

OMHGS Newsletter

OREGON MENNONITE HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
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Nampa Mennonite Church Centennial by Margaret Shetler

We were privileged to be a part of the centennial celebration of First Mennonite Church in Nampa, Idaho, the weekend of June 9-11.

Those in charge of putting together the program for the weekend did an excellent job. One can only guess at the hours of time that went into such preparation and execution of the celebration.

Friday evening a play depicting the early settlers and settlement, written by Lois Janzen Preheim, was presented.

There were tours of the area on Saturday morning. Some of the places visited included the site of the original Antioch church (building no longer standing) and the small Antioch cemetery which is maintained by the church; the site of the Christian day school operated for many years by the congregation; the location of the children's home; the mission hall downtown; the building on Sixth Street where the church was located for 60 years; and the City Acres area. Saturday afternoon was a time for visiting and recreational activities followed by a pork barbecue meal. The evening service was devoted to music. Former and present song leaders spoke and led the congregation in one or more of their favorite songs. Quartets and other musical groups also contributed to the service. A meeting scheduled for two hours lasted three and we understand that there were those hardy individuals who spent several more hours singing after the meeting was officially over and most of the congregation dispersed.

The Sunday morning service included a time of looking ahead as the story was told of how God led in the acquisition of their present building and of the

plans they have for it. Following the morning service was a carry-in meal and lots of visiting in the afternoon.

First Mennonite congregation outgrew their facilities on Sixth Street and were looking for something larger. They ended up with a school building only a few blocks from the Sixth Street location which was no longer used by the Nampa school system and was for sale. The total cost of the building, including expected costs for more renovation, amounted to less than half the estimated cost of an entirely new facility! This is but one of the stories that is found in the history book published by the congregation for this centennial event. The book is "Roots Out of Dry Ground," written by Lois Janzen Preheim of South Dakota at the request of the congregation. Copies of this book are available from the First Mennonite Church, 1220 5th Street N., Nampa ID 83687. They also have a notebook format centennial cookbook for sale. I recommend both books.

Workshop and Dinner Meeting Report

Saturday afternoon, March 18, 2000, an enthusiastic group of researchers and interested persons gathered at Zion Mennonite Church east of Hubbard for a genealogy workshop sponsored by OMHGS. Jerry Barkman, president of OMHGS, gave the first presentation on the subject of "Computers and Genealogy." He explained some of the advantages of using a genealogy program on the computer and discussed different programs available. His plans to demonstrate the program he used for his Jost genealogy were thwarted by an uncooperative computer. Tim Janzen of Portland who has a massive amount of data in his computer was present



and assisting Jerry and his computer was more cooperative. He was able to call up bits of information for some of the researchers present. His article about researching Mennonite-related

topics on the Internet appears elsewhere in this newsletter.

The second presentation of the afternoon was by Peggy Goertzen, Director of the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, located at Tabor College. Hillsboro, Kansas. Peggy was our featured guest for the weekend. She talked about "Researching Your Family History" and had numerous items on display for our perusal. She presented basic information as well as some lesser-known resources. The place to start to research your family is with yourself and what you know. You work back from there. Interview family members for what they know and remember. Don't wait; talk with the older family members now before it is too late. Write down what they know; better yet, use a tape recorder and record the interview. Document all information received: from whom, the date and where the interview was done. Check out stories for validity and accuracy. Some of the information that is handed down has become inaccurate with the passage of time and oft-telling. Or it may be true, as far as it goes, but is not the whole story.

One interesting resource she mentioned for those with German background is the copies of German language newspapers that are available in the archives at Tabor College. Many of these have been translated into English for those of us who don't read German.

Peggy's presentation was both informative and delightfully given.

At the dinner meeting Saturday evening, those present enjoyed a meal prepared by Shirley Martin of Zion. Following the meal, Peggy was our speaker. Her subject for the evening was "Why I Should Know My Family History." After differentiating between genealogy and family history, she gave us several good reasons for knowing our family history.

Genealogy is a line of descent where you have

dates: birth, marriage, death. Family history fleshes out the bare skeleton provided by those dates. It creates the life and times of the person, his/her emotions, family context, social context, historical context. It includes stories.

Following are some of the reasons why it is important to know something of our family history.

- 1. It makes history come alive. It's one thing to read about an event; it's another to have had an ancestor who was a participant in the event.
- 2. The world becomes smaller as you meet, either in person or by way of correspondence or telephone, new and interesting persons in pursuit of your research.
- 3. You get to be a detective as you seek out information and attempt to discover the truth of the stories that have been handed down from generation to generation.
- 4. It helps unravel some of your personal medical and health history as well as discover the source of personal physical characteristics; I.e., where did the red hair come from?
- 5. A further reason is that as you learn about and come to know your forebears, you gain a better understanding and knowledge of yourself.

Peggy illustrated these various reasons with stories from her personal research. Following her informal presentation, there was a time for questions and comments with excellent audience participation.

The following afternoon, Sunday, March 19, 2000, the spring semi-annual public meeting of the Society was held at Salem Mennonite Church. Again Peggy Goertzen was the speaker as she briefly told us

about a trip she had made a year or so as part of a tour group to the Ukraine. The talk was illustrated with slides and some pictures. The meeting was well attended and enjoyed by all and also generated a number of interesting questions and comments.

We hope to be able to publish a few of the pictures and Peggy's explanation of them in a future issue of the newsletter.

OMHGS NEWSLETTER

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Several former or current members of OMHGS have died recently.

John Lais, born April 18, 1914, son of Daniel and Ella (Egli) Lais, died May 9, 2000. John was one of our oldest members and had a vital interest in the stories of the Mennonites in this area and loved to share his knowledge.

Frank Morris, born March 19, 1921, the son of Glen E. and Elva (Schultz) Morris, died at his home at Hope Village in Canby on April 18, 2000. Frank and his wife, Mavis, who survives, were members of the Society from its beginning and have been generous contributors. Mavis is a valued volunteer in the Archives and Library.

Wendell King, born March 15, 1947, son of Donald (deceased) and Thelma (Yoder) King, died June 24, 2000, while attending the PNMC conference session at Moses Lake, Washington.

Earl Kennel was born July 13, 1923, the son of John and Anna (Widmer) Kennel, died June 25, 2000, also while attending conference in Moses Lake, Washington.

Our condolences to the wives and families of each of these four.

Upcoming Events

Following are some events with historical significance which will be taking place in the next several months.

September 17: Fall semiannual meeting of the Society featuring the "Life and Ministry of N. A. Lind"; Salem Mennonite Church, 2:30 p.m. (Program included with this Newsletter.)

September 29 to October 1: Drift Creek Camp celebrates 40 years. There has been a history book prepared for the occasion.

November 11-12: Menno Mennonite Church will be celebrating their centennial. They have prepared a history book of the congregation which should be available for the celebration.

New Books in the Library

Two recently published books have been added to our historical library.

Preheim, Lois Janzen: Roots out of Dry Ground. C2000. Published by the author. This is the history of First Mennonite Church of Nampa, Idaho, 1899-1999.

Nafziger, Florence: My Walk With God. 1999. Published privately. This is an autobiography of Florence's years as a missionary in India, 1946-1984.



The Second Boat: Amish Mennonite Immigrants to Canada by Lorraine Roth

This is the final article of the series presented by Lorraine Roth of Kitchener, Ontario, at an OMHGS workshop held at Fairview Mennonite Church in August 1996.

In 1983 the Mennonite Church celebrated the 300th anniversary of the coming of Mennonites to America. In 1683, the ship Concord brought a number of Ouakers among whom were a few Mennonites, to Penn's Woods, landing at Philadelphia. Two friends accompanied me to the conference held in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in 1983, celebrating the anniversary of the arrival of those first Mennonites. Upon hearing that they had arrived on the Concord, one of my friends said, "Oh, I thought we all came on the Mayflower!" Well, we didn't all come on the Mayflower, and we didn't all come on the Concord. I really should have entitled this presentation "The Third Boat." The point is simply that the group of immigrants that I am going to talk about were not the first ones to reach the American continent.

HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING First of all, let's place ourselves into the .

historical and geographical context of the times Our story begins in 1822. In the north, a war between the British and the French ended with Quebec being ceded to Britain in 1763 — only 60 years ago. And, for a few years Britain held the entire northwesterly part of the American continent.

The Revolutionary War ended about 40 years ago (1782), and the French Revolution 10 years later. The United States comprised thirteen states along the Atlantic seaboard with the new State of Ohio as the western frontier. What is today southern Ontario was then only the Quebec hinterland.

At the close of the Revolutionary War, United Empire Loyalists (Americans who had fought on the side of the British and who were promised land for their efforts), began crossing the Niagara River into this hinterland. Mennonites, although not qualifying as Loyalists, also began making their appearance in the Niagara Peninsula in 1786, shortly after the close of the war.

The Indians, who had fought on the side of the British, were also losing their lands in the State of New York. In order to compensate the Indians, the governor of Quebec purchased a tract of land along the Grand River from the local tribe. The limits of this tract was six miles on each side of the river from its mouth to its headwaters.

To accommodate this influx of settlers Britain proceeded to create a government to serve these people — one set of laws and expectations for the French, another for the Indians, and still another for the rest. We are still sorting them out today!

In order to accommodate both the French and the English (although the English turned out to be not so English), two colonies or provinces were created. The original Quebec colony was to retain the French language, culture, etc., and was to be called Lower Canada, with a new government based on the British system. This took place in 1791 — five years after the coming of the first Mennonites and a little over 30 years before our date of 1822.

This new government — that is, those appointed to be this new government — had high hopes for creating an ideal British colony. Although the settlers would not likely all be of the elite, at least they would be willing to be governed by the elite. After all, the United Empire Loyalists had been willing to lose everything to remain British. Advertisements for settlers declared that the British Parliament had "renounced forever the right of taxation."

A letter to the British Consul in Philadelphia also assured Quakers that they were welcome and would be exempt from bearing arms. Docile, industrious, loyal settlers were needed and hoped for.

The first government of Upper Canada met in September of 1792. It had many basic tasks to perform. I will name only a few which relate directly to our story. One was to provide for justices of the peace to perform marriages if there were no Anglican clergy in the area — and although this was a British colony there were few Anglican clergy. When Presbyterians and Baptists petitioned for rights to perform marriages, they were called "disloyal and wicked."

The Mennonites knew better than to ask. It would be 1831 (40 years) before all religious bodies were given the right to solemnize marriage.

The Canada Act, which had created Upper and Lower Canada, provided for the division of the provinces into districts, counties and townships. It also provided for the appropriation of lands as Crown and Clergy Reserves. The Crown Reserves were to provide the government with revenues from their rents or sales and the Clergy Reserves were to provide revenue for the Church — the Church of England, of course. The townships were to be divided into 200-acre lots with one-seventh of the lots designated as Crown Reserves and another seventh as Clergy Reserves. These were to be interspersed among the other lots of the township.

Since several townships had been settled by Loyalists, Mennonites, and others before these provisions were made, several entire townships were set aside in other areas of the province to make up for the lack of reserves in these settled townships. This point is very important to our story, and we will come back to it later.

We now have Upper Canada with a duly constituted government. In come the speculators with the Mennonites on their heels. One speculator was Richard Beasley. He found the Indians, at least the spokesman for the Indians, quite willing to sell him a chunk of land, because obviously they didn't need all of this huge strip along the Grand River. Beasley had no money to pay for the land. He expected to generate the funds by selling it to settlers — in smaller parcels, of course. In 1799, the first Mennonites arrived at the Grand River, were impressed by the land, and found Beasley delighted to sell them a few sizable tracts. In the next few years, several Mennonite families came to

the Beasley tract and made their purchases, until they discovered that the land was mortgaged. Beasley had not told them that!

The politics behind this affair is quite complicated. I will try to be brief. In the first place, the government did not want to give the Indians the right to sell their land. In the second place, they did not allow Beasley to divide it and sell it in parcels, putting him into the position of not being able to pay for it or sell it. In order to extricate himself from this dilemma, Beasley offered to sell 60,000 acres to the Mennonites for 10,000 pounds. The Mennonites took him up on it, brought the coins to Canada hidden in barrels on their wagons, and bought much of Beasley's trace — roughly Waterloo Township.

In 1806/07, the Mennonites also bought another Block north of the Waterloo settlement — now known as Woolwich Township from yet another party acting on behalf of the Indians. With these land deals settled, Mennonite immigration resumed and continued until interrupted by the War of 1812. Mennonite men and their teams were conscripted, and they served unarmed. Otherwise, the Mennonite settlement in Waterloo was far from the war zone, and actually prospered due to better prices. Benjamin Eby was ordained a bishop, and the Mennonites built their first meetinghouse in 1813 in the Waterloo settlement.

The war was between Britain and the United States, but was fought on the Canadian and American border. The Canadian border remained intact, but Canadian-American relations were not greatly improved over these hostilities. For a time, American immigrants were not sought, especially Mennonites because of their pacifist stance.

Before the first Amishman comes riding into Waterloo, we must make a few additional explanations. We said earlier that whole townships were set aside as reserves to make up for the lack of reserves in the townships settled before the 1790s. West of Waterloo was the Lincoln Reserve — the Crown Reserve for the County of Lincoln, in the Niagara area. West of Woolwich was the Clergy Reserve for the Indian lands along the Grand River. On the east of Waterloo there was still another Clergy Reserve. Until now, these reserves were in a wild state and not available for settlement — hemming in the Waterloo settlement on almost all sides.

ENTER CHRISTIAN NAFZIGER

It is now August 1822, and we are ready for

Christian Nafziger from Bavaria. How much Nafziger was operating on his own initiative, his own need to find a better living for himself and his family, or how much he may have been acting as a representative of the Amish Mennonites of Bavaria or even all of Europe, is not known. At any rate, he had left his wife and five children, and with little more that a walking stick had made his way to Amsterdam, where the Dutch Mennonites had been helping refugees find their way to America for the last 100 years. A certain Mr. Von Eeghen gave him a voucher for 50 dollars drawn on Mssrs, Vincent Nolte & Co. Nafziger had really wanted to go to Philadelphia, but we presume the shipping company was scheduled to sail to New Orleans; so that is where they took him.

After landing in New Orleans, Nafziger had 10 dollars left from the voucher and was given another 10 dollars by Mr. Nolte, with which he set out for Pennsylvania. He followed the Mississippi River and the Ohio River to Cincinnati, where we presume he stopped to visit the new settlers in Butler County, who had just recently arrived from Alsace. We also presume he followed the Ohio River and National Road from Cincinnati to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. (The National Road continued on to Baltimore.)

The Mennonites in Pennsylvania advised Nafziger to go to Canada where the land was still cheap and much of it unoccupied. He was given an old horse, and we suppose he accompanied other immigrants to Canada since the road to Canada was reported to be "much in use." (1)

When Nafziger got to Canada, the Mennonites received him favorably. No doubt, they showed him the Crown Reserve to the west, because they had their eyes on that particular piece of land. They used Nafziger's search for land as an opportunity to renew their petition for more land.

A few delegates accompanied Nafziger to visit the Lieutenant Governor. An officer of the Executive Council recorded Nafziger's story and his desire to find a block of land to which he could bring his fellow countrymen.

The response of the Council to his request was very vague. Nafziger, however, seems to also have met with Governor Maitland who outlined to him the procedure for settling the Crown Lands. Settlers who did not have money would be given a 200-acre lot, and 50 acres of that would be free. If they cleared some of it and built a house, after being in the country seven

years, they could get a title to it. The remainder of the lot could be purchased by the settler anytime he wished or had the finances to do so.

Governor Maitland probably made it clear that he did not have the power to decare the reserve open for settlement — that was the prerogative of "His Royal Highness." Whether His Royal Highness, meaning the King, had much to do with that decision may be open to question, but at least it meant that permission had to come from England and could not be decided locally. It seems, however, that Maitland sent a letter with him, thus suggesting that Nafziger stop in England — at the Colonial Office, one would suppose.

Christian Nafziger retraced his steps to Pennsylvania. No doubt, he met with some of the more recent Amish Mennonite immigrants, telling them of his findings. We will stop briefly to introduce some of them here, because they are of interest to some of you here in Oregon. The first family is that of Jacob and Magdalena (Rothacker) Kropf. Jacob and several single Alsatian men applied for passports on February 22, 1819. On March 3, the Minister of the Interior in Paris authorized the passports, but told the local official to point out the difficulties of such an undertaking and to try to dissuade them from leaving. Then he reproved him for "this spirit of immigration which . . . Is making altogether too much progress in your department." (2) I suspect that this may have been part of the group which Christian Augsburger brought to America in 1819. The Augsburgers were leading a party to Butler County, Ohio, but many who accompanied them had stayed in Pennsylvania. This large number of applications for passports may have prompted this reproof, but this was only a ripple compared to the wave of emigration which would follow.

The second family who we expect met with Christian Nafziger was that of John Brenneman. The Brennemans had come from Hesse, Germany, in 1820. This family must have been very poor, because it is reported that they arrived indentured — that is, they would have to pay for their passage by service on this side of the Atlantic. Fortunately for them, the Mennonites were accustomed to meeting the ships in the harbors and paying the passage of their brethren and taking them back to their own communities where they were given not only work but also fellowship and orientation to life in America. (3)

A few of the single men interested in Canada were John and Christian Erb and Joseph Goldscmidt, all from Alsace. Two other parties had definite

interests in Canada — Christian Stoltzfus and Christian Koenig/King. Both had invested in the block of land which is now Woolwich Township. One would expect that they had immigration in mind, not only speculation, although no one, either of their own families or friends, had yet availed themselves of these lands.

After these consultations, Christian Nafziger boarded a ship in New York and sailed for England. In November, he made his appearance at the Colonial Office. By that time word had been sent to Upper Canada with the authorization to put a road through the reserve; so the Colonial Office granted Nafziger's request without delay, giving him the written confirmation that he sought.

Now Nafziger had the approval of the Colonial Office but what about the King? If the reserves could be settled only on the approval of "His Royal Highness," was his task complete? Knowing Christian Nafziger, he was not intimidated by kings and princes, and I am sure that he sought the confirmation of the king. The only question is, did he actually have an audience with the king. The story printed in the newspaper at the time of Christian's death in 1836 reported that he had gone to see the King, had innocently repeated to him his request, which the King granted, pressed a few gold coins into his hand and wished him a good journey. (4) A contemporary document indicates that Nafziger had seen the Duke of York, the King's younger brother. An exchange of letters with the Royal Archives several months ago indicates there is no record of Nafziger's visit to King George IV. Since we don't really know what took place, I will leave Nafziger's visit with the King to everyone's own imagination.

In January of 1823, Christian Nafziger arrived back home in Bavaria, but with his financial resources even more depleted than before, there wasn't much hope of getting his family to America. He wrote of his plight to the Mennonites of Waterloo, who assured him that his passage to Philadelphia would be paid. While Nafziger is preparing for his return to Canada, let us see what is happening in Canada.

Although the opening of the reserve had been approved, the government was reluctant to do anything about it. Instead, it suggested the townships of Proton and Melanchton, which comprised the headwaters of the Grand River, as the location of the new settlement. The Mennonites voiced their dismay

over this proposal, pointing out the distance, lack of roads, swampy land, etc. of this location. They also pointed out the problems caused by the wild lands on either side of Waterloo, which harbored predatory animals.

Reg Good whose PhD thesis was a study on the connections between Indian lands, government, and Mennonites, suggests that at this particular time, the Indians were negotiating with the Colonial Office for the lands of the Grand River headwaters. The original grant to the Indians had included the headwaters of the river, but that could be interpreted in two ways — it could mean to the point where the river was called "Grand," or it could include the tributaries leading to the "Grand." At the time of the initial grant, the limits were not defined. By 1823, the government was anxious to limit the grant to the "Grand," and the Indians just as anxious to include the tributaries. If the government could have put settlers into that area, the Colonial Office would obviously rule in favor of the white settlers. (5) As it turned out, the Colonial Office did not rule in favor of the Indians, settlers or no settlers, so the government did not continue to push this option on the Mennonites, but it must have been somewhat disconcerting for a while.

AMISH MENNONITE SETTLERS BEGIN TO ARRIVE

Michael and Barbara (Oswald)
Schwartzentruber and their family arrived in
Philadelphia from Hesse, German, in August of 1823.
I would suppose that they joined the Kropfs and the
Brennemans, who made the trip to Canada in October
of the same year. These people had to spend most of
the first year in Waterloo Township, waiting for the
reserve to be surveyed.

Early in 1824, the Waterloo Mennonites petitioned the government to get on with the survey, because of the settlers who were already there and those who were expected to come. John Goessman, a surveyor of German origin, was engaged to survey three roads through the middle of the reserve with 200-acre lots on each side of the road. Each settler who claimed a lot was expected to pay his share of the cost of the survey, and then he was expected to clear the roadway, clear 10 acres for cropping and build a substantial cabin (not just a shanty). This particular part of the township became known as the German block.

In 1824, John Oesch and his family, his fatherin-law, Henry Schultz and several unmarried sons and daughters, along with Jacob Steinman, arrived from Bavaria. By this time, Joseph Goldschmidt had married, and he brought his bride to the new frontier as well. Jacob and Elizabeth (Grieser) Buerge may also have arrived the same year.

In 1824, Bishop John Stoltzfus also made the trip to Canada to ordain ministerial leadership for the fledgling congregation. John Brenneman and Joseph Goldschmidt were ordained as ministers, and Jacob Kropf as deacon.

In 1825 John and Magdalena (Joder) Lichti and their unmarried children arrived from Alsace. Their married children would come two years later. Jacob Kuepfer, a Swiss, Christian Honderich, who was married to Margaret Gingerich, and two different Jacob Gingerichs also arrived in 1825. This group was from Hesse, Germany.

That brings us to 1826, the year that Christian Nafziger arrived back in Canada with his wife, Maria Stalter, and their five children. Accompanying them were the families of Bishop Peter Nafziger, who became known as "the Apostle," Peter Danner, and Christian Steinman. Steinman was the brother of Jacob who had come in 1824 and was also an ordained minister.

The year 1827 brought a large contingent of settlers from Alsace again. The Christian Lichti family, his brother-in-law, Michael Roth and family, and the widow Litwiller with all of her family which included her daughter and son-in-law Christian and Catherine Boshart, whom we shall meet again later.

Perhaps we should stop briefly to consider how people got from Europe to Canada. Let me assure you, it wasn't easy! Since the Amish Mennonites came from various places in Europe, they embarked at different ports. Some of the early ones came through Amsterdam — probably to take advantage of any aid offered by the Dutch Mennonites. Later, the immigrants from Germany usually came through Bremen and those in France came through Le Havre. In any case, they had to find transportation to the port or walk. Whenever possible, they used the rivers, because barges on the rivers could easily be engaged to transport goods and people. Perhaps wagons overland could also be hired. I think some people who had wagons and horsed used them to get to the port and then sold them. Some may also have taken their wagons apart and taken them along. I have not heard of anyone bringing animals. In the early days, passengers also had to bring their own food supply. I

think the captain was required to bring drinking

water which was rationed out to each person.

I have not yet made a careful study of the conditions on board the ships, but one can imagine that they were extremely uncomfortable by modern standards. Modern plumbing even on land was unknown. How did they prepare meals and how did they manage any semblance of cleanliness? I really do not know the answers to these questions — I can only imagine them.

The first settlers landed at Philadelphia, but later the ships from Bremen usually landed at Baltimore and those from Le Havre at New York. In any case, most of the settlers then headed for the established Mennonite or Amish Mennonite settlements where they were given whatever aid was required to help them on their journey. Single men would frequently work for a while to earn some cash and sometimes found a wife before moving on.

The Mennonites who had gone and were still going to Canada in the first quarter of the century had goods to transport; so they had wagons and horses. The Europeans didn't have wagons nor did they have enough goods to justify the purchase of a wagon. I suspect that some joined wagon trains of Mennonites so that the women and young children could ride. In some cases, immigrant families may have purchased a wagon and team between them. I think there were also teamsters who hired out to make the trip.

In 1825, the Erie Canal was completed. Immigrants could then go up the Albany River, take canal transportation to Lockport (near Buffalo), transfer on to a stage coach to Newark (now Niagara-on-the-Lake), where they would again board boats to either Toronto or Hamilton. Once the immigrants had contacts in Canada and were no longer dependent on contacts in Pennsylvania, this route was reasonably convenient. For a fee, one could hire one's transportation on the river, lake and canal boats and on the stage coach.

THE GERMAN BLOCK BECOMES THE PROPERTY OF KING'S COLLEGE

Now let's go back to the German Block, which is part of the township now called Wilmot. The year is still 1827. Another event of which these Amish Mennonite settlers were not aware, but which would affect them very shortly, was the founding of King's College, the forerunner of the University of Toronto. On January 3, 1828, the government deeded the German Block along with other reserves to King's College as an endowment. The rents from

these lands were to provide funding for the college.

Six months later, the settlers in Wilmost received a letter from the bursar of King's College outlining the new policies relating to their lands. Rent was to be paid, retroactive to the date when they settled on the land. They did have the option of buying the land — but at a price double the amount the settlers were expecting to pay. Failure to comply with the new regulations would jeopardize obtaining their 50-acre grants.

The settlers were dismayed at this turn of events, and were not about to take this new regime lying down. A letter was composed immediately signed and probably composed by Bishop Peter Nafziger and Christian Nafziger and hand-delivered to the College. In their haste, they didn't even bother having it translated into English. A translation was made by John Goessman, who had done the initial survey, and he also went to bat for the settlers, adding his own comments. He said he was in the settlement when they received the letter from the college, and many of them were disposed to abandon the improvements they had made and some were even making preparations to leave. Goessman tried to persuade them not to leave and not to mistrust the British Government.

Adding to the discomfort of the settlers was the fact that Lt.-Governor Maitland left office during the next several months, and they were afraid the new governor would not be sympathetic to their cause. Fortunately, he did see their point of view. His assessment was that the settlers had been "forgotten" in the land transaction. My assessment, unfortunately, is that they were far from being forgotten, but that they were considered as a good source of immediate revenue.

A great deal of correspondence ensued during the next eight or ten years. The government backed down, agreed to give the original settlers their 50 acres if they complied with the original understandings and also prodded to college to moderate its prices. Christian Nafziger, however, continue to write asking for a firm price on the land. He needed to know the price in order to encourage settlers from Europe to come. If he could not give them a price that was satisfactory, they would either stay in Europe or go elsewhere. The government or the college, on the other hand, were reluctant to give a firm price to settlers who were still in Europe. At best, it would take ten years for an European settler to qualify for a

land purchase, and who knows what the price would be then?

The outcome of this whole fracas was that most of the settlers settled down and made the best of it. Several, however, including some of the leaders, picked up and left for Ohio. Among them were Bishop Peter Nafziger and Joseph Golschmidt, one of the young men chosen as a minister in the first ordinations. Settlers continued to come during the ensuing decades, although many of them stayed only a while and then moved on.

I have already mentioned a few of the early settler families who have descendants living in Oregon. I shall now briefly mention a few additional ones. The first story I want to tell is that of the Christian Christner family. It illustrates the extreme difficulties which a number of immigrant families faced, and one of its members made the trip all the way from France to Oregon in her lifetime.

According to family tradition, the Christian Christner family came to Canada in 1828, probably from France. In 1836, Christian was killed in a tree-felling accident. The children were farmed out to other families, including two-year-old Maria. One 12-year-old boy found himself in difficulty and ran away from his foster home. The oldest daughter Elizabeth married Nicholas Roth, but she died the following year. Nicholas then married Elizabeth's sister, Catherine.

According to family tradition, the surviving children, except the two youngest ones, who were left in their foster homes, left for Indiana. Mother Elizabeth walked the whole way. Several years later, some of them moved to Iowa, and again Mother Elizabeth walked to Iowa. Catherine's husband Nicholas Roth died in Iowa in 1862, and when some of her children moved to Oregon, Catherine accompanied them and died here in 1905. She is buried in the Knox Butte Cemetery. She was born in France in 1824 and died in Oregon in 1905 — a long way to go in one lifetime.

Nicholas Roth, Catherine's husband, came with his parents to Canada in 1835. By that time Wilmot Township was filled up and most immigrants settled in adjoining townships. This was the case with Nicholas' parents who were Nicholas Roth and Anna Schantz. I have not been able to connect this family to any other Roth family, including my own.

I have already mentioned the family of Jacob Kropf and Magdalena Rothacker. They left France in

1819 and came to Canada in 1823. Jacob Kropf claimed Lot 13, Joseph Goldschmidt, Lot 14 and John Oesch, Lot 15, all on the north side of Snyder's Road in the middle of the new settlement. David Kropf, the youngest of the Kropf family, was born in 1824, probably in Waterloo Township, as the Kropfs had not yet built a house. When Joseph Goldschmidt left for Ohio, Jacob purchased his claim, including a new sawmill. Perhaps this sawmill became the focus of what would later become the village of Baden, although it was slow in developing.

The John Oesch family had arrived from Bavaria in 1824 and John was ordained as a minister in 1829. Jacob Kropf, you will remember, was ordained a deacon in 1824. In 1847, David, the son of Jacob and Magdalena Kropf, married Magdalena, the daughter of John and Barbara Oesch.

The Kropfs with 40 acres and only five living children had lots of space. The Oesches had only 200 acres and eight sons — not counting an equal number of daughters; so their space was limited. John and Barbara left the farm in Wilmot with their oldest son Christian, and they took the rest up to Huron County, and were going to begin all over again. Unfortunately, John died the following year, leaving his widow and the children to fend for themselves. The older children, of course, were quite able to do that. Barbara had given birth to her 18th child in Huron County, and she outlived John by 30 years.

In 1853, the Kropf sawmill was destroyed by fire, and they had no insurance. A number of Amish Mennonites had insurance policies in spite of the fact that the Amish frowned on it, but Jacob Kropf, the deacon, did not. It is quite certain that the mill was rebuilt and that David became the miller. In the early 1860s, however, David and Magdalena and their family also went to Huron County. According to family tradition, they went to Ohio but because of the Civil War returned to Canada. In 1867 they migrated to Missouri, first Hickory County, then Cass County, and are buried in the Clearfork cemetery. By the way, several other Oesch siblings also migrated. Christian, who had been left with the family farm in Baden, went to Missouri as well. I won't take the time to tetll you what happened to all eighteen of the Oesch children.

Now back to the Kropfs. The third child, oldest son of David and Magdalena Kropf, was John, and I believe he and Charity King moved to Oregon in 1888, beginning the Kropf family trek to Oregon. John and Charity were buried in the Zion Mennonite

Church cemetery.

Let us return briefly to Jacob and Magdalena in Baden. They both lived to a ripe old age, and one wonders whether they didn't feel somewhat forsaken. Their daughter Catherine died unmarried in 1840, Jacob Jr., without any surviving children, in 1848, daughter Elizabeth, with seven young children, in 1853, and Henry, with eight children, in 1855. The surviving children, Christian and David, both migrated to the U.S. Jacob died in 1875 at the age of 89 and Magdalena in 1878 at the age of 92. A cemetery was begun on their farm and it is presumed that all of these family members are buried there although no markers remain.

John Brenneman has also been mentioned. His family, including his wife, whose name we do not know, arrived in Canada at the same time the Kropfs did. John Brenneman claimed Lot 13 on the south side of Bleams Road. His three daughters married, but only Magdalena married to George Helmuth had surviving children.

John Brenneman Jr. eventually became the owner of the family farm at the crossroads where the Wilmot Centre Cemetery and school are located. Daniel Brenneman claimed a lot with the Nith River flowing through a corner of his property. Young Jacob married an Irish immigrant and had to look for land in a neighboring township. Jacob Brenneman and Lydia Leonard became my great-greatgrandparents.

A descendant of John Brenneman Jr. married Marie Boshart. They purchased Marie's parents' home in Wellesley Township, just north of the Wilmot Township line, but sold it in 1900 and also went to Nebraska. In 1915, Daniel and Marie pulled up stakes again and came all the way to Albany, Oregon.

I must also mention the Boshart family. Christian Boshart, his wife Catherine Litwiller and their family had come to Canada in 1827. Christian had two brothers, John and Joseph. John died in France in the early 1830s, and in 1837, his wife, Marie Eicher, brought her family of five to Canada where they were hosted by Christian and Catherine. Christian, the oldest of widow Marie Eicher Boshart, married Catherine Buerge. Her parents Jacob Buerge and Elizabeth Grieser were also among the early settlers in Wilmot. Catherine, born in 1826, was among the first white children born in the township.

Christian and Catherine (Buerge) Boshart located on a farm just north of the Wilmot Township line. One corner of their farm has become part of the

village of Wellesley. In 1890, they sold the farm to their daughter Marie and her husband Daniel Brenneman and moved to Milford, Nebraska. Christian died there two years later. Eventually, all of Catherine's daughters, including Marie Brenneman, had moved to Oregon; so Catherine came to be with them and died here in 1920 and is buried in Riverside Cemetery.

Closely related to the Bosharts are the Jantzis. Some members of the family in both Canada, New York, and Nebraska changed the spelling to an initial Y in order to retain that pronunciation, but in Canada many write it with a J and still pronounce it like a Y. The Jantzis did not arrive until the 1830s, and then some of them went to Lewis County, N.Y. Two fo them, Michael and Joseph, came to Canada and married daughters of Christian Boshart, the first Boshart immigrant. Their brother John also moved to Canada from Lewis County. Oregon Jantzis descend from John and Joseph.

I must also mention the Ropps. Although they came much later, we have another case of persons who were born in France, went to Canada, and then to Oregon — all in one lifetime. The Joseph M. Ropp family came to Canada in 1853. Their youngest daughter Fannie was then seven. Joseph's brother Peter remained in France, but his youngest son, John M. Ropp, came to Canada in 1871, married his cousin Fannie, and they eventually came to Albany.

This does not cover all the connections of Oregon residents who had a stop-over in Canada, but it is a good sampling. How did they get here? In most cases, I am dependent on someone telling me how they got here. In Canada they left no record of how they were going or even when, although one can sometimes guess that by checking the sale of their land. That, of course, applies only if they owned land.

When the Christners left Canada in the 1840s, they may have walked — as is suggested by the family tradition. They were probably too poor to own a wagon. Perhaps they had a horse to carry their few belongings. The railway company was guying land from the Wilmot settlers to put their tracks through their farms in the mid-1850s. Those who went to Nebraska were using the railway at least by the 1870s. I think western railway companies were sometimes enticing settlers by paying their transportation from the U.S. border to the western states.

Another nephew of Christian Boshart, the

first Boshart immigrant to Canada, was Joseph Megli. He must have saved every scrap of paper that ever came into his possession, and these have become a historian's paradise. From this family's cache of documents, one learns about their move to Nebraska. They occupied three railroad cars. The first contained the cattle, horses, and other livestock. The second was loaded with farm machinery, tools, and grain, and the third provided for the household goods, furniture, and living quarters for the family. After a trip of 1000 miles, they unloaded their goods at Beatrice, Nebraska, the last town on the rail line. They still had 15 miles to go to get to their land but no record of how they got there. No doubt, the animals and people walked, and horses hitched to an assembled wagon probably transported whatever could not walk.

How folks got to Oregon, especially in the days before the railroads had pierced their way through the mountains, you will know better than I do. One story that tickled my funny bone — and I don't remember which family provided this one — was that of crossing the mountains in one of the early model cars. The car could not make it up the steep grade, but they discovered it had more power in reverse; so they backed up the mountain.

Our ancestors' wildest or most imaginative dreams could not have foreseen my flight of four or five hours over much of the North American landscape in such comfort and luxury. The gap between that time and this is almost greater than even my imagination can span.

NOTES

This presentation is based on research done in the National, Province of Ontario, and University of Toronto archives for an article entitled "The settlement of the German Block in Wilmot Township, Upper Canada" by Ann Hilty and Lorraine Roth, to be published in Ontario Mennonite History in the fall of 1996 and in a source book on the early history of Wilmot Township to be published in 1997.

- 1) From a letter written in 1822 and quoted in Frontier Community to Urban Congregation, First Mennonite Church, Kitchener 1813-1988 by E. Reginald Good. Kitchener, ON: First Mennonite Church, 1988.
- 2) Photocopies of these documents were received from William Diener (now deceased) who did a great deal of research in France.

- 3) Reported in an 1826 letter written by Ludwig/Louis C. Jungerich (from the Olga Kennel Christian Iutzi Letter Collection)
- 4) For a translation of the newspaper account, see Appendix IX in <u>Amish Mennonites In Germany . . .</u> By Hermann Guth.
- 5) Good, E. Reginald. <u>Crown-Directed Colonization of Six Nations and Metis Land Reserves in Canada</u> (A Thesis), The University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Sask., 1994, p. 271.

A Small Cyber-World by Suzanne Roth

I have typed (or in the case of Tim Janzen's article, electronically transferred) the articles in this issue with great interest. It is so fascinating to learn about my adopted people and their histories.

I was made aware of how small the cyberworld is when I typed in the portion of Lorraine Roth's article dealing with the Canadian Mennonites' relationship with King's College, which later became the University of Toronto, because I have developed a warm cyber-friendship with a lady in Toronto, Edith Helen Smith, who goes to that university. In the process of our online correspondence, she told me that her ex-husband, who passed away last year, had his ashes buried in a Mennonite Church cemetery not far away. She said she was getting copies of pictures relating to the church and the funeral for me.

They arrived today. They are of the Nairn Mennonite Church in Nairn, Ontario. One of the pictures is of a plaque on the church which reads "Nairn Mennonite 1996" and lists the names of founding families in 1948. Again, there was that sense of familiarity due to having typed Lorraine Roth's article, with her listing of the names of those settling in the Toronto area earlier on (although some came to Oregon). The names listed on the plaque as founding families in 1948 were Lorne and Katie Bender, Melvin and Mabel Bender, Reuben and Fanny Gingerich, Floyd and Gladys Ropp, Alvin and Madeline Roth, John and Erma Roth, and Pastor Wilfred and Emma Schlegel. What are the odds of this information coming today, as I am putting together the OMHGS Newsletter?

I thank God for this small cyber-world, and for such wonderful little touches relating to my doing the Newsletter that He provides, verifying my service to Him through editing it.

Researching Mennonite-related Topics on the Internet: A Perspective from the United States by Tim Janzen

If you have had Internet access for very long you are probably aware that the amount of information available online via the Internet has been increasing exponentially, particularly in the past 5 years. The astounding growth of the Internet has been transforming the way we engage in research and exchange information. This online revolution has made it possible to click on a mouse and quickly gain access to enormous amounts of information that had previously been only available to those able to travel to the archives and libraries that held that information. Those of us actively involved in various areas of research in Mennonite studies have been increasingly using the Internet to access information that hitherto had been difficult to obtain. I have personally approached this primarily from a Mennonite genealogical research perspective, but scholars involved in research on a wide variety of Mennonite-related topics will find information on the Internet that will be useful to them. In this article I will outline some of the more useful web sites and other resources available to Mennonites interested in pursuing research through the Internet.

Many Mennonite archives now have web sites on the Internet. Researchers will find these very valuable in their efforts to locate little known material or allow them to research various topics. Below I have listed information about the largest Mennonite archives, libraries, and historical associations in the United States. Many of these have catalogs of portions or all of their holdings available online through their web sites and I have made comments about the current status of their online material in this list. The archivists at the various institutions can be contacted for additional information as well.

1. Archives of the Mennonite Church

1700 S. Main St., Goshen, Indiana 46526

Phone: (219) 535-7477

Web site: http://www.goshen.edu/mcarchives Director: John E. Sharp; Archivist: Dennis Stoesz

Summaries of some of the 922 personal collections housed in the archives are

Online.

2. California Mennonite Historical Society

4824 E. Butler Avenue, Fresno, California 93727-5097

Web site: http://www.fresno.edu/cmhs/home.htm

3. Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies at Fresno Pacific University

1717 S. Chestnut, Fresno, California 93702-4709

Phone: (559) 453-2225

Web site: http://www.fresno.edu/cmbs/home.htm

Archivist: Kevin Enns-Rempel E-mail: kennsrem@sunone.fresno.edu Catalog of 14,000 items in the Hiebert Library is available online at

http://www.fresno.edu/dept/library; enter "guests" at the login prompt and enter "6" at

the prompt for the type of terminal

4. Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies at Tabor College 400 S. Jefferson, Hillsboro, Kansas 67063

Phone: (316) 947-3121

Web site: http://www.tabor.edu/library/library.shtm

Director: Peggy Goertzen E-mail: peggyg@tcnet.tabor.edu

5. Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society

2215 Millstream Rd., Lancaster, Pennsylvania 17602-1499.

Phone: (717) 393-9745

Web site: http://lanclio.org/lmhs.htm

Index to collections in the library is available online

6. Mary Miller Library, Hesston College

325 S. College Dr., Hesston, Kansas 67062-2093

Phone: (316) 327-4221

Web site: http://www.mennolink.org/mic/menno.html Director: Margaret Wiebe E-mail: margaret@hesston.edu

7. Menno Simons Historical Library and Archives, Eastern Mennonite University 1200 Park Rd., Harrisonburg Virginia 22802-2462.

Phone: (540) 432-4177.

Web site: http://www.emu.edu/library/histlib.html Catalog of holdings in the archives is available online

8. Mennonite Historians of Eastern Pennsylvania Historical Library and Archives 565 Yoder Rd., Harleysville, Pennsylvania 19438-0082

Phone: (215) 256-3020

Web site: http://www.mhep.org/library.html

9. Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen College

1700 S. Main St., Goshen, Indiana 46526.

Phone: (219) 535-7418

Web site: http://www.goshen.edu/mhl

E-mail: mhl@goshen.edu

Catalog of holdings in the archives is available online; enter "gonetpac" at the

Login prompt

10. Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College

300 East 27th Street, North Newton, Kansas 67117-0531

Phone: (316) 283-2500

Web site: http://www.bethelks.edu/services/mla Archivist: John Thiesen E-mail: mla@bethelks.edu Catalog of holdings in the archives is available online

11. Musselman Library, Bluffton College

280 West College Ave., Bluffton, Ohio 45817.

Phone: (419) 358-3271

Web site: http://www.bluffton.edu/library

Catalog of holdings in the archives is available online

There are a number of other organizations and libraries besides the various Mennonite archives which have web sites that can be useful to Mennonite researchers. Below is a list of these:

Federation of East European Family History Societies
 P. O. Box 510898, Salt Lake City, Utah 84151-0898
 Web site: http://feefhs.org

2. Germans from Russian Heritage Collection

North Dakota State University, 1301 N. University, Fargo, North Dakota 58105

Phone: (701) 231-8416

Web site: http://www.lib.ndsu.nodak.edu/gerrus

3. Germans from Russia Heritage Society

1008 East Central Avenue, Bismarck, North Dakota 58501-1936

Phone: (701) 223-6167

Web site: http://www.grhs.com

4. Library of Congress

101 Independence Ave., SE, Washington, DC 20540

Phone: (202) 707-5000

Web site: http://lcweb.loc.gov

5. National Archives

8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, Maryland 20740-6001 and other locations

Web site: http://www.nara.gov/nara

6. Salt Lake City Family History Library

35 North West Temple St., Salt Lake City, Utah 84150

Web sites: http://www.familysearch.org and http://www.genealogy.org/~uvpafug/fhlslc.html

MennoLink is also a resource that is becoming increasingly valuable to Mennonite researchers. MennoLink's web site at http://www.mennolink.org has been developed by Jon and Laura Harder of Mountain Lake, Minnesota. In the past several years they have expanded MennoLink to provide a number of services helpful to researchers including providing articles from Mennonite periodicals online and other information. Probably most useful, however, is the forum it has established through the various E-mail lists that MennoLink hosts. On these E-mail lists researchers can post messages and queries and hopefully make connections and exchange information with others doing similar research. Some lists may be accessed free of charge, but other lists are restricted only to subscribers who pay an annual fee for membership to MennoLink. Mennonite-related E-mail lists to which one can subscribe are available for many topics including genealogy (menno.rec.roots), history (menno.rec.study. history), theology, music, and general chat groups. This forum will no doubt continue to expand and evolve in the future. MennoLink has also recently become the host of the Mennonite Information Center, a catalog of links to the web sites of hundreds of Mennonite-related organizations. The information is provided in a well-organized manner and often a brief description of the organization is included on the web site.

Another web site offering links to the multiple Mennonite organizations and churches that currently have web sites is the Mennonite Connections on the WWW web site at http://www-personal.umich.edu/~bpl/menno.html. This web site is supported by Dr. Bradley Lehman and contains a catalog to Mennonite and Amish resources on the Internet. It is reasonably well organized and allows researchers to quickly locate web sites to many Mennonite-related organizations.

An E-mail list of interest to Mennonite genealogical researchers is the RootsWeb Menno-Roots list which can be subscribed to at the following web site: http://MENNO-ROOTS-L-request@rootsweb.com. This list is dominated by genealogical researchers of Swiss Mennonite ancestry although there is also some participation by Low German background researchers. Subscribers to this list are encouraged to financially support RootsWeb, but payment is not required at this time. An E-mail list that may be of interest to those researching people from nonMennonite German colonies in Russia as well as Mennonites is the GR-Genealogy (Germans from Russia Genealogy) list which is hosted by North Dakota State University. This list may be subscribed to at the following web site: http://www.lib.ndsu.nodak.edu/gerrus/listgerrus2.html.

For Mennonites interested in pursuing genealogical research online many web sites offer information of interest. The most frequently used web sites may be accessed through a web site known as Cyndi's List. This site has links to over 59,000 web sites containing genealogical information and can be visited at http://www.cyndislist.com. Cyndi's List has categories for Mennonites and for Germans from Russia as well as for many localities in the United States. Within each category are links to multiple web sites that may be of interest. I have also developed an outline of Low German Mennonite genealogical resources which is available at my web site at http://www.pacinter.net/users/janzen. This outline includes links to many sites of interest to Mennonite researchers and also summarizes the currently available Mennonite genealogical information.

The Odessa Library web site at http://pixel.cs.vt.edu/library/odessa.html is an important web site hosting a number of databases helpful to Mennonite genealogical and historical researchers as well as those interested in other German background groups from Russia. This site is supported primarily by the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia and by the German Russian Historical Society. Mennonite-related databases on this web site are only a small portion of all the information available at the site, but these are gradually increasing. Genealogical researchers of Low German Mennonite ancestry will want to become familiar with the GRANDMA database. The GRANDMA database is a genealogical database of people whose Mennonite ancestors originally came from West Prussia and/or Russia. GRANDMA stands for "Genealogical Registry and Database of Mennonite Ancestry." The GRANDMA database is a compilation of the contributions of genealogical information from dozens of Mennonite researchers in which the data has been merged together to create one unified database. The first version of the GRANDMA database was released in 1996 on a compact disk holding information about 135,482 people as GRANDMA Volume 1 and since then the database has continued to grow rapidly. When the third version of the GRANDMA database is released on compact disk as GRANDMA 3.0 this spring it will contain about 400,000 people of Low German ancestry. In addition to the GRANDMA database, each GRANDMA compact disk also holds scanned images of material such as maps. Mennonite church records, or census records and a database of Mennonite immigrants to the United States. For example, GRANDMA Volume 2 includes scanned images of the census records from Benjamin H. Unruh's book, Die niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert.

The GRANDMA Project is organized by the Genealogical Project Committee of the California Mennonite Historical Society in Fresno, California. Additional information may be found on the web site for the California Mennonite Historical Society at http://www.fresno.edu/cmhs/gpc/home.htm. An index to the GRANDMA database is available online at the Odessa Library web site.

There are plans to have an up-to-date version of the GRANDMA database omitting currently living people available online in the near future. The California Mennonite Historical Society is seeking additional Mennonite genealogical material to add to GRANDMA and is also interested in correcting errors that researchers discover in the database.

People doing research on Mennonites of Swiss/South German ancestry will be interested in the OMII Project. OMII stands for "Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois". Information about this project is available at http://www.wgbc.org/hindex.htm. This genealogy research group has pooled together 52 different databases totaling over 1.3 million people. The databases have not yet been merged into one unified database, however. The largest databases are the Kidron database which currently contains 319,750 individuals and James Hostetler's database which contains 227,317 individuals. These may be searched online at the OMII Project web site.

Databases such as GRANDMA and those under the OMII umbrella are quite valuable for genealogical researchers as they have made it possible to have access to early records and information that previously was more difficult to obtain. These databases will no doubt continue to grow and become more refined in the future as more genealogists contribute data.

At present, we are no doubt seeing just a small portion of the Mennonite-related material that will eventually become available for viewing via the Internet. Robert Kreider laid out his vision of some of the possibilities for future online research in the last issue of Mennonite Life. I endorse many of his suggestions. I believe it would be especially valuable to provide online access to large collections of electronically scanned material taken from sources currently housed in the various Mennonite archives. Collections of material such as this would give researchers easier access to little known sources and would facilitate their research. I hope we can work together to bring more and more of this material online in the future.

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