

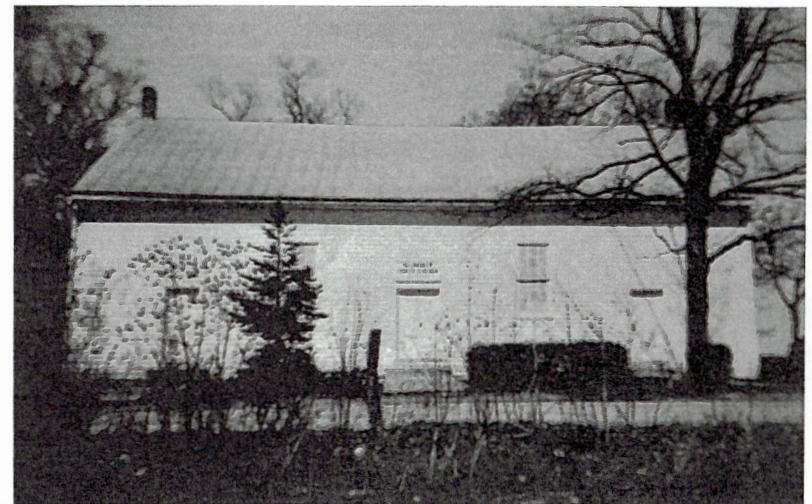
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SUMMIT CHURCH

The First Forty Years

1874-1914



Undated photo, Ralph & Gertrude Collection, Augusta County Historical Society

Our Church's 150 Year Anniversary 1874-2024

By Ronald R. Diehl

Preface

The purpose of this booklet is to present as much written information as I was able to find during the 1874-1914 period when Summit Church was a part of the Pleasant Valley Congregation, the first forty years. Hopefully, this will provide our current and future church membership with the knowledge and understanding of our early beginnings.

Summit Church has been a cornerstone of this community since 1874 when the original church was built and used for services. The original meeting house provided families in our community the ability to worship and learn about the word of God, be baptized into the church, have weddings, hold Christian social gatherings, and funeral services for our loved ones.

Our early church members were Christians from Europe who brought their beliefs in God, their trades of work, and a desire for a fresh start of freedoms and hopes for their families.

During the 1874-1914 period in America, technological change was overwhelming. Our ancestors saw advancements in power and transportation (i.e. refrigeration, automobiles, planes, and roads), communication (i.e. radio, and phones), medical care, and other areas of modernization. These early inventions in the 1800's and early 1900's brought more immigration to the USA. The Brethren changed from its 1700's and early 1800's German immigrant roots to immigrants from most English-speaking countries. Research into the history of the Brethren did expose reluctance, especially in the 1870-1900 period by the German

faction, to give up control of the church, but acceptance and the word of God prevailed.

I am confident we will celebrate another 150 years, for our 300th anniversary in the year 2174, however, we must adapt to meet the spiritual needs of future generations.

Congregational support, hard work, and new membership will continue to see Summit Church as an important part of this community for generations to come.

My research has revealed something I will share in this brochure later, that was true 150 years ago, as it is today. The potential for what was found could support our membership for years to come, only if we follow our German and English ancestors' Christian example.

Summit German Baptist Tunker Church

"Known as Schwarzenau Brethren, German Baptist, and historically as täufer, Tunkers, Dompelaars, and Dunkers...(the) name is derived from the German word tunken which means to dip or immerse." ¹

"1708 is a memorable year to the church of the German Baptist Brethren. In that year at Schwarzenau, Province of Wittgenstein, in Hesse-Cassel, was enacted a remarkable scene. Eight pious souls, after careful prayer and prolonged study, relying only on God and the Bible to guide them and their followers forever, walked slowly, solemnly and heroically from the house of Alexander Mack to the river Eder, which, like a silver thread, wound its way through the hearts of the rich and varied landscape. Here the pious eight, in the early morning, surrounded by many curious witnesses, knelt in prayer, and then one of them led Alexander Mack into the water and immersed him three times, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Then Alexander Mack baptized the other seven, and these eight, perhaps the first to receive trine immersion in the history of the Protestant Church, then organized a new congregation. This new congregation chose one of their number, Alexander Mack, as their leader, and thus begun the täufers or German Baptist Church, as a separate and distinct organization." ²

"The eight founding members referred to themselves as 'brethren,' and New Baptist (German: Neue täufer)... " ³

In 1871, the denomination adopted the name, "The German Baptist Brethren Church." ³

"At the German Baptist Brethren Conference in 1908, the name Church of the Brethren was adopted." ⁴

"One of the important changes taking place in the Church of the Brethren in Virginia in the years from 1800 to 1860 was building of meetinghouses, of which there had been none in 1800. Another important change was the trend in direction of established formal organizations both at the local congregational level and at the district level. Still a third important change was the transition from German-speaking to an English-speaking church. When the Brethren first came to Virginia in the 18th century, they were without exception German, who spoke German as their mother tongue. By 1860, English had become the language used in the Brethren worship services, even though many families still spoke German in their homes." ⁵

"At about the same time that the Lebanon church was being built to meet the needs of the Brethren in the southwestern corner of the Pleasant Valley territory in Augusta County, the Brethren in the northwestern corner of this territory were establishing and building the Summit meeting in 1874 on a parcel of land sold by William Landes. For forty years the Summit church was a part of the Pleasant Valley congregation, but in 1914 it was granted independent congregational status" ⁶

The Pleasant Valley Congregation

By Eld. Peter Garber (p.208-210)

“In 1869, Daniel Miller was elected to the Ministry.”

“Samuel T. Miller was elected in 1874.”

“J. W. Cline was called to the ministry in September 1887.”

“Daniel Garber was ordained to the eldership in 1881.”

“Peter Garber was chosen minister in 1881.”

“S. D Miller was elected minister in 1887.”

“B. F. Miller was elected minister 1900.”

“A. C. Miller was chosen minister in 1902.”

“Perry J. Wenger was elected to the ministry in 1903.”

“At present the Pleasant Valley congregation has four hundred members, ten ministers, four meeting houses, four Sunday schools with an enrollment of four hundred and nine scholars and an average attendance of two hundred and seventy, three Christian Workers’ meeting with an average attendance of thirty, and Sisters’ Aid Society with thirty-one members...”⁷

“The Pleasant Valley Congregation can trace its history to the building its first church at Weyers Cave in 1824 and through the interesting

experiences of the Brick Church Congregation (Middle River Congregation) to the first Brethren settlement in Augusta County in 1790.”⁸

In 1854, the Pleasant Valley Congregation decided to build their second church building.

Ready to Build the Pleasant Valley Church

"The land on which the original Pleasant Valley Church was located, was given by Daniel Glick and his wife. The deed was executed in February of 1854, and when spring came, all preliminary plans had been completed, and they were ready to build. A section of the deed is as follows:

'This DEED, made the 9th day of February in the year 1854--- Between Daniel Glick and Mary Glick his wife of the County of Augusta & State of Virginia of the one part---and Samuel Miller, John Glick and John Miller Trustees of the German Baptist (Tunkin) Church of the County and State aforesaid---of the other part...'"⁹

Expansion of Work

"During the long history of the Pleasant Valley Congregation, it followed the same expansion policy which had been followed by the Brick Church Congregation (Middle River) and which was responsible for the origin of Pleasant Valley as a separate congregation. Early in the history of the congregation, it began to hold regular services at two points in the western part of its large territory. In due process of time, the Lebanon Church was built in the southern end of this territory, and Summit Church filled a long felt need in the northern end of this western part of the congregation. After a period of careful consideration, steps were taken at a Council meeting at Lebanon Church on April 4, 1908, which led to the

organization of the Lebanon congregation. On January 1, 1914, the Pleasant Valley congregation voted to permit the Brethren in the northwest section of its territory to establish the Summit Congregation. By this action, it was agreed that the Glade Church would become a mission point of the Summit Congregation, and that the mother church, Pleasant Valley, would assist as maintaining this mission station. It was in December of 1901 that the Pleasant Valley congregation decided to build the Glade Church."¹⁰

"In the northern end of the western section of the Pleasant Valley territory the Brethren worshipped together in the Summit meetinghouse, which was built in 1874, and in the Glade Church, built in 1901. Over the years the Summit settlement became the larger and more important, and the Glade Brethren were absorbed into the Summit congregation."¹¹

The Missionary Mind

3-7-1902 —Summit: "Taken up collection for India Sufferers."¹²

Contributions to the Ministry

"In addition to the ministers already mentioned in this account, the Pleasant Valley Congregation elected and licensed or ordained ministers as follows:

1874 - Samuel T. Miller	1907 - H.N. Glick
1877 - John C. Cline	1908 - John C. Garber
1900 - Benjamin F. Miller	1912 - Arthur C. Miller
1906 - John T. Glick	1921 - J. Quinter Miller
1907 - Peter Cline	1924 - Guy Wampler

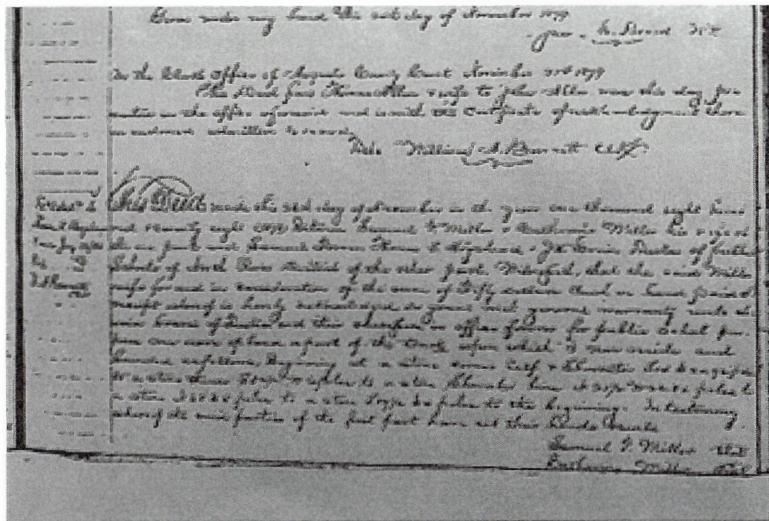
These do not include several ministers working were elected after Lebanon and summit became separate congregations." ¹³

The Summit Church School

"At the same time the young people of the Summit Church were attending Sunday Schools of other denominations against the wishes of their parents and the sanction of the church. Rev. Samuel T. Miller made a visit to the west and coming in contact with the Sunday School work there, was so favorably impressed with it he came back enthusiastic over starting one at the Summit which he did in the Spring of 1886...Rev. Samuel T. Miller was the first Superintendent, with J. M. Glick and J. G. Miller following. Lucious Earman served as Secretary and Librarian for a number of years during the infancy of the Sunday School. He and his wife were two of the staunchest pioneers in the movement...The attendance at first was about 25 or 30. The Bible was the textbook which led up to other helps...The early school was in session only six months during the spring and summer months of each year." ¹⁴

On December 26th, 1878, Samuel T. Miller and Cathrine Miller sold a small tract of their land on the southeast corner of their farm along the highway to trustees of public schools of the North River District for the Summit Church School to be built.

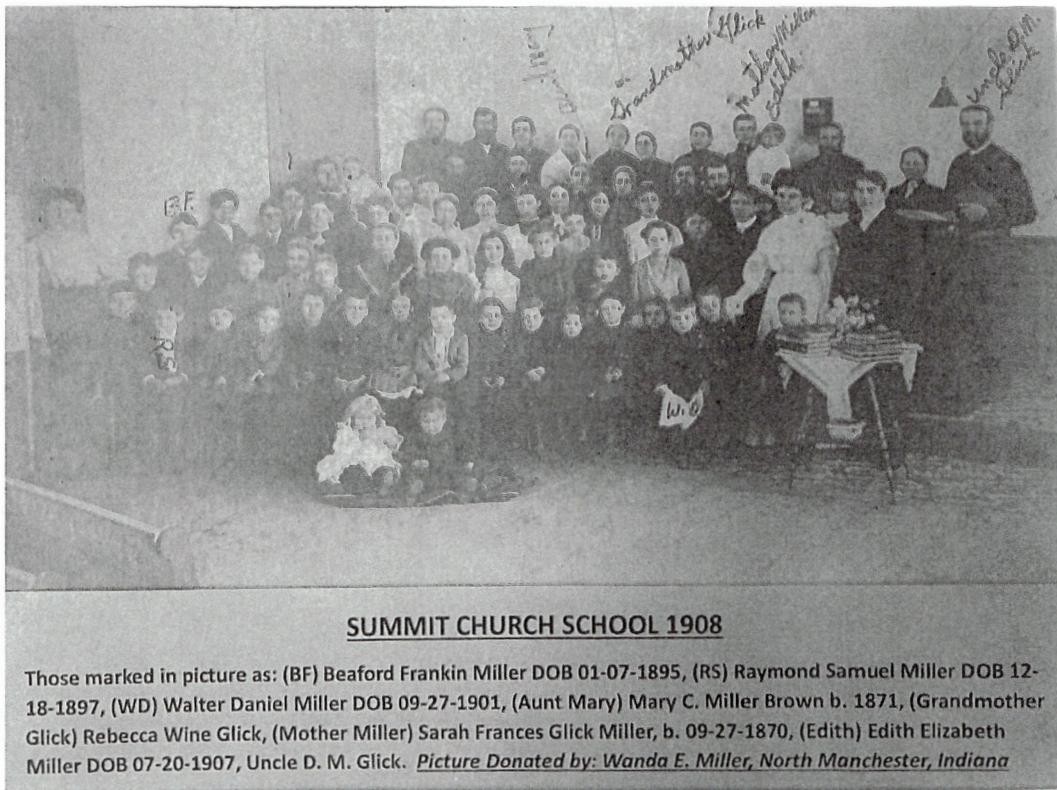
A partial portion of the 1878 Deed reads as: "This Deed made this 26th of December in the year one thousand eight hundred & seventy-eight (1878) between Samuel T. Miller and Cathrine Miller his wife of the one part and Samuel F Thomas S. Hogshead & J _____ Trustees of Public Schools of North River District of the other Part." ¹⁵



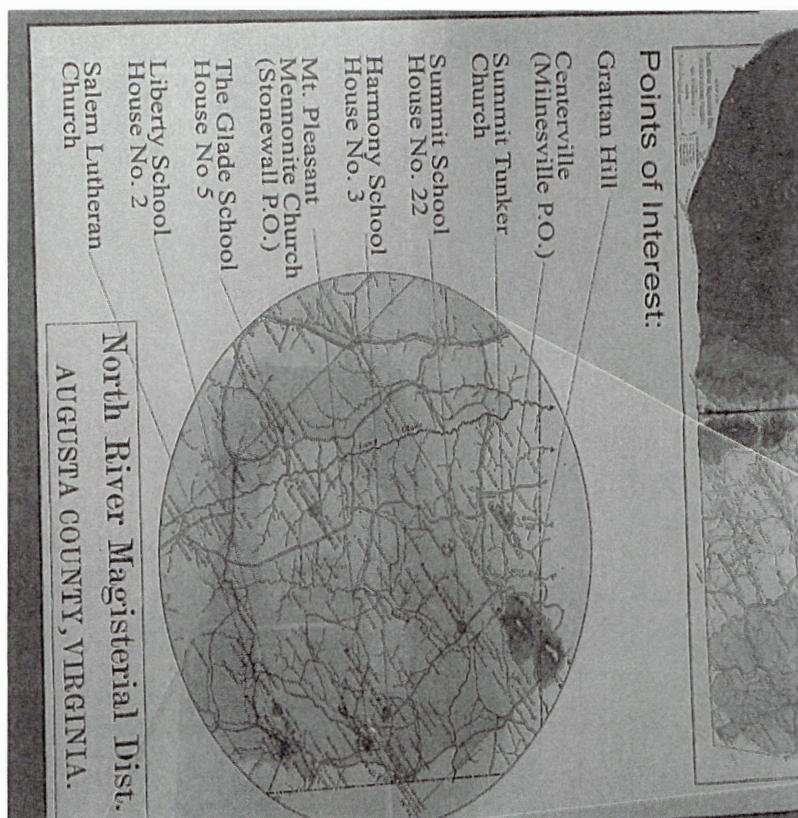
Augusta County, Virginia Deed Book 94, PP. 485-486, 1878.

The land sold for \$50 by Samuel T. and Cathrine Miller to the Public Schools North River District on 12-26-1878 for the Church School. This raises questions about the Spring of 1886 that Minor C. Miller wrote about in The Summit Church School book. Is it possible that Summit Church School started almost eight years earlier? A simple timber framed structure would certainly be built in a brief period. This time difference strongly indicates that may certainly be the case. Did Summit operate the Church School starting in 1878? Did the Augusta County School System rename the structure Summit School House No. 22 later with an expanded curriculum?

"Free public schools began in Virginia in 1870 as provided for in the state constitution...The Augusta County Atlas-1885, by Jed Hotchkiss shows a map of the North River District on which appears its five election districts of 1884. These are: Sangerville, Mount Solon, Centerville, Parnassus, and Springhill...Centerville Election District had five schools -- Summit, No. 22; Glade, No.5; Liberty, No. 2; Harmony, No. 3; and Centerville, No. 4."¹⁶



Donated by Wanda Miller, North Manchester, Indiana



Map of North River Magisterial District, Augusta County, Virginia

By: Jed. Hotchkist, T.E. 1884

Centerville Election District Points of Interest

Note: This original map identified with points of interest was enlarged.



Harmony School House No.3, Date Unknown

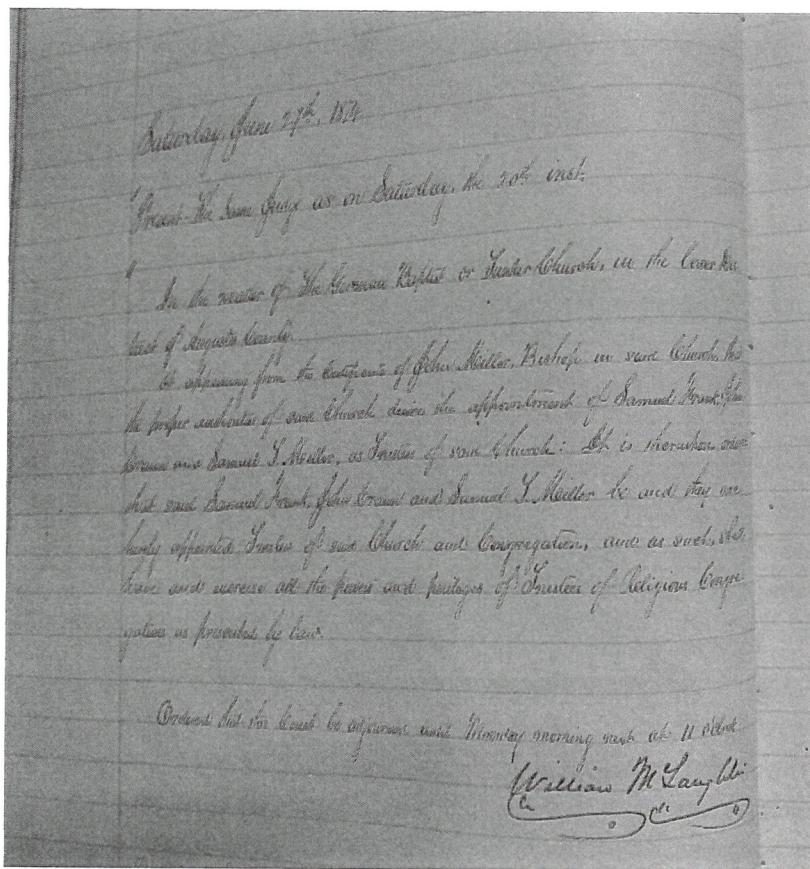
The Ralph and Gertrude Coffman Collection Augusta County Historical Society

The Exhibit

In this exhibit there is a Bible on display that was Catharine Miller's in German on one side of the page and the other side in English. Catherine Hockman Miller was the wife of the Reverend Samuel T. Miller. This Bible according to Samuel T. and Catherine Miller's granddaughter Diehl, Ferrell was frequently used in sermons by Samuel T. Miller at Summit Church. This Bible of The New Testament published in 1854, contains interesting artifacts (scrap papers with references to various Bible verses and handwritten notes). Could these writings be Rev. Samuel T. Miller's sermon notes? Additionally, a cloth with stitching that says, "True friendship never dies," as well as, a lock of red or auburn hair. Could the cloth stitching be from a friend and the lock of hair be Catherine Miller's?

Additionally, there is a Bible of Emma Miller Moyers, daughter of Samuel T. and Catherine Miller, on display and opened to the page that contains Psalm 23. This Bible page is torn and certainly a favorite verse of my grandmother's. I remember her sitting in her rocking chair in the kitchen reading this Bible daily. Emma Moyers lived to be 104 and 9 months old, and in examination of her Bible, the pages tell of frequent use.

My hope is to have other families at Summit Church contribute items from the 1874-1914 period to this exhibit. The exhibit additionally contains a book titled, "A Collection of Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs; suited for the various kinds of Christian Worship, and especially designed for, and adapted to: The Fraternity of the Brethren." ¹⁷



A copy from the Augusta County Common Law Order Book 11, page 98, entry dated Saturday June 27th, 1874, by Judge William M. McLaughlin.

A retyped copy of the Common Law Order Book 11, Page 98, June 27, 1874, entry by Judge McLaughlin of Augusta County, Virginia.

Saturday June 27th, 1874

PRESENT - The Same Judge as on Saturday the 20th inst.

In the matter of the German Baptist or Tunker Church, in the lower District of Augusta County.

It appears from the Certificate of John Miller, Bishop in said Church, that the proper authorities of said Church desire the appointment of Samuel Frank, John Craun and Samuel T. Miller, as Trustees of said Church. It is therefore ordered that Samuel Frank, John Craun and Samuel T. Miller be and they are hereby appointed Trustees of said Church and Congregation, and as such, shall have and exercise all the powers and privileges of Trustees of Religious Congregations as prescribed by Law.

Ordered that this Court be adjourned until Monday morning next at 11 o'clock.

-William M. McLaughlin

As a legal entity Summit German Baptist Tunker Church was established June 27, 1874. However, other previous dates have been noted by others that are key to the creation of Summit Church.

Interesting to note Judge McLaughlin's Court was in session on a Saturday. Was this due to a backlog of work, or possibly the day people

could set aside to travel from work? The mode of transportation in 1874 was dirt roads with horse and buggy, or in Judge McLaughlin's case, travel by train. Judge McLaughlin lived in Lexington and likely traveled by train to the Staunton Train Depot for court sessions. My research did not include Augusta County Real Estate Records to see if Judge McLaughlin owned a second house in Staunton, or he could have possibly stayed at the nearby hotel when needed.

Three years after the German Baptist Church changed to German Baptist Brethren in 1871, the Augusta County German Baptist Tunker Church leaders would not use the Brethren name in 1874, referring to Judge McLaughlin's order previously shown. However, our founders were required to plan ahead of June 27, 1874. Records of any meetings in homes prior to 1874 were not found.

Planning the Church required appointing Trustees, purchasing land, establishing membership, building the church structure, and having a dedication service once built. No information on the period of construction, or the date the Church structure was dedicated was found. I did find a deed for the land, and an article of a Church service that same year as shown in the following documents.

HERITAGE AND OPPORTUNITY

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in the congregation in recent years. The deed was executed in February of 1854, and when spring came, all preliminary plans had been completed, and they were ready to build. A section of the deed is as follows:

"THIS DEED, made the 9th day of February in the year 1854—Between Daniel Glick and Mary Glick his wife of the County of Augusta & State of Virginia of the one part—and Samuel Miller, John Glick and John Miller Trustees of the German Baptist (Tunkin) Church of the County and State aforesaid—of the other part—Witnesseth that in consideration of one dollar in hand paid the receipt thereof is hereby acknowledged the said Daniel Glick and Mary Glick his wife do grant unto the said Samuel Miller, John Glick and John Miller Trustees for said Church and to their successors forever—one certain lot or parcel of land containing two acres adjoining the other lands of said Daniel Glick and others bounded as follows to-wit: (The description follows).

"The said lot or parcel of land is hereby conveyed for the purpose of erecting a Church thereon, and for no other purpose whatever (and in case the Church shall be used and converted for other purposes than the service of God by the said German Baptist denomination then the land and appurtenances hereby conveyed shall revert to the said Daniel Glick and Mary his wife their heirs

Heritage and Opportunity, p.11, Minor C. Miller, 1958, The Beacon Press. This is the Pleasant Valley Church Deed to property to build their second church structure in 1854.

They first used a structure in Weyers Cave until the structure in 1854 was built.

The Pilgrim newsletter contains a letter from C. G. Lint dated October 30, 1874, requesting The Pilgrim publish his short synopsis on his trip through the valley of Virginia. "I was conveyed to the Lower District of Augusta County. In this district I filled five appointments, one at the Oak Grove schoolhouse, two at the summit, (this is a new meeting house, quite a fine building, adapted to hold Lovefeasts in,) and two at the Valley meeting house. This branch has the following minister in holy things: John Miller, elder; A. D. Garber, Daniel Miller, and Samuel T. Miller." 18

C. G. Lint started his trip on Sunday night September 21, 1874 and returned home to Pennsylvania on October 22, 1874. These dates in the Fall of 1874 show that meetings were held at Summit Church, but no dedication ceremony was found.

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THE PILGRIM

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Pilgrim.

Dear Pilgrim.

Being solicited by many of the members of our congregation to give a short synopsis of my trip through the valley of Virginia, I shall therefore ask you to please publish the same.

On Sunday night, September 21st, at 10:30 o'clock, I took the train for Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, as a member of a committee to the Indian Creek branch of said county, arriving at Hagerstown, Maryland, on the 22d, at 8:10 a. m., then I remained until 4 p. m. when brother David Long joined in with me for the remainder of the day. We arrived at Hagerstown at 8 o'clock in the evening. Here we remained until next morning, when we made our way to the Little Valley Railroad depot. At this place we left in company with brothers H. D. Day, David Long, and brother Daniel Miller. We were glad to meet the brethren in so favorable circumstances as we did. At 8:30 p. m. we started out for Schenckstown, where we arrived at 9:30 p. m. and were met by brother Tyner, who conveyed us to his house about five miles distant, where we were very agreeably entertained.

On the morning of the 23d, brother Tyner conveyed us to the meeting house, where we met with brother D. Garber, the other member of the committee. Opened council at the time appointed in the usual order. Continued it until the hour of departure of the 24th, when the meeting was finished and brought to a close, and I trudged to the great interest of the church, where, after a short time, we were convened, that is, between H. D. Day, Moses Miller, David Long, and myself, to the North Pennsylvania Railroad depot where we embarked in the car for Philadelphia and thence to Baltimore. At this place we had some faint hope of meeting Elder D. F. Saylor but he not failing in company with us we conversed ourselves with the thought that his wife's affliction was the cause.

From Baltimore we went to Washington city, thence to Philadelphia. Here we arrived on Friday, the 25th, between 1 and 2 p. m. Were met by brothers D. Phane and B.

F. Moosman, brother H. D. Day and myself went with the latter with the others carried with the former. On the morning of the 26th brother H. D. Saylor made his appearance, and after hearing him make his statement, as to his mission as in Baltimore, we informed that he was about awaiting our arrival at said place, and had gone a great deal of bodily labor to have been, but while he was seeking out our whereabouts we passed through the city on a through train, but all ended well.

On Saturday evening and on Sunday we had services at different places, and on Monday morning at 8 a. m. at 9 o'clock we met at the Valley meeting-house for council, and after we were properly organized we remained in council until about 9 o'clock of the fourth day, when visitors were brought to a close, and on the same evening brethren Day, Long, Saylor and Miller left for their homes and other fields of labor, while I remained with brother D. Phane until the next morning at 5 o'clock, when I took the train for Lynchburg, thence to Charlottesville, thence to the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad and so to Washington, D. C. and so to the Lovefeast in D. C. and two at the Valley meeting house. This branch has the following minister in holy things: John Miller, elder; A. D. Garber, Daniel Miller and Samuel T. Miller.

From this point I was conveyed to the Middle District, to what is called the Beck branch. This house stands on the battlefield known as Fredericksburg, and during the fight was used as a hospital by the rebel army. In this branch we had three meetings, two at the Beck and one at Mountaineer Chapel. The ministers are elders Levi Garber, Joseph M. Kline and Daniel Tyner. From this district I was conveyed to the Lower District of Augusta county. In this district I filled five appointments, one in the Oak Grove school-house, two in the summit, (this is a new building, adapted to hold Lovefeasts in,) and two at the Valley meeting house. This branch has the following minister in holy things: John Miller, elder; A. D. Garber, Daniel Miller and Samuel T. Miller.

From this district I was conveyed to what is known as the Mill Creek branch, Rockingham county. In this district we met four times in worship with the brethren once in Long's school-house, and three times in the Mill Creek meeting house. While in this locality, I learned that I was not so great a distance from the cave, one of Virginia's great wonders, so I accordingly asked the brethren to do me the favor and convey me to said cave, and was gratified in my wish. Brother Samuel Petty volunteered to take me there. This took up the greater part of one day, two hours and a half we spent in the cave. The cave is known as "Weyer's Cave." It is said to be one mile and a quarter long. I shall say no more as to the cave, than, simply, that the sight is grand.

The ministry here consists in brother Isaac Long, elder, Christian Hartman, Frederick Miller, Samuel Kline, John Hershberger, and Samuel Petty. We found Bro. Long confined to his home, and rather seriously ill, a very bad cold and pain in the one lung of his lungs, but did learn, are I but the valuer, that he was improving in health. I hope the Lord may re-

The 1874 Deed of Summit Church shows interesting, if not controversial writing about the word Tunker versus Dunker. Dunker is the English version of Tunker, a synonym used by the English members, but was not used by the German members through the period of the 1700's-1800's. The 1700's through the 1800's exposed something that relates to today. Why did a German Church turn into an English-speaking Church?

The German Baptist Church certainly has German heritage. This period saw different nationalities move into our country. Augusta County experienced growth in people from other countries. The conversion of German to English took place over more than a century. My study of this period exposed a similarity between the 1800's, as today the 21st century.

The Germans and English found a way to increase membership in the 1800's, and with the enormous immigration taking in place during the 21st century, we have opportunities now to offer families from other countries an invitation to attend services at Summit Church of the Brethren. Growth is key to the next 150 years at Summit Church.

The language barrier may not be as difficult as you think. I have been personally in eight European countries, and English is a second language, in each of the European countries I visited. Please note that I am not talking about the total population of those countries but select groups located normally at city centers. This will take work to find new members, however, it is a very viable option.

I made attempts to gain access to records from the period 1874-1914 at Pleasant Valley Church of the Brethren. Pleasant Valley Church stated that these important historical documents are in very fragile condition. I

want to honor their position on this matter. I feel these records, from that period, may hold additional information that was unavailable.

Closing Comments

Our Church Members are the Church, those that come, pray, give, and receive communion with our other Brethren. We have generations of families that go back to 1874, who are still in attendance today. Those families forefathers found an important need in the northwestern corner of Augusta County that continues to service our membership 150 years later.

Our local libraries, universities, and members of our Church, other Churches, and families were used as sources for research. I thank the numerous others who have provided information to this exhibit.

Since this is from the 1874 to 1914 period, I made every attempt to use written sources from that time. However, I found it necessary to make comments as needed. Please consider donating family artifacts from this period to the church.

Sincerely, Ron Diehl.