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A Brief History of the Holdeman People (Church of God in Christ, Mennonite) by Caleb F. Heppner

Introduction

I appreciate the opportunity to present this talk, titled "A Brief History of the Holdeman People" (also known as the Church of God in Christ Mennonite. I do not consider myself a historian, and I am not a member of the denomination. However, I was born and baptized in the church and spent over 30 years of my life in the church community. My wife, Bonnie, and I left the denomination in 1979 and have been associated with the Salem Mennonite Church since that time.

I believe that I can say, without offending anyone, that the Church of God in Christ Mennonite is a unique manifestation of the Mennonite tradition that in many ways has preserved a way of life and a set of beliefs from the early American Mennonite experience, almost as if it were placed in a time capsule virtually unchanged by the passage of time or influence of modern culture.

My 12-year-old niece in Moundridge, Kansas wears a shirt-waist dress not much different from the dress my mother wore to church in the Lone Tree township a few miles north, at the same age. Our parents still faithfully abide by the customs of avoidance of disfellowshipped members practiced by the Russian Mennonites newly arrived in America.

My personal family lineage goes back to 1788 and the migration of the Mennonites out of Prussia to Russia led by the Deputy Jacob Hoeppner, my great-great-great-great-grandfather. The Russian migration

of these people to America in the 1870s played a key role in the history of the Holdeman Mennonite people.

Beginnings

The denomination is named after John Holdeman, born on January 31, 1832 to Amos and Nancy (Yoder) Holdeman at New Pittsburgh, Wayne County, Ohio. Amos Holdeman was interested in the "true lineage" aspects of church history and the revival movements of his day — particularly the Methodist-influenced Church of God. It is believed that Amos' interest also stimulated John, who was converted at the age of 12, possibly after hearing sermons at the Church of God established by John Funk only a mile from their house.

Following his marriage to Elisabeth Ritter on November 18, 1853, he went through a "dark experience" until in 1854, when he finally experienced a "release and received a joyful and quiet conscience." He reported having visions and dreams, and a call to the ministry. This moved him to study the Bible, writings of Menno Simons and Dirk Philips and the Martyr Mirror.

During that time of study John Holdeman began to be concerned that the Old Mennonite Church was no longer faithful in upholding the gospel standard. The issues uppermost in his mind were:

- how many had come into the Church unconverted. This caused him severe heartache and led him to appeal to leaders of the Church to re-establish those doctrines which had been ignored or forgotten.
- that child training was not practiced as taught in the Bible,
- that disobedient or unfaithful members were not being disciplined and if excommunicated,
- the Avoidance was not practiced.

The old Mennonite Church referred to the Eighteen Articles of Faith as their confession of faith.

However, it was explained to John Holdeman that some things such as the avoidance were spiritual, not physical. In his mind, this denied the seventeenth article of the confession. This troubled him; if they did not agree on all articles, they should not send them into the world as their own.

Despite these concerns, he came to the conclusion that he would live as faithfully as he could in the Old Mennonite Church. His exhortations to the other Mennonites went unheeded and he was not invited to speak or ever nominated by "the lot" as a candidate for the ministry. Discouraged by the lack of response, he finally called his own meetings in April 1859. This became the beginning of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite — for him the continuation of the "true lineage" church.

The "Johnny Holdeman" church, as it was called, was built in Wayne County, Ohio, but remained small, limited largely to his own family and some who had, like himself, become disillusioned with the church they belonged to. The following among Mennonites and Amish did not materialize as he had hoped. Unrest and divisions over doctrinal issues in the Mennonite groups adjusting to life on the American Frontier provided a context for him to speak out about the issue he felt plagued the church.

The "Holdeman" group was one of approximately 25 secessions that came out of the (Old) Mennonite (Swiss-south German Mennonite background) Church in the 19th century (as did the General Conference Mennonite Church).

John Holdeman wrote extensively to communicate his beliefs and exhort followers. The twelve books and booklets he authored between 1862 and 1889 in English and German reflected his strong beliefs in nonconformity to the world, nonresistance, and church discipline.

During this period, 1874 to 1882, he traveled tirelessly, visiting churches across the newly-settled areas of the midwest and Canada. His travels added to his growing financial difficulties. He turned most of his farming over to his sons, and eventually had to sell his farm in Wayne County and moved to Jasper County, Missouri in November 1882, accompanied by most of his church members.

His high debt from investments in publication added to his financial burden. When he left for Missouri, he took with him two wagon loads of unsold books and literature.

By 1890, still unable to make ends meet on the farm in Missouri, he moved to Moundridge, Kansas where he died in 1900.

The Russian Migration

John Holdeman's work as the traveling evangelist was successful. It was among the immigrants who came from Russia after 1874 to -75 that he as a person and his emphases were welcomed the most. About 45 to 50% of today's North American membership stems from the Polish Russian immigrants who came to McPherson County, Kansas. These immigrants came from the Ostrog area of Russia and were descended from the Groningen Old Flemish Group in Holland. (Names include: Koehn, Schmidt, Unruh, Jantz, Becker, Nightengale, Wedel, Ratzlaff, Jantzen/Johnson.)

About 25 to 30% were from the Kleine Gemeinde group that settled in Manitoba. The Kleine Gemeinde were from South Russia's Molotschna area. They had experienced traumatic, internal divisions, resulting in a decision to locate in the new world at a distance from each other: some to the Kleine Gemeinde, settled in Nebraska; the other group in Manitoba. It was this latter, more progressive group led by Peter Toews, that opened their doors to Holdeman's ministry. (Names include: Toews, Penner, Friesen, Giesbrecht, Loewen, Isaac, Wiebe, Reimer.)

About 10 to 15% of Holdeman followers were from Holdeman's own Swiss-South German background with names like Holdeman, Leatherman, Litwiller, Yost. Among the remaining 10 to 15% are a few names like Fricke and Mastre who came from a Lutheran background.

Holdeman's ministry among the Russian immigrants was a real breakthrough. He spoke their language, related well to the issues they faced in the new land, and received open invitations to preach in their churches.

In 1878 John Holdeman was invited to visit

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the destitute Ostrogers who settled in the Lone Tree Township of central Kansas. Worship services were held in their homes. He preached his first sermon in the Canton Emmanuel Mennonite Church. The first convert baptized was Benjamin Schmidt, on whose land the first sod house church was built 7 miles north of Moundridge. Seventy people were converted and baptized during this visit. Within a year, two ministers and two deacons were elected. A sod church building was built. By 1882, there were several small congregations and over 200 members in the state of Kansas.

It is estimated that John Holdeman spent the equivalent of 13 years traveling and preaching in 17 states of the U. S. and two provinces of Canada, visiting at least 112 locations. When he died in 1900, the church membership numbered approximately 750.

The decade after John Holdeman's death was difficult for the group. No strong leadership emerged until an earlier convert to the church from Lutheran parentage, Fredrick C. Fricke, took leadership in 1909. Since Frick was not from either of the main Russian groups within the Church, he was able to mediate issues and bring stability.

During the first half of the 20th century, the church faced a number of demanding changes, going through the transition from German to English; facing the compulsory draft and maintaining a strict conscientious objector stance through the two World Wars; adapting to some Americanization; finding new ways to deal with the emergence of technology

(farm equipment, radios, television, etc.); routinizing the yearly revival meeting method as the major church disciplining process; establishing conference channels for emerging mission and evangelistic thrusts and moving away from leadership by elders. Another threat felt for many years resulted in the establishment of 87 private elementary schools in response to the formal decision to avoid public schools reached at the 1974 conference.

The church grew from 5,000 to 8,500 members between 1950 and 1970. During these two decades, missionary efforts increased in the U.S. and abroad with churches gathering members in Mexico, Nigeria, Haiti, India and Brazil. The denomination now has over 17,000 members worldwide.

1999 Membership Church of God in Christ, Mennonite

Belize	48
Brazil	307
Canada	4,034
Dominican Republic	37
Ghana	24
Guatemala	15
Haiti	428
India	89
Jamaica	8
Kenya	43
Malawi	32
Mexico	362

Mozambique	6
Nigeria	278
Philippines	210
Romania	2
Uganda	1
Ukraine	4
United States	11,846
Zimbabwe	35
Total	17,809
Ministers	354
Deacons	291

Brief History in Time

- 1803 Mennonites organizes churches in Ohio soon after it became a state.
- 1832 John Holdeman was born January 31, 1823 to Amos and Nancy (Yoder) Holdeman at New Pittsburgh, Wayne County, Ohio.
- 1844 John Holdeman converte possibly as the result of Methodist-style preaching in Funks Church of God a mile from the church where John's father, Amos, was a deacon.
- 1852 Married to Elizabeth on November 18.
- 1857 Began to speak out about the "decayed" nature of the Old Mennonite Church.
- 1858 January, John Holdeman's vision
- 1859 Began his own church meetings in Wayne County, Ohio.
- 1863 Fulton County church was organized with Mark Seiler, an Amish minister converted to Holdeman teaching.
- 1873 Meridian church started (American Mennonite Migrants — Pennsylvania Dutch).
- 1874 Kleine Gemeinde some 18,000 strong migrate to North America, Manitoba, from South Russia area of Molotschna (a minority group).

- 1875 Visit to the Volhynians at Florence, Kansas — the destitute Poles. In January, Ostogers leave England for Philadelphia. David Holdeman, and uncle to John Holdeman and member of the Board of Guardians (Hesston Church) worked to give aid to the Ostogers.
- 1878 First "Johnny Holdeman" church erected in New Pittsburgh, Ohio.

Holdeman visits the Canton community. Preached his first sermon in the Canton Emmanuel Mennonite Church; after that he preached in the homes of the Ostroger. The first convert baptized was Benjamin Schmidt, on whose land the first sod house church was built 7 miles north of Moundridge.
- 1880 Holdeman visited the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren and the Mennonite Brethren but was not accepted well. Tobias Unruh was baptized into the church by Benjamin Schmidt and ordained Bishop in South Dakota by Holdeman in 1881.
- 1882 Holdeman reports that there were 219 members in Kansas. Sells his farm in Wayne County due to high debts from investment in publications. Relocated in Jasper County, Missouri. The church in Jasper County for the next 14 years were mostly the same members that left Wayne County and mostly family members.
- 1884 Conference in McPherson County, Kansas, regarding call and ordination of ministers.
- 1890 Hoped to find zinc on his farm like his brother had. He lost \$800 in this venture and by 1892, his indebtedness was so extensive that even sale of his land would not liquidate it.
- 1894 Did road work to help pay debts
- 1897 Move to Moundridge, Kansas
- 1900 John Holdeman dies and is buried in the Lone Tree Cemetary

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One Family's Roots by Agnes Becker

REGEHR was the family name of my mother's father. Anabaptist-Mennonite refugees from Holland, Switzerland and France are believed to have found their way to Danzig, Prussia (today called Gdansk, Poland) as early as the 1530's.

We are not sure where the Regehr name came from but we do know that they arrived in Prussia sometime before 1790 possibly from Flanders (northern Belgium). Very likely the family came to Prussia due to the persecution in the Middle Ages from the Roman Catholic Church. As early as the 1550's, Mennonite refugees from Holland found their way to the deltas in West Prussia. These were swampy, unfruitful lowlands and they were experts at reclaiming swamplands by means of dikes and canals. They were offered freedom from Military conscription and freedom of religion. Peter Regehr, our ancestor, was a member of the Kleine Gemeinde Mennonite church. There were Flemish and Frisian Gemeinde churches, the Flemish being the more conservative and the Frisian the smaller, more liberal church.

Peter, who was born in 1740, was married to a Judith . . . ? They were very poor and where most people went by horse and wagon, this family walked. In 7 years, 7 of their children died. Later their 18-year-old daughter died and only Isaac was left. Many of the others had left for Russia and after his parents died, Isaac and his wife Gertrude (Wiebe) decided to move also. This was in 1811 and most of the other people had gone in groups by wagon trains. Isaac and his wife must have been desperate and determined to go, since they would be going by themselves, walking 975 miles and pushing their belongings in wheelbarrows. They had 5 children 13, 12, 8, 1 and a younger child.

How could they have gone so far, walking with two infants!! Gertrude spent the last 8 years of her life confined to bed because she had ruined her back by pushing a wheelbarrow during the immigration.

They moved to the Russian Steppe, a land covered with grass as high as a man, which took a great effort to walk through. The grass when dried was a good source of heat and fuel. No trees or shrubs were to be seen on this endless rolling steppe which is an arid plain covered with grass. The Molotschna settlement consisted of 320 acres of rich productive land which lay on the east bank of the Molotschna river. These villages were organized from the point of view of German order and in compliance with regulations. The Oberschultz (village Mayor) who was elected by the people controlled village order. Each village consisted of 20 Wirschaften (village farms) each 280 feet wide. Since Isaac came after the properties were assigned, he was given farm number 29. At first temporary houses were built out of wood and later brick was used. The poorer used raw brick and those more well-to-do used kiln-dried brick. Their fields were long strips of wheat, rye and baley with pastures for sheep and cattle. Throughout history the Anabaptist Mennonite people helped eachother unselfishly to help establish themselves and provide food for the families. (This is still the Mennonite way!) The climate was moderate, with only 13 inches of rainfall a year on the average. The government assigned them 175 acres of land and a plow.

Isaac W. who was the 13-year-old boy who had walked to Russia with his parents spent 9 years working with his father and brothers. He died at the age of 43 when his youngest boy was only 8. This son, Jacob G, married an Anna Toews when he was 20. They had 13 children, 9 of them dying at birth or soon thereafter. Anna was a half-sister to Minister Peter P. Toews. It was this minister that left the Kleine Gemeinde group in 1882 and joined John Holdeman's church.

Jacob and his wife Anna were known to have a heart for others. Anna became a midwife and must have delivered many babies as there were few doctors. They purchased a farm in Hierschau for 3,400 rubles. Next they moved to Gruenfeld. The economy started to change, land prices increased by 10 times, grain export started during this time and by 1860 the export business really took off. By then only 50% were farming and the others entered trades such as blacksmithing, wagon building, merchandising, grain milling and oil pressing.

The government started bringing in mandatory army conscription and the Mennonites tried to sway the government to no avail. Delegates traveled to Canada and upon their report it was decided to make the move. Jacob, his wife and four children were with the first families that went, leaving their home on May 30, 1874. Imagine how difficult it must have been to leave their home and friends. A son was born on this long journey but died before they reached Canada. They reached the Shantz Immigration houses south of Niverville, Manitoba, on August 2, 1874. They were very thirsty and tired. No water was available. Someone came along and brought them some water but it was almost undrinkable. The children cried for water. The next day they hauled it by oxen, a distance of 6 miles, but there was only a little water for each family.

In the year 1882, a minister, John Holdeman, came to Manitoba and preached the word of God so clearly that Minister Peter P. Toews and half of his congregation were baptized to the Church of God in Christ Mennonite. Jacob G. Regehr and his wife Anna were among those people.

Anna died at the age of 61 after a very severe headache. Several years later, Jacob married a lady from Kansas and lived there until he died. His son, Jacob T. Regehr, married in Manitoba. He operated a general store for many years. He was recognized as a prominent figure in promoting and establishing the dairy industry in the east Reserve.

Jacob T. had a son, John T. John T. married an Elizabeth Dueck, who had a son John D., who had a daughter Amanda, who had a daughter, Agnes!

But that is getting ahead of my story!

Grandpa's father was sick 10 weeks with typhoid fever and died when his son was only a few weeks old. His parents had been married only a year. Elizabeth moved back to live with her parents.

Before she married John his best friend, John B. Toews, had also been interested in her; when she chose to marry John Regehr moved to another area so he wouldn't create a problem for his friend. After the death of his best friend he wanted to take care of his widow and child. When Grandpa was 10 months old he got a new father. They decided to let him keep the name Regehr as a memorial to his best friend. This created some problems, too, when Great-grandpa introduced his children one of them had a different name and then he became the center of attraction! He was a restless fellow. Having learned to know Great-

grandpa 99 as we called him, there was a big contrast between the two, but they loved and respected each other.

His mother died when he was 14. Now he was an orphan, yet the oldest in his family. His oldest sister was only 12 and there were 9 children. In 10 months his father brought home a new mother from Kansas.

Grandpa Regehr went to work for his uncles who were carpenters. A hammer, saw, square, plane and level were his first purchases. He decided he would learn how to build from digging the basement to painting the roof.

Two years later they moved by train to Kansas. They stayed with his new grandparents who had a house built like the homes in Russia. It had a huge brick fireplace. They could walk into this stove that was 12 feet square, slowly tapering up to the ceiling, through the attic, and by the time it came through the roof it looked like a regular chimney. The iron bars that braced it were also used to hang bacon, ham and sausage to cure for the winter. The museum in Hillsboro, Kansas has a sod house with a chimney made like this. It has four rooms around it so they all have heat and the attic had some bedrooms for the children and they also could keep warm.

Grandpa was converted and baptized into the church when he was 18. He loved to sing and often gave out and led songs in church. They would give out a song and lead it from where they sat in the benches. He loved his German bible and bought a German concordance and learned how to use it. He went back to Manitoba to visit and work with his cousins and uncles.

There was a certain girl in Kansas that he loved. He hoped she would be willing to move to Canada with him. Helena Loewen's father planned on making his daughter's wedding a special occasion. She had a gray cashmere dress instead of the traditional black. They sat together on two chairs near the front instead of being called from the crowd when it was time to be married. They came to church by horse and buggy and while passing another buggy on the road slid into the ditch. Grandpa got out and helped push the buggy back up on the road. Four weeks after they were married, they left for Canada where they lived in the upstairs of an uncle and aunt. One year later they decided to move back to Kansas. They rented a small house and prepared for the birth of their first child, my mother Amanda.

For many details of the 27 moves in their married life, read the book my mother wrote when she was 83. It is in your library.

I will give you a few of the highlights of the book and their life.

Grandfather had a spirit of adventure and a restless nature and it was hard for him to be patient and "wait on the Lord." A favorite saying of his and one the rest of us often quite is "shvind a bate vachta" or quick wait a little bit. In 1912 Major G. W. Littfield bought the Yellow House Cattle Ranch in the south plains of West Texas and developed it for colonization. Grandpa got the fever and after much planning he moved the cattle, household goods and farm equipment by boxcar to Texas. Grandma and the children traveled first class. Living in Texas was hard. Two small children of that congregation died before their church was completed. Grandpa built the coffins.

They traveled everywhere by horse and buggy. They sang German songs as they traveled. Grandpa had a deep bass voice and sang with gusto. One of my nephews has inherited that voice and I often think of grandpa when I hear him sing.

World War I was raging in Europe in 1917. After the U.S. declared war, the Canadians fled back to Canada to avoid the draft. Grandpa and his family also moved. This move was very hard for Grandmother. I wonder how she would have felt if she had known how many more times she would move with Grandpa.

They bought their first car in 1918, a Model T with a canvas top that could be folded back in good weather. Those cars had no heaters and Canada was cold. One trip when the children in back complained of being cold, Grandpa carried the children one by one to warm their feet on the manifold and then tucked them in under the buffalo robe again.

One time when Grandma was baking zwieback, Grandpa was nailing the second story on with 16 penny nails.

A muddy trip to Morris gumbo soil stuck on the wheels — finally, they wouldn't turn, so took off the fenders, mud balls all around them.

1919 Sunday school began and it was first held in afternoons. Grandpa led children in singing. If they had Sunday dinner guests, the men took the children to Sunday school.

The first song book published in 1915 was German and without notes. Often they didn't have enough books for everyone so the song leader would say a phrase, then immediately it was sung. "Fea

Ziya." Grandpa 99 and my dad demonstrated it when he visited us at the age of 99. Mother said they often sang while milking by hand. It taught them how to keep time.

Grandpa wanted his family to have good reading material so he subscribed to the Youth's Christian Companion, Beams of Light and Words of Cheer published by the Mennonite Publishing House at Scottsdale, Pennsylvania. Bible story books with quizzes, find verses first, etc. I still have some of those magazines.

He sang with such vigor he couldn't share a book, he was too restless. Young boys wanted to sit on the same bench because it vibrated.

There was world-wide flu during World War I. Grandpa built caskets in the basement and Grandmother lined them with soft cloth. Then Grandpa got sick, a lady doctor was called; the children were afraid and prayed. The doctor brought an invalid cup — this was the day before straws. Grandma forced fluids, which probably saved his life.

To California in 1920—saw a "Hello there" sign above a gate. When my folks moved to Oregon, they also put up a "Hello there" sign and now it is at the foster care home my father lives in.

A & W root beer: In 1919 two brothers invented it and they lived only 15 miles away. Grandpa took one child at a time along with him to town and sometimes they got root beer!!! (My dad did the same thing and those are still precious memories.)

Mother said no matter where they lived the house was always cozy and Grandpa put up a swing.

"Use it up, wear it out, make it do or do without" would have been a fitting motto for them. When I find myself doing some of those things, I feel like I am honoring my parents and grandparents.

Hoof and mouth disease 1926: My grandfather's herd of dairy cows had to be destroyed. They were quarantined. A very sad time.

Gold dredging . . . Many rocks . . . Built three houses with round rock, two of the two-story. At the reunion of '91 in Bonners Ferry Idaho he visited the house he built when he was 61. He built two more houses after that but they were of wood. The last one he finished when he was 71. This one was built to Grandmother's specifications because she wanted no modern conveniences!!!! A washhouse for her wringer Maytag, an iron kettle to heat water in (I now have this kettle because Grandma knew I wouldn't plant flowers in it!!!) She did consent to having a modern bathroom next to the bedroom.



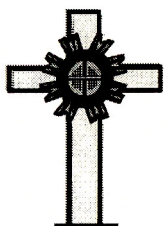
When his children were young, he helped Grandma build a playhouse out of mill ends. When they moved to Idaho, that playhouse came to our place. When my folks moved to Oregon it went to another daughter's place. Now a great-grandchild is enjoying it. At our reunion this year one of the grandsons had made a kit to scale, to duplicate that house.

Grandparents aged, but kept busy with writing letters to their scattered family, reading the Bible and tracts, feeding the birds, gardening, fishing.

Grandpa had several small strokes and he was often tired and felt useless. He sorted through his tracts, read the Sunday school lessons and the Bible. One day he said he needed to give someone authority to handle the money and do the banking; he was preparing to take his next journey.

When it was time for him to go to the hospital he went willingly. He was 87 when he died — Grandmother left us 6 years later.

What a heritage we have. When someone says to me, "Are you related to the Regehrs?" I am happy to say yes!



In Memorium

Alfred (Al) Nofziger left us on August 22, 1999, at the Corvallis, Oregon Good Samaritan Hospital. He was born February 7, 1921, on a farm one mile north of Tallman, a community west of Lebanon, Oregon, the middle of nine children born to Daniel and Lydia (Erb) Nofziger. Al is survived by his wife, Marjorie (Gerig), whom he married August 18, 1944, and their six children and 12 grandchildren.

Al and Marjorie have been members of the OMHGS since its beginning and have been substantial contributors to the society in many ways. They gave of their time and resources in the early years of the organization. Their home was the temporary location of our library until the space in the chapel building on the Western Mennonite School campus became available to us. They have donated many books to the library as well as a good computer

and making available a good used copy machine. You could count on their presence and participation in all activities of the Society if they were in the area.

Al will continue to be missed by his family and friends.

Following is an article about the now-extinct town of Tallman which Al wrote a few years ago.

My Story of Tallman by Al Nofziger

Tallman was named for James Tallman, who had the original donation land claim at this location in 1851. A description of the town in the late 19th century was given on January 1, 1940 by Andrew Jackson Smith, a pioneer: "Tallman was a busy place then. The railroad had a big yard there, the engines were wood burners and used to back up to the Albany Ditch to take on water. The warehouse was the grain center of the country about, and cars were loaded there nearly every day. The post office was in Father's store and there was usually a bunch of men swapping yarns and talking politics around the stove."

In 1921 Tallman consisted of fifteen homes, six barns and sheds. The family names were Blach, Fox, Grugett, Hoover, Lueck, McClain, McQueen, Nijinsky, Reidy, Snodgrass, Thayer, Truelove, Turpin, Webber and Welch. My family lived about a mile north of Tallman, and Tallman was listed as my birthplace in 1921. The folks knew all their neighbors and everyone helped each other out when needs arose.

There was also a railroad section house and a bunk house, a railroad depot, a post office established in July 1886, and discontinued August 15, 1923, that included a store and living quarters. Two churches, both Baptist, the one referred to as the hard-shelled Baptist, one hotel and the Senders Grain warehouse powered by a huge one-cylinder kerosene engine. Arthur McClain operated the warehouse.

A community hall built about 1915 was the gathering place for dances every two weeks on a Saturday night. The other Saturday night were for parties for folks that didn't believe in dancing. Local talent was used and people from Portland came to speak. Once Linus Pauling, a well-known science teacher from Corvallis, was the speaker. I don't recall that our family, Dan and Lydia Nofziger and their nine children, ever attended any of the events.

School District #7 was formed in 1854 and a

school house was built and called the Bentley School. Later it was named Oak Grove. Then it was moved to the Jesse Swank property. I remember seeing the old school when I rode a horse and did chores for Joe Swank for a few weeks. They used the old school for a granary.

A new school was built and was named Tallman. This was the school all my siblings and I attended. It had a wood floor, cloak rooms, and a bell tower. The one room school for all eight grades was heated by a hug wood-burning stove with a jacket around the outside. There were huge blackboards on three walls. A clock, a picture of George Washington and "The Gleaners" adorned the walls. A traveling library came occasionally. A teacher did the janitor work and taught eight grades. Outside was a hand pump, outdoor toilets, one each for girls and boys, a play shed, teeter-totters, a ball diamond and a flagpole. My father served on the school board for a number of years and I remember he chaperoned us on a school outing to the top of nearby Peterson's Butte about 1932.

Frank Hayes was born in 1916 and remembers the narrow-gauge railroad north from Tallman called the Natron Cut-off, but its use had already been discontinued and then used as a siding. It had gone to Silverton, Woodburn and Canby to the river. The boxcars were then ferried across at Ray's Landing. (Guy Ray later lived on the Oak Creek dairy farm west of Lebanon.)

It was in 1880, ten years after the first train whistle was heard in Albany, that two more trains appeared in the country. The first, the Southern Pacific railroad line, 14 miles southeast of Albany, and six miles from Lebanon, intersected at Tallman. Because of this, it was also known as the Lebanon Junction. Trains ran daily from Albany to Lebanon with freight, mail, logs, lumber, and passengers until the need came for more passenger service. Then a "galloping goose" was added, also called the "Skunk." I remember my father taking cream to Tallman and shipping it to the Albany Creamery on the "Galloping Goose," which was a kerosene engine-powered unit,



School outing to top of Peterson's Butte, ca. 1932. Standing l./r. Ruth Ginther, teacher Veronica Whitney, Mrs. Whitney, Dan Nofziger, sons, Alfred & Virgil in front of Dan. Seated, Ina Nofziger, Lois Ginther, Berneice Nueschwander, Esther Nofziger. In front, Verl Nofziger, Don Hayes, Jack Whitney and Morris Nofziger.

carrying express mail and passengers, with two round trips daily for a few years. When the railroad section boss or anyone saw water dripping from a boxcar on the siding, people were informed that ice was available for ice boxes to keep the food cold or for the treat of homemade ice cream.

The second was the rail line running south. It was owned by Southern Pacific and ran to Plainview, Brownsville and Springfield. Sometime in the early 1980's this line was taken up. Tallman schoolchildren who came from the north walked the old railroad grade from Truelove's through the McClain property and through Tallman, south on the S. P. tracks to the road and one-eighth mile west to the school, located on the road now called Gore Drive.

It was interesting to find that the "Albany Register" (September 30, 1880) newspaper wrote: "At the crossing of the narrow gauge Oregonian Railway line and the Albany Lebanon Branch line, a depot was erected at the future site of Tallman. It was predicted that a town to rival Lebanon would spring up in this location."

Today freight trains run daily from Albany to Lebanon, hauling mostly grass seed, fertilizer, chemicals, plywood and some lumber.

An Albany real estate company had the site surveyed in 1889 and an article in the Lebanon Express, (November 8, 1889) reads: "All right we're glad of it, and hope that it will greatly enhance the real estate of the adjacent country. The car of progress is moving this way and cannot be stopped, so take hold and pull or get out of the way and let her come." Land prices had risen at the influx of settlers from 1906 to 1917.

Many hoboes walked or rode the rails in boxcars or on top of them. Once when walking home from school alone, I noticed a hobo about a quarter mile behind me on the tracks. I was so scared and walked as fast as I could. One time Beulah Grugett caught a hobo stealing her chickens. I remember an occasional hobo would find his way to our home. Dad believed one should work for their needs and so he had told mother to have them split wood, which they would do while she fixed something for them to eat. She never invited them into the house but would bring the plate out for them to eat.

Tallman has the honor of being home to a well-known author, Frederich Homer Balch, born in 1861 and whose birthplace was given as Lebanon. His father was a man of culture and taught Frederich at home till he was 15 years old. Frederich read many of

the classics and became intensely interested in the legends, customs and history of the Indian tribes of the Columbia River. He wrote, "The Bridge of the Gods," published in 1890. A stone was placed at the Tallman School in his honor and was later moved to the Lebanon Library where it can be seen.

Arthur McClain had a fast team of horses and a light wagon to use on a cream route out to Lacombe, bringing the cream into Tallman to send to Albany on the train. Mr. Hoover had beehives and extracted honey at his place. Rose Snodgrass was postmistress at the post office until it closed in 1923. The Thayer place had been a hotel and had a huge outside stairway. The Trueloves, McClains and McQueens were farmers.

Farmers in the Albany Prairie raised horses, cattle, hogs, sheep and chickens for their own use and to sell. Their crops were hay, corn for ensilage that was put into silos and wheat for livestock feed and to take to the mills to grind into flour for their families to use.

The past seventy-five years have seen more changes in the shortest amount of time than of all the centuries before. There are not any of the old-timers or their descendants that lived in Tallman in 1921 living there today. There are not even any signs to indicate where Tallman existed. Only the road that goes through the area is named Tallman. Tallman exists in our memories, and little has been written so I add my few words to those.

I interviewed Frank Hayes in December 1996 and he drew me a rough plat of Tallman as he remembered it, as it was in 1921. His brother Irvin helped him with the plat. I remembered some things about Tallman and I did a little research at the library also.

—Alfred E. Nofziger
February 7, 1921-
August 22, 1999

Book Review

by Margaret Shetler

Paton Yoder and Steven R. Estes, Proceedings of the Amish Ministers' Meetings, 1862-1878: Goshen In: Mennonite Historical Society, 1999; xviii, 429 pages, photographs. \$11.95.

I recently received a copy of this book and found it to be interesting and informative reading. The book is the first complete translation of the minutes of the Dienervesammlungen, the Amish conferences held annually (with one exception) from 1862 through 1878.



The Amish church at that time was facing internal problems caused in part by diverse practices between established churches in the east and their descendants, dating from the early immigrants, and immigrants who came in the early 19th century, most of whom settled farther west in newer communities. These later immigrants brought with them changes and newer practices then common among the Amish communities in Europe. These conferences were an attempt to reach common ground on some of the dividing issues and create a unity among all the congregations. This did not happen and the minutes of the meetings document the disintegration of unity and the ultimate division which resulted between those we today refer to as Old Order Amish and the change-minded Amish of that time who became the Amish Mennonites who later merged with the Mennonite Church.

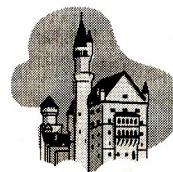
Some of the minutes give only bare-bones reports of the proceedings; others contain very much detail, depending on the secretaries of each meeting. All do detail the questions brought before each conference and the way the questions were answered, usually by an appointed committee which deliberated and returned their answer during the conference. When there were no questions before the conference, the time was spent listening to exhortations and admonitions from various of the attending brethren. Again, some of these messages are detailed much more than others.

The book contains much more than just the minutes of these meetings, however. Extensive commentary is offered about each meeting. Several pertinent documents relating to one or another conference are included in an appendix. Also included are brief but comprehensive bibliographies for each of the 253 different Amish leaders who attended one or more of the conferences. The book is well-indexed.

This volume has both historical and genealogical value and I would recommend it to anyone who is interested in church history from the latter part of the nineteenth century and who is faced with answering the question, What is the difference

between the Amish and Amish Mennonites?

OMHGS can order copies of this book if any of our constituency is interested. Let us know by the first of April if you would like to order one or more copies and we will send in a one-time order.



Genealogical Research in Europe by Lorraine Roth

In the last issue, August 1999, we published the beginning of this article, including General Prerequisites and Aids and Sources of Information and Where to Look for Them for Switzerland. This is the final installment of that article.

Sources of Information and Where to Look for Them

GERMANY

Records of birth/baptisms, marriages, and deaths —may be found in the "Pfarramt" of local churches or in regional church archives, or in the various "Staatsarchivs," such as in Darmstadt, Marburg, Zweibrücken, etc.

German Genealogical Research by George K. Schweitzer, 1995 (\$20.00)

—contains samples of addresses and letters in English and German, list of postal codes
(Dr. George K. Schweitzer, 407 Ascot Court, Knoxville, NT 379223-5807)

Quite a number of books containing emigration lists are being advertised. Any that I have checked have not contained family names in which I am interested. My suggestion is "check before purchasing."

FRANCE

Types of Records to be Found

A. ETAT-CIVIL (civil registration — best single

source

- registration of births, marriages, deaths
- are found in two places

1. MAIRIE (town hall) of each village or town (cities have their archives)
 - may have limited office hours
 - tell person in charge the name of your ancestor and a date you wish to check.
 - will bring out large ledgers in which the the information has been chronologically recorded and will probably make photocopies for you.

2. ARCHIVES DEPARTEMENTALES — at Strasbourg for Bas Rhin (Lower Alsace)
 - at Colmar (or Guebwiller) for Haut Rhin (Upper Alsace)

Addresses:

Archives Departementales du Bas-Rhin
5-9 rue Fischart, 67200 Strasbourg

Archives Departmentales due Haut Rhin
Cite Administrative
3, rue Fleischauer, 6800 Colmar

There is another centre especially for
genealogical research at Guebwiller

Archives de Meurthe-et-Moselle
1, rue de la Monnaie, 54000 Nancy

Archives of the Dept. de Moselle has moved
to a village outside of Metz.

Information to be found in the Etats Civils:

a) Birth

- date of registration and birth
- name, age, occupation, residence of person making declaration
 - usually father of child
- whether “naturel” or of legitimate marriage
- mother’s name (including maiden name), age, occupation
- where birth took place (especially if other than parents’ residence)
- sex of child and name given
- witnesses (usually two) — names, age, occupation, residence
- signatures of informant, witnesses and mayor

b) Marriage

- date and place of marriage
- groom’s name, age, occupation, place of residence (frequently gives his date and place of birth)
- names of parents (including mother’s maiden name), ages, occupation and place of residence
 - date and place of death if deceased
- bride’s name, age, occupation, place of residence
 - may give date and place of birth
 - names of parents (same as for groom)
- publication of marriage were made in each of the bridal couple’s home town on two successive days (a week apart) in order to give persons an opportunity to object to the marriage
- if parents or guardians consent and no objections are raised, mayor, in name of law, pronounces them married
- witnesses (two to four) names, ages, occupations, residences, relationship to bride or groom
- all parties sign
(Intentions of Marriage are published in both groom’s and bride’s home towns on two Sundays preceding marriage)

c. Death

- date and place of registration
- informant’s name, age, occupation, residence, relationship to deceased person
- deceased person’s age, occupation, residence, sometimes place of birth
- date and place of death
- name of spouse, whether living or deceased
- sometimes names of parents
- witnesses (usually two) — names, ages, occupations, residences, relationship to deceased person

d) General comments:

- 1) Republican Calendar in use from 1793 to about 1804
- 2) Women are indexed under their maiden names

B. PARISH RECORDS — for Catholic, Lutheran and Reform Churches

- only source of birth, marriage and death before 1792
- early parish records are found in archives

C. OTHER

1. Census Records (Recensements) — 1836, 1841, 1846, 1851, etc.
2. Notarial Records (several types)
 - Wills (Testaments)
 - Land and Property Records (Ventes de terres, batiments, etc.)
 - Administration of Estates (Partage de succession)
3. Emigration Records (Registres d'emigres) (eg. Alsace Emigration Index)
 - Alsace Emigration Index — (1817-1866) on 6 rolls of microfilm (can be ordered and seen at LDS Family History Centre)
 - A-C on #1,125,002
 - D-G on #1,125,003
 - H-K on #1,125,004
 - L-P on #1,125,005
 - Q-S on #1,125,006
 - T-Z on #1,125,007

GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH IN GERMANY

German research is difficult. One professional genealogist says it is the most difficult of all European countries. There are several reasons for this.

1) Political and Religious Upheavals

Germany has a very turbulent history and, as a united nation, did not exist until 1871. The following are a few highlights:

a) From 962 to 1806, Germany was part of the Holy Roman Empire, which at times was ruled by German kings.

b) The Reformation, which we usually date at 1517, divided the church, and also affected the political aspects because of the alliance between church and state. The Reformation continued this alliance but added religious stress points to the political ones.

c) The Thirty Years' War (1616-1648) illustrates that point. It began because of religious tensions. The religion of individual rulers has to determine the religion of his state, and they resorted to war to resolve the tensions this caused. The result of the Thirty Years' War was that much of what is today Germany was depopulated and ravaged,

delaying the unification of Germany by more than 100 years.

The Peace of Westphalia (1648) ended the conflict, declaring Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed denominations equally legal, but this still did not apply to the sects. Lorraine and Alsace were ceded to France.

d) World Wars I and II again caused disruption, destruction and division of the country.

When one looks at the history of the country, it is not so surprising that research in Germany is difficult; what is surprising is that so much can be found. This lack of continuity wreaks havoc on archival resources. One can only hope that peace will reign long enough for these industrious and efficient people to organize their records and archives so one can find and use what is there.

2) Use of gothic script during the time period under study:

Learning the gothic script well enough to interpret names and dates in church record books is not too difficult. After all, there are only 12 months of the year, and the number of names used by Amish Mennonites are limited to about 25; so that is not an insurmountable task. Other documents, however, are another matter, and in order to flesh out our history, those need to be tackled.

I suspect that one reason why scholars have avoided the period between the Reformation and the migration to America is this script. The 16th century documents are easier to read than the later ones.

I can handle (with a little help) what has been written in Canada because I am familiar with the subjects about which they are writing. Documents originating in Germany are quite another matter. Even after one has an intelligible transcription, one is still faced with unfamiliar terms to be translated.

3) Location of Resources

That is frequently the crucial question! Churches of the principal denominations may still have their records in their local churches, or they may be deposited in their regional church archives. Some church records are also found in regional "Landesarchives," literally — archives of the land. So, if you know the location of your ancestor, it will simply mean going from one place to the other until you find where the records you need are kept.

If you happen to have a German ancestor who was either Lutheran or Catholic, the first place to go would be to the local church of that locality. They should know where their records are if they have been deposited in any archives. For Mennonite ancestors,

I suggest going directly to the regional "Landesarchiv" and try your luck there. The main-line churches of the area were to register all persons in their parish. Some did so quite faithfully and others didn't bother. Some Mennonites took the registrations quite seriously and others didn't bother. So you may find them and you may not, but he who seeks may find.

So much for the difficulties, now what are the options for research and what are the aids?

1) Location of places:

Sometimes family records give us names of places, but where in the world are they? A number of booklets have been published which are a great help — if the name of the place is not too badly misspelled in your family document. The Atlantic Bridge to Germany series listed in the notes is helpful in finding places.

Detailed maps and atlases are also available. The maps do not have indexes, but the atlases do.

2) Mormon or LDS Family History Centers have some German resources on microfilm. Check them out.

3) Write to churches and archives in Germany. For suggestions, types of records, and names and addresses of archives, etc., German Genealogical Research by George K. Schweitzer is an excellent resource guide. It contains samples of addresses and letters in English and German, and a list of postal codes. (See complete reference in the Notes)

4) Visit Germany (or any other European country) and the places where your ancestors lived; do your own research. Develop friendships with German people. Exchanging visits is a marvelous way to see the country and learn its history and customs. The resources mentioned above will also be helpful in locating the records which you may wish to study on-site.

5) Hire someone to visit your ancestral home for you! The notes will give you some names and addresses. I recognize the person who recommends them, but I cannot vouch for the persons who offer to do the research.

6) Latch on to the research of others:

I have visited Germany, and I have tried to do a little research — mostly without a great deal of success. My best sources have been the research of others — Hermann Guth being the principal one. His research has covered a wide area and many families. It is far from perfect, because it leaves as many gaps as it closes. Many times his research ends before it

reaches the time when my research clicks in, leaving me with a gap. Some of his speculations may be proven wrong, but it is better to speculate than to do nothing.

Realizing that Hermann's research days are over, I am very quick to write to anyone I hear is doing research on a certain area or family. I have been in touch with Rudolph Ingold from Bavaria since 1985. Guth has encouraged him to do for Bavaria what he has done for the rest of Germany, but Ingold's health will probably not allow him to accomplish as much as did Guth.

On the Jutzis, I am in touch with Klaus Jutzi from Lautersheim, and on the Gingerichs with Helmut Gingerich from Teublitz. Another extremely interesting contact is that with Otto and Elisabeth Schanz from Bamberg, Germany. They have visited us in Canada and hosted a friend and me in 1992, taking us on an extensive tour of Hesse and the Schwartzenruber ancestral homes. The Gingerichs are from there as well, but we have not found specific locations. Otto and Elisabeth probably cannot be counted on to do any research, but their input on general information and friendship, nevertheless, have been very valuable.

GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH IN FRANCE

I have already mentioned that Alsace and Lorraine, provinces in which many Swiss Anabaptists found refuge, was ceded to France in 1648. These provinces were culturally and linguistically Germanic and their having been ceded to France has been a sore spot for Germany ever since. There have, of course, been periods when Germany has won them back by force, but those have always been short-lived.

Perhaps we should pause briefly to look at the geographical area in which Mennonites were, and still are, found in France. Alsace and Lorraine are still designations used to describe the original provinces, but they are no longer political units. Alsace, already called Upper and Lower Alsace in the days of our ancestors, is now divided into two departments called Haut-Rhin (literally Upper Rhine), with the capital at Colmar, and Bas-Rhin (Lower Rhine), with the capital at Strasbourg. (Note that "upper" refers to southern Alsace and "lower" to northern Alsace.) Several departments cover the old Lorraine — Moselle, with the capital at Metz, Meurthe-et-Moselle with the capital at Nancy, and Vosges, with the capital at Epinal. Belfort, with the capital city by the

same name, used to be part of Alsace, but is now a separate department. Montbéliard is just south of Alsace in the department of Doubs, with the capital at Besançon. One finds Anabaptists and now Mennonites in several departments further west, but these are the ones with the largest concentrations.

I have also mentioned the French Revolution in the latter part of the 18th century. The French overthrew the monarchy and by 1792 had drafted a constitution. In 1792 and -93, government officials fanned out into every city, town, village and hamlet, and every adult male had to swear allegiance to the constitution. The Anabaptists, it seems, had no trouble with the constitution — only with the swearing part, and in most cases they were allowed to “promise” their allegiance rather than swearing. This acceptance ceremony gave the Anabaptists full citizenship, which in turn caused problems with military conscription.

The new republican government also instituted civil registration. Not only did the republicans do away with the monarchy, but also attacked the church. Marriage was now performed by agents of the law, and registrations of birth, marriage, and death were made by the state. One can imagine the consternation this must have caused in the Catholic Church. I have read a little history of the village of Imling near Sarrebourg in which lived many Anabaptists such as Steinman, Moziman, Nafziger, Shertz, etc. The priest in this village refused to swear allegiance to the constitution and the village was left without a functioning priest.

I am not aware that Anabaptists were too disturbed by civil marriage, because they had been having trouble for centuries having their marriages legally recognized. They probably did not find it any worse to go and be married by the law than by the state church. I am not aware that they also had religious services to consecrate their marriages, but perhaps they did.

At any rate, beginning in 1793, one can expect to find a record of all births, marriages and deaths which took place in Alsace and Lorraine and even a few areas in Germany, such as Zweibrücken where the French were exerting their influence at that time. In most areas, the Anabaptists cooperated with these registrations. In Montbéliard, however, they seem to have dragged their feet for the first ten years. It may have been to satisfy the record-keeping prerequisites that Bishop Hans Roth of Montbéliard made his rather complete list of the families in his

congregation, giving the names of the children and their dates of birth. This Montbéliard church record book has been a genealogists' paradise and hopefully it will not be too long until we finally have an English, annotated publication of it.

But back to the “état civil,” as the civil records are known, in France. I became aware of these records about 26 years ago when I spent some time in Europe, hoping to make some connections between the continents and the span of time. However, I also discovered that I needed to know exactly where to look, and I had to find that on this side of the Atlantic. So I came home, and for the next 15 years I tried to do my homework. When I went back to Europe in 1985, I had a detailed list of immigrants, but still relatively few place names, because our Canadian ancestors simply did not record their place of origin — at least they were not any more specific than “Alsace” or “Bavaria.” Sometimes “Germany” covered both Alsace and Bavaria. I was hoping, however, that if I found the Jantzis in Bistroff in Lorraine, perhaps I would find others there as well.

That trip was a fruitful one. My homework had paid off. Mind you, out of more than 75 families, I did not find all of them, but sometimes I found a second or third family where I found the one I was looking for. I sought out all the European Mennonites who would talk to me, and once in a while they could direct me to the right place.

Let me describe to you the documents which you can expect to find in France and where they are located. Each population center, whether city or hamlet, has its mayor or registration officer. In a town it might be the local school teacher. In a hamlet it might be a local farmer, who has to be able to write. In the case of a birth, it was usually the father who went to the town hall (in a larger center) or the home of the officer (if in a hamlet) to declare the birth. He would ask one or two persons he knew to accompany him and sign as witnesses. The registrar would write up the record, giving the location, date of registration as well as birth, the name of the informant and witnesses, their professions, ages and places of residence, the name of the mother of the child (including maiden name) and the name to be given to the child. Then they would all sign or make their mark if they couldn't write.

The marriage records are something else! In the first place, intentions to marry had to be posted in the village of residence of each of the two intended spouses each Sunday for two weeks before the

marriage. This was to allow people the opportunity to object to the marriage. Both spouses, their parents and several witnesses must be present at the marriage. The spouses must bring with them certificates of birth (if born elsewhere). If the parents are not able to be there, they may send written consent. If they are not living, certificates of death are to be presented. The officer then proceeds to write up all the information beginning with the groom's name, profession, place of residence, age and date of birth, parents' names (including mother's maiden name), their place of residence, and if not living, then their date and place of death. The same information is given for the bride. Both groom and bride are asked separately if they wish to take each other for husband and wife, and if they respond affirmatively, the officer pronounces them married. Then the witnesses are named with ages, professions, places of residence and relation to the spouses and all sign or make their mark.

These marriage records are a veritable gold mine of genealogical information. Even though the civil registrations are found only after 1793, the information one gleans from many of them frequently take us back much further than that.

Death records are written up in a similar fashion, giving the place and date of death. It should give the age and place of origin of the deceased person, although not usually a birth date. The spouse's name, whether living or deceased, is also usually given. The informant and witnesses are also identified by age, place of residence and relation to deceased.

Some records, of course, are done better than others. The early records in Alsace are frequently written in German and are usually very difficult to read, because the writing is generally not very legible, and it may be somewhat of a mixture of German and French. The records written in French are surprisingly legible with a few exceptions. Not all officers were diligent in collecting or recording all of the information which was required, so some documents are not as informative as the descriptions I have just given.

Now, where does one find them? The officers or registrars were supplied with large ledger-like books, one for births, one for marriages, and one for deaths. The births, marriages and deaths were recorded in these in chronological order for the year. At the end of the year, an index was added. Also at the end of the year, the registrar was expected to send

a copy of each of these documents to the capital of the province or department. These copies were made on loose pages which were similar to the pages in the ledger books.

So today, one can find these records in two places — either in the town or village in which they were first recorded or in the capital of the department to which the second copy was sent. There may be a few towns or villages where records were destroyed due to fires, especially during the wars. I am not aware that any departmental records were lost during the war.

I did most of my research in the departmental archives, where one can cover much more ground more quickly. In 1985, I was given the original documents, and sometimes I may have been the first person to untie the package since they had been packaged when put away in the archives in the first place. I suppose by now most of the documents have been microfilmed and the originals are no longer available to researchers. That has some advantages, because in 1985 there were only a few archives which made photocopies; so I had to make copious notes. One can make one's own photocopies from the microfilms — a decided advantage.

There is, of course, nothing that compares with the experience of going to the local "Mairie" as the town hall or office is called, and perhaps it is even the same building which your ancestor entered, and look at the record which was written in the presence of and signed by your ancestor many years ago. Most of these offices are now equipped with photocopiers, and they will probably be happy to make photocopies for you, and may be so pleased that you came that they will even do it free of charge.

Let me mention two aids to finding names of places. I have already referred to the Atlantic Bridge to Canada series which includes Alsace, Lorraine, Germany and Switzerland. Another excellent source if you have ancestors coming from Alsace between about 1837 and 1866 is the Alsace Emigration list. It is advertised as covering 1817-1866, but has only a few entries for 1817-1819 and then almost nothing for the intervening years until the late 1830's. This list is available on microfilm at the Mormon (LDS) family history centers. For the later immigrants to Canada, I have found a number of places of origin as well as finding a firm date for their leaving Alsace.

A French friend of mine had been working on a similar list of emigrants from Lorraine, but unfortunately he died before completing it. One can only

hope that someone will pick up the project and complete it.

Many other documents can be found besides the civil registrations. A number of them have come into my hands; so I know they are there, but time, energy, and lack of facility in the languages have thus far put them beyond my reach. The old documents are in German with its difficult script and often difficult handwriting. They frequently contain extremely interesting material if one can find someone to help interpret them.

The Mormons have microfilmed some French materials. The civil records for Alsace are probably all on microfilm and can be ordered for viewing at the local family history centres. Again, you will need the name of a place and a date of birth, marriage or death. Ask the staff to help you find the number of the film(s) you will need to order.

Miscellaneous tips:

As in Germany, one can acquire copies of documents by mail. (1) I have found the mayor's offices of towns to be quite accommodating in sending copies. One must, however, send specific requests. Be sure to send remuneration for expenses — \$10.00 would be a suitable amount unless extensive research and copying is required. Departmental archives will not do research.

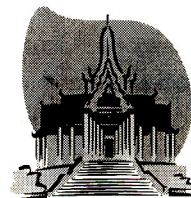
When doing research in France, one must have a working knowledge of French (or find someone to help you) — departmental archives do have written instructions in English. Early records in Alsace are often in German.

In France, women retained their maiden names and are found in the index under their maiden names. Also be aware of this custom in checking emigration or ship passenger lists.

From 1793 to about 1804, the French used the "Republican Calendar;" so you need a conversion chart to re-interpret the dates during that period.

Some general comments on the use of European researchers:

I have already indicated throughout this presentation that I rely heavily on European researchers, especially in Germany. I also have a network of persons in France with whom I share notes. I have not "hired" anyone to do research for me. I have heard some people have had good results hiring researchers and others who have not done so well. It can get costly. I am a firm believer in "networking" on both sides of the Atlantic, but I prefer to network with people who are interested in the same subjects rather than professionals.



My Two Heritages by Suzanne Roth

It was interesting to me as I typed this issue to read Lorraine Roth's article and see how my birth- and adopted-heritages came together in her research.

LDS Family History Centers are a part of my heritage due to the genealogical focus of the LDS Church, which I was born into and of which I was a member for 36 years. I didn't do a lot of genealogy work as an LDS myself because most of it had been done by my grandparents, including my maternal grandfather, who claimed to have his genealogy traced clear back to Adam because of the family line coming from the kings of Europe. (I have since learned that this is highly doubtful.)

As I write this, I realize that the term "genealogy work" may seem foreign to OMHGS newsletter readers. It is the term used in the LDS Church for tracing ones' genealogy, and it might be helpful in understanding why that is so if I explain the LDS purpose for doing genealogy work more fully than I have before.

The LDS believe that the accumulating of deceased family members' and other peoples' vital statistics — dates and places of birth, marriage and deaths — gives them the information they need to do proxy ordinances in LDS temples for these deceased persons. They believe that those who did not have the opportunity to hear and accept the Mormon gospel while on earth are given the opportunity to hear it in the afterlife due to the teaching of deceased LDS present among them in a spirit world LDS believe all deceased persons' spirits go to after they die. Since these spirits are unable to do physical ordinances like baptisms and marriages, Mormons attend their temples and in them do these ordinances in

proxy for the deceased persons.

In the process of accumulating these names and dates, the LDS have gathered information that is helpful to Mennonites interested in tracing their genealogy. I'm glad the LDS Church is so generous in sharing their information.

The LDS Church is my heritage, as I mentioned. One of my ancestors pushed a handcart across the plains to Utah, and another worked on the woodwork in the Salt Lake temple. As was discussed on the online former LDS newsgroup of which I am a member, a part of me will always be LDS, because that culture is where I came from. However, I have rejected that religion — for instance, I think it is highly unlikely that the LDS will be able to do the genealogy work for any more than a very few, percentage-wise, of the people who have ever lived on the earth. This is just one reason I don't believe in the LDS religion any longer. I have accepted Jesus as my only salvation and I have been baptized a Mennonite: I have adopted the Mennonite heritage which was my husband's and is my children's'. I am no longer a stranger and foreigner but a fellow-citizen with the people of God.

For this reason, my heart is with my adopted Mennonite family and I find their history fascinating. Still, it's nice that both of my heritages dovetail in this issue.

