

# FOCUS

## THE MENNONITE HERITAGE CENTER'S 18TH-CENTURY FAMILY RECORDS



CCAHA Paper Conservator Heather Hendry surface cleans the Bachman family record with a polyurethane sponge.

THE MENNONITES WERE ONE OF THE PERSECUTED ANABAPTIST GERMAN PROTESTANT GROUPS WHO EMIGRATED TO THE UNITED STATES IN THE 18TH CENTURY, SEEKING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

Today, the Mennonite Historians of Eastern Pennsylvania manage the Mennonite Heritage Center (MHC). Its collections illustrate and interpret three centuries of Mennonite life in eastern Pennsylvania.

MHC contacted CCAHA about three items from the collections in fragile condition. The first, a 1536 Bible printed by Christoph Froschauer, was brought across the Atlantic by the Schnebelli-Bachman family around 1727. Its unique 1708 bookplate is fraktur, a decorative German writing style blending folk motifs and text. In addition, another fraktur was tucked into the volume, this one commemorating the family record of the Bachman family. An additional 18th-century family record fraktur, slipped into a Bible handed down through generations of the Sauter family, was also in need of conservation treatment.

The Froschauer Bible and the family records contribute to the story of German migration and the establishment of Mennonite communities in North America.

Thanks to grant funding, they are receiving treatment at the Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts (CCAHA). MHC collaborated with CCAHA to write an application to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Museums for America Collections Stewardship grant program. The grant was awarded in 2016, and CCAHA is currently carrying out the conservation treatment.

CCAHA conservators stabilized the fraktur family records, surface cleaning each leaf and removing tape and adhesive residue. They filled losses and mended tears.

The cover of the Froschauer Bible will be surface cleaned and the binding's sewing supports will be reinforced before the spine is lined. Conservators will clean the surfaces of the pages and mend any large, vulnerable tears. In addition, the media on the bookplate fraktur will be consolidated.

Read this and other stories at CCAHA's website: [www.ccaha.org](http://www.ccaha.org).