MENNONITE LIFE

January, 1946

Published in the interest
of the best
in the religious, social, and economic phases
of Mennonite culture.

For subscriptions, manuscripts, and book reviews address *Mennonite Life*,
North Newton, Kansas. Subscription $1.00 per year.

COVER DESIGN
By Hans Bartsch

COVER ILLUSTRATION
A typical Mennonite farm in Eastern Pennsylvania
(Photograph courtesy FSA)

MENNONITE LIFE

VOL. I JANUARY, 1946 No. 1

CONTENTS

Contributors in This Issue

CORNELIUS KRAHN, who was born in Russia, studied at Amsterdam, Heidelberg, and other universities, specializing in Mennonite history and theology. He is now teaching at Bethel College and is the Director of the Bethel College Historical Library.

JOANNA S. ANDRES is the editor of **Missionary News and Notes** and the author of many poems that have appeared in various Mennonite papers. She is a graduate of Goshen College and a home-maker in Newton, Kansas.

DAVID SUDERMAN has just resumed his position as instructor in music at Bethel College after being released from C.P.S., where he served as the Director of the Civilian Public Service Camp at Colorado Springs and as Regional Director of the Rocky Mountain area.

WALTER H. HOHMANN is Director of the Department of Music at Bethel College. He is the co-editor of the **Mennonite Hymnary** and the author of **Outlines of Hymnology with Emphasis on Mennonite Hymnology.**

C. HENRY SMITH is a pioneer Mennonite educator and the most widely known American-born Mennonite historian. He has written numerous books in this field, the latest of which is **The Story of the Mennonites.** He is Professor of History at Bluffton College, Bluffton, Ohio.

FREEMAN and MARY GINGRICH, residents of St. Jacobs, Ontario, have contributed toward the solution of a vital problem in their community by providing wholesome and educational entertainment for the young people. Mr. Gingrich is a successful businessman.

J. WINFIELD FRETZ is a graduate of Bluffton College and the University of Chicago, where he studied theology and sociology. For the past two years he was engaged by the Mennonite Central Committee to do special studies in Mennonite mutual aid and colonization. He is a frequent writer on subjects pertaining to Mennonite social problems. He is teaching sociology and economics at Bethel College.

ERNEST E. LEISY is an authority in American literature and has written numerous books in this field. A native of Kansas, he has taught in several schools there. At present he is teaching at the Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

JACOB H. JANZEN was born in a Mennonite community in Russia where he was a successful educator and a pioneer writer. At present he is active as a minister and writer in Waterloo, Ontario.

This article was first published in 1935 in **Gemeindekalendar and later in the WarteJahrbuch** under the title **"Die Belletristik der Canadischen Russlanddeutschen Mennoniten."** The translation was made by Magdalene Friesen, Mountain Lake, Minnesota, a student at Bethel College. **"Ten Years Later"** was written by the author as a supplement for this publication.

ARNOLD B. DYCK, writer, artist, and publisher, lives in Steinbach, Manitoba. He studied art in Russia and Germany. He is one of the outstanding Mennonite writers in Canada.

S. H. N. GORTER has been pastor of the Mennonite church in Rotterdam and active in Mennonite relief work for many years. He is vice-chairman of the Mennonite Conference of Holland and the editor of the conference periodical.

MISS M. DE BOER is the pastor of the Mennonite Church of Vlissingen an industrial city in the Province of Zeeland. Her church and the city suffered severely during World War II.

BRUNO EWERT was the elder of the Heubuden Mennonite Church in the Danzig area. Last winter when the Russian army invaded that territory, he was evacuated with the rest of the population to Denmark where he ministers to the spiritual needs of the refugees.

H. A. FAST, vice-chairman of the Mennonite Central Committee, went to Paraguay in 1938 and again in 1945. He is a graduate of Hartford Theological Seminary, and taught at the Witmarsum Theological Seminary, Bluffton, Ohio. He served for three years as the General Director of Civilian Public Service Program. In 1943 he became head of the Bible Department at Bethel College.

MELVIN GINGERICH is a graduate of Goshen College and the University of Iowa where he majored in history. He is a contributor to various Mennonite and non-Mennonite publications, author of **The Mennonites in Iowa**, and co-editor of **Who's Who Among the Mennonites.**

J. P. KLASSEN was born in Russia. He studied art at the universities of Berlin and Munich and taught art in Russia. In 1924 he came to America and has been teaching art at Bluffton College, Bluffton, Ohio, since that time.

Active or Passive Christianity

By CORNELIUS KRAHN

The Oberammergau Passion Play is not unique. Similar plays were quite common throughout the Middle Ages. They depicted a phase of the life of Christ and were presented in churches. With the addition of worldly elements they were banned from the churches and were continued in the market square.

The presentation of the life of Christ or any phase of salvation in a drama is symbolic. It expresses a certain concept of Christianity which is common even today. Not only in Oriental, but also in some Western churches display, liturgy, and formalism are essential parts of Christianity.

Christianity of the Middle Ages was passive. The Christian was a spectator of a divine drama. Without wishing to be irreverent, let us illustrate it like this: God is the stage manager, Christ and the divine host are the actors, Christians are the audience. God created the world and man. Through sin the fellowship between God and man was broken. To atone the sins and restore the fellowship God sent His son. In this divine drama, man is more or less passive. Even Luther and Calvin did not entirely rid themselves of this concept of Christianity. In Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and Klopstock's *Messias*, we find the same theme. It consists of the prehistoric fall of the angels and the historic fall of Adam and Eve (Act I), and the restoration of man's original state (Act II). This theme is the center of worship, meditation, philosophy, and literature. In modern times Anglo-Saxon Christianity has made out of the Second Coming of Christ, a third act of this drama. The stage is set for the final act. The play is coming to a close. There is a hush, a suspense before the curtain falls at the close of the last act.

What is the Mennonite attitude toward the divine drama? This question leads directly to the essence of Mennonitism. Also it may be of significance in solving some of our problems. Mennonites have seldom, if ever, been passive on-lookers, be that for divine or human entertainment. They were too practical and time was too precious for that. They were orthodox in their belief in the divine plan of salvation. For them Christianity was less a matter of thinking and contemplation, and more a matter of attitudes and actions. They did not consider themselves spectators but rather co-actors in the sacred drama. As far as the third act of the drama is concerned they definitely anticipated the Second Coming of Christ; this only made them more zealous co-workers of God. The few instances in which some attempted to chart future events and set dates concerning the coming of Christ were catastrophic and sobering.

Thus, the essence of Mennonitism was unique. It emphasized strongly that Christianity is an active and aggressive force in a world of sin. The early Anabaptists dug through the rubble of tradition until they believed to have reached that true foundation of which Paul writes: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." It was their desire as co-workers of God to build on this foundation free from debris "gold, silver, and precious stones." They testified in word, deed, and blood in public debates, in the markets, in cathedrals, in courtrooms, in universities, wherever they went. Every member was a missionary; every man an actor in the divine drama. This is exemplified by the testimony of a Catholic persecutor who remarked to an Anabaptist martyr in a prison cell, "Before you join your church you cannot distinguish between 'a' and 'b', afterwards you know the Bible better than we theologians." This knowledge of the Bible, coupled with the aggressive spirit of testimony which found expression in consecrated living, accounts for the rapid spread of Anabaptism, in spite of severe persecution.

Is Mennonitism today still the aggressive force we have been describing? If not, why did it become passive? Because of its unique concept of Christianity, Anabaptism found itself in contradiction to existing churches, social, and civic institutions. The medieval idea that God was ruling His universe with the help of His two arms—the church and the government—prevailed even during and after the Reformation. Any new arm (church) was immediately amputated as a pseudo arm. According to the Anabaptists, the government had no right to interfere with the inner life of a church. The *"established* churches," naturally, did not object; they had been established by the government. For this reason early Anabaptism, severely persecuted and deprived of its trained intellectual leaders, became a movement of peasants and the lower middle class. Therefore today, with the exception of the Netherlands, the Mennonites are still predominantly rural. Like the saints of the Middle Ages, who went into the deserts to save their own souls, Mennonites settled in uninhabited countries to find religious liberty and to preserve the true spirit of Christianity. Sometimes their withdrawal may have resulted in being an end in itself and have become a matter of self-preservation. But, as the monks would join the world in distress and tribulation to acknowledge their solidarity with a world in sin and serve it in

a Christian spirit, so would Mennonite communities as a rule perform their Christian duties and obligations. Also, they were quietly testifying to the surrounding world by demonstrating what a Christian community can achieve in solving religious, social, cultural, and economic problems.

It is true, the Mennonite "ark of Noah" has never been perfect. Too often it anchored in a quiet, peaceful port instead of doing its mission on the high sea. How did we become complacent? Severe persecution forced the Mennonites to withdraw from the world to till the soil in quietness. Their strength is at once their weakness. This is the route by which we became passive on-lookers.

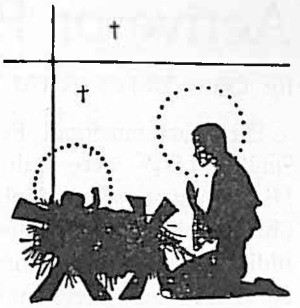
How can a passive Christian become active? Time is playing into our hands. The "Chinese wall" that surrounded us is gone. Modern means of communication have thrown all the problems of the world into our compact and confined Mennonite churches and communities. We have no choice but to confront them. How are we going to solve them? Many solutions, other than the traditional ones, are being offered to our young people. We could not, and would not isolate them from proposed solutions, but we certainly cannot afford to withhold from them our own answers to these problems.

Formerly all doves were kept secure in the ark surrounded by a world flooded with sin. Here an atmosphere was developed which instilled the characteristics and beliefs of the church into all of its members without much discussion or consciousness of it. Today the situation is different. The windows of the ark are open. Many a dove leaves without ever returning. It escapes into the world instead of from the world. But it may still be escaping the problems it confronts.

Together we have to realize what the mission of our Christian church is and how we can fullfil it best. We have to be fully acquainted with the trends of today and tomorrow, but we must also know what the essence and characteristics of our church were yesterday. Analyzing the past and the present will enable us to point out which way will lead to what goal. When a farmer wishes to make a straight furrow he must have a goal in line with the point from which he started. Looking back, we find that the early Mennonites started out on the solid foundation, "Jesus Christ, the same, yesterday, today, and forever."

This is the foundation upon which we wish to present in *Mennonite Life* the problems of our churches and communities of the past and present, —both here and abroad. Only thus, with the help of God, can we make a contribution to a greater and more abundant realization of Mennonite life "as it should be."

I Only Thank and to the Angels Listen



I wonder how it felt to hear the story
In later years of pilgrimage on earth
That angel voices resonant with "Glory!"
Proclaimed salvation's coming at Thy birth.
I wonder how it felt—when through the ages
The hosts of angels worship at Thy feet
And from eternal time to years unending
The great hallelujahs Thy presence greet.

I wonder how it felt to know that shepherds
Came kneeling to Thy lowly manger-bed;
That far across a desert, lit with starlight,
The wise men came to crown Thee King instead.
I wonder how it felt—when all around Thee
There was no room like once in Bethlehem,
No room in hearts so dark, so sin infected,
And in Thyself lay power to heal all men!

I wonder how it felt to be a stranger
Within a world by Thy creation blest;
Where foxes have their holes and birds their nest build,
But for the Son of Man no place to rest.
I wonder how it felt to walk through corn fields
And be rebuked for plucking a few ears,
When having kept the covenant of promise
To feed earth's creatures to their end of years.

I wonder how it felt to be rejected,
To find so few that loved Thee in return;
To hear the multitudes in anger shouting
While strong compassion in Thy heart did burn.
I wonder how it felt to be so emptied—
So stripped upon a cross at last to die—
When legions of Thy mighty unseen armies
By one command of Thine would have drawn nigh.

I cannot know the currents of emotion
That stirred Thy heart in pilgrimage on earth;
I only thank for that first Christmas morning
That gave Thee to us—Savior at thy birth!
I only thank and to the angels listen . . .
I watch once more the guiding of the star . . .
I worship, kneeling at the manger . . .
O God! I'll spread the glorious truths afar!

—Joanna S. Andres

The Returning Civilian Public Service Man

By DAVID SUDERMAN

In this paper we are interested in giving a brief analysis of what has happened and is happening to the camper, so that we may understand him better as he returns to his home church and community. This is no objective study; but merely some observations, gathered as we work in CPS. Such an analysis may not give a very accurate picture, but something may be gained by sharing these observations.

Need for This Analysis

For the church to profit by the experiences of the camper, it will want to learn as much about him as possible before he returns. CPS men, when they return home on furlough, are often under the impression that home folk know very little about camp life. At a recent directors' meeting it was estimated that probably not more than half of our ministers had ever visited a CPS camp. This may not be an entirely accurate estimate, but it does indicate that our constituency is far removed from the camps. Unless we can acquaint the ministers and the people back home with the camper and his experiences, we may find that he will be a "stranger" when he returns. Since the camper will come home with many unsolved problems, he will need and want counsel. Intelligent counsel can be given only when one understands something about the issues under concern.

We are conscious of the fact that the camper will need to make a greater adjustment than the congregation since, numerically, he will be in the minority. This will be easier if his home people and minister have a sympathetic understanding of him.

Basic Assumption

One basic assumption which we need to keep in mind is that a man will not be the same man he was when he entered camp. Something *does* happen to him in camp. Life is abnormal, and there are powerful influences playing on him while there. In one of our camps a visiting minister was asked what he expected of the camper upon his return. This minister stated that the one concern he had was that the camper return just as he had gone—presumably unchanged. This is precisely what is not going to happen. The camper will be "different." He will have changed. A prominent Mennonite minister observed that CPS is normal life but it is much accelerated; that is, the camper crowds more experiences into a shorter period of time than he normally would at that age level. In camp one commonly hears the statement that, "one year of CPS equals two years of college," probably not in credit hours, but in experiences which are the result of problem situations.

Before Entering Camp

In order to understand the camper, we need to observe what some of his problems were before entering camp. Every camper, before his induction, had to make a decision whether to join the armed forces, accept an alternative service, or refuse to cooperate with the Selective Service and Training Act, and eventually find himself in prison. This was a crisis. It was no easy decision. He had to make this decision in terms of his relationship with his home church. Of course, in most Mennonite churches he had the full support of his church, although not in all. Some Mennonite men have had to stand almost alone when they took this stand.

Furthermore, he made this decision in terms of his relationship to his employer. Probably his employer informed him that the job would be open when he returned. On the other hand, it may have meant giving up his job, and not returning to it.

Then, too, a CPS inductee had to make this decision in terms of the "crowd." Probably less than one tenth of 1 per cent of all the men drafted in America took the IV-E position. The "crowd" takes a different road. All of this becomes a part of his decision. He thinks seriously about it—prays much about it. This is pre-induction experience. One might also state here that although the camper makes this decision only once, it creeps back for review again and again. The fact that it is a serious decision causes him to rethink and to re-evaluate many times whether he really made the right decision. Occasionally, men transfer to the armed forces. They cannot reconcile themselves to CPS. Probably the pressure becomes too heavy. Likely this same thinking happens to the men in the armed forces, namely, that some of them wish themselves in a IV-E classification. In their case, however, it is almost impossible, once inducted, to transfer to IV-E.

Influences Crowding in on the Camper

Let us now enumerate some of the influences which make life abnormal for the CPS man.

(1) The men in the camps live very close together without any privacy. They eat, sleep, work, "gripe," and worship together—always in a group, and always the same group. Instead of the family table, there are the "rows" of dining hall tables. Instead of an upstairs bedroom, there is a long "barn," with some

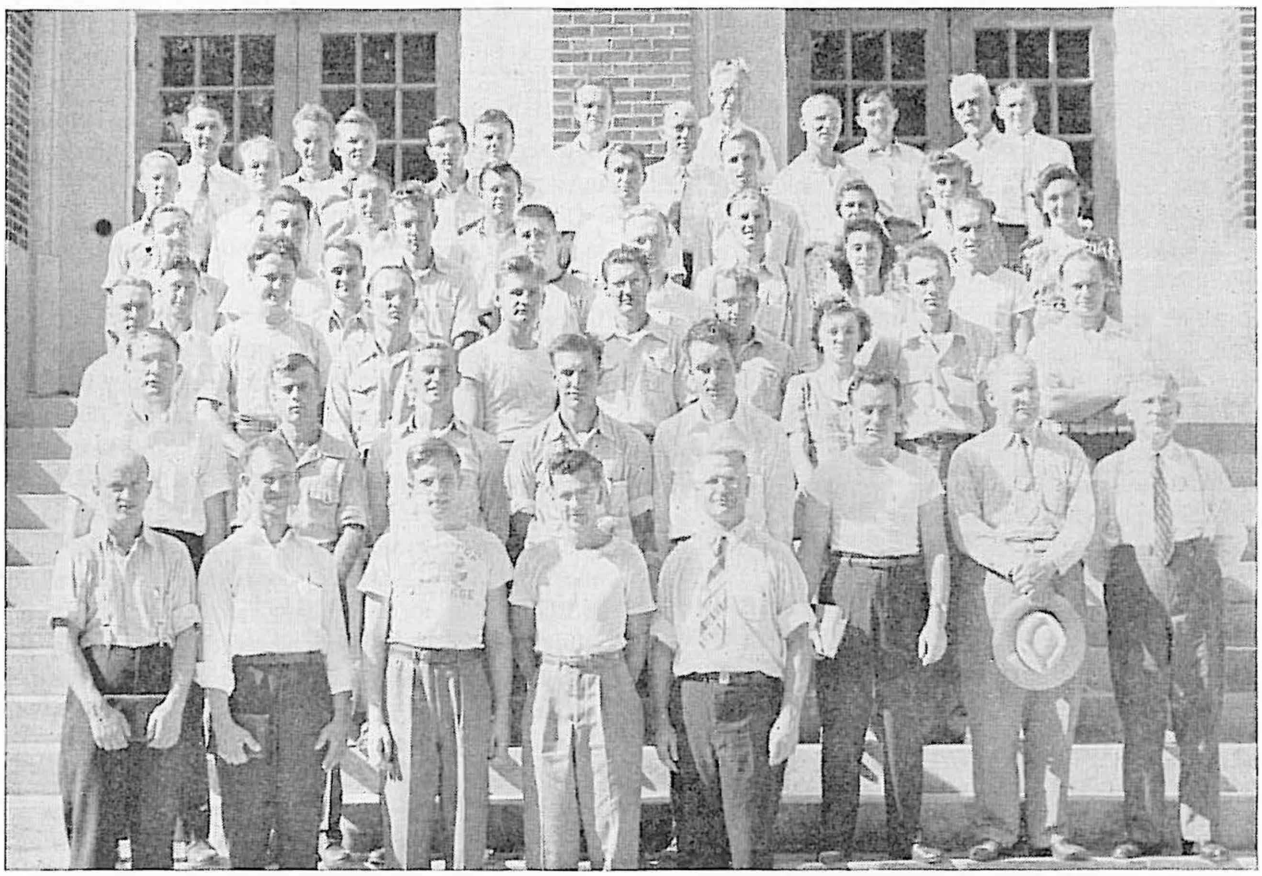
dirty beds in a row. Instead of being on the job alone, there are the crews. Instead of seeing new faces on Sunday morning, there are the same men who have been around all week. To our Mennonite men, this is abnormal, especially so for our rural men who have lived on isolated farms.

(2) The denominational range is wide and varied. Our camp includes representatives from ALL Mennonite branches. There are about eighteen, besides a few from almost all Protestant churches. There are Baptists, Methodists, Church of God, Church of the First Born, Evangelical· Reformed, Christadelphian, Catholic, Molikans, etc. For a camper suddenly to be thrust into such a society requires an adjustment. The majority of the men in all MCC camps are, however, Mennonite men.

(3) The educational range is wide. There are those who have completed only the first six grades; while others have earned the doctorate degree. The man with a doctorate may find himself in the dormitory next to a farmer, both trying to share what they have in common; an Amish camper may be foreman of a crew, with a college man receiving instructions from him. It is a democratizing process.

(4) The age range too is wide. It ranges from eighteen to forty-eight. At present, most of those over thirty-five are being released. The daily pattern of living again requires an adjustment, both for the eighteen-year old as well as the more mature. Some of the older men have been in business or on their own farm for years; for them to fit into a camp group pattern is difficult.

(5) The financial remuneration which usually motivates work output is missing. There is no pay-check at the end of the month. In fairness to the churches who support the men it should also be said that food and utility bills do not come due—for this they are grateful. Most of them have found that their sense



Christian Workers' Institute, sponsored by co-operating Boards of the General Conference, August, 1944. Invited to this institute were young people seriously considering full-time direct Christian service and some young people just recently appointed to the ministry or to missionary service. Twenty-six of those present were from C. P. S. camps. Leaders of the institute can easily be identified: D. C. Wedel, Dr. D. D. Wiebe, Sam Goering, C. E. Krehbiel, Albert Gaeddert in the right background; H. A. Fast, E. G. Kaufman, J. H. Langenwalter in the right foreground. Walter Gering and Don Smucker can be recognized in the upper lefthand corner. P. S. Goertz and P. P. Wedel are not on picture. The Institute, greatly appreciated by the young people, was intended to provide fellowship, inspiration, serious study, and discussion for young people interested in Christian service.

of values is in terms of money. They think largely in terms of dollars and cents. Of course, they have their idealism which they want to live by, but it tends to become materialistic. On the whole the men gladly offer their services gratis as a demonstration to our government of their sincerity. It is natural, however, as one works day by day, week by week, month by month and year by year (Some are now going on their fifth year.) that the realism of the situation dampens the idealism which brought them to camp.

(6) The family ties are broken. For the married man it means living again like a single man. At best he can stay with his wife over night only twice each month; at other times he must report back to camp not later than midnight. This is abnormal and trying for most of them. It is not difficult to understand that it takes an additional portion of grace to "see" this arrangement. Many married men feel that it is probably a more difficult adjustment for the wife than the husband. The husband is drafted and he simply accepts that fact, while the wife is not drafted by law, although her life is governed pretty much by the fact that her husband is drafted. In case of children, this becomes more complicated. There are men in camp who have more than five children. Needless to say, this creates a difficult situation. In a few instances this strain on the marital relationship has resulted in a divorce. No doubt many have simply depended on the grace of God to tide them over.

The single man too has his problems. He has been taken out of his normal social life. He finds himself in a situation where his social contacts are almost nil. This is frustrating. A good number have gotten married while in camp, but they too face an abnormal marriage arrangement. Because of lack of social contacts, some of the men have sought contacts in the community near-by the camp, and some have married girls from the community. This, too, our churches will need to face realistically and with understanding.

(7) Conscription itself is a terrible thing when one stops to think of all the implications, especially when men are conscripted for destructive purposes. It is hard to say just what its effects are on an individual whom God created a free agent, capable of making free choices. Human nature reacts against it. The element of compulsion which daily hovers over the camper evokes an unfavorable reaction. The very fact that his liberties are restricted creates in the camper a feeling of frustration and is fertile soil for cynicism.

Although not an all-inclusive list, these are a few, rather powerful influences which impinge upon a camper. To understand him as he returns to his church and community, we need to keep these and others in mind.

What Will He Be Like?

Having briefy enumerated a few factors which play heavily on the camper and cause him to be a "changed person," let us now try to visualize what kind of product will come out of C.P.S. What will this person be like when he returns? This is the one burning question which the church asks, and rightfully so, since they have invested heavily in the program. The church will want to realize some returns on its investment in terms of building up the church when the men return. Just what will this experience mean to the total work of the church and its mission in the world?

Lest we develop any pre-conceived ideas of what may be expected, we need to say that there is no "sure-fire" product coming out of C.P.S.—no more so than from our churches back home. Campers sometimes get the impression when they return on furlough that people at home talk of the C.P.S. program as "your" program (meaning the camper's program), when really the camper is only the representative of the churches at camp. It is a "WE" program. CPS men are on "front lines": the churches are supporting the program. With this in mind, we need not think so much in terms of "guaranteeing" results, as having a mutual Christian concern: one of sympathy, understanding, and wanting to help each other.

Some Positive Gains

(1) The camper has had to learn to stand alone. For the first time, he began to see clearly just who he was. This caused him to be more self-assertive.

(2) The camper has had to re-think his whole view on Christianity. One camper put it this way. "In C.P.S. we shrink to our natural size."

(3) The camper has developed a new appreciation and respect for his kindred Mennonite branches. He has learned to appreciate the fine emphases of each denomination; also the differences.

(4) The camper has developed a new appreciation for his own denomination. He will go home stronger in the teaching of his own denomination.

(5) He has developed an appreciation for our natural resources. He will likely initiate practices on his own farm which will help to control the erosion on the farms.

(6) He has developed an appreciation of what good medical care means. Some campers have for the first time been exposed to scientific medical care, and some have made their first visit to a medical doctor.

(7) Many of the campers, who have had experience working in our mental institutions will have an enlightened understanding of mental illnesses and a more healthy attitude as to treatment of such illnesses. This

(Continued on page 21)

Transition in Worship

By WALTER H. HOHMANN

The Mennonite Church has an interesting and challenging history. In this historical record many worthwhile lessons are found. It behooves us at times, to look into it and study some of the lessons it contains.

The language question has been a perplexing problem. Even today in certain congregations in the United States and with a goodly number in Canada the language question looms large as an issue. In the United States the transition from the German to the English language has for the most part been accomplished. In Canada this transition is still to be made in many congregations.

This matter caused some concern in the Prussian Mennonite congregations which were closely associated with the Dutch congregations in Holland, because of their Dutch background. The Prussian congregations, naturally, used the Dutch language. By the second half of the eighteenth century the language question caused considerable discussion in these congregations.

September 19, 1762, is the date of the first German sermon in the congregation of Danzig in Prussia. Rev. Gerhard Wiebe, from the Elbing congregation, to the surprise and even consternation of the members of the local congregation delivered the sermon in German. Since they were accustomed to the Dutch language, Reverend Wiebe was not welcomed too warmly in Danzig.

April 20, 1767, another sermon, in the German language, was delivered by Rev. Cornelius Regier, from Heubuden congregation. This sermon was better received on the part of the congregation than the earlier one by Reverend Wiebe.

Four years later, January 1, 1771, Cornelius Moor, a teacher in the local congregation of Danzig, again spoke in the German language. He was followed by other teachers and ministers, until in 1777 Rev. Peter Epp, the elder of the congregation, preached his first sermon in the German language, interspersed with many Dutch words.

In 1767 the congregations of West Prussia used the first hymn book in the German language. It bore the impressive title: *Geistreiches Gesangbuch worin nebst denen Psalmen Davids eine Sammlung auserlesener alter und neuer Lieder zu finden ist, zur allgemeinen Erbauung herausgegeben, Gedruckt Koenigsberg, 1767.* This book has gone through a number of editions since. It is a forerunner, in many respects, of a considerable portion of our hymnology today.

Another matter that has caused differences of opinion in Mennonite congregations in the past has been the use of a musical instrument in the church.

Organs were not used in the services prior to this time, since their use would have been contrary to the conception of simplicity in the worship service. In 1765 an organ was introduced in the church at Utrecht, Holland. This was a real innovation. The congregation at Neugarten, Prussia, placed an organ into their church in 1788. This was the first organ in any congregation in Prussia. Some members of the congregation were opposed to having an organ placed into their church.

In these transition periods it seems that very often one may find a lowering of standards of quality. Many congregations in changing from one language to another experience a loss of spiritual power. This gradual deterioration is especially true as it pertains to music. Our Mennonite congregations, as they arrive at such transition periods must be on the alert not to permit any impairing of quality of their church music.

The first Mennonite hymn book, *A Collection of Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs,* in the English language used in the United States was published in 1847. An examination of this book reveals this lowering of standard as far as hymns are concerned. In many congregations today cheap commercial hymn books are used with a definite loss of appreciation of truly good music. A congregation may not be aware that this is happening. The use of an improper type of music even with an instrument, leaves a church definitely weaker and spiritually poorer as a result.

Contemplation

Joanna S. Andres

Fairer art Thou to me
Than all the flowers
Strewn by Thy hand;
Fairer than a lily
In the valley
Or a rose of Sharon
With its crimson strand.
There is the evening
And the morning star—
But Thou art lovelier far
To me. And the sun
Flaming bright
At eventide
Is but a shadow of Thy light.
My love for Thee is strong . . .
Eternity long.

I Find My Life Work

Editor's note: In our library there is a mimeographed autobiography written some time ago by a man who was a pioneer in his field of endeavor. This interesting story is entitled "Education of a Mennonite Country Boy." Realizing that this would be valuable material for "Mennonite Life" we approached the author inquiring whether we might publish some of the chapters. He generously granted our request. Naturally it was difficult to make selections because all of it would be enjoyed by our readers. Finally, we decided upon those paragraphs from the last three chapters which throw light on the making and development of the first American-born Mennonite historian. These chapters are "I Find My Life Work," "Goshen College Days," and "The End of a Long Educational Trail." The writer of this autobiography is the well-known Dr. C. Henry Smith, Bluffton, Ohio, to whom we wish to express our sincere gratitude for the privilege of publishing these excerpts.

C. Henry Smith

I entered the University of Illinois in the fall of 1900 as a conditioned freshman. Most of the courses I had taken at Normal were too elementary even to count for entrance requirements; and since my high school course also was irregular, I lacked a number of the required subjects for entrance to the freshman class. These deficiencies I now had to make up in some manner. One course I took in the preparatory department, which the University still maintained, in the basement of what was then the main building, for just such students as I. The others I made up by special examinations during the fall months. And so, by the close of the first semester, I had not only worked off all my conditions, but had accumulated several college credits in my favor as well.

And so, I took advantage of every possible means of shortening my course. I carried the maximum numbers of hours permitted by petition to the faculty; I studied during the Christmas holidays and other vacation periods, preparing for outside credits by examination; I attended summer sessions. In fact, I took neither holiday nor vacation from the hour I entered the University until the day I left.

It is needless to say, of course, that this was all a big mistake. I did not see it then, but I do now. Education is more than a cramming of a certain number of specified courses. It is a developing process that requires time. Time, to me, seemed very valuable. Because of lack of it, I passed by numerous opportunities for accumulating the general culture and training which is essential to a well-rounded education; and which, to me in particular, would have been of inestimable value in later life. One of these opportunities was an invitation to join one of the leading fraternities of the University. No doubt there are many valid arguments against college fraternities. They are inclined to be undemocratic; often foster a spirit of snobbishness; and do not always promote the best traditions of the university. To some students, no doubt, they are a positive detriment; to others, they are at best unnecessary; but to me, at that time, the social contacts made possible by such an organization might have been of some benefit. I did take time to join several organizations, however: the Glee Club and the Y.M.C.A.

It was but natural, of course, that I should join the Y.M.C.A. At the end of the year I was elected vice-president, and chairman of the Bible Study Committee, an important position in the organization, since we were rated as one of the strongest associations in the country at that time, with perhaps the largest number of students taking Bible study—some nine hundred—of any of the universities. I again attended Geneva the following summer with benefit to myself. My connections at Champaign with the Y.M.C.A. I regard as one of the most valuable experiences of my student life. The literary societies of the University were not strong, and I do not believe that my connections with the Adelphian Society added much to my education, although the fault was entirely my own.

Before the close of the year I had decided to continue my graduate study in the University of Chicago, the following year. After floundering about in

the field of languages, and later in English, I had finally decided upon history as my special interest for graduate work. The faculty agreed to apply my summer credits to the A. B. degree, so I entered Chicago for the summer session.

My first summer was devoted entirely to undergraduate studies, which I still needed to finish my A. B. work at the University of Illinois. I did not begin my graduate work until the fall term.

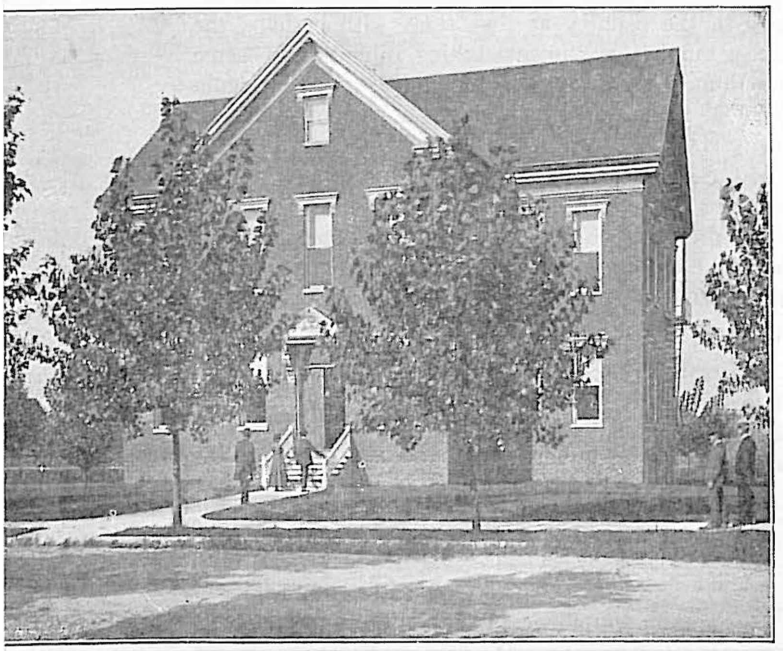
I spent a profitable year studying history and government under such teachers as Judson, who later succeeded Harper as President, Professor Jameson, and Dr. Merriam. It was in the course of my studies at this time that I first became interested in a subject which later became my special field of investigation—Mennonite history. One day, while casually leafing through a book on Baptist history in the library of the Seminary, I ran across the name of Menno Simons. A little investigation disclosed the fact that the author of the book claimed Menno Simons as one of the founders of the Baptist faith. Through further reading I found to my surprise that all Baptist historians claimed a common spiritual origin with the Mennonites in the Anabaptist movement of the early sixteenth century, as well as a direct descent through the Mennonite church in Amsterdam in the early seventeenth. Continued reading during the winter revealed the fact, to my increasing delight, that the Congregationalists, too, credited the Dutch Mennonite artisans, and religious refugees, who came to southeastern England all through the latter part of the sixteenth century in considerable numbers, as the source of the ideas of religious toleration from which the separation of our own Pilgrim Fathers later developed.

To me, this was a most interesting discovery. I had never known much of Mennonite origins. I had always thought of Mennonites as an obscure, peculiar people, with strange, unpopular practices. A good, honest, and thrifty people, of course, but with little influence in the world, and with little bearing upon the great currents of world movements. I never expected to find their deeds recorded in the books of either secular or religious history. To discover, therefore, that they were pioneers in he rise of religious toleration, and that they were the spiritual forefathers of both the Baptists and the Congregationalists, as well as the earliest of all modern peace societies, was a revelation to me as surprising as pleasing. My respect for the religion of my forefathers was greatly enhanced. I no longer needed to apologize for my humble faith. The real contribution of the Mennonites to the great cause of religious toleration and world peace ought to be given wider publicity I thought. Before I left the university, I had decided to make a thorough investigation of their history and if possible write a comprehensive treatise on the subject for publication. And so I began a task which has not ended to this day.

I had already been re-engaged to teach in the Elkhart Institute for the following year. This institution had now outgrown both its curriculm and its quarters at Elkhart, and was to be removed to the neighboring city of Goshen, where by the addition of a two-year college course it was to start as a junior college under the name of Goshen College. I had been present early in June to participate in the ceremonies incident to the breaking of ground for a commodious building to be erected during the summer. In the absence of President Byers, who had not yet returned from Harvard where he had spent the year in graduate study, I was invited to deliver the address of the day. I was highly pleased with the new location of the proposed college campus on the southern outskirts of the city along the Elkhart River, and looked forward with pleasant anticipation to an interesting year of work.

It was perhaps perfectly natural that by this time I should decide permanently upon a teaching career. Graduate study in history hardly fitted one for anything else. And yet I must frankly confess I did not deliberately choose that profession. I drifted into it. I was not primarily interested in the technique of teaching. I do not know that I was consumed with a burning zeal to make myself useful in the world. I cannot say that I had an overweaning ambition to do anything great, or to be an active participant of any sort in the routine of the world affairs. I had no ambition to be rich. In fact, I did not like the detailed routine activities of a work-a-day world. My main interest was to be a student; an observer of life, rather than a participant in its varied activities; to know life, to acquire knowledge, to travel, to explore, to acquire experience, to develop an enriched

Cut courtesy Goshen College



Elkhart Institute Building, Elkhart, Indiana

personality. Since one must have a profession of some sort, I knew of none which would afford such opportunities for this kind of a life as that of teaching. Although I drifted into my life work, first as a secondary interest, but later as a final objective, I have been happy in it ever since and have never regretted the step. So far as I see now, I would choose the same career again were I permitted the happy privilege of charting the course of my life-work all over again.

The college buildings at Goshen were far from ready for use when the time came for the opening of school in September. The walls of the main building were hardly more than half-way up. The girls dormitory, however, which was the first building to be erected was sufficiently near completion to permit the use of the lower floor for recitation purposes. This building, together with one of the churches in Parkside, served as recitation rooms until far into the winter, when classes moved over into the main hall, and the girls deserted their downtown residences for their own home. The curriculum, like the buildings, remained incomplete for some time—only two of the four years of the college courses being given at first. It was hoped, however, that within a few years the institution might become a full fledged college, as it actually did some time later.

Our teaching staff consisted of ten members—with one exception, all were young men and women under thirty.

A part of this summer I decided to spend in travel. It was the year of the St. Louis Fair; and I included a visit to that attraction in my vacation program.

I spent the remainder of the summer at Elkhart, doing research in Mennonite history in the library of John F. Funk, for I decided now to begin my chosen field of investigation. Mr. Funk had gathered together in the course of years what was undoubtedly the most complete collection in America of books and pamphlets dealing with the various phases of Mennonite history. This collection he very kindly placed at my disposal. I spent several summers here, and later made good use of the facts gathered in my investigations.

My second year at Goshen was as pleasant as the first had been. In fact, teaching favorite subjects like history to eager and interested students of mature age and serious purpose was not a task at all, but rather a delightful privilege; the kind of thing one would wish to do even though he were not paid for it.

At the close of my second year at Goshen I decided to re-enter Chicago to finish my work for the Ph. D. degree. I was nearly out of debt again, but did not have a cent toward my further university expenses. My father, however, who had become thoroughly reconciled by this time to my educational career and had implicit faith in my judgment as to what was best for me, promised to furnish me with whatever money I might need to complete my work.

I limited myself during these last two years of graduate study entirely to my chosen field of investigation—history, "The Mennonites of America." I had decided on as the title of my doctor's thesis. As a suitable background for this study, I selected church history as a minor, which was offered, not in the University, of course, but in the closely affiliated divinity school.

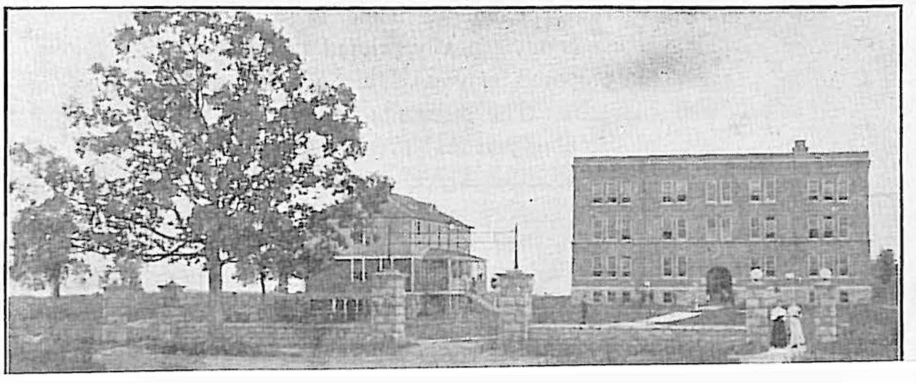
I soon began to reap the results of my special study at Elkhart during the preceding summer. The field of Anabaptist history was little known, and but slightly cultivated even in a Baptist institution like Chicago. My brief investigation of a few months on sources not found in the University's libraries and unknown among the history professors enabled me to speak with some show of authority on the subject.

Fortunately for me, for some reason or other no longer remembered, I was invited quite early in the fall term to prepare a paper for the history club, which was composed of the graduate students and faculty of the department. This gave me an opportunity to present the results of my special studies. The faculty, unaware that I had spent months in studying this special field, and thinking perhaps that my presentation at the club was the work of only a few weeks of casual preparation, seemingly were well impressed with my effort. At the next meeting of the club I was elected its president. It never rains but it pours, they say. Not long after this there happened to be a vacancy in a history fellowship. When the new appointment was to be made I had become a logical candidate for the position. This fellowship I retained for the two remaining years of my university course. The few summer months I had spent in John Funk's library were by no means wasted.

These university fellowships, in addition to the scholarship prestige and the modest stipend that went

(Continued on page 43)

Cut courtesy Goshen College



Goshen College, 1905

A Thousand Evenings - - Well Spent!

By FREEMAN and MARY GINGRICH

Whatsoever things are of good report.....think on these things.—Phil. 4:8.

We have suspected for some time, and, we are now positive, that American Mennonite young people are going to the "bow-wows." We have shouted in our churches, decrying current evils, and much printer's ink has been spilt in futile efforts to arrest the alarming conduct of our young apostates. The several warnings have all had their perfect place, but the flaw in the whole affair is that few of the alarmists have ever ventured any genuine remedy. In our churches, the Third Sub-committee of our Senior Organization has often complained that the "youngsters" are distressingly problematic, but no one seems to know what should be done. Must disaster be the inevitable score? Are we really defeated?

Sour, wormy, green apples and sweet, sound, ripe apples are both edible, but the only person who could conceivably prefer the former would be one with a mind considerably warped. You can put up with a foul, evil-smelling pool room, or the din of a fourth-class restaurant if you have no better place to go! And you may even have sufficient endurance to suffer what comes out of the juke box in the bus terminal if no one has ever taught you better music! Stumbling over the ropes that fasten down the midway tents may even have its peculiar fascination if you have never been directed to anything more worthy of your time and money and interests!

The little village of St. Jacobs, Ontario, Canada is in the center of a large Mennonite community. The same conditions which you know elsewhere, obtain here also. In Canada, we are no angels! But we have begun something that is entirely without precedent in the Mennonite Church. How much help we can give will yet remain to be seen!

Imagine being invited to a clean, well-lighted, well-heated Christian home, instead of going to a doubtful and actually sinful "outfit," for a bit of amusement? Let's have you come once at least! At the door you are welcomed kindly, and inside there are fine chairs to sit in. A few well-chosen paintings hang on the walls, and on every hand are tempting books which you may take home should you care to do so. The owner of the home, to set you at ease, himself hands out a neatly printed sheet telling what has been prepared for you. Many of your best friends also come in. The discussions begin, and after an hour of listening you may even be offered a drink of "pop" and possibly a generous helping of crackers and cheese, big sugary doughnuts—or even a fat hamburger with relish! What is this all about?

In 1943 the National Trust Company in Toronto, for a very small amount, sold us a large home in almost perfect condition. By using ordinary folding chairs we can provide seating in our living room, for one hundred guests. Other rooms can be used readily, to make a large group of people reasonably comfortable. A long time it had been our desire to own a large home where those who are particularly in need of inspiration and encouragement could come to learn and to enjoy worthwhile things. It came to a decision point when an intelligent girl in our church burst into our place one evening and frankly requested that we provide some adequate and interesting activity for the young boys and girls. On January 16, 1945 we had the first session of the "Christian School of Appreciation." The pastor of the church (Roy S. Koch) and the deacon were both very anxious to give their encouragement. A few days before, at the literary society meeting, everyone had been invited. This represented an honest effort to displace sinful, worldly, city amusements with something nearer home, that is constructive, inspiring, and by no means less enjoyable. Why pay for hard, green apples when the sign in the next fellow's door says he is giving away big, ripe, juicy apples?

Our evening begins about 8:15 and is divided into five, short, interesting periods. The first half-hour is definitely intended for worship, and Christian inspiration of a very high order. We aim to make this part the best one of the evening. We are well equipped with a tidy set of excellent new hymnals, and consciously aim to sing real songs of worship, only. The topics discussed are practical and, moreover, we insist that the speakers make adequate preparation. We aim to have Christian addresses so interesting that Johnny Smith on Tuesday night will pass up the hockey game in order to hear them! Subjects like Consecration, Unselfishness, Confidence in God, Love, Non-Resistance would be fair samples of our instruction and emphasis. We aim to make this period some of the best Christian instruction that can be had anywhere. But at the end of thirty minutes we stop! We do not drag on and on!

The second period follows. English Literature, Christian Business Practice, Christian Biography, Missions, Hymnology, and Mennonite History have

all had their turn. Discussions are maintained at least on high school level, and the standards of public speaking and oral expression at which we aim in our lectures are far above those which ordinarily obtain in the Literary Society (although the Keystone Literary Society attended by these same young people, is much superior to average in some ways).

The intermission period comes next. It is only fifteen minutes. Everyone comes to the kitchen (in single file) and helps himself to whatever happens to be prepared. (We make our students think acutely; at the end of an hour of hard work they need little persuasion to accept the refreshments.) Doughnuts, pop corn, crackers, and cheese have all been well received. Soft drinks like ginger ale and orange are in good demand. Sometimes we have chocolate milk instead. We hand out generous portions, and no one has ever said he did not get enough. Commercially prepared treats are used, thereby avoiding much preparation in our home.

At the end of fifteen minutes the program is resumed with material of a slightly less formidable nature. Students have requested subjects in which they can take part, so lately we have been discussing and learning several excellent hymns. The text and the music are both considered. Where possible, we make a few well-chosen remarks about the author and composer. We avoid long stories.

Sound films, which we show with an excellent, government-owned machine, are tremendously popular. Christian films are readily obtainable in the nearby book houses in Toronto. Fortunately, we are located in a community where there is no violent reaction to modern, visual education.

My Goshen College friends and others have been waiting to have us say something about the record player. We have in our program a regular "Music Appreciation Hour," and it is no "free-for-all" either! Those who whisper, and make a disturbance otherwise get themselves into swift disrepute. We dim our lights to get a suitable setting, and place several "silence" cards in plain view. Response has been very nearly all that could be hoped for, and certainly much better than we had anticipated. Our young people, one year ago, had no knowledge whatever of classical music, so we have made an effort to acquaint them with some fine compositions of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, etc. Pithy, interesting facts concerning the various selections are often given. We are well equipped with a modern electric phonograph and, of course, play the pieces immediately after they are introduced. (A favorite and popular trick for example, is to play a section of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 and then have the students sing the hymn, "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee," the tune for which was taken from this same symphonic section. The correct name and the date of each composition and composer are carefully and neatly printed on the sheet of notes which is handed to each student. There is a new set of notes for each program. Every piece is played three times during the season so that it can be better enjoyed and remembered. This winter we are learning Bach's Double Violin Concerto, Mozart's Symphony No. 36, "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik," and a few shorter pieces. Beethoven's "Archduke" Trio and Symphony No. 8 (because it is light and "listenable") are also on our course, as well as a number of selections from Handel, and others.

Our response has been excellent. The success we have enjoyed came with the first meeting. Fifty-five came. The second evening there were eighty! The fourth night there were about one hundred and fifteen. Interest in the actual subject-matter is splendid, and there is much co-operation. Many already prefer our program to the worldly amusement to which they were accustomed.

It had been our sincere intention to provide everything entirely free of charge. To this our guests would not agree, so when numbers soared past the hundred mark we were made willing to accept a small donation. This season we are suggesting that each one contribute a maximum amount of four dollars for a series of ten programs. Any who find this too much to pay are given kind consideration and are sometimes welcomed without paying anything. Money paid in is used to purchase simple refreshments, folding chairs, books, and other necessary items. All financial matters have been placed in the hands of an enthusiastic and courteous young man who passes out neatly printed cards at forty cents each.

We are aiming to give the very best! We mean just that! The Church has endorsed our undertaking, and we do what we can in return. Our theory is that Mennonite young people will rise to accept something excellent if it is provided for them and *we have proved our theory!* We believe that questionable practices can be literally displaced by Christ-honoring and attractive features.

Anyone travelling through Kitchener, Ontario, can reach our home very conveniently. Program dates for this winter are November 20, December 4 and 18, January 15 and 29, February 12 and 26, March 12 and 26. The first date in the series was November 6. You are courteously and kindly reminded that you will be well received. And when you come, be prepared to give us your ideas for further improvement! If one hundred people come for ten evenings we shall have had one thousand evenings—well spent!

The Renaissance of a Rural Community

By J. WINFIELD FRETZ

For twenty-five years the population trend in America has been toward the cities. Urban communities have been growing and rural communities dying. There are those who say that the advocates of a revival of rural life are struggling for a lost cause; that to emphasize the importance of rural life is to be looking backward; that the century of the future is the century of the cities.

The thesis of this article is directly to the contrary. It is our contention that the future of society must have its hope in the rural community; that the rural areas are of increasing importance, because they are the seed-beds of our country's population; they are the areas in which Christian ideals, moral values, and standards of conduct and behavior of the highest type will be produced and maintained. It is here that democracy at its best and in its purest form can thrive.

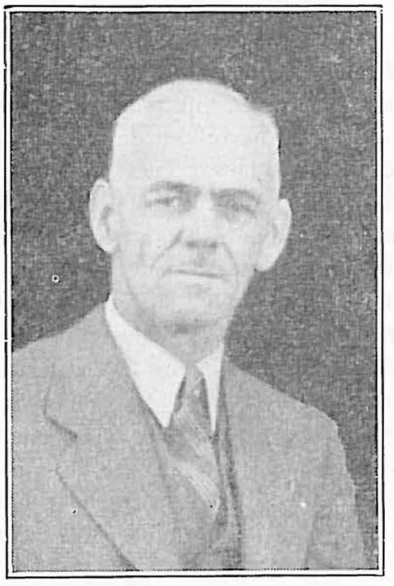
Our contention is not that the rural community of yesterday be restored after the fashion of a museum display, but rather that the rural community be enriched and modified in the light of new inventions and improved methods of living. The rural community of today needs to be revitalized not left to stagnate and die.

Altona, Manitoba

The community that best illustrates the thesis of this article is the small community of Altona, Manitoba. It has a population of about 1,000 inhabitants in the town with an equal number scattered in the surrounding hinterland. Ninety-nine per cent of the population is Mennonite. Altona is located just six miles north of the International Border and seventy-five miles southwest of Winnipeg. It was settled by the Mennonite immigrants who came to Canada in the 1870's with a few added by later migrations. On the treeless prairies in this area the early settlers were the first to demonstrate that it was possible to live and farm on family-sized units on the open prairies. These first settlers introduced new types of watermelon, muskmelon, and sunflower seeds into Canada. They established themselves at first in villages which were clusters of twenty to thirty farm families with ten-acre lots, spread along both sides of a broad main street. These lots served as space for dwelling houses, barns, yards, orchards, flower and vegetable gardens. The usual hardships of pioneer life were experienced, but through perseverance they were overcome, and in due time a stable community was established.

The early years of the new century were relatively normal years; then came World War I with its accompanying boom in building expansion and rise in prices. Following this, the depression with its low prices, vanishing markets, and the consequent period of economic strain. The depression hit Altona hard. Young people fled to the cities looking for jobs; farmers lost their farms in wholesale fashion and seemingly well-established businesses went bankrupt. The early thirties found Altona in anything but flourishing condition and, like thousands of other prairie towns, the outlook was far from bright.

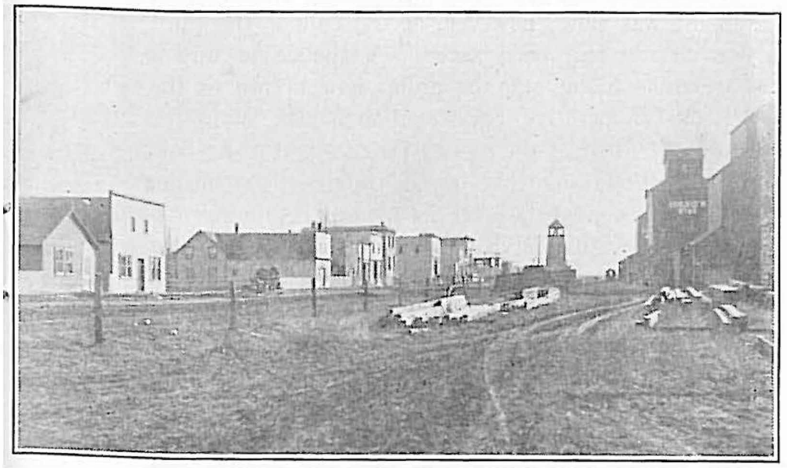
Attacking the Problem



J. J. Siemens

A leading figure in Altona community life has been J. J. Siemens. He was responsible for organizing most of the co-operatives in the municipality, as well as of the Agricultural Society. Besides his many community interests and the offices he holds, he operates a large farm on the edge of town. He has a family of five children; the eldest daughter, Viola, is a student at Bethel College at North Newton, Kansas. Much of Altona's renaissance can be attributed directly to Mr. Siemens.

Everybody admitted that times were bad. Some were pessimistic, others fatalistic, and still others were certain that some new steps needed to be taken but were afraid to launch out for fear of opposition and criticism. There was a small group of Altona citizens, however, who belonged neither to the pessimists, the fatalists, or the fearful. This small group belonged to the courageous, the far-sighted, and the hopeful. They were men of vision who were determined to do whatever needed to be done to pierce the oppressing clouds of economic darkness that lingered



Cut Courtesy Altona Echo

Main Street Altona, Manitoba, 1915

gloomily overhead. A group of twelve interested farmers, led by that energetic leader J. J. Siemens, met one day in 1931 to discuss their personal and community problems. They were determined to stop the rate of farm foreclosures, the growing tenancy rate, and the frightening increase of unemployment. This small band of twelve decided to find sixty other farmers who were interested in joining together to form an Agricultural Society. They found sixty additional farmers and, under the direction of the Manitoba Department of Agriculture, organized the first and only all-Mennonite Agricultural Society in Canada. The chief purpose of the Society was to study local community problems and to work together toward their solution.

One of the first activities of the Society was to develop a program of education and activity for their young people. Junior and senior clubs, similiar to 4-H clubs in the United States, were organized. Each club consisted of from twelve to fifteen members. The clubs concerned themselves with such enterprises as potato-seed, and grain-growing, calf-, chicken-, hog-, and livestock-raising for boys; and cooking, canning, weaving, and baking-clubs for girls. In all, over 700 young people in the area were at one time participating in the program.

In 1936 the Agricultural Society organized the Rhineland Agricultural Institute for the purpose of carrying a systematic program of study and education for the out-of-school youth. Each winter 25 boys and 25 girls between the ages of 18 and 30 were chosen to enroll in the Institute. Most of the students were chosen from the 700 who had experience in club work The instructions were given by local men and by men from the Extension Department of the University of Manitoba. Some of the local school boards became so interested that they began providing shop equipment and weaving material in the local schools. Up to 1943 when the writer visited Altona and saw the work that had been done by the Agricultural Society through the Institute there were 250 young people who had benefited from the ten weeks' training courses.

The Fruits of Education

The wisdom of the twelve farmers who started things moving by organizing the Agricultural Society and later the Institute is already manifest. They started at the right place to solve their own and their community's problems, because they started with themselves. A number of clearly-recognized results can already be observed. (1) It provided a channel through which new and progressive farming ideas and methods were introduced into the community. (2) It provided a stimulus for young people to go on to college and university, as well as for many in the home community, better to prepare themselves for service locally. (3) It resulted in a greater appreciation for both the limitations and possibilities of the rural community. (4) It was to a large degree the agency most responsible for the economic rebirth of the whole community by its stimulation of the organization and growth of co-operative societies. (5) Through the newly-created co-operatives and the adult education programs a surprising amount of latent leadership has been discovered and other leadership developed.

It is doubtful if any other community in the United States or Canada, whether Mennonite or non-Mennonite has developed such a vigorous and thorough-going program of co-operatives as has Altona, Manitoba. There are many examples as Hillsboro and Moundridge, Kansas; Mountain Lake, Minnesota; Yarrow, B. C; Coaldale, Alberta; and Virgil, Ontario, that have established flourishing co-operative ventures; but none of them have developed so many successful ventures in so short a time; and no other community is contemplating such far-reaching and per-

Main Street Altona, Manitoba, 1944

manent economic changes in the direction of co-operatives in the future.

Co-ops the Outgrowth of Mutual Aid

The co-operatives developed in Altona have their roots in the long-time expression of Mennonite mutual aid. One may say that co-operatives are indeed the stream-lined expression of mutual aid in that it is more highly systematized than much of the mutual aid in the past which was often quite spontaneous and sporadic. Mutual aid among the Mennonites goes back through their history in Russia and Prussia to Holland and Switzerland. The Waisenamt is familiar to all Mennonites coming out of Russia as the best-kown of the old mutual aid organizations.

Two co-operative organzations now in operation in Altona are very old. What is now called the Mennonite Burial Aid Society was formerly known as the Mennonite Mutual Supporting Society. It had originally been organized in 1910 but was reorganized in 1940 to meet the requirements of provincial laws. The Red River Mutual Fire Insurance Company was chartered in 1941, but before that time had been operating for a long time as an unchartered aid society.

During the past fifteen years an impressive number of new co-operative ventures have been undertaken and to date all of these have survived and prospered.

The Rhineland Consumers Co-operative

In 1931 the Rhineland Consumers Co-op was organized to provide gasoline, oil, and service-station facilities to local citizens on a mutual basis. This society had a membership of 792 at the time of its 13th annual meeting in 1944. The financial statement revealed that for every dollar the shareholders had invested since the business had been started $140.49 has been earned. A portion of the annual net earnings, which during the previous fourteen months have been over $16,000, are used for educational purposes. Contributions out of the earnings are also made to worthy causes, such as the $792 contribution to the Mennonite Collegiate Institute at Gretna in 1944 and $1,000 to the Rhineland Agricultural Society for educational purposes.

Altona Co-operative Service Ltd.

In 1937 ten local men decided to take the initiative in forming a co-op store. They were tired of the way some of the local merchants had been exploiting local people by allowing them to run large accounts at their stores, then taking mortgages on their homes, and later foreclosing if the customers could not pay. The ten men started with $45 capital and added $600 of borrowed money to buy stock. The first years were difficult and growth in membership and financial support was slow; however, at the end of the third year $1,200 had been saved. A chance to buy a store came along and the group now known as the Altona Co-operative Services bought the store for $14,600. Most of the money for this had to be borrowed. Following this, rapid progress was made. In 1944, seven years after its meager beginning, Altona Co-operative Services had assets of over $67,000 and a membership of over 800. The annual sales in 1944 amounted to almost a quarter million dollars. The store is one of the largest and best-equipped general stores in the entire province of Manitoba. In the basement of the store are adequate facilities for candling and grading eggs up to 100 cases a day. Here farmers may bring their eggs and poultry and market them through the co-op with maximum net returns.

Credit Union

In February of 1939 nineteen local people agreed to form a credit union. They pooled their money and found they had a total of $23. Today they have a membership of 316 with assets that total $18,440. At the annual meeting in February, 1944, the treasurer reported that loans of $22,855 had been made to 197 members during the previous year. The Credit Union provides a place for local people to put their savings and at the same time a place to borrow small amounts of money at low rates of interest in case of necessity.

Rhineland Co-operative Hatchery

In 1940 the Rhineland Co-operative Hatchery was organized by a group of industrious farmers. They rented a local hatchery at first and started doing commercial and custom hatching. By the end of the first year there were sixty-eight farmers who had become members of the co-op hatchery. By 1942 additional units of brooders were added so that the hatchery had a 100,000-egg capacity. The enterprise is steadily growing, and it meets a vital need in the Altona community.

Farmers Co-operative Machine Shop

One of the most unique co-operative enterprises to be found anywhere is that of the Farmers' Co-operative Machine Shop in Altona. It is an organization resulting from a scarcity of new farm machinery and from the difficulty of getting old machinery repaired due to war shortages of material and labor. The Altona farmers, in the face of this difficulty, as in the face of many others, were wise in not trying to solve their local economic problems by running around getting signatures on a petition with which to protest to politicians. They had learned that the best way to

Cut Courtesy Altona Echo

The Altona, Manitoba High School built in 1938

solve problems is to get their heads together and work out their own solutions.

Thirteen farmers took the initiative and others soon joined them. Someone knew of shop equipment and machinery that was for sale; others knew of a vacant garage in town that could be rented; someone else knew of an expert mechanic who had left Altona to take a job in a Winnipeg defense plant, but who, it was thought, would be willing to return to Altona if a job were offered him. The farmers pooled their money, their brains, and their energy, and the result was a co-operatively owned and an expertly managed machine shop in which they were prepared to do their own farm-machine welding, rebuilding, and repairing. An illustration of the need this enterprise met is the fact that seven men found employment in the shop during the first year and the cash income from sales and service amounted to over $24,000.

The Co-operative Vegetable Oils Ltd.

Whatever new needs to be done in Altona now seems as a matter of course to be done co-operatively. For almost two years the farmers of Altona have been discussing ways of changing and improving their agricultural practices so that they, and all those who depend on agriculture for a living, would not be solely dependent on a single crop, such as wheat. They came to the conclusion that certain oil-producing crops, such as sunflowers, argentine rape, flax, beans, and peas could be grown in this section of Manitoba without difficulty. Some of the more enterprising farmers had experimented and could talk from experience. The farmers, therefore, organized Vegetable Oils Ltd., investigated carefully the future market for such oils, the number of farmers who would be willing to produce these crops, the government's attitude toward their growth, the most profitable way to market them, and the cost of erecting an extracting plant. After all these investigations and numerous discussions it was agreed to proceed with plans to raise $15,000-share capital for the purpose of building a plant. A building 30 feet by 90 feet has now been completed for purposes of housing the plant; and another of equal size has been completed to be used for storage, drying and cleaning.

This venture may bring far-reaching changes not only into Altona but into the whole of Southern Manitoba. It will change the agricultural pattern of the area, and it will provide an industrial base for the entire community, which means that more and more people will be able to earn their living in occupations other than those of farming. It may provide a balance between industry and agriculture; it will mean that farmers will be able to process the the raw crops into commercially usable forms and thus control the marketing of their produce much more effectively than is possible with such commodities as wheat, corn, fruit, or vegetables.

Co-operative growth in southern Manitoba has not been confined to the Altona community. There are co-operative developments in the surrounding towns and villages of Gretna, Winkler, Plum Coulee, Horndean, Rosenfelt and Rhineland. In an effort to consolidate the numerous co-ops in this area the Southern Manitoba Federation was organized in 1942. This organization had its headquarters in Altona and employed six people in its auditing and educational program. The Federation was temporarily discontinued because of internal differences, but it will inevitably be revived because its function will sooner or later be recognized as indispensable.

Other Community Developments

"All that glitters is not gold." The renaissance that has been taking place in the rural community of Altona is not a Horatio Alger's story of community success. For every gain made an obstacle has been overcome and there are still many difficulties in the road ahead. Those who have had most to do with the renaissance in this community will tell you that a mere beginning has been made; that the real improvements are still in the future. But it cannot be denied that amazing gains have already been made and far-reaching plans are now incubating. Of genuine significance is the enthusiastic way in which the women of the community share in the development and activities of Altona. Their contribution to the local economic revival has been of great value.

(Completed on page 39)

On a Kansas Farm

By ERNEST E. LEISY

On our farm south of Moundridge in Central Kansas, we lived much as anyone else in that neighborhood during the nineties and the early years of the new century. Farming was a ceaseless round of plowing, harrowing, sowing, and harvesting, with odd jobs like trimming hedge, fixing fence, hauling grain or stock to market, cutting weeds and of course, morning and evening chores thrown in. During the winter one went to the district school and on Sundays to church. Once in a while there were gala days, like the Fourth of July, with its baseball and fireworks in the neighboring town, or the annual trip to the county seat to pay taxes and buy heavy suits; or Christmas, with its excitement of speaking "pieces," bundling up in the springwagon to see the big tree at church, and returning home with the precious bag of oranges and candies. Now and then an aunt came from Iowa to visit, and of course, there were presents. But mostly that life was a matter of routine. I suppose times haven't changed essentially even in this mechanized age. If what I say, then, seems commonplace, I can only reply that to the social historian even the commonplace has interest.

It was a sturdy, middleclass, farm-owning community that we had in Central Garden. There were almost no renters, and therefore few "floaters." The Vogts, Kittells, Eymans, Bachmans, Ruths, Dettweilers, Luginbills, Reussers that surrounded us had earned their quarter sections by their own industry and thrift. If that could be done the country over, we would have few economic problems There was little left over from year to year, yet one usually "got by." That is, unless the hail wiped out the money-crop, wheat, which it frequently did. Such loss was particularly hard to bear, because it came just as the fruits of the year's work were within one's grasp and when it was too late to substitute some other crop.

Work began early in the day, with some doing the milking of eight or ten cows, while others fed and harnessed the horses and "slopped" the hogs. By seven we were in the fields, raising the dust, and eager to beat the neighbors at getting things done. To break the long day; about ten in the summer, and again at four, we had lunch in the fields, brought by younger children, if water-keg and sandwich bucket were not already tucked away in a shady spot. Grateful for the pause, we continued until dark. At noon we had an hour off. Nobody argued for a "forty-hour week" or for "time-and-a-half" overtime. During the harvest season men were hired that followed the harvest from Oklahoma to Canada. Such men brought a touch of the outside world with them. From one who had been in the Philippines I learned to count in Spanish to fifteen. Another season four Negroes came singing along the road, and each found work in the neighborhood.

All the world seemed to move by our place for it was on a main-traveled road. Once a Civil War veteran with a bullet lodged in the arch of his nose spent the night with us Another time an unkempt woolly fellow with a dozen dogs of every breed stopped and brought terror to us youngsters. Gypsies in their covered wagons camped along the road. When the Oklahoma "strip" was opened, the "mover-wagons" were numerous. Little trenches beside the road with a bit of charcoal in them were evidence of last night's campfire. In the fall, during corn-husking, some of the "movers" came back, disappointed, over the familiar road.

School life was rugged but pleasant. Older boys missed the first month of school and the last, as they were needed for the work in the fields. Off one trudged with a dinner-pail, containing an egg, a sausage, a butter-and-jelly sandwich, and perhaps an apple At the neighbors', other children joined the trek across fields to the distant schoolhouse. Through cold and wet and storm one left home soon after winter sunrise and got back only with the setting sun. At school one played drop the handkerchief, or andy-over, or darebase, townball, crack-the-whip, pump-pump-pull-away, run-sheep-run, New York, London-bridge, or work-up. In school one marveled over the pictures in *Webster's Unabridged*, or tried to get one's lesson while all the other grades recited in the same room. Once one of the bigger boys got a severe whipping, which awed us for a long time. Occasionally there was a spelling-match at night, which was exciting, or a box-supper, to which older young people came. We had perhaps two hundred books in the school library, and during my last winter another boy and I had a race to see who could read the most books. We fudged a little by reading the shorter ones to swell our list and, I think, stayed home from church a time or two to bring up the total.

It was about this time that we took the *Youth's Companion* as well as the *Kansas City Star*. In the former I hold in precious memory C. A. Stephens with his adventure series, stories by Homer Greene, and others. Modern youth has nothing like it for clean, wholesome entertainment. The *Star* is still one of the most circumspect papers in the country. There were also the *Bundesbote* and the *Volksblatt*, with their

items about folks we knew. About New Year, the town drugstore handed out almanacs with slapstick jokes sandwiched between weather forecasts. On rainy days we would read these or look eagerly through the *Sears Roebuck Catalogue.* I remember too, a fifteen-cent a year magazine *Comfort,* which had thrilling Jack Harkaway stories in it that kept me up long after the family had gone to bed. The agent for the Mennonite Book Concern drove through the country during the summer, taking orders for books to be delivered when the crops were gathered. After the Spanish-American War someone sold me a war-book, and Dewey of Manila Bay straightway became my hero. Some of my reading I took into the fields with me, and the horses must have been eternally grateful for the rest they got at the end of each round.

In the matter of politics, I recall the Populist spell-binder Jerry Simpson, who, speaking to our townsmen, on a vacant lot between store buildings, tried to prove he was the poor man's friend by giving his trousers a hitch and showing he was indeed "sockless." When the McKinley-Bryan campaign came along in 1896 my folks were unable to get a McKinley-Hobart cap for me, so I wore a Bryan-Sewall! During the War with Spain I faithfully wore a button, "Remember the Maine!" Later, Teddy Roosevelt was my hero. It was my good fortune to hear the popular President in Denver one fall after the haying was done. My brother Ed will never forget that trip, for besides climbing Pike's Peak one night for a rather disappointing sunrise, we stopped over at La Junta for the watermelon festival. We got a free melon, but we dared not eat it for we wanted to bring it home, though we were nearly starved because we had spent all our money.

We had a pond in our pasture where we learned to swim "dog-paddle" and to skate in the winter. Sometimes a group of us went to the Emmett creek to dive off the bridge. It seemed a glorious swimming-hole then, but when I last visited it, a few years ago, it had shrunk terribly and lost all its former glory.

One of the big days on a farm comes with cold weather when the family decides on butchering. Early that morning someone shoots the hog or slays it with an axe. Then it is brought on a wheelbarrow to the shed, where it is seized by the hind-legs and dipped into a barrel half-filled with scalding hot water. After the hog has been thoroughly soaked, its bristles can easily be scraped clean and the white body hung up by its hind-legs before disemboweling it. Now the activity moves to the kitchen, where pots and pans are in readiness, and before long comes the odor of fresh-cooked tenderloin steak and a dozen other tidbits. Long into the evening the meat-grinder converts pork into appetizing sausage-balls that are stored amid their lard in large earthen jars. No town dweller with carefully hoarded ration points will ever know the luxuries of butcher-day on the farm! Later, the hams are hung in a smoke-house, connected by a funnel with a covered fire several yards away, and are cured.

Another big day is "thrashing"—nobody called it threshing. An outfit carried with it as many as fifteen men moved from one farm to another until everyone was taken care of. If the shock-thrashing was delayed too long, the farmer arranged with a rival outfit, or stacked his grain, to be thrashed later. It is still a mystery to me how the engineer managed all the gadgets to keep the engine from exploding. Sometimes the three whistles had to be repeated to bring the water-wagon back in time from a neighbor's tank. A series of short whistles was used to warn the grain shovelers to hurry along with an empty wagon. The threshing-machines at first had men cut the bands of bundles, but later, "self-feeders" were attached. At the other end, the straw-carriers were replaced in time by "blowers." The dustiest job was on the straw-pile where the stacking was done. To this day I can hear the regular chug-chug of the engine and the steady roar of the "thrasher," and smell the acrid coal smoke and chaff that accompanied community thrashing. At noon, the sweaty "hands" washed in a gray-granite wash-pan on the porch and the engineer used a dash of Grandfather's Soap. Soon some two dozen men around a long table devoured all the food the housewife and her help could assemble. Sometimes rain interfered with the thrashing. I remember that the outfit always ate at our house both before leaving for town and again on resuming the work

"No town dweller with carefully hoarded ration points will ever know the luxuries of butchering-day on the farm."

Photo FSA

when, after a day or two, the grain was dry again.

Every farmboy has mixed feelings about the animals on the place. He may remember a pet calf that grew up with him, or a colt that sometimes played the mischief, and then one day was gone for good. A dog, seldom two, is the most intimate member of the family, following in the furrow the livelong day, yet ready for a romp at night. Geese are not so understanding, usually challenging some message you try to shout from the barn to the house. For some reason we never had mules, though for a while we had a burro that gave the children plenty of grief when going to or coming from school. I could tell some thrilling escapades we had with horses, but I want in this paper to generalize my account as far as possible.

In the late fall, fuel had to be provided for the winter. Some coal was bought, but usually there was plenty of brush to be cut into stove-wood; and after corn-shelling, there were baskets of cobs to be brought into the kitchen after school. The kitchen was headquarters for a healthy family. Well do I remember the smell of new-baked bread or rolls on Saturday afternoon. Sometimes there was a pinch of coconut to be sneaked from the pantry, or a crisp new crust. And on Sundays there were guests—other large families that gathered around a well-prepared table that groaned with the products of the farm.

The range of acquaintance in those horse-and-buggy days did not extend much beyond four miles in any direction. Early in the new century a rural-free-delivery route brought mail daily to our corner. Later, a rural telephone system was introduced, with its long and short, whirring rings repeated for signals. No farmer owned an automobile or tractor as yet.

"Soon the men around the long table devoured all the food the housewife and her help could assemble."

Photo FSA

Sundays everyone dressed in his store-clothes and spent two hours at church, first at Sunday School and then at preaching. The benches were hard, and youngsters were placed in front at right angles to the congregation, where their fidgeting might be controlled. Babies squalled, and newcomers were carefully looked over. It was a fairly somber occasion, but I think the stolid look often attributed to our people was owing less to hereditary piety than to incessant hard work. So tired were some of the older brethren that they could not fight off sleep during the services. After the worship, people stood around to compare crops and prices or simply to gossip or to invite a visit. In the evening the young people gathered from far and near for Christian Endeavor. A place on the program was sure to give the amateur speaker the shudders. Quartets of singers developed, and there was for a time even a string orchestra. The long buggy-rides offered many a young couple opportunity for courtship.

Sunday afternoons were devoted to visiting, to baseball games in somebody's pasture, to reading, or music. It was then that the parlor, which was kept austerely closed all week, was opened, and one looked at stereopticon views, entertained guests, or heard the organ. Some of the pieces played were lovely melodies in our church hymnbooks. But there were also such lively pieces as the "Burning of Rome" and the "Ben-Hur Chariot Race." Sentimental pieces, like "Redwing," "School Days," "Where the Silvery Colrado Wends Its Way," I recall, among the popular songs. Nothing can set you day-dreaming like distant chords of music floating to you on a hazy summer afternoon.

In the winter we occasionally went hunting, but I remember shooting only one rabbit. Father shot a prairie chicken once when we were husking corn. He often had the gun along for wild ducks or even a coyote. I learned to make a wooden rabbit-trap later and had the pleasure of enticing some "cotton-tails" into it. Fishing was sometimes indulged in at Alta Mill, but a single five-inch fish was all I could catch, and the day seemed wasted. One of the scenes I shall never forget is the vast flocks of migratory blackbirds floating over kaffir-corn and other late grain in mid-September, loudly chattering in windy congresses. Later, the solitary crow called from his height through the gloomy day. In the calm before a storm one heard the mournful coo of the turtle-dove. In the spring the meadow-lark added its cheerful warble after a refreshing shower.

Such was life as we knew it in Central Kansas at the turn into the present century. There was nothing particularly exciting or heroic about it. Yet it had a

bouyancy and a freedom from war's alarms that later generations have missed. People had enough, and to spare, though they worked incessantly for it. Houses and barns were freshly painted with regularity; now, I understand, they are faded, and allowed to fall into disrepair. Groves of trees are gone that once stood in majesty and, in general, there was a glory that has passed. The people we knew are scattered, some in Oregon, others in California, and elsewhere. A few remain. Perhaps they can recall a dozen things that I have forgotten. If so, the purpose of this paper has been achieved.

RETURNING C.P.S. MEN ---------- from p. 7

---

field of work will probably stand out in years to come as a major contribution to the total Peace Witness.

(8) The camper has developed a new appreciation of the Church's mission in the world. It has been painful to be dependent on the Church even to the point of having them pay directly for our meals and lodging. The camper has developed a new sense of mission. As one notes the offerings, for example, of various congregations, one is at times struck with the amount of the offerings. At times the offerings at camp are more than those in the home churches when actually prorated according to members. The camper has learned to share what little he does have.

(9) The camper has re-thought his vocational interest. To some, this meant a calling into the ministry and teaching, while others will go back to their farms or former position, but with a new outlook—an outlook that is more church-centered.

(10) The camper has found that money is not everything in this world. He has had to make a few dollars go far.

(11) The camper has gained a new appreciation of the meaning of religious freedom which prompted our forefathers to come to this country.

(12) Those campers who were intrusted with staff positions in the camps and units were thrust into positions of responsibility at any early age. Some camp directors are not over twenty-four years old. When one stops to think that their responsibility is as great as that of a pastor of a large church (with problems multiplied), one should expect out of CPS a maturity of leadership which one normally does not expect from that age group.

And Some Doubtful Gains!

Lest we give the impression that ALL campers will have gained these new insights, let us hasten to say that not all will have benefited from their CPS experience. The percentage might compare with the loyalty of members in our home churches). There were some who were not able to cope with situations; they likely will have "drifted." An arbitrary classification of campers as we might find them might be as follows:

(1) The camper who was not challenged with C.P.S. He simply decided to "sit it out." To him it was a matter of marking time. He lived mostly for his week-ends, his furlough; and above all, for the day when he would be released.

(2) The camper who became cynical. He did not have the grace to turn an adverse situation into an opportunity; he gave way. He became openly cynical.

(3) The camper who became openly resentful to the point where he criticized the Church for even administering a program of alternative service. He feels that cooperation with Selective Service is compromise, pure and simple; he resents it.

Conclusion

Finally, there is, however, the camper who accepts Civilian Public Service as an open challenge of the Church to witness for peace in a world that is totally at war. These adverse situations which come upon him bring out the best in him. It is his intention to turn adversity into opportunity. The experience reassures him in a renewed faith in God, and a stronger conviction that God's Law of Love is still the only solution of our problems, whether they be personal, national, or international. He believes that unless the world will look to the Cross, where God's love was manifested to man, and then permit His love to permeate our lives as we deal with our neighbor—unless we accept God's way of working, the world's problems will continue unsolved. We believe the larger portion of campers will claim to be in this last group.

They are grateful to the government for having honored conscience in a time when our country has been in a total-world-war. To the churches they express gratitude for the fine support given, in prayers and financial aid. It is their hope and prayer that the combined effort may light a little candle, as it were, in a world that is much in need of light—namely Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

The Literature of the Russo-Canadian Mennonites

By J. H. JANZEN

It appears that Mennonitism has never been fertile ground for belles-lettres. Already in the seventeenth century the most outstanding writer in Holland, Joost von den Vondel, felt impelled to leave the Mennonites (1645), so that his talents would not be hindered in their development. It seems to me that his transfer to the Catholic Church was not, as many may think, founded in ungodliness or disloyalty to the brotherhood in which he was born.

However, even though the Mennonites did not support or accept their own belles-lettres, that does not mean that they were unfavorable toward all of them. They liked to have good books. They bought Menno Simon's writings and laid them away to become dust covered on the "corner shelf." But they gladly read "good" stories, and in many cases their opinion of "good," not putting it too strongly was quite strange. Catholic stories of saints ("Genoveva," etc.) were read with pleasure. Publications of the Enslin and Laiblin firms were frequently found in our homes while I was yet a child. "Indian stories" in the style of Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* were avidly devoured, and when we entered America, we were mildly surprised that the pioneers did not greet us from the stakes of torture of an Indian encampment. Such "good" stories were read with pleasure, and if ever something out of the ordinary broke the monotony of our Mennonite village life in Russia, we would say, "Why that is almost like a story."

However, Mennonitism was regarded in certain respects as a "terra sancta," on which the jugglery of belle-lettres dared not appear. That Mennonites would write in this genre was simply sin. After all, one could not treat Mennonitism that way.

Later when I came to Canada and in my broken English tried to make plain to a Mennonite bishop that I was a "novelist,"(that being the translation for "Schriftsteller" in my dictionary) he was much surprised. He then tried to make plain to me that "novelists" were fiction writers and that fiction was a lie. I surely would not want to represent myself to him as a professional liar. I admitted to myself, but not aloud to him, that I was just that kind of "liar" which had caused him such a shock. One may, for a change observe with delight the arts of the juggler, without becoming a juggler himself. If any member of the family or community becomes one, he thereby sets himself apart as an outcast.

J. H. Janzen in 1912

Fifty years ago we in Russia regarded a writer in our midst as a sort of renegade. When I came out with my first book in 1910, *Zenian, Denn meine Augen haben Deinen Heiland gesehen,* and later even dared to place my humorous Low German plays before the public, a great storm was raised, but it calmed itself again. The time had come when writers from our midst could assert themselves in our communities, even if they did not make much progress. My book was reviewed favorably in most German papers of Russia, America, and also Germany, but in all of these countries not enough German-reading Mennonites were found to buy enough books to cover the expenses involved.

Before the appearance of my book, I had published a story in Kroeker's *Familienkalender* in the style of a diary, in which, awkward as I was at that time, I had not sufficiently masked the individuals who served as my characters, and they recognized themselves and became furiously angry at me. I had to ask their pardon, and it was no easy task to receive their forgiveness. I thought I had defended them, but they felt that they had been exposed at the rack, and the injustice which had been done, they considered a sin unto death. Later I became more clever, and if occasionally someone felt himself offended, he would not know where to send me to beg for pardon, so that I was henceforth spared that unpleasant task.

Even before me, Peter Harder published *Die lutherische Cousine* with the result, that, in spite of his being one of our better elementary-school teachers and a son of the widely known minister and poet Bernhard Harder, he was regarded almost as an outsider. His father B. Harder escaped such fate, because he wrote and published only religious poetry, and his volumes of poetry and songs were not only bought (and laid on the corner shelf along with the *Martyrs' Mirror* and Menno Simons' *Fundamentals),* but were made full use of on all possible and "impossible" occasions. However, when Peter Harder as a Mennonite tried to bring his message to the Mennonites, his fate was

sealed. He, however, did not let himself become intimidated; he later published his *Lose Blaetter*, which have enjoyed a kind reception, although they have caused the author a good deal of criticisms from those who felt themselves exposed.

I well know that I am no genius and possess only very modest talent, but I believe that Peter Harder and I have "broken the ice," and now the novelists shoot past us almost like toadstools out of the earth. A lively relating of Mennonites and Mennonite life began, and novelists have arisen whose genius cannot be denied.

The above-mentioned Bernhard Harder was our first significant poet. His poetry and songs do not breathe a learned but rather a warm, lifelike, piety of the heart, out of which joy radiates, and many of which have the essence of folksongs, if only our people were willing to come to self-realization and would not always believe that only "imported goods" have value.

My father, Heinrich J. Janzen, wrote poetry and collected in a manuscript what he called *"Erzeugnisse schlafloser Naechte."* The poems have never been published as a book. Several of them appeared in our papers and in H. Dirks' *Mennonitishes Jahrbuch.* Father's poems were not quite as elastic as Harder's. Several of his songs were taken into our *Gesangbuch* but I fear they will never become real folksongs. They have a special depth of thought, but as mentioned above, they lack elasticity.

Of the contemporary poets among us, Martin Fast of Murrawjewka, in the Province of Samara, and Gerhard Loewen, Stuartburn, Manitoba, stand in first rank in my mind. Unfortunately, I do not possess any of the writings of these poets and writers, not even those of my father—not even my own book, *Denn meine Augen*—so I am completely dependent upon my memory for these comments, and my memory is not of the best.

I know Martin Fast only as poet. Many years ago M. Fast, G. Loewen and I had at one time a sort of "Hainbund," (league of young poets); however, unfortunately, we could never clasp our hands by moonlight and dance around the oak tree, for thousands of miles lay between the individual members of this league. However, we agreed on a theme, formulated it, sent the poems to each other in chain letters, criticizing and comparing them. That was a wonderful time. It lies in the past, and the vagaries of life have long since disbanded that league. We do not know if Fast is still living; and even though Loewen and I live in the same country, little communication continues.

Today I think of M. Fast as the one who could easily put profound thoughts into a finished form, without the form becoming rigid. As far as I know, his poems have never been published, and yet he is one of the first foremost poets of our people.

Gerhard Loewen presented as his first work, if I am correct, *Die Feldblumen.* I believe that of us three he was the one who was most in tune with nature. He lived in the romantic, myth-surrounded valley of the Dnieper near the island of Chortitza, where in olden times the Cossacks had their camps. One time I roamed with him through this valley, and he conveyed to me the idea that a real poem is a song, even before it is set to music. Poems became music when he uttered them. His own poems all breathe a heart-warming joy that is closely allied to nature. Of the three of us, he certainly was the most expert in the theory of writing poetry, but it did not handicap him. When necessary his spirit soared in freedom and gushed forth as free and expressive as the waters of the Dnieper in the valleys of Chortitza and Einlage. At the present time some of his poems appear occasionally in the *Bote,* winning approval by their unforced naturalness.

G. A. Peters, who passed away recently in Beamsville, Ontario, produced numerous poems that will assure his fame; even though they are a little too formal, they cannot easily be treated with indifference. It is not easy to seek out the pearls from his collected works, but we should certainly have someone who could separate the significant from the pedantic and give to us from G. A. Peter's poetry and prose that which speaks to the heart, and there is much of that, especially in his poetry. As we have them now, few would take the trouble to go through all his works and find for themselves those things of significance which refresh and strengthen. As Peter's works now appear, they are destined to a place with the unread *Martyr's Mirror*—good, but not all acceptable.

Similar to the former, only much nearer to life, is G. H. Peters, teacher at Gretna, Manitoba, Canada. In his style he is not completely different from his namesake, but his daily contact with young people has kept him from getting lost in the pedantic. His poems are easily read and grasped, and leave a lasting impression. I hope the time will soon come when Peters will present to us a volume of selected poems, which will surely be a real treasure in our libraries.[1]

Elder Johann P. Klassen, Winnipeg, Manitoba, has a poem for every occasion. If he has not already written a poem, he is ready to do so about any object or incident. He writes mostly for existing melodies, so his poems at the moment they appear are already songs. At any occasion he reaches for his handwritten songbook, indicates the melody, and we sing.

In my estimation he is the most productive and most

[1] *Blumen am Wegrand* has been published.—Ed.

natural of our poets. His songs come directly from the heart. Klassen's strength is his overflowing, ever-active spirit. His cheerful nature has never given way to bitterness even though he has suffered much from an infirmity. Instead of inviting sympathy, he has been a source of comfort to many through his sermons and poems. An inexhaustible and unconquerable joy speaks out of all his poems, even where they are most serious. God is to him the one to whom he and all his fellow beings may speak in their own language, and who answers in a way that can be understood. At times his poems may almost seem too realistic but whoever reads them can derive benefit and joy from them. A reader will learn to love the poet, and his heart will become lightened and inspired by the poetry.

Peter J. Klassen, Superb, Saskatchewan—sick man who is struggling against sickness and want—has been especially successful in his translating of the "Krylow Fables" from the Russian into the German language. He is more of a narrator than a poet. This is not true of the other poets mentioned. They have all written narratives, but their greatest significance lies in their poetry. Peter Klassen has had more success with his prose than with his poetic works. He is the one who is most widely known in German literature and is the only poet who has received high honors, and even money for his literary work.

Peter J. Klassen is a good narrator and writes what our youth will call "good stories." Klassen's novels have a theme that expresses a philosophy of life. His appealing stories have not always received the praise of everyone. Klassen's wholesome spirit has conquered every temptation to retreat from a complacent Mennonite society.

A great poet and narrator is Fritz Sen (Gerhard Joh. Friesen, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada) and it is not altogether impossible that he alone, of all of us, will be remembered by future generations. His works are too magnificent in content and composition for the ordinary mortal. His literary works have real significance reaching out beyond the Mennonites, even though he writes to Mennonites about Mennonite life. To him the cultural essence of Mennonitism is more important than its doctrinal, if one is permitted to differentiate thus. Viewing life he writes poetry and fiction that is appreciated and honored not only within the confines of a denomination and its creed, but wherever a people think and feel as a cultural group.

The Russian composer Glienka is almost equal to Tschaikowsky, but because his music is so bound up by nationalism, it will always have much less universal significance than Tschaikowsky's. Fritz Sen is the Tschaikowsky of the Mennonite poets and novelists, and he stands upon a platform from which he, better than any of the rest of us, can speak to the world.

However, Fritz Sen, like Peter Klassen, has unfortunately been held in check by bitter poverty. The paths he walks are hard and covered with thorns. In how far he still belongs to us is hard to tell. He comes from Mennonite rural life in South Russia, has been baptized and was a member of the church in Halbstadt. As far as I know, he has joined no church here in Canada—perhaps because he thinks that he could not be helpful in church work as a poor man. Though my opinion of him is that he is deeply religious, it may seem to him that our church is too narrow and complacent for him to be identified with it. Oh, when will we finally realize that people that have been called to render a great service must also have the freedom and the opportunity to render this service? God be merciful to us!

And now we want to consider Gerhard Toews (Georg de Brecht), one of the younger writers, but an excellent one. I believe and hope that his two novels—*Die Heimat in Truemmern* and *Die Heimat in Flammen*—will find the reception among the Mennonites that they deserve and will find acceptance outside the boundaries of Mennonitism.

Toews treats the theme of "Selbstschutz" with an openness that will win friends as well as foes for him. But he is not afraid to face the question squarely. The action in his novels is animated. He always hastens on, always holding us in suspense. His plots often present a puzzling succession of events before us, and sometimes it seems that they lack psychological foundation and causative coherence. Toews sees not only the tumult of the physical struggle in the great slaughter of the Russian Revolution and civil war, but also the destruction of the human soul which trembled and often was shattered by the brutal attacks on the prevailing life of that day. Toews does not look at the soul from the viewpoint of the rational, analytical German. In Toews, one notes the influence of Russian literature with its psychological depth. Nowhere do we find a mechanistic psychology expressed, but we always see into the depths of the human heart which he portrays.

Toews' counterpart is Peter Epp, Columbus, Ohio. He is a philosopher and sees the meanings of happenings most clearly. In Toews, the frail human body burdensomely carries the soul through life. In Epp, the soul bravely carries the body, and all that happens has been destined by the soul. This is obvious in his short story *Erloesung*, and especially in his detailed novel *Eine Mutter* which was written as memoirs. Here the monotony of Mennonite life in South Russia

passes before our eyes, but every moment of this monotony is a deep experience for the soul of the reader. This novel leads to the understanding that the worth of human being, in the last analysis, depends on the values that are within him which in the various circumstances of life can carry and build up or lead to decay and destruction.

I want to mention also our "Tante Marie" (Mrs Marie Penner, Luseland) whose beautiful fairy tales may perhaps also find friends beyond the boundaries of Mennonitism. I believe that our youth admires writers such as she, because she speaks to them. If we do not accept writings such as these, we will lose our young people, and for that reason I hope that Tante Marie will tell us and our children much more of what she has observed and heard concerning the breezes, the clouds, the rabbits, and other animals. While reading her stories, it was impressed upon me that good children's literature is also gladly read and genuinely appreciated by adults.

I am aware of the fact that I have mentioned not nearly all of those who deserve to be mentioned. That must remain for those who are better informed than I. For we have today a great Mennonite literature. Shall our writers again, sooner or later, face the alternative either to despair or to leave the Mennonite brotherhood? God alone knows.

TEN YEARS LATER

Many things have happened since 1935 when I first wrote "chatterings" on the literature of the Russo-Canadian Mennonites. I must confess that I am poorly posted on what happened in the field of our belle-lettres during the war.

My own writings at this time, I am afraid, have become overconventional. And, too, it is also hard to get the attention of the reading public for a moment away from the happenings of the day as related by the newspapers and the radio in time of war.

My *Wandkalender* was well received in 1943, but it could not be published in 1944, due to conditions over which I had no control. My little stories in the calender about the people of Ebenfeld County were not overflowing with brilliance. Since my stories were written to illustrate the everyday sermonettes in the *Wandkalender,* the free flow of my inspirations was hampered. But, nevertheless, they stirred up enough curiosity about the Ebenfeld people to warrant a continuation of the stories for 1944 in book form. They appeared under the title *Geschichte der Grafschaft Ebenfeld,* Vol. III and IV. (Vol. I and II had already been given in the *Kalender* 1943.)

After that I fled from the turbulent present to the more peaceful and prosperous past, publishing *Wanderndes Volk,* and finally translated my *Tales from Mennonite History* into the English and published them in my usual way, via the Mimeograph. A few additional essays and poems was all that I could create during this period.

Also retiring from literary activity more and more are Gerhard Loewen and Joh. P. Klassen. The latter published his *Aehrenlese,* a collection of his own and poems of others, all singable after some familiar tune from our hymn books, all of them written for particular occasions, all of them revealing the personality of Joh. P. Klassen himself, just as he is—even those which are composed by others.

Peter J. Klassen sought refuge from the turmoils and hardships of his life in the land of imagination, and his *Peet* books, I, II, and III, came into being, with the usual amount of decidedly unusual action in them, dealing with children and child-like people, and full of that vital power which the poor, sick poet covets for himself without the slightest hope of ever attaining in this valley of the shadow of death in which he wanders. In spite of his poor health he is the richest of all of us; if he lacks something, he writes and puts his life into it, and he gains treasures which he shares liberally, exceeding anything given by the most generous millionnaire. What abundant living in that feeble frame of his!

A genius has arisen among us during the time of war. He is Arnold Dyck, who wrote before the war under different *nom de plumes,* and edited and published the *Mennonitische Warte* which, due to circumstances, had to be reduced to the *Warte-Jahrbuch* which he is editing and publishing now. Of significance and rare beauty are his two humorous booklets *"Koop enn Bua op Reise"* and, above all, *"Verloren in der Steppe."*[1]

Arnold Dyck is both a writer and an artist. Compared to other Mennonite writers he received far more formal training. He was privileged to study art at Munich and Stuttgart.

Dyck's writings make exceptionally good reading, but it seems to me that there is something that curbs his genius. I do not know what it is, but I am confident that he will shed his fetters and emerge a free man to soar upward like an eagle and to carry us with him, a free man of a free people.

Gerhard Toews and Gerhard Friesen, gifted writers in German, went to Germany before the war hoping to find there a reading public more responsive to what they had to offer. The war cut their activities as authors and poets short, and it remains to be seen what they will accomplish in the future.

Gerhard Toews is working, at present, in conjunc-

[1] Of each the third volume is in preparation. Ed.

(Continued on page 28)

Koop enn Bua op Reise

By ARNOLD DYCK

Editor's note: *Koop enn Bua op Reise* is the title of a story in Low-German of which the third volume is being prepared. This little scene in which the writer introduces Koop and Bua is taken from the first volume.

Wiels eck onse Reisende nu grods aula soo scheen op'm Klompe hab, sull eck mie woll 'n baet Tiet naeme enn ju dee eenzelwies vaeastalle. Eena saul doch weete, met waem eena sich aufgeft. Enn dee vea Oomkes seen nu krakjt aula gaunz goot to seene, wann daut uck noch een baet tiedig es enn dee Sonn hinjrem Bosch noch nich vaea.

Aum dollste to seene es Bua selwst. Nich bloos, wiels hee een baet wishig ess enn emma han enn haea flitzt enn met de Henj en'e Loft 'rompoaket, waut hee soo aun sich haft; daut natiedlich uck, oba aun am es uck aum measchte to seene. Eck meen, soo aun Butakaunt. Hee haft naemlich von dee vea dee gratste Loftvedrengung.

Sest ess he mau grods meddelgroot, hee es oba met aulem een baet daeaj aun'e wiede Kaunt. Daut es tom Wundre, woo hee sich en eene Tiet von knaup feftig Joa soon scheenet Klompke Schmolt haft toopaete kunnt. Sette deit am daut meerendeels doa, woa sest dee geweenilja Mensch siene "Taile" haft —soo nanne geleade Lied woll, wann eck racht sie, dee dennste Staed twesche Schulre enn Sett.

Oba uck Bua siene Been—sowiet aus eena daut no dee dralle Beckselempe beordeele kaun—senn gaunz doano, dise "Taille" bowre Ead to hoole enn han enn haea to schuwe: see senn schmock rund enn gaunz ornoa stiew, wann uck een beat kromm. Kromm geboage habe dee sich oba nich, wiels an vleicht to vael Wicht opgelode es. Nae, daut nich. Veboage saul hee sich dee selwst habe, met Gewault, aus hee noch en'e Weaj lag. Soo habe mie daut weens dee oole Mumkes vetald, dee sowaut aules weete. Hee saul uck donn aul emma een gaunz nattet Buckje gehaut habe—eenje Mumkes haude aul gemeent, auf daut aum Enj uck'ne Oat englische Krankheit wea—enn aewa daut Buckje haud hee dann emma siene Beenkes geboage, wann hee dee Feetkes haud wullt em Mulke naeme. Na, enn soo weare dee Beenkes dann schliesslich kromm geworde, enn soo weare se dann uck schliesslich kromm geblaewe. Auf daut nu oba aules krackjt soo gewast es—eck weat daut nich dann mot jie aul selwst dee Mumkes froage.

Bua sien Kopp enn Gesecht senn uck gaunz soo aus daut aewaje, daut heet, see senn rund enn goot to seene. Siene Hut es redlich, enn dee Hoa senn licht, enn haud hee eenen Boat gedroagt, waea weet, auf dee nich, wann uck nich grods fiaroot, soo doch weens daeaj fossig gewast wea.

Em aewajen es Jasch Bua een frintelja Maun enn es goot to liede. Eena mot sich mau eascht doaraun gewannt habe, daut hee emma racht haft, enn daut hee billawaem dootraede kaun.

Waut nu Isaak Koop es, dee dolle Koopsche aea Maun, soo es dee en aulem daut Gaeajenpoat von Buare. Meist en aulem. Von Joare enn ven Gewaus senn see ziemlich glick. Oba doa heat dann daut Glicknis uck aul op. Sest senn see von Gelot enn von Natua veschiede aus Dach enn Nacht.

Woa aun Bua waut utgebuckt es, doa es nun Koope waut engebuckt. Woa Bua aewabrestig es doa es Koop unjabrestig. Enn soo geit daut dann wieda. Eascht wann eena bot de Been kemmt, stallt sich wada soo'ne Oat Glicknis en: uck Koop siene Been seen naemlich kromm. Oba daut es dann uck wada mau soo-so met daut Glicknis: Bua siene Been seen no bute kromm, Koop siene no benne. Enn doavon kemmt daut dann, daut uck aere Overalls sich met'e Joare opheare to lickne. Bua siene krie'e aere Kneeflecka mea aun'e Butakaunt, Koop siene mea aun'e Bennakaunt.

Uck em Raede senn dee beid sea verschiede. Wann Bua raedt, dann raedt hee foats enn geheajet Straemel, daut sich daut uck haft loont auntofange. Enn hee raedt uck soo, daut'et goot to heare es. Na enn doaromshaulwe uck to seene, waejen daut Romgefuchtel. Heare deit sien Raede sich oba soo, aus wann woa een nia ruscha Opsautzwoage foat, soona met'n Swon, fresch enn vegneajt. Raedt Koop, dann es daut aus wann eene oole rusche Powos knoat, enn eena mot goot oppausse, daut eena doa Wead 'rutkrigt.

The Parlor

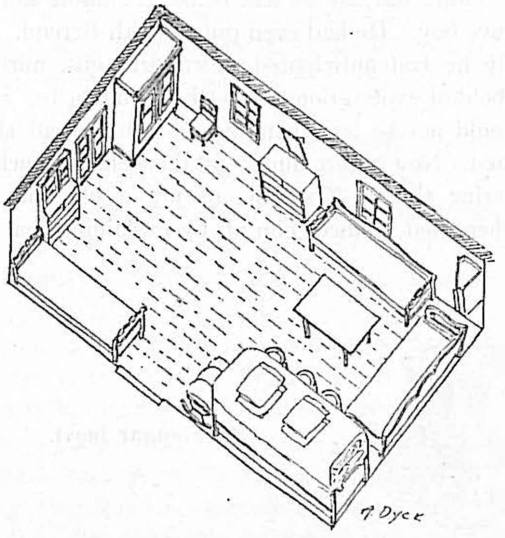
"Die Grosse Stube"

By ARNOLD DYCK

Editor's Note. This is a part of *Verloren in der Steppe,* Vol. I, translated by Arnold Nickel, a student at Bethel College.

Once in a while, about once a week Haenschen is permitted to go into the *Grosse Stube.* When he is in that room his shoes and trousers must be clean. There Mother brings him his "Sunday" playthings—some wooden soldiers, a small tin wagon with lead wheels which no longer turn, a train made up of a locomotive and three coaches (which is, by the way, the only train Haenschen has ever seen), and some white horses made of paper with wooden wheels that do not turn either. These are his choice toys, and he does not get to play with them very often. Usually they are stored in the china closet (Glasschapp) in the *Grosse Stube* where they are safely out of his reach. He is forbidden to open the closet, and it never even occurs to him to break that rule.

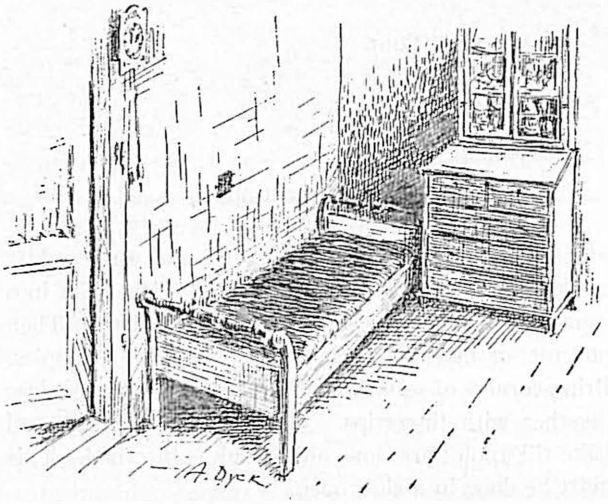
It takes all kinds of imagination to stage a real war with the few materials Haenschen has to play with, but he knows how to use his imagination and his toys so that he can play war. And where could the boy have gotten his liking for shooting! When he plays war he has no concern for his surroundings. He is deeply interested in them though, whenever he gets a stomach ache, which he has had frequently. Lately, however, the attacks have been fewer, and usually they are cured by taking six *Haarlemer-tropfen* on a piece of sugar, and by lying on the bench by the stove



"Grosse Stube"

(Ofenbank). Even though weak, he likes to lie on the *Ofenbank* and occupy himself with his surroundings. Naturally the *Ofenbank* is the best place for a person who does not feel well, or wants to take an afternoon nap, or is simply lazy. The bench, which got its name from the stove in front of which it stands, has no back rest, so the warm air from the stove can circulate freely around it. Above the head end of the bench hangs the large Kroeger clock which steadily ticks the fleeting time. If a person follows the pendulum with his eyes and counts the strokes, he usually does not get beyond thirty before everything is gone—pendulum, clock, and even the last count.

Kroeger clock, "Ofenbank" and "Glasschapp"



Near the foot of the bench is the built-in cabinet *(Glasschapp).* The bottom is arranged like a bureau with drawers and the top half is a china closet. Ordinary china is usually not stored here, but just the ornate and beautiful pieces, especially the colorful coffee cups, gold rimmed soup bowls, flowered tea kettles, unusual cream pitchers, and above all else, the sugar bowls *(Zuckerdinger)* of different shapes, sizes, and colors. One of these sugar bowls, the one that glitters like gold, belongs to Haenschen. How he got it is quite a story. One day when Mother and Father decided to go to town Haenschen wanted to go along. They promised to bring him something beautiful if he would stay home and act like a man. That evening there was placed before him the glittering sugar bowl. As he reached for it—eagerly thinking that the real gift

was inside it—there was general excitement. How easily he could have broken the fragile bowl! He was not supposed to take it into his hands, it was to be placed in the built-in china cabinet. Yes, naturally it was his, but it was too precious to be played with. That entire fall day he had behaved himself and been a brave boy. He had even put up with Berend. Naturally he had anticipated a beautiful gift, nurturing the boldest expectations as to what it might be. Surely it would not be less than the popgun he had always wanted. Now before him stood this cold, untouchable, glittering thing. The note of joy would not come. Mother tried to cheer him up by explaining that after

The sugar bowl

he had grown up and was married he would have a nice new sugar bowl in his possession. Haenschen did not even try to imagine how in twenty years he would have a bride at his right side and a sugar bowl in his left hand, and move into an otherwise empty house. No, he did not have that much imagination, and it would have been impossible to keep the tears back had not Berend stood beside him. On the table was another sugar bowl, just as cold and glittering and a little larger. That was Berend's gift. Whether Berend was figuring out how long it would be before he would marry, or whether he was planning to trade his bowl for a lasso from the Indians, or whatever else he may have been thinking, his facial expression did not reveal. His face was long, much longer than usual. This long, drawn face helped Haenschen overcome his own sugar bowl misfortune.

Those colorful contents of the china closet had little monetary value, but made up for it with a growing reminiscent value. Some of the pieces are quite ancient, the oldest being more than one hundred years old and having been brought from Prussia to Russia. It too, is a sugar bowl. "Sugar bowl" has become a collective name applied to any porcelain or glass dish which has an outstanding shape or glittering colors, or for which the purpose cannot immediately be recognized. Whatever the cause, this habit of buying and giving sugar bowls is not due to an excessive use of sugar. No, that is not the case, for they use very little sugar. At the table—for coffee, etc.,—sugar is used only on Sunday when there is company, and then only seldom would anyone take a piece. Haenschen and others of his age would be less modest than the older guests if it depended on them. But children are permitted to take only that which was placed before them, the piece that was next to the cup on the table. In addition Hanschen gets his piece—usually it is only half a piece—with the *Haarlemer-tropfen.*

He doesn't mind taking the drops along with the sugar. Yes, Mother suspects that that is the case with her son, for these drops sometimes show surprisingly quick results. No, these sugar bowls are not for sugar. It is for outward splendor that they stand empty and unused one decade after another in the china closet of the *Grosse Stube.*

RUSSO-CANADIAN MENNONITES_____.fr. p. 25

tion with the Canadian occupation army in Germany. I hope that he soon will be with us again and share with us the profound treasures of human life, as he has experienced it. I hope also that G. Friesen has not grown away from us altogether, and that we will hear often from him in times to come. He is our best poet.

Preparing this supplement I feel as if I am writing epitaphs on tombstones. Would God that I could see a new generation of poets and artists arise among us. But even if I do not see my hopes realized in my lifetime, new poets will come. Here is to the future belle-lettres of our own a hearty, VIVAT! CRESCAT! FLOREAT!

PIROSCHKI

2½ cups flour
1 t. salt
¾ cup water
½ cup shortening
1 qt. finely cut apples

Mix flour and shortening. Add salt and water. Mix as for pie. Roll out on board ⅛ inch thick. Cut into squares. Put handful of apples on each square. Then put 1 t. or more of sugar on each handful of apples. Bring corners of squares to the top and pinch the edges together with fingertips. Place on baking pans and bake till apples are done and dough is browned. This must be done in a slow oven.

Mennonites the World Over

By CORNELIUS KRAHN

Two years before the last war broke out the writer was in Reverend Gorter's study in Rotterdam when the latter, pointing at the *Martyr's Mirror* remarked, "The sufferings of the Mennonites of Russia far exceed those of our martyrs of the sixteenth century." How little did we realize that this was just the beginning, and that all European Mennonites would be involved soon. Among them the Mennonites of Russia have suffered the longest and the most severely. One of them who succeeded in reaching Holland after a modern odyssey writes to friends in Canada, "If those who left Russia before 1929 thought they had suffered in Russia, let me assure them that it was only a shadow in comparison to the complete darkness which we have experienced." C. F. Klassen is now investigating the conditions of the displaced Mennonites of Europe.

Russia — Revolution, civil war, famine, liquidation, collectivization, concentration camps in the North, and mines in Siberia are the epitaphs of a unique Mennonite religious, cultural, and economic achievement in Russia. Little of this garden spot of the Ukraine was left by the time Hitler's army moved in. Just before its arrival thousands of the Mennonites had been evacuated into Siberia. When the German army retreated in 1943 the remaining 20,000-30,000 were taken to Eastern Germany and Poland. When the Red army moved into Germany proper in the winter of 1945 the Russian Mennonites were on the move once more. Unable to escape, some remained in the Russian occupation zone to be sent to Siberia. A few reached Holland, and many are in British and American zones of occupation. How many will be "repatriated"? How many will reach this continent? The future will tell. In Russia, where Mennonitism had reached its greatest achievement, it has been systematically and completely destroyed in one generation. Communities, churches and families have been broken up. Families are scattered all over Europe and Asia and South America without the slightest hope of ever being re-united. And yet one of the participants in this journey puts it this way: "We cried to God on our knees many times during our journey. He directed our path and will do so in the future."

Germany—The Mennonites of Germany did not suffer as much during the early part of the war as later. Gradually the losses in men in some congregations, doubled in comparison to World War I. The catastrophies occurred during the second and final phases of the war and are still in progress. How the leveling of the German cities affected an urban Mennonite church is stated in the following report, "No church building, no school, no administration, no baker's shop, no stores, no gas, no water, no light, etc." The pastor of the Krefeld Mennonite Church, the mother church of the first American Mennonite church, announced, after his return from service, as his first topic to his scattered flock, "The Power of Christianity." The Krefeld church building has also been destroyed.

Equal to the fate of the Russian Mennonite communities is that of the Prussian churches. During the Russian invasion of Prussia, last winter, many of the 10,000 Mennonites there were evacuated to Denmark and West Germany. Hundreds perished during the Russian campaign, during their escape, and since that time behind barbed-wire in Denmark. What the final fate of these displaced persons will be is not as yet known. Their homes have been taken over by Poles. To add millions of Germans from other parts of the country to an over-populated industrial Western Germany that is to become a goat pasture is impossible. Admission of these Mennonites to other countries is improbable.

Holland—The Mennonites of Holland have suffered more than they had for centuries. Especially the final stage of the war caused innumerable hardships. Friend and foe flooded the country and bombed the cities. Many died of malnutrition and more than one hundred Mennonites perished in concentration camps. (See the reports by S. H. N. Gorter and M deBoer.) The Dutch Mennonites will be the first ones among those mentioned here to come to normalcy.

France—The number of Mennonites in France and Alsace-Lorraine is small. Since they were located in combat areas they suffered severely.

Switzerland—The Swiss Mennonites are the only European Mennonites who lived in a country that was not engaged in the war. Their number is so small that they can do little to relieve the suffering of the others.

Paraguay and Brazil—The Mennonites of these countries are still in a pioneer stage but gradual progress can be noted (See report by H. A. Fast in this issue.) The MCC maintains a large staff of workers in the Paraguay and Chaco which helps to tie this settlement with the Mennonites of the United States. A number of Mennonites from Paraguay are attending Mennonite colleges in the United States.

There is less contact of the Mennonites in the United States with those of Brazil.

Mexico—There are approximately 12,000 Mennonites in Mexico. After World War I they migrated from Canada to Mexico. There are signs that this ultra-conservative group may reach out for contacts with Mennonites of other countries.

Canada—Roughly speaking there are three different groups of Mennonites in Canada—those of Swiss background who went to Ontario from Pennsylvania after the American Revolution, those from Russia who settled in Manitoba in 1874, and those who migrated from Russia into all of the Provinces after World War I. The latter have become established and have nearly paid off the tremendous debt incurred for their transportation. In all probability another group of European Mennonites will settle in Canada now that the war is over.

United States—Numerically and economically the Mennonites of the United States are today the best established. More than 4,000 young men served the country in Civilian Public Service (work of national importance). This phase of work is coming to a close. All Mennonites are challanged more than ever before to engage in Christian service (of international importance). Instead of solving problems the war has created new ones. Only consecrated service can solve them. This is our challenge.

Cut courtesy MCC

Destruction and Re-construction of Mennonite Churches in Holland

By S. H. N. GORTER

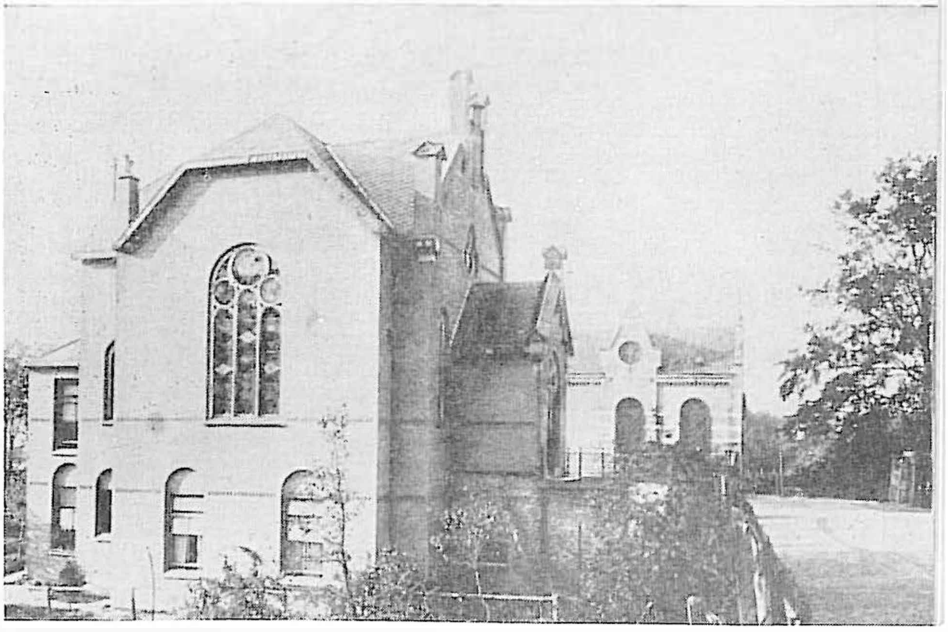
The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore, we his servants will arise and build. (Nehemiah 2:20)

During the years of war the Dutch people have suffered severely and have endured great hardships. The Mennonite brotherhood had its share of suffering. Reading the reports from the various congregations, one is impressed by the great number of brothers and sisters who perished in this time of distress. In my own church, at Rotterdam, I recently completed the list of members for the last half year. The number of those who died was large. Many old people did not survive the period of starvation. Humanly speaking, they were carried to the grave too early, and this has been the case in all urban churches in the western part of the country. But it is even more lamentable that so many from almost all our churches—have had to die an unnatural death, because of the war in general, bombings, and deportations to Germany. More than a hundred of our brothers have perished in the concentration camps. Among them are two of our ministers Rev. Albert Keuter, The Hague, and Rev. Andre du Croix, Winschoten, and a student from our Theological Seminary, Wieger Smit. Some were executed because of their "underground" activities during the German occupation. Among them was a student Gysbert Gorter. Everywhere in our congregation are wounded hearts and our only comfort is the faith, that even that which we do not understand has its place in the plan and work of God.

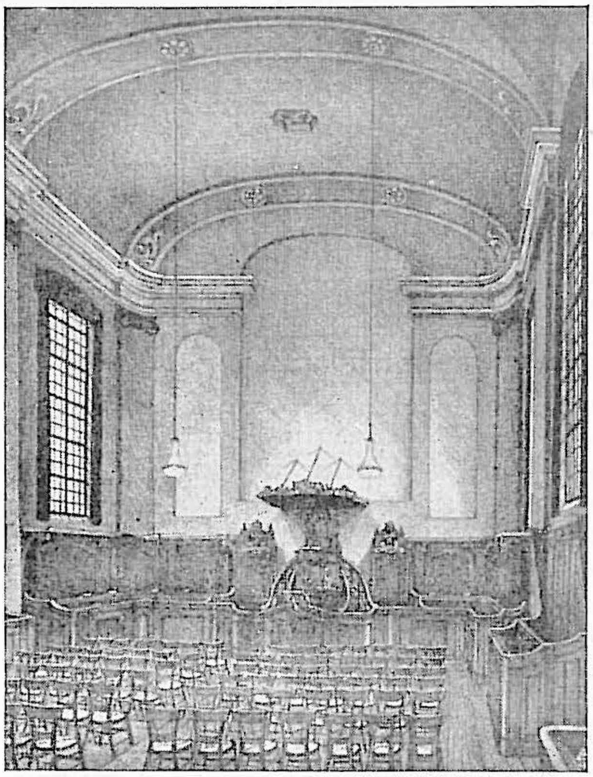
In comparison to all these sufferings, the material losses are insignificant, and yet they affect our life and even our religious life. We Protestants do not consider our churches as the only places to worship God. We know that a real fellowship with Him is possible without them and that as Mennonites we do not look for large buildings and splendors in our churches. Yet they are the centers of our faith and congregational activities where together we experience in a special way the nearness of God, His Word, His Calling and His Grace. When we lose these old familiar places of worship or when they are damaged, we consider it a great loss. Generations before erected the buildings in honor of God, and we feel a lack in our worship when they are gone.

In this respect too we have suffered. Four churches were completely destroyed and several more were damaged. The first one that was destroyed was the church at Wageningen, located in the middle of our country in the hills of the Rhine. When the Germans invaded the country on May 10, 1940, this city was in the zone of fighting. The church located

Church at Wageningen after bombing.



Mennonite Church at Wageningen



Mennonite Church of Rotterdam with beautifully carved pulpit.

No splinter of the organ and pulpit of the Rotterdam Church was left.

The Mennonite Church of Rotterdam had a fine pipeorgan.

outside of the city, was hit and nothing but ruin remains. It was a friendly little church. The Mennonite congregation of Wageningen is young and active, and under the leadership of Rev. B. Dufour it made plans to rebuild the church. Fortunately, this did not materialize because in 1945 Wageningen experienced much heavier destruction than before. This time the parsonage, also was completely destroyed. Meanwhile the congregation has been meeting in the laboratory of the agricultural school. I once preached in this surrounding and was peculiarly impressed when asked to preach in a laboratory, surrounded by blackboards, water and gas faucets, and other scientific equipment.

In those days we were struck even harder. The Germans moved westward and approached Rotterdam south of the Meuse river. Hitler's blitz, however, did not break the will of resistance. Rotterdam was no easy prey. The bridge across the Meuse river, defended by the Dutch marines, was a hindrance to the Germans. The German high command used a terrible weapon to set an example of warning to the other cities. Rotterdam was bombed. At noon Tuesday, May 14, 1940, hundreds of bombers came toward our city and dropped thousands of incendiary bombs. Within an hour and a half, old Rotterdam was a pile of rubble, and some of our sections of the city were also destroyed. Thousands of refugees were escaping from the burning city.

It was at this time that our church was destroyed. This was not only a great loss to our congregation but, also, to the Brotherhood as a whole. We cherished our church. It had been built in 1755 out of the legacy of the brothers Jan and Pieter Bisshop. Unchanged for years, the church had been a place of worship; and according to the practice of those days, it was located in the inner side of a block of old Rotterdam, where it was quiet. Whosoever entered the church, coming from the lively business section of our city, was surrounded by an atmosphere of quiet and worship. Our church was built with an appreciation of art in a baroque style. The pulpit was beautifully carved, and the pipe organ was very valuable. In the church council room were many pictures of the former pastors of the congregation. We had modernly equipped rooms for religious education and smaller meetings.

At noon, May 15, I found my way through the smoking and smelling rubble to the place where the church once stood. On the way I always hoped that our beautiful church would have been spared, but now I saw the four bare walls with the holes where formerly the high windows had been. Many times I have returned to the ruins. Often I have looked for some remnant—a splinter of wood from the pulpit or from the organ—but it was in vain. Nothing was left. Everything had been blown to bits. And now the place where the church stood can hardly be recognized. The walls have been torn down and leveled. When one of the Canadian Mennonites [C. F. Klassen?] who in former years had so much admired the church at the St. Laurens Straat, came to Rotterdam, we did not repeat the unpleasant pilgrimage to the ruins of our church.

Since then the Mennonite congregation of Rotterdam has been moving from place to place for worshiping. For a while we met in the "Noorsche Kerk," but this church too was bombed. Then we met in a hospital, which later was taken over by the Germans. We met for a while in a school building but this too was taken. We met in other churches and halls and are now temporarily meeting in a museum, where we have a nice room at our disposal. Naturally, we cannot stay here very long. The life of the congregation continues undisturbed. Again and again the members find each other for fellowship, no matter how often we change the location. However, it is difficult, and we long to have our own church building. We have a number of plans. We had nine architects make blue prints for a new building, and from two (one made by a brother of the church) we shall choose one. But we realize that the building projects will not be completed for years. We realize also that we will not have what we had. In the old building we found an atmosphere of century-old piety; but we hope that a younger generation will possess a treasure in the new church which we lost in the old one.

It was to be expected that the old city Vlissingen (Flushing) would have to bring great sacrifices during the war. It is located at the approaches to the city of Antwerp and has a large shipyard. Right next to the cranes stood the Mennonite church, built during the nineteenth century in old Dutch architectural style, with beautiful gables. The pulpit was on the long side of the church so that the congregation was sitting in a semi-circle around the minister. For a long time the church remained unharmed, but on April 12, 1942 it was hit and destroyed and with it the building of the caretaker. The lady pastor, Rev. M. de Boer, met her congregation at various places and then regularly at the Lutheran church. Vlissingen had to endure much more. For a while almost the entire congregation lived as refugees in villages in the city of Middelburg. The real trouble came when the whole island of

Right next to the cranes of the shipyard at Vlissingen stood the Mennonite church.

The cranes of the shipyard still stand but the church is gone.

Walcheren was flooded. But now most of the people are back again. Here, too, plans of building for a new church are under way but they are far from being materialized.

During the close of the war Nymegen was in the front lines for more than a half year. Among the many valuable things that were destroyed was the Mennonite Church. I must confess that I personally lost something very dear to me in that church. It was here in this plain church with its neat interior and windows which faced the inside of the church yard that I, as a little boy, was first consciously influenced by the preaching of the Gospel. Here I attended the catechism classes. It was here that I was baptized in my youth. In later years I was privileged to preach from the pulpit of this church. Thus memory is tied to this church through many reminiscences; and so it is with many others. The only remnant of the church is a small part of a gable. Under the leadership of Rev. Y. S. Baruma the congregation will erect a new building, perhaps larger than the former. Yet there is something lost that cannot be replaced.

Four churches were totally destroyed. At many other places churches were damaged to greater or lesser degrees. In modern total warfare one cannot escape and there is no security during air raids. Our country was destroyed from the south to the north. At the Belgium border the Mennonite church of Aardenburg was damaged and has been temporarily restored. In the Province of Friesland, near Witmarsum, the birthplace of Menno Simons, in Makkum, a bomb was dropped on our church, but the church could be restored. In Pingjum, where Menno Simons served as a Catholic priest,

the church, which now belongs to the Reformed is destroyed. In Waal, on the Island of Texel, in a plainly built Mennonite Church, a bombshell shattered the pulpit. The Bible, which had been on the pulpit, was found in a corner undamaged For a long time we feared for the fate of Arnhem. As is known everywhere, there was heavy fighting in and around the city from September, 1944 to the end of the year. To a great extent the city has been destroyed; our church, however, was only slightly damaged and can be repaired. Our congregation has been meeting with its minister Rev. J. E. Tuininga, in the anteroom. The church of Ymuiden, the harbor of Amsterdam, has been looted and the beautiful organ destroyed.

Summarizing the whole of our Netherlands Brotherhood, we have cause to be thankful for many things—that our lives have been spared and that after a year of enforced separation we are united again. We can meet again, and express ourselves freely. The *Algemeene Doopsgezinde Societeit* (General Conference of Mennonites in Holland) is making plans for great work to be done. It has chosen a new leader in Rev. C. Nijdam.

Meanwhile there are many material losses that have to be restored. The destruction of numerous buildings and thousands of dwellings in the entire country is so great that we can expect little help from government and people. In this respect we must rely entirely on ourselves. That is not bad, because the common need and mutual help cannot otherwise but revive and strengthen the spiritual life of the Brotherhood. Already at all places money is being collected for the Emergency Fund that has been created by the *Algemeene Doopsgezinde Societeit*. Even from the smallest churches significant contributions have come in. But if one considers that we need a million guilders ($500,000, estimated roughly) for reconstructing the churches only, it is evident that we have hardly begun. Besides all the other obligations which our international Mennonite Brotherhood has to fulfil these days, it will, no doubt, lend willing ears and hands to the Dutch brethren in their reconstruction project. This was our trust during the time of suffering throughout the years of war.

We Mennonites have scattered all over the world throughout the centuries, and yet we have found each other again and again. It is true, we meet as those who differ, but not strangers. God has kept a tie between us and He brings Mennonites together in a reviving way even in our day. To be a part of the great Brotherhood of Jesus Christ, in which each one in his way can fulfill his duty, in a world of displacement, is a source of comfort and strength which comes from God.

Editor's Note. This article is a free translation from the Dutch. The writer of it has for many years been active in the Dutch Mennonite Emergency Relief Board, helping displaced Mennonites, especially from Russia. Upon request Reverend Gorter sent us this valuable, vivid, first-hand information concerning the destruction of Mennonite churches in Holland and plans for their reconstruction. Through the efforts of Rev. W. Koekebakker and Rev. H. S. N. Gorter we were able to present to our readers the first pictures showing some Mennonite churches of Holland before and after they were destroyed by bombs. Those who wish to help our Dutch Brethren in their reconstruction project should forward their gifts to the Mennonite Central Committee, Akron, Pennsylvania.

Flooding Walcheren Island

By M. de BOER

Editor's Note. This is first-hand information on the disaster that was brought to a Dutch island in modern, total warfare. The Mennonite Churches referred to are those of Vlissingen (Flushing), a significant port and industrial center, and Middelburg, the capital of the Province of Zeeland. It happens that both of these pastors are women, which is common among the Mennonites in Holland. This account was published in the August issue of the *Elspeetse Brief* and is abbreviated here in free translation.

When the Allies were invading "fortress Europe," Antwerp, one of the significant approaches which was heavily fortified by the Germans, had to be taken. To break the German position on Walcheren Island, the Royal Air Force blasted the dikes and flooded the island.

Things began to happen here in Walcheren early in September, 1944, with indescribable confusion. One evacuation decree followed another, un-

til finally no one knew what to do; and everyone did what he thought best. For the people of Middelburg that meant to stay at home. In Vlissingen (Flushing) the situation was different. The struggle for the approaches to Antwerp would be concentrated in Vlissingen, that was evident. Allied bombing and the dropping of leaflets convinced everyone of this fact. The citizens of Vlissingen left for Middleburg which became more and more crowded. By October the majority of the members of the Mennonite Church of Vlissingen were in Middelburg. The ministers of Middelburg and Vlissingen, who temporarily lived together in the parsonage, had taken into their home many church members. The pastors' tasks in those days were mostly that of finding shelter for their flocks and keeping in touch with all of them. The tie between the Mennonite churches of Vlissingen and Middelburg became very strong. We worshiped together, and each Sunday was a time of inspiration after a week of restlessness and danger. Listening to the Gospel gave us courage. "Whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."

Blasting Ancient Dikes

Tragedy came to Walcheren early in October, when the dikes were blasted and water flooded the island. No pen can describe the catastrophe. We can relate only the results. An endless line of refugees came into Middelburg from the villages, farmer wagons loaded with the most essential household goods and the entire family, barefooted, cold, wet, and miserable without shelter. Then the water reached the cities. Those who were happy to be on dry ground one day were flooded the next. All usable homes were overflowing with occupants. No cubby-hole or attic remained empty. The Mennonite church of Middelburg was also offered for use. It was gratifying to be able to help at least a little. No one complained about the drastic situation. Soon thirty persons were living in the church. Since we could not have our services in church, we used the little English church for that purpose. The various denominations held services there in succession all Sunday.

One of the greatest hardships was that of being entirely out of communication with the rest of The Netherlands. Our vision at that time was very limited, but our fellowship with each other was intense.

Liberation of Walcheren

Gradually the approaches to Antwerp were taken. The liberation of Walcheren Island began the night of November 1 when Vlissingen was invaded. The battle for Vlissingen lasted four days. Thank God none of our church members was killed although one was wounded. Middelburg, too, was under heavy fire. Our outlook became more and more limited, until finally it was each for himself in his own house, or cellar if he was fortunate enough to have one. Now we did not even know what was happening around us on the Island of Walcheren. It was too dangerous to have church services Sunday, November 5. The next day word went around that the Germans were giving up the city. We hardly believed it, but that evening we saw a soldier burning his own flag. In my memory, that impressive moment is the hour of our liberation. A little later we saw the Dutch flag on the Abbey tower.

Life on a Flooded Island

Nine months have passed since our liberation—months during which our own lives and the life of our congregation has been somewhat revived. Thankfulness for our own regained freedom was tempered by the fact that we were worried about the rest of our country and about our relatives. Complete isolation was hard to endure, but intercessory prayers for all about whom we were concerned united us and gave us strength and comfort. It was a coincidence that on New Year's Eve sermons based on Phil. 4:6-7 were preached at both Middelburg and Vlissingen. "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

In other aspects life had not become more comfortable. Conditions were chaotic, especially in Vlissingen, where hardly a house was fit to live in. A few families found a room here or there in the destroyed city, in which they tried to set up living quarters. Before long the citizens of Vlissingen who could find any sort of shelter returned from Middelburg, thankful for the hospitality they had received and eager to begin ridding their city of rubble. Every dwelling place had to be freed from debris. By this time most of our church members have returned. We resumed our own worship services in January.

Rebuilding Our Church

There is nothing left of our church but the place where it stood. Our congregation which has suffered too much during the years of war in the front lines misses its own church building very much. We are now meeting in the Lutheran Church every two weeks,

but that is not satisfactory. A new church building is the greatest need of our congregation. We hope that our American brethren will be willing to help us. Our members have all suffered great losses in houses and property.

First Conference

After reporting at length about suffering and destruction, I would like to conclude by telling you of the conference (Gemeentedag) we had this summer, the first after our liberation. Sunday, June 24, many old and younge people gathered from all congregations of the Province of Zeeland. There was something especially festive about this occasion. After all that we had experienced, it did us a lot of good to meet as a fellowship of brethren and sisters united through faith in the one Father who had protected our lives in good days and bad, and who has called us into his service through Jesus Christ, and will continue to guide us on his path. The evening meeting testified to the renewed strength and courage which had come to us; "when Paul saw (the Brethren), he thanked God and took courage."

The fellowship meal on long tables and the reports from our Brotherhood in the other provinces gave us the contact which we had missed so long. In the afternoon we heard an inspiring message about our martyrs and the strength of faith.

(It was the editor's privilege to visit the Mennonite Churches of Zeeland during the years immediately preceding the outbreak of this war. Bicycling on the dikes, listening to the roaring of the sea, and visiting with the people in their homes and in the churches made an indelible impression. No one realized then that such tragedy would come to the Island of Walcheren. Anyone wishing to speed up the rebuilding of the deserted churches may send money to the Mennonite Central Committee, Akron, Pennsylvania, for that purpose.)

From Danzig to Denmark

By BRUNO EWERT

On January 23, 1945, we were forced to leave our home, and on the 24th the Russians arrived. What had been our home was a battlefield. We heard later that everything was destroyed and burned. With many others we fled across the Vistula River, believing we would be safe there, and hoping that the enemy would be repelled and that we would soon return. But the battlefront moved closer and closer and crossed the Vistula River. Marienburg was surrendered as a ruined city; also our beautiful church on the Wilhelmstrasse is destroyed. We had to move on. At that time the attack on Danzig began. Refugees in Hela were put on ships and sent to unknown destinations. Many a ship was sunk by the enemy and many of our friends, with whom we had been together till then, perished. On April 11, upon the urgent advice of the officers, we went to Schievenhorst. We were permitted to take only our suitcases with us, leaving our four wagons with linens, clothes, and food behind. Toward evening we were put on small boats which took us to Hela and from there we left early the next morning on our boats which took us to the large ships, one of which, with our few belongings, we boarded during the afternoon. On our ship were 3,000 wounded soldiers and about 6,000 refugees. Together with ten other ships we started out in the evening of the 12th and arrived in Copenhagen the next evening. While going to our ship and also during the voyage we were undisturbed. God's almighty hand had protected us. (Three ships had been sunk the day before and several thousand people had perished.) We left the ship April 15 and were taken into a large General Motors automobile factory by German military cars. Scant bunks were arranged there. It was not pleasant. The food was scarce; we were watched carefully; nobody was permitted to leave the camp except those who had to see a doctor, etc., but not even they could view the city. Over 4,000 people were in this camp, mainly women and children. I consider it as a special grace of God that I, as a Mennonite minister, have been permitted to leave the camp at any time. In my services I have had the opportunity to look at the beautiful city of Copenhagen. I also went to the place where lost members of families were reported. Among the reported names I found that of my daughter and her five children. I wrote to her immediately and she answered that she and all of her five children were well. In our camp many children and old people

(Continued on page 42)

Mennonites in Paraguay

In 1939 — in 1945

By H. A. FAST

In 1930 approximately two thousand Mennonite refugees from Communist Russia seeking a place where they could live and worship according to the dictates of their conscience, landed in the Chaco wilderness in Paraguay

The early years in this wilderness were difficult and discouraging. Refugees, they arrived in this new home utterly penniless, with no resources except their bare hands, a few simple tools and the courage of a deep Christian faith to sustain them. The distance from markets and factories and the slowness of transportation, the Chaco's lack of all native building materials like stone, except the hardwood of the forest, aggravated their problems of settlement. The strangeness of the new culture, the new neighbor, the new climate, and the new agriculture made a quick and happy adjustment almost impossible. Nevertheless, these pioneers of faith proceeded with courage and resourcefulness to grapple with the wilderness, starting with the crudest shelters for homes, schools, and churches and the crudest methods of transportation and of agriculture.

The Mennonite Central Committee had tried from the beginning to be helpful to these refugees by sending them various representatives to assist them; first, in finding a new home and then, in getting them established on the land and in stable communities. In 1939 I had my first opportunity to see these people and the conditions of their life. Six years later there came the privilege of seeing them again during an all-too-brief visit. But even a hasty visit revealed changes within this last six-year period that were remarkable, and thrilling to behold.

The most remarkable change was in the field of medical service. In 1939 there was no doctor or medical care in Fernheim Colony, except such as midwives could give. There was a hospital built of adobe clay with thatched roof of grass, rooms without window panes, floors made of clay, crude operating room and cruder equipment, no sterilizer, one trained nurse and several helpers. In 1945 there were two thoroughly trained doctors, Dr. John Schmidt, a physician and surgeon, and Dr. A. M. Lohrentz, an eye-ear-nose-throat specialist, both sent there by the Mennonite Central Committee. There was in operation now a school of nursing with seven young women in training under the direction of Mrs. John Schmidt, R. N. Three other young women were in Asuncion hospitals finishing their course in nursing. There were in service two well-trained practical dentists, thanks to the work of Dr. G. S. Klassen, Hillsboro, Kansas, and an efficient practical pharmacist, besides other necessary hospital personnel. All of these were kept very busy.

Various important improvements of the old hospital were in progress, including the construction of five large cisterns to provide an ample supply of water. The hospital was now equipped with electric light, and plans were complete for a bedside electric bell system. The old operating room and equipment was greatly improved and a sterilizer was now serving its needs.

Just completed on the hospital grounds and dedicated August 26 was a beautiful new brick building providing a doctor's reception room and examining room, an emergency operating room, a pharmacy and laboratory· two offices for dentists, and other rooms. On the same day another beautiful new brick structure was dedicated to the service of the mentally ill. A doctor's home, simple, inexpensively, but beautifully constructed, was serving as a model for other colony homes. Judged by the standards of hospitals in our country the above provisions are still primitive, but judged by 1939 Chaco conditions, they represent a remarkable progress. The present efficient, resourceful, and consecrated staff provides an extensive service of health care in hospital and office.

Expansion in business and industrial lines was almost as thrilling to behold. In 1939 they were operating a limping cotton gin and peanut oil press, a sawmill, and a blacksmith shop that made a limited number of wagons for colony use. In 1945 there was expansion of the above industry, especially of the blacksmith and wagon-manufacturing business. Now the Mennonite wagon has become the model for Paraguay. Several new buildings have been added: one houses a butter and cheese factory combined with an ice plant, another houses the blacksmithing and wagon-building project, and still another a woodworking project.

Another new industry is an oil-extracting project from palisanto wood for which they find a market in the United States perfume industry. They have a brick and roof-tile manufacturing project and a tinware industry. Plans are complete for a cottonseed oil press. Now invesigations are being made about the feasibility of starting a textile mill to process the extensive cotton crops raised in the Chaco. Present oil prospecting operations by some United States oil companies in the region beyond the Menn-

onite colony are offering some business opportunities to the colony co-operative store.

The earliest school buildings were very simple, crude adobe clay, thatched roof structures. The newest school buildings are of burned brick or of sun-dried brick, painted with white-wash. School houses usually are the most imposing buildings in the village. Various improvements in the equipment also are easily noticeable. In 1939 the Lengua or Chulupi Indians were wandering around in their free manner as children of the forest. Now there was a boy's school of thirty and their participation and response showed intelligence, aptitude, and eagerness to learn A new building was going up to house this school for Indian boys.

In 1939 there were no church buildings anywhere in the colony. Services were held in school buildings in the various villages or on the first floor of the colony administration building in Philadelphia. Now they have one fine church building in one of the villages. A new brick church was under construction in Philadelphia, and the corner-stone of a third one was being laid in one of the out-lying villages. Church buildings are a necessity for them, because the old school houses were entirely unable to hold the large numbers of adults and children. The various groups of Mennonites worship together in these church edifices.

The first homes were likewise simple and crude structures. The walls were of adobe clay with grass thatched roof, dirt floor, and very simple furniture made in the village by self-trained cabinet-makers. New homes are going up, made of burned brick or sun-dried brick, tile roofing at times, and with floors sometimes made of tile and at other times of substantial clay. Walls are decorated with white-wash paint and fancy decoration of flowers and the like. Furniture is still made by colony craftsmen, but they have since then become skillful in their trade.

In 1939 there still was present a considerable colony. They travelled the simple, winding roads of the prairie or of the woods. Now their roads are being widened and improved. Transportation in the early years was by oxen and primitive wagons. Now there are very few ox teams on the road, and an improved strain of horses does the work on farms and the hauling of supplies on the long road to the railroad. Strong sentiment was now urging the establishment of a landing field for airplane service from the Chaco to Asuncion.

In 1939 there still was present a considerable feeling of uncertainty as to whether they could remain in Paraguay permanently. Now people were quite sure that Paraguay would be their future home as Mennonites for a good many years to come. There was a much stronger disposition to build their colony and community life and to establish their homes on a permanent basis. New land was purchased this year, sufficient for the establishment of two new villages, a step made necessary because of a rate of population increase of about 90 per cent.

Judged by United States standards these people are still extremely poor, but with ingenuity, courage, and faith they have accomplished remarkable results in spite of poverty. This year they suffered almost a total crop failure because of drought and grasshoppers, but they are not complaining. They are building for the future.

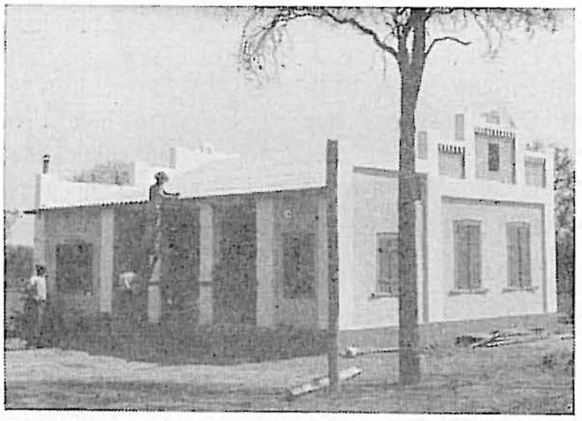
Many of the problems they faced in the earliest years still remain. The training of good Christian leadership, the need for wholesome educational materials for their schools, fellowship with the larger group of Mennonitism, the economic problem due to distance from markets, the slowness of transportation, and the discovery of good agricultural practice in the new land are samples of continuing problems. In all these areas, the Mennonites of Paraguay still need enrouragement and help. The Mennonite Central Committee has earnestly tried to give them assistance in developing and strengthening their colony life in the areas discussed above. This assistance has been of inestimable value, but the real credit for the achievements of these last six years must go to these pioneers of faith, whose trust in God led them to face their hardships with steadfast courage and with ingenious resourcefulness.

RENAISSANCE ---------- from p. 17

A new town-hall has been erected; a new fire engine purchased; the old hospital is being replaced by a new $45,000 structure which will be the finest rural hospital in Manitoba according to the Provincial Department of Health. A cold-storage co-operative locker organization has been formed and building plans made. Eight young men without resources but with plenty of idealism have undertaken to establish a co-operative farm. The enterprising young editor of the community newspaper, *The Altona Echo* suggests that the Rhineland Municipality engage a community engineer. He presses for improved streets, an adequate drainage system; for a Provincial highway through the Mennonite settlements to Winnipeg; for improved rail or bus transportation for the rural communities. In brief, Altona is demonstrating that a rural community can be reborn. What is happening in Altona can happen in varying degrees in a thousand rural communities throughout America.

1. One of the earliest adobe clay homes, grass thatched roof, still standing in 1939. Ox team hitched to home-made wagon loaded with cotton to cotton gin.

2. Home in Fernheim in 1939. House on right, barn in background.



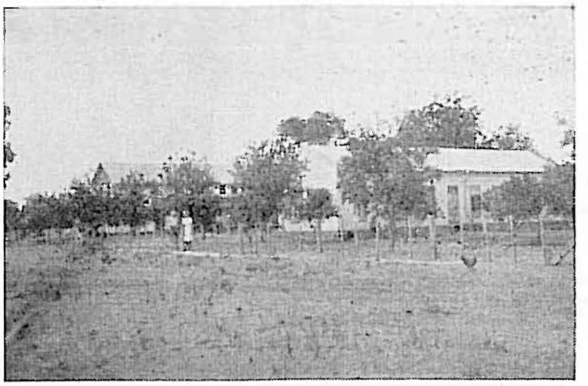
3. Sample of a 1945 home in Fernheim, village of Philadelphia. Constructed of burned brick and tile roofing.

4. One of the earliest school houses in Menno Colony, very thin walls of adobe clay, grass roof, no glass in the windows, only black shutters. Still in use in 1939.

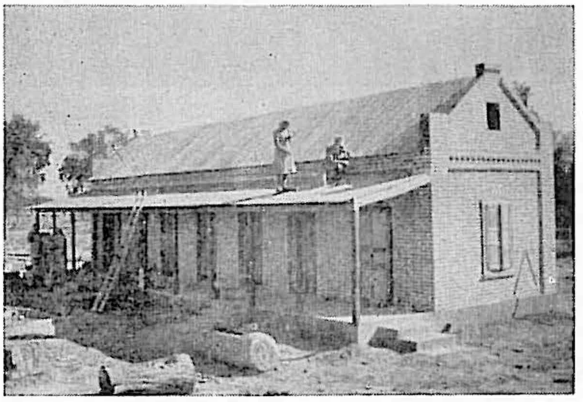
5. A beautiful 1945 two-room school house in Friesland Colony, walls of substantial adobe clay painted white, rooms well lighted, equipped with glass window panes. Playground ample and well-kept.

6. *Zentral Schule* in Fernheim comparatively new in 1939 still in use in 1945, but now provided with glass window panes.

7. Hospital building in 1939. Doctor's office at near end, patients' quarters at the other, nurses' quarters second floor, unbearably hot in high temperatures. Wide veranda protects walls from rain and rooms from excessive heat.

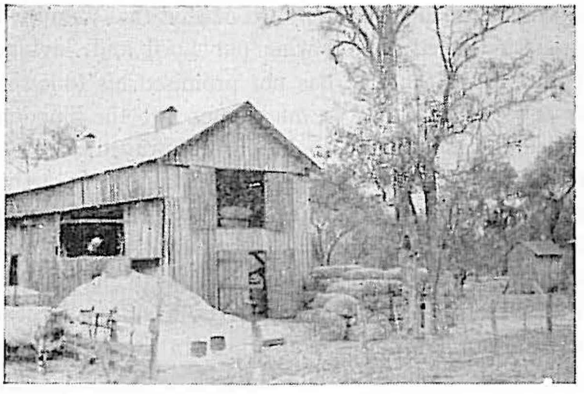


8. Hospital grounds in 1945. Renovated old hospital in background, new brick structure providing doctor's and dentist's offices, pharmacy and laboratories in the foreground. Other utility buildings not visible.

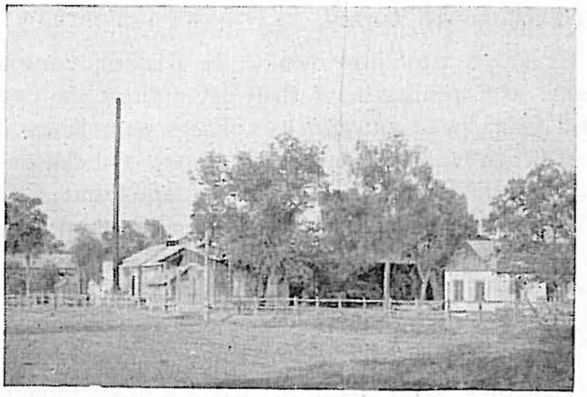


9. Bethesda Hospital for mentally ill just finished in 1945. Construction, burned brick and corrugated roofing. Nurses on veranda roof help put on finishing touches to building.

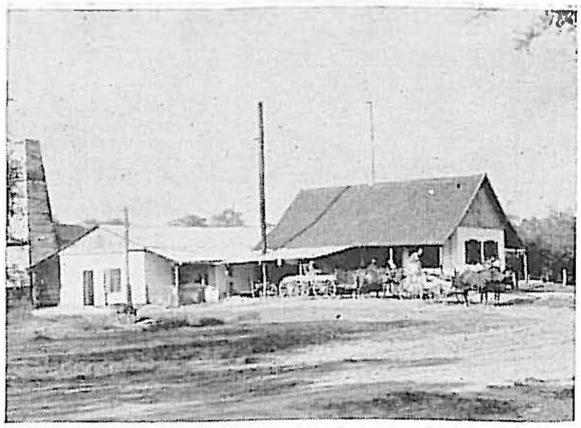
10. Mennonite Central Committee staff of workers in Fernheim. From left to right—Vernon and Mrs. Schmidt, Waldo and Mrs. Hiebert, Orval Meyers, Dr. and Mrs. John Schmidt with their little son, Dr. A. M. Lohrentz, Willard Smith.



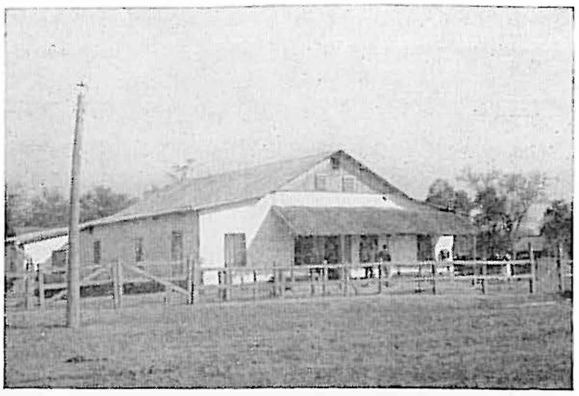
11. Cotton gin in 1939. Cotton bales on right waiting to be processed.



12. Industrial plant in 1945. Cotton gin on extreme left, power house and sawmill. Building on extreme right houses blacksmith shop and wagon factory adjacent to it.



13. Industrial plant in 1945 showing ice plant at left, butter and cheese factory at right.



14. Fernheim Colony Co-operative store operating in 1939, considerably extended and improved in 1945.

15. Picture showing improved health conditions of children in Fernheim, 1945. Twin daughters of Nickolai Siemens, editor of the *Menno Blatt*.

FROM DANZIG TO DENMARK------from p. 37

have died, mostly from disease resulting from exposure and cold on the journey.

It was a great joy when C. F. Klassen, Canada, came to Copenhagen. I shall never forget the days and hours he spent with us. These were hours in which our faith was strengthened anew and the first ray of light was to shine into our dark future. We shall never be able to return to our much-loved home in West Prussia. We will not receive anything for what we have left behind. We have nothing and we do not know what to do. We have thought of leaving —but where to? United States and Canada will hardly permit Germans to enter. We have no desire to go to South America. We are in real need of a large portion of strong faith in the Lord, that He knows the way for us even if we do not know nor suspect it. It is my work to help strengthen this faith among the refugees in Denmark. By the grace of God I serve not only these in our camp at Copenhagen, but also in many other camps especially to the Mennonites, and proclaim the precious word of God that many will be strengthened in following our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ: that He has not promised his followers an easy life, but that we must enter into the kingdom of God through much tribulation. He prayed: "Father if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." So we may come to Him at all times with our cares and worries, and also with our praise and thanksgiving for His grace which we and many with us have experienced anew on our journey and also here in the camp. We speak with Paul when he says, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

Kidnaped?

By PETER DYCK

While in Brussels I had on my mind to inquire into the possibility of assisting a Russian Mennonite family living in France and being in imminent danger of being forced to return to Russia. It is, of course, known to some and disbelieved by many, that the Russians do force their people back to Russia—an act no other country sanctions. Not only are Russian agents in civilian clothes active in France and Belgium but here in Holland, too, cases of trickery and violence have been observed. Having equipped myself with certain papers and forms which I obtained from a Dutch Repatriation official, I set out from Brussels early Sunday morning, September 30, on the long and uncertain road which was to take me through Luxemburg into France. As the car came to a stop in front of a dilapidated old house in the poorest quarter of this French town, a woman stuck her head timidly out of the window of the second floor and, as I learned afterwards, instantly turned to her husband with the words, "They have come from Canada to save us!" She had read the words "Mennonite" and "Canada" on the car and her guess was right. But, of course, everything was so sudden and unexpected and, worst of all, how would they get across the many frontiers which had to be crossed before they could join the happy little group of thirty-three already at "Fredeshiem" in North Holland. There was nothing much they could do about this except offer up a prayer and leave the rest to God and to myself. I am not sure into which of the two they put most of their trust, but to me, and especially in retrospect, it is crystal clear that I was a very insignificant factor in the entire affair. We held our breath at the French border, then once more as we came to a stop at the Luxemburg frontier only to be asked to turn back at the Dutch one. Fortunately, I had been at this post several times before and the fact that I was known helped matters. Still, it must have been a very trying hour-and-a-half for the family of four sitting in the car while I did my bit inside the control-house. I must have smiled when I at last came out because the little girl of five, guessing the result, began to jump all over the car seat for joy while her mother, attempting to conceal her emotion, covered her face with both hands. All I could say as we drove into Holland were the words spoken by a little, wicked Manchester boy once at "Taxal Edge" when he told us about the bombing and complete destruction of his school: "Thank God for that!" And so the family, only one out of thousands and millions who need to be helped, came to us in Amsterdam and after spending a few days with us at Number Six went up to "Fredeshiem" with Fred and Cornelius Klassen, who had arrived during my absence. Since then another Russian Mennonite family has been located in one of the Dutch Repatriation Camps and also taken up to "Fredeshiem."

Editor's Note. Mr. Dyck is a MCC worker in Holland. This account is taken from **European Relief Notes** Vol. I, No. 3.

MY LIFE WORK ---------- from p. 11

with them, also involved a small amount of assistance to the professors. I was assigned to Professor Terry's history class.

Whatever time I could spare from my regular class work, I devoted to research of my thesis. Source material, however, in the field was meager. I found practically no literature nor documents on the American Mennonites. They kept no records of their church life nor of their family affairs. They were largely a rural people. with little interest in political and social questions of their day. The fact that they were the very first German settlers in America was the only thing that saved their history from complete oblivion. Because of their pioneering they were given attention by German American historians. Governor Pennypacker of Pennsylvania himself of Mennonite descent and somewhat of a local historian, had made some investigation in the field of Mennonite affairs. The published results of his research was almost the only printed soures of information; even that was brief and unorganized. The Pennsylvania German Society in its published reports contained an occasional Mennonite item. These scattered notices, together with local county and family histories, and certain colonial records of Pennsylvania, New York, and Virginia furnished the only sources from which I was obliged to dig out such bits of information as I discovered about the colonial Mennonites.

This process of chasing down isolated facts was not very different from the proverbial hunting for a needle in a haystack. The sum total of information gathered was meager; but the hunt was not altogether without interest. Man is by nature an explorer, a hunter, and a gambler. He is content to spend hours and even days if necessary in pursuit of his game, valueless though the object of his hunt may be, just for the sheer pleasure of bagging it in the end. To me the

pleasure of running down an elusive fact was as great as the capturing of big game to the hunter, not as exciting and as dangerous perhaps, but to me just as interesting, and perhaps more profitable.

I spent the summer of 1906 in southeastern Pennsylvania and Virginia among the Mennonites there, in the interest of my thesis. Lancaster county, the original nest of Pennsylvania Mennonites and the home of more than twenty-five thousand of them today, is no doubt one of the most charming as well as the most prosperous rural bits in all America. The well-tilled fields of corn and tobacco, without the sign of a weed anywhere, the whitewashed fences, the substantial stone houses and capacious red barns full of well-groomed horses and well-fed cattle—everything spelled thrift and industry in every detail. For several weeks I enjoyed to the limit both the charm of the landscape and the fine hospitality of the good people; but I learned little history. The Mennonites here, I found, were not much interested in their ancestry. At least they had kept no records. Even the resting places of their dead were left unmarked for a full half-hundred years after the first settlements in the early eighteenth century. Of early records of their church life there were none whatever.

But in Philadelphia and Harrisburg, in the archives of the State Historical Society and in the Department of Interior, I was able to gather further bits of information for use in my story. It was in the State Library that I first met a young fellow historian by the name of Albert Cook Myers, a Quaker, who had just begun his life task, a history of the life and work of William Penn. He proposed to make a thorough investigation of all the sources both here and in Europe which had any connection whatever with his subject. It was a big undertaking, and would require years for its accomplishment. Being young, Myers was rich in time but poor in this world's wherewithal. His first task, therefore, was to collect a sufficient sum of money from wealthy interested Quakers with which to endow himself while pursuing his arduous task. Just twenty years later I again had occasion to spend several weeks in this library. I found my friend Myers still engaged upon his life work. So far as I know the task has not yet been completed. Such is the price of scholarship. Few realize the years of toil and sacrifice that may lie back of a great book which can be read through in a course of a few hours.

From Philadelphia I went to New York, where in the public library I discovered a rare old book written by a Dutch Mennonite communist, Plockhoy by name, and published in English in 1659, in which was outlined the communistic scheme of social organization which was actually tried out a few years later by a group of Mennonites along the Delaware. I also discovered in certain ecclesiastical records here the fact that Dutch Mennonites had appeared on Long Island as early as 1643.

At Harrisonburg, the center of a large Mennonite community, I ran across a typical southern gentlemen of the old school—tall and distinguished-looking as befitted the type, courteous and generous, but withal proud and punctilious who, judging from his title, had been an officer in the Confederate army—General John E. Roller. General Roller was now a prosperous and well-known attorney in this section of the state. Being of Pennsylvania German extraction, he was interested in the history of his people, and had collected what was then perhaps the largest private collection in the country of books in that particular field. I had had some correspondence with him relative to historical matters, and he had invited me to call on him when in his part of the state. But I had not thought of doing so until I happened to find myself in his town. Although he knew who I was and had heard of me through others because of the special historical research in which both of us were interested, he received me rather coldly at first because I had not thought of furnishing myself first with a letter of introduction. He thawed out sufficiently, however, to show me through his large collection of old books of Pennsylvania German imprint. Although his library was of interest to the antiquarian, yet it was of little value to the historian.

I visited all the county seats in the valley where Mennonite settlements had been made, some of which had long become extinct. Everywhere I found that Mennonites had been pioneers, having arrived in the Shenandoah region with the very first group of Pennsylvania Germans to locate here.

Among others bits of information not directly connected with my subject which I picked up here and there in the various courthouse records, most interesting were the transcriptions of land transfers to George Washington, the Fairfaxes, Lincolns, the Boones, and other well-known families in American history. It was either at Harrisonburg or at one of the other county seats—I have forgotten just where now—that I incidentally ran across an item which did not impress me much at the time, but became of considerable interest later. As I recall the item now it was the record of the marriage of Abraham Lincoln, grandfather of the martyred president, to a Pennsylvania German girl by the name of Pennypacker. The Pennypackers were Mennonites. Sometime later when I had become interested in the life of Lincoln as well as the history of the Mennonites, I was wont to claim that the Illinois rail splitter was of Mennonite as well as of Quaker stock. I have ceased to make this claim, however, for I have not been able to

corroborate it from any of the genealogical studies I have read of the Lincoln family. Perhaps my memory played me false. The record I saw may have been that of a land transfer, rather than a marriage.

My last year in the University of Chicago was spent very much as the others had been—in classroom routine, work on my thesis, and in attendance upon downtown musical and other events. My fellowship duties were more congenial than the year before. I was asked to assist an exchange professor who had just arrived from Germany for a half year's lecture engagement.

I passed my examinations for the doctor's degree several weeks before the end of the spring term. Although I did not pass with distinction, I think I did so with credit. This practically ended my required academic work; and so I had several weeks before the end of the spring term to enjoy a well-deserved rest, and look about for a position for the coming year—a task as fascinating as it might be disappointing. I had been invited to return to Goshen, but believing that several years of experience elsewhere might be both profitable and congenial I accepted, among several prospective openings, a position as teacher of history in the University of Arizona.

I had now come to the end of my long educational trail. It was more than fifteen years since I had entered the doors of Metamora high school—a timid, green country boy, but hungry to learn. I was about to receive the highest degree the University could confer; I was elected to a position in a state university; I was nine hundred dollars in debt; I was well past the days of youth; and still unmarried, although I had met, just a short time before, a young school teacher down state of whom my friend Orie said, "She has the finest brown eyes I have ever seen."

The Alexanderwohl "Schnurbuch"

By MELVIN GINGERICH

When in 1874 large numbers of Mennonites in South Russia decided to emigrate to America, they faced the problem of furnishing aid to those of their numbers who were unable to finance a journey to and settlement in the new country. As they had established various forms of mutual aid previous to this time, such as the fund to help orphans and the plan to assist young men in the purchase of land, the residents of these Russian Mennonite communities had had considerable experience in formulating systematic programs to help their needy members.

It is not surprising therefore to learn that in 1874 a new mutual-aid organization was formed to assist needy emigrants. On February 11, 1874, the ministers among the emigrants of the South-Russian Mennonite district met to adopt regulations to govern "The Corporation of Emigrants to America."

The rules adopted were simple and few, less than eight hundred words being used in their "Statutes." One of the most significant portions of the statement agreed to in the meeting of February 11 was: "Since the emigration is taking place for conscience' sake, it must carry a Christian stamp, and consequently the well-to-do brethren are under an obligation to help the poor through a loan-treasury."

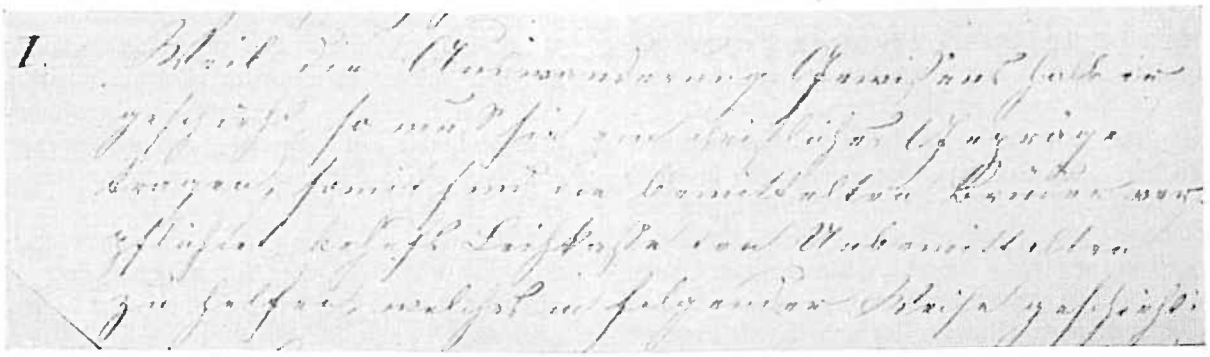
The regulations then explain the manner in which the loans are to be made. The brother with means is to pay cash into the treasury according to his ability. This figure is to be entered into the ledger where the transaction is confirmed by the lender's signature. The lender is also to state the number of years for which he is loaning his money without interest.

It is emphasized that the Corporation is to be diligent in the care of the funds entrusted to it; but if there are losses, the whole membership will carry these proportionately. One who does not accept the responsibilities of the Corporation thereby makes it known that he is no longer a member of the organization and that it no longer has any obligations to him.

The one who wished help was to present his needs by registering his property and giving the size of his family. The lending committee of the corporation then granted him a loan, after which he signed his name in the ledger on the line giving the sum loaned. His signature also was a testimony that he was accepting "in love this brotherly help" and that he would use it carefully and only for the agreed-upon purposes. He also agreed to pay back the loan to the committee at the set time.

Section III of the "Statutes" explains the duties of the committee selected by the Corporation. They were to handle prudently the money of the Corporation, to present to the ministers the cases of those who desired loans, to pay to the borrowers the sums approved, to record the transactions in the ledger, and to obtain the signatures of the borrowers. The duties of the committee continued until the loans had been paid.

The original document containing these rules was to be kept by the ministers and every ledger was to contain a copy of the agreements. Each ledger was



On page 1 of the Alexanderwohl Schnurbuch is recorded the above significant agreement: "Since the emigration is taking place for conscience' sake it must carry a Christian stamp, and consequently the well-to-do brethren are under obligation to help the poor through a loan-treasury."

to be signed by the ministers and the committee of the group which it concerned. Finally, it was stated that if the father received a loan, his family is responsible for the loan if he should die.

The ledger containing the "Statutes" and the bookkeeping of the Corporation was known as a *"Schnurbuch,"* which means a "cord-book." Two small holes were punched through all the leaves of the book near the bottom of the bound edges of the leaves. (See the illustration.) A heavy cord was passed through these two holes and brought to the back of the book, where the two ends of the cord were securely fastened with a wax seal. This made it difficult to tamper with the records of the book and marked the book as an official record of the church.

How many of these *cord-books* have been preserved the writer does not know. The Bethel College Historical Library has the one signed by the leaders of the Alexanderwohl Church in Russia, in February, 1874. At the top of the list of signers is the name of Elder Jacob Buller. Below his name appear the names of the following ministers: Peter Voth, Heinrich Richert, Heinrich Goertz, Dietrich Gaeddert, and Peter Balzer. The treasury committee whose signatures appear in the document are Kornelius Wedel, Johann Voth, Peter Schmidt, and David Penner.

The Bethel College Historical Library has a second copy of the *Schnurbuch,* a copy donated by J. J. Friesen of Henderson, Nebraska. The Nebraska book does not contain the signatures of the ministers and the treasury committee. The materials presented below pertain to the Alexanderwohl book and not to the Nebraska copy.

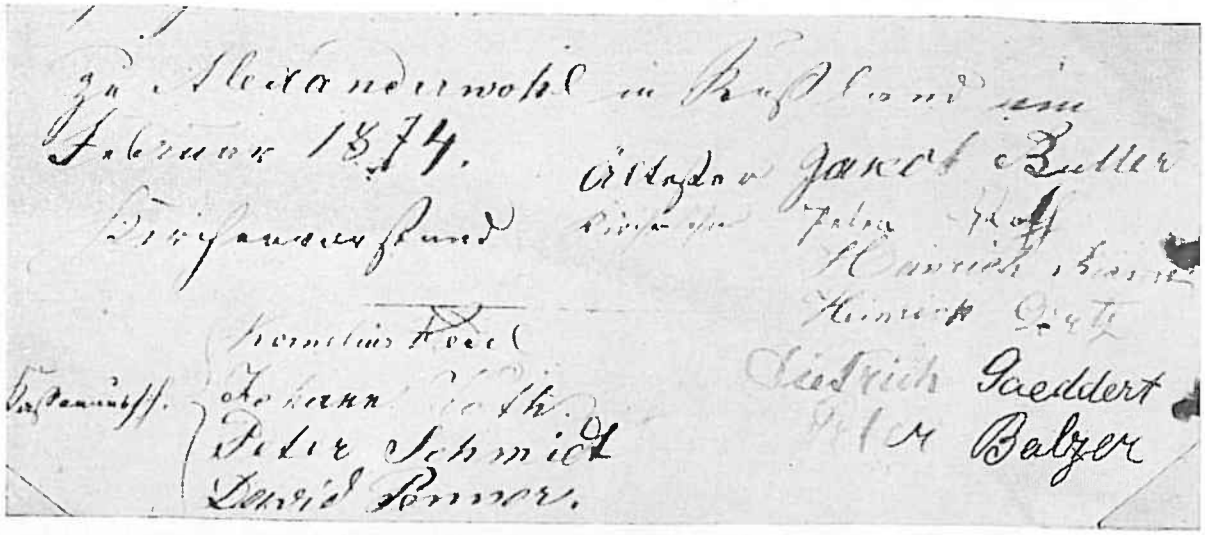
The entries of loans total 11,625 rubles. Near the end of the book, a note is inserted stating that 100 Russian rubles were worth $73 in American greenbacks. The total offered for loans thus would have been $8,486.25. The amounts offered by 69 lenders ranged from 25 rubles to 500, with an average loan of slightly over 168. Three entries for loans appear without the signature of the lender. These were not included in the above calculations.

It was assumed that those to whom loans were to be made would find it exceedingly difficult to pay back any of the principal in less than three years. Most of the loans, therefore, were without interest for three years, while other lenders were willing to forego interest for four and five years.

The cord shown here passes through all the leaves of the Alexanderwohl Schnurbuch (cord-book.) In the back of the book the two ends of the cord are securely fastened by a wax seal. This prevents anyone tampering with the leaves and gives the book an official status.

The names of the villages from which the creditors came are given. The twenty-nine villages listed are about one-half of those in the Molotschna colony, so-named because it was located on the Molotschna, a small stream flowing into the Sea of Azov. The list of the places in which the borrowers lived is almost the same as the above, athough there are at least seven villages that had families to whom aid was extended but who had no individuals offering loans to the Corporation.

In 1874, the Alexanderwohl congregation had eight-hundred souls, according to C. H. Smith. It is said that of this number only seven families remained in

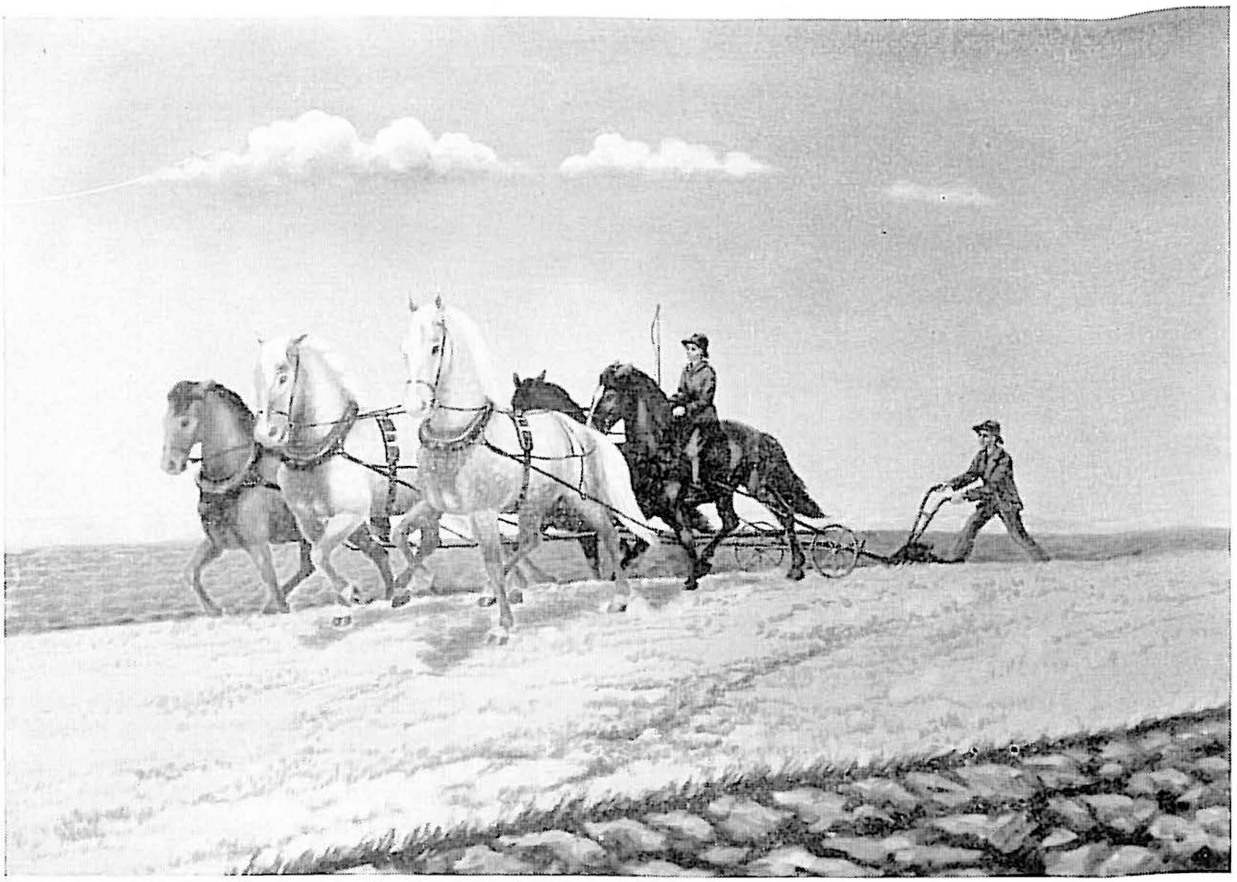


Here are the signatures of the ministers in the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church in Russia who in February, 1874, signed the agreements of The Corporation of Emigrants to America. To the left on the same page of the Schnurbuch are the signatures of the treasury committee. (From a retouched photograph)

Russia. Residents of this village loaned to the Corporation 1,525 rubles, while others of the same village borrowed over 1,800. Over forty entries are listed in the section naming those who received loans. One loan was as high as 790 rubles, while others were as small as five dollars. The treasury committee met on January 25-26, 1875, in America, to study their accounts. They reported that of the $8,486.25 that had been placed in their charge, $7,610.63 had been loaned to needy individuals.

In the remainder of the *cord-book* the separate accounts of the debtors are recorded, with the amount paid on the principal each year from 1879 to 1884. Interest payments following the interest-free years are also recorded. From these accounts it is apparent that by 1884 considerable sums remained to be paid. This is not surprising when one takes into account the grasshopper plagues, droughts, prairie fires, and other misfortunes these emigrants to the trans-Mississippi West experienced in the late Seventies.

The four columns of a retouched photograph of the Alexanderwohl Schnurbuch shown above, name the villages in which the lenders live, the names of those who are loaning money for the aid of needy emigrants, the number of rubles each individual is loaning, the years for which he is loaning the money without interest, and the signature of each lender.



Plowing the Steppes

J. P. KLASSEN

"There is as much beauty and riches in farming, as there is in any other productive line of work, and our people have proved it, never being satisfied, unless they had achieved the highest and best, not only in numbers, but also in quality and beauty.

"The material goods we must have, to live, all of us, without distinction or discrimination; but the real value of life lies in spiritual work, in religion, in our work with God.

"For this no price to pay can be too high, and no suffering to endure will ever be too great, for in this is the Kingdom of God. And if we as Mennonite artists can do our share in clarifying these ideals, what more and better could we wish for?"

From an address by J. P. Klassen on "MENNONITE IDEALS AND ART," given at the Conference of Mennonite Cultural Problems at Bluffton· Ohio, August 25, 1945.

MENNONITE LIFE

Published under the auspices of Bethel College: David C. Wedel, President; J. M. Regier, Vice-President; Arnold E. Funk, Secretary; Chris. H. Goering, Treasurer; Gerhard Zerger and P. F. Quiring, members of the Executive Committee.

Executive Board

H. A. Fast — J. F. Moyer
...ury — Treasurer

ERRATA: Middle 1st column, p. 3, insert: "Dante's, Divine Comedy, Milton's, Paradise Lost, and Klopstock's Messias.... P. 7 ctd. on p. 21: p. 11 ctd on p. 43: p. 17 ctd. on p. 39: p. 25 ctd. on p. 28

In editor's note, p. 9, change to read as follows:....and development of the first American-born Mennonite historian.

...Varkentin
...Gingerich

...s

Mary Bargen
I. W. Bauman
Honora Becker
H. S. Bender
John E. Bender
Arnold Dyck
D. D. Eitzen
Anna E. Entz
Paul Erb
Arnold E. Funk
Albert Gaeddert
Harold Gross
M. S. Harder
Eva Harshbarger
G. F. Hershberger
P. C. Hiebert
A. E. Janzen
J. H. Janzen
R. C. Kauffman
C. F. Klassen
J. P. Klassen
C. E. Krehbiel
Robert Kreider
Stella S. Kreider
J. H. Langenwalter
M. C. Lehman
Marie W. Lohrentz
Ernest E. Miller
Sylvia T. Pannebecker
P. A. Penner
Lloyd Ramseyer
Luella S. Regier
Mary Royer
P. E. Schellenberg
Menno Schrag
Paul Shelly
Lena Mae Smith
Don Smucker
W. A. Stauffer
Wilma Toews
Roy Umble
J. D. Unruh
Caroline A. Waltner
Erland Waltner
D. C. Wedel
R. W. Weinbrenner
J. C. Wenger
Olive G. Wyse
and others

Subscription Price
$1.00 per year

Address:
Mennonite Life
North Newton, Kansas

MENNONITE LIFE

Published under the auspices of Bethel College: David C. Wedel, President; J. M. Regier, Vice-President; Arnold E. Funk, Secretary; Chris. H. Goering, Treasurer; Gerhard Zerger and P. F. Quiring, members of the Executive Committee.

Subscription Price	Address:	Mennonite Life
$1.00 per year		North Newton, Kansas

Menno Simons on Brotherhood

We teach and maintain by the word of the Lord, that all truly believing Christians are members of one body. . . Inasmuch as they are thus one, therefore, it is Christian and reasonable that they divinely love one another, and that the one member be solicitous for the welfare of the other, for thus both the Scriptures and nature teach.

It is not customary that an intelligent person clothes and cares for one part of his body and leaves the rest destitute and naked. The intelligent person is solicitous for all his members. Thus it should be with those who are the Lord's church and body.

All those who are born of God, who are gifted with the Spirit of the Lord, and who, according to the Scripture, are called into one body of love in Christ Jesus, are prepared by such love, to serve their neighbors, not only with money and goods, but also after the example of their Lord and Head, Jesus Christ, in an evangelical manner, with life and blood. They show mercy and love, as much as they can; suffer no beggars amongst them; take to heart the need of the saints; receive the miserable; take the stranger into their houses; console the afflicted; assist the needy; clothe the naked; feed the hungry, do not turn their face from the poor, and do not despise their own flesh.

—Selected