MENNONITE LIFE

MARCH 1985

In this Issue

This issue focuses primarily on the last quarter of the nineteenth century, but the themes are diverse, ranging from biographical and family sketches to community studies. *Mennonite Life* would like to thank Rebecca F. Krehbiel and the Illinois Historical Society for permission to reprint her article on Albert H. Krehbiel, an early American impressionist artist. The article originally appeared in the spring, 1984 issue of the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*. This publication contained two other articles about Krehbiel's murals, and reprints of the issue may be purchased through the Society for $3.50 each. Rebecca F. Krehbiel resides in Geneva, Illinois, and with her children established the Krehbiel Corporation to promote the exhibit and sale of the works of Albert H. Krehbiel.

John F. Schmidt, former archivist at the Mennonite Library and Archives, has translated a letter printed in the *Vulksfreunden Beubachter* in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, August 5, 1877. In the letter Henry A. Hunsicker of Freeland, Pennsylvania, describes his visit during the summer of 1877 to the Mennonite settlements east of Newton, Kansas. Richard H. Schmidt of Newton, Kansas, views the Alexanderwohl settlement north of Newton during the same period. Schmidt has revised sketches of the Hochfeld village. He prepared this manuscript for his grandchildren and focuses on the house-barn-sheds of Peter Schmidt, Sr. and Jr. Richard H. Schmidt also created the sketches of the barns which accompany the article.

Thomas B. Mierau of Wichita, Kansas, has produced a multigenerational account of a Mennonite family, the descendants of Elder Benjamin Ratzlaff. He traces the family from West Prussia to the Molotschna Colony of Russia to various locations in North America. The spiritual pilgrimage of Elder Ratzlaff and emergence of the Mennonite Brethren Church are themes explored by Mierau.

George Hume, a British engineer, spent thirty-five years in Czarist Russia, primarily in the area of the Mennonite colonies of South Russia. In his memoirs, *Thirty-Five Years in Russia,* Hume describes his impressions of the Mennonites and his contacts with the Mennonite colonies. Hume's career is related to the production of agricultural machinery by several large Mennonite firms in Russia. Robert Kreider introduces selections from Hume's account. The back cover reproduces advertisements from the Mennonite manufacturing firms in South Russia.

The final selection in this issue reprints two poems written by Simon P. Yoder of Vistula, Elkhart County, Indiana, in 1873. Yoder printed and sold copies of these poems to aid the migration of the Mennonites from Europe and Russia to North America. The Mennonite Library and Archives has copies of lists which detail Yoder's sales.

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MENNONITE LIFE

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Front Cover

John Jacob Krehbiel Family, ca. 1860: Mary K., Linda A., Mother, Albert H., Isaac R., Fred A., Father, Edgar A., and William J.

Back Cover

Advertisements from *Friedenstimme,* Russian Mennonite paper, 1908, 1914.

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Front cover and p. 6, Rebecca F. Krehbiel; pp. 4,5 and 7, Illinois State Historical Library; pp. 10-11, Mennonite Library and Archives; pp. 13 and 15, Simon W. Schmidt; pp. 18-19, Thomas B. Mierau and Mrs. Henry Ratzlaff; and p. 22, George Hume, *Thirty-Five Years in Russia.*

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Albert Henry Krehbiel, 1873-1945: Early American Impressionist

by Rebecca F. Krehbiel

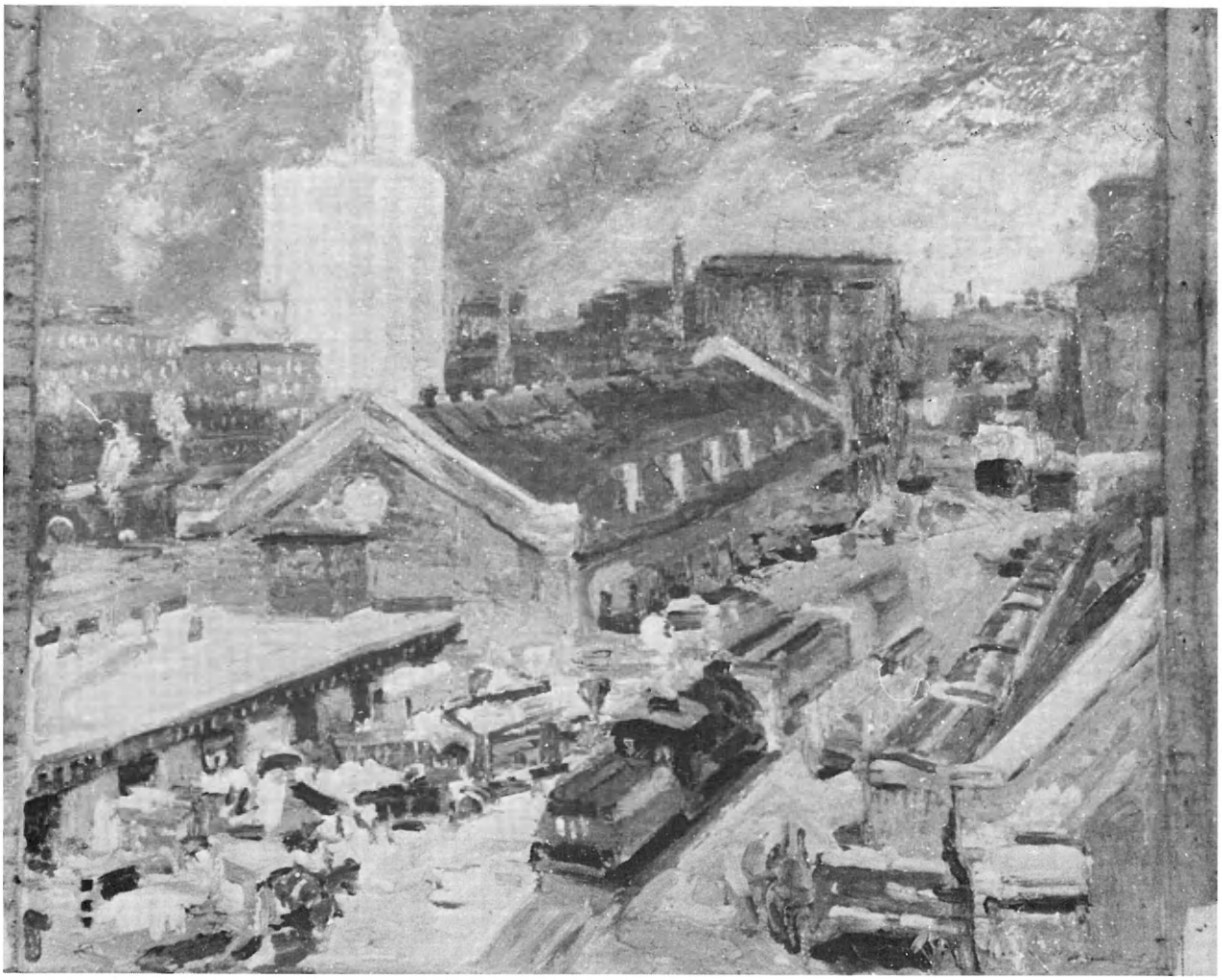
Albert Henry Krehbiel, the artist who created exquisite murals for the Supreme Court Building of his adopted state, was a man of many talents and many artistic moods. Eleanor Jewett, art critic of the *Chicago Tribune,* once said of Krehbiel's vibrant Illinois landscapes: "His pictures will long be remembered for their happy note, their impression of joy in nature, and the sheer beauty of their impetuous, irresponsible color."[1]

A uniquely personal view of the artist can be found in his papers and correspondence, which form the basis of this essay. The author, wife of the artist's late son, Evans Krehbiel, read through newspaper accounts, reminiscences of family members, and original writings of Albert Krehbiel in preparing this narrative.

Albert Henry Krehbiel was the third son of Anna and John Jacob Krehbiel of Denmark, Iowa. The elder Krehbiel, a prominent Mennonite layman and properous carriage and buggy maker, was later a cofounder and first president of the board of trustees of Bethel College in Newton, Kansas.[2] During his early years in Iowa and Kansas, young Albert developed the love for the outdoors that he sustained and celebrated throughout his life.

One of Albert's happiest recollections was of the annual county fair at Newton, at which the finest of his father's wagons were displayed and judged. It was the delight of the Krehbiel children to clamber into the shining farm wagon and lead a proud caravan of coupled vehicles—a spring wagon, several buggies, a beautifully upholstered carriage, and perhaps a

Working from scaffolding in his barn studio in Park Ridge, Krehbiel reproduced his sketches onto huge canvases for the wall and ceiling murals of the Illinois Supreme Court Building.



"Docks at Navy Pier" by Albert Krehbiel, an oil on canvas, measuring 18 by 21 inches, shows mid-1920 Chicago.

store wagon—all demonstrating the art of expert builders, painters, and upholsterers.

The lemon-yellow delivery wagon was enclosed much like the delivery trucks of today, but resplendent with gay trim, bold lettering, and fancy striping. On its spacious sides were large wine-colored panels decorated with rococo borders of gold and red; the name of the company was lettered in genuine gold leaf, and every letter was shaded in both red and purple. On one wagon, Albert was allowed to paint even the wheels and running gear in wine color. At the fairgrounds, the Krehbiel wagons competed with "factory-made" buggies—including those manufactured by Bain and Studebaker—but such vehicles simply could not win.

Decorating his father's brilliant wagons—together with schooldays filled with drawing caricatures of teachers and students—instilled in the boy a passion for painting and color. Albert Krehbiel's only desire was to enter the field of art—totally against the family's wishes. During his teens he agreed to learn the blacksmithing trade in order to meet his father's' demand that he have something to fall back on in case art failed to provide a living. He pursued his study of art first at Bethel College and then at the School of Design and Painting at Topeka.

Family legend has it that late in the 1890s Krehbiel's talent was discovered by the director of the Art Institute of Chicago, William Merchant R. French, during one of his frequent lecture tours through the West. With French's encouragement, Krehbiel enrolled at the Art Institute. Family tradition further has it that he pedaled his bicycle from Newton to Chicago.

Within a few years after entering the Art Institute, Krehbiel was awarded the Institute's American Traveling Scholarship, which enabled him to go abroad for study under the greatest of the European artists, including Jean Paul Laurens, considered the last of the great historical painters. In addition to classes with Laurens at the Academie Julian in Paris, Krehbiel spent summers in the museums of Holland and France. During his last year in Europe he made a walking and painting tour through Spain, observing the impressionist Velasquez at first hand. (Years later, nine of Krehbiel's Velasquez studies were displayed at the Art Institute Exhibition of Copies of Old Masters,)

In Paris, Krehbiel received honors seldom given Americans. The Academie recognized his work with

gold medals in 1904 and 1905, and the news was rapidly transmitted to the newspaper at Newton:

Newton Boy Successful Artist
An interesting letter has been received from Albert Krehbiel . . . [who] is now in Paris and has received three gold medals, the first position in painting, and two prizes of 100 francs apiece. Nine of his pictures are hung in Julian college, which is more than any one artist on record has had, and he also has several pictures in the most exclusive Paris salon.[3]

Returning to the United States with a total of four gold medals and the coveted Prix de Rome, Krehbiel married Dulah Marie Evans, an Art Institute classmate and a highly talented member of the Arts Club of Chicago. Since graduation, Dulah had established herself as a commercial artist, specializing in covers for women's magazines and such well-known trademarks as the Ivory Soap babies. The newlyweds settled in rural Park Ridge, at the northern edge of the city.

Albert Krehbiel accepted a faculty appointment at the Art Institute, and he pioneered the Institute's Summer School of Painting at Saugatuck, Michigan. Inspired by Saugatuck and his own scenic part of Cook County, he later remarked, "I became addicted to landscapes." He painted mostly along the Des Plaines River near Park Ridge. Occasionally, he would gather his gear and take a weekend train to Fox River Grove or Cary in nearby McHenry County or across the state to Galena.

Albert H. Krehbiel, ca. 1940.

In 1907 Krehbiel entered the competition for design of the murals and decorative paintings for what was being called "The Temple of Justice," the chambers of the Illinois Supreme Court in Springfield. He was chosen over several competing artists, and his selection by the jury was said to be unanimous.

Krehbiel and his artist wife spent several months in research and planning for the execution of each mural. They purchased the vacant lot next to their Park Ridge home, moved a barn onto the property, and converted the barn into a studio. Much space was needed for the canvases—some as large as twenty-one feet by sixteen feet—and for the equipment needed to hold and move them. Sketchbooks were filled with costume designs. Dulah Krehbiel created Grecian gowns and robes, and then she served as her husband's model so that the draping would be authentic. When the canvases were installed in the magnificent mahogany courtrooms of the Illinois Supreme Court and the Third Appellate Court, they were greeted with praise.

William Carbys Zimmerman, State Architect and designer of the Supreme Court Building, considered Krehbiel's work an example of the best mural painting ever executed in the West. Editors of the *Green Bag,* a magazine for lawyers published by the Riverdale Press of Boston, wrote: "The panels are not only paintings of the highest order, but are painted in such a manner as to form an unquestionable and an essential part of the general decorative scheme" of the courtrooms. The magazine had strong praise for the "natural attitude" of Krehbiel's figures, which were "free from stillness and arranged with grace and dignity." The artist's "truthful portrayal of familiar types" gave his work "the character of distinctive American art."[4]

Krehbiel's success with public art was repeated in 1908 when he accepted a commission for the murals in the Juvenile Court chambers of Chicago.

Following the mural work, Krehbiel resumed his teaching at the Art Institute. In 1914 he became an instructor in the Architecture Department of the Armour Institue (later the Illinois Institute of Technology), a program cosponsored by the Art Institute.[5] Summers he continued teaching at the Ox-Bow Inn at Saugatuck, and later he established his own A K School of painting there. A member of a Saugatuck family who spent many summers as the Krehbiels' neighbor during the 1920s and 1930s provides this image of the Chicago artist:

He spent so much time in a class that we never saw a great deal of him except when he was walking through the grounds or giving a public art lecture in the gallery near the Inn. . . .
Mr. Krehbiel expected a great deal from his students but gave generous credit where it was due. He often seemed quite intense, but he had a genial side and was extremely courteous to anyone sincerely interested in art. The picture of him in my memory's eyes is of a lean, longlegged man in casual dress with a large hat—straw—slightly peaked, wide brim turned jauntily up at the back . . . under that a quick penetrating glance and a small pointed beard. He gave the impression of possessing much nervous energy and perhaps difficulty in tolerating those who weren't as keen minded as he. I have a sort of cartoon of him in my recollection: Albert Krehbiel, hat tilted and beard . . . a pair of narrow legs streaking across the Oxbow grounds with a panting brace of art students in hot pursuit![6]

The recollections of a nephew, Marion Krehbiel, are equally fond: "[He was] my favorite, since he was a breakaway from staid family tradition, struck out on his own, [and] rode a bicycle all the way to Chicago from Newton, Kansas to pursue his

Top right. Krehbiel's "Colorful Rowboats." Bottom right. Krehbiel's "Unbelievable Winter Color."

art. . . . In general [he] was what we'd have called "the wild one" in his day. . . . He and I had fishing tales to swap . . . and he always seemed to have time for us kids."[7]

When in Park Ridge, Krehbiel was a friendly and colorful neighbor who could frequently be seen hitching a ride with the local grocers, Charles Kobow and his son Bill, in order to find the most scenic, out-of-the-way reaches of Park Ridge. When Krehbiel was planning a painting day he would drive out with young Kobow in the early morning and be picked up late in the evening for a ride home in the grocery cart. What amused the grocer was that Krehbiel always wore two pairs of long red flannels! All of his paintings were done "on location," and he had to dress accordingly!

The artists's appreciation of landscapes was not limited to Midwest winters, however. Some of his most striking work was done in California and New Mexico. The vibrant hues of Santa Fe scenes seemed to add an especially brilliant splash to his palette. He was fascinated with the flow of color—not so much in the forms themselves but the way that forms were affected by light and weather.

Krehbiel in his later years often reminisced in letters to his family. In 1942, at age sixty-nine, he observed great changes at the Art Institute because of World War II. In a December letter to his brother Will he noted:

> Recently at a faculty meeting . . . the board advised the closing of the school altogether to keep out of the red . . . such a drop in students. The dean maintained it was better to reduce the faculty to almost nil. Imagine my surprise in getting a letter that my contract is to remain the same. Sometimes giving pays abnormal interest. . . . I'm five years beyond the retiring age designated by the association.[8]

His enthusiasm for his art was undiminished, however, even in the midst of Chicago's winter and wartime restrictions. On December 22 he happily wrote his nephew Marion:

> Greetings of the season. Hope your gas is holding out. People here cannot get adequate oil to heat their homes and are flocking to hotels. Certainly fine to be working in the snow again —the calm—the peace of the winter out-of-doors is hard to improve upon. It has been a wonderful Dec. so far. Upon the least excuse the snowflakes would be in the air. Transportation is so uncertain. I did not go to Saugatuck though I have an outfit of paint and canvases awaiting me there—the sun has crossed the line today; the advent of winter—the wind is in the south . . . that will be the prevailing wind for the next 3 months. I'd better get to work for it looks like a Jan. thaw.

A letter to his brother Will at about the same time was more reflective:

> The recess painting period proved so good that I did not wish to break the work until the rain had washed away the snow. This happened on Dec. 30. In my work I have had to deal with instinct (now declared a science) and feeling—a problem of how shapes and voids can be arranged so as to produce the sentiment one wishes to portray . . . the real words in a painter's world. I have been more productive than any painter in my period—and there are many dealers in the biz who could take my stuff since there is plenty and make a name at a price. This may happen in time. My interest is not so much in a sale as it is in the call of the wild to enable one to create or establish rather a new phrase of Nature. I've missed many a sale in not giving up a painting day outdoors to meet a patron downtown."

Within months, on March 2, 1943, as he became more sensitive to the chilling weather, he complained of the onset of age, but he was quick to conclude, "A painter never seems to grow old."

> Crippled and staggering with age, I don't seem to like the zero weather like I used to. I remember the times when at 20 degrees below, I could take a dog trot of half a mile and return to my easel feeling like a red hot stove. . . .
>
> For sixteen summers I was busy teaching classes out of doors [at Saugatuck]. To get away from the crowd of students at night without losing an arm, I got into my boat and fished. The second summer I got over 70 bass. I have only a one-half track mind . . . it runs from fishing to painting. . . .
>
> Many of my patrons in this neck of the woods have got a liking to go out in the deep snow—just from my paintings. Nothing like getting into winter weather. Even then it is fine to sleep with the snow blowing in one's face through an open window. . . .
>
> A painter never seems to grow old. Nature has so many new things to reveal that one dislikes to miss a single day.

In June, 1945, on the day of his retirement from the Art Institute, Albert Krehbiel suffered a fatal heart attack, thus bringing to an end a career of nearly four decades. His contributions to the people of Illinois had been great, and had he been more of an egotist and less of an academician, his name and art would be better known. As a young man, his paintings had won gold medals in international competitions; later they were exhibited at the Louvre, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, the Century of Progress, and the Salon des Artistes Francaises. He delighted his neighbors and colleagues with occasional exhibits at the Art Institute, the club rooms of Chicago's Cliff Dwellers, and even at the Pickwick Theatre near his home in Park Ridge. His legacy was to several generation of students, to those who loved the rural scenery of the northern Illinois region, and to those who found inspiration in the murals of the Illinois Supreme Court Building.

ENDNOTES

1 July 15, 1945. Pt. 7, p. 4, col. 3 (facsimile in Rebecca F. Krehbiel comp., *Albert H. Krehbiel* [Chicago: Privately printed, 1977], p. 17).

2 *The Mennonite Encyclopedia* (Scottdale, Pa.: Mennonite Pub. House, 1957), II, 304-6, III, 235; W. J. Krehbiel, *History of One Branch of the Krehbiel Family* (McPherson, Kan.: Privately printed, 1950), pp. 82-84 (facsimile in *Albert H. Krehbiel,* pp. 14-16).

3 Facsimile in *Albert H. Krehbiel,* p. 17.

4 Mr. Krehbiel's Paintings in the New Illinois Court House," *Green Bag,* March, 1911, pp. 135-36 (facsimile in *Albert H. Krehbiel,* pp. 8-11).

5 "Albert H. Krehbiel—An Architect's Appreciation." *Illinois Society of Architects Monthly Bulletin,* Oct.-Nov., 1945, p. 6 (facsimile in *Albert H. Krehbiel,* pp. 12-13).

6 Barbara Petrie to the author, Jan. 9, 1981: copies of this and all letters hereafter cited are in the possession of the author.

7 This letter to the author is dated Nov. 15, 1980.

8 This letter is dated Dec. 25, 1942.

9 This letter is dated Jan., 1943.

Among the Kansas Mennonites

by Henry A. Hunsicker
Translated by John F. Schmidt

This letter is reprinted from Der Vulksfreunden *Beubachter, Lancaster, PA, Aug. 5, 1877.*

Since I have spent almost a month in Kansas and have been among the Mennonites there, it may be of interest to your many readers to read more about them and where they live.

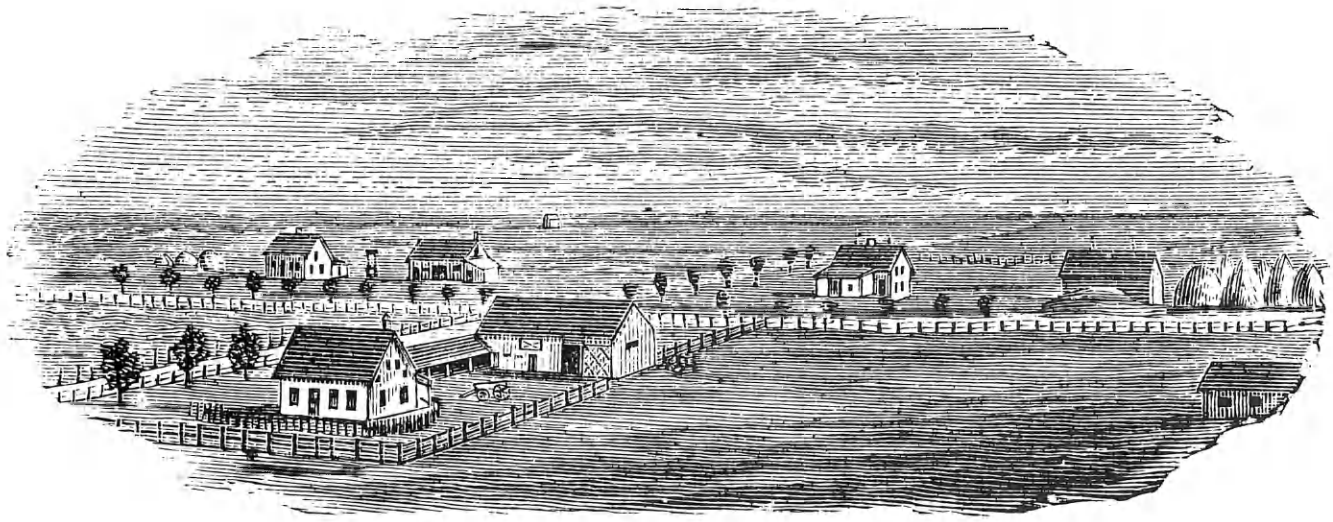
Over 6,000 Mennonites have recently settled in the counties of Chase, Marion, Harvey, McPherson, Butler, Reno and Rice and more are coming from Europe and states of our own continent. The choice of land for settlement is made by a competive committee chosen by the new arrivals from their own group whose judgment and experience in regard to land quality, climate, etc. is fully trusted.

The vocation of Mennonites in Kansas is farming. Hence, they have settled on the fruitful bottom lands of the Cottonwood and the upper Arkansas River valleys along the route of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroads. These lands sell cheaply from $2 to $6 per acre payable in eleven years, even though Mennonites have often paid cash for their land. The diligence, industry, and moderation of these people assures them of permanence and a greater prosperity in the near future.

On Sunday afternoon, July 7, Henry Cornelson, a Prussian Mennonite of the firm of P. Wiebe & Co., lumber dealer in Newton and Halstead (to whom we are greatly indebted for many favors shown us) offered to take me and J. G. Strassburger (of Schwenksville) to a Russian Mennonite settlement several miles from Newton. Our drive took us over a high road from which we had a beautiful view of the surrounding area. The farm buildings, recently built, are very commodious and present a sharp contrast to the so-called sod houses and shanties which pioneers in the west have usually built. We soon met Hermann Sudermann [a member of Emmaus Mennonite Church and a leader of the Kansas Conference], a friendly, genial, open-hearted man, and the reception which we received from him was typical of the hospitality with which we were greeted everywhere by these people. No sooner had he introduced us to his wife and the other members of his family than he bid us tread into his *Sanctum Sanctorum* and make ourselves at home. That the invitation came from the heart was shown by the concern expressed and the manner in which all of our wishes were met and our needs were satisfied. The warm reception and the familiar manner showed clearly that we were here dealing with a noble-minded person and his whole behavior indicated that he had definite knowledge of books and writings.

After having made us as comfortable as possible, Sudermann gave us a brief story of his family and their ancestors, as well as their wanderings from Holland to Prussia then to Russia and finally to America, the best place. Low German is still mostly spoken among these people; Russian expressions are also known but in their schools and churches the pure standard German is being used. Since the people had just recently settled here and their surroundings were still very primitive we could see household items of first quality showing careful workmanship and artistic taste evidently brought from Europe and now standing here and there awaiting a suitable setting in the new house. The children too impressed us with their poise and their mannerly behavior, evidence of good upbringing and cultivation of spirit.

Since the Sudermann house was not yet finished and since another group of Russian Mennonites had just come from Russia and needed housing, Sudermann took us to his neighbor Wilhelm Quiring [Quiring, like Hermann Sudermann, resided in the Prussian Mennonite village of Goldshaar, a few miles southeast of Newton, Kansas] (also a Russian Mennonite) where we were comfortable and lovingly quartered. Quiring is indeed, "A true Israelite in whom there is no guile," and his wife a true example of Christian concern and genuine hospitality. Various members of these families have recently intermarried and all of them participated in the pleasant



Die Kolonie Goldschar bei Newton.

evening devotions in the house of Bro. Quiring before they separated for the night. Such a devotional service is, I understand, customary among these Mennonites. We had expressed a desire to Bro. Sudermann that we remain in their midst over Sunday and participate in their religious services; this was why the two families joined to go to their main settlement [Emmaus] 14 miles further northeast, [actually southeast] to attend their worship service. So it happened early at 5 the next morning a light wagon pulled by two spirited horses stopped at the door with the young people of both families. Bro. Sudermann, Bro. Strassburger and I mounted and away we flew over the wide prairie, occasionally disturbing a flock of prairie chickens and fully enjoying the brisk morning air and the singing of our "German Band" as it harmonized so beautifully with the mood of the sacred day.

On our way we drove through a settlement of Mennonites from Russian Poland [Grace Hill Mennonite Church], consisting of some fifty families which had occupied a strip of land from 6 to 10 miles wide. The landscape is more rolling here and it is clear to all that the industry of these people in cultivating their fields and erecting buildings, that makes this area look so much better than surrounding areas. The honorable Johann Schroeder is the bishop [elder] of this group which meets weekly in the schoolhouse located in the midst of the settlement.

At eight in the morning we stopped at the beautiful farm of Bernhard Harder [one of the founders of the Emmaus Church] in front of his large house recently built on his 640 acre farm. Here I was told there was to be a preparatory service for commission service to be held a week later. After our team had been taken care of we were invited into a comfortable new kitchen

Top. Bernard Harder, ca. 1877. Right. Farm of Gustav Harder, son of Bernard, ca. 1890.

where the table, spread with butter, cheese and an excellent coffee, awaited us. This was breakfast No. 2 as mother Quiring had already prepared a small lunch for us before we left. Soon the brethren from the vicinity began to arrive and Brother Harder had his hands full, taking care of their horses. Many who came from a greater distance, arrived after the service had started. Many adjoining larger rooms were used for the service. The Reverend Leonard Sudermann, bishop of this congregation [Emmaus] (although he himself was from Russia and a brother of Hermann Sudermann) led the group as minister. Leonhard Sudermann had been introduced to me before the service. One recognizes him at once as a leader; he is a large well-formed man, a Martin Luther, physically considered. His presentation is outstanding, his voice full and deep, pleasantly modulated, and his articulation excellent. He is, in a word, a very competent, thoughtful minister, easily understood by his listeners. Several hymns were announced and sung followed by prayer and the sermon by the bishop on the text John 1, verses 8 and 9. The sermon lasted one hour.

After the sermon I was introduced to various members of the congregation, among them also Abraham Sudermann, older brother of the Bishop and of Hermann. As in the case of his brothers, his is also of a noble nature, a powerful physique, glowing with love for his fellowman, of practical piety, and charity, and a heart overflowing with goodness as can be seen at first glance.

For dinner I was invited to Dietrich Classens [another founder of the Emmaus Church], a noble Prussian who has a wife, six sons and a daughter and 1280 acres of land on which he has two sets of farm buildings, all new and excellently arranged. The dinner which consisted of turkish plums, soup, meat, bread and butter as well as noodles and plenty of milk to drink, was served in a well-lit and well-ventilated room. Everything was orderly, clean and neat and showed the high standard of the housemaker.

Since it had been announced at the service that a catechism class would be held for younger people, we again met at Bro. Harder's place at two-thirty in the afternoon and found a large group of young people there. At three o'clock Bishop Sudermann and his spiritual staff of deacons and singers took their places. At the conclusion of the singing by the young people and the prayer of the bishop, the latter proceeded to catechise the members of his class—some 35 altogether—by directing the questions to them concerning the attributes of God and receiving their answers. His questions are simple, pointed and arouse interest. In the class, attention is given to individuals as they cite scripture passages in their discussion.

After the class there was friendly visiting when I soon noticed a difficulty: my Pennsylvania-German was not understood here! My knowledge of high German leaves much to be desired and I was thus confronted by a problem. For the courage to venture, without hesitation, to use the best of German, I was highly complimented. After the social visiting had continued for some time, some undertook the homeward journey. On the other hand, others reunited and again sat down for a lunch consisting of "Roll-kuchen" bread and coffee. This done, we took farewell from our new friends and became the charge of Peter Dyck [who became the first elder of the Zion Mennonite Church, Elbing], a Prussian living some six miles from Peabody. We accompany him, his wife and daughter nine miles across the prairie and at sunset we arrive at his house. This is a very large farmstead with the largest new buildings that we have yet seen among the Mennonites. The man showed us his garden as well as his oats and cornfield, all of which testify to his skill and success at farming. Judging from his present circumstances this man must have brought along about $30,000 from Prussia.

After sharing meal No. 5 and a further visit we took part in the family evening worship and then retired for the night. During the night a heavy thunderstorm passed over and disturbed our sleep. The rain stalled our trip to Peabody, yet friend Dyck was so good to take us to the railway in time to reach Emporia by evening.

The anti-war and non-resistant principles of these peace-loving and yielding Christians, moved there to forsake everything rather than permit themselves to be impressed into the Russian or Prussian military service and to settle in a country whose government respects the principles of peace and protects all in its enjoyment.

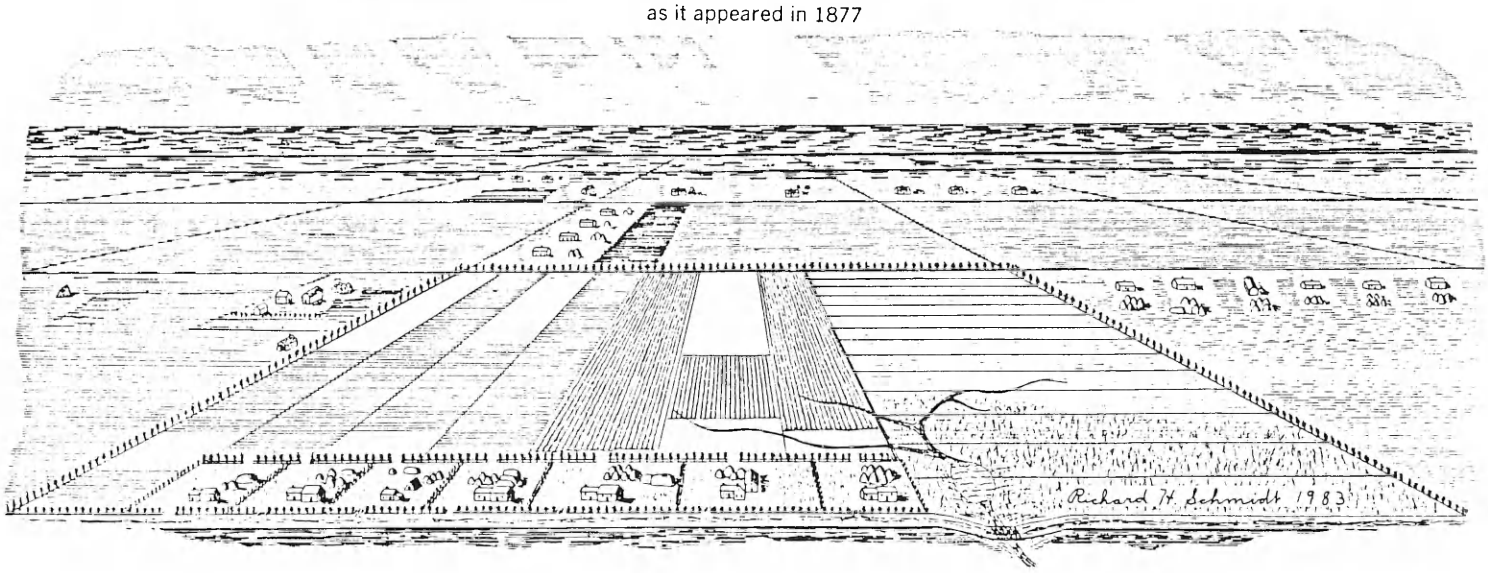
Much could be said about the peculiar customs and usages of these people as well as about their devotion to their religion, based on the scriptures according to the teaching of Menno Simons, a reformer living in Europe in the days of the great Reformation. But since my letter is already too long I must leave that for the present.

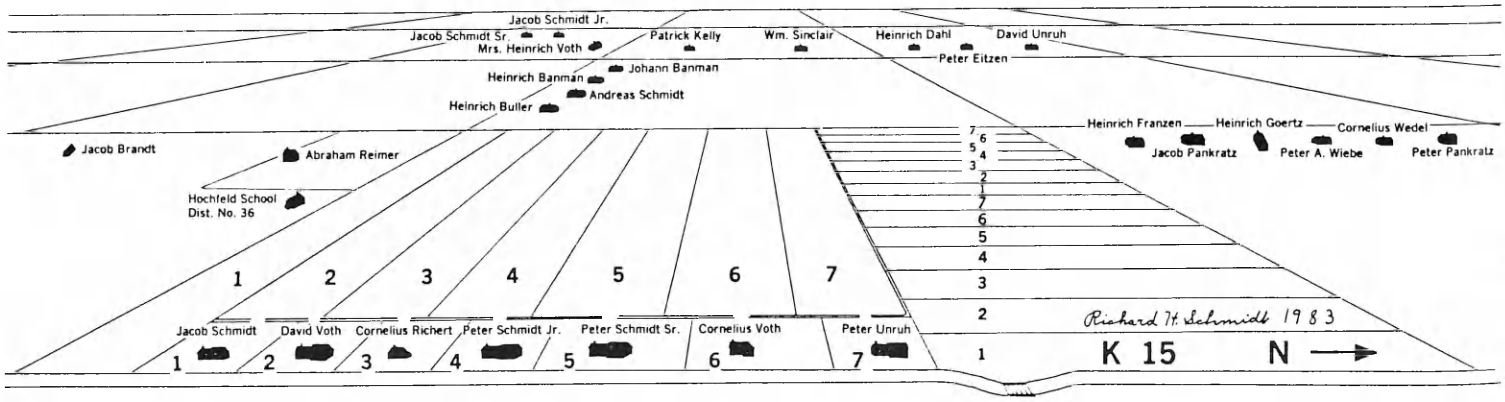
Henry A. Hunsicker
Freeland, PA., 27 July, 1877

The Hochfeld Village

by Richard H. Schmidt

The Hochfeld Village
with
Blumenort in the south background and Springfeld in the north background
as it appeared in 1877





The perspective picture of the Hochfeld Village with Blumenort in the south background and Springfeld in the north background (as published on page 76 of the April 1970 *Mennonite Life)* was drawn in 1877 by an unnamed artist who accompanied Real Estate Agent C. B. Schmidt on a visit to our Mennonite settlement. While the perspective view appears beautiful, errors in the picture beg for correction. A church with an eighth strip of land appears at the south end of Hochfeld. Also the sketch shows four when there should be six households in Springfeld. I have edited these errors out. So, rather than being mine, this is the 1877 picture with my editorial corrections.

Several of the villagers are remembered as influential church leaders. Heinrich Banman of Blumenort was a school teacher and minister, serving as the Elder of Alexanderwohl from 1910 to 1915. The Cornelius Voths of Hochfeld household No. 6 were the parents of H. R. Voth, our pioneer missionary to the Hopi Indians at Oraibi, Arizona. Heinrich who was 19 at the time of immigration had taught himself English, and he was the only one in our two shiploads of immigrants who could communicate and serve as interpreter while our group was buying implements, horses and cows during the time they were housed in the King Bridge Shops in Topeka. Heinrich Goertz of Springfeld was ordained in 1867 as a minister of Alexanderwohl. Peter A. Wiebe of Springfeld became the Elder of the Springfield Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Church. Cornelius Wedel of Springfeld, who was the father of C. H. Wedel, the first President of Bethel College, became a minister of the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Brethren Church of Goessel.

The other villagers were staunch, industrious farmers who helped build a prosperous Alexanderwohl community. Widow Mrs. Heinrich Voth, Blumenort, was the mother-in-law of Peter A. Wiebe and the great-grandmother of my wife, Tina Bergen. Peter Schmidt Sr., Hochfeld (household No. 5) was my great-grandfather and Peter Schmidt Jr., (household No. 4) was my grandfather.

Great-Grandfather Peter Schmidt Sr's House-Barn-Shed

Mrs. Alvin Schroeder, the former Marie Schmidt, was raised on great-grandfather's place, and she lived there until retirement. Now at 87 she resides in the Bethesda Home in Goessel where I visited her and received the following information:

Originally the barn stood north-south with the house attached to the south end. Entrance to the house was by a door on the west side and also through the barn door.

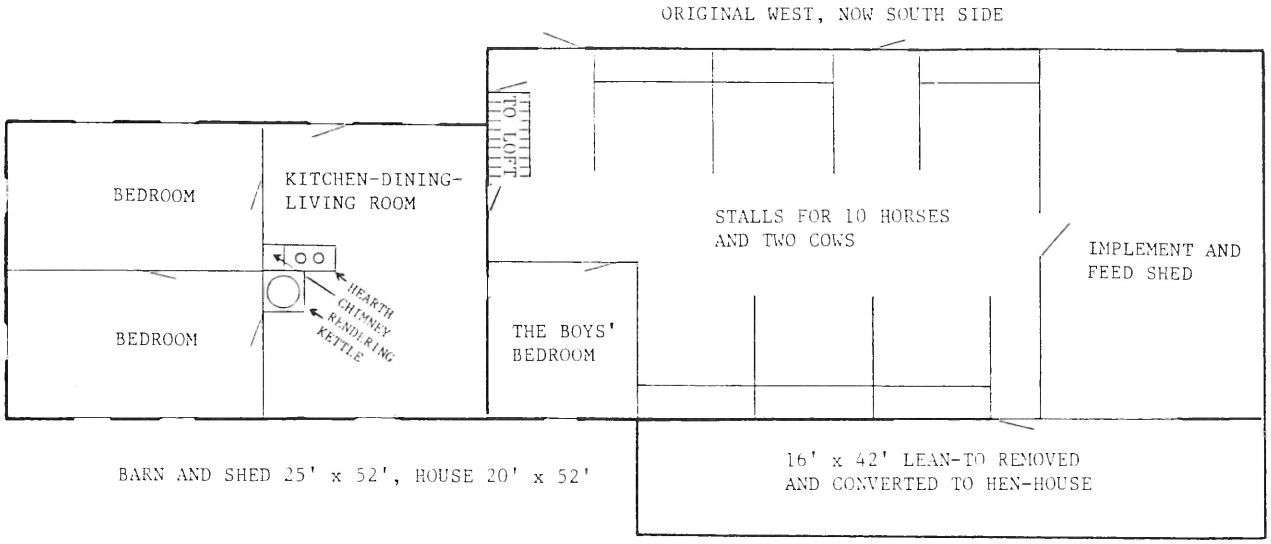
A few years after the house-barn-shed combination was built it was realized to be impractical. The lean-to was sawed off, cut in half, and the open sides were then joined. The new building became a hen-house. Then the barn was sawed off from the house, moved north and given a quarter turn (with the former west side to the south). Marie also described the room arrangement of the house and the location of the big cast iron kettle and brick hearth.

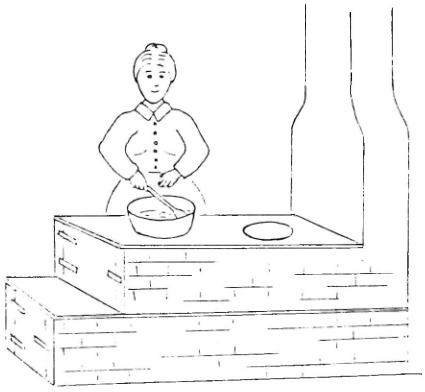
After Great-Grandfather's death, great-uncle Abraham Schmidt inherited the place and he lived there until his death in 1912. Marie said they laid Uncle Abraham's body in the barn in the boys' room. In the evening she and her mother would go there by lantern light and pack more ice around the body. With Abraham's death Marie's father, my great-uncle, David Schmidt, inherited the place. A new and more modern house was then built and the old house was sold.

It has been appropriately said that Great-Grandfather's house should have been built on wheels. The first buyer moved the house to Sec. 26 Menno Twp. Two years later it was sold and moved to Sec. 13 West Branch Twp. In 1926, it was again sold and moved to Sec. 26, Spring Valley, Twp. McPherson Co. Then in the early 1950s the house was again sold and moved to 403 W. 10th, Newton, Kansas, where it stands at the time of this writing.

With extensive remodeling and additions that house has lost its original identity (except the length which has not changed and is exactly the length of the Unruh-Fast house in the Kauffman Museum Complex of Bethel College). Incidentally, the description of the room arrangement and the brick hearth that Marie Schroeder gave of Great-Grandfather's house is exactly like that of the first unit of the Unruh-Fast house, Consequently, the Unruh-Fast house was used as a model when drawing the floor plan of Great-Grandfather's house-barn-shed.

Great-Grandpa Peter Schmidt Sr.'s House-Barn-Shed.





Top. Great-Grandpa Peter Schmidt Sr.'s House-Barn-Shed (Now owned by great grandchildren, LaVern and Jane Schroeder).
Left. Great-Grandma at her brick hearth which she fired with dry cow chips, prairie grass or straw. Later when the mulberry hedges were mature enough she burned twigs, never coal. The bottom tier was the bake oven.

The barn, which still stands where it was placed after being sawed off from the house, was carefully researched. (Note that all lumber dimensions are full and sometimes a little oversize. Also, there is a lack of consistantly uniform construction. This makes it difficult to describe how the barn is built). The studs are mortised into double 2"x6" sole and top plates. On the north and south walls the 4"x6" studs are spaced 32". On the west end the 6"x6" studs are spaced 72" with a 2"x8" lateral plank 20" from the floor and a 4"x6" lateral 74" from the floor. The upright sheathing boards are 16½" to 18" wide. On the north wall the sheathing is diagonal. On the east end the top plate is a 2"x10" on edge and the 2"x4" studs are spaced 24", and the sheathing is horizontal. (No doubt, this wall was built new after the house had been sawed off.)

Door posts are 6"x6" mortised into the plates. In the shed part the 4"x6" loft floor joists are spaced 45". In the barn part the 2"x10" loft joists are spaced 36". Two 4"x 6" lengthwise beams supported by 4"x8" pillars reinforce the joists. The loft floor is 1"x5" tongue-and-groove. (The loft served as granary. The wheat was carried in two bushel sacks up the stairs.) The shingle roof is on spaced sheathing over 2"x6" rafters spaced 40". The walls are covered with 5½" lap-siding that has never seen any paint.

The boys' room, where my great-uncles Abraham and David slept, is still intact. It is lathed and plastered, and the window trim is painted bluish green. I felt in that room as if in the presence of ghosts of yesteryear.

The stall arrangement has been altered. However, with the help of Marie and her son LaVern who lives on the home place, the original interior of the barn has been platted as accurately as possible.

When in 1880 or 1881 the Hochfeld Village was dissolved (see *Mennonite Life* March, 1981) grandfather Peter Schmidt Jr. bought the Peter Unruh place (household No. 7) and Peter Unruh moved east to the middle of Section 7. Cornelius Voth later built himself a small retirement house east of the road and his son-in-law Peter P. Schmidt moved into the Voth place (household No. 6). After great-grandfather's death, grandfather dropped the title Jr. and called himself Peter H. Schmidt.

Now that two Peter Schmidts lived only a few rods apart nicknames became imperative for identification. Peter P. with his beautiful golden beard became Gold Schmidt and Grandfather who always kept a large beautiful patch of potatoes by the roadside and sold wagon loads of potatoes to the Hillsboro grocers became Potato Schmidt, and that he has remained to this day.

Grandfather Peter Schmidt Jr's House-Barn-Shed

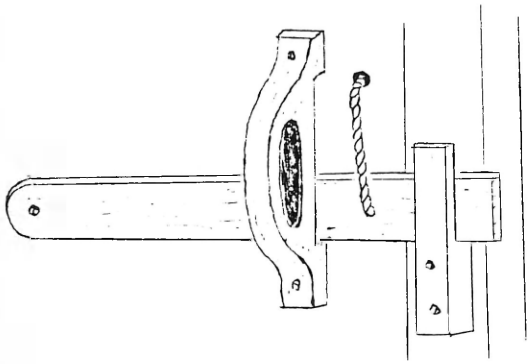
Originally the house was attached to the south end of the barn. When the barn was sawed off, it was given a half turn and moved farther north. Cousin Walter schmidt recalls his father saying that Grandmother's large summer kitchen had been the attached house. The exterior dimensions and door and window arrangement were used to illustrate the house. One can say nothing of the interior room arrangement of the house; however, we have a fairly accurate memory of the interior arrangement of the barn.

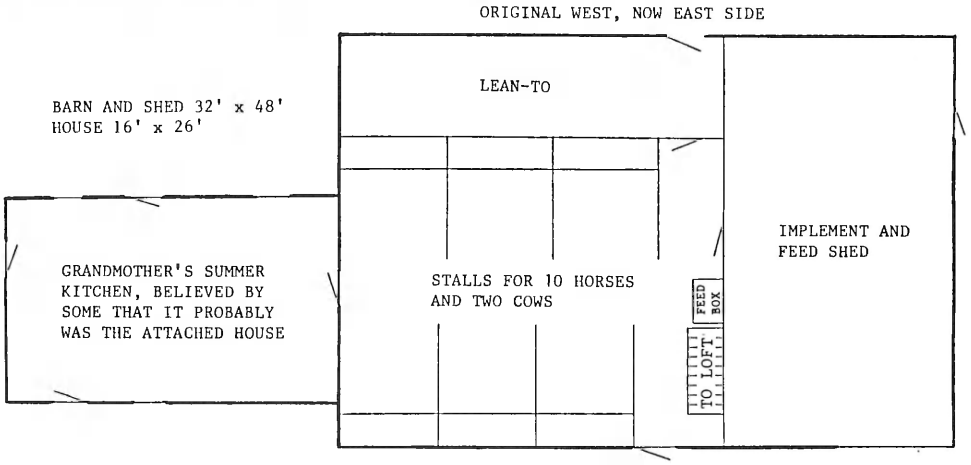
Like Great-Grandfather's barn and shed, this barn also is not consistantly uniform in construction. The sole plate is 4"x6" and the top plate is double 2"x6". The mortised studs are 4"x6", others are 2"x6". Spacing is 24" and sometimes 36". The upright sheathing is 1"x10" to 1"x12". In the part that still has the loft floor the 2"x9" joists are spaced 24". (Since the lofts were used as granaries, I am astonished that both Great-Grandfather's and Grandfather's barn loft joists were spaced so far apart). The shingled roof is on spaced sheathing over 2" x5" rafters spaced 26", 32", 36" and in some places 40". The walls are shingled.

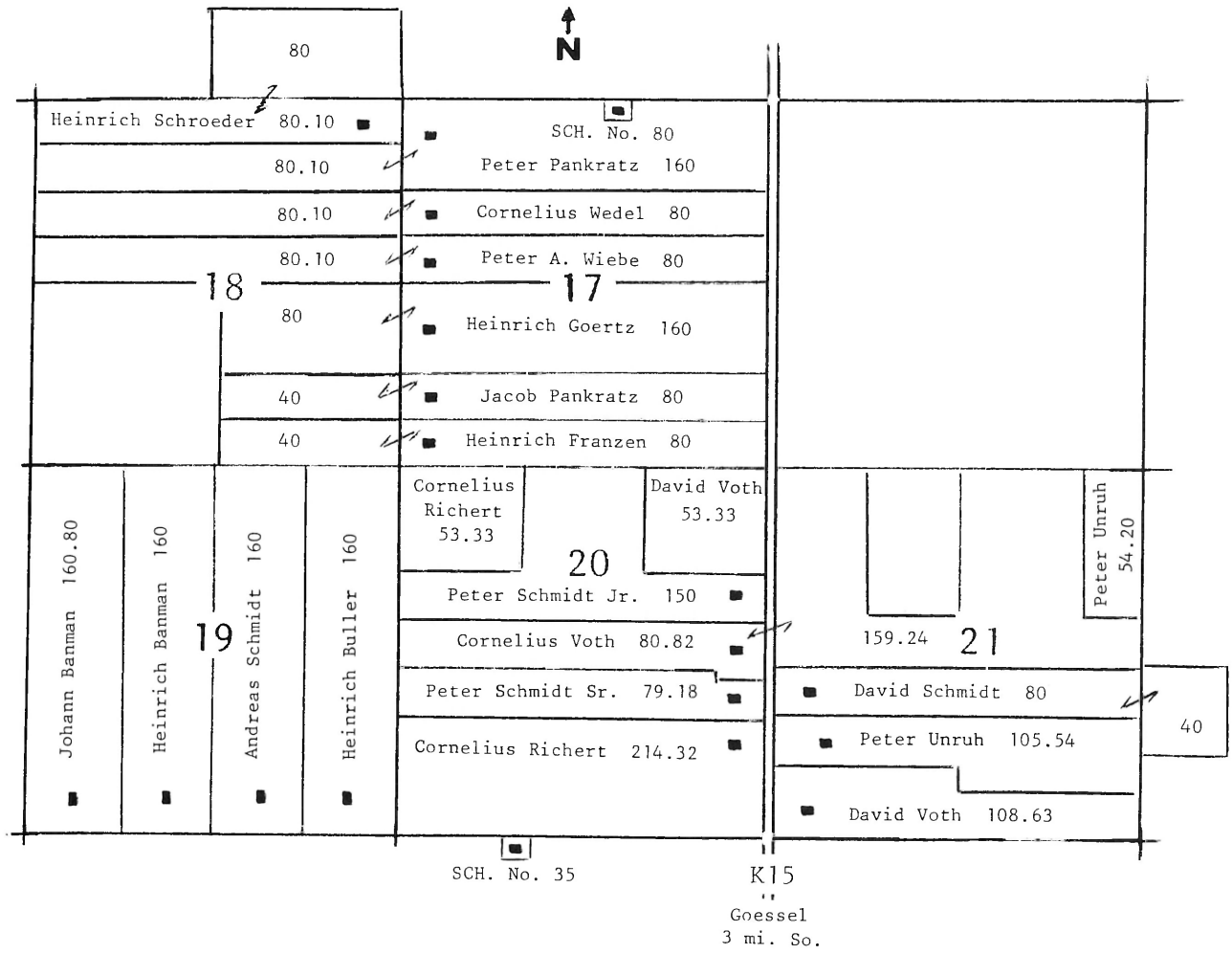
Both Great-Grandfather's and Grandfather's barns had 12"x30" vent openings in the walls by the stalls. These are closed over in both barns except (as shown in the photograph) on the south wall of Great-Grandfather's barn.

In my time Grandfather kept his horses and cows in a newer, smaller barn. It seems the old barn was valuable only as a storage place for old things. I fondly remember some of those antiques. There was the 10-row Hoosier drill with chisels instead of disks. It was in the early 1920s when that drill was disassembled and shipped to refugee immigrants. Other items were a one-horse corn row drill, check-row corn planter, wooden harrow with steel teeth, and a saddle that Grandpa had made. The saddle had neither horn nor stirrups. I preferred riding bareback when cultivating potatoes because the saddle did not fit me and the oily black leather dirtied my overalls. The barn also contained an interesting Russian harness with breast-strap instead of harness and collar. In the center of the wide breast-strap was a large ring for fastening the neck yoke. The homemade articles, such as a wooden hay fork, wooden scoop shovel and wooden garden rake with wooden teeth were of great interest to me. Especially fascinating was the wooden door latch with latch string on the east (originally west) door.

Grandpa Peter Schmidt Jr.'s House-Barn-Shed
(Now owned by great-grandchildren Randolf and Laura Flaming.)







By 1885 Springfield, Sec. 17 and 18, and Blumenort, Sec. 19, were still intact. In these two villages the people had settled on their own land. In Hochfeld, Sec. 20 and 21, the people had settled in a compact group on land to which they did not hold a deed. As a result, Hochfeld was already dissolved by 1885. Dr. A. E. Janzen, former professor of Bible at Tabor College, Hillsboro, states that Gnadenau, seven miles east, was also short-lived because they, like Hochfeld, had settled compactly away from the land they owned (as had been their custom in Russia).

The map is traced from a photocopy, furnished by Raymond F. Wiebe, of part of Menno Township, as it appeared in the Marion County Atlas of 1885, published by the Davy Map and Atlas Co., Chicago, Ill.

Elder Benjamin Ratzlaff: His Life, Times and Descendants

by Thomas B. Mierau

For more than a half century Benjamin Ratzlaff struggled with the issues of nonparticipation in war, spiritual awakening, and church renewal. From the day when first the Mennonite Ratzlaff withdrew "his sword from its sheath and thrust it into a hedgepost," nonparticipation in war became a major expression of faith in the Ratzlaff family. Neither imprisonment nor loss of material well-being could deter Benjamin from following the principle of nonparticipation in war. Benjamin emigrated twice in his lifetime to preserve this Mennonite principle.

Earthquakes, death, and suffering held special meaning for Benjamin Ratzlaff. Benjamin saw the hand of God beckoning his people to deeper spiritual commitment. Benjamin welcomed the spiritual renewal within the mid-nineteenth century Mennonite Church. But, when the spiritual renewal movement in 1860 threatened the Russian Mennonite privilege of nonparticipation in war, Benjamin became an opponent of the emerging Mennonite Brethren movement.

Benjamin Ratzlaff was born April 1, 1791, in Jeziorka, West Prussia, a son of Elder Peter Ratzlaff and Ancke Unrau. Benjamin's paternal grandparents were Adam Ratzlaff and Maricke Wedel and his maternal grandparents were Peter Unrau and Trincke Wedel.[1] The Ratzlaff family belonged to the Przechowka Mennonite Church. Benjamin's great-great-grandfather was the first Ratzlaff to join the Mennonite Church. He was a Swedish soldier of Pomerainian descent;[2] who, moved by sermons he heard in the Mennonite Church, withdrew "his sword from its sheath and thrust it into a hedgepost."[3]

The Jeziorka and Przechowka congregations were part of the Groningen Old Flemish Mennonite Society (Groninger Doopsgezinde Societeit).[4] Originally this group opposed the uniting of Flemish congregations with Frisian congregations, both Dutch Mennonite groups. The Old Flemish, who separated from the Flemish about 1630, tended to be more conservative than either the Flemish or Frisian groups both in doctrine and in practice. The Groninger Doopsgezinde Societeit dissolved in 1815, so the restrictions which kept the different Mennonite groups separate were based on custom during Benjamin Ratzlaff's life, rather than on doctrine.[5]

On June 19, 1813, Benjamn Ratzlaff married the widow Anna (Richert) Becker. They resided in Jeziorka where their first two daughters, Helena and Eva, were born in 1816 and 1818 respectively; both died in April, 1818. Also in 1818, Benjamin was elected "Dorfschulze" (mayor, village guard) of Jeziorka.[6]

That same year the Prussian government attempted to draft Benjamin and three other brethren into military service. Following the teachings of their religious faith, their consciences would not permit them to submit to the draft. They made many trips to the high authorities to appeal the conscription. Finally, the authorities imprisoned them for refusing to submit to the draft. From prison, Benjamin and the others petitioned to the high government for permission to emigrate. While in prison, they were mocked and ridiculed; but they held fast to their faith and prayed for deliverance. After three days the government gave them permission to emigrate.[7] Benjamin and his wife moved from the province of West Prussia to Franztal in the province of Brandenburg.

The villages of Franztal and the adjacent Brenkenhoffswalde were formed in 1765 when Frederick the Great gave thirty-five Mennonite families, who had been expelled by Polish nobelmen from Culm, permission to settle in the marshy Netzebruch, near Driesen in Neumark. Mennonites from the two villages formed the Brenkenhoffswalde Mennonite congregation, a congregation that belonged to the Groninger Old Flemish Society.[8] On May 25, 1819, Benjamin was elected minister in this Old Flemish congregation.[9]

Benjamin and his wife emigrated from Franztal, Brandenburg, Prussia, in the spring of 1820 to a village of the same name in the Molotschna Colony, province of Taurida, South Russia.[10] Helena, the daughter of Benjamin and Anna, was born October 10, 1820, in the village of Franztal, South Russia. January 23, 1827, Anna gave birth to a son, Benjamin II. Anna died the same day. Because his mother had died, Benjamin II was raised by another family who lived in Rudnerweider, four miles from Franztal.[11] Benjamin remarried April 25, 1827, marrying the widow Eva (Nickel) Wichert in Rudnerweide. A daughter, Eva, was born to this union June 13, 1828.[12]

April 9, 1835, Benjamin was elected elder of the Frisian Rudnerweide Mennonite Church following the

death of Elder Franz Goertz. Benjamin was confirmed by the community April 21st, when Elder Bernhard Fast from the Orloff congregation performed the ordination service.[13] By his association with the Rudnerweide congregation, Benjamin left the Old Flemish to join a Frisian congregation.

On January 11, 1838, the Molotschna colony experienced a strong earthquake lasting more than a minute-and-a-half. The Ratzlaff family was sitting down to supper when the doors and windows vibrated and the ground moved. Benjamin envisioned the earthquake as a sign from God, preparing them for the day of judgment. Later that winter, February 13, Benjamin experienced a severe day of testing where he re-examined his religious convictions and begged the Lord for assistance.[14]

On September 21, 1847, Benjamin's second wife, Eva, died after having suffered from illness for eight years. He married the widow Katharina (Goertz) Penner from Pastwa February 12, 1848. Katharina died January 13, 1850, at the age of forty-one. Married August 27, 1850, Benjamin and his new wife Susanna (Hiebert) Regier lived together nearly twenty years before she died March 5, 1870.[15]

The spiritual revival in the Mennonite church, culminating in the emergence of the Mennonite Brethren Church, occurred during Benjamin Ratzlaff's term as elder of the Rudnerweide congregation. Benjamin's signature appears on numerous official documents during 1860 and 1861 pertaining to the emerging MB Church. The documents signed by five elders (Toews, Warkentin, Ratzlaff, Wedel, and Lenzmann) opposed the formation of the MB Church. The German historian Christian Neff labeled Benjamin Ratzlaff an ardent opponent of the forming Mennonite Brethren Church.[16] Benjamin resigned as elder in 1861. Little is known of Benjamin's spiritual pilgrimage from 1861, but we know that Benjamin was baptized into the MB Church in Russia;[17] and, when he died in America he was buried on the section of land where the Mennonite Brethren built their church.[18]

Though Benjamin saw acts of God in nature and felt the spiritual awakening of the pietistic movement, scripture was the foundation of Benjamin's faith in God. Gerhard Wiebe, elder of the Bergthal church, recorded the response of Benjamin Ratzlaff and Peter Wedel at an all Mennonite conference held in the Alexanderwohl church to discuss new curriculum materials being introduced into the Mennonite schools in South Russia. Illustrated biblical stories had been proposed as a substitute for the Bible when instructing the younger children. The conservative church leaders saw the innovation as a threat undermining the value of the scriptures. Wiebe writes, "I raised my eyes to look at the old *Aelteste,* and God be praised and thanked, there were still true watchmen in Zion."[19] The church supported Elders Ratzlaff and Wedel, and the move to remove the Bible from the curriculum was defeated.

By 1872 it became increasingly clear that the Russian government would rescind the privileges given to Mennonites to entice them to settle on Russian soil. As the rumors of loss of privileges, most importantly the loss of exemption from military service, reached the Mennonite villages, Mennonite leaders became increasingly alarmed. Benjamin Ratzlaff, though retired and elderly, strongly supported the emigration movement so that his grandchildren and other Mennonite young people would be free to follow Christ's teachings and not participate in military service. When the delegation preparing to visit Czar Alexander at his vacation home in the Crimea to seek assurances of continued military exemption met in October 1872 at Alexanderwohl, Benjamin Ratzlaff was not among them. Benjamin had concluded by then that emigration was the only alternative and that seeking further assurances from the Czar was futile.[20]

Benjamin Ratzlaff joined the family of his son Benjamin II as they boarded the train at Halbstadt on July 22, 1874 (Julian calendar), and headed for the port of Hamburg, North Germany. They boarded the *S. S. Teutonia* at Hamburg on

Elder Benjamin Ratzlaff.

August 16, 1874 (Gregorian calendar).[21] Benjamin's one-year-old grandson, Heinrich, died at sea while the ship sailed on the North Sea. The child's mother "held him in her arms covered with a shawl. Had the officials known of his death, he would have been buried at sea. When the ship docked at some port [London] in England, the baby was taken by his father to an American cemetery [in London] and buried... [Benjamin II] then caught the ship when it docked at another port [in England]."[22] The *S. S. Teutonia,* surviving a fire as it crossed the Atlantic, arrived in New York on September 3, 1874.[23]

Benjamin Ratzlaff, with his son and his son's family, arrived at the immigrant house in York County, Nebraska, on October 14, 1874. At two o'clock in the morning October 31, Benjamin Ratzlaff died following five-and-one-half weeks of illness.[24] Benjamin Ratzlaff was buried on the land in which he had hoped to settle.[25]

Elder Benjamin Ratzlaff, who reached the age of eighty-seven years, seven months, twice emigrated to preserve the Mennonite practice of nonparticipation in war; married widows on four separate occasions, and was widowed four times; fathered five children, four

daughters and one son; served the Mennonite church in Prussia and in Russia; initially opposed, but later embraced the emerging Mennonite Brethren Church in Russia; began his ministry in an Old Flemish congregation, became an elder in a Frisian congregation, and in retirement joined a Mennonite Brethren congregation; and, at times felt God speak to him through natural and historical phenomena, as well as, through scripture.

After settling in America, Benjamin II and his wife, Sarah (Neumann) Ratzlaff, were baptized in the York river May 10, 1877, and joined the Mennonite Brethren Church. The 14th of May, Benjamin II and Sarah's "sod house was struck by lightning. One whole side was exposed to the elements. [Benjamin II] and the children were seated around the table, and he was reading the Bible by lamplight. Everyone was knocked out, but he came to first and went to [Sarah] and lifted her from where she fell over the cradle—she came to—and then he went from child to child and revived them. All but Benjamin [III]. He was seventeen years of age."[26]

On June 2, 1897, Benjamin II and Sarah Ratzlaff moved from Nebraska to California where they joined their children. Benjamin II's son Johann had moved to Escondido, California, on February 19, 1895. Benjamin II and Sarah's daughters Sarah, Helena, and Anna together purchased $80 worth of train tickets and headed for Azusa, California, on June 25, 1895. And, on May 3, 1897, their son Peter also moved to Azusa. Peter and his family moved back and forth between Nebraska and California several times, but in the fall of 1926 they left Nebraska for good. Benjamin II and Sarah Ratzlaff are buried in the Oakdale cemetery at Azusa, California.[27]

The theme that God speaks and acts through natural phenomena and historical events surfaces repeatedly in the history of the Benjamin Ratzlaff family. This theme is carried for three generations in the progressive diaries first of Benjamin Ratzlaff; then, of Benjamin Ratzlaff II; and, finally, of Peter Ratzlaff and Helena (Ratzlaff) Nichols. The late 1820's and early 1830's were times of crop failures in South Russia. Benjamin interpreted the famine as judgment from God, "After a seven year plague of grasshoppers the Lord punished again with extreme heat and dryness."[28] The earthquake of January 11, 1838, was God preparing his servants for the day of judgment. The day of testing—"schwere Pruefungstag"— was sent by God to strengthen Benjamin's faith. The call to emigrate was also a call to faithfulness. Benjamin III's death was seen as an act of God, "The Lord took away my oldest brother Benjamin when he let him be killed by lightning."[29] Helena's diary includes three further references to earthquakes.[30]

Benjamin Ratzlaff II Family: Helen Nichols, Sarah Juden, Anna Lanphear, and Peter B. Ratzlaff.

Intertwined with the view of God as judge, expressions of God as redeemer appear often. Comments similar to the one following the entry of the death of Eva (Nikkel) Ratzlaff, Benjamin's second wife, are frequently recorded in the diaries, "After laying sick in bed for 14 days the Lord relieved her from all pains and took her to heaven."[31] Following the account of Benjamin Ratzlaff III's death by lightning comes the affirmation of faith and hope, "Lord, you forgive all his sins with your blood."[32]

A nagging question remains unanswered. What could have caused Benjamin Ratzlaff's shift in attitude toward the Mennonite Brethren Church? Spiritually, Benjamin probably was never at odds with the emerging Mennonite Brethren leadership. The Mennonite Brethren movement was in one sense a conservative movement calling the people of God back to the believer's church model of the early Mennonite church.[33] Benjamin would not have been a stranger to the quiet pietism that was a forerunner to the expressed pietism of 1860. After Benjamin left Jeziorka and settled in Franztal, he served the Brenkenhoffswalde church under the leadership of Elder Wilhelm Lange. The warm pietism of Elder Lange not only influenced the Brenkenhoffswalde congregation, but influenced the religious life of the Molotschna colony after 1835. The Brenkenhoffswalde congregation led by Elder Lange immigrated to the Molotschna colony, establishing the village of Gnadenfeld in 1835.[34] Likewise, Tobias Voth, who was born in Brenkenhoffswalde the same year Benjamin was born, brought a quiet

pietism to the Orloff school in 1820. Like-minded contemporaries of Voth included Franz Goertz who preceded Benjamin Ratzlaff as elder of the Rudnerweide congregation and Bernhard Fast of Orloff who ordained Benjamin as elder. It was elements of progressive-minded people within the Orloff (Flemish), Rudnerweide (Frisian), and Alexanderwhol (Old Flemish) congregations who kept quiet pietism alive in the Molotschna colony during the 1820's and 30's.[35] Benjamin's relationships with Wilhelm Lange, Tobias Voth, Bernhard Fast, and Franz Goertz undoubtedly prepared him for his "schwere Pruefungstag" in 1838. Spiritually, Benjamin was in tune with the Mennonite Brethren movement.

Politically, Benjamin was clearly at odds with the emerging Mennonite Brethren leadership. Under the charter granting Mennonites the privilege to settle in Russia, secular society was defined by ecclesiastical structures. The Mennonite colonies were granted tracts of land by the Russian government; and, the colony as a whole was responsible to the Russian authorities. Mennonite individuals did own land, but only insofar as individual ownership complied with colonial structure. Individuals excommunicated by the Mennonite church were stripped of citizen status as well, including the right to own property in the colony. To be a part of the society meant one was a part of the church.[36]

The documents signed by Benjamin Ratzlaff and the four other elders as well as the majority of correspondence written by the leaders in the Mennonite Brethren movement called on the civil powers to mediate in the dispute. Religious issues were not debated in the documents.[37] Clearly, the primary issue was not spirituality, but separation of church and state. Benjamin feared the collapse of the privileged autonomous colonial society where Mennonites were free to govern themselves. Undoubtedly, Benjamin's prison experience in Prussia justified his fears. Because the emerging Mennonite Brethren movement posed a threat to the existing political order, Benjamin opposed the movement.

The dilemma was resolved when the Russian government recognized the Mennonite Brethren Church as a legitimate Mennonite institution within the context of the larger Mennonite society. Thus, the autonomous Mennonite society was preserved, while a believer's church was allowed to separate itself ecclesiastically from the rest of Mennonite society.

Benjamin Ratzlaff, who had retired as elder of the Rudnerweide congregation towards the end of 1861, was free in his retirement to follow openly a more pietistic course. Benjamin acknowledged the Mennonite Brethren Church as a believer's church which called its members to pure living in the cause of Christ. In this context, it may be possible to understand why Benjamin Ratzlaff once "an ardent opponent" of the forming Mennonite Brethren Church within a few years could come full circle to join the church.

ENDNOTES

1. Church Records of the Old Flemish or *Groeningen Mennonisten Societaet in Przechowko, West Prussia,* trans. Lydia Pankratz and Anna M. Unruh, (Goessel, Kansas: Mennonite Immigrant Historical Foundation, 1980), 8, 12, 13, 28, 29, 35.
2. Letter from Eric L. Ratzlaff, 209-32040 Tims Ave., Clearbrook, B. C., Canada V2T 2H2, April 7, 1983; Eric L. Ratzlaff, *Familienregister von Erich L. Ratzlaff Ausgabe 1971,* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Published by Author, 1971), 5; and, Horst Penner, *Die ost- und west-preussischen Mennoniten* (Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein E. V., 1978), 322.
3. Church Records of the Old Flemish . . . , 3; and, Thomas B. Mierau, "The Origin of the Ratzlaff Families of Nebraska and South Dakota," *Mennonite Family History.* Vol. II, (January 1983), 25.
4. Groningen is the capital of a Dutch province of the same name. There were fifteen Old Flemish congregations in the province of Groningen in 1677. The Old Flemish congregations in Groningen gave much financial assistance to the Old Flemish congregations in Prussia during the great floods of 1738 and 1765.
5. N. van der Zijpp, "Groningen," "Groningen Old Flemish Mennonites," and "Groninger Doopsgezinde Societet," *Mennonite Encyclopedia,* Vol. II, 593-7. Also, Ernst Crous, "Przechovka," *Mennonite Encyclopedia,* Vol. IV, 225.
6. Peter Ratzlaff, "Journal," trans. Henry G. Ratzlaff, 3623 Burton Ave., Lynwood, California 90262, 1.
7. Ibid.
8. H. G. Mannhart, "Brenkenhoffswalde," *Mennonite Encyclopedia,* Vol. I, 416; and, Christian Hege, "Brandenburg," *Mennonite Encyclopedia,* Vol. I, 404.
9. Cornelius Krahn, "Benjamin Ratzlaff," *Mennonite Encyclopedia,* Vol. III, 255-6.
10. Benjamin Heinrich Unruh, *Die niederlandisch-niederdeutschen Hintergrunde der mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18., und 19. Jahrhundert,* (Karlsruhe, 1955), 369.
11. Helena (Ratzlaff) Nichols, "Journal," submitted in trans. by Mary (Nichols) Ulrey, 914 Krentz Lane, Yuba City, California 95991, 1 & 2. Note: The practice of placing children into other homes after the death of one parent was not uncommon in South Russian Mennonite society. The Waisenamt (orphan's bureau) appointed guardians to care for children after one or both parents died. See: John B. Toews, "The Diary of Jacob Epp 1860-1880," *Journal of the American Historical Society of Germans From Russia,* Vol. V, No. 1, Spring 1982, 41-42.
12. Peter Ratzlaff, "Journal," 2, 3, 5.
13. Ibid., 3; P. M. Friesen, *The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia (1789-1910),* (Fresno, California: Board of Christian Literature General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1978), 168; and, Franz Isaac, *Die Molotschnaer Mennoniten,* (Halgbstadt, Taurien, South Russia: H. I. Braun, 1908), 268.
14. Peter Ratzlaff, "Journal," 3.
15. Ibid., 3 & 4.
16. Christian Neff, "Benjamin Ratzlaff," *Mennonitisches Lexikon,* Vol. III, 430.
17. Robert O. Epp, *One Hundred Years of Bethesda Mennonite Church,* (Henderson, Nebraska: Centennial Committee of the Bethesda Mennonite Church, 1974), 1 &39.
18. "Family Registar," *Mennonite Brethren Church Records of Henderson, Nebraska,* began 1879 by Peter Regier, trans. John and Bertha Quiring.
19. Gerhard Wiebe, *Causes and History of the Emigration of the Mennonites from Russia,* trans. Helen Janzen (Winnipeg: Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 1981), 19.
20. Ibid., 26
21. Jacob J. Friesen, "Recollections of the Emigration from Russia and the Pioneer Life in America 1874," unpublished paper in Henderson, Nebraska, file at Mennonite Biblical Seminary library, Elkhart, Indiana, 1-4. Note: The Gregorian calendar was twelve days later than the Julian calendar in 1874.
22. Helena (Ratzlaff) Nichols, "Journal," 7.
23. Stanley E. Voth, ed., *Henderson Mennonites from Holland to Henderson,* (Henderson, Nebraska: Henderson Centennial Committee, 1975), 23-28; and, "S. S. Teutonia, Hamburg Departure, New York Arrival, September 3, 1874," Shiplist, in Clarence Hiebert, ed., *Brothers in Deed to Brothers in Need,* (Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press, 1974), 176-8.
24. Helena (Ratzlaff) Nichols, "Journal," 3.
25. Jacob J. Friesen, "Recollections. . . ," 12; and, "Review of the Life of Elder Benj. Ratzlaff," unpublished paper in J. J. Friesen file at the Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, Kansas, 5.
26. Helena (Ratzlaff) Nichols, "Journal," 7.
27. Ibid., 4-6; Peter Ratzlaff, "Journal," 7; and, Letter from Mrs. Henry G. Ratzlaff, 3623 Burton Ave., Lynwood, California 90262, April 22, 1983.
28. Peter Ratzlaff, "Journal," 3.
29. Ibid., 6.
30. Helena (Ratzlaff) Nichols, "Journal," 5 & 6.
31. Peter Ratzlaff, "Journal," 3.
32. Ibid., 6
33. P. M. Friesen, *The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia (1789-1910),* 201-227.
34. H. G. Mannhart, "Brenkenhoffswalde," *Mennonite Encyclopedia,* Vol. I, 416; and, Cornelius Krahn, "Wilhelm Lange," *Mennonite Encyclopedia,* Vol. III, 288.
35. John B. Toews, *Czars, Soviets, and Mennonites,* (Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press, 1982), 19-20.
36. C. Henry Smith, Fifth Edition Revised and Enlarged by Cornelius Krahn, *Smith's Story of the Mennonites,* (Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press, 1981), 274.
37. Franz Isaac, *Die Molotschaer Mennoniten,* 122-210; and P. M. Friesen, *The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia (1789-1910),* 233-262.

The Introduction of the Reaper into Russia

by George Hume
Edited by Robert Kreider

A British Engineer Describes a Sales Trip to the Molotschna in 1861

By 1860 a "wheat revolution" had occurred in South Russia. Silk, flax, and tobacco production declined sharply. Sheep and cattle production decreased. In an article on "Agriculture Among the Mennonites of Russia" in *Mennonite Life* Cornelius Krahn reports that around 1850 the Russian hard winter wheat, which was native to the coast of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, was increasingly prized on the London market.[1] As new ports were opened, the Ukraine became the granary of Europe.

Mennonite farmers of the Molotschna, served by the nearby Sea of Azov ports of Berdyansk and Mariupol, were producing as many as a half million bushels of wheat by 1855. Stimulated by the opportunities for the sale of wheat abroad, aggressive farmers expanded their holdings. Land prices rose. The arable land on an average Molotschna Mennonite farm increased from 60 acres in the early 1850's to 120 acres in 1888. Soon Mennonite entrepreneurs were building reapers, threshing machines, improved plows and other farm machinery to meet the demands of a wheat-export economy.

Beginning with Peter Lepp in the Chortitza colony in 1860, eight large agricultural machinery firms emerged in the Mennonite communities. Among the farm implement manufacturers were Lepp, Wallmann, Koop, Neufeld, Classen, Franz, Schröder, Klassen and Jansen. The A. J. Koop factory in Chortitza in 1911 employed 376 workers. More than six per cent of the production of farm machinery in all of Russia in 1911 came from Mennonite-owned firms.

An enterprising British engineer, George Hume, contributed to that wheat revolution when in 1861 he introduced a group of Mennonites in the Molotschna to a reaper machine and, soon thereafter, a thrasher. George Hume describes this in his memoirs, *Thirty-Five Years in Russia,* published in 1914 when he was 78 years old.[2]

Hume was born in 1836. His family brewed Scotch ale in the village of Feltham near London. After his elementary schooling, he was apprenticed to become a mechanical engineer and worked as a ship builder. His last project during this period was the *Warrior,* "the first engined ironclad." At the close of the Crimean War, 1854-56, he finished his apprenticeship at the engineering firm of John Penn and Son of Greenwich. He was appointed by the Penn's Works to accompany a paddle steamer built for the Russian government, the *Mithridates,* for delivery to the Russian Steam Navigation Company at Odessa.

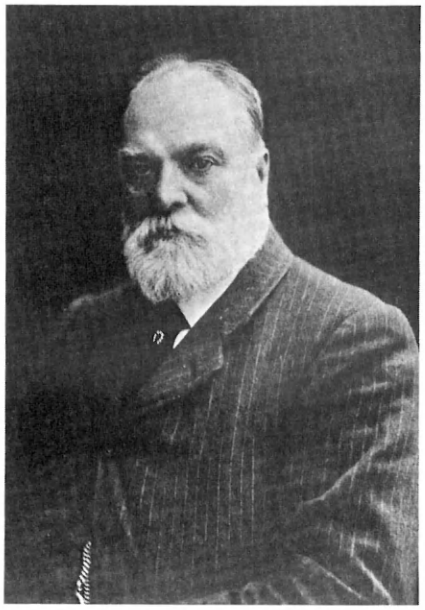
He accepted a position offered by this Russian company. In Odessa, where he became a part of the English colony, he met a Mr. Melville, an agent for the British and Foreign Bible Society, who taught him Russian. Mr. Melville and his British business friend, Mr. Wagner, ignited his interest in "the Mennonite section of the German colonies," which lay two hundred miles to the west. Hume writes: "It was at Mr. Melville's instigation that I became filled with enthusiasm at the idea of going into the interior to investigate the situation, which on its fruition was destined to effect a complete economic transformation in the whole of the farming industry in South Russia."[3]

George Hume left the Russian Steam Navigation Company. A new position took him to Constantinople where he chanced to meet a Mr. Graham, who had once been a fellow apprentice with him in England. Together they decided to launch a plan for "the introduction of labour-saving machines into the Mennonite colonies." They purchased machines for reaping and thrashing. Mr. Wagner promised to "advance any sum that was necessary without any binding documents."[4] George Hume proceeded to Berdyansk, sixty miles southeast of the Molotschna, for his new base of operations.

For thirty-five years Czarist Russia was George Hume's business turf. In Russia four of his children were buried, one in a Mennonite cemetery at Berdyansk. To the end he remained an English gentleman, proud of his nation, confirmed in his evangelical commitments, condescending in his views of Russian Orthodox religion, and full of English curiosity about strange and far-away peoples. One senses linkages between the mission of Mr. Melville's Bible society and Mr. Hume's British entrepreneurial acumen. Toward the end of his memoirs, written on the eve of World War I and three years before the Bolshevik Revolution, Hume envisioned "a great future" lying ahead for the Russian Empire: ". . . it would be a solid buffer between the Eastern and the Western civilization. . . . I entertain a sanguine hope that,

under judicious laws and a system of national education, the country will progress along the paths of peaceful evolution, avoiding reaction and revolution."[5]

George Hume discovered after his wife's death a complete collection of all the letters he had written to her during the fifty-one years of their married life. This aided him greatly in his writing. Reprinted below is much of Chapter V and a small partion of Chapter IX of Hume's memoirs, *Thirty-Five Years in Russia*. No changes have been made in his spelling of place names. He rarely identified a person's given name which presents problems in identification. We are grateful to Dr. Von Hardesty, Associate Curator in the Department of Aeronautics, National Air and Space Museum, Smithonian Institution, for finding this memoir and bringing it to our attention for publication in *Mennonite Life*. One of Dr. Hardesty's areas of special interest is nineteenth century Russian history.



George Hume.

Chapter V. Introduction of Reaping Machine into Russia

On arrival at Berdiansk with letters of introduction from Mr. Melville to the British and German Consuls respectively, Messrs. Cumberbatch and Jansen,[6] I found that they had already been apprised of my coming, and had provided comfortable quarters for me. The town is situated on the Sea of Azov, a shallow sea lying in a saucer-like depression, said to be gradually drying up, and united with the Black Sea by the Straits of Kertch. This desiccation seems certain, as within my own experience vessels which in 1860 could be loaded at six miles from the shore, before my departure in 1890 were forced to load at a distance of sixteen miles. On its northern apex is situated the town of Taganrog, once a flourishing seaport and noted as the place where the Emperor Alexander I died. It is at the mouth of the River Don, one of the largest streams in Europe. . . .

The Mennonite Colonies

The harvest of 1861 had been so superabundant that a considerable portion of the crop remained unharvested, through scarcity of labour, until very late in the autumn, and then much of it rotted in the fields. With the breaking up of the ice and the opening of navigation in that year, we received our machines from England; and, introduced by Mr. Jansen, I started on a journey through the Mennonite colonies with a view to introducing the reaping and thrashing machinery, which had not hitherto been seen there. On my preliminary journey, I found that the colonies consisted of a large number of villages inhabited by the followers of Menno, a sect of Bible Christians who had emigrated from Prussia on the introduction of obligatory military service in that country. The bearing of arms was contrary to their religion, and, under special Charter, exemption from military service had been granted them by the Empress Catherine of Russia.

The villages of this section of the colonies, with a population of 60,000 inhabitants, embraced the whole district from Berdiansk to the River Malotchnaya, and certain colonies beyond the Dnieper. They are models of arrangement and construction, and were planned under the supervision of a special Government inspector. Each farmstead is provided with barn and stables attached at right angles to the dwelling-houses, all being substantially built and tiled with Dutch tiles. Their gable ends are whitewashed and face the street, presenting a very neat appearance, and this with the trim fences and gates gives one a justifiable impression of industrial prosperity. Another pleasant feature is the large number of storks, whose nests are perched upon the ridges of the houses. I consider this bird one of the most chivalrous of his kind, seeing that the male always arrives first and prepares the home nest for his mate.

At the time of my arrival, a conspicuous feature of each village throughout the colonies was the number of windmills used for grinding corn. These followed the mediaeval practice of turning the sails (which were covered with sail-cloth) to the wind by a pole. The grain was thrashed out by being trodden under foot by oxen or horses, though I noticed, among the larger landowners, a large granite stone cut into wide teeth was also used. The winnowing was done by throwing the corn into the air. In fact, the whole operation was biblical and primitive, and of course under such conditions the quantity of land sown was very small. The only attempt at mechanical working I found to be grinding the corn by treadmill worked by the weight of the horses on a plane table.

The principal village, or town as they call it, was Halbstadt, which contains the municipal buildings, educational high schools, etc. It is with a deep sense of gratitude that I record the fact that I received the ungrudging hospitality of these good people and was invited to all

their social gatherings, more especially to those called in America "Bees," which are organized in every village. In the autumn the pigs, which form the chief meat food during the winter months, are killed and dressed. Sometimes, however, it is proposed to kill an ox or a calf, but this is only done when the principal joints thereof are previously ordered. I have been present at festivals where sixteen pigs have been killed and dressed in one day, the hams being put into brine, and all other joints made ready for curing or prepared for sausages of various kinds, besides which a dinner has been provided and cooked for the occasion. In my time it was always roast goose stuffed with chestnuts.

The division of the sexes prevails at the festivals, the women sitting at one side of the table and the men at the other. From place to place, in due course, the "Bees" fly; the same ceremonies are performed, until the last village in the circuit has stored its winter provisions.

The inhabitants of these villages are farmers possessing about 120 acres of land, and in the larger ones there are so-called "Beisitzers," who have no land, but are the artisans of the districts, such as blacksmiths, carpenters, etc. It was in such a village as this that I first tried the mower. When the machines arrived in the spring, I had visited on introduction a very large estate belonging to a rich German proprietor, and had asked him to allow me to give the machines a trial on a field of corn, and also whether, seeing that he was often sending corn to Berdiansk, he would allow two reapers to be brought thence in the returning empty wagons to his yard, to remain until July for inspection by the colonists. His decision was that he had heard that such machines were very good at thrashing out the corn, but never that any one in the colonies had used one. He had already engaged a sufficient number of men for cutting his corn, and could not therefore give the trial, but would willingly order the reapers to be brought from the town on the wagons, and they could then stand in one of his barns for inspection.

It had, however, got noised abroad that a young Ennglishman had arrived in the district, bringing with him a newly-invented wonderful machine, which was erroneously said to be capable of cutting three acres in one day, and this had excited much curiosity. On the arrival of the machines at Steinbach,[7] I again proceeded thither to erect them, and met a Mr. Dick, a preacher, who was much respected throughout the colonies. After examining the machine when I had fully explained it to him, he said that he began to see that there was a possibility of its doing the work I predicted. The only thing he feared was that the beater apparatus which brought the corn on to the knives might thrash a considerable quantity of grain out of the ears. Mr. Dick had seen something of the world beyond the village, having been to Moscow and St. Petersburg, and had inspected mechanical contrivances used by manufacturers which had astounded him. He was a man of considerable culture and natural ability, and became much interested, ultimately asking me to go to the village of Podonau,[8] his dwelling-place, where he would show me a field of rye on which the machine might be tried.

Of course I pointed out to him that the horses had not been trained, and that the noise of the machine usually affected them before they had become accustomed to the working. We arranged that on a certain Friday morning a preliminary trial should be carried out apart from the reaping, and, if satisfactory, the cutting should take place on the ensuing Monday.

On bringing the machines to Podonau, the blacksmith of the village, called locally "The Mechanic," was specially invited to inspect them and give his decision upon them. He was a veritable type of a Dutch burgher of mediaeval times—broad in the beam, with his unstockinged feet thrust into slippers much trodden down at the heels, and smoking a cherry-wood pipe at least four feet long. Such was the umpire who was to give his verdict upon these unfamiliar machines. It was only necessary to look at the man's face to see that he had decided on his verdict. After going round and examining the reaper, refusing any information I was ready to give, he turned to the villagers, who were standing by open-mouthed, and sententiously gave his opinion. "That is no machine; that is a grasshopper." To this I replied, "No, no! it is no grasshopper, but a locust, and you will see it clear the corn to the ground cleaner than the work of locusts." The ultimate result proved my locust to be nearer the truth than his grasshopper.

The machine was American, Wood's patent, consisting of a cutting bar with dog-tooth knives, a plane table with a seated back for raking off the sheaves, and a revolving beater for bringing the corn on to the knives. When all was ready, Mr. Dick ordered the horses to be harnessed to the machine. They were a beautiful carriage pair, evidently very fresh, and not recently in harness. I took my place on the very small seat provided, and lifting the reins prepared to guide the horses; but they suddenly took the bits in their teeth, and well it was that the men had stood off, for they began kicking and plunging so that it was a marvel how I escaped being thrown under their heels. Then the unwonted rattle of the gearing at the rear caused them to stampede, and mad with terror they rushed through the village to the open steppe. I feel sure that Mazeppa[9] tied to the wild horse was child's play to this. With the machine leaping and shaking with the irregularities of the ground, it was with the greatest difficulty I kept my seat; there was no question of using the reins, for I was forced to let the horses go their own sweet way, and it was only when, in a white foam they gradually became exhausted that I was at last able to conquer them.

When I found that I could control and guide them with the machinery in full work, I dismounted, soothed and pacified them, and wiped them down with dry steppe grass, leading them gently towards the village. Half-way I was met by a large number of the villagers on horseback, who expressed their surprise at finding me safe and sound. One of them, a young man, gave me his horse, and assured Mr. Dick on his arrival that they were so thoroughly broken in that he could go any-

where with them, which was confirmed practically the next day, Saturday. The bridles of Russian horses are without blinkers, and this fact was probably the cause of a great part of the mishap. In subsequent trials with fresh horses, I always had the training done with their eyes bandaged.

Mr. Dick, uninfluenced by the entreaties of the women folk, decided that cutting should be tried on the Monday as arranged. When the great day arrived, people from the neighbouring villages flocked in on horseback, or in buggies, to see the wonderful sight of a modern harvester; and as I drove it, I was followed by a crowd critically examining the ground to see how much corn had been thrashed out, and their verdict was "Not half so much as by hand work." When the trial of the Burgess & Key machine (which gained the first prize of £500 for reapers at the Great Exhibition of 1851) was carried out, the Russian peasants following it were simply astounded at seeing the corn come rolling off in a long continuous swathe ready for the binder. At last they took off their caps and crossed themselves, devoutly praying that they might not have been present at an invention of the devil.

On another occasion when the steam thrasher was at work, a deputation from a neighbouring village came begging our man in charge to call out the unclean spirit that was doing the work, so that they might see it. He, instead of explaining to them the working of it, told them that he could not do that, because he would have to work the machine himself, besides which there would be the devil to pay amongst the villagers. I admonished him, and explained to him that in introducing these machines we looked upon ourselves not merely as the pioneers of a great industry, but also as emissaries of civilization, and, seeing that superstition and ignorance go hand in hand, our duty lay through enlightenment to destroy the source and power of it.

The Russian peasant, owing to the state of ignorance in which serfdom has kept him, is naturally most superstitious. A woman will not cross the road before a man, fearing she might bring him misfortune; also should a priest or cat cross before him when first driving out in the morning, the driver will return and begin his journey afresh.

A series of bad harvests ensuing, it was long before any extended use was made of the machines, so that we earned little or nothing from our first venture. Subsequently, however, the use of them extended. Our business in the steam machinery increased, and the manufacture of reapers and such small machinery was eventually taken up by others, thousands being made yearly in factories in Chortitz, Alexandroff, and Berdiansk. It was interesting to me, the pioneer, on visiting the colonies in 1891, to be shown the machine which I had introduced into Russia in 1861. This Wood's machine, being light and suitable for their horses, now finds a home in almost every peasant's cottage or colonist's homestead in South Russia.

The Mennonites

To the general reader it may be of interest to give a short description of the origin and experiences of this people, all the more that it seemed extremely strange that for conscience' sake they should have found in Russia, the most despotic of all countries and known for its intolerance, a refuge and asylum. All the more extraordinary was the fact that, at the time of their immigration, the Holy Synod of Russia was using every means in its power to bring the adherents of all other communities under the priestly domination of the Greek Church. Yet here I found them, in a corner of the Empire, enjoying the full rights and freedom of citizens, and practising their religious tenets without let or hindrance from the Russian hierarchy.

This remarkable community dates its origin from the time of Luther, and is considered to be the first dissenting section of that period. Its original founder was one Obbo Phillipoz[10] in 1523, who, however, left the community early, in disagreement on the point of church fellowship. The name Mennonite is derived from Menno Simens (1492-1559), who became in 1537 the missioner of that body, which had separated itself from Luther owing to being in disagreement with his tenets. This formed a new community, and ultimately took the name and leadership of Menno.

The main tenets of this new sect were first, that, discarding all priestly domination outside the Bible and the believer's conscience, no forms or ceremonies should be tolerated in the Christian Church. Secondly, that neither baptism nor the Lord's Supper conferred grace, and that it was only those of the New Birth that formed the true body. Baptism is performed by pouring water on the head, and formerly, or it may still perhaps be, there was the custom of feet-washing with the Lord's Supper. Further, amongst their tenets, marriage out of the community is forbidden, or only sanctioned after profession of faith.

They deny all right of the civil authority to bind their conscience under any circumstances whatever. This excludes the taking of oaths and the acceptance of any office under Government, even to the extent of refusing magisterial duties. Whilst they inculcate obedience to all laws which do not bind their conscience and are rightly enforced by the civil authority, they repudiate under any circumstance the taking of human life. As a consequence, they refuse all enactments forcing them into obligatory military service, and stand fast on the charter given them by the Empress Catherine, which conceded to them full freedom for ever from conscription, and granted to each family an allotment of land for their support. The date on which the sect was founded was 1523, in the town of Zurich.

In their church government they have no settled ministry; their leaders, who preach without text, are chosen from the community. This is considered a great honour; and owing to the sermons being in High German, instead of the German which is the common speech of the people, the preachers chosen must of necessity be men of fair education. The women take no part whatever in the church government, and in their simple chapels are seated separately, the men to the right and the women to the left of the preacher. Instrumental music in worship is prohibited, and to an unaccustomed ear the long-drawnout ending to each line of their hymns sounds

very monotonous.

In their services they have been compared to the Quakers, being much addicted to silent prayer; they also agree in their opposition to military service. On more than one occasion the members of the British Quaker sect have visited the colonies and preached in their chapels, which, they pointed out to me, they had considered to be a great honour conferred upon them by the English community, and consequently much appreciated.

Again, they have been compared to the Plymouth Brethren, with whom, certainly, they have much affinity. They differ from them, however, in church government and practice, one special point being that they do not require for church fellowship strict uniformity in their religious opinions, a tenet which has caused so many doctrinal differences and splits amongst the Plymouth Brethren, otherwise a most estimable class of Christians.

As a community, the Mennonites are highly esteemed by all classes in Russia, being strictly honest in all their dealings, and reliable in all their undertakings. Instances have personally come under my notice when (as very seldom occurs, however) a member of their community being unable to meet his liabilities, the colony has subscribed the amount due and satisfied the debt.

During my frequent visits to the villages, I used, together with my host and his family, to attend their services. At that time Spurgeon[11] was greatly esteemed; his sermons were translated into German and Dutch, and very often formed the subject of the discourse, being much prized.

From the above it will be seen that in the eyes of the Church of Rome a community of this description would be considered not only subversive of all religion, but a danger to civil authority. Hence much persecution ensued; members of the sect were tortured and drowned, and, as was usual in those times with those who only wished to live their religious life quietly and apart from the world the blood of the martyrs led to the teaching and spread of the new religion to Germany, Holland, and France. It was mainly, however, the introduction of universal obligatory military service that sent them farther afield; and as each country in turn adopted conscription, they have fled from its enactment.

When in 1870 universal military service became law, the Mennonites, having in mind the charter which specially exempted them from it, were much agitated, and on the Government insisting, a large number left for Canada and the States. In order to stay the exodus of so laborious and God-fearing a community, the leaders (including among them our dear friends the family of the German Consul, the Jansens, with whom we have kept in touch ever since) were forced to leave, and probably the majority would leave followed. This drastic action, however, did not avail to stay the exodus, so General Todleben, the hero of the defence at Sebastopol, was sent down armed with full powers to settle matters. This ended in a compromise arrangement, under which they could not be called to the fighting ranks, but must serve three years in the Forestry Department, and be trained as bearers of the wounded and in the art of giving first aid.

The present adherents of the sect number about 250,000, of which 80,000 are in the United States, 75,000 in Russia, 60,000 in Holland and 25,000 in Canada, the remainder being spread in small communities in Germany, Poland, Switzerland, Galicia, and France.

Shortly after the Crimean War, an agitation took place among the more earnest Christians of the denomination, in consequence of their opinion that there had been a serious backsliding of the community, as a whole, from the principles for which they stood. This movement led to the formation of a brotherhood among them, which eventually attracted the attention of the priestly authorities. Year by year, during the time of harvest, there was a great immigration of Russian labourers from the villages of the interior for the ingathering. These usually returned annually to the same Mennonite household, and joined with them in their evening meditations, known as the Gebetstunde, or hour of prayer. From this name eventually arose that of the Stundists.[12] These labourers, with the well-known impressibility of the Russian peasant in religious matters, became missioners of the new doctrines in their various villages, and to so great an extent that the priesthood were greatly affected in their material interests through losing their fees for marriages, christenings, burials, etc. On this the ecclesiastical authorities took action, and sent round commissioners, comprising priests, deacons, and superior members of the clergy, to report as to the number of Stundists in the various villages of their districts.

A German Mennonite friend related to me the following incident. He was at the time the mayor of the village, when he received notice from the ecclesiastical authorities of Ekaterinoslav that a commmission was visiting the district, and amongst others his own village. He was to prepare them lodgings and all due hospitality, as well as fresh horses for their next journey. Having found necessary lodging for the others in the village, he himself hospitably entertained the leaders, and in course of conversation inquired whether they had found many Stundists in that locality. To this they cheerfully replied that, thanks to God, there were not many in that neighbourhood.

Knowing of the widespread character of Stundism in his own district, he felt much surprise, and took an early opportunity of interviewing the coachman who had been driving them, the latter himself a Stundist. To the queries put the Russian replied that they had only found one, an old woman, who, unlike the others, declined to pay the sum (perhaps two roubles) demanded in order to place them in the ranks of the orthodox. My friend thereupon objected that purchasing exemption in such a manner was not consistent with the principles held by the Stundist community, and was answered, "Brother, I fear that you have not studied your Bible to profit, for have you not read the words in the Gospel (Luke xvi. 9), 'Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness'?" —which, if stretching a doctrinal point, certainly brought immediate relief to a harassed community. . . .

Chapter IX. Life in Poltava and Kharkov

Owing to a two-years' succession of bad harvests, it became evident that Berdiansk did not offer sufficient prospects for expansion that could yield permanent support for two families. In the year 1863, on January 20th, I had married, and therefore taken upon myself great responsibilities. . . .

Having taken the above resolution Mr. Graham and I resolved to dissolve our partnership, he remaining in Berdiansk, while I went forth to seek new fields. Previous to our final departure, I had visited, together with my wife, a number of the German colonies, and, armed with an introduction from Mr. Jansen, the German Consul, we made the acquaintance of the leading members, who heartily invited us to stay with them during our inland journey. After long deliberation with our friends, the city of Poltava[13] was considered to offer the best prospects for a settlement, it being the centre of Russia's finest agricultural districts. This town is well known also from a historical standpoint, as being the scene of a crushing defeat of Charles XII of Sweden by Peter the Great.

On our first journey, the following incident occurred. It had been arranged that we should stop at the house of a Mr. Reimer, who at that time was the mayor of the village of Orloffka. To reach this place we had to cross the River Malotchnaya, where our coachman, having misjudged the ford, drove us into the middle of the stream, when we immediately sank to the axles of the carriage. The position became a very difficult one, as it would have been impossible for the driver to descend without himself becoming embedded, and water began to invade the carriage itself.

At this juncture we heard in the distance the voices of men approaching the ford, who soon appeared accompanying their teams of bullocks. We therefore hailed them, and they commenced bargaining as to the amount to be paid them for rendering assistance, the sum finally settled being 25 roubles (£2 IOS.). The coachman could by leaning over unlock the traces, thus freeing the horses; the bullocks being attached to the carriage in a few minutes landed us on the bank, and the horses were then also extricated, the whole operation taking nearly half an hour.

Soon after we arrived at our host's house, when I related the whole circumstances. On hearing this, Mr. Reimer became extremely angry, and at once sent a man on horseback to bring back the men who had helped us. On their arrival, after being bitterly upbraided for breaking the accepted law of the Steppe, which enjoined mutual aid to be given in case of necessity, without payment, he made them return me the money, and threatened to impound the team if they did not do so; he would not even allow me to give them a small gratuity.

We had now to prepare for the greater trek. For this purpose we had a large fourgon, a covered roomy coach, drawn by three horses. My wife and our German colonist housekeeper slept inside, and myself and our driver (also a German colonist) under the vehicle. Taking as we did a circuitous route, as long as we were in the German colonies we had a roof over our heads every night, and we stayed a week with Mr. Cornies, the Government inspector of the Mennonite community. Contrary to the Mennonite tenets he had married a wife from Germany; he was also a man of great intellectual powers, and possessed a large estate, on a portion of which he had planted an extensive forest, thereby proving that the climate and soil of the Steppe were amply suitable for the vigorous growth of trees. Following his example, the Russian Government planted large tracts of Steppe land with forest trees, and it is in institutions connected with the development of these that the youth of the Mennonites receive instruction in forestry and first aid to the wounded instead of undergoing military service.

In this house one of the dishes provided for dinner was peacock, and a water melon of their own growing that weighed forty-five pounds. This was about our halfway house, from which we now entered on our Steppe journey, reinvigorated and refreshed. For many a long mile the driver and myself walked on foot; we started early in the morning, taking three hours' rest in the middle of the day, after which we proceeded until sunset.

The next stage of our journey was Einlager,[14] where we stayed two days with our friends the Ungers, for whom I had erected the first mill, which I was pleased to find was making large profits. At that time it was the custom to work on the principle of barter, the owners of all windmills receiving one-tenth of the corn delivered instead of money, and this same principle was being carried out at this time with the steam mills. The trade had so increased that those bringing corn, no matter what quality, could immediately receive in return barley, wheat, or rye already ground, without having to wait.

We then proceeded on our further journey to Ekaterinoslav,[15] a city that had been founded within a few weeks by Potemkin to prove to Catherine the Great the prosperity of her newly-conquered Tartar territories. In this city we stayed with Mr. Tiesen, for whom I had erected my second mill after which we took our last stage to Poltava. . . .

ENDNOTES

1. Cornelius Krahn, "Agriculture Among the Mennonites of Russia," *Mennonite Life* X:1 (January 1955), 14-24.
2. London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton. Kent and Co., 1914; reprint: Arno Press and *The New York Times,* 1971).
3. *Ibid.,* p. 37.
4. *Ibid.,* p. 50.
5. *Ibid.,* p. 308.
6. Cornelius Jansen (1822-94) and his family emigrated from West Prussia to Berdyansk in 1850, returned to Danzig, and in 1856 returned to Berdyansk, where he served as the Consul for Prussia and Mecklenburg. He was one of the leaders in the migration of Mennonites to the United States, arriving in Ontario in 1873 and subsequently settling in Beatrice, Nebraska.
7. One of the southeast villages of the Molotschna colony.
8. The next to last village in the southeast corner of the Molotschna colony.
9. A Cossack chiefton, 1632-1708, who according to legend was strapped to a wild horse and sent into the wilderness. The horse eventually reached a camp of Cossacks, where he became their leader in the struggle for Ukrainian independence.
10. Obbe Philips, c1500-1568, brother of Dirk Philips.
11. Charles Spurgeon, 1834-1892, well-known Baptist preacher in London.
12. A pietistic revival movement among the German and Russians of the Ukraine in the nineteenth century.
13. A city 100 miles north of Chortitza.
14. A village in the Chortitza settlement. Abraham Unger was the first elder in the Mennonite Brethren Church, 1862-76.
15. Now Dnepropetrovsk, was the largest city in the vicinity of the Chortitza Mennonite settlement, which was fifty miles to the south. The Thiessen, Toews, Hesse, and Fast families were engaged in the growing milling industry in that city in the nineteenth century.

Immigration Poetry

by S. P. Yoder

Introduction

The following two poems, "Christianity Requires Peace" and "Christian Love and Sympathy" served a unique purpose. They were composed by Simon P. Yoder of Vistula, Elkhart County, Indiana, in 1873, and Yoder sold copies of the poems for $.06 each and donated all of the proceeds to aid the migration of the Mennonites from Europe and Russia to North America. John F. Funk promoted the sale of the poems in the *Herald of Truth*.

S. P. Yoder's poetry was popular, and his records indicate that he received orders from fifteen states and Ontario. For example, during the first week of February, 1874, he listed five purchases: February 2, Moses Brenneman, Elida, Allen Co., Ohio, $1.00; February 3, Mary A. Slagell, Chenoa, McLean Co., Illinois, $.10; February 3, Anna Shank, St. Martins, Morgan Co., Missouri, $1.00; February 4, Ben. Brenneman, Elida, Allen Co., Ohio, $1.00; and February 5, J. S. Good, Nodaway Mills, Page Co., Iowa, $.10. S. P. Yoder's son, J. Harvey Yoder, donated copies of the poetry and the records of sales to the Mennonite Library and Archives (Small Archives, I-26) in 1974.

S. P. Yoder was a bedfast invalid when he began to write poetry in the 1870s, but he recovered to some extent and married in 1880. He continued to write poetry until his death in 1926, and in 1916 a book of his poems entitled *Political Meditations of Thoughtful Paragraphs* was published. Yoder was also a frequent contributor to the *Herald of Truth*.

The following two poems are reprinted not only as an illustration of S. P. Yoder's writing but also as a demonstration of the concern for and support given to the Mennonite immigrants of the 1870s.

—David A. Haury

CHRISTIANITY REQUIRES PEACE

The following Poem was written by a young man who has been an invalid for a number of years, and writes only with the greatest difficulty. But, anxious to do something, for the cause of the Prince of Peace, he with much labor wrote these lines, and proposes to give the proceeds to the Aid of the needy brethren, who are about to emigrate from Russia to America for conscience' sake.

The righteous prophets long foretold
That cruel wars must cease—
That Christ the Shepherd for his fold,
Would bring a reign of peace;
When men would walk in the light of the Lord,
And no more desire to lift up the sword:
When none need quake at the fierce battle's roar,
For nations should not learn war any more,
But follow the paths of peace.
Isa. 2:4, 5; Mic. 4:3.

List to the song of Bethlehem,
The joyful sound prolong;
Lo! "On earth peace, good will toward men."
This was the angel's song,
When the Prince of Peace, our Savior was born,
To proclaim that peaceable kingdom's morn.
The gospel of peace he freely revealed,
Yea, with his own blood his Testament sealed,
To redeem the world from wrong.
Luke 2:14.

What were the doctrines he did preach?
What saith his holy word?
Did Jesus his disciples teach
To wield the bloody sword?
O no; but he said they should bless and love
Their enemies, and be harmless as doves.
Christ, lowly in heart, meek, merciful, kind,
Left none but gracious examples behind:—
So we should follow the Lord.
Matt. 5:44; 10:16.

No law of peace you'll find so good,
Searching the wide world through,
As, Do to others as you would
That they should do to you.
All those who will search the Scriptures can see,
That true disciples we never can be,
Unless we possess Christ's spirit which leads
Us e'en to repay wrong—violent deeds,
With deeds that are good and true.
Matt. 7:12; Rom. 8:9; 12:17-21.

He came to save the lives of men,
Then why should we destroy?
When men accept Christ's Spirit, then
They'll find true peace and joy.
He said unto Peter, "Put up thy sword,"
He taught by his deeds as well as his word.
The Author of peace—he taught us to pray
For our enemies too, but not to slay,—
To *forgive* and not destroy.
Luke 9:56; Jn. 18:11.

How can men be so blind in this
Clear peaceful gospel light,
As to believe and say, It is
The Christian's legal right
To forge the instruments of carnal strife,
And learn the fiendish art of taking life!
With sword and gun join in the mad affray
To kill his fellow men in every way!
May God save us from this sight.

Come, blessed time, seen from afar
By holy seers of old,
When none shall sanction deeds of war
Within the Christian fold.
Oh, when shall appear the glorious day,
When carnage and strife shall have passed away?
When all men on earth love the Prince of peace,
And obey his gospel—then wars will cease,
'Tis the hope we firmly hold.

Lord, cleanse us now from every thought
Of violence and strife;
Help us to serve thee as we ought,
And live a peaceful life.
We pray thee to cause all rulers and kings
To humble themselves, and follow the things
That cherish sweet peace:—to obey thy word;
Forever to stay the murderous sword,
And cease from carnal strife.

Vistula, Elkhart Co. Ind. S. P. Yoder.

CHRISTIAN LOVE AND SYMPATHY

By S. P. Yoder

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" John 13:34, 35.

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death." I John 3:14.

On this subject long I've pondered,
Through my mind these texts still ring:
Is the "New Command" I wondered
But an outward, formal thing?
Through it we see indications
Of the workings of the soul;
That has changed its inclinations—
Given all to Christ's control.

Oh that men had always hearkened
To sweet counsel from above;
Precious homes would not be darkened
For the want of Christian love.
Now kind feelings oft lie dormant,
Anguish dwells where love should reign;
And amidst such things discordant
Hearts are crushed for selfish gain.

Listen then while I am pleading,
Since in truth it must be said;
All around us hearts are bleeding
For the want of friendly aid.
In the light by heav'n begotten
Shall such things forever be?
Have all men then quite forgotten
Christian love and sympathy?

Some are bound by worldly fashions
Till they loathe a Christian life;
Others yield to angry passions,
And engage in envious strife.
While 'mongst those who stand professing
Pious, non-resistant ways;
Ofttimes see we most distressing
Symptoms of declining grace.

By what sign shall true believers
Be distinguished everywhere,
From mistaken world deceivers?
By the Christian love they bear
To each other, said our Savior.
From this holy love will grow
Humble, true and right behavior,
That all men their faith may know.

Fellow man, whate'er thy nation,
Trustest thou in Jesus' word?
Hast thou found that great salvation
Which is given by our Lord?
Let us pray, my Christian brother,
For a deeper work of grace;
That may cleanse us from all error,
And discordant things efface.

Sympathetic feelings, brother,
We should cherish day by day;
But if harsh towards each other
How can we for blessings pray?
All true hearts have inward longing
For a higher, nobler life;—
Why not cease from bitter wrongings,
Live in love and banish strife?

Henceforth let us aid each other,
It will make our burdens light.
If we kindly walk together
In the path of truth and right.
Since we now confess Christ Jesus
As our Savior and our guide;
Let not Satan's wiles deceive us
Till we yield to hate or pride.

We are called to love each other—
Oh for faith and love that we
May our selfish feelings smother
And increase in sympathy!
While on earth, Oh may we ever
Walk together hand in hand;
Jesus will forsake us never,
If we heed his *new command.*

We are pilgrims bound for heaven
Where the holy ones abide;—
Where true happiness is given,
And no evil can betide:
And by faith we look to Jesus
As the only way to God;
For from guilt he did release us
By the shedding of his blood.

Wherefore then, my Christian brother,
Should we be estranged so long?
Can we not stand up together
In our warfare 'gainst the wrong?
Let no *idol* gods deceive us;
Hope would all be wretchedness
If we could not trust in Jesus
Who is all our righteousness.

Let us now provoke each other
Unto love and righteous deeds,
And assist our weaker brother—
Thus we'll scatter precious seeds,
Which perchance may grow and flourish
In what else were barren land,
And ourselves and others nourish
Through the Savior's new command.

This would be a world of beauties
Like unto the world above,
If all men would do their duties
From the motive of true love.
Peaceful glories, pure and holy
Would descend our homes to bless,
If all men both high and lowly
Were but freed from selfishness.

E'en the peaceful homes in glory—
Homes of angel hosts above;
Would be filled with battles gory
If they were not filled with love.
God is love, and he abideth
Only with the pure in heart;
Where no party strife divideth
Anxious souls with cruel art.

While we pray the Lord of heaven.
For the thing of highest worth—
That his kingdom may be given
And his will be done on earth:
Let us not forget, dear brother,
That pure charity so rare;
And in love now walk together
Lest we strive against our prayer.

We should zealous be to labor
For the good of all mankind;
By our *actions* lead our neighbor
To the fount of love refined:
By our "walk and conversation"—
By the fruit the tree is known,
Hence without dissimulation
Must true Christian love be shown.

Many wrongs would soon be righted
Many errors truth remove,
Were the hearts of men united
In the bonds of Christian love.
For the wicked world's salvation
Let us labor then and pray;—
May Christ's fold in every nation
Gain in number day by day.

First I'd say to every *brother,*
Let *us* do the Master's will;
And as Christians, *love each other*—
Thus at once the law fulfill!
From the throne of grace above us
Then rich blessings will descend,
Hosts celestial then will love us,
And our holy cause defend.

Book Reviews

C. Arnold Snyder, *The Life and Thought of Michael Sattler*, Scottdale: Herald Press, 1984. Pp. 260. ($19.95 hardback)

Ten years ago, Kenneth Davis' *Anabaptism and Asceticism* was published as volume 16 of Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History. Davis, in the tradition of Albrecht Ritschl, contended that Anabaptism could constructively be considered a kind of lay asceticism. And as such, it was more firmly rooted in medieval Catholicism than in sixteenth-century Protestantism. Not surprisingly, given the general nature of his study, Davis painted with a broad brush in support of his provocative and important thesis. Davis noted, for example, Michael Sattler's Benedictine background as evidence for this thesis, but he had to leave the task of a truly thorough examination of Sattler's life and thought to others.

That task has now been accomplished in the finest sense of that term. The newest volume in the Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History series, C. Arnold Snyder's *The Life and Thought of Michael Sattler* is a superb book! It reveals meticulous research; it is well-written; its conclusions are convincing, significant, and—although Snyder makes no overt attempt at providing such support—generally supportive of Davis' thesis.

Snyder considers first the life of Michael Sattler. After establishing that much of what we think we know about Sattler is based on naive conclusions resting on very slender evidence, Snyder embarks on a critical analysis of the textual and contextual evidence regarding the life of Michael Sattler. Along the way, he concludes that Sattler was *not* university-educated; that he *was* prior of St. Peter's of the Black Forest sometime between 1518 and 1525; that he was influenced by the Bursfeld Reform of the Benedictine Order, especially in the form of the writings of Abbot Johannes Trithemius; that Protestant ideas came to Sattler through the social and political demands of the peasants, *not* through the writings of Luther or Zwingli; that Sattler probably left the monastery in 1525 *with* the radical peasants; that he does not appear in the Zurich records until November of 1525 (the "Brother Michael in the white coat" of March 1525 is *not* Sattler —Benedictines wore black); that he did *not* work with Grebel; that he was *not* a confirmed Anabaptist until June of 1526; that Sattler's separatist ecclesiology was the insurmountable obstacle in his relationship to the Strasbourg reformers, Bucer and Capito; that he *was* the primary author of the Schleitheim Confession; that that confession was an internal document aimed at other Anabaptists, *not* at outsiders like Bucer and Capito; and that he was martyred not at the midpoint of his Anabaptist career, but at its very threshold.

Snyder then turns to a similarly systematic analysis of Sattler's thought. He reviews the extant writings of Sattler, and then examines, in turn, Sattler's *Schriftprinzip*, christology, soteriology, and ecclesiology. Sattler's christocentric understanding of scripture, according to Snyder, is derived largely from his Benedictine past and the writings of Trithemius; his Christology is likewise dependent on these monastic sources, with one caveat—"whereas the monastic teaching outlines a process of gradual sanctification, Sattler now holds to a doctrine of election and regeneration through the Spirit, which he learned from the Swiss Anabaptists" (169). In the areas of soteriology and ecclesiology, Snyder (not surprisingly) sees more evidence of Protestant influence, but even here the monastic strain is unmistakable. Sattler's strong emphasis on a pure and separated community of saints, declared so unequivocally in the fourth article at Schleitheim, "leads from Michael Sattler straight back through to the monastery." (202)

The Life and Thought of Michael Sattler is so carefully researched and logically argued that one hesitates to quarrel with Snyder's conclusions. There may be occasional evidence of the procrustean bed. For example, in arguing for the almost exclusively Benedictine roots of Sattler's christocentrism, Snyder may have too easily dismissed the christocentrism of the earliest Zurich Anabaptists. At least, in this reviewer's opinion, Snyder's position here is open to question. But there are no glaring errors. Indeed, the worst mistake in the book was committed by Herald Press. The half-title page declares this volume to be the 26th in the Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History series, when in fact the series listing opposite the title page clearly shows it to be the 27th. Would that all works of historical scholarship could claim no worse error!

This is a book of exceptional quality, a truly outstanding addition to an important series.

Dale Schrag
Bethel College

Bender, Urie A. *Stumbling Heavenward: The Extraordinary Life of An Ordinary Man, Peter Rempel.* Hyperion, 1984, 299 pages. Index.

A fully-developed biography of a living person is unusual; a full-length biography of a Mennonite whose life-blood is still pumping vigorously in his veins is even more unusual. Yet Urie Bender, well known for his Anabaptist biographies and novels, presents a portrait of Peter Rempel, a living and sometimes controversial figure in the Alberta Mennonite community.

Hundreds of interviews form the basis of this thoroughly developed profile, a combination of straightforward reporting, narrative, testimonials, and interpretation, to reveal both Rempel's strengths and shortcomings.

Who is Peter Rempel? Bender describes him as a "contemporary prairie pioneer," a modern frontiersman who explored social and spiritual truths beyond their traditional restrictions for the "excitement of discovering himself, his neighbor, and his God." Rempel began the Youth Orientation Units (YOU) near Edmonton, which provide a home and counseling for drug and alcohol abusers and boys in trouble with the law.

The book details his life from infancy to the present, attempting to show the various environmental and

genetic factors which shaped him and played a part in his difficult struggle to break away from narrow fundamentalist views into the freedom that allowed him to use his counseling gifts. One marvels at Rempel's willingness to allow his biographer to show the sharp contrast between his readiness to allow the boys he counseled freedom to make mistakes and his reluctance to give his own children the same privileges.

The book can be read on various levels. First, I see it as an account of an unusual person who, hemmed in by socio-religious walls, found the courage to strike a new mold despite serious criticism from his contemporaries who could not understand his need to find new ways of serving Christ and the church. As such, the book asserts that it is never too late to change, and endorses Christian individualism as necessary when institutional boundaries become confining and personal experience seriously conflicts with one's internalized belief system as long taught by church institutions.

In this regard the book reminds me of biographies of some Christian feminists who recount their movement toward freedom after discovering that their experience and own study of the Scriptures no longer meshes with traditional teachings.

On another level the book can be read as a case history of the Alberta Mennonite Brethren church, for alongside Rempel's biography it traces the history of the Coaldale-Vauxhall church community, at one and the same time both unyielding in defining the boundaries of acceptable Christian behavior, yet exhibiting strong faith and much kindness toward others. The author is careful to point out that this pattern held true for Mennonites of other kinds and other areas. Yet having objectified this material here, the resulting images of the static spiritual life and extreme rigidity of this area regarding male/female relationships, entertainment, and so forth will remain vivid in the reader's mind. The accuracy of the portrayal can only be determined by those who experienced it. But the final message to the Mennonite Brethren reader seems to be, "Yes, Virginia, even Mennonite Brethren can change. Here's an example of one who did. . . ."

I welcome a biography of a contemporary. I congratulate Bender on his thoroughness and the balanced picture he presents. The list of sponsors of this book is impressive. The book is strong when it treats Rempel objectively. When the style waxes lyrical, eloquent and repeats material, I found myself drawing back or lagging. For example, the reader is told over and over that Rempel was a preacher, farmer, bus driver, and a cowboy and bear fighter at previous stages in his life as if to force a legend where there may not be one. Yet despite these minor details, the book represents a significant contribution to contemporary Mennonite literature.

Katie Funk Wiebe
Tabor College
Hillsboro, KS

Hutterian Society of Brothers and John Howard Yoder, eds., *God's Revolution: The Witness of Eberhard Arnold.* Pp. 224. (Paperback).

As I was reading this book, I became aware of something churning in my subconscious. It finally surfaced one day: "This is wisdom literature—I am being reminded of Biblical wisdom literature!" Indeed, it felt like I was reading an updated, Anabaptist, New Testament version of *Proverbs*. *God's Revolution* is a collection of short sayings, containing (according to the introduction) "a selection of those dominant strands of Arnold's instruction." Another reason for this comparison to wisdom literature is because the sayings are wise. The range of subject matter, of course, does not approach the book of *Proverbs*. Nor does this collection even cover the range of subjects which Arnold, himself, touched on in his lifetime. Nevertheless, the writings are wise and are relevant to anyone attempting to live a serious Christian life, especially in an age when societal forces are mitigating firmly against it.

As John Howard Yoder writes in the introduction, this book centers on the "life and rationale of the Community which has survived him for half a century." The book has these four major headings: This Crumbling World and God's Coming Order; The New Order Fleshed Out; The Individual and the Community; and Peace and the Rule of God. Each major unit has various subunits. For instance, The New Order Fleshed Out includes The Church, Unity and the Holy Spirit, Mission, and others.

Yoder's introduction is very helpful because he sets the context—"the causes and cultural currents" of Arnold's day. For unfamiliar readers, it is important to know that Arnold's wisdom and his application of the Scriptures were forged in a crucible called "Germany" and eventually "Nazi Germany," and in the Christian "movements" of his time. And, it is vital that readers understand that the whole of his life, from about 1920 onward, was given to establishing and pastoring and living in Church-community. Arnold told guests and followers alike that "the prophetic Old Testament," "the life of Jesus," and "the life of the first Church in Jerusalem," were a Word from God that we, too, should live together in Church-community. "Church-commnity" to Arnold, and to the Bruderhofs which formed with his help, means a deeply and totally shared life: economically, socially, and spiritually.

As one who has lived a life in this direction for nearly fourteen years, I find both inspiration and challenge in this book. I see how far I and others have to go! But let me be quick to add that the challenge comes primarily by the looking at Jesus which Arnold's sayings/writings prompted me to do. And if the book did this for me and would do this for other readers, I expect that would greatly please Eberhard Arnold and the Bruderhofs, for that is their simple goal—to advance the Kingdom of God.

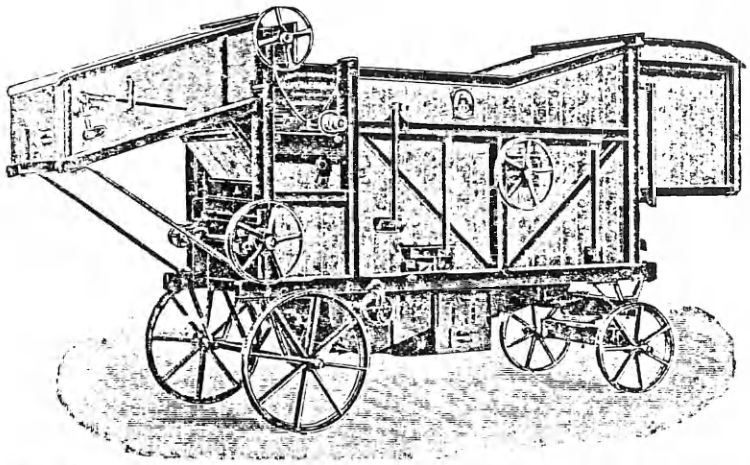
Steven G. Schmidt
New Creation Fellowship
Newton, Kansas

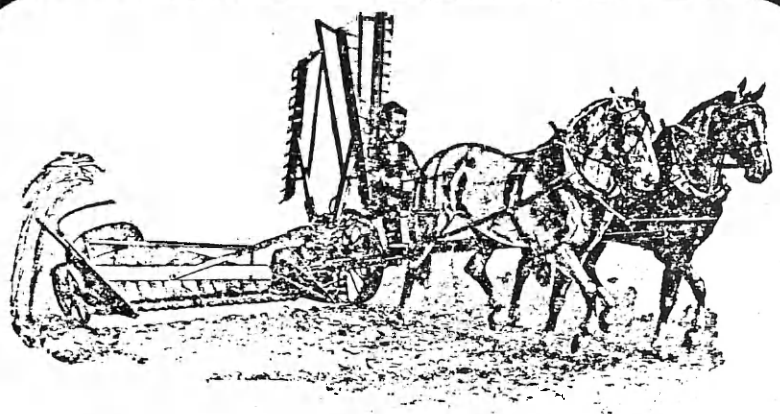
Die Aktiengesellschaft

J. J. Neufeld & Ko.

Post **Waldheim**, Gouv. Taurien

offeriert den **Herren Landwirten** folgende Erzeugnisse:





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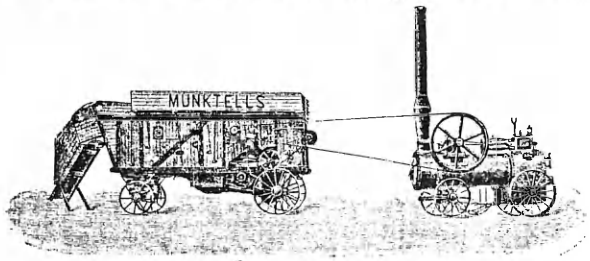

Aktienges.
Munktell
Eskilstuna
(Schweden)

Alleinvertreter für Taurien, Jekaterinoslaw und Cherson:

P. A. Ediger, Halbstadt, Taurien.

Dampfdreschmaschinen in allen gangbaren Größen.

Dreschkastenbreite von 30—67 Zoll.

Die Versuche des vergangenen Jahres haben bewiesen, daß auch die **kleineren Munktellschen Dampfdreschmaschinen alle Vorzüge der größeren** haben: sie **brauchen wenig** Stroh und Wasser, **leisten viel** und saubere Arbeit, und sind bezüglich Feuergefahr viel **ungefährlicher** als Naphta- und Petroleummotore, besonders wenn Drahtseilübertragung eingerichtet wird. **Beim Dreschen auf der Ausstellung in Halbstadt im August 1907 arbeitete die Lokomobile 38 Faden vom Dreschkasten entfernt.** Wer eine in jeder Hinsicht **zuverlässige Dreschmaschine** haben will, wende sich an mich. **Die Preise sind niedrig, die Zahlungsbedingungen sehr günstig.** Bei **sofortiger Bestellung** und **Anzahlung** wird **Preisnachlaß** gewährt.