DECEMBER 1976

IN THIS ISSUE

The Mennonite people are a migratory people. They have been pushed by religious or cultural intolerance and pulled by the magnet of new economic opportunities to move again and again. In the process they have performed a variety of services, and encountered a wide range of experiences, on a succession of frontiers.

The articles in this issue of *Mennonite Life* deal with Mennonite beginnings in various parts of Canada. The theme of beginning again is common to all the articles, although the places are widely separated. The description of pioneer settlement in Saskatchewan at the turn of the century and in British Columbia three decades later, and the much more recent Mennonite experiences in the Maritimes are all a part of Canadian Mennonite pioneer life.

The authors of these articles are as varied as the articles themselves. The articles on the Maritime and Rosthern beginnings were written by persons who participated themselves in many of the events described. In the case of the Rosthern article the author's name is not given on the original document although there is no doubt that many of the events are described on the basis of personal observation and experience. Dr. Peter Penner, the author of the article on the Maritimes is an Associate Professor of History at Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick. The British Columbia article, however, is written by a different kind of author—the agent of the Canadian National Railways who, with the company he represented, had responsibility for the Mennonite migration from Saskatchewan to British Columbia which he describes. In total, these diverse items illustrate and explain important aspects of Mennonite life in Canada.

Ted Regehr
Editor of this issue

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MENNONITE LIFE

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COVER

Indian chief Almighty Voice, c. 1894. Photograph from the Duck Lake Museum.

BACK COVER

Scenes from the Abram J. Wiebe Homestead, Vanderhoof, British Columbia, in 1944. Photographs from the T. P. Devlin report.

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Peter D. Zacharias. *Reinland: An Experience In Community.*
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Rosthern, c 1906. *Photograph Saskatchewan Archives.*

MENNONITE BEGINNINGS AT ROSTHERN

Immigration from Russia to Saskatchewan.

A group of families arrived in Manitoba from Russia on November 2, 1891. During the first winter they stayed with relatives and friends in Manitoba, but at the close of the winter they began thinking of establishing their own homes. Since much of the land was taken in Manitoba where most of the Mennonites were located, they looked further westward. Among them was a resident by the name of Klaas Peters, who was a Mennonite and a C.P.R. agent. He promoted Saskatchewan, and a group of twenty-seven families of pioneering spirit decided to go to Saskatchewan.

Once the entire group was assembled everything was loaded into railway coaches and cars. The people, domestic animals, and baggage comprised two coaches. They left Morden, Manitoba, on April 22, 1892, and arrived at Rosthern, Saskatchewan, on April 24, at four in the afternoon.

En route, the train halted on open prairie between Lumsden and Saskatoon. We wondered what the reason for this stop could be, and soon learned that the entire crew had left on an antelope-shooting expedition. I do not recall how successful the active hunters were. A number of animals must have been shot down, given the large herd.

We, too, took advantage of this brief stop, stepped out of the coaches with spades, and dug holes in the virgin prairie soil in order to determine the quality of the soil. Grass in this area was not high since several prairie fires each year burned all grasses and plants down to the ground. Ordinarily the so-called "prairie grass" grew like "prairie wool", as thick as a layer of felt. In every direction deep buffalo trails were visible. They were trampled to knee-depth, and all led toward a river or lake. Indians told us that these trails suggested the vast herds of buffalo that had roamed the prairies. (Ed. The last of the large buffalo herds on the Canadian prairies disappeared in the 1870's about 15 to 20 years before the arrival of the first Mennonite settlers. With the disappearance of the buffalo the entire way of life of the Canadian Indians was destroyed.)

When we arrived at the present-day site of Rosthern, the entire station consisted of a water reservoir or tank with a railroad siding and a telegraph pole with the name plate "Rosthern" fixed to it. At that time the railway was owned by the Qu'Appelle, Long Lake and Saskatchewan Railroad and Steamboat Company, and leased to the C.P.R.

Our first impression of this entire area was hardly encouraging. As far as we could see the earth was blackened and not a blade of grass was in sight since a prairie fire had swept over the area. In this desolate setting the rail coaches were shunted onto a siding, and remained there for about five weeks as living quarters for the settlers. In one of the railway cars, a settler, Mr. George Ens, opened a small retail store with the most essential items for settlers: coffee, sugar, tea, tobacco, nails, soap, etc. He soon erected a small shanty which served as home and store. Mr. Ens was the first settler and, thus, the founder of the town. During the first five weeks, Mr. Ens and several other men also took a train to Prince Albert, where they purchased two carloads of building lumber to build their first houses. These were small shanties built next to the railway track, although some settlers stayed in tents initially. Theirs was a very primitive way of life, as would be expected in a new settlement.

Upon our arrival at Rosthern we were also greeted and welcomed by a small group of earlier Mennonite settlers. They were Old Colony people who had moved from Manitoba to Alberta and settled in the Gleichen, Alberta, area. The environment and climate at Gleichen were not to their liking. It was dry and water was difficult or impossible to obtain, and in July of 1891, on the recommendation of Klaas Peters, they had moved to Rosthern where they erected their primitive homes—small tents—near the station. All took homesteads at or near the location of the present town of Rosthern.

The Search for Land.

In late April a group of thirty men gathered and boarded five wagons. With five or six on each wagon, we started on our search for land. We headed westward, there being no road at all, since apparently no one had traveled this way before. Our only help was the surveyor's post or land markers. We passed a few haystacks and saw two young playful foxes who hardly took notice of us as we passed by. It was a beautiful scene in nature.

We also came to a rather small bush area where we noticed a large herd of cattle which belonged to a German settler named Diehl. Since the cattle on this grassland appeared so healthy we decided to look at them more closely. It was spring and the cows had calved. As we drew nearer, the cows grew restless, coming wide-eyed with out-stretched necks. We became uneasy, though we could not guess why they were disturbed. Perhaps it was George Ens' Russian sheepcoat. At any rate, some cows started right for us, and we had to start running—faster than many of us thought we were really capable. Our only refuge was the wagon and every one of us ran at full speed to reach its safety again. We had seen little of the herd.

We were now eleven miles west of Rosthern and turned northwest to avoid a large lake. Thus we came to a pine treed creek near the Laird Ferry area on the North Saskatchewan River. Here, on the right side of the river, we rested with our teams. From this location we gained an impressive view of the river and the surrounding area.

We continued in a northwesterly direction until we reached an Indian trail. (Ed. The direction indicated here seems to be erroneous and should probably be northeasterly) It was an old traders and Indian trail that led from Prince Albert to Battleford. On it we traveled in a north-northeasterly direction, continuing across the so-called Stone Hill. We liked this Stone Hill area very much, and were more convinced than ever of this as we passed by it again on our way back. But we discovered that this entire area was an Indian reserve of "Indian Beardy" (Bartindianer), land that could not be considered for settlement.

Toward evening we began looking for a place to camp for the night. We arrived in a valley, where Tiefengrund is now located, and prepared for the night. Several fires were made since there was snow falling and it was cold. Kornelius Penner,

who was not too pleased with the idea of a night in the open camp, ran around and seemed to be searching for something. After a while he returned to us and said, "Men, I have found a house." He was right. It was one of rancher Diehl's, whose cattle we met earlier in the day. Diehl also owned a large herd of sheep, cared for by his hired shepherd.

The whole house consisted of one large room with two partitions in the corners. In one of these smaller rooms the rancher slept with his wife. In the center stood a stove. We begged him for a night's lodging, which he willingly granted us. We were under the impression that we were the only ones that knew of this place. But when we awakened in the morning the entire room was filled. Almost the whole community was there. It was lambing season. The last man to arrive was a man named Julius Toddy, and he found a small space for himself near the stove where he decided to bed down for the night.

That night several new lambs were added to the sheep herd. Since the shepherd could find no empty space for the lambs inside the building, he laid them close to the seat of Julius Toddy. Toddy awoke, feeling a wetness, and noticed the situation. Thereupon he started to make audible "baas", which awakened us from our sleep. He mentioned that many things had happened in his lifetime, but he had so far never given birth to lambs.

A small group of people who were unable to find room in the house had bedded down in the barn. They had covered their bodies with sheep coats, and upon awakening in the morning were covered with a layer of snow.

The next day we returned by nearly the same route as we had come, arriving safely at the Rosthern station. After a few days each man went out alone to find a homestead for himself. Six families settled down in a village somewhat to the north of where Eigenheim lies at present. They named the little village Friedensfeld (field of peace). But the name alone did not suffice because peace lasted only till the first "Schultenbott" (council meeting) took place. Here differences of opinion arose because of school and church matters. The people became restless, with a mind to move again. Each moved his small house to his respective homestead and the village of Friedensfeld was dissolved.

The summer of 1892.

The people began to break the sod as soon as they had selected their homesteads. It was hard work, which began at sunrise and continued till 10 o'clock in the morning when the oxen were put to pasture, because that was the only feed available. At four in the afternoon the work on the land was resumed and continued until sundown. During the feeding time between ten and four, construction of homes could continue.

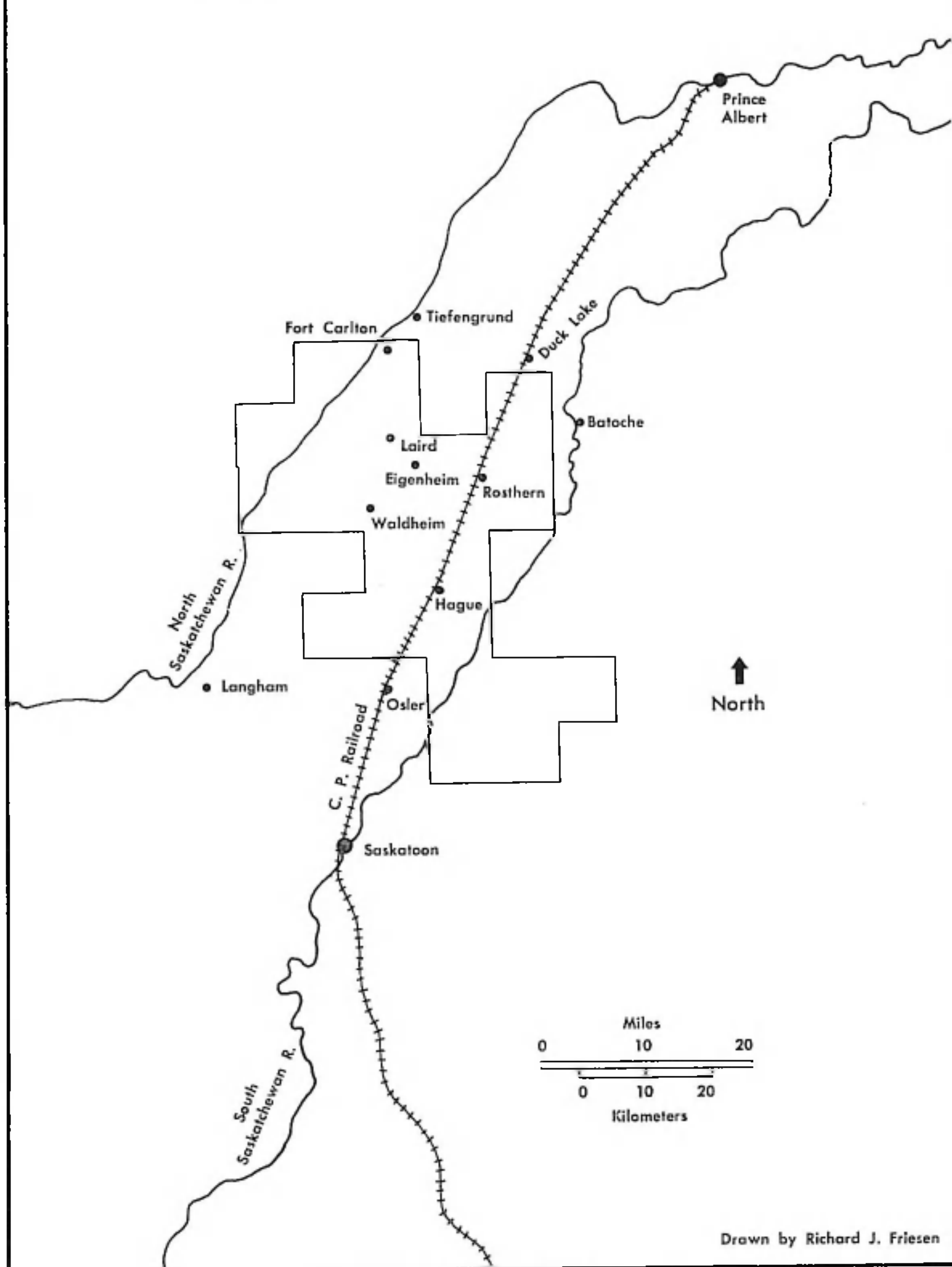
Most of the settlers had only a pair of oxen. A few owned horses, which they had brought from Manitoba. Some owned cows; a few had sheep and chickens. Each settler had acquired only the most essential farm implements: a wagon, a plow, a harrow, a mower and a hayrake. There were no blacksmith shops. Homesteading settlers drove three or four miles to the railway tracks, and there, on the rails, they sharpened or beat out their plowshares.

The main occupation of the settlers in that first year was making hay so there would be sufficient feed for the cattle in winter. Potatoes were also planted that first year. We were under the impression that planting them in the low spots would produce the best results, but we were badly mistaken. The best returns on potatoes came from level terrain, while the low spots yielded nothing. Potato planting was done in a very simple fashion. In most cases there was very little soft soil that had been plowed up, and the potatoes were only covered with earthen sod. We received a good crop despite this primitive planting method. In fall we simply lifted up the earthen sods, and there lay many fine potatoes, like eggs in a nest, except for being slightly flattened. The weather was rather dry all summer; rains were sparse.

The area had much wildlife: deer, antelope, foxes, coyotes, ducks, prairie chickens, etc., but they were not destructive of the crops. Many of the settlers shot them and prepared the meat for winter use. Cattle prices were low; a good ranch cow cost up to $10.00.

We received our mail at Duck Lake. Train service was provided weekly. The mail was usually brought out by someone who drove or even walked to Duck Lake. It happened, too, that letters were lost and were picked up on the trail. Duck Lake had a Hudson Bay trading post. There were also some seven or eight mounted police stationed there. These men came to our settlement at least once a week and enquired how we were getting along. We then had to sign a form for them that would prove their visit to our area.

Hilliard Mitchell had a store in Duck Lake, and since at this time there was no store, station, or post office in Rosthern, we were always obligated to go to Duck Lake. Once we had established ourselves somewhat, we applied to the government for a post office for Rosthern. Mitchell opposed this as much as possible. He seemingly had con-


THE ROSTHERN MENNONITE RESERVE
Saskatchewan, Canada
(Established 1895)
Prince Albert
Tiefengrund
Fort Carlton
Duck Lake
Batoche
Laird
Eigenheim
Rosthern
Waldheim
North Saskatchewan R.
Hague
Langham
Osler
North
C. P. Railroad
Saskatoon
Miles
0
10
20
0
10
20
Kilometers
South Saskatchewan R.
Drawn by Richard J. Friesen

siderable influence since he was a member in the Territorial Government. (Ed. Mitchell served in the Territorial government, but when Saskatchewan was established as a province in 1905, George Ens successfully entered the election and won the Rosthern seat. He was one of the first Mennonites in Canada to hold political office at the provincial level.) We were, in fact, generally displeased with Mitchell. For one thing, he was accustomed to dealing with Indians and halfbreeds, and we also experienced the rather rough treatment he gave to them. He was not a friend of the German people.

To carry forward the post office idea we delegated George Ens with a petition to Prince Albert, where he met with the resident lawyer, H. Newland. (Ed. In the manuscript the author says Newland "had recently left the position of Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan." In the context of the manuscript this is misleading. Newland was Lieutenant Governor from 1921 to 1931.) This man was helpful to Ens in wording the petition. All settlers in our area signed this petition "Haunki en Maunki" (husbands and wives). The outcome was that in 1893 we were granted post office privileges. Our first postmaster was George Ens and the post office was situated in his store. The first years he received wages of $10.00; later it was $30.00 annually.

Usually the people gathered when the train arrived and Ens would then distribute the mail personally. The people did not demand much, yet he was quite busy at times. On one occasion, when the train arrived, the postmaster had to hurry with the mail bag on his back to reach the train in time. Since it was winter and icy, and since, like most early settlers, he still wore the wooden "mules" (i.e. *Hotzschlorren*—wooden soles, open heels, leather tops) he slipped and fell on his back. With legs up, and "Schlorren" even higher, he lay gazing at the sky. A quick search recovered only one "Schlorr". Since there was not time to find the other, the postmaster hurried on one sock and one "Schlorr" to the train to dispatch the mail. From that day on he changed his uniform, at least with respect to his feet. "Hotzschlorren", though economical, were not practical for this business.

The first winter, 1892-93.

One foot of snow fell on November 6th. The winter of 1892-93 was severe with extreme cold down to -45 degrees F., and considerable snow on the ground. On the railway tracks there were up to twelve foot high drifts in places.

In January and February there was no train for seven weeks. Our food stocks dwindled; even Ens' store supplies had disappeared. To venture out by team was impossible, due to the deep snow. Mostly the people lived on potatoes and milk, though a number still had tallow of butchered cattle. A very few had some eggs. The flour had been consumed. The tobacco was also gone, so that heavy smokers sought out a substitute for tobacco. One of them searched the hay stacks for dried leaves to smoke.

In Manitoba some of our fellow Mennonites heard of our plight and collected food supplies for us. In fact two carloads were gathered. We all waited anxiously for that train to come. Finally after seven weeks we saw smoke to the south. It was heavy dark smoke, so it had to be a train! The settlers of the nearby farms all came to meet this train, but due to conditions the train only arrived the next day. It had to work its way through deep snow and drifts. When the train finally arrived, there was great disappointment because our two carloads of food supplies were not in this car lot. Only the mail had been included. Some time later our awaited supplies arrived. The Mennonites in Manitoba had given the food supplies and the C.P.R. brought them to our destination without charging freight fees. A distribution committee was formed as soon as the supplies arrived.

The Waldheim people, who lived 15 miles away, usually required a whole week for one trip to Rosthern. They would travel six miles at a time with their ox teams and then rest. They had to continually dig themselves out of the snow on the way. They remained overnight at farm homes along the way, and other farmers would join them along the way, so larger groups would arrive together in Rosthern. Their purpose in grouping up this way was so that the first ox teams would break a trail, and the others could follow in the same trail. Often when they would return again the trails were covered over with snow, and new ones had to be made.

In Rosthern the whole group usually remained with George Ens for the night. The oxen were tied to the sleighs outside, and the people all came inside like herrings packed in a barrel. The available space inside was about ten by eighteen feet. Here ten to fifteen or even more men stayed overnight. They were usually in high spirits. It was a fine time for visiting, and one of the important facets of such meetings was a chance to express opinions and ideas. That's how they got their supplies.

The summer of 1893

In the spring of 1893 several more families arrived from Manitoba. Seeding began on May 8th.

We received seed grain from the government, which had to be repaid at 35 to 40 cents per bushel after the harvest in fall.

We were now about forty newly-settled families residing in this entire area. In all, approximately 600 acres had been put under cultivation, of which three-quarters was seeded to wheat and about one-quarter to oats. Red Fife wheat was most popular, and the 1893 grain crop was very good. There were 30-bushel yields per acre for wheat and oats. The best wheat yields were harvested on the "double" summerfallow. This was the term used for land that had been plowed twice. The first plowing was only shallow, the second about an inch deeper. This was done mainly to produce loosened soil on the surface, which was then harrowed and seeded.

Seeding was done by hand. None of us had seeding drills in 1893. The farmer walked ahead scattering the seed and leading his oxen which pulled a harrow that covered the scattered seed. The grain had to be covered immediately or the birds would eat it. On the regularly broken land there was little loose soil, so the birds would consume much of the seed grain.

The first harvest was gathered into stacks in August and the last grain was harvested as late as October. This crop was not destroyed by frost. One of the Mennonite farmers owned a threshing outfit, and he threshed the entire area. The threshing engine (steam engine) had an upright boiler. (Ed. Before 1908 most of the steam engines used in Saskatchewan were "stationary" engines, not steam tractors which were widely used on the prairies later. The early steam engines referred to here were similar to those used by the Mennonites in Russia before World War I.) His fee for threshing was three cents per bushel. The wheat price was then set at 25 cents per bushel, and weighed 64 pounds to a bushel, but there was a dire need for a market. There seemed to be no sale for the grain. Thus many resorted to the barter method of disposing of surplus grain. Most of our first grain crop was purchased by new settlers for seed grain. Almost all the farmers had some wheat gristed for flour. For this they had to go to the Prince Albert flour mill, a distance of about sixty-five miles. With an ox team, a trip like this could take up to ten days or even more when there was a long line at the mill. The Prince Albert mill was the only one within a radius of some 500 miles.

The Gerhard Bergen family and home near Hague, Saskatchewan. The Bergens moved to the area in 1891 from Manitoba. The photo was taken around 1893. Provided courtesy of Elizabeth Bergen, Altona, Manitoba.

Subsequent economic progress.

The winter of 1893-94 was not as severe as the previous year. Many by now had horses, so that local traveling was improved greatly. There was much snow.

In the spring another group of settlers arrived. They settled down in the Eigenheim area. More land had been broken up, since the earlier settlers were already better equipped with "pulling" power (i.e. horses). The newcomers were better off, having brought out more cattle and machinery. This was in contrast to the earliest settlers who had very little of anything.

In 1894, every settler had broken up about forty acres of land. This was a good year. The wheat yield ranged between twenty-five and thirty bushels per acre, and weighed sixty-three pounds to the bushel. Red Fife was again popular. There was already so much wheat that the settlers could not utilize it all for themselves. The result was that Peter Neufeld began to buy wheat and erect a granary. But since he did not pay top prices the other settlers requested that George Ens also buy grain. He bought grain that year at 53 cents per bushel and shipped fifty carloads of wheat to Winnipeg.

Settler morale was high, since they now obtained actual cash for their efforts. They also realized some ready cash from sales of butter and eggs. These products sold at the following prices: butter, seven cents per pound; eggs, five cents per dozen. But the preserving of produce was not reliable, since shipping to Winnipeg was a great distance, and so this income was not lucrative. By the time butter reached Winnipeg it was often rancid and had to be used up as wagon axle grease.

In 1895 there occured a total crop failure, due to a frost that destroyed almost all the grain. The wheat fields were completely blackened, the grain not even fit for chicken feed. In order to obtain seed, grain for the coming year seed was collected in Manitoba. A carload was sent to Rosthern and distributed among the settlers. Every settler who received seed grain had to make himself responsible for an equal amount in the fall, to be offered to any new settlers that needed seed grain.

Since it was very difficult to travel to Prince Albert for the needed milling, the early settlers saw the necessity of building their own mill. Since the settlers did not have the funds to build, they applied to Osler, Hammond and Nanton Company for a loan. (Ed. Osler, Hammond and Nanton Co. at that time were the owners of the Qu'Appelle, Long Lake and Saskatchewan Railroad and of that railway's federal land grant. Like other companies of this kind, they sometimes advanced loans for developmental projects which would facilitate land sales and increase the railway's traffic.) They were successful and received $3,000.00. The mill was built in 1896 by the previously mentioned Peter Neufeld, who had emigrated in 1870 from Schoenhorst, Russia, to Minnesota. But some of the settlers had to underwrite the loan with personal signatures. The mill was capable of doing 75 barrels per day.

Early church developments.

In the early years groups would gather occasionally in the homes for church services and someone would read from a book. In 1892 there were no ministers or pastors within 250 miles of Rosthern. That winter the father-in-law of Julius Toddy died. Pastor Schmeider of Edenwald (Ed. Edenwald was a small Lutheran German settlement near Regina, Saskatchewan) requested George Ens by a letter to officiate at this funeral since the pastor was unable to travel the long distance. George Ens drove out to the Toddy farm for the funeral. He wanted the people to sing a song, but since he was no singer, and the people also not versed in singing, they simply omitted the songs. Ens read a Psalm, prayed, and the coffin was lowered and covered. This was the very first funeral within this settlement.

When the Old Colony Mennonite settlers arrived, they immediately considered the organization of a church. They wrote to the Bergthaler church in Manitoba requesting ministers. This action was not approved by a number of other settlers, and a second group wrote an anonymous letter to Elder David Stoesz clearly expressing their dissatisfaction. After that, the Old Colony group waited long and patiently for a minister, but eventually Elder David Stoesz came and called a meeting to which mainly Old Colony settlers responded. This comprised about half of all the settlers. At this meeting Kornelius Epp (of Fuerstenland, Russia) was elected as minister, and later ordained as Elder.

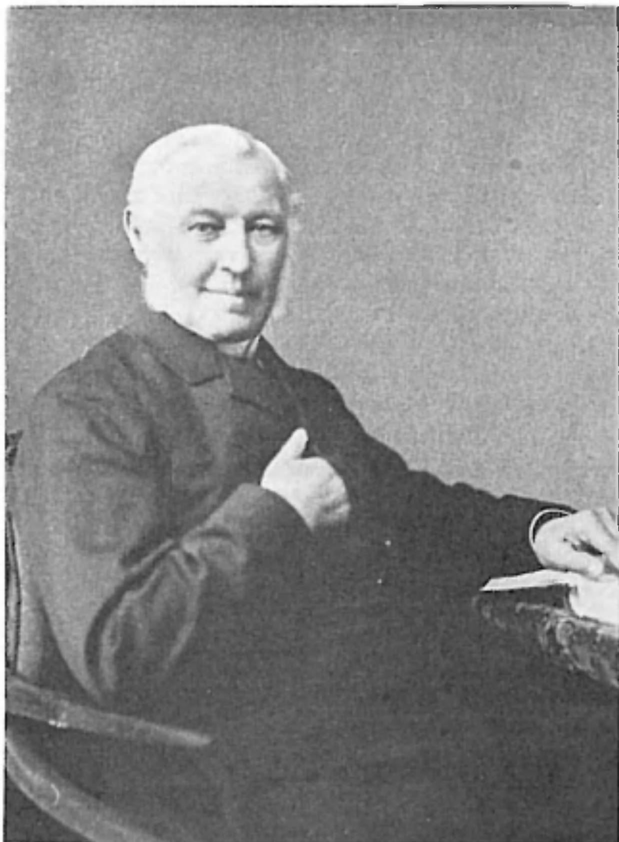
These Mennonites were of strong orthodox faith. Kornelius Epp's brother, for instance, had on one occasion bought a profusely decorated clock with a wooden case. He then took a hatchet and chopped off all the decorations because the clock was too fancy. Later he got the nickname of the "chopped" one (*Behackte*).

Kornelius Epp was a poor farmer and must have been an incompetent servant of his congregation. Under his leadership the congregation suffered heavily. Many members attended other churches and others moved away. Finally Epp was left with very few adherents, and moved to Mexico.

In 1894 a group of new Mennonite settlers arrived. They came from the Rueckenau region of the Danzig area in Germany. This group had spent a winter in

Manitoba. Among the members were Elder Peter Regier and his brother Kornelius Regier. Elder Regier purchased a farm and settled down in the area where Tiefengrund is located at present.

Elder Peter Regier had been the bishop of the Rosenort Church in West Prussia. He had become acquainted with H. Van der Smissen of Hamburg at the founding of a German association in the Werder. Van der Smissen assisted Peter Regier and his group when they emigrated and continued to show an interest in the religious activities of that group.



Elder Peter Regier

When Elder Regier settled down in Tiefengrund a group of the same faith as he decided to join his fellowship. Several more families who arrived from West Prussia joined with those already residing there to found the Rosenorter church. Soon the homes where this group worshipped became too small, especially on such occasions as baptism and communion services. They agreed to build a temporary church building. For this purpose a collection was held among the early settlers. This collection amounted to a total of only ten dollars.

The government granted the group permission to fell poplar trees on the islands of the Saskatchewan River at no cost to them. The C.P.R. donated 20 acres of land, and the group began to work in erecting a rough log church for themselves. Every settler made a trip to the river, hauled home a load of felled trees, trimmed and shaped them, and the church building was erected. The settlers donated all their labour to complete the task.

Then came the finish work inside. For this cause the various congregations from their homeland overseas aided them. There were donations from the church in Heubuden, West Prussia; from H. Van der Smissen, Hamburg; from Brother Hesta, Haarlem, Holland; from Bernie De Haan, Amsterdam, Holland; from John Ens, Kansas; from J. Ens, Elbingen, altogether a sum of $275.00. In this undertaking much was left to faith in God, and Elder Regier shouldered considerable personal responsibility for cash outlays. The building was dedicated for worship on July 12, 1896. On that day twenty-four persons were baptized, and fourteen days later Holy Communion was celebrated with 107 participants.

Those were blessed days for Elder Regier personally, but also for the growing congregation. The building still lacked a ceiling and floor, but by 1898 overseas donations covered this as well. The cemetery laid out on the donated plot near the church was duly dedicated and on July 12, 1896, a 72 year old member of the church was the first person to be buried there. Up to this time it was customary to bury the deceased in their own gardens or elsewhere on their own homesteads.

Small groups also met in homes in some of the other settlements, notably Rosthern, Eigenheim and Waldheim. On August 11, 1895, the first local ministers and deacons were appointed to their office. The first minister so appointed was Gerhard Epp of Eigenheim.

Further immigration brought new immigrants to the area in 1902. Families were also growing. So the suggestion came to build a large roomy church house. Elder Regier could not escape some anxiety, since such a major project would involve him personally, as it had earlier. But his worries were soon relieved. In a week the members of the congregation collected $2,000 for the building, whereas six years ago it was impossible to raise more than $300.00.

Things moved quickly after that. The congregation received permission to incorporate, and was divided into six districts. All continued to belong to the one congregation, with Elder Regier leading, even though each district supported itself and also chose leaders from its own midst. On July 1, 1913, Elder Regier celebrated his 25th year of service in that position; he had been called to the work of elder (sometimes called bishop) of the Werder area at Rosenort, West Prussia, in 1888. Several elders, including F. Ger-

brandt from the North Star congregation, joined in the celebration. A large mission festival was held during the afternoon. During the same day Regier called the attention of the group to the growing responsibilities and his own waning strength, and asked for an assistant Elder. On September 14, 1913, David Toews, the first teacher of the German-English Academy, was ordained to serve as Assistant Elder.

Most of the Mennonites coming to North America after 1877 probably formed their congregations in a way similar to that of the Rosenorter-Rosthern group. Thus the history of this community would become a model for the various congregations which emerged during the past fifty years.

Early schools.

In Rosthern, where the Old Colony people were a majority in the earliest years, no school was desired and so none was built. But when the flour mill was built by outside labour, the other settlers of the area united with the labourers and voted in favour of a school. So in 1896 the first public school was built. The teacher was Abr. Gloeckler from South Dakota. He received a permit from the government to teach school. He had not been able to get a certificate. Prior to his coming, some school sessions had been conducted in farm homes.

At Tiefengrund Abram Friesen arrived from Germany with a large family of eighteen children in 1895. Several other families also settled in this area. Some homes were put to use as a school room, and Jacob Herman Klassen became the first teacher. Later, when the first school house was built, David Toews was the first teacher. Toews had come to the Tiefengrund area to take up a homestead after graduating from the Mennonite Collegiate Institute at Gretna.

Also in 1894, a group of some five families founded the village of Eigenheim. To begin with, classes were also held in homes. The teacher, Rev. George Epp, gathered the children of the neighbourhood of one and a half to two miles distance in a wagon hitched to an ox, and took them even in the winter in extremely cold weather to the Andres home for classes. Church services were also held in the Andres home, and also in the H. Epp home in Waldheim during the early years. In Andreasfeld the J. Janzen home and in Rosthern the George Ens home were also used for church services.

In the year 1896 a school, now named Carmen, was built for Waldheim. The teacher was Peter Klassen (a former factory teacher in Chortitz, South Russia). Previously he had instructed in various homes.

Significant political events.

The year 1896 was a year of importance for Rosthern inasmuch as the Dominion election took place that year. Till this time, the Conservatives had been in power. The whole district of Rosthern from the North Saskatchewan River to the South Saskatchewan River and from Duck Lake to Osler had a total of fifty votes at this time. Almost all of these were

Wilhelm Rempel (1847-1931) served for a number of years as postmaster at Rosthern. He had earlier come to Manitoba from south Russia, and resided at the village of Reinland. He was the first principal of the Gretna Normal School in 1889-1890. On the photograph are left to right (standing): Wilhelm Rempel, his daughter Sarah, his son-in-law Janzen, son Wilhelm. Seated Mrs. Sarah (Abrams) Rempel (senior Wilhelm's wife), sons Peter and Gerhard, daughter Mrs. Janzen. Provided courtesy of Jacob Rempel, Gretna, Manitoba.

Mennonites. There were three candidates in the running: for the Conservatives, D. McKay; for the Independents, Captain Craig; and for the Liberals, Wilfrid Laurier. The latter won and one could say the votes of the Mennonites contributed to his success. (Ed. At that time politicians could run in more than one constituency, and in 1896 Laurier was the Liberal candidate in both his home constituency in Quebec and in the Saskatchewan constituency which at that time included most of northern Saskatchewan. Laurier won in Saskatchewan by a small majority of 44 votes. The Mennonites voted Liberal and their 50 votes won the election for Laurier. After the election Laurier, who had also won a seat in Quebec, resigned his Saskatchewan seat and T. O. Davis of Prince Albert, Liberal Party, was elected in a by-election with a majority of 741 votes.)

Laurier became Prime Minister and he instituted a new policy of immigration. The immigration was a lucrative business and was promoted on a large scale. The government was concerned to obtain many useful immigrants, and premiums were paid to shipping companies for their special efforts in this respect. The government preferred Germans to others. (Ed. German immigrants were preferred over Galicians, Ruthenians Doukhobours and other Slavic peoples, but British, Scandinavian and American immigrants were preferred over Germans.)

George Ens was appointed immigration agent and sent to the United States to secure German immigrants. A considerable number were drawn in; people with means who were good farmers. Most of them came to Rosthern and took up homesteads. In this way Rosthern progressed quickly.

An added incentive to Rosthern progress was the celebration of the Jubilee of Queen Victoria. In July 1897 this Jubilee was celebrated throughout Canada and also in Rosthern. The town was decorated with green tree boughs, and at night brightened up with lanterns. The one and only foot pedal organ was brought into town from Tob. Unruh's farm for this celebration. In the evening a program was presented. It was mostly humourous. The settlers were the actors, with people gathered from far and wide for this event. Batoche, Duck Lake, and the surrounding areas were represented. Even the Regina-Prince Albert passengers on the 5 o'clock train stopped over for an hour and all personnel and travellers joined in the fun.

Through this celebration the town of Rosthern came to be widely talked about and the newspapers of Prince Albert and other towns had columns or reports describing the celebration events here. The result of this was that more business people became interested in Rosthern and opened business places here. The town began to prosper.

The Almighty Voice incident.

We seldom came in close contact with the Indians. They were always friendly, but we had to resort to sign language to understand one another. We met them most often in Duck Lake.

In the summer of 1895 there was great excitement among the settlers of the Rosthern area because there was a rumour that at Batoche in the Indian reserve much unrest was arising among the Cree Indians. Since it was not too long ago that the great Indian rebellion had taken place there, it was hard to tell how serious this outbreak could become. (Ed. The 1885 rebellion was not an Indian rebellion. Those leading and organizing that rebellion were French, Roman Catholic half-breeds. Their leader, Louis Riel, tried very hard to persuade the Indians to join his group, but almost all the Indians of western Canada refused. There were at that time an estimated 20,000 Indians living in western Canada, but not more than 200 took an active part in the 1885 rebellion. The Indians were certainly restless, but they trusted the French half-breeds and their priests as little as they trusted most white settlers.)

In 1893, during a hunting expedition, a chief named Almighty Voice had shot a steer which belonged to the government. He had come from the Batoche Indian Reserve situated across the river about fifteen miles distant from Rosthern. He was a young man of about twenty years of age, a renowned hunter and sharpshooter. To him, this shooting incident was not considered a crime, and since the government did not judge Indians by the existing Canadian laws giving due consideration and respect to the Indian customs and traditions in the legal system, his punishment would have been lenient. At most he would have received a few weeks jail punishment. (Ed. The Indians were subject to Canadian laws, but under their Treaties and under the Indian Act they were accorded special hunting privileges. Those privileges did not include the killing of domestic cattle, although most magistrates were lenient in cases where starving Indians killed cattle to feed their families.)

The Indian chief was taken to the Duck Lake police station where the Mounted Police detachment had their headquarters. He was charged, given a hearing and it was decided to send him to Prince Albert. He was for the present placed into one of the rooms of the police barracks and placed under guard. During the night when the police guarding Almighty Voice walked to the second floor of the building to awaken his comrade to continue the vigil, the Indian fled into the dark night.

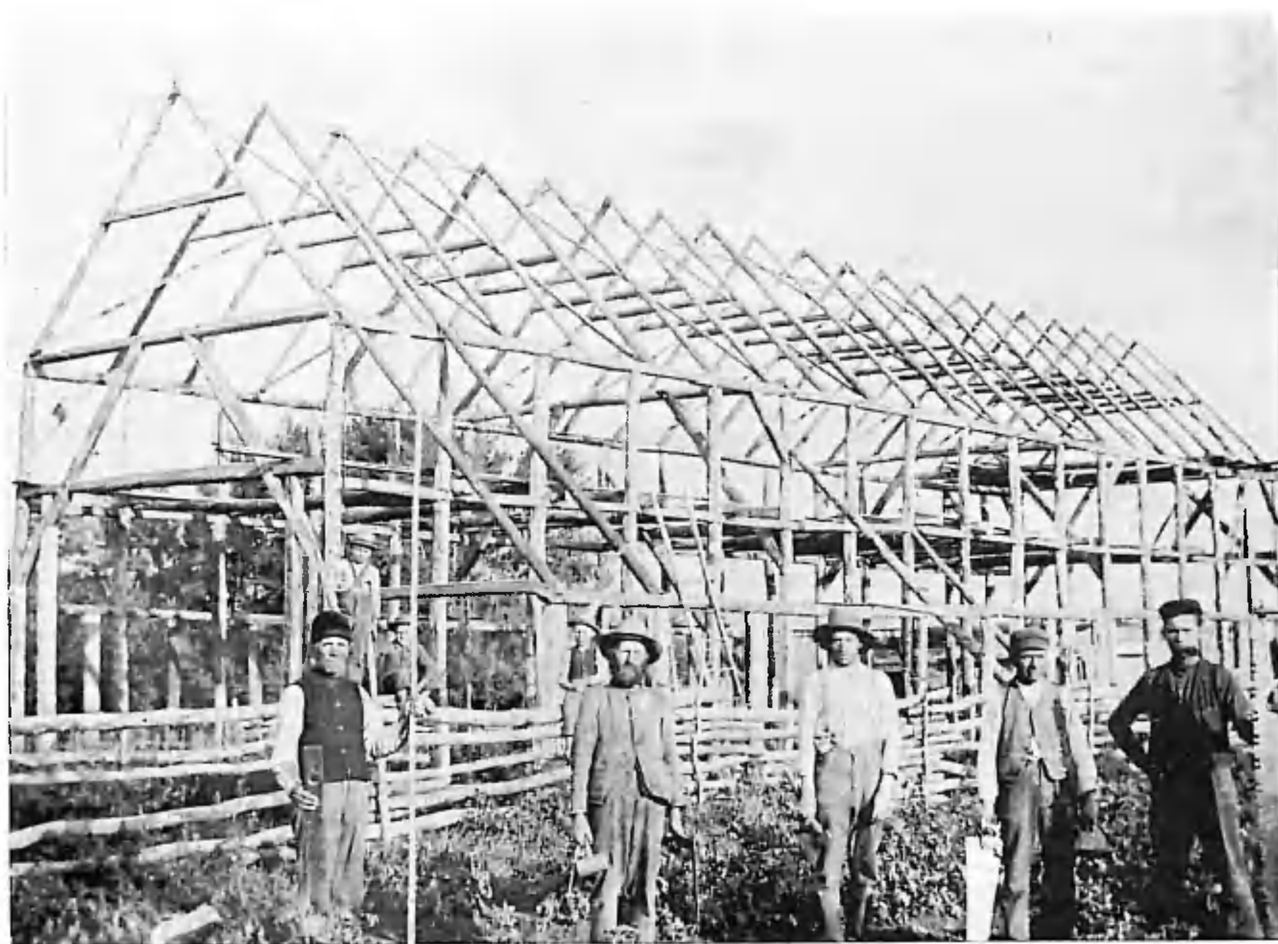
The next day they started the search for the runaway, and finally after a long search Sergeant Colebrook found him again on the Indian reserve at

Batoche. He told the Indian to give himself up. The reply that came was that the policeman should come no nearer or he would be shot. When the policeman rode up closer a shot rang out, and the sergeant fell to the ground, a dead man. After this episode the Indian vanished from sight completely. Where he hid was not known to anyone, most likely somewhere in the reserve. He was not seen again till 1895.

In the meantime a price was set on his head for his return, with a reward promised to the person reporting his whereabouts. The reward was placed at $1,000.00. In July 1895 a cattle rancher named Napoleon Venn rode out to look for his herd. When he came to a fair-sized bush he saw a group of Indians in the act of skinning one of his cows. He rode as fast as possible back to Batoche and reported the incident there.

Immediately a group of men accompanied Venn and they spied the Indians still in the same place. The riders split up and circled the bush with orders to shoot the Indians on sight. (Ed. The police orders in this case were very specific—that no shot be fired unless the Indians fired first.) But the Indians were on the lookout. The police heard one shot and thought the shot had come from Venn. When they heard a second shot, they saw Venn come riding around the bush, wounded in two places. Actually only one bullet had hit him. The other had passed through his hat close to his head. The police then rode back to Batoche to have the man's wound treated. From there they notified Prince Albert, and a force of about sixty Mounted Police came out to assist in capturing the Indian.

When they were still ten miles distant from the



A building under construction in the Bergthal district. It was the residence of Peter Abrams. Seen in the photo are Johann Andres senior, his sons Gerhard and Johann, the owner, Peter Abrams, and Jacob Andres, a brother to Gerhard and Johann. The standing on the fence is Aron Abrams who later became a grain buyer in Laird, Saskatchewan. The photo was taken around 1898, and provided courtesy of Art Abrams, Waldheim, Saskatchewan.

place where the rancher had been wounded, a shot rang out and one of the policemen fell from his horse. Now the police sent word to Regina, and from there an extra train brought out another sixty men. They brought a cannon with them. Now the policemen circled the bush where the Indians were in hiding so as to lock them in with the intent to starve them out because they had orders not to risk any more policemen's lives. The Indians were nevertheless constantly harassed with gun fire and the cannon was also brought into action. Farmers from the surrounding area also came to assist the policemen. Even from Rosthern several men had gone to the scene.

It was now the third day and they could see no signs of life. Then they saw a crow settle on one of the tree branches. There was one shot from the bushes and the crow fell to the ground. The men surrounding the bushes then also heard the Indians singing their war songs, which told them that there was still life within the bushes, but on the third day postmaster Grundy from Duck Lake came out with several other men. This small group intended to earn the one thousand dollar reward for the capture of Almighty Voice. They walked and crawled into the bush and were greeted by bullets and were all killed.

On the fourth day of the siege, a Sunday afternoon, another group of volunteers gathered and stormed the bushes with close-range shooting and loud shouting. But when they moved in, they found that all the Indians had already died. There had been only three, two of which had been dead several days. Almighty Voice had been killed several hours earlier, according to medical reports. A gun shot had torn open his head and he also had a double break in his leg. He had tied it up with poplar tree bark and fastened the leg in a splint. He had suffered much of hunger and exposure, very evident when one of the policemen, with one hand lifted Almighty Voice by the hair of his head.

In this whole skirmish seven men had lost their lives or were wounded. The heavy attack was made because of the recent Indian rebellion which was still fresh in everyone's mind, and no one could determine the real extent of this Indian opposition. That is why a small incident caused such a big uproar. (Ed. The Almighty Voice incident was recently the subject of a Hollywood film, shot mostly in and around Duck Lake and starring Donald Sutherland. It is clear from the surviving records that Almighty Voice was a troublesome Indian who lived a very active and sexually unorthodox life. During the seige both his mother and his "woman" stationed themselves on a nearby hill to chant war and death laments, exhorting Almighty Voice to die with courage and not to give himself up. Those who produced the Hollywood film had a story that should have appealed to them, but still took so many liberties with the basic facts that the entire film is seriously misleading. The name of the film is "Alien Thunder").

The author of this article is thought to be Peter Klassen from Waldheim, who is mentioned in the article. The translator of the article was Jacob E. Friesen of Hague, Saskatchewan. The complete text in both German and English is available in the archives of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, Winnipeg. Ed.

Mennonites in the Atlantic Provinces

by Peter Penner

Mennonites have never settled in these provinces in large numbers. The Atlantic Provinces of Canada have never promised the opportunities for unlimited cheap and productive land to the same extent as Manitoba; nor did they provide the comforting thought of Mennonite settlements already in existence. Where these provinces missed out on Mennonites entirely, it appears, is during the coming of the pre-Loyalists, that is, after 1755 and before 1783. Had there been any significant number, the story of Mennonite migrations in Canada might have been quite different. As it was, the three major Mennonite migrations before World War Two—into Upper Canada after 1783, into the West after 1873, and into Canada generally during the 1920s—have bypassed the Atlantic Provinces. Only after World War Two, as this article will show, have Mennonites begun to filter into these provinces.

For the sake of *Mennonite Life* readers unfamiliar with Canada, it may be necessary to explain something of the history, economy and general character of these far eastern Canadian provinces. They are made up of the three Maritime Provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island, and of Newfoundland, the latecomer (1949) in the Canadian Confederation of ten provinces.

During the first half of the 18th century, the area covered by Nova Scotia was a political and military pawn between the imperial powers of England and France who were competing for harmony in the Atlantic. In 1755 the English won a decisive military victory in Nova Scotia and consolidated it by expelling the Acadians. These were the French-speaking inhabitants who had, since the early 17th century, built up prosperous dykelands in the Annapolis Valley and the Chignecto Isthmus. They had been threatened even before 1755 by the settlement of English soldiery at Annapolis Royal in 1710, at Halifax in 1749, and a few years later by German mercenaries at Lunenberg. After 1755 the Acadian lands were filled by the pre-Loyalists: Yorkshiremen who settled in the eastward basins (Minas and Cumberland) of the Bay of Fundy, and Americans from the Atlantic seaboard colonies. Later, other settlers including many Germans from Pennsylvania, settled in Albert County, which runs along the Petitcodiac River. According to some historians there may have been a very small number of Anabaptist families among the Loyalists. A likely interpretation for this designation, however, is the fact that Baptists then were either confused with, or derided as, Anabaptists (rebaptizers).[1]

The Province of New Brunswick was created in 1784 out of the northward extension of the old Nova Scotia. Its lands were taken up rapidly by Loyalists—those who left the American colonies during the Revolution (1775-1783) for land or for loyalty to the Crown. They settled on the north side of the Bay of Fundy, particularly in the Saint John River valley.

Nova Scotia has a widespread fame as the land of the *Blue Nose*, a vessel which recalls the "golden age" of leadership in a Maritime economy based on shipbuilding and fishing. It was this province and New Brunswick, a country of great stands of timber

Below, MCC teachers and nurses in Newfoundland, c 1960: first row—Mamie Schrock, Hary Ellen Kauffman, Marion Sherk, Mrs. Walter Dueck and daughter, Betty Damunde, Rosella Hostetler, Mrs. Eldred Thierstein, Mrs. Allen Gingerich and Agnes Dueck; second row—Mildred Bender, Myron Harms, Walter Dueck, Samuel Wenger, Eldred Thierstein, and Allen Gingerich.

Below: recess at Wild Cove

and rock and grindstone for export, which joined with Ontario and Quebec in 1867 to make Confederation. Prince Edward Island, a small and ever picturesque island, rich in agricultural land, did not join Confederation till 1873, despite the fact that Charlottetown, its capital, was the scene of the first talks in 1864, which ultimately led to Confederation.[2]

Newfoundland, brought into Confederation by the strenuous efforts of the well-known politician, Joey Smallwood, was England's earliest outpost in the Atlantic (1610). For many years prior to 1949, Newfoundland was administered by commission government. While its natives may ofetn be the butt of Newfie jokes in the other Atlantic Provinces, they have come to share a common and vital interest: the economy of the sea and Canada's resources of fish and offshore minerals. Nothing appears as urgent today as to ensure to Canadians their right to fish and exploit the mineral resources to their capacity. This explains the recent Canadian attempt to command international recognition of the 200-mile offshore fishing rights. This would mean an extension, virtually, of the maritime boundaries of the Atlantic Provinces.

Today these Provinces beckon tourists by the thousands. For here is still the relatively quiet retreat from the metropolitan centers of the St. Lawrence lowlands, and the hustling West. Since World War II they have also provided the setting for a small influx of Mennonites.

If in the first instance the Mennonites were not lured by land or "volk," what has served to bring them here? There are Maritimers who have wished that Mennonites or Netherlanders had come long ago to make productive again those areas where once Acadians did well before 1755. Yet none seem to have come as active colonizers, and very few were driven by entrepreneurial ambitions, even though there is new room for such, in farming and other forms of self-employment. Unfortunately, the movement of that type has been too much the other way. The Maritimes since 1867 have been too much denuded of their enterprizing people—from politicians like Robert Borden (PM, 1911-1920) to Pugwash thinkers and business men like Cyrus Eaton. It is time that that trend was reversed.

Not even transfer mobility so characteristic of developed countries has brought Mennonites. They have resisted transfer by business firms to the Atlantic Provinces for the same reason that made earlier immigrants hesitate to settle here. For them, as for far too many Canadians and Americans, Canada begins at Vancouver and extends eastward to Montreal —period! That is the great mental block. Another is the total absence, until the recent past, of Mennonite congregations to which they may relate.

Broadly speaking, one might think of three motivations which have brought Mennonites to the Atlantic Provinces since about 1954. One is withdrawal or escape from the frenzied pace of life in the metropole or from the large concentrations of Mennonites elsewhere; a second is an orientation towards service —social and evangelistic—to relatively underdeveloped areas; and a third is the availability of jobs for professionals at advanced levels in teaching, engineering, research, and medical work.

The one who admits most readily to the withdrawal motive in his move to Nova Scotia is Siegfried Janzen. He also, interestingly enough, almost alone for some time, representing the entrepreneurial type among the Mennonites who have come. The name of Siegfried and Margaret (Wiebe) Janzen became intimately associated with Gronau, the chief refugee camp under MCC sponsorship. During the late 'forties the Janzens directed the difficult task of screening just under 10,000 Russian refugees for immigration to Canada. When their European service with MCC ended in 1950, the Janzens returned to North America. Soon thereafter Siegfried began

Bible School, Newfoundland.

Below: MCC/VS group for Newfoundland, in orientation with the late Harve Taves, seen at the extreme right. Late 'fifties. Courtesy the Mennonite Reporter archives. Left to right: Elton Martin, Carolyn Swartzendruber, Harry Isaac, Doris Martin, Henry Kliewer, Fern Onder, Marvin Friesen, Alice Bartsch, Lowell and Ruth Detweiler, Harry and Ethel Taylor.

a degree programme at Tabor College in preparation for the ministry of the Mennonite Brethren (MB) Church. When that expectation remained unfulfilled, Siegfried had a strong motive for withdrawal.

He came under criticism during his MCC service period for not working assiduously enough in the MB interest. He had resisted an urgent request in 1948 to permit himself to be ordained for the purpose of baptizing in Europe those immigrants who wished to adhere to the MB denomination. In response to this request, which appeared like an effort to compete with those who baptized in the GC interest, Siegfried stated that he would consider ordination following his MCC service. He was made a minister-elect by the Vineland MB Church only to be rejected for ordination, after a period of probation, by the Ontario Conference. Perhaps, at Gronau, he had made some enemies who were now in Ontario and took the opportunity to mispresent his earlier position.[9]

There were other reasons for settling in the Maritimes. When interviewed on April 13, 1974, Siegfried told the author he and Margaret had become too Europeanized in the years 1945 to 1950 to feel at home in the Americanized milieu of Southern Ontario. Moreover, they wished to find a climate less muggy, normally, than that afforded in the fruit belt between Niagara and Hamilton. In the fall of 1954 they settled in the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia, an apple-growing area. When an early attempt at mushroom farming failed, Siegfried turned to his former trade—masonry—and developed a modest construction company.

Withdrawal from the metropole, however, did not mean an escape from their identity as Anabaptist-Mennonites. If their kind had been multiplied a dozenfold in the Annapolis Valley, not necessarily as a form of colonization evangelism, Mennonites could have contributed from the perspective of that heritage at many points in the Maritimes. The Janzens, for example, joined the United Baptist Church, first at Upper Canard, then at Kentville, the shire town of King's County. In many ways, not least in the office of deacon and as a member of the Canadian Baptist "Mission Flying Seminar" to Zaire and Kenya in 1973, Siegfried has been faithful to his spiritual heritage.

A second motivation for a Mennonite presence in the Atlantic Provinces has been that of Christian service to the social and spiritual needs associated with depressed areas. Such evaluations are, of course, usually made in some head office, such as Akron, Pa., or Hillsboro, Ks. MCC Akron, of course, had extensive experiences, since World War I, of service to the needy. The Board of MB Missions and Services, seated at Hillsboro, with its missionary experience since the 1890's was seeking, after 1945, to bring together new areas of need and the increasing number of volunteer workers in the congregations.

It was within this context that Harvey Wilbert Taves of Kitchener's MCC office went to Newfoundland in 1954 to see in what way Mennonite young people could serve, particularly in the outports along the rugged coast. This was partly in response to a call from the United Church of Canada (UCC) which shared the responsibility in that province of bringing education to all areas. To Taves it seemed that Newfoundland was a new and unheralded opening for Mennonite teachers, nurses, and social workers, now that the refugee problem had been resolved. MCC/VS had found a new outlet for Mennonite youth! Both American and Canadian teachers and nurses took short term assignments under VS regulations That has continued for two decades, though the numbers have been sharply reduced from the peak year of 1971-2 when 43 Mennonites served in the programme. Since 1954, however, Memorial University of Newfoundland has been founded. Today it supplies sufficient teachers to meet the province's needs, except in certain specialties, which Mennonites still help to fill.

Launching the movement in Newfoundland proved one of the capstones to Harvey Taves' career, which was all too brief. Raised in Steinbach, Manitoba, Taves (1926-1965) began as a teacher and missionary in Northern Manitoba. Eventually he moved to Kitchener to become director of the MCC office there. While in that position he also helped to develop Ailsa Craig Boys' Farm, Conrad Grebel College, and always supported at inter-Mennonite paper, the *Canadian Mennonite.* But he claimed that MCC was the "most exciting part of the Mennonite witness." And he saw MCC/VS in Newfoundland as a "new frontier" for Vountary Service. In this vision he was more creative than perhaps he had imagined. For this

Above: Siegfried Janzen with Rev. Cornelius Wall and a small group of Mennonite refugees, at Gronau, before coming to Canada, late 1940's. Photo courtesy of Siegfried Janzen.

can now be seen as one of the first "teacher abroad programmes." Peaceful permeation of Newfoundland society by persons committed to service "in the name of Christ," even for the short term, exerted considerable influence.

Because of its success, other MCC administrators, like Robert Kreider, began as early as 1961 to look upon the Newfoundland project as an experimental model for an international education programme. MCC/VS was seen to serve a vital and Christian link in the modernization process in underdeveloped countries. From considerations such as this, TAP, with African countries in mind particularly, has opened a new field of Voluntary Service. Where missionaries can no longer go, teachers with a commitment to Christ and an appreciation for their peculiar heritage gain entrance and carry positive influence.[4]

In Newfoundland the MCC/VS programme grew from the vision of an MCC administrator. A comparable programme in Nova Scotia, that of Mennonite Brethren Christian Service (MB/CS), resulted from the initiative of one family who, once settled in the province, saw a field of service. John and Agnes Esau, formerly MB missionaries in the Belgian Congo (now Zaire), settled in 1962 on a farm at Debert, near Truro, and very soon appealed to MB/CS at Hillsboro to send CS units (comparable to MCC/VS units) into Nova Scotia. As a result, the Esau's in 1965 coordinated the placement of teachers and nurses in various areas. While this project was not seen immediately as a model of colonization evangelism, the concentration of CS personnel, from 1967 onwards, in Dartmouth, a burgeoning twin city of Halifax, gave the venture the semblance of that model. This was possible under MB/CS, when it was not under MCC/VS. The Mennonite Brethren Church has always seen church planting as central, whereas MCC has at least until very recently left promotion of such an aim to the denominations associated with it. In Newfoundland, in any case, MCC could not entertain church planting as a goal as long as it worked with the UCC. MCC provided auxiliary social services only, even though some of its workers were asked by the UCC administrator to take services in outport churches and to conduct summer Bible schools.

In Dartmouth MB/CS workers soon formed a nucleus for a congregation. Its first pastor, Walter Epp, then from British Columbia, also assumed the responsibility for the coordination of the congregational and CS witness in the Province. By February 1973, under the leadership of Isaac Bergen, an MB church had been chartered, known since 1967 as the Mount Edward Bible Fellowship. Thus the missionary impulse of John and Agnes Esau achieved an early goal.[5] Having said that, however, is not to imply that Mennonite colonization evangelism has come to the Maritimes. Such a model would call for a group of persons at some area of Mennonite concentration, like Winnipeg, for example, to band themselves together for evangelism to be supported by literal resettlement in some designated locality. Nevertheless, in Dartmouth-Halifax, as some of the CS workers stay, and the congregation comes to be supported by Mennonite professionals, the long range effect will approximate what more consciously-planned colonization might have achieved.[6] Today the Mount Edward Bible Fellowship has Hartley Smith, Maritimer from Elgin, New Brunswick, as its third pastor.

Attention must be drawn, briefly, to the third motivation for a Mennonite influx, small though it be, to the Atlantic Provinces. Like a mere trickle, Mennonite professionals with advanced academic degrees have come to fill vacancies at the universities and colleges, in the provincial civil services, city administrations, and medical practices, to mention four areas. While they live as scattered as are the universities, colleges and cities, they have this in common: a spiritual heritage. In some cases, the commitment to the Anabaptist-Mennonite persuasion has

Siegfried and Margaret Janzen, taken at Gronau, late 1940's.

been nurtured in the home and schooled in a Mennonite college; in others, there is, to be sure, a merely ethnic identification.

Having come to the Atlantic Provinces, will they assimilate with their peers, at the university for example, or will they also wish to associate, even if distantly, with other Mennonites for the sake of a unique heritage which makes them a little like brothers? An attempt to gather them together on August 2, 1975 at the home of the author was not entirely unsuccessful. About half of the then-known couples came from places as distant from Sackville as Halifax, Antigonish, Debert, and Fredericton. Some brought spouses whose backgrounds were not Mennonite. Most of the others who had been invited sent regrets, by itself an indication of interest.[7] Perhaps in another year invitations may be sent to the nurses and teachers serving under MCC and MB/CS. This would considerably swell the numbers who might be urged to consider anew what it means in today's world to carry the Anabaptist-Mennonite heritage.

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Homesteading in Northern British Columbia

by T. P. Devlin

The settlement of Saskatchewan relief families on land in the territory south of Burns Lake, British Columbia, which commenced in 1940, has now been successfully completed. This, therefore, is a report summarizing the project from its inception in the spring of 1940 to the end of 1943, at which time the families included in this settlement had become firmly established on new land in Central British Columbia.

Early in 1940 our Department was consulted by the Hon. J. G. Taggart, Minister of Agriculture for Saskatchewan, for suggestions and assistance in removing distressed families in the Swift Current and Warman districts to territory offering opportunities for successful farm settlement. These families, largely as a result of the depression and the concurrent drought conditions which prevailed over large sections of southern Saskatchewan, had been forced on to the relief rolls. It was quite apparent that without assistance they would be unable to re-establish themselves, and they were in danger of becoming a permanent problem. It was also evident that it would be necessary to remove them to some other territory and perhaps place them outside the province if they were to be established with a moderate cash outlay.

The families were well recommended, having experience, pioneering qualities, adequate livestock and machinery, and it seemed possible to arrange that each would be in possession of at least $100.00 in cash at the time of departure. Our Department decided on, and recommended Central British Columbia as the most suitable territory, subject to the approval of the Province of British Columbia, which on behalf of the Province of Saskatchewan we then were authorized to solicit.

Two delegates nominated by the settlers proceeded to Central British Columbia and examined the territory south of Burns Lake, more particularly some partially open areas in the Cheslatta Lake Region. This delegation continued on to Victoria where we introduced them and on their behalf negotiated with officials and members of the British Columbia Government for the use of Provincial lands, securing the consent of that Government to this assisted movement, and the assistance of all local officials in dealing with necessary detail work. The Saskatchewan Government agreed to provide funds for transportation, and subsistence, if necessary, for a three-year period.

When preliminary arrangements had been completed a representative of our Saskatoon Office proceeded to Swift Current to select and inform families, and to compile particulars of their livestock, equipment and household effects. Ten families were selected from this territory, their livestock treated for disease prevention to comply with regulations for entry to British Columbia, seed and feed gathered, and all other details completed for their movement. Through the splendid co-operation of other departments of the Railway, special loading and transportation arrangement were made. At the railway siding at Toppingham, Sask., 17 carloads of livestock and effects were assembled and made ready to ship. Two colonist cars were attached for the 87 passengers and one box baggage car and a caboose completed the special train, which arrived at Burns Lake, B.C., on May 7th, 1940.

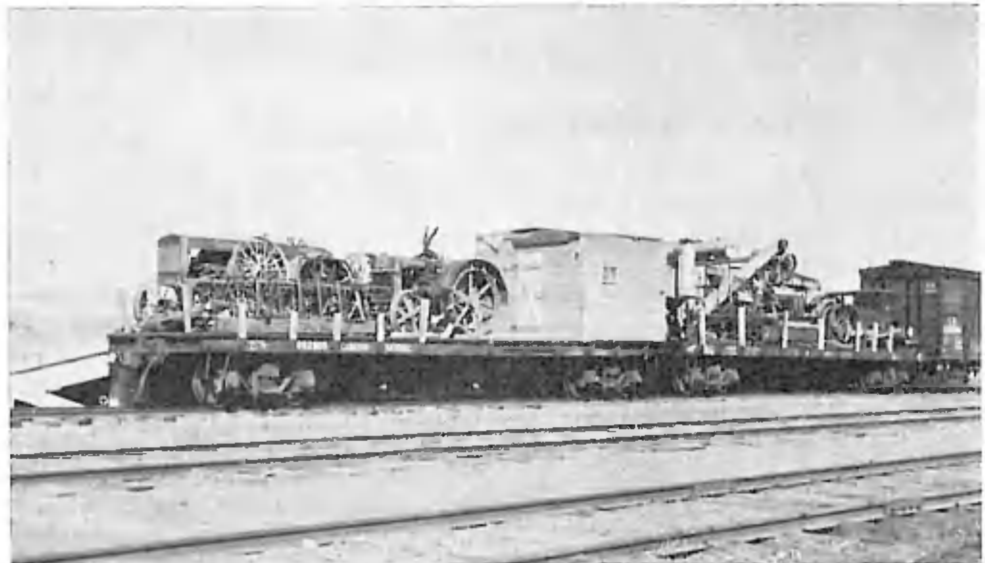
To complete the projected movement of 25 families, arrangements were then continued for the movement of the remaining 15 families from the Osler-Hague territory which lies north of the City of Saskatoon.

On May 16th, after all available seed grain had been collected, one carload containing some of the effects of one of the families and a considerable quantity of seed grain, potatoes, some brush breaking plows and other essentials, was shipped to Burns Lake. Three adult boys accompanied this preliminary movement in order to assist in gardening and seeding operations to safeguard the first winter requirements of all the families and their livestock.

On June 15th, 23 cars containing settlers' effects and passengers were moved from Hague to Osler. One hundred and five persons, comprising 14 families, moved in this train load. The last family to be moved in 1940, completing the total of 25, left Hague for Burns Lake on October 8th with two carloads of effects and considerable quantities of vegetables and feed.

On arrival of the families at Burns Lake, the first group of 87 passengers and 17 carloads of settlers'

Toppingham, Sask. May 2nd, 1940. Loading cars of settlers' effects destined to Burns Lake, B.C.



Toppingham, Sask. May 2nd, 1940. Tractors, separator, etc., going with settlers to Burns Lake, B.C.

Toppingham, Sask. May 2nd, 1940. Group of settlers ready to leave for Burns Lake, B.C.

Settlers on the north shore of Francis Lake, Miss J. Dick driving front team. May 8th, 1940.

Settlers repairing roads and bridges between Takysie Lake and the settlement.

House under construction. Temporary quarters of H. K. Bergen at Cheslatta, B.C.

Ootsa Lake, B.C. October 5th, 1940. Log house being erected by J. Schapansky on E½ Lot 420, two miles from Ootsa Landing.

John Siemens' new home. Sod covered root house on right.

Cheslatta, B.C. August 15th, 1940. Buildings on farm of J. J. Martens on NW¼ of Lot 906. Granary in background is used as community storage house.

effects had to be transported by road to the proposed settlement area, approximately 65 miles south. At that time, trucks could cover only the first 30 miles on account of the condition of the trails. Free ferries across Francois Lake were secured; temporary housing at vacant farm homes was arranged; in addition the privilege of using 25 military tents which had previously been provided for our Sudeten settlement at St. Walburg, Saskatchewan, was conceded by the Department of Militia and Defense.

The main necessities and livestock having in two weeks of intensive work been moved to the points referred to the next step undertaken was land selection. The whole area was cruised by our representatives, accompanying the settlers in small groups and ably assisted by Mr. H. E. Whyte, Special Representative of the British Columbia Department of Lands, together with Mr. J. D. Moore, Provincial Government Land Agent from Fort Fraser. In this way satisfactory locations were eventually secured for every member of both groups brought forward. Arrangements were made with the Public Works Engineer to supply a foreman to assist in making the road passable from Takysie Lake to the settlement, the settlers supplying the men and horse power. Timber permits were obtained from Forestry Officials, enabling the settlers to get logs for buildings. Fences were built to enclose stock.

All of the settlers built houses of logs, plentifully supplied within the territory, the only outlay of cash was for building paper, window panes and nails; the average cost in money for each house being $15.00.

The feed supply in the first year of such pioneer settlement is always the chief concern. Settlers previously established in the territory pretty well controlled available hay leases, but some of the new settlers were able to rent hay land on shares. Meadows were located east of the settlement and leased on behalf of the settlers, which provided considerable of the necessary roughage. Grain crops, sown on about 70 acres of land which had been broken in June, were too late to mature but provided a very heavy crop for green feed. There was some shortage of grain for poultry and livestock, but this was partly removed by that which the settlers brought in on October 8th, and by a special shipment from friends in Saskatchewan. The settlers produced about 300 sacks of potatoes and a fairly adequate supply of other vegetables. Several in the group obtained outside work for which they accepted payment in such items as vegetables, potatoes and meat.

The venture was regarded as an initial experimental movement which, had the depressed condition of agriculture continued, would have been used as a pattern to deal with the possible necessity of moving upwards of 600 such families. The Province of British Columbia, though desirous of increasing its northern population, had necessarily to heed local reaction, and it was intended that the success of the first settlement should largely govern the number that would be later admitted. Insofar as could be determined by the two governments, at the end of 1940 the results of this settlement were highly satisfactory and they agreed to the settlement of another 25 families in 1941, in the Vanderhoof district. This additional settlement is still under our supervision and is making remarkable progress. The advent of war has altered the situation so greatly in Saskatchewan that no further similar movement of families is likely to take place for some considerable time, but the two Governments concerned have expressed complete satisfaction with the results obtained.

The movement of this first group of 25 families resulted in immediate transportation revenue to the Railway for passengers and freight of $6,812.47. The 25 families, comprising 225 persons, with all essential farm equipment in the Company's exclusive territory, are new and permanent customers, while the land they are occupying is for the first time being brought into production.

Supervision and direction of this group of families were continued in 1941. Much negotiation and close attention was necessary to arrange matters of land tenure, assure a sufficiency of feed and seed, and to deal with road, school and other questions looking to their final and secure establishment. Frequent visits for such purposes were made, and members of our staff accompanied representatives of various departments of the Saskatchewan and British Columbia Provincial Governments into the settlement, participating in the discussions leading to decisions made.

During their first year the settlers supplied themselves with adequate housing and buildings for their livestock and broke 350 acres of land. A small amount of relief assistance for subsistence only was necessary. The movement of a carload of oats for seed and food from Saskatchewan which had been donated by friends, was arranged. Road work for the settlers sufficient to give them access to the main highway was negotiated, and this also assisted the settlers in making payments. Under the original agreement with the Provincial Lands Department lands were taken on a rental basis, but following personal discussions with the Minister in Victoria we arranged an exchange of leases for purchase agreements on which all rental payments were credited and road work earnings applied.

Several privately-owned properties were found by our Department which could be rented for pasture and hay. A Post Office known as Choslatta was established in the settlement as a result of our representations.

Cheslatta, B.C. July 25th, 1940. J. Petkau's house under construction. Settler and family standing near door.

J. J. Petkau in community garden around Aug. 7th, 1940.

Ootsa Lake, B.C. Aug. 20, 1943. Herman Dyck in front of his house. Barn shown at left. NE¼ Lot 430.

The success attending this settlement, aroused considerable interest in Saskatchewan, and some additional families have located using entirely their own resources.

During 1942 our representative visited the settlement on a number of occasions to assist and advise the families in their farming operations and in their arrangements with Provincial Government Departments.

Of the land taken up originally, the settlers had in 1942, 400 acres under cultivation, crops were excellent, with some phenomenal yields of grain. All had good gardens and all were comfortably housed. For the year 1942 it had not been necessary to supply food or seed from outside sources and garden produce was sufficient for all the families, with some surplus for sale. An adequate supply of seed for the following year's operation was also in hand. The settlers marketed a fair number of cattle and hogs and their livestock herds steadily increased entering the winter in good condition.

Arrangements were completed by our Department with the Public Utilities Commission for permission to operate a truck service from the Settlement to Burns Lake, which enabled the settlers to deliver cream and other produce to the rail at Burns Lake in good condition. The steady production and marketing of cream aided materially in financing the families and became an important factor in building up the local creamery business. It is noteworthy that the 25 families, all large ones, which two years before had been completely on relief in Saskatchewan, were by the end of 1942 so firmly established that only $41.00 relief had been necessary for that year up to the end of August.

All of the settlers had made first payments for the purchase of their properties, several of the younger members were purchasing adjoining lands, and a number of additional independent families from Saskatchewan had located in the neighborhood.

Responsible officials of both the Saskatchewan and British Columbia Provincial Governments had expressed themselves as completely satisfied with the work done.

In August, 1943, our representative visited the Cheslatta Settlement. The road into the district is still difficult to traverse in wet weather, but the road superintendent advised our District Superintendent that an appropriation of $500.00 had been made and that heavy power machinery is to be used to widen the road and render it permanently more satisfactory.

It was found that excellent crops were in prospect, although somewhat late; these since have been safely harvested. All of the men-folk were busily engaged in putting up hay. Gardens were excellent and an adequate supply of vegetables is assured in the settlement. It was found that steady progress had been made and this settlement is now producing considerable revenue to the Railway, with promise of a rapid increase in the years to come.

Grassy Plains, B.C., near Takysie Lake. Oct. 6th, 1940. Oats on farm of J. J. Petkau. S.160 acres of Lot 901, about 16 miles from Ootsa Landing. Land broken first week of June, 1940, and seeded June seventh. Exceptionally good crop cut for feed, not quite fully ripened.

Books in Review

Education with a Plus—The Story of Rosthern Junior College by Frank H. Epp. Waterloo, Canada: Conrad Press, 1975. 460 pp.

A number of years ago a good friend and distant relative of mine switched from fairly lucrative and, what I thought, satisfying self-employment to employee status as an elevator operator in one of the better hotels in Winnipeg. Since he was single he owed nobody an explanation for his actions, and whenever he was questioned about his new job he would answer noncommitally with a half grin: "Oh, it has its ups and downs." This whimsical retort came to my memory more than once as I read with sustained interest Frank Epp's history of Rosthern Junior College. I also had to think of a chart which I once plotted for an Annual Meeting of the Gretna Mennonite Collegiate Institute of the enrollment fluctuation of that institution from 1932 to 1972. The chart was a line graph connecting the points which represented the highest enrollment figures for each of the 40 years covered. Very graphically this chart portrayed the "ups and downs" of the ongoing story of an institution very similar to the one chronicled by Frank Epp.

But "it has its ups and downs" is hardly an adequate sub-title for this volume of history. Epp's story is not non-committal; it flows from the pen of an author who himself is a grateful matriculate of a number of Mennonite private schools and the distinguished and dedicated president of a Mennonite College.

The story is that of the conception, birth and growth of a Mennonite private high school in the prairie town of Rosthern, Saskatchewan. The school was begun after scarcely a decade and a half of Mennonite settlement in the then North West Territories of the newly created Dominion of Canada. It was housed in temporary quarters in its first five years. In 1910 a two-story red brick building which was to serve as main administration and classroom building for the next 40 years was dedicated. The guiding spirit during most of those years was David Toews who served the school at various times as teacher, principal, overseer and Chairman of the Board.

It was only after the death of David Toews that a new era dawned for the school. But before that could happen the school had to weather one of the worst crises in its history: the loss, in two years, of an entire and exceptionally able faculty as the result of a tragic loss of confidence between board and faculty. But gradually stability and trust returned, and under the leadership of Elmer Richert, who gave 15 years of service to the school as teacher, principal and president in that order, the school was able to bring its enrollment to the highest point ever and to embark on a building and expansion program more ambitious than that of any comparable Mennonite institution in Canada.

It is understandable that the first 25 years of the school are treated in a scant 33 pages, the next 25 years in 90 pages and the last 20 years in 220 pages. Everyone who has written any Canadian Mennonite history will have discovered a paucity of material and documents covering the earlier years in this country. In addition, a 70 year span is too long for the few surviving contemporaries to remember with clarity. Recent events, on the other hand, tend to be well documented and more clearly remembered by surviving participants. Then there is the inevitable temptation for every writer of recent history to give his own interpretation to events of recent vintage. Epp tries, with remarkable success, to remain objective and to present both sides of a controversial issue fairly and adequately. In doing so he presents the story of R. J. C., in the immortal words of Oliver Cromwell to his portraitist, "warts and all." This reviewer agrees wholeheartedly with the author's contention in his preface that "the best long term public relations of a school are to be found, not—in glossy self-promoting publications, but—in forthright self-exposure, (because) the people who support the school are entitled to fuller knowledge and—deserve complete trust."

The first quality of *Education with a Plus* is its readability. Epp's style is journalistic; he always has the reader in mind whom he does not want to lose with ponderous prose and long sentences with involved syntax. And so, with the storyteller's sure instinct, he narrates rapidly, in logical, easy to follow sequences, without tiring the reader. Tables and charts are summarized skillfully, so that the first reading of the book need not be interrupted by lengthy chart analysis. They can simply be skipped for later, more careful perusal, or left entirely to the expert or the reader with very specialized interests. There is no reason why history should be dull. It is history writers and teachers who make it so. Frank Epp is one historian who exemplifies Goethe's dictum that the only real justification for the study of history is its ability to inspire.

The second quality of this story of R. J. C. is its integrity. The story rings true. This reviewer has been intimately connected with a very similar institution, the Mennonite Collegiate Institute of Gretna, Manitoba, for most of his adult life, and he finds the parallels between the stories of R. J. C. and M. C. I. to be so close as to be almost breathtaking. Some

sections of the story need almost no more than name and date substitutions (H. H. Ewert for David Toews, D. D. Klassen for H. T. Klaassen, D. P. Esau for F. C. Thiessen, to name just a few) to become virtually the story of M. C. I. So this reviewer, while not familiar with more than a broad outline of the Saskatchewan Mennonite experience, always had the comfortable feeling while reading this story that here was a competent rendition of history with very basic veracity coupled with warm appreciation and empathy. "These are our people," he constantly had to tell himself; "this is how you experienced them over and over again. This is how you learned to love them. And really you wouldn't want them any different."

The third quality of Epp's story is its comprehensiveness. The developments of Rosthern Junior College are never presented in isolation or merely as a chronology of events. The beginnings of Mennonite settlements in the "West" in the last decade of the 19th and the first decade of the 20th centuries and the Mennonite mosaic in Saskatchewan (immigrants from the U.S., Ontario, Manitoba, Prussia, Russia) are carefully and skillfully delineated. The Western School Question, as it came to a head in 1904-05, the difficult pioneer years, the great Russländer influx in the 1920's, the "dirty thirties"—during which a farmer who annually sent the school a donation representing the gross proceeds from one acre of wheat one year sent a check of $4.97, the experiences of the Mennonites in two world wars—all these are woven into the story with skill and relevance and let the reader see the larger panorama rather than merely the local events on the scene of a struggling school of always less than 200 pupils.

Having said all this, and without desiring to downgrade the very real merits of the history under discussion, this reviewer feels that a few words of criticism are also in order. If he sounds as if he were nit-picking instead of finding basic flaws, that is indeed what he is doing. However it is virtually impossible for anybody, given his basic strengths, not to display the corresponding weakness. Ironically and paradoxically, any person's strengths tend to become his weaknesses. The giants depicted in this history of R. J. C. display these strength-weaknesses at various times as shown so adequately by the author. And so does he himself in the writing of this history.

The basic weakness of the author, if indeed it can be so labelled, is his tendency, on occasion, to generalize too quickly, to read too much into an isolated incident or reference in the minutes of the Board, or to give slightly distorted nuances to translations from the German into English. Thus a "beratende Versammlung" (p. 20) is not a "consultative meeting", but simply an exploratory meeting at which an exchange of ideas takes place. "Bibelkunde" is Bible survey, not "Bible doctrine". "Lumpig" (p. 42) is indeed a derogatory term, but by no means as negative as the translation "squalid" would imply. *Die Wacht am Rhein,* identified as the German national anthem on page 52, the singing of which allegedly was substituted for that of the Canadian national anthem at a literary program on January 30, 1914, has, in fact, never been the German national anthem. It is a patriotic poem written by Max Schneckenburger, a Württemberg poet, at a time when the desire of all of young Germany was to unite Germany under a liberal constitution, and when this was opposed by the German princes and princelings on the one hand and the aggressive policies of France on the other. The song is thus not a song of aggression and arrogance, but one of a deep desire for liberty and national unity. It is therefore no more militaristic than "O Canada, we stand on guard for thee!" And what could have been, in one sense, more natural in pre-World War I days for a bilingual student body, some of whose parents were only two decades removed from their German "Heimat", than to sing an occasional German patriotic folk song? In view of what followed it may well have been unwise, but only in retrospect could this seem to be any more objectionable than to sing of "Wolfe, the dauntless hero." In this same vein the reviewer would also look at the author's reference to the Third Reich's support of German culture in Canada. (p.107) Promoting a culture is neither imperialism nor propaganda, and the German Consultant in Western Canada was by no means the only one so engaged. The worst choice of terms, in the opinion of the reviewer, however, occurs on page 373 where reference is made to the "Germanic purpose" of the school. The context, fortunately, makes it quite clear that the reference is to language and culture, but the capitalized proper adjective certainly conveys political overtones which were never representative of either the founders of the German-English Academy or the Russländer group who allegedly "temporarily revived" this "Germanic purpose". The fault of too quick generalization is, of course, very much inherent in the journalist's craft, of which the author is a master, and the above examples serve to amplify my earlier observation that a person's strength can also become his weakness.

A second weakness of the book is a grammatical and stylistic weakness. Again this weakness should be seen as the other side of a corresponding strength. My guess is that much of the text was dictated into a tape recorder and later transcribed. This procedure gives a certain fluidity and continuity to the text of which I spoke earlier in this article. But it is also quite conducive to grammatical and stylistic errors, which, once incorporated even into only a rough first draft, are difficult to eradicate. The author seems to have a penchant for unrelated adverbs, i.e. adverbs which really don't modify anything, and as a result weaken rather than strengthen the prose. Two such adverbs immediately come to mind: "importantly" and "hopefully". The English language could only gain if a moratorium were declared on the use of these two adverbs in our spoken and written prose. Both are used in the book and each time they serve only to render the prose less crisp and effective. The use of the adverb "presently" for the adverb phrase "at the time" or "at this time" or simply "at present", while it has some dictionary support, also has the net effect of weakening the prose, quite apart from

the fact that in present day usage this word almost exclusively is meant to indicate "immediately" or "at once". A similarly jarring misuse of a word is the use of "disinterest" (p. 34) for "indifference." Again, there is some dictionary support for this usage, but as far as this reviewer is aware, the most acceptable usage of this word today is the positive one of indicating an absence of personal bias. Other stylistic faults noted are the occasional redundencies, ("most senior" p. 823, "unfailing popular" p. 182) lack of parallel structure, (—he was—a diabetic and hard of hearing" p. 114) and the use of a colloquialism without indentifying it as such. ("ornery" p. 235)

All this makes for somewhat less than the polished prose one would expect from an author of the stature of Frank Epp, and sometimes jars the sensitivities of the more discriminating reader. On the other hand, some dozen or so of such relatively minor errors could be seen as par for the course. They certainly do not detract substantially from a basically well conceived and very competently written history. The value of the book for the serious historian is further greatly enhanced by the excellent footnotes at the end of each chapter and the eleven appendices, a comprehensive bibliography and an index at the end of the book.

The greatest over all impression that one is left with after reading the book is that of the importance in our history of dedicated and capable leaders from David Toews to Elmer Richert who have made the continued influence and existence of schools like R. J. C. a reality. Very aptly private church school education has been termed "education with a plus." Plus what? Not the least of many pluses could well be the exposure of a student for one year or more to such leaders and educators as David Toews, H. H. Ewert, C. D. Penner, F. C. Thiessen, K. G. Toews, G. H. Peters, P. J. Schaefer, Elmer Richert and many more, and last but not least, the discerning and inspiring writer of this book on Rosthern Junior College. We are the richer for it. Our thanks go out to him.

Gerhard Ens
Past principal,
Mennonite Collegiate Institute,
Gretna, Manitoba

Valley of Shadows by Jake Plett. Horizon House Publishers, Box 600, Beaverlodge, Alberta, 1976. Paperback, 168 pp.

The front cover of the book summarizes as follows: "When my wife, MaryAnn Plett, was abducted and murdered we went through the VALLEY OF SHADOWS."

MaryAnn Plett was a real estate salesperson in Edmonton, Alberta. In a short period of time she had become very successful in her work. On September 15, 1971 she was murdered by a client on an acreage 25 miles outside of the city. MaryAnn's body was not found until April of the following spring.

In this book, Jake Plett, the husband of MaryAnn, describes in touching, sometimes almost overwhelming manner, the emotions, upheavals, adjustments, questions, and religious experiences of those seven months of uncertainty.

Of the first hours he writes, "My mind was in a whirl. Hundreds of tortured thoughts pounded their way into my mind. Like rabbits, they darted off in a thousand directions." At the same time he also responded with considerable rationality in some areas. ". . . I had not told any of her family yet, reasoning that there was really nothing they could do at night, they might as well get a good night's sleep. They would need it in the morning."

At various points in the book he describes, often at length: his initial feelings toward the abductor; how he told his sons, aged 8 and 5, of their mother's disappearance; the healing aspect of having to go back to the routine of a job; the problem of how to pray for MaryAnn when he did not know if she were dead or alive; his response to the people offering help through mediums, clairvoyants and fortune-tellers; and the outstanding efforts put forth by the two police forces that were involved in the investigations.

Plett clearly indicates that MaryAnn's "disappearance was not an accident. It was an incident in our lives carefully designed by God's loving hand, through which God wanted to fulfill some special purpose."

The basic purpose of the book is to herald the love and faithfulness of God. A second purpose is to share with others how the author's faith responded in the circumstances and how it grew in the face of his trying experiences.

Bernie Retzlaff

Immigration and the Rise of Multiculturalism, edited by Howard Palmer. Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing, 1975. 216 pp.

Howard Palmer's book of readings on Canadian immigration has grown out of considerable research. A judicious selection of materials with thoughtful comments, it reveals his familiarity with the field of immigration. He is concerned with several major issues: attitudes towards immigration and immigration policy, economic adjustment, social adjustment, political adjustment and the role of ethnic organizations. Along with a consideration of these issues, he has related the coming of the immigrants over the last century to the larger question of the emergence of multiculturalism.

Palmer recognizes that numerous economic and social forces, within and outside of Canada, have shaped the government's policy on immigration. He also makes it clear that the immigrant's world is one of tension, between the ideals of the newcomer and the values of the older Canadian society. The documents collected here are fairly representative of opinions on both sides. They reflect in addition the views of different social classes and a number of ethnic groups.

This book, with its historical perspective and its awareness of the current concern about immigration, should be of interest to many readers.

Henry C. Klassen

Reinland: An Experience in Community by Peter D. Zacharias. Altona, Manitoba: D. W. Friesen and Sons Limited for the Reinland Centennial Committee, 1976 pp. viii, 350, $15.00.

Have pity for the local historian who must meet the demands of his own conscience and then respond to the complaints of every armchair critic in the town. The directors of a community history committee wish to commemorate a special event with a volume that will win the praise of town residents and distant readers alike. They want the historian to include references to their own families, of course, and to the important institutions—school, church, work—but also to distinctive customs and to the commonplace details of houses and streets and the daily routine. The volume must convey the trials and ideals of the first generation and the success of their offspring. It must meet the needs of everyone, whether as supplementary reading in college or as a remembrance of old friends. Is it little wonder that we are often dissatisfied with the result? Peter Zacharias deserves congratulations because, having accepted this responsibility, he has created a work that will satisfy the most critical residents and, despite a few qualifications, will be welcomed by students of Canadian and Mennonite history.

Reinland was one of a number of villages established in Manitoba's West Reserve by the 1875 Mennonite migrants from Russia. It survived early disagreements between Old Colony (Chortitza and Fürstenland) and Bergthaler settlers over schools and hymn tunes to become a stable conservative community. Its houses, built on the traditional four-room pattern with a connection to the barn, lined the main street. The narrow strips of land surrounding the village, a consequence of the open field system of agriculture, were maintained until the mid-1920s. Each summer morning, the herdsman would blow his bugle to announce his departure for the community pasture and then proceed down the street to collect the cows. In mid-afternoon, family or neighbors would gather for *faspa,* a superior variety of coffee break. Sunday was reserved for worship and visiting. Hog slaughtering in the autumn was the occasion for a bee. Life was pious and remarkably peaceful.

The dominant rhythms of village history were related to perceptions of the godly life. The first important division took place in the 1880s when Bergthaler settlers established a separate church and determined to make their own accommodations with Canadian society and government. The second occurred in the 1920s when many of the Old Colony settlers decided to migrate to Mexico. The arrival of another wave of immigrants from Russia saved the village from extinction but resulted in the establishment of a new church (Blumenorter) and yet another perception of the ideal society. The imposition of the provincial school system upon the village in this same era was soon accompanied by the automobile, the radio, youth clubs, a revival church (Rudnerweider), and co-operatives; the open field system was abandoned and the number of farm units began to decline. Though the village survived, its way of life changed drastically in the period between the 1920s and the 1950s. Reinland is apparently a smaller village now, and only a dozen farms operate in the neighbourhood, but it will probably continue for another generation without further significant changes in its outward appearance.

Zacharias has done justice to many aspects of this rich and varied history. His book contains chapters on virtually every important area of village life including the 1875 migration, the development of local leadership, the stories of the four main churches and the evolution of agricultural practices and schools and social customs. The strengths of his work lie in his broad definition of community history and in his extensive research in primary sources. (The holdings of archives in Manitoba, Ottawa, and Indiana were supplemented by interviews with many residents and by the discovery of private collections of documents in Canada and Mexico.) The layout of the book is especially effective because the text is enlivened by several hundred photographs, copies of documents, and lengthy quotations from important primary sources. Residents of the town can accept this volume as a full and fair celebration of their heritage.

Outsiders, particularly those unfamiliar with Mennonite history, will have greater difficulties with the book. The patterns of conflict and change, for example, are hard to perceive because the story is organized poorly. Because the chapters are based upon obvious units in village life—trade, agriculture, youth groups—rather than upon the development of the entire society, the reader emerges with a dozen separate stories rather than an appreciation of a community's experience. A synthesis can be made, of course, but one must have sufficient patience to juxtapose the four key chapters, on agriculture and education and the Reinlander and Sommerfelder churches, for the period between 1880 and the 1930s.

Despite this shortcoming, *Reinland* is a helpful and interesting volume. As a thorough account of a Manitoba village, it stands almost alone in provincial historical writing. As a contribution to the history of Mennonites in North America, it provides insights into community tensions, social change and religious conviction at the local level where these stories can best be written. Though not the definite treatment of such issues, it is a worthy contribution to our understanding of the Mennonite heritage.

Gerald Friesen
University of Manitoba

Above and below, Abram J. Wiebe homestead, August 11, 1944, Vanderhoof, British Columbia. Abram J. Wiebe arrived on May 16, 1942, and settled on 160 acres of virgin land purchased from the government. The family numbered ten: Abram 42 and wife 40, with four sons aged 19, 16, 11, 9 and four daughters aged 7, 6, 3, 2. Besides their household goods, tools and $150 in cash, the Wiebe family had the following stock and equipment on arrival: 2 horses, 2 cows, 1 calf, 2 pigs, 50 poultry, 1 tractor, 1 tractor plow, 1 wagon gear, 1 wagon box, 1 cream separator, and 1½ sets of harness. In 1944 they had 10 head of cattle, 10 pigs, 100 poultry, geese, and apparently an automobile.