

## ANNUAL REPORT

### WESTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCE HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

June 2023

The Western District Conference Historical Committee remains firmly convinced that understanding the Western District's unique history, as well as the distinctive history of the Mennonite denomination, is essential for moving confidently and appropriately into WDC's future. A significant part of the committee's time and energy this past year was devoted to offering counsel to various groups and projects, all of which are relevant to the broader history of the Western District Conference. Below are listed some examples:

- Assisting the Mennonite Library and Archives (MLA) in planning a celebration of the securing of a one-million-dollar endowment for the MLA's Operating Fund. The event was held on November 4, 2022.
- Assisting in the planning of a symposium on the contemporary relevance of Desiderius Erasmus, held at Bethel College on November 4-5. Of contemporaneous individuals who never joined the movement, Erasmus was arguably the single most significant 16<sup>th</sup>-century influence on the birth and development of Anabaptism. Funded largely by the Marpeck Fund, the symposium involved contributions and/or participation from every MCUSA and MC-Canada Mennonite college or university.
- Consulting with the Swiss Mennonite Cultural and Historical Association regarding its vigorous plans for the sesquicentennial of the 1874 immigration to the United States.
- Consulting with the conference executive over issues related to the Mennoville Mennonite Cemetery in Oklahoma.
- Consulting with the Mennonite Library and Archives regarding the discovery and use of Native American records in the collection.
- Commissioning Raylene Hinz Penner to write an entry for Lawrence Hart in the Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia On-line (GAMEO).
- Continuing to assist WDC churches in submitting congregational entries into GAMEO.

Committee members are Roger Juhnke, Brett Klingenberg (secretary), 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.

Submitted by Dale Schrag, chair