

the *Mirror*

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The Storied History of the Ephrata Cloister *Martyrs Mirror*

The *Martyrs Mirror* has its own tumultuous and triumphant history alongside those detailed in its pages. One fascinating story is how Mennonites in the early colonies obtained a German language translation of the book.

In the 1700s, the colonies careened toward what we now call the French and Indian War. Fearing their young men would be tempted to join, six Mennonite leaders in the Lancaster area hoped that a German translation of the *Martyrs Mirror* would remind the Pennsylvania Mennonites of their predecessors' enduring faith and nonresistance.

They sought the help of the Ephrata Cloister, home to a small community of Seventh Day Baptists and a printing press. Peter Miller of the Cloister took on the daunting task of translating the massive tome from its original Dutch. He also oversaw a production team of fourteen who managed typesetting and printing on locally made paper. Each book had 1,512 pages and weighed around 13 pounds, making it the largest book in Colonial America. This was a risky financial undertaking for the Cloister, as there was no guarantee the books would sell. Nevertheless, the team worked tirelessly for years.

Like the early Mennonites, the story of these books was one of persistence but also of hardship. At a pivotal moment, the *Martyrs Mirror* was reborn in a new land and in a new language, thanks to an interconnected community. Ironically, some of those same copies were dismembered during the Revolutionary War, when troops seized hundreds of unbound copies from the Cloister, tore them apart, and used their pages for musket packing. A book intended to remind its readers of a nonresistant faith was mutilated to line gun barrels.

The Ephrata Cloister printings of the *Martyrs Mirror* still exist, and collectors engage in lively conversation about the nuances and circumstances of the surviving books. One of these books will be sold at our Rare & Used Book auction on November 10. See page 2 for more information about our book auctions.

The Printing Office at the Ephrata Cloister



Martyrs Mirror Printing Plate Rediscovered

In March, I became aware that over thirty years ago, Mennonite Life had been gifted a one-of-a-kind treasure: an original copper plate used in printing the first illustrated edition of the *Martyrs Mirror* in 1685. Only 31 of the original 104 plates are known to exist, each etched in meticulous detail by Dutch engraver Jan Luyken. To transfer an illustration like the ones in the *Martyrs Mirror*, printmakers rubbed ink into the etched indentations, and then pressed the plates onto paper.

I found a box in the archives labeled "Martyrs Mirror Prints." Curious, I opened the box; one of the folders felt oddly heavy. Inside, enclosed in acid-free paper, was the plate, depicting Algerius, an early Christian of Rome, being burned at the stake. I was stunned.

It still shimmers under light, but the plate seems small, humble. Feeling the ridges of the engraving beneath my cotton-gloved finger, I remembered that Jan Luyken was merely one individual who created iconic illustrations that have crossed language barriers for generations to become a touchstone of Anabaptist history and faith.

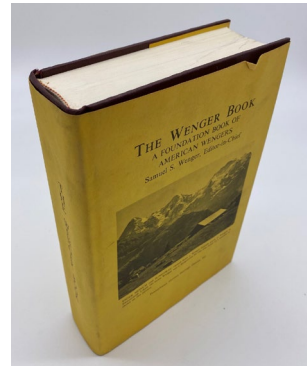
— Julia Wiker, Archivist & Librarian

Top: The copper plates used to print images in the *Martyrs Mirror* measure 5.5 x 4.5 inches.



Upcoming Book Auction Highlights

The July 14, 2023 Rare & Used Book Auction will feature a wide range of exciting lots to bid on. The selection includes a 1681 edition of Menno Simons' *Complete Works* in Dutch with original binding (#243); a 1722 edition of *T Merg van de Historien der Marterlaren*, in Dutch, with original vellum binding (#245); and *The Wenger Book: A Foundation Book of American Wengers*, edited by Samuel S. Wenger (#41). Also featured is a collection of *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage*, 1984-2010 (#351); four volumes of *Mennonitisches Lexikon* (#246); and the 1960-1977 issues of the *Mennonite Research Journal* (#349). Other notable lots include a reprint of the 1535 edition of the *Froschouer Bible* (#308), an 1849 edition of the *Martyrs Mirror* (#396), and a 1768 edition of the *Nurnberg Bible* (#400).



For more information about the auction, and to view the full catalog, visit mennonitelife.org/shop/used-books/submit-bid/, or contact Kevin Bradford at usedbooks@mennonitelife.org or 717.393.9745 x106.

Left: An image of Moses from the pages of the Nurnberg Bible.

Visitors Center Offers Wide Selection of Christian Books

The Mennonite Life Visitors Center is now open Tuesday through Saturday, 9:30 a.m.–4 p.m. Biblical Tabernacle Experience showings are at 10 a.m., 12 p.m., and 2 p.m. We welcome you to visit and bring out of town friends. Don't miss our Ten Thousand Villages retail section, and wide selection of new and used Christian books.

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The Visitors Center carries a wide range of new and used Christian books.



Adopt-a-Shingle!



Be a part of preserving Lancaster County history

Mennonite Life's best known "artifact" is the Herr House, built for Anna and Christian Herr in 1719. Known for its gorgeous door-frame and long-standing walls, the house's roof is also a significant part of its story. We will be replacing the roof's badly degraded shingles, and we invite you to join us.

Not long after the Herr House renovation in 1981, historian Henry J. Kauffman wrote, "Although the Herr House seemed to be decaying in recent years, it remained a reasonably sound structure because it had a good roof." We may never know how many times the roof has been replaced throughout the centuries, but historians have pieced together the following information about the Herr House's roof:

- The roof covers two attics. The first attic was sleeping space for the seven Herr children, and the small second attic was used for storage.
- The sharp pitch of the roof is reminiscent of homes in Germanic areas of medieval Europe, and designed to shed heavy snow.
- The shingles of the roof were hand cut with a drawknife on a schnitzelbank similar to the one in the attic of the Herr House. The shingles for the roof replacement project will also be cut by hand. To see the shingle-making process in action, check out our Facebook page ([Facebook.com/MennoniteLife](https://www.facebook.com/MennoniteLife)).

Herr House Roof: Adopt-a-Shingle

- \$100** (1 Shingle)
- \$300** (3 Shingles)
- \$500** (5 Shingles)
- \$1,000** (10 Shingles)
- \$3,000** (30 Shingles)
- \$ _____ (_____ Shingles)



Each shingle is 3 ft. long.
About a foot is exposed
once installed.

And, I make a
general gift of: Total Amount
+ _____ = _____



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Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Check Enclosed (payable to **Mennonite Life**)

Donate by Credit Card: Visa Mastercard Discover

Credit Card # _____

Exp. Date _____ / _____ Security Code _____

I would like to explore planning an estate gift; please contact me.

Adopt-a-Shingle

The Herr House's current roof is over 20 years old and shows expected signs of weathering and degradation. We are grateful for the protection the roof has offered the Herr House for over 300 years, and after significant research, we have committed to re-roofing the Herr House with red oak shingles, optimal not just for historical

accuracy but for longevity. With proper maintenance this roof will last for 40 years.

The roof will be made of over 7,000 hand-hewn shingles. The project will cost \$230,000. We invite you to join us by "adopting" one or more shingles, at \$100 each, to conserve this extraordinary home. Your support is greatly appreciated!



Mennonite Life 2023 Events

Rare & Used Book Auction

Friday, July 14, 6:30 p.m.
Mennonite Life Community Room
See accompanying article for details

Fanciful Fraktur Bird Workshop with Emily Smucker-Beidler

Friday, July 28, 1–4 p.m.
Mennonite Life Community Room
Paint your own vibrant Fraktur bird
with the guidance of a Fraktur artist
and teacher
\$95.00
Register by July 25 at mennonitelife.org/events

Annual Storytelling Night

Monday, August 7, 7 p.m.
Landisville Mennonite Church
Storytellers Karl McKinney and
Karen Sensenig will share stories
of life and faith

Bookworm Frolic

September 14 and 15 (9 a.m.–7 p.m.);
September 16 (9 a.m.–4 p.m.)
Mennonite Life Collections Building
See back page for volunteer
opportunities

Maize & Snitz Fest

Saturday, September 30,
10 a.m.–4 p.m.
1719 Museum
Cost: Adults \$15; Children (7–16) \$7;
Children 6 and under complimentary
18th-century inspired autumn
celebration for the whole family

A Community Story: African Americans & Mennonites in Mount Joy Area

Save the date: Saturday, October 14
Check mennonitelife.org for info

Rare & Used Book Auction

Friday, November 10, 6:30 p.m.
Mennonite Life Community Room



Chart your Swiss Anabaptist Ancestry

Each of us carries a unique origin story, the particular fingerprint of our family heritage and history. To learn about our family tree, even to find the names of our ancestors, requires historical research that often takes the form of hours in a library, or travel to cemeteries seeking birth and death date information, or even international travel and research. Most who pursue this knowledge organize their findings in an ancestral fan chart.

Mennonite Life is pleased to offer those with Swiss Anabaptist ancestry a headstart on the work of researching family history. If customers are able to provide the name and birthdate of the person they want to research, along with information about their parents and grandparents, they will receive a customized ancestry fan chart populated with the names of their ancestors going back eight or ten generations. The information is available through a database of Swiss Anabaptist families.

Available soon, an ancestral fan chart would also make a valuable gift for those who do not have the time or resources to do the research themselves, yet want to know more about their unique origin story.

The image shows a form titled "SWISS ANABAPTIST Ancestry Fan Chart Order Form". At the top, there is a diagram of an ancestry fan chart with labels for "Grandfather", "Father (M)", "Mother (M)", "Grandmother", "Grandfather", "Grandmother", and "Starting Name and Date of Birth". Below the diagram are several numbered sections for providing information and payment details. Section 1 asks for the starting name and date of birth. Section 2 asks for the full names of grandparents. Section 3 asks how many generations to go back. Section 4 asks for a book order. Section 5 asks for a gift certificate. Section 6 asks for delivery options. Section 7 asks for contact information and payment details. The form includes checkboxes for "Expedited (2-3 day)", "Check enclosed (payable to Mennonite Life)", and "Gift Certificate". It also has a table for shipping charges and a total due section. The Mennonite Life logo is at the bottom right.

New, Enthusiastic Guides at 1719 Museum

Seeking to expand our pool of volunteers, the 1719 Museum offered five Saturday morning tour guide trainings this spring. Each unique session would further equip volunteer tour guides to share the rich history of the museum with guests. It was a time commitment. Would anyone come?

Sixteen people from varied walks of life participated, including retired teachers, a local farmer, and a physician and Herr descendant. They learned about Anabaptist history, Indigenous cultures, and the Herr home. Current guide John Horning appreciated the camaraderie of the instructors and his fellow participants. "Questions raised by the trainees provided additional context as I reflected on my own presentations," he said.

"This is history from my own backyard," said Cindy Bernhardt, a new tour guide. "I can't imagine what more you could have done to give us the opportunity to learn. Information ranged from the broad picture to the small details. It's been a positive experience from start to finish and has made me want to do a good job for the museum and visitors."

"This is history from my own backyard!"

—Cindy Bernhardt, new tour guide at 1719 Museum

(Re)reading the Wisdom of Menno Simons

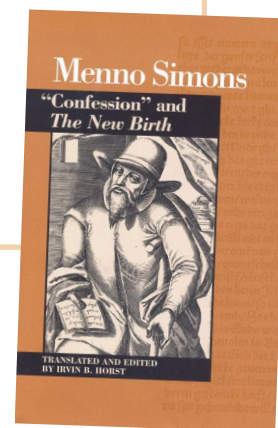
In a series of six articles for *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage*, beginning in the July 2023 issue, Dr. Gerald Mast will examine the life, experiences, and teachings of Menno Simons. Covering topics such as Menno's awakening to biblical faith, practice of believer's baptism, and political theology, these articles will ultimately form the foundation for a book.

It's easy to assume that teachers and scholars have already gleaned all they can from the writings of someone who died in 1561. Many Anabaptist and Mennonite believers have been deeply shaped by the teachings of Menno Simons without any real familiarity with his works. But Mast, professor of Communication at Bluffton University, wants to challenge that assumption by bringing to the forefront the "old" words and work of Menno Simons. Mast believes that the writings of Menno Simons are fresh and relevant to the many challenges and opportunities of today.

An Intro to Menno

A great place to get acquainted with Menno's work is *Menno Simons: "Confession of My Enlightenment, Conversion, and Calling" and The New Birth*, published by Mennonite Life.

[lmhs-book-and-museum-store-myshopify.com/products/501714](https://www.mennonitelife.org/lmhs-book-and-museum-store-myshopify.com/products/501714)



Bookworm Frolic: September 14–16



Thursday, September 14,
9 a.m.—7 p.m.

Best selection of books
Paperback: \$2
Hardcover: \$3

Friday, September 15,
9 a.m.—7 p.m.

Friday only!
Buy five books,
get one free.

Saturday, September 16,
9 a.m.—4 p.m.

Saturday only!
Everything half price.
Fill a box for \$15.

Want to volunteer? Bookworm Frolic volunteers receive special deals!
Call 717.393.9745 x106 or email usedbooks@mennonitelife.org

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