

YOUNG CENTER

News

THE YOUNG CENTER FOR
ANABAPTIST AND PIETIST STUDIES
AT ELIZABETHTOWN COLLEGE



Students participate in summer research at the Young Center

SUBJECTS OF STUDY: AMISH EXPERIENCE WITH COVID-19 AND BOWERS INTERPRETIVE GALLERY

The CDC's identification of the Amish as a group that has responded differently to the calls for social distancing and offers of immunization against COVID-19 led to a summer project at the Young Center. "Content analysis of letters appearing in Amish publications such as *Die Botschaft* newspaper can provide a major window into the Amish experience with COVID," Young Center interim director and professor of history Steve Nolt said. "Each issue contains hundreds of letters from across the United States."

Four students joined the research team for the seven-week project, which was part of Etown's Summer Scholarship, Creative Arts and Research Projects (SCARP) program. "What drew me into the project was a general curiosity of how the Amish population was impacted by COVID-19," sociology/anthropology major Cecilia Stoner said. Liz Wanamaker concurred: "Since many lives were changed during COVID, I wanted to know how specifically Amish society and behaviors changed. As an occupational therapy student, I have learned about roles, routines, and activities of daily living. These are all areas that would have the potential to be changed during a pandemic. This project gave me the opportunity to both utilize my OT lens and my interest in Amish society."

The student researchers read letters from *Die Botschaft*, an Amish-published weekly, and coded the contents according to references to illness and death, description of illness, community responses, mitigation efforts, statements on risk, attitudes toward government health mandates, sources of information about COVID and apparent level



Fredilyn Dong (left) and Liz Wanamaker (right) read and code letters from *Die Botschaft*.

of trust in the sources, and general theological or cultural responses (trust in providence, concern for the suffering of others, etc.).

By July 16 the students had read and coded data from 8,281 letters in *Die Botschaft*. In addition to becoming adept at the assessment and coding process, they also learned about Amish practices and values. Fredilyn Dong noted, "What inspires me about the Amish is their compassion for themselves and others. Several of the letters mentioned not only strong ties to their family and community, but also Amish women making masks and Amish men building hospital beds for hospitalized patients." "I love their focus on family and community; it's like they have multiple families all in one!" Christina Mer-

cincavage said. "I believe the results from this project could be useful to help find better ways to strengthen the relationship between the Amish and the medical staff," she continued. "If [medical staff] can understand their culture, tradition, and religion, then they may be able to find more naturalistic treatments better suited for them."

The student researchers presented their preliminary findings at the 12th annual Landmark Summer Research Symposium, hosted by Goucher College (Towson, MD). They will continue the coding and analysis through the fall and present again later in the semester at a conference hosted by Temple University-Harrisburg.

(continued on page 4)



From the Interim Director

Student engagement is at the heart of the Young Center’s mission. In addition to offering courses in Anabaptist and Pietist studies for Elizabethtown College students, the center provides internships, research assistantships, and capstone projects as signature learning experiences. These opportunities connect with a range of majors and disciplines on our vibrant liberal arts campus.

During the past school year, fourteen students worked with Young Center programs and projects in significant ways, including student assistants Caitlin Rossiter, a history and French double major, and Eric Schubert, a history major.

Meghan Kenney, a communications and criminal justice double major, created a series of short videos for the Young Center website, while mass communications major Kaitlyn Chambers completed her senior capstone project by preparing audio and video files of past Young Center lectures for posting to our website’s digital library. The Young Center engaged Nick Nolt, an information system major, to help develop the interactive music corner in the Bowers Interpretive Gallery.

During spring and summer 2021, four students—psychology major Madi Meiser and political science majors Alli Melnikoff, Ashlee Reick, and Destiny Troy—worked with an ongoing study of political participation by members of the Amish community.

And as described elsewhere in this newsletter, five students participated in Young Center summer research under the auspices of Elizabethtown College’s Scholarship, Creative Arts and Research Projects (SCARP) program. Fredilyn Dong, Christina Mercincavage, and Liz Wanamaker, all occupational therapy majors, and Cecilia Stoner, a sociology major, documented Amish communities’ experiences of COVID-19. Eric Schubert’s SCARP project involved researching and compiling materials for student docents to use when giving tours of the Bowers Interpretive Gallery.

We are grateful for the outstanding students with whom we are privileged to work. They are the reason we’re here.

Steve Nolt
Interim Director

Rose Beiler named Snowden Fellow

The Young Center is pleased to announce that Rose Beiler, associate professor of history at the University of Central Florida, has been named the Snowden Fellow for fall 2021. Beiler’s research interest is the German-speaking Atlantic world.

Her focus while at the Young Center will be on drafting her book, *Communication Networks and the Dynamics of Migration, 1630-1730*, and continuing to create [PRINT—People, Religion, Information Networks, and Travel](#), the digital project that grew out of her book research. Both projects examine the ways religious dissenters—Anabaptists, Quakers, and Pietists—created connections that crossed cultural, linguist, and political borders to address religious persecution and carry out missionary work. The communication networks they created became channels for information about migration opportunities and eventually shifted migration flows to the British North American colonies.

Beiler will also continue working with the history committee for [Nicholas Stoltzfus Homestead](#), an eighteenth-century Berks

County Amish homestead, on interpreting the historic site.

“The Young Center will provide a wonderful environment for working on my projects,” Beiler said. “Having easy access to reference materials; collections like the Spohn Collection of Ephrata imprints, the Donald Durmbaugh Research Collection, the Eckerlin letter books; and rare books like early copies of *Martyrs Mirror*, the Ephrata Music Book, and the 1743 Saur Bible, will allow me to contextualize my writing in ways that are simply impossible from my office in Orlando, Florida. Two of the groups whose communication networks I’m studying (Anabaptists and Pietists) are the focus of the Center’s collections. And my third group is the Quakers—a community whose archives are close by. The Young Center will provide ample resources and a quiet place to focus on my writing.”

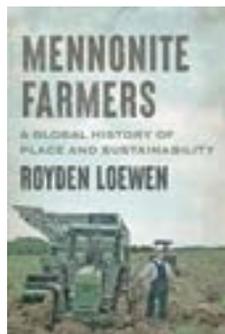
Beiler will present a talk about her work on November 15 in the Bucher Meetinghouse. The lecture will also be livestreamed.

The generous gift of Armon and Lucille Snowden endowed the Snowden fellowship and lecture. The Young Center invites nominations and applications for its fellows programs. Visit www.etown.edu/youngctr for details.

New book explores Mennonite farmers

[Mennonite Farmers: A Global History of Place and Sustainability](#), the most recent title in the Young Center series published by Johns Hopkins University Press, will be available in late October.

Written by Royden Loewen of the University of Winnipeg, the book is based on a multiyear study of seven geographically distinctive Anabaptist communities located in seven countries—Bolivia, Canada, Indonesia, the Netherlands, Russia, the United States and Zimbabwe—on five continents. Although they share a common Anabaptist faith, the farmers reside in places and climates that are quite distinctive from one another. The book describes the ways each of them has dealt with the environmental changes and the global forces of modernization during the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.



Third journal issue to be released



The third issue of the *Journal of Plain Anabaptist Communities* (JPAC), an Open Access journal published by the Ohio State University Libraries, will be released this month.

The Summer 2021 issue contains articles on the Old German Baptist Brethren love feast, attitudes and beliefs about COVID-19 and vaccination rates among the Amish, reproductive history and post-reproductive mortality among Amish women, non-Amish prejudice toward the Amish, and others.

Access to the journal, including an option to subscribe to the mailing list and detailed information for prospective authors, is available at <https://plainanabaptistjournal.org>.

Ephrata music book conservation

A manuscript music book containing music composed at Ephrata for the community's 1739 hymnal, *Zionitischer Weyrauchs-Hugel*, is currently undergoing conservation by the Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts in Philadelphia.

The Young Center is paying for the professional conservation and digitization of this rare manuscript in the Hess Archives. Among the treatments is an effort to reduce the greenish blue stains on many of the leaves (top: before stain reduction; bottom: after stain reduction). While the manuscript is partially unbound, the pages and cover will be photographed. The image files will allow researchers to study the manuscript without disturbing the original.



Center schedules conference on the Amish

“THE AMISH AND THEIR NEIGHBORS” TO BE HELD JUNE 2-4, 2022

The Young Center will host “[The Amish and Their Neighbors](#),” a multidisciplinary conference, June 2, 3, and 4, 2022. The conference, which is open to the public, will focus on interactions between Amish communities and wider society, including those in areas such as public health, government regulation, business and economic development, charitable work, land use and environmental issues, tourism, and civic involvement.

Carl Desportes Bowman, director of survey research at the University of Virginia’s Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture, will give the keynote address, “Tacit Tribes and Soft Allegiances in American Life.” “The past two decades have witnessed extreme political polarization and paralysis, culture wars between progressives and conservatives, and racial diversity and division. What is less obvious are the tacit cultural

tribes into which Americans sort themselves and their allegiances that often remain unrecognized and unspoken,” Bowman said. “This presentation will examine the American cultural context of the early twenty-first century, especially as it pertains to the Amish.”

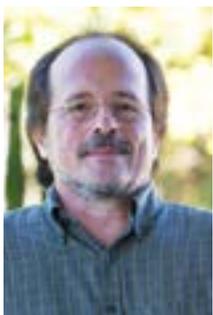
The conference will include three plenary sessions. Jeanette Harder will deliver “Who is Caring for Our Children? Plain Communities’ Involvement in Foster Care and Adoption,” a presentation of the findings of the qualitative research study she and a colleague conducted with Plain community families from diverse affiliations and geographic settings who have provided foster care and adoption for children. Harder is a professor of social work at University of Nebraska at Omaha and a founder of Dove’s Nest.

In “Epidemics and Echo Chambers: What the Pandemic Teaches Us About Beliefs, Be-

haviors, and Community,” Rachel E. Stein will explore how the relationship between health officials and the Amish has developed over time and how public health directives were accepted (or not) in Amish communities during COVID-19. Stein is an associate professor of sociology at West Virginia University. Her research focuses on community building and health in Amish communities.

In “Plain Politics: Assessing Old Order Amish Voter Participation in the 2004, 2016, and 2020 Presidential Elections,” Kyle Kopko will present a comparative analysis of Amish voter registration and voter turnout across the 2004, 2016, and 2020 presidential elections. Kopko directs the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, a legislative service agency of the Pennsylvania General Assembly, and is an adjunct professor of political science at Elizabethtown College.

The conference will also include academic paper presentations and poster sessions. Proposals for papers and posters will be accepted through November 1, and conference registration begins in January. For more information, visit www.etown.edu/amish2022, call (717) 361-1470, or send an e-mail to amish2022@etown.edu.



C. Desportes Bowman



Jeanette Harder

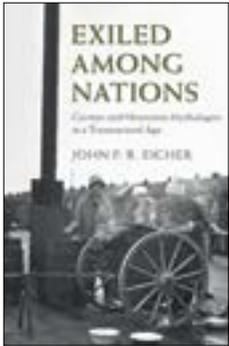


Rachel Stein



Kyle Kopko

Brown Book Award recipient named



Exiled Among Nations: German and Mennonite Mythologies in a Transnational Age by John P. R. Eicher is the 2021 recipient of the [Dale Brown Book Award](#). The award, named for author and theologian Dale W. Brown, is given

annually to an outstanding book in Anabaptist and Pietist studies published during the previous three years.

Exiled Among Nations (Cambridge University Press, 2020) follows two groups of German-speaking Mennonites, one composed of voluntary migrants and the other of refugees, across four continents between 1870 and 1945. Eicher describes how migrant groups used the global spread of nationalism to secure practical objectives and create local mythologies and how governments and aid organizations used such groups for their own purposes.

Reviewer Brandon Bloch of the University of Wisconsin-Madison calls the book “an important and timely contribution to studies of nationalism, migration, religion, and transnational exchange in the turbulent period of 1870-1945” and a “tour de force of archival research and theoretical rigor.”

The Brown Book Award judges also commended the book. “The quality of his prose is exceptional. Eicher has a gift for lucidly applying to his subjects complex sociological theories in ways that bring significant conceptual clarity and dividends for his readers,” one said. “Eicher is also to be commended for the impressive range of sources. Beyond his work’s direct contributions to the historical experiences of Mennonites with major political ideologies of the early twentieth century, its insights also speak, more broadly, to our understanding of other modern diaspora communities.”

Another judge noted: “The sophisticated analysis of how Mennonites’ self-understanding is shaped by both their history and experiences as well as their stance toward society makes this volume valuable to any reader interested in how to understand, tell, or live the Mennonite story.”

Eicher is an assistant professor of history at Pennsylvania State University-Altoona, where his research focuses on Europe’s global connections including colonialism, nationalism, migration and religion. He will present a lecture about *Exiled Among Nations* on October 21 at 7 p.m. in the Bucher Meetinghouse. The talk will also be livestreamed.

Nominations for the 2022 Dale W. Brown Book Award will be accepted until December 15, 2021. Visit www.etown.edu/youngctr for details.

Summer Fellow pursues work with Plain communities

Jeanette Harder, professor of social work at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, spent most of the summer at the Young Center.

Harder also cofounded [Dove’s Nest](#), a nonprofit organization whose mission is to “empower and equip faith communities to keep children and youth safe in their homes, churches, and communities,” and coauthored, with Allen Hoover, [For the Sake of a Child: Love, Safety and Abuse in Our Plain Communities](#) (Ridgeway Publishing, 2019)

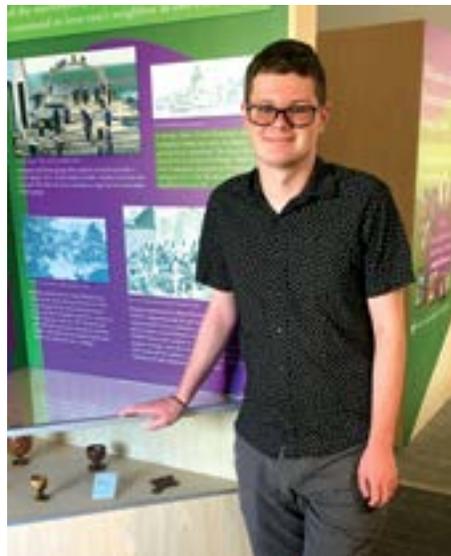
Her work and research with Plain communities started more than five years ago with providing cultural awareness trainings to social service professionals in upstate New York through Dove’s Nest. Prior to the pandemic, she was collecting qualitative data sporadically as she was able to travel. “Being at the Young Center helped me tremendously by giving me closer access to Plain communities in the Northeast and by allowing me to learn from those more knowledgeable than I, like Steve Nolt and Edsel Burdge,” Harder said.

She spent a portion of her time finishing qualitative data collection with the Plain community families who provide foster care and adoption to mainstream children. She also began a new study on Plain communities’ responses to child abuse, especially through their crisis and family restoration teams. Harder’s hope is that her research findings “can be used to inform and train social services around the U.S. as well as to empower Plain communities to continue to bring hope and healing to survivors of abuse.”

Student research projects *(continued from page 1)*

The second SCARP project involved creating a script for student docents to use when guiding visitors through the Bowers Interpretive Gallery. History major and Young Center student assistant Eric Schubert read primary and secondary sources, did archival and historical library research, conducted oral history interviews, and studied museum exhibit design in preparation for creating the script.

Schubert particularly appreciated his oral history interviews with retired Etown history and religious studies faculty. “It was invigorating to hear their life stories related to Anabaptist service and peacemaking,” he said. “Those two points make up such a strong part of their personal and professional lives, so it was wonderful to talk with them and learn such great info.” Schubert will continue his work on the project during the fall semester.



Eric Schubert

Carl Zeigler Award

Occupational therapy major Veronica Zerebillov has received the 2021 Carl W. Zeigler Award for the best student research paper related to historical or current aspects of Anabaptist or Pietist studies. Her paper, “Amish Utilization of Mental Health Treatment Services,” was written for SO224: The Amish in Modern Society, taught by Conrad Kanagy. The award is accompanied by a prize of \$250.

The award is named in honor of Carl W. Zeigler, a long-time religion professor at Elizabethtown College and an active leader in the Church of the Brethren in Pennsylvania.

UPCOMING EVENTS

All lectures will be held in the Bucher Meetinghouse and livestreamed via Zoom.
See the [upcoming events page](#) of the Young Center's website for access instructions.

LECTURE

Quiet Riots: Latino Mennonites and the Politics of Belonging

FELIPE HINOJOSA

Thursday, September 16, 7 p.m.



Felipe Hinojosa provides an overview of Latino religious politics in the Mennonite Church in the 1960s and 1970s, as discussed in his book *Latino Mennonites: Civil Rights, Faith, and Evangelical Culture*. He focuses on how Latino Mennonites forged coalitions with Black Mennonites to both push back against the racism they experienced in the church and to fight for a seat at the Anabaptist table.

Born and raised in the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas, Felipe Hinojosa is an associate professor of history at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. He serves as director for the Carlos H. Cantu Hispanic Education & Opportunity Endowment at Texas A&M and is editor for the interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed, and on-line moderated forum Latinx Talk. His work has appeared in *Zócalo Public Square*, *Western Historical Quarterly*, *American Catholic Studies*, *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, and in multiple edited collections on Latinx Studies.

BRETHREN HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Saturday, October 16, noon to 4:00 p.m.

Young Center

Enjoy bicycle-churned homemade ice cream and popcorn from the Reist popcorn wagon served in the tent outside the Young Center. Then listen to country gospel music by Days of Old and participate in a hymn sing inside. Games and crafts for children and a magic show round out this family-friendly event.

BROWN BOOK AWARD LECTURE

Migration Stories of Mennonites on the Move: Russia, Canada, Germany, and Paraguay (1870-1945)

JOHN P. R. EICHER

Thursday, October 21, 7 p.m.



Paraguay's oldest and largest Mennonite colonies are Menno Colony, founded by a group of voluntary migrants who moved from Russia to Canada in the 1870s and from Canada to Paraguay in the 1920s, and Fernheim Colony, established by a group of refugees who fled from Soviet Russia to Germany in 1929 and settled next to Menno Colony in 1930. In

this lecture, John Eicher argues that the colonies remained socially and spiritually divided for the first twenty years of their existence because their migration stories were not mutually intelligible. On a broader level, the lecture suggests that all humans live inside group narratives that shape the way they understand time, space, good, evil, and reality itself.

John Eicher is an assistant professor of history at Pennsylvania State University-Altoona. He received degrees from Goshen College and the University of Iowa and visiting fellowships from the Free University of Berlin, the University of Freiburg, and the German Historical Association in Washington, D.C. His book, *Exiled Among Nations: German and Mennonite Mythologies in a Transnational Age* (Cambridge University Press, 2020), received the 2021 Dale W. Brown Book Award.

SNOWDEN LECTURE

Seeking Religious Toleration: Anabaptist Communication Networks and Migration in the Seventeenth Century

ROSE BEILER

Tuesday, November 16, 7 p.m.



Many connections exist between seventeenth-century European Anabaptists in Switzerland and the Netherlands and places in between. Beiler explains why those connections arose, how participants communicated across cultural, linguistic, and political borders, and how their relationships shaped migration opportunities and flows. The networks and processes of mobility that began in the seventeenth century extended across generations and expanded well beyond the Rhine Valley by the eighteenth century.

Rose Beiler is an associate professor of history at the University of Central Florida in Orlando. She has published *Immigrant and Entrepreneur: The Atlantic World of Caspar Wistar, 1650-1750* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008) and essays that look at the intersections of religion and migration within Europe and to the British North American colonies. She is currently working on a book titled *Communication Networks and the Dynamics of Migration, 1630-1730* and a companion digital project, [PRINT—People, Religion, Information Networks, and Travel](#).



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High Library to feature Hughes Amish photograph exhibition

In 2014, East Petersburg, Pennsylvania photographer Dennis L. Hughes donated his collection of over 18,000 images of Amish life and culture to Elizabethtown College's Hess Archives. The collection, primarily color slides, features images of Amish communities throughout the United States with a special emphasis on the Amish of Lancaster County. Images date from the 1980s through the early 2000s. Subjects include buggy styles, agricultural work, mud sales, schools, children, and more, and the collection includes photographs taken for Donald Kraybill's books *Amish Enterprise* (coauthored with Steven Nolt) and *The Riddle of Amish Culture*.

The upcoming exhibition, *Amish Life in Focus: The Dennis L. Hughes Photographs of the Amish*, will showcase a selection of recently digitized materials from the Hughes collection. Curated by Hess Archives intern Emily Erdlen '23 and Archivist Rachel Grove

Rohrbaugh, the exhibition is funded by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to support the study of humanities at the College. The physical exhibition will be accompanied by a virtual presentation.

Amish Life in Focus will be available and open to the public November 8–December 10, 2021, in the High Library IDEA Lab on the main level. For exhibition hours, see <https://www.etown.edu/library/>. Direct questions to Rachel Grove Rohrbaugh at grover@etown.edu or 717-361-1506.



FALL 2021

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Young Center News is published twice each year for those interested in the work and events of the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies. For e-mail notification and a link to each new issue, send a message to youngctr@etown.edu.

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