

## WESTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCE HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

### Annual Report

2022

The Western District Conference Historical Committee remains firmly convinced that understanding the Western District's unique history is essential for moving confidently and appropriately into WDC's future. Below are listed some of the highlights of WDHC activity during the past year.

- Finally meeting in person after almost two years of Zoom meetings.
- Revising the committee's purpose statement on the recommendation of the Resource Commission.
- Adding a wonderful new member, Renae Stucky, on the recommendation of the Resource Commission.
- On Renae's initiative, launching a program of Podcasts featuring interviews of persons with significant WDC ties (The initial interview was with Conference Minister Heidi Regier Kreider, who participated in a four-month course with Elaine Enns of the Bartimaeus Institute using the workbook for settler accountability, *Healing Haunted Histories*, (Enns and Myers, 2021) with an eye to leading WDC churches in work to dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery.
- Supporting and assisting in the planning of a symposium on the contemporary relevance of Erasmus in today's highly polarized world. Erasmus was a sixteenth-century scholar who played a significant role in improving the accuracy of the biblical text now utilized by virtually all Protestant Christians (including Mennonites), and he was indisputably influential in the birth of sixteenth-century Anabaptism. Funded primarily by a grant from the Marpeck Fund, the symposium will involve many—perhaps all—of the other Mennonite colleges and seminaries.
- Assisting in securing the Papers of Lawrence Hart for the Mennonite Library and Archives. In last year's WDCHC report, we indicated that the committee was involved in helping the MLA secure a "major manuscript collection with close ties to the Western District Conference." That reference was to the Lawrence Hart Papers. We have just learned that the family of Lawrence Hart has agreed to deposit the collection with the MLA. This exciting development is thanks, in no small part, to committee member Raylene Hinz Penner, who has maintained very close ties with the Hart Family ever since writing her biography of Lawrence Hart.
- At the request of Associate Conference Minister Kathy Neufeld Dunn, the committee is currently working on developing a WDC history version of the popular show, *Jeopardy*, for the 2022 WDC Assembly.

Committee members are Roger Juhnke, Brett Klingenberg, Raylene Hinz Penner, Dale Schrag (chair), Renae Stucky, and John Thiesen. *ex officio*. We continue to covet additional members with a passion for history who would bring more diversity to the committee's composition.