

THE PRUSSIAN-POLISH MENNONITES IN SOUTH DAKOTA
1874 AND SOON AFTER
BY J.A. BOESE

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1.
WHO THEN ARE THE PRUSSIAN-POLISH MENNONITES?

This is the question that needs to be answered in order to get to the hear of our story. Glancing into the December 14th, 1950 issue of the Mennonite Weekly Review Newton) Kansas. Dr. Cornelis Krahn in an article asks the following question: "..THE COMING OF THE MENNONITES FROM POLAND" and

"WHO ARE THE SO-CALLED POLISH MENNONITES?" Then in the same article the following statement is offered:

"...(they) are of the same background as other Mennonites from Prussia and most of them from Russia. They have a Dutch-German ethnic and cultural background, the only difference being that they for a long period of time were a small group isolated from the rest."

With this being accepted as a satisfactory answer, it might perhaps be helpful to try to explain some of these details, especially in regard to what the difference between the "bigger" and the "smaller" group might be.

We may assume that the "bigger" group refers to the great numbers of Prussian Mennonites who had lived in many villages around the SCHWETZ and GRAUDENZ area in Prussia who had mainly come from Holland and later left for Russia to settle at the Molotschna and other areas in southern Russia. The "smaller" group were those Mennonites that lived in the northern part of Prussia in the Delta area, in Neumark, in Driesen and in the Brenkenhoffswalde area and likewise left northern Prussia during much the same time-space as did the "bigger" group (if not somewhat earlier) to go to Russia.

But instead of locating in southern Russia they settled farther north in the province of Volhynia and near by. Some of the "smaller" group also appear to have for a time lived in Deutsch-Kazun and Deutsch-Wymayle and some also for a short time in the WARSAW area. In places such as Czerneberg and "Wolla" (near Plonsk) and perhaps elsewhere, and then soon came to Volhynia and into the Kiev area.

These migrations started mainly in the 1770-ties and soon after. Then about one hundred years later these same groups came from Russia to America. The "smaller" group, ISOLATED FROM THE REST for a long time, now in some instances, again located near each other. This mainly happened in Dakota and in Kansas. Others located in various other states and in Canada.

The majority segment of the smaller group settled mainly in Kansas. (*1) These sometimes were referred to as CANTONERS because they had spent their first winter there.

(*1) Article by A. J. Unruh and Victor Sawatzki in Mennonite Life -July 1955. NOTE: This source and all other sources as well as foot notes are all listed numerically in the back of this book.

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However many spent their first winter in America at Newton, Peabody and other places in Kansas and then came to Dakota in the spring of 1875. Meanwhile a considerable number of families came directly to Dakota in 1874 and located in the Silver Lake area. A number of families left Newton in the spring of 1875 for Wayland, Iowa and came to Dakota a few years later. These were mainly the Buller families. A number of families remained in Pennsylvania the first winter. Of these a few remained there permanently but most of them came to Kansas and Dakota in the spring of 1875. These various segments constituted the minority group of the KARLSWALDER while those that located in Kansas and elsewhere are the majority group of the Karlsruwalder.

The above Karlsruwalder in the Silver Lake area were soon joined by some Heinrichsdorfer families who

also belonged to the "smaller" group but the main part of the Heinrichsdorfer segment settled at Loretta in 1874, later known as the Avon settlement, located in Bon Homme County, South Dakota.

A second segment that joined the Silver Lake area also belonging to the "smaller" group were families from Michalin in the Kiev area in Russia. A few of these families also lived at Avon.

These three groups then, the Karlsruwalder, the Heinrichsdorfer and the Michaliner constitute

"THE PRUSSIAN AND POLISH MENNONITES SETTELING IN SOUTH DAKOTA 1874 AND SOON AFTER"

While the story of our minority segment of Karlsruwalder and the majority group in Kansas and elsewhere IS THE SAME, it still stands to reason that the story of the majority group should be written by someone (*2) that lives there. Karlsruwalder are sometimes referred to as OSTROGER Mennonites because many of the villages there were near the city of OSTROG in Volhynia.

Mennonites of the above three segments are the ones that are in question in this story. These segments of the "smaller" group here in Dakota also were joined by other groups of Mennonites NOT belonging to the Prussian-Polish group of Mennonites. The first such group was from the Crimean area and had already arrived in 1873. They settled mainly at Swan Lake and not far from Parker. Daniel Unruh belonged to this group.

The second such group were the big Molotschna group of families who settled mainly west of Marion. This group arrived without a minister as their leaders and ministers had settled in other states. However, this group was very loyal to the leaders and ministers of the Karlsruwalder group and joined them in the original church endeavors in 1875 and 1876. The earliest Mennonite Church record started 1875-6 by Elder Peter P. Becker presents evidence that all the foregoing groups joined in that earliest church pioneering effort. (See the membership register in the back of this book.)

During the same time that our "smaller" group settled here in Dakota a considerable group of Swiss Mennonite families settled mainly east of Freeman. These of the Swiss element had lived in Volhynia near our Mennonite segments and now here in Dakota they were near them again. The Hutterian Mennonites who came here from southern Russia settled mainly west of Freeman.

It is a known fact that our Mennonite segments arrived in the United States on different steamers. The passenger lists of these steamers are of great importance. The lists give the name of the parents and generally also the names of the unmarried children. With each individual the age is also given. In many instances these lists have aided greatly in identifying our foreparents.

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AREAS IN VOLHYNIA

Areas in Volhynia from which our groups came are from the Ostrog area spreading southeastward to Zhitomir and then still more eastward into the province of Kiev. Near Zhitomir was the village of

Heinrichsdorf and then some 20 miles east was the village of Michalin near the west boundry of the province of Kiev.

Speaking of Mennonites earlier -under whatever name they were known (*3), we have actual evidence of some of our forebears, because we now find names like Dircks, Unrau, Scmidt and others such as Ratzlaff, who were actual participants in the latter years or the Anabaptist activity. Soon additional names now still in use in our circles appear in governmental records of the Netherlands and in Prussia.

While in Prussia and in Russia our forebears were a rural people and were not often admitted into towns and cities, end as a rule they did not ASK FUR CITIZENSHIP because they were aware that as citizens they would be called upon and be compelled to participate in military service which they felt was contrary to Christian beliefs. (*4)

Under the above reference it does not appear to be fair that our forefathers should be referred to as Prussians or Poles, or Russians, but should rather more correctly be referred to as Prussian, Polish or Russian MENNONITES.

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REGARDING OUR ANCESTORS

Historians pretty well agree that evidence in many ways regarding our forebears is rather vague. At best in trying to pin-point something regarding them, one should probably only assume that they came from the northern part of Holland, or from that part of Holland immediately west from Germany. In instances like some family record as the Ratzlaff and Dirks families there appears to be evidence that they resided in certain areas.

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In the earliest years of the Anabaptist activity many of them came into Holland. And it is quite generally maintained that most of the Prussian-Polish Mennonites stem from Dutch origin. (*5) Generally speaking it is believed that they maintained an attitude of isolation and that they at first probably refrained from intermarrying with non-Mennonites. Also that in Prussia they, in a great measure, continued to adhere to their Dutch ways of living.

It is assumed by many that the early Christian Church enjoyed a fair measure of growth the first several centuries after Christ. But it is known that there were disagreements, and even during the time reported in the new Testament they could not fully agree on how they should proceed. Already false teachings were noticed and in due time it led to struggles and later even to some persecution. Then there followed a long period of time when MAN-MADE regulations were reported to. It was during this time that the Catholic Church began to dominate to a great degree.

One can hardly imagine that great changes followed acts such as those of Martin Luther (*6) and Conrad Grebel whose acts had a part in bringing about the REFORMATION. Conrad Grebel' s teachings appear to have caused quite a stir in Switzerland and historians consider that this was the CRADLE OF

MENNONITISM which started about 1523, and also came to Holland about 1530. (*7) It is known that there were men like Johann Huss and Wycliffe and others like them, whose teachings earlier caused upheavals in the Roman Catholic Church. The teachings of these men were by Catholics regarded as heresies and attempts were made to quell them.

In following Dr. B. H. Unruh's historical references it is indicated that "Täufer" showed up in Marienburg, Prussia as early as 1526. (*8)

Speaking of the cradle of a movement, Fritz Blanks states (*9): "The fellow believers gathered; probably on the evening of January 21, 1525, supposedly in the home of Felix Manz in Zurich, Switzerland. They prayed together, and then Jörg Blaurock arose and asked Grebel to baptize him. Grebel baptized him and after wards Blaurock baptized the other participants in the meeting. -THAT IS THE HOUR OF THE BIRTH OF THE ANABAPTIST MOVEMENT" (*10)

That Anabaptists were in Dutch domains, -Ostfriesland, quite some time before Mennonites were mentioned there as indicated (*11) in an article by Kollman J. Doornkaat in a periodical, namely, in the Nederlands Archiv voor Kerkgeschiednis, Neue Siere, Vol. 47 page 87-99 and covers developments there from 1489 to 1548.

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REFORMATION

As has been indicated the Reformation started with activities of Martin Luther and Conrad Grebel and others of like beliefs and was thereby soon accelerated into action. This new movement appears to have struck the Catholic Church with

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a severe impact, -so much so, that it decided about 1550 or soon thereafter, that the Catholic Church should plan a COUNTER REFORMATION. (*12) This was to be directed against the protestants. In planning this, it was decided to base their counter movement on:

1. A fight against all non-Catholics.
2. A reform in their own standards which took place between Paul IV about 1555 and Sextus V 1570. (It appears that in central Europe this movement may have been something like a generation later.)

In 1513-17 when Menno Simon appeared on the scene he had already left the Catholic Church and actively joined the protestants in their movement for NEW CHRISTIAN STANDARDS. Menno was regarded as a sound leader. It soon came about that the followers of these protestants were called MENNONITES.

Catholics with this counter reformation carried on a process of resisting the protestant reformation over the years. This finally culminated in what was known as the 30 YEARS WAR, which took place from 1518 to 1548. Although as is known, many historians agree that the real beginning of the Reformation started in 1517 WITH MARTIN LUTHER'S (*13) nailing of his 95 theses on the church door at Wittenberg. Some historians appear to indicate that the battle between the Catholics and the Protestants

developed into a tie and thereby settling for the future the relationship and distribution OF THE CHURCHES IN EUROPE. In other words it could probably be said that the 30 YEARS WAR was the climax of the struggle between Catholicism and the then emerging PROTESTANT CHURCH. It appears that through these struggles more religious freedom was obtained 1555 through the final TREATY OF AUGSBURG.

Historians make it clear that the religious struggle which took place during the reformation has been one of the most momentous and significant undertakings in man's religious struggles after the truth!

It appears that Netherlands was about the only country which for a while managed to break away from the Roman Catholic influences. For this reason Anabaptists settled there.

"The origin of the Mennonites (*14) parallels the reformation of the sixteenth century. The Anabaptist movement developed both within and extending beyond these to countries in a manner quite independently from each other."

Dr. B. H. Unruh infers that "TAUFGESINNTE" -perhaps meaning those that practiced adult baptism end such other teachings as involved their faith were found before Menno and M. Hofman in several areas. (*15) Another historian infers that "...Mennonites is the name for the FIRST DENOMINATION that

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when they sought aid from the provincial court, the village officers soon discovered that the formalities were so confusing that before long the complaints of the village officers were dropped before it came to the point of actually having a hearing. The reason for this appeared to be because the village officers were not READY TO OFFER A HANDSOME BRIBE to those in higher authority. So then, the local village had learned another "lesson", namely, that disagreements generally end up with disappointments to both sides of the controversy. Also, that it would have been much better for both sides to be more considerate, -and settle the matter at home.

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IMPORTANCE OF NAMES OF VILLAGES AND INDIVIDUALS

By this time it may already have been noticed by many that village names had been brought along from Holland to Prussia. Later such village names were also carried from Prussia to Russia. To top it off, such names were also brought to places in America. Our people meant well, but the custom has caused good deal of confusion because there were too many identical names in use which made it very hard for many to guess where they were actually located, when referred to.

This same practice was also followed in naming the members of family children and has caused a good deal of confusion to those who would want to trace their genealogies into the past. In recent times here in America, this practice has not been followed so closely. It will help to avoid errors.

The Mennonite Encyclopedia reports many names of leaders that served in various places. The following are given as having served in Brenkenhoffswalde and Franztal: Andreas Voet, succeeded by Earnest Voet, Peter Jantz, Jacob Schmidt, Peter Isaak, Heinrich Unrau, Abraham. Ratzlaff (*89) and there perhaps were others.

A Jorgen Unruh is mentioned to have served at Jeziorken. At Przechowka Hans Schmidt and Peter Schmidt are mentioned. These two were direct ancestors to Benjamin P. Schmidt who located at Avon, S. D. Peter Schmidt served at Zabara-Waldheim in Volhynia and he also served a short time at Waldheim at the Molotschna. The group the Rev. Benjamin P. Schmidt served were more recently known as the Avon Mennonite settlement.(*90) Of these same segments lived in the village of Konpot in Prussia while others lived in different villages. Other mentioned in the Neumark area are Benjamin and Martin Unruh. They were the forefathers of Dr. B. H. Unruh (1881-1959) who later lived in Karlsruhe, Germany. Others there were Jacob and Ernest Schmidt. At Dropsch it was Jacob Thomas. (*91 & 92)

Names of other villages not heretofore mentioned are Schoensee, Jamerau, Ostrower, Niedermaas, Oberaumaas and perhaps others. Family names in some instances may reveal from where their ancestors came. Otherwise it may also reveal the kind of business they were engaged in. In some cases the family heads were not consistent in that they did not spell out their name alike when reporting the names of their children.

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The following family names are ones that are reported from Brenkenhoffswalde, Franztal and Driesen: Richert, Ratzlaff, Koehn, Thomas, Becker, Buller, Schmidt and Unruh. (*94) Dr. B. .H. Unruh makes the following remark. In this connection:

"...alles Namen, denen wir in den Mennonitischen Kolonien ...Ruszlans begegnen." The English version would read:

All names of people we find in Mennonite Colonies in Russia. We can not doubt but that these are the names of our groups later in Volhynia, Russia. As time passed other names were added to these while our forebears lived In Russia.

The list of the last Heinrichsdorf church record lists the following family names: Byer, Buller, Boese, Dirks, Voth, Nachtigall, Nickel, Pankratz, Teske, Schultz, Richert, Sperling, Unruh, Schmidt, Balzer, Bartel, Ewert, Eck, Funk, Frey, Jantz, Koehn, Lüdke, Penner, Schroeter, and perhaps a few others not often found with these groups. Historian Walter Kuhn also lists many of these in some of his writings. Very near all of these names are also listed with the Karlswalde group. (*95)

In connection with these groups Herbert Wiebe gives the following names: Block, Buller, Dirks, Ewert. Foth, Frey, Gertz, Jantz, Koehn, Nachtigall. Nickel, Pankratz, Ratzlaff, Schmidt, Unruh, Wedel, and perhaps others. (*96) A few more names that may be found in Prussian-Polish circles are Beier, Tiaht, Becker, Lidtke, Priss, Schroeder, Harms, Dick, Fast, Willems, Wiens, Klassen, Adrian, Ennsz, Fogt, Kunkel, Gossen, Kroeker, Koop, Loewen, and perhaps others.

Names of the Michaliner segment are very nearly all listed, except a few more that are given on the ship lists. These are Kliewer, Deckert, Boecher. Eckert and perhaps a few others. It is clear that the above

groups of names reveals that some of these names came from the Molotschna. No doubt there were intermarriages. Name study is quite involving and one must here refrain from too many details. Historical documents (*97) indicate that the present method of continuing family names some 500 years ago was then not adhered to. Progress called for more specific methods.

Passing now over to the matter of names and records of our Dakota segments, we first mention the oldest church record which was started 1876 by Elder Peter F. Becker. These groups in Dakota joined in what we call UNITED SERVICES that took place in homes first and later on the farm yard of Bonesetter Tieszen, which was located west of Marion. This list included some Krimmer Mennonites (*98). Likewise it also includes some of the Molotschner group. The following names are found in this first church record,(*99):

Adrian. Becker, Berg, Buller, Bohse, Boehse, Beyer, Bartel, Born, Deckert, Dirksen, Dirks, Engbrecht. Ennz, Fast. Goertz. Goosen, Isaak, Janz, Jantz, Kliewer, Kunkel, Kroeker, Koop, Loewen, Lütke, Koehn, Nachtigall, Neufeldt. Nickel, Ortman, Peters, Prisz, Pankratz, Richert, Ratzlaff, Regehr, Schmidt, Schartner, Schroeder, Tieszen, Thiessen, Tissen, Teske, Unruh, Voht, Vogt and Wedel.

As can be noticed, this list apparently includes all segments of Mennonites that settled here in Dakota, except the Swiss and the Hutterite groups. These attempted to form a new church group here. These segments came from different areas. One begins to ask, after finding that they split into different groups, WERE THEY NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO RETAIN THIS MEMBERSHIP? Or were they on the search for something new? It appears that their differences could not be solved.

An attempt to obtain a separate list of the Molotschna and the Krimmer groups, and also of the Michaliner group here, but no such lists were to be found.

The following two groups landed at Swan Lake area. With the first group (*100) Daniel Unruh from the Crimea was included. and had arrived In Yankton October 10th 1813. Reported then from Brotherrfeld Township were the following names: Tobias Unruh, John Boese, Diedrich Loewen, Henry Kunkel, Tobias Kunkel; Henry Schmidt, Aaron Peters, Benjamin Dierksen, Henry Buller, Cornelius Voth and his father. (*101)

The same historian, W. H. Stoddard, also reports a second group from the Crimea. (*102) in the following words: "In the fall or 1875 two large wagon loads of sturdy men, women and children, drove into FINLAY (not far from Parker), having come by way of Yankton, reported to have come from the Crimea area in Russia...(with) the following names: Tobias Kunkel, John Beyer, Henri Koop, Mr. Duerksen and others." These families homesteaded around Parker. (There appears to be a repetition of the Kunkel names in these two groups.)

NOTE here that the Tobias Unruh listed here was from the Crimea and this was not Elder Tobias A. Unruh from Karlswalde. Dr. B. H. Unruh stated that Elder Tobias A. Unruh was his great-uncle. He was in error. This Tobias Unruh from the Crimea was his great-uncle. See copy of a letter in the back of this book, written by B. H. Unruh's brother Abr. H. Unruh, dated Nov. 29. 1951, which gives additional information. There may have been other isolated families from the Crimea that were later to be found in

the K. M. B. church record. This church is located north-west of Freeman.

Family names from the Michaliner group are given In the Schmidt family record written by J. A. Schmidt in 1948 which include the following: Balzer, Becher, Deckert, Dirks, Eckert, Ewert, Foth, Franz, Harms, Klassen, Kliewer, Nickel, Penner, Schmidt, Schroeder. Voth, and Wedel. (*103) The Krimmer end Molotschna groups are not a part of the Prussian-Polish Mennonites, but of their families are found in the first church record. started by Elder Peter P. Becker in 1816. So we know they had a part in the UNITED MEETINGS there. (See Register in back.)

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LOCATIONS OF VILLAGES AND OTHER POINTS

Having been concerned in regard to different groups. living in different areas. And not being very familiar with the geography or the many past years, it is very clear that one can not form a correct mental picture regarding areas that need to be mentioned. Queer it seems that publications and encyclopedias, seem to have found it hard to supply useful maps.

The foregoing situation holds true in a leaser measure even in Canada and South America, where they have named villages and towns, using names that they have brought from Prussia and Russia. This will complicate matters for students. In the next paragraph some geographical positions are listed, but the writer wishes to make it known that such listings are to only serve as guides. As given here, they may lead the searcher in the general direction where official verifications might be obtained.

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LIST OF SOME GEOGRAPHICAL POSITIONS

NAME	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE
Antonofka	50,15	26,15
Berdychev	49,54	28,35
Brezene	52,06	23,42
Deut. Kazun	52,24	20,42
Deut.Wymysle	52,24	19,50
Danzig	54,21	18,56
Dub.	50,25	25,48
Graudenz	53,29	18,45
Eduardsdorf	50,21	25,25
Hordyazoze	50,01	26,44
Jadwannin	50,15	26,29

Karlswalde	50,20	28,32
Kiev	50,29	30,28
Kutosofka	50,26	28,09
Lemberg	49,49	24,00
Leczna	51,18	22,53
Luck	50,44	25,20
Lublin	51,15	22,34
Lindenta	50,25	28,27
Masuria (Lake)	53,30	20,23
Miche1sdorf	51,24	23,12
Machnofka	49,44	28,40
Modlin	52,27	20,36
Marienwerder	63,44	18,56
Neumanofka	50,37	28,12
Ostrog	50,19	28,31
Plocki	52,19	19,45
P1onsky	52,38	20,23
Schwetz	53,25	18,27
Waldheim	52,25	28,27
Warsaw	52,15	21,00
Wola Vodzinska	52,44	20,30
Zhitomir	50,15	28,39

Most of this Information was obtained from J. A. Duerksen Washington, D.C.

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In common words it might be more clear to state the distance in term of miles between a certain given place and that of another location. A few are listed here.

Kulm is about 24 miles n w of Thorn.

Karlswald is about 5 miles s e of Ostrog.

Heinrichsdorf is about 75 miles s and e of Ostrog.

Kiev s e of Zhitomir & 400 miles s e of Warsaw.

Mazurian Lakes about 50 miles west of Johannesburg.

Zabara about 65 miles e and n of Ostrog.

Deutech-Wymysle about 4 miles s of Modlin. 10 e of Plock.

Lindental about 30 miles n w of Zhitomir.
Plonsky about 49 miles e and 15 n of Warsaw.
Wola Wodzinska about 9 miles n e of Plock.
Graudenz about 125 miles n e of Warsaw.
Waldheim Volhynia is near Zabara.
Waldheim at Molotschna about 450 miles s e of Ostrog.
Brankenhoffswalde about 125 miles west of Graudenz.
Konopot near Kulm, about 15 miles w of Graudenz.
Vishenka -province in Tschernigov near 100 mi. n e of Kiev.

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THE UKRAINE BECKONS

After our forefathers had lived in Prussia for many years, a new problem faced them, namely a great shortage of land. Authorities refused to allow them to expand in land possessions. Their population had increased. To keep their youth in the home community, it was necessary to have more land. Originally they were promised the privilege to expand, but times had changed. They were now forbidden to purchase additional land.

They felt that their only choice was to look for other areas, where they would have more of a future. Before any definite steps were taken, the Prussian government issued declarations limiting their original privileges. They had lived there now for nearly 250 years. Prussia apparently faced the possibility where they would carry on a war. They would need more man-power and it seemed that everything would be "PRUSSIANIZED."

Within about 15 years, many limitations had been forced on them. Meanwhile Russia had been looking for new immigrants as there were vast open lands in the southern part of their domain that needed to be developed. They knew about the Mennonites in Prussia. Our forebears were the kind of farmers they wanted. So in 1763 Kathryn II invited the Mennonites to come into the UKRAINE. This now opened the way for our forebears to undertake to leave Prussia.

Here the story of Herman Epp, entitled. "FROM THE VISTULA TO THE DNIPER" fits in nicely, to demonstrate what the results were regarding Russia's Invitation. (*104) It is very probable that that some of our forefathers had not waited until THE MOVEMENT OF THIS STORY was in full swing. They appear to have left earlier for "MITTEL POLEN", which could refer to the Warsaw area. This might refer to Czerneberg and to "WOLLA",

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which was looted near Plonsky. These people probably felt that they could not afford to wait too long before leaving Prussia. After leaving here about 1791, they landed at ZABARA, in the province of Volhynia, Russia. Rev. H. P. Unruh in his address of November 30th 1933 at the Bethesda Church at Marion. S.D. indicated that, after having lived at Zabara for ten years, the left for near Ostrog about 1800 or 1801 and helped to organize the village of Karlswalde.

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A PRUSSIAN OFFICIAL DECLARATION

The Prussian authorities now soon took a rigid attitude towards the position that the Mennonites held. When the authorities found that our forebears did not believe in settling , differences by a shooting war, and that they would not participate in such a conflict, our people were soon made to understand that they were no longer wanted there.

THE PRUSSIAN EDICT of November 10th 1749, made it official as to the exact attitude that the authorities maintained. However it was still some years before specific pressure was applied. Horst Quiring gives a vivid presentation of the degrees or pressure used, and a copy or it is presented in the German language. (*105)

Acknowledged is the fact, that it is generally known that the migration of our forebears also was a direct PROTEST BY OUR forebears against the Prussianization or everything under Fredrick II. It was fortunate that our people left before the direct expulsion of Mennonites followed.

The Fast family History (*106) reports that the Mennonites from the Elbing area started to leave there in 1788. Some of our forebears came from there also, (*107) and this was the same time that our people from the Neumark area left for the south and some came to Volhynia. (*108)

After authorities had made a close check of all the details they soon realized that Prussia was facing a great economic loss in forcing the Mennonites to leave. It maybe realized that after our people had spent nearly 250 years in Prussia, and one source states: "...After more than 250 years in Prussia..." (*109), our people had accomplished a great deal in the way of improving agriculture. So now Prussia did not like to see them leave.

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RUSSIA OFFICIALLY INVITES THE MENNONITES

At this time Russia was on the search for new settlers in the southern part of the Ukraine. Here was a vast open area that Russia had annexed after the war with Turkey. PETER THE GREAT had visited Holland in 1679 on business, and had at that time came in contact with the Mennonites there. Later two Mennonites, namely, the Bidloo Brothers, were his personal physicians. It appears that after having learned about the dependability of our people, Peter The Great was favorably impressed and he

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probably now helped to lay the ground work a for the invitation for Mennonites to come there which followed years later. Then on July 25th, 1763, Kathryn The Great, issued the EDICT THAT MADE THE INVITATION OFFICIAL (*110)

When Kathryn II died in 1795, many of our Mennonites were gravely concerned and feared that they would lose the privileges they had been granted in Russia. However, appeals were made to Czar -"OHM" PAUL and it was through his generosity that they received the benefits of the famous "GNADENBRIEF"- meaning a letter of mercy, which was dated September 6th 1800. Through this renewal of privileges, our forefathers were privileged to remain in Russia under the original terms that they received with the invitation to locate there.

The Gnadensbrief contents were highly important to our people, and (*111) years later, namely, in the 1870ties when under new developments, Russia was again facing the probability of a war and Mennonite principles were again challenged. A copy of this edict is said to have been preserved at the Chortitza Colony. M. B. Fast reported that in 1908 when he visited at Chortitza, this copy was still in preservation there. (*112)

Our Mennonites in Prussia were somewhat relieved to learn about this invitation to come to Russia. They then sent Jacob Heppner and Johann Bartsch (*113) to southern Russia to investigate in 1786. These men reported that the offer appeared favorable. To help matters along now, Russia sent Gen. George Van Trappe to Prussia to do all possible to encourage our people to consider coming to Russia. (*114) Many of the Mennonites did not trust these two delegates that they had sent to Russia. They accused them of having been bribed and persecuted them.

One historian (*115) shows a picture of a fitting monument of Kathryn II where she is holding in her right hand the DECREE OF 1763 whereby the invitation, with special privileges were offered to our forefathers. Said monument was erected in Katharinenstadt, Wolga.

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A UNANIMOUS MOVEMENT

Various historians indicate that there were many groups of Mennonites, at this time, on their way out of Prussia. One such report is given by Bruno Ewert, (*116) which vividly depicts the interesting points about such travel. Other reports demonstrate the same facts. (*117) One story is entitled: "From the Vistula To The Dniper." These stories aid us to form a mental picture of this great movement. One may imagine that our forefathers made the same journey.

The trip from Prussia to Russia was a real long one, -by the way of Riga it was over 1500 miles. Some of them faced real hardships on the way. They then had to stop somewhere.

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FROM EUROPE INTO DAKOTA

PART I. HEINRICHS DORF

PART II. KARLSWALDE - Page 44.

PART III. MICHALIN - Page 50.

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FROM EUROPE INTO DAKOTA - PART I. - HEINRICHSDORF

Heinrichsdorf good deal has already been related but some additional details may be of inter-est. This group at Avon found that laying the ground work of church activity and otherwise, are no small undertakings. And even after getting a start then soon other religious workers came in to see if they also might hold meetings and in due time get members over to their way of believing. (*166)

This group landed in Yankton on September 2nd 1874. The group numbered 100 souls counting old and young. Before long they were joined by others. Most of these spent the winter in Yankton. Some five families ventured out in fall and spent the winter on their homesteads and in spring the others followed. (*167) It was rough. At night coyotes howled near by.

Before they had their own church they maintained services in homes. They soon began to plan for a church but they found it difficult as they were poor. Their leader was Rev. Benjamin P. Schmidt assisted by Rev. Cornelius Ewert and Rev. Tobias H. Ratzlaff The latter soon resigned. They had no Elder and when the services of an Elder was needed they called one from the Silver Lake area. The first one they called was Elder Peter P. Becker. Later Benjamin P. Schmidt was elected to be their Elder and for some 15 years they had their own Elder. (*168) Schmidt resigned as Elder in 1891 on account of advanced age.

Now a period followed when Elders from elsewhere helped out. The following served J. B. Baer, H. H. Regier from Minnesota, H. A. Bachman and Christian Kaufmann from Freeman was a loyal helper at various times.

Before long there were intermarriages with Karlswalder and others. Some couples remained and other couples moved to the Silver Lake area. Before long a number of families joined them that had arrived from the old country.

In the church there was some internal strife. It appeared that it was a battle of leadership. The majority group did not intend to surrender and it climaxed in a "split" (*169) The sad part was that a big group, numbering ninety left and built a church of their own. Ninety in number that meant old and young. (*170)

This was a blow to the bigger group but they decided to work harder and within five years the Friedensberg congregation had to build a bigger church. The group that left called their church the SHARON (E.M.B.) Church. Not long before this the original group had elected David Ewert and Heinrich P. Unruh as ministers. Ewert soon died and Rev. Unruh then served the Sharon Church until 1904. Then in May 1904 a tornado took this church. Soon after that the entire Sharon Church group again joined the original Friedensberg congregation.

The first church at Avon (earlier Loretta) was built in 1877. This was built of long cotton wood logs that they had to get from along the Missouri River ten to 12 miles away. The logs were dovetailed at the corners. They logs were shaped with a broadaxe so they were straight enough to form the walls. On the outside the walls were covered with boards and the building had a fair appearance. The roof was covered with shingles.

This picture is from a snap shot of a painting that was done by the late B. A. Bose of Sioux Falls in 1963. Mr. Bose as a boy attended this church. This building was dismantled in 1898 and some of the lumber was used in building a new church. That same building serves the same Friedensberg congregation to this day, however it has been remodeled and a full basement with kitchen and dinning hall are in operation presently. The first church building shown by this picture was dedicated by S. F. Sprunger in 1878. Rev. Sprunger was an official of the General Conference at that time.

One of the early history on Mennonites in America, printed in 1890, (*171) reported, that Rev. Benjamin P. Schmidt, Cornelious Ewert, Tobias Ratzlaff and David Ewert were the ministers in this church. It can also be reported here that Rev. Heinrich P. Unruh (*172) also served here at the same time. When homestead land was no longer to be had in this area the youth then growing up could no longer be kept here. Soon many families left for other states like Minnesota, Oklahoma, Colorado, Montana and Canada. Soon the community began to decrease. Today the church membership is less than 100.

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Early years here were also difficult because they had crop failure on account of drouth and grasshoppers and other discouragement's. Had the Eastern Mennonites, who came to the U.S. years earlier, not extended loans to our people it would probably been tragic in some cases. Later weather conditions were more favorable and prices of products were better so times were encouraging them to continue farming here.

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WHAT THIS GROUP EXPERIENCED AT THE MOLOTSCHNA

Reported has already been that some 40 to 60 families of this group while they lived in Volhynia, migrated to the Molotschna but only remained there about 13 years. This was sad experience for them. They found considerable disagreements in the church there and also in the village management. (*173)

It appeared that the more well-to-do element of the village or colony desired to keep this new group, because they were poor, as a laboring class. So they would not allow them to own land. Village and church management appeared to dictate that the children of this new group should be placed in homes to serve as help. Our group was not accustomed to such idea and wanted to keep their own children in their own homes. All concerned could come to no agreement. (*174)

While Elder Peter H. Schmidt was the leader at Zabara-Waldheim, and appeared to have had good training and was a very able speaker, (*175) the residing ministers did not seem to want to tolerate him and with all this resistance he decided to resign. He and his wife joined the group that went back to Volhynia in 1848 and his wife was the first one to be buried on the new cemetery plot in Heinrichsdorf.

This group that planned to return to Volhynia had elected Benj. P. Schmidt, (a son of Peter H.), as minister. They now applied for permission by authorities to migrate back to Volhynia. This was granted and so they returned in 1848 to an area that they had passed thru on the way to the Molotschna. This was

a wooded area with the possibility of clearing enough ground for cultivation and pasture. The soil here was quite promising and the area was near good markets for their products.

Here the village of HEINRICHSDORF was established. Since they had no Elder they joined the church activities of the Ostrog area where Benjamin Dirks was Elder. Later Tobias A. Unruh was Elder there and he also served this group. (*176) These church servants were still active when this group left for America.

Judging by the experience that this group had at the MOLOTSCHNA, one would probably not just want to claim that "politics" had entered into the management of affairs there, but it appeared that those belonging to the more well-to-do class possessed the ruling element. One report (*177) states that the truth of the matter was that often "when men served as leaders who could hardly write their own name and who could scarcely read," this was an indication that the management was in default. Another historian relates regarding Johann Cornies, a leader at the

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Molotschna who had been appointed as Agriculturist but found it difficult to refrain from meddling in all other affairs. It is reported by one historian (*178) that Cornies "...ran a dividing line through the population on the basis of land ownership, often cutting through the ties of domestic kindship." So we can see that there were areas that needed correction. No wonder that this group could not find it possible to fit in.

While the Heinrichsdorf group is referred to as a small group, the old church record of that congregation (*179) appears to reveal, that it was a fair-sized group because it shows that there were quite a variety of family names recorded. As indicated when this group settled near Zhitomir in Russia in 1848 Rev. Benjamin P. Schmidt was their leader. He was in charge of the group when they landed in South Dakota.

Dr. B. H. Unruh reported (*180) that his great-grandfather, Benjamin Unruh was Elder in Franztal, Prussia, and that they left there in 1816 for Volhynia and that he was Elder there. We feel that it is rather strange that no particulars regard-this has ever been revealed.

While some of this group lived at Konpot in Prussia earlier, it is reported that an Elder Richert served there. Others that served were, Franz Ewert, Benjamin Voth, Jacob Kettler, and Heinrich Kliewer. In 1849 when they were settled at Zhitomir in Volhynia, they elected Benjamin Unruh and John Ratzlaff as deacons but both soon left Heinrichsdorf. Then in 1859 Tobias H. Ratzlaff and David Unruh were elected (*181) as ministers.

One of the situations that kept our people on guard here was the fact that beggars were plentiful and among their number were those who "snatched" any personal property that they could lay their hands on. This was mainly prevalent because they were located near bigger cities. The distance to the village of Michalin was about 20 miles. (*182)

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AN INCIDENT occurring in Heinrichsdorf is reported in the following words: (*183) "In the year 1873 on the 17th day of November, the following incident took place in Volhynia, in the Mennonite village of Heinrichsdorf: A family was overpowered by robbers expecting to obtain money. Two young ladies (Wedel sisters) were caused to be unconscious and the father who resisted the robbers was brutally murdered. It appears that by about the time this brutal act had been done the police arrived and the robbers escaped, without having obtained money."

The foregoing story was taken from the Andreas Schrag Diary. Also reported is the Rev. Schrag on this same trip saw the big "Allgemeine" TABOR church (probably Greek Catholic) in 1875 in the city of Zhitomir. We notice here that Swiss Mennonites associated with the Low German Mennonites there.

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PART II. (FROM EUROPE INTO DAKOTA, continued.)

KARLSWALDE

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FROM EUROPE INTO DAKOTA - PART II. - KARLSWALDE

PART II. KARLSWALDE

The second group that we consider here under this subdivision is Karlsruwalde. It is well known that, of all the villages around Ostrog, this was the one most spoken of. This no doubt was because it was the home of Elder Tobias A. Unruh. He was the PRE-SIDING ELDER of a church circuit known there as "KIRCHENSPIEL". Under the agreement all the congregations in neighboring village were served by Elder Tobias A. Unruh.

Nearly every village had a House of Prayer of its own. As a rule they had one or more ministers that were not Elders. So Elder Unruh was the Superintendent over all of these Mennonite churches. These churches called Elder Unruh to administer baptisms and serve Communion. Also to perform marriages and also to assist in the event there were problems on which they were not fully agreed upon. It is clear that the Elder of such groups would have to do a good deal of traveling.

Generally speaking, the dominating element of those that settled around Ostrog, were Mennonites that came from the Neumark and other areas in Northern Prussia reaching northward into the Delta of the Vistula River. Indicated has already been that some-of these on their way south lived in MITTEL-POLEN for a time.

The time of settling around Karlsruwalde appears to have been spread from (*184) 1773 or earlier. However, the main movement into this area, appears to have been just before the turn of the century or very soon after. It is evident that there were several scattered groups locating very near by, who later joined in organizing the village. One written report, (*185) in the case of Henry H. Buller, states that his mother was born in 1788 in Prussia and that, when they arrived here she was two years old. This would indicate that they arrived in the year 1790.

Still others differ on the date somewhat. One historian (*186) holds to the date of 1800. If these dates are based on governmental records, it is very possible that, in many cases even these were not too accurate.

In this instance the church records would help out extensively. But church records are absent in this case. It appears that, at the time when these Mennonites came to America in 1874, they were denied a copy of the church records to be taken along. Rev. Johann Schartner was apparently opposed to going to America and kept these church records. By some it is believed that he took these records to the Molotschna later. Various reports have been circulated but so far none have appeared in print as far as is known at present. Family records may reveal more but in most cases they are not easy to be found.

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AN INCIDENT OCCURRING IN KARLSWALD (*187)

On January 17th 1874 Mr. Schrag rode by train from Dubno to Ostrog. Arriving at Usremin later in the afternoon. Here he hired a "taxi" (Fuhr) to take him to Ostrog. Here he remained over night and the next morning he walked to Karlswald, a distance of 5 or 6 miles. Already on the way he heard about news that had happened at the home of a certain Mennonite by name of Johann Unruh, an honorable man or age 73.

Robbers, five or more in number, bound this man and did beat him and trampled his body, injuring him severely. They also did beat the man's wife age 70, so that later she was black and blue where beaten. There was another widow in this home by name of Eva Kehn whom they locked in a closet. Then the robbers broke open closets and chests looking for money, but they found very little. However, they continued to swear at the owners of the home and threatened them with several big knives. The widow's five year old son had hid under the bed but they pulled him out while he was screaming for fear and then muzzled him.

The robbers did not take anything but the money they found, but they scattered the contents from the drawers and chests on the floor all over. Mrs. Unruh was able to free herself and she then unbound the others. Mr. Schrag states that he was a witness of this scene in this home soon after the robbers had left.

The foregoing story again verifies the fact that, our people and the Swiss Mennonites associated with each other. The story also repeats evidence that stealing, pilfering and robbing was common in that part or Russia. In some other areas armed forces made a practice of these ungodly acts during the days of our forefathers. In a more recent times when communism took over here, reports have it that, their treatment to the Mennonites was about the worst that one can imagine.

The houses in the village or Karlswald were at first mostly built on the west side of the street, as is shown in the sketch shown here, but later more residences were built as the village progressed. Shown here is only a part of the village. East of the street was the pasture land for the village. This was in common use by all who owned live stock. However, sometimes they had a separate pasture for the horses. To the west of the village were the "strips" of cleared land which was the area where they raised crops. The land of each owner was staked out so each one knew where his land was. Often they maintained a path between the strips of land.

The following items and "sketch" of the village were supplied to us by Rev. Verney Unruh, while he was

still in Japan. He had obtained the information from his great-uncle. Rev. Jacob P. Unruh who lived near Halmstead, Kansas. (*188) He had interviewed him on April 8th 1945.

4?

The village of Karlswalde was located about five or six miles south and east of Ostrog. Near by are two rivers. The smaller of the two streans came from the southwest and joined the larger river which was Goryn River. Southeast of the village along the Wilja River was a large forest extending southward along this stream. The villagers obtain their wood for fuel from this source. It has been reported that wild berries were quite plentiful in these wooded areas.

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The following list of immigrants (*189) are said to have spent their first winter (1874-5) in Newton, Kansas. The first column of figures after the name indicates the number of grown persons in each family. The second column indicates the number of children in the family and the third column shows the total number of folks in the entire family. The last column indicates the amount of money the household possessed... The information appears just as it was taken off the records in the archives of the Mennonite Church Historical Library, Goshen College at Goshen, Indiana.

1.	Peter Tobias Unruh	2	5	7	400.00
2.	Heinr. Jacob Koehn	4	7	11	800.00
3.	Jacob Bern. Becker	2	2	4	250.00
4.	And. Jacob Becker	1	0	1	250.00
5.	David Chr. Rudiger, Wid	3	5	8	250.00
6.	Abr. Henry Buller	2	1	3	400.00
7.	Benj. David Unruh	5	5	10	500.00
8.	Ludwig Benj. Decker	2	3	5	200.00
9.	Benj. Benj. Decker	2	0	2	300.00
10.	Andrew David Dirks	3	5	8	150.00
11.	Benj. John Boese	2	1	3	150.00
12.	John And. Becker	2	7	9	1000.00
13.	Peter P. Richert	2	3	5	100.00
14.	Peter Benj. Decker	2	3	5	10.00
15.	Abr. David Schultz	4	3	7	100.00
16.	Abr. Benj. Dirks	2	3	5	
17.	Abr. Henry Unruh	2	4	6	
18.	Tobias John Jantz	2	2	4	
19.	Corn. John Schmidt	2	3	5	

20.	Benj. Bern. Voth	1	0	1	
21.	Peter Peter Balzer	2	1	3	
22.	David Balzer	1	0	1	
23.	Benj. Henry Buller	2	0	2	8.00
24.	And. Corn. Jantz	4	1	5	
25.	Henry Henry Buller	2	5	7	
26.	Fried. Heinr. Buller	1	6	1	
27.	And. David Unruh	2	0	2	800.00

It is known that there were others not mentioned in the above list who also spent the winter in the Newton Kansas area but, perhaps they did not stay in the close proximity of the above quarters. It may be that the above group were to some extent, supplied with some aid from Eastern Mennonites thru relief workers. Others arrived as late as January 9th, 1875 on the ship KENILWOHTH. Some of these remained in Pennsylvania for the winter and most of them followed to the central states in spring. Some of them remained in the eastern states for a year or more and then came to Kansas and Dakota.

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Following here is another list of our people that are said to have spent the winter at Pawnee Rock, Kansas. This list was also supplied by. Rev. Verney Unruh.

1.	Andreas B. Unruh	2	2	4	1654.00
2.	Andreas P. Unruh	4	2	6	440.00
3.	Peter H. Unruh	3	2	5	900.00
4.	Peter C. Unruh	3	4	7	220.00
5.	Corn. D. Unruh	3	3	6	250.00
6.	Corn. P. Unruh	2	3	5	220.00
7.	Heinrich Unruh	2	4	6	45.00
8.	Wid. Benjamin Unruh	3	3	6	1100.00
9.	Heinrich Dirks	2	1	3	130.00
10.	Jacob H. Dirks	2	4	6	130.00
11.	Abraham H. Dirks	2	1	3	50.00
12.	Tobias H. Dirks	2	1	3	50.00
13.	Peter H. Dirks	2	5	7	500.00
14.	David J. Wedel	3	4	7	670.00
15.	David P. Wedel	4	5	9	550.00

16.	Jacob D. Wedel	2	0	2	60.00
17.	Andreas Siebert	2	9	11	282.00
18.	Jacob Siebert	3	0	3	650.00
19.	Abraham Siebert	2	4	6	630.00
20.	Cornelius Thomas	2	2	4	250.00
21.	Ludwig Thomas	2	2	4	30.00
22.	Jacob A. Sohmidt	2	1	3	30.00
23.	Henry Jantz	2	0	2	15.00
24.	Henry Boese	2	0	2	147.00

There may have been other isolated families near here that spent the winter here that were not included in this list. Of interest it is to learn that there were some families that had a little cash. This was a great help when it came to the point where they wanted to get established on a homestead. If they had to purchase the land when there was quite a need for money to make a down payment. Homesteading was one reason why Dakota appealed to many as they were informed that there was still opportunity to file on homesteads here.

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THERE HAD BEEN ACTIVITY AROUND OSTROG

Since, there were a goodly number of villages in the Ostrog area in Volhynia there also were active workers there. However, we have never found a consolidated list of such workers. Most of these workers joined in the emigration movement in 1874 and they settled here in America in different states. It has been pointed out that most of these Mennonites originally came from an area not far from PRZECHOWKA in Prussia.

While yet in Prussia the following ministers (*190) have been named: Andreas Voet (Voth)?, Ernest Voet. Peter Jantz. Jacob Schmidt, Peter Isaak and later Wilhelm Lange. There may have been others. Approaching then the time when our people came to Volhynia, it is possible that they also obtained the services of ministers not their own if their own Elder had not yet been elected. There is evidence of this and it can be

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based on the following source (*191) which states: "...in Ruszland...Anno 1803 den 3ten März von mir getauft....Jünglingen...einer Anzahl von 24..." Translating the foregoing statement, it conveys the information that an Elder baptized 24 young people there, this by Elder Benjamin Wedel.

One source also indicates that Benjamin Ewert was elected at Ostrog. It may all be that such reporters considered the Ostrog area to extend eastward as far as Michalin, but this can not be verified here. Elder Benjamin J. Dirks was elected in 1817 and served until Elder Tobias A. Unruh was ordained in 1853.

Elder Dirks ordained Elder Unruh. Unruh was serving at the time of the emigration to America in 1874. He died in the Silver Lake area July 23rd 1875. He had been in Dakota only something like three months, as during the winter he had preached in the eastern states.

Prior to coming to America, Elder Unruh had lived a very active life with what they called in Volhynia, a KIRCHENSPIEL for over 21 years. Kirchenspiel refers to a church circuit where Unruh was Elder and superintendent and visited these congregations whenever needed. He was always called when Communion was to be observed Also for baptisms and other occasions. This situation implies that he had to do a good deal of travelling.

The residing minister at Karlswald at the time when our people left there was Rev. John Schartner. He soon left for the Molotschna where it appears from the following statement that he was Elder there. (*192) "...Molotschna Colony...served as Elder in the Alexanderwohl Mennonite congregation..." But no additional information appeared.

In addition to what has been stated, the following list of workers can be given: (*193)

Peter Unruh Sr	1820	Karlswald
Peter Unruh Jr	1832	Jadwannin
Heinrich Dirks	1832	Jadwannin
Peter Jantz	1820	
Peter Schmidt	1831	
Johann Schartner	1851	Karlswalde

Lehrer (ministers and teachers but not Elder)

Samuel Koehn	1852	Antonofka
Peter Unruh	1852	Jadwannin
Peter Unruh	1852	Karlswalde
Heinrich Koehn	1852	Dosidorf

(Dosidorf is name as Zabara)

Andreas Unruh, Deacon	1815	
Andrew Unruh, Deacon	1827	Karlswalde

At the time these groups arrived in Dakota, Peter T. Unruh, Peter P. Unruh and Elder Tobias A. Unruh were active, but the latter soon passed away. Others may have landed in Kansas.

Since the early death of Elder Tobias A. Unruh in July 1875, one can imagine that a period of uncertainly prevailed for a short time, because they were without their beloved Elder. Before long Peter P. Becker was elected Elder. (*194) The other two ministers mentioned above were faithful workers and their services were greatly appreciated during the early years. This so because the group attempting to work together had grown considerably. Included among them were members of the Krimmer group and also a considerable group of the Molotschna segment.

PART III: (FROM EUROPE INTO DAKOTA, continued.)

Michaliner (*195)

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FROM EUROPE INTO DAKOTA - PART III - Michaliner

In as much as the Michaliner segment in Dakota merged with the Molotschna group (later Bethesda Church), and since they never had an organized group of their own in Dakota, there will not follow a detailed story of them here. However, some general "high lights" will be attempted here.

These Mennonites were also granted certain privileges in the province of KIEV. One historian (*196) appears to indicate, that privileges and rights were granted here to fugitives as early as 1723 and soon after. These Mennonites here came into the lands of the Nobleman POTOCKY. The area was located between Rachnofka and Singeroдек in the province of Kiev. (*197) This was south and east from Zhitomir, Volhynia.

The settlement was named after Prince Michal, with whom these Mennonites had come in contact probably in the Warsaw Markets. Prince Michal had been favorably impressed by these people. The family names here included the following: Harms, Kliewer, Nickel, Voth, Ewert, Siebrand, Schroeder, Schmidt, Funk, Unruh and probably others.

Potocky had considerable land holdings here. In a land contract here be offered favorable terms. These Mennonites settled here on individual farms at first, but later a village was organized. Here as in most other areas in Russia, settlers experienced difficulties such as pilfering and steeling. While Potocky was liberal at first, it soon developed that he did NOT live up the terms of the contract.

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A CASE TAKEN TO COURT

Potocky did not exempt them from certain taxes as agreed. He also compelled them to have their grains proceased in HIS mills where the charges were higher than elsewhere. Nor did he attempt to stop the pilfering. The Michaliner people now felt that they had to protect themselves. So they took the complaint into court. They sent Graf Wedel, one of their own members, to St. Petersburg to make an attempt to settle their differences in court. This involved several years and Graf Wedel remained right there until the case was won by him.

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Not having heard from Wedel over this period of time, the settlers became discouraged and left for the Ostrog area and elsewhere. When Graf Wedel returned he discovered that about 90 per cent of the Mennonites had left. Wedel also soon left. However, those that lived there at this time and later did not have to pay the taxes, nor were they limited to have their grain processed in Potocky's mills. Later there was also less pilfering. Before long more families from Prussia arrived and the settlement was again received and they did not have any more trouble with Potocky.

At the time of the great immigrations of 1874, to America, a few families also located in Dakota. (*198) Most of them located in Kansas near Whitewater. Among the first families that came to Kansas were J. F. Harms, several Nickels, Steven Voth, Jacob Dirks, Frank Ewert and others, in all 50 persons. Some had come on a ship with the Karlsruwalder, but otherwise the group came in three or four shifts. (*199)

It appears that quite a group of families came on the steamer NEDERLAND, landing Nov. 1. 1874. Some of these remained in Philadelphia and among these were Jacob Schmidt, Mr. Kliewer, John Schmidt, Cornelius Schmidt and perhaps others. (*200) some of these Schmidt families later came to Avon, S. Dakota.

The third group was probably the largest group and a few came several years later. The times here in early years were difficult and their beginnings were somewhat limited. Many spent the first winter at Peabody and at Newton and others near by. Many located on Rail Road land in Harvey County, Kansas.

During the earliest years in Kansas they maintained Sunday meetings in homes. The first church they built was constructed of Kansas stone and it took some time to complete it. Recently they built a modern church. Before they had a church they also used a school house.

Within a few years the church membership reached 150 and soon passed the 170 mark -and was still growing. At first they were called Michaliner and later they were incorporated under the name GNADENBERG Jacob R. Toews from Newton served them at times and later G. N. Harms served. Earliest leaders were David Siebrand, Gerhard Harms, Peter Foth, Benj. Wedel, Peter Kliewer and Johann Schroeder. The latter was active at the time they had emigrated. Others that served were Andreas Harms, Henry Nichols, Jacob Toews, Peter H. Schmidt, Jacob J. Voth and perhaps others more recently. Rev. Wm. Ewert from Prussia on his way to the Molotschna did visit at Michalin in Kiev. (*201)

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52.

WHY JUDGE ON WHAT YOU DO NOT KNOW?

Having presented various aspects regarding the people from Karlsruwalde, let us also converge here on one aspect that needs correction. This matter also deals with Elder Tobias A. Unruh. This, because it has been felt by many that Historian, Dr C. H. Smith did not present the true facts and that he made derogative statements regarding these people and Elder Tobias A. Unruh, in his book "THE COMING OF THE RUSSIAN MENNONITES" which was published in 1927.

The term Karlswalder here refers mainly to three of four groups that come on different ships in 1874 and early in 1875. These Karlswalder located mainly in Kansas but a goodly number of families also located in the Silver Lake area in Turner County in South Dakota. The area here settled by them is mainly north of Freeman and west of Marion.

This item of complaint is not intended to be defiant in its nature, but it should indicate that it is possible to spread a story that does not convey the real truth and that it does not present facts in the true light. Such a situation could give readers a cloudy impression regarding a leader who rates a good reputation.

No wonder that Verney Unruh states in the Family Record of Elder Tobias A. Unruh, (published 1950), that Elder Tobias A. Unruh had, up until that time, not been regarded as an able leader. This may very likely have been expressed as a result of the derogative statements above referred to. Soon after Smith's book was put out for distribution, there were many in this area of South Dakota, that expressed amazement and disappointment.

The writer then exchanged a series of letters with the author, the contents of which will be referred to here. In as much as this matter is of long standing, and since it is a little delicate matter to discuss, it may seem to some happenings, that the matter could as well be dismissed and be forgotten. But the writer feels that if the truth is revealed, it can hardly hurt anyone. So with this in mind we proceed. Added could be, that it probably was fortunate that Elder Unruh did not live to suffer the embarrassment and grief that it could have caused to him.

In letters received from the author were admissions that he had been in error, and that in fact, it was not Elder Unruh but that it was another individual, that he had mistaken for Elder Unruh, and that he was under the wrong impression. Also admitted was, that he was under the wrong impression. Also admitted was, that he had not been aware of the fact that Elder Unruh had never been in Kansas. He further stated that he intended to correct his matter in his next publication on that subject which he had already started. However, He did not live to finish that publication. It was a book of 856 pages entitled: "Smith's Story Of The Mennonites" The book was finished by others.

55.

In order to make clear on what statements this writer feels, that he would have offered improvements, the following list is offered in expressing ideas regarding the matter in question: (a) "...Mennonites in America did not know that this group was on the way...(to America." The truth is that the first two groups arriving in America from Russia that fall, had given evidence of the fact, that a third group would be coming. Eastern newspapers also reported that the steamer ABBOTSFORD was on the way. Also that this ship had a collision with another ship and had been damaged and would therefore be delayed on its trip.

(b) Page 454 is stated that this group..."left en masse in midwinter." The statement was not based on true facts, because the steamer CITY OF LONDON left there October 24th and the steamer CITY OF MONTREAL left there on November 3rd, 1874. The third ship was the one in question. It was the Abbotsford and left there on November 24th. The historian did not mention that the ship was disabled

and never arrived in the United States on that trip. The passengers could not help that they were delayed. "EN MASSE" was entirely out of question in this case.

Explained could be here, that these passengers were taken to England where the steamer was to be repaired. However, they were given passage on another ship, the KENILWORTH brought the greater number. This ship landed January 9th 1875. Those that were quarantined in England came on the S.S. ILLINOIS, and landed on the 29th of January, 1875. Elder Tobias Unruh arrived on this ship. H remained there with the quarantined group as he was in charge of the entire group.

On page 102 is stated: "...they were indigent..." To prove this might have been very embarrassing and it would have been better to avoid saying it. Some of this group had been in a second exposure when their ship also was damaged and towed back to England. They faced extreme fear in a raging storm for days. If a little sympathy had been expressed instead of criticism, it would have done much more to encourage these people.

(d) Page 148, -"...ost poverty stricken..." Was this a disgrace? Hardly. They were helpless.

(e) "...were immediately rushed to Kansas, -Florence, Newton and Great Bend...and created an emergency..." The impression that is apparently conveyed to the reader was, that the entire KARLSWALDER groups were involved and were CARED FOR HERE, which was not the case. Many took care of themselves. A number stayed in Pennsylvania over winter. Others took care of their own families somewhere alson Sand Creek near Newton, Kansas. It is no doubt but what the situation caused an emergency, but most of this was not a reflection on the character of these people.

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