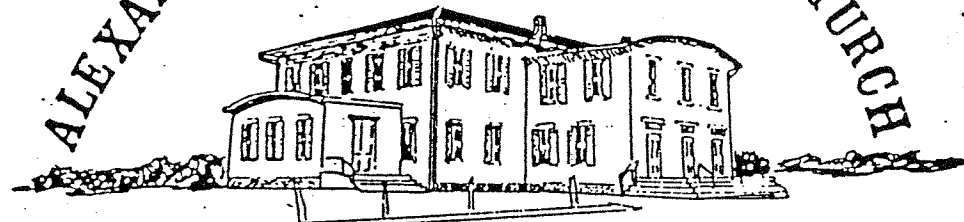


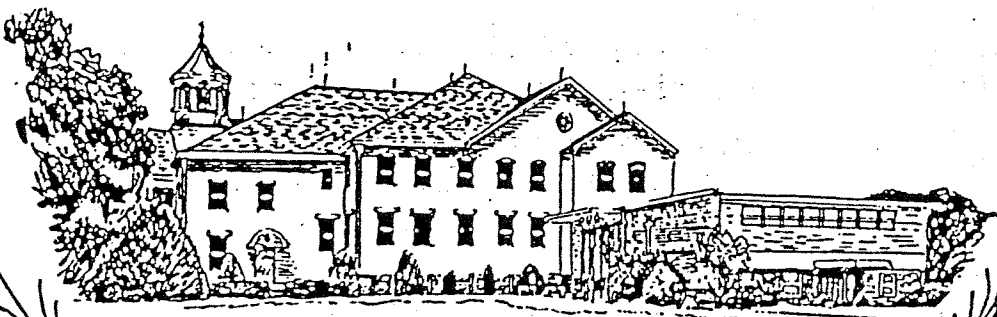
to bear arms, early Mennonites migrated from one European country to another. Russia at one time offered haven to a part of this group because of their skilled farming ability. As a certain group was traveling to the Molotschna region, the Russian Czar Alexander met and wished them well (wohl in German). This is the origin of the name Alexander-wohl.

When Russian rule demanded military service, another decision was made to emigrate. This time to the U.S.A. where there was no military service. Those principles did not allow them to serve in the military. In 1847, a settlement was founded in Franklin County, Kansas.

ALEXANDERWOHL MENNONITE CHURCH



1886



1986

GOESSEL, KANSAS

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Worship in the house furnished by the community for living quarters. A church building in the "Dutch Mennonite" style was erected in 1886. The structure was enlarged and rebuilt in 1928. An education wing was added in 1961 and a conference room and elevator in 1984.

In 1986 we remember - the vision and faith of our forefathers. In 1986 we pledge - to seek vision and grow in faith to deal with spiritual issues as well as arms control, human sexuality, and the economic crisis of farming.

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## INTRODUCTION

This booklet is produced as part of the Centennial observance of the construction of the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church of 1886. In this observance of 1986, we have collected recollections of older members of the church which appear as Part I. In Part II, we publish some documents from the church vault which may not be readily available to the average church member.

What this booklet is not is an official history of the church, or of the church building. This has been done in other publications (The Story of Alexanderwohl, by David C. Wedel; / Alexanderwohl Architecture; MENNONITE LIFE, March 1986 by Brian Stucky; other various articles).

The recollections collected in this booklet are, of course, considered a primary source in historical research. However, in a church of this size, there are undoubtedly those who disagree with the storyteller. Rather than declare any given story as inaccurate or invalid, we would prefer to let these recollections stand as they are; as informal recollections and remembrances from each person's point of view. The Centennial Committee therefore does not necessarily guarantee the accuracy of the stories nor present them as documented historical fact, but rather as simple stories of the people of this church for the enlightenment of its members and friends in order to better understand who we are and how we came to be.

The vault of the Alexanderwohl Church contains treasures which overwhelm even the seasoned researcher. Diaries, trustee's records, church minutes, genealogies, Photographs, and other documents which continue to be donated by families cleaning out the attic are great in number, but the Church Historian welcomes more. Because of the unique, very long history of this church, there is much yet to be discovered. Dr. D.C. Wedel, speaking in the Sunday School class on Alexanderwohl history, made the claim that another whole book could be written from what is contained in the letters, diaries, etc. in the vault. Again, this should not be viewed as musty old history, but as part of how we came to be the people we are today.

The Centennial Committee of Brian Stucky, chm., Velda Duerksen, Church Historian, Laura Flaming, secretary, Anita Boese, and David Esau wish to thank all those who have assisted in this observance in any way.

## A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF THE ALEXANDERWOHL MENNONITE CHURCH

The origin of the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church families can be traced back to the various provinces of the Netherlands in the 16th century. During the years 1556 to 1565, hundreds of the Flemish people fled to the northern provinces of the Netherlands because of severe religious persecutions. During the first half of the 17th century, 1600 to 1650, and even before, many of these families migrated to West Prussia, settling in the Danzig area between the Vistula and the Nogat Rivers. Most of these settlements were made up of Mennonites who were actually refugees due to severe religious persecution because of their staunch objection to military service. Their backgrounds varied, coming from both, Dutch and German nationalities besides being from different Anabaptist and Pietist groups.

The Przechowko Church in West Prussia, which is the mother church of Alexanderwohl, was composed of Mennonites who settled near Schwetz on the Vistula River about 1540. In 1820 a large portion of the Przechowko Church migrated to the Molotschna area in South Russia, with Elder Peter Wedel leading the group. During this journey the story is told that they met Czar Alexander I, and that he inquired of them about their former home and their destination, and in parting wished them well (wohl). The village of Alexanderwohl was established near Halbstadt in South Russia in 1821 by 21 families. For 53 years Alexanderwohl prospered in South Russia. In 1874 Elder Jacob Buller led the Alexanderwohl congregation to Kansas. About 800 persons, including children, left Russia in July 1874, coming on two ships, the Cimbria and the Teutonia. This included almost the entire Alexanderwohl church membership plus some others who had joined the group. Migration from Russia to Kansas was due to the new military law of 1871 in Russia which introduced compulsory military training, and because of increasing difficulty in acquiring land to support its rapidly increasing population.

A large portion of the families in this congregation settled in the Goessel, Kansas area. The Santa Fe Railroad built two immigrant houses near the middle of the section on which the church now stands. Before winter of 1874 arrived, 80 families had built houses and moved to their farms. The immigrant houses were then moved together to form a place of worship. In 1886 a new church was completed on the present site, a replica of which may be seen in the Mennonite Historical Complex in Goessel. In 1928 the church was completely remodeled, and in 1961 Sunday School rooms and other improvements were added.

Since the migrations consisted of congregational groups, complete church records were brought along and have been preserved. The earliest records were compiled by Jacob Wedel, elder of the Przechowko Church in West Prussia. Some of the dates in this record go back to 1625.

Some of the important beliefs of the Mennonite Church are:

- The Bible should be our guide for faith and life
- That Jesus Christ is the son of God, and the highest revelation of God that man has known. Therefore we should put our faith and trust in Him and endeavor to pattern our lives after His example
- Since His life is best exemplified by love, simplicity, service, stewardship and witness, these should all be important ingredients of our lives
- The Mennonite Church believes in what is called "The Believer's Church", with only adult Christians as members. Baptism is an adult decision which a person makes at the time of committing one's belief to Christ
- The Church is a congregation of love, which mutually helps each other when there are financial difficulties, sickness, tragedy, and moral and spiritual problems
- The Mennonite Church believes that it's wrong to take another human life and refuses to participate in war
- Honesty is another important virtue, which is exemplified in our belief in the non-swearing of oaths
- The Mennonite Church has a world-wide mission program and also a world-wide peace and relief organization
- There are many different denominations of Mennonites. Those in this community belong to General Conference Mennonite Church whose headquarters are in Newton, Kansas

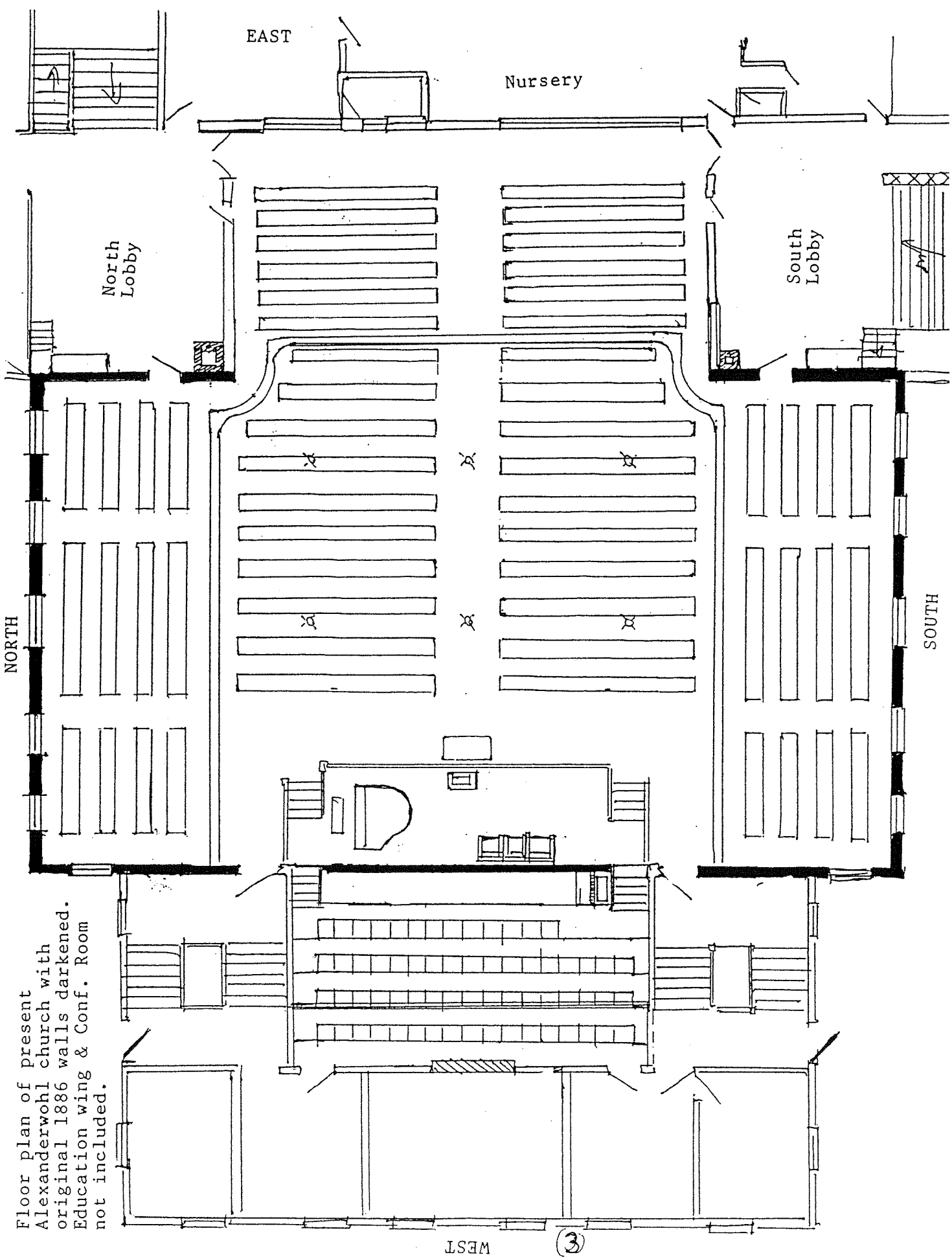
ELDERS OF THE ALEXANDERWOHL CHURCH IN KANSAS

(From the Constitution of the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church,  
Appendix III, 1976)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Life Span</u>	<u>Ordained</u>	<u>Elder</u>
Jacob Buller	1827-1901	1859	1869-1896
Peter Balzer	1847-1907	1884	1896-1907
Heinrich Banman	1843-1933	1884	1910-1915
Peter H. Unruh	1881-1943	1910	1915-1943
C.C. Wedel	1871-1954	1896	Interim 1943-1944
P.A. Wedel	1897-1967	1925	1944-1960
John Thiessen	1893-1967		Interim 1960-61
Aaron J. Epp	1918-	1947	1961-1970
Ronald Krehbiel	1931-	1956	1970-1978
C. Nevin Miller			Interim 1978-79
Orlando Waltner	1914-	1939	Associate 1974-1982
Ronald Krehbiel	1931	1956	1979-1981
David C. Wedel	1908-	1936	Interim 1981-1982
<u>Pastoral Team</u>			
Kenneth Rupp	1941	1967	1982-
Anne N. Rupp	1932-	1977	1982
Orlando Waltner	1914-	1939	1982-

LIST OF MINISTERS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Born</u>	<u>Ordained</u>	<u>Died</u>
Peter Voth	1815	?	1896
Heinrich Richert	1831	1859	1895
Peter Pankratz	1844	1876	1909
Abraham Woelk	1840	1875	1900
Peter Unrau	1824	1859	1915
Heinrich Goertz	1835	1867	1904
Jacob Richert	1844	1876	1916
Peter Buller	1863	1896	1956
C.C. Wedel	1871	1896	1954
P.H. Richert	1871	1896	1949
P.R. Voth	1870	1896	1961
P.P. Buller	1874	1905	1958
J.J. Banman	1874	1910	1948
Franz G. Pankratz	1871	1912	1955
H.T. Unruh	1885	1918	1976
Dr. C.H. Wedel	1860	1890	1911



Floor plan of present Alexanderwohl church with original 1886 walls darkened. Education wing & Conf. Room not included.

WEST

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## AN INTERVIEW WITH ART BANMAN

PLEASE GIVE ME A BRIEF LIFE HISTORY OF YOURSELF.

My grandfather and grandmother Banman came across with the migration in 1874. My grandfather was Heinrich Banman. He was a teacher in Russia and also a preacher. When he came over, he was a minister in the Alexanderwohl Church and later was an elder for several years. My parents were both born here in the states. They were both Alexanderwohl people. Dad was a farmer. He farmed about 120 acres. That was big enough at that time to support a family. They had livestock, chickens, and a few cows. Of course, wheat was the main crop.

I came along in June of 1904 and was baptized in June of 1922 by the Rev. P.H. Unruh. My wife and I were married in August of 1926. She was Frieda Schmidt. She was born exactly six months later than I, in December of 1904. She was baptized at the same time in 1922. Church was always important to us. We went to church whenever mother's health allowed or the roads permitted.

We lived in the middle of the section. The roads were very muddy, gumbo. You know how heavy the soil is around Goessel. We lived about three miles northwest of Goessel and the church.

Transportation was by horse and buggy or wagon at the time. Papa bought his first car in 1917. We could drive only when it was dry. The first car I remember was in about 1910 or 1911. The doctor owned a car. He came out whenever there was sickness. Doctor Kaiser braved any kind of weather.

I attended grade school from 1912-1919 in a one room schoolhouse. We lived a mile and three-quarters from the school. After grade school, I had two years of preparatory school in the years 1920-1922. We drove to school in a buggy or many times on horseback. We rode the old mare. I didn't have a pony, so I just rode a work horse. After I finished the preparatory school, Dad bought a Ford roadster in 1923 which we used from there on.

Art and Frieda Banman served the Alexanderwohl Church as custodians from January 1 of 1936 through the year of 1951. They also farmed the land owned by the church. With his many musical talents, Art enriched the church life at Alexanderwohl.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR REMEMBRANCES OF YOUR LIFE AT ALEXANDERWOHL?

One important event I think was when Rev. P.H. Unruh taught a Bible class. It was an intense study during the winter months of about 1921. This required intensive study and we were graded on our work. I remember going to these Wednesday evening classes riding horseback on cold winter evenings.

WHAT WAS THE FUNCTION OF THE VORSÄNGER?

The Vorsänger were seated on the platform. They announced each number and started the singing, but did not direct the song. They remained seated. When we bought the organ I think the Vorsänger were challenged. They felt their office didn't amount to anything any more. When the church was remodeled in 1928 no provisions were made for the Vorsänger to sit. I think they felt a little slighted. I think in the

records we find that they resigned as a body at one time when this came about.

We had choir practice once a week preparing special music for Christmas and Easter, special occasions. The choir didn't sing for the church services. It was something special for the holidays. The choir was directed by Rev. J.J. Banman, one of the preachers and also a teacher at the preparatory school. As far as I can recall, I was the first one that played the organ for the choir. Before that the choir would have sung a cappella.

From the records I can find, the church bought the first organ, which is the one we have here\*, in 1906. It was purchased with the help of P.R. Schroeder of Mountain Lake, Minnesota. The manufacturer was the Packard Company of Fort Wayne, Indiana.

That church organ eventually went to the Indian mission in Oklahoma. One day my wife and I decided to see if we could buy the organ back from the mission. We did go, found it still there, and asked for it. "Yes," they said, "It is just standing there collecting dust and we don't ever need it." They had another organ that looked very beautiful. They thought that was the better organ, but I knew better. I gave them \$75 for it at the time. That was many years ago. They were very happy, and I was happy too. I could have had it for nothing as far as that is concerned because they were glad to get rid of it. As for restoring it, I have just cleaned it out. There are a few reeds missing. I have tried to get them, but haven't been able to determine where to obtain them. An ordinary house reed organ probably has one set of reeds, but this one has many sets of reeds, all of different tonal character. The stops all speak with very few exceptions. They have a different tone quality or timbre, so one needs to know how to mix it properly so it has a nice sound. The bellows could stand repairing. I have to pump pretty hard but they still work.

One innovation which came in about 1922 was when Rev. J.J. Banman first tried using a small string ensemble to accompany the choir at the annual S<sup>ä</sup>ngerfest, which was held that year at the Hoffnungsau church. The members of the choir and the ensemble were very proud of their combination. It was something different and was very well received. But I don't remember that it was continued.

We had our own private little orchestra which gathered mostly in our home. I played keyboard instruments. We had a flute and cello, a couple of violins, and perhaps a baritone horn. It was rudimentary, but we tried.

Some people played in bands, however their music wouldn't have been allowed in church. There was too much of a reminder of the military associated with the band instruments. That was a very hot issue for quite awhile.

I started the men's chorus in the late thirties. A younger men's chorus was directed by Herb Franz. During the 1940's a tape recorder was purchased by the men's chorus to provide the residents and patients at Bethesda with a recording of the Sunday morning service. A later project of the men's chorus was to run a line from the church to Bethesda to relay  
\*church organ currently owned by Art Banman, Newton, KS



the worship service each Sunday morning.

The closest I can remember we got the piano was about 1926. Rev. J.J. Banman had an important part in getting that instrument.

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT THE CHURCH BUILDING?

For a period of approximately ten years carbide gas was used to light the church. Previous to that they had big coal oil lamps with reflectors, in the front of the church, but you couldn't see much by that light. I remember that the use of carbide gas was discontinued after there was an explosion one evening after church when the custodian went to the small building to the west of the church. He was carrying a lantern while going to check on everything which ignited the gas and the whole thing blew up. The custodian was burned, but I don't think very seriously. Not long after that incident, the church bought two Delco type generating units which they started for the evening meetings. They made noise, but they were far enough away from the church that we could still have our meetings.

I remember the two large stoves that we used in the first church building. How hot it was close to the stoves and how cold the rest of the building was. They were fueled by coal. The janitor or caretaker had to fire those stoves during the service whenever it was necessary.

I think there was a stairway and a small basement in the northeast corner of the church before the big basement was dug. Then in 1920 the church building was raised with many screw jacks to a height where a basement could be dug. The dirt was removed with horses and slips. It was very hard underneath, of course, there hadn't been any rain there for many years. With the excess dirt they made a big pile and used it for fill dirt. The ground was quite low around the church.

On occasions such as this church people liked to show off their horses; the beautiful teams they had and how much unity the two horses had in pulling a slip. There was also a spirit of fellowship. We had a good time in spite of all the hard work.

The facilities in the basement, before 1928, for weddings and events must have been rough. The water for the coffee was carried from the janitor house to the church. They heated the water in the kitchen using a cauldron, we called a Miagrope.

Before they had the basement they made temporary tables upstairs by turning the pews back to back and laying boards on top. Everyone carried their food up to the balcony to eat. Those tables served the purpose but it was hard to get around.

As custodians we lived in the house on the church grounds. The first custodian house was built reusing some of the wood from the immigrant house. The house did not have insulation, in fact, inside the house you saw the bare 2X4's and the inside of the exterior siding. So it was a cold house in winter. In the evening we would fire up the kitchen stove, but by morning the water on top of the stove was frozen. In about 1947 a house was moved from Lehigh to the church grounds to be used as the custodian house.

PLEASE TELL ME ABOUT FUNERAL PROCEEDINGS.

In my recollection funerals were always held in church,

preceded by a short service with the family at the home.

Before there were undertakers what was done, as in the case of my grandfather Quiring, after he died, they dug a grave in the granary part of the barn for the body. Then they covered the body with ice until the funeral, which was probably in two days.

WHO WAS THE FIRST ELDER TO RECEIVE A SALARY?

The ministers were either teachers or farmers. Thus, they were considered to be self-supporting. It was probably in the early twenties when the church began giving them a small salary or stipend. Rev. P.H. Unruh was probably the first elder to receive a salary. I know Rev. C.C. Wedel didn't want to accept anything.

WHAT WAS THE PROCEDURE FOR ELECTING AN ELDER?

I think he must first have been a minister before becoming an elder. The election was an open ballot and was very democratic. The elder usually was selected from among the group. In my early years that is the way it was done. Later a candidate for the position was recommended by a committee.

We had only one elder, <sup>11</sup>Alteter. The elder was the main leader. He did the baptizing and marrying. The ministers were a bit more in the background. Once in awhile a minister would be asked to marry a couple and they would consent to do that.

WHEN DID THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE COME INTO USE?

In the late thirties the question of language became a serious question because of the war with Germany. German speaking Mennonites were under suspicion for preaching in the German language. That was a very hard adjustment to make, especially for the older people. I think it was hard for the minister also. I remember some rather queer sentences, very literal translations from the German. But that could be expected because the ministers didn't have a lot of education. Some of them had had some college, yes, but by and large, not. This language revolution, if you want to call it that, started by having an English service once a month and later twice a month. As time went on through the months and years we ended up having a German service once a month. One can possibly imagine, in our case, listening to a Spanish or French service. You don't get anything out of it.

There was pressure to learn English from the people of the nearby town of Newton. They had signs in the streets like the following which read: "If you can't speak the English language--learn it or else get out." Some of the Newton merchants lost a lot of business. I remember Sanders Feed and Grain. Sometime later Mr. Sanders said, "I learned my lesson, I'll never do that again." He was boycotted by the Mennonites. The time of language transition was not a very good time. It caused a lot of confusion.

WAS THE WEARING OF A HEAD COVERING FOR THE WOMEN A PART OF THE CHURCH DISCIPLINE?

I don't think that was especially stressed during my day. The main time they would wear the caps was to church. They didn't wear them at home. The caps were made very nice and frilly, although being stylish wasn't their purpose. I know the grandmothers in my day wore the Kaupkje, or cap, but that didn't continue on into the next generation as I remember.

#### WHAT ABOUT MEN'S BEARDS?

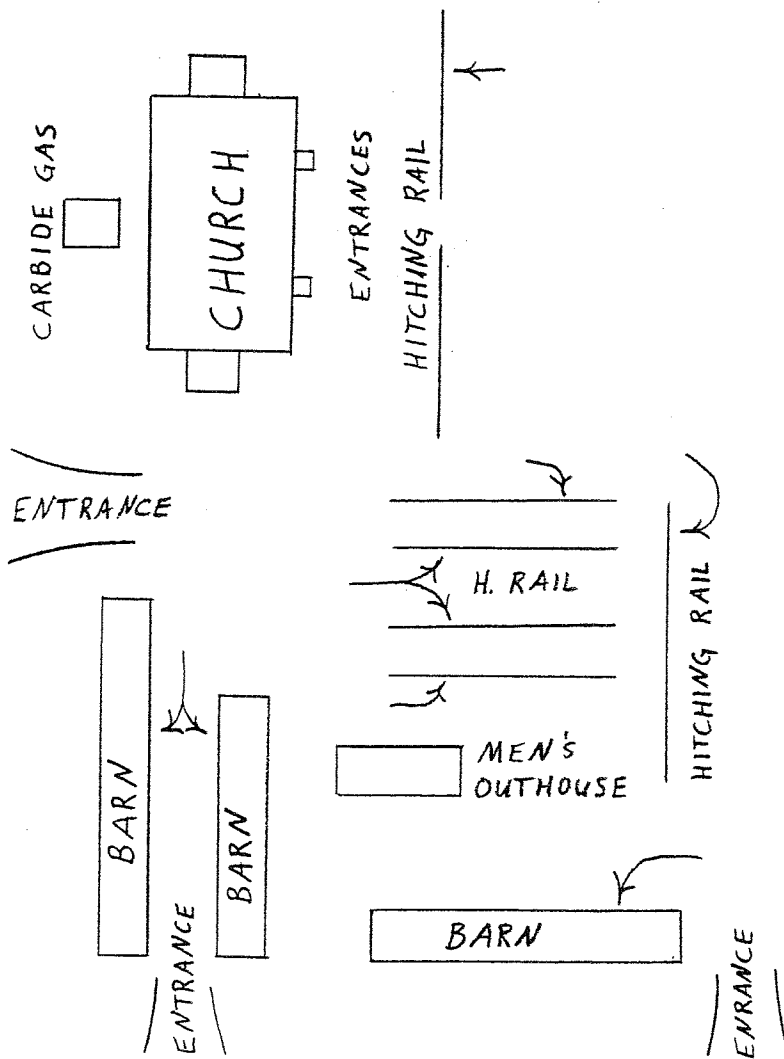
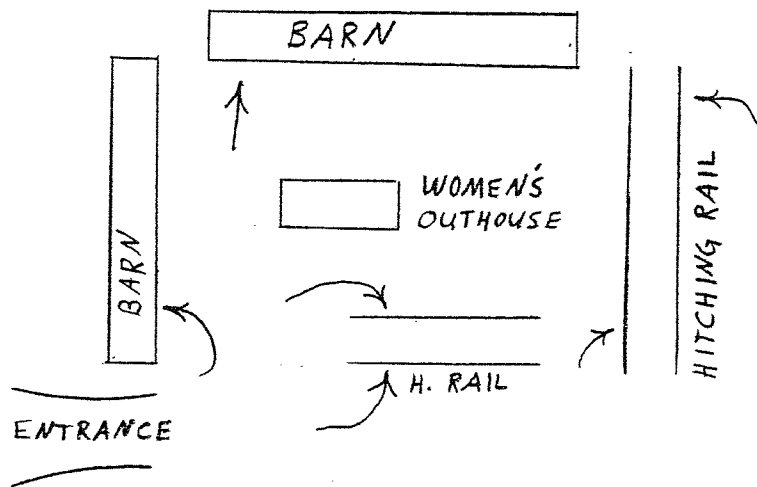
I don't think it was part of church discipline. Some wore a beard for their own reasons.

#### HOW WAS COMMUNION CELEBRATED IN THE EARLIER YEARS?

Communion was always very special. I still think about it quite often when I think of our Communion nowadays. We rush through it. At that time, during the distribution of the bread the minister and deacons went from pew to pew and isle to isle. The minister repeated the Passion story, slowly, until everyone had been served; always emphasizing the broken body of Christ. Distribution of the wine was quite similar except when the wine was distributed he always stressed the blood of Christ. He referred to all the scripture references to the blood of Christ. That to us was always very impressive. There was a sermon before the Communion celebration. The children did not go to church on Communion Sunday. Most of the parents were able to come to Communion because either the children stayed by themselves, or the neighbors went together to babysit. The common cup was used until the forties when they replaced it with individual cups. I think that was a good thing. As far as I can remember we never used wine, it was grape juice.

The deacon's wives were responsible for the bread. They used zwieback dough to make a piece of bread no bigger than your thumb. The attendance on Communion was less because the children stayed at home, but also people for various reasons felt they couldn't attend. Some people thought they had to be perfect in order to attend Communion. I think we use a little different theory today.

At first footwashing was part of every Communion service. Men and women were separated in church. Footwashing was done just where people were seated in their pews. Part of the footwashing ritual included the holy kiss and embrace. If done in the right spirit, I think footwashing is a very good thing. It came to the point where people walked out when it came to that part of the service though, or others stayed at home for that Sunday. There wasn't the spontaneous love that this ritual required. The church decided to discontinue footwashing about the mid-thirties.



A SKETCH OF THE CHURCH GROUNDS c. 1910

AS RECALLED BY ART BANMAN

## ADOLPH BARTEL REMINISCENCES

In the early days, I remember that weddings were usually in a home or tent, not in the church like now.

The Sunday before Communion was always a "preparation" day, and Communion Sunday we held an offering for the poor in our church.

The country school districts were almost an extension of the central church. Let's say in 1910 or so, the church was, in Jewish terms, a "Temple", and the outlying areas, school districts, were "synagogues". That's where you get the names of our church districts: Süd Blumenfeld, North Blumenfeld, Gnadenthal, etc. That's where they would have Sunday School and choir practice, too. Before this church was built, that's where they would worship, too. But that's the place where people really got involved. And the school districts were to them very sacred. Never did we have a Christmas program in the church. Christmas programs were held in the schools - and not a secular program. They did have Christmas trees, but otherwise religious. But on the outskirts (of the Alexanderwohl territory) Santa Clause took a big part of the celebration. The teachers would call those together who wanted to sing, and they'd have "Singstunde" (choir practice) and they'd be part of the program. It would always be on Christmas Eve, the night of the 24th.

When the first paid minister, P.A. Wedel, I think, came here, he couldn't understand! Christmas Eve at Alexanderwohl and nothing doing? To him that was a travesty! He couldn't see that. He also got support from another couple, and eventually they did have a program on the 24th. But the people were upset. It was just like breaking something sacred. P.A. Wedel reasoned, "Why, you can still have your Christmas programs in school, only we should have it in church on the 24th." That was one of the traditions that didn't break easy. There used to be church on the 26th, also, a "second holiday" that had a mission emphasis. Further back, they had 3 holidays at times like Christmas and Easter.

In early days, the "Verwälter" (District Representatives) were given much more power than now. There was a nominating committee, and a program committee which make the preaching order of the various ministers.

My dad, Peter Bartel, was on the Trustees at the time of the remodeling in 1928. Others were Cornelius R. Voth, P.U. Schmidt, Cornelius F. Unruh (brother to Dan), and Gerhard Duerksen.

Why remodel in 1928? Well, aside from those in the balcony not able to see, the Sunday School department was pressuring for rooms. There was a thought to building a new church to the east, but that never happened. And there was a heating problem - places in the building stayed cool. When the basement was built under the old church, I recall the heating system was different. There were stoves before, but they were removed and a furnace went in, with floor grates.

Q: Did your dad have something that he especially wanted to see in the new building? Yes. He had definite feelings that the heating system be no. 1. They put in the best heating system at the time.

Dan Unruh was an interesting man. I marvel at that man now more than I did then. He was outspoken, very thorough, and demanding in his work. My father made an acquaintance of him early on. Since my father had building experience also, whenever Dan needed something from the lumberyard which had to be right, he sent my father.

Dan Unruh was modern enough of a builder to know about stresses, that putting a steel I-beam under the balcony instead of pillars would hold it. The trustees and Dan sat right under the edge of the balcony on dedication day, so that if the balcony had broken down, it would be on the builder and the trustees. I don't know if this was on a dare or not, but it was talked about later.

BARTEL, cont'd

Rev. A.R. Hardy, a Baptist minister from Newton, spoke at the 1928 dedication. Why did we get him to speak? He was probably a good speaker of the time. County Superintendent James A. Ray was a violinist and brought an orchestra. He loved to be in the community and be involved. Even Bob Florer, who was sheriff of Marion County, sang in a quartet, but I don't think they would have invited him if he hadn't offered. A comment was made, "I hope he can shoot better than he sings!"

During the dedication, I was sitting up in the balcony on the south side, and Heinrich Banman, minister, was blind, and couldn't watch the time, and I recall P.H. Unruh pulling on his coat to let him know that his time was up.

The reason for two aisles in the church, originally, was that people liked to sit at the end of the bench. And it was very hard for the ushers to get people to move over. The change to one aisle was made because it was easier to bring the coffin to the front during funerals; and for weddings, it was easier for the bride to be escorted by her father.

And thinking about weddings, it happened that after some weddings, you could see smoke billowing out of the horse barns - you knew what was going on out there.

The wars were times which were difficult. During World War I, there was always a farewell service for those who left. The non-combatant position was accepted, although there were those like Cornelius Voth, who was an absolute pacifist, and others who wore the uniform.

In World War II, I served on the Peace Committee. Half of my family (brothers and sisters) were in CPS. I'm not sure of the stand of the minister, whether he was a C.O. or not. He did non-combatant office work in the military. Some time during that time the flags were placed up at the front of the church.

One evening church meeting after World War II was over, there was still tension between those who participated in the military and those who did not. So, as a way for reconciliation, I made a motion in that emotional meeting. I can't find it in the church minutes, but it went something like this; "Realizing that many of us have taken part with our finances in this war, and thus may have contributed to the war, be it resolved that we forgive each other and go in peace." It was accepted and brought the church together.

My earliest recollection of the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church is oriented to the physical facilities - the building, out-houses, the long shelter barns, team hitching facilities, as well as early experiences of attendance. These early recollections date back to circa 1913 when I was three or four years old. It was a time when I was still "hanging on to mother's apron strings". The north and south annexes had already been added. They were 12' x 24', large enough to accommodate two Sunday School class rooms. It was in one of these north annex rooms that the pre-schoolers met with Mrs. J. C. Reimer as teacher, for their first Sunday School experience. It was of course taught in the Low German language as this was the only language we could understand.

I don't know at what age we were promoted but perhaps not until we had been introduced to the High German. Every Sunday we were given a Bible verse to memorize during the week and recite it the following Sunday. After memorizing and reciting them we were given a Bible story booklet in exchange for the ten verses. We also received a Bible story-pictured card with the story printed on the reverse side. These we could keep. Unfortunately I can remember only three teachers beside Mrs. Reimer: Mrs. Henry Warkentin, Will J. Reimer, and P. D. Voth.

As I recall we did not attend church services very regularly, mainly because of weather conditions: too hot or too cold, raining or snowing. Father's compassion for his horses was such that he did not feel right to work the horses all week and then again on Sunday. They also needed their rest. The horse and buggy were the only means to go to church until 1917 when we bought our first car. On Sundays when we stayed home mother usually read a sermon from a sermon book.

When going to church with horse and buggy father would not drive very fast so that the horses would not be sweaty upon arrival and then would have to stand there until the services were over, quite late at times. Horses were covered with horse blankets and secured with special belts and five-inch safety pins. The five long shelter barns were not sufficient for all attending services. They were hitched to facilities provided for this purpose. There were three shelter barns on the south side, setting parallel while the two on the north side were set in an "L" shape, running east and west and north and south, meeting in the northwest corner.

On Thursday, September 22, 1921, an attempt was made to burn the long barns on the south side. The custodian, Mr. Stelting, was able to extinguish the fire. The next day he again discovered the flames in the same place but this time he was unable to contain the fire. A general ring by way of the Goessel Telephone Company was made and a large crowd gathered to preserve the church building and were successful. While all this was going on a man with a red handkerchief covering his face was seen driving up and down the street in Goessel. He was constantly focusing his attention (looking) in a northeasterly direction - the direction of the church. His plans evidently were to lure as many people to the church and then rob the local bank. Since he did not succeed in burning the church he made no further effort to rob the bank. The man was picked up and as I recall was identified by some of the local people although he was not from this area. At the trial in Marion it was verified that robbing the bank had been his motive. It was also discovered that the man was mentally deranged. I don't know what the final outcome was.

When the Goessel Mennonite Church was organized in 1920, many of the stalls were vacated and offered for sale. Father bought the one from A. H. Boese. It was located midway on the west barn, closet to the road. After the fire most

BOESE, cont'd

of them, if not all, were rebuilt. My dad did not participate in this rebuilding project. The horse and buggy had been replaced by the automobile, which were parked outside subject to the elements. Blankets were used to cover the hood and the radiator to retard the freezing in case they had only water in the radiators. Many of them were quite fancy. Two couples who kept on using the horse and buggy means of coming to church were my Uncle Heinrich Bergs and Emil Schroeders, the latter perhaps until the early 1930's.

Four out-houses had been erected, one for men and one for ladies on each side. They were the general type of two and three-holers. The ladies' houses were in two sections, the front being the ordinary type, but the addition back of it was quite unique. It reminds me of some we saw in Europe, particularly in France. The wooden floor had an open space in the middle, approximately 10 to 12 inches wide.

I think very few people know what became of the pulpit and pews when the church was remodeled in 1928. I recall Uncle Jacob Banman telling me that the pulpit and some pews had been given to a church in Herrington where blacks from the city worshipped. It was quite a railroad center with repair shops. Quite a number of blacks resided in Herrington at the time. During the time of preparing for the 1974 Centennial we made it a point to stop in Herrington on our way back from Topeka. It was not too difficult to locate the church building and the two remaining black residents of Herrington. The railroad had pulled its shops out of the city and most of the black residents had found employment elsewhere. We located the two ladies who were willing to open the building for us. We inquired what had become of the pulpit as it was not there. They said that it had been replaced by a smaller one. The Alexanderwohl pulpit had been set outside and had deteriorated to the extent that it had been hauled to the city dump. Of course they no longer had any services there. At some point the pews had been painted a dull red color. The ladies were very friendly and knew that the pulpit and pews had been given to the church by a congregation somewhere south of Herrington. They seemed delighted to have their picture taken.

After the remodeling of the church many of the remaining items had been stored in some of the barns. Sometime in the early 1930's they were sold at a public auction. I recall that Herbert Franz and I were serving as clerks. He was recording the names of the buyers while I was assigned to set in the front hallway in the church receiving the payments of items sold. This was my first experience and I recall that I was very slow at adding all the sales of the individual as he came to pay. A few of the items sold surfaced during preparation and following the 1974 Centennial celebration. Ferd Goossen, for instance, had purchased all the green shutters. He offered to give us two of the better ones to use as a background in the Alexanderwohl display case in the Immigrant House. August Duerksen brought some of the spindled railing from the pulpit area. Evidently one pew was saved and placed in the attic. It too is in the Immigrant House as well as the spindled railing. A number of items were discovered in the attic quite a number of years after the Centennial. One of these is a combination coffin stand, and by folding the legs was used to carry the coffin to the cemetery.

In 1918, the building which housed the gas tanks for the carbide gas lights exploded. My grandfather Benjamin Boese died during the time that the tall windows were boarded up. It was extremely cold when the funeral services were held. It was cold in the church, as not enough heat could be generated for the big building. After that, electric lights were installed, run by two generating plants.

(14)



The Catechism class I was enrolled in convened in January, 1929, the first class in the newly remodeled building. As I remember I didn't miss a single session, although it was necessary to go by horseback several times. I regret that the class was not taught in the English language. Baptism was on Pentecost Sunday, May 19, 1929 by Rev. P.H. Unruh, Elder of the church since 1915. Communion was observed two weeks later and included the rite of foot-washing, the only time that I experienced this rite.

A year or two after graduating from high school and working in the Goessel Bank, I was elected to serve as S.S. treasurer. This meant that I leave class ten minutes early to count the collection and have a report ready for the register posting. The collection consisted mostly of pennies, with some nickels and dimes. I usually counted it again on Sunday afternoon as I prepared it for deposit. The bank supplied the usual wrappers to put them up in rolls. There were generally about \$14 in pennies or perhaps fourteen rolls of pennies.

I have been involved in a variety of church activities: congregational secretary, S.S. Superintendent, Bethel College Fellowship committee, and Auditing committee. Although I enjoyed this participation there are certain aspects of which I am not too proud, for instance, the time that the S.S. quarterlies included the Revised Version of the Bible and the modern interpretation of Christ in the pictures in the children's material. This was too sudden when people were uninformed about these changes. They caused some very hard feelings.

There are, however, some rewarding aspects which I cherish very highly. Serving on the Western District Historical Committee would have to rank among the highest. It was during this time that the history of the conference, Prairie People, was written and was done under the sponsorship of this committee. Working with historians like Robert Kreider, Bill Juhnke, Clinton Kaufman, Mariana Harms, and others was most informing.

The three-day celebrations - Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost - were observed for many years. I don't remember any time that we observed the third day. The two-day celebrations, however, continued for many years. Although World War I had brought about some changes, especially in the use of the German language, the second World War brought about more. A number of people worked in war industries where it was a seven-day week at all times. With the initiation and rapid expansion of Hesston Corporation and other industries in the area came more changes. As more people went to work in these industries, church attendance dropped, eventually to the extent that the second holiday soon was abandoned and Pentecost almost ignored, except that baptism generally took/takes place on this day. The Sunday before Pentecost was the day when there was no Sunday School as the Articles of Faith were read. This took all morning and to me was most boring. Again it was in the German language.

The Sunday following Pentecost was known as "For-bereitungs Sunday" - the day to admonish people to reconcile any differences, hard feelings with/towards any one within the congregation as well as others. Ascension Day had/is perhaps nearly forgotten. The evening which is ten days prior to Pentecost, may be a time for testimonies of the candidates for baptism.

The Alexanderwohl Church was divided into sixteen districts, primarily because of its size. Each district had a secretary to collect the annual dues and supply personnel to work at the church when needed, a second person to represent the region on the nominating committee, and a third person as a member of a program committee. This committee was responsible to set up a program for a week of spiritual renewal, generally observed during the first week in the new year. It was abandoned some years ago as very few people attended.

The secretary, or district representative, had charge (and still does) of collecting the church dues from members of his respective district. He would set a date in early December when members would meet, usually in a school house, to pay their fair share of the church budget for the coming year. They were required to bring their tax receipt to show their valuation of property. As I recall, the amount each member paid was a certain percent of the valuation and a membership fee as had been determined by the trustees. (15)

REMINISCENCES ABOUT THE ALEXANDERWOHL CHURCH HERE IN KANSAS

(Transcription of Tape by August Duerksen)

This is August Duerksen speaking, reminiscing about the Alexanderwohl Church here in Kansas. I'd like to go back a little further than Kansas. The Alexanderwohl Church in Russia was located in the Alexanderwohl village, and from all indications from history this was a popular place to congregate when they had important issues to discuss. It was in the middle of the Molotschna settlement where the villages were quite close together, and it was probably the largest church building in that area near the Molotschna River. The church was the central point, the focal point for planning the migration to the United States, to Kansas, and the important meetings were held in this church, organizing for the migration. The church building itself was large, but it did not have the hip roof that ours had here, it had a gable roof, but I understand that the inside was much like ours in arrangement.

There were two traditional theories about the building, and one was that during the persecution the Mennonites were persecuted by the Catholics and Lutherans, and when the persecution subsided, the Mennonites took over some church buildings which Catholics had vacated. But they did not use the altar in the front, instead they moved their pulpit to one side and placed the chairs around the pulpit.

The other traditional theory has it that Mennonite ministers liked to have their congregation around them, so they had balconies along three sides of the building, so that the congregation sort of sat around the pulpit and the pastor. We do not know exactly which theory is authentic, but these are the two theories we have traditionally.

So the plans that we used here with the three-sided balcony must have been brought to Prussia from the Netherlands, then to Russia and then to Kansas. The ceiling was round, arched, and the hip roof was self-supporting, the walls supporting it, there were no braces or anything inside the building holding up the roof; and the remarkable part is that by 1928 it had not deteriorated, the walls were standing straight and firm. As you see in pictures, the east addition or entrance roof was rounded and the two vestibules on the south and north ends were also built in that style although they were added on a few years later.

They did not decide to build the church until 1886, many thought it was too far to drive. Since the village style did not go over good, there were only a few places here in Kansas where the village style was tried out and did not last too long. They preferred to live on their own quarter section or eighty acres. My father told about how they lived near the Cottonwood River, and they would cut across the fields to the Immigrant House, and that was about seven miles. They hitched up two oxen to the wagon, and since there were no bridges at that time they drove thru the creeks wherever they could. The cruising speed of the oxen team was about two miles an hour, so the seven miles was a three and one-half hour drive, one way, to church. So they did not make that trip very often, going to church was rather for a nice spring, summer or fall day. But since Grandma and Grandpa Balzer lived one and one-half miles from the church, they would often go there for Sunday dinner and a visit before going home. Being on the road about seven hours - there and back, there was not too much time left to visit they parents. So we see that the worship in the Immigrant House was limited more to those living close by and those just coming occasionally.

There usually were five or six ministers besides the Elder, and they made a worship schedule for these assistant ministers to have services in the district schools. As far as I know, these districts were Emmethal, Springfield, Blumenfeld and Steinbach and Schoenthal, maybe there were more. They were the outlying districts of the church, six to seven miles away, so the minister would have worship service there in the morning and the young people would gather there in the afternoon for

Sunday School and Choir Practice and singing led by the local school teacher. And so really the school became the social center for the community.

Since there was no church building until 1886, 12 years after coming here, until the farms had been fully established, houses and barns built and the sod plowed up, another practice was that funerals were generally held in the homes. Each family would select a plot in the corner of the orchard, along the fence row, or in the corner of the pasture and this would become the family burial plot. The best one that has been kept up, and the largest one, is known as the Wedel Cemetery, two miles west, one-fourth north and then one-fourth east into the field. Each member of the Peter Wedel family had one row for their family members' graves; it is well kept and Henry Wedel has the complete records of it, it's worth looking at.

By the way, this Mrs. Peter Wedel was a young girl when they migrated from Prussia to Russia, and then she migrated from Russia to Kansas. She was one of the few who experienced two migrations. She also is buried in the Wedel Cemetery.

There were many other burial plots. Some we can hardly find, some are just here-say that someone was buried there, some are in the middle of plowed up ground where the wide implements are rapidly taking their toll on these grave markers. Something needs to be done, and people who own that land would like to have something done. So we hope that in the future someone will find a way to handle these individual cemeteries. We figure that at least 150 to 180 people were buried in the Alexanderwohl community before the church was built. After the church was built, some kept up their family plots, but most began to use the church cemetery and had the burials there.

The child and infant mortality rate was high, so for the first few years we have a lot of graves of infants and young people. Later on in the church cemetery family plots were sold and some are still being used as such. These were for people who liked to have their relatives buried in family plots in the church cemetery.

The old church was broader than long. The three sides of the balcony were fairly close to the pulpit and platform railing. It was not designed for good viewing, so the balcony had some blind spots where nobody could see the minister or the pulpit, and as I remember, there was a large platform extending clear across the front from the south balcony to the north balcony. The platform had really two elevations, the first one was used for special occasions, especially during spring at Pentecost when young people went to catechism class. The boys would sit on the south side and the girls on the north side. The higher elevation had some steps leading to where the vorsänger sat on either side of the pulpit. The pulpit was in the center and ministers sat behind the pulpit. An old story goes that after a young minister was elected and started preaching and became too enthusiastic, the senior minister sitting behind him would pull on his coattails to calm him down a little, and get down to basics. Well, so we were told.

The church was build without a basement, with a rock foundation, with a cellar in the northeast corner where the coal was kept. There were two big stoves in the front of the church, and they were heated to red-hot to get the church warm, and on cold days the janitor had to go back to the cellar to get more buckets of coal to keep the church warm during the service.

The interior decoration on the plastered walls always looked to me like a rock formation. A Mr. Kim from Buhler, I believe, had painted the inside. The other decorations were probably done by him too. The pillars that supported the balconies were square, but they were rounded off in 1906, I believe, I suppose for better viewing, the people downstairs didn't like to sit behind a pillar.

When the organ was brought in, the old reed organ, it was set on that first platform. It was not used for general worship, that's when the vorsänger took over, but they allowed the organ to be used for the Sunday School opening. Later on a piano was bought and it was also put on the platform.

This did not suit the vorsänger too well, and when the church was rebuilt in 1928 no arrangements were included for the vorsänger, and in fact they were not used any more. They did not like it that the old system of leading songs during worship service was dropped from our worship agenda.

The first lighting system I believe was kerosene lamps. The carbide system which came later exploded and blew out some windows of the church; so the church bought two delco, gasoline powered generators which were used until K.G.&E. built their lines to Goessel, then the church was ready to use this.

At first the people were not favorable to having Sunday School in the church. Our church members said that the church had been built for worship service and therefore it should be used only for worship service. But it didn't take long until cords were strung from pillar to post to the wall and curtains were hung on these cords, and we went into the Sunday School system. The arrangements were rather crude for the children at first, wherever they could find a corner or a little space, that's where the children had their classes. And since the attendance was rather erratic, the teachers never knew how many would be in church. I remember that in my class there would be 40 on one Sunday and maybe 6 on the next Sunday. You can imagine that youngsters like me, if you sat in the back corner and there were 40 in the class, that the order situation was not always the best.

Early weddings, and funerals also, before the church was built, were always in the home. The weddings were always in the home of the bride, and usually a tent was erected to accommodate all the guests. The day before the wedding, the men would gather and drive posts into the ground so there were places to tie their horses when they came to the wedding. The weddings were always big celebrations. Families were large, with many children and grandchildren, and uncles and aunts and friends so the weddings had a tendency to be well attended, good social events.

The weddings were later on brought to the church. For the wedding meals, they built flat tabletops and moved two church pews together about 2 feet apart and put the tabletops on the backs of these pews, making a table and seats out of the pews. I remember that on weddings before the basement was dug, that the coffee water was boiled in the big wash kettle in the janitor's house, and the men would carry ten gallon cans of hot water to the church where the women would add the coffee. The eats that were served were zwiebach, cheese and sugar cubes, finally cookies came in - home baked, and later they bought them, and then meat was served later on. So we had a gradual development of culture, you might say, of customs and of doing things as everything progressed. What brought the weddings and more social doings to the church was naturally the cars, replacing horse and buggy transportation.

There were four rows of barns, really five, at the church. One was on the north side, running north and south, and then they built on to the east; and three rows of barns on the south side. They were open on one side, and they would drive the carriages and later the cars into these barns for some protection from the weather. The Rev. Heinrich Banman and Rev. J. J. Banman had the first two barns (stalls) on the north side, and Rev. P. H. Unruh and Rev. C. C. Wedel had those on the south side. So the ministers had good barns and I remember that one time when at the annual meeting there was a complaint that it was so muddy on the church yard that hardly anybody could get around, Rev. P. H. Unruh got up to say, why, he couldn't help it, the mud ruts went right up to the church and that's where his car went and that's where he parked, he had no choice, he couldn't steer his car out of the ruts into his barn. Some of you will remember, some of those ruts were axle deep, there was no choice - and if you drove into your own barn, you might never get out because it was so muddy.

One of the stories I remember was that 15 or 20 fellows came to church on their motorcycles and lined them up on the east side of the church. A little gust of wind came up during the church service and they all fell over like a row of dominoes. The ruling was made at one time that those that came with motorcycles

to church should leave early because they scared the horses too much. So there were always some problems reminding us that the modern inventions were creeping into the life of the church.

And you know, most of us remember when there was no "15 Highway", it was a muddy road like all others, and it could be quite muddy! So the services were not attended as regular as now, because on a bad Sunday maybe two-third or three-fourth of the members stayed home. We hope that you gather some memories from this also.

I don't remember the building of the first church, but Jacob G. Pankratz reminisced with me one time how as a young man he had gone to this building of the church, and he had enjoyed crawling around the joists and the rafters and what-have-you. It was a real experience for him as a young man to be around when the church was being built. Of course, we didn't have tape recorders at that time and I didn't write down what he told me when I came home - and you know how memories slip away! Well, the building itself, I don't know much about it either, except that this hip roof was self-supporting, and that the pillars used to support the balcony, the round ones, are now holding up the main floor of our present building.

Well, I do remember though, one thing about the church service. Before I went to school I had to sit with father, well that was alright, and I'd put my head on his head and sleep - that's where I learned that sleeping in church was good - but I could understand German, and so when the minister got to "Punkt" Point 6, he never had more than 8 points, I think, then it was time to wake up and listen a bit to the close of the service. Well, we all learned our ways of worship.

There were a number of "accidents" in the church because on the old benches, the top of the lean or back rest was only a 2" by 8" and the rest of it, there was nothing there. So every once in a while during church service a youngster would fall asleep and roll off through this opening with a loud bang and a real loud yell. This was one of the experiences we often heard in the church.

The Hoffnungsau Church was a replica of the Alexanderwohl Church, only smaller, and they tell me that the Beatrice, Nebraska church was also built on the same style. So there were really only three Mennonite churches built here like the style of our church - square or oblong, with similar roof style and all that.

Thank you.

I would like to talk a little bit of the men who did the work of erecting the church building fifty-eight years ago. The church had passed a resolution that all able-bodied male members work 5 days of voluntary labor. These men worked under Peter Bartel, work that did not require too much skill, such as dismantling part of the old building, carrying supplies to the carpenters, nailing the sheathing, shingling, lathing, etc. This worked out very well.

Then there were the carpenters who worked for wages: Daniel F. Unruh, architect and builder; Peter M. (Mike) Schroeder; Henry Woelk; Gerhard A. (George) Duerksen; Jacob Wiebe; John G. Flaming; Cornelius C. Koehn; and John Ratzlaff. Of these, only I am still alive, so I cannot compare my remembrances with anybody else.

The wages we got were the prevailing wages of the time. We worked 10 hours a day, 6 days a week. Starting wages for an inexperienced man was 50¢ per hour. I had been with Dan for several months before, so I got 60¢. What Dan, Mike, and Henry Woelk got I don't know, but I am sure it was less than \$1.00 an hour.

Then there were others who worked for shorter periods who I don't remember. There also were a couple of men, whose names I don't know, who nailed siding.

Being together for about 9 months, we became good friends, eating lunch in one of the barns or stalls which members had built to keep horses out of bad weather, became a pleasant experience.

Dan Unruh was a good boss. Good workmanship and subordination were his strong points. If anyone would violate either one he would be disturbed and would let it be known in no uncertain terms. But as soon as he was thru with his lecture he forgot it and did not hold it against the person.

All work was by hand, except, Dan had a table rip-saw which only he used. Cross-cuts were all done by hand. It took Mike Schroeder and me 2 days to cut the rafters, I on the diagonal end and he on the other end, the hip and valley cut.

One little incident: A pair of robins, I think, built a nest in the southwest corner of upstairs. We all walked very carefully around the nest, but I don't remember what happened to that family.

G. A. Duerksen

Sept. 11, 1986

## THE COMING OF OUR PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS FROM RUSSIA

By Ferd S. Goertzen

When the men of the Alexanderwohl Church in Russia were compeled by the Russian government to haul military supplies to the war front with their own horses and wagons, the congregation decided to move to America. My father, a Russian born, said those that stayed behind did so only because they couldn't part with their earthly possessions, their big farms (feastad). The question here is were they trying to serve two masters? If so, did God allow them to be persecuted for their act of being self-sufficient? What about us today, are we in danger of depending too much on our earthly possessions?

My uncle, being a young lad in those days, rode along with grandpa to the war front to deliver war supplies. Here, later in life, he was asked, "What did you do when the cannon guns went off?" He said, "I hid behind the wagon wheel."

Father said in Russia the Mennonites lived in villages. Grazing land for milk cows was outside the village. Every farm home owned a cow or cows, and they were brought to the road every morning to join the village cows as they were on the way to pasture outside the village herded by a Russian hired boy. This was before barbed wire fence came to be. Each village owned its own bull. Sometimes the herd boys would allow the herds to get too close together and the bulls would get into a fight. Father said after this the village men from one village got together in the evening, and one of the Russian herd boys got whipped with a blacksnake - how gruesome. If I can read between the lines, maybe some of this caused the separation of those that stayed behind in Russia.

The Voyage - Father said that on the ship my parents and grandparents came on, fire broke out as the boiler man had too hot a coal fire, and it got out of control. They got the fire out, but the captain was very angry at the boiler fire man. He hit him so hard that he broke his jaw bone.

Mother said when they arrived at Topeka, Kansas they learned the immigrant houses were not ready so they had to lay over at Topeka till they were finished. Some of the men went up ahead to help the Santa Fe railroad men finish the work; it was already October in 1874. There is a monument in Peabody, Kansas at the site where your and our grandparents got off the Santa Fe train. It honors the first settlers of the Alexanderwohl Church.

In the spring of 1875 the new settlers were busy erecting their homes.

My grandparents, Heinrich Goertzens, settled five miles southeast of the Alexanderwohl Church. Father said he rode with Grandpa the diagonal wagon trail to Peabody to trade.

Prairie chickens were plentiful. Grandpa made a coop with a trap door on top, and they fell in. The new settlers then had chicken to eat.

When a prairie fire broke out the new settlers would quickly start a counter fire to protect themselves, but when an English settler was asked, "How come you let the fire get away from you?" He said, "I can't help that my donkey dropped fire."

The locusts took the first wheat crop. Father said they came so thick they darkened the sun. The men would drag a rope across the wheat field between two horses to keep the locusts moving. They cut all the wheat heads off.

Mother's parents, my grandparents Jacob Schmidts, settled at Hochfeld first and later moved north to Springfield, the quarter south of Abe Klassen or east across the road from the now existing cattle feed lot.

I asked Mother about a year before she died, "When you first came here to Kansas did you have enough horses to farm with or did you have to farm with oxen?" She said, "We did not have enough horses, we had to farm with oxen. One day my brother was going across the field with grain on the wagon. The oxen decided to go for water and turned short with the wagon upsetting and dumping grain in the tall grass. Then my brother came home very upset, and I had to go along and help clean up."

As I look back, I wish I would have asked my parents more. I would have learned more about their early life.

A homestead on the west corner across from my home place had a little shack where a man slept one night a month to make a legal claim on the land. Later Heimbaugh schoolhouse stood there. In the end the schoolhouse was moved one mile south and one mile east.



## ALVIN L. GOOSSEN RECOLLECTIONS

The first twelve years in America, from 1874 to 1886 the worship services were held in one of the two Immigrant Houses which were located in the middle of the same section. When the church was built it was called, Neu-Alexanderwohler Kirche (New Alexanderwohl Church). It was called "New" because the church in Russia from which they came, was called Alexanderwohl.

I remember that Rev. Peter H. Unruh and others who traveled in Holland, Germany, and Russia shortly after the First World War that they said that the inner architectural arrangement of the Alexanderwohl Church was similar to many of the old church buildings in Holland. Rev. Peter H. Unruh said that when he walked into the Alexanderwohl Church in Russia, he felt that he was almost back home in America. So we see that the Mennonites not only carried their religious practices but also their Dutch style of architecture from Holland to Prussia to Russia and then to America.

The main auditorium of the original church was 40 by 70 feet which is directly on top of the present basement (Fellowship Hall). The basement was dug in spring of 1920 under this building which took much hard labor, because the ground was hard and dry. The remarks were often made that it had not rained for a long time under this building.

Some of the old structure was still left when the building was rebuilt in 1928, such as the main floor and some walls, some of the lumber is still from the Immigrant House. The pulpit is still at the same location where the first pulpit was, except now the platform is lower and a present pulpit took the place of the old one in 1928.

The church also had a front entrance to the east 22 by 30 feet with two stairways. On the first floor under the north stairway was the nursery and on the south under the stairway the Sunday School library. This room was also used for Sunday School. The middle room upstairs was used for the Catechism class.

In 1899 it was decided to build two rooms 12 by 24 feet, one to be added on each end of the building, which were also used for Sunday School. The little room on the south end was the minister's prayer room. It was quite common to see three or four ministers and two deacons following one behind the other on the long aisle from the prayer room to take their place on the north side behind the pulpit. This was done while the congregation was singing the first song for the worship service. In the early days all the people stayed seated while singing, even the song leaders. Usually there were five or six song leaders on the stage seated on the benches south of the pulpit, one of them would stand up and announce the number and then sit down. These song leaders sang energetically and vigorously. Everyone stood up for all prayers except for the pastoral prayer when the congregation knelt.

In the early years there were two sermons on Sunday morning and Sunday School was held in the afternoon in rural schools. Even as late as in 1911 curtains were put up in the church to divide between the Sunday School classes, making room for 21 classes, then after the Sunday School the curtains were pushed back to the wall for the worship service.

In January 1918, when carbide gas lights were still used a building about 10 by 12 feet west of the church with gas tanks in it, exploded with a loud noise and flash. This was after the evening service when all the people had gone home except Mr. Reinhold Schwartz, the custodian. He was walking toward this out-building with a kerosene lantern in his hand which caused the explosion. Mr. Schwartz was burnt very badly and hospitalized.

All the windows on the west side and some on the south end were blown out by the explosion. The windows then were boarded up until the glass could be purchased and replaced. The frosted glass had to be ordered through a firm in

GOOSSEN, cont'd

Wichita. It was rather dark in the church for the services, even at the funeral of Mr. Benjamin Boese on January 27, 1918 (age 84).

My Uncle Henry Ediger living one-half mile east of the church saw and heard the explosion. He quickly ran into the house and told Mrs. Ediger to call Goessel that the church was on fire. A company ring was made on every line, after which many people arrived on the scene in a short while.

Mr. David S. Voth, then living almost one-half mile west of the church, related to me recently that they were sitting in their living room when suddenly there was a very hard knock against their east wall. They did not know what it was, but after a short while the telephone rang and the cars began coming from every direction to the church. Mr. Schwartz was picked up unconscious and taken to the Goessel Hospital. After this the gas lights were not used anymore. Two light plants were purchased and electric lights were installed. Since that time in summer of 1918 the church has had electric lights.

In fall of 1927 it was decided to rebuild the church, and on the first Sunday morning in February of 1928, it was announced that help was needed Monday morning to start removing the additions from the main building. Monday morning it felt rather strange to work with some twenty men to start in with hammers and wrecking bars.

On March 1, 1928 the church 40 by 70 feet was raised 39 inches with screw jacks, about 36 man power were occupied most of the day. My father, F. M. Goossen had the responsibility to manage the raising. The church was raised with all the furniture in it, even the piano and organ. Rev. C.C. Wedel stepped in about every hour and said that both clocks were still running. At first the congregation intended to have worship services in the building after it was raised, but when they saw it so high above the foundation and the big basement under it, it was decided to hold the services and Sunday school in five rural schools. This was done until the new church was dedicated on November 11, 1928.

In history it is recorded that all but 7 families of the original Alexanderwohl congregation in South Russia immigrated to Kansas as a group in 1874, with all of the church records and all of the ministers.

Dr. John R. Schmidt:

As a teenager I participated, together with my older brother, shingling the northwest corner from the middle to the top, the (stalossh)frame to get there was built so close to the wall, so it was hard to crawl over the extended roof. This was a real concern for me the whole time I was working on that roof--how would I be able to crawl down?

It so happened that my older brother, Orlando, was the first one to have his funeral in this church after it was altered.

AN INTERVIEW WITH MOSES VOTH

WOULD YOU TELL ME WHO YOUR PARENTS WERE?

My father's name was Cornelius Voth. My mother's name was Anna. My grandfather, on my mother's side, was Heinrich Banman. He was an elder at Alexanderwohl. My grandmother was a Buller.

My father was a year old when he came over from the Molot-schna in Russia. He had smallpox when he got to Ellis Island as they came over. Of course they had to be checked before they could enter the U.S. The man who was checking them looked at my father, smiled and said, "He is okay," and let him through.

I grew up four miles northwest of Goessel. We lived together with my grandfather Banman in an adobe house. The house was protected by siding on the outside and had some sort of plaster that would hold wall paper on the inside. When I was still small we built a house. The carpenter Dan Unruh built it. The house was set by compass so it was not setting straight east and west. We connected it with a little enclosed walkway to my grandfather's house. We sold the house and five acres. It belongs to Marvin Banman now. We still have the land, my brother Waldo and I.

WAS YOUR FATHER A TRUSTEE?

Yes, during the 1928 rebuilding. That is when we put the entrance on the west side. All the entrances were on the east side before. I think they wanted the front entrance towards the road. That did not go over very good. Many people still came in from the back because they did not want to face the people who were already in the sanctuary.

DID YOU HELP WITH THE 1928 REBUILDING PROJECT?

No, I was too young. I still remember Dan Unruh from the church rebuilding and from building our house.

WHOSE IDEA WAS THE BELL TOWER?

That I can't tell you. My father favored it. Church bells were common. That was a sign of the times.

Later on they wanted an organ grill. I designed the grill during the time I was studying architecture at Bethel College.

DO YOU REMEMBER HOW MUCH EACH MEMBER PAID FOR THE CHURCH REMODELING?

No, I don't know that. I don't recall hearing any complaint about them being too high. I guess it was a necessity.

One thing about the old church. At the entrance into the sanctuary upstairs from the hallway were these words: Bewahren deine Fuss wenn du comst in Gottes Haus. In English: Beware of your foot when you enter the house of God. In other words, you were asked to be conscious that you were trodding into a sacred place.

HOW WAS FOOTWASHING OBSERVED?

There was the practice of footwashing there for awhile. One Sunday they had footwashing with Communion and the next time Communion was celebrated without footwashing. Of course, footwashing stems from the Biblical information that we have. Traveling in open country with sandels it is no question the feet got dirty. For footwashing we sat in the pew. One would wash the other's feet and then the other person would take his turn. Footwashing came into disrepute for sanitation reasons.

We had a Peace Committee. My father was on that committee. There were some members who got into it with eacher about property. This committee was supposed to meet with the two parties and see if they could come up with an agreement with each other. That was so they wouldn't go to the law.

WHEN DID YOU JOIN THE CATECHISM CLASS?

When you came to that age. I think you also felt a little peer pressure. You saw your friends go that way and you decided that you would too. We memorized the whole catechism book. It was religious questions and answers. It told you what your conduct should be.

WHO WAS THE FIRST PAID ELDER?

P.H. Unruh was influential in seeing to it that the elders be paid.

AN INTERVIEW WITH REV. D. C. WEDEL

Rev. Wedel, would you give a brief autobiography?

Just a little bit about my father, C. C. Wedel, who was a minister at the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church. He was ordained as an evangelist on March 29, 1896. Two years later he was ordained into the ministry. He served the church as minister of the church for 50 years. Celebrating the 50th anniversary on March 31, 1946.

Four persons were ordained as evangelists in 1896. They were Peter Buller, C. C. Wedel, P. R. Voth, and P. H. Richert. Peter Buller served later on as one of the assistant ministers in the Goessel Mennonite Church. P. R. Voth served as minister, as I recall, in the Buhler Mennonite Church. Rev. P. H. Richert was the first minister in the Tabor Mennonite Church. There are many changes which took place in regard to the church services during those 50 years.

What year did you go into the ministry?

I was ordained as elder in the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church by Rev. P. H. Unruh on the 19th of July in 1936. I served the Halstead Mennonite Church from 1936 to 1946. I married Martha Quiring, also a member of the Alexanderwohl Church, on August 5, 1936. Together we have been in the ministry, having only one regular pastorate. Most of the other time of my career has been in college education at Bethel College and Southwestern College in Winfield. I have also served as interim pastor at various churches since my retirement.

Maybe a word or two about the growth of the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church. The church records show that on May 9, 1917 there was a long discussion on the need for more room. A committee composed of H. J. Duerksen, P. C. Richert, Abraham Nikkel, F. J. Banman, P. A. Schmidt, A. D. Voth, H. H. Richert, Jacob Abrahams, B. H. Friesen and a Mr. Franz was formed. This committee was to bring recommendations about the need for more room. They brought a recommendation to the congregation that two churches should be built. One church should be built in Goessel, because there were many people moving to that community and church services had been held there for quite some time in the Goessel Preparatory School. The Goessel Mennonite Church was built in 1919. The other church was to have been built to the northwest, but it was never built. The next move in making room for more of the activities of the church came just a little later. The question came up whether a basement could be put under the existing building to provide room for Sunday School classes and other church activities. There were differences of opinion as to whether such a project should be undertaken. Mostly the question of cost was involved. It was not possible to come to any conclusion, so the whole matter was tabled. But at a meeting on March 8, 1920, this question came up for discussion again. A vote was actually taken. 72 people voted in favor of putting in a basement, with 22 voting no. It was then agreed that five persons should be added to the board of trustees. They were J. G. Pankratz, A. C. Schmidt, J. P. Janzen, Peter Bartel and F. M. Goossen. Activities began very soon. In order to cover the cost, \$5 was to be assessed each church member. They were also supposed to show the tax report to see how much income each family received. Then a certain amount would also be assessed, depending on the report of the tax form. Everything began to fall into place and the work was carried out in harmony.

I recall one particular incident that has to do with this project. The church had to be raised in order to make room for this project. F. M. Goossen, a professional house mover and farmer was given the responsibility for this project. The church was raised by jacks, and everyone was supposed to move one stroke of the jack at the same time in order to keep the church level. My father recalled that they kept watching the clock in the church building to see whether it would stop. If it would stop, they felt that somewhere the level had not been kept as it should have been. The clock never stopped.

There was an opening on the west side, as I recall, where they took away enough ground so they could get teams of horses into the partial excavation. In that way, with team and the slip, they excavated. This also required a great deal of hand labor, because you can do just about so much with a team of horses. I recall on one occasion, everybody had stopped working except my father. When he was successful in removing a big chunk of dirt, everybody picked up courage and the project went ahead. There was the feeling that this was a real accomplishment and that it was a real asset to the church as such. This took care of part of the whole problem of the expansion of the facility. This was only a temporary measure.

There was a great deal of feeling developing that there should be a remodeling project. Five people were then added and designated to begin the gathering of money for the remodeling project. The agreement was that as soon as \$2,000 - \$2,500 had been gathered, the membership was to discuss plans of how to remodel the church. There were five more people added to the original five in order to gather money and complete the project a little more rapidly.

An architect from Hutchinson was supposed to submit a plan if it would not cost more than \$75 to have such a plan drawn up. When this whole matter came up for discussion there were 97 who voted in favor of going ahead with the project and 53 said no. So this vote was not overwhelming. For a little while there was discussion as to whether we should actually go ahead with the remodeling project. The trustees then came with the suggestion that a plan should be drawn up that would cost about \$25,000. \$25 were to be assessed each church member, and \$6 per \$1,000 of property owned. Also, each member was to contribute 5 days of labor. When this plan was discussed, another vote was taken. This time there were 95 who said yes and 45 who said no. It was then agreed that the plan should proceed.

Dan Unruh, a local carpenter, was called to talk about the plan which had already been partly drawn up. He said a church renovation or remodeling project could be completed for \$30,000. He would value the old building at \$5,000 and the remodeling at \$25,000 which then would fall into the trustees' plan for acceptability.

A building committee was appointed. This was composed of C. R. Voth - chairman, G. J. Duerksen, Peter Bartel, and C. F. Unruh. The committee visited many churches. C. R. Voth reported to the brotherhood what they had seen and what they thought should be incorporated into the remodeled church. He was a very excellent chairman for this building committee. I think he was able to keep the congregation in a gentle mood. If there was any question or dissent he was always very considerate. The committee would talk about this or try to reach some decision. As chairman, he was able to keep harmony within the congregation, which is a rather marvelous accomplishment. He deserves a lot of credit for that, which I think he never got.

Now, there were many requests. Everyone wanted as many Sunday School classrooms as possible. Rev. P. H. Unruh, who was elder of the church, wanted a large room for Bible study. There were other questions of all kinds that came up. How should the seating be arranged? Should this be the old seating like that of the old Alexanderwohl Church building, with the ladies sitting on the north and the men on the south? The ladies were given a chance to vote. There were 71 votes in favor of sitting on the south side and 112 voted to stay on the north side where they had been.

Was the bell in the remodeling plan to begin with?

It came as a later addition. There were people who thought we should have a bell, while others did not know. I think the bell was not in the \$30,000 range originally. There were special solicitations made to meet the amount needed for the purchase of a bell. The Christian Endeavor Society asked the

young people if they would contribute enough money for a bell in the tower. I was in charge of collecting some of this money.

There are many little stories connected with the church rebuilding project. Some of us had no experience in the work we were asked to do. I recall that I hauled sand one particular day. Not having hauled sand before in my life, my father gave me instructions what to do. I loaded the wagon part-way full, and hoped the horses could pull the load out of the creek bed. Then there was a little pile of sand where you could finish loading and have a full load. The creek was located one mile south and three miles west of Alexanderwohl. I remember one time I was substituting for my father. My father must have had other duties, but it was our turn to work. I had to crawl up there on the roof to nail down sheathing, which I had never done. It was kind of a scary operation. Getting onto and off the roof was a scary experience too. I always found comfort in the fact that Peter Bartel, an old carpenter, would see the mistakes I had made. This was also true of the time I came to shingle the roof. I had never nailed shingles before. My father showed me just how to do it before I went to the church project. I shingled. Then, after the first rain after the church was completed, I went up to the southeast corner to see whether the roof leaked. It had not. Another story goes that one person who did not want a new church building, finally figured out where he could sit in the new church and still be located in the old building. He found a spot and began to attend church again.

I want to say one thing for Dan Unruh. He was very careful and a meticulous worker. He sawed all the timbers for the roof by hand and then they were reached up to the roof. He never wasted one 2X4, they all fit. He did not say much, but anything he said was right.

The total cost of the church remodeling amounted to \$31,431.56. This money was not all in hand. At the time of dedication they still needed \$12,264.12. They figured the days of labor contributed amounted to \$2,500.

It was a marvelous occasion to come to the dedication when the church was completed in 1928. One thing that stands out on that occasion is that people were invited to bring their own meals from home. But guests were entertained and given a meal by the congregation, by the church as such.

While this sounds very strange, we had not yet come to a time when church facilities were used for eating. That was a later development with the new 1928 church.

Please explain the procedure of Communion and the rite of footwashing.

Everyone was to participate in a Preparation Sunday held a week before the observance of Communion. They called it a Preparatory Sunday, which was to be a time for self-examination. If they had quarrels with somebody else in the congregation they should write to those people before they came to Communion. So that this was a meeting of love and brotherhood. As I recall, Communion was observed twice a year, one with footwashing and one without.

During the Communion service the bread was always served first. The story of the Passion of Christ was told as long as I remember. As the bread was being distributed, the minister would tell the story. He would begin with the arrest of Jesus. When everyone had been served, he would interrupt the story and everyone would eat the bread. When it was time for the cup to be passed, he would begin the story where he had left off. The story was continued through the trial of Christ and finally His death and His resurrection. The Rev. P. H. Unruh had perfected this story to a place where he always finished the story when the Communion Service was over. I think this is one of the most remarkable things I know about the Communion Service.

The bread was baked by the wife of each deacon. The bread was a yeast bread. It was zwieback bread really, but pinched off into little breads. The loaf of bread was about the size of the thumbnail.

Have you always practiced the custom of placing the bread into a clean white handkerchief, and what is its significance?

That was an old tradition. The minister broke the bread apart and it was passed on a platter. As it was passed each person took a bread and placed it in a handkerchief. I think the thought back of it was that this bread was a sacred element used in the Communion Service and therefore should not be held by human hand, which might be unclean. I think that symbolism goes with it, although I have never heard it explained. In the early years the common cup was used as was wine. Each person wiped the common cup before passing it to the next person, using the handkerchief you had held the bread in. Later, grape juice was substituted when individual cups were used for hygienic reasons.

The practice was to hold the rite of footwashing after the Communion Service. Footwashing took place in the sanctuary, right in the pews. The congregation moved apart a little so a basin of warm water could be brought in between the pews. The men were more in the south section of the church, and the women on the other side. The people would pair off. One person would wrap a towel around their waist and throw the longer end over their shoulder and then wash the feet of the other. They would rise, embrace, and the recipient would kiss the one who washed his feet in gratitude for his brotherliness. They would take turns in that way.

The whole issue of footwashing came up for discussion when Rev. Heinrich Banman was older and did not want the responsibility as elder. My father was elected as elder, but he did not feel he was ready to accept this position. At that time the question of footwashing came along because my father read the account in the New Testament that footwashing was not to be a ceremonial observance, but that it was symbolic. This raised the whole question if footwashing should be continued or not. The congregation as such, as I understand it, wanted to retain the footwashing. But it was then changed to one footwashing during the year with Communion, and the other one without.

How did a person join the Catechism Class?

Usually, at a certain point in the Sunday School curriculum and when you were in the age group of 15 to 18. You would go to the minister and request to be part of the catechism class. The catechism was memorized. There was an assignment with so many questions for each Sunday. I think it was the fourth Sunday in the month that the members of the catechism class would sit on a platform in the old church. The catechism was a public service instead of Sunday School. The minister would ask the question and the students would recite together in unison. That was always a Sunday to be dreaded if you were in the catechism class. You also recited the answers together on the other Sundays when you were in a Sunday School room.

After the catechism class was finished and before baptism, you had a witnessing night when you gave your testimony. You were called on individually to give your witness before the congregation, also reciting a scripture or hymn. This Sunday evening service was open to the congregation with many people attending. Baptism was on Pentecost Sunday. You were baptized and accepted into the membership of the church.

When was the German language discontinued and English used?

All church services were conducted in German until 1940. An English service was first discussed when a missionary from Chicago asked for permission to speak in the Alexanderwohl church. The church minutes (May 19, 1917) state that since many older members would not be able to understand the English, a German sermon should be preached also.

The first move toward the English came via the Sunday School. At first it was agreed that no English class be held, but a teacher might use an English phrase to clarify statements. At the annual meeting of December 30, 1924, the motion was adopted that English classes might be created on a trial basis — one class for children and one for adults. Thirteen years later the question of one English service per month was raised. It was agreed that the



entire congregation should vote on this question. The vote taken on January 23, 1938 indicated that 266 favored such an arrangement, while 126 opposed it. That same year the Articles of Faith read to the catechism class were read in English. On October 12, 1939 it was voted to have a series of four evangelistic services, two each in English and German. By the end of that year, two English services per month were held, the second and fourth Sundays. In 1940 an English pulpit Bible was purchased. In 1950 the regulation governing the affairs of the district representatives were translated into the English language.

When did the church start paying the elder?

Elder Jacob Buller, who led the congregation to Kansas received two sections of land from the Santa Fe Railroad for his efforts to bring the Mennonites to Kansas. The congregation expressed its gratitude by giving him a new buggy and harness for his horse. To keep him warm in winter, he was also given a fur coat.

After the death of Elder Peter Balzer, Rev. Heinrich Banman was asked to carry the responsibility as church leader. The election of a successor to Elder Peter Balzer was held February 29, 1908. C. C. Wedel was elected by a large majority. After giving the matter considerable thought, he declined this office on March 28, 1908. This created a difficult situation. Some felt that additional ministers should be elected. Also, that further thought and prayer should be given this matter. On September 19, 1908, the motion was made that C. C. Wedel be given a unanimous vote and that he be given proper financial support to make this possible. He however, felt that he had given the congregation an answer and that he should not accept the position. Two evangelists were now elected, J. J. Banman and P. H. Unruh. On January 15, 1915, P. H. Unruh was elected as elder.

While the elder had been supported on a voluntary basis until 1912, a new arrangement was recommended whereby his support was taken from the church treasury.

Here are three very brief pioneer stories Rev. D. C. Wedel related about his father.

"My father was out plowing one day. I suppose they were antelope that came by. These animals were running through the grass down a slough. Since he had never seen anything like them before, he was frightened to death."

"As a boy, my father and his friends would walk across the prairie looking for prairie chicken eggs after the prairie fire. The fire had cooked the eggs, so they ate them."

"Another interesting thing were the cowboys herding cattle which were at large on the prairie. The cowboys would use their saddle for their pillow at night under the stars."

EXCERPTS FROM "PIONEER DAYS"

by C. C. Wedel

As soon as the settlers had moved out of the immigrant house that the Santa Fe train agents had erected, it was turned into our worship house.

It did not stand on a very convenient place, we always had to pass a creek. The building was moved some years later to where our Alexanderwohl Church now stands. It was a very long and low building with one wing to the east. The ceiling was made out of six inch flooring. When Rev. Wm. Ewert, father of Wm. Ewert of Brudertal, who was a tall man was our guest speaker; he nearly touched the ceiling. The benches were of plain boards nailed to wood horses without back rests. A narrow aisle was left in the center and benches around the walls which were the most comfortable ones were always taken first. The services usually lasted from two to two and a half hours. The four or five songleaders announced two or three songs with a great number of verses which were sung without instrument accompaniment. Then came the sermons, first one preacher made the opening which was longer than the sermons we have today followed by the regular sermon; so, it was always a long service. On holidays which were three; Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost they had a guest preacher. Usually between the opening and sermon was a long hymn. They often had a recess between the opening and sermon which was taken advantage of by many people to go out for a little while. We all drove to church with horse and wagon. Those who had no horses drove oxen. There was always something to look after, some horses came untied and went home.

I was a barefoot boy and as I saw people leave the church, I thought the service was over with. I went to our wagon and waited a while but nobody came. I did see that one by one the people went back in to the service but I didn't think too much about it. When we went home from church, I got straightened out as to what was the right thing to do.

The catechism class was started on Sunday afternoon. This was kept a long time. Baptism was given any time of the year, as soon as they had finished catechism instruction. It was strongly insisted that the candidates learn the catechism by memory.

The funerals and weddings were held in the family house and were announced by mailing out letters. The brotherhood meetings were similar in form to the Quakers, in that the Elder presented before the congregation the agenda or business which the brothers with silence granted, but afterwards there often arose murmurings. No parliamentary procedures were used, or motions or resolutions. No minutes or records were brought before the Brotherhood meeting.

Singing schools were arranged in the evening which were led by the school teacher. So came new life to the congregation with these choir practices. There was day school for many years in our parlor or front room, because of this the choir practices were held in our house. Mother always baked two big pans of rolls ready for distribution at recess.

The congregation also started Sunday School which was led by Rev. Banman alternately held at Blumenfeld, Blumenort, Springfield or Steinback. These meetings were more of a prayer meeting and attended mostly by elderly people. Once as I was a little boy I attended such a meeting and we had to each read a verse out of the New Testament. I as a boy was not much interested in that skill, so we as a gang of boys loved rather to play Sunday afternoon.

Reedley, Calif. Nov. 18, 1986.

Rev. Kenneth Rupp, pastor  
Alexanderwohl Church  
Goessel, Kans.

Kindly convey my greetings to the Alexanderwohl Church on this historic 100th anniversary.

It brings back to my memory many things of my experiences of past years, when as a child I with my parents, B.B. and Lena Reimer, who were members there, learned to attend church there. And about 1900, a little before or after, I also attended Sunday School there, which at that time my father and C.H. Friesen, two school teachers, persuaded the church to begin conducting S.S. in the church on Sunday mornings. Previously S.S. had been conducted in the school houses in the afternoons.

I am reminded of sitting with my father and older brother in a bench just south of the high platform where the row of "Foresaenger" sat and begun the songs of the congregation. There were no instruments. I used to ask my father "will the preaching soon be over?". On the annual mission Sunday the children marched by the table placed on the main floor before the rostrum and dropped their year's mission savings in the row of plates. These were offerings for missions to the "Heiden" (heathen). The older people had other methods of gathering funds. Also there were boxes fastened to the wall at the door for contributions.

Vivid in my mind is the day in 1906 in June when my brother and I were sledding corn in the very place north of the church where the immigrant house stood, which served as the church in the first years. That afternoon just before the cyclone devastated Goessel. We stood and watched with horror as the funnel like a huge writhing snake let down on its way over Goessel and then lifted as it continued toward the east.

I would have wanted to be with you on this day except my age (92) prevents it.

My prayers are for the blessings of the Lord for this day and the years ahead.

Most sincerely yours, Otto B. Reimer

*O. B. Reimer*

SUMMARY OF EXPENSES FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ALEXANDERWOHL MENNONITE CHURCH - 1886  
 - from PETER PANKRATZ'S ACCOUNT BOOK (KONTE BUCH) 1886 - 1892

BUILDING MATERIAL

Lumber, Roofing Material, Miscellaneous Purchases -	3,159.10	}	3,865.60
Masonry - Bricks, Stones, Cement, Lime -	64.50		
Paint Supplies - Linseed Oil, White Lead, Black Paint, White Paint, Varnish, Brushes -	304.25		
Doors, Windows, Hardware, etc. -	230.50		
Shutters - 53 pair & Hinges, etc. -	105.00		

FURNISHINGS

Lamps - 16 & Oil Container -	17.80	}	52.90
Chairs - 3 dozen -	16.50		
Chairs - 2 -	7.00		
Stoves & Pipes -	50.50		
Carpeting -	7.60		
Bible -	4.00		

LABOR EXPENDITURES

CARPENTERS:	-	995.70	}	1,725.00
Master Carpenter (Johann Wall?)				
Peter Quiring           Heinrich Banman				
Heinrich Quiring       Jakob Schroeder				
Johann Ediger           Jakob Ensz				
Cornelius Richert       Johann Banman				
Kornelius Schmidt       Herman J _____ ?	-			
Johann Janzen           Heinrich Nikkel				
Leonhard Sommerfeld   Heinrich Flaming				
MASONS:	-	163.30		
Master Mason -				
Jakob Warkentin & Other Masons				
PAINTERS:	-	181.00		
Master Painter - Peter Harms				
Master Painter - David Kroeker				
Johann Harms				
Peter Ediger				
BUILDING COMMITTEE:	-	385.00		
Peter Schroeder				
Heinrich Unruh				
Heinrich Schmidt				
Peter Pankratz				

FOOD and LODGING for Carpenters, Masons, Painters			
FOOD PURCHASED - Hams, Beef, Cabbage, Raisins,	-	181.00	}
Prunes, Apples, Currents, Eggs, Coffee, Sugar			
Cookstove, Utensils, Table Service			
COOKS'S WAGES	-	135.00	}
Frau Quiring, Maria Boese, Helena Buller			
LODGING & MEALS @ 15¢ per meal	-	15.00	
(for Boarding Carpenters & Painters)			
FUEL- for Cooking & Heating			
Kerosene	-	11.73	}
Coal	-	64.27	
FIRE INSURANCE	-	45.00	45.00
TRANSLATION OF CHARTER	-	1.00	1.00
MISCELLANEOUS	-	4.00	4.00
Including: Telegram, Paper & Notebook,			
To Carpenter - for use of Grindstone, Drill			
Bits, Wood Hammer, Chisels, & Lead Pencils			
		TOTAL EXPENDITURES	6,100.20*
		- 1886 to 1892 -	

\*The figure of \$6,100.20 is for total expenditures until April 1892 and the erection of a coal shed, outhouses, and some expenses for items for an adjoining building (custodian's house?) are included.

The figure of \$6,030.24 quoted in my original summary and Brian's article was Pankratz's entry for November 24, 1890.

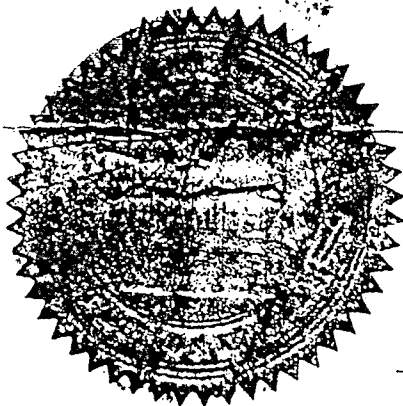
states 241



STATE OF KANSAS  
OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF STATE

*J. E. Allen, Secretary of State*  
of the State of Kansas, do hereby certify that the following  
and annexed is a true and correct copy of the original instru-  
ment of writing filed in my office:

*June 1* 1888



IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have

*hereto subscribed my name and affixed*  
*my official seal. Done at Topeka, Kansas,*  
*this 14th day of June 1888.*

*E. J. Allen*

SECRETARY OF STATE

*J. W. D. Cavanaugh*  
Act. Sec'y of State

A R T I C L E S O F A S S O C I A T I O N

of

THE ALEXANDERWOHLER MENNONITEN GEMEINDE.

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The subscribers hereby associate themselves as a body politic and corporate, in pursuance of the provisions of the Statute Laws of the state of Kansas, authorizing and regulating the formation of stock corporations and adopt the following general articles of association and agreement:

1, The name of this corporation shall be "THE ALEXANDERWOHLER MENNONITEN GEMEINDE".

2, The purposes for which said corporation is organized are,  
(a) for the support of public worship according to the articles of faith, and the discipline now held and enforced by said church.

(b) and for the maintenance of a private cemetery to be used for the burial of deceased members and adherents of said church.

3, That the place where its business is to be transacted shall be at the church on the south west quarter of the south west quarter of section thirty-three, in township twenty, south, range one east of the sixth P.M. in Marion county, state of Kansas.

4, That the term for which this corporation shall exist is perpetual.

5, That the number of directors or trustees of this corporation shall be five and the names and residences of those appointed for the first year are

Peter Pankratz	Legigh	Kansas.
Heinrich Unruh	Newton	Kansas
Benjamin Wedel	Springvalley	Kansas
Peter Schroeder	Lehigh	Kansas
Peter Quiring	Springvalley	Kansas.



6, That the estimate of the value of the real property of said corporate association and their goods, chattels, rights and credits is six thousand five hundred (\$6,500.00) dollars.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, we have hereunto subscribed our names  
this 18th day of May A.D. 1888.

PETER PANKRATZ

HEINRICH UNRUH

BENJAMIN WEDEL

PETER SCHROEDER

PETER QUIRING

MARION COUNTY

State of Kansas. ss.

Personally appeared before me the undersigned a notary public in and for said county and state; Peter Pankratz, Heinrich Unruh Benjamin Wedel, Peter Schroeder, Peter Quiring who are personally known to me to be the same persons who executed the foregoing instrument of writing and duly acknowledged the execution of the same for the purposes therein named.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name and affixed my notarial seal, this 18th day of May A.D. 1888.

E. R. BURKHOLDER Notary Public.

( S E A L ) Apr. 3rd, 1889.

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES FOR RECONSTRUCTION OF THE ALEXANDERWOHL CHURCH - 1928  
 - from PETER BARTEL'S TREASURY RECORDS for February 1928 to 1932 -

BUILDING MATERIALS

Brick, Cement, Sand	-	949.68	}	12,454.56
Finish Lumber, Frames, Windows	-	3,485.57		
Rough Lumber, Oak Flooring, etc.	-	5,831.96		
Hardware	-	1,143.25		
Electric Wiring - Material & Labor	-	800.00		
Paint	-	141.68		
Hauling & Freight	-	101.58		

EQUIPMENT & FURNISHINGS

Furnace System	-	4,743.00	}	10,489.70
Copper Finial	-	52.25		
Light Fixtures	-	707.70		
Pews	-	4,348.40		
Pulpit, Table & 5 Chairs	-	349.60		
Choir Chairs	-	288.75		

LABOR EXPENDITURES

Raising Church Building & Cement Work (F. M. Goossen)	-	298.29	}	9,356.35
Masons (Wm. Granada & Sons)	-	1,483.35		
Floor Sanding (Carl Barrett)	-	285.00		
Carpenters (Dan F. Unruh - Architect & Master Carpenter)	-	5,459.70		
P. M. Schroeder				
Henry Woelk				
G. A. Duerksen				
Charles Egy				
Jacob Wiebe				
Charles Miller				
John G. Flaming				
A. E. Unruh				
C. C. Koehn				
H. J. Schroeder				
John Ratzlaff				
P. J. Duerksen				
Blueprint - Dan F. Unruh	-	150.00		
Exterior Paint & Labor (H. S. Buller)	-	533.01		
Interior Painting Contract (H. E. Dirks)	-	1,147.00		

TOTAL EXPENDITURES 32,300.61

ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURES

BELL - Funded by 48" Blymyer Bell, Tone - "G"	-	340.00 (plus freight - 29.79)
INSURANCE	-	216.19

BUILDING COMMITTEE:

C. R. Voth  
P. U. Schmidt  
Peter Bartel  
G. J. Duerksen  
C. F. Unruh

DEDICATION: November 11, 1928

## MEMOIRS

February 6, 1898

My grandparents, Frank Goertz (the grandmother a Schroeder daughter) lived in the Kingdom, now under the rule of the Kaiser in Prussia. Their home and farm land was in the <sup>established</sup> Grundenszer region adjacent to the Weitzel. Here my dear father, Heinrich Goertz, was born April 9, 1809.

My mother was born Eva Voth, September 17, 1810. Her parents, Peter Voth, also lived in Prussia in the Swedish region. Grandmother was a daughter of Jacob Buller, living in Pschokofka. Grandfather Peter Voth was a preacher in the church where Peter Wedel was the Elder.

My wife's parents were Jacob Pankratz. They were born and lived in the Schweitzer region of Prussia under the Kaiser in Pschokofka, not far from Kullen. My wife's mother was a daughter of Jacob Buller, who was a deacon in the Brotherhood which was later named Alexanderwohl in Russia.

In 1819-1820 the parents (as children) from both sides with their parents moved from Prussia to Russia. They settled in the southern part of Russia. In southern Russia, under the Czarist government, in the region of Berdjansk on the Molotchna River they were given a large reservation of land.

My father's parents settled in Dorf Grosweide and the Church's name was Rudnerweide Gemeinde. The first Elder was Franz Goertz, later was Benjamin Ratclaff. My grandfather also served as deacon.

My father grew up and was baptized in the Rudnerweide Gemeinde. My mother and my wife's parents grew up and were later baptized in Alexanderwohl Gemeinde where my parents were married and where they stayed a member until their grave. They became part of the body of Believers and remained members until their graves.

My dear mother was married twice. Her first husband was Peter Pankratz and they were married four years. During this time 2 daughters were born to them, Maria and Anna. Then later she married my father, Heinrich Goertz, who was an old bachelor. She stepped into the second marriage and 2 children were born to them.

Because the 2 sisters from the first marriage died under 6 years I had the privilege to know and enjoy only one sister, Elizabeth.

My mother died in November 24, 1866, at 9: p.m. at the age of 56 years and one month and 25 days. My mother was mother of 4 children and grandmother of <sup>26</sup>??

Then my father was a widower for 4½ years and then at the age of 62 he married the widow of Jacob Buller which lasted 6 years and 12 days. In the last year he

suffered much because of a stroke. His mind was not clear. It was very hard to leave them behind, but we should not worry about them because we have the hope that we will see them again. My father's last words to me were "My God is still living". The farewell had taken place to never meet again on this earth.

My dear father died June 8, 1877, at 10:00 p.m. at the age of 68 years and 2 months. And he was father over 2 children and grandfather over 26.

The relatives of my father's side all stayed except his cousin, Heinrich Goertz, who with all his family came to America. The seven families in my father's family are Peter Goertz, Alexanderwohl; Jacob Neumans, Alexanderwohl; David Balzer, Leonard Bartel, Jacob Balzer, later Johann Koethler, and an Aunt Heinrich Janzen who had no children; all lived in the village of Grosweide.

From my mother's side the relatives are all here in America in Kansas. My Aunt Johann Abrahams children are living in Nebraska.

Now something of my wife's parents as much as I know. Her father died February 3, 1869, reaching the age of 72 years, 9 months, and 19 days. Her mother died January 24, 1872, and reached the age of 68 years, 5 months and 24 days. Both died in Alexanderwohl, Russia. The dear mother died in the evening. From 9:00 to 12:00 that evening the heavens were red as with light from a fire. The people were scared and asked "What will happen?"

Now something of our personal life -

I am born in 1835, April 2. My wife, born Sara Pankratz, April 7, 1837. Thanks be to God, we both had the privilege to be brought up by Christian parents. Finally we reached that age of youth where we realized that without God it was a lost life. We are thankful that through the drawing of the Holy Spirit, and the Word of the sermons of the cross of Jesus Christ, our faith in that time which by rights could have been called a weak faith, but in beautiful baptismal instruction which we were given, was very much strengthened. So that we also had our own testimony of repentance of our sins and that Jesus Christ, God's Son, the world's Saviour, through the offering of His Son all may have the privilege of being saved.

Then we were baptized by Honorable Elder Peter Wedel in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, baptized on the second day of Pentecost, 1853. Then we became members of Alexanderwohl Church in which we were privileged to receive the spiritual nourishment of which we very often felt unworthy. As young warriors in the war against sin and the world, sometimes we almost yielded to temptation. But we were always strengthened through the grace of God which says in Matthew 12:20 the flickering, glimmering light of a wick will not be blown out and the bruised reed would not break.

Then in 1858, October 5, through a Christian betrothal we were promised to each other. On October 23 we celebrated our wedding where we gave each other our hands in marriage. The priestly blessing was given by honorable Elder Peter Wedel. With that we entered a new period of life, which brought both its joys and also worries,

sorrows, pains, and suffering. Soon after the wedding, in addition to our housekeeping and farming responsibilities, I had another task in the church. I was elected by the church to serve as Vorsänger (song leader). Since God has given the gift of a beautiful voice and because of this with God's help, I could serve for over 9 years with joy.

So as it was said to the Apostle Peter; John 21:18; Verily, verily I say unto thee, when thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst, but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not. The Lord also led me where I did not want to go. At the age of 33 the church elected me as minister. Now I have reached the period of life with great responsibility which a ministry brings with it. My humble life reached to the foot of a mountain which I thought I would not be able to climb. But the Lord also guides and leads. So with a heavy heart I was willing to be ordained to the ministry, February 2, 1868, by Honorable Elder Peter Wedel. My first text was Ezekiel 4: 22-24; That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Now when I am writing this 25 years have gone by. I think back on all the duties all these years have brought with them. Whenever I look back I see so many ways that I have failed in this important ministry. Then I but pray that the Lord will be lenient with his servant, and give grace instead of what I deserve.

Now back to our married life -

We lived for some years with my parents in their summer room. We tilled the land that we rented from my father. The first year, 10 months after the wedding, after a hard labor, my wife was delivered of a small son. He lived at birth, but died almost immediately, August 1, 1859. So with a heavy heart we had to bury our first son. On top of that my wife was very sick. She had to stay in bed 12 weeks. We had to experience what the Apostle Paul says that those who marry will have personal suffering. With God's help she recovered completely.

And on October 14, 1860, our son, Heinrich was born and speedy recovery was our joy.

Then on March 10, 1864, our son, Jacob, was born. In this year we had a complete harvest failure so that many of the brothers went out as laborers, threshing. It was hard labor, hard to earn our bread. During harvest it rained very hard so we had a lot of fodder to cut but it was too bad that so many of the farmers had sold their cattle at a low price. Jacob died December 18, 1866.

In the fall, November, 1865, we took our foster daughter, Anna Buller. We became her legal guardians until she reached her seventeenth birthday. She was just a little over 7 years old being born, March 6, 1858.

She stayed as a child in the home until she was married. She was treated like a child of the home and given clothes, bedding, a wardrobe, a cow, a calf, one hog, and \$100 in cash at the time of her marriage. (Translator's note, She was married to Jacob Loewen the 1<sup>st</sup> of December, 1879. She was the mother to the late Mrs. H.J. Reimer and the grandmother to Milton Reimer.)

The next year, 1866, November 12, my loving mother died. In February, 1867, on the twenty-second a son, Peter, was born; a fat, perfect baby. At the age of 9 months he took very sick. We thought it was because he had no teeth and his illness was caused by teething. Then came the epilepsy (convulsions) with children a passing thing, but with him it was different. It hung on and he had it 'til his death at age 15. All during this time we had a heavy cross to bear. But in all of this suffering we felt the loving supporting hand of God and also in our home. To Him be the thanks and praise.

Then in 1870, February 22, our twin daughters, Sara and Elizabeth, were born. At this time the colonists, especially the Dutch colonists were living under the Kaiser but had certain written privileges, that they would not have to serve in the army. Now a new law was put into effect that after 20 years all would come under the Russian law (control). All would have to serve in the army. It was a trying time. At the same time a 10-year emigration law was passed. All colonists were free to emigrate with all his property. Then it was very hard - where to? where to?

Then on October 31, 1872, the children, Eva and Frank, were born, the second pair of twins. The next year, 1873, the emigration pressure was so great that delegates were sent to America; they were Elder Jacob Buller, Elder Leonhard Suderman, and from Prussia Elder Wilhelm Ewert. The delegates went to North America to look for a new home to live. The Lord was gracious and protected them by land and sea so that after a 17-day ocean trip they arrived the seventeenth of May at Castle Garden in New York. The purpose of the trip was to require about religious freedom and to look for land. After they had looked at the land in Manitoba, Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas, they returned well and healthy and with God's protection arrived in Berdganski the eighth of September. The report was such that the decision was to emigrate to America.

In fall, the same year we sold our farm land very cheaply, at half price; 2400 ruble. Grain, horses, cattle, house and furniture and every thing salable amounted to another 2400 ruble, in all 4800 ruble.

Since we owed my father 800 ruble, (who decided because of sickness to stay in Russia) we gave him the 800 ruble, although he did not want nor needed the money.

After his death it was sent to us. So with 4000 ruble we started our trip to America. We left our dear home (Russian time) July 24, 1874, and started our journey with a sick son, Peter, and 2 pair oxen, all four small which gave us much sleepless nights and much worry. We stepped into the train and left Russia.

By the new calendar, on August 16, we left Hamburg. The Teutonia was the name of our ship. The first days we were very seasick. Otherwise it wasn't too bad. After 18 days on the boat, on September 2 at 9:00 in the evening, well and healthy we arrived in New York, Castle Garden.

After we rested awhile, we had our money changed. Our money melted to \$2000 since the ruble was worth only 73¢. Then we left September 5 at 8:00 p.m. by train for Kansas and arrived September 8 at 4:00 p.m. in Topeka. We arrived in Topeka where the railroad had a very large brick factory. Here we lodged, pitifully for 4 weeks. At this time we looked for land where we could settle. Our 2 youngest children, Frank and Eva, were very sick with summer sickness (trans. note, probably diarrhea). Our little son, Frank, was a victim of this disease and died on Wednesday, October 7, at 8:00 p.m. Because it was already determined that we leave the next morning for Marion County there was no other way than in great haste to bury our lovely little son at the City Cemetery which was Thursday, October 8 at 12:00 noon. Very sorrowful, we left the grave where our little son was resting. It was very comforting that there were 6 little ones of our group resting there. Also there was a Henry Unruh. In all hurry we had to rush back to our lodging, pack our belongings and at 3:00 in the afternoon with a roar the train took us with our sorrowful hearts from the city of Topeka.

Those days are numbered among those in which we experienced hardship. We arrived in Peabody at midnight and unloaded in the morning our cattle, horses and other things. Then we left for our settlement on October 9. Here the railroad had built 2 big houses 13 x 200 foot long which should serve all of us for living quarters temporarily 'til our houses were built.

But we quickly made hay for fodder and we were fortunate with building that we could move in on November 12. The cost of it was \$611.75. It was just the shell, the inside not being finished. It was in winter very cold. November 17 there was a great snowstorm. It was very cold. The work that first year, because everything had to be started, was very hard. Some families were poor. The work was very manifold and complicated; breaking the prairie, planting, and do all the building. That was the order of the day. It was very hard.

"Every beginning is hard". This is one saying that has really been fulfilled for us here in America.



In that first fall, 1874, I accompanied Sam Miller to Nebraska to locate possessions which were unloaded at the wrong address. We also went to look for Peter Pankratz' trunk and bedding.

In the first year there was much traveling to do to put everything in order, also because of the poor brethren from Poland. There had to be a committee elected to care for the poor. There was also much traveling to do because of fire insurance. In February 15, 1876, our church elected teachers; Cornelius Wedel, Jacob Richert. Also Heinrich Schmidt and Peter Schroeder were elected deacons. Heinrich Banman and Peter Balzer were elected Vorsaeuger.

In 1876 we built a barn in addition to the living quarters. Jacob Wiebe and Jacob Pankratz. were the carpenters.

On the first of March, 1876, at 8:00 in the evening Eva died. In 1876, the night of March 12-13, there was a severe rain storm with thunder and lightening; a tornado threw the barn over. Horses and cattle were covered with debris, but nothing died as a result.

In 1876, June 1, our brother-in-law, Johanna Voth, went to bed a healthy person, at 1:00 a.m. he was dead. On June 3 he was buried.

In 1877, July 15, lightening struck Peter Uruh's wheatstack.

In 1877, November 28, there was an accident at Johann Uruhs. Their daughter, Eva, went at 6:00 a.m. to the well to draw water. She slipped and fell headfirst into the well. They pulled her out dead. With great sorrow she was buried the first of December.

In 1878, February 19, we had our Aunt Johann Abrahams of Nebraska as a guest.

On November 20, 1878, Peter Ediger started to school at Peter Balzers. The following spring I gave him \$60 as wages for 4 months ending in August. (A remark - This Peter Ediger became an orphan just before we started our trip. Then his grandmother, the day before we left, she came to us with him that we should take him along to America. We hardly could decide in such a short time. But he did not let up in begging and promised to help as much as was his capacity with the small children, which he performed well. It all worked out so well. The governor in Russia had one child more of 15 years of age written down for us. So we considered it God's will that he come with us. The trip cost \$80 plus his clothing, and board. He worked 4 years for us after we came here to pay this back.) (Translators note - He was the grandfather to Paul Ediger, Hillsboro.)

In 1879, March 8, my wife became very sick with a hemorrhage. After one month our son, Cornelius, was born April 6. Mother could not get her strength back. She started to swell and we thought it was dropsy. After 7 weeks we went to Neyton to Dr. Wuhall. After 3 months, with praise to the Lord, she was well.

In October they sent him to "Opola" to the mental institution. In December Jacob Hiebert died.

In 1877, November 18, our son started to go to school in Peter Balzer's school. In 1886 he attended one more winter the Balzer school.

In 1879, December 12, our foster daughter, Anna Buller, was married. We invite 56 families.

In 1883, May 1, at 3:00 a.m. our sick son, Peter died. He had epilepsy for 14 years. During this time he and we lived through many difficult nights. He reached the age of 15 years, 2 months and 9 days.

In 1883 our labor costs were \$58 for building the addition to the house and the granary.

In 1883, November 8, I and Elder Heinrich Richert went to Summerfield, Illinois, for the General Conference. The conference ended and we came back happy and well November 17.

In 1883, December 22, the church had an election. The lot fell to brothers Heinrich Banman and Peter Balzer to be teachers. In 1884, January 20, these church brothers were ordained as ministers.

In the spring of 1884 we moved the big barn away from the house.

In 1886, September 27, we started to build an addition to the church 40 x 70 feet. On December 12 we dedicated this building. At this dedication the following brothers preached; Elder Jacob Buller, Elder Dietrich Goertert, Elder Heinrich Urruh who was here as a visitor from Russia, and Elder David Goetz.

In the new church on December 27 a Mission Festival was held. The preachers were Elder Jacob Penner, Elder Wilhelm Mart, Bradental, and Elder Heinrich Urruh from Russia. That was a blessing for our big church.

October 27, 1887, I and Elder Heinrich Richert went to the Eastern District Conference in Orville, Ohio, and from there we went to Pennsylvania to the General Conference. On November 13, we came home well and protected at 4:00 p.m.

In 1887, December 3, our son, Heinrich was betrothed to Suzanna Isnac. On December 13 they were married. The weather was beautiful.

In 1889, September 1, Peter Bartel shingled our house. In 1889, in fall, our children, the Heinrich Goertz's, moved from our farm.

In 1884 we bought the big machine (translator's note - possibly a threshing machine) and built a cow barn.

In 1886 in spring, we took a trip to the Indian Territory.

In 1889, January 19, Heinrich Voth's wife of Berlin ton (Oklahoma) died.

In the fall of 1888 Jacob Warkentine built a brick oven for us.

In 1890 we made a room upstairs.

In 1890, March 4, *our daughter was betrothed to* Jacob Markentine. The wedding was March 20. We invited 108 families.

October 13 I and Elder Heinrich Richert left from Mountbridge at 8:00 p.m. to go to South Dakota to go to the General Conference. On our way back we stopped in Nebraska to visit relatives. After a four-day visit we left for home and arrived safely at home November 4 at 8:00 a.m.

In 1891, by Newton, Bethel College was built. The school was dedicated in 1893.

In 1891, May 1, because I cooled off too quickly, I took sick with rheumatism. I spent 10 weeks in the house with much pain.

November 7, 1891, our sister-in-law, Mrs. Jacob Krause died.

On October 29, 1891, our daughter, Elizabeth, was betrothed to Heinrich Unruh. November 17, 1891, they were married. Ninety-six families were invited.

January 17, 1892, Mrs. Jacob Pankratz, our sister-in-law, died.

September 14, 1892, our Vorsaeuger, Cornelius Weibel, was kicked by a horse in Lehigh when he stepped off the wagon. It was such a deathly kick that he died the next day in Newton. This was very painful for his family.

In the month of December, 1893, I was sickly until December 21 with malarial fever. I finally took to my bed. Then I also contracted 'rose face' and rheumatism. Because of this I spent months and weeks in pain. Even in spring, for the Easter holiday of 1894, I was not yet able to go to church.

In 1897, the last week in July I fell in the barn on a large box and injured my side. Because I did not take good care of it at that time, rheumatism set in so I had to spend 2½ months off and on in bed.

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Thus far, Rev. Heinrich Goertz, grandfathers <sup>Memories.</sup> ~~story.~~ I was told that he returned very sick from the General Conference, held in one of the eastern States, to which he had gone as a delegate. After spending many months in bed with dropsy, he went to be with his Lord December 23, 1904, reaching the age of 69 years. He had served as minister of the Alexanderwohl Church in Russia and America 33 years.

Grandmother Goertz went to her reward February 26, 1916, at the age of 79 years. The cause of her death was Flu.

Anna M. Unruh