Mennogespräch

Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario

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Nancy-Lou Patterson, Fine Arts Department, University of Waterloo.
(Photo by Maurice Green)

In Thy Holy Place: A model of the Tabernacle of Israel

by Nancy-Lou Patterson

The making of wooden models "to show how things used to be" (as a model-maker recently explained his work to the author) is a common element in 20th century "people's art." Most of these items are the work of individuals. In the Southern Ontario Mennonite community (shown by works in the exhibition *"The Language of Paradise: Folk Art from Mennonite and other Anabaptist Communities of Ontario,"* at the London Regional Gallery, London, Ontario, September 14 - October 23, 1985) these include barn models, models of farm equipment, fine furniture, and even windmills. A very remarkable work in the same exhibition was the result of group activity, but had its source in a single extraordinary mind—that of Samuel Frederick Coffman (1872-1954).

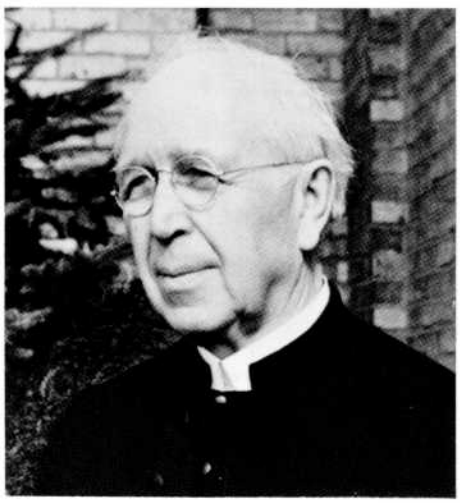
This work is a model of the Tabernacle of Israel, made by the students of S.F. Coffman at the Ontario Mennonite Bible School, probably before World War I. Readers who have pondered the words of God to Moses in Exodus 25, its account of the building of the Tabernacle, and the account of its use in Leviticus, will take delight in noting how carefully the Coffman model follows the biblical accounts, insofar as the understanding of teacher and makers allowed.

The structure was created in a multitude of small parts, cunningly designed to fit into carefully-made storage boxes. When assembled, the many parts of the Tabernacle create a wooden and textile unit, reproducing the Tabernacle (Photo, page 11), its special furnishings, draperies, coverings, and surrounding court (Photo,page 10). The biblical Tabernacle was a large ceremonial tent with a court formed by a draped fence. This could be carried through the wilderness by a travelling people, and then assembled and erected when the people stopped to make camp, just as they erected their ordinary dwellings. The use of portable sanctuaries among nomadic and herding peoples is a traditional part of world culture.

The Tabernacle of Israel is distinguished by its extraordinary longevity as an idea—a symbolic structure in the mind. Thousands of years after it ceased to exist as a physical object, the Tabernacle has remained intensely real in the meditations of readers of the *Torah,* the first five books of the Bible. It has existence as a psychological or conceptual, indeed as a spiritual, reality.

It was as such a symbol that it recommended itself to S.F. Coffman. The creation of the model was the result of his long meditation upon the meaning of the Tabernacle. This had already produced a beautiful hymn, "In Thy Holy Place."[1] As a work of visual art, the Tabernacle model was produced by a group of young people. The young men reportedly created the wooden portions, some including wire and metallic paints. The textile portions were reportedly made by the young women, who took the pieces of cloth home to embroider them. The completed structure includes appropriate hangings and veils, embroidered with ornamental forms and executed in red, purple, and blue.

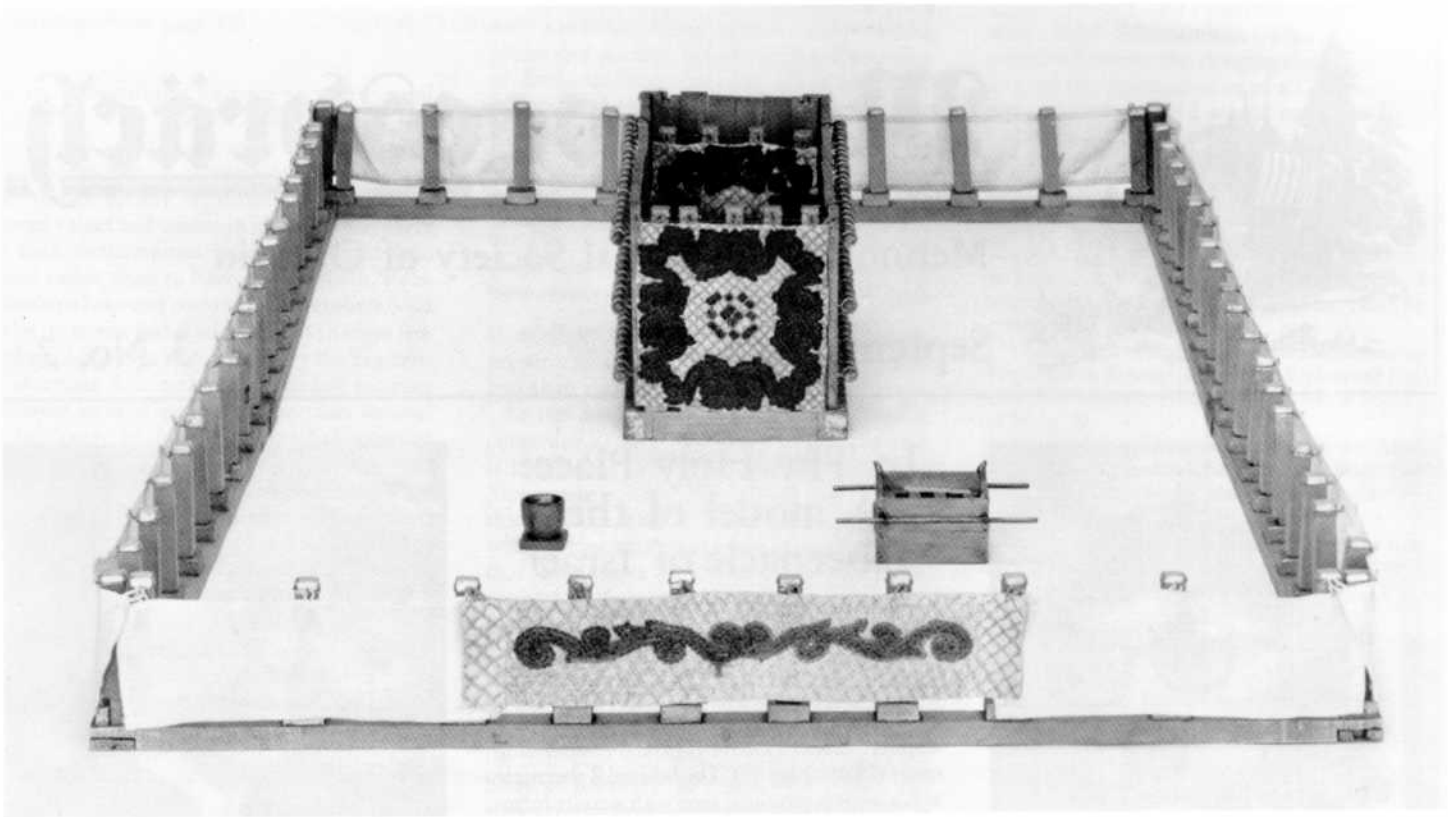
The generation of students who made the model enjoyed a unique experience as with the work of their hands they created this refined labour of devotion. Succeeding generations of students must have carried out the rather solemn process of opening the storage boxes, taking out the many small units, and carefully assembling them to bring the image of the Tabernacle into being. People who participate in the making and in the reassembling of such a structure will not easily forget the experience. There is a sense of personal identification in these actions, as if one became in even a small way part of the original process of creating a place for God to dwell in the midst of His people. The man who conceived this pedagogical device was very evidently a remarkable teacher.



S.F. Coffman, Creator of Tabernacle model. (Photo from Ontario Mennonite Bible School Collection, Conrad Grebel College).

Samuel Frederick Coffman, whose inventive and imaginative mind inspired this work, was born in Rockingham County, Virginia on June 11, 1872. His family found the rocky land too difficult, and in 1879 travelled by train to Elkhart, Indiana. He was baptized May 26, 1888, to the delight of his father, evangelist John S. Coffman. During his high school years he worked at the bindery of the John F. Funk Publishing Company. He continued there after graduation in 1890 until he moved to Chicago where he was ordained in 1894. This began a period of wide travel, including tours of Canada. S.F. married Ella Mann in 1901, and was ordained a bishop in 1903. The couple settled into a pastor's life in Vineland, Ontario at the Moyer Mennonite Church, where Bishop Coffman remained for some 50 years, a remarkable longevity, though his wife's death in 1935 was a great loss.

Coffman's youthful experiences as a student at the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, and his participation in a series of yearly Bible conferences in Ontario, caused him to become a prime mover in the development of the On-



The Tabernacle of Israel enclosed in its draped fenced court, with the large water vessel for ritual cleansing and the horned grilled altar where animal sacrifices were burned. (Photo: Robert McNair, courtesy London Regional Art Gallery, London, Ontario)

tario Mennonite Bible School. At the Canada Conference of 1906 at the Moyer Church he "showed his deep conviction for a Bible study program."[2] The purpose, in his own words, was "to instruct Christians to appreciate the Bible, to know the will of God, understand the Christian life, and then give faithful testimony both in life and service.[3]

A formal motion was presented at this conference to establish a Bible School in Berlin; the first classes were held in 1907 and the first board appointed in 1909. S.F. Coffman was with few exceptions the sole teacher of the Bible Study class until 1919, a period of twelve years. The model of the Tabernacle was presumably created sometime early in this period.

J. B. Martin lecturing on the Tabernacle. (Photo from OMBS Collection, Conrad Grebel College)

Much is conveyed by the fact that his students called him "Daddy Coffman." His biographer, Urie Bender, calls him "a kind of saint-scholar combination."[4] He made a significant contribution to the quality and longevity of *a capella* singing in the Ontario Mennonite Conference, and as a member of the committee for the Mennonite Church *Hymnal* his influence even more widespread. His beloved hymn, "In This Holy Place," grew out of study and meditation on the Bible. When travelling in Alberta in 1901 he conceived the idea for its organization—the three verses are devoted to the three ceremonial objects placed in the forechamber of the Tabernacle: the altar of incense, the golden candlestick, and the table of the shewbread. In describing this meditative work, Coffman wrote:

> The title, "In Thy Holy Place," suggests the fact that all believers live in that holy place of spiritual relationship with God. We are not in the Most High place, for that is in the presence of God, where Christ is entered for us and from when He shall come to receive us unto Himself. But our daily life now is in that place of communion and prayer, and guidance and life by the Word . . . [W]e want to abide in His presence and our hope is that in due time we shall enter the realm of God's glory which is beyond the veil of our flesh.[5]

One must assume that Coffman's intention for his Tabernacle model insofar as it served as a symbol, as well as a teaching aid in Old Testament history, was the same. The effect of the model is dignified and compelling. The degree of refinement is sufficient to be suggestive rather than scale-perfect, as befits a form which is intended to direct the viewer toward the concept it embodies rather than drawing awed attention to itself. On the other hand it is manifestly not a toy. It is a work of instructive art, intended to offer instruction and to inspire meditation. In both intentions it is a success. In aesthetic terms, the complex inner box with its intricate form and contents, contrasted with the geometric simplicity of its proportionate enclosure, creates a three-dimensional structural field of remarkable intensity. The credit for this must go to the

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designer whose identity is indicated in Exodus. But S.F. Coffman and his students brought this particular structure into physical being, and their work, carefully preserved at Conrad Grebel Archives, is an artifact of signifance, even delight.

Notes

[1]The text and music can be found as #167 in **Church hymnal** (Scottdale: Mennonite Publishing House, 1927).

[2]**Mission completed: history of the Ontario Mennonite Bible School and Ontario Mennonite Bible Institute** (N.p.: St. Jacobs Printery [ca. 1969]), p. 2.

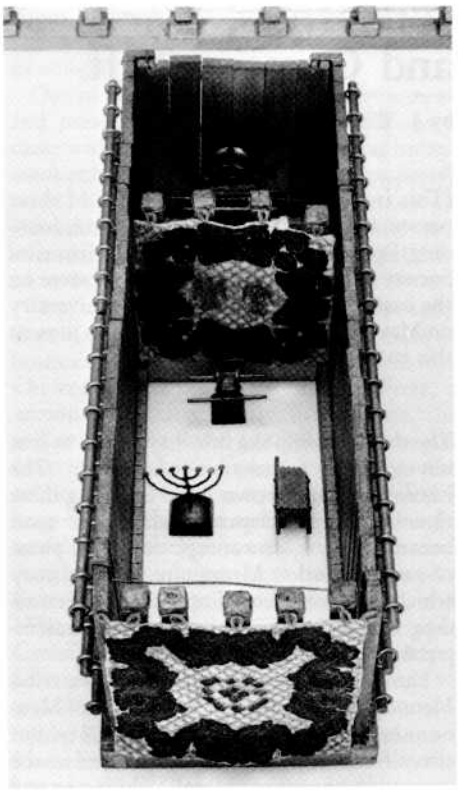
[3]**Ibid.**, p. 3.

[4]Urie A. Bender, **Four earthen vessels** (Kitchener: Herald Press, 1982), p. 147.

[5]**Mission completed,** pp. 5-6.

For information on the Tabernacle, see Paul M. Zehr, **God dwells with His people** (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1981).

The Tabernacle of Israel, shown here with its three outer layers removed, contains, in the innermost chamber, the Ark of the Covenant with its confronted Cherubim, and in the outermost chamber, the Altar of Incense, the Golden Lampstand, and the Table of the Shewbread. The veil between the chambers depicts two Cherubim. (Photo: Robert McNair, courtesy London Regional Art Gallery, London, Ontario)



A Small Mennonite Publisher

by Sam Steiner

Many persons are not aware of an Old Order Mennonite publisher in the Mt. Forest, Ontario area.

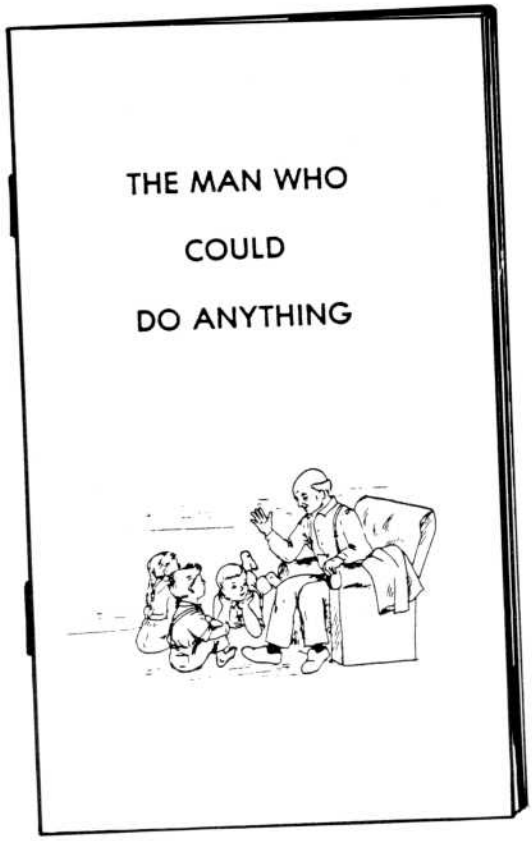
Isaac R. Horst, an active member of the Old Order community, has written and published cookbooks, childrens' books and Mennonite history books. Probably his best known book is *Up the Conestogo,* a history of the Woolwich Mennonites published in 1979.

Horst has also translated into English a number of German materials, and published them in limited mimeographed form. Although the translations are quite literal, and retain the endless German-style sentences with countless phrases and clauses, Horst has made important source material available to the English researcher.

Among items of this nature translated by Isaac R. Horst are: *Discussions of the preachers and deacons of the Mennonite parishes in the County of Waterloo, containing the resolutions passed at the semi-annual conferences,* n.d. This volume translates the earliest extant minute books of the Mennonites in Ontario, beginning in 1842.

Similar titles include *Disclosure of the persecutions against Daniel Hoch, preacher of the Mennonite church in Upper Canada,* n.d. (Translated from the 1853 publication by John H. Oberholtzer) and *A ship directed against the wind* by Jacob Martin, 1984 (from the 1883 edition).

Currently available publications from Isaac R. Horst include the following, all by Isaac unless otherwise noted:



Up the Conestogo, 460 pages, hard cover, illustrated. $6.45. A comprehensive history of Woolwich Township and the Old Order Mennonites. Genealogies, history of towns, schools and churches, as well as pioneer life in Ontario.

Separate and peculiar, paperback. $2.95. A booklet on the customs and traditions of Old Order Mennonites.

High, healthy and happy: 3-H Mennonite cook book, 275 pages. $6.95 (Coming soon). A collection of Swiss Canadian recipes with a brief history of the Swiss Canadian heritage.

Wildlife vittles, 120 pages. $3.95. The nature lover's cook book. Recipes for game, fish, edible greens, trail cookery, plus other related information.

Thou art Peter, paperback. $1.95. A biography of the Woolwich pioneer, Peter Martin. Most of the Woolwich Mennonites descend from him.

The man who could do anything, children's book. $1.95. Stories from pioneer days related by Simeon Bowman, a local nonagenarian.

The little mother's cook book, $3.95. 50 easy-to-follow recipes for the little miss with illustrations and poems.

Life is a poem by Esther Horst, 120 pages, illustrated. $5.95. Inspirational poetry.

Why grossdaudy? $2.95. A sequel to *Separate and peculiar,* giving the scriptural reasons behind many of the customs and traditions. (Coming soon).

Potato potential. $2.50 (Coming soon). A collection of fifty potato recipes.

Any of these books can be purchased from Isaac R. Horst, R.R. 2, Mount Forest, Ontario N0G 2L0 or from Provident Bookstores in Ontario.

Wilderness, War and Gemeinschaft

by J. Winfield Fretz

(This is a condensation of the first of three presentations by Dr. J. Winfield Fretz, founding President of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario. The presentation were on the occasion of the Society's 20th anniversary on May 10-11, 1985. We are pleased to present this to our readers.)

The three terms in the title may appear at first not to have connection whatsoever. The justification in my own mind for using these three seemingly disparate terms will soon become clear. Each concept denotes a phase of early Waterloo Mennonite social history which may provide a glimpse into understanding the sociological character of contemporary Waterloo-area Mennonites.

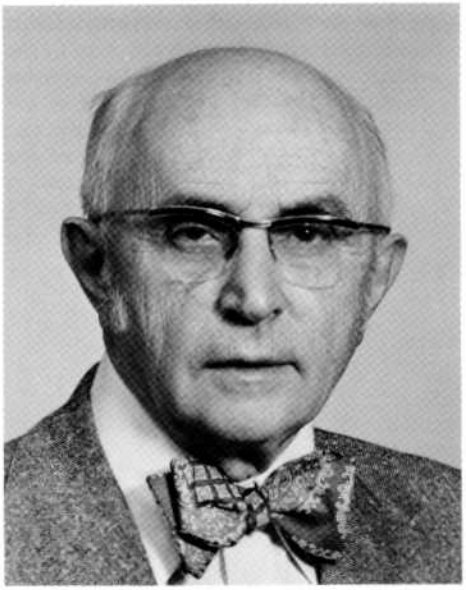
Throughout this address I refer to Waterloo Mennonites not only as all branches of Mennonites and Amish in Waterloo County, but also all those Amish and Mennonites in the surrounding counties of Perth, Wellington and Oxford counties where church memberships cross county lines. The Mennonite population in this area is something in excess of 16,000. It refers to men, women and children rather than to formal church membership only.

Throughout my discussion I will refer to sectors of this community as "conservative," "moderate" and/or "progressive" Mennonites. This general classification is for the sake of simplicity and clarity, and to avoid the constant need to refer to specific conference groups. The distinction between each of the three classifications is based on relative degrees of resistance or accommodation to social and cultural change. In my forthcoming book I cover fourteen separately organized groups. The largest group is the Ontario and Quebec Conference with 21 congregations, and the smallest are single congregations such as the Reformed, the Elam Martin group, the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Church and the Old Colony Mennonites.

Among the Waterloo Mennonites there are three ethnic strands: the Swiss-Pennsylvania Mennonites, the Swiss-South German Amish who came directly from Alsace (France), and the Dutch-Prussian-Russian Mennonites. Each of these three strands has one or more congregations in each of the conservative, moderate or progressive categories.

Waterloo Mennonites and wilderness

A wilderness is best defined as an uninhabited geographical area. An uncultivated region or even a wasteland is also referred to as a wilderness. Waterloo County in the beginning of the 19th century was part of the Grand River basin area and was indeed still an uninhabited wilderness. The Neutral Indians are reported to have settled along the banks of the Grand River as early as 1627 in scattered small groups. Although they grew a few vegetables, they never had a serious impact on the development of the region.



J. Winfield Fretz

The wilderness character of this area must have seemed very real to the Sam Betzner and Joe Sherk families and the other dozen families who followed them in the 1800's across the eighty or ninety miles west from Vineland by wagon and on foot. At that time every additional mile toward their Waterloo County destination was one mile farther away from contact with the first Mennonite settlers in Canada and from relatives and friends back in Pennsylvania. We have all experienced how much longer and more difficult a journey into a new and unknown territory is than over an old familiar route.

What these first Waterloo Mennonite settlers were doing in fact repeated what they or their parents and grandparents had done a generation or two before in Pennsylvania and what their earlier ancestors had done in Europe. An illustration will make my point.

In Switzerland Mennonites were driven out of the cities from the very beginning of the Anabaptist movement, so they had to find places and ways to earn their living as best as they could. One such place was on a 3,000 foot elevation on a plateau in the Jura Mountains in northeastern Switzerland. In 1700 they fled there from the more fertile lands in the Emmental Valley. The Jura plateau was indeed a wilderness for them. The land was stony and infertile. Water resources were limited. Naturally, they were far from markets and travelling to them had to be over mountain trails.

Nevertheless the experienced Mennonite farmers succeeded under extremely difficult circumstances to make virtues out of necessities. They developed new methods of fertilizing through the conservation and use of animal manure and also to use run-off water to irrigate their meadowlands. Because of the poor farming land they devoted themselves entirely to dairying and cattle breeding. They succeeded in developing an exceptionally fine flavored cheese, called "Jura" cheese, which found a good market.

In the course of 200 years (1700-1900), they also found a way of utilizing the long winter days by engaging in weaving. Their half-linen clothes and bed linens provided their own consumption needs of these items as well as some for sale. Samuel Geiser points out that no Mennonite in Switzerland was able to own his own farm before 1890.[1] This is a commentary on the severity and persistance of persecution and discrimination against the Mennonites in that so-called freedom-loving country.

I cannot avoid the conclusion that these deeply impressive social and economic experiences for almost four centuries had a lasting effect upon the world view of Mennonites as they migrated first to the Palatinate, then to Pennsylvania and finally to Waterloo County. It could not have been accidental that with the exception of Germantown, all of the Pennsylvania Mennonite immigrants were farmers. Certainly the first settlers in all of Upper Canada followed this occupation religiously.

The first Mennonite settlers in Waterloo found themselves in a wilderness in the early 1800's, but within a decade after they arrived that wilderness began steadily, almost rapidly, to be transformed into ever larger agricultural tracts, and finally to independent family farms. At the center of practically every cluster of farms were one or two community buildings—the meeting house and the school house. Almost always one building served two purposes during the first years of a new settlement. The Waterloo pioneers emulated their industrious and illustrious ancestors by converting a wilderness into a place of human habitation, the foundation for subsequent Christian communities.

War and the Mennonite social experience

There is a sense in which Mennonites, with many other Christians who hold the two-kingdom view of human society, are constantly in spiritual or social warfare. They have stayed aloof from political and general social participation. The warfare was carried on in silence by means of a kind of conscious separation and avoidance of all but necessary social interaction. When Mennonites and their adversaries were reasonably satisfied with this arrangement, the silent warfare system worked for extended periods of time. When such arrangements were *not* mutually agreeable, strain, strife and even discriminatory treatment and persecution were the consequence.

In their four and a half centuries Mennonites have never been known to start a war, but they were many times the victims of wars. Several illustrations of direct and disastrous impacts of war on Mennonites could be mentioned.

As fate would have it, a severe renewal of persecution in Switzerland at the close of the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) drove large numbers of Mennonites out of Switzerland and across the border into Alsace, the Palatinate and wherever else they found refuge. Because of the devastation of the land and buildings, and the depopulation of the war-torn areas, the land-owning princes eagerly accepted the Swiss Mennonite refugees. They welcomed them only because the princes themselves were desperate for help, not

because they harbored sympathy for Mennonite religious views.

The Swiss refugees found conditions extremely difficult and their hardships bitter. It was precisely from these harassed and exploited refugees in the Palatinate in the early and mid 18th century that large numbers emigrated to Pennsylvania and settled in Bucks, Montgomery, Berks and Lancaster counties. It was the stock from which the Mennonite and Amish Swiss in Waterloo County descended. That we may appreciate the living hell through which some of our ancestors passed in their struggle for survival, let me quote part of a letter from Jacob Everling of Obersuelzheim in the Palatinate to friends in Amsterdam. A letter dated April 7, 1671 described Mennonites in Bern, Switzerland thusly:

> They are daily hunted with constables, and as many as they can get taken prisoners to Bern, so that about four weeks ago about forty men and women were in confinement here. They also scourged a minister of the word and then conducted him out of the country into Burgundy, where when they arrived there, they first branded him and let him go among the Walloons. However, as he could talk with no one he had to go about three days with his burnt body before his wounds were dressed, and he obtained some refreshment; being in such condition that when they undressed him for the purpose of binding up his wounds the matter ran down his back, as a brother who helped dress the wound told me himself. This friend arrived in Alsace together with two women and a man who had also been scourged and banished. Hence they proceed very severely, and as it seems will not desist from their purpose until they shall have utterly banished from their country and exterminated this harmless people.[2]

It is not unrealistic for us to imagine that the names of some of these hapless victims might well have been Tshantz, Frei, Schneider, Bauman, Brubacher, Burckhart, Weber or Wiedemann. It was such constant economic insecurity and threat of persecution in Europe on the one hand and the advertising of favorable living conditions in Pennsylvania on the other, that caused large numbers of Mennonite (and non-Mennonite) Palatines to seek refuge from their insecurity in the new world. Since most of them were quite poor, it was not an easy matter to secure necessary passage money.

In addition to whatever meager personal resources were available in each family were three other possible ways of getting transportation to America. First was the mutual aid from the more fortunate relatives, friends and neighbors. Second was the generous assistance from the Dutch Mennonite Committee for Foreign Needs.[3] The third source of help was the system of indenturing oneself and family to a ship captain who then sold that indenture contract to an American employer. The number of indentured Mennonites seemingly was small.

C. Henry Smith, one of my highly admired teachers, states in his excellent *Mennonite immigration to Pennsylvania* that 1709 marked the beginning of Mennonite emigration from the Palatinate. These first immigrants after Germantown settled largely in Bucks and Montgomery Counties, from which the first Mennonites later came to Lincoln County in Upper Canada. The flow of immigrants from the Palatinate to Pennsylvania continued throughout the rest of the 18th century. In 1717, 300 Mennonites arrived in Philadelphia along with a large influx of other Germans.

Smith estimated that 2,500 Mennonites had immigrated to Pennsylvania by mid-century (1754). Smaller groups continued to come till shortly before the Revolutionary War. This means that many of the Mennonites who left the Palatinate for Pennsylvania as young people in their twenties would still have been alive in the 1770s when the War of Rebellion broke out. A few of the later arrivals like Sam Betzner, one of the first Mennonite settlers in Waterloo County, lived in three countries in his lifetime. He came as a boy of 17 from Nottenburg, Germany in 1755 and for 45 years lived in Franklin County, Pennsylvania. In 1800 at the age of 62 he migrated to Canada where he died in 1813.

The outbreak of the Revolutionary War must have been a truly disappointing event in the eyes of the Mennonites who had come to this new land of religious freedom hoping to leave war and all its calamities behind them. They had lived longer than ever before through a period of peace, prosperity and personal freedom. Early in the century the Mennonites had pledged loyalty to the British Crown when they became British citizens. They, along with most rural colonists, were not as agitated about the various taxes levied by King George as were the Atlantic Coast commercial interests, since they were not as directly affected by them. Furthermore they could not bring themselves to renounce their opposition to war and violence by assisting to overthrow a legitimate government. As the war went on their attempt to maintain a neutral position became almost impossible. The British expected those who professed loyalty to show it. The colonial patriots, on the other hand, found it hard to tolerate neighbors and fellow citizens who refused to join them in defeating the enemy.

Despite their efforts to maintain a neutral position, it is clear that the majority of Mennonites were sympathetic to the British. Most Canadian Mennonites who have expressed themselves on this point have consistently maintained this was the primary reason for the emigration to Upper Canada. American observers tended to soft-peddle that argument and stressed rather the hard economic conditions brought on by the war, and the high price and scarcity of farm land in Pennsylvania which they desired for the children, the proximity of Upper Canada to Pennsylvania and the easier access north than to settlements west of the Alleghenies. Pro-British sympathies during the war might not have been sufficiently strong to induce the emigration, but two other causes related to the war made the decisions to emigrate easier.

One of these causes included the harassment and pressure to support the revolutionary cause with money and military service; harassment enforced with confiscation of property, arrest, imprisonment and physical abuse. Illustrations of pro-British sympathies are related in the Fretz family genealogy published in 1890.[4]

One account reports that during the early days of the war, soldiers went from house to house collecting guns for the Colonial Army. On coming to the home of John Fretz, a second generation family in America, the soldier asked for Fretz' gun. John took the gun from its accustomed place and said to the soldier, "Yes, you can have my gun, but I'll keep hold of the butt end of it." Whether he actually kept the gun is not told, but the anecdote has been interpreted to indicate his pro-British sympathies. John Fretz was born in 1730, and at the age of 70 migrated to Upper Canada. He was the first deacon of the Moyer Church in Vineland, and died at the age of 96 in 1826.

John Ruth reports yet another unusual anecdote which reflects pro-British behavior on the part of a Bucks County Mennonite during and after the War. Abraham Overholt lived along the Delaware River fairly close to the area controlled for a time by the British Army. Outraged by the confiscation of family property by the American authorities, Abraham is said to have joined Butler's Rangers who made raids on American positions. At any rate, after the war he applied for a free land grant in Upper Canada along with other Empire Loyalists. His cousins had received 2,000 acres along Twenty Mile Creek, and had moved there in 1786. Abraham was at first denied his request on the ground that he had a record of horse stealing. He admitted this, but claimed it was stealing in behalf of the British cause. He later received a land grant.[5]

I don't want to imply these anecdotes are representative of all Pennsylvania Mennonite attitudes during the war. They were the attitudes of the *first* Mennonites to emigrate to Canada. It is possible, and even likely, that later emigrants decided to emigrate because of economic or other reasons. This was certainly likely after the formation of the German Land Company.

The second cause was the political instability in the last decades of the 18th century. When the first pro-British group left Pennsylvania in 1786 the political situation was still pretty chaotic. It was three years after the war and three more before the constitution was adopted. The legal conditions for Christian pacifists were still unknown. By the turn of the century those questions were answered, and political conditions had stabilized somewhat.

Gemeinschaft

This brings us to the third concept, *Gemeinschaft*. It is a German term that has been found hard to translate. Sociologists have long spoken of the "Great Dichotomy" to describe the sharp contrast between two characteristic

(continued on page 16)

Genealogical Resources: Census Records

by Lorraine Roth

Census records are useful for those of us who have ancestry in Ontario before 1880. These records are not open to the public for 100 years; so the latest census to which we have access is 1881. Detailed census were not taken until 1851, but for each decade between 1851 and 1881, they are a valuable tool for the historian and genealogist.

These census records have been put on microfilm and any library with a microfilm reader can order them from Ottawa for our viewing. The library should have a catalogue showing the number of the reel on which the various townships appear. A fee is charged when a film needs to be ordered. The Kitchener Public Library has copies of all the films for Waterloo County and even a few from adjacent counties. These can be viewed without charge. The Mennonite Archives of Ontario has microfilm of the 1851, 1861 and 1871 census records for most areas in Ontario with a significant Mennonite population, including the Waterloo, Niagara and Markham areas. These also can be viewed without charge.

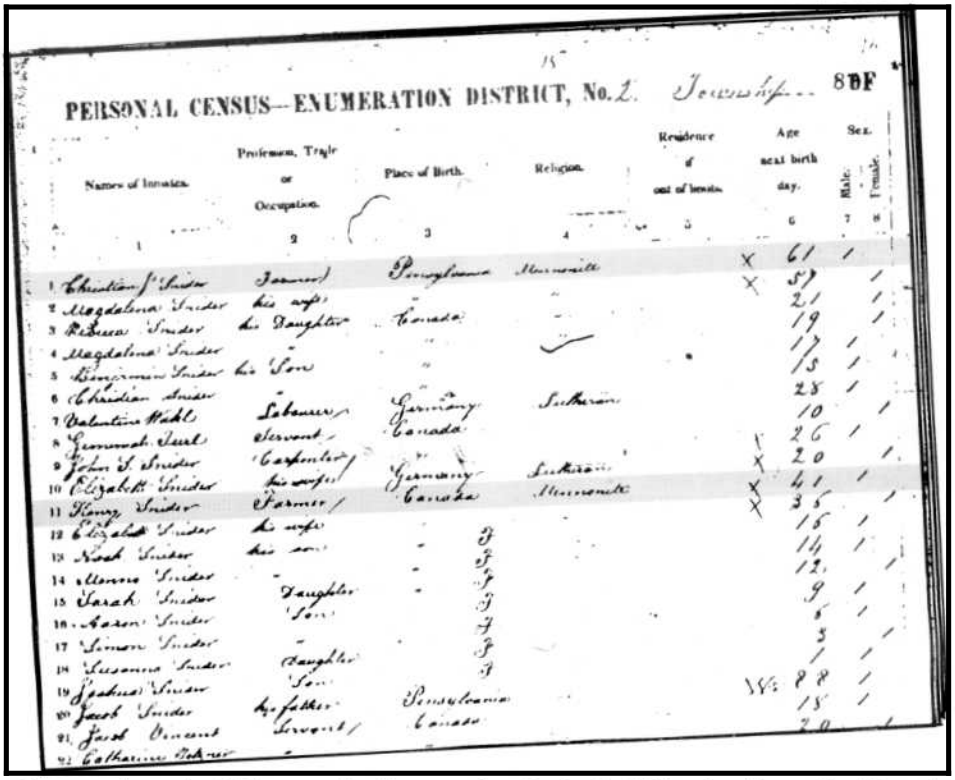
There were some census or assessment records made prior to 1851, but these contain only the name of the head of the family and the number of males and females in certain age brackets in the household. Most of these surviving records are found in the Provincial Archives in Toronto. Some of the old Berlin records are in the Kitchener Library.

What information does the genealogist glean from census records? Frequently, they supply us with a family list. However, they give only ages at the time the census was taken, and they list only the children who are at home at that time. They do not list children, whether married or unmarried, who are living somewhere else, and, of course, they do not list children born after the census was taken. Sometimes one needs a series of census years to complete the total family picture.

The census cannot compete with the records one finds in family Bibles, but where these were never made or where they have been lost, the census is probably the next best thing. Although they do not give date of birth and death, one can establish an estimated year of birth, and deaths can be assertained less closely by the disappearance of a name from the census. Occasionally the enumerator listed the deaths during the previous year on his final page.

The census record lists everyone in the household including servants; so children who are not at home can frequently be found in another home. However, one needs to know to which family they belonged from a previous census or from another source.

The other most important item of information gained from the census record is the location of the family. Very seldom is the lot and concession given in the family listing, but in the agricultural census usually accompanying the general census, the exact location is given.



PERSONAL CENSUS—ENUMERATION DISTRICT, No. 2. Township... 80F

Names of Inmates	Profession, Trade or Occupation	Place of Birth	Religion	Residence of out of Inmates	Age next birth day.	Sex. Male.	Sex. Female.
1 Christian J. Snider	Farmer	Pennsylvania	Mennonite		61	/	
2 Magdalena Snider	his wife	"	"		57		/
3 Rebecca Snider	his Daughter	Canada	"		21		/
4 Magdalena Snider	"	"	"		19		/
5 Benjamin Snider	his Son	"	"		17	/	
6 Christian Snider	"	"	"		15	/	
7 Valentine Wahl	Labourer	Germany	Lutheran		28	/	
8 Emmanuel Seul	Servant	Canada			10		/
9 John S. Snider	Carpenter	"			26	/	
10 Elizabeth Snider	his wife	Germany	Lutheran		20		/
11 Henry Snider	Farmer	Canada	Mennonite		41	/	
12 Elizabeth Snider	his wife				35		/
13 Noah Snider	his son				15	/	
14 Moses Snider	"				14	/	
15 Sarah Snider	Daughter				12		/
16 Aaron Snider	Son				9	/	
17 Simon Snider	"				6	/	
18 Susanna Snider	Daughter				3		/
19 Joshua Snider	Son				1	/	
20 Jacob Snider	his father	Pennsylvania			88	/	
21 Jacob Vincent	Servant	Canada			18	/	
22 Catharine Bokner					20		/

One page from the 1851 census for Enumeration district 2 of Waterloo Township. Note the Christian "Snider" and Henry "Snider" families.

Again, the census cannot compete with the land records in giving precise dates of purchase and sale of the property. However, the value of the census supercedes the land records in cases where people are tenants. The census covers everyone, the land records only those who own property.

Besides the information on family lists and location, the census records provide us with a variety of interesting and useful tidbits. Besides the age of each person, sex, marital status, the country of birth, occupation (in case of head of house and servants), and religion is also given. Usually it indicates which children were attending school. The 1851 and 1861 records gave the type of house the family was living in and sometimes the date it was built. In Wilmot the 1861 record gave the year of marriage in many cases. In 1871 the European nationality of those born in Canada is usually given. Other items which could be checked were "blind," "deaf and dumb," "lunatic," etc.

These census records were also accompanied by a detailed agricultural census. These gave the lot and concession for each household. The 1871 census of South Easthope Township, for example, covered the following categories: number of acres—total, cultivated, pasture, garden, wheat, hay; number of animals—horses, colts, milk cows, other cattle, sheep, swine; slaughtered animals during the previous year—cattle, sheep, swine; number of implements—carriages, wagons, plughs, reapers & mowers, one-horse rakes, threshing machines, fanning mills. Unfortunately, either the agricultural census was not always carried out or they have not survived. A number of them are missing. For South Easthope, the total 1851 census is missing.

Although the pre-1851 census are not as helpful for family listings, they are better than nothing, if the other alternative is "nothing!" They do give the number of males and females, over and under 16. They also give the location of the family. The 1838 Wilmot census included the following categories: land (no. of acres)—uncultivated, cultivated, lot number; persons—males over 16, males under 16, females over 16, females under 16, dumb & deaf, insane, total; dwelling—hewn of 1 storey, frame of 1 storey, hewn of 2 stories, frame of 2 stories—animals—horses, oxen, milch cows, horned cattle; total value—pounds, shillings. It is interesting to note the simplicity of the 1838 census compared to that of 1871.

Some of the enumerators were better writers and more accurate than others. They were usually English speaking, and when they tried to record the German names of the Mennonites and Amish, they had a great deal of difficulty with the spellings. Thus one needs a fairly good imagination when trying to decipher these records today. In the 1851 East Zorra census, for example, the following names appear—Road, Swatsanrover and Arp. A Pennsylvania Dutchman will recognize these without much difficulty. In Amish circles a fairly popular name was Jacobena, shortened to "Bena." In more than one case the enumerator gave her the name "Phillipina." Frequently "Machtalana" appeared for Magdalena. Only occasonally did the enumerators distinguish between Mennonite and Amish. One even called them all Methodist. Some were careful in recording country of origin, others simply called all German-speaking people "German."

The United States, of course, also has its census records, and those whose ancestors lived in Pennsylvania before coming here will find

them useful. However, the type of census taken in Pennsylvania before the migration will be the type where only the head of the family is named and the result are counted as males and females in various age categories.

A number of census indexes have been made, and these are also very helpful. Hugh Laurence, commissioned by the Mennonite Historical Society, prepared a listing and index of all Mennonite and Amish families in Wilmot and Wellesley townships for the 1851-1881 census records as well as the 1881 Mornington census. The latter is not indexed. He also made a summary of how the census is set up including the various idiosyncracies, some of which are mentioned above. The Kitchener Public Library has indexed a few of the census records, and it may save time to check these indexes first before going to the microfilm.

In spite of inconsistencies and weaknesses in the census records, they are still a useful tool for the genealogist. The fact that there are a series of them if helpful, because one can frequently detect where the errors lie by comparing several lists.

Coming Events . . .

Genealogy Workshop

November 8 Friday Evening

7:00 p.m. Registration ($5) at entrance of Conrad Grebel College, Great Hall with Lois & Lemar Mast.
7:30 p.m. "Finding Your Mennonite Ancestors"
8:15 p.m. Intermission
8:30 p.m. "Lancaster Mennonite Historical Library Resources"
9:00 p.m. "Preserving Your Research"

Historical Workshop

November 9 Saturday Morning

9:00 a.m. Historians Workshop at Conrad Grebel College chaired by Sam Steiner
— Registration & Coffee $6.
— Reports from congregational historians
— Intermission
Address: "The Value of Family History in Recording Church History" Lois & Lemar Mast
12 Noon Lunch by reservation in college dining room

Society Fall Meeting

November 9 Saturday Afternoon

2:00 p.m. **Fall Meeting of Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario** in Congrad Grebel College Great Hall
— Announcements & Reports
Illustrated Lecture: "Genealogical Research in Europe" Lois Ann & Lemar Mast.
Collection for expenses.
Everyone is welcome to attend all sessions.

Recent genealogical additions to Conrad Grebel College Library

by Sam Steiner

The following supplements the list published in the September, 1984 issue of *Mennogespräch*. We are also always interested in donations of Mennonite genealogies not currently in the collection.

The Cober genealogy of Pennsylvania, Iowa and Canada by Alvin Alonzo Cober, 1933.
The Dettweiler family record: the genealogy and history of the Dettwiler family of Swiss origin, 1556-1958 by Hilma Drotts-Detwiler, 1958.
Dick reunion and thanksgiving service, 1984.
Erbs by Winston J. Martin, 1984.
Hoffman — *Family history of Daniel B. Hoffman, 1837-1979* by Elizabeth D. Wideman, 1979.
Hoffman — *The descendants of Samuel B. Hoffman; 1839-1904, George B. Hoffman, 1842-1927; Joseph B. Hoffman, 1845-1938*, 1982.
The King family (2 vols.) by H. Harold Hartzler, 1984
Martin — *Christian (1669-1754) & Elizabeth; David and Maria Martin and their descendants* by Winston J. Martin, 1983.
Martin — *Manasseh Martin family history*. 1974.
Mullet — *A near complete genalogical compilation of the Mollat immigrants of 1833 and 1851* by Nadine M. Getz, 1950.
Ratzlaff — *Familienregister* by Erich L. Ratzlaff, 1971.
Reist — *Peter Reist of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania and some of his descendants* by Henry G. Reist, 1977 reprint.
Reist — *Family record of Jacob B. Reist* by Mary Rohrer and Mrs. Roy Sauder, 1979.
Roth — *Descendants of Mary Egli (1848-1918) and Joseph Roth (1838-1910)* by Sadie Roth, 1982.
Sauder — *The Jacob N. Sauder genealogy*, 1973.
Schaus — *The history of the Schaus family in Canada, 1846-1979* by Lloyd Schaus, 1979.
Scheel family, compiled in 1983.
Shantz — *Schantz's* by Winston J. Martin, 1984.
Sherk record book by J.H. Sherk, n.d.
Sherk — *Family history of Peter Shirk*, 1984.
Snyder — *Schneiders, Sniders & Snyders* by Winston J. Martin, 1984.
Stoltzfus — *The genealogical history of the Stoltzfus family in America, 1717 to 1972* by Wilmer D. Swope, 1972.
Troyer family history by Hilda Troyer, 1984.

Multipple family genealogies

Martin, Winston. *Webers, Horsts & Goods*, 1984.
Rommel, Hazel Hathaway. *My mother's people: A history of the related families of the Bingamans, Betzners, Bowmans, Clemens and Sniders of Pennsylvania, Ontario and Michigan*, 1985.

Books

Aitken, Barbara B. *Local histories of Ontario municipalities, 1951-1977: a bibliography*, 1978 (Ref Z1392.05A37).
Baxter, Angus. *In search of your European roots*, 1985 (CS402.B38 1985).
Genealogical guide to German ancestors from East Germany and Eastern Europe, 1984 (CS683.G413).
Guide to genealogical research in the National Archives [United States], 1982 Ref Z5313.U5U54).
Jonasson, Eric. *Untanglish the tree: organizational systems for the family historian*, 1983 (CS16.J65).
Ontario Genealogical Society library holdings, 1984 ed. (Ref Z5305.C3058 1985).

Filby, William, ed. *Passenger and immigration lists index*, 1981-

This index, published in 1981 with supplements every year since, lists over 1,000,000 immigrants to North America who came prior to 1900. The references were culled from many published works, and is a good starting point for persons not sure when their ancestor came to these shores. It is *not* an index to unpublished materials.

Two recent books

Cassel Mennonite Church, 1935-1985 by Vernon Zehr and Leona Bender (Tavistock: Cassel Mennonite Church, 1985). 40 p. $5.00.

This attractively presented little volume combines a brief narrative history by Zehr, brief reminiscences by members, useful appendices with statistical information, and photographs.

The style is descriptive, not analytical, and the narrative focuses on the leadership of the congregation.

One wishes the reminiscences could have been worked into a longer narrative, perhaps providing a larger overview of the congregation.

Memories: Sixty years of Mennonite life in Essex and Kent Counties, 1925-1985 (Leamington, 1985). 78 p.

In 1984 Russian Mennonites in the Niagara Penninsula published a regional history book, *Memoirs of the Virgil-Niagara Mennonites: History of the Mennonite settlement in Niagara-on-the-Lake, 1934-84.*

This more modest effort is another commendable move in the direction of regional histories. Short historical summaries of the 9 sponsoring congregations, supplemented by memories of life in Russia and the early days in Canada, round out the book.

An introductory overview on the history of the Mennonites in the area would have strengthened the volume; this is a good start.

Wilderness, war and Gemeinschaft
(continued from page 13)

life styles or cultures found in societies—rural and urban. The rural is referred to as *Gemeinschaft* and the urban as *Gesellschaft*.

Gemeinschaft is characterized by a small face-to-face society organized on the basis of shared values and common interests. Members in such communities tend to be born into them rather than to have chosen them. Relationships between community members tend to be intimate; social and cultural changes few and gradual. Joys and sorrows re the concern of everyone. Life in the *Gemeinschaft* societies revolves around people rather than around technologies. In short, *Gemeinschaft* societies are *human* communities.

By contrast, *Gesellschaft* societies are characterized by a predominance of individual self-interest, relationships tend to be impersonal, and there is less agreement or concensus as to what constitutes "right and wrong." Commitment to the common good and to traditional values tends to be weak. Decisions are based much more on reason than emotion, and efficiency is likely to be the criteria for social change rather than what is customary, traditional or sentimental.

There is no question into which category the Waterloo Mennonite community or communities have fit from thec beginning. Mennonites have demonstrated four and a half centuries of *Gemeinschaft* communities. Only in the large cities of Holland have Mennonites demonstrated *Gesellschaft* characteristics. Even today the Mennonite congregations in the cities of Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Saskatoon and Vancouver, while existing in *Gesellschaft* societies and gradually taking on the characteristics of their environment, are still predominantly ethnic and *Gemeinschaft* in character—but noticably accommodating in the direction of their *Gesellschaft* environment.

Of the congregations now in the Ontario and Quebec Conference, the first ten were all known by Mennonite family names: Benjamin Eby, David Eby, Hagey, Snyder, Wanner, Shantz, Geiger, Latschar, Cressman and Weber in that chronological order. In addition there were a number of congregations and preaching places that are now extinct, such as Detweiler, Hallman, Bechtel, Clemens, Reist and Stauffer. The Western Ontario Conference has only one family-named church—Steinmann, but the Beachy Amish have two congregations with family names: Lichty and Nafziger. Among the Old Order Mennonites are the Martin, the David Martin and the Elam Martin congregations. Interestingly the congregations that have retained their family names are all rural.

If nothing else this illustrates the greater pressure to accommodate and to change in urban than rural areas.

In my study of the Waterloo Mennonite community I am greatly concerned about what is happening to the *Gemeinschaft* aspect of Mennonite culture. While I am not ready at this point to state my conclusions, I can say without hesitation that I see present footprints that head in a direction away from *Gemeinschaft* characteristics and all that it implies sociologically. One of these disturbing signs is the manifestation of excessive individualism in decision-making within the progressive segment of the Waterloo Mennonites. There is hardly any aspect of conduct or belief where the individual will is subordinate to that of the body of believers. In matters of morals and ethics the individual is his/her own master. If norms in these areas are discussed at all it is not with the intention of arriving at concensus. This is in sharp contrast to Anabaptist views of the Believers' Church as a disciplined body of disciples who mutually admonish, teach, share and pray about common matters of life, faith and conduct.

In retrospect I have been impressed with the way in which the Waterloo church communities have maintained themselves without proselytizing at the expense of other denominations. The churches have maintained themselves, and even expanded, by the process of natural growth.

I think I am safe in saying that every one of the sixty-one churches under consideration in my study has always been, and still is, an ethnic congregation. This means that anywhere from fifty to one hundred percent of the members have either one or two parents who were Mennonites. This does not necessarily mean the congregations continue to have the characteristics of a Christian *Gemeinschaft* or what I would call a wholistic Christian community.

Notes

[1]Samuel Geiser, "Farming among the Mennonites in Switzerland," **Mennonite Encycolopedia,** II (Scottdale: Mennonite Publishing House, 1956), pp. 310-311.

[2]Quoted in C. Henry Smith, **The Mennonite immigration to Pennsylvania in the Eighteenth Century** (Norristown: Pennsylvania German Society, 1929), p. 32.

[3]For further information see N. van der Zijpp, "Fonds voor Buitenlandsche Nooden" (Dutch Relief Fund for Foreign Needs), **Mennonite Encyclopedia,** II, pp. 344-346.

[4]A.J. Fretz, **A brief history of John and Christian Fretz and a complete genealogical family register** (Elkhart: Mennonite Publishing Co., 1890). See p. 22.

[5]John L. Ruth, **Maintaining the right fellowship** (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1984),.

I would like to become a member of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario. I will be informed of all Society events, will be eligible to serve on the various committees of the Society, and will receive *Mennogespräch* as part of my membership.

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