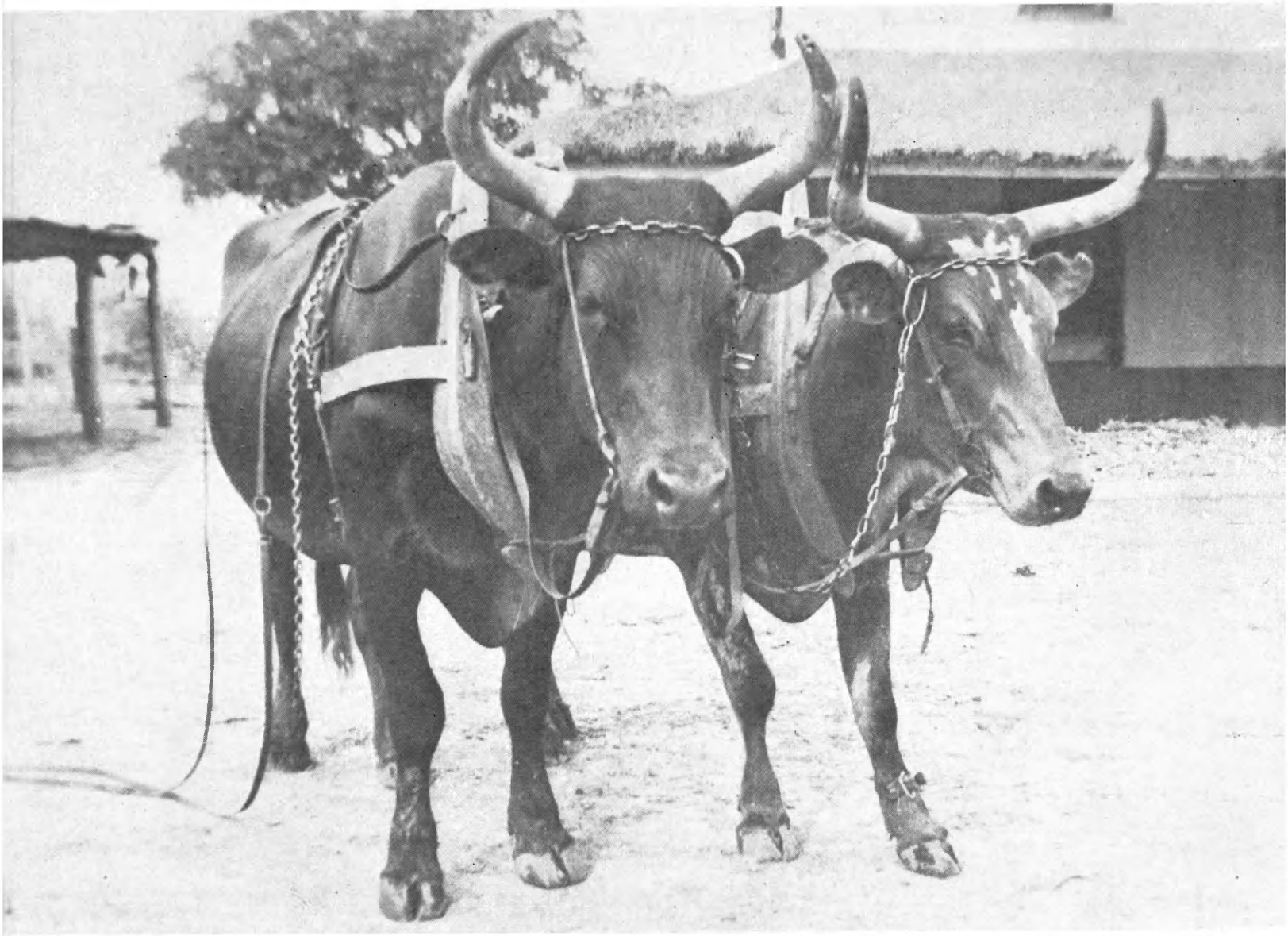
MENNONITE LIFE

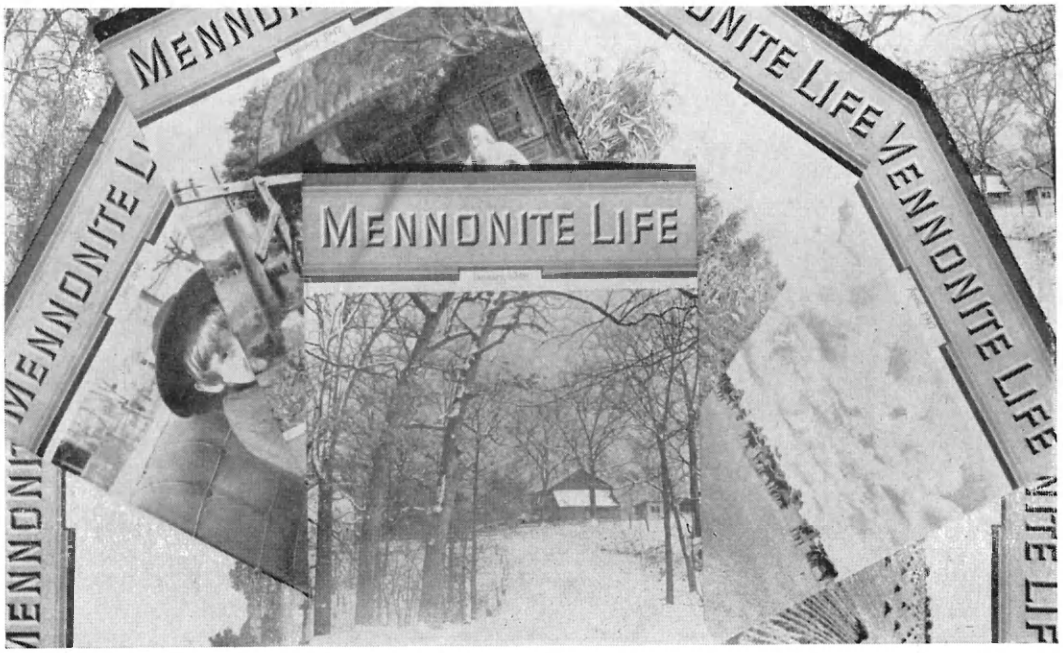
January, 1950



Pioneering in Paraguay

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

Christmas Gift Suggestions



Mennonite Life is now entering its fifth year of publication. Each year more and more readers value *Mennonite Life* as a Christmas Gift For your convenience ye have inserted a gift order card in this issue. Note the gift rates. Upon receipt of your order we shall announce your gift with an appropriate greeting card. To make sure your gifts will be received before Christmas, mail your order in the enclosed self-addressed envelope at once!

We also suggest the following as gifts:

1. Imitation leather covered binder for ten issues of *Mennonite Life* at $2.00 each.
2. The first ten issues (1946-48) of *Mennonite Life* in a permanantly bound volume for $6.00.
3. The colored 18 x 24 portrait of Menno Simons by A. Harder for $3.00.
4. The copper-plate 8x11 etching of Menno Simons recently made by A. Hendriks (see article, July, 1948) for $5.00.
5. All four issues of *Mennonite Life* for the year 1947 for $1.00.

Don't put off your *Mennonite Life* Christmas shopping. Make out your order today!

Address all correspondence to:

MENNONITE LIFE, North Newton, Kansas

MENNONITE LIFE

An Illustrated Quarterly

Vol. V. January, 1950 No. 1

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Mennonite Life is an illustrated quarterly magazine published in January, April, July and October by Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas. Entered as second-class matter December 20, 1946, at the post office at North Newton, Kansas, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Contributors in this Issue

(From left to right)





WALTER QUIRING studied the Mennonite settlements in Paraguay in their early stages and published numerous books and articles in this field. He placed at our disposal his complete file of photographs.

J. W. NICKEL, a Canadian Mennonite graduating from Bethel College in 1948, is serving the Mennonites of Paraguay under the sponsorship of the Board of Home Missions of the General Conference.

GERHARD BUHR served in Paraguay under the MCC for two years and is now attending Bethel College. Most of the photographs showing current Mennonite life in Paraguay were taken by him.

SIBOLD S. SMEDING, Mennonite pastor in Holland, wrote the article, "The Portraits of Menno Simons," in the July, 1948, issue of *Mennonite Life*.

J. H. JANZEN, well-known writer and popular speaker, of Kitchener, Ontario, is a contributor and associate editor of *Mennonite Life*.

Not Shown

HOWARD W. EKINTON is editor of *The American-German Review*, published by the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, Inc., Philadelphia, Pa.

ERNST HARDER studied in the United States and has returned to Paraguay where he serves in Asuncion under the Board of Home Missions of the General Conference.

C. C. REIMER, Mennonite refugee from Russia, prepared the statistical material presented on pages 14-15, and 20-23. He wrote the article "Mennonite Relief Work in Russia," in the January, 1949, issue of *Mennonite Life*.

Acknowledgements

Photography p. 5, Reuben Fanders; pp. 6 (bottom), 8, Alvin Wieler. Photography pp. 7 (top), 10 (bottom), 11, 30 and 31 (top), Star Newspaper Service, Toronto, Courtesy C. J. Rempel. Photography pp. 9, 12, 13 (top, left and bottom, left), 14-17, 18, 19 (bottom and right), 20, 21 (top), 22 (bottom, left), Walter Quiring. Photography p. 10 (top), D. W. Friesen. Photography pp. 18-19 (top, left and center), 22 (bottom, right), 29 (left, center), 33 (bottom, right), Viola Duerksen. Photography, Cover, pp. 20 and 21 (bottom), 22, 23, 26-28, 33 (top and bottom, left), Gerhard Buhr. Photography pp. 24 and 25 (bottom), Peter Dyck. Photography pp. 30 and 31 (bottom), *Steinbach Post*. Photography p. 32, J. W. Nickel; p. 33 (center), Ernst Harder; pp. 34-35, Hutterian Brethren. Map p. 39, Robert W. Regier. Pictures pp. 41-43, Rempel Manufacturing Co. Photography pp. 44, 45 (bottom), Sibold S. Smeding. Translation of letter pp. 12-13, by M. S. Harder.

In their treatment of the Mennonite colonies in South America the editors have relied most heavily upon the books by Walter Quiring.

Correction

A sub-head was omitted in the article: "Religious Education in Public Schools," in the October, 1949, issue. On the left column of page 45 the sub-head, "The Goessel Schools," should be inserted before the paragraph beginning, "Daily devotional exercises . . ."

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Pioneering Today

BY CORNELIUS KRAHN

THE age of pioneering never comes to a close. This is especially true for Mennonites as a group. The frontiers of the prairie states and provinces, of the steppes, and of other waste places may have been conquered, but new frontiers challenge us. Some twelve thousand Mennonites are at present engaged in taming the wild Chaco and the uninhabited primeval forest lands of Paraguay. They confront problems and obstacles similar to those of our forefathers two hundred years ago in Colonial America or in the American Middle West one hundred years ago.

Our generation, enjoying the comforts of modern life, pities those who are forced to start life over again under the most primitive conditions. We may, out of a sense of duty and compassion, even make a little contribution to their welfare. When people, due to religious and political persecution, are compelled to undergo the hardships of pioneer life, like our brethren from Russia in Paraguay, we understand that there is no alternative, but when we see our Canadian brethren voluntarily give up their homes with modern conveniences and migrate to the primeval underbrush of the Chaco—as they do in our day—we do not quite know what to make of it. We shake our heads in pity over these "fools in Christ." We hardly realize that our ancestors just a few generations ago—and not our Mennonite forebears only—would not have come to this country if they had not similarly been obstinate nonconformists, adhering to certain accepted principles. And, needless to say, if such reasoning be in place, we would not then enjoy the comforts which we now possess.

A true and loyal commemoration of the great events of pioneer days cannot consist only of leisurely and satisfied reminiscencing, nor in a claim of credit by those whose ancestors brought the sacrifices. It is, and should be, a challenge to pioneer in our day in avenues open to us. This may not be breaking the sod in the prairies under pioneer conditions, and it may not require us to settle far away from all semblance of our civilization, like our brethren in South America, in order to create new centers of Christian culture. (How few of us feel challenged to do just this!) But today, as always, the prerequisites for true pioneering are a forward look, an undaunted faith, and perseverance in spite of great obstacles. This it takes to convert the primitive Chaco into a habitable place.

Applying this to our own group—the Mennonites—there is no end to pioneering. Goethe said, "What thou hast inherited from thine ancestors, conquer it so that thou mightest possess it." A heritage, like a talent, cannot be buried without loss. It must be applied in new areas and tried in new realms. We have been known for our consistency in handling the Bible and the plow. Should we be consistent in these areas only? For generations our people, after a century of persecution, withdrew from the stream of life and concentrated on tilling the soil. No doubt that is a very honorable concentration, but there are so many other areas of life in which a Christian can make his contribution.

Our brethren from Canada left that country to go to the Chaco because they believed "that no Christian church can endure without the teaching of God's word in our schools," and left with the hope "that all defenders of the faith of Jesus Christ" would through their emigration "be encouraged to the recognition that the Bible is the most effective and best weapon against the inroads of atheism." Is not that a challenge worth pondering? We may disagree with our brethren as to whether their leaving was fully justified, but we cannot deny their sincerity and concern in the matter they stated as their reason for leaving. Christ- and Bible-centered education is an area in which probably just as much pioneering and hard work must be done in our day as in generations past.

All avenues of modern life call for an example of consecrated Christian living—the home life, the professional life, the business life, the social life, and public life. They require as much of a forward look, undaunted faith, and perseverance today as in any pioneer era. Paraphrasing the above quotation we could say "Let us conquer our Christian heritage anew so that we may possess it more fully and apply it more consistently."

Prerequisites of a Christian Community

The Mennonite conference convening in Moscow, 1925, petitioned the Soviet Government for the priviliege of having:

1. Undisturbed religious meetings in churches and homes.
2. Undisturbed choir practices and instruction in religion for youth.
3. Undisturbed distribution of Bibles and religious literature and periodicals.
4. Recognition that the schools are to be neutral where neither religious nor anti-religious propaganda is to be carried on.

These and other requests were the minimum conditions considered necessary for the continued existence of the Menonites as a religious group. Since they were denied, thousands fled Russia, settling in Canada, Brazil, and Paraguay.

Two Worlds of Peace

BY HOWARD W. ELKINTON

THE road to the Civilian Public Service Camp at Snowline, California, passed through the desolate, gold-ravaged country that lies between Placerville and Sacramento. There were many sign posts pointing to the agony of frenzied men who rushed to California to get rich—to find gold. In the county of Eldorado and under the lure of Eldorado almost everything has happened. The bus did not digress to the town of Cool but followed the American River—whereby hangs a tale of murder and greed—toward Lake Tahoe. It was early January, 1944, so motor vehicles could not go beyond Snowline.

Before reaching the camp there lay on either hand hill after hill planted with pear trees. The pattern of the pear is distinctly different from the limb design of the apple or the peach. There is something of the candelabra in the pear tree. I marveled at these orchards, quite unaware that the Civilian Public Service men from the Mennonite camp at Snowline were detailed to thin the extra branches from these trees by which I passed.

Snowline is a place name. It is exact; it is at the snowline where the winter of the mountains breaks. Above the snowline the roads are blocked and the lakes are frozen. Lake Tahoe is forbidding except to the hardiest skiiers, but below the snowline spring not only begins but spring in California begins at once.

Camp Snowline was not too different from other Civilian Public Service camps in the same general formation. Erwin C. Goering was director. His wife was with him at that time. They were both feeling a bit isolated because visitors did not always get to the camp. It did seem remote. There was the usual mess-hall (I have forgotten the exact camp-lingo) to which men swarmed when the gong rang. There was the grace before meals, an impressive feature in all Mennonite camps. I think I assayed a few words after the meal to the assembled men. I have forgotten my talk except that it was always a pleasure to digress to Mennonite camps as then one could be at ease. I could even peddle a few sly jokes about the Friends, which in the Friends' camps were likely to be "misunderstood" or declared somehow disloyal to "our beloved Society" of which I am happy to be a member.

I recall chatting with the Goerings in their quarters, made attractive by the simple trim of bright curtains. There were the usual problems. Some men would not trim the pear trees—it was merely helping wealthy neighbors and in no way represented—in their minds—"work of national importance." Not being passionately attached to the pear, as a fruit, I could not argue the case with too much conviction. Some men felt the forest work was mainicuring the Sierras. I had heard the same criticism at Patapsco, Maryland, where we were called upon to make an important municipal park available for the people of Baltimore; but to many it was an expedition toward manicure. At Snowline there were a few who were sick, genuinely ill; others who were "under the nurse's care," and a few who were sick-in-quarters. All, however, were at Snowline because they had scruples against making war. All were hopeful to make some contribution to a world of peace. In a way, Snowline, like other Civilian Public Service camps, was a fragment in the larger mosaic of peace, which in turn seems dreadfully small in a world that tends toward force and war.

I was fascinated by this camp. I shall always remember the visit as one long-to-be-remembered during two years of visiting such camps. After supper we went out into the winter night. The eye followed the wonderful conifers, in the midst of which the camp lay; those magnificant *pinus ponderosa*. White snow carpeted the camp like a glistening rug, closely cut to fit every house and step. The brown trunks of the pines traveled aloft with majesty, symmetry, and power. Above them—it seemed as if it was immediately above them—were myriad stars, each glowing like a hard, blue-bright jewel in the night sky. It was a scene to arrest a stranger. It was a night that I shall never forget.

I thought of the orderly crystals, the millions of frozen fragments that spread away from our feet through the forest. I thought of the orderly rhythm of the mighty boles of the great trees that ran skyward like the pipes of a huge organ. Then I thought of the order of the night and the place of each star and vast design of God's heaven. There was no sound. All was still. I was in a world of peace.

That night the bed was a bit hard—as such camp beds should be. I did not sleep too well. It was a strange bed and I was far from Germantown, Philadelphia. Then in that witching hour when sleep comes not we resort to devices to induce sleep. One is to remember verses of poetry; for example:

> Strong son of man, immortal love
> Whom we, who cannot see thy face,
> By faith and faith alone embrace,
> Believing where we cannot prove.

It is a good time to remember poetry and to learn new lines. It is an occasion when one can turn over the wise sayings of the church, quotations from the great

(Continued on page 46)

When Winter is King ⟿→

The New Bergthal (near Altona) village school in the West Reserve of Manitoba, in the earlier days when Mennonite villages supported and controlled their own schools and used German exclusively as the medium of instruction.

PIONEERING IN PARAGUAY

1. Menno Colony

FOR nearly a quarter century Mennonites have been engaged in the task of conquering the Paraguayan Chaco. The frontier of these Mennonites is in the midst of the north Chaco, a vast undeveloped and incompletely surveyed area almost equal in size to the state of Arizona or the whole of Italy.

All of the Mennonites living in Paraguay are of the same background, although they came to South America via different routes, at different times, and for different reasons. Their ancestors were of Dutch-German background, settling in South Russia in 1789 and the years following.

In 1874 the most conservative element among the Mennonites of the Chortitza settlement and its daughter colony, Bergthal, migrated from Russia to Canada and settled on the so-called East and West Reserve of the Red River Valley of Manitoba. Here these Mennon-

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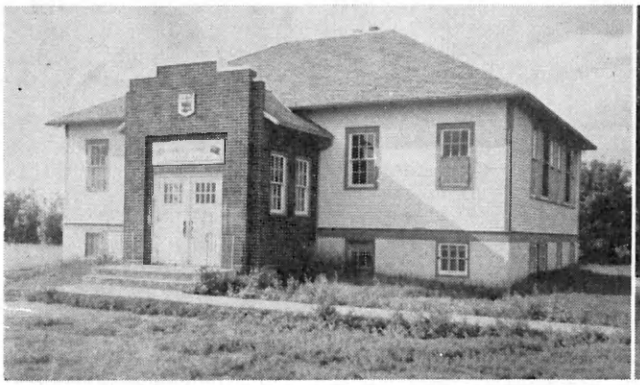
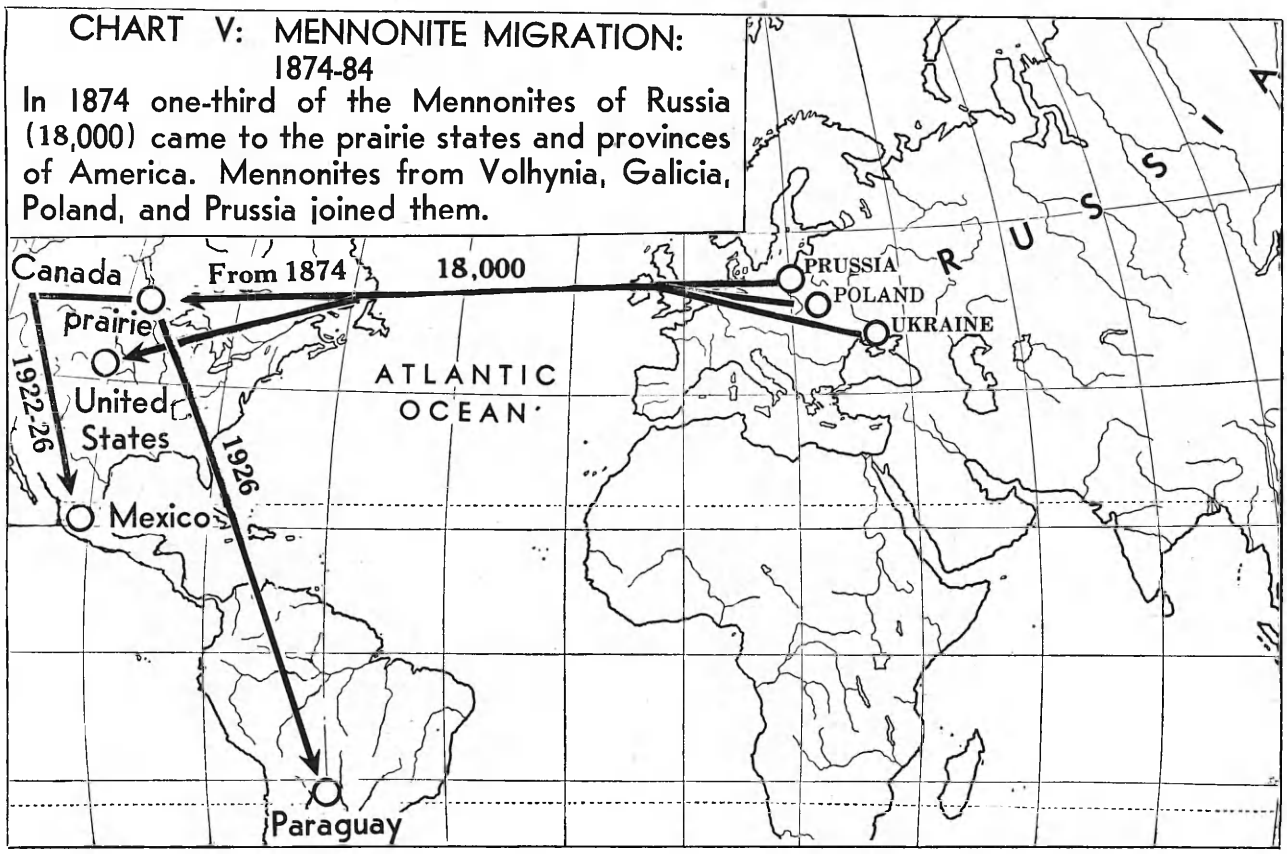
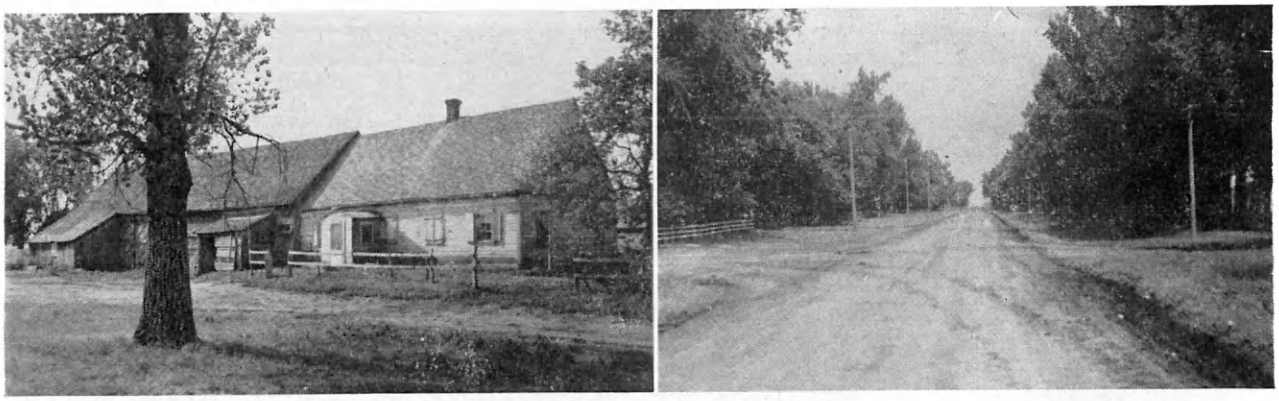
(Left) A government school established at the outskirts of Chortitza village; the old schools were soon doomed. (Right) The New Bergthal school (above) made a gradual adjustment and now functions as a government school.



The school question was a basic factor when some 18,000 Mennonites came over to Canada from the Bergthal and Chortitza settlements of Russia in 1874. It was again the motivating factor when, two generations later, some 10,000 of them moved to Mexico and some 3,000 went to Paraguay (1926 and 1948).





These were left behind in Manitoba. (Left) Chortitza and (right) New Bergthal village street (both West Reserve).

ites were granted unrestricted religious and cultural privileges which had been threatened in Russia. They were given complete freedom in worship, the right to conduct their own schools, and absolute exemption from military service. The Canadian government was most liberal in granting assistance in transportation and aid in establishing new homes. Through hard toil and pioneer hardships the first generation established homes, while the second generation helped make this region a bread basket of the north.

With the coming of World War I, Manitoba passed laws which prohibited the use of German as the medium of instruction in public and private schools. With the exception of the last thirty-minute period each day, the teaching of religion was also forbidden. Government schools in which English was used as the medium of instruction, were gradually introduced into the Mennonite villages. The most conservative groups—especially the so-called Old Colony and Sommerfeld Mennonites—considered this to be a breach of the original promises given by the government regarding freedom of worship and the right to conduct their own schools. Many a father was compelled to pay fines or was imprisoned for failing to send his children to the newly-established public schools.

On the second of October, 1919, Elder Johann Schroeder, from Steinbach, Manitoba, in the name of the Mennonites, addressed the provincial board of education as follows:

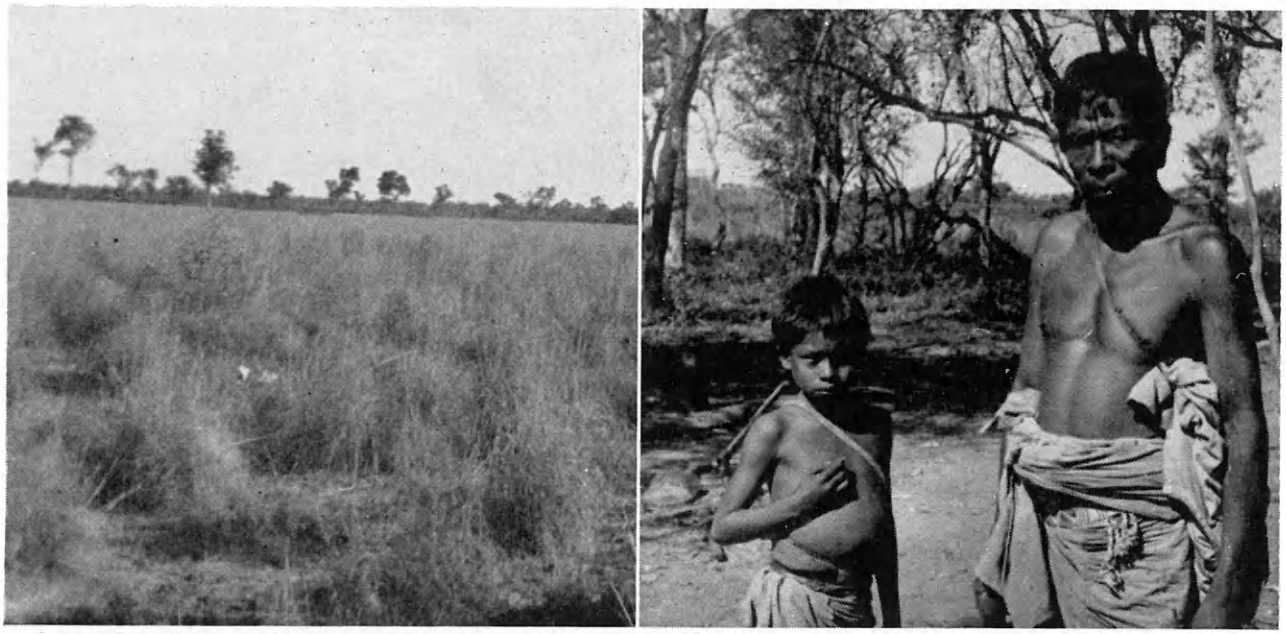
> We can hardly believe that the authorities at Ottawa and of England know how much we have been plagued in matters concerning our school. We have placed unlimited confidence in the British government, as is shown by the fact that we gave up rich farmlands and a pleasing climate in Russia in order to make the wasteland here in Canada productive. This, with the help of God . . . and through hard toil, we have accomplished. And now we are suddenly regarded as enemies of the land because of our language. The government well knew which language we used when we were cordially invited and were promised the right to conduct our own schools without molestation or restrictions . . . . I think the government should now make provision that the great confidence which we have placed in it should not be confounded.
>
> (signed) Johann Schroeder and five others

This and similar memorials addressed to governmental officials all seemed in vain; the government proceeded in its unification and nationalization program. Mennonite delegations were sent to Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Mexico to investigate possibilities of settlement.

On February 11, 1921, a group of six delegates left Canada to investigate the Chaco of Paraguay. After pursuing their investigations for a month and receiving the assurance from the Paraguayan government that they would be given the desired rights concerning worship, schools, and exemption from military service, the delegates returned, favorable impressed. The delegation had hardly returned when it received the following law sanctioned by the Senate and Chamber of Deputies of Paraguay:

Article I. Members of the community known as Mennonites who come to the country as components of a colonization enterprise, and their descendants, shall enjoy the following rights and privileges:

1. To practice their religion and to worship with absolute and unrestricted liberty, to make affirmations by simple "yes" or "no" in courts of justice instead of by oath; and to be exempt from obligatory military service either as combatants or noncombatants both in times of peace and during war;
2. To establish, maintain, and administer schools and establishments of learning, and to teach and learn their religion and their language, which is German, without restriction;
3. To administer inheritances and especially the properties of widows and orphans by means of their special system of trust committees known as *Waisenamt* and in accordance with the particular rules of the community without restriction of any kind;



Campo (prairie) and Lengua Indians of the Chaco. The Paraguayan Chaco is about the size of the state of Arizona.

4. To administer the mutual insurance against fire established in the colonies.

This article and seven others was signed and dated, Asuncion, July 26, 1921.

However, the depression following World War I prevented further developments. In 1926, the sale of property and real estate was begun. The Intercontinental Company, Ltd., Winnipeg, (McRoberts and Robinette) bought their farms with buildings and crops for $6.50-$42.00 per acre. However, they were only paid $7.00 per acre in cash, the balance due them being given in land in the Chaco which this company had purchased from Jose Casado. The sale of land in Canada involved 43,998 acres, selling for $902,900, while 137,920 acres of land were bought in the Chaco for $698,602.

Meanwhile, a majority of the Old Colony Mennonites had begun a migration to Mexico (1922-1926). On No-

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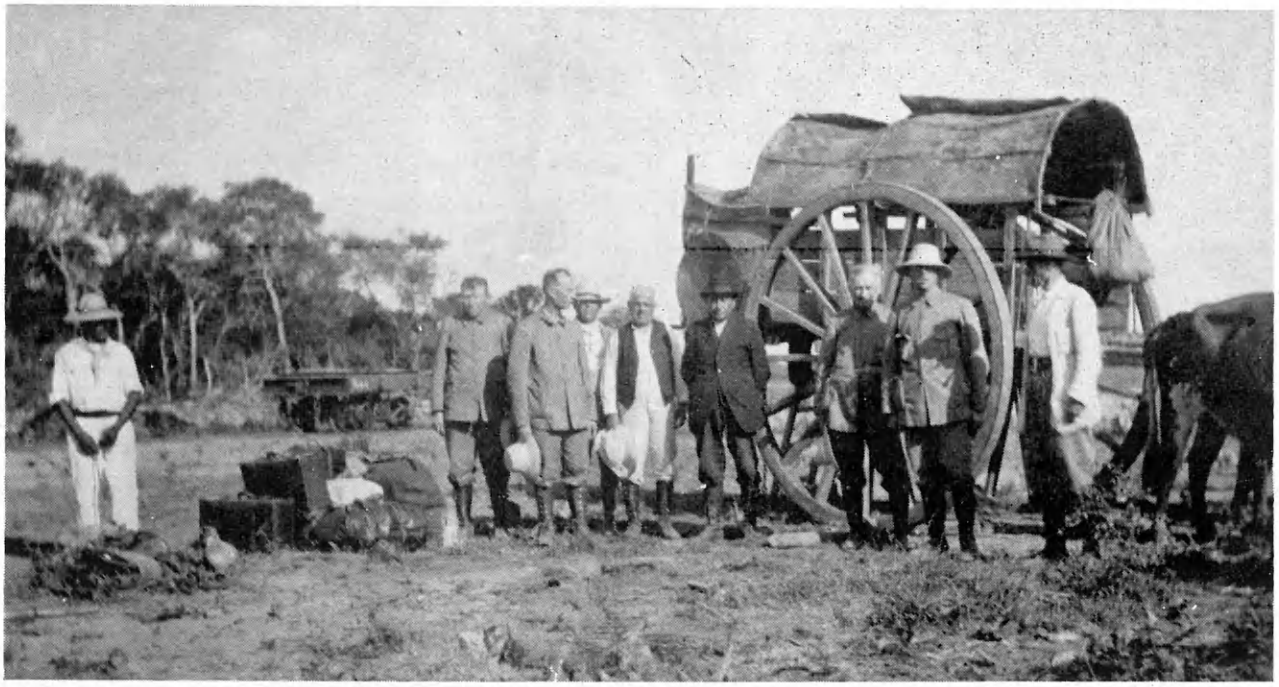
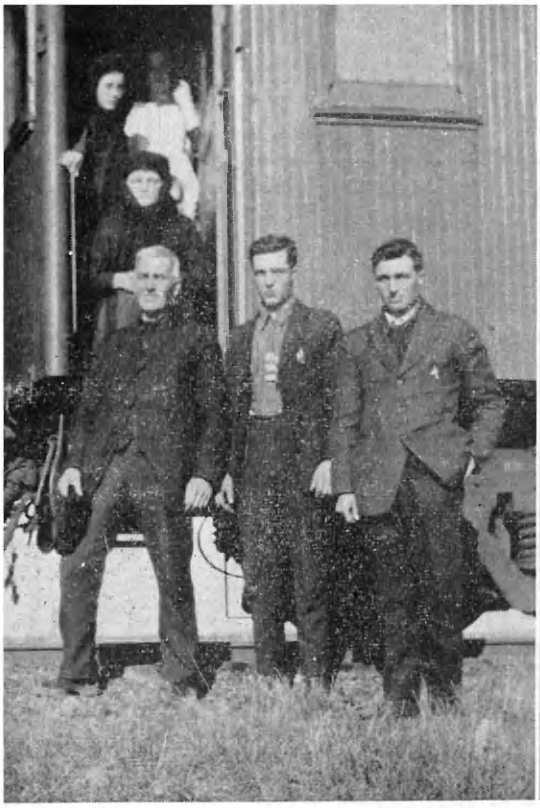
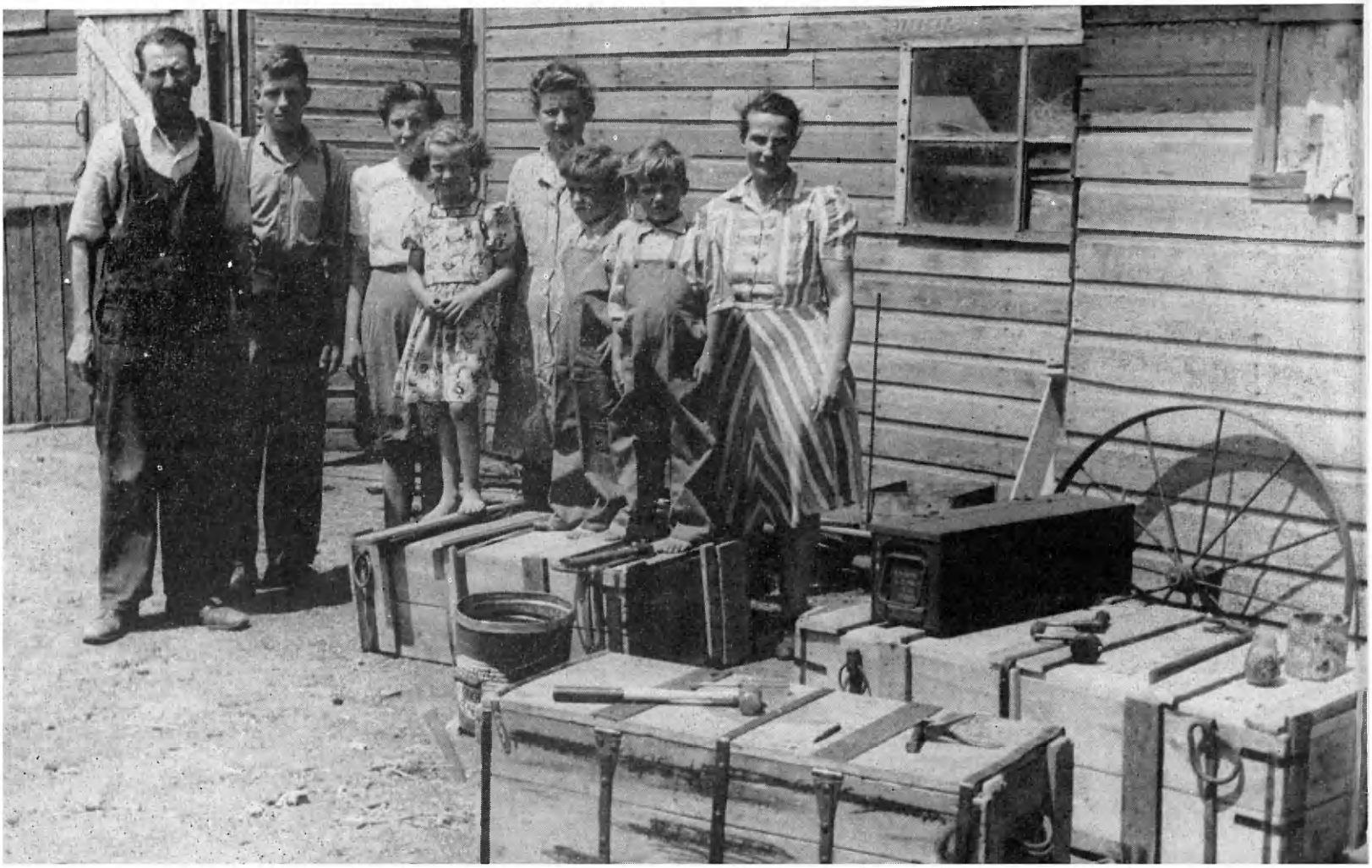
The six (center) delegates from the Sommerfeld, Chortitza, and Bergthal churches, investigating the Chaco in 1921.





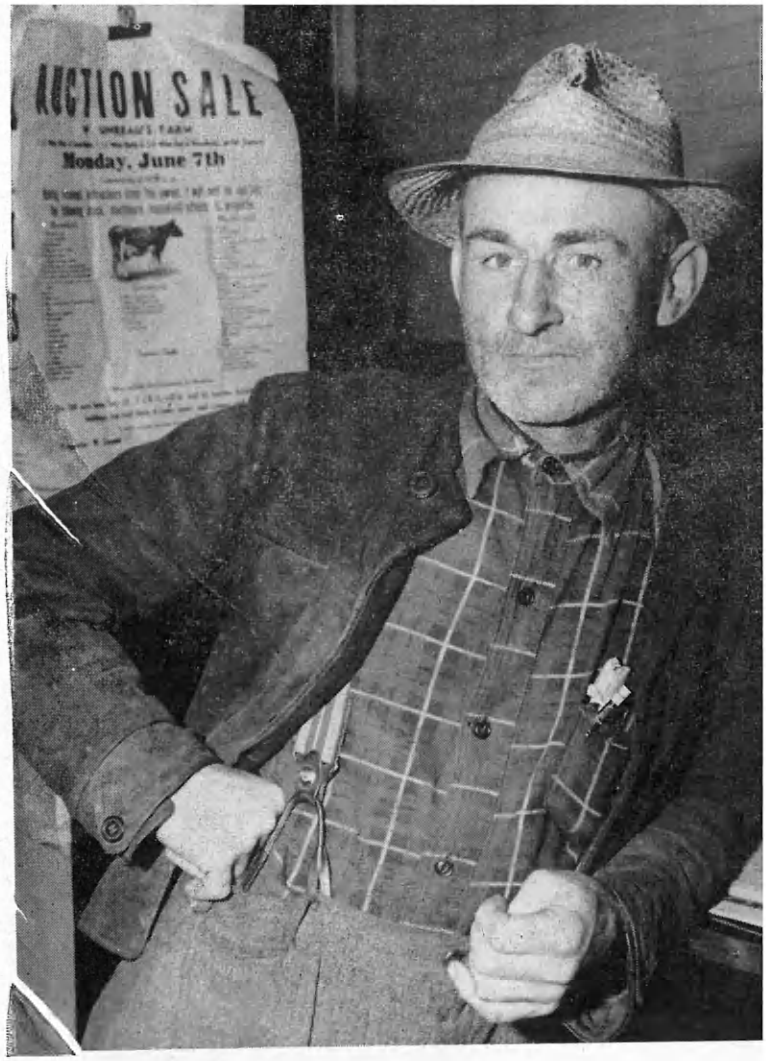
(Left) Johann Schroeder, minister and leader of the migration to Paraguay in 1926. (Right) a farewell scene of the Mennonite emigrants at Altona, Manitoba. The emigrants of 1926 sold their farms (44,000 acres) and equipment for $902,-900.39 to McRoberts and Robinette of the *Corporacion Paraguaya*. About a third of this was paid in cash; for the balance they received nearly 138,000 acres of land in the Chaco. Before they left Canada, all debts were paid and the poor among them helped in making the trip. (Bottom) The Abraham F. Giesbrecht family has packed its necessities for the trip to Paraguay.

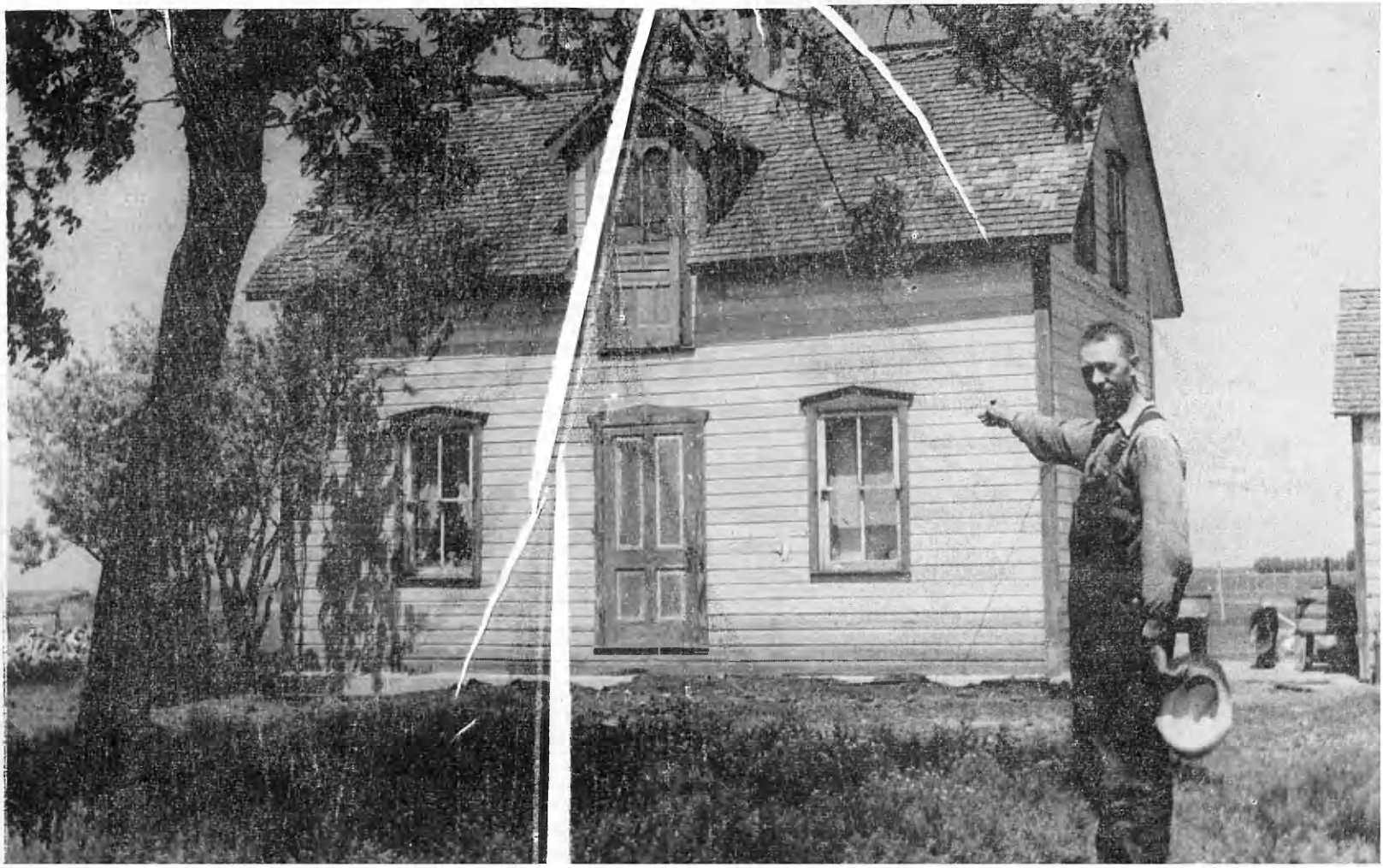
Leaving Home and Fireside in Canada, 1926 and 1948



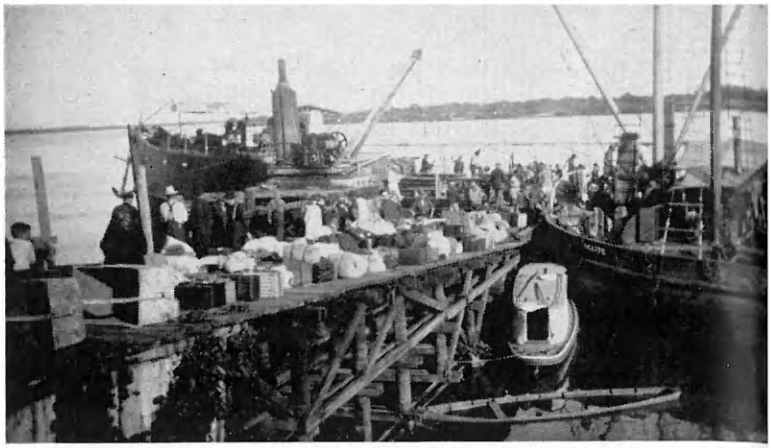
vember 23, 1923, the first group left for Paraguay. By the end of 1927, 277 families, or a total of 1,744 Mennonites, mostly from the Sommerfeld group, had gone to Paraguay. Smaller groups followed later. To make a difficult situation more tragic they had to wait for some sixteen months in Puerto Casado, a port on the Paraguay River, 125-150 miles from their destination west of the river in the Chaco. The promises given to the Mennonites, as in days of the czars when their ancestors had settled on the Dnieper River 140 years before, were not kept. It was not until April, 1928, that the *Corporacion Paraguaya,* of McRoberts and Robinette, proceeded to survey the land so that settlements could be begun. Some 200 persons died of typhoid fever before the settlement was made, and by April, 1929, 335 had returned to Canada. During the year 1928 the following villages were begun: Bergtal, Laubenheim, Waldheim, Gnadenfeld, Weidenfeld, Reinland, Bergfeld, Osterwick, Blumengart, Schöntal, Halbstadt, Strassberg, Chortitz and Silberfeld. Four more villages, Neuanlage, Lindenau, Grünfeld, and Grüntal, were added by 1932. The entire settlement now consisted of 255 homesteads ranging in size from 80-200 acres each.

Before they had left Canada the leaders had written the following letter to the Canadian government:





(Right) In 1948, when the second migration to Paraguay took place, auction sales were a daily occurance. (Bottom) W. H. Hildebrand takes leave of home where he was born and reared.



(Left and top) On December 23, 1926, the first group arrived at Buenos Aires, Argentina, from where they continued by river boat via Asuncion to Puerto Casado. (Left) Here they waited almost two years until the necessary preparations for their final settlement on the Chaco were made.

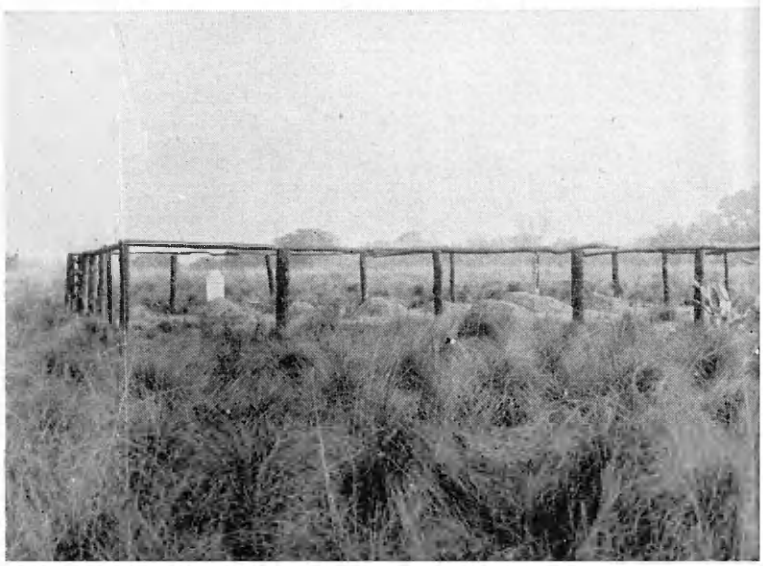
To the honorable Minister of Agriculture, Ottawa.

Honorable Sir:

In appreciation and recognition of the kindness and peace which we have enjoyed nearly half a century, we feel led, before we leave Canada for our new home in Paraguay, to express our gratitude to the government of this land and Great Britain, and, in the name of those who have already left this country and those who still want to leave, we, as the first Mennonite settlers of the prairie provinces, would like to thank you for your good will as expressed in the provision of free lands and later of financial assistance in hard times, and, particularly, for the highly esteemed hospitality which we have enjoyed here for such a long period of time. And, since our hearts are filled with love toward you and we will continue to cherish fond memories of this land, our prayers shall ascend to the throne of God in your behalf, including also those who did not hesitate to break the sacred promises of 1873 with regard to our schools.

We are leaving because we believe that no Christian church can endure without the teach-

(Left) First temporary homes in the Menno Colony. (Left, bottom) David Peters of Waldheim has established a more permanent home. (Bottom) The cemetery of Hoffnungsfeld is evidence of the hardships of pioneering.



Near end of April, 1928, first group moved into the Chaco to establish the Menno Colony. (Top, Right) H. D. Harder, *Oberschultze* (chief administrator) of the Menno Colony and the administration building. (Right) The cooperative of the Menno Colony through which most of its business is transacted.

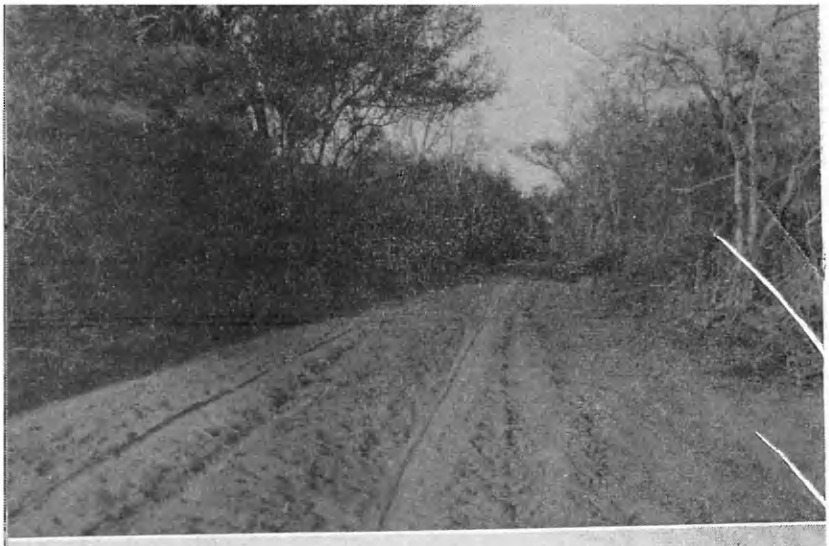
ing of God's Word in our schools. We believe that such instruction must not be reduced to a minimum, but must receive primary emphasis, for our Lord said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God . . . . " It is hoped that all defenders of the faith in Jesus Christ and His Word, be it in government or among the people, will, through our emigration, be encouraged to the recognition that the Bible is the most effective and best weapon against the inroads of atheism and will become, more and more the primary subject of instruction in all schools of the land. It is hoped that the government will resolve to regard Christian schools with greater toleration, and thereby promote Christianity and its attendant blessings throughout the world.

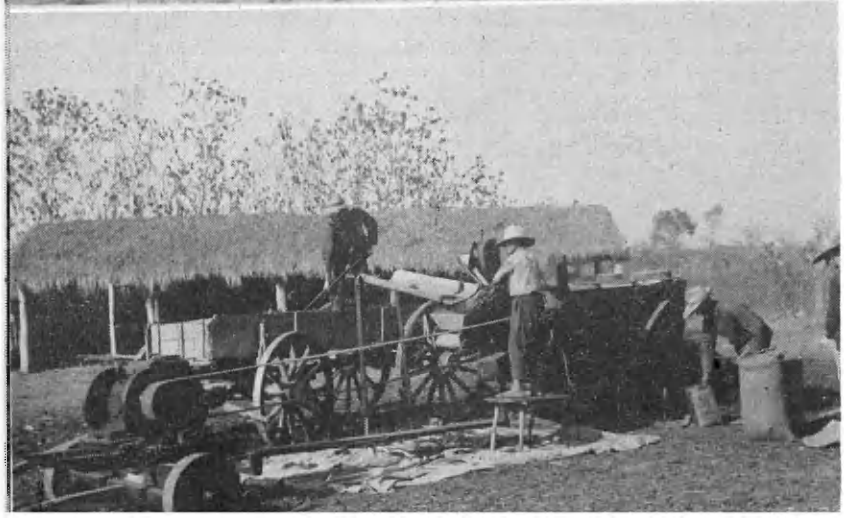
With fond memories of the many years of peace, we, the undersigned, in the name of a departing church sign our names in a spirit of abiding love and gratitude.

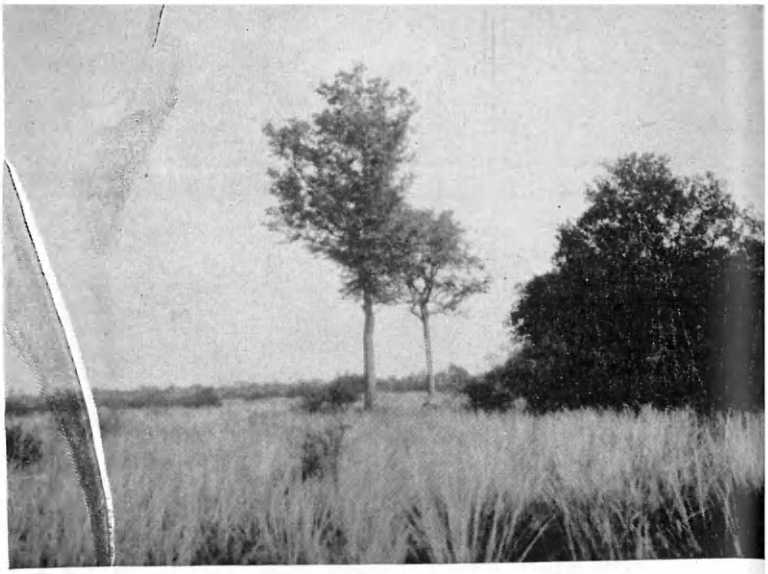
With best wishes,

Martin C. Friesen	Johann W. Sawatzky
Johann Schroeder	Abram B. Toews
Abram Giesbrecht	Wilhelm L. Giesbrecht
Abram A. Braun	Johann Schroeder

(Bottom) H. B. Toews and wife in orchard examing fruit of the papaya tree. (Right) H. B. Toews in grapefruit-tangerine orchard and (bottom, right) date palm in orchard in the Menno Colony.







(Top) Typical Chaco road and *campo* (grassland). (Left) Farm of Johann Toews with Mr. and Mrs. Toews on "sulky."

Population and Eco

Founded in 1928, its population in 1936 was 1,713. During the decade preceeding 1946, 1,115 persons were born and 197 died. In 1946 there was a total population of 2,679, composed of 510 families living on 520 farms in 40 villages.

In 1946 there were a total of 626 vehicles, and some 1,415 agricultural implements, such as plows and cultivators.

Average Cultivated Acreage of Farm

Average cultivated acreage of Menno Colony farm is 13 acres distributed in the following crops (average of one decade):

Cotton	7 acres	Sweet Potatoes	1/3 acre
Sorghum	3½ acres	Mandioca	1/3 acre
Peanuts	¾ acres	Misc.	1/3 acre
Beans	¾ acre	Total	13 acres

Total Acreage of Various Crops

Crops	1937	1946
Cotton	4,000 acres	3,020 acres
Sorghum	1,260 acres	3,010 acres
Peanuts	327 acres	414 acres
Beans	450 acres	360 acres
Mandioca	275 acres	194 acres

(Left) Threshing kafir corn by flail and (bottom, left) threshing kafir corn in home-made thresher. (Bottom) Menno Colony industries at Sommerfeld.

Tilling the soil in the Chaco. (Right, top) Breaking oxen for farm use. (Right) Extracting juice from sugar cane.

nomic Life -- Menno

Sweet Potatoes	350 acres	260 acres
Misc.	200 acres	150 acres
Total	6,862 acres	7,408 acres

Average Number of Trees per Farm

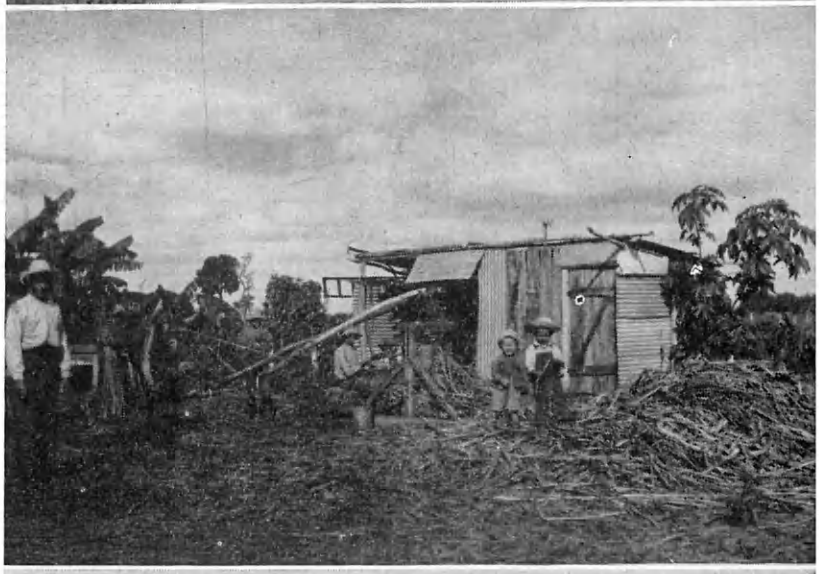
Horticulture	1939	1946
Oranges and Tangerines	9 trees	7 trees
Bananas	4 trees	3 trees
Misc.	7 trees	8 trees
Grape vines		1 tree
Paraisa (shade tree)		9 trees
Total	20 trees	28 trees

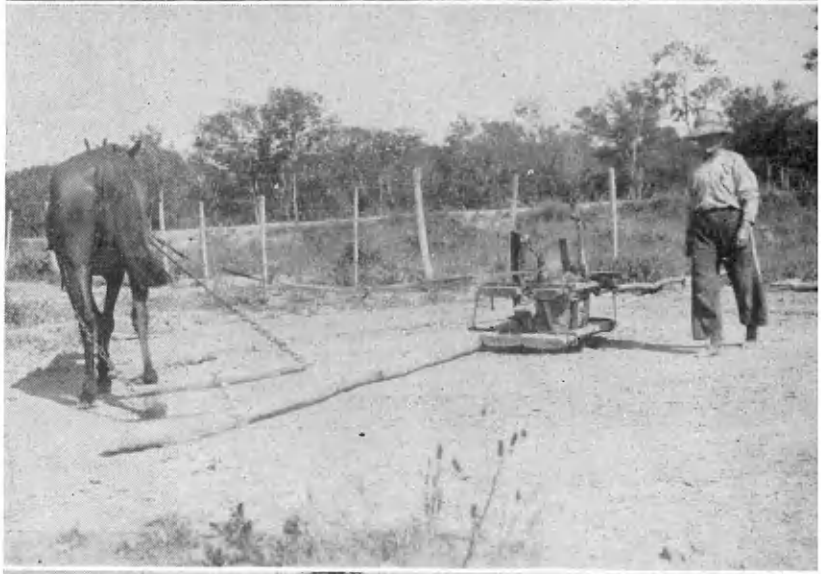
Total Livestock in Colony

Livestock	1939	1946
Cattle	3,587	7,002
Horses	508	1,365
Oxen	785	734
Swine	840	777
Poultry	11,777	21,695
Total	17,497	31,573

Per farm of 5.4 persons on each farm, these figures of 1946 show 8.1 cattle, 2.1 horses, oxen 2, and 2 swine.

(Right) Klas Wiens "turning" leather, a step in the process of tanning. (Bottom) Picking cotton, one of the chief commercial crops. (Right, bottom) Bales of cotton at station.





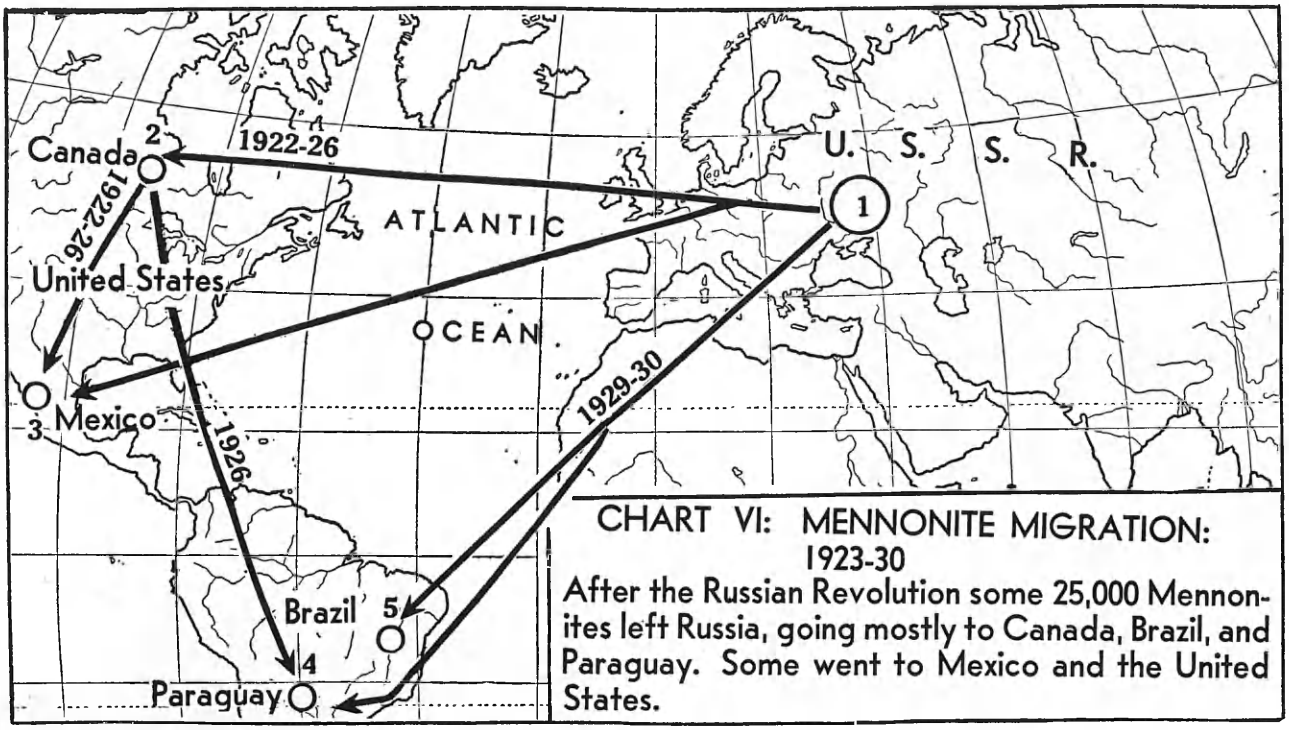


CHART VI: MENNONITE MIGRATION: 1923-30

After the Russian Revolution some 25,000 Mennonites left Russia, going mostly to Canada, Brazil, and Paraguay. Some went to Mexico and the United States.

(Left) In a refugee camp in Germany the women are busy sewing. (Bottom) Camp Hammerstein in Germany, where a great number of the children died of epidemics and the after effects of the long journey.

2. Fernheim and Friesland

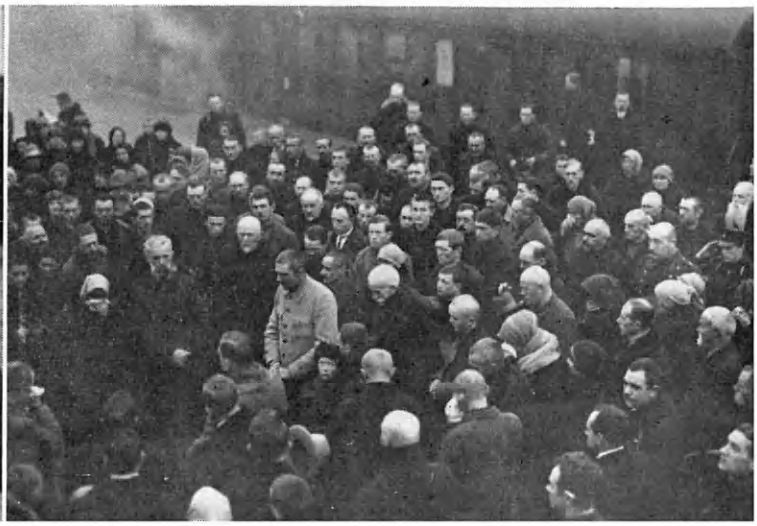
Two years after the Menno Colony in the Chaco was founded, a new settlement—Fernheim—was established. These settlers did not come from Canada but from Russia, the original home of the Menno Colony residents.

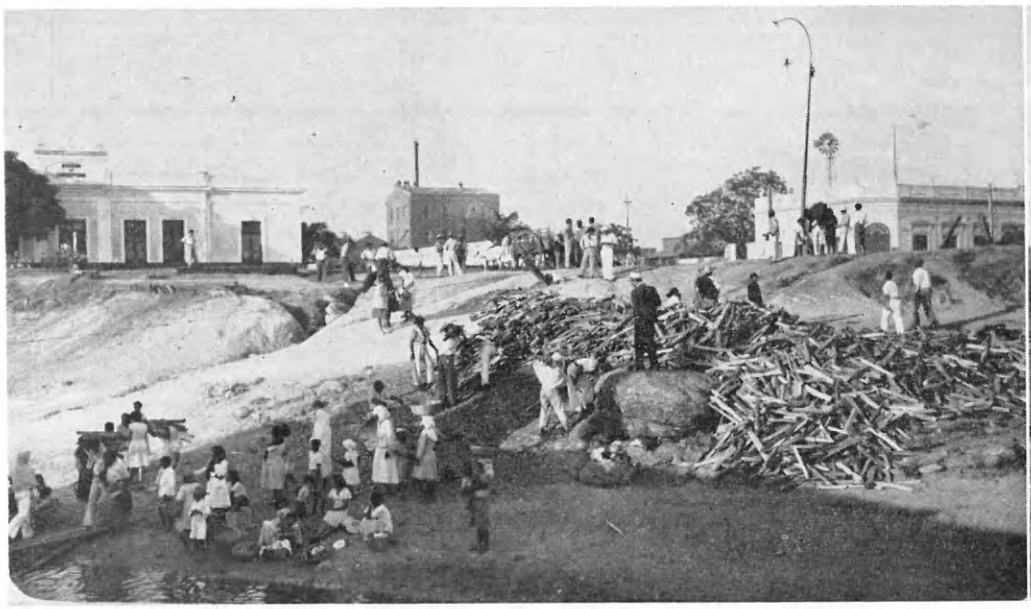
Under the communist distatorship the policy of forced collectivization and complete industrialization of the population resulted in the destruction of all religious and cultural groups, and the increasing exile of peaceful citizens in order to obtain a reservoir of unpaid labor. To escape the terrors involved in these policies some nineteen thousand Mennonites left Russia in the years 1922-1927, and came to Canada, many occupying the homes

The Red Gate through which nearly 4,000 Mennonites passed in 1929. (Right) A group ready to leave on the long journey. Upon arriving in Riga on this side of the Red Gate they sang a spontaneous, *Nun danket alle Gott,* and are served their first warm meal (bottom).

left by those who had gone to Mexico and Paraguay (1922-1926). Further migration from Russia became almost an impossiblity, because of governmental restrictions. However, in 1929 Mennonite families from various parts of Russia flocked to Moscow in the hope that passports and permission to leave the country could be secured. They waited weeks and then months.

Mennonite organizations of Europe, the United States, and Canada tried to find a refuge for these people so they would be released for migration by the Russian authorities. Governmental authorities in Germany and Canada, as well as Canadian railroads, were approached. The Canadian authorities, who had been very helpful during the mass migration of a few years previous, now



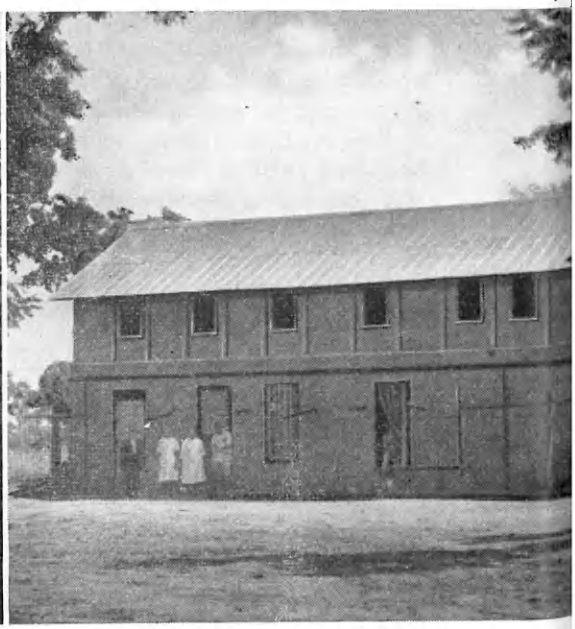


(Left) Concepcion, a harbor on the Paraguay River. (Top) The end of the railroad from Puerto Casado to the Chaco.

hesitated. Prompt action was necessary because Russia was threatening to send home the thirteen thousand who had meanwhile reached Moscow. The German government declared its willingness to provide temporary shelter for those who would be permitted to cross the border until they could find a permanent home. Accordingly, the first group of refugees arrived in Germany November 3, 1929. By December 11, the number had reached five thousand. However, Russia had now turned the tide and only a few more refugees reached Germany. Of the total of some 5,671 refugees from Russia, 3,885 were Mennonites. More than half of the thirteen thousand who had gathered at Moscow were forcibly sent back to their homes and the sale of tickets to those who contemplated migration abroad was stopped throughout the country. That ended the hope for emigration of those remaining. Of those who were able to enter Germany the greater number were later settled in Brazil while some went to Canada, and 1,580 went to Paraguay to establish a new colony adjacent to Menno which they named Fernheim.

The Mennonite Central Committee of the American Mennonites arranged for the purchase of land from the *Corporacion Paraguaya*. On March 15, 1930, the first group of 61 families of 357 persons left the camp at Mölln, Germany, arriving at Buenos Aires on April 10, from where they proceeded by river boat to Asuncion, the capital of Paraguay. They were welcomed by the president of Paraguay and then continued their journey on the Paraguay River to Puerto Casado, where they were met by the Menno Colony representatives to be taken to their future home by ox-cart some sixty miles farther. The immigrants were depressed seeing the wild Chaco stretching for miles before them with no sign of civilization they had been used to. What would they produce in such a tropic wilderness which the white man

(Left, bottom) Harvesting peanuts, Lichtfelde, Fernheim. Soon a hospital (right, bottom) was established in Filadelfia, Fernheim Colony.



(Right) Temporary tent camp of Fernheim settlers, their home while the land is being cleared for settlement.

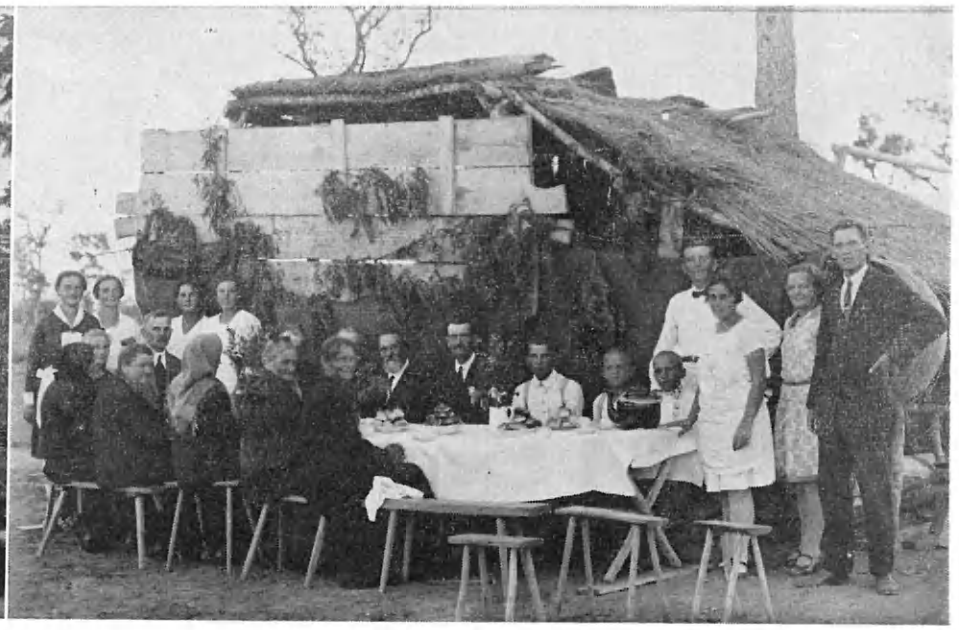
had so far almost entirely avoided? Where would they market their produce? The primeval forest consisted primarily of underbrush. Wood of desirable quality for building and for furniture was rare.

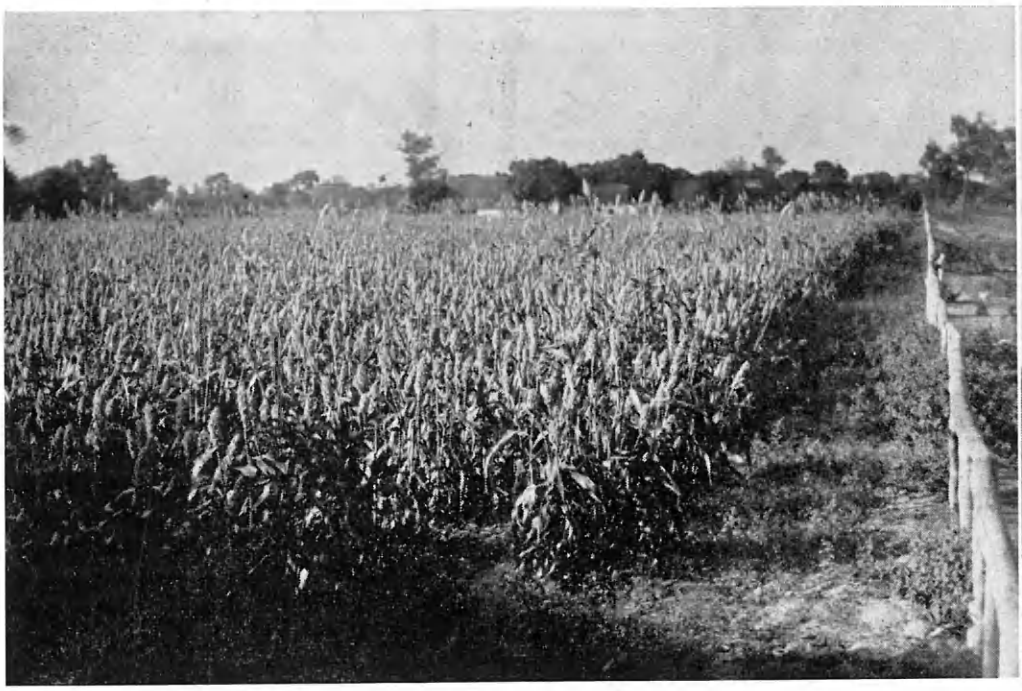
On April 30, 1930, the group reached the land which had been selected for them northwest of the Menno Colony. Here they found a half-finished warehouse on a so-called camp—an area covered with tall grass in contrast to the usual underbrush of the Chaco—and a well with sweet water.

After a few weeks the locations for the villages were selected and the families assigned by lot to their respective village. Each farm consisted of hundred acres. In quick succession the six additional transports reached

(Continued on page 40)

(Right) Early school with thatched roof, Wiesenfeld, Fernheim. (Bottom, right) Family joys are expressed at silver wedding of the Neufelds in Rosenort, Fernheim, 1930.





Field of kafir corn and (right) field of wheat in Fernheim. (Bottom) Fernheim agricultural experiment station.

Population and Economic Life -- Fernheim

Founded in 1930, its population was 2,157 in 1936. During the decade preceeding 1946, 800 persons were born and 108 died. In this decade also 360 persons entered the colony and 1,121 left the settlement. In 1946 there remained a total of 2,088 persons, composed of 357 families and living on 241 farms in 20 villages.

In 1946 they had a total of 427 vehicles, and some 877 farm implements, such as plows and cultivators.

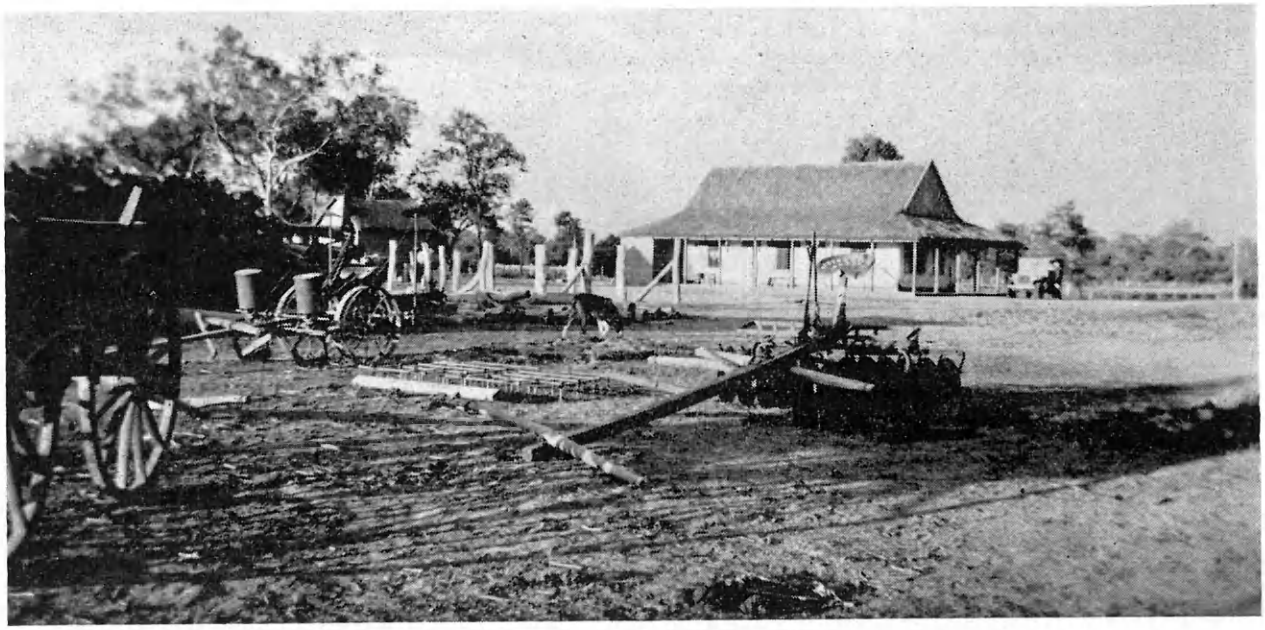
Average Cultivated Acreage of Farm

Average cultivated acreage of a Fernheim Colony farm is 22 acres, distributed in the following crops (average of one decade from 1937-1946):

Cotton	10½ acres	Sweet potatoes	½ acre
Sorghum	6½ acres	Mandioca	¼ acre
Peanuts	2 acres	Misc.	¾ acre
Beans	1½ acres		
		Total	22 acres

Total Acreage of Various Crops

Crops	1937	1946
Cotton	3,000 acres	1,835 acres
Sorghum	1,320 acres	2,400 acres
Peanuts	520 acres	500 acres
Beans	220 acres	502 acres



Chaco watermelon field. (Below) Oil press and refining plant in Filadelfia set up by Dr. Herbert Schmidt.

Mandioca	25 acres	62 acres
Sweet potatoes	120 acres	135 acres
Misc.	145 acres	78 acres
Total	5,350 acres	5,512 acres

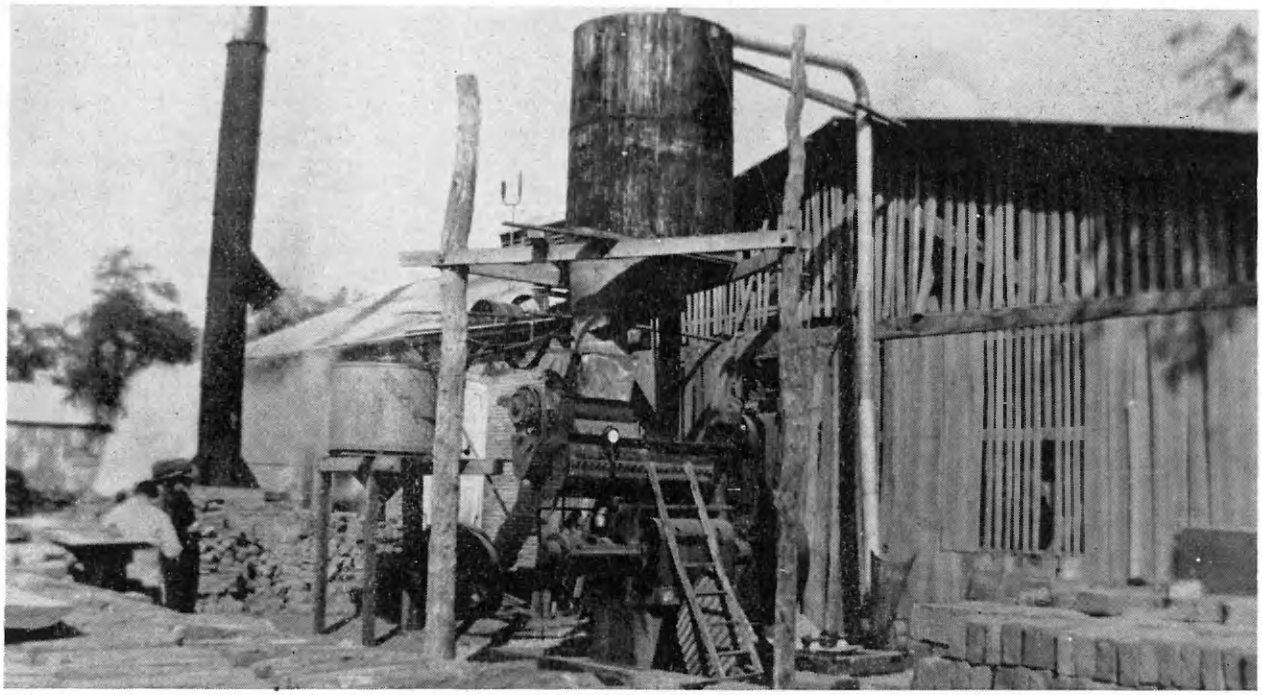
Average Number of Trees per Farm

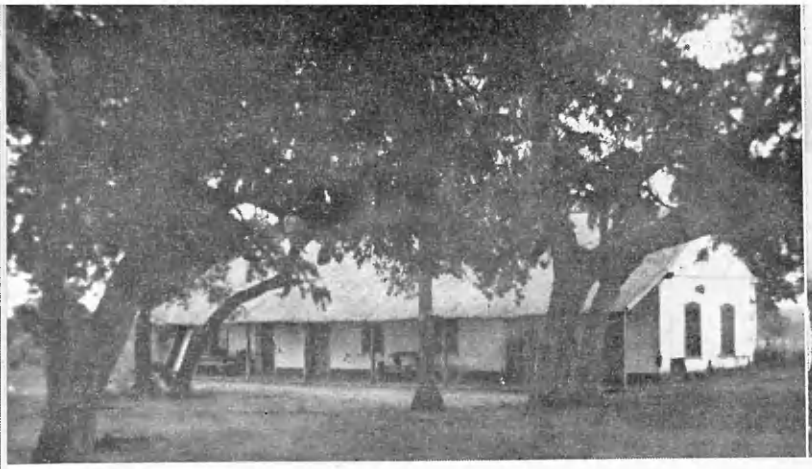
Horticulture	1938	1946
Oranges and tangerines	9	19
Bananas	9	4
Grape vines	4	5
Paraisa	14	19
Misc.	11	6
Total trees per farm	47	53

Total Livestock in Colony

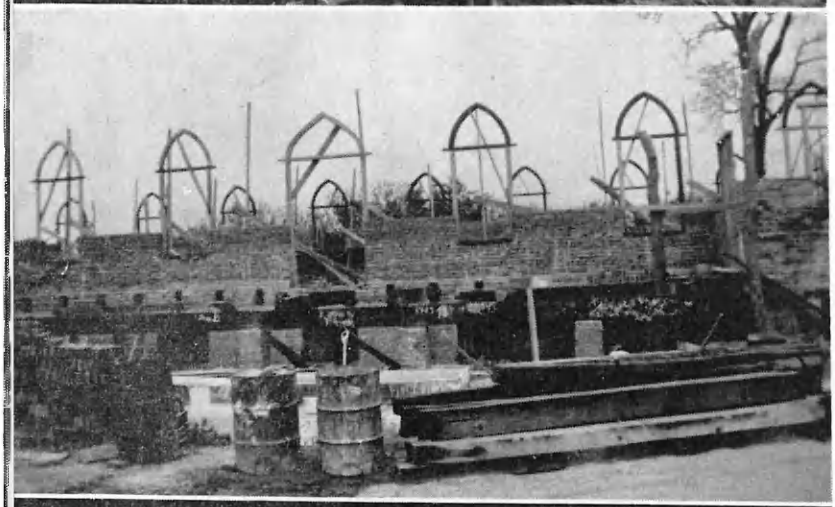
Livestock	1937	1946
Cattle	2,075	9,480
Horses	420	986
Oxen	455	1,022
Swine	209	401
Poultry	5,490	9,270
	8,649	21,159

Per farm of 7.2 persons on each farm these figures of 1946 show 12 cattle, 2.9 horses, 2.6 oxen, and 1.93 swine.





(Top) Friesland hospital and (left) *Zentralschule*. (Left and down) Building the new Filadelfia church.



Population and Eco

Founded in 1937, its population in 1937 was 748. During the decade preceeding 1946, 287 persons were born and 47 died. A total of 101 persons entered the settlement and 137 left. At the end of the decade there were 952 persons, composed of 180 families, living on 164 farms in 9 villages.

In 1946 Friesland had a total of 108 vehicles and some 335 farm implements.

Average Cultivated Acreage of Farm

The average cultivated acreage of a Friesland Colony farm is 10 acres, distributed in the following crops (average of one decade from 1937-1946):

Cotton	3¾ acres	Mandioca	1 acre
Sorghum	1½ acres	Corn	1½ acres
Peanuts	¼ acre	Misc.	1½ acres
Beans	½ acre		
		Total	10 acres

Total Acreage of Various Crops

Crops	1937	1946
Cotton	310 acres	335 acres
Sorghum	310 acres	400 acres
Peanuts	17½ acres	30 acres
Beans	52 acres	28 acres
Mandioca	64 acres	180 acres

(Left) End of Paraguayan-Bolivian War is celebrated. (Bottom) Village street of Grossweide, Friesland.

(Top) *Zentralschule*, Filadelfia. (Top right) Church at Karlsruhe. (Right) Youth meeting, 1946, and bales of cotton, Filadelfia.

nomic Life -- Friesland

Corn	23 acres	290 acres
Misc.	35 acres	170 acres
	811½ acres	1,433 acres

Average Number of trees per Farm

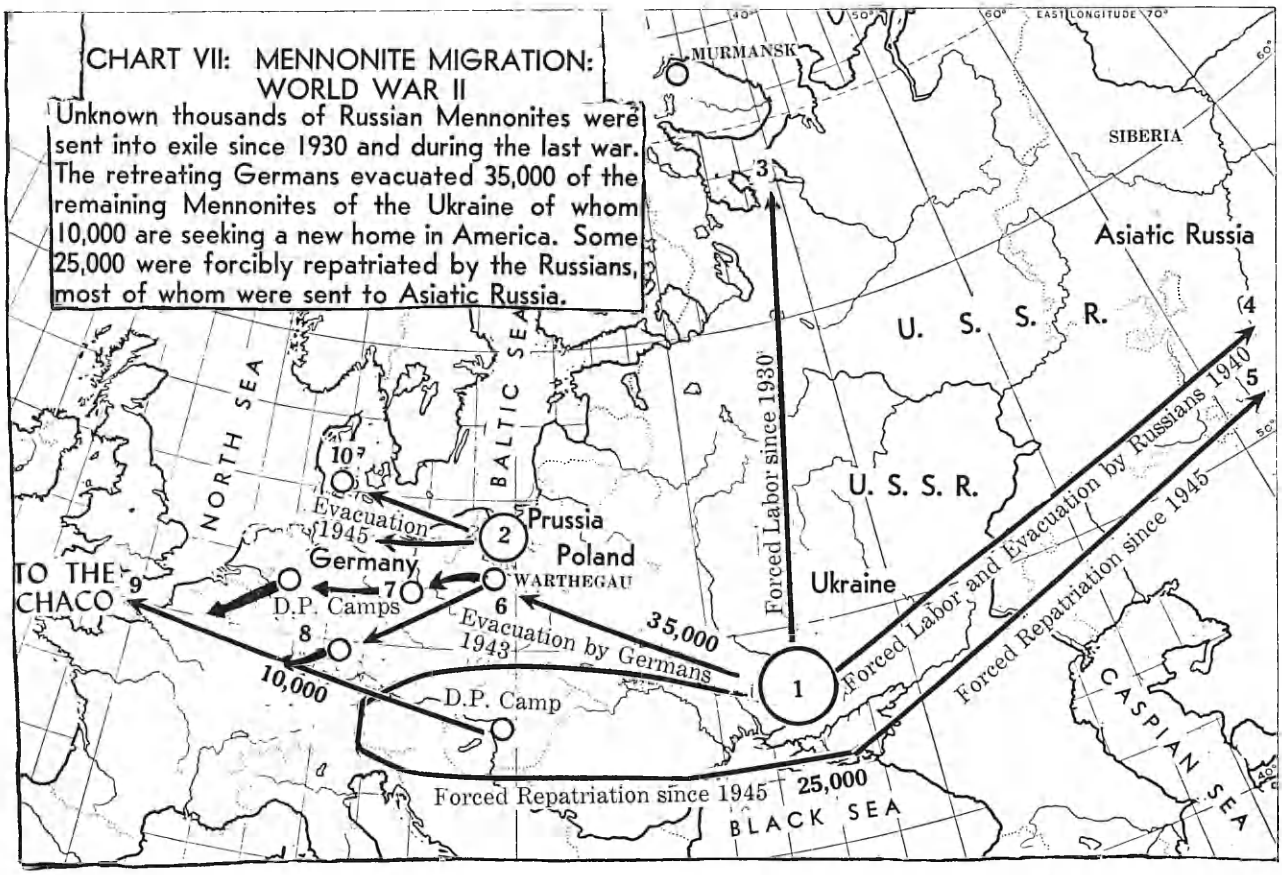
Horticulture	1937	1946
Oranges and Tangerines	4	28
Bananas	30	15
Grape vines		5
Grapefruit		1
Misc.		9
Total trees per farm	34	58

Total Livestock in Colony

Livestock	1937	1946
Cattle	536	3,295
Horses	134	478
Oxen	246	573
Swine	56	366
Poultry	1,616	5,003
Total	2,588	9,715

Per farm of 5.5 persons on each farm, these figures of 1946 show 7.15 cattle, 2.3 horses, 1.53 oxen, and 2.3 swine.

Modern Fernheim home. (Right) Tin untensils produced and used by Mennonite settlers.



3. Volendam and Neuland

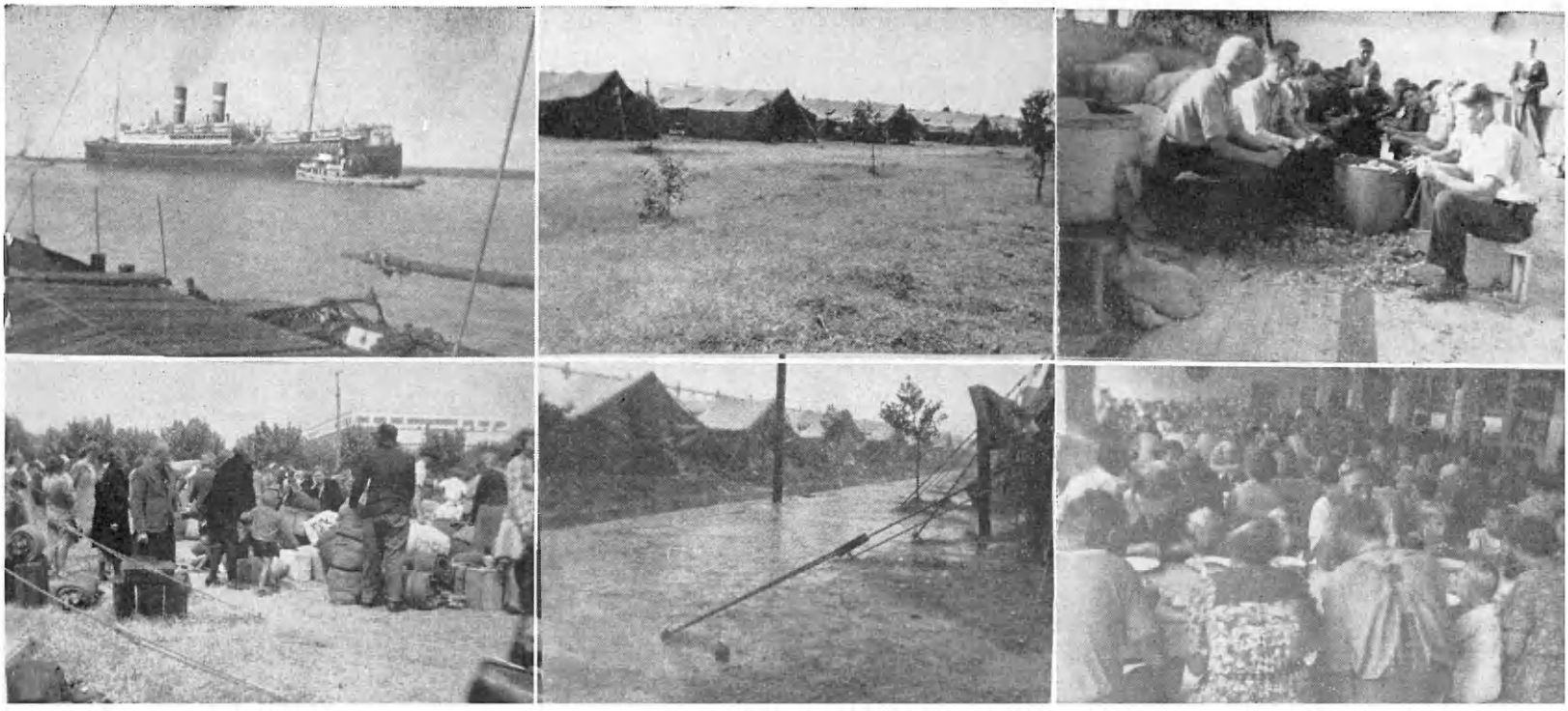
Prior to World War II successive waves of exile deprived the Mennonite settlements of Russia of most of their men. When the invasion of the Ukraine by the German Army took place in 1940, the Soviet Government organized an evacuation of all population of German background, including the Mennonites, beyond the Ural Mountains. In the Ukraine the government did not succeed in totally evacuating the Mennonite settlements, especially those located west of the Dnieper River. The reason for this was the swift advance of the German Army in its Blitzkrieg stage. However, the Dnieper River formed enough of a barrier so that most of the people

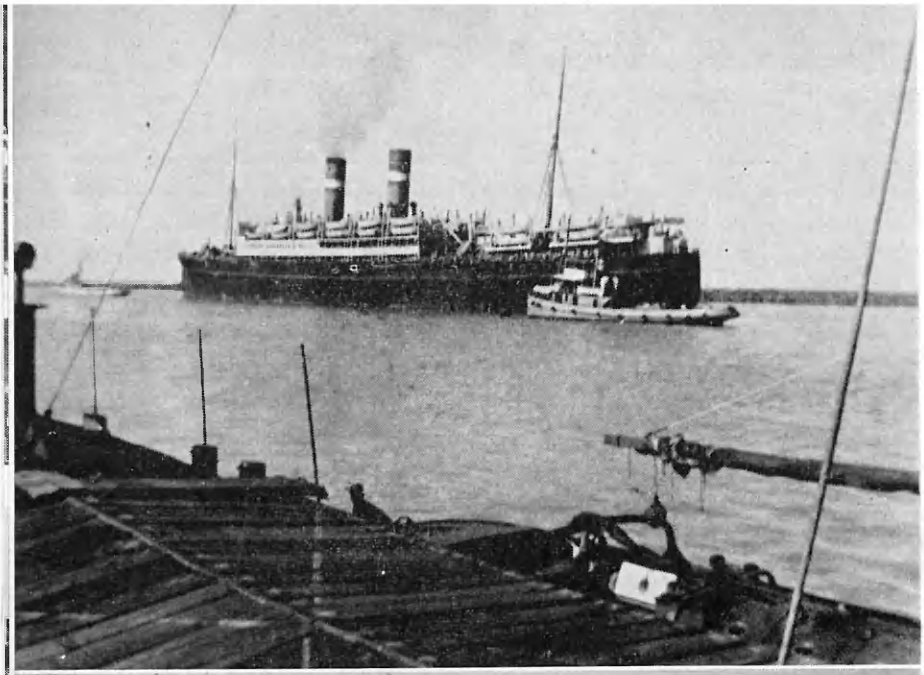
Passengers embarking on the *Volendam* for the first transport to the Chaco.

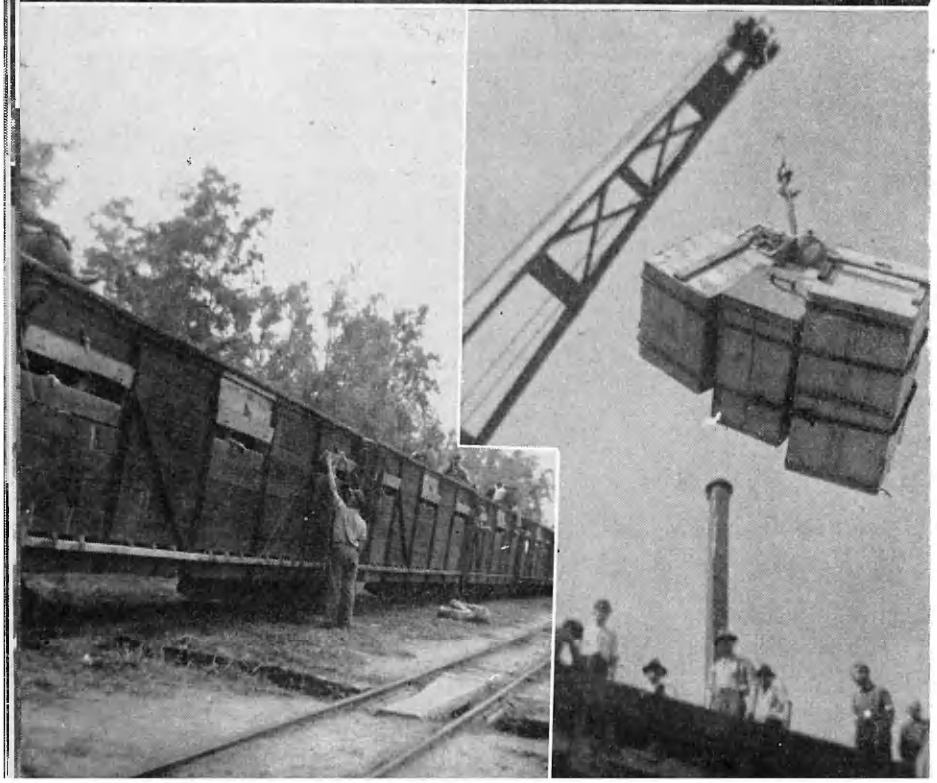
to the east had been evacuated when the Germans arrived. This explains why most of the Mennonites that have been moved to North or South America after World War II are of the Chortitza (west of the Dnieper) and not of the Molotschna settlement.

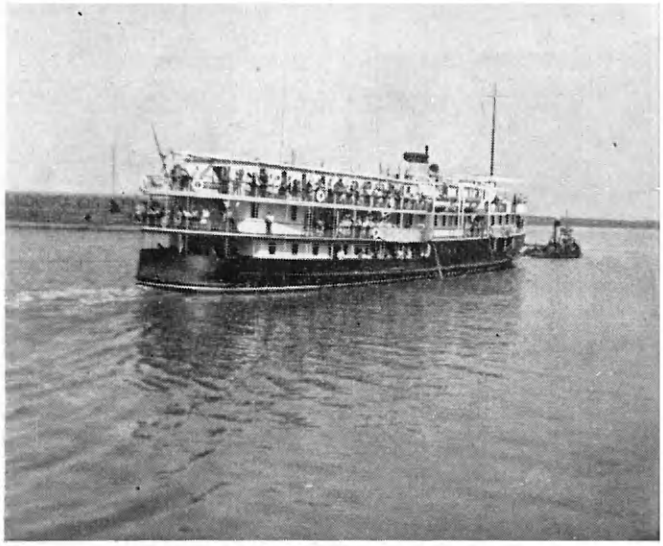
In the fall of 1943 another evacuation occurred. This time the move was not eastward, where most of the husbands and sons were, but westward. In endless treks the civilian population preceded the retreating German Army on its move westward. Some went by covered wagon, others by train. No definite figures of the total number are available. It is estimated that some thirty-five thousand Mennonites were involved. Most of the evacuees were

(Top) An endless trek of Mennonite refugees preceeds the retreating German Army from the Ukraine to Germany proper, 1943. (Below) The Volendam refugees in Buenos Aires. (Right) Baptismal service in refugee camp.









(Left) The *Volendam* arriving at Buenos Aires, Argentina. (Top) *Volendam* group leaves on a river boat for Asuncion. 1,200 miles from Buenos Aires. (Left, center) Boats leaving Asuncion for Puerto Casado.

scheduled to be settled not far from the region from which their forefathers had come 150 years before, in Prussia and other places in eastern Germany. However, the German Reich was crumbling and the Red Army was pushing westward. In January, 1945, the latter entered Germany proper and a general movement of refugees further westward, started.

At the close of the war these refugees found themselves as displaced persons in the British, American, French, and Russian zones of occupation. Those in the Russian zone—and many in the other zones—were forcibly "repatriated." It was most urgent to rescue those remaining, especially those in Berlin. The Russian authorities finally agreed to permit the 1,125 Mennonite refugees to proceed from Berlin to Bremerhaven by train. Peter and Elfrieda Dyck, representatives of the MCC, were instrumental in taking this group to Bremerhaven where the *Volendam* received other Mennonite refugee passengers making a total of 2,305. On February 1, 1947, they departed for Paraguay, arriving in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on February 22. The transportation of this group to Paraguay was delayed because of a revolution in that

Refugees leaving Puerto Casado by railroad for the Chaco.

(Top) MCC personnel at Buenos Aires, Mennonite refugee camp. (Right) MCC and Mennonite representatives from Paraguay are making arrangements to receive the new refugees from Europe. (Center) Immigration house and outdoor ovens in Volendam Colony.

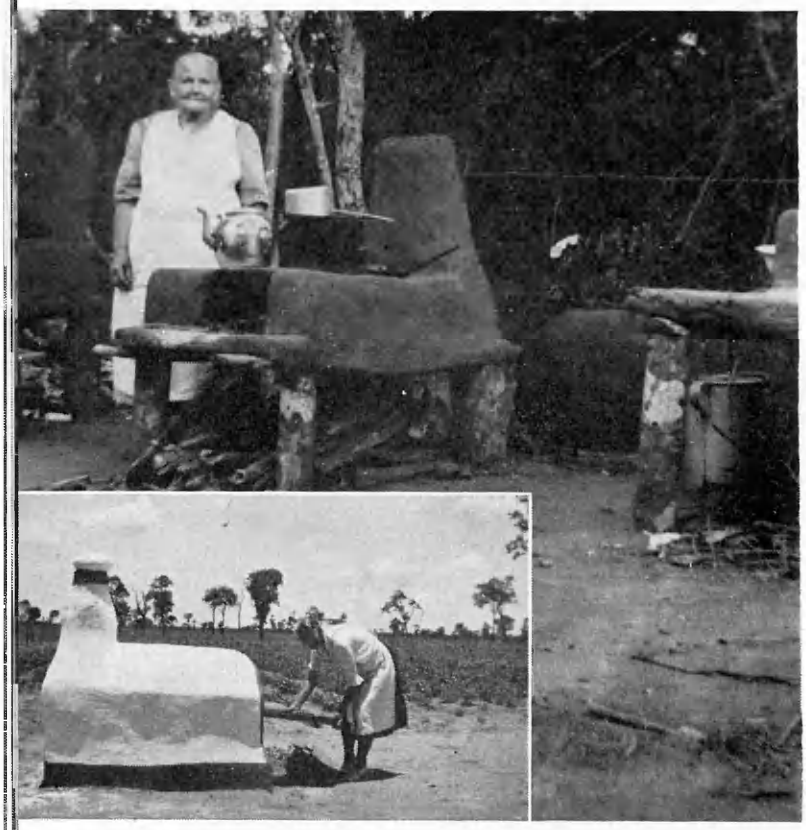
land. About half of this group settled in the new colony Volendam, west of the Friesland colony and bordering the Paraguay River. The next largest group established a new colony called *Neuland,* south of the Fernheim colony in the Chaco. The total cost to the MCC of moving these immigrants was $494,807, of which the International Refugee Organization contributed $160,000. This was the first of a number of shiploads of Mennonite refugees transported to Paraguay.

On March 13, 1948, the *General Stuart Heintzelman* arrived in Buenos Aires with 860 refugees aboard and on May 16, 1948, the *SS Charlton Monarch* left Bremerhaven on October 7, 1948 with 827 refugees destined for Paraguay. This ship stopped in Montevideo, October 22, disembarking 751 Prussian Mennonite refugees for their destination in Uruguay.

Thus of some ten thousand Mennonite refugees from Russia who were not forcibly repatriated, some five thousand joined the Mennonite pioneers in the Chaco and eastern Paraguay. The remaining have either gone to Canada or are expecting to do so.

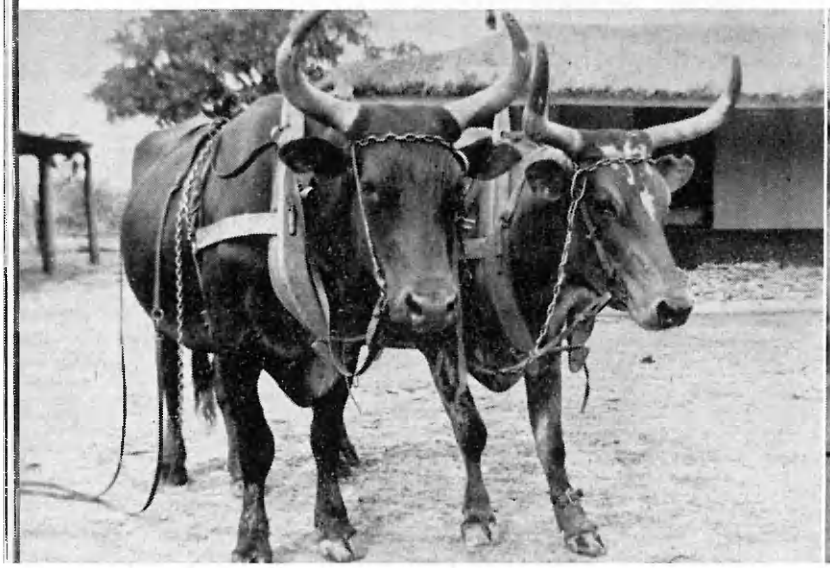
The bridge has been crossed and new life has begun.

(Top) Their husbands and brothers in Siberia, these women are building their own homes with adobe brick in the Chaco. (Left, top and center) Meals are being prepared and served under primitive conditions.



At Last! Homes

(Above) Since good water is precious, the role of the water boy is an essential one. (Left) Draft oxen are most helpful in taming the Chaco. (Bottom) Gerhard Buhr at well on village street.



(Top) The house is already being occupied and neighbors are paying a friendly call. (Right, top) The smile indicates successful milking after having primed the cow with the calf now tied to the post.

OF THEIR OWN!

(Above) Adobe brick factory. (Right) The thatched grass roof is being put on. (Bottom) Village street in Neuland, new Chaco settlement. (Bottom, right) Again he may till the soil in peace.

Again in 1948 the immigration fever spread through the Mennonite villages and settlements of Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

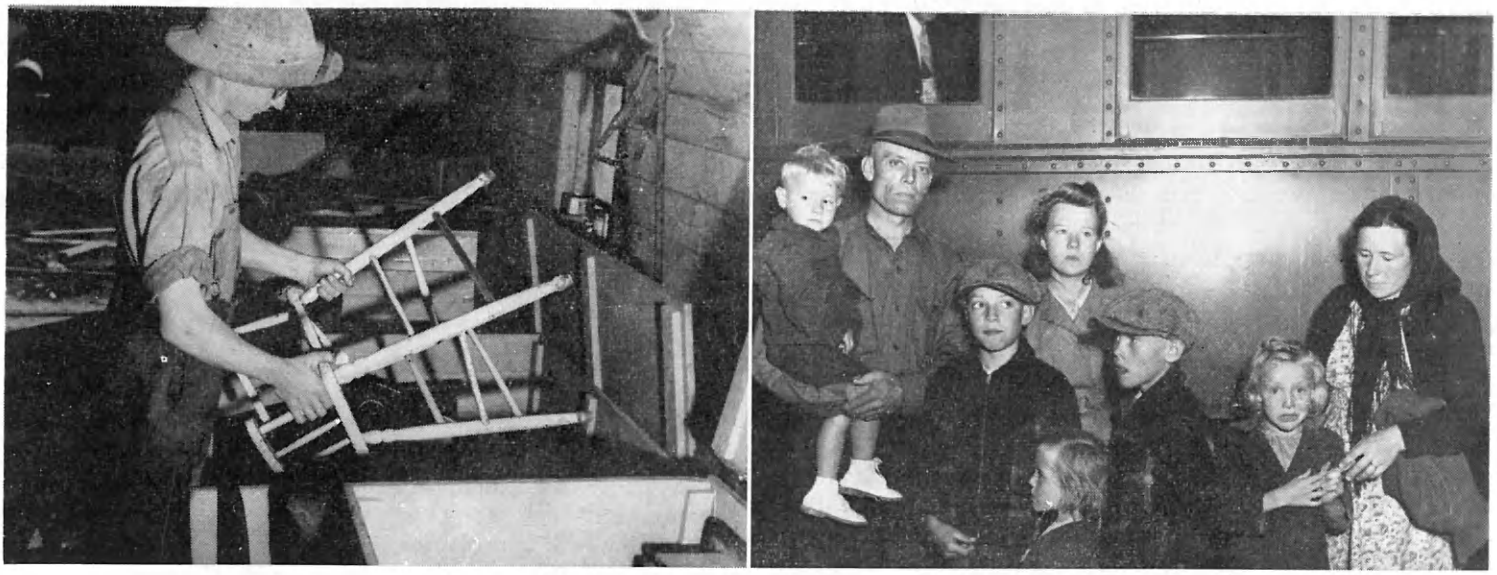
4. Canadians in East Paraguay

BY J. W. NICKEL

FOR freedom of conscience Mennonites have trekked through the centuries until today we find them in almost all parts of the world from centers of culture, industry, and progress in Europe and North America to the "Green Hell" of the Gran Chaco, a country shunned even by Indians of some ambition and where they are neighbors to the most primitive tribes imaginable, the Lenguas, Chulupis, Chomacocas and Guarajos.

It was in the years of 1926-27 that a larger body of Mennonites left Manitoba and Saskatchewan to seek a

Taking leave of relatives and friends causes heartache and shedding of tears. Even the tractor is being taken along.



Some 1,650 Mennonites left Canada for Paraguay in July, 1948, taking with them heirlooms and household necessities.

new home here. As they saw it, their cherished simple way of life seemed threatened in Canada with the accelerated development and progress of the last few decades, and to preserve their own quieter community- school- and church life they hoped to find the isolated wastes of Paraguay's Chaco a more satisfactory place.

Since then a steady stream of Mennonites has trickled into Paraguay. Mostly they came from Russia via Germany and China. However, in July, 1948, some 1650 of them again came from Canada. They were of the same Mennonite groups as before. But this time they chose the southeast section of Paraguay near Villarrica for their new colonial enterprise.

The Chaco with its frequent droughts, locusts, sandstorms, and epidemics had proved too rugged and inhospitable a place for many who had come out with the

The *Volendam* is again sailing with Mennonite passengers, this time from Canada to Paraguay.

first emigrants in 1926, and these had returned to Canada in the subsequent years. A goodly number of these first Chaco pioneers came out again with the new group when they heard that the rolling territory of Caaguazu was to be the site of their new settlement.

This locality does indeed, offer many distinct advantages. For one thing, sweet water abounds, pastures are permanently green, the soil is productive, and the heavily-wooded hills offer an abundance of timbers and hardwoods.

However, this new colonization attempt did not lack its hardships, either. The country is still Paraguay with its unstable and unpredictable government, its revolutions, and its general backwardness. Many bitter experiences of the first Chaco settlement attempt awaited them here. Thrown among a people whose tongue they could not understand and who, as others the world over, were quick to take advantage of the uninitiated, they lost much of their hard and honestly-earned cash before they had begun to get settled. The increasing tropical heat of September and the months following, against which their hastily-built and flimsy tents offered little or no shelter, tropical ulcers and diseases for which they were inadequately prepared, strange insects and vermin, and an equally strange new diet told heavily on them. This was especially true among the aged and the children, who often found themselves confined to closed and overcrowded quarters, and infant mortality ran high.

Nor could they build more adequate shelters. They were as yet many miles from their chosen territory, with no roads leading towards it. These had still to be built through swamps and woods and across the estates of larger landholders whose whims and caprices often made these roads uncomfortable travelling.

However, all this had to some extent been expected, but what proved most baffling and sorely trying was the problem of evolving and developing an adequate administrative system for their new colony when they themselves possessed little more than the first few years of rural grade school preparation for this task. The effort gave rise to every kind of misunderstanding and suspicion and many grew tired of it all and returned to Canada.

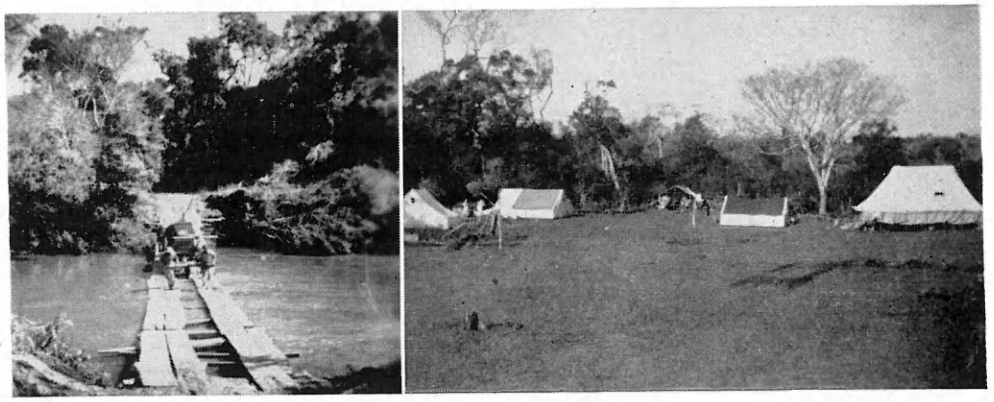
This general feeling of uncertainty seemed to prevail when I first visited these people in January 1949. Only a limited number had succeeded in getting to their land. Many were still living in temporary shelters at Caambary and Urungay while some thirty families had not even dared to leave the main road at Independencia and were anxiously waiting here and in hotels in Asuncion for plane reservations to enable them to return to Canada.

This also caused hesitation on the part of others to begin the difficult task of clearing and building. However, when I was privileged to visit them again in May, all but fifteen families had moved onto their land. Here they settled in two rows of villages, some thirteen in the one and nine in the other, along the Yucure and Rio Yhu, two small rivers cutting parallel across their territory.

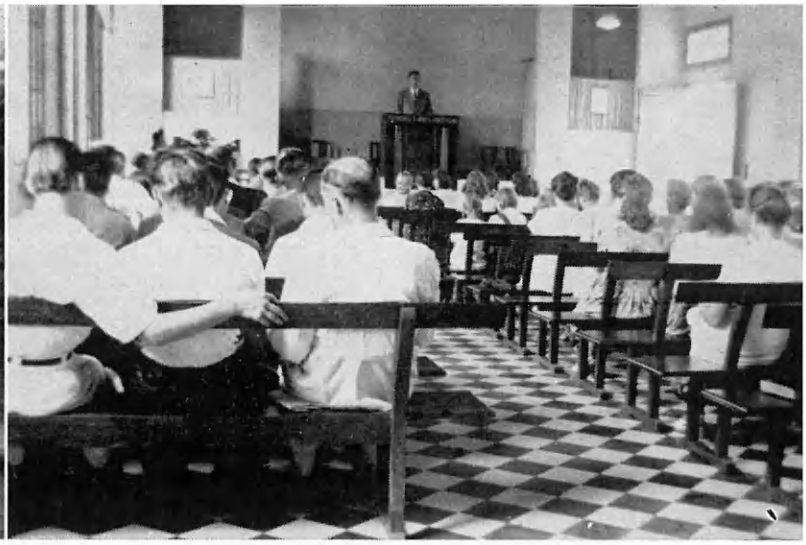
It is a rather quaint sight to see these little Mennonite villages nestled among the wooded hills and along these Paraguayan rivers. While children and dogs are playing in the red sands and long-horned cattle and great zebus are lazily feeding in the valleys, the woods resound with the echoes of powerful axstrokes of men clearing land and of hammers and saws of others building houses and barns.

It is equally quaint to watch the activity at the little cooperative community store where some of this new colony's public and social activities can be seen. The bulletin board displays their social work in part as one reads: *"Wer in diesem Store kaufen will und kein Geld hat der Muss sich an den Dorfschulz wenden."*

Thus another colonization attempt by Mennonites is added to the long chain of similar ventures throughout their history. As yet it is hard to tell whether the undertaking will be successful. One can only contemplate Mennonites and the qualities they possess as pioneers and colonists, Paraguay and its possibilities and handicaps, and what has become of other similar ventures by other groups in this land of many woods, and —wait.



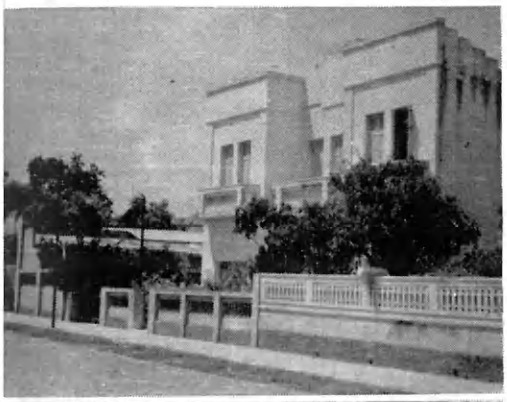
In the new colony of the Canadian Mennonite immigrants, 1948. (Left) They cross a river on an improvised bridge to the site of their settlement (right) near Villarrica, to begin life over again far removed from the temptations of the modern secular civilization.



The Evangelical church in which the Asuncion Mennonites meet regularly Sunday afternoons, Ernst Harder, preaching.

5. Mennonites in Asuncion

BY ERNST HARDER



ASUNCION still carries the "look" of a very old city. It has not changed much in the last few decades. On every hand one finds evidences of past glory; churches and government buildings once started in grand style, but never finished. Only a few cobblestone streets have been covered with asphalt and a handful of beautiful new buildings such as the Bank of Paraguay, a large theater, a club house, the five story Ministry of Interior, and the buildings of the health and sanitation department are the heralds of the "coming" modern age. However, even these have difficulty in keeping up their appearance as pioneers of progress. Too often they, like the Senate building and the police headquarters, are riddled with machine gun bullets and have to be refinished. Yet they are, nevertheless, signs that someone else besides the Mennonites believes in the future of Paraguay.

(Continued on page 37)

(Left) Mennonite Home and Mennonite youth. (Right, top) After worship and (bottom) the Ernst Harder home where young people meet. (Bottom, left) MCC representatives ready to leave Asuncion for the Chaco. (Right) The Bank of Paraguay, Asuncion.

(Top, left) Lumbermill and workshops. (Top) One of first buildings, still being used. (Left, center) Interior of dining room on the "Loma Jhoby." (Left, bottom) Sowing on the fields cultivated by the Hutterite brethren.

6. Hutterian Bret

FOR the past nine years a group of Hutterian brethren have been living in East Paraguay on the borders of the Mennonite settlement of Friesland. United with the Hutterians of North America in faith, and therefore bearing the same name to the world, this group was of separate historical origin. Its members came mostly from the great modern European cities. Starting with a group of seven in Germany in 1920, men and women who previously had widely varying outlooks have been brought and welded together by their determination to find the truth that leads to active Christianity. They have turned back to the life and words of Jesus and the apostles, and the first church in Jerusalem. Love, peace, and faith are dynamic principles that shape the whole of life. The outside observer stamps them as community of goods, refusal to take part in war, and as readiness for martyrdom for the cause. The member knows them as total dedication to God and his fellow men, leading to unity of faith and work and the desire to share all he possesses to heal the need of others; as mutual encouragement, discipline and humility, as complete certainty in the power and victory of Christ.

The newly-formed group was on fire to find men and movements, both today and in the past, that in any way shared the same purpose. They found inspiration in the witness of the peace-minded groups of the Anabaptist movement of Reformation times, and particularly in that relatively small group which was known as the Hutterians, who began community life in 1528. In 1930, finding the Hutterian Brethren in Canada and the United States still living on the same basis of faith, and finding that their faith expressed all the truth for which they had been striving, the new group in Germany became united with the larger, historical group, and adopted their name. During its thirty years of com-

Babies are cared for in the colony nursery. (Top, right) A kindergarten group around the fireplace. (Center, right) A carpenter at work in the workshop. (Right, bottom) School children and school in background.

hren at Primavera

munity life, the group has already shared richly in the fate experienced over a long period by their brothers and by the Mennonites: threats, imprisonment, expulsion, and emigration from one country to another in search of freedom of conscience. In 1937 they were expelled from Germany and their property was confiscated by the National Socialist Government. With the help and hospitality of Mennonites in Holland, they came to England, where a branch had been started in 1936. In 1941, due to localized ill-feeling against the German members, the Community had to leave England and find a new home in Paraguay, where they were granted the same privileges of freedom to follow their faith as had already been extended to Mennonite immigrants.

The group which came to Paraguay had grown from the original seven to three hundred and fifty men, women, and children; new members having come chiefly from Germany, Holland, Switzerland, and England. Of the dozen ships that carried them, all made the crossing safely, although it was at the height of the submarine campaign. Land was purchased in East Paraguay: the *estancia Primavera,* 19,500 acres of alternating grassland and forest, with only one house. For a time the women and children were lodged with their Mennonite neighbors in Friesland until the men had built temporary dwellings—at first just great, grass-thatched roofs, supported on posts and without walls. The first years were difficult, pioneering years, when everyone had to adjust himself to the sub-tropical climate on a very primitive standard of food and shelter. Now there are three villages and the community numbers over six hundred people.

At each of the villages there is a school, kindergarten and nursery, a mixed farm, and one or two subsidiary industries. One member worked for several years for

the Inter-America Agricultural Commission which is seeking to improve standards of farming in this country. In Primavera experiments have been carried out to improve existing crops and introduce new varieties. Timber is worked in the sawmills, some expert furniture making is done, as well as the skilled craftwork of woodturning. At Loma Jhoby, the village lying nearest to Friesland, is the community's hospital, a thatched and whitewashed building containing twelve beds. Here work four doctors, nurses, a chemist and a bacteriologist to render medical service not only to the Hutterians but also to their Mennonite and Paraguayan neighbors, altogether a district inhabited by some thirty thousand people. It was built by the brothers in 1942. The MCC, the Society of Friends, and the Brethren made contributions to the cost. During the last seven years the number of people attending the hospital, both out-patients and in-patients, has increased steadily, with a sudden, remarkable increase over the past few months which makes the present building and staff quite inadequate. The most acute shortage is that of nurses. Every effort is being made to provide better equipment and more adequate accommodation and trained nursing so that efficient, careful service may be given to this backward and isolated neighborhood.

The Community also has contact with people of this, its adopted country, through a house operated by the brothers in Asuncion, partly as a center for transacting business in the capital and partly as a home for a number of their young people who are receiving advanced training at various schools and colleges. People who are interested in the Community's life and work can visit here and find out more about it before undertaking the long journey to Primavera.

Throughout all the time of its intensive pioneering in Paraguay, remote and half-forgotten as it seems in the midst of South America, the Community has lost none of its fire to find and combine with like-minded men and women and to offer help where needed. Its activity has brought it into lively intercourse with groups and individuals scattered over three continents. Besides maintaining a considerable correspondence with different parts of South America, brothers have visited the Argentine, Chile, Brazil, and Uruguay. Contact with North America has become particularly important during the last year when several young Americans have come to the Community, earnestly searching for a way of life that is true, genuine, and sure-rooted. Many new friends have been made by interchange of letters, and in February, 1949, two members traveled to North America to stay for about one year. They visited the Hutterian Communities in the United States and Canada as well as many people who have written to Paraguay.

In spite of its distance, Europe remains a focal point of interest and activity, partly as the place of origin, and partly for its great spiritual and material need. A strong connecting link is formed by the Wheathill *Bruderhof,* a daughter community in England. This Community grew up, quite unexpectedly, around the three members left behind in 1941, supposedly for one or two months to wind up affairs when the main body of members emigrated to Paraguay. As the previous land and buildings of the Community had already been sold, and no further exit-permits were to be had, it was plain that the newly-forming group would have to begin afresh in England. There was now no antagonism because the membership was almost purely English. They took a neglected upland farm among the Shropshire hills in the spring of 1942. To-day the Community has three farms, worked as one unit, which persistent labor has raised to first category level for English farming, and the number of people has grown from twenty to one hundred and forty. It is now possible for people of other nationalities to enter England, and the Wheathill Community has and is expecting, many visitors from Europe.

Much interest was stimulated through journeys made in Germany and Switzerland by members of both the Paraguayan and English communities. Besides holding meetings and talking with many men and women about the goal and basis of the common life, these members tried to gather some sixty war-orphans to be adopted by the communities. They found, however, that no state was willing to yield up even its most destitute children to this charitable scheme; the utmost that could be granted was for a restricted number of orphans to be in the care of the English Community for three years. The brothers then turned their attention also to older people: the so-called Displaced Persons who have lost, or fear a return to, their homeland. One hundred and thirteen people, some families, some single men and women, some widows and little children were welcomed by the Community in Paraguay in early November, 1948.

Although few have shown a strong interest in the way of life practiced, a number have found at least a temporary home here, away from the devastation and fear in Europe, and give good help in the communal work. Others, driven by the restless discontent bred of long years of restraint and suffering, could not adjust themselves to this peaceful and ordered agricultural settlement.

The common life of work and faith can be accepted only by the voluntary agreement of every member. Once given, this united purpose can override all differences of race and origin. This group of the Hutterians includes about twelve nationalities, and the members come from all walks of life. There are teachers, doctors, farmers, chemists, engineers, men who were tramps on the road, and men who "sold all they had and gave to the poor." All live and work together in complete equality, and the door is always open for anyone, no matter what his previous background. The decisive thing is that each person must be ready to make an entirely new beginning. People who realize that there is no solution to the prob-

lems of mankind along political lines without a complete inner change; people who realize that an inner change, a faith or "religion" is ineffectual if it does not bring a practical remedy for social and economic ills; people who feel, however vaguely, that a radical change is necessary in the way men live; such people come as seekers and as guests. If they find in this way of brotherhood the answer to their questions, and if they are willing to pay the price of utter self-surrender, a new life is open to them in the search for the Kingdom of God. Such a decision must be made of their own free will, but it must be a decision for life. Before taking the final step of uniting with the brotherhood, they are expected to test their decision thoroughly and count the costs.

Entrance to the Hutterian church follows baptism upon confession of faith. Child baptism is not practiced. Every member of the brotherhood not only renounces all property and all claims to any personal rights, but must be prepared to follow Christ through hardship and persecution, through scorn and death. His yea must be yea and his nay, nay. His allegiance can be only to the church of Christ, and therefore he can hold no public office for any world state. The church, as the bride of Christ, must be kept pure and spotless, and all that is evil must be put aside, and overcome through the use of church discipline. There is strength in community, but this is no path of security, and no retreat from the cares of the world. Love toward one's fellow men must be put into action in all the affairs of daily life. Hard work, and the willingness to do any job that is necessary, with no privileges, is the order of the day, every day. Such a life finds its vitality in its witness to all men and in its task as the embassy for a new order on the earth.

The whole community is also engaged in a different kind of struggle—pioneering in a wild country. It is a hard struggle, economically, against such formidable factors as drought, locusts, and political unrest. But all stand together as brothers. The weak do not go to the wall, the strong do not accumulate; the sick and the aged are cared for; no one is left to hoe his row alone. This unity and peace of men with one another fills such a life with joy. Through full Christian brotherhood true joy is found and multiplied by sharing.

MENNONITES IN ASUNCION

(Continued from page 33)

Ten years ago only a small group of Mennonites had come to live in Asuncion. There were a small number of young girls and men who hoped through their earnings to supplement their parents' meager income in the Chaco colonies. In fact, the number of young people in Asuncion was a good barometer as to how things went in the colonies. When there had been a good crop the Mennonite population in Asuncion decreased, in lean years it increased. Only the occasional visit of a minister from the colonies brought the group together for church services.

In 1942 the Mennonite Central Committee organized a Mennonite Home. Regular visits of ministers to serve the people in Asuncion were arranged and the services were held in the Home.

Since the coming of the refugees in 1947-48 the work in Asuncion has grown considerable. The Mennonite population here in the city at present numbers about 250 persons. Many have come here because they could not adjust to the difficult pioneer conditions, others are occupational specialists who have found work here, and again others have come here to be in a more favorable position to grasp opportunities to go to Canada. The number of girls who work as clerks and housemaids has also increased.

The Mennonite Home, for which MCC has recently bought a new building, is still the main service center for our Mennonites in the city as well as for those from the colonies coming here only for a short time on business, for medical attention, or just to visit. It also serves as MCC office, the center for unit activities, and welcomes any visitors coming from Canada or the USA. Most of our people in the city receive their mail through the Mennonite Home address. In the Home they also gather each Sunday evening for supper and an evening program.

Since the beginning of this year we do full-time religious work in Asuncion under the Home Mission Board of the General Conference. Every Sunday we meet with the people in an Evangelical church for worship service. The attendance varies from 120-170 persons. Our Sunday School, which was started with eight, now includes thirty-two children who are divided into two classes. On Wednesday we have choir practice and on Thursday prayer meeting. The younger girls meet once a week as a sewing class and all the young people meet the first Sunday of every month in our home for a young people's program.

In these few years it has become clear that there will probably always be a large number of Mennonites living in Asuncion. People have already asked for the organization of a congregation. The group will need its own church. There is much work to be done in order that more people might be brought to the saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and that in their lives and in this community, too, God's will might be done.

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Paraguay—An Informal History

PARAGUAY, by Harris Gaylord Warren. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1949. 393 pages. $5.00.

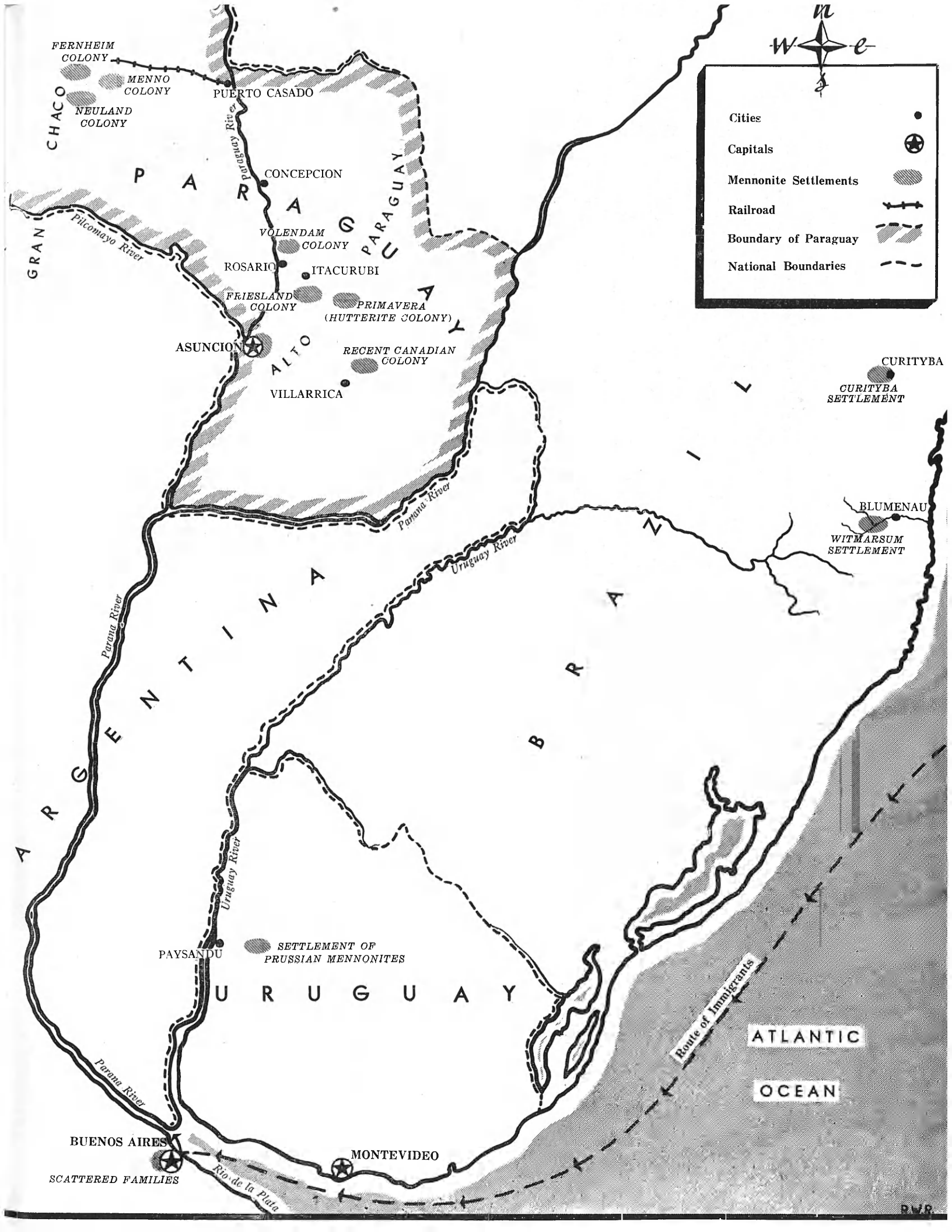
Good reading material in English about Paraguay is exceedingly scarce. Most treatments of Paraguay are in the form of a brief chapter in some larger history or geography about South America as a whole. Harris Gaylord Warren's informational history of Paraguay is a solid contribution to the English reading public who are interested in the background and development of this little land-locked country in the heart of South America. This interestingly written account gives the reader a glimpse into a hitherto unfamiliar subject. Mennonites have, of course, heard much in the past two decades about Paraguay in general and something of the extreme primitive conditions in the Chaco, and as such, know more about Paraguay than most North Americans. But even they know next to nothing about the history of the country into which their brethren have moved for the purpose of establishing permanent settlements.

Warren's history of Paraguay may be somewhat difficult reading at first, not because of the style, but because of the strangeness of names and places and what must seem to the reader like a lot of adolescent pranks carried on by politically ambitious individuals who seek power. The insight into the political intrigue and the background of the endless number of revolutions and counter revolutions reminds one of gang warfare in modern cities. Paraguayans seem to take these revolutions in stride much like Chicagoans take the announcements of blazing newspaper headlines about another gang warfare.

This history can be profitably read by all who want to be more intelligently informed on recent political and economic developments in Paraguay. There is evidence of increasing stability as manifested by a growing interest in education, economic development, and political contacts with outside countries. Of course, the growth is slow and in keeping with the general Latin American pace. This volume also affords an excellent opportunity

(Continued on page 40)

Mennonite Settlements in South America


FERNHEIM COLONY
MENNO COLONY
NEULAND COLONY
CHACO
PUERTO CASADO
Paraguay River
CONCEPCION
PARAGUAY
GRAN
Pilcomayo River
VOLENDAM COLONY
ROSARIO
ITACURUBI
FRIESLAND COLONY
PRIMAVERA (HUTTERITE COLONY)
ASUNCION
ALTO
RECENT CANADIAN COLONY
VILLARRICA
Parana River
CURITYBA
CURITYBA SETTLEMENT
BLUMENAU
WITMARSUM SETTLEMENT
Uruguay River
ARGENTINA
BRAZIL
Parana River
Uruguay River
PAYSANDU
SETTLEMENT OF PRUSSIAN MENNONITES
URUGUAY
Route of Immigrants
ATLANTIC
OCEAN
Parana River
BUENOS AIRES
SCATTERED FAMILIES
Rio de la Plata
MONTEVIDEO
Cities
Capitals
Mennonite Settlements
Railroad
Boundary of Paraguay
National Boundaries

PARAGUAY—AN INFORMAL HISTORY

(Continued from page 38)

for acquaintance with the total culture of Paraguay, its people, its customs, its dress, its food habits, traditions and religion. The author shows clearly how the Roman Catholic church, especially the Jesuit order, is deeply entrenched in Paraguayan history, including its political plots, intrigues, and revolutions.

For Mennonite readers this book will provide an excellent frame of reference to understanding the larger cultural setting in which the Mennonites are placed. The somewhat detailed account of the Paraguay-Bolivia war indicates the part that Mennonites played in this war. The treatment that Mennonites receive in the whole book is quite brief. For the most part, the statements are accurate with one major exception. The author must not have had accurate sources, otherwise he could not have made the following statement: "The first arrivals avoided those hardships so often a part of new colonization efforts. At Puerto Casado a comfortable hotel, homes for transients, and other comforts provided quarters until dwellings could be built in the Chaco." This is a gross inaccuracy, for the facts are that few colonization efforts in history have been made more tragic. Disease, pests, and plagues combined to create a catastrophe which cost 185 lives from this little band of pilgrims within the first two years before they even got settled on their own land in the Chaco. This tragedy was due to lack of preparation, carelessness, ignorance, and indifference on the part of both Mennonites and Corporation Paraguay with whom the Mennonites dealt. This defect, however, does not detract from the usefulness of the volume since it does not claim to treat the history of the Mennonites.

—J.W.F.

FERNHEIM AND FRIESLAND

(Continued from page 19)

the Chaco so that by the end of 1930 a total of 294 families of 1,580 people had located in the Chaco. These were later joined by fifty-seven Mennonites of nine families from Poland.

Another group came from East Siberia. In 1927 a Mennonite settlement had been made on the Amur River north of the Chinese border. As the pressure of the Soviet policies became more intense they escaped in groups across the Amur River into China where they established a center in the city of Harbin. Of these nearly 1,500 refugees, 373 left for the Chaco on February 22, 1932, to settle in the new Fernheim Colony. Six hundred and seventy-six went to Brazil and the remainder of the group went to North America.

Thus, the total of original settlers of the Fernheim Colony numbered 383 families with some 2,000 persons. They settled on a land area of 39,650 acres purchased and occupied by the settlers by the end of 1932. This land was purchased by the settlers from the *Corporacion Paraguaya*. The price of this land was originally set at $8.00 per acre, later reduced to $3.00 per acre and, finally, after the MCC bought the *Corporacion Paraguaya* with all its assets, the land was made available to the settlers for forty cents per acre payable in fifteen years. The German government contributed nearly one million *Reichsmark* to the movement, support, and settlement of the Mennonites in the Chaco and in Brazil.

The following are the original villages of the Fernheim settlement:

1930 1. Lichtfelde
1930 2. Kleefeld
1930 3. Gnadenheim
1930 4. Wiesenfeld
1930 5. Friedensfeld
1930 6. Friedensruh
1930 7. Schönwiese
1930 8. Schönbrunn
1930 9. Auhagen
1930 10. Rosenort
1930 11. Waldesruh
1930 12. Rosenfeld
1931 13. Hiebertsheim
1932 14. Blumenort
1932 15. Orlof
1932 16. Karlsruhe
1932 17. Schönau

During the year 1930, 88 people died of typhoid fever. Malaria and hookworm caused considerable suffering. As a result of a drought in 1935 and 1936, 140 families composed of 706 people left the Fernheim settlement in the fall of 1937 to establish a new colony in eastern Paraguay. This settlement was started in August, 1937, and named Friesland. It is located inland from the port of Rosario. A land complex of 17,500 acres was bought and the following villages established:

1. Cornisheim
2. Grossweide
3. Central
4. Grünfeld
5. Rückenau
6. Landskrone
7. Waldheim
8. Rosenberg
9. Blumenau

The Hutterite settlement joins the Friesland Colony while the Volendam settlement is also located in this area near the Paraguay River.

To summarize, there are now in Paraguay some three thousand Canadian Mennonites in the Menno Colony some three thousand Fernheim-Friesland Mennonites who came there after World War I, and some five thousand World War II refugees still in the beginning of their struggle for a new home and an existence. And, finally, about fifteen hundred Old Colony Mennonites from Canada came to South America in 1948 to found a new colony in southeastern Paraguay.

D. G. Rempel's Adventure in Toy Manufacturing

AS a penniless youth Dietrich Gustav Rempel came to this country in 1922 to escape the succession of disasters that attended the Mennonite colonies in South Russia—revolution, famine, religious persecution, and economic confiscation. With artistic talents he early had ambitions of becoming a sculptor. Continuing his education in America he studied art at Bluffton College, Bluffton, Ohio, under J. P. Klassen, who had followed him to America from South Russia. In 1929 he graduated from Bluffton with the degree of bachelor of arts. In memory of his brother who lost

Rubber toys being packed at the Rempel factory, Akron.

"FRISKY" The HORSE

"MILKY" The COW

"FROGGY" The GREMLIN

his life in the Russian Revolution, Rempel created a bronze statue of a horse and his fallen rider and presented it to Bluffton College, where it now stands in the Musselman Library.

Rempel's interest in sculpture and design has led him, since World War II, into the highly competitive rubber toy making field. Various experiments in moulding rubber toys led to the discovery of a revolutionary process which does away with costly machinery, dies, moulds, and the need for steam curing. Rempel modeled all of the animals in his toy family out of clay. He was then confronted with the task of organizing, with the aid of his wife, a manufacturing company, and establishing an adequate plant to house his factory. The Rempel Manu-

"HOPPY" The RABBIT

SQUAWKY" The DUCK

"CUDDLY" The CAT

"YIPPY" The CHICK

"CHUBBY" The PIG

"PERKY" The PUP

"BALKY" The MULE

"FLEECY" The LAMB

At the Christmas banquet of the Rempel Manufacturing Co. Second and third from left, Ruth W. and D. G. Rempel.

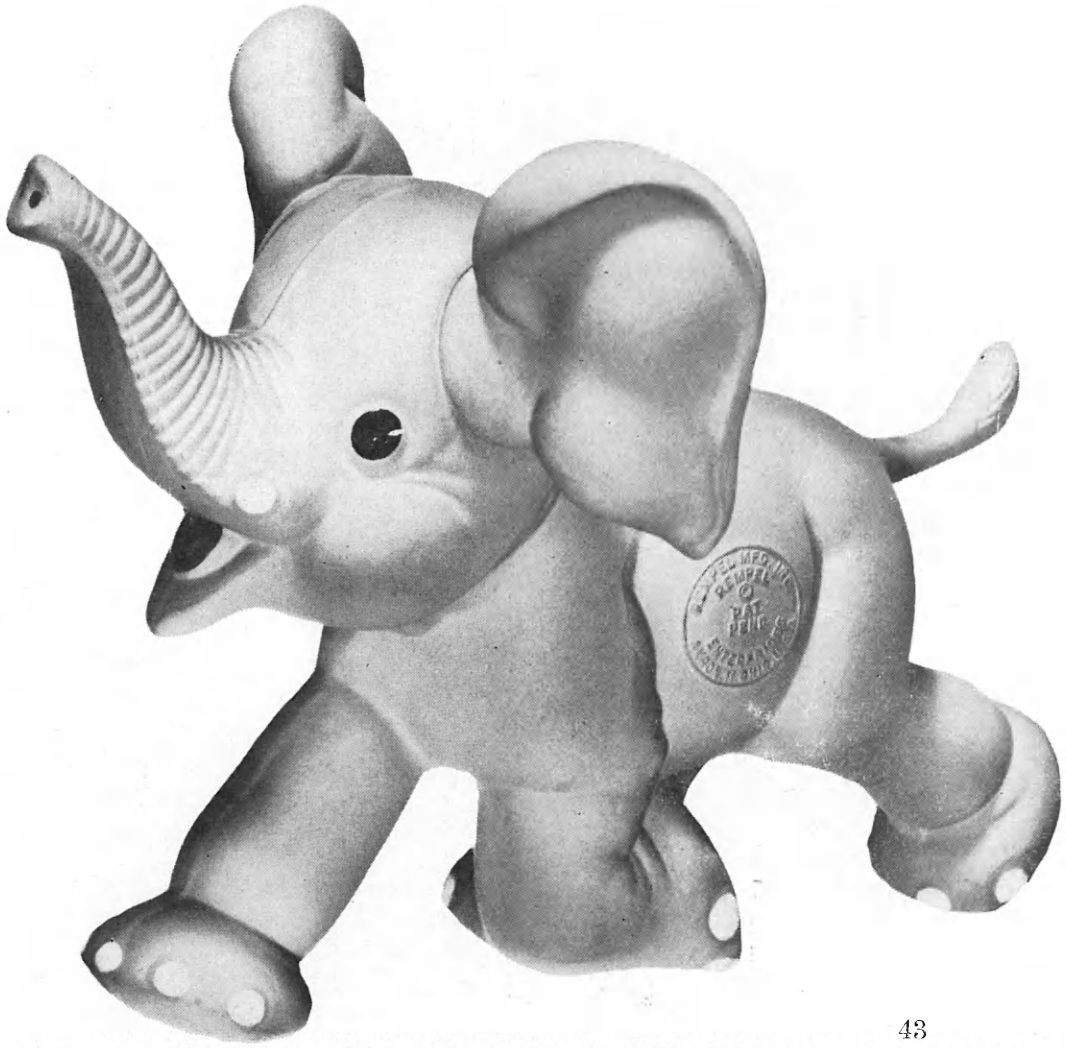
facturing Co. was launched in July, 1946, with a handful of employees. Even before the factory was in production Rempel had sold his product to some of the largest variety store chains. The company grew rapidly. At the end of its third year it had 140 employees and could show total sales of the preceeding year of over $1,000,000. The Rempel Manufacturing Co. now has an international division and is licensing companies all over the world to use its production methods and its animal characters which are protected by a world-wide copyright.

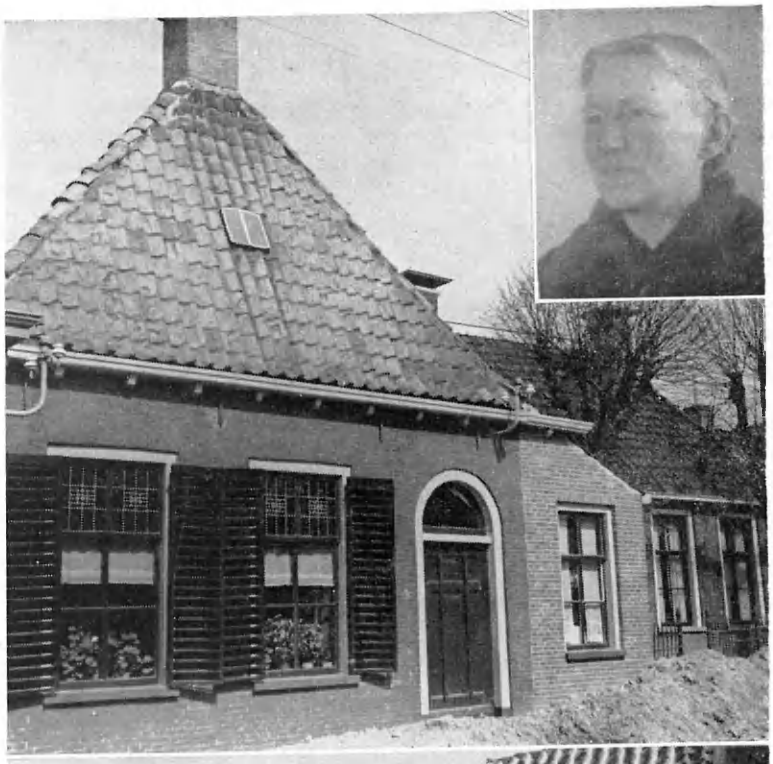
The Rempel rubber toys have found such wide popularity largely because painstaking attention to detail in designing, modeling, and painting has given them such life-like appearance. They seem to possess "personality" and in the hands of children *Frisky* the horse, *Milky* the cow, and *Balky* the mule become animated friends from "Sunnyslope Farm."

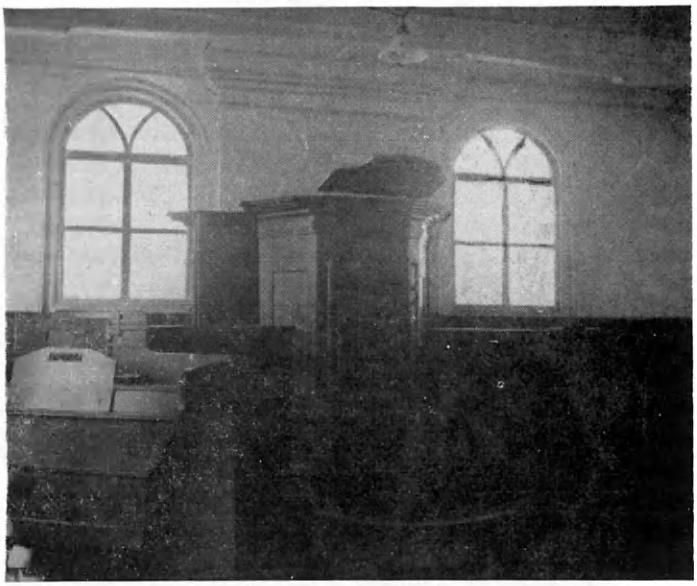
The Rempels have recently produced a story book for children, *Deegie and the Fairy Princess*, written by Ruth W. Rempel, wife of the manufacturer, and illustrated with pictures of the Rempel toy animals by Rempel and James A. Wiley. The story is a fantasy based on the early life and experiences of D. G. Rempel in Russia and later in America.

Latest Rempel creation is "Tusky" the elephant. The illustrations on the opposite page are approximately two-fifths of actual height. The Rempel toys are all nationally known and are available at drug, book, and variety stores the country over.

For information and price lists concerning the toys as well as the book, *Deggie and the Fairy Princess*, write to the Herald Book and Printing Co., Newton, Kansas, where they may be ordered at popular prices.







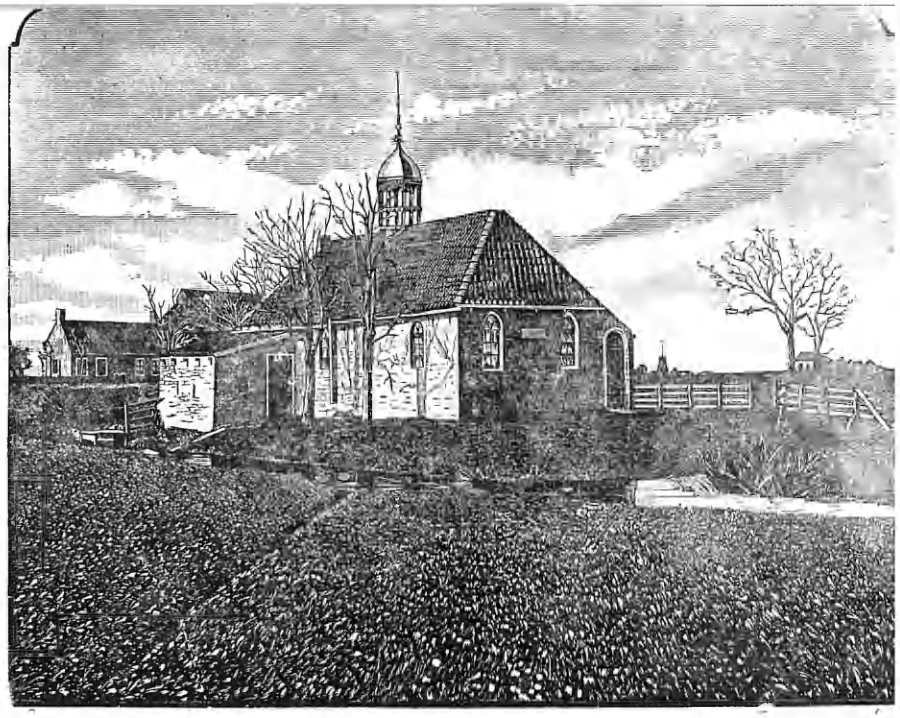
The "hidden" Mennonite church at Pingjum, The Netherlands. (Above) Interior view shows elevated pulpit. (Left) Miss S. E. Doyer, pastor of Pingjum Mennonite church and exterior views of church, showing need of reconstruction.

Hidden Church--Pingjum

BY SIBOLD S. SMEDING

THREE geographical names in The Netherlands are pre-eminent for the student of Menno Simons' life: Groningen, Witmarsum, and Pingjum. In Groningen, where Menno found shelter the first years after he renounced Catholicism, where he probably married and was ordained as elder of the already existing

(Left) Interior of Pingjum church showing chairs used only by women during worship. (Bottom) The "White Parsonage," traditionally associated with Menno Simons.



(Right) The old "Menno Simons church," now replaced by the Menno Simons monument (left), Witmarsum.

congregation, little of Mennonite historical interest remains to be seen.

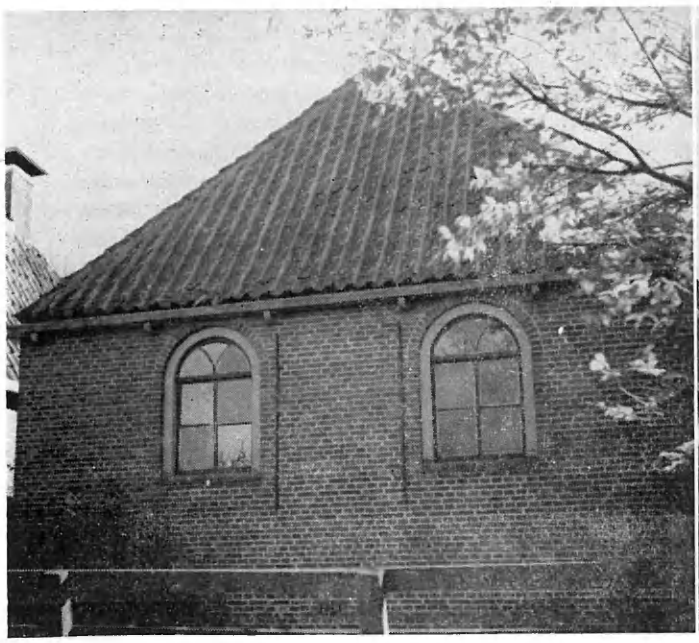
Witmarsum and Pingjum are two rather small villages in Friesland, a few miles south of Harlingen. In the first named, Menno was born. Shortly afterwards, his parents went to the neighboring, still smaller, village of Pingjum. Later, when he was twenty-eight years old, Menno became the assistant priest in Pingjum (1524) to be promoted to a parish priest in his native village of Witmarsum in 1531. He stayed there as such until the end of his Roman Catholic career in 1536. An interesting feature of today in Witmarsum is an oil painting of our reformer, which hangs in the Mennonite church above the pulpit. A mile east of the village an extremely plain monument indicates the place where the original *preeckhuys* (meeting house) once stood.

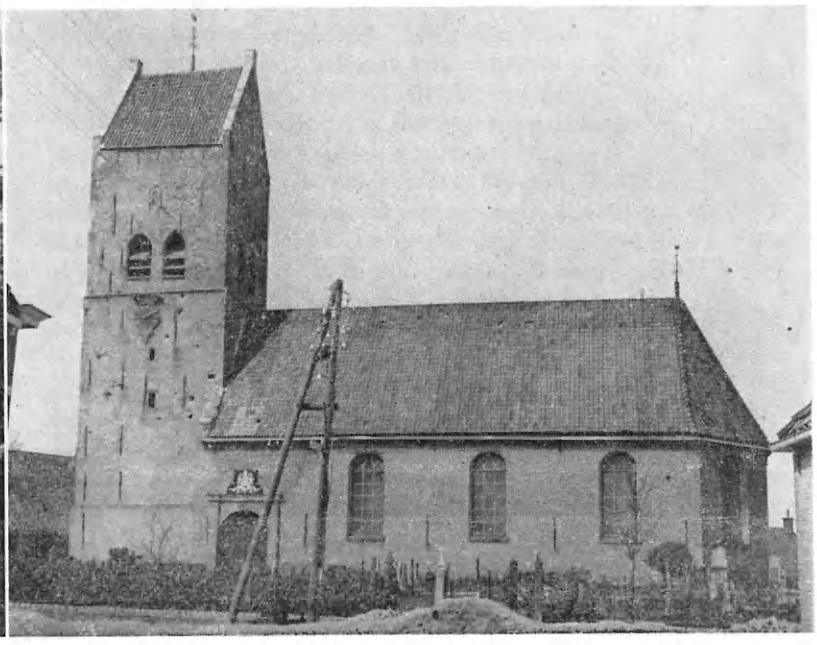
Where the Dutch Reformed church of Pingjum, built in Frisian style in 1760, now stands, there was, before the Reformation, a Roman Catholic church in which Menno celebrated many a mass. A small congregation of Mennonites still exists in Pingjum. Together with the congregation of Witmarsum, they have a pastor in Miss S. E. Doyer. But the Mennonites at Pingjum have their own church, however small it may be! (The Frisians call their Mennonite churches—and only these—*Formanje,* Dutch: *Vermaning,* meaning: Admonition House.)

I do not hesitate to call the small church of Pingjum probably the oldest, and, if not the most beautiful, certainly the most interesting of all the Mennonite churches in The Netherlands. It is what we call a *schuilkerk. (Schuilen* means to hide, to keep in the background.) The best translation is perhaps: "Hidden church."

How and why this? When in 1580 the Roman Catholic religion was prohibited in the Low Countries, the Dutch Reformed church took over the organized reli-

Northern wall of Pingjum church. (Right) Dutch Reformed church on site of Catholic church where Menno Simons once served.





gious life here in a more or less authoritarian way. Other non-Roman Catholic religions and the Jews were theoretically considered as non-existant, and practically were only more or less tolerated. Their only restriction was this: they were not allowed to build their houses of worship on public squares or in such a style that they might easily be recognized as churches. The non-Reformed Protestants had to build their meetinghouses in out-of-the-way places so that they could not be recognized as churches!

In this way in the beginning of the seventeenth century, the spiritual descendants of Menno built their *Formanje* in Pingjum. I regret I cannot truthfully state that Menno built it himself, or that he ever preached in it. What we may say, however, is this: that those, who did build it, may have been the sons and daughters of fathers and mothers, who had been in Menno's audience. It is certain that those seventeenth century builders stood, spiritually as well as architecturally, very much nearer to him than we of the twentieth century.

The church building of Pingjum is today what it was two centuries ago. Coming into the village, you may roam around for an hour without finding it! And when, having been directed to the house, you have rung the doorbell, and the friendly custodian opens the door to you, still nothing indicates that the small and ordinary passage leads, through the small door into something other than an ordinary backroom. But when you open this door, you are at once in the church room of 8,40 m. by 6,30 m. (14 ft. 6 in. by 10 ft. 8 in.).

Around the four whitewashed walls, under the six small, arched windows, runs a continuous single-row bench or pew. It is very simply made from pine and painted a dark brown. This pew is for the men only! In the small center square are two dozen old and dilapidated chairs, with rush seats for the women. Above the north pew where the church council sits, is a very simple elevated pulpit. When I had the rare privilege of preaching there on a fine Sunday afternoon in the spring of this year, one woman still wore the old-Frisian gold-casque with white lace-cap.

The church of Pingjum is in a state of decay, making restoration action urgently necessary. Plans have been made and funds are now being gathered to accomplish this end. While Mennonites acknowledge no holy places, we do cherish places intimately related to our historical background. Something of the spirit of our forefathers seems to enter our lives when we foregather at the places where they worshipped; when we join in prayer with him who leads us from the same pulpit where centuries ago a venerable long-bearded elder—a "love-preacher" as he was then called—led in prayer; when we sing our hymns where they sang their psalms. Thus, this simple small church of Pingjum seems to me to be more than an old decaying building—the church home of a small congregation in an obscure Frisian village. I consider it to be, in all its simplicity, a monument of Mennonitism the world over.

(Any readers wishing to share in the cost of restoring this old church should sent their contributions to *Mennonite Life,* North Newton, Kansas. We shall be happy to forward these to the pastor of the Pingjum Mennonite Church. The Editor).

TWO WORLDS OF PEACE

(Continued from page 4)

souls of the past. In Quaker circles it is always open season to think on the words of George Fox. Then, if that does not fetch sweet sleep, there is the additional exercise of converting some passage into German *zum Beispiel:*

> *Freunde, wenn euch jemand reizt und erbittert, so streitet nicht wider ihn, denn dann tut ihr eurer Seele Schaden und vergeltet Gleiches mit Gleichem. Vielmehr wird die Geduld siegen: denn sie gibt Antwort auf das, was von Gott in allen Menschen ist, und wird jeden von seinem Widerstande abbringen.*

Even that did not bring sleep and my mind wandered back to Germany where in the winter of 1944 so many persons were suffering, for conscience' sake. I thought of Karl and Eva Hermann—Karl sent to concentration camp because he would not bear arms, convinced of the wrongness of military duty after World War I; and Eva, his wife, who was sentenced to ten years at hard labor because she refused to obey the law of the land and continued to befriend Jewish children, sheltering them in her home and caring for their needs like a mother. I wondered what peace they had found. What would be the ultimate end of their suffering? Would God take them as in the blessed sleep of the martyrs or would they emerge from their prisons into the hard glare of the post-war world? Travail of soul, troubles, and misery in life, communion of the saints? At last I fell asleep at Snowline.

Later I read from Eva Hermann, formerly of Mannheim:

> *In Hagenau hatte mir einmal nach einem Hofgang eine Mitgefangene versonnen gesagt: "Vor einem Jahr lag mir die ganze Schoenheit des Walsertales zu Fuessen. Aber ich habe heute viel mehr Freude an einer einzigen Rose im Hof als damals an allen Alpenbergen mit einander." Was es bedeutete, Berge und Felder, Wiesen und Waelder wieder um sich zu haben statt Gitter und Mauern, Blumenduft statt Rauch und Waeschedunst, Vogellaut und Nachtigallenschlag statt Maschnenlaerm bei Tag und Nacht —das laesst sich auch nicht in Menschenworte tun.*

Such was the peace at Hagenau and such was the peace at Snowline, California. Such is the peace of God that can make two worlds one.

Dr. Stonepie's Christmas

BY J. H. JANZEN

THE constellation of stars which we call the "Big Dipper" is known as the "Big Wagon" and the "Big Bear" to others. To the Big Wagon-people the crooked handle of our Dipper is the wagon tongue with a sharp bend in it; and just above Mizar, the star at that bend, is a wee little starlet named Alcor (*das Reiterlein),* an imaginary rider pulling the Big Wagon.

Many years ago, I was caught up by some conveyance not much different from the imaginary horse of the heavenly Big Wagon, and carried right to the star Alcor, which, as I learned at that occasion, is called by its inhabitants "Star Success." I was amazed to find the Alcor dwellers very much like we are, while our funnies always depicted the mars dwellers much different from anything existing on Earth. In my former imagination the Alcor dwellers, if any, would have to be still more different from us than the Mars people, since Alcor is so much farther from us than Mars. There had never before been contact between the Alcorites and us; the people here and there developed independently from one another. Yet the Alcor people spoke our own languages, looked like us, and were divided, like we are, into many different national states, some being kingdoms and others democracies. However, they never warred with one another, but lived in peace and harmony, working industriously and efficiently, being successful in everything that they undertook to do. When I asked how they managed to do without wars, they said, "We had them before, but soon found out that war is the most foolish enterprise that can be undertaken, because it prevents success in every area of life."

What struck me on Alcor was that people there seemed to avoid one another's eyes. They always looked beyond persons with whom they were talking, toward something that promised immense success, if rightly handled. This made their features, especially their eyes, as it seemed to me, cold and soulless. I never heard them use the words *happiness, blessedness,* and the synonyms thereof. If I tried to look them straight in the eye, or if I introduced the subject of happiness, they looked beyond me at something they had achieved, and changed the subject.

O yes, they were religious. They had large, beautiful temples so wonderfully built that little boys and girls had just to go and look at them to find the solution of all their mathematical problems. There was the multiplication table before them, clear and comprehensible, engraved in stone; and so were their algebraic equations, their logarithms, etc. Inside one could find the solutions of all social, economic, psychological, and other-wise-logical problems. Here was the God Success enthroned and dominating everything.

On my return to Earth—early in the morning—from my unusual excursion, to my own very sober and plain, but nourishing, porridge, I wondered whether I liked it better here or on Alcor.

I continued to wonder as I pondered the recent attempts made by the Earth people to achieve success. The great wars had come and set our civilization back for centuries. Success had been very hard, if not impossible, to achieve. Crime and vice had been on the rampage, and, if we were not to be smothered under the mire of our own juvenile and adult delinquencies, an educational institution had to be established to teach us to behave. That institution just had to be a success or else . . . . The corporation to set it up had been organized, and at the first meeting of the executives the bylaws had been drafted and tentatively accepted. It had been easy to find a name for the institution, "The University of World Perfection." Soon after, the scientists, the mathematicians, the chemists, the philosophers, the psychologists, the psychiatrists, the pathologists, and all the rest of them, found themselves at the ends of their respective ropes.

They had heard, though, of my journey to Star Success and, in their consternation summoned me to their meeting at Frustration City and tried to find out from me how people on the stars contrived to achieve success. I tried to explain, but my feeble language could not enlighten nor persuade them; they seemed not to know what I was talking about, and thought I did not either.

About this time the jetexex propelled (JXXP) superlight-speed Universe Cruiser had just been completed, tested, and found safe for universe travel. Since atmospheric conditions and landing facilities on Alcor were about the same as those on Earth, to which I could testify, it was resolved to send a delegation to Star Success commissioned to bring back a scientist-expert on success who would be willing to serve as the head of our University of World Perfection, and to make it the biggest success ever heard of.

The delegation found Dr. Stonepie, who was willing to come down to Earth and to help us poor Earth-dwellers, while he did a little research on Earth conditions himself, for further use on Star Success on his return home. They had found the right man to lead us to success, as he himself had discovered a method to turn stones into flour, dough, bread, pies, cookies, and other pastry. Moreover, he was willing to serve without salary, as the Alcorites, in their mania for success, had found, also, that money was more of a hindrance than

a means to achieve success. This claim is made on the stars on scientific grounds and with the fervor of religious fanatics. He insisted on the one condition that Earth people should not make life unbearable for him by intently gazing into his eyes. To this the delegation agreed, rejoicing in the fact that Dr. Stonepie's services would not aggravate the financial problems of the Earth population like any home-made proposition did.

Dr. Stonepie became the President of our University of World Perfection and began his activities by inspecting our means of education, of which, strangely enough, we thought the Bible was one of the foremost. Dr. Stonepie was quite positive that the temples on Star Success with the mathematical symbols outside and the philosophical interior served the purpose much better. But when he found that the Bible also mentioned the turning of stones into bread—his main achievement—he left it in its place.

What puzzled me most was the change in Dr. Stonepie's view in regard to the Earthdwellers' eyes. His students soon nicknamed him "Old Emptyeyed Soulless" abbreviated for everyday use to "Old Empty," in spite of the fact that he was always filled with ideas leading toward success. In the beginning it was a little hard for them not to search their professor's eyes when he was lecturing; but very soon they lost interest in doing that because there was no response in them. One of the more backward students remarked, "As a teacher he is unsurpassed, as a man he is a bugbear."

Dr. Stonepie, on the contrary, found it more and more interesting to look into human eyes. The humans did not mind his trying to do so. The only drawback was that they, only too willingly welcoming his gaze, reciprocated his inquiring looks with friendliness and warmth which still hurt him to the quick. Nevertheless, it was pleasing, enlightening, and very gratifying for him to search the depths of human eyes. There was something sparkling in them that made the very souls of men and women, but especially children, visible.

He got the surprise of his earthly days on Christmas Eve when the birth of Jesus Christ was celebrated by old and young. Jesus Christ! . . . A queer fellow, indeed, who had come to seek and to save the lost! According to Dr. Stonepie, the first step on the way toward success was to do away with those who obstructed progress because they were lost beyond recovery and could not be converted to the ways of successful people. But here was one who singled them out to save them and—yes—to make them happy. Happy, indeed!

The lights on the Christmas tree flared up and flooded the sanctuary with brightness; and from every human eye shone the radiance of the lights of the Christmas tree.

The guest of honor, Dr. Stonepie, was seated on the platform from where he could see, in one of the front pews, an old man sitting side by side with a little girl. The two held hands and, time and again, beamed at one another with their expressive, lucid eyes, smiled, and settled comfortably back again in their seats to worship with the choir. Never before had Dr. Stonepie seen such a perfect picture of satisfaction and contentment.

Christmas, with all its splendor and abundance of love, went by leaving Dr. Stonepie wondering, pondering, marvelling. After New Year's Day he packed up and ordered the Universe Cruiser to take him back to Star Success.

We were taken aback and tried to persuade him to stay a little longer, but he said, "You do not need me. We Success people have only knowledge, but you have faith, love, happiness, blessedness. What more do you want? If you do not give yourselves to the riches with which you are endowed, like we have given ourselves to our cold soulless knowledge—nobody, nothing can help you."

We stared at him, and he looked back unafraid and unhurt, calm and unflinching.

"Maybe Old Empty has a soul after all," said the student who had dubbed him with this nickname.

What should we give the old dear soul for a parting gift?

He himself answered our question by asking us for a Bible. We gladly gave him our best, the edition de luxe of the University, and in his gratitude he just whispered, "Faith, love, happiness, blessedness! Wait till I bring that to my compatriots on Star Success!"

But thou, Earth, though thou be little among the stars of heaven, yet onto thee came forth the Ruler of the Universe whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting!

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The Faith of Pioneers

We are leaving because we believe that no Christian church can endure without the teaching of God's Word in our schools. We believe that such instruction must not be reduced to a minimum, but must receive primary emphasis, for our Lord said, "But seek ye first the Kingdom of God . . . ." It is hoped that all defenders of the faith in Jesus Christ and His Word, be it in the government or among the people, will, through our migration, be encouraged to the recognition that the Bible is the most effective and best weapon against the inroads of atheism and will become, more and more, the primary subject of instruction in all schools of the land.

—From letter to Canadian Government
by Mennonites leaving for Chaco, 1926