

# Hostettler European Heritage Tour



*September 12-24, 2025*

This tour led by **Lemar and Lois Ann Mast** with Resource **John E. Sharp** will visit historic Anabaptist sites in Switzerland and Germany including ancestral villages where our Hochstetler/Hostetler/Hostettler ancestors lived. The above photo is the Hostettler Chapel in Switzerland.

## Friday, September 12, 2025

Fly to Europe—parking will be available at Morgantown, Pa., where a chartered bus will take us to the airport to begin this memorable journey! Others may fly direct to the Philadelphia Airport.

## Saturday, September 13, 2025

Arrive at the Zürich Airport and enjoy a Swiss lunch of Alpen-soup, Swiss Bratwurst with homemade bread, plus a scrumptious Swiss dessert by our friend Lydia Baumgartner-Flachsmann before visiting Zurich city—the birthplace of Anabaptism in 1525—for a short walking tour. Our walk will begin at the Fraumünster Cathedral with its five famous stained glass windows by Marc Chagall, and will also include the Grossmünster Cathedral with its massive bronze cast doors depicting the Reformation story, the memorial stone along the Limmat River—site where Anabaptist Felix



*Memorial plaque along the Limmat River in Zürich showing the site where early Anabaptist Felix Manz was drowned in 1527. The Grossmünster is in the distance.*

Manz was drowned in 1527, and where Preacher Hans Landis was beheaded in 1614. As we walk the same cobblestone streets our Anabaptist ancestors walked, this journey becomes a spiritual journey. Yes, we will go to bed early tonight after an early dinner!



*Walking up to the Anabaptist Cave is certainly a rewarding accomplishment!*

## Sunday, September 14, 2025

Our first stop this morning is at the *Täuferhöhle* (Anabaptist Cave) where Anabaptists are known to have worshipped in secret. As we hike up the hill past cows with ringing cowbells, we will consider the freedom we experience today to worship unmolested in stark comparison to how the Anabaptists hiked to this cave at night in the dark where they secretly worshipped. After a delicious lunch served by our Fischer friends, we will drive north to see the largest waterfalls in Europe. We enter Germany and sleep in the Black Forest in the cuckoo clock country.

## Monday, September 15, 2025

A morning drive will take us into the Pfalz area of Germany where our first stop will be at Münsterhof—known home of German Hostettlers for a number of generations that was originally a monastery destroyed in the Thirty Years' War. Then, it is on to Weierhof to see the Mennonite Historical Library and enjoy a walking tour of this town, before traveling to our hotel near the famed Worms Cathedral and the Martin Luther monument.

## Tuesday, September 16, 2025

Today is our Rhine River cruise sailing up the Rhine River past the same castles that our ancestors passed when they were on their way to America. Then say goodbye to Germany as we drive to France.



*Ride past the same castles our ancestors rode past on the Rhine River—although our ship will be quite different than boats used years ago!*





*Present-day Struthof Concentration Camp*

**Wednesday, September 17, 2025**

Our first stop this morning is at the Struthof concentration camp, the only German-run WWII camp built on French soil. It was preserved at the time of the liberation in 1944 so most of the buildings, fences, towers, and incinerator are preserved. After this sober visit, we will drive south to the city of Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines where many Amish families lived in the 1600s. Our lunch stop will be at a park where we will see many storks and other animals before leaving for Switzerland.

**Thursday, September 18, 2025**

A morning visit to a local Swiss cheese factory will provide the opportunity to sample Swiss cheese and even purchase some shrink-wrapped cheese to carry home. Then we will visit Bern—the capital of Switzerland: first a stop at the Stad-tarchiv to see old papers and books about the Hofstetters dating back to the Anabaptist period. Lunch and some free time in the downtown city of Bern to watch the famous clock tower, enjoy the bear pits, and tour the impressive cathedral. We will also visit the Hans Haslibacher home and the old Trachselwald Castle built in 1200 A.D. where Brechbill, Martin, Mosimann, Leichty, and Sommers Anabaptists were imprisoned. The prison cells that were there in the 1500s and 1600s can be seen yet today. On one of these nights in the Emental, we will be treated by a Yodeling Choir just for our group!



*Guggisberg, Switzerland, is considered the origins of the Hostettler name and is even found on a plaque in the Guggisberg Community*



*A highlight of our trip will be the special **Alpabfahrten** when the cows are brought down off the high Alpine pastures and paraded through the town right past our hotel!*

**Friday, September 19, 2025**

What a delight to see the *Alpabfahrten* (cows coming down off the mountain) at Sumiswald this morning. Our lunch will be at the Kambly Swiss Cookie Factory where we will sample lots of different Swiss cookies (free)! This afternoon, we visit our friends, Simon and

Regula Fankhauser, who will tell us about the *Täuferversteck*—a hiding place for Anabaptists. Before returning to our hotel, we will enjoy a stop at Langnau—home of the oldest, continuous Mennonite church in the world! The cemetery across the road reveals names such as Amstutz, Gerber, Hirschy, and Lehman.

**Saturday, September 20, 2025**

Today will be extra special as we visit the Schwarzenburgerland area of Switzerland. Here among the hills and valleys is where our Hostettler family originated, perhaps in the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> century.

Some have remained, and others have left for other countries. We will visit the Hostettlen Chapel and also the farming hamlet of Winterkraut where the father of Immigrant Jacob Hochstetler lived and was an Anabaptist leader. Jacob fled his lifetime home in the late 1690s for fear of his life and took his family to Alsace, France. We will also



*Famous 13<sup>th</sup> century **Clock Tower** in the city of Bern that was seen by our ancestors before they came to America.*



*We climb to the top of the **Trachselwald Castle** tower to see where Anabaptists were imprisoned in the 1500s.*



*It is a solemn moment to consider placing one of our group into the stocks in an old prison cell at **Trachselwald**.*





*Winterkraut*

*Winterkraut where the father of Immigrant Jacob Hochstetler lived and was an Anabaptist leader.*



*Erlenbach Reformed Church where Jakob Ammann was baptized as an infant.*



*Thun castle where Anabaptists were chained in the prison towers. Yes, we can walk to the top.*

visit Guggisberg where in the town hall we can see a large plaque with the following family names who have lived in this region: Beyeler/Byler, Hostettler, Marti, Mast, Mischler, Steiner, Weber, Wenger, and many others. An afternoon visit to the Reformed Church at Steffisburg will show us where Kauffmans, Kings, Lehmans, Yoders, and Zauggs/Zooks have lived and served in government positions.

**Sunday, September 21, 2025**

This morning we will enjoy our Sunday morning worship at the Erlenbach Reformed Church where Jakob Ammann was baptized as an infant. Then it is on for a memorable afternoon visit to the Thun Castle where Anabaptists were chained already in 1532. If the weather is good, we will see the snowy Alps these three days.

**Monday, September 22, 2025**

As the morning clouds lift this morning, we will board a cablecar to take us high up into the Alps with spectacular scenery to enjoy a morning breakfast. The spectacular view of the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau snow-capped mountains plus more than 200 other summits will be awesome! After our descent, we board our bus, and stop at the town of Interlaken before driving on to Brienz for a cheese-fondue dinner accompanied by an alphorn concert!



*Susten Pass*

**Tuesday, September 23, 2025**

Not only the hikers and walkers will enjoy the Ballenberg Open Air Museum this morning—also called the “Williamsburg of Switzerland”—but everyone will love to stroll through the paths to view the 100+ buildings that are centuries old from all over Switzerland, pet the farmyard animals, study the traditional and old-time gardens and fields, and learn from the demonstrations of local crafts—all that create a vivid impression of rural life in days gone by. Then what a great way to spend our last full day in Switzerland by driving through the Susten Pass—so scenic but yet exciting! Then we arrive at the small town of Hirzel—the home town of the Landis family—and also where Johanni Spyri lived and wrote the book *Heidi*. The Hirzel Reformed Church was built from money confiscated from Landis and other Anabaptist families who were forced to leave their homeland in Switzerland. We will see the house of Preacher Hans Landis—the last Anabaptist to be martyred in Switzerland.



*A cable car ride up to the **Niederhorn** will give us imposing views of the Bernese Swiss Alps and wonderful views of Lake Thun. We can also enjoy some hiking up here as well.*

**Wednesday, September 24, 2025**

Fly home from the Zurich, Switzerland, airport. This memorable experience of visiting Europe needs to end some time!





*Grape vineyards along the Rhine River.*



*Lovely Swiss Edelweiss,*



*Colorful flower boxes are everywhere!*

— TOUR FEATURES AND CONDITIONS —

**TOUR PRICE:** \$4,900.00 per person based on double occupancy (add \$800 for a single room). A chartered bus from Morgantown will be available to transport persons to and from the airport. Vehicles may be parked cost-free at Masthof (Morgantown, Pa.) while we are in Europe. The projected cost for bus transportation to and from the airport will be about \$60 roundtrip per person (depends on the number of persons).

**AIR TRANSPORTATION:** Airfare and USA departure tax included in tour price.

**MEALS:** Continental breakfast each morning and dinner each evening (excludes beverages) are provided. Lunches are on our own, although suggestions will be given.

**BAGGAGE:** Motorcoach capacity limits tour participants to one large suitcase per person plus a carry-on bag, so only one large suitcase plus “underseat” baggage, **please**. Airline baggage limits apply to the tour: luggage may not exceed a combined length, width, and height of 106 inches provided no bag exceeds 62 inches in width. The carry-on bag total dimensions limit is 45 inches, and cannot weigh more than 50 pounds.

**SIGHTSEEING AND ENTRANCE FEES:** Entrance fees are included to all places mentioned in this itinerary.

**TIPS AND TAXES:** Applicable taxes and service charges for program features are included. All tips to hotel staff for included services and meals and to bus driver are included.

**NOT INCLUDED:** Passport fee, travel insurance if your situation deems necessary, meals at noontime, beverages with included dinners, and personal expenses are not included. Details on the use of credit card and using the country’s currency will be provided closer to our departure.

**DEPOSIT AND PAYMENTS:** A deposit of \$500.00 per person is requested to hold space on this tour. The remaining \$4,400 will be due on or before January 1, 2025, as space permits. Pending availability, reservations will be accepted after January 1, 2025, although the cost of the airline ticket portion of the tour price may increase.

**CANCELLATION CONDITIONS:** Full refund granted if cancellation is received by January 1, 2025. Cancellation after January 1, 2025, will result in a full refund less airline ticket cost (although the airline usually grants a voucher that can be used later).

A valid passport is required. If you do not have a passport, you should apply for one immediately. If you have a passport, please verify that it is valid until at least December 31, 2025. No visa is required.

**ALL RATES AND FARES ARE CALCULATED ON PRICES IN EFFECT AS OF JULY 1, 2023, AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. TOUR PRICE IS BASED ON THE PARTICIPATION OF 35 PERSONS.**

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Mennonite Family History, 219 Mill Road, Morgantown, PA 19543-9516 • mast@masthof.com • 484-798-8556

Please reserve space for \_\_\_\_\_ person(s)  
on the *2025 Hostettler European Heritage Tour*  
led by the Masts and John E. Sharp. Check should  
be payable to **“Mennonite Family History.”**

Enclosed is my deposit check of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(\$500.00 deposit per person).

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone & E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_