MENNONITE LIFE

July, 1947

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

To Our Readers

Many of our readers have followed our suggestions on the back cover of the last issue. They were in brief:

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By Hans Bartsch

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Seward, Nebraska
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MENNONITE LIFE

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Contributors in this Issue

(From left to right)



ED. G. KAUFMAN, president of Bethel College, has served as a missionary to China and taught at Bluffton College. He is the author of the book, *The Development of the Missionary and Philanthropic Interest among The Mennonites of North America.*

ERNEST E. MILLER, president of Goshen College, has served as a missionary to India and a relief worker in the Near East. He is a co-founder of Little Eden Camp, which he describes in this issue.

OLIN A. KREHBIEL, pastor of the Berne Mennonite Church, has previously served the Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, Wichita, Kansas, and the Grace Mennonite Church, Lansdale, Pennsylvania.



JESSE N. SMUCKER, pastor of the First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio, is serving as president of the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America. He did relief work in the Near East after World War I and has served as pastor of the Bethel College Mennonite Church.

R. C. KAUFFMAN is chairman of the social science division and professor of psychology at Bethel College. During the years 1944—46 he did relief work in India under the auspices of the Mennonite Central Committee.

JOHN C. WENGER, a native of eastern Pennsylvania has written various books and articles on the Mennonites. He is teaching at Goshen College Biblical Seminary.

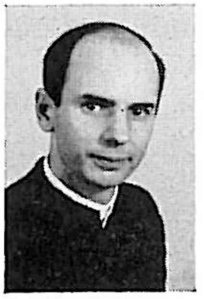
J. WINFIELD FRETZ, is associate editor of *Mennonite Life*, and teacher of sociology at Bethel College. He is a native of Pennsylvania and is a regular contributor to various periodicals.

LELAND C. LEHMAN, a son of Berne, Indiana, a graduate of Bluffton College, and a graduate student at Ohio State University, is now an instructor in economics at Capitol University, Columbus, Ohio.

JOHN R. SCHMIDT was graduated from the University of Kansas School of Medicine in 1938, and served as a physician to the Mennonites of the Paraguayan Chaco from 1941-46 under the auspices of the Mennonite Central Committee.







JOHN E. FRETZ, is a Mennonite businessman in Philadelphia and a very active layman in church work of the Eastern District of the General Conference, especially in connection with the subject he writes on.

ROBERT W. TULLY, director of physical education at Bethel College, has served as pastor of the Church of the Brethren and on its recreational committee. He has served as youth and camp director since 1931 and has written the widely read book, *Recreation Primer.*

CLARENCE FRETZ, pastor of thr Norris Square Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, is a graduate of Goshen College and has taught in various schools. He has done relief work in Spain and made specialized studies on the Mennonites in Philadelphia.

JOANNA S. ANDRES is the author of many poems. One of them, "Contemplation," which appeared in *Mennonite Life* has since been set to music and published by the Augsburg Publishing House.

JOHN LOEWEN was born in Didsbury, Alberta, and has taught in Bible schools in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. He is manager of Elim Gospel Beach and a senior at Bethel College.

NOT SHOWN

S. F. PANNABECKER, dean of the Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Chicago, has been a missionary to China. He received his Ph.D. from Yale Divinity School after completion of a dissertation on the American Mennonites.

CHARITY HOSTETLER (nee Steiner) grew up near Bluffton, Ohio, and graduated from Goshen College. Her interest and background qualify her to review authoritatively a book like "Folk Art in Rural Pennsylvania." She is the wife of Lester Hostetler, pastor of the Bethel College Mennonite Church.

OTHER ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Free Library of Philadelphia page 24 "Philadelphia Waterfront", 1702 (1) and "Philadelphia," 1707 (3). Germantown Historical Society pages 24 and 25 "Rittenhouse Paper Mill" (8) and "Dirck Keyser House" (9). Convention and Visitors Bureau of Chamber of Commerce and Board of Trade of Philadelphia page 25 "William Penn Tower" (5). J. Herbert Fretz map page 27 and photography page 32. Neuman Studio photography page 21 and 17 (left, top). Melvin Gingerich photography page 9. Ray Funk chart page 39. Friends Historical Society cut "William Penn makes a treaty" pages 24 and 25.

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Christian Fellowship

BY JESSE N. SMUCKER

ONE OF the great words of Christianity is "Fellowship," a word rich in meaning for all who have experienced its power. No one can be at his best alone; we crave companionship and fellowship. Some seek it on a low level, but to the Christian it is a high and holy relationship. The Apostles' Creed recognizes its value, for it includes among our fundamental beliefs "the communion of saints."

One of the great values of religious gatherings and conferences is the opportunity for Christian fellowship. A strong part of the regular Sunday worship service is the bond of the communion of saints. It is also evident that what the world in general needs is the spirit of brotherly fellowship where God is recognized as our common Father, and we as His children are brothers to each other. There can be no lasting and abiding peace until this is recognized.

The place to start is with fellowship with Christ. In I Corinthians 1:9 we read, "God is faithful, by whom ye are called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ. our Lord." It is God that invites us into this sacred fellowship with Christ. How great is our privilege in entering into such a friendship! We need to have faith in Him, repent and be forgiven of our sins, be born anew and consecrate ourselves wholly to Him as Lord and Master in the citadel of our souls. This is not a hardship, as some seem to feel; but so great an opportunity that the wonder is that anyone can pass it by. Companionship with Christ—how such a high relationship lifts us above the commonplace into the elevated and stimulating level of the spiritual, whereby one can truthfully say, "Jesus and I are friends." That sacred friendship can hold us steady through many a storm and difficulty. It is worth many times over the cost required to achieve it!

Such a high fellowship requires much of us. Both its purchase price and maintenance cost are very high. It is not a selfish experience to be personally enjoyed, only personally, without regard for others. True fellowship, in its very nature, cannot be selfish. Paul, in Philippians 3:10, speaks of "the fellowship of His suffering." We are to share, then, in His suffering, and become keenly sensitive to the things that caused Him to suffer—the sins of the world, the disobedience and folly of mankind headed in the wrong direction. Are we willing to enter into that fellowship, and take to heart the folly and sins and wickedness of all the people of the world? There must be a deep concern within us that others also may be brought into the true fellowship of Christ. This is the heart of the missionary motive that causes us to desire to be true witnesses to the Son of God and show forth His love and forgiveness to those who do not know nor acknowledge Him. To share in the fellowship of suffering means that we have such a burden for lost souls that we cannot rest without doing all we can to spread the good news of the Gospel of Christ. He suffered and died on the cross that men might be forgiven. In a measure we need to enter into His suffering with a deep concern for all who do not know Him.

In II Corinthians 8:4 Paul speaks of yet another fellowship—that of ministering unto the needy. The deep fellowship with our Lord should find expression in helping those in real need who are also dear to Christ. Fellowship is not to be enjoyed selfishly, but to find expression in service. What an opportunity is ours today in entering more deeply into this fellowship of sharing, both with our means and our lives! For the gift without the giver is bare, and who gives himself with his gift feeds himself, his hungering neighbor, and the Christ. Here is our present challenge for relief work. Here is our opportunity to be Good Samaritans and show the spirit of Christ in helping the needy and healing the broken hearts. Not out of a cold sense of duty, nor yet with the patronizing air of a superior, but as doing it unto Him who came into this world, not to be ministered unto, but to minister. A true fellowship with Him moves us to follow in His steps who "went about doing good." The present needs of the world cry out for such sharing and ministering, and, as followers of Christ, we respond to these needs.

Having, then, entered into fellowship with Christ—including the fellowship of suffering and ministering—we can experience something of the value of "the communion of saints." For "if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." This fellowship with the believers strengthens us in the experience of both public worship and personal friendships. The fellowship of public worship gives us a proper sense of directions—so much needed to-day. It also relieves the tension and strain of overburdened lives, for we strengthen and support one another as we cast our cares upon Him who careth for us. In the unity of worship there is released the power needed to face life; for we feel we are not alone, but are supported with a cloud of witnesses.

How rich, too, are the experiences of personal friendships as we enter into Christian fellowship one with another! How they encourage and inspire us, both in the ordinary and adverse circumstances of life. Such a brotherhood transcends race, rank, and nationality; for in Christ Jesus we are all one, and "truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."

Retreat grounds of the Mennonite youth of Saskatchewan.

Elim Gospel Beach

BY JOHN LOEWEN

WHEN our people of Southern Saskatchewan were spiritually revived under the ministry of Nicholai Banmann in the later thirties, a Bible school was opened in the city of Swift Current, in 1937, and became the nucleus of the spiritual life of our youth. However, Bible school in the winter was not enough. Summer activities were introduced, such as children's camps, young people's retreats, and daily vacation Bible schools.

But where were they to have their camps and retreats? Various places were rented year after year in some valley, either by the Swift Current Creek, the Saskatchewan River, or other places. Though these places were good, they were temporary and involved a great deal of work in renting tents, moving bunk-houses, building kitchens, and setting up and tearing down the camp each year. This was not too encouraging. The young people saw the need of having a campsite of their own, and this became their desire.

After much prayer and waiting upon the Lord, several possibilities were opened to them. One possibility was to buy a farm, which had a beautiful grove of trees on it with a fine stream running through it. The farm was to be sold in a block. The other possibility was to buy an established summer resort known as the Iverson Beach at the north end of Lac Pelletier. This is a clear-water lake in a deep valley about twenty-six miles southwest of Swift Current and about 135 miles due north of

Malta, Montana, on Highway 19, connecting with Highway 4 at the Canadian border. About eighty miles north of the border and eight miles west of Highway 4 is the place now known as Elim Gospel Beach.

How the Beach was Purchased

The Mennonite Youth Organization of Saskatchewan is an incorporated organization with its head office at Rosthern, Saskatchewan. A subsidiary board of directors was appointed by the official board to handle this project, with the chairman a member of the official board. After the two above-mentioned possibilities were presented, the board decided to buy the Iverson Beach rather than the large farm. Money to the amount of $3,000 had already been donated for the project before negotiations with the Iverson family had begun. After a few months of negotiating, terms for the purchase were made. The original price asked for the place was reduced from $16,000 to $10,000 plus taking over an indebtedness of $2,500 against the buildings. Terms were $5,000 in cash, which was paid in two installments: $2,500 at the signing of the contract and $2,500 a few months later. A payment of $2,500 was to be paid November 1, 1946, and the final is to be made November 1, 1947. The contract was signed by the official board in the early part of 1945.

The purchase included 320 acres of land, the main building—38 x 80 feet—which is used for auditorium, restaurant, and kitchen. The restaurant and kitchen were complete with all necessary utensils, stoves, cooking utensils, dishes, ice refrigerators, tables, and benches.

The contract also included seven cabins complete with beds, tables, chairs, and an oilstove. Two cabins were conditioned for winter living. Five boats and a boathouse were included, some swimming suits, a shop building, and a little storehouse with ice-cream coolers, a large ice-house, and a few farm buildings, plus a beautiful grove of trees and some shrubbery to beautify the place.

Management and Financing of the Beach

As stated before, a board of directors is responsible to the Youth Organization. This board in turn hires a business manager for the active season. The board is responsible for the raising of money to pay for the project, and this is done through receiving voluntary donation from cheerful givers and borrowing if necessary.

The manager is responsible for the operating expenses, and these expenses are met in various ways: 1. A small entrance fee, charged at the gate; 2. Annual rental fees from private cabin owners; 3. Rentals from our own private cabins to visitors; 4. Rentals from boats and swimming suits at a given rate per hour; 5. Sales of refreshments, ice-cream groceries, meals, fishing supplies, and motor oil. However, this is not all. Cheerful givers donate food, potatoes, eggs, milk, meat, besides cash and labor. One must not forget the men, women, and young people who helped clean the grounds, the kitchen, and restaurant, and who painted the buildings. Nor the men who helped to put up ice in the winter and who helped to build a dormitory in the summer and who took no pay. Even those of the regular staff, after receiving their wages, often turn part of it back as a donation. A good portion of the money comes from the camp and retreat fees and freewill offerings taken during the Gospel services. The pasture land is rented out to stock owners and, therefore, also brings some revenue.

Elim Gospel Beach not only serves as a retreat ground, but also as a summer resort. People from far and wide, from all walks of life, come there for a holiday or a fishing trip. Cars from as far as Texas, California, Illinois, from Prince Rupert on the Pacific, near Alaska, and from other States and provinces near by, have been registered. Community groups, ladies organizations, country schools, and other groups have their annual picnics there.

Organized activities start about the middle of June with special speakers and singers engaged for the different occasions from all parts of Canada and the United States. The first few weeks of the season, Bible-study and worship services are held daily, commencing at 10:30 in the morning, and evangelistic services, commencing at 7:30 p.m., daily. On Sunday, Sunday school, worship services, and special song services are held beside the evening services.

A special missionary conference was held last year for one week.

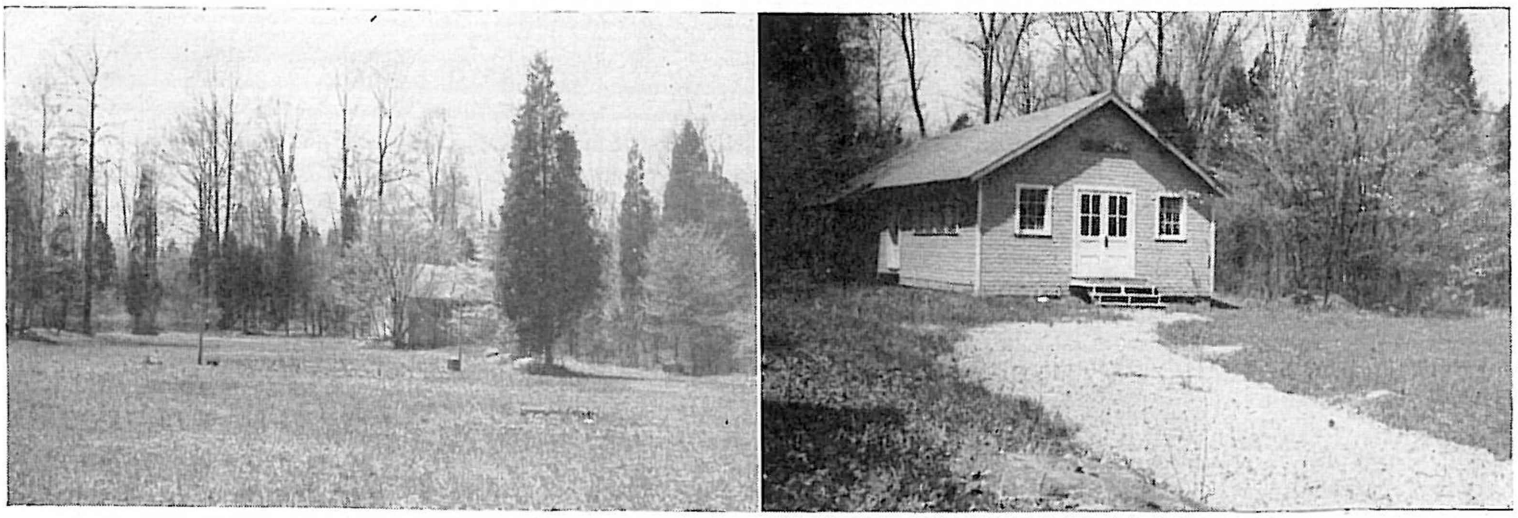
Some of the features of the children's camp and the young people's retreat were classes in Bible, missions, crafts, and singing. The afternoons are spent in resting, swimming, boating, fishing, hiking, and ball games. Evenings are spent in singing and evangelistic services.

Sunday school conventions and similar groups have annual meetings there. The summer quickly passes with a full program coming to a close the first week in August, a few lingering on until sometime in September.

One may ask, "what was the true purpose of the young people in obtaining the Beach?" Young people desire to make a contribution to society and to the Kingdom of God. They want ownership and responsibility. They want to develop a strong, Christian character. Besides developing physically, they want to develop spiritually and socially. They want to be of service in helping to carry out the great commission of Christ when He said, "preach the Gospel to every creature." By having their own retreat grounds and making it available not only to Mennonites, but to all those who desire a place that provides spiritual and physical rest, this purpose is, in part, realized.

Elim Gospel Beach: 1. Offers a quiet resting place where, amid the beauties God has created, one may draw near to Him and feel His refreshing touch. 2. Proclaims that "The Son of Man is come to seek and save that which was lost," not only in words but by the deeds in the life of every staff member so that many lost souls

(Continued on page 16)



Retreat grounds for the young people of the Eastern District of the General Conference.

Retreat Camp Grounds -- Men-O-Lan

BY JOHN E. FRETZ

WITH the growth of interest and attendance in the Eastern District Young People's Retreats, which began in 1928, it was felt that a Conference-owned camp would be desirable and eventually less costly than the annual rental of existing camps.

In the fall of 1937, J. Walter Landis, a layman member of the East Swamp Congregation, offered about twenty-six acres of his property, mostly wooded, for the purpose of a retreat camp ground. Very shortly thereafter four interested ministers made the now-historic pilgrimage to the site, as one report has it, "To spy out the land . . . and their hearts were encouraged, feeling that the Lord had led in this manner."

The property was formally accepted by the Conference in session April 30, 1938, the same body delegating a committee consisting of the president and the field secretary of the Sunday School Union, the president of the Young People's Union and the retreat chairman to work out plans for its use as a retreat camp, and to report to the next session of the Conference. An appropriation of $100 was made to assist the committee in this work.

Work progressed slowly. Volunteers met to clear out brush and make a driveway. Plans were made for

Building an auditorium.

A fallen giant.

proposed buildings and a report prepared for the 1939 Conference.

This conference directed formation of a six-member retreat committee whose duties were: (1) to adopt a plan of development; (2) to receive and expend monies; (3) to enlist volunteers for work; (4) to draw up a constitution for the development and management of the project and present same to the next conference. By this time a well had been drilled and the foundation laid for a dining hall and kitchen, 30 by 50 feet.

It may be of interest to note a few excerpts taken from the above constitution, adopted in 1940. "OBJECTIVE: The objective of Men-O-Lan shall be to provide a suitable place of retreat for the development of Christian character and leadership through retreats, Bible conferences and other Conference activities . . . . Board of managers composed of six persons, elected by the Conference . . . personnel to consist of two ministers and four laymen, two of which shall be under 30 years of age."

The first retreats were held at Men-O-Lan in July, 1941, with 190 present. Each year the attendance increased until 1946, when 515 attended, and an excellent program has been prepared for the 1947 retreats which will be the twentieth. The term retreats is used, since the various age-groups meet separately. This year young people, unmarried, and those above High School age meet July 3-6; intermediates: age 11-13, July 6-12; juniors, 8½-10, meet July 19-24; and those not in other groups, July 25-27. Attractive folders are prepared each year giving full information on the current program and the leaders.

Aside from the dining hall, nine cabins and other buildings have been built, almost all of them donated by the various local congregations, Sunday schools, or brotherhood chapters, many named in honor or memory of missionaries on the field or other workers. At present an auditorium is being erected. During the year 1946 Men-O-Lan was occupied 16 days for retreats; 3 days for the Laymens' Bible Conference, and 13 other dates such as young people's outdoor meetings, and Sunday school picnics, with another full schedule for 1947. The name, "Men-O-Lan," was chosen to commemorate (1) the donor of the grounds, Mr. Landis, (2) Mennonite, (3) idea of a camp; thus the term, "Men-O-Lan."

Looking back over these past ten years, it is significant to point out that the parent body of our church work, the Conference and delegates elected year by year, have encouraged younger members of our churches in this work by appropriating over $3,000 during this period and largely by putting the younger men in charge. It has not been unusal to have the fathers and grandfathers then back up the others by coming and doing volunteer work as well as with many private contributions.

Sunday schools and Christian Endeavor Societies have worked unceasingly on this project with volunteer labor and funds, contributing much of the $9,000 which the Board has received to date.

It will be noted that aside from the original donor, the many individuals who have labored lovingly and faithfully during these years are not mentioned by name. That is obviously impossible here, although without such devotion the work could never have been accomplished. A fine Christian spirit has prevailed throughout the entire decade. It has definitely created goodwill and a clarity of purpose among the young Mennonite leaders of the future. Fittingly, the Board of Managers closed its last report with these words of Scripture: "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

For Our Young Readers

MENNONITE LIFE plans to continue to present instructive and inspiring illustrated articles about and for our young people everywhere. We invite you to submit articles and pictures about your summer and winter activities to be considered for publication in MENNONITE LIFE. In the five issues of MENNONITE LIFE thus far published you will find many topics and much material for interesting and profitable discussions in your meetings.

The Editors

Little Eden Camp is located in western Michigan and operated by Mennonite stockholders from Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, and Illinois.

Little Eden

BY ERNEST

THE initiative in securing a camp for Mennonite people in this central area was taken by brethren from Archbold, Ohio. Jesse Short, from Archbold, was an original stockholder of Laurellville, a Mennonite camp established in 1944. Phil Frey, also of Archbold, was led through his leadership-experience in Civilian Public Service to the conviction that the church should have a camp to provide for continuing recreational and spiritual fellowship. These two brethren spoke to some of their home-church brethren and Lester Wyse, from Michigan, about their conviction. Lester Wyse found Little Eden Camp, owned and operated for seven years by a Brethren minister as a private venture. On account of poor health and inability to secure good help, he agreed to its sale.

These brethren, in company with Harley Nafziger, Lewis Britsch, and Sylvanus Lugbill, visited the camp and, after taking counsel with their home ministers, decided on immediate purchase. After the contract was negotiated, they interested other friends and sold stock to Mennonites in various parts of Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and Illinois. The original promoters showed vision and courage characteristic of the operation of the camp ever since.

Little Eden Camp is located on Portage Lake, well up on the western edge of Michigan about five miles beyond Manistee and joined to Lake Michigan by a short canal. Hard surfaced highways lead to Little Eden through miles of national forests. It may be reached also by crossing Lake Michigan by ferry from Milwaukee. Little Eden Camp is near enough to be readily accessible and yet far enough away to be different. One enjoys cool nights under blankets throughout the summer.

The camp provides a large building, including sleeping quarters, dining-room and chapel. This main building is provided with steam heat and facilities which make it suitable for early spring, late fall, or even winter conference groups. On the grounds are also a number of log cottages nestled among the trees. These are completely furnished with dishes, beds, and necessary furniture. Flowing wells provide a never-failing supply of good water on the grounds. Facilities for boating, swimming, and fishing are good. A large grove planted by nature, plus a few imported trees and shrubs, make up a variety of about fifty different kinds. Two winding brooks spanned by a number of rustic bridges meander across the grounds. A little dam in one of the brooks provides a small waterfall and a pool in which the speckled trout play.

A group of fifty-two stockholders own and operate the camp. A board of five directors, elected at an annual meeting of the stockholders, is responsible for the operation of the camp between annual meetings. The board fixes the charges, hires the employees, and determines the different camp programs to be offered during the season. It holds monthly meetings during the planning

Camp

E. MILLER

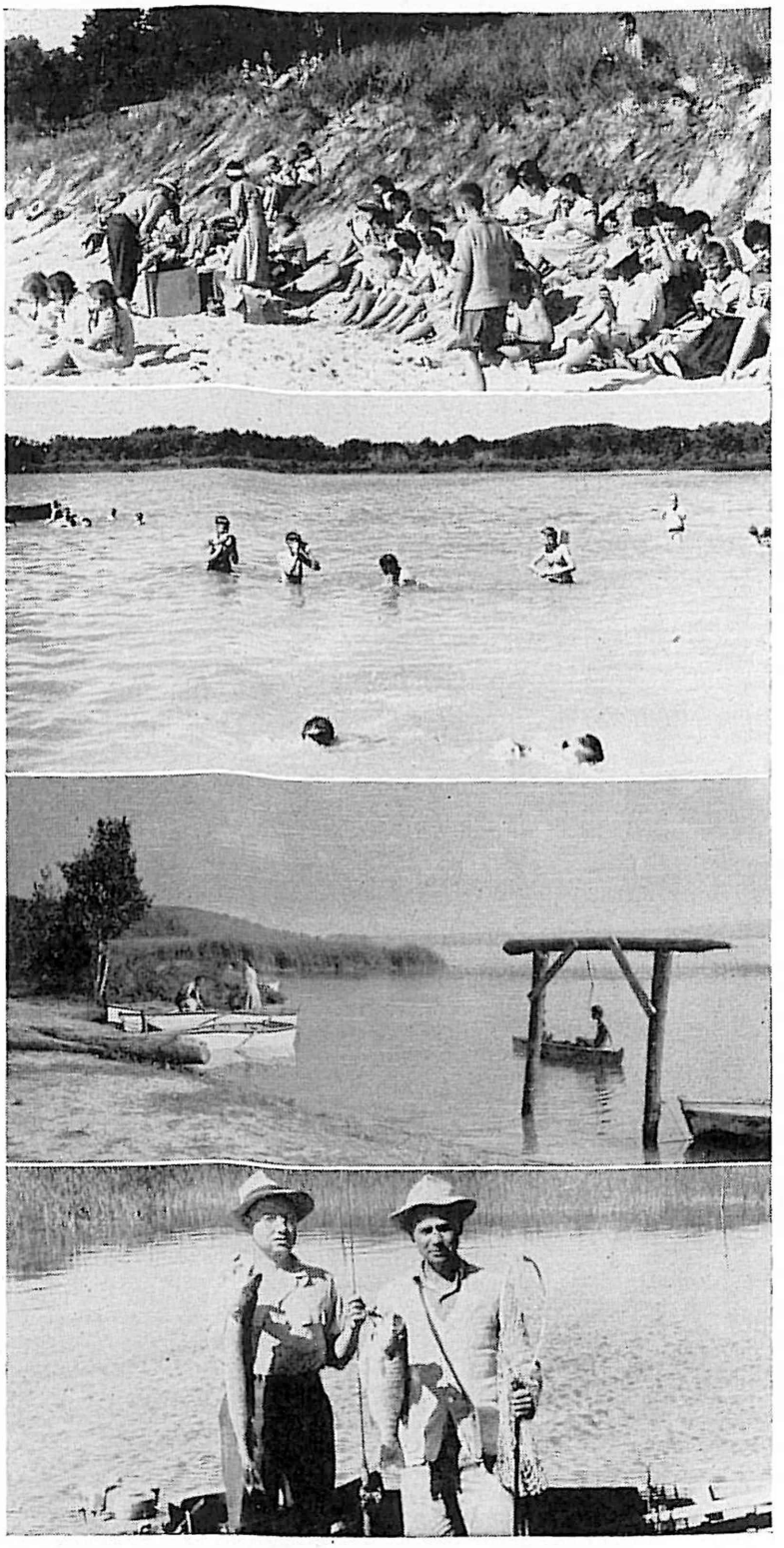
and camp season. The present assets of the board, a non-profit organization, are held at approximately $22,000. The annual profits are regularly utilized for camp improvement. The stockholders have authorized sale of stock up to $30,000 and have specified that any income from this source also be utilized to enlarge the facilities of the camp. Camp directors and persons serving on the programs do so without any financial remuneration other than their actual expenses.

The camp is to serve Mennonites in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Ontario. The directors have never envisioned camp Eden as a large conference grounds with numerous church gatherings of a public type. Rather it is to be a place for study groups where persons of common interest may learn together. The following list of camps for this season will indicate something of the variety and extent of the programs held in a particular season: Opening Bible conference, boys and girls, high school boys, high school girls, young people, missionary retreat, Bible conference, recreation workshop, music choristers, farmers week, and faculty retreat.

Bible study has a large place in every camp. Here is an opportunity to study the Bible in the quiet of the great out-of-doors, with no hurry or distraction from farm chores or office routine. Many persons have spoken of the blessing that has come to them through such an experience. In each camp there is provision for talks to invite persons to reconsecration and periods also to challenge the unsaved to accept Christ. Boys and girls decide here to dedicate their lives to Christian service.

The camp also provides a good training ground for students and faculty from our church colleges. Girls majoring in home economics find here an opportunity to engage in quantity cookery. Professors in sociology, in music, in education, and in missions, find here a laboratory in which to take counsel with practical men on the workability of their theories. Young people, desiring to prepare for work with boys and girls, here live and play and pray with real boys and girls. In these camps church leaders are working out under laboratory conditions and in counsel with each other, a philosophy of Christian recreation which should exert a wholesome influence on the brotherhood.

As a Mennonite people we have been slow to accept any solution to our problem of leisure. Our fathers taught us how to work and how to fill our time with profitable activities. They did not teach us how to play. There was not much time for play. But, more and more, modern inventions are forcing leisure time upon the average American. We no longer can avoid the problem of what to do with the extra time. The summer camp with its opportunities for rest, for recreation, for renewing of the mind, for restoration of physical energy, and for refreshment of the spiritual life is one good answer to the problem.



Little Eden Camp is located on Portage Lake which provides ample opportunities for boating, swimming, and fishing.

The Church and Recreation

BY ROBERT W. TULLY

What Is Recreation?

For the church, recreation is just that — *re-creation.* It is the re-creation of something that is damaged or injured. It is the repair of human damage where it *can* be repaired in the adult or child, and the prevention of damage in the rising generation—the children! For children recreation is a preventative rather than just a cure. It is the activities used in free time to repair and rebuild the energies of the body and soul. It is purposeful, but it is entered into with zest and satisfaction, not hindered by the purpose. The end-results of recreation are soon forgotten in the actual participation. *Recreation is self-chosen activity taken for its own value, and not for any goal or reward beyond its recreative values.*

Recreation, therefore, includes many types of pursuits engaged in by individuals, both as individuals and as members of the social group. Grandmother's favorite recreation may be quilting, but it probably isn't granddaughter's. Dad may recreate in his workshop, while his son drives the car for his recreation. Recreation may be active or passive, public or private, organized, or unorganized. What may be work to some may be recreation to others; so recreation is more than just activity. It is activity that is entered into by free choice; the attitude while doing it relieves tensions and aids in rebuilding the individual.

Play in "Life's Totality"

Cabot states that there are four things that men live by. Perhaps a better statement is that there are three things that all men do to a greater or less degree. All men work, all men play, and all men worship. To the degree they do these three things in the spirit of love, to that degree are they Godlike, for love is the law of life and the law of God.

Work without the spirit of love becomes drudgery. Play without love becomes frivolity. Worship without love becomes hypocrisy. Therefore, to live abundantly is to work, to play, and to worship completely in the spirit of love.

In the words of L. P. Jacks:

> The art of living is one and indivisible. It is not a composite art made up by adding the art of play to the art of work, or the art of leisure to the art of labor, or the art of the body to the art of the mind, or the art of re-creation to the art of education. When life is divided into these or any other compartments it can never become an art, but at best a medley or at worst a mess. It becomes an art when work and play, labor and leisure, mind and body, education and recreation, are governed by a single vision of excellence and a continuous passion for achieving it.

A too-clear line of distinction is not to be drawn between work and play and worship. They are all part and parcel of life. These three things men do. Regardless of men's attitude and insistence that they do not play, the play attitude and recreative activities are to be found in their lives.

The Church's Responsibility

Since play is a part of every life, it becomes a vital responsibility of the church. The church has accepted the challenge of Christ to bring into the hearts of men the Kingdom of God. The church prays, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth." This implies that the Kingdom and God's will are one and that it is for all men on the earth, in all activities of their lives. In their work or education, in their fun or recreation, as well as their worship, the church is to see that the will of God has a chance to reign in the lives of men.

The method of the church is to bring man into a re-creative, re-birth experience with Jesus. In the past the church has expressed its main interest in the re-birth in only one major experience of man—his worship life. The church has asked for and guided a change in that, but at the same time it has failed to ask for and guide the change in the work and recreational life that should be made if man is to live the will of God in the whole of life.

A number of years ago Amos R. Wells prepared a little booklet entitled, *Socials to Save,* in which he stated the evident truth that the major job of the church to save souls is to save the entire personality of man. The church's social activities are to be geared to saving souls, saving them from snobbishness, from excessive commercialization, from frivolity, from worry, from delinquency, from lust, while saving them to fun, to inexpensive pleasures, to simple skill experiences, to appreciation of the beautiful, to the church, to a deep faith in God, to the will of God.

During the ages past the church has always been the guardian of the highest life of the people. It has reached this enviable position not only by being vocal and protesting against the evils, but it has trained the leadership

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Will she peck? →

Danny Hirschler, Jansen, Nebraska, at his daily task.

Photography Reuben Fanders.

and instituted the program that has counteracted them. It is the responsibility of the church to continue this practice, to train leaders and to build and demonstrate programs of Christian recreation. The total play and recreational life of boys and girls, men and women is not to be trusted to commercial interests and public recreation facilities alone.

Perhaps it is wiser to eliminate the placing of the one —church-centered recreation—over against the other—church-motivated recreation. In varying degrees in different communities both are needed. So it becomes church-centered *and* church-motivated recreation. Those recreational activities that can best be centered at the church may be centered there. Those that can best be centered in the home should be centered there. Certain recreational activities should be centered in the school, some in public parks, some in community playgrounds, etc. For the Christian all recreation is to be Christ-motivated. The church, therefore, is interested in motivating all recreational activities to the end that all are re-creative and Christian. This is the responsibility of the church.

A Few Specific Objectives

Other than the major objectives hinted in the foregoing paragraphs—the objective of abundant living through Christ—there are some specific objectives toward which the church might strive in reaching the all-inclusive purpose. These suggest church objectives and are not objectives of recreation. Recreation's first objective is to re-create.

The church might strive:

(1) *To make people conscious of the importance of the right use of leisure time for the development of Christian character and to furnish helps to that end.* When an individual joins the fellowship of Christ, he desires to change his life. The major changes come in his free time, his former recreational life. The church emphasizes the fact that he must give up the sins in that area, but how often the church fails to guide, to help his first steps in the expected way a Christian should walk in those free hours. When he walks from his work, the old habits, many of them physical, come back with their call to enter again into old sinful forms of recreation. The new conscience says No at first, but is slowly beaten back by the physical and mental habits of the past unless new Christian ways are found to use the new free time. All Christians, young and old, need to be guided in the first steps of Christian recreation, as well as in the first steps of prayer and Christian worship. This is more than outlining the activities Christians should not do. It is aiding in establishing the pathway of constructive, Christian recreation.

(2) *To help stabilize and enrich life in the home through play, by establishing its proper relationship to work and worship in that same institution.* This is a huge job that calls for great leadership, but if done properly will pay huge dividends for the advancement of the Kingdom. Perhaps the greatest breakdown in work, play, and worship has come in the home. Challenging chores are hard to find in a city apartment. It's a pretty dull job just to carry out the garbage every day. A few rooms do not leave much play-space. Even worship, for children, has seemingly reached only the "Now-I-lay-me-down-to-sleep" stage. The building of work, play, and worship back into family experience is a great challenge to the church. The Mennonite church, with its belief in the sanctity of the home, its low divorce rate, its rural, on-the-farm constituency, could take the lead in the rehabilitation of the family. Family recreation has a big place in this rehabilitation.

(3) *To bring children into natural creative play that isn't divorced from spiritual values.* It may be argued that this should be the job of the school. In some places the school is carrying on. It is giving more and more play experience, and it is in many areas considering spiritual values in play. In the main, however, the school will have to emphasize only physical values. The church should supplement the school-and home- play- experiences with and emphasis on the spiritual values.

(4) *To encourage, develop, and foster an enriched progress of creative recreation for the adult group.* Here is a greatly neglected area. The old philosophy that adults do not play is now considered false. Many will not need paid leaders to teach them how to play or to guide their play life, but all of them enter into re-creative experiences in which the only returns they expect is the joy of doing them. But all need some help to build a creative program of adult recreation.

(5) *To help youth guide itself into creative, cultural, recreative experiences.* Youth recreation has been guided too much by a protesting group on one side and an inviting, commercially-minded group on the other. They have not learned to guide themselves into creative play experiences in which they can find joy. This is a slow task of building play skills and attitudes throughout childhood and on into youth, and the church should take its place in building the needed skills and attitudes.

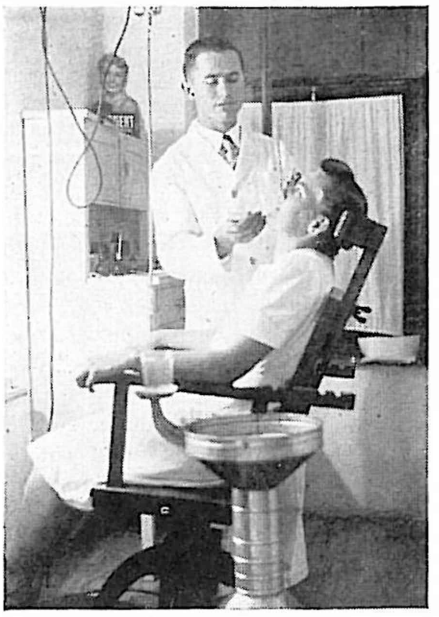
(6) *To combat activities that tend to self-indulgence, vice, and sin.* This is more than vocal protest, a crying out against evil. Two great needs loom up as the church starts out on this crusade. First, there must be a well-trained, disciplined leadership. Second, there must be provided some opportunities for Christian play and fellowship, including opportunities for the expression of the highest creative powers of the individual.

In the light of these objectives the church faces a dynamic challenge in the areas of recreational leadership and the sponsorship of recreational activities. It cannot permit the trend toward vulgarity, cheapness, "spectatorites" and over-commercialization to continue to undermine the spiritual life of its members. Instead, it must now begin to train leadership and provide facilities and programs to counteract the present recreational trends and build a new and better pattern of Christian recreation.

A. M. Lohrenz and nurses in the Paraguayan Chaco.

MEDICAL SERVICE UNDER PIONEER CONDITIONS

BY JOHN R. SCHMIDT



A Mennonite dentist at work in the Chaco.

I HAD two weeks in which to get my release from my hospital a month before my time was up, to say farewell to my friends, to get packed and, not least of all, to adjust my thinking to the fact that I would enter a medical service which required of me not only to take care of a general practice like we are used to in the United States, but one with tropical diseases to treat and this in an isolated area where I would find no opportunity for consultation. I had done only specialized work in internal medicine the last two years, so I decided to pack enough books on surgical instructions so I could work out my problems as I went along.

What I Found

The medical care for the Paraguay colony had an interesting history. A hospital had been built as early as 1933, but they had never had any one doctor for any length of time. In ten years' time they had had ten men to serve them, many with very poor training. One had flunked out of a veterinary school. They had never had a Mennonite doctor, and to get a doctor who knew Low German was just beyond their imagination.

The trained personnel consisted of two nurses with practical training and several nurses' aids. Equipment included a pair of dental pliers to pull teeth. In the outlying villages were several midwives and several *Knochenaertzte*. In the absence of trained doctors—often none—colony people depended entirely on the *Knochenarzt* and the midwives. The midwives of the Fernheim colony (Russian immigrants) have had fair training; those from the Menno colony (Canadian immigrants), less. To understand many of the medical problems here, one has to take a look into the history of these people. Tuberculosis has been rife. Many have relatives who died from it in Russia, others regained strength and health after coming to the Chaco, a favorable climate for the cure of tuberculosis. The prevalence of bone tuberculosis among the colony people indicates that many have been exposed to active infection at some time in the past. The famine years of the 1920's took their toll, increasing infectious diseases among them, especially among the young folks. Children suffered from rickets, which reveals itself later in permanent deformity of bones.

The nervous tension that these people went through during the years of torture in Russia when they lost home, friends, and relatives or saw members of their family put to death leaves permanent marks on their temperament. Through these experiences some have become nervous, and others indifferent to health and surroundings.

During their flight only the completely healthy could go to Canada. This meant that those with poor health, especially trachoma, had to come to Paraguay. The hard years of the early colonial days, with poor medical and dental care, poor nourishment and hygiene, all left their mark on the health of the people.

I Begin My Work

The medical work had not gone long when it was very evident that the treatment of trachoma had to be done on a large scale. Merely treating a case here and there was like putting out a forest fire by killing a fire here and there. More than 1,500 people were examined in 1942, revealing 75 per cent who had trachoma and with 50 per cent having acute trachoma needing active treatment. Eighteen pounds of sulfanilamide tablets were used, after we had seen the ones with active disease repeatedly. One year ago the percentage had come down to less than 25 per cent with active infection. This has again been reduced considerably except for slight epidemic outbursts now and then.

I had expected my books and supplies to come in two weeks. They were shipped from Rio, June 20; they arrived in the colony for Christmas of that year. During that interval, I had to do many operations I remember studying in school but had never seen done. I lay awake nights figuring out how one would do this or that operation if called upon. My desire for my books was gone when they finally came. The primitive surroundings often made surgical work difficult. One night a two-year-old

boy was brought in because a colt had kicked him in the abdomen. We were proud to have our recently installed electric light for the work. Just after we had opened the abdomen and saw pieces of watermelon swimming around in it, the lights went out, as they so often would. We always had a gas lamp handy. However, through the excitement, the nurses' aid made a big fire but couldn't get the lamp lit until she got some more help. I had a local school teacher give my anaesthetic at that time, so you can imagine the anxiety over the stage of anaesthesia and the condition of the abdomen besides the pieces of watermelon I had seen.

The increased need for surgery became apparent as time went on. Many men and women had carried bodily defects for years which could only be corrected surgically. My brother, Dr. Herbert R. Schmidt, Newton, Kansas, agreed to come and help me. In two weeks we performed thirty-three major operations.

I Return to the Chaco

I came back to the United States at the end of 1942 with the idea of not returning. Since the Mennonite Central Committee could not find anyone for this work I could not remain at peace with myself. The decision to return depended on certain conditions. One of these conditions was that a dentist, with supplies that the Mennonite Central Committee would pay for, would go along. It was unbearable to see so many people going without proper dental care. As most of my readers know, Dr. and Mrs. Klassen went along at that time to instruct three men in dentistry. These young men are ambitious, adventurous, and co-operative in the fight for better health for the colonists.

On our arrival in 1943 not one person was available to help in the hospital. This meant getting people from the farms to help out. My wife was especially responsible for the training of nurses. Many of these girls had only had three and four years of grade school before they started their training. One young man was trained as pharmacist and anaesthetist. He does excellent work filling prescriptions efficiently and intelligently, and he gives anaesthesia in all cases where inhalation or intravenous anaesthesia is used. He does a better job at giving anaesthetics than many physicians and interns in the United States, and he is certainly more eager to observe all changes in his patient than they, keeping me well informed on essential changes during the process of operation.

We were very fortunate to have Dr. A. M. Lohrentz, of McPherson, Kansas, a specialist in eye, ear, nose, and throat, work with us for a year. Through his specialized training he was able to help many people with long-standing ailments who would not otherwise have been helped. He also gave us much valuable assistance in the general medical work.

The Work Done

We have done eighty-two major operations besides the thirty-three mentioned above. The most common operations were those of hernia (rupture) and appendicitis. We had eleven cases with ruptured appendix. Except for one child which came in a moribund (dying) condition, all recovered. One of these patients was a heavy-set, 65-year-old lady with a body appearing more like one 78 years old, coming in with advanced peritonitis. In this isolated Chaco, where it takes us five days to get to consulting doctors, one was forced to do much work which one was not qualified to do. Often we definitely felt that God helped us through situations through which we could not see ourselves. Our list of operations includes every type of gynecological operation, cesarean section, amputation of various extremities, meningoceolectomy (repair of a congenital abnormality of the spinal column), removal of tumors, and various minor operations from tonsillectomies to the removal of ingrown toenails.

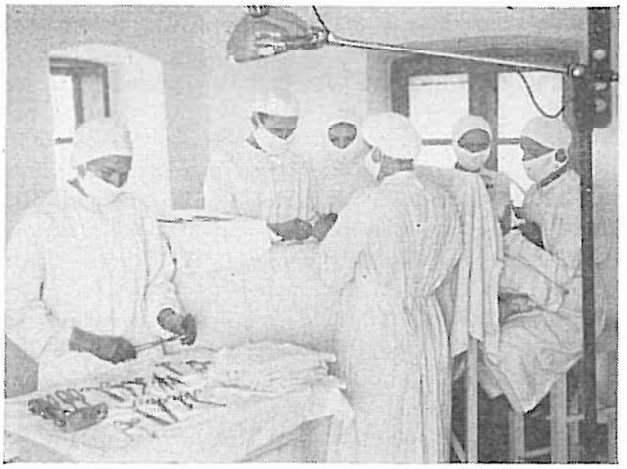
The hookworm disease has become a menace to the colonists. In 1941, hookworm was found only with those colonists who had returned from areas where native Paraguayans had been their neighbors. In 1943, the first hookworm cases were found among Fernheim colony people who had always lived here; in 1944 more were found; in 1945 very many were found; and in 1946, examination of groups of young people taken at random showed more than 50 per cent were infested with hookworm. No group examination of the Menno colony people has been made but many of its colony people were positive to hookworm on examination even in 1941. I believe that at least 80 per cent of its young people are infested with hookworm. Poor toilet facilities is the main cause for the spread of this disease. There are many Menno colony people who have been very careless in this respect. Fernheim, however, has been careful, respecting hygienic rules which I gave them. The great problem in this matter are the Indians who live and work with the Mennonites but who cannot be taught hygienic rules.

Speaking of the people in general we cannot speak of severe epidemics. We have cases of typhoid and malaria at various times throughout the year, pneumonia and colds during the cold season, and diarrhea during the hotter season. One of the major problems in the office is the vitamin-deficiency diseases which come with the repeated periods of droughty weather. Among children we find epidemics of whooping cough, chicken pox, and to lesser extent measles, mumps, scarlet fever, diphtheria, and infantile paralysis.

Improvements in building and equipment have progressed, especially in the last three years. We needed the increased roomspace because of the increase in work and personnel. Some of the more important improvements were: adequate light and ventilation for hospital rooms, improved high hospital beds, improved floors, more conveniently placed, better-equipped nursery, improved charting system with the addition of daily progress and medication notations, increased and improved space for linens, a laundry-room provided and the method changed from hand washing to machine washing. For the clinic

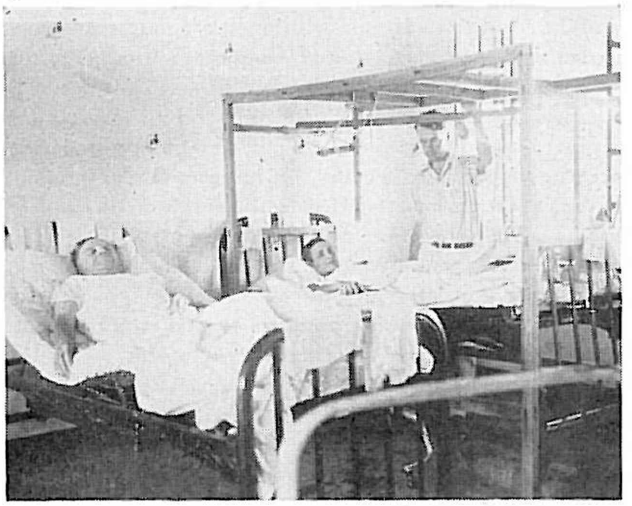
Medical Service in the Chaco

At the breakfast table.



The operating room.

Nurses ready for duty.



A hospital room.

A patient arrives.

Pharmacist and nurse at work.

a filing system of history and physical examination for each patient was started. More than 3,700 names, some patients having more than twenty visits, are on file. Building additions have been: a large 80x19 foot clinic building which houses an enlarged and improved office, pharmacy and laboratory, a library and dental offices, and a building added to the nurses home which serves as dining room. A unique establishment among Mennonites is the building of an institution for the mentally ill with rooms arranged for seven patients. These improvements were made possible by the generous gifts from many of the churches and organizations from the United States. Recently the Mennonite Central Commitee sent an X-ray machine.

The medical program for the Chaco Mennonites at first served only the Fernheim people. In the last five years this has changed, and in the last two years Menno and Fernheim have shared costs of operation on a 50-50 basis. The Menno colony has also sent three of its girls to take nurses training in our hospital.

The Future

There are many indications that the medical service established in Philadelphia will become a more-and-more needed service in the Chaco of Paraguay. Surrounding the colony to the north and west we have the Union Oil Company drilling for oil. There seem to be prospects for oil. To the south we have an ever-enlarging population of cattle ranchers and settlers. The refugees that are coming to Paraguay are being settled to the south of the colony, for the most part. There are native Paraguayans several hundred miles to the south, west, and north who have no place to go to for medical care and who are already coming in ever-increasing numbers to this establishment. Those who have gone to other distant places prefer the modern, more adequate, conscientious, and Christian service of the set-up here. A reception home and hotel for natives is being built, and a yard that already has a reception home and hotel is provided for Menno colony people that come for medical care.

Extensive changes in medical care have made the cost of medical care go up. The Mennonite Central Committee has done much to make improvements and additions possible. Whether the colony can continue this standard of medical care will depend on further industrial developments, such as an oil press, refinery, and other developments such as a textile mill and possibly food-processing establishments. The telephone line which is in the process of being built, improvement of roads, and building of an airport will all have their effects on the medical care here in Philadelphia.

The great need for proper medical care here in the Chaco is a good complete laboratory and a trained man to run it. Almost all medical centers in the United States have this. In the tropics one finds a laboratory service much more necessary, since proper diagnosis is more dependent on laboratory findings. Common diseases here which need laboratory service are typhoid, malaria, dysentery, and tropical sores.

ELIM GOSPEL BEACH

(Continued from page 5)

may be brought to the feet of Jesus, the Saviour of men. 3. Proclaims unity in Christ, as He said "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou has sent Me." (John 17:21) 4. Provides a place of recreation under Christian supervision. It places no restrictions on wholesome enjoyment, but suggests that we give the best consideration for others at all times. 5. Seeks to establish a spirit of good will among fellow men.

Highlights and Testimonies

The director of the camp will never forget the thrill that surged through his soul on July 9, 1945. He was about his business on the beach that morning when a teen-age lad from the city, walked up to him, his face all beaming as he looked up with joyful eyes: "I accepted Jesus as my Saviour last night and others are going to also." The next evening a fagot service was held on the east shore of the lake. A beautiful scene of about 150 children, many of their parents, and Christian workers waited on the east bank of the lake in the sunset glow. The story of the "The Stranger of Galilee" was presented on flannelgraph. Fitting songs were sung. Testimonies were given by the workers, followed by the parents and many of the children, and then others accepted Jesus as their Saviour too.

Another evening that will long be remembered was the following week when Professor Walter H. Hohmann, from Bethel College, led a group of one hundred singers to the lake shore, placing a group of fifty on one side and a group of fifty on the other side, and then they sang across the lake in relays. Rev. Charles Tourney, hearing the melodious melodies coming across the waves, exclaimed "How wonderful, how wonderful!"

Another evening, about fifty young people dedicated their lives to the service of Christ and another eight to foreign missions.

What the future holds no one knows, of course; but we are confident that God has great future blessings in store. In the organized program we shall again have a young people's retreat July 13-20; children's camp, July 20-27; evangelistic and deeper Christian life conference, July 27-29 (in English); the same in German, July 30-31. There are at least 4,000 German-speaking children and young people, with Mennonite background, in this area who get no religious training or very little; besides many others of non-Mennonite background.

Another feature to be added to the ground is to establish a stock- and truckfarm there as soon as possible in order to utilize the pasture ground and the farm land in the valley, which is suitable for irrigation. This will permit the planning of a small park and the planting of fruit trees. We also hope to establish a "Text Garden" near the main building. If this can be done, it will, in itself be a great attraction.

Mennonite church, Berne, Indiana (Rev. Olin A. Krehbiel and E. W. Baumgartner).

THE BERNE COMMUNITY

BY OLIN A. KREHBIEL

BERNE, Indiana, the place where the 31st General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America will be held this summer has attracted considerable attention in the past year. At least six newspapers and magazines (one as far away as Switzerland) have sent representatives to get stories and pictures on Berne, the Mennonites and the Amish.

The first Swiss Mennonites settled in Adams county in 1838 and started what was known as the Baumgartner congregation. Rev. David Baumgartner was the first minister. This group increased in size with the coming of other settlers from the mother country and about 1860 built the Baumgartner meetinghouse.

Another group of 80 persons, mostly members of the Sprunger family or their relatives by marriage, left the Jura Alps in the canton of Bern, Switzerland in 1852 for America. They located close to the Limberlost area, clearing trees and draining land near a spot where twenty years later the town of Berne was to get its start. This group formed the Berne congregation with Rev. Peter S. Lehman as their leader and in 1856 began erecting their first church building. An early interest in education was manifest with the construction of a log school house in that same year and here Abraham J. Sprunger served as teacher.

The former Berne Mennonite church, replaced in 1912.

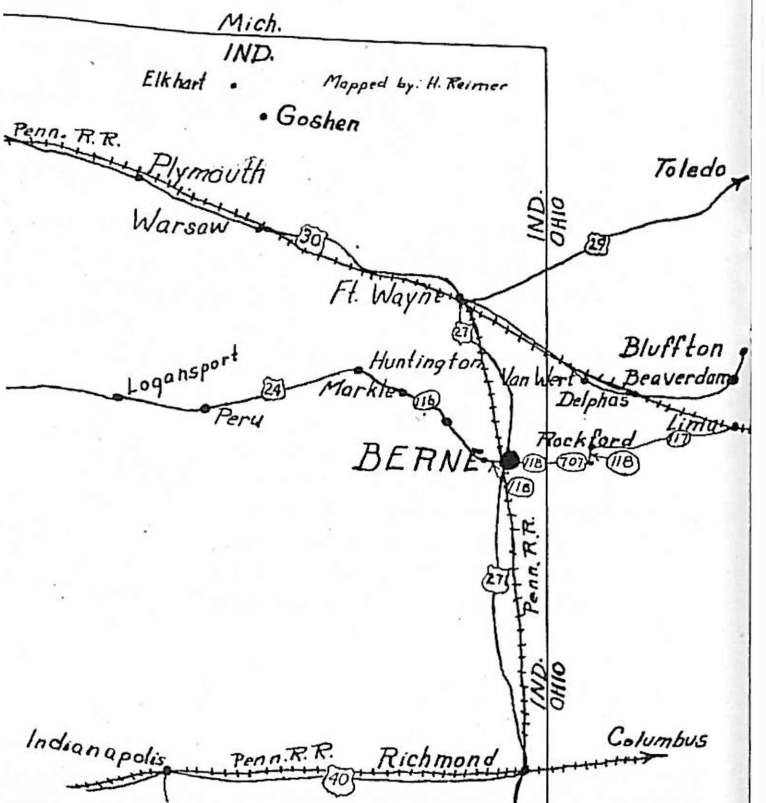
In the summer of 1886 a great Holy Ghost revival took place in this community. However it was not a revival according to the popular conception of our day, for no visiting evangelist came to town. There was no publicity campaign, no outside singers or musicians were engaged and no altar calls were given. It started when Miss Emma Reusser, under Rev. S. F. Sprunger's teaching, felt the need of a re-birth and with the guidance of J. F. Lehman, received inward peace. She told her friends, Judith and Bertha Liechty, also her brother Amos and their hearts were changed. These gave public testimony at a temperance meeting and others were touched. Groups met in homes for prayer and went down the street singing and praising God. Over 100 persons, mostly young people were converted and became active in the church. It was also in this year that the Berne congregation which had been divided into two factions, with Christian Sprunger the leader of the conservative wing and S. F. Sprunger the leader of the progressive wing, reunited. In addition the Baumgartner congregation some six miles from town joined the Berne congregation in their enlarged remodeled church building. The frame building was replaced in 1912 with the present fine brick building seating 2000 persons.

The Evangelical Association and the Reformed Church came to Berne in the 80's, the Missionary Church Association in 1900 and the Nazarene Church in recent years. There are also several Amish groups in this vicinity.

Some early leaders who had a great influence upon the community were: Rev. S. F. Sprunger, Mennonite minister, who attended Wadsworth school and then began his ministry in 1871 amid much opposition which he overcame. He promoted progressive Christianity, emphasizing a true spirit of godliness rather than custom and dress. He created an interest in education, missions and conference endeavors. Mr. J. F. Lehman was a layman, business man, church worker and a backer of the temperance movement which under the leadership of Fred Rohrer rid Berne of the saloons. He was also associated with Mr. John A. Sprunger, the pioneer enterpriser of stores, mills and factories. Later John A. Sprunger started a Deaconess Home and Orphanage and carried on numerous religious activities which led to the development of the Missionary Church Association.

From the small beginning of two stores and two residences, Berne has grown to a fine town of over 2000 inhabitants. It is a clean, beautiful little town with well kept homes and lawns. You will find an ideal balance between farm and industrial life, with a spirit of harmony between the two. Most of the business establishments are home owned.

The Swiss have many noble character traits. Thus one finds the people of Berne prudent, reliable, honest and thrifty. The local bank has over seven million on deposit with over four million in savings accounts and time certificates. They have a town loyalty and take a great deal of pride in this community. Most young people establish their homes in this vicinity because of the foresight of the fathers in creating opportunities for employment. They are devout, hospitable, soft spoken and gentle mannered. Punctuality is a great virtue with them and the large audience is in the pews when the bell rings and the service begins. They are talented muscians and enjoy good music. The local high school has won many honors in state musical contests. The choral society renditions of "The Messiah" and "The Creation" attract great crowds of visitors from miles around. The Mennonite Men's Chorus is also well known. A union Summer Bible School with about 550 scholars is held for five weeks in the public school building. A wholesome Christian family life rooted in the Bible and prayer is the secret of the strength and success of this community.



THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE BERNE COMMUNITY

BY LELAND C. LEHMAN

THE Mennonite community at Berne was established by Swiss brethren who migrated to this country during the nineteenth century. As early as 1838, Rev. David Baumgartner and some members of his family found it advisable to leave Wayne County, Ohio, and settle on the border of Adams and Wells counties in Indiana, where land was still available at $1.25 an acre. The fact that land was expensive in Wayne county would be indicated by its population of 23,344 in 1830, while Adams county was not organized as a separate political unit until 1836 and which by 1840 had only 2,264 inhabitants.

During the years following 1838, various small groups of Mennonites settled near the Baumgartners; and by 1849, a congregation of some sixteen families was in existence. However, the area in the immediate vicinity of what was later Berne was not settled until 1852, when a group of some seventy Mennonites arrived. This band of Mennonites left the Jura Alps of Switzerland for the same reasons as had previous emigrants, namely crop failures, high rents, military service, and the glowing accounts received from their brethren already in America. Traveling by train, stagecoach, and ship, they arrived in this country in the spring of 1852. They were warmly received by the brethren in Wayne County and remained there for some weeks before continuing on to what is now Berne.

Berne is located about thirty-three miles southeast of Fort Wayne, in the southern part of Adams county, on the summit of the watershed between the Gulf of Mexico and the Great Lakes. The soil in the immediate neighborhood was a heavy and impermeable type of clay that was unproductive and difficult to cultivate. To the north and east much of the land was swampy and was of little value until public drains had been built. Before some of these ditches were put in, during the 1860's to provide an outlet for the drainage of the forest-lands and frog ponds, the area north of Berne was known as the "wilds" of Monroe township.

Pioneer Farming

Mennonite farmers around Berne have grown most of the staple crops found in the east north-central states such as wheat, oats, and corn as well as potatoes, garden truck, hay, and seed. The raising of livestock has always been important; horses were essential for farmwork, while cows, sheep, and hogs provided money income. Everything possible was taken from the farm for the family's own living needs. No monetary expenditure was made unless it was absolutely essential; strict economy had to be practiced in order to allow either the purchase of a farm or the payment of one already purchased.

Early agricultural tools, such as were available, were simple and ineffective when compared with those of today. However, the Berne church, as far as is known, never placed any restrictions upon the use of new methods and machinery as have some of the local Amish groups.

It was not until 1871, when the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad passed through the Mennonite settlement, that the town of Berne had its beginning. While the railroads were ruining some nearby towns because of bypassing them, they brought others into existence. Berne was one of these. Through the influence of the county commissioner, a switch and station were placed in the Mennonite community. In honor of the Bernese Swiss who had settled there in 1852, the station was named "Berne" at the suggestion of the commissioner. Very soon a general store was established; and in the same year Abraham Lehman and John Hilty, settlers on the site of Berne, laid out and plotted the first lots which extended west from the railroad for two blocks. Quickly the area was occupied by merchants, so that within ten years the town had grown several blocks in each direction and had a population of about two hundred.

For about seventeen years after the building of the railroad, Berne grew as an unincorporated village, but on March 30, 1887, Berne was incorporated as a town, with Daniel Welty, J. F. Lehman, and John C. Lehman as its first board of trustees. The various town boards have always been concerned with the moral welfare of the community. One of the first acts of the town board in 1887 was to tax the saloons. Later pooltables were each taxed $10 per month with the intention of making the operation of a pool hall unprofitable in Berne. Under corporate organization the community has made constant civic progress. Police and fire protection were established before 1900 and in 1901 the council had the main street paved and caused the first sewer in town to be built. A franchise to give the town electric service was granted in 1904. A public school system, a water plant, and two parks have been built and maintained under local government.

From the establishment of the first store and even to the present time, Mennonites have taken an active part in the development of Berne. More and more Mennonites began to leave the farm for the town and although it was, in a sense, still a semi-rural life, most families in town had a large garden as well as a cow and some chickens, and land no longer provided their primary source of income.

From Farm to Town

Several factors contributed to this transition from the farm to the town. First, most rural families of that

S. F. Sprunger (1848-1923).

time were very large. This meant that as sons grew to manhood, land for their settlement had to be found, if they were to continue as farmers. But, as the local area became settled and as the national frontier became practically non-existent, obtaining farm acreage became increasingly difficult. Second, the head of a household was often a recent immigrant to this country and was in no financial position to help his sons secure a farm. Third, the price of land was constantly increasing around 1900. Fourth, as the ability to secure land decreased, the opportunities for an outlet and success in business increased. For the average man, a small savings, diligence, and hard work were all he needed to start a business. A fifth factor was the general freedom of the Mennonite in choosing a vocation. This would be in contrast to some of the related groups which specified very definitely in what occupations its members could engage. Finally, we might consider this transition as merely a part of the nationwide transition from rural to urban life which started early in our national history and continues to the present.

For several reasons, then, many Mennonites moved to town and became small entrepreneurs or worked for someone else. Where did an individual secure the necessary funds to organize a commercial house? To organize a business in a small town before the first World War did not take a huge capital outlay, but still it did require some savings.

Very important to this small but necessary capital accumulation was the family life of the Mennonites and the wife's efficient management of her household, which permitted savings even on the small wage earned by the husband. Most families in town had their own cow which furnished them with milk and milk products. Cream was used very sparingly since it could be made into butter and then sold, adding to the family income. Canning and preserving of foods was practiced extensively, and in the wintertime beef was butchered. The womenfolk also sewed clothing for their children at home, using old clothing when possible.

By this type of saving and in other ways many families were able to accumulate capital. At first, careful living and saving was neccessary, but even later when considerable wealth had been accumulated, this saving would continue, perhaps out of habit. One was never wasteful, for what one himself could not use, someone else could. Generally, there was an abhorrence of debt, and all financial affairs, family and otherwise were carried out after systematic, methodical planning so as to owe no man anything.

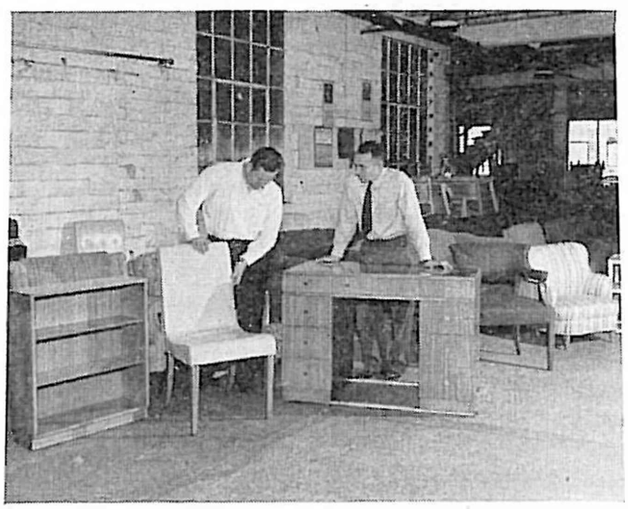
Business Enterprises

What types of businesses were first undertaken in Berne? Before 1880, Berne had at least nine different enterprises: two general stores, a drugstore, a meat market, a wagon and blacksmith shop, a hotel, a sawmill, and two saloons. By 1889, according to an old business directory, there were thirty-five firms or individuals doing business or performing services.

Of the above firms, only five were still in existence by 1910, and at present Sprunger, Lehman and Company, a drygood store organized in 1882 by four Mennonites, is the only one which is still doing business. This firm early assumed leadership in the drygoods business and today, having meanwhile survived fires, competition, and depressions, it continues with its drygoods and grocery business.

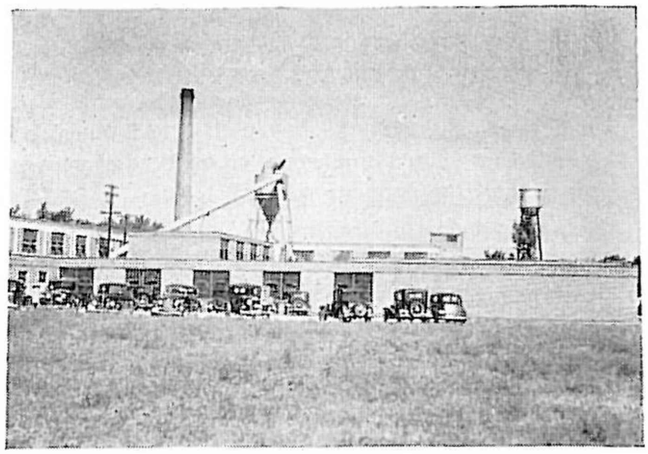
The Mennonite Book Concern has played an important role in adding to the financial development, as well as to the moral and intellectual life of the community. Its forerunner was a bookstore, opened by a Mennonite named Joel Welty, in the year 1882, who, for a number of years, conducted a furniture business in con-

The Berne Mennonite Church today.



Modern furniture is being manufactured.

Dunbar Furniture on display at the Merchandise Mart in Chicago.



Dunbar Furniture Manufacturing Company, Berne, Indiana.

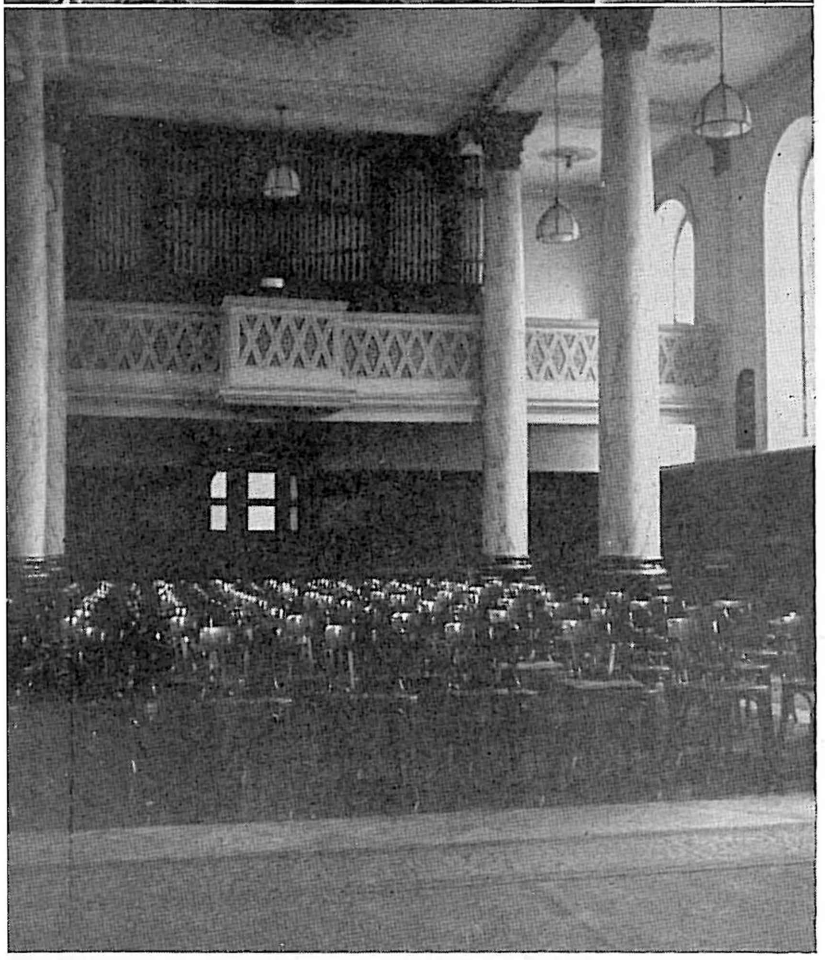
The First Bank of Berne (in front, E. W. Baumgartner and L. B. Lehman).

nection with it. The Mennonite minister, Rev. S. F. Sprunger, assisted in the selection of books, which were primarily of a religious character, and his name was added to the firm. In 1884 they offered a three-year loan of $1,000 to the General Conference of Mennonites, which accepted the offer and in turn this firm became a church undertaking becoming the publishing house and bookstore of the General Conference, under the name, "Christian Central Publishing House." Early in the 90's the furniture business was discontinued and the name changed to "Mennonite Book Concern."

In 1896 a young Mennonite enterpriser, Fred Rohrer, established Berne's first newspaper. Learning the printer's trade in spare hours while attending college, he returned to Berne in 1896, purchased equipment costing less than $600 and launched *The Berne Witness*. This venture was important, for it provided the town with news, helped create a community spirit, provided employment for several persons, and gave business men an advertising medium.

Banking early became essential to the economic growth of Berne. In 1891 several of the prominent business men of Berne aided by several individuals from Decatur, the county seat, organized the Bank of Berne with a capital stock of $40,000. A. A. Sprunger was the first president, with the following men succeeding him in that position: C. A. Neuenschwander, J. F. Lehman, Levi Sprunger, and at present E. W. Baumgartner. The Bank of Berne has grown from total resources of $108,723.39, in 1896, to $7,302,555.90, in 1946. The banker's function in the community cannot be overemphasized. Not only does a bank provide central bookkeeping and facilitate the making of payments, but more important it is the banker who decides who should have access to the savings and resources of the community and thus determines to a large extent the type of development that may take place. From all appearances this duty has been discharged with wisdom and discretion in the development of Berne.

(Continued on page 46)



Interior of Krefeld Mennonite Church before its destruction in World War II.

The Cradle of

BY DIRK CATTEPOEL AND

From all directions came the fugitive, persecuted, and hunted Mennonites to hospitable Krefeld; from Kempen and Aldekerk, from Bergen and Juelich, from Maastricht and Aachen, from the Eifel and Rheydt. They had committeed no crime. They simply wanted to be faithful to their conscience and their Christian concepts, which did not always coincide with those which were officially practiced. Thus they came to the little insignificant town on the Rhine with not more than some fifty houses and two hundred inhabitants. But it had one thing that was missing in many a significant city of Germany: it had religious tolerance. The Mennonites that found refuge in Krefeld have thanked its rulers many times! Through their industry the little village became the "velvet and silk" city of Germany.

It must have been in the year 1609 when a young Mennonite by the name of Hermann op den Graeff, a weaver by trade, entered the town. Many followed him since. By 1634 the Mennonites had organized a congregation and numbered two hundred persons—nearly half the population of the town.

From Krefeld to Germantown

The privileged group of the town, belonging to the Reformed Church, complained about the influx of the Mennonites. After periods of restrictions and oppressions, they were permitted in 1678 to become citizens. It was at this time that William Penn was making trips in continental Europe, meeting with Mennonites and related groups, inviting them to settle on his land in "Pennsylvania." It is probable, however, that he did not come to Krefeld itself.

In March, 1683, thirteen families from Krefeld purchased land in Pennsylvania. In May, they made preparations for the trip, arriving in Rotterdam in June. The "Concord" began its voyage July 24 and arrived in Philadelphia two-and-one-half months later. They found a valuable friend and adviser in the lawyer, Francis Daniel Pastorius, whom they had met before they sailed. Pioneers for freedom of conscience and human rights, they protested against slavery publicly almost before they had erected their crude homes, in 1688.

Later Developments in Krefeld

The thirteen families had hardly left Krefeld when a new influx of Mennonites occurred. In the neighboring city of Reydt a fire had destroyed some fifty houses, and the Mennonites were being accused of having started the fire. When the case was "in-

Germantown--Krefeld

ROSWITHA VON BECKERATH

vestigated" it was found that the city would profit considerably by expelling the Mennonites and confiscating their property. This was done. The expelled Mennonites came to Krefeld and became a significant factor in its economic and religious development. The city grew considerably and the Mennonites built their first church on the Koenigstrasse in 1696. Next to the church a parsonage and an orphanage were erected.

Entering this church on a Sunday during those days one would have noticed that the bearded men were dressed in dark, coarsely-woven clothing and carried wide-brimmed hats. The women wore full skirts, white aprons, and a prayer-covering. The women sat in the center and the men on the sides, a custom which has been kept up to the present day. Looking around, one would have seen that the room was painted white and had clear-glass, round-arched windows. The rows of slender pillars supported the roof. The front benches were close to the plain pulpit at the front wall. On each side of the pulpit were the benches for the ministers, elders, and deacons. One of the ministers rose to preach. After the opening Scripture passage, he announced the song. No organ was heard, but throughout the long-drawn-out singing one might have noticed the leading of an especially loud voice. This was the *Vorsaenger*. The minister stepped to the pulpit and read from a heavy Dutch Bieskens Bible. His words of explanation and devotion were in Dutch. The middle of the sermon was interrupted by a song. A song and a prayer closed the services.

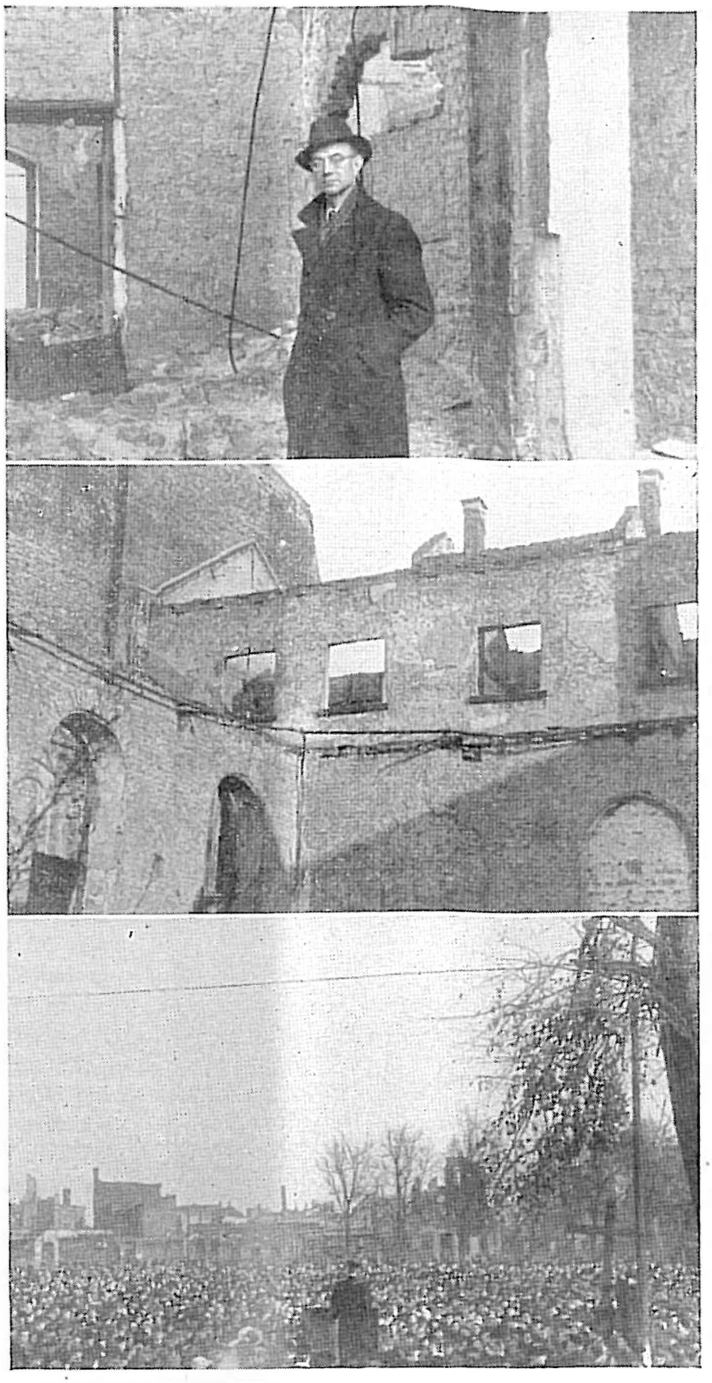
Tersteegen in Krefeld

During the early part of the eighteenth century the congregation underwent considerable influence through the Pietism of that day, with its emphasis on a definite personal Christian experience and life. The matter of baptism by immersion came up, but sprinkling remained the practice.

Gerhard Tersteegen, who lived in the not-distant Muelheim an der Ruhr, and who has become well known throughout Christendom by his songs *O Pow'r of Love* and *God Reveals His Presence (Gott is gegenwaertig)*, had many personal friends among the Mennonites of Krefeld and frequently visited them for spiritual fellowship. Not being an ordained minister, he was privileged to preach only in the Mennonite pulpit at Krefeld. Tersteegen himself wrote about a sermon that he had preached there: "As I entered, the church was filled to capacity by adherents to various denominations, especially Reformed and Mennonites. God led me to speak on II Peter 3:11. If I pleased God as much as I did the listeners, it will have been satisfactory. The people were touched, and some to such a degree that it will have been lasting."—(Continued on page 26)

Roswitha von Beckerath (right) describes a worship amidst ruins (page 26).

Dirk Cattepoel, (below), pastor of the Krefeld Mennonite Church, had experienced the disaster of Stalingrad and upon returning found his home city and church in ruins.



Reverend Cattepoel (top) in his former study. (Middle) Krefeld Mennonite Church in ruins. (Bottom) In the presence of 20,000 bombed-out Krefelders Reverend Cattepoel appeals to the Christians of the world for help.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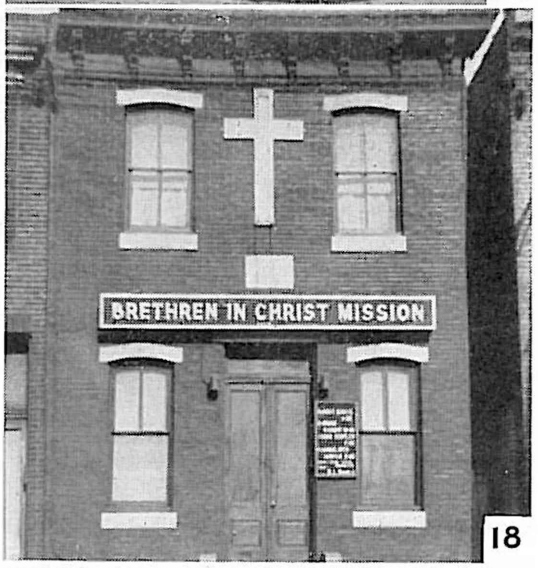

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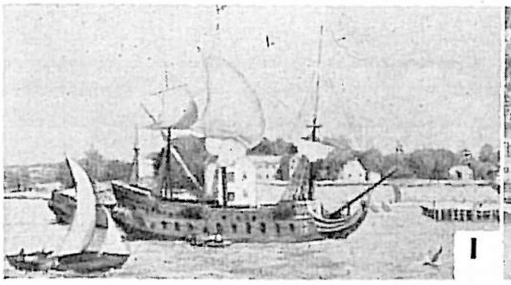
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Philadelphia at the time the "Concord" arrived.

A Sight-Seeing Tou

BY CLAREN

LET US begin our tour at Wilmington, Delaware. Here we take an excursion steamer, and approach the city from the same angle as did our pioneer forefathers. As we come up the Delaware river, we see a large city on our left with tall skyscrapers, many buildings, and a large, busy port. This is Philadelphia, third largest city of America, with a population of almost two million.

When our forefathers first arrived in small sailing vessels (1) (1683), Philadelphia and its port looked quite different. It was but a "greene countrie towne," "having a high and dry bank next to the water, with a shore ornamented with a fine view of pine trees growing upon it." (3) Embarking here, the first thirty-three Mennonite arrivals (1683) met with their land agent, Francis Daniel Pastorius. After prospecting with him in the wilderness, they returned to his cave in this embankment and drew lots for their respective portions of land in the proposed settlement, which was henceforth called "Germantown."

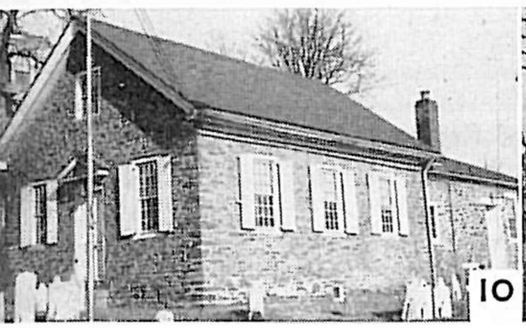
We embark at Chestnut Street, and walk north to Market Street. Originally called High Street, this street derived its present name from the market sheds in the middle of the street, where for years many Mennonite and other farmers sold their produce. After these sheds were removed to make way for street traffic, markets were located in buildings in various parts of the city, where we can still find our Mennonite brethren selling their scrapple, butter and eggs.

Of interest to us is the old Quaker Meeting House at Fourth and Arch Streets, to which we now proceed. It was the Quaker, William Penn, who founded this colony and gave a warm welcome to the Mennonites and other persecuted peoples. Moreover, the Quakers shared the peace principles, plain dress, simple life, and worship of the Mennonites. Does not this meetinghouse (2) remind us of our own meetinghouses?

Returning to Market Street and walking

William Penn makes a

Typical Pennsylvania G



Germantown Church and Dirck Keyser house—"shrines" for American Mennonites.

...UR OF PHILADELPHIA

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...treaty with Indians.

...erman chest (See page 35).

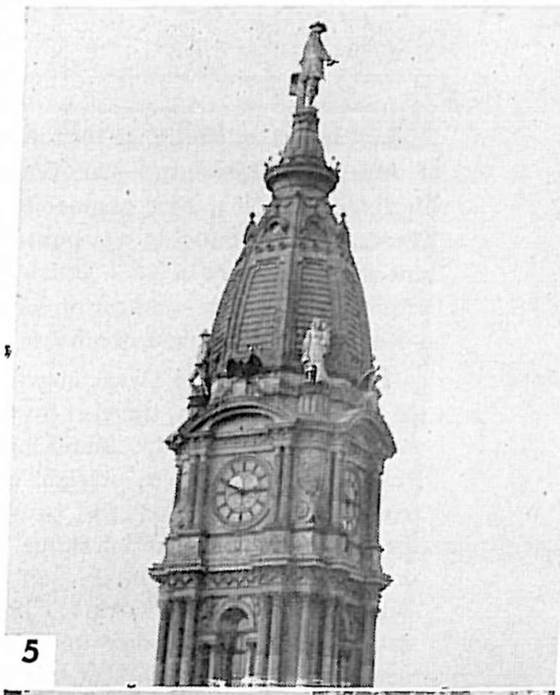
west, we come to the Reading Terminal, where trains go north to the easternmost Mennonite conference districts. To the rear of this building is the Reading Terminal Market where we get our first glimpse of modern Mennonites, engaged in their historic role in Philadelphia—selling farm produce.

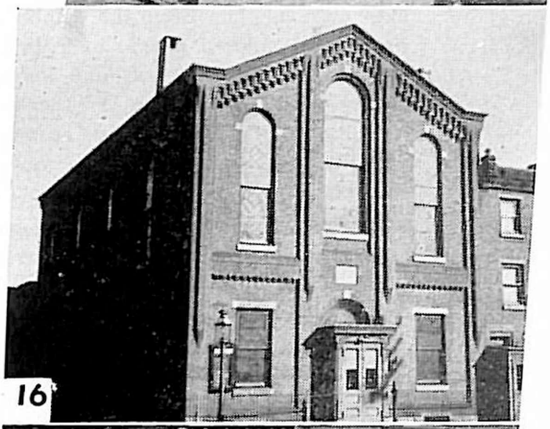
We go now to the official center of the city—City Hall, located in Penn Square, where Market and Broad Streets intersect. Towering above this building is a large statue of William Penn (5).

Going northwest on Philadelphia Parkway we stop briefly at the Free Library, with its thousands of volumes—including a rather good selection on Mennonites. On the left is the Franklin Museum and Fels Planetarium, attractions often sought out by our non-movie-going Mennonites when they visit the city. A little farther ahead of us is the Art Museum, with a Pennsylvania Dutch room, containing furniture and utensils such as were used by Mennonite pioneers.

We now eagerly turn our steps towards the cradle of Mennonitism in America—Germantown. Our route takes us up the charming West River Drive and up along the beautiful Wissahickon. This wooded area not only relieves city "nerves," but reminds us of the primeval state in which our forefathers found this land of freedom. We arrive at a fork in the road (Lincoln Drive), and stop for our first glimpse of ancient Mennonite landmarks. Here is the site of the first paper mill in America (8), established by William Rittenhouse, first Mennonite minister in the New World.

Going north by way of Lincoln Drive and Johnson Street, we come to historic Germantown Avenue. A few blocks south, at No. 6205, we see the 200-year-old house of Dirck Keyser (9), that faithful Mennonite layman who gathered his brethren together in his home, and read sermons to them, when as yet they had neither minister nor meetinghouse.





A little farther south, we turn in at the historic shrine of American Mennonites—the Germantown Mennonite Meetinghouse (10), first Mennonite church in America. The original log building was built in 1708, and the present stone structure in 1770. Outside is the old cemetery with dark soapstone markers of early Mennonite settlers —Keyser, Kulp, Funk, Rittenhouse, Gorgas.

Our trek south on Germantown Avenue takes us in the opposite direction, traveled by the first settlers when they came north on this laurel-lined Indian trail from Philadelphia, then seven or eight miles away! We soon cross Rittenhouse Street, and pause at Vernon Park to see the imposing memorial statue of Pastorius and the original Mennonite-Quaker settlers. America's first Bible was printed (in German) in 1743 by Christopher Saur, where No. 5253 now would be (12). The German newspapers and almanacs of this Dunkard printer were widely read among the plain people, at a time when Benjamin Franklin was calling the Pennsylvania Germans stupid and illiterate. At No. 5214, the museum of the Germantown Historical Society exhibits colonial furniture, utensils, costumes, and implements.

Our journey south on Germantown Avenue brings us, in turn, near to four Mennonite churches. The first is Salem Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church (Broad and McFerran). The Mennonite Brethren in Christ have active missions in West Philadelphia and Roxboro.

Next in order is the Second Mennonite Church at Franklin and Indiana (15). This is a General Conference church with a membership of 164. Our next stop is also at a General Conference church—the First Mennonite Church at Diamond and Reese Streets (16) the largest Mennonite church in the city. At the time of its seventy-fifth anniversary (1940) it had 338 members.

Going eastward to 2147-51 North Howard Street, we come to the Norris Square Mennonite Church (17), a mission church under the Lancaster Conference. An active program of evangelism and teaching is carried on. One outcome has been the establishment of the work among the colored people in Philadelphia, now located at 1814 Diamond Street, and known as the Diamond Street Mennonite Church. Another outcome has been the opening of a branch Sunday school in northeast Philadelphia. Traveling north on Second Street to No. 3423, we come to the Brethren in Christ Mission (18).

Back at the Delaware River again, we finally wend our way to a spot of special interest along its banks—Penn Treaty Park. Here, it is believed, William Penn, the great-hearted colonizer, met with the native Indians, paid them for their land, and made a treaty of perpetual peace with them. No oaths were made, we are sure, but as long as Penn governed the colony, no war whoop was heard in Pennsylvania; white man and Indian lived side by side in peace and friendship. With the prayer that men today may learn this way of peace, and that Philadelphia may be the "City of Brotherly Love" that Penn hoped it would be, we conclude our tour of the "Quaker City."

Cradle of Germantown

(Continued from page 23)

In the economic life of the city of Krefeld the Mennonite family of von der Leyen played a significant role. Generations of them have been outstanding in the weaving and silk industry.

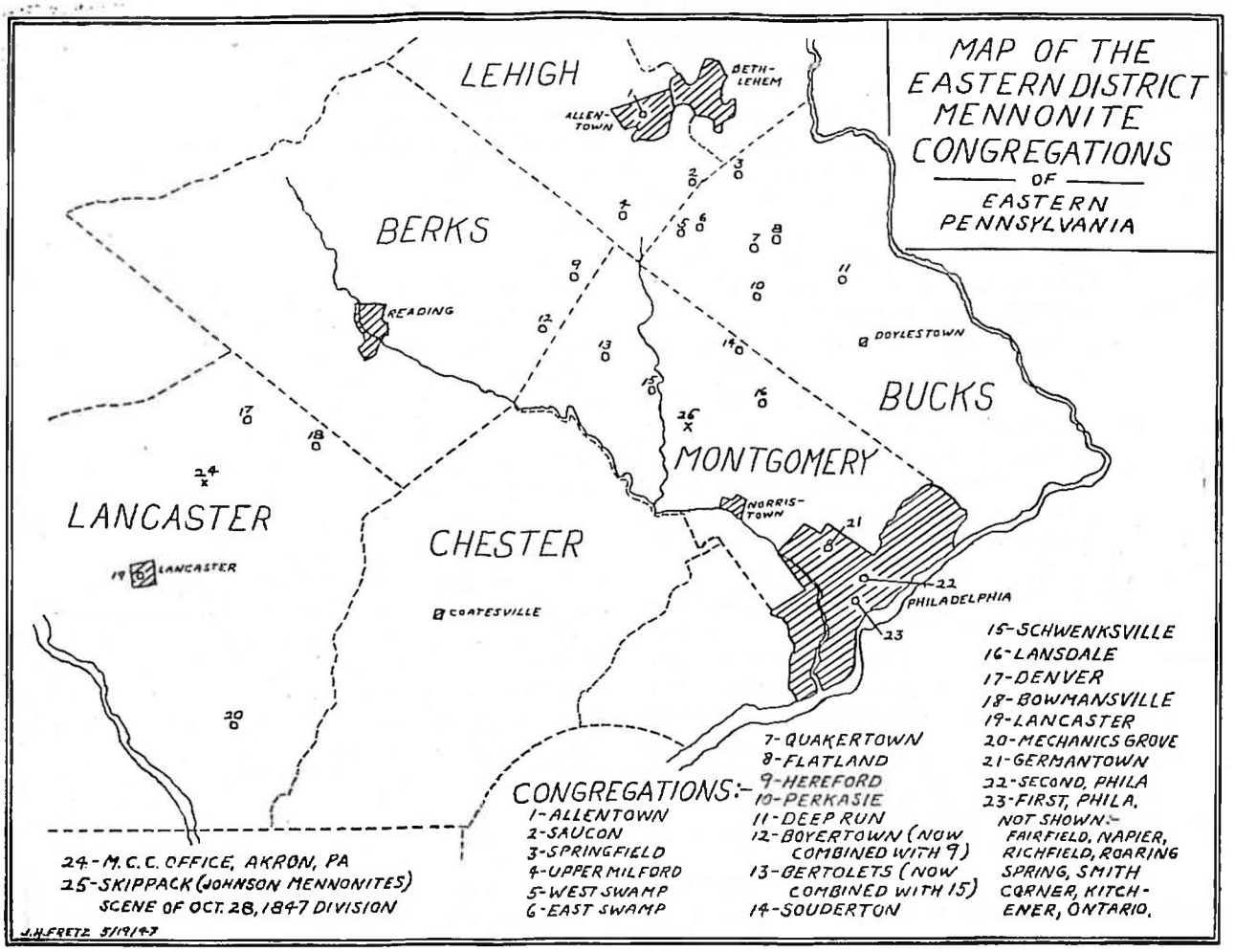
Krefeld Today

Trucks, street cars, automobiles, wagons, bicycles, and endless masses of hastening pedestrians crowd the thoroughfares of the city at all hours of the day. The masses are jammed together, especially at the close of the day when the workers are waiting for street cars. The headlights of on-coming cars illuminate them for an instant and then leave them again in eerie darkness.

Turning into a small side street, one finds himself surrounded by pleasant quietness. The noise of the traffic is muffled by the ruins of the destroyed buildings. This side street leads into the devastated area of our city, where, as far as one can see, no habitable house remains. One is surrounded by the open wounds of the war. Three years ago the ruins still revealed the bizarre shapes of burned out and bombed out buildings. Forcibly splintered dwellings were still pervaded by the breath of their former inhabitants. The destruction was gruesome—charred beams pointed skyward, on exposed walls one could see here a picture, there a radiator, and on the remnants of a floor an occasional chair or bed or a curtain flapping in the wind. Today the ruins have lost their forceful complaint. Storm and rain have crumbled them and leveled their bizarre shapes.

In the midst of these ruins are the remnants of the Mennonite church. The baroque gate, which withstood destruction, still reveals the year 1696 as the date of the original erection of the edifice. This was the entrance into the church up to the year 1842, when the building was enlarged and the entrance shifted to the other end. The walls of the choir loft, which were erected at this time, still stand as do the outer walls of the church. Ferns are growing in the ruins, and flowers are blooming in the room where for centuries joyful and sorrowing people had thanked God and prayed to Him.

During the bright summer days these ruins are simply the ruins of a destroyed building, but on moonlit nights they seem to come to life. Then they seem to be not merely walls of brick and mortar, but vessels filled with prayers of thanksgiving and intercession. With eyes fixed on the endless sky one feels secure in this former place of worship. Thousands of believing Mennonites have, in times of war, sought refuge here in prayer and in the singing of chorales which still seem to pervade the room. Clouds now cover the moon, and their shadows play on the floor and walls. It seems as though the room has been filled with worshippers. The faith of generations fills the room! Wherever one prays in thanksgiving or supplication one meets God. Whenever one is filled with faith, love, and hope, Christ is present. With Christ the ruins of this church and the ruins of its members will be restored!



THE MENNONITES ESTABLISH THEMSELVES IN PENNSYLVANIA

BY JOHN C. WENGER

In the year 1709 Mennonite immigration to North America began in real earnest. The immigrants of the following decades were not Dutch, but Swiss, coming directly from Switzerland or via Palatinate (Pfalz), South Germany.

The first outpost of the Germantown settlement was about twenty miles to the northwest, a place in what is now Montgomery County, called Skippack. Some Germantown Mennonites settled at Skippack as early as 1702. The Palatine Mennonite immigrants of 1709 and the following years passed by the town of Germantown and pressed on to the Skippack rural area. Other settlements were made in rapid succession: the Schuylkill Valley and the Manatawny section (now in Chester and Montgomery counties and in Berks county, respectively); other sections of Montgomery County, and in Bucks and Lehigh counties. The oldest congregations of the Franconia Conference settlements were Skippack, Coventry, Hereford, Swamp, and Deep Run. In the eighteenth century the Franconia Conference had churches all over the following southeastern counties of Pennsylvania: Philadelphia, Montgomery, Chester, Bucks, Berks, Lehigh, and Northampton.

The most prosperous settlement in Pennsylvania was not that which radiated outward from the counties just mentioned, however. This distinction belongs to the Pequea and Conestoga settlements, which in time developed into the great Lancaster Mennonite Conference. It was in 1710 that the original Pequea settlement was made in the general area of the village of Willow Street. What is now Lancaster County was then a part of Chester. (The town of Lancaster was at first known as Hickory Town.)

The Conestoga settlement was made in 1717. In the following decades a strong immigration of Swiss Mennonites swelled the original settlements and formed new ones. The Hickory Town area became the most powerful Mennonite colony in Pennsylvania, and in all of Colonial America; and even today is stronger than any other Mennonite community east of the Mississippi.

In Colonial America life centered about the home and the church. Little else concerned the settlers. Their first task was to clear the forests, build themselves homes, and erect a dual-purpose building for church and school. The women manufactured soap from fat, lye, and rainwater. Rye or whole-wheat bread was also home-made. They spun flax and made clothing for the entire family. They made butter, cheese, and applebutter at home. Wine and whiskey were considered essential for tonics, for medicine, and for moderate social drinking. The use of tobacco was common. Prior to 1825 the usual mode of travel was riding horses. The men were compelled to do all their farm work by hand; there was much back-breaking work and no labor-saving inventions.

The clothing of the pioneers would appear quaint today: The men wore buckle shoes, knee breeches, frock coats without lapels, and high silk- or beaver hats. The women wore plain headdress, a hood or perhaps a large flat-hat, a long and full, plain dress, and large cloaks. About the time of the Revolutionary War long trousers began to be worn by the men. In summertime the men went barefoot a great deal, even to the "meeting" (religious service). The big social events were marriages and funerals, when the whole community would come together. The language of the pioneers was Palatine German to which, in the course of time some English was added, producing the famous "Pennsylvania Dutch." *Aver die Leit saage zu viel ivver die Sprooch, un' viel saage meh' a's sie wisse'.* (People talk about the language too much, and many say more than they know.)

The church life of the pioneers was simple, dignified, sincere, and satisfying. The Mennonites had not yet become American activists. Services were usually held about every two weeks on Sunday morning, with no exact time stipulated for the beginning of the meeting. Choristers led the congregation in singing one-part German hymns. The deacon read a chapter from the German (Saur, Germantown) Bible, remaining seated to read. The congregation knelt in silent prayer. Then the minister preached a sermon, about an hour in length. After the sermon the other ordained men gave "testimony" that the sermon was in harmony with the Word of God. The final prayer was an audible petition which was always completed with the Lord's prayer. After another hymn the benediction was pronounced, over a seated audience.

In the Franconia district, communion services were held annually in the spring; in Lancaster in spring and fall. In the Lancaster district feetwashing was practiced as a church ordinance in connection with the communion service, but not in Franconia as a whole. Fast days were occasionally observed. In the autumn, after the ingathering of the crops, "Harvest Home" services were held to express thanksgiving to the Lord of Harvests.

Bishops (elders), ministers, and deacons did not choose their own offices. When there was need of a given official in a congregation, votes were cast; and when two or more brethren received votes—the usual experience — lots were cast in a solemn service to determine who was called of the Lord. The individual immediately assumed his responsibilities with the loyal support and earnest prayers of his former fellow-laymen.

The Mennonite communities of the first century were self-contained German communities, the major non-Mennonite contacts being confined to their Reformed and Lutheran neighbors, who were also Pennsylvania Germans. Family life was strong, divorce was unknown, families were large, often as many as ten or more children. Everyone worked hard, idleness being considered a sin and recreation never heard of. It was taken for granted that everyone would either farm or work for another farmer. Marriage with "outsiders" was rather rare. In general, boys and girls grew up on the parental homesteads, attended the elementary school maintained by the Mennonite community, worked for their parents until they were married, and then settled down on a nearby farm, which the parents of one or the other marriage partners helped them rent or purchase. Money was often scarce, but there was always plenty to eat and wear, and much work to be done. The pioneers were happy, busy, and satisfied. Their faith satisfied all their needs. They knew there was a kind and beneficent Father in heaven who had guided them across the Atlantic to the earthly paradise of Pennsylvania. Where a tragedy occurred, perhaps a horse kicking a man fatally, the relatives of the widow sustained her economically, and if necessary the church through its deacons helped, until the children were old enough to assume the financial burdens of their mother.

The Pennsylvania Mennonites were quite different in some respects from their Swiss Brethren forefathers of the era 1525-30. Their Christianity was not that of "radical" Christians; it had settled down to a comfortable, conventional, denominational type. There was no thought of evangelistic work, no need of any kind of mission work, no occasion to alter any of the set patterns of worship. The faith and practice of the immigrants was good and satisfying; why change? From 1683 until the ordination of John H. Oberholtzer almost 160 years later no significant changes were made, and no one intended to make any. The Bible had not changed; why should anyone introduce any innovations? Only with great effort would it be possible to introduce Sunday schools, evangelistic services, Bible study and prayer meetings, evening services, and church boards of charities, publication, education, and missions. This was the situation 160 years after the thirty-five Krefelders arrived at Philadelphia on the good ship *Concord*, October 6, 1683.

JOHN H. OBERHOLTZER AND HIS TIME

A Centennial Tribute 1847 - 1947

BY S. F. PANNABECKER

THE church division of 1847, one hundred years ago, which resulted in the formation of the East Pennsylvania Conference of the Mennonite Church marked the beginning of a period of Mennonite adjustment to the changes in American life. The traditionalism and formalism which had settled on Mennonite life was not without cause, for the church had lost her European trained leaders of the century before and had never replaced them.

New Life

Though little change occurred in the church, yet changes of immense significance were taking place in American life during the first half of the nineteenth century. Democracy, with its emphasis on the common man, and universal suffrage appeared. Public education, financed and controlled by the state, was offered and accepted by the people with the right of the state to demand that every child accept it. In the field of religion revivals had swept the country, and new life and faith, with an evangelical fervor, was being introduced. To the Germans, this was mediated through such men as Martin Boehm and Jacob Albright. The latter most closely touched the Mennonites and spoke to them fearlessly:

> You Dunkards and Mennonites, with your peculiar dress and outward plainness, by which you comfort yourselves, will be lost without the new birth. . . . . Be not astonished that I say unto you, "Ye must be born again," for these are the words of our Saviour and Judge.

The listeners are reported to have been "strongly affected" and some, "dissatisfied with the cold and formal worship of their people," joined the Evangelical movement.

Parallel with the religious awakening that struck the country came a sense of responsibility for spreading the Christian gospel and the formation of organizations to promote that end. The early nineteenth century saw the beginnings of the American home- and foreign mission boards, tract societies, temperance societies, the inauguration of religious periodicals, and the promotion of Sunday schools. These organizations, with the information which they disseminated and the work they fostered, brought to some Mennonites new visions of opportunities and responsibilities.

The Mennonites as a whole were opposed to both the new evangelistic movement grounded in Pietistic methods and thought, and to its expression in active work. They had been trained in the suppression of feeling, not only in religion but also in everyday life. Practical virtues and stability in the face of difficulty were to them the traditional tests of true religion. Nevertheless, the emphasis upon the Bible, rebirth, and a verified religion made many of them open to the new expression and the method which also claimed such foundation.

The struggle among the Mennonites for the acceptance of new ideas—democratic, educational, religious—based on changes in the American environment occupied the nineteenth century. By the close of the century, Mennonites, in general, had adjusted their church program and life to the valid claims of many of these new insights. Out of them came church organizations, a more evangelical program, co-operative movements, educational institutions, publications, missions, Sunday schools, and a limited amount of social interest expressed largely in the temperance cause.

The extent to which different Mennonite groups were willing to make modifications in the directions of these environmental influences varied, and particularly the speed with which groups and individuals have been willing to change varied. It is only with this in mind that a proper view of the nineteenth-century divisions may be possible. There were, indeed, many personalities involved, with clashes of opinions and bitter recriminations and even a church lawsuit. This may well be forgotten and forgiven. Descendants of the participants of one hundred years ago may take a more objective view and think in terms of movements rather than personalities.

As the middle of the nineteenth century drew near, there were indications among the Mennonites that a viewpoint other than the traditional one was finding expression in the matter of education, the adoption of new methods of work, the use of the English language, association with outsiders, and the acceptance of current modes of dress. These steps marked the beginning of the new period. Henry Bertolet, a Mennonite preacher, tried to start a religious paper for Christian farmers in 1836. His effort called *Der Evangelische Botschafter* lasted for but one issue, but showed that at least one Mennonite was interested in religious journalism. Abraham Gottschall, in 1838, produced the first important piece of Mennonite literature since the Colonial times. His *Description of the New Creature* appeared in English as well as German. Abraham Hunsicker, ordained bishop in 1847, was typical of the isolated individuals who showed concern for education. He, with his son Henry, founded a boarding school for men, called Freeland Seminary, which later developed into Ursinus College. He favored the new Free School System, was an ardent Whig, and attended political meetings.

New Methods

Among those inside the Mennonite fold who stood for adoption of new methods and freedom from tradition none was more outstanding than John H. Oberholtzer. Born in 1809 of Swiss Mennonite parents, he was permitted to take advantage of the schools then available. His progress was promising enough that at the age of sixteen he was engaged as a school teacher, at which occupation he continued each winter season until entering the ministry in 1842. During these years Oberholtzer also learned the trade of locksmith and set up a shop at Milford Square.

Selected by lot and ordained to the ministry at the age of thirty-three, Oberholtzer was concerned about the low grade of education generally and deplored the ignorance which caused children to follow in the ways of their fathers without concern for improvement. He also believed that too little preparation was given candidates for baptism and that insufficient effort was being made to ascertain whether they had right knowledge of the way of salvation. To remedy this, he himself had printed in 1844 a small catechism, originally published in Prussia but reaching him through friends in Canada.

Oberholtzer, it appears, was a man of ability and initiative. He was also rather progressive and because of this, very early in his career, was severely critized. He mentions some of the matters which aroused dissatisfaction. There was the cut of his coat, which was not according to the traditional pattern. Then, also, he received invitations to preach elsewhere, and if possible always accepted them, preaching in neighboring churches and schoolhouses, or wherever opportunity offered. Occasionally he seems to have received remuneration for these services and this acceptance of *Dienstgeld* was regarded as improper. It was also disapproved that he should recognize brothers and sisters of other denominations as "fellow believers in Christ," and that he should go up into the high pulpit in other churches.

Oberholtzer differed from his brethren in the multiplicity of contacts with the outside, as would be expected from one who was a business man and a teacher rather than a farmer. He was also open to the influences of these contacts. In addition to the ability, initiative, and liberal-mindedness, there was also a certain independence of judgment and determination to follow his conclusions regardless of consequences. Perhaps this characteristic, more than any other, made him a reformer. In writing about the criticisms Oberholtzer said:

> My Lord and Master who promised to help me, gave me no commands regarding such human notions and was not bound in man. service nor to traditions. Hence I consulted not with flesh and blood over such things but went directly ahead in my duty as I believe it right. If one's aim and duty is not to be confused, he can and should only seek in such a spirit that his thoughts be proved clear with Scripture.

As time went on and as he met with the obstinacy of those grounded in tradition, his own obstinacy to yield to nothing except Scripture increased. The cut of the coat he recognized as a small matter and would have been quite willing to comply with custom had he not felt that the matter was unduly stressed. He says, "After the trouble made over it, I was determined to change only by clear proof from the Word of God."

It is easy to understand, therefore, why Oberholtzer was the center of a schism among the Franconia Mennonites. There were three matters, in a sense of minor concern, over which Oberholtzer and his group differed with the more conservative brethern. The first was the wearing of the ministerial garb; the second was the keeping of minutes of the business sessions of the conference; and the third was the introduction of a constitution for the regulation of business procedure. Of the three, the second was more or less incidental. The first mentioned was also first chronologically, while the third grew out of it.

When, about 1800, coat collars grew higher and higher and eventually turned over to form a lapel, the conservative Franconia brethren regarded the following of this unnecessary fashion as improper. For ministers and deacons the "round coat" with front buttons on one side only and with no lapel was required. After ordination to the ministry, the new preacher was allowed a reasonable amount of time to wear out his old clothes and was then supposed to change to the ministerial garb. Evidently there had been general acceptance of the custom. Oberholtzer never became convinced of the duty to change his coat and resented pressure on a point which he referred to as "superstition." His obstinacy on this matter was interpreted by the older brethren as disobedience and arrogance, and, consequently, in 1844 he and several like-minded brethren were, by majority vote, excluded from the council. The churches in which they ministered were still favorable to them, so they continued officiating while attempts at reconciliation were made.

Limberlost Bridge.
Linoleum cut, Arthur L. Sprunger.

The Constitution

Oberholtzer had presented a constitution to his West Swamp congregation which had been adopted and he was now producing a written constitution which would outline general methods of procedure for the Franconia Council.

A preliminary draft of the constitution was reduced and, fortified with the regulation coat to appease criticism, Oberholtzer and his friends appeared at the spring meeting of the Franconia Council, called for the first Thursday in May, 1847. Oberholtzer presented his document with the prefacing remark that he now had another coat.

The constitution, obviously, could not be judged on its own merits. There was a clearcut line dividing the group into two parties, of which coats and constitutions were but symbols. One favored aggressive action, the introduction of new methods, and willingness to accept not only the symbols of outside society, but some of the ideas and spirit as well. The other felt that the introduction of these things would not benefit the church. Both were sincere and both were determined.

Looking back at the incident after one hundred years, the difference seems unfortunate, for the descendants of both sides have long since accepted the innovations then proposed, and today are perhaps nearer in spirit than before the outward rupture took place. But to finish the story: The Constitution was printed and distributed; approved by one group, condemned by the other. Both sides were convinced of their right and, whether by secession of the one, or by expulsion by the other, the sides were crystallized into the "News" and the "Olds," and thus the separation which we refer to as the schism of 1847 occurred.

Examination of Oberholtzer's constitution, called *Ordnung der Mennonitischen Gemeinschaft,* reveals a group of sponsors who were obviously trying to remain true to Mennonite principles but showing at the same time an openness to wider interests. The influences of democracy and education are evident in the attempt to recognize the wishes of the majority and place boundaries on the authority of individuals, in the use of written records and precise methods of procedure, in the emphasis on more careful selection of ministers as full-time workers worthy of congregational support. A wider sympathy with other ecclesiastical and secular groups is evident in a wider use of government agencies for protection, in intermarriage, and in membership transfer without rebaptism. The idea of rigid separation from the world was undergoing revision.

Bonneyville Mill.
(Still operated near Goshen, Indiana.)
Linoleum cut, Arthur L. Sprunger

The East Pennsylvania Conference

The rejection of the *Ordnung* and its sponsors took place at the October 7, 1847, meeting of the Franconia Council. On the 28th of the same month eleven ministers and deacons, ten of whom had subscribed to the Constitution, met and organized the East Pennsylvania Conference of the Mennonite Church. The *Ordnung,* with a few modifications was accepted as their constitution. The group forming the new conference were the more progressive and the younger men. Oberholtzer, the leader, was then thirty-eight years of age. Of the *Ordnung* sponsors, only three were above forty, while the others averaged thirty-four. There were about twenty-eight ministers who remained in the old conference; the youngest of these was forty-three and only five were under fifty; the average age for the group was fifty-five.

Sixteen congregations, or parts of them, followed the new organization. Six of these came over intact, retaining possession of the former meeting house. These were Upper Milford, Schwenksville, Skippack, East Swamp, West Swamp, and Flatland. With these might be included one more, Bertolets, where an undenominational church was served by one of the ministers. In seven more congregations large enough elements broke off that they retained partial use of the old church. These were Saucon, Springfield, Providence, Worcester, Hereford, Boyertown, and Rockhill. In one more congregation, Deep Run, a small group was denied the use of the old meeting house and soon after erected its own. To these should be added Germantown, which was very weak, almost facing dissolution, but favored the new party.

Thus the new organization was started with eight ministers, eleven deacons, and sixteen congregations. The total number of members involved is estimated at about five hundred, or one-fourth of the Franconia Conference at that time. The influence of outside factors on the congregations as well as the ministers is suggested by the fact that the congregations mentioned are in general those on the fringe of the settlement and thus more susceptible to contact with outside environment than those in the heart of the Mennonite area.

As might be expected, J. H. Oberholtzer continued to hold the leadership and demonstrated his enthusiasm and ability by the sheer weight of enterprises in which he engaged. His activities may be summarized as follows: First is correspondence and travels. He early got in touch with Jacob Krehbiel, at Clarence Center, New York, a

John H. Oberholtzer.

Palatinate immigrant of 1831, and between them flowed a lively correspondence with occasional visits. Through Jacob Krehbiel, Oberholtzer, inquiring about the German brethren in the West, got acquainted with Daniel Krehbiel, then located at Cleveland, Ohio. A visit between the two was shortly arranged and marked the beginning of a long period of friendship and association in work for unification of scattered church groups. These two were the key men in the organization of the General Conference a decade later. Daniel Hoch, a progressive leader in Ontario, was a third man with whom Oberholtzer maintained a long and profitable relationship which resulted, in 1855, in a series of conferences between the Ontario and Ohio congregations, where a concrete union was much discussed though never completed. Further afield, Oberholtzer reached across the ocean and reestablished the European contacts that had been suspended for almost one hundred years. Several most interesting letters from both sides found their way to the pages of Mennonite publications that were being inaugurated just at that time both in Germany and in America.

A second important line of activity in which Oberholtzer engaged was that of children's religious training. The third contribution of Oberholtzer, and perhaps the greatest, was the introduction of publication among the Mennonites. Oberholtzer's press was financed by himself and set up in his locksmith quarters at Milford Square where he himself toiled till late at night, setting type, composing and editing—all the while carrying responsibility for his churches and supporting himself by his trade. On August 23, 1852, appeared the first issue of the *Religioeser Botschafter,* "a sheet for the spreading of true religion" as the heading says. In this eight-page paper American Mennonites became able for the first time to get in touch with each other through the printed word and to discuss the many questions then arising. It was an indispensible factor in preparation for the General Conference organization.

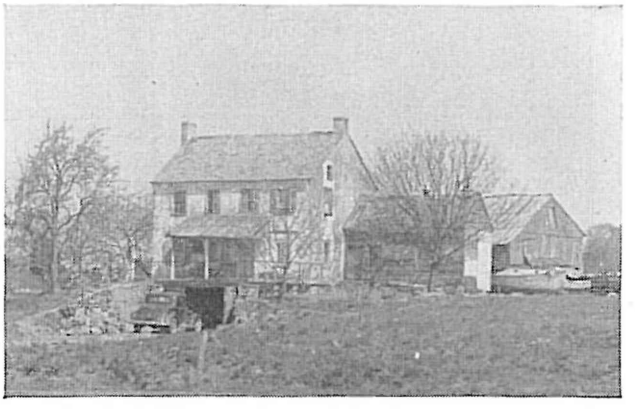
The opposition encountered by Oberholtzer need not be recounted here. He had opponents even in his own group who raised charges against him. It is significant that he was a man who, though supervising a charge of seven congregations, was able to keep a broad view of his field and its relation to wider church areas. The problems with which he was concerned and for which he made a noteworthy contribution are those of church organization and administration, co-operation and union, instruction of the young, the work of missions, church literature, and ministerial education.

As to the ministers and congregations associated in the 1847 move, it may be noted that they did not go to an opposite extreme but rather, as far as possible, adhered to former usages and tried to remain consciously Mennonite. At the same time there were innovations. Some customs were modified in the direction of popular practices, such as freedom to dispense with publication in advance of the names of those about to enter matrimony and a freer use of the English language.

The possibility of young men feeling the call to the ministry apart from congregational election was recognized, and a door was opened for the introduction of a fulltime, trained ministry. In line with this, the Swamp church in 1854 decided to collect funds for the support of their ministers, probably the first move of this kind among the American Mennonites. A step toward open communion was taken when members of other denominations were granted the privilege of partaking, subject to congregational approval.

Nor can the matter of foreign missions be omitted. The East Pennsylvania Conference in 1858 authorized approaching the European brethren for information concerning missionary teaching and practice. Correspondence on the matter followed and, with the stimulus of moves on this side of the ocean, resulted in the organization in 1866 of a mission society. In Canada, Ohio, and Iowa, Mennonites were feeling concern over the same question, and the East Pennsylvania Conference joined with these in planning for such work. It was largely missions and ministerial education that drew the various groups together, and this resulted in the closer union effected with the organization in 1860 of a General Conference of the Mennonite Church, open to all congregations which cared to join.

The place where John H. Oberholtzer lived and had his locksmith and print shops.



REFLECTIONS AT THE END OF A CENTURY

By J. WINFIELD FRETZ

MENNONITES are referred to by historians and sociologists as a religious sect. A sect is a religious organization that is in conflict with the world. It may be said to be at war with the existing customs, practices, and beliefs of the secular world about it.

New sects generally arise in times of social unrest. This was the situation in the sixteenth century, when the various branches of the Protestant church originated. Menno Simons, in fulfillment of the sociologist's description of a "sect" sought to cultivate a state of mind and establish a code of behavior for his followers so that it should be known as a body of Christian disciples "without spot or wrinkle." With these lofty standards it was natural that Mennonites would be in conflict with the world about them.

Most religious organizations have a way of undergoing gradual transformation so that as time goes on the differences between themselves and the world about them quietly vanish. This process, whereby the religious group ceases to struggle against the world and accepts its standards, is a process of accommodation. The group may continue to have a separate name and a separate organization many years after it has ceased to be in conflict, although all fundamental differences may have been erased and only superficial and external differences remain.

In reflecting on the first hundred years of the Eastern District of the General Conference of the Menonnite Church, it is impossible to overlook this accommodation process. The Eastern District was, of course, never a new religious sect; it was merely a branch of an older sect. In a very real sense the founding of this Conference resulted in a hastening of the accommodation process. It was, of course, not intended by its founders that this should be the result; nevertheless, it is clear in retrospect that the demands of the new group were—to a degree—demands for accommodation to changes of the times.

The new Conference plead for missionary activity; the establishment of Sunday schools; the use of musical instruments in church services; the right to engage trained ministers and to pay them a fixed salary; freedom from dress regulations; a minimized emphasis on the literal separation from the world; and individual freedom of choice on such observances as foot washing. These and other evidences in the history of the Eastern District's first hundred years point to the fact that the differences between the old and the new groups were sociological rather than theological. The differences pertained to matters of custom and practice rather than to fundamental Christian doctrine.

The one basic assumption of the new Conference was that the changes it advocated could be made without loss of basic religious values. It contended that old forms could be altered or even discarded without loss of old religious principles or spiritual values. It claimed that many of the old forms were not only unessential to a Christian life, but were actually a handicap to the most effective kind of Christian witnessing. The question that must be raised is whether in the course of its first century, the Conference's basic accumption has been affirmed or denied.

In order to comment on this question it might be well to focus attention on five religious principles that have been characteristically identified with Mennonite faith. These five are: Christian simplicity; Christian non-conformity; Christian discipline; Christian mutual aid; and Biblical non-resistance. All of these principles are held to be clearly taught in the New Testament and as clearly demonstrated among the Apostolic Christians.

To one who was born and raised in this Conference and as one whose forefathers were among those who helped found it it seems essential that the question be approached frankly, honestly, and openly. Have our forefathers, have we of this generation, been able to preserve and demonstrate the principle of Christian simplicity? Have we by our manner of speech, our manner of dress, the care of our homes, the accumulation of material goods given witness that as a Christian people we believe in simplicity as our chosen way of life? Has simplicity been demonstrated out of free choice or out of economic necessity. The one makes the practice of simplicity a virtue, the other a nuisance.

Has the Conference succeeded in separating itself from the world about it and adhering to the practice of Christian non-conformity without the aid of external symbols such as distinctive dress or the denial of the use of modern conveniences? Has the concept of separation from the world any significance to those of our number who work in factories, mills, stores, and offices, have our people accepted the slang vocabulary of the average factory worker, have they joined in labor organizations, service clubs, social organizations, lodges, and attended movies and dances as part of the normal activity of modern life?

Has the Conference a record of either spontaneous or formal mutual aid organization and activity? Do members aid one another in carrying on the common tasks of life? Are there such mutual organizations as burial societies, hospitals, mutual-aid life and accident insurance societies, orphanages, and old people's homes? Have our people demonstrated that strength of strong Christian group life which is distinct from the individualism and self-centeredness of secular society? Has our Conference

had its rural communities broken up, its neighborhoods shattered, and its churches weakened by people moving to cities and distant places in search of jobs, adventure, or advancement? If so, what efforts has the Conference made to preserve and build a strong brotherhood life?

In its early days the congregations of the Conference observed the custom of "Umfrage." This was a service of self and group-examination in connection with preparation for the communion service to ascertain whether all believers were in harmony of spirit with one another. Somewhere during the century the custom has been surrendered. What has been put in its place? How are members admonished or corrected in case of conflicts and controversies within the congregation? If individuals act contrary to the professed standards of the congregation and Conference, what steps does the congregation take to restore the offending individual?

Finally, how has the principle of non-resistance been preserved? What has been the record of our Conference during the five wars of the past century? Has a witness been given to the world that the way of Christ is the way to peace? Has it demonstrated that the way of love is the way to peace?

As one reviews the developments of the Eastern District Conference's first century one is driven to say that on all these points there has been loss of ground. The accommodation process has almost been completed. The Conference, as a religious group, has gradually adjusted itself to its environment. Adherence to the principles of simplicity, non-conformity, mutual aid, discipline, and nonresistance has been weakened to the point of a faint flicker. In the recent war, out of 401 men drafted for military service, 94 per cent accepted service in the regular armed forces while only 6 per cent adhered to the principle of Biblical nonresistance. As to evidences of simplicity, non-conformity, and mutual aid there is no indication that there is a testimony of greater or less vigor than is being given by any other evangelical Protestant group.

Where will the next century lead our Conference? Will the secularization and accommodation processes continue or will the consciences of our people become sensitive to the needs for a more distinctive Christian testimony?

Folk Art of the Pennsylvania Germans

BY CHARITY HOSTETLER

A review of FOLK ART OF RURAL PENNSYLVANIA, by Frances Lichten. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 276pp. $10.00.

AWARENESS of the artistic productions of the common man is of recent growth. The realization that European folk art has been preserved among various groups in America has been more recent. Among these groups is that of the Pennsylvania Germans, who formed stable closed communities upon their arrival from the Palatinate two hundred fifty years ago, providing soil favorable for the continuance of many old world traditions. After the extreme economic pressure of pioneer days had eased, the farmers and artisans, producing the pottery, furniture and hardware needed in the homes, began to add decorative notes using the traditional motifs brought from Europe. These simple substantial articles served the people until, upon the arrival of the machine-age, this "dumb furniture" was relegated to attics and barns.

The Pennsylvania German group had become so engrossed with practical affairs that they long remained inarticulate regarding their own history and cultural contributions. But, when they realized that they were being overlooked by historians, writers within the group began to make studies and to bring out valuable historical material, but they made no mention of the contribution of the group to the arts. Only in the last few years, due to the interest of the museums and the collectors, serious studies have been made of this art and magazine articles and books on the subject have followed each other in rapid succession. The most complete treatment is the book, *The Folk Art of Rural Pennsylvania,* by Francis Lichten.

The author spent her childhood in Allentown, studied in the Pennsylvania Museum School of Industrial Art, at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, and the Pennsylvania Graphic Sketch Club. As a professional artist she practices various forms of applied arts and exhibits water colors. The material for the book was gathered when the author was state supervisor of the *Index of American Design,* one of the most significant of the Federal Arts projects. In studying the mass of material collected, the author became aware that the work of the Pennsylvania German artisans not only demonstrated the endurance of sound workmanship, but also offered a source of fresh ideas for contemporary design.

The book discusses every phase of Pennsylvania German art. The text details the methods used in each craft, describes the craftsmen and their ways, and the environment in which they functioned. It tells the story of the *poi schissel,* from the selection of the clay in the field until the object is decorated, glazed and burned. In connection with this, the institution of "Baking Day," as practiced in the households, is described in detail. It presents an intimate picture of the social and economic life of the family in the description of the making of the linens, the wool coverlets, the quilts, and the assembling of the *Aussteuer* for the daughter of family. The chapter on stone relates the story of the founding of Germantown by the Mennonites, the coming of the artisans of the building trades, and of their use of stone, rather than the brick of Quaker Phila-

← Pennsylvania German *Frakturschrift.*

Illuminated title page from manuscript songbook (Abraham Oberholtzer, 1814).

Pennsylvania German dough tray.

All items courtesy, Frances Lichten, Folk Art of Rural Pennsylvania.

"Show" towel worked in brilliant wool on coarse linen by bride of Jacob Stouffer.

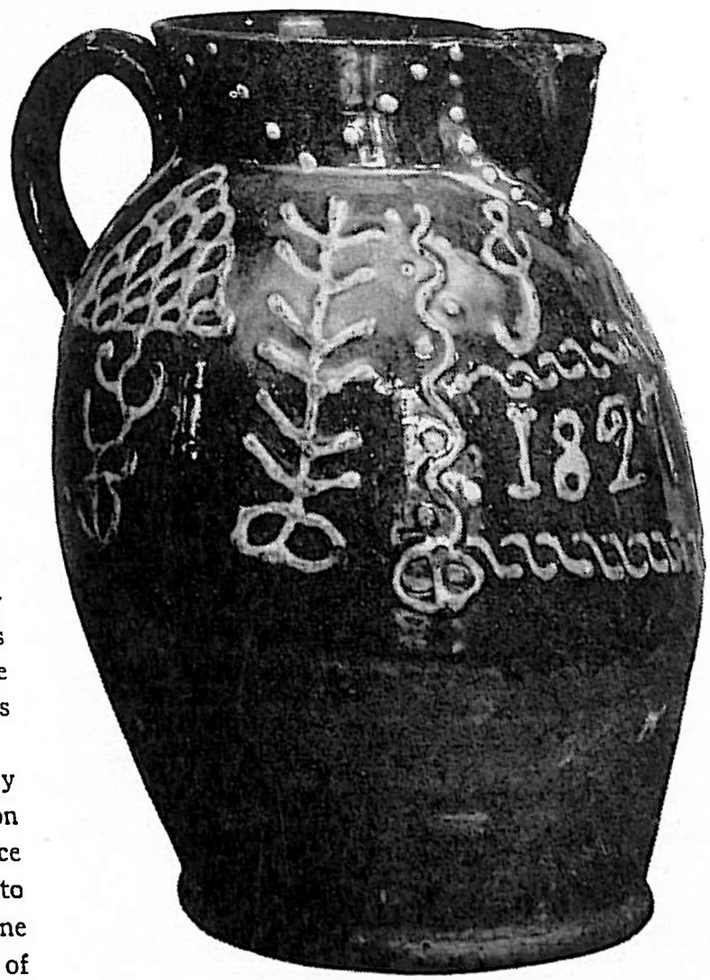
delphia only five miles away. These old stone houses remain a prominent feature of the Pennsylvania German communities.

It is significant that there are three chapters on the salvage arts. The one on rags into paper gives an account of the building of the first paper mill in the colonies at Germantown in 1690 by the Mennonite, William Rittenhouse. Here was manufactured handmade paper of such quality that many examples of it in baptismal certificates and other records have lasted to the present day. These records were hand lettered and decorated, usually by the minister or school teacher who served as scribe of the community in addition to his other duties. This *fractur* writing was studied under the direction of teachers and was one of the leading arts of the Pennsylvania Germans.

The author's familiarity with the present-day Pennsylvania German country is shown in her discussion of the love of color. Her theory is that the predominance of pure reds, greens and purples, is due to a desire to relieve the eye starved by the coldness of the gray stone and to afford a substitute for the lack of elegancies of surface and texture. So, in the garden, scarlet sage and kochia are planted against old brick, with vermillion cannas and purple petunias. In the kitchen, noodles and cold slaw are colored with saffron and hard-boiled eggs, magenta. The predominating color of the big bank barns is a pure, bright read.

The Pennsylvania craftsmen used the traditional motifs brought from Europe. Among the most frequently used are the peacock, dove, cock, tulip, rose, the rose tree, and stars. These may be found as designs on pottery, wool coverlets, quilts, *fractur* drawings, buttermolds, or dower chests. Each chapter includes many illustrations as well as drawings of detail, and there is a section of illustration in color.

The modern designer will find the book a treasure house of ideas. The general reader will be delighted with a fascinating account of the folkways and art of a group of early Americans who made a valuable contribution to the development of one of our great states. The reader with Pennsylvania background will value the book for its presentation of folkways rapidly disappearing even in rural areas, their preservation for future generations, and the appreciative evaluation of both the art and the life of the people. The book is an outstanding contribution to the growing list of studies of the Pennsylvania Germans and indispensible to the student interested in the study of their art.



Red earthenware pitcher.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

BY ED. G. KAUFMAN

IN THE space of a short article we must be brief and deal with this wealth of material in a summary fashion. The following items shall be considered: organization and activities, cultural background, district conferences, and present trends.

Organization and Activities

The Beginning.—The year 1947, marks one hundred years since a general restlessness, then current among Mennonites in America, began to crystallize. On October 28, 1847, under the leadership of a young school teacher with a warm evangelistic emphasis, Rev. John H. Oberholtzer, the "East Pennsylvania Conference of the Mennonite Church" was organized.

In 1852 Rev. Ephraim Hunsberger moved from Pennsylvania to Ohio, and became the leader of a more progressive group in this area. He and Rev. Daniel Hoch, from Ontario, were kindred spirits and in touch with each other. In 1855, representatives from the two areas met and organized the "Conference Council of the United Mennonite Community of Canada West and Ohio." In 1858 this conference met at Wadsworth, Ohio, and invited representatives from the Pennsylvania group to join them.

About the middle of the nineteenth century, several groups of Mennonites from Bavaria and the Palatinate emigrated to America, most of them settling in Illinois and Iowa. They were acquainted with mission work and publications, and soon made contact with the Oberholtzer group in Pennsylvania, the Hoch group in Canada, and the Hunsberger group in Ohio. Daniel Krehbiel was the leader of the Iowa group.

The various groups interested in union were invited to send representatives to the Iowa Conference which was to meet May 28, 1860 at West Point, Lee County, Iowa. At this meeting, with three congregations participating, Oberholtzer was elected chairman, and Christian Schowalter, a teacher in the Iowa community, secretary. A committee of five was elected to work out a "Plan of Union" and report the next day. This the committee did. The conference, after some discussion, adopted it, and "The General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America" was under way. The second meeting was held at Wadsworth, Ohio, May 20-23, 1861, with eight congregations represented.

In the years following, the movement spread and grew so that at present, according to a survey of the Mennonite bodies of North America made by Delbert L. Gratz and released by the Mennonite Central Committee in February, 1947, a total of 235 congregations with a membership of 50,827 belong to the General Conference.

A Common Confession. — According to Article 3 of the Constitution, "the Conference owes its origin and its growth to a deeply felt need of a closer union of the individual congregations, with the object of promoting the 'unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,' of establishing more firmly the common faith, and of rendering mutual assistance in good works."

Articles 10 and 11 read as follows:

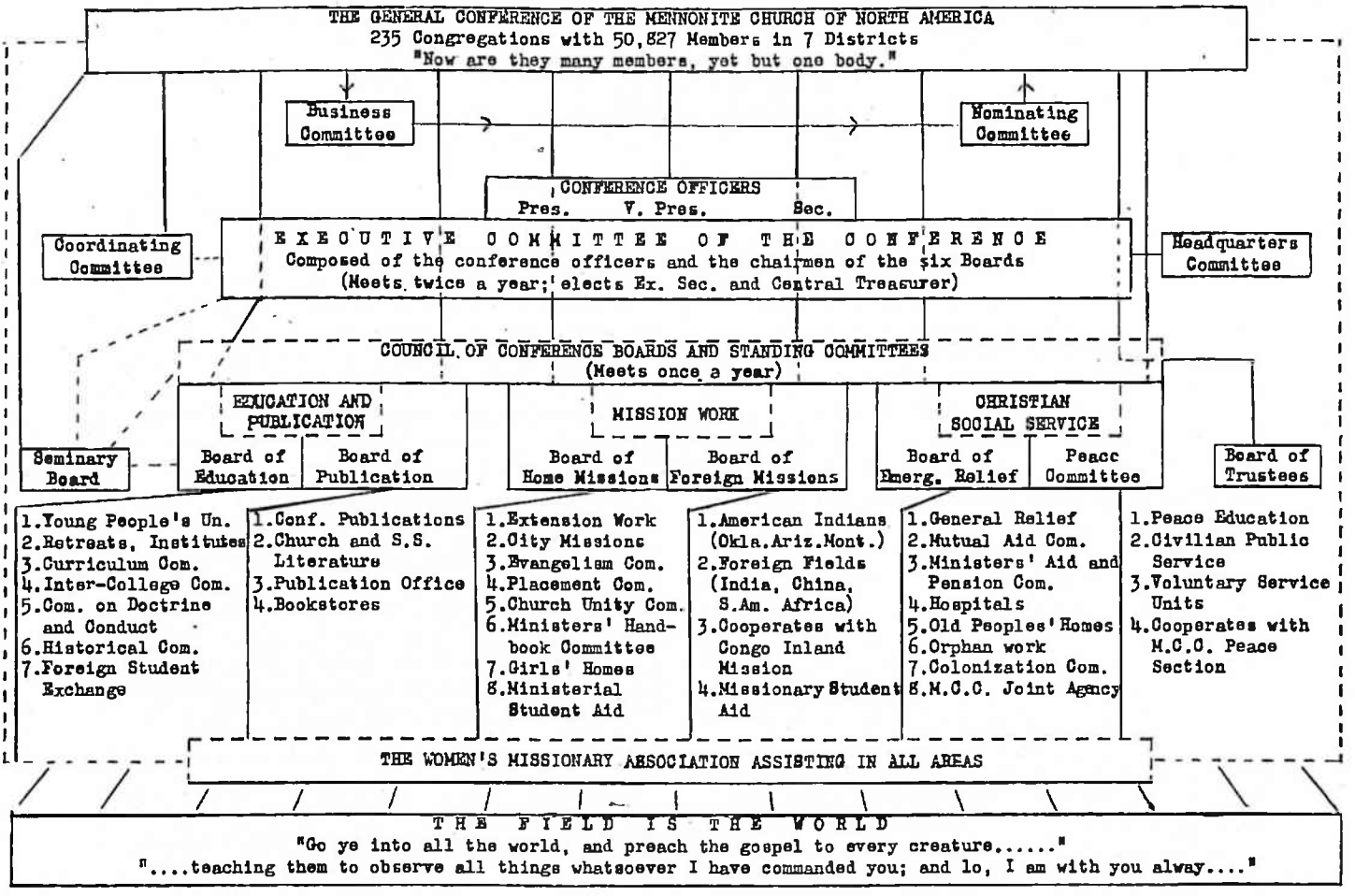
> The Conference recognizes and acknowledges the Sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the word of God and as the only and infallible rule of faith and life; for "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 3:11). In the matter of faith it is, therefore, required of the congregations which unite with the Conference that, accepting the above confession, they hold fast to the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, baptism on confession of faith, the avoidance of oaths, the Biblical doctrine of non-resistance, and the practice of a Scriptural church discipline. At no time shall any rules be made, or resolutions be adopted which in any way contradict the principles of faith as laid down in this constitution.

Article 12 deals with secret societies.

> The Conference is convinced that oath-bound societies are contrary to the apostolic admonition: . . . . II Cor. 6:14-15; . . . . Jas. 5:12; . . . . Gal. 5:21; . . . . Therefore, no congregation which does not seriously strive to be and remain free from these evils shall be admitted into or be entitled to representation at the Conference, provided that the Conference shall have the right to limit the representation of any church at the Conference if this becomes necessary for the purpose of discipline in cases where this or other parts of the Constitution are persistently violated.

Present Organization.—Each congregation has direct relation to the General Conference. At the triennial meeting of the Conference each congregation has one vote for every thirty members or fraction thereof. The accompanying chart is based on the Coordinating Committee's report and recommendations to the 1945 Conference session; it gives some idea of the Conference organization. In the interest of democracy, no person can succeed himself more than once in any office, committee, or board; with

ORGANIZATION CHART OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE



This chart is based on study and recommendations of the Coordinating Committee presented to the General Conference, 1945 session. Figures are based on Mennonite Central Committee study by Delbert L. Gratz in Mennonite Bodies of North America, February, 1947. (See also Organizational Chart in What is the General Conference by Don E. Smucker).

certain exceptions no person can hold a position on more than one standing board or Conference office at one time. The officers, with the chairmen of the six standing boards, form the executive committee which acts for the Conference between sessions. This committee meets twice a year. The Council of Boards and standing committees meet once a year for general discussion of common problems. In recent years the need for more integration between committees and boards, as well as between district conferences and the General Conference, has been felt.

There are seven districts in the General Conference. Congregations have a direct relationship to their respective district conference. However, the district conferences, as yet, have no direct organizational connection with the General Conference. Each congregation, as well as each district, is more or less autonomous. The General Conference assumes only an advisory relationship, not legislative one, to the congregations and the district conferences. From the very beginning the emphasis has been on "unity in essentials; liberty in non-essentials; and love in all things."

Areas of Activity.—The Great Commission of our Lord has from the beginning been considered the basic task of the Conference and the congregations belonging to it. The first American Mennonite Mission was established by the General Conference in 1880. The missionary was Rev. S. S. Haury, Summerfield, Illinois, and the field was among the American Indians in Oklahoma. In time, mission work was begun in India, China, South America, and Africa. Even before going to the foreign field, home mission work was done, mainly with the thought of gathering together scattered Mennonite families. The home-and foreign-mission work has grown to considerable proportions. Altogether, some 250 missionaries have been sent to foreign lands and some 170 persons have been employed as home-mission workers.

Publication and education were emphasized from the beginning. During the years some twenty-five different publications have come into being, only about one-half of which are still in existence. *The Mennonite* and *Der Bundesbote* are the official English and German Conference papers. Sunday school and young people's material, church hymnals, and a variety of Christian material is produced. A number of bookstores are operated by the Publication Board. At present the following schools

are serving the Conference constituency and report to it at its triennial session: The Mennonite Biblical Seminary and Mennonite Bible School, Chicago, Illinois: in affiliation with Bethany Biblical Seminary of the Church of the Brethren; Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas; Bluffton College, Bluffton, Ohio; Freeman Junior College, Freeman, South Dakota; Rosthern Junior College, Rosthern, Saskatchewan, Canada; and Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna, Manitoba. In recent years approximately one thousand General Conference young people are annually attending Conference related schools.

A third area of activity pertains to relief and peace. Besides carrying on its own program in these areas, the Conference has helped to organize the Mennonite Central Committee and ever since has been affiliated with it in work of general relief, Civilian Public Service, mutual aid, colonization, voluntary service units, various efforts of peace education, etc. Hospitals and homes for the aged are maintained in various areas by district conferences or local groups of congregations. Mennonites, having suffered much themselves, have always helped to relieve suffering. In recent years an immense amount of energy, money, and goods have been contributed for war sufferers in Europe. The Mennonite nonresistant faith finds positive expression in relief work.

Cultural Background

Nearly all Mennonites are either of Swiss German or Dutch German background. There is no other Mennonite conference that is composed of such a variety of groups with different cultural backgrounds. For example, the Old Mennonite Conference has a homogeneous Swiss German background. The General Conference on the other hand is heterogeneous and is composed of many shades of these two main cultural groups. We mention briefly a few facts concerning each.

Swiss German background

1. The descendants of those who came out of the Old Mennonite Church with Pennsylvania German background at present largely constitute the membership of 26 congregations, mostly in Pennsylvania.

2. The descendants of those who came to America via South Germany constitute most of the membership of 12 congregations. This group has exerted great influence in directing the organization and development of the Conference. Among others the congregations at Donnellson, Iowa; Summerfield, Illinois, Halstead, and Moundridge, Kansas; Reedley and Upland, California, belong to this group.

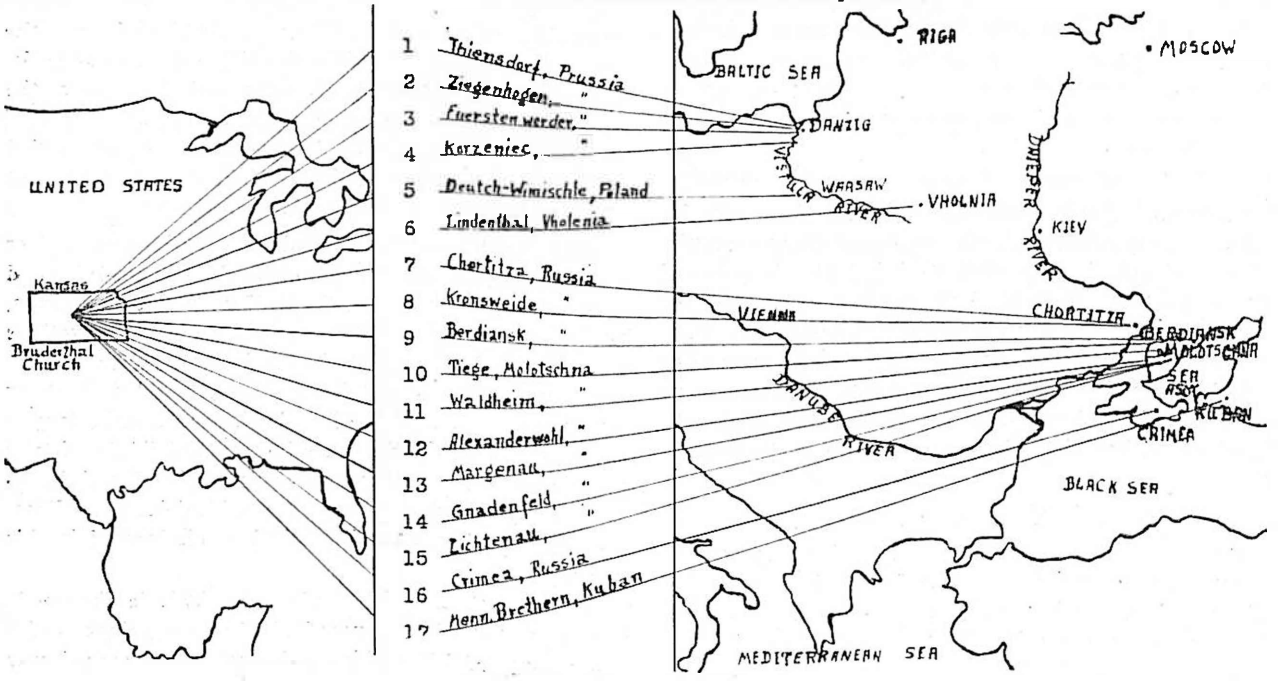
3. The descendants of those who came directly from Switzerland to America at present constitute the major part of the membership of 11 congregations. The congregations at Berne, Indiana; Bluffton, Ohio; and others belong to this group.

4. The descendants of the Swiss who came via South Germany, France, and Volhynia, Russia, arriving in 1874, now constitute the major part of the membership of 12 congregations. The Eden Church at Moundridge, Kansas, belongs here; also congregations at Freeman, South Dakota; Pretty Prairie, Kansas and others.

5. The descendants of the Swiss who came via South Germany and Galicia now largely constitute the membership of 5 congregations located at Arlington, Kansas; Butterfield, Minnesota, and elsewhere.

6. The descendants of Amish background now largely constitute the membership of 27 congregations—mostly

Chart illustrating variety of backgrounds of the members of the Bruderthal Church, Hillsboro, Kansas. Note that various congregations of Prussia, Poland, and Russia are represented.



in the Central District Conference, largely in Illinois and Indiana.

7. The descendants of Hutterite background now largely constitute the membership of 7 congregations, mostly in South Dakota.

Dutch German background

1. The descendants of the Dutch who came via Prussia now largely constitute the membership of 6 congregations. Among them there are churches at Beatrice, Nebraska; Newton and Whitewater, Kansas, and elsewhere.

2. The descendants of the Dutch who came via Prussia and South Russia arriving in America in 1874 constitute the major part of 70 congregations. This is the largest cultural group in the General Conference. The congregations are scattered all over the west. Many are located in Kansas, Minnesota, and Canada. Alexanderwohl, at Goessel, and Hoffnungsau at Inman, Kansas, are two of the original settlements from which have come a number of younger congregations.

3. The descendants of the Dutch who came via Prussia and Polish-Russia now largely constitute the membership of 4 congregations. Among them are Gnadenberg, at Elbing, and Johannesthal, at Hillsboro, Kansas, and others.

4. The descendants of the Dutch who came via Prussia and Volhynia, Russia, now largely constitute the membership of 7 congregations, some at Canton and Pawnee Rock, Kansas; Meno, Oklahoma, and elsewhere.

5. The descendants of the Dutch who came via Prussia and South Russia, arriving after World War I, now largely constitute the membership of 40 congregations, practically all in Canada.

Mixed background

There are 12 congregations that already have such a mixture of various Mennonite backgrounds as well as members of non-Mennonite background that it is impossible to classify them. The Bethel College congregation at North Newton, Kansas, is an example of this group. As time goes on many congregations are becoming more and more mixed.

In the past the various Mennonite groups lived in different countries, separated from each other for many decades at a time; thus each one developed its own peculiarities, not only in dress and food, but also in point of view and world outlook, in language and social customs, as well as in Biblical interpretation and religious practices. However, in essentials they are one; and because of their feeling of kinship and the desire to work with each other, they have been drawn together since coming to America and have been influenced by the social process involved.

District Conferences

These cultural groupings are scattered throughout the various district conferences. The figures in this section are taken from the *Yearbook of the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America, 1947*. Figures for Canada are for 1946.

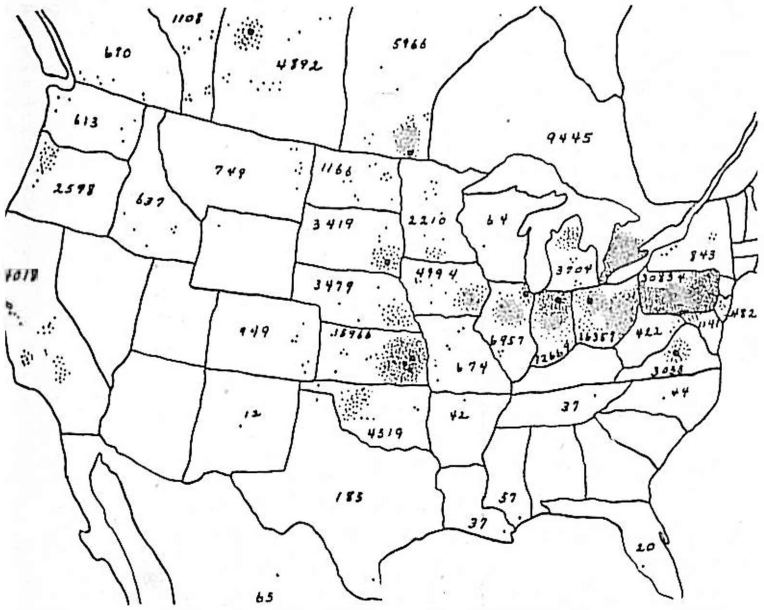
The Eastern District.—This district is composed of 26 congregations, all in Pennsylvania, with a membership of 4,225. Seventeen of the congregations are located in the area fifty miles from Philadelphia extending north to Allentown, including 80 per cent of the membership in the district. The ancestors of these people have been in America for more than a century before forming a separate conference in 1847. Here there is homogeneity of stock. There is only one small congregation in this district that is not Pennsylvania German, and it is located at Denver, Pennsylvania—it is composed of more recent immigrants of Dutch German background. The process of accommodation to American life and culture has gone farthest in this Conference.

The Middle District.—This district has 19 congregations, with a membership of 5,392 located in five states: Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri. There are five different cultural groups: Pennsylvania German, Swiss, South German, Amish, and mixed. Besides these cultural differences, there is also considerable geographical distance between the congregations. Bluffton College is located in this district. The largest cultural group in this conference is the Swiss.

The Western District Conference.—This Conference is composed of 62 congregations, with a membership of 12,754. Forty of these congregations are located in Kansas, 17 in Oklahoma, a few others scattered in Nebraska, Colorado, and Texas. Over half of the congregations, with 75 per cent of the membership of this district, are located in a radius of fifty miles from Newton, Kansas. This is probably the largest and most compact Mennonite community in the General Conference. This district has a complex cultural background. It is composed of nine different groups—Dutch Prussian, Dutch Russian, Dutch Volhynian, Dutch Polish, Swiss, South German, Swiss Volhynian, Swiss Galician, and a few mixed congregations. About 60 per cent of the membership belong to the Dutch Russian group. While the different cultural backgrounds make for great diversity and democracy, the close geographical proximity of the congregations makes for unity. The General Conference Headquarters, Bethel College, and Bethel Hospital and Deaconess Home, at Newton, Kansas, are located in this district.

The Northern District.—This district is composed of 31 congregations and has a membership of 5,634, located in five states: Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, and Nebraska. Culturally, these congregations belong to six groups: Dutch Russian, Dutch Volhynian, Swiss Volhynian, Swiss Galician, Hutterite, and a few mixed congregations. The Dutch Russian are the largest in number. This district is similar to the Middle District in that the congregations are of varied cultural backgrounds and scattered as to geographical location. Freeman College, Freeman, South Dakota, is located in this district.

The Pacific District Conference.—This is the smallest of all districts, composed of 17 congregations, and a membership of 3,197. This Conference is also spread over



Distribution of all Mennonites of North America—1946.
(According to Yearbook of General Conference, 1946, Mennonite Yearbook and Almanac, and Census of Religious Bodies, 1936).
. - 100 members or less.
● - institutions of higher education.

the greatest area—Washington, Idaho, Oregon, and California—the distance of 1,200 miles from north to south. There are six cultural groups in this Conference: Dutch Russian, South German, Swiss Volhynian, Swiss, Dutch Russian who came since World War I, and mixed congregations. Geographical distance and cultural variety makes for great diversity in the congregations of this district.

The Canadian District.—This is the largest of all districts; it has a total of 56 congregations, with a membership of 13,844. In the main there are only two groups: the Dutch Russian who came to America in 1874 and thereafter, and the Dutch Russian who came since World War I. There are 6 congregations with a membership of 1,641 in Ontario; 13 congregations with a membership of 5,891 in Manitoba; 20 congregations with a membership of 4,785 in Saskatchewan; 8 congregations with a membership of 877 in Alberta; and 9 congregations with a membership of 1,641 in Ontario; 13 congregations with a membership of 650 in British Columbia. The Canadian District, although scattered, is one of great future promise. Rosthern Junior College and the Mennonite Collegiate Institute, at Gretna, are located in this district.

The Central District.—This district has 22 congregations, with a membership of 3,139. The cultural background is mainly Amish and Old Mennonite. This district has existed as a separate conference for many years and has rendered a great service in missions, hospital work, higher education, and other areas of activity. In 1945 it joined the General Conference as a district. The Mennonite Hospital, at Bloomington, Illinois, is located in this district.

Foreign Mission Field.—In considering the various districts, perhaps one should also mention those who have come into the church on the mission field through the work of the General Conference. Although they are not organized as separate districts of the General Conference, nevertheless there is a real relationship and rather direct connection between these Christians and the General Conference. The figures in the 1945 Conference report are as follows: American Indians, 712; India, 3,021; China, 2,300.

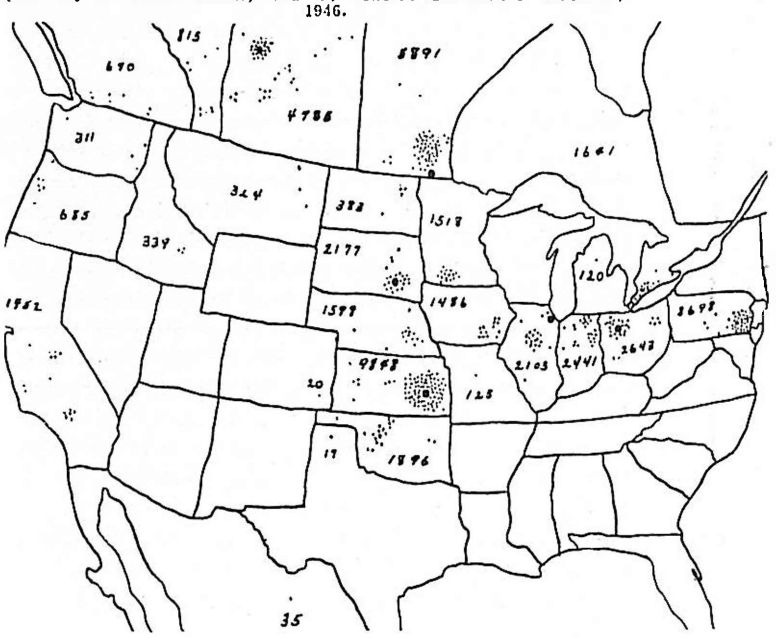
Present Trends

S. F. Pannabecker, of the Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Chicago, Illinois, in his very significant recent doctor's dissertation, dealing with *The Development of the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America in the American Environment* points out some of the following trends (The figures in this section are taken from this study unless otherwise indicated):

Trend toward town and city.—In 1900, there were 22 congregations located in town or city, with a membership of 3,151; and 42 congregations were located in the country, with a membership of 6,950; while in 1942 there were 80 congregations located in town or city, with a membership of 16,138, and only 68 congregations were located in rural areas, with a membership of 13,022. In other words, the total rate of movement to town or city, for each one thousand members is 3.94 persons per year.

Occupation.—Originally, farming was the main occupation of the General Conference Mennonites. From the trend to town and city one would expect that the occupation of General Conference Mennonites has also undergone great changes. Pannabecker finds that in the Eastern District only 16 per cent of the members are still farmers; in the Middle District, 39 per cent; in the Pacific District, 47 per cent; in the Western District, 65 per cent; and in the Northern District, 74 per cent; making an average of 48 per cent for the General Conference.

Distribution of congregations of the General Conference—1946.
(For key see chart above.) Source; General Conference Yearbook, 1946.



Of other professions, teaching ranks the highest. Altogether, he reports 540 teachers in private and public schools. There were 250 persons engaged in other professions, not including business. A good number of General Conference persons are engaged in government work and some have been elected to public office; for example, there are 12 mayors, 44 members of town councils, 239 members of school boards, and 84 others, among whom are a number of former congressmen and other high-ranking state-and federal government officials. In this respect, the General Conference would differ from some of the other Mennonite branches. In some circles of the General Conference, public office and government positions are considered not only a privilege, but a duty to be accepted and thereby make a contribution to American life and democracy.

Increasing non-Menonnite stock.—In the Eastern District, 14.1 per cent of the membership has a background of non-Mennonite stock; in the Western District, 3.3 per cent; in the Middle District, 11.5 per cent; in the Pacific District, 6.3 per cent; and in the Northern District, only 1.9 per cent. Pannabecker reports 376 persons as having married out of a General Conference church and transferring *away;* and 405 marrying out but the non-Mennonite party transferring *into* the General Conference. He reports 161 members as having left the General Conference for a more liberal denomination, while 188 members have come into the General Conference because of its more liberal position than the conservative group to which the person formerly belonged. In both—transfers because of marriage or because of point of view—the General Conference is gaining more than it is losing.

Language modification. — The General Conference transition from the German to the English language has been a slow and sometimes painful process. New immigrant groups coming into the Conference usually helped to hold on to the German a little longer. World War I was the period of transition for those who came to America in 1874 and after. However, even today many congregations are still bilingual, especially those in Canada. With the passing of the German language also went the parochial school, which was a great loss. The German language helped to give a sense of distinction and separation from the world. With its disappearance also came a lighter type of church music, known as the American gospel songs. As the transition is completed, slowly the better type of music is again winning its way back into the churches. With the adoption of the English language for church services, closer kinship is felt to other Protestant groups and there is manifest a greater willingness to cooperate with them. The transition in language encouraged the process of re-thinking Christian convictions and to sift essentials from non-essentials in the Mennonite heritage. Although the process also has its dangers, on the whole and in the long run it ought to make not only for progress but also for clarity of conviction and unity of spirit.

Non-conformity.—The General Conference has never adopted strict regulations regarding dress, although avoidance of extremes has been emphasized. This emphasis has been more pronounced among those of Swiss, Amish and Hutterite background, while those of Dutch and South German background had given up strict regulations regarding matters of dress even before arriving in America. It is generally assumed that there must be separation from the world, even though forms of expressing this may change. Many hold that worthwhile contributions can be made to other groups as well as something worthwhile learned from them.

The emphasis on missions and education, as well as participation in democratic processes, government, business, and the cultural life of the community in general, all help to make the contrast between the church and the world less evident. As a test of separation from the world, Pannabecker got reactions on a list of fifteen items such as wearing earrings, buying war bonds, attending picture shows, the use of tobacco, mission sales in the church, membership in labor unions, etc. Out of 107 replies from ministers, he found that the two items still most condemned are dancing and secret societies. On the other hand, the two items most encouraged are voting at elections as a public duty and carrying life insurance as a duty towards one's own family.

From the beginning the General Conference looked with favor on Sunday schools, special young people's programs, musical instruments, open communion, cooperation with other Protestants, a trained and salaried ministry, democratic procedure, the abolition of separate seating for men and women in the church, and, in general, did not favor too much form or regulation.

Christian nurture and higher education.—Catechetical instruction has long been quite general. Reports indicate that 80 per cent of the congregations have protracted meetings for the purpose of deepening the spiritual life, but only 25 per cent of the congregations have altar calls. Personal work is emphasized, evangelism is stressed, although extreme forms of revivalism are not generally practiced. The necessity of individual personal conversion and acceptance of Christ as Savior and Lord is taken for granted. More stress is laid upon Christian nurture than upon revival methods. The emphasis on Christian nurture found expression in maintaining parochial schools and academies, as well as in the founding of junior-and senior colleges and the theological seminary. From the more advanced schools come most of the church workers, missionaries, and ministers.

Non-resistance.—The Mennonite Central Committee survey made by J. W. Fretz indicates that up to December 1, 1944, of the 2,525 boys drafted in World War II, about 55 per cent accepted regular army service; 18 per cent, non-combatant; and 27 per cent went into Civilian Public Service. If the non-combatant position is also considered as registering one's objection to war which, no doubt, it was meant to be by those taking that position, it would mean that 45 per cent of the young men were true to the faith of their fathers in this respect. There

were 74 per cent of all the congregations in the Conference which financially supported Civilian Public Service.

Centralization.—In the light of increasing industrilization, greater wealth, modern transportation and communication, and increasing totalitarianism through state and national control, it becomes more difficult to maintain Mennonite non-conformity. More centralization of the Conference is needed if it is to hold its own and make its contribution to the larger Christian community of our age. The following steps have been taken in recent years in this general direction: (1) The securing of official Conference Headquarters at 722 Main Street, Newton, Kansas, where Conference activities are gradually more unified and integrated. The appointment of a General Conference Executive Secretary and Treasurer with offices at the Conference headquarters. (2) The adoption by the Conference of suggested standards for ministerial training and preparation for ordination to the Christian ministry. (3) The re-opening of the theological seminary two years ago under Conference auspices and in affiliation with the seminary of the Church of the Brethren. The generous financial support that the churches have given this cause promises well for better-trained and more unified leadership of the future. (4) The consideration given to suggested standards and procedures for the recognition of institutions such as hospitals, orphanages, schools, etc., as officially affiliated with the Conference, including similar standards and procedures for recognized inter-Mennonite activities and organizations. (5) The creation of a Coordinating Committee to study and make recommendations to the Conference looking toward better integration of Conference boards and committees, as well as General and District Conferences. (6) The conscious efforts to move closer to other Mennonite branches and cooperate with them in every way possible, especially as seen in the work of the Mennonite Central Committee along the lines of Civilian Public Service, relief, mutual aid, peace, educational work, and other cooperative efforts.

Conclusion

In the General Conference there has been a definite shift in the direction of American Protestant thought and ways, while at the same time making an attempt to hold on to essential Mennonitism. As Pannabecker correctly says: . . . . "Farming is still the occupation of as many members in the General Conference as there are in all other occupations combined; there is a characteristic tendency to avoid extremes in dress; forms of worship tend to be restrained; accent is given the more stable hymns; Biblical standards are recognized as supreme; the social approach to the Gospel is making headways slowly, although practical Christianity is emphasized; practical rather than theological questions find a response; interdenominational relations are approached with hesitancy; and the interest in Mennonite history and heritage is on the increase."

The Conference serving only in an advisory and not in a legislative capacity has its advantages, such as: helping to develop strong leadership, permitting changes without friction and still fostering enough unity to make for a feeling of oneness and to give a sense of direction. However, this principle also has weaknesses, such as: making it easier to get away from Biblical non-resistance, not furthering non-conformity to the world, leaving every congregation free to use literature of its own choice which tends toward dis-unity and disintegration. As this process goes on, some congregations slowly come to feel closer to other groups than they do to their own Conference.

It is probably safe to say that the genius of the General Conference lies in the conscious and purposive direction of a process in which Mennonites endeavor to retain the real values of their heritage, while at the same time relating it to contemporary developments of forward-moving Christian and world history. This process is greatly helped by the fact of the varied cultural groups within the Conference and the necessity of adjustment to each other. Not only is it necessary to adjust the best elements in Mennonitism to the American environment without sacrificing anything essential, but at the same time also to accept what is worthwhile from the outside. All this calls for re-interpretation of Mennonite fundamentals in the spirit of Christ and the Bible, and in the light of the best of the times in which we live in order to conserve and transmit the essential values of the Mennonite way of life. This is a slow and difficult process. The attempt has not been uniformly successful. However, the General Conference has demonstrated the possibility of cooperation of groups with widely different backgrounds and characteristics while upholding Mennonite ideals, at least in principle, and adopting much of the best in the American environment. The task is not complete, difficulties remain to be overcome, but a consideration of the past one hundred years gives hope and courage for the future.

What of the next one hundred years? There are only a few possibilities open for a part of a larger body to pursue: (1) It may continue to go on as a streamlet alongside of other similar groups for an indefinite period of time. (2) It may lose itself in the sands of time and finally cease to exist altogether. (3) It may merge with other likeminded groups and so find itself in a larger whole of which it becomes an integral and contributing part.

Furthermore, the General Conference should never be satisfied to become a mere service club without spiritual motivation, where youngsters give time and energy and oldsters give money. The Conference was born out of a missionary passion. Spiritual roots must be maintained to have even the fruits of good works continue. The Mennonite non-resistant position must be permeated with missionary zeal as a spiritual crusade. There is need for a revision of the purpose and method of the historic non-resistant position to save it from being merely passive and to give it a more active expression. In addition to

(Continued on page 47)

My Children Have the Mumps

BY JOANNA S. ANDRES

My children have the mumps!
One's bedded here, one there;
Their "song" I share:

Mother, how long will this yet pain?
Can you not read to us again?

Mother, a bit of sugar lumps
Would very surely cure our mumps.

Mother, what day is this, tell quick!
Look! I jumped the candle stick!

Mother, is there a knock at the door?
Who could be coming at half-past four?

Mother, a little joke was the knock —
I only pounded a block on a block.

Mother, can't you make us some tea
With orange slice and sugar to see?

Mother, look what I have made —
Between my pillows a gallant parade!

Mother, what time is it just now?
Oh! I have learned to make a bow!

Just six o'clock! How can it be?
Mother, come see my grand tepee!

Beware! I'm an Indian brave and strong,
I can wield my tomahawk right through a throng!

Mother, and will it snow today?
What shall we do if we cannot play?

Mother, I'm hungry, is supper soon?
How many hours is it since noon?

Mother, how many are four times eight?
Why is father, today, so late?

Tell me, how do you make a J?
Mother, will you get me some hay?

My sheep are so hungry, my cows moo-oo for oats —
O mother, look! I am sailing my boats

Down the wide rivers 'tween counterpane land!
Mother, this dolly refuses to stand;

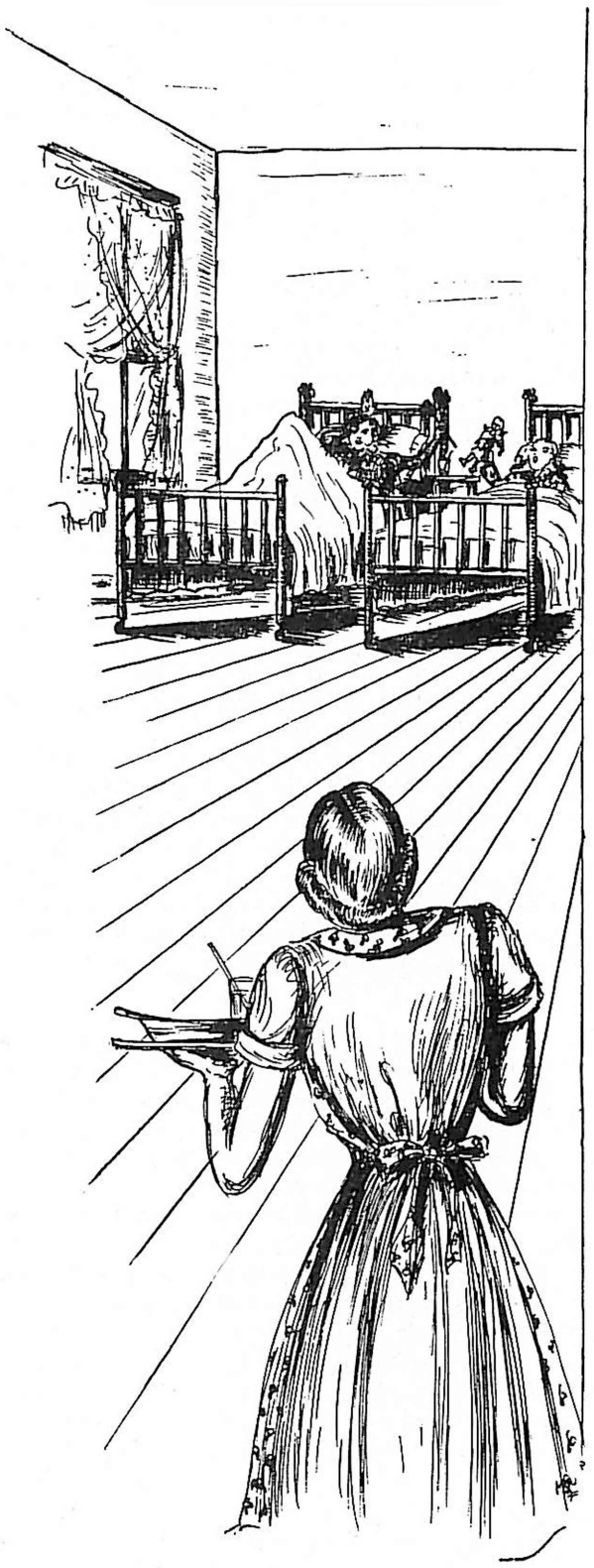
Come shake her and see if she will not behave —
She shall be but the queen's ragged slave!

Mother, my head is beginning to ache —
Will you give my pillows a good shaky-shake?

And make me a pile as high as can be,
I want to dive down — now watch me and see!

Oh dear! My stomach feels funny inside!
Mother, please come and sit by my side . . .

I sit once here, once there;
I give them bits of sugar lumps —
My children have the mumps!



Drawing by Mary Lou Rich.

OUR "CHRISTIAN" FUNERALS

BY R. C. KAUFFMAN

TO THE question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" the Christian answers with a confident, "Yes." Equally confident is he that this life hereafter is not dependent upon that present physical habitat of the soul, the body. This is the doctrine of immortality, perhaps more commonly held than any other single Christian doctrine; yet, also, one of the most inconsistently applied. It would be less discomforting if an article such as this could be entitled, "Our Pagan Funerals." Such a designation would, however, appear unfair, since it is questionable whether there is any pagan society that has, as a general policy, made as much of a travesty of funerals as have we. Some belief in immortality is almost universal. In Hinduism, Tagore has given this hope the following expression:

"Death is not extinguishing the light;
It is putting out the lamp because dawn has come."

Consistent with his belief, the average Hindu spends less than $5 on a funeral. Let us look at our Christian practice.

The Present Situation

Each year, in the United States, about 1,400,000 people die. The cost of disposing of these, our dead, runs into a figure that gives funerals a decidedly "big business" status. In the *Survey of Current Business* for June, 1944, the Department of Commerce estimated that in 1942 the American people paid $337,300,000 for funeral- and burial service, $163,000,000 to cemetaries and crematories, and $60,600,000 for monuments and tombstones—a total of $560,900,000. This was an average expenditure of $405 for each death.

These figures become more significant when compared with certain other items estimated by the Department of Commerce for the same year. Bequests to churches and other religious institutions totaled $720,800,000; tuition paid to schools, colleges and universities, $578,-300,000; payments by patients to hospitals and sanitaria, $53,100.000. The amount spent on our dead, in other words, is over three-fourths of that given to religious institutions; very nearly equals that spent on education; and exceeds that spent with hospitals and sanitaria in making sick people well. In a society that has traditionally affirmed its belief in the temporal nature of the body as over against the immortality of the soul, these figures are hard to understand. To an outsider they must surely represent one of the great enigmas regarding "Christian" society.

In allocating the blame for this situation, funeral directors have often been singled out. There are those who, callous and coarsegrained, first compete for the possession of the body by "ambulance chasing" and prearrangement with hospitals and who then find out, if they can, how much insurance the deceased person carried in order to fix their fees accordingly. There are those who accept commissions from florists and cemeteries; and others who, through finely devised techniques, take easy advantage of their clients in the time of their bereavement by grossly overselling them. But not all, nor any, of this may be true of the majority of funeral directors. Especially in smaller cities and towns, undertaking is characteristically a family business which descends from father to son, and the undertaker here is a well-respected citizen, as mindful of his reputation as the doctor or minister.

Irrespective, however, of the character of the individual undertaker, the nature of the business is such as to impose heavy costs that must be borne by someone. A city undertaker must maintain an establishment large enough to conduct two funerals simultaneously, and sometimes three or four in the course of an afternoon.

Still more pertinent is the fact that the undertaking business is overcrowded. For the 1,400,000 deaths in the United States annually, there are 25,000 undertakers. If funerals were divided evenly, each would conduct fifty-six funerals a year—a little over one a week. But they are not. According to the publicity department of the National Funeral Director's Association (in *The American Funeral Director,* December, 1936), "Funerals in cities large and small fall with an amazing approach to uniformity into the following brackets: 15 per cent of the funeral directors handle 60 per cent of the total; the next 25 per cent handle 25 per cent; the last 60 per cent handle 15 per cent." If 15 per cent of the undertakers now handle 60 per cent of the business, it seems reasonable to suppose that half of the total could easily handle all of it. At any rate, under present circumstances, the majority of undertakers conduct less than fifty funerals a year, which means that each funeral must carry the entire overhead and operating costs for at least one week.

The greatest and final responsiblity, however, falls to the general public—not only for tolerating the system as such, but also for promoting it directly through their expressed wishes. Pride and affection play their part: "This is the last we can do for our loved one; the best is none too good." Regret and remorse are also involved. All normal people have recollections of neglect and pain that cluster about their dead: "I should have awakened him to give him that medicine." "She could have had that new hat." "Why did I slam the door in his face?" "Such a silly thing, to fight over a piece of butter!" "Many a bronze casket," says one writer, "is the rueful

NOTICE:

Read Page 47 First

(Pages 46 and 47 have been exchanged).

Our "Christian" Funerals

(Continued from page 46)

2. The Mennonites are singularly adapted to this reform by their tradition of the simple life. Not only are they singularly adapted, but they should also feel themselves particularly called to make this move in consistency with this principle.

3. We need the savings effected through such a reform for our expanding program of Christian service. In other words, such savings could very properly come with us in the name, not of penurious thrift, but "in the name of Christ." In the face of an ever-widening and challenging program of Christian service, it is well to urge people to increase their giving—but there is a limit to this, as anyone will attest who has been repeatedly approached for various causes—all of them worthy. We should think also in terms of saving toward this end. The savings possible here are considerable. There are an estimated 200,000 Mennonites in the United States. Assuming our death-rate to be that of the general population (11 per thousand), there are 2,200 Mennonite funerals annually. At the national average of $405 each, this amounts to a total expenditure of $891,000 each year. If, however, the average cost of a funeral could be reduced to, say, $50, this total would become $110,000—thus yielding an annual saving of $781,000. In a day when we have become accustomed to seeing figures "writ large," $781,000 may not be impressive. However, for a group of our size it is, or at least should be. It is more than the annual cost of all our Mennonite missions put together, more than the annual cost of operating all our Mennonite colleges, more than the annual cost of our entire relief program. It is enough to support thirty such excellent witnesses to our Christian faith as that found in the Puerto Rico relief project. We spend it on our dead. Yet we confidently assert that the body is "a mere shell," only the soul is immortal!

Is it unreasonable to suppose that funerals could be conducted at an average cost of $50? It is not within the scope of this article to offer an alternative to our present-day funeral system. Such an alternative would involve medical and legal as well as practical considerations and should come only after a careful study made by a qualified and duly appointed group. Offhand, however, it does seem to the writer that it is not unreasonable to suppose that $50 per funeral should be adequate—not only as an average, but as the approved maximum. Certain of our fellow Mennonites in Canada are doing it for less now. At Rosemary, Alberta, there is a small organization known as the *Sterbekasse,* which acts as a funeral-insurance company, serving about five of our Mennonite church communities. Each member pays about 50 cents into the common fund whenever someone in the membership dies. From this fund the family of the deceased receives $40 in the case of an adult, $20 in the case of a child. This is calculated as adequate to cover the entire expenses. In fact, over a long period of time, an average of $25 per funeral was regarded as about correct. The largest item of any funeral is the casket; and this is made locally by a carpenter from the church community at a cost $10-$15. (We pay $100 for a cloth-covered casket; $250 for an oak casket, and $500 for a walnut or mahogany casket. Still others, obsessed with the idea that no moisture must touch the body, may pay up to $2,000, sometimes even more, for a seamless metal casket, guaranteed to be "moisture-proof.") Opening of the grave and making of the markers are also done by members of the church community. In other words, funerals remain a function of the church. We have permitted them to become commercialized, and in our reform, need to bring them back to the church. Funerals, like weddings, belong to the church.

When a native Christian of India dies he is usually, because of tropical conditions, buried that same day. He is buried in a grave similar to ours. While in some cases there is a simple box-like casket, more often his body is wrapped in a clean white sheet and therewith lowered into the grave. In each end of the grave there is a small pillar of stone or brick across which are placed several boards, separating the covering sod from the body. The total cost? Perhaps two or three dollars at most. We do not wish to identify ourselves in our standard of living with these, our brethren, during life; we may not be willing to do so even in the great democracy of death. But how near to doing so dare we come?

EDITOR'S NOTE: What's our next move? Expressions of opinion or concrete proposals on the matter dealt with in the above article may be sent to **Mennonite Life**, and will be forwarded by us to the author of this article, or may be sent direct to him.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

(Continued from page 43)

raising and distributing relief funds, it is necessary henceforth also to devote primary attention to influencing public opinion. Works of mercy, however intelligently performed, will not constitute a sufficient Christian witness in a world hurtling toward destruction. Neither will a personal intent to oppose war or to refuse to bear arms, by itself, mean much after atomic warfare is allowed to start. The Christian responsibility, therefore, when all humanity is threatened with extinction, must be something more than that of an ambulance squad and something more than an illusory attempt at withdrawal. It must be aimed to stop war before it starts, or else it will be largely irrelevant to the crisis. The General Conference should continue in this shift of emphasis which is also taking place among Friends, Brethren, and other historic non-resistant groups. As these kindred groups work together, they will be able to make a greater contribution toward the hallowing of our Heavenly Father's name, the coming of His Kingdom, and the doing of His Will "on earth as it is in Heaven."

atonement of a cold wife, or perhaps a substitute for the letters that were never written to mother. The funeral bill is a vicarious cross." Only in our saner moments do we realize how much better this money could have been used on the living. There is a story of a mountaineer attending the funeral of the wife of his neighbor, Josh, and philosophically remarking: "If only poor Mandy could of seen old Josh carryin' on just as though his heart was breakin', and if only afore she died she could have had some of all them roses that Josh and others brung her, I wouldn't be one mite surprised if she were still alive."

Our Responsibility

Now what is the point of all this? Obviously one does not write on a grim subject such as funerals for the sheer entertainment value of it. Nor are we interested primarily in quoting figures. The figures that have been quoted plus many more can be found in other publications that have appeared from time to time. They all point to one and the same fact—namely, that funerals have become with us an un-Christian extravagance on a national scale. The purpose of this article is, rather, to urge a point of attack which other writers, addressing themselves to the general public, are unable to urge. This is that we, as a Mennonite body, give this matter our religious consideration and initiate the necessary reform—on a denominational scale.

There are several reasons why we, as Mennonites, should feel impelled to take the initiative in this matter:

1. Somebody has to do it and it won't be done by either the general public or the individual. The general public is slavishly committed to custom; a custom, in this case reinforced not only by tradition, but by vested interests, emulation, and all such other factors as have already been mentioned. Only legislation could possibly bring about a reform, and legislation in such private matters is extremely unlikely. As for the individual, what is there that he can do of and by himself alone? Indications are that there are many who are acutely aware of the problem and anxious to see a reform, but the individual is quite helpless in this matter. So long as he is a member of a group that adheres to this custom, his deviation from it will be regarded as a reflection of his esteem and affection for the deceased. Few would dare to subject themselves to this, the severest of social censorships, for it involves not only the person himself, but his departed loved one as well. So impelling is this social censorship, that even where the deceased has left explicit instructions for a sane and simple funeral, they are often not adhered to. The only solution that holds forth any promise is, therefore, one in which some articulate group —preferably a group that is both motivated and intimately united by a common faith—goes on record as adopting an alternative procedure. Then, and then only, can the individual follow the dictates of conscience and common sense in this matter without fearing the aspersions of others.—(Continued on page 47.)

Economic Life . . . .

(Continued from page 21)

The earliest manufacturing concerns in Berne included those producing bricks, cement blocks, harrows, barrel hoops, and school tablets. Most of these were either shortlived or unsuccessful. Before World War I the manufacture of overalls was the most successful attempt to serve more than a local market. This was first tried unsuccessfully in 1897, but failed due to financial difficulties. In 1900 a second attempt to manufacture overalls was made. Although it changed hands before the first year was out, the firm continues to the present. Late in 1902 it was reorganized as the Berne Manufacturing Company with a capital stock of $15,000. Today it is known as "The Winner House," and with capital stock exceeding $300,000 is managed by C. T. Habegger. Giving employment to 130 women and 18 men, the firm now manufactures primarily Safety Legion Togs for boys and in conjunction with them performs a social service by stressing safety rules for children. In addition to this, there is another clothing factory, the Berne Overall and Shirt Company, which has been operating since 1915.

Following the first World War the manufacture of furniture was started in Berne. The oldest and largest furniture factory is the Dunbar Furniture Manufacturing Company, managed by G. W. Sprunger. At the present time this firm has approximately 185 employees, most of whom are highly skilled craftsmen. The concern makes a modern type of furniture for bedrooms and dining rooms besides some upholstered living-room furniture. Dunbars display their products at the Merchandise Mart in Chicago as well as at some of the largest department stores in the country. Also in the furniture field are two other smaller companies which manufacture upholstered living-room furniture. The furniture industry, which has become dominant in the industrial life of the community, has afforded many people of Berne both employment and an opportunity to become skilled in crafts.

At present there are nearly one hundred firms or individuals producing goods or performing services; ten of these employ twenty-five or more persons.

While agriculture is still very important to the community, it is of interest to note that it no longer ranks first in providing a direct livelihood for the largest number. The total population of Berne today exceeds 2,000.

Berne has had a slow, but continuous economic growth. Only during the oil boom at the turn of the century did an abnormal growth appear probable, but this was prevented by the depletion of the oil reserves. A community such as Berne seems to provide a wholesome economic life. Employer-employee relationships are on a friendly, personal basis providing for healthy labor conditions. Only one firm has a written contract with its employees. The community has provided for some the opportunity to organize their own businesses, while for all it provides an opportunity for work in pleasant industrial and social surroundings.

From Contributing Readers . . . . .

Difficult to Keep Up

Editors, **Mennonite Life:**

I just received the issue of **Mennonite Life** and am highly pleased with it. I am glad to note the international emphasis which you have put on it. The illustrations are fine, too. It will be difficult to keep up this standard; but if you do, **Mennonite Life** will certainly secure a wide circulation . . . . .

Very sincerely yours,
S. F. Pannabecker
Chicago, Illinois

Enjoyed, by Young and Old

Editors, **Mennonite Life:**

I received the last copy of **Mennonite Life** this morning and have read it almost from cover to cover. I wish to commend you on this issue. It is excellent . . . . . Our oldest boy, Paul, 12 years old, and in the seventh grade, finds **Mennonite Life** a favorite periodical in our home . . . . . How helpful it would be if more of our people could read our periodicals and . . . . show . . . . love and appreciation for such a rich heritage . . . . . Continue in this fine work!

Most sincerely,
H. N. Harder
Aberdeen, Idaho

Editors, **Mennonite Life:**

. . . . As a teacher of history and German in our Junior High School, I took the **Mennonite Life** issues to my classroom to show the pictures and read some parts to the students. They appreciated this very much . . . . . I want to congratulate the editors on their success in publishing a modern magazine which is so attractive to young and old and so instructive at the same time. I think **Mennonite Life** has a great opportunity in getting our young Mennonite people interested in their own history and culture. I hope to get many more people in Steinbach interested in this fine magazine.

Very sincerely yours,
Peter J. B. Reimer
Steinbach, Manitoba

Editors, **Mennonite Life:**

I have just completed reading your last issue of **Mennonite Life** and want to tell you in a few words, how much I enjoyed doing so. Your own article was most inspiring, and the articles on the "Romance of Low German," the Mennonites in Mexico, and others gave me a thrill. Indeed highly interesting and educational . . . . I am proud to have **Mennonite Life** in my home. If you could add a few more articles in German, it would help greatly in facilitating the introduction of the magazine among our Mennonites in Canada.

Wishing you every further success and God's richest blessing, I am

Yours very sincerely,
A. C. DeFehr
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Editors, **Mennonite Life:**

. . . . The whole issue is chuck-full of articles of keen interest to Mennonites everywhere and should be found in every Mennonite home . . . . . I want to congratulate you most heartily on the splendid illustrations and the general make up.

Very truly yours,
Cornelius Jansen
Pasadena, California

To Our Readers

We appreciate the many letters of encouragement from our readers and especially all efforts and suggestions to maintain and improve *Mennonite Life*. Our aim is to get *Mennonite Life* into each Mennonite home. We can succeed only if you help us. For suggestions see inside front cover and enclosed card.

THE EDITORS

On Plain Dress

Editors, **Mennonite Life:**

. . . . Was sorry to see the liberal position taken on plain dress, in your last issue. The question of attire is not an indifferent matter according to I Tim. 2:9 and I Pet. 3:3 and Isaiah 3. Would it not be more in keeping with your **Mennonite Life** motto "as it was . . . as it should be" to come out in favor of the decidedly, simple, plain life, and include dress as Scripture does?

Sincerely,
Clarence Fretz
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

On the Hutterites

Editors, **Mennonite Life:**

One of the contributing readers in your April issue was Marcus Bach. Mr. Bach, in a recent letter to the **Winnipeg Free Press** (April 30, 1947) takes up the defense for the Manitoba Hutterites in the recent provincial controversy. Though Mr. Bach's stand will be generally appreciated here, I would like to point out one historical inaccuracy in his letter. He says that in United States "we admire them (the Hutterites) . . . ." Mr. Bach may admire them, but the United States as such was not as generous. Our Hutterites in Canada are mostly refugees from across the southern border.

Very sincerely,
Victor Peters
Horndean, Manitoba

On Colonizing Mennonites

Editors, **Mennonite Life:**

My husband passed an issue of **Mennonite Life** on to Dr. Carl Taylor, head of Farm Population and Welfare Section of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. He was the guest speaker yesterday at the Iowa State College Faculty Seminar. He has just returned from South America, where he had been sent to check on possibilities of immigration —especially in Paraguay and Argentina—and here are a few comments which he reported at the meeting: In Dr. Taylor's opinion Paraguay has very poor immigration possibilities, because it has so few railroads and roads and its industrial system is not yet developed . . . . . A member of the Seminar staff spoke up and said, "What about the Mennonites who are going in there now?" Dr. Taylor replied that it is generally known all over the world that the Mennonites can make a success of colonizing where no one else can.

Dr. Taylor was in Paraguay and saw the Mennonites arrive and was amazed that the colonists would accept the responsibility of caring for the 600 families. We thought these comments, coming from an outsider, were really quite interesting . . . . .

Sincerely yours,
Mrs. Howard D. Raid
Ames, Iowa

One World

Editors, **Mennonite Life:**

. . . . I understand that **Mennonite Life** will include questions pertaining to philosophical problems as is evidenced in the article by Harold Gross. This is very significant for our young people. Young Mennonites of Europe and, no doubt, also of America do not care for writings that take every thing for granted and do not touch upon their vital problems . . . . . Among us there are Dirk Cattepoel and Otto Schowalter, who are interested in philosophical and theological problems. Our Dutch brethren are traditionally interested in questions pertaining to art. The Mennonites from Russia like to touch upon questions pertaining to Russian writings and art, for example, as they are represented in Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky . . . .

All articles are written objectively in a fluent style and are good in content. Naturally, not everybody will have the same taste, and you will find some criticism. May God bless this venture. You can expect our brotherly support in it.

Very Sincerely yours,
B. H. Unruh
Karlsruhe-Rueppurr, Germany

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True Christians

I AM far from believing that there are no true Christians outside the Mennonite brotherhood, but I do claim that each denomination should put forth effort to build up and improve its Christian fellowship. I insist that no brotherhood can be indifferent about itself and should earnestly seek to win souls for Christ. I recognize further that each denomination should treat others with honor and love as long as they agree on the foundation and essence of the saving faith.

—J. H. Oberholtzer in *Der wahre Character* . . . . .