

Amish Mission Endeavor, 1950-57
Andrew A. Miller Collection
1 File, in Box 1 (Large)

Re: Research on this periodical and on Russell Maniaci

Mennonite Historical Library has Vol. 1, No. 1, December 1951, but in this file are found earlier newsletters.:

First Amish Mission Conference, August 6-8, 1950, 5 pages

[Letter] #4, R. Maniaci, 504 Hubbard, Elkhart, Indiana, Dear Brethren in Christ,
6 pages

Letter # 5, May 1951. Meditations, 6 pages

Are looking for Letters #1 - 3, and anything before December 1951

Mennonite Board of Missions, Overseas and Home Missions, 1951-55, J. D. Graber, (IV-18-10, Pronto 1) File entitled "**Amish Mennonite Mission Interests, 1949-51**"

Contains some early letters from Maniaci, etc.. Important for additional research.

J. D. Graber was at the 1950 Missions Conference in Iowa.

July 25, 2005
Dennis Stoesz

Martin W Lehman, 03:43 PM 7/25/05, P. S. Russell Maniaci

To: Martin W Lehman <mwlehman10@juno.com>
From: Dennis Stoesz <dennises@goshen.edu>
Subject: P. S. Russell Maniaci
Cc:
Bcc:
Attached: M:\MyDepartment\Photo Archives (des)\MBM Overseas Home Missions Graber 1951-55 (IV-18-10)\Amish Mennonite Mission Interests 1949-51\1950 Missions Conference Page 1 R. Maniaci.jpg;

Dear Martin,

P. S. on Russell Maniaci.

Attached are the first page of two documents which sheds light on Maniaci's conversion from the Catholic faith to the Mennonite faith in about 1949, through connections with the Amish. And then he felt a call to have the Amish become mission minded.

Source: Mennonite Board of Missions, Overseas and Home Missions, 1951-55, J. D. Graber, Secretary (IV-18-10), Box 1, File entitled "Amish Mennonite Mission Interests., 1949-51"

I also examined the periodical that Maniaci edited, Amish Mission Endeavor, 1951-57, and found in Vol. 7, # 1, Jan-April 1957, that he said he moved from Elkhart to Pinecraft, Sarasota, Florida because he had to vacate his repair shop in Elkhart.

Dennis

Dennis

"God calls us to preserve our heritage, to interpret our faith stories, and to proclaim God's work among us" (Mission Statement of the Historical Committee, Revision 2002)

Dennis Stoesz, Archivist
Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee
Goshen Archives Desk Phone: 574-535-7478
1700 South Main Street FAX: 574-535-7756.
Goshen, Indiana 46526-4794 E-Mail: Dennises@goshen.edu

Historical Committee & Archives Home Web Page: <http://www.MennoniteUSA.org/history>

Martin W Lehman, 03:44 PM 7/25/05, 1949 letter

To: Martin W Lehman <mwlehman10@juno.com>
From: Dennis Stoesz <dennises@goshen.edu>
Subject: 1949 letter
Cc:
Bcc:
Attached: M:\MyDepartment\Photo Archives (des)\MBM Overseas Home Missions Graber 1951-55 (IV-18-10)\Amish Mennonite Mission Interests 1949-51\1949 (about) Letter Page 1 from Maniaci Dear Brother.jpg;

Dear Brother in Christ,

Greetings in the name of Him who said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Perhaps you wonder who I am and why I am interested in awakening the Amish Church to the great need of spreading or preaching the Gospel. The primary reason why I am interested is what we read in 2 Cor. 5:14, "For the love of Christ constraineth us (me)." This is the result of the experience I had some years ago when I came out of darkness into the Gospel light, and because I know what it means to receive the Gospel light, I can now say, "for the love of Christ constrained me", as it should be with every one that has received the Gospel Light. The whole story of how I came into the Gospel Light from the formal Catholic Church would take too long, but I'll try to give you a brief account. From it, you will also understand why my natural interest is to awaken the Amish Church into mission activities.

By an unusual incident I came to know, for the first time in my life, of a sect known as the Amish, and since I was looking for the Light, I managed to contact some Amish folks in Iowa. After some correspondence I was referred to an Amish bishop by the name of M. E. Bontrager of Centerville, Michigan, who now has gone to be with the Lord. His first letter made such an impression on me that I shall remember as long as I live. The way he expressed himself, I could hardly believe it. You see I had never had contact with any real Christians. The letters that I received from I. E. Gingerich from Hazleton, Iowa and the one from Bro. M. E. Bontrager made a great impression, and it was through Bro. M. E. Bontrager that I and part of my family were taken into the Mennonite Church. I still recall the first time my wife and I visited Bro. Bontrager in his home. We were treated like as if we were millionaires, and the welcome was not like the one I was used to in the big city-- superficial--but was real and genuine. After I moved to Elkhart, Indiana, I had the privilege of spending many happy profitable hours with our departed brother.

Perhaps you wonder what all this has to do with my deep interest for missions. As I stated before, because I know and can truthfully testify of the difference, and I would not take anything that this world could offer for me to go back in the old life. Why? Because now I have the Gospel Light and the peace and joy which the world can't give. Had Brother Gingerich and Brother Bontrager refused to answer my letter and take special interest in my spiritual darkness, perhaps I still would be in darkness. About 3 years ago, I came in contact through the mail with a young woman in Palermo, Sicily and the Lord used my humble ministry to open the door of Salvation to her. I wish you could read how grateful she is now for having received the Spirit of Christ. She too was Catholic. Her heart is now on fire for the Gospel as a result and the Lord has called in others and now a home has been rented for Bible school for children, relief and Bible and tract distribution. And I am looking forward that the Mennonite Mission Board will soon open a mission there. Through her ministry her brother was also converted. Last year Brother Jason Weaver from Stuartdraft, Virginia, and Brother Lewis E. Martin from Harrisonburg, Virginia, consented while they were in Europe to visit this young woman who was converted only through the mail (the power of the Gospel knows no limits or boundaries.) The result was that Brother Jason Weaver was constrained to baptize her. Here is part of the first letter I received from Brother Martin, written from Palermo, Sicily, May 26, 1949

"We have spent the day in Palermo and can count it one of the high spots of our life. We went to the home of Franca Cerullo and found her home. In our little experience we never found anyone so resigned and desirous of baptism as she. Bro. Weaver baptized her."

I wish that I could express the joy that I felt when this news was transmitted to me. The many hours that I had spent in instructing her were completely forgotten in the joy to know that a soul was received in the Kingdom. If my joy was great, what must it have been in heaven? As we read in Luke 15:7, "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. . . ."

Notes On The

FIRST AMISH MISSION CONFERENCE

Heid on Jonas Gingerich's farm in Kalona, Iowa

August 6-8, 1950

Chairmen: Harvey Bender, Kalona, Iowa Moderator: Harry Miller, Partridge, Kansas

-- SUNDAY AFTERNOON, August 6, 1950 (attendance about 150) --

Congregational song #120 - "Yesus Yesus Brun Des Lebens"
Devotion - I Peter 2 - - - - - by W. W. Wagler, Partridge, Kansas
Prayer - - - - - by R. Maniaci, Elkhart, Indiana
Congregational song - "Send The Light"
Testimonial Message: "From Darkness Into the Gospel Light" - R. Maniaci, Elkhart, Ind.
The following are brief points of the message:

Realizing that many are opposed to the Mission Movement, he said, "Should any opposers be in this group, please stop and think of what I am going to testify. First may I refer you to Acts 5:29; 34-38. Peter and the apostles were on trial, but one of the Pharisees, Gamaliel, warned the council to be careful about those men. If this movement is of men, it will destroy itself, but if its from God be careful lest ye be found even to fight against God. I ask of you all, wait and see. If God has not led; this movement will come to nought; but I am positive that it will grow because it is God's command. God has led from the death of his father and mother, he had how he came into the Gospel light. After the death of his father and mother, he had lost all interest in life itself. By clear reasoning he realized that the Roman Catholic religion was only a worldly religion. He had an old Bible that someone had given to him and by reading and praying he came to realize that his religion was false and misleading. After many struggles he gave up his membership in the Catholic church. By an unusual incident he came in contact with the Amish believers and he was much impressed by their letters and finally through them God led him and part of his family into the Mennonite Church. In closing he stated that none of those things including this Mission Movement could have taken place without the leading of the Holy Ghost. It would have been humanly impossible.

Congregational song - "Let Your Lower Light be Burning"
Benediction - - - - - * * * * * by Lester Miller

-- MONDAY, August 7, 1950; 9 a.m. (attendance about 150) --

Congregational song - #172 "Leibster Yesus Ver Sined Hier"
Devotion - II Cor. 5:10-21 - - - - - by Ora C. Nisly, Hutchinson, Kansas
Prayer - - - - - by Daniel Bontrager, Goshen, Indiana
Testimonial Meeting in charge of - - - - - Levi Miller, Kalona, Iowa
Theodor Larson's experience in his life. Deep appreciation for the Gospel light and the truth.
Alvin Beachy's experience of Summer Bible School he taught in through the M.R.C.
Mahlon Wagler's experience in Europe as a member of a builder's unit through the MCC
David Miller's experience and blessing received in visitation work.
Tobe Bontrager's experience in CPB camps helped him to catch a vision of the need in various parts of the States.
Harry Miller - Builders unit and mission work in Glen Flora, Wis.
Harvey Bender - Life of those who were converted and carried testimony to others.
John C. Yoder - Experiences of self receiving great blessing in fasting and praying really gave him power to go forth and serve and testify for Christ.

Hist Mss
1-501
SC

Bontrager, Manasses E , 1868-
Papers, 1920-1945
1 folder

Xerox copies of papers and notebook of
poetry and drawings. He was an Old Order
Amishman from Centerville, Michigan. He
was also a bishop in the Amish Church.

1. Amish Mennonites (Old Order)

Hist Mss
1-513
SC

Bontrager, M E
Beiler, Joseph F
1 folder

Includes photocopies and transcriptions of M
M. E. Bontrager and Christian Beiler papers.

No Recipient, Fwd: Re: Yellow Creek Joint Conference

To: Dennis Stoesz <dennises@goshen.edu>
Subject: Fwd: Re: Yellow Creek Joint Conference
Cc:
Bcc:
Attached:

Date: Mon, 25 Jul 2005 09:38:48 -0500
To: Martin W Lehman <mwlehman10@juno.com>
From: Dennis Stoesz <dennises@goshen.edu>
Subject: Re: Yellow Creek Joint Conference

Dear Martin,

First I would be happy to send you a hard copy of the minutes, 1970. I would also send the entire SCCO report. Easier to do it this way, than for me to do the research.

Would you be willing to send me your mailing address? I can also send it priority mail if you need it quicker. Compliments of the archives. Glad to see your work on this. And I am realizing the significance of those decisions back then on a "regional" map - sounds somehow familiar to what is happening today.

Secondly, as for Russell Maniaci, I could not locate a file on him in Russell Krabill's collection. I think those "Biography" binders Krabill took with him to his Greencroft residence.

I did find 5 copies of the "Amish Mission Endeavor" that Maniaci edited from about early 1951 through to February 1952, when he was living at 504 Hubbard, Elkhart, Indiana. I would also be willing to send you these newsletters, to give you an idea of Maniaci's approach. But they probably do not include direct biography material on Maniaci.

Let me know on these two items. Sincerely, Dennis

Martin W Lehman, 01:27 PM 7/18/05, Re: Russel Maniachi

To: Martin W Lehman <mwlehman10@juno.com>
From: Dennis Stoesz <dennises@goshen.edu>
Subject: Re: Russel Maniachi
Cc:
Bcc:
Attached:

Dear Martin,

Thanks for the question.

1. Russell Krabill did transfer a lot of his archival collection to the archives, so I will check his 74 boxes. I also know that he wanted to retain some binders for his Greencroft residence, when he moved there this past year, and I strongly suspect that this information on Russel Maniachi would probably be in his "Biography" binders there. I will let you know either way.

2. I also remember this Maniaci name from some issues of the Amish Mission Endeavour that he edited, as found in the Andrew A. Miller collection that we have here at the archives. Didn't know if you were aware of that.

Hist. Mss. 1-906

Andrew A. Miller, 1918-1992

▪ Notes of the first Amish Mission Conference, Kalona, Iowa, held on Jonas Gingerich's farm, Kalona, Iowa, August 6-8, 1950. And issues of the *Amish Mission Endeavour*, published out of Elkhart, Indiana, by R. Maniaci, and later by Harvey Graber, Goshen, 1950-55, and which had several names including *Amish Christian Fellowship Review*, and later *Witnessing*

3. The interim director is Franklin Yoder, who also serves as chair of the Historical Committee. His contact information is below.

4. Would you be willing to send me the Krabill obituary? I just heard about his death this morning from his son, James Krabill.

Dennis

Date: Mon, 18 Jul 2005 13:00:44 -0500
From: John E Sharp <johnes@mail.goshen.edu>
To: dennises@goshen.edu
Auto-Submitted: auto-replied
subject: Vacation Notifier

This office is in transition. Franklin Yoder, Kalolna, Iowa, is replacing me as (interim) director, beginning July 16.

Printed for Dennis Stoesz <dennises@goshen.edu>

Martin W Lehman, 01:27 PM 7/18/05, Re: Russel Maniachi

To contact the director write <franklin-yoder@uiowa.edu>

To contact archives staff write <archives@goshen.edu>

Send personal messages to <johnes1951@msn.com>

After August 8 send personal messages to <johns@hesston.edu>

-John E. Sharp

At 12:10 PM 7/18/05, you wrote:

Dear Dennis,

A friend sent me a copy of the Russell Krabill obituary. I talked with him briefly at the In-Mich conference and learned that he had some information in his files about Russel Maniachi. He couldn't remember where it was, and I have been informed that he had given papers to the archives. His memory had the papers in one of his notebooks.

Russel Maniachi was instrumental in attracting Lancaster Conference to Miami, Florida. I will appreciate any information as to how and when he or his family became Mennonites and what took him to Miami.

I noticed on the societies web page that John Sharp is now a "Past director". I will introduce myself to the interim director.

Thanks,

Martin Lehman

"God calls us to preserve our heritage, to interpret our faith stories, and to proclaim God's work among us" (Mission Statement of the Historical Committee, Revision 2002)

Dennis Stoesz, Archivist
Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee
Goshen Archives Desk Phone: 574-535-7478
1700 South Main Street FAX: 574-535-7756.
Goshen, Indiana 46526-4794 E-Mail: Dennis@goshen.edu

Historical Committee & Archives Home Web Page: <http://www.MennoniteUSA.org/history>