



ARCHIVES NEWS

Respecting the Past | Forging the Future

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Welcome

As the seasons change and new growth emerges in our environment, new projects have emerged here at the Archives!

In this issue, you'll find a section detailing recent projects and events and a feature article on our MEDA collection, inspired by a new donation. Additionally, this edition includes a look at the inspiring life of James Liu.

Enjoy!



Olivia Krall
Archives Coordinator
Archives@MennoniteUSA.org



New Collections: MEDA Materials

Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) was born in 1953 out of the desire to provide support to Mennonite immigrants to Paraguay after World War II. What started with a small collection of U.S. business owners who wanted to encourage Mennonite businesses in Paraguayan colonies in the Chaco region has blossomed into a multi-national economic development organization. MEDA works in the agri-food market systems to combat poverty, focusing primarily on women and youth in rural communities in the Global South. Last year, MEDA helped to create and sustain more than 48,000 work opportunities.

In March of 2024, Dan Sauder, grandson of MEDA founder Erie Sauder, expanded the MC USA Archives' collection of MEDA materials by donating two linear feet of additional MEDA material, documenting the organization from the 1950s through the 1970s. This brings the total size of the MC USA Archives' MEDA collection to nearly 20 linear feet. In addition, the MC USA Archives holds records for three related organizations, which eventually merged with MEDA.

The Archives' MEDA collection offers a window to the first 40 years of MEDA. It documents endeavors, such as MEDA's first investment – a venture called Sarona Dairy, which fundamentally altered dairy production throughout Paraguay and transformed dairy into a staple food in the nation. Mennonites now produce 70% of Paraguay's processed milk yet comprise only half a percent of the population.

Mennonite Economic Development Associates. Audiovisual Materials 1950-1991. X-19-6. Box 1, Folder 1. Mennonite Church USA Archives. Elkhart, IN.

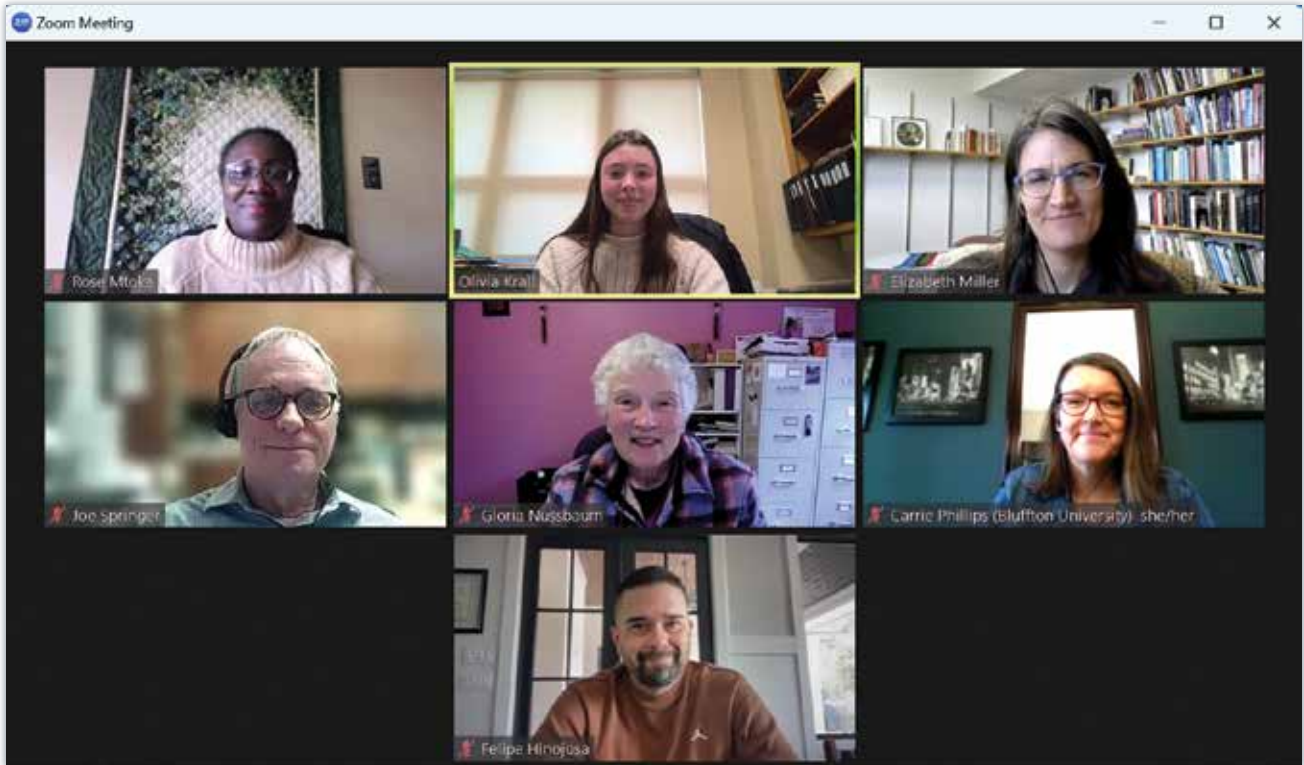


The first MEDA project. Fernheim, Paraguay. A registered bull to improve breeding stock imported by Sarona dairy farm.

These documents tell complex stories about culture and community. Materials in this collection provide insight into Mennonite relationships with Indigenous people in the Chaco region, whose lives and communities were altered by Mennonite settlements. Other documents in this collection mark MEDA's transition from working primarily in the Chaco region of South America to a more global mission – and MEDA's need to find new ways of working as the organization navigated cultures and traditions with different priorities and perspectives.

In this 71st year of MEDA, as the organization continues to find new ways to combat poverty, MC USA archival materials provide unique insights into its formative early days.

Citations: Mennonite Economic Development Associates Archival Records, 1952-1991. X-19. Mennonite Church USA Archives. Elkhart, IN.



New Historical Advisory Committee

The newly formed Historical Advisory Committee met for the first time on March 27, 2024. This dedicated group of volunteers works with MC USA Archives Coordinator Olivia Krall to provide vision and guidance and to help update policies.

Pictured above (from left to right, starting at the top row): **Rose Mtoka**, Human Resource placement assistant, Mennonite Mission Network, Elkhart, Ind.; **Olivia Krall**; **Elizabeth Miller**, director of the Institute

for the Study of Global Anabaptism and assistant professor of history at Goshen College, Goshen, Ind.;

Joe Springer, curator, Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen College, Goshen, Ind.; **Gloria Nussbaum**, personal historian, board member for the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Historical Society, Beaverton, Oregon; **Carrie Phillips**, library director, Bluffton University, Bluffton, Ohio; **Felipe Hinojosa**, Ph. D., John and Nancy Jackson Endowed Chair in Latin America & Professor of History, Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

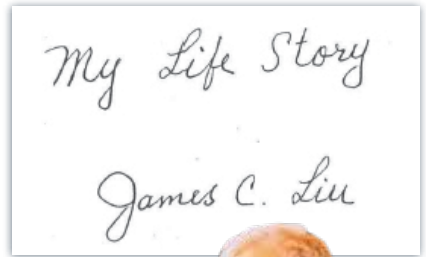


Goshen Community Engagement

MC USA Archives Coordinator Olivia Krall connected with students at the Goshen College 2024 Community Engagement Fair in March. The fair provides Goshen students with an opportunity to meet with local organizations to learn about nonprofit opportunities.

Photo by Birch Baer.

The Fascinating Memoir of James Liu, Chinese Christian Leader and Educator



One of the interesting treasures in the MC USA Historical Archives is the 60-page, typed memoir of Chinese Christian leader and educator James (Chung-Fu) Liu, June 19, 1904 - Oct. 13, 1991. The memoir, part of the Mennonite World Conference collection, details Liu's experiences, including his childhood in China, his imprisonment during the Cultural Revolution and his time in North America.

Liu was born in the city of Puyang (formerly Kai Chow) in Henan (Honan) Province, China. His Buddhist parents converted to Christianity at the General Conference Mennonite Church mission station. His education began in a Confucian school and continued in the Mennonite mission school.

Some of his relatives feared the missionaries. "Therefore, I was quite scared and [quit] catechism class," he wrote. Later, he realized there was nothing to fear and was baptized at the age of 16.

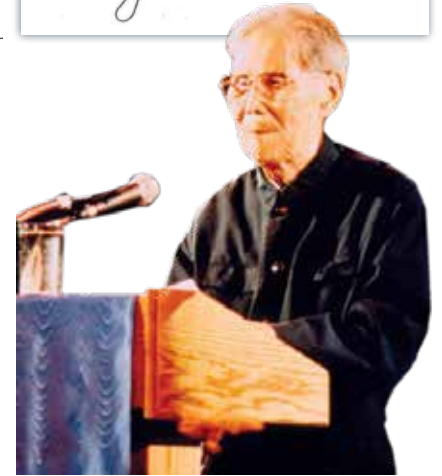
Liu attended Yenching University, before moving to the United States,

where he studied at Bluffton College (now Bluffton University) in Ohio, graduated from Bethel College in Kansas, and attended the Iliff School of Theology.

He returned to China in 1932 during the Great Depression. "I decided to promote the friendship between the people of the States and the Chinese people," he wrote.

In China, Liu served as principal of the Mennonite mission high school at Kai Chow until the spring of 1946, when, during the Chinese Civil War, he, his wife, Hazel, and young son, Timothy, fled in fear. "During the night, the Lord said to me, 'Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward lies ahead.' (Philippians 3:13) I heard it very plainly."

James and Hazel worked with Mennonite Central Committee for six years, during which time they helped to manage the Hengyang Orphanage, caring for 250 children. Liu then taught in a government school but, during the Cultural Revolution, he was imprisoned for three years and tortured.



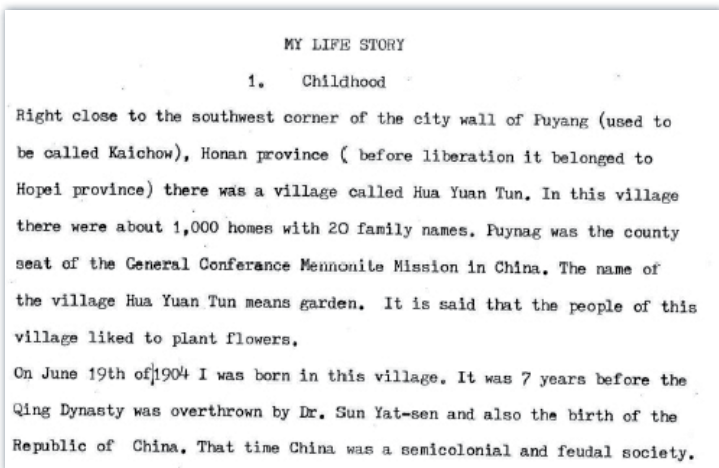
In 1990, Liu shared his faith story during worship services at the 12th Mennonite World Conference in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

prayed for forgiveness. "We felt very bad about it," he wrote.

At age 82, Liu with his son, Timothy, revisited his hometown and then traveled to the United States and Canada as guests of Mennonite friends.

"The culture between Chinese and American peoples may be different, but we all belong to one family, that is the family of God ... No matter what your nationality or denomination is, it does not make any difference to God," he wrote.

To read Liu's memoir, visit the MC USA Historical Archives in Elkhart, Indiana, or, for a PDF, send an email to Archives@MennoniteUSA.org. Further information on James Liu's life can be found in the *James Liu and Stephen Wang collection* at the Mennonite Library and Archives in North Newton, Kansas, or in the book *Christians True in China* by James Liu and Stephan Wang.



"One day, some Red Guards [made] me kneel on a bench, and they threw snowballs [at] my face. My eyes hurt very severely. It took a month to get healed," he wrote, describing one painful incident. He and his family were also forced to burn their Bibles, for which they

MC USA Archives' Collection Goes Viral

On Jan. 15, 2024, the MC USA Historical Archives photo collection went viral on Flickr, the global photo-sharing website, earning a record 27,712 views in a single day. Flickr featured four photos from the MC USA Archives' collection on its popular "explore" web page that day. Photographers from around the world follow the "explore" page. The four featured photos were from the Mennonite Board of Missions (now Mennonite Mission Network) collection. Through Flickr, the MC USA Archives provides broad accessibility to its online library of more than 11,000 images.



Birthday party, Bethel Day Nursery, Chicago, Illinois.

Mennonite Board of Missions photo collection, 1960-67 from Chicago, IL. IV-10-7.2 Box 3a Folders 56 Photo #13. MC USA Archives. Elkhart, IN.



Martha Baker, member of Red Hills Church, Jamaica.

Mennonite Board of Missions Photograph Collection. Jamaica, 1957-1961, IV-10-7.2, Box 5, Folder 33, Photo #13. MC USA Archives. Elkhart, IN.

Farewell at Bifuka train station, Japan.

Mennonite Board of Missions Photograph Collection. Japan, 1950-1957, IV-10-7.2, Box 5, Folder 36, Photo #6. Mennonite Church Archives. Elkhart, IN.



Taxi at annual youth retreat, Balodgahan, India, 1965.

Mennonite Board of Missions Photographs, 1898-1967. IV-10-007.2 Box 4 Folder 7. MC USA Archives. Elkhart, IN.



Scan the QR code to visit the MC USA Archives photo collection on Flickr.



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Historical Archives

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