History of The Kansas Mennonites With A Study of Their European Background

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HISTORY OF THE KANSAS MENNONITES
WITH A STUDY OF THEIR EUROPEAN BACKGROUND

being

A Thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty of the
Fort Hays Kansas State College in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science

by

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Chairman Graduate Council
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DEDICATION

To all students, teachers and Mennonites who have inspired me in the work of collecting and compiling the information of this thesis; to the librarians of Great Bend High School, Fort Hays Kansas State College and the State Historical Society; and to the future generations of Mennonites, this thesis is sincerely dedicated.
Many books have been written on Mennonite history, but these deal largely with the religious aspect of their life. The purpose of this thesis is to present the social, moral, economic and political aspects of their migrations and life, not only of their early centuries, but of the present time. Only enough of the religious element will be presented to give a general modern knowledge of their religious beliefs which in turn influence their life in general. Particularly will it be stressed how these people have influenced the history of Kansas.

This thesis was written for the purpose of preserving early Kansas history, and I was granted that subject because of my personal acquaintances with many of the early Mennonite settlers making it possible to present sketches of their intimate life that probably a stranger would not have been able to secure.
BEGINNINGS OF THE Mennonites
HISTORY OF THE KANSAS MENNONITES WITH A STUDY OF THEIR EUROPEAN BACKGROUND

BEGINNINGS OF THE MENNONITES

Although the history of the Kansas Mennonites begins during the latter half of the nineteenth century, it is necessary to go back several centuries to understand the reasons for their coming and even a few centuries more to understand their origin. Consequently, one must go to fifteenth and sixteenth-century Europe to fully understand the background of these Kansas Mennonites.

By the beginning of the sixteenth century practically every person living in Western Europe called himself a Christian, and pledged his allegiance to the Catholic Church. This was the climax of century after century of effort upon the part of ecclesiastical people to convert the heathens to Christian belief. The regions served by trade routes were converted first and from these the religion spread until practically all of the western part of that continent had been brought under the sway of the Catholic Church.

Although the Catholic Church appeared to be the universal church, it met competition throughout its history.
And so early we have records of the Lollards, Arian Christians, Mohammedans, Heretics, Jews and Skeptics who gave opposition in part or in whole to the beliefs and teachings of the Catholic Church. Therefore, even before the sixteenth century we find discontent in the Catholic Church and this, no doubt, had at least some influence in bringing about the Reformation.

The Reformation was caused by many reasons, religious, political, and economic, and in order to understand the origin of the Mennonites it is necessary to list the principal reasons beside the one given above:

1.) Conflict in thought as to just how far the Pope could interfere with national affairs.
2.) Catholic Church had grown enormously wealthy, causing extreme jealousy.
3.) Taxation of clergymen's property.
4.) Churches taxed the people.
5.) Quarrel over state and ecclesiastical courts and their jurisdiction.
6.) Appointment power of state and Pope.
7.) Growth of strong national states.
8.) Immorality of the clergy in some communities.
9.) The Great Schism.
10.) The Renaissance and its new thought.
11.) Development of new religion - Mohammedanism.
12.) Abuses of ecclesiastical authorities in some localities.

The subject of my thesis does not allow me to go into detail for each of the above points, but suffice it to say that each had a striking influence upon the Reformation, and any other religious works may be read for the proof of each and their further explanation.

Probably for scores of years the sentiment had been growing favorably for a Reformation and only leaders were needed for its commencement and favorable conditions needed for its success. The leaders were found in the persons of Cranmer, Zwingli, Hus, Luther, Menno Simons, Knox, Wesley, Calvin and many others. The favorable conditions were found in the "invasion of the Mohammedans;" the uprising of the German nobles; the "Black Death" epidemic; establishment of trade routes; the Great Schism; and the spirit of freedom created and developed by the latest discoveries.

In 1525, we find the beginnings of the Mennonites at Zurich, Switzerland. For some time there had been a feeling that the then existing union of Church and State and the resultant religions and their tyranny were unscriptural; also, a feeling against the theory that every child was born into the church; objection to the conscription of mercenary
troops; the belief that children could be baptized was questioned; and so under the leadership of Conrad Grebel, Felix Mantz, and George Blaurork, a large group of people left the Roman Catholic Church. This group of people has been given many names, Anti-Baptists, Taufers, Waldenses, Doopsgezinde (persons holding special views on baptism) and even Mennonites. However, most authorities agree that this group is distinct from the Waldenses and that the term Mennonites should not be applied until after the time of Menno Simons. The beliefs of this group consisted of the following main points:

"1.) National state is unchristian, so no oath was taken.

2.) Baptism on faith alone, thus excluding infant baptism.

3.) Objection to military service."¹

This being the age of suspicion and persecution, this group soon was brought in conflict with the state, due to their refusal to take oaths and to serve in the army. Another factor that contributed to their conflict with the state has been their communistic system of farming which was contrary to existing farming methods. They also separated themselves from the world and prohibited marriage be-

yond the brotherhood. They refused worldly vanities and refused civic duties and they soon were persecuted and suspected. At this time many of them became involved in the Munster uprising wherein the existing system of rule was to put down new communistic systems, corresponding to their beliefs. Although the uprising was put down without success on the part of this new sect, it cast such reflections upon them that the entire sect that took no part were under suspicion. "Although they were suspicioned we find that the followers of Grebel really had no desire to found a new theocracy in opposition to the Anti-Christian state. They sought only to withdraw from what their conscience condemned, content to live as strangers upon the earth and devoting all their energy to preserve the purity of their communities." 2 But their real beliefs and ideals were lost and persecution followed which will be described more fully at a later time.

"Although many of the original leaders perished at the stake others immediately took their plans and so by 1533 the fanatical follower, John Mattias, led the sect. Mattias came from Haarlem and he is sometimes known by the name Matthyszoor. It was he that inaugurated the atrocities of Munster in Westphalia, which although (as I have stated

2. Ibid. pp. 85-86.
before) committed by men who had deviated from the original
principles of the sect, were charged to the whole body. And
about this time a band of Anabaptists seized and fortified
a cloister in the vicinity of Witmarsum, but were captured
and put to death (February, 1535). One of those killed was
a young man by the name of Simons, a brother of Menno Simons.3

This brings me to the real beginning of the Mennonites
as a sect, and I will present a short sketch of the life of
the man after whom the sect was named. "Menno Simons was
born of humble parents at Witmarsum, Friesland, in 1492.
He was ordained a Catholic priest and appointed curate at
Pingjun, which was near his native place. It was here that
he began to read Luther's tracts and to study the New Testa-
ment and soon began to question infant baptism. In 1531,
the execution of Sicke Freerks, who had been baptized at Emden,
introduced further question. Menno was not satisfied with
the inconsistent answers of Luther, Bucer and Bullinger.
In 1532, he exchanged his curacy for a living at Witmarsum.
His brother was killed as an insurgent at Witmarsum in Feb-
uary, 1535, and in January, 1536, Menno left the Catholic
communion." (Authorities do not agree as to whether this
was the reason for his leaving the Catholic religion or not.
But most of them agree that it was because his brother was

killed and, although he sympathized with them, he felt that that was not the way to gain the ends of a Reformation.) Continuing from the above source we find that at this time "there were four parties among the Anabaptists...the Batembergers known as extremists; the Melchiorites known as liberals; the favorers of the Munster faction and the Obbenites who believed that they were to relive the life of Christ on earth. For a time Menno remained aloof from both the Obbenites and the Melchiorites. But, by the end of 1536, yielding to the prayer of a few who had left the Munster faction, he became their minister and in January, 1537, was set apart to the eldership of Groninger. Many regard Obbe Philpez as the original founder of the sect. But, it was Menno Simons, that was forceful enough a leader to give to that sect his name. Menno repudiated the formation of a sect; those who had experienced the 'new birth' were to him the true Christian church. His Christology was in the main orthodox, though he rejected terms such as Trinity which he could not find in Scripture, and held a Valentinian doctrine of the celestial origin of the flesh of Christ." 4 After this the life of Menno Simons seems to be much confused, since few records were kept at that age and his greatest work was in preaching and not in writing. Thus, no definite records are known

about his later life, but it is generally supposed that due to the persecution of the Mennonites it was necessary for him to flee from place to place. "He was apparently much in East Friesland in 1541; in North Holland, with Amsterdam as center from 1541 to 1543; again till 1545, in East Freesland (where he held a disputation at Emden with Jonas 'lasco in 1544); till 1547, in South Holland; next about Lubeck; at Wismar in 1553-1554 (holding disputations with Martin Micronius at Norder); lastly at Wustenfelde, a village between Hamburg and Lübeck, where he died on January 13, 1559."5 Thus, we have seen the beginning of the Mennonite sect and the naming of it after their recognized leader even today - Menno Simons.

The Mennonites had many beliefs which were contrary to the political, social, religious and economical orders of the times. The following is a summary of their principal beliefs and doctrines:

1.) Did not believe in taking a life and consequently would not serve in the armies or serve as judges or on a jury.

2.) Baptism by faith which meant adult baptism.

3.) Excommunication from membership of Church and excommunication also meant that the person was barred from even association with members of the sect or even with his family.

5. Ibid., p. 250.
4.) Excluded themselves from world and worldly goods.
5.) Although refusing to be judges they did obey the orders of the judges.
6.) Denied Trinity and other terms and ceremonies not mentioned in the Scripture.
7.) They denied Civil authority and Christian character of the Church.
8.) Limited marriage to members of their Church.
9.) Believed in communistic system of farming.

Many of the above, or most of them, were contrary to the order of things and naturally resulted in severe persecutions. Since no definite records were kept in those times, we have no definite idea as to how many were put to death, but even as early as 1527, and 1528, various leaders had perished at the stake. About 6,000 of them suffered martyrdom under the rule of Philip II of Spain. According to the United States Department of Commerce 7 "their book of martyrs (First German Edition, Ephrata, Pennsylvania, 1749, English edition, Elkhart, Indiana, 1886) is a ponderous volume." According to A. Rauschenbusch 8 "3,600 of them suffered martyrdom in Swabia, Bavaria, Austria, and Tyrol."

In order to more fully understand the terrific persecution put against the Mennonites or Anabaptists by many different sects for various reasons, it is well to quote M. J. Spalding\(^9\) at length. "The Anabaptists, in particular, were hunted down with a ferocity which is almost inconceivable. The favorite mode of punishing them, especially at Berne, was by drowning. This manner of death was deemed the most appropriate because it was only baptizing them in their own way. The rivers and lakes, which abound in Switzerland, often received the dead bodies of these poor deluded men. Sometimes, however, this mode of punishment was dispensed with in favor of others less revolting to humanity. 'Their excellencies of Bern, not being able to convince the Anabaptists, found it much more simple to banish them, or to throw them into the water and drown them. These punishments having, however, rather increased their number the Council of Bern, being embarrassed, resorted to measures less severe, and acting under the advice of the ministers, published on the second of March, 1533, an edict announcing that the Anabaptists should be left in peace, if they would keep their belief to themselves, and maintain silence; but if they continued to preach and to keep up a separate sect, they should not be any longer condemned to death; but only to perpetual imprisonment on

BREAD AND WATER. This was certainly a singular favor. Catholics, who are accused of much intolerance, had never molested the Zwinglians who had kept their faith to themselves, and even when these openly preached their doctrine from the pulpit, they were not condemned either to death or to perpetual imprisonment on bread or water.... The cruel persecution of the Anabaptists is another dark page in the history of the Reformation. To be sure these sectarists taught many things subversive of all social order, such as polygamy; their chief crimes, in the eyes of Luther and the reformers, were their rejection of Luther's authority, their pretensions to supernatural rights, and their protest against infant baptism and baptism by any other mode than immersion.1... The Lutherans carried out their intolerant principles in regard to the Anabaptists. On the seventh of August, 1536, a synod was convened at Hamburg, to which deputies were sent by all the cities who had separated from Rome. The chief object of the meeting was the devising means for exterminating the Anabaptists. From this synod emanated a decree, from which we will present the following extract, as a specimen of Lutheran intolerance, officially proclaimed - "Whoever rejects infant baptism— whoever transgresses the orders of the magistrates— whoever preaches against taxes— whoever teaches the community of goods— whoever usurps the priesthood— whoever
ever holds unlawful assemblies—whoever sins against faith—shall be punished with death....as for the simple people who have not preached, or administered baptism, but who were seduced to permit themselves to frequent the assemblies of the heretics, if they do not wish to renounce Anabaptism, they shall be secured, punished with perpetual exile, and even with death, if they return three times to the place whence they have been expelled. In a letter by Luther to Hesse we read (1536), 'Whoever denies the doctrines of our Scripture, or the authority of the universal teaching of the church must be punished severely. He must be treated not only as a heretic, but also as a blasphemer of the holy name of God. It is not necessary to lose time in disputes with such people: they are to be condemned as impious blasphemers.' Towards the close of this letter, speaking of a false teacher he is saying: Drive him away, as an apostle of hell; and if he does not flee, deliver him up as a seditious man to the executioner. The land-grave's scruples were quieted, and Luther's advice was acted on." Such was the condition that greeted the Anabaptists in the early part of the sixteenth century, and that picture was given to give some idea as to what methods were used in persecutions and who were back of the edicts that called for those persecutions. To more fully express the horribleness of persecu-
tion we need only to turn to a picture of how the Mennonites were persecuted in the latter part of the sixteenth century. One of the many accounts of the sufferings of those who died for the faith is that of Maelyken Wens at Antwerp in 1573. The account says, 'There upon the next day which was the sixth of October, this pious and Godfearing heroine of Jesus Christ as also her fellow believer, who in like manner had been condemned, were with their tongues screwed fast, like innocent sheep brought forward, and after each was tied to the stake in the market place, were robbed of life and body by a dreadful and horrible fire and in a short time were burnt at the stake to ashes.'

"Such being the state of affairs, the Mennonites were continually looking for places where they could worship without being disturbed or even found and condemned to death or imprisonment. The place where these meetings were sometimes held were vacant buildings, private family homes or even out in the woods." But even then they many times were discovered and imprisonment or death followed. Hans Landes of Zurich was the last Mennonite martyr for he was beheaded in 1614. Although Landes was the last of the Mennonites to suffer the death penalty, persecution continued unabated for the next two hundred years. Espec-

10. The Mennonite, April 17, 1934.
11. Ibid., April 21, 1932.
ially severe were the measures passed by the Councils of Bern and Zurich during the eighteenth century. Beginning even as early as 1640, mandates were repeatedly renewed ordering the imprisonment of Mennonites. The prisoners were to be visited by the Reformed Clergymen with a view of winning them back to the state church. Failure to comply was punishable by exile. In case of return they were to be whipped, branded with a hot iron and again exiled. Prisoners were fed for months on a bread and water diet. Prison cells were usually damp and foul and full of disease germs causing the premature death of many of the inmates. The property of those who were arrested and condemned was frequently confiscated and given to the nearest relative of the Reformed faith, or turned over to the State Church itself. A letter by the one Swiss minister in 1643 to the elder of the Mennonite congregation at Amsterdam, states "$80,000 has been confiscated, and on that Easter Day of this year thirty men and women are lying in filthy prison." 12

In 1711 persecution again broke out and Mennonites were again ordered to be cast into prison. Rewards were offered for their arrest, 15 crowns for a woman, 30 for a man and 100 for a minister. Secret meetings were prohibited

12. The Mennonite, April 21, 1934.
and no one was permitted to give Mennonites any assistance. One man was fined $300 for shielding his own wife. Reformed parents must disinherit Mennonite children. The installation of a minister was punishable with a heavy fine. Returned exiles were threatened with a galley sentence....at one time there were over 40 Mennonites in prison....And it was not until the close of the century when the liberalizing influences set in motion by the French Revolution made themselves felt throughout Europe that democratic Switzerland reached the state of religious toleration attained by the Dutch two hundred years earlier.

It was but a small wonder that these Mennonites finally began to look to foreign lands for a place where they would be given a right to worship as they pleased, keep their race intact, and to be settled in a region where they would be in line for economic advancement. Migrations and their wanderings were next in order.
MIGRATIONS OF THE MENNONITES
MIGRATIONS OF THE Mennonites

It was seen from the first chapter that the Mennonites had to suffer great persecutions and they were interfered with not only in religion but socially and economically as well. As they were persecuted in Switzerland, they gathered up their few belongings and fled, singly or in masses, to foreign lands where they hoped to experience greater freedom, toleration and economic opportunities. And so as early as 1632, we find them in such numbers in Holland that they could gather in a conference and voice their opposition to the treatment that they were receiving. This conference, held in Dort, Holland, in 1632, voiced a protest against ecclesiastical rule and a rigid liturgy and registered an appeal for simpler organization, worship and faith. But even eighty years earlier (1554) the Mennonites were familiar people in Holland, for it was in about that year that they divided into Flemings and Waterlanders. But,\textsuperscript{13} "these were united in 1811, into one group called Doopsgezinde," And the same source says that as early as 1619 a separate Mennonite settlement was made at Rhijnsburg by the four farm brothers, - Van der Koddle. It was William of Orange who granted the Mennonites a settlement in
\begin{footnotes}
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the United Provinces near the end of the sixteenth century. In 1626 their Confession of Faith was published; in 1626 an association was formed among them and was strengthened in 1849, which in its organization resembled in some respects that of the present Congregationalists in the United States. As a result of Menno and his successors, laws were softened and improved. Each congregation chose its own pastor who was called an exhoiter, and not being supported by his people, provided for himself in the best way he could by engaging in business. Where no pastor could be obtained, the deacon and deaconess ministered respectively to the men and women. But even in Holland under the rule of William they were not given religious freedom as we think of it today. "For hundreds of years Mennonites were expected to hold meetings in plain buildings placed in unconspicuous places. Sometimes there meetings were in back streets. Sometimes a tree was planted before the blind alley that led to the meeting place and, in other instances, the worshippers had to cross barn yards to get to their buildings."\(^\text{14}\)

Having always to consider that they were being watched and suspected, the most natural places during the Reformation in which they worshipped were private houses or the woods. When they were tolerated and permitted to have houses

\(^{14}\) The Mennonite, editorial, April 7, 1932, pp. 1-2.
great weaving industry. And even in the ship building industry we find that the Mennonites left a trace of their sojourn. The following is an account from an old edition of the Mennonite Year Book recotted, 17

"At the time of the truce between the Spaniards and the Dutch in 1609, there lived at Hoorn, in North Holland, a Mennonite, Peter Jansen, who took the notion that he would build a ship of the same proportions as Noah's Ark, only smaller, that is 120 feet long, 20 feet broad, and 12 feet high. While he was building it, everyone laughed at him, but he kept sturdily on and found in the end that it justified his expectations, for when launched it proved to be able to bear a third more freight than other ships of the same measurements, requiring no more hands to manage it than they, and sailed much faster. The result was that the Dutch built many others like it, calling them Noah's Arks, and they only ceased to be used after the close of the truce of 1631, because they could not carry cannons and were not safe against privateers." That the Mennonites must have been influential people in the early history of Holland can be seen from the fact that one of the most precious treasures that hangs in the Berlin Gallery is a picture painted by Rembrandt to which is given this title, 17. The Mennonite, editorial, July 2, 1935, pp. 3-5.
"The Mennonite." The subject of the painting is a Dutch Mennonite minister, Ansloe by name, who is portrayed in lights and shadows that only Rembrandt could use so effectively, explaining the Scripture to a woman arrayed in the garb of a widow of the time. Sometimes the picture has been called the "Light" because of the effective use the artist made of the glow of the candle in the picture in bringing out the effective scene. ¹⁸ So we see that the Mennonites played an important part in the history of Holland and thousands remained there and many more are there today. But due to persecution and greater opportunities, thousands left the shores of Holland for other lands in other parts of the world.

Due to the fact that these Mennonites had attracted a lot of attention in the weaving industry, Henry VIII of England invited these Flemish Mennonites to settle in England and they were pioneers of the great weaving industry of that country. ¹⁹ They had had a friendly interest in England for many years, for William the Conqueror had married Matilda of Flanders and so they expected a friendly reception. They also had formed friendship with the English Brownists of Independents who came over to Holland and there came in con-

Next we find that thousands of Mennonites went to Germany hoping to find their Utopia in that nation. Several times the rulers of Germany invited these sturdy and hard working people to their land. And even before the Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648) we find that Mennonites were permitted to settle in the Palatinate, in South Germany. But persecution again broke out and the effects of the war were so discouraging that thousands again left for foreign shores or other lands. And after we realize the full significance of this Thirty Years’ War we readily see that they were justified in leaving that country. Sweet says, “There is little doubt but that this war was one of the most cruel and brutal in modern history. Seventy-five per cent of the population throughout Germany were killed, while the property loss was even greater, and it is an accepted fact, based upon carefully gathered statistics, that the war set back German material development by 200 years. Southern Germany, or the Palatinate (and many Mennonites had settled there) was the region which suffered most. But so fertile was the soil and so great was the recuperative power of the people, because of their industry and agricultural skill, that soon after each invasion, the country was transformed from a desert into a garden, only to attract other plunderers. But

22. Department of Commerce, Mennonite Bodies, p. 5.
as though the sufferings of the Thirty Years' War were not enough, Louis XIV of France on three different occasions (1674, 1680, 1688) in the last quarter of the seventeenth century sent his armies into the Palatinate to burn and to plunder. The greed and the cruelty of the French, we are told, exceeded even that of the Landsknechts of the Thirty Years' War, who drove nearly 500,000 Palatines from their burning houses and devasted fields. Added to the terrible conditions produced by the wars and invasions were the religious persecutions. The Treaty of Westphalia (1648) which marked the end of the Thirty Years' War provided for some degree of toleration. Catholics, Lutherans and Reformed were to have equal rights of the Empire, though the individual princes could still restrict the religious freedom of their subjects. But neither Catholics, Lutherans nor Reformed respected the rights of the small sects, such as the Mennonites, Dunkers and German Quakers. Thus, religious persecution, the tyranny of the petty rulers, destructive wars and general economic distress produced the background out of which came German emigration to the American colonies."

Later we find that the "king of Prussia" had taken a kindly interest in the Swiss Mennonites for several years. Realizing the valuable contribution the Dutch Mennonites had made toward the development of the Vistula Swamps 100 years earlier, he visited the
Swiss refugees at Amsterdam and invited them to locate in the East Prussia, in a section which had been largely depopulated several years before by a pestilence. In return Benedict Brechtbuhl of the Mennonites was sent by the Swiss to interview the kind of Berlin and investigate the lands in question. After completing his mission and visiting the Mennonites at Danzig and Elbing, he returned too late, for the Mennonites had departed and settled in various parts of the Netherlands and also they did not care to settle in a land that was raked by pestilence. From these discussions we see that everytime Germany was in need of some hard-working settlers, the Mennonites were invited, only to be persecuted by other religious bodies, or succeeding rulers, and driven to other lands; but only after they had improved certain sections, as the Vistula. So again, the Mennonites have also left their stamp upon the development of Germany.

In the seventeenth century (1622) many were expelled by Ferdinand II from Moravia and Germany and he then spent a short time in driving them from section to section. Finally they went to Hungary and Translyvania but moved from there to Russia. Their stay in Hungary and Translyvania was of too short duration to influence the histories of that region. While a large group of Mennonites were residing in

Translyvania new attacks by the Catholic clergy led them to a new emigration, this time to Roumania. Sixty-seven of their number departed secretly for that country in 1767. But the Russo-Turkish War of 1768 compelled them to emigrate again and this time they went to Russia.²⁶

Russian territory finally seemed the haven of all of the migratory tribes of the Mennonites and it was toward that nation that they were finally drawn in the latter part of the eighteenth century. It is with these Mennonites that this thesis will deal more fully, for most of the Mennonites found in Kansas today came from that nation. The first large migration of Mennonites into Russia occurred in 1770, when a large group came to that nation from Roumania at the insistence of the Russian General Semetin. They settled on the estate of Count Romantzov in the Ukraine. Good fortune came to them here and they prospered. They led a communal existence and every member was compelled to learn a trade. The settlement soon acquired an enviable reputation for the industry, frugality, and intelligence of its inhabitants. Their customs and mode of life were in striking contrast to those of Russian peasantry and occasioned much comment among their new neighbors. We are told that members of the nobility visited the community and expressed their admiration.²⁶ American Review of Reviews, August 1908, pp. 243-244.
their gratification with what they saw. They admired the workshops, school, house of worship, dining-halls, children's halls, apothecary shop, etc. The clothing of the brothers and sisters were very simple. The men wore short, black breeches, the sisters blue dresses, and white kerchiefs on their heads. Every traveler admired the little community. The internal arrangement was as attractive as its internal relations. After nursing the child for one year and a half the mother brought it to the children's hall. A number of women were charged here with the care of the children, and especially with the preparation of their food. Two of the older children watched over the children at night. When they reached the age of three they were brought to the large school. The members of the community came together every morning for their prayers and likewise at night for the evening prayers. This was only a small settlement in comparison with later ones which did not come into Russia until Catherine the Great came to the throne. The real migration did not begin till 1783 and continued until about 1824. The next settlements were on the banks of the Dnieper and around the Sea of Azov.

It was in 1783 that the Crimean Peninsula and a strip of territory fronting the Black Sea were ceded to Russia by Turkey (close of the Russo-Turkish War). It soon occurred to the Empress Catherine II, who was by birth a German prin-
cess, that the German Mennonites, whom she knew to be sturdy folk and splendid farmers, would make good colonizers for this region. It was further hoped that they might intermingle with the natives of the Black Sea Region, thereby improving the citizenship of Southern Russia. Knowing their religious peculiarities, Catherine made important concessions to induce them to settle in Russia. They were granted immunity from military service, freedom of worship, and the privilege of local self-government. Furthermore each family was granted 65 desjardines (about 160 acres).\textsuperscript{27} Other privileges included such as that they might continue to speak their own language forever; to have their own school books in German and to have complete religious freedom. These were important concessions but Catherine was interested in building up the great steppes wastes she had just acquired. The Mennonites sent scouts ahead and their report was acceptable to the settlement and so they moved once again from Germany, Roumania, Hungary and other nations, over seemingly endless and arid steppes. Up to 1817 greater privileges were granted to bring greater numbers. Some of the newer privileges included: Protection from all attacks; exemption from taxation for 10 years; money for their journey, money and wood with which to establish themselves; freedom of

\textsuperscript{27} Bradley, Glen Danford, \textit{Story of the Santa Fe}, p. 115.
trade and manufacture and administration of oaths in their own way. These new colonists settled near their brethren in the government of Tourid, and between the rivers Molotchna, Dnieper and Tkimak, and from that time they continued to increase in numbers and prosperity. They were always protected and favored by the government...They enjoyed also a kind of popular government among themselves, for each group of towns was under a magistrate chosen by themselves from among themselves and forming the organ of communication between them and the imperial government. All of these privileges mentioned above had been sanctioned by the Russian and German governments. In 1861, the late emperor, Alexander II, gave new lands and confirmed all the old concessions to a colony of Mennonites who established themselves on the Volga. These lands, indeed, as well as those which Catherine had given, were not altogether without restriction. The holders could bequeath them to their children or sell them to any of their community but could not part with them to any one except a Mennonite unless by express permission of the government. Of course, such privileges to a group of people in any land would arouse a spirit of jealousy and antagonism which would result in either a withdrawal of those special privileges or in forced opposition to the government by those people that were not included in such concessions. And so it proved with these Mennon-
ites in Russia. The increase of wealth of these people, their refusal to intermarry with the natives, their refusal to bear arms and other special grants aroused serious opposition on the part of the natives and thus pressure was brought on the government to withdraw these concessions. Accordingly, in keeping with the agreement made by Catherine these privileges were to last until 1883, so some pretext had to be sought to withdraw them before that time. The French-Prussian War of 1870-1871 offered the government a solution for its embarrassment. Russia would remain neutral during the conflict only under certain conditions and one of these was that Germany withdraw the political guardianship which hitherto it had exerted over all German people residing in the Russian Empire. Bismarck acceded to this condition only upon the requirement that the German colonists, of whom there were, including Mennonites, about 3 million, should be given 10 years in which to migrate, in case they did not choose to become subjects of Russia. To this Russia assented, but the Mennonites were not informed of this arrangement. They were not concerned with politics and ordinarily read no newspaper except perhaps their church publication. Had it not been for Cornelius Jansen, a member of their faith who was Prussian Consul at Berdiansk, the 10 years might have elapsed without
the colonists having learned of the significant change in the Imperial Government's intentions. Had this been the case, they doubtless would suddenly have been compelled to submit to Russian demands such as enrolling in the army and attending Russian schools, which were controlled by the Greek Catholic Church. But Jansen, who of course was in touch with public events, informed high brethren of Russia's actions. Great excitement prevailed. The devout colonists could not think of changing their religion or their country. Jansen advised them to go to America, where he knew there was religious toleration. 28 (There will follow an account of their preparation for leaving Russia in the next chapter). Now they had to leave Russia. Russia - the land where they were asked to settle under promises which would result in their development; Russia - the land they had helped to convert from waste steppes into the greatest wheat region of Europe through hard labor and the planting of a good variety of wheat (Red Turkey); Russia - the land that had let them live long enough under their peculiar farming, social and economic systems, to make them believe that at last they had found a permanent home; Russia - the land where the rulers were plotting to overthrow them and force them to practices which were contrary to their be-

liefs; Russia - the land that they would now leave for distant shores.

A few did not wait for the return of the delegates that had gone to America to investigate conditions, but gathered their belongings and attached themselves to two leaders that were going to lead them into the desert wildernesses of Western Asia to seek a new land where they could believe and live as they wished. J. B. Schmidt of Pawnee Rock, Kansas, tells many experiences of this caravan as they crossed the desert wastes of Western Asia on the backs of camels. After traveling days and weeks through blinding sandstorms, under oppressive hot skies, and with heavy hearts, they at last reached a sheltered valley in Asiatic Turkey and here they made their settlement. There their neighbors were Mohammedans and in the course of a few years the two leaders differed in their religious beliefs and the settlement broke up and they again traveled to the shores of Turkey, where they boarded ships to America to join their brothers who had gone directly to America from Russia.

So the Mennonites wandered year after year, yes, century after century in an attempt to find a land where they could live their life as they wished, where they could have opportunities for economic advancement, where their children would not come in contact with worldly people. And that
land was America where years ago (1683) "several Mennonites had settled at Germantown, Pennsylvania, who wrote glowing accounts to their brethren in Holland and other European nations of the opportunities in America."  

LIFE OF THE KANSAS Mennonites

Many factors were responsible for the coming of the Mennonites to America. They may be listed in the following order:

1.) Economic crises following war and revolution.
2.) Severe measures against all socialists and communists and religious organizations.
3.) Increase in prices in America by manufacturers.
4.) Organization of societies for assisting emigrants both in Europe and in America.
5.) Protective measures adopted directly by the countries of origin and of destination.
6.) Formation of powerful shipping companies with lowered prices of transportation.
7.) High level of wages in the United States.
8.) Cheap land in the United States.
9.) Discovery of gold.
10.) Crop failures of staples and poor crops. (1871-1879).

To this may be added the desire to avoid military services, although I am inclined to the belief that, in a
majority of cases, this motive is only a secondary one. This belief is corroborated "by the experience of former years for it appears that during the year 1867-1868 the apprehensions then expressed by many that the new Prussian military law would drive out the best material from the country proved groundless. During that year, for instance, of 132 emigrants who left the town of Reuteningen only 26 were liable for military duty. It is not the fear of military service, but a simple desire to better their condition that drives young men to emigrate." 30 This reason also is probably not responsible for emigrations today, for we must only investigate the migrations of the Mennonites from Canada to Mexico and then back again, the migrations of the American Mennonites, and in none of these cases was military training a contributing factor. In every case it was economics that drove the emigrants to new shores.

Even when the Mennonites found that the Russian government was threatening to force them into Russian citizenship and their social order, they did not flee "ill-mell" to other regions, but sent scouts ahead to investigate the suggested regions. As was stated in the last chapter, Jansen suggested America and so a committee was appointed and $20,000 was collected for their use. This was an opportune time, for just

at this time the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad had thrown open thousands of acres of land to settlers. To fully understand this important factor of Kansas history it is well to explain the land grants in detail, for the history of the Santa Fe railroad and the Kansas Mennonites are inseparable. Also many of the Mennonites purchased their land under these systems and it is interesting to see how these purchasing systems differ from our present system. Building the Santa Fe across Kansas entitled the company to about 3,000,000 acres of land. This was in accordance with the Congressional Act of 1863, which gave to the corporation 6,400 acres of land for each mile of railroad duly and satisfactorily constructed. The lands were granted in alternate sections for a distance of ten miles on each side of the track. Or, to aid the imagination, the road was to run through the center of a "checker-board" strip twenty miles in width, and every alternate square mile of this strip belonged to the railroad company. The remaining squares which comprised the other half were retained by the government. This was assuming that none of the lands along the prospective route would have been taken by settlers before the railroad was built. But since the railroad had been given 10 years in which to construct its line the act of 1863 wisely provided that if the road was built
beforehand they would have to make provisions that the exact limits of the grant were to be determined and it was found that many portions of these public lands had already been taken up for settlement. In that case the company should be given the same amounts of land elsewhere. In other words, to receive compensations for lands that might already have been preempted and thereby cancelled from the regular limits of its 10 mile grant, the company should be awarded odd sections outside the terminal restrictions, but farther west. It was further provided that in such event, no lands farther than 20 miles from the railroad should be awarded; which was supposed to guard against unfairness, since the market value of the land depended upon its proximity to the railroad. "Thus in effect there was created on each side of the regular tract a supplementary ten mile zone from which the company was likewise granted alternate sections of so-called "indemnity" of "lieu lands." And it so happened that within the eastern limits of the grant between Atchison and Emporia, practically all the public lands had been taken up for settlement before the building of the road and the consequent withdrawal of the granted land by the Federal Land Office could be effected. Accordingly the indemnity land zone began at or near Cottonwood Falls in Chase County, and to insure a full
compensating acreage they extended westward about to Spearville, in Ford County. As finally determined, therefore, the Santa Fe land grant comprised the odd numbered sections in a tract 40 miles wide and about 200 miles in length, extending from near Emporia, well into Ford County, and a strip 135 miles long from a point near Dodge City to the Colorado line and 20 miles wide.\textsuperscript{31}

The next problem was to dispose of this great tract of land, to secure enough revenue from the land to provide funds with which to run the railroad, and to bring in settlers that would give the railroad business in the future. And the Mennonites were those settlers that would meet all three requirements of the railroad. They on their arrival were looking for a new home; generally they were capable of paying for the land purchased and in the third place they had proved to Europe that they were sturdy farmers and consequently would produce excess products which would have to be hauled by the railroads, thus guaranteeing an income from freight rates. In order to acquaint the Mennonites with these conditions the railroad and land companies used three methods:

1.) A special stationery was sent to foreign countries.
2.) Printed literature was sent.
3.) Representatives were sent.

In a letter from the Bureau of Immigration, State of
\textsuperscript{31} Bradley, Glen Danford, \textit{The Story of the Santa Fe}, p. 109.
Kansas, Topeka, Kansas, March 1, 1867, to Mr. F. G. Adams, we find that that bureau had decided to issue "immigration paper" which contained blank spaces enough for the ordinary correspondence, but the fourth page of such material was printed with valuable information concerning the resources of Kansas and the possibilities for emigrants in that state. Such paper was distributed freely and the people became familiar with the conditions and possibilities of Kansas.

Thousands upon thousands of copies of printed literature was distributed among the foreigners and a leaflet issued by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe under the date of 1879 shows the plans worked out by the railroad company and the possibilities that were presented by the companies. This particular circular (leaflet) was 29 inches by 11 inches with the title "Arkansas Valley Guide - Southwest Kansas. Prairie versus Woodland." It had four large illustrations on the front cover which illustrated the advantage of tilling prairie land over wooded land. It was a 16 page leaflet containing the following topics: Climate, Timber, Fruit Trees and Hedges, Facts worth Considering, Markets, Rare Opportunities, What can be Done with $1,000, Who Should Come, What It Costs, Stock Raising, Fruit Growing, a Land of Plenty, Title to Lands, How to Come, Land Agents, Go with the Tide, Fuel, Wheat Belt of Kansas, Lumber, Terms of
Sale Prices and Location of Land, Local Agents, and Maps.
Under the title "What can be done with $1,000" we find the following printed information. "First payment on 160 acres on the six years' plan $150, house of two rooms and small kitchen $250, team and harness $180, breaking plow $22, harrow $10, cow $30, interest payment on land one year from purchase $35, total $667, leaving $333 for seed and support of family until crop can be raised." The land could be purchased on the four plans commonly found at that time: 11-year plan, the 6-year plan, 2-year plan, and the cash payment plan. The following charts illustrate in detail all four plans for 160 acres.

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32. Martin; George W. (Printer), Kansas Publishing House, Topeka, Kansas.
### Payment Details

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160 acres purchased at $5 per acre 6-year payment plan, 20% cash.

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160 acres at $5 per acre two-year payment plan. 30% cash.

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<td>18.67</td>
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Cash Payment Plan

This was a sale whereby the whole amount of purchase money was paid down, and deed given. For cash they made a discount of 33 1/3% from the appraised price as follows:

Sept. 1, 1878, 160 acres at $5 per acre .......... $ 800.00
Cash discount of 33 1/3% off ...................... 266.67

$ 533.67

All persons who bought on long credit could pay up at any time and receive a liberal discount if payments were made before the date of maturity. Under such plans it was easy for the settler to make a start in farming and the payments were not pressed if the crops failed or other conditions made themselves known to the railroad companies.

Other railroads issued literature of the same type but the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad worked particularly with the Mennonites. Such opportunities aided by other information of the following tone, soon brought thousands of settlers. (This information is presented to show what encouraging information was printed and made available. It accounts for the large influx of settlers, including Mennonites, into Kansas, where they set up their new home.) The following is from a 42-page magazine published in May, 1871:33 Kansas "Climate. Located as it is between the 37 and 40 parallels and the lines of Isothermy, running east

33. Kansas Herald, James Lathrop, April-May 1871.
through Sacramento in California, Kansas, Kentucky, North Carolina, and the same as that of Spain, Italy and the Japan Islands, gives it, like the balmy name of these places, an atmosphere and geniality removed from the extremes of cold and heat, where it may be said, "December's as pleasant as May." And thus situated the climate is admirable. The winters are only about six weeks long, and not severe; snow coming and going, some in that time. Spring opens in February when plowing and sowing commences. Summers are warm with cool nights, refreshed with dews and plenty of warm rains and gentle showers, and are exceedingly pleasant and long. Timber abounds along all streams, in abundance and excellent quality; about 1/3 of the bottoms are so covered. Coal is found cropping out in an accessible manner in all parts of the state - a valuable supply of material for fuel for all requirements. The most important and largest deposits of salt are in the "Big Bend" of the Arkansas River, and the salt works of Republic County. The works cover an area of 10,000 acres, which in dry weather are covered with a white incrustation of salt. A man may scrape up fifty bushels of this salt in a day. The soil of Kansas has been pronounced to be better than that of the bottom lands of the Nile or Aragon or Shenandoah. Corn yields from 50 to 100 bushels per acre. Cattle bought in Texas
at $3 to $5 per head can be fed on grass until fall and sold at 100% profit. Corn stalks growing 15 feet in height can be used for fuel. Wheat is grown upon bottom and upland, and will grow and ripen without rain, making 30 bushels to the acre, and with rain 50 bushels per acre. Between 2 or 3 acres of ground produced 5,600 pounds of oats. 50 potatoes make a bushel! The article ends with the following poem:

DECEMBER'S AS PLEASANT AS MAY
How joyous and happy the hours,
When Kansas, fair Kansas, I see,
Her climate, her prairies, her flowers
Do all shed a sweetness for me,
Her mid-winter's sunshine is warm,
Her herds in the village feel gay,
Far distant from cold and from storms,
December's as pleasant as May.

Wild Kansas will soon be far known,
And sweeter than music the story,
Her hills and her valleys are sown,
And their fruits put man in his glory,
Her buffalo in large herds remain,
In Kansas determined to stay,
With us they join in the strain,
December's as pleasant as May.
Content with my journey in the West,
I'll sing as I journey along,
I will ask you to come and be blest,
Come join with me in my song,
We'll plow and we'll plant in the spring,
In summer we'll reap and make hay,
In autumn and winter we'll sing,
December's as pleasant as May."

Another pamphlet\(^4\) gives the following average yields of crops produced in years preceding 1865:

Corn produced from 50 to 70 bushels to the acre.
Wheat produced from 20 to 40 bushels to the acre.
Barley produced from 40 to 70 bushels to the acre.
Oats produced from 40 to 80 bushels to the acre.
Rye produced from 30 to 50 bushels to the acre.
Potatoes produced from 100 to 300 bushels to the acre.
Sorghums produced from 100 to 300 bushels to the acre.
Hungarian produced from 3 to 5 tons to the acre.
Prairie Hay produced from 2 to 4 tons to the acre.
Tobacco, hemp, flax, cotton are also raised in large quantities."

With such glowing accounts of the possibilities of Kansas to encourage these persecuted, insulted and wandering
\(^{34}\) State of Kansas, Macdonald and Baker, Topeka, Kansas, 1865.
tribes of people, one can readily realize that many thousands would be led to the shores of America. As that Mennonite peasant or farmer sat perplexed as to whether he should flee from Russia which was threatening him with national absorption or whether he should remain and peacefully give in to that threat, this literature gave him a ray of hope and it took only a representative or the return or the delegates to substantiate the picture painted by the printed literature. His choice was immediately made - to America, the Promised Land.

The representative was hired by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad and this man (able to speak German fluently) would tour the various Mennonite settlements in Russia and explain the various phases of making the trip, land purchasing plans, the schedule of trips and the railroad's connection with the settlers. Sometimes private land speculators from the eastern cities, as Boston and New York, would buy up thousands of acres of land in Kansas and other states and then would go to Europe themselves or send representatives, and then in turn would sell these thousands of acres to the new immigrants at a profit.

The delegates, as mentioned before, were met at the eastern port by a representative or representatives and these would take the delegates to the companies' various
lands in the Middle West. The lands of the Dakotas were usually shown first and then they were brought south. The Dakota lands were usually of too poor a quality. In Nebraska they were afraid of deep wells. They were used to dug wells and since those in Nebraska had to be drilled these delegates passed up that state. The next stopping place was usually Harvey and Marion Counties, Kansas. They visited Kansas in August and the crops had only been fair that year. Millions of grasshoppers were everywhere and even the railroad representative gave up hope of selling these Mennonites land in such a region, but with these objections, the delegates quietly said that they also had to contend with grasshoppers in Russia. With that they dropped on their knees and carefully inspected the soil. They found it both fertile and of good quality - black loam, and they, realizing the possibilities of this region, purchased 100,000 acres of land.

But, before the deal was made they inquired of the freedom of their religious worship, the freedom of their school, freedom from military training and other social conditions. When the deal was completed they returned to the East to board a ship for home. Some delegates were still skeptical about freedom from military training and so decided to go to Washington to ask President Grant himself concerning this freedom as well as the others. At that time Grant was on
his vacation at Long Branch, New Jersey, and so the dele-
gates went there and presented the following petition to
him.35

"To the President of the United States of America:
We, as a delegation of Russia with the intention to mi-
grate to the United States of America, petition the Presi-
dent of the United States of America on the following
points: For at least fifty years we want to be entirely
free from all military obligation. After fifty years we
are willing to pay the amount that all the rest of the Men-
nonites or peoples whose Confession of Faith are against
their taking up arms, pay. Otherwise, we are willing to
pay all taxes and submit to all the laws of the United
States like other citizens, that is, as long as they are
not against our conscience of belief. The military ques-
tion drove us from Russia and we are seeking for a land
where we can live peaceably according to our faith. We,
also, ask the esteemed and excellent President of the United
States whether it may be permitted to live in colonies or
villages, to have our own schools where we may teach the
German language, whether we will be free from holding pub-
lic offices such as judgeship, etc., and from sitting on

35. Young, Gertrude S. Record Concerning Mennonite Immigra-
tion. 1873. American Historical Review, Vol. 29,
pp. 518-522.
and how many acres will be given to one person? Will we, as Mennonites, be excused from taking an oath? Will our "yes" and "no" be accepted by the government instead of the oath? Our Confession of Faith does not allow us to swear or take an oath. In case the government should later try to compel us to do something against our Confession of Faith, will we have a right to move out of the country? For all of these questions we ask a definite answer from the excellent President of the United States of America so that we as a delegation will be able to tell our oppressed people in Russia something of the privileges of America.

(signed) Paul Tschetter
Lorenz Tschetter

.....When the German petition was read to him, the President answered, "It will take a little time to give an answer to these questions." So the delegates returned home with the understanding that the answer would be sent to Russia. In about a month the following answer came:

"Washington, D. C., September 5, 1873. To the Mennonite Delegation of Russia to America: The Honorable President of the United States of America gave me your petition to look over and as there are several questions of import-
ance involved in your petition, I was not in a position to answer it without consulting authorities. The demands in your document are: that your people should be free from all military service for 50 years, and that after that you pay the same tribute as other Christians whose Confession of Faith does not allow them to take part in war; and also that you be excused from holding judgships and from sitting on juries; and that you be allowed to manage your own school affairs. We say to your requests that holding office or sitting on jury, or managing school affairs are matters under the control of the state in which you reside. I, the President of the United States of America, cannot excuse you from those laws enacted in the state that you are living in. The president of the United States of America cannot make you any promise in connection with your request from entire exemption from military service for 50 years, not for dealing with you after that as suggested in your petition. But we are sure - and it will prove true - that the United States of America will not be entangled in any great war for the coming 50 years that would make it necessary to molest you. But in case there should come a great war, I have not much doubt but that then Congress would find itself justified in finding a way to honor your faith without releasing you from the duties of citizenship or
citizens. Excuse the delay in my answer as I had to have a personal talk with the President in order to be able to write this opinion or reply. With great respect, your obedient servant,

(signed) Hamilton Fish

In Kansas we find that they were exempt from such military service, for in the General Statutes of Kansas\textsuperscript{36} we find the following quotation:

"...That the following persons are exempted from enrollment in the Militia of the state..., all persons who shall, on or before the first day of May of each year, pay to the county treasurer of the county in which they may reside the sum of thirty dollars, for the benefit of schools and who shall make and file with the county clerk of their county an affidavit that they have conscientious scruples against bearing arms."

The Mennonites were informed of all of these facts and decided that they would leave immediately for America. Days and days of preparations were necessary. Since the railroads furnished free freight rates to the immigrants, the Mennonites took all the movable property that they had. Wagon, flower seeds, wooden dishes, clocks, clothing and other trinkets were included in their movables. All of the

\textit{36. General Statutes of Kansas.} Chap. 64, Sec. 2, 1868.
Mennonites did not come but thousands came to Kansas between the years of 1873 to 1883. As several thousands would leave and write back to the home folks, they would also gather together hundreds and they in turn would leave. All of the Mennonites that came to Kansas did not come from the same region, but came from different sections as the Motoleschna, (Milk River), Ukraine, Ostrog, Poland and other regions. This probably is the reason for finding many different branches of the Mennonites in Kansas. One of the first things that had to be done for the trip was to secure a permit from the government to travel from the original settlement in Russia to the border of Russia. My father, Andrew Seibert, Jr., of Great Bend, Kansas, has his father's permit. This is a four-paged paper 8" x 13" in size dated August 28, 1874, on which are named all the members of the family that are to leave Russia, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Seibert, Sr., and their nine children. It had to be countersigned, sealed and stamped and presented at different passport cities. After several days' and even weeks' journey overland on wagons and sleighs they would finally arrive at the sailing port. Some went on trains and since the children had never seen a train, they would run in all directions as the locomotive pulled into the station. Here
they would have to spend some time packing their goods on
the train. At the docking place they would have to quite
frequently wait several days until a ship would come that
would be bound for America. Finally, the sailing day would
come and then would come the task of saying good-bye to
friends — maybe even sometimes to children, parents, wives
and husbands.

Mrs. Jacob Rudiger of near Dundee, Kansas, gave the
following information about the voyage which was probably
characteristic of many others experienced by other emigrants.

"We boarded a large wooden ship that was overcrowded
with people and their belongings. The beds of the ship were
narrow and divided off into narrow sections by boards.
This kept one from rolling out of bed as the ship tossed
over the rough ocean. One of the men died on the ship as
the ship was ready to leave, so the wife had to remain be-
hind for two weeks before the next ship left. After a short
time at sea, the ship broke down and sprung a leak and every-
thing had to be transferred onto another ship and the jour-
ney continued. Soon after this a twelve-year old girl broke
out with smallpox and so she and the mother were immediately
taken into a quarantine cabin and all of their belongings
burned. The captain next ordered all the other passengers
on deck for inspection for symptoms of smallpox. I, then a
girl of 11 years, had a pimple on my chin and my mother was afraid that the captain would diagnose it as smallpox so she wrapped me in bundlesome clothes so my chin would not show. I passed inspection and everything resumed its regular routine. The small girl afflicted with the smallpox soon died and a coffin of rough lumber and weighed with heavy irons was hurriedly made and the girl was buried at sea. After four weeks (28 days) at sea we finally reached New York City. It was here that we new arrivals tasted our first oysters. None of us liked them."

Many of the new arrivals did not come immediately to Kansas but stopped in some eastern states for a few years to take up farming or work at some trade to earn enough money to begin farming in Kansas. My grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. John Boese, and children, stayed two years in Ohio, where they tried farming. They liked the climate but did not like the idea of clearing the land of timber and fertilizing the land, so they packed their belongings and came to the Mennonite settlement at Dundee. Mrs. Jacob Rudiger told the following about her early years in America before she came to Kansas. "I, although only eleven years old, stayed with an "English" family in Pennsylvania. They gave me the old clothes of the family and these were
remade to fit me. I picked up chestnuts which I sold in the small town and sold them for 14¢ a quart and with this money I bought my school books which consisted of a reader, arithmetic, speller and a geography. They furnished the food but this cost was subtracted from what I earned. After working a few years and having earned between $30 and $40 I left for Kansas to make my home." Thousands of others did the same thing, some working as blacksmiths, stove makers, stone-cutters, lumbermen, farm hands, housekeepers, etc., and with what little they earned they came to Kansas and began a permanent settlement.

As they would arrive in Kansas sometimes in winter or late fall it would give them no chance to build houses in that short a time, so the railroad (Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe) would furnish them with a round house, section house or any other type of shelter. Early the next spring the Mennonites would go to their purchased land and break the sod.

In the early Mennonite settlements the land was purchased and farmed under the communistic system. These varied sometimes in their arrangement, so a diagram will be presented in this thesis of the settlement at Dundee in Barton County, Kansas, and of the settlement at Marion and McPherson Counties, Kansas, which will be presented later.
The settlement at Dundee was originally planned for 20 families and they took all of Section 16 (Liberty Township, Barton County) under the homestead act, and all of section 9 they purchased from the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad under the 11-year payment plan which has been discussed before. On section 16 they built their houses and each family was given 32 acres on this section. This land was left in sod for a communistic pasture. Section 9 was divided into 32-acre strips running in a north-south direction. These strips were farmed and it was here that the crops were raised. The plans did not work out as they were planned, for only fifteen families came as a few stayed behind and others remained in the eastern states for a few years to earn a little money to begin with out on the prairies of Kansas. Only a few of the original settlers of this colony are left. A few of them that were small children of young age and these were Mrs. Jacob Rudiger, Reverend J. B. Schmidt, Andrew Seibert, Tobias Unruh and others.

The houses of this colony were built of lumber four inches thick and six inches wide and usually in lengths that varied from 10 to 20 feet. This lumber was shipped in from Michigan and was of soft pine. Each piece of lumber was drilled through with a one-inch auger or bit at about one or two-foot intervals and instead of nailing these
boards together they were put together with pegs and so the house could be taken apart at any time and moved to a new locality. The ends were "pigeon-tailed" or "joined" so that the corners would be snug and smooth. The rafters were of 3" x 3". The ceiling was of 3" x 10" or 2" x 12" and a ladder nailed against the wall led up through a hole in the ceiling to the upstairs. The floors, if boarded, were of 2" x 12" material. But usually the floors were of the bare ground that was rolled and tramped smooth and hard. The shingles were of the regular manufactured type. There were usually two windows in the room, having four window panes each 9½" x 11½". Three beams, each of 6" x 4" lumber supported the ceiling of the loft. The rooms had a 7-foot ceiling. There were several styles of houses, most of them modern and a few like those in Russia. The modern ones were of the 2-room and 3-room type as the illustrations will show. The third plan is that of the style found in a few places. It was based on the type found in Russia where the barn and the house were all in one part with two rooms.

These houses were all built in a straight line and placed at an exact distance apart, in spite of all obstacles, and even if the house happened to come in the middle of the road, as was the case of the house of a Mr. Schultz
DUNDEE MENNONITE SETTLEMENT 1874

COMMUNISTIC SYSTEM
Valley in which the Dundee Mennonites settled

Mennonite Church of the Dundee Settlement 1874

Present Day Mennonite Church at Pawnee Rock, Kansas
TWO ROOM HOUSE WITH BARN CONNECTED
THREE-ROOM HOUSE WITH BARN CONNECTED
THREE-ROOM HOUSE WITH BARN
in the Dundee community. One house was built out of line and that was the house of the "Schultz" who was the leader of the community. His home was built near the school and was used as a council meeting house.

Soon after the community was started a stone school house was built of native stone that was hauled from a quarry near Olmitz. This building was also used as the church of the community. It had two windows on both the north and south sides. It contained a heating stove of the old type, rude desks and benches and a simple altar. It was to this school that the children of the community went. They usually had two teachers, one that taught English and one that taught German. The subjects taught were arithmetic, reading, spelling and a little geography. The teachers "boarded" around and when they were asked if they always got enough to eat they said, "Sometimes we don't get enough to reach the ribs," meaning that they could not put on weight on the fare. A "smattering" of religious history and catechism was taught in the school under the direction of the German teacher.

The clothing of these settlers was usually simple but roomy. All of the men's clothes were hand made. The trousers had six pleats behind and three on each side. The shirts were of blue color and roomy. The shoes worn by the men,
women and children were wooden shoes. These had only a leather strap over the toe and were slightly hollowed out.
The women and girls wore cotton dresses. All of the girls and women wore caps which had a ribbon bow-pleated over the top and nice ribbon to tie in a bow at the throat.
The older women wore black or brown shawls over these caps. These shawls were folded in a triangle and tied under the throat. The third point would hang down at the back. In the corner of this third point would be an embroidered flower in bright colors. All new fashions were fought over, usually in the church "bruderschops" meetings.

The furniture was usually very simple and scarce. Boxes and benches would serve as chairs. Tables were almost always home made. The stove needs special attention. It was usually made of stone and sometimes located in the corner of three rooms so it could heat all of them at the same time. This stove was several feet high, in a circular shape and had thick walls. It was usually heated with straw, stalks and wood, and on bitter cold nights these people would sleep on the top of the stove. The chimney was a large affair and had a niche in it. When meat was to be smoked thoroughly, they would hang it in the niche where they would leave it hanging until used in the late summer. When bread was to be baked, the stove was heated.
to a hot temperature and when the dough would be ready, the wife would quickly scrape out the ashes, mop the inside of the stove, lay cabbage leaves on the floor of the stove and dump the dough on it. The stove door was then sealed shut and the bread was allowed to bake itself in this "fireless" stove. After it was baked it would be removed as one large loaf. Feather beds were in style and every bride was expected to bring a large dowry of feather beds and pillows stuffed with goose feathers. The children usually slept in the loft as is mentioned before. Few pictures were on the walls and those that would be found there would usually be pictures of some member of the family set in huge frames.

The food was usually very simple. Meats were usually pork and beef and at Thanksgiving and Christmas time the family would be treated to smoked goose. All of the other ducks and geese were sold because money at that time was scarce. The bread was usually "black" bread or at least had only a little white flour mixed with it. Potatoes were also a common article on the menu. Frying was the usual way of preparing them. Molasses was made by cooking beets and carrots together and adding sugar. The children's lunch consisted of pancakes made of coarse rye flour mixed with water and rolled out flat into a cake, and the molasses
mentioned above was then spread over them. Another common food was made of a grain called "haize." This was a plant producing a kernel like German millet, but it was white in color. This kernel was cooked with sweet milk and flavored with sugar. Mrs. Jacob Rudiger brought two pounds with her, but at the present time there is none found in any part of the settlement. Barsch was and is a very common food. It consists of mixing beets and cabbage together and putting them in large jars of pottery or barrels like sauerkraut. After it sours the cabbage and beets are removed from the salted brine and washed and then are sliced and diced into small pieces. The fruit usually consisted of cooking prunes, raisins and sour milk together. The cheeses were not eaten but rather sold to help raise money for the land payments. Only the very rich would be able to afford chickens, so eggs were a rare article on the bill of fare. Pickles were prepared in 50-gallon barrels and dill pickles were the most common.

The farm animals were well taken care of, and especially was this true of the cow. The stable was always attached to the house and it was kept as neat and clean as the house. Each day the barn was cleaned and scrubbed. The cows were put in the barn at the first cold weather and did not leave the barn until warm weather set in in the spring. Whenever a disease broke out among the animals of the com-
munity, all of the cracks in the barn were stuffed shut so that the disease would not be able to get in. In extremely cold weather the cows would sometimes be brought into the house. Horses were scarce in the early settlement and so oxen had to be used for the farm work. Many times one farmer would have an ox while another had a horse, so an agreement would be reached whereby they would use each other's animal and work them as a span. The feed for the animals would be kept up in the loft in Russia, but in Kansas most of it was stacked just outside the barn.

The crops generally raised were wheat, corn, haize, sorghum, broom corn and hay. The wheat was cut with scythes and tied into bundles, and then threshed with a flail or by letting cattle trample it out of the heads. Later the separator was used, but this still was not the self-feeding type. Very little of the wheat was used then at home but most of it was sold. It was their greatest source of income for their land payments. Corn was not very productive but enough for their hogs was usually produced. The hay was produced on Section 16 which was not allowed to be broken up. On this also were pastured all of the cattle of the community. The boys of the village had to take turns at herding the village's cattle and were responsible for their care during the day.
All disputes and business was settled by the "schultz" and council which in all cases were elected by the population of the village. No saloons were allowed in the village and the use of liquor and tobacco was scorned. It was only in time of very important business that the villagers went to town. Then they would go in a wagon sometimes drawn by two horses, two oxen, or even a horse and an ox. The grain was all hauled to Breat Bend, for the station at Dundee had not yet been built.

This colony lasted only a few years and then the different families separated and purchased larger tracts of land in nearby localities. The land originally owned in the communistic system never was actually in the hands of the settlers but the railroad company retained the deeds. The breaking up of the communistic system was probably due to the fact that the members saw the advantage of individual farming and also there developed a quarrel between the members as to the religious beliefs of Swedenborg. As the colony broke up this settlement was made history, for they settled on other tracts of land and everything was moved away excepting the school house-church, which is still standing on the original site and which was still being used a few years ago. There is a movement on among the Mennonites to make this a historic park. One room of Miss
Effie Rudiger's house on the original site also still stands. This is of the old pegged type. Sidings have been nailed over the pegged boards so it is not as conspicuous as the former types. The cemetery also is still in its original place. But with the exception of these three things, nothing is left of the communistic community of Dundee.

Most of the farmers settled in nearby lands, but others sometimes moved some distance away. My mother's family, that of John Boese, lived in Western Barton County, while father's family moved to eastern Rush County. Both lived for some time in sod houses. These houses were built near the location, with a breaking plow drawn by a yoke of oxen. The sod was then cut into pieces 2 feet long and 6 or 7 inches wide, and 3 or 4 inches thick. The sod pieces were then flipped on a board and carried to the house site. Two pieces of sod were first laid side by side around the wall measurements. Then for the next layer, the sod was laid crosswise and the next layer lengthwise, and so on, alternating with a lengthwise and a crosswise layer. The walls were smoothed off as it was built up. When the walls were completed, they secured rafter logs from the Dry Walnut Creek. One beam was laid lengthwise with two props under it. The rafters were then laid across the walls and beam. Fine brush was then laid over the rafters. Long Sleugh
grass or bluestem grass was next piled over the brush and then a layer of sod placed on top of this for the roof. Lime stone dirt was made into whitewash and with this the walls were painted once or twice a year. The floors were of dirt, as was the usual custom. As the families progressed they paid for the land, built large separate barns, other buildings, and finally large modern houses. The houses were improved last.

The settlements in Marion and McPherson Counties were made earlier than the one at Dundee. The following discussion on the early settlement in these two counties is taken from Bradley's "The Story of the Santa Fe."37 "In the winter of 1869-1870 the firm of Case and Billings, Santa Fe land agents at Marion, had sold to M. W. Klein of Johnstown, Pennsylvania, a Mennonite recently arrived from Europe, a tract of some 5,000 acres. The purchase proved satisfactory and others soon followed." These soon corresponded with home folks and hundreds followed. C. B. Schmidt was the representative appointed by the Santa Fe Railroad and he met Jansen and the other delegates as has been discussed before. The following is again taken from the above source and gives some information as to the experiences of one of the early settlers. "When finally we had bought the land, 12 sections, we let our people follow us.....We were making preparations for their arrival. We hurried namely

37. Bradley, Glen Danford. The Story of the Santa Fe. p.111.
to get ready with everything before the winter. I rented an empty store, bought a stove, table, two horses and a wagon. On a Saturday night our people arrived at Peabody. Sunday we rode out upon the land. John Fast, Sr., who already lived here, came with a conveyance to get people, also Wilhelm Evart, Mrs. Peter Funk and John Ratzlaff sent teams. I took my family in my own wagon; it was the 17th day of August when we rode from Peabody onto the land, 14 miles northwest. I had loaded some lumber and utensils and my family on top. We were others loaded. So we rode in the deep grass to the little stake that marked the spot I had chosen. When we reached the same I stopped, my wife asked me, "Why do you stop?" I said, "We are to live here." Then she began to weep. Several families moved into Mr. Funk's barn.....We built light board shanties, dug wells, in three weeks it began to rain, there came a heavy rain. We rented some plowed land from "English neighbors," who lived on sections 12 and 14. Seed wheat was 70¢ in price. Corn was high prices, there had been no crop that year, it was $1.25; potatoes were $2 per bushel. The first sowed wheat brought a bountiful harvest the next year. We had not sowed very much but that little brought much. That gave us courage. We were all poor people, many families owed their traveling expenses. They had to go in debt for land, oxen,
plow, farmer's wagon and even their sod house; they had to have provisions for a year; there was no chance of earning something... So there was no other way than to borrow money. But where?" They finally received four loans for $1,000 each from fellow Mennonites in other parts of Kansas and Nebraska.... "So we sat in our poor sod houses some 2 feet deep in the ground, the walls of sod, our roof of long reed grass, that reached into the prairie. In part we were glad to have progressed so far before the winter, but we did not think of the great danger we were in, as we lived up to knee middle in the prairie. But there we had a dear "English" neighbor on section 12, John Risely, had seen the prairie fire in the west, so he went for his 5 pairs of oxen and big prairie plow, and plowed 5 or 8 times around the village with his 5 yoke of oxen, and brotherly told us, 'Now dear people, burn off the grass between the furrows, else all you have may burn.' And we followed his advise..... When the crops failed especially in the year 1879 - grass-hoppers came, and we could not make our payments at the appointed time. But the company had pity and patience with us." The following is a diagram of the sod grass house that the above speaker described.38

SOD HOUSE AS FOUND IN MARION COUNTY
Many of the early arrivals were quartered in the King shops of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railroad at Topeka during the winter and the Topeka business men enjoyed a prosperous season with these Mennonites, some of whom were rich. The next spring they left for their land claims in McPherson and Marion Counties. Here the land was laid out in the communistic style similar to the one found in the Dundee settlement.

"In appearance, the Mennonites are a singular people. Many of them are very dark complexioned, with great shaggy heads of hair and piercing eyes. They are very muscular, especially the women, and so nearly alike in the dress of the sexes that it is often almost impossible to tell a woman from a man. Their ordinary garments are made of sheepskin with the wool-side in, and for both men and women the outer garment consists of a plain waiste of cheap material or bodice, to which a skirt of sheepskin, also with the wool side in, is gathered and sewed. The principal means of distinguishing the men and women among newly arrived Mennonites is the length of the skirt, that of the men reaching just below the knee, while that of the women falls half way between the knee and the ankle. Noble L. Prentis visited these Mennonites at their settlement at

Gnadenau. Here he saw immense flower gardens, large patches of watermelons, which was a popular food among these people, and immense rows of fruit trees. Some even had large tracts of mulberry trees, the leaves of which were fed to the silk worms. The houses were bare of all decorations and curtains. Only a few books were seen in the homes and these were ponderous volumes printed in German. They were all religious books. In this settlement, too, all of the houses were arranged in one long row." The following is a plan of their land lay-out.40

The Mennonite is credited with bringing many new products to Kansas. Some of these were already here but the Mennonites developed them to a high degree of perfection. The first of these is the mulberry tree as mentioned before. These served not only as a food supply for the fine silk worms, but as a source of food for the settlers and also as a shade tree. The second was the "haize" which served as a food supply but seemingly has become lost. Even in the line of cattle the Mennonites proved important as the following quotation shows: "In 1872 the hoof pestilence again attacked the cattle and nearly wiped them out. The farmers then bought from the Mennonites of Molotsch a sort of red milk cow. They were called American cows and were excellent milkers, superior to any there before."41

But it was in wheat that the Mennonite has left his mark for evermore. For this product alone, it is well to spend some time in its history. "The development of wheat shows what has been done with one crop, and is evidence of what can be done with other crops. Prior to 1875 Kansas had not produced as much as 10 bushels of wheat a year, and no one supposed that Kansas would be a great wheat state."42

42. Isely, Bliss. Topeka Daily Capital, August 28, 1928.
"During their century in Russia the Mennonites grew a variety of wheat which they called Turkey Red, because it was red in color and because they had obtained the original seeds from Turkey. Each of the Mennonite farmers who came to Kansas in 1874 brought a small quantity of Turkish Red Wheat for seed. The painstaking care in selecting the seed is illustrated by the story of Anna Barkaman, 8 years of age, who selected two gallons of seed wheat for her father to take to their new homes at Hillsboro, Kansas. She selected one grain at a time. In other families the little children were assigned the same task of selecting the grains from a wheat bin. Neighbors of the Mennonites in Kansas discovered that the foreigners had a superior brand of wheat better suited to the climate than varieties previously grown. More wheat was imported from Russia for seed." A London merchant said, "Kansas wheat lands lead the world in wheat production. No other wheat has so much gluten and nerve-building material. It has become so popular on the continent that our dealers have to carry it regardless of profit of product or price."43

The introduction revolutionized the milling industry and even caused the development of some cities as "Kansas City owns her pre-eminence as a milling center of the best quality wheat in the world to a group of Mennonite children."

in Crimea in the '70's who as a preliminary to a migration to America picked up the best products of their parents' bins - one grain at a time. 44 It was not only the variety of wheat that caused this revolution of wheat raising but also the industry of these new immigrants. These Mennonites from centuries had proved to Europe that they were outstanding farmers and they soon proved to Kansas and all America that they were the same industrious sturdy farmers in the New World as in the Old World. One of the principal reasons for their success in wheat raising was the fact that they believed in "plowing the dew under." This meant simply that these farmers would work from early morning in their fields, and naturally would result in a better seed bed and consequently in a better yield. The distinction of Kansas as a wheat state rightly belongs to the credit of the Mennonites.

Several hardships have already been mentioned, viz., debts, friendlessness, want of modern equipment and facilities, sicknesses with no medical facilities available, low prices, no available means of travel, scare of Indian raids, extreme winters such as 1898, and pestilence among the animals. Many came with the grasshoppers but they out-stayed them. Many more came when Indian raids were still common on the frontier and the hardships of other frontiersmen also had to be encountered by these late arriving Mennonites.

The Kansas Mennonites have always been interested in education. Never has there been a serious objection to public education. It is true that they are interested in German and Bible schools during the summer time but these do not interfere with the regular terms of public schools. Few Mennonites attend denominational schools besides their own, a few more are attending our state institutions, but as would be expected most of them attend their own colleges.

Originally the Mennonites were opposed to seeking political offices and took no part in the affairs of the state and even today we find that few ever seek a political office. They take an active part in voting at election times and the majority of them lean toward the Republican party because of their admiration for William McKinley, who befriended them when they were early settlers in Kansas. But today a few even run for office for we find "in Kansas in 1928 a son of an early Marion County settler was a candidate for secretary of state." 45 And a few others have been candidates for county offices. But generally speaking they still do not seek political offices.

Since there are 12 denominations of Mennonites in Kansas it is difficult to put into general statements the beliefs of the Mennonites. But generally speaking the

following are the major ones that are practiced by some of them or all of them:

1.) Refuse to take an oath.
2.) Baptism on faith alone and consequently no infants are baptized.
3.) Refuse to bear arms.
4.) Refuse to serve as judges or on juries.
5.) Believe that the New Testament teachings have supplanted the teaching of the Old Testament.
6.) Do not believe in the Trinity.
7.) Believe that in the eucharist the wine and bread are symbols for the blood and body of Christ.
8.) Discourage life insurance.
9.) Believe that Christian living is the highest ideal of life and not merely church attendance.
10.) A disobedient brother or sister is excommunicated from the church, other brothers and sisters and even other members of their families in some cases.
11.) Do not believe in intermixing with other races.
12.) Have a simple religion with not many formalities.
13.) Preachers are not paid a regular salary.
14.) Churches are generally built out in the country.
15.) Do not believe in honors or in seeking glory for themselves.
It must be remembered that the Mennonites have no creeds and that is the reason for so many people belonging that have different beliefs and also accounts for so many different branches of the Mennonites even in the state of Kansas. Since this thesis is more interested in the social, economic and political history of the Mennonites, the different sects will be herein only mentioned for enlightenment purposes.

1.) Brudeerholf - communistic property - German.
2.) Amish - bearded - hooks instead of buttons.
3.) Old Order Amish - conservative discipline - German.
4.) Conservative Amish - aggressive church services.
5.) Reformed - no original church. Rigorous discipline.
6.) General Conference - paid ministry - educational - modern.
7.) Church of God in Christ - new interpretation.
8.) Old (Wisler) Mennonite - Dort Confession of Faith.
9.) Mennonite - bearded.
10.) Defenceless Mennonite - about the same as Amish.
11.) Krimmer Brueder-Gemeinde - baptize backward.
12.) Schellenberger Brueder-Gemeinde - baptize forward.

Again, since there is no creed there is a wide difference between the beliefs of the members of each one of the above sects. In many cases there exists the greatest har-
mony between the different Mennonite churches and recently many movements have been begun to unite all of them under one body. As will be seen in the next chapter, great progress and changes have taken place among the Mennonites.
THE FUTURE OF THE KANSAS Mennonites
The last chapter of this thesis will deal with the changes recently adopted by the different sects of Mennonites, and the future life of this strange group of people and the influences made by the Mennonites upon the history of Kansas. It will also contain other interesting and important factors about these nineteenth century emigrants.

In the first place, in chapter three it was pointed out that the Mennonites had played an important part in the history of Kansas because of their development of wheat, mulberry trees, "haize", etc., in the line of agricultural products. This chapter will present other facts that show that the Mennonites were influential in other lines. For instance, "The son of an influential Mennonite in Kansas is now one of the leading men in the American milling industry, and is one of the 150 industrial leaders whom President Hoover invited to Washington to a Conference after the New York Board of Trade Crash."46

In literature the Mennonites have not contributed anything of importance. However, in the field of hymns, sev-

eral Mennonites have achieved great success. "There is preserved a hymn written by Menno Simons. Christopher Dock, the pious school master of the Skippack and Germantown in Pennsylvania, was the author of several hymns the best known of which are "Mein Libensfaden lauft zu Ende" and "Ach Kinder, woldt ihr lieben, so lieben was libenswert." An examination of the "Gesangbud of the West Prussian Mennonites 1873, reveals hymns by the following Mennonite authors: John Elenberger, born 1800 and John Malenar."47

In discussing the social standards of the Mennonites it will sometimes be necessary to refer to a particular sect of them for they have such different standards even in dress. Speaking generally of all of them we find that they are honest, industrious and plain in clothes. Formerly they shunned other races of people, and even sometimes other sects of the Mennonites, but today this great barrier is being rapidly broken down and we find Mennonites associating everywhere with other classes of people - in business, in society, in economics, and even to some extent in religion. The Old Mennonites and the Amish Mennonites let their beards grow from young men on. The beards of the Old Mennonites are light (white) in color while those of the Amish are reddish-black (sandy) in color. The Amish do not wear buttons but rather use hooks and eyes. The men all dress 47. The Mennonite, editorial April 14, 1932.
alike in a blue or black loose suit and hat to match. The women and girls also dress in full dresses of the same kinds of material. The dress of the General Conference Mennonites is not distinguishable from any other class of people and that is why they are classed as the most modern of the Mennonites. In former times musical instruments were entirely missing from the homes of the Mennonites but today we find such luxuries in many homes. But, even then we find that certain sects of the Mennonites do not favor the radio. For instance the "Amish Mennonites solemnly assembled in conference at Ottawa, Canada, June 28, 1931 and have declared the radio a musical instrument and have banned it from the homes of true believers as an instrument of the devil. When it was first founded, the Amish Mennonite sect forbade its members all musical instruments and many other luxuries of modern life on the ground that they tended to lead the faithful from the devotions. The radio escaped specifications because it had not been invented at that time, but now the oversight is remedied. Penalty for violations is excommunication."\(^{48}\) Again "the Old Mennonite Conference which met July 30, passed the following resolution with reference to the radio. 'We recognize that the radio may have a legitimate use among the people of the world, but \(^{48}\) New York Times, June 28, 1931. Sec. III, p. 6, col. 8.
whereas, the majority of the programs broadcast are detri-
mental to the spiritual growth and life, be it resolved
that we require our members to refrain from placing them in
their homes and require those who have them now dispose of
them."49 But in spite of these resolutions we find that
hundreds of Mennonites have radios in their homes. In the
line of insurance the different sects all discourage life
insurance but yet they have one of the strongest fire, hail,
and tornado mutual insurance companies in the country. Again,
we find many Mennonites that do carry life insurance in
spite of the fact that it is being discouraged. The weapon
of excommunication is still used but not as often nor is
it as strictly enforced as in former days. Previously an
excommunicated person was barred from associating with his
church brethren and sisters and even with members of his
own family. Today it is still used in cases of immorality,
robbery, intoxication or hatred or jealousy between members
or disregard for church rules. But today it is not gener-
ally so strictly enforced. In the line of sports they al-
so are usually discouraging, but we find that some of the
basketball stars of the Pawnee Rock High School and Bethel
College have come from the Mennonite communities. Sunday
sports are always shunned and discouraged. Some Mennonite
sects allow no pictures or other decorations on the walls.

49. The Mennonite Jottings, August 28, 1931, p. 15.
and carpets and curtains are often missing in the homes of these people. Aisle rugs in churches are only purchased after years of discussion on the part of the brethren. Records are rarely kept by these people and their events and records are handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. In reference to one of the most vital social problem of modern times—birth control, the following quoted item speaks for itself:50

"It was to our disappointment that we read that a commission of the Federal Council of Churches had taken upon itself the responsibility of making an utterance, though a cautious one, concerning birth control and the spacing of children. It is a matter not to be considered at all by any who would speak in the name of Protestant Churches. It would seem to us that such expressions, to say the least, would be encouraging to immorality. Granting that such expressions is within the province of ecclesiastical organization, which we insist it is not, the very fact that information such as must be given out in such cases, could not be limited to those in the marriage state and must surely lead to an immorality, that would gnaw the very vitals of matrimony.... However all those connected with churches in

the Federal Council of Churches do not agree with the Com-

50. The Mennonite, editorial, April 9, 1931, p. 1.
mission. Perhaps there are only a comparative few that agree with the Commission and simply presented as something to be discussed or argued about is a great deal less than an action formally adopted by the representatives of the Churches in assembly acting for and in the name of their churches. Much as we regretted the withdrawal of the General Conference of Mennonites from the Federal Council some years ago we may feel ourselves fortunate that we are not now members of that body when it is so permitting itself to be discredited. "Great changes have taken place, socially, among all sects of the Mennonites and if the progress is continued as rapidly in the future as in the past we can expect to find little, if any, difference in the social life of the Mennonites and other races and sects of people. Certainly, we can expect this condition to come about much more quickly of some Mennonite sects than in others.

Religiously we also find that very great changes have taken place since their beginning in the sixteenth century. Few if any of the Mennonites still practice the custom of feet washing which was generally practiced in their early history. Churches still are usually built out in the country but even then we already find a few located in some cities as at Hanston and Newton, Kansas. The preachers are not paid a regular salary but collections are taken up from time
to time which are given to the ministers. Consequently, the preachers are required to do other work besides preaching - this is usually farming. German still is used in many of the services, but at the insistent demand of the youth, English is being used in Sunday Schools and even the sermons are interchanged between German and English. The preachers are still, as always, hired by the local congregation. Formerly the Mennonites had little in common with other churches but today we find that the Sunday Schools take part in county Sunday School Conferences, other ministers preach in the Mennonite Church and even perform Mennonite marriages in the Mennonite Church. Since there is no creed we can expect a great diffusion of religious sects in the future. Their religion and progress is summarized by the following article:51

"1.) Form discarded in church services. It was a vanity. (Discarded).

2.) Mennonites wore plain clothes, like the Dunkards. Adornment in dress also was a vanity. (Discarded in part).

3.) Mustaches were adornments, and were not to be worn, unless together with a beard. (Discarded)

4.) Lace curtains, hardwood floors, musical instruments, all were taboo as vanities. (Discarded in part.)

5.) No notes were in the song books of the church. Again the vanity reason. (Discarded).

6.) Divorce or recognition of divorce was not allowed.

7.) The ministers drew no salaries and any member of the congregation had to be prepared to preach the services. (Discarded in part).

8.) Church attendance on the part of everyone was compulsory.

9.) No matting was allowed on church aisles to deaden the sound.

10.) The use of liquor, except for medicinal purposes, was an offense.

11.) Tobacco was frowned on and seldom used.

12.) Chastity and honesty were the cardinal virtues the people recognized.

13.) The Mennonites did not take out citizenship papers and did not vote. (Discarded)."

Others may be added thus:

14.) Still do not believe in original sin so do not practice infant baptism.

15.) Statues or images are not allowed in the church.

16.) Suicides are condemned and excommunicated to the extent that church burials are not allowed.
Religiously great progress has been made to keep up with the times and only the future can answer as to what other changes will be made to keep pace with the times. We can expect a great intermingling of Mennonites with other religious sects if they can and if we can use the past century as a standard for prophecy. Some of the religious beliefs, of course, will never be given up as long as there is the least resemblance of the Mennonite Church, for they have become rooted through centuries of persecution, trials, and faithful defense. The Mennonite Church will probably never be absorbed but its membership will include many different races and beliefs.

Educationally, as stated before, the Mennonites have always been pioneers. At first they sent their children to only their church schools but from the beginning in Kansas their children have attended the public schools and then after the regular term was over they would have a short term of Bible School or German schools. Today in Kansas we find three Mennonite colleges that grant degrees: Tabor College at Hillsboro, Kansas, Bethel College at Newton, Kansas, and Hesston College and Bible School at Hesston, Kansas. There are nine other colleges elsewhere in the United States and in these 12 institutions there are about 2,000 students. About 60% of the students in these insti-
tutions are Mennonites while 40% belong to other denominations. In 1929 the degrees granted by some of these colleges were: Bachelor of Theology, Bachelor of Science in Education, Bachelor of Divinity, and Bachelor of Arts. In the line of the German or Bible Schools "people do support Summer Bible Schools. The members of the Berthal Mennonite Church, Pawnee Rock, Kansas, believe definitely in the worth of Bible teaching for their boys and girls. The children attend seven or eight district schools in the winter. In the summer they maintain one high grade Bible School with two teachers. Some of the parents have to bring their children in the morning and also get them again in the evening after school. It has been found that one man makes a total of 42 miles a day to bring his and his neighbor's children to this Bible School. The school runs for four weeks, and starts at 9 and closes at 4." 52 Their educational attitude may be summarized into one statement made by L. C. Wooster: 53 "The proper education of their children has always been a matter of prime importance to the Mennonites."

In the line of singing the Mennonites have always taken an active part and in some churches hymns are still being sung to which no music has ever been written down.

The following is a history of the hymnal being used today by the General Conference, who recognizing the need of an English hymnal, arranged for the taking over of a publication issued by a commercial concern and adapted to the use of our churches in 1891, which bore the title, "Mennonite Hymnal, a Blending of Many voices." The work gave general satisfaction for nearly four decades. When its usefulness seemed to have come to an end and the General Conference appointed a committee to compile a new hymnal, their work resulted in the issuing of the "Mennonite Hymn Book," which is gradually coming into general use throughout the General Conference. But lately the church is not the only scene of singing of the Mennonites, for we find that during the Christmas Holidays of 1934 a quartet from Bethel College made an extensive trip through Western Kansas and Eastern Colorado and broadcast a program from the radio station at Dodge City. (This is in conflict with the resolutions adopted by the Amish Mennonites and the Old Mennonites mentioned before. This college quartet represented the General Conference Mennonites and again shows that there is a striking difference between the sects of Mennonites.)

Taking one back glance at the European Mennonites that remained in the Old World, we find that varying conditions are experienced by them and various opinions are expressed
concerning the Mennonites even there. When in the 1870's and 1880's thousands of Mennonites left Russia we find that the government officials became alarmed over the departure of their best farmers and attempted to stem the tide of emigration. "When the Czar, Alexander, learned of this, he sent General von Todleben to the Molotschner Colony, who let all emigrants come to church once at Halbatadt and at another time at Alexanderwohl in Elder Jacob Bultler's great church and so there came every many together. The General Todleben in his full military uniform stepped before the great assembly, and looked about with the question: "Are all these emigrants?" Then he began to speak, loud and distinctly in pure German: "His Majesty, the Czar, Alexander, has sent me to you, and I am to tell you he loves you, you are worthy to dwell in this empire, why do you have it in mind to emigrate? One hundred years your good fathers have been in this land, you enjoy it here, you have everything arranged so well, why will you emigrate? You have fine schools, fine churches, fine houses and gardens, you need not work yourselves, the work is being done without you, all you have to do is to look after the work. You can hire Russian laborers at low wages, why will you emigrate? When you come to America you will have to dig trees, weed the roots and break the prairies, and do all
your work yourself. Here you have it as fine as you wish."

And so the high official worked very hard against emigration. He was faithful and true in his duty, and later made an offer that those who did not like to serve in military duty, and take weapons, could do sanitary service, nurse the sick, build bridges and make plantations, that is, take care of woods and forests. The latter has been chosen by those remaining, that when a young man is 21 years old he has to go to the lot, and if found fit has to serve several years in the forestry service.54 And so was answered the following question raised in 1879: "And it remains to be seen whether the Mennonites will believe that the Czar has done all he could.....for them." But since the beginning of the World War the hatred has again grown against these Mennonites in Russia and thousands are again fleeing to foreign shores - principally South America. The tone of the following letter was and perhaps is still characteristic of the feeling towards these people in Russia:

Nilolai Milharlovich to the Tsar (Nicholas II)
August 8, 1916 Grushinka (Kherson) (Bugeimia)

In accordance with my promise, I am writing about my impressions here. My estate represents an immense area of 54. Bradley, Glen Danford. Story of the Santa Fe, p. 111.
75,000 desiatins. It is situated in the three viezds of three guberinias, Kerson and Ekaterinoslav, viez of the same names and Taurida Bugernilia - Biex of Militopal. There are 16 villages on the estate, and 7 German colonies, one of which moved away last year on its own initiative. The remaining colonies are waiting for the decision of the government. Most of them are Mennonites, who are inclined to stay, and one of Wurtembergers, intends to move. Thus, for there have been no misunderstanding with them, the Mennonites emphasized the fact that they left Germany two hundred years ago, spent a long time in Poland, migrated to us under Emperor Alexander II, and have been dwelling here over 50 years. Although they do not believe in war, they furnished soldiers who serve as hospital orderlies. In conversation they stress their anti-German attitude, even though everywhere in their homes there are portraits of the Kaiser, and also of Vasili Fererovick (Kaiser William I) as well as of the Kaiser, and of Bismarck and Moltke. Personally, I hope that they will clear out bag and baggage after the war."

Even in Holland, the scene of the early Mennonite persecutions, we find that the Mennonites are still playing an important part in the history of that nation for they "are

taking advantage of the great engineering feat by which a
dike has been erected across the Zudder Zee in order to
drain it of the waters and reclaim the land. A brother-
hood house is to be erected on the dunes near Aekmaar and
access to it will be made easy over the dyke from Fries-
land, Groninge and other distant parts." Consequently,
we see that in spite of persecutions, trials, mistreatment,
and jealousy and hatred thousands of Mennonites remained
behind and even today are helping to make the history of
those nations. But at the same time thousands at last
have given up their faith and hope in their country and are
fleeing to foreign shores.

Returning to America, we find that the Mennonites
faced and conquered many hardships. These emigrants did
not come when the dangers of the frontier had all been
removed but still when Kansas was in the raw state. In-
dian raids were common just before they arrived and even af-
ter their arrival the raids of the Indian braves occurred
in scattered sections on the frontier.

To see what a great mass of emigrant Mennonites came
to Kansas, it is well to turn to Wilder for these entries: 57
"August 5, 1873 - five Mennonite leaders visit Harvey, Sedg-
wick, Reno, Marion and McPherson Counties to select land for
57. Wilder, Annals of Kansas, p. 643 and others.
a colony from Russia.
March 19, 1874 - An act exempting Mennonites and Friends from military services is passed.
September 8, 1874 - Six hundred Mennonites arrive in Topeka.
September 23, 1874 - Eleven hundred Mennonites arrive in Topeka.
October 14, 1874 - Mennonites buy 100,000 acres of land of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad.
January 2, 1875 - Two hundred Mennonites arrive at Great Bend direct from Russia.
August 10, 1875 - A train with 201 Mennonites arrives at Topeka and leaves for the Southwest.
July 15, 1877 - C. B. Schmidt says that now more than 60,000 Mennonites are living in the Arkansas Valley.

Now turning to other pages we find the following entries showing the hardships suffered by these Mennonites at their approximate corresponding dates given above:
August 7, 1874 - Grasshoppers reach Topeka and stay all fall until winter. W.P. Pampense says: "They seem to cover the fact of the earth. This visitation of grasshoppers, or locust, was the most serious of any in the history of the state. They reached from the Platt River on the north to Northern Texas, and penetrated as far east as Sedalia, Missouri. Their eggs were deposited in favorable localities
over this vast territory. The young hatched the next spring, did great damage to early crops, but in June, having passed into the winged state they rose into the air, and flew back to the northwest, whence their progenitors had come the year before.

June, 1875 - All of the west and south of Topeka carpeted with grasshoppers; noses north and all walking; some fully grown and winged; others shedding their slight silver shields; a line like an army; they leave no grass behind them; a strange sight. They do an immense work and are silent - in several counties they are successfully fought with plows, coal oil, and the spade.

June 7 - Hoppers fly into Topeka and fill the town.
June 9 - The most hoppers in Topeka today.
June 12 - Air full of hoppers in Topeka, going and coming.
June 13 - Hoppers in the clouds, flying over Topeka.
June 16 - Hoppers nearly all gone. Farmers have replanted corn.

August 16 - Denver is full of hoppers - vegetation rank and luxuriant in eastern Kansas.

January 1, 1876 - Rainfall for 1875 was 28.87 inches, for 1874 the same, one year a success, the other a failure. (reason - grasshoppers)."
"Even in the principle of churches these sturdy emigrants suffered privations. These were sometimes very simple structures for churches that won't have mortgages, surely, are those proposed to be built in certain districts on the western frontier of Kansas. They are to be made of sods. A few such already exist. The walls are made of sods, the roofs are covered with sods, and the floors are of earth. A church can be built in size about 26 x 36 for an outlay of money of only $10, and this has already been done in at least one instance. A wall of sod, if properly built and protected, will last a hundred years. Roofs of shingles and floors of wood are greatly to be desired; but, of course, they add very much to the cost of the church."58 And so even if the Mennonites were not the first settlers in Kansas, they did arrive early enough to come face to face with enough hardships to make a hardy race even more hardy and prepared for the obstacles of the future.

Even today when certain obstacles arise the Mennonites migrate from one place to another, seeking a place where these obstacles will not present themselves. And so we had the migration from Canada to Mexico and then back again because of governmental reasons; the migrations from Kansas to Wyoming, Southwest Kansas and the irrigated regions of Texas, because they wish to improve their financial

condition and to keep themselves more intact or from mixing with other nationalities. And so we have every reason to believe that the future will also see migrations.

In concluding this thesis, the Mennonites have conquered persecutions, public opinion, and through difficult work and integrity have improved land products and animals and conquered the elements for their successful life and now the future is looking towards these people for their aid in the Middle West today - the dust storm. It is the Mennonites of the future that will help to determine whether the following prophecy made in 1875 will come true: "The fact has not yet dawned upon the people that the Western limit of our agricultural lands has already been reached by the settlements along the frontier, from the Rio Grande to the 49 parallel of latitude......After passing Fort Hays, we get beyond the country suitable for agriculture....For the years 1861-1862 the Kansas Pacific Railroad Company employed a farmer to experiment on their lands, but the moisture of the spring season has heretofore been of too short duration for him to accomplish much....From Dakota to Texas some settlements have reached the border and from the 100 meridian to the Sierra Nevada Mountains, a distance of 1200 miles, there is not more than one acre to the hundred that has any appreciable value for agricultural purposes,
or that will for the next hundred years sell for any appreciable sum." The Mennonites have conquered swamps and seas and other elements in Europe and so the world looks to them to conquer this latest of nature's destructive forces - The Dust Storm.

APPROACHING "BLACK" BLIZZARD OR DUST STORM.
THESE SOMETIMES LAST DAYS AND NIGHTS.
MANY LIVES ARE LOST, IF THEY ARE
IN THE OPEN, FROM SUCCUTION
SHOVELS OF DIRT ARE SWEPt
FROM THE BEST OF HOMES

WILL THE Mennonites BE ABLE TO STOP THIS
MENACE TO AGRICULTURE WITH THE CO-
OPERATION OF OTHER FARMERS?
RICH TOP SOIL SWEEP OFF THE FIELDS AND PILED INTO SHELTERED PLACE

TRACTOR ALMOST COVERED BY DUST
DUST CLOUDS, THOUSANDS OF FEET HIGH AND HUNDREDS OF MILES WIDE, SWEEPING OVER THE GREAT WHEAT BELT OF THE MIDDLE WEST.

TOTAL DARKNESS EXISTS EVEN AT MID-DAY

RESULT OF "WHITE" BLIZZARD IN WINTER AS THE SNOW IS SWEPT OFF THE FIELD AND PILED INTO THE SHELTERED PLACES, LEAVING THE FIELDS BARE AND DEFICIENT IN MOISTURE
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A guide interested in selling real estate, so the statistics are the exceptional rather than the general facts. State Historical Society Library.


A real estate magazine which gives an interesting and authentic account of the Mennonites in McPherson and Marion Counties. State Historical Society Library.


An account of the personal life of the Mennonites based on personal contact with them during the early years of their life in this country. Forsythe Library.


A source dealing with the cattle developed by the Mennonites. The article deals largely with the Russian Catholics. Forsythe Library.

A newspaper account which shows the part that the Mennonites had in the development of wheat. Forsythe Library.

Isely, Bliss. Mennonite Children Selected the Wheat Seed That has Made Kansas Famous. (In the Kansas City Star, June 5, 1927).

This newspaper article shows with what care and precision these early settlers selected their seed wheat. State Historical Society Library.


A newspaper article that presents proof that the Mennonites are becoming interested in politics. Hays City Library.


A newspaper article which shows that the Mennonites have attracted the attention of national leaders. Hays City Library.

Special Correspondence - Mennonites and the Radio. (In the New York Times, New York, June 28, 1931, Sec. III, p. 6, col. 8).
A newspaper article which quotes a resolution adopted by the Amish Mennonites banning the radio. Forsythe Library.


A newspaper article which presents the cardinal points of the Mennonite beliefs and doctrines. State Historical Society Library.


An article in the book which shows the educational attitude of the Mennonites. Forsythe Library.


Documents showing the Russian attitude toward the Mennonites of Russia today. Forsythe Library.


Notations of major events listed in chronological order. Forsythe Library.

Currey, Daniel, editorial. (In the National Repository devoted to General and Religious Literature. Cincinnati,
A prophecy of the regret of Russian leaders will have for the migrations of the Mennonites from that country. Forsythe Library.


A remarkable article based on facts collected after months of research by government men. It deals largely with topography, soil condition, climate and rainfall. Forsythe Library.

Personal Interviews

Mrs. Jacob Rudiger of Great Bend, Kansas. Now about seventy years of age. Keen minded and remembers many experiences of the old country and early years of the settlement.

Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Seibert, Jr., of Great Bend, Kansas. Also remember many experiences of the early years of the settlement and have documents dealing with the early history of their coming from Ostrog, Poland.

Rev. J. B. Schmidt of Pawnee Rock, Kansas, remembers many local events of the early settlements and has the early church records well in mind.