



Mennogespräch

Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario

March 1986

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The Mountain Church at Campden

by Carson Moyer

Prologue

A cemetery grown wild with weeds and reports of a church meetinghouse that was moved to become a tenant house caught my interest as a child when we visited grandparents in Campden, Ontario, just a mile west of the Mountain Mennonite cemetery. Grandpa James Moyer told about hiring someone to mow the weeds. Seven years after he died a high school history essay at Rockway Mennonite High School provided the stimulus I needed to spend Easter vacation in 1949 visiting and interviewing Bishop S. F. Coffman, Alf Frey and Emery Moyer. S. F. Coffman spent an afternoon going through his diary lifting out material relevant to the Mountain Church while Emery Moyer gave me (for \$1.50) the Isaac Moyer family Bible. (Isaac was the third son of Bishop Jacob Moyer.) Back in Kitchener I interviewed Rev. Harvey Moyer, a retired United Church minister whose parents had been active members of the

Mountain Church. More recently I did a search of relevant material in the archives at Conrad Grebel College followed by a search of title and deed in the land registry office in St. Catharines for the Township of Clinton, Municipality of Lincoln.

The Growing Years 1799-1849

During the summer of 1799 Amos Albright, with Abraham and Jacob Moyer, travelled on foot from Hilltown, Pennsylvania to the Niagara district in Upper Canada. Twenty miles west of Niagara they purchased eleven hundred acres. This became known as The Twenty settlement. The first group of settlers came in the fall of 1799 followed by a larger group in 1800. This settlement ordained the first Canadian Mennonite ministers, Valentine Kratz in 1801 and Jacob Moyer in 1802, the latter being confirmed bishop in 1807. The first meetinghouse was built on the latter's farm in 1810.

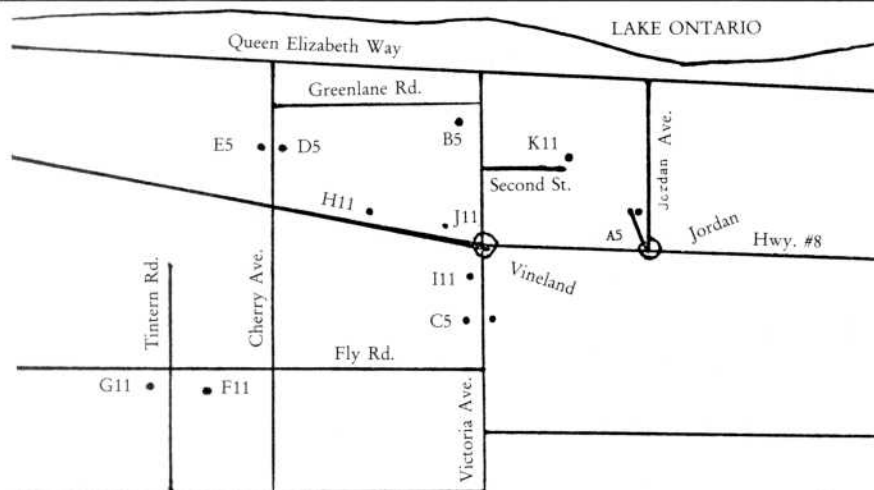
The first half century was a period of rapid growth and expansion for the settlement at The Twenty. In order to find farms in the area many of the second and third generations had to move onto the mountain. Under the leadership of Jacob Moyer, a peacemaker and fluent speaker, the church had grown in spirit and in unity. After his death in 1833 the church continued to grow with its two aggressive leaders: Daniel Hoch, a step-son of Bishop Moyer, and Jacob Gross.



Carson Moyer

In the 1840's the congregation had three places of worship: Moyer, Mountain and Jordan. In 1842 two of Jacob Moyer's sons, Dilman and Abraham were also ordained to the ministry of the congregation. Abraham was the only minister to devote a major part of his effort to ministering to the members on the mountain. Unfortunately, in his later years he became demented and according to oral history had to be restrained with chains to prevent him from harming himself or others. Thus his active ministry came to an end several years prior to his death in 1871.

The Mountain meetinghouse was built about 1840 according to L. J. Burkholder's **Brief history of the Mennonites in Ontario**. Other available records would point to a somewhat later date. Although no construction date is recorded, a copy of the "deed of gift" is registered in the Municipality of Lincoln land registry office. It was drawn November 10, 1843, signed by the grantor David Moyer August 10, 1844 and registered on the ninth day of June, 1845. The purchase price for the half acre was five shillings (\$1.00). The grantee was Abraham Kratz, "one of the Elders of the society called the Mennonists" who were to have this property "for a place of public worship forever." It was situated in the north east corner of Lot 7 in the Seventh Concession of Clinton Township.



Mennonite historical sites in the Vineland, Ontario areas. Numbers correspond with the Mennonite Tour Map published by the Mennonite Bicentennial Commission.

A5 — Jordan Museum
B5 — Kulp Homestead
C5 — Daniel Hoch Homestead
D5 — Dilman Moyer Homestead
F11 — Bethesda Home
G11 — Campden (Mountain) Mennonite Cemetery

H11 — First (Moyer) Mennonite Church
I11 — Missionary Church
J11 — Mennonite Brethren Church
K11 — United Mennonite Church

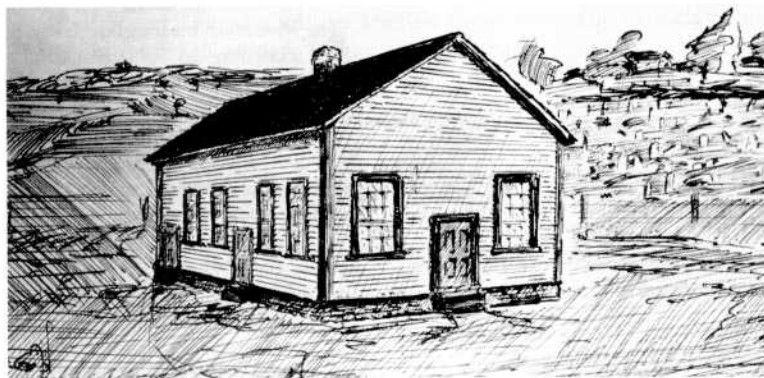
The Declining Years 1850-1908



Jacob & Salome (Moyer) Gross. (Photo: L.J. Burkholder Collection, CGCA).

Since the land was granted by one of the church members it is possible that building may have started before the "deed of gift" was drawn, but it is doubtful if it was started as early as 1840. It is more likely that following the ordination of Abraham Moyer in 1842 the members on the mountain began working toward the construction of a meetinghouse. The site having been chosen by November 1843, it is possible that logs and lumber were cut and sawn making construction possible in 1844. Thus the meetinghouse may have been completed by the time the deed was registered in 1845. Another possibility would be that it was built in 1845 following the registry of the deed. I would suggest that the earliest date for the construction of the meetinghouse would be 1843 and the latest date 1845.

The meetinghouse was approximately thirty-six by fifty feet with the gable facing the Fly Road to the north and the cemetery lying to the west of it. It was a white frame building with two windows and a door to the north and three windows and two doors facing east. The pulpit, made of plain unpainted pine lumber, was centered on the west side of the meetinghouse. A stove stood in the centre of the meetinghouse with an aisle from the stove to each of the three doors. The seats of unpainted pine were arranged in the quartering style and elevated at the back of each quarter in the old amphitheatre style, with hat racks suspended over the men's heads.



The Mountain Church. An artist's rendition. The drawing shows four windows on the side. The author's information on three windows comes from S.F. Coffman. (Photo: L.J. Burkholder Collection, CGCA).

The second half of the first century was a time of disintegration for the congregation at The Twenty. Some progressive moves were made, but not enough for some and too many for others. As early as 1848 a Sunday School was conducted by Jacob Gross and Dilman Moyer. Prayer meetings of an "orderly" nature were also permitted. Although Bishop Gross was not as aggressive as some of his contemporaries he was a friendly, progressive man who with his wife spent much time visiting the sick. During his incumbency in office as bishop, a controversy arose with reference to the temperance movement, Sunday School, and prayer meetings that included emotional expressions and testimony by women. This controversy at The Twenty polarized with the step-brothers, Daniel Hoch and Dilman Moyer, as the opposing leaders. The Ontario Mennonite annual conference at Markham in May 1847 allowed prayer meetings for "all prayerful persons who call upon God in spirit and in truth. Those who favour prayer meetings and those who do not shall exercise love and forbearance toward each other. Where true love is absent there is also not the spirit of prayer."

This conciliatory conference action did not settle the controversy at The Twenty. Although Bishop Gross stood with Hoch in his plea for greater spiritual emphasis, rather than take part in a division of the church, he, with several of the more aggressive members, joined the Evangelical Association in 1849. Unfortunately for the Mountain Church this was not a one time division. For more than half a century creative, active young people continued to gravitate to the Evangelical (German) and Methodist (English) churches.

The Sunday School conducted by Jacob Gross and Dilman Moyer in 1848 lived only a short time. It was again organized in 1868 with meetings alternating from Sunday to Sunday between the Mountain and Moyer meetinghouses. The attendance was lower the Sundays that they met on the Mountain where about thirty people attended, whereas some fifty attended on the alternate Sundays. The Sunday School offerings for 1870 totaled \$22.51. During the same year \$22.36 was paid out leaving a balance on hand of \$.15 at year end. Sunday School material was purchased from the Methodist Book Room in Toronto.



Daniel & Margaret (Kratz) Hoch. (Photo: L.J. Burkholder Collection, CGCA).

Daniel Hoch's followers initially fellowshipped with other New Mennonites in schism in Pennsylvania but later withdrew from what became the General Conference Mennonite Church. For a time they fellowshipped with other New Mennonites in Ontario. When the Mennonite Brethren in Christ schism swept Ontario in 1872-1874 the Hoch group, possibly with the exception of Hoch himself, united with this new division of the church. Although the Jordan meetinghouse went with the Hoch group this schism had little direct effect on the Mountain church. However, the constant quarreling at The Twenty between the groups encouraged many more of the young people to go to the Evangelical and Methodist churches as Jacob Gross had done a quarter century earlier.

By 1875 a new feud had risen in this congregation. The Sunday School annual meeting minutes of December 20, 1875 record that "there were 12 of the brethren present and it was agreed without opposition that the Sunday School should be kept on as before and the parents should do all they could to encourage the welfare of the school." The minutes of the annual meeting a year later try to accommodate the concerns of the more conservative group. December 11, 1876 the annual meeting of the Clinton Sunday School was held in the Moyer meetinghouse. "It was decided to keep the Sunday School on as it had been kept unless we can compromise with

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Frank H. Epp, 1929-1986

by Sam Steiner

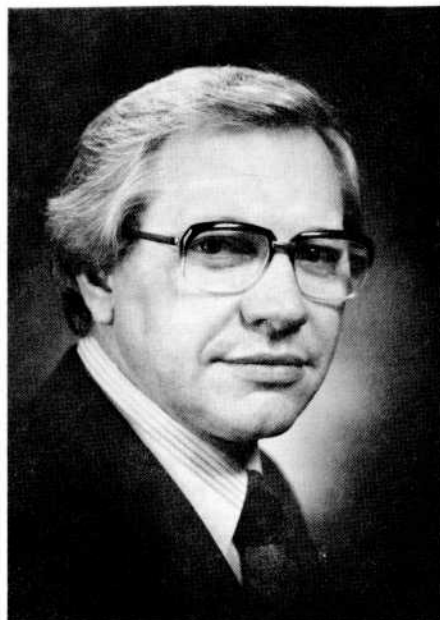
During this bicentennial year Mennonites in Canada are celebrating many things. This issue of *Mennogespräch* recounts events from several of the streams of Mennonite experience in Ontario. Alice Koch's "Story of stones" and the schedule of Bicentennial activities tell us something of the many events planned to remind us of reasons to be thankful.

But we are missing a special voice during the celebrations this year. Frank Epp died in January before seeing the fruits of his vision, leadership and organizational skills. He died before he could complete volume III of *Mennonites in Canada*. That volume will include mention of his significant contributions to Canadian Mennonite life through Mennonite Central Committee and the *Canadian Mennonite*.

But while it seems he left us too soon, Frank Epp has left a rich legacy. The Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario is one of the beneficiaries. Frank spoke first to the society in 1969, while still living in Ottawa, but after he had agreed to undertake the *Mennonites in Canada* project. He spoke to us again in 1974, with the centennial of the immigration to Canada by Mennonites from Russia. In 1982 he spoke at the first meeting of the Society's genealogy committee. His talk at that meeting was published in the first issue of *Mennogespräch*. As president of Conrad Grebel College, Frank was second to none in making sure the Archives area in the academic building would be equipped with first-rate, albeit expensive, facilities. Then there are the seven four-drawer filing cabinets stuffed with material from the Mennonite History Project. One could go on.

While Frank himself is gone, his challenge is still with us. We can be proud of our history—a history far larger than the Swiss & Dutch streams. The use we make of our history can help nurture the direction and vitality of our Mennonite faith, or we can regard it as a quaint impediment to our witness. Frank's choice was clear.

Sam Steiner is editor of Mennogespräch



Frank H. Epp, 1929-1986

A story of stones

by Alice Koch

"We are asking you to find a stone representative of your area for the memorial to be erected on the grounds of the First Mennonite Church, Vineland, Ontario." This was the request to twenty persons in Ontario by the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario, on behalf of the Mennonite Bicentennial Commission. The stones were to come from throughout Ontario and Quebec, where there are or have been Mennonite settlements. The memorial, to commemorate the coming of the first Mennonites to Ontario in 1786, is to be unveiled on July 1, 1986 at the site of the first Mennonite meeting house in Ontario. The stones were to be about six inches long with one flat side, on which the settlement name would be engraved.

Some of the stones came with a story. The Waterloo Region stone came from the foundation of the David Eby church, built in the 1850s at the corner of Erb St. West and Hallman Road. The David Eby meetinghouse was the original building of the Erb St. congregation. The site is now part of the Erb St. cemetery. The land was owned by David Eby.

Another stone came from the foundation of a house built in the 1870s by Isaac Hallman. Isaac Hallman was ordained minister in Wallace Township, Perth County, in 1882 to serve the families in that area. He died in 1901 and is buried in the cemetery behind the United Church in Kurtzville. This stone represents the early Mennonite settlements in Wallace and the present congregation at Listowel. The farmhouse is now owned by Ken Hallman, a great-grandson.

The stone from "The Twenty" comes from the Culp farm in Vineland. This farm has belonged to the Culp family since 1805 when Isaac Culp came to Lincoln County from Hilltown, Pennsylvania. Culp purchased the land from Amos Albright who had purchased it in 1799. Michael Culp, son of Isaac W., is the sixth-generation Culp on this farm.

The Cayuga-Simcoe stone was found in the woods behind the Rainham Mennonite Church at Selkirk. Both the church property and the woods behind are part of the land originally owned by the Hoover family, who came to Pennsylvania in the 1790s. The Hoover family, five sons and three daughters, were the first settlers in this area.

The "Ottawa" stone was picked up from the parking lot of the Ottawa Mennonite Church. The "Toronto" stone was picked up from the Don River valley by a geology student some years ago. The fossil formations are an interesting item of interest. The stone symbolic of Wilmot was found in our garden. Its significance lies in the fact that this farm was owned by my grandfather, Joseph Nahrgang, minister at Blenheim from 1878-1903.

We thank those who sent stones with a special meaning. May they help us remember the goodness of God in bringing our ancestors to this land.

Alice Koch is president of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario.

The Mountain Church, cont.

those that object to the English and English singing. If it could give better satisfaction we would leave the English singing away at the Moyer meetinghouse. John F. Rittenhouse was chosen again for superintendent for his sixth year." None the less, in 1889 forty-one members went with minister Abraham Rittenhouse to the Wisler (Old Order) division of the church while seventy remained with the congregation at The Twenty, meeting on alternate Sundays at the Moyer and Mountain meetinghouses. By 1898 women were taking an active position in the Sunday School. "Moved by Debby Moyer, seconded by Charles P. Watson that Alda Culp act as chorister to be at the front." (From the annual meeting minutes of December 26, 1898.)

At a meeting on April 6, 1904 it was recommended "that an effort be made to hold a school every Sunday in the Moyer Church."

However, worship services continued at the Mountain meetinghouse for another four years. S. F. Coffman, who was called to The Twenty in 1895, has recorded in his diary that the services at the Mountain meetinghouse were discontinued in the fall of 1908, the funeral of Bishop Jacob Moyer's granddaughter, Catherine Moyer, being the last service conducted there. The closure was only intended to be for the winter, as the meetinghouse was in a poor state of repair and thus difficult to heat. By Spring the four members still residing on the mountain preferred to worship at the Moyer meetinghouse. In 1915 conference authorized the sale of this building and it was moved to Vineland Station where it was used as tenant house.

Carson Moyer, from New Dundee, is a market gardener. He and his wife, Ellen, have served as missionaries in Africa.

The Mennonite Brethren in Ontario: a short history

by Anne Wiebe

Who are they? Geographically they trace their history to the Molotschna Colony of southern Russia. Their spiritual heritage stems from a double source: the **Mennonite Brethren** who separated from the main body of the Mennonites in Russia in 1860, and from the **Evangelical Mennonite Brotherhood**, a movement from the early decades of the 20th century. The Evangelical Brotherhood was also known as the **Alliance Church**, because it attracted membership from both the Mennonite Brethren and the older established Mennonite church.

The Alliance and Mennonite Brethren streams both practiced baptism by immersion only, but the Alliance church did not make immersion a condition of membership. Its stance on participation in the Lord's Supper was likewise more liberal than that of the Mennonite Brethren. Within the Alliance, the Lord's Table was accessible to all believers regardless of church affiliation. This theological freedom had made the Alliance Church very attractive in Russia, where it found adherents not only in the Molotschna, but also in the "Old Colony," Chortitza, as well.¹

The majority of today's Ontario Mennonite Brethren locate their origins in the 1924 emigration from the Soviet Union. Most of these M.B. immigrants landed in Waterloo, Ontario. The Erb Street Mennonite Church became the reception area. On arrival they were received by Mennonite farmers of the Waterloo area, and distributed throughout the county and beyond.

The original plan had been for these people to travel to Western Canada where they were to start homesteading. But drought and a generally unfavorable agricultural climate in 1924 made it impossible for Western farmers to accommodate the quota of immigrants allotted to them for that year. An "SOS" was



Arrival at the Erb St. Church "reception area." The immigrants walked up Erb St. from downtown Waterloo.

sent by Elder David Toews, chairman of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization to its member in Ontario, Bishop S.F. Coffman in Vineland. Toews asked him to accept the refugees the West was unable to cope with.

This cry for help did not go unheeded. Charitably and generously the Swiss Mennonites of Ontario responded. Concerning this operation the Kitchener **Daily Record** reported:

Mennonites Find Homes For Many Russian Immigrants—During the past three weeks Waterloo County has absorbed 1082 Russian Mennonites, the first party arriving Saturday, July 19 and consisting of 875, while a little later a party of 63 came. It was expected that many of these two contingents would

go out west this fall and remain there, but the failure of the crop in the Mennonite sections there has caused a change in plans and they will remain in this county.²

When the final tally of immigrants for 1924 was completed, a total of 1340 had found homes in Ontario, thanks to the hospitality of their Swiss brothers and sisters. Except for a handful, these people all arrived in the town of Waterloo, from whence they were distributed among the Mennonite farmers of the county and further afield.³ Sixty years later those who recall the events of 1924 speak of their benefactors in highest superlatives. A few excerpts from letters or interviews illustrate this point:

"So far we are very happy here . . .," wrote Mrs. Peter Enns to those of her family who had remained behind in the Soviet Union. "Our living quarters, fuel and to a large degree our food, is supplied for us. Our hosts are very kind. Occasionally they ask, 'Do you still have potatoes, lard, eggs, etc.' If our provisions are running low, they replenish them. We have already stored 110 eggs for the winter. Of fruits and vegetables we have canned about 60 jars. By this time we also have two sugar bags full of dried apple pieces (Schnitz). The man for whom Peter works is a bishop. We refer to him and his wife simply as grandma and grandpa. (endearing terms). They want to give us a pig to butcher . . ."⁴

Jacob Bartels, father of four, was taken with his family to the farm of A.J. Shantz of Fisher Mills. On the farm premises Shantz had prepared a little house for the immigrant fami-



Getting organized for placement. These were the sheds at the Erb St. church.

The full text of a letter written by Marie Enns (Mrs. Peter) upon their arrival in Waterloo from Russia in 1924.

September 21, 1924

Dear Sister and brother-in-law:

I will try and write a letter to you, since it has bothered me for some time that I have let it go this long.

I have already written one letter today, to Bertha Regier, one of our relatives living in Kansas, with whom we are in regular contact. It all seems so unbelievable — like a dream.

Up to now we like it here, where we live. We live together with Hermann Enns' and share the kitchen facilities. The two of us, Anna, my sister-in-law, and I, are away much of the time. It happens sometimes, that we have only Saturday to ourselves. This week, for 4 days, I have picked beans, half for the owner and half for us. I believe I have picked, for us alone, no less than 100 pounds. Living quarters, fuel, and, for the most part, food is supplied to us. Our hosts are very friendly and helpful; they will ask "are you in need of potatoes, lard, eggs, etc." and if we say we need anything, immediately it is brought to us. I have already put away 9 dozen of eggs for the winter. Fruits and vegetables there is no end of. I have filled 60 jars of preserves and fruit. Of fruit there is such an abundance that we can truly manage. It is fallen fruit, which, we are told cannot be sold, and if we don't pick it up, it is left to rot on the ground. We have already dried 2 sugarbags of cut-up apples.

The husband of the family for whom my Peter works, is a Bishop. We refer to them as

Grandpa and Grandma Snider. They have offered to give us a pig for butchering, later this fall, and besides that we have a shoat of 9 weeks; so you see, we will soon have our own household again. In fact, to see us, one would conclude that we have settled in rather quickly. We even have a sofa and a rocking chair.

I should actually start at the beginning. When we arrived here, everything was ready for us. In a letter home, I have described in detail how we were received, but since you will probably not get that letter, I will write about some of the things that greeted us upon arrival.

When we arrived here, the beds were ready for us, with blankets, pillows and sheets. There was a nice metal cooking stove, a frying pan, 6 cups, 6 plates, knives and forks and spoons; there was sugar, salt and pepper, and salt and pepper shakers, coffee, flour, oatmeal cookies, 2 irons, dish-towels, a large dining table, 2 benches, 5 chairs, a pail, even soap to wash our laundry with. We were speechless, unable to express our feelings. It raised our emotions to the point of breaking, as we realized how concerned our hosts had been in supplying everything in such detail.

As we prepared to do the laundry, we realized we had no washboard so went to Grandma Snider in order to borrow one. Right away she had one for us, and said, "you can keep it, you don't have to return it. In addition we were given three large pails.

We have received many clothes. We are no longer scared of the approaching winter. Martha has received two winter coats and a lighter one, as well as some warm underclothing. Recently a widow notified us that I should come over, she also has some clothing for us, and this is the way it has been going on almost daily; it seems as though we are having

Christmas every day. My sister-in-law Anna, has even received a sewing machine.

Our living quarters are made up of 7 rooms and two hallways, and a large basement. We live at one end of the house, and Herman's landlord for whom he works, lives in the other end. Peter must cross the highway to the place of work at Grandpa Snider's. In fact Grandpa Snider is the father to Walter Snider, where we live.

The children are now all at school; our 3, Herman's 2, and 3 from Walter Snider's, making 8 children from one farm. Henry's teacher can't speak a word of German. I feel sorry for him at times, but they say they are getting along fine.

Greetings from your ever-loving sister,
Marie

Note: Grandpa Snider was Bishop Jonas Snider of Erb St. Mennonite Church, Waterloo. Translation by Herbert P. Enns.



Rev. Jacob W. Reimer, one of the founders of the Mennonite Brethren Church of Ontario.

The Mennonite Brethren in Ontario, cont.

ly. Sixty years later one of the Bartels daughters fondly recalls her family's introduction to Canadian life:

When we entered the little house we were greeted by a steaming hot meal on the table. After ushering us into our new home, the gracious host quietly closed the door, and left us to ourselves. Overwhelmed by the magnanimity of the man, father offered a prayer of thanksgiving I shall never forget.⁵

Expressions of gratitude and recognition for "Samaritan" services to those who had "fallen among thieves," were not slow in coming from diverse sources. Elder David Toews expressed his appreciation to Ira S. Bauman, the man who headed the committee that placed the immigrants in the Waterloo district:

Mr. Zacharias of our Board has returned home after witnessing the excellent reception which you and your people have extended to our immigrants. We certainly appreciate the splendid way in which you and your people have acquitted yourself of the task allotted to you.⁶

Although it was a task of monumental proportions to accommodate and provide work for around 1500 immigrants, the Mennonites

of Ontario were by no means daunted by the task. When approached by the local newspaper as to the ability of the Waterloo County Mennonites to absorb so large a quota, Ira Bauman replied:

I could place many more if the time were longer for making the arrangements. We are perfectly satisfied with the people here now. All are good people, as far as we know well educated, and their moral character is A-1.⁷

Initial fears and doubts among local residents regarding cleanliness and personal hygienic habits of the immigrants were quickly dispelled upon closer contact and acquaintance. The *Daily Record* again shed light upon the subject. In describing the immigrants it said, "There was not the slightest semblance of squalor or dirt which is usually associated with European immigrants. Every person was clean and the women, particularly, were quite neat, though their clothing had seen better days."⁸

Before the summer months of 1924 were over, the committee in charge of placement (Jacob Snyder, Noah Snyder and Moses Hunsberger were also on the Erb St. committee) led by "king-pin" Ira Bauman,⁹ had found accommodation for 1340 persons, and employ-

ment for those who were able to work. The immigrants were scattered from Kitchener and environs to Vineland and Beamsville.¹⁰

In the process of allocating those who were able to work, it sometimes happened that family members or close friends were separated from one another. The need to meet one's kith and kin, and the necessity of getting together with friends, was of the utmost importance for the immigrants. Congregating with persons who were scattered over a large area however, posed a major problem for the new arrivals who had no personal means of transportation.

The generous host farmers recognized the need of their guests for social and also for spiritual communion. At first it was hoped that worship services in the local churches would prove satisfactory for the immigrants, but this was not so. Language barriers proved to be insurmountable. Although the Pennsylvania German was to some extent intelligible to the newcomers, the adoption into this language of much English terminology prevented the Russian Mennonites, who were accustomed to High German, from spiritually benefiting from these services.

Thus in the late summer of 1924 the committee in charge of immigrants decided to ac-

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Rev. Jacob P. Friesen, leader of the Kitchener M.B. congregation from 1925-32. One of the founders.

range special services for newcomers to be held in the German language. Moreover, these services were to be conducted by immigrant ministers, and were to be held in various Mennonite churches of the Kitchener-Waterloo area every second Sunday. This area was the logical choice because of the large concentration of immigrants located there.

Those involved recalled the events:

These services were much appreciated. All immigrants worshipped together under the leadership of Mennonite Brethren ministers, since ministers of the General Conference affiliation had, by coincidence, gone West upon arrival in Canada. But a feeling of regret was felt by most, that these services could not be conducted with greater regularity. This was not possible at that time because all immigrants at that time were dependent upon their hosts for transportation to such services.¹¹



Rev. Henry H. Janzen, leader of Kitchener M.B. Church from 1932-1944. (Photo courtesy of K. Janzen)

Wherever possible the newcomers also gathered for Bible study and prayer. One such meeting place was the home of Rev. Jacob W. Reimer, who had found refuge in New Dundee. At such a gathering the possibility of uniting to form a Mennonite Brethren church was the topic of discussion. Members of both the Mennonite Brethren and Alliance churches had emigrated from Russia. In the event of amalgamation into one congregation compromises would have to be arrived at and differences resolved.

Reimer, Jacob P. Friesen and Jacob P. Wiens were trail blazers in efforts to bring into being a congregation of believers from dual, although similar, sources. On May 25, 1925, at the home of Rev. Jacob P. Wiens in St. Jacobs, the Mennonite Brethren Church of Ontario became a reality. Eighteen signatories, three of whom — Gerhard J. Enns, Katharina (Dyck) Swartz and Marie Fehderau — are still living, became charter members of the newly formed church. Within a month the *Kirchliche* (General Conference) Mennonites also organized a congregation.

The official name given to this unique amalgam was **Molotschna Mennoniten Brüdergemeinde** (Molotschna Mennonite Brethren Church), but it was also referred to as the Kitchener Mennonite Brethren Church. The latter name was exclusively used after the formation of the Ontario M.B. Conference in 1932. The word "Molotschna" was chosen to serve as a reminder of the liberal stance Mennonite Brethren churches had enjoyed in the old country.¹²

The leadership of the new church was entrusted to Rev. Jacob P. Friesen, a graduate of a theological seminary in Hamburg, Germany. Assisting him was a Board of Elders (*Ältestenrat*) comprised of three ministers: Jacob W. Reimer, Jacob P. Wiens and Peter Goertzen.

At the time of its organization the fledgling church had no meetingplace of its own. Fortunately local churches, the Bethany Mennonite Brethren in Christ at Lancaster and Chapel Streets in Kitchener, and the St. Jacobs Mennonite congregations graciously opened their facilities. Here worship services were held on alternate Sundays for some months.

While the congregation was worshipping at Bethany, Sunday school classes for children as well as adults was begun. Some of the first teachers were Katharina (Dyck) Swartz, Maria Fehderau, Johann G. Rempel and Maria Braun. Children enrolled from both Mennonite Brethren and *Kirchliche* (General Conference) backgrounds. As more immigrants flocked to the "Twin Cities" to look for employment, enrollment in Sunday school increased rapidly.

Special music to beautify the church service was first provided by a quartet, but as early as 1925 Gerhard J. Enns organized a choir. He directed it until 1928. Following a period of three years when Henry Wiebe led the choir, N.J. Fehderau was asked to carry on this work. Fehderau was the choir's conductor from 1931-1958, when he was succeeded by John Goertz, who wielded the baton to 1979. Goertz was followed by Geraldo Wall.

The congregation's rapid growth necessitated a more permanent church home. A make-shift solution was found in a rented hall on the third floor of an office block at 40 King Street East. Trolley cars clanging incessantly down below on King Street continued to disrupt the services throughout the nine odd years the church met there, but that was one of the inconveniences that had to be tolerated. Under the circumstances it is not hard to understand that the congregation blessed the 30th day of October, 1935 when its trustees finalized the purchase of a small church building at 53 Church Street for the sum of \$4000. The property had a mortgage of \$3250 on it. At the time the congregation had a membership of 151.¹³



Rev. Jacob P. Wiens (in dark suit). The M.B. Church in Ontario was organized in his St. Jacobs home on May 25, 1925. (Photo courtesy of Elsie Dyck)

Of the immigrants who arrived in Ontario in 1924, only a nucleus remained in the Kitchener-Waterloo area. The majority soon scattered, settling in places that held out the greatest promise for economic prosperity. In Essex, New Hamburg, Hespeler, Port Rowan and Vineland the immigrants tended to congregate, and wherever this was the case a small Mennonite Brethren church was soon organized.

These so-called **stations** were extensions of the mother church in Kitchener, and were administered and controlled by her until the formation of the conference in 1932. As the parent institution, heavy responsibilities were placed upon the Kitchener church. Hers was the duty to provide the stations with spiritual nurture—especially those groups who were closest, such as Hespeler and New Hamburg. This system gave rise to a great deal of travel for the leadership.

Rev. Jacob P. Friesen, who had been elected in 1925 to lead the Kitchener congregation, was succeeded in 1932 by H.H. Janzen. Janzen's leadership from 1932-44 proved to be trail-blazing not only for Kitchener, but also for all the M.B. churches of Ontario. Since the existing churches at the time were scattered throughout the productive farming areas of Southern Ontario, administration from one central area was cumbersome and difficult. To expedite the administrative process, and to enable all congregations to obtain local autonomy within an overall umbrella covering, it was decided in January 1932 to organize a provincial conference. H.H. Janzen of Kitchener was elected moderator; Abram Huebert of Leamington, assistant moderator; Henry Penner of Kitchener, secretary; and Abram Teichrob of New Hamburg, Treasurer. The

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executive was asked to write a constitution and to make application to the provincial government for legal recognition of the body. The Ontario government granted Letters Patent on July 8, 1932, and the Mennonite Brethren Conference of Ontario became a reality.

At this point the Kitchener church dropped "Molotschna" from its name, and became known officially as the Kitchener Mennonite Brethren Church (Kitchener Mennonite Brüdergemeinde). The combined M.B. membership in Ontario at the time was 287. Congregational membership in the conference was not automatic, but was obtained by individual congregational application. All churches positively responded to this stimulation within a short time.¹⁴ The major incentive for congregational membership was the complete autonomy for the local church in domestic affairs, with the benefit of united action in matters of common interest such as home or foreign missions.

From a provincial point of view the formation of this "federation" was no doubt a major achievement. From the national perspective, however, Ontario churches stood very much alone. No one was more aware of this than H.H. Janzen. In his extensive travels as a conference speaker throughout Canada and the United States, Janzen obtained an international vision for the possibility of united action in building the Kingdom of God on earth. With this conviction he aspired to yet another union. He wished to link the Ontario Mennonite Brethren Conference to the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches of North America, with headquarters in the U.S.A. As moderator of the Ontario M.B.



Gerhard J. Enns,
First Choir Director



Marie Fehderau



Katharina (Dyck) Swartz
with a great grandchild

Member congregations

Hespeler	1926, amalgamated with Kitchener in 1953
New Hamburg	1927, amalgamated with Kitchener in 1952
Port Rowan	1927
Leamington	1932
Vineland	1932
Virgil	1937
Scott St. M.B., St. Catharines	1943
Christian Fellowship Chapel, Hampshire	begun in 1944
as a mission, organized as an M.B. church	1961
Niagara Christian Fellowship Chapel	1951
Fairview M.B. Church, St. Catharines	1954
Zion M.B. Church	1961, amalgamated with Kitchener in 1983
Waterloo M.B. Church	1967
Orchard Park Bible Church, M.B., Niagara-on-the-Lake	1971
Grantham M.B. Church	1973
Evergreen Heights Christian Fellowship (Simcoe)	1975
Fairview Louth M.B. Community Church	1979



Sunday School Class of Abr. J. Dick ca. 1930

Front Row — l-r: Alice Neufeld, Lydia Friesen, Abr. J. Dick, Tilly Enns (nee Bergen), Lena Dick.
Second Row — l-r: Agatha Woelk, Martha Friesen, Agnes Heinrichs (nee Klassen), Lydia Dick, Elviar Faust (nee Friesen).
Third Row (back) — l-r: Toli Isaac, Corny J. Rempel, Jake Enns, Henry Enns, Peter Faust, Victor H. Penner, John Becker.

Conference, Janzen's influence on the local churches was paramount. Having gained support for this vision, he was delegated in the fall of 1936 to go to Reedley, California to make application to the General Conference for membership of the Ontario churches. The larger and older conference sympathized with the Canadian aspirations, but Ontario's "Alliance" position on baptism was foreign to the more conservative American views. The net result was conditional membership only, with strictly limited participatory rights in the General Conference.

Naturally Ontario Mennonite Brethren were disappointed. They found, however, that their Alliance-based view was similarly strange to the M.B.'s on Western Canada. Thus finding themselves outside the M.B. pale, the Ontario congregations decided to pay the required price. They relinquished their more liberal stand on baptism, and in 1939 were granted full membership in the General Conference of North America.¹⁵

A further union between the Ontario Conference and the Northern District Conference of the M.B. Churches in Western Canada took place in 1946. This was formalized in Winkler, Manitoba following prolonged and reciprocal participation in certain Home Missions projects. These included care of the mentally

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The Mennonite Brethren in Ontario, cont.

disturbed at Bethesda in Camden, Ontario and higher education at Mennonite Brethren Bible College, Winnipeg and the Winkler Bible School. Through this step Ontario became a provincial jurisdiction of the Canadian Conference with the same rights and obligations as the other provinces of Western Canada.¹⁶

From its inception in 1932 the Ontario Conference of M.B. Churches has experienced much numerical growth in membership as well as member congregations. On page 7 is the list of churches organized since the birth of the Kitchener Church in 1925.



Rev. Frank C. Peters, leader of the Kitchener M.B. Church, 1949-1954 and 1965-1973.

In addition to the established churches, there are a number of mission churches not yet self-sustaining. These churches were organized as mission projects by either one of the older congregations, or by the Board of Church Extension, formerly known as Home Missions Board. Scattered over an area ranging from Yorkdale to Ottawa, from Spragge near Elliot Lake to Stoney Creek near Hamilton, from Komoka near London to Brampton and Niagara Falls, these churches are promising but challenging fields.

In addition to building the Kingdom of God by means of evangelization within Ontario, Mennonite Brethren are actively involved on foreign mission fields as well. In secondary education Eden Christian College was established in 1945, and has met with a considerable degree of success. A Bible School program begun in 1938, however, was eventually phased out in 1965. Young Ontarians looking for theological training are encouraged to attend Bible School at Winkler, Manitoba; Hepburn, Saskatchewan; or Clearbrook, B.C.

An educator of international stature, whom the Mennonite Brethren of Ontario claim as their own, is Frank C. Peters. Upon completing his first pastorate in Kitchener from 1949-54, he served as president of Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kansas for a short period of time. Back in Canada, he accepted the office of president at Mennonite Brethren Bible College in Winnipeg, followed by a second Kitchener pastorate from 1965-73. Throughout the two periods of shepherding the Kitchener church, Peters established and maintained close ties with Waterloo Lutheran University where he lectured in Psychology. Professionally



Meeting place of the Russian Mennonite immigrants on King St. North in Waterloo, 1924.

Peters' first love was always the classroom. This was demonstrated once again in 1973 when he accepted the presidency of Waterloo Lutheran University. During the tenure of his office to 1978, the institution relinquished its denominational connection, and as a provincial university was renamed Wilfrid Laurier University, after the illustrious Prime Minister.

Mennonite Brethren are also involved in the activities and projects of the Mennonite Central Committee. Their concern for the care and treatment of the mentally disturbed has already been alluded to. Recently the preservation of historical documents by microfilming has awakened greater interest in historical research.

The latest cooperative venture has been a camping program. In 1980 a camp site was purchased in the Muskokas, near Bala. Although the price of \$505,000 was considered by many to be staggering, cash donations and pledges equalled the cost. There was much cause for rejoicing when after two years all pledges matured and the debt was retired.

Laboring in the Lord's vineyard and going about the Master's business are hundreds of dedicated and devoted men and women. Within the scope of this paper it is impossible to mention them by name. However they are known to the Master whose call they are heeding, "Go ye, for the fields are white unto harvest."

Notes

- 1 I.H. Thiessen, *Er führt . . . : Geschichte der Ontario M.B. Gemeinden, 1924-1957* ([S.l.: s.n., 1957]), 7-9.
- 2 *Kitchener Daily Record* (August 11, 1924), 2.
- 3 Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada, 1920-1940* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1982), 176.
- 4 Marie Enns to relatives in Russia, September 21, 1924. By permission of Herbert P. Enns; translated by Anne Wiebe.
- 5 Interview with Kay Peters, daughter of Jacob Bartels, 1983.
- 6 "Mennonites find home for many Russian immigrants," *Daily Record* (August 11, 1924), 2.
- 7 *Daily Record* (August 14, 1924), 2. Bauman is quoted in this article.
- 8 "Pathetic scenes as 875 Russian Mennonites were distributed among local brethren," *Daily Record* (July 21, 1924).
- 9 Albert & Greta Hunsberger, *A brief history of the David Eby Church and Erb Street Mennonite at Waterloo, Ontario, from 1851-1976* ([Waterloo: Erb St. Mennonite Church], 1976), 13.
- 10 Epp, 176.
- 11 Jacob Fast & Herbert P. Enns, ed., *Jubilee issue of the Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church, 1924-1976* ([Waterloo: s.m.], 1976), 8.
- 12 Thiessen, 7-22.
- 13 Jacob A. Kutz, "Die Kitchener Mennoniten Brüdergemeinde, Juli 1924-1957," in Thiessen, 61-67.
- 14 "Congregational minutes of the Kitchener Mennonite Brethren Church," July 3 and August 28, 1932. Translated from the German.
- 15 Katharina Janzen, et al, "Seine Lebensgeschichte — H.H. Janzen," *Mennonitische Rundschau*, Vol. 100, No. 13 (March 30, 1977), 10.
- 16 Thiessen, 22.
- 17 Edward Boldt, ed., "When your children shall ask . . .": a history of the Ontario Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches ([S.l.: s.n.], 1982).



Bethany Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church at Lancaster & Chapel Streets in Kitchener. The M.B. immigrants met here on alternate Sunday afternoons in 1925-6.

Genealogical Resources: A General Overview

by Lorraine Roth

Perhaps in 1986, as we pause to celebrate the bicentennial of Mennonites in Canada, we ought also to reflect on our various Mennonite cultural streams and what that means in terms of genealogical research. We celebrate our common faith heritage and rejoice in it, but when it comes to working on our genealogies we need to recognize that our roots go back to more than one cultural heritage. Because of this, we cannot all use the same resources.

In Ontario one finds three distinct cultural groups. We shall consider them in the order in which they came to Ontario. The first ones to come and establish a permanent Mennonite community were Mennonites from Pennsylvania. These were descendants of Palatine Mennonites of both Dutch or Low German and Swiss ancestry. The following summary of resources, libraries and archives will serve this group well:

Court House Records: Land records (at the Registry Office) Wills and Will Probates.

Libraries: Census records (can be ordered for viewing if the library does not have them — open to public only until 1881)

A variety of directories, gazetteers, etc. County Archives (usually located in libraries in towns which are county seats)

Newspapers (sometimes well indexed)

Provincial Archives: Archives of Ontario

77 Grenville Street
Toronto, Ont. M7A 2R9

National Archives: Public Archives of Canada
395 Wellington Street
Ottawa K1A 0N3

Mennonite Library and Archives, Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ont. N2L 3G6

Mennonite Historical Library —

Goshen College, Goshen, Ind. 46526

Archives of the Mennonite Church —
Goshen, Ind. 46526

Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society,
2215 Millstream Rd.

Lancaster, Pa. 17602

Mennonite Historical Library and Archives of
Eastern Pennsylvania

1000 Forty Foot Rd.

Lansdale, Pa. 19446

Mennonite Historical Library,

Bluffton College

Bluffton, Ohio 45817

(This library has a strong collection of published genealogies)

The second group of Mennonites to appear in Ontario were the Amish Mennonites, also of Swiss background, and they came shortly after the first group. Except for a few isolated cases, however, they came directly from Europe without spending much time in Pennsylvania. The resource list for this group is almost identical to the one above except that the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society has little help in their collection and the Mennonite Historical Library and Archives of Eastern Pennsylvania even less. This group may wish to add the Amish library at Aylmer to their list:

Amish Historical Library, Route 4, Aylmer,
Ont. N5H 2R3.

The third group came much later and via a completely different route. The Mennonites from Russia came in the 1920s, generally from Dutch ancestry with a sojourn in Prussia before the Russian experience. Only a few of the above resources will be helpful for this group of people. They will find varying degrees of help in the following places:

Court House Records: (These are useful for any period of time if individuals and families do not have the information these records can give.)

Mennonite Library and Archives —

Conrad Grebel College

Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives —

600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Man.

R3P 0M4

Mennonite Historical Library —

Winnipeg, Man. R3P 0M4

Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies
in Canada —

77 Henderson Highway

Winnipeg, Man. R2L 1L1

Mennonite Genealogy Inc.

(good private collection)

Box 393, Winnipeg, Man. R3C 2H6

Mennonite Library and Archives —

Bethel College

North Newton, Kan. 67117

This is not an exhaustive list, but these should provide the necessary leads.

When I began this column a few years ago, I stated that families are the genealogist's best resources. This is still the case. Be sure you have exhausted their possibilities before you go to those mentioned above.

Lorraine Roth, February, 1986

Reist Family Reunion

by Agnes Reist

Two month old Margaret Ladd of R.R. 4, Listowel, was the youngest person to attend the Reist reunion at the Woolwich Arena in St. Jacobs on July 20, 1985. Margaret could trace her ancestors back to Hans and Barbara (Ryser) Reist, who lived in Duerrenroth, Canton of Bern, Switzerland in 1690. Margaret was one of several who attended from the eleventh generation.

Of the 440 persons at the reunion, 77 had the name Reist. U.S. states represented included Pennsylvania (over 50 persons), New York, Illinois, North Carolina, Michigan and California. Rev. Larry Spicer, his mother and grandmother travelled from Calgary; Stanley Reist and his daughter came from Frobisher Bay.

In 1700 Hans and Barbara Reist confessed the Mennonite religion.¹ It is not clear whether this Hans Reist is the Mennonite leader that came into conflict with Jakob Ammann, leading to a split in 1693.² This split led to the formation of the Amish group over the question of stricter enforcement of church discipline.

Because persecution of Mennonites continued in Switzerland in those years, the Reist family eventually fled to Montbeliard, presently part of France just across the Swiss border.

The church records in Duerrenroth indicate the birth of five children to this family, but give no record of the birth of son, Peter. It is believed he was born after the family went into exile.

In 1723 Peter Reist married Anaclore Boyer, a French Huguenot. The same year he obtained his passport to travel to Pennsylvania. This passport, as well as the Patent (Deed) to his land in Pennsylvania is still kept with family records.³

Peter and Anaclore Reist had a family of seven children. Abraham, the fourth, was a shrewd businessman. Among his enterprises in Pennsylvania was a distillery, though he gave this up in later years, and desired that none of his sons would engage in that business.⁴

Abraham Reist owned land in Canada though he never lived there; he appeared to

be an investor in the German Company Tract of Woolwich Township.⁵ One of Abraham's nephew's, John, first purchased land in Canada in 1804 — on a plot of land that later became Fort Erie. At the outbreak of the War of 1812, this John Reist moved to the New York side of the border.⁶

Abraham's eldest son, John, moved to Canada in 1826 with his wife, Susannah (Huber), and youngest children. Three older children came already in 1821. One of these, John, was accidentally killed while building a bridge over the Conestoga River. He was buried in 1822 in the First Mennonite Church cemetery in Kitchener. Samuel and Barbara (later Mrs. Ludwig Koch) came with young John in 1821.⁷ John appears to be the second Reist to be buried at First Mennonite Church. There is evidence that a Reist born in the 1770s was buried at First Mennonite in 1809, the same year that Benjamin Eby was ordained to the ministry, and before a meetinghouse has been erected.⁸

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When John and Susannah came in 1826 they first lived near Bridgeport, moving after a year to land near Kossuth. In later years this farm was owned by his grandson, Isaac.⁹ John and Susannah are buried at the Wanner cemetery near Cambridge (Preston). Most persons attending the reunion were descended from this family.

The oldest living Reist, though not able to attend, was Martha (Reist) Eby who was 104 on February 23, 1985. Mrs. Leah Brubacher and Jacob Rudy, both 91, were the oldest in attendance.

The only other Reist reunion in Canada was held 50 years ago in Waterloo Park. A show of hands indicated some persons at this reunion attended. Although a date has not been set, there will likely be a third reunion in this area in three to five years.

Notes:

- 1 Henry G. Reist, *Peter Reist of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania and some of his descendants* (Manheim, Pa.: Mrs. Mary R. Rohrer, 1977 reprint), 6. The 1977 reprint of the 1933 edition is available from George Reist, 1610 Westmount Rd. E., Kitchener, Ontario N2G 3W5.
- 2 Reist, 97f; Samuel Geiser (?), "Reist, Hans," *Mennonite encyclopedia*, IV, 281-282.
- 3 Reist, 7ff.
- 4 Reist, 25-26.
- 5 Reist, 26; Ezra Eby, *A biographical history of early settlers and their descendants in Waterloo Township* (Kitchener: Eldon D. Weber, 1971 ed.), N-17. Abraham Reist is not listed as one of the original investors in the German Company Tract in Waterloo Township.
- 6 Reist, 27-28.
- 7 Eby, 257; Reist, 32; "Readings of the tombstones of the cemetery of First Mennonite Church," (Xerographic copy, 1983), 35. (At Conrad Grebel College).
- 8 "Readings of the tombstones . . .," 35.
- 9 Reist, 32.

Christian Troyer of Vaughan

by Marlene J. Grant

Immigrant Michael Troyer arrived at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from Rotterdam on November 3, 1750 on the ship, "Brotherhood."¹ Born in the Trub Valley in Switzerland, Troyer fled from religious persecution along with a great many other Amish families. Michael first settled in the Northkill, then in the Brothers Valley, Bedford Valley, Pennsylvania. He was married to Magdalena Mast, who arrived on the ship from Rotterdam, with her brothers Jacob and John and three sisters. All were under the guardianship of their uncle, Johannes Mast. Magdalena's brother, Jacob, married Magdalena Holly, and became Bishop Jacob Mast.

to the 200 acres he owned in Norfolk County. This petition for Clergy land March 25, 1809 was signed by a number of Amish/Mennonite settlers whom Christian personally brought to Ontario to settle. Among them were the names of Shank, Curtz (Kurtz), Fisher, Hendriks, Vober (Cober), Shunk (Shank), Cumer, Becker, Barnhart, Holly (Hooley), Cristner, Brown, Spriger, Mishler, Miller, Berky, Horner, Oberfole (Ebersole), Morningstare, Hershy, Sheane, Ashbogh, Bonworth, Rorer (Rohrer), Prockunier, Kesler, Horton, Hoover, Woolf, Starnaman and White. The petition was handwritten, and attested to Christian as an honest and industrious man who had caused all those who signed the



Christian and Maria (Troyer) Hoover's home on the original homestead, now lands owned by York University. The picture shows the home as it appears today.

Immigrants Michael and Magdalena (Mast) Troyer had a total of fourteen children. With the exception of two, all remained in Pennsylvania until 1816. The two children who did leave were the eldest, John, and Christian, the third child. Both travelled to Ontario in the mid to late 1780s to settle with other Pennsylvanians.

Christian Troyer settled first in the Sugar Loaf area (west of present Port Colborne) and then in 1789 at Long Point on Lake Erie on Lot 21, Concession 1, Walsingham Township in Norfolk County. Shortly after arriving in Canada for the first time, he returned to Somerset County, Pennsylvania for his older brother, John, and family. They settled at Long Point (Troyer's Flats) on Lot 21 adjacent to the land owned by Christian. It is not definitely known if Christian was Amish or Mennonite, though more evidence would point to the latter. Despite this, when Christian returned to Ohio in later life, he lived in an Amish settlement.

In 1809 Christian petitioned for land in Vaughan Township, York County, in addition

petition to settle in the province. It is interesting to note that the 200 acres of land (Lot 5, Concession 3, Township of Vaughan) requested in the 1809 petition was not deeded to the Troyer family until June 9, 1838. By this time Christian had returned to the United States with his oldest son, David, so the land was turned over to Christian Jr., youngest son of Christian Troyer.

The senior Troyer was born either January 8, 1755 or May 8, 1756. He first married Barbara Yoder (1756-1789) and later Elizabeth Becker (Baker/Boecker), born June 24, 1761, and daughter of George Becker. Christian had three children (Magdalena, David and Maria) by his first wife, and three children (Jacob, Catherine and Christian) by his second.

Christian Troyer's family attended the Schmitt (Vaughan) meetinghouse near Edgeley. Christian Troyer Jr. was a minister in that congregation. The meetinghouse is now preserved at Black Creek Pioneer Village north of Toronto.

Christian Troyer's faith did not allow him to fight in the War of 1812. He also took the stronger step of declining use of his horses for government service during the conflict. In the minutes of the General Quarter Sessions of the Peace, Home District in York on March 19 Christian's name appears with co-defendants John Oster, Michael Keffer, John Shunk, John Snider and Joseph Mishler. The case was dismissed when the constable who had impressed the teams and sleighs, Samuel Arnold, failed to attend the hearing.²

Christian returned to the U.S. soon after the end of the War of 1812, probably in 1815, with his oldest son, David, and their wives. In the U.S. David was known as "Canada Dave." Christian and Elizabeth (Becker) Troyer settled with David's family in Walnut Creek, Holmes County, Ohio, north of Farmerstown. It is believed that Christian is buried on this farm (SE ¼, Section 3, Range 5, Township 8) together with his daughter-in-law, Catherine Hooley (Holly). The Troyer Family Archives Committee, together with Amish relatives of "Canada Dave," have erected a memorial to the memory of Christian Troyer in the cemetery of the farm, now owned by the Mervin Shetler family.

It is not known just why Christian moved to Ohio in his later life. Reasons could have included the following:

During the War of 1812 strong feeling of allegiance were stirred on both sides of the border. Both Christian and David had been born in the U.S. The conflict he and his neighbors had with the government authorities may have angered Christian, or may have given him reason to fear further difficulties because of his beliefs.

About this time there was a very severe year in terms of the weather. It was called the "year without a summer," when there was frost every month and crops were almost a complete failure.

Or Christian may have had a desire to return to the Amish church. All of his children married Mennonites in Ontario, but the Holmes County settlement to which Christian moved is still Old Order Amish today.

The Troyer heritage lives on in Ontario through Christian's many descendants who will remember their rich family ties through their records kept in safe archives for future generations of Troyers.

Information on Christian's six children follows:

Magdalena (1780 - June 6, 1851). Magdalene Troyer married Joseph Heise² (September 24, 1772 - May 6, 1841). Magdalena was Joseph's second wife. His first wife was Anna Wideman, daughter of Preacher Henry Wideman for whom the Wideman church in Markham was named.

Joseph Heise was one of ten children born to John and Barbara (Yordy) Heise of Lebanon County, Pennsylvania. Four of the ten children moved to Canada. Joseph's grandfather, Hans Heise (Hisly) came to America on the "Adventurer" on October 2, 1727.³

Joseph and Magdalena had two children, plus one child from Joseph's first marriage. In

1803 they purchased Lot 26, Concession 8, Markham Township from Alexander Wood.

David ("Canada Dave") (February 11, 1784 - September 11, 1871). David is buried in the Miller Cemetery in Middlebury, Indiana. His will, dated February 3, 1868 and probated October 7, 1871, leaves his Indiana farm to his son, Levi. The 81.5 acre farm is N part, Section 7, Lot 37, Range 7 East in Elkhart County, Indiana.

David first married Katherine Hooley (Holly) (November 12, 1783-1847). They were married in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, though David was likely living in Ontario with his father and step-mother who were likely in Vaughan Township as early as 1791. Katherine was the daughter of David Holly, possibly the David Holly who settled in Weston, Ontario. We do not know where David and Katherine Troyer lived in Ontario. His brothers took up land in Vaughan Township, but there is no trace of David doing so. We believe as the eldest son he worked his father's 200 acre farm, mentioned earlier. Records show that David and Katherine's first five children were born in Ontario; the remaining four were born in Ohio.

David, his wife, his father and his step-mother moved to Ohio between October 30, 1814 and December 25, 1816. Census records from 1820 show the families living together in Coshocton County (part of Holmes County after 1825).

David returned to Ontario at least once for a visit. His son, Elias (b. 1819), passed down to his family details of such a trip made with his parents as a boy. A highly-treasured glass cane which had been given to him by an old friend was taken from him by a sailor on the boat and thrown into Lake Erie.

David sold his farm to his sons, Jonas and Elias, in 1846. In the same year a \$1000 contract was drawn up with Jonas to furnish lifetime necessities for his parents. Katherine died in 1847 and is buried on the Ohio homestead.⁴

David's second marriage was to Mary Eash (April 22, 1807 - July 18, 1869). Mary was just one year older than David's oldest daughter. No children are known from this marriage. Mary died in Elkhart County, Indiana.

Maria (October 22, 1789 - October, 1884). Maria Troyer married Christian Hoover (July 4, 1784 - July 11, 1859). Christian came from Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Christian and Maria had seven children, all born at Edgeley, Ontario: Elizabeth, David, Abraham, Mary (Polly), Susannah, Catherine and Sarah. The family lived on Lot 23, Concession 4, west of Yonge Street. Their home is now preserved by York University and remains in the original setting.

Christian was the son of John and Elizabeth (Baker) Hoover. His mother died when he was a baby. His father brought him to Canada to be raised by his uncle and aunt Martin and Elizabeth (Shaeffer) Hoover who had no children of their own. Christian and his father came to Canada by large ferry service from Rochester to a harbor at Adolphustown near Trenton, then by way of the Port Hope Road to Markham. Both Maria and Christian are buried at the Edgeley Mennonite Cemetery.

Jacob (1793 - April 28, 1868). Jacob married Catherine Oster (1802-1886) on February 2, 1819. They had twelve children: John, Rachel, Catie, Christian, William, Jacob, Betty, Susannah, Mary, Michael, Ann (twin) and Sarah (twin). Jacob and Catherine are buried in the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church Cemetery, Keele Street, Sherwood, Ontario.

Catherine (October 31, 1794 - January 20, 1886). Catherine was born in Walsingham Township in Norfolk County, Ontario. She married Henry Burkholder (January 1, 1790 - August 21, 1860), on June 28, 1814 in Toronto. They had three children: Henry, David and Sarah. Both Catherine and Henry are buried in the Edgeley Mennonite Cemetery.

Christian (March 21, 1798 - February 24, 1883). Christian Jr. married Magdalena Cober (February 8, 1802 - August 1, 1888) on June 25, 1822. Magdalena was the fourth child of

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The Schmitt (Vaughan) meetinghouse in its original setting. It is now at the Black Creek Pioneer Village north of Toronto.

Christian Troyer of Vaughan, cont.

Nicholas Cober (b. November 24, 1763) and Eve Fisher. They are buried at the Cober Cemetery, Maple, Ontario. Christian and Magdalena were married by Rev. William Jenkins, and witnessed by her father and David Leek. They had ten children: David, Jacob, Nicholas, Elizabeth, Eve, Johnnothan, Catherine, Samuel, Christian and Sarah.

Christian was an ordained Mennonite minister as early as 1836. After a number of years as a minister he joined the "New Mennonite" group led by Daniel Hoch in the 1850s.

Christian and Magdalena settled on Christian Sr.'s farm in Vaughan, and also owned Lots 1 and 2, Concession 3, Vaughan Township, York County. (77 acres of the latter were left to son Samuel in a will dated September 11, 1880.)

Dr. John Troyer of Long Point

John Troyer was brought to Ontario by his brother, Christian, in the early 1780s. He settled on Lot 20, Concession 1 (Troyer's Flats) adjacent to Christian's land on Lot 21. When Christian moved further east to Vaughan Township, John decided to stay at Long Point. He was married to Sophronia Reichenbach (1753 - September 15, 1821), and had two children, Michael and Barbara. John was a Dunkard, and known in Norfolk County history books as "Doctor John Troyer," first white settler of Long Point.

John was born February 3, 1753 in Pennsylvania, and died February 28, 1842. He and Sophronia both died at Long Point, and were buried in their homestead cemetery, long since vandalized and destroyed.

"Dr. John Troyer" is remembered in that area to this day, with artifacts preserved at the Eva Brook Donly Museum in Simcoe, Ontario. He was able to witch for water with a hazel twig, operated both a gristmill and blacksmith forge at Troyer's Flats, built a large sailing vessel for transporting his produce to markets, and had one of the finest orchards in the Long Point area.

Barbara. No records have been located.

Michael (November 29, 1779 - September 10, 1861) married Mary Holly (July 17, 1788

- June 6, 1850) on July 25, 1808. He married Elizabeth Burgher on March 9, 1851. Michael and Mary had nine children. He built the first cider mill in Walsingham Township, and was deacon of the Port Rowan Baptist Church for 33 years.

Notes

- 1 Michael Troyer's name appears on the passenger list of the "Brotherhood" as Michael Holly, and it is recorded that Michael's mother was married to a Mr. Holly as her second husband. Records conflict on whether the Mr. Holly was Johannes or Andreas; both arrived on the same ship.
- 2 See York and the War of 1812, p. 327.
- 3 M. Juther Heisey, *The Heisey family in America* (Lancaster, 1941); "The Wideman chart," (Markham: The Markham Museum); I. Champion, ed., *Markham, 1793-1900* (Markham: Markham Historical Society, 1979).
- 4 "Cemetery 0-26 - SE ¼, Section 3, Range 5, Township 8 in Walnut Creek, Holmes County, Ohio. See Leroy Beachy, *Cemetery directory of the Amish community in Eastern Holmes & adjoining counties in Ohio*.

First Mennonite Church (Kitchener) Cemetery Book

A significant new resource for Mennonites in Waterloo County is now available. Readings of the tombstones at the First Mennonite Church in Kitchener was completed in 1983. A photocopy of the card file has been prepared together with a comprehensive index and plot plan of the cemetery.

Very valuable cross-references to Ezra Eby's *Biographical history of Waterloo Township* have been included with the text. Appended to the booklet are "complications, complexities, corrections" usually indicating a conflict between the Eby book and the tombstone.

It is hard to overstate the value of this printed record. This is an old, important Mennonite cemetery. It even has its own interesting history. In the 1860s Mennonite farmers that owned land around the cemetery threatened to withdraw from the village of Berlin when it was feared the village might take over and close the cemetery in favor of its own.

The index is comprehensive and quite easy to use. Some copies of the 69 page publication are still available. They may be obtained for \$8 from First Mennonite Church, 800 King St. E., Kitchener, Ontario N2G 2M6.

Books Available

These books may be purchased **in person** at the Conrad Grebel College Archives at the prices listed.

Burkholder, Lewis J. *A brief history of the Mennonites in Ontario* (Waterloo: Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario, 1986). \$25.00

This is a **reprint** of the 1935 edition. Long out of print, this valuable and unique resource is again available.

Epp, Frank H. *Mennonites in Canada, 1920-1940* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1982). \$25.95. Volume II of the Mennonites in Canada series. The volume covers the "liberal-conservative" debate in Ontario; the immigration of the Mennonites from the Soviet Union; the depression years in Canada.

Bender, Urie. *Four earthen vessels* (Kitchener: Herald Press, 1982). \$4.75. This is the **hardcover** edition. Biographical treatment of S.F. Coffman, C.F. Derstine, J.B. Martin and Oscar Burkholder. Evokes the life of an era in the Ontario (Old) Mennonite Church.

Fretz, Winfield. *The Mennonites in Ontario* (Waterloo: Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario, 1982 ed.). \$2.50.

A short introduction to the many groups of Mennonites in Ontario. Excellent for those school projects about Mennonites.

Other pamphlets and books are also available. Ask for Sam Steiner at the Conrad Grebel College Archives, Waterloo, Ontario.

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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