

REINLAND

AN EXPERIENCE IN COMMUNITY







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REINLAND

AN EXPERIENCE IN COMMUNITY

By Peter D. Zacharias

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I want to thank my wife, Valentine, who has been with the project whenever and in whatsoever way possible. No person understands better what this undertaking has entailed and what were its frustrations and rewards.

Peter D. Zacharias

FOREWORD

Every local history is of special significance to the citizens and former residents of the community. Since the village described in this volume has been a small and particularly close-knit community throughout its first century, the book will undoubtedly have a very special place on the coffee tables and bookshelves of present and former Reinlanders. Peter Zacharias has told our story with insight and understanding.

The story is told in considerable detail, especially that of the first several decades. Even old timers would not have thought that so much information about the formative years of the village was still available. The author deserves credit for searching far beyond the local Manitoba resources, in the Public Archives of Canada in Ottawa, the Mennonite Archives in Goshen, Indiana, and in private sources in Cuauhtemoc, Mexico, in order to give us this story in such rich and well-documented detail.

This volume is much more than merely a local history. As center of both the civil administration of the Mennonite West Reserve and the ecclesiastical administration of the Reinländer Mennonite Church, the village of Reinland was the scene of many far-reaching decisions. It was here that the Russian patterns of church and colony administration were adapted to the Canadian scene. It was here that the expansion of the Mennonite settlement into the Northwest Territories (later Saskatchewan) was planned, first to the Hague district in 1895 and then to the area south of Swift Current in 1905. And it was here that the decision to emigrate to Mexico was made in the aftermath of World War I. The story of Reinland told in this larger context, in the author's skillful handling of the material at hand, thus becomes the story in microcosm of much of western Canadian Mennonitism.

Peter D. Zacharias is a native of Reinland. His paternal grandfather arrived from Russia some fifteen years after the village had been founded. His maternal grandfather was one of the early public school teachers of Reinland. Having lived for 22 years in this community, the author through the impact of village life, the school, the Sunday School and the Sommerfelder church is undeniably a Reinländer. His wife, is the former Reinland teacher Valentine Tiessen. Together with their two daughters, they now live in Grunthal, Manitoba, where Peter is Vice Principal of the Green Valley School.

Past and present Reinland residents join the Centennial Committee in expressing their sincere thanks to Peter Zacharias for recovering and preserving their common heritage in this way.

Adolf Ens
Instructor in History and Theology
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Introduction

On a long July day in 1875 a strange caravan started wending its way westward from the immigration sheds at Fort Dufferin, two miles north of Emerson. Men, women and children in unmistakable European garb, some on ox-carts, others on foot, were moving across the plains towards the regions beneath the Pembina Hills.

And one evening rows of campfires flickered in the slowly gathering prairie dusk. One such cluster of campfires was located beside a winding creek not quite three miles north of the American border. The Low-German speaking people preparing to retire for the night called their village Reinland.

The story of Reinland is the story of these people and of those who came in later waves of immigration. Above all, it is the story of an experience in community, sometimes heroic, at other times tragic, sometimes the common experience of all humanity, at other times the unique experience of a Mennonite prairie village.

The Heritage

*"Was du ererbt von deinen Vätern hast,
Erwirb es, um es zu besitzen."*

Goethe

The history of Reinland did not begin with the 1875 settlement. Its spiritual heritage, its socio-economic patterns, its strengths and its weaknesses had origins that went back much farther in the annals of time. To get a glimpse of this background it will be necessary to look at other pilgrims who in the sixteenth century sought to recover a heritage, a vision of the Christian community, that was at least 1500 years old. It will be necessary to visit Zürich and Witmarsum, the Vistula and the Dnieper and to examine the motivations that eventually brought Reinland forefathers among many of like mind to the prairies of Western Canada.



Photo courtesy G. G. Sawatzky

CHAPTER ONE

A COMMUNITY OF FAITH

Who were these Low-German speaking people whose campfires were flickering in the prairie dusk that summer evening in July, 1875?

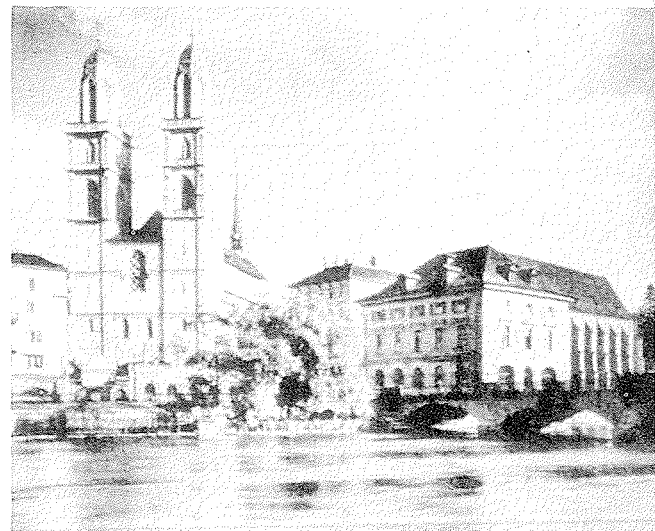
The one-hundredth anniversary of the coming of the first immigrants to Reinland coincided with another jubilee, the birth 450 years ago of the first Anabaptist church of the Reformation. This happened in Zürich, Switzerland, on January 21, 1525. The event is generally considered to be the beginning of what emerged as the Mennonite church. Maybe one should go back to that time and start the Reinland story there.

450 Years — Anabaptist Church

Just ten years before 1525 western Europe had been outwardly united. There was but one dominant church organization and it was dominant not only in the religious sphere, but also in politics, in social life and economics, in intellectual life and culture. Princes paid homage to the Pope. The church was rich, a great landholder and could reward whom it chose to reward and withhold reward when it so desired. There had been cracks in this outward unity during the past centuries, quite serious cracks, but these had always been repaired, more or less, and had not split the church in twain permanently.

In the early 1500s the cracks in the foundation of the European order were getting wider. There existed a double threat. One was external. The Moslem Turks were advancing from the east and in 1529 were to threaten at the gates of Vienna. Had the Turks succeeded in conquering Europe at that time the course of European (and North American!) history would have been much different. The other threat was internal and proved to be the greater. This threat had many facets. Restless princes were fretting under taxation from Rome. They would be eager to assert their authority when the opportunity presented itself. Peasant dissatisfaction had caused revolts before and new outbreaks of rebellion could be kindled again. Religious dissent had surfaced on a number of occasions and in the 1500s was to change the face of Europe.

Gross Muenster, Zürich, Switzerland.



The Reformation, that time of great religious and political change in Europe, did not come without warning. In the late 1300s the English preacher, John Wycliffe, later called the morningstar of the Reformation, had claimed that the Bible took precedence over the Pope and that the true Church was composed of all believing Christians.¹ In order to make it possible for his countrymen to see the difference between the simplicity of early Christianity and the wealth and power of the contemporary church, he and his followers translated the Bible into the common English language.²

Wycliffe's teachings travelled to the Continent where Johannes Huss, a priest in Bohemia, began to preach a similar message. He called on the Pope and the cardinals to follow Christ and the apostles "who went about the towns, cities, and castles clad in humble garb, on foot, preaching — evangelizando — the kingdom of God".³ Huss claimed that these church leaders could be vicars of Christ and the apostles only if they became their true followers.⁴ Huss was burned at the stake at Constance in 1415.

The Reformation came a century later. The German monk, Martin Luther, who on October 31, 1517, nailed ninety-five theses to the church door at Wittenberg, never intended to cause a division in the church. He was seriously protesting injustices in the church as he saw them. The sale of indulgences (remission of temporal punishments for sins)⁵ was one of Luther's main targets. Like Wycliffe and Huss, Luther protested the religious monopoly of Rome. Called to account before the Emperor Charles V at Worms, Luther refused to retract his writing and took his famous stand: *Hier stehe ich. Ich kann nicht anders. Gott helfe mir. Amen.*⁶

Luther translated the Bible into the language of the German people. Luther's hymns, among them "Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott", "Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir", and "Vom Himmel hoch da komm' ich her" gained great popularity among the people. Some of his hymns were to find their way into Mennonite hymn books much later.

Politically Luther won the support of many independent German and Scandinavian princes who had their own reasons for opposing the power that emanated from Rome. The peasants, turning not only against Rome but against their oppressors in general, and this included the power-wielding wealthy class, launched the Peasants' Revolt (1524-25). They were not supported by Luther and the revolt failed.

In Switzerland the Reformation was led by Ulrich Zwingli. He had studied at the University of Vienna and had become attached to the humanist teachings of the Dutch scholar Erasmus. The Greek translation of the New Testament completed by Erasmus, challenged the exclusive authority of the church's standard Bible, the Vulgate, and spurred a careful study of the Scriptures. As the priest of the Grossmünster in Zürich, Zwingli could use the pulpit to proclaim his new insights. With Luther he advocated the abolition of the mass, an

end to indulgences, to the celibacy of the clergy and to convents and monasteries. He, too, favoured the use of the language of the people in preaching.⁷ Zwingli differed from Luther in emphasis by stressing not only salvation by faith but also a life of good works. Like Luther he saw the whole of society within given geographic boundaries as constituting a Christian body. This meant that the church in Zürich consisted of all the citizens of Zürich. Unity of faith was essential to Zwingli's interpretation of the church. It was perfectly proper for the priest of the Grossmünster and the Council of Zürich to work hand in hand in building the kingdom of God.⁸

Among Zwingli's disciples were several young men who were to play leading roles in the Anabaptist movement. One was Conrad Grebel, who had been a student at the universities of Paris, Basel and Vienna. Zwingli and Grebel were attracted to each other. Both had been exposed to the breath of fresh air in religious thought; both were genuinely interested in biblical Christianity; both had high ideals regarding the meaning of Christian discipleship. But ultimately Grebel and other radicals could not become part of Zwingli's experiment in Zürich because of fundamental differences in views on the nature of the church. Authority lay in the Scriptures alone, they said, and the Council of Zürich could not make decisions in theological matters. The church was constituted of believers who voluntarily chose to become disciples of Christ, they declared, and the city or state could not fulfill the requirements of the church's calling.⁹

It was for these reasons that infant baptism became the focal point of the dispute between Zwingli and Grebel. The baptism of all infants into the church was essential to the nature of Zwingli's city of God. The baptism of adults, who freely and voluntarily submitted to Christian discipleship, was essential to the rebirth of the New Testament church as Grebel understood that church.¹⁰ Grebel, Felix Manz, Georg Blaurock (also called Georg vom Haus Jakob), and others of this persuasion were calling for the separation of church and state, an idea conceived by neither Luther nor Zwingli. Grebel also advocated absolute Christian non-resistance.¹¹

The Council of Zürich evidently realized the implications of this stand. The demand was not for a mere institutional change such as a transference of authority from Rome to Zürich. The demand was not for certain further reforms that Zwingli was opposing. If it had been that, negotiation might have been possible. These reformers were hewing at the pillars of the existing religious, social and political order.¹²

The Council of Zürich acted. On January 17, 1525, a public debate was held to silence the radicals. Conrad Grebel and Felix Manz, another young erstwhile follower of Zwingli, represented the dissenting groups at this encounter with Zwingli and the Council.¹³ Shortly thereafter the Council ordered that all children be baptized within eight days,

Arent and Ursula van Essen, Maastricht, Netherlands were executed for their faith during the persecutions of the sixteenth century. Arent was an elder and school teacher. The illustration depicts the tortures of Ursula.



that special Bible study meetings be discontinued and that non-resident radical leaders be banished.¹⁴

In the evening of January 21, 1525, fifteen of the "circle of seekers for a more faithful Reformation" met in the home of Felix Manz, near Zwingli's church, to decide what to do in the face of the Council's mandate.¹⁵ There was prayer and searching for the will of God. Then Blaurock approached Grebel and asked to be baptized. Speaking of this event *Das Klein-Geschichtsbuch der Hutterischen Brüder* gives the following account:

Nach dem Gebet ist der Georg vom Haus Jakob aufgestanden und hat um Gottes willen gebeten den Konrad Grebel, dz er ihn wölle taufen mit dem recht christlichen Tauf auf seinen Glauben und Erkenntnis. Und da er niedergekniet mit solchem Bitt und Begehren, hat der Konrad ihn getauft, weil dazumal sonst kein verordneter Diener, solches Werk zu handeln, war. Wie nun dz beschehen, haben die andern gleicherweis an den Georgen begehrt, dz er sie taufen soll; welches er auf ihr Begehren auch also tät. Und haben sich also in hoher Forcht Gottes miteinander in den Namen des Herrn ergeben, einer den andern zum Dienst des Evangeli bestätigt, angefangen, den Glauben zu lehren und halten; damit ist die Absünderung von der Welt und von ihren bösen Werken anbrochen.¹⁶

After prayer Georg Cajacob stood up and begged Conrad Grebel for God's sake to baptize him with true Christian baptism upon his faith and confession. And because he was kneeling with such a request and desire Conrad baptized him, because there was no minister ordained to take such an action. When that had happened the others in the same way desired of Georg that he baptize them, which he did at their request. Thus in the great fear of God they committed one another to the Name of the Lord and installed one another in the ministry of the Gospel, began to teach and to keep the faith. Thereby began separation from the world and from its evil works.¹⁷

The group that emerged from that house in Zürich constituted the first recorded Anabaptist church of the Reformation. The name Anabaptist, meaning rebaptizer or *Wiedertäufer*, was given to the group by its opponents. The group asserted that it accepted only one true baptism and therefore strongly rejected the term. Its members simply called themselves Brethren, hence the name Swiss Brethren became a common designation. It is through this group and through this event that Mennonites generally see their strand of history.

Spread of Anabaptism — Menno Simons

Two years after the Zürich baptism, Felix Manz was sentenced to death and executed by drowning in Lake Zürich. In 1529 Georg Blaurock, who had preached at many locations in Switzerland, was in Tirol. The preacher of a Tirolese Anabaptist congregation was burned at the

stake on June 2, 1529. Blaurock went to serve the orphaned Brethren group. His preaching and baptizing took him from place to place. Blaurock himself was burned at the stake three months later, on September 6, 1529, at Clausen.¹⁸ Less than five years after that first adult baptism of the Brethren, the three best known leaders of the period had died. Conrad Grebel had died of the plague in 1526, thereby probably escaping a martyr's death. All three died young. Grebel was 28 years old, Manz was 29 and Blaurock 37.

Persecution drove the Anabaptists, whose earliest congregations were mostly in the bigger cities, into the countryside and into the mountains. Wherever they went, persecution followed. "They were left to rot in prison, broken on the rack, thrown into rivers and lakes, burned at the stake, beheaded and buried alive."¹⁹

In spite of persecution and because of it the movement spread rapidly. Anabaptism was carried into the Tirol, Austria, Moravia, into the regions of the Upper Danube, into Southern Germany and down the Rhine to the Netherlands. Many Anabaptists fled to Alsace and the Palatinate. A large number of their descendants found their way to the English colonies in North America, now the eastern United States, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The ruthless attempts to eradicate the Brethren had other results which were to leave their mark on immediate and later Anabaptist development. The educated leadership was virtually wiped out. Segments of the movement fell into the hands of zealous fanatics. During the persistent persecution in the Netherlands some frustrated Anabaptists hearkened to the voice of Jan van Leyden, who rejected the doctrine of non-resistance, seized the city of Münster and held it by force for eighteen months. Leyden proclaimed himself King David and called Münster the "New Jerusalem". Leyden and his followers claimed that they were to usher in Christ's millennium.

Three hundred of these zealots, including, some historians believe, the brother of Menno Simons, were killed at Bolsward, Netherlands province of Friesland, in a Münsterite uprising. This episode greatly disturbed the nearby Roman Catholic priest, Menno Simons.

Born in Witmarsum, Friesland, Menno Simons had been ordained to the priesthood at Utrecht in 1524. He was then 28 years old. Menno Simons served first in the church at Pingjum, close to his native village. From 1531 to 1536 he was pastor of the church at Witmarsum. Spiritually callous in his early priesthood, his increasing doubts about transubstantiation (the belief that the bread and wine of Communion are literally the flesh and blood of Christ) and infant baptism led to an avid study of the New Testament. As with Luther, study led to further doubts and new convictions. But as in Grebel's case, it also led him to a more radical departure from church teaching than either Luther or Zwingli. Like Luther, he rejected transubstantiation. Unlike Luther, Menno Simons developed strong convictions about adult baptism and



Unobtrusiveness was a characteristic of early Anabaptist meeting houses. Mennonites worshipped in this building, the Schuilkerkje, in Pingjum, Netherlands, for several centuries. Except for the arched doorway, the house, as viewed from the street, could well be mistaken for an ordinary older Frisian dwelling.

Afterwards the poor straying sheep who wandered as sheep without a proper shepherd, after many cruel edicts, garrottings, and slaughters, assembled at a place near my place of residence called Oude Klooster. And, alas! through the ungodly doctrines of Münster, and in opposition to the Spirit, Word, and example of Christ, they drew the sword to defend themselves, the sword which the Lord commanded Peter to put up in its sheath.

After this had transpired the blood of these people, although misled, fell so hot on my heart that I could not stand it, nor find rest in my soul. I reflected upon my unclean, carnal life, also the hypocritical doctrine and idolatry which I still practiced daily in appearance of godliness, but without relish. I saw that these zealous children, although in error, willingly gave their lives and their estates for their doctrine and faith. And I was one of those who had disclosed to some of them the abominations of the papal system. But I myself continued in my comfortable life and acknowledged abominations simply in order that I might enjoy physical comfort and escape the cross of Christ.

Pondering these things my conscience tormented me so that I could no longer endure it. I thought to myself — I,

non-resistance and although he remained in the Roman Catholic church for many years, he accepted many of the teachings of the Anabaptists. He became known as the evangelical priest.

The death of an Anabaptist martyr, Sicke Freerks Snijder, who was executed at Leeuwarden in 1531 for his “rebaptism”, deeply impressed Menno and he became increasingly occupied with the question of baptism. In the following years, too, the Münsterites caused him increasing concern. He secretly met with Anabaptists and warned them not to join the violent Münsterite sect. Then in April, 1535, came the Bolsward massacre, mentioned above, and a deepening crisis in Menno’s life.²⁰

Menno Simons tells of this experience in his own words:

miserable man, what am I doing? If I continue in this way, and do not live agreeably to the Word of the Lord, according to the knowledge of the truth which I have obtained; if I do not censure to the best of my little talent the hypocrisy, the impenitent, carnal life, the erroneous baptism, the Lord’s Supper in the false service of God which the learned ones teach; if I through bodily fear do not lay bare the foundations of the truth, nor use all my powers to direct the wandering flock who would gladly do their duty if they knew it, to the true pastures of Christ — oh, how shall their shed blood, shed in the midst of transgression, rise against me at the judgment of the Almighty and pronounce sentence against my poor, miserable soul!

My heart trembled within me. I prayed to God with sighs and tears that He would give to me, a sorrowing sinner, the gift of His grace, create within me a clean heart, and graciously through the merits of the crimson blood of Christ forgive my unclean walk and frivolous easy life and bestow upon me wisdom, Spirit, courage, and a manly spirit so that I might preach His exalted and adorable name and holy Word in purity, and make known His truth to His glory.²¹

Menno’s sermons in the parish church took on a new vigor. On the one hand he attacked many aspects of Roman Catholic teaching and on the other he preached against the excesses of the Münsterites. He exhorted to repentance and proclaimed salvation by faith.

On July 25, 1535, the Münster episode reached its climax. The “New Jerusalem” of Leyden fell to besieging troops and few of his followers escaped death. A new wave of persecution broke out affecting all Anabaptists. Even those who had remained true to the non-resistant stand and had not been involved with the Münsterites were now



Map of Netherlands at time of Reformation.

identified with all the excesses, from heresy to polygamy, of the uprising. Menno Simons' final break with the Roman Catholic church came in January, 1536, at the darkest hour in Anabaptist history. The horror of Münster had run its course. Scattered, virtually leaderless, often confused groups of Anabaptists were in the throes of relentless persecution.

Ordained as an elder by Obbe Philips in the winter of 1536-37, Menno Simons gave the Anabaptists a theological and organizational unity they had not experienced before.²² He gave their scattered groups in northern Europe much needed leadership and guidance. His life was

one of relentless teaching and preaching, studying and writing, fleeing persecution and visiting the dispersed, baptizing and building up churches. He travelled countless miles visiting not only Friesland and Groningen but Holland, the Rhineland, where he spent considerable time as a refugee in Cologne, and the North Sea and Baltic German states. His family life was continually disrupted. Menno's wife, Gertrude, a former nun whom he had married after his entrance into the Anabaptist congregation, was left alone with the family for long periods of time.

Disparagers nicknamed Menno's followers *Mennists*, which eventually became *Mennoniten* or *Mennonites*. As persecuted groups of Mennists fled eastward and sought asylum in the lands of various princes and nobles, the nickname became a boon. The nobility learned to distinguish them from the Münsterites. Eventually the name *Mennonite* was officially adopted not only by the North German and

An interior view of the Schuilkerkje reveals a marked resemblance to the simple interior of early Manitoba Mennonite churches. Note the design of the pulpit.





The Menno-Kate

In 1543 Bartholomäus van Ahlefeldt granted the Anabaptists refuge on the Fresenburg estate owned by the van Ahlefeldt family. It was located between Hamburg and Lübeck, Germany. According to tradition Menno Simons' writings were printed in this house located just north of Bad Oldesloe and on the former van Ahlefeld territory. The building is now known as the Menno-Kate. Supposedly the linden tree beside the house was planted by Menno Simons himself. The nearby village of Wüstenfelde, where Menno Simons lived was also a part of van Ahlefeldt's estate. Wüstenfelde was destroyed in the Thirty Years War.

Prussian churches but even by most of the Swiss and South German Anabaptist groups which were not directly connected to Menno Simons. The Dutch congregations were an exception and later adopted the name of *Doopsgezinde*.

Towards the end of his life Menno Simons finally found a refuge where he could write and print in peace. His wife did not live to share this experience. She had died in the course of the family's wanderings from place to place. Wüstenfelde, a village in the vicinity of Bad Oldesloe, north of Hamburg, became his final field of work. There Menno died, apparently on January 31, 1561, at the age of 65 years. He was buried in his own garden. The Thirty Years War destroyed Wüstenfelde and the exact site of the grave is no longer known. Today a simple memorial, close to the hut which according to tradition was once Menno's printing shop, bears the following inscription:

Hier lebte, wirkte und starb
Menno Simons
In Demut, fromm und still.

From the Netherlands to Prussia

Migrations and divisions have played significant roles in the story of the forefathers of the Reinland people. Both began in the Netherlands and both in Menno Simons' lifetime.

Persecution of Anabaptists reached a critical point when Charles V's Edict of 1529 deprived all Protestants of their rights as citizens. The Inquisition cracked down particularly hard on the Anabaptists. During Charles V's reign as Holy Roman Emperor an estimated 30,000 "heretics" were executed. His successor Philip II continued this work. He sent the Duke of Alba to the Netherlands with 10,000 soldiers. After six years Alba boasted that he had executed 18,000 people. Many endured unimaginable sufferings in the torture chamber. Laws to curb the Mennonites were decreed. Giving a Mennonite shelter for the night meant a fine of 100 guilders. A person reporting a Mennonite was to be rewarded with one-third of the Mennonite's possessions. Small children of executed Mennonites were to be baptized immediately. A Mennonite caught fleeing was to be put to death. The same fate awaited laymen who taught the Scriptures. Women who dared to teach Scripture were to be buried alive. People who continued in their witness were to be burned at the stake. It was the period which Mennonite historian Paul J. Schaefer termed "die Blut- und Tränenperiode" (the period of blood and tears).²³

The first Dutch execution occurred in 1531 and executions continued until 1597. During these years the first great migration of Dutch Mennonites occurred — a migration that led a considerable number to England but many more to the east, to Danzig, Elbing, Königsberg, into the Vistula and Nogat deltas. This marshy area, at the time partly under Prussian, partly under Polish rule, became the home of thousands of Mennonites. They came from the Lowland provinces of Flanders (today southern Flanders is part of Belgium), Holland, Friesland, Brabant and Overijssel and some from the other Dutch provinces.²⁴ Many from Flanders fled first to Friesland, then eastward to Prussia. Some Mennonite refugees came from German states. It should be noted that the term *Holland* is used here to refer only to the province of Holland, today divided into two provinces, North Holland and South Holland.

The Mennonites also brought divisions from the Netherlands to Prussia. The divisions had taken root as a result of the flight of the Flemish from Flanders northwards to Friesland. The Flemish were different from the Frisians in customs and background. The Frisians considered the Flemish worldly because of fancier dress and different ways of living. The Flemish considered the Frisians worldly because of their greater stores of linen and household goods. The Flemish, severely persecuted in their homeland, believed that they "had proved their world-denying faith in persecution."²⁵ The difference has been summarized as follows: The Flemish were worldly in their dress, the Frisians in their homes.²⁶

So far the problem seems to be relatively simple — two groups of different backgrounds have trouble making adjustments. Soon, however, church organizational problems arose and by 1566 had caused

a split between the two groups. This split was complicated by various issues and Frisians who found the Flemish views attractive joined the Flemish church. Some of the Flemish joined the Frisian church. The two groups banned each other. The split spread to many parts of the Netherlands and soon there were two Anabaptist churches, one Flemish and one Frisian, where before there had been only one. In the Netherlands it took two hundred years to heal the rift. In Prussia and Russia the divisions were to be perpetuated even longer. The churches of the Waterland area north of Amsterdam tried to steer a moderate course.

As the above indicates it is wrong to think of the Flemish and the Frisians in purely geographical terms. Even though it is correct to say that *almost all people who have lived in Reinland during the past century have historically been of Flemish church background*, it would not necessarily follow that their ancestors came from Flanders. The research on names by the Dutch Mennonite historian Dr. J. J. Postma seems to indicate that *the ancestry of the Reinland people is a goodly mixture that can be traced to both Flanders and Friesland*.

Mennonites from Flemish and Frisian congregations did not, as a rule, intermarry. They maintained separate worship services in Prussia and later for many years in Russia. The confession of faith and the order of worship were essentially the same for both.

Flemish congregations in Prussia, however, kept up close relations with the Dutch Flemish congregations and the Frisians kept up similar ties with sister groups in the Lowlands. To read of this interrelationship is revealing. In the library of the Doopsgezinde church in Haarlem there exists a document in diary-like form entitled "Memoriaal begonnen in't jaar 1735."²⁷ Apparently half the contents of this handwritten Dutch work are devoted to relations with the Prussian churches. It makes many references to baptismal candidates from Prussia. The Prussian Mennonites were forbidden to proselytize. They were strictly prohibited, under threat of severe penalty, from rebaptizing persons who had received baptism in the Lutheran church. Numerous cases arose where persons had been baptized as infants but desired to join the Mennonite church. What should the church do under the circumstances? The solution was to send these persons to the home church in the Netherlands where they were then baptized — almost immediately if they brought an acceptable attestation from Prussia, or after a year's probation if such attestation was lacking. In 1742 ten persons from Danzig, Königsberg, and from the Elbing area arrived at the Dutch Haarlem church alone. In 1743 nine persons came from Danzig and the Danziger Werder to be baptized at Haarlem. What a long and difficult journey to endure! A veritable baptismal pilgrimage! To walk some 15 miles from Schoenfeld to Reinland to participate in baptismal instruction classes in the pioneer years must have been quite a trip but a journey to the Netherlands from Prussia in the mid-

The Mennonite church at Heubuden, West Prussia, was built in 1768. In 1853 fourteen feet were added to the length of the building. At the same time it was raised two feet and a foundation of masonry was laid. Its seating capacity was 800. The Heubuden congregation was in existence until the Russian occupation of West Prussia in 1945. After World War II the building became a Catholic church.



eighteenth century was an undertaking, indeed. Such journeys were also evidence of the strong ties that still existed between the Dutch and Prussian churches at that time.

In the late eighteenth century Russia, Austria and Prussia sliced up Poland and divided the territory among themselves. After the first of these partitions in 1772, all the Mennonites of West and East Prussia found themselves within the borders of the Kingdom of Prussia under Frederick the Great. Their migration to the steppes of the southern Ukraine was to begin in 1788.



Photo courtesy CMBC Publications

Former Toews home in Neumuensterbergersfeld, West Prussia. Note fire-protection wall between house and barn.

In those over two hundred years in the Vistula delta area, changes had transformed these ancestors of the Manitoba Mennonites. Some changes were extensions of their Netherlands experience. Others were unique to their adopted land.

The Mennonites had lived through their first great pioneering experience. The land they inhabited had been swampy and uninviting. After draining large areas of marshy land many of them had become industrious agrarians. Others had established themselves as successful tradesmen in Danzig and other centres. Generally speaking, they had become relatively affluent.

The Mennonites had largely withdrawn from active involvement in the society around them. Having lost their intellectual leadership during the persecutions of the sixteenth century, they viewed educated people, especially clerics, with suspicion as those through whom persecution came. Since public worship and the making of converts had often been restricted in Prussia, places of worship were located in the most unobtrusive locations. This did not mean that they ceased to communicate their faith. But it did mean that this faith had to be lived in a practical situation.

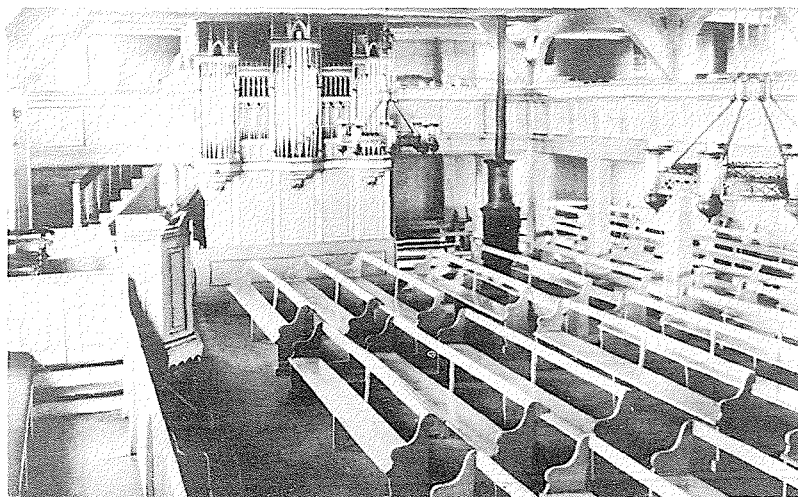
Schools had been developed to teach children basic skills and especially to read the Bible, an ability essential to the Mennonite concept of Christian community which emphasized the priesthood of all believers. It was for this reason that literacy was common among the Mennonites in an age that was largely illiterate. One must also note that ministers of the church were elected. It was in these schools that they had to receive an elementary preparation.

In many ways legally forced into isolation, forbidden to proselytize, Mennonites were developing characteristics of an ethnic group such as a common historical tradition (resulting from the common experience of persecution in the Netherlands and migration to Prussia), common social customs and a common language. The cultural manifestations were later developed to a much higher degree in Russia.

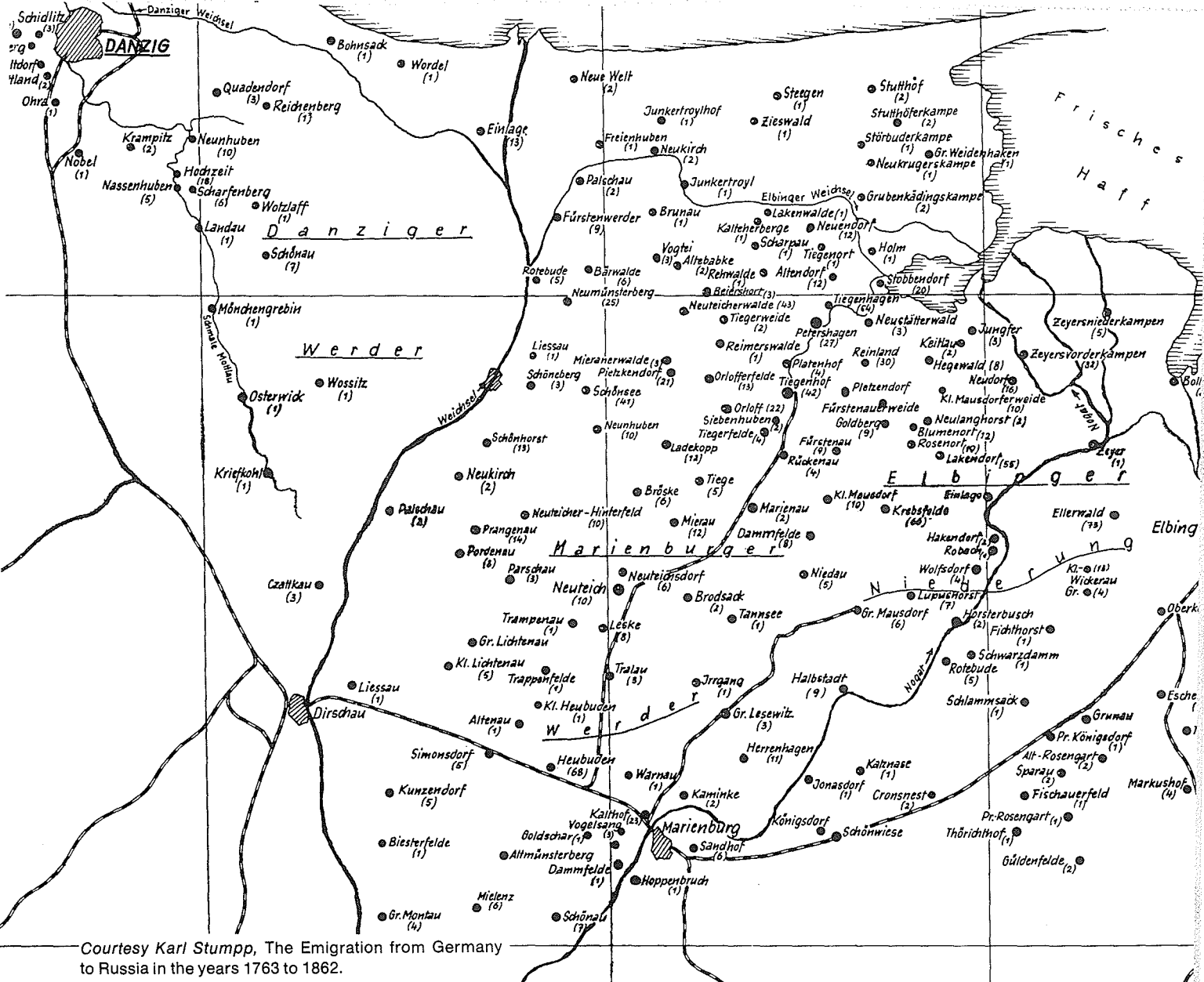
Here in Prussia the Low German vernacular was adopted. It is still

Peter Wiens, Reinland, hat nicht nur viele Freunde und Verwandte, sondern auch neun Geschwister in Preußen. Auch fast die ganze Verwandtschaft seiner Gattin befindet sich dort. Weil nun der Briefwechsel immer seltener wird, so möchte unser Freund W. gerne durch die „Rundschau“ erfahren, ob die Geschwister noch leben, wie es ihnen geht u. s. w. S.

Article in Die Rundschau, June 15, 1881.



An interior view of the Heubuden church shows some elements of design that became features of early Mennonite churches in Russia and Western Canada. The location of the pulpit on the long side of the church, the raised platform for ministers and Vorsänger and the bench designs were basically the same in the Reinland, Manitoba church built in 1876 (although the Reinland church did not add back rests to the benches before the 1920's). The balcony on three sides of the building, which greatly increased seating capacity was common to many churches in Russia. The first organ in the Heubuden church was not installed until 1890.



Courtesy Karl Stumpp, The Emigration from Germany to Russia in the years 1763 to 1862.

Map of the settlements in Danzig-West Prussia, from which the Mennonites emigrated to Russia in the years 1789-1807. The numbers in parentheses indicate the number of Mennonite families that emigrated during that period.

Available in English at Arthur Flegel, 1895 Oakdell Drive, Menlo Park 94025 Calif. Available in German at Dr. Karl Stumpp, 7 Stuttgart 71, Florentinerstr. 20, App. 5117.

the common dialect of Reinland. Here, also, German replaced Dutch as the language of the worship service. The conflict surrounding the change from the Dutch language to the German language was as severe as the change from German to English in twentieth century Manitoba. In 1757 a certain Rev. Bühler began preaching in German in the Gross Werder (the delta area between the Vistula and Nogat rivers) and ran into opposition.²⁸ In 1762, only sixteen years before the first Mennonite immigrants left for Russia, Rev. Gerhard Wiebe of Elbing preached the first German sermon in the Flemish church in Danzig.²⁹

CHAPTER TWO

The Old Home

In Reinland's earlier years certain villagers would recall "Preissen" (Prussia) either from personal experience or because their parents or grandparents had told them about that land. For a whole century, however, Reinland has had people who reminisced about "Russlaund" (Russia) in the long winter evenings. Russlaund — this was a land of beautiful villages and luscious orchards. Here the "hundatjoasche Ietj" (hundred year oak) threw out its branches in the heart of Chortitz, a village in which, according to legend, everything was handier than anywhere else on earth. Here the mighty "Nippa" (Dnieper) splashed the shores of the *Oole Kolonie* (Chortitza).

This chapter dwells briefly on the move to Russia, the sojourn there and on the conditions that resulted in migration to the New World.

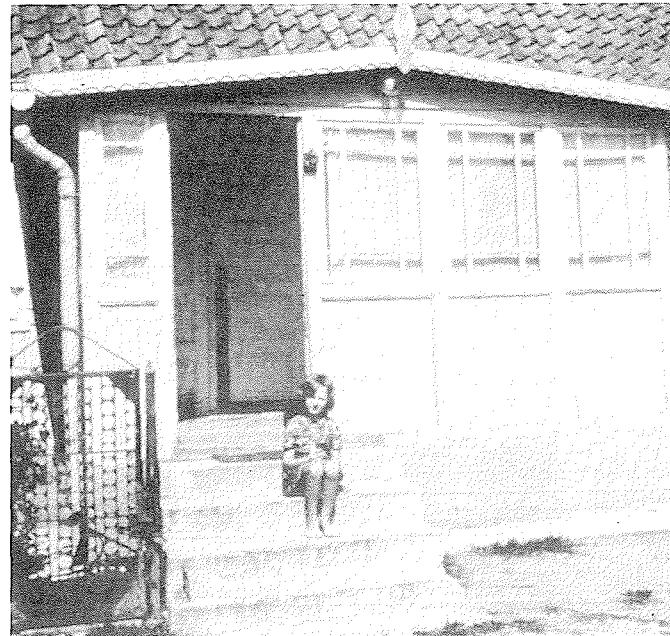
From Prussia to Russia

Initially the advent of Prussian rule in the Mennonite colonies did not greatly affect the status of the settlers. Frederick the Great, "der alte Fritz," was basically well disposed towards the colonists. However, certain pressures made themselves felt with increasing intensity during his reign and even more so after his death. One was the need for men in the army. Mennonites were able to negotiate an exemption but were forced to pay special military taxes in lieu of services as well as taxes for the support of the Lutheran church. Another concern of the Prussian rulers was that Mennonites, while refusing to bear arms, were taking over more and more agricultural land. Resultant restrictions by the alarmed authorities not only forbade the expansion of Mennonite landholdings but also ordered a reduction of the total acreage. With a rapidly expanding farming population the growth of a landless class became inevitable.

It is not surprising that when Georg von Trappe, an envoy of the Russian Czarina Catherine the Great, visited the settlements, he stirred up great excitement. The landless listened to the glowing reports of

Photo courtesy CMBC Publications

This 1973 photo shows a girl sitting on the steps of a house once owned by Hans Penners, Baerwalde, in what was formerly Prussia.



The illustration depicts the gravestone of Jakob Hoepfner. Hoepfner and Johann Bartsch were appointed as delegates to Russia by the Mennonite churches of West Prussia. In 1786 they set out to investigate the colonization offers of Catherine II. In 1788 they were among the first emigrants to leave Bohnsack, West Prussia, on the long journey to the new land. When the settlers were not permitted to locate at Berislaw, as the Russian government had originally promised, but were forced to go to Chortitza, many of them were dissatisfied. The strangeness of the new land and various misfortunes increased their disillusionment. The emigrants heaped their anger and frustration on Hoepfner and Bartsch. Hoepfner was accused of misappropriating funds, was expelled from the Flemish church, imprisoned and threatened with deportation to Siberia. His property was sold.

After a year of imprisonment he was pardoned and released. Towards the end of his life Hoepfner was accepted into the membership of the Kronsweider (Frisian) church. In 1890 a monument was erected beside his grave on the island of Chortitza. The monument and gravestone and the surrounding iron fence were transferred to the Mennonite Village Museum, Steinbach, Manitoba, in 1973.



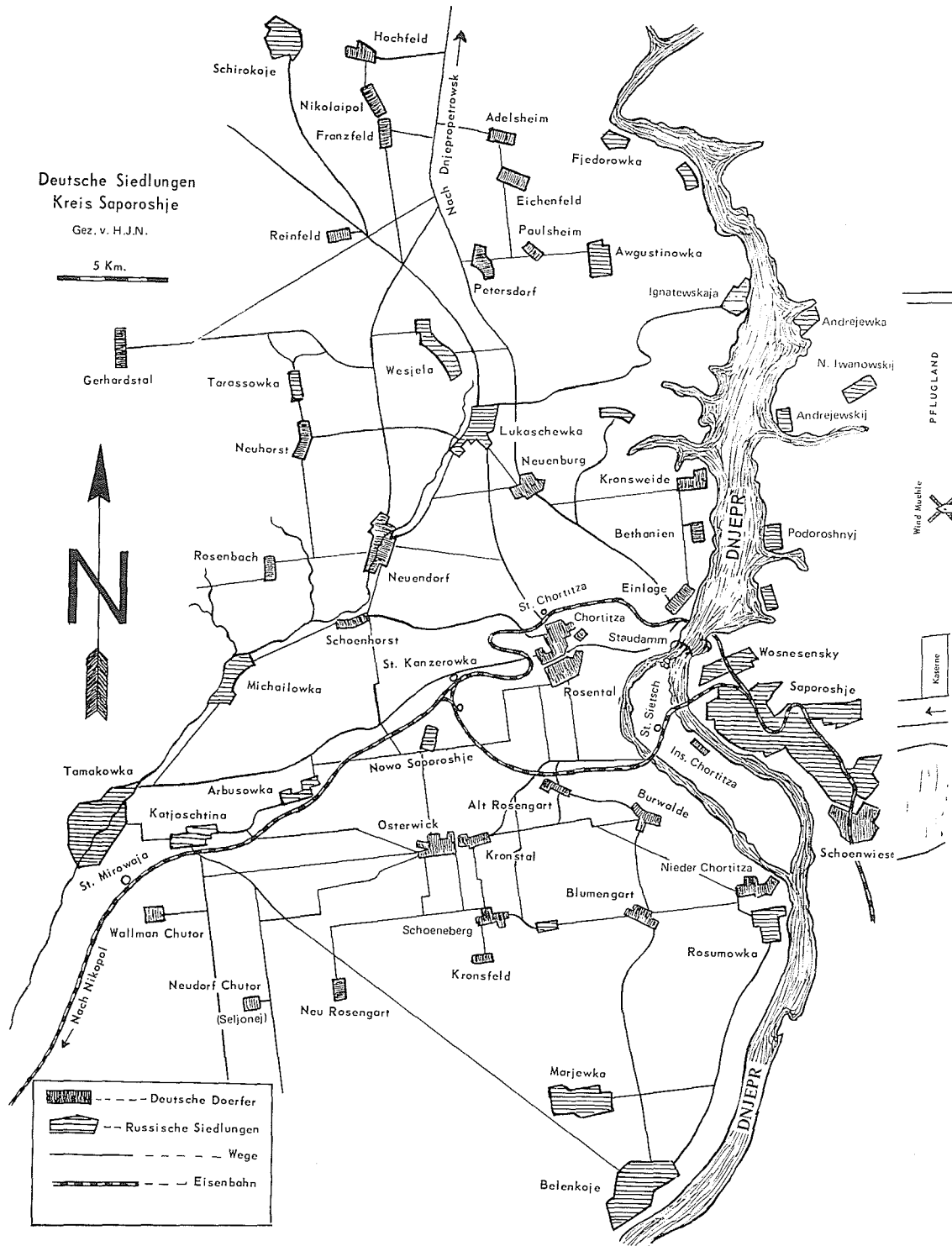
abundant land in the newly conquered territories on the Black Sea. The settlement possibilities and promises of religious privileges also attracted an important Mennonite leader, Elder Peter Epp. Two delegates, Johann Bartsch and Jakob Hoepfner, were sent to investigate the new land. In the fall of 1786 they set out, traveling at the expense of the Russian government, and in the following year they met the Empress Catherine herself at Kremenchug.

The privileges granted to the Mennonites and officially confirmed by Czar Paul I, Catherine's son, in 1800, included total military exemption, the validity of a simple Yes or No in place of an oath in court, a grant of 65 dessjatin (approximately 175 acres) of land per family, a ten to fifteen year tax exemption, the right to own property and to provide for heirs and orphans.¹

The trek began in earnest in 1788. The families that set out for South Russia (now generally referred to as Ukraine) had a long difficult journey. Jakob Hoepfner and Johann Bartsch were in a group that departed from Bohnsack, Hoepfner's home village, on March 22, 1788.² None of the emigrating families reached the promised land that year because the Russians were still carrying on military operations to solidify control of the land of the travellers' destination, the area north of the Black Sea. The emigrants were forced to spend a winter of hardships at Dobrovna. They were poor and virtually leaderless. No minister accompanied the group. Finally in June, 1789, the first settlers arrived at the confluence of the small Chortitza River and the Dnieper. Here the "big oak" provided the first shelter.³ This was the beginning of Chortitza which later became known as the *Alte Kolonie* (Old Colony).

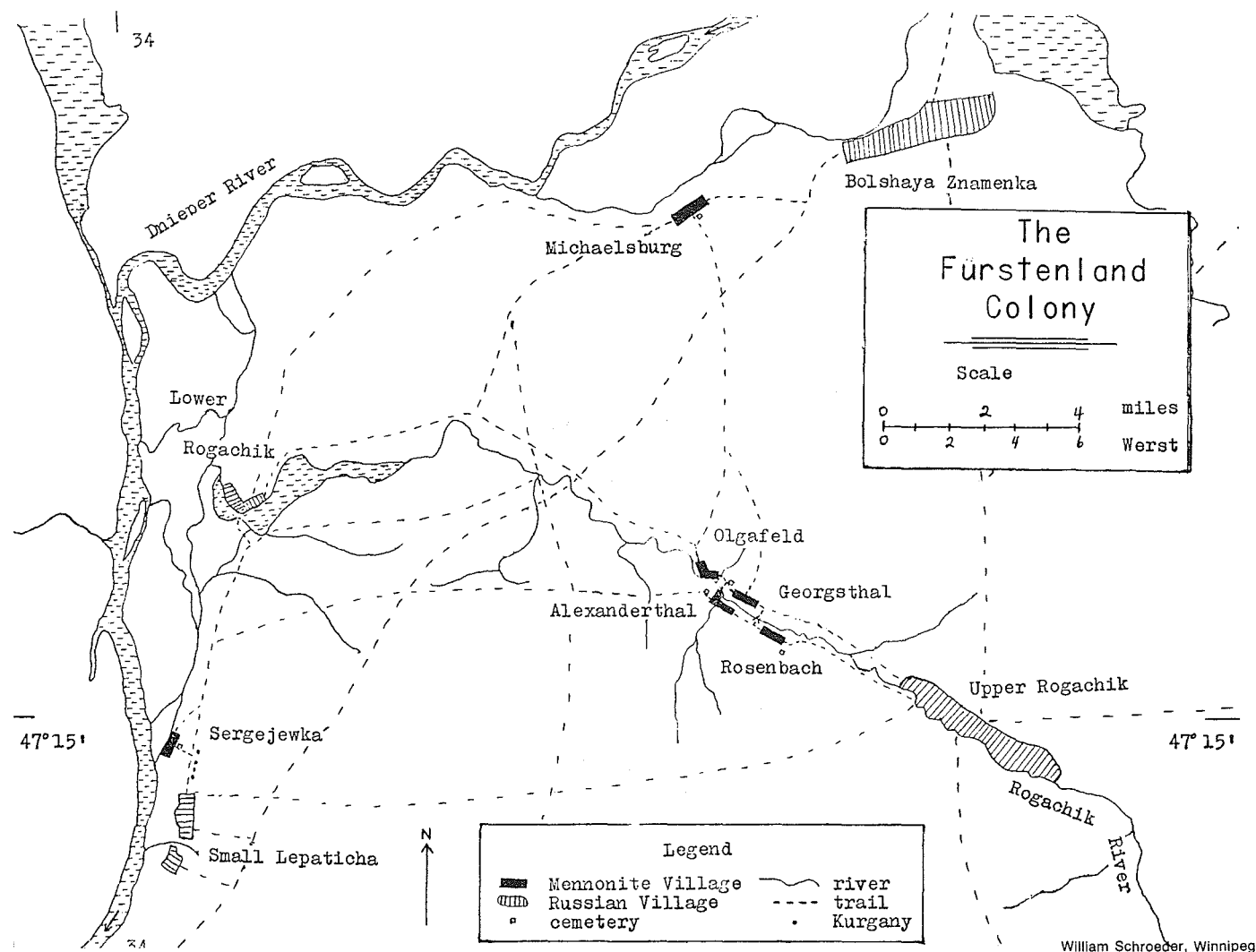
In 1790, Bernhard Penner, was chosen to become the first elder of the Chortitza church. The home congregations in Prussia confirmed him in his office by letter. Elder Penner was so poor that he had to borrow boots for his appearance at baptism and communion services.

In Prussia further government strictures affected both church and economic development. A new wave of migration to Russia resulted in the years 1803-1806. A second colony was founded on the Molotschna River, approximately 100 miles south-east of Chortitza. Ministers of the church accompanied this group of 365 pioneering families which included well-to-do landowners. These people stayed at Chortitza for many months before travelling on to their land. This boosted both the economy and the morale of the Chortitza settlers. Not only did the new immigrants spend a considerable amount of money there but also hired Chortitza workmen to help them get started on their own Molotschna settlement. More migration, natural increase and gradual agricultural advance strengthened the colonies. By 1835 Chortitza had fifteen villages and 89,000 acres of land; Molotschna contained fifty-eight villages and 324,000 acres of land.



Map of Chortitza Colony in latter years of its existence.

H. J. Neudorf



Map of Fürstenland. Elder Johann Wiebe called a brotherhood meeting at Alexanderthal to discuss emigration. Soon thereafter the 1875 migration of Fürstenländer to Manitoba began.

The Russian Experience

It is not the purpose of this book to dwell on the history of the Mennonites in Russia. But it will be necessary to make some observations on the Russian experience as a background for the migrations to Canada. If the concentration is on Chortitza and its daughter colonies, it is only because the majority of Reinland families can trace their histories through these colonies.

In spite of severe difficulties in agricultural pioneering, in spite of grave problems in early church development, the Chortitza pioneers paid attention to the instruction of children in schools. The Bible and the catechism were used as texts. There were no teaching aids, few

books, poor physical facilities and ill-equipped teachers. These shortcomings were aggravated by the rigours of pioneer life. But it is important to remember that even under all these negating circumstances, schools were considered essential.

In 1847 Johann Cornies (1789-1848), an initiator in both agriculture and education, who carried through a far-reaching reform program in Molotschna education, was appointed to supervise the Chortitza schools. Rapid educational reform spread through the Chortitza settlement.

Quite early Chortitza experienced new problems in the agricultural field. According to the 1789 agreement with the Russian authorities, each settler was to receive a parcel of 175 acres of land which could not be subdivided. Since the colonies had definite boundaries, the available land was soon taken up and a new landless class was born. A solution was eventually realized — the founding of daughter colonies on crown lands made available by the government. Bergthal, founded in 1836, was the first daughter colony of Chortitza. Its five villages were located about 20 miles north-west of the Black Sea port of Mariupol.⁴

Fürstenland

Fürstenland was founded in 1864. It was a *Pachtkolonie* (colony on rented land), most of which lay along the banks of the Rogachik River. Grand Duke Michael Nikolaevitch (1832-1909), son of Czar Nicholas I, owned 75,000 Dessjatin (just over 200,000 acres) of land along this river. It was administered by one Moritz Schumacher of Grushevka, who on a visit to Chortitza offered to rent some of this land to the Mennonites. Peter Dyck, Schoeneberg, chairman of the Chortitza Agricultural Society, negotiated the first contract with Schumacher. The annual rent during the first 15 years amounted to 1.25 rubles per Dessjatin.⁵

FÜRSTENLAND VILLAGES

Name of Village	Date of Founding	Size of Village
Georgsthal	1864	30 farms
Olgafeld	1864	28 farms
Michaelsburg	1865	35 farms
Rosenbach	1866	18 farms
Alexanderthal	1867	23 farms
Sergejevka	1868	20 farms

Fürstenland was given that name because the land belonged to the *Grossfürst*, the Grand Duke. All the villages except Rosenbach were named after members of the Grand Duke's family.

The first *Oberschulze* (superintendent) of Fürstenland was Peter Dyck, a man whose industry and competence as administrator was later

praised by Schumacher. Peter Dyck moved to Michaelsburg. His son-in-law Franz Froese was to migrate to Reinland where he became the *Obervorsteher* (title of West Reserve superintendent) of the Reinland Mennonite Colony.

Another person who moved to Fürstenland was Johann Wiebe, who was ordained to the ministry by Elder Gerhard Dyck of Chortitza in 1865 and who in 1870 was ordained as Elder of the Fürstenland Church by the same man. Elder Johann Wiebe moved to Manitoba in 1875, settled in Rosengart and served as Elder of the Reinländer Mennonite Church.

Baratow — Schlachtin

Baratow and Schlachtin were both daughter colonies of the Chortitza Colony. They were located in close proximity to each other, north-east of Krivoy Rog. The two colonies formed one administrative unit. Baratow, founded in 1871, consisted of two villages, Neu-Chortitza and Gnadenthal, located on an acreage of 9,800. Baratow was initially settled by 74 Mennonite families. Schlachtin, founded three years later, was composed of two villages, Grünfeld and Steinfeld, with an acreage of 10,800 settled by 200 families.

The two colonies were both part of the Neu-Chortitzer Mennonite Church which also included Kusmitzky, Felsenbach, Nikolaital, Schöndorf, Blumenhof, as well as some members in the villages of Heuboden, Steinbach and Ebenfeld. Some other scattered families also belonged to this church. For some years the congregations of the Neu-Chortitzer Church were served by the elders of the mother colony. Later the daughter church got its own elder. The first was Elder Jacob Paetkau. The second, Elder Jacob A. Rempel, was ordained by the Chortitza Elder Isaak Dyck in 1920.⁶

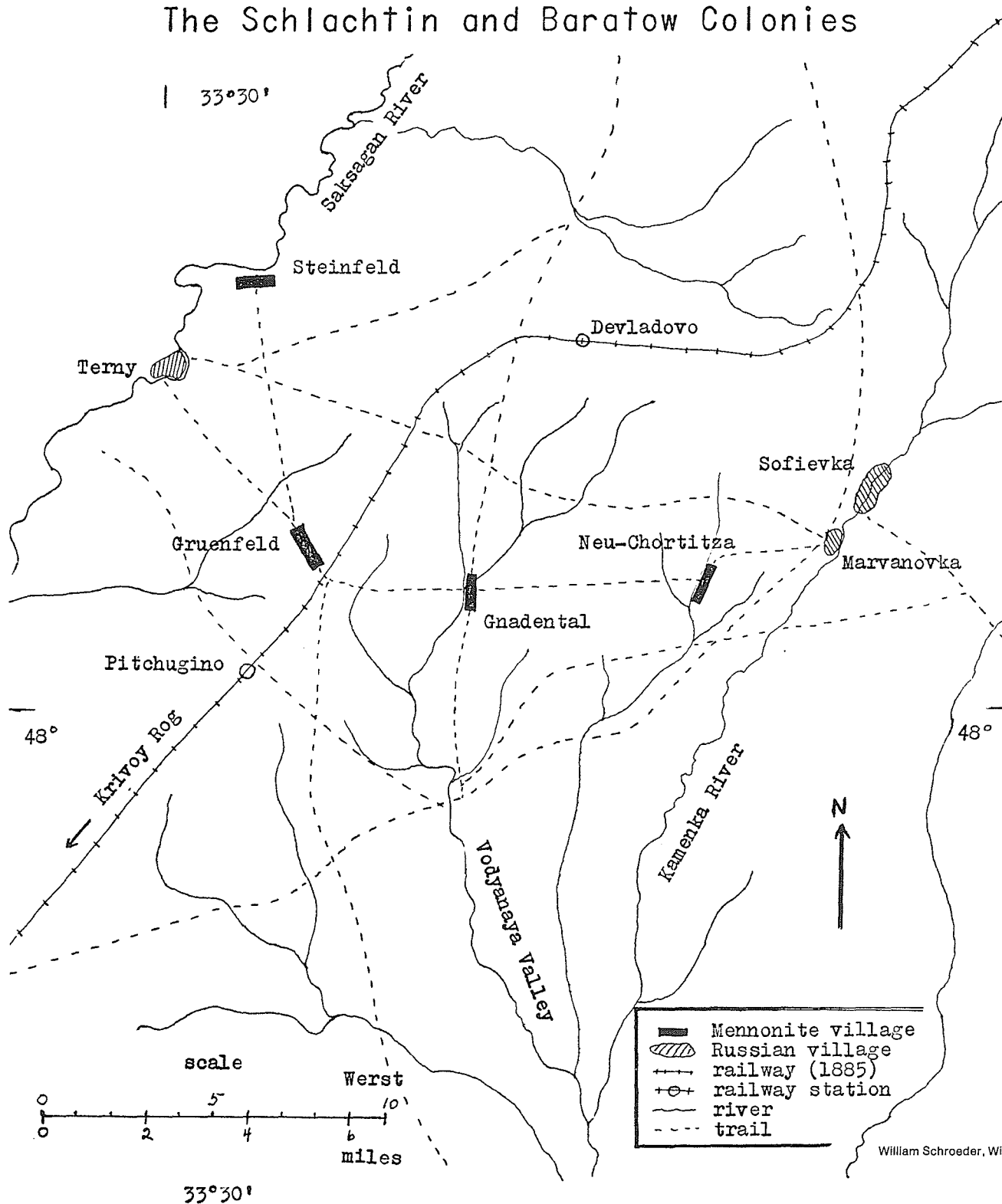
Elder Rempel, who got his seminary and university education in Basel, Switzerland, served the congregation entrusted to him with great dedication. His work was complicated by the civil war and banditry, by poverty and famine and by the large scale migration to Canada. Elder Rempel deliberately chose to remain in Russia to serve the remaining flock. This decision meant persecution and martyrdom. Exact details of his death are not known but he died in exile, probably in prison, around 1940.⁷

Russification and its Impact on the Colonies

Catherine the Great had given the Mennonites attractive guarantees and a large measure of autonomy. Their flourishing colonies became a state within a state. Civil administration was run from a central office of the colony known as the *Gebietsamt*. Each colony had its *Oberschulze* who was responsible for affairs pertaining to the whole colony; each village had its *Schulze* who was responsible for calling village meetings to discuss local problems. The colonies ran their own

The Schlachtin and Baratow Colonies

23



William Schroeder, Winnipeg

school systems and in Molotschna and Chortitza these were becoming quite progressive after 1850. The teaching of the church and its *Lehrdienst* (a term referring to elders, ministers and deacons collectively) permeated colony life.

But by the early 1870s, a new stirring and growing uneasiness was spreading through the vast Russian Empire. Czar Alexander II had decreed the freeing of the serfs in 1861 and had given them land; he had introduced a jury system and undertaken education reforms. The results of Alexander's reforms were far-reaching. There were less restrictions on the press which became first moderate, then radical. A new generation of university students demanded ever greater reforms. New political forces were unleashed which split into liberal, moderate socialist and Marxist wings. A growing bureaucracy was nibbling away at the power of the Czar. A new Russian national consciousness was awakening. This new spirit abroad in the land was beginning to be felt in the Mennonite colonies.

The specific implications of the new mood soon became clear to the colonists. The Russian army, which had not practiced conscription up to this time, intended to introduce compulsory military training. The new law was to include all ethnic minorities and was to take effect on January 1, 1874. The Russian language would be introduced in the schools; school administration would be taken over by imperial authorities. All business of the *Gebietsamt* was to be transacted in the Russian language.

Photo courtesy CMBC Publications

The renowned old oak of Chortitza.



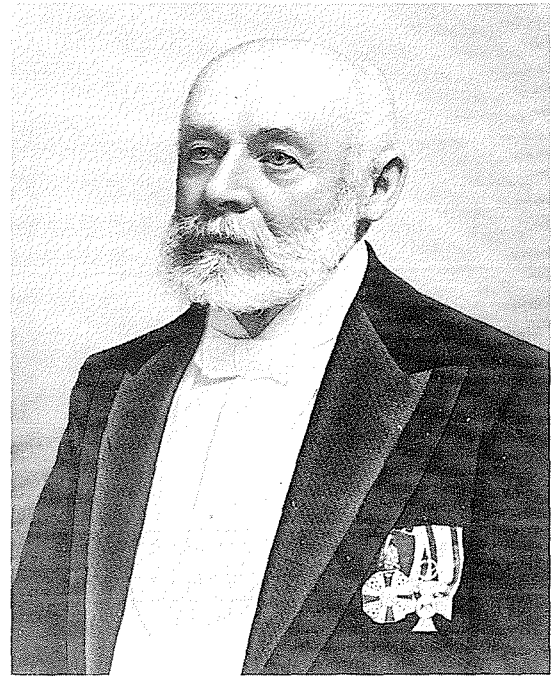
It was the abrogation of military exemption that initially united the colonies in an attempt to persuade the Russian government to change its mind. Delegations from the churches visited the Russian capital, St. Petersburg. After these seemingly fruitless efforts the colonies began investigating possibilities of emigration to the United States and Canada. When Canada heard about the difficulties of the Mennonites in Russia, it reacted just like Russia had a century earlier. Canada, concerned about holding the Americans at the forty-ninth parallel, eager to bring thousands of settlers into the North-West, ordered its special immigration agent in Germany, William Hespeler, to go to Russia immediately to investigate the situation. When the Russian authorities discovered Hespeler's activities in the colonies, he was forced to leave the country. He had spent enough time in the villages, however, to arouse keen interest in emigration and to invite a Mennonite delegation to visit Canada at the expense of the Canadian government.

The delegation that was chosen included both Mennonites and Hutterites. One of the delegates came from Prussia. They visited both Canada and the United States. The table below indicates the composition of the group.

MENNONITE DELEGATION TO AMERICA IN 1873⁸

Name of Delegate	Group Represented
Heinrich Wiebe	Bergthal
<i>Oberschulze</i> Jacob Peters	Bergthal
Cornelius Buhr (accompanied delegates at own expense)	Bergthal
Jacob Buhler	Molotschna
Leonhardt Sudermann	Molotschna
Cornelius Toews	Kleine Gemeinde
David Classen	Kleine Gemeinde
Tobias Unruh	Wolhynia
Andreas Schrag	Wolhynia
Paul Tschetter	Hutterian Brethren
Lorenz Tschetter	Hutterian Brethren
Wilhelm Ewert	West Prussia

Neither Chortitza nor Fürstenland, home colonies of most of Reinland's early immigrants, sent delegates in 1873.⁹ How closely Fürstenland co-operated with the Bergthal delegation is not clear. It is probable that Elders Johann Wiebe of Fürstenland and Gerhard Wiebe of Bergthal, who were first cousins and who were both to emigrate later, were in communication at that time. Evidence indicates, however, that the Fürstenland elder, ordained by the Chortitza elder just a few years earlier, still did not feel totally independent and looked to the mother colony for leadership.¹⁰ And even though there was much interest in



William Hespeler, Canadian government immigration agent, who was dispatched to the Mennonite colonies in Russia in 1872 to invite the Mennonites to migrate to Canada.

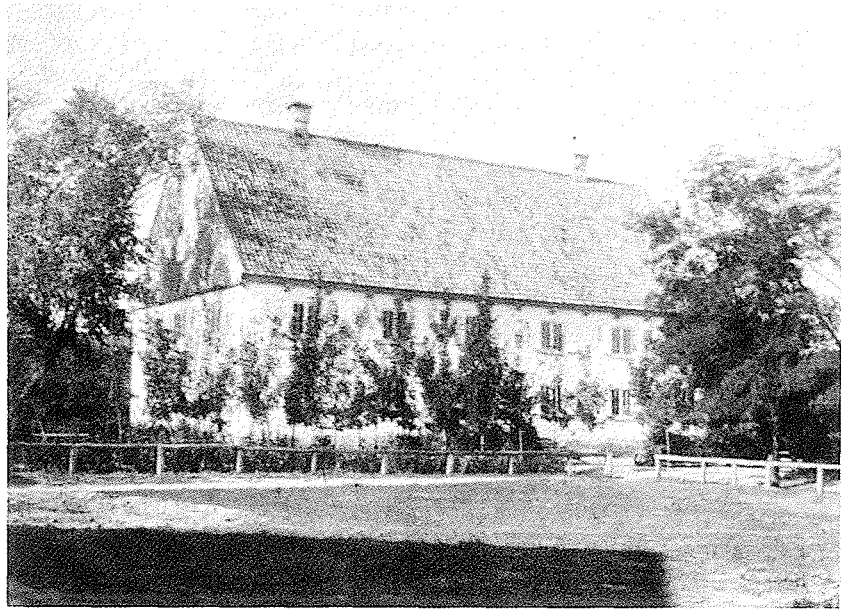


Photo Courtesy Aaron Klassen, R.R. 1, Waterloo, Ontario

From *Als ihre Zeit erfuehlt war*, by Walter Quiring and Helen Bartel
The Mennonite church in Chortitza.

emigration in Chortitza and even though Elder Gerhard Dyck was considering emigration as a serious alternative (apparently he persuaded the Bergthal elder to read Canadian immigration literature),¹¹ this leadership was not forthcoming. In Chortitza both church and colony leaders were still hoping that migration, at least on a mass scale, could be avoided by an acceptable agreement in St. Petersburg. Elder Dyck did call a brotherhood meeting to discuss migration and at least one contemporary source states that a decision to send a delegation to America was made then but was not carried out. Chortitza was still considering a delegation as late as 1874.¹² On March 22, 1874, Peter Wiens, who was to become an outstanding Reinland pioneer, wrote to the Mennonite Board of Guardians (a committee set up by American Mennonites to assist Mennonite immigration from Russia¹³) as follows:

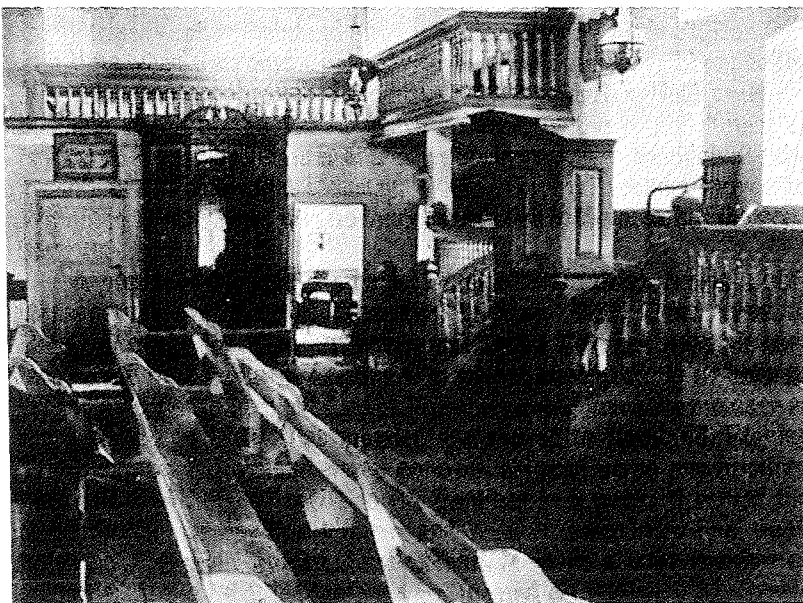
Some of the brethren have determined to get ready for the journey . . . without sending a deputation. In order, however, not to separate from the church, we went to see our bishop . . . He advised us to write to you and he would confirm and sanction it and assist us. We also determined that in case we should send a deputation to America during the present Summer, which should select land for us, that we would move on it. Should this not be done, however, then we would join the Bergthaler Church, which were represented in the deputation by Wiebe and Peters.¹⁴

A Chortitza deputation was never sent. The immigrants from both Chortitza and Fürstenland later moved onto land which had never been

visited by an official Russian Mennonite delegation. (There is a hint of prophecy in the Wiens letter quoted above. Only ten years later some Chortitzer settlers in Reinland and other villages were to join the Bergthaler Church under circumstances not yet visualized by Wiens. That momentous event in Reinland's story is related in other chapters.)

After the North American visit of the 1873 deputation, all but the Bergthal and Kleine Gemeinde delegates decided on a home in the United States rather than in Canada. The better economic outlook and the milder climate south of the border could be cited as important factors in the choice. The geographic situation in Kansas, where winter wheat and watermelons could be successfully grown, was obviously much more like that of the delegates' native Ukraine than was Manitoba. John F. Funk, the American Mennonite publisher and church leader from Elkhart, Indiana, who joined the tour, did his best to convince the delegates that the United States was much the better option. An unfortunate meeting with over-zealous Dominion Day celebrants almost resulted in a violent encounter and could have jeopardized the whole migration to Manitoba. The mosquitos launched an all-out merciless assault on the delegates who were trying to sleep in their tents. Fully dressed for the night, with nets across their faces and hats over their heads, these brave men endured incessant sessions of agonized blood-letting.¹⁵

But the Bergthal and Kleine Gemeinde delegates chose Canada. Ontario Mennonite Jacob Y. Schantz, who also accompanied the



Interior view of Chortitza church.

delegation, lost no opportunity to draw attention to Manitoba's virtues. It was also the Canadian government that made specific guarantees regarding military exemption and freedom in the conduct of schools. It was the Canadian government that offered opportunity for block settlement. To these delegates, representing the most conservative elements seeking to migrate, those guarantees outweighed any advantages that the United States might offer. And these guarantees were soon to attract the immigrants from Chortitza and Fürstenland, who with some Bergthal families, formed the nucleus of early Reinland.

Excitement and emigration fever spread rapidly when the delegates returned to their homeland. An alarmed Russian government responded by sending a German-speaking representative, General von Todtleben, to the colonies to prevent a wholesale departure of Mennonites. Todtleben came with an offer of alternative service in forestry in lieu of military training. The offer satisfied many Mennonites and was generally accepted by the Chortitza and Molotschna leadership. Many others decided to go ahead with emigration plans. Most of the Alexanderwohl congregation of the Molotschna migrated to Kansas. All of Bergthal and the entire Kleine Gemeinde chose to emigrate and these groups very largely came to Manitoba. A major portion of the Fürstenländer, joined by a large number from Chortitza, also moved to Manitoba although some went to the United States. West Prussian Mennonites settled in Kansas and Nebraska.

Elder Johann Wiebe of Fürstenland felt that migration was the only acceptable solution to the crisis confronting the Russian Mennonites. He was one of those who remained unconvinced by Todtleben's arguments. He visited Elder Gerhard Dyck of Chortitza, but was deeply disappointed by Elder Dyck's attitude. He could not understand the Chortitza elder's acceptance of the alternative service offered by the Russian government. "The waves are rolling high on one side," he quotes Elder Dyck as saying, "but on the other side they are higher still."¹⁶ This seemed to be the attitude of the Chortitza clergy generally. Depressed, Elder Wiebe returned home to Fürstenland. But depression changed to a strong conviction that migration was the will of God. He called a brotherhood meeting at the Alexanderthal church in Fürstenland to make a decision about emigration.¹⁷ About 150 families, states Elder Wiebe, decided to migrate.¹⁸

Summary of Reasons for Migration to Manitoba in the 1870s

For many conservative Mennonites in Russia there could be no compromise on the issue of military training. Others might have accepted the forestry service but distrusted Todtleben's proposals. Canada's unconditional guarantee of military exemption had a strong appeal.

The introduction of the Russian language into the schools and the threat to the church's control of the educational system caused great uneasiness. Canada guaranteed the Mennonites control of school administration.

New trends and innovations in the church emanating from the mother colonies were disturbing to Mennonites like Elder Johann Wiebe of Fürstenland. The *Zentralschulen* (Central Schools), founded to foster education at the higher levels, were viewed as places where reform demands were spawned. The introduction of new hymn tunes had touched off a crisis in Chortitza not too many years before. This was seen as one example of what *hohe Gelehrsamkeit* (high education) would do and as a forerunner of other measures to come.¹⁹ Then, too, the new Mennonite Brethren movement and parallel revival movements in the old churches were causing a stirring in the mother colonies that must have been sensed, at least vaguely, in the daughter colonies.

The economic factor cannot be overlooked. The landless problem was a continuously vexing affair. Even as many Mennonites were looking eastward into the vast unsettled regions of the Russian Empire, others were looking westward at the New World. The homesteads offered by both the United States and Canada were powerful incentives. Without doubt the attractive advertising literature from America fired the imagination of many a colonist in Russia. Fürstenland lands, moreover, were leased and long term prospects were insecure.

Canada was seen as the land in which the Anabaptist ideal, as many Mennonites including Elder Johann Wiebe understood that ideal, could be restored. A total church-state separation would be possible. A return to the old values in uncompromised form could again be achieved. Migration was a reform movement. A further treatment of this theme will be necessary in the chapter discussing the early Reinländer Mennonite Church.

Canada provided the opportunity for block settlement because Canada was willing to reserve large tracts of land in Manitoba exclusively for the Mennonites. The leaders of the churches that emigrated to Manitoba saw block settlement as essential to their hope of recreating a Mennonite commonwealth. Block and village settlement would provide better control of the whole experiment and a closer watch over the flock.

The Mennonite "Magna Carta"

The following is a copy of the privileges granted the Mennonites at the time of the delegates' visit in 1873. The document, frequently referred to as the *Privilegium*, has been called the Mennonite "Magna Carta".

**Certified Copy of a Report of the Committee of the Privy Council,
approved by His Excellency the Governor General on the 13th
August, 1873.**

The Committee of Council have had under consideration the annexed memorandum, dated July 28, 1873, from the Honourable the Minister of Agriculture, stating that he has made an arrangement with certain delegates from the Menonites settled in South Russia in view of their formal announcement to him of their intention to settle, together with the Menonite colonists whom they represent, in the province of Manitoba, and submitting for Your Excellency's approval the terms of the said arrangement as set forth in the said annexed memorandum.

The Committee advise that the arrangement so made be sanctioned.

RODOLPHE BOUDREAU,

Clerk of the Privy Council.

See typed a true copy
F. H. Bennett
Secret. *Asst. Clerk of the Privy Council*

The undersigned has the honour to report that he has made an arrangement with the following named delegates from the Menonites settled in South Russia, in view of their announcement to him in their joint letter of the 23rd July, instant, of their intention to settle together with the Menonite colonists whom they represent, in the province of Manitoba: David Klaassen, delegate of Henboden colony; Jacob Peters, delegate of Bergthar colony; Heinrich Wiebe, delegate of Bergthar colony; Cornelius Jows, delegate of Grienfield colony:—

The arrangement made is to the following effect:—

1st. That an entire exemption from any military service, as is provided by law and Order in Council, will be granted to the denomination of Christians called Menonites.

2nd. That eight townships will be reserved, under the Order in Council passed on the 3rd March last, in the province of Manitoba for free grants on the conditions of settlement, as is provided in the Dominion Lands Act, that is to say: "Any person who is the head of a family or has attained the age of 21 years, shall be entitled to be entered for one-quarter section or a less quantity of unappropriated Dominion Lands, for the purpose of securing a homestead right in respect thereof."

3rd. The said reserve of eight townships to be for the exclusive use of the Menonite settlers, and the free grants of one-quarter section to consist of 160 acres as provided by the Act.

4th. That should the Menonite settlement extend beyond the eight townships set aside by the Order in Council of 3rd March last, other townships will be reserved to meet the full requirements of Menonite immigration.

5th. If next spring the Menonite settlers, on viewing the eight townships set aside for their use, should prefer to exchange them for any other eight unoccupied townships, such exchange will be allowed.

6th. That, in addition to the free grant of one-quarter section to every person over 21 years of age, on condition of settlement, the right to purchase

the remaining three-quarters of the section at one dollar per acre is granted, as provided by law, so as to complete the whole section.

7th. That the Menonite settler, will receive a patent for a free grant after three years residence, in accordance with the terms of the Dominion Lands Act.

8th. That, in the event of the death of the settler, the lawful heirs can claim the patent for the free grant, upon proof that settlement duties for three years have been performed.

9th. That from the moment of occupation the settlers acquire a "Homestead Right" in the land.

10th. That the Menonites will have the fullest privilege of exercising their religious principles, and educating their children in schools, as provided by law, without any kind of molestation or restriction whatever.

11th. That they will have the privilege of affirming, instead of making affidavit, as is provided by law.

12th. That the Government of Canada will undertake to furnish Passenger Warrants from Hamburg to Fort Garry for Menonite families of good character for the sum of \$30 per every person over the age of eight years, half price, or \$15, for person under the age of eight years, and for infants under one year, \$3.

13th. That the arrangement as to price shall not be changed during the seasons of 1874, 1875 and 1876.

14th. That, if such arrangement is changed after the year 1876, the price shall not, subject to the approval of Parliament, for a period to extend to the year 1882, exceed \$40 per adult, and for children in proportion.

15th. That the immigrants shall be provided with provisions during the portion of the journey between Liverpool and Collingwood; but that during other portions of the journey they are to find their own provisions.

He respectfully recommends that the arrangement as hereinbefore recited with the Menonite delegates be concurred in.

The whole respectfully submitted.

(Sgd.) J. H. POPE,
Minister of Agriculture.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
OTTAWA, 28th July, 1873.



Photo courtesy Harold Funk

be sanctioned.

John A Macdonald

Approved 13/8/73 Dufferin

Above, copy of signatures of Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald and Governor-General Lord Dufferin on original Privilegium Document.

CHAPTER THREE

The New Land

In 1874 the migration began. That year many Kleine Gemeinde and Bergthaler families left for the distant, largely unknown, but exciting land across the Atlantic. In a few years thousands of Mennonites were transplanted from the Ukrainian steppes to the North American frontier, to Kansas, Nebraska and other states and to the young province of Manitoba.

The Jacob Fehrs — First Reinland Family to Arrive in Canada¹

Strangely enough, the first Reinland pioneer family to set foot on Canadian soil came to the new country almost one year before the village of Reinland, or the West Reserve, had been founded. Jacob and Helena Fehr and their sons Johann, 18, and Dietrich, 14, stepped off the S.S. Hibernian at Quebec on August 27, 1874.²

The Fehrs decided to cross the Atlantic with their children from the Kleine Gemeinde, Cornelius Fasts and Bernhard Bergens. They spent their first Manitoba winter on the East Reserve with the intention of joining their other children as soon as they arrived with the settlers from their own *Alte Kolonie*, Chortitza.

In 1875 the Fehrs came to Reinland and built their crude shelter for the winter. In 1877 they built the house standing just west of Penner's store today, the present residence of the Henry W. Penners. Before the building was quite finished Mr. Fehr passed away at the age of 68. Mrs. Fehr then moved to Hoffnungsfeld and died on June 22, 1898. Mr. Fehr was born in Schöneberg, Chortitza, and Mrs. Fehr (nee Helena Fehr) was born in Osterwick, Chortitza.³ Descendants of these pioneers have lived in Reinland continuously for over a century.

From Russia to Canada in 1875

The journey from Russia to Reinland by boat, train, ship and finally by ox-cart was a journey of many weeks in the 1870s. Jacob Fehr (1859-1952), a grandson of Jacob Fehr, first Reinland settler to arrive in



This passport photograph, dating to the time of the first migration from Russia to Manitoba, shows the Peter Friesens and their son Isaac. The boy became Rev. I. P. Friesen, Rosthern, Saskatchewan, well-known evangelist, who played an important role in the revival movement which led to the founding of the Rudnerweider Mennonite Church. He wrote a book of poetry entitled Im Dienste des Meisters.

A 1974 photograph of the Henry W. Penner home, oldest Reinland building still in use as a residence. Built by the Jacob Fehrs in 1877 and sold to windmill builder Johann Bergmann that same year, the structure originally had a thatched roof. Later occupants included the families of Jacob Zacharias, Abram Zacharias, Peter A. Zacharias and Frank G. Ens. Henry W. Penners have resided here since 1972.

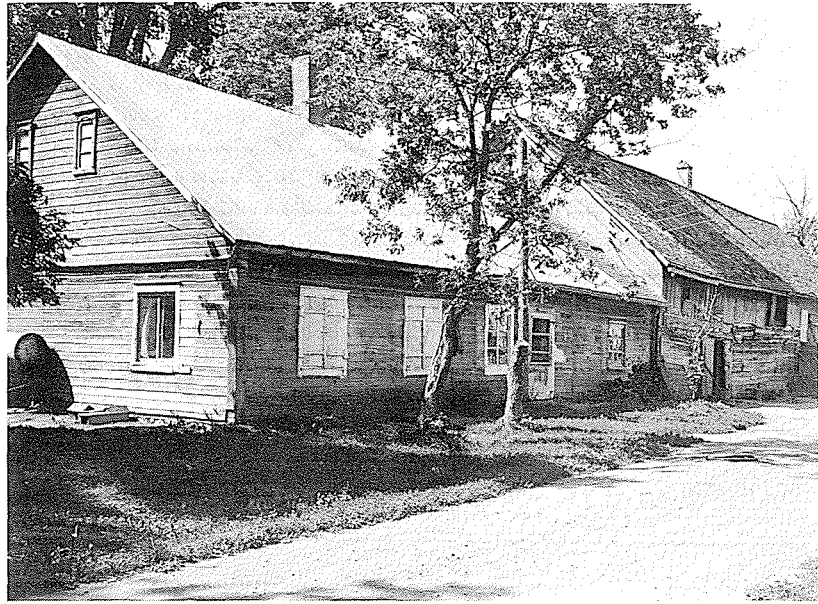


Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Canada, had that unforgettable experience when he migrated with his parents, as a lad of sixteen. A perceptive and studious person, Mr. Fehr put down on paper many of his thoughts and impressions. In a letter written to his sister, Mrs. Katherine Loeppky, many years later, he recalled that momentous event in his life — the migration from the village of Kronsthal, Chortitza, to the site of the village of Reinland, West Reserve, in 1875. The following is a free translation of a large portion of that travelogue.

I would like to tell something of times past, of that which I have experienced, especially of the departure from Russia, because this often comes to my memory. And so I'll begin from the day before we left our former home — how I walked in the garden before evening, how I criss-crossed it in various directions. I remembered how often I had hoed it and cleaned it of weeds. I observed the fruit trees and how promising they looked and what a blessing they could bring forth, without our being able to enjoy it. The May cherries were almost ripe. The other sweet cherries were less advanced. The plums were greener still; one plum variety when it ripened became white as snow and was to have an unusually excellent taste. I have not tasted them because the trees were still young — they were to show forth their art for the first time and were now heavily-laden with fruit. I remembered how so often I had worked in the garden with my mother. She showed me where the beds were and I dug them up. Thereupon she seeded them. Father had

bought me a light metal spade that I could easily handle for at the time I still was a schoolchild.

When I had observed all these things and reflected on them I walked out of the garden and closed the gate. I remained standing at the gate and looked at the garden once more and said to myself, "I will never again enjoy your fruit." My eyes filled with tears.

Thereupon I left the garden, walked across the yard, and entered the house and the room where they were busily packing different articles that were to be taken along to America. Finally they also packed roasted buns into bags. These were to be taken along for the trip as something to eat at times when meals would be irregular. And while all this was being prepared for the departure, evening came and we lay down for the night's rest.

Next morning when we had risen and finished our breakfast, women began gathering in the house and in the yard

— they came for the farewell. Mother's brother, Uncle Johann Wiens, too, came with his vehicle. He had been asked to drive us to the boat which lay at anchor in the river at Neuchortitz. Then we packed onto the wagon what we wanted to take along. When all was done and we were ready to board the wagon, farewells were taken of all who had gathered on the yard. These farewells were accompanied by many tears. Then we climbed onto the wagon and the vehicle set in motion. And we drove off the yard towards the road.

For some time while we were on the road, which gradually rose — we were going uphill now — we could always look back and see the village. Because our yard and house were situated at the end of the village, we could continue to see it from quite far and often we turned around to see the home we had left and were reminded of the many good things we had enjoyed there. One could also notice the many people gathered at the fences along the street. Finally, as we covered more and more distance, the crowd of people resembled only a black line until at last we reached the top of the hill. Then we had a flat prairie before our eyes, and our village and home, where we had lived so long, were taken from our sight. For some distance now we drove through grain fields which looked dreary because rain was needed.

At last we had traversed the level prairie. The road began to drop downhill. Then we caught sight of the village of Neuchortitz and beside it the river in which our boat lay anchored. As we approached we noticed that the hill was covered with vehicles and people — the boat, too, was filled with people. It was almost impossible to get close to the boat with the wagon for the purpose of unloading. The boat had a gangplank, approximately 10 feet wide, connecting the boat and the shore. The people were walking back and forth over it. They would be seen with tear-stained cheeks and handkerchiefs in their hands. Kisses and handshakes were general. These indicated that a painful parting was taking place.

On the ship's bridge, which was generally reserved for the captain, the *Vorsänger* gathered to announce the songs that were to be sung in farewell. When they began to sing there arose a mighty sound along the river and along the hill — its echoes spread out far and wide. I had never seen a gathering of people as large as this one. It was a leave-taking with no hope of again seeing each other in this world. Parents parted from their children and children from their parents. It was a heart-rending day. There was much weeping and crying among the people — a memorable day which I will never forget. In the meantime the singing had ended. Suddenly a shrill whistle, with a penetrating tone came from the boat.



Photo Courtesy Aaron Klassen, R.R. 1, Waterloo, Ontario

From *Als ihre Zeit erfüllt war*, by Walter Quiring and Helen Bartel
David Aron Froese farm in Rosental, Chortitza.

Mr. Fehr goes on to describe the second and third whistles and final partings among the people.

When the captain had taken his place on the bridge he called out at the top of his voice that those who wanted to go with the ship should come to the ship and those who wanted to stay should leave the ship. The walls of separation were drawn for a final time.

Then a machine pulled the drawbridge onto the deck and the ship began to move. The farewell call sounded through the air in full tones. Caps were waved in the air from both sides and the women did the same with their handkerchiefs. The ship had gone for a considerable distance and still we saw the repetition of this act of farewell until there was a bend in the river. Now all was separated.

Our ship sailed along towards the south. Our departure from the village of Nieder Chortitz took place at 2 p.m. At about seven o'clock in the evening we reached the large city of Nikopol. During this stretch that we had sailed we had seen so many beautiful fruit orchards and vineyards, which had been planted along the river, and beautiful estates. Oh, the beautiful region and climate we had to leave!

During our landing at this city we met the Fürstenländer, who also constituted a Mennonite church, and who also originated from our *Alte Kolonie*. A number of these, too, wanted to migrate and joined our party and we emigrated together. Among them was also their Elder.⁴ Later the church became known as the Old Colony Church.

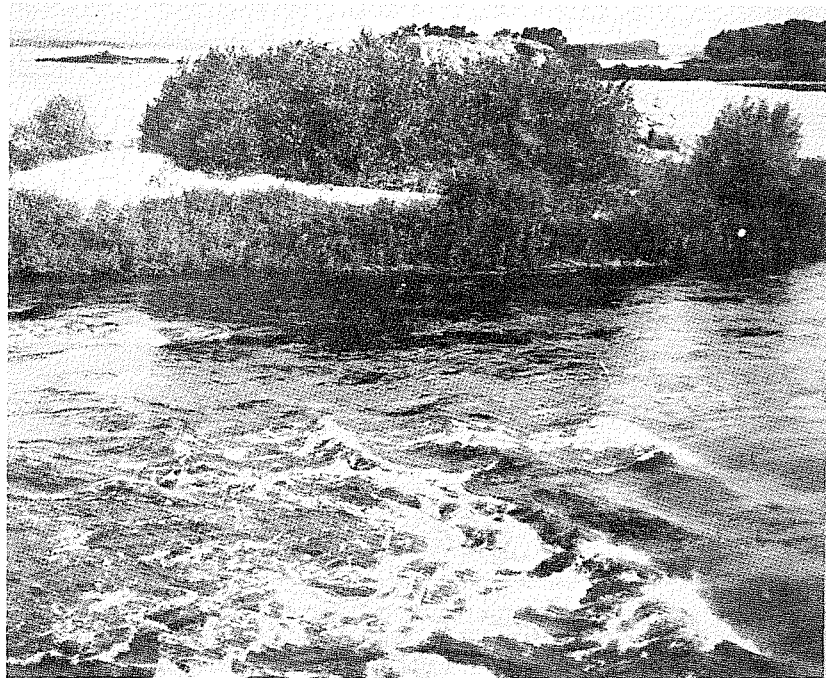


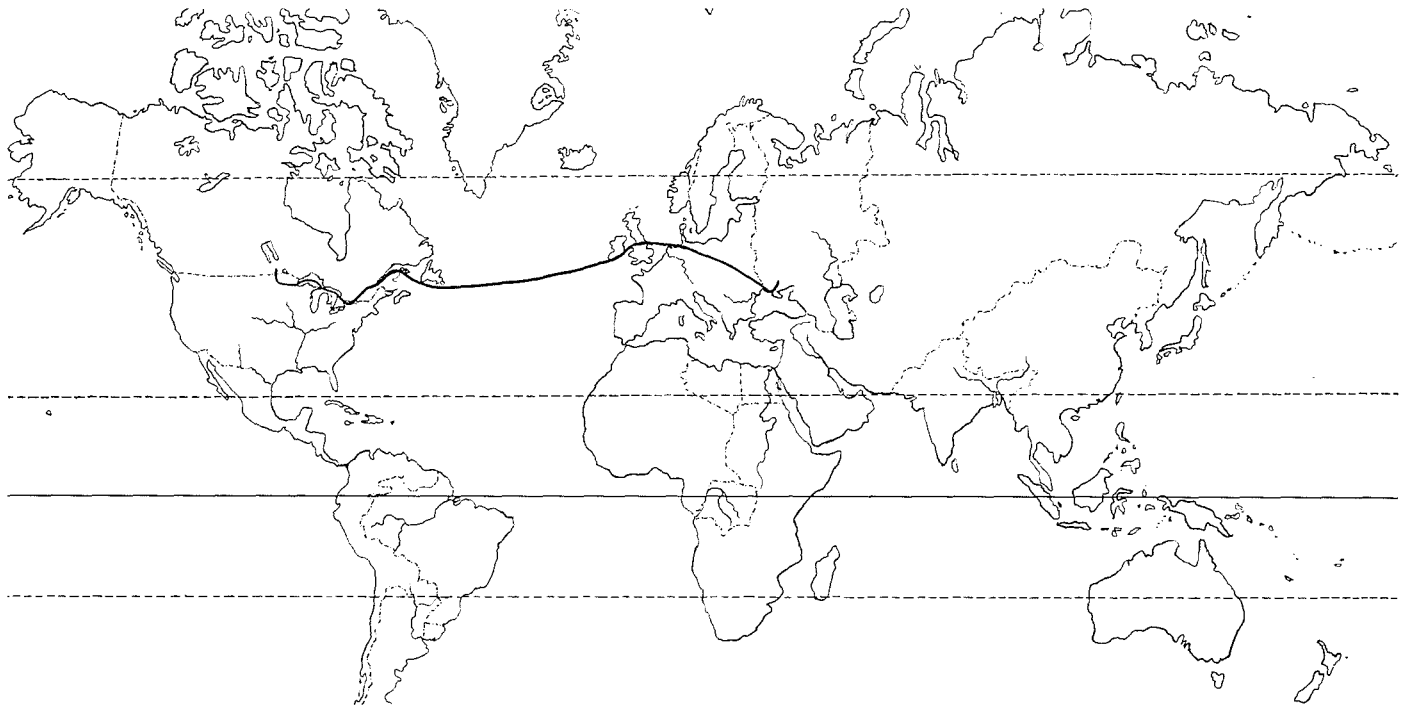
Photo Courtesy Aaron Klassen, R.R. 1, Waterloo, Ontario

From *Als ihre Zeit erfüllt war*, by Walter Quiring and Helen Bartel
The mighty Dnieper.

Mr. Fehr continues to describe that first night of the journey. The Fürstenländer emigrants were brought to the large boat by smaller boats. Again this was a sad farewell for many. Pre-school aged children of their own group were crying for their beds — they wanted to go home. When one considers that Mr. Fehr was a lad at the time of the migration one must admire his detailed recollection of the suffering mother on the journey.

On the second day the boat continued down the Dnieper and arrived at Kherson. There the travellers changed to a larger vessel — they had to cross a part of the Black Sea on the way to Odessa. At Odessa a larger camp was set up on a rise not far from shore and near a forest. The men camped in a circle surrounding the women and children in the middle. Next morning the roasted buns which they had brought with them and water or coffee served as breakfast. Fehr was impressed with the luxury of the train that they now boarded. His account continues.

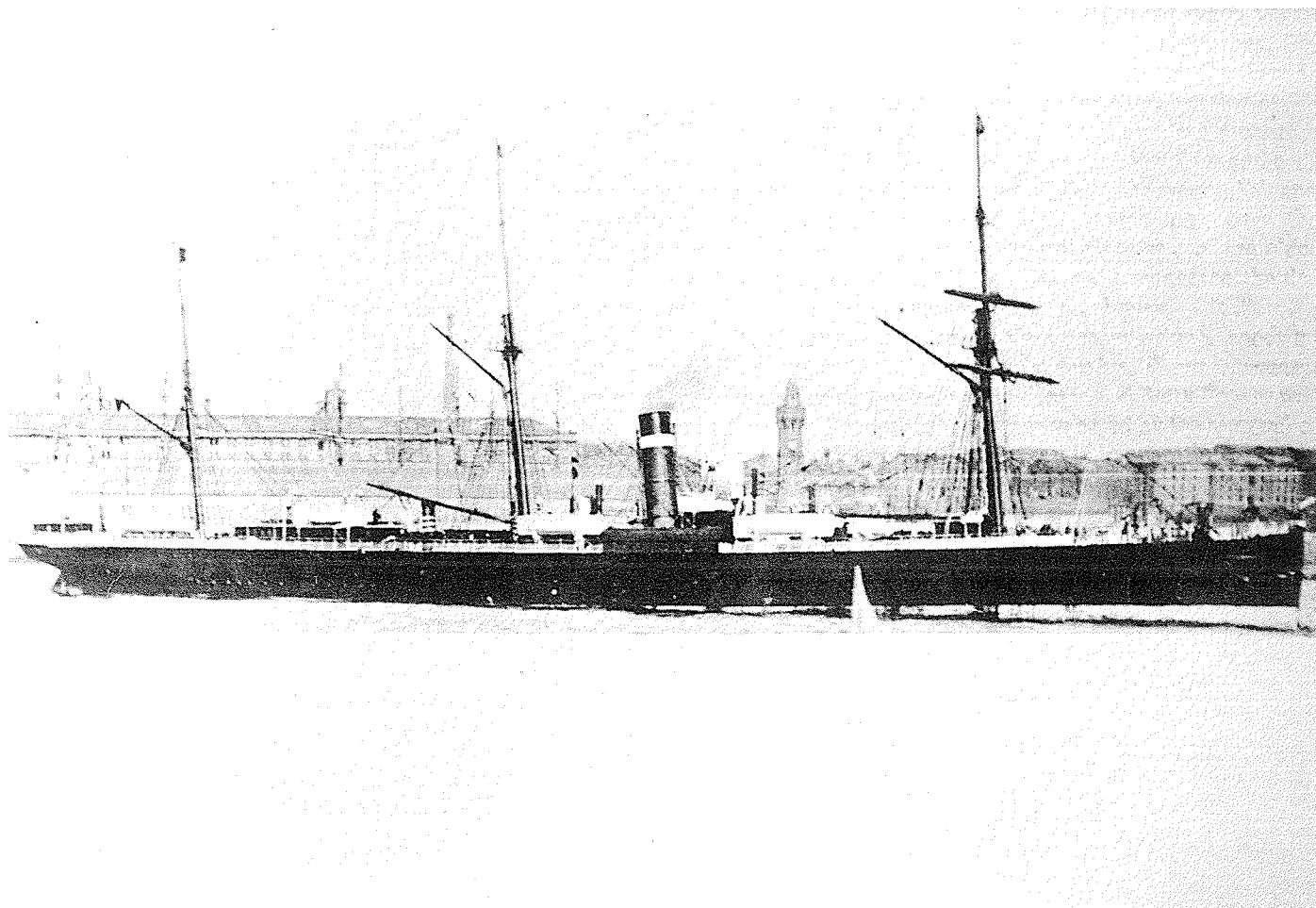
Approximate route of Fehr migration.



So we had a wonderful trip up to the border of the Russian Empire, where we had to transfer to a different train. From there we crossed a corner of the Austrian Empire to Germany and continued to the port of Hamburg. We stayed there for almost a week. We also had a worship service here for there was a minister with us, *Ohm* Jacob Wiens, whom I knew, because he, too, was from our village of Kronsthal. Soon, however, the time came that we could leave here, too. Now we were to board a large ship which was to take us across the North Sea to England. How long we sailed this sea I have forgotten, but that we were heavily struck with seasickness I will not forget. It is a severe sickness with constant vomiting. When we got across we

landed at the port of Hull. There we were prevented from immediately leaving the ship because of a woman in childbirth. But because she could not give birth successfully, she had to give up her spirit. Oh, how hard it was for her husband — wringing his hands in agony. He had to leave his wife in a strange land and continue travelling into the unknown.

From there we travelled across England by rail to the harbour of Liverpool. There our ship was ready to receive us. It was a mighty liner which was to take us across the Atlantic Ocean. Late in the evening the ship began moving. When we had risen in the morning we found that the ship had landed at the island of Ireland. It was Sunday. In the night the ship left



The S.S. Sardinian brought many Reinland settlers across the Atlantic from Liverpool to Quebec.

Photo courtesy Harold Funk.

1976 aerial view of Fort Dufferin site.



the place. Next morning when we were on deck (we had to go on deck every morning for fresh air) we saw water mirrored all around us as far as our eyes could see.

The quiet lasted for two days and two nights. On the evening of the second day a wind began blowing and soon the water appeared black and because of the whirling winds its surface underwent a transformation. Thereupon it got dark and we went for our rest. But our rest changed to the greatest unrest. The ship began moving rapidly — it did not take long until the chamber pots were thrown in all directions. One could not walk around without leaning on solid objects or holding on with hands for support. In the morning we could not go on deck for the waves were rolling over the ship and were washing everything they could reach off the deck and into the sea. This weather lasted up to three days. There were sounds of rumbling and crashing. We thought we were in danger of death. Those who had not yet learned to pray learned now. Even the captain requested prayer that our Creator might have mercy upon us and help us. We were also struck with seasickness.

All became better again; the storm and the waves calmed down. The sea became friendly and smooth as before.

The small children lay ill.

On the eighth day of our voyage the captain announced that he could see America through the telescope. Then joyous hope streamed into our hearts. At two in the afternoon we could see with our naked eyes a small black line which gradually came nearer. Everyone rejoiced in the hope of setting foot on solid ground again. Soon we could differentiate between the mountains. Then white dots were discovered and it was thought that these were white stones. When we neared they turned out to be large buildings. We entered a gulf that was locked in by high mountains on both sides. At first the mountains were far away. The gulf got narrower and narrower and the mountains gradually came closer and closer together. We met some fishing boats going about their business.

Dusk began falling — it got dark. Electric lights sent their streaming beams towards the ship from both sides. Soon we caught sight of innumerable lights, a world of stars, by which we knew that we had reached the port of Quebec. Three times the ship sent a flare skyward. It sailed into harbour. Thereupon the gates were opened for disembarking. We saw an almost uncountable crowd of people that was welcoming those leaving the ship. Then we were received as Canadian immigrants. The Queen had seen to this for us, as non-resistant Christians. We were then served a wonderful evening meal.

Here we had to wait until noon for the train. We travelled across these two provinces changing back and forth from train to boat. Because the border between Canada and the United States then takes a turn we had to travel through the U.S.A. for a stretch and finally arrived at a city called Duluth. Here it was

recommended that we buy tools, cook stoves and cooking utensils in this city for "where you are now going there is no trade nor traffic. Nor can you obtain anything there for it is an absolute wilderness." ("... denn da wo ihr jetzt hingehet ist kein Handel noch Wandel. Da könnt ihr auch nichts anschaffen denn das ist eine reine Wildnis.") So purchases were made and packed into the freight car. We spent one or two days there. I still remember that cutlery was prepared for usage, stoves were erected and fired and food was prepared — for a large yard with much room was placed at our disposal.

From there we continued by rail and came to a small town. It had only recently been founded and construction was in progress. It was called Fishers Landing. When we got there we were received by a large crowd of people. Among them were many Mennonite brethren who lived in Kansas. During the time when our forefathers moved from Germany to Russia they had moved to America. They came and tried to persuade us not to go to Manitoba. They said that two settlements had been made there before and these settlers had to turn back. They could not survive there because of the cold, raw, long winter. They insisted that we come to Kansas. The climate was much milder there. Many allowed themselves to be persuaded and went with them to the south. But our leadership remained firm. It had once negotiated our freedoms with the Queen. The contract was in writing. We could fully enjoy those freedoms within the framework of our confession of faith according to the teachings of the Apostles and if we would hold on to those teachings no law would touch us. Our leaders and Elder did not want to break this solemn promise. They held true to it. The majority remained on our side. After the two parties had taken leave of each other, we, who wanted to stay with Canada, boarded the boat which brought us to Emerson in three days.

There still was not much to see of the town. A few houses could be seen that had been constructed very superficially. The town lay on the east side of the river. On the west side the government had set up immigration houses for us. It seems to me that there were three buildings arranged in a triangle. Our party occupied these quarters quite fully. There was little elbow room. There were many sick children who had not recovered from seasickness and one after the other they passed into eternity. There was a funeral every day. In addition there was a need for variety of diet, especially of milk for the small children, who were waiting for the arrival of the brethren we left behind in Ontario, wondering whether these would soon come with a herd of cattle, milk cows and oxen. During the time when we travelled through Ontario the Mennonites had offered to help us get some cattle. If some of our people would remain there to drive the cattle, they wanted to buy up a herd. The Old Mennonites also offered to keep some of our poor people there to earn some money since they were in need of labourers for

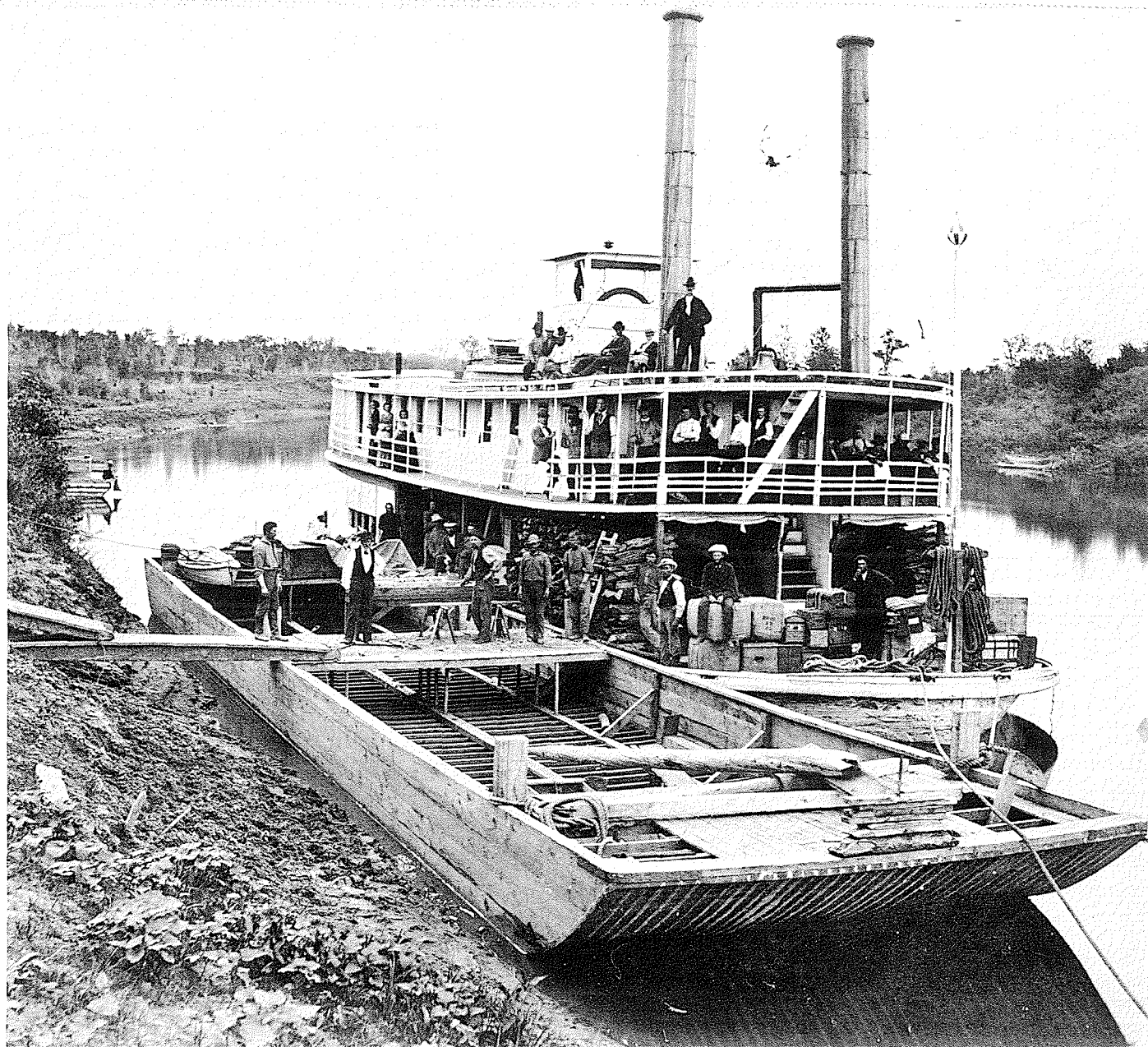


Photo courtesy Manitoba Archives

their large orchards. And this is what happened. They stayed there and joined us the following year.

The cattle arrived and there was great joy, especially for the mothers who had to take care of the sick children. To a degree this necessary supplement rejuvenated the children. But the sadness of the time was not completely taken away. There was still a yearning for the true friends which had to be left behind, for the beautiful *Heimat* with its precious orchards. Here in contrast, we saw only a rolling prairie. Sometimes when

I walked along the shore of the river, I saw someone sitting on a tree stump here and someone sitting on a tree stump there. Then I remembered the verse in Psalm 137:

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down,
yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

We spent six weeks at this place of mourning till we could finally start out and set our foot upon our new land.

At the immigration houses my smallest brother died.
The delegates decided to strike out west of Emerson.

The Land “West of Emerson”

Buffalo bones by the score turned up when the old village hayland section 23-1-4, just north-west of Reinland, was broken by the plow in the mid 1920s. The skulls and bones bore mute testimony to a civilization that had flourished on the western plains. By the 1870s the once well-organized and self-sufficient Plains Cree Indian culture, whose economic mainstay had been the buffalo, was largely ruined. By the end of the 1860s the buffalo had been destroyed, in part purposely by whites eager to drive the Indians onto the reserves, in part by Indians who overkilled to cash in on the buffalo hide market. The land between the Red and the Pembinas shared the tragic consequences. Human activity, once meaningful, healthy and vibrant, had almost ceased.

Following the Red River uprising led by Métis leader Louis Riel, the Province of Manitoba was created in 1870. The next scene directly involving the West Reserve, and hence Reinland, took place inside the walls of Lower Fort Garry in the following year. Cree and Ojibway Indian chiefs sat down with Hon. James McKay. The treaty that was made ceded much of southern Manitoba including the Red River Valley. At first the Indians demanded two-thirds of the land. What they finally got consisted of specified reserves, a \$3.00 per person annual payment with the first payment to be made immediately, an agreement that liquor would be prohibited, that a school would be established on each reserve and a promise of “perpetual peace.”⁵

On the opposite page is the Red River steamer Dakota at the Fort Dufferin landing around 1872-1874. The 1873 Mennonite delegates travelled on this boat on the return trip from Winnipeg to Moorhead. That this boat (like the International) carried immigrants is highly probable. West Reserve immigrants disembarked at this landing.

Photo courtesy Manitoba Archives

Below, Chippewa Indians at Fort Dufferin around 1872-1874. When the Mennonites moved to the West Reserve there was only one group of Indians that had not yet left that tract of land after the signing of the 1871 treaty — those that lived in the Pembina Hills region close to the international boundary.



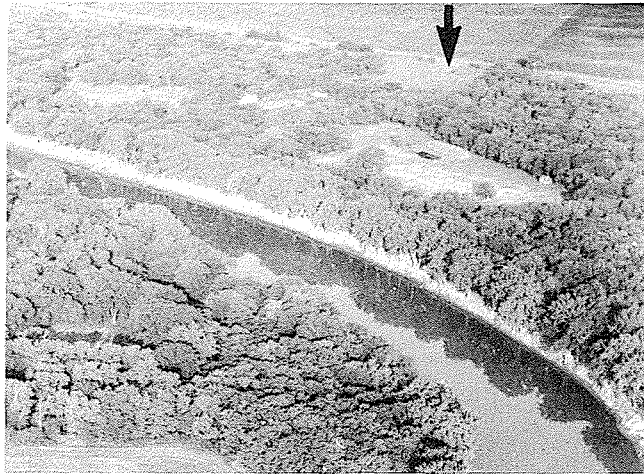


Photo courtesy Dennis Fast.

Two present day photographs of the Fort Dufferin site. The picture above shows the Red River approach from Winnipeg. The site is marked by a cairn (see arrow).

The land between the Red and the Pembinas had often been traversed before the arrival of the Mennonites. The Selkirk settlers had crossed it again and again on their buffalo hunting expeditions into the Pembina Hills. In 1875 it was still being crossed by large numbers of English settlers from Ontario on their way westward to the rolling country beyond the Pembina Hills community of Mountain City.⁶ Western settlers considered it the most undesirable land imaginable — as far as they were concerned it was truly the land nobody wanted. In 1878 a historian commented, “Canadians and others, who settled in the province, rejected the lands now occupied by the Mennonites, owing to the scarcity of timber.”⁷

The first Mennonites to settle in Manitoba had also chosen a location with more immediate access to wood. In 1875, a year after



Photo courtesy Dennis Fast.

The picture on the right shows the same site looking south towards Emerson. Note the cairn in the foreground beside former highway 14 and also the old clearing. The Red River is on the left. Pembina, North Dakota, is faintly visible in the upper right hand corner.

settlement had begun, the readily available agricultural land on the Reserve east of the Red had largely been occupied. Fortunately the 1873 delegates had foreseen just such a situation and had won assurance in Article 4 of the *Privilegium* that more lands would be made available if the need arose. An application for the establishment of an additional reserve west of the Red River was made as early as 1874.

By the following spring the need for more land became quite obvious. A new influx of Russian Mennonite immigrants was paddlewheeling down the Red from Moorhead, Minnesota. The group was being accompanied from Toronto to the Dufferin immigration houses at Emerson by Jacob Yost Schantz, an Ontario Mennonite businessman who became a great benefactor to the immigrants.

J. Y. Schantz was no newcomer to Manitoba. He had accompanied a young Mennonite of well-to-do parents, Mr. Bernhard Warkentin of Berdiansk, Russia, on an exploratory trip to Manitoba in 1872.⁸ The two had travelled as far as Winnipeg and Portage la Prairie, and also east of Winnipeg. After the trip Schantz published *Narrative of a Journey to Manitoba*, a pamphlet translated into several languages and used by the Canadian government as promotional literature. It went through many editions with a total circulation running into hundreds of thousands. Schantz came to Manitoba again in 1873, this time with the delegates from Russia. In 1874 he supervised the construction of the first immigration houses in anticipation of the first East Reserve arrivals.

Schantz was the West Reserve's La Verendrye. In anticipation of further immigration he set foot on its soil before the 1875 migration began. He took his son Abraham, a Métis driver and a Métis surveyor, and three earlier immigrants to explore the land.⁹ Schantz liked what he saw.

However, when the Fürstenland and Chortitza immigrants arrived at Dufferin, they, too, balked at the thought of settling on the open plains. One of the settlers' concerns was to obtain a parcel of land with an easily accessible supply of wood and of hay. There was a considerable delay at the immigrants' sheds while Mr. Schantz, Mr. Hespeler, the immigration agent, and Mennonite immigrant leaders inspected the land. All were satisfied that the earth itself was "excellent good land." But at least some of the leaders expressed the desire to look elsewhere. When Schantz and Hespeler argued that it would be impossible to find another suitable tract of land for block settlement and assured them that this whole tract of land including timber areas along the Pembina Hills could be reserved for them, the immigrants accepted the proposed tract.¹⁰

In a letter from Winnipeg dated July 23, 1875, Schantz tried to impress upon the Minister of Agriculture, Ottawa, the necessity of establishing on the "big Plain" a reserve which would include both the hay marshes, the area around Buffalo Creek and Buffalo Lake (today a well-drained area) and Pembina woodlands.¹¹

Jacob Y. Schantz (he spelled the name Shantz when he wrote in English) was a well-to-do Ontario Mennonite businessman and promoter of the migration from Russia to Manitoba in the 1870s. He accompanied the 1873 delegates to Manitoba, supervised the construction of the immigration houses at the confluence of the Red and the Rat, explored the West Reserve, helped to negotiate the \$100,000 government loan to the Mennonites and was responsible for its administration. Schantz fostered trade in the Mennonite settlements. He purchased grain from the settlers and shipped it to eastern Canada. It is said that Schantz established Jacob Fehr, Reinland, as a sub-agent for the International Harvester Company.



MR. JACOB Y. SHANTZ,

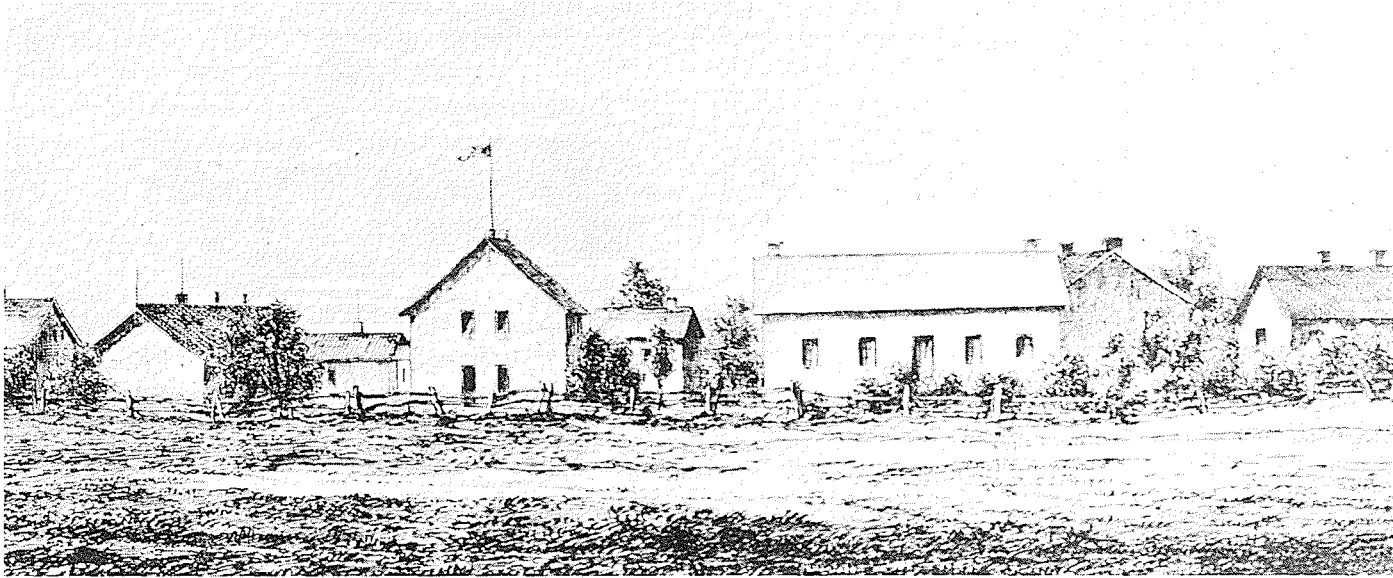


Photo courtesy Manitoba Archives

An 1874 sketch of Fort Dufferin

Several factors in their Russian experience suited these immigrants for the “big Plain.” They had lived on open steppes before. They had learned how to make fuel in the absence of wood (though they were to make much use of wood from the Pembina Hills right from the beginning). They had learned to plant trees. They had struck living water on level ground before. Their open-field system of landholding did not require wooden fences.¹² The historian of Manitoba Mennonites, Dr. E. K. Francis, sums it up this way “Thus, the West Reserve, laid out between Emerson and Mountain City at a depth of eighteen miles north of the United States boundary, was really the first permanent agricultural settlement ever established on the open prairie of Western Canada without direct access to a major body or current of water.”¹³

Fort Dufferin

The long wait at Fort Dufferin was full of difficulties. Loneliness, heartache, deaths of children, frustration, overcrowdedness, diet problems — all these appear in Fehr’s memoirs. That houses had been erected on the riverbank was fortunate. The coming of the first cattle from Ontario, which meant milk for the children, was cause for jubilation.

Dufferin was also a time of decisions. Not only was a final choice of land made, but Elder Johann Wiebe of Fürstenland, who accompanied the group, called a brotherhood meeting at which ground

work for both church organization and colony administration was laid. Elder Wiebe realized that forging church members from different colonies in Russia into one ecclesiastical unit would be difficult and should begin immediately. He desired a colony administration on the Russian Mennonite model but differing in some aspects. Colony officials were not to mete out physical punishment to wrong-doers. Instead church discipline should be applied. These decisions were significant and are discussed in greater detail in another chapter.¹⁴

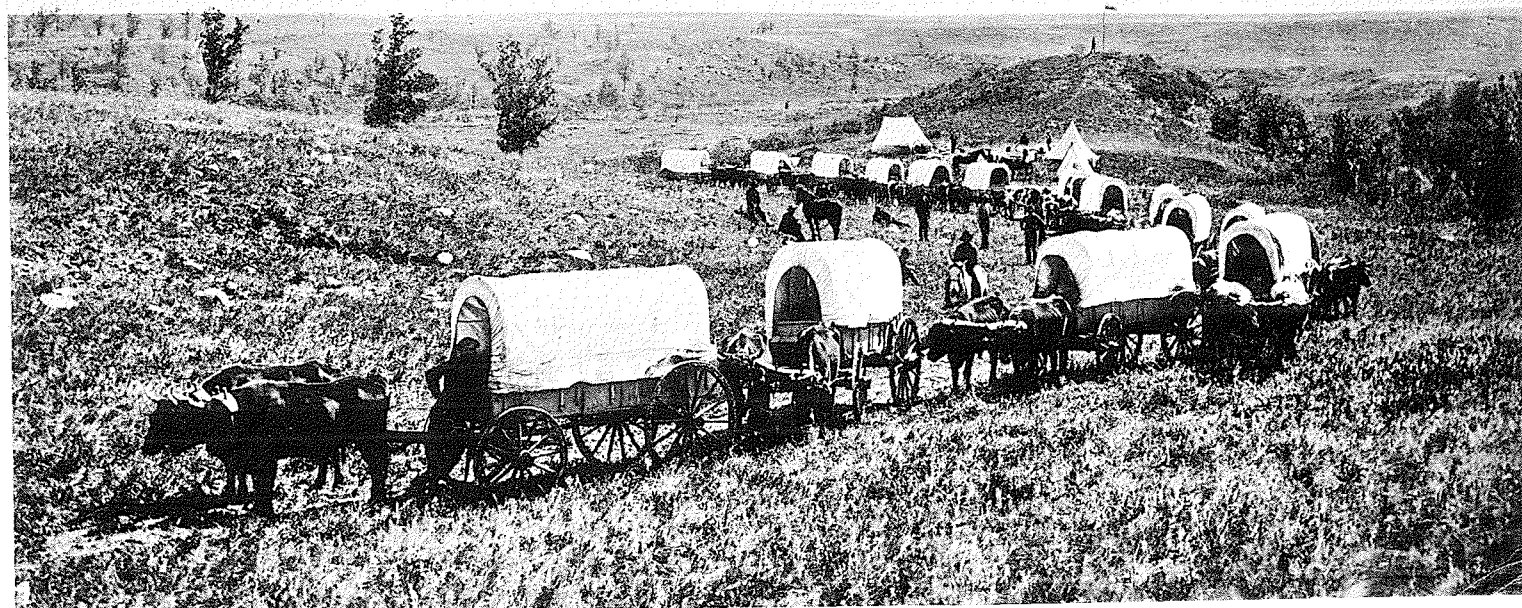
Reinland, Ho!

Excitement at the Dufferin immigration houses! The men were back! The necessary surveys had been made. The first village locations had been chosen. Settlers could move onto the land. The long-awaited day had finally come!

Whether all groups began the westward trek around the same time is not clear but probable. The party which included the youthful Jacob Fehr began the journey after a six-week stay at Fort Dufferin. Fehr relates that the ox-cart trip from Fort Dufferin to Reinland began in the morning. For a while the party travelled along the Dakota border. (Dakota Territory had not yet been organized into the states of North

Photo courtesy Manitoba Archives.

Ox trains travelled west of Emerson and past the future Reinland site even before the arrival of the Mennonites. This train is shown leaving the boundary commission depot at Long River at a point near the international border, some 45-50 miles west of Reinland, in 1872-1874. The Reinland pioneers also travelled by ox-wagon train when they travelled west from Emerson.



and South Dakota.) Woods and meadows alternated. At noon the travellers arrived at a prosperous French farm on the Dakota side of the border.

The farmer had planted an orchard of wild cherry trees. Fehr, who so vividly recollected the fruit orchards in his native Russia, comments: "Es waren Pungels aber doch anders als die Wein Trauben" ("The fruit was in clusters and yet different than grapes."). Since the fruit was now ripe one after another undertook to taste it and one after another drew his face into contortions and spit out the cherries. The general opinion was that this fruit could not be eaten. The immigrants had made their first encounter with chokecherries.

The group was warmly received at the farm. The cooking utensils were taken from the wagon and a meal was prepared. Fresh potatoes were purchased here at a price of eighty cents per pail.

Fehr then describes the arrival at Reinland.

Because we could travel only with oxen, everything was slow. At last we came to the land. The land had been surveyed a few days before and numbered and had also received names. Our lot was the name of Reinland. After a three day journey we arrived at Reinland and pitched our tent. The government had ordered these tents for the immigrants at very small cost to us.

That was Reinland, summer, 1875 — a village of tents and campfires.

Reinland — The Name

Where did Reinland get its name? That the name was the product of some innovative immigrant's imagination is possible but this idea runs counter to the general practice on both East and West Reserves of choosing Old Country place names for New World villages. Schanzenfeld is a notable exception but it was named in honor of a man who was a moving spirit in early Manitoba Mennonite settlement and towards whom there was a sentiment of indebtedness. A further complication, however, arises. No Mennonite village with the name of Reinland existed in Russia, certainly not in the Chortitza, Fürstenland, Bergthal or Molotschna colonies.¹⁵

Although it is difficult to establish the origin of the name with certainty, it is a reasonable and logical suggestion that this name can be traced to a village in old West Prussia (present day Poland). In the Gross Werder, the delta area between the Vistula and Nogat rivers, and only a few miles from the Frisches Haff of the Baltic Sea lay the old village of Reinland. Between 1789 and 1807 thirty Mennonite families, perhaps including some unmarried adults, moved from Reinland to Russia. More may have emigrated later.

Although most of these moved to the Molotschna Colony (Jacob Harder and Herman Peters, who moved to Neuendorf, Chortitza, in 1789 were exceptions) and there is no evidence at hand to indicate that

any of the original Reinland, Manitoba, settlers traced their origins to Reinland, West Prussia, a connection, nevertheless, existed. Peter Wiens, who moved to Reinland, Manitoba, in 1875, and his brother, Jacob Wiens, were both born in Rosenort, West Prussia, only a few miles from Reinland. It is altogether likely that Peter Wiens, who together with Isaak Müller, Neuhorst, constituted the *Vorstand* (executive) of the Reinland Mennonite Colony, as the West Reserve was known at the time, played a key role in the naming of the villages. Since Peter Wiens was born in Rosenort, West Prussia, and later moved to Fürstenau, West Prussia, again only a few miles from Reinland, and lived there with his family until he was thirty-five years old, he must certainly have been thoroughly familiar with the village in question.¹⁶ One must also remember that Peter Wiens lived in Russia for only twenty years and his Manitoba letters indicated a strong interest in his Prussian homeland. That Peter Wiens suggested the name of Reinland seems to be not only logical but probable. His Prussian background may also account for the naming of Rosenort, Gretna, five miles east of Reinland (even though the name Rosenort was found in Molotschna Colony in Russia and was also being used for a new Kleine Gemeinde village near Morris, Manitoba).

This is what the Mennonite Encyclopedia says about the Prussian village:

“Reinland, a village in West Prussia, Germany, was one of the later villages to be cultivated, being covered by a forest until 1725. The first settlers had predominantly Dutch names. The settlers were given permission to build walls and dams, dig trenches, and build windmills and sluices for drainage. They were released from work on the main dam. They were permitted to sell their land only to relatives. In 1936 there were still seven Mennonite families there, who were members of the Tiegenhagen (q.v.) congregation.¹⁷

Residents of the Village of Reinland — 1880

Two main sources of information were used to compile the table below. The first two columns giving names and birthdates are taken directly from the Reinland section of the *Gemeinde Buch der Kolonien Reinland worin befindlich ist wie viel Wirthe und Familien Glieder sind im Jahre 1880*.¹⁸ This book of village names and residents was sent by the Reinland Mennonite Colony to the provincial government for taxation purposes. Information for the third column was gleaned from passenger ship lists, 1875-1878. The fourth column, for which several sources have been used, indicates settlers' places of origin in Russia.



Reinland pioneers Abraham and Anna Dyck (Dueck) with their children Peter and Anna. The Dycks returned to Russia for some years for the sake of their children's education.

Table, pp. 48-49

Names of persons are written as they appear in the old records. In many cases spellings have changed considerably over the years e.g. Vehr, Vaehr, Fehre, Fehr — all of which are now generally spelled Fehr. Spellings like Wieb and Walle occur. Some names that appear as Dueck were later written Dyck and it seems that these names were sometimes used interchangeably. Both forms are still much in vogue. Two other forms of the name that were used in the village records were Dück, Dyck and Düeck.

Ages may not always be accurate in the passenger ship list column. However, the ship lists help to further the completion of the migration picture. Some names listed in the ship lists no longer appear in the Reinland records of 1880. In all likelihood some people moved to other villages. Marriage could be an important factor. Russian birthdates are given according to the Julian calendar. Twelve days have to be added to convert those dates to the Gregorian calendar now in general use.

GEMEINDE BUCH der KOLONIEN REINLAND

PASSENGER SHIP LISTS

PLACE OF ORIGIN

Names	Birthdates		
1. Johann Bergmann	30.5.25	Sarmatian 1877 #24 ¹⁸	Heuboden, Bergthal ²⁰
Frau Anna Wieb	24.2.22	Also lists Peter 18	Chortitz, Chortitza ²¹
Bernhard	4.9.63	Cornelius 15	
Heinrich	6.5.66	Maria 20	
Catharina	5.4.54	Jacob 16	
Gertrude	3.11.64	Sarah 24	
2. Peter Wiens	15.11.44	Sarmatian 1875 #28	Kronsthal, Chortitza ²²
Frau Maria Wiens	19.11.39		
Peter	27.11.79		
Maria	16.11.67		
Anna	7.9.69		
Catharina	12.9.77		
Maria Friesen	15.6.1804		
3. Johann Peters	28.12.39	Sardinian 1876 #20	Kronsthal, Chortitza ²³
Fr. Agatha Neufeld	9.8.40	Also lists Aganetha, 18	
Herrmann	26.8.62	(This is a corrected spelling. Aganetha's name was misspelled in ship list where her occupation was erroneously given as labourer but research by a family member has established identity.) ²⁴	
Jacob	4.10.63		
Johann	26.9.65		
Abraham	27.6.77		
Peter	27.6.77		
David	16.11.79		
Katharina	7.6.61		
Maria	20.6.67		
Helena	26.8.70		
Susanna	11.6.75		
4. Wilhelm Esau	1.7.51	Sarmatian 1875 #28	Probably Chortitza
Fr. Barbara Wiens	22.6.53		Kronsthal, Chortitza ²⁵
Maria	17.9.73		
Elizabeth	15.8.77		
Katharina	19.10.79		
Pflegesohn Jacob Faehr	11.6.66		
5. Jacob Wiens	31.7.07	Sarmatian 1875 #28	Kronsthal, Chortitza ²⁶
Fr. Anna Friesen	8.2.24	Also lists Anna 31, (spinster)	
Schwigersohn Jac. Wieler	27.8.56	Jacob 20, Franz 14, Marie Friesen 71, wife (widow?)	
Fr. Just. Wiens	27.7.57		
6. Jacob Vaehr	31.8.37	Sarmatian 1875 #28	Kronsthal, Chortitza ²⁷
Fr. Maria Wiens	25.5.33	Also lists Jacob 15, and Isak, infant. Isak died at the Emigrant's houses, Emerson, July 29, 1875 ²⁹	Insel Chortitz, Chortitza ²⁸
Söhne Johann	3.6.62		
Peter	1.5.67		
David	9.5.71		
Isak	22.9.78 ³⁰		
Töchter Helena	4.12.63		
Justienna	19.7.65		
Maria	12.2.76		
7. Isak Dueck	28.1.37	Sarmatian 1875 #28	Probably Chortitza
Frau Susana Vehr	13.9.38		
Isak	17.10.61		
Peter	1.10.68		
Herrmann	8.11.76		
Margaretha	20.8.63		
Elisabeth	13.5.66		
Susanna	6.4.79		
8. Peter Harms	28.8.50	Sarmatian 1875 #28	Osterwick, Chortitza ³¹
Söhne Peter	4.8.76	Lists Peter 24	
Jacob	16.8.79	Cath. 22 wife	
Töchter Elizabeth	24.11.72	Eliz. 2	
Pflegesöhne Joh. Vehr		Anna 1. inf.	
Peter Friesen	8.10.06	(The wife of Peter Harms, Katharina Wiens, died on Oct. 11, 1879) ³²	
9. Franz Froese	9.1.45	Quebec 1876 #22	Fürstenland ³³
Fr. Elisb. Friesen	1.6.51	(Elizabeth Friesen was the second wife of Franz Froese; ³⁴ his first wife Barbara Dyck, died in Russia on March 24, 1870.) ³⁵	
Johann	10.9.73		
Franz	2.9.77		
Peter	1.4.79		
Maria	3.4.68		
Elisabeth	25.8.75		
10. Bernh. Bergmann	20.2.51	Sardinian 1876 #39	Bergthal ³⁶
Fr. Helena Huebert	18.5.52	Also lists Helena 1, Susanna 42, spinster ³⁷	
Anna	15.9.76	(Helena, listed as 1 year old, probably passed away soon after arrival in Canada since second daughter Helena was born in 1878.)	
Helena	27.12.78	Sardinian 1876 #20	Probably Chortitza
11. Johann Fehre	10.3.40	(The family name is spelled Vehr in ship list)	
Fr. Anna Niessen	11.4.40		
Johann	3.6.79		
Catharina	13.1.68		
Maria	23.8.72		
12. Jacob Wiens	11.5.55	Sarmatian 1875 #28	Kronsthal, Chortitza ³⁸
Herrmann Dueck	12.8.33	Sardinian 1875 #61	
Fr. Helena Fehr	21.4.33	Also lists Isaak 18, Jacob 15	
Peter	15.4.62	(The family name is spelled Dyck in the ship list.)	
Herrmann	27.3.67		
Johann	21.11.72		
Helena	24.7.64		
Elizabeth	10.3.69		
Anna	23.6.75		

GEMEINDE BUCH der KOLONIEN REINLAND		PASSENGER SHIP LISTS	PLACE OF ORIGIN
Names	Birthdates		
14. Johann Walle Fr. Helena Hilbrand Isak Helena Anna	22.10.22 23.10.23 6.1.61 3.8.59 3.4.65	Peruvian 1878 #27 Also lists Johan 23, Kornelius 21	Probably Chortitza
15. Franz Rempel Fr. Eva Neufeld Abraham Franz Johann Gerhard Judith Elisabeth Maria Anna Katharina Susanna	17.11.36 29.9.41 13.6.62 1.2.63 31.5.64 25.11.67 4.5.66 24.10.69 14.11.71 15.10.73 18.10.75 26.10.78	Quebec 1876 #22	Fürstenland ³⁹
16. Jacob Giesbrecht Fr. Anna Fehr Jacob Isak Johann Cornelius Anna Elisabeth Magaretha Dienstbote Isak Vaehr	1.6.42 31.10.45 7.8.67 3.6.70 15.8.72 1.12.76 17.2.69 10.6.74 8.8.79 .63	Sardinian 1875 #61 (Besides Giesbrecht and Hermann Dyck families, a total of 17 persons, there were only 3 other Mennonites on this ship.)	
17. Cornelius Vaehr Fr. Maria Vaehr Cornelius Isak Jacob Peter Maria	8.7.36 14.12.36 10.11.61 6.5.67 12.9.70 28.11.78 2.9.65	Sardinian 1876 #20 Also lists David 16, labourer Joh. 15, spinster (?) (The family name is spelled Vehr in ship list.)	
18. Jacob Faehr Fr. Maria Braun Maria	19.8.51 15.2.51 10.4.78	Sardinian 1876 #20 (The family name is spelled Vehr in ship list.)	
19. Peter Letkemann Fr. Anna Fehr Johann Peter Jacob Anna Helena Elisabeth Catharina	22.5.35 4.6.38 3.11.64 29.2.68 1.5.77 17.5.66 30.10.70 12.2.72 12.2.75	Sardinian 1876 #20	Probably Chortitza
20. Isak Vaehr Fr. Elisabeth Banmann	17.11.10 28.5.21	Peruvian 1875 #30	
21. Abraham Dueck Fr. Anna Friesen Peter Anna	24.5.49 22.1.47 13.4.74 .78	Quebec 1876 #22 (The family name is spelled Dyck in ship list and in family records. The birthdate of Anna is 10.18.78.) Abraham Dyck was the brother of Barbara Dyck, first wife of Franz Froese. ⁴¹)	Fürstenland ⁴⁰
22. Peter Wiens Fr. Maria Wiens	3.4.20 30.12.15	Landlose Sarmatian 1875 #28	Kronsthal, Chortitza ⁴² (born Rosenort, Prussia) ⁴³ Kronsthal, Chortitza ⁴⁴ (born Fürstenau, Prussia) ⁴⁵
23. Johann Vaehr Fr. Maria Wiens	4.2.13 18.7.11	Sarmatian 1877 #24	
24. Wilhelm Rempel Fr. Sara Abrams Agatha Sara Wittwe Sara M....	29.12.46 13.7.48 31.5.71 18.5.76 23.11.26	Peruvian 1878 #27	Rosenthal, Chortitza ⁴⁶ Neuenburg, Chortitza
(The totals to this point are 71 male and 73 female, a total of population of 144. The information below is then appended.) Die in Reinland und anderwärts Landg.			
Jacob Toews gestorben Peter Bergmann Cornl. Bergmann David Vaehr Johann Vaehr Joh. Walle Fr. Maria Letkemann Cornl. Walle Abram Friesen Jacob Dueck	27.5.38 21.5.61 5.10.39 10.10.60 18.12.55 18.4.61 29.10.57 28.10.61	Sarmatian 1877 #24 Sarmatian 1877 #24 (Also listed in #1.) (Also listed in #14.)	Heuboden, Bergthal Heuboden, Bergthal (Peter and Cornelius Bergmann were sons of the Johann Bergmanns. See #1.) Probably Chortitza
(At the end of the Reinland section of the Gemeindebuch the following entry of the Peter Abrams family is appended. Peter Abrams was the brother-in-law of Wilhelm Rempel. Abrams moved to Schanzenfeld but in 1881 came to Reinland where he was a merchant. ⁴⁷ The Peter Abrams family was probably added to the Reinland section of the Gemeindebuch in 1881.)			
Peter Abrams Susana Abrams Willhelm Sara Agatha Peter Schwester Catharina	28.2.52 15.6.54 20.8.74 21.11.75 10.9.77 27.12.78 10.1.64	Peruvian 1878 #27	Neuenburg, Chortitza

Summary of Families Migrating to Reinland 1875-78⁴⁸

The summary should not be considered complete. Some other families apparently arrived during this time and either moved out of the village soon after arrival or lived elsewhere temporarily before coming to Reinland.

Tombstone of pioneer Johann Peters.



1. The S.S. Hibernian (1874 No. 63) arrived at Quebec on August 27, 1874. It carried the Jacob Fehrs and two of their sons. The family stayed on the East Reserve for a year and came to Reinland in 1875.
2. The S.S. Sarmatian (1875 No. 28) sailed from Liverpool on June 24, 1875, and arrived at Quebec on July 6, 1875. This ship carried the families Peter Wiens, Wilhelm Esau, Jacob Wiens, Sr. and Jr., Isaak Dueck, Peter Harms, Peter Wiens Jr., Jacob Fehr. Most or all of these came from the villages of Kronsthal or Osterwick, Chortitza.
3. The S.S. Peruvian (1875 No. 30) sailed from Liverpool and arrived at Quebec on July 13, 1875. Bound for Reinland were Mr. and Mrs. Isak Vaehr.
4. The S. S. Sardinian (1875 No. 61) sailed from Liverpool on September 23, 1875, and arrived at Quebec on October 5, 1875. Reinland-bound families aboard were those of Hermann Dyck and Jacob Giesbrecht.
5. The S.S. Sardinian (1876 No. 20) sailed from Liverpool on June 8, 1876, and arrived at Quebec on June 23, 1876. It contained the Johann Peters, Johann Vaehr, Cornelius Vaehr, Jacob Vaehr and Peter Letkemann families.
6. The S.S. Quebec (1876 No. 22) sailed from Liverpool on June 8, 1876 and arrived at Quebec on June 23, 1876. It contained three Fürstenländer families bound for Reinland: Franz Froese, Franz Rempel, Abraham Dueck. Franz Froese was one of the two leaders of this group.
7. The S.S. Sardinian (1876 No. 39) departed from Liverpool on July 20, 1876 and brought the Bernhard Bergmanns. It arrived at Quebec on July 30, 1876. The origin of the group travelling with this ship is given as Bergthal Colony.
8. The S.S. Sarmatian (1877 No. 24) departed from Liverpool on June 21, 1877, and arrived at Quebec on June 30, 1877. Reinland-bound families aboard were Joh. Bergmann, a group leader, and Joh. Vaehr.
9. The S.S. Peruvian (1878 No. 27) sailed from Liverpool on June 20, 1878, and arrived at Quebec on June 30, 1878. It carried the families Joh. Walle, Wilhelm Rempel and Peter Abrams.

West of the Red

With surprising rapidity, approaching the wonders of the Arabian Tale of Aladdin, quaint, home-like little villages were dotted over the reserve.

— J. F. Galbraith

In the summer of 1875 nearly one thousand settlers moved to the land between the Red and the Pembinas, the country that Jacob Yost Schantz had explored and found to be good. The new settlement, first termed Reinland Mennonite Colony by its leadership, came to be known as the West Reserve. The colony, piloted through the crises of infancy by Elder Johann Wiebe, a man of faith, and Isaak Müller, a man of energy and determination, manifested an amazing degree of organization and vitality. But the pioneering years were hard years and tribute was earned by many men and women who shared in the toil and struggle. By 1880 new and foreboding clouds were gathering on the horizon. The tempest struck in all its fury and when the skies cleared somewhat at the end of the next decade, new patterns in church, school and colony organization had emerged in the West Reserve.



Photo courtesy Harold Fuhk

CHAPTER FOUR

Reinland Mennonite Colony

When the immigrants of 1875 and 1876 reached their new land there was not much time for homesickness and nostalgia. They arrived in mid-summer and the days were getting shorter. Homes had to be built before the onslaught of the blizzards and hay for the cattle had to be made while the grass was still tall. Lumber and firewood had to be hauled from the woods and food had to be provided for the families. Ordinary words like bread and blanket, house and hay, wood and water were key words in the settler's vocabulary.

But intense as the struggle for survival was in the early years, it was not all-encompassing. By the end of 1876 there were classes for the children in every village. Worship services were held and a log church building had been constructed. An awareness of higher purposes was evident from the outset.

Neither were the physical struggles against the elements and the economic struggles against poverty and starvation chaotic fights of luck and chance. This chapter deals with the organization of the young colony, the administrative institutions that ensured the success of the West Reserve in its infancy.

Official Creation of the West Reserve

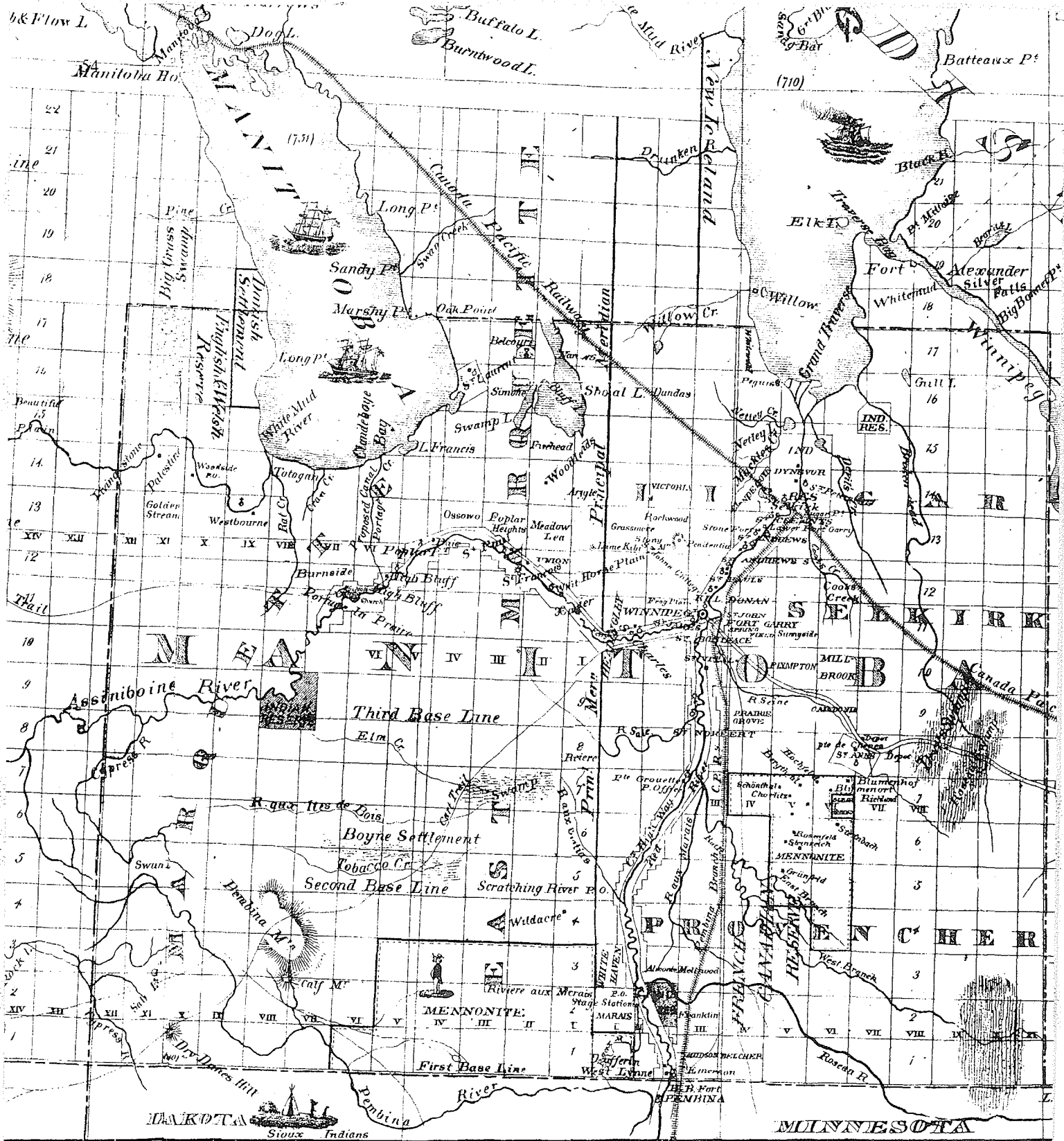
In 1875 Schantz and Hespeler had assured the Mennonites encamped at Fort Dufferin that it would be possible to create a new reserve west of the Red River. The settlement was begun. In 1876 Schantz' urgent appeal to the government was finally and officially answered. Seventeen townships were set aside for the reserve. The territory included the lands that Schantz had requested, not only the higher stretch of fertile prairie, but also the lower haylands around Buffalo Creek and the woodlands along the Pembina escarpment.

Pioneer Villages

Eighteen villages sprouted on the western part of the reserve that

Early Mennonite settlers' dwelling on the prairies.





1875 summer. These included Schoenwiese, Rosengart, Neuhorst, Neuendorf, Hochfeld, Neuenburg, Osterwick, Rosenthal, Chortitz, Blumengart, Reinland, Blumenort, Rosenort, Blumstein, Ebenfeld, Blumenfeld, Schanzenfeld, and Rosenfeld.¹ The first ten names were an inheritance from the old mother colony of Chortitza. Blumenort, Rosenort and Blumstein were Molotschna names but interestingly Blumenort and Rosenort, as well as Reinland, occurred in the immediate Prussian vicinity where Peter Wiens, the secretary of the new West Reserve colony, was born and raised and was a merchant before moving to Russia. The names of Ebenfeld, Rosenfeld and Blumenfeld were found in the younger colonies of the Ukraine (Ebenfeld and Rosenfeld in Borosenko²; Blumenfeld in Neplujewka, Nikopol). Rosenfeld, located some two miles south-west of the present town of the same name, was settled by pioneers of Fürstenländer origin, but was geographically separated from the other villages. Schanzenfeld, described by contemporary writers as the most beautiful of the early villages, was named after Jacob Yost Schantz, the Ontario benefactor of the colony.

Blumenort had a temporary location at first but by the spring of 1876 had been moved to its present site. The old location, just west of the new one, became the community pasture. Whereas Reinland and Rosenthal were early windmill sites, Blumenort was the location of the first steam-operated flour mill on the West Reserve.³

Peter Wiens reported in *Herold der Wahrheit* in November, 1877, that the West Reserve settlement consisted of twenty-five villages.⁴ The appearance of seven new villages in the 1876-1877 period is indicated. Schantz, who again visited the Manitoba colonies in 1877, confirms Wiens' figure and adds that 303 families came to the West Reserve in 1875, another 147 came in 1876 and 35 families arrived in 1877. At the end of the same year, the East Reserve had thirty-eight villages with a total of seven hundred families.⁵

In the late 1870's the Manitoba Mennonite population pattern shifted dramatically. Most of the good agricultural land in the East Reserve had been occupied by 1877. The eastern half of the West Reserve was still largely unsettled. In 1878 a movement of Bergthaler families from the East Reserve to new homes west of the Red gained great momentum. Wagon load after wagon load of people and every kind of household and farm supply cargo set out westward. Cattle were driven along. Sometimes even buildings were dismantled and the lumber was taken on the trek to be reassembled at the new site.

It is difficult to establish with certainty the exact dates of the founding of many Bergthaler villages. Some families came across as early as 1876. A number of early families moved to the west of the reserve, to Waldheim and Hoffnungsfeld and other locations on the border of the existing settlement. The majority of the Bergthal settlers made their homes in the eastern half and founded Altbergthal,

On opposite page, The postage stamp province. The map of Manitoba was "entered according to the Act of Parliament of Canada in the year 1876 by Jas. Cleland Hamilton in the Office of the Minister of Agriculture." Note the interesting railway plans.

Neubergthal, Schoenthal, Gnadenfeld, Sommerfeld, Edenburg, Halbstadt, Silberfeld, Weidenfeld, Altona, Schoenau, Blumenthal, Neuhoftung, Lichtfeld, Rudnerweide, Bergfeld, Hochstadt, Edenthal, Strassberg, Schoenhorst and other villages. (Neuanlage, founded in 1878 by a group of settlers coming largely from the Molotschna Colony, associated itself with the Bergthaler.) One difficulty in ascertaining founding dates results from the haphazard way in which at least some of these villages began. Both the East Reserve settlement and the Chortitza-Fürstenland villages of the West Reserve had strong organizational leadership at both colony and village levels. The early Bergthaler families coming across the river were largely on their own and organization came later. Sometimes three or four families settled in one location and a few more in another and village development was either gradual or did not really occur at all.

Some Bergthaler villages like Weidenfeld disintegrated very early.⁶ Beautifully treed Neubergthal and the well-preserved village of Sommerfeld have survived as village communities for a century.

In a ten year period about four hundred Bergthaler families migrated from the East Reserve to the West Reserve. A number of families of Bergthal Colony origin came to the West Reserve directly from Russia. The Bernhard Bergmanns, who arrived from Russia in 1876, and made their appearance in Reinland village records in 1877, seem to be one such family. Johann Bergmann was of Bergthal origin and came directly to Reinland in 1877 (Bergmann's second wife, whom he had married just before migrating to Canada, was from Chortitza.)⁷

One result of the Bergthaler westward migration was that both the population and the number of villages in the West Reserve doubled in a decade. The migration was to have implications at all levels of West Reserve development — implications that will be discussed further in later chapters. But during the first five years the initiative in the West Reserve, administratively, socio-economically and spiritually, remained with the Chortitza-Fürstenland settlers who called the reserve Reinland Mennonite Colony.

Early West Reserve Organization

An appeal for aid addressed to Jacob Y. Schantz on September 3, 1875, and published in *Herold der Wahrheit*⁸, two months later, is signed by the following (translations in parentheses are author's):

Johann Wiebe, Aeltester (Elder)	
Jacob Wiens	} Lehrer (Ministers)
Gerhard Pätkau	
Cornelius Peters	
Isaak Müller	} Vorstand (Executive)
Peter Wiens	

The signatures identify the spiritual and secular leadership of a colony that had existed for only a matter of weeks.

The decision to elect an *Obervorsteher* (chief superintendent) of the colony was made at the Fort Dufferin brotherhood meeting in July, 1875.⁹ It is highly probable that the election of Isaak Müller, the first to hold the office in the new colony, actually took place at Fort Dufferin before the immigrants divided into village groups. If, as has been suggested by some historians, Isaak Müller already occupied the position of colony head in Fürstenland, a general confirmation of Müller by the immigrants would still have been necessary because a large proportion of the newcomers were not of Fürstenland background.

The use of the term *Obervorsteher* instead of *Oberschulze* is interesting, since the latter term, meaning literally head mayor, was used in Russia and by the East Reserve Bergthaler. One of the themes of the Dufferin brotherhood meeting, called and led by Elder Johann Wiebe, was that the old practice of using physical force and worldly authority to punish crimes and acts of sin should be abolished. In Elder Wiebe's opinion, this practice had prevailed in the Russian colonies to the detriment of the authority of church and Scripture.¹⁰ The term *Oberschulze* was seen as an identification with an aspect of the Russian experience that ran counter to the reform movement in America envisioned by Elder Wiebe. Isaak Müller generally avoided the use of the term *Oberschulze*.^{*} So did his successors in the Reinland Mennonite Colony and years later in Saskatchewan and Mexico.

The *Schulzen* or mayors of villages were also elected early. The first elections took place at the immigration house or immediately upon arrival at the village sites.

In general the ministry, led by Elder Wiebe, was more closely involved in colony administration than had been the case in the Russian Mennonite colonies. Since the ministry saw the migration to Canada in terms of halting the drift towards the exercise of worldly authority, it was concerned that the gains of the migration would not be lost. Although the day to day administration of village and colony affairs was left to the *Schulzen* and the colony executive, major directions were under strong clerical influence from the start at Fort Dufferin. Soon the ministry became involved in disciplining members who did not cooperate in colony decisions. The ministry became involved in the later struggle for retaining the village system and in the opposition against the establishment of municipalities.

Peter Wiens, Reinland, the former Prussian merchant, held a key administrative position as secretary. He was close to Isaak Müller, attended all general meetings with village heads and joint meetings with Elder Wiebe. Wiens became a strong spokesman for the colony in *Herold der Wahrheit*, *Der Nebraska Ansiedler* and its successor *Die Rundschau* (later *Mennonitische Rundschau*), all German language Mennonite newspapers published in the United States. Some of Wiens' articles were translated into English and published in *Herald of Truth*.

^{*}Peter Wiens, the colony secretary, occasionally used the term *Oberschulze* quite vigorously.

Wiens' good relations with American Mennonite publisher John F. Funk stood the young colony in good stead.¹¹

In 1877 Peter Wiens wrote a detailed report on the administration of the Reinland Mennonite Colony. The report appeared in the German language *Herold der Wahrheit* and the English language *Herald of Truth* in November of that year. The English version is somewhat cumbersome and, though generally accurate, sometimes runs into debatable translation. The German article is rich in the administrative terminology of the day which is lost in translation. The article is reproduced in both versions.

A Brief Account of the Government of the Reinland Mennonite Settlement in Dufferin, or West Lynne, Manitoba.

(There have been various Newspaper articles going the rounds, representing the manner in which the Russian Mennonite churches are governed, some of which are entirely false. For the purpose of correcting some of these misstatements Bro. P. Wiens, of Reinland has written the following article, giving a correct statement of the facts as they are.)

Editor

This settlement consists of twenty-five villages, with about five hundred inhabitants,* and is governed in the following manner:

In matters concerning the church, there is one bishop for the whole settlement, and seven ministers, which are elected for life, and preach the word of God in their public meetings. In the management of the affairs of the church, the bishop occupies the highest position, and is looked to first in deciding and settling any difficulties that may arise in the church. The bishop and preachers, where such are needed, are chosen by lot by the church during life.¹²

For the management of their temporal affairs, to see after roads, bridges, &c., the colony has a district office in Reinland. To fill this office the whole colony elects a general superintendent. Each village, a director and two assistants. A secretary for the district office is hired for a year. The general superintendent or director, and the village directors, or village superintendents, as they are sometimes called, and their assistants are elected for two years. The general superintendent and the village superintendents are each paid a small salary.

The general superintendent gives all general orders, or when anything is to be done, the order from him is made known through the secretary to the village superintendents, who make the villages, who in turn make it known to the village. When matters of importance are to be attended to the general superintendent, through the secretary calls all the village superintendents to a general conference, in which all the village superintendents in the district must appear in Reinland, and sometimes also the bishop of the church takes part in their

councils. The general superintendent, when considered necessary, makes known the proceedings of the council, through the secretary of the village superintendents, who make it known in the villages. Ofttimes also, when the proceedings are short, and they can remember them without difficulty, the proceedings are delivered verbally to the village superintendents. As long as everything goes on in peace and all are obedient, the general superintendent and the village superintendents have only to give the needful instructions; but if any become disobedient, and refuse to obey the instructions of the general and village superintendents, they are, after they have been exhorted several times, given over to the bishop of the church. He again exhorts them to obedience. If they hear him all is again well. If, however, they refuse to hear him, the bishop and the general superintendent together visit them several times, in order, if possible, to adjust the difficulties; sometimes also some of the ministers go with them to assist in settling the difficulties. If they hear these, all is well again; but if they refuse to hear them, they are called into the church before the whole congregation, where a counsel is held with them before the whole congregation, where the bishop is the director of the meeting. The bishop presents the matter to the congregation and makes the necessary inquiries of them, and if the whole congregation agrees, when these disobedient persons are not willing to hear, after the matter has been again, seriously and solemnly presented to them, then these disobedient persons are excommunicated from the church, so that they can no longer be members of the church until they become obedient, acknowledge that they have done wrong, and ask for forgiveness. When an excommunicated member comes again in this manner, penitent and sorry, he is presented before the congregation, and when he there makes his confession, he is again, according to the word of God, received into the church.

The entire colony has an office for the care of orphans, to fill which two persons are elected for three years. These have in charge all money of the orphans, widows, and other weakly per-

**This should obviously read families. The error was corrected in a later edition of the paper.*

sons, which they loan out at five per cent, on good security, and are required to keep a correct account of all their transactions.

The colony also has a fire office, to which a fire overseer is chosen. In this office every family is secured and a record is kept of the amount of property that each family has secured. When a fire occurs, the fire overseer makes an estimate of the percentage of the loss. He then reports to the village superintendents who collect the money and hand it over to the fire overseer who pays it to the person that sustained the loss.

Each village also has a school teacher who is employed by the village for a year, for such salary as they can agree upon. The bishop and ministers receive no pay.

The above is briefly an account of the manner in which our colony is conducted.

I will further give a brief account of the products of our colony. We harvested 35,746 bushels of wheat, 8,969 bushels of barley, 2,782 of oats, 264 bu. of millet, 63 bu. of flax seed, 16,-244 bu. of potatoes. This is about what our harvest amounted to this year. Possibly some more, some less as it is not all threshed.

See Clarence Hiebert, Brothers in Deed to Brothers in Need, p. 330.

We would probably have harvested more if we had had more seed. We are also still in need of cattle and horses to cultivate our lands properly. Some have no cattle yet with which to plow, and no cows to milk.

The heavy rains did some damage in some of the villages, but, thanks be to God for the blessings of the harvest which we gathered, for we have enough for bread for a year, and possibly also for clothing, of which there is still need in some places. But to pay debts we are not yet able, and hence, feel a heavy burden resting upon us. But our heavenly Father, who thus far has helped us and provided for us, will also, we hope, in the future provide for us. Glory be to His name for his inexhaustible love, grace, mercy and faithfulness through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Peter Wienns.

Oct. 12. 1876

Note.- We need about 33,500 bushels of wheat to provide the colony with bread for one year, beside the other grain and potatoes.

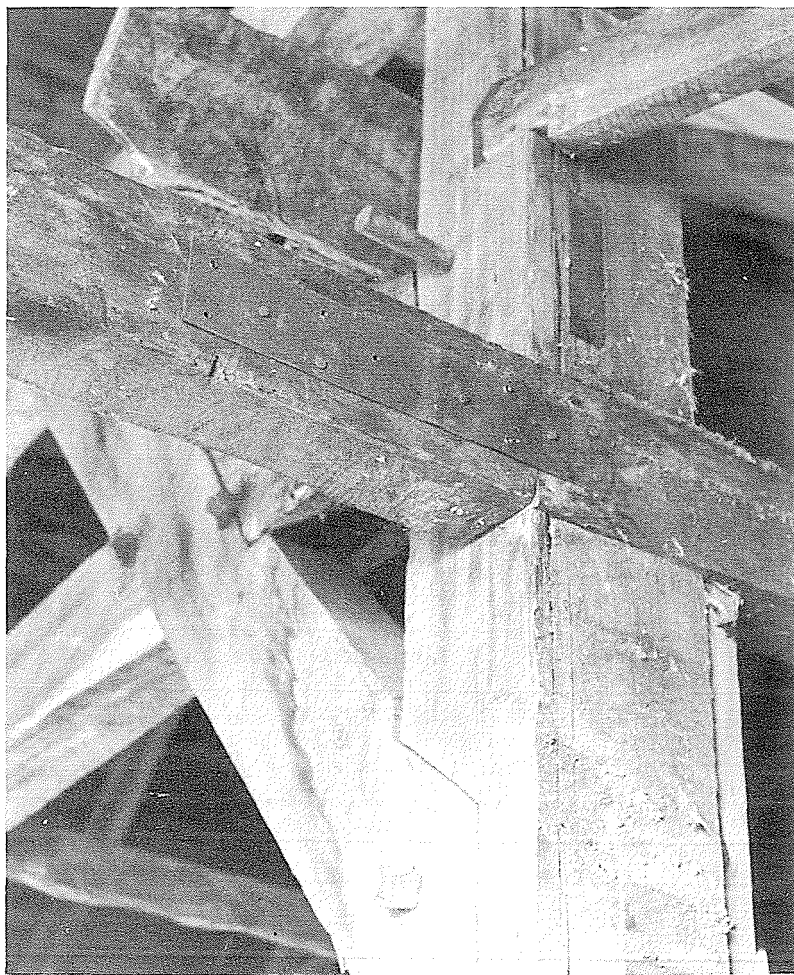


Photo courtesy Harold Funk.

Mute testimony to pioneer building skill.

Kurzer Bericht über die Verwaltung der Kleinländer Mennoniten Ko- lonie bei Dufferin oder West Lynn, Manitoba.

Verschiedene Zeitungsartikel machten die Kolonie, die die Art und Weise darstellen sollte, wie die russisch-mennonitischen Gemeinden ihre Dörfer verwaltet werden, und da in den von diesen Artikeln diese Sache ganz falsch dargestellt wurde, sandte uns Br. uns von Kleinland den nachstehenden Bericht, die Thatsachen angehend wie sie sich wirklich verhalten. — E d i t o r.]

Diese Kolonie die jetzt aus 25 Dörfern besteht mit ungefähr 500 Einwohnern, wird auf der Art verwaltet und registriert.

Was die geistliche Verwaltung betrifft so ist die ganze Kolonie einem Kirchenältesten (Pfarrer) und sieben Kirchenlehrern (Predigern) zur Lebenszeit gewählt und das Wort ist in den öffentlichen Versammlungen. Wo Uneinigkeiten zu entscheiden zurechtzumachen sind ist der Kirchenälteste die erste Person. Der Kirchenälteste und Kirchenlehrer werden, wo solche nöthig sind, durch das Loos der Gemeinde für Lebenszeit erwählt.

Was die Verwaltung ihrer zeitlichen Sachen betrifft als Straßen, Brücken u. s. w. Ordnung zu halten, hat die Kolonie ein Amt in Kleinland. Zu diesem Bezirksamt wird von der ganzen Kolonie ein Oberster erwählt. Ein jedes Dorf wählt Vorsteher und zwei Beisitzer. Ein Schreiber für das Bezirksamt wird auf Ein Jahr erwählt. Der Oberste, auch Vorstand, und die Dorfvorsteher, auch Dorfamt genannt, sowie die Beisitzer, werden zwei Jahre erwählt. Der Oberste und die Dorfvorsteher werden mit einem kleinen Gehalt belohnet.

Der Oberste ordnet alles an und was etwas gemacht oder gethan werden soll, es von ihm aus, durch den Schreiber des Amtes, den Dorfvorstehern bekannt gemacht, die es alsdann in ihren Dorfschaften ausführen. Wenn wichtige Sachen vorliegen sind, läßt der Oberste durch den Schreiber an alle Dorfvorsteher eine Zusammenkunft rufen, worauf alle Dorfvorsteher im Bezirksamt in Kleinland zu erscheinen

haben, an welchem Stelle dann auch manchmal der Kirchenälteste Antheil nimmt. Was da verhandelt und besprochen wird läßt der Oberste, wenn für nöthig betrachtet, es durch den Schreiber an alle Dorfvorsteher bekannt machen, die es dann in ihren Dorfschaften bekannt machen. Auch geschieht es manchmal, wenn die Verhandlungen nur kurz und die Dorfvorsteher sie gut behalten können, daß sie ihnen nur mündlich mitgegeben werden. Nur so lange es friedlich zugeht und alles befolgt wird, hat der Oberste und die Dorfvorsteher anzuordnen; werden aber welche ungehorsam, die dem Obersten und den Dorfvorstehern nicht mehr Gehör geben wollen, so werden sie, nachdem sie mehrmals ermahnt wurden, dem Kirchenältesten angezeigt. Dieser ermahnt sie dann zur Gehorsamkeit. Hören sie ihn, so ist wieder alles in der Ordnung; hören sie ihn aber nicht, so besucht der Kirchenälteste und der Oberste sie einige Mal um womöglich die Schwierigkeit zurechtzumachen, einige Mal gehen auch mehrere Lehrer mit um die Sache helfen zu schlichten. Hören sie diese, so ist wieder alles in der Ordnung; hören sie diese aber nicht, so werden sie vor die ganze Gemeinde in die Kirche gefordert, wo dann die Sache vor der ganzen Gemeinde mit ihnen verhandelt wird, wobei der Kirchenälteste der Vorsteher ist. Dieser fragt dann die Gemeinde an und stellt ihr die Sache vor, und wird die ganze Gemeinde darin einig, wenn diese Ungehorsame nicht hören wollen, denen die Sache noch sehr an das Herz gelegt wird, so werden diese von unserer Gemeinde ganz ausgeschlossen, daß sie keine Mennoniten mehr sind so lange sie sich nicht wieder gehorsamlich erzeigen, Abbitte thun und es bekennen daß sie unrecht gethan haben. Kommt ein abgesonderter Gemeindeglied aber wieder auf eine solche Weise, reumüthig und bußfertig, zurück, so wird es in der Kirche vor die Gemeinde gestellt, und so es dieser Abbitte thut, so wird es wieder in die Gemeinde aufgenommen, laut dem Worte Gottes.

Noch hat die ganze Kolonie ein Waisenamt, wozu zwei Männer auf drei Jahre erwählt werden. In dieses Waisenamt kommen alle unmündige Kinder, Wittwen und schwache Personen ihr Geld, welches zu fünf Procent ausgeliehen wird gegen glaubhafte Bürgen. Ueber dieses haben die beiden Männer Rechnung zu führen.

Auch hat die Kolonie ein Brandamt, wozu ein Brandälteste erwählt wird. In diesem Brandamt sind alle Familien versichert und eingeschrieben wie viel eine jede Familie versichert ist. Wenn nun ein Brandschaden entsteht so berechnet der Brandälteste wie viel es auf hundert Dollar macht. Dann sendet er seinen Bericht ein an die Dorfvorsteher, die das Geld collectiren und es dem Brandältesten übergeben, der es dann dem Verunglückten ausbezahlt.

Auch hat jedes Dorf einen Schlichter, welcher von der Dorfschaft auf Ein Jahr gemietet wird für eine gewisse Summe, so wie sie darüber einig werden können. Der Kirchenälteste und die Kirchenlehrer bekommen keine Besoldung. Also ist dies ein kurzer Bericht über unsere Verwaltung und Anordnung unserer Kolonie.

Noch ein kurzer Bericht über den Erntesegen dieses Jahres.

Weizen ernteten wir 35746 Buschel, Gerste 8969 Buschel, Hafer 2782 Buschel, Hirse 264 Buschel, Roggen 63 Buschel, Leinsamen 63 Buschel, Kartoffeln 16244 Buschel. Dies ist ungefähr den Erntesegen für dieses Jahr, mag vielleicht etwas mehr oder weniger sein, denn es ist noch nicht alles aus dem Stroh. Wir hätten vielleicht mehr geerntet wenn wir von allen Sorten mehr Saat gehabt hätten. Auch fehlt uns immer noch am Vieh um den Acker recht zu bearbeiten, denn einige haben noch kein Vieh zum Pflügen und auch keine Kühe zum Melken.

Das Regenwasser hat auch in einigen Dörfern Schaden gethan, aber dem Herrn sei Lob und Dank gesagt für den schönen Erntesegen, denn wir haben so viel geerntet daß wir auf Ein Jahr unser Brod haben, und auch vielleicht für Kleidung ausreicht, an welchen es Stellenweise noch mangelt; aber um Schulden zu bezahlen, dazu reicht es noch nicht hin, so daß wir uns immer noch in einer bedrängten Lage befinden. Aber der liebe Gott, der so lange geholfen und für uns gesorgt hat, wird, wie wir hoffen, auch fernerhin seine Hülfe nicht entziehen. Ihm sei Ehre, Lob, Preis und Dank für seine unerschöpfliche Gnade, Liebe und Treue, durch Jesum Christum, unserm Heilande, Amen.

Peter Wienns.

Isaak Müller — An Outstanding West Reserve Leader

An early report on the Reinland Mennonite Colony by J. B. McLaren contained these interesting comments:

A Kaiser or general business manager of the community is elected annually. He and the village masters constitute a kind of municipal council. They meet every Saturday afternoon in Reinland or Windmill village, as it is the "Capital" of the colony and has the largest church.¹³

The reference to a Kaiser is amusing but the term is used for the *Obervorsteher* on more than one occasion. It originated with Isaak Müller, the first head of the colony executive, who was nicknamed Kaiser Müller and became known by that name throughout the villages. Later the nickname was mistakenly used as the "title" of one of his successors, Franz Froese, Reinland, who is referred to as a Kaiser in a report on his meeting with Sir Wilfrid Laurier. According to an old letter fragment Laurier commented that perhaps Froese was not a Kaiser but he certainly was a prince!¹⁴

McLaren, too, assumes that the nickname was the Mennonites' designation for its colony superintendent. But the settlers did have reason to dub Müller with that name. The dynamic, strong-willed and often authoritarian Isaak Müller was one of the most important public figures that the West Reserve has seen in its over one hundred year history.

Born on June 19, 1824,¹⁵ Müller was fifty-one years old when he assumed his position in the West Reserve. He had just come to Canada with his wife Gertrude, and children and grandchildren and settled in Neuhorst. He had been a group leader aboard the SS Quebec on its Atlantic voyage.¹⁶

Müller's first great accomplishment as *Obervorsteher* was organizational. The eighteen villages that sprang up in 1875 had effective local government through which village activities and the common interests of the whole colony could be co-ordinated. This initial situation, in large measure a credit to Müller, supported by the prestige of Elder Johann Wiebe, was a prerequisite to the success of Müller's other achievements in the pioneer era.

Müllers's task was an unenviable one from the beginning. The young settlement faced an instant food and supply problem and a staggering debt on its share of a government loan made to the two Manitoba Mennonite reserves and guaranteed by Mennonites from Ontario. Though economic prosperity came rapidly after the effects of agricultural development began to show, the early years were years of poverty for a large segment of the West Reserve population. To Müller fell not only the enormous task of managing the West Reserve's share of the debt and the distribution of goods purchased with this money but also the later work of collection.

Müller sent out directive after directive to the village officials and

organized the resources of each community for the long ox-cart journeys to West Lynne, Emerson or Pembina to bring back food, seed-grain and *Schantz-Waren* (supplies sent to the colony by J. Y. Schantz). It was Müller who in the face of the Manitoba blizzard organized the erection of a line of posts from Emerson to the Pembina hills to guide the travellers and give them security.¹⁷

The energetic *Obervorsteher* kept in touch with new immigrants arriving in 1876 and immediately upon their arrival from Russia ordered them to divide into village groups and to elect their officials.¹⁸ Seemingly village officials, at least on occasion, seem to have been elected before families moved to the village site.¹⁹ (It is quite possible that Reinland's first *Schulze* was elected at Fort Dufferin.)

All villages were instructed to keep accurate records. Müller protected the rights of the village membership (consisting of all farmers who held land within village boundaries) by insisting that the village books be read at a public meeting at the end of the year. The records of each village also had to be handed in to the colony office at Reinland for annual checking.²⁰

Before the settlement was a year old Müller was directing the delivery of supplies and the placement of work crews at the church construction site in Reinland. In the fall of 1876 he ordered the villages, in no uncertain terms, to begin school instruction and three years later requested that school buildings be erected.

In the 1880's Müller's attentions were increasingly drawn to new problems. He fought hard for the village landholding system. He became deeply involved in a struggle with the new municipality, a phase discussed in another chapter. By the end of Müller's tenure many changes had occurred in the settlement. Many more changes were in the offing. But the great crisis of the infant years had been overcome. When Müller left the services of the colony, the viability of the prairie experiment had been established. The West Reserve was to survive. Its foundations were to be more secure because of the thorough groundwork of Isaak Müller.

Dee Brotschuld

Dee Brotschuld is the title of a Low-German drama written for the Manitoba Mennonite centennial by Gerhard Ens.²¹ Its presentation at the Reinland centennial celebrations in 1975 was a fitting commemoration of an event of great significance to the pioneers. *Brotschuld*, literally debt for bread, was a term used to describe the \$100,000 government loan that was negotiated by Jacob Y. Schantz and the Ontario Aid Committee (organized by the Ontario Mennonites to assist the migration of Mennonites from Russia) to meet the desperate need for provisions in the Manitoba colonies. Schantz and the Committee had already helped to arrange assistance in the form of voluntary contributions and direct loans to the immigrants. Schantz and John F.

Funk had co-operated in negotiations to reduce the cost of transportation from Europe to America.

The coming of the Mennonites was a boost to the Manitoba economy. Estimates as to the amount of money they brought vary but it was in excess of \$1,000,000,²² no mean sum for the small, thinly-populated province of the 1870s. The money was certainly welcome to Winnipeg merchants. But the sum was insufficient to put the colonies on an immediately sound economic footing. Help would be necessary.

Both before and during the loan period, the settlers were engaged in serious efforts to help themselves. Early records, like the Isaak Müller directive below, document some of the measures.

Auch sollen die Schulzen Sorge tragen, dass alle, die mehr als zwei Ochsen oder zwei Kühe haben, sich Geld besorgen und Wagen und Saatgetreide und Schantz selber bezahlen, damit mit dem Geld denen geholfen werden kann, die noch keine Kuh und keinen Ochsen haben. Wenn wir das nicht tun, können wir beschuldigt werden, dass nur die Reichen durch die Brotanleihe vom Osten verbessert werden. Wer das nicht befolgen wird, soll sein zweites Paar Ochsen der Gemeinde abgeben, dass den Armen, die noch keine haben, kann geholfen werden.²³

And the *Schulzen* are to see to it, that all who have more than two oxen and two cows, get themselves money, wagons and seed grain and pay Schantz themselves. Then the money (loan) can be used to assist those who still have no cow and no ox. If we do not do this, we can be accused that only the condition of the rich is improved through the bread loan from the east. Anyone who does not want to obey, shall give his second yoke of oxen to the church that the poor, who still have none, may be helped.²⁴

There is abundant evidence that Müller's directive was not an isolated effort to achieve some economic balance in the pioneer West Reserve. The wealthier are continually urged to sacrifice for the sake of the less fortunate. The poorer settlers are urged to contribute to the betterment of their own lot. An interesting Müller letter urges those who keep dogs and depend on aid for food to get rid of their dogs and those who smoke to cut down on smoking. There always seems to be money for tobacco, laments Müller, but not enough for bread.²⁵

A second form of assistance to the hard-pressed came through *Waisengelder*, literally orphan's money, but a term referring to *Waisenamt* funds generally. The *Waisenamt*, originally an institution designed to handle the estates of widows and orphans, had gradually added other functions, such as savings and loans. The Bergthal *Waisenamt* was transferred to Canada in its entirety. Through wise management, it was able to assist many poor people to migrate. Creditors were allowed to withdraw only money needed for travelling expenses and were to re-deposit it at the earliest possible time. From large deposits twenty-five percent was deducted to help pay journey costs for the penniless and to liquidate debts to merchants in Russia. There was a four to five year suspension on interest payments on deposit.²⁶ *Waisengelder* were also brought to Canada by West Reserve settlers from Chortitza and Fürstenland although the immigrants from these colonies did not have the advantage of a mass colony migration and total *Waisenamt* transfer. The *Waisenamt* located at Hochfeld, nevertheless, became a centre for monies and deposits transferred from Russia²⁷ and served an important pioneer function.

But a critical period loomed in 1875. Grasshoppers had destroyed the first small grain fields on the East Reserve. Immigrants arriving in 1875 and going to both reserves included many poor people. And even the more prosperous faced difficult times until the colonies would become viable economically. Much of the loan money was applied to food, seed-grain and other necessary provisions. Some was applied to capital investment. In the first year Schantz spent \$6,000 to buy plows from the Oliver Company and \$12,000 for wagons from the Studebaker Company.²⁸ In 1876, Schantz reports that thirty-seven families have been assisted with travel expenses and \$25,000 are needed for provisions for two hundred thirty families.²⁹

The West Reserve received \$54,670.17 of the government loan and the East Reserve immigrants, including those who moved to the West Reserve, received \$35,329.83³⁰ The Ontario Mennonites put their good name and their farms at stake to guarantee repayment. During the 1875 Mennonite loan debate in the House of Commons, it was the reputation and the prosperity of the Ontario Mennonites that carried the day.³¹

In addition to underwriting the government loan, the Ontario benefactors loaned \$23,638.52 to East Reserve settlers and \$26,000 to West Reserve settlers.³²

The original terms of the government loan provided for a four-year interest-free period and six additional years at six percent annual interest.³³ A new bill was passed in April, 1889, according to which 4 percent simple interest was required and \$33,986.53 accumulated by July 1, 1888, was accepted as full payment of interest.³⁴ When the loan came up for discussion in the House of Commons for the last time in 1892 it had been paid in full. The government rebated \$24,000 for the sake of the poorer segment.

The Ontario loan had a similar history. By 1880 a considerable part of the loan had been repaid. That year the Ontario Aid Committee reduced the remaining principal by sixty percent and cancelled all remaining interest on direct loans. The cost of the loan to the Ontario group was approximately \$8,000.

What did the *Brotschuld* and the direct loan by the Ontario Mennonites (early settlers probably used the term *Brotschuld* for both collectively) mean to the Reinland Mennonite Colony? The loans assured survival. They assured economic growth. They greatly accelerated the latter. Colony secretary Peter Wiens, in a letter addressed to Jacob Y. Schantz on February 4, 1877, pleaded for more aid than just aid for immediate survival. Provide us with \$12,000 more money now, Wiens wrote, and we will be able to sow more grain, stand on our own two feet sooner, and repay our loans. If we do not get additional money now, he stated, we will become more and more dependent on you and the government. In other words, make the loan big enough and soon we will become economically viable.³⁵ The Ontario Mennonites responded and Wiens' prediction came true, possibly to a

greater degree than he would have dared to dream at the time of the letter.

The *Brotschuld* strengthened the early sense of gratitude toward the government of the adopted land and a feeling of confidence in that government. The moral support of the Ontario Mennonites helped to engender in many settlers an appreciation of the wider Mennonite community. In 1890 Elder Johann Wiebe addressed the following words to the Ontario Mennonites:

All this which you have done for us humble people, and what the government has given us in land and money, and what is still more, that we with our children have the liberty of exercising our faith according to the teachings of our Saviour by the providence of God, so moves our hearts, that we are constrained in praise and thanks to exclaim, "O Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits," which the great God, the Canadian brethren and the Dominion Government have bestowed upon thee. The Lord of all grace, love, and peace be your shield and exceeding great reward. Amen.³⁶

The Canadian government, which had approved the Mennonite loan in 1875, also expressed praise. The 1892 annual report of the Minister of the Interior stated:

The history of any country does not afford, I undertake to say, a case in which an obligation to the government on the part of any society, company, or individual, has been fulfilled with greater faithfulness than this.³⁷

The *Brotschuld* was an epic in Mennonite pioneer history. Its heroes on the West Reserve scene were called Jacob Schantz, Isaak Müller, Johann Wiebe and Peter Wiens. But there were other heroes as well who were no less a part of this drama. They were the Old Mennonites and Amish of Ontario who became "brothers in deed to brothers in need". They included the Canadian government which had already contributed \$70,000 "for transporting Mennonites and \$190,000 toward assisting immigration and meeting immigration expenses" and which in addition had made the loan of \$100,000 in 1875. But not least they were the men and women who toiled long hours to honour their commitment to repay what they owed.

Reinland Village and the *Brotschuld*³⁸

Reinland villagers borrowed \$2195.73 by the end of the crucial year of 1876. Some of this was repaid by year's end but a debt of approximately \$2,000 remained. By the end of 1877 there were only some five hundred dollars in further borrowings (which included \$135.07 owed to the colony treasury by Peter Olfert which may not have been connected with the loans in question). Several villagers held their own financially and never entered a serious deficit situation. Seven of the nineteen Reinlanders entered in the 1876 records borrowed over one

Reinland Brotschuld — 1876

Flour	\$ 552.44
Salt	5.58
Lard	10.94
Meat	86.01
Potatoes	78.14
Beans	21.60

Reiseschuld (Expenses of trip
from Russia) 629.66

Wheat (102½ bushels) 119.85
Barley (35 bushels) 42.00

Cows and Oxen 367.00

Wagons approximately 100.00
Two plows (four half shares) 50.00

Cash advances 60.00
Miscellaneous 72.51
Total \$ 2,195.73

Food \$ 754.71

Reiseschuld (Expenses of trip
from Russia) \$ 629.66

Grain \$ 161.85

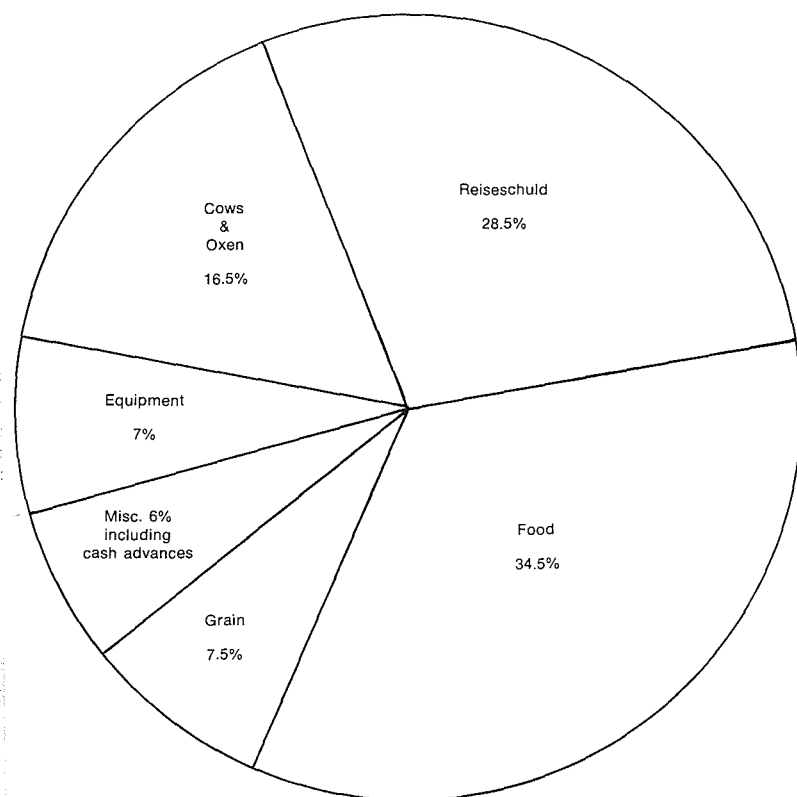
Cows and Oxen \$ 367.00

Equipment \$ 150.00

Cash advances \$ 60.00
Miscellaneous \$ 72.51
Total \$2,195.73

The pioneers' calculations were very precise and involved $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ cents. The actual total above would be $2\frac{1}{4}$ cents less because in compilation these fractions have been rounded off to the next nearest cent in a number of the figures above. The table was compiled from the Brotschuld records of Reinland's first Schulze, Jacob Fehr.

Circle graph depicts Reinland Brotschuld distribution.



1876 *Brotschuld* Record of a Reinland Pioneer Family

Item	Amount	Item	Amount
One bag of flour	\$ 2.60	Thirty-one and one-half	
One-half box of wagon grease .....	.12½	lbs. meat at 12½ cents	3.93¾
Half share on a wagon	33.00	Sixty lbs. of beans at 6 cents	3.60
Cash	10.00	Two windows at \$1.00	2.00
Forty lbs. of salt at 1¼ cents .....	.50	Money for oxen	60.00
Half share on a plow	12.50	One bag of flour	2.90
Four lbs. of pork at 16 cents.	64	Twenty bushels of potatoes	
Received cash from Schantz .	50.00	at 75 cents	15.00
One bag of flour	3.35	Five bushels of potatoes	
Seven bags of flour at \$2.85	19.95	at 77 cents	3.85
Seven and one-half bushels		Three bags of flour at \$2.85	8.55
of wheat at \$1.31	9.82½	One fork .....	.75
Five bushels of barley at \$1.20	6.00	Forty lbs. of salt at 1½ cents .....	.60
Five sacks at 30 cents	1.50	One bag of flour at \$3.30	3.30
Eighteen lbs. of pork		Four bags of flour at \$2.80*	11.40
at 16 cents	2.88	Fifteen lbs. of pork at 15 cents	2.25
		Total	\$271.00¾

*The \$11.40 is probably correct. In the books \$11.20 has been changed to \$11.40 deliberately. The error may actually lie in forgetting to change the price to \$2.85 per bag.

hundred dollars and three of these received over three hundred dollars each. Jacob Fehr, the *Schulze* (there were three Jacob Fehr families in Reinland) borrowed \$140.99½ but at year's end had paid it all. The other twelve villagers had relatively small debts, many of which were quickly paid. Wilhelm Esau owed \$20.00 on his trip from Russia and Johann Fehr \$40.41. A few like Isaak Dyck, Rev. Jacob Wiens and Johann Peters were in a solid credit position with \$1,500.00, \$1503.44 and \$607.16½, respectively, loaned into the colony's treasury at the end of 1876. These were either well-to-do or had been able to sell their properties in Russia advantageously.

A brief perusal of the Reinland village *Brotschuld* records affords a microcosmic view of what the loan from the government and from the Ontario Mennonites meant to pioneer communities in practical terms. Food and travel expenses accounted for a full sixty-three per cent of the amount loaned. Only about one quarter of the money was used for capital investment. Miscellaneous items were of some variety and included a grindstone for Isaak Kehler, some lumber for Bernhard Bergen, a fork and a spade for Isaak Fehr, a hatchet for David Fehr, a wheel for a plow for *Schulze* Jacob Fehr and numerous other items including grease, windows and the milling of some wheat.

All of Reinland's residents benefitted because the whole community became a viable economic unit sooner. Prosperity was still some years away. But even within the first few years it would become possible to pay greater attention to capital investment in agriculture.

CHAPTER FIVE

Prairie Village

The Mennonite village attracted the attention of an early Winnipeg newspaper reporter who left some interesting impressions:

The earliest homes of these settlers were built of mud and sticks, thatched with straw or hay. Some of the oldest are still standing. The walls are a delicate lilac, the window sash is a dull red, the shutters gray . . . A village of these houses, seen when flooded with the mellow October sunshine and against a background of yellow stubble fields, presents a wonderful harmony of color, and is more suggestive of Holland in the sixteenth, than of Manitoba in the nineteenth, century.¹

The picture may be somewhat romantic. But the Mennonite village or *darp*, as the settlers called it, was unique on the Canadian prairies. And the connection with Holland was not that far-fetched.

This chapter will deal briefly with some historical background on the Mennonite village, hamlet privilege in Manitoba and some factors that contributed to the survival of the early Chortitzer-Fürstenländer villages.

Holländerdorf on the Prairies

The Mennonite village community had its origins in Prussia. Dr. Cornelius Krahn, Newton, Kansas, has done some interesting research on its development.² Its emergence goes back almost to the time of Dutch-North German Anabaptist beginnings. When Dutch religious refugees, including Mennonites, fled to the Vistula delta in the 1500s, they found medieval colony villages there. But these had been established according to "German right." Such a village was organized by an individual who located a suitable piece of land and who then served as hereditary *Schulze* or mayor. He paid no rent. Prospective settlers obtained long term leases of land, which was owned by royalty, from the *Schulze*.

The Dutch refugees settled under different terms which came to be known as *Holländish Weis' und Gebrauch* or "Dutch right." They also made long term leases, generally for forty year periods. The position of

Only a few buildings are visible on this photograph taken from the north end of the Dwäagauss in the 1940s. In the distance is the village of Rosengart.



DOMINION LANDS.

GRANT

TO

Peter Harms

SITUATE IN THE

Province of Manitoba

Township 1.

Range 4 W. of P. M. Mer.

Section N.E. 14 of 13.

Acres 160

DATED

30th August 1889

RECORDED

File *File*

Per Registrar General

C. Cornmaison B. O. P.

Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Schulze was not hereditary and he had no special privileges. He was elected by the village community which could also elect annually two advisers known as *Ratsmänner* (counsellors) or *Beisitzer*³ (committee members). A village so organized became known as a *Holländerdorf* (literally Dutch village) or simply as a *Holländerei*. Reinland in Prussia was one such *Holländerdorf*. Characteristic features of such villages were the attachment of houses to barns and of sheds to barns.

At first the *Holländerdörfer* were actually settled mostly by people of Dutch background. Later many German villages were founded according to "Dutch right" and also were called *Holländerdörfer*. In fact the term *Holländer* itself was applied to a multitude of settlers in Prussia, regardless of their origin.

In the Vistula region of Prussia the villages were generally located in swampy areas and close to rivers and canals. In Russia they were adapted to the steppes. The street which in Prussia had sometimes followed riverbends was now a straight line with houses on one side or on both. The Russian Mennonite reformer Johann Cornies put his own stamp on village development by introducing rules of village layout and for the location and construction of buildings including schools. Cornies stressed the planting of shade trees and orchards, a lesson which was not lost on the Reinland settlers.

Communal pastures were features of the Russian Mennonite village.

The older villages generally consisted of *Vollwirte* (farmers with full-sized farms), *Halbwirte* (farmers with half-sized farms) and *Anwohner* (people without land). The *Anwohner* were often young people who might later attain land within the village system or when new villages were founded. In Russia the *Oberschulze* (colony superintendent) headed the whole settlement while the *Schulze* was still the chief village official.

Most of these village characteristics would have sounded familiar to the West Reserve pioneers. They still awaken memories among Reinland's older people. Reinland, the pioneer *darf*, was essentially a *Holländerdorf* adapted to the prairies. Many of the old institutions are gone but many reminders of the four hundred year village history of its people are still indelibly engraved in the village's layout, its older architecture, its trees and gardens, the character of its inhabitants and its sons and daughters.

Hamlet Privilege

The Free Land Homestead Act (1872) had been devised to encourage the settlement of the West. What the Act did not envision was the kind of arrangement that the Mennonites brought with them to Manitoba. It did not contemplate village settlement of farmers. The Act granted a free quarter section of land to a naturalized citizen fulfilling a three year residence requirement and cultivating and otherwise

improving the property. Only after the fulfillment of these conditions could an application be made for a Letters Patent grant and for a pre-emption on an additional quarter.

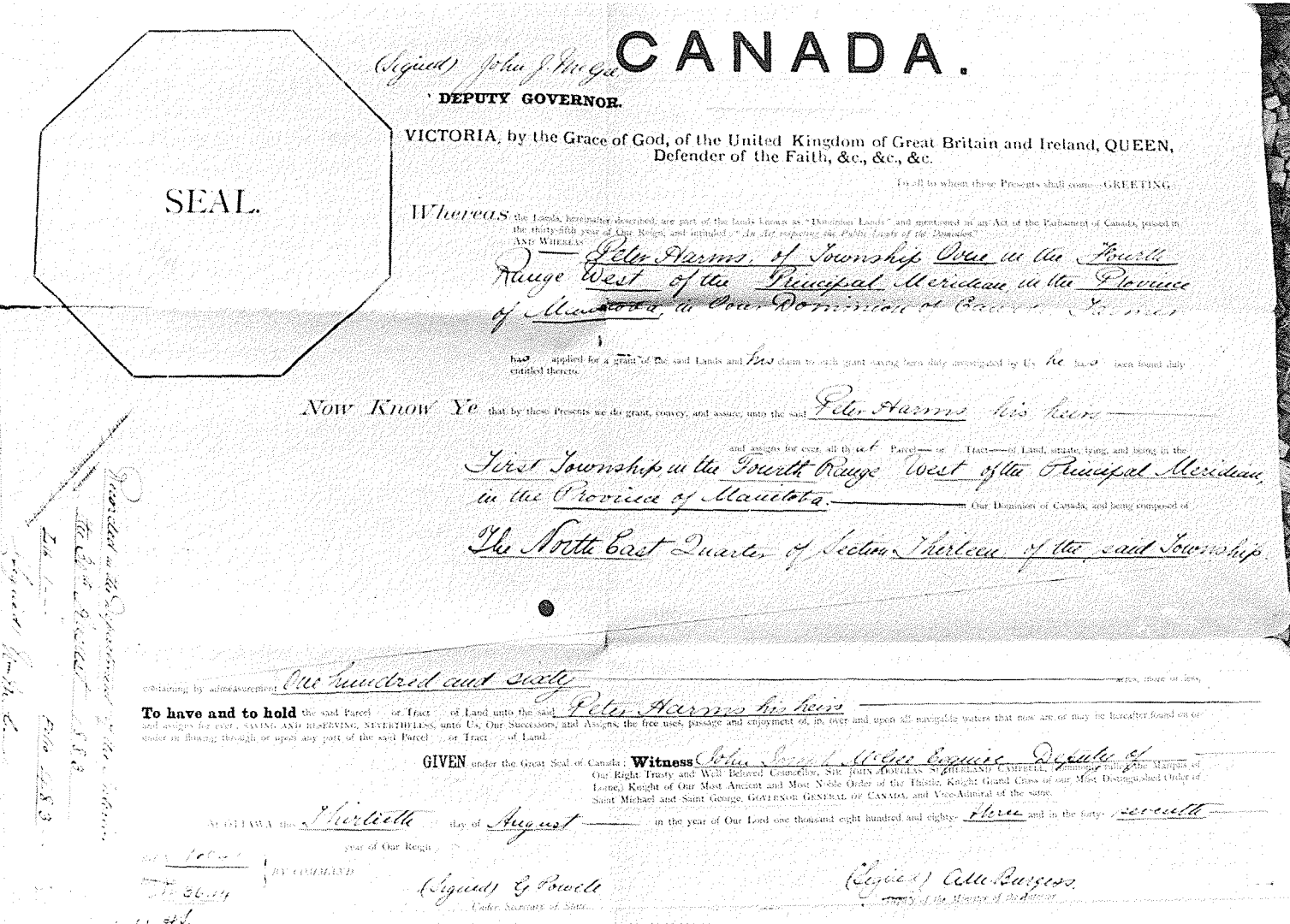
The "Application for Homestead Patent" form used in the 1870s assumed residence on the homestead in clause 2. Mennonites used this application form at first even though it obviously was not designed for their particular situation.

This state of affairs resulted in a curious episode in West Reserve legal history. It was the hamlet privilege case.⁴

Hamlet privilege was the privilege enjoyed by Manitoba Mennonite homesteaders of performing their three years residence requirement by living in a village instead of actually residing on their homestead quarter section.

Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Most of the village of Reinland was originally located on Section 13-1-4W. The Letters Patent grant was made to Peter Harms on August 30, 1883. Such grant was made upon application after homesteading requirements had been met. Two parts of the Peter Harms document are displayed on these photographs.



The privilege existed in fact though seemingly never in law. There exists an interesting series of letters relating to hamlet privilege. *Ober-vorsteher* Isaak Müller was aware of the problem in the "Application for Homestead Patent" in use. Therefore he wrote to Lindsay Russell, Deputy Minister of the Interior, on November 28, 1882:

I have the honour to address you on behalf of my people the Mennonites requesting that you cause to be made out "Application for Homestead Patent" forms different from those now in use and that will meet the case of my people who are settled in villages and also your department by so doing you will greatly oblige. Your ob't Servant.⁵

The next correspondence came several months later. J. B. McLaren, solicitor for the Mennonites and forerunner of the firm of McLeod and Black, later also McCauley of Morden, wrote to the Minister of the Interior on March 29, 1883, to ask what was required of a Mennonite on the application for a homestead patent. McLaren was writing on behalf of Frank Banmann, who apparently wanted to apply for a homestead patent on his land on SE¼ 24-3-5W.⁶

The answer by the Department of the Interior on April 9, 1883, stated that a Mennonite applicant must be a naturalized citizen, and prove in the usual forms "that he has resided upon and cultivated the land applied for, for three years from date of entry, or, that he has resided in the village of which his Homestead forms a part and cultivated lands in the limits of the same for the required three years."⁷

Müller's earlier request for the different application form also seems to have found a positive response in Ottawa. Under provisions of the Dominion Lands Act, 1883, the Application for Homestead Patent", clause 2, was amended to read as follows:

"That I made my Homestead Entry in the Dominion Lands Office at _____ and perfecting the same by commencing to actually reside in the village of _____ to which said homestead is appurtenant and cultivate my portion of the land belonging to said village on the day of _____ 188 ____."

The hamlet privilege was ended for the West Reserve on May 6, 1885,¹⁰ and on the East Reserve on August 14, 1889¹¹ — in both cases by Order-in-Council. But the Department of the Interior discovered fifteen years after the Mennonites began settling in villages in Manitoba that the settler's right to dwell in hamlets instead of on the homestead proper had never existed in law in the first place. Interesting correspondence led up to the final "abolition" of the hamlet privilege. An unsigned Department of the Interior memo of March 23, 1889, stated:

I can find nothing in the early files wherein the Minister of the Interior distinctly states that the Mennonites might settle in hamlets though the permission is implied all through.¹²

In a reference to the Order-in-Council of May 6, 1885, which end-

ed the privilege on the West Reserve and which assumed that the privilege existed, the memo added:

I am of the opinion that this permission to settle in hamlets was part of the agreement with the Mennonite delegates made in 1873 and that the proviso to sub-clause 11 of clause 34 in that Act (of 1879?) was added in accordance with that agreement.¹³

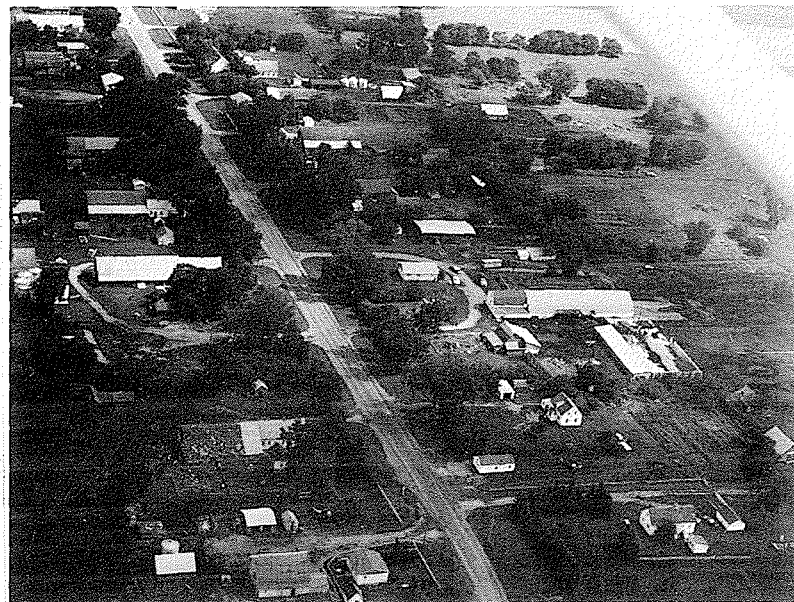
If there was any discussion or any agreement between the Minister of Agriculture and the 1873 Mennonite delegates regarding hamlet privilege, it was certainly only oral. It is never mentioned in the *Privilegium*.

The memo then quoted that 1879 proviso:

Provided further that in the case of settlements being formed of immigrants in communities (such as those of the Mennonites or Icelanders) the Minister of the Interior may vary or waive, in his discretion, the foregoing requirements as to residence and cultivation on each separate quarter section entered as a homestead.¹⁴

That was an excellent proviso, but was it ever used? It could have become the legal basis for the hamlet privilege but was apparently never employed by the Minister of the Interior. The search by the Department of the Interior itself, when it was preparing for the Order-in-Council to end the privilege, was futile.

After the Deputy Minister, A. M. Burgess, received the unsigned memo (obviously from a department aide) quoted above, he relayed its basic contents to H. H. Smith, Commissioner of Dominion Lands, Winnipeg.¹⁵ It is a summary of the whole somewhat humourous situation. The letter read as follows:



1974 aerial view of west end of Reinland.

207431.

Interior,

Courtesy Archives of Canada

Ottawa, 3rd Aug., 1889.

Dear Mr. Smith,

I have caused a careful search to be made in relation to the subject of your letter of the 21st May, as to the residence to be performed by Mennonites, but cannot find any record of the Minister having exercised the discretion vested in him by Sub-clause 11 of Clause 34 of the Dominion Lands Act, 1879. There does not appear to be any doubt ~~that it was exercised or that it was intended to have been exercised, from the fact that the patents have always issued to Mennonite homesteaders without regard to the condition of residence on the land.~~ I have the advantage of the ^{formerly} experience of Mr. Newcomb, who was Agent for the district in which the Mennonite Reserves are situated, but he cannot remember any specific instruction on this point, although his recommendations were always made as though such instruction had been given him. It is unfortunate that no record can be found of the Minister's decision. It

H. H. Smith, Esq.,

Commissioner of Dominion Lands,
Winnipeg, Man.

may

And so the hamlet privilege, which never existed in law but was certainly and thoroughly enjoyed, was "abolished." Its existence had been assumed by the Mennonites, assumed by Isaak Müller, assumed by the federal government and it had run on assumptions for a full decade in the West Reserve and longer on the East Reserve. It had largely determined the course of Reinland's history for the next century. At the time of the "abolition," Reinland's homesteads had all been claimed, the village land system had been solidly established and was to survive to the 1920s, when the long narrow strips surrounding the village were plowed down. The community pasture was to survive, in increasingly modified form, to the 1950s.

But is hamlet privilege not still being enjoyed today? How many families, including farming families, within the boundaries of the former village lands, or even within the boundaries of the old Reinland School District, live outside the village? In a whole century of existence, the number of residences established outside the village has never exceeded a few in number.

may be, of course, that some understanding was arrived at between the Mennonites and the Minister of Agriculture at the time the negotiations for their settlement in the country were in progress; and with this idea I wrote to the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, as long ago as the 1st April last, asking whether he was able to give me copies of any Orders in Council or other documents bearing upon the early history of this settlement which would enable me to clear up this point. So far he has not sent me any reply, *but I have written reminding him.*

I think it would require an Order in Council to determine the privilege, which is now enjoyed only in the Eastern Reserve. It was abolished in the Western Reserve by Order in Council dated 6th May, 1885. I have prepared a memorandum to Council for the Minister's approval, recommending that this action be taken in regard to lands in the Eastern Reserve.

Sincerely yours,

(C. A. Newcomb)

D.M.I.

Draft.

Appd.

and the instructions are that it was exercised,

CHAPTER SIX

Early West Reserve Municipal Government

An overview of West Reserve municipal government will facilitate the study of the village of Reinland in succeeding chapters.

The executive of the Reinland Mennonite Colony, headed by Isaak Müller, dominated West Reserve administrative affairs until 1883. There was no interference from the provincial government even though the Manitoba Legislature passed numerous pieces of legislation providing for local administration in the province. In 1879 the Municipal Act was passed. It divided the settled parts of Manitoba into proposed municipal units which were to have elected councils. The actual establishment of these municipalities was left to local initiative. Incorporation followed local petition. This delayed the beginning of municipal government not only in the Mennonite reserves but also in many Anglo-Saxon communities.

William Hespeler persuaded the East Reserve Bergthaler to accept the municipality.¹ He pointed out the advantages of provincial subsidies and public works. The Kleine Gemeinde apparently did not resist this move — it did not participate in voting and allowed the Bergthaler to take care of administrative affairs. The municipal system could be introduced without a serious disturbance of the status quo.

In the West Reserve the situation was much more volatile. Two groups had strong interests in the running of the colony. The Bergthaler who had moved from the East Reserve to the West Reserve were more free from group controls than any other Mennonite body in the province. They were many miles away from the authority of the East Reserve *Oberschulze*. They were tasting deeply the air of independence and freedom of the New World frontier.² To many this meant not only freedom from rigid controls of an *Oberschulze* but of the village structure itself. Moreover, they were not registered in the new East Reserve church register of 1878. Gradually a new West Reserve Bergthaler church under Elder Johann Funk came into being but it was a very loosely organized church in the early eighties. The Bergthaler were reluctant to submit to the authority of the dominant *Altkolonier** group

Early municipal correspondence.

Uebersetzung eines offenen amtlichen Schreibens im Wortlaut.

Collegium der Ärzte und Wundärzte
von Manitoba.

J. S. Gray, M.D., Registrar,
23 May St., Winnipeg.

Winnipeg, 24. August 1887.

E. Ludwig, Esqr., M. D.,

Reinland, Manitoba.

Geehrter Herr!

Als Antwort auf Ihre Erkundigungen in Betreff eines „Doctor Donovan“, von welchem man sagt, daß er in Gretna und der umliegenden Gegend seine Profession betreibt, habe ich Ihnen zu berichten, daß im medicinischen Register von Manitoba kein Mann dieses Namens eingeschrieben ist, und falls dort so Einer practicirt, daß er es ohne alle Befugniß und im Widerspruche mit dem Medicinalgesetz von Manitoba thut, und daß er gerichtlicher Verfolgung unterworfen ist, wosfern Jemand geneigt wäre, solche gegen ihn einzuleiten.

Ich habe die Ehre zu sein.

Ihr gehorsamer Diener,

J. S. Gray,

Registrar.

[Siegel.]

P. S.—Reinland, 26. August 1887. Auf Grund eines Briefes von dem oben genannten Collegium an die Municipalitäten Reinland und Gretna (solte Herr Douglas) wird obiges Schreiben hiermit der Oeffentlichkeit übergeben. — Zugleich wird noch gemeldet, daß der Doctor Hr. E. Ludwig von jetzt ab seine Hauptoffice in dem Hause des bekannten alten Herrn McDougall in Gretna haben wird.

Wm. Kempel, Schreiber.

Jacob Giesbrecht, Reeve.

*The term *Altkolonier* (literally *Old Colonists*) came into use to distinguish the group belonging to the *Reinländer* church from those belonging to the *Bergthaler* group.

Reinland pioneers Jacob and Anna (Fehr) Giesbrecht pictured here with their two youngest children, David and Mary. The Giesbrechts belong to the original Reinland homesteaders. Mr. Giesbrecht became a charter member of the Council of the R.M. of Rhineland in January, 1884 (elected 1883) and the first Mennonite reeve of this municipality in January, 1885 (elected 1884). The Giesbrechts purchased the windmill in 1886. Mr. and Mrs. Giesbrecht also offered lodging and breakfast to Post Road travellers and operated a livery barn to house the travellers' horses.



which had established the Reinland Mennonite Colony (and which would soon lose its majority position on the West Reserve). The Bergthaler saw in the municipality an opportunity to free themselves from the hegemony of Isaak Müller and the established group.

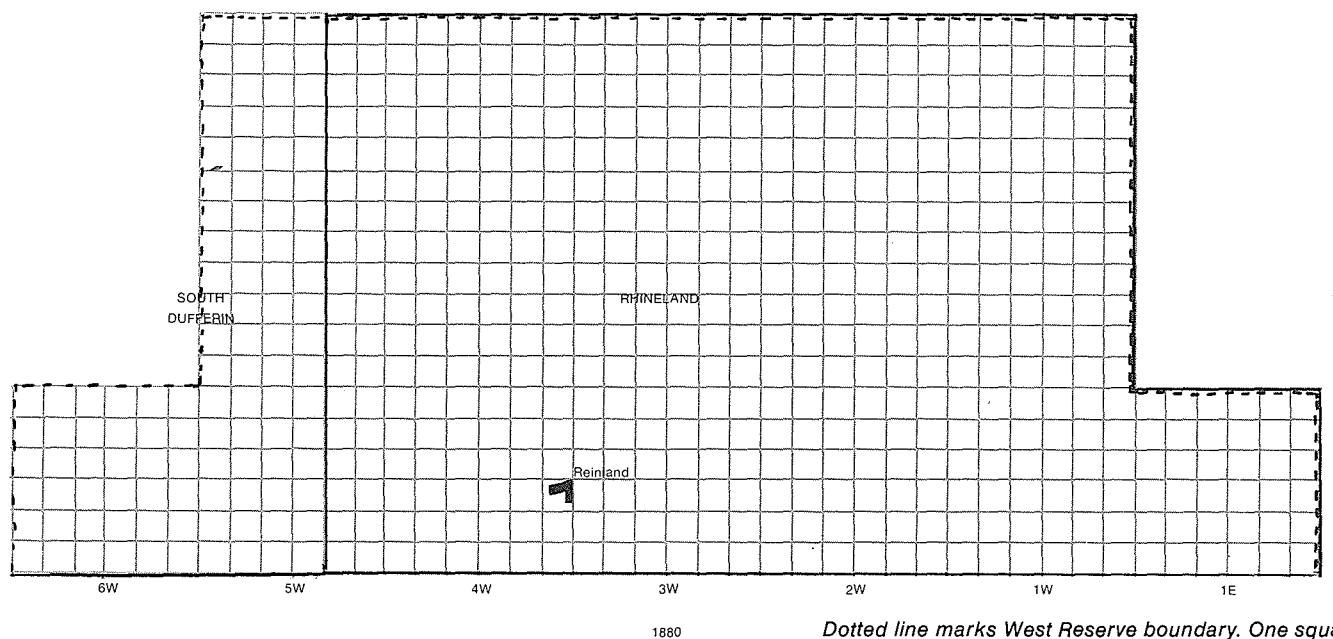
But official Bergthaler participation in West Reserve administration was temporarily stalled around 1881 and William Hespeler succeeded in persuading the Reinland Mennonite Colony leadership that nominal compliance with the new laws would be advantageous and that the *Obervorsteher* would simply act as reeve.³ In effect there would be no change. At this time the West Reserve unofficially became the Municipality of Rhineland⁴ (the spelling or translation error of the time has been perpetuated to this day — someone confused “Rein”, meaning clean, with “Rhine”, the name of the river in Germany). For all practical purposes, though not officially, Isaak Müller functioned as reeve.

Two forces hindered a peaceful settlement such as occurred in the East Reserve — the challenge of the Bergthaler group coming across the Red River combined with the growing group of *Altkolonier* dissenters who opposed the rigid controls of either their colony leadership or their church or both and joined the Bergthaler. These forces combined to wrest control from the existing Reinland Mennonite Colony, an attempt that was never completely successful until well after World War I.

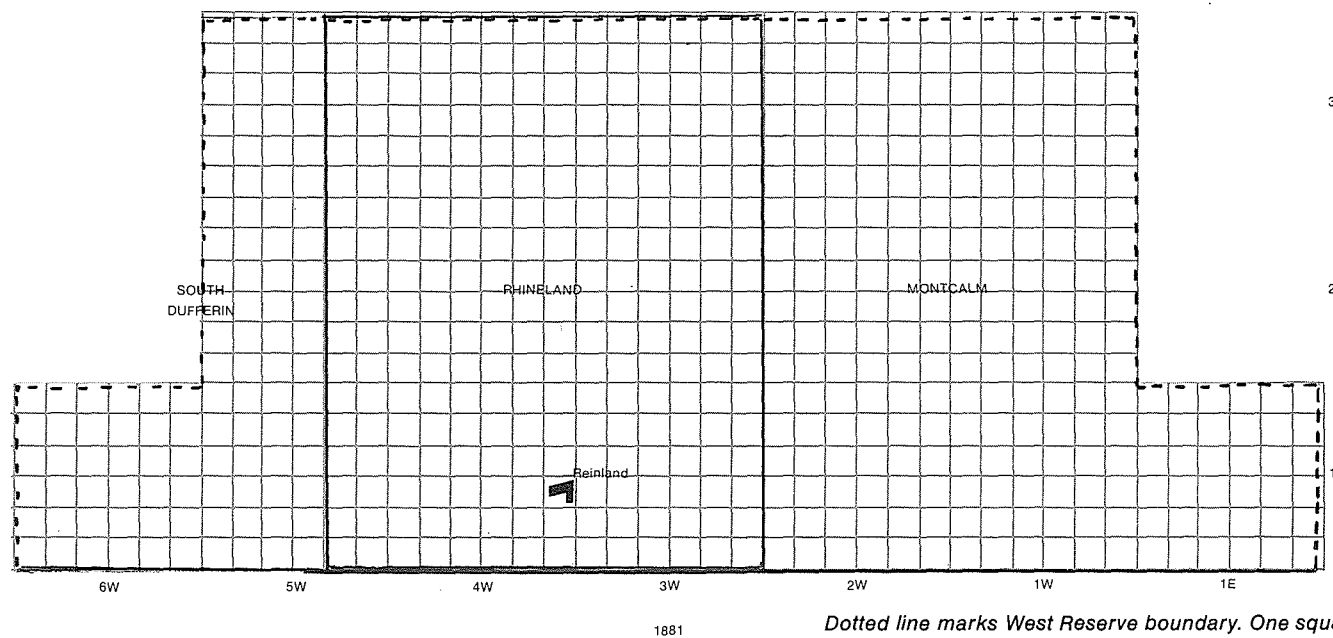
At this critical time the provincial government divided the West Reserve into two municipalities. The eastern part, with a strong Bergthaler majority, became the Municipality of Douglas. It came into being officially in January, 1884, with Otto Schulz as its first reeve.⁵ On the council were John Schwartz, John Buhler, Peter Funk, Gerhard Klassen, Peter Friesen and John Braun.⁶ The first council meeting was held on Tuesday, January 8, 1884, at the Erdman Penner residence in Gretna. Here Franz Kliever was elected secretary-treasurer.⁷

One of the early problems of the Douglas council was the status of township 1, range 1 east, a township of mostly Mennonite population and a part of the West Reserve that had been attached to another new municipality — Montcalm. The residents wished to join Douglas Municipality. In the meantime they paid their taxes to Douglas. In the 1891 settlement, which finally resolved the dispute, the cost to Douglas totalled \$39,000 in taxes that had been collected illegally. This sum came to rest in the coffers of Montcalm.⁸

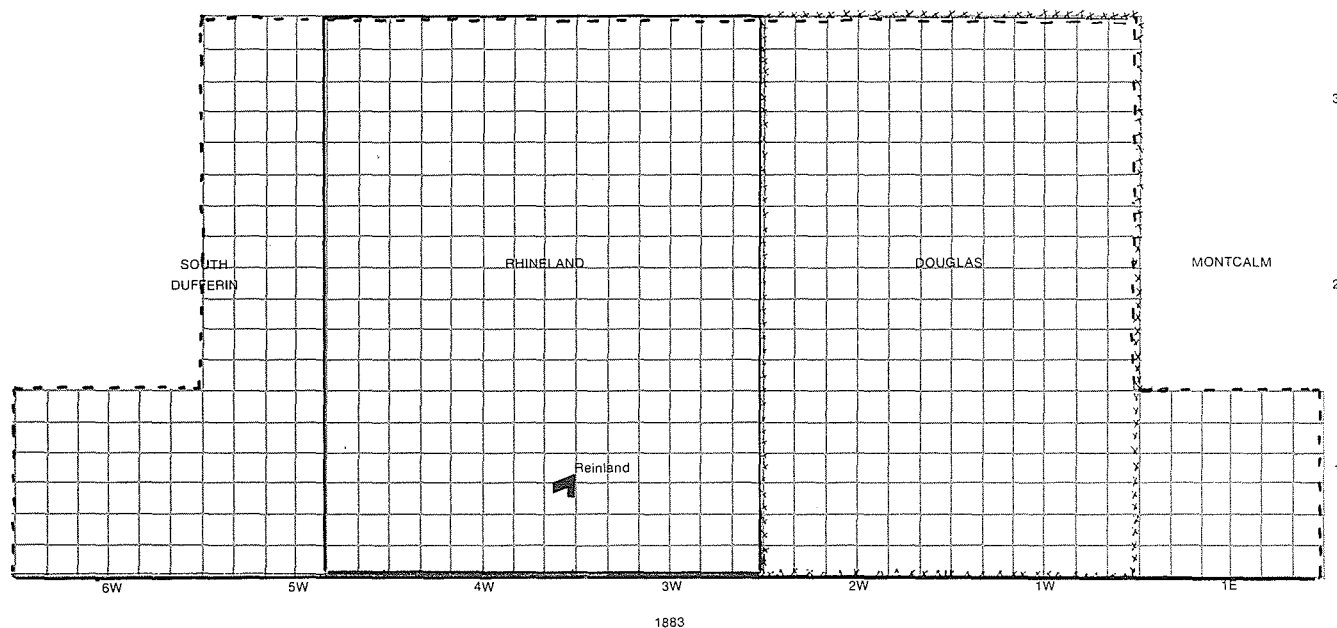
The western part of the West Reserve consisting largely of *Altkolonier* population became the Municipality of Rhineland in 1884. (This can be extremely confusing. The reader should note that the area included in the Municipality of Rhineland now was basically the Municipality of Douglas then. What was the Municipality of Rhineland in 1884 is today largely incorporated into the present Municipality of Stanley.) The Municipality of Rhineland included the village of Reinland. The charter council was chosen under the supervision of



Dotted line marks West Reserve boundary. One square represents one square mile. Map based on John Warkentin, "The Mennonite Settlements in Manitoba," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1960.



Dotted line marks West Reserve boundary. One square represents one square mile. Map based on John Warkentin, "The Mennonite Settlements in Manitoba," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1960.



Dotted line marks West Reserve boundary. One square represents one square mile. Map based on John Warkentin, "The Mennonite Settlements in Manitoba," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1960.

returning officer C. F. Collins.⁹ Jarvis Mott, one of the few Anglo-Saxons within West Reserve boundaries at the time, became the first reeve. On the council were David Redekopp of Schanzenfeld, Jacob Giesbrecht of Reinland, Heinrich Reimer, Jacob Nickel and Bernard Hildebrandt.¹⁰ Johann Dyck of Osterwick, a member of the Reinländer Mennonite Church, was also elected but was extremely reluctant to serve.¹¹ There is no indication in council minutes that he ever attended a meeting and in mid-year he was replaced by Peter Zacharias.¹² The first council meeting was held in Schanzenfeld on January 8, 1884, on the same day that the first Douglas council met in Gretna. Wilhelm Remppe of Reinland was elected secretary-treasurer.¹³

The overriding preoccupation of the new Rhineland council lay in establishing its relationship with the *Altkolonier* administration. The council sought to assert its authority over Isaak Müller and met tenacious resistance. As early as its second meeting held on January 26, 1884, the council passed the following motion:

Moved by Con. Redekopp sec. by Con. Giesbrecht that the Clerk write to the Hon. the Provincial Secretary requesting him to write Mr. Mueller of Rhineland informing him that the Government will not recognize any Council formed by him this year and at the same time requesting him to furnish to the proper Department a statement of amount of taxes levied and

amount of money paid out during the past four years in order that we may receive from him our proportionate share of balance on hand.¹⁴

At the March 1, 1884, meeting, the Council took another step and appointed Johann Bergmann, Reinland, as auditor

"to audit books and accounts of the former municipality of Rhineland, acting therein jointly with an auditor to be appointed by the municipality of Douglas; and that such auditors be empowered as arbitrators to apportion the assets and liabilities of said former municipality of Rhineland between this municipality and the municipality of Douglas . . ."¹⁵

A third resolution in the same series passed on April 15, 1884, asked

"that the Clerk notify A. S. Washburn, Deputy Provincial Treasurer of Winnipeg that this Council is not to be called indebted, for the old council of this municipality has not yet handed over to the new council the books and accounts . . ."¹⁶

The former municipality of Rhineland (1881-1883), which was really the whole West Reserve and of which Isaak Müller was the chief executive, had legally been replaced by Rhineland and Douglas. These new municipalities considered themselves the heirs of the old municipality. They wanted its books and its money. They were already appointing auditors to divide the inheritance. The *Altkolonier*, who, with considerable justification, saw the imposition of the municipality as a threat to the prevailing social, economic and religious order were not about to surrender the vision of a restored commonwealth, a vision that they had fostered in the 1875 migration from Russia. It resembled too much the imposition of the kind of worldly authority that in Elder Johann Wiebe's eyes had gone too far in Russia. It ran counter to the new order he had wished to create in America. The municipality also seemed to be a foreign imposition — one *Altkolonier* referred to it as "the English municipality".¹⁷

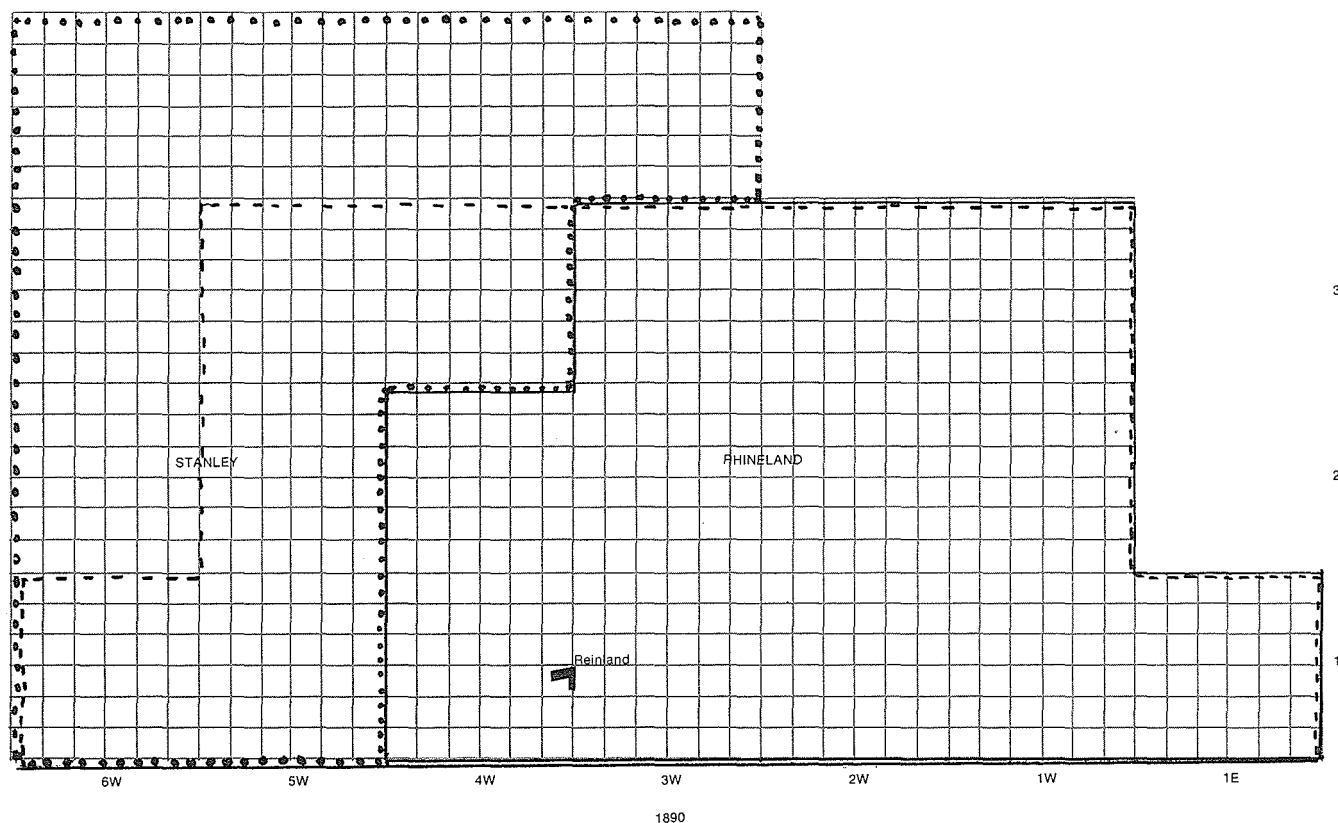
On April 29, 1884, a communication from Douglas municipality, announcing that it had now appointed its auditor to work with Johann Bergmann, was read at the Rhineland council meeting. But Müller had not been caught napping. On February, 5, he had visited Winnipeg to present the *Altkolonier* case before the provincial authorities.¹⁸ Müller's argument must have been convincing if another communication received by the Rhineland council that April day is any indication:

A. S. Washburn, Deputy Provincial Treasurer, stating the cause of the difficulty under which this Council labours, and that Mr. Mueller is justified in retaining in possession any assets or books whatever a proper provision is made under the new Act regarding apportionment and distribution of the said assets, etc."¹⁹

In another area the Rhineland council was more successful. It had no municipal office and decided to take over the office of the Reinland

The second Franz Froese to serve as Obervorsteher and his wife.

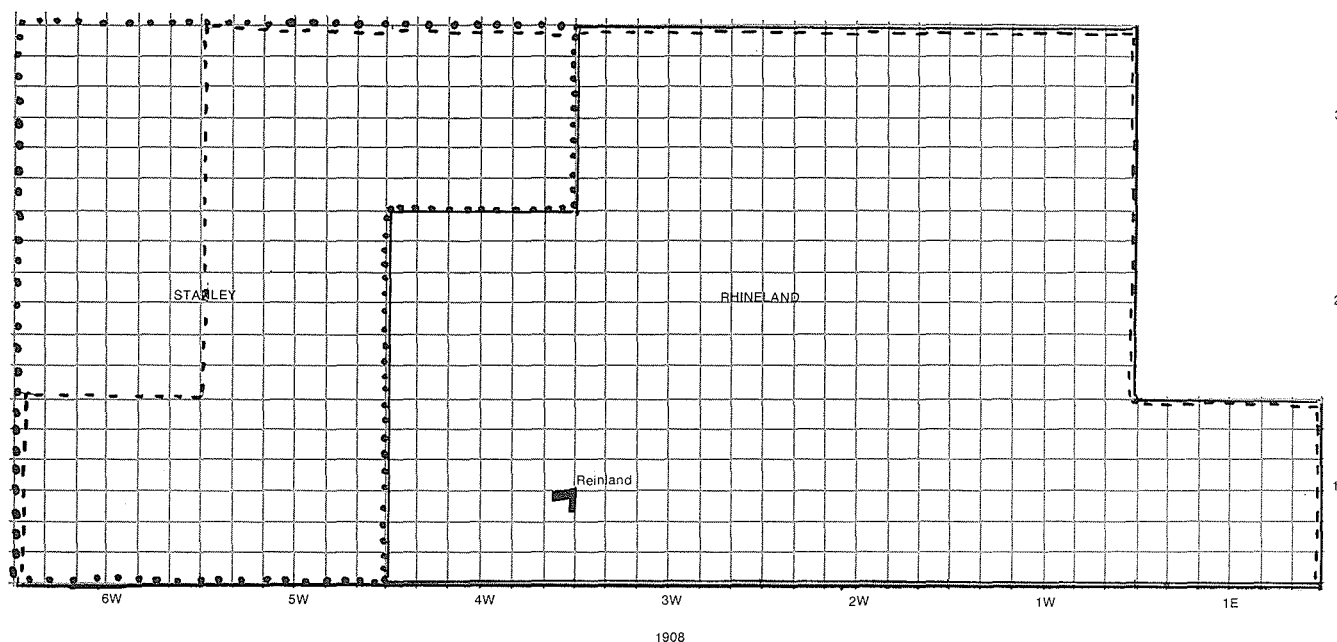




Dotted line marks West Reserve boundary. One square represents one square mile. Map based on John Warkentin, "The Mennonite Settlements in Manitoba," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1960.

Mennonite Colony in the village of Reinland. A building which also served as a school was used for the purpose. An *Altcolonier* source said that the takeover was forcible. The books of the colony i.e. the records of Müller, Peter Wiens and other officials were set outside the door by the municipality which then moved in its own books.²⁰ The municipal minutes are also quite definite on the matter. At a series of "Farmers Meetings" a majority of 162 to 69 voted for the takeover of the Reinland office. The fact that the *Altcolonier* did not vote apparently did not bother the council. In the takeover motion of March 3, 1885, it was decided to inform Johann Froese of Reinland, who in turn was to inform Müller of the impending course of action.²¹ Reinland in 1885 became the site of the first office of the Municipality of Rhineland (1884-1891).

An interesting council event occurred when Reeve Jarvis Mott was chosen to represent Rhineland Council at a March 5, 1884, Winnipeg



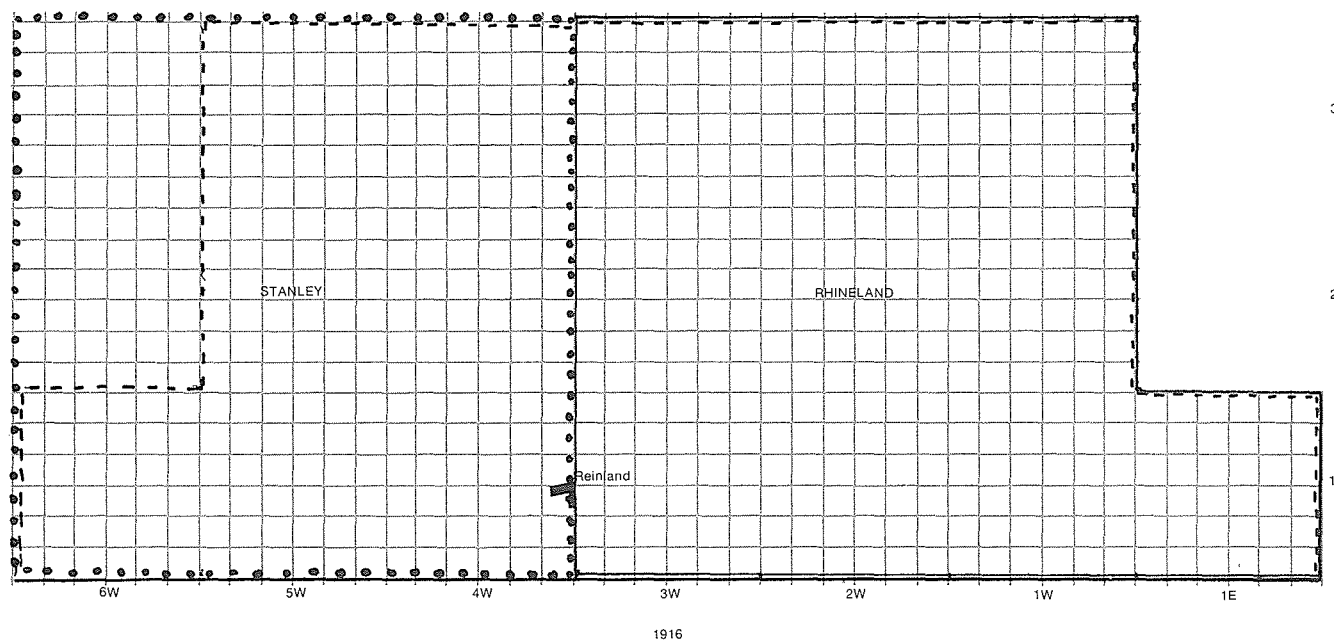
Dotted line marks West Reserve boundary. One square represents one square mile. Map based on John Warkentin, "The Mennonite Settlements in Manitoba," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1960.

meeting "to consider the building of the Railway to the Hudson's Bay and other matters affecting the interests of the province."²² In November, Mott was granted a leave of absence to visit Ontario relatives. At the December meeting Reinland's Councillor Giesbrecht served as chairman. Councillor Jacob Nickel moved to the United States during the year.²³

When Rhineland Council met for the first time in the new year of 1885, great changes in personnel had occurred. Jacob Giesbrecht was the new reeve and the council consisted of Bernhard Penner, Jacob Warkentin, Bernhard Hildebrandt, Heinrich Dyck, Isaac Wiens and Abraham J. Klassen.²⁴

During the first year of operations, 1884, all meetings of the municipal council were held in the home of David Redekopp, Schanzenfeld. During the second year the meetings were held in the Jacob Giesbrecht home in Reinland. Redekopp and Giesbrecht were reimbursed seventy-five cents per meeting for the use of their homes.²⁵

In municipal affairs the village of Reinland was a considerable powerhouse in the mid 1880s. Jacob Giesbrecht held office as the reeve of Rhineland Municipality. He was the first Mennonite to hold the position. Wilhelm Rempel was the first secretary-treasurer of the



Dotted line marks West Reserve boundary. One square represents one square mile. Map based on John Warkentin, "The Mennonite Settlements in Manitoba," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1960.

municipality. Johann Bergmann was the auditor assigned to co-operate with a Douglas auditor to work out an arrangement with the old municipality. Peter Wiens was secretary of the Reinland Mennonite Colony and as such still played a strong role in the 1880s.

The Rhineland Municipality (1884-1891) gave the minority Bergthaler group and the dissenting *Altkolonier*, the more "progressive" elements, a voice in local administration. It prepared individuals for future participation in local government. It displayed a greater readiness to work together with the surrounding non-Mennonite world. In some instances (Reinland and Schanzenfeld) it fostered district schools. But the municipality enjoyed only limited success, much more limited success than its neighbour, Douglas. The reason was not hard to find. It lacked the broad base of support in its constituency. Indeed, the majority of people within its boundaries did not consider themselves part of that constituency. Johann Froese, Reinland, an opponent of the municipality, writing to *Mennonitische Rundschau* in 1886, reported that only ten per cent of the 820 eligible voters cast ballots in the municipal election of January 5, 1886. His estimate of percentage of votes cast is probably fairly accurate. This lack of effectiveness demonstrated by the Rhineland Municipality apparently led to its merger with Douglas on January 1, 1891.

The Prairie Shelter

*The Prairie and the community
Must merge and always be friends.
Each is dependent on the other.*

— Harold Funk

The creation of a new community on the life-giving prairie soil was the task of the first Reinland settlers. As the pioneers linked the buildings to each other and tied the community together with rows of cottonwoods, as they broke the sod and planted their gardens, as they built the log church and the school in the very heart of the village, they expressed their philosophy of faith and life. For faith and life, too, were linked and merged in this expression of community.



Photo courtesy, Harold Park

CHAPTER SEVEN

Creating the Shelter

From the day of its birth Reinland became a shelter — not a complete shelter, not a mature shelter, but a shelter, nevertheless.

When the first campfire was lit, other campfires were lit as well. When the first tent was pitched, other tents were also pitched. When the Fehrs looked towards the approaching unknown prairie winter, the Wienses, the Dycks, the Esaus, the Harms, the Giesbrechts shared the same apprehension. The settler referred to this village, this shelter, as the *darp*.

When the first primitive huts, called *simlin* or *simlinki* by the pioneers, had been completed, the shelter, too, had taken on an added dimension. The first frosts came, the first snows fell, winter advanced, blizzards howled across the open fields. But huddled warmly in the crude abode, protected by sod, wood and thatch, the family, its cows, its oxen, perhaps its horse, defied the elements. It was not a romantic existence. There were fears, anxieties, yearnings for the old homeland, cares about the future. But that *simlin* was not the only dwelling on the landscape. There was another *simlin*, and another. And inside each dwelt the same fears, anxieties, yearnings and cares. Not only that. There were also the same hopes, the same dreams, the same visions of tomorrow.

Trees were planted and as the years went by huge cottonwoods lined the street of the village. They tied the whole *darp* together as it should be bound together. Maples, ashes, elms and evergreens grew on yard after yard. Lilacs, rose bushes, flowers, a variety of shrubs and fruit trees turned the *darp* into a thing of beauty. Underneath the shadow of the trees, new houses and barns and summer kitchens linked together to form their own private refuge. Yet on the horizon all these merged into one, one rising bluff, one prairie shelter.

The *Simlin*

Descriptions of the *simlin* vary but some features seem to be common. The building materials were the natural resources of the land —

An early painter captured this West Reserve village scene in the pioneer years. The painting appeared in Picturesque Canada.



soil and sod, wood and grass. Its appearance blended with its surroundings. Its architectural design was simple; practicality was the dominant characteristic. It was to keep out wind and rain and more particularly to provide a shelter for the fast approaching winter. It was considered a temporary habitation.

The following description of the *simlin* was sent to friends in Russia by Klaas Wall of Neuhorst in the fall of 1876:

I want to report briefly how we constructed our dwelling. For our living quarters we dug an excavation to a depth of two and one-half feet. It is twenty-nine and one-half feet long and its inside width is twelve and one-half feet. The inside walls and the floor were finished with boards. The roof, however, was first covered with split oakwood which was nailed into place, then plastered with clay and overlaid with earth. And so we believe we have a beautiful warm room prepared for winter. We have to get the wood from a distance of about eight *Werst* (approximately five miles — in all probability the reference is to the Pembina River Valley of Dakota). The wood is largely oak and very good firewood for our iron stoves. We also made somewhat of an excavation for our cattle barn. We erected the walls with split logs and put earth around them. It is sixteen feet long and sixteen feet wide. But its roof is only of hay, without spars and laths because of lack of adequate time, for sometimes it was already getting quite cold.¹

The *simlin* of the Jacob Fehrs, the parents of the Reinland chronicler, stood in what is now the garden of the Isaac Brauns.² This structure was built in the immediate days and weeks after the pitching of the family tent at the Reinland village site. The Fehr narrative speaks of the event. Not all its details focus on the construction but the total picture is a reflection of the mood and the season.

Now the busy work to get ready for winter began. Father told me to dig an excavation in the ground to be used to make a dwelling. Father and Johann drove to the forest to fetch firewood and at the same time to get wood to construct a framework to serve for our house. Later this framework was set into the four foot deep excavation I had dug and was then finished with boards. This was the dwelling for us and two oxen, two cows and one pony.

Then we mowed grass for our cattle's winter supply. On the third of October eight inches of snow fell. The heart became sad. Then the weather became very beautiful. Winter came on the 25th. The dwelling was pleasant and warm. We used it for two years. Maria was born in that house in 1876.³

Fehr returns to the construction of a *simlin* (seemingly that of his grandfather) later in the journal and states that he cut grass along the creek with a scythe, which had been brought from Russia, his sisters tied the grass into bundles and his grandfather thatched the roof of the



House with thatched roof in one of the villages circa 1912.

simlin. Spars had been set up to support the roof and laths had been nailed to the spars. Grass was used to tie the thatch to the roof.

Progress within the Shelter

The *simlin* was used for the first few winters. As early as 1877, and possibly sooner, more permanent dwellings appeared. Lumber was hauled from the Pembina Hills. Fehr wrote:

It was a great advantage that there was enough forest and an abundance of lumber for building. Father purchased a saw to cut building lumber.⁴

Jacob Fehr calls the saw *Brettschneideisen*. This saw was apparently operated by two men and used to cut lumber lengthwise. Rough logs could be smoothed and boards could be cut. A hole was dug in the ground and one of the men would stand in this excavation to pull the saw downward from underneath the log while the other man stood at ground level to pull the saw upward in his turn. Jacob Fehr's father, *Schulze* Jacob Fehr, cut lumber for many area pioneers as well as for the building of the Reinland church. The account continues:

For the third winter we had a dwelling place above ground. People almost ran our house down — all wanted to have their lumber cut. That is how we earned money to purchase flour. In the second winter Father and I began cutting wood to build a house.⁵

Oak was generally used for construction. Roofs were thatched with long prairie grass and were six to eight inches thick.⁶

In the mid-1880s frame dwellings constructed of purchased lumber began replacing many of the original log structures.⁷ Wooden shingles



Photo courtesy Harold Funk.

1968 photo of 1877 house on east end of Reinland's main street. Note the divided door.

replaced thatched roofs. The first house in the Reinland area to have a shingle roof, it is told, was the Jacob Toews home⁸ located, not in the village, but on NE¼ 30-1-3, two miles to the north-east, on newly-bought Hudson's Bay Company land. Toews came to Manitoba after pioneering in the Mapleton area, just west of Fargo, North Dakota.⁹ After having shingled his roof, Toews was promptly dubbed Schindel Toews (Shingle Toews). The house was moved to the village in later years. (Toews was elected deacon of the Bergthaler Church at Hoffnungsfeld in 1887).¹⁰



By 1900 the twenty-five year old prairie shelter had greatly matured. To one outside observer, its two long rows of buildings presented quite a town-like appearance. J. F. Galbraith and his companion, T. C. Birnie, Morden photographer, attempted to take a picture of Reinland's two rows of buildings on October 26, 1900. They purposefully had waited until fall because earlier "the villages are . . . in the midst of little forests, the trees of which were set out by the inhabitants in 1876 and following years." Even though Birnie waited, he was unsuccessful for "the plates taken of the big village of Rhineland proved valueless when developed, and could not be utilized, the long rows of buildings being entirely hidden by the leafless trees."¹¹

This is the view that greeted the visitor entering the prairie shelter called Reinland in 1945.

Trees and Gardens

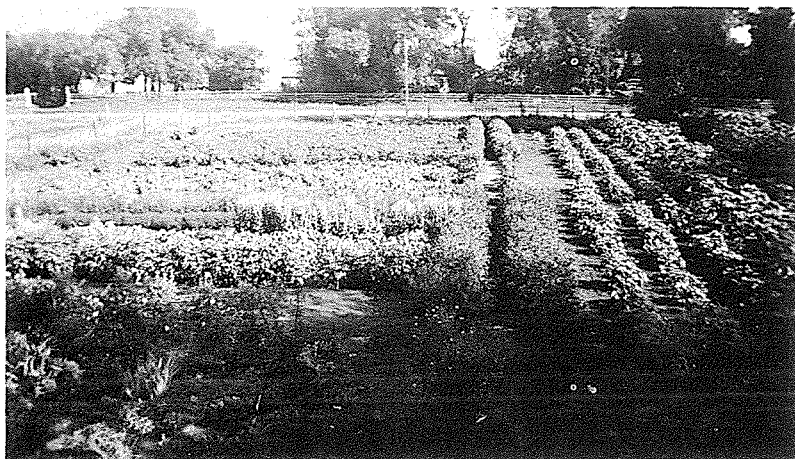
Very soon after arrival the villagers began planning improvements for their prairie shelter. Long rows of young cottonwoods soon lined the village streets. Valentine Winkler supplied the villages with many cot-



Photo courtesy Harold Funk.

tonwood saplings. Fifteen years after the founding of the first West Reserve villages N.W.M.P. Constable St. George wrote from Reinland that the houses were almost hidden from view by groves of trees. Little flower gardens were attached even to the homes of the poor. Large kitchen gardens lay farther back from the house.

The settlers had left beautiful fruit orchards behind in their old homeland. Attempts at growing fruit trees were probably made early, especially since self-sufficiency in food was very important to the



The garden economy was a stabilizing factor in good times and hard times. The J. P. Thiessen garden was located at the west end of the village.

economy of the young colony. Peter Wiens, Reinland, bought fruit trees from an agent in the spring of 1880 and by late summer they were growing well. In late August the agent visited him again and asked Mr. Wiens, the colony secretary, to advertise the fruit trees for him. Mr. Wiens evidently believed that this was a good cause for he sent a circular to all the villages announcing the availability of the following trees:¹²

Two varieties of apples, summer and winter, 3-4 years old: 35 cents each.

Two varieties of currants, white and red, 2 years old: 12½ cents each.

Two varieties of Christorbeeren, white and brown, 2 years old: 15 cents each (Christorbeeren are probably gooseberries.).

Grape plants: \$4.00 per dozen.

Interested persons were asked to indicate whether fall or spring delivery was preferred.

Orchards and gardens were an important part of the village economy. They provided food and helped greatly to make the villages self-sufficient in many basic food sources. They provided important variety to the family diet.

How did the wild cherry (chokecherry trees) and wild plums make their way into those gardens? When the early Mennonites travelled to the bush and forest country in the western part of the reserve they saw these fruit trees in abundance. They selected the best and transplanted them in their gardens. They also did this with black currants.¹³ Many years later the establishment of the government's Experimental Station at Morden became an invaluable source of fruit varieties suitable to the Morden and Winkler areas.

Flowers

Flowers were used to communicate a few simple messages at the 1975 Reinland centennial celebrations. A plot in front of the old church building announced: Reinland 1875-1975. At the west entrance of the

This garden scene of the few decades ago features Helen Froese, daughter of the Heinrich Froeses.



The general outlook seemed optimistic at this "garden club" meeting held sometime in the 1940s. Abram E. Ens, Ernst Ens, Peter Bueckert, Armin Ens, Adolf Ens (kneeling) and Werner Ens each display characteristics of their own for the benefit of the photographer and posterity.



village stood the welcome wagon bedecked with floral ornamentation. Flowers have a long Reinland tradition. The plots of flowers grown around the homes of the settlers did not escape the attention of visitors. J. F. Galbraith, Morden, who had the opportunity to observe the colony from the time of its first campfires, wrote of the West Reserve villages:

. . . the Mennonites . . . brought with them from their European home a variety of flower seeds and a number of flowering plants. As soon as their villages were established they set these out, and in a year or two their homes were beautiful in summer with gardens of bright flowers. They were the first to introduce the dahlia and the women added something to the family income by the sale to townspeople of Morden of ever-blooming roses in pots, which they cultivated in their houses.¹⁴

Prairie Fire!

Steppenfeuer! Prairie fire! This cry of alarm announced a serious threat to the prairie shelter. Fires could be accidentally set. Sometimes in autumn when the grass was dry as tinder, fires would roar across the border from Dakota. Isaak Müller took two measures to combat the threat. He forbade all colonists to set fires in the open country without permission of the village authorities. He ordered all villages to plow a broad strip of land in autumn. These strips were to surround each village.¹⁵ When fire struck, all the human resources of the village were put into combat.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Die Feuerstellen

The German word *Feuerstelle* or *Fiastäd* (Low German) was familiar to Reinland pioneers. Closer to its European origins, the term would probably have been defined as a place of permanent fire as opposed to the temporary campfire of the nomad.¹ In Mennonite village development the meaning of the word took on added dimensions. Its scope expanded to encompass the entire yard with all its buildings and also all the strips of land held by a farmer with a full share in village lands.² A villager who held only a half-share in the village holdings was said to own half a *Feuerstelle*.

The most important part of the *Feuerstelle* was the house and yard within the sheltering *darp*. When the village land holding system became history and even when more and more of Reinland's inhabitants ceased to be farmers the permanent residences remained. This chapter deals with Reinland's homes, its places of permanent fire.

The Older Homes

The attachment of barns to houses which characterized early Reinland farmsteads was an arrangement that served villagers well in the prairie environment. As blizzards howled across the fields and the mercury on the Reaumur thermometer plunged, there was security within the refuge. Winter lost much of its dread for the family feeding its horses and milking its cows underneath the protective reassuring common abode.

Buildings constructed up to World War I generally followed the architectural patterns of the early settlers. The last Reinland home built in the traditional style was probably the present Frank G. Ens residence, built by Cornelius Friesens in 1914.

The older homes were originally heated by a centrally located brick-walled oven. Simple in principle, this form of central heat which travelled through ducts inside the walls before reaching its chimney exit radiated warmth to all the rooms of the house. Manure, first cured, then pressed and dried, was a clean fuel with high heat capacity. The Jacob P. Peters family used central brick heating up to the 1950s.

Photo courtesy Dennis Fast.

Brick heater in home of Elizabeth Zacharias. Although no longer in use, these heating systems can still be found in some Reinland homes.

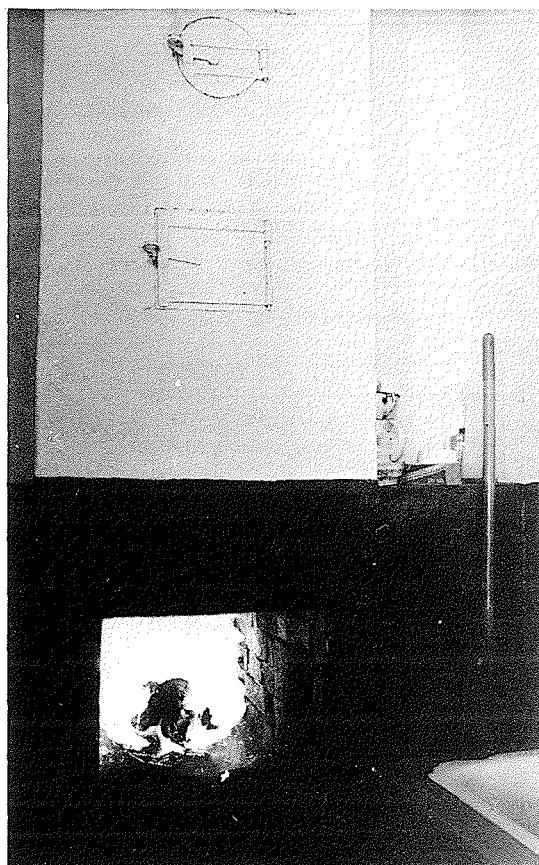




Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Elizabeth Zacharias residence. The house, occupied since the late 1930s by the David F. Zacharias family, was built by the Isaak Dycks in 1910. Mr. Demke, well-known West Reserve carpenter, supervised the construction of both this building and the Reinland school that year. The section between house and barn, used for many years as a summer kitchen, is part of the old residence of Isaak Dycks and of Bernhard Bergmanns. (Isaak Dyck came from Waldheim village near Morden and married the widow of Bernhard Bergmann in 1882.) The first residents of this lot, Isaak Kehlers, lived here for only a few years (1875 — approximately 1878).



Photo courtesy Harold Funk.

Porch at Elizabeth Zacharias residence.

Photo courtesy Harold Funk.

Linkage of buildings on the Gerhard. G. H. Ens farm.



Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Linkage of buildings on the Gerhard. G. H. Ens farm.

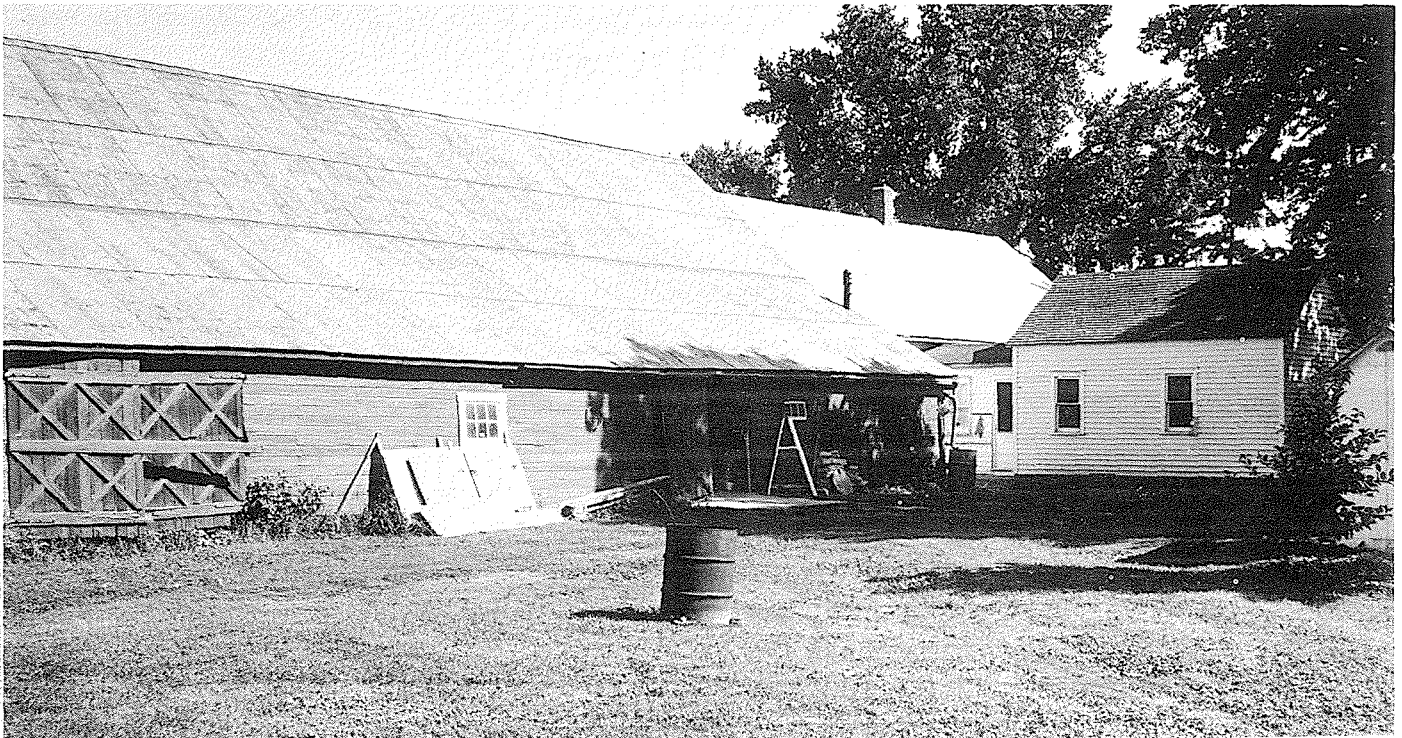




Photo courtesy Dennis Fast.

China cabinet in home of Elizabeth Zacharias.

Photo courtesy Dennis Fast.

Bernie Elias home. The settlers were probably the Isaac Fehrs. Abram Friesens lived here from the late 1880s to 1905 when they migrated to the Hague-Osler area. Jacob Froeses were the residents from 1905 to the time of their migration to Mexico. Later residents included the P. N. Isaaks (1925-1928), the Isaac Fehrs and W. J. Wiebes.

Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Frank D. Zacharias residence in 1974. Homesteaded by Peter Letkemans in 1876 and then inhabited by the Jacob Letkemans, this farm became the home of the Cornelius C. Penner family in 1925. C. N. Friesens, Peter Dycks and Frank G. Enses have lived here for short periods of time. Frank D. Zacharias have resided here for close to thirty years. On June 6, 1976, the house survived a bolt of lightning.



Courtesy Harold Funk.

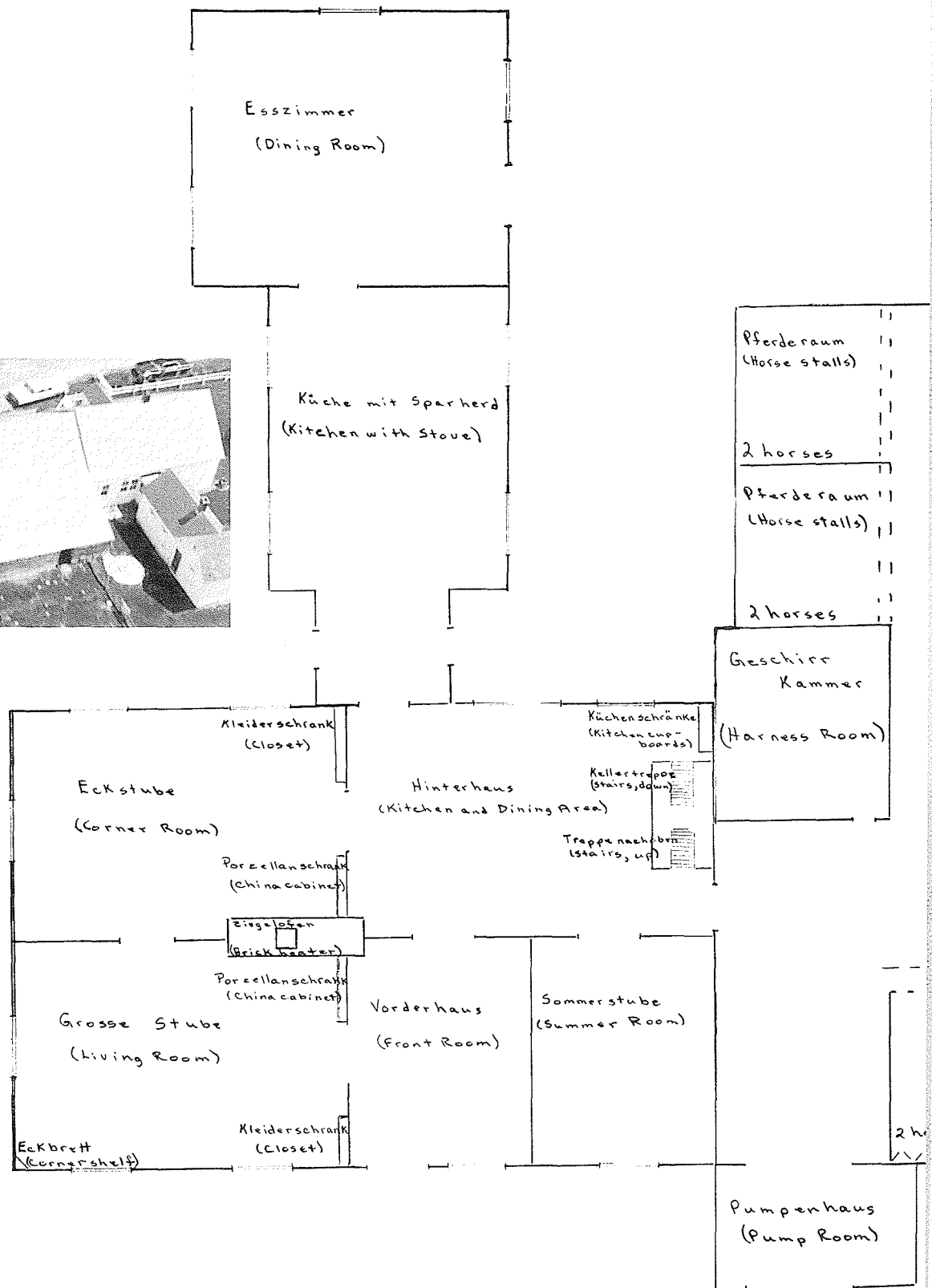
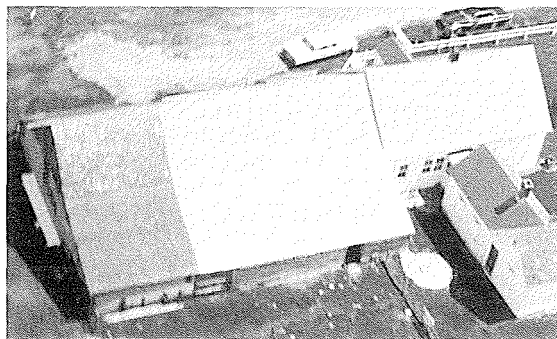
Schlafbank (bench with sleeping unit) in G. G. H. Ens home.



Courtesy Werner Ens.

Jacob F. Ens home. The upstairs rooms and the dormer window, features of this house, were unusual in early Reinland homes. The maintenance of the Brandleiter (ladder for fire emergencies) visible at the end of the barn, was a strict regulation of the Mennonite mutual fire insurance. This farm was first developed by Isaak Dycks and then occupied by Johann Walls (after Johann Wall married the widow of Isaak Dyck in the 1880s). Around 1893 the farmer and blacksmith Abraham Rempel moved here. Rempel's old blacksmith shop, containing some of his former equipment, still stands on the yard although it is not visible on this photograph. In 1928 the Rempels moved to Mexico and the Gerhard G. Ens family, which had just arrived from Russia, took over the farm. Several of Ens' married children have lived in the quarters attached to the west side of the house at various times.





JACOB AND MARIA ENS HOME

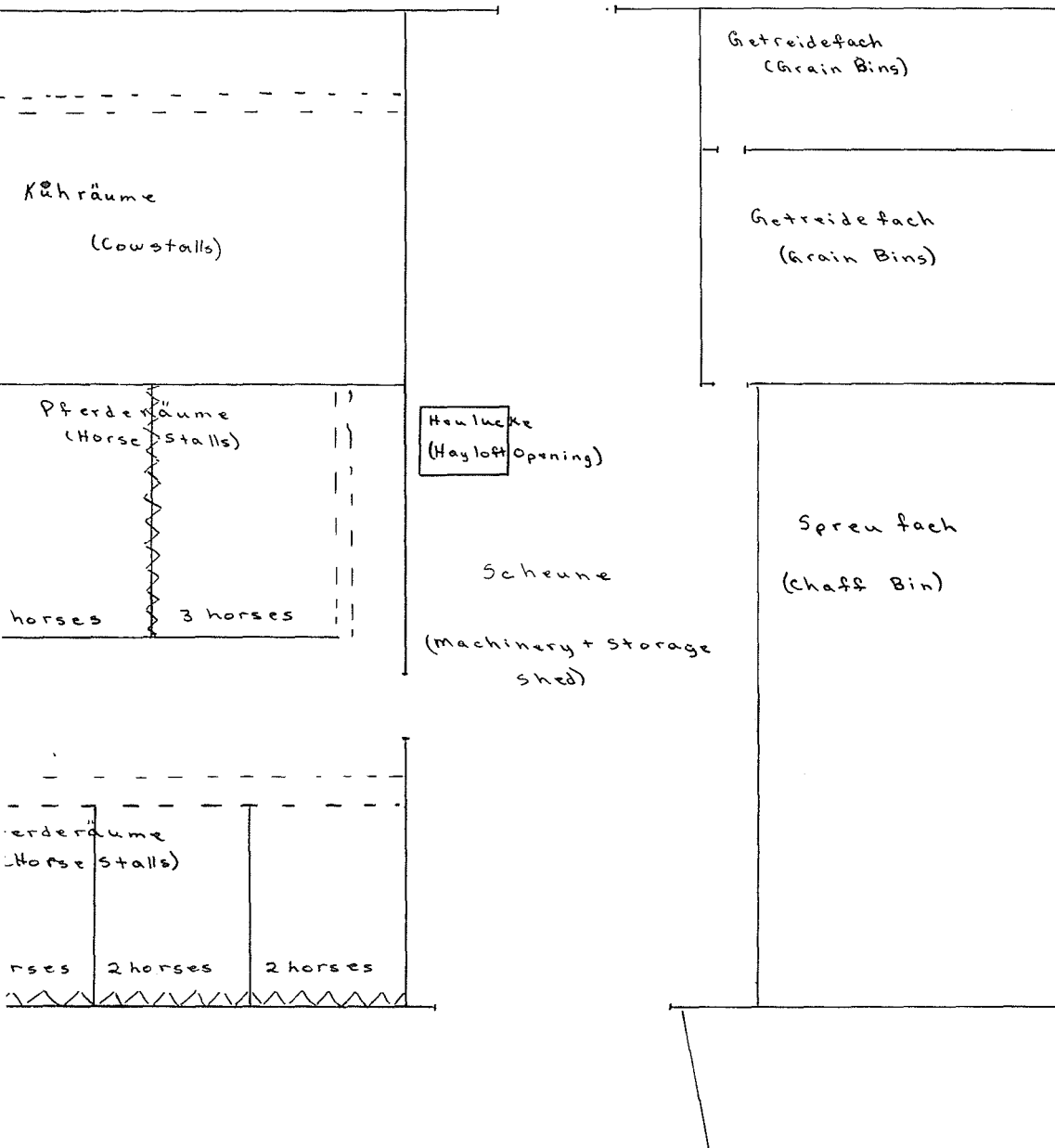




Photo courtesy Harold Funk.

Jacob P. Peters home. Only three families (aside from married children and other related persons who have lived on the yard with these families) have resided here in one hundred years. Johann Fehrs settled on the lot in 1876 and lived there until approximately 1903. Peter Wielers made their home here from 1903 until their departure to Mexico in 1923. The Jacob P. Peters moved into the house as a young couple in 1923 and have lived here for fifty-three years!



Photo courtesy Harold Funk

Linkage at Jacob Peters residence.

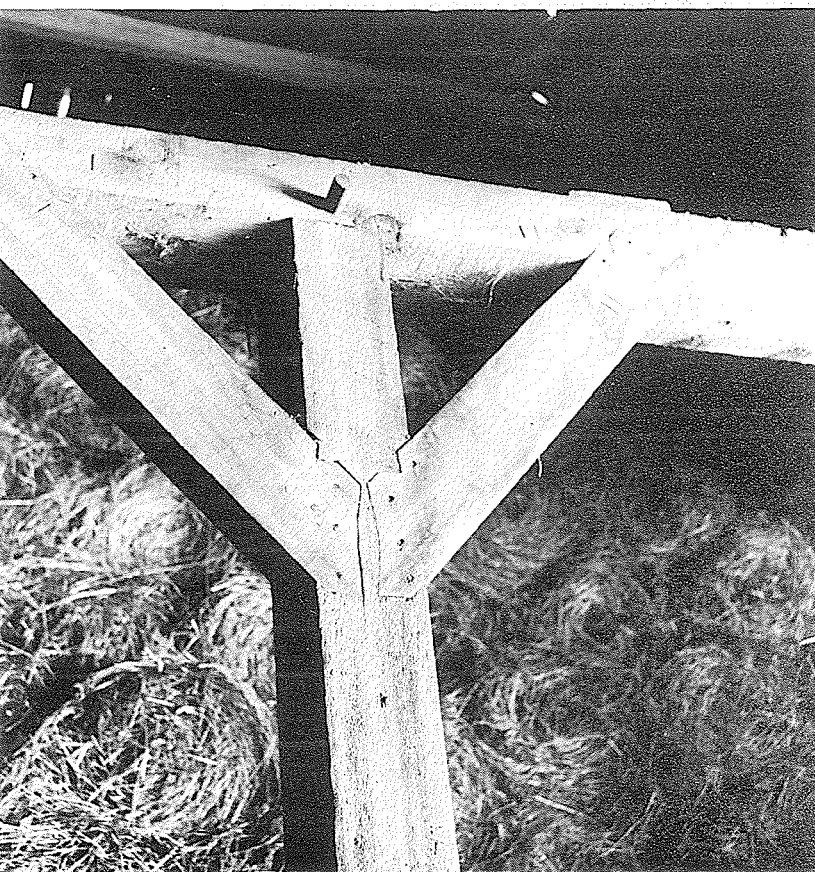


Photo courtesy Harold Funk
Architectural features of barn.

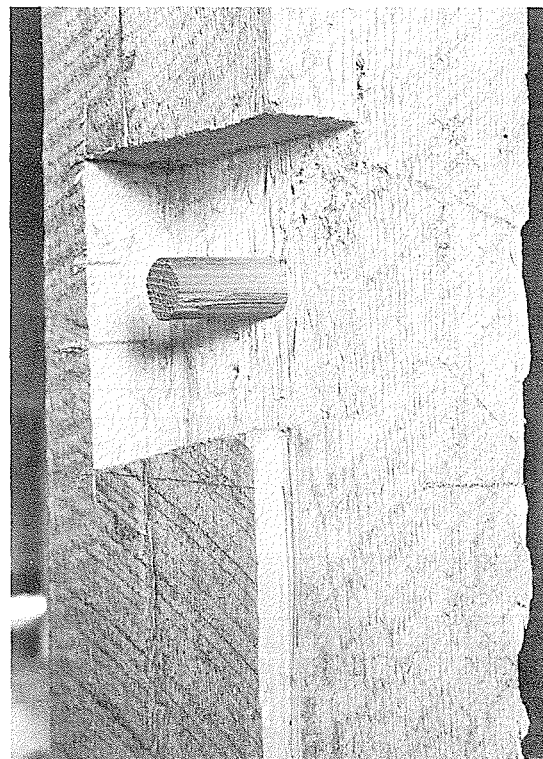
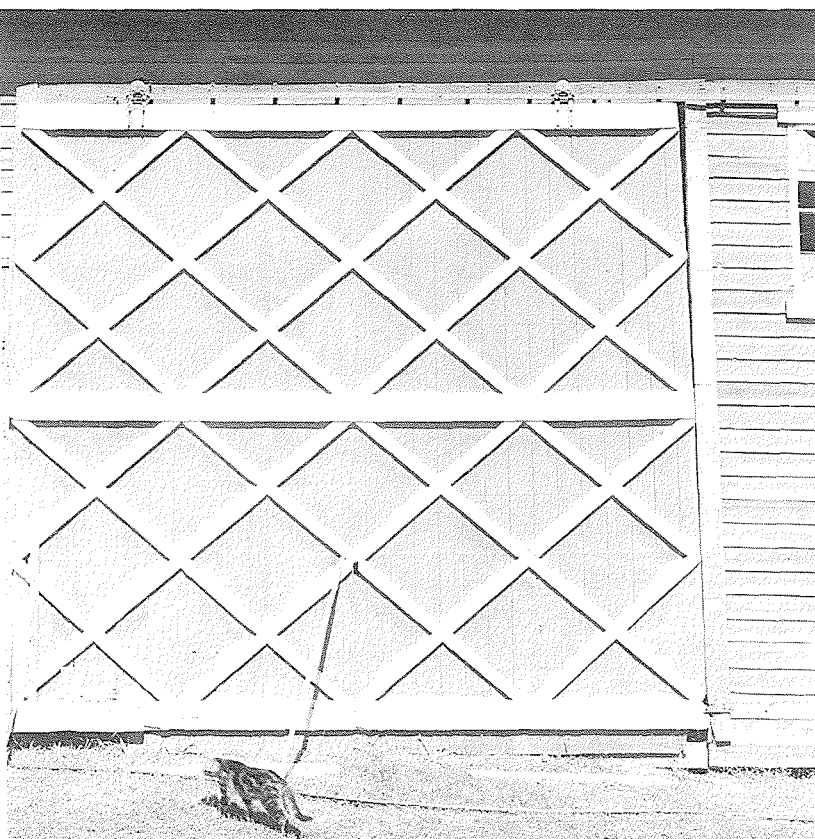


Photo courtesy Harold Funk

Former Diedrich Wieler home. Later it served as the residence of the P. P. Zacharias and Abe E. Ens families. The latter built a new house on the site in 1967.



Photo courtesy Harold Funk

Home of Jacob Martens about 1917. Pioneer Cornelius Fehr settled here in 1876. Around 1917 the farm passed into the hands of Franz Harders, who lived here until 1925. Newly arrived immigrants from Russia, Jacob Poettkers, lived here for some years. Since the 1930s many families have resided here, some of which are Jacob Neufelds, Jacob Nickels, Frank Ennses, Abe H. Ennses, Diedrich Thiessens, Jacob Dycks, Johann Blatzes and John Janzens, not necessarily in that order. The house served as a classroom with Gerhard G. Baerg as teacher in 1939-1940. The buildings have disappeared. A newer house originally occupied by the P. W. J. Peters and Armin Enses now serves as a "motel" for members of the G. G. H. Ens family coming to Reinland for visits.

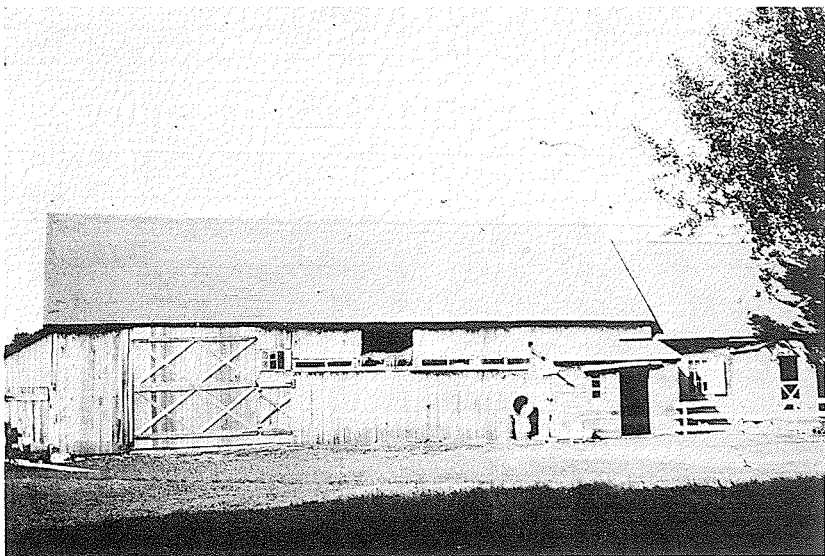


Photo courtesy Harold Funk.

Franz Tiessen residence in 1925.





Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

John P. Peters home in 1974. Franz Tiessen residence in 1925. This photograph was sent to Canada some years ago by the Tiessens' daughter, Luise Tiessen, Hamburg, Germany, who died in October, 1975. Jacob Kroekers constructed the buildings. Isaak I. Dycks lived here prior to 1920. Cornelius Martens and Johann Giesbrechts have also resided at this place. Since 1928 this has been the home of the John P. Peters family.

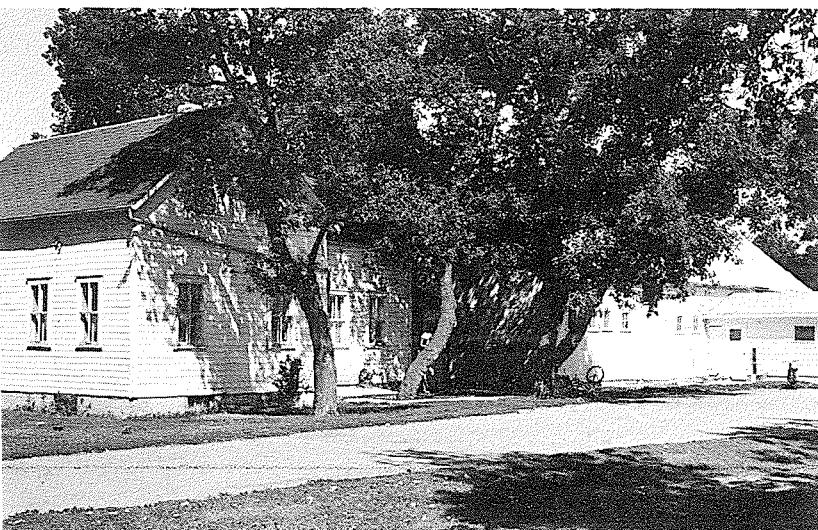


Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Bernie and Lydia Zacharias home. Prior to 1909 mail carriers Johann Quirings and Peter Hieberts lived here. The house was occupied by the Peter Froeses prior to the exodus to Mexico in the 1920s. This was for many years after the mid-1920s the home of the Rev. Peter S. Zacharias family.



Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Frank G. Ens residence since 1972. The house, built by Cornelius Friesens in 1914, is the former home of Abram D. Paetkaus, Frank Paetkaus and David Falks. This was probably the last Reinland dwelling built in the style of the settlers from Russia. The pioneers who homesteaded on this allotment were the Abraham Dycks. After several years the Dycks temporarily returned to Russia to give their children an education. Johann Walls and two Cornelius Friesens lived here before the exodus to Mexico.



Photo courtesy Harold Funk.

In foreground, Jake Fehr residence, long-time home of Frank Suderman family.

In background, Isaac Giesbrecht residence. Pioneers Johann and Agatha Peters homesteaded at this location in 1876. Johann Froeses lived here from circa 1905 to 1925, when they moved to Mexico. Froeses sold to Abram Dycks, who had arrived in Canada from Russia one year earlier. Heinrich Froeses purchased the lot in 1928. Residents since the 1950s include Wilhelm Heppners.

Adaptation

Some of the newer Reinland homes built soon after World War II departed considerably from the older styles in general design, but were still basically adaptations of those architectural forms. Linkage to the barn by means of a connecting corridor characterized the homes of the Abram Paetkaus and Mrs. Isaac Fehr (now the residence of Isaac Brauns). Several other homes, such as that built by the David P. Peters no longer had the connecting link.

Photo Courtesy Werner Ens.

Isaac Braun home. This was lot number six in the old village books. Settled by Jacob Fehr, Reinland's first Schulze, in 1875, this yard was the site of the simlin described by Jacob Fehr, the Schulze's son, in his chronicle. Another son, Isaac Fehr later became owner of the property. For many years the Isaac Fehrs lived in the house now occupied by the Bernie Elias family. During that interval several families rented the house on lot number six (old number). These included Abram Dycks, Jacob Thiessens, Mrs. Friesen and Herman Heides. For some years in the late 1930s and 1940s Monty Mitchell rented the house and ran a store in it. The present house and barn were built later for Mrs. Isaac Fehr. Isaac Brauns, the present residents, are the children of the Isaac Fehrs and the third generation of the same family living on this lot. The land has been in the hands of one family for the entire 101 year history of the village.

Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Abram A. Paetkau farmstead (historical details in Chapter 21). Architecturally the Abram A. Paetkau residence is an adaptation of the early post-World War II building patterns to the traditional village house-barn concept. Notice the Vordergarten in the foreground.

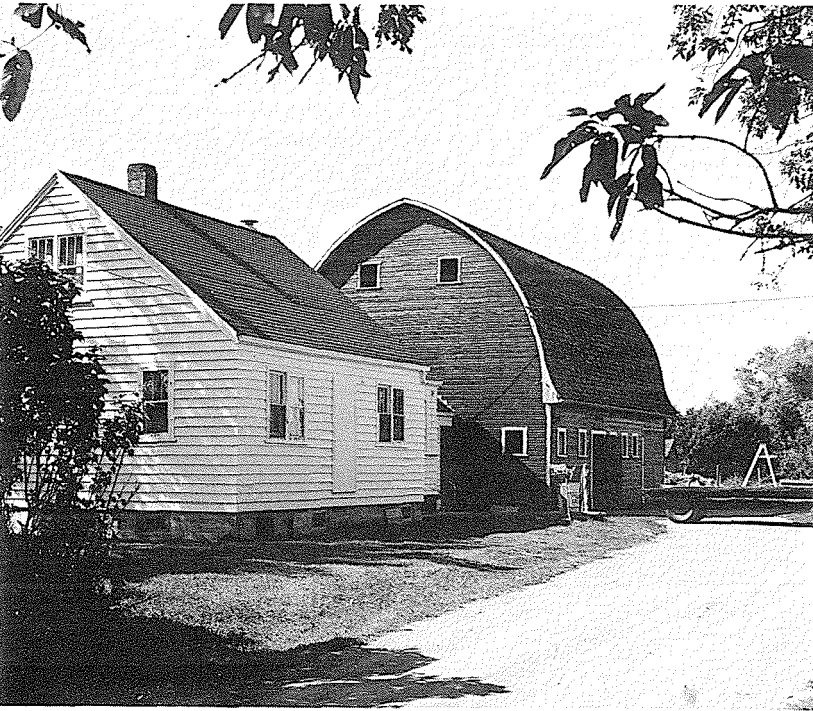


Photo Courtesy Werner Ens.

Upper right, Peter Friesen home — long the site of a Reinland store (Johann Dyck and David Paetkau operated stores here).

Photo Courtesy Werner Ens.

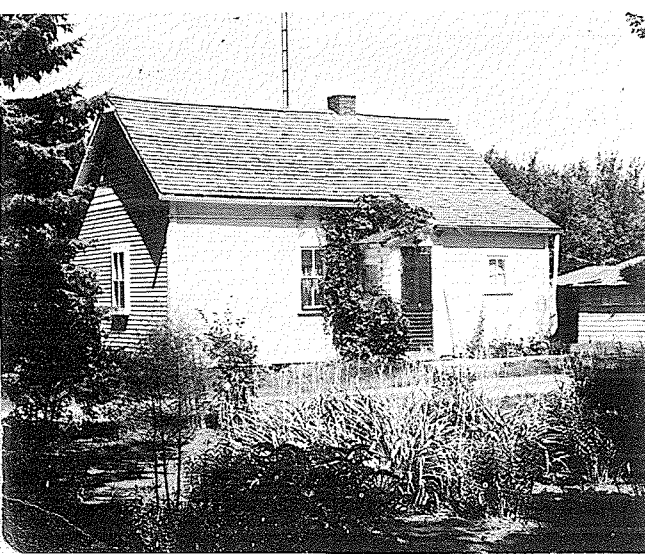
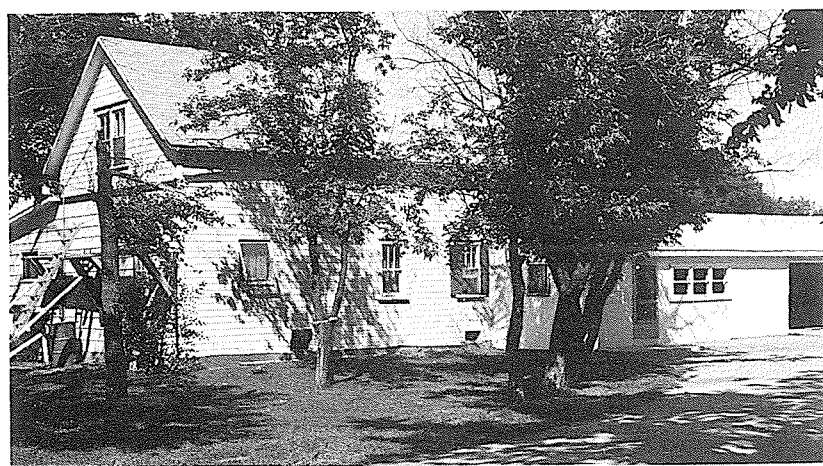
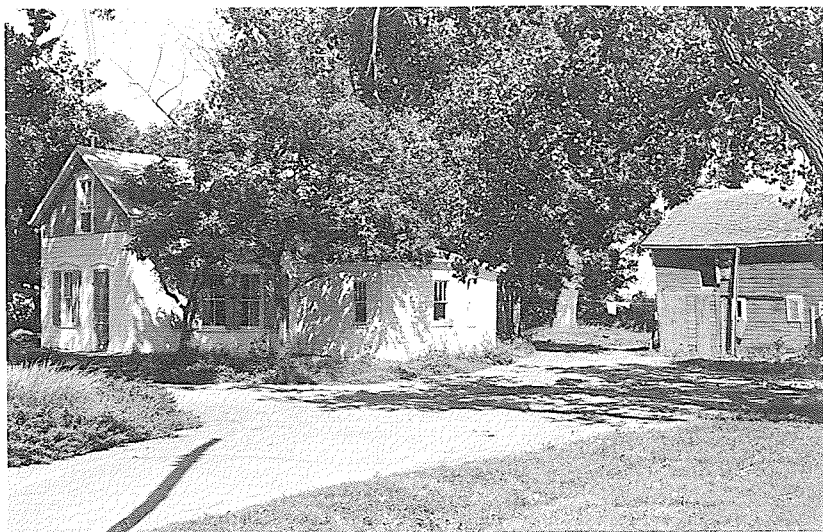
Centre right, Peter Thiessen home — The H. G. Penners lived here for many years.

Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Below right, Harvey Janzen residence.

Bottom left, home of Mrs. Elizabeth Friesen.

Below, home of Mrs. Margaret Hiebert.



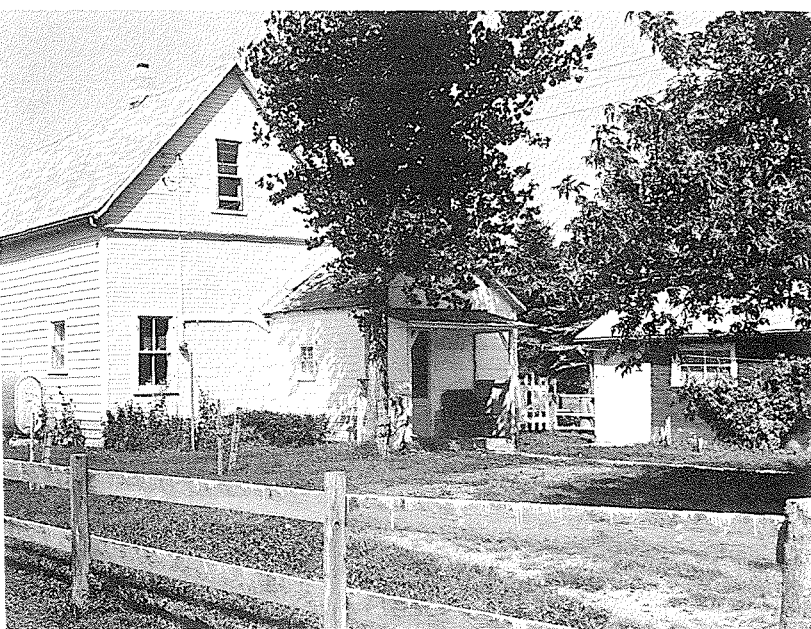


Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Jake Peters residence.

Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Upper left, P. J. W. Peters residence. Peter and Katharina Harms migrated from Osterwick, Chortitza, and settled on this allotment in 1875. Harms became a minister of the Mennonite Church like his father in Russia. Peter Friesens lived here from circa 1905 until the exodus to Mexico. David Harms resided at this place for a brief interval. In 1925 David F. Zacharias purchased the property and the family moved from Schoenwiese to Reinland. Since 1964 the P. J. W. Peters family has made its home here.

Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Jacob H. Peters home and former residence of Abram A. Olferts and Bill Penners.

Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

David J. Thiessen home.

Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Upper right, Frank Knelsen home, former residence of Rev. C. B. Krahns and B. C. Krahns.

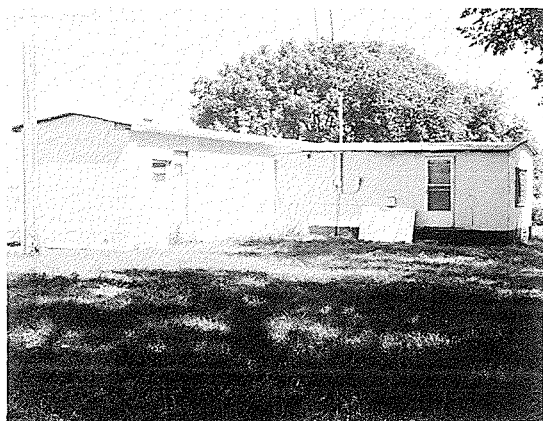
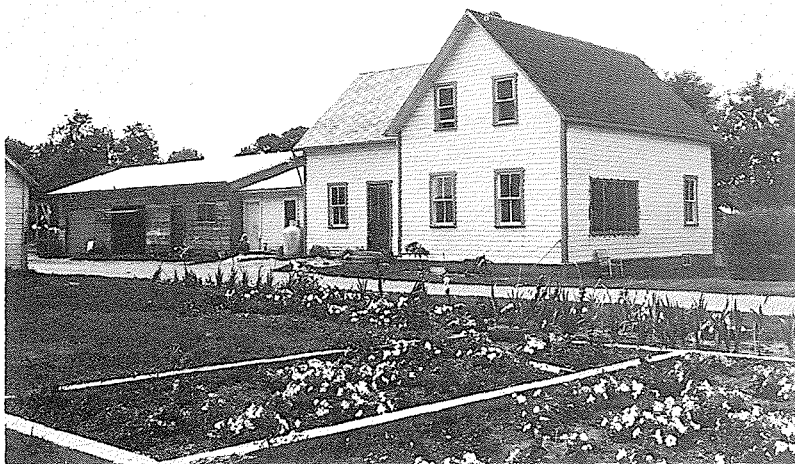
Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Centre right, Menno Wieler lives in this house occupied until recently by Jacob F. Wielers.

Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Bottom, George Braun home. The buildings were constructed by the David P. Peters. Jim Bergens and Ed Eliases have lived here briefly.

Below, Pete Thiessen home.



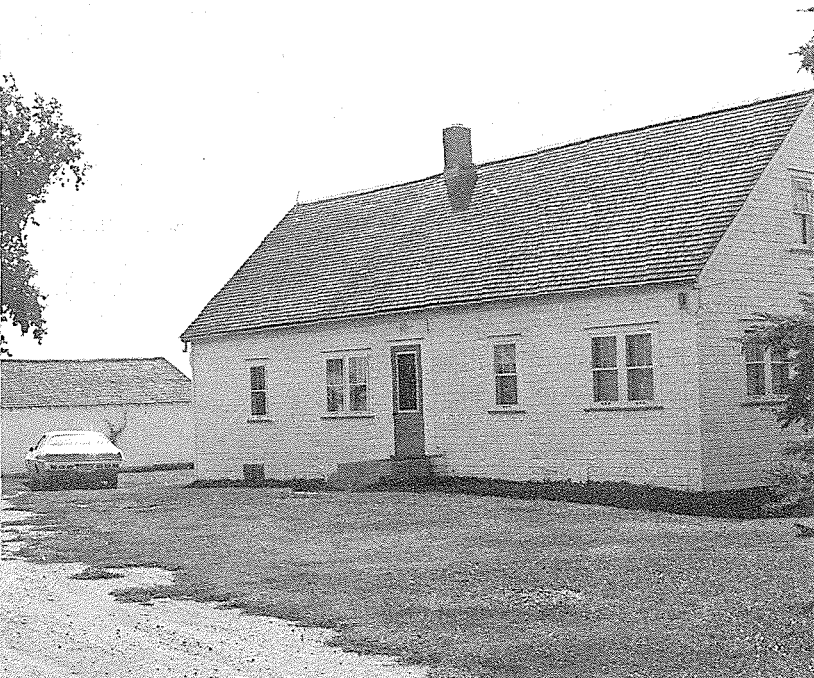
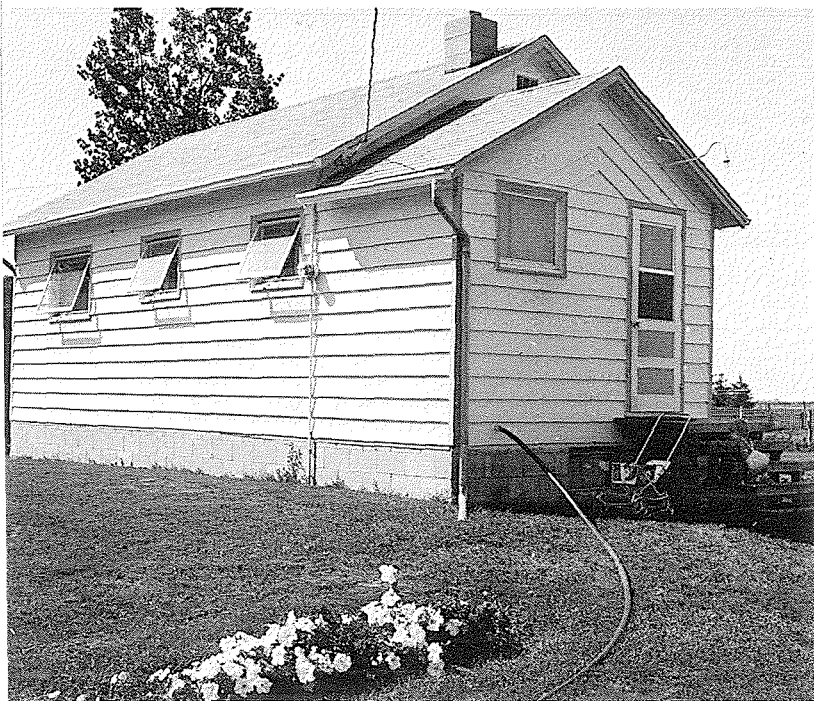


Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Dave Wall residence.

Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

The present home of Armin and Caroline Ens was long the residence of the Rev. Heinrich G. Ens family. Dave Hoeppners lived here in 1970-1971.



Abe Peters residence located on site of former Peter J. Peters home. Picture below shows same house with recent addition.



Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

The spacious well-treed backyard of the Frank Reimer place was used to advantage by several campers during the 1975 centennial celebrations. The J. D. Wielers lived in this house for many years before the Reimers assumed residence.



Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Abram E. and Helen Ens home in 1974. This farmstead has been owned by the Diedrich Wieler (prior to Mexico migration). Peter J. Zacharias and Peter P. Zacharias families. Abram E. Enses have lived here since 1958.

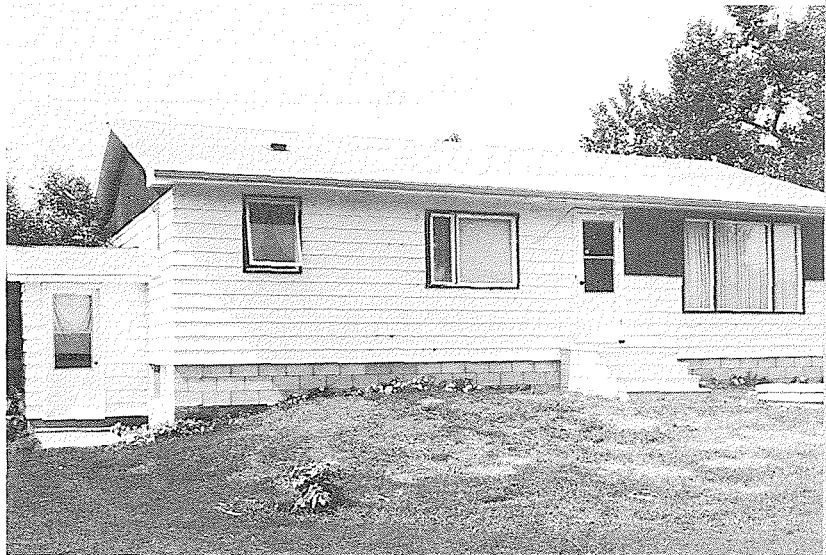


Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Home of Henry J. Janzens — a more recent farmstead.





Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Abram H. Enns home. Before the migration to Mexico, Franz Peters resided here. Jacob Ennses were long-time residents. Later the Abram H. Enns family took over this farm and eventually built the new dwelling.



Photo Courtesy Werner Ens.

Henry D. Falks' bungalow on Reinland's main street. The yard has undergone several transformations. Franz Dycks lived here in the early 1920s and moved to Mexico. In the mid-1920s Abram N. Friesens purchased the farm. They planted gardens and orchards and sold fruit and vegetables. Probably Friesens, more than any other village residents, deserve credit for first attracting a large number of American customers for village garden produce. During Friesens tenure the Peter Buhlers, new arrivals from Russia lived on the yard briefly. Friesens' children, the Jacob Friesens, lived in a separate house on the east side of the yard until they moved to Paraguay in 1948 (Friesen is now the pastor of the Gladstone Mennonite Church.) The Gerhard Huebners, Fred Peters and Jacob Letkemans have lived on this allotment in more recent years. At present the yard is the base of Henry D. Falks' farming operation.



Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Jacob F. Wieler residence — former home of Frank Wielers.



Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Nestled among trees and shrubs is the Abram P. Peters home. Former residents on this allotment include Johann Froeses, Abram Friesens and Peter Hieberts.

New Architectural Forms

Many architectural forms, both old and new, are illustrated in this chapter. The bungalow style was adopted by several village families in the last few decades.

An early Reinland bungalow was the Abram P. Peters family residence built in the 1950s. Surrounded by well planned shrubs and trees, this dwelling does not dominate its natural environment. Instead it harmonizes with nature and seems to be at peace with the village. With the disappearance of so many of the giant cottonwoods that lined the streets in earlier days, the preservation of the village as a definition of prairie shelter has become a challenging proposition. As new architectural forms find their place in the village, it is imperative that they speak the language of the *darf*.

Along the Post Road

"Just as the pioneers of the earlier days sought a measure of security and stability by establishing the guide posts as an aid to travelling, so the people who followed them have figuratively added many branches to the Post Road to give them a greater measure of security and stability."

— J. J. Peters

Reinland's strategic location in the heart of the West Reserve and on the Post Road contributed to its early development as a postal and trade centre. It provided new scope for the ingenuity of the village's inhabitants and of those who passed through along the route. An officer on patrol was inspired to pen a special report, a merchant extended hospitality to new immigrants, some Reinland people were challenged to endeavours in milling grain, blacksmithing, merchandising, invention and other pursuits.



Photo courtesy Harold Funk.

CHAPTER NINE

The Reinland Mail

Every day of the week except on Sunday and holidays the mail is delivered to the village group mail boxes by Johnny Doell. It was not always so.*

West Lynn, Manitoba, thirty some miles to the east, was the first mailing address of the settlers in 1875. West Lynn was a growing community situated on the west side of the Red River, across from Emerson, the town which was at that time confidently aspiring to become a western Canadian metropolis. In 1876, Reinland newspaper correspondent Peter Wiens gave his address as (Reinland) West Lynn, Manitoba.

In the late 1870s the West Reserve settlers established the Post Road, so called because of the posts that were spaced along its stretch to guide travellers across the open prairie, especially in winter. This Post Road began at Emerson, passed through the Strassberg district and Neuanlage and continued in a line just north of the later Gretna townsite, Blumenort and Neuhorst. Many Reinland residents will remember the "Schrotzstaul" that used to be Brown's Inn, that old former Post Road stopping place, located north-west of Neuhorst. From that location the road made its way to Schoenwiese, through Reinland, and on to the Pembina Hills via Hochfeld, Osterwick and Waldheim, eventually terminating at Mountain City. Even though this road was not named for the postmen it did become the early mail route of the West Reserve. It was along this trail that the mail came to Reinland. Starting in 1876 the mail was probably left at Herman Dyck's new store to be picked up by residents.

The mail was very important to the early settlers. It brought them news of loved ones they had left behind in the "alte Heimat" (old home). It brought letters from friends and relatives in Minnesota, Nebraska and Kansas. It brought them the *Nebraska Ansiedler* (later *Die Rundschau*) and the *Herold der Wahrheit*. It enabled them to send messages to the outside world.

Folgende Auskunft wird uns von
unserm Freunde W. Kempel, Reinland,
Manitoba, gegeben:

„Reinland war bis vor etwa drei Mona-
ten nichts weiter als ein Dorfsname und
ist auch heute noch. Da aber die Landpost
dieses Dorf jedesmal passieren muß, wenn
sie von der Stadt Emerson nach dem Pem-
bina Berge, und umgekehrt, fährt, und da
von der hiesigen Anliebung viele Briefe
ausgehen und ebensoviel per Post herein-
geschickt werden, so hat es die Ober-Post-
verwaltung für gut befunden, den hiesigen
Kaufmann Herman Dyck mit der Postmei-
sterchaft zu betrauen, und seiner Office den
Namen Reinland zu geben.“

Die Rundschau new article, March 19, 1881, describes
Reinland post office beginnings.

*Since this chapter was written, Johnny Doell was succeeded as mail carrier by
Peter Peters in October, 1975.

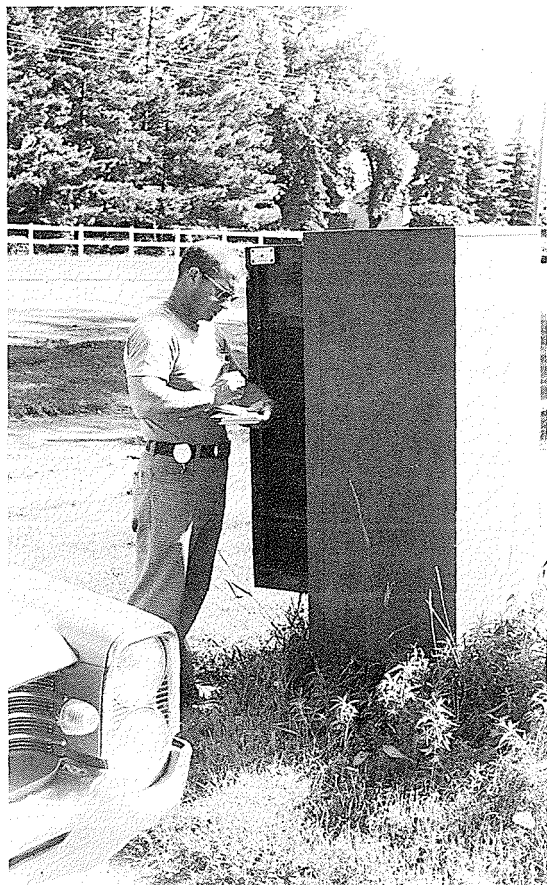


Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Johnny Doell served as Reinland's mail carrier for a quarter of a century. He passed away suddenly at his home in Winkler on June 5, 1976, at the age of 51 years.

That even at this early stage the mail arrived with a degree of regularity seems to be indicated by Mr. Wilhelm Rempel's letter quoted below. Rempel notes an important change in the local mail delivery system:

"Reinland, up to about three months ago, was no more than the name of a village, and still is that today. But because the rural mail has to pass this village every time it goes from Emerson to the Pembina Hills or vice versa, and because many letters leave this settlement and just as many are sent into it by mail, the Postal Administration has seen fit to entrust the local merchant, Herman Dyck, with the postmastership and to give his office the name of Reinland."¹

Since the newspaper was published at Elkhart, Indiana, at the time and is dated March 19, 1881, the letter was probably written in early March which suggests that the Reinland Post Office was opened in early December, 1880.

The Reinland Post Office of the 1880s served a large area. Mr. Heinrich Hildebrand of Neuendorf in a letter written in 1882, gives his address as:

Heinrich Hildebrand (Neuendorf)
Reinland P.O., Manitoba
Brittisches Nordamerika²

Similarly other *Rundschau* writers gave their addresses as Reinland (Burwalde), Reinland (Schoenfeld) or Reinland (Osterwick). At one time or another in this early era, the Reinland postal area included Schoenwiese, Rosenort, Gruenfeld, Neuenburg, Neuendorf, Osterwick, Kronsgard, Hoffnungsfeld, Burwalde, Eichenfeld, Gnadenthal, Kronsfield, Blumenfeld, Hochfeld, Rosengart and probably several other points. After some time another post office was established at Schanzenfeld.

After Herman Dyck several other postmasters served in Reinland. A prominent one was Klaas Kroeker, who developed a reputation as an extremely punctual and dependable postman. Every Tuesday and Friday he would travel to Gretna to pick up the mail, leaving at 8 a.m. and returning at 4 p.m. Blizzards would not deter him. He attached the reins to a hook on his top-sleigh and his horse intuitively followed the right road while Mr. Kroeker could sit back and relax.

Mr. Johann Dyck also served as postmaster. Later when Mr. David Paetkau owned the store at the east end of Reinland, Mrs. B. C. Krahn was postmistress for a number of years until the final closing of the Reinland Post Office in 1937.

Early mailmen who ran up thousands of miles of travel on pioneer roads were Mr. Johann Quiring, who was severely frozen one winter, and Mr. John Woelke. Many stories of adventure and heroism could be written about the post service of the early years when wind and weather, rain and snow, and long distances rose to challenge these trail breakers. Reinland school teacher Jacob Peters makes an indirect comment on

the work of these postal pioneers when he reports in his diary on February 13, 1920:

“Ein recht Manitoba artiger Stüm aus Norden das die Nachbaren nicht immer zu sehen sind bei 17 Grad Frost. Zum ersten mal seit vier Jahren das wir die Post nicht erhielten.”³

(A real blizzard from the north, Manitoba style, with a temperature of 17° below zero [Reaumur]. We cannot always see our neighbors. The first time in four years that we did not get the mail.)

In the 1880s the railway building era came to the West. In 1883, just a few years after the opening of the Reinland Post Office, the town of Gretna appeared beside the new railway line at the Dakota border and the mail came to Reinland via Gretna. This greatly shortened the distance for the mail carrier. In a letter dated August 29, 1883, Peter Wiens who was an agent for Mennonite Publishing Co., explained the new circumstances to Publisher John F. Funk:

Dear Brother Funk,

Received your letter of August 22 in which you write that you have received the \$200 and have taken care of everything. You write about the address. Put the following address on the box: To Peter Wiens, Reinland, Railway Station, Gretna, Manitoba, via Neche, Dakota. I write Neche because there are two railways leading from St. Paul to Manitoba, one via Emerson. If it (the shipment) goes via Emerson, it goes to Winnipeg and then back to Gretna on the Dakota Border and so makes a detour of approximately 150 miles for which I then have to pay, too. Gretna is situated on the Dakota border and Neche is two miles inside Dakota, directly across from Gretna. So my correct and advantageous address is as given above; I receive it (the shipment) sooner and at lesser cost. — One railway leads from St. Paul to Emerson and one via Neche to Gretna and in Gretna there is an Express Office and a Customs Office. So it does not have to be sent via Emerson to Winnipeg.⁴

No doubt Peter Wiens' letter effectively cured John F. Funk's habit of sending shipments via Emerson. The fact that Mr. Wiens replies on August 29 to a letter written in Indiana on August 22 is a testimony to the efficiency of the postal connection.

Reinland continued receiving its mail by way of Gretna until the 1937 closing of its post office and the subsequent changing of Reinland's address to R.R. 2, Winkler. An era in the village's history came to a close when Gretna mail carrier Cornelius Martens brought his last load of mail earmarked for the Reinland Post Office. It was then that mail boxes became part of the street scene.

Cornelius Martens delivered mail to Reinland, first from the Gretna base and then from Winkler, from 1930 to 1943. He was succeeded by Mr. Friesen from Winkler and after that Mr. Braun made the rounds.

Johnny Doell, the present mailman, has served for over half the



Photo courtesy Harold Funk.

Looking eastward along Reinland's main street.

time that this rural route had been in operation. Accepting the route as his challenge he developed a reputation as an all-weather mailman soon after he began bucking the snowdrifts with his four-wheel drive Willys Jeep in 1950. He has maintained his reputation ever since. He is a popular local figure, well-known for punctuality and devotion to his postal area.

Not to be forgotten is the memorable winter of 1949-1950 when roads were blocked for several weeks and Mr. P. J. W. Peters went to Winkler with his team of horses and bobsleigh on a twice weekly basis, doing business for Reinland residents and bringing the mail to the village. Shipments of cream and eggs were taken to town and empty cream cans and egg crates came back. An adequate supply of the *Echo*, the *Free Press Weekly Prairie Farmer*, the *Family Herald* and the one and only *Steinbach Post* constituted precious cargo that kept the snow bound villagers in contact with the rest of humanity.

CHAPTER TEN

An NWMP Outpost

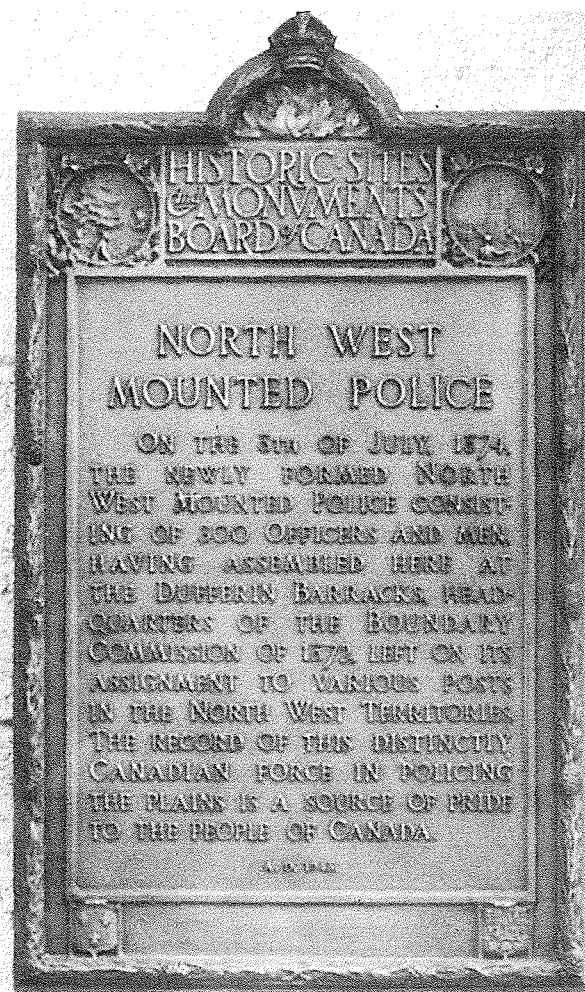
The North-West Mounted Police (NWMP), the forerunner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), was organized by the Canadian government in 1873. The initial purpose of the new force was to bring a semblance of law and order to the North-West, to curb the whisky trade from Montana and to calm the increasingly restless Indian population of the Northwest Territories (which still included the lands that now constitute the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta). It exercised a combination of restraining and beneficent controls over both Indians and whites. Organized in the East, the troop came to Western Canada in 1874. The NWMP assembled at Fort Dufferin, which had been built two years earlier as headquarters of the Boundary Commission and where the first West Reserve immigrants arrived a year later.

Two considerations warrant the inclusion of the NWMP in this account — the fact that for several years a Reinland detachment of the force existed and the fact that Sergeant Victor Joseph St. George wrote a report on the West Reserve while on duty in Reinland.

Reinland Detachment — North-West Mounted Police

The Reinland NWMP detachment may have been established as early as November, 1888, when the system of police patrols along the international boundary was extended into Manitoba from the North West Territories.¹ This extension took place at the request of the Department of Customs and Interior. Inspector McGibbon was sent to Manitoba with a party including besides himself, one Sergeant, two Corporals and eleven Constables. Border patrol was a top priority. The assignment of the Force included the prevention of smuggling, collection of duty on articles imported into Manitoba, prevention of timber and hay stealing, issuing permits to cut timber and issuing "Let-Passes" to persons going to the United States. McGibbon reported that monthly crop and weather bulletins were sent in for the Department of

Photo Courtesy Manitoba Archives.



the Interior. The Force did not execute criminal laws unless requested to do so by local authorities and then only in serious cases.

In April, 1889, the Manitoba boundary detachments were withdrawn, but in June of that year it was found necessary to order Inspector McGibbon, with a detachment of approximately 21 men, back again. McGibbon set up headquarters in Morden. By June, 1889, the Reinland detachment had definitely come into existence. Two men were stationed at each of the following nine Manitoba detachments: Manitou, Burritts, Windygates, Snowflake, Crystal City, Cartwright, Wakopa, Sourisford and Reinland.

At each point one man was to remain at the detachment while the other was on patrol duty. The 1891 NWMP Report gives patrol distances as follows (further extensions since 1889 can be noted):²

Ridgeville to Roseau River East	— 19 miles
Ridgeville to Emerson	— 12 miles
Emerson to Gretna	— 18 miles
Gretna to Reinland*	— 10 miles
Reinland to Morden	— 24 miles
Reinland to Pembina Mountain	— 18 miles
Morden to Mountain	— 14 miles
Mountain to Windygates	— 10 miles
Windy gates to Snowflake	— 15 miles
Snowflake to Crystal City	— 17 miles
Crystal City to Cartwright	— 25 miles
Cartwright to Wakopa	— 23 miles
Wakopa to Killarney	— 14 miles
Deloraine to Sourisford	— 30 miles
Deloraine to Wakopa	— 40 miles

At one point the members of the Reinland detachment were stationed on the Walhalla trail but the exact location is uncertain.³ Generally NWMP were billeted in homes or taverns in the area in which they were stationed. Horses were boarded. Forage purchases were then unnecessary.

The names of the first men stationed at Reinland are not known. However, in 1890 Sergeant Victor Joseph St. George was in charge of the Reinland detachment. St. George was born in April, 1867. When he joined the Force in 1885, he gave his previous occupation as university student and his previous residence as London, England. He was fluent in both English and German. St. George was promoted to Corporal in 1887 and to Sergeant in 1890. He was stationed at Battleford in 1887 and at Reinland in 1890-91. His conduct is described as "very good."⁴

Obviously either Reinland or the NWMP was not every constable's cup of tea. On April 23, 1890, Const. H. H. Moore deserted from Reinland and J. Little followed a month later.⁵

On October 31, 1890, Inspector McGibbon of Morden asserted that a great deal of smuggling had been stopped since the NWMP ar-

*Apparently the Reinland detachment was located on the Walhalla trail for some time. The patrol distance given here indicates that it may have been stationed at Brown's Inn, near Neuhorst at one time.

rived. Settlers, he said, had forgotten that there was a boundary. The implication was that they had again been reminded. McGibbon especially praised Corporal Baby of Manitou:

"This corporal is the best man I have for Customs work, as he thoroughly understands the Customs laws and has that particular knack of finding out things, such as smuggling. Most of the Customs seizures were made by him."⁶

Corporal Baby's "knack" extended all the way to Reinland where he nabbed a would-be smuggler.

One police job particularly important at Reinland was the issuance of "Let-Passes" to allow Mennonite settlers to go to the mill in Walhalla. McGibbon reports that settlers saved two cents a bushel in this way. Sergeant St. George attributes the large numbers of settlers going to Walhalla for their grist to the scarcity of mills in the western half of the reserve. "Let-Passes" permitted settlers to cross the boundary for three days. Time extensions were possible. An average of four hundred such passes were issued annually at each detachment.

In effect the Reinland NWMP detachment was the Customs Office for the surrounding area. Duties were collected at Reinland and sent to Morden from where they were forwarded to the collector in Winnipeg.

In 1890 there was considerable excitement along the border. Sitting Bull had been killed and his followers had gathered at Wounded Knee, Pine Ridge region, South Dakota, for a last stand. Inspector McGibbon reports from Morden in November, 1891:

"A very effective patrol service was kept up during the Indian fighting at Pine Ridges, Southern Dakota, last winter, in order to prevent hostiles from crossing to Canada."⁷

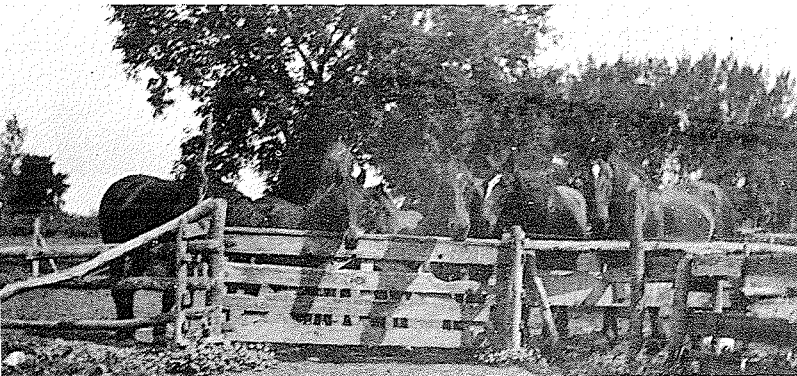
The Indians at Wounded Knee suffered a bitter defeat which was to have repercussions for generations to come. Violence, however, stayed away from the 49th parallel despite rumours in January, 1891, that the Deloraine Indians were on the war path and that 72 of them were having a Ghost Dance at Fish Lake.⁸

In 1892, the NWMP cut its Manitoba forces. In February, 1892, the number of detachments was reduced from thirteen to ten and in November a further reduction to six detachments with a total of thirteen men was made. Reinland was among the detachments closed in November.⁹



Photo courtesy Carillon News.
Police officer in uniform of North-West Mounted Police at Emerson ceremony in 1974.

Horses at the gate at Abram P. Zacharias farm.



An Interesting Report

In 1890 Reinland detachment head Sergeant St. George wrote an article on the Mennonites that was included in the NWMP Commissioner's Annual Report for that year.¹⁰ He presents an interesting outside view. The account is given in its entirety except for one cut explained by a footnote.

Reinland, Man., 20th October, 1890.

Sir, — I have the honour to report as follows on the country and settlers, &c. surrounding this detachment of "B" Division, North-West Mounted Police, stationed here on preventive duty.

The Mennonite reserve, consisting of Townships 1, Range 1, east of the Principal Meridian, and Townships 1, 2 and 3 of Ranges 1, 2, 3 and 4, and the east third of Range 5, west of the Meridian, is divided into two municipalities — Douglass and Reinland. With the exception of a few farmers, who have bought school and Hudson Bay Company's lands, and of some merchants, &c, more especially men connected with agricultural implement agencies and other businesses supported by Mennonite farmers, these municipalities, numbering some 6,600 souls, are peopled exclusively by Mennonites.

The Mennonites, so called from their founder, Meno Simon, emigrated from Holland, Germany and Switzerland in the eighteenth century, to Russia, in the hopes of there finding relief from the bitter persecutions to which they had been for some time subject.

Placed by the Russian authorities on what was then almost a desert, (north of the Black Sea) it was not many years till, by their efforts, the country became thickly settled. The course of events ran smoothly enough until the years 1871-72, when the Russian Government determined, despite their original agreement, to enforce compulsory service among them for the National army.

The Mennonites determined, rather than submit to this and other obnoxious laws, to seek new homes, and as the result of examinations by delegates, &c., the exodus to Manitoba and different points in the United States began.

... for several years a steady stream of immigration continued, so that, with the children born in Manitoba since their arrival, the reserve is now thickly populated.¹¹

They have to a great extent retained their custom of living in communities. The 160 acres belonging to each man are thrown into the common land surrounding each village.

These villages are in summer very pleasant in appearance. The houses are generally almost hid from view by groves of ash and other trees, while little flower gardens are attached to even the poorest houses.

Large kitchen gardens lay further back from the house, and as a rule they raise good vegetables.

Their cattle are tended by a herdsman, who is paid by the village, and who, early in the morning, passes down the street blowing a horn as a signal. At sunset the cattle are brought home by the herder, and they generally manage to pick out their own stables without assistance. These stables generally adjoin the farmer's house and communicate by a door with it.

The class of horses met with on the reserve is, on the whole, very good, being large and powerful, and yet not too heavy for fairly fast travelling. The prices demanded and given are, however, in my opinion, exorbitant (an average team costs from \$400, to \$500) taking into account the price of good horses only a little farther west.

Cattle are by no means what they should be, chiefly owing to the lack of good bulls, scrubs abounding. However, I am informed that they began with just as poor a lot of horses as the cattle are now, so that with some well-bred bulls to breed from improvement may be expected.

The number of horses in the two municipalities is about 4,609.

Some cases of glanders have occurred during the last year — six having been shot near Gretna and several on this half of the reserve. No disease, as far as I am aware, has occurred among cattle.

Sheep are not kept much, but some fair stock has been imported from the United States.

Pigs and poultry every Mennonite keeps, bacon, &c., being used very much more than beef, which is regarded by them as more or less of a luxury.

Livestock is not exported to any extent, the towns in the neighbourhood of the reserve take the surplus.

Large shipments of eggs are made to Winnipeg. Their butter is not in demand among the English speaking people in the surrounding districts, owing to the generally inferior quality, which is due, I think, to their not working it enough after taking it from the churn.

However, it is to cereals these people devote themselves most, and on the whole with success, as the numerous elevators at Morden and Gretna testify.

There are steam mills at Morden, Gretna and Blumenort, and windmills at Reinland and Rosenthal. The western half of the reserve is not well supplied in this line, and great numbers go to Walhalla, a small town six miles from the line, in



Photo Courtesy Harold Funk.
Jacob P. Peters garden scene looking skyward.

American territory. Wheat goes over, having been first checked by us, and returns as flour.

The harvest this year, some little time before reaping, was expected to outdo all previous ones, but owing to too rapid ripening and very heavy continuous rains later on it has unfortunately not turned out quite so well as expected. However, it has been on the whole a fair year.

Roughly speaking, the soil of the eastern half is clay loam, while the western half is inclined to be sandy.

On the whole, the eastern half raises more grain to the acre than the western.

The average of the reserve is as follows: — Wheat, 15 bushels per acre; Oats, 20 to 25 bushels per acre; Flax, 7 to 10 bushels per acre; Barley, 20 to 25 bushels per acre.

Garden stuff was coming on very well but the frosts of the latter half of August did considerable damage. Although I made inquiries at different points, I heard of no damage done to grain by these frosts.

One hail storm, also in August, did some damage between Reinland and Plum Coulee, but the area damaged was inconsiderable.

The rainfall in 1890 was much heavier, and earlier than of late years, but the numerous dried up creeks and sloughs, and the testimony of the settlers, point to a succession of dry years.

There are no rivers on the reserve, water is struck nearly everywhere a few feet below the surface.

Firewood is only procurable at the extreme west end of the reserve, in the Pembina Mountains, which necessitates long journeys for most of those in search of it.

A good deal of manure is used as fuel in their large brick stoves which take up a good deal of space in their living rooms.

The manner of preparing it is as follows: The manure is spread out in their stable yards till nearly dry, and when a sufficient quantity is ready a team of horses is used to tramp it into a solid mass. This is then cut into blocks of about a foot square, and these blocks are left in the open air all summer to dry. The advantages claimed for this fuel are cheapness and the length of time it burns.

Hay will soon have to be imported from a distance, or grown, as vacant lands now form a very small percentage of the reserve, and are chiefly school and Hudson Bay Company lands.

Prairie fires are, owing to the large area cultivated, almost things of the past.

Prairie chicken this year are very numerous, but ducks and geese, in the absence of open water, are scarce.

I may here remark that the Mennonite is a scrupulous observer of the game laws.

From the nature of things, it was not to be expected that this district would receive a visit from any of the numerous delegates or farmers, &c., who have been doing Manitoba and the North-West Territories. On the other hand, quite a number of Mennonites have paid visits to different parts to look for new lands, chiefly in the Lake Dauphin district, and along the Manitoba and North-Western Railroad, in Manitoba, Gleichen and Calgary, in the North-West Territories.

A few of the Mennonites from the United States have come in from time to time, and now and then a family arrives from the remaining settlements in Russia.

On the whole, I may say that the Mennonites are in general prosperous and contented. They certainly are a hard working and peaceful class of settlers.



Photo Courtesy Harold Funk.

Thatched roof.

Crime of any sort is almost unknown on the reserve.

They have a number of meeting houses and schools. A regrettable feature about the latter is the fact that English is not taught, and the rising generation is growing up as ignorant of the language of the Dominion as those who came some eighteen years ago from Russia.

The elders of the communities exercise immense power, and their word is law, even in the most trivial matters. For example: the members of one community are not allowed to paint their houses outside, and must wear one particular kind of heavy cloth cap in summer, and so on.

These elders are averse to any intellectual improvements or educational advance whatever among the Mennonites, and so long as they remain so these people will be what they are today — foreigners in language, customs and sentiments.

A few years ago an attempt was made by some of the more enlightened ones to introduce geographical maps into one of the village schools. This led to a rupture in the community, and the result is, today two schools and two churches in the same village, the respective members of which often do not speak to each other, although in some cases they are brothers, or even father and son.

I enclose a map of the reserve.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

V. T. ST. GEORGE,

Sergeant.

The Officer Commanding
N.W.M. Police, Regina.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Migration of the Nineties

During the late 1880s a new wave of migration from Russia began that was to crest in the early 1890s. Peter Abrams reported that three families arrived in Reinland on April 21, 1888 — Gerhard Wiebes, Johann Trienkys and Elias Bergens.¹ Apparently none of them settled in the village.

Beginning in 1890 many more arrivals are reported. Abram H. Friesens arrived that year and settled in Reinland.² Reinland merchant Klaas Kroeker was continually involved with the new arrivals. Eduard Wiebe came in 1891 and found employment in the Klaas Kroeker store.³ The Franz Zacharias family arrived in 1892 and first lived in a house owned by Klaas Kroekers before moving on to Schoenwiese.⁴ In this family was a future Reinland farmer, David F. Zacharias (1878-1941), then fourteen years old. Jacob Heide, an 1891 immigrant, told the *Rundschau* the following year that Klaas Kroeker, who made arrangements for them to migrate (“der uns kommen gelassen”) picked them up in Winnipeg. Whether “them” meant only Heides is not clear because this party also included the Aron Enns family and their married children A. Ennses, the Abram Ungers, the H. Teichroebs, the Jacob Martens, the D. Krahns and a widow Olfert. The Jacob Heides arrived in Reinland on June 25, 1891, and Mr. Heide found work on the Jacob Zacharias (father of Rev. P. S. Zacharias) farm for a salary of \$20 per month. In 1892 the Heides were living at the Jacob Zacharias place.⁵

Although most of the people arriving seemed to come from the *Alte-Kolonie*, the Gerhard Hein family came to Reinland from Fürstenland. The Hein family did not come in a Mennonite group; according to Hein they were the only “German” people on board the ship. Apparently two Fürstenland families, the Heinrich Neudorfs and the Heinrich Epps, both from Sergejewka, preceded the Heins.⁶

In the many letters published by the immigrants of this period several things stood out. The importance of religious motives for migration were not emphasized, at least not to the degree that economic motives were stressed. One Reinland settler wrote, “We are glad that



By the 1890s a large degree of prosperity had come to Reinland. In 1900 Jacob Kroeker (1836-1914), pictured above with his wife, journeyed to Russia for a visit. In an interesting travelogue Kroeker described the trip and specifically mentioned his visit to the old Chortitza church where he had been baptized.



Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Peter Penner home. Former residence of Isaac Friesens, Abram Bueckerts, Martin Friesens and A. J. Falks.

we are here. Many new settlers are still arriving because here everyone can obtain a farm (54 dessjatin) for a registration fee of \$10.00.”⁷⁷ Eduard Wiebe, Klaas Kroeker’s new clerk, told the Mennonites in Russia, “Since I know that some people over there are looking to America with longing eyes, I say, ‘You who are without land over there and practically without bread, come here and work hard in the midst of your brethren and eventually you will find the ways and means to own a piece of your own land.’”⁷⁸

To an extent the church in Russia was assisting the migration. It was apparently seen as a way of easing the land shortage in the Russian colonies and of helping the landless. The Neuendorf congregation was singled out for special praise by some Reinland arrivals. One settler thanked “the dear Neuendorfers” for helping so many poor people. He encouraged them to continue the good work and to help those without

Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

George B. Fehr dwelling, built by Klaas Kroeker. The addition on the right was built by the chiropractor Isaac Thiessen who used it as his office.

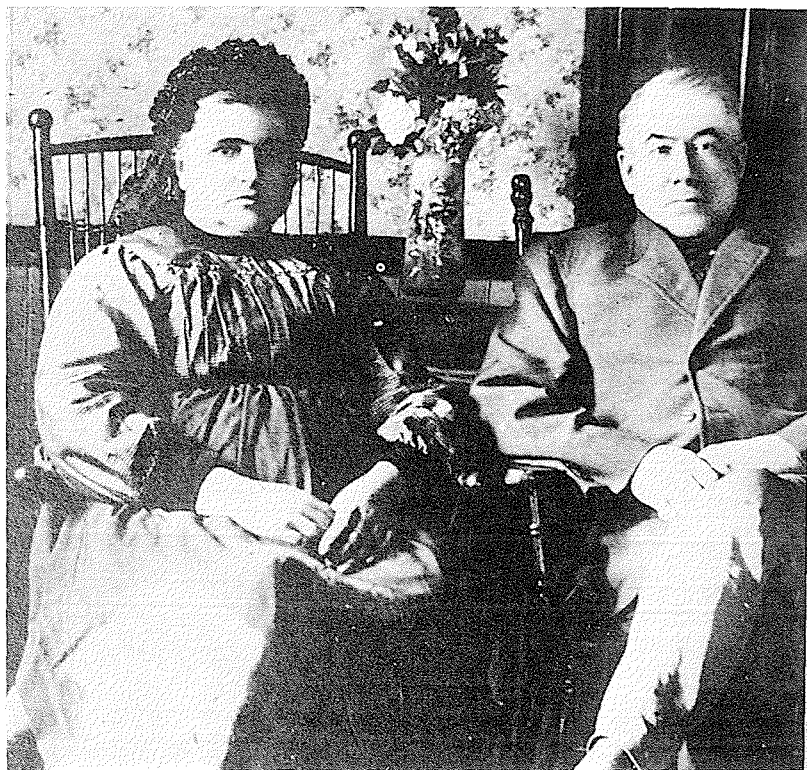


Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Ben Wiebe home.



Klaas and Maria (Dyck) Kroeker played a major in Reinland history. They extended hospitality to many immigrants in the 1890s. Kroeker was one of Reinland's well-known merchants, and postmasters. He served as a Vorsänger in the Sommerfelder church in Reinland for many years.



finances to migrate." "Poor people," he told them, "do not have to go hungry here, if they want to work."⁹ Eduard Wiebe appeals to the Russian brethren to assist the poor in migration "like the Neuendorfer congregation, which has given many the means."¹⁰

Some help, perhaps quite limited, also came from Manitoba. Beside the aid already mentioned given by individuals like Klaas Kroeker, there was at least some family to family aid, probably involving relatives. C. M., the full name is not given, reported from Neuenburg, Manitoba, that he sent a ticket to Jacob Marten (Martens?) to come to America from Russia.¹¹

Some immigrants settled in the villages, including Reinland, Schoenwiese and Gnadenthal. Others, like many who had come to Manitoba earlier, had their eyes set on the "North-West." Optimism seemed to be a general characteristic. The opportunities in America, the spirit of the frontier, a sharing of the excitement about the opening of new lands along the banks of the two Saskatchewan "which are about as wide as the Dnieper at Einlage"¹² pervaded the messages sent back to Russia by the new arrivals.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Trade

Ever since Herman Dyck opened Reinland's first store in 1876, the village economy has not been purely agricultural. Some families have made their livings working in stores, blacksmith shops, the windmill, various co-operative enterprises, manufacture and other ventures.

The Reinland Windmill

Reinland's outstanding landmark during its early decades was the windmill. Its broad sails rotating in the breeze could be sighted from miles around the village. J. B. McLaren referred to Reinland as "Windmill village".¹ Both Dawson² and NWMP officer St. George make reference to the windmills at Reinland and Rosenthal.

The Reinland windmill, known as a "holländische Windmühle" (Dutch windmill), was built by Johann Bergmann, who arrived from Russia in 1877.³ Bergmann, early Reinland's wealthiest citizen, according to the 1881 tax roll, may have constructed the mill as early as the fall of 1877, although 1878 or 1879 appear to be more likely dates. The earliest dated documentary reference to the mill occurs in the 1881 Reinland tax roll in which Bergmann is assessed \$300 for the mill.⁴ The same assessment holds for 1882.

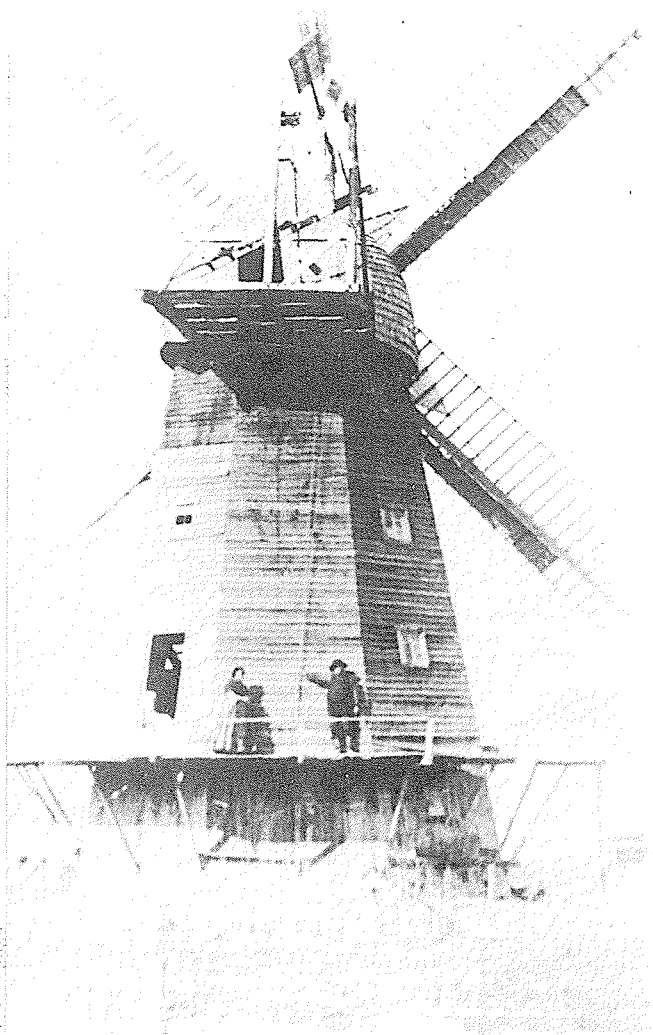
One of the young men who found employment in the mill was Jacob Zacharias, who was the miller for a period of time. He was the father of Rev. P. S. Zacharias.⁵

In a letter to *Mennonitische Rundschau*, December 15, 1886, the death of Johann Bergmann was reported. The same letter stated that Jacob Giesbrecht purchased the mill for \$775.00 and intended to add another grinding wheel in order to make wheat flour. Up to that point the mill had been used only for barley and other feeds.⁶

Great excitement surrounded the mill towards evening of June 4, 1888.⁷ Rain had begun to fall. A sudden shift in the wind from south-west to north-west was accompanied by a drastic increase in velocity. The miller tried desperately to halt the rapidly turning sails of the windmill. The brake consisted of a heavy wooden ring which could be

Reinland, 5. Juni. Western gegen Abend fing es hier an zu regnen, wobei der Wind von Südwest nach Nordwest herumsprang. Bei dieser Gelegenheit hätte es mit der hiesigen Windmühle bald ein Unglück gegeben. Bei dem Umspringen hatte sich der Wind noch um ein Bedeutendes verstärkt und als die Mühle nun zu schnell die Flügel schwang, versuchte der Müller sie aufzuhalten, aber die Vorrichtung wollte nicht ihren Dienst leisten. Die Macht des Windes war so stark, daß die Mühle selbst unterm „Drahm“ lief. (Der „Drahm“ ist die Vorrichtung in der Mühle, welche diese zum Stehen bringt; es ist nämlich ein schwerer Holzring über dem großen Kammrad angebracht, welcher nach Belieben gehoben und niedergelassen werden kann und genau um das Kammrad herum schließt). Dadurch nun, daß sich das Rad unter dem Drahm mit solcher Gewalt und so anhaltend herumdrehte, erhitzte sich das Holz dermaßen, daß bald der ganze Oberstock mit Rauch angefüllt war. Mehrere Leute hatten dies bemerkt und waren hingeilt. Die Mühle hatte so geschwankt, daß man oben (in der Mühle) kaum hatte stehen können, ohne niedergeschleudert zu werden. Jedoch war's endlich gelungen sie zum Stehen zu bringen, so daß man noch mit dem Schrecken davon gekommen ist. Gott sei gedankt!

Wilhelm Rempel's 1888 *Mennonitische Rundschau* report on the drama at the Reinland windmill.



This photograph of the Reinland windmill was discovered by Mr. Edward Urlaub, Walhalla, N.D., United States customs officer, in 1974. The Windmill was located on the Dwaagauss (cross-street) in what much later became the C. B. Krahn pasture. The persons standing on the platform are probably Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Giesbrecht.

lowered to fit snugly over the huge cog-wheel. Now all seemed to be of no avail. The cog-wheel beneath the applied brake would not stop rotating and the wooden ring heated up to the point that the upper storey of the mill filled with smoke. This upper section was also violently jarred and shaken. Neighbors noticed the smoke and ran to help. Finally the sails were brought to a stand-still. A disaster that could have spelled the end of the Reinland windmill and perhaps even the loss of human life had been averted. To this day the grandchildren of the Jacob Giesbrechts recall their mother telling them of this frightening and unforgettable experience in her childhood.

Another accident, that reportedly happened at the mill but is not as well documented, ended in tragedy. It is told that a certain Johann Redekopp, working at the mill, was oiling a bearing on the second floor. A set screw on one of the shafts caught his scarf and strangled him.⁸

The windmill served Reinland until shortly before the turn of the century.

Reinland Merchants

Due to its central location in the Fürstenland-Chortitza settlement and its position on the Post Road, Reinland was bound to become a trade centre in the pioneer era.

Reinland's first merchant, Herman Dyck, opened a store in 1876.⁹ In 1881 Dyck sold half of the business to Peter Abrams of Schanzenfeld for \$2500.¹⁰ Abrams, who moved to Reinland, and Dyck separated after a while. Abrams then founded Reinland's second store.¹¹

In 1882 Dyck reported that business was good, although many sales had to be made on credit. He imported wares from West Lynne, Emerson, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal, St. Paul, Minneapolis and other places.¹² Only a few years earlier this region had been called an absolute wilderness where nothing could be bought. Herman Dyck died on August 9, 1883.

Abrams had been operating his own store for a while at the time of Dyck's death. In 1884, Abrams sold half the interest of his business to Wilhelm Esau and, at the same time, purchased half of Esau's farm. The new partnership constructed a large new building, one part of which became the new store and the other part of which became a dwelling (presumably that of Abrams).¹³ The Abrams and Esau store served Reinland for several years. The pair also owned a threshing machine which they sold to a second Herman Dyck of Reinland in 1888. In the same year Abrams and Esau purchased the Hoffman store in Gretna. Both of them left Reinland some time after that event. Abrams left for Gretna in 1888.¹⁴

Klaas Kroeker entered the Reinland business picture in 1887, the year in which he sold his buildings in Schoenwiese for \$800 and moved to Reinland. He built a little house in the village, found employment in



Jacob Zacharias family.

the Abrams and Esau store, but planned to continue farming his old land.¹⁵ Kroeker took over the enterprise fairly soon after his move, perhaps as early as 1888, when Abrams and Esau bought their Gretna business. In 1891 Kroeker was definitely in business on his own. A newly arrive immigrant, Eduard Wiebe, wrote a year later that Kroeker had hired him as a clerk in November, 1891.¹⁶ Klaas Kroeker continued as a Reinland merchant until the early 1920s and is still remembered by the village's older citizens.

Another Reinland merchant was Johann A. Peters who sold quantities of cordwood brought from the Pembina Hills. Sometimes the cordwood was brought across the American border by Metis who sold it to Peters. According to old customs records, Peters imported many articles from the United States including calendars by the pound.

Erdmann Penner, Gretna, long owned a branch store in Reinland. This store, which proclaimed the Erdmann Penner name on its large front awnings, employed up to seven clerks during the pre-Christmas business period. The Penner branch existed well into the twentieth century.

Johann Dyck (father of Isaac Dyck, Hochfeld), commonly known as *Stoa* Dyck (Store Dyck), operated a store at the crossroads of the village's east end. In the later 1920s Dyck sold the business to David



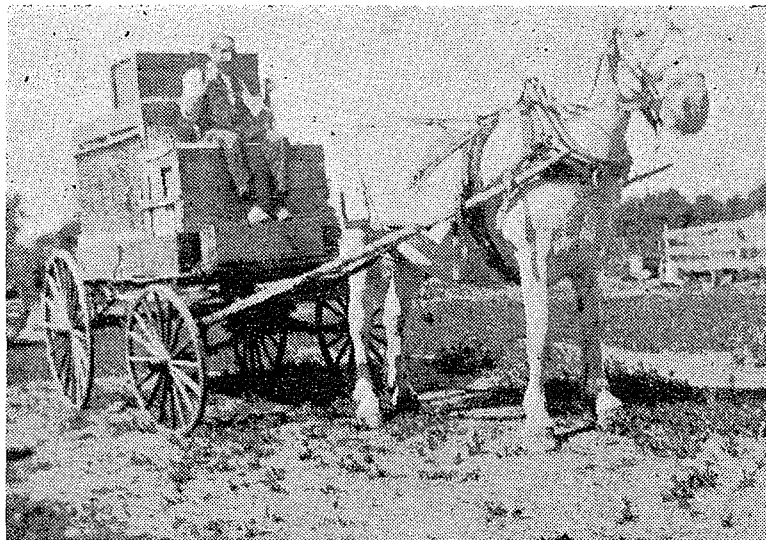
Klaas Kroeker store, post office and residence as it appeared in the early part of the century.

Paetkau, a new immigrant. One former Reinlander has recalled a shopping trip he made to Paetkau's store as a small boy. With a coin firmly clenched in his little fist he set out to buy candy. Little did he realize that his precious Russian five kopek coin (*fief Kopietje*) was not Canadian legal tender. Paetkau, apparently both amused and impressed by the lad's seriousness, gave the boy the desired candy. That was one of the lighter moments of the Great Depression. After Paetkau ceased operating the store, he rented the premises to the newly formed Sunrise Co-op. The Co-op later purchased the Friedensruh school and converted it into a store building.

Jake Sawatzky ran a store in Reinland in the 1930s and 1940s. Sawatzky later went into business in Winkler.

Monty Mitchell opened a store in a building on the present P. W. J. Peters property in the 1930s. Mitchell specialized in dry goods. Sometimes he would travel to other villages with his panel truck to make sales. Later Mitchell rented a house on the present Isaac Braun property. He moved to Winnipeg in the 1940s and in 1976 was still happy to greet Reinlanders in his Winnipeg Main Street business, Mitchell Fabrics.

Three stores, Paetkau's, Sawatzky's and Mitchell's were operating simultaneously in the late 1930s. They served a fairly large area including Reinland, Rosengart, Schoenwiese, Neuhorst, Rosenort and several other villages.

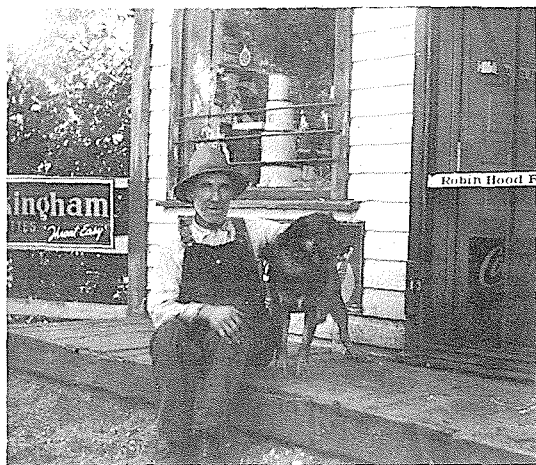


So zogen die Händler in früherern Tagen von Farm zu Farm. Sie hatten in ihren Kisten alles, was das Herz begehrte. Der Name dieses Händlers war Danzki. Er war weit umher bekannt.

This picture of pedlar and his outfit appeared in an issue of the Steinbach Post in 1962.

Early twentieth century character is revealed in this photo taken at the rear of the Klaas Kroeker store.





Jacob K. Letkeman on the steps of Sawatzky's store.



Jacob Thiessen Jr., tries one of his inventions.

Henry G. Penner worked in the Mitchell store for many years. When Monty Mitchell moved to Winnipeg, Penner and his sons, Bill and Waldemar, continued the Reinland store, first in the former Sawatzky premises and then at the present Penner store location at the east-end. Henry G. Penner was a dry goods man and has measured thousands of yards of cloth in his day. As he was getting older and contemplating retirement, the business was divided between Bill and Waldemar. Around June, 1959, Waldemar Penner took over the groceries section and set up a separate general store east of the older store. Around November, 1959, Bill Penner began managing the dry goods store. Henry G. Penner passed away in January, 1960.¹⁷

In early 1965, Penner's Dry Goods, the store with "yard goods by the thousands," moved to Winkler where it is run by Bill and Margaret Penner. The general store operated by Waldemar and Betty Penner was then moved to the older Penner store location vacated by the removal of the dry goods business. This general store was still in operation in 1976.

Smithing and Repairing

Jacob P. Thiessen and his sons have been involved in mechanics in Reinland for three-quarters of a century. Mr. Jacob P. Thiessen was a village institution when he passed away in the 1950s. Hundreds of times the fire on his blacksmith's hearth was used to repair a bent or broken



Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Reinland store by Waldemar and Betty Penner.



Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Höret den Schmied! Den Hammer er schwinget! Es schallet, es Klinget.

David J. Thiessen carries on the Reinland blacksmith tradition of his father.



Corny and Dave Thiessen at Sawatzky's garage.



Frank Paetkau's garage.



When lumber was needed and cash was scarce, some Reinlanders decided to rip tree trunks hauled from Walhalla. At work here are Rev. Peter S. Zacharias, close to the blade, Frank P. Zacharias, Abram P. Zacharias and Peter P. Zacharias.

Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Half-hidden by surrounding shade trees is the Yurchak house. The Yurchak family was part of Reinland village life for many years. Heinrich and Margaret Elias lived here at the turn of the century.

threshing outfit and moved many buildings with his steamer. He passed on the mechanical gift to his sons, Jacob, Wilhelm, Corny, Peter, David, and John.

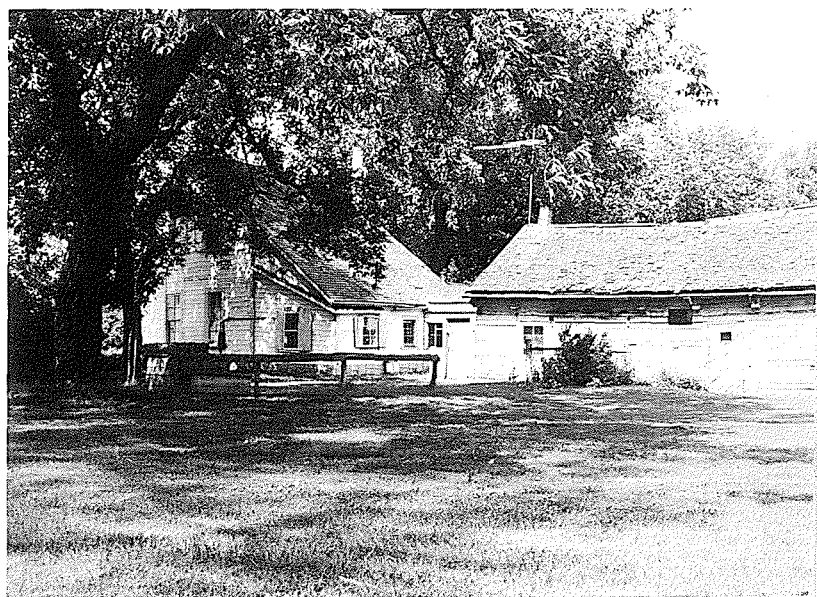
When Jake Sawatzky opened his Reinland garage, Corny and David Thiessen were the mechanics for a number of years. David also worked in the Frank Paetkau garage for a time, often driving to his job in a Model T Ford.

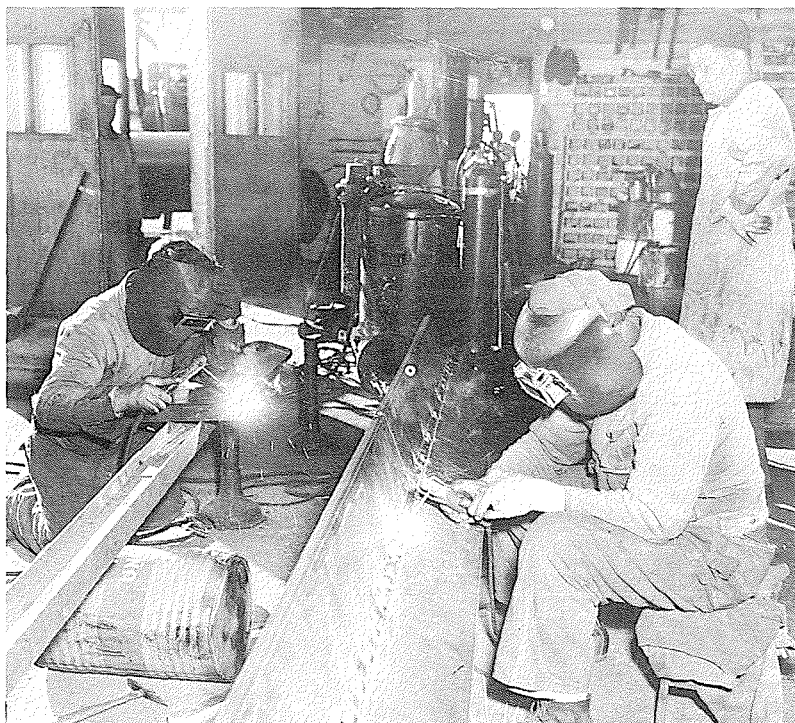
Eventually David Thiessen opened his own blacksmith shop at the west end of the village.

An interesting story surrounds a single brother and his sister, Heinrich and Margaret Elias, who lived on the village cross-street with their aged mother. Heinrich Elias started a blacksmith shop and also sold hardware. He repaired wagons, sharpened plowshares and performed other blacksmith functions. Later Heinrich and Margaret Elias moved to California. Heinrich Elias is mentioned in the Reinland village books for the last time in 1914.

Heinrich F. Froese took over the Elias business. Froese was a tinsmith and also operated a steam threshing outfit. For a time a certain German blacksmith, Weber, joined Froese in his business. Froese was involved not only in repair work but in the construction of new equipment; the stove built for the new school in 1910 was an example.

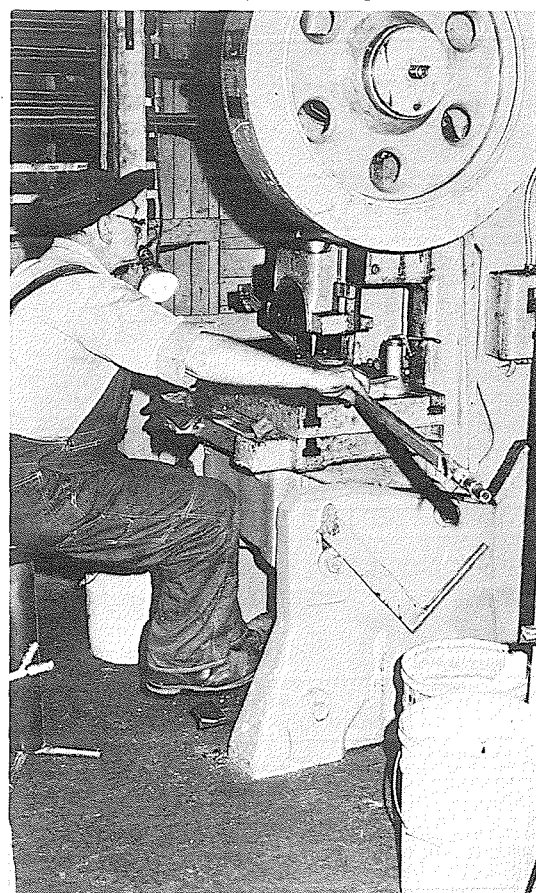
The largest garage in Reinland in the 1940s was that of Frank Paetkau. The building, ultra-modern at the time of its construction, was a sign of the new times and geared for the modern age. It was already a service station offering complete repair service for cars and trucks, gas and oil sales and grease jobs.





Welding at Big J Industries. George J. Janzen is standing in the background.

Isaac Braun at the punch at Big J Industries.

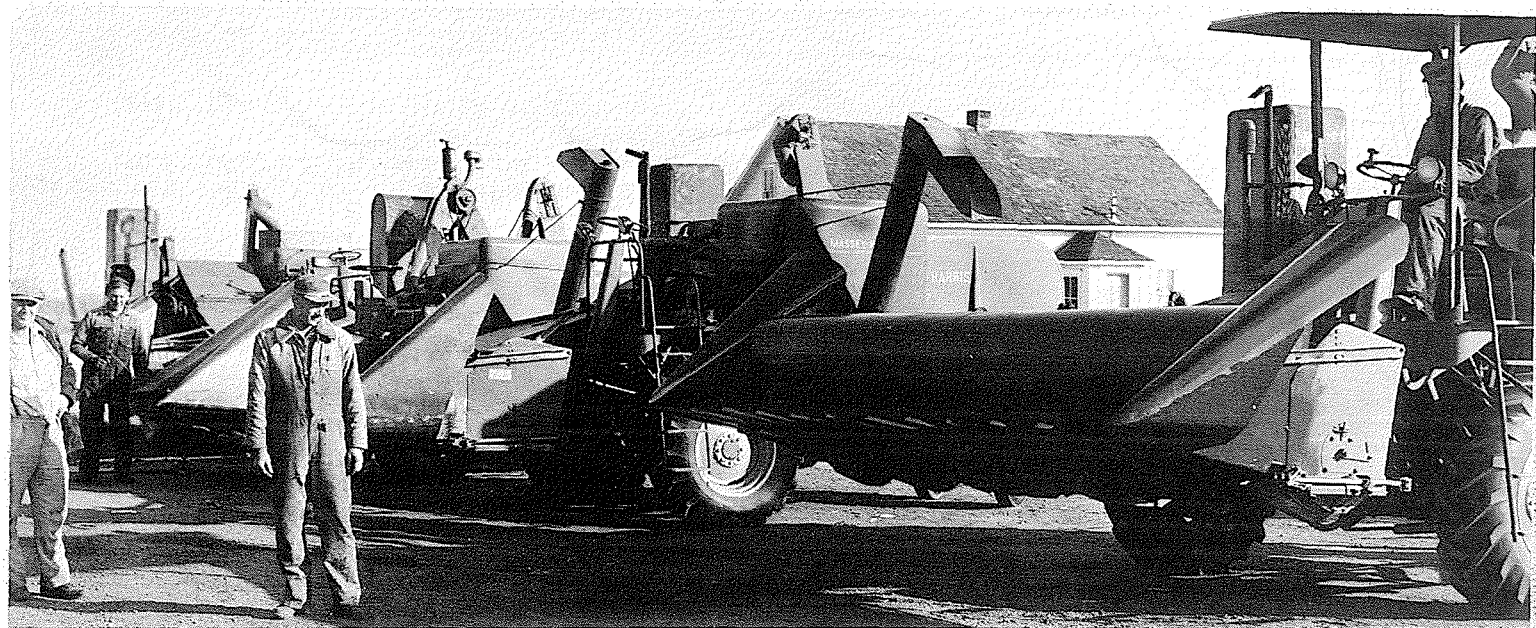


Big J. Industries

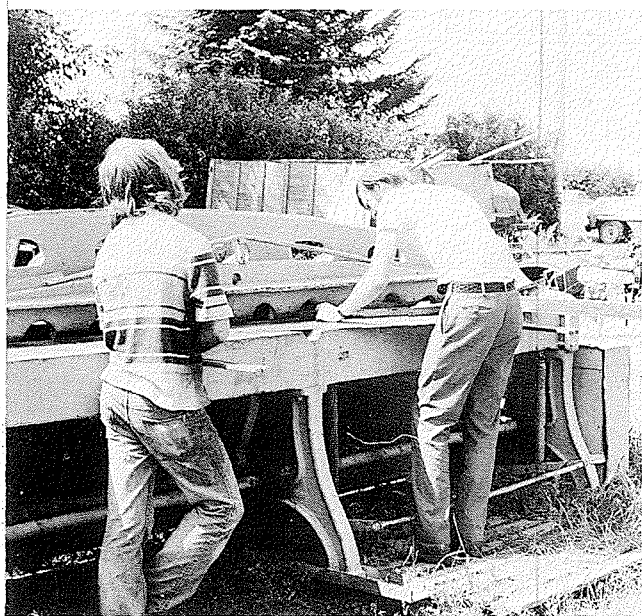
A creative mind and a community need combined to produce a business that has been operating in Reinland for almost thirty years. George Janzen was thinking of mechanical invention when as a boy, he was working on the farm of his parents, the Jacob Janzens of Rosengart. In 1945 he opened a machine shop in Rosengart.¹⁸

In the 1940s a new crop, sunflowers, created a demand for new farm equipment. Row crop planting and cultivating machinery was produced by major manufacturers and was therefore available (although not always that readily available in the early postwar years). Special harvesting equipment was another matter entirely and gave scope to Janzen's inventiveness as early as 1946.

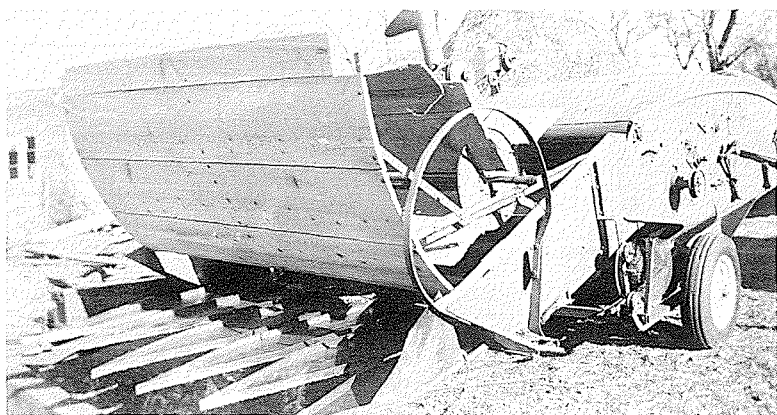
The need for larger and more permanent shop facilities resulted in a move to Reinland in 1947. The present building was constructed that year and opened as the Country Repair Shop. Farm machinery and automobile repairs continued. The manufacture of sunflower harvesting attachments for combines was begun on a considerable scale in 1948. Experimentation and continual modification resulted in the development of a series of improved models. The latest of these came on the market in 1973. A system of brushes installed between the guards to prevent loss of sunflower seeds is a recent innovation.



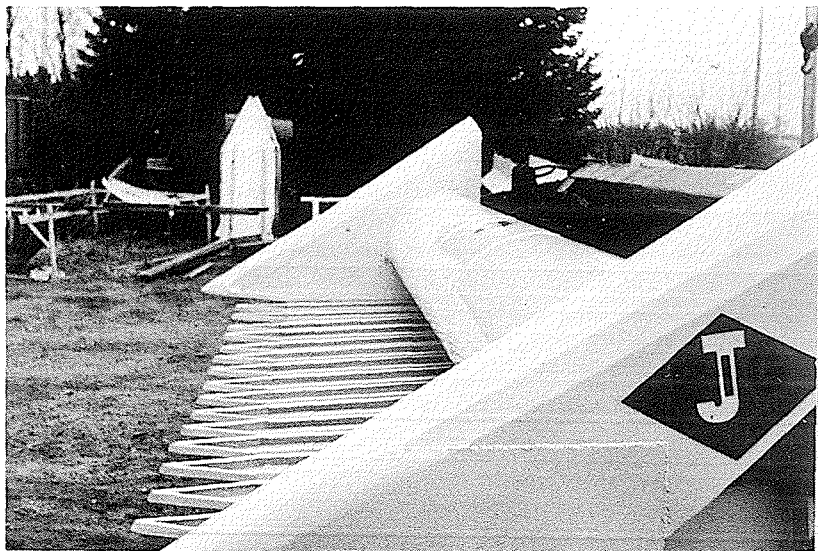
Typical fall scene at Big J Industries.



Sam Janzen at work.



One of the early sunflower attachments developed by George J. Janzen.



Latest sunflower equipment.

General repair work ceased in 1972 and full time manufacturing was begun. In 1975 the industry was in the process of incorporation as Big J Industries with George Janzen and his son Sam Janzen as the prospective president and manager, respectively, of the firm.

The industry has considerable potential. The export market is developing into major importance with dealerships in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota and Ohio. In 1973 the Massey Ferguson firm transported a Massey Ferguson 760 combine with a 20 foot corn header, a pick-up header and a Big J sunflower attachment to a demonstration in the USSR. Patents for the sunflower harvesting equipment have been obtained in both Canada and the United States and patents are pending in Australia and South Africa.

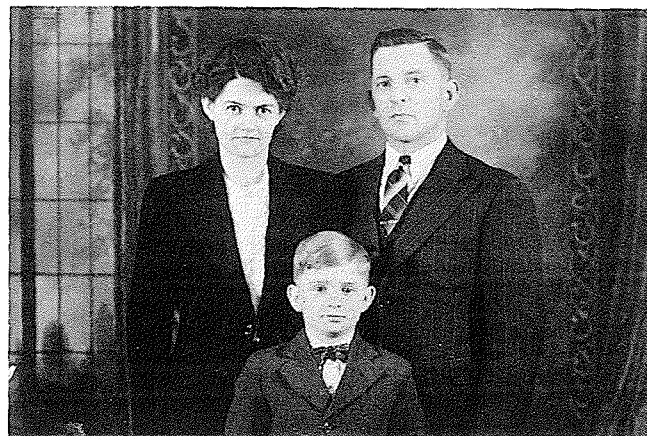
Big J Industries are also manufacturing, among other articles, triangle scaffolding for building construction and portable work benches for use in shops and in school industrial arts classes.

Persons who have been working at the Country Repair Shop and Big J Industries for long periods of time besides Mr. and Mrs. George Janzen and sons George and Sam, include Bill Janzen, David Neufeld and Isaac Braun. Many others have found employment there for shorter terms.

Transport Business

The Reinland branch of Gretna Transfer was operated by Abram Bueckert. The trucking firm fulfilled a local need that arose during World War II when the production of cattle and hogs for market was greatly expanded to meet wartime needs. Gretna Transfer trucks ran many trips between Reinland and the Union Stockyards in St. Boniface at a time when the nearest pavement was the old narrow ribbon, called No. 14, running through Letellier. The Reinland agricultural and business boom of the 1940s, which resulted in the establishment of several co-operative ventures and other businesses, was conducive to the growth of the transport industry. When Abram Bueckert moved to Winnipeg this business was no longer operative in the area but the need persisted.

A young and single Blumenfeld man, Bernie Elias, began a new transport venture, Stanley Transfer, in May, 1955. Elias came to Reinland every day. George Janzen and David Thiessen were his contact points in the village. Anyone who wished to ship cattle or hogs or wished an order to be picked up in Winnipeg could leave the message at these places. In 1961 Elias married and moved to Reinland. Stanley Transfer, now a Reinland based concern, shipped up to one hundred hogs and fifty head of cattle to St. Boniface in a week. It served the stores in the surrounding villages and brought machinery and truck hoists to Janzen's Country Repair Shop. It made a large number of deliveries to the Ed Elias lumber yard located on Highway 32. Bernie



Mr. and Mrs. Abram Bueckert and son Peter.



Stanley transfer fleet at Blumenfeld store.

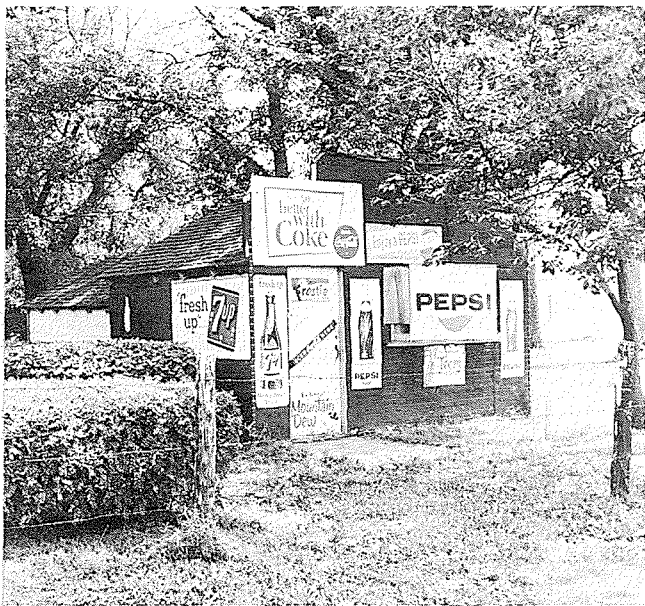


Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Yurchak's watch repair shop, barber shop and colorful social gathering place. After the passing of both Nick and Pete Yurchak the place has been closed.

Elias was always concerned about getting adequate return freight from Winnipeg. During slack times he purchased cement blocks in the city and brought them back for resale. In May, 1965, precisely ten years after starting, Elias decided to end the trucking business and go into farming.

Other Businesses

A small but colourful combination of enterprises was run by Pete and Nick Yurchak from the 1930s to the early 1970s. The Yurchak brothers had a barbershop and watch repair business and operated a gas pump. For many years Pete Yurchak took care of a large percentage of Reinland haircuts (the family fathers took care of the rest). The Yurchak shop was a regular gathering place for many village boys.

In the early 1940s an egg-grading station was opened by J. H. Brandy. After a while Bill Zacharias, who managed the station for Brandy, purchased the undertaking. It was later owned by Sunrise Co-op for a number of years until in 1952 the concern was acquired by Bill and Waldemar Penner. The business ran for several more years.

The Loewen shoe repair shop was housed in a lean-to attached to the Jake Sawatzky store and was in operation during the Sawatzky era.

A business that functioned over fifty years ago was the wind-driven feed mill of Franz Froese II.

Not to be forgotten in the Reinland trade story are the many pedlars, horse traders and cattle buyers who entered the villages. Cattle buyers of the 1950s who had a considerable share of the cattle market were Jack McKennitt of Morden and David Penner of Winkler.

How the Winklers came to the west — a 102 year connection

The Winklers were an important link with the outside world for the early settlers of Reinland and continued their involvement in later years. The directive below, sent to the *Schulzen* by colony superintendent Isaak Müller during a time when the Reinland Mennonite Colony



John Thiessen and B. C. Krahn shovelling gravel at Eichtefeld. Watching is Helen Krahn.

still had to import large quantities of food, is the first reference in the Reinland village books to the Winkler family.

To the village superintendents: 43 sacks of wheat and 311 sacks of barley have arrived. They are to be picked up on Monday, May 1. They are at the river at Emerson — where Winkler lives. Winkler will issue them to you

Neu Horst, April 30, 1876
Isaak Müller¹⁹

The directive was issued only some ten months after the first West Reserve settlers arrived at Emerson. Later 1876 directives referring to flour and pork again mention Winkler.

Ruth Winkler, the widow of the late Howard Winkler, M.P., attended the 1975 Reinland centennial celebrations. In a letter written on July 20, 1975, she told the story of the Winklers' coming to the west. The reference in the first sentence of the quotation is to the Reinland centennial observance.

Howard would have enjoyed the occasion. He always took great interest and pride in the activities of the Mennonite people. Had it not been for the arrival of the Mennonites, the Winklers would probably never have come to this part of Canada.

Back in 1874 Enoch Winkler, a pharmacist, was living in the Berlin (Kitchener) station with the telegrapher. On an occasion when the telegrapher was out Enoch took a message for Jacob Schantz giving him the date of the arrival of the first Mennonites to Canada. When Schantz learned that Enoch spoke both German and English he persuaded him to accompany the group as interpreter. The group subsequently persuaded Enoch to set up in lumbering in Emerson to help meet their building needs. In 1879 at the age of 15 Valentine Winkler joined his older brother in Emerson and then took over the lumbering business established in Morden in 1883. I mention all this to show the link between the Mennonites and the Winklers.

Best wishes for continued success and prosperity to your community.²⁰

The Winkler family related to the settlers and their descendants not only in business but also in the political area. In 1888 Enoch Winkler was elected MLA for Rosenfeldt, running as a Liberal and defeating William Hespeler 106 to 58 in a riding with 873 voters on the list. He won reelection in 1892 and 1896. He also served as Emerson town councillor and as reeve of Douglas Municipality (1885-1886). Valentine Winkler became the first reeve of the Rural Municipality of Stanley in 1890. He represented Rhineland in the Manitoba Legislature (1892-1920) and served as the province's Minister of Agriculture (1915-1920). His son Howard Winkler was the Member of Parliament for Lisgar (1935-1953). The town of Winkler bears the family name.

Old-time transportation. Rev. H. G. Ens is holding the reins. Dick Zacharias is standing beside the sleigh.



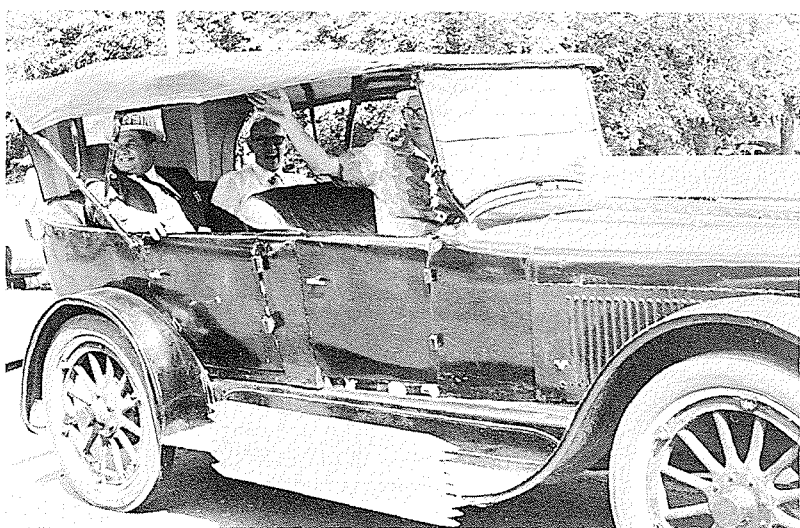
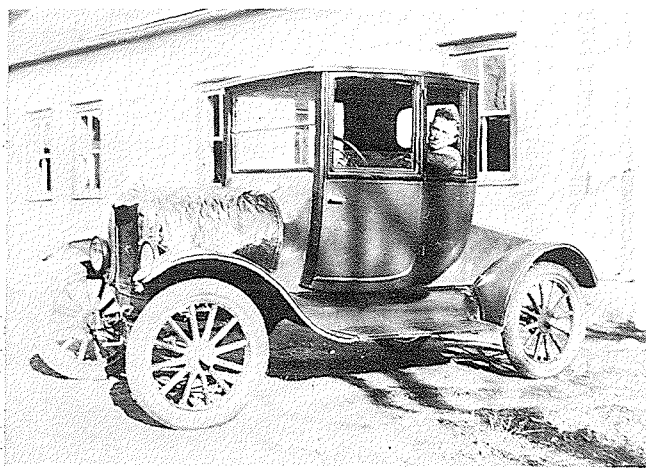
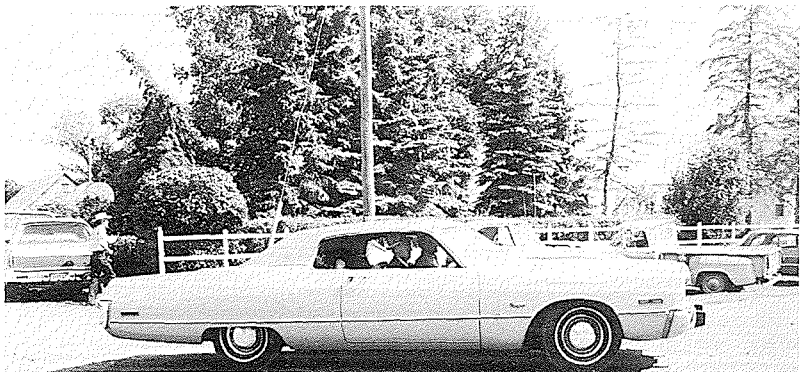


Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

The April, 1917 photo above, right, shows one of the early cars to visit Reinland. At the wheel is Henry P. Friesen. Behind him is his brother, Rev. Isaac P. Friesen, Rosthern, evangelist. Note the gas lanterns. Upper left, Dietrich Dyck and his Model T in the 1920's. Centre right, restored 1922 McLaughlin at Reinland centennial.

Lower left, John Peters, Elizabeth Peters and David Peters admire a brand new 1928 Pontiac. Lower right, new Chrysler driven by Frank D. Zacharias in centennial parade.



The Good Earth

*Wir tragen Schollenduft am Wanderkleide,
Den Kräuterduft einsamer Steppenweide;*

*Wir sehn die Herden wandern, grasen, rasten,
Den Pflüger abends dorfwärts, heimwärts hasten.*

— Fritz Senn

The struggle with the prairie, with wind and weather, was intense from the beginning. But the settler fingered the soil and found it to be good. And it was on this soil that the community pattern was established. Long strips of land were designed to give each family an equal share of the better and poorer soils and an equal distance to travel to his holdings. All families shared a common pasture for their cattle. As the old order passed away, new land holding arrangements, new techniques and new crops emerged. Clubs and co-operatives were formed to combine the people's ingenuity with the village's natural resources. The bond between the villager and the good earth remained.



Photo courtesy Harold Fook

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Agricultural Patterns

Years ago a Reinland lad and self-appointed minstrel was walking along the street singing merrily:

Oh, I've got a horse and a cow
And a mule and a plow
So I'll be able to get along somehow.

Farming has been the backbone of the Reinland economy for a century. Hard work and methods that seem primitive now characterized the beginnings of Reinland agriculture. Today farming has become a complex operation and a village lad and lass seeking farming careers would certainly need to make revisions to the minstrel's song.

One factor has remained fairly constant and this is a key to understanding the village's prosperity since its first decade. This factor is the high capability of Reinland's soil. Its texture, neither extremely heavy nor too light, lent itself early to a variety of field and garden crops. It supported abundant hay for cattle. Beginning in the 1940s the fertile soil made possible a diversification of crops that greatly widened the community's agricultural base.

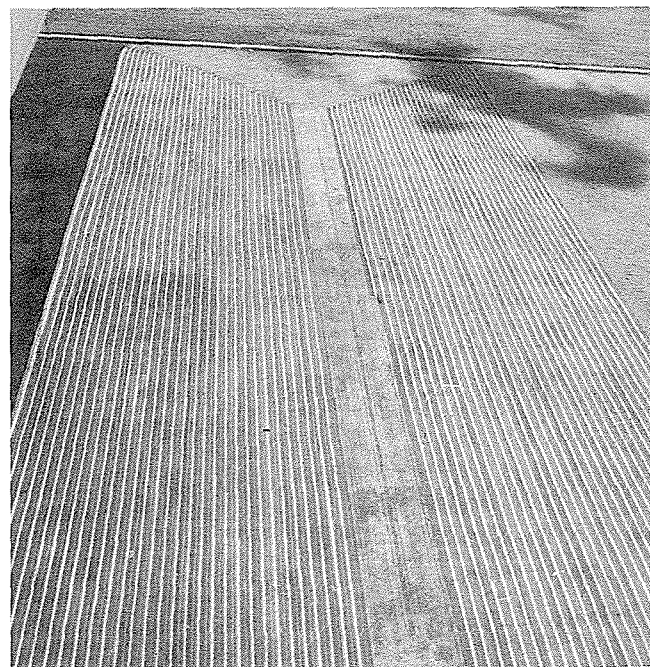
Breaking the Sod

Imagine a field north of Reinland in the spring of 1876. A team of oxen is slowly pulling a one-bottom plow, which the farmer walking behind it is trying his best to control. At the end of the furrow the farmer stops and surveys what is done. There lies the furrow, one mile long, a cut of virgin prairie soil. He sits down to munch his bread and contemplates his achievement.

And it was an achievement! Jacob Fehr recalled that the Fehr family broke nine acres with its two oxen during the first year of land cultivation. Six acres were sown to wheat and three to oats. The seed was broadcast by hand, the sower walking up and down his plowed acreage, scattering the seed which was held by a bag strapped around his shoulders.

The yield was small because the sod had just been broken. The grain was cut with a scythe. The first crop was threshed with a flail.

Aerial view displays modern agricultural pattern.





den Interessen der deutschen Bevölkerung des Westens gewidmet.

Ganze No. 21.

No.	Namen der Dörfer.	Mülla. Döfln	Mühl. Gefell.	Gefell. Eckel.	Eckel. Stett.	Döfln.	Stett.	Silber. Gold.	Dampf. müll.	Brotk. müll.	Wagen. schän.	Hühne. maße.	Weizen.	Gerste.	Faser.	Feinf.	Kartoff.	Ader.	Gesamtes Land zu Summa 14,826 Ader.	
1	Reinland	22	71	73	77	12	49	55	—	1	19	31	22	6112	2692	4910	97	1395	709	Pferde 718 Stück \$ 43080.00
2	Neuenburg	20	67	50	22	36	37	32	—	—	6	18	17	3690	1108	1555	368	1520	649	Ochsen 639 " 46050.00
3	Ebenfeld	14	44	46	9	9	13	18	—	—	—	6	7	1578	368	65	92	365	172	Rübe 1012 " 30390.00
4	Blumengard	14	33	34	2	26	20	23	—	—	—	6	7	2362	511	652	204	796	233	Jung-Vieh 1047 " 15705.00
5	Rosenthal	20	70	53	21	24	30	42	1	—	12	17	12	3552	2162	1262	191	1160	502	Dampfmach. 12 " 12000.00
6	Schanzenfeld	24	80	64	34	25	43	46	1	—	11	26	11	6740	2191	2965	188	1358	722	Pferdemach. 7 " 3500.00
7	Cortitz	32	97	84	34	39	48	70	1	1	14	29	14	8977	1810	2071	1837	1740	1068	Heumach. 213 " 17040.00
8	Höfningersfeld	28	85	69	20	51	53	46	1	—	16	24	16	5933	2755	2571	178	1245	607	Windmühle 1 5500.00
9	Blumstein	24	64	54	24	42	35	44	—	—	8	19	8	4845	1762	874	311	1145	565	Alles Getreide zusammen 131493.80
10	Schönfeld	20	56	52	20	21	22	25	—	—	4	13	4	3620	658	404	19	1179	316	Alles im Werth in Sum. \$480,348.80
11	Rurwalde	29	54	42	2	34	18	13	—	—	1	7	1	1150	30	25	231	390	143	Dieses Alles so wie hier von Altem
12	Rosenfeld	17	53	50	31	22	31	60	—	—	5	18	20	6137	1765	4245	78	1625	515	laut unfrem Willen und Beurtheilung
13	Grünfeld	21	54	58	19	36	35	30	1	—	5	16	14	2648	620	678	105	985	391	ist befindlich und befandlich gewesen als
14	Eichenfeld	24	65	60	27	32	31	20	—	—	3	18	18	4000	667	420	131	1021	422	vom Getreide ein ganz Theil verkauft.
15	Blumenfeld	24	68	65	19	23	37	44	1	—	6	19	14	3295	834	1571	237	790	536	Dörfer sind noch zwei mit 34 Wir-
16	Osternfeld	24	71	63	32	33	39	60	1	—	10	25	23	8305	1828	2103	308	1250	816	then und 37 männlichen und 7 weiblichen
17	Hochfeld	20	64	63	18	57	44	42	—	—	9	21	21	3140	736	1472	262	1487	601	Selen, welche noch anzusiedeln find.
18	Walldheim	24	58	55	20	41	52	46	—	—	13	20	18	5833	1276	1347	37	1895	456	Im Ganzen, 38 Dörfer mit 753 Wir-
19	Schöndorf	29	80	59	18	34	26	27	1	1	7	16	16	3544	505	507	333	600	435	then, und 1917 männlichen und 1617
20	Schönwiese	31	97	75	61	65	66	53	1	—	13	37	28	7632	1195	4176	233	1715	858	weiblichen Selen, im Ganzen 3534 See-
21	Neundorf	10	22	24	6	10	11	12	—	—	1	6	6	1592	136	250	47	570	169	len. Im Ganzen noch Dörfer zum An-
22	Rosenort	20	68	48	35	37	38	25	—	—	9	20	18	5395	870	2110	360	987	597	siedeln als Reinfeld, Neu Cortitz, Ro-
23	Kronsfeld	17	46	34	30	20	25	24	—	1	8	18	13	6387	1814	2712				

Reinland, den 20. Dec. 1879.

Changing Patterns

"The Mennonites may be said to have fairly obtained their feet, financially, about the year 1880," wrote J. F. Galbraith in 1900.¹

Marked changes in agricultural patterns occurred by 1880. The draft animals of the first settlers were oxen. In 1877 oxen still out-



Threshing stone (Ausfahrstein) used by the Jacob Fehr family in Reinland's pioneer era and now on display at the Mennonite Village Museum, Steinbach.



Horses on Peter S. Zacharias farm.

numbered horses but a transition was well underway. In 1878 horses were leading in Reinland; in the following year horses dominated over oxen.

The head of cattle doubled from 1877 to 1879. Cattle became an important element in the mixed farming economy of the village.

Early Agricultural Growth of Reinland²

	Farm Families	Village Population	Horses	Oxen	Cows	Young Stock	Steam-Powered Threshing Machines	Horse Powered Threshing Machines	Acres Under Cultivation	Wheat (bushels)	Barley (bushels)	Oats (bushels)	Flax (bushels)	Potatoes (bushels)
1877	20	135	26	44	34	19	—	—	479	—	—	—	—	—
1878	19	134	48	37	48	29	1	1	625	6182	1757	2572	14	1940
1879	22	144	77	12	49	55	2	1	709	6112	2692	4910	97	1395

The poultry industry developed. Galbraith claims that the building of barns adjoining houses and the village shelter itself were conducive to making poultry a profitable enterprise. Stable heat tended to encourage early egg production and the village served as a protection against hawks, wolves and foxes. By 1900 the West Reserve was not only a great egg producing district but also supplied a great deal of poultry for the market.³

Scenes on the field changed. The scythe was soon discarded. After two years, writes Jacob Fehr, his father bought a rigger. This machine drawn by a team of horses, cut the grain and formed bundles but did not tie these bundles into sheaves. Fehr describes an early Reinland scene at harvest time:

Johann, Helena, Justina and I tied the sheaves by hand. Peter was still small at the time and dragged the sheaves together. He saved us work in stooking. There was a spirit of comradeship in those days.⁴

By 1882 many binders were being purchased.⁵ The flail was the first thresher, followed by the threshing block or threshing stone (*Ausfahrstein*). In 1878 more sophisticated threshing equipment was making the scene. Horses on treadmills provided the power for early threshing machines. Steam power also made its debut. However, in 1882, some farmers still used the threshing block.⁶

Sowing by hand also became a thing of the past. Three or four machines for sowing were purchased in Reinland in 1882 and some were probably bought earlier.⁷ Better drills continued to be purchased in succeeding years.

The Fehrs brought a wagon from Russia. Wagons, mowers, plows and other equipment was added to the farmer's stock of machines year by year.

Crops were to fluctuate greatly after 1880, but from 1878 to 1879, when the bushels of cereal grain harvested at Reinland rose from 10,511 to 13,714, the increase reflected the larger number of acres brought under cultivation. Rye was grown in succeeding years. Flax, a crop introduced to the western prairies by the Mennonites, had made its appearance by 1878.⁸ The only crop that showed a decline in 1879 was the potato crop, but it, too, was still good. Potatoes were a diet staple and a regular supply was essential.

By 1880 the development of vegetable gardens was a further stabilizing factor in the village economy. People who only five years earlier had lived in Europe were adapting rapidly to the Manitoba environment.

Changes accelerated as the nineteenth century drew to a close. In 1900 Rhineland Municipality, which at that time consisted of its present territory as well as townships 1-4W and 2-4W, thus including Reinland and most other West Reserve villages, ranked first in population among Manitoba's seventy-four municipalities. It stood second in acreage under cultivation, first in number of horses, fifth in number of cattle, first in number of pigs and seventh in number of sheep. (Sheep have never been a major factor in the Reinland economy.) In 1898 a total of 2,150,000 bushels of wheat were marketed at the West Reserve points of Winkler, Plum Coulee, Rosenfeld, Altona and Gretna.⁹

Farm Prices — February, 1883¹⁰
(as given by Peter Abrams, Reinland)

Product	Price
Russian Wheat	40-50¢ per bushel
English Wheat	75¢ per bushel
Oats	35-40¢ per bushel
Flax	80-90¢ per bushel
Barley	Can't sell
Butter	25¢ per pound
Eggs	Up to 35¢ per dozen

Heinrich F. Froese breaking sod with steam-power around 1926.



The Open Field System

The open field system, which the Mennonites brought from Russia, was reestablished in Canada under hamlet privilege. Most Manitoba Mennonite villages initially adopted the system; most abandoned it before 1900; Reinland retained it up to the mid-1920s.

The system was communal in that all of the Reinland pioneer farming families surrendered their right to occupy their own homesteads and agreed to the division of the village lands. Two farmers, Peter Harms and Isaak Dueck, held the legal titles to NE 13-1-4W and NW 13-1-4W, respectively, the two quarter sections on which the entire pioneer village was located. (Later the village spread to NW 18-1-3W and in the 1930s, to SW 18-1-3W.) But within the village these

REINLAND VILLAGE PLAN

Post Road \rightarrow Heidelberg \rightarrow Marburg City

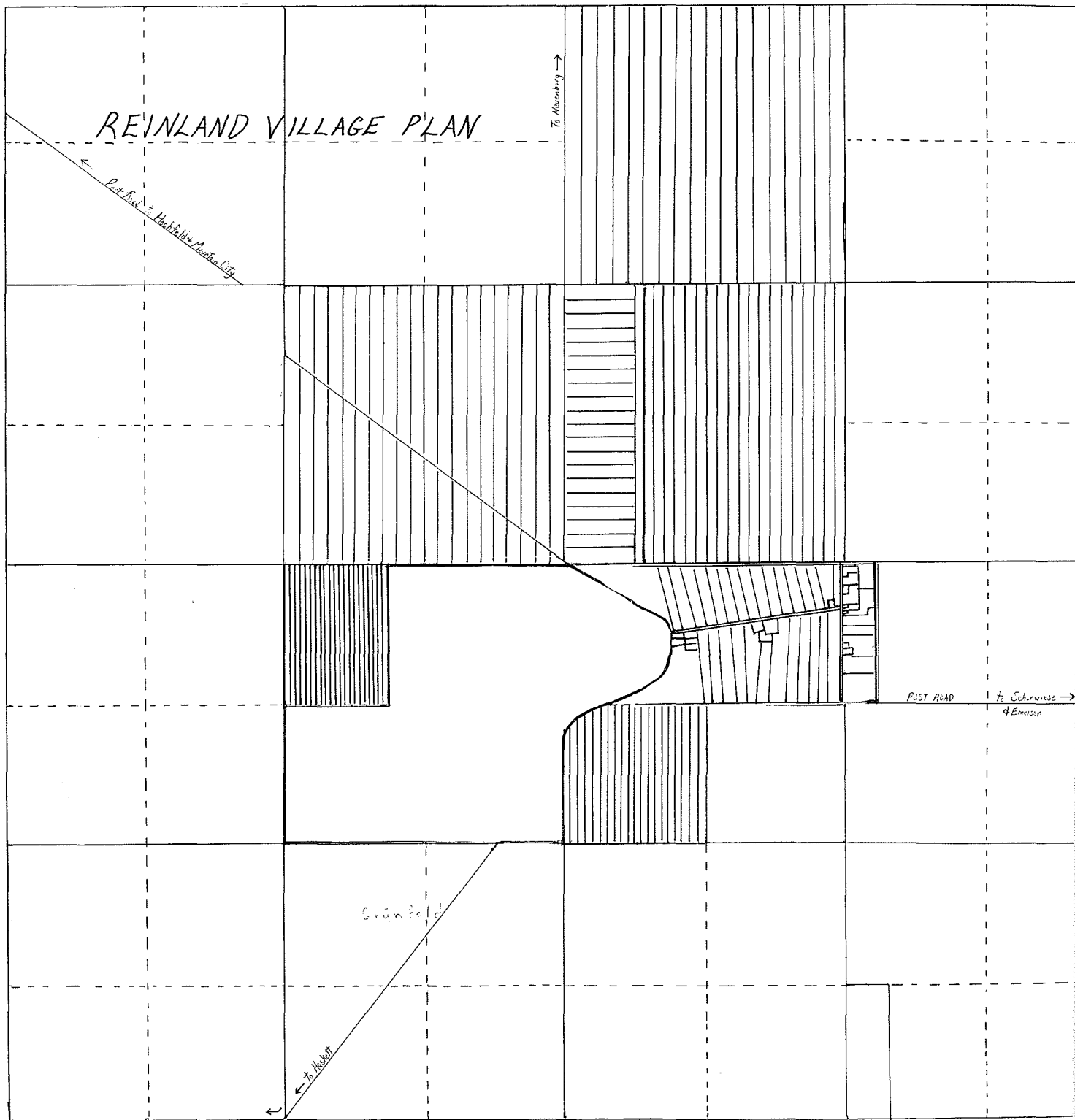
To Marburg \rightarrow

POST ROAD

\rightarrow Schwarzwiese
 \rightarrow Embsen

Grünfeld

\rightarrow Heubitt



two homesteaders got only their apportioned lots, just like all the other families.

The surrounding village lands were divided into *Koagels*, strips of open fields. Each family received a lot in the village and several separated strips of land. All village farmers had an equal distance to travel to the land and all were to share both good and poor soils. Fortunately, the Reinland village lands contained no significant areas of unproductive territory, no swamps or extended stretches of alkali soils. There was no rocky land and there were no large gumbo patches. There was also no woodland which was a disadvantage in the early years and an advantage in terms of agricultural production later. The land was fairly uniformly fertile. The conditions for a rapid transition to commercial agricultural production existed.¹¹

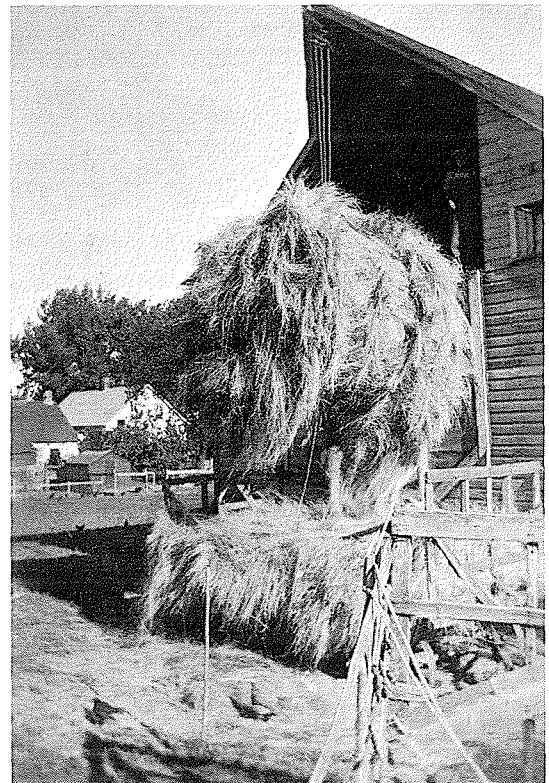
The two sections directly north of the village were divided into cultivated strips. Section 23-1-4W was hayland and divided into twenty *Koagels*. About one-fifth of the village land was community pasture.

The open field system was also communal in that it depended on the co-operation and harmony of all shareholders. Had some farmers refused to work together for the common good and had they instead withdrawn their land from the community, the system would have soon collapsed. In at least one village a farmer, who wished to make the boundary of his property known, built a fence right across a village street. Such behaviour was not conducive to the welfare of the village. Families had to co-operate in supporting the whole village structure. In practical terms this included keeping their fields clear of weeds, working on village projects such as roads and bridges and the maintenance of the school.

The open field system was not communal in other ways. The families did not divide up the wealth produced by the village. Each farmer got his allotment within village boundaries but beyond that the system was based on private enterprise. What the individual family produced on its allotted land was its own. Many village farmers took advantage of the privilege of claiming a second quarter outside of the village limits but near Reinland. As land got more scarce in the 1880s and 1890s, several Reinland families moved to the Plum Coulee and Myrtle areas. Some joined the trek to Saskatchewan which began in the 1890s.

By definition, the open fields had no fences. A strip of grass called the *Rain* was left between the farmers' land strips to indicate borders. Eventually the *Rain* became a problem. Drifting of soil over the years caused the *Rain* to grow higher and higher. When the open field system was abandoned in the 1920s, these ridges had become so high that a farmer on one side could not always see his neighbour on the other. When the *Rains* were finally levelled with tractors and plows, the slopes had grown so steep that it was necessary to exercise caution to avoid upsets.

July was haying time in old Reinland. This was the ultra-modern haying equipment at the Jacob P. Peters farm. The photo was taken in the 1930s.



REINLAND LANDS: 1881
 Nr. 9 Gemeindebuch worin die Taxierung für 1881 Angeschrieben
 ist für der Reinländer Kolonie

			ARON ESAU 6472 4-III-80	PETER LETKEMANN 2190 30-V-77	ISAK VAEHR 5485 10-IX-79	ABRAHAM DUECK 5583 13-IX-79	JACOB TOEWS 5984 20-IX-79
27		26			JACOB VAEHR (6) 5811 17-IX-79	JOH. BERGMANN 5036 4-VI-79	AB. DUECK ANKAUFS- STÄTTE
			HERMAN DUECK	JOH. WALLE 5037 2-VI-79	FRANZ REMPEL 5038 5-VI-79	JACOB GIESBRECHT 5691 16-IX-79	
22		23			BERNH. BERGMANN 5420 2-IX-79	FRANZ FROESE 2192 30-V-77	
			JACOB WIENS 5484 10-IX-79	JOH. VAEHR 2191 30-V-77			
			JACOB WIENS SR. 2194 30-V-77	JACOB VAEHR (3) 5614 13-IX-79	ISAK DUECK 2197 31-V-77	PETER HARMS 2193 30-V-77	
15		14			PETER WIENS 5422 3-IX-79	CORN. VAEHR 5998 20-IX-79	
			WILHELM ESAU 5421 3-IX-79	JOH. PETERS 2198 31-V-77			
10		11					

4W

3W

SOUTH

Also lists, with X before name:

X Peter Wiebe SW and SE 27-1-3W #5400 10-IX-81

X Franz Rempel SW and NW 1-3-3W #5853 7-VI-81

X Abraham Rempel SE and NE 1-3-3W #5857 7-VI-81

Community Pasture

Who remembers the bugle call of the village herdsman walking eastward along the street early in the morning? He wasn't practicing for the symphony orchestra, but reminding people that milking time was almost over and that only minutes remained to get their cattle ready at the gates. He repeated his bugle call intermittently until he reached the end of the village. The herdsman turned at the last farm. The day's round-up was about to begin. The cattle began pouring into the street — heifers kicking up their heels, cows jostling each other at the gates and old Daisy sauntering along indifferently until she was given a sharp reminder. The drove grew bigger and bigger as the herdsman progressed on his westward trek.

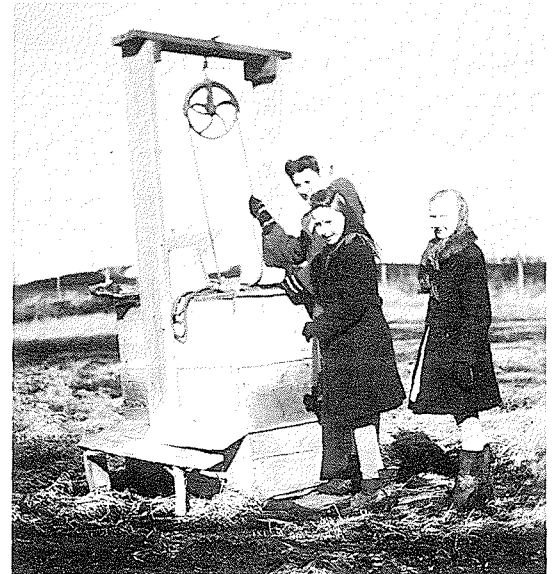
No barbed wire surrounded the community pasture in the early days. The herdsman would tend his charges all day. A Morden observer commented on the cattle tended around the prairie villages:

So numerous and considerable were these herds, that they invariably called to mind the days of the now extinct buffalo, when droves of those animals were scattered all over the western prairie.¹²

Such thoughts probably never entered the herdsman's mind when he shivered through a wet rainy day in spring or through the first snows of autumn or was caught in a thunderstorm far from shelter. But then the days were not all like that. There were pleasant days for a contemplative herdsman to enjoy.

Reinland herdsman Frank Hiebert heading westward to the community pasture in the morning.

Margaret Ens, Helga Olfert and Helen Zacharias at the Letkeman sisters' old well.





Quiet scene at the Reinland creek.

As the sun dropped towards the Pembinas and sky and cloud changed to evening colours, the herdsman would again round up his cattle and return to the village. The cows needed no coaxing and were already wending their way along well-trodden meandering paths. A girl in the village could be heard shouting, "Mami, daut Veeh tjemmt!" (Mom, the cattle is coming!). When the herd entered the street at the village's west-end, the first farmer's cows would intuitively leave the herd and enter the home gate. As the herd proceeded eastward along the street, it dwindled until, somewhere on the *Dwäagaus* (cross-street) it petered out completely. At that moment cow's milk was already squirting into the pails at the west end farms.

Had this been the first drive of the spring with inexperienced young cattle forming a large part of the herd, this drive would have been much

more exciting — at least for the children. At such times the herdsman needed assistance, especially in the evening, when the “ornery critturs” had to be sorted out of the herd.

A small pasture behind each farmer's lot was used to keep the herds overnight in summer.

After the harvest, cows were generally permitted to graze on the fields surrounding the village. They could feed on the grass along the *Rains* and seek out greenery here and there. This practice not only helped to protect the community pasture from overgrazing, but also allowed it to recuperate with the benefit of autumn rains. For the farmers it meant the conservation of precious hay reserves for winter use.

During the winter, cattle was generally kept inside. Wells were important water sources and Reinland was fortunately endowed with good

Reinland's first herdsman's contract drawn up in 1876.

Grätzer Bouswilk Jun. Jahr 1876

[illegible]

Tray Schir

Geo. C. Schryer

Ben Harris.



Flooding at the water reservoir (Drentj) in the community pasture.

wells. In early years these were dug wells; later many were drilled to a depth of over one hundred feet.

The village tradition of *Faspa* (afternoon lunch break) found its counterpart among the cattle. *Auffodern*, the practice of giving cattle a bedtime snack later in the evening, was a fairly well-established routine in early Reinland. Hay, *Hacksel* (oat sheaves cut into small pieces) and grain mash were old wintertime favorites for the cows. Alfalfa and clover also came into use, but corn silage did not come into its own until well after World War II.

The creek winding through the community pasture was the cattle's water supply from spring to autumn. A key problem was continuity of supply. A torrent of water rushed down the Pembina Hills during the spring thaw but during the summer the creek was often dry. The solution was the creation of a water reservoir which villagers called the *Drentj*. A dam was built to hold back a quantity of water sufficient to last through the summer.

The community pasture had its own niche in the village administration. A *Hirtenschulze* (village herding superintendent) was elected to supervise the herding of cattle. A herdsman was hired annually. Reinland's first herdsman was Isaak Fehr. Herdsmen were often Reinland residents but several of them were Ukrainians, who moved into the village for the duration of their term of service. One Ukrainian family, the Yurchaks, originally came to Reinland as herdsman, then stayed to farm and to open a barber and watch repair business.

Hard Times

Never has Reinland experienced a total crop failure. There have been hard times, certainly. Even today, Reinland farmers will be able to sympathize with their counterparts of 1882, the first Reinland farmers to suffer a poor crop year.

Spring was kind that year. On May 9, seeding time was almost over.¹³ In June, Peter Wiens expressed satisfaction about the progress of the crop. As the season progressed, the grain headed. The wheat fields, waving gently in the summer breeze, were a sight that gladdened the heart of the settler. Prospects indicated that the *Brotschuld* would again recede. Some farmers even purchased new machinery.

Then came August. A heat wave accelerated the ripening of grain stands. What would happen to the late sown grain? Then rust struck, shrivelling the kernels of wheat to a quality that proved hard to sell later. On August 25 hail cut a swath through Hochfeld, Reinland, Schoenwiese, Neuendorf, Rosenort, Kronsthal, Neuenburg, Ebenfeld and the new village of Gnadenthal. Farmers lost a quarter, some a half and others even more of their crop. Jacob Toews, living north-east of Reinland, had a promising thirty acre field of oats which was devastated. Johann Peters, who had a ninety acre wheat field on a

Feeding the Harms' horses on the field, 1942.



quarter he had acquired, estimated that he would be able to harvest just enough for his family to survive.

Fall rains hindered the harvest. On Sunday, October 15, the rains turned to hail, accompanied by a strong north-west wind. On Monday morning the earth was covered with snow and by Tuesday three inches of it blanketed the ground. Although the whistles of the steam engines announced the resumption of the harvest on the brilliant autumn morning of Wednesday, October 18, some farmers were unable to reap all of their crop before the coming of winter. In spite of all these setbacks, many farmers got yields ranging from six to twenty-five bushels to the acre.

Familiar problems followed the 1882 harvest situation. Cash was scarce. Some farmers mortgaged their homesteads.

Reinland was to experience more hard times with hail, drought, grasshoppers, aphids, wet harvests, low prices and poor markets. The Depression of the 1930s, a period of world-wide financial crisis, brought the most serious economic slump in village history. The situation was worsened by its coincidence with drought and grasshoppers.

According to C. A. Dawson, Mennonites in general had lower incomes than non-Mennonites during the Depression, but were also more successful in balancing their budgets. There was a general return to self-sufficiency. Wheat acreage was reduced in favour of feed grains. Less grain was sold and more was fed to livestock.¹⁴ In Reinland the shift to greater diversification of crops, including corn, and to livestock also occurred. A broader economic base for Reinland's agriculture was one of the direct results of the Depression.

The most recent major crisis for Reinland farmers was the grain market deterioration of the late sixties and early seventies. For several years elevators were clogged, prices were poor and foreign trade was difficult. By 1973, a shift in the world market situation had ended the crisis.

Taking Grain to Market

During the first years grain and other products were taken to Emerson. This meant a long, two-day journey. The coming of the railway through the West Reserve in the fall of 1882 was a great boon to Reinland. Two towns, Gretna and Stevens soon emerged.¹⁵ In 1883 the construction of an eighty-five foot high elevator at Gretna was undertaken. Peter Abrams wrote a newspaper report on the workings of a grain elevator to explain this prairie landmark to the Mennonites in Russia.¹⁶

Then in 1892 Hoffnungsfeld Siding, which soon became Winkler, grew up beside another new track traversing the reserve.¹⁷ With the later emergence of Haskett on the Walhalla-Morden railway much of Reinland's trade switched to that centre. At one point grain was even shipped to the former Tipperary elevator in North Dakota.

Fragment of 1883 Peter Abrams newspaper letter. He is explaining the workings of a grain elevator for the benefit of readers in Russia.

denn durch den frühzeitigen Frost ist viel Weizen beschädigt und ist fast nicht zu verkaufen, in vielen Fällen gar nicht. Der Preis ist gegenwärtig von 40—74 Cents per Bushel, Hafer ist ebenfalls schwer zu verkaufen und zwar für 18—20 Cents per Bushel, die Stadt Gretna, welche 15 Meilen von uns östlich liegt, wächst mit Riesenschritten empor, denn es wird den ganzen Winter hindurch gebaut, da befindet sich auch schon ein Elevator, derselbe ist 85 Fuß hoch. Manche Leser in Rußland mögen nicht wissen, was das ist, deshalb diene hier zur Erklärung, daß dies ein großer Speicher ist. Das Getreide von einer Fuhre wird durch die Wand in einen Behälter geschüttet und so gewogen; dann wird der Behälter unten geöffnet und entleert. Mittels künstlich angebrachter „Schöpfen“ (ähnlich dem Schöpftrabe einer altmodischen Waschermühle) wird sodann das Getreide in die Höhe befördert und je nachdem noch verschiedenen Reinigungsprozessen unterworfen, alsdann es auf sehr bequeme Weise in die Eisenbahn-Car geschüttet wird. Das wird alles mit Dampf betrieben. Solche Einrichtung ist für den Farmer ganz prächtig, wenig Arbeit, aber leider jetzt auch wenig Geld. Der Winter ist bis dato ziemlich gelind gewesen, auch nur wenig Schnee. Einen Gruß an Alle, die sich meiner erinnern.

Peter Abrams.

In more recent times Reinland's business has been largely oriented towards Winkler. The hard-surfacing of Highway 32 in the 1950s has served to expedite this trade. Altona has long had a share of the Reinland farm trade. Many thousands of pounds of sunflower seeds have gone to Co-op Vegetable Oils. Several farmers are still regular fuel customers of Rhineland Co-op in Altona.

Steam is King

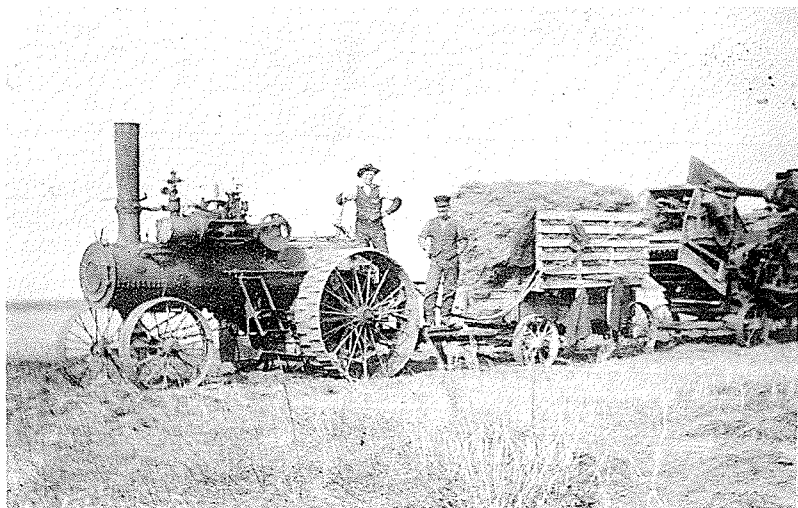
When the whistle of the steam engine sounded once more on the streets of Reinland during the 1975 centennial observance, many older people thought nostalgically of other times, of the age when steam reigned as the undisputed monarch of the harvest field. Steam came into its own in the 1880s and for half a century giant steam-powered engines dominated the late summer scene.

Heinrich F. Froese and Jacob P. Thiessen were probably Reinland's best known steam engine operators. Proud of their skills, these veterans would take their steamer and threshing machine to the middle of a field of stooks, unhitch the threshing machine, swing the steamer around in a huge semi-circle and, with astonishing accuracy, drive into the belt, lining up the huge pulley of the engine with the main drive of the separator.

A large crew constituted the threshing gang. Manpower was needed to run the steam engine and separator. The steamer had to be supplied with water. Its fires had to be stoked. The grain, which for many years was always bagged on the field, had to be taken home with horse teams and wagons. A large crew with teams and hayracks was required to gather the sheaves and pitch them into the feeder of the separator. Many men had to be fed on the field.

Lower right, Henry Unger, Neuenburg, threshed in the Reinland area around 1910.

G. G. H. Ens on the binder.



„Farmers Glück!“

Es kann nichts Schön'eres geben
Auf dieser weiten Welt,
Als wie des Farmers Leben,
Das jedem wohlgefällt.

Am Morgen auf der Weide,
Wenn frisch die Lüfte weh'n,
Seh' ich mit Lust und Freude,
Die goldne Sonn' aufgeh'n.

Wenn ich am späten Abend
Vom Felde heimwärts zieh',
Am Abendrot mich labend,
Sing ich mein Lieblingslied.

Schenkt der Mai den Auen,
Dem Wald sein Prachtgewand,
Bin ich dies zu beschauen,
Als Erster gleich zur Hand.

Wie kann ich oft andächtig
Am goldnen Weizen steh'n,
Wenn Wogen sanft und prächtig
Durchs ganze Feld hingeh'n.

Dort unten an dem Bache,
Da steht mein trautes Haus,
Mit grünem ranktem Dache,
Da ruht sich's herrlich aus.

Ne edle Frau zur Seite,
Ein niedlich Kind im Arm,
Die ganze Welt, die weite,
Lass' ich nicht um die Farm!

Sollt' mich 'mal einer fragen,
Nach meinem Handwerkszweign,
Mit Stolz werd' ich dann sagen:
„Will nur ein Farmer sein!“

N. S. Claus, Winnipeg.

Eine Farm unter der Farm.

Die mei-... daß

Heinrich F. Froese was one of Reinland's threshing outfit engineers when steam power was supreme on the prairies. His outfit is shown in upper left photo.

Centre left. Diedrich Hiebert and Jacob Wieler on the harvest field.

Lower left, Henrich F. Froese and Diedrich (or Frank) Wieler beside Froese's steamer.



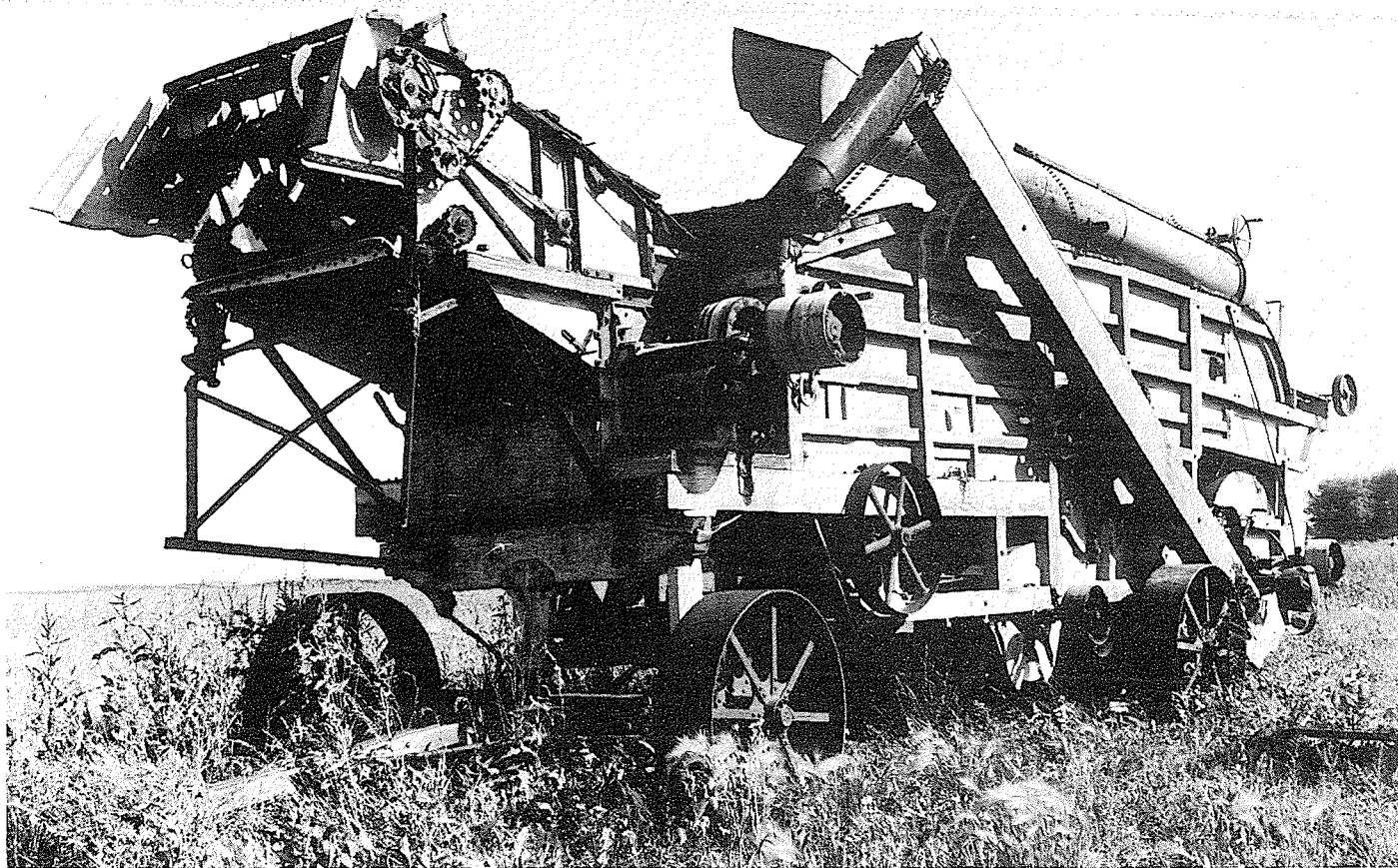


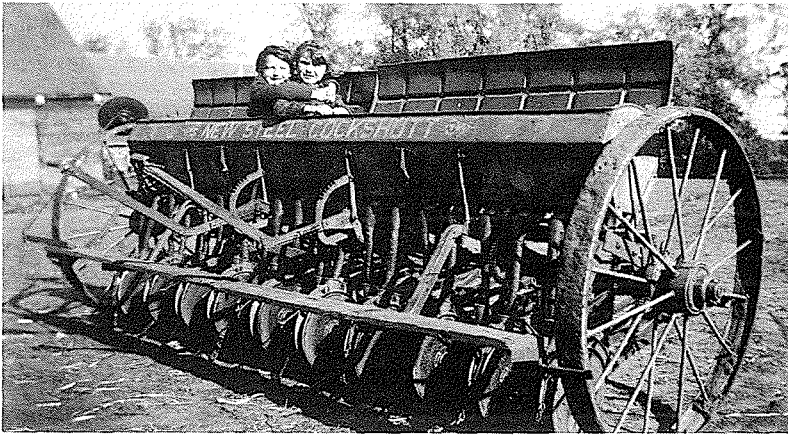
Photo courtesy, Harold Funk.



Photo courtesy, Harold Funk.



Reinland's first rubber-tired tractor was the 10-20 McCormick-Deering purchased by David F. Zacharias (standing behind power binder).



Cockshutt drill with Esther Neufeld and Eva Froese around 1937.

Modernization

Steam abdicated gradually between the wars. What its successors had in efficiency and maneuverability, they lacked in dignity. The Advance Rumely, Hart-Parr, J. I. Case, Fordson, McCormick and other tractors entered the scene as the switch to petroleum-power gained momentum.

The first cautious, then rapid, changeover to combines came in the 1940s. Peter A. Zacharias' eight foot Massey Harris power take-off model may well have been the first combine in Reinland. Peter S. Zacharias was the village's first owner of a self-propelled unit, when he purchased his Massey Harris combine. In 1945 several threshing machines were still in use but by 1950 the switch to combines was almost complete.

Power for early binders was transmitted by means of a large drive wheel. Later power binders came into use. With the coming of the combines, innovative farmers converted binders to swathers. Gone from the fields were the summer stooking crews. Instead of acres upon acres of golden stooks, fields of symmetrical windrows characterized the Reinland panorama.



Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Above and lower right, modern farm machines in parade at Reinland centennial.

Upper right, Throwing bails at Suderman loft around 1968.



The Survival of the Farm Village

Why did the open-field system of farming survive so long in Reinland? And why did Reinland not cease to exist as a farm-operator village after the open-field system was finally abandoned? Several explanations could be offered.

Reinland's inhabitants through the decades have belonged to a strongly conservative tradition. The forbears of Reinland have been living in villages for many generations over several centuries. Even the kind of break from the organizational pattern experienced by the Bergthaler who moved to the West Reserve from the East Reserve, had not been experienced by Reinland forbears since the years immediately following their 1788-1789 immigration from Prussia to Russia and then only temporarily. But the momentum of tradition, though important, cannot suffice as an explanation.

The role of Reinland's alternative church was also a factor in the village's survival. The village up to the 1920's was dominated by the Chortitzer-Fürstenländer group which had collectively become known as the *Altcolonier*. Members of the Reinländer Mennonite Church, they offered strong, consistent and organized opposition to all attempts at undermining the village social structure which they rightly considered as essential to the preservation of their way of life. A Bergthaler Church group which later became the Sommerfelder Church, emerged as an alternative church in Reinland in the 1880's. But whatever else this new church in Reinland did, and its effects were significant, it did not destroy the village system. The Reinland Bergthaler group was largely constituted of former members of the Chortitza Mennonite Church led by Elder Gerhard Dyck in Russia. Its members had found it difficult to work with the more conservative Fürstenland Elder Johann Wiebe. It became a rallying point for those who tended to be more "progressive". But its members had come directly from Chortitza to Reinland, had been co-founders of the village and had helped to organize its structures under Isaak Müller. They co-operated in the perpetuation of the village. Wilhelm Rempel, a supporter of the Bergthaler Church in Reinland and municipal secretary-treasurer, expressed his regret at the passing of the villages as follows:

Too bad . . . that so many villages have already disintegrated and that others are near to dissolution. Who would have thought or believed beforehand that the villages would not have permanence! The people could have saved themselves the work of resettling if they would have settled on their homesteads immediately upon arrival.¹⁸

Even when the Reinländer Mennonite Church immigration to Mexico occurred in the 1920's, there was no rush to end the open-field system. A new Sommerfelder *Schulze* was simply elected and the system continued. An understanding of this rather different role of the Bergthaler" in Reinland in contrast to their role in some other com-



Mrs. G. G. H. Ens milking cow in the old days — no breakdown in milking equipment.

Fodder storage at Ens Farms in 1976.

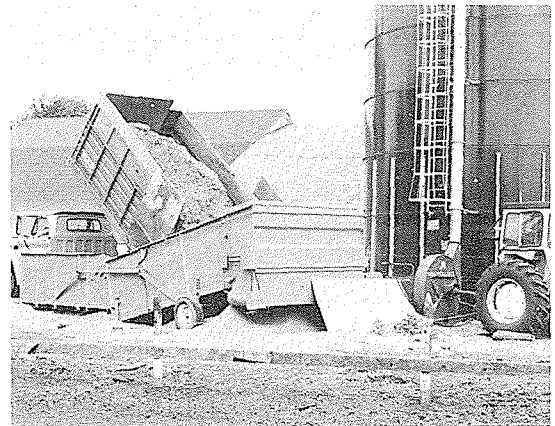




Photo courtesy Harold Fur

munities where they had a disintegrative effect on village structure is necessary to an understanding of the village's survival.

Another factor in addition to *Altkolonier* tradition and organization and the relatively supportive role of Reinland's second church was the large influx of new immigrants from Russia at precisely the time when the *Altkolonier* were migrating to Mexico. These Reinland immigrants were predominantly of Chortitzer or Baratow (daughter colony of Chortitza) origin. Like the original immigrants of the 1870's they saw in these villages established in the West Reserve an opportunity to recreate a lost commonwealth. In Reinland they went to far as to officially join the village organization and for several years the new dominant groups in Reinland, composed of Sommerfelder members and new immigrants from Russia, retained the open field system.

Up to the time of the emigration to Mexico the open field system was still in operation in at least the following West Reserve villages: Blumenort, Neuhorst, Reinfeld, Blumenfeld, Hochfeld, Friedensruh, Chortitz, Osterwick and Reinland.¹⁹ When mechanization continued to make the small fields more and more impractical and the absence of the strong leadership of the Reinländer organizational structure made itself felt and as the pull of the magnet of the New World's vast horizons and opportunities became increasingly persistent, the open-field system was finally allowed to pass away. But several villages remained as farm-operator communities, especially where one or both of two factors were present: either there was a large concentration of *Altkolonier* who had stayed behind during the migration to Mexico as in Hochfeld and Blumenfeld or there was a strong group of new immigrants present as in Blumenort, Rosenort, Gnadenenthal and Reinland. In the 1920's most of the Bergthaler villages had long since ceased to function both as open-field systems and as village communities. Neubergthal and Sommerfeld, which developed strong traditions of community of their own and which for many years escaped the church fragmentation which plagued many villages (Sommerfeld was a totally Sommerfelder Church community up to 1948) were notable exceptions. Although they abandoned the open-field system earlier than many Chortitza-Fürstenländer villages, they continued to exist as farm-operator hamlets.

Economic factors were significant in contributing to the survival of Reinland. The high capability of the soil permitted both a feed grain economy and export grain economy to flourish. In the 1920's, Reinland was largely export oriented, in the 1940's greater emphasis on cattle and hog production necessitated a higher feed grain acreage. Since 1945 there has been increasing diversification with sunflowers, sugar beets, alfalfa crops, rapeseed, buckwheat and vegetable crops being raised. In 1976 the prospects of even greater diversification existed.

The prevention of the break-up of homesteads within the village system was a significant factor in early years. Had such divisions oc-

On opposite page, home of the Gerhard G. H. Ens family since 1937. Rev. Jacob Wiens, born in Rosenort, Prussia, and minister of the Mennonite Church in Russia and Manitoba, settled on the location in 1875. Jacob Wielers took over the Feuerstelle in 1881, or earlier, built the present house and barn, planted many trees and gave the yard much of its character. After the Wielers migrated to Mexico, the Jacob P. Zacharias family lived here in the 1920s and 1930s. Gerhard G. H. Ens developed a prosperous dairy farm on the site.

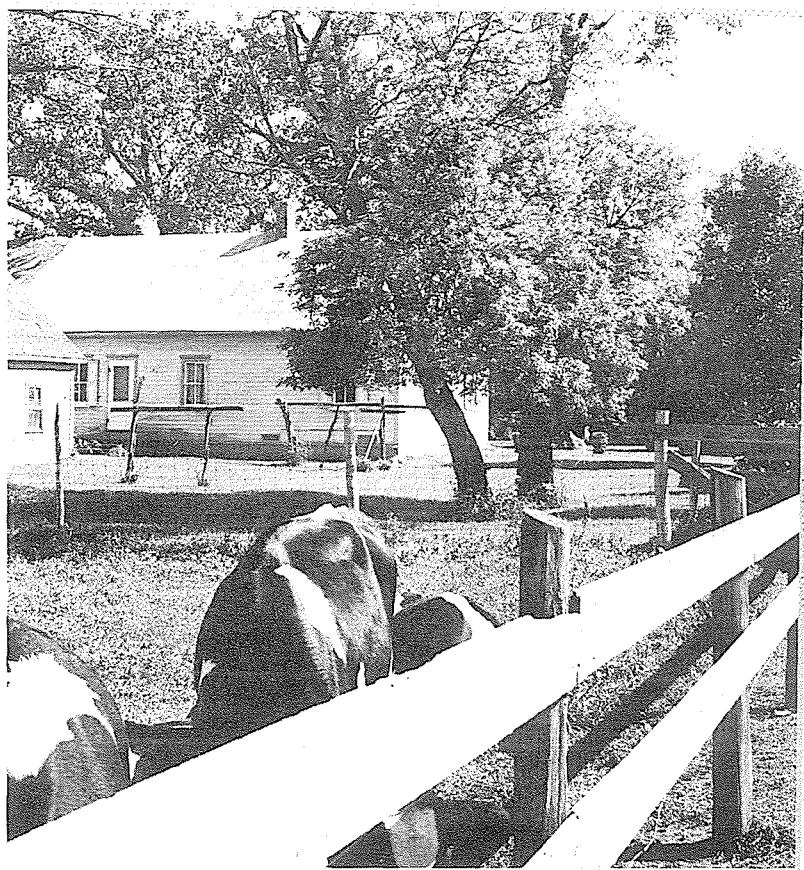


Photo courtesy Harold Funk.

curred frequently upon the death of a father having several sons economic fragmentation would have occurred in a few generations.

Population pressures were released by migration again and again and enabled Reinland farms to remain sound economic propositions. As early as the 1880's Franz Rempel took land at Plum Coulee. Soon others took homesteads at Myrtle. Beginning in the 1890's families migrated to Saskatchewan and took up new lands. The migration to Mexico in the 1920's again released population pressure in Reinland. A migration of that magnitude, however, destroyed some villages entirely. Reinland was fortunate in having its population largely replaced. After World War II new population pressures were solved by westward movements to Snowflake, Crystal City, Killarney and other areas.

In the 1960's and 1970's a new pattern emerged. Reinland has always had a number of families engaged in non-farming activities. But in recent years a growing number of families has decided to live in Reinland and drive to work in Winkler. Only twelve farms operated in Reinland in June, 1975. Due to expansion in farm sizes and greater diversification in farm operations, several other families found employment on farms.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Reinland Co-operators

A group of later Reinland pioneers were the co-operators. The Reinland Co-op Dairy Society, the Sunrise Co-op Store, the Reinland Credit Union and the Pembina Co-op Cannery were all begun in Reinland in the post-depression late thirties and forties.

None of these ventures were strictly Reinland village enterprises. Strong support and participation came from families in Schoenwiese, Rosengart, Haskett, Blumenfeld and other districts. All four businesses were founded with community needs in mind — making greater use of agricultural resources in the area through farm diversification, providing the community with easily accessible consumer goods at reasonable prices, providing needed local services, providing more local employment opportunities and providing additional sources of income. All of these businesses are now gone; some of them have merged with other co-operatives. The impact of these undertakings is still being felt and Reinland's experience in community has been enriched by their struggles, failures and achievements.¹

The Reinland Co-op Dairy Society

The first cheese factory in Reinland was established in 1885. Its newspaper coverage ranged from complaints about poor milk prices ("if he won't pay more than I've heard he'll pay . . . the farmer is better off to feed the milk to the pigs")² to skepticism. In March of that year Peter Abrams commented:

A cheese factory is being built in Reinland, but whether the farmer will get a good income through the factory, time will tell.³

The end came in the following newspaper report in July, 1885:

Reinland P.O., July 3: It was announced in the *Rundschau* at one time that two cheese factories were started on the Menonite West Reserve. Today everything is being cleaned up again because the contractor has no money. From the beginning up to today he has never given anyone as much as a red

The General By-Laws of the Reinland Co-operative Dairy Society Ltd., were published in German and English in 1937. The minutes of meetings were kept in German.



This milk delivery scene was a common sight at the cheese factory for many years.



cent for labour and effort nor has he paid for the little milk that he has received. Today the machinery such as cheese press and milk cans are again being shipped to Winnipeg.⁴

It would be interesting to know the story behind those reports. Obviously some things did not work out. The plant, whatever it was, did not have community backing.

The Reinland Co-op Dairy Society had enough difficulties during its period of existence but its story was considerably different. The minutes of its early meetings in 1936 reveal that at least a core of people in the community believed that the proposed undertaking was a community need and this core of individuals was prepared to see its plans through to the fulfilment stage.

The first general membership meeting recorded took place on December 30, 1936. Before this date a provisional committee consisting of Abram D. Paetkau, president, John J. Dueck, vice-president, G. G. H. Ens secretary, Is. Wieler, Peter W. Thiessen, David Falk, Peter Redekopp and A. Wall was hard at work making preparations. A number of shares had already been sold. By the time of the general meeting the committee had sent an exploratory delegation (Wall, Redekopp, Paetkau, Ens) to inspect a plant that was already operating at Steinbach and to study it from a business point of view. The committee made plans to apply for authorization to construct the plant and by its detailed preliminary homework, it virtually ensured the success of the general meeting.

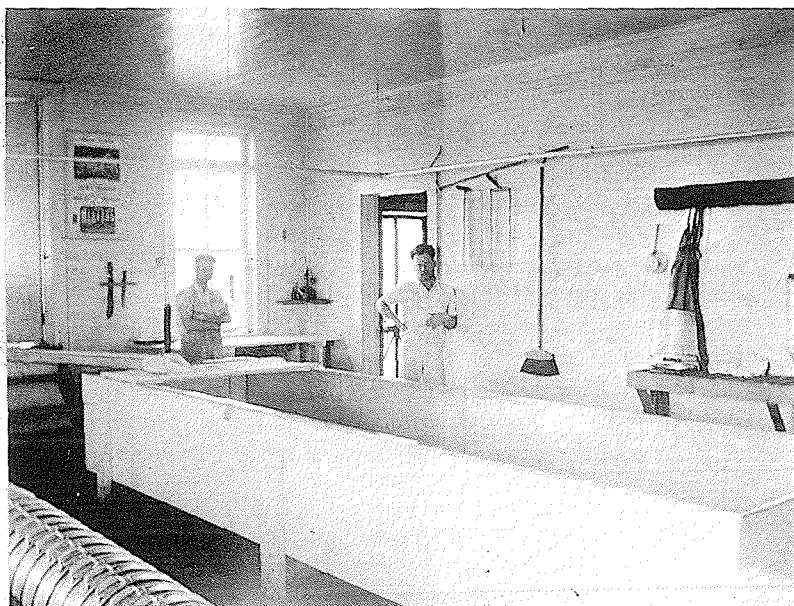
At the December 30, 1936, meeting, attended by 59 members and chaired by John J. Elias, Winkler, the following decisions were made:

1. It was decided unanimously to proceed with plans to construct a cheese factory.
2. A plot was to be purchased from Isaac Friesen for that purpose (The plot had already been approved by the dairy inspector and by the health inspector.)

3. The Jacob Giesbrecht lot and buildings were to be purchased as living quarters for the cheesemaker.
4. Members were asked to purchase additional shares to make extra money available for construction. No member was allowed to purchase more than ten shares and no more than 2,000 shares could be sold.
5. A building contractor was to be hired but as far as possible the work was to be done by volunteer labour.
6. Two 17 foot presses were to be ordered and the vats were to be made by Plett Brothers.
7. The secretary-treasurer was to be bonded for \$2500 and was to make a monthly report to the board.
8. During the first month of operations deliveries of milk were to be made to the plant by the members with no remuneration to compensate for delivery.
9. Shares were to be paid as follows:
 - \$3.00 by Jan. 15, 1937
 - \$3.00 by March 1, 1937
 - \$4.00 by April 1, 1937

At this meeting the first permanent Board of Directors, consisting of seven members was elected.⁶ After a committee organization meeting held on the evening of the same day at the Abram D. Paetkau residence the new Board had the following make-up:

- Peter W. Thiessen, Schoenwiese, president
- Abram N. Friesen, Reinland, vice-president
- G. G. H. Ens, Reinland, secretary-treasurer
- John J. Dueck, Blumenfeld
- Abram D. Paetkau, Reinland
- John Giesbrecht, Haskett
- Gerhard M. Elias, Haskett



Inside view of Reinland cheese factory in 1940s.

After application and preliminary work through W. C. Miller, M.L.A., the Reinland Co-op Dairy Society received its charter of incorporation on February 11, 1937. The purpose of the Society according to the charter was:

The manufacturing and marketing of cheese and other dairy and allied products and carrying on of any and all processes incidental thereto, and purchase, sale and exchange of general merchandise.⁷

The cheese factory began operations in 1937 with John Unger, Landmark, as cheesemaker and Mr. Peter R. Redekopp as assistant.

The use made of available resources for the common good of the Society is striking. Heavy use of volunteer labour has been cited as was the one month do-it-yourself milk delivery. When in 1937 it became necessary to borrow \$1500, the loan was instantly secured by fifty notes at \$30.00 signed by Society members. The cheese factory did not have to be mortgaged. Volunteer workers were asked to haul gravel to the cheese factory's location. The following offered to bring a load of gravel to the site free of charge: J. P. Peters, J. G. Neufeld, H. G. Ens, A. P. Zacharias, G. G. Harms, J. Dueck, D. A. Fehr, Is. Buhler, Isbr. Siemens, Is. Friesen, P. C. Rempel, J. W. Dyck and C. W. Thiessen. Loading gravel at the pits by shovel was hard work and time-consuming in 1938. When a house had to be moved from Gnadenthal for cheesemaker John Unger, J. J. Dueck contributed his tractor, the Gnadenthalers volunteered to put it onto the wagons, Gerhard M. Elias volunteered his assistance and C. W. Thiessen consented to take over the organization of the moving.

Mechanization had its limitations in the late thirties. Electric power was not yet available. A decision at a director's meeting on September 24, 1937, read:

Wird beschlossen eine Mantellaterne zu bestellen, weil das Käsemachen sich manchmal verzieht bis es ganz dunkel am Abend wird.⁸

The system of pricing milk decided upon in October, 1937, was an interesting adaptation to the times. Milk shippers were divided into three categories. Those living within three miles of the factory received the standard price; those living within a radius of three to seven miles received a five cents per hundredweight bonus and those living more than seven miles away received a ten cents per hundredweight bonus.

When John Unger left the cheese factory, Peter R. Redekopp became the manager and served in that capacity for approximately five years. Mr. Bernhard Penner was the assistant. C. H. Wall, Diedrich Zacharias, Tony Siemens and others have also worked at the plant.

During this time milk processing reached about 14,000 lbs. during peak season. This yielded about 1400 lbs. of cheese. Though a small plant, the Reinland factory won several first prizes both at the Brandon

Exhibition and the Winnipeg Exhibition. Much of the Reinland cheese was shipped overseas for the armies in World War II.

By the time that the cheese factory closed its doors, it had largely accomplished what it was to accomplish. It had given Reinland and district farmers an added agricultural endeavour. The Reinland Co-op Dairy Society did not lose money. It completed its course above water financially and had during its existence been able to pay out several thousand dollars in dividends. Its closing was a logical step. The much larger Winkler Co-op Creamery could operate more efficiently and was in a position to serve Reinland better.

When the Reinland Co-op Dairy Society ceased operations the equipment was transferred to Winkler Co-op Creamery which then went into cheese production. In 1976 several Reinland farmers were shipping cream to the Winkler creamery and Reinland's four dairy farmers, Jacob F. Wieler, Bernie Elias, Bernie Zacharias and Ens Farms Ltd. were shipping milk to the Winkler plant. The increase in milk production in the last three decades was drastic. In January, 1946, approximately thirty-seven producers shipped a total of 46,475 lbs. of milk to the Reinland cheese factory. In January, 1976, Ens Farms alone shipped 79,129 lbs. of milk to Winkler. Ens Farms itself produced 3,763 lbs. of milk in January, 1946; in January, 1976, it was producing over twenty-one times that quantity.



One continuing benefit of the Reinland Co-op Dairy Society era has been the cattle improvement it gradually brought. The importation of pedigreed cattle began in 1937 and the loaning of purebred bulls was initiated in the early 1940's. The 4-H Dairy Calf Club complemented the trend. At a meeting of farmers from several villages and districts held in Reinland in 1950, the Artificial Breeders Association was formed. The three large-scale dairy farmers in Reinland and immediate vicinity in the 1940's, Peter S. Zacharias, G. G. H. Ens and Henry J. Giesbrecht, Rosengart, promoted the movement to cattle herd improvement.

The Reinland Credit Union Society

The Reinland Credit Union was never a large concern and the advantages it could offer its membership were limited. Like the other co-ops at the time, it did not lack enthusiastic supporters. Since it could not afford to hire a treasurer, members of the credit society received deposits and collected payments on loans. Apparently the treasurer was called from his tractor seat or his wife from the chicken house to complete necessary transactions.⁹

The Reinland Credit Union, because of its size and limited potential at the time, was not an efficient operation and its eventual merger with the Winkler Credit Union Society proved to be in the best interests of the community.

Sunrise Co-op Store

The Sunrise Co-op Store was a more successful business than the Credit Union but it laboured under the same handicaps. The small population of Reinland and the surrounding villages meant a small business volume even though the business was supported well by its 172 members. Annual volume fluctuated from \$30,000 to \$34,000.¹⁰ One inevitable result of the low volume was that the range of goods that the store could offer was consistently limited.

Two reasons help to account for the extended period of relative success that this co-op enjoyed in spite of severe disadvantages. One was the consistent support of a core of persons who were determined to make the enterprise a success. Another was the good management that the store enjoyed. Diedrich Friesen, C. N. Friesen, Abram A. Olfert and George P. Warkentin served in this capacity. Peter Redekopp occupied the position temporarily.

Pembina Co-op Cannery

Pembina Co-op Cannery could be written off as one of those failures in Manitoba Co-op history. It could also be termed an outstanding success.¹¹ It "failed" in that it closed in 1949 with a considerable loss of money. It succeeded in that it was largely instrumental in introducing a new agricultural dimension to the Southern Manitoba

Frank Suderman and Peter Peters on "formal" visit to Sunrise Co-op.



community. New crop patterns emerged that are still part of the scene in 1976 and will probably become even more so in the future. In that sense the cannery ranks as a pioneering achievement in the best tradition.

Geographically Reinland was an ideal place to experiment with a canning industry. A series of studies and experiments by the Morden Experimental Station indicated that Southern Manitoba would be a suitable location for growing vegetable crops. It was suggested that Reinland area soil would be good soil for crops like corn, beans, peas and tomatoes. Figuring largely in these experiments was Dr. Charles Walkof, who was also responsible for interesting Reinland area farmers in these new ventures. The big problem in growing vegetables was selling the crop. A cannery would provide local vegetable growers with a readily accessible market.

A small group of men met on February 12, 1945, to discuss plans. This group of seven, the charter members of the society, later to be known as Pembina Co-op Cannery, constituted the provisional committee. It consisted of John Dueck, Blumenfeld, Peter Dueck, Blumenfeld, Jacob Friesen, Reinland, Frank Froese, Reinland, James Hamm, area school teacher, Peter Redekopp, Reinland, and Jacob S. Zacharias, Reinland. Peter Redekopp was chosen provisional president and Jacob Friesen as provisional secretary. None of these people had ever seen a cannery and many meetings were held to discuss marketing, financing, and other details. Dr. Charles Walkof explained the workings of the cannery, the machinery needed, and discussed cost.

At the first general shareholders meeting, three Haskett men, G. Elias, Eugene Giesbrecht and J. Wieler were added to the board and the complete board was made permanent.

Some early measures taken to initiate the project were:¹²

1. Only one carpenter was to be hired. All other work was to consist of volunteer labour.
2. Growers should not be paid until products were sold.
3. The other three co-ops were asked to put their Victory Bonds up as security for a loan.
4. Directors personally guaranteed notes of up to \$2,000.

When the small frame building was completed in the summer of 1945 it immediately began to can the first commercially grown sweet corn in the province. Peter Redekopp became the manager and Jim Hamm took over the board chairmanship. The machinery in the building had been bought from the Broder Canning Company, Lethbridge, Alberta.

The whole harvesting and canning operation would be considered primitive in 1976. The husking of the 30 acres of corn was all done by hand. There was no electricity in the plant. The canning process was hand-operated. Home canning equipment was simply utilized on a large scale. The number of "employees" was impressive: members working



Scene at Pembina Co-op Cannery, September 10, 1948.

without pay, children hired to work part-time in the holidays, people from the community working in their spare time. The 16,000 cans of corn that were processed in 1945 were quickly sold.

In 1946 the board of directors included David P. Peters, Reinland, president; Jacob Friesen, Reinland, secretary; Peter Redekopp, Reinland, manager; W. V. Elias, Blumenfeld; Frank Froese, Reinland; Jacob Janzen, Rosengart; and Abram A. Olfert, Reinland. One hundred acres were contracted. Additional machinery was purchased. A contract was made with Campbell Soup of Toronto for brimmed corn packed in 45 gallon barrels to be shipped to Toronto for further processing. It was a successful year. It could have been even more successful if the cannery had had a larger capacity.

The decision was made to go ahead with necessary additional expansion. A gasoline driven power plant replaced the original one cylinder hit-and-miss stationary engine. About \$15,000 were invested. By 1947 the plant had a capacity of one million cans.

In 1947 the first cloud appeared on the horizon of the young industry. The success of the Reinland experiment was being well noted by private entrepreneurs. A new well-financed operation was in the making in Winkler and would be ready for the 1948 season.

1948 was a disastrous year. There was a good crop and a depressed market. It cost \$3.00 to can a case of corn and prices dropped to \$1.85. The \$11,000 loss that was incurred during the year could have been absorbed if some financial reserves had been available. As it was, not all farmers could be paid for their deliveries.

In 1949 only a few farmers could afford to take a gamble on growing corn and only fifty acres were raised. This was the last year of canning operations. Losses in the Reinland community were heavy. Those who had served in the boards already mentioned including the 1949 board of H. J. Giesbrecht, G. G. H. Ens, George Janzen, Henry Janzen, Jacob Janzen, Peter Redekopp, Jake Wieler and J. S. Zacharias had largely guaranteed the cannery's loans and now had to absorb considerable losses.

The MCC canning operation in the Reinland plant following the Second World War will be mentioned in a different context.

Had the organization had the financial resources to tide it over some early crisis years it might have remained a healthy community industry for a long time. However, that was not to be. In 1949 the doors of Pembina Co-op Cannery were closed. But special crops had become a part of the economy of the general area around Winkler and Morden.



Bringing corn to the cannery, September 10, 1948.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Junior Club to 4-H

The world-wide depression that hit every city, village and individual in North America also affected Reinland profoundly. Not only did it have dire economic consequences but it took its toll socially as well. There were many teenagers and people in their twenties in Reinland at the time. Jobs were not available, not even at fifty cents a day. Even the farms did not supply sufficient employment in the bone-dry dust bowl years.

It was in this setting that agricultural representative Walter Fraser of Morden found a response among young boys in Reinland. Mr. Fraser and Jake Enns, Reinland, perhaps more than any other individuals, deserve credit for organizing a movement that filled several important functions. It filled a social vacuum and gave young people something constructive to do together. It served an educational purpose, teaching youth the art of public speaking, drama, proper meeting procedures, debating, keeping minutes and records. It met a community agricultural need, through the direct teaching of scientific farming to cores of would-be agriculturists. It brought direct benefits to the community by introducing new grain varieties.¹

Junior Club activity, which was begun with a group of boys around 1935 or 1936, eventually produced several different clubs involving both girls and boys. In the early 1950s the Junior Club organizations evolved into the 4-H movement as it is known across Manitoba today.

Reinland Junior Seed Growers Club

The Seed Growers were the first of Reinland's Junior Clubs and were pioneered by Jake Enns, the first leader, and W. S. Fraser, who was later to serve on the Board of Grain Commissioners. Former members still speak nostalgically and with pride of their experiences.

All members were expected to participate in public speaking to the embarrassment of some and the enjoyment of many others (perhaps to the embarrassment of one and the enjoyment of all others on any given occasion). Each member was free to select his topic. One reluctant

Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Abe Dyck and his team of horses begin the 1975 Reinland centennial parade with parade marshal Hon. Sam Uskiw and 4-H queen Martha Elias. Barry Uskiw, son of Hon. Samuel Uskiw, is in the front seat of the democrat.





Dee Fria cast in 1947.

young orator walked onto the platform when his turn came and proclaimed, "Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen" Pause. More pause. . . . One could have heard a needle drop. And then after some moments of acute discomfort, "I told you I wasn't prepared." He marched off the stage.

Another youthful Reinlander addressed the club on the topic, "Why should a young man speak in public?" This speech by one who, needless to say, became a successful agriculturist, Jake Harms, now farming at Mather, was distributed as study material to all the Junior Clubs in the province. Apparently it is still being used in Grain Clubs today. Mr. Fraser once mentioned that many club members were murdering the King's English. In spite of this some outstanding drama performances in English, German and Low German were presented. Many latent talents were discovered through the clubs and had there been an Oscar in rural Manitoba in those early club years it would have certainly been presented to the late David Fehr.

After a few years the point was reached where leadership in community social activities was expected to come from the Junior Clubs. They initiated literary programs, dramas and wiener roasts. Frank G. Ens, who has been active in Reinland clubs for as long or longer than anyone else, both as a member and as a leader, recalls his involvement in a production of Arnold Dyck's "Dee Fria", which concluded his Junior Club member's career in 1947.

The clubs introduced many new grain varieties to Reinland. Rust-resistant wheat varieties like Thatcher (which is still used in parts of Saskatchewan and Alberta), Regent (a long time No. 1 milling wheat) and Renown came to the village sooner because of club work. The club operated its own "experimental farm" on the place now owned and occupied by the Frank Reimers. When club work was first introduced some members of the older generation asked questions. When the economic benefits of club work became apparent, support in the community reached new heights.

O.A.C. 21 malting barley was another experiment. Three rust-resistant oat varieties that were introduced were Vanguard, Garry, and Rodney. In the community generally an oat yield of 50 bushels to the acre was considered good at the time. Gopher had brought yields up to 65 bushels per acre. However, the Junior Club, experimenting with Garry in 1945, was proud of its whopping 85 bushel per acre average with some plots going to 100 bushels. Plush, a feed barley (regarded as malting barley in the United States), turned out to be a good cash crop for some years.

Experimentation with flax varieties was also done. Carleton Durum was another successful club project which found a market south of the border.

In the course of its grain-growing activities the Juniors developed an acquaintance with the science of agriculture at the Morden Ex



Reinland Junior Clubs pioneered in early displays. On the right is the prize-winning display in Eaton's annex in 1940.

perimental Station. Clubs met there for rallies and educational tours which were followed by evening softball games.

Public recognition was not lacking. The greatest and proudest award in Reinland Junior Club history was the winning of the Harrison Shield. This top provincial trophy was won at the 33rd Manitoba Provincial Seed Show in February, 1940. The Canadian Boys' and Girls' Club News, April, 1940, contains the following note;

The T. J. Harrison trophy, awarded to Manitoba seed clubs on the basis of general proficiency in the year's work, was won by the Reinland club of Winkler with a score of 898 out of a possible 1000 points.²

During the same year the club also won the trophy for the best display at the Rhineland Agricultural Fair, Altona, and another trophy for the best at the Morden Rally. The latter display was taken to the Provincial Seed Fair in Winnipeg held in Eaton's annex.

Unfortunately the National Club Contests were not held that year because of the cancellation of the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto. The Royal's buildings were being used for military purposes. Prior to the cancellations two Reinland boys were in training to form part of Manitoba's delegation to the Toronto Royal. A free trip and a week's stay would have been included.

At least one member, Jake Harms, is still the proud owner of a silver medal received at the 1941 Provincial Exhibition in Brandon for the highest standing in the province in inter-club competition.

The Department of Agriculture presented awards to the highest scoring club members. Jake S. Zacharias won the award in 1939. It included a one week all expense stay at the University of Manitoba. In 1939 that week coincided with the Royal Visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. Seeing royalty at that time was a rare privilege.

In 1943 two other Reinland club members won one week trips to

Below, the 1940 winners of the T. J. Harrison Trophy. Left to right, the club members are: Frank Froese, David Peters, Jake Harms, Frank Paetkau, Jake S. Zacharias, Jake Friesen, David Fehr, A. W. Friesen.



Richard Enns of the Reinland 4-H beef club proved himself the top showman at the September 1965 fair in Altona. Ernie Wieler placed second. This was the second year the Reinland club was in operation and competing in the R.A.S. fair.



Winnipeg. John Froese, now deceased, won the Department's award as the Seed Club's delegate and Frank G. Ens won the Kiwanis award as the Soybean Club's representative.

The Junior Seed Growers Club continued to function until approximately 1947. In 1955 it was revived under the leadership of Abram E. Ens. During the following years it experimented with Rodney oats and Lee wheat.

Table: Reinland Junior Seed Growers: Some Early Clubs

1939-40	1940-41
Club Leaders:	Club Leaders:
Frank Froese	Frank Froese
Jake S. Zacharias	Jake S. Zacharias
	A. W. Friesen
President: Peter G. Harms	President: Jake Harms
Vice-President: David G. Harms	Sec. Treas.: Herbert J. Brandt
Sec. Treas.: Herbert J. Brandt	Members: David G. Harms
Members: Frank G. Ens	Frank G. Ens
Dietrich Zacharias	Fred C. Krahn
Fred C. Krahn	David Froese
David Froese	Henry H. Ens
Frank Suderman	Frank Suderman

Reinland Garden Club

This was another club that emerged in the thirties and left its mark. Garden clubs generally appealed to teenagers just below the age of the Junior Seed Growers Club members. One of the purposes of the Garden Club was to develop an appreciation of the garden economy.

A Junior Garden Club existed in Reinland for several years although its earlier records seem to be lost. What is definitely known is that the club had the benefit of the horticultural arts of Reinland school teacher Peter J. Dyck, who was its first leader. The club dates to at least 1937-1938. In 1938-1939 it had thirteen members.

The Garden Club disbanded but reappeared under the leadership of C. P. Zacharias around 1946-1947. At a Rhineland Agricultural Fair, Altona, inter-club judging competition, first, third, fourth and fifth prizes were won by Willie Peters, Peter H. Zacharias, Abe Hieber and Adolf Ens.

There was another Garden Club revival in the late sixties and early seventies under the leadership of Mrs. David J. Thiessen and Mr. and Mrs. Frank G. Ens. One highlight recorded is a three-day Winnipeg seminar, Aug. 25-27, 1971, attended by Margaret Ann Ens, Henrietta Ens and Kathy Peters. Featured were guided tours of the University of Manitoba Plant Science Laboratories, test plots and greenhouses. Tours of The Assiniboine gardens and greenhouses and attendance at the Annual Flower Show at Polo Park were also featured.

Garden club activity meant a lot of work and fun. It also meant rewards in terms of personal satisfaction for the individual and in terms of improved gardening in the village.

Reinland Dairy Calf Club

It would be unfair to say that no attention had been paid to the development of improved cattle prior to the 1940s. Selective breeding was certainly practiced. The good cattle raised in the days of the community pasture and the *Darpsboll* (village bull) were generally, however, purebred only in the sense that they were pure scrubs.

With the emergence of the Reinland Co-op Dairy Society and the cheese factory in 1936 and 1937 greater interest in the cow's milk production inevitably led to thoughts of herd improvement. Registered bulls were introduced into the community.

The organization of the Reinland Dairy Calf Club around 1946 was timely and helped to interest young people in dairy cattle. The leaders at this time were Frank Froese and Jacob F. Wieler. Frank G. Ens was president. The club experimented with purebred Holsteins. It also became involved in the fight against the dreaded disease rucellosis (better known as Bangs disease) at a time when veterinarians and the Department of Agriculture were in the thick of battle against its incursion.

Beef and Beets

The Reinland 4-H Beef Club functioned briefly but with a high degree of success. Its leaders were J. D. Wieler and P. W. J. Peters. The highlight in its achievement came at the 1965 Rhineland Agricultural Fair, Altona, when Reinland club members Richard Enns and Ernie Vieler placed first and second respectively in showmanship.

The Reinland 4-H Sugar Beet Club was in operation at the same time with Frank G. Ens and Albert Peters as leaders. The club drew in approximately twenty members from Reinland, Blumenfeld, Rosengart and Haskett. This club did well financially with members averaging approximately fifteen tons of beets to the acre during its one year of existence.

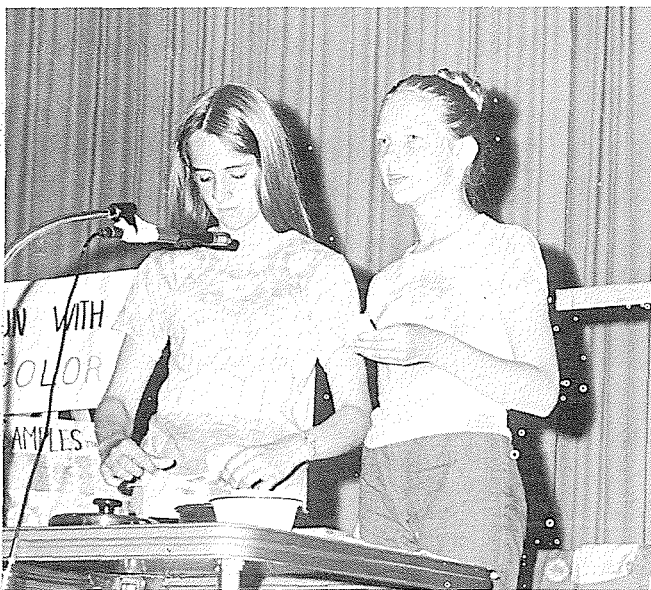
4-H Home Economics

Reinland 4-H activities in Home Economics began with the organization of the club on October 16, 1961. Under various names, Reinland Stitchers, Golden Needle Club and since 1964 the Reinland Home Economics Club, it has had a continuous existence since that date.

Besides the regular project work which varied from year to year, from sewing to foods to both and more, the club engaged in social activities (e.g. skating parties, Hallowe'en parties, Christmas socials,



Lydia Peters and Lottie Ens won the senior award with their baby bathing demonstration at the 4-H rally in Altona in 1975.



Esther Elias and Carolyn Janzen won the Junior 4-H demonstration in Altona in 1975. They demonstrated fun with color by tie dyeing. They dyed their own shirts.

Reinland Home Economics Club 1974-75

REINLAND MEMBERS

Verna Wieler
Wilfred Wieler
Wilma Ens
Monica Ens
Dianne Falk
Lydia Peters
Kathy Peters*
Lottie Ens
Ingrid Ens
Kathy Elias
Esther Elias
Angela Pauls
Linda Braun
Dianne Wiebe
Carolyn Janzen
Adolf Ens
Bernie Thiessen
Carey Pauls
Allen Wiebe

ROSENGART MEMBERS

Laurel Spent
Heather Wieler
Larry Thiessen

HASKETT MEMBERS

Annie Reimer
Lois Suderman
Margaret Elias
Martha Elias
Betty Fehr
Glenda Wieler
Sharon Buhler
Phyllis Wieler
Lena Penner
Robert Suderman (Blumenfeld Dist.)

LEADERS

Mrs. Betty Ens
Mrs. Helen Ens
Mrs. Nettie Peters
Mrs. Hilda Pauls
Mrs. Nettie Braun
Mrs. Mary Janzen
Mrs. Marge Suderman
Mrs. Elsie Suderman
Mrs. Lorena Wieler
Mr. Dave Hoepfner
Mr. George Braun
Olga Braun (Junior Leader)
Kathy Peters (Junior Leader)

*Kathy Peters was participating both as a club member and as junior leader.



Heather Wieler (left) represented the Reinland 4-H Club at the spoon presentation for the Junior dress revue in Altona in 1974-75.



Photos courtesy Werner Ens.

1975 Reinland 4-Hers in centennial parade on village street.

etc.), bazaars, 4-H radio broadcasts, demonstrations and public speaking (Elaine Wieler won a public speaking contest in 1965). Dramas presented have included *Wanted: A Housekeeper* in 1963 and *Advice to the Lovelorn* in 1967. The clubs have participated in 4-H rallies in Altona and Winkler regularly. Activities are climaxed by an Achievement Day at the end of the club year.

1973 was a year of change for the club. Not only were activities expanded to give club members greater opportunities to pursue their own interests but a union with Rosengart and Haskett came into being.³

In 1974-1975 the club consisted of thirty-two members, eleven leaders and two junior leaders. Club members could choose to participate in any of six different areas: cooking, sewing, woodwork, home nursing, baby sitting or self-determined projects.

At a special 4-H night in Altona in the spring of 1974 Hilde and Lottie Ens won the top award for their senior demonstration in leathercraft and Ingrid Ens won the public speaking contest with a talk on the energy crisis. In 1975 Esther Elias and Carolyn Janzen won the junior award with their tie-dyeing demonstration and Lydia Peters and Lottie Ens won the senior prize with a baby bathing demonstration.





Dianne Falk, Betty Fehr, and Linda Braun (first three in line) from the Reinland Club participated in the 1974-75 Senior dress revue in Altona.

EXECUTIVES OF REINLAND 4-H HOME ECONOMICS CLUB 1961-1976

Year	President	Vice-President	Secretary	Treasurer	News Reporter
1961-62	Dorothy Peters	Lena Zacharias	Irene Paetkau	Elaine Wieler	Jean Martens
1962-63	Lena Zacharias	Jean Martens	Irene Paetkau	Elaine Wieler	Esther Ens
1963-64	Elaine Wieler	Esther Ens	Linda Peters	Linda Peters	Mary Lou Zacharias
1964-65	Elaine Wieler	Rosanna Janzen	Linda Peters	Linda Peters	Joan Krahn
1965-66	Linda Peters	Rosanna Janzen	Diana Janzen	Diana Janzen	Joan Krahn
1966-67	Linda Peters	Diana Janzen	Rosanna Janzen	Judy Falk	Joyce Janzen
1967-68	Henrietta Ens	Rose Wieler	Marg. Ann Ens	Marg. Ens	Frieda Krahn
1968-69	Rose Wieler	Roxie Enns	Marg. Thiessen	Frieda Krahn	Kathy Peters
1969-70	Henrietta Ens	Kathy Peters	Roxie Enns	Marg. Ens	Kathy Peters
1970-71	Kathy Peters	Olga Braun	Roxie Enns	Ingrid Ens	Lottie Ens
1971-72	Olga Braun	Lydia Peters	Linda Falk	Ingrid Ens	Lydia Peters
1972-73	Kathy Peters	Henrietta Ens	Olga Braun	Ingrid Ens	Lottie Ens
1973-74	Ingrid Ens	Kathy Peters	Hilde Ens	Lottie Ens	Lydia Peters
1974-75	Marg. Elias	Laurel Spent	Annie Reimer	Lydia Peters	Olga Braun
1975-76	Marg. Elias	Lois Suderman	Annie Reimer	Lydia Peters	Martha Elias

Community of Faith

*The community, as a community of believers, is itself a witness
and a call to faith . . .*

— Adolf Ens

The leader of the first congregation in Reinland, Elder Johann Wiebe, saw the Christian church as a community of believers seeking the will of God and committed to discipleship. Four congregations have played major roles in Reinland's church history and have sought to discover and rediscover the meaning of discipleship in changing circumstances. Sometimes there appeared wide gaps between precept and practice. In the relative calm of the dawn of the village's second century, the church's imperative is still to seek to be the community of faith visualized by its prophets throughout the centuries.

Photo courtesy Harold Funk



CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Reinländer Mennonite Church (1875-1925)

The Reinländer Mennonite Church, popularly known as the Old Colony Church, served the community for fifty years. Its founding was one of the first events in West Reserve history and its early directions influenced significantly the course of West Reserve development.

Brotherhood Meeting at the Red River, July, 1875

Elder Johann Wiebe had some important reasons for calling a brotherhood meeting at the Fort Dufferin immigration sheds on the Red River before the move onto the West Reserve was made. The newly arrived settlers had come from different villages and even from different colonies in Russia. Many were from Elder Wiebe's own Fürstenland flock while many others came from the congregations of the more liberal Elder Gerhard Dyck of the Chortitza Colony. It was therefore important that a basis for unity be established.

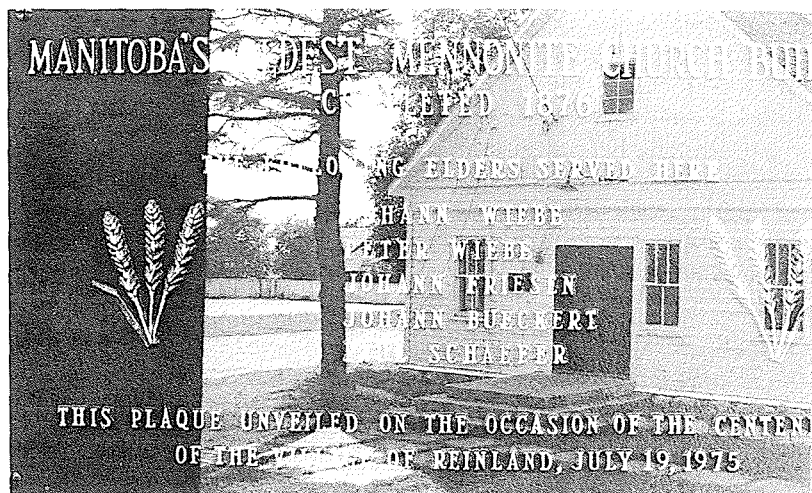
The decision to emigrate to America, and specifically to Manitoba, could in itself be interpreted as a conservative act. Those who migrated were generally those who opposed any form of alternate service in Russia, those who opposed Russification, those who were concerned about modernizing trends in the church at home. Canada was the choice of the more conservative leaders because Canada, not the United States, guaranteed the Mennonites the freedom to conduct their own schools and guaranteed military exemption in time of war.

But to see the migration only as a conservative act is an oversimplification. To Elder Johann Wiebe it was much more — it was a reform movement. His intentions were not just to preserve the status quo. They were to restore the New Testament church. And this, too, should be remembered when considering the elder's call to assembly at Fort Dufferin. The form of the new church and the new social order to be established in the West Reserve were of primary importance to the elder.¹

Den ersten Juli find wir
mit Gottes Hilfe glücklich und wunderbar
über den Ozean bei Quebec gegenüber
ans Land gekommen. Da ging der Spruch
jenes Dichters in Erfüllung: Land, Land,
hört man mit einmal schreien — Und al-
les steigt aufs Berdeck — Und alles sieht
man sich jetzt freuen — Und jeder Finger
ausgestreckt, — Zeigt hin aufs Land Ame-
rika — Und spricht Gottlob bald find wir
da. — Solch Gottlob wird dereinst erschal-
len — Wenn unsere Seel das Jenseits
sieht — Wenn wir uns in die Arme fal-
len — Die welche sich hier treu geliebt —
Wie freun wir uns auf jenes Land — Uns
alle die wir hier gekannt. Ach ja! gerade
mit Sonnenaufgang kam das Schiff
an Bord am Meeresufer. Und das erste
ehe wir ausliegen haben wir noch alle zu-
sammen dem Herrn ein Danklied gesungen,
welches also lautet: Nun danket alle Gott
— mit Herzen Mund und Händen — Der
große Dinge tut — An uns und allen En-
den — Der uns von Mutterleib — Und
Kindesbeinen an — Unzählig viel zu gut
— Und noch jekund getan. —

Quote from a sermon by Elder Johann Wiebe in which he describes the landing of the 1875 immigrants at Quebec.

Photo courtesy Werner Ens.
A fortunate accident resulted in this double exposure — the writing on the plaque superimposed on a picture of the church.



Elder Wiebe wrote some years later:

I must add that the ministers themselves could not grasp all these things when the conflict grew so intense, because this was to be an entirely different order from the one they were accustomed to in Russia — to deal with everything according to the Gospel was strange to some. Some said that we were introducing a new teaching, when it was only the teaching of Christ which the apostles had received from the Lord more than 1800 years ago.²

What were Elder Wiebe's concerns? He emphasized a major one specifically. It was the whole question of church discipline — that thorny issue that had accompanied the Mennonites since their days in the Netherlands. Elder Wiebe lamented the punishment that was meted out to offenders in the Mennonite colonies in Russia. Brotherly discipline according to the word of God was being forsaken by elders, ministers and the entire church and worldly means of punishment were used. The scriptural three-fold admonition which constituted Article 12 of the confession of faith was gradually being abandoned. True church-state separation had been lost, Elder Wiebe implied, because punitive measures were carried out by officials elected by the colony but empowered with the authority of the state by the state. Wrong doers, stated the elder, were known to have been whipped, jailed, put on a bread and water diet, fined, sentenced to wood chopping or ditch digging but they remained in good standing as brothers in the church. This was unbecoming of followers of Christ. At this brotherhood meeting at Fort Dufferin, continued Elder Wiebe, the decision was made to cease those practices of punishment. Instead a *Vorsteher* (see Chapter 4) was to be elected to assist the church to lead and govern according to a Christian order.

The emphasis on a Christian order in the “secular” realm, or better, the assertion that to the Christian there is no secular realm as such, that all of life is discipleship — this emphasis was important. The later interpretation of what this meant in practical terms was to cause much conflict in the spheres of church, school and municipal affairs.

The Building of the First Church at Reinland

A special plaque that marked the oldest Mennonite church building in western Canada was unveiled at the 1975 Reinland Village Centennial. Its inscription read:

Manitoba's Oldest Mennonite Church Building

completed in 1876

The following elders served here:

Johann Wiebe

Peter Wiebe

Johann Friesen

Johann P. Bueckert

Paul J. Schaefer

This plaque unveiled on the occasion of the
Centennial of the Village of Reinland July 19, 1975

In one way or another the building has played a role in the lives of almost all Reinland residents. In the first half century of its existence a church meeting to take care of problems that arose in the colony was held inside its walls every Thursday. How many worship services and baptisms have been held in that building! How many weddings and funerals of different denominations that were represented in the village! Brotherhood meetings, conferences, *Jugendvereine* (youth programs), elections and ordinations of ministers! In a special way it has served the Reinländer Mennonite Church and the Blumenorter Mennonite Church.

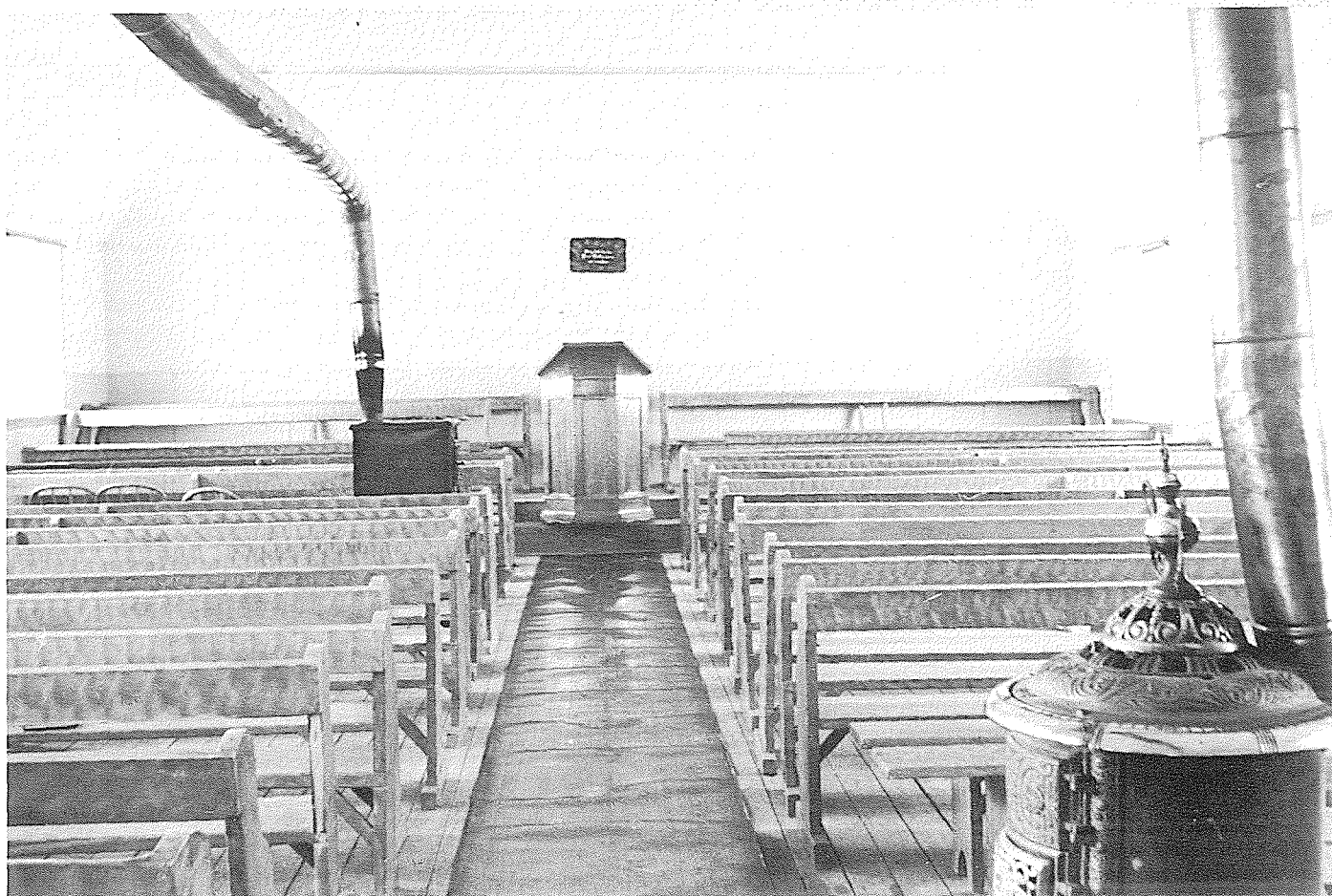
The building had its origins in the first year of village settlement. At a meeting held in the home of Peter Wiens, Reinland, on January 24, 1876, a decision to build the church was reached. Eight days later, on February 1, *Obervorsteher* Isaak Müller of Neuhorst sent a letter to the *Schulzen*, instructing them to proceed with church-building preparations. Each farmer in the village (and in other surrounding villages) was to bring a plank 30 feet long, 8 inches wide and 6 inches thick and planed on all sides. It was permissible to bring this plank in two sections. This meant that a farmer who could not find a 30 foot tree of suitable size and shape had the option of cutting two shorter sections totalling 30 feet. Instructions were given to prepare these planks well. Then Müller adds, “Es würde uns herzlich freuen wenn die

Western Canada's oldest Mennonite church building was dedicated on September 17, 1876. The photograph shows the building before its exterior was remodelled in the mid-1940s.

Freiwilligkeit so wäre alls bei Salomonis Tempelbau, dann konte der Liebe Gott auch ein Wohlgefallen daran haben." (We would be heartily pleased if the spontaneous will toward this work would be such as at Solomon's building of the temple — then the Lord could have pleasure in it."³

Most of the information regarding the construction itself has its source in a series of directives issued by Müller in 1876. In a May 11 circular, he told the *Schulzen* to see to it that the planks were delivered to Reinland by the 16th of the month because church construction was to begin.⁴ Some people apparently had "delays" because eight days later Müller urged the *Schulzen* to make certain that all planks were delivered to the building site by the 22nd and 23rd of the month so that matters would not come to the point that workers had to cease construction. The winter had not been so short, he told them. Anyone not





Interior view of Reinland church after its second renovation by the Blumenorter congregation.

following the directive was asked to make a \$5.00 contribution or to work at the church for six days.⁵

Further instructions came on June 12 when the *Schulzen* were requested to organize the carting of earth to the church site. A clay was generally packed in as a floor or as a base for a wooden floor. (It is not clear whether a wooden floor was built into the church in 1876 but it is not likely.) The villages were asked to take turns in doing work: Rosenort on Tuesday the 13th, Neuendorf on the 14th, Schoenwiese on the 15th, Reinland on the 16th, and Neuenburg on the 17th. Four farmers were to provide one team and wagon and every farmer was to supply one man.⁶

Another urgent Müller directive on June 17 instructed those who had not yet delivered the rafters to the church to do so immediately.⁷ In a July 16 circular the *Obervorsteher* requested Blumenort and Rosenort to haul five loads of church lumber each from the customs office. Herman Dyck, the foreman of the construction project, was to accept delivery.⁸

All summer long the people of Reinland and the surrounding villages were busily working at the project, supervised by Herman Dyck

Poem in the April, 1878, edition of *Herold der Wahrheit*.

Für den Herold der Wahrheit.

Das alte mennonitische Gotteshaus.

Von G. J. Bussmeyer.

Nicht in den hohen, thurmgekrönten Bauten,
Die majestätisch in die Wolken schau'n;
Wo Orgelklang, gleich schweren Donnerlauten,
Die Seele jagt mit Wehmuth und mit Graun;
Auch nicht in Tempeln als die Juden schauten
Wenn laut sie rief die tönende Posaun:
Habe ich in trüben, mühevollen Stunden,
Für meine Seele neue Kraft gefunden.

Im Stalle ward der Heiland uns geboren,
Der Erde Pracht und Reichthum liebt' er nicht;
Und jetzt auch hat er solche Stätt' erkoren
Wo nicht der Stolz, wo bleib die Liebe spricht;
Wo's Aug' in Gottes Anblick ganz verloren,
Der Welt sich schließt und himmelwärts sich richt:
Dort spricht der Herr am liebsten mit den Seinen—
Den Einfachen, den Frommen und den Reinen.

Und darum lieb' ich sie, die weißen Wände,
Das Kirchlein, nicht geschmückt, und doch so fein;
Dort hoben unsre Väter ihre Hände
Und ihre Herzen, wie die Wände rein,
Zu Dem empor, der ihr Beginn und Ende,
Ihr Vater war—denn alle waren sein—
Dort lernten sie Genießen, Lieben, Darben,
In Gott getrost, zu leben und zu sterben.

Und wenn ihr Blick von jenen Himmelssternen
Auf diese Welt noch manchmal niederseigt,
So weist er gerne wo den Töchtern, Söhnen,
Der alte Vater dieses Kirchlein zeigt,
Und sie ermahnt sich doch nicht zu entöhnen
Der Väter Sitten, ob ihr Mund auch schweigt;
Und stets, wie Jem', in Trübsal und Gefahren,
Ein frommes Herz im Busen zu bewahren.

and conducted under the watchful eye of Isaak Müller. Many unsung people participated. Apparently Jacob Fehr, who lived on the present Isaac Braun yard, finished church logs to required specifications for many farmers. These farmers hauled the logs from the forest and brought them to Mr. Fehr for the finer work. It is altogether possible that Abraham Dyck, who arrived in Reinland in the summer of 1876, assisted in the finishing work. Abraham Dyck was a carpenter and many years later was to be foreman at the construction of the Eigenheim Mennonite Church in Saskatchewan.⁹

The day of rest and reward was to come. In a letter to the congregation Elder Johann Wiebe invited all to come and worship in the new *Bethaus* (House of Prayer) at a dedication service to be held on Sunday, September 17, 1876.¹⁰

The dedication service can be reconstructed without too much speculation.

Early on the morning of Sunday, September 17, horsedrawn vehicles and people on foot, some after travelling many miles, began arriving at the new church. A feeling of expectancy pervaded the growing crowd gathering at the door. Then a hush fell upon the congregation as Elder Johann Wiebe, the ministers and deacons and the *Vorsänger* (choristers, who led congregational singing) made their way to the steps of the door. The *Vorsänger* announced the song, "Walt's Gott, in Jesu Christi Namen", No. 89 in the *Altes Gesangbuch* (old Mennonite hymnary).¹¹ The congregation took up the lines until the swelling notes filled the air. The first and second verses were sung, then the third:

Schliess' auf, Jerusalem, die Thore
und lass dein Volk zum Tempel ein,
damit wir singen in dem Chore,
denn dieser Ort soll heilig sein.
Ach, höret! hier ist Gottes Haus,
d'rum zieht die Sündenschuhe aus.

As the singing of the third verse began, Elder Johann Wiebe opened the door of the pioneer sanctuary and then entered. Following him into the aisle were the aging Rev. Jacob Wiens, Rev. Gerhard Paetkau, Rev. Abraham Wiebe, Rev. Johann Friesen, Rev. Cornelius Peters, then the deacons, Peter Klassen and Johann Ens of Rosenort, and after them the *Vorsänger*. As the singing continued the whole congregation filed into the church. Elder Johann Wiebe then preached the dedicatory message. The congregation knelt for silent prayer. The elder spoke the blessing. The feeling of gratitude and rejoicing was real. It was "the day which the Lord has made" that crowned the toil and sweat of the frontier.

Today the building which was dedicated on that September Sunday still stands. No scaffolding holds up its walls because the walls are

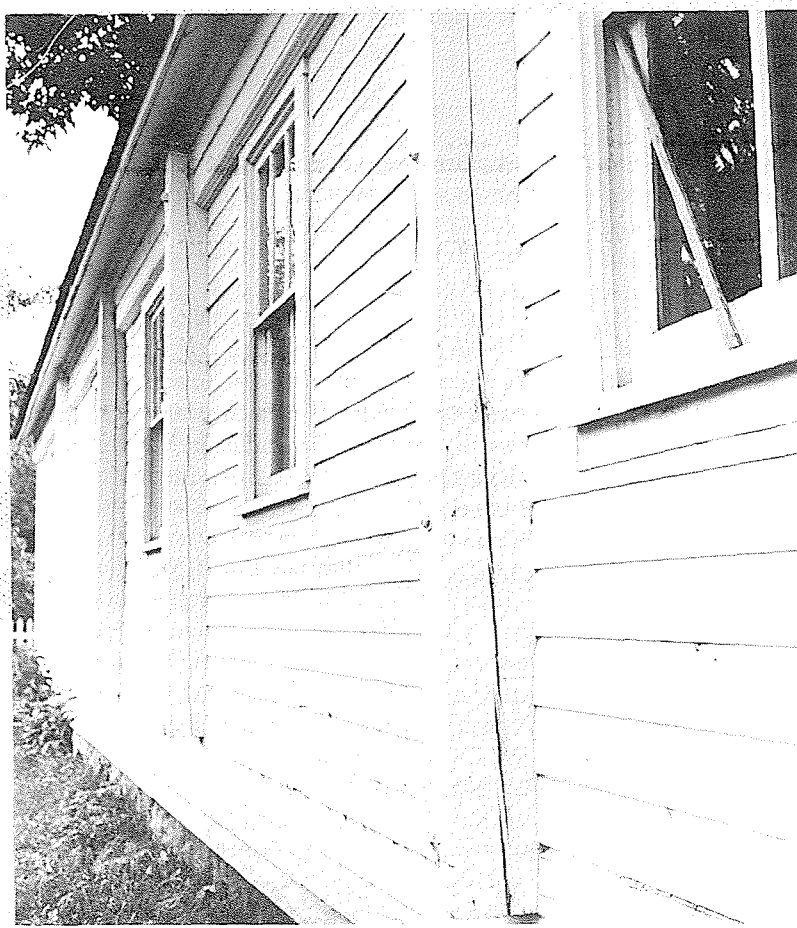


Photo courtesy Harold Funk.

Beams holding the log wall of the church together.

f solid oak. The first roof was probably thatched and the shingled roof added several years later.

Tribute is due to the pioneers who even in the rigours of the first winter and spring in a new and harsh country planned and completed a house of worship. The fact that the building was begun by the earliest arrivals — West Reserve settlers still arrived in force in 1877 — makes the feat all the more remarkable. The church building served the Reinländer Mennonite Church until approximately 1925. It continued to serve the Blumenorter Mennonite Church from 1926 to 1968.

Early Tensions in the Reinländer Church

Hymn tunes proved to be one of the first difficult issues to face the congregation. The old tunes, sung for many decades in the Russian Mennonite congregations, had been abandoned in the *Alte Kolonie* and in most other colonies not too many years before the migration. The upplanting of the old tunes by the new in the churches of Chortitza and Urwalde was still painfully remembered by some of the immigrants.¹² Many of the young generation had no knowledge of the old hymn tunes,

having been exposed only to the newer melodies. The number of church members, however, for whom the beginning of a reformed church in America also meant a return to the old mode of singing, was strong.

Elder Johann Wiebe seems to have supported the reintroduction of the old tunes quite strongly. In a letter dated January 12, 1876, Elder Wiebe relates that he and Rev. Jacob Wiens have visited all the villages and held consultations with the brethren concerning the manner of singing. The result of these meetings has been a decision to return to the old melodies. Elder Wiebe seems to anticipate difficulty in switching over to the older tunes but urges strongly that the change be carried out immediately both in the worship services and in the schools.¹³

Among a considerable number of people who would have been happy to maintain the status quo in both the worship service and in the prevailing social order, there was a strong current of unwillingness to turn back the clock. Conflict seemed inevitable. Hymn tunes were but one issue, large though it loomed in the early years. Schools were another and there was concern on the part of some individuals that the schools were regressing, not just in that the old hymn tunes were to be taught to the exclusion of all other melodies, but in general proficiency. There was uneasiness, too, about the use of the ban as a means of discipline. This was, as Elder Wiebe implied, new to many. In the West Reserve as a whole the issues were compounded by the Bergthaler who began coming across from the East Reserve in the late seventies. Elder Wiebe also cited the old problem — that the people in the congregation came from different places in Russia and that resultant differences had to be overcome.

The Brotherhood Meeting of October 5, 1880

A large degree of organization existed in the Reinländer Church by 1880. In Elder Johann Wiebe's mind there was no doubt that only one colony administration and only one church served the villages of the West Reserve. And the two were inseparable. This was the decision that had been made at the Dufferin immigration houses in the summer of 1875. He showed deep concern about unity in that one body, consisting as it did of members of somewhat different traditions and persuasions. He was at the same time totally convinced of the rightness of the course that the *Lehrdienst* (clergy) was pursuing. He saw this course as God's will and hence, could not tolerate deviations. But continually the church was facing challenges to this course — this challenge, even though it was broad, found its specific expression in its opposition to the old hymn tunes. Two intransigent positions were developing. Up to September, 1880, efforts to resolve the problem at the brotherhood level had been unsuccessful.

On September 18, 1880, the elder sent one more letter out to the villages, an urgent letter, calling for another meeting to be held in the

Reinland church on Tuesday, October 5. All brethren were requested to attend. "For, my beloved brethren, as things now stand in our church, our church cannot endure, for 'every kingdom divided against itself shall not stand' says Jesus himself in Matthew 12." He goes on, "Therefore, beloved brethren, because we have one baptism and one confession of faith, and yet are not of one mind, who have been brought together here from many places through the merciful help of God, who did not know each other, who still do not all know each other and yet have all joined our church . . . I say again, let us reason together in a Christian manner and see whether we cannot become of one mind." After a strong plea to church members to stay with the church, he adds, "My fellow ministers and I have agreed that all brethren who have joined our church and who wish to remain one mind with the church and to strive to live, to deal and to walk according to the Gospel, in love and this will not be too much to ask or to demand of a . . . God-seeking member, if it should become necessary), should, one after another testify of their faithfulness and love towards God and the church." Elder Wiebe asks that the announcement go out to all families and admonishes the women, too, to pray.¹⁴

The issue was clear. All families had to make a decision to stay in the church or to leave it. And all knew that staying in it meant conforming to the teaching of the *Lehrdienst* and that this extended to the singing of hymns, to adherence to the church school, to obedience to the colony administration.

At the brotherhood meeting it was decided that all church members who wished to remain with the church should register anew with the Elder. Many registered. Quite a few did not.¹⁵ The decision of that brotherhood meeting largely determined the course of the Reinländer Mennonite Church for its half century of existence in Manitoba and for its daughter churches at Saskatoon and Swift Current. Its effects live on in succeeding churches of Mexico, Belize and Bolivia today.

Reinländer Mennonite Church: The Name

The name Reinländer Mennonite Church is used in this book because that was the official name of the church. It never called itself Old Colony Church in its records. Even before the construction of the house of worship in the village, Elder Johann Wiebe began signing his letters, "Johann Wiebe, Ältester der Gemeinde zu Reinland." The church seal had the inscription: *Kirchensiegel der Reinlaender Mennoniten Gemeinde zu Reinland* (Church seal of the Reinlaender Mennonite congregation at Reinland).

Several other names appeared and some persisted. It has been said that in the very early days of settlement the Church was referred to as *die Gemeinde zu Michaelsburg*. If that is true, Elder Wiebe probably lived in the village of Michaelsburg when still in Fürstenland, Russia.

Sometimes the Church was called the Fürstenländer Church even though many of its members were not from Fürstenland. Another early name was "Rosengarter Gemeinde" because Elder Wiebe lived in Rosengart. The name Old Colony probably came into use more and more after 1880 to differentiate the church from the Bergthaler groups including the later Sommerfelder.

Most members of the Reinländer Church came from the Old Colony (Chortitza) or its daughter colony, Fürstenland. But most Bergthaler Church members in Reinland were also from the Old Colony and that included those who later became Sommerfelder or Rudnerweider Church members.

After the majority of the Reinländer Church membership migrated to Mexico, a remaining minority of its membership was reorganized under the leadership of Elder Jacob Froese of Reinfeld in the 1930s. This reorganized church officially became the Old Colony Mennonite Church. It had some members in Reinland but no church building in the village. Its houses of worship were located in Chortitz, Reinfeld, Rosenort and Blumenfeld.

Ministry of Reinländer Mennonite Church — 1888¹⁶

Elder Johann Wiebe and the first five ministers listed in the table (right) were elected in Russia, the last four in Manitoba. The names of the deacons are not given in the 1888 source. However, Peter Klassen and Johann Ens were deacons at the time of the Reinland church dedication in 1876.

Rev. Jacob Wiens, though still listed as a minister was no longer active in 1888 for reasons of old-age. Rev. Abraham Wiebe was the brother of Elder Johann Wiebe.

Name	Place of Residence
Elder Johann Wiebe	Rosengart
Rev. Jacob Wiens	Reinland
Rev. Abraham Wiebe	Hochfeld
Rev. Gerhard Paetkau	Schanzenfeld
Rev. Cornelius Peters	Rosenort
Rev. Johann Friesen	Neuenburg
Rev. Jacob Friesen	Neuenburg
Rev. Peter Harms	Reinland
Rev. Peter Klassen	Blumenfeld
Rev. Franz Dyck	Blumenort

Portrait of an Elder

Much of Elder Johann Wiebe's work has received fairly detailed attention in this account. His impact on Reinland village history and West Reserve development and the continued influence of his teaching on thousands of Mennonites to this day, especially in Latin America warrants this more than passing attention.

Johann Wiebe was born in the Chortitza Colony in Russia on March 23, 1837. He was baptized by Elder Gerhard Dyck, who also officiated at his election and ordination to the ministry in 1865 and to the Fürstenland eldership in 1870. He was thirty-eight years old when he came to America with his family. The Wiebes moved to Rosengart and

settled at the south end of the village and east side of the street on the yard now occupied by the William Spensts.

As a man of uncompromising principle Elder Wiebe had many opponents as well as strong supporters. He did not make snap decisions on major issues (e.g. emigration from Russia or the October 5, 1880, meeting, which was preceded by several years of conflict) but once he had made these decisions he was unbending in their execution regardless of consequences. A newspaper article of the 1890s, by a Mennonite not of Wiebe's persuasion, comments on Wiebe's reputation for personal openness and for sacrificing himself for his congregation.¹⁷

After the church and colony turbulence of the early years, Wiebe's eldership entered calmer waters. He lived to see the *Brottschuld* paid in full. He also saw the land problems of the second generation which resulted in the founding of daughter colonies in Saskatchewan.

When Elder Wiebe passed away on February 21, 1906,¹⁸ there was one person outside of the Mennonite community who sensed something of the stature of this man. Wilhelm Hespeler, who had contacted the Russian Mennonites on behalf of the Canadian government before the migration, had continued his involvement with the settlers during and after the founding of the colony. Hespeler sent the following message of condolence to Jacob Wiebe, Rosengart, the elder's son:

With sadness of heart I received the painful news that your father, who was so close to me, had gone to his Creator. Please accept my deepest sympathy and also express my condolences to the church he left behind on its irreplaceable loss. He was a faithful shepherd and spent his energy, indeed, his whole life for the welfare of his flock and as its example. I will always remember him as a personal friend and as the father of the Reinländer Mennonite Church. I also express my sympathy to his own family and to those who lent assistance and support in his good works and I hope that his good spirit will remain an example to them. I thank you for informing me on the death of my unforgettable, faithful friend and with a heartfelt greeting to you and the family, I remain your faithful friend,

William Hespeler, Winnipeg,
Manitoba¹⁹

Rev. Jacob Wiens

Rev. Jacob Wiens was born in Rosenort, Prussia, in 1807.²⁰ He moved to Kronsthal, Russia, as a farmer, sometime before 1843.²¹ In 1843 he was elected to the ministry of the Chortitzer Mennonite Church,²² in which he served until his migration to Canada in 1875. During the journey he preached a sermon to the emigrants at Hamburg, Germany.²³ Rev. Wiens continued to serve in the ministry of the Reinländer Mennonite Church where he was an associate of Elder Johann Wiebe.²⁴ Rev. Wiens passed away in 1889. His funeral was

Ein Gedicht vom Herrn Hespeler am Ältesten Johan Wiebe Rosengart.

(Ihm zur Verehrung geschrieben.)
Aus diesem Kupferblatt
Kannst du mein Leser sehen
Von was für Angeficht
Der Menno sei gewesen
Sofern du aber willst
Sein's Geistes Gaben sehen
So mußt du ungetäuscht
In seinen Schriften gehen.
Da wirst du Zweifelfrei
Den Finger Gottes merken
Der diesen werten Mann
An Geist hat wollen stärken
Und kräftig heizustehn
Er war ein treuer Knecht
Im Werke seines Herrn
Und lebte schlecht und recht. Amen.

Der Hespeler hat viel für die Mennoniten getan, und ist unsern Ältesten sehr behilflich gewesen wo er nur gekonnt. Wer dieses Buch lesen tut der merke darauf.

Copy of a poem dedicated to Elder Johann Wiebe by William Hespeler. It is printed in Die Auswanderung von Russland nach Kanada, a booklet published in Mexico in 1972. The note at the bottom has been added by the editor.

reported in the *Mennonitische Rundschau* as follows:

A solemn funeral was held in Reinland on Tuesday, September 24. The aged and beloved minister Jacob Wiens was carried to his final resting place. Almost 200 persons were present at the service. The funeral procession that followed him to the gravesite was probably the largest that has ever been seen here. The deceased reached an age of over 82 and because of aging he was relieved of his pulpit duties several years ago. He has served in the ministry for approximately 45 years.²⁵

A long ministerial career in the Old World and the New World had come to an end. On countless occasions he had preached to the Osterwick congregation and in other churches of the *Alte-Kolonie* and in the Reinland church and sister congregations in Manitoba.

His son, Rev. Jacob Wiens of Reinland, later went to Hague-Osler at the request of Elder Johann Wiebe.²⁶ He served the Reinländer congregations in that area of Saskatchewan as elder and joined the migration to Mexico in the 1920s.

Various Church Notes

The following interesting note on the church in Reinland appeared in the *Herald of Truth*, Elkhart, Indiana, in July, 1879:

Baptism — On Whit-Sunday there were seventy persons received into church by baptism, in the Russian Mennonite Church in Rheinland near Pembina, Manitoba. There seems to be a prosperous condition of things in this church and we trust the Lord may be with them and continue to prosper them, and bring yet many more into the fold of Christ through their influence.²⁷

It is known that persons walked all the way from Schoenfeld, north-west of Winkler, to Reinland, a distance of some fifteen miles, to participate in baptismal instruction services.²⁸ These young people reached Hochfeld at dawn, eventually arrived in Reinland, where they washed their feet after the long journey, and went to church.

The Reinländer Church had an unusual experience in 1880 and 1881, an experience that was much appreciated by Elder Wiebe and church members. Rev. Isaak de Veer, minister from Schönhorst, Chor-titza, came to Manitoba for a visit. From August 11, 1880, when he arrived in Emerson, to August 21, 1881, when he departed, he visited all the villages, saw relatives and friends, helped his children in Blumenhof in seed-time and harvest and assisted his son Jacob in building a house. He was delighted when his cousin Wilhelm Niessen took him on a full day's sight-seeing tour of the Pembina Hills. De Veer called on Elder Wiebe and Isaak Müller and preached in the services of the Reinländer Church. After a full year of activity in the colony de Veer returned to Russia. Elder Wiebe invited him to preach a farewell sermon in the church in Reinland but de Veer declined saying that he would find it too hard to bid farewell.²⁹

Services in many villages were held in school houses on occasion and in earlier days this was probably done on a fairly regular basis in some villages. Eventually more and more churches were built. By around 1900 there were houses of worship in Reinland, Chortitz, Rosenort, Grünthal, Hamburg and Blumengart.

Elder Peter Wiebe, Rosengart, who became the second elder of the Reinländer Mennonite Church, was the son of Elder Johann Wiebe. His tenure, 1906-1913, was a period of relative calm. The conflicts of the pioneer years were largely over, the church had been established, there was general prosperity and the war had not yet come. Peter Wiebe was a conservative elder and seems to have held a pro-status quo position. Wiebe was a strong supporter of church schools. He passed away suddenly in 1913.³⁰

Elder Johann Friesen, Neuenburg, then succeeded to the eldership and held the position until his death in Mexico in 1935.³¹ He led the church through the storms of war, the school controversy and the migration.

The Reinländer Church and the School Controversy

Why did the school controversy, which followed a series of Manitoba legislative acts in 1916, become an especially loaded issue for the members of the Reinländer Mennonite Church? Why were they willing to face fines and imprisonment and finally to leave their prosperous farms and migrate to a region that was strange and alien to them?

For the past several decades these people have been at the receiving end of severe criticism. They have been labelled stubborn, ignorant, uncultured, stupid and worse by many who stayed behind when the exodus to Mexico occurred.

Before making overly drastic judgments it will be necessary to examine briefly some of the background story.

Throughout their sojourn in Prussia and Russia the Mennonites had fostered schools. In an age when illiteracy was general among the lower classes of Europe, the ability to read the Bible was regarded as an essential skill by these people who believed that every individual was personally responsible to God. These schools were often quite primitive, especially in pioneering times. This was true during the first half century in Russia. It was certainly true in the first half century in Canada, though one must add that this condition on the pioneer prairies was not restricted to the Mennonites.

The Mennonites established schools immediately upon arrival in Manitoba. Elder Johann Wiebe wrote about school instruction in the first winter after arrival.³² The Reinland Mennonite Colony made the construction of schools compulsory in all the villages. *Obervorsteher* Isaak Müller, not always noted for mildness of language, told the *Schulzen* in the fall of 1876 "the *Schulzen* are to see to it that there is a

school in every village by November 12 and that instruction is carried out according to the old method as agreed upon by the *Lehrdienst*. I ask the *Schulzen* to make sure that all is in order because we will come and check.”³³

The school was, however, regarded as the “nursery of Christianity.”³⁴ The education of children was regarded as the responsibility of the family and church. To have the young educated by the state, which certainly had its own reasons for wanting to educate children, was unthinkable. It would have been a denial of the Anabaptist principle of church-state separation. It is in this light that the fear felt by the Reinländer Mennonite Church from 1916 onward must be viewed.

The nationalism of World War I, which produced the Manitoba school legislation of 1916, was the climax of pro-British sentiments that had been building up for the last few decades. Mass migration from continental Europe alarmed elements of British origin who by 1916 formed only 58% of the Manitoba population (the percentage was to drop even farther).³⁵ Anti-French and anti-Ukrainian as well as anti-German feelings were running high. There was an imperative “to make one hundred per cent Canadians”³⁶ of these people as rapidly as possible. Years later Elder Isaak M. Dyck of Mexico, who was a young minister of the Reinländer Mennonite Church at the time of the exodus, was to sum up the Church’s views eloquently,

“Die Grundlage und das Fundament zu den Schulen war mit dem Titel bestätigt: Ein König, ein Gott, eine Flotte, eine Flagge, ein allbritisches Reich.”³⁷ (The rationale for the public schools was expressed with the following slogan: one king, one God, one navy, one flag, one all-British empire.)³⁸

When an inspector visited Elder Johann Friesen of Neuenburg (Elder Friesen led the Reinländer Mennonite Church during the school crisis), and asked him whether the English language was not of God just as well as the German language and whether the English Bible was not God’s word as well as the German Bible, the elder answered, “The language is not the issue. But it is unthinkable for us to have our children educated under the flag, and with militaristic implications to become citizens of this world.”³⁹

The Mennonite attitude to the flag, which became an intense issue in many districts after Roblin’s flag legislation of 1906 and which became an issue in the villages of the Reinländer Church during and after World War I, should be understood in terms of historical background. Loyalty and patriotism were two very different concepts. Loyalty, reverence for the King and for those in authority, and loyalty as an act of obedience — these were concepts that Mennonites had understood in the days of Frederick the Great in Prussia, and under the Czars in Russia. There was a deep attachment to Queen Victoria — she was the symbol of the *Privilegium* — the Canadian Mennonite Magna

Carta. There is considerable evidence to indicate that one of the reasons that many Mennonites emigrated to Canada rather than to the United States was the fact that Canada was under the British monarchy and not a republic. The East Reserve Elder Gerhard Wiebe in later telling of the return of the 1873 Mennonite delegation from Canada and the United States to Russia stated, "So now the church could choose, but it chose Canada, because it was under the protection of the Queen of England, and we believed, that we could retain our freedom from bearing arms longer there, and also that we could have church and school under our administration."⁴⁰ Prayers for the monarch were a regular part of the worship service in the pioneer Mennonite church. Loyalty was considered a high priority but patriotism was an attachment to this world and the flag was a symbol of patriotism associated with war. To fly the flag of the nation over the school, this "nursery of Christianity," was as contradictory to Anabaptist principles as the introduction of the flag into the church would be considered in most Mennonite congregations today. When Elder Johann Friesen asked the inspector whether the flag that was hoisted at the school did not have the same implications as the flag that was raised on the field of battle, this was to Friesen a perfectly relevant question. And the inspector's affirmative answer was just as logical.⁴¹

Were these people opposed to school attendance when they refused to send their children to the public schools? School attendance was compulsory in the villages of the Reinland Mennonite Colony decades before the Manitoba government made it so through its Public Schools Attendance Act of 1916.

Were these people opposed to quality education? The private school had its own definition of quality. It sought to prepare the child, both spiritually and socially, for life within the village environs, its present and its future home. It sought to pass on to the child values of that society and to equip it with the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic which it would need. Perhaps it is fair to say that the village private school had a greater interest in the actual welfare of the child than did the government of the day.

Were these people opposed to a certain kind of education? There was a constant fear of "hohe Gelehrsamkeit" (higher education) and what it would do to succeeding generations.⁴² There was apprehension that state support and state control of schools would mean that their children would abandon the agricultural life and go to the towns and cities. They would then also abandon their simplicity and become conformed to the world. They would lose their Anabaptist heritage and become materialistic and militaristic.

It is unfortunate that the exhaustion of the cultural heritage brought from Russia eventually resulted in a certain stagnation in the schools. It is unfortunate that the early pioneer schools of Russia and Canada became models to be uncreatively perpetuated (a situation that

might yet have corrected itself). But it is also unfortunate that unnecessarily intransigent school legislation forced the migration of several thousand people of uncompromising principle who, had they stayed, could have made an immeasurable contribution not only to the Mennonite community but to the province of Manitoba.

The Migration to Mexico

The Reinländer Mennonite Church era on the West Reserve ended with the migration to Mexico in the early 1920s. Religious terms alone do not explain the migration, for religious, economic and social threads were intertwined in the fabric that constituted the Reinland Mennonite Colony and the Reinländer Mennonite Church.

Chronic land shortages, a problem on both Russian and Canadian Mennonite settlements, were especially acute in those villages that formed the core of the Reinland Mennonite Colony. Two daughter colonies, one at Hague-Osler, near Saskatoon, and the other at Swift Current had already been founded. Especially vexing was the fragmentation developing in both the West Reserve and the daughter colonies as a result of the ever-deepening inroads made by the Bergthaler and the Sommerfelder. Not only were there land shortages but the possibility of maintaining a compact Reinländer agricultural settlement was becoming more and more difficult. Preserving the village economic pattern based on the open field system and social controls, both of which the *Altkolonier* considered essential to their way of life, was becoming increasingly hard.

The challenge to the authority of the Reinland Mennonite Colony leadership in both municipal and school affairs has already been discussed. Only a new settlement, protected by a new *Privilegium*, seemed to promise the return of the lost commonwealth.

Probably the most incomprehensible situation for the *Altkolonier* was the collaboration of the more liberal Mennonites with the Canadian host society. Why did the Bergthaler and the Sommerfelder cooperate with the municipalities? Why did they help to form school districts in so many places? Were they not clearly undermining the existing structures? These were questions that they asked.

Migration as a great gathering of the faithful, a reunion of the scattered remnants who wanted to remain true to the ways of the fathers, in a new compact settlement seemed to be the desired and logical answer.⁴³

The initial decision to migrate was made at a brotherhood meeting at Neuanlage (Hague-Osler settlement), Saskatchewan, on July 8 1919.⁴⁴ A week later, on July 15, meetings were held in the church at Reinland and in the Swift Current settlement.⁴⁵ Six delegates, two from each settlement, were chosen to seek suitable land and the desired *Privilegium* guaranteeing freedoms of religion, conduct of schools and colony administration. On August 4, 1919, the delegation consisting of

Rev. Johann P. Wall and Rev. Johann Wall of Hague-Osler, Kornelius Rempel and Klaas Heide of Manitoba and Rev. Julius Wiebe and David Rempel of Swift Current, departed on an extended tour of South America.⁴⁶ Rev. Johann Wall passed away in Curitiba, Brazil.⁴⁷

After unsuccessful negotiations and settlement offers involving Brazil, Argentina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama and Quebec, a decision to migrate to Mexico was finally made at a conference in the Reinland church on May 19, 1921.⁴⁸ Great interest in the brotherhood meeting was in evidence. At six in the morning the church was packed and many could find no room. Under the chairmanship of Elder Johann Friesen, the brotherhood decided to purchase 200,000 acres of land in Mexico.⁴⁹ A further decision to sell its Manitoba lands en bloc and at one single price per acre, including buildings, ran into difficulties and was never carried through.⁵⁰

Departure from Haskett

The first train departed from Plum Coulee on March 1, 1922.⁵¹ The second train left from Haskett on the following day.⁵² Neuhorst school teacher Jacob Peters (who taught in Reinland from 1916-1921) gave his pupils a holiday and left for Haskett early in the morning to be present at the occasion.

Thursday, March 2, 1922, was a beautiful, clear day. The train, according to Peters' diary entry made on the same day, was scheduled to depart at 11 a.m. Before departure time hundreds of people gathered around the station and hundreds of farewells were said. The locomotive was shunting railway cars, which had been loaded on the previous day, and animated conversations and quiet weeping were punctuated by the loud rumbling of coupling boxcars. Finally all twenty-seven freight cars and three passenger cars had been connected in proper order. Then — a delay and tensions mounted. A certain Mrs. Rempel was still missing. At 11:20 a.m. all were ready, the signal was given and slowly the train pulled out of the little town of Haskett and headed southwards towards the United States border and Walhalla.

Rev. Isaak M. Dyck of Blumenfeld, who later became elder of the church in Mexico, was then a thirty-three year old minister. Years later he recalled the occasion.⁵³ Before the loading of the boxcars (probably on the day before departure) the Blumenfeld people met for the farewell service in their school. After the train departed from Haskett, Rev. Dyck stood at the window directing his gaze towards Blumenfeld and towards the house, yard and land that was left behind. When Blumenfeld disappeared from view he turned towards Rosengart. Finally the last of the villages melted from sight.

This was the beginning of the great migration that involved several thousand people of the Reinländer Mennonite Church in the years 1922-1925. Only forty-seven years earlier some of the same people who

O! Vaterhaus, du Wiegenstätte,
Du Schule und du Gotteshaus,
Wo wir versammelt zum Gebete
So oft gewesen es ist aus
Die Zeit die wechselt auf und ab,
Dies Leben ist ein Wanderstab.
Geleite Jesu unsre Schritte
In dieser Welt in dieser Zeit
Bis wir in heiliger selger Mitte
Bei dir einst stehn in Ewigkeit
Dann ist die Wanderzeit erst aus
Wenn wir getehrt ins Vaterhaus.

The poem quoted here is an eloquent expression of the recurring theme of Reinländer Mennonite Church history for the past century.

In 1922 the trek of several thousand Canadian Mennonites to Mexico began. The photo was taken at the Haskett station during those turbulent years.



were aboard that Haskett train had entered Manitoba at Emerson by Red River steamer.

The effects of the migration were felt in the West Reserve villages immediately. Twenty-one Eichenfeld families departed from Haskett in 1922. It was the village's death knell. Twenty-five Rosengart families, including the Rev. Franz Loewen family, are listed among the emigrants of that year. Rosengart has not yet fully recovered. Nine Schoenwiese families left that first year. From Reinland only Abram Friesens and the widow Jacob Bergen were among the early emigrants.⁵⁴ Heavy migration from Reinland came in the following years.

Reinland, Cuauhtemoc

The great majority of the members of the Reinländer Mennonite Church living in Reinland, Manitoba, moved to Mexico. Most of these Reinland emigrants participated in the founding of the village of Reinland, Cuauhtemoc, Chihuahua, Mexico. A comparison of the Reinland, Manitoba, village records of 1922 and the Reinland, Mexico records of 1927 shows a marked similarity. Eighteen family names appear in both village books. These include Franz F. Froese, Johann Froese, Peter P. Harms, Peter Harms Jr., Abram Rempel, Peter Friesen, Franz Dyck, Peter Wieler, Johann F. Peters, Cornelius Friesen, Jacob Letkeman, Jacob F. Froese, Franz Peters, Peter A. Zacharias, Wilhelm Peters, Wilhelm W. Peters, Peter Froese, and Isaak I. Dyck.⁵⁵ Apparently Jakob Wielers and Diedrich Wieler moved to the village of Rosenfeld in Mexico.⁵⁶

Most of the people who moved from Reinland, Manitoba, to Mexico as adults have now passed away. But on March 30, 1975, four of those who were married in Canada were still living. These were Deacon Peter Harms and his wife, still living in Reinland, Mexico, Mrs. Franz Dyck, widow, living in Bolivia, and Mr. Johann Neufeld, not mentioned in the 1922 records but who lived in Reinland at one time.⁵⁷

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Sommerfelder Mennonite Church

The Sommerfelder Mennonite Church in Reinland has had a continuous history for ninety years. The congregation did not always bear that name. The church had its roots in the Bergthaler Church in Reinland that developed in the 1880s. Since that time the congregation has survived the schisms of 1892, 1936, and 1958 and two migrations to South America.

Bergthaler Origins in Reinland

By 1880 a large number of Bergthaler Mennonites had crossed the Red River to settle on the West Reserve. This influx created new tensions on the hitherto predominantly Chortitzer-Fürstenländer settlement.

The difference between the two groups was not only one of origin but also one of organization. The Rosenort and Reinland village books both indicate the existence of a highly organized West Reserve colony under the dynamic leadership of Isaak Müller. Under the ecclesiastical guidance of Elder Johann Wiebe, the Reinländer Mennonite Church, though wrestling with internal problems, had from the first year of settlement been a rather clearly identifiable body. The Bergthaler who migrated from the East Reserve were beginning pioneer life anew without the benefit of an Isaak Müller or the direct supervision of their own *Oberschulze*, Jacob Peters. Some now settled in exclusively Bergthaler villages, some settled in predominantly Reinländer villages and submitted to the established order and some moved directly onto their homesteads. Many felt no allegiance to the authority of the West Reserve *Obervorsteher*. Conflict seemed inevitable.

Nominally, too, the Bergthaler settlers belonged to the Bergthaler Church of the East Reserve which in 1878 was registered as the Mennonite Church of Chortitz (and consequently came to be known as the Chortitzer Mennonite Church) and was headed by Elder Gerhard Wiebe. But Elder Wiebe lived in Chortitz, East Reserve, far away from the new settlers.

Photo courtesy Dennis Fast.

Winter view of Sommerfelder church in Reinland.



The Bergthaler who moved to the West Reserve displayed a spirit of independence that was to change the complexion of the Reserve within a decade. This change was to result in transformations in administration, in education, in agriculture and not least in West Reserve church structure. Innovative and progressive elements were to develop among the Bergthaler, who, removed from direct church and colony control, inhaled deeply the air of frontier freedom.

The Bergthaler migration from the East Reserve was to have an important bearing on Reinland village history, not because a significant number of the Bergthaler settled in Reinland, but because they were to provide an alternative for dissatisfied members of the Reinländer Mennonite Church. Reinland was settled almost exclusively by people from Chortitza and Fürstenland. The Bergthaler migration did not change this. But after the Bergthaler presence west of the river made itself felt and worship services were conducted on the West Reserve by Bergthaler ministers outside of the Reinländer houses of worship, an increasing awareness of the new alternative grew. This alternative became all the more significant in the light of the brotherhood meeting of October 5, 1880. Not all church members from Reinland and the surrounding villages responded to Elder Johann Wiebe's call to register anew in the Reinländer Church.

The Bergthaler alternative became more viable when several ministers had established themselves on the West Reserve and an elder had been elected. Rev. Johann Funk was ordained as elder of the West Reserve Bergthaler Church in 1882.¹ Rev. Heinrich Wiebe (brother of Elder Gerhard Wiebe), Rev. Abraham Bergen, Rev. Isaak Giesbrecht and Rev. Abraham Schroeder served as ministers.²

When the first Bergthaler worship services were held in Reinland is unclear. That church tensions existed in the West Reserve is much easier to establish. In two letters to *Die Rundschau* published in 1883 and 1884, Jacob Y. Schantz deploras the lack of unity among the Manitoba Mennonites. In the former letter he mentions singing specifically.³

An early sign that the crisis caused by the emergence of the Bergthaler church was affecting Reinland came from Peter and Heler Siemens, Mountain Lake, Minnesota, who wrote a report of their 1883 visit to friends and relatives in Reinland, Rosengart and other villages. During this time they participated in a worship service in the church in Reinland. The Siemens wrote:

The house of worship is built of oak timbers; I estimate that its length is not under 80 feet and its width not under 35 feet — anyway, the church is large but the listeners were few. It was cold and windy, to be sure, yet several vehicles were driving to worship service and yet drove past this church.⁴

A letter by Mr. Wilhelm Rempel dated August 16, 1886, definitely indicated the presence of the Bergthaler Church in Reinland, even

though no building had yet been erected by the group. He wrote about a Reinland wedding — the marriage of Jacob Peters, son of Johann Peters and Aganetha Neudorf. The marriage ceremony was performed by Rev. Peter Zacharias of Schoenwiese.⁵ Rev. Zacharias, the grandfather of Peter P. Zacharias, Winkler, was a minister of the Bergthaler Church.

Worship services may have been held in a private home or other building in Reinland, or in one of the neighboring villages at this time. Whatever the case, in the following year the group was ready to move in the direction of church construction.

A New Church Building

In 1887 the Bergthaler Mennonite Church built two new churches simultaneously, one in Hoffnungsfeld and the other in Reinland.⁶ The Reinland church was dedicated by Elder Johann Funk on April 7, 1887, the day before Good Friday. Among the people who attended the service was Mr. Wilhelm Rempel, who with Mr. Peter Abrams, seems to have been an early strong supporter of the new church.⁷ This support insured a progressive element in the early stages.

Hoffnungsfeld was the centre of much church activity at this time also. Rev. Wilhelm Harms, brother of Rev. Peter Harms, Reinland, was a minister in the Hoffnungsfeld congregation. On Easter Monday and Easter Tuesday Rev. Frank Sawatzky and Rev. Jacob Hoepfner, newly ordained ministers, preached their first sermons after ordination. On Easter Tuesday the new Hoffnungsfeld church was dedicated in a ceremony led by Elder Johann Funk.⁸ The Hoffnungsfeld presence in the Bergthaler Church was felt so strongly that people who joined the Bergthaler group were sometimes referred to as *Hoffnungsfelder*.⁹

Some factors that led to the establishment of the Bergthaler church in Reinland could be summarized as follows:

The old hymn tunes and use of the ban were creating intense conflict among members and former members of the Reinländer Mennonite Church. Some preferred not to register with the church when the new registration took place as a result of the October 5, 1880, brotherhood meeting.

The new Bergthaler Church accepted into its membership those who had been excommunicated by the Reinländer Mennonite Church for reasons of nonconformity with church policy.

Progressive-minded people like Wilhelm Rempel, Peter Abrams and Wilhelm Esau were unwilling to accept the strictures of the Reinländer Mennonite Church school.

There was a close identification between the Reinländer Mennonite Church and the Reinland Mennonite Colony administration. Any disagreement with the administration of the colony was automatically a disagreement with the church. Church discipline was used to enforce colony policy. The municipal conflict was therefore bound to



Former house of worship of Sommerfelder (originally Bergthaler) congregation in Reinland. It was built in 1887, enlarged in the 1920s, and used until 1966.



Rev. John B. Baer and his wife Jennie (Roberts).

be a church conflict. The Bergthaler Church became not only an alternative for those who disagreed with church policy, but also for those who could not conform to the handling of colony affairs.

By the end of 1887 the Bergthaler group built four churches at Edenburg, Rudnerweide, Hoffnungsfeld and Reinland. The new church group in Reinland was to play a role in the village for many years to come.

Visit of John B. Baer

On July 3, 1887, Rev. John B. Baer (1854-1939) visited the churches of southern Manitoba, including the new Bergthaler congregation in Reinland. Rev. Baer was born in Summerfield, Illinois, and in 1887 graduated from the Union Theological Seminary in New York. He had been to Alaska with S.S. Haury in 1879 in search for a General Conference mission field. One year before his Manitoba visit he had been ordained to the ministry. For 15 years he was to be the home mission and field secretary for the General Conference. Later he served as pastor in Bluffton, Ohio, and Aberdeen, Idaho.¹⁰

Just how Rev. Baer was received in the Reinland Church would be interesting to discover. The fact is that the doors were open to him. Peter Abrams was favourably impressed. "Yesterday", he told the *Mennonitische Rundschau*, "we had the honour to hear a preacher from Bucks County, Pennsylvania, by the name of J. B. Baer in our meeting house in Reinland. He preached a penetrating sermon on Matthew 13, about the tares and the wheat."¹¹

The visits of John B. Baer and other American evangelists to southern Manitoba in the 1880s strengthened the evangelical element within the Bergthaler Church and at the same time solidified a segment of opinion against American Mennonite church interference in Manitoba.

The Gretna School Crisis

A meeting regarding the improvement of education on the We Reserve was held in the Bergthal (Altbergthal) school on September 1, 1885.¹² The entire ministry of the Bergthaler Church was present. The following topics were discussed: the improvement of schools in general, teacher helps, the learning of English. No agreement was reached. It seemed impossible to rally the ministry and the church to provide the necessary moral backing for a strong program of educational improvement.

The shortage of qualified teachers grew. On November 23, 1888, a second meeting was held in Gretna. Here it was decided to found a Mennonite Educational Society to promote the construction of a new school. The lack of support from the Bergthaler Church as a whole necessitated the formation of a separate education society. A cor

mittee elected to draw up the constitution of the new organization consisted of David Peters, Erdman Penner, Franz Kliwer, Peter Abrams and Gerhard Rempel. At the following meeting held on December 1, 1888, and chaired by Wilhelm Rempel, this committee presented the new constitution for approval. The meeting also decided to construct a residential school in Gretna.

The new organization had the blessing of Elder Johann Funk, the leader of the Bergthaler Church. It did not have the support of most other ministers. The school issue combined with other issues to create a rift in the Bergthaler group that was to result in the emergence of the Sommerfelder Mennonite Church. The final cleavage came at a series of consecutive brotherhood meetings held in the churches at Edenburg, Rudnerweide, Schoenthal and Hoffnungsfeld in the spring months of 1892. Five ministers of the Bergthaler Church, Rev. Abraham Bergen, Rev. Isaac Bergen, Rev. Isaac Giesbrecht, Rev. Peter Zacharias and Rev. Abraham Schroeder walked out of the church followed by a large number of members.¹³ Eventually three-fourths of the membership withdrew from the church. Elder Johann Funk and about one-fourth of the membership were left to carry on the planned program.

Ministry of Bergthaler Mennonite Church — 1888

The ministry that served the West Reserve Bergthaler Church, including the Reinland congregation, was led by Elder Johann Funk. He was first elected to the ministry on the East Reserve. Funk was chosen Elder of the West Reserve on November 26, 1881,¹⁴ and was ordained to that position by Elder David Stoesz on Easter Day, 1882.¹⁵

Bergthaler Church Ministry — 1888¹⁶

Name	Year of Birth	Year elected to ministry	Place of Residence
Elder Johann Funk	1836	1877	Alt-Bergthal
Rev. Heinrich Wiebe	1839	1865	Edenburg
Rev. Abraham Bergen	1843	1869	Schoenthal
Rev. Isaac Giesbrecht	1847	1881	Neuhoffnung
Rev. Abraham Schroeder	1845	1881	Bergthal
Rev. Wilhelm Harms	1842	1883	Hoffnungsfeld
Rev. Peter Zacharias	1840	1885	Schoenwiese
Rev. Isaac Bergen	1854	1885	Lichtnau
Rev. Franz Sawatzky	1853	1887	Hoffnungsfeld
Rev. Jacob Hoepfner	1855	1887	Schanzenfeld
Deacon Jacob Hamm			Edenburg
Deacon Heinrich Bergen			Bergfeld

Rev. Heinrich Wiebe had been elected deacon in 1864, prior to his election to the ministry in 1865. Both of these events occurred in the Bergthal Colony in Russia. He was a member of the Russian Mennonite delegation to Canada in 1873 and the following year accompanied the first group of Bergthal settlers to come to Canada. Wiebe was one of the negotiators for the 1875 government loan.¹⁷

Rev. Franz Sawatzky had also been elected deacon in 1885 before entering the ministry.¹⁸

Brief Background to Bergthaler Rift, 1892

In 1875 Elder Johann Wiebe had seen the migration to Canada as a movement towards a truer realization of what the church had once been and should again become. As leader of the Reinländer Mennonite Church he had not lost that vision. This view found practical expression in the church's involvement in colony affairs. It found expression in strict church guardianship of the school curriculum in which *hohe Gelehrsamkeit* had no place. It found expression in outward forms such as the restoration of the old church melodies. A large number of Mennonites accepted Elder Wiebe's lead.

Many, however, who would have been happy to accept the status quo, were not willing to go backward. The ban had not been used as a means of social control in Russia at the time when they left, at least not in the manner that the Reinländer Mennonite Church employed it. The tunes compiled in the *Choralbuch* (book of choral melodies) by H. Franz had already been in use in Russia at least among the Alt-Kolonier and Fürstenländer. Many had no desire to return to the old times. These people simply wanted things to remain as they were. After 1880, a considerable number of them, who originally had joined the Reinländer Mennonite Church, joined the Bergthaler when that option presented itself.

Another group within the Bergthaler Church, consisting of Elder Johann Funk, Rev. Heinrich Wiebe, Rev. Franz Sawatzky and Rev. Jacob Hoeppner, and supported in Reinland by people like Wilhelm Rempel and Peter Abrams, was striving for progressive reforms. They were less rigid in their adherence to the old order of worship. They were more prepared for communication with other Mennonite bodies. But the dominant issue was the school issue. Both Bergthaler elements, the more conservative and the more progressive, were sincerely concerned about the education of their children. It was precisely because both were concerned that the final division came. The conservative group in the Bergthaler Church recognized the importance of schools but saw the new school planned for Gretna (an earlier plan to build it at Rudnerweide was rejected because of lack of church support) as a *threat* to the Mennonite heritage and faith. It feared the loss of the young generation. The progressive group saw the new school as *essential* to preserve the Mennonite heritage and faith. They, too, feared the loss of the young generation.

The Sommerfelder Church in Reinland

Name changes did not immediately result when the break occurred. Both groups continued to regard themselves as Bergthaler for several more years. After the division the congregations that had le

Elder Johann Funk's Bergthaler Church were temporarily served by Elder David Stoesz of the East Reserve. In 1893 two new ministers were elected — Peter Zacharias of Neu-Schoenwiese, near Plum Coulee, son of Rev. Peter Zacharias, Schoenwiese, and Abraham Doerksen. Both were ordained. Soon thereafter Rev. Abraham Doerksen was chosen to become the first elder of the new church. Since Elder Doerksen lived in the village of Sommerfeld the church gradually became known as the Sommerfelder Church. The name Sommerfelder Mennonite Church was officially adopted only in 1903.¹⁹

In Reinland this division within the Bergthaler Church was not nearly as traumatic as the earlier separation from the Reinländer Mennonite Church had been. Actually what happened in Reinland cannot really be described as a division. The strongest supporters of Elder Johann Funk had moved to Gretna and Winkler by 1892. The Bergthaler Church in Reinland became the Sommerfelder Church in Reinland. The trusteeship of the church building was transferred from Elder Johann Funk to Elder Abraham Doerksen on June 10, 1895.²⁰

As far as the form of worship was concerned the change from Bergthaler to Sommerfelder was a name change only. From its Bergthaler beginning the *Choralbuch* melodies were used. Its local minister, Rev. Peter Zacharias of Schoenwiese, continued to serve. All the ministers of the various Sommerfelder congregations were on a list and visited the different congregations, taking turns in preaching at the different locals. The same practice existed in the Reinländer Mennonite Church and in the Bergthaler Mennonite Church. The form of baptism and communion was also basically the same. All three churches used the catechism as a means of instructing youth preparing for baptism. It would be difficult to establish any doctrinal differences.

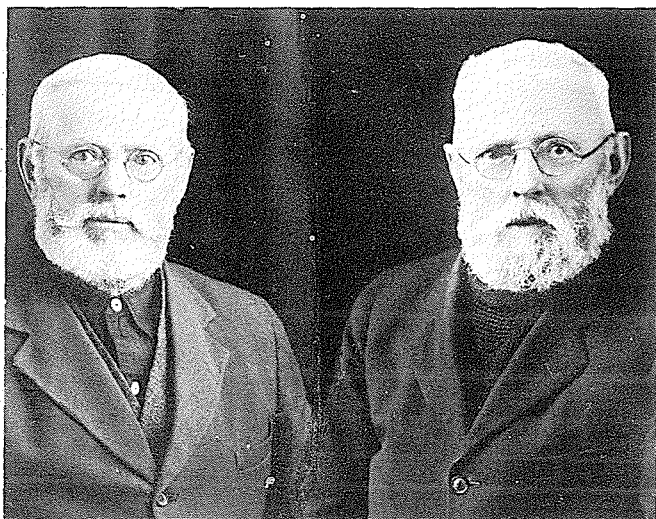
Elders of the Sommerfelder Mennonite Church²³

For the first few years after 1892 Elder David Stoesz, East Reserve, served the congregations of the new church as elder. In 1893 the churches elected their own elder. The following elders have served since that date.

Rev. Abraham Doerksen, Sommerfeld	1893-1922
Rev. Henry J. Friesen, Blumenthal	1922-1931
Rev. Peter A. Toews, Altona	1931-1951
Rev. Peter M. Friesen, Schanzenfeld	1951-1955
Rev. John A. Friesen, Lowe Farm	1955-

Leadership ability has been an outstanding characteristic of several Sommerfelder elders. Elder Abraham Doerksen was a strong organizer and charismatic leader. In the years following the 1892 church split, the

These twin brothers, sons of Reinland pioneers Johann and Aganetha Peters, were born in Reinland on June 27, 1877. Rev. Abram Peters, left, was elected to the ministry of the Sommerfelder Church in the Swift Current area of Saskatchewan and later became elder of the church at Vanderhoof, British Columbia. Peter J. Peters (right) was a long-time farmer in Reinland and served as Vorsänger in the Sommerfelder Church.



Sommerfelder led by Doerksen won over a great majority of the membership of the old church.²⁵ (The new group also got most of the church buildings and all of the church books, though not the church name.²⁶) Doerksen was to lead the body for thirty years.

Three elders, Henry J. Friesen, Peter A. Toews and Peter M. Friesen had municipal experience before entering the ministry. Peter M. Friesen served as councillor in Stanley Municipality. Both Henry J. Friesen and Peter A. Toews served as reeves of Rhineland for extended periods of time. Toews also served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Mennonite Educational Institute in Altona for some years prior to becoming elder. The involvement of Elder Doerksen with the conscription issue in World War I and the strong participation of Elder Toews in the Committee of Elders formed by several Mennonite bodies in World War II warrant further discussion in another context. Elder Toews is remembered best by many middle-aged and older Sommerfelder members for the leadership he gave to the church during the war. Many probably recall him most vividly as a visitor to the conscientious objector camps.

The fifth and present elder of the Sommerfelder Church is Rev. John A. Friesen of Lowe Farm. Elder Friesen was ordained by Elder Abram Buhler of Saskatchewan in the church at Rudnerweide in the spring of 1955 and has guided the Sommerfelder congregations through critical and smoother times for over twenty years. Elder Friesen is leading a large church body at a time when Mennonite congregations generally are besieged by a multitude of problems in a rapidly changing world. His approach towards a difficult task has been one of moderation.

Sommerfelder Church Developments

Education, which became a major issue for the Reinländer Church when the school legislation of 1916 was passed, also became a grave concern for many Sommerfelder members. At a series of brotherhood meetings held at Sommerfeld, Rudnerweide, Grossweide and Kronsweide on May 22, 24, 25, and 26, 1916, the Sommerfelder Church decided to return to private schools after participating in public schools in several districts.²⁷ The move proved to be temporary and most Sommerfelder districts had public schools a decade later. Elder Doerksen led a minority group of Sommerfelder families to Mexico in the 1920s rather than to comply with the public school.

In Sommerfelder education policy the Reinland congregation stood outside of the mainstream of events in the church at large. A minority in the village at the time, the Sommerfelder members sent their children to the Reinland village school conducted by the Reinländer Church. The same circumstances applied to Sommerfelder members who were part of the Reinland congregation but lived in Schoenwiese and Rosengart.

Taufelingen von Reinland 1927.

Peter Peters Sohn von Peter Peters Reinland
 Cornelius Lettkeman Geb: Jan 11 Novemb 1900 Johann Lettkeman Gaskett
 Anganetha Unger " " Heinrich Unger Neuenburg
 Maria Duesch " " Peter Duesch Blumenfeld
 Katharina Duesch " " " " " "
 Anna Friesen Geb: Jan 11 Januar 1908 " " Johann Friesen Blumenfeld
 Elisabeth Neufeld " " Jacob Neufeld Blumenfeld
 Peter Loecksen " " Gerhard Loecksen Reinthal
 Abram Wiebe Geb: 17 Juli 1906 " " Heinrich Wiebe Rosengart
 Anna Giesbrecht " " Peter Giesbrecht Schoenwiese
 Katharina Giesbrecht " " " " " "
 David Fehr " " Diedrich Fehr von Berg
 Johann Braun Geb: 26 Januar 1906 " " Jacob Braun Rosengart
 Helena Leiding " " Cornelius Martens Reinland
 Gerhard Hiebert Geb: Jan 9 Mai 1907 " " Abram Hiebert Hochfeld

Ministry of the Sommerfelder Mennonite Church April, 1903²¹

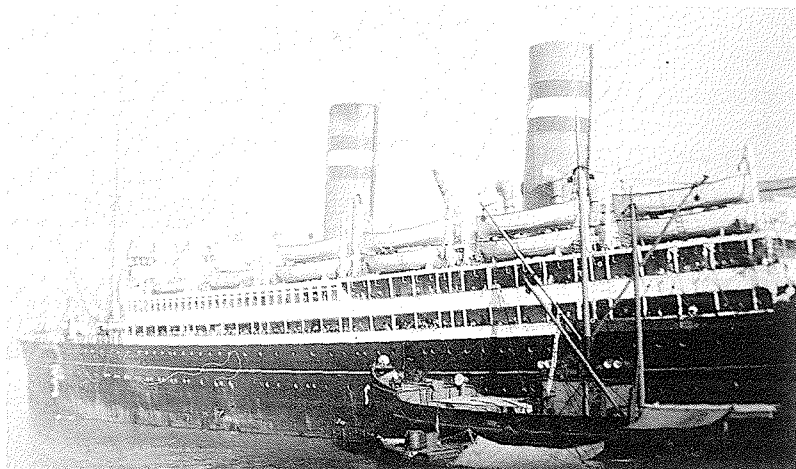
Elder Abraham Doerksen
 Rev. Abram Bergen
 Rev. Abraham Schroeder
 Rev. Peter Zacharias, Schoenwiese
 Rev. Isaac Bergen

Rev. Peter Zacharias, Neu-Schoenwiese
 Rev. Johann Klippenstein
 Rev. Peter Dyck
 Rev. Isaac Friesen
 Rev. Jacob Stoesz

List of baptismal candidates of the Sommerfelder congregation at Reinland, 1927. The list reflects the area served by the Reinland church.

Three emigration movements involved the Manitoba Sommerfelder Church. Following the move to Mexico a second migration began in 1926 and led to the establishment of the Menno Colony in Paraguay the following year. This migration was carried out jointly with the East Reserve Chortitzer. The third was the Sommerfelder-Chortitzer move to eastern Paraguay in 1948. None of the treks had a traumatic effect on the Reinland congregation in numerical terms. The strongest participation of the Reinland group was in the 1948 migration when some members from Reinland, Schoenwiese and Rosengart left

Migration to Paraguay in 1948. The Volendam sailed from Quebec.



Ministry of the Sommerfelder Mennonite Church, May, 1916²²

Elder Abraham Doerksen
 Rev. Peter Zacharias, Schoenwiese
 Rev. Isaak Bergen
 Rev. Peter Zacharias, Neu-Schoenwiese
 Rev. Peter Dyck
 Rev. Abraham Friesen

Rev. Jakob Schroeder
 Rev. Peter W. Dueck
 Rev. David Stoesz
 Rev. Wilhelm Friesen
 Rev. Jakob Stoesz

for South America. This migration, following the recent war experiences, sought a new home where education would again be in the hands of the church, and a new shelter where pressures from the society of the outside world could be controlled. But even in 1948, the great majority of Sommerfelder families in the Reinland congregation remained.

Crisis Times — The Reinländer Division

The Sommerfelder Church in Reinland had become a strong local body by the 1920s and 1930s serving a fairly large membership from Reinland, Schoenwiese, Rosengart, Haskett, Neuenburg and other areas. Several former Reinländer Church members who did not migrate to Mexico joined the Sommerfelder congregation. From 1931 to 1936 the local Sommerfelder minister was Rev. Peter S. Zacharias. In 1936 a portion of its members founded the Rudnerweider congregation in Reinland. Another chapter deals with this development in greater detail.

The formation of a new Reinländer Mennonite Church in 1951 resulted in the loss of some members by the Sommerfelder Church in the village of Reinland. The Reinländer group built a church building in Blumenfeld. Although the new organization never established a center

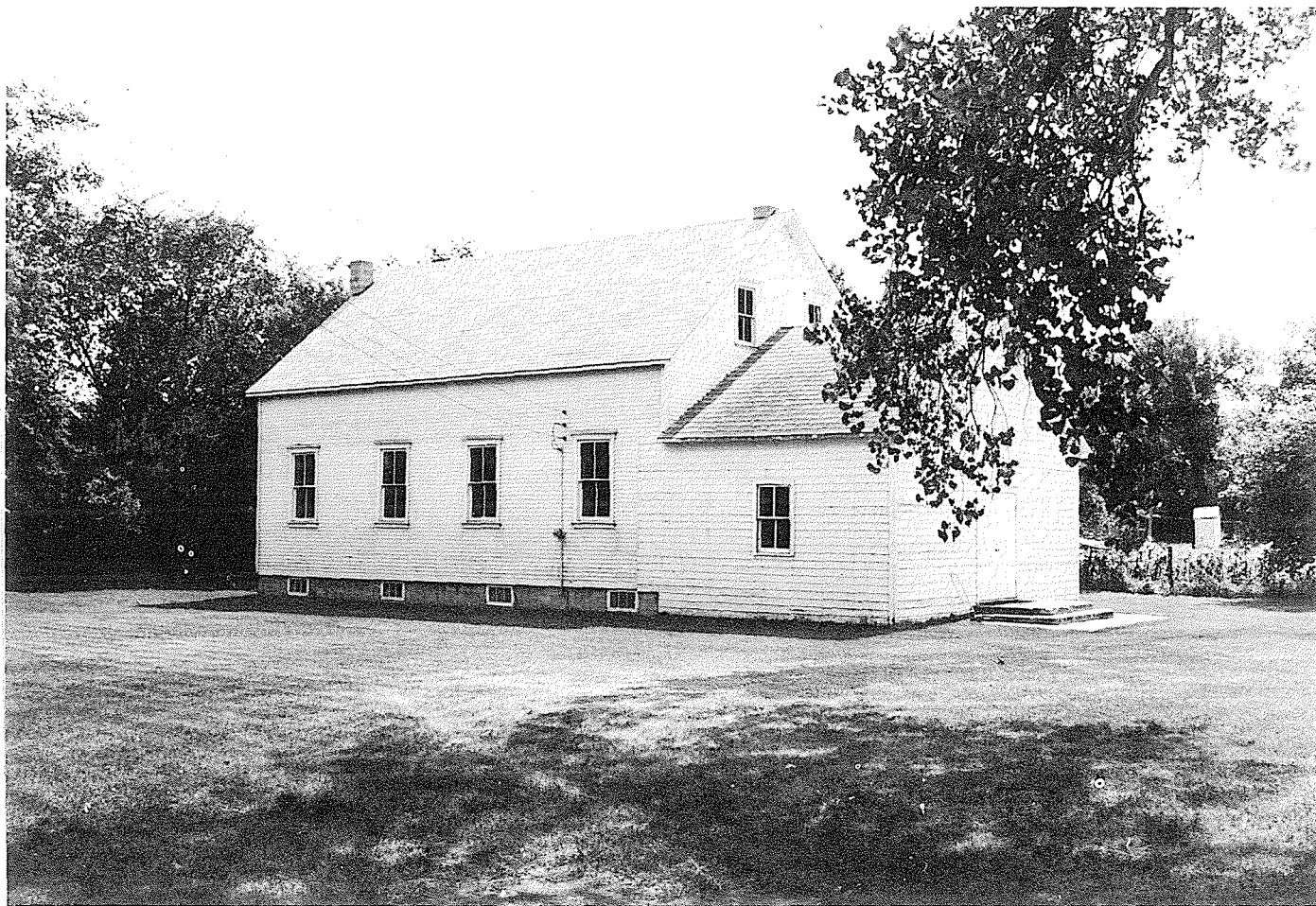


Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Sommerfelder church in Reinland.

of worship in the village of Reinland *and should not be confused with the Reinländer Mennonite Church of 1875-1925*, its choice of the name Reinland may be interpreted as a conscious identification with the past, with “die Gemeinde zu Reinland”, as Elder Johann Wiebe described his congregation, not only in his correspondence, but in the introduction he wrote to the publication of the *Glaubensbekenntnis* (Confession of Faith) in 1881.²⁸ The Reinländer Church is the most conservative Mennonite church in Manitoba today with centers of worship in Blumenfeld, Winkler, and Altona, in the West Reserve, as well as at other locations in the province. In the 1960s and 1970s the church has provided a home for a considerable number of families that have come from Mexico. Its present leader is Elder Peter Rempel of Neuenburg, who has been active in the ministry since the late 1940s, first in the Sommerfelder Church and since 1958 in the Reinländer Church.



Rev. John I. Peters of the Sommerfelder Church stands behind what may well be the oldest Mennonite pulpit in Western Canada.

Ministry of the Sommerfelder Mennonite Church — 1975²⁴

Elder John A. Friesen, Lowe Farm
 Rev. John J. Klassen, Altona
 Rev. John H. Thiessen, Winkler
 Rev. Diedrich H. Klassen, Altona
 Rev. Abram J. Neufeld, Austin
 Rev. Diedrich H. Penner, Halbstadt
 Rev. Peter K. Harder, Altona
 Rev. Jacob A. Sawatzky, Altona

Rev. Jacob Loewen, Stuartburn
 Rev. John Rempel, Winkler
 Rev. John I. Peters, Morden
 Rev. Abe S. Friesen, Morden
 Rev. Henry T. Schroeder, Grunthal
 Rev. Abram Wiebe, Winkler
 Rev. John A. Peters, Winkler
 Deacon Henry B. Dueck, Lowe Farm

After the Reinländer split, the Sommerfelder congregation regrouped. This was a process that actually took some years and was also influenced by the closing of the Sommerfelder Church and Sunday School in Osterwick. The years immediately following 1958 were difficult years in the Manitoba Sommerfelder Church generally because twelve of its ministers had joined the Reinländer Church. It took several years to recover its pulpit strength.

Recent Developments in the Reinland Congregation²⁹

Reinland Sommerfelder families generally supported the village of Reinland Sunday School. After the regrouping of the church in the late 1950s and 1960s the need for a Sunday School to serve the entire congregation was felt more and more acutely. Classes were begun in 1967 and at present about 35 pupils are attending. The Sunday School staff in 1975 consisted of Frank and Margaret Reimer, Bill Dueck, Abe Klassen, Mary Peters, Shirley Zacharias, John Dueck and Mary Hiebert.

The church program was extended to provide for Bible Study sessions, Young People's activities and greater participation in missions.

In regular worship services the church is being served by the entire ministry of the Manitoba Sommerfelder Church on an alternate basis. Ministers in the vicinity serve more frequently than those who live a long distance from Reinland. Elder John A. Friesen regularly conducts baptism and communion services in the Reinland church.

The *Vorsänger* in 1975 were Bill Zacharias, Schoenwiese, Henry Penner, Chortitz, C. C. Reimer, Haskett and P. W. J. Peters, Reinland.

The present church structure was acquired in 1966, when the Silberfeld house of worship built in 1917, was moved to Reinland. The original church constructed in 1887 with an addition built in the late twenties was dismantled.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Rudnerweider Mennonite Church

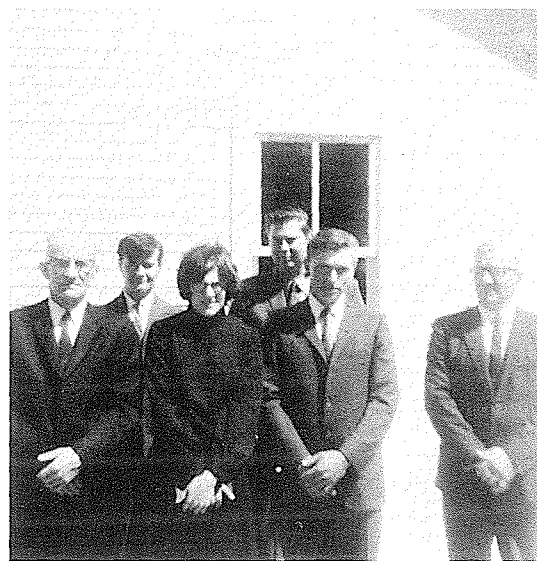
Since the Rudnerweider Mennonite Church has its roots in the Berghthaler-Sommerfelder movements, its early history has already been largely told. This chapter will pick up some threads in the 1930s and weave them into the fabric of later development.

Beginnings

The Rudnerweider Mennonite Church in Manitoba grew out of a revival movement in the West Reserve in the 1930s. The revival meetings conducted in Reinfeld and in Winkler by Rev. Isaac P. Friesen, Rosthern, Saskatchewan, in 1934 gave a strong impetus to this movement.¹ Emphasis on conversion and a separated Christian life as well as a missionary spirit were characteristics of this revival. New forms of worship, that were innovations in the Sommerfelder Church at the time, such as evening meetings, were fostered by these happenings.

The movement was supported by four ministers of the Sommerfelder Church: Rev. W. H. Falk, Schoenthal; Rev. P. S. Zacharias, Reinland; Rev. Gerhard J. Froese, Reinfeld; Rev. Isaak Hoepfner, Waldheim. After a period of tension and conflict the Sommerfelder Church held brotherhood meetings on the issue of whether or not evening services should be permitted by the church. These meetings were held in the churches at Sommerfeld, Rudnerweide, Waldheim, Grossweide and Kronsweide. Evening services were not accepted. Following the meetings it was decided at a gathering of the entire ministry of the Sommerfelder Church to make a new registration of church members. This meant that every church member had to make a choice between remaining in the Sommerfelder Church or electing to go with the four ministers. About 1200 members chose to join the new group.

At a November 11, 1936, meeting of the four ministers in the home of Rev. Gerhard Froese, Reinfeld, it was decided to hold a brotherhood meeting on November 17 at Rudnerweide to discuss organization of a



1971 baptismal class at Reinland Rudnerweider church. Left to right: Elder Jacob H. Friesen, Menno F. Wieler, Mrs. Brenda Friesen, Richard Enns, Mr. Dave Friesen, Rev. George J. Zacharias.

new church. A second meeting for the purpose of setting up an agenda was held at the home of Rev. P. S. Zacharias, Reinland, on the day before the planned brotherhood session.

Two decisions were made at the Rudnerweide meeting. One was to proceed with the organization of a new church. The second was to proceed with the election of an elder.

Elder David Schulz of the Bergthaler Church was asked to conduct the elder election and to officiate at the ordination. Rev. W. H. Falk was elected on January 8, 1937, in the church at Rudnerweide and ordained on February 4, 1937, in the same church. Elder J. P. Bueckert of the Blumenorter Mennonite Church was also present at the ordination. On this occasion the newly formed church organization was given the name Rudnerweider Mennonite Church.

The church demonstrated a strong interest in missions from its birth. As early as October, 1938, Rev. Gerhard Froese and the newly ordained Rev. I. P. F. Friesen, both living in Reinfeld at the time, made their first missionary journey to Saskatchewan where they preached in the Hague area. Extensive activity in Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Ontario followed. John Schellenberg who went to Africa in 1942, became the church's first overseas missionary.² Missionary activity was greatly expanded in the forties, fifties and sixties. In 1959 the congregations of the Rudnerweider Mennonite Church of Manitoba and Saskatchewan organized the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference (EMMC). Since that time the EMMC has been joined by congregations in British Columbia, Ontario and Belize (formerly British Honduras).

The EMMC holds annual conventions where conference policy is formulated. Up to 1974 the annual conventions were always held in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The 1975 conference took place at Aylmer, Ontario.

The Decision to Build a Church in Reinland

In both the Reinland and Haskett districts a considerable number of Sommerfelder families joined the Rudnerweider Church. When the question of church construction arose early in 1938, several options were open — a church could be built in Reinland, a church could be built in Haskett, or churches could be erected in both communities. A meeting was held in the school at Haskett on March 26, 1938, to arrive at a decision.³ The Haskett group moved that the Reinland collectors for the church building also come to collect money in the Haskett district and declared that it was willing to participate both financially and in the provision of labour for the actual construction. The Reinland and Haskett groups then agreed to work together as one district and to build a church in Reinland that summer. The Rudnerweider Church's central building committee, which was also present at the meeting, assured the groups that if they would work



together to build a church at Reinland first, they would get a full share of support from the central treasury for the construction project. If the Haskett group then decided to build a church later it, too, would get that support and Reinland was then to aid Haskett both financially and with the provision of labour. The matter came to a vote and it was unanimously agreed to work together on the project.

Photo courtesy Harold Funk.
Rudnerweider church in Reinland.

Thereupon a resolution was passed to add two representatives from Haskett to the building committee. Only the Haskett group was to vote. I. A. Warkentin and P. S. Elias were elected.

The church was built and dedicated in 1938.

The Haskett group became a permanent part of the Reinland congregation.

Rev. Peter S. Zacharias

Rev. Peter S. Zacharias was born in Reinland, Manitoba, in 1893 and lived in Reinland all his life.⁴ He received his education in the village school. In 1914 he was baptized and accepted into the membership of the Sommerfelder Church. In 1916 he married Susanna Friesen who passed away the following year. In 1920 he married Aganetha Penner with whom he was to share the rest of his life.

Rev. Zacharias was a successful farmer and also participated in community affairs. He was a charter member of the Reinland School District board of trustees in 1925.⁵

On June 20, 1929, he was elected to the ministry in the Sommerfelder Church in Reinland and was ordained on March 15, 1931. He served this church until the founding of the Rudnerweider Church in which he continued working until his death.

Rev. Peter S. Zacharias' contribution to his church and to the village community has never been fully measured. His presence in the community was a unifying presence and his interests embraced all segments of village society. He was a practical man as a farmer. This practicality also extended to his understanding of the Christian Gospel. Rev. Zacharias was a strong promoter of unity among the churches of Reinland. This manifested itself in his attitudes towards evangelism and Christian education as well as towards the Reinland Sunday School and *Jugendverein*.

Rev. Zacharias passed away on May 8, 1957. A large congregation filled the old Reinland church and overflowed into the old school building when final tributes were paid at the funeral services on May 11, 1957.

Later Developments

Rev. Peter P. Zacharias, the son of a Sommerfelder minister (Rev. Peter Zacharias of Neu-Schoenwiese) and the grandson of another (Rev. Peter Zacharias of Schoenwiese), was elected to the ministry on January 28, 1938, and was ordained on September 25 of the same year. He was active in the church and in Reinland youth work for a decade.

With the passing of Rev. P. S. Zacharias in 1957 there was no local minister to serve the Reinland congregation. George J. Zacharias Blumenfeld, was elected to fill this position and was ordained in April, 1959. Rev. Zacharias has been working both in the local church and at the conference level ever since.

Rev. and Mrs. Peter S. Zacharias with Rudnerweider church in the background.



Like most other Mennonite churches in the province at the time, the Rudnerweider Church at first was organized on the elder system. Elder Wm. Falk and his successor Elder Jacob H. Friesen served the various congregations in baptismal services and communion. When the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference was formed, the member congregations became autonomous. In most churches baptism and communion became the functions of the local pastor. The Reinland congregation invited Elder Friesen to continue to perform these rites. He did so until his health no longer permitted him to serve. In 1975 the local minister, Rev. George J. Zacharias, performed the baptismal service for the first time when he baptized Rose Wieler and Charlotte Klassen.⁷

Even after the formation of the EMMC, the Reinland congregation opted for the retention of the old Rudnerweider name.

At a meeting of the entire Rudnerweider Church ministry in the early fifties it was decided that every local congregation should elect its own deacon. In 1952 the Reinland local chose Mr. Jake F. Wieler, who was ordained in 1955. In 1975 the Reinland church elected two deacons to serve for a two year period. Fred Peters, Schoenwiese, and Barney Gerbrandt, Rosenort, were chosen.

The children of Rudnerweider members living in Reinland attended the village Sunday School until the mid-sixties. Several of the members participated as teachers in that venture. In January, 1965, the Rudnerweider congregation began its own Sunday School classes. The first superintendent, Mr. Jacob Banman, is still serving. Mrs. Mary Banman, Henry Banman and Peter H. and Ella Zacharias were among the first teachers.

In 1968 the need for more facilities led to a decision to build a new education wing. It was dedicated on April 28, 1968. Growth created the need for more space and an addition to the education wing was undertaken in the spring of 1976.

In 1975 the Sunday School staff consisted of Mrs. Mary Banman, Mrs. Eileen Wieler, Mrs. Lydia Zacharias, Mr. Jake D. Klassen, Mrs. Margaret Zacharias, Mrs. Elizabeth Peters, Mr. John Wieler and Rev. George Zacharias.

Mrs. Jake Dyck, Mrs. George Braun and Mrs. Alvin Wiebe served as substitute teachers. Adult classes were conducted by Mr. Barney Gerbrandt and Mr. Fred Peters. The 1975 enrolment stood at approximately ninety-five including adults.



Rev. and Mrs. George Zacharias have been in the ministry of the Reinland Rudnerweider Church since 1959.

Rose Wieler and Charlotte Klassen were baptized by Rev. George Zacharias in the Reinland Rudnerweider Church in 1975.





CHAPTER NINETEEN

Blumenorter Mennonite Church

A tide of Mennonite refugees following the Russian Revolution and Civil War brought 21,000 new immigrants to Canadian shores. A number of these settled in the villages of the West Reserve taking up farms vacated by the Reinländer Church exodus to Mexico. These new settlers formed the Blumenorter Mennonite Church.

The Reinland Connection

Several comparisons could be made between the origins of the Blumenorter Mennonite Church in 1925 and the origins of the Reinländer Mennonite Church of 1875. Both were constituted of members who had just arrived from Russia and were beginning anew in a strange environment. The founding of both churches necessitated the amalgamation of members from different colonies in Russia. But in both cases the overwhelming majority of members claimed *Alt-Kolonie* background. Both Fürstenland, former home of many members of the Reinländer Mennonite Church and Baratow-Schlachting, former home of many members of the Blumenorter Mennonite Church, were daughter colonies of Chortitza — the *Alte Kolonie*. In both churches a considerable segment of the membership came from the mother colony itself. There were even fairly close family ties. Rev. Peter Harms the second, Reinland, of the Reinländer Church, was the first cousin of Gerhard G. Harms, Reinland, of the Blumenorter Church.¹ The Franz Froese family, Reinland, of the Reinländer Church were *Schoeneboajhsche Froesen* (Froeses from the villages of Schoeneberg). The wife of Blumenorter Elder Johann P. Bueckert and the wife of Jacob Falk of Schoenwiese, later Reinland, were also *Schoeneboajhsche Froesen*.²

There were economic similarities. Members of both churches began life in Canada under difficult circumstances. The 1870s settlers went through a pioneering stage that absorbed almost all of their energies. The establishment of villages on the open prairie, the construction of primitive shelters, the adaptation to a new agricultural en-

A 1920s photograph of recently arrived immigrants, including the families of Rev. C. B. Krahn, Gerhard G. Harms and Abram Paetkau.



*Ohm was a title of respect commonly used for elders and ministers in the Russian and early Canadian Mennonite churches. It is still used in some conservative churches. However, the title became inseparably linked to the long-time Chortitza elder, Ohm Isaak Dyck.

Cornelius C. Penner (1877-1974) was born in Rosenthal, Chortitza. He married Helena Rempel. Penner became village secretary of Nieder Chortitza, his wife's home village, and was known as "Schriewa Panna". In 1923 the Penners came to Canada and in 1925 to Reinland where they farmed. They became members of the Blumenorter Church. Penner was a carpenter and in charge of the second renovation of the Blumenorter church building when the ceiling was raised and the windows were changed. He was the custodian of the church for many years.



environment were often accompanied by adversities. The 1920s settlers, deprived of all possessions by the Makhno bandits and through the Russian Revolution, were to enter the Great Depression while still desperately trying to make payments on their newly acquired farms.

The comparison could be extended. Many of those who formed the Reinländer Church were in a few years facing the payment of a staggering debt — the *Brotschuld*, which consisted of money borrowed to buy food and supplies until the colony could attain a degree of self-sufficiency. Many of those who formed the Blumenorter Mennonite Church were also facing a staggering debt — the *Reiseschuld*, which consisted of money borrowed to pay the cost of migration from Russia to Canada. Both groups hoped to recreate a lost commonwealth in the New World.

The Migration of the 1920s

The migration of Mennonites from Russia to Canada which began in 1874-1878 never really came to a complete halt. It slowed down in the early 1880s, but became stronger again towards the end of the decade and in the early nineties when several hundred immigrants arrived. After the early nineties there was another lull but immigrant continued to trickle in up to 1914. Then came World War I, the Russian Revolution and a migration that was to bring another 21,000 Mennonites to Canada.

In the interval from 1875, when Reinland was founded, and 1922 when the great migration from Russia commenced, many developments had taken place in Russia. In the Chortitza Colony the old Elder Gerhard Dyck, who had ordained Elder Johann Wiebe, had passed away in 1887 and Elder Heinrich D. Epp had taken his place (1885-1896). Then Elder Isaak Dyck, son of Elder Gerhard Dyck, served from 1896 to 1922. *Ohm** Isaak Dyck was known not only in the *Alte Kolonie* but in all its daughter colonies. Persons in the older generation today still speak of the old elder who baptized them and gave them their first communion bread. On April 18, 1922, when the catastrophe was already upon the Mennonite colonies, the aging elder mounted the steps that led to the pulpit of the old church in Chortitz, the same steps that his father who had baptized so many of Reinland's pioneers, had so often mounted. *Ohm* Isaak Dyck was followed by Rev. Peter P. Neufeld, who was about to be ordained as his successor.³ For most of Reinland's new immigrants, Elder Neufeld was the last elder of the Chortitzer Mennonite Church they remembered.

During the years 1875-1914 the Russian colonies had grown and new colonies had been founded (e.g. in Bachmut District where Rev. C. B. Krahn spent part of his youth). Great progress had been made in agriculture, in industry, in education, in institutions to serve the needs of the aged and the sick, and in church development. Economically and culturally the colonies were reaching the peak of their achievement.

The schools were conducted in Russian but the teaching of German and religion was permitted and formed a vital part of the school program. Alternative service had been accepted by Elder Gerhard Dyck in the 1870s and all young men were required to render forestry service. About 12,000 young Mennonite men served in forestry and medical work during the First World War.

World War I, revolution, the overthrow of the Czar, the Makhno reign of terror, typhoid, famine, the destruction of the religious, social and economic order, the establishment of the Communist regime followed each other in short order in the years of 1917 to 1923.

Perhaps the reasons for the decision to emigrate in 1923 and the following years could be summarized as follows:

- The terror of the Makhno period, its mass murders and brutality, followed by arrests, deportations, slave labour camps suffered by Mennonites in general (and other segments of the population as well) and their leaders in particular — these were reasons for people to look to America as a new home.

- The school compromise that the church had eventually agreed to after 1875 had still given the Mennonite church autonomy over some areas of instruction — German and religion. Now atheism was to be the new philosophy of the schools. All religious teaching of children in schools was to be forbidden.

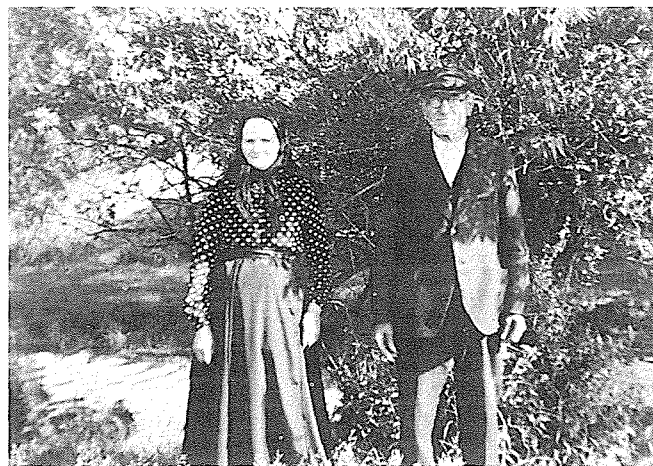
- The church itself was not free to pursue its teaching. Many churches were closed and ministers were deported to other parts of the country. America held forth the promise of religious freedom.

- The economic order in the well-to-do Mennonite colonies had been destroyed. For many prosperous farmers and industrialists the revolution was a step backwards. The social structure within the colonies, too, was on the verge of serious break-down.

Thousands made the decision to emigrate. Many decided to stay and pointed hopefully to Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP). The colonies went through intense suffering and agony during the Stalin purges of the 1930s. The existence of all the old Mennonite colonies in the Ukraine ended in evacuation by the retreating Germans during 1943.⁴ Of those who fled westwards and eventually reached Germany, a large number were repatriated to the Soviet Union. Others reached North America and South America.

Among those who decided to migrate in the 1920s were families from Baratow-Schlachtin and the *Alte Kolonie*, who were to arrive in Reinland and become part of the core group that formed the Blumenort Mennonite Church.

It is not within the scope of this book to dwell on the details of the Mennonite experience in Russia in World War I and the years following except to point out that both Baratow-Schlachtin and the old Chortitz settlement were heavily victimized by Makhno and found themselves in the cross fire between Red and White armies. They ex-



Mr. and Mrs. Gerhard Ens came to Reinland in 1923 where they purchased the Abraham Rempel farm. Mr. Ens served as a deacon first in the Neu-Chortitzer Church in Russia and later in the Blumenort Church in Canada.

Rev. David Toews (1870-1974), Rosthern, Saskatchewan, elder of Rosenorter Mennonite Church and chairman of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization (1922-1946). Toews was a benefactor of thousands of Mennonites who came to Canada in the 1920's. He ordained Rev. Johann Bueckert as the first elder of the Blumenorter Church at a service in Reinland on November 18, 1928.



perienced the famine and the subsequent North American relief program that saved the lives of many Mennonites in Russia.

It is necessary to make a special mention of the unfailing efforts of Elder David Toews of Rosthern, Saskatchewan, the Mennonite statesman who negotiated endlessly to make the migration financially and physically possible and who personally underwrote the *Reiseschule* which finally amounted to a loan of almost \$2,000,000 owed to the Canadian Pacific Railway and Steamship Company. He was instrumental in organizing the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization in 1922 and was in constant touch with every aspect of the migration which began in 1923. Elder Toews was one of the greatest leaders that the Canadian Mennonite churches have produced.⁵

Early Church Developments Among Immigrant Groups in the West Reserve Villages — Blumenorter Church Beginnings

On August 21, 1923, Rev. Jacob J. Klassen, who had been elected to the ministry in 1900, arrived in the village of Blumenort. On September 9, a few weeks later, he conducted the first worship service among the new immigrants there.⁶ The services in Blumenort continued on a regular basis until the group's final merger with the Rosenort local in the 1950s.

On October 28, 1923, Rev. Klassen conducted a worship service in Reinland which may have been the first new immigrant worship service in the village. Rev. Klassen's records reveal some of his early activity.

On the first of January, 1924, held a worship service with the immigrants in Blumenort and also on January 6. Visited immigrants on the other side of Winkler January 3-13. In the week of January 20-27 visited immigrants in Reinland. Was at Morden from January 27 to February 3 and visited the scattered settlers. On February 3 conducted worship service in Gretna which had been announced to the immigrants in the area. On the second of March held worship services in Edenburg and Sommerfeld.

Rev. Klassen's records indicate that he preached sixty one times in 1924, once in Edenburg and Sommerfeld, three times each in Gretna and Kronsthal, five times in Reinland, nine times in Gnadensthal and thirty-nine times in Blumenort. The worship services were held in private homes or in school houses.

Other immigrants who came to West Reserve villages as ministers were Rev. P. A. Rempel in 1923 and Rev. J. P. Bueckert in 1925. Mr. Gerhard Ens, Reinland, had been a deacon in Russia since 1905. Rev. Cornelius Krahn, who arrived in 1924, had been elected to the ministry in Russia in 1920 and was ordained in Canada in 1925. Two immigrant ministers of the Berghthaler Church, Rev. Jacob Siemens and Rev. Peter Epp, also served the immigrants in the early years.

One of the early questions that the immigrant groups in the villages faced was whether or not to found a new church organization to serve the needs of its scattered members. An alternative possibility that was seriously considered at the time was joining the Berghthaler Church.

The decision to form the Blumenorter Mennonite Church was made at an organizational meeting on April 14, 1925. Rev. Jacob Klassen, Blumenort, served as chairman and Gerhard Ens, Reinland, and Abram Vogt, Gretna, as secretaries, at the gathering.

The new church did not have its own elder during the first few years. It was served by Elder Johann P. Klassen of the Schoenwieser Mennonite Church and by Elder Franz Enns of the White-water Mennonite Church. On August 5, 1928, Rev. Johann P. Bueckert was elected⁷ and on November 18 he was ordained as the first elder of the Blumenorter Church. Elder David Toews of Rosthern, Saskatchewan, officiated at the ordination.⁸

On June 27, 1925, the Rosenort church building of the emigrating Reinländer Church was purchased for \$800.00 and became temporarily the central meeting place of the Blumenorter Church. The purchase of the old historic Reinland church building had a story of its own. The building was to cost \$500. Rev. Isaac P. Friesen, Rosthern, Saskatchewan, offered to pay \$400.00 if the congregation would raise the rest. The offer was accepted and soon \$187.04 had been raised. On October 29, 1926, payment in cash was made to Rev. Giesbrecht and Rev. Loewen of the Reinländer Church. The building became the new central of the Blumenorter Church. In 1929 a house was bought to serve the Blumenort group which had had worship services since 1923. The house was then converted into a suitable worship centre.

The Gnadenthal local constructed the first new church building of the Blumenorter Church. After having worshiped in the former Gnadenthal school for a number of years, local initiative resulted in the dedication of a new building in the centre of the village on August 2, 1942.

For a number of years the church at Wingham near Elm Creek belonged to the Blumenorter Church. Services were also conducted in co-operation with other churches at the Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna.

The Blumenorter Mennonite Church is a member of the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba, the Conference of Mennonites in Canada and the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Blumenorter Church in Reinland

The Reinland local existed as a separate congregation from 1926 to 1968. Like the other Mennonite churches in Reinland for most of their histories, the Blumenorter Church was not served by one pastor. The ministers from the entire Blumenorter Church served alternately at



1942 baptismal candidates at Blumenorter church in Reinland.



Baptismal class at Blumenorter church in Reinland on May 26, 1947. Third row, left to right, Frank G. Ens, Paul Peters, John Nickel, Abram J. Froese, Henry G. Ens. Second row, left to right, Margaret Peters, Helen Peters, Anna Peters, Laurina Buhler, Lena Buhler, Margaret Ens. Seated are, Rev. Frank F. Sawatzky, Elder Johann P. Bueckert, Rev. Peter A. Rempel.

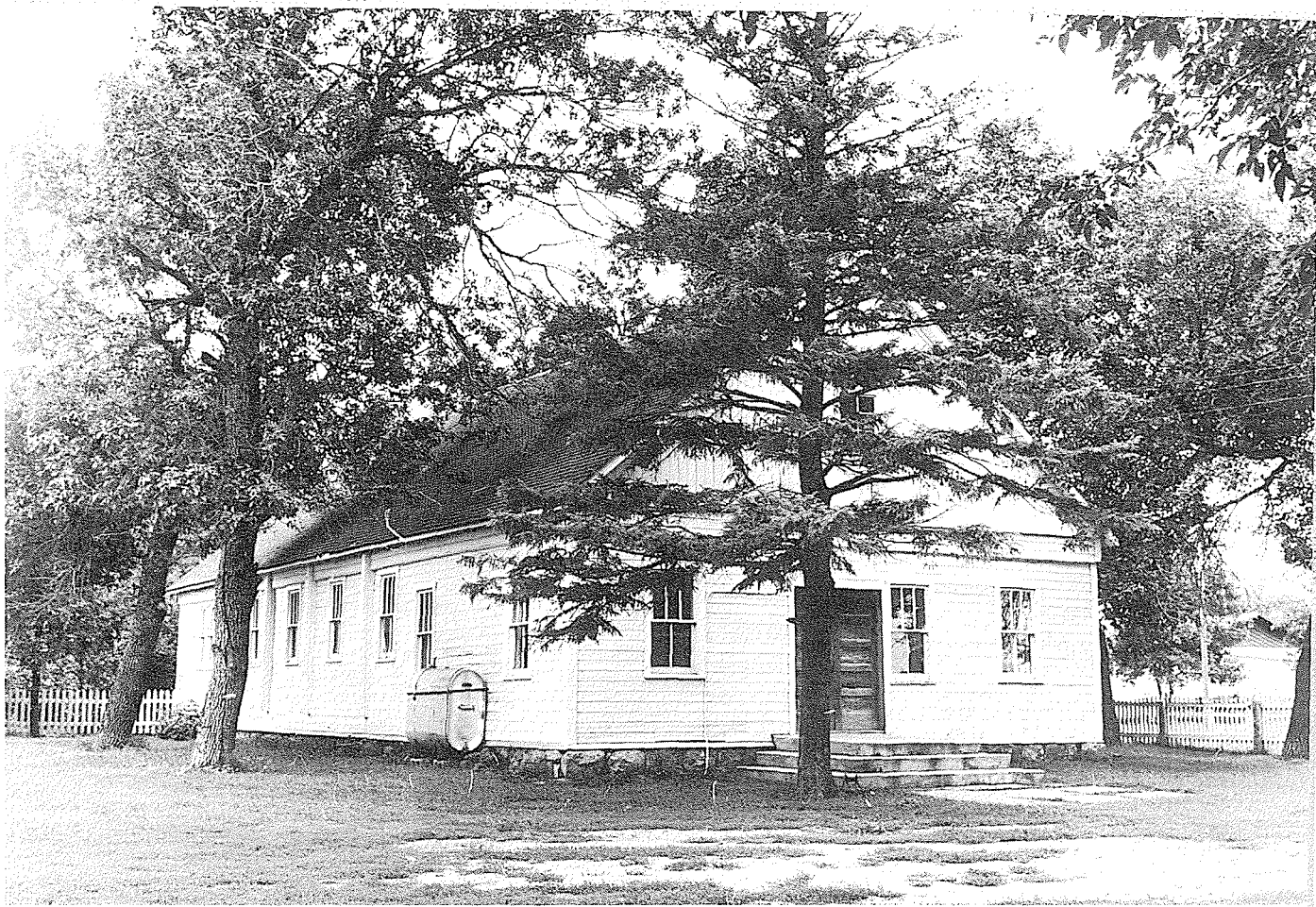


Photo courtesy Harold Funk.
Blumenorter Mennonite church in Reinland.

worship services in Reinland and the Reinland ministers would go out to preach at Gnadenthal, Rosenort, and Blumenort.

Services were held at Reinland every Sunday as well as on church holidays. For some events like baptism, communion, Thanksgiving and *Missionsfest* (mission festival) there would be a united worship service with all Blumenorter congregations participating. After 1957 these special services were conducted in Rosenort. The elder officiated at baptism and communion. The Blumenorter Church has been served by two elders, Johann P. Bueckert and Paul J. Schaefer. Local Reinland ministers who have served the church are Rev. Cornelius B. Krah, Rev. Heinrich G. Ens and Rev. J. K. Klassen (during his six year tenure as Reinland teacher). Deacon Gerhard G. Ens, Reinland, served the church for many years.

The Reinland congregation was actively involved in community-based endeavours like Sunday School, *Jugendverein*, Young People activities and the choir.

The last regular service in the Reinland church building was held on September 22, 1968. On the following Sunday the Reinland congregation became part of the Rosenort congregation.

Rev. Cornelius B. Krahn

Cornelius B. Krahn was born in Rosenbach, Fürstenland, on February 16, 1883. As a young boy he moved with his parents to the new colony in the Bachmut District where the family settled in the village of Grigorjewka.⁹

On September 12, 1910, he married Maria Neufeld. He spent most of World War I in alternative service which consisted of three and one-half years of *Sanitätsdienst* (medical service) in the city of Nowgorod. The Krahn family came to Canada in 1924 and worked on the Johann Wiens farm at Rosenort, Gretna, for the first year. In 1925 the Krahns got the opportunity to acquire their own farm in Reinland which they worked until their retirement from farming in 1957.

Mr. Krahn had been elected to the ministry in May, 1920, in the Grigorjewka congregation of the New York Mennonite Church in Russia. In the fall of 1925, a year after his arrival in Manitoba, he was ordained by Elder Johann P. Klassen. Rev. Krahn's impact on the spiritual life of the community was felt deeply and not only in the circles of the Blumenorter Church. He spoke on countless occasions at *Jugendverein* and other gatherings. Many Reinland people will remember the messages he delivered at *Sylvester Abend* (New Year's Eve) gatherings. He was dedicated to his task and preached whenever asked, travelling by horse and buggy, by sleigh and later by car.¹⁰ Even after retirement from farming he often preached in the Salem Home for the Aged, Winkler.

In spite of times of difficulties and discouragements in his long career in the ministry, Rev. Krahn wrote at the age of 78: Joy and love in the work for my Saviour I have always had and that has sustained me in difficult times of life. His wife, a strong support in his ministry, died in July, 1969.

Rev. Krahn passed away at the Salem Personal Care Home in Winkler on January 24, 1975, at the age of 91.

Rev. and Mrs. Cornelius B. Krahn in retirement.



Rev. and Mrs. Heinrich G. Ens with three of their grandchildren, left to right, Phillip Laverne Ens, Gerald Wayne Ens, Robert Wayne Pauls.

Rev. Heinrich G. Ens

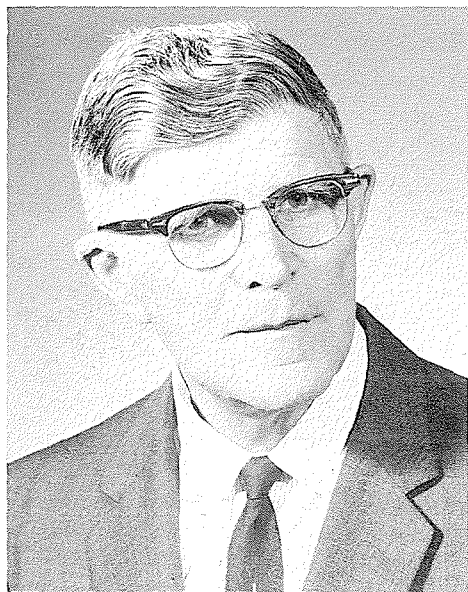
Heinrich G. Ens was born on September 17, 1899, in Gnadenthal, Karatow, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Gerhard Ens.¹¹ He attended the *Zenalschule* in Nikolaipol in the years 1912-1915. In 1921 he was baptized and accepted as a member of the Neu-Chortitzer Mennonite Church. His marriage to Helena Redekopp took place in 1922. Together they migrated to Canada in 1923 where they settled in the village of Reinland and began a career in farming. His wife passed away on December 27, 1927. Rev. Ens married Maria Wiebe in 1934.

Mr. Heinrich G. Ens made a significant contribution to Reinland Sunday School work in its early stages. The Blumenorter Church elected him to serve as its minister. His election on August 5, 1928, was followed by his ordination on November 18 of the same year.

Elder and Mrs. Johann P. Bueckert.



Rev. Paul J. Schaefer, long-time principal of the Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna, and known best to many Reinland people simply as Lehra Schäfa. He became the second elder of the Blumenorter Church in 1954 and served until his death in 1969.



Rev. Ens was active in all areas of church life, especially in the years following his ordination. He passed away on February 16, 1972.

Elder Johann P. Bueckert

Johann P. Bueckert was born on July 29, 1879, in Schoeneberg Chortitza.¹² In 1900 he was baptized in the Osterwick Church by Elder Isaak Dyck. In the fall of that year he married Katharina Froese, also of Schoeneberg. 1906 was a year of new experience for the young couple. On January 7, Mr. Bueckert was elected to the ministry and on April 6, he was ordained. These were times of great trials for the Bueckert family. At the time of his election, a two year old daughter had recently died. Four days after the election a second daughter passed away and three days after ordination the Bueckerts lost a third daughter.

As a minister he served at the *Forstei* (forestry) at Neuberdjans for five and one-half years. The Bueckerts then moved to a new settlement at Arkadak where they lived for over twelve years. When the new government came to power in the First World War, Rev. Bueckert was chosen by both his own church and the Mennonite Brethren Church to accompany young men to court to free them from military service. He served in this capacity until his emigration in 1925. The work involved visits to Balaschov, Saratov and Moscow.

In Canada the Bueckert family first lived in the Blumenort area. During 1930-1931 they lived in Reinland and then for almost twenty years in the neighboring village of Schoenwiese.

For twenty-six years, from 1928-1954, Elder Bueckert guided the Blumenorter Church through its formative years, through the Depression and through World War II. For some twenty years he served as *Reiseprediger*, an itinerant minister, of the General Conference.

On August 22, 1954, he ordained his newly elected successor, Rev. Paul J. Schaefer. Elder Bueckert passed away on April 27, 1958.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Reinland Village Sunday School and *Jugendverein*

On August 4, 1963, a memorable gathering crowded the old Reinland church to pay tribute to Mr. Gerhard G. H. Ens who had completed 35 years as teacher and superintendent of the Reinland Sunday School. The gathering consisted of persons of all ages and of various church backgrounds. Many former Reinland residents had travelled many miles to attend.

The story of the Reinland Sunday School that unfolded that day was really the story of an era in Reinland church-school education. In retrospect, the measure of co-operation and support it eventually enjoyed is remarkable. Long before it was finally closed in the mid-sixties for reasons that will be examined later, it had won the confidence of families of all the major denominations in Reinland. Children of Blumenort Church background were eventually joined by children of Sommerfelder and Old Colony Church backgrounds. When the Rudnerweider Church was founded in 1936 it began active participation in the endeavour and did not initiate a Sunday School of its own until 1965. The Sommerfelder Church in Reinland did not found a Sunday School until the mid-sixties either, even though Sunday Schools had long since become well established in other Sommerfelder locals. The reason was not opposition to the Sunday School idea but the confidence of the parents in the work that was being carried out in the village Sunday School.

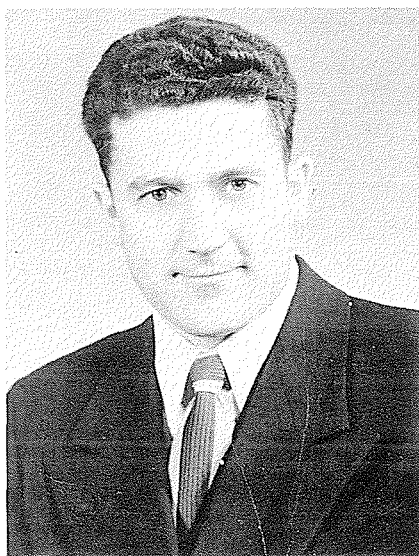
Background

In the pioneer years there was no Reinland Sunday School. The church was strongly and directly involved in the teaching of its children in the regular village schools. The curriculum of those schools had a strong religious orientation. For these reasons no need for a Sunday School was felt even though the training of the children to grow up in the values of the church was a concern of major priority.

Moreover, the Sunday School was not a Mennonite institution. Among many other institutions it was adopted and adapted from other

Margaret Ens (now Mrs. J. F. Wieler) and Sunday School class circa 1942-1943.





Gerhard Ens, who until 1976 was principal of the Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna.

As far as I could determine the Sunday School in Reinland began in 1925. It began with one class of children and one teacher, Anna Penner. She was the sister of the long-time Reinland resident and merchant, now deceased, Heinrich G. Penner. Miss Penner came from the Allianz group in Russia, where Sunday Schools and other innovations had been introduced early. But after just one year Miss Penner moved to Winkler. The cause, however, which had been planted in Reinland as a mustard seed, did not die. The next teacher was Heinrich G. Ens, or as I knew him, Uncle Hein. This is where my personal memory begins. My first memory of the Reinland Sunday School is of myself and other small boys and girls sitting on the hard benches in the *Ohmsstuebchen* (ministers' room) of the church and how I listened, enraptured and captivated by Uncle Hein's words and Bible stories. Besides, he had

Protestant denominations. When the school legislation of 1916 resulted in the closing of the Mennonite private schools in the following decade, the Sunday School was increasingly seen as an essential means of passing on the spiritual values of the church to succeeding generations raised in secular schools. By 1960 even the most conservative Mennonite bodies in Manitoba had adopted the Sunday School.

Rev. Gerhard Ens, son of Mr. and Mrs. Gerhard G. H. Ens, at present principal of the Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna, and a minister of the Blumenort Church, delivered a talk on the history of the Reinland Sunday School at the 1963 reunion. He attributed the early development of the Sunday School in Mennonite circles to three influences. These were:

1. the emergence of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Manitoba before the turn of the century;
2. the work of the Bergthaler Church under Elder Johann Funk and Elder Jacob Hoepfner and especially of H. H. Ewert;
3. the immigration of the 1920s.

The immigrants of the 1920s, Mr. Ens explained, either brought the Sunday School idea with them from Russia, although the idea was just as new in many Mennonite congregations in Russia as it was in many Mennonite congregations in Canada, or they adopted it from the Mennonite Brethren or Bergthaler churches when they arrived. In any case, he continued, they found it to be a practical, even necessary, institution in the Canadian situation where religious instruction in the district schools was limited to a daily half-hour.

The Sunday School in Reinland

In his address at the 1963 gathering Gerhard Ens, who completed the entire Reinland Sunday School course, paid particular attention to the development of the Sunday School in the Reinland village setting. Some portions of his discussion follow in free translation:

a picture portfolio which folded like a book and which he used quite often. Oh no, the pictures were not the main thing (in those days we were not spoiled by pictures and crayons and other things) and exactly for that reason we treasured that which was offered to us in that line so much more.

In 1928 Uncle Hein was elected and ordained to the ministry. Though he continued to assist in the Sunday School for several more years the situation necessitated that he give up its leadership. This my father now assumed. He has now worked in the Sunday School from 1928 to 1963, for 35 years — 1880 Sundays, the equivalent of nine school years, longer than any teacher has been in Reinland.

In 1929 Mr. John W. Driedger came to Reinland as public school teacher. He showed much interest and sympathy for the Sunday School. He and Father understood each other well and

with Mr. Driedger's assistance the Sunday School soon became more than just a private undertaking. He agreed to permit the use of the school for Sunday School classes and he took one class himself. Soon the two-room Sunday School became a three-room one and later a four-room school. The schoolroom was divided into two classes by a bright curtain. One class was conducted in the *Ohmsstuebchen* and one in the main part of the church.

These were the difficult Thirties — difficult and yet beautiful. Many of the unsettling, destructive elements that are encroaching on our quiet villages today were unheard of then. It was a quieter, more peaceful life.

What kind of material was used in those days? I already mentioned Uncle Hein's picture portfolio. There were also Bible Story books: Wiedemann, Wangemann, Affolter (wonderful books) and there were no more beautiful pictures than those of Julius Schnorr and Carolsfeld, at least not as far as I was concerned.

But that was not all. In 1934 P. A. Rempel published a small booklet *Bilder aus der Kirchen-und Mennonitengeschichte*. Father introduced this booklet in the senior class. An entirely new world unfolded for me. We learned of Polycarp, Constantine, Wynfrid Boniface, the Dark Ages, John Huss, Martin Luther and our Anabaptist forefathers Hans Denk, Balthasar Hubmaier, Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, and of our Menno. My love for the people of my heritage can be traced to this time. I thank the Reinland Sunday School for my first positive impulse of church consciousness.

Soon after Father became superintendent of the Sunday School he drew others into the work. I mentioned Mr. Driedger. Later the teachers P. B. Krahn, J. K. Brandt and G. G. Schmidt have also assisted. But others, too, were drawn in by Father. First of all, I would like to mention the long selfless work of Cornelius Penner. Almost from the beginning to the

time of his move to Winnipeg, Mr. Penner has served either the second or third class. In these first years I would also like to mention two women: Lena Paetkau (Mrs. B. C. Krahn) and Maria Harms (Mrs. Peter Hildebrandt).

And so the Thirties came to a close.

The public school teachers came and went according to the custom of our land. People who served for many years moved away: Cornelius Penner, Mr. Isaak Harms, Mrs. Peter Hildebrandt. A new generation grew up. New workers had to be sought. Soon the thought entered Father's mind to draw in the oldest students, that were about to "graduate", to assist in the work. As far as I know, Margaret Ens (Mrs. Jacob Wieler) was the first student who consented to be recruited. She worked in the Sunday School until her duties as wife and mother made it impossible for her to continue.

What Father did on occasion when he needed teachers can be demonstrated by an example. I was seventeen years old and had come to Sunday school as usual. One teacher was missing. Abruptly Father asked me to take the class. I was afraid but my classmates and especially David Froese, if I remember correctly, said that it would work and I consented. And it did work — but you must not ask me how. Not only has the second generation been drawn in since then, but some children of the first Sunday School students have been teachers for many years.

Thirty-eight years of Sunday School activity in Reinland!

It has tied us Blumenorter, Sommerfelder, Rudnerweider and *Altolonier*, *Russländer* and *Kanadier*, together. It has given hundreds of young hearts the first impulse of spiritual life. Ministers, missionaries and teachers have emerged from it.

"It (the kingdom of God) is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it."



Reinland rhythm band in early 1940's. Back: (Left to Right) Dave Froese, Henry H. Ens, Peter Harms, Herb Brandt, Dave Harms, Died Zacharias, Fred Krahn, Jake Zacharias. Second row: John Froese, Elsie Brandt, Susie Zacharias, Betty Zacharias, Elsie Harms, Evelyn Brandt, Helen Ens, Henry Ens, Esther Brandt. Front row: Frank Zacharias, Pete Peters, Henry Harms, Pete Krahn, Allen Brandt, Herman Peters, Victor Brandt.

Table: Teachers of Reinland Village Sunday School
1925-1968

Anna Penner	Maria Harms
Heinrich G. Ens	(Mrs. Peter Hildebrandt)
Gerhard G. H. Ens	Mr. Isaak Harms
John W. Driedger	Margaret Ens (Mrs. Jacob Wieler)
Peter B. Krahn	Nettie Zacharias
John K. Brandt	Helen Zacharias (Mrs. Abram E. Ens)
G. G. Schmidt	Bill Penner
Cornelius Penner	Katie Peters (Mrs. Jake Dyck)
Lena Paetkau	Abram E. Ens
(Mrs. B. C. Krahn)	Mary Peters
	Margaret Ens (Mrs. Bill Penner)

Jugendverein and Young People's

The origins of the *Jugendverein* tradition in Southern Manitoba Mennonite churches can be found both in Manitoba and Russia. Generally it had its roots in the choir movement which seems to have begun in some Bergthaler congregations in Manitoba as early as the 1890s and in some Russian congregations at about the same time. In Altona, *Jugendverein* activity began in the district school in 1902, was carried on in the Mennonite Educational Institute after 1908 and moved to the church after 1912.²

It would be interesting to know whether any youth singing or choir related work was carried on in Reinland during the days of Wilhelm Rempel, Peter Abrams, and Wilhelm Esau.

In Reinland organized choir and *Jugendverein* activity began with the coming of the immigrants of the 1920s. Teacher Jacob A. Schellenberg reinforced this interest by his promotion of singing. The first leader of the *Sängerchor* (choir) was Mr. G. G. H. Ens, a young farmer with some school teaching experience. Mr. Ens was leading a choir as early as 1924-25. Since then the choir work has never ceased. After many years under the leadership of Mr. Ens, the choir was led at various times by John W. Driedger, Peter P. Zacharias, J. K. Brandt, C. P. Zacharias, Dan Peters, Jacob K. Klassen, Henry Dick and Henry Banman. Interest in the choir grew until a large part of village youth became involved. Like the Sunday School, the choir and *Jugendverein* developed along community, rather than denominational, lines. Many young people who would not have participated in a *Jugendverein* program of one particular church were free to become active in a community effort.

The *Jugendverein*, as it developed in Reinland, was a Christian Endeavour group that evolved strong traditions of both religious and cultural dimensions. In winter it presented monthly programs, generally built around a particular theme chosen by the *Jugendverein* committee. The backbone of the *Jugendverein* program was the choir.



Reinland choir circa 1924-1925. First row: Annie Paetkau, Sarah Braun, Helen Schellenberg, Luise Tiessen (died in Hamburg, Germany in 1975). Second row: Margaret Ens, Mary Paetkau, ?, Anna Braun, Tina Braun. Third row: ?, ?, Isaac Harms, David Paetkau, Julius Klassen, G. G. H. Ens. Fourth row: Diedrich Ens, Aron Thiessen, Jake Poettker, Abe Schellenberg, John F. Warkentin, Pete Schellenberg.

which met for rehearsals on a weekly basis. The *Deklamatorium* was often a highlight of the winter's activities. The works of Ernst Moderohn, such as *David* or *Heilige Berge Gottes*, were successfully performed. *Der Friedefürst* became a Christmas and New Year's Eve tradition. For many years the community Christmas *Jugendverein* program was held on the evening of Christmas Day. Before Christmas the choir usually visited homes of underprivileged older people, or sick people and also distributed Christmas bundles. Carolling was enjoyed by the choir also. The New Year's Eve service was a community tradition that continued to December 31, 1968, having been observed for approximately forty years. With the revival of community feeling and spirit as centennial preparations gained momentum, this Reinland tradition, too, returned on December 31, 1974, and another such service was held on New Year's Eve, 1975. Mother's Day programs with red and white flowers in honor of Mother were early *Jugendverein* events that continued for many years.

Young People's activities which were introduced in the 1950s ran parallel to the *Jugendverein*. The two served different functions although in general the same people were involved in both. The *Jugendverein* served the community at large. Young People's was specifically designed for young people. Its activities were both devotional and social in nature, with an emphasis on Christian commitment.

In its early stages the choir was made up mostly of persons from the Reinland community. In the 1950s choir practices alternated

Henry Dick, who taught in Reinland from 1958-1963, was active in choir and youth work.



Scene at 1942 Sngerfest in Reinland. A mass choir from several Southern Manitoba churches participated.



between Reinland, Rosengart and Schoenwiese. The *Jugendverein* and Young People's programs continued into the mid-sixties. Today both the Rudnerweider and Sommerfelder churches carry on Young People's programs through their Reinland locals. The Blumenorter young people participate in the youth activities at the Blumenorter Church at Rosenort (renamed Rosetown in 1976).

The Closing of a Chapter

The Reinland Sunday School and *Jugendverein* were still strong and healthy at the time of the 1963 reunion but the disintegrative forces that were to bring about their dissolution were already at work. The urbanization of young people loosened their ties to the home community. Consolidations in churches and schools were occurring in many districts. The following discussion concerns the Sunday School particularly but all the major events discussed had its parallel effects on youth work.

All of the Reinland churches were affected by major change. The construction of the central Blumenorter Church in Rosenort in 1957 resulted in the weakening and eventual closing of its locals. The division of the Sommerfelder Church in 1958 was to have far-reaching consequences. The organization of the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference by the Rudnerweider churches in 1959 had its effects as well. This assertion of stronger denominationalism was to be felt in Reinland in the 1960s.

Close co-operation had long taken place between the Blumenorter and Rudnerweider churches in Reinland. They had co-operated in Sunday School and *Jugendverein*; they had even had worship service together during snow-bound winters. They had very similar formats in their worship services, used the same hymn book and conducted their baptismal instruction classes in similar ways. There were close ties among their ministers, Rev. C. B. Krahn, Rev. P. S. Zacharias and Rev. H. G. Ens. Both supported the Elim Bible School, Altona, and the Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna. Both had ties to the Manitoba Conference, the Blumenorter Church officially, the Rudnerweider congregation in its sympathies, its outlook, its mentality, its general orientation. It was the fact that they had different headquarters that was to cause agony in the sixties. It was this fact that was slowly to draw the Reinland Rudnerweider Church into the EMMC orbit and the Reinland Blumenorter Church into the Rosenort orbit. Perhaps by 1960 the only way in which the united efforts of the two churches could have been saved was by total union.

A number of families belonging to the Reinland Rudnerweider Church did not live in Reinland, Rosengart or Schoenwiese, all of which were close to the church, and all of which had village Sunday Schools prior to the 1960s. These families found it difficult to attend



Reinland choir at wedding of Margaret Harms and Jake Hildebrand. Mr. J. K. Brandt, choir leader, at left.

church together unless there was a Sunday School at the church. Certain families had no place where their children could attend Sunday school. Some members, both in Reinland and outside Reinland began to propose a separate Sunday School to accommodate this problem. The opening of the Rudnerweider Sunday School in 1965 resulted in the withdrawal of a large number of pupils from the village Sunday School. At the same time it opened a new Sunday School in Reinland that served a fairly large church area.

The division of the Sommerfelder Church of 1958 also affected the Sunday School. One effect was almost immediate. The new Reinländer congregation at Blumenfeld immediately built its own Sunday School facilities. It felt that in order to reestablish a conservative church in the old tradition a separate Sunday School for the training of its children was a prerequisite. The church in Blumenfeld involved only a few

children that had attended the Reinland village Sunday School. However, the division had a second effect — the regrouping of the Sommerfelder congregation in Reinland. The division meant the loss of a number of families in the Sommerfelder Church, especially from Rosengart. It eventually resulted in the closing of some locals and the regrouping of others. One of the churches that closed was that in Osterwick. A core of Sommerfelder families from Reinland and others from a fairly scattered area constituted the regrouped Sommerfelder congregation in Reinland. A new Sunday School to accommodate the needs of the congregation was established.

By 1968 the Reinland village Sunday School consisted of pupils of Reinland Blumenorter families and a few others. On September 29, 1968, the last Sunday School class of the Reinland village school was dismissed. On the following Sunday children and young people of the Blumenorter families attended classes in Rosenort. The Reinland Sunday School had served the village well for forty-three years. For forty of those, Mr. G. G. H. Ens piloted the school through calm and crisis steadily and wisely, with confidence and dedication. Its message lay not in zeal without knowledge, its methodology not in high pressure tactics. It was dedicated to an appreciation of heritage, to Christian commitment and to Christian community.



Another scene at the Sangerfest in Reinland, June, 1942.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

The Reinland Churches in the Two Wars

World Wars I and II were different experiences in some respects. Despite what was probably the strongest national fervour that Canada has known, the government, in World War I, adhered strictly to the *Privilegium* of 1873. In World War II this adherence took some different forms. A large number of Mennonite young men volunteered for military service including some from Reinland. When conscription came there was no blanket exemption as in the previous war. Provisions were made for alternative service. In effect the conscientious objectors became involved in forestry and other types of service in the 1870s.

World War I

When World War I broke out there was some uneasiness in the churches. Would the *Privilegium* stand the test of war? In November, 1916, three Reinländer Mennonite Church elders, Johann Friesen of Manitoba, Abram Wiebe of Swift Current and Jacob Wiens of Hague-Dsler, visited Ottawa. The uneasiness of these leaders was temporarily allayed, at least to a degree, by the guarantee of Prime Minister Robert L. Borden that the 1873 contract would be observed to the letter.¹

Elder Isaak M. Dyck, Mexico, a young minister in Manitoba at his time, later described some anxieties from his viewpoint. The large sums of money that soon had to be raised for the Red Cross were viewed with misgivings by Dyck. The reason was certainly not stinginess because at various times considerable sums had been raised voluntarily for relief programs even before the war. His stated concern was that while this money was not being used directly for military purposes it, nevertheless, supported the war effort and hence helped to intensify the war.²

Fears also surrounded the January, 1917, government manpower survey and Elder Johann Friesen returned the National Service Cards

Camp 3 at Riding Mountain National Park. Many Reinland conscientious objectors worked at forestry camps in World War II.



Historic house is dismantled. This was the home of Rev. Peter Harms, the second, and scene of the Reinländer ministers' meeting with Locke. Before the turn of the century it was the residence of Rev. Jacob Wiens, who moved to Saskatchewan to become the elder of the Reinländer Church in the Hague-Osler settlement. In the 1920s, Rev. Peter Harms' cousin, Gerhard G. Harms, arrived from Russia and bought the farm. The Gerhard Harms family moved to the Snowlake area in the 1940s. Abram A. Paetkau then purchased the farmstead, dismantled the old house and constructed the present dwelling.



for the Reinländer Church to Ottawa.³ At a meeting in Reinland of leaders and laymen of both the Manitoba and Saskatchewan congregations of that body it was decided not to complete the National Service Cards.⁴

Another delegation to Ottawa in January, 1917, consisting of Elder Abraham Doerksen of the Sommerfelder Church, Rev. Benjamin Ewert of the Berghthaler Church, Rev. David Toews, Rosthern, of the Rosenorter Church, and Mr. Klaas Peters of Saskatchewan was also assured that the *Privilegium* would be honored, but was told that the National Service Cards had to be completed though the word *Mennonite* could be written across it to give it special treatment. They were even assured that Mennonites who had joined the forces because of undue pressure on them and who wanted to be released could be freed. The delegation was satisfied.⁵

The registration issue would come up again. A year later, hard on the heels of the Conscription Act, the Canada Registration Act of 1918 was passed. The superintendent of registration for Manitoba, P. C. Locke, called it "an effort by the Dominion Government to classify the available man and woman power of the Dominion."⁶ Organized resistance developed because of the doubt as to the real purpose of the Act. Mennonites had been exempted from the Conscription Act under the *Privilegium* and now claimed that therefore they should not be required to participate in this registration. The government was concerned that the defiance of the Manitoba Mennonites would spread to other parts of the country. Locke was aware of this danger and determined to deal with the situation. He met with Mennonite representatives in Winnipeg and also worked through the lawyer who represented the Reinländer Church, Mr. Alexander McLeod, K.C., of Morden. Finally a meeting was arranged between Mr. Locke and Reinländer leaders from both Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Locke arranged for McLeod and W. J. Rowe, Manitou, to accompany him. The meeting was to take place in Reinland on June 13, 1918. The registration deadline was June 22, 1918. The law made provision for fines and imprisonment if there was no compliance.

An exciting drama unfolded in Reinland that meeting day. At a brotherhood meeting at the church that morning it was decided not to register. Locke claims that he had been invited to that meeting for eleven o'clock and seemed to feel let down by finding out later that the conference had been held at 6 a.m. Elder Isaak M. Dyck simply stated that the "Registrarherr" arrived after the brotherhood meeting to find out about its results.⁷ It has not traditionally been the policy of the Reinländer Church to permit non-members to participate in its decision-making meetings with the brethren. What probably happened was that Mr. Locke was deliberately invited to meet with the elders and the rest of the ministry at eleven o'clock and an invitation for the brotherhood meeting was never intended.

Locke wrote about what took place at that meeting in the home of Rev. Peter Harms, Reinland, that day.⁸

I arrived at Morden about ten o'clock on the morning of the 13th. Mr. Rowe and Mr. McLeod met me. We drove out by far to the village of Rhineland situated about 14 miles from Morden. When I got three or four miles from there I could see horses and buggies, teams and democrats, streaming away in all directions from the village. That wasn't a healthy sign to me. My driver knew many of the people in the reserve. A team came towards us. I said to my driver, "Joe, turn your car crossways in the road." A democrat came along drawn by a beautiful pair of horses. Joe said to me in a low voice, "That is - - - -, he is the head man in one of the villages here." I got out of the car and walked over to the driver, put my hand out and introduced myself. I said, "You are Mr. - - - - and you are head man at - - - -? I was invited to a meeting of the congregations this morning. Why is everybody leaving Rhineland?" He looked rather nervously at me and said, "the meeting is over. We met at six o'clock this morning and prayed to the Lord and he told us not to register." That was rather a facer. I said to him, "Why was the meeting held at six this morning when I was invited for eleven o'clock?" He looked rather shamefacedly at me and said, "Mr. Locke, you know Mr. Harms?" In return I replied that Mr. Harms was a very old friend of mine. "Well," he said, "he expects you to go to his house." I said to him "I don't think I will go to the house. I think I will turn back to Morden but our people will have to register." Mr. McLeod, Mr. Rowe and I had a little talk and Mr. McLeod thought that I should go to Rhineland, although he was very frank in saying that he thought it was a waste of time. I drove into the village of Rhineland. I went up to Mr. Harms's house which was one of the largest houses in the village and as my car pulled up at the front gate, Mr. Harms came out. He invited me to come in and, of course, invited Mr. McLeod and Mr. Rowe with me. I said to him, "Mr. Harms, I don't think your people are playing fair with me. I met one of your men (naming him) on the road and he tells me that your people have decided to defy the provisions of the Act." He said, "Yes, we had a meeting at six o'clock this morning but I have asked the bishops and predigors to meet at my house and to meet you and to discuss the matter with you. We want to point out that we are not deliberately defying the Dominion Government." I walked into the house and there I met the bishop from the west reserve, a large number of Mennonite preachers and a tall, handsome man from Rosthern, Bishop Walls. I was introduced to each man in the room. A number of them were younger than I was, some of them older. We sat down around the sides of the room. Mr. McLeod, Mr. Rowe and I in one corner. Bishop Walls explained to me that he had been asked to act as interpreter. In the centre of the room

was a small table, perhaps a foot and a half square, and lying upon the table was a large leather bound Bible. We started our conference. Most of the conversation was between Bishop Walls and myself. I went over the provisions of the Act; I read them extracts from it; I read them letters received from Senator Robertson, and other members of the Dominion Government. I pointed out that this was simply an endeavour to get the man and the woman power of the Dominion made up so that the Government would know what efforts could be put forth should the war, then in its fourth year, carry on indefinitely. My knowledge of German is not great. I was able to follow some of the conversation between Bishop Walls and the other members of the conference but not all. I used every argument I could think of. The answer was "no, we cannot register, the Lord will not let us." Mr. McLeod said to me, "I am afraid we cannot do anything." I said to the Bishop, "Bishop, I have known the Mennonite people since my childhood. If you refuse to register it is my duty to enforce the Act and I propose to do so. The Act provides for ten days' imprisonment for failure to register, and for a fine of so much a day for each day after the 22nd of June you fail to register. I propose to enforce that. I cannot have the authority of the Dominion Government flouted." The old Manitoba Bishop then broke silence. He said to me in English. "You cannot put all the Mennonite people in jail." I said, "No, but I can guarantee you one thing, and that is that you and every man present in this room who fails to register on the 22nd of June will be imprisoned on the 23rd." Again the old Bishop spoke. He said, "I want you to clearly understand we do not blame you for doing your duty. If we don't register any man of us whom you want we'll report to Mr. McLeod's office at Morden on the morning of the 23rd ready to go to jail." I said, "Bishop, there is also a fine." He said, "Yes, and we will bring you in our bank books, the titles to our farms and lists of our stock." The answer was certainly a facer. Mr. McLeod again leaned over to me and said, "There isn't a thing we can do." I realized what a difficult situation was being created. I knew that in all probability other communities in other parts of Canada would defy the government's mandate. The Mennonite people had called my hand. They knew that I knew that they did not fear imprisonment or confiscation of their worldly goods in defence of a principle. No one realized that any better than I did. For a while nothing was said. I was desperately groping for some way out of the entanglement. Arguments and cajolements had got me nowhere. Threats of enforcing the rather unpleasant penalty provisions had had just as little effect. What was left to do? I did a lot of serious thinking. Then I got up, walked over to the middle of the room, picked up the Martin Luther Bible ly-

ing on the small table, and took it back to my seat with me. All eyes followed me. The Bible was in German. I had stated and a good many of those in the room knew that my knowledge of German was a very scanty one. I leafed over the pages and turned up the second chapter of St. Luke, the first verse. There it was: "And it came to pass in those days that there went forth a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed and all went to be taxed, everyone unto his own city, and Joseph, also went up from Galilee to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife."

To make sure I called my friend Mr. Harms over. I said to him, "Mr. Harms, my German, as you know, is rather faulty, but will you correct me if my English translation is not correct?"

Many years before I had remembered at Sunday School, Archbishop Matheson speaking about the same passage in the Bible, and explaining that it was not a taxation but an enrolment or registration and he then said to his class, "The Martin Luther version is right, the King James version is wrong." Anyway, there was the word in the old German Bible, 'engerracht'. Mr. Harms confirmed my translation. I walked back into the centre of the room, placed the open Bible on the table and said to the conference. "I have known your people as long as I can remember. A good many of the older men were clients of my father. Some of your people I know quite intimately. I know that this book is the Mennonite's law. Am I right?" I am quite sure that none of them knew what was coming except Mr. Harms. "My friends, if I can show you authority for this registration in the Bible will you do what I ask you to

do?" Some of the men thought I was going pretty far. I am quite sure my friends, McLeod and Rowe thought I had taken leave of my senses. I said, "This Government is only asking from you the same thing that Caesar Augustus asked the earthly father and mother of our Lord to do, and they did so. Will you listen to this passage from St. Luke's?" I read the first five verses of the second Chapter of St. Luke and I read it in German. I then translated it into English. There was rather a hushed silence and then the members of the conference began to talk among themselves. They gathered in little knots around the two Bishops. Then the old Manitoba Bishop turned to me. His voice was shaky. He was evidently very deeply stirred by what I had said to him. He walked over to the centre of the room where I was standing. He said, "Mr. Locke, we are deeply obliged to you. You have shown us the truth. We believed we were right this morning when we told you that we had been advised not to register. We have put the Government to a good deal of expense. Will you let us register our own people under your direction? We will give you all our young people who read and write and speak English well and they will do whatever work is necessary without expense." I said to him, "Bishop, I should be very glad to have the assistance of your young people but as I am paying all my help in other parts of the Province do not think that I should accept the offer of free services of your people here in the reserve. They will be paid the same as the rest of my staff.

There was no more trouble. Bishop Walls went back to Rosthern and in no part of Canada was there a more complete registration than amongst our Mennonite Canadians.

One of the fascinating revelations of the account is that a position that stood firm in the face of a summons to Winnipeg, threats of fine imprisonment and confiscation of property, yielded to a simple appeal to Scripture. Perhaps this incident provides a clue to a much misunderstood aspect of the so-called "stubborn" attitudes of the old Reinländer Church.

Who is a Mennonite?

Mennonites were exempted from military service by the *Privilegium*. But who was a Mennonite? Disturbed authorities were asking the questions. Even though lowering the age of baptism was practiced, at least in some circles, and others were certified as Mennonites by elders whether or not they were baptized, the concern and suspicion of the authorities was enough to instigate action. Or Abraham Dyck of Lowe Farm, who was unbaptized, was put into the barracks to prove that unbaptized youths did not qualify.⁹

Elder Abraham Doerksen of the Sommerfelder Church and Elder Jacob Hoepfner of the Bergthaler Church were now in a position when

Certificate

To whom it may concern.

This is to certify that the bearer of this note Heinrich F. Froese, whose signature appears below, is a member of the Reinland Mennonite church in Manitoba. He is exempted from Military Service by Order-in-Council of 1873 exempting mennonites from all forms of Military Service

Signature of bearer

Heinrich F. Froese.

Dated at Neuenburg
this 25 day of May
1918

Signed Johann Friesen
Bishop.

they were forced to define the term *Mennonite*. Their position which was accepted by the authorities was summarized as follows:

Our *Gemeinschaft* has always considered its children and young people its own as much as the baptized members and petitions for exemption have always intended to include young people of military age whether they were baptized or not. Any assurances which provided for less than that would never have persuaded us to accept the invitation of the Canadian government to settle in this country.¹⁰

Simple proof of identity as a Mennonite according to a definition like the one above was henceforth sufficient to secure exemption from military service.

World War II

War clouds were already visible on the horizon when representatives of Mennonite denominations gathered for a conference in the Linkler Mennonite Brethren Church on May 15, 1939. Participants presented the Canadian Conference, the Mennonite Brethren Church, the Old Mennonites, the Bruderthaler (today Evangelical Mennonite Brethren), Kleine Gemeinde, Old Colony, Rudnerweider, Church of God in Christ (Mennonite) and the Hutterian Brethren. The meeting under the chairmanship of Elder David Toews, Rosthern, and attended

The original certificate that exempted Heinrich F. Froese from military service in World War I is reproduced here.

by Dr. Harold S. Bender, was informal and no binding decisions were to be attempted. It presented an opportunity for dialogue. Each participating conference was asked to express its view on the question of non-resistance and alternative service. Elder David Toews was especially concerned that all Mennonites be united. Division, he said, had caused considerable difficulties in World War I.¹¹

The war that had been feared came. On September 7, 1940 representatives of Manitoba churches met in the Sommerfelder Church at Kronsweide under the Chairmanship of Sommerfelder Elder Peter A. Toews. Unity was a major concern. At this meeting a Committee of Elders was formed to represent the interests of the Mennonite churches in dealings with the government.¹² The committee consisted of the following elders:

Name of Elder	Affiliation	Address
Peter A. Toews	Sommerfelder	Altona
Jacob Froese	Old Colony	Winkler
David Schulz	Berghaler	Altona
Wm. H. Falk	Rudnerweider	Altona
Peter S. Wiebe	Chortitzer	Chortitz
Jacob T. Wiebe	Church of God in Christ (Mennonite)	Greenland
Jacob Kroeker	Kleine Gemeinde	Morris
Peter P. Reimer	Kleine Gemeinde	Steinbach
Johann P. Bueckert	Blumenorter	Gretna
Heinrich S. Voth	Mennonite Brethren	Winkler

Living quarters for Mennonite conscientious objectors at Timberton. Reinland men on the photo include John Janzen, Henry Froese, Jake S. Zacharias, Henry Janzen, Frank Froese. One Reinland man, Henry Born (not on picture) was jailed when he did not answer the draft call.



At a subsequent meeting at Rosenhof on September 16, 1940, an executive consisting of three members — Elder Peter A. Toews, Elder David Schulz and Rev. Jacob F. Barkman, Steinbach, was elected to the committee. Together with secretary Rev. David P. Reimer this executive was to co-ordinate many negotiations with the government at the National War Service Board for most of the war.¹³

However, a divided Canadian Mennonite opinion was to frustrate attempts to create a unified Mennonite position. To the immigrants of the 1920s the idea of alternative service was not new. A considerable body of *Kanadier* Mennonites (a term used to describe Mennonites who came to Canada prior to the 1920s migration), especially in the provinces west of Manitoba and including Elder David Toews of Rosthern, also favoured offering alternative service to the government. A proposal to perform medical service had considerable support. The Mennonite Brethren generally leaned in that direction.

Initially the churches composed largely of *Kanadier* Mennonites in Manitoba were opposed to all forms of alternative service. The difference in approach can be quite readily understood in terms of the

widely divergent experiences of World War I and before but it was unfortunate, and in the long run, proved to be unnecessary. The result of the split in views was that two different organizations represented the Mennonites before the federal government.¹⁴

The Manitoba executive favouring alternative service consisted of Elder Johann Enns, Winnipeg, C. F. Klassen, Winnipeg, and Jake Crocker, Winkler. It was elected at a meeting in Winnipeg on October 4, 1940. The committee of Elders Toews, Schulz and Barkman continued to represent the Sommerfelder, Bergthaler, Kleine Gemeinde, Church of God in Christ (Mennonite), Chortitzer, Old Colony, Ludnerweider and Bruderthaler churches.¹⁵ The Blumenort Church, which had temporarily withdrawn from the committee to work with the new executive, returned to active participation in the Committee of Elders sometime after the meeting of June 22, 1942.¹⁶

By the end of the war and after a great deal of experience the two executives gravitated much closer towards a common point of view. Both had to make concessions; both eventually rejected all forms of service in uniform and under military command; both eventually accepted various forms of civilian alternative service.¹⁷

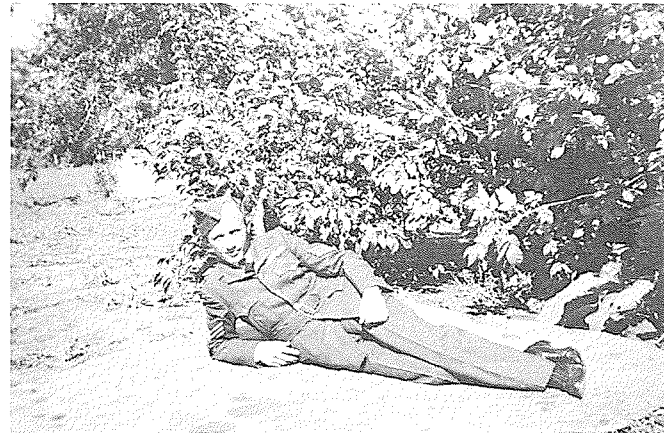
Conscription Plebiscite, 1942

Many votes have taken place at the Reinland polling station in the 20th century but certainly none was more strange than the plebiscite of 1942.

The first selected draft of men between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-four occurred in the autumn of 1940 and was intended to give these men a thirty day training period. Gradually the age limit was lowered to eighteen and the period was extended to four months. In 1941 the government announced that draftees would be kept in service for home defence after the training period. Prime Minister Mackenzie King had pledged that conscription for overseas service would never be imposed.

As the Allied situation on the European front became more grave and the Canadian troop situation seemed increasingly inadequate in view of Canada's commitment to the overseas war effort, Mackenzie King in April, 1942, resorted to a plebiscite to free him from all past pledges and to permit the government to enact full conscription for overseas service.¹⁸

The Committee of Elders urged all the members of the congregations they represented not to vote in the plebiscite.¹⁹ The committee feared that participation would jeopardize the conscientious objector status of the Mennonites. A strong negative vote among Manitoba Mennonites would certainly have hardened opinion against their cause. The committee informed Mackenzie King of its stand and King replied with a letter of recognition of its stance.²⁰



George Krahn flew with the Royal Canadian Air Force during World War II and was killed in action. He is buried in the Netherlands.

Mrs. Frank Paetkau (Mary Zacharias) visits her husband at the CO camp.



Voting day came. Reinland poll clerks J. K. Brandt and A. W. Friesen showed up at the polling station, the Jacob Peters residence. They sat there all day as the law required. Not one voter appeared.²¹

Conscientious Objectors (C.O.s)

On February 17, 1941, the executive of Elders Toews, Schulz and Rev. Barkman, accompanied by Elder Jacob Froese of the Old Colony Church met with Judge Adamson, Deputy Minister Davis, Major L. Fleche, Howard Winkler, M.P., Rene Jutras, M.P. and others in Ottawa to discuss the status of Mennonite young men of military age.²²

Several questions were raised by the committee. Would it be possible to free Mennonite young men from all forms of service? The answer was no. Public opinion would not permit that at the time. But alternative opportunities that would not offend the consciences of the Mennonites would be provided. Was the Order-in-Council of 1873 still fully in effect? The Order-in-Council was still valid. Why then did Mennonite youths have to appear in court to be exempted from military service? It had to be established who was a Mennonite or conscientious objector.

Three alternatives were then presented to the committee:

1. Non-combatant service without arms, under military jurisdiction
2. Hospital care, care for the wounded, under military, perhaps civilian jurisdiction.
3. Work in parks or road projects under civilian jurisdiction.

The four Mennonite representatives immediately and unequivocally opted for the third choice which involved forestry service. The young men were to receive \$15.00 per month plus room and board. Clothing would not be provided. Later youths working on farms received \$25.00 per month. The rest of the wages went to the Red Cross. By the end of the war the 10,700 C.O.s in Canada had contributed \$2,000,000 to the Red Cross.

The Mennonite churches were permitted to provide ministers to serve their young men.

The following form entitled ministers to free admission to all camps:

Victoria, B.C.

To all Camp Foremen

This will introduce Rev. Mr. (name of Minister) who will be visiting the camps in the next few months. Please extend to him every courtesy and accommodation when required, and assist him with transportation whenever possible.

Yours truly,

H. G. McWilliams

Superintendent A.S.W.

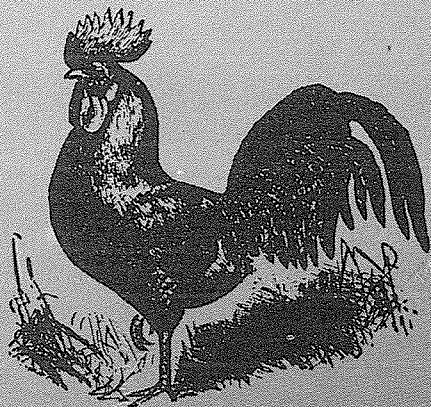
Many middle-aged residents or former residents of Reinland recall their wartime experiences as C.O.s in camps and on farms.

Learning

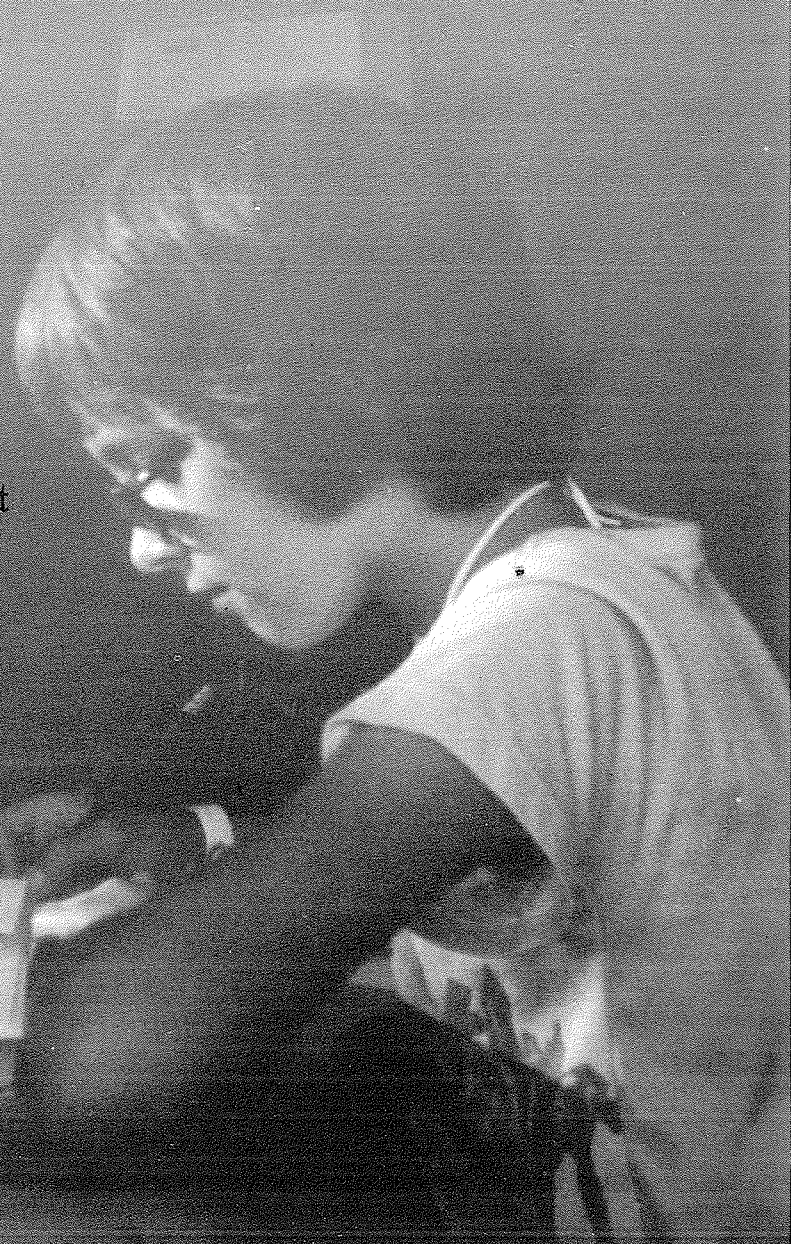
Instruction in the schools is absolutely essential because the school is the first nursery of Christianity. — Sommerfelder Schulregeln

From the first years of West Reserve settlement, the school was regarded as an integral part of the church community. The education of children was the responsibility of the family and of the church, and not of the state. Even after the Reinland school was no longer under church jurisdiction, a strong identification of the school with the village community continued to exist. Strong resistance developed at every point where the school-community interrelationship was challenged. In 1976 when most smaller community schools in the province had disappeared, some village schools, including that of Reinland, were still existing and testifying to the strength of these communities.

Auf, auf, ihr Kinder, zieht euch an,
Die Glock' schlägt sechs, euch weckt
der Hahn.



Der Hahn hat oft gekrähet heut,
Steh auf, mein Kind, es ist schon Zeit
Zur Schul' zu gehn. O lerne wohl,
Was lebenslang dir nützen soll.



CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Education

Education has been a primary concern of the village since its beginning. The history of Reinland education falls into several eras. The early establishment of the school and the progressive experiments of Wilhelm Rempel were certainly one phase of this story. The increasing conservatism with its resultant withdrawal of the school from the public school system was another. This phase would roughly encompass the years 1890-1916. The school legislation of 1916, the *Zwangsschule* (school established by coercion) of Snowdon, the last-ditch struggle of the Reinländer Mennonite Church to keep the school in the hands of the village and the church, the final exodus to Mexico — all these constituted a period of intense conflict. After this exodus the Reinland School District was established in 1925. It lasted till 1973 when the present phase in Reinland education commenced. The Reinland School District was absorbed into the Garden Valley School Division.

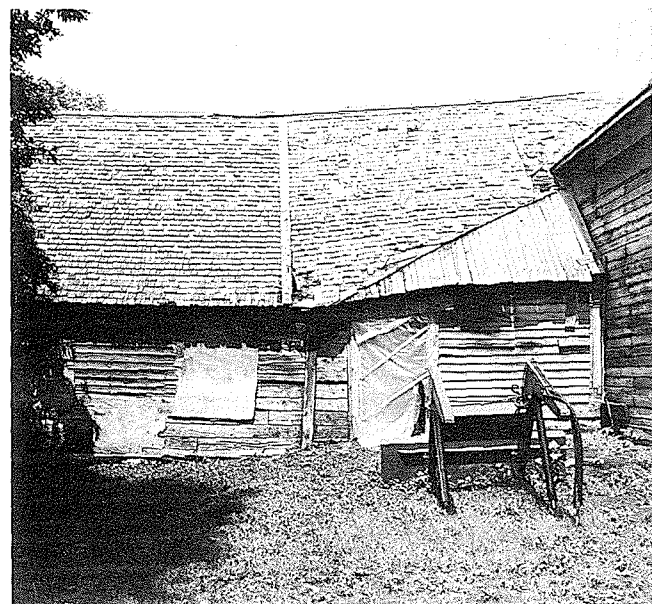
Beginnings

The years of 1875-1878 were the years of village settlement. It is not possible to establish with certainty when formal school instruction of children began in Reinland. Did it commence in 1875-1876? The old records do not say. But it is quite possible, for in a letter to the villages dated January 12, 1876, Elder Johann Wiebe requested that the old hymn tunes which had already been abandoned in Russia but were now introduced in Manitoba, be taught in the schools of the colony.¹ Whether an actual school building was constructed soon after the arrival of the settlers or whether the first classes were held in a private home or who the first pedagogue was — these, too, remain unanswered questions.

In the autumn of 1876, however, formal education had commenced. In October of that year all villages received a letter from *Oberbrister* Isaak Müller ordering them to have schools by November 12, 1876. Two years later Wilhelm Rempel began his teaching career in Reinland.

Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

As far as is known, this shed attached to the barn on the Abe H. Enns yard was Reinland's first school building.



Wilhelm Rempel — Pioneer Educator

When Wilhelm Rempel came to Canada in 1878 he had already taught in Russia for eight years. He now began farming at Hoffnungsfeld. After four months he received two visitors from Reinland, *Schulze* Franz Froese and *Beisitzer* Wilhelm Esau. They persuaded Rempel to accept the teaching position in Reinland.² He began teaching in November, 1878. In November, 1881, a private school with an enrolment of 21 pupils was begun in the home of Jacob Giesbrecht.³ This school ran until the fall of 1882. It is not known why this occurred. It is altogether possible that two schools were run simultaneously during this one year — a village school, which was private, and a more progressive one in the home of Jacob Giesbrecht which was also private. Wilhelm Rempel taught in the Giesbrecht home during this period.⁴

There is an interesting note that appeared in *Die Rundschau* during that school year:

Das von den Schülern der „Reinland Privatschule“ gespendete Missionsgeld im Betrage von 5.70 ist wol für die Darlington Missionsstation bestimmt, daher wir es der betreffenden Behörde zugestellt haben.⁵ (The missions money totalling \$5.70, donated by the pupils of the Reinland Private School, is apparently designated for the Darlington Mission Station. For that reason we have forwarded it to the proper board.)

In the fall of 1882 Reinland was organized into a district school. Mr. Rempel became the teacher in that school and continued to serve until May, 1884.⁶ Mr. Rempel's direct impact on Reinland's children ceased, but he was to be fondly and respectfully remembered for many decades. Even today older people talk about a certain Mr. Rempel who taught their parents or grandparents. Mr. Jacob P. Peters, Reinland, recalls that his father had learned both English and German under two days per week English program conducted in Mr. Rempel's classroom. Mr. Julius Toews of Steinbach recalls how well his mother (a daughter of Jacob Giesbrecht) knew the German preposition. Reinland village undoubtedly felt Mr. Rempel's influence for several decades.

In 1884 Mr. Rempel resigned his teaching post to become full-time secretary-treasurer of the Rhineland Municipality.⁷ But his work in education did not cease. He was appointed Inspector of Schools in December, 1884.⁸ As such he inspected both East and West Reserve schools as well as those of the Scratching River settlement near Morris. His inspector's reports contain some interesting comments. In 1885 Rempel stated that there were "twelve school houses built for the purpose and ten rooms rented for the same."⁹ He then listed the villages in which there were school houses: Kronsthal, Bergthal, Schoenthal, Neubergthal, Neuanlage (West), Edenburg, Reinland, Grünfeld, Steinbach, Blumenhoff, Blumenort and Rosenort. The following had rented



facilities: Schoenhorst, Gnadenfeld, Altona, Hochstadt (West) Rosenfeld, Weidenfeld, Schoenau, Sommerfeld, Hochstadt (East) Rosenhoff. It should be borne in mind that this is not a complete list of Mennonite schools at the time. It is a list of the district (public) schools that were receiving government grants and were in Rempel's inspection. Schools of both the Reinländer Church of the West Reserve and the Chortitzer Church of the East Reserve were private church schools at the time and these were not listed in the report. Kleine Gemeinde schools were generally district schools in the mid-eighties. These, together with five or six West Reserve schools, are singled out for praise in one report.¹⁰

Rempel also mentioned that all schools but one were equipped with blackboard — Blumenort (East Reserve) even had two. "There is no

Reinland pioneer teacher Wilhelm Rempel and his family. Standing, left to right: Wilhelm Rempel, daughter Sarah, son-in-law Janzen, son Wilhelm. Seated: Mrs. Sarah (Abrams) Rempel (wife of Wilhelm Rempel), sons Peter and Gerhard, daughter Mrs. Janzen.

other apparatus, except one map 'The Easter and Western Hemispheres' in Reinland, and common map 'Manitoba and the Northwest Territories,' in Hochstadt (East)."¹¹ Gestetners, overhead projectors, and laboratories did not clutter the classroom of the good old days.

Amid notes of optimism, Rempel's reports revealed a deep underlying concern about education in the Mennonite district schools. He expressed concern about the attitudes of parents and trustees. He was concerned about the impression that "an advancing of the school would lead the Mennonites into inconvenience and conscientious troubles." He added that "under such circumstances it might be advisable to drop the school districts rather than doubtfully stick to them."¹²

In 1887 Rempel summed up his report as follows:

But it is not only the teachers whom I would hold responsible for the defects in conducting their schools, for there is a great deal of indifference amongst the farmers as to properly educating their children, and even opposition as to several of the subjects to be taught, and it seems to me as if we will have to wait for years to come till our wrongly informed people surmount that aversion prevailing amongst them regarding the better education of our rising generation.¹³

Mr. Rempel, who had attended the Chortitzer *Zentralschule* (Chortitza Central School) in Russia, revealed in a letter written much later, that he also had concerns about the education of his own children. "As long as we lived in Reinland and the district school was in operation we could feel satisfied. But what if the district school should cease to exist . . . ?"¹⁴ These views were shared by Rempel's brother-in-law, Reinland merchant Peter Abrams. In February, 1883, Abrams wrote:

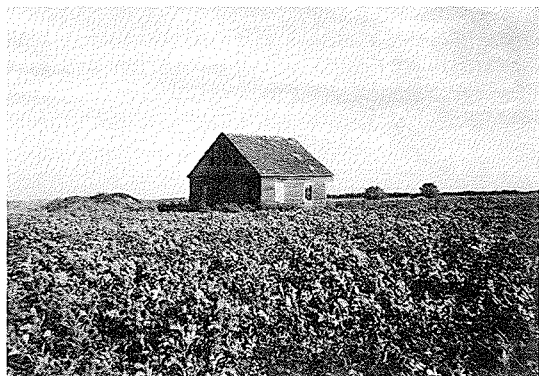
Da sind namentlich in erster Linie die Schulen, diese Pflanzstätten unserer lieben Jugend, in einer höchst traurigen Lage, und während man von allen Seiten Berichte über Schulverbesserung liest und von Ausbildung tüchtiger Schullehrer, scheint man hier nicht einmal daran zu denken.¹⁵

In the first place the schools, these nurseries of our dear youth, are in a most sad state and while from all sides one reads reports of the improvement of schools and of the training of proficient teachers, people here do not even seem to think of these things.

In the spring of 1888 Rempel and Abrams (the latter had now moved to Gretna) read an announcement in the *Herold der Wahrheit* that interested them greatly. A teaching demonstration was to take place in Mountain Lake, Minnesota, on May 8. The two decided to make the trip and see "what our brothers" were doing. They made sure to be at the school in good time so that they would hear everything "from A to Z."

Mr. Rempel writes of the joy of that experience.¹⁶ Everything reminded him of the Chortitzer *Zentralschule* and its teacher Rev Heinrich Epp (who was elected Elder of the Chortitzer Church in

Reinland's second school building now stands alone in a field near Haskett.



enced. Meetings were held. Elder Johann Funk of the Berghthaler Church, who had been concerned about educational deterioration in Manitoba, was interested in the new venture that these men were suggesting. Finally in February, 1889, a newly-founded *Schulverein* (School Society) decided to build a school 30 ft. x 50 ft. in Gretna.¹⁷ Peter Abrams and Wilhelm Esau, who had also been a Reinland pioneer settler, each contributed \$150.00. Gretna merchant Erdman Penner, who operated a branch store in Reinland, contributed \$300.00. Wilhelm Rempel became the school's first teacher. Later, under the leadership of H. H. Ewert, the school was to evolve into a Normal School for the training of Mennonite teachers and eventually into the Mennonite Collegiate Institute. The importance of the pioneering work and the vision of men like Wilhelm Rempel should not be underestimated.

The Reinland Church School

Before 1890 there was much turmoil in Reinland's school system. The village had a private school, then two private schools, then a district school or apparently a district school and a private school simultaneously. According to NWMP officer St. George (Chapter Nine, q.v.) it would seem that there were two schools in Reinland in 1890. The district school was to return in 1921, when for a number of years there would again be two schools. That means that the Reinländer Church school functioned as Reinland's only school for no longer than thirty-one years after the Wilhelm Rempel era and the first district school controversy.

From the 1890s to the beginning of the 1920s the church school under the supervision of the Reinländer Church had the educational field to itself. Children from families of the Sommerfelder Church as well as from the few non-Mennonite families that lived in the village from time to time all attended that school. This included some Ukrainian children and the German Lutheran family Weber.

This much-maligned village school deserves some attention, especially its function after the departure of Mr. Wilhelm Rempel and the first Reinland district school. The deterioration of the private school after the 1890s was undeniable and a continuing degenerative trend could be and was predicted by some far-sighted persons at the time. The idealism of the pioneers was waning. Those teachers who had received training in Russia were getting old; there were no newly-trained teachers to succeed them. E. K. Francis draws attention to this stagnation.¹⁸ He asserts that the real weakness of the Mennonite private school (and he could have added the grant-supported Mennonite public school) lay not in its curriculum, not in weak methodology, not in its church controlled administration, but in the exhaustion of the educational heritage brought from Russia. Just like the schools in the pioneer years in Russia up to the time of Johann Cornies, the Manitoba

Mennonite private schools were operating in a vacuum. They were cut off from the educational and cultural activities that were gaining momentum in Russia in the 1880s and 1890s and at the same time they were isolated from educational influences outside the colonies in Manitoba.

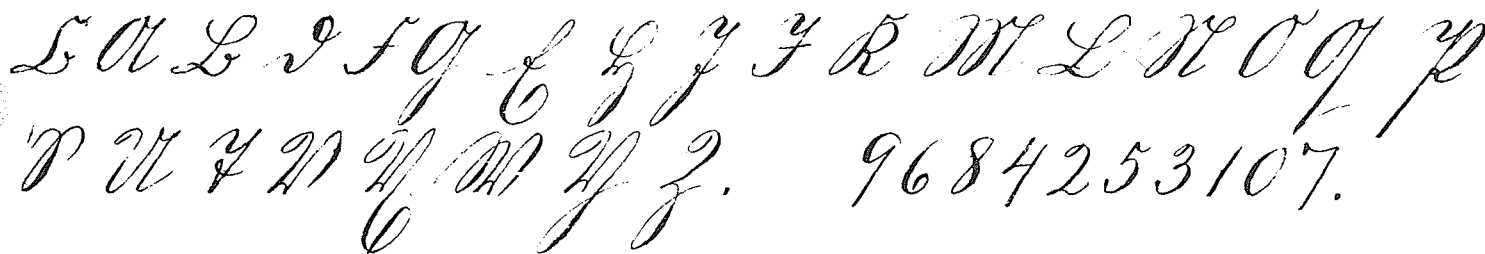
The church was concerned about education and the perpetuation of the church's values. It was interested in preparing children for life in the village society it envisioned for them. But it feared the dangers of the encroachment of the outside world and its undermining influence on society as it existed in the colony. In this context even the Gretna school was feared as a potentially destructive instrument.

Village school teachers, often untrained and poorly paid, continued to teach pupils to the best of their ability during those years, thus ensuring a continuing literacy among the new generations that grew up in Reinland. The lives of many people of Reinland's older generation are enriched today through the unselfish work of those teachers. This is a lasting credit to them.

There is a long-standing myth that the teachers of private schools were people who "could not make it", men who were teachers in winter and herdsmen in summer. There is no evidence in the herdsmen's contracts or teachers' contracts or anywhere in the village records that this was ever the case in Reinland. It is certainly true that the teacher Jacob Peters, for example, was the owner and operator of a steam threshing outfit.¹⁹ And if a Reinland teacher did "stoop" (the emphasis is on the quotation marks) to herding cows during summer to supplement his meagre earnings, who can lay blame on him?

And can one doubt that the village teacher of the day, even though labouring under severe limitations, was not just as concerned, perhaps much more concerned, about the fulfillment of his task than many a teacher is today? Jacob Peters, who taught in Reinland from 1916 to 1921, was a conservative man, a *Vorsänger* in the Reinländer Church and a believer in its teachings. He also believed in his own mission in the classroom and was convinced that migration, not compromise, was the only way to preserve the Christian community in the face of state school competition. He saw the public school as an incursion on the freedom of that community. (Was he so wrong?) His attitude to his task was neither filled with illusions nor naive. He wrote in his diary on December 21, 1921, some months after he had left Reinland to teach in Neuhorst:

So sitze ich denn wieder wie schon so oft bei der Lampe des Morgens in der Schulstube, die Kinder fangen an zu kommen, und mein Herz ist oft mit den Gedanken angefüllt: Was thu, was fang ich an . . . Ach Gott, fördere doch das Werk meiner Hände nach deinem Wohlgefallen, die kleinen mir anvertrauten Seelen zu dir zu führen. Schenk Weisheit und Verstand sie so zu lehren wie es vor dir gefällig ist.²⁰



The Vorschrift (schoolmaster's example of handwriting) of Reinland teacher Jacob Peters.



School teacher Isaak F. Dyck served in Reinland for a record total period of nine years.

Specific information on many of Reinland's early teachers is meagre. Several Reinland residents remember Mr. Isaak F. Dyck who taught in the village from 1909 to 1916 and again in 1921-1922.²¹

Even though the schoolmaster was sometimes assisted by an Unterlehrer (assistant teacher), sheer numbers alone would have been enough to make Reinland classes challenging to the most seasoned veteran in the profession. On November 23, 1920, Jacob Peters reported perfect attendance — a total of 72.

The class was divided into four sections: *Fibler*, *Katechismer*, *Testamentler* and *Bibler*. The *Fibler* were the beginners who used the *Fibel* (primer). They learned the alphabet. The *Fibel* itself had a picture of a rooster on the last page. This rooster had the gift of laying a cent and occasionally if a student had performed really well it produced a five cent piece. With heavy emphasis on "sounding out" words, the first reading took place. The catechism was the chief text of the *Katechismer*, the New Testament of the *Testamentler* and the Bible of the *Bibler*. The only additional text used was the *Gesangbuch* (hymn book). The schools were inspected by the ministry of the church. Ministers and other visitors could see immediately upon entering the classroom who the sharp learners were, for pupils were seated according to rank. A pupil who did well was promoted to a higher rank. A top ranking student who went into an academic tailspin had to move farther down the row.

Corporal punishment was common, especially for the boys. Great corrective powers were ascribed to the rod. Good parents gave the teacher solid backing and pupils, especially those with brothers and sisters in school, often feared that which came after classes more than that which transpired at school.

Boys were seated on one side and girls on the other. Boys and girls were also expected to play separately.

The *Gesangbuch* and the old melodies were used exclusively. The *Choralbuch* of H. Franz used by the Bergthaler and the Sommerfelder was not tolerated by the Reinländer Church ministry.

Great emphasis was placed on memorization, whether this applied

to the catechism, hymns or the multiplication tables. There was much drill-class recitation of the multiplication tables as a regular school feature.

One aspect considered very important was handwriting or as the village schoolmaster called it: *Schönschreiben*. Pupils were known to develop skills that turned handwriting into an art.

Pupils of the senior class, the *Bibler*, were often used to help those in other classes who had problems.

But then, as now, no matter what regulations were imposed or what methodology was employed, or what curriculum was followed, the teacher was in the last analysis responsible for the atmosphere in class. Then, as now, some teachers were regarded as tyrannical and others as benevolent. Then, as now, some teachers were able to create an atmosphere conducive to learning and others were less successful.

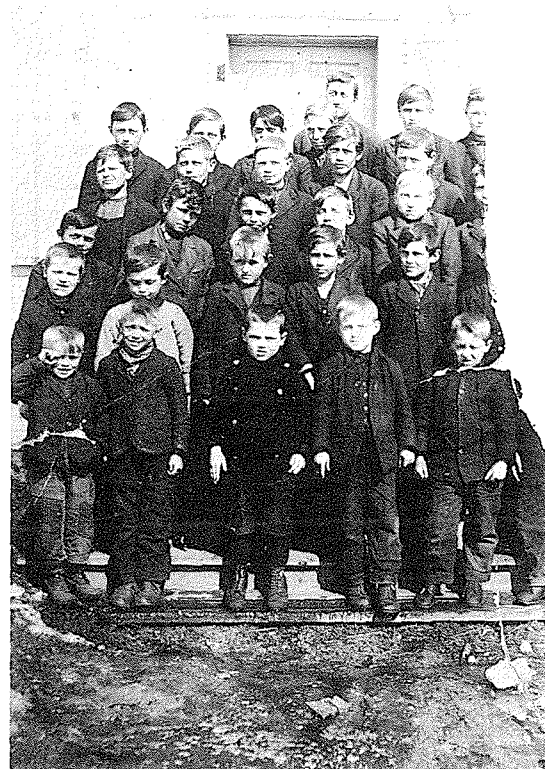
In spite of all its weaknesses and limitations, the private school did in fact teach people skills that served them well in their rural village setting.

It taught them arithmetic. The calculations on Reinland's old granary walls are accurate. The ability to calculate was a matter of pride to the private school graduate. The ability to calculate mentally was considered an art.

It taught children to read. Former Reinland private school pupils became avid readers of *Mennonitische Rundschau*, the *Nordwesten*, the *Steinbach Post* and other German periodicals.

It taught children to write. Not only the samples of artful handwriting, but countless letters to friends and relatives are testimony of this skill. In the pioneer years, when even relatively short distances were barriers, this was important.

The private village school reinforced the values of its surrounding society. It taught pupils to relate to that society socially, economically and philosophically. It reinforced religious values and helped the roots of faith to sink into firm soil. All these things were objectives that the school was designed to attain. The private school was, to a large degree, successful by its own standards.



Picture fragment. Isaak F. Dyck with part of his class around 1914.

Another Vorschrift of teacher Jacob Peters.

b d i n g f f i k j l n o m z w y /
A n n m n z . 9 0 6 8 / 2 4 3 5 7

Vörsiffrate Graft für

Maria Peters

Reinland

Januar 18^{ter} 1910

No 2.

Wom Geburt.

"Die Luft ist all der Wein, Oben = Gucken imt.
unserm, und laß die befehlen sein, Tanten
Linden und Lukanen, Gib uns Gott imt Tofte die
Ummen, laß die ifen Hoff nehmen, Tögeu Nichter! fong
lof, für die Mittern imt die Morfen, für die Kanten
imt die noch futen wir der Welt ungeriffen, laß die
pfenken die Güte imt die Gmüthigkeid befehen, Mo ist die
noch bitten more, lafen uns die fely pfenken.

Handwriting notebook of Maria Peters, Reinland pupil in 1921.

Reinland Builds a New School — 1910

A new village school was built in Reinland in 1910. Demke, a well known Winkler area carpenter, supervised construction. The west section of the building was designed as a classroom; the east section functioned as a teacherage. In 1943 the teacherage was converted to serve as a second classroom. After serving as a school building until 1951 the structure was purchased by the Blumenorter Church and moved onto the church property where it served as a kitchen and dining facility.

The break-down of the school construction costs in the 1910 village records is a little history of its own.

1910 SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION — THE FINANCIAL PICTURE

The following financial statement is a translation from the village records

DATE	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
Firstly	Paid Demke for labor	\$345.
	Demke reimbursed for expenses	2.
	Paid Joh. Loewen	4.
April 23	Paid Johann Quiring for 18 loads of rocks	7.
	Paid Wilhelm Peters for 20 loads of gravel	10.

April 29	Paid in Haskett for nails, locks and hinges	40.00
	Paid for cement	92.50
	Paid Heinrich Froese for paint	24.50
	Paid Peter Wieler for digging cellar at the school	3.00
	Paid Johann Hiebert for digging cellar at the school	3.00
	Paid Jacob Letkeman for digging cellar and cementing at school	4.50
	Paid the teacher for carrying the cement out of the school	1.00
	In Winkler for latches, lock and hinges	2.50
	Paid J. Hiebert for getting one load of gravel .....	.25
	Bought 3 lbs. of 1½ inch nails .....	.15
	Paid for two locks in Haskett	5.00
	Paid for lumber in Gretna	7.65
	In Winkler for various items	5.50
	For bricks from the other side of Walhalla	11.05
	Jacob Thiessen for digging cellar at the school	3.00
une 27	At Kroeker for shingle nails and screws .....	.80
	Paid Gerhard Wiebe for painting	24.30
	Johann Peters — brought oats to school, 6 bushels @ 25¢ per bushel	1.50
	Paid Isaak Dyck for lime, lumber, bricks, rocks and hooks	7.30
	Paid Funks in Winkler for paper and cement	18.55
	The cement from Cornelius Friesen's bags	3.70
May 28	Paid for lumber at Wiebe's Winkler	750.00
October 31	Final payment at Wiebe's Winkler	523.45
March 11	Jacob Froese for 2½ kegs of nails	8.80
	Paid registration fee for school .....	.75
May 31	Paid the masons from Morden	58.00
	Johann Letkeman for 11 gal. of linseed oil @ \$1.10 per gallon	12.10
	Johann Letkeman for 5 paint brushes (\$1.65) ½ gallon of turpentine (\$0.70), 1 lb. blueing (\$0.25)	2.60
	Also got paint (\$2.85), 2 dozen screws (\$0.05)	2.90
	Heinrich Froese for eavestroughs on the school	9.45
	H. Froese for 6 plates of cast iron	15.95
	Paid D. Penner for masonwork	21.45
	3¼ gallons of paint @ 60 cents per gallon. (there must have been a discount - ed.)	1.80
	½ gallon linseed oil .....	.55
	½ gallon linseed oil .....	.55
	1/6 gallon Hard Oil .....	.40
	Soda, white earth, cotton cheese cloth	1.58
	A wooden pail broken at school while cementing .....	.20
	Purchased block and rope for the school .....	.35
	Paid three loads of gravel for the school	1.50
	Paid one year's fire insurance for the school and herdsman's house	3.38
	Paid H. Froese for building stove	35.00
	16 stove pipes (\$1.60), 4 elbows (\$0.70), 1 flue (\$0.10), 11 yards of cotton (\$1.15) and 1 broom (\$0.40)	3.95
	Jacob Wieler for 4 bushels of oats donated to the village as feed for Demke's horse during construction	1.00



Reinland's third school building, in 1910.

A special village levy was needed in 1910 to pay for the costs. Every *Vollwirt* was required to contribute \$101.99. *Halbwirte* paid \$50.99½. In 1910 there were thirteen *Vollwirte* and eight *Halbwirte*. That means that about \$1734.00 was raised in this manner during that year.

The Snowdon Era 1921-1925

The Snowdon School was a direct consequence of the legislation of 1916. Its imposition was greeted very coldly by village residents. It was a symbol of the *Schulzwang* (coercion to attend a school imposed from the outside). It was foreign in name, foreign in that it was administered by an outside official trustee, J. F. Greenway, foreign in that it violated the basic educational tenet that Reinland villagers and their forbears of many centuries had held — that education was the responsibility of the family and the church, not that of the state. A mitigating factor was that members of the Mennonite Church were still permitted to carry on instruction provided that these had the credentials that the state required.

The location of the school is also worthy of note. The School Attendance Act of 1916 stipulated that all children aged 7-14 and living within three miles of a public school were legally required to attend the school. The school was built at the south end of Reinland. The three-mile radius encompassed not only Reinland but also Rosengart and Schoenwiese, in which villages public schools were not built at the time. Reinland's private school alone had an enrolment of over seventy. The Schoenwiese and Rosengart must also have had a fairly high private school enrolment at the time is a reasonable assumption. Yet only a single one-room school was built in the area, making all parents within the three-mile radius subject to fines or prison sentences if they failed to send their children to that school.

The first Snowdon Teacher did not exactly have his hands full. Young Peter W. Warkentin assumed his duties in December, 1921. School was open for seventeen days in December. The Half-Yearly Report of December 30, 1921, signed by John Stratton, Justice of the Peace, and J. F. Greenway, Secretary, indicates compliance with the law regarding the flying of the Union Jack.²³

One pupil, Cornelius P. Fehr, aged 13, Grade One, attended during that first month of Snowdon's operation. Reinland's early public school records indicated a preponderance of pupils of all ages in Grade One. When students were transferred to the English language public school, they were simply started off in the first grade. In the spring of 1922 nine pupils, three girls and six boys attended Snowdon. They ranged in age from 6-13 and all were in the first grade. The following is a list of the students with the accompanying attendance totals for the spring half year:

John Giesbrecht	3½
Helena Derksen	2
John Fehr	15½
Abram Giesbrecht	3½
Cornelius Fehr	16½
Catharina Derksen	3
Isaac Derksen	2½
Joseph Yurchak	17
Annie Yurchak	3
Total Pupil Days	66½

The school was open until April. The Spring Half-Yearly Report, 1922, indicates that the school was open for 78 days. There were only 5½ pupil days. One person commented on this arithmetical achievement: *Dee haben de Rejierung mol domm jeleat.*

Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

The Snowdon school building now standing at Wakeham.





Mr. Jacob A. Schellenberg and his Snowdon class.

It should be kept in mind that the Reinland private school taught by Mr. Jacob Peters was still in full operation with around seventy pupils. It is also possible that some parents had their pupils attend Snowdon only for a few days to satisfy the minimum legal requirement. In any case the Snowdon attendance record indicates only a minimal degree of acceptance of the public school.

In the fall of 1922 Mr. Jacob A. Schellenberg, who was to teach in the village for seven years, became the second Snowdon teacher. A total of thirteen pupils, including five from the Schellenberg family, attended school during 1922-1923. The attendance increased to twenty-eight by Christmas, 1923, and to forty-three by June, 1924. Several reasons could be cited as probable factors in the sharp increase in enrolment.

TABLE: PUPILS IN ATTENDANCE AT SNOWDON SCHOOL FALL TERM, 1923

Grade One

John Letkeman
Cornelius Thiessen
Annie Letkeman
Mary Derksen
Lena Derksen
Tina Derksen
Isaac Derksen
Peter Thiessen
Klaas Letkeman
Margaret Harms
Neta Paetkau
George Schellenberg
John Woelke
Jacob Ens

Grade Two

Margaret Chetter

Mary Ens

Mary Harms
Annie Yurchak
Tina Paetkau
Abram Paetkau

Grade Three

Annie Paetkau
Margaret Letkeman
Joseph Yurchak
Herman Schellenberg
Lena Letkeman

Grade Five

Willie Schellenberg

Grade Six

Abram Schellenberg

Grade Seven

Peter Schellenberg

1. Harsher fines coerced more parents to comply with the new order. A former Reinland resident recently recalled how as a young boy, he was asked to transfer from the Reinland private school to Snowdon after his father had to pay a fine. He transferred at his father's request.
2. The emigration to Mexico was in full swing. The strongest adherents to the old order were leaving and especially its leadership.
3. New Mennonite immigrants from Russia were arriving.
4. Slowly villagers were accepting the public school system. This acceptance grew not only with the accommodation to new circumstances that came with the passing of time but also with the growing prestige of Mr. Schellenberg.

From January 2 to March 15, 1924, Mr. Schellenberg conducted night school for older youth and adults. The following attended the particular session:

Abram D. Paetkau
 Dietrich G. Ens
 Jacob K. Letkeman
 Gerhard G. Harms
 David A. Paetkau
 Peter P. Peters
 Jacob J. Thiessen
 Peter Yurchak
 Isaac G. Harms

Nicolai Yurchak
 John P. Peters
 Abram Zacharias
 David Woelke
 Lena Paetkau
 Gerhard Ens
 John Giesbrecht
 Martin Schellenberg
 Henry J. Andres

Newly arrived immigrants Paetkau, Ens, Harms, Andres, took the opportunity, offered by Mr. Schellenberg, to acquire a knowledge of the English language. Older Reinland residents Peters, Letkeman, Zacharias, Thiessen, Yurchak also took advantage of this course offering. Women's Liberation was not in vogue at the time but Lena Paetkau (later Mrs. B. C. Krahn) had the courage to participate fully, nevertheless. Some other women attended other evening classes offered during the twenties and thirties.

By mid-1925 considerable changes had taken place. Reinland's private school, whose last teacher was Johann Dyck, had ceased operations. Mr. Greenway's tenure as official trustee had also run its course. In June, 1925, Snowdon School closed its doors. The building was sold to Wakeham where it was to serve for many more years. For Reinland a turbulent era of controversy surrounding the public school had come to a close.



Mr. and Mrs. Jacob A. Schellenberg.

The Reinland School District

On August 7, 1925, the charter board of trustees of the newly created Reinland School District No. 2130 was elected. Peter J. Peters, P. S. Zacharias, and A. N. Friesen were the new trustees. Mr. Peters became the first chairman and Mr. Friesen assumed the duties of secretary-treasurer. C. C. Penner and Jacob P. Peters were elected auditors.²⁴ When school opened in September, 1925, classes were held in the building which had served as the village's private school since 1910 and which was located in the middle of the village. Mr. Jacob A. Schellenberg was hired as the first teacher.

For Reinlanders there were some grounds for apprehension in 1925. It had been the strong conviction of many Mennonite villagers for so long: "Was die Schule ist, das wird die Kirche werden." (What the school is, that the church, too, will become.) Would it be possible to retain the religious and cultural values of the forefathers and pass these on to succeeding generations through a school that was no longer in the hands of the church? The uneasiness was especially apparent among those who had lived in Manitoba, under the 1873 *Privilegium*, for several decades. The uneasiness was less pronounced among the more recent arrivals because these had already gone through a similar conflict in Russia in the preceding decades. There the conflict had brought a similar compromise — a school taught basically in the Russian language with extra instruction time permitted for the teaching of German and Religion.

Reinland people also had grounds for optimism in 1925. Though the school was no longer in the hands of the church, it was again run by a local board of trustees, elected by the voters of the village. This board was empowered to handle taxation and expenditures and to hire the teachers of its choice. The law required that instruction be in English and also prescribed the curriculum but it permitted the teaching of German and Religion before 9 a.m. and after 3:30 p.m. The board was still basically responsible for the spirit in which the school was to be conducted.

The change to a district school was probably not altogether unwelcome to a large segment of Reinland residents. The members of the charter board were all members of the Sommerfelder Church which had existed in Reinland since its Bergthaler Church origins in the 1880s but which for thirty years had had little or no voice in school administration. Now, finally it had a voice again. The district school also permitted an early participation in school affairs by the new immigrant families that were moving in at the time.

Then, too, the new Reinland School District was being launched with Mr. Jacob A. Schellenberg as teacher. He was not a stranger but a man whom the community had learned to respect and trust. Mr. Schellenberg, whose Reinland teaching career spanned seven years

helped the village to weather a difficult transition in education. He made an outstanding contribution to Reinland education.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, REINLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT, 1925-1973

Year	Chairman of the Board	Trustees	Secretary-Treasurer
1925	P. J. Peters	P. S. Zacharias	A. N. Friesen
1926	P. S. Zacharias	P. J. Peters	A. N. Friesen
1927	P. J. Peters	Jacob Enns	A. N. Friesen
1928	J. K. Letkemann	Jacob Enns	A. N. Friesen
1929	J. K. Letkemann	Jacob Enns	A. N. Friesen
1930	J. K. Letkemann	D. F. Zacharias	A. N. Friesen
1931	D. F. Zacharias	G. G. Harms	G. G. H. Ens
1932	D. F. Zacharias	G. G. Harms	G. G. H. Ens
1933	Jacob Enns	G. G. Harms	J. K. Letkemann
1934	Jacob Enns	P. J. Peters	J. K. Letkemann
1935	P. J. Peters	Jacob Enns	J. K. Letkemann
1936	P. J. Peters	Jacob Enns	A. N. Friesen
1937	A. N. Friesen	Jacob Enns	G. G. Harms
1938	A. N. Friesen	F. J. Suderman	G. G. Harms
1939	F. J. Suderman	P. J. Peters	G. G. Harms
1940	P. J. Peters	F. J. Suderman	G. G. Harms
1941	A. N. Friesen	P. J. Peters	G. G. Harms
1942	A. N. Friesen	D. D. Zacharias	G. G. Harms
1943	A. N. Friesen	D. D. Zacharias	G. G. Harms
1944	P. P. Zacharias	Jacob Peters	G. G. Harms
1945	Jacob Peters	P. P. Zacharias	P. P. Zacharias
1946	G. G. H. Ens	P. P. Zacharias	D. P. Peters
1947	G. G. H. Ens	P. P. Zacharias	D. P. Peters
1948	G. G. H. Ens	P. P. Zacharias	D. P. Peters
1949	A. A. Paetkau	P. P. Zacharias	D. P. Peters
1950	A. A. Paetkau	P. P. Zacharias	D. P. Peters
1951	A. A. Paetkau	P. P. Zacharias	D. P. Peters
1952	B. C. Krahn	A. H. Enns	D. P. Peters
1953	B. C. Krahn	A. H. Enns	D. P. Peters
1954	A. H. Enns	D. D. Zacharias	D. P. Peters
1955	A. H. Enns	D. D. Zacharias	D. P. Peters
1956	A. H. Enns	H. D. Falk	D. P. Peters
1957	A. H. Enns	H. D. Falk	A. A. Paetkau
1958	A. H. Enns	H. D. Falk	A. A. Paetkau
1959	A. H. Enns	H. J. Janzen	A. A. Paetkau
1960	A. H. Enns	H. J. Janzen	A. A. Paetkau
1961	A. H. Enns	H. J. Janzen	A. A. Paetkau
1962	A. H. Enns	H. J. Janzen	A. A. Paetkau
1963	A. H. Enns	H. J. Janzen	A. A. Paetkau
1964	A. H. Enns	H. J. Janzen	A. H. Enns
1965	A. A. Paetkau	H. J. Janzen	A. H. Enns
1966	H. J. Janzen	A. E. Ens	A. E. Ens
1967	A. E. Ens	H. J. Janzen	Bernie Elias
1968	A. E. Ens	H. J. Janzen	Bernie Zacharias
1969	A. E. Ens	H. J. Janzen	Bernie Zacharias
1970	A. E. Ens	H. J. Janzen	Bernie Zacharias
1971	A. E. Ens	H. J. Janzen	Bernie Zacharias
1972	A. E. Ens	H. J. Janzen	Bernie Zacharias



Reinland school and teacherage circa 1950.

The Thirties

It would be impossible to do justice to the many teachers who have served in Reinland. Three outstanding teachers, John W. Driedger, Peter B. Krahn and Peter J. Dyck, taught during the Great Depression when heavy one-room teaching loads were coupled to low salaries. From 1929-1930 to 1933-1934 Reinland teachers' salaries plunged from \$1100 to \$500 annually. (Not until 1944-1945 was the pay scale back to the 1930 level.)²⁶

John W. Driedger, a physically active and outgoing personality, is especially known for his involvement with village youth in the classroom, in Sunday School, choir and sports. Driedger introduced a new German reader *Lesebuch für deutsche Volksschulen in Russland* by Linde, Jedig and Hoffmann.

Peter B. Krahn had a short tenure but one of the most difficult of



Mr. and Mrs. Peter J. Dyck.

any person who taught in Reinland. Krahn, the village's first new immigrant (1920s immigrant) teacher, was caught in the eye of the storm emanating from conflict between older and newer immigrants. At its climax, the turbulence necessitated the special ratepayers' meeting of January 14, 1933, chaired by Inspector G. G. Neufeld.²⁷ The outward charges of unfair and overly-strict discipline were dismissed by the inspector as "partly trivial and petty." The introduction of new German textbooks was a sore issue and the disagreement can be understood historically. For many years before 1925 the *Fibel*, catechism, New Testament, Bible and hymnbook had been the sole texts used in the Reinland schools. A "rapid" transition to new books, especially by a new immigrant teacher, could be an explosive issue. Perhaps, also, the new immigrants did not fully understand the concerns of the more conservative element.

Voices of moderation could be heard on both sides. A textbook compromise was reached at the meeting, not unanimously, but nevertheless by a vote of twenty-one to four. The motion accepted some of the newer books, including the first German reader of the Eclectic Series and approved the use of the New Testament, catechism and Bible Story books in the upper groups. At this meeting Rev. C. B. Krahn moved and Rev. H. G. Ens seconded

To forget and to forgive old differences and
dissensions and to go on with a better and
more united spirit of good fellowship.²⁸

All but one holdout rose from their seats to indicate acceptance of the motion.

The 1933 meeting did not end all conflict. One of Reinland's dedicated and devoted teachers was a casualty of the tensions and departed from the village at the end of the school year. In retrospect, it seems that Reinland not only owes a debt of gratitude to Peter B. Krahn for a year of sound teaching and positive influence on many children but for standing in the brunt of a village storm that helped to clear the air for a more tolerant future.

The 1933 compromise became the basis for the teaching of German and Religion in succeeding years. The scope of religious teaching was widened when at a meeting on August 31, 1934, the board consisting of Jacob Enns, P. J. Peters and J. K. Letkeman authorized instruction of History of the Church and History of the Mennonites as part of the religious teaching in school.²⁹ P. A. Rempel's text *Bilder aus der Kirchen- und Mennonitengeschichte* was to be used. The inspiration for the move probably came from Peter J. Dyck, the teacher.

Peter J. Dyck started his Reinland career immediately after the stormy 1932-1933 term. His five year tenure proved to be a period of healthy transition to an era of greater understanding in Reinland school affairs. Having spent his first twenty years of life in Russia, Dyck was in a position to better understand the recent immigrant

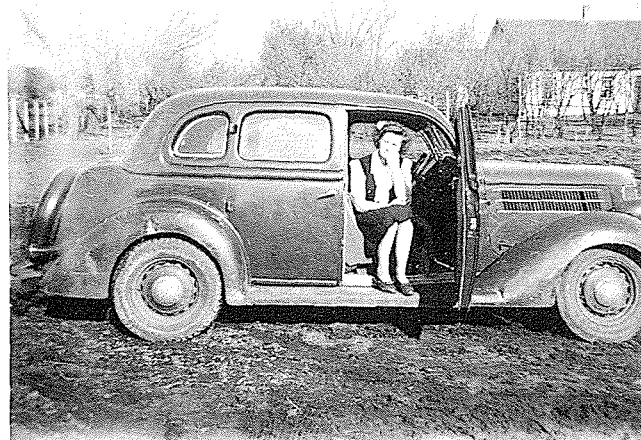
while at the same time his over thirty years in Canada qualified him as a *Kanadier* in the eyes of older residents. He is remembered as a thorough and demanding teacher, who expected a high standard of work. Scrupulous fairness and recognition for work well done marked his relations with his pupils. A former student of the *Zentralschule* in Halbstadt, Molotschna, although born in Steinau, Nikopol, and later a student at the Mennonite Educational Institute, Altona, Dyck was an excellent teacher of German and English. He instilled in at least some of his pupils a love of classical English literature. A former Reinland student, now a school principal, has on more than one occasion paid tribute to his teaching of Shakespeare.³⁰

The task of doing justice to eight grades and an enrolment of sixty students was becoming an almost impossible task as educational demands continued to increase. One year after the departure of Peter J. Dyck a second classroom was opened in Reinland. John K. Brandt was the last teacher to teach the one-room school in the village and the first to take the Grades 5-8 Senior class.

Later Developments in Education

In the fall of 1939 Reinland opened a second classroom. The newly-created Junior class met in an old residence (a house that was located west of the present A. E. Ens home) for a year, then moved to the Blumenort church building until 1943 when the teacherage section of the village school was converted into a second classroom. In 1951 a new two-room school building was constructed. A high school class offering Grades 10, 11 and 12 was in operation from 1957 to 1964. Bertie Loeppky, Henry Dick and Edward Falk taught the high school class at various times. Several Rosengart and Schoenwiese students attended the high school in Reinland during those years.

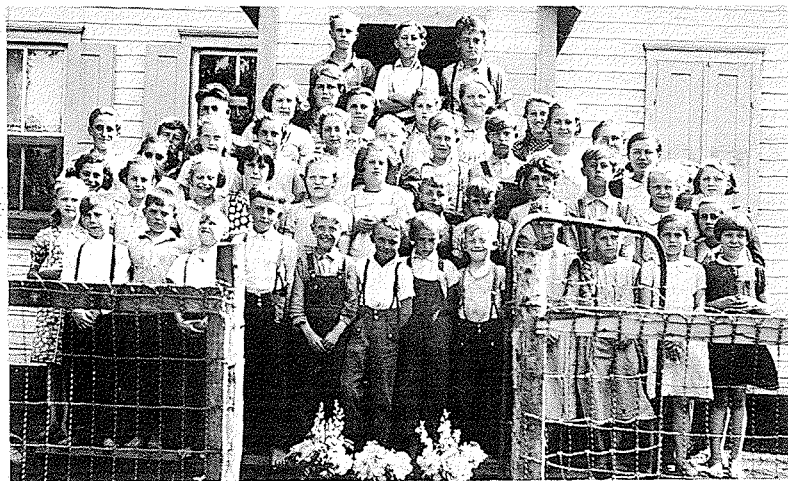
It should be noted that since the 1940s many Reinland young people have graduated from the Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna. Mr. G. G. H. Ens was active in the board of the Gretna school for a number of years. Reinland persons were prominently involved in the es-



Susie Peters.



Mr. and Mrs. J. K. Brandt and children Bertie, Bernie and Ethel.



J. K. Brandt and the class of 1938-39.

REINLAND TEACHERS 1875-1977

REINLAND VILLAGE SCHOOL

1875-1878	Not known	1909-1910	Isaak F. Dyck	
1878-1879	Wilhelm Rempel	1910-1911	Isaak F. Dyck	
1879-1880	Wilhelm Rempel	1911-1912	Isaak F. Dyck	
1880-1881	Wilhelm Rempel	1912-1913	Isaak F. Dyck	
1881-1882	Wilhelm Rempel	1913-1914	Isaak F. Dyck	
1882-1883	Wilhelm Rempel	1914-1915	Isaak F. Dyck	
1883-1884	Wilhelm Rempel	1915-1916	Isaak F. Dyck	
1886	Johann Froese	1916-1917	Jacob Peters	
1893	Isbrand Friesen	1917-1918	Jacob Peters	
1894	Johann Wiens	1918-1919	Jacob Peters	
1898	Peter Neufeld	1919-1920	Jacob Peters	
1903-1094	Jacob Friesen	1920-1921	Jacob Peters	Snowdon School
1904-1905	Jacob Friesen	1921-1922	Isaak F. Dyck	Peter W. Warkentin
1905-1906	Jacob Friesen	1922-1923	Isaak Janzen	Jacob A. Schellenberg
1906-1907	Jacob Friesen	1923-1924	Johann Dyck	Jacob A. Schellenberg
1907-1908	Jacob Friesen?	1924-1925	Johann Dyck?	Jacob A. Schellenberg
1908-1909	Isaak F. Dyck			

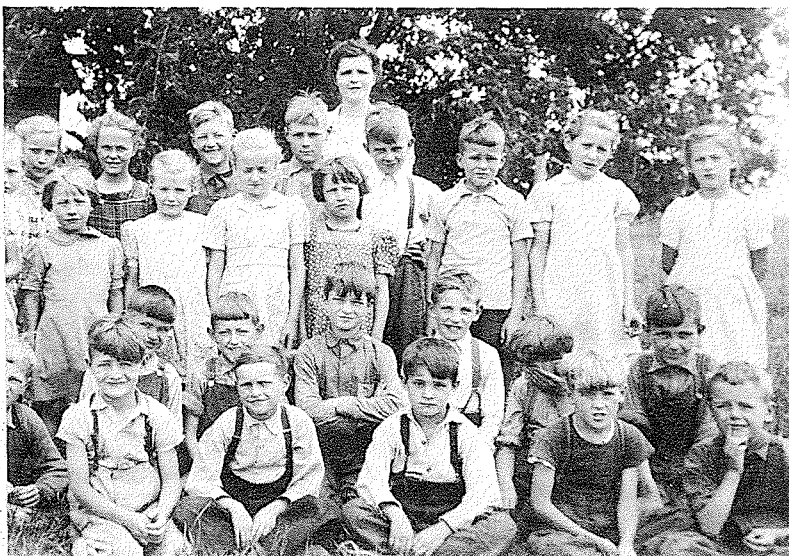
REINLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

One Room School

1925-1926	Jacob A. Schellenberg	1949-1950	Margaret Harder	Jacob K. Klassen	
1926-1927	Jacob A. Schellenberg	1950-1951	Margaret Harder	Jacob K. Klassen	
1927-1928	Jacob A. Schellenberg	1951-1952	Margaret Harder	Jacob K. Klassen	
1928-1929	Jacob A. Schellenberg	1952-1953	Margaret Wiebe	Jacob K. Klassen	
1929-1930	John W. Driedger		Helen Ens (2nd term)		
1930-1931	John W. Driedger	1953-1954	Nellie Enns	Jacob K. Klassen	
1931-1932	John W. Driedger	1954-1955	Ben Sawatzky	Jacob K. Klassen	
1932-1933	Peter B. Krahn	1955-1956	Louise Peters	Bernhard Loeppky	
1933-1934	Peter J. Dyck	1956-1957	Louise Peters	Bernhard Loeppky	
1934-1935	Peter J. Dyck		Junior Room	Senior Room	High School
1935-1936	Peter J. Dyck	1957-1958	Rita Klassen	Mrs. Helen Loeppky	Bernhard Loeppky
1936-1937	Peter J. Dyck	1958-1959	Rita Klassen	Esther Toews	Henry Dick
1937-1938	Peter J. Dyck	1959-1960	Erica Sawatzky	Esther Toews	Henry Dick
1938-1939	John K. Brandt	1960-1961	Erica Sawatzky	Valentine Tiessen	Henry Dick
	Junior Room	1961-1962	Erica Sawatzky	Valentine Tiessen	Henry Dick
1939-1940	Gerhard G. Baerg	1962-1963	Elizabeth Enns	Valentine Tiessen	Henry Dick
1940-1941	Gerhard G. Schmidt	1963-1964	Elizabeth Enns	Ruth Klassen	Edward P. Falk
1941-1942	Gerhard G. Schmidt	1964-1965	Elizabeth Enns	Theodore H. Klassen	
1942-1943	Gerhard G. Schmidt	1965-1966	Jacob Driedger	Henry W. Funk	
1943-1944	Marie L. Friesen	1966-1967	Jacob Driedger	Henry W. Funk	
1944-1945	Susie Peters	1967-1968	Mrs. Helen Penner	Jacob Driedger	
1945-1946	Tina Andres	1968-1969	Mrs. E. M. Reimer	Jake Hildbrandt	
1946-1947	Helene Sawatzky		(nee Elizabeth Enns)		
1947-1948	Susan Martens	1969-1970	Tina Thiessen	Arthur F. Sawatzky	
1948-1949	Susan Martens	1970-1971	Tina Thiessen	Arthur F. Sawatzky	
	Senior Room				
	John K. Brandt				
	John K. Brandt				
	John K. Brandt				
	Gerhard G. Schmidt				
	Gerhard G. Schmidt				
	Cornelius P. Zacharias				
	Cornelius P. Zacharias				
	Arthur H. Duerksen				

AMALGAMATION OF FACILITIES WITH ROSENGART AND HASKETT

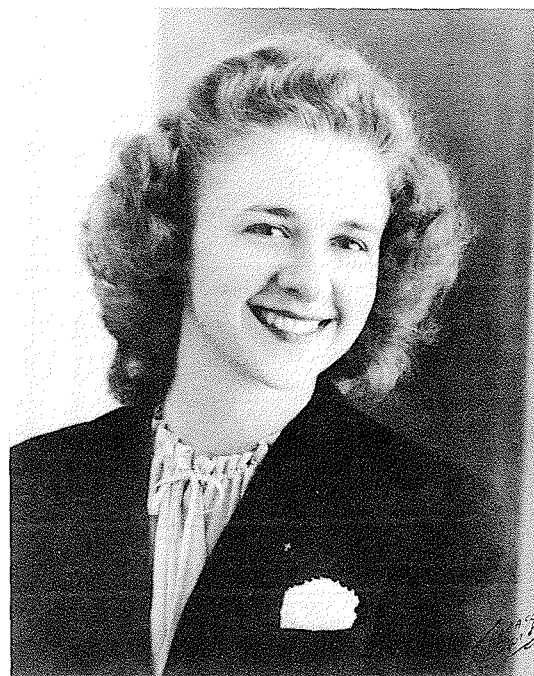
	Rosengart	Rosengart	Reinland	Reinland
	Gr. 1 and 2	Gr. 3 and 4	Gr. 4 and 5	Gr. 7 and 8
1971-1972	Mrs. Hoepfner	Len. Hoepfner	Dave Hoepfner	Arthur F. Sawatzky
1972-1973	Rebecca Barkman	Irene Krocker	Dave Hoepfner	Arthur F. Sawatzky
1973-1974	Sylvia Giesbrecht	Irene Krocker	Dave Hoepfner	Adolph Pauls
1974-1975	Sylvia Giesbrecht	Irene Krocker	Dave Hoepfner	Adolph Pauls
1975-1976	Sylvia Giesbrecht	Patricia Krocker	Erica Enns	Dave Hoepfner
1976-1977	Sylvia Giesbrecht	Patricia Krocker	Stanley Friesen	Dave Hoepfner



Tina Andres and the class of 1945-1946.

Some interesting items gleaned from the Minutes of School Meetings.

Aug. 7, 1925
First Trustees elected
Sept. 20, 1925
To borrow \$500.00 at 6% from P. S. Zacharias
Nov. 25, 1925
To borrow another \$500.00 from David F. Zacharias
Aug. 4, 1926
Pay Sec.-Treas. \$40.00-year
Aug. 3, 1927
To deposit Monies in Royal Bank of Canada, Morden.
Mar. 12, 1928
To deposit Title of School yard with Land Titles Office.
Aug. 6, 1930
Pay Sec.-Treas. \$35.00
Aug. 5, 1931
Pay Sec.-Treas. \$20.00
Aug. 2, 1932
Pay Sec.-Treas. \$15.00
Jan. 14, 1933
Inspector G. G. Neufeld conducted special ratepayers meeting.
Aug. 2, 1933
Pay Sec.-Treas. \$10.00. Transfer acct. to Can. Imp. Bank
July 15, 1935
Pay Auditors 75¢ ea. Pay \$4.50 to clean school and scrub desks
Jan. 14, 1939
Decided to hire the 2nd teacher in fall
July 21, 1941
Set up speed limit signs 20 mph.
Jan. 11, 1943
Enough wood can be obtained, build new one room school
July 19, 1943
East end of school be converted to classroom.
Feb. 4, 1950
Decided to build a new 2 classroom school
Sept. 23, 1957
Decided to open another classroom for high school



Marie Friesen, the first woman to teach public school in Reinland.

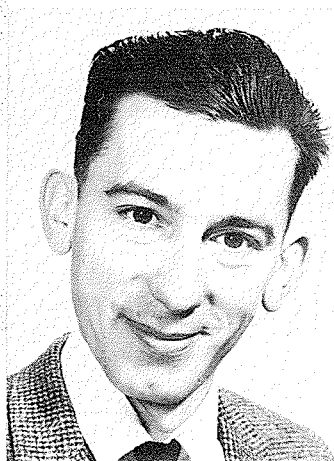


Photo courtesy Werner Ens.
Present Reinland school built in 1951.

establishment of the school in 1889 and a native of Reinland, Gerhard Ens, is its present principal. In the last two decades a large number of Reinland youth has attended the Garden Valley Collegiate in Winkler. Reinland has fought long and successfully for the retention of its school. It has voted against the creation of large school divisions consistently. It weathered the sweeping school centralizations of the 1960s. In 1971 provincial government legislation established the unitary division in Garden Valley, but Reinland, like several other villages, has been able to maintain its school to the present time. In 1976 the Manitoba government is again favourably inclined towards the small school and there seems to be no immediate threat to the Reinland School on the horizon. The attitude of Garden Valley School Division superintendent Henry Neufeld, towards the smaller schools has been positive.

No change occurred in the membership of the Reinland Board of Trustees during the last six years of the school district. Chairman Ab E. Ens, H. J. Janzen, Bernie Elias and Secretary-Treasurer Bernie Zacharias constituted the last board. When the school district ceased to exist, Bernie Elias ran as a candidate for trustee in the Garden Valley Division and was elected.

A recent development in Reinland's school history was the amalgamation of school facilities with Rosengart and Haskett in 1971. All three school districts officially continued to exist until the coming of the unitary division. The sharing arrangement is still in effect. Grades 1-4 pupils from Reinland, Rosengart and Haskett attend the Rosengart School. Grades 5-8 pupils have classes in Reinland. In 1975-1976 Sylvia Giesbrecht and Patricia Kroeker taught in Rosengart and Dave Hoeppner and Erica Enns taught in Reinland.



Edward Falk.



Bernie Loeppky.



Helene Sawatzky.

Margaret Harder.



Top left, Mr. Gerhard G. Baerg was the first teacher of Reinland's Juniors after the two-room school was introduced in 1939. The class was conducted in the old house west of the present Abram E. Ens residence.

Next top left, Mr. G. G. Schmidt, Reinland teacher from 1940-1945, is standing on the steps of the old school.

Senior Room 1942. Teacher J. K. Brandt.



Moving the old school in the early 1950's.



Esther Toews.



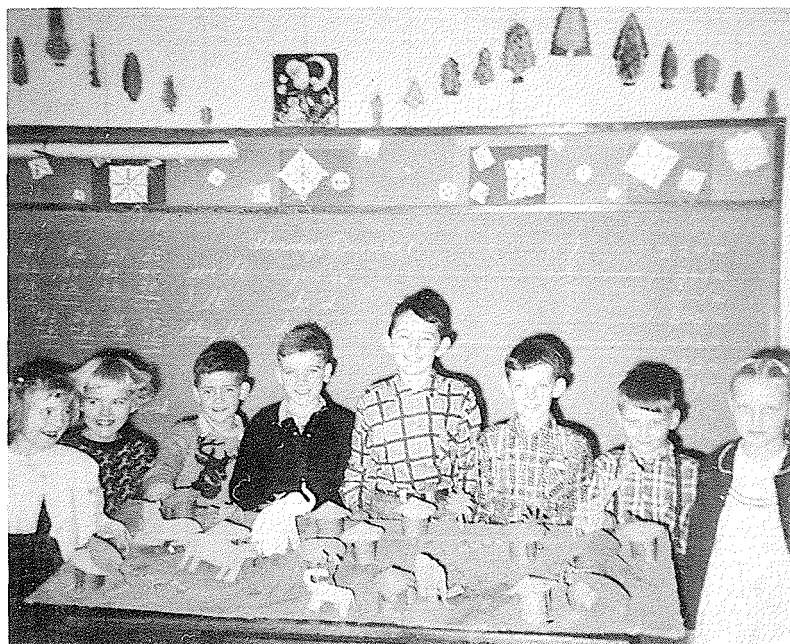
Susan Martens.



Nellie Enns.



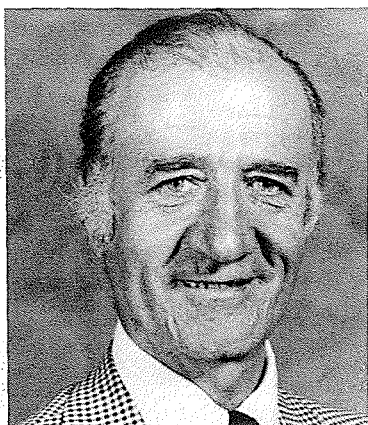
Grade III — 1951. B.L. Eddie Zacharias, John Peters, Peter Braun, Elfrieda Ens, Emma Peters, Irene Enns, Susie Suderman.



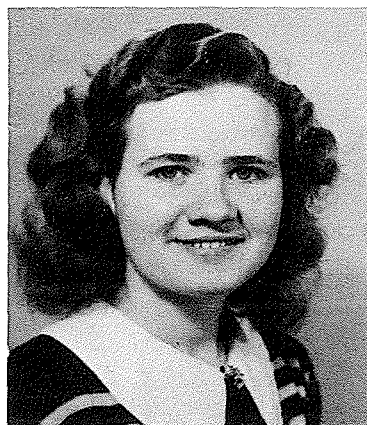
Reinland Junior class going to play ball 1947-48. Teacher, Susan Martens. Driver of truck, G. G. H. Ens.



Grade III-IV Social Studies project 1955-56.



Art Durksen.



Margaret Wiebe.



Girls' team — 1957. Marge Thiessen, Lydia Ens, Irene Enns, Martha Wiebe, Elfrieda Ens. Sitting — Sarah Thiessen, Emma Peters, Edna Zacharias, Evy Evenson.

Gr. II — 1951. Peter Reimer, Peter Hiebert, Willie Kliewer, Jackie Peters, Jackie Dyck, Alvin Ens, Johnny Dyck, Cornie Reimer, Betty Paetkau, Helen Klassen, Helen Derksen, Margie Thiessen.



Ben Sawatzky.

Lower left, Helen Ens with pupils, John Zacharias and Rosanna Klassen.



Junior Room Gr. I-IV, 1956-1957.



Mary Pauls, Mary Anne Ens, Dorothy Huebner, Helen Krahn.



Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

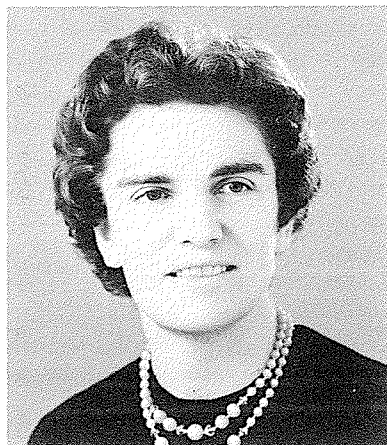
Present Reinland teacherage.



Mr. and Mrs. J. K. Klassen, Rosanna, Helen and Amanda.



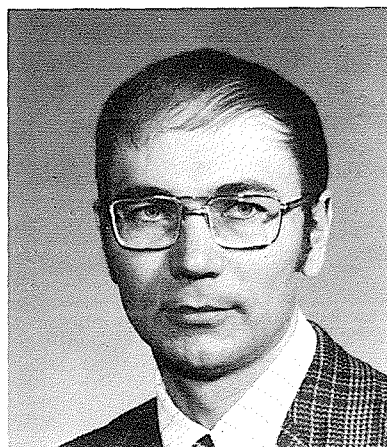
Rita Klassen.



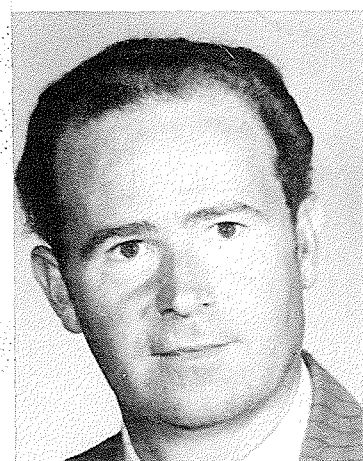
Valentine Tiessen.



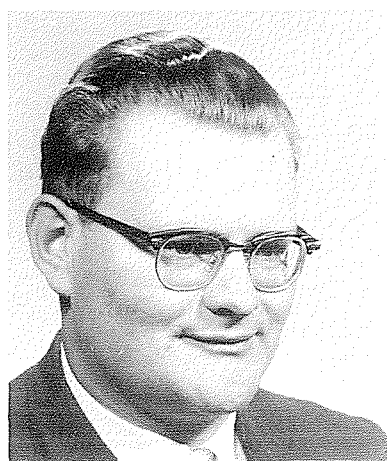
Ruth Klassen.



Ted Klassen.



Jake Hildebrandt.



Art Sawatzky.

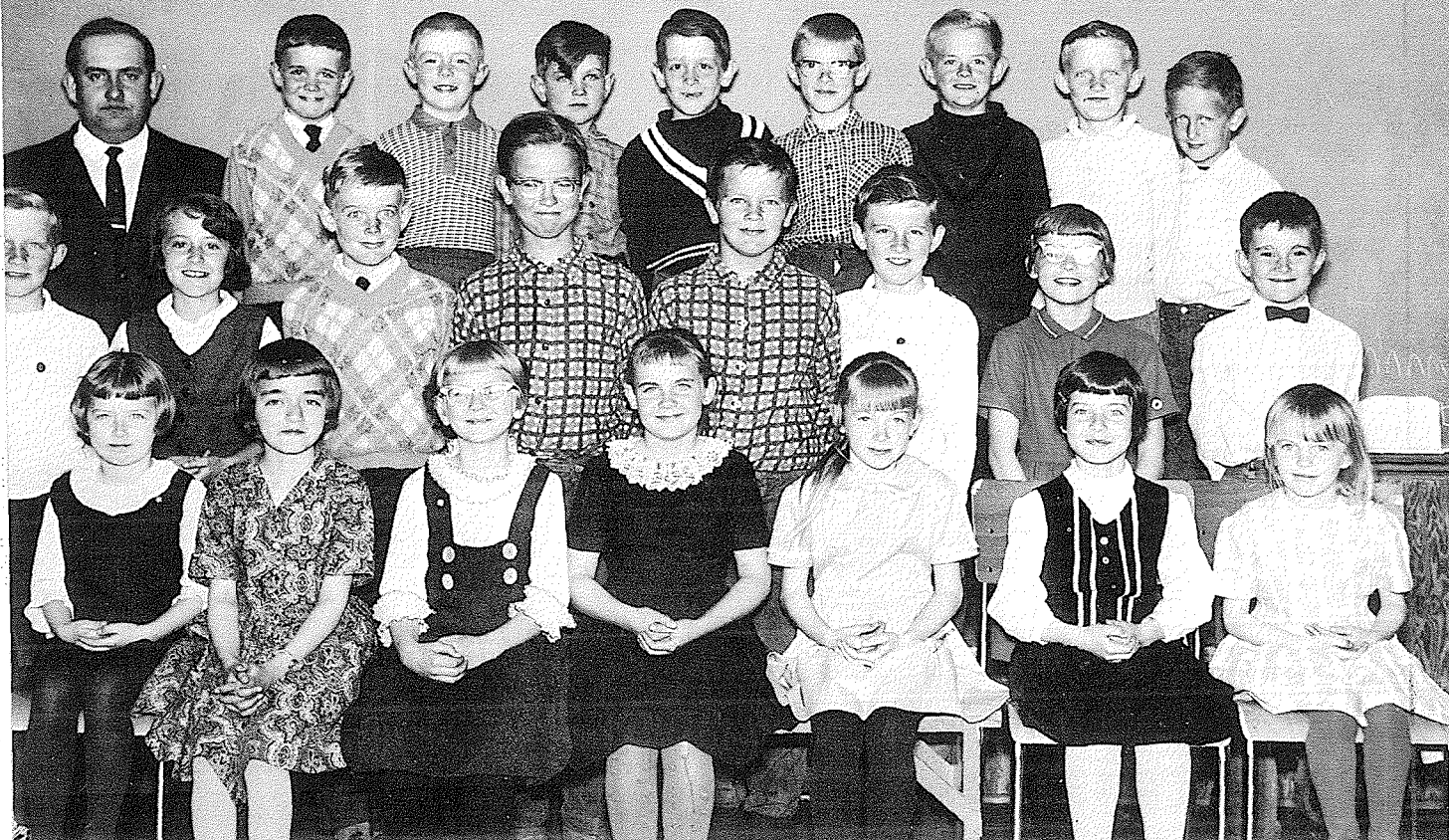


The Grades 1-4 class of 1970-71 was taught by Miss Tina Thiessen, now Mrs. Isaac Bergen of Sanford, Manitoba. Front row (left to right): Monica Ens, Wilma Ens, Helen Knelsen, Linda Braun. Second row: Carolyn Janzen, Esther Elias, Adolf Ens, Cornie Krahn. Third row: Miss Tina Thiessen (teacher), Diane Falk, Nettie Penner, Annie Thiessen, Bernie Thiessen, Wilfred Wieler, Ben Krahn.

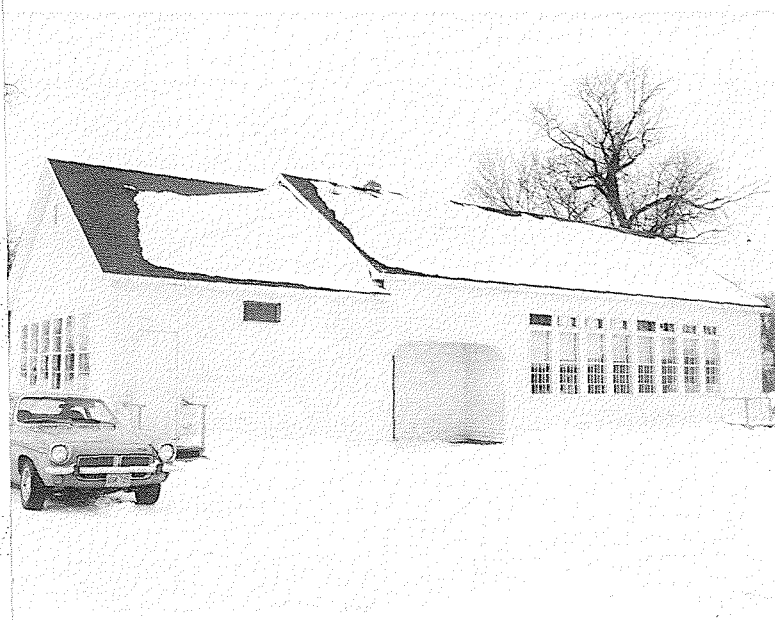
Right, Ellie Reimer's class 1969.

Below, 1st row: Margaret Thiessen, Martha Wieler, Martha Falk, Lorna Wieler, Irene Ens, Tina Enns, Henrietta Ens, Rose Wieler. 2nd row: Rolf Enns, Cornie Thiessen, Donald Falk, Joan Krahn, Judy Falk, Helen Thiessen, Peter Penner, Harold Peters, Abe Giesbrecht. 3rd row: Frank Rempel, Abe Penner, Walter Falk, David Peters, Frank Ens, John Janzen, teacher — Henry Funk.





The Grades 1-4 class of 1965-1966 is shown with its teacher, Mr. Jacob Driedger. First row (left to right): Ingrid Ens, Frieda Krahn, Roxie Enns, Margaret Ann Ens, Betty Enns, Linda Falk, Eva Enns. Second row: Leonard Wieler, Kathy Peters, Ted Ens, John Friesen, Abe Friesen, Lesley Wieler, Jeanie Falk, Henry Wieler. Third row, Jacob Driedger (Teacher), Helmut Ens, Timothy Penner, Jake Giesbrecht, Johnny Thiessen, Peter Falk, Art Paetkau, Raymond Wieler, Peter Thiessen.



Rosengart School.

Photo courtesy Dennis Fast.

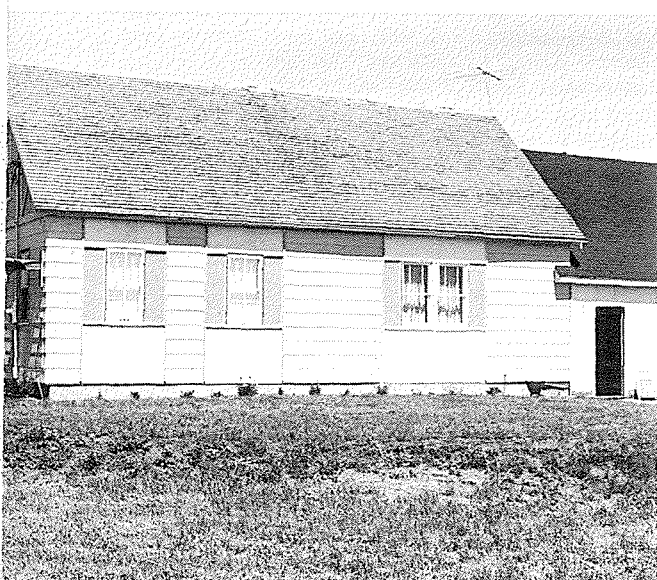


Mr. and Mrs. Dave Hoeppner.

Carla Zacharias' education at home.

1976 — Reinland pupils at scientific experiment. L-R: Linda Braun, Carolyn Janzen, Esther Elias, Wilma Ens.

The Dave Hoeppners are in the process of remodelling a house at a new site at the west end of the village. It is a sign of the changing times. For most of Reinland's history, teachers lived in teacherages.



Belonging Together

*No man is an island, entire of itself;
 every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main;
 if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less,
 as well as if a promontory were,
 as well as if a manor of thy friends, or of thine own were;
 any man's death diminishes me,
 because I am involved in Mankind;
 and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls;
 it tolls for thee.* — John Donne

Common cultural traditions, a common language, living in a common shelter and sharing a common faith have fostered strong ties between the people of the Reinland community. The sharing of this experience in community brought many hundreds of Reinland's inhabitants and sons and daughters closer to each other during the celebration of the village's year of jubilee, 1975. The experience has become especially meaningful where it has matured into a realization of involvement with all mankind.



CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

An Experience in Community

The word *community* can be used to express many different concepts. It may simply mean a neighbourhood in a geographical sense. It can refer to people held together by common interests. The term *community of faith*, as used in earlier units of this volume, connoted the sharing of a common experience in the search for God and his will for humanity. *Community* has other connotations. One writer has said about the term *community*:

It is a word which once stood for a collection of people living in close physical proximity to and mutually dependent upon each other. Community meant sharing of the same community services, such as schools, churches, stores, shops, and other facilities in a given geographical area.¹

Reinland came closest to achieving that ideal of community in the years 1875-1880. The welfare of each family depended very directly on mutual co-operation, whether this meant joining the ox-cart expedition to get flour from Emerson, building the Post Road to guide travellers, visiting the neighbours to lend support in trying times or preparing a log to go into the construction of the church.

Sometimes disintegrative forces threatened the very core of the community experience. The period 1880-1890 was such a time. Villagers were pulling in two directions and by 1890 there were two churches, two schools, loyalties to two colony administrations. It seemed doubtful, indeed, that Reinland, as an experience in community, would survive.

But in spite of painful convulsions, Reinland has survived crisis after crisis. Reinlanders discovered and rediscovered that they needed each other. After one hundred years villagers and former villagers demonstrate a strong sense of identification with Reinland. There is a growing awareness of a common heritage and of the values of the community experience. It is this awareness that must transcend the disunity and intolerance that so often characterized the past.

This chapter deals with several facets of community experience —

Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Street scene at 1975 centennial.



Photo courtesy Harold Funk.
Pause for Faspa.



working and playing together, rejoicing and sorrowing together and the sharing of common cultural encounters.

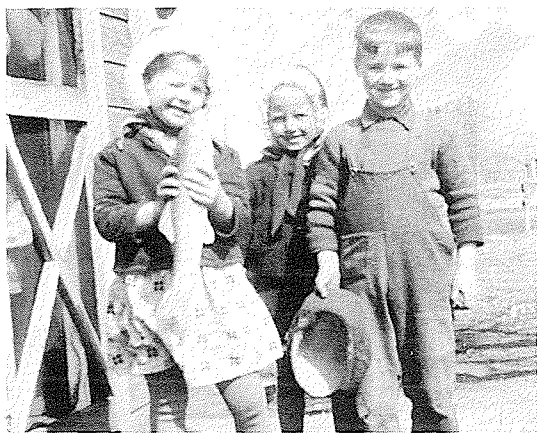
Cultural Aspects

The attachment to the land and the strong religious orientation of the villagers have permeated Reinland culture. Another dominant influence has been life in one common shelter — the *darf*. These factors strongly determined the relationship of neighbour to neighbour. The term *Nachbar* (neighbour), as commonly used in the Reinland village books, encompassed all villagers, regardless of where their homes were located.

Spazieren, in Reinland vocabulary, did not have the dictionary definition of taking a walk. *Spazieren*, meaning visiting, was a deeply ingrained social custom. Holidays, Sunday afternoons and evenings and even, on occasion, week-day evenings were given to this activity. *Faspa*, a time for coffee and a light snack on mid-afternoon work-days, served a different function on Sundays and holidays. It became a time for socializing, for relaxation, for sharing food and drink with neighbours, friends, or relatives. The eating of sunflower seeds, a tradition brought from Russia, was commonly taken for granted on social occasions.

Bees were part of the village tradition. Not only was there direct co-operation in doing required roadwork and taking care of the community water reservoir for cattle but direct forms of helping each other were numerous. Threshing, which required a large work gang, was of necessity, a co-operative effort involving several farm families. Even the

Fishing in Reinland? Irene Enns holds 1948 specimen. Irvin Zacharias removes cap.



burial of a dead horse, which would have been a difficult task for one farmer, was cause for the neighbours to pitch in and help.

Hog-slaughtering

Perhaps hog-slaughtering was the most celebrated of the bees. Each family would set a fall date, often in early November, and invite several other farm couples to participate. Later this help would be reciprocated.

Several days of food preparation preceded the event. The day before hog-slaughtering was one of feverish family activity. Equipment was borrowed from neighbours, if necessary. The ropes and blocks, vats (*Miagropes*) for boiling cracklings and lard, a trough for scalding, the sausage machine, and ladders, tubs and other necessities were set ready. In the evening the men inspected their *Schlachtmesser* (butcher-knives).

Early in the morning of the appointed day, before the break of dawn, the invited men and women would gather for breakfast at the designated house. When light appeared in the eastern sky and the stars faded away, it was time to go outside for the shooting. A glass of wine, on occasion, preceded this event.

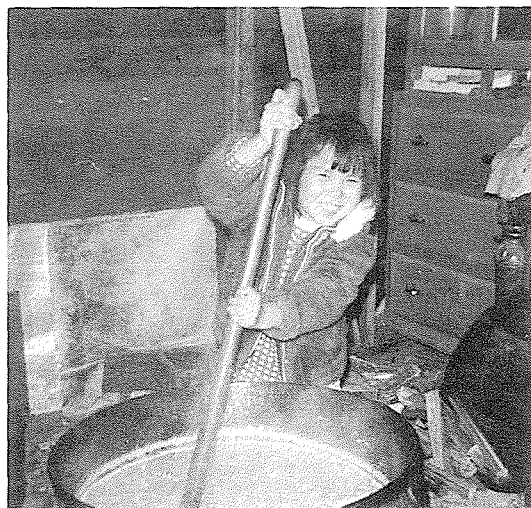
A popular figure at these gatherings was the *Utnehma*, a person skilled in the art of evisceration. An *Utnehma* of repute generally received many invitations to hog-slaughtering bees.

The tasks of killing, scalding and shearing, eviscerating and cutting up the meat of the two to six hogs being slaughtered was generally completed by noon. Women customarily sterilized the hog's intestines for sausage making. In later years this last mentioned practice was discontinued and the casings for sausages were bought.

The noon meal was a sumptuous affair enjoyed by young and old. Usually a group of school children poured into the house at this time and quite possibly the teacher, too, would appear. The long-anticipated feast featured fresh buns, *Moos* (fruit pudding is an inadequate translation), rice, potatoes, meat, raisin-filled *Bubbat* (a food often used as a dressing for meat courses) and other foods.

After the noon meal the men would sit around, rest for a while, perhaps have a smoke and recount the details of the morning's activities. The finer arts such as sausage making, including liver sausage, and rolling the bacon were typical afternoon activities. After a hearty *aspa* everyone would go home to the chores.

However, that was not the end of the event for the socializing villagers. Everyone returned for the supper feast. Fresh spare ribs and newly-made liver sausage were added to the menu and another round of animated visiting would follow. Finally, well fed and content with the accomplishments of the day, men, women and children would find their way to their own homes.



Stirring the lard in the Miagropen.



*Mr. Jacob P. Peters displays a sample of smoked sausage. Mr. Peters developed a reputation as a butcher (*Utnehma*) and was invited to many a hog slaughtering bee.*



Photo courtesy Harold Funk.

Am Feierabend (at close of day). Mrs. Frank Suderman at the organ circa 1968.

Language

Low German was practically the exclusive lingua franca of the village for its first eighty-five years. It was still strong in 1975 when meetings to plan for the centennial celebrations were still held primarily in Low German. Adopted by Reinland forbears in the Prussian Vistula and Nogat deltas several centuries ago, the dialect was the means of communicating joy and sorrow, the language of *Schultebott* and Co-op meeting, of children at play, of youth in courtship and of families visiting each other on long winter evenings. So strong was Low German in the villages that a goodly number of people who were not of Dutch-German background, especially merchants, salesmen and pedlars, learned to speak the language.

Today English is the language of communication with the world at large. It is the language of the school, of radio and television. Low German

man is still a dominant Reinland tongue, the official language of Dave's Garage, Penner's Store, Big J Industries and the Reinland farm. Young people generally communicate with each other in English and with their parents in Low German but practically all of them still understand Low German and the majority speak it fluently.

High German is traditionally the language of the church, the choir, the Sunday School and *Jugendverein*. It has been taught in Reinland schools for a century. It was the *Schriftsprache*, the language of written communication with friends and relatives. High German was the language of several newspapers that entered village homes — *Herold der Wahrheit*, *Nebraska Ansiedler* and its successor *Mennonitische Rundschau*, *Der Nordwesten*, *Steinbach Post* and eventually *Der Bote*. *Die Warte*, a cultural treasure edited by Arnold Dyck in the 1930s and 1940s, appeared in High German but also carried Low German literature. All of these publications were read in Reinland and some of them enjoyed great popularity. Reinland pioneer Peter Wiens deserves much credit for making reading matter, of the type that the settlers needed, readily available from the beginning of West Reserve settlement. As newspaper and book agent for John F. Funk of Elkhart, Indiana, Wiens imported a considerable quantity of literature in the 1870s and 1880s. Probably the German newspapers that enjoyed the widest cir-

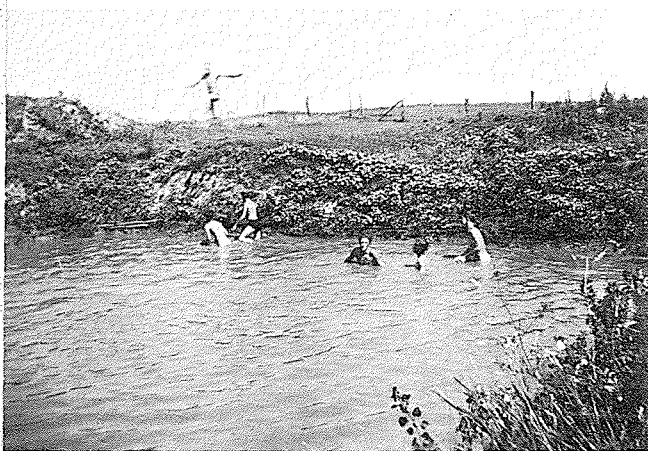
Photo courtesy Harold Funk.

G. G. H. Ens in a quiet moment in the Grosse Stube (Living Room).





Well remembered by many Reinlanders — dugouts as recreational facilities.



culcation in Reinland's hundred years have been *Mennonitische Rundschau* in earlier years and the *Steinbach Post* after 1913. The High German language kept open channels of communication in the pioneer years when contacts outside the settlement were scarce. It enriched the lives of villagers. In the twentieth century it opened the doors to a rich tradition in music to the younger generations.

The acquisition of English, a process first initiated by school teacher Wilhelm Rempel in the pioneer years but then halted for several decades, was rapidly accelerated by the introduction of the district schools in the 1920s. Local English language newspapers like the *Altona Echo* began appearing in the 1940s. *The Free Press Weekly*, *Prairie Farmer*, *Family Herald*, *Country Guide* and the *Western Producer* made their way into village homes. Radio, with its many fees of aerial, made its debut. Trucks took farm products to markets outside of the immediate area. The learning of acceptable English was an essential development and greatly broadened the horizons of village youth within the spectrum of Canadian society. It affected every area of the lives of young people from sports and recreation to education and cultural patterns to career opportunities.

At the 1975 Reinland centennial celebrations it was assumed a practically every event that everybody was trilingual. The assumption was not without considerable foundation. Will this state of affairs still exist in the year 2000? Or will a rich heritage of great future potential be allowed to wither and die? Will Reinland, which in the past has paid more than lip service to involvement in a larger mission, opt for total unilingualism at a time of great need for dialogue and understanding in the world?

Recreation and Sport

The creek that winds its way through Reinland was in its own way elevated to national park status by the children and young people of the village. In spring or in times of heavy rains it would not only be an excellent crab digging area for young boys but also nature's whirlpool bath equipped with continuous running water. In drier times the dugouts, or the village *Drentj* (a water reservoir in the community pasture), were first-rate recreational pools and many youngsters learned the "art" of swimming in these wonderfully adaptable water storage facilities. And adaptable they were for they were also functional — the cows used them for drinking, for standing in during mosquito times, swishing their tails to keep the pests off the remaining exposed surface. And they also used them for other well-known purposes. No doubt the health of many middle-aged Reinlanders today can be attributed to these spas.

That children also made use of these facilities has already been mentioned. The dismay of many mothers has not. And this in spite of the fact that nobody ever drowned in either the creek or the dugouts.



Upper left, hockey heroes of the late 1930s. Below, A. W. Friesen in Reinland uniform.

he Drentj. Even the knowledgeable “big boys” found these resort areas perfectly safe. Nevertheless, some youngsters who jumped into the creek or dugout before the “legal” age limit (set by individual parents) had the opportunity to make amends in a brief, convincing, personal interview in the *Ovezied* (a lean-to section on the long side of the barn). Generally these sessions resulted in promises that the event would not be repeated. And they weren’t repeated that week.

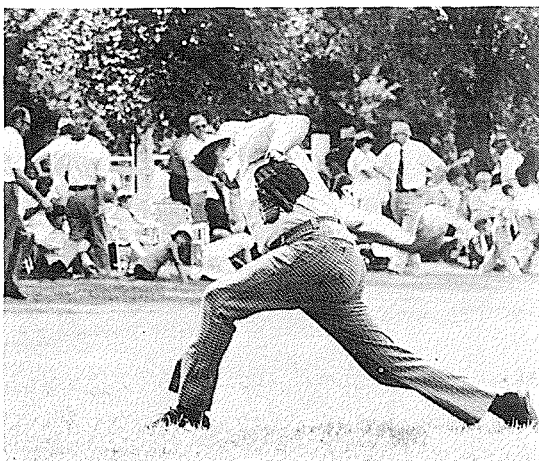
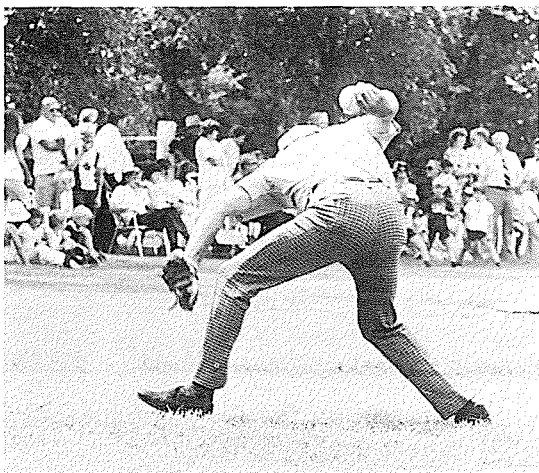
Sometimes high adventure surrounded these swimming excursions. One young fellow who had taken off his clothes (trunks, etc., were regarded as encumbering paraphernalia) had forgotten to check the inspection schedule of the *Darpsboll*, the venerable reigning bull of the community pasture, who was concerned about keeping the water uncontaminated for his harem. The fellow, so rudely interrupted, did not stop to ponder the imponderable, but gladly forsook all his clothes and valuables on the bank for that which he believed to be the right course to take under the given set of circumstances. Needless to say he reached that fence before the charging bull breathing down his neck.

Hockey made its debut in the horse and buggy days. One reason for choosing this sport was perhaps economic — in those days it was not necessary to buy a puck. In very early days, tradition says, primitive hockey was played on frozen pools. Bent branches were fashioned into hockey sticks. Keen rivalries developed. Hotly contested games between the east end and the west end of the village were characterized by no referees, no periods, a few verbally established rules and a multitude of fiery arguments.

Later on rinks were built. Water had to be drawn and teams of horses were used to haul the water. The first rink was located behind Sawatzky’s store, on the present Frank Reimer lot. There were later rinks on the Jacob Enns (later Abram H. Enns) property and the Abram Bueckert lot at the east end.

Games against other villages eventually developed. The first game against Haskett was played around 1930. When Winkler paid its first





In two photos above, Jake Harms demonstrates how to pitch at the centennial celebrations.

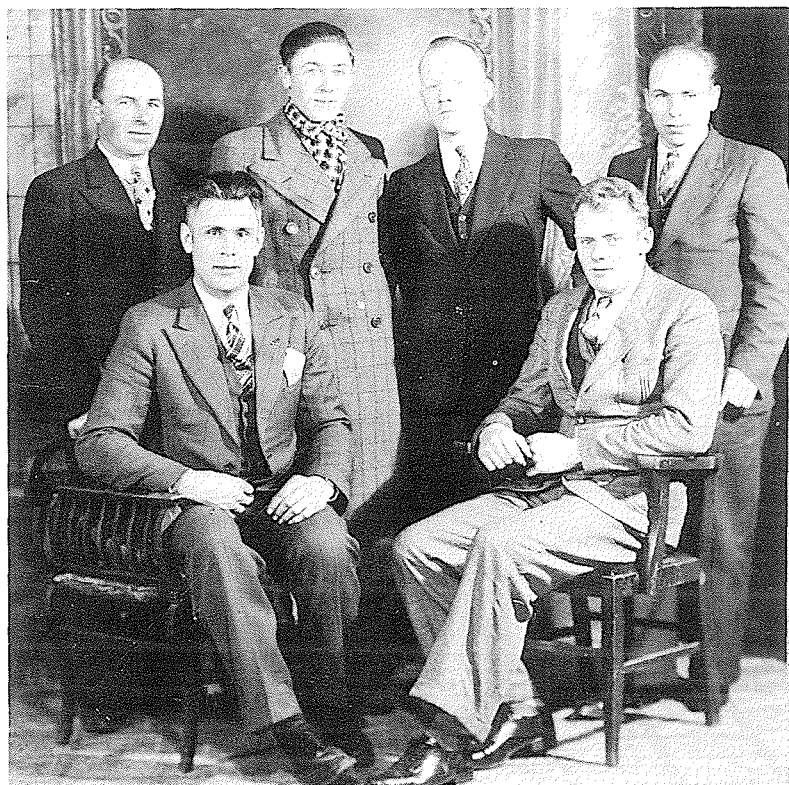
Photo courtesy Werner Ens.

Picture at right shows standing: Nick Yurchak, Frank Froese, Bill Zacharias, Pete Yurchak. Sitting: Dave Thiessen and Henry Penner.

visit to Reinland the local boys learned pointed lessons in stick handling from fellows like Bill Rietze. One fine winter day the Reinland boys got onto the box of Bueckert's truck to play Morden in the first game in a closed rink. Reinland lost that one. The Reinland boys were called savages in a contemporary issue of the *Morden Times*. The term was to result in a strong letter to the editor from a Haskett reader who objected to the application of such a "biased" term to Reinland players.

Flooding by tractor and water tank was another development. Hockey became a village institution and though Reinland never made it into the big leagues, even when expansion occurred, it has become an important part of the community recreational program. Some players have gone on to make their contribution to the Winkler Royals. For the 1975-1976 season an improved rink was constructed on the Community Centre lot.

Both hardball and softball made their debuts in days when no gloves for fielders was the rule. It would not have made that much difference what the rule books said anyway — money for sports equipment was not often in the family budget in the depression and pre-



Reinland Clod Hoppers

RECEIPTS AND EXPENSES

DATE	ITEM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	AMOUNT RECEIVED	AMOUNT PAID
	Conny Thiesen c. file	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				X			
	Abe Friesen c. file	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		X		X			
	Henry Penner L.F.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		X		X			
	Jake Harms P.D.	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		X			<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Jake Friesen c. file	X	L			<input type="checkbox"/>		X		
	Mike Jurchack L. short	X	L			X		X		
	George Harms R. short	X	X			X		L		
	Henry Zacharias R. fl.	<input type="checkbox"/>		X		<input type="checkbox"/>		X		
	Pete Harms L. short	<input type="checkbox"/>		X		X				
	Conny Krahn L. short	<input type="checkbox"/>		X				<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Total	2	7			2		11		

12

depression eras. Some early sports enthusiasts were the Schellenberg boys who in the 1920s drummed up considerable interest among village youth for a variety of sports activities.

When the topic of softball is raised, due recognition must be given to John W. Driedger, teacher in the 1930s when Reinland still had a one-room school. Driedger inspired an enthusiasm that was to establish a strong ball-playing tradition in the village, a tradition that has never faded out. He took the school team out to surrounding communities. One game in particular that has not been forgotten was played against the Winkler Grades 7 and 8 classes. Driedger packed the Reinland team of ten players (there were two short-stops in the 1930s) into his 1926 Chevy. In Winkler Mr. Driedger walked to the school door to announce the arrival. Apprehension filled the team when the "big" Winkler boys emerged from their classrooms to look over the shy, somewhat intimidated, rural bumpkins from Reinland. Their eyes bulged when they discovered that the Reinland team had an all-girl battery. Evidently this could be a slaughter. But there was Mr. Driedger saying, "C'mon".

The Reinland Clod Hoppers scored twelve runs to win over Gnadenthal in a game played on May 19, 1940.

Nettie Krahn walked to the pitcher's box and Sophie Penner settled down behind the plate. The boys took up their positions and the game commenced. Among all the victories that later Reinland teams, including league teams, have won, none was more glorious than the encounter that afternoon some forty years ago. The heavy-laden Chevys carried a jubilant cargo back to the village and none was more pleased than Mr. Driedger himself. The sun was sinking in the west and the moon was just rising in the east. A listener standing by the roadside wondering what all the singing emanating from the pattering 1926e was all about could have picked up the following chords:

Reinland has won today,
 Reinland has won!
 When the sun goes down
 And the moon comes up
 Reinland has won today!³

Mr. Driedger had just taught his class a new song.

An important outcome of Driedger's coaching was that softball, later fastball, did not remain confined to the school. Driedger's gang continued playing long after he had moved away. The team began participating in Victoria Day tournaments and other competitions. Some of the outstanding players of the late thirties and early forties include

Pictured right are the 1971 Reinland Regals, who captured both the pennant and championship trophies of the Pembina Valley Fastball League. Back row, left to right: Dave Peters, Harvey Janzen, Roy Enns. Middle row: Don Falk, Menno Wieler, Art Paetkau, John Janzen, Art Sawatzky. Front row: Frank Enns, Abe Peters, captain, Victor Krahn, coach, and Victor Elias.



Henry Zacharias and Jake Harms, fielder, and Jake Friesen, first baseman. George Harms, Niel Krahn, Waldemar Penner, Frank Aetkau, Frank Froese, Albert Penner, Frank Zacharias and Mike Turchak could be added to this roster. In 1943 Peter Harms began pitching for the Reinland squad and became outstanding. In the 1950s George Ens and Johnny Peters developed into a strong battery.

Hardball pitchers Frank Zacharias, Jake Zacharias and Henry Penner must also be mentioned in this context. Hardball enjoyed great popularity for some years and produced a class of keen competitors.

Jake Harms, who has a strong sports record, has named Henry Zacharias as Reinland's greatest athlete. Henry Zacharias was a wrestler, with whom boys had to reckon, a good skater, a fast runner and a strong pitcher. It is naturally difficult to compare athletes from one era with those of another and the fifties, sixties, and seventies have all produced good athletes. Reinland has been involved in fastball league activity for many years.

Not to be forgotten is Frank G. Ens who has probably called more balls and strikes than anyone in the village. Ens has been involved as both a hardball and fastball umpire.



Top, David Thiessen and Nick Letkeman "kidnap" Bill Zacharias.



Lower right, at the far west end of the village, the Hiebert boys at serious play.



At left, Reinland blacksmith Jacob Thiessen and Isaac Fehr playing horseshoe a few decades ago.

Below right, 1932 wedding of Marie Krahn and Abe Penner.

Below, wedding photo of Mr. and Mrs. Peter J. Peters in 1898.



Weddings

Reinland wedding ceremonies have changed greatly over the years. The air of joy and excitement attending the event have remained the same.

Courtship in the village's first half century would be considered austere by the youth of today. Yet there were many opportunities for a boy and a girl to find each other. A social gathering, such as the celebration of an engagement, was an event where a girl could show her preference or a boy could seek to win a girl's attention. The language of love has existed since time immemorial. But courtship had to advance beyond the social gathering to a more serious plane. The young man was much less mobile before the advent of the horseless carriage. Parents insisted that there was only one place where their daughter could be courted. That place was their home. Nevertheless, courtships were as intense in quality of experience at that time or in any age as in more recent times. The age-old mystery was there:

There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not: The way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid.⁴

Lengthy, drawn-out courtships were discouraged. One evening the young man made his proposal and the young woman gave her answer. After this the couple visited the daughter's parents in the living room. The prospective groom sought their consent. Two weeks before the wedding the bans were read in the Sunday morning worship service.





Above, Frank Wieler and Maria Hiebert wedding picture, March 14, 1912.



Upper left, Jake Harms and Helen Zacharias wedding on August 5, 1945.

Lower left, young people at a wedding.



Wedding picture of Mr. and Mrs. Abram N. Friesen in 1910.

The engagement was celebrated at the home of the bride's parents that same afternoon. Relatives, friends and many young people flocked to this occasion. A service was held where the *Vorsänger* announced hymns to be sung and the minister would address the young couple. Food had been prepared for days. The day was a time of feasting and celebration, a break in the hard work routine of the villager's life. Often new courtships blossomed by the close of day.

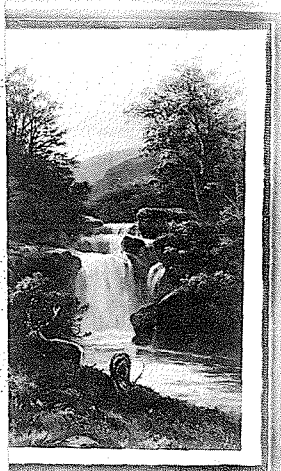
Then for two weeks the bridal couple was on the road. Tradition dictated a visit to grandparents, aunts and uncles and cousins. With the best horse groomed and the buggy in top shape the couple set out on an expedition that often took them to many villages. When they turned into a driveway, the first one to sight them would announce, "*Dee Brütlied sent hial!*" ("The bridal couple is here!"). The host family would drop all its regular work and for a minute there would be a frantic scramble to set the house in order. The man of the house or older sons would take care of the groom's horse. Bride and groom were invited into the living room and, if their schedule allowed it, there would be *Faspa* later on.

The wedding vows themselves were made at a simple ceremony following a Sunday morning worship service.

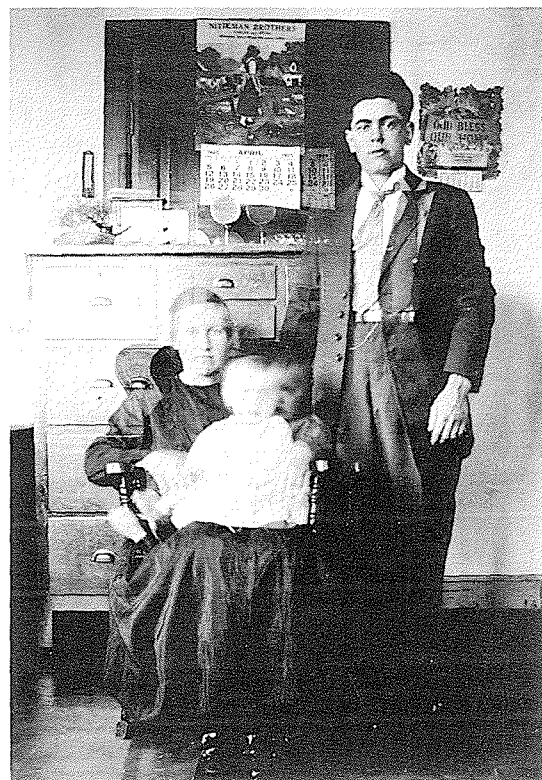
The Model T Ford initiated a change in courtship patterns. A young man could reach more villages and more young women. Entering neighbouring villages was a risky proposition for wooers at the best of times. Endless possibilities for mischief by the natives existed. On youth had a unique method of preventing at least one type of problem. When he reached the house of his beloved, he removed the steering wheel from his Model T and took it with him. After the courtship session he bade his sweetheart good-night, picked up the steering wheel, walked back to his car, reattached the steering wheel and puttered home.

Many modifications marked later weddings. Afternoon wedding at the home of the bride were popular in the twenties, thirties and forties. During this era, the bride and groom would spend a day prior to the wedding delivering dough, which had been prepared at the bride's home. In this way many villagers shared in the baking of buns for the wedding meal. Afternoon church weddings were also introduced. Brides, who had traditionally worn dark dresses at the forenoon ceremonies, generally wore lighter dresses. Eventually the bridal veil and wedding gown became established traditions. Wedding dress varied greatly, however, from church to church. By the 1960s many wedding had shifted from Sunday to Saturday and late afternoon or evening ceremonies were popular.

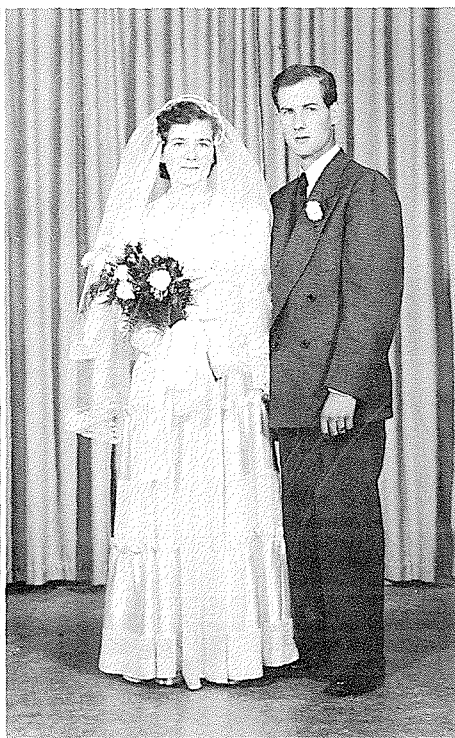
A significant part of the traditional Mennonite wedding ceremony was the custom of man and woman walking the aisle to the altar side by side (philosophically satisfying symbolism for believers in the equality of man and woman), was being dropped by many churches in the late



Remembrance of
your Friendship.



Upper left, two Christmas cards of the early twenties. The first was sent by Elizabeth Wiens to Jacob Peters, the other by Jacob Peters to Elizabeth Wiens. They were married in 1922. The picture above shows the Jacob Peters family in 1925.



Lower left, wedding picture of Mr. and Mrs. Abe H. Enns in 1942. Lower right, wedding photo of Jake Zacharias and Jessie Froese.

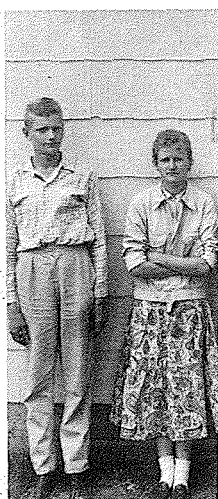
Upper right, Mr. and Mrs. Abe H. Enns were married in the old Reinland church in 1942.

Lower right, domestic chores in the new Enns household, 1942.

Upper left, B. C. Krahn wedding picture in 1934.

Lower left, wedding photo of Betty Zacharias and Sam Weyland.





1960s. A new custom, by which the father brought in the bride and gave her in marriage, was adopted.

The immigrants of the 1920s brought several wedding traditions to Reinland. One was *Polterabend*, an evening of poems, skits and gifts on the eve of the wedding. The youth choir often sang at wedding ceremonies. A social evening followed the wedding. *Schlüsselbund* and other folk games were played by the young and watched with interest by the older generation. A highlight of the evening was the raising of bride and groom on separate chairs held close together. The couple would be lowered to the ground only after having kissed.



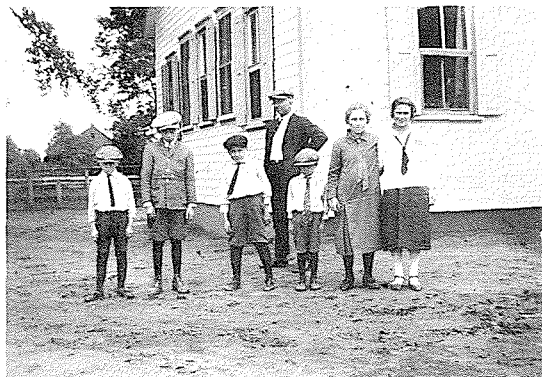
Upper left, Bernie Zacharias and Lydia Ens at school.

The next picture is their wedding photo.

The picture above shows a double wedding: Betty Zacharias and John Janzen, Mary Zacharias and Henry Janzen.

Lower left, Margaret Thiessen and Larry Reimer, married on September 29, 1973.





Upper left, Jacob Schellenberg with four of his sons and daughter Helen (Mrs. George T. Reimer, Steinbach) and Lena Krahn (Mrs. John A. Driedger, Grunthal) in 1920s.

The group of girls above includes sitting, left to right: Sarah Krahn, Lena Schellenberg, Tina Krahn and standing: Lena Krahn, Lena Penner and Mariechen Krahn.

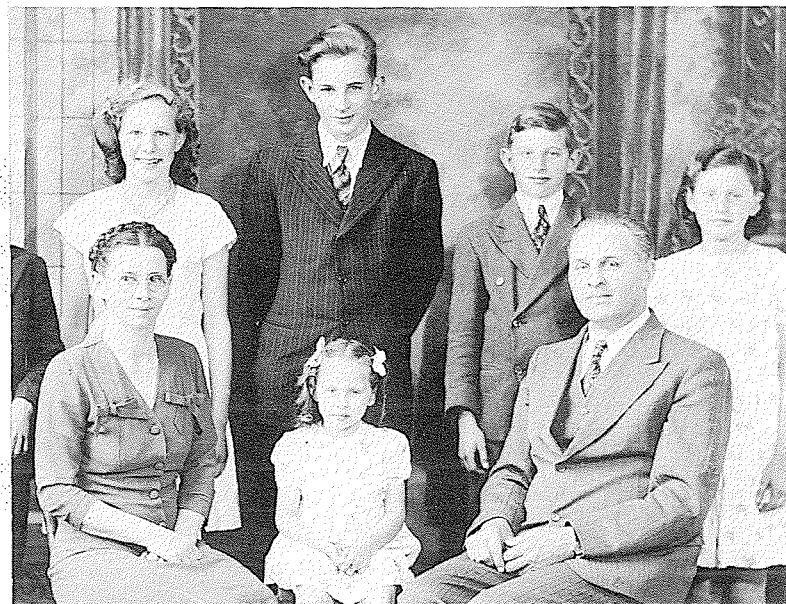
Upper right, Harms children around 1925.

Lower right, Jacob Peters and Cornelius Martens children at play circa 1928.





This photograph was taken at the Golden Wedding of Mr. and Mrs. G. G. H. Ens in 1971.



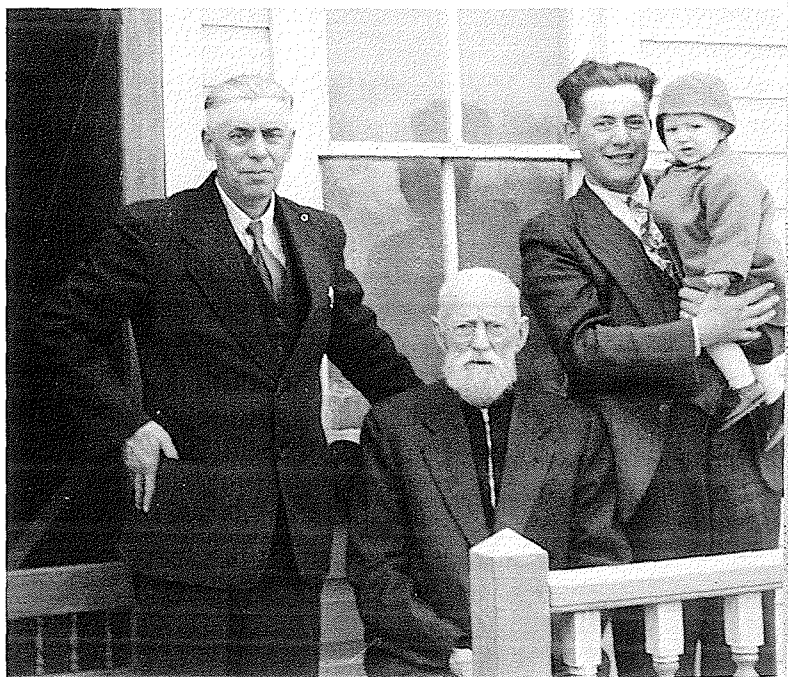
Picture of family of Abram and Margaret Olfert around 1947. The children are, left to right: Henry, Hilda, Jake (Jascha), Abe, Helga and seated Heidi.

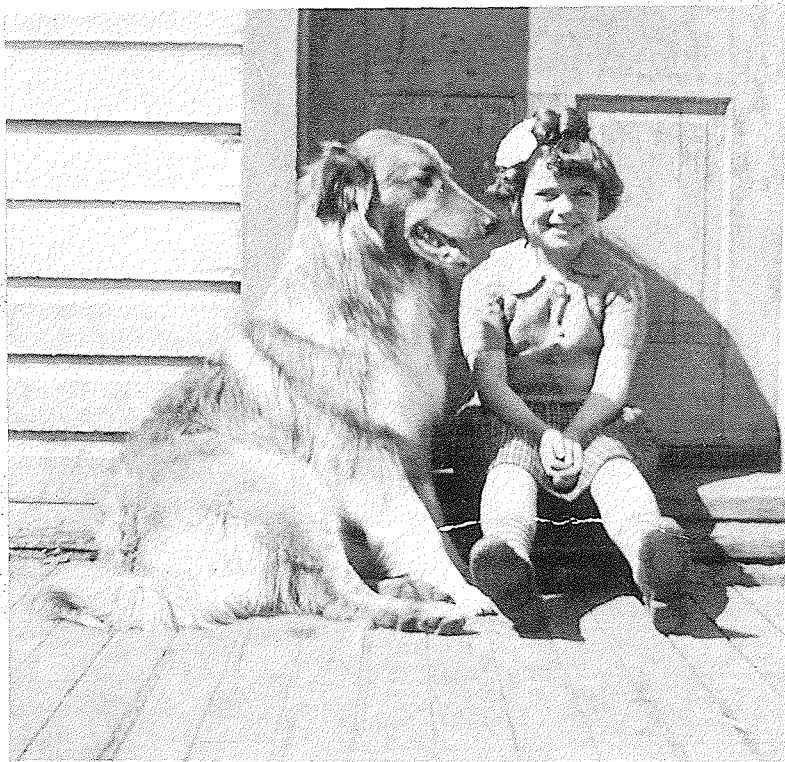


Lower right, four generation picture of some 25 years ago shows great-grandfather Peter J. Peters, grandfather Jacob P. Peters, father Peter J. W. Peters and son Jacob Peters.

Above, four generation picture of 1976 shows some changes with great-grandfather Jacob P. Peters, grandfather P. J. W. Peters, father Jacob Peters and daughter.

Upper right, the Peter J. Peters family got together for a family picture in 1944.



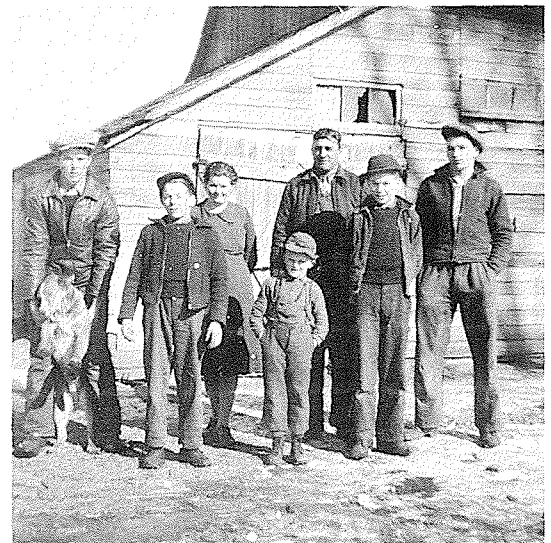
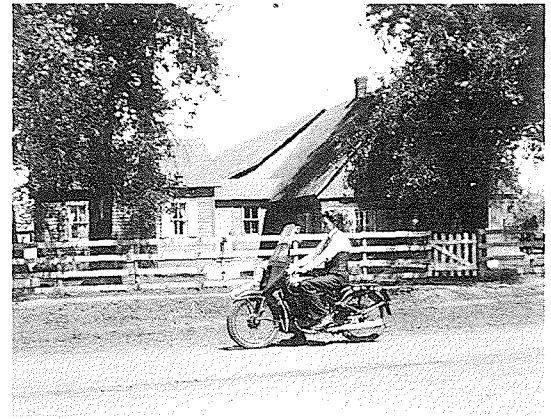


Left, Eva Froese around 1940.

Lower left, winter scene at Ens farm with Frank G. Ens and Bingo (big dog) and Laddie.

Bottom right, David Wiebes and boys.

Immediately below, Peter Harms on his motorcycle.





Above David Fehr and J. F. Wieler.

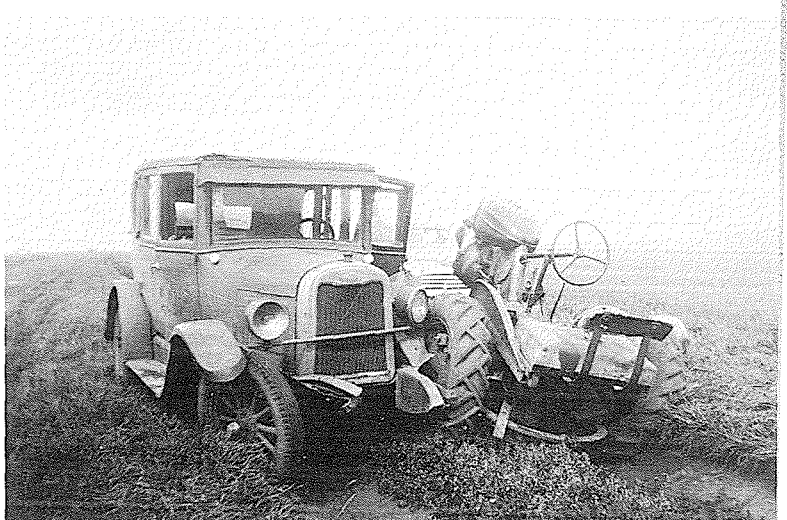
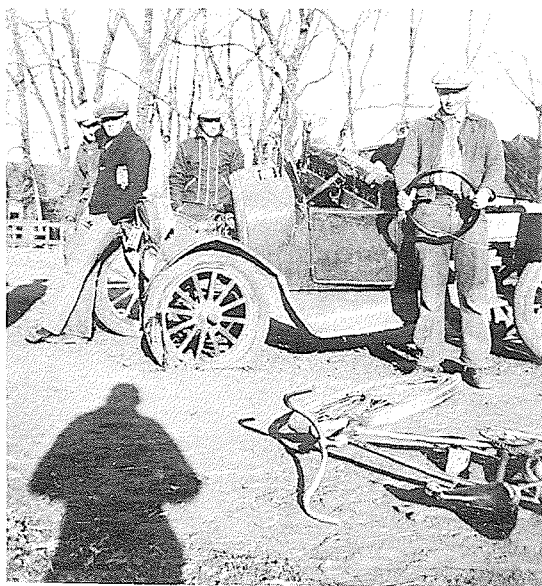


Upper right, a historic 1895 photo. Standing: Isaac Fehr (deceased husband of Mrs. Isaac Fehr, Winkler), Franz Froese (son of pioneer Obervorsteher Franz Froese and later heir to the same post), Jacob Letkeman, who became known for his selective seed-growing feats and Peter C. Fehr. Sitting: Johann Fehr, Peter Harms (later elected to the ministry) and Jacob Thiessen, long-time Reinland blacksmith and steam-engine operator.

Right centre, Nettie and Helen Fehr.

Lower right, car-tractor collision on country road in 1940.

Below, a traffic accident involving Jacob Thiessen's car and John Paetkau's car, on October 15, 1939. This was probably Reinland's first motor vehicle mishap.





Above, pressing manure for fuel at A. N. Friesens and at upper left, at C. B. Krahns. Lower left, Betty and Susie Zacharias neatly piling the finished products to dry.



Below, Jack Dyck known as old Jack, son of Herman Dycks. He lived in Reinland's first house trailer some fifty years ago.



Right, the late Letkeman sisters, originally from Osterwick, Chortitza, who settled in Reinland in the 1920s.



Below, a four generation picture taken in the Grosse Stube of present Jacob Ens home (note door to central brick heater). Great-grandmother Mrs. Gerhard Ens, grandfather Rev. Heinrich G. Ens, mother Mrs. Margaret (Ens) Wieler and son Ernie Wieler.



The Aged

In Reinland's first eight decades most older people remained in the village until they passed away. Although they lacked many of today's facilities, there were many compensations.

Community was important to the aged. They were surrounded by caring people, by their own family. They remained in the midst of familiar work activities. They could enjoy the smell of the soil after summer rain and the fragrance of freshly cut hay. Grandparents could relate to their grandchildren in an environment that both understood. Older people enjoyed a large measure of emotional security.

The Senior Citizens Homes of today are the product of great economic and social transformations in society. They perform a needed and vital service that modern society often provides in no other way. They are not, however, necessarily improvements to the encompassing shelter of family and community.

Tragedy

Heute ist hier im Dorf Franz Wielers Heinrich, ein Kind von 7 Jahr und 7 Tagen mit einem beladenen Wagen zu Tode gefahren.⁵

Henry Wieler, son of Franz Wielers, a child of seven years and seven days, was killed here in the village today when a loaded wagon passed over him. (English translation-ed).

So wrote Jacob Peters in his diary on Monday, June 28, 1920.

Times of tragedy have occurred on several occasions in the village's history. The tractor mishap that killed the young son of Jacob Friesens, the sudden death of two brothers-in-law, Abram Zacharia and Jacob Friesen, in the 1930s, the farm accidents that killed a well known Reinland farmer, John Braun, and young Victor Wieler and Rosengart in the 1950s, the highway accident that claimed the life of

Seid fröhlich in Hoffnung, geduldig in Trübsal, haltet an am Gebet. Röm. 12, 12.

Meiner geliebten Gattin
Anna Bergmann

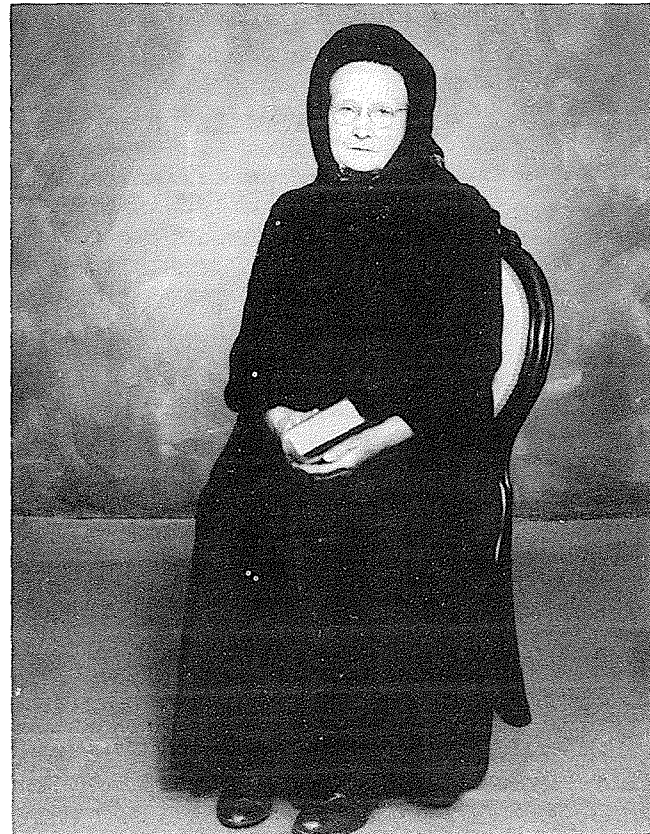
zu ihrem Geburtsstage am 22. Mai, 1846.

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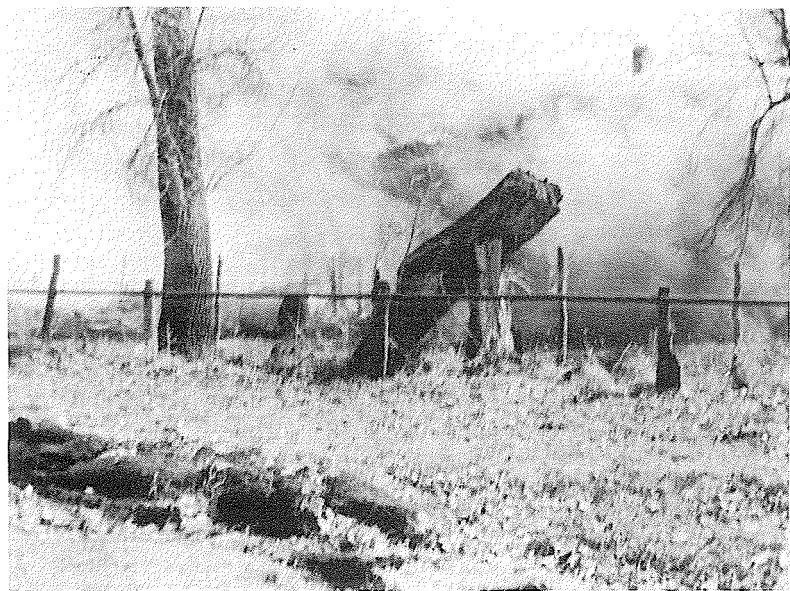
Johann. Bergmann.

Left, beautifully hand-written birthday greeting of Johann Bergmann to his wife Anna. He wrote this greeting one year before the Bergmann migration from Russia to Reinland.

Below, the beauty of old age. Mrs. Peter Klassen, Blumenfeld, in traditional costume.



Right, fire destroyed the home of the Abram P. Zacharias family about twenty-five years ago.



Below, some fifty years ago, Jacob and Anna (Siemens) Schellenberg mourning the passing of their son Arthur who died of pneumonia at the age of eight.



Gerhard Huebner and the electrical mishap that resulted in the death of Mrs. David Falk, have all not been forgotten.

Epidemics have caused much sorrow in the past. Many children and older people died in the great influenza outbreak after the First World War. It was not easy to obtain the services of doctors and even where doctors were available they were often helpless against diseases. Medical science had not yet advanced to present levels of sophistication. Dr. Hugh McGavin, Plum Coulee, and Dr. C. W. Wiebe, Winkler, have visited many Reinland homes. Since 1930 modern hospital facilities in Winkler have greatly improved the medical services available to Reinland.

The death of women in childbirth left some families motherless. In earlier days all births took place at home with the assistance of the husband or a mid-wife. Midwives rendered important services and the great majority of births had no complications, but the use of modern technology for emergency cases was not available.

Death — Family and Community Sorrow

Funeral services were generally held in homes during the early years and gradually were transferred to the churches. These services were very simple, with the singing of hymns and the preaching of a message of comfort to the bereaved. Following the services, the coffin was either carried to the cemetery or borne there by wagon or sleigh. After a short graveside ceremony, the body was buried. Everyone remained at the graveside until the burial had been completed and

little mound marked the final resting place of the deceased. Generally no flowers or monuments adorned the graves of early Reinland people. There was a common belief that flowers and kindness were tributes to be paid when the person was still alive.

Funeral customs changed over the years but community involvement with the bereaved family in practical ways long remained part of the village funeral service. The following is a free translation and paraphrase of an article written by Mrs. Maria Ens, Reinland, on funeral customs. Mrs. Ens came to Reinland in the 1920's and has belonged to the Blumenorter Church since its beginning. What she says, however, has validity for all the Reinland church groups of the 1920's-1940's even though certain variations existed:

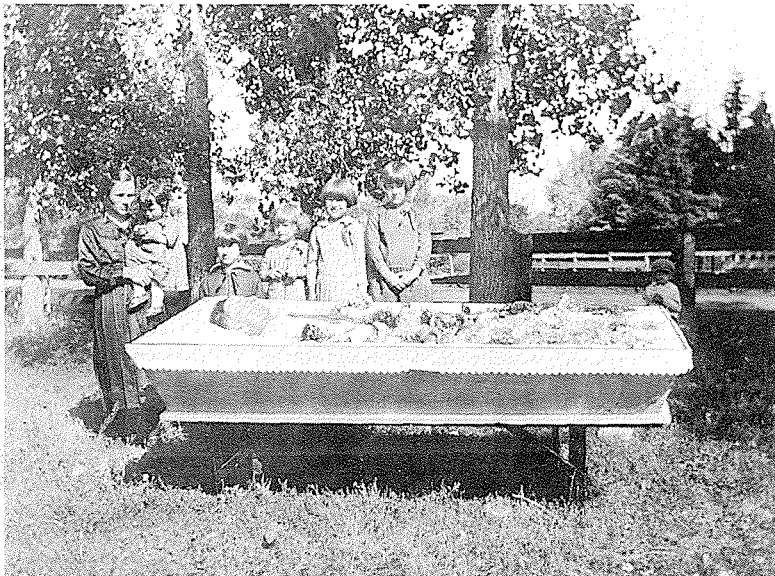
When a loved one died, the eyelids were closed, the body was washed and dressed in a funeral garment. The deceased was then placed on a board or laid on a bench and the hands were clasped as in prayer.

The family, relatives and neighbours gathered at the home, read a passage from the Word of God, prayed and sang a hymn. The body was then carried to a cool room.

The coffin was made at home or by a local carpenter. Usually the dead were clothed in white. Some families chose the best black clothing.

The caretaker of the cemetery would select the place for burial and volunteers would dig the grave.

During our first years in Canada, our people did not make use of an undertaker. When Father died on July 17, 1949, we



Peter J. Zacharias who died of tuberculosis around 1930, is mourned by his family. Traditional village funeral customs still prevailed at the time.

made use of the services of an undertaker for the first time. Now this is a general practice.

Written funeral invitations were sent out. One letter reached many people. One neighbour carried the letter to the next invited family until the letter had made the rounds.

The invited guests brought lard and milk to one location. Here a large dough for buns was mixed in preparation for the funeral repast. The dough was then divided so that each family was in charge of baking one part. Only buns were baked for the simple meal. Twigs and flowers were braided into wreaths, which were later to be placed on the grave.

Today the buns are purchased at the baker's and the coffin and wreaths are also purchased.

At the funeral service, the coffin was placed beneath the pulpit. One or more ministers delivered the eulogy. The obituary of the deceased was read. The viewing was held outside; today it is inside the church building.

At the cemetery a hymn was first sung. A minister would read a Scripture selection and dedicate the grave. In former times the coffin was lowered into the grave by means of ropes. Then the men would close it with earth. The bereaved would remain until the mound was completed. The wreaths were then placed on the grave and a silent prayer would follow.

Now the coffin is lowered by the undertaker and everyone present leaves the cemetery.⁶

After the burial the family, relatives and friends would gather at the home of the bereaved to share a simple meal. In later years this meal was held in a building which served as a kitchen and dining facility for the Blumenort congregation or in church basements.

Photo courtesy Werner Ens.
Reinland cemetery in 1975.





Reinland sewing circle 1947-48. Back, left to right: Mrs. Dave Thiessen, Laura Thiessen, Nettie Wieler, Susan (Martens) Froese, Marg. Enns, Nettie Zacharias, Mrs. Dave Peters, Mrs. Mary Janzen, Margaret Ens. Sitting, left to right: Mrs. Hiebert, Mary Zacharias, Mary Paetkau, Mrs. Jac. Dyck, Mrs. Abr. Paetkau.

Relating to a Larger Community

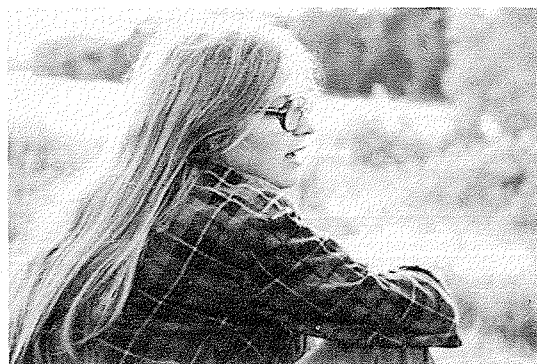
No local community can live unto itself. It is involved with all of humanity. Reinland has received great benefits through its bonds with the neighbouring communities of Rosengart, Schoenwiese and Haskett. Reinland's involvement extends to many areas beyond those districts, to the rest of Manitoba, to the rest of Canada and to the world beyond.

In the earliest days the Ontario Mennonites helped Reinlanders in settlement and provided necessary aid. Many contacts with governmental authorities have been mentioned. Pioneers also kept up steady correspondence with relatives and friends in Kansas, Nebraska and Russia. Many other contacts could be listed.

A general feeling exists that the Reinländer Mennonite Church (1875-1925) was largely ignorant of events in the world at large and was too isolationist to have any concern for its fellow man outside of the immediate Mennonite circle. There are facts that challenge that contention. Records have revealed numerous drives for contributions for both Mennonite and non-Mennonite causes. Famine-stricken people in India were supported by two drives for funds in Reinland, one completed on April 15, 1897, and another completed on May 28, 1900. Money was raised to support hospitals in Morden and Winnipeg. Elder Peter Wiebe authorized a campaign for contributions for Mennonites at Penburg and Terek, Russia, in 1912. (Much earlier at least some Reinlanders made donations to assist Mennonites at Khiva in Asiatic Russia). During World War I several collections for the Red Cross and for war victims were made. One 1917 collection is particularly interesting. Reinland raised \$41.05 for the victims of the ship explosion

at Halifax harbour, a disaster described in MacLennan's novel *Barometer Rising*.⁷

*Diana (Janzen) Brandt, daughter of the Henry Janzens, Reinland, who wrote the words for the folk opera, *The Bridge*.*



Scene at Reinland cannery. Large quantities of food for overseas relief were canned here after World War II.

THE BRIDGE

A FOLK OPERA
Commemorating the 100th
Anniversary of the Mennonites
coming to Manitoba
their life, joys and trials.

by
Esther Wiebe, Music
Diana Brandt, Words

Director
Elizabeth Schlichting
Musical Director
George Wiebe

Commissioned, and Sponsored by:
 Manitoba Mennonite Centennial Committee



Similar projects have been carried out in later years. After World War II, the facilities of Pembina Co-op Cannery were mobilized to produce many cans of beef for a large scale Mennonite Central Committee relief project in Europe. Calves from numerous Southern Manitoba areas were donated. Volunteer labour was used. The Reinland-Rosengart ladies sewing circle has been involved in mission and relief projects for many years.

In the summer of 1972, voluntary labour from Reinland joined Mennonite Disaster Service program to help clean up the debris of disastrous flood at Rapid City, South Dakota.

Involvement in more recent years has taken on many forms: political participation at the municipal, provincial and federal levels; school board participation, business connections, membership on provincial and national agricultural boards, church conferences and missions.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

The Jubilee

The Reinland centennial observance for reasons evident in the village's history, was not exclusively a Reinland celebration. It was an observance of a century of West Reserve history. People from all corners of the West Reserve as well as a fair representation from the East Reserve participated.

It was naturally also a Reinland celebration planned by the people of Reinland and brought to fruition by the efforts of villagers. People from all occupations gave many hours to make the necessary preparations. Men, women, youth and children shared in the work.

The gathering that took place on July 18-20, 1975, was probably the largest in the village's history, leaving far behind even the *Jännerfest* (song festival) of 1942. There were people present from all over southern Manitoba, from Winnipeg, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Ontario, Kansas, Florida, Mexico, Belize, Germany, and probably other provinces, states and countries. A large percentage of these were former Reinlanders and their descendants.

The following article, written by Elizabeth Bergen, appeared in the July 30, 1975, edition of the Red River Valley Echo and describes many of the events of the celebration. It is reproduced with some revisions.

Reinland village celebrates 100th year of West Reserve

"A Time to Remember," was the motto that greeted the guests at the Reinland centennial celebrations July 19 and 20.

The centenary of a community, a once-in-a-lifetime experience, means many things. So it was for Reinland when that village commemorated the 100th birthday of the opening of the West Reserve.

During this historic event tribute was paid to the Mennonites from Russia who had founded the village in 1875, the first of whom came with the first contingent of Mennonites on July 15. Also remembered were the Mennonite immigrants that came from Russia during the 1920's, who took over the

Invitation to participate in the celebration of one hundred years of Reinland village life. The photography on the centennial activities was done by Werner Ens.





Above, the 4-H welcome wagon at the west end of Reinland.



Right, Esther Elias was one of many Reinlanders busily preparing for the centennial in early July, 1975.

farms from the Old Colony Mennonites when they migrated to Mexico. In this way there was an almost complete changeover. Only a few of the former residents remained.

But it was also a time to reflect and a time to say thank you, a time for informal visiting under the cool shade of Manitoba maples which surround much of the yard at the community centre.

The program committee had also arranged for activities for the youngsters in the form of races, games and pony rides.

The first of many events was the Saturday morning parade. For this occasion hundreds of people lined the picturesque village street through which the parade passed.

The parade was unique in that it was largely Reinland-orientated. The entries included many farm artifacts of all sorts as well as the latest in farm machinery, a miniature covered wagon drawn by a brand new small scale model tractor, a float depicting early period furniture in a farm kitchen where a number of villagers were grinding coffee, ironing with sadirons, doing the laundry with an old hand-operated washing machine and churning, while a few "oldsters" sat eating sunflower seeds. There were early model cars, one a 1922 McLaughlin, and instead of the usual band music, a group of past and present Reinlander men, riding on a hayrack, provided English and German folk songs.

Possibly the old hissing steam engine, which once dominated the prairie, following the period when the one plow share was king, attracted the most attention.

Riding in an old "democrat" was the parade marshal — the Hon. Samuel Uskiw, minister of agriculture of Manitoba.

The official opening program followed the noon dinner hour where words of welcome were brought by chairman, Bernie Elias, and the invocation by G. G. H. Ens.

The opening address was delivered by the Hon. Samuel Uskiw, who told the assembled that the province of Manitoba is richer through the efforts of the Mennonites, and it appreciates the cultural activities they provide along with other ethnic groups. He said, "The Manitoba government sends greetings, and I say to those who have come here from a distance that I wish them a successful journey home."

Also bringing greetings was Jack Murta M.P. for Lisgar. He extended congratulations of Reinland's centennial event and stated "People make the difference when we reflect on the past 100 years. There is evidence that by working together for our own community we can learn a substantial lesson. Proof of this lesson is evidenced by centres such as Reinland, Winkler and Altona . . . I wish you much continued success in the next hundred years."

Others extending greetings were Arnold Brown, M.L.A. of Rhineland; George J. Froese, Reeve of the Rural Municipality of Stanley; John Wieler, Rosengart, councillor of the Rural

Municipality of Rhineland; Abe Enns, Reinland, councillor for Rural Municipality of Stanley, and Henry F. Wiebe, mayor of the town of Winkler and manager of the Winkler Credit Union. Speaking on behalf of the Credit Union, he conveyed sincere congratulations on behalf of the board, and presented a few cheques to help defray expenses of this event.

He also presented a cheque of \$200 from the town of Winkler to help with costs involved with this centennial gathering.

Mr. Wiebe also made G. G. H. Ens of Reinland an honorary citizen of Winkler. He was chosen for his many community and church efforts, which have included Sunday school teacher for 35 years; school trustee and secretary for many years; secretary of the cheese factory; as member of the Winkler hospital board, the Salem Home board; as representative of Manitoba Central Committee; as honorary member of the Seed Growers Association, etc. Another token of appreciation was the new Olympic coin set.

Other greetings came from the Winnipeg Centennial Committee offered by John Klassen, who also presented a pictorial history book of Winnipeg for the village library; Winkler Co-op Service conveyed best wishes through Henry Bergen; while Winkler Chamber of Commerce conveyed best wishes and recalled that Reinland was once a stopover place for travellers across the open prairie.

Special singing was offered by a male octet of past and present Reinlanders.

A highlight of the afternoon was the unveiling of a plaque by Mr. and Mrs. Henry J. Falk. They are direct descendants of the first Mennonites to come to Manitoba and those that followed from Russia 50 years later. The plaque, to be placed on the building in the near future reads:

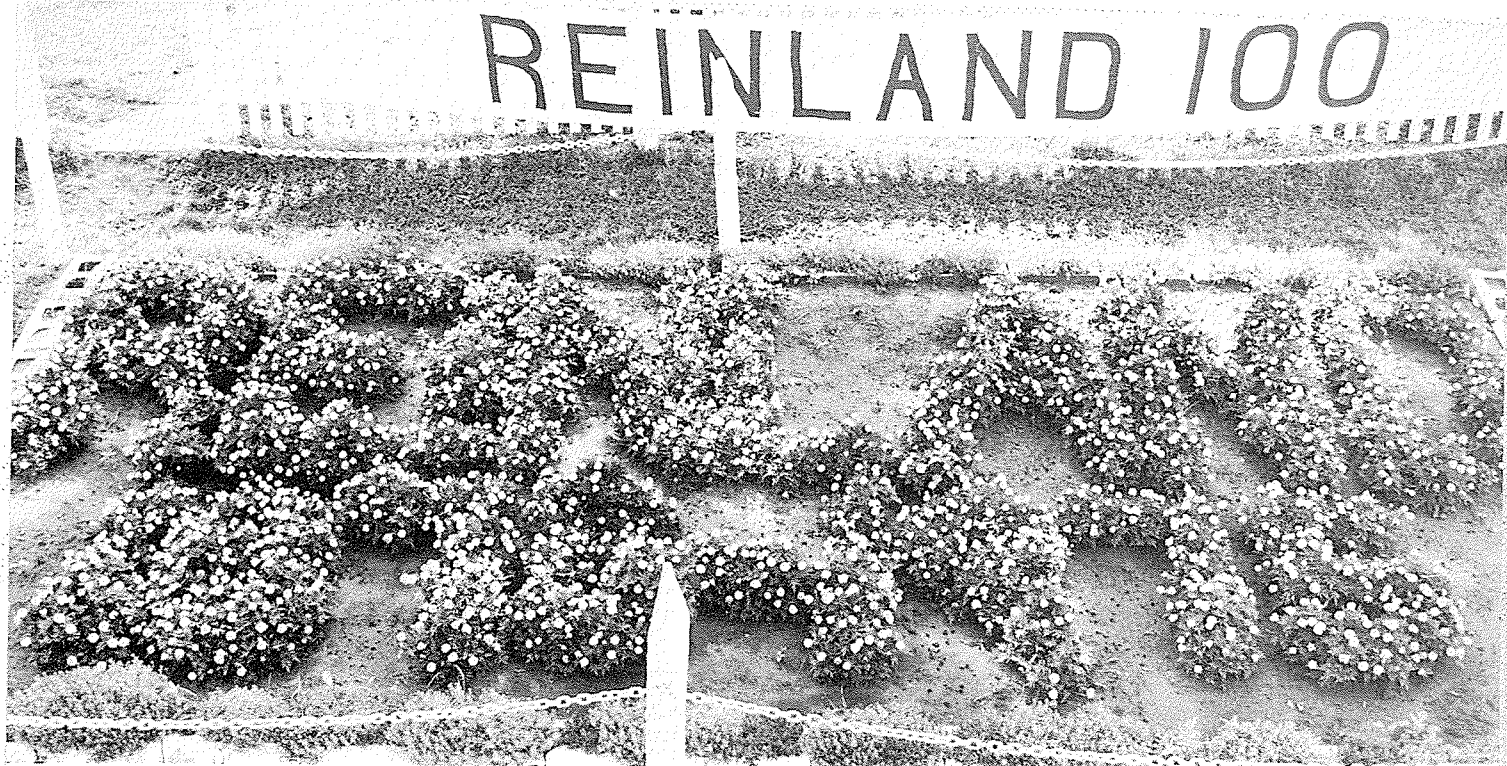
"Manitoba's Oldest Mennonite church building completed in 1876."

"The following elders served here: Johann Wiebe, Peter Wiebe, Johann Friesen, Johann P. Bueckert and Paul J. Schaefer."

"This plaque unveiled on the occasion of the Centennial of the Village of Reinland July 19, 1975."

Saturday evening's activities concluded with a Low German play "Dee Brotschuld" written by Rev. Gerhard Ens, Gretna, and was presented by the young people of the Blumenort Mennonite church. It was the story of Mennonite pioneers in Manitoba showing how they decided to repay a loan made to them by the Canadian government a few years after their arrival from Russia.

A large tent erected on the grounds of the community centre (the former Old Colony Mennonite church building erected in 1876), in which the major events took place, proved



Floral display in front of community centre reading Reinland 1875-1975.



Right, activity around the big tent.

Opposite page, centennial choir led by Henry G. Ens singing at Sunday morning centennial worship service, July 20, 1975.

much too small to shelter the entire audience for the Sunday morning worship and thanksgiving service, but benches and chairs were placed outside to accommodate the overflow.

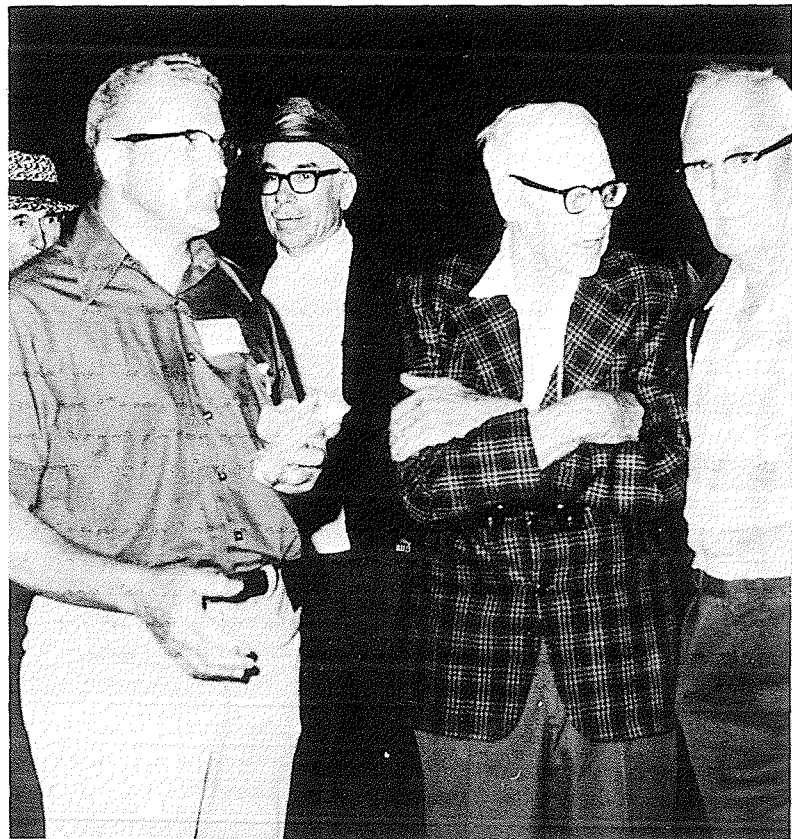
The meditations delivered in German and English consisted of a joint service by Blumenorter, Sommerfelder and Evangelical Mennonite Mission churches. Rev. John I. Peters, Morden, read portions of Psalms 103 and 104 and gave the invocation, the German meditation was delivered by Rev. Gerhard Ens, Gretna, and the English one by Rev. Jake Friesen, Gladstone, both former residents of Reinland. The Rev. G. J. Zacharias, Reinland, Rudnerweider (EMMC) church, had the closing prayer. A mixed choir, directed by Henry Ens, formerly of Reinland, and more recently of Mexico, sang "Holy God We Praise Thy Name", "Herr, deine Guete" and "So lang mein Jesus lebt". The congregation sang "Nun danket alle Gott" and "Faith of Our Fathers".

Rev. Ens told the audience that "it is a special honor for me to stand behind this pulpit, the oldest of any in our Mennonite churches in Manitoba". He also reminded the audience that it is fitting to remember their forefathers who came to this newly-opened province to carve homes for themselves, and for their children. They had come with only their hands as tools of toil — but all brought with them staunch courage, hopes and unbounding faith in God for the future. He chose his text from Numbers 32:7.

Rev. Friesen based his address on Joshua 1:5,6,7. He said, "We are sometimes prone to belittle what our forefathers did for us, but it was they who taught us respect for the church and our elders, honesty, law and order.

"Our forefathers did not build any memorials of stone, but they left us a tremendous heritage for which we are grateful today."

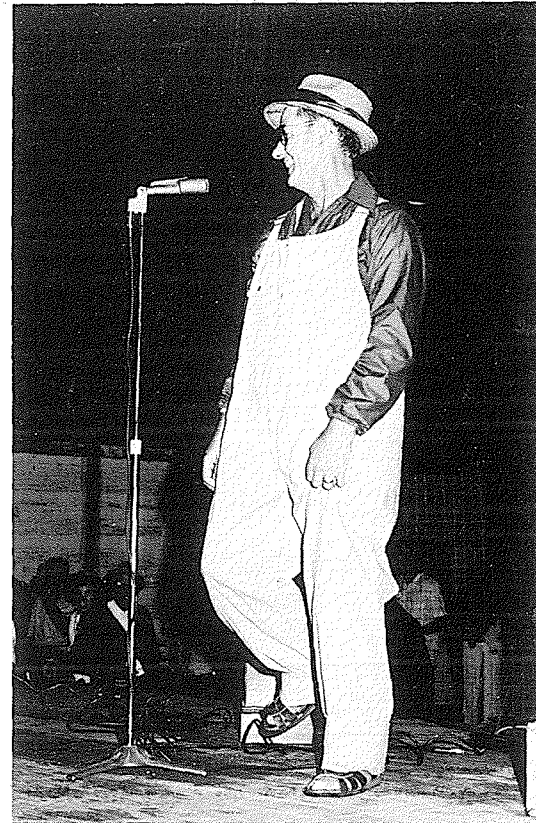




Four pictures of Friday night wiener roast. Upper left David Peters and John Peters take in the activities.

Above roasting wieners while groups like the ladies (upper right) were entertaining.

Right, Gerhard Ens, Ed Giesbrecht, Peter P. Zacharias and David Thiessen.



Upper left, street scene at the Centennial Community Centre.

Above, Jake Zacharias, member of the men's centennial singers, at the microphone.

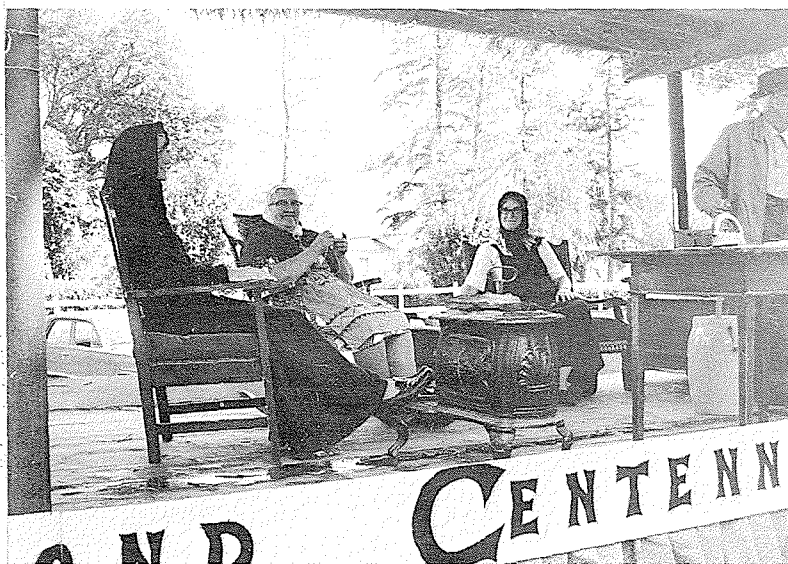
Left, Conrad Zacharias observing the centennial.



Above, parade marshal, Hon. Sam Uskiw, Manitoba Minister of Agriculture, and 4-H Queen Martha Elias headed the centennial parade on Saturday morning, July 19, 1975. Sitting in the front seat is Barry Uskiw, son of the cabinet minister.

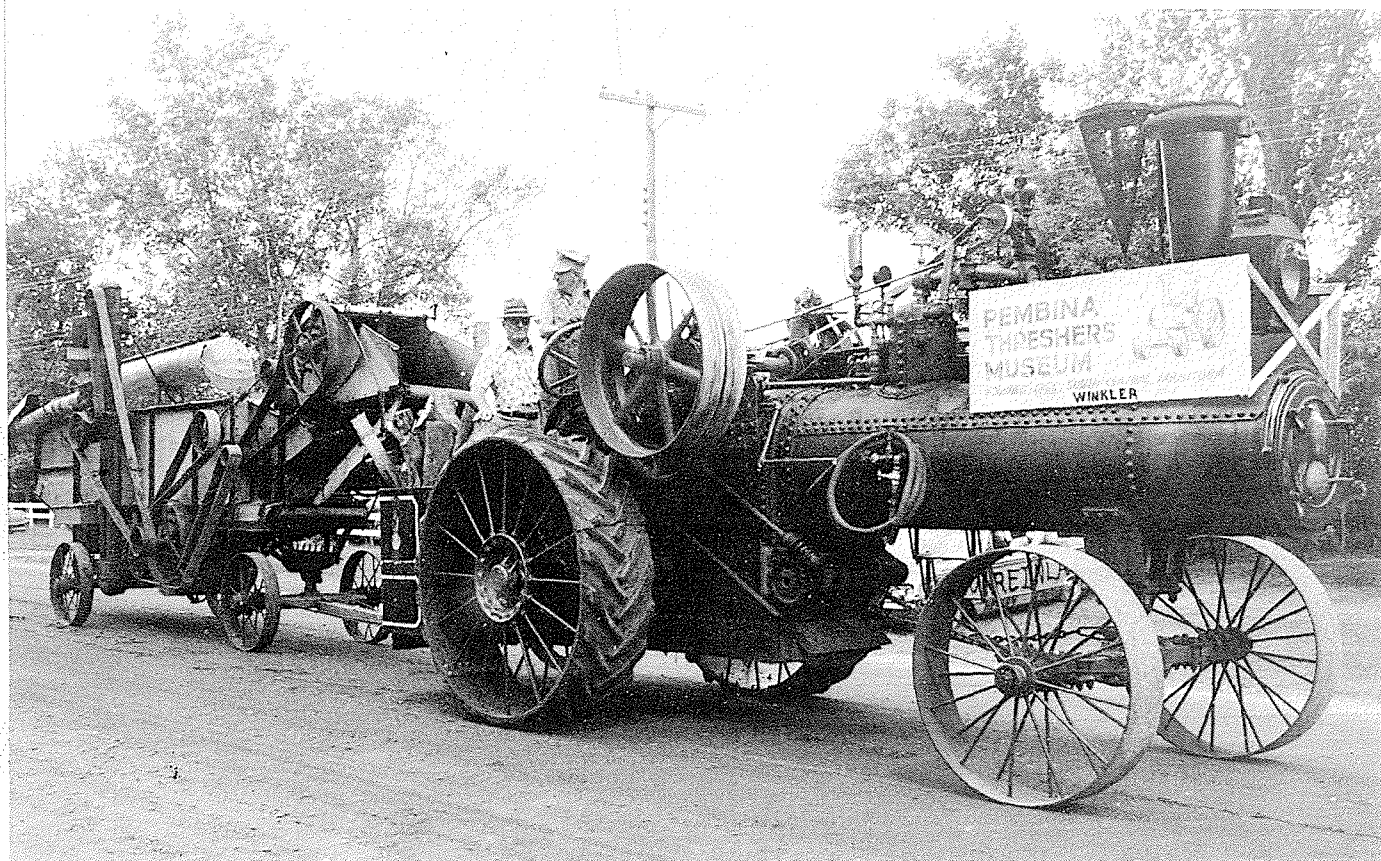


Right, Conrad and Carla Zacharias demonstrate the old and the new in the parade.



Left, this float depicting the simlin attracted much favourable attention. Shown above are Margaret Reimer, Mrs. Jacob Peters, Betty Hoepfner and Mr. Jacob Peters. Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Peters have lived in Reinland as a married couple for over half of the village's history.

Below the steam engine driven by Abram Hiebert, Morden, accompanied by George J. Rempel, Winkler. Many old-timers thrilled to the steamer's whistle sounding once more on Reinland's streets.





Three pictures of simlin float. Centre right, Reinland teacher Dave Hoeppner and Frank Reimer enjoying their old-timer roles.

Lower right, Edwin Peters tending old feed-grain crusher.

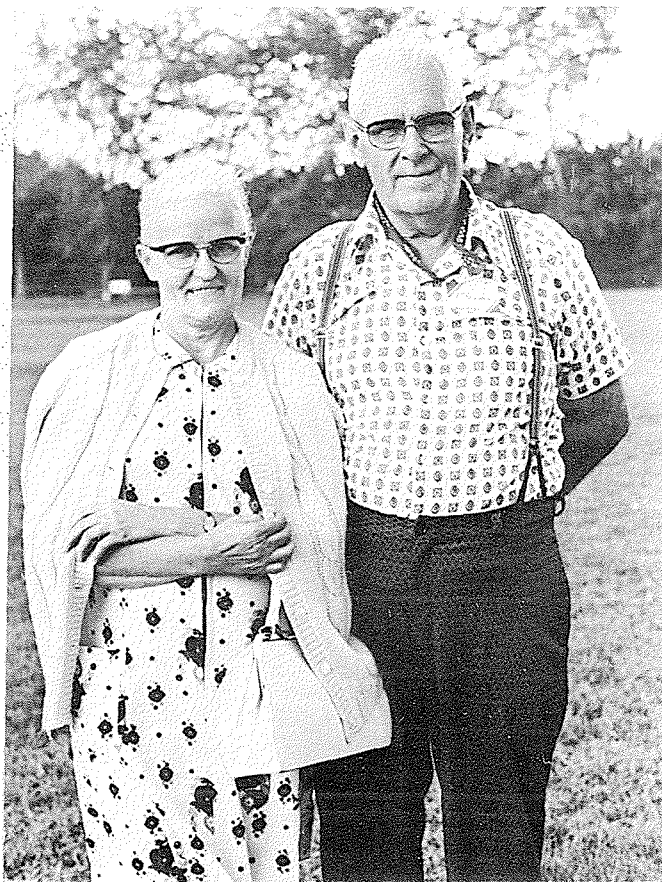
On opposite page, the Gausseschlingels (literally street rascals) finally received the recognition they had so long deserved and they got it on their own stamping ground — dee Darpsgauss (the village street). Frank G. Ens on the tractor was "pulling for them" and a special escort was on hand to handle any problems on the route.

Two former Reinlanders Phil Ens and George Ens are involved with the Triple E firm, which contributed the trailers needed for registration at each end of village.





Dit Darp ess Reinlaund
Dit Darp ess Reinlaund
Von'e oole Veehfenz
Bott de lange Dwäagauss
Von-Wielasch Joakob,
Bott Hendrik Jaunzen
Dit Darp ess tūs fe die enn mie.

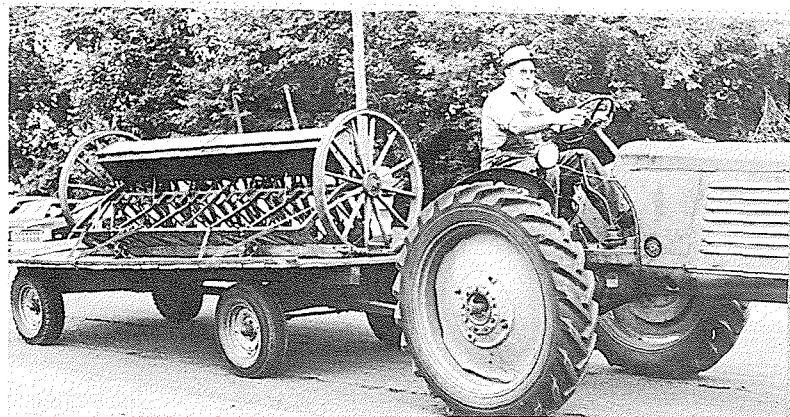


Above, long-time Reinland residents David J. Thiessens. Mrs. Thiessen has reported Reinland news to the Pembina Times and the Red River Valley Echo for many years.

Upper right, Isaac Braun with grain drill of a different era.

Centre right, Henry W. Penner and Isaac Fehr with part of Big J Industries' sunflower display. Isaac Fehr is showing the old method of harvesting sunflowers.

Three Zacharias sisters Betty, Mary and Tina, now all married enjoy celebration.





Above, Jim and Betty (Paetkau) Krahn share in Reinland homecoming.

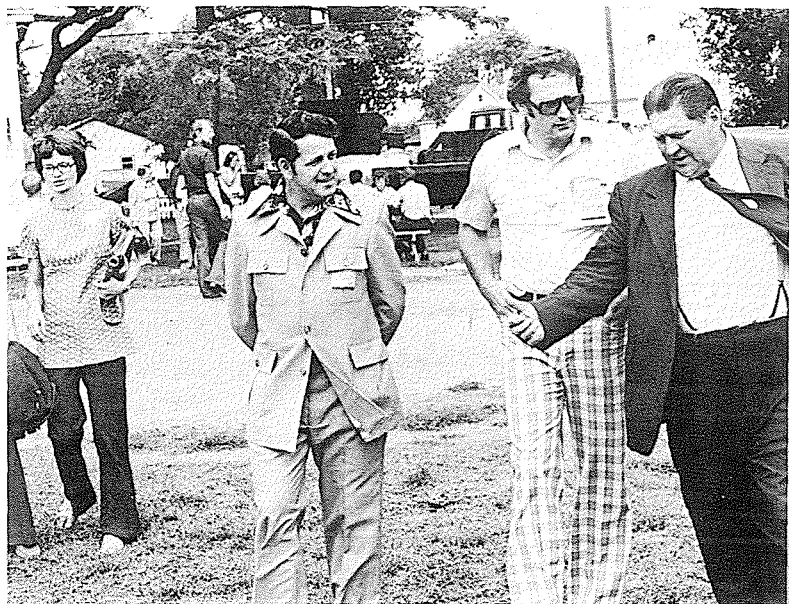


Upper left, modern tractors and machinery along the parade route.



Centre left, children's sack race.

Lower left, many people enjoyed the music of the Senior Citizens orchestra from Winkler.

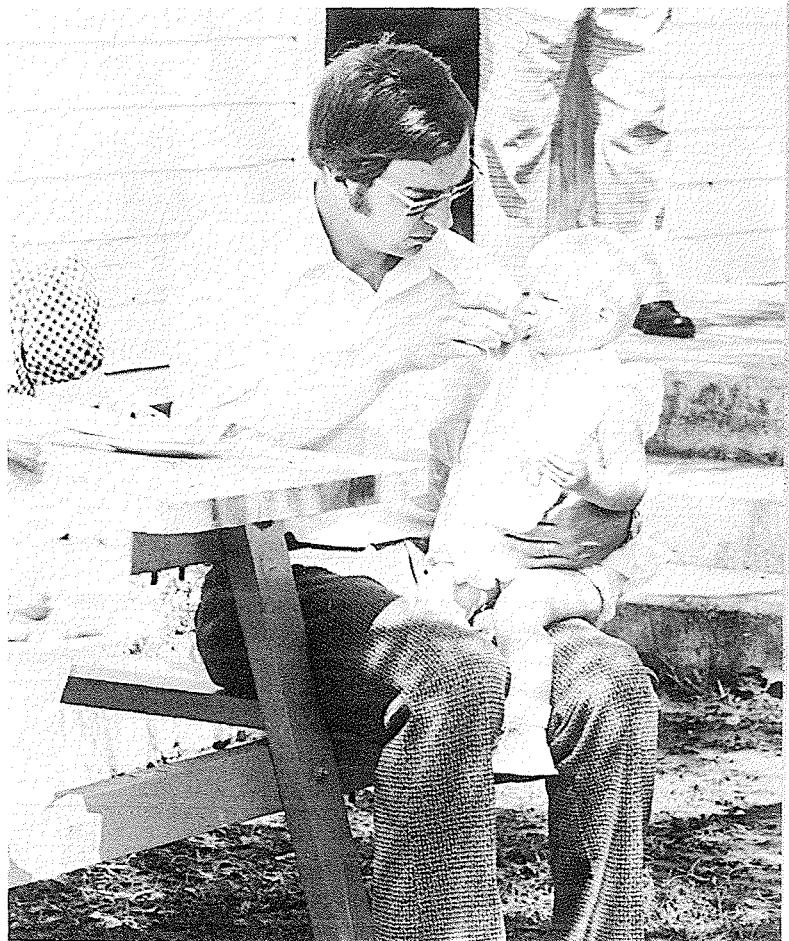


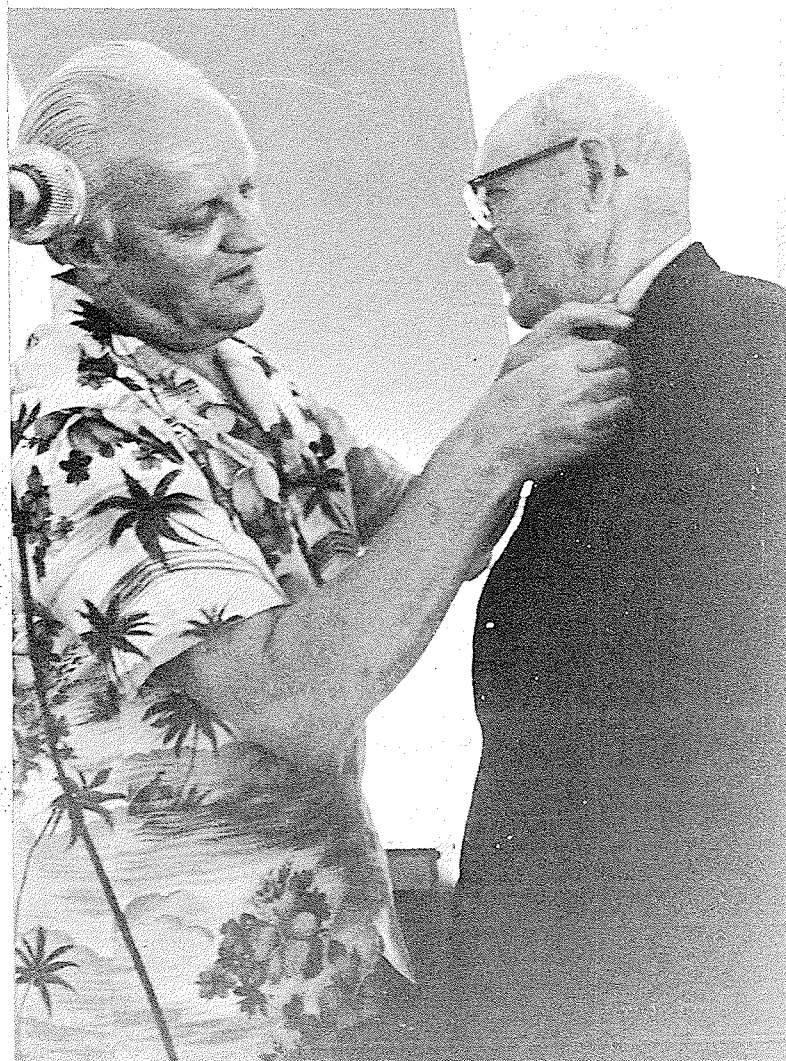
Upper left, Henry G. Ens surveys the whole situation.

Lower left, many old acquaintances were renewed at the centennial observance. Pictured here are Hilda (Olfert) Redekop, Frank G. Ens and Dave Froese.

Upper right, Hon. Sam Uskiw, Jack Murta, M.P., Lisgar and Abe H. Enns in serious discussion. They are about to be joined by Arnold Braun, M.L.A.

Lower right, life must go on and Almer Elias takes time off to feed his offspring.





Above, dignitaries at the centennial celebrations included Abe H. Enns, Reinland, Councillor, R.M. of Stanley; Hon. Sam Uskiw, Manitoba Minister of Agriculture; Gerhard G. Ens, historian and principal of the Menonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna; Arnold Brown, M.L.A., Rhineland; George Froese, Reeve of R.M. of Stanley; Jack Murta, M.P., Lisgar; John Wieler, Rosengart, Councillor, R.M. of Rhineland; Henry F. Wiebe, Mayor, Town of Winkler.

Left, G. G. H. Ens was made an honorary citizen of Winkler by Winkler mayor Henry F. Wiebe.

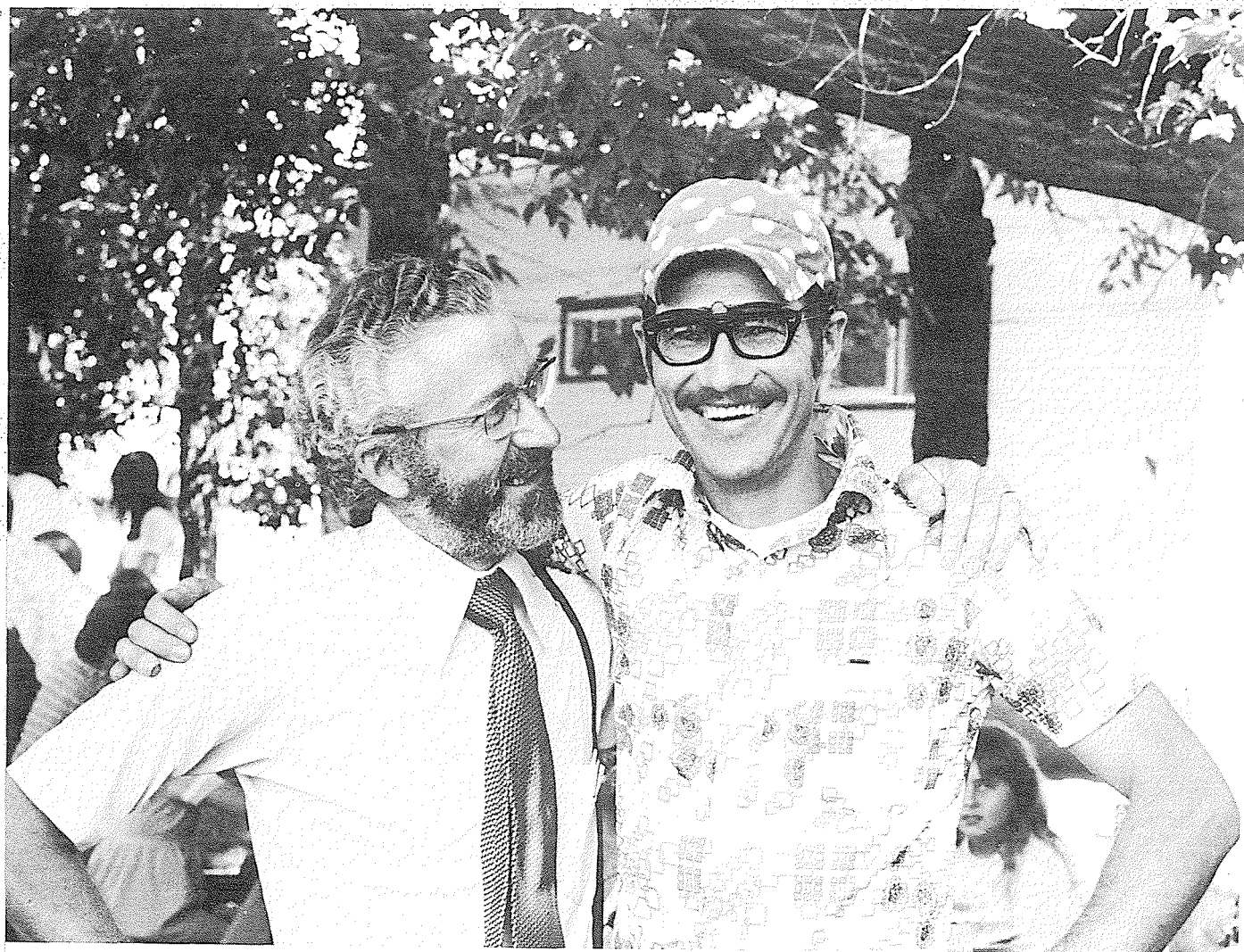
Centre, Reinland Centennial Committee chairman Bernie Elias accepts cheque presented by Winkler mayor to help defray celebration expenses.

Upper right, Mr. and Mrs. Henry J. Falk unveiling the plaque marking the oldest Mennonite church building in Manitoba. Mrs. Falk is a direct descendant of Isaak Müller. The Falks represent both the migrations of the 1870s and of the 1920s.

Centre and lower right, two scenes from the Saturday night performance of Dee Brotschuld by the Blumenorter Church young people's group.

Below, a young participant on a centennial exploring expedition.





Above, Henry G. Ens and Irvin Zacharias meet again at Reinland.

Left, book and historical displays were featured in the community centre.

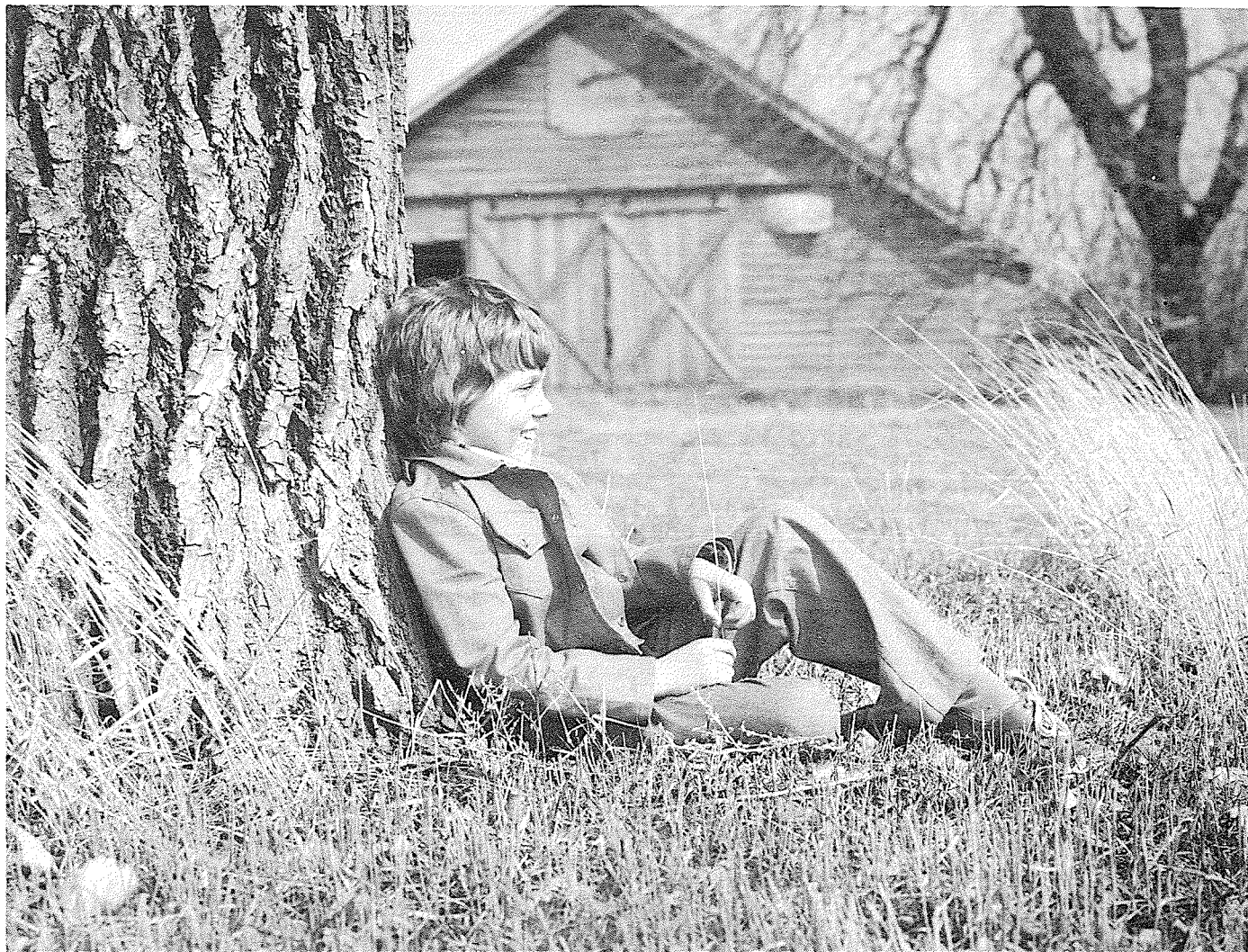


Photo courtesy G. G. Sawatzky.

As Reinlanders gather once again in September, 1976, this time to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the dedication of the oldest Mennonite church building in western Canada, the village's second century has already dawned. That century may well have a different chronicle. Yet the village, so deeply rooted in the experience of generations of forebears, may well survive and flourish and grow in meaning with the hope and faith of the new generation.

APPENDIX A: RESIDENTS OF ROSENGART, 1880

Census 1880 — Nr. 9, Gemeindebuch der Kolonien Reinland

Rosengart and Schoenwiese

Reinland's history has been closely intertwined with the histories of Rosengart and Schoenwiese, two villages founded in 1875.

Village of Rosengart

1. Peter Wall	8 Nov. 1840	7. Johann Walle	12 Mar. 48
Frau Aganetha Wiebe	25 Oct. 40	Frau Anna Neufeld	30 Nov. 49
Klas	1 Mar. 76	Johann	12 Apr. 72
Peter	28 Nov. 77	Peter	31 Oct. 79
Helena	2 Oct. 63	Jacob	16 Apr. 68
Susana	26 Apr. 70	Anna	27 July 70
Aganetha	5 Apr. 74	Sara	16 Apr. 75
2. Johann Wiebe	28 May 37	8. Peter Walle	17 Jan. 57
Frau Judith Walle	7 Aug. 36	Frau Gertrude	20 May 60
Johann	26 Apr. 59	Gertrude	7 Aug. 79
Bernhard	5 Apr. 67	9. Johann Mueller	19 Mar. 33
Heinrich	16 Mar. 69	Frau Susana Krahn	26 Sept. 24
Abraham	26 Aug. 71	10. Cornelius Walle	28 Oct. 35
Helena	1 Mar. 63	Frau Maria Krop	13 Mar. 45
Maria	11 Feb. 74	Johann	2 Mar. 63
3. Jacob Guenther	25 Mar. 43	Jacob	10 Feb. 67
Frau Katharina Wiebe	10 May 43	Abraham	31 Oct. 79
Jacob	5 Feb. 65	Helena	11 July 60
Aron	8 Mar. 68	Maria	29 Sept. 75
Aganetha	14 Aug. 73	Gertrude	26 Apr. 77
4. Johann Loewen	21 Aug. 39	11. Jacob Neudorff	5 Nov. 38
Frau Elizabeth Harder	10 May 54	Frau Agatha Martens	2 May 43
Johann	11 May 63	Jacob	12 May 67
Jacob	20 July 65	Abraham	31 July 78
Peter	19 Feb. 70	Agatha	21 July 65
Franz	20 May 78	12. Klas Walle	22 Oct. 33
Helena	20 Feb. 68	Frau Helena Walle	1 May 34
Elizabeth	10 Jan. 72	Peter	9 Feb. 64
Katharina	21 Nov. 79	Cornelius	24 Nov. 70
5. Franz Harder	28 Nov. 49	Margaretha	15 Feb. 72
Frau Eleonore Neufeld	20 Mar. 42	13. Gerhard Blatz	27 Mar. 47
Herrmann	17 Sept. 68	Frau Susana Walle	7 May 50
Jacob	13 Nov. 71	Gerhard	23 Apr. 77
Sara	26 Sept. 64	Susana	5 Aug. 79
Katharina	3 Feb. 70	14. Wilhelm Peters	18 May 36
Elizabeth	26 Sept. 78	Frau Catharina Neufeld	27 Oct. 33
6. Heinrich Wieb	10 Feb. 30	Jacob	19 Sept. 62
Frau Maria Froese	27 Oct. 44	Susana	24 Apr. 65
Peter	10 Oct. 61	Anna	7 Nov. 70
Jacob	2 Oct. 65	Maria	July 75
Johann	18 Nov. 76	15. Cornelius Walle	19 Jan. 32
Helena	12 Aug. 63	Frau Maria Wiebe	1 Oct. 33
Maria	19 Feb. 71	Jacob	13 Sept. 62
Anna	20 May 75	Abraham	20 July 67

Heinrich	2 Apr. 69
Maria	2 Apr. 77
16. Johann Dueck? Loewen?	16 Apr. 44
Frau Helena Peters	12 May 48
Jacob	11 Jan. 69
Wilhelm	19 Dec. 78
Helena	31 Aug. 67
Katharina	31 Oct. 72
Maria	17 Nov. 76
Anna	No dates
Landlose	
Jacob Harder	15 Dec. 51
Frau Sasana Janzen	
1. Peter Walle	29 Apr. 55
Frau Elizabeth Guenther	27 June 56
2. Jacob Walle	8 Feb. 56
3. Johann Walle	14 May 60
4. Herman Peters	12 Dec. 58
5. Cornl. Walle	2 Mar. 59
6. Jacob Wiebe	2 Oct. 57
7. Peter Wieb	19 May 61
8. Ben. Wieb	9 Aug. 59
9. Abrah. Klassen	
Frau. Cathar. Walle	

APPENDIX B: RESIDENTS OF SCHOENWIESE, 1880

Census 1880 — Nr. 9, Gemeindebuch der Kolonien Reinland

Village of Schoenwiese

1. Franz Guenther	24 May 22	Peter	27 Nov. 63
Frau Catharina	27 Feb. 32	David	6 Jan. 72
Gerhard	22 Feb. 68	Abraham	23 June 77
Peter	30 Oct. 71	Maria	5 Mar. 70
Aron	9 Apr. 74	10. Aron Zacharias	26 Mar. 38
Anna	10 July 61	Frau Margaretha	4 Sept. 38
2. Gerhard Enss	12 Apr. 45	Peter	18 Feb. 64
Frau Elizabeth	1 Apr. 46	Jacob	4 Nov. 66
Franz	23 Aug. 73	Aron	5 Feb. 71
Gerhard	23 June 76	David	2 Sept. 74
Judit	30 Apr. 69	Abraham	9 Sept. 77
Elizabeth	16 Sept. 78	11. Abrah. Reimer	1 June 47
3. Johann Guenther	15 May 45	Frau Catharina	6 May 48
Frau Judit	15 Apr. 45	Dietrich	23 May 72
Abraham	23 Aug. 76	Johann	24 May 74
Johann	27 Nov. 79	Abraham	22 May 78
Judit	12 Nov. 73	Katharina	11 Nov. 76
4. Peter Friesen	19 June 47	12. Peter Thiessen	17 Sept. 40
Frau Katharina	27 Aug. 47	Frau Catheriena	26 July 44
Peter	22 Nov. 75	Peter	1 Feb. 70
Gerhard	30 Jan. 69	Wilhelm	10 June 72
Jacob	31 Mar. ? 79	Jacob	15 Feb. 74
Helena	22 Aug. 70	Agatha	10 Oct. 65
Anna	16 Dec. 71	Catharina	29 July 68
5. Peter Friesen	25 Sept. 45	Sasanna	4 Apr. 71
Frau Aganetha	22 Sept. 45	Anna	15 June 79
Cornelius	10 June 64	13. Peter Zacharias	13 Mar. 40
Jacob	31 Aug. 75	Frau Maria	2 Oct. 45
Peter	13 June 77	Peter	21 May 66
Heinrich	13 June 79	Jacob	2 Nov. 70
Anna	10 Nov. 67	Anna	8 May 64
Aganetha	10 Mar. 71	Aganetha	23 Sept. 68
Maria	14 Mar. 73	Catharina	18 Sept. 74
6. Johann Heinrichs	22 Sept. 44	Maria	18 July 75
Frau Catharina	31 Dec. 44	14. Peter Froese	26 July 56
Jacob	9 July 74	Margaretha	7 Oct. 55
Johann	12 Jan. 78	15. Peter Giesbrecht	28 June 51
Isak	29 Oct. 74?	Frau Maria	30 Aug. 51
Helena	26 Oct. ? 72	Peter	16 May 79
Margartha	6 Sept. 76	16. Heinrich Wieler?	25 Nov. 48
7. Johann Bueckert	23 Jan. 21	Frau Anna	14 Nov. 50
Frau Helena	7 Jan. 26	Peter	26 Nov. 75
Margaretha	16 Mar. 63	Heinrich	24 July 76
8. Johann Harder	18 Aug. 31	David	4 Feb. 78
Frau Anna	13 Apr. 36	Catharina	23 Aug. 70
Johanna	27 Apr. 65	Maria	11 Nov. 74
Isak	20 Apr. 67	17. Abraham Reimer	2 Aug. 36
Martin	18 Oct. 76	Frau Anna	25 Dec. ? 57
Helena	23 May 70	Jacob	11 Nov. 78
9. Jacob Kroecker	30 May 36	18. Jacob Friesen	19 Dec. 49
Frau Anna	13 Feb. 36	19. Abraham Wiebe?	10 Dec. 47
Franz	25 Oct. 62	Frau Catharina	22 Feb. 48
		Abraham	3 Nov. 79

Catharina	21 Jan. 69	31. Johann Giesbrecht	6 Nov. 35
20. Heinrich Enss	5 Mar. 28	Frau Anna	28 Jan. 37
Frau Helena	2 May 34	Johann	10 Aug. 76
Heinrich	18 Apr. 62	Justina	24 Feb. 62
Jacob	2 Mar. 69	Catharina	4 Feb. 66
Cornelius	9 July 70	Anna	3 Feb. 68
Peter	16 July 77	Elizabeth	17 Mar. 70
Anna	28 June 67	Aganetha	31 May 72
Catharina	1 Aug. 73	Margaretha	16 Dec. 78
21. Gerhard Friesen	17 Nov. 1819	Cornl. Friesen	3 Mar. 1796
Frau Anna	20 Feb. 25	Jacob Zacharias	7 Jan. 1798
Johann	10 Sept. 63		
Isak	7 Mar. 65		
Catharina	2 June 60		
Anna	15 Aug. 67		
22. Catharina Giesbrecht	27 Aug. 26		
Anna	23 June 53		
23. Jacob Zacharias	22 Sept. 53	} parents of Rev. P. S. Zacharias	
Frau Sara	21 Sept. 52		
Anna	2 Sept. 79		
24. Johann Friesen	17 Sept. 54		
Frau Catharina	30 Apr. 54		
Bernhard	31 Oct. 78		
25. Bernh. Penner	22 June 31		
Frau Elizabeth	6 Jan. 30		
Bernhard	11 July 62		
Johann	6 May 70		
Anna	21 Jan. 56		
Maria	3 June 68		
26. Abraham Friesen	6 Nov. 30		
Frau Justina	21 Nov. 31		
Abraham	16 Aug. 63		
Cornelius	1 Feb. 65		
Heinrich	1 Jan. 68		
Justina	26 Jan. 59		
27. Peter Froese	4 Oct. 24		
Frau Sahra	7 June 27		
Gerhard	18 June 63		
Jacob	9 Oct. 72		
Sahra	27 Feb. 68		
28. Cornl. Berg	4 Aug. 40		
Frau Catharina	26 Oct. 42		
Isak	28 May 68		
Jacob	23 Oct. 76		
29. Jacob Reimer	22 Feb. 17		
Frau Catharina	26 Dec. 18		
Jacob	2 July 53		
30. Gerhard Friesen	14 July 35		
Frau Susanna	9 Feb. 36		
Johann	26 Aug. 62		
Gerhard	8 June 64		
Cornelius	5 Sept. 76		
Heinrich	17 Jan. 79		
Catheriena	25 Mar. 72		
Justina	14 Dec. 67		

Die Juenglinge de Land Genommen

Abraham Guenther	22 Oct. 51
Jacob Guenther	2 May 59
Jacob Dueck	6 Sept. 51
Johann Bueckert	26 Aug. 59
Jacob Kroeker	5 Jan. 59
Klas Kroeker	27 Nov. 60
David Zacharias	11 Mar. 61
Gerhard Friesen	22 Aug. 51
Abraham Friesen	4 May 58
Abraham Giesbrecht	12 Mar. 58
Frau Catharina	12 Mar. 58
Anna	20 Oct. 79
David Giesbrecht	8 Mar. 54
Peter Penner	25 Jan. 38
Johann Froese	15 Aug. 58
Abraham Froese	18 Sept. 60
David Reimer	4 Feb. 55
Frau Maria	3 Jan. 55
Jacob	23 Nov. 78

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER ONE: A COMMUNITY OF FAITH

¹ Carroll, Embree, Mellon, Schrier, Taylor, "John Wycliffe, Letter to Pope Urban VI, 1384: 'An Early Protestant,'" *The Development of Civilization, Vol. 1* (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1961), pp. 20-422. The article includes Wycliffe's letter in which he turns down the Pope's summons to Rome to answer for his Jews.

² *Ibid.*, p. 421; Brinton, Christopher, and Wolff, *Civilization in the West*, 3rd edition (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1965), p. 224. The involvement of Wycliffe's followers in the translation is mentioned by the latter source.

³ Carroll et al, "John Hus, DE ECCLESIA: Nationalistic Protest," *op. cit.*, p. 424.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 422-424.

⁵ Carroll et al, "Luther at the Diet of Worms: 'Here I Stand,'" *ibid.*, p. 426.

⁶ Brinton et al, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

⁷ C. Henry Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites*, 4th edition (Newton, Kansas: Mennonite Publication Office, 1957), p. 4.

⁸ Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada, 1786-1920* (Toronto, Ontario: MacMillan of Canada, 1974), pp. 27-28.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-29.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ H. S. Bender, "Conrad Grebel," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. II, p. 573.

¹² Epp, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30.

¹³ Christian, Neff and H. S. Bender, "Felix Manz," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. III, p. 472.

¹⁴ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

¹⁵ Cornelius J. Dyck, *An Introduction To Mennonite History* (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1967), p. 33.

¹⁶ A. J. F. Zieglschmid, *Das Klein-Geschichtsbuch der Hutterischen Brüder* (Ithaca, New York: The Cayuga Press Inc., 1947), p. 5. Early Hutterite chroniclers provide rich insights into the history of the Anabaptists. The story of the founding of the first Anabaptist church is recorded in the collection of chronicles known as the Great Chronicle or *Geschichtsbuch und Kurzer Durchgang vom Anfang der Welt*. When the great historian of the Hutterites, the minister and elder Johannes Waldner (1749-1824) wrote his *Denkwürdigkeiten*, or *Das Klein-Geschichtsbuch der Hutterischen Brüder*, he relied on the older chronicles for his treatment of the period 1525-1665. Zieglschmid's edition, quoted above, contains the works of Johannes Waldner, who completed the chronicle to 1802, as well as later chronicles and additional research on Hutterite history.

¹⁷ The translation, which appears in Harold S. Bender, *The Life and Letters of Conrad Grebel* (Goshen, Indiana: Mennonite Historical Society, 1950), p. 137, and is quoted in Dyck, *op. cit.*, p. 34 is based on the Rudolf Wolken (ed.) *Geschichtsbuch der Hutterischen Brüder* (Wien: Carl Fromme, 1923), p. 35.

¹⁸ Christian Neff, "Georg Blaurock," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. I, pp. 358-359.

¹⁹ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

²⁰ Cornelius Krahn, "Menno Simons," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. III, pp. 577-583.

²¹ John C. Wenger, ed., *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons* (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Mennonite Publishing House, 1956), pp. 670-671.

²² Epp, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

²³ Paul J. Schäfer, *Woher? Wohin? Mennoniten!* Band I (Altona, Manitoba: Rhineland Agricultural Society, 1942), p. 28.

²⁴ Johan Sjourke Postma, *Das niederländische Erbe der preussisch-russländischen Mennoniten in Europa, Asien und Amerika* (Leeuwarden: Niederlande: Drukkerij A. Jongbloed c.v., 1959), Chapter 3, pp. 34-57. This work is a valuable source of information for the reader seeking a better understanding of the Lowlands phase of the Prussian-Russian Mennonites.

²⁵ Christian Neff and N. van der Zijpp, "Flemish Mennonites," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. II, p. 338.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ The source for most of the information on Dutch Prussian Mennonite interrelationships is Postma, *op. cit.*, p. 13 ff. Dr. Postma bases much of his work in this area on research on the "Memoriaal begonnen in't jaar 1735."

²⁸ John Thiessen, *Studien zum Wortschatz der kanadischen Mennoniten* (Marburg, Deutschland: N. G. Elwert Verlag, 1963), p. 27.

²⁹ Schäfer, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

CHAPTER TWO: THE OLD HOME

¹ Karl Stumpp, *The Emigration from Germany to Russia in the years 1763 to 1862* (Tübingen, Germany: published by author, 1972), pp. 21-22.

² Benjamin Heinrich Unruh, *Die niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der mennonitischen Wanderungen* (Karlsruhe, Deutschland: Heinrich Schneider, 1955), p. 205.

³ William Schroeder, *The Berghal Colony* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: CMBC Publications, 1974), p. 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁵ The information and statistical data on Fürstenland is largely based on a summary of Fürstenland Colony history sent to the writer by William Schroeder, Winnipeg.

⁶ Blumenorter Mennonite Church, *Geschichte der Blumenorter Mennonitengemeinde*, (unpublished manuscript), I.

⁷ P. A. Rempel, *Ältesten J. A. Rempel's Lebens- und Leidensgeschichte* (Gretna, Manitoba 1946). This booklet on the life of Elder J. A. Rempel is written by his brother. It tells the story of an outstanding Mennonite leader in one of the church's great crises.

⁸ Paul J. Schäfer, *Woher? Wohin? Mennoniten! 3. Teil* (Altona, Manitoba: Mennonite Agricultural Advisory Committee, 1946), p. 24.

⁹ The claim that Chortitza and Fürstenland entrusted Bergthal to negotiate for them does not seem to be well founded. It is probable that many families in these colonies eagerly waited to hear the reports of the Bergthal delegates. But officially Chortitza did not ask other colonies to negotiate for it. As indicated in the main text, Chortitza, in 1871 and 1874 was debating whether or not to send its own deputation to America. However, both Chortitza and Fürstenland emigrants became beneficiaries of the 1873 delegates. It was the deputation that obtained the privileges from Ottawa.

¹⁰ Johann Wiebe, *Die Auswanderung von Russland nach Kanada* (Cuauhtemoc, Chihuahua, Mexico: Campo 6½, Apartado 297, 1972) pp. 22-23. It was only after Elder Johann Wiebe felt convinced that no leadership from Chortitza was forthcoming that he took decisive independent action. It should be remembered that Fürstenland was directly served by the Chortitza elder until 1870. The colony itself had been founded only in 1864 and ties to the mother colony were still strong. In 1875, after the Elder's departure, the Fürstenland church reverted to the Chortitza eldership.

¹¹ H. J. Gerbrandt, *Adventure in Faith* (Altona, Manitoba: D. W. Friesen and Sons Ltd., 1970), p. 70.

¹² Peter Wiens, "Letter from Russia," *Herald of Truth* (June, 1874) as it appears Clarence Hiebert, *Brothers in Deed to Brothers in Need* (Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press, 1974), pp. 156 and 158. A short note by Elder Gerhard Dyck is appended to the letter at the request of Peter Wiens.

¹³ The Mennonite Board of Guardians provided assistance for Mennonites wishing to migrate to the United States. However, according to an appeal entitled "Die Noth in Manitoba!" in the October, 1876, issue of *Herald der Wahrheit*, it also assisted Manitoba Mennonites. The Board co-operated closely with the Aid Committee of Ontario, whose treasurer was Jacob Y. Schantz.

¹⁴ Wiens, *op. cit.*

¹⁵ Leonhard Sudermann, *Eine Deputationsreise von Russland nach Amerika* (Elkhart, Indiana: Mennonitischer Verlagshandlung, 1897), p. 37. Suderman, one of the twelve delegates of 1873, has written an interesting account of his tour through the United States and Canada. He gives the mosquitos their warranted publicity.

¹⁶ Wiebe, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ See "Eine Begebenheit aus Russland und Kanada Manitoba", in Wiebe, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-65. This article by an unidentified writer and appended to Wiebe's book, contains an interesting account of the changing of hymn tunes in Russia and links the changes to the influence of higher education. The writer migrated to Canada in the 1870's.

CHAPTER THREE: THE NEW LAND

¹ Several Jacob Fehr families have lived in Reinland. The chief source of information on the Jacob Fehrs, who became the first Reinland family to set foot on Canadian soil, is the unpublished account of the journey from Russia to Canada, and of the early pioneer years written by the Fehrs' grandson, Jacob Fehr.

² *Quebec Passenger Lists, S.S. Hiberian arrived Quebec August 27, 1874* (Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada: Microfilm No. C-4529).

³ Helen Fehr, Winkler, Manitoba, has in her possession a brief genealogy of the Fehr family. It is therefore possible to trace the Chortitza (Alte-Kolonie) origins of the family accurately.

⁴ The reference is to Elder Johann Wiebe of Fürstenland.

⁵ Robert MacDonald, *The Owners of Eden* (Vancouver, British Columbia: Evergreen Press Limited, 1974), p. 179.

⁶ E. K. Francis, *In Search of Utopia* (Altona, Manitoba: D. W. Friesen and Sons, 1955), pp. 61-62.

⁷ James Trow, *Manitoba and the North-West Territories* (Ottawa: 1878), p. 24, as quoted by Francis, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

⁸ Clarence Hiebert, *Brothers in Deed to Brothers in Need* (Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press, 1974), p. 30. Mr. Hiebert's book which is subtitled "A Scrapbook about Mennonite Immigrants from Russia 1870-1885" is a valuable collection of primary source material to be recommended to every student of Mennonite migration to the plains of Canada and the United States. Schantz' narrative appears on pp. 30-34.

⁹ Francis, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

¹⁰ Jacob Y. Schantz, writing to the Minister of Agriculture, Ottawa, from Winnipeg, July 23, 1875, reveals some of the conflict and its resolution. The letter is published by Hiebert, *op. cit.*, p. 245. The source quoted is *Sessional Paper, No. 14481*.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Francis, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ See Johann Wiebe, *Die Auswanderung von Russland nach Kanada* (Cuauhtemoc, Chihuahua, Mexico: Campo 6½, Apartado 297, 1972), pp. 34-35.

¹⁵ Cornelius Krahn, "Villages", *Mennonite Encyclopedia, Vol. IV, 2nd edition*, pp. 821-827, is an informative article containing an extensive table identifying 769 Mennonite village names and locations. One error, probably typographical, gives Krahn's symbol for Schlachting, *Sh*, as the location of a village called Reinland. It was probably the author's intention to use the symbol *SH* used for Saskatchewan, Hague, in the article.

¹⁶ Benjamin Heinrich Unruh, *Die niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der mennonitischen Ostwanderungen* (Karlsruhe, Deutschland: Heinrich Schneider, 1955), p. 358.

¹⁷ Ernest Crous, "Reinland," *Mennonite Encyclopedia, Vol. IV*, p. 279.

¹⁸ *Gemeinde Buch der Kolonien Reinland worin befindlich ist wie viel Wirthe und Familien Glieder sind im Jahr 1880* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Provincial Archives of Manitoba).

¹⁹ *Quebec Passenger Lists op. cit.* Ships are numbered in order of their arrival at Quebec, starting with number one each year.

²⁰ *Memoirs of Bernhard Toews*, unpublished manuscript. Toews was the step-son of Johann Bergmann.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Unruh, *op. cit.*, p. 358. The birthdates of both Peter Wiens and his father Peter Wiens, as given in the Gemeindebuch, correspond to the birthdates given by Unruh. Both Peter Wiens were born in Prussia.

²³ *The Family Tree of the Johann Peters Family*, unpublished research work by the great-grandson of Johann Peters — Jacob Peters, 646 Elmhurst Road, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Unruh, *op. cit.*, p. 358. Barbara Wiens was the daughter of Peter Wiens Sr., and was born in Prussia.

²⁶ J. J. Neudorf, D. G. Rempel, H. J. Neudorf, *Osterwick* (Clearbrook, British Columbia: A. A. Olfert and Sons Ltd., 1973), p. 87. It is stated here that Jacob Wiens, Kronsthal, born in 1807 was called to the ministry in 1843. That Jacob Wiens, Reinland, was a minister is corroborated by several sources, especially *Mennonitische Rundschau Vol. X*, No. 42 (October 16, 1889), p. 1. The article, whose writer is not given, is dated Reinland, October 4, and reports the death of the 82-year-old Rev. Jacob Wiens. His birthdate would be 1807. Jacob Fehr, *op. cit.* writes that Rev. Jacob Wiens of Kronsthal preached a sermon at Hamburg, Germany, during the migration. Jacob Wiens, Kronsthal, listed by Unruh, *op. cit.*, p. 358, probably refers to the same person even though his birthdate there is listed as approximately 309.

²⁷ Helen Fehr, Winkler, Manitoba, genealogy.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.* See also Jacob Fehr memoirs, *op. cit.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Gerhard G. Harms, Crystal City, Manitoba, genealogy.

³² "Peter Harms, Kirchen No. 830," *Kirchen Buch zu die Dorfschaft Reinland 1895*.

³³ Adolf Ens and Rita Penner, "Quebec Passenger Lists of the Russian Mennonite Immigration, 1874-1880, *Mennonite Quarterly Review* (October, 1974), p. 528.

³⁴ Anna M. Peters, Walton, Kansas, correspondence, 1975.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Kirchen Buch der Gemeinde zu Berghthal Angesehen im Jahr 1843 im Januar Monat vom Kirchenlehrer Peter Papp*, Litter B, p. 369.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Jacob Wiens was the son of Rev. Jacob Wiens of Kronsthal, Chortitza, born 1807. See "Jacob Wiens, Kirchen No. 952," *Kirchen Buch zu die Dorfschaft Reinland 1895*. He was elected elder of the Reinländer Mennonite Church in Saskatchewan and moved to Mexico in the 1920s where he continued as elder.

³⁹ See Adolf Ens and Rita Penner, *op. cit.* Franz Rempels arrived at Quebec on the SS Quebec on June 23, 1876, with a Mennonite group identified as Fürstenland.

⁴⁰ The Abraham Dyck family was entered in the church register of the Fürstenland branch of the Chortitz Mennonite Church. A note verifying this registration and signed by Rev. H. D. Epp in Michaelsburg on Dec. 30, 1894, is in the hands of Mrs. Anna Peters, Walton, Kansas. Abraham Dyck was the son of Peter Dyck, first Oberschulze of Fürstenland. Mrs. Anna Peters' genealogy indicates that Mr. Abraham Dyck was born in Schoeneberg, Chortitza.

⁴¹ Anna M. Peters, Walton, Kansas, genealogy.

⁴² Unruh, *op. cit.*, p. 358.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Jacob Rempel, Blumenort, Gretna, Manitoba, personal interview, 1974.

⁴⁷ *Die Rundschau Vol. III, No. 5* (March 1, 1882), p. 3.

⁴⁸ The source of information for this summary of Reinland immigrants is Adolf Ens and Rita Penner, *op. cit.* Their search was based on the Quebec Passenger Lists.

CHAPTER FOUR: REINLAND MENNONITE COLONY

¹ John Warkentin, "The Mennonite Settlements in Manitoba," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1960.

² Rosenfeld is not listed among the Borosenko villages in the article "Borosenko," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*. Research by William Schroeder, Winnipeg, has revealed that Rosenfeld was one of the early villages of the Borosenko settlement.

³ Jacob Rempel, "The First Steam-operated Flour Mill in the West Reserve," *Manitoba Mennonite Memories* ed. Julius G. Toews, Lawrence Klippenstein (Altona and Steinbach, Manitoba: Manitoba Mennonite Centennial Committee, 1974), pp. 43-46.

⁴ Peter Wiens, "Kurzer Bericht über die Verwaltung der Reinländer Mennoniten Kolonie bei Dufferin oder West Lynn, Manitoba," *Herold der Wahrheit Vol. 14, No. 11* (November, 1877), p. 176.

⁵ Jacob Y. Schantz, "Bericht über die Mennonitischen Brüder in Manitoba," *Herold der Wahrheit Vol. 14, No. 12* (December, 1877), pp. 188-189.

⁶ See footnote in E. K. Francis, *In Search of Utopia* (Altona, Manitoba: D. W. Friesen and Sons, 1955), p. 70.

⁷ *Memoirs of Bernhard Toews*, unpublished manuscript.

⁸ See "Aus Manitoba," *Herold der Wahrheit Vol. 12, No. 11* (November, 1875), p. 187.

⁹ Johann Wiebe, *Die Auswanderung von Russland nach Kanada* (Cuauhtemoc, Chihuahua, Mexico: Camp 6½, partido 297, 1972), p. 35.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-35.

¹¹ Several Peter Wiens letters addressed to John F. Funk are to be found in the John F. Funk Papers, Mennonite Historical Library and Archives, Goshen, Indiana. Wiens' most valuable contributions are his newspaper articles.

¹² The translation is confusing. Compare with the German article. *Loos* here does not refer to *lot* in the nineteenth century American and Ontario Old Mennonite tradition. Ministers in the Manitoba Mennonite immigrant churches were elected and the word "Loos" was understood in that context. The following translation of the German rendition is suggested: The bishop and preachers, when such are needed, are elected by the congregation for life.

¹³ J. B. McLaren, "The North-West: The Mennonites" in G. M. Grant, ed. *Picturesque Canada I*, p. 324.
¹⁴ An interesting undated letter fragment describing the meeting of *Obervorsteher* Franz Froese with Sir Wilfrid Laurier is in the possession of Frank Froese, Cartwright, Manitoba.

¹⁵ *Gemeinde Buch der Kolonien Reinland worin befindlich ist wie viel Wirthe und Familien Glieder sind im Jahr 1880* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Provincial Archives of Manitoba).

¹⁶ Quebec Passenger Lists No. 34, SS Quebec arrived Quebec July 20, 1875 (Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada; Microfilm No. C-4529), 1875.

¹⁷ Copies of several dozen of Isaak Müller's circulars are to be found in the Rosenort and Reinland village documents at Canadian Mennonite Bible College.

¹⁸ Directive of Isaak Müller "an die Schulzenämter" (to the village officials) dated Neuhorst, July 9, 1876, in *Reinland Village Documents*, 1876.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Directive of Isaak Müller dated Reinland, January 10, 1879, in *Reinland Village Documents*, 1879. See also note on record-keeping in Müller's circular dated Reinland, November 18, 1876, in *Reinland Village Documents*, 1876.

²¹ Gerhard Ens, *Die Brotschuld-Bühnenstück in drei Aufzügen* (Gretna, Manitoba: 1975) was published by the author as a contribution to the West Reserve centennial. The drama, written in the Altkolonier (Old Colony) or Chortitzer Low-German dialect is based on sound historical research.

²² Francis, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

²³ Directive of Isaak Müller in *Reinland Village Documents*.

²⁴ The translation is by the writer.

²⁵ Directive of Isaak Müller dated Neuhorst, September 12, 1876, in *Reinland Village Documents*, 1876.

²⁶ H. J. Gerbrandt, *Adventure in Faith* (Altona, Manitoba: D. W. Friesen and Sons Ltd., 1970), p. 60.

²⁷ Circular of Isaak Müller to village officials dated Neuhorst, August 16, 1876, *Reinland Village Documents*, 1876.

²⁸ Francis, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

²⁹ See "Die Noth in Manitoba", published by the Board of Guardians in *Herold der Wahrheit* Vol. 13, No. 1 (October, 1876) under the subheading "Aufruf an Alle, zur Unterstützung der armen Ansiedler im Norden."

³⁰ Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada, 1786-1920* (Toronto, Ontario: Macmillan of Canada, 1974), p. 226.

³¹ *Ibid.* For a detailed account of the debates on the Mennonite loan in the House of Commons see accounts of the debates in Clarence Hiebert, *Brothers in Debt to Brothers in Need* (Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press, 1974), pp. 214-223. The primary sources used by Hiebert are *Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada, Vol. I, Session 1875*.

³² Epp, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

³³ *Journal of the Senate of the Dominion of Canada, 1875*. The Statute 38 Victoria Chapter 3 (1875) as quoted by Hiebert, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-204. The rates are recorded on the first page of the *Reinland Brotschuld Records* as follow: Diese Schuld ist auf vier Jahr ohne Prozent hernach in 6 Jahr mit 6 Prozent Abzuzahlen.

³⁴ Francis, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

³⁵ This letter of Peter Wiens to Jacob Y. Schantz is in the Mennonite Historical Library and Archives, Goshen, Indiana.

³⁶ Johann Wiebe, "Address of Thanks from the Mennonite Brethren in Manitoba to their Brethren in Ontario," *Herald of Truth* Vol. XXVII (August 15, 1890) as quoted by Epp, *op. cit.*, p. 226. Elder Wiebe's letter dated July 1, 1880, appears in his original German in *Mennonitische Rundschau* Vol. 11, No. 34, (August 20, 1890), p. 2.

³⁷ As quoted by Francis, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

³⁸ The information in this section is based on the *Dorfs Buch zu die Dorfschaft Reinland, Worin jedem, Seine Schuld eingeschrieben, Auch wie viel jeder, Abgezahlt hat auch, Abzahlen wird*. The book was begun in 1876 by Reinland's first Schulze, Jacob Fehr.

CHAPTER FIVE: PRAIRIE VILLAGE

¹ The comment is made by a Winnipeg reporter and is quoted by Lawrence Klippenstein, "Manitoba Settlers and the Mennonite West Reserve 1875-1876," unpublished essay, p. 5.

² Cornelius Krahn, "Villages (Holländerdörfer)," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. IV, 2nd edition, pp. 821-822. Krahn's article is the major source of information for this account on the *Holländerdorf*.

³ Benjamin Heinrich Unruh, *Die niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der mennonitischen Ostwanderungen*. (Karlsruhe, Germany: Heinrich Schneider, 1955), p. 134. Unruh deals with *Holländerdörfer* on pp. 133-135.

⁴ Credit for basic research on the whole issue of hamlet privilege goes to Adolf Ens, Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

⁵ Public Archives of Canada, RG 15, Vol. 232, No. 3129, letter of Isaak Mueller, Spencerfield, 28 November, 1882, to Lindsay Russel, Deputy Minister of the Interior.

⁶ *Ibid.*, letter of J. B. McLaren, Morden, to Minister of the Interior, March 29, 1883.

⁷ *Ibid.*, letter by Department of the Interior of J. B. McLaren, Morden, April, 1883.

⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. 246, No. 27630 (1), Application for Homestead Patent.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 232, No. 3129 Form No. 11, Application for Homestead Patent (Under Provisions of the Dominion Lands Act, 1883). Note amendment to section (4).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, *Order-in-Council*, No. 937 of 6 May, 1885.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, *Order-in-Council*, No. 1938 of 14 August, 1889.

¹² Public Archives of Canada.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, RG 15, Vol. 246 No. 27630. A. M. Burgess, Deputy Minister of the Interior to H. H. Smith Esq., Commissioner of Dominion Lands, Winnipeg, Manitoba, of August 3, 1889.

CHAPTER SIX: WEST RESERVE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

¹ E. K. Francis, *In Search of Utopia* (Altona, Manitoba: D. W. Friesen and Sons Ltd., 1955), pp. 91-92.

² H. J. Gerbrandt, *Adventure in Faith* (Altona, Manitoba: D. W. Friesen and Sons Ltd., 1970). The influence of the New World environment on the settlers and especially on those Berghaler who left their East Reserve anchors and started anew on the West Reserve is dealt with by Gerbrandt in Chapter VII.

³ Francis, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

⁴ Wilhelm Rempel, Clerk, *Minute Book, Municipality of Rhineland 1884-1891*. See minutes of second meeting, 26 January, 1884, p. 3; minutes of fourth meeting, 1 March, 1884, p. 7; minutes of fifth meeting, 15 April, 1884, p. 15. The existence of a Municipality of Rhineland preceding the one formed in 1884 is assumed throughout. In the minutes of the second meeting the Council is concerned about Isaak Müller's "statement of taxes levied and amount of money paid it during the last four years." Even if it is assumed that possibly 1884 was one of those years it would take the beginnings of the former municipality back to at least 1881. The minutes corroborate the conclusion of Francis, *op. cit.*, 93, that such an unofficial Municipality existed for several years.

⁵ H. H. Hamm, *Sixty Years of Progress* (Altona, Manitoba: D. W. Friesen and Sons Ltd., 1944), pp. 10-11.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Rempel, *op. cit.*, German entry, p. 4.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹¹ John F. Galbraith, *The Mennonites in Manitoba 1875-1900. A Review of their Coming, their Progress, and their Present Prosperity* (Morden, Manitoba: The Chronicle Press, 1900), p. 7.

¹² Rempel, *op. cit.*, 29 April, 1884, p. 17.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 8 January, 1884, p. 1.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 26 January, 1884, p. 3.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1 March, 1884, p. 9.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 15 April, 1884, p. 13.

¹⁷ "Eine Begebenheit aus Russland und Kanada Manitoba", by an unidentified *Altikolonier* writer is appended to Johann Wiebe, *Die Auswanderung von Russland nach Kanada* (Cuauhtemoc, Chihuahua, Mexico: Campo 6½, partado 297, 1972), pp. 71-74.

¹⁸ Rempel, *op. cit.*, 15 April, 1884, p. 13.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 29 April, 1884, p. 17.

²⁰ See the article in Wiebe, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-73.

²¹ Rempel, *op. cit.*, 3 March, 1885, German translation, pp. 63, 65.

²² *Ibid.*, 1 March 1884, p. 11.

²³ *Ibid.* The information is gleaned from various 1884 council minutes kept by Rempel.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, minutes of first meeting, 13 January, 1885.

²⁵ *Ibid.* The information is collected from both 1884 and 1885 council minutes.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CREATING THE SHELTER

¹ Klaas Wall, Neuhorst, letter written to relatives in Russia in 1876. It is written sometime after October 13.

² Some family members recall the spot where the structure once stood. The location was apparently long recognizable because ashes had been used to fill up the excavation and as a result the spot was less productive than its immediate surroundings.

³ Jacob Fehr, unpublished memoirs.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Jacob Y. Schantz, "Bericht über die Mennonitischen Brüder in Manitoba," *Herold der Wahrheit* Vol. XIV, No. (December, 1877), pp. 188-189.

⁷ Wilhelm Rempel, letter, August 16, 1886, in *Mennonitische Rundschau* Vol. VII, No. 34 (August 25, 1886), p. 1.

⁸ Julius Toews, Steinbach, recollections.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ H. J. Gerbrandt, *Adventure in Faith* (Altona, Manitoba: D. W. Friesen and Sons Ltd., 1970), p. 83.

¹¹ J. F. Galbraith, *The Mennonites in Manitoba 1875-1900* (Morden, Manitoba: The Chronicle Press, 1900), p. 10.

¹² Peter Wiens, circular, *Reinland Village Documents*, August 28, 1880.

¹³ Galbraith, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹⁵ Isaak Müller, circular, *Reinland Village Documents*, October 18, 1876.

CHAPTER EIGHT : DIE FEUERSTELLEN

¹ Dr. Jack Thiessen, Department of German, University of Winnipeg, has suggested that *Fiastäd* refers to "a fester Wohnort im Gegensatz zu nomadenhaftem Unterwegssein. Dazu kam wohl Land zum Wohnort und somit war gebührende Prestige geschaffen." The definition certainly harmonizes with the pattern of Mennonite village development.

² The expansion of the definition of *Feuerstelle* was not limited to Mennonite villages.

CHAPTER NINE: THE REINLAND MAIL

¹ Wilhelm Rempel, "Folgende Auskunft . . .," *Die Rundschau* (March 19, 1881), p. 3.

² Heinrich Hildebrand, *Die Rundschau Vol. III, No. 6* (March 15, 1882), p. 1.

³ Jacob Peters, unpublished diary, p. 47.

⁴ Peter Wiens, letter to John F. Funk, August 29, 1883, *John F. Funk Files*, Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana.

CHAPTER TEN: AN NWMP OUTPOST

¹ Information in this chapter is based on contact with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police made by Abe Peter Reinland. A response by S. W. Horrall, Historian, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Ottawa, on February 11, 1975, included a general summary of Reinland detachment history, excerpts from NWMP Annual Reports and biographic information from the RCMP Quarterly.

² *Annual Report of the Commissioner of the NWMP, 1891*, report of J. A. McGibbon, Inspector, Commanding Manitoba Frontier to the Officer Commanding "B" Division N.W.M.P., Regina, dated at Morden, November 30, 1891, pp. 55-58.

³ S. W. Horrall, "Reinland, Manitoba", a summary of the history of the Reinland detachment sent to Abe Peter Reinland, February 11, 1975.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Annual Report of the Commissioner of the NWMP, 1890*, report of J. A. McGibbon, Inspector, to the Officer Commanding "B" Division, Regina, dated at Morden, October 31, 1890, p. 119.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Annual Report . . . 1891, op. cit.*, p. 56.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁹ S. W. Horrall, *op. cit.*

¹⁰ *Annual Report . . . 1890, op. cit.*, pp. 120-122.

¹¹ The first part of the sentence, "The first settlers here arrived in 1872, and" has been deleted to avoid a misleading factual error in the text. While Bernhard Warkentin of Russia and perhaps, some other Russian Mennonites set foot in Manitoba in 1872, Mennonite settlement, as such, on the West Reserve, did not begin until 1875. This fact is supported by hundreds of documents.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: THE MIGRATION OF THE NINETIES

¹ Peter Abrams, *Mennonitische Rundschau Vol. IX, No. 19* (May 9, 1888), p. 1.

² Abr. H. and Aganetha Friesen, *Mennonitische Rundschau Vol. XI, No. 51* (December 17, 1890), p. 1.

³ Eduard Wiebe, *Mennonitische Rundschau Vol. XIII, No. 5* (February 3, 1892), p. 1.

⁴ Jacob Kroeker, under "Erkundigung-Auskunft", *Mennonitische Rundschau Vol. XIII, No. 50* (December 1892), p. 3.

⁵ Jacob Haid, *Mennonitische Rundschau Vol. XIII, No. 9* (March 2, 1892), p. 1.

⁶ Gerhard Hein, *Mennonitische Rundschau Vol. XIII, No. 29* (July 20, 1892), p. 1.

⁷ Friesen, *op. cit.*

⁸ Wiebe, *op. cit.*

⁹ Dietrich Wiebe, *Mennonitische Rundschau Vol. XIII, No. 6* (February 10, 1892), p. 1.

¹⁰ Eduard Wiebe, *op. cit.*

¹¹ C.M., *Mennonitische Rundschau* (June 8, 1892).

¹² Eduard Wiebe, *op. cit.*

CHAPTER TWELVE: TRADE

¹ J. B. McLaren, "The North-West: The Mennonites," in G. M. Grant, ed. *Picturesque Canada I*, p. 324.

² C. A. Dawson, *Group Settlement*, p. 111.

³ Peter S. Zacharias, personal notes.

⁴ *Gemeinde Buch der Kolonien Reinland, No. 9* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Provincial Archives of Manitoba).

⁵ Zacharias, *op. cit.*

⁶ Peter Abrams, *Mennonitische Rundschau Vol. VII, No. 50* (December 15, 1886), p. 1.

⁷ Wilhelm Rempel, *Mennonitische Rundschau Vol. IX, No. 24* (June 13, 1888), p. 1.

⁸ Henry G. Ens, Cuauhtemoc, Chihuahua, Mexico, received this information through personal communication in Mexico.

⁹ Herman Dyck, *Die Rundschau* Vol. III, No. 5 (March 1, 1882), p. 3. Dyck writes, "After I had operated my business alone for five years and it had gradually expanded somewhat, I sold half of it to Peter Abrams of Schanzenfeld at fall."

¹⁰ Peter Abrams, *Die Rundschau* Vol. III, No. 6 (March 15, 1882), p. 1.

¹¹ Wilhelm Rempel, *Mennonitische Rundschau* Vol. V, No. 18 (April 30, 1884), p. 1.

¹² Herman Dyck, *op. cit.*

¹³ Wilhelm Rempel, *Mennonitische Rundschau* Vol. V, No. 18, *op. cit.*

¹⁴ —, *Mennonitische Rundschau* Vol. IX, No. 39 (September 26, 1888), p. 1.

¹⁵ Peter Abrams, *Mennonitische Rundschau* Vol. VIII, No. 46 (November 16, 1887), p. 1.

¹⁶ Eduard Wiebe, *Mennonitische Rundschau* Vol. XIII, No. 5 (February 3, 1892), p. 1.

¹⁷ Bill Penner, Winkler, Manitoba, interview, April 22, 1976.

¹⁸ The report is based on an interview with George J. Janzen on September 20, 1975.

¹⁹ Isaak Müller, directive to the *Schulzen*, April 30, 1876, *Reinland Village Documents*.

²⁰ Ruth Winkler, letter addressed to Abe Ens, c/o Reinland Centennial Committee, Winkler, Manitoba, July 20, 1975.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: AGRICULTURAL PATTERNS

¹ John F. Galbraith, *The Mennonites in Manitoba 1875-1900* (Morden, Manitoba: The Chronicle Press, 1900), p.

² Three sources have been used to set up the table of early agricultural growth patterns in Reinland:

(a) E. Winkler, "Pembina Mennonite Reserve," *Annual Report of the Minister of Agriculture for the Calendar Year 1877*, Appendix No. 41, 41 Victoria, Sessional Papers (No. 9), A. 1878.

(b) "The Pembina Mennonite Settlement," *Annual Report of the Minister of Agriculture for the Calendar Year 1878*, Appendix No. 16, Report of the Dufferin Immigration Agent, 42 Victoria, Sessional Papers (No. 9) A. 1879.

(c) Peter Wiens, "Nachweis wie viel Dörfer, Wirthe, Seelen, ackergebrochenes Land, Maschinen, Wagen, Pflüge, und viel geerntet in 1879, *Nebraska Ansiedler* Vol. II, No. 9 (February, 1880), p. 1. This is apparently the same list that was sent in to the government by Peter Wiens.

³ Galbraith, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

⁴ Jacob Fehr, unpublished memoirs.

⁵ Wilhelm Rempel, *Die Rundschau*, Vol. III, No. 17 (September 1, 1882), p. 1.

⁶ Peter Abrams, *Die Rundschau* Vol. III, No. 18 (September 15, 1882), p. 1.

⁷ Wilhelm Rempel, *Die Rundschau* Vol. III, No. 6 (March 15, 1882), p. 1.

⁸ Galbraith, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹⁰ Peter Abrams, *Die Rundschau* Vol. IV, No. 5 (March 1, 1883), p. 1.

¹¹ See H. Leonard Sawatsky, "The Mennonites in Manitoba," *Manitoba Mennonite Memories* (Altona and Einbach, Manitoba: Manitoba Mennonite Committee, 1974), p. 16.

¹² Galbraith, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

¹³ Information on the crop year of 1882 is based on a series of Reinland reports which appeared in the *Mennonitische Rundschau* in 1882.

¹⁴ Elizabeth Bergen in, "Effects of the Depression," *Red River Valley Echo* (July 23, 1975) is discussing some of the effects of the Depression.

¹⁵ Peter Abrams, *Die Rundschau* Vol. IV, No. 11 (June 1, 1883), p. 2.

¹⁶ —, *Die Rundschau* Vol. IV, No. 51 (December 19, 1883), p. 1.

¹⁷ Frank Brown, *A History of Winkler* (Altona, Manitoba: D. W. Friesen & Sons Ltd., 1973), p. 13.

¹⁸ Wilhelm Rempel, *Mennonitische Rundschau* Vol. 7, No. 34 (August 25, 1886), p. 1.

¹⁹ John Warkentin, "The Mennonite Settlements in Manitoba," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1960, 229.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN: THE REINLAND CO-OPERATORS

¹ Robert R. Meyer, *The Spirit of the Post Road* (Altona, Manitoba: D. W. Friesen and Sons Ltd., 1955) is a major source of information for this chapter. The major source for the section on the Reinland Co-op Dairy Society is the *Minute Book*, Reinland Co-op Dairy Society.

² *Mennonitische Rundschau* Vol. VI, No. 13, (April 1, 1885) p. 1. The writer is not identified.

³ Peter Abrams, *Mennonitische Rundschau* Vol. VI, No. 16, (April 22, 1885) p. 2.

⁴ J. J. Kroeker, *Mennonitische Rundschau* (July 22, 1885), p. 1.

⁵ "Protokoll der Allgemeinen Versammlung der Reinland Co-op Dairy Society Ltd. am 30. Dezember 1936 zu Reinland," *Minute Book*, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-11.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Charter of Reinland Co-op Dairy Society, February 11, 1937.

⁸ "Protokoll der Komiteesitzung am 24. Sept. 1937," *Minute Book*, *op. cit.*

⁹ Meyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-130.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 130-133, contains a wealth of information on this industry. Peter Redekopp, former manager, contributed further information.

¹² Meyer, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN: JUNIOR CLUB TO 4-H

¹ Credit for information on the evolution of the club movement in Reinland is due to Jake Harms, Mather, who took the time, not only to write down his personal experiences in the movement, but also to make an assessment of impact on the community. Valuable information was also given by Frank G. Ens, a long-time club veteran, both member and leader, who supplied several important documents for the write-up. Several other former and present club members and leaders have volunteered information.

² "Manitoba Seed Show," *Canadian Boys and Girls Club News Vol. IX, No. 2* (April, 1940), p. 2.

³ Ingrid Ens, Reinland provided information on the 4-H activities of the last few years.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN: REINLÄNDER MENNONITE CHURCH (1875-1925)

¹ Johann Wiebe, *Die Auswanderung von Russland nach Kanada* (Cuahtemoc, Chihuahua, Mexico: Campo 6 Apartado 297, 1972), pp. 32-36. Elder Wiebe's account is the major source for the discussion on the Fort Dufferin Brotherhood meeting.

² *Ibid.*, p. 47.

³ Isaak Müller, "Brief an die Schulzenämter," Neuhorst, February 1, 1876, *Dorfbuch Rosenort 1875-1876*.

⁴ Isaak Müller, circular of May 11, 1876, *Reinland Village Documents*.

⁵ *Ibid.*, May 19, 1876.

⁶ *Ibid.*, June 12, 1876.

⁷ *Ibid.*, June 17, 1876.

⁸ *Ibid.*, July 16, 1876.

⁹ Anna M. Peters, Walton, Kansas, personal interview, 1975.

¹⁰ Johann Wiebe, letter to the congregation sent to the villages, Rosengart, October 19, 1876, *Reinland Village Documents*.

¹¹ The claim that this hymn was actually sung at the occasion is supported by more than its traditional place in church dedication service. The article "Eine Begebenheit aus Russland und Kanada Manitoba," appended to Johann Wiebe, *Die Auswanderung von Russland nach Kanada, op. cit.* is written by an unidentified member of the Reinländer Mennonite Church who attended the service and specifically mentions the singing of the hymn.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 62-65.

¹³ Johann Wiebe, letter to the congregations sent to the villages, Rosengart, January 12, 1876, *Reinland Village Documents*.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, September 18, 1880.

¹⁵ "Eine Begebenheit aus Russland und Kanada Manitoba," in Wiebe, *op. cit.*, p. 70. See also Wiebe's account *Die Auswanderung von Russland nach Kanada, op. cit.*, pp. 38-50.

¹⁶ "Gemeinde in Manitoba, Canada," *Herold der Wahrheit, Vol. XXV, No. 9* (May 1, 1888), p. 130, gives information for this table and the data to the left of the table.

¹⁷ "In Manitoba," *Mennonitische Rundschau, Vol. XII, No. 4* (January 28, 1891), pp. 1-2.

¹⁸ Isaak M. Dyck, *Die Auswanderung der Reinländer Mennoniten Gemeinde von Kanada nach Mexiko* (Cuahtemoc, Chihuahua, Mexico: Imprenta Colonial, Campo 6½, Apartado 297, 1970), p. 174.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 174-175.

²⁰ Benjamin Heinrich Unruh, *Die niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der mennonitischen Ostwanderungen* (Karlsruhe, Deutschland: Heinrich Schneider, 1955), p. 358. Unruh gives the birthplace as Roseno, Prussia, but gives the birthdate as approximately 1809. J. J. Neudorf, D. G. Rempel, H. J. Neudorf, *Osterwitz* (Clearbrook; British Columbia: A. A. Olfert and Sons Ltd., 1973), p. 87, establishes the birthdate as 1807. That it was the same Jacob Wiens who was born in Prussia and lived in Reinland is corroborated by Peter Wiens, Reinland, "Auskunft verlangt," *Herold der Wahrheit, Vol. XIII, No. 7* (July, 1876), p. 136. The article begins: Peter Wiens, Reinland, Jakob Wiens, now living in Manitoba, Canada, who moved here last year from South Russia, from the village Kronsthal, born in Rosenort, Russia, wish . . .

²¹ Unruh, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

²² Neudorf et al. *op. cit.*, p. 87.

²³ Jacob Fehr, unpublished memoirs.

²⁴ See Wiebe, letter of January 12, 1876, *op. cit.*

²⁵ "Manitoba," *Mennonitische Rundschau Vol. X, No. 42* (October 16, 1889), p. 1.

²⁶ Dyck, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26.

²⁷ "Baptism," *Herald of Truth* (July, 1879) as quoted by Clarence Hiebert, *Brothers in Deed to Brothers in Need* (Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press, 1974), p. 358.

²⁸ Rev. I. P. F. Friesen, Winkler, Manitoba, communication.

²⁹ Isaak de Veer, "Eine Besuchsreise von Süd-Russland nach Manitoba in Amerika," *Die Rundschau Vol. III, No. 3 and No. 4* (February 1 and 15, 1882). The article is dated Schönhorst, December 10, 1881.

³⁰ See "Eine kleine Beschreibung über den Ältesten Peter Wiebe, Rosengart Manitoba," in Johann Wiebe, *Die Auswanderung von Russland nach Kanada, op. cit.*, pp. 57-61.

³¹ See Dyck, *op. cit.*, pp. 169-173. Elder Dyck has commentary and statistical data on Elder Johann Friesen

³² See Wiebe, letter of January 12, 1876, *op. cit.*

³³ Isaak Müller, circular of October 26, 1876, *Reinland Village Documents*.

³⁴ The phrase is borrowed from the *Allgemeine Schulverordnung für den Privatschulen der Sommerfelder mennoniten Gemeinde in Süd-Manitoba*, (The Altona Printery). However, the spirit expressed permeated the writings of Reinländer Church leaders as well. See Dyck, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

³⁵ See E. K. Francis, *In Search of Utopia* (Altona, Manitoba: D. W. Friesen and Sons Ltd., 1955), pp. 180-183.

³⁶ Dyck, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Translated by Frank H. Epp in *Mennonites in Canada, 1786-1920* (Toronto, Ontario: Macmillan of Canada, 1974), p. 333.

³⁹ Dyck, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

⁴⁰ Gerhard Wiebe, *Ursachen und Geschichte der Auswanderung der Mennoniten aus Russland nach Amerika* (Vinnipeg, Manitoba: Nordwesten, 1900), p. 27.

⁴¹ Dyck, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 21. The concern is a recurring theme in writings by members of the Reinländer Mennonite Church.

⁴³ Harry Leonard Sawatzky, *They Sought a Country* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1971), p. 29. The first two chapters of Sawatzky's book contain valuable background information on the migration to Mexico.

⁴⁴ Jacob Peters, unpublished diary, p. 26. Peters, Reinland school teacher, attended both the Neuanlage brotherhood meeting and the one in Reinland a week later. Note also Sawatzky, *op. cit.*, p. 31, who dates decision to migrate as July, 1919.

⁴⁵ Peters, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 100-101. Rev. Johann Wall kept a diary of the delegates' journey from the time of departure up to his death in Curitiba, Brazil. The diary is quoted in full by Peters on pp. 102-134.

⁴⁷ Johann P. Wall, letter to widow of Rev. Johann Wall, dated Curitiba, September 29, 1919. The letter is quoted in Peters, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-139.

⁴⁸ See Chapter 2, "Preparations for Auswanderung", in Sawatzky, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-55. At one point a decision to migrate to Mississippi was actually made. Sawatzky refers to this action at a Reinland conference on May 4, 1920, on p. 34. Peters, *op. cit.*, p. 58 also reports on the brotherhood meeting decision.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

⁵⁰ Sawatzky, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-50.

⁵¹ Peters, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

⁵² *Ibid.* The Haskett station account is based on the Peters diary.

⁵³ Dyck, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-88.

⁵⁴ The statistical information is based on Peters, *op. cit.*, p. 302. Rev. Franz Loewen was on the March 2, 1922, in that left Haskett. See Dyck, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

⁵⁵ F. F. Peters, *Dorfs Buch zum Jahr 1922* included in Reinland Village Documents and *Dorfs Buch*, Reinland, Cuauhtemoc, Chihuahua, Mexico, containing records of 1927 and 1928 and some other material.

⁵⁶ Mrs. Peter J. Wiebe, Grunthal, Manitoba, communication.

⁵⁷ Abram and Elisabeth Ens, Campo 30, Apdo. 173, Cd. Cuauhtemoc, Chihuahua, Mexico, letter of March 30, 1975.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: SOMMERFELDER MENNONITE CHURCH

¹ David Stoesz, diary, entry of April 7, 1882. David Stoesz, who had become elder of the East Reserve Chortitzer church, ordained the new West Reserve elder.

² H. Hiebert, under heading "Manitoba," *Die Rundschau Vol. III, No. 16* (August 15, 1882), p. 1. Hiebert's letter dated Westlynn (Gnadenfeld), July 25.

³ Jacob Y. Schantz, *Die Rundschau Vol. IV, No. 6* (March 15, 1883), p. 2, and *Vol. V, No. 9* (February 27, 1884), p. 1.

⁴ Peter and Helena Siemens, "Bericht über unsere Reise nach Manitoba," *Mennonitische Rundschau Vol. VI, No. 1* (January 28, 1885), pp. 1-2.

⁵ Wilhelm Rempel, *Mennonitische Rundschau Vol. VII, No. 34* (August 25, 1886), p. 1.

⁶ Jacob Kröker, Sen., *Mennonitische Rundschau Vol. VIII, No. 15* (April 13, 1887), p. 1.

⁷ Jacob Wiens, Sen., *Mennonitische Rundschau Vol. VIII, No. 18* (May 4, 1887), p. 1.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ See "Eine Begebenheit aus Russland und Kanada, Manitoba" in Johann Wiebe, *Die Auswanderung von Russland nach Kanada* (Cuauhtemoc, Chihuahua, Mexico: Campo 6½, Apartado 297), p. 69.

¹⁰ C. Henry Smith, "John B. Baer", *Mennonite Encyclopedia Vol. I*, p. 212.

¹¹ Peter Abrams, *Mennonitische Rundschau Vol. VIII, No. 29*, (July 20, 1887), p. 1.

¹² Information on the school meetings of December 6, 1885 to December 1, 1888, is based on Wilhelm Rempel, "Der Schulverein in Greta, Manitoba", as reproduced in seventy-fifth anniversary yearbook of Mennonite Collegiate Institute, 1965.

¹³ P. P. Zacharias, Winkler, Manitoba, personal interview.

¹⁴ "Gemeinden in Manitoba, Canada," *Herold der Wahrheit XXV, No. 9* (May 1, 1888), p. 130.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, gives Funk's ordination date as April 11, 1882. The correct date is probably April 2, 1882. Elder David Stoesz, *op. cit.*, writes on April 7 that he and Rev. Franz Dueck travelled to the West Reserve to confirm an elder, which took place on Easter day with God's presence, and attended by a very large assembly."

¹⁶ "Gemeinden in Manitoba, Canada", in *Herold der Wahrheit*, *op. cit.*

¹⁷ William Schroeder, *The Bergthal Colony* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: CMBC Publications, 1974), pp. 94-95.

¹⁸ "Gemeinden in Manitoba, Canada", in *Herold der Wahrheit*, *op. cit.*

¹⁹ H. J. Gerbrandt, *Adventure in Faith* (Altona, Manitoba: D. W. Friesen and Sons Ltd., 1970), p. 90.

²⁰ Registry for NW¼ of 18-1-3 at Land Titles Office in Morden.

²¹ *Allgemeine Schulverordnung für den Privatschulen der Sommerfelder Mennoniten Gemeinde in Süd-Manitoba Kanada* (The Altona Printery), p. 12.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

²³ Abe Peters, Reinland, 1975.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Gerbrandt, *op. cit.* p. 91.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

²⁷ *Allgemeine Schulverordnung . . . op. cit.*, p. 13.

²⁸ See "Glaubensbekenntnis der Mennoniten in Manitoba, Nordamerika", which is appended to *Katechismus oder Kurze und einfache Unterweisung aus der Heiligen Schrift*, 26th edition (Winnipeg, Manitoba: The Christian Press Limited, 1954), pp. 3-4 of appended section. The "Vorwort" of Elder Johann Wiebe also occurs in other editions.

²⁹ The major source of information on this section has been the local research of Abe Peters, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jacob P. Peters, Reinland.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN: RUDNERWEIDER MENNONITE CHURCH

¹ J. D. Adrian, *Die Entstehung der Rudnerweider Gemeinde 1936* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: The City Press, 1958), p. 10. Adrian's book is the source for most of the historical background on Rudnerweider Church beginnings and development. Rev. I. P. F. Friesen, Winkler, Manitoba, who has been involved with the Rudnerweider Church since its beginning, has also offered valuable insights.

² *Der Leitstern* Vol. XXII, No. 2 (June, 1966).

³ Peter S. Zacharias, who wrote the minutes *Protokoll der Beratung im Haskett Schulhause*, March 26, 1938. Mrs. H. J. Janzen, Reinland, has kindly made these minutes available for use in research.

⁴ Mrs. Aganetha Zacharias has supplied some of the more personal information on Rev. P. S. Zacharias. Other information has been gleaned from Adrian, *op. cit.*

⁵ "Meeting of the ratepayers of the Reinland S.D.," *Minutes*, August 7, 1925.

⁶ Adrian, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁷ Most of the information on recent developments in the Rudnerweider Church in Reinland has been furnished by Jacob F. Wieler, who served the congregation as deacon for twenty years.

CHAPTER NINETEEN: BLUMENORTER MENNONITE CHURCH

¹ Gerhard G. Harms, Crystal City, Manitoba, interview, 1975.

² Gerhard Ens, Gretna, Manitoba, interview, 1975.

³ J. J. Neudorf, D. G. Rempel, H. J. Neudorf, *Osterwick* (Clearbrook, British Columbia: A. A. Olfert and Sons Ltd., 1973), p. 93.

⁴ For further reading on this event read Gerhard Fast, *Das Ende von Choritz* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Regel Printing, 1973).

⁵ The result of much research on this migration and Elder Toews' involvement is collected in Frank H. E. Mennonite *Exodus* (Altona, Manitoba: D. W. Friesen and Sons Ltd., 1962).

⁶ *History of the Blumenorter Mennonite Church*, unpublished manuscript, p. 24. This collection of articles about many aspects of Blumenorter Church history is the major source of information used for the discussion of Blumenorter Church development.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁹ Most of the information in this biographical sketch is based on Rev. C. B. Krahn's autobiography in *ibid.*, pp. 58.

¹⁰ "Cornelius B. Krahn". *Red River Valley Echo* (February 19, 1975), p. 1.

¹¹ The Heinrich G. Ens autobiography in *History of the Blumenorter Mennonite Church*, *op. cit.*, is the chief source of information.

¹² The source for the article is the biography of Elder Johann P. Bueckert in *ibid.*, pp. 32-38.

CHAPTER TWENTY: REINLAND VILLAGE SUNDAY SCHOOL AND JUGENDVEREIN

¹ Mr. Gerhard Ens' address of August 4, 1963, is included in the *History of the Blumenorter Mennonite Church*, unpublished manuscript pp. 101-106.

² H. J. Gerbrandt, *Adventure in Faith* (Altona, Manitoba: D. W. Friesen and Sons Ltd., 1970), p. 163.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE: THE REINLAND CHURCHES IN THE TWO WARS

¹ Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada 1786-1920* (Toronto, Ontario: Macmillan of Canada, 1974), p. 369.

² Isaak M. Dyck, *Die Auswanderung der Reinländer Mennoniten Gemeinde von Canada nach Mexiko* (Tehuacan, Chihuahua, Mexico: Imprenta Colonial, 1970), p. 29.

³ Public Archives of Canada, *Borden Papers*, M.G. 26, H, RLB 1167, 121078. Bishop Johann J. S. Friesen, Leuenburg, Winkler, to Sir Robert L. Borden and Hon. Arthur Meighen, January 4, 1917.

⁴ Epp, *op. cit.*, p. 370.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 370-371. Note that Epp's sources establish that the delegation referred to went to Ottawa in regard to the 1917 registration, which is not to be confused with the 1918 registration. See also Paul J. Schäfer, "Die Denkschrift an die canadische Regierung in Angelegenheit der Wehrfrage (Überreicht den 8. Jan., 1917). 'Woher? Wohin? Mennoniten!'" 3. Teil (Altona, Manitoba: Mennonite Agricultural Advisory Committee, 1946), pp. 148-151 and R. B. Epp's reply of January 8, 1917, in German translation, "An die Herren Abraham Dörksen, Heinrich Dörksen, David Töws, Klaas Peters, Benjamin Ewert," *ibid.*, pp. 151-152. See further Dyck, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-34, who discusses the Ottawa response to the delegation in some detail.

⁶ Account of Hon. J. C. Locke, K.C., submitted to Judge J. E. Adamson and attached to memo of L. E. Westman March 27, 1944, to A. MacNamara RG 27, 601, 3-6, Vol. 4, *Lacelle Files*, Department of Labour, p. 2. Information that the Canada Registration Act in relation to the Mennonites is largely based on Locke's account.

⁷ Dyck, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

⁸ Locke, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-9.

⁹ Epp, *op. cit.*, pp. 380-381.

¹⁰ Benjamin Ewert, "Bemühungen zur Sicherheit der Wehrfreiheit für unsere ungetauften Jünglinge," *Der Mitarbeiter*, XII (June, 1918), pp. 3-7, as quoted by Epp, *ibid.*, p. 382.

¹¹ "Bericht über eine Besprechung in der Wehrfrage von Vertretern mennonitischer Gemeinden Canadas, abgehalten am 15. Mai 1939 in der M.B. Kirche zu Winkler, Manitoba," *Erfahrungen der Mennoniten in Canada während des zweiten Weltkrieges 1939-1945*, pp. 42-64.

¹² "Protokoll der Versammlung von Vertretern der verschiedenen mennonitischen Gemeinden Manitobas, abgehalten am 7. September 1940 in der Kronswelder Kirche zu Lowe Farm," *ibid.*, pp. 65-67.

¹³ "Protokoll der Versammlung, bestehend aus den Ältesten der verschiedenen mennonitischen Gemeinden Manitoba, samt ihren Vertretern oder Gehilfen, die sie sich erwählt hatten. Abgehalten am 16. September 1940 im Rosenhof Versammlungshause," *ibid.*, pp. 70-72.

¹⁴ H. J. Gerbrandt, *Adventure in Faith* (Altona, Manitoba: D. W. Friesen and Sons Ltd., 1970), pp. 317-318.

¹⁵ Protokoll der Beratung der Vertreter der Mennonitengemeinden verschiedener Benennung in Manitoba am 14. Oktober 1940 in der Kirche der M.B. Gemeinde, 621 College Ave., Winnipeg, "Erfahrungen der Mennoniten . . .," *ibid.*, pp. 79-88. The Bruderthaler Church expressed some reservations about remaining in the older Committee of elders. Later it opted to remain.

¹⁶ See Item 6, "Protokoll des Ältestenrates, abgehalten zu Winnipeg im Bibelhause am 22. Juni 1942," *ibid.*, pp. 116-128.

¹⁷ J. A. Toews, "Organization and Preparation of Historic Peace Churches for Alternative Service," *Alternative Service in Canada World War II*, (Winnipeg, Manitoba: The Christian Press, 1959), p. 54, as quoted by Gerbrandt, *op. cit.*, p. 318.

¹⁸ Edgar McInnis, *Canada — A Political and Social History* (Toronto, Ontario: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1958), pp. 496-498.

¹⁹ See Item 4, "Protokoll des Ältestenrats, abgehalten zu Altona am 5. März 1942," *Erfahrungen der Mennoniten . . .*, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-116.

²⁰ See Item 2, "Predigerversammlung, abgehalten zu Lowe Farm am 4. Mai 1942," *ibid.*, pp. 118-122.

²¹ A. W. Friesen, Abbotsford, British Columbia, personal communication February 15, 1974.

²² "Erste Reise nach Ottawa," *Erfahrungen der Mennoniten, op. cit.*, pp. 26-30.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO: EDUCATION

¹ Johann Wiebe, January 12, 1876, *Reinland Village Documents*.

² Wilhelm Rempel, "Die Gründung der ersten Fortbildungs-schule der Mennoniten Manitobas," Rosthern, August 6, 1927, published in *Ich Sende Euch Vol. XXV, No. 2* (February, 1968), pp. 7-10.

³ Peter Abrams, March 5, 1882, in *Die Rundschau Vol. III, No. 6* (March 15, 1882), p. 1.

⁴ *Ibid.* See also Rempel, *op. cit.*

⁵ See "Briefkasten," *Die Rundschau Vol. III, No. 10* (May 15, 1882), p. 2.

⁶ Rempel, *op. cit.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Wilhelm Rempel, March 25, 1888, under "Manitoba", *Mennonitische Rundschau Vol. IX, No. 15* (April 11, 1888), p. 1.

⁹ —, "Mennonite Schools," *Report of the Superintendent of Education for the Protestant Schools of Manitoba for the year ending 31st January, 1886* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Queen's Printer, 1886), pp. 85-86.

¹⁰ —, "Mennonite Schools," *Report of the Superintendent of Education for the Protestant Schools of Manitoba, 1887* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Queen's Printer, 1887), pp. 53-54.

¹¹ —, *Report 1886, op. cit.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Rempel, *Report 1887, op. cit.*

¹⁴ —, "Die Gründung der ersten Fortbildungs-schule der Mennoniten Manitobas," *Ich Sende Euch, op. cit.*

¹⁵ Peter Abrams, February 13, 1883, in *Die Rundschau Vol. IV, No. 5* (March 1, 1883), p. 1.

¹⁶ Rempel, *op. cit.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.* See also Wilhelm Rempel, "Der Schulverein in Gretna, Manitoba, December 12, 1888," *Mennon Collegiate Institute Yearbook, 1965*, seventy-fifth anniversary edition.

¹⁸ E. K. Francis, *In Search of Utopia* (Altona, Manitoba: D. W. Friesen and Sons Ltd., 1955), p. 164.

¹⁹ Jacob Peters, unpublished diary, makes numerous references to his threshing career.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, December 21, 1921, p. 163.

²¹ Isaak I. Dyck, Apdo. 44, Osterwick, Cuauhtemoc, Chihuahua, Mexico, personal communication, 1975.

²² "Dies sind die Dorfsausgaben für die Schule 1910," *Reinland Village Documents, 1910*.

²³ The Spring and Fall Half Yearly Reports of the Snowdon School and the Reinland School District No. 2130 on microfilm at the Department of Education, Robert Fletcher Building, 1181 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba. The statistical information on the Snowdon and Reinland schools is largely based on these reports.

²⁴ Reinland School District No. 2130, *Minutes*, August 7, 1925.

²⁵ Several sources have been used including *Reinland Village Documents*, communication of Isaak I. Dyck, Mexico, and *Half-Yearly Reports*, *op. cit.*

²⁶ *Minutes*, *op. cit.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, January 14, 1933.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, August 31, 1934.

³⁰ Gerhard Ens, Gretna, personal recollections.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE: AN EXPERIENCE IN COMMUNITY

¹ J. Winfield Fretz, "Mennonite Community — Traditional or Intentional," *Mennonite Life Vol. 30*, No. (December, 1975), p. 5.

² Frank Froese, Cartwright, Manitoba and Jake Harms, Mather, Manitoba, have made significant contributions of information for the section on Reinland sports.

³ As recalled by Jake Harms, Mather, Manitoba.

⁴ Proverbs 30:18-19.

⁵ Jacob Peters, diary, entry of June 28, 1920, p. 66.

⁶ Maria Ens in "Die Bestattung unserer Toten," *Geschichte der Blumenorter Mennonitengemeinde*, unpublished manuscript, p. 88-90.

⁷ *Reinland Village Documents* and *Rosenort Village Documents* have been used.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR: THE JUBILEE

¹ Elizabeth Bergen, "Reinland village celebrates 100th year of West Reserve," *Red River Valley Echo* (July 1975), pp. 1 and 13.

SPECIAL PHOTOGRAPHS

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