

L = Daily Local News, West Chester, PA

L 6/25/1888

Next Sunday will be a red letter day for the colored people of Falls of French Creek, 250 of whom hail mostly from Virginia. Baptismal services will be held and about 25 of their number will be immersed in the waters of Forge dam. The exercises will take place in the morning and a great outpouring of people is expected. Several residents of West Chester will leave here early that morning for Falls of French Creek to witness the baptism. They will return leaving the Falls about 8 o'clock.

L 7/16/1888

Hundreds of people from far and near gathered at Falls of French Creek yesterday to witness the baptism of 18 colored men who have been working in the quarries there for a long time. There are several hundred southern colored men employed there, over whom a deep religious feeling has swept of late, resulting in the great event which took place yesterday. A large dam was built in Franc Schiek's meadow near the French Creek and in this the 18 men were immersed by Reverend Fisher Wilson, pastor of the East Nantmeal Baptist Church. It was expected that the baptism will have taken place the previous Sunday by the colored evangelist from the South who was expected to perform the ceremony, but he did not arrive and the occasion was postponed. A colored church will now be established at the Falls.

L 7/19/1888

Baptisms seem to be frequent at the Falls of French Creek. For the last two or three Sundays colored people have been baptized there and now next Sunday there are several more candidates awaiting the ordinance.

L 9/4/1888

The Amendment Mass Meeting held in Amole's woods, Warwick, by the F. C. V. and Warwick unions was one that will live long in the memory of those present. The meeting was presided over by Miss S. L. Bingaman, and a Bible reading given in the morning, followed by music by the Coventryville Brass Band. The first address in the afternoon was given by Miss Henrietta G. Moore of Springfield, Ohio, one of the national organizers of the W.C.T.U. Words utterly failed to express the excellence of this lecture, argumentative, logical, convincing and forcible it carried with it at times a tender pathos that reach the hearts of an attentive and eager audience. She pleaded earnestly with the voters to do their duty in the work before them and made plain the fact that "prohibition does not prohibit". A. C. Rankin followed with an address for more than an hour's length. In the evening Miss Moore addressed the colored men at the Falls in French Creek. To use her own expression this was one of the most interesting meetings she ever held. She spoke from the platform of the large boarding house and held the throng before her for more than an hour. Grateful and appreciative for those colored men isolated thus from their homes in Old Virginia, and beautiful and touching were the Southern songs and hymns they sang. There are over 200 of these men at work in the graphite mines. Miss Moore closed with a beautiful prayer for the welfare of these brothers.

L 11/22/1888

The colored Baptist at the Falls of French Creek, Warwick Township are increasing in numbers. They are building a church for themselves which will be dedicated before winter rightly sets in. Last summer when many were baptized it was an occasion of considerable commotion in that part of the county for it was expected that Reverend Sam Jones, the author of the sermon "De Sun do Move", would conduct the baptismal services but he was unavoidably detained in Richmond Virginia where he is pastor of the largest colored Baptist congregation of America. The colored Baptist of the Falls and French Creek are a branch from his

church. He came North a few years ago having them brought to the Falls by contractors who put them to work on making blocks of the huge boulders that are so numerous at that point. They are industrious honest and frugal and their employers did well by them. Consequently, many more came and now it was said that 500 of them are living and thriving at the French Creek Falls, where only a short time ago a colored man was a rare specimen of humanity. Their congregation is presided over by local preachers who daily toil by the side of the members of the party who turn out the solid blocks for building purposes, principally for the largest cities. Said Col. Missimer, of the hotel at the Falls. Many of these colored people went back South before the election to get a chance to vote but as work will be plentiful for next spring it is thought they will come back again bringing with them their cousins or uncles and their aunts. They are a permanent fixture in that locality and they are fast building up a colony among themselves with plenty of comfortable homes and lots of work. Of course, during the winter there will be very little going on excepting the getting out of the surface stone, but great expectations are entertained for the spring opening. These colored people are very religious and are making a good clean record for themselves up our way.

L 8/20/1889

On Sunday next June 2, at noon there will be baptism by immersion at the Sankanac Church (colored) at Falls of French Creek. Rev Morton Winston, pastor will perform the ceremony.

L 11/6/1891

The Dunkards' Church at Smedley is being repainted recarpeted and otherwise improved

L 9/17/1892

Tomorrow 13 colored persons will be baptized at Sankanac Baptist Church, Falls of French Creek.

Source: Chester County Historical Center

<https://mycchc.org>

L 12.21.1888

A PASTOR ORDAINED

Reverend Morton Winston placed in charge of Sankanac Baptist Church

December 20, 1888

Upon a call issued to the various Baptist churches in Chester county and the vicinity by the Sankanac Baptist church for recognition and ordination of the Reverend Morten, Winston, the following business, was transacted.

Upon motion. EB Waltz, was elected moderator. Upon motion T. B. DeWees, was elected secretary. After reading the 31st Psalm and singing, the following delegates answered to their names. Pughtown, Baptist Church, Pastor WO Owens, brother, John, Legget, brother, David Lockhard, brother, Joshua Burgoyne, Vincent Baptist Church, Reverend JW Griffith, brother, Edwin Frick brother TV. The Weepies is Nate Mill Baptist Church, Reverend Fisher, Wilson, brother, Jesse Phillips, brother, Louis Phillips, brother Jacob Sterrett, Shiloh Baptist Church, Wilmington, Reverend BF More brother, Archer P Henley and brother Joshua Morris.

# CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN NETWORK

*Continuing the work of Jesus : Peacefully ~ Simply ~ Together*

UNOFFICIAL WEBSITE OF THE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

Written by [Ronald J. Gordon](#) Published: August, 1998

Last Updated: March, 2013 ©

**Dunker is a moniker for a people of faith that originated in 1708 near the village of Schwarzenau, Germany, along the Eder River. Originally, calling themselves Neue Taufer (New Baptists) in order to better distinguish themselves from older Anabaptist groups, such as the Mennonites and the Amish. We use the label Schwarzenau Brethren to designate this original body, since there have been a number of Brethren Groups that formed through splits and sub-movements over the centuries. Typical of the derisive labeling experience of many religious groups, they were called Dunkers by outsiders because they fully immersed or “dunked” their baptismal candidates in nearby streams, three complete dunkings; a particular method of baptism that completely distinguished them from the “sprinkling” Lutherans and Methodists, their kindred “pouring” Mennonites, and even the single dunk Baptists. For this reason, numerous Brethren congregations are still known by the body of water where these baptisms or dunkings took place: Beaver Creek, Yellow Creek, Lost Creek, Marsh Creek, Pike Run, Spring Run, Trout Run, Blue River, Eel River, West Eel River, Little River, Valley River, Falling Springs, Roaring Springs, or Three Springs. Brethren stem from German Pietism (a religion of the heart) of the Eighteenth century and the Anabaptist (re-baptizers) movement of a previous century. This latter movement sought to reform the European State-Church system by emphasizing the process of regeneration whereby adult believers accept entrance into the faith through a mature decision, that stresses personal awareness of eternal consequences and the enlightened understanding that Christ is the answer to the problem of human sinfulness.**

Members of this Brethren sect later emigrated to America between 1719 and 1733, during a period when religious intolerance in Europe began to increase. They established many settlements and congregations throughout Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas. Presently, there are seven denominations that trace themselves back to this original group from Schwarzenau, Germany: Church of the Brethren, The Brethren Church, Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, Conservative Grace Brethren Church International, Dunkard Brethren, Old German Baptist Brethren, and the Old Order German Baptist Brethren. The largest group is the Church of the Brethren with one seminary and six affiliated colleges. Brethren settled early throughout most of eastern and southern Pennsylvania, establishing large congregations which later gave birth to smaller daughter groups. Nestled in the southeastern part of the large Cumberland Valley, the Antietam Brethren were originally a mission project of the Eastern Pennsylvania congregations. This was a large valley, at some points nearly thirty-five miles wide and over fifty miles long, extending from the Susquehanna River to the east and then curving south to the Potomac River in the west, and bordered its full length by the Blue Mountains to the north. Brethren referred to this area as their Conococheague District (*pronounced: kon no kaa JIG*) because of the Creek by the same name which flowed through its mid-section. Also rippling through this valley was the Antietam Creek, a southward flowing stream which starts near Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, and empties into the Potomac south of Hagerstown, Maryland. The battlefield church (Mumma) is located near this same stream, though many miles to the south. Brethren leader Jacob Price, newly arrived from Philadelphia, assisted this loose-knit group of Brethren to formally organize into a Congregation in 1752. For this reason, many people also call it the Price Meeting House. Over the years, many other leaders would come to hold revival meetings or otherwise contribute to its growth and spiritual firmness. Services were held in homes until the first meeting house, a building of native stone, was constructed in 1795. The present brick building of the Antietam Congregation was erected in 1892. Initially, Antietam was an extremely large congregation

with hundreds and hundreds of members, stretching over vast territory in south-central Pennsylvania and north-central Maryland. Gradually, these Brethren sub-divided into many smaller Daughter Congregations: Manor -MD (1800), Welsh Run -PA (1810), Ridge -PA (1836), Back Creek -PA (1850), Beaver Creek -MD (1858), Falling Springs -PA (1866), Hagerstown -MD (1893), Chambersburg -PA (1910), Waynesboro -PA (1922), Shippensburg -PA (1924), Broadfording -MD (1924), Long Meadows -MD (1926), Greencastle -PA (1930), Welty -PA (1934), and Rouserville -PA (1949). Of particular interest to us is the Manor Congregation (1800) near Hagerstown, which was also joined by Brethren moving east from Frederick County, Maryland. The original gray limestone rock church built in 1839 is still in use. Dunkers populated the region and the Brethren message of non-violence and spiritual regeneration flourished. Manor steadily gained prominence among the young denomination, for they twice hosted the denomination's Annual Conference, in 1838 and again in 1857. As the influence and spiritual strength of this congregation grew, a strong contingent of ministers emerged that would start daughter congregations in the immediate area.

Furnishings and practices varied among Brethren congregations with some having three and sometimes four sermons over the morning, because this was a period when Brethren generally did not observe Sunday School. Dunkers felt that biblical instruction for children was a duty of parents in the home, and Sunday morning was the time for those parents to receive their own spiritual guidance. Interestingly enough, the matter of instituting Sunday School was voiced at the denominational Annual Conference on two occasions, and both times it was held at the Manor Congregation. In 1838, the Brethren voted against Sunday School and in 1857 they formally adopted the practice. In another fifty years, the issue would be moot because of its wide acceptance by many congregations. Brethren were plain people in lifestyle and dress. They were purposely reserved in accepting innovation or change, and their buildings matched their beliefs. So unostentatious was the outside appearance of the Mumma

Church, that Union officers looking from the North Woods on that early Wednesday morning thought it to be a School House.

Source: <https://www.cob-net.org/antietam/dunkers.htm>



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