swiss church during the 1896 renovation. He was the grandson of Solomon Hochstetler, who had been falsely accused of the child murder in Somerset County, Pa. William was a long-time school teacher, part time farmer, and historian of Eastern Holmes County at that time. He is best known for writing the history of the Hochstetler family in the “*Descendants of Jacob Hochstetler, the immigrant of 1736*”, published in 1912. While most of the newly discovered letters are related to the history of the Trail Church, I have selected portions of both letters where they talk about the first settlers in Holmes County including the Amish. I have taken the liberty to footnote the contents of the letters to provide additional clarification for the readers.



This is the display at the Amish & Mennonite Heritage Center of the items found in the cornerstone at the Swiss Church.

<sup>1</sup> Wayne, a retired businessman, serves as Archivist for the Ohio Amish Library and President of the Board of Directors of the Amish Mennonite Heritage Center, Berlin, Ohio.

<sup>2</sup> Faith Christian Fellowship has been kind enough to place the display of the box and its contents at the Amish-Mennonite Heritage Center for the public to see.

## **A Short History of the German Reformed Walnut Creek Church** by William F. Hostetler

*When the church was established, the area wasn't so new that one was unable to adjust. The well-known Moravian branch under David Zeisberger were already in Tuscarawas County in 1772<sup>3</sup>. The gruesome bloodbath of the Christian Indians by the whites under Captain Williamson occurred in the spring of 1782. For some time, this settlement was desolate, but was later renewed. In 1824, the last of the memorable Moravian Indians left this beautiful place. From now on the Indians were driven out of this area.*

*In the year 1808 Tuscarawas County already had 3,000 inhabitants. In the same year died a very old person, the missionary Zeisberger, after he had worked for ten years in Salem, Schoenbrunn, and Goshen.*

*At this time, Holmes County was still a thick forest. In the same year there arrived some pioneers just south of Shanesville close to the border (Holmes County). In June of 1809 Jonathan Grant and his son came down from the direction of Wayne County and cleared a piece of land near the mouth of Martins Creek and sowed it with turnip seeds. This was the first field crop grown by whites in Holmes County. They dug them that autumn and the harvest was good. When they left their place, and returned the next spring, the turnips were still well preserved<sup>4</sup>.*

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<sup>3</sup> David Zeisberger (1721 - 1808) was a missionary among the Delaware Indians for 62 years in Pennsylvania, Ontario, and Ohio. He spent most of his last 36 years at the Moravian Christian Indian villages of Schoenbrunn, Salem, and Goshen along the Tuscarawas River just south of New Philadelphia, Ohio. For more information see, *Blackcoats Among the Delaware and David Zeisberger, A life Among the Indians* by Tuscarawas County historian Earl P. Olmstead

<sup>4</sup> In July 1809, Jonathan Grant and his son came on foot from Beaver County, Pa. They built a log cabin along the banks of Salt Creek in Northern Holmes County, cleared land and sowed their turnip seeds. Jonathan became very sick, and nearly starved. A passing Indian told him another white family, Jonathan Butler, had just arrived a short distance away at the Big Springs. Grant's son immediately left and soon returned with Mr. Butler and some food. The Grants went back east for the winter and returned the

*In the year 1809 Jonas Stutzman settled about one half mile south of New Carlisle (Walnut Creek). He was a young man without a family and went once a week to his acquaintance Jacob Miller in Sugarcreek, which was about five miles.*

*The county in 1809 had three inhabitants<sup>5</sup>, but they did not know each other. In 1810 came the Dawsons, Casters, Butlers, Martins, and several other others to this region in Martins Creek.*

*The David Bergers and others came to Eastern German Township.<sup>6</sup>*

*On May 10, 1810, four families of the Amish Church came to the upper Walnut Creek and were Jonas Stutzman's neighbors. They were Jonas Miller, Jonas Mast, John Troyer, and Christian Yoder. The settlement stayed that way for two years<sup>7</sup>. Several children were born during that time.*

*Many people know of Moses J. Miller, the third white child born in the county<sup>8</sup>. He still lives about one mile from this place today. He is a respected preacher in the Amish Church and turned 85 this last January 12th.*

*At the outbreak of the War of 1812, many emigrated from Pennsylvania to the new west, mainly Ohio. The settlements were significantly reinforced and new settlements were founded. From Somerset County came 12-15 more Amish*

following spring to find the cabin and turnips in great shape. That winter, on February 4th, 1810 the first white child, Hanna Butler, was born in Holmes County. Holmes County Historical Society, *Holmes County Historical Sketches*, Carlisle Printing, 2002

<sup>5</sup> They were the Grants, the Butlers, and Jonas Stutzman.

<sup>6</sup> The land owners of 1825 in German Township include Samuel, David, John, Daniel, and Christian Berger. A.J. Stiffer, *Standard Atlas of Holmes County Ohio*, Standard Atlas Publishing Co. 1907

<sup>7</sup> In the mid-summer of 1810 two more families arrived: John Millers and Abraham Hershberger. During the spring and summer of 1811 several more families arrived. Leroy Beachy, *Unser Leit*, Carlisle Printing, 2011 Vol. 1

<sup>8</sup> Moses was the third Amish child born in the county.

families to the Walnut Creek. Already by 1812, if not earlier, Jacob Miller from near Sugarcreek preached to them in the German language. The German language has been in this area for 56 years and is still used by the old and the young.

The first school house in Holmes County was built on the Jonas Stutzman farm in 1815. The first teacher was Alexander Constantine, after him was Anthoni Fabra and Peter Schowalder. The schools were more German than English. By 1814 Holmesville already had a school, but no school house.

In the year 1814 Shanesville was laid out, and in 1816, Berlin, the oldest village in Holmes County. Around Shanesville there lived, besides the Amish, a number of Pennsylvania Dutch Reformed people from Somerset County, Pa.

After New Year, a section of land in Millersburg would come up for public auction, so named "leese land", 2 miles wide and 10 miles long. The Swiss had an eye on this land, but the Amish who had lived nearby the last 15 - 20 years got the lions share.<sup>9</sup> On the first section of this land stands the church.<sup>9</sup>

**THIS SHOULD KEEP EVERYTHING IN GOOD SHAPE LONG AFTER MY BODY HAS TURNED TO DUST AND SOIL, AND THE UNDYING SOUL IN ETERNAL SALVATION! MIGHT ALSO, THE CHURCH SURVIVE AND PROSPER TO THE WELL-BEING OF MANY, FAST AND UNMOVABLE AS THIS CORNERSTONE, ROOTED ON JESUS CHRIST, THE TRUE CORNERSTONE.**

-William Franklin Hochstetler, about the copper box wherein the contents of the time capsule were placed.

<sup>9</sup> Hochstetler is referencing a tract about 2 miles wide x 10 miles long and known as the School lands. It was owned by the state and leased out with the income to fund the schools. This was sold at public auction in 1832. The

## History of the Reformed Walnut Creek Church (At Trail, Ohio)

By Reverend Carl Hartman  
May 1896

*The drafting of a church history is always put together with much preparation and many great difficulties. Much that should be said can't be because there is a shortage of the necessary complete documents and the knowledge of many incidents was buried with the death of the older members. The writer is often reminded of this as he sees a little bit of what belonged to one or the other of our ancestors. To gather the material, to place everything correctly in order, often brings one to an embarrassing predicament. If therefore some of our descriptions are not always in agreement with the readers' knowledge of things, we ask for forgiveness, and request that everyone realize that we are not trying to distort history.*

*Soon after the ending of the Revolutionary War during which the 13 states became a free land and after calm and safety had been established, men began to turn their attention toward the seemingly unknown land west of the Susquehanna River open to be settled. Through the problems of the current residing populations and through immigration from the outside there was soon a surplus of people seeking new homesteads. Men began to judge the situation and moved westwards. Western Pennsylvania flourished quickly under the protection of the new government.*

*The hostile attacks of the Indians were pushed back and they moved further west. After the settlement of Western Pennsylvania had been attained, people listened to fabulous reports of the hunters, trappers, and other good men who traveled through the fertile regions west of the Ohio River. It became the desire of many to own a portion of this El Dorado.<sup>10</sup>*

*Even before the Revolutionary War, in 1772, the salvation of the superstitious and idol worshipping*

Amish bought most of it, though the Swiss church at Trail was built on the first tract.

<sup>10</sup> A term used by the Spanish Empire for a mythical land in the Americas covered with gold dust. A land of milk and honey.

*red men lay heavy on the hearts of several God-fearing German men. They proceeded to the almost impenetrable forests of Ohio to bring them the light of the gospel.*

*The leader of these faithful ones was David Zeisberger.<sup>11</sup> His main Indian settlement was at Gnadenhutten about 20 miles from here near New Philadelphia. These pioneers were directly or indirectly the reason for the emigration of the German Pennsylvanians to Eastern Ohio at the end of the previous and the beginning of this century. This immigration at the beginning of this century seemed to be a large movement.*

*Already in the year 1809, Jacob Miller, a preacher of the Amish came to the Sugarcreek area. In 1810 four Amish families came to the Walnut creek area close to the so called Indian Trail. The above-named Jacob Miller preached in their houses.*

*The first settlers of Walnutcreek Township came from Somerset County, Pennsylvania. Soon the axes started ringing and the fires lit up the primitive woods in all directions and all the ground capable of being cultivated was cleared. It is not completely known if there were emigrants (European) among these first settlers. We know the details of emigrants for the following years as it seems to have been directly arranged from Europe to America. So, it came to be that in 1828 a great multitude of Wurttembergers (Germany) came directly from their old home and founded the town of Winesburg, Ohio. All the first settlers had a Christian outlook, were church like-minded, and proved themselves favorably. In Winesburg their*

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<sup>11</sup> David Zeisberger (1721 - 1808) was a missionary among the Delaware Indians for 62 years in Pennsylvania, Ontario, and Ohio. He spent most of his last 36 years at the Moravian Christian Indian villages of Schoenbrunn, Salem, and Goshen along the Tuscarawas River just south of New Philadelphia, Ohio. For more information see, *Blackcoats Among the Delaware* and *David Zeisberger, A life Among the Indians* by Tuscarawas County historian Earl P. Olmstead

<sup>12</sup> Rev. William Schmitt (Smith) accepted a call to preach in Canton, Ohio in 1830. Rev. Henry Colloredo, born 1806, was a German Lutheran Circuit Minister who traveled between Baltic, New Bedford, and Winesburg preaching. He walked to Winesburg, a distance of 20 miles, to preach every

*first preached Jonst Schmitt, following him Henry Colloredo and Daniel Crantz.<sup>12</sup>*

*During the first twelve years that the Swiss lived here they participated in the already existing church at Winesburg and many were very productive members. Despite that it appears that the greater majority were not in a position to visit the church services as diligently as they would have wanted to. From what we have heard we would understand that people were scattered living north and east of here. There was a lack of wagons and the wagons would have had to go through mostly dense primeval forests which were full of wild things of all sorts and Indians.<sup>13</sup> Travel to church was over an old Indian path or cattle trail. Even if there had been a road they wouldn't have had a horse and buggy to travel with. Most were glad if they had a pair of slow oxen.*

*Because of the great distances and difficulties, the women and children were on many occasions not able to attend church. Even though they lacked the money and a leader, many longed to have a closer church where they could worship with their wives and children.*

In addition to the work of Hochstetler and Hartman, the laying of the cornerstone was also noted in the May 21, 1896 issue of the Sugarcreek Budget newspaper:

*“The work of the new church is on. The day set for the laying of the Cor. Srone(sic) is June 2<sup>nd</sup> a large crowd is expected. Everybody invited young*

4-6 weeks. He died in 1848 in his early forties. Rev. Daniel Crantz came to Winesburg in 1836 to succeed Rev. Colloredo. He served for nearly 32 years. Rev. Author Smith, *An Authentic History of Winesburg, Holmes County, Ohio* 1930, Reprinted Winesburg Reunion Committee, 2010

<sup>13</sup> While the fear of the Indians may have been real, most had actually moved on west after the War of 1812. In 1824, the Last Moravian Christian Indians on the Tuscarawas River by New Philadelphia left the state. By 1832 the remaining Delaware and Wyandot sold their reservations in Crawford County, Ohio in Western Ohio. Wolves and Panthers were still animals to be feared by the first Swiss settlers of 1832.

*and old, the day will be spent in a sort of picnic and begins in the forenoon. May 18<sup>th</sup> Trailer”*

Again, the Budget paper reported several weeks later that:

*“The corner stone laying for the new Reformed church, near Trail on Tuesday was largely attended.”*

Hochstetler’s interest in the history of the Amish is further evidenced by his letter to the editor of the Budget on April 22, 1910.

### ***A Hundred Years***

*Editor Budget: I thought it proper to call attention to the fact that on the coming 6<sup>th</sup> of May it will be one hundred years that the first Amish settlement was commenced in Holmes County, Ohio.*

*Four young Amish families ---- Jonas Miller, John Troyer, Joseph Mast, and Christian Yoder ---- arrived from Somerset Co., Pa. on the above-mentioned day, in Walnut Creek.*

*The Miller, Troyer, and Mast families stopped at what was later the Samuel Weaver farm, where in the fall of 1809 a man named Olinger, also from Somerset Co., PA. had erected a log cabin, intending to move his family there the following spring, but for some reason never moved out.<sup>14</sup>*

*Christian Yoder moved up the Walnut Creek valley to the place he selected for his future home, where the family resided for a long time. They reached the place in the evening, camped in their canvas-covered wagon until a cabin could be erected.*

*In the spring of 1809 Jonas Stutzman entered the quarter section where Benjamin Mast now resides, just south of Walnut creek post office, and being at that time unmarried, he made his home with Jacob Miller and family, of Sugarcreek Township, Tuscarawas Co., about seven miles distant, being there over Sundays. He kept up a temporary cabin, which he occupied during the week, and cleared*

*several acres of land, and, as far as known, was during part of that summer the only white person in what is now Holmes Co.*

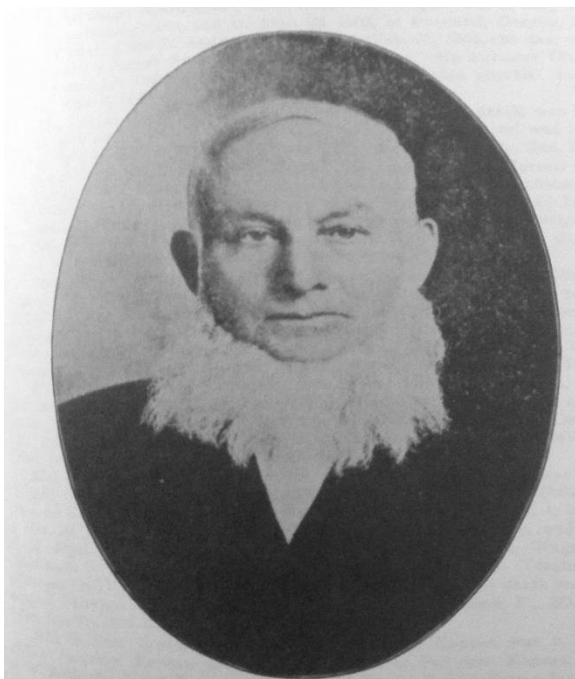
*Abraham Gerber and Henry Willard also explored that region in 1809, and camped for a while at the place which later was the Gerber home. Other parties also visited the place, but space forbids to mention more here.*

*It would seem appropriate for the people of Walnutcreek Township to celebrate the event by a reunion or Home-coming, sometime during the coming summer.*

*William F Hochstetler*

*R.F.D. No. 1, Barrs Mills, Ohio*

There was one letter to the editor in the following weeks endorsing William’s reunion idea, but other than that, we have no evidence that anything ever came of his idea. Hochstetler passed away October 30<sup>th</sup>, 1912.



An undated photo of William Franklin Hochstetler. Image found in *Descendants of Jacob Hochstetler*.

<sup>14</sup> Samuel and Elizabeth Weaver farm, just south of Walnutcreek, Ohio, on the Southeast Quarter of Section 20,

Range 5, Township 9. A farm occupied in 2017 by the Paul Mast family.

# From the Dark: Anabaptist Prison Songs

Marcus Yoder<sup>1</sup>

In the summer of 1535 the Moravian nobility implemented expulsion orders against a dangerous sect that they called *die Täufer* or *Wiedertäufer*. The order had originated in the Imperial Diet of Speyer in 1529, led by Ferdinand I, the brother of Emperor Charles V. One of the few ideas that the Roman Church and the newly coined “Protestants” concurred on was the death penalty for anyone willing to be re-baptized. Some nobility favored periodic expulsion rather than capital punishment, and this order forced about four hundred Anabaptist in central Moravia from their homes and communities. Splitting into smaller groups, most tried to make their way west to the Palatinate and Rhine valley of Germany, where they knew were others of their kind. Three smaller groups, totaling about 50 people were captured by the authorities near Passau in August and September 1535. Among those captured were two leaders, Michael Schneider and Hans Betz. Betz was distinctive because he had holes burned in both cheeks from a previous imprisonment, typical of punishment given to heretics.<sup>2</sup>

They were imprisoned in the *Oberhaus* (castle) dungeon.<sup>3</sup> This imposing structure, built for the bishop in the thirteenth century, loomed over the city, and would be the place where they would suffer hunger, deprivations and torture, but also where they would worship together. Some would die in this cold, dank prison; a few recanted and were given their freedom with the commitment that they would leave this sect. With limited

resources these prisoners wrote songs of praise and lament that not only told their story, but also allow the modern reader a window in their hearts and theology. In the first two years of imprisonment some fifty-three of these Passau Prison Songs, as they became known, were written and smuggled out of the dungeon. An overall evaluation of the themes in these songs and a contextual understanding of the events that surround the imprisonment and the production of these songs gives a better understanding of Anabaptist identity and theology, and aids the modern reader in seeing the importance of these songs as a reflection of that identity and theology.

Music is an important part of a religious group’s definition and structure, and most have developed unique styles and hymnology that reflect their theology. The Amish, Mennonite and Hutterites, who have their roots in Anabaptism, are no exception to this rule. While they are often viewed as merely conservative protestant groups, on the far right of the range, this is actually a misnomer. This is reflected in their early views of music that differ significantly from the other reformers of the early modern period, not only in the role of music in the church, but also in the kind of songs they wrote. There was a broad variety of songs produced during this time among the Anabaptists, many of which have undoubtedly been lost, the extant ones are very similar to the Passau Prison songs. These fifty-three represent a good cross-section of Anabaptist hymnody and are helpful in setting the base from early in the movement.

Anabaptist identity in this era is hard to categorize since they are varied, both in origin, and in belief.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was originally written for a university class on Music in the Reformation. Marcus serves as the Executive Director of the Amish & Mennonite Heritage Center and the Ohio Amish Library.

<sup>2</sup> Robert A. Riall, *The Earliest Hymns of the Ausbund* (Kitchener Ont: Pandora Press, 2003) 20.

<sup>3</sup> This is an imposing fortress, built as the Bishop’s residence in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, that overlooks the city. For more

see: [http://www.hdbg.eu/burgen/burgen\\_suche-burgen\\_detail.php?id=brn-0126](http://www.hdbg.eu/burgen/burgen_suche-burgen_detail.php?id=brn-0126)

<sup>4</sup> The issue of identity is one that is contested among many Anabaptist historians. For more on its development and interaction with other radical groups see James M. Stayer, Werner Packull and Klaus Deppermann, “From Monogenesis to Polygenesis: the Historical Discussion of Anabaptist Origins.” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 49, 1975, pp. 83-121. Available online at <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdf->



In the south there is a small group that calls itself the Swiss Brethren. Originally students of Ulrich Zwingli in Zurich, they broke after disputations with their former mentor in 1524-1525. To the north there were more militant groups who banded together and eventually overthrew the city of Münster and established an Anabaptist territorial kingdom. There was also a growing group of these people in the Netherlands where a former catholic priest, Menno Simons, became their primary leader. In the southeast, near the German city of Passau, where the Danube, Inn and Ilz river meet, a following developed as well. The groups in Moravia and around Passau were not only people from that area but also Swiss refugees who had been banished from their homes. Under the leadership of Jakob Wiedemann and Jakob Hutter they became more focused on a communitarian lifestyle, and became the Hutterite expression of Anabaptism.

While this era is a period of reformations in Europe, it is not necessarily a period of anarchy and revolution. The Protestant Reformers remained clearly focused on working within a magisterial system.<sup>5</sup> In the end, “every last European political entity had to make a decision whether to stay formally aligned with the Church of Rome or embrace one or the other of the 'Reformation' religions, this decision was reached in individual countries in different ways and with different intensity.”<sup>6</sup> While the Protestant Reformers gave new answers to the traditional medieval problems, in many respects this era remained deeply embedded in the medieval value system of *Corpus Christianum*. This idea that *society* was identical to the *church*, was still the

operative norm for all except the radical elements of the Reformation.<sup>7</sup> Luther protected by Elector Frederick the Wise, and Zwingli with the Zurich city council remained committed to magisterial reformation and not the freedom of expression in religious choice.

Therefore, the gravest danger to the fabric of European society and life became those people who called for the separation of the ecclesiastical structure from the temporal authority. It was the Anabaptist that were not willing to work within these magisterial realms, not because of a desire for political revolution, rather for their view of what constituted the true church. Heinrich Bullinger, who succeeded Zwingli in Zurich, saw the Anabaptist, not the papacy, as the chief threat to the development of the Reformed reformations and the peace of Europe. He says that these people, “stir up seditions and tumult, and do make every rascal knave minister of God’s Word.” These were dangerous people.<sup>8</sup>

The danger of these Anabaptist was not in a desire to be anarchist or even necessarily revolutionary, rather it is built on a view of the church that is sharply defined by volunteerism. While the flashpoint of disagreement in many places was whether or not infants should be baptized, it is in fact a larger issue. Baptism for all involved was about entrance into the kingdom of God, the very nature of what constitutes the church. As one early Anabaptist leader, Hans Denck said, “Baptism is the enrollment in the fellowship of believers...thus infant baptism is contrary to the command of Christ.”<sup>9</sup> It was only adults who could make a voluntary decision to do so. This

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[viewer?sid=a62e31b2-be8d-4224-a78e-af3453f8bb89%40sessionmgr-4001&vid=4&hid=4207](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4146259)

<sup>5</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Christianity: the First Three Thousand Years* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009) 615-620 MacCulloch defines the term “magisterial,” as meaning any temporal power outside of the church hierarchy. This is a good definition and will serve as such in this paper.

<sup>6</sup> Hans Hillerbrand, “Was There a Reformation in the Sixteenth Century?” *Church History*, Sept. 2003, 525-552 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4146259>. 534.

<sup>7</sup> For more see George Huntston Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Kirksville MO: Truman State University Press, 2000).

<sup>8</sup> Williams, 311. See also Bruce Gordon, *The Swiss Reformation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002) 210.

<sup>9</sup> Hans Denck, in *Anabaptism in Outline: Selected Primary Sources* ed. Wlatere Klassan (Scottsdale PA: Herald Press, 1981) 168.

view holds that one makes a personal choice to enter the church, and the church is not bound to a territory, nor should it be controlled in any way by the civil authorities.<sup>10</sup> For more than twelve hundred years the church and the state had been firmly united and suddenly this small group of people was undermining not only church structure, but also the very social and political order. It was ultimately about whether the church and state can function separately.<sup>11</sup>

The fear of Anabaptism was also about the security of the Empire from its enemies without. During this era, the largest security threat from outside Christendom was the Turks, who had as recently as 1532 laid siege to Vienna and in 1535 controlled much of Eastern Europe. The Anabaptist were seen as subversive because they did not support the local temporal powers and the Empire, and because of their unwillingness to fight. Rumors prevailed that the Anabaptist were secret allies of the Turks, a “fifth-column” that would betray Christendom to the infidel Turks.<sup>12</sup> Most Anabaptist were unwilling to swear allegiance and bear the sword, because of their view of the church and state, and therefore seen as unwilling to support the Empire.

Events in western Germany gave rise to the fear of anarchy within the authority structure of both church and the temporal powers. In 1534 a militant group of Anabaptists had taken over the city of Münster, and established a kingdom of Anabaptism. The city was besieged and eventually retaken by a combined force of Catholics and Protestants. As accounts of the excesses of Münster began to filter through the

area, there was renewed fervor to stamp out this subversive and revolutionary movement. While Münster appears to have been an anomaly, the majority of Anabaptist were not militant, the idea of an Anabaptist revolution was a distinct fear for both civil and ecclesiastical leaders of this time. The debacle at Münster, and the perceived connection of the Anabaptist with the various peasant uprisings gave this fear credibility. While some areas had offered relative freedoms to these people, the confluence of events in 1530-1535 moved both civil and ecclesiastical authorities to try and remove this threat from their midst, and led directly to the arrests of the Passau prisoners.

The spread of Anabaptism was remarkable considering the persecution. As early as 1531 Sebastian Franck wrote, “These men [Anabaptist leaders] moved about so rapidly that their teaching spread quickly and secretly throughout the whole land. They obtained a large following, baptized many thousands and drew to themselves many well-meaning people who were zealous for God.”<sup>13</sup> The people of this movement were not often the cultural or religious elite, but rather common people. While many of the leaders and authors of Anabaptist literature were not theologically trained, as were the Protestant reformers, they certainly were not remiss in writing and printing. This literature production is key to the spread of Anabaptism; and songs, hymns and ballads are a central part of that literature. Rudolf Wolken estimated that there were 750 hymns written by 130 different writers from 1525-1570 among German Anabaptists. By 1700 the number was over 2000.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Williams, 213.

<sup>11</sup> Sigrun Haude “Anabaptism” in *The Reformation World* edited by Andrew Pettegree 237-256 (New York: Routledge, 2002) 248.

<sup>12</sup> Some of these rumors can be traced to the trial of Michael Sattler in Rottenberg am Neckar in 1527. Sattler who was the author of the Schleitheim Confession of Faith, defended his non-resistance stance by saying that he would “rather take the field against so-called Christians who persecute, take captive, and kill true Christians, than against the Turks.” While Sattler was clearly

not supportive of the Turks, these were inflammatory words in this era. For more see John Howard Yoder, *The Legacy of Michael Sattler* (Scottsdale PA: Herald Press, 1973) 72.

<sup>13</sup> Sebastian Franck, in *Sources of South German and Austrian Anabaptism* ed. C. Arnold Snyder (Kitchener, Ont: Pandora Press, 2001) 231.

<sup>14</sup> Rudolf Wolken, qtd in Harold S Bender, “The Hymnology of the Anabaptists” *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* Jan. 1957, 5-10. Also see Ohio Amish Library, *Songs of the Ausbund V.1* ed. Edward Kline (Sugarcreek OH: Carlisle Printing).

This is not something that is unique to Anabaptism; rather it comes out of a vibrant music culture of the late medieval and early modern era. While “the literate musical culture of this period continued to be dominated, like that of the Middle Ages, by clerics” including the Protestant clerics like Luther, there is a much broader use of music then merely singing in church.<sup>15</sup>

Corporate singing was the most “distinctive innovation of the new evangelical worship service.”<sup>16</sup> What this did was build a sense of community where in “the corporate hymnody each member of the congregation proclaimed to the others the substance of their communal faith.”<sup>17</sup> This is a radically different approach then the Roman mass where people listened, but were not active participants in the singing parts. This active participation changed the people’s view of the text of music when suddenly they were able to sing with their neighbors the message of the Reformation in the language of the people. Just as music and hymnology helped spread the message of the Reformation for the Protestant reformers, so it did for the Anabaptists.

What was unique to Anabaptism is that many of their songs do not address God, as formal church music was apt to do, rather they most often address their fellow believers. While there is praise and worship to God present, the overall sense is that these were written to remind the faithful to be strong and expect suffering. Anabaptist songs of this era were not intended as necessarily formal liturgical songs that were to be used at certain times or places in worship. Rather they are in the rich folk tradition of using ballads

and songs as the medium to spread news, stories and the ideas that was prominent at this time.<sup>18</sup> This use of song as a medium for talking about the experiences of life is not reserved for Anabaptist, but is seen in the “volkslieder” or songs of the people that is common at the time. As A.J. Ramaker states “dealing with all the experiences in the everyday life of the people, they call forth the lyric spirit in melody and verse as nothing had succeeded before.”<sup>19</sup> These songs were often sung to the popular tunes of the day. This allowed songs to be sung to tunes that were familiar, but with new words. This properly called contrafactum, is defined as a “vocal composition in which the original text is replaced by a new one,” particularly a secular text by a sacred one.<sup>20</sup> This is true of nearly all the Anabaptist songs in that popular tunes were used to convey them.<sup>21</sup> Anabaptist songs were obviously meant to be sung in ways that people understood, both privately and corporately.

Europe was deeply religious and was eagerly receptive for any religious literature. Pamphlets, broadsheets sermons, and ballads like these were cheap and easily produced with the advent of the moveable type printing press. By 1530 there were about 6 million “in circulation in Germany” “twenty each for each literate member of the population.” The most prolific period of these propaganda pamphlets was from 1520-1530 when ten thousand unique pamphlets were published in Germany, with three-fourth of them being produced from 1520-1526. Most of these pamphlets were in the vernacular of the people, which goes to show that they were aimed at

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<sup>15</sup> Leeman L. Perkins, *Music in the Age of the Renaissance*, Excerpt of 55-87 for Class Reading. 71

<sup>16</sup> Andrew Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion* (Cambridge Cambridge University Press 2005) 40.

<sup>17</sup> Robin A. Leaver, *Luther’s Liturgical Music* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2007) 224.

<sup>18</sup> William I. Schreiber, “The Hymns of the Amish Ausbund in Philological and Literary Perspective” *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 36, January 1965, 40.

<sup>19</sup> A. J. Ramaker, “Hymns and Hymn writers Among the Anabaptist of the Sixteenth Century” *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* April 1929. 96-97.

<sup>20</sup> *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, s.v. “Contrafactum [Lat.],” accessed December 06, 2013, [http://www.credo-reference.com/entry/harvdictmusic/contrafactum\\_lat](http://www.credo-reference.com/entry/harvdictmusic/contrafactum_lat).

<sup>21</sup> While the scope of this paper precludes looking at what tunes were used, this is a fascinating study. Each song in the *Ausbund* from the earliest edition had tunes assigned to them. To categorize and examine these would be a rich study.

popular audience.<sup>22</sup> As many as half of these pamphlets were written anonymously or with pseudonyms, partially because of fear, but also because they wanted to be seen as the will of the people, most were written in language that was designed to succeed when read publicly, as well as privately.<sup>23</sup> This is certainly true of Anabaptist songs, which were all written in the vernacular, and while some were anonymous many also had names or initials of people attached to them.

The Passau prison songs were all written in German, which should be expected, since none of the prisoners appear to be trained in Latin, the ecclesiastical language of the day. While this points to the lack of formal training, it also shows the growing literacy of the day. In all likelihood the prisoners were all common people and this ability to read and write speaks to the growing emphasis of literature production as the means to spread ideas. Hans Betz, a weaver, was the most prolific, authoring twenty-three and contributing to two others. Michael Schneider wrote thirteen and contributed to one jointly composed song. Bernard Schneider and Hans Gärber were also contributors to this corpus. Eleven of the songs are unattributed, seven of which are Psalm paraphrases.<sup>24</sup>

The first known collection of these songs was a small booklet of fifty-three hymns that were apparently collected by the Swiss church. In 1928, the Mennonite Historian, Harold Bender

discovered the only extant copy of this, which indicates a 1564 print date.<sup>25</sup> It was entitled *Etliche schöne christliche Geseng wie sie in der Gefangknecht zu Passau im Schloss von den Schwitzer brüder durch Gottes Gnad getiehet and gesungen worden* or “Some beautiful Christian songs as they were composed and sung in the castle at Passau by the Swiss Brethren, through the grace of God.”

Nineteen years later in 1583 these became the core of the first known publication of the *Ausbund*, a hymn collection by the Swiss Anabaptist.<sup>26</sup> This edition included all but two of the songs from the 1564 edition, and for all of the subsequent editions of the *Ausbund* these songs would be a central part of the hymnal. Unfortunately, nothing is known about who compiled or printed these hymns, but the fact that they found their way out of the dungeon and into use, not only in worship, but also devotionally and polemically, speaks to the power of these songs to describe the Anabaptist experience in these early years. The two songs that are not included in the 1583 edition from the earlier edition, celebrate the community of goods that became the hallmark of the Anabaptist in the east. The 1583 edition is clearly sponsored by the Swiss Anabaptists who did not have the same theological leanings towards the community of goods as did the Hutterite Anabaptists in the east.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Nowhere is this more noticeable than in the development of the *flugschriften*. These were generally short, ephemeral, and easily produced booklets, similar to broadsheets or pamphlets. Many were sermons, ballads, or short focused writings written in a polemical way. For more see Pettegree “Books, Pamphlets and the Polemic,” in *The Reformation World* edited by Andrew Pettegree 237-256 (New York: Routledge, 2002) 111.

<sup>23</sup> Steven Ozment “Pamphlet Literature of the German Reformation” in *Reformation Europe: a Guide to Research* edited by Steven Ozment 85-105 (St Louis MO: Center for Reformation Research, 1982) 110.

<sup>24</sup> Riall, 22.

<sup>25</sup> Bender describes this in his role as the editor of the Mennonite Quarterly Review in the 1928 article, “The First edition of the *Ausbund*” where he describes how he found the hymnal and

describes the binding, etc as well. See also Albert N. Keim, *Harold S. Bender* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1998) 191. Keim describes Bender’s book-buying forays as raids because of the tension between Goshen College and the established Lancaster Mennonite community. He says that Bender’s aggressive pursuit and knowledge of source material allowed this precious piece of history to return to Mennonite hands. This copy is held at the Mennonite Historical Library at Goshen College, Goshen IN.

<sup>26</sup> The initial German spelling was *Auss-Bundt* which meant “sample” or “pattern.” It was later shortened to *Ausbund* Riall, 10. For this paper the 2011 version of the *Ausbund* is used. *Ausbund* (Lancaster PA: The Amish Book Committee, 2011)

<sup>27</sup> Werner O. Packull *Hutterite Beginnings: Communitarian Experiments during the Reformation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995) 89.

Anabaptist liturgy and church meetings were not nearly as developed and organized as in Protestant circles. This was due to their popular nature, and the fact that they often had to meet secretly. With no church buildings they met in caves, woods, barns and houses. There was as much diversity among these people about the use of songs and singing as among other groups. While a few of the Swiss Brethren initially adopted the Zwinglian view that singing since not expressly enjoined in Scripture, should not be a part of the service, the use of singing was developed early in the movement. In 1542 Peter Riedeman wrote that:

*We say that to sing spiritual songs is good and pleasing to God if we sing in the right way, that is, attentively, in the fear of God and as inspired by the spirit of Christ. ...where this is not the case and one sings only for carnal joy, or for the sweet sound or for some such reason, one misuses them, changing them into what is carnal and worldly and does not sing songs of the Spirit, but of the letter. He, however, who sings in the Spirit, considers diligently every word, how far and where it goes, why it has been used and how it may be serve to his betterment. He who does this sings to the Lord's praise, both to the betterment of both himself and others and as an instigation to a godly life.* <sup>28</sup>

The focus on the way that one sang, or the reason for singing, is crucial to understanding their view of music. Singing, both corporately and devotionally was to bring their hearts in a correct way to God.

This view of music is built on the core theme of Anabaptism that is evident not only in what they thought was the proper use of music, but also the text of the songs themselves. Their understanding of what the true church of Christ was is central to understanding these people and their songs. Ultimately their entire theology is built around the idea of *gemeinde* or community, made up of the elect, those who had made the choice to enter into relationship with Christ and their brothers and sisters.<sup>29</sup> To that end they believed that at its essence Christianity was *nachfolge* or a following after Christ in practical discipleship, and this discipleship was best done in community.

Disciples live best when they are accountable not only to Christ, but also other disciples, and should practice what Riedeman calls the “betterment of others.” They were deeply committed to the Word of God and its authority in both corporate and individual lives. While they had a high view of Scripture and would often appeal to it, they also had a high view of Christ’s inner, living word which differs from the *sola Scriptura* of the reformers.<sup>30</sup> Those who followed after Christ could expect to suffer, and in that suffering, would be given opportunity to love and forgive their enemies. While this is not a complete and comprehensive view of these songs, this overarching theme is evident in nearly all of them. A sampling of the different authors and songs show that these men, and perhaps women, wrote from a deep sense of conviction and while not nearly as sophisticated as trained theologians, it reflects the philosophy and theology of the common person who embraced Anabaptism in this era. <sup>31</sup> <sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Peter Riedeman, in *Anabaptism in Outline: Selected Primary Sources* ed. Walter Klassan (Scottsdale PA: Herald Press, 1981) 131.

<sup>29</sup> This German term means commune, community, congregation or fellowship. This became an important distinction because they saw the church as not a parish, or a building but rather a community.

<sup>30</sup> Riall, 31.

<sup>31</sup> Although outside the scope of this paper, Anabaptist hymnody includes songs written by women, and in some cases ordained women leaders. This is unusual for this era. George Huntston Williams says these people were as nearly “gender-equalizing” as any group.

<sup>32</sup> Rosella Reimer Duerksen, “Doctrinal Implications in Sixteenth Century Anabaptist Hymnody” *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* Jan. 1961. 38

The Anabaptist agreed that justification by faith, as proposed by Luther was essential to human redemption. Hans Betz wrote that:

*Understand! Christ the Lord, has become  
a mercy seat for all who,  
if they believe, are born in him.  
They receive his mercy if they avoid all  
sin.  
For these he has, by his death, intended the  
eternal kingdom.*<sup>33</sup>

This is clearly the idea of the propitiation and sacrifice of Christ as the only way that a person can be saved, which is central to the idea of justification by faith. This is evident time and again throughout the corpus as different writers indicate the centrality of faith and dependence on Christ for redemption. What makes the Anabaptist view of redemption uniquely different from the other reformers is that while they believed that one is redeemed by faith in Christ, that faith is only real and sincere when it is applied to practical living and personal holiness.

For these writers the idea of justification is always deeply connected to the individual choice of the person in responding to that grace and being willing to *follow after*; redemption is justification by faith and following after Christ. Bernard Schneider wrote a twenty-four-stanza song in Passau where each stanza has some action on the Christians part to appropriate this redemption. In the first three stanzas he explicitly connects the following of Christ with redemption, and while they do not think that following was what ultimately saved them, neither could they disconnect it from redemption. The English translation uses “follow” while the German uses *nachfolge* or *folgen nach*, which is more literally

to follow after, which emphasis not only that they follow, but that they follow after Christ.

#### Stanza One

*Darum lass uns ihm folgen nach*  
Let us, therefore, follow him

#### Stanza Two

*Welcher Christ nun nachfolgen  
will,  
Whoever now wants to follow  
Christ*

#### Stanza Three

*So er nur Christo folget nach*  
If only one follows Christ<sup>34</sup>

Even those opposed to the movement saw this emphasis. Heinrich Bullinger called them, “devilish enemies and destroyers of the Church of God,” but he admitted that in lifestyle:

*Those who unite with them will by their  
ministers be received into their church by  
rebaptism and repentance and newness of  
life. They henceforth lead their lives under  
a semblance of a quite spiritual conduct.  
They denounce covetousness, pride,  
profanity, the lewd conversation and  
immorality of the world, drinking and  
gluttony. In short, their hypocrisy is great  
and manifold.*<sup>35</sup>

For an Anabaptist, redemption meant a lifestyle, not an intellectual or a rational commitment.

Their theology of redemption and following Christ is essential to understand their view of the church and the fact that it was not connected to a territory or a magisterial system. The church supersedes civil authority and:

*This church alone is the Christian Church—  
note indeed*

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<sup>33</sup> For clarity this paper will use the translation provided by Riall and further referencing will be as follows: Riall, 118. *Ausbund*, number 92, stanza 12

<sup>34</sup> Riall, 320 *Ausbund* number 114, stanzas 1-3.

<sup>35</sup> Heinrich Bullinger, qtd in Harold Bender, *The Anabaptist Vision*, available at <http://www.goshen.edu/mhl/Re-focusing/d-av.htm>



*Her foundation is the Lord Christ. He  
gives her his authority  
through his Spirit. What she decides is  
decided before God.*<sup>36</sup>

This view, expressed here by Hans Betz, is exactly what made them dangerous to the magisterial reformers. The foundation of the church was Christ and there was no authority, temporal or religious, outside the Word of God, that had any authority in dictating what religious truth or the church was. For this cause, they were willing to live and die. In their songs this idea is deeply connected to the idea that the church is not a territorial area or even a parish; rather, it is a gathering of the loving community of disciples. This body has responsibility not only to Christ, but also to other disciples. In the Passau prison corpus one of the Psalms that they paraphrase is Psalm 133, whose first line is, “See how fine and lovely it is where brothers dwell with each other” and ends with “without a doubt it certainly pleases God where peace, love, and unity are kept.”<sup>37</sup> Their choice of this Psalm, as one of seven that they paraphrase, is an example of their seeing discipleship and community as key.

From early in the movement there were nuances between the groups of Anabaptists that tended to separate them. The Swiss Brethren were much stronger on the use of the bann than were their Dutch counterparts. In the east differences in the community of goods led to distinct differences and groups such as the Philipites and Gabrielites emerged.<sup>38</sup> Among the Passau prisoners were elements from all of these groups. Prison tended to erode these ideological barriers and promoted a return to the solidarity of core beliefs. A group composition by fourteen of the prisoners reflects

this well. Each stanza has a different author identified by initials. The stanzas build on each other in a way that is typical of the ballad style of the day. One singer would compose a stanza and the next one would pick up a thread and compose his stanza. This provides a sense of continuity while allowing the individual voices expression. In this case at least seven of the twelve connections use the same word or sequence of words from one to the other.<sup>39</sup> The entire song is a call to stay strong and remain unified in the midst of the suffering “in a hard prison.”<sup>40</sup>

*You sisters and you brothers, be strong in  
this fight,  
you are Christ's members, dedicated in  
baptism.  
We begun it in God, for whom we want to  
hold still.  
Although we must certainly hang and  
suffer great coercion,  
so may his will come to pass in us.*<sup>41</sup>

This sense of familial connection, care and concern is central to understanding how these people saw the connection of disciples in this community. The “betterment of others” is most aptly reflected in this call to remain true, and a commitment to stand together. Christian love for each other becomes the primary indication of regeneration.<sup>42</sup> This is not only versified in this case, but also reflected in the community writing of the song.

The supreme example of love for these people was that of Christ on the cross, the thought of which pervades Anabaptist songs. He suffered at the hand of sinners and should true disciples expect any less? This is especially prevalent in the

<sup>36</sup> Riall, 267 *Ausbund* number 108, stanza 15.

<sup>37</sup> Riall, 71. *Ausbund* 84, stanzas 1,3.

<sup>38</sup> This does not take into account groups like the Münsterites who most of the others disavowed and did not view as true to the principles of love and non-resistance. They did believe in adult baptism and have strong connections to the Dutch

Anabaptist. This issue of identity of who is an Anabaptist was as problematic then as it is for historians now.

<sup>39</sup> Riall, 180-184. *Ausbund* number 100.

<sup>40</sup> Stanza 14, which appears to be written by Bernard Schneider.

<sup>41</sup> Stanza 11.

<sup>42</sup> Duerkson, 40.

prison and martyr songs. Hans Garber wrote from Passau:

*The pious therefore will be tried here on earth  
so that their faith is found clean, pure, and adorned.  
But after this short time, they will rejoice  
with inexpressible joy.*<sup>43</sup>

Nearly every song from the Anabaptist in this era carries some idea of suffering and persecution. These people saw it as the obvious consequence “of the practice of discipleship and love here on earth” and as a prerequisite to indicate salvation.<sup>44</sup> One must also note that, seldom if ever, especially in this corpus, are their imprecatory tones.<sup>45</sup> Love was something that one practiced not only to the community of believers, but also to one’s enemy. There are sometimes scathing reviews of the Catholic and Lutheran doctrines, such as Michael Schneider calling the Roman Church the Anti-Christ, but no individual calls for vengeance because they are being persecuted.

The idea of suffering for the sake of Christ is as nearly a sacrament that there is for Anabaptist. They rejected the idea that communion, baptism and the other traditional sacraments of the church were instruments that conveyed any grace or revealed the presence of Christ in a literal way. In fact, they saw this as idolatry where elements of creation were worshiped.<sup>46</sup> They viewed baptism and the Eucharist as symbols or memorials and would end up calling them ordinance. For Anabaptist the real presence of Christ could be found in suffering, their songs reflect deeply the idea that suffering brings Christ in living presence to their world. In the jointly composed hymn noted above the author of stanza twelve, noted with the initials H.T. says:

*We want to strive for this: to give the flesh  
in death,  
We shall find life with the Father, as Christ  
says.*<sup>47</sup>

The presence of Christ was real to these people, but not in the Eucharist or baptism, rather in identification and suffering. It is this identification with the suffering Christ in a literal way that becomes the focus.

The Passau Prison Songs the ideas and beliefs that served to create a unique identity for these people. In order to understand this corpus of songs produced under duress one must understand the convergence of events in their world that brought them to the prison in the first place. Their songs were produced on the anvil of hardship because of their unwillingness to embrace the relationship between church and state that was the cultural and political norm of the day. The specter of Münster, and the fear of the invading Turks, made it difficult to live out their vision of a free church, and the freedom of the individual to choose their faith. It is equally important to understand that their theology is built around a church that is free from the power of any authority except the power of Christ and his word. The power of Christ freed the person to follow, and in that following, suffering was to be expected. In that suffering, the most powerful weapon of love would be brought to bear not only on one’s fellow believers, but also the persecutor and the executioner. And in that life of following after and suffering was found the presence of the living Christ.

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<sup>43</sup> Riall, 409. *Ausbund* number 124, stanza 8.

<sup>44</sup> Duerkson, 42

<sup>45</sup> Packull, 96.

<sup>46</sup> Schneider focuses on this in *Ausbund* number 102, stanzas 5-12.

<sup>47</sup> Riall, 182 *Ausbund* number 100, stanza 12.

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