



Fig. 1. Examples of early American imprints bound in a Germanic style commonly associated with Swiss Anabaptist religious communities near Germantown and Philadelphia. Courtesy of Lloyd Weiler Collection (LWC) and the Muddy Creek Farm Library (MCFL), Ephrata, Pennsylvania.

Left to right:

Das Neue Testament unsers Herrn und Heylandes Jesu Christi, verteutscht von D. Martin Luther. Mit jedes Capitels kurtzen Summarien. Auch begefügten vielen richtigen Parallelen. Germantown: Christoph Saur, 1763 (MCFL: #13629.53).

Das Neue Testament Unsers Herrn und Henlandes Jesu Christi, nach der Deutschen Übersetzung D. Martin Luthers, mit kurzem Inhalt eines jeden Capitels, und voustanbiger Anweisung gleicher Schrift-Stellen. Wie auch aller Sonn- und Fest-tagigen Evangelien und Episteln. Germantown: Christoph Saur, 1775 (MCFL: #13629.55).

Ausbund, das ist: Etliche schöne christliche Lieder, Wie sie in dem Gefängnuß zu Bassau in dem Schloß von den Schweitzer-Brüdern, und von anderen rechtläubigen Christen hin und her gedichtet worden; Allen und jeden Christen welcher Religion sie seyen, unpartheyisch fast nutzlich. Germanton: Christoph Saur, 1751 (LWC: uncataloged).

Schabaelje, Jan Philipsen. *Die wandlende Seel, das ist: Gespräch der wandlenden seelen mit Adam, Noah and Simon Cleophas: verfasset die geschichten von erschaffung der welt an, bis zu und nach der verwüstung Jerusalems...Durch Johann Philip Schabalie in Niederländischer sprach beschrieben; anjetzo aber in die Hochdeutsche sprach übersetzt von B.B.B.* Germantown: Michael Billmayer, 1805 (MCFL: R#11734.0).

Luther, Martin. *Das Neue Testament unsers Herrn und Heilandes Jesu Christi.* Philadelphia: Georg W. Mentz, 1831 (MCFL: #13578.02).

The Faith that Binds: Swiss Anabaptist Devotional Bookbindings in Early America

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Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

—John Fawcett (ca. 1740–1817)¹

INTRODUCTION

A trip to the rare-book stacks of the various libraries and historical societies that dot the rural southeastern Pennsylvania landscape will likely reveal artifacts of binding traditions that seem out of place in a state that had once been an important British colony – even to those familiar with general trends in early American bookbinding. As a home to many thousands of newly arrived German-speaking immigrants from central Europe, the several rural counties surrounding Philadelphia (not to mention the Quaker City itself) hosted a vibrant German culture, beginning in the late seventeenth century, within the context of an Anglophone colony that welcomed this diverse assortment of continental Europeans.² Today the region's archival repositories and historical institutions, some of which are maintained by organizations devoted to the preservation of German ethnic and religious heritage, house printed spiritual-devotional texts bound in a distinctive Germanic style. Such volumes, including those pictured in Fig. 1, speak to old-world binding traditions that took root and evolved in early America. The bindings of the Swiss Anabaptists, many of which bear characteristic features including spine straps and numerous metal attachments, function as book-historical artifacts of interest to those concerned with the history of binding in America. They and the texts they enclose offer a highly useful record of religious

1. “Blest Be the Ties That Bind” is often sung to a Swiss tune by Hans Georg Nägeli (1773–1836).

2. For an overview of German immigration, see Fogelman, Aaron Spencer. *Hopeful Journeys: German Immigration, Settlement, and Political Culture in Colonial America, 1717–1775.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996.

life among a minority religious culture in early Pennsylvania and thus occupy an important place in early American history.

But to what extent are “Anabaptist bindings” truly Anabaptist in nature? The bindings are often referenced as if they figured exclusively in the Anabaptist faith tradition, which was a radical branch of Protestantism with roots in Reformation-era Germany and Switzerland. Yet no hard-and-fast definition of the Anabaptist binding style, as embraced by Swiss members of the faith, currently exists. What is more, many of the binding features that appear to be unique in an early American book-historical context may simply reflect onto the wider world of continental European bookbinding during the early modern period. To complicate matters further, the transatlantic Anabaptist movement was vibrant, complex, and multifaceted, making it unwise to assume a uniform identity among its adherents regarding their bookbindings or anything else. Understanding the historical significance of the bindings, then, requires delving deeply into the books’ material features, as well as broadly into the rich, centuries-old cultures and faith traditions in which the volumes have long played a central role.

In addition to offering a brief assessment of the origins, characteristics, and impact of Anabaptism in southeastern Pennsylvania and beyond, this essay examines several case studies to illustrate various binding features observed on Swiss Anabaptist texts with the goal of carefully describing American-bound Anabaptist materials, and in some cases, comparing them to artifacts of European binding practice. With this physical evidence in hand, the essay also reflects on if and how the materiality of religious texts and bindings might have figured in a sense of shared Swiss Anabaptist identity among the books’ users, and what these artifacts reveal about religion, culture, and identity in early American life. Some conclusions have emerged through the work with surviving Swiss Anabaptist bindings on which this research is based.

Bookbinding figured prominently in Swiss Anabaptist religious life, and our research indicates that certain sets of material characteristics did resonate with Anabaptist readers. Careful sewing on substantial supports; pronounced spine rounding; ploughed text edges; transverse cloth strips adhered as spine linings; endbands worked off the book and adhered to the spine; fairly thick, carefully shaped wooden boards attached on the inner face adhesively with the overhanging cloth spine linings and no use of lacing holes – these structural binding features (some with clear Germanic roots) appear on many Anabaptist titles in American collections. Many of the bindings have numerous metal attachments anchored to their wooden boards, including corner- and centerpieces sometimes decorated with fine linear punchwork. Notably, many bindings have metal date and initial plates (indicating ownership), which were not typical on religious books from other traditions but occurred on a good number of both European and American Anabaptist imprints when they were bound. Spine straps are an especially interesting feature on some Swiss Anabaptist bindings. Leather spine straps are attached to the covers and bridge the spine but are not adhered to it. Some were plain but many were adorned with brass or copper studs. There are even some examples with chain-like,

all-metal spine straps on European examples. Each of these binding elements are explored in greater depth in the pages to come.

A few words might be said about the scope of this study and its limitations. The authors sought to narrow the focus of investigation to American-made bindings, belonging to Swiss Anabaptist communities, but during the course of the project, many European imprints were also examined for context because it seemed that many family Bibles were carried from the old world to the new and remained in steady use amongst Pennsylvania German families for generations.^{3,4} There are also many examples in which it is not clear where an item was printed or bound. When the place of printing was known, the authors felt it safe to assume that American imprints in North American collections were likely bound in America. Ample numbers of comparative European Anabaptist books were not always easy to locate. Several custodians of Anabaptist collections mentioned the scarcity of Anabaptist materials in present-day Switzerland, a point confirmed by cursory research undertaken in that country. David Luthy wrote that Anabaptist books are uncommon survivors in European collections because the texts were confiscated and destroyed there.⁵ This point was echoed by archivist Stefan Boller from the Staatsarchiv Bern.⁶ It is notable that only eight examples of Swiss Anabaptist bookbindings with metalwork and spine straps could be located in the collections at Münstergasse Library in Bern, given how many Anabaptist works were published in that city alone. During the course of this research, the authors were drawn to bindings that had attached metalwork and spine straps, and tended to privilege their examination, though similarly bound examples, lacking in metalwork, exist in large number, and their technical bookbinding features are described in detail in a later section. Finally, the authors are aware that many historic Anabaptist devotional texts remain in private hands, and their research was for the most part limited to books available in public collections. Most images included in this essay were taken by the authors, and any images that do not indicate another photographer may be assumed to have been taken by the authors. Wherever possible, the authors have opted to maintain original spelling and punctuation of German-

3. Amos Hoover and Lloyd Weiler in conversation with the authors, Ephrata, Penn., 4 May 2018.

4. This practice can be traced through provenance information of individual copies. One example is described from the Swarey family in Luthy, David. *Our Amish Devotional Heritage: From the Collection of Heritage Historical Library*. Aylmer, Canada: Pathway Publishers, 2016, 22.

5. Luthy, David. “Metal Initial and Date Plates on Amish and Mennonite Books Known to Exist in North America.” *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage* 35, no. 3 (July 2012): 4. “Copies bearing metal initial and date plates are found to a lesser degree today in Europe than in North America. Authorities in Switzerland confiscated Anabaptists’ books and destroyed there...the custom was seldom practiced among the immigrant’s descendants.” Luthy notes the early settlers did not have the money for the metalwork. It looks like Anabaptists in the United States did sometimes pay for spine straps alone with little or no metal other than clasps.

6. “As the Anabaptists were persecuted by the government, you will find in our archive governmental records which document the persecution. But you will rarely find Anabaptist texts in our holdings.” Stefan Boller, email to authors, 1 March 2018.

language names and publication titles in image captions and citations for bibliographical accuracy, even when titles and spellings are irregular, so that the items may be easily relocated in collections in the future.

In preparation for this qualitative study, the authors examined over sixty binding examples in person from ten American repositories.⁷ The majority of the repositories visited were in southeastern Pennsylvania, and most of the American imprints examined were printed in the cities of Germantown, Lancaster, Ephrata, and Philadelphia prior to 1850. Approximately thirty Swiss Anabaptist bindings were examined from the Münstergasse Library, Universitätsbibliothek in Bern, and at the Archive and Library of the Swiss Mennonite Conference (ALSMC) housed at the Chapel of Jean Guy in Corgémont, Switzerland. Additional examination of photographs of several other examples was made possible through the research and kindnesses of colleagues at various other institutions. While the authors have adopted the term “Swiss Anabaptist devotional bindings” for use in this essay, they acknowledge that more work remains to be done in placing the binding style described here within a broader context of European and American bookbinding traditions. With the writing of this piece, the authors tread carefully so as not to make broad generalizations, but rather to help shine a light on these materials for the benefit of bookbinders, conservators, and students of American Anabaptist history and culture. They hope that this work will contribute to understanding the making and use of these special bindings.

The essay begins with an introduction to Anabaptism as both a conceptual category within the history of Christianity and as an historical religious movement that exercised important influence on settlement patterns in early America. The next three sections delve into the material traits of the bindings, paying special attention to what features seem linked to larger Germanic traditions and what features may have resonated among binders and readers as especially appropriate to Protestant devotional texts. Finally, a conclusion reflects on how these bindings may have figured in Anabaptist and Pennsylvania German religious and cultural identity.

ANABAPTISM: DEFINITIONS, ORIGINS, MIGRATIONS, AND DEVOTIONAL TEXTS

Anabaptism in early modern Europe was a radical theological position, not a moniker for a specific ethnic community, civil polity, or geographic zone. It may seem odd, then, to postulate that a geographically expansive and philosophically diverse radical sectarian faith tradition should possess its own bookbinding style among its Swiss adherents. Why would a religious group, which was known (and criticized) for the practice of adult baptism, consciously decide to favor extensive metal furniture, date and initial plates, and studded spine straps on its

7. Materials from this study were examined at these North American repositories: Duke University; Winterthur Museum, Garden, & Library; Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society; Hans Herr House; Ephrata Cloister; Library Company of Philadelphia; Eastern Mennonite University; Muddy Creek Farm Library; Bryn Mawr College; Historical Society of Pennsylvania; University of California, Los Angeles, Library Special Collections; and Franklin & Marshall College.

books, more so than any of its numerous infant-baptizing counterparts? The association of Anabaptists with a certain book design was probably not an explicit theological link but represented the rich linguistic, cultural, and theological world that those who became Swiss Anabaptists inhabited, as they moved across Europe and finally to America in search of a place to practice their faith freely. It was one component of their rich cultural heritage. A brief discussion of Anabaptism’s origins in Europe, its central tenets, as well as its history in early America, provides useful context for thinking about the material texts that believers used in their popular piety.

To understand Anabaptism requires understanding its conflicted, Reformation-era context. Martin Luther’s famously seditious Ninety-Five Theses formally launched the Protestant Reformation in 1517, but, as time would tell, the renegade monk from Wittenberg unleashed far more radical forces than he had initially intended by disrupting Roman Catholic hegemony. Lutheranism was, at least as its founder conceived of it, not an especially radical or liberal theology. It centered on the notion that humans were powerless to bring about their own salvation and could be saved only through God’s grace, which they could achieve by means of faith cultivated through engagement with Holy Scripture. This required that individual believers pursue their own faith agenda by means of engagement with the Word.⁸ Other prominent reformers, namely Ulrich Zwingli of Zürich and Jean Calvin of Geneva, also worked to rejuvenate the spiritual life of the Christian church via modified understandings of the nature of faith, justification, and grace, centered on the rigorous study of biblical texts.⁹

In an era when church and state were deeply intertwined, the civic and social implications of these theological movements, which gave greater autonomy to individuals, were not always entirely clear. Luther, for one, had not intended to disrupt the dominant political systems of the age.¹⁰ Zwingli and Calvin likewise sought measured reforms that preserved much, though not all, of the old order. These dominant strains of Reformation thought occurred with support from, and under the auspices of, established civic authorities, which led well-known historian George Huntston Williams to dub this part of the movement the “Magisterial Reformation.” The Anabaptists, by contrast, figured in a “Radical Reformation” that sought to carry the principles of the Reformation further than Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin had desired. In so doing, the Anabaptists threatened, rather than reinforced, contemporary civic structures and earned the ire of the nascent Protestant establishment.^{11, 12} Prominent

8. Wood, A. Skevington. *Captive to the Word: Martin Luther, Doctor of Sacred Scripture*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969, 121.

9. Cameron, Euan. *The European Reformation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992, 1, 117, 121, 132, 137–138.

10. MacCulloch, Diarmaid. *The Reformation: A History*. New York: Penguin Books, 2003, 156.

11. de Groot, Aart. “The Radical Reformation Revisited?” *Nederlands archief voor kerkgeschiedenis / Dutch Review of Church History* 73, no. 2 (1993): 204.

12. George Huntston Williams’s classic book is *The Radical Reformation*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962.

historian of Anabaptism C. Arnold Snyder summed up the reputation of the movement well: “Anabaptism was a church reform movement born at the time and in the context of the Protestant Reformation, an unwanted and unloved ‘stepchild’ of the mainline reformers, all of whom disavowed responsibility for their unruly offspring.”¹³

Anabaptism was thus a byproduct of the zeal of the Protestant Reformation, having emerged in the midst of the religious and social upheaval of that tumultuous era as one of the most radical alternatives to the early modern political, social, and religious order. Appearing in the German-speaking lands as early as the 1520s, the movement remains a powerful presence in Christianity to this day.¹⁴ But what exactly did Anabaptists believe that set mainstream Protestants on edge? The term “Anabaptism” comes from Greek root words meaning “to baptize again”; in German, the Anabaptists are referred to as *Wiedertäufer*, which like the Latin, translates to something along the lines of “those who baptize again.”¹⁵ As these terms suggest, the key identifier of Anabaptists was their embrace of the tradition of adult baptism, which upended how Lutherans and Reformed (the latter being followers of John Calvin of Geneva) interpreted and practiced this important ritual.¹⁶ But this divergence figured in a larger religious tradition quite at odds with the work of the magisterial reformers. As historian Steve Ozment explained when discussing the history of scholarship on Anabaptism:

[The well-known historian George Huntston] Williams defines Anabaptists in terms of the following distinguishing marks: primitivism, or the desire to restore a simple, biblical pattern of life; biblical literalism, or fundamentalism in the interpretation of Scripture; a disciplined communal life; and adult baptism and “free faith” in the place of the “state religion” of Lutherans and Catholics.¹⁷

This last component, as well as some early Anabaptists’ efforts to overthrow local European governments, earned the movement a dangerous reputation and incited much persecution of its adherents.¹⁸ Anabaptists were also highly controversial among powerful European governments because of their pacifism.¹⁹

13. Snyder, C. Arnold. *Anabaptist History and Theology: An Introduction*. Kitchener, Canada: Pandora Press, 1995, xi.

14. Erb, Peter C. “Anabaptist Spirituality.” In *Protestant Spiritual Traditions*. Ed. Frank C. Senn, 81. New York: Paulist Press, 1986.

15. Erb, “Anabaptist Spirituality,” 81.

16. Walker, Williston. *John Calvin: The Organiser of Reformed Protestantism, 1509–1564*. New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1909.

17. Ozment, Steve. *The Age of Reform, 1250–1550: An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980, 344–345.

18. Friesen, Steve. *A Modest Mennonite Home: The Story of the 1719 Hans Herr House, an Early Colonial Landmark*. Intercourse, Penn.: Good Books, 1991, 15.

19. Ward, W.R. *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992, 174.

Several strands of Anabaptism emerged independently across Europe, in Switzerland, the Netherlands, and in what is now Czechia, giving the movement a transnational, multilingual heritage and flavor.²⁰ Two branches of Anabaptism bear especially on the bookbinding story told here: the Mennonites and the Amish. The Mennonites took their name from the Dutch cleric Menno Simons, though most Pennsylvania Mennonites had Swiss, rather than Dutch, roots. The Swiss Anabaptists had long enjoyed close affinity with their Dutch counterparts, however.²¹ The Amish, perhaps modern America’s best-known Anabaptists, were a conservative branch of Swiss Mennonites who emerged in 1693 as followers of the religious leader Jakob Ammann.²²

All of this history bears directly on early American, and early Pennsylvanian, culture. The British colony of Pennsylvania emerged as a focal point in the long history of the Protestant Reformation in Europe, in large part because William Penn, who founded the colony via royal charter in 1681, sought to employ his settlement as an opportunity to test a policy of religious toleration.²³ Penn himself belonged to the Quakers, a sectarian fellowship of English spiritualists. He actively marketed his proprietary colony to German-speaking central Europeans, especially the Anabaptists known as Mennonites, with whom he sensed a theological affinity.^{24, 25} Penn found an especially receptive audience in the Palatinate, a region of Germany near the Rhine River where Swiss Anabaptists had settled after fleeing their homeland to avoid persecution years earlier. As they wore out their welcome in the Palatinate, Pennsylvania, with its promise of religious freedom and ample arable land, seemed an ideal destination.²⁶ Given the European regions from which Anabaptists emigrated, most of those who ended up in Pennsylvania could trace their heritage to Switzerland.^{27, 28}

The Mennonites first came to Pennsylvania in 1683, and many more arrived thereafter. According to historian Donald F. Durnbaugh, Anabaptism was, alongside Pietism (a Protestant

20. Friesen, *Modest Mennonite Home*, 13–15.

21. Ruth, John L. *Maintaining the Right Fellowship: A Narrative Account of Life in the Oldest Mennonite Community in North America*. Scottdale, Penn.: Herald Press, 1984, 90–92.

22. Johnson-Weiner, Karen M. and Joshua R. Brown. “The Amish.” In *Pennsylvania Germans: An Interpretive Encyclopedia*. Ed. Simon J. Bronner and Joshua R. Brown, 151. Young Center Books in Anabaptist and Pietist Studies. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017.

23. Durnbaugh, Donald F. “Pennsylvania’s Crazy Quilt of German Religious Groups.” *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 68, no. 1 (Winter 2001): 8.

24. Geiter, Mary K. “Penn, William (1644–1718).” In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. Online edition, January 2007: <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21857>>; accessed 22 January 2017.

25. Ruth, *Maintaining the Right Fellowship*, 36–37, 45–90.

26. Ruth, *Maintaining the Right Fellowship*, 26, 45–51, 93.

27. Friesen, *Modest Mennonite Home*, 15.

28. For a detailed account of the origins of Swiss Anabaptism, see Snyder, C. Arnold. “Swiss Anabaptism: The Beginnings, 1523–1525.” In *A Companion to Anabaptism and Spiritualism, 1521–1700*. Ed. John D. Roth and James M. Stayer, 45–81. Boston: Brill, 2007.

movement that emphasized emotional religious experience), one of two “formative strands” of German religious life present in the early colony.²⁹ Radicals probably comprised somewhere around ten percent of the total number of Germans living in Pennsylvania in the eighteenth century; the rest were mainstream church people. As many as 100,000 Germans lived in Pennsylvania around 1790, meaning that ten thousand or so were sectarians – a category that comprised a large number of small groups of which only a few were Anabaptist.³⁰ In Pennsylvania, Anabaptists tended to pursue agrarian lifestyles in rural areas.³¹ They gradually dispersed to other regions in search of land, space, and privacy for their communities, including Canada, the U.S. South, and the Midwest.³² Despite their small number, the Amish and Mennonites exercise a powerful hold over popular imagination of the Pennsylvania Germans (or “Pennsylvania Dutch,” as they are often known). This is doubtless due to the fact that their distinctive, separatist religious communities and continued use of the German language in certain contexts have proven remarkably durable over the centuries, making them highly visible in Pennsylvania and other areas of settlement to this day.³³

Anabaptists, including the Mennonites, carried on a rich, text-based spiritual life once in Pennsylvania. In his informative 2012 article, historian of Anabaptism Luthy enumerated some of the key texts that figured in the religious life of the Amish and Mennonite communities. They included Scriptural texts, such as the famous Froschauer Bibles printed in Zürich in the sixteenth century (and reprinted thereafter), as well as the *Täufer Testament*, an Anabaptist translation of the New Testament dating to 1579, along with books suited for personal devotion, like the Lutheran Johan Arndt’s well-known *Paradies-Gärtlein*. The *Märtyrer Spiegel* [Martyrs’ Mirror] by Dutchman Tielemann van Braght was immensely popular among, and important to, the Mennonites. Hymnals, most notably a text called the *Ausbund* (also spelled *Auß Bundt*) and after 1804, another hymnal, the *Unpartheyisches Gesang-Buch* (literally: *Impartial Song-Book*), ranked as especially important devotional tools and often featured bindings now associated with the Anabaptists. A German translation of the Psalms by Ambrosius Lobwasser and the *Betrachtungen* [Meditations] of Jacob Denner were also well-loved. These and numerous other books played critical roles in Anabaptist devotional life, as

29. Durnbaugh, Donald F. “Pennsylvania’s Crazy Quilt of German Religious Groups.” *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 68, no. 1 (Winter 2001): 8.

30. Friesen, *Modest Mennonite Home*, 15.

31. Bronner, Simon J. and Joshua R. Brown. “Introduction: Pennsylvania German Studies.” In *Pennsylvania Germans: An Interpretive Encyclopedia*. Ed. Simon J. Bronner and Joshua R. Brown, 3. Young Center Books in Anabaptist and Pietist Studies. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017.

32. For excellent introductions to settlement patterns, migrations, and broader social-historical issues, see the following articles in *Pennsylvania Germans*: Frantz, John B. “To the New World: Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” 36–52; and Wenger, Diane and Simon J. Bronner, “Communities and Identities: Nineteenth to the Twenty-First Centuries,” 53–76.

33. Louden, Mark L. *Pennsylvania Dutch: The Story of an American Language*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016, 34.

the ornate bindings surviving on many copies of the texts would suggest.³⁴ While scholars have frequently downplayed Anabaptism’s spiritualistic tendencies, it was actually a movement of deep religious feeling and literary sophistication, and some varieties even possessed mystical elements.^{35, 36} By means of hymns, verses, and other devotional writings, Anabaptists poeticized their persecution and separateness from the corrupt and wicked world around them.³⁷ Today, many of those text-artifacts survive within identifiably German religious bindings, bearing features including studded spine straps, woven endbands, and metal furniture serving functional and decorative purposes.

Evidence that the Swiss Anabaptists bound many of these favored devotional texts in the sturdy, German religious style closely associated with the sect today is revelatory, but equally useful are observations made from study of bindings of other traditions, which allow us to assess the uniqueness of the Anabaptists’ preferred aesthetic. An exhaustive study of comparative bindings is beyond the scope of this project, but a cursory review of the rare-book stacks of a few other, non-Anabaptist Germanic denominational and sectarian collections points to the relative uniqueness of Swiss Anabaptist books in early Pennsylvania. While many early religious books in collections of the Schwenkfelder Library in Pennsburg, the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem, and the Evangelical & Reformed Historical Society in Lancaster, resemble the Swiss Anabaptist texts in some ways; for example, in possessing metal cornerpieces or raised cords, few books used by adherents of these traditions combined all of the features that so commonly appear on Swiss Anabaptist devotional texts. Revealingly, books found in these collections that do indeed unite the different characteristics common to eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Swiss Anabaptist books are folio-size Bibles and other religious texts, many printed and bound in Europe in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries. Pennsylvania’s Anabaptists seem to have hung on to old-world binding traditions longer than other German religious communities and applied them to smaller volumes than other contemporary German-American groups did.

Regardless of the extent to which “Swiss Anabaptist bindings” were solely, or even primarily, Anabaptist in character, books bound in the style occupied an important place in the spiritual and material lives of Anabaptist settlers who called early Pennsylvania home. With their wooden boards, spine straps, and extensive metal adornment, the books functioned as hinge points between the physical spaces of church, school, and home, and the intangible, inner, spiritual world that the Anabaptist brand of Protestantism favored. In the Herr family home, built in 1719, for example, such books would have exuded an evocative

34. Luthy, “Metal Initial and Date Plates,” 9.

35. Erb, “Anabaptist Spirituality,” 82.

36. For more on mysticism, see Erb, Peter C. *Pietists, Protestants, and Mysticism: The Use of Late Medieval Spiritual Texts in the Work of Gottfried Arnold (1666–1714)*. Metuchen, N. J.: Scarecrow Press, 1989; and Packull, Werner O. *Mysticism and the Early South German-Austrian Anabaptist Movement, 1525–1531*. Scottsdale, Penn.: Herald Press, 1977.

37. Erb, “Anabaptist Spirituality,” 87.



Fig. 2. The Hans Herr House, constructed 1719.

presence in a small domestic space. The stone house was the dwelling of Mennonite settler Christian Herr and is the oldest house left standing in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania today.³⁸ Fig. 2. Christian's father Hans, an important Mennonite pastor, is believed to have lived with his wife Elizabeth, as well as his son Christian's family in the home.³⁹ The property operates today as an historic-house museum, and family artifacts on display at the property include many religious texts bound in Anabaptist style and were read by means of light flowing in through one of the house's small windows, or by candlelight in the evenings. One especially precious volume, a copy of the Mennonite *Auß Bundt* that was probably published in Europe in or before 1709, features an inscription in the old German script known as "Kurrentschrift" that translates as: "This book belongs to me, Hans Herr, of New Strasburg [a town in Lancaster County, now simply called Strasburg], and I treasure it greatly. If anyone finds it, please return it to me. Anno 1724."⁴⁰ Figs. 3a–d. Which Hans Herr wrote this inscription is a matter of some debate; it may have been either the immigrant Christian Herr's father or brother who shared the same name. In any case, his words leave little doubt as to the importance of this *Auß Bundt* to the family's religious sensibilities.

The case of the Hans Herr *Auß Bundt* is a reminder that books bearing Swiss Anabaptist binding features, which often live today on library shelves or in exhibition cases, once were mixed

38. Friesen, *Modest Mennonite Home*, 41–50.

39. Friesen, *Modest Mennonite Home*, 51.

40. Joe Springer letter to Joe Lahr, 1 March 2018. Provided by David Schrock, Director of the Hans Herr House.

Fig. 3a. The upper cover of *Auß Bundt/ Das ist: Ettliche schöne Christenliche Lieder*, undated. Inscribed by Hans Herr, LMHS. Likely a European binding displaying remnants of two leather spine straps and brass furniture with fine linear punchwork. 18 × 11 × 9 cm. (Hans Herr House Museum (HHHM): uncataloged). Dimensions in all Figures are given as: H × W × Th.

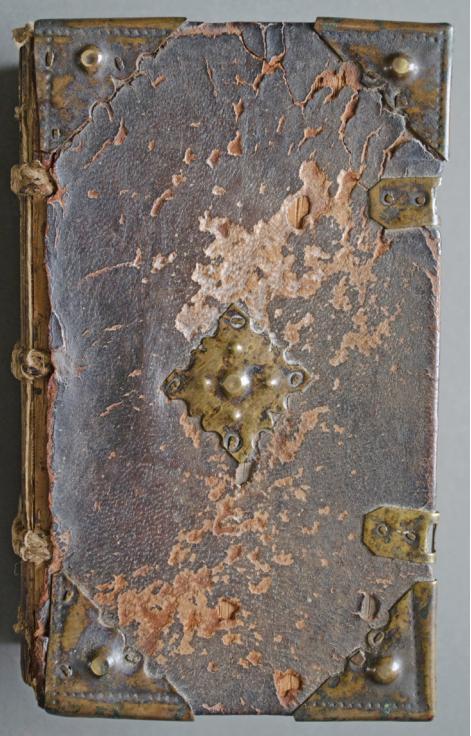
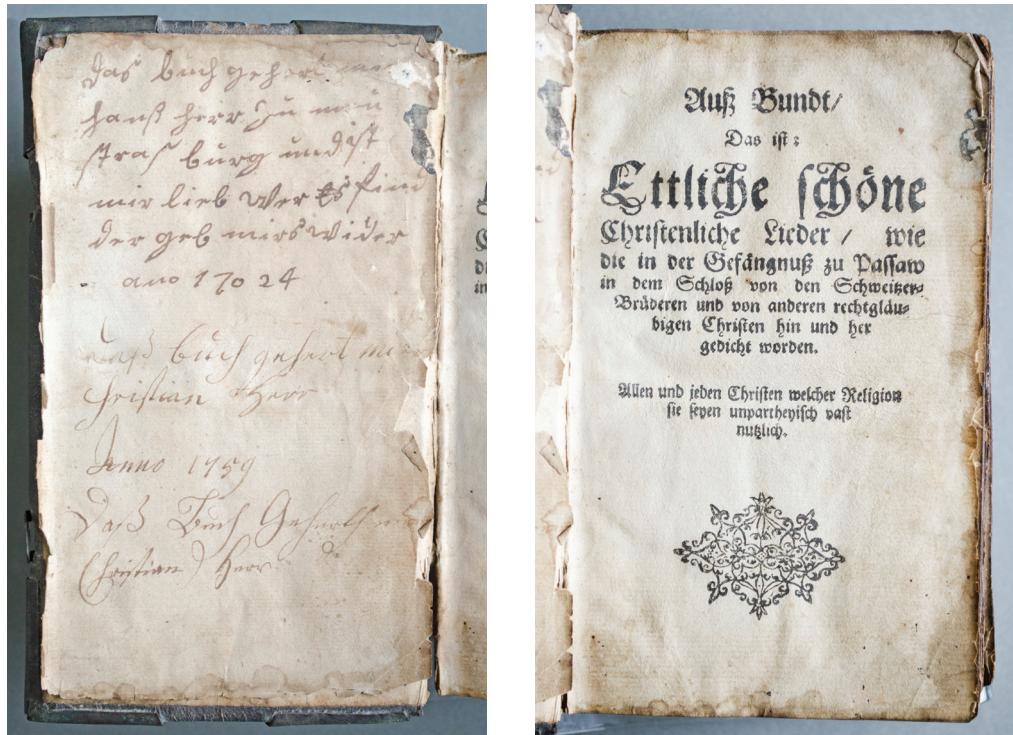


Fig. 3b. See remnants of two spine straps under the metal work, with stuck-on endbands crossing the joint to act as part of the board attachment, and the exposed raised sewing cords of the *Auß Bundt*.



Figs. 3c-d. Left: Inscription of Hans Herr (top) in the *Auf Bundt*. The bottom inscription, written by Christian Herr in 1759, translates as: “This book belongs to me Christian Herr, Anno 1759,” with the same line repeated below the date. Right: Title page.

among various other objects and people in domestic and social realms, just as treasured family Bibles still do in many Christian homes. In domestic contexts, Pennsylvania German devotional texts, like the *Auf Bundt*, served as tools of piety and lent contour to the lived experience of radical Protestant Christianity in Pennsylvania. A cupboard now displayed at the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society reveals how copies of the *Auf Bundt* and other religious texts would have been housed in venues more public than a family home. Figs. 4a–b. Constructed of pine, the cupboard, which dates to 1787, once hung on the wall of the Hernley Mennonite Meetinghouse, located in Rapho Township in Lancaster County. Churchgoers would have found copies of the *Auf Bundt* and a later Mennonite hymnal called the *Unpartheyisches Gesangbuch*, which replaced the *Auf Bundt* in common Mennonite use beginning in 1804, stowed inside the cupboard and ready for retrieval when needed in worship.⁴¹

Despite the prevalence of bindings bearing spine straps and distinctive metal furniture, as well as the undeniable religious and cultural importance of the texts these bindings contained, it remains difficult to determine what this decoration meant to the books’ users

41. Exhibit label. “Wall Cupboard Dated 1787.” Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society.



Figs. 4a–b. The 1787 pine cupboard, showing shelves once used to store copies of the *Auf Bundt*, and after 1804, the *Unpartheyisches Gesang-Buch* at the Hernley Mennonite Meetinghouse in Rapho Township, Lancaster County, 1787 (LMHS).

in terms of their religious or cultural identity. Three special artifacts suggest, however, that the binding style did resonate with their Anabaptist owners. The first book is a Luther Bible printed in Basel, Switzerland, in 1767 and bound in tawed pigskin, possibly without any furniture apart from clasps on the original binding. Johann Heinrich Franck purchased the Bible, seen in Figs. 5a–b, using British currency on 15 April 1775, suggesting that the book had found its way to Britain’s North American colonies by that date. Fifteen years later, the Bible’s owner (perhaps someone other than Johann Franck) added to the binding an inscription on the front pastedown of the book that reads, “Beschläge,” or metal garnishments. The garnishments identified in the inscription include “spine straps,” “knobs,” and other adherences. Intriguingly, the cornerpieces attached to the Bible in 1795 seem almost identical to cornerpieces on a copy of the Ephrata edition of the *Martyrs’ Mirror* owned by the Moravians and housed with their congregational library in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Fig. 6. This, along with the presence of small remnants of tanned leather adhered to the underside of the cornerpieces, suggests that the furniture on the 1767 Franck Bible may have been salvaged from another binding and then applied here.

The second book of interest here from a cultural-historical perspective, a European-printed copy of the *Martyrs’ Mirror*, has a Midwestern Swiss Anabaptist provenance and likewise bears an inscription describing the adornment of its pigskin binding with metal attachments. Fig. 7. The volume was very possibly owned by Peter Gingrich, whose name appears on the inscription on the book’s front pastedown. “Gingrich” was an Anabaptist with Swiss heritage, many of whose descendants lived in Iowa and other Midwestern states.⁴²

42. “Gingerich (Gingrich, Guengerich, Gingery) family.” *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*: <[http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Gingerich_\(Gingrich,_Guengerich,_Gingery\)_family](http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Gingerich_(Gingrich,_Guengerich,_Gingery)_family)>; accessed 26 May 2018.



Figs. 5a–b. Above: Upper cover.
Biblia, Basel: Emanuel Thurneysen,
1767. 41 × 21 × 9 cm. (MCFL: no.
1332). Right: Detail of cornerpiece.
A remnant of tanned leather, likely
from a previous binding, can be
seen under the cornerpiece (top,
left.)

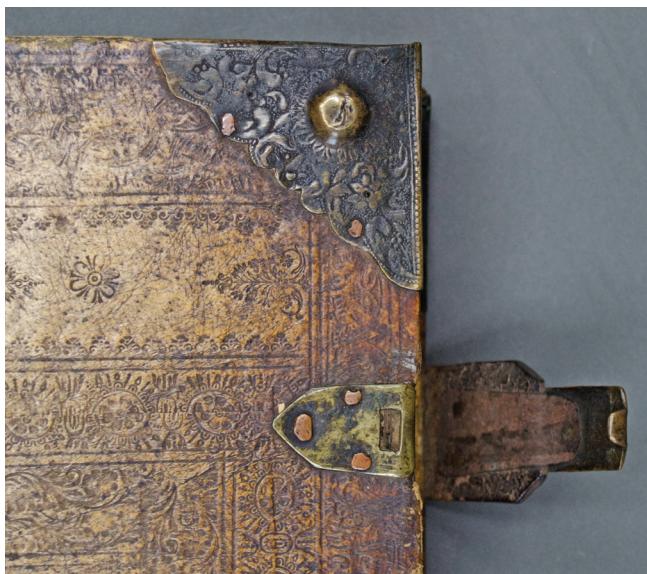


Fig. 6. Detail of cornerpiece on the copy of Braght, *Der Blutige Schau-Platz [Martyrs' Mirror]*, Ephrata: 1748, which is in the congregational library of the Moravians of Bethlehem (Moravian Archives (MA): CongLib 3 folio).



Fig. 7. Braght, *Der Blutige Schau-Platz [Martyrs' Mirror]*, [Pirmasens]: Verlag der vereinigten Brüderschaft, 1780. 41
× 21 × 14 cm. (LMHS: BR1600.B8315
1780).



The furniture on this book's front and back covers is even more ornate than that on the 1767 Bible described above and lends the volume a grandiose character.

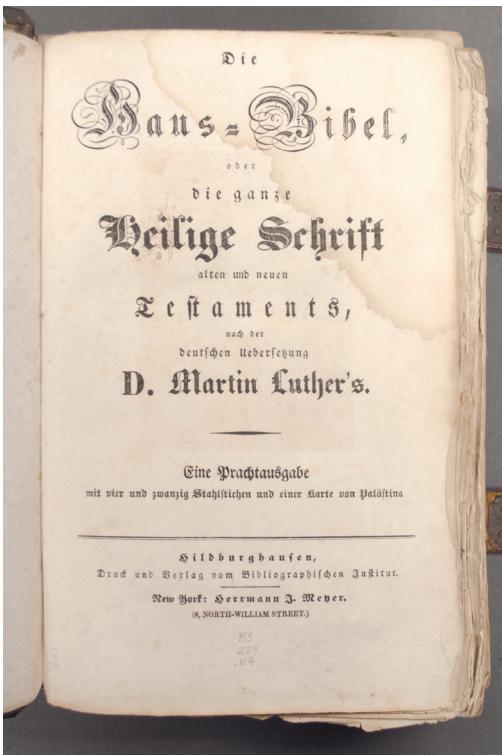


Fig. 8a. Title page of Josiah Beiler's copy of *Die Haus-Bibel*, New York: Herrmann J. Meyer, [1846?], which he acquired in 1851 (LMHS: BS 239.N4).

binding tastes. This is one of only two paperboard bindings seen with added Anabaptist features more typically encountered on wooden-board bindings in America. Even though adding metalwork to thinner, flexible paperboards was likely not as secure as adding metalwork to more rigid wooden boards, owners and readers of such books may have viewed spine straps and metal adornment as ways to signal and honor the items' status as vessels of Holy Scripture and other revered devotional texts, or perhaps simply as ways to protect heavily used devotional books from the wear and tear they would likely encounter.

A key element of American Anabaptist history and culture is that the communities' faith practices continue to thrive today. Devotional books, like those analyzed for this study, are often preserved in faith-based organizations, as well as in private ownership, and they fill an

43. *Die Haus-Bibel*, [1846]. An obituary clipping tipped into the book identifies the father of the wife of the man who owned the book as a member of the Amish community.

Fig. 8b. *Die Haus-Bibel*.

Tinned-iron-sheet corner- and centerpieces, attached to the front leather-covered paperboards with large brass tacks and smaller iron nails. 28 × 20 × 10 cm.

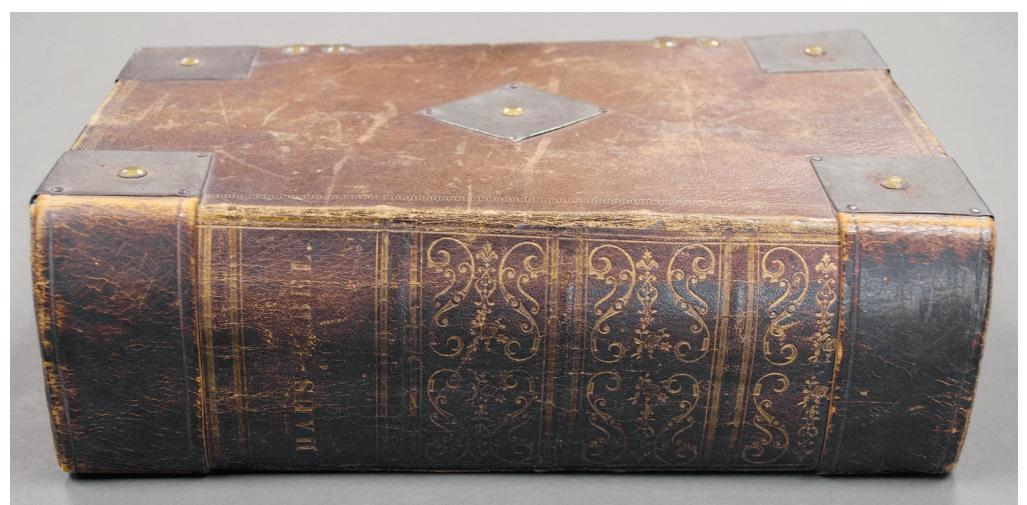


Fig. 8c. Spine straps added to *Die Haus-Bibel*.

important role in collective community heritage. The continued interest in Swiss Anabaptist bindings within the Mennonite community is shown in the work of Mennonite bookbinder Ross Dilts, currently producing facsimile 1579 “Taufer” Testaments, with a text printed on handmade paper, hand-sewn on supports, and given wooden boards, as well as extensive reproduction brass metalwork and metal spine straps. As in many religious communities, there is a trade in facsimile foundational texts, but not all invest the significant time to reproduce such specialized binding elements.⁴⁴

The authors tried to remain cognizant of possible pitfalls of writing about the history and practices of a community of which they are not a part. In an effort to offset the authors’ voices and include more of the rich and deep perspectives of the curators and custodians met in the course of this research, a questionnaire was distributed to some custodians of Amish and Mennonite collections regarding use of their materials, and their knowledge about binding use and practice generally. The following is a summary of their responses.

All of the custodians of Amish and Mennonite collections interviewed for this study mentioned that their collections are primarily consulted by researchers today for genealogical purposes. There are many fewer researchers without an Anabaptist family connection, or for whom the research interest is oriented toward academic scholarship or bookbinding practice. One curator said that provenance information or family information found in bindings is a draw, but that in some cases, “the records that are written in these family books are, in fact, available elsewhere yet family descendants continue to come to see and touch and smell books that connect them to something larger than their individual lives.”⁴⁵

Custodians consulted in this study did not have a uniform picture of how these artifacts fit within historical Anabaptist faith practice. Many see their association with the broader Lutheran and Reformed heritage. The same curator mentioned that

Much of the folk art that we have from the Anabaptist community has historically emphasized function over form, the practical over the purely aesthetic. At first glance, the brass studs and leather spine straps of so-called Anabaptist bindings seem to be at odds with this emphasis. While I cannot be certain, my suspicion is that what we are finding on these bindings has more to do with protection and preservation of the book rather than ornamentation.⁴⁶

Another curator noted that the attachment of decorated metalwork simply demonstrated the value practitioners placed on the content of the volumes and that this ornamentation may have contributed to these bindings’ survival and passing down through generations.⁴⁷

44. For information, see Dilts, Ross. “Old and New Froschauer Bibles for March 9 Program.” *Michiana Anabaptist Historians (MAH) News & Notes* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 1.

45. Steve Ness, Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, email message to authors, 3 August 2018.

46. Ness, email message to authors, 3 August 2018.

47. Joe Springer, Mennonite Historical Society, Goshen College, email message to authors, 7 July 2018.

As one custodian put it, “It is true that these sturdy bindings were part of the larger Germanic binding tradition, but...these books were bound to last a long time. I think many of the Anabaptist crafts were done with the ideas of being durable, practicable, and usable.”⁴⁸ Another expressed his feeling that not all Anabaptist bindings were constructed by Anabaptists, and that there were likely local and other influences at work. This curator mentioned the difficulty in determining who bound Anabaptist works.⁴⁹ He also expressed concern about lumping all bindings into a single Anabaptist binding category, without acknowledging the likely variations in production or influences for making such bindings. “I think the nature of all these bindings is fundamentally functional with the decoration thereof being a flourish rather than something that represents faith practice...the ‘flourish’ relates to – perhaps permitted only due to – the status of the content of the printed work.”⁵⁰ Caretakers for devotional books bound in a Swiss Anabaptist style engage on a daily basis with the same questions that inspired this essay.

BOOKBINDING TECHNIQUES ON SWISS ANABAPTIST TITLES BOUND IN AMERICA BEFORE 1850, WITH REFERENCE TO EUROPEAN TRADITIONS

Shelf after shelf of pre-1850 Swiss Anabaptist titles in American Mennonite collections show that metal furniture, name and date plates, and spine straps, while essential as part of Swiss Anabaptist bookbinding history, are found on a minority, perhaps a fifth or fewer, of American-bound Anabaptist titles. Most Anabaptist bindings observed by the authors on repository shelves were sewn on raised cords, covered in brown sheep or calf over 3.5 mm. or thicker wooden boards, given two metal clasps at the fore edge, and are decorated with a bare minimum of blind-tooled lines; see Figs. 23a–d. Still, however simple the decoration, these books, when looked at together and individually, radiate a uniformity of technical finesse and deliberate solidity. The overall relationship between the parts of these American bound Anabaptist books – structural and decorative aspects – is unique and tells a story.

David Pearson, in *English Bookbinding Styles 1450–1800*, questioned the notion that a detailed understanding of bookbinding structure can ever be as important as the study of binding decoration for librarians trying to date and classify books.^{51, 52} In this, Pearson was calling attention to practical problems with book structure research. Pearson noted that bookbinding structural elements are too hidden under covering materials to describe accurately, and even if one could correctly identify a bookbinding structural element, these elements can be so varied binder to binder that one cannot draw useful conclusions from what

48. Amos Hoover and Lloyd Weiler, Muddy Creek Farm Library, email message to authors, 31 July 2018.

49. Springer, email message to authors, 7 July 2018.

50. Springer, email message to authors, 7 July 2018.

51. Pearson, David. *English Bookbinding Styles 1450–1800*. London: British Library, 2005, 3–4.

52. For an early look at Nicholas Pickwoad’s application of bookbinding structure to interpreting books, see Pickwoad, Nicholas. “Italian and French Sixteenth-Century Bookbindings.” *Gazette of the Grolier Club*, n.s., no. 43 (1991): 55–80.

is observed. Perhaps Pearson overstated his case. By closely looking at bookbinding structure, a story unfolds within Swiss Anabaptist communities before 1850, showing the overwhelming choice to hire German-trained binders. English-trained binders were certainly available and working in their own shop (or in booksellers' shops) with their own binding traditions could probably have applied wooden boards and clasps to a German-language devotional to accommodate the aesthetic preferences of an eighteenth-century Anabaptist German client. However, their training would not have prepared them to carry out the Germanic text-block shaping, wooden-board shaping, board-attachment methods, transverse cloth spine linings, or stuck-on endband styles so consistently seen on early Swiss Anabaptist titles bound in America. Of course, English speakers could be trained in German binding traditions by German binders in America, and there is some evidence that this happened.⁵³

Anabaptist devotional books bound in Pennsylvania before 1850 were primarily produced within the context of German binding traditions, with likely Dutch and Swiss influences. By the mid-nineteenth century, there was a growing Anglo-American influence, though that is not examined with any detail in this essay. The underlying binding structure used in early American Anabaptist bindings was similar to that of other devotionals bound by those with German training for non-Anabaptist German Protestants like Lutherans, Schwenkfelders, Reformed Lutheran, or even German-Catholic book owners. The underlying bookbinding structure for Anabaptist books bound in America was also strikingly similar to the European-bound Anabaptist devotionals the authors examined in American and Swiss collections. In order to better understand Anabaptist titles bound in America, this section will attempt to position these books within the literature of early American bookbinding history, as well as within Germanic technical accounts of the bookbinding craft published in Europe.

The American literature of bookbinding structure related to books owned by Swiss Anabaptists in America has traditionally tended to focus on the singular oddness of these bindings in the American scene, and then tended to acknowledge the excellent craftsmanship of the volumes. American bibliophile descriptions of German binding were curious, and the conclusions could be jarring. Andrews, in his 1902 *Bibliopegy in the United States*, wrote:

The German is nothing if not conservative, and his racial characteristics are slowly modified by new environments. Consequently we are prepared for the Teutonic plainness and solidity of the brass-knobbed calf binding, with its brass-tipped leather clasps, which covers, as with a coat of mail, the *Gesang Buch*, printed at

⁵³ "The panel transverse lining is one of the most common types of spine lining, and was used in all European countries from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, though it was much less commonly used in France and Britain than elsewhere, even allowing for a general reluctance in Britain to use spine linings at all." "Secondary tackets, transverse," Language of Bindings Thesaurus: <https://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/search?search_api_views_fulltext=transverse>; accessed 20 July 2019. On German binders working with English binders, see: Swank, Scott. T., Benno Forman, Frank H. Sommer, et al. *Arts of the Pennsylvania Germans*. New York: Norton, 1983, 289.

Germantown, Pennsylvania, in 1762, by Christopher Saur, 2d, for the spiritual comfort of his Dunker Brethren, in their vernacular tongue, and the black-letter type of their Fatherland.... This sombre-looking volume, from the hands of the pre-Revolutionary typographer, is indeed a very pleasant thing to sight and touch, and its strong and honest construction inspires one with a feeling of respect, for both the book and its maker.⁵⁴

A collector of early American books noted:

Bindings even reveal the religious attitudes and the general religious concepts of the people who owned them. Note the strongly bound Bibles of Christopher Sauer and many of the other books of the Pennsylvania Germans. Notice on some the strength-giving guards, the brass corners, and the leather and metal clasps. These are bindings meant to hold a book of permanent worth. They point to a strong belief in the God who rules the world with dignity, wisdom and power.... The more graceful bindings on religious books – those of an Aitken, Buglass or Legge – suggest that Americans had also discovered beauty in creation and in the world where they lived.⁵⁵

In his 1931 book, *The Colonial Printer*, Lawrence Wroth singled out the bindings from the Cloisters of Ephrata, and described them as "solid, dependable, and well fashioned in the manner one would expect from craftsmen of the German tradition...unlike any other bindings fashioned in the three Americas." This is He also famously dismissed the essential Anabaptist text, the *Martyrs' Mirror*, printed before the American Revolution as "the largest and ugliest book produced in colonial America."⁵⁶ In Hazel Dreis's 1948 article, "Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Bookbindings: An Historical Study," the English-trained binder described the unfamiliar German prewoven endbands as a "peculiar tape," and she found it odd that most wooden boards were attached with adhesive only, not laced on, though both practices are common in German books of the time. Importantly, Dreis did indicate the bookbinding structures she observed in Lancaster were often of Swiss origin, though she gave no documentation as to why she came to this conclusion.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Andrews, William Loring. *Bibliopegy in the United States and Kindred Subjects*. New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1902, 52, 57.

⁵⁵ Maser, Frederick E. "Introduction by the Donor." In *Bookbinding in America 1680–1910: From the Collection of Frederick E. Maser*. Ed. John Dooley and James Tanis, 12. Bryn Mawr: Bryn Mawr College Library, 1983.

⁵⁶ Wroth, Lawrence C. *The Colonial Printer*. Charlottesville, Va.: Dominion Books, 1964, 211. On this page, Wroth also suggests that the studded spine straps seen on some Ephrata-bound books were for taking the book off the shelf. This cannot be so because it is impossible to get your fingers behind them when the book is closed.

⁵⁷ Dreis, Hazel. "Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Bookbindings: An Historical Study." *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 42 (1948): 123–125.

American bookbinding historians also described these American Anabaptist devotionals as “Gothic” or “medieval.”^{58, 59} The terms “Gothic” and “medieval” applied to Anabaptist binding features emphasized that these eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century books lived apart from the mainstream trajectory of bookbinding history. Bookbindings in the humanist Renaissance of Europe and the Enlightenment period in America tended toward thinner, lighter boards, gold tooling, brightly colored goatskin coverings, and Islamic influenced design.^{60, 61} But not all bookbinding moved toward brighter colors and lighter, thinner boards. Christian devotionals have had their own branch of the bookbinding family tree, and their own trajectory, and can best be understood in that context. Julia Miller noted this distinction in her description of a German-American binding: “Small, personal copies of Bibles and other religious works also continued to be bound in a quasi-Gothic style well into the nineteenth century; this was a reflection of tradition and sentiment more than need.”⁶² J.A. Szirmai gave an outside date of the seventeenth century for his use of the term Gothic, but added that “The Gothic wooden-board binding continued to be used throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and even much longer for books intended for the Church.”⁶³ Dutch book conservator Herre de Vries describes passages in an early nineteenth-century Dutch bookbinding manual that detail the special steps for binding Bibles, and he characterizes those techniques as follows: “It’s a somewhat archaic style with stylistic and technical references to late medieval bindings and those bindings of the sixteenth and seventeenth-century that used to be in the first ‘public’ libraries after the Reformation.”⁶⁴ Pearson marked this prevalent bookbinding choice for devotionals as well. He wrote, “Clasps... became less common as the use of wood declined.... Luxury bindings, presentation copies

58. Miller, Julia. *Books Will Speak Plain: A Handbook for Identifying and Describing Historical Bindings*. 2nd ed. Ann Arbor, Mich.: The Legacy Press, 2014, 71, Fig. 2.8. Miller uses the term “American Gothic” to describe an early Anabaptist title bound in America.

59. [Miner, Dorothy.] *The History of Bookbinding 525–1950 A.D.: An Exhibition Held at the Baltimore Museum of Art November 12, 1957–January 12, 1958, Organized by the Walters Art Gallery and Presented in Cooperation with the Baltimore Museum of Art*. Baltimore: Trustees of the Walters Art Gallery, 1957, 236. Miner described American bound Anabaptist titles as “not far removed from medieval work.”

60. Hobson, Anthony. *Humanists and Bookbinders: The Origins and Diffusion of the Humanist Bookbinding 1450–1550*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, 1.

61. Pickwoad, Nicholas. “Book Review: *Humanists and Bookbinders: The Origin and Diffusion of the Humanist Bookbinding 1450–1550*.” *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy* 62, no. 4 (October 1992): 447–448.

62. Miller, Books Will Speak Plain, 71.

63. Szirmai, J.A. *The Archeology of Medieval Bookbinding*. 1999. Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2000, 173–284.

64. Herre de Vries, email message to authors and Jeffery S. Peachey, 14 August 2018.

or devotional books might be enhanced with nicely engraved clasps in brass or silver.”⁶⁵ Christian devotionals, even today and especially those meant to be gifts, can still be purchased with clasps, metal attachments, or even full metal bindings, which shows the endurance of devotional binding as a category.⁶⁶

As with the Herr House *Auß Bundt* discussed earlier, Anabaptist devotionals in European bindings were treasured in the home and religious life of American Anabaptists; see Figs. 3a–d. Indeed treasured older family bibles are still kept in the homes of many different Christian sects today, and may influence the Christian community’s sense of what devotionals should look like. Pre-1850s bookbinders were accustomed to producing devotionals that looked different than other types of secular books, and the aesthetics of cherished surviving early European radical Protestant devotionals brought over the miles to America and kept at hand in the homes of their owners likely exerted a strong influence within the Anabaptist communities of America.

The historical narrative of early American bookbinding techniques usually focuses on economy and roughness. Accounts lament absent endbands, thin scaleboard instead of paperboards, indifferently consolidated text blocks, sawn-in or stabbed supports with adhesive instead of sewing on raised supports, and so on. Julia Miller, who celebrates the unique beauty of Early American bindings, has noted, “Early American bindings were often ignored by collectors of bindings for the very reason that ties them to the early colonial experience of North America: their rough quality.”⁶⁷ Andrews, in his much earlier *Bibliopegy*, gives a quite unfavorable description of the plain early American bindings as compared to the best of what Europe produced in the eighteenth century. He called the European books “a well-ordered garden bright with the variegated colors...of lovingly and patiently nurtured flowers; whereas a study of Bibliopegy...in this country during the corresponding period, conducts us for most of the tiresome way over a field of brown and withered winter stubble.”⁶⁸ “Withered winter stubble” implies more than just a brown-leather covering material on these binding; it implies ragged, uneven, haphazard forms. Leaving the beauty or ugliness of Early American bindings aside, there is little argument that binders could produce plainer or fancier bindings, depending on what the client paid for. Less expensive bindings generally take less care with or forgo many of the more time consuming bookbinding steps. So it may be a surprise to encounter a group of eighteenth-

65. Pearson, *English Bookbinding Styles*, 27–30.

66. “Silver Family Bible.” Franklin Mint Silver: <<https://franklin-mint-silver.com/franklin-mint-silver-family-bible.htm>>; accessed 13 October 2018. In 1975, Franklin Mint issued a family bible with a pound of silver on it. A quick internet search with the terms clasp and bibles brings up a wide variety of 19th- and 20th-century Christian devotional books with clasps.

67. Miller, Julia. “Not Just Another Beautiful Book.” In *Suave Mechanicals: Essays on the History of Bookbinding*. Vol. 1. Ed. Julia Miller, 249. Ann Arbor, Mich.: The Legacy Press, 2013. The images of early American books in her essay show the many ways these lightly built structures were vulnerable to wear.

68. Andrews, *Bibliopegy*, 22.

century American books where sophisticated text block and board shaping and careful strengthening structural refinements were regularly undertaken for books never intended to have bright colored leather, decorative blind tooling, or gold tooling for a wealthier client.

In collections of most American Anabaptist devotionals before 1850, while there are a few very rustic bindings that stand out, there do not seem to be cheaper or more expensive bindings, other than the bindings where the owner paid for the later addition of metal furniture and spine straps, described earlier in the essay; see Figs. 5a–b, 7, 8a–c. Furthermore, plain blind lines alone, with no other decoration on the covering material and no titling, do not indicate any other structural short-cut associated with a more economical product as one might expect. For example, even devotional texts with no added metal elements were generally carefully and intentionally prepared so their form would accommodate shaped wooden boards and allow clasps to function well. The practice of thoroughly beating text blocks before sewing and attaching boards was considered vital for most printed books in Europe and was clearly employed by those binding Anabaptist books in America.⁶⁹ Beating flattened and consolidated text gatherings, and involved a special heavy metal hammer with a rounded and polished face along with a smooth, hard surface to lay stacks of text paper on during beating. After beating, the gatherings of American-bound Anabaptist devotionals were sewn relatively carefully on stout raised supports, rather than sawn-in supports. The American text blocks were expertly ploughed, then protected with wooden boards consistently beveled and shaped so that once attached, they integrated smoothly with the rounded text-block shape. For those unfamiliar with German binding techniques, there may be other surprises on American-bound Anabaptist devotionals – a variety of stuck-on endband styles, transverse cloth spine linings, and wooden boards attached to the text block via adhesive instead of being laced on mechanically. Non-German binders working in America before 1850 certainly produced highly crafted books, just as the Germans did, in different classes depending on the job, but if the Anabaptist owners of these devotionals had an option to skip some binding steps to cheapen their bookbinding purchase, visual evidence shows that option was not taken.

Some of the earliest bookbinding manuals printed were German, and it is instructive to compare the techniques described in these manuals to German bookbinding as practiced in North America. The German technical accounts of bookbinding from the eighteenth century that could have influenced German-trained binders working in America include, but are not limited to, those manuals of J.G. Zeidler (1708), C.E. Prediger (4 vols., 1741–1753), and J.J.H. Bücking (1785).⁷⁰ A possible Dutch manual of influence is *De Boekbinder* written in 1806

69. See Peachey, Jeffery S. "Beating, Rolling, and Pressing: The Compression of Signatures in Bookbinding Prior to Sewing." In *Suave Mechanicals: Essays on the History of Bookbinding*. Vol. 1. Ed. Julia Miller, 316–381. Ann Arbor, Mich.: The Legacy Press, 2013. See page 322, Fig. 4 for an example of an 1801 American scaleboard binding with little or no compression of the text block before sewing. Peachey notes that the underlying binding structure was spongy, and the boards would likely not have withstood heavy pressing.

70. Peter Verheyen, email message to authors, 30 August 2018. Bücking, J.J.H. *Die Kunst des*

by Hendrick de Haas.⁷¹ Later in this essay, specific techniques from these manuals will be discussed in relation to the bindings on Anabaptist titles the authors examined. Readers of early craft manuals must exercise caution, however, as apprentice training, not book learning, was still the main avenue for craft work education.

In the German-American community around Philadelphia, there is clear evidence at least one German-speaking bookbinder interacted directly with the German bookbinding manual by Prediger, either in manuscript or printed form. Christopher Hoffmann, a German-speaking Schwenkfelder born in 1727 and a practitioner of a faith professing a "middle way" between state churches like Lutheranism, and radical Protestants like the Anabaptists, was a prolific binder who worked in the Philadelphia area in the mid-eighteenth century. The collections of the Schwenkfelder Library and Heritage Center in Philadelphia include a manuscript bookbinding manual copied by Christopher Hoffmann from parts of the Prediger manual.⁷² This indicates that either a printed or manuscript Prediger bookbinding text was circulating in the German community surrounding Hoffman. Unfortunately, Hoffmann's binding teacher in America is as yet unknown, but Hoffmann bindings, Germanic in technique, survive in collections all over the region, easily identified by the tools and patterns he used regularly. Hoffmann came to Pennsylvania in 1734 at the age of seven, and his bookbinding training likely happened in the Philadelphia area when he was fairly young. When his name appears on a land purchase document in the region dated 1752, Hoffmann was already known as "The Bookbinder." While Hoffmann's hand-copied bookbinding manual shows no physical signs of active use, like stains or creases, its existence displays a level of interest in the technical aspects of bookbinding within the German-speaking community of Philadelphia.^{73, 74} It seems unlikely that Hoffmann was the only German-speaking binder in the Philadelphia area to interact with the Prediger bookbinding manual he copied.⁷⁵

Buchbinders. Stendal: D.C. Franzen & Grosse, 1785. Prediger, C.E. *Der Buchbinder und Futteralmacher*. 4 vols. Frankfort: Leipzig & Anspach, 1741–1753. Zeidler, J.G. *Buchbinder-Philosophie*. Hall im Magdeburgschen: Renger, 1708. De Vries, email message to authors and Jeffery S. Peachey, 14 August 2018. De Vries notes that the 1612 Faust manuscript manual (Faust was a German binder writing in Flemish and French) was not published until 1987. Also Szirmai, *Archaeology*, 174–175 and Foot, Mirjam. *Bookbinders at Work: Their Roles and Methods*. London: British Library, 2006, 37–40.

71. de Hass, Hendrick. *De Boekbinder*. Dordrecht: A. Blussé en Zoon, 1806.

72. Verheyen, email message to authors, 10 September 2018.

73. Viehmeyer, Allen. "Christopher Hoffmann, Eighteenth Century Schwenkfelder Bookbinder." The Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center: <<https://schwenkfelder.wordpress.com/2014/08/06/christopher-hoffmann-eighteenth-century-schwenkfelder-bookbinder/>>; accessed 9 October 2018.

74. Schenkel, Hunt. "Eighteenth C Colonial Bookbinder Christoph Hoffman." The Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center: <<https://schwenkfelder.wordpress.com/2011/11/03/18th-c-colonial-bookbinder-christoph-hoffmann/>>; accessed 11 November 2018.

75. For another discussion of historical bookbinding manuals, see Geraty, Peter. "A Manual Approach to Stiff-Board Parchment Binding." In *Suave Mechanicals: Essays on the History of Bookbinding*. Vol. 5. Ed. Julia Miller, 124–196. Ann Arbor, Mich.: The Legacy Press, 2019.

The following subsections proceed through bookbinding steps in the order a German-trained binder would do the work. Published German bookbinding technical descriptions will be combined with conclusions based on examinations of Anabaptist devotionals bound in America, most of them from the southeastern Pennsylvania region, where the earliest Anabaptist texts were printed and bound.

Format and paper preparation

Since there are no unique Swiss Anabaptist paper dimensions or printing layouts, there are no special format issues to discuss.

Many German bookbinding manuals gave instructions for how to surface-size paper before gathering it into sections, since the printers in those parts of Europe seem to have printed books on unsized or slack sized paper, expecting binders to size it later so book-readers could easily write in their books with pen without the ink running.⁷⁶ It is not clear if this practice of binders sizing their printed book sheets continued in German influenced parts of North America, and it would be an interesting area for further research.⁷⁷ The number of printed sheets to a signature for books printed in North America seems to have followed Continental European practice with folio-format books often quired in sixes through the seventeenth century. Quarto and octavo sheets were generally not quired.⁷⁸ No attempt was made in this study to track watermarks. Early papermaking in North America will not be covered in this essay, but it bears mentioning that the first papermaking mill in America was run by the first Mennonite preacher in America, William Rittenhouse. Rittenhouse came to Germantown in 1688 already trained as a papermaker. By 1690, William Bradford, who had been a printer in Philadelphia for five years, was looking to build a local paper mill. Bradford put Rittenhouse in charge of the first paper mill in what is now the Historic Rittenhouse Town near the Germantown area of Philadelphia.⁷⁹

76. Foot, *Bookbinders at Work*, 46.

77. Cathleen Baker, email message to authors, 2 July 2018. When asked about binders surface-sizing printed book paper, Baker notes that the practice could hardly have been workable. Sizing was hard work to do well, and professional paper mills with trained staff and adequate facilities still regularly lost sheets during the sizing process. She further notes that slack sized or unsized paper for letterpress work was common throughout the handpress period and into the 19th century. Later, she also noted that if printed sheets were sized in the bindery, it would have been performed for writing-on only, since there are not any other practical reasons why sizing after printing would have been necessary. It is possible that blank printing papers, supplied with the collated sheets, might have been sized by the binder so that ink inscriptions on the endsheets would not bleed, and that it is these relatively few sheets that are discussed and illustrated in early manuals. Baker, communication with the authors, 3 January 2020.

78. Gaskell, Philip. *A New Introduction to Bibliography*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1972, 82–83.

79. Wenger, John C. and Victor Wiebe. “Rittenhouse, William (1644–1708).” *Global Anabaptist and Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*: <[https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Rittenhouse,_William_\(1644-1708\)>](https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Rittenhouse,_William_(1644-1708)>); accessed 20 November 2018. Baker, Cathleen A. *From the Hand to the Machine. Nineteenth-*

Endpapers and beating

Once the sheets were sized, gathered, and folded into signatures, endleaves were created from two or three folded sheets of paper similar to the text to be sewn along with the text. Decorated endleaves were extremely rare in the American-bound pre-1850 books examined for this essay, though some endleaves were decorated later with colorful fraktur as seen in Fig. 61b.⁸⁰ Next, the gathered sections were well beaten. Beating, as discussed earlier, consolidated and smoothed the paper, driving air from the paper and reinforcing the folds, making the collated book more compact, and the technique was thoroughly covered in historic German bookbinding manuals. Beating was considered especially important for books with clasps, and almost every Swiss Anabaptist devotional book has clasps with a text block that measures thicker at the fore edge than the spine. German bookbinding manuals specified beating the spine of the text block more than the fore edge in order to ensure a compressible area at the fore edge that would provide enough tension for the clasps to engage and stay shut. Pressure applied to the spongy fore edge then released the clasp. Examples of text blocks beaten with more compression of the spine for proper clasp function are readily observed in Anabaptist devotional bindings; see Figs. 11 and 23c.^{81, 82, 83}

Sewing

American-bound Swiss Anabaptist books generally were sewn on substantial but not exaggerated raised supports before 1850. Figs. 9a–b and 10a–b. Early German bookbinding manuals seldom discussed sawing in cords or kettle stitches, and when the technique was suggested, it was for books covered in velvet or silk.⁸⁴ The number of supports varied on the books examined with four being typical on an octavo, four or five on quartos, and six on larger volumes. The supports were made from twisted vegetable fibers (linen or hemp) with a diameter before sewing of 3 to 4 mm.⁸⁵ Not enough books with visual access to sewing holes were observed to summarize how sewing holes were made, but slitting or piercing were the

Century American Paper and Mediums: Technologies, Materials, and Conservation. Ann Arbor, Mich.: The Legacy Press, 2010, 6–8.

80. Dreis, “Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Bookbindings,” 125–126. Dreis describes the endleaves she observed and notes that in some cases, the printing of the first and last section allowed for several blank pages that acted as endleaves.

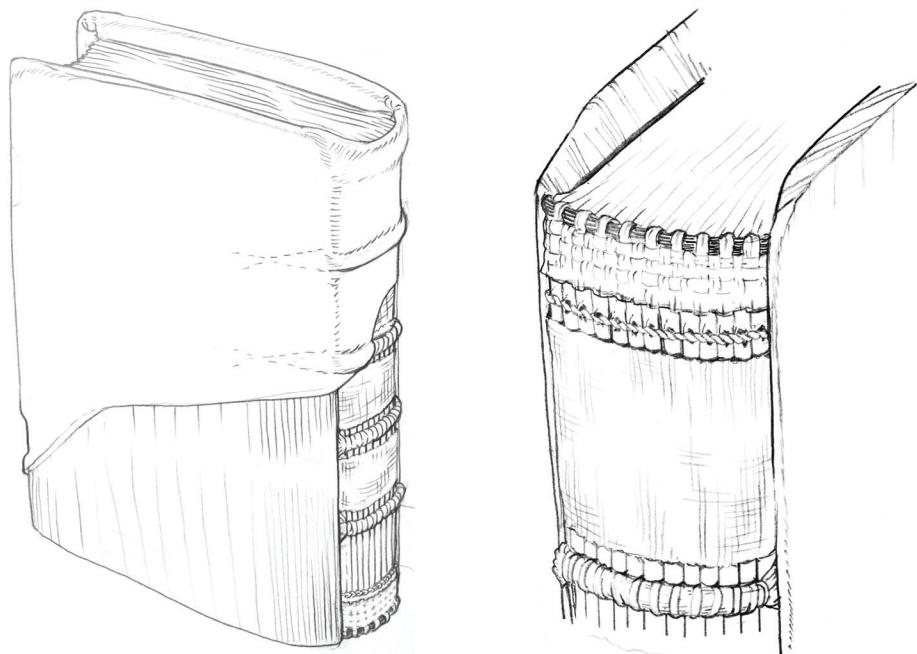
81. Foot, *Bookbinders at Work*, 49–51. Foot emphasizes that German bookbinding manuals are emphatic about the need to beat the text block well.

82. Peachey, “Beating, Rolling, and Pressing, 316–381.

83. For an excellent discussion in English of German bookbinding traditions as they relate to text-block treatment, browse this expansive website: Verheyen, Peter. “The Pressbengel Project: Exploring German Bookbinding Traditions”: <<http://pressbengel.blogspot.com/>>; accessed 14 October 2018.

84. Foot, *Bookbinders at Work*, 52.

85. Pickwoad, “Italian and French Sixteenth-Century Bookbindings,” 73–75. Note especially the German use of frayed-out bast fiber sewing supports to attach boards, starting in the mid-sixteenth century, discussed on p. 75.



Figs. 9a–b. Illustrations of typical bookbinding techniques seen on Swiss Anabaptist titles bound in America before 1850. Drawings show sewing on raised supports, transverse cloth spine linings adhered to inside of shaped wooden boards, sewing cords not laced but frayed and adhered to the inside of the boards, and prewoven endbands adhered at the head and tail. Original drawings by Wil Lin.

most likely methods, carrying on from the late Gothic tradition. While it can be difficult to see into the gutter of these often quite intact and solidly constructed volumes, the sewing thread seems to commonly have been two strands of slack S-twist linen with the strands between 25 to 18 gauge, as would be typical for books made before three-strand machine sewing thread was common.⁸⁶ The sewing pattern seemed to be all-along in a few cases, but more typically an abbreviated pattern like two-on sewing was used with two or more sections added to the frame for each pass of the sewing thread. An abbreviated pattern was arguably faster to complete. Perhaps more importantly, the spine did not gain as much swelling during the abbreviated sewing process, which allowed the binder to maintain a thicker fore edge for any text block destined to have clasps.⁸⁷

While single-cord supports were observed on many volumes, if the spine was exposed enough to reveal it, double supports sewn together as if they were a single support were also found. This practice was faster than circling thread around each of the two supports at

86. Szirmai, *Archaeology*, 181, 189–190. See p. 181 for a discussion of sewing holes, and 189–190 for discussion of thread.

87. Foot, *Bookbinders at Work*, 51–52.

Fig. 10a. Transverse cloth end-band support folded around a paper core the width of the spine with two-color front-bead pattern sewn in blue and white linen thread. The folded cloth overhangs the spine width, the flanges are adhered to the outside of the wooden boards. *Ausbund*, Germantown: Christoph Saur, 1742. 17 × 10.5 × 7.2 cm., octavo (Library Company of Philadelphia (LCP): Rare Am 1742 Ausbu 108381.O).

Below: Fig. 10b. Abbreviated sewing on raised supports created from bast fiber, transverse cloth spine linings adhered to outside of the boards, sewing support cords frayed out and adhered to inner faces of boards.



each sewing station, yet it maintained a well-defined spine profile and offered the combined strength of fibers from two supports for attaching the wooden boards adhesively or by lacing at each sewing station.^{88, 89, 90, 91}

88. Szirmai, *Archaeology*, 189.

89. Peachey, email to authors, 6 May 2014. Peachey wrote: "All the books that have been damaged I've seen have been sewn with two cords as one, and most often some kind of abbreviated sewing."

90. For details on a binding on an Anabaptist title, see Beck, Ervin and Jeffery S. Peachey. "Ausbund 1564: The History and Conservation of an Anabaptist Icon." *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage* 39, no. 4 (October 2016): 128–135.

91. For an in-depth discussion of various "short cut" sewing measures developed by bookbinders after the



Fig. 11. Example of a typical excellent text-block consolidation, ploughing, slightly curved wedge shape overall, lack of heavily backed shoulder, and blue-sprinkled edge coloring. Note prewoven endband loops surrounding the degraded and partially missing bundle of colored threads. *Ausbund*, 1751. 16.8 × 10.3 × 5.8 (spine) to 7 cm. (fore edge) (LWC: uncataloged).

TEXT-BLOCK SPINE ADHESIVE AND SPINE SHAPING

After sewing, the text-block spine was covered with adhesive. German binding manuals often specified animal glue for this consolidation step. The Swiss Anabaptist titles examined generally had a convex round shape at the spine, which developed in the Gothic period for printed works on paper in Western Europe.⁹² A round can be formed by hand or with tools like a hammer to distribute any “swell” or sponginess from the accumulation of spine folds and sewing thread into a rounded shape. Shaping wooden boards along the spine edges by beveling, combined with a moderately rounded spine, creates a distinctively integrated spine shape/board shape in the final book. Fig. 11; also Fig. 23c. The German manuals specified first rounding; then an adhered transverse cloth spine lining; backing after the spine linings are dry; and then ploughing before the boards were attached.

Spine linings

The typical spine linings observed on American Anabaptist titles were transverse cloth spine linings adhered between the sewing supports; see Figs. 10a–b. European bindings on Anabaptist

advent of the printing press, see: Pickwoad, Nicholas. “Onward and Downward: How Binders Coped with the Printing Press before 1800.” In *A Millennium of the Book: Production, Design & Illustration in Manuscript & Print 900–1900*. Ed. Robin Myers and Michael Harris, 75–78. Winchester, U.K.: St. Paul’s Bibliographies, 1994.

⁹² Szirmai, *Archaeology*, 192.

titles also used transverse cloth strip linings on the spine. Fig. 12. These linings were often made from a rather coarse cloth, occasionally an offcut dyed blue, that did not always fill the entire spine space between the cords. These transverse cloth spine linings extended 2 or 3 cm. beyond the spine on each side. The 1772 edition of the German manual by Prediger noted:

lining the spines of folio, quarto, or octavo volumes that will be bound in parchment or leather with linen. Using a glue that is warm and not too thick, apply to the entire spine making sure all areas receive glue. Then using the reverse (narrow) side of the backing hammer, rub the glue into the spine until smooth. Then re-glue and apply parchment or linen strips between the sewing supports, and finally brush on another layer of glue and rub down with a bone folder.⁹³

The head or tail panels of the spine were not often given transverse cloth spine linings, since most German endbands involved a textile element that served a spine lining function.⁹⁴

Backing

German manuals called for backing to be completed after the spine lining had dried completely. One manual described using backing boards held in a lying press for the backing process, and again the manuals specified that a text block that would have wooden boards, clasps, and other metal furniture attached at a later date should be backed so the fore edge of the text was thicker than the spine edge. Backing after the spine had been fully lined with textile could have affected the angle of the shoulder, and most of the pre-1850 Swiss Anabaptist books the authors observed had rather minimal backing; see Figs. 11, 17, and 23c. A hammer would be helpful to form a shoulder on the rounded and lined text block, held under pressure in backing boards, though a hammer was not always explicitly specified in the German manuals. Later nineteenth-century Anabaptist devotionals were more clearly hammer backed with a shoulder approaching a 90° angle; see Fig. 61d.⁹⁵

Text-block cutting and edge coloring

The majority of the American- and European-bound books observed by the authors looked as though they had been ploughed, not trimmed with a draw knife; see Figs. 11, 17 and 23c. German manuals describe using a needle between the raised bands and the sewing thread

⁹³ Peter Verheyen, translation of Prediger, *Der Buchbinder*, 1:38–41 and email correspondence with the authors, 3 November 2018.

⁹⁴ Transverse cloth spine linings came rather late to European bookbinding but had a long history as a board attachment in eastern Christian bookbinding, for example, Byzantine and Armenian binding as described in Szirmai, *Archaeology*, 75 and 89.

⁹⁵ Peter Verheyen, translation, email correspondence with the authors, 4 November 2018. Translation of Greve, Ernst Wilhelm. *Hand- und Lehrbuch der Buchbinder- und Futteralmache-Kunst, Die Buchbindenkunst*. Vol. 1. Berlin: Maurer, 1823, 202.



Fig. 12. Endband sewn with a two-color front bead pattern over a cord held in a fold of transverse cloth with the flanges adhered to the outer face of the boards. *Die gantze Bibel*, Strassbourg: Simon Kürssner Cantzley-Buckdrucker, 1744, with ownership plate bearing the name of Jacob Baumgartner 1868. (Archive and Library of the Swiss Mennonite Conference (ALSMC): Corgémont, Switzerland (ANC/101/14).

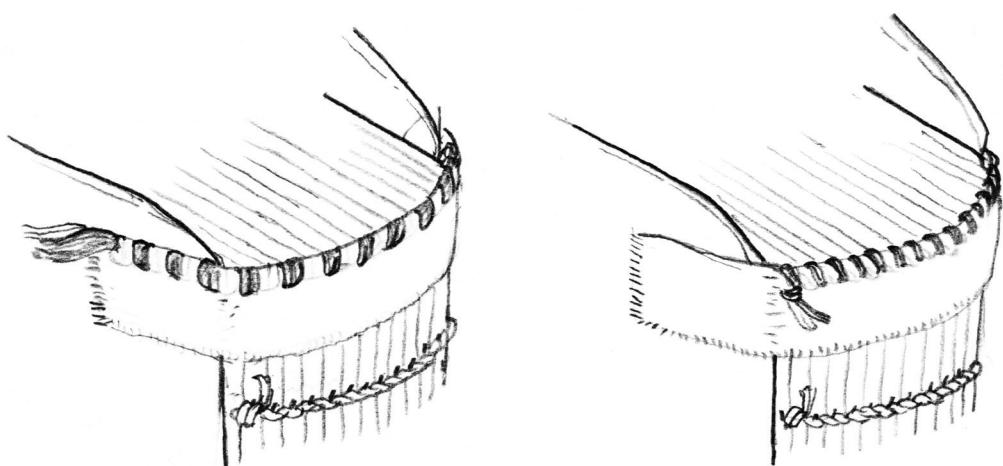


Fig. 13. Illustrations of variations of typical endbands sewn through a fold of cloth as seen on Swiss Anabaptist titles bound in America before 1850. Left: two-color front-bead endband sewn off the book on a strip of linen wider than the spine with flanges adhered onto the outside of the boards. Right: two-color front-bead endband sewn on the book on a strip of linen wider than the spine with flanges adhered onto the outside of the boards. Original drawings by Wil Lin.

to pull the spine flat before ploughing the fore edge.⁹⁶ Edge coloring was entirely typical in Swiss Anabaptist devotionals bound in America and in Europe with red being the most common color, followed by blue. The edge coloring ranged from overall color to medium or light sprinkle and was often badly faded; see Fig. 28c. Though it made sense to color the edges of the text at the time of ploughing, since the text was smooth and well compressed at that time, edge coloring for the American Anabaptist bindings was not always performed then. Some of the wooden boards where the leather covering was gone show splashes of the edge-coloring paint on the exposed squares, which meant the edge coloring was done after the boards were attached.^{97,98}

Endbands

Many German endbands from the later Gothic period to early modern times were some variation of the stuck-on type, attached to the spine of the text block with adhesive alone, without mechanically attaching the endband to the text block with thread tie-downs. The main support for the stuck-on endband could be parchment or cloth. The adhesively attached cloth or woven support endband was the type most often observed on American- and European-bound Anabaptist devotionals seen by the authors, and those endbands ranged from extremely tidy and careful to rather casually done. Any decorative sewing elements on the endband, such as a two-color front bead pattern, could have been worked with the cloth already adhered to the spine of the book, or the decorative thread patterns could be sewn onto a piece of cloth off the book and adhered to the spine later. Fig. 13. The stuck-on endbands could have a core stiffener within a fold of cloth, generally of twisted cord, or the stuck-on endband support material could be a simple fold of cloth with or without decorative sewing along the edge of the fold. German manuals indicated a stuck-on endband could overhang the width of the spine and be adhered to the inner or outer face of the boards, especially for folio volumes; see Figs. 3b and Fig. 12. The German practice of using a transverse stuck-on endband to reinforce board attachment is readily observed in American-bound Anabaptist books, as seen in Figs. 10a–b and Fig. 14, where the overhanging portion of the endbands is adhered on the outer face of the board and inner face of the board respectively.

A simpler form of stuck-on endband the authors observed consisted of cloth tape sewn on a tape loom. These tapes used as endbands often consisted of plain prewoven white threads with a bundle of colored threads making up the outermost warp on one or both sides. Figs. 15–16. This prewoven tape could be cut to the width of the text-block spine, or

96. Foot, *Bookbinders at Work*, 56.

97. Foot, *Bookbinders at Work*, 54–57. Foot notes that Germany and Holland binding manuals described trimming and decorating the edges of the text blocks before the boards are attached, unlike in English and French manuals that usually describe attaching the boards then trimming and decorating.

98. While Foot does not discuss text-block spine lining in her *Bookbinders at Work*, spine linings are discussed in German bookbinding manuals, as noted in Szirmai, *Archaeology*, 194–197. Szirmai finds one 1454 book among his Gothic sample set with a cloth spine lining and notes that Zeidler's 1708 bookbinding manual suggests cloth as an alternative text-block spine lining material instead of parchment.

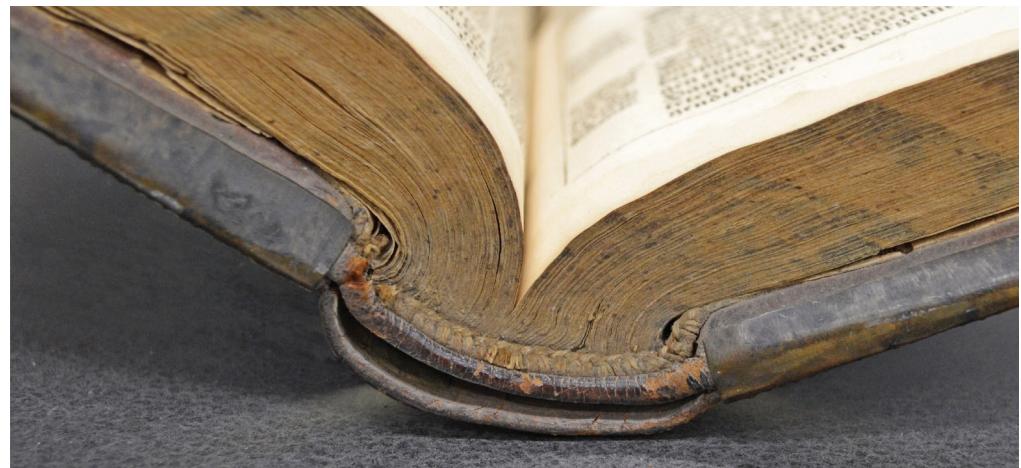


Fig. 14. Example of endband that is wider than the spine with an overhanging support adhered under the pastedown but over the leather turn-ins. Brägt, *Der Blutige Schau-Platz [Martyrs' Mirror]*, 1748. 37.5 × 23.5 × 5.5 cm. (Franklin & Marshall College (FMC): EPHRATA 1748 B889 BLU Part 1).

wider, and adhered to the spine. If a bundle of colored threads was set up as the outermost warp on both sides of a tape loom, then one span of prewoven endband could be split down the middle to produce two endbands.^{99, 100} The colored thread bundles caught loosely by the weft threads were attached along the text-block edge at the spine, and the prewoven tape endbands had no further linings before the leather covering was adhered. As the book was opened and closed in use these colored weft threads can work their way out of the weave, or over time the dyestuff used to color the bundle of weft threads exposed above the text block weakens the threads and they break and fall out due to degradation. Either way the colored bundle of warp threads sitting above the text block could work their way out of warp threads, leaving those warp thread loops empty. Empty or very loose white loops are a common sight under the headcaps of American bound Anabaptist devotionals with prewoven endbands. Fig. 17; see also Fig. 11. Loss of the colored thread elements typical of most endbands is a likely explanation for these “empty loops,” though the creation of deliberate large loops with the warp threads while weaving, intended to be exposed above the spine of the text block is certainly a possibility.

The tape looms used to make these prewoven endbands were a common accessory in North American colonial homes, which needed woven ties for clothing, closing bags,

99. The early history of German “stuck on” endbands in the Gothic period is well discussed by Szirmai, *Archaeology*, 214–216.

100. Pickwoad, “Onward and Downward,” 83–84. Pickwoad discusses the history of this style of endband, a style that was not always done as an economy. He identifies the use of loosely woven stuck-on endbands as starting in the 1750s and notes that by the end of the 18th century, “binders across Europe, with the sole exception of the British Isles, began to use stuck-on endbands.”



Fig. 15. Left: Endband weaving detail. A rigid heddle is used in a backstrap loom system to maintain tension, and raise and lower the shed so a shuttle with two threads can create the plain weave.

Fig. 16. Below: Example of two prewoven endbands made from one length of tape cut off the tape loom and split in half. Woven by the authors.



Fig. 17. Empty woven tape loops on the endband with original bundle of colored threads in the loops now mostly gone. *Ausbund*, Germantown: Christopher Sauer, 1751. 16.8 × 10.3 × 5.8 (spine) to 7 cm. (fore edge) (LWC: uncataloged).



holding up stockings, and edging for a variety of fabrics.¹⁰¹ Miller's *Books Will Speak Plain* has an excellent illustration of prewoven cloth tape used for endbands on an early eighteenth-century European German binding, and German craftspeople in colonial North America continued this tradition.^{102, 103}

Boards and board shaping

The use of wooden boards on the majority of Swiss Anabaptist devotional titles and books owned by Anabaptists is striking. This is especially true since Philadelphia was an area blessed with early papermaking mills and some binding historians have remarked on Philadelphia binders using more paperboards than other areas of the colonies.¹⁰⁴ Very few Anabaptist devotionals with paperboards were observed before 1850. Instead, many Swiss Anabaptist devotionals continued to be bound in carefully shaped wooden boards into the nineteenth century.¹⁰⁵

Why the choice of stout, quarter-sawn wooden boards? European Anabaptist devotionals brought to America, as discussed with the Herr House's *Auß Bundt* above, were usually bound with shaped wooden boards, so possibly later American board choice was based on tradition; see Figs. 3a–c. The use of clasps may have also guided the choice of thicker wooden boards. For text blocks given a wedge shape to make them narrower at the spine than at the fore edge, substantial wooden boards sustained the fore-edge pressure required to release and fasten a clasp. The nails required to fasten clasp hardware might have been easier to push through paperboards initially, since no predrilling of nail holes would have been required.

101. Weaver, Susan Faulkner. *Handwoven Tape: Understanding and Weaving Early American and Contemporary Tape*. Atglen, Penn.: Schiffer Publ., 2016, 14–41. This chapter gives an historic overview, and a section in this chapter describes weaving differences between English and Pennsylvania German communities with images of various loom types and the uses for cloth tape.

102. Miller, *Books Will Speak Plain*, Pl. A2.7, A2.7a–c. The plates show bookbinding details of a contemporary European parchment covering over stiff boards on a 1721 German-printed religious work. The 18th century, loosely woven endband was clearly woven on a tape loom in Europe. American tape loom endbands are similar.

103. Adam, Paul. *Practical Bookbinding*. London and New York: Scott, Greenwood & Co. and D. Van Nostrand Co., 1903, 81–82. This book describes what may be tape-loom-style woven endbands with colored threads on each side to make up the decorative pattern: "Woven endbands are now to be had so cheap that it is no longer necessary for the binder to make his own.... The band is cut along the middle for use; for the rest, it is cut into pieces according to the width of the book and then glued on the back."

104. French, Hannah D. "Early American Bookbinding by Hand, 1636–1820." In *Bookbinding in America: Three Essays*. Ed. Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt, 14. New York and London: R.R. Bowker Co., 1967.

105. *Bookbinding in America 1680–1910*, 47, 49, 54, 72–73. This exhibit catalog discusses four Pennsylvania German bindings before 1850 with paperboards. All are octavo or smaller. The earliest is 1754, the latest is 1820. The latest of the five wooden-board bindings included in the catalog is 1824. All the wooden-board bindings are on German texts.

But metal fastenings through paperboards might have required additional reinforcement on the inner face to keep them from becoming loose or tearing out with repeated use of the clasps. For Anabaptist owners who contemplated adding metal furnishings and spine straps to their devotionals at a later date, thicker quarter-sawn wooden boards were less prone to splitting when multiple nails were driven into drilled holes to secure each metal and strap element. Finally, for the board-shaping patterns observed, thicker wood boards were also a logical choice, as thin wood or typical paperboards would not offer the surface area to accommodate removing millimeters of board material at the spine edge to integrate the board and the text shape smoothly.

Perhaps the choice of thicker wooden boards was simply an expectation for Germanic Christian devotionals. As noted earlier, devotionals have their own family of bookbinding, and eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century German and Dutch bookbinding manuals continued to instruct the binder on the use of wooden boards for devotional bindings.

The boards the authors examined were typically quarter-sawn wood, though not always cut parallel to the spine. They could be as thin as 4 mm., and were often quite a bit thicker for folio volumes. The authors did not record the wood species or direction of the growth rings. German bookbinding technical descriptions discussed thinning the wooden boards more at the spine edge than the fore edge, and differences of as much as a 5 mm. between the spine edge and the fore edge have been observed in late-sixteenth-century German books.¹⁰⁶ While the authors of this study did not generally observe a 5 mm. difference, they did typically find the fore edges of wooden boards on American Anabaptist devotionals were left a few millimeters thicker than the spine edges.

Most Anabaptist devotional bindings with wooden boards had similar shaping, Fig. 18; see also Figs. 9a–b, 11, and 17. A pronounced inner bevel that was 45° and 4 or 5 mm. wide was created at the head, tail, and fore edge on the inner face of each board on most of the Swiss Anabaptist books examined. This bevel on the inner face of the boards removed half or more of the thickness of the board edge, and the start of the bevel generally aligned well with the edges of the text block in the examples the authors observed. Zeidler's 1708 bookbinding manual instructed binders that for ordinary wooden-board bindings, an inner bevel was sufficient board shaping, and this was certainly the most obvious element of the shaping on the inner face of the wooden boards the authors examined.¹⁰⁷ Additionally the inner face of the board had a narrow, steep inner bevel along the spine edge, though with the pastedowns in position, this spine bevel on the inner face is often difficult to see. The spine bevel on the inner face could have helped the board fit more closely into the shape of the text-block shoulder.

Outer board shaping consisted of removing wood one-quarter to one-third the width of the board at the spine edge in what seemed to be a conscious attempt to continue the rounded

106. Szirmai, *Archaeology*, 217. Szirmai mentions the manuals of Zeidler (1708), Faust (1612), Prediger (1741), and de Bray (1658) in his discussion of board growth rings and board thickness related to text-block shaping in the German tradition.

107. Szirmai, *Archaeology*, 222.



Fig. 18. Model of typical Anabaptist devotional board shaping, showing wood removed on the inner face of the board, creating an inner bevel starting at the text-block edge, a narrower inner bevel on the spine edge of the inner surface to fit into the text block shoulder. Wood was also removed on the outer face of the wooden board along the spine edge and fore edge.

shape of the spine as it transitioned to the boards, as well as perhaps to accommodate the bulk of future board-attachment elements. The result of the wooden board shaped to flow with the text block form can be very pleasing; see Figs. 11, 17, and 23c. On some American Anabaptist devotionals, the outer board face along the fore edge could have had wood removed as well. This outer face, fore-edge shaping resulted in a curved board with the middle of each board as the highest point.^{108, 109} Recesses were only occasionally formed in the wooden boards for clasp components prior to covering, and sometimes consisted only of notches just at the fore edges and not on the faces of the boards. For more on this, see the “Fastenings” section in this essay, p. 243; see Figs. 10a–b and 28a–d.

Back-cornering was long and gentle in pre-1800 Anabaptist bindings bound in America, when it can be observed at all, with a move toward a more English style of nicked-in caps and back-cornering on some later nineteenth-century books, and on any books that had been rebanded over the years.¹¹⁰ Seen in Fig. 58a, at the tail, near the cornerpiece, there is some wear

^{108.} Beck and Peachey, *Ausbund*, 131. The authors describe the board shaping of the likely American-bound 1564 Anabaptist title with the spine edge of the board planed down to a sixteenth of an inch when the outer and inner spine edge shaping are combined. Peachey notes that “The outer face of the boards was shaped to match the curve of the spine.”

^{109.} Peachey, email to authors, 6 May 2014. “There seems to be a conscious attempt to start the often 45 degree inner bevel at the edge of the textblock...some [board shapings] are very sophisticated, with elegant board edge proportions that match the headcaps.”

^{110.} Back-cornering: “The process of cutting away the corners at both head and tail of the spine edge of a board. This was to serve either of two purposes – to lower the height of the board either, if the squares were particularly wide, to the level of the endband, or, if there was no endband, to the level of the bookblock, or to accommodate the turn-in of the covering material. The shape of the back-cornering can vary widely. “Back-cornering.” Language of Bindings Thesaurus: <https://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/search?search_api_views_fulltext=back+corner>; accessed 20 July 2019.



Fig. 19. The most common board-attachment method using frayed and glued sewing cords on the inside face of the board. *Biblia*. Lebanon, Penn.: J. Schree, 1808. 17.8 × 11.3 × 5.5 cm. (spine) to 6.6 cm. (fore edge) (LMHS: BS 2825.3.M37 1808).

in the outer edge of the joint that corresponds to the slight back-cornering, as well as the very typical small tear in the leather covering at this point. Fig. 61d shows a more modern nicked-in shape for the leather at the joint, where the covering leather has been pushed down toward the text block where board material was removed by back-cornering. German bookbinding manuals specified completing all board shaping and removal of wood at the fore edge for clasp straps before attaching the wooden boards to the text.¹¹¹

Board attachment

The most typical board attachment in the Anabaptist devotionals bound in America, on both large and small books, was entirely adhesive. It involved fraying the sewing cords out and adhering them to the inside surface of the board, along with other layers consisting of the ends of the transverse cloth spine lining and endleaves serving as board pastedowns. Figs. 19–20. Attaching boards adhesively was not confined to Germanic binding tradition; it was common in English and early-American work overall, although it was often associated with cheaper bindings in English and American practice.¹¹² Lacing boards on mechanically by taking the sewing supports over the outer face of the board and through holes to the inside face of the board was a technique associated with the Gothic period, and lacing boards

^{111.} Foot, *Bookbinders at Work*, 54–59.

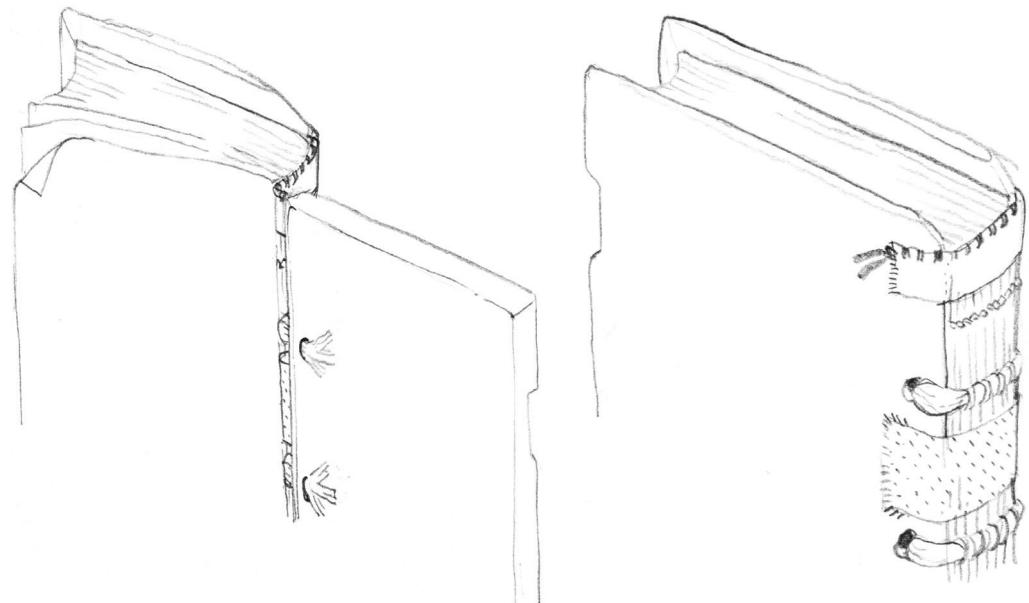
^{112.} This process of attaching boards to the text, one by one adhesively, with frayed cords and all or part of the endleaves is described in later English-language bookbinding texts, e.g., Cowie, George. *The Bookbinder’s Manual*. London: Cowie and Strange, 1828, 17–18. This method of board attachment was discussed as appropriate for cheaper bindings. Transverse cloth spine linings were not utilized for board attachment in these descriptions, which makes sense because English binders did not often line the spines of books. Germans sometimes adhered frayed sewing supports to the outer face of the boards as an attachment, as seen under the tawed skin covering in Fig. 7.



Fig. 20. Model showing typical American-bound Swiss Anabaptist devotional board-attachment layers on the inner face of the wooden board. The layers are frayed out overhanging sewing supports, transverse cloth spine linings, and a stub of the endleaf.



Fig. 21. Example of the least-common technique of board attachment for American Anabaptist devotionals. Large quarto-size German bible with five sewing supports, each laced through one hole in the wooden boards and frayed out on the inner surface of the board. The transverse cloth linings on spine were adhered to the inside of the boards. The Bible is Lutheran and has an English-style panel tooling pattern not usually seen on Swiss Anabaptist devotionals. *Biblia*, Germantown: Christoph Saur, 1763. 27 x 22 x 9.5 (spine) to 10 cm. (fore edge) (LCP: Rare Am 1763 Bible Ger 15361.Q).



Figs. 22a–b. Illustrations of laced board attachments seen on about 20% of Swiss Anabaptist devotionals bound in America before 1850. Folio volumes were more likely to have laced attachments. Cloth spine linings could be adhered to the inner or outer face of the board. Left: One-hole lacing pattern as seen from the inside with cords trimmed, frayed out, and adhered to the inner face of the board. Right: One-hole lacing pattern from the outside, with transverse cloth spine linings adhered to the outside of the board face. Original drawings by Wil Lin.

generally continued in this way in much of hand bookbinding practice.¹¹³ Only about twenty percent of the American-bound Anabaptist devotionals the authors observed had laced-on boards, and most of those were larger folio volumes. Figs. 21 and 22a–b.

For books with adhesively attached boards, the ends of the transverse cloth spine-lining strips were trimmed to 2 or 3 cm. wide and then adhered to the outermost endleaf. The overhanging cord sewing-support ends were unraveled, trimmed to a similar dimension as the transverse cloth spine-lining ends, frayed out, and adhered to the endleaf. More adhesive was applied to all the layers of material adhered to the endleaf, as well as to about one-third to one-quarter of the board's inner face. Finally, the boards were placed into position on the endleaf, the squares adjusted as needed, and the board-attachment layers left to dry under

¹¹³ Szirmai, *Archaeology*, 173–174. “The main typological feature of gothic bindings is that the slips of the sewing-supports enter the board over the beveled edge if the outer face.... The gothic wooden board binding continued to be used throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and even much longer for books intended for the church.”

pressure.^{114, 115, 116} In some examples, the profiles of coarsely woven textile, paper stub, and frayed cords were so clearly delineated under the pastedown that significant pressure must have been used as the board-attachment layer was drying.

Once the board-attachment layers had dried, any unadhered parts of the endleaf could be torn away, and the book covered in leather. The covering leather could be cut at the joints to allow a head and tail turn-in with this method of adhesive board attachment, though the binder could have also slit the board-attachment layers in the joint at the head and tail to allow the head and tail turn-ins to be completed without cutting the covering leather. If the ends of the transverse cloth stuck-on endbands were already adhered on the outer face of the board as part of the board attachment, the binder would certainly have made cuts in the covering material to complete the head and tail turn-in; see Figs. 10a–b. These cuts in the leather at the joint could be clearly seen in some of the books examined, but if made precisely and pulled into the right place when covering, the cuts can be very discreet; see Fig. 11.

Leather covering

The leather on Anabaptist devotionals in early America was medium- to dark-brown vegetable-tanned calf and was left rather thick compared to the thinner leather common on many European books of the same period; brown sheepskin was also common. Just a few pigskin-covered books were present in the Swiss Anabaptist collections, and these were often found on books bound in Europe.^{117, 118} Compared to the European-bound Anabaptist

^{114.} Adam, *Practical Bookbinding*, 85–91. This English translation of an 1898 German bookbinding manual discusses three ways of attaching boards: putting them on top of the frayed-out sewing supports if the shoulder is not too deep, fraying out the sewing supports on top of the boards if the shoulder is deep, and lacing the boards on with the sewing supports. He mentions that paste is preferred so the supports can be pressed more evenly into the boards. On p. 87, Adams notes that “the bands must be paste[d] so they radiate from the back without any tangle; a morsel of paste the size of a pea is laid on the band from underneath with the folder or point of a knife, the band smoothed down, and the thing is done.”

^{115.} De Vries, email message to authors and Jeffery S. Peachey, 14 August 2018. De Vries notes that the 1806 Hendrick de Haas, *De Boekbinder*, bookbinding manual specifies lacing the boards of folio Bibles, but for smaller octavo and duodecimo devotional books, the Dutch manual specifies thinner wooden boards attached to the text by fraying out the cords and adhering them to the boards.

^{116.} Miller, *Books Will Speak Plain*, 77–81. Miller discusses what she calls a “Late Eighteenth-Century Gothic” binding on a German text printed in Stuttgart in 1778. This book has several features seen in the Anabaptist titles the authors examined: a text sewn on double cords treated as one cord, using an abbreviated sewing pattern, stuck-on endbands, transverse cloth linings between the supports, wooden boards attached with the transverse cloth spine linings and frayed cords instead of laced-on supports, beveled inner board edges, a spine bevel on the outer edge, and clasps.

^{117.} [Miner], *History of Bookbinding*, 236–237. Entry 598 discusses a dark-brown, pigskin-covered binding on a 1748 Ephrata printed, folio-size *Martyrs' Mirror*. The description does not indicate if the pigskin was tanned or tawed.

^{118.} *Bookbinding in America 1680–1910*, 52–53. A description of a pigskin-covered Germantown folio bible. The description notes that the spine straps and metal work were added later. There are also

devotional, it does seem that the American-bound devotionals used thicker leather. The covering leather on the American-bound Anabaptist titles was only slightly pared along the edges of the turn-ins. The adhesive used in covering was not chemically tested but was likely paste or paste mixed with animal glue, based on tradition and observation.^{119, 120} It is known that there was a tannery at the Anabaptist-affiliated Ephrata Cloisters outside of Philadelphia, and certainly more research could be done in this area. The leather on these Anabaptist devotionals bound in America has generally lasted extremely well, which is a testament to high-quality processing.

The leather corners were often completed with a simple overlapping miter. As a result of frequently substantial squares and a typically low endband profile, the simple soft caps can sometimes dip noticeably lower than the boards at the head and tail and are rarely higher than the squares; see Figs. 1, 9a–b, 17, 42.¹²¹ Low soft caps make sense given the shape of the wooden boards near the cap, and the caps almost never have nicked-in areas at the back-cornering. The spine was usually tied up with cords on either side of the raised cords to ensure good adhesion of the covering leather. Tying-up cord marks were also sometimes seen near the head and tail caps on the spine leather, evidence the binder wished to ensure adhesion of the covering material in those areas as well. Fig. 23b. The turn-ins were generally not trimmed out, and average from one to 2.5 cm. wide. Once the covering material was dry, a one- or two-layer pastedown was adhered with the books usually opening to the sewing in the endleaf section.¹²²

Leather staining, blind and gold tooling, and titling

Leather staining as a decorative technique was fairly rare in the books that dated before 1850 but was observed on some volumes. Gold tooling was even rarer but was observed on non-Anabaptist titles owned by Anabaptists, and on later nineteenth-century bindings; see Figs. 8b–c and 61c. Spine labels or titles on the covering material in other locations were rare, and when seen were often added later based on the examination of the label materials used.

descriptions on pp. 47, 49, 74, and 78 of a variety of Pennsylvania German books bound using techniques described in this essay. Each description includes a black and white photograph.

^{119.} Haverstick, Tony. “Pennsylvania German Bookbinding and Anabaptist Bookbinders: 1700–1840.” *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage* 23, no. 3 (July 2000): 8–9. Haverstick discusses the heavier skins and minimally pared turn-ins typical on these books.

^{120.} Szirmai, *Archaeology*, 228. Szirmai confirms the supposition of paste as a covering adhesive used with leather, but he also notes that “Yet one of the earliest recipes for adhesives (Faust 1612 p. 81 ff.), contains a mixture of paste from rye flour with animal glue.”

^{121.} Peachey, email to authors, 6 May, 2014. Peachey notes: “Headcaps often very German looking, minimal shaping or excess material worked. Sometimes very beautiful integration with the spine straps, they can visually merge.”

^{122.} Haverstick, Tony, interviewed by telephone by Consuela Metzger, 6 July 2018. Haverstick notes that many of the pastedowns he has encountered when restoring pre-1850 Anabaptist materials were well glued with what he thought was animal glue, making them tough to lift during restoration.



Figs. 23a–d. Features of a plain binding, typical of those observed on the majority of the Anabaptist titles bound in America. Top, left: Typical blind lines along the board edges with a second double line approximately a centimeter away from the first tooled double line on the spine edge of the board. Top, right: Typical spine tooling pattern. Slack twist cord tying up marks on either side of the supports with single blind lines outside the cord marks and near the head and tail of the spine. Above: Typical well-beaten text block, beaten more at the spine

than the fore edge, edges colored red (now faded). Above, right: Back board showing tooling and inserted clasp hardware for clasp straps. *Auß Bundt*, Germantown: Christopher Sauer, 1785. 17.3 × 11.2 × 5 (spine) to 6.3 cm. (fore edge) (LMHS: BV 481.M4.A8 1785 c.1).

Blind- or gold-tooled initials and dates were often seen on the covers of European books in the early modern period, but in the American-bound Anabaptist titles examined, no blind or gold tooling was used to indicate any date or initials on the covers of the books.^{123, 124} When date and initial information was found on the Anabaptist titles, it was incorporated in the metalwork, and this is covered later.

Blind-tooled lines were a constant, and every book had at least some lines executed with relative precision. Single- or double-blind lines were often seen on each side of the raised cords on the spine, as well as near the caps on the spine and along the outer edges of the boards. Figs. 23a–b, d. It was not always clear if a heated tool was used, or if a cold (unheated) tool was used on damp leather. There were exceptions to the plain-style blind-tooled pattern in American-bound Anabaptist devotional materials, as seen in the far more decorative blind tooling on a 1742 Christopher Sauer-printed *Auß Bundt*. Fig. 24. When the occasional frame of wide ornamental blind rolls was used in American Anabaptist bindings, the effect is very close to what one author describes as “seventeenth century German Protestant binding, itself not far removed from medieval work”; see Fig. 5a.¹²⁵ Wide floral blind-tooled rolls are clearly seen under the metal attachments of European Anabaptist bindings seen in American Anabaptist collections; see Figs. 47b, 54a, 55a.^{126, 127}

¹²³ “A copy of the printed work ‘Emblematæ Andreæ Alciati, Antwerp, 1565 BL Add Ms 17488.’ British Library Database of Bookbindings: <<https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/bookbindings/LargeImage.aspx?RecordId=020-000017646&ImageId=ImageId=56644&Copyright=BL>>; accessed 28 October 2018.

¹²⁴ Szirmai, *Archaeology*, 276. Shows a 1599 Tübingen manuscript with a date tooled on front cover.

¹²⁵ [Miner], *History of Bookbinding*, 236.

¹²⁶ [Miner], *History of Bookbinding*, 236. Miner describes two of these panel styles found on American-bound Anabaptist devotionals in entries 598 and 599.

¹²⁷ While the term “German Protestant Binding” is not a typical bookbinding-style description, some bookbinding sources come close to using it. One example is the style term: “Protestant Reformers.” British Library Database of Bookbinding: <<https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/bookbindings/>>; accessed



Fig. 24. A rare example of elaborate blind tooling on an American-bound Swiss Anabaptist title. *Ausbund*, Germanton: Christopher Saur, 1742. 16.5 × 11 × 8 cm. (FMC: Germantown 1742.S255AU).

The Christopher Sauer printed binding discussed earlier with its plain-style blind tooling, demonstrates the most common tooling pattern the authors observed – double-blind lines on the edges of the boards and on each side of the raised bands and an extra set of double-blind lines about 1 cm. away from the spine edge of the front and back board; see Figs. 23a–b, d. Willman Spawn noted that this simple blind-line pattern associated with Sauer bindings was influential in the Philadelphia area beyond the Anabaptists and the Germantown community:

The Pennsylvania Germans came to the New World from a culture where bookbindings were solid, sturdy and authoritative in appearance, decorated in blind with wide floral rolls and geometric patterns. The very earliest Pennsylvania German bindings were so decorated, but then there came a total about-face in the late 1730s. The decorative rolls totally disappeared from use and were replaced by single and double fillets; hand stamps disappeared as well. This was not a passing vogue or the influence of one man. Christopher Sauer is the best known practitioner of the style, but a number of other, later German binders used it as well. Even Franklin adopted it for some of his publications of general appeal.... This striking style, so very different from any in use anywhere in the Colonies, persisted into the nineteenth century.¹²⁸

While Spawn observed the influence of German plain-style blind tooling on English language titles bound in America in the eighteenth century around Philadelphia, it is worth questioning if Sauer was somehow influenced by a plain style popular in England one hundred years earlier, and common in simple early American binding. David Pearson carefully tracked the subtle changes in plain-style bindings in sixteenth-century England, documenting double-blind lines near all the board edges with an extra set of double lines set 1 cm. or more away from the spine edge of each board. However, between 1700 and 1730, Pearson noted a panel style had replaced “plain style” in English work for all but the cheapest sheepskin books in England. A panel-style, blind-tooled design was uncommon on the American-bound Swiss Anabaptist devotionals examined by the authors but was found to be fairly common on European-bound examples and non-Anabaptist titles bound in America; see Figs. 34, 36, and 47b.¹²⁹

The Sauer family was very influential in publishing and bookbinding in the early-American Anabaptist communities of Philadelphia, and their work is discussed in detail in a case study featured below. Not all Sauer bindings were bound by either Sauer I or II, however.

¹²⁸ August 2018. These books usually have an image of Luther on the cover with ornamental roll panels surrounding the portrait.

¹²⁹ Spawn, Willman. “The Evolution of American Bookbinding Styles in the Eighteenth Century,” *Bookbinding in America 1680–1910*, 34–35.

¹²⁹ Pearson, *English Bookbinding Styles*, 61, 69, 76.

The Sauer printing operation was large with other binders employed, as discussed in an exhibit catalog about Germantown. The catalog describes the binding of a 1753 Quaker catechism not published by Sauer but bound in a Sauer shop:

The binding on this Quaker catechism has a double-filleted border with a second double fillet along the left edge of the top cover; this tooling is characteristic of the bindings of Christopher Sauer II. Peter Leibert took over the bindery when Sauer succeeded his father in the printing business in 1756. Leibert’s bindings are indistinguishable from his mentor’s except by their date.¹³⁰

Plain-style blind-tooled lines can be seen under the added metal work and spine straps of many Anabaptist devotionals, both those bound in America and in Europe; see Figs. 10a, 25, 41, 44a.

SUMMARY OF BINDING TECHNIQUES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO ANABAPTIST METAL FEATURES

The basic structural bookbinding techniques and blind tooling observed on devotionals the authors studied cannot be described as exclusively Swiss Anabaptist per se. The bookbinding techniques employed by these people were common to Germanic devotionals of the period. The books do not just look German from the outside, they were built with fully Germanic techniques, though this changed as the nineteenth century progressed and other book-production methods took hold. This does not mean that the books were not special to the Anabaptist communities in question as artifacts of their religious life, however. The Anabaptists in America deliberately chose binders with German training for their devotionals, despite the option of English techniques prevalent in colonial America. Perhaps the German binding shops gave them a better price, but economizing by taking shortcuts with fundamental time-consuming binding techniques – careful beating to consolidate the paper before sewing, strong sewing, carefully lined spines, and deliberately shaped wooden boards with clasps – was not seen in the collections the authors examined. Even for these plain books with no added spine straps or metal work that might signify a more deliberate Swiss Anabaptist identity, the high level of craft skill employed in the volumes’ construction, with no apparent economizing for different price levels, stands out in eighteenth-century American collections.

We have seen that an estimated twenty percent of American Swiss Anabaptists did elect to add metal furniture and very distinctive spine straps to their devotionals, no matter how small the format. The underlying structural binding foundation of these books facilitated these later additions. In general, nailing on substantial metal furniture and spine straps to thin wooden scaleboards and most of the rather flexible eighteenth-century paperboards, found on many English-style bindings, could be technically problematic. Eventually one begins to see these pre-1850 American-bound Anabaptist devotionals, with their thicker

¹³⁰ Germantown and the Germans, 94.



Fig. 25. *Ausbund*, Germanton: Christopher Saur, 1751. 16.8 × 10.3 × 5.8 (spine) to 7 cm. (fore edge) (LWC: uncataloged).

Fig. 26. Dutch Protestant New Testament represented in Franz Hals' *Portrait of Maritge Claesdr. Vooght*, painted in 1639. 128 × 94.5 cm. (Rijksmuseum: # SK-C-13; CCO 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication).



larger family of devotional binding styles – an American-bound Swiss Anabaptist devotional binding can be visually compared to a Dutch image of an elegant Protestant devotional. Figs. 25–26; see also Fig. 24.¹³³ These two books – Figs. 24 and 25 – are recognizably part of the same family of craft traditions, united by metalwork and by Protestant faith. This metalwork is addressed in the next section of the essay.

wooden boards and substantial structure, as essentially ready for the heavy religious use they were intended for and ready for the more distinctly Swiss Anabaptist metalwork and spine straps if and when the owner decided to add them.

Looking at bookbindings in primarily Mennonite or Amish communities can make the viewer simplistically assume that the bindings are distinctive and removed from the mainstream, just as the communities who produced them are sectarian and separatist in nature. Applying that view to Swiss Anabaptists in Pennsylvania before 1850 would cut these books off from the thriving community of Germans who published and bound these books, and who deeply shaped the city of Philadelphia and the region. While German speakers were a minority population in early America writ large, their considerable influence in Pennsylvania is reflected today in the many Germanic-bound books that document the region's cultural history.¹³¹ The Swiss Anabaptist devotionals bound in America were linked to a very early and ambitious German language new-world printing enterprise that was originally tied in every way to political and religious ferment in Europe.¹³² Anabaptist titles bound in America were also linked to a

¹³¹ Fogleman, *Hopeful Journeys*, 6–8.

¹³² Roeber, A. Gregg. "German and Dutch Books and Printing." In *A History of the Book in America*. Vol. 1: *The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press,

METALWORKING: THE WESTERN-EUROPEAN AND COLONIAL-AMERICAN CONTEXT
Since the late middle ages, German craftsmen specialized in working with brass, and they transmitted their skills throughout Western Europe in the succeeding centuries.¹³⁴ By the time Swiss Anabaptists were immigrating to North America via England in the seventeenth century, metalworking skills were well-developed in England, as well, and had a significant influence on colonial metalworking practice. Upon arrival, English and Continental settlers faced difficulty in developing copper and brass industries, in part because of their failures in mining zinc and copper ore and because of English restrictions on colonial metal sales and production. Sheet copper was not produced in the colonies until after the Revolutionary War when water-driven rollers were imported from England and copper ingots were able to be drawn down to usable sheets.¹³⁵ In 1771, twelve tons of copper, mostly in the form of sheets,

American Antiquarian Society, 2007, 302–313.

¹³³ Storm van Leeuwen, Jan. "Bookbindings: Their Depictions, Their Owners and Their Contents." In *Eloquent Witness: Bookbindings and Their History*. Ed. Mirjam M. Foot, 30–34. London and New Castle, Del.: Bibliographical Society, British Library, Oak Knoll Press, 2004.

¹³⁴ Schiffer, Peter Berwind, Nancy Schiffer et al. *The Brass Book: American, English, and European, Fifteenth Century through 1850*. Exton, Penn.: Schiffer Publ., 1978, 16.

¹³⁵ Shöpf, Johann David. *Travels in the Confederation*. Vol. I. Trans. Alfred J. Morrison. Philadelphia: W.J. Campbell, 1911, 27.

and twenty-nine tons of brass were listed as imported into the northern colonies that year. Copper sheet was used to sheathe ships and for vessels used in the distillation of alcohol, and it is believed that this sheet copper was recycled in the colonies as well.¹³⁶

The colonists remained fairly dependent on English copper and brass up through the late-eighteenth century.¹³⁷ Colonial iron-working operations were much more ubiquitous and successful from an early date. Bog iron was smelted using charcoal made from the plentiful North American hardwoods as early as the 1640s and continued from that point forward.¹³⁸ Saugus Ironworks was founded in Massachusetts in 1645, and by the 1700s, ironwork was present in almost every colony, dispersed across townships.¹³⁹ In a 1774 Philadelphia tax list, fifty-two master metalsmiths were recorded, most of whom were blacksmiths.¹⁴⁰ Post-Revolutionary War iron production grew exponentially and was concentrated in Pennsylvania with as many as seventy new iron firms opening during the last decade of the eighteenth century.¹⁴¹

The Pennsylvania Germans could obtain nails and other iron hardware from blacksmiths in Philadelphia or in local townships.¹⁴² Alternatively, farmers in rural areas would fashion nails themselves, using strips of copper or iron obtained from slitting mills.

The first major wave of Swiss Anabaptists to immigrate to Pennsylvania in the early 1700s may have read German accounts from travelers who preceded them, such as Daniel Falckner, who traveled to Pennsylvania in 1699, and chronicled his journey in the book *Curieuse Nachricht von Pennsylvania*.¹⁴³ Falckner suggested selling most family housewares prior to leaving for America but recommended that copper kettles, iron pots, broad axes, and heating stoves to distill fruit and grains be brought from Germany.¹⁴⁴ When not fashioned from recycled items, copper and brass kitchen- and housewares were imported and could be purchased in Philadelphia. Blacksmiths, weavers, and other craftspeople produced goods that could be purchased in Germantown from an early date. Books such as the *Ausbund* were imported and sold in Germantown, and later were produced there.¹⁴⁵

136. Mulholland, James A. *A History of Metals in Colonial America*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1981, 92–93.

137. Mulholland, *History of Metals*, 92.

138. Paskoff, Paul F., ed. *Iron and Steel in the Nineteenth Century*. New York: Facts on File, 1989, 84.

139. Lathrop, William Gilbert. *The Brass Industry in the United States: A Study of the Origin and Development of the Brass Industry in the Naugatuck Valley and Its Subsequent Extension over the Nation*. Mount Carmel, Conn.: William Lathrop, 1926, 22.

140. Paskoff, *Iron and Steel*, xv.

141. Mulholland, *History of Metals*, 78.

142. Paskoff, *Iron and Steel*, xv.

143. Friesen, *Modest Mennonite Home*, 43.

144. Falckner, Daniel. *Curieuse Nachricht von Pennsylvania in Norden-America, welche auf Begehrungen guter Freunde*. Frankfurt and Leipzig: 1702. Reprinted in *Proceedings and Addresses of the Pennsylvania German Society XIV* (1905): 5–256.

145. Friesen, *Modest Mennonite Home*, 26–27.

146. Friesen, *Modest Mennonite Home*, 55.

Attachments

Metal attachments are some of the most distinctive features on Swiss Anabaptist bookbindings in Pennsylvania. The following sections consider the various attachments encountered in collections of these bindings.

Fastenings

For fastenings and furniture terminology, the authors looked to J.A. Szirmai and to the Language of Bindings Thesaurus.^{147, 148} Generally speaking, almost all bindings had clasps at one time, even on some of the latest examples examined from the latter half of the nineteenth century. The clasps on American Anabaptist bindings were remarkably consistent, as can be seen from the series of 1751 *Ausbunds* printed in Germantown and held at Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society. Fig. 27. They display simple brass hook-clasps that fasten on the front board, consistent with the German tradition. The clasps feature undecorated catch plates, botanically inspired hasps, and simple strap anchors; see Figs. 27 and 28a–d. This style is represented on perhaps eighty to ninety percent of the American Anabaptist imprints with extant clasps examined for this study.

Catch plates are brass and folded over the fore edge of the board, what Szirmai referred to as “bent slot,” with the slot having been either cut or filed.¹⁴⁹ Alternately, the catch plates wrap around an iron pin. The sharp corners of the plates are typically beveled, and then they are inserted through a slit in the leather covering at the fore edge. Or occasionally, the plates are placed on top of the leather on the front board and held in place with a single, large iron nail. The leather straps for the clasps appear to have been wrapped around a core, typically vellum, as can be seen on the examples in Fig. 27. As with catch plates, the straps were often slipped under the leather on the back board and attached in place with a single iron nail, or occasionally with a plain brass anchor plate and smaller brass tacks.

Frequently, notches were shaped into the fore edges of the wooden boards before covering to accommodate the straps and catch plates. However, the faces of the boards were not always cut or chiseled to recess components, causing the catch plates and straps to sit proud on top of the boards. Hasps were formed from pieces of brass, forged into a wide, thin taper at the strap end, and sandwiching and attaching the leather straps to the hasp with three brass or iron rivets and with a rough cut, thin iron back plate.

Furniture

Apart from fastenings, for the portion of Swiss Anabaptist bindings with additional metal attachments, the furniture is abundant on both European and American examples. They take the form of centerpieces, as well as cornerpieces or edge strips, all fashioned from sheet metal rather than cast. The sturdy wooden boards are riddled with fasteners from all of the pieces

147. Szirmai, *Archaeology*.

148. Language of Bindings Thesaurus: <<http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/>>; accessed 11 July 2018.

149. Szirmai. *Archaeology*, 252.



Fig. 27. Collection of 1751 *Ausbunds*, printed by Christopher Sauer in Germantown (LMHS: BV481.M4 A8 1751 c.1–5).

attached, yet they hold up well. Anabaptist book furniture is often decorated with raised bosses and linear punchwork designs. In most instances, the punchwork does not pierce the sheet but was worked from the back of the sheet (before attachment to the binding) with fine punches, likely while using a material, such as lead or pitch, to support the work from the front. A smaller percentage of examples, perhaps fifteen percent of those examined, have recessed punchwork that was worked from the front of the sheet.¹⁵⁰

European examples are set apart from colonial bindings by their elaborately blind-tooled covers and typically more sophisticated yellow-brass furniture. The book furniture on European bindings is often decorated with very fine linear punchwork, or more rarely, with specially shaped punches, such as stars, applied with skill around the perimeter and sometimes in the body of each piece; see Figs. 36, 46a–c, and 47a–b. It should be noted that there is one style of Swiss Anabaptist binding, described by Luthy in particular and referred to as the “Jura style” colloquially by custodians, with punched brass edge strips and dated and initialed centerpieces that was very distinct and uniform in production; see Figs. 50, 51a–c, 52a–b, 53, 54a, and 57c.^{151, 152} A later case study explores this style in depth, and

^{150.} LoB uses the term “furniture”; Szirmai uses the term “furnishings”; and Etherington and Roberts do not provide an overarching term for metal attachments to bookbindings. “Furniture (components).” Language of Bindings Thesaurus: <<https://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/1353>>; accessed 30 July 2019; Szirmai, *Archaeology*, 263; Etherington and Roberts, *Bookbinding*: <<https://cool.conservation-us.org/don/>>; accessed 30 July 2019.

^{151.} Luthy, “Metal Initial and Date Plates,” 2–14.

^{152.} Springer, email to authors, 13 December 2017.

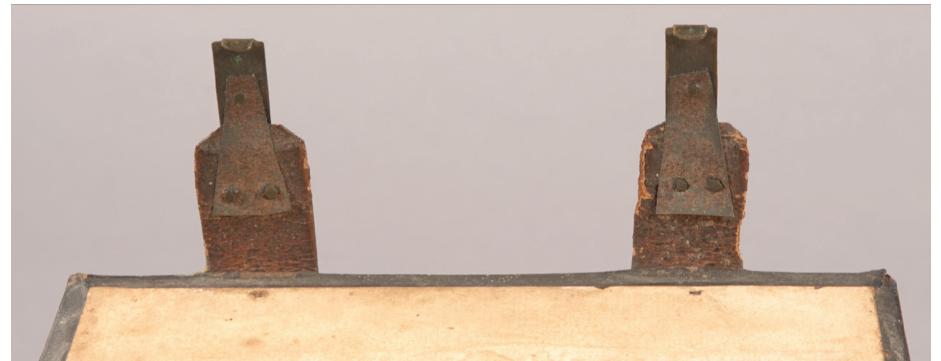


Fig. 28a. Detail of the thin, rough-cut iron back plates used to attach hasps to straps on typical American Anabaptist binding clasps. *Ausbund*. Germantaun: Gedruckt, bey Leibert und Billmeyer, 1785 (courtesy David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University (DUL): BV481.M4 A8 1785 c.1).



Figs. 28b–d. Details of clasp components of American Anabaptist bookbindings.

Table 1 enumerates the differences between Jura, European (more generally), and American Anabaptist book furniture.

Book furniture on American examples is highly varied, making it difficult to describe generally. Yet the pieces examined for this study can usefully be placed into a few broad categories: mass-produced examples, finely made one-offs, and more homemade pieces. Some pieces were clearly mass produced, likely in Europe, judging from their sophistication. The cornerpieces found on *Biblia, das ist...* at Muddy Creek, and *Martyrs' Mirror* at the Moravian Archives are good examples of this European style; see Figs. 5a–b and 6. These pieces appear to have been die-formed or stamped, perhaps with some type of fly press or drop hammer.

The mass production of brass furniture for bookbindings began as early as the fifteenth century in Germany with some pieces marketed as “Nuremberg wares” because of the association with the city as an early center of production.¹⁵³ The mass-produced examples are yellow-brass pieces, some of them quite ornate and well-made, and mostly found on folio volumes. Furniture may have been transferred from earlier bindings, as this practice was fairly common generally, according to Szirmai, and there is some evidence of this on the *Biblia, das ist...*, discussed previously; see Figs. 5a–b.¹⁵⁴ The mass-produced examples are the type of furniture that could be found on any number of German folio volumes of the period and do not appear to be unique to the Anabaptists.

Cornerpieces on American imprints of the *Martyrs' Mirror* were often of a standard style as well, though some more individualized examples also exist. Fashioned from fairly heavy-gauge yellow-brass sheet, they were undecorated except for integrated raised bosses and beveled or scalloped cut edges. It seems possible that some of these were made in the community at Ephrata. An example from the Musselman Library in Bluffton, Ohio, displays such furniture. Fig. 29.

However, most American examples observed were not mass produced but are quite individualized and were made with a range of skill and finesse. Made from various sheet material, including that which was more easily sourced in the colonies, such as tinned-iron sheet, these pieces were cut, likely with shears or chisels, into simple geometric forms (squares, triangles, rectangles and diamonds) with raised or relief punchwork and integrated bosses, or attached with brass hardware that also served as a boss. A range of idiosyncratic book furniture is found on bindings of early Pennsylvanian Anabaptist imprints, as can be seen in Figs. 30a–b.

When not attached with large brass tacks that also doubled as bosses, furniture was attached with multiple, small copper cut nails or brass tacks. The pieces were often attached after endleaves were put down, with nails emerging through pastedowns. The sharp ends of longer nails were hammered over onto the inside face of the boards. Shorter fasteners were blunted with a hammer and spread (also termed “upset”) on the inside face of the boards, essentially locking the many fasteners in place with a very secure, rivet-like attachment. This

¹⁵³ Szirmai, *Archaeology*, 267.

¹⁵⁴ Szirmai, *Archaeology*, 263.



Fig. 29. The type of brass furniture often found on American *Martyrs' Mirror* volumes. File marks can be seen on the beveled, scalloped edges. Bracht. *Der Blutige Schau-Platz [Martyrs' Mirror]*, 1748 (photograph courtesy of Carrie Phillips, Bluffton University (BU): Rare Books MM 1748 c.2).

can be achieved by hammering short fasteners through pilot holes in metal furniture and wooden boards, while supporting the inside face of the open book board on a heavy, flat metal plate, such as on the face of an anvil. However, more evidence would be required to confirm that it was done this way historically. Edge strips and cornerpieces have extending flanges that are turned over and hammered over the inside, beveled edges at the head, tail, and fore edges, providing further protection for the wooden boards. Oftentimes, sharp corners of metal attachments were folded downwards towards the face of the board, causing them to dig into the leather covering, or inserted into slits in the leather, such as in Figs. 5a and 29, making them safer to run one's hands over.

While all European examples the authors examined have brass furniture, early American examples tend to have simpler, or more haphazard metalwork fashioned from sheet brass, copper, or tinned-iron, and cut into pieces often without any regard for uniformity. The colonial copper pieces observed were fairly rough looking and perhaps were fashioned from reused copper sheet. All of the bindings examined with copper furniture were Pennsylvanian, and the copper sheet had been treated with a pinkish enamel-like coating, a sort of japanning. Fig. 31. This coating was likely formed from a mixture of naturally occurring resins and colorants, applied in an oil-based varnish, and heated to form the protective layer.¹⁵⁵ Since heat was used to produce the treatment, metal pieces would have been japanned prior to their

¹⁵⁵ Webb, Marianne. *Lacquer: Technology and Conservation. A Comprehensive Guide to the Technology and Conservation of Both Asian and European Lacquer*. Oxford and Woburn, Mass.: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2000, 114.



Figs. 30a–b. The front and back covers of a collection of American Anabaptist imprints, displaying metal furniture typical of early Anabaptist bookbindings. From left to right, the metalwork comprised of copper, brass, iron, copper, brass, and iron. Some pieces are decorated with fine punchwork and others are left plain. Imprints from left to right: *Ausbund*, 1742 (MCFL: E #11860.0); *Ausbund*, 1731 (MCFL: #11862.08); *Ausbund* 1751 (LWC: uncataloged); *Ausbund* 1751 (MCFL: #11862.15); Jan Philipsen Schabaelje, *Die wandlende Seele*, 1805 (MCFL: #11734.0).

Fig. 31. Detail, displaying copper cornerpieces treated with an enamel-like coating. *Ausbund*, 1751. 16.8 × 10.3 × 5.8 (spine) to 7 cm. (fore edge) (LWC: uncataloged).

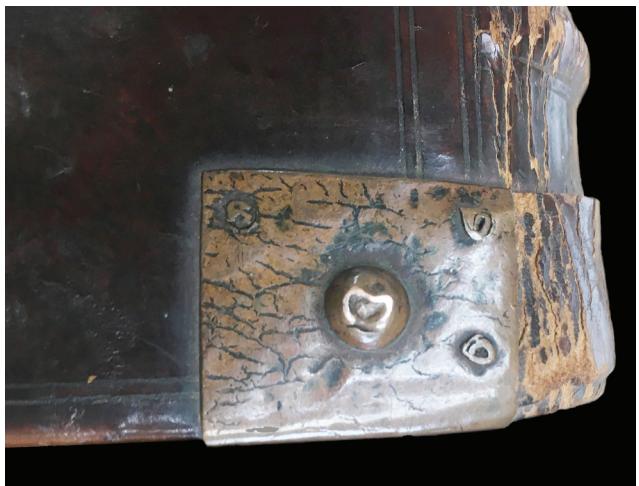


Fig. 32. Selection of American bindings with copper metalwork. Left to right: de Saint George Marsay, Charles Hector. *Zeugniss eines Kindes*, Libanon: J. Schnee, 1808 (LMHS: BS 2825.3.M37 1808); *Ausbund*, Germantown: 1742 (LMHS: BV 481.M4.A8 1742 c.5); *Aufsbundt*, n.p.: 17—, likely a German imprint (LMHS: BV481.M4.A8 1700zf).

attachment to bindings. A nicely proportioned binding at Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society exhibits triangular copper corners with integral raised bosses, brass clasps, and two copper-studded spine straps. The text was printed in Lebanon in 1808, and to the copper centerpiece is applied with fine punchwork the initials “F.L.” for the owner, Mennonite-United Brethren minister Felix Light (1767–1841) also from Lebanon county. Figs. 32–33.

Comparing the book furniture on early American and European Anabaptist bindings makes evident that styles were being replicated in the new world with the most obvious



Fig. 33. *Zeugniss eines Kindes von der Richtigkeit der Wege des Geistes*, 1808 (LMHS: BS 2825,3.M37 1808).



Figs. 34. European binding. *Auss Bundt*, n.p.: 1784 (Münstergasse Library, Universitätsbibliothek Bern (ML/UB): UB MUE Hx190 b).



Fig. 35. American binding, lower cover. Schabale, Johann Phillip. *Die wandlende Seel*, Germantaun: Michael Billmayer, 1805 (MCFL: #11734.0).



Fig. 36. European binding, lower cover. Sulzberger, Johann U. and Ambrosius Lobwasser. *Transponiertes Psalmen-Buch*, Bern, 1714 (ALSMC: ANC/101/37). See Fig. 40 for image of the five studded spine straps on this book.

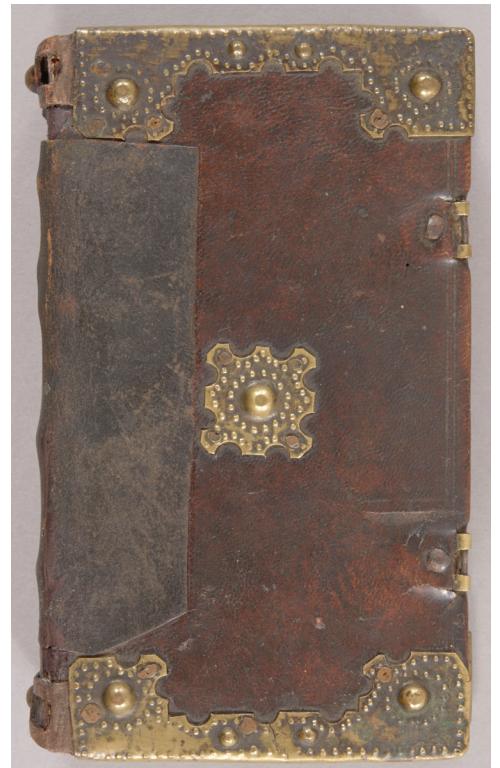


Fig. 37. American binding with a later spine repair, showing two studded leather spine straps, and punched centerpieces and edge strips. Schabaelje, Jan Philipsz and Berhart B. Brechbill. *Die wandlende Seel*, Germantown: Christoph Saur, 1768 (DUL: BX8125 .S33315 1768 c.1).

differences being the materials used and the level of craftsmanship. Figs. 34–37. Some of these handmade one-offs are plain and others decorated with punchwork; see Figs. 35, 37, and 41. Some pieces have scalloped edges that appear to have been cut with curved chisels or perhaps they were filed; see Fig. 37. Certain colonial examples do display a higher quality of workmanship than others with more elaborate designs produced with punchwork or edge decoration. These pieces were perhaps made by more skilled or specialized metalworkers, and in some cases, they appear to reference finer European examples more directly; see Figs. 34–37.

Date and initial plates

Another notable feature of many Swiss Anabaptist bindings is the attached date and initial plates. The dating and initialing of metalwork was not unique to the Jura style but was found consistently on that style of binding. Luthy noted, “as far as we can determine, the

personalization of volumes by attaching metal initial and date plates was rarely done on books other than for those for people of Swiss Anabaptist heritage – whether still residing in Switzerland or having migrated to Alsace-Lorraine, Montbéliard, the Palatinate, or various independent areas of what is today southern Germany.¹⁵⁶

Luthy's extensive research found that date and initial plates corresponded to Swiss Mennonite book ownership more than Amish ownership at a ratio of 2:1 from among the items he surveyed.¹⁵⁷ He found 161 bindings with date and initial plates, some of which are also examined in this essay. The date plates he examined cover a 171-year span, from 1709 to 1880, with the majority of the plates dating between 1750 and 1850.¹⁵⁸ Delbert Gratz and others have speculated that the dates corresponded most commonly to dates of baptism and that books would have been gifted to recipients by ministers, parents, or grandparents on the occasion of their adult baptism.^{159, 160} Luthy cited examples of date plates known to correspond with other life events, such as emigration to North America and date of ordination within the church.¹⁶¹

This tradition of affixing date and initial plates is intriguing because it can offer additional entry points into the study of any individual binding's provenance and may be generally indicative of the personal nature of ownership of these works. The practice of dating and signing artifacts, while not commonly found on English and other continental crafts, was quite common in the broader Pennsylvania German craft tradition.¹⁶² Initialing and dating occurred on all manner of Pennsylvania German craft production from furniture, trunks, and chests, to woven coverlets and frakturs (Pennsylvania German painted and decorated documents). Unlike English products, Pennsylvania German objects were more commonly signed for their owners rather than their makers.¹⁶³

On the bindings examined for this study, initials and dates were observed punched into edge strips and hasps on a few examples, but they were found most frequently on centerpieces attached to the front and back boards, respectively. This practice is not entirely unique in bookbinding history, as dates and initials are occasionally found stamped or engraved on metal book furniture, but only rarely.^{164, 165} Date plates have also been observed on Latvian bindings. Although the authors have not yet found a connection with Milevski and Villeruš's "Latvian

156. Luthy, *Our Amish Devotional Heritage*, 32.

157. Luthy "Metal Initial and Date Plates," 4.

158. Luthy, "Metal Initial and Date Plates," 3.

159. Gratz, Delbert L. *Bernese Anabaptists and Their American Descendants*. Studies in Mennonite History, no. 8. Scottdale, Penn.: Herald Press, 1953, 184.

160. Amos Hoover, interviewed by the authors, 4 May 2018.

161. Luthy, "Metal Initial and Date Plates," 3.

162. Schiffer, *Brass Book*, 20. Notes one in 1000 brass artifacts are typically signed.

163. Garvin, Beatrice B. and Charles E. Hummel. *The Pennsylvania Germans: A Celebration of Their Arts: 1683–1850*. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1982, 39.

164. Adler, Georg. *Handbuch Buchverschluss und Buchbeschlag*. Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2010, 57–59.

165. A more common, somewhat parallel practice was the stamping of coats of arms on covers to indicate ownership of armorial bindings.

Peasant Metal-Clad Bindings," they bear a strong resemblance to some Anabaptist works with their dated, punched metalwork cut into whimsical forms, and occasional apparent use of spine straps.¹⁶⁶ Strong visual similarities can easily be drawn between Latvian bindings and some European Anabaptist examples, such as the *Vierstimmiges Psalmbuch* pictured in Fig. 38.

Spine straps

Perhaps the most immediately notable feature of some Anabaptist bindings is the leather, all-metal, or studded-leather spine straps. These straps are fixed under the cornerpieces or edge strips at the head and tail, and bridge the spine without being adhered or affixed to it. While the majority of Anabaptist titles do not have spine straps, perhaps twenty percent do, and they also appear to have originally been associated with the Swiss Anabaptists.^{167, 168} Fig. 39. Spine straps are not associated with the Swiss bookbinding tradition more broadly.¹⁶⁹

Lawrence Wroth in *The Colonial Printer* hypothesized that the spine straps facilitated pulling the books from the shelf.¹⁷⁰ However, since they are fitted too tightly to be gripped with the fingers, this is unlikely. Tony Haverstick noted that Amos Hoover, a current Mennonite historian, has called spine straps "bumpers," which humorously highlights their protective properties. Haverstick has also heard them called "Kapitals."¹⁷¹ Luthy said of his institutional collection: "Heritage Historical Library has quite a few volumes with brass-studded spine straps, which was not a common European custom but confined primarily to books owned by Swiss Anabaptists (Mennonite and Amish)."¹⁷² The authors have seen images of studded spine straps on Hungarian and Latvian bindings, as well as images of slender silver chains across the spine on silver Armenian bindings, though it is not clear if anything unites these binding practices.¹⁷³

166. Milevski, Robert and Valdis Villerušs. "Reading the Bible, Preserving the Precious Text: Latvian Peasant Metal-Clad Bindings." *Library History* 24, no. 2 (June 2008): 128–142.

167. "Studded spine straps." Language of Bindings Thesaurus: <<http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/concept/3054>>; accessed 12 August 2018.

168. Peachey, *Ausbund* 1564, 131, describes an Anabaptist title sewn on three raised supports and incorporating four spine straps – one at the head, one at the tail, and then two nailed-in middle straps. He notes on p. 130 "Spine straps are possibly a uniquely Anabaptist feature."

169. Ulrike Bürger, Münstergrasse Library, email to authors, 10 November 2018. She states that "leather and metal spine straps on the Anabaptist bindings seem unique to me, too. I found single elements of the 'Anabaptist-decor' on other bindings. But especially noticeable is, that you find on the Anabaptist-bindings all the elements like studded spine straps, corner and centerpieces decorated with fine punchwork and/or initial plates."

170. Wroth, *Colonial Printer*, 211.

171. Tony Haverstick, interviewed by Consuela Metzger, 6 July 2018.

172. Luthy, "Metal Initial and Date Plates," 2.

173. Toth, Zsuzanna. *A Tot Kotosek*. Hungarian reference sent to Consuela Metzger as a scan by Nicholas Pickwoad in 2014. He said the reference, illustrating all-metal spine straps, seemed to have been self-published in Hungary. "Old Armenian Bible Covers." People of Ar: <<https://www.peopleofar.com/2017/06/07/old-armenian-bible-covers/>>; accessed July 23, 2019.



Fig. 38. This European binding, with its initial plate and heart-shaped catch plates, resembles bindings found in Villerušs and Milevski's study. Lobwasser, Ambrosius and Johann Ulrich Sulzberger. *Vierstimmiges Psalmbuch*, Bern: 1756 (ALSMC: ANC/101/56).



Fig. 39. Shelves of European, octavo-size Anabaptist works, illustrating prevalence of spine straps. Note that some bindings pictured here had spine straps at one point that are now missing (ALSMC).

Fig. 40. European binding; see lower cover of this book in Fig. 36.



Like clasps and metal book furniture, spine straps could be added at any time in the book's history, as described for *Biblia, das ist...*, pictured earlier in this essay; see Fig. 5a. When straps are present, there are at least two, one at the head and one at the tail. Two or three straps are most common. When there is one strap in the visual middle of the spine, then there were typically four or six raised supports, with the middle spine strap placed between the middle two raised bands. As many as five spine straps have been observed on a European duodecimo volume, with the thick leather spine straps lying on either side of the four raised sewing supports. Fig. 40.

There are a remarkable number of spine-strap variations. Most were made from leather carefully folded over a paper core, much the way many clasp straps were made. A much smaller percentage, approximately ten percent, were made from a single piece of rather thick leather with no core. For straps with a core, leather was cut into strips three times wider than the core, edge-pared, covered with adhesive, then folded around the paper. In most cases, the straps were pared at the ends and extend on either side of the spine 2–3 cm. for attachment.

Leather spine straps were often made from the same leather as the binding, indicating they may have been attached at the time of binding and perhaps with the other metalwork. But some were made from a contrasting white alum-tawed skin on bindings covered in tanned leather. Fig. 41. Others were fashioned from tanned skin and attached to (typically earlier) tawed pigskin bindings; see Fig. 5a. The straps could be adorned with metal in various ways, given blind-tooled lines along the edges or left plain. The authors have observed many more unadorned leather straps on American bindings than on European ones, generally with only two plain straps attached at the head and tail; see Fig. 41. Head- and tail-edge spine straps were typically brought over and nailed into the boards, and then the point of attachment was covered with metal edge strips or cornerpieces. If there were additional straps, the middle strap(s) were usually pushed through a slit in the covering leather and nailed into the wooden board with a brass nail and rivet or with a large tack or boss.

The authors encountered both mass-produced and handmade studs on the bindings examined for this study. On colonial examples, the handmade variety were individually fashioned from brass or copper sheet, with studs sunk into individual pieces, and the edges of the sheet mitered or cut to a point and inserted through slits in the leather spine straps.



Fig. 41. American Anabaptist bindings with plain leather spine straps. From left to right: *Ausbund*, 1751 (LWC: uncataloged); Schabalie, *Wandlende Seel*, 1805 (MCFL: #11734.0).

Figs. 42–43. The paper core of the strap helped to keep the studs from tearing through the leather. Alternately, the edges of the studs were wrapped around the exterior of the strap; the top and bottom edges were mitered and folded over toward each other onto the interior side of the strap, locking the studs in place. Figs. 44a–b.

The mass-produced studs are a butterfly-style with circular domed studs having two long, narrow brass prongs on the back side. Figs. 45a–b. The prongs were inserted through a single vertical slit in the leather and folded (typically outward) and across the interior side of the strap. These studs could have been drawn from stationers' wares or perhaps repurposed from another industry, such as clothing, luggage, or saddlery, but at the time of writing, the authors' attempts to locate additional uses of the studs on other Pennsylvania German housewares have been unsuccessful.

There are even spine straps that are chain-like and made entirely of metal, though these are less common and have only been observed on European bindings, particularly on Lobwasser hymnals like the one pictured below.¹⁷⁴ Figs. 46a–c. Even scarcer, large star-shaped studs have been found on two bindings of European origin. The star-shaped studded

¹⁷⁴ Title page missing; believed to be Lobwasser Hymnal printed before 1735.



Fig. 42. A selection of American bindings with copper-studded spine straps. From left to right: de Saint, *Zeugniss eines Kindes*, 1808 (LMHS: BS 2825.3.M37 1808); *Ausbund*, 1742 (LMHS: BV 481. M4.A8 1742 c.5); *Außbundt*, 17—, likely a German imprint (LMHS: BV481.M4.A8 1700zf).

Fig. 43. Spine strap made from tawed skin on a tanned-leather binding. Individually fashioned studs are made of brass and inserted through the leather strap. *Ausbund*, 1742 (HSP: AM 1742 Aus Ac 281).



spine straps mimic star-shaped stamps on metal furniture attached to the covers on the two examples observed.¹⁷⁵ Figs. 47a–b.

¹⁷⁵ ALSMC holds a copy of *Das gantz Neuw Testament grundtlich und wohl verteutschet nach hebreischer, griechischer und lateinischer Spraach*. Basel: Verlegung Hieron, Schwarzen Buchbinders, 1687, with star-shaped studded spine straps nearly identical to those on *Das Newue Testament...*, pictured in Fig. 47. (ALSMC call number unknown; item not pictured.)



Figs. 44a–b. Brass studs wrapped around spine strap and detail. *Ausbund*, Germantown: Christopher Sauer, 1785 (LCP: Am 1785 Aus 67419.O)



Figs. 45a–b. Example of butterfly-style brass studs on detached spine strap. Bracht, *Der Blutige Schau-Platz*, Ephrata, 1748 (LCP: Am 1748 Bra Log 1861.F).



Figs. 46a–c. Title page missing but appears to be a Lobwasser hymnal in a European binding with hasp stamped 1735. The binding had three chain-like, all metal spine straps originally. Sulzberger, Johann U. and Ambrosius Lobwasser. *Transponiertes Psalmenbuch*, Bern: Tschiffel, 1714 (ALSMC: ANC/101/37).



Figs. 47a–b. A European binding with decorative stamping and star-shaped studded spine straps. *Das Newue Testament*, Basel: 1720 (ML/UB: UB MUE Rar Alt 5527).



Curiosity regarding the spine straps among those who work with collections of Anabaptist materials is understandable. Steve Ness mentioned that they cost money, and so could be considered a frivolous addition to the already bound book.¹⁷⁶ Not only would the spine straps add cost, but so would the metalwork sometimes present on these devotional texts. This addition of straps and metalwork was discussed earlier in the case of the European-bound Bible with straps and metalwork added in America, and also noted with an inscription on the front pastedown describing the “Beschläge,” “spine straps,” “knobs,” and other adherences affixed to the leather; see Fig. 5a. Despite the added expense, spine straps add a layer of protection to the spine, and since spine straps are always paired with clasps, they could counteract the pull of the fasteners and function to keep the boards from lifting away from the book along the joint.¹⁷⁷ For a people devoted to daily interaction with the Bible and other devotional texts, spending money to add strength can be seen as a practical expense.

As previously mentioned, there is evidence of all-metal, or leather and metal spine straps on certain Hungarian, Latvian, and Armenian metal bookbindings with no known connection to the Anabaptists. Do spine straps have other relatives in the bookbinding family? Two related features that come to mind are straps covering the raised supports for large books intended for heavy use. An eighteenth-century Spanish choir book in the UCLA Library Special Collections features leather spine straps over, rather than alongside, each of its seven raised bands, as well as straps at the head and tail, all held in place by wide, nailed-in metal strips and corner guards. Figs. 48a–b. Another possibly related feature is the heavy chamois or leather spine cover seen on Dutch, German, and some English bindings. These overbacks were often held in place along the spine edge of each board with a strip of tacks or with what Szirmai called a metal edge strip.¹⁷⁸ And while leather spine covers/overbacks were observed on some European Anabaptist examples, such as the book illustrated in Fig. 49, none were observed on North American Anabaptist bindings.^{179,180,181}

¹⁷⁶ Steve Ness, interview with the authors, Lancaster, Penn., 5 May 2018.

¹⁷⁷ This function for the spine strap suggested by Jeff Peachey, email correspondence with authors, 14 November 2018.

¹⁷⁸ Szirmai, *Archaeology*, 264.

¹⁷⁹ Herre, email correspondence with the authors, 14 August 2018, pointed out a possible functional connection between spine straps and the spine covers.

¹⁸⁰ There are other types of bookbindings that incorporate strips of unadhered material crossing the spine. See Miner, *History of Bookbinding*, 12–13. This description of an Armenian Gospel in a 17th-century binding notes the silver chains crossing the spine of the jeweled and enameled binding.

¹⁸¹ Szirmai, *Archaeology*, 239. Szirmai discusses a separate leather overcover found on some Gothic books, often of thick chamois, that just covers the spine of the already leather-covered book and nailed in along the spine edge of the front and back board. He gives Germany, Netherlands, and occasionally England as regions using this spine protection on some books.



Figs. 48a–b. *Noted Manuscript Choir Book*. Toledo or Seville: 1737. 70.5 × 51.5 × 19 cm. (courtesy Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA): ***170/659).



Fig. 49. Remnants of a leather overback can be seen on this European binding. The spine cover was held in place with a line of decorative brass tacks. Lobwasser, Ambrosius. *Die Psalmen Davids*, Lemgo, Germany, 1716 (ML/UB: UB MUE Rar alt 5962).

MAKERS

It is worth considering who fashioned the spine straps and metal furniture and who attached them. In the old world context, Szirmai described the *Gürtler*, or belt and buckle maker, being employed in the production of book furniture, as well as the *Clausuremaker*, or clasp-maker in Nuremberg, Erfurt, and Wittenberg in the mid-sixteenth century.¹⁸² Clasps on American Anabaptist bindings were uniform enough to suggest that the components were very likely ready-made, perhaps purchased in quantity and then attached at the time of binding.

It seems possible that the mass-produced furniture was made by the same German brass workers who specialized in production pieces like furniture and coach hardware. The very uniform, Jura-style bindings may have come out of one operation that was passed down through generations and included metalwork production.¹⁸³ In addition to papermaking, printing, tanning, and bookbinding operations, the community in Ephrata had a nailery, and may have been a one-stop shop for bookbindings, including metal book furniture.^{184, 185}

The Pennsylvania Germans were also farm people and craftspeople, capable of hand crafting many things. A settlement in Conestoga in 1717 listed the farmer/tradesmen inhabitants as: “a bricklayer, a miller, a blacksmith, two physicians, five house carpenters, two weavers and several land agents. A sawmill, two grist mills and a boring mill were in operation.”¹⁸⁶ The chisels apparently used to fashion many pieces of book furniture almost certainly reflect the type of tools that a tinsmith or tinker would use. There are plentiful examples of Pennsylvania German punched tin pieces, footwarmers, and lanterns that display punchwork akin to that found on the more individualized Anabaptist bindings.¹⁸⁷ The common use of tinned-iron sheet on American Anabaptist bindings, the same material used for tinwork, further bolsters this association.

The variety and idiosyncrasy in the metalwork, particularly in the colonial examples, suggests that finer pieces, perhaps European bindings kept in the home such as the Herr family *Auß Bundt*, were being referenced and attempted by later craftsmen, bookbinders, or farmers/owners who were less skilled at working with metal and were perhaps using a limited set of tools. The punches, chisels, and tinsnips used to make many colonial examples could have been generically useful farm tools, easily sourced by a rural craftsperson from the local blacksmith. According to Mulholland, “in the wide-ranging rural areas away from towns and along the frontier, such simpler skills of the smith as the making of nails from slit bar stock were practiced by the individual farmer or settler.”¹⁸⁸ It is therefore perhaps more fitting to think of

¹⁸² Szirmai, *Archaeology*, 283.

¹⁸³ Springer, email to authors, 13 December 2017.

¹⁸⁴ Garvin and Hummel, *Pennsylvania Germans*, 60.

¹⁸⁵ Luthy, David. *A History of the Printings of the Martyrs' Mirror: Dutch · German · English 1660–2012. From the Collection of Heritage Society Library*. Alymer, Canada: Pathway Publ., 2013, 16.

¹⁸⁶ Friesen, *Modest Mennonite Home*, 37.

¹⁸⁷ Kauffman, Henry J. *Pennsylvania Dutch American Folk Art*. New York: Dover Publ., 1964, 61–86.

¹⁸⁸ Mulholland, *History of Metals*, 79.

these examples as a group as rural pieces, rather than haphazard or simply idiosyncratic. Some case studies of particular examples of Anabaptist bookbindings, presented in the coming pages, offer an opportunity to examine key artifacts in greater depth.

Case studies

Bearing in mind the general themes and trends in Anabaptist bookbinding discussed above, exploration of a few notable case studies of the binding tradition in practice will prove useful in considering the technical details and social significance of these religious-devotional artifacts.

Toward establishing an Anabaptist “Jura Style” of bookbinding

Those with deep familiarity with Swiss Anabaptist collections have identified a distinctive bookbinding style they call “Jura style,” because of its association with the Jura region of Switzerland, where Anabaptists from the Emmental region attempted to take refuge in the early eighteenth century.^{189, 190, 191, 192} This Swiss region, northwest of Bern and near to the French border, still retains a Mennonite community. But by the mid-eighteenth century and for the next one hundred years, Anabaptists in the Jura faced continued persecution, and waves of migrants left the area for North America, with the early groups settling in Lancaster County.¹⁹³

This Swiss Anabaptist binding style is most notable for the large number of strikingly uniform extant examples. The authors of this essay have personally examined over twenty volumes in this style. Many of the European Anabaptist bindings that David Luthy described as having date and initial plates also appear to exhibit this Jura style, though the exact number is not noted in his study.¹⁹⁴ In addition to the many examples found in North American collections, this style can also be found in present-day institutional collections located in and near to the Jura region and on Anabaptist texts printed in Switzerland and apparently bound there. Of the eight Anabaptist binding examples found at Münstergasse Library in Bern, four of them were Jura style. Fig. 50. At the ALSMC in Corgémont, approximately thirty percent of the bindings with attached spine straps and metalwork were Jura style.

Jura-style bindings display Germanic bookbinding techniques described earlier in this essay – beveled wooden boards, rounded and solidly consolidated texts, carefully ploughed edges, and often adhesive board attachment. There is some variety in the blind tooling on covers with some more ornate and some simpler. These bindings are perhaps most easily recognized by their

¹⁸⁹ Springer, email to authors, 7 July 2018. Springer writes, “It is the combination of uniformity over about a century of dated bindings and the known provenances of many of those works that permit a localization to the Jura region.”

¹⁹⁰ Lloyd Weiler, conversation with authors, 4 May 2018.

¹⁹¹ Springer, email to authors, 7 July 2018. Springer states, “I think ‘Jura style’ is an accurate description. I don’t know how widespread this appellation is or if I developed this myself, heard it from my father (who preceded me in the curator position), or heard it from others.”

¹⁹² Gratz, *Bernese Anabaptists*, 69.

¹⁹³ Gratz, *Bernese Anabaptists*, 85–86.

¹⁹⁴ Luthy, “Date and Initial Plates,” 2–14.



Fig. 50. Jura-style octavo bindings in the collection of Münstergasse Library, Bern. All lower covers. From left to right: *Auss bundt*, 17— (ML/UB: UB MUE Hx190a); *Auss Bundt*, 17— (ML/UB: UB MUE Hx190e); Schabaelje, Jan Philipsz. *Die wandlende Seel*, Basel: 1770 (ML/UB: UB MUE Rar alt 5859); *Auss Bundt*, 17— (ML/UB: UB MUE Hx190c).



Fig. 51a. Top book: *Testament, Das gantz Nüw*, Frankfurt und Leipzig: Christoph Froschauer, 1825 (MCFL: #10989.05). Bottom book: *Testament, Das gantz Nüw*, Frankfurt und Leipzig: Christoph Froschauer, 1825 (MCFL: Q #10989.0).

distinctive and uniform metalwork with brass edge strips, date and initial plates, and three studded leather spine straps. The elements of the Jura style appear in two known variations, each associated with a certain size of binding. On octavo-size works, more often minimal blind tooling on light- or dark-colored calf or sheep bindings are decorated with rectilinear edge strips at the head and tail of the book and lozenge-shaped centerpieces with stamped initials and dates. Figs. 51a–c and 52a–b. Nearly all the metal attachments to the covers have a linear border

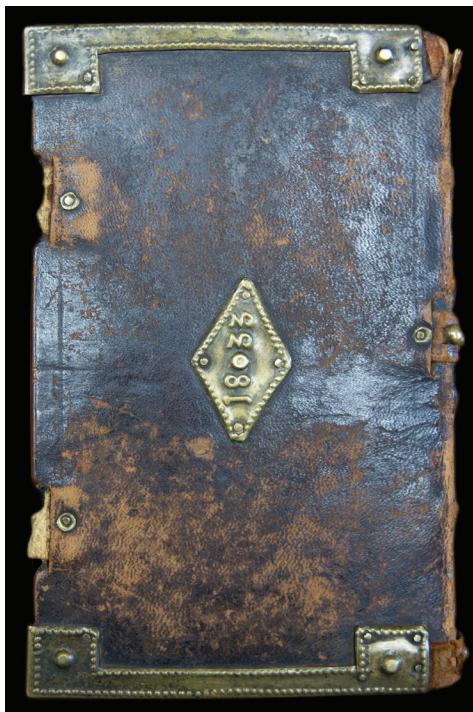


Fig. 51b. Lower cover of top book.

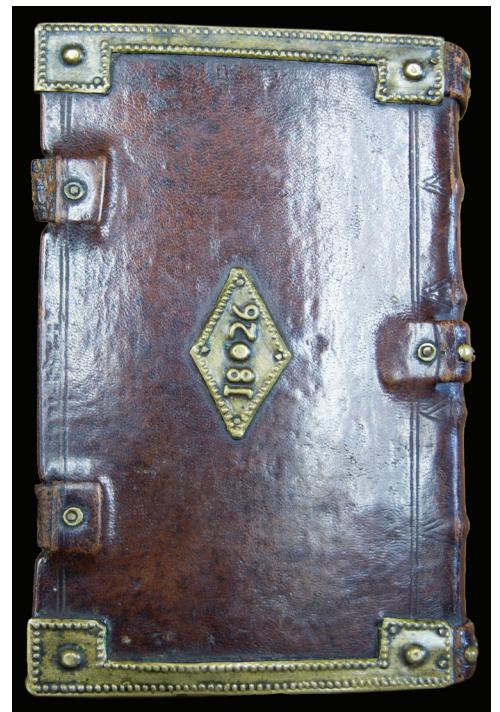


Fig. 51c. Lower cover of bottom book.

of fine punchwork. The octavo-size bindings have three brass-studded spine straps, located at the head, tail, and middle with the middle strap inserted under the leather on the covers and held in place with a single brass rivet and nail.

The appearance is so similar between bindings that it is tempting to assume one bindery completed them. Curator Joe Springer noted, “Because of the strong similarity through the 100+ year record of this particular style of decoration, it seems reasonable to think that there may have been only one “operation” in place, possibly passed down from relative to relative.”^{195,196} Despite the widespread familiarity of many curators with this style, the authors have yet to find a written reference to the “Jura style” in an English-language publication.¹⁹⁷

There is what appears to be a folio-size version of the Jura style that is also remarkably consistent. Figs. 53, 54a, and 55a–b. The folio-size bindings exhibit darker leather covers with

^{195.} Springer, email to authors, 13 December 2017.

^{196.} Springer, email to authors, 13 December 2017. “I think I would not go so far as to say it was necessarily “one family” – we don’t have the evidence for that...given the frequency of intermarriages within the region, it would not have been hard to have it pass from relative to relative, even if not necessarily from parent to child through multiple generations.”

^{197.} Dreis, “Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Bookbindings,” 123. Dreis notes that the Anabaptist bindings she was looking in Lancaster were likely Swiss, though she gives no reference for this statement, and it is unclear if she is referring specifically to the Jura style.



Figs. 52a–b. Jura-style octavo binding in a Swiss collection. Schabaelje, Jan Philipsz. *Die wandlende Seel*, Basel, 1770 (ALSMC: ANC/101/137).



more extensive blind tooling, often with decorative roll patterns forming a panel design. The folios also have edge strips in the same general form as those found on octavos. The centerpieces are square, rather than lozenge-shaped, but positioned on the diagonal. The brass pieces are additionally decorated with a fleur-de-lis stamp, placed along and within the punched linear border of each piece; see Figs. 55a–b. They also exhibit three studded spine straps, but the studs are larger and the straps wider than the octavo-size straps. The middle strap is anchored with two nails and two washers rather than one. This binding style can be found on the Giliom family *Martyrs' Mirror* at the Ephrata Cloister, see Fig. 57c; on a 1571 Froschauer, *Bibel*, held at Muddy Creek Farm Library, see Fig. 53; and on two different *Täuferbibels* printed in Strassbourg in 1744, one held at the ALSMC in Corgémont, Figs. 54a–b; and one pictured in Luthy's *Our Amish Devotional Heritage*.¹⁹⁸

198. Luthy, *Our Amish Devotional Heritage*, 24.

Fig. 53. Froschauer, *Bibel*, 1571, displaying a Jura-style binding in folio size in an American repository. This item has an initial plate of "D.W.M." and a date plate of 1792, 221 years after the date of printing. *Biblia*, Zürich: Christoffel Froschauer, 1571 (MCFL: DL #100).



Fig. 54a. Jura-style folio binding examined in the Jura region of Switzerland. *Die gantze Bibel*, 1744 (ALSMC: ANC/101/14).



Fig. 54b. Ownership bookplate bearing the name of Jacob Baumgartner 1868.





Figs. 55a–b. Detail of furniture on a Jura-style folio volume with fleur-de-lis stamping and date plate stamped 1784. Undated European *Neues Testament* (ALSMC: ANC/101/358).

Luthy did a careful job discussing initial and date plates in American collections in his 2012 article. While he did not give the size of the books he describes, he sent images from his library showing a variety of book sizes featuring what he called “typical Swiss Anabaptist Style” with Jura-style metal furniture, date and initial plates, and spine straps.¹⁹⁹ Regarding Mennonite and Amish connections to the Jura style, Joe Springer wrote:

the binders we know by name were Mennonite rather than Amish and the region in which the bindings were executed was primarily (but not exclusively) Mennonite rather than Amish. It is clear that original customers included both Amish and Mennonite buyers – the market radius reached across the border into France where most of the communities were Amish rather than Mennonite.²⁰⁰

See Table 1 at the end of this essay for a summary of observed characteristics on various Anabaptist bindings.

Anabaptist bookbinders

Perhaps to be expected, there is little mention in historical accounts of Anabaptist bookbinders by name, but there are three examples known to the authors, all of Swiss origin and two of whom were even familiar to one another.^{201, 202}

199. Luthy, *Our Amish Devotional Heritage*, 36.

200. Springer, email to authors, 7 July 2018. See descriptions of binders Baumgartner and Moser below.

201. It should be noted that Christopher Sauer II was a member of the Church of the Brethren and also a known binder of Anabaptist works. Please see Christopher Sauer case study, pp. 275–277. There is reference in Hocker of a Germantown bookbinder who bound Sauer II's bible (1763 or 1776). The binder's name was Peter Leibert, but the authors have no knowledge of his religious affiliation or bindings. Hocker, Edward W. *The Sower Printing House of Colonial Times*. Norristown: Pennsylvania German Society, 73.

202. Peter Leibert and the Sauers are three other known bookbinders of Pennsylvania German

David Baumgartner, Jakob Moser

Baptist traveler John Sheppard recounted his meeting with the Baumgartners, a Swiss Mennonite family (formerly of the Emmental region of Switzerland) near La Reuchenette, on the road to Bienne in 1816. Intending to find a young preacher, he said “I was first conducted by mistake to the cottage of his father, who, with a venerable silver beard, was exercising his trade as a book-binder.”²⁰³ The bookbinder was David Baumgartner the elder (1737–1819), a deacon in the congregation of Pery.²⁰⁴ His son David (the younger, 1765–1853), a minister, immigrated to America in 1837 and came to organize the first Mennonite church in Berne, Indiana.²⁰⁵

While the authors do not know of any specimens of Baumgartner’s work, they did locate another example attributable to another binder to whom he appears related. In his survey of Anabaptist bindings in North American collections, Luthy described a *Täufer Testament*, printed in Frankfurt und Leipzig in 1825 and housed at the Musselman Library at Bluffton University in Ohio.²⁰⁶ The binding exhibits a date plate from the following year, 1826, as well as an initial plate “P.S.” for owner Peter Schumacher.²⁰⁷ An inscription by the owner (and translation) reads:

Das Buch gehört mir	The book belongs to me
Peter Schumacher.	Peter Schumacher
in Basel.	in Basel,
und habe es selbst	and I picked it up
geholt beim Buchbind-	myself from the bookbinder
er Jakob Moser	Jakob Moser
im Klein Tshampo	in Petit Champoz,
An[n]o 1827.	in the year 1827,
Peter S.	Peter S. ²⁰⁸

According to genealogical sources, Jakob Moser lived in Combe de Pery in the immediate vicinity of La Reuchenette. David Baumgartner (the younger) “had a half-sister Barbara who was the mother of Jakob Moser (1799–1840), in Petit-Champoz, Moutier.”²⁰⁹ Thus, Jakob

Anabaptist works (and discussed in other sections of this essay), though only one religious affiliation is known of the three: Sauer II was affiliated with the church of the Brethren.

203. Rusling, G.W. “Anabaptists in the Jura Mountains.” *Baptist Quarterly* 18, no. 8 (October 1960): 342.

204. For Baumgartner’s dates of birth and death: Gratz, Delbert L. “Baumgartner (Baumgardner) family.” *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*: <[http://gameo.org/index.php?title=baumgartner_\(baumgardner\)_family&oldid=146373](http://gameo.org/index.php?title=baumgartner_(baumgardner)_family&oldid=146373)>; accessed 12 June 2018.

205. Rusling, G.W. “Anabaptists in the Jura Mountains,” 342.

206. *Täufer Testament...* Frankfurt und Leipzig, 1825. Musselman Library, Bluffton, Ohio.

207. Luthy, “Metal Initial and Date Plates,” 1–14.

208. Transcription provided by Joe Springer, email to authors, 13 December 2017.

209. Springer, email to authors, citing David Habegger’s research, 13 December 2017.

Moser would have been a grandson to the elder bookbinder, David Baumgartner. Moser was the son of a doctor, Johannes Moser (1768–1842), but little else is known of him.²¹⁰ His binding displays the characteristic brass edge strips, decorated with fine punchwork and small raised bosses; simple blind-tooled covers; three studded spine straps (only one extant); and lozenge-shaped date and initial plates that have come to be associated with octavo-size bindings from the Jura region.^{211,212}

Abraham Giliom

Luthy also recorded an imprint of Jacob Denner's *Betrachtungen*, held at Muddy Creek Farm Library. It was printed in Frankenthal am Rhein in 1792 with what appears to be a date plate of 1859 and initial plate stamped "D.Z." Fig. 56a–b. "Detailed bookplate, dated 1871, states that the book belongs to David Zuercher, who purchased it from David Brubacher in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. It was bound in 1839 in Wayne county, Ohio by Abraham Giliom."²¹³ Fig. 56c.

Upon closer examination of the date plate, the third digit is not clearly discernable and the date could be read as either 1839 or 1859; see Fig. 56b. The date on the inscription, with the number 3 underlined, lends weight to the stamped plate being 1839. The date of binding would help to determine which of two possible Abraham Gilioms the binder might be.

An obituary dated November 2, 1873 records the death from "Thyphus fever" of Abraham Giliom, "aged 50 years, 5 months, and 29 days. He was a faithful brother, and beloved by all. His quiet walk through life, was a comfort to those left behind. He leaves a widow and seven children to mourn their loss. Services by Peter S. Lehman and Carl Koontz in German, and Benjamin Lapp in English."²¹⁴ This Abraham Giliom (1823–1873) appears to have been associated with a group that followed Minister Peter S. Lehmann from Berne, Indiana, to Hickory County, Missouri, in 1868–1869.²¹⁵ Abraham would have been only sixteen in 1839 and thirty-six in 1859.

²¹⁰ Springer, email to authors, 13 December 2017. "That same Jacob is identified as a bookbinder in Baumgartner, Samuel Henry. Brief Historical Sketches of Eight Generations; Descendants of Ulrich Welty, Born 1728. (Indianapolis Ind: Author, 1926.) p. 325."

²¹¹ Thank you to Carrie Phillips, Musselman Library, for providing reference images of the binding.

²¹² Springer, email to authors, 16 January 2018. Springer associates this style with the Jura region.

²¹³ Luthy, "Metal Initial and Date Plates," 14. Springer, email to authors, 9 July 2018: Correct spelling is Zürcher, David (1803–1879). "David immigrated to U.S. as a young man arriving in New York on July 5, 1821 on the Brig Thetis."

²¹⁴ Mennonite Church USA Archives. "Herald of Truth Obituaries – December 1873": <<http://mcusa-archives.org/MennObits/1873/ht73dec.html>>; accessed 12 June 2018.

²¹⁵ Gratz, *Bernese Anabaptists*, 164. To complicate matters, Gratz mentions a group who moved from Indiana to Missouri in 1868: "Those joining with his family in this move were a sister of P.S. Lehmann who married a Schneck and their family, Christian Gilliom and his wife who was a daughter of P.S. Lehmann, and other members of the Gilliom relationship who came from Wayne County, Ohio." Gratz, *Bernese Anabaptists*, 164.

Fig. 56a. Denner, *Jacob Denners Christliche*, 1792, bound by Abraham Giliom for David Zürcher.

Fig. 56b. Detail of the date plate.

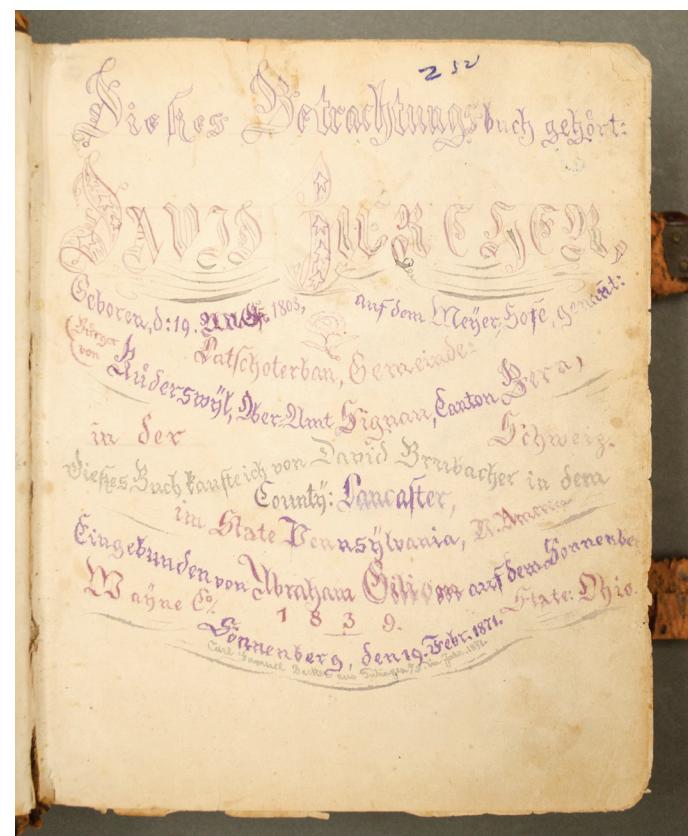


Fig. 56c. David Zürcher's inscription in Denner, Jacob. *Jacob Denners Christliche*, Frankenthal am Rhein: Ludwig Bernhard Gegels, 1792 (MCFL: #14075).

A more compelling figure when considering the 1839 date is Abraham Giliom, born 14 September 1811 in Sonnenberg, Switzerland (and died 3 May 1877 in Wells County, Indiana), an uncle to the Abraham described above.^{216, 217} Figs. 57a–c. This Abraham emigrated to America in 1823, when he was twelve years old, from the Canton of Bern, Switzerland, to the new Sonnenberg Settlement in Wayne County, Ohio, with his brother Christian and mother Elizabeth (née Schneck or Schnäg).²¹⁸ A record of Christian's birth and baptism exists in the collection of the Ephrata Cloister Library. Fig. 57c. It reads:

Extract

Christian Gilean Lengnau Canton Bern is the legal son of Johannes Gilean and Elisabeth Schnäg [Schneck], presently living in the parish Gorgemon [Corgémont] in the district Curtelry [Courtelary], Canton Bern. He was born the 8 of September 1800 and was baptized, and he was first admitted to communion on Easter of 1818 by Paster Oberli, and he has since then held communion with us in the congregation of Büderich [Péry], district of Curtelry [Courtelary] Canton of Bern, the 28 of December 1819.
witnessed

David Baumgartner, minister

[round bureaucratic stamp indicating a fee paid in Swiss money]

Canton Bern

5 Rappen²¹⁹

In 1829, Abraham Giliom married Magdalena Moser (no known relation to Jacob Moser), and they had ten children together. The family relocated to Wells County, Indiana, in 1846 where they eventually owned a 300-acre farm.²²⁰ If this is the bookbinder of the Muddy Creek *Betrachtungen*, the timeline tracks with the 1839 date of binding, when Abraham was twenty-eight years old and living in Wayne County, Ohio. Note that the extracted birth and baptismal record for Christian has the name of Minister David Baumgartner.²²¹ This was likely David Baumgartner the younger who was ordained as a

^{216.} Habegger, David and Karen C. Adams *The Swiss of Adams and Wells Counties, Indiana, 1838–1862*. Fort Wayne: Habegger, 2002, 34. Wells County and Berne, Indiana, are approximately 20 miles from one another and are in adjacent counties; the two Abraham Giloms would have lived in this area at the same time.

^{217.} Springer, email to authors, 9 July 2018. He states that the younger Abraham was a nephew to the older Abraham.

^{218.} Gratz, *Bernese Anabaptists*, 133; see reference 24. Christian may have eventually moved to Hickory County, Missouri, along with Abraham Giliom (1823–1873). Gratz, *Bernese Anabaptists*, 164.

^{219.} Translation by Springer, email to authors, 9 July 2018. Gilean is a variant of the surname, Giliom.

^{220.} Their ninth child was named Abraham Lui Giliom, but sadly he only lived to be an adolescent (1845–1857). Swiss Anabaptist Genealogical Association website: <<http://www.saga-omii.org/index.html>>; accessed 16 January 2018.

^{221.} Springer, email to authors, 9 July 2018. “Because this bears the bureaucratic stamp for a fee paid,

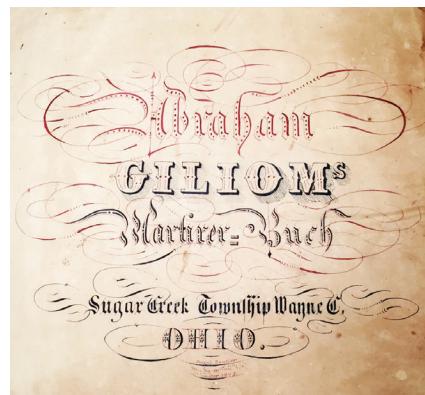


Fig. 57a. Fraktur bookplate on the Giliom family's Bracht, *Martyrer-Spiegel*, 1780 (PHMC: uncataloged).



Fig. 57b. The cover of the Giliom family's Bracht, *Martyrer-Spiegel*, 1780.

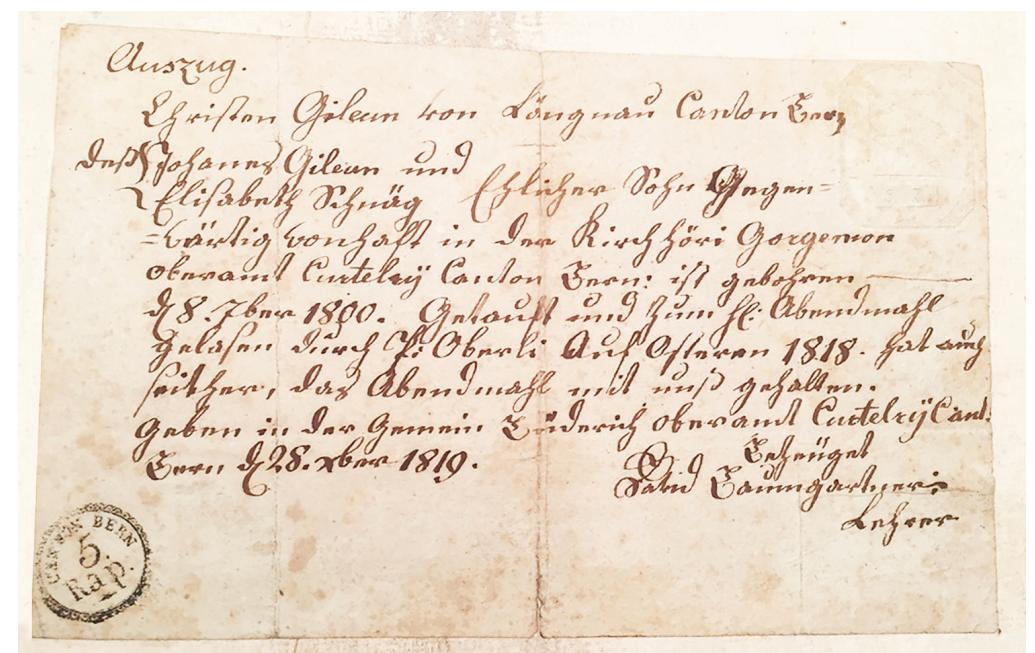


Fig. 57c. Christian Gilean's birth and baptismal certificate within Bracht, *Martyrer-Spiegel*, 1780 (courtesy of Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission, Ephrata Cloister (PHMC): uncataloged).

minister in Canton Bern in 1789.²²² Additionally, Gratz recorded the group that emigrated with Christian and Abraham to the new Sonneberg Settlement in Ohio, and amongst the list is another David Baumgartner (1798–1863), believed to be the son of the Minister David Baumgartner (the younger).^{223,224}

Also of interest is the binding within which the extracted birth and baptismal record is preserved. The book is a *Martyrer-Spiegel* folio printed 1780 in Pirmasens and bound in a European binding. This text was a reprint of the Ephrata *Martyrs' Mirror*, printed in the Palatinate and widely used by Amish and Mennonite inhabitants there.²²⁵ On the flyleaf is Abraham Giliom's ornate fraktur bookplate, signed by the manuscript artist Joseph Beutler; see Fig. 57a.²²⁶

The large binding is covered in dark and heavily grained leather with ornate blind tooling; see Fig. 57b. It has edge strips as well, and square-shaped date and initial plates, all additionally adorned with a stamped fleur-de-lis border. This style again appears consistent with those found on folio-size volumes from the Jura region. Curator Kerry Mohn believes the Pirmasens *Martyrer-Spiegel* once belonged to Abraham's great-grandfather, Adam Giliom, explaining the European binding and centerpiece stamped "A.G."²²⁷

David Zürcher's quarto-size *Betrachtungen*, bound by Abraham Giliom and held at Muddy Creek, appears to mimic the square date and initial plates on the Pirmasens *Martyrer-Spiegel*, although Giliom opted for simpler, triangular cornerpieces rather than edge strips, and there is no fleur-de-lis stamping; see Fig. 56b. The fineness of the marbled calf binding and elegantly punched brass metalwork sets this item apart from many other American examples. The clasps on the American binding are not of a typical early American

the writing is that of a copyist rather than written out by Baumgartner who would have signed an original record on which this extract was based."

^{222.} Gratz, Delbert L. "Baumgartner (Baumgardner) family." *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*: <[http://gameo.org/index.php?title=baumgartner_\(baumgardner\)_family&oldid=146373](http://gameo.org/index.php?title=baumgartner_(baumgardner)_family&oldid=146373)>; accessed 12 June 2018.

^{223.} "In 1822 Ulrich Gerber, a minister, Michael Gerber, a deacon, and Jacob Gerber left their Jura homes for the new Sonnenberg settlement," a Swiss Mennonite settlement in Wayne County, Ohio. "In 1824 those who emigrated were Peter and Hans Wahli, Johannes and Abraham Tschantz, Johannes and Christian Wahli, Christian and Abraham Gilliom, Christian Beer, Nicholas Hofstetter, Abraham Falb, Michael Bogli, Hans Luginbuhl, David Baumgartner, Ulrich Sommer, and Peter Schneck. (24)." Gratz, *Bernese Anabaptists*, 133.

^{224.} Springer, email to authors, 9 July 2018. Springer identifies this as the son of David the younger.

^{225.} Zijpp, Nanne van der, Harold S. Bender et al. "Martyrs' Mirror." *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*: <http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Martyrs%27_Mirror&oldid=145854>; accessed 12 June 2018.

^{226.} Springer, email to authors, 9 July 2018. "There is a paragraph about Beutler on p. 118 of Decorative Arts of Ohio's Sonnenberg Menonites by Paul G. Locher, Joseph W. Irvin, Stanley A. Kaufman (Kidron, OH: Kidron Community Historical Society, 1994) and an illustration on p. 120 of a (somewhat simpler) fraktur bookplate for David Zürcher's *Martyrs' Mirror* done in 1843."

^{227.} Kerry Mohn, conversation with the authors, 5 May 2018.

style, but of the same style as the European-bound *Martyrer-Spiegel*, suggesting they may have been obtained from the same source as those bound in the Jura region. The central spine strap is missing but had been anchored with two brass nails and rivets, apparently the custom on the larger size Jura bindings. Giliom's *Betrachtungen* serves as a physical example of an American translation of this century-old style, one that given the family ownership of such European binding examples and the familial connection to the Jura region would likely have been highly familiar to the binder who undertook it.²²⁸

THE SAUERS' ROLE IN THE PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN PRINT AND BINDING COMMUNITY
Johann Christoph Sauer (1695–1758) emigrated from Germany with his wife, Maria Christina, and their son, also named Johann Christoph (II), to Philadelphia in 1724.²²⁹ Though he worked as a tailor in Germany, he repaired clocks, pots, and pans in his new home in Pennsylvania.²³⁰ He owned a 200-acre farm in Lancaster County from 1726 until 1731, when Maria Christina Sauer chose to leave the family farm and join Conrad Beissel's celibate community in Ephrata, making maintenance of the farm unsustainable.²³¹ After holding various other jobs for several years (apothecary, farrier, cabinetmaker, glazier, and bookbinder), by 1739 Sauer turned his attention to printing and located his shop in Germantown. He imported the first set of fraktur type from Germany to Pennsylvania, printed the first German-language bible in the colonies in 1743, and published a German-language newspaper there for several years. He became the most well-known German-language printer in the colony, and along with his son, printed over 150 works, including several Anabaptist titles, many of which are featured in this essay.²³²

Hazel Dreis states that monks from the Ephrata Cloister "supplied paper to the Sauer print shop in Germantown. It is also certain that they bound some of the Sauer books. They did not bind all of them, and the Germantown work is easy to distinguish from the work of the Cloister."²³³ *Bookbinding in America 1680–1910* pictures both an Ephrata Cloister and a Sauer binding that can be compared. The example from Ephrata is a simple calf binding with a single heart-shaped, hinged brass fore-edge clasp stamped with owner and date information. It has no other metalwork or spine straps. "The binding on this book is typical

^{228.} Springer, email to authors, 9 July 2018. This supposition is supported by Springer.

^{229.} The spelling of Sauer's surname varies and is sometimes presented as "Saur." The authors have used "Sauer" in this essay.

^{230.} Lehman, Hans. "Johann Christoph Sauer (1695–1758)." Immigrant Entrepreneurship: German-American Business Biographies: <<https://www.immigrantentrepreneurship.org/entry.php?rec=195Biography>>; accessed 26 October 2018.

^{231.} Hocker, *Sauer Printing House*, 9.

^{232.} Durnbaugh, Donald F. "Christopher Sauer, Pennsylvania-German Printer: His Youth in Germany and Later Relationships with Europe." *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 82, no. 3 (July 1958): 328; Lehman, "Johann Christoph Sauer"; Hocker, *Sauer Printing House*, 5.

^{233.} Dreis, "Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Bookbinding," 121.

of the Cloister's work, but the heart-shaped clasp is unusual.²³⁴ The binding attributed to the Sauer workshop has an atypical pigskin covering and slightly more ornately-tooled panel design. "The decorative panels, which have their outer panels stained are more ornamental than the plain boards which usually emanated from Sauer's shop."²³⁵ It displays German-style brass clasps, undecorated square cornerpieces, simple tack bosses in the center of the boards, and two brass-studded leather spine straps.

The Sauers had emigrated with a group of Church of the Brethren members from Schwarzenau, Germany. The elder Sauer was well-esteemed by and had an affinity for the Separatists, but his specific denomination remains unknown.²³⁶ He was highly moralistic, an outspoken critic of the militarization and corruption of "church people" (Anglicans, Lutherans, and the Reformed), and he published writings in opposition to the use of slave labor.²³⁷

His son, Christopher Sauer II (17211–1784), who later became a bishop of the Brethren, took over the press in the mid-1750s. With both English- and German-language skills, Christopher Sauer II was able to expand the English-language press offerings with an almanac in 1755, as well as other works.²³⁸ Christopher Sauer II was more directly associated with the trades of papermaking and bookbinding, having taken up printing somewhat begrudgingly after his father aged out of it.²³⁹ He built a paper mill at Falls of Schuylkill in 1772.²⁴⁰ After meeting with hostility for his ardent pacifism, Sauer II was arrested and his estates seized in 1778 by the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. Widowed a year earlier, Christopher Sauer II moved with his four children to his brother-in-law's home in Germantown and spent his last six years working in poverty as a bookbinder.²⁴¹

The contribution of the Sauers to the Pennsylvania German printing community cannot be overstated. Examples of their binding contributions require more study. A 1748 Ephrata *Martyrs' Mirror* at Muddy Creek Farm Library was reportedly bound by the Sauer workshop. Figs. 58a–b. There are narrow double-blind lines along the board edges, and an extra set of double lines that parallel the spine edge about 1 cm. away from the first set of lines. This tooling pattern is associated with the Sauer workshop in published literature as discussed earlier. The prominently rounded spine, the extraordinarily solid text-block consolidation, the substantial sewing on two cords, the simple soft cap over a narrow endband, and the smooth transition from spine to boards appear consistent with other bindings associated with Sauer, such as the binding illustrated in Fig. 23a–d. It is unknown whether the simple

²³⁴ "An Ephrata Cloister Binding, ca. 1754," *Bookbinding in America 1680–1910*, 47.

²³⁵ "A Germantown, Pennsylvania, Binding from Christopher Sauer's Shop, ca. 1776," *Bookbinding in America 1680–1910*, 52–53.

²³⁶ Hocker, *Sower Printing House*, 2.

²³⁷ Durnbaugh, "Christopher Sauer," 317; Lehman, "Johann Christoph Sauer."

²³⁸ Hocker, *Sower Printing House*, 24.

²³⁹ Hocker, *Sower Printing House*, 66.

²⁴⁰ Hocker, *Sower Printing House*, 84.

²⁴¹ Hocker, *Sower Printing House*, 107.

Fig. 58a. Front cover. Bracht, *Der Blutige Schau-Platz [Martyrs' Mirror]*, 1748. Folio binding associated with the Sauer bindery (MCFL: #16).

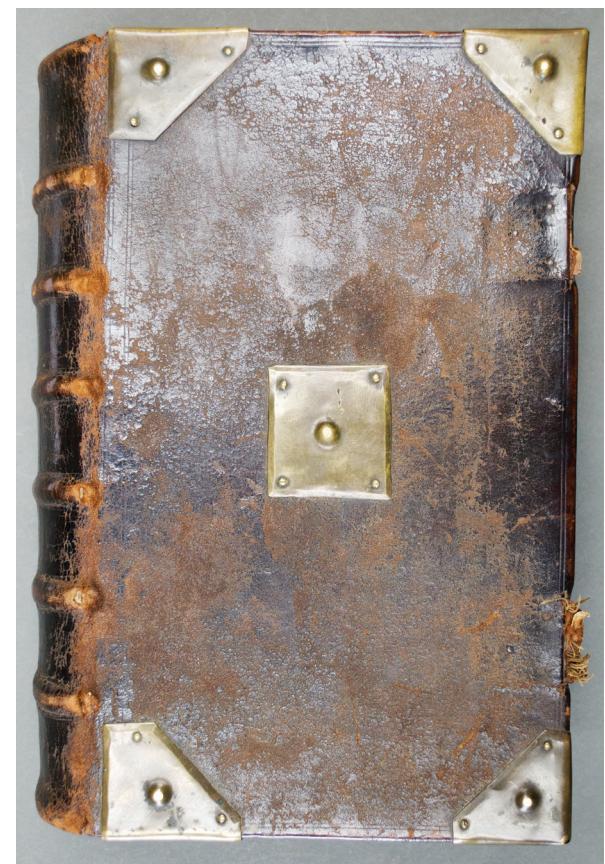


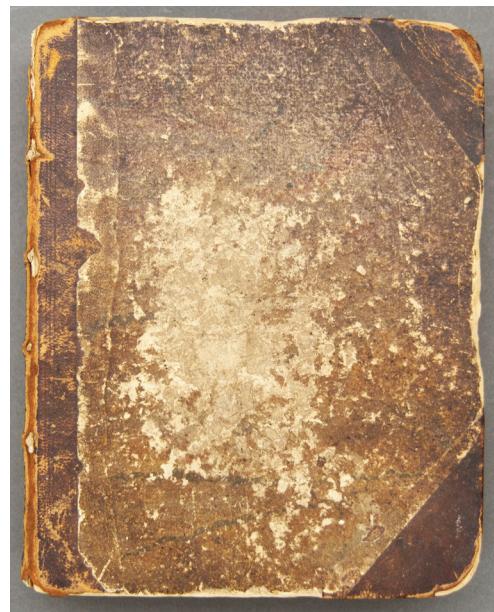
Fig. 58b. Tail edge.



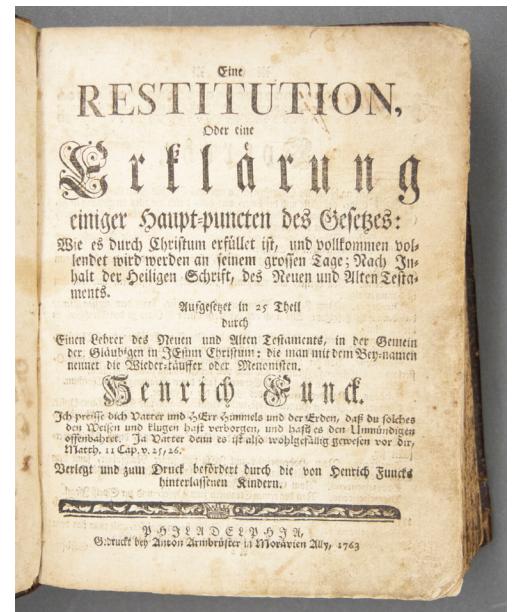
triangular cornerpieces and square centerpieces seen in Fig. 58a, fashioned from heavy sheet brass with raised bosses and beveled edges, were fashioned by the Sauer workshop. It is interesting to note the lack of spine straps on this volume.



Fig. 59. Extended thick calf spine straps running from front to back and around the spine. Strap attached to the binders' board with adhesive and flush square-faced copper brads. Additional small square leather centerpiece attached to middle of each board also with a flush copper brad. Funck, Heinrich. *Eine Restitution*. Philadelphia: Anton Armbrüster in Moravien Ally, 1763. 21.5 × 17.5 × 4 cm. (courtesy Frederick E. Maser Collection, Bryn Mawr Library (FEMC/BML): 1106).



Figs. 60a–b. Same title, same binder as Fig. 59, but text in half-style binding in sheepskin and marbled paper. Funck, *Eine Restitution*. Philadelphia, 1763. 21.5 × 17.5 × 4 cm. (FEMC/BML: 9760).



ADAPTATION IN AN AMERICAN ANABAPTIST DEVOTIONAL TEXT

The American Anabaptist title *Eine Restitution* offers an interesting opportunity to consider how an owner's expectation of spine straps and metal work on an Anabaptist work can be adapted in unique ways, resulting in an Anabaptist book that looks like no other the authors have seen. Fig. 59. The book was written by Heinrich Funck, an eighteenth-century Mennonite who settled in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, worked as a farmer, served as a Mennonite bishop, and had even been involved in the publication of the *Martyrs' Mirror* at Ephrata. *Eine Restitution* was one of two books Funck authored. It had not been published at the time of his death, so Funck's heirs facilitated its printing in 1763.²⁴² That Funck was a leading American Mennonite of the eighteenth century, and that Bryn Mawr College possesses two versions of this book; one with elements that one might expect on a Swiss Anabaptist devotional and one with no such elements is suggestive. The leather binding incorporates the only example the authors observed of spine straps extending from fore edge to fore edge, and one of only two examples of spine straps attached to paperboards; see Figs. 8a–c. This binding, especially compared to a completely standard half-style binding with

²⁴² Wenger, John C. "Funck, Heinrich." Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online: <[http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Funck,_Heinrich_\(d._1760\)&oldid=145204](http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Funck,_Heinrich_(d._1760)&oldid=145204)>; accessed 29 September 2018.

marbled-paper sides on the same title, suggests the relevance of binding choices to different religious groups, and the intentionality of having a book bound in such a way.

These two copies of the same title at Bryn Mawr are part of the Frederick E. Maser collection of primarily early religious titles; see Figs. 59 and 60a–b. Both are attributed to the Philadelphia-area binder George Christopher Reinholt, bound around 1763, and both are bound using paperboards instead of wooden boards. The binding description mentions that Reinholt arrived in Philadelphia in 1753 at the age of thirty, after training in Germany. By 1763, he had set up his own bindery, where he worked until 1793. Reinholt was known for his early use of marbled paper, combined with leather in a half style to cover his bindings like that seen in Fig. 60a.^{243, 244} Both books have a very distinctive round shape cut into one of the outside hook endleaf elements and clearly visible under the pastedown. Was the binder making less expensive books with his choice of paperboards? Did he mostly work for a non-Anabaptist community, but adapt his paperboard binding

²⁴³ "A Philadelphia Binding Attributed to George Christopher Reinholt," *Bookbinding in America 1680–1910*, 49.

²⁴⁴ *Germantown and the Germans: An Exhibition of Books, Manuscripts, Prints, and Photographs from the Collection of the Library Company of Pennsylvania and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, October 1983 to January 1984*. Ed. Jean Benoit, 94, entry 22. Philadelphia: Library Company of Philadelphia and Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1983.

to allow these unusual extended spine straps, such as those seen in Fig. 59? The editors of *Bookbinding in America 1680–1910* assumed the extended spine straps on the leather-bound *Eine Restitution* were added later, and by someone other than the binder. Certainly the straps were added after the pastedowns were adhered, but this was typical for all added metalwork and spine straps observed by the authors on Anabaptist devotionals in America and does not prove the extended spine straps were the work of a second person. How much later the spine straps were added after the binding was covered would be difficult to determine. At some point, a set of ties was also added to the front of the leather-bound book, but now only holes remain. This speaks to the expectation of some closure mechanism for German devotional works at this time, perhaps especially expected if the devotional has a leather covering and metal elements. Reinholdt, or someone else, ingeniously adapted the idea of spine straps and bosses for use on a paperboard binding. It is not clear what exemplars whoever created these spine straps was following, or if the idea of spine straps was described by a customer and the craftsman used creativity and elements at hand to meet the need.

This binding gained the attention of Frederick E. Maser, who collected other American Anabaptist devotionals with spine straps. The catalog description for *Eine Restitution* notes that the “crude strapwork” and square copper bosses makes this book “more unusual.”²⁴⁵ Today, it is important to feature this book again and note how traditions from Europe evolved after leaving the continent for other parts of the world.

AMERICAN ANABAPTIST TREATMENT ON A NINETEENTH-CENTURY NEW TESTAMENT

The binding on the 1831 Lutheran New Testament combines elements of more mechanized bookbinding techniques to match its elements of stereotype printing and machine-made paper. Figs. 61a–d. It also shows evidence of Anabaptist ownership, despite being a Lutheran New Testament. In this way the binding is quite similar to Figs. 8a–c, discussed earlier.

Like the book illustrated in Fig. 8a–c, this Anabaptist-owned book has been sewn on sawn-in cords. The text-block shaping does not involve beating the spine narrower than the fore edge to help with clasp tension as seen in earlier Anabaptist examples, and the text block was backed to form much more of a 90° shoulder than earlier books the authors have seen. There is a gold-stamped skiver-leather label on the spine that is contemporary with the printing. The use of wooden boards facilitates the addition of clasps and metal furniture, but the boards have no outer board shaping, and the only inner face board shaping is a slight bevel at the spine edge. A fraktur ownership inscription, dated 1831, reveals the proud German identity of owner, Magdalena Kaufman; see Fig. 61b. Most striking is the addition of metalwork vaguely reminiscent of the European Jura bindings discussed earlier, but with unadorned, American tinned-iron-sheet pieces attached with large brass tacks that serve as bosses, rather than the more elaborate punched brass work in Figs. 50, 51a–c, and 52a–b, and unadorned spine straps as well. This metalwork and added leather spine straps show

²⁴⁵ “Philadelphia Binding,” *Bookbinding in America 1680–1910*, 49.

Fig. 61a. Back board with tinned-iron-sheet furniture. Luther, *Das Neue Testament*, 1831. 17.6 × 11.5 × 4 cm. (MCFL: #13578.02).



Fig. 61b. Fraktur ownership inscription.





Figs. 61c–d. Above: Spine label and spine straps. Below: Heavily hammered shoulder on text block.



the continued use of specific protective/decorative bookbinding choices in the Anabaptist community almost into the mid-nineteenth century.

CONCLUSION: MATERIALITY, IDENTITY, AND SWISS ANABAPTIST BINDINGS

The bookbinding methods of early America's Anabaptists drew heavily on centuries-old Germanic traditions and included several features, such as a unique arrangement of metal attachments along with spine straps, that were employed primarily among Anabaptists, but not as frequently by other new-world Germans. This continued prevalence of traditional techniques is not to assume, however, that observable trends in book structure and aesthetics should be interpreted as an entirely conscious part of Swiss Anabaptist religious and community identity in early America in all cases. It is clear that Anabaptists used the bindings and the texts they contained as important tools in their spiritual and devotional lives, and today those books remain engrossing and unique artifacts of religious, linguistic, and cultural heritage. Like other features of many Anabaptists' lifestyles in early America – retention of the German and Pennsylvania Dutch languages, maintaining separate communities removed from mainstream Anglo-American life, and so on – the bindings reflect a pervasive attachment to cultural tradition and community distinction, especially where matters of religious life were

concerned.²⁴⁶ In this sense, the bindings on devotionals emerge as important components of Anabaptist German Protestant religious identity.

"Identity" is, admittedly, a loaded term in humanities and social-science scholarship, and for good reason. Considerable debate has raged as to whether identity is primarily a constructed social phenomenon or an "essential" component of human experience. That is, does identity exist primarily as a social force that is outside the power of members of a community to modify? Is identity forced upon people? Scholars remind us that identity is more than just a loose sense of affinity; it is a broadly agreed-upon categorization that can structure, direct, and limit social opportunity. The concept can be used to organize groups for political or social purposes, to categorize based on perceived similarities among peoples, to evoke the existence of a fundamental unifying quality or set of qualities amongst a collectivity, to connote an internal group conception of shared traits, or serve as a bulwark against outside aggressions on internal stability.²⁴⁷ Identity often has as much to do with outside forces as an individual or group's own goals and desires. For example, persecution became a key component of Anabaptist identity because it was leveled upon them in early modern Europe. While they embraced their persecuted state and incorporated it into a group identity grounded in community cohesion and rootlessness in the world, the trope of suffering was initially imposed from the outside. So, for that matter, was the name "Anabaptist," which had been coined by the sects' opponents.²⁴⁸

At this point, sufficient evidence does not exist to suggest that bindings were themselves a foundational element of Anabaptist social identity, but they certainly figured prominently in the material and cultural context in which Anabaptists and their communities lived and worshiped, as tools for the ritualistic performance of the act of devotional reading, and thus should be interpreted as an important feature of Anabaptist culture in early America. The bindings comprised a material packaging in which believers encountered key religious texts and preserved them for future generations – which counts for a lot in a religious community so thoroughly rooted in the Holy Word. As such, the bindings reflect a self-understanding among Anabaptists of the important place that personal experience of the Word occupied in their faith traditions.²⁴⁹

The importance of the bindings as tools of Anabaptist cultural and religious identity manifests itself in two ways that should guide future research. First, the binding methods and associated aesthetics survived for a very long time, even after book structures and production

²⁴⁶. For more on plainness, the plain peoples, and plain dress, see Scott, Stephen E. "Plain People." *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*: <http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Plain_People&coldid=102606>; accessed 29 November 2017.

²⁴⁷. Brubaker, Rogers and Frederick Cooper. "Beyond 'Identity.'" *Theory and Society* 29, no. 1 (February 2000): 1, 7–8.

²⁴⁸. Bender, Harold S., Robert Friedmann, and Walter Klaassen, "Anabaptism." *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*: <<http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Anabaptism&coldid=143474>>; accessed 28 November 2017.

²⁴⁹. Brubaker and Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity,'" 17–18.

technologies changed, suggesting that the bindings resonated as part of a generally accepted standard for how religious books should look, quite aside from the structures' practical advantages. More research should be done into transitional phases in nineteenth-century bookmaking as the technology of book structures evolved but certain traditional features of Anabaptist bindings remained important within the community. Second, Anabaptists continued (and still continue) to embrace the German and Pennsylvania-Dutch languages and maintain a strong religious community today, which suggests the pervasive power of the devotional world to which the bindings have long belonged. Continued exploration of the intersection of devotional life and book form could provide more answers regarding Anabaptists' preferred book structures. This study has revealed that early American Anabaptist bindings should be considered a central, if complex, artifactual source base for the study of religious and cultural identity among an important minority community that did much to shape the contours of American religious culture.

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**Additional images of American and European bindings,
including Swiss Anabaptist examples**

American bindings

Figs. 62–63

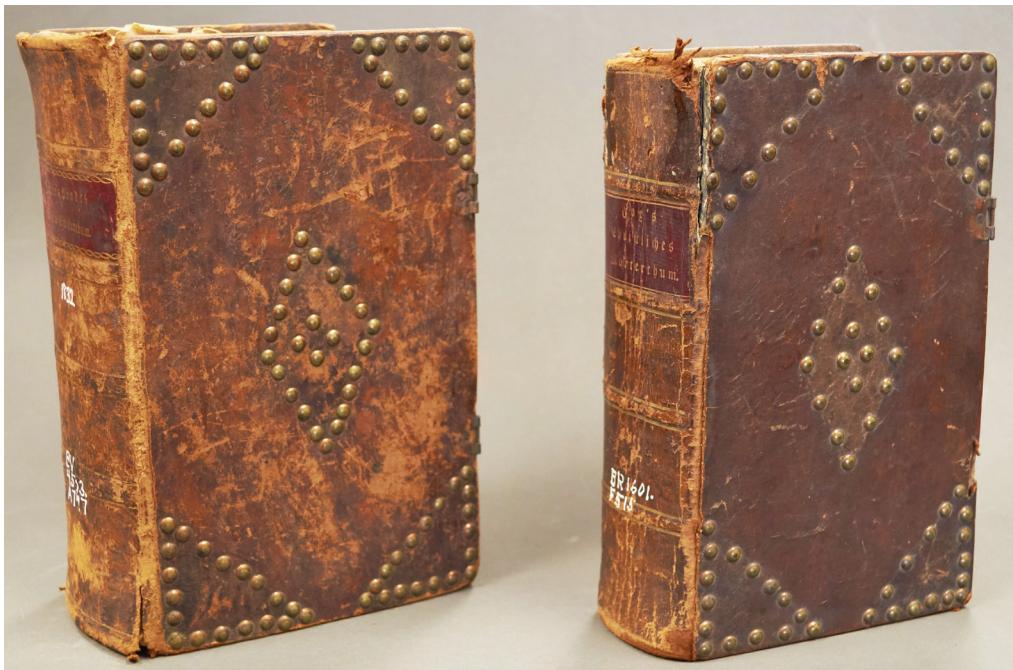
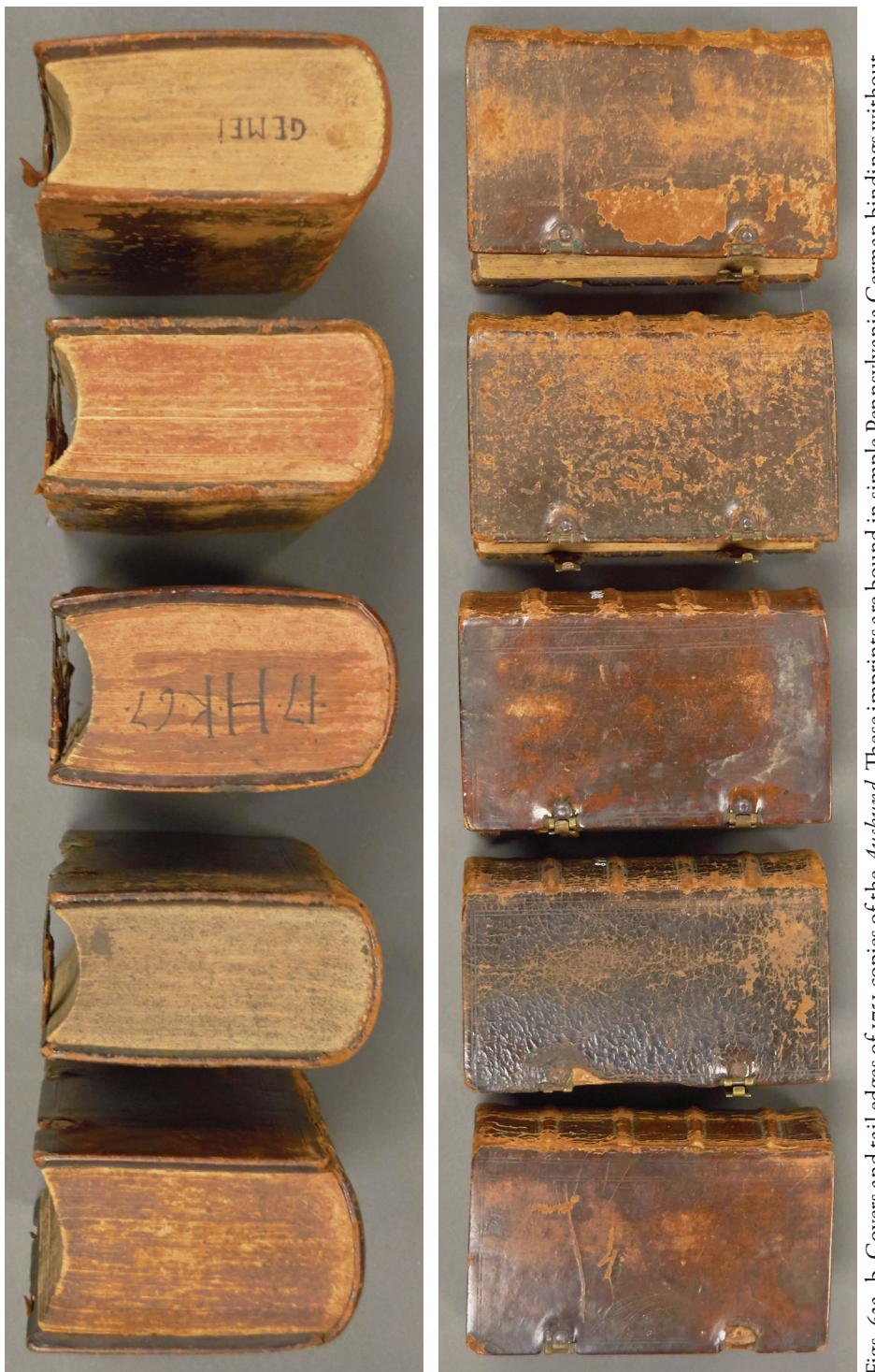


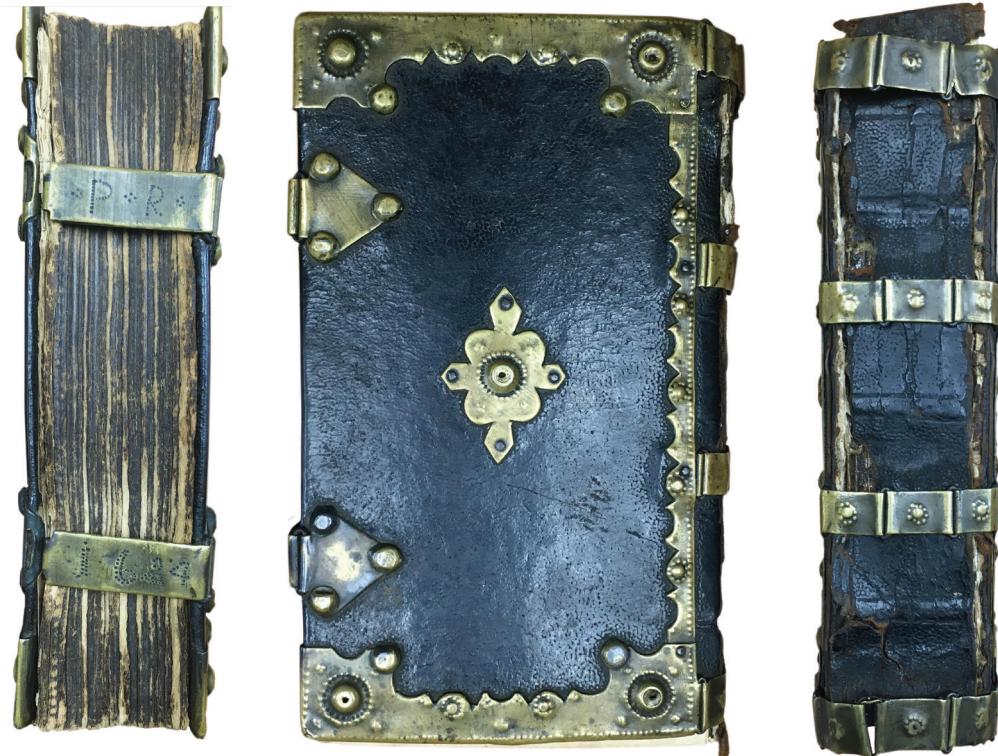
Fig. 62. Left: Arndt, Johann. *Des hoherleuchteten Lehrers Herrn*, Philadelphia: Georg W. Wentz, 1832 (LMHS: BV 4573.A747). Right: Foxe, John. *Allgemeine geschichte*, Philadelphia: G.W. Mentz und Sohn, 1833 (LMHS: BR 1601.F515).



Figs. 63a–b. Covers and rail edges of 1751 copies of the *Ausbund*. These imprints are bound in simple Pennsylvania German bindings without metal attachments, apart from clasps. They display a great uniformity in production, as well as the typical forwarding characteristics of American Anabaptist bindings; see also Fig. 27 (LMHS: BV481.M4 A8 1751 c.1–5).

Likely European bindings (found in American collections)

Figs. 64–65



Figs. 64a–c. Some of the more ornately decorated bindings the authors have observed were found on Lobwasser hymnals, such as this book held at Muddy Creek Farm Library. The authors have observed that chain-like, all-metal spine straps are often found on these highly adorned bindings as well; see also Figs. 46 and 49. Lobwasser, Ambrosius, Pieter Mortier, and Abraham Van Someren. *Ambrosii Lobwassers D. CL. Psalmen Davids*, Amsterdam: 1696 (MCFL: #12345.9).



Fig. 64d. Title page.



Figs. 65a–c. Another Lobwasser hymnal with a highly decorated binding and chain-like, all-metal spine straps. Lobwasser, Ambrosius. *Lobwasser, Ambrosius. Die Verbesserte CL. Psalmen Davids*, Amsterdam: H. Burgers, 1749 (MCFL: E#12371.0).



Figs. 65d–e. Inscription and title page.

European bindings

Figs. 66–69



Fig. 66. This Jura-style binding displays the most commonly exhibited clasp style on the European Anabaptist bindings we observed. To see the catch plates, see Fig. 50, second from left. *Auss Bundt*, 17— (ML/UB: UB MUE Hx19oe).



Fig. 67. This Jura-style binding displays the second-most commonly exhibited clasp style on the European Anabaptist bindings we observed. Other views of this binding can be seen in Figs. 52a–b. Schabaelje, *Die wandlende Seel*, 1770 (ALSMC: ANC/101/137).



Figs. 68a–b. Spine and front cover of another Lobwasser hymnal, this one a sextodecimo. This small binding once had two vellum spine straps that were wrapped in leather and then brass strips; another spine-strap style observed on a very small proportion of European Anabaptist bindings. *Die Psalmen Davids*, Zürich: Bey Michael Schaufelbergers sel. Erbin und Christoph Hardmeyer, 1698 (ALSMC: ANC/101/33).



Fig. 68c. Title page.



Figs. 69a–c. European octavo binding resembling the Jura style but with some differences from the highly uniform, most common style. Ornate blind-tooled calf covers, and punched and chiseled or die-formed cornerpieces. Star-shaped nails anchor the straps to the rear board (opposite). *Auss Bundt*, [undated, pre-1744] (ALSMC: MTR/101/2).



Fig. 69d. Inside of back board showing (failed) adhesive board attachment with frayed cords and paper stub. The metal furniture was attached with iron and brass nails, some of which were hammered over (at corners) and some were spread or upset, forming a rivet-like attachment (at center).

Table 1.
Some differences between European, Jura-style, and American Anabaptist
binding decoration and attachments.*

	European	Jura-style	American Anabaptist (Pennsylvanian), pre-1850
Blind tooling	Varied. Can be plain or more elaborate, with decorative rolls forming panel designs.	Octavo-size volumes mostly have single lines in a plain style. Folio-size volumes have decorative roll patterns forming a panel design.	Typically simple blind lines in a plain style. Very minimal, compared to European examples.
Book furniture materials	All sheet brass.	All sheet brass.	Sheet copper, tinned-iron, and brass. Brass and iron clasp components.
Shapes	Varied.	Highly regular. Edge strips rather than cornerpieces.	Varied.
Date and Initial Plates	Occasionally.	Always. Lozenge shape on octavos and square shape on the diagonal for folios.	Occasionally.
Means of attachment	Small brass tacks. Occasionally, large decorative brass tacks.	Small brass tacks.	Varied: small brass tacks, large brass upholstery tacks. Commonly: copper cut nails.
Spine straps	Varied, from 2–6 observed. All metal, leather, and studded leather.	Highly uniform: always three studded leather spine straps.	Varied, but there is a much higher percentage of examples with two plain leather spine straps on American bindings.

* Jura-style is also European, but specifically, it is produced in the Jura region of Switzerland.

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 DUL: Duke University, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Durham, North Carolina
 FEMC/BML: Frederick E. Master Collection, Bryn Mawr College, Library, Bryn Mawr, Penn.
 FMC: Franklin & Marshall College, Lancaster, Penn.
 HHHM: Hans Herr House Museum, Willow Street, Penn.
 HSP: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
 LCP: Library Company of Philadelphia, Philadelphia
 LMHS: Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, Lancaster, Penn.
 LWC: Lloyd Weiler Collection
 MA: Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, Penn.
 MCFL: Muddy Creek Farm Library, Ephrata, Penn.
 ML/UB: Münstergasse Library, Universitätsbibliothek Bern, Bern, Switzerland
 PHMC: Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, Ephrata Cloister, Ephrata
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