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Prefatory Note

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Prefatory Note:

Among immigrants from Switzerland the [Adult-] Baptism-Minded Swiss Brethren and Sisters whose first communities emerged in the 1520's occupy a special place. Their rejection of the very foundation of the pre-1790 Swiss Confederation--infant baptism, militia service, and the oath--brought them into head-on collision not only with the religious, but also the secular authorities. Sporadic persecutions led to migrations, especially to William Penn's 'Holy Experiment' which allowed, in contrast to New England, all forms of the Christian faith in its domain. Although in the 19th century the free exercise of the Swiss Brethren faith became constitutionally guaranteed also in Switzerland, the search for affordable land suitable for family-farming continued and led many Swiss Brethren and Sisters to settle in the Midwest of the United States. Delbert Gratz has pioneered the study of those migrations in his book Bernese Anabaptists and Their American Descendants, published by Herald Press in 1953. In this issue of the SAHS Review he offers a sensitive retrospective summary of his findings from the vantage point of the Swiss Brethren faith.

Three reviews--two relating to books on Swiss abroad and one to an important literary study by a noted Swiss scholar--intend to familiarize SAHS members with valuable works of Swiss-American interest as does an appended list of recent titles. As always, Natalie Hector has greatly helped in shaping the issue which is gratefully acknowledged. With best wishes for a good summer,

Leo Schelbert, Editor