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CALIFORNIA MENNONITE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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From Russia With Pedagogy: The Origins of a Mennonite Educational Program in Reedley

On February 5, 1909 the members of the Reedley Mennonite Brethren Church gathered for one of their regular business meetings. Following discussions of the church building project, purchase of cemetery blocks, the wisdom of allowing Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Church members to transfer their membership to Reedley, and a brief matter of church discipline, the group turned its attention to the question of establishing a German school. Though the congregation took no action at that meeting concerning a school, this event marks the first such recorded discussion within the Reedley Mennonite community.¹ Off and on for the next three decades, Mennonites in Reedley would discuss and experiment with a variety of educational models before finally establishing Immanuel Bible School in 1941.

While they perceived the need for a church-run educational program, few Reedley Mennonites at that time possessed the necessary qualifications to conduct one. However, the arrival in Reedley of three Russian immigrants—Wilhelm P. Neufeld in 1911, Kornelius G. Neufeld in 1915, and Johann P. Rogalsky in 1928—provided the educational expertise that made a Mennonite school in Reedley possible.

Neufeld, Neufeld and Rogalsky were not typical members of the Reedley Mennonite community. In a setting where few people had more than a grade school education, each of them possessed at least the equivalent of a college degree. Wilhelm and Kornelius Neufeld had even left Russia for a time to further their education in Germany, Switzerland and England. All were teachers by trade in a community made up mostly of farmers. They brought with them a combined total of about fifty years teaching experience at the time of their respective migrations to California. The nature of their arrival also set them apart from the others there. Whereas most early Reedley Mennonites had left Russia in the 1870s and spent better than a quarter-century in the Midwest before moving to California beginning in 1904, each of these men immigrated directly to California from Russia. Furthermore, the timing of their departure from Russia—1911, 1913 and 1928—did not fit the usual pattern for the Reedley community. The two Neufelds

came out at a time when very few Mennonites were emigrating from Russia. Rogalsky, while part of a major migration following the terrors of the Bolshevik Revolution, civil war and famine, was unusual in that he gained entry directly to the United States rather than Canada despite the restrictive immigration policies of the US government at that time.

The unusual characteristics and gifts of these three men provided the necessary ingredient for the creation of a Mennonite educational program in Reedley. In their stories we discover something of the origins of the school known today as Immanuel High School.

Wilhelm P. Neufeld was born in 1859 in Gnadenfeld, Molotschna. At the age of eighteen he joined the Mennonite Church in Russia. A student at the Halbstadt *Zentralschule* (Secondary School), Neufeld also taught there after his



Wilhelm Peter Neufeld as a teacher in Russia.

graduation. A few years later he enrolled at the Missionshaus, a seminary in Barmen, Germany. Upon completing his course work there, Neufeld took some courses at the pedagogical institute in Neuwied, Germany. In 1880 he married Ida Schlenken. She died in 1893, and in 1895 he married Margaret Rempel. From 1881 until 1898 Neufeld taught religion and German at the Gnadenfeld *Zentralschule*; from 1898 until 1911 he was an instructor of religion and principal of the Halbstadt *Zentralschule*. In 1911 the Neufeld family moved to Reedley, California, where they became members of the Reedley First Mennonite Church.²

Upon arriving in Reedley, Wilhelm Neufeld found a Mennonite community in the early stages of implementing an educational program. Much of the impetus for this program came not from the First Mennonite Church, where he attended, but from the neighboring Mennonite Brethren Church. After its first discussions of the topic in February of 1909, the Reedley Mennonite Brethren Church, in the summer of 1911, selected a committee to lay the groundwork for establishing a German school. Members of this committee were Rev. John Berg, Peter T. Harms and John J. Thiessen. The committee must have done its work well, since on October 23, 1911 the Reedley Mennonite Brethren Church voted unanimously to open a German school.³ At some point in the process the committee also sought the participation of the Reedley First Mennonite Church in laying plans for the school.⁴

The school association hired Wilhelm Neufeld to serve as teacher for the new school; he began teaching the first class of about twenty students in a private home on K Street late in 1911. After a three-month term, this first class held its closing celebration in the Mennonite Brethren Church on February 16, 1912.⁵

The founders of the Reedley school hoped to accomplish two primary goals. The first was to provide Bible teaching and other Christian training for their children, topics that could not be offered in the public schools. Second, they wished to preserve the German language in the younger generation, a skill that they feared would be lost in the predominantly English culture of the United States. Neufeld was certainly attuned to this latter goal. In a 1914 letter to the General Conference Mennonite periodical *Christlicher Bundesbote*, he expressed concern that the German language was giving way to English in Mennonite communities. He compared this situation to that of the first-century church when Latin replaced the Greek language. Neufeld noted that many Mennonite young people grow up hearing nothing but English and Low German, and that "the family and school are the battle grounds" for the maintenance of the German language.⁶ Clearly, Neufeld was acting as a soldier in this battle for language preservation when he began teaching at the Reedley school in 1911.

Reedley Mennonites appear to have had a difficult time firmly establishing their new school. In January of 1913 Johann J. Kliewer reported that there would be no German school under Neufeld's leadership that winter. He went on to raise the concern that the young people might lose their

ability to speak and understand German without the school. Six months later, however, Kliewer noted that a German school had begun on June 16 and would continue for six weeks under the tutelage of Mr. and Mrs. Herman S. Kliewer. About one hundred students attended this school.⁷

Wilhelm Neufeld's involvement with the Reedley school was sporadic at best after the 1911-1912 year. He may not have taught in the school at all after that first term. His legacy is that of a pioneer, the first teacher in a Mennonite educational institution in Reedley. Within a few years, Wilhelm Neufeld's ground breaking work would be continued by another educator from Russia: Kornelius G. Neufeld, who arrived in Reedley in 1915.

Kornelius Neufeld was born in 1871 at Alexanderkrone, Molotschna to Gerhard and Maria (Friesen) Neufeld. After



Kornelius G. Neufeld as a student in Europe.

Photo: Center for MB Studies

graduating from the Ohrloff *Zentralschule* in the Molotschna Colony, Neufeld taught for three years at an intermediate school in the Mennonite colony of Sagradowka, about eighty miles southwest of the Chortitzia Colony. Following his stint
(continued on page 6)

Those persons of a decade and century past become immediate members of the reader's world. Their pleasures, pains, achievements, and experiences are shared in the present. If the measure of a good poem is its ability to share the experience with the reader, then Janzen's poems are successful. It is a pleasure to dig below the surface, to discover and share those treasures, experiences, and memories of the past. But it is equally enjoyable to climb up the roots of the upside-down tree and discover that they point outward and upward.

Commendations are also given to artist Spencer Newell, the poet's son-in-law, for the imaginative cover that sensitively reflects the title as well as the tone and style of the poetry.

New books in the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies

The following are only a few of the many new books received in the Center for MB Studies during recent months:

Bartel, Matthew. *Bartel: From 17th Century Nederlandt, 18th Century Prussia, 19th Century Ukraine, 20th Century American*. Rosenort, Man.: Prairie View Press, 1991.

A history of the Heinrich Bartel (1834-1867) and Gertrude Warkentin Bartel (1832-1872) family.

Bartsch, Abe F., ed. *A.J. and Susie Wiebe Family*. n.p.: privately printed, 1992.

A history of the Abraham John Wiebe and Susie Ewert Wiebe, prepared for a Wiebe family reunion in July 1992.

The Descendants of Ohm Abraham Wiebe: 1831-1991. Winkler, Man.: privately printed, [1991].

A history of Abraham Wiebe (1831-1900) and Maria Koop Wiebe (1831-1892).

Janzen, Jean. *The Upside-down Tree*. Winnipeg: Henderson Books, 1992.

The latest collection of poetry by this Fresno poet. See the book review elsewhere in this issue.

Janzen, John, William Janzen & Ruth Hildebrand, comp. & eds. *The Heinrich F. Janzen Family Record*. Saskatoon: privately printed, 1992.

A history of the Heinrich F. Janzen (1849-1920) family.

McKee, Wilma. *Heritage Celebrations: A Resource Book for Congregations*. Newton, Kans.: Faith and Life Press, 1992.

A practical guide for local Mennonite congregations planning a church celebration event.

Nolt, Steven M. *A History of the Amish*. Intercourse, Pa.: Good Books, 1992.

A new history of this significant branch of the Anabaptist-

Mennonite family.

Redekopp, Alfred H. *The Muensterberg Hueberts: A Family History and Genealogy of the Descendants of Claas Huebert (1785-1853)*. Winnipeg: privately printed, 1992.

Claas Huebert was the father of Heinrich Huebert, the first elder of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Russia.

Pedagogy (continued from page 2)

in Sagradowka, Neufeld studied for four years at the Evangelical Seminary in Basel, Switzerland and later at Spurgeon's Pastor's College in London, founded by the renowned Baptist minister Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Upon completion of his studies, Neufeld moved back to Russia, settling in the Ufa Colony near the Ural Mountains, over eight hundred miles northeast of the Molotschna Colony. There he became the principal of the Davlekanovo *Zentralschule*.⁸

The Ufa settlement, founded in 1894, was far removed from the heartland of the Mennonite colonies in Russia. For the first several years of its existence, the Ufa Colony had no adequate educational system. Some wealthy members of the settlement sent their children to schools in the more established colonies, but this was hardly practical for most people. Faced with the need for improved local education, a committee in the Ufa Colony set about to establish a secondary school in its main city of Davlekanovo. They secured the services of two Mennonite teachers, Cornelius G. Neufeld and Johann Peter Rogalsky, who began teaching there in September of 1908. Neufeld served as the school's first principal.⁹

In 1913, after five years at Davlekanovo, Cornelius Neufeld left Russia. Following a short stay in Germany, he emigrated to the United States in 1914. Like Wilhelm Neufeld, he skipped over the more established midwestern Mennonite settlements and moved directly to California. Neufeld initially settled at Fairmead in Madera County, where a new Mennonite settlement had been established only about one year before. With Cornelius Wittenberg, he served as an ordained minister of the Fairmead Mennonite Brethren Church during 1914 and 1915. By 1915, however, the Fairmead congregation was beginning to unravel and many of its members moved away; Neufeld soon relocated to Reedley.

Kornelius Neufeld made his first contribution to Mennonite education in Reedley in the fall of 1915. That year the Mennonite Brethren Church there granted him permission to conduct a school on Sunday afternoons in the church basement.¹⁰ In the spring of 1916, representatives of the Reedley Mennonite Brethren Church met with their counterparts at the First Mennonite Church to discuss the possibility of reestablishing a German school. Neufeld's involvement in this renewed effort to organize a school is not clear. It seems likely, however, that the arrival of someone with his expertise and experience might well have been an impetus for these negotiations.¹¹

It does not appear that these inter-Mennonite discussions went very far, since the Mennonite Brethren Church alone

carried out subsequent planning for a Mennonite school in Reedley. At the 1916 sessions of the Mennonite Brethren Pacific District Conference, the delegates went on record encouraging all congregations to conduct German schools, and recommended that each congregation appoint a representative to solicit \$5.00 membership certificates in support of a Mennonite Brethren high school in Reedley. They furthermore appointed K.G. Neufeld to travel among the congregations in the interest of the school and to raise funds for the construction of a school building.¹²

Meanwhile, Neufeld continued to teach in the German school he had begun in 1915. No longer meeting in the church basement, Neufeld now taught both high school and elementary students in his home at 11th and K Street. He continued in this capacity until about 1917, when war-related anti-German sentiment among the Reedley townspeople caused the church to close the school.¹³ Soon thereafter Neufeld left Reedley. After living for a short time in Long Beach and Los Angeles, Neufeld moved in 1919 to Bakersfield, where he served as a minister of the Rosedale Mennonite Brethren Church. In 1924 he moved to Shafter, and died there in 1946.¹⁴

Despite the experience of World War I, Reedley-area Mennonite Brethren did not abandon their plans for a school. In 1920 the Reedley Mennonite Brethren Church resumed evening and Saturday afternoon religious training classes as a supplement to public school training.¹⁵ In 1926 the church began construction of a separate building for the school. Following completion of the new building, the church hired David V. and Martha Wiebe from Tabor College as instructors. On October 17, 1927 classes began in the new Reedley Bible School.¹⁶

The next school year the Reedley Bible School welcomed a new member to its faculty, Johann P. Rogalsky, the third Russian educator to play a crucial role in the development of a Mennonite school in Reedley.¹⁷ Rogalsky was born on November 28, 1886 in the village of Ebenthal in the Memrik Colony, some 100 miles northeast of the Molotschna Colony. After attending his village school for four years, Rogalsky's parents sent him for additional education in the Schönfeld Colony halfway between Memrik and Molotschna. After completing studies there, Rogalsky moved even farther from home to continue his education at the Halbstadt *Zentralschule* in the Molotschna Colony. Rogalsky chose the school in Halbstadt in part because it offered a two-year teacher training course, the profession that he had chosen for himself some time before. He remained at Halbstadt for six years: four in high school and two more in the teacher training program. While at Halbstadt Rogalsky studied under Wilhelm P. Neufeld, who would later move to Reedley and teach in the first German school there.

After graduation, Rogalsky took his first teaching position in 1906 in the Neu-Samara Colony, about 750 miles northeast of the Molotschna Colony. As in many young Mennonite settlements, no formal school had been established in this area, and Rogalsky taught classes in the home of Gerhard G. Neufeld. When Neufeld decided to move to the nearby Ufa

Colony, Rogalsky's school automatically closed down after only one year. Out of work, Rogalsky returned to his parents' home in Memrik. He soon secured employment in the city of Melitopol, near the Molotschna Colony, where several wealthy Mennonite landowners hired him to teach their children. The position was apparently not entirely satisfac-



Johann P. Rogalsky

Photo: Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, donation of Esther Dick

ry, since Rogalsky notes in his memoirs, "I was happy when the school year ended. Of course I would not come back."

After only two years of teaching, John P. Rogalsky was already in search of his third job. Since his two-year teacher training program qualified him to teach only in elementary schools, Rogalsky decided to pursue further education toward a secondary school teaching credential. He considered programs at St. Petersburg, at Tiflis in the Caucasus Mountains and at Tomsk in Siberia, eventually choosing the teachers' institute at Tomsk. While preparing for his entrance examinations, Rogalsky received a letter from Cornelius G. Neufeld, the brother of his former employer in Neu-Samara. Neufeld had just returned from studying in Switzerland, and England and had recently moved with his brother Gerhard to the city of Davlekanovo in the Ufa Colony. In the letter Neufeld urged Rogalsky to join him in teaching at the *Zentralschule* being organized in Davlekanovo. A second letter soon followed "with such persistency" that Rogalsky abandoned his plans for studies at Tomsk and moved to Davlekanovo. There he joined principal Cornelius G. Neufeld in September of 1908 as the first faculty of the newly-

organized secondary school.

After two false starts in his teaching career, Rogalsky found a comfortable niche in Davlekanovo. In 1912 he married Helen Wall, a cousin of Cornelius G. Neufeld. He taught in the Davlekanovo Zentralschule from 1908 until 1922, except for the years 1914-1917, when he served in the medical corps of the Russian army during World War I, and one year teaching at the school for the poor in Berezovka, a village near Davlekanovo. Rogalsky assumed he would continue teaching at Davlekanovo following the war, but as he recalls in his memoirs, "the Revolution in Russia . . . changed everything . . . so drastically, that we found it more and more difficult to adjust ourselves to the new order." Under these changed circumstances, Rogalsky began contemplating the possibility of emigration. He considered Germany, but decided that conditions there following the war were hardly better than in Russia. The fact that his colleague Cornelius G. Neufeld had migrated to the United States in 1913 and found success there did not escape Rogalsky's attention. He decided to emigrate there as well in 1922. Like Neufeld, Rogalsky moved directly from Russia to California, settling at first with his brother-in-law in the Lodi/Stockton area.

With no English language skills or credentials to teach in the United States, Rogalsky was forced to accept employment as a manual laborer upon his arrival in California. For the

In 1925 the Rogalskys moved from Shafter to Kerman in Fresno County. They relocated there at the request of the Fresno Farms Company, which had placed about seventy-five Russian refugee families in Kerman. The company had been having trouble with these settlers and hired Rogalsky to work in the land office there since he understood the Russian language and culture. The company hired Rogalsky's friend Cornelius G. Neufeld in a similar capacity. At about the same time the Fresno Farms Company began promoting a large Mennonite settlement in Kerman. The company prepared several hundred acres of land and began a vigorous advertising campaign to bring Mennonites there. A few families came, but the settlement never amounted to much and most families moved away within a few years. Cornelius G. Neufeld moved back to Shafter without ever having purchased land there. Rogalsky bought ten acres of land at Kerman and farmed it for a few years, although it was obvious that few other Mennonites would join them there.

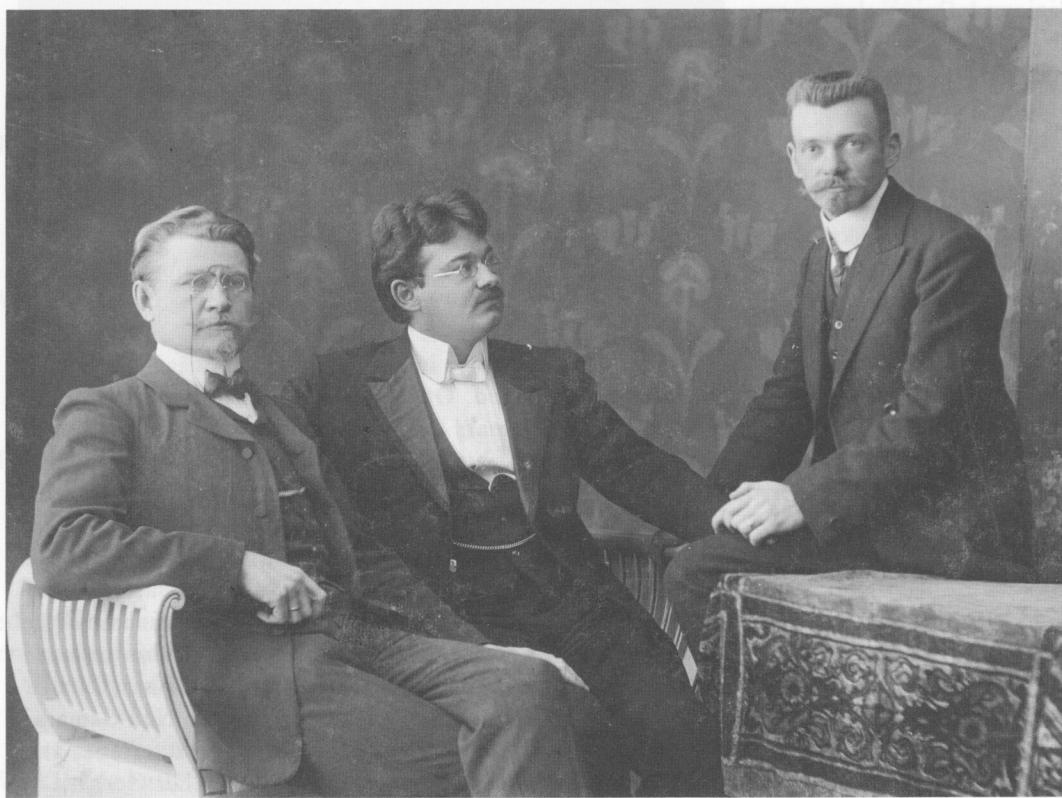
In 1928, after about a decade out of the teaching profession, Rogalsky was given the opportunity to return to the classroom. In the fall of that year he took a position at the Reedley Bible School, then in its second year of operation. Rogalsky taught such courses as Bible Survey, Bible History, German I and II, Church History and Missions History. All of his classes were taught in German, since he still lacked a

firm grasp on the English language. With the departure of the Wiebes after the 1929-1930 school year, J.P. Rogalsky became the principal of the Reedley Bible School in the fall of 1930.

Rogalsky taught one more year at the Reedley Bible School before dropping enrollments forced the board to reduce its faculty from two to one full-time positions. Since Rogalsky could not teach the English subjects, the board decided to retain J.E. Hildebrandt and to release Rogalsky. Hildebrandt taught at the Reedley Bible School for one more year before it closed completely in May of 1932.

Not only was Rogalsky out of a teaching position again, but Reedley was without a Bible school. Concerned that such a program not be completely lost, Rogalsky turned to the South Reedley Mennonite

Brethren Church (today known as the Dinuba Mennonite Brethren Church), which was then meeting in the old Reedley High School building. The South Reedley church agreed to let Rogalsky, assisted by part-time teacher Dan Schellenberg, open a new school in their building; classes began there in the



Johann P. Rogalsky (center) with Jakob Toews (left) and F.C. Thiessen (right), teachers at the Davlekanovo Zentralschule.
Photo: Center for MB Studies, donation of Esther Dick

first six months there he dug trees out of a vineyard owned by his brother-in-law. While engaged in this activity, Rogalsky became seriously ill with malaria. After his recovery, he moved to Shafter, where the climate was considerably drier than the marshy area around Stockton.

fall of 1932. Enrollment climbed from fourteen in 1933 to thirty-four by 1935. In 1937 Rogalsky moved his school into the kitchen of the newly-constructed church building in Dinuba. Later they moved into the church basement, but had to vacate that site when the heating system was installed there. The church finally offered the school a partitioned space in the church dining hall, where Rogalsky conducted classes for the next several years. Enrollment fluctuated between the teens and twenties.¹⁸

Meanwhile, the Reedley Mennonite Brethren Church had begun to reconsider the 1932 decision to close its Bible school. In 1936 they began discussions that would lead to them reopening the school in the fall of 1938. Representatives of the Reedley church approached the Dinuba congregation about merging their two schools, but it was not possible to enlist adequate support for a single school at this time. The

recognized academic degree, and so returned to school. Few American universities were familiar with the Russian educational program in which Rogalsky had received his earlier education, and so it was difficult to find a school that would accept him. He eventually gained admission to the Claremont Colleges, where he completed a Master of Arts degree in modern languages.

Rogalsky never returned to Immanuel Bible School. In 1945 he accepted a position at the Mennonite Educational Institute in Yarrow, British Columbia, where he taught until 1947. From 1947 until 1956 Rogalsky served as a professor of church history and German at Tabor College. In 1956 he retired, at which time he and his wife moved back to Santa Cruz, California. Rogalsky died in Dinuba on June 24, 1960, only five weeks after his wife's death.

The departure of John P. Rogalsky marked the end of an



J.P. Rogalsky with students of the Dinuba Bible School in the late 1930s.

Photo: Center for MB Studies, donation of Esther Dick

issue came up again in 1939. The Reedley church voted in favor of the merger, but Dinuba remained opposed. In 1941 the Reedley Bible School and Dinuba Bible School finally merged into one school, which became known as Immanuel Bible School. The merger was finalized when Reedley agreed to Dinuba's request that J.P. Rogalsky be appointed principal of the new school.¹⁹ Egon Hofer and Sarah Hiebert were hired as the other teachers for the new school.

Rogalsky served as principal of Immanuel for two years. Following the 1942-1943 school year he decided that it was inappropriate for the principal of a high school not to have a

era in Immanuel High School history. Subsequent administrators and faculty members came not from Russia, but from Mennonite communities in the United States. Their education was not based on a European model, but that of the American college and university. With time the school's German emphasis declined, to be replaced by a more standard American curriculum. Today, Immanuel looks little like the schools presided over by Wilhelm Neufeld, Cornelius Neufeld and John Rogalsky.

Despite the changes, these three men deserve much of the credit for the eventual success of Immanuel High School.

Most Mennonite communities in California during the early twentieth century operated German schools; only Reedley's program survived more than a few years. While the larger Mennonite population base in Reedley certainly gave its school an advantage over those in other smaller communities, that only partially explains its success. The pedagogical expertise, experience and dedication of these three Russian Mennonite educators laid the groundwork on which subsequent generations of educators in Reedley have built.

Kevin Enns-Rempel

NOTES

1. Reedley Mennonite Brethren Church Records, Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Fresno, Cal.
2. Obituary of Wilhelm P. Neufeld, *The Mennonite*, 23 June 1923, p. 7; P.M. Friesen, *The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia (1789-1910)* (Fresno: Board of Christian Literature, 1978), pp. 738-739.
3. Congregational business meetings, 23 July 1911 and 23 October 1911, Reedley MB Church Records.
4. H. J. Krehbiel, correspondence from Reedley, 29 October 1911, *Christlicher Bundesbote*, 9 November 1911, p. 5.
5. Esther Jost, *The Church Alive in its 75th Year* (Reedley: Mennonite Brethren Church, 1980), p. 63; H. J. Krehbiel, correspondence from Reedley, 29 February 1912, *Christlicher Bundesbote*, 7 March 1912, pp. 4-5.
6. W. P. Neufeld, correspondence from Reedley, 18 June 1914, *Christlicher Bundesbote*, 9 July 1914, pp. 5-6.
7. J. J. Kliewer, correspondence from Reedley, 25 January 1913, *Christlicher Bundesbote*, 20 February 1913, p. 4; Johann J. Kliewer, correspondence from Reedley, 23 June 1913, *Christlicher Bundesbote*, 10 July 1913, p. 2.
8. Friesen, p. 769.
9. Njuta Fast, "Schools and Teachers in Dawlekanowo," in *Ufa: The Mennonite Settlements (Colonies) in Ufa, 1894-1938*, ed. H. J. Neufeld, Mrs. H. F. Klassen & Peter H. Mierau, trans. Mary Enns (Steinbach: Derksen Printers, 1977), pp. 26-28.
10. Congregational business meeting, 17 October 1915, Reedley MB Church Records.
11. H. J. Krehbiel, correspondence from Reedley, 8 May 1916, *The Mennonite*, 18 May 1916, p. 5.
12. *Verhandlungen der fünften Pacific Distrikt-Konferenz der Mennoniten-Brüdergemeinde von Nord-Amerika, abgehalten der Gemeinde zu Lodi, California, vom 19. bis 21. November, 1916*, p. 11.
13. Larry Jost, "The History of Immanuel High School," 1977 (typewritten manuscript), p. 2; Esther Jost, pp. 63-64.
14. Obituary of Kornelius G. Neufeld, *Zionsbote*, 10 July 1946, p. 12.
15. Congregational business meeting, 18 October 1920, Reedley MB Church Records.
16. Esther Jost, pp. 63-64; Larry Jost, pp. 4-5.
17. The following biographical information on Rogalsky is taken from John Pierpont Rogalsky, "My Autobiography," (typescript, 1959), John P. Rogalsky Papers, Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Fresno, Cal.
18. Rosie E. Nikkel, "Early History of Reedley Bible School," paper presented at the Immanuel High School annual banquet, 1952, pp. 2-3.
19. Frank C. Peters, "The Coming of the Mennonite Brethren to the United States and Their Efforts in Education" (Th.D. dissertation, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, 1957), pp. 162-164.

Mennonite tour of Poland, Ukraine and Russia planned for summer of 1993

Dr. Peter Klassen and Dr. Paul Toews will host a Mennonite tour of Poland, Ukraine and Russia from June 19 through July 9, 1993. The tour will visit sites important to the story of Mennonites in these three regions. It will include virtually all of the remaining visible legacies of the Mennonite sojourn in Northern Poland and in the Molotschna and Chortitza colonies in the Ukraine. A secondary focus of the trip will be to assess the dramatic changes taking place in Eastern Europe and the lands of the former Soviet Union.

After the transatlantic flight the tour begins in Warsaw, Poland and then heads towards Gdańsk. The first two of five days in Poland will involve a drive north along the beautiful Vistula River. Stops will be made at the former Mennonite settlements of Kazun, Wymysle, Nessau, Schönsee, Dragasz, Montau, the Alt Schottland and Schidlitz. Three days in the Gdańsk area will permit exploration of the city and the many Mennonite villages of the Vistula-Nogat delta region: Rosenort, Heubuden, Ladekopp, Orlofferdorf, Bärwalde, Rosengart, Elbing and others. Virtually all of the former Mennonite church buildings and cemeteries in these villages will be visited.

From Gdańsk the tour will fly via Moscow to Zaporozhye in the Ukraine. That is the starting point for a visit to the former Molotschna and Chortitza colonies. During the four days in Zaporozhye the tour will visit all of the villages in both colonies that are important to the members of the tour group. The former administrative centers will also be included: Chortitza/Rosental, Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld. As in Poland many of the church buildings, schools and other public buildings remain and give us hints as to the nature of the Mennonite story.

From Zaporozhye the tour will move to Orenburg, Russia. Nearby are villages founded by settlers from Chortitza in 1892-93 and then farther west are the villages of the Neu Samara colony, an 1890 daughter settlement of Molotschna. We will visit both groups of villages. Unlike Chortitza and Molotschna, where all of the Mennonites were evacuated during World War II, these villages have had a continuous Mennonite population since they were founded. Between visiting the Mennonite sites the tour will also visit the cities of St. Petersburg (formerly Leningrad) and Moscow.

The tour is being arranged by the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies in association with the Mennonite-Polish Friendship Association. For further information write the Center requesting a complete travel brochure.