

**PART ONE**  
**Their First Years**  
**1930 - 1935**

# Chapter 1

On the morning of December 2, 1930, the activity on Abram and Lizzie Zimmerman's farm rivaled a disturbed anthill. Their farmhouse, standing sharply downhill just outside the borough of Terre Hill, gleamed in anticipation of Lydia's wedding guests. Lydia's was a groundbreaking wedding; Abram and Lizzie had never hosted a wedding in their home before.

The level of excitement and activity spiked on Lydia's special day, but Abram and Lizzie's home in southeastern Pennsylvania rang with activity everyday, wedding or no wedding. With ten children ranging from twenty-two-year-old Lydia down to one-year-old Harvey, quiet times seldom happened during waking hours, except during the brief moment before mealtimes when the family paused, with hands on their laps, for a silent prayer.

When Barton Horst, the young gentleman responsible for the agitated anthill, first came courting, it took him awhile to get used to the racket of Lydia's boisterous siblings. Bart had eleven brothers and sisters but, unlike Lydia, he found himself at the end of the family. Bart, three weeks short of twenty-three, and his twenty-year-old brother, Adam, no longer created much commotion in their home. They certainly didn't tear around or cry like four-year-old Mabel and little Harvey.

On Sunday evenings, when Bart came to see Lydia, the two of them escaped the interested glances of Lydia's younger siblings by closing the parlor door, but that bit of privacy was short lived when Eli Sauder started seeing Lydia's sister Lena.

Lydia, used to having siblings all around, accepted the presence of Eli and Lena at the other end of the parlor, as a normal part of life. When someone asked what she and Bart did when they wanted to tell secrets, Lydia calmly replied that they could always whisper.

Occasionally, instead of Bart and Eli both hitching up horses on Sunday evening to go see their girls, the young men rode to the Zimmerman home in the same carriage. The first time the suitors shared a ride, Lydia and Lena's siblings crowded around the

window to watch as both Bart and Eli walked up the sidewalk. As soon as Lizzie discovered her curious offspring teeming around the window like flies, she shoed them all away.

Lydia and Lena, the two oldest children in the family and only fifteen months apart in age, did more together than share a parlor. Because they attended youth activities before their brother Weaver was old enough to go, the two girls took the horse and carriage to the Saturday evening youth singings by themselves. They lacked an older brother to care for the horse and carriage, but the two girls seldom lacked willing hands to tie their horse after they arrived at the home of the family hosting the singing.

Lydia and Lena also rode the trolley to youth activities. In 1905, several years before Lydia's birth, the Conestoga Traction Company extended the trolley line that ran between Lancaster and Blue Ball, out to Terre Hill. The trolley, at least in the early years, went hourly, from six in the morning till almost midnight. If Abram and Lizzie, or the older children, needed something in Lancaster, they got on the trolley at Terre Hill, rode five miles to Blue Ball, then on through New Holland to Lancaster, the county seat of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

For most people, the interurban trolley, a glorified city streetcar, bridged the gap between the era of horse drawn carriages and the era of automobiles. Interurban trolleys came into being during the last few years of the 1800's. The trolley lines that grew so rapidly and showed such promise, were virtually extinct by the 1940's since, during that time, most people bought automobiles.

Unlike most Americans, Abram and Lizzie did not buy an automobile, or machine. As Old Order Mennonites, they shunned the faster, more convenient vehicles, and kept using their horse and carriage.

Abram and Lizzie's family lived near the trolley that came into Terre Hill. On cold, icy mornings they could see sparks fly as the trolley wheel bounced on and off the icy wire, constantly making and breaking the connection to the electric wire.

The borough of Terre Hill was the end of the line so whenever the trolley got to Terre Hill, the driver walked to the driver's seat at the other end of the trolley, and

started back to Blue Ball. If passengers returning to Blue Ball, New Holland, Lancaster, or other stops along the way, did not want to make the trip looking backward, they simply flipped the hinged seatback, so they could look out front.

Slaters, a small restaurant conveniently located beside the trolley station, was known for the delicious ice cream they sold. Abram and Lizzie contributed to the tasty ice cream by selling cream, skimmed from their milk, to the restaurant owners.

Most Saturday evenings during the summer, Lydia and Lena joined other young people at the Linden Grove singing school, about two miles from their home. Since the trolley passed close to their house and to singing school, Lydia and Lena rode the trolley instead of taking the horse and carriage. As the two of them walked to or from the trolley station at night, they often saw the lamplighter going from lamp to lamp with his kerosene can, refilling the street lamps.

One evening after singing school, before the girls began dating Bart and Eli, two stout young men asked Lydia and Lena if they had a way home. Having no interest in the boys who offered to escort them, the girls, thinking of the trolley, said, yes, they had a way home.

As Lydia and Lena rode home from singing school on the trolley, they hashed the incident over as sisters do. Suddenly one of them came up with the notion that the boys might be waiting for them at the Terre Hill trolley station. Aghast at the thought, Lydia and Lena hurriedly planned an escape route. Instead of going all the way to the station, the girls bided their time until the trolley slowed for the curve near their house. When it slowed enough, they hopped off and hurried home through the dark field.

But the days of Lydia and Lena sharing a parlor and going away together had come to a halt; Bart and Lydia were getting married. Like other Old Order Mennonite weddings in the Groffdale Conference, Bart and Lydia's wedding took place on Tuesday, in late fall or winter, in the bride's home. In later years, as the Old Order Mennonite community grew, weddings took place on both Tuesdays and Thursdays. Later weddings also took place any month throughout the year, except in June.

Around a hundred friends and relatives laid aside weekday duties and gathered in Abram and Lizzie's home for the joyful occasion. Married folks visited amiably on the first floor while the youthful set congregated upstairs. Two young couples moved among the milling guests offering cookies and shot glasses of homemade wine. Guests chose between cookies with chocolate frosting and cookies with coconut sprinkled on white frosting.

Excitement mounted as the announcer called out names of the guests, so they could be ushered to seats on the first floor of Abram and Lizzie's spotless farmhouse. As soon as everyone was seated the service began.

When the singing and preaching came to an end, Bishop Joseph Wenger asked Bart and Lydia to stand and join their right hands. Aaron Sensenig, a young man in the audience who would later replace Joe Wenger as the bishop of the Groffdale Conference, noted with interest that Bart and Lydia looked at each other instead of at the bishop reading the wedding vows.

It was a serious moment for the young couple; they knew the vows were a commitment for life. As Lydia answered "ya," her family name of Zimmerman fell away like an old cocoon, and she emerged from the ceremony with a new name, Lydia Horst.

Like most of their peers, Bart and Lydia got a large new family Bible. A maple branch engraved in the stiff, thick cover, and the words "Holy Bible", adorned the front of the bulky, black book. By days end, the first record page, located between the Old and New Testaments of the big Bible, read:

**This Certifies that** *Bartin M Horst of East Earl Township and Lydia S Zimmerman of Terre Hill* **were united by me in the Bond of Holy Matrimony at Terre Hill on the** *Second* **day of** *December* **in the year of our Lord 19***30***. In the presence of** *Lena Zimmerman and Eli N. Sauder* **Signed** *Joseph Wenger*

Bishop Joe Wenger inadvertently misspelled Barton.

The guests at Bart and Lydia's wedding sat down to a delicious meal; one that did not come about without hard work. In the hectic days before the wedding, Lizzie and the girls made, cut, and dried, noodles. They baked ten large loaves of bread for the tables and eleven small loaves to cut into pieces to make a crusty oyster filling. Roast duck on the menu called for plucking and butchering thirteen ducks. In addition to making five chocolate and four white layer cakes Lizzie, Lydia and Lena made ten dishes of caramel pudding and ten coconut pies.

Making a wedding dinner demanded much time and effort for Lizzie and her family, but they were well compensated as those nearest and dearest to them, eagerly sniffed the platters of roast duck, and appreciatively eyed bowls of stuffing, white potatoes, sweet potatoes, and buttery noodles.

After a silent prayer of thanks, the hungry wedding guests spread homemade bread with homemade butter and jelly. Along with the steaming platters and bowls of warm food, they enjoyed cubes of cheese, and caramel pudding. Last to make the rounds on the long spread-out table were the layer cakes and fruit salad made with fresh oranges, canned white cherries, canned sliced pineapple, and fresh red grapes.

In the evening after most of the older people left, the Zimmerman household served the younger set another delicious meal, including Lizzie's delectable coconut pies.

As Lizzie watched her oldest daughter throughout the day, her mind may well have gone to the time when Lydia, as a young child, lay sick with pneumonia. Feeling Lydia's sickness exceeded his expertise, Abram and Lizzie's family doctor had summoned a surgeon from Lancaster. On that bygone day Abram had walked to the trolley station to meet the surgeon and bring him back to their house.

At the house, the surgeon deftly examined Lydia, who was lying on the kitchen table. As soon as he had his shiny instruments arranged on a nearby chest, he administered ether. When Lydia succumbed to the ether, the surgeon made an incision

in the left side of her chest near her waist and removed a rib so he could insert a wick to drain her lungs.

Young Lydia spent the next nine weeks in bed. By the time she got up again her back was slightly crooked so Abram fixed a bar in one of the doorways for her to swing on, so she could straighten out her back.

Lydia survived her battle with pneumonia, but her little brother Abram Jr. did not. At six months of age, when Lydia was seven years old, Abram Jr. had died of pneumonia. But that all happened long ago, long before Lydia was a grown, just-married woman.

Bart and Lydia got married in December but didn't move into their own home until March thirty-first. Because Old Order Mennonite weddings were held only in fall and winter at that time, many couples had to wait to live together until they could move onto their farm at the beginning of the new fiscal year.

The day after Bart and Lydia's wedding, Bart went back to his parent's home while Lydia stayed with her parents. Each Saturday evening, Bart hurried back to Lydia's home to spend the weekend with her. On Monday morning he left for his own home again.

As the fiscal year coasted to a close, Lydia packed items she received from home. Her five handmade quilts, six sheets, eight pillow cases, six gingham aprons, a blanket shawl, six muslin shirts, six pairs of stockings, a dozen dish rags, and a half dozen spools of thread, would, among a host of other things, make the move from Terre Hill to her new home on Turkey Hill.

Lydia recorded everything she got from her parents, and everything she bought at auctions, or bought new, including the price. In the middle of one of the pages listing items she would take with her, Lydia wrote, "From mother a present - \$200.00".

Early in the spring of 1931, Bart's parents, Preacher Henry and Barbara Horst, moved out of the Horst homestead farmhouse on Turkey Hill, into the *daudy* house.

The small *daudy* house stood just yards behind the farmhouse. Henry's parents lived in the little house earlier; now it was Henry and Barbara's turn to live in the *daudy* house.

After Henry's moved out, Bart and Lydia, with the help of their families, moved their belongings into the farmhouse where Bart lived all his life. Willing hands carried in a brown cupboard, a washstand, a Columbia range that cost one hundred and ten dollars, a wood chest, a red lounge and red rocker, a large rocker and an armless nursing rocker, a parlor stand, a mantel lamp, an eight-foot extension table, six dining room chairs, six kitchen chairs, three cane seat chairs, a bed, chaff bags (used as mattresses), two bureaus (one with glass drawer knobs), a White sewing machine, and a cabinet. Lydia's linoleum rug, seventeen yards of carpeting, with seventeen yards of Chinese matting, covered some of the farmhouse floors.

Bart and Lydia's smaller items included a set of dishes, two dozen tablespoons, stainless steel knives and forks, brooms, a nickel coffee pot, two cake pans, a flour sifter, a tin grater/slicer, a Puritan skillet, a butcher saw, at least a dozen stone crocks, a small tub, a clothes basket, two chamber pots (the house had no indoor plumbing), oil cloth for the table, and a set of Mrs. Potts sadirons.

In addition to items she purchased or got from home, Lydia brought along gifts from years gone by; the cup and saucer that once belonged to her grandmother, and the two goblets her grandfather, Joseph Theophilus Shirk, had given her during her teen years.

Bart and Lydia did not set up housekeeping without food. The summer and fall before their wedding, Lydia canned fifty quart jars of fruits and vegetables, and twenty-five jars of canned beef to take to their new home. They also took four bushels of potatoes, four crocks of apple butter, a twelve pound bag of flour, a piece of dried beef, salt, soda, and a half pound of black pepper.

A thirty-eight dollar cow, and thirteen chickens purchased for eighteen dollars, ensured a continuous supply of eggs, milk, and meat.



Lizzie, knowing bread making and moving did not mix well, sent six small loaves of bread along so her oldest daughter could settle into her new home before baking bread again.

As is often the case with married couples, Bart and Lydia were opposites. Bart talked fast, walked fast, and worked fast with his hands. Always on the go himself, he struggled with impatience when people or animals responded slowly, but he had a big heart and did not hold grudges. Bart loved to visit and had many friends. He was an overly cautious man who quickly got anxious.

Lydia provided a good balance for Bart. Her quiet, calm, easy-going personality took life as it came without worrying over every little thing. She was a gentle woman, not given to harsh words. Although not as fast as Bart, Lydia kept at her work until it was finished. Both were honest, hard-working people, always willing to lend a hand to those in need.

Though different in temperament, Bart and Lydia were both slightly built and slender, and stayed that way all their lives. Bart was medium height; Lydia on the short side.

Coming from a lively, noisy home, the first winter in her own home must have felt empty and quiet to Lydia, but winter passed as winters do. The onset of warm weather meant yard and garden work; a pastime Lydia enjoyed. The year before their marriage, after she had turned twenty-one, Lydia had worked at a nearby garment factory in Terre Hill. Although she lived close enough to walk to work, Lydia still spent most of the day inside. Now she could go outside at will.

The busy days of their first summer as husband and wife had barely slipped away when, on October 14, 1931, Amos, the first of Bart and Lydia's thirteen children, arrived. Bart and Lydia experienced the joy that comes with holding your offspring in your hands but, like other first-time parents, they also discovered that being responsible for a baby day and night was not all peace and joy.

Baby Amos fussed so much Lydia finally resorted to knotting her apron in such a way that she could carry Amos in it as she went about her work. Because of Amos's fussiness, Lydia decided they should start eating healthier, and more naturally. She did not want her children to grow up a sickly lot like some families she knew. Her resolution did not fall by the wayside; from then on, healthier eating became a way of life for Lydia and her family.

Two months before Amos's second birthday, in the heart of the busy summer, Lydia gave birth to another baby; a little girl this time. Bart and Lydia named their first daughter Florence. Just thirteen months after Florence's birth, baby Melvin joined the family. With three little children Bart and Lydia's house was no longer quiet.

During the four years they lived in Bart's childhood home on Turkey Hill, Bart and one of his twin brothers, Mahlon Horst, helped each other during busy times, like hay-making. Joe, one of Lydia's younger brothers, also worked for them for a couple summers.

Joe came to work as Lydia's maid because, after Lena married Eli Sauder, Abram and Lizzie's oldest girl at home was only eleven years old. Lizzie needed her daughter at home to help with her countless household chores, so she sent ten-year-old Joe to Turkey Hill to help Bart and Lydia.

Joe worked wherever he was needed. He worked as Lydia's maid tending the children and helping in the garden, or he worked as a hired man, helping Bart in the barn and the fields.

By the time Joe came to Turkey Hill, Bart and Lydia owned three cows. Every day after the morning milking, Joe followed Bart and Lydia's three cows down the long lane out back. Most of the farm Bart and Lydia called home stood high and dry, but the back lane led down to a flat, almost swampy, pasture.

As young Joe drove the cows down to the pasture, or went in late afternoon to drive them back up to the barn for the evening milking, he watched for blacksnakes. Joe hated the blacksnakes that abounded in the tall grass of the swampy pasture. When

the cows reached the pasture he opened the gate and let the cows in or out. He never stepped into the waving pasture grass.

The long black reptiles did not stay in the pasture. Joe often saw the snaky tracks they left in the dusty lane as they silently slithered to a new area. Sometimes he saw the dark snakes sunning themselves in blackberry bushes beside the lane, or draping from low-hanging branches of nearby trees.

Sometimes after Joe came back up to the house with tales of snakes, Bart grabbed his gun and hurried down the lane to put an end to a snake or two.

To bring in a little extra income, Lydia skimmed cream from the milk and made butter to sell. After churning the butter, she pressed it into her one-pound mold topped with a star. Lydia sold excess butter to the huckster, or peddler that came around. She also sold their extra eggs to him.

Bart and Lydia did not waste the buttermilk, or other milk. If they had more milk than they could use, they poured the excess milk into a pail to thicken. Later, after the milk thickened, Bart and Joe fed the thick, curdled milk to the pigs and chickens. The animals eagerly gobbled the sour, chunky, milk.

Although Bart and Lydia did not know it, the stage was being set for another world war during the first years of their marriage. After the death of Germany's president in August of 1934, Adolf Hitler, already chancellor of Germany, also became its president. Unfortunately, the merging of the two offices made Hitler dictator of Germany. As both legislator and executive, Hitler possessed the power to make war or keep peace, to make new laws or wipe out existing laws.

While they were unaware of the happenings in Europe, Bart and Lydia knew they set up housekeeping during a difficult time in American history. The stock market crash in October of 1929, the year before their wedding, put a quick end to the economic boom of the 1920's. Banks and businesses failed. By 1932 one out of every four United States workers no longer had a job.

The Great Depression affected much of the world, and lasted, at least in the United States, until the outbreak of World War II in 1939, when the demand for men, and the creation of new jobs, revived the economy.

The first nine years of Bart and Lydia's married life took place during the Great Depression, but it did not significantly change their lifestyle. Bart and Lydia's chickens supplied eggs and meat, their cows gave them milk, one of their steers provided beef, and vegetables from their large garden were eaten fresh, canned, dried, or stored in the cellar.

Growing up as the oldest child in a large family, Lydia knew and understood the maxim, "Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without," and that is what she did, not only during the depression, but throughout her life.

Lizzie had taught Lydia from little up to be thrifty. During the depression years Lydia became thriftier yet. If one of the big, tight-fitting nipples that she pulled down over the rim of the glass baby bottles, ripped, Lydia did not run to the cupboard for a new one right away. Instead, she sewed the tear in the nipple.

Lydia liked to sew and made most of the family's clothing. At the age of twelve, when her mother had gone away for the day, Lydia, decided to sew a dress for herself because she did not like how the ones fit that Lizzie made for her. Lydia got the waistline a little high, but otherwise the dress did not turn out too bad. When Lizzie returned and saw the dress Lydia made, she told her daughter she could start making her own dresses.

As members of the Old Order Mennonite Church, Bart and Lydia wore plain, unadorned clothes, so Lydia did not do a lot of fancy sewing. She sewed dresses, aprons, slips, and shirts, and trousers for the little boys, but bought items like stockings, hats, and shawls.

The Old Order Mennonite Church had emerged over time. After the Mennonites emigrated from Europe to America, the various Mennonite congregations formed two conferences; the Franconia Conference and the Lancaster Conference, with the

Lancaster Conference becoming the larger of the two. In the early years, the church stayed together in doctrine and practice with a few exceptions.

The first major break from the main body of the Mennonite Church began in 1767 when the United Brethren organized. The second group to leave was the Reformed Mennonites in 1812, followed by the Stauffer or Pike Mennonite division in 1846, the Oberholtzer Mennonite division of 1847, and the Holdeman Mennonite division in 1859. The Oberholtzer group eventually led to the General Conference—not to be confused with the Mennonite General Conference which formed in 1898.

The most widespread division and the one that impacted nearly every Mennonite community, including the community where Bart and Lydia's families lived, was the division of the Old Order Mennonites from the mainstream Mennonites. The first Old Order division occurred in northern Indiana in 1872 and was followed by divisions in Ohio and Canada. Pennsylvania divided in 1893 and Virginia in 1901. Families going with the Old Order Mennonites kept the old form of worship, while the mainstream Mennonites adopted Sunday school, English preaching, and evangelistic meetings.

Bart's parents and Lydia's grandparents chose to keep the old form of worship, and went with Jonas Martin, the leader of the Old Order division in Pennsylvania. After leaving the Lancaster Conference, Jonas Martin and his followers formed the Weaverland Mennonite Conference.

As long as Jonas Martin served as bishop of the Weaverland Conference, owning automobiles resulted in excommunication from the church. Moses Horning, the bishop who took the reins after Jonas Martin's death in 1925, allowed members to own cars if they choose to do so.

In 1927, thirty-four years after they broke from the Lancaster Conference, the Old Order group split in two mainly because of their differences on owning automobiles. (Language used in worship was also a factor.) About half of the Weaverland Conference, including Bart and Lydia and their parents, left the Weaverland Conference

with preacher Joseph Wenger and formed the Groffdale Old Order Mennonite Conference.

Members of the newly formed Groffdale Conference, (sometimes called Old Orders, team Mennonites, Joe Wengers, or horse-and-buggy Mennonites) kept their horses, while families staying with the Weaverland Conference (also known as Horning Mennonites or black bumper Mennnonites) soon all had cars.

Because both the Weaverland Conference and the Groffdale Conference retained the old form of worship and did not have Sunday school or evangelistic meetings, both groups are considered Old Order Mennonites, but the term is more often applied to the more conservative Groffdale Conference, where they also retained German preaching and continued to use horses for transportation.

Three years before their marriage, Bart and Lydia had joined the class of young applicants for instruction and baptism. They were baptized at the Weaverland Church in the fall of 1927, and were in the first group of young people received as members of the newly formed Groffdale Old Order Mennonite Conference. The congregation was so new they did not have a resident bishop to baptize the young people, so they asked Bishop John Martin from Indiana to come baptize them, which he did.

After living on Henry Horst's farm on Turkey Hill for four years, Bart and Lydia knew they needed to look for a farm of their own. Bart's brother Adam got married in November of 1934, and as the youngest of Henry Horst's sons, he would live on the Horst homestead.

Adam and his new bride Annie, like Bart and Lydia, did not live together right after their wedding, so Bart and Lydia did not need to move until the end of March, when it was time for Adam to work and plant the homestead fields, and time for Bart to work and plant new fields.

Bart's interest sparked when he heard Winnie Kurtz's forty-six acre farm on the northeast end of Terre Hill was going to be sold at a public farm auction. The farm, back in Lydia's home territory, was less than a mile from Abram and Lizzie's farm, making it especially attractive. If Bart and Lydia bought Winnie's farm, they would live

close enough to Lydia's parents that Bart and Abram could help each other with their farm work, and Lydia's younger sisters would be close enough to lend a hand when she was bogged down with work.

Bart attended the sale and bought the Kurtz farm for six thousand dollars.

Moving again meant packing again. Along with the belongings Lydia brought from home they also moved the furniture Bart's parent's had given them, including a bed, and a varnished chest emblazoned with Bart's initials, B.M.H. (Barton Martin Horst) and 1931 (the year Bart and Lydia set up housekeeping).

Bart and Lydia did not have to move alone. Family and friends soon emptied the belongings from the farmhouse and outbuildings, and loaded them onto wagons, each pulled by two horses. When the wagons were full, the horses headed for Terre Hill. The Horst homestead on Turkey Hill was no longer Bart and Lydia's home. Now it belonged to Adam and Annie.