

ing schools, church membership, agricultural and industrial production; observations and records collected by Russian and Soviet government officials; census records for both villages and colonies; vital statistics (birth, marriage and death records); emigration records, and yes, even some church records.

The Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Fresno is currently entering into agreements with the archives in St. Petersburg, Dnepropetrovsk and Zaporozhye. In St. Petersburg and Zaporozhye the agreements will be in collaboration with other North American Mennonite archival institutions. Currently we are the only Mennonite organization negotiating with Dnepropetrovsk.

We recently forwarded \$2500 to St. Petersburg and nearly \$1000 to Dnepropetrovsk for the purpose of microfilming their Mennonite records. In order to complete the negotiations in Zaporozhye, we will need to commit ourselves to \$4500 per year for three years. In exchange we will receive 150,000 pages of documents from the Zaporozhye archives.

We are looking for friends and supporters who will help us underwrite this project on a three-year basis. Please carefully consider whether you might be able to assist us in procuring these important historical records.

## Genealogy Committee moving ahead on CD-ROM project; other activities

The January 1996 issue of *The Mennonite Genealogist* reports on several items of interest from the Genealogy Project Committee (GPC) of the California Mennonite Historical Society. Perhaps most important is the committee's progress toward releasing the GRANDMA database in CD-ROM format. The CD-ROM, which the committee hopes to release by summer 1996, will tentatively contain the latest version of GRANDMA, a database of ship passenger list information, the Brother's Keeper genealogy program, and digitized copies of the Rosenort (Prussia) Church family records and the earliest North and South Enid (Oklahoma) Mennonite Brethren Church family records. Subsequent CD-ROM releases will include at least one new set of pre-immigration and post-immigration church family records along with the most recent version of GRANDMA.

After two successful mergers of data, the GRANDMA database now contains over 134,000 names. The merging process has been greatly facilitated by the development of GEDTOOL, a program that recognizes and identifies possible duplicate entries when merging multiple databases.

The GRANDMA project has caught the attention of other Mennonite genealogical groups. One of these, called the "OMII Genealogical Project," has taken steps to coordinate its efforts with our committee. The OMII project, which is compiling information on Swiss/South German Mennonites,

currently has identified several such databases containing about 200,000 names. What is important and encouraging about the two projects, apart from the fact that both are working at parallel endeavors, is that they have standardized software and name-coding systems. A joint effort by the OMII Genealogical Project and the CMHS Genealogy Project Committee has resulted in a Swiss/South German Mennonite name code system similar to the GPC's Low German name code system. This will make it possible to more easily merge these databases if that should ever seem advisable. There are no current plans to do so.

During 1995 the GPC released its *Handbook for the Low German Genealogist Using Brother's Keeper 5.2*, which contains guidelines for entering data for the GRANDMA project. The GPC encourages all persons who are actively entering genealogical data into computer formats to obtain a copy of the handbook and familiarize themselves with the standards that have been developed for the GRANDMA project. Copies are available for \$5.00 plus \$1.00 shipping from the California Mennonite Historical Society at 4824 E. Butler, Fresno CA 93727.

Persons interested in receiving future issues of *The Mennonite Genealogist* or wanting more information about the Genealogy Project Committee's work should contact Jeff Wall at 563 E. Salem Ave., Fresno CA 93720 or via e-mail at [zzjlw@valleynet.com](mailto:zzjlw@valleynet.com).

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