

## OTELIA'S HOOPS: GETTYSBURG DUNKERS AND THE CIVIL WAR

*Stephen Longenecker*  
*Bridgewater College*



FIGURE 1: Mary, Otelia, and Anna Sherfy (l-r); Adams County Historical Society, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

Otelia Sherfy and her sisters, Mary, and Anna, lived on a peach farm one mile south of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. In 1863 they were 18, 16, and 13 years old, respectively.

They were Dunkers. Or, more accurately, they were the children of Dunkers. Otelia, Mary, and Anna were too young to join a faith community that practiced adult baptism, as were their brothers Raphael, John, and Ernest (photographs not extant). But

---

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORY: A JOURNAL OF MID-ATLANTIC STUDIES, VOL. 76, NO. 1, 2009.  
Copyright © 2009 The Pennsylvania Historical Association

their mother, Mary Sherfy, and their paternal grandmother, Mary Heagan, who lived with the family, were members, and their father, Joseph, served as a minister. On July 2, 1863, a battle destroyed their home and severely damaged their peach orchard.

The Civil War's fury, literally on the doorsteps of the Sherfys, impacted their religious life but less dramatically than popular and scholarly thought often suggests. James McPherson and William Cooper, for example, portray the war as the "most momentous event in American history" that created "fundamental changes that transformed the country." They cite the end of slavery, the permanence of the Union, and three Constitutional Amendments—the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth—as core shifts in American society brought by the war. Likewise, Garry Wills has argued that Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address created an "intellectual revolution" that permanently altered Constitutional thought.<sup>1</sup> Students of religious history display more caution about anointing these four violent years as a second American revolution, but many, including Gardner Shattuck, Charles Reagan Wilson, and Phillip Shaw Paludan, emphasize significant change in the form of army camp revivals, Lost Cause theology, or the rise of the southern black churches. Others, such as Anne Rose and Samuel Hill, see gradual change in rising secularism, social reform, and denominational organization rather than a landmark event.<sup>2</sup>

The experiences of the Sherfys and other members of their Marsh Creek congregation support claims that the Civil War's impact on religion was conspicuous but measured. Change for Dunkers was particularly notable because they distrusted it. Many Dunkers, for example, considered Otelia's hoops as part of the sinful world, best avoided, and her stylish apparel created tension with the fellowship. Yet even this conservative denomination felt the impact of the war. In obvious ways, the battle at Gettysburg touched Otelia, her family, and the Marsh Creek congregation very directly, and the larger war accelerated change in the Dunkers' system. In particular, Dunkers became attracted to the Unionist cause, a worldly movement that, like Otelia's fashion, threatened their separation from the mainstream. Even so, many of the Dunkers' practices persisted, making the war's impact something short of a massive turning point but nevertheless significant.

## I.

In their photograph Otelia, Mary, and Anna do not look like Dunkers or even the children of Dunkers, much less the daughter of a preacher. Dunkers,

founded by Alexander Mack in 1708, belonged to the Anabaptist and Pietist branches of Protestantism, and they usually called themselves simply “the Brethren.”<sup>3</sup> They stressed the separation of believers from worldly sin and unity among the fellowship. Members of the faith community were not to pollute it with worldliness or disturb its harmony by rejecting its guidance on nonconformity to the mainstream. Dunkers held that this separation and consensus embodied the New Testament church, which they sought to restore.<sup>4</sup> Dress that avoided worldly fashion exemplified New Testament-like faith, but the Sherfy girls in their photograph, especially Otelia in her hoops, did not.

To accomplish separation, the Dunkers did many things differently. They did not, for example, participate in mainstream religion. Gettysburg’s faith community was remarkably diverse and included a Lutheran seminary, two Lutheran congregations—one of which worshipped in both German and English—and Methodist, Presbyterian, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, and Catholic fellowships. In the surrounding area United Brethren and the Society of Friends added to the mix. The Sherfy’s lived on a farm just outside town, and as they walked or rode into Gettysburg along the Emmitsburg Road, they passed Lutheran, Catholic, and AME Zion neighbors. Relations with non-Dunker neighbors were amicable, but Dunkers did not worship with them and, in particular, spurned the camp meetings that graced the summer season. Indeed, Dunkers opted for separation rather than cooperation with fellow Christians.

Several rituals particularly differentiated Dunkers from other religious movements in the area. Members with life-threatening illnesses received annointment.<sup>5</sup> When Dunkers baptized, they immersed the entire person three times, once each, as instructed Alexander Mack, for “God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.” Jesus’s immersion as an adult established baptism for adult believers only and, in the words of Mack, “certainly not children.”<sup>6</sup> Otelia, Mary, and Anna would have to wait until their twenties. Insistence on adult baptism separated Dunkers from many Protestant traditions, and total immersion three times was very distinctive. It gave the fellowship its nickname, “Dunkers,” and lay at the core of its identity.

Love Feast, the Dunker’s most cherished ritual, was particularly distinctive. Because I Corinthians 11:20 describes the event in the Upper Room as a “supper” rather than a “morning or noon meal,” Brethren insisted that this “Love Feast” occur only in the evening. Similarly, as Jesus washed the feet of the disciples prior to the meal, Brethren celebrations of the Lord’s Supper

always included footwashing. After the meal Jesus broke the bread and distributed the wine, so communion concluded the service. Congregations usually held Love Feast in the spring and again in the fall, which was the high point of the religious year. Admittedly, other traditions, particularly Moravians and Methodists, also practiced a Love Feast but only the Brethren adhered to a rigid, literal recreation of the Lord's Supper, including footwashing.<sup>7</sup>

Joseph Sherfy's service as a minister also reflected Dunker differences with other religious communions. His path to leadership was typical for Dunkers. In 1851 a congregational council of all members, including women, rather than an assembly of clergy or a bishop, selected Sherfy as one of two new deacons. In this office Sherfy was unordained, but he assisted ministers, directed support for the poor, and visited membership. Two years later the congregation elevated him to the first degree of the ministry, and he became an exhorter or speaker, a young, just-beginning spiritual shepherd who commented on sermons without preaching. Dunkers had two other stages of leadership: ministers, who were more mature and had passed through the exhorter stage, and elders or "bishops," who were still older, more experienced ministers. The senior elder, or elder-in-charge, supervised the fellowship. Peach-grower Sherfy, like all of these voluntary "free ministers," served for life without pay and was self-trained or guided by informal mentors. In contrast, the Lutherans had a seminary in Gettysburg, a stark reminder of the gap between the free ministry Dunkers and the degree-holding clerics of most other denominations, and even the African Methodist Episcopal Zion congregation, occupying the bottom of the town's economic ladder, dug deeply to pay its pastor.<sup>8</sup> Other congregations in Gettysburg, which included a Catholic parish and Methodist, Presbyterian, Reformed, and two Lutheran societies, all used seminary-trained, paid professionals. To be sure, Dunker ministry was not mainstream.<sup>9</sup>

The building in which the Sherfy family worshipped additionally reinforced Dunker outsidership. Organized in 1805, in 1830 the Marsh Creek congregation built its first meetinghouse several miles outside of Gettysburg. In 1852 the fellowship constructed an additional house of worship to serve members who lived a bit distant from the original location. Plainness dominated this second structure, a framed 34 x 34 foot building, "weather boarded in the rough," according to the Marsh Creek Church Book. Interior walls were plastered and the room had a ceiling covering the rafters, but otherwise the décor was minimalist. Instead of rented pews, which emphasized status,

worshippers sat on “common benches” with backs, while preachers faced them from behind a ten-foot table on a simple platform, one or two steps above floor level.<sup>10</sup> The absence of a raised pulpit and a communion rail minimized distance between ministers and laity. The Sherfy’s place of worship was also without steeple and decorations, which further separated it from most other Protestant buildings in Gettysburg.<sup>11</sup>

Other practices further separated Dunkers from worldly sin and the Protestant mainstream, which they usually considered one and the same. Nonresistance, for instance, came from the example set by Jesus, including his command to Peter to “put up thy sword into his place,” and Dunkers refused to participate in community events like militia drills or the election of militia officers.<sup>12</sup> Neither did Dunkers swear oaths because Christ warned that anything more than yea or nay “cometh of evil” (Matthew 5:37).<sup>13</sup> They avoided fashion, like Otelia’s hoops, and dressed plainly. Boasts of local merchants about the availability of the “largest and best assortment of READY-MADE CLOTHING ever brought to Gettysburg” in “magnificent styles” and the “most approved fashions” had little appeal to nonconformist Dunkers.<sup>14</sup> Men, especially ministers like Joseph Sherfy, wore untrimmed beards because Dunkers took literally Old Testament law that commanded priests “not to mar the corners of the beard.”<sup>15</sup>

Nonconformity to the sinful world, then, as designed by the scriptures, bore much weight in the Dunker blueprint for the restored New Testament church. True, Dunkers were not totally isolated from their neighbors. They participated in the local economy—the Sherfy’s advertised their peaches—and in 1860 their five children attended public grammar school.<sup>16</sup> But in many ways Dunkers were separate. Ritual, especially baptism and Love Feast; and practices; such as free ministers, meetinghouse architecture, nonresistance, and plainness; molded Dunkers as strongly nonconformist in their pursuit of separation from the sinful world.

But it was not enough for the faithful to be distinct. As Dunkers migrated to the margins of the mainstream, Brethren believed that they should do it together. The New Testament church was separate from the world, but it was also a community. A variety of institutional practices and mechanisms facilitated a unified approach to Dunker nonconformity. Although Dunkers believed that the Holy Spirit wrote God’s laws on each member’s heart, they disdained personal interpretation of these commandments as flawed. To illuminate God’s word, Jesus provided the church, and truth came from its collective discernment, not from individual insights.



FIGURES 2 and 3: Joseph and Mary Sherfy, radiating plainness in late middle age, undated photographs, Adams County Historical Society, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

The denomination's combined wisdom came most commonly from annual gatherings called Yearly Meetings. (Joseph Sherfy represented his congregation at the 1857 meeting in Washington County, Maryland.)<sup>17</sup> Yearly Meeting particularly helped Dunkers maintain the "ancient order," as they called their tradition, amidst the changing larger culture. The annual gatherings, for example, kept the Sherfys from the popular camp meetings, and they also prohibited practices associated with the movement, such as prayer with uplifted hands or the anxious bench (designated seats for those desiring conversion).<sup>18</sup>

Yearly Meetings also responded to the early nineteenth-century consumer revolution, which threatened plainness by greatly increasing the availability of inexpensive manufactured goods. The annual gathering banned, for example, carpets, worldly furniture, and sleigh bells, characterizing the "tinkling of bells . . . improper for brethren." Because the changing economy made fashion increasingly accessible to middling rural families who typically filled Dunker benches, Yearly Meeting gave special attention to clothing and appearance. It placed stylish caps and fashionable bonnets out-of-bounds, and when hoop skirts became popular in the late 1850s, they, too, became off-limits.<sup>19</sup> Mary Sherfy's photograph, taken late in the century, shows acceptance of Yearly Meeting's guidance in avoiding worldliness: She wore no jewelry, a simple hairstyle, a bonnet instead of a fashionable hat, and a plain

dress with a form-hiding cape over the shoulders and the front. Mary Sherfy was as unfashionable as possible, and the minority status created by her garb struck Dunkers, including Yearly Meeting, as consistent with obedience to the scriptures. Just as important, her appearance demonstrated conformity to the order of the Brethren, which enhanced unity.

If the Sherfys or other Dunkers strayed too far from the boundaries laid down by the fellowship, they threatened harmony. Discipline, typically applied by the congregational council, restored unity and discouraged individuals from practicing their own interpretation of separation. Excommunication was a last resort, coming at the end of a process that included admonition, visits from ministers, and withholding of certain privileges, such as Love Feast; but in the end Marsh Creek was willing to expel.<sup>20</sup> Reconciliation, however, came quickly if council deemed repentance heart-felt.<sup>21</sup>

The Yearly Meeting, then, provided uniform interpretation of God's law across the denomination, but generally Dunkers relied on the local level for enforcement. As Dunkers disciplined, forgave, and reconciled, congregational authority lay at the heart of their separate community.

Yet despite the efforts of Yearly Meeting and congregational council, the Brethren order still felt stress. Sometimes the lines between the fellowship and the world were unclear or individuals pushed the boundaries, and notwithstanding the emphasis on conformity, the system occasionally demonstrated flexibility. Politics, for example, interested the Sherfys even though Yearly Meeting identified this activity with the worldly kingdom. Gettysburg, like most antebellum communities, had a rich political life. Two newspapers, one Whig and the other Democrat, competed for allegiance, and local meetings and caucuses kept citizens active. Merchants even appealed to this interest. For example, under the headline "'Know Nothing' Meeting" one merchant reported that "The Know Nothings" would meet at his store, "not to tear asunder former parties, but to examine his stock of new Spring and Summer goods." In fact, this was not a political meeting but merely a catchy way to advertise. The Sherfys and other Dunkers were not to partake of this political culture.<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, in 1835 Mary Sherfy, a silkworm buff, sent a ball of silk and a letter of political support to President Andrew Jackson. He replied with the gift of a copper bowl and a handle for making silk, which became treasured objects shown to special guests.<sup>23</sup> But this happened prior to Joseph Sherfy's election to the ministry, and apparently the family withdrew from politics after he answered the call to serve his faith community.

Otelia Sherfy's hoops represented another potential intrusion of the world into the fellowship. Perhaps Otelia's photograph was taken before Yearly Meeting first made hoops unacceptably worldly in 1861, and, regardless, her non-member status kept her from discipline. But as a participant in the larger Marsh Creek community, the pursuit of fashion, by a minister's daughter no less, endangered the otherworldliness and unity of the faith community.<sup>24</sup>

Otelia's photograph also fell outside the order. In 1849 Yearly Meeting had advised against "likenesses," an admonition it repeated in 1857 and 1858, when it cited Romans 1:23 ("changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man") and Deuteronomy 27:15 ("Cursed be the man who maketh any carved or melted image, an abomination unto the Lord."). After the Civil War when Mary and Joseph Sherfy had their photos taken and Otelia sat again for the photographer, Yearly Meeting still considered likenesses worldly. (Yearly Meeting repealed its ban on photographs in 1904.) The hoops and photographs confirm that although the Sherfys were out of step with their change-resisting fellowship on these two questions, they nevertheless remained generally in good standing with it. Sometimes the system bent.<sup>25</sup>

Race also disrupted harmony at Marsh Creek. Yearly Meeting's instructions on race, including slavery, were consistently progressive and once again outside the mainstream. The Dunker assembly cast its vote against slavery early and often. In 1782, one of the first recorded annual gatherings, delegates barred Dunkers from owning slaves and participating in slave trade, and in 1812 Yearly Meeting simply demanded that slavery "should be abolished as soon as possible," a position it repeatedly reaffirmed. In 1845 the annual gathering added that hiring slaves, i.e., renting them, was tantamount to ownership and likewise unchristian.<sup>26</sup>

Yearly Meeting also wanted African Americans accepted on an equal footing with whites and for local associations to "make no difference on account of color." It specifically banned discriminatory seating. (Southern Protestants often restricted slaves in the back or in galleries.) This attempt to create racially blind harmony, however, backfired when some whites withheld the Holy Kiss from members of color. The Holy Kiss was a greeting exchanged by members of the same gender, another example of Brethren unusualness, and new members received it as they rose out of the baptismal water. But some whites refused to kiss blacks. Yearly Meeting termed this white resistance a "weakness," an extraordinary position in a very racist

society, and reiterated that black members should receive the distinctive greeting and that full racial equality was the "more perfect way." Yet, enough congregations balked at exchanging the Holy Kiss with blacks that Yearly Meeting could not enforce its position.<sup>27</sup>

Marsh Creek was one of the balkers. In 1851 its council decided to greet black members only "by the right hand of fellowship," still an egalitarian gesture that many other whites would have opposed.<sup>28</sup> In 1855 the congregation sent a question to Yearly Meeting asking, "How is a church to proceed where their Bishop cannot conscientiously teach or practice the salutation of the Kiss at Baptisms, Ordinations, and at the communions."<sup>29</sup> The church book does not indicate why the Holy Kiss troubled the elder, David Bosserman, but odds are high that it related to race, which during this period was the only aspect of the Holy Kiss seriously disputed across the denomination. Yearly Meeting mediated the quarrel between the elder and his congregation,<sup>30</sup> but conflict soon returned. In 1859 the Marsh Creek skipped its spring Love Feast "owing to the want of union between the Bishop and the other members."<sup>31</sup> Again, Marsh Creek kept silent on further details, but no other disagreements besides race and the Holy Kiss appear in the records, leading to the suspicion that once more this question divided the body of believers.

Yet despite the disunity of hoops and photographs and the discord of race and the Holy Kiss, harmony normally prevailed at Marsh Creek. In fact, these bumps in the road to unity demonstrate that this religious fellowship absorbed change and dissent in small amounts. But when the Sherfys entered the baptismal waters, dressed plainly, sat on benches rather than pews, shunned camp meetings, washed feet, attended Yearly Meeting, elected preachers, answered the congregation's call to the ministry, voted to expel, and voted to forgive, they participated in a society bent on preserving separation and unity. That the Dunkers referred to this system as their "ancient order" testifies to its conservatism. When the Sherfys got too close to the mainstream or hesitated to conform to the fellowship, they threatened the order, which is why the photograph of Otelia's hoops is so striking.

## II.

Gradually the nonconformist denomination and the separate community at Marsh Creek, so wary of change, felt the effect of the nation's inability

to settle peacefully its difference over slavery. Even before Fort Sumter the secession crisis intruded on the religious life of the Dunkers, and the pressure only intensified after the hostilities began. In 1863 the full force of war bore down on the Sherfys and other members of their religious society when the military front abruptly appeared in their locale.

Despite their desire to keep temporal politics out of God's house, Dunkers could not completely avoid it. In 1861 the secession crisis jeopardized their Yearly Meeting, which was scheduled for its normal time of Pentecost, or late April, in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley (Rockingham County). In February, with the Deep South already out of the Union, the Dunkers' national periodical, *The Monthly Gospel-Visitor*, questioned the safety of meeting in Virginia and suggested a change in location. Angry Virginia leaders admitted the "excitement that exists in the government" but refused to relocate and accused the editor of encouraging sectionalism within the denomination. Virginia Dunkers denied that their region was dangerous and countered that moving the meeting north would merely shift the risk of travel to southerners. The assembly, then, went ahead as planned in Virginia, but although northerners typically comprised a majority of the delegates, this time only four northern fellowships sent delegates. The minutes nonetheless noted that "dense crowds" met in the meetinghouse, under the tent, and in the grove and that the listeners gathered "as far as the speaker could be heard." The conference further recorded that attendees "enjoyed a feast of fat things together, forgetting, for the time being, the confusion of the political affairs without."<sup>32</sup> But with only four northern congregations represented, the "political affairs without" had undeniably damaged Dunker unity.

Otherwise, it was business as usual for the 1861 Yearly Meeting, which considered typical questions about the order, such as the participation of children in school debates (acceptable), administering communion to those too infirm to attend Love Feast (acceptable only if in the evening and with the other ordinances), and public discussions with opponents about religion and other topics (acceptable for religion but not politics).<sup>33</sup> In 1862 Yearly Meeting in Montgomery County, Ohio, considered seventy-two items of business without mentioning the war.<sup>34</sup>

In 1863 the annual assembly noticed the war a bit more. It maintained the prohibition against political voting but characterized the times as "days of trouble." The first items on the agenda asked for a ruling on Dunkers who served in the military. Nonresistance was a core principle. During the Revolutionary War many Dunkers had paid fines to avoid service, and in

the decades prior to the Civil War the annual meeting repeatedly barred participation in militia drills. At the 1863 gathering, however, the delegates barely uttered a word on this, considering it "not expedient" to discuss, except that "the gospel gave sufficient instruction." Perhaps they feared that a strong statement could make even more difficulties for Dunkers in the Confederacy, who were under duress for pacifism, anti-slavery, and suspected unionism. In fact, for many Southern members of the fellowship the war had become very hard. In Missouri and Kansas fighting forced Dunkers to leave with severe property losses, and in Virginia authorities heavily taxed them for refusing military service. In 1862 approximately one hundred Virginia Dunkers and Mennonites suffered arrest as they fled conscription, and John Kline, moderator of the 1862–64 Yearly Meetings and a Virginian, experienced confinement for several weeks.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, the war years were "days of trouble" for many Dunkers.

Likewise, during the war's first years Marsh Creek felt the conflict in a variety of ways. True, the local society worshipped, washed feet, deliberated in council, admonished members, and elected leadership as it always had. In May, 1863, council advanced Joseph Sherfy to the second level of ministry and installed him on the evening of May 30, following the spring Love Feast. In some ways, the rhythm of religion appeared deaf to the drumbeat of war.<sup>36</sup>

But in other ways the great conflict loomed over the Marsh Creek congregation. Invasion scares swept the area. Gettysburg was just a short ride from the Potomac River and Virginia, and self-appointed scouts patrolled the roads, generating rumors of invasion and subsequent panic. Other alarms had substance. In 1862 Confederates advanced to nearby Sharpsburg, Maryland, approximately fifty miles distant, flooding Gettysburg with refugees, some with their livestock and other property. One month later Confederate cavalry rode through western Adams County, and, according to one report, ventured within four miles of Gettysburg. With danger so close, merchants prepared to move their most valuable goods on short notice, and farmers hid horses in the mountains or east of the Susquehanna River. Individuals routinely kept prized possessions in boxes easily moved. Through this period the church book is silent about war and rumors of war, but surely these events touched Marsh Creeks Dunkers as much as their neighbors.<sup>37</sup>

Additionally, the military's unquenchable need for men included Dunkers. Conscientious objectors like the Dunkers enjoyed the protection of the Pennsylvania Constitution of 1838, which provided that "those who

conscientiously scruple to bear arms shall not be compelled to do so, but shall pay equivalent for service." But identifying Dunkers is hard because they kept no membership lists, and members are recognizable only if the Church Book mentions them or a parent in the course of congregational business. Additionally, most Dunker converts were in their twenties, which meant that young men became draft eligible before they became members though they still belonged to the faith community in the larger sense. Precise quantifiable data, therefore, on Dunker participation in the military is elusive, but without a doubt a draft in 1862 snared several young members of the Marsh Creek fellowship. All but one of them had previously appeared before authorities to affirm nonviolent principles. The state legislature never determined the amount of the commutation fee for those with scruples, and for the moment the drafted Dunkers hung in legal limbo.<sup>38</sup> Increasingly, the war complicated the religious life of the Marsh Creek fellowship.

Suddenly, however, the war experience became overwhelming. As historian Edward Ayers has observed, the fighting came to localities "like a force of nature, uncontrollable and unpredictable." No one, including those who gave the orders, knew where the front would be next, but within hours it could ruin property and change life.<sup>39</sup>

In the summer of 1863 the front abruptly descended on Marsh Creek Dunkers when, with little warning, Robert E. Lee's army crossed the Potomac River and spilled into southern Pennsylvania. Thousands of enemy soldiers quickly swarmed into villages, towns, and small cities, including Chambersburg, Carlisle, Mercersburg, and York.<sup>40</sup>

Confederate troops first entered Gettysburg on June 26, 1863. After driving off local militia, troops under the command of Major General Jubal A. Early galloped into town, shooting and shouting. Early's troops stayed for two days, then left.<sup>41</sup> But on July 1 Confederates returned, and a fierce battle began north and west of town.<sup>42</sup>

The Sherfys probably heard the firing in the distance. As Union Major General John F. Reynolds' First Corps rushed north along the Emmitsburg Road to join the fight, they marched past the Sherfy farm. Joseph and Mary sent their children to a Dunker farm behind Union lines, but the adults stayed home with Joseph drawing water from his well and Mary baking bread for the passing soldiers, who likely damaged fencing and trampled crops.<sup>43</sup>

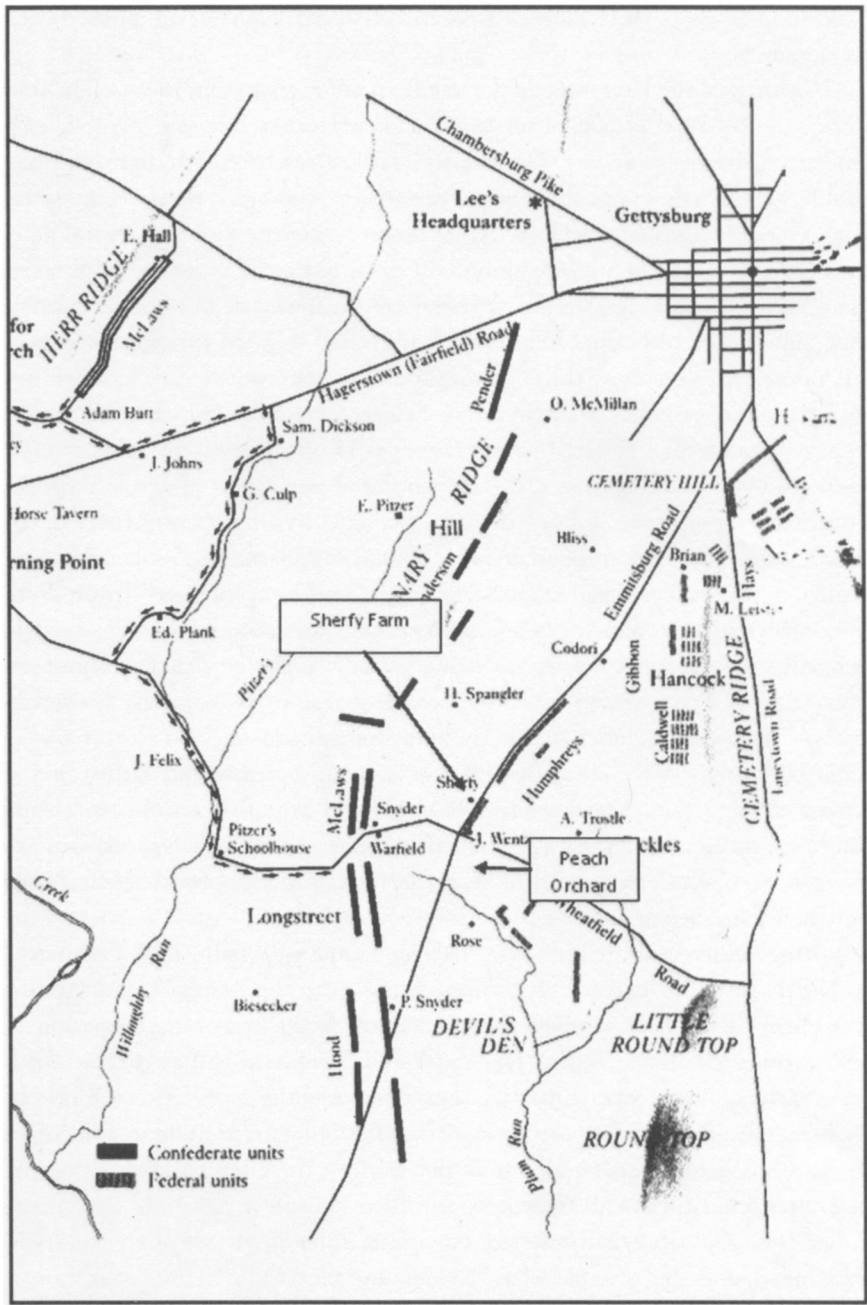
The next day fighting shifted south of Gettysburg. Union troops remained on Cemetery Ridge, to east of the Sherfy farm, and Confederates held the town and a long, low crest called Seminary Ridge, to the west of the Sherfys.

The Emmitsburg Road ran parallel to these two positions in a shallow valley with the Sherfy's home between the two armies.

The adult Sherfys remained on their farm through the morning of July 2. Even as skirmishers fought in the woods approximately one-third of a mile to the west, the Sherfys stayed. When Mary's mother, Catherine Heagen, walked across the farmyard, a stray Minié ball passed through a fence and struck the folds of her skirts, thankfully spent. Heagen picked up the ball and kept it as a souvenir. Around mid-day, Union troops prepared a major advance from Cemetery Ridge to the Emmitsburg Road, and an officer ordered the Sherfys away "on account of danger," in Joseph's words. The adult Sherfys reunited with their children a few miles behind Union lines.<sup>44</sup>

At 1:30 p.m. Union troops commanded by General Dan Sickles advanced to the Emmitsburg Road. Troops in Sherfy's peach orchard occupied a particularly strategic point, one of the highest elevations on the battlefield other than the Round Tops, but they also formed a salient, vulnerable to attack from the south and west and the closest point to southern lines. A Union battery fired between Sherfy's farm buildings at Confederate guns in the woods along Seminary Ridge, and for approximately two and one-half hours the opposing armies pounded each other with artillery. Then late in the afternoon Confederates attacked. Southerners moving through the peach orchard flanked Northern troops along the Emmitsburg Road and drove them back towards Cemetery Ridge. Fierce fighting occurred in the Sherfy farmyard. Northern sharpshooters fired from the house's windows and from the cellar, and Confederates captured fifty enlisted men and four officers on the property, including some still in upstairs rooms as southerners came up the steps. When Confederates advanced and the fighting moved away, dead and wounded animals and humans lay in the yard, around the property, and in the road. Other wounded horses remained on their feet, adding to the gruesome scene. Injured soldiers sought shelter in the barn, which one officer described as "riddled with shot and shell like a sieve from its base to the roof." Later it caught fire. Otelia Sherfy thought that Union artillery shells set it afire on July 3, but others understood that Confederates deliberately burned it. Regardless, approximately one dozen soldiers were too injured to escape and burned to death inside the structure.<sup>45</sup>

On July 3 Confederate batteries on the property contributed to the great artillery duel prior to Confederate assault on the Union center, commonly called "Pickett's Charge." During the night of July 3 skirmishers clashed in the peach orchard, and for a brief period the premises were between the lines.<sup>46</sup> On July 5 a Northern unit on the property buried thirty or forty bodies, bloated and discolored black and purple. Where the barn had stood



**FIGURE 4:** Troop positions at 4:00 p.m., July 2, and the Sherfy House. From *Gettysburg: The Second Day* by Harry F. Pfanz. Copyright © 1987 by the University of North Carolina Press. Used by permission of the publisher. [www.uncpress.unc.edu](http://www.uncpress.unc.edu).

were bodies with their clothes burned off, other bodies half burned, and skeletons.<sup>47</sup>

Nothing could have prepared the Sherfys for what they saw when they returned: Joseph and Rafael on July 6; grandmother Heagen, Mary Sherfy, and the girls the next day. Devastation was everywhere. The barn and hog stable were in ashes, and the fencing was down. The brick walls on the south and west sides of the house were bullet-scarred, and the roof had several holes made by shell fragments. A cannon ball damaged a corner of the house, and another remained lodged in an old cherry tree in the yard. The house's interior had bloodstains and bullet holes, which indicated that the fire had come from all directions. One cow, three calves, and two hogs were dead. Combatants had pulled up or knocked down most of the trees in a new peach orchard, and the mature orchard suffered severe damage. Dead soldiers had already been buried in very shallow graves, but the bodies of horses rotted where they fell, moistened by a heavy rain on July 4 and cooked by the summer heat. Battle trash—guns, haversacks, blankets, bits of clothing, harnesses, broken caissons, canteens, paper, cartridge shells, and stolen civilian property—littered the grounds. Artillery maneuvers left deep ruts in the ground. Confederates had emptied the dresser drawers, and one witness reported “clothes, bonnets, towels, linen, etc., trampled in indistinguishable piles from the house out to the barnyard.” Kitchen and household items, bedding, and clothing were gone. Flies fed off the dead flesh of humans and animals and multiplied at an astonishing rate. Thick swarms of green and blue flies coated fences and bushes. Mary's silk worms had starved to death, and the Jackson heirlooms were gone. The Sherfy farm had “seen the elephant,” the phrase soldiers used for the experience of combat.<sup>48</sup>

Other Dunker farms also saw the elephant but a little less. On July 2 a North Carolina battery that unlimbered near the Michael and Amelia Bushman's farm lane received fire, and Confederate troops participating in the advance on Little Round Top and Devil's Den trudged over their fields and flattened the crops. Christian and Susan Benner lived just behind the Confederate lines to the north of Culp's Hill. Their farm became a hospital, but a Confederate battery also took position on their land and drew enemy fire. John and Suzannah Trostle's farm also became a hospital, and many others near the battlefield suffered damage as units moved through the fields, encamped, and confiscated horses, fodder, and fencing.<sup>49</sup>

Invasion anxiety and conscription had given the Sherfys and other Marsh Creek Dunkers a taste of war, but the uncontrollable, unpredictable force

struck them out of the blue. In its wake it left damaged homes, destroyed crops, and stolen property. It hit them hard.

### III.

As Marsh Creek Dunkers recovered from the fighting, broader pressures related to the war increasingly threatened their conservative faith community with change. When Robert E. Lee's defeated Army of Northern Virginia re-crossed the Potomac, the military front left Adams County, and the Marsh Creek neighborhood once more became the home front. But the war's influence on the Northern homeland and the Dunkers intensified.

Although the clash had been very costly, its aftermath offered farmers small ways to realize compensation. Many helped themselves to material of value left on the battlefield, such as guns, swords, blankets, and harnesses. The government declared these items its property and scavenging became illegal, but souvenir hunters, impromptu entrepreneurs, and farmers desperate for recovery all descended upon the field for relics, objects with re-sale value, or useable items to supplement the cost of rebuilding.<sup>50</sup> One Dunker farmer, a minister, David Blocher, took advantage of the situation even further. Blocher refused access to his property for the purpose of removing bodies without advance payment. Retrieval of already-buried bodies for reburial at home was common, but Blocher was uncooperative until pressured by authorities. Then he kept a fallen Confederate officer's lower jaw, which had a gold plate attached to a set of false teeth. Later Blocher's son returned the jaw for five dollars, though bargaining for ten.<sup>51</sup>

Mutuality within the faith community provided a more traditional contribution to recovery. The congregational council distributed sixty-six dollars, donated by a congregation in nearby York County, to thirteen persons, including Joseph Sherfy, who received six dollars. The York County contributors intended for non-Brethren, who had given to the fund, also to receive assistance. Therefore, three Lutherans, a German Reformed, two Catholics, and Abraham Bryan, an African Methodist Episcopal Zionite, received financial assistance. This is the first hint of ecumenicity among the Marsh Creek Dunkers, whose church book had not one favorable comment about other traditions, except for the leased property from the Friends, until this and mostly ignored other faiths. Additionally, although Marsh Creek had

always cared for its needy, this is the first example of assistance to persons outside the faith community.<sup>52</sup>

Later in August, 1863, another nearby Dunker congregation, Pipe Creek, Maryland, also sent relief. At this point, Marsh Creek's council confessed that it still could not ascertain the conditions of all members except to say some had escaped only with what they wore. This probably included the Sherfys. Clothing and bedding, especially, were critical. Joseph Sherfy's estimated losses of \$2466, which one official thought were understated, amounted to the greatest of any within the congregation.<sup>53</sup>

As Marsh Creek Dunkers struggled towards material recovery, they just as eagerly sought return to spiritual normalcy. The initial item of business at their first council meeting after the battle (August 13, 1863) scheduled a large Love Feast for Saturday and Sunday, October 3 and 4. To be sure, this ritual of fellowship had a high priority in the Brethren universe. Other familiar practices quickly reappeared in the months after the battle. Council elected deacons and visitors.<sup>54</sup> Sherfy and elder David Bosserman "amicably settled" a difference; each promised to "drop what had previously passed," possibly a debate over Otelia's hoops. One month after Sherfy and Bosserman reconciled, council appointed Bosserman and Michael Bushman, another minister, to admonish female members who "sometimes wear hoops."<sup>55</sup> Perhaps this even included Mary Sherfy. Her daughter wore them; maybe she did, too, although her photograph suggests that plainness came easily for her. Otelia, of course, was too young for membership and discipline. Still, she was a preacher's daughter who dressed outside the order, and in 1862 Yearly Meeting specifically censured ministers for allowing their children to wear hoops. In 1863 the stylish garments returned yet again to Annual Meeting, indicating that some persisted in wearing them.<sup>56</sup> Now Marsh Creek took up the cause of purging the faith community of this worldly garb. In some ways religion after the battle looked much like it did prior to the tempest.

On the other hand, developments unrelated to the battle but tied to the larger war increasingly brought the world into the Brethren meetinghouse. The military's demand for manpower particularly encroached. In 1863 the federal government assumed responsibility for the draft, replacing the state in this function. On October 17, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln asked for 500,000 men. On March 14, 1864, he asked for another 200,000. Then in the summer he wanted 500,000, and just before Christmas yet another 300,000. Conscription in Gettysburg, therefore, acquired new energy. Reluctant warriors could still pay a commutation fee, but these

lost their effectiveness when in February, 1864, Congress limited the term of these payments to one year although the chances of a draft beyond that were high.<sup>57</sup>

Yearly Meeting, which had more or less kept the war conspicuous by its absence from its deliberations, now repeatedly reaffirmed its pacifism. For instance, the annual gathering ruled against baptizing soldiers in most cases, and the delegates also opposed paying bounty or hiring substitutes and instead recommended waiting for the government to compel fines and taxes. In 1865 three questions about military service came to the conference. Because congregations initiated agenda items, the multiple appearance of inquiries about this issue indicate that Dunkers entered the military at disturbing frequencies on the local level.<sup>58</sup>

Indeed, conscriptors tabbed a number of young men from the Marsh Creek fellowship. In November, 1863, several, including Raphael Sherfy, paid commutation fees, now set by the federal government. Coming just months after the battle, this must have been a particularly heavy burden. In 1864 Council expelled one (Theodore Cullison) who answered the call and suspended another, Alexander Rath, who had taken the oath of nonresistance but now declared his intent to enlist for the bounty. Both of these men had relatives disciplined by the congregation within the previous decade, suggesting that their families were backbenchers reluctant to yield to the council's concept of purity. Additionally, Rath was a humble coachmaker boarding with a single woman and her young daughter; perhaps for him the commutation fee was too high, but the bounty appealingly high. On the other hand, others followed the counsel of Yearly Meeting and paid the fee. In a show of support for two of these faithful brothers in Christ, the congregation tapped into a bequest and contributed towards the expense, which it termed a "military fine." By expelling those who took up arms and supporting those who did not, Marsh Creek sustained the ancient order.<sup>59</sup>

In other ways the war encouraged a redefinition of Brethren values. Non-voting, for example, came under severe pressure as rank-and-file Dunkers increasingly desired ballots. In 1864 the Marsh Creek council "advised" members "to abstain" from voting, an indication that questions about political behavior had arisen within their fellowship, and numerous inquiries about it came to Yearly Meeting. In 1864 one communication reflected that the previous year's decision to continue the ban on political activity had caused "hard feelings and disunion," and in 1865 delegates considered four more questions about voting. Each time denominational leadership ruled against

it, but the persistent pressure to relax this position showed growing interest in political activity.<sup>60</sup>

In fact, wartime politics entered the faith community as never before. The Yearly Meeting declared discipline for those who preached pro-slavery principles, publicly or privately. Moreover, lest non-voting and non-resistance cast Dunkers as "indifferent" to or even as opponents of the Union, Yearly Meeting now blessed the effort to "suppress the rebellion." Also, Yearly Meeting now defined Confederate sympathies as a worldly sin that corrupted the body of believers. Elders and ministers who sided with the "rebels in this bloody rebellion" or who voted for secession could not continue in their office, and anybody who voted for secession would "be put away from among us." The gathering also condemned those who "speak evil of the rulers of our land in public." At first blush this appears to reaffirm a long-standing Brethren belief that God ordained civic rulers, but excommunication of those who criticized the government, "especially of President Lincoln," combined with removal of Confederate sympathizers sounds more like an endorsement of Republican policy.<sup>61</sup> In another time a nonresistant faith, repulsed by the carnage, might have joined in the politics of peace, but apparently this generation of Dunkers considered anti-slavery, Unionist Republicanism more attractive than peace Democracy. Undoubtedly, the hard line against Confederate Brethren showed that one heretofore-worldly behavior, i.e., mainstream politics, now interested Dunkers.

Marsh Creek had no Confederates to expel, but in May, 1865, it edged closer to the political mainstream by honoring President Andrew Johnson's request for a day of "humiliation and prayer." Previous presidents James Buchanan and Abraham Lincoln had called for days of fasting and thanksgiving, national observances that implied that the nation was Christian and brought church and state closer. On these occasions religious leaders often blessed the war from their pulpits, praised the dead as martyrs, gave thanks for victory, suggested that triumph came from prayer, or blamed defeat on believers who lacked sincerity. Prior to 1864 the Dunkers had ignored governmental appeals for these moments of civic religion, but in that year Yearly Meeting approved abiding by calls from the president and state governors for Thanksgiving and other holidays. This was close enough to Johnson's plea that Marsh Creek scheduled a ten o'clock a.m. service. The decision, however, required a special meeting of congregational leadership (all of the deacons and part of the ministry attended), which indicates the new ground that it broke.<sup>62</sup>

In the war's last two years, then, Marsh Creek Dunkers recuperated from the battle but felt the war in ways unrelated to the clash in the Sherfy's peach orchard. They still sought to restore the New Testament church through footwashing, nonresistance, plainness, adult baptism by trine immersion, the election of laymen to the ministry, and the expulsion of members who threatened unity. But change also emerged. Military service pressured the fellowship. Although non-voting continued, this brought some cost to harmony because the polling place now tempted many male Dunkers. Additionally, the Dunkers' faith community became much less politically separate when it enrolled in the North's great cause. Responding to the state's call to worship was also new, and that, too, represented mainstream behavior. Of course, for this conservative fellowship, dikes to keep out the shifting mainstream had always been works in progress, and the barriers were never leak-proof. But, undeniably the war created a new and very porous hole in those walls by making it increasingly difficult for Marsh Creek Dunkers to remain aloof from the larger society, particularly its politics.

#### IV.

Unlike several neighbors who moved west after the battle and started over, the Sherfys stayed.<sup>63</sup> In 1865 a visitor found their trees loaded with peaches, and Anna selling them out of a basket. "They were large and juicy and sweet," the sightseer reported.<sup>64</sup>

Nevertheless, reminders of the battle lingered long. Bloodstains on the floor defied soap and water.<sup>65</sup> In 1866 a visitor riding down Emmitsburg Pike noted that battle debris, such as hats, shoes, and pieces of equipment, littered the gullies beside the road and "was scattered everywhere in great profusion." In the peach orchard he noticed that "a tangled mass of dead branches still strews the ground." Although the hastily dug graves had disappeared, "the deep green spot in the turf, the few hills of corn more luxuriant than their neighbors, or the dark color of the oats, and the ranker growth of the wheat, told where vegetable life had drawn rich nourishment from the dead."<sup>66</sup> Joseph Sherfy could hardly have missed the effect this had on his large and juicy peaches. When years after the battle, veterans returned to Gettysburg, "Mother" Sherfy, as she was called in later life,<sup>67</sup> warmly welcomed them. One day a large fellow showed up and announced, "I'm the man who ordered you out of your house. What are you going to do with me?" Another visitor

received a tour of the house, and after remarking that during the battle he was positioned in the cellar, Mary allowed him there.<sup>68</sup> The old cherry tree still stood in the farmyard with the ball in its trunk.<sup>69</sup>

Joseph Sherfy died in 1882 of “malarial fever, running into typhoid.” He was seventy and had just been elevated to elder fifteen months prior, when David Bosserman passed away. His well-attended funeral was at Marsh Creek, where he was buried. His obituary described him as a pioneer in the peach business for his dried and canned fruits.<sup>70</sup>

Tragically, many in the family had the disease, and a few weeks later it claimed Joseph and Mary’s oldest child, Raphael. The cost of rebuilding after the battle had denied him the opportunity to continue his education, but Raphael managed to become a schoolteacher and an active member of the State Fruit Growers Association, another step into the mainstream. Raphael



**FIGURES 5 and 6:** Twenty-something Otelia Sherfy (Adams County Historical Society, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania) and aged eighty-two (Anna Kepner Collection).

and his wife joined the church when converted during a series of revival meetings, now acceptable for Dunkers.<sup>71</sup>

"Mother" Sherfy died in 1904, aged 87 and praised for her "gentle manners, her kindness and goodness of her life." She, too, was buried at Marsh Creek.<sup>72</sup>

Otelia Sherfy was a teacher prior to her marriage to Isaac Hereter, a state senator. She was 33; he was 51. Their marriage ended only four years later when Isaac died, also of malaria. They had one child, a son. After her husband's death, Otelia moved to Keymar, Maryland, to live with or near her sister, Mary. Ten years later she returned to Gettysburg, residing with her son for thirty-five years. She was an active member of the Marsh Creek congregation and taught Sunday school for years. Her death, at age 93, made front-page news, and the article reported that she had heard Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Perhaps other members of her family did, too.<sup>73</sup>

At first glance the great conflict had modest impact on the Dunkers and their basic forms of nonconformity and harmony. Otelia's hoops were still out of favor with the fellowship. Yet destruction of the Sherfy home, blood-stained floors, and returning veterans made the battle unforgettable, and in small but significant ways the war brought change for their faith community, most notably the embrace of mainstream politics. Pressure on the old order was part of pre-war trends, as attested by young Otelia's photograph, but the Dunkers' sudden embrace of mainstream politics is eye-catching and represents a significant shift directly attributable to the war. Thus, the war's impact on this religious community lacks the hyperbole often applied by popular historians but was nevertheless striking.

## NOTES

I am grateful to Chris Arndt, Carl Bowman, Gary Scott Smith, Jewel Spangler, Warren Hofstra, and my friends at the Southeastern Colloquium for American Religious Study for their comments and to Bridgewater College for a Faculty Research Grant.

1. James M. McPherson and William J. Cooper, Jr., eds., *Writing the Civil War: The Quest to Understand* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 1; Garry Wills, *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words that Remade America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 212-47.
2. Anne C. Rose, *Victorian America and the Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 12-13; Gardiner H. Shattuck, Jr., *A Shield and a Hiding Place: The Religious Life of the Civil War Armies* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1987), 35-50, 73-93; Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: University Press of Georgia,

- 1980), *passim*; Randall M. Miller, Harry S. Stout, and Charles Reagan Wilson, eds., *Religion and the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 1–11; Phillip Shaw Paludan, "Religion and the American Civil War," 21–40; Samuel S. Hill, "Religion and the Results of the Civil War," 371–75, 380; James M. McPherson, "Afterword," 401–2—all in Miller, et al, *Religion and the American Civil War*; Mark A. Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 9. Rose and Hill stress the evolution of religion in familiar patterns.
3. In 1836 the denomination adopted the name "Fellowship of German Baptists," but it appears nowhere in the local records.
  4. Carl F. Bowman, *Brethren Society: The Cultural Transformation of a "Peculiar People"* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 23–92; Donald F. Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine: A History of the Brethren, 1708–1995* (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Press, 1997), 45–50.
  5. *Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the Brethren: Containing All Available Minutes from 1778 to 1909* (Elgin, Ill.: The Brethren Publishing House, 1909), 19, 30, 52, 120.
  6. "God the Father," in Alexander Mack, "Rights and Ordinances," *European Origins of the Brethren: A Source Book on the Beginnings of the Church of the Brethren in the Early Eighteenth Century*, ed. Donald F. Durnbaugh (Elgin, Ill.: The Brethren Press, 1958), 350; "certainly not for children," in "Rights and Ordinances," 351. See also "Rights and Ordinances," 361; Mack, "Basic Questions," in Durnbaugh, *European Origins of the Brethren*, 329, 331, 335.
  7. Mack, "Rights and Ordinances," 363–64, *Marsh Creek Church Book*, (November 24, 1853; August 31, 1854; August 26, 1858; February 17, 1862); *Minutes of the Annual Meetings*, 51, 55, 105, 120; Bowman, *Brethren Society*, 58–64; Roger E. Sappington, *The Brethren in the New Nation: A Source Book on the Development of the Church of the Brethren, 1785–1865* (Elgin, Ill.: The Brethren Press, 1976), 168–92.
  8. *St. Paul's AME Zion Church Book* (October 29, 1859), mss., private collection, Jean Odom; Peter C. Vermilyea, "'We did not know where our Colored friends had gone': The Effect of the Confederate Invasion of Pennsylvania on Gettysburg's African American Community," *Gettysburg Magazine* 11 (January, 2005): 4–6.
  9. *Marsh Creek Church Book* (October 4, 1851, May 29, 1853); Bowman, *Brethren Society*, 86–87; Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 110–13;
  10. The description of the Friends Grove Meetinghouse is in *Marsh Creek Church of the Brethren Church Book* (February 26, 1852; May 20, 1852), mss., Adams County Historical Society (ACHS), Gettysburg, Pa. See also *Minutes of Annual Meetings*, 53, 150; J. Linwood Eisneberg, ed., *A History of the Church of the Brethren in Southern District of Pennsylvania by the Historical Committee* (Quincy, Pa.: Quincy Orphanage Press, n.d.), 149–50. In 1859 Marsh Creek bought a large notebook and recopied its notes into it; *Marsh Creek Church Book* (May 12, 1859).
  11. "Architecture," *Brethren Encyclopedia*, 1:48; Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 104–8.
  12. *Minutes of the Annual Meeting*, 9–10, 70, 85; "Gettysburg Troop," *The Star and Banner* (October 3, 1845); "Gettysburg Troop," *The Star and Banner* (August 7, 1846), "Marion Rangers," *Republican Compiler* (August 2, 1852); "Military Election," *The Star and Banner* (June 16, 1854). Early in the twentieth century the Brethren changed the name of their annual gathering from "Yearly Meeting" to "Annual Meeting."
  13. *Minutes of the Annual Meetings*, 1, 10, 45, 48.

# OTELIA'S HOOPS: GETTYSBURG DUNKERS AND THE CIVIL WAR

14. *Minutes of the Annual Meetings*, 27, 40, 46–47; “Now for Bargains! New Supply of Fall and Winter Ready-Made Clothing,” *Gettysburg Sentinel* (October 1, 1855). For other examples of local advertising that appealed to fashion see “Exhibition: Admittance Free,” and “Anti-Nebraska Hats, Caps, Boots & Shoes,” *The Star and Banner* (April 14, 1854).
15. “Not to mar...,” *Minutes of the Annual Meetings*, 26; see also 45–46, 91, 135.
16. Gregory A. Coco, *A Strange and Blighted Land: Gettysburg: The Aftermath of a Battle* (Gettysburg, Pa.: Thomas Publications, 1995), 47; Ancestry.com, 1860 and 1870 United States Federal Census [database on-line]. (Provo, Ut.: The Generations Network, Inc., 2004). By the 1870 Census two of the Sherfy children were teachers.
17. Bowman, *Brethren Society*, 77–80; Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 211–13; *Marsh Creek Church Book* (February 8, 1851; February 24, 1853; February 22, 1855; May 21, 1857; February 24, 1859). Curiously, in 1859 Marsh Creek did not appoint delegates to the nearby Yearly Meeting in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.
18. *Minutes of the Annual Meetings*, 75, 98, 104, 151; “Camp Meetings,” *Republican Compiler* (August 2, 1852); “Camp Meeting,” *Adams Sentinel* (November 16, 1852); “Religious Notice,” *Republican Compiler* (August 8, 1853); Stephen L. Longenecker, “Emotionalism Among Early American Anabaptists,” *The Dilemma of Anabaptist Piety: Strengthening or Straining the Bonds of Community*, ed., Longenecker (Bridgewater, Va.: Forum for Religious Studies, Bridgewater College, 1997), 61–67; Longenecker, *Shenandoah Religion: Outsiders and the Mainstream, 1716–1865* (Waco, Tx: Baylor University Press, 2002), 66, 75–76.
19. “tinkling of bells...” in *Minutes of the Annual Meetings*, 70. See also 27, 40, 46, 58, 85, 90–91, 94–95, 104, 163, 209, 218; Longenecker, *Shenandoah Religion*, 107–8.
20. *Marsh Creek Church Book* (December 12, 1850; February 8, 1851; August 28, 1851; November 27, 1851; September 25, 1852; November 23, 1854; November 22, 1855; May 22, 1862); Bowman, *Brethren Society*, 85–91.
21. *Marsh Creek Church Book* (May 9, 1861; November 28, 1861; February 27, 1862). For another example of reconciliation, see *Marsh Creek Church Book* (May 5, 1853; November 13, 1862).
22. “‘Know Nothing’ Meeting,” *The Star and Banner* (June 16, 1854). For other examples, see “Jackson Jubilee,” *Compiler* (April 15, 1844); “Whig Meeting,” *Star and Banner* (October 3, 1845); “Mass Meeting in Gettysburg,” *Adams Sentinel* (August 30, 1852); “Democratic Standing Committee,” *Republican Compiler* (August 8, 1853); “Know Nothings,” *The Star and Banner* (June 16, 1854); “Anti-Nebraska Hats, Caps, Boots & Shoes,” *The Star and Banner* (April 14, 1854).
23. “Rare Souvenirs Lost in Battle,” undated newspaper clipping, Sherfy Family File, ACHS.
24. *Minutes of the Annual Meetings*, 201.
25. *Minutes of the Annual Meetings*, 107, 164, 178, 617, 793.
26. *Minutes of the Annual Meetings*, 7–8, 18–19, 30, 31–32, 65, 85, 136.
27. *Minutes of the Annual Meetings*, 19, 53, 58, 60, 85, 110–11, 188. Yearly Meeting did not cite Scripture; for Biblical support for this practice, see “Holy Kiss,” *Brethren Encyclopedia*, I:697–98, which mentions also 1 Cor. 16:20, 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26; and 1 Peter 5:14.
28. “by the right hand...” in *Marsh Creek Church Book* (August 28, 1851). See also November 27, 1851; February 26, 1852.
29. *Marsh Creek Church Book* (May 17, 1855).

30. Annual Meeting (Henry Kurtz, clerk) to Marsh Creek Brethren (May 30, 1855), in *Marsh Creek Church Book*.
31. *Marsh Creek Church Book* (May 12, 1859).
32. *Minutes of the Annual Meetings*, 199–200; *Gospel Visitor* (February 1861): 62; *Gospel Visitor* (April 1861); Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 282–83.
33. *Minutes of the Annual Meetings*, 200–3.
34. *Minutes of the Annual Meetings*, 204–18.
35. *Minutes of the Annual Meetings*, 40–41, 47–48, 59, 70, 277–78; Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 152–53, 277, 281, 284–85.
36. *Marsh Creek Church Book* (May 14, 1863).
37. "Arrival of Refugees," *The Star and Banner* (September 11, 1862); Robert L. Bloom, "'We Never Expected a Battle': The Civilians at Gettysburg, 1863," *Pennsylvania History* 55 (October 1988): 164; Charles M. McCurdy, *Gettysburg: A Memoir* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: Reed and Witting, Company, 1929), 9–10.
38. Jonathan R. Stayer, "Pennsylvania's Civil War Conscientious Objectors," [www.genpa.org/CivilWarConscientiousObjec.html](http://www.genpa.org/CivilWarConscientiousObjec.html). Drafted members of the Dunker community are also identifiable if the *Church Book* mentions their parent, but this still leaves church membership in doubt.
39. Edward L. Ayers, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies: War in the Heart of America, 1859–1863* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2003), 191.
40. Ayers, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies*, 390–412.
41. Gerald R. Bennett, *Days of "Uncertainty and Dread": The Ordeal Endured by the Citizens at Gettysburg* (Littlestown, Pa.: published by the author, 1994), 11–15; Bloom, "We Never Expected a Battle," 166–68; Edwin B. Coddington, *The Gettysburg Campaign: A Study in Command* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968), 167–68.
42. Bennett, *Days of "Uncertainty and Dread"*, 15–17; Bloom, "We Never Expected a Battle," 169–70; Coddington, *The Gettysburg Campaign*, 195–96.
43. Kathleen R. Georg, "The Sherfy Farm and the Battle of Gettysburg," (mss., Gettysburg National Military Park Archives, 1977), 6–8; "The Joseph Sherfy Family at the Battle of Gettysburg," Sherfy Family File, ACHS; Timothy H. Smith, "The Sherfy House," mss., (May 10, 1995), Civilian Accounts of the Battle of Gettysburg, ACHS. "The Joseph Sherfy Family and the Battle of Gettysburg" is a typescript mss. excerpted by Robert L. Brake from William Emory Sherfey, *The Sherfey Family in the United States, 1751–1948* (Greensburg, Ind.). Sherfey relied heavily on the account of Otelia Sherfy, whom he interviewed. "The Sherfy House" is a typescript of a handwritten account written by an unnamed family member; Smith describes the document as "undated" but it carries the date "1916."
44. "Claim of Joseph Sherfy," Federal Claims, National Archives, RG 92, 214–849; Georg, "The Sherfy Farm," 8–9.
45. "riddled" is the account of Humhreys, quoted in Georg, "The Sherfy Farm," 24. See also Georg, 10–26; "The Joseph Sherfy Family at the Battle of Gettysburg"; Harry W. Pfanz, *Gettysburg: The Second Day* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 94–95, 303–35, 364; "History of the 114th (Zouaves d'Afrique) Regiment Infantry-Pa. Volunteers," Gettysburg National Military Park, Archives (GNMP), Sherfy Farm and the Battle of Gettysburg File.

# OTELIA'S HOOPS: GETTYSBURG DUNKERS AND THE CIVIL WAR

46. Kent Masterson Brown, *Retreat from Gettysburg: Lee, Logistics, and the Pennsylvania Campaign* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 75–76, 105; Georg, “The Sherfy Farm,” 26–27.
47. Coco, *A Strange and Blighted Land*, 50.
48. “clothes, bonnets, towels,...” quoted in Brown, *Retreat from Gettysburg*, 76; and in Coco, *A Strange and Blighted Land*, 42–43. See also Sherfy War Claims; Georg, “The Sherfy Farm,” 27–28; “Rare Souvenirs Lost in Battle,” undated newspaper clipping, Sherfy Family File, ACHS; “The Joseph Sherfy Family at the Battle of Gettysburg”; “The Sherfy House”; Coco, *A Strange and Blighted Land*, 38–52, 379n27; Thomas W. Knox, “The Battle Field at Gettysburg: Scenes after the Battle,” Gettysburg Newspaper Clippings File, GNMP. Knox published his account in *New York Herald* (July 9, 1863), and the *Berks and Schuylkill Journal* (July 18, 1863) reprinted it.
49. Claims File of Christian Benner, Claims File of Michael Bushman, and Claims File of John Trostle—all in “Index of Federal Claims, National Archives,” GNMP; Brown, *Retreat from Gettysburg*, 62–63; Coco, *A Strange and Blighted Land*, 206; Pfanz, *Gettysburg: The Second Day*, 160–61, 170–71, 215; Thomas Fanning Wood, *Doctor to the Front: The Recollections of Confederate Surgeon Thomas Fanning Wood, 1861–1865*, ed., Donald B. Koonce, *Voices of the Civil War Series* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2000), 104–07. For the impact of the battle on other Dunkers see Claim of Jacob Diehl, 214–822, Claim of Henry Utz, 214–726, Claim of John Radkey, 214–835, Claim of Henry G. Koser, 214–2149, Claim of John Deardoff; 214–2228—all in National Archives.
50. Coco, *A Strange and Blighted Land*, 309–13.
51. Coco, *A Strange and Blighted Land*, 137–38.
52. *Marsh Creek Church Book* (August 13, 1863).
53. Michael Bushman, John Pfoutz, and Joseph Kittinger to Philip Boyle and others, Pipe Creek congregation, in *Marsh Creek Church Book* (August 23, 1863); *Church Book*, (November 12, 1863); Sherfy Claim, National Archives, RG 92.
54. *Marsh Creek Church Book* (November 12, 1863; February 27, 1864).
55. *Marsh Creek Church Book*, (March 24, 1864). The minutes have no details about the dispute between Bosserman and Sherfy. At this time, however, hoops were the only issue that troubled congregational waters, which leads to the suspicion that Bosserman and Sherfy disagreed about women’s fashion.
56. *Minutes of the Annual Meetings*, 209, 218–19.
57. J. Matthew Gallman, *The North Fights the Civil War: The Home Front* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1994), 166–67; James W. Geary, *We Need Men: The Union Draft in the Civil War* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois Press, 1991), 81; Jonathan R. Stayer, “Pennsylvania’s Civil War Conscientious Objectors,” [www.enpa.org/CivilWarConscientiousObjec.html](http://www.enpa.org/CivilWarConscientiousObjec.html).
58. *Minutes of the Annual Meetings*, 230, 231–32, 237.
59. *Gettysburg Compiler* (November 23, 1863); *Marsh Creek Church Book* (March 26, 1864; April 17, 1865; August 10, 1865; November [day illegible], 1865); Ancestry.com., 1860 *United States Federal Census*; [ftp.rootsweb.com/pub/usgenweb/pa/adams/military/nov1863.txt](http://ftp.rootsweb.com/pub/usgenweb/pa/adams/military/nov1863.txt).
60. *Marsh Creek Church Book*, (March 26, 1864); *Minutes of the Annual Meetings*, 225, 236, 241, 242, 244.
61. “indifferent...,” *Minutes of the Annual Meetings*, 231–32; “rebels in this bloody rebellion,” 238; “speak evil...,” 238; “especially of President Lincoln,” 242. See also 239.

# PENNSYLVANIA HISTORY

62. *Minutes of the Annual Meetings*, 238; Harry S. Stout, *Upon the Altar of the Nation: A Moral History of the Civil War* (New York: Viking, 2006), 48, 77, 79, 90, 133–34, 248.
63. "The Sherfy Farm and the Battle of Gettysburg," 28.
64. Coco, *A Strange and Blighted Land*, 48.
65. Sherfy Farm and the Battle of Gettysburg File, GNMP, Archives 2-11b .
66. Coco, *A Strange and Blighted Land*, 52.
67. "Mother Sherfy" in "At Gettysburg: What Was Recalled by a Tramp Over Part of the Battlefield," *The National Tribune* (July 28, 1898), Newspaper Clipping File, v. 2, GNMP.
68. I. H. Dean to Mrs. [Mary] Sherfy (March 4, 1891), Sherfy Family File, ACHS; Smith, "The Sherfy House."
69. K. Ployd, "At Gettysburg: What Was Recalled by a Tramp over Part of the Battlefield," *The National Tribune* (July 28, 1898), Gettysburg Clippings File, GNMP.
70. *Compiler* (October 1, 1882, and October 11, 1882)—Sherfy Family File, ACHS.
71. B. F. Kittinger, "Death of Raphael Sherfy," *The Primitive Christian* (January 7, 1883), Sherfy Family File, ACHS; "Raphael Sherfy," *History of Cumberland and Adams Counties, Pennsylvania* (Chicago: Warner, Beers, & C Co., 1886), III:403.
72. "Mary H. Sherfy" obituary, Sherfy Family File, ACHS.
73. "Mrs. Hereter Expires; Heard Lincoln Speak," *Gettysburg Times* (May 13, 1939): 1.