

THE ANABAPTISTS OF JUNIATA COUNTY

A HISTORICAL PROFILE

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ABSTRACT: The Anabaptist story in Juniata County begins with Johannes Kröebiel Jr., a young, ambitious Swiss Mennonite seeking a wider place in the New World. In the 1770s Johannes began to carve a future for his own family and succeeding generations on central Pennsylvania's frontier land. Within the next century, Mennonite, Amish, Brethren, and Brethren-in-Christ groups had growing settlements in the beautiful Juniata Valley. Today dozens of Anabaptist congregations of various affiliations have found their home in the rural county and the saga of faith continues. Their story is similar to Anabaptist settlement in other central and western Pennsylvania rural counties.

KEYWORDS: Mennonites, Amish, Juniata County, Pennsylvania German Anabaptists

INTRODUCTION

When discussing historical German and Swiss Anabaptist groups who migrated to eighteenth-century Pennsylvania, people automatically think of their settlements in Lancaster and Berks counties. But almost from the beginning, some of these sects found Lancaster and Berks too confining. Not long after the Pennsylvania government purchased land from the Native Americans in 1754 and 1768, Mennonites, Amish, Dunkards, and other groups moved into the Susquehanna and Juniata river watershed. They often took up lands left behind by Scots-Irish illegal squatters who had moved on by this time. Many Juniata County histories such as Ellis and Hungerford, Hain, Rupp, and others give the Anabaptist groups only cursory attention. A history of the settlement of Juniata County by these Anabaptists is presented here as a

useful example of how similar counties of central Pennsylvania's ridge-and-valley system were established and still thrive today.

Early Mennonite Settlers

The story begins just before the American Revolution and about fifty years before the 1831 formation of Juniata County. In the early 1770s, thirty-two-year-old Johannes Kröebiel Jr. (John Graybill) traveled from Lancaster County and explored the valleys of the Juniata River. He cut his way through the forest for twelve miles to a location near the current village of Richfield, then part of Northumberland County (now West Perry Township, Snyder County). Tradition holds that Kröebiel chose a piece of land within the shadow of Shade Mountain. He discovered a vacant, but sturdy stone building with a beautiful spring under it that he found adequate and appealing for his future home. The structure still exists, and is approximately 20 × 28 feet with two floors; possibly it was constructed during the French and Indian War and then abandoned, about twenty years before Kröebiel found it. Some controversy exists about the origin of this building, sometimes called Pomfret Castle or Fort Pomfret.

Intending to come back soon with his family and the necessary warrant to claim the land, tradition holds that Johannes Kröebiel hid his log chain and other tools in a sinkhole near Shade Mountain and returned to Lancaster County. With a land warrant dated March 18, 1774, and a survey for the plot performed the following April 7, Johannes moved his family to the fertile, promising valley where the vacant fort became their first residence. The peace-loving nonresistant Anabaptist/Mennonite Kröebiel family closed the port holes of the structure, proving their intentions to live at peace with all men. There the family endured the hard winter of 1774–75.¹

European Mennonites and Amish

Pioneering was not new to the Kröebiel family, who had their origins in Switzerland. For more than 200 years, Anabaptists had been fleeing persecution on European soil.² The Anabaptist/Mennonites were first known as Swiss Brethren in Zurich. A few years after Martin Luther tacked his Ninety-five Theses to the Catholic church door at Wittenberg, Germany, in 1517, Zurich Reformed pastor Ulrich Zwingli also parted ways with Catholicism when he criticized selling indulgences and other practices, but chose to accept the state rule that combined infant baptism with legal citizenship. Some members of Zwingli's group believed salvation a voluntary choice beyond the

understanding of an infant and chose to be rebaptized in 1525. Later they became known as “Anabaptists” (or rebaptizers). Menno Simons, a Dutch priest, left the Catholic Church in 1536 and eventually became a prominent leader of the Anabaptists. His writings were circulated to Germany and Switzerland; his followers were called Mennonites. In spite of severe persecution from both Catholic and Reformed groups, the Anabaptist movement grew and spread to surrounding European lands. A more conservative group in 1693 followed Jakob Amman, a young Anabaptist minister. They became known as “Amish.”³

By 1681 Peter Krahenbuhl/Kröebiel’s Anabaptist family had fled Zazwil, Switzerland, to escape persecution, part of a group of 700 Anabaptists who traveled to Germany. Eventually the Kröebiels found safe refuge in Weierhof in the Palatinate.⁴ Later that year some Mennonites (or Mennonists or Swissers as they were known) made plans to accept William Penn’s offer of religious toleration and freedom in the new colony of Pennsylvania. Thus began the large migration of Mennonites and Amish to the New World, and most famously to Lancaster and Berks counties.

When life in Germany became difficult for Anabaptists—with religious persecution ranging from discrimination to fines, penalties, heavy taxes, and mandatory military conscription—Peter Kröebiel’s descendant Johannes Kröebiel Sr. migrated to Pennsylvania and Lancaster County about 1765. Within the first decade of their arrival, his son Johannes Jr. chose to move into somewhat unsettled territory, possibly after the 1772 creation of Northumberland County. Soon other Mennonites followed Kröebiel Jr. and his family along the West Mahantango Creek near Shade Mountain.⁵ They were likely one of the first groups of Mennonites to cross the Susquehanna and head north and west after the French and Indian War.⁶

LIFE IN THE COLONIES

The Revolution brought new challenges to the nonresistant Mennonite and Amish settlers. They had left Europe to avoid compulsive military conscription. Now they were encouraged to join the military to fight for independence from British rule. When these immigrants arrived at Philadelphia, they had affirmed loyalty to the British crown, intending to practice obedience to the government unless it interfered with God’s higher law of love. But they were living in the colonies—which government rule were they to obey? Some joined the military, and Johannes Kröebiel Jr. was likely one of the majority

of Anabaptists who enrolled but did not serve, paying a hefty fine rather than compromise his nonresistant beliefs and be mustered into the army.⁷

Worship services were held in private homes. Johannes's son, John Graybill III, became the first resident minister among the Juniata County Mennonites and served for fifty-one years from his ordination in 1788 to 1839. His godly influence was a great blessing to the church. Among his descendants are many ordained Mennonite ministers and deacons. In 1818 Christian Graybill, the settler's grandson, established the village of Richfield near the present Snyder–Juniata county line.⁸ Settler Johannes Kröebiel and his wife Barbara were laid to rest in 1806 and 1829, respectively, in a small Graybill family plot in Cross Roads Mennonite Cemetery not far from Fort Pomfret. Today a small marble monument with the inscription, "First settler in this valley" marks his grave.

Brick (Shelleys) Mennonite Church

In 1800 Johannes Shelley donated a parcel of land for a church on the north side of his ridge farm, located about a mile from the Kröebiel homestead in adjoining Cumberland County (currently Juniata). This log building, known as Shelleys, was also used as a schoolhouse for early families, and had an adjoining cemetery. When the log building was no longer adequate as a church, it was razed and some heavy timbers salvaged to become part of the new 1868 Brick (Shelleys) Mennonite Church. Oral tradition tells us the bricks for this structure were made in the farm fields just north of the church. In the following years, the congregation had differences of opinion about biblical applications and practice, resulting in several divisions. One of these, the Leiter division, held services on alternating Sundays for about thirty years in the mid-1800s until the few remaining members reunited with the church in the early 1870s. A family quarrel led to another schism in 1883 and the entire ministry and many members withdrew from the Old Mennonite Brick Church, resulting in the formation of the Richfield Mennonite Church in 1886.

When the new Brick Church was only four years old, John M. and Catharine (Shelley) Kurtz's family was stricken with diphtheria. Five of their large family of children had died of various causes before this date, and in one week in 1872 an epidemic carried away six more. They buried eleven of their twelve children in the adjoining cemetery. The surviving teenage son, John, was later ordained a minister in a double ordination at the church. John served the Brick Church faithfully until 1894 when he moved to Lancaster

County and became part of the Old Order Mennonites. His two younger brothers, born after the epidemic, also migrated to Lancaster County.

The Brick Church was used for services until the 1930s. The building was vacant for almost a decade until it was remodeled for the purpose of a sewing room for local Mennonite congregations. After the sewing circle discontinued its use, the property was deeded to the Juniata Mennonite Historical Society who restored the church in 1995; and the cemetery was deeded to Cross Roads Mennonite Church.

Lost Creek Mennonite Church

After the Shelleys log meeting house was erected, Mennonite settlers ventured a little further west in the Juniata Valley and planned a log meeting house instead of worshiping in private homes. Located along the road to Cedar Spring, the 1819 log structure functioned both as a church and school house, and became known as the Lost Creek Mennonite Church.

Mennonite Jacob Kauffman, with his wife and six children, arrived in the Oakland Mills area in 1795. Soon the Acker, Brubaker, Funk, Gingrich, Holtzapple, Kilmer, Lauver, Meier, Musser, Scherk, Shellenberger, Shelley, Sieber, Smith, Weaver, and other families arrived to erect dwellings and farm the land. The Lost Creek Mennonite Church is believed to be the second-oldest Mennonite Church in Juniata County. Jacob S. Graybill, ordained in 1849, became the first minister to preach in English. Because travel was often by foot over undeveloped roads, and was inconvenient, between 1880 and 1919 the Lost Creek congregation also held services in various area school-houses, including Mexico, Locust Run, Mount Pleasant, Swamp, Fairview, and Rockland. It appears that John Graybill, a son of Johannes Kröebiel, the settler, and ordained as a minister in 1788, may have served as bishop for this area along with the Shelleys congregation.

The Lost Creek congregation erected a new building in 1867 and replaced the original log structure. About 1936–37 electric service was provided from the light plant on the Weaver farm across the road. This electric service replaced the kerosene lights for evening meetings until electricity was provided to the rural area. The building was enlarged in 1962 and then remodeled and enlarged again in 1991. Samuel Gayman was the first Sunday school superintendent on April 9, 1893, when forty-seven persons attended the 3:00 p.m. classes. For many years the Lost Creek and nearby Delaware Mennonite congregations alternated Sunday morning services. They began holding weekly services at both places in July 1979. The Lost

Creek congregation continues to be affiliated with the Lancaster Mennonite Conference, and its cemetery is located on a slope adjoining the church building. Approximately 1,500 burials are recorded in this burial ground for Mennonite families and the local community. Several African Americans are buried here including the Carter family who were Lost Creek members.

Cross Roads Mennonite Church

The Cross Roads Mennonite Church had its beginnings when the Johannes Kröebiel Jr. family worshiped in their home. More Mennonites moved into the area and services also held in their newly constructed farm homes. After 1800 John Graybill, Kröebiel's oldest son, served this congregation as well, and used the Shelleys church schoolhouse instead of homes for services. Because travel to church was often slow and by foot on unpaved roads or paths, the Graybill stone meetinghouse was built in 1854, then Lauvers church in 1867. About 1908, the Graybill church name was changed to Cross Roads. Services conveniently alternated among Cross Roads, Lauvers, and the Brick meetinghouses. When the congregation outgrew the stone building, a new brick building was constructed. It was dedicated debt-free on September 27, 1930. With the introduction of automobiles, travel became less burdensome. Since membership at the Brick Church had dwindled, it was no longer used for regular services. Sunday morning services alternated between Cross Roads and Lauvers for many years, then were held at both places beginning in 1989. They were the last two congregations that alternated worship services in the Lancaster Mennonite Conference.

The congregation withdrew from the Lancaster Mennonite Conference in 1994 and became affiliated with the Keystone Mennonite Fellowship. The Cross Roads congregation grew rapidly and was out of space by 2012 when they were offered the Susquehanna Mennonite meetinghouse in Snyder County. Two Cross Roads ordained leaders, Orval Graybill and Brian Stauffer, along with half of the membership, formed a new congregation, and they meet in the Susquehanna Meeting House near Port Trevorton.

Cross Roads opened its first Sunday school on April 4, 1897, at 2:00 p.m. The attendance was forty-five persons with an offering of thirty-six cents. In the early years, the Sunday school was often closed in the winter months, but became year-round in 1917. A sewing circle was organized in 1919 and held in the homes of various members. From 1922 to 1941 the women met in a vacant house on sewing day. Bishop W. W. Graybill's sons picked up sewing machines with their horse and wagon, one at a time, on sewing circle day.

When the Brick Church was renovated in 1941, the monthly all-day sewing circle was held there. In 1995 it was moved to the Cross Roads church basement.

CIVIL WAR ERA

In the 1860s the Civil War brought another crisis of conscience for the Mennonites and Amish in Juniata County. Again, some young men enlisted but many held to the nonresistant beliefs of their church and paid a heavy fine to be exempt from the army. An 1862 list of conscientious objectors from Juniata County includes many Mennonite surnames such as Auker, Benner, Dysinger, Graybill, Haldeman, Kanagy, Lauver, Musser, Seiber, Shelley, and Weaver.⁹

Lauvers Mennonite Church

Juniata Mennonite congregations grew steadily, and more members were moving west of Richfield and Evendale. Jacob and Catherine Lauver sold a one-acre plot of land near Evendale for fifty dollars to build the Lauvers Mennonite meetinghouse in 1867. The plot was referred to as “a brushy place.” Families among the charter members were Aukers, Gingrichs, Haldemans, Kauffmans, Lauvers, Myers, Rines, Shellenbergers, and Oberholtzers. John Gingrich, who died on May 18, 1868, was the first person laid to rest in the new Lauvers Mennonite cemetery. The first and only wedding that took place in the original stone building was a double wedding on October 13, 1925, when J. Roy Graybill wed Mary Ferster and Nevin Bender married Esther Lauver. At that time weddings were usually conducted in the bride’s home or the bishop’s house.

By 1928 the building was crowded with worshipers so members decided to replace the stone structure with a new 40 × 60-foot brick building. The total cost for the structure amounted to \$7,432.19. Even four-year-old J. Lloyd Gingrich contributed four dollars from his savings account for the project. Other improvements and renovations took place at various times. The most recent and largest addition took place in 2006 when the church was enlarged and renovated to make the building handicapped accessible.¹⁰

Lauvers has the distinction of being the location for the first known Mennonite African American baptism. Cloyd Carter and his parents, Robert and Susan/Susanna Carter, were baptized at Lauvers Mennonite Church by Bishop William Acker on April 21, 1897. Just prior to that date, A. D. Wenger

preached powerful evangelistic meetings in Juniata County. Many responded to God's call on their life and a class of thirty applicants was baptized and received church membership. Some chose to be part of the Lauvers congregation, while others, like the Carter family, chose membership at Lost Creek Mennonite Church.¹¹

Lauvers has been well represented on the mission field through the years. William G. Lauver and his wife went to Argentina, South America, as missionaries in 1921. Clinton and Maybell Ferster, also pioneer missionaries, sailed to Tanganyika (Tanzania), East Africa, in 1935. In more recent years, missionaries have gone to Haiti, Gambia, Ghana, and various points of voluntary service in the United States. The Lauvers congregation transferred its affiliation from Lancaster Mennonite Conference to Conservative Mennonite Conference in 2012.

Delaware Mennonite Church

The Delaware Mennonite congregation met in private homes for services for many decades before a plot of land was purchased from Christian G. and Sarah Ann (Benner) Shelley in 1871 for the purpose of building a meetinghouse. Christian was the son of minister Henry Shelley, who died in 1850. The brick building was heated with small ten-plate stoves and coal oil provided fuel for the lights. A shed between the church and the cemetery provided shelter for horses during a service.¹²

In the early days of the congregation, the ministers occasionally traveled to Pfoutz Valley near Millerstown to conduct services for the Mennonites living there. Casper Acker was an early minister in that area as well. The group met either in the Wardville or Lock schoolhouse. A meeting was held at the Delaware Mennonite Church in 1898 about building a meetinghouse in Pfoutz Valley, and interest was expressed, but it never happened. Eventually, the members either moved away or joined other local churches.¹³ By 1925 a basement was excavated under the Delaware Mennonite church and within a few years, coal oil lights were exchanged for electricity. When the old building was crowded and in need of repairs, the church worked together as a team to build a new meetinghouse on the same property. The facility was dedicated on October 24, 1953, and the old meetinghouse used for a Christian school from 1954 to 1988. Today the Juniata Mennonite School near McAlisterville serves the succeeding generations of students. A group of families left the Delaware congregation to form the Goodwill Mennonite Church in 1967, and is affiliated with the Eastern Pennsylvania Mennonite

Church. Lost Creek and Delaware continued to alternate Sunday services until July 1979 when they saw the need to conduct services in both churches every Sunday. The Delaware congregation is affiliated with the Lancaster Mennonite Conference.

REACHING OUT

Mennonites have always believed in helping their neighbors. With this sense of community, the Juniata District reached out to assist the Susquehanna Mennonite Church about fifteen miles away in Port Trevorton, Snyder County. That congregation, established in 1879, worshiped in the Brubaker schoolhouse until their meetinghouse was built in 1890. A group met at the Brick Church near Richfield to elect trustees and discuss the need for a place of worship and a burial ground for the Mennonites in the eastern region known as the "Big River District." The first service was held in a newly constructed building on October 26, 1890. The local bishop, Jacob S. Graybill, was ill and unable to attend, so Jonas H. Martin from Lancaster County and John M. Zimmerman were in charge of the service. The church thrived for the next century, when finally, due to dwindling membership, the building was transferred to the Cross Roads Mennonite Church in 2012. Two of the Cross Roads Mennonite ministry and half the membership transferred to the Susquehanna meetinghouse and are affiliated with the Keystone Mennonite Fellowship.¹⁴ Susquehanna Mennonite Church was not the last or only time the Juniata District reached out to surrounding counties. The Buffalo Mennonite Church near Lewisburg, Union County, was established under their wing in 1949 when some Juniata County families and other Mennonites moved into that area. In recent years, the Buffalo congregation transferred its affiliation to the Conservative Mennonite Conference.

During the 1950s the Susquehanna congregation and the Juniata churches banded together to establish a mission outreach at the Locust Grove School House near Meiserville, Snyder County. Eventually local interest waned and the mission was discontinued about 1958. Currently the schoolhouse is a private residence. Another outreach of the Juniata District was the Millmont Mennonite Church near Millmont, Union County, established in 1963. That congregation is now affiliated with the Mid-Atlantic Mennonite Fellowship. A fourth outreach congregation served by the district was the Valley Mennonite Chapel located near Madisonburg, Centre County. Today that small, rural congregation is affiliated with the Keystone Mennonite

Fellowship. Currently, there are more than a dozen Mennonite congregations in Juniata County of various affiliations.

JUNIATA COUNTY AMISH SETTLEMENTS

In addition to Mennonites, other Anabaptist groups settled in Juniata County. The first Amish presence was in the Oakland Mills area about 1806. Joseph Hostetler (Hochstetler) and his two sons were among the first to own a farm there. Joseph was the son of Jacob Hostetler, whose family was attacked by Indians in 1757 in Berks County. Joseph's mother and some of his siblings were killed in that attack.¹⁵ Joseph may have lived in the area a few years before he purchased the farm in Fermanagh Township, Juniata County (then Mifflin County), in 1810. Other Amish settlers followed in a steady stream to the Lost Creek settlement that included family surnames such as Byler, Headings, Hertzler, Hooley, Kauffman, Kurtz, Lantz, Mast, Renno, Rickenbaugh, Sieber, Speicher, Stutzman, Swarey, Yoder, and Zook/Zug. The Amish moved away about eighty years later, due to differences of opinion on biblical applications and the opportunity of cheaper farming land in Nebraska. They left behind a few burial grounds and some descendants who had transferred to the nearby Lost Creek Mennonite Church. Many of the Lost Creek Amish migrated to Nebraska where they pioneered a new settlement.

The well-known "Rosanna of the Amish" moved to the Juniata County Amish settlement with her foster parents in 1842 when she was nearly four years old. Rosanna McGonegal Yoder (1837–95), an Irish Catholic orphan, lived near Jericho with her parents, Christian and Elizabeth (Yoder) Kauffman. After Christian Kauffman died, Elizabeth married widower Shem Yoder and Rosanna moved with them to Big Valley in Mifflin County. Rosanna married Christian Z. Yoder, and their son, Joseph W. Yoder (1872–1956), published in 1940 the book *Rosanna of the Amish* as an homage to his mother and a means of educating others and dispelling stereotypes about the Amish. The book is one of the best-known accounts of Amish life and principles.¹⁶ Joseph and his mother are buried in Locust Grove Cemetery in Belleville, Mifflin County.

Another early Amish settlement was established in the 1830s west of the Juniata River around Mifflin, Port Royal, Academia, Walnut, and Spruce Hill. This Tuscarora settlement consisted of common Amish family surnames such as Blank, Esh, Glick, Hertzler, Kanagy, Kauffman, Reihl, Swarey, Schmucker, Yoder, and Zook/Zug. It seems a more liberal attitude

led to dissolving the settlement in 1880. Many in the Tuscarora settlement were attracted to fertile soils in the Big Valley, Mifflin County, where a large grouping of Amish thrive today. They left behind several burial grounds that serve as a reminder of their Juniata County presence. Although the Tuscarora settlement did not depart from many of the traditional Amish practices, this may have been the harbinger of the present day Amish-Mennonite groups who value a conservative lifestyle but have also adopted some of the practices of the Mennonite groups. Many of the Tuscarora Amish eventually moved to Mifflin County, where a large Amish settlement exists today.

Amish returned to the Oakland Mills area in 1950. German worship services are held in the homes of the members. There are no meetinghouses, but small schoolhouses dot the countryside, where children receive an eighth-grade education.

Juniata County Church of the Brethren

Another Anabaptist group with early beginnings in Juniata County is located in Bunkertown. In 1708, well over 300 years ago, the Church of the Brethren originated in Germany. Alexander Mack Sr. was influenced by Pietism and Anabaptism when he established a group who simply called themselves the "Brethren." While many Anabaptist groups baptize by pouring, the Brethren practice baptism by immersion.¹⁷ Their distinctive immersion practice soon led to the common names "Dunkers" or "Tunkers," meaning "to dip." Another distinguishing feature of the Brethren is the Love Feast, an important occasion for the groups that descend from the Brethren, including the Church of the Brethren, Old German Baptist Brethren, and Dunkard Brethren. They regularly practice the Love Feast resembling the Last Supper as instituted by Jesus with His disciples in Luke 22:7–22 and John 13:1–20. Feet washing, a simple meal, and the communion service are observed at the Love Feast. Although the Moravians later adopted a Love Feast, the Brethren first instituted the Love Feast during the early eighteenth century.¹⁸

As a result of severe persecution in Germany, Peter Becker led a group of Brethren immigrants to the New World in 1719 and established a congregation in Pennsylvania. Mack later led a second group of immigrants to Pennsylvania in 1729. A major schism in 1880 resulted in three factions. The largest group, the German Baptist Brethren adopted the name Church of the Brethren in 1908.

In 1838 the first Brethren Church in Juniata County, the Bunkertown Church, was erected. The meetinghouse was placed on a plot of ground

donated by John Shellenberger, son of the immigrant pioneer who purchased land in 1780. When asked for a price for the land, Shellenberger replied, "Nothing but your goodwill." Therefore, until 1941, the church was called the Goodwill Meeting House; the allied cemetery in Bunkertown continues to carry the name Goodwill Cemetery. Peter and David Shellenberger, sons of the immigrant, were early ministers of the Lost Creek congregation. The church building was rebuilt in 1891 with an addition added in 1960. The expanded building was used until 2002 when it was sold to the Cocolamus Mennonite Church. This congregation, affiliated with the Hope Mennonite Fellowship, uses the facility for church services and a private school.¹⁹ The Bunkertown Church of the Brethren built a new and larger church on an adjoining property. Another Church of the Brethren congregation with a presence in Juniata County includes the Free Spring Church of the Brethren near McAlisterville established in 1990.

Juniata County Brethren-in-Christ Churches

The Brethren-in-Christ Church denomination in Juniata County dates to 1788 when Jacob Engle and a group of Mennonites met near Marietta, Pennsylvania, for Bible study. They came to the conclusion that the biblical mode of baptism was to be immersed three times, representing the Triune Godhead. As most of the early members lived near the Susquehanna, they came to be known as the River Brethren. During the Civil War, this nonresistant group adopted the name Brethren-in-Christ when they registered with the Union government of the United States. Today Brethren-in-Christ are scattered across the United States and Canada and in more than twenty-three countries. The denominational headquarters are located at Grantham, near the institution they founded, Messiah College.²⁰

Cedar Grove Brethren-in-Christ congregation of Mifflintown was established in the mid-1800s as a small body of believers who met in local schoolhouses and various homes. Originally called the Pike Meetinghouse, it was later named the Mount Pleasant Church. The members from this district often walked to Lykens Valley, about thirty miles away, for the Love Feast events. The congregation did not have a meetinghouse until 1930 when the original structure was built at a cost of \$4,817.40. Greely Gingrich donated the land for a place of worship. Additions to the original structure took place in 1965, 1976, 1995, and 2003. The Cedar Grove congregation has assisted in establishing new congregations in neighboring counties in the past few decades.

MENNONITE AND AMISH DISTINCTIONS

Many non-Mennonites are confused by the wide variety of applications and practices of the Amish and Mennonites groups. One Mennonite writer has illustrated this with the metaphor of the hedges people place around their property. Some prefer high hedges that yield only a limited view of the outside world. Their desire is to protect children from wandering into dangerous places. Others prefer low hedges, which are easier to step over. This allows more freedom to move between the property and the world around them. Rather than seeking protection, they are simply establishing boundary lines. As there are varying heights of hedges, so the Amish and Mennonites have varying standards of separation from the world and its influence.

The most conservative Amish and Old Order Mennonite groups drive a horse and buggy, avoid modern conveniences in their homes, and have very simple, plain clothing. They view higher education as a danger for their children. In contrast, many Mennonites drive cars, have electricity, and telephones. Many do not use the radio or television and other forms of entertainment that might hinder biblical, moral and spiritual values. They encourage modest dress and a simple lifestyle. Higher education is accepted as a way to prepare for Christian service. In general, many Mennonites and Amish differences are the expression of how they choose to be “in the world, but not of it.”

Like some members of many other church groups, some Mennonite and Amish individuals are not truly committed to God and a biblical lifestyle. For some, there is the temptation to assume their simple lifestyle or good works will earn their salvation. Others are tempted to “sow their wild oats” or discard biblical principles. It is not wise to measure a whole group by certain individuals. Both deviations hinder the message of the Gospel to the world around them.²¹

Generally, Amish and Mennonites are widely acclaimed for their beautiful quilts, and community barn raisings, but the deeper richness of their lives is a shared faith and community. Nor is their generosity limited to their own community. Van loads of Amish and Mennonites can be seen traveling from Juniata County to assist residents in other parts of the country who have suffered the devastating effects of a tornado, earthquake, or other tragedy. Mennonite Disaster Service functions under the umbrella of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), a global relief agency established in 1920 of inter-Mennonite connections. Christian Aid Ministries, established in 1981

is also an important Mennonite relief agency in the role of disaster service. They have teams in many states that are on twenty-four-hour call as first responders in the event of a major disaster such as forest fires, hurricanes, or tornados in their region.

The Juniata County Anabaptist story continues to be an intriguing saga of faith. We reflect in appreciation for the sacrifices and bravery that Johannes Kröebiel and many others exemplified. Their vision and enduring faith helped to open a whole new territory in our beautiful Keystone state. The scenic, rural Juniata Valley continues to attract Mennonites and Amish from other counties and states with its fertile farm land and peaceful surroundings.

BETTY ANN LANDIS is the wife of one, mother of six, mother of two children chosen by love, and grandmother of sixteen. She is a follower of Jesus Christ and an active member in a conservative Mennonite congregation. She currently serves as assistant director at Juniata Mennonite Historical Center, Richfield, Pa. She and her husband, Marvin Landis celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in 2015 and live on a crop farm at Liverpool, Pennsylvania.

NOTES

1. Spencer L. Kraybill and Noah L. Zimmerman, *History of a John Graybill Family in America 1681–1981*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore, MD: Gateway Press, 1982), 30. Fort Pomfret is located at 1829 Winey Road, Richfield. Pennsylvania Land Warrantee Records and Survey Book C-79, p. 112, Pennsylvania State Archives.
2. An excellent overview is Donald B. Kraybill, *Concise Encyclopedia of Amish, Brethren, Hutterites, and Mennonites* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 10.
3. Leroy Beachey, *Unser Leit: The Story of the Amish* (Amberson, PA: Scroll Publishing, 2011).
4. John L. Ruth, *The Earth Is the Lord's* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2001), 119.
5. Kraybill and Zimmerman, *History of a John Graybill Family*, 73–74.
6. In 1755 the Jacob King family migrated to the “Big Mahanoy” (Penns Creek) and became victims of the Penns Creek Massacre along with some other “Dutch” settlers. See Ruth, *The Earth Is the Lord's*.
7. Leann Lauver, *Cross Roads Mennonite Church* (Richfield, PA: Juniata Mennonite Historical Society, 2009).
8. Betty Ann Landis, *Brick Mennonite Church* (Richfield, PA: Juniata Mennonite Historical Society, 2014).

9. Editor, *Mennonite Research Journal* (April 1965): 21.
10. Betty Ann Landis, *Lauvers Mennonite Church* (Richfield, PA: Juniata Mennonite Historical Society, 2010).
11. Bishop William Acker 1897 baptism record, preserved at Juniata Mennonite Historical Center.
12. Mary (Peachey) Graybill, *Delaware Mennonite Church* (Richfield, PA: Juniata Mennonite Historical Society, 2005).
13. Harold Saner, Richfield, PA, quote from Juniata Mennonite Historical Society annual meeting on July 9, 2005.
14. Betty Ann Landis, *Susquehanna Mennonite Church* (Richfield, PA: Juniata Mennonite Historical Society, 2013).
15. This incident is well documented and versions of it can be found in Eli J. Hochstetler, *The Descendants of Jacob Hochstetler* (Elkhart, IN: The Hochstetler Family Association, 1977), and Beth Hostetler Mark, compiler and editor, *Our Flesh and Blood: A Documentary History of the Jacob Hochstetler Family during the French and Indian War Period 1757–1765*, 2nd ed. (Elkhart, IN: The Jacob Hochstetler Family Association, 2003).
16. Joseph W. Yoder *Rosanna of the Amish* (Huntington, PA: Yoder Publishing Company, 1940), 27–52.
17. Donald B. Kraybill, *Concise Encyclopedia of Amish, Brethren Hutterites, and Mennonites* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 29.
18. Donald F. Durnbaugh, editor, *The Brethren Encyclopedia* (Elgin, IL: Lakeside Press, 1983), 174–75.
19. Mary Alice Charlton, “A Glimpse at Bunkertown,” *Echoes: The Newsletter of the Juniata Mennonite Historical Society*, April 2013, 6.
20. Messiah College- One College Ave., Mechanicsburg, PA, 17055.
21. Brenda Weaver, *Answers to Questions about the Amish and Mennonites* (Dundee, OH: Calvary Publications, n.d.).