



Lottie and B. Frank Hatter



Mary and John D. Martin

# Shenandoah Mennonite Historian

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## FOCUS ON AUGUSTA COUNTY MENNONITES

We have done less with Augusta County Mennonites, so this issue attempts to redeem that situation.

As Mennonites from Pennsylvania migrated westward and southward they found good land in the Shenandoah Valley in the late 1700s, in both Rockingham and Augusta counties.

After the tragedy that took place among Page County Mennonites in the 1750s and 60s, some emigrants from Pennsylvania looked on the westward side of the Massanutten range of mountains. Although more families settled in Rockingham, the Hildebrands and others found what they were looking for in Augusta County.

The Hildebrand Mennonite Church northwest of Waynesboro became the earliest congregation and claimed a date as early as 1825, perhaps for good reason. As reported by Harry A. Brunk in his history of Virginia Mennonites, 1826 Jacob and Barbara Hildebrand sold land to "trustees Henry Rode, John Fauber, and Henry Hildebrand of [the] Menecee Church." The clerk didn't get the Mennonite name very clearly apparently!

A few years later in the 1830's we learn of a congregation about six miles southwest of Waynesboro that met in the Kendig's schoolhouse. It became known as Kendig's Chapel until after the Civil War when the name was changed to Springdale Mennonite Church. Within sight of the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains, it was a good place to settle, although for many years total Augusta County Mennonite numbers remained quite small.

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## JOHN DRIVER MARTIN (1898-1983)

John D. Martin was a son of Daniel and Savilla (Driver) Martin. In his later years John is remembered by his grandsons as someone who could find lost things!

A number of times items such as wallets or glasses were lost by his farmer sons as they worked in their fields. His grandsons remember standing with him in a field, praying, "The Lord knows where that wallet is, and He will show it to us." Then he walked into the field and found it.

John was married to Mary, daughter of Jacob Martin from Williamsport, MD and Mary Alexander Craig Hildebrand. John Martin was a hard worker during his years of farming. He expected the same of his sons—Clinton, Roy and John Garland. John and Mary also had two daughters—Thelma (Mrs. Clayton Maust) and Mary Frances (Mrs. Ersel Campbell).

John was known as a frugal person but also as a very generous man. He and Mary gave liberally to the church and its agencies, as well as to people in need.

During the lean Depression years of the 1930s, he was approached by a father who needed work. John not only gave him a job but also a house, together with a milk cow, a hog for meat, garden space, flour from the wheat grown on the farm and possibly a few chickens for eggs.

One time he told Mary of a visit to a needy family so he and Mary went to town. She needed to get warm clothes for those children.



*John and Mary at their 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary*

At age 52, John felt he no longer could manage the farms that he together with his sons and hired help were farming, so he turned responsibilities over to his sons. He and his wife "retired" to a new house along Rt. 340, near the farms. But he did not really retire. There was a stable for a cow, a chicken house for chickens and a large garden. He continued very involved in the day-to-day farm work with his sons.

During his years of farming and later, John had been active in the work of the church. He attended conferences faithfully, serving as delegate, once going to Kansas as a delegate for Mennonite General Conference. He served as a trustee for EMC from 1950-1966, following in the steps of his father, Daniel, who had served 24 years. Also, during that time he served as an assessor for the Virginia Property Aid Plan.

**Amazingly, John went through the lot seven times but was never chosen.** Their son Roy also went through the lot four times, once for deacon, twice for minister and once for bishop. In 1960 Roy was chosen to become the minister of the nearly new Greenmonte Mennonite Church at 1661 Cold Springs Rd., Stuarts Draft, VA.

In 1952 John had been approached by the Southern District of Virginia Conference to give leadership for a church plant beyond Stuarts Draft near Greenville. At first John turned down the idea, but

after having a dream about Jonah, he accepted the call. He was licensed then ordained as minister.

They rented an unused church building and the work began with a vacation Bible school in the summer of 1952. In 1956 land was purchased along 608, and a new building erected. Greenmonte Mennonite Church continues services today and is listed in the *Mennonite Church USA 2009 Directory* as having 84 members, with Bruce W. Hankee as pastor. Attendance from Sunday to Sunday averages about 120.

John D. Martin did a lot of visiting in the community. He peddled eggs from his hen house to people in the church community, making contacts and many friends. He did not make long visits, but he made a lot of visits, telling families their children needed to be in Sunday school.

The children would come and later the families. Since there were a number of older persons in the community, John conducted many funerals. Occasionally, he was called upon to settle feuds among families or neighbors, It was a "colorful" work, but he was faithful.

John not only did visiting in the Greenmonte community, he also paid calls at the local nursing homes like Liberty, now Avante near Waynesboro, and Blue Ridge Christian Home, now the Stuarts Draft Retirement Community. At Wednesday evening church prayer meetings John would mention visiting the "older people," some actually younger than he was.

In the mid-fifties a need was brought to John to begin work in Deerfield, beyond Churchville, VA, as a mission effort. John as minister and son Roy as deacon began working at it together, as well as others from Greenmonte. They held Bible Schools there a number of summers. They used a small unused church building for afternoon and evening church.

[Along with Greenmonte the Deerfield mission effort continued a number of years. From the Bishop Franklin E. Weaver diary and other records, we note that Deerfield became a regular preaching point on the district ministerial calendar. On through the 1960s Franklin and Katie Weaver periodically went to Deerfield to serve communion. Evan Brenneman became involved in pastoring at Deerfield and, despite, other calls for ministry, Evan frequently preached at Deerfield until the end of that mission effort. YPCA students from Eastern Mennonite College also helped. In February 1967 the diary reported ten EMC students from Harrisonburg attending and helping at Deerfield. The "Church Record Book of Southern District" says that "Deerfield Mennonite Chapel" discontinued on Dec. 19, 1970. However, the Weaver diary indicates that date to be incorrect. On May 6, 1971, Franklin and his wife Katie "went with others to Deerfield for communion." That may have been about the end of the Deerfield mission effort. Six days later Bishop Weaver was killed in an industrial accident at the Klean Organ Company. *Ed*]

Mary Martin supported John in all his activities. While they attended Springdale, she was a part of the WMSA (Women's Missionary and Service Association). She was an avid quilter and piecer of quilts, for the WMSA and in the home .

After annual MCC relief sales began in Augusta County (now held at the Fair Grounds in Rockingham County). Mary was involved in the quilts put together for the sale each year. At times the current quilt was located in her home where she could possibly spend some extra hours on the quilting. Their home was always open to guests. She was an example to her family in providing delicious meals for guests and for people in the community at times of grief.

The family of John and Mary Martin has been blessed by the heritage of faithfulness to God and the church passed down to them.

## **B. FRANK HATTER: MOUNTAIN PASTOR (1891-1983)**

Benjamin Franklin Hatter was born 1891, a son of Alonzo and Elizabeth Lotts Hatter near Montebello in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. During his early years he had several jobs, including selling fruit trees and being a self-taught "optometrist," going door to door by horseback, fitting and selling glasses.

Although he had only a grade-school education, he had an interest in reading and especially studying the scriptures. He soon felt the call to serve the church teaching Sunday school (in a Brethren church near Love, VA) and filled in preaching at a Pentecostal church near Montebello.

Frank married Lottie Campbell (1896-1975), also from the Montebello area, and they raised six children on a mountain farm near Love, VA. The Blue Ridge Parkway has a sign for Love at the intersection where Rt. 664 exits and goes toward Sherando and Lyndhurst.

The names of the six children and the spouses of those who were married, are as follows:

- Ruth (1915-1996) married Mark Wolfe
- Hunter Hatter (1918-1944)
- Winfred Hatter (1920-1944)
- S. Reginald Hatter (married Jean Cook)
- Mattie (married Austin Demastus)
- Warren Austin Hatter (married Louise Maynard)

Frank's mother started attending the mountain mission church, now Mountain View Mennonite, which was planted by Joseph Driver and others from the Springdale Mennonite Church near Waynesboro. Frank's family lived just a few miles up the mountain from Mt. View and started attending and became active members in this growing young congregation.

Frank served as Sunday school teacher and preached on occasion. When the Southern District leadership decided that Mt. View needed a full-time pastor, Frank, along with Silas Brydge, agreed to be in the lot to determine who would be chosen to be pastor. In a service at Mt. View on December 25, 1946, with Bishop Joseph Driver officiating, the lot fell on Frank.

Roy D. Kiser's history, *Mission in the Mountain* (published 1975) described Frank as being "very warm and personable." However, some people felt that the other person in the lot, Silas Brydge, should also be a minister, so with Conference and congregational approval, Brydge was also ordained on September 5, 1948.

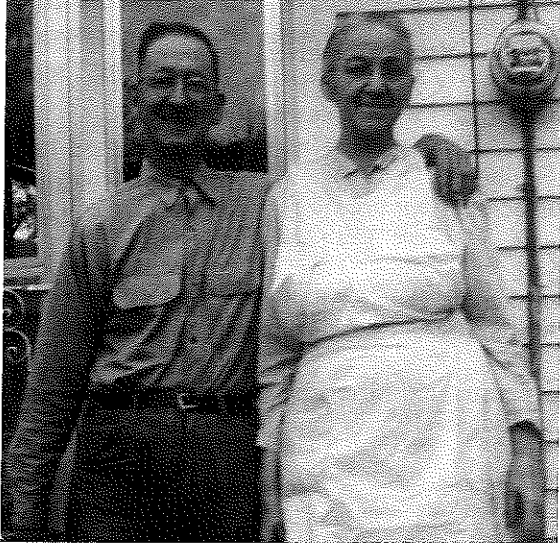
The two men served together in the pastoral ministry at Mt. View. They "were a complement to each other in their ministries and under their leadership the congregation grew rapidly." Attendance jumped from 90 in 1947 to 176 by 1950. They had different styles of preaching. Hatter tended to be subdued in speaking but could get fiery when preaching on a favorite topic.

He was "deeply interested in Biblical prophecy, his messages often related to spiritual preparation for the coming of Christ and the details surrounding that event." (Kiser, p. 46) Frank enjoyed preaching about prophecy, forgiveness, heaven and hell. Someone said that you could even "feel the heat."

Dennis Hatter (author of this article) remembers a significant sermon on forgiveness when his grandpa used the illustration of forgiving the enemies that took the lives of two of Frank's sons, Hunter and Winfred, who were killed in World War II.

Frank was never paid or salaried by the church for his pastoral work. He made a living on his mountain farm, primarily raising sheep. Times were tough during the Great Depression. In 1931 he fell over a cliff, fracturing his spine while hunting a horse at night. That laid him up in bed for six months.

Frank and Lottie were known for their gracious hospitality, having visitors along with family for Sunday meals and offering their home to travelers and visiting evangelists. Frank was also instrumental in starting "Young People's Meeting" every other Thursday evenings in various homes. Someone would present a devotional "topic," followed by a time of refreshments and fellowship.



*B. Frank and Lottie Hatter, 1964*

With a growing attendance Mt. View needed a new building by the late forties when the new macadam road was routed farther away from the meetinghouse. Progress was slow since money was scarce, but in 1949-50 a new brick building was finished at a cost of \$26,486.57 and first used on January 29, 1950.

Hatter became popular for starting youth meetings. As often happens in congregations with two very different preachers, some disagreements began to surface in the church. Eventually, by 1954, the dissensions led to the formation of a new group, Lyside Mennonite Church at Lyndhurst. Brydge pastored there.

Both groups stayed with Virginia Conference but the division took the majority away from Mt. View. Unfortunately, it also led to some being lost to the church altogether. Mt. View was left

with the task of rebuilding. Today, Mt. View is the larger of the two congregations. By 1975 Mt. View had recovered the losses of 1954.

Pastor Hatter promoted daily Bible readings. For years Daisy Fitzgerald kept a record of readings, reporting weekly at the end of Sunday school. In 1960 it was reported that 13 members had "read through the Bible" in the last year, with 26,572 chapters and 695,572 verses having been read during the year. (Kiser, various pages)

In 1957 the Southern District Council discussed the need for a deacon and ministerial help since Frank Hatter was nearing retirement age. However, Mt. View proceeded with only ordaining a deacon. On January 19, 1958, with several nominees, Frank's son, Samuel Reginald Hatter (1923-2002) experienced the lot falling on him to become the new deacon.

Reginald assisted with visitation, communions, and continued to teach Sunday school for many years. He worked for several years as a rural mail carrier and later started a sheet metal fabrication business. He and Jean also had six children, three of whom still attend Mt. View and have active leadership roles in the congregation.

The names of their six children are:  
 Dennis (married LuAnne Lehman)  
 Randall Dean (married Crystal Esh)  
 Sharon (married Randy Kiser)  
 Daniel (married Tina Ramsey)  
 Rebecca (married Richard Truxell)  
 Marcia (married Raymond Nester)

B. Frank Hatter died in 1983, after some years of retirement as a "mountain pastor."

*Dennis Hatter*

*(Dennis wrote most of the above but said at the end of his article that if more is desired, see the Mt. View history written by Roy D. Kiser, Mission in the Mountain. That was done. Ed.)*

## The two JACOB HILDEBRANDS, the Church, and Journal Entries

The outstanding bishop Jacob Hildebrand of Madrid, northwest of Waynesboro, who lived 1816-1899 and his first cousin, Jacob R. Hildebrand (1819-1908) have left a considerable trail of documentation about 19<sup>th</sup> century Augusta County events. Here is a generous sampling:

A key is needed to sources we cite in the chronology

DR – Deed records (EMU Archives)

FBR – Jacob Hildebrand Family Bible Records (EMU Historical Library)

HCR - “Church Record” book, kept by Bishop Jacob Hildebrand (VA Conf. Archives)

HAB – Harry A. Brunk, History of Mennonites in Virginia, Vol. 1

JHD – Bishop Jacob Hildebrand Diary (VA Conference Archives)

JRHJ – Jacob R. Hildebrand published journal, *A Mennonite Journal, 1862-1865*, Burd St. Press, 1996

VCM – Virginia Conference Minutes Book

PET – petitions to General Assembly or to governor (copies in VA Conference Archives)

- 1823, July 25 – Jacob Hildebrand, Sr. (father of Bishop Jacob) gives schoolhouse for German school. (FBR)
- 1823, Oct. 3 – Parents sending children to the above school: Martin Grove, Johannes Faber, Jacob Hildebrand, Enoch Branner, Gabriel Sticklely, John B. Farmer (?), George Barnhart, Jr. (FBR)
- 1825 or 26 – First Mennonite Meetinghouse in Augusta County, Hildebrands, perhaps organized 1825
- 1826, May 4 – Jacob, Sr. and Barbara Hildebrand, for \$15, sell one acre for “Meneece” (also called “Amenian Church” to trustees, Henry Rode, John Fauber, Henry Hildebrand, Jr.  
Small meetinghouse was built on south side of road in either 1825 or 26. (DR, HAB)
- 1839, Aug. 22 – Jacob Hildebrand, Jr (who later became bishop). and Magdalene Gochenauer married (FBR)
- 1843, July – Jacob Hildebrand, Jr. baptized at age 26.
- 1843, Dec. 3 – five months after baptism, Jacob, Jr. was ordained to the ministry, most likely by lot and presumably at the Hildebrand Church. He was 27 years old. (VCM and other sources)
- 1847, May 8 – ordained to become bishop, at age 30.
- 1855 – July 23 – trustees appointed for Hildebrand Church: Jacob R. Hildebrand, Albert Y. Freed, Jacob Hildebrand, Jr. (the bishop), Peter Shumaker (minister). (HCR)
- 1861 – Bishop Hildebrand keeps a diary; the 1861 and 1867 diaries survive; here are selected entries (JHD)
- Jan. 4 – preaching at church as president requested day of prayer (Pres. James Buchanan)**
- Feb. 3 – the bishop goes to Brenemans Church in Rockingham County (near Edom and present Lindale Church to serve communion, since Bishop Martin Burkholder had died in December 1860.
- Feb. 4 – at Weavers Church near Harrisonburg.
- March 25 – at court in Staunton.
- March 31 – preached at Hildebrand “to a good assembly.”
- April 1 – William Eavers began to work for Jacob.
- April 6 – Eavers last day already because he was “going to muster,” says the diary.
- April 18 – “war commenst volenteeres called on.”
- April 19 – “vollenteers started from Waynesboro.”
- April 21 – had meeting at the church; 8 people joined the church -- William & Mary Eavers, David & Francis Kennedy, John & Anna Landis, Sarah Wright, “Old Mrs. Huye.” (HCR)
- April 26 – Virginia Mennonite Conference held at Hildebrands (no minutes published in VA minute book)
- April 28 – “sacramental meeting” on Sunday, the usual way VA Conference concluded a conference; Joel Wheeler joined the church; 38 members communed.
- May 12 – to Rockingham County to administer “sacrement” at Dry River Church (Bank) to 220 members. Samuel Coffman had not yet been put into office as bishop in Middle District.
- May 19 – back again in Rockingham County to administer “sacrement” at Pike Church – 117 communed.
- May 23 – went to Waynesboro and “votet for Seesetion” (secession of VA from Union).**
- May 26 – back to Rockingham to administer “sacrement” at Brenemans Church (Lower District – 117 there
- June 2 – Joel Wheeler accompanies the bishop to a church meeting at Mount Piskey.
- June 9 – had preaching at Church. Organized a Sunday school. (note that this is 1861, long before VA Mennonites adopted Sunday schools).
- June 13 – “ fast day and prayer proclaimed by the Preasident. Had preaching at the church.”** (this was not President Lincoln now in office in the North; this was President Davis of the Confederacy!)
- June 16 – at Sunday School (this is the last time he refers to having Sunday school).

- June 21 – “heard the cannon at John Chandler.”
- June 23 (Saturday) – preached at Brenemans at a 3:00 p.m. meeting; on Sunday the 24<sup>th</sup> again preached at Brenemans “Electet Abraham Shank to the ministry and Jacob Geile to Deacon” (significant leaders for decades in Lower District in Rockingham County).
- July 1 – got “Patrick’s reaper” (thereafter he had two threshing machines for a while).
- July 6 – started the “New mechine and moved to Simon Coiner.”
- July 12 – started “old mechine at widow Kennedys.
- July 15 – at Staunton “was about 2000 soldgers there.”
- July 21 – “great fight warm & clear Had Preaching. Baptized 7 persons.
- July 22, 23, 24, 25 – four days in Staunton. On 24<sup>th</sup> “got David off the muster roll” (uncertain what David)
- August 5 – “Sent petition to governer Letcher.” 36 men’s names at end of petition. Nothing in petition about Mennonite position on war. The petition pleaded that the governor let Joel Wheeler off for 60 days from military to run his “8 horse Threshing Machine.” Wheeler, (despite being a church member), “has recently volunteerd in the County and Joined a Company” under command of Captain William Long. Now stationed at Staunton. Has Jacob Hildebrand, Sr. and Jr. signatures, as well as deacon John Grove, minister Peter Shumaker and many others from this “densely populated and very productive neighborhood.” Wheeler is described as “an experienced and very competent hand” in running the threshing machine, “one who has given great satisfaction to my costumers.” At the end of 60 days Wheeler “would again report himself for duty.” (note this significant promise in the petition that Wheeler, a church member, return to military duty! PET)
- November 3 – “I was up at Kindig meeting;” preached for a funeral.
- November 6 – “I was at Waynesboro at lechion I votet for Davis and Coffman (Jefferson Davis for president of Confederacy and Samuel A. Coffman of Rockingham for Confederate legislature.)**  
Coffman was a grandson of Michael Kauffman, early Mennonite preacher in Page and Rockingham counties. Coffman lost the election by a wide margin.
- November 15 – “fast day proclaimed by Davis we had preaching at Church”**
- December 1 – Isaac Grove and myself at Kindig meeting
- December 25 – “we had Preaching at church” Text Luke 2:8-20  
(Throughout the year he preached at least 10 funeral sermons, six of them for children – HCR)  
Diary ends in December 1861; only a partial year diary of 1867 has come down to us
- 1862 – February 14 – Jacob Hildebrand, Sr. died.
- 1862-65 – many citations could be made from Jacob R. Hildebrand, *A Mennonite Journal, 1862-1865*. A few here:  
1862, June 20 – son Benjamin in army; he left with army “to drive out Abe Lincolns Hireling tools who are invadeing our soil and desecrating our homes.”
- 1863, Sept. 5 – son Gideon joins “Home Guard” (J. R.’s second son in the military now).
- 1863, Oct. 23 – went past Port Republic battlefield; saw where hogs had uprooted buried Yankee soldiers.
- 1863, Dec. 25 – with 8 men in the lot, two deacons ordained, Jacob R. Hildebrand and Jacob Landes, but Jacob R. doesn’t tell us he was ordained to be deacon that day! (HCR and JRHJ)
- 1864, April 29-May 1 – his first VA conference at Hildebrand; JRH elected secretary for that meeting
- 1864, June 8 – Yankees surprised Gideon; he “shot one of them but lost his horse” (no further word!)
- 1864, July 29 – Jacob R. paid “fine of \$500” for himself to be excused from military duty
- 1865, Jan. 1 – youngest son Michael joins 1<sup>st</sup> VA Cavalry
- 1865, April 2 – son Gideon killed by friendly fire; his father went to get his body and a funeral was held on May 11 at Hildebrand Church, and he was buried in church cemetery.
- 1865, May 30 – Abraham J. Grove, son of deacon John Grove “slain in war” Funeral held Oct. 8.
- 1865, June 24 – Deacon John Grove died at age 69.
- 1867 – Bishop Jacob Hildebrand publishes *Wine Plants for Making Myatt Wine*; Historical Library has the only known copy. Title page says “I am growing this Plant and am prepared to furnish Roots in such quantities as may suit purchasers.” Pamphlet says “This Wine is manufactured extensively in various parts of Ohio, from a species of Rheum.” First grown by Myatt in England and introduced in this country seven or eight years ago. It possesses “rare medicinal qualities,” good for indigestion and constipation, a good stimulant. It has a fine flavor. Good for “general debility and weakness.” Churches also use it for sacramental purposes—a *pure* Wine. Superior to grape wine; an acre the first year can produce 2500 to 4000 gallons at \$2 to \$3 per gallon.
- 1867, Feb. 26 – “plantet all my wine plants” (Jacob Hildebrand’s 1867 diary)
- 1867, July 31 – “we made 83 gallens of wine”
- “Memorandum Book for the Church” regarding present Hildebrand meetinghouse (VA Conf. Archives)  
Built in the fall of 1876 and finished spring of 1877. 92 subscribers gave money; Bish Hildebrand gave most: (\$125); six Pennsylvania churches and donors gave a total of \$516.50. Old meetinghouse sold for \$55. The new one cost \$1181.55. It was dedicated April 22, 1877 (HCR)

# Annual Meeting of SAGA, May 1-2, 2009

SAGA stands for Swiss Anabaptist Genealogical Association and is a consortium of individuals that have compiled over a hundred databases and a total of several million names that are now available on Internet Their annual meeting is at Harrisonburg on May 1-2.

On Friday May 1, Jim Lehman will give a local tour:

10:00 a.m. Begin at Menno Simons Historical Library to learn about the great collection of books and records in this library

11:15 – 12:15 Inexpensive lunch at Main Street Café, VMRC

12:15 – 2:00 To historic cemeteries at Lindale and Trissels Mennonite Churches

2:00 – 2:30 Brief tour of Old Order Mennonite country and end up at Pleasant View Old Order Mennonite meetinghouse for interchange with Lewis Martin, minister for the Cline-Showalter group of OOM.

2:45 – 4:15 To Dayton Farmers Market

\$3.00 for van transportation, or drive your own car

Break

6:30 – Dinner at Bob Evans and sit in on Board Meeting of SAGA

May 2 – Meet at Shady Oaks Fellowship Bldg, Weavers Mennonite Church for morning meeting beginning at 8:30 with coffee and doughnuts. \$9.00 for morning session and lunch.

Morning schedule: introductions, a few business items, followed by a symposium:

**Overview of Virginia Mennonite History and Culture – Jim Lehman**

**Genealogical Resources at Menno Simons Historical Library for Virginia**

**Mennonite Families – Lois Bowman**

**Virginia and Other Mennonite and Amish Families on SAGA website – Jim**

**Hostetler, Richmond, VA**

**PERSONS INTERESTED IN LOCAL FAMILIES, GENEALOGY AND VIRGINIA MENNONITE HISTORY ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND EITHER OR BOTH DAYS.**

For inclusion on Friday tour or Saturday morning session, contact Jim Lehman 437-4326 or [lehmanj@myvmrc.net](mailto:lehmanj@myvmrc.net) **no later than Mon. April 28.**

**To become a SAGA member for \$6.00/year, contact Bob Geiser [bob@gs-titanium.com](mailto:bob@gs-titanium.com)**

*Shenandoah Mennonite Historian*

Editor: James O. Lehman

[lehmanj@myvmrc.net](mailto:lehmanj@myvmrc.net)

**Membership: SHENANDOAH VALLEY MENNONITES HISTORIANS, \$6.00/yr. individual; \$10/couple**

Membership Contact: James Rush 434-0792 [jamesrush@comcast.net](mailto:jamesrush@comcast.net)

Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians

780 Parkwood Drive

Harrisonburg, VA 22802

Elwood Yoder

1181 Sharon Lane

Harrisonburg, VA 22802