



# ARCHIVES NEWS

Respecting the Past | Forging the Future

February 2024

[mennoniteusa.org/archives](http://mennoniteusa.org/archives)

## Schowalter Foundation funds interns to save at-risk materials

### Welcome

I am pleased to release our second issue of *Archives News*! In this issue, you'll get an inside look at what's coming up at the Archives this year, including an internship program thanks to a generous grant from the Schowalter Foundation.

We also have features of two fascinating collections. The first is an 1845 letter from Christian Yoder IV to his son about disharmony in the Amish church. The second showcases photos taken by Leonard C. Kreider at Goshen College in the 1920s.

Thank you for supporting the Archives in 2024!



Olivia Krall  
Archives Coordinator

The Schowalter Foundation, North Newton, Kansas, has provided \$10,000 to fund up to four semester-long internships at the Mennonite Church USA Archives and to help digitize fragile resources in 2024.

"J.A. Schowalter wanted his legacy to continue beyond his lifetime, supporting the missional work of Mennonite churches and organizations with similar faith and values," said Schowalter Foundation President Diane Yoder. "We are pleased to support the efforts of MC USA Archives through his vision and generosity."

The interns will help the Archives staff process a backlog of manuscript collections and audiovisual materials.

The MC USA Archives has over 800 linear feet of unprocessed documents and audiovisual materials, according to Archives Coordinator Olivia Krall. "We receive more collections each year than we can process, and this problem has worsened in recent years. Unprocessed materials are less accessible to researchers, and their contents are often housed in boxes that do not meet archival standards and are potentially damaging to the records inside," she explained.

The students also will learn about the process of digitizing film.

"Many of our film reels are deteriorating due to age, putting their contents at risk," Krall said. "We currently have several boxes of films we suspect have 'vinegar syndrome,'



Lydia Stauffer and Andrew Ness,  
2022-2023 Goshen College interns

so named because of the vinegar smell films emit as they deteriorate. However, we have not had the staff or financial resources to digitize these materials." Students will learn how to test the film's quality to determine which reels to digitize and learn how to catalog and preserve the new digital copies.

Krall said she hopes the internship program will bring greater awareness of Mennonite history and foster a new generation of historically minded leaders.

Andrew Ness, a recent Goshen College graduate and 2022-2023 intern, said he values his experience in the MC USA Archives. "Not only did I learn about working in an archive, but I also encountered fascinating stories, people and artifacts that I never would have come into contact with otherwise," he said.

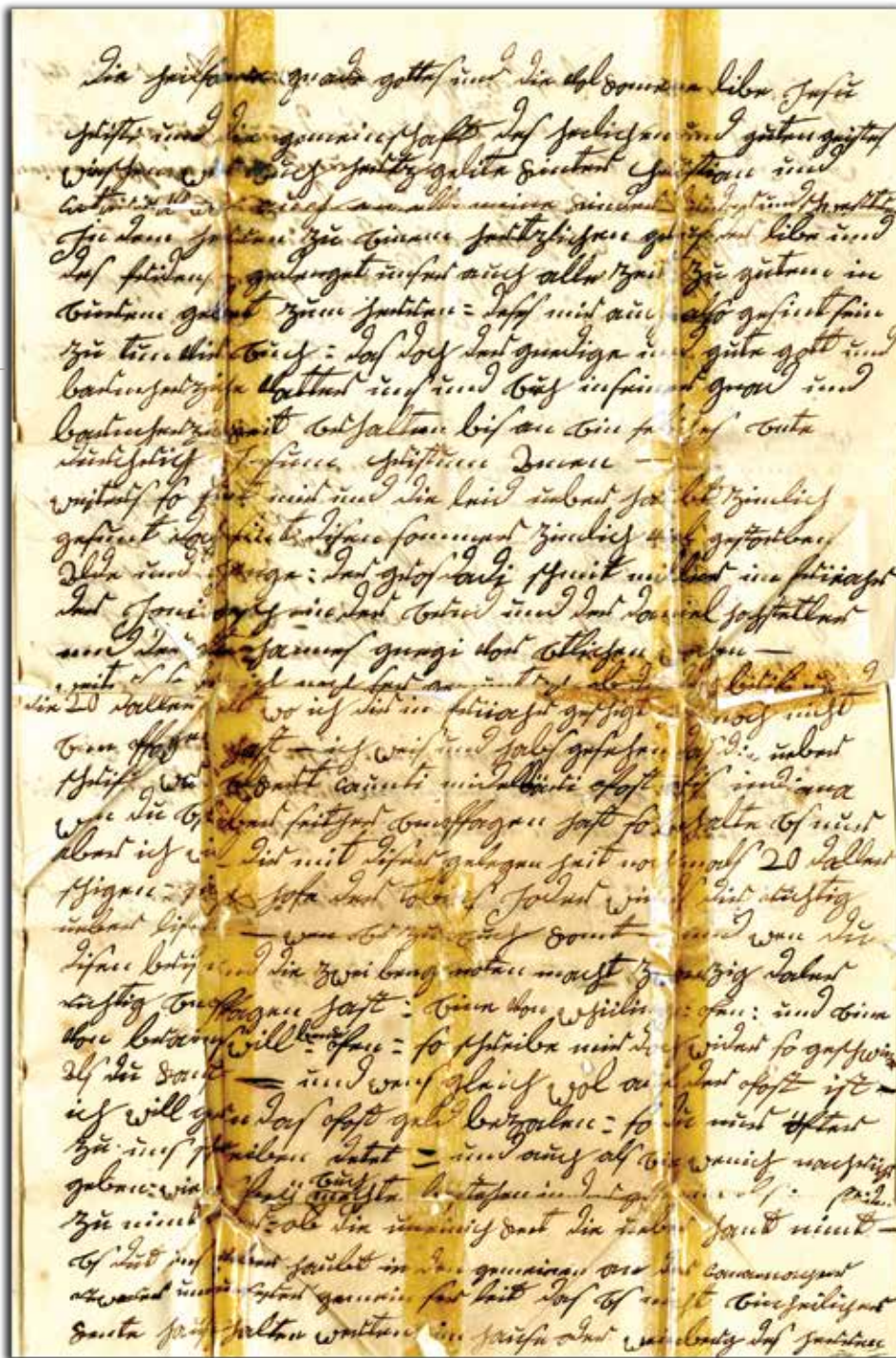
# Bishop Yoder's 1845 letter mourns disunity in the Amish church

Written in 1845, this letter from Bishop Christian Yoder IV to Christian Yoder V is one of the older items in the MC USA Archives. In it, Christian Yoder IV expresses his grief and concern over the state of the Amish church and his worry that his son may be straying from "simplicity in Christ." This letter provides a unique window into the history of the Amish community in mid-19th century, and the relationships and conflicts that have defined it.

**Excerpt translation provided by James Burkett:**

The saving grace of God and the perfect love of Jesus Christ and the communion of the Holy and Good Spirit, to you beloved children, Christian and Catharina, as also to all my children, brethren and sisters in the Lord, a hearty greeting of love and peace ... We and the people are generally well, yet quite a few have died this summer, old and young, Grandfather Somit Miller in the spring, Joni Oesch in harvest, and Daniel Hochstettler and old Johannes Gnagi several weeks ago.

Further, I am indeed very anxious to know if you received the letter and the twenty dollars in money that I sent to you in the spring ... I will gladly pay the postage if you will only write oftener to us, and also give us some information how things are in the church, whether peace is increasing or whether disunion is taking the upper hand. It grieves us very much, especially in the church on the Conemaugh River [Pennsylvania] and in our congregation, that there is not more uniformity nowadays in housekeeping in the House or Vineyard of the Lord ... We are so grieved for you and your children that we may not be led



Citation: Christian Yoder Records, 1845-1849. HM1-5445C. Mennonite Church USA Archives. Elkhart, Indiana.

away from the simplicity in Christ ... If it were not so far to you, we would gladly be helpful to you in the good work, by the help of God.

I must ride tomorrow to the congregation on the river, and until the 7<sup>th</sup> of October Jonas Pitachi and I must go to the Kishacoquillas Valley [Pennsylvania], if we live and the Lord wills.

Furthermore, our winter and summer crops are pretty good with us. But it has been better. We do not thank and praise God enough for this, all the good things that the good Lord gives us.

So much from us, your father and mother,  
Christian Yoder  
Written the 26<sup>th</sup> of September, 1845

# The goofy side of Goshen College

By Olivia Krall

Here are some of the most unique and lighthearted photographs from the MC USA Archives. These images are from the Leonard C Kreider collection and were taken between 1927 and 1931 on Goshen (Indiana) College's campus.

Kreider sold photographs while he was a student at Goshen College, developing his images in a homemade dark room under the science hall stairs. His photography features portraits, the debate and athletic teams, campus events, the horse-drawn groundbreaking of Coffman Hall and hilarious photographs of college students enjoying life. Kreider eventually earned a Ph.D. in Chemistry and became a beloved professor at Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas.



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1—Six students pose on top of an empty fountain on Goshen College's campus.

2—"Dorm Glimpses"\*

3—Ross Gerber and "Shy" Brunk with the latest invention, sliced bread.

4—Helen Eby (left) and Verna Schmidt in costume.

5—"They had to cool off and have it out some way!"\*

6—Mary Hess, Ruth Heatwole, Alta Brenneman, Lenna Heatwole and Rachel Weaver depicted sitting on milk jugs.

7—An image of Paul Horsch is overlaid with a drawing of two owls.

Citation: Leonard C. Kreider Photographs 1927- 1931. HM4-107. Mennonite Church USA Archives. Elkhart, Indiana.

\*The captions in quotations are ones that were written into the album – presumably by either Leonard or his wife, Rachel.



**Mennonite  
Church  
USA**

718 N. Main St.  
Newton, KS 67114-1704

[www.mennoniteusa.org](http://www.mennoniteusa.org)

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**Inside:** A glimpse into the  
Amish church of 1845  
and  
Goshen College students  
in the Roaring '20s.

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the MC USA  
Archives photo  
collection on  
Flickr.

Near East Relief orphans arriving in Beirut from Caesarea. They were brought out in charge of Miss Fletcher of Amherst, Massachusetts. Nellie Miller Mann took this photo in Syria between 1921 and 1923. As a 24-year-old, Miller Mann traveled with the Near East Relief Foundation to Syria to support refugees fleeing the Armenian genocide. Her photographs helped document the Armenian genocide, and researchers around the world have used them. In 2017, she was portrayed in the movie, "They Shall Not Perish; the Story of Near East Relief."

*Citation: Cleo A. and Nellie Miller Mann Papers, 1920-2000. Nellie Miller Mann Photographs, 1921-1923. HM1-695 Box 4. Mennonite Church USA Archives. Elkhart, Indiana.*



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