
Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society

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Lt.-Gov. Dumont receiving the three volumes of the Mennonites in Canada series from Dr. Ted Regehr. Looking on is society President Ken Reddig.

Lt.-Gov. Holds Reception for MMHS at Government House

On Saturday, September 14, the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society was honoured with a reception at Government House, hosted by Lieutenant-Governor the Hon. Yvon Dumont. The reception was attended by approximately 125 society members and guests. During the reception, the lieutenant-governor thanked the society for their work in

preserving the history of the Mennonites in Manitoba. In turn, the society presented Lt-Gov. Dumont with the three volumes in the Mennonites in Canada series, including the latest volume by Dr. Ted Regehr.

Regehr's volume was officially launched in Manitoba at a book launching ceremony prior to the

reception, held across the street from the Legislative Buildings at St. Andrews United Church, with approximately 75 in attendance. Regehr presented a synopsis of his volume, and Ted Friesen of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada also spoke.

1996 MMHS Annual Meeting

Society members met at Concord College on January 13, 1996 for its annual meeting. The highlight of the evening was the banquet, when three society members were granted honorary memberships. The three, Harry Loewen, Al Reimer and Victor Doerksen, each spoke about their experiences with the society from the time of its founding until the present. Reimer currently resides in Arizona, while Loewen and Doerksen have recently retired and relocated to Kelowna, B.C.

During the business sessions held earlier in the afternoon, the following were elected to the M.M.H.S. board: Henry Ens, Bert Friesen, Otto Hamm, Irene Kroeker, and Alf Redekopp. They join Abe Dueck, Adolf Ens, Helene Friesen, Marianne Janzen, Lawrence Klippenstein, Ken

Reddig, Conrad Stoesz and Richard Thiessen in comprising the board of directors for 1996. The major item of business involved the approval by the membership of the sale of the society's inventory of published materials to Brandt Family Enterprises, owners of Mennonite Books. As part of this agreement, Brandt will now be the society's distributor of its publications. MMHS will continue to distribute its publications if it wishes. This arrangement allows the society to focus its efforts on publishing without having to worry about the storage and distribution of its books.



MMHS President Ken Reddig presenting honorary memberships to (L-R) Victor Doerksen, Al Reimer, and Harry Loewen.

Henry E. Plett Memorial Award

The Genealogy and Family History Committee of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society awarded the Henry E. Plett Memorial Award to Tanya Barkman and Pamela Penner of the Steinbach Christian High School at the June 23, 1996 school graduation service. The award is given annually to two Manitoba high school students for research and documentation

of a Mennonite family history. Tanya received the first prize of \$100 for her research on "The Barkman Family." The second prize of \$50 was given to Pamela Penner for her project on "The Von Riesen Family." The annual award by M.M.H.S. has been made possible through the generous contribution of Delbert and Doreen Plett of Steinbach, Manitoba.



Award winners Tanya Barkman and Pamela Penner

MMHS Board Activities

The M.M.H.S. board of directors met several times throughout the year. On February 7 at the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg, the board approved the executive for 1996: Ken Reddig, President; Bert Friesen, Vice-President; Richard Thiessen, Secretary; Alf Redekopp, Treasurer; and Irene Kroeker, Member-at-large. The committee chairpersons approved for 1996 were Adolf Ens, local history; Helene Friesen, genealogy; Richard Thiessen, membership and publicity; Lawrence

Klippenstein, sites and monuments; and Abe Dueck, research, scholarship and publications.

At the April 10 meeting at the Mennonite Heritage Museum in Steinbach, the research, scholarship and publications committee reported that John Friesen, Harry Loewen and Victor Doerksen will continue to serve on the Echo Verlag Series committee. It was reported that they planned to proceed with the Sagradovka volume, and to expand the Zwei Dokumente volume to include other documents. It

was also reported that the Memrik volume is currently being translated but there is no commitment to publish it at this time. The local history committee reported that work is continuing on the West Reserve Settlement Register 1880, and that several local governments of the former West Reserve would be approached for modest contributions towards the cost of publishing this work.

The board also met on October 3 at the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg.

Zaporizhya Archives

Delbert Plett

One of the highlights of the 1996 tour was my visit to the Archives in Zaporizhya, Ukraine, on April 10, 1996. I was honoured to meet Lyudmila L. Melnik, Deputy Director of the Archives and Alexander S. Tedeyev, Chief Archivist. Dr. Tedeyev spent the morning with me showing me some of the treasures of their holdings relevant to the Mennonite community that once existed all around Zaporizhya. I will summarize the material referred to during this meeting.

1) Census or Revisions of Imperial Russia.

2) Detailed village maps showing field plans, elevations,

etc. A list of these maps has been provided to the Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg. Dr. Tedeyev showed me the maps of the villages of Chortitz and Kronsgart.

3) Records of Tokmak Military Office 1921, etc. These records include much information relating to the governance of the Mennonites in the Molotschna.

4) Institutional Ledgers. Some records of businesses and institutions are available. e.g. 1910 ledger of the Niebuhr factory listing loans, 1917/18 ledger of Bethania Mental Home-books of account, donations.

5) Yazykovo Colony. List of settlers 1873.

6) Individual files. e.g. Peter Braun (b. 1880), son of Jakob, main archivist, Molotschna; Peter Schroeder.

7) Soviet Power Organs 1919-22 Third Floor. Records pertaining to Machno Army. e.g. 1919 requisition to Mennonite Gebietsamt for 4 men daily to tend to wounded soldiers. All these records are written on the back sides of pre-revolutionary documents. It is sometimes difficult to say which side of a page is more interesting.

8) Chortitza District Committee 1923-30. Two rows of cartons relating to economic and social

economic and social conditions. e.g. Neuendorf village council minutes. Also includes files from the Molotschna, e.g. Muensterberg and Ohrloff village council minutes. The information for the Chortitza villages is quite complete.

Unfortunately the archival material for the Borosenko area where the Kleine Gemeinde settled in the mid-1860s is under the Dnepropetrovsk region where much material has been lost. Similarly the material regarding the Berghal settlement would be found in the Donets Archives.

The Zaporizhya Archives was first opened to foreigners in 1994. They are anxious to make their materials available to historians and researchers. But like Archives everywhere in the West, shortage of funds is always a problem as these type of institutions tend to be at the bottom of the list of priorities when public funds are allocated.

Individuals wishing to make inquiries of the Archives should include an inquiry fee of \$20.00 U.S. Any search time required in the Archives will cost an additional \$5.00 U.S. per hour. No central index exists for the Zaporizhya

Archives, which makes any research extremely time consuming. Anyone wishing to do research should ideally be able to read Russian and make arrangements to visit the Archives in person. In this case appropriate fees would have to be negotiated in advance.

The address for the Archives is: Ukraine - 330123, Zaporozhye, Builders' Bld, 10, ap. 43, Att: Tedejev, Alexandr Sergejevich.

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Russian Census 1795-1858

"Russian population census material as sources for the history of the Mennonites 1795-1858," by Alexander Tedejev, Publication and Use of State Archives, Document Department Manager, Zaporozhye Region, Ukraine.

During 150 years of Mennonite life in the southern Ukraine, their activity became an important factor in the economic and social-cultural development of the region, and impacted positively upon the population. Therefore the interest in their history and culture from the side of researchers is well warranted.

Important but scantily explored sources on this theme are the materials of the population census in the period

from the end of 18th century and the first half of the 19th century. The census of "Revision" was the basic form of tax and non-tax population registration in Russia. The main kind of population census materials are census lists ("revizskiye skazky"). From census lists we can determine the surname, name, patronymic, class affiliation of the person, the age, residence; number of children--male and female--their names, ages; and other important information. All census but the 6th registered women as well as men.

Mennonite registers of births, marriages and deaths from the end of the 18th century and the first half of 19th century are lost from

archives. Therefore, census lists are of even greater value for genealogy and demographic investigations.

At the same time it is necessary to note that these documents counted not the whole population, but only those registered. In particular, there was no information about foreigners living in Mennonite districts. One more difficulty is that census lists on Mennonite settlements only survived partially. They do not form a separate complex of documents and are kept in different state archives in several districts of Ukraine.

A total of 10 Revisions or census (population census) were conducted in Russia. Information on Mennonites is found in the last 6, numbers

5-10. The 5th revision (1795) remains in the State Archives in the Dnepropetrovsk regions (herein SADR) in the Deposit of Novorossiysk foreign settlers Tutorial office (Note 1). The 1795 census contains information on the 9 earliest settlements in the Khortitsa district. The lists contain information about the date of arrival of Mennonites to Russia and their former residence. These documents are already familiar to researchers because they were published in the well-known work by Benjamin H. Unruh (Note 2).

The 6th census was held in 1811 and was speeded up. Unfortunately, the revision lists of the census on Mennonite settlements are not found in archives, though we can assert that a revision was conducted there. This information is confirmed by the 1816 year revision list on the settlement (village) Schoenwiese in the Khortitsa district. This census is found in Aleksandrovsk district Treasury Fund of State Archives Zaporozhye region (herein SAZR) (Note 3), and contains information on this settlement and the previous revision of 1811.

The absence of the documents of the 6th census is compensated for by the preservation of materials of the 1808 census on 18 Moloschansk Mennonite settlements (1901 persons) as well as on Khortitsa settlements, including new

ones (Burwalde and others), founded after 1795. The 1808 census, kept in SADR, also contains interesting information on the property status of settlers. Materials from this census are also published in the already mentioned work by Benjamin H. Unruh.

Though the basic year of conducting the 7th census was 1815, it was conducted in the spring of 1816 in the Mennonite settlements.

Census lists for 1816 are extant only for the settlement of Schoenwiese. The population of the settlement at this time was 156 persons--78 male and 68 female. According to the 1795 year census, there were 136 persons in Schoenwiese. Only alphabetic indexes to census lists remain for the other Khortitsa settlements. The same are consequently of great value for researchers.

The 7th census on the Molochansk settlements is lost. To compensate to some degree for the absence of these documents, similar documents are extant regarding the Molochansk Mennonite district from 1835 (8th census), containing information on the previous census. They are kept in the State Archive of Odessa region (herein SAOR) in the Deposit "Mennonites Community of Berdyansk district" (Note 4), also known as the Johann Kornies Archives and in Canada as the Peter Braun Archives.

Lists kept here on 41

settlements contain rich material about the foundation of new settlements in the district between 1816 and 1835, and about the migration of population in this period. These documents contain information about the creation of new settlements and migration to them of Mennonites from 1835 to 1849 (e.g. to the settlement Grishau created in 1848), i.e. until the time of conducting of the 9th census in 1850. Materials of this revision have since been translated into English and published in Canada and are available for a wider audience.

The 9th all-Russia census was done in 1850. Unfortunately, of all Mennonite settlements whether Khortitsa or Moloshansk, only the lists on the settlement of Schoenwiese are known to be extant as of the present time. The revisions regarding other Khortitsa settlements may be in Germany. Archival materials was removed from the Zaporozhye State Archives and taken to Germany in 1943, including materials regarding the Khortitsa district and Khortitsa administration. Johann Epp, former Oberschulz of the Khortitsa district during the period of Fascist occupation, confirms the fact of the transmission of Khortitsa Archives to the Archives in Frankfurt-on-Oder. But Epp does not know what happened to the documents later and their contents.

Census lists and extracts from revision lists remain in

the SAZT and contain information regarding Mennonite families which migrated in the 19th century to the newly-created Mariupol Mennonite district, on migrants from Khortitsa to the Molochansk settlement and vice-versa, and about families changing their village of residence inside the Khortitsa district. There are a small quantity of such documents, but they, nevertheless, enable the study of the process of creating daughter settlements.

The census for the settlement of Schoenwiese shows a further increase in the population of the village: 159 male and 161 female, 320 persons in total. The census list reveals that important changes took place in the structure of population in the settlement. The revision list of the 10th census for the Moloshansk settlements were kept only in SAOR prior to World War Two. During the Fascist occupation an effort was made to remove the

Archives on German Colonization to Germany. The main part of the Odessa Archives was not removed. But documents of the 1858 census of Mennonite settlements were not found after the war and nothing further is presently known about them. 1858 census lists for the Mariupol Mennonite daughter settlements (Bergthal) are of great value for studying Mennonite daughter settlements. Documents on 2 of the 5 settlements (Heuboden and Friedrichstahl) remain in the Deposit of Aleksandrovsk Town-hall SAZR (Note 5). Another part of the revision is contained in the Deposit of Mariupol district treasury in the State Archives of Donetsk region (SADoR) (Note 6). Summary lists of the 9th and 10th census on Mariupol Mennonite district have also survived. These census lists remain largely unknown to specialists. Even a superficial evaluation of basic information contained in these census lists confirms the great importance

of these sources for studying problems of foreign colonization in the Southern Ukraine. Serious analysis of the census lists together with church and police materials of population registration, enable a much deeper study of the social, economic and demographic processes which took place in the Mennonite communities of the Southern Ukraine from the end of 18th century through the first half of 19th century.

Endnotes:

1. SADR, f. 134, in 1, file 18.
2. Unruh, Benjamin. *Die niederlandisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16/18. und 19. Jahrhundert.* Karlsruhe, 1955.
3. SAZR, f. 12, in 2, file 101.
4. SAOR, f. 89, in 1, file 357.
5. SAZR, f. 1, in 1, file 752.
6. SADoR, f. 131, in 1, file 115.

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The Origins and Interrelationship of the Churches of the East Reserve

Dr. Harvey Plett

Introduction

The topic given to me is a very fascinating subject: "The Churches of the East Reserve: Background and Current Scene." To say the least this presentation is an overview

rather than a detailed study. The subject limits the discussion to the East Reserve. The East Reserve is bordered on the West by Niverville, on the North by Silberfeld on the East by Steinbach and on the South by Neubergfeld. The

Reserve is not square but consists of 8 townships.

Churches in the East Reserve Today

Mennonite communities are usually well stocked with

churches. This is not surprising since they are a religious group. The East Reserve area is no exception. A survey indicates the following church groups in the area:

Mennonite Bodies:
 Evangelical Mennonite Conference - formerly Klein-gemeinde - 6 churches (not counting the Prairie Rose EMC at Landmark); Chortitza Mennonite Conference - formerly Bergthaler - 8 churches; Evangelical Mennonite Brethren - 2; General Conference Mennonite Church - 5 churches; Mennonite Brethren - 2; Sommerfelder - 2; Reinländer - 1; Holdeman - 3; Evangelical Mennonite Mission Church - 2. This makes for a total of 31 Mennonite churches.

Non-Mennonite Bodies:
 Charismatic Churches - 5; Pentecostal - 1; Evangelical Free Church - 2; United Church of Canada - 2; Lutheran - 1; Roman Catholic - 1; Greek Catholic - 1; German Church of God - 1; Greek Orthodox - 1; Branhamites - 1. This makes a total of 16 congregations.

Other Independent Churches: Kleefeld Christian Community Church - daughter church of St. Pierre Christian Fellowship - about 70 attenders; House Church in Blumenort; Church of God - Steinbach, David Kauenhoffen; Mitchell Community Fellowship Church; Word of Life Church - Niverville; Christian Fellowship Church in Steinbach. This makes a total of 6 churches.

This means that we have today some 53 churches in the East Reserve. Of these, 31 are affiliated with 9 different Mennonite Conferences. 11 churches are not affiliated with a larger body or Conference. I include the Charismatic groups in this count since their affiliation is a fellowship affiliation and not an accountability connection. They are virtually independent. Thus 53 churches, 31 in 9 Mennonite Conferences, 11 in non-Mennonite Conferences and 11 independent churches. One group meets only in a home, another group rents a school for 3 Sundays of the month and meet in a home on the 4th and 5th Sunday.

Steinbach is one of the most churched of the towns in the Reserve though on a per capita basis Niverville and Grunthal are probably ahead. Steinbach has a total of 20 churches with a population of almost 10,000. Niverville has 7 churches with a population of c 1500.

Origin of the Churches of the East Reserve.

Of the many Mennonites who migrated to Canada and the United States, two church groups decided to settle on the East Reserve. They were the Kleingemeinde and the Bergthaler groups. The Bergthaler Mennonites were the larger of the two groups settling on the East Reserve. Dennis Stoesz estimates that the Bergthaler were about 80% of the settlers on the Reserve. They were known as

Bergthalers due to the name of the colony they came from in the Ukraine, the Bergthaler Colony. Almost the total colony migrated. Some of these settle on East Reserve while others on the West Reserve and other places such as south of the US-Canada border.

These colonists from Bergthaler ultimately divided into three groups. The Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Manitoba organized on the West Reserve in 1892. In 1894 the other group on the West Reserve called themselves Sommerfelder Church. The East Reserve decided to call themselves the Mennonite Church at Chortitz as early 1878. They were little affected by the splits on the West Reserve at least as far as their name was concerned.

The Chortitzer church lost half of its members to the West Reserve during the 1880's, but then slowly began to grow. In the early part of the 20th century they lost some members who moved to Saskatchewan and in 1926 to the Chaco, Paraguay. They again lost a significant number when Chortitzer from the Silberfeld-New Bothwell area migrated to East Paraguay in 1948. Influence from what is known by some as evangelicals, filtered into the reserved Chortitza group causing reaction. When the dust of this turbulence had settled, the Chortitzer lost two small contingents in Niverville and Steinbach. The former has become the independent Word-

of-Life Mission Church and the latter after being an independent church for a while has joined the EMMC. These splits occurred because a number of members felt the church was moving to slowly in preaching a clearer Gospel and emphasizing missions.

However on the other side there were those who were unhappy with the rapid change and so in the 1960's invited the Sommerfelder ministers from the West Reserve to come and serve them. As a result two Sommerfelder Churches, New Bothwell and Steinbach, are in existence in the East Reserve today. Both have buildings built by the seceding members. There is a third Sommerfelder church near Stuartburn.

Both the Chortitza and Sommerfelder churches itinerate their preachers and both have a bishop system. The Chortitzer Church has made some moves towards becoming a conference as well as having preachers in the local churches be pastors in their church even though they itinerate. The Chortitza also have several ministers who are remunerated. The Steinbach, Mitchell and Grunthal churches remunerate their ministers. The remuneration is paid 50/50 by the Conference and the local church. They have their own Mission board and work in Canada. Their members work in foreign countries through other Mission Boards. In addition they are partners with the EMC and EMMC in operating the Steinbach Bible

College. They participated in the Tri-Conference Convention in the summer of 1994.

The Evangelical Mennonite Conference:

The Evangelical Mennonite Conference formerly know as the Kleingemeinde migrated as a total body. They however settled in three different areas. A total of 686 Kleingemeinde families came to Manitoba. A majority of these settled towards the western side of the East Reserve. A few families settled on the Scratching River settlement. A small contingent moved to Nebraska and then when there was insufficient land in Nebraska, they moved on to Kansas.

The Kleingemeinde suffered considerable ridicule in the Ukraine. Delbert Plett has made a valiant effort in redeeming the reputation of the small conservative group. The study of the Mennonites in Russia will have a different tone as a result of Delbert's effort. It makes those of us from that group, if we know of Delbert's writings, hold up our head just a little more.

In Russia the Kleingemeinde suffered a split in 1866 which had not been totally reconciled by the time they migrated. The break away Krimmer Mennonite Brethren was another division they experienced. In spite of the 1866 division they moved as one group. Full formal reconciliation only came in 1893.

The Kleingemeinde

experienced another decimation in 1881. Aeltester Peter Toews was concerned about the spiritual life in the church. He liked what he heard about John Holdeman and so he invited Holdeman to come for a series of meetings. Holdeman accepted the invitation. He informed the people that they had the wrong teaching, and they were to get converted and be baptized. About half of the membership including the whole ministerial except 2 ministers and one deacon remained with the Kleingemeinde.

The Aeltester from Jansen, Nebraska, was invited to come and help re-establish the church. Bishop Friesen came and ordained some preachers, and later an Aeltester was elected and ordained. Once more rebuilding was begun, except now you had a Holdeman church in each area where you had a Kleingemeinde church, that is in Rosenort (Scratching River), Kleefeld, Steinbach, and Greenland, near Blumenort. This division enhanced the isolation mentality of the Kleingemeinde. When John Warkentine, a Bible colporteur from Winkler, wanted to conduct evangelistic meetings in Steinbach in 1892, he was kindly refused with the answer that the church was well served by their own ministers.

A further split occurred in 1897 with the founding of the fourth church group on the East Reserve, namely the

(Cont'd on p.10



Lt.-Gov. Yvon Dumont addressing society members on Sept. 14, 1996



Dr. Ted Regehr at the Manitoba book launch of Mennonites in Canada, Vol. III.



On January 13, 1996, society board member Dr. Adolf Ens received the Margaret McWilliams award from the Manitoba Historical Society. Pictured (L-R): Laura Peers, J. M. Bumsted, Lily Stearns (Pres., MHS), Jim Blanchard, (Chair, Margaret McWilliams Medal Competition), Katherine Pettipas, Adolf Ens.

Bruederthaler, also known as Evangelical Mennonite Brethren. The Steinbach Evangelical Mennonite Brethren church was born out of the desire for deeper spiritual life. Heinrich Rempel from Steinbach had heard of the evangelical preaching of the Bruederthaler in Mountain Lake Minnesota. He invited Henry C. Fast from Minnesota and Cornelius Wall from Nebraska to come and conduct evangelistic meetings in Steinbach. As a result of this mission a new church was formed with four couples as charter members.

A further loss of members by the Kleingemeinde occurred when in 1948 a significant group moved to Mexico. These who moved to Mexico produced a Darlegung in 1952 spelling out the relationship with the Canadian church. It was tantamount to a declaration of separation.

From 1923-27 a new wave of immigrants from Russia came to North America. Several of these new immigrants who were members of the Mennonite Brethren Conference settled in Steinbach and the surrounding area. At the November 3, 1927 organization meeting there were some 38 brethren and seven sisters present. George Unruh, who was chairing the meeting announced that there were some 65 members in and near Steinbach. A second Mennonite Brethren church was founded in Niverville in 1933.

In 1955 services were

begun near Grunthal by the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren. Out of this emerged an Evangelical Mennonite Brethren church which moved its meeting place to the Grunthal village in 1964.

Among the new immigrants were also some Schoenwieser Mennonite. Some 8 families settled in Steinbach. After meeting every third Sunday in the EMC church for several years they moved into rented quarters in 1938. In 1941 they had built their first building and the following year they adopted Steinbach Mennonite Church as their name. Additional immigrants joined this church with the post WWII migration. The church is affiliated with the General Conference Mennonite Church.

The Grunthal General Conference Church was established by immigrants of the 1920's. In 1959 3 families from the Steinbach Mennonite Church, 5 from the Bergthaler Church, and 4 from the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren left their congregations to establish a new Mennonite Church. It is called the Grace Mennonite Church.

The Bergthaler Mennonite Church

As noted above, the 1874 immigrants on the East Reserve were Bergthaler. There were also many Bergthaler immigrants on the West Reserve. The Bergthaler divided into three groups, one of them being the Bergthaler Mennonite Church on the West

Reserve. It has often described as being more progressive and culturally receptive.

With the move to Mexico and Paraguay during the 1920's, a number of West Reserve Bergthalers purchased land that was for sale in the East Reserve, both in the Grunthal and Steinbach area. The Bergthaler Lehrdienst became involved in Steinbach when a request was received on Feb. 13, 1925, to conduct Catechism classes in Steinbach. Records indicate that decisions were made to visit Steinbach to see if services were warranted but no record of follow-up on those decisions is in evidence. There is evidence that in October 1927, a collector for church fees was sent to Steinbach. This was done for another 10 years.

The first recorded Bergthaler church services in Steinbach were held in 1939 in the EMC church. Minister David D. Klassen from Lowe Farm had moved to Steinbach and he served the group. For a while this group met in the Steinbach Bible School. The group's request for help to the Home Mission Board for a building received a terse response from David Toews, saying that they should attend the Steinbach Mennonite Church for they would give money only to one church in one locality of the same Conference, and the Steinbach Mennonite had applied for and received a grant to build their church. The group finally got their own building by moving

an old school building into town from Prairie Rose. In 1945 it was dedicated and the Steinbach Bergthaler church had its own home.

The Steinbach Bergthaler church started as an independent church which meant it did not assume financial obligations for conference expenses and projects. Later it became a full fledged member of the Bergthaler Mennonite Church as well as the General Conference.

The Grunthal Bergthaler Church, formerly known as the Spencer Bergthaler Church, was a product of the West Reserve people who moved to the East Reserve after the 1920's migration to Latin America. In addition some Chortitzer people joined this group. As in Steinbach so here, a request for spiritual help was sent to the Lehrdienst in 1933. In 1936 minister William Heinrichs from Lowe Farm moved to the Grunthal area and became their minister. In 1937 the Spencer church was under review for there was no interest in starting another church of the same group since the Elim General Conference Mennonite church in Grunthal made up of 20's immigrants had been established by now. Bishop Schulz authorized Heinrichs to receive members and in 1938 the Lehrdienst designated Barkfield as a Bergthaler Church center. In the early forties the Bergthaler ministers served five localities, Spencer, Rosengart, Steinbach, Chortitz, Hochstadt, and

Pansy. In 1970 the Spencer Bergthaler church relocated to the town of Grunthal.

The Grunthal Bergthaler church stayed with the General Conference when the Bergthaler organization dissolved. The Steinbach Bergthaler church has cut all ties with the General Conference and functions as an independent church today.

Non-Mennonite Churches

The United Church in Niverville had its beginnings as a Presbyterian church. Rev. Alexander McFarlane of the Clearsprings church visited Niverville once a month to serve the congregation from 1885 to 1904. When the United Church was organized in 1925, the church joined the Union. The first Presbyterian church was built in 1907, but services had been held in a school building for 22 years prior to this. It is of interest to note that the Mennonites used this church for services for a while, a happy good-will gesture.

The Steinbach United Church was organized in 1950 with services in the high school auditorium. On December 1956 the United Church building was dedicated. Members include people from some of the Mennonite churches.

The Evangelical Free church emerged in the 1940's first as an independent group with majority of its members coming from the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren church.

In the late 1970's a second Evangelical Free church was established but this time the bulk of the charter members came from the Mennonite Brethren church.

Bethel Tabernacle, now called Bethel Christian Center had its beginning in the Blumenort area. A group was worshiping in the rural area until 1956 when a church building was built in Steinbach. The church is affiliated with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. Most of its members have come from the Mennonite churches in the area.

Evangelist Max Solbrekken conducted several evangelistic campaigns in the Steinbach area in the early 1960's. Due to a rather extreme emphasis on healing the Bethel Pentecostal church disassociated itself from the campaign. Some farmers rather rudely emptied their pits spreading the manure on fields close to the tent where the meetings were conducted. This created a rather strong odor, making the air rather heavy. As a result of this disassociation a new group was formed calling itself the Full Gospel Church, Steinbach. They began services in 1965. A recent split occurred and a new church was formed calling themselves Shalom.

St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Steinbach was started by Lutherans who had moved to town and began services in 1948. Two Lutheran parishes south of town, they had split

due to some disagreement, were able to reconcile and untied to purchase the Steinbach Mennonite Church in 1951. As a result the rural parishes were closed and only the Steinbach church served the rural as well as the towns people.

The Charismatic Groups

In addition to the two Pentecostal churches there are several Charismatic churches that have emerged in the last decade. There is a church in Niverville, Grunthal, and Steinbach. There is also one in Landmark but that is beyond the boundary of the original East Reserve. These churches are made up mostly of members from Mennonite churches who have adopted the Charismatic teaching of the baptism of the Holy Spirit as second blessing as well as strong emphasis on signs. They have been somewhat divisive but things have settled down and relations are being normalized.

The house fellowship in Kleefeld is a daughter church of the St. Pierre Christian Fellowship, while the Blumenort House church is a break away group from the Blumenort congregation. David Kauenhoffen is pastor of a small Church of God. They hold to a holiness doctrine of sanctification which leads to sinlessness for this life. Again most members come from the Mennonite churches.

Finally there is the German Church of God in Steinbach.

They have attracted several of the Mennonites returning from Paraguay and Mexico.

A small group of Brahnamites is meeting in the Grunthal area.

Interaction and Current Status

Until recently each of the church groups went their own ways rather than work towards closer working together with each other. The Mennonite churches are tied into Conferences and so their first loyalty is to their Conference programs.

This was explained by the fact that most of the groups got started by splitting off and then being ridiculed, put down, or being "mistreated" in other ways. Therefore there was suspicion towards the other groups. In addition, the reason for existence necessitated remaining aloof from the other groups. Had the group not started to be purer in doctrine and practice? Why would they then seek closer relationships with each other? Cooperation and inter-action focused on Conference member churches. For example: the EMC had regularly monthly, than bi-monthly and now quarterly ministerial meetings but these included the Scratching river ministerial as well. The Mennonite Brethren, General Conference Mennonite, and Bergthaler had similar connections and meetings in their own groups. There were however attempts at cooperation as the

communities moved from pioneer conditions to more settled situation. One area of cooperation was the celebration of the 75 anniversary of the coming of the Mennonites. The event was celebrated on July 8, 1949. An attempt was made to involve all groups of the 1874 migration including the newly formed groups such as the Holdeman church.

There has been considerable cooperation in sponsoring United Evangelistic Crusades in Steinbach, some have included the whole Reserve, Niverville, and Grunthal. In each town there have been some joint crusades seeking to reach the unchurched.

There have been cross Conference Ministerial meetings in the Reserve during the '50's and '60's. These at times were all Saturday sessions with a noon-meal being served. They are no longer being held.

Red Rock Lake Bible Camp was begun in 1947 as the effort of several interested men from several different churches. Today it is a cooperative effort as an independent non or cross denominational work.

A united effort that involved all churches, Mennonite and non-Mennonite was teaching religion on released time in the Steinbach collegiate. Teachers were recruited from all the churches in Steinbach including the Lutherans. This program ran for two years in the late '60's.

The Steinbach Bible College and Steinbach Christian High School were initially a personal project. In 1936 the Mennonite Brethren began the Bible College. After a few years it was given over to an independent board. The independent board ran the school until 1962 when several churches took over the administration. Today the EMMC, Chortitzer, EMC, and the Steinbach Evangelical Mennonite Brethren own and operate the College and High School. But again, it is more Conference centered than Reserve centered.

In Steinbach there is also an organization of the Youth Leaders of the various churches. Periodically they put on youth programs.

There are very few activities that are limited to the Reserve today. Niverville and Steinbach have local community ministerials but

very little in terms of joint-projects has been done recently. Niverville has a community church service at their annual Community Day.

Conclusion

The two Mennonite bodies have spawned several new groups on the East Reserve. New groups were added through migration, especially the Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonite. With the advent of the Charismatic movement in the '60's several Charismatic groups have emerged. And so we find a rich variety of churches in what once was the primary domain of the Chortitzer and Kleingemeinde.

Today there is good respect between the churches. Acculturation has removed many of the barriers that existed between the groups and so you will find pulpit

exchange at times, or inviting individuals from other churches to teach a Sunday School class. There is a lot of inter-marriage across church lines. This has served to remove suspicion and develop trust. It is also my opinion that education and knowledge of history has helped voices speak up for toleration and in some cases for cooperation and even union. Not all suspicions are gone and probably never will be. It is however imperative that we respect each other, value each other as fellow pilgrims on the way to the promised land, and seek to encourage each other.

Extracts of a lecture presented to the Manitoba Historical Society at the 1995 annual meeting, held at the Heritage Village Museum in Steinbach on January 21, 1995. Dr. Harvey Plett is a professor at Steinbach Bible College.

GRANDMA CD-ROM Release

The Genealogy Project Committee of the California Mennonite Historical Society is pleased to announce that the long-awaited CD-ROM containing the GRANDMA database will be ready for distribution on September 2, 1996. The principal file on the CD-ROM is volume one of the GRANDMA database (GMV1). This file has more than 135,000 names organized into family groups. The

information comes from individual submissions, family books, church membership books, census records, family Bibles and private collections. It includes Low German Mennonites in the U.S., Canada, Russia, Prussia, Latin America and other places, predominantly persons born prior to 1930 who trace their ancestry through the American Midwest back to Russia. The Committee expects and intends

that later volumes of GRANDMA will improve and expand the coverage of persons born after 1930, and of families outside the U.S. Everyone who is interested in Low German family lines will want a copy of this database.

Other files on the first CD-ROM include a shareware version of Brother's Keeper (for those who do not yet have this program); a copy of the Rosenort (Prussia) Mennonite

Church membership book in the original form (which can be viewed with an image viewer); a file containing many of the immigrant families in the 1870's through 1890's as they appeared in the ship passenger lists, and a collection of maps.

The CD-ROM will also include a form for submitting corrections. The Committee knows that there are still many errors in GMV1, despite our best efforts to "clean up" the database. Errors are inevitable because neither data transcribers nor the compilers of family books are free from error. Additionally, we have had a few problems with the merge software that combines the contributed databases. Therefore, the user will find a form on the CD-ROM for reporting corrections and

additions to us.

We are already planning GMV2, which may be ready early next year, and most certainly will have greatly expanded information about the Canadian Mennonite families, as well as many new persons born after 1930.

To order a copy of the CD-ROM with GMV1, please send a check or money order for US \$30.00 plus \$2.00 shipping to the California Mennonite Historical Society, 4824 East Butler Avenue, Fresno CA 93727-5097. (California residents please include 7.5% sales tax). The disk will be sent to you by regular mail as soon as possible.

The Genealogy Project Committee encourages persons who purchase the CD-ROM to also purchase a copy of the

Handbook for the Low German Genealogist Using Brother's Keeper 5.2. It is very important that anyone doing data entry that will be contributed to the GRANDMA project uses this manual, because it explains how data should be entered. Nonconforming data submitted to us for GRANDMA causes extra work for us, because we must adapt that information to our standards before it can be added to the database. To obtain a copy of the handbook, please send check or money order for US \$5.00 plus \$1.00 for shipping to the address listed above.

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MMHS on the WWW (<http://www.mmhs.org/mmhs/mmhs.htm>)

During the Spring of 1996, the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society entered the world of cyberspace. Richard Thiessen, chair of the membership and publicity committee, decided to create a homepage for the society so that individuals on the internet could learn about the society. The homepage also contains a section entitled: Prussian-Russian-Canadian Mennonite Genealogical Resources. This section has links to a number of different files of interest to genealogists, and is by far the most popular aspect of the

homepage. Genealogists from around North America and beyond have accessed the site and have been able to obtain information.

The page is divided geographically. Under the Canada heading, individuals can browse what is known as the "Consolidated Index of the Church Family Registers of the churches known as Bergthaler (Russia) 1843 and Chortitzer (Manitoba) 1878, 1887 and 1907", compiled by Loren Koehler. If they are interested in more information, they can contact the Mennonite Heritage

Centre or other archival centres which own copies of these registers. There is also an index to the Reinlaender Church Register (Manitoba), compiled by the Local History Committee, M.M.H.S., and to the Sommerfeld Gemeinde Buch (Manitoba) Cumulative Index, compiled by John Wall.

Under the Prussia heading, which is the largest section of the page, individuals can browse several different sub-sections. One section entitled "Sources" contains a number of documents compiled by Adalbert Goertz, a well-known

researcher from Pennsylvania who has conducted extensive research into Prussian Mennonite archival documents. These documents include a bibliography of the works of Adalbert Goertz, *Mennonitica* in Prussian Archives, Mennonite Villages in the Danzig District in 1820, and Mennonite Villages in the Marienwerder District, West Prussia, 1820.

Another section entitled "Secular Records" contains documents compiled by Goertz along with other researchers. Glenn H. Penner of Guelph, Ontario has transcribed the Brandregister of 1727. The Brandregister of 1727 includes the names and amount of land owned by the people of 53 villages in the Vistula delta region of the former West Prussia, including both Mennonites and non-Mennonites. There are a total of 1111 people registered. This register was originally published by Horst Penner in 1963 as part his *Bauern=Verzeichnis* which is an appendix to his book *Ansiedlung mennonitischer Niederländer im Weichselmundgebiet von der Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts bis zum Beginn der preußischen Zeit*. This book has been out of print for many years. Glenn Penner's transcription includes 23 villages missing from Horst Penner's list. The Brandregister of 1727 is a very important genealogical resource for those who trace their Mennonite ancestry back to Prussia in the early 18th

century.

This section includes a number of other items of interest to those whose Mennonite ancestors lived in Prussia in the 17th and 18th centuries. All items in the following list were compiled by Adalbert Goertz, unless otherwise noted: the 1776 Prussian Mennonite Census, by Village, arranged by Bert Friesen of Winnipeg; the Mennonite Land Census/General-Nachweisung, West Prussia, 1789; an alphabetical index of individuals in the Mennonite Land Census/General-Nachweisung, West Prussia, 1789; Mennonite Land Acquisitions in West Prussia, 1789-1798; Mennonites of the Danzig Territory in 1793; the 1811 Elbing, West Prussia Census; the Mennonite Land Census/General-Nachweisung of the Marienwerder District, 1824; Mennonitenhoefe 1839 im Regierungsbezirk Marienwerder; Land disposals by Mennonites in the Marienwerder District, 1803-1856; Mennonites in the Gumbinnen District, East Prussia; Mennonites in the Koenigsberg District, East Prussia; Mennonite settlers in the Neumark, Brandenburg (1767/1778); Mennonite settlers in Obernessau; and Mennonites in the Przechowka area, West Prussia.

Another sub-section of the Prussian section deals with Church Records. This records are both Mennonite church records and Lutheran church records, since many Lutheran

priests were obligated to compile data on all who lived in their jurisdiction, including Mennonites. Again, most of these documents have been compiled by Adalbert Goertz, unless otherwise noted: an index to the First and Second Danzig Mennonite Family Books; Mennonite Deaths, Kreis Culm, West Prussia, 1800-1840; Danzig Mennonite Church, West Prussia Membership List, 1886; Mennonite Marriages 1801-1830 in the evang. Kirchenbuch Gr. Mausdorf, Westpreussen; Mennonite Marriages 1800-1830 in the evang. Kirchenbuch Fuerstenau, Westpreussen; Mennonite Baptisms in Koenigsberg, East Prussia 1770-1820; Mennonite Marriages 1805-1821 in the evang. Kirchenbuch Kunzendorf; Mennonite Baptisms in Ladekopp 1782-1804; Ladekopp-Orloffelfeld Mennonite Church, West Prussia Membership List, 1880; Mennonite Baptisms in Montau, 1741-1813; Mennonite Families in the Montau-Gruppe/Schoensee Region, 1800-1840; Montau Mennonite Church, West Prussia Membership List, 1894; Ministers and Deacons of the Montau-Gruppe Church in Prussia; Mennonite Baptisms in Orloffelfelde, 1772-1804; Mennonite Baptisms in Plauschwarren, East Prussia 1771-1800; Mennonite Marriages in Plauschwarren, East Prussia 1778-1802; Thiensdorf-Markushof Mennonite Church,

West Prussia Membership List, 1903; and Mennonite Baptisms in Tiegenhagen, 1782-1800.

The Prussian section also contains images of maps of the following areas: Danzig, 1930; Danziger Werder, 1942; Driesen; Kulm; Marienburger Werder; Die Memelniederung; M o n t a u ; D i e Weichselniederungen bei Thorn; and West Prussia.

The final geographical section deals with Russia. Secular records include a link to B. H. Unruh's South Russian Mennonite Census, 1795-1814: Index, compiled by Alan Peters of Fresno, California; Deutsch-Michalin Mennonites, compiled by

Adalbert Goertz; From Jeziorka, Prussia to Russia in 1804, by Goertz; Migration of Mennonites from West Prussia to Russia, 1820-1841, by Goertz; the 1835 Molotschna Census, compiled by Richard Thiessen; The Molotschna Colony Census of 1835: Chortitza and Bergthal Colony Connections, compiled by Glenn Penner; and From Prussia to Russia 1853-1855, by Goertz.

Church records include an index to the Schoenhorst Register, compiled by Richard Thiessen.

Items not specific to any one geographical area include a list of Mennonite villages compiled by Judith Rempel of

Calgary, and a list of Mennonite ministers, compiled by Adalbert Goertz.

Plans are under way to add many more documents, including the 1862 Molotschna School Registers, the school registers of the Molotschna of the 1870s, additional Prussian documents, and indexes to other Canadian Mennonite church registers. The society welcomes contributions from anyone who has an index or a document that would be of interest to Mennonite genealogists.

Please contact Richard Thiessen by e-mail at: editor@mmhs.org or by mail at 169 Riverton Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2L 2E5.

Local History Committee Workshop

Date: Saturday, April 26, 1997

Place: Winkler Senior's Centre

Topics include "Computers and Family History" and others to be announced.

Contact: Adolf Ens, 489-6044; John Dyck, 256-1637.