

Indians and Boa Constrictors: The Making of a Swiss Volhynian Community in the Dakota Territory

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In 1874, a group of conservative Mennonite farmers known as the Swiss Volhynians emigrated from Russia to the southeastern Dakota Territory. There they established the town of Freeman and practiced the religious doctrines of Anabaptism and pacifism.

Although the lands they settled were once home to Sioux Indians, these native peoples had been forcibly relocated by the early 1870s. Nevertheless, Mennonites' immigration experiences were colored by perceptions of the American West as a frightful land of Indians and boa constrictors, where famine and six shooters were the norm.

While the majority of Russian Mennonites who settled in the Great

Plains were of Dutch and Prussian origin, the Swiss and south Germans living in Volhynia, or "Polish Russia," offer an important exception. Their history, although influenced by the same events and religious convictions as other Russian Mennonites, encompasses unique settlement patterns and pioneer experiences. These Swiss Volhynians, enticed by the prospect of cheap land—available under the Homestead Act of 1862—and aided by Mennonites already living in the United States, immigrated to preserve their religious freedom and ethnic traditions.

Mennonites first came to Russia in 1789 at the invitation of Catherine the Great. The Czarina wanted to attract colonists from Europe and offered a liberal *Privilegium* to settlers. For the Mennonites, this included religious and political freedom, educational control, the right to affirm oaths, and exemption from military or civilian service.¹ Apart from a small land tax, Mennonites enjoyed fiscal autonomy as well; when they first arrived, settlers even received a loan from the government to begin farming.²

Mennonites living in disparate colonies remained culturally distinct during their stay in Russia. They practiced Anabaptism, held strict conservative values, and spoke German. Villages usually followed a common plan: the church was both the literal and spiritual center, a school—also centrally located—

provided instruction in religious and community doctrines, and farming houses radiated out along main roads. Family hierarchies usually determined the arrangement of houses, with the largest belonging to the parents and the rest to their children. These communities were “cultural islands” in a sea of Russian Slavs.³ Russian Mennonites were not entirely isolated, however; inter-village visits were common, although rarely between Swiss and Prussian Mennonites, as they spoke different German dialects. Many businessmen even learned Russian, and by the mid-nineteenth century Mennonites had absorbed distinctive aspects of Russian culture.⁴

The Mennonites prospered during their years in Russia, but in 1856 the rise of Alexander II threatened their privileged status. Although the Czar began his career as a reformer, bloody revolts and insurrections led him to adopt reactionary policies. These were accompanied by a nationalist movement to “Russianize” the Empire, which spelled the demise of Mennonites’ *Privilegium*. Fearful for their way of life, the Mennonites discussed how best to respond. Without substantial concessions from the Czar, many saw emigration as their only option. In 1870, several delegations traveled to St. Petersburg, threatening mass exodus. The Russian government did not take such warnings seriously, but nevertheless decided to relent on issues of military service. Rather than performing active combat duties during times of war, Mennonites would be allowed to perform civil service or hospital work. Despite such accommodations, Mennonites feared encroaching government control, and many resolved to leave Russia.⁵

At debates held in local churches, Mennonite elders considered immigrating to Asia, Africa, or South America, but finally settled on North America.⁶ As one immigrant recalled, “The mention of north America received very little applause at first as it was considered by most of these people merely a place for adventure where one would have to carry a revolver in his hip pocket all the time to protect himself from the savage natives.”⁷ Frequent letters and even some visits from Mennonites already living in the United States helped dispel such misconceptions. Once they had settled on North America, the Russian Mennonites dispatched a committee of twelve men to determine the best site of colonization. The twelve delegates hailed from different Russian Mennonite communities, with Andreas Schrag representing the Swiss Volhynians.⁸ After landing in New York in the spring of 1873, the group met with Mennonite leaders from the

United States and toured the continent for three months. Traveling by train, boat, and wagon, they visited parts of Manitoba, the Dakota Territory, Minnesota, Nebraska, Kansas, and Texas.⁹

By 1873, American Mennonites had made the needs of their Russian counterparts well known in the United States. They had established aid societies and published hundreds of newspaper articles and letters in support of immigration. Even secular newspapers often printed stories championing the cause. Mennonites had, since their early days in the Russian Empire, been recognized as diligent and productive workers. Russian officials admired Mennonite villages as models for “progressive development” and commented favorably on the high quality of Mennonite agricultural goods.¹⁰ Each year Russian Mennonites brought to market ten million bushels of wheat alone. Their wheat was in such high demand that in the top European markets, it usually commanded “eight to ten cents per bushel more than other importations.”¹¹ In this light, Americans recognized the potential benefit of bringing Mennonite farmers to the United States. A May 1874 article in *The Republic* predicted that Mennonite immigration to the United States would prove a significant economic asset.

For a year or more past representatives of the Mennonite colonies in Russia have been examining the government lands in the United States with a view to immigration.... The main body of them, and probably the entire forty to fifty thousand, will come to the United States.... The Mennonites are industrious and frugal.... Placed in wheat-growing districts this accession to our population would soon increase the surplus product of cereals alone so as to ...add twenty or twenty-five million of gold annually to the United States treasury....¹²

Western states in particular expressed “unanimity of opinion” in desiring Mennonites settlers and even competed with each other to attract immigrants.¹³ The delegation from Russia was treated like royalty; they attended fine receptions and met with high officials from both Canada and the United States, including President Ulysses S. Grant.¹⁴ Canada tried to win the Mennonites’ favor by extending full educational freedom and exemption from military service. During the stay in Manitoba, however, the weather was poor, and the delegation preferred the sunnier climate of the United States.¹⁵ Swiss Volhynian Andreas Schrag particularly liked Dakota, commenting on its soil, climate, water, and crops.¹⁶

Because of this positive report, the Russian Mennonites decided to settle in the United States. While they were not guaranteed military exemption, American Mennonites reassured them that, as during the Civil War, conscription could be easily avoided with the payment of a three hundred dollar fee.¹⁷ Mennonites

were still concerned, however, about preserving their ethnic identity. Because the United States granted land to railroad companies in alternating sections along the tracks, Mennonites believed that if they settled in these areas, other groups could purchase the land between their plots and disrupt otherwise cohesive communities. In April 1874, they petitioned Congress for an allotment of contiguous land sections in large enough areas to permit communal living.¹⁸ While the bill originally included a request for an American version of the *Privilegium*, it was revised to state that the Russian Mennonites would seek American citizenship and adopt some elements of American culture.¹⁹

The 1874 Congressional floor debate of the “Mennonite Bill” centered on whether or not the federal government should encourage the formation of isolationist communities within an otherwise largely heterogeneous population. Mennonite pacifism also entered the discussion. As one senator emphatically stated, “If there is any portion of the world that can send us a few advocates of peace, in God’s name let us bid them welcome.”²⁰ Others were quick to praise the “thrift” and “integrity” of Mennonites already living in the United States. Those who opposed the bill feared that the settlers would neither assimilate nor become United States citizens. Eastern states sought to block the bill because they thought their representation in Congress would diminish if western populations continued to grow.²¹ Some senators even believed that the presence of Mennonites might undermine national cohesion, and that Mennonites must be made to fight in America’s wars. As one senator stated, “I cannot agree [that Mennonites] would be or could be exempt from the duty to perform military service.”²² In the end, the bill failed, but its lack of success did little to deter Mennonite settlement in the United States.

In 1874, the floodgates of Russian Mennonite immigration opened. Within half a decade, approximately 18,000 settlers had relocated to the United States.²³ Of course, not all Mennonites left Russia; as many as two-thirds stayed behind. These may have been wealthier Mennonites, or those who stood to gain economically by the departure of others; significant land tensions had developed in Russia because Mennonites were not allowed to purchase new land without official permission, and the mass exodus solved some of this stress.²⁴ A number of Mennonites even stayed for religious reasons, arguing that only an autocratic state like Russia could grant privileged status to minority groups, while Mennonite identity would be lost in the inevitable cultural intermingling of American democratic society.²⁵

Unlike other Russian Mennonite groups, however, nearly all Swiss Volhynian Mennonites immigrated to the United States. Only seven families are known to have stayed in Russia in 1874, and of these, some emigrated in later years.²⁶ Among the Swiss Volhynians, the vote to immigrate was cast as a community, and all four Swiss Volhynian congregations decided to leave.²⁷

When the time for departure arrived, the Mennonites experienced unforeseen difficulties. The mass sale of land created a glut in the market, leaving previously well-to-do families with little means of starting a new life across the ocean.²⁸ Even exiting the country was difficult. At first, the Russian government refused to issue passports, and the Mennonites had to hire a lawyer and bribe a number of Russian bureaucrats.²⁹ When the long journey to America finally began, the Mennonites traveled to Germany by train—the first time many had ever seen a railroad—and then to England by boat. At Liverpool they boarded monstrous steam liners for the long transatlantic voyage to New York.³⁰

Upon arrival in the United States, most Mennonites settled in the Great Plains. Some sought to escape the decadence of worldly eastern cities, which they thought signaled “the end of the world,” although most preferred the west simply because of the abundance of cheap land.³¹ The majority of immigrants settled in Kansas, with smaller numbers moving to Nebraska, Dakota Territory, Minnesota, Manitoba, and various eastern states. Mennonites decided upon locations for settlement before they left Russia, but they often changed their minds once in the United States. Agents for the Santa Fe railroad often influenced these decisions, meeting Mennonites in New York and guiding them west.³²

Swiss Volhynian settlement patterns, however, did not match those of wider Russian Mennonite immigration. Although the last group of Volhynians to leave Russia settled in central Kansas, the majority made their way to southeastern Dakota Territory. Since there were no land grant railroads until the 1880s in that part of the territory, the settlers did not have to worry about the federal government owning land plots adjacent to theirs along railroad lines. Had the Mennonite Bill passed Congress, it is possible that Mennonites would have settled in more northern parts of the territory where the rail companies had already penetrated. Some writers have speculated that a large influx of 1870s pioneers might have brought the northern section of the Dakota Territory into the Union as the state of Pembina, but the failure of the

Mennonite Bill left little incentive for settlement in the north, and Russian Mennonites instead chose more southern locations where they could acquire land cheaply and in bulk.³³

Unlike other Russian Mennonites, the Swiss Volhynians were persuaded to settle in Dakota by positive reports from Andreas Schrag of the 1873 delegation. Railroad agents prevented the majority of Russian Mennonites from forming such favorable impressions, however. Unscrupulous agents, organized in favor of heavily railroaded states like Kansas, spread lies personally and by letter to immigrating Mennonites about the otherwise attractive Dakota Territory. *The Yankton Press*, a Dakota newspaper, reported that Mennonites in Russia widely believed that “a great portion of Dakota had sunk, that a great part of the people were starving, and that a war with the Indians was inevitable.”³⁴ The Dakota Territory which, like other parts of the west, was trying to recruit Mennonites, worked to dispel such rumors. The territorial legislature at Yankton appropriated money to attract settlers and built a lodging house for newly arrived immigrants. Still, their actions were not enough; most Mennonites settled elsewhere.³⁵

On October 22, 1873, the first Swiss Volhynians reached Yankton. *The Yankton Press* welcomed the colonists, hailing them as “industrious” and “a valuable addition to our population.”³⁶ The Mennonites, however, did not know what to expect from their new surroundings. P.R. Kaufman, a young immigrant, remembered the strangeness of the journey west:

We boys could not help thinking of the many Indians or perhaps boa constrictors that might lurk in the caves and the bluffs, waiting for some poor creature to come into their power. Of course we were just green Russians....somewhere in Pennsylvania or Ohio we saw a lot of men in uniform playing with a big stick and a ball. We took them to be soldiers in uniform practicing some art of warfare. Now we rather imagine it to have been a baseball game that we saw.³⁷

Of the roughly two hundred Mennonite families that settled in the Dakota Territory, comprising some 1,600 people, the majority settled in Hutchinson and Turner counties, to the north of Yankton. While most of these families had been fairly wealthy while in Russia, the poor prices they received for their land and the long expensive journey to Dakota left them with little.³⁸ The migration would have been impossible without substantial help from American Mennonites. The Swiss Volhynians, like many other Russian Mennonites, borrowed extensively from North American Amish and Mennonite aid organizations, receiving over \$150,000 by 1880.³⁹ When the Swiss Volhynians first reached Yankton, most filed homestead claims with the government or, if they were reluctant to become citizens, bought privately owned land. Excess

money went toward oxen, wagons, and basic supplies.⁴⁰ Those who were too poor to afford their own property worked as day laborers in Yankton until they had saved enough money to file a land claim.⁴¹

Like most other Russian Mennonites, the Swiss Volhynians settled in primarily agricultural communities.⁴² Early houses, although occasionally timber framed, were usually sod or mud brick.⁴³ Because the Homestead Act required dwellings to be located on the land claims, most Mennonites did not build on the village model they had used in Russia. In the one known instance of village planning in Dakota, one large family erected a string of houses along a central road. The system was impracticable, however, and in 1877, it was abandoned.⁴⁴

Settlers were lucky enough to raise a few potatoes and some corn during their first fall.⁴⁵ The women brought seeds from Russia, but their vegetables did not grow well in the new climate, and they soon turned to grain production.⁴⁶ Although most immigrants were farmers, many also possessed valuable trade skills, including the raising of silk worms and production of silk.⁴⁷ Early cash crops included flax—although it degraded the soil and could only be raised in newly broken ground—and wheat. Unlike their Kansas counterparts, Dakota Mennonites did not grow the famous Turkey Red wheat from Russia, but rather a local variety of spring wheat that was better suited to the Dakota climate.⁴⁸ Farmers planted this by hand, using ox-driven plows to break the sod and sticks to drill seed holes. In later years, Mennonites raised fruit orchards and adopted large farm equipment such as tractors and threshing machines.⁴⁹

The farming lifestyle helped define social relations within Swiss Volhynian communities. Although Mennonite women worked alongside men in the fields more often than women in other pioneer groups, they still performed most domestic tasks including house and yard work, childcare, and cooking, as well as daily chores such as milking.⁵⁰ While women often performed tasks traditionally assigned to men, the reverse was rarely true. Men held the highest positions in churches and schools, and often had the final say in both family and public decisions.⁵¹

Interactions with non-Mennonites in the Dakota Territory were usually limited to business matters. Mennonites conducted trade in Yankton, and sometimes communicated with German-speaking Hutterites living nearby, as well as some Norwegian settlers. Wealthier farmers hired farm hands from outside the Mennonite enclave and there were even a few intercultural marriages.⁵²

Before the Mennonites' arrival, Americans considered the land north of Yankton a "wilderness," empty of any but a few white settlers.⁵³ In actuality, this land had once been home to Indian populations, including the Yankton Sioux. Burial grounds and Indian religious sites can still be found in Freeman, South Dakota, and surrounding areas. Local tribes lost dominance in the area following the establishment of the territorial capitol at Yankton in 1861 and the construction of Fort Yankton during the Sioux Uprising a year later. One Mennonite remembered that when his family settled near present-day Freeman, "there were hardly any Indians left, and the few who were still abiding were living near Swan Lake."⁵⁴

There are almost no known encounters between Indians and early Swiss Volhynian pioneers in the Dakota Territory. Mennonites considered Indians "savage," a perception stemming from descriptions transmitted to Russia years earlier via letters and hearsay.⁵⁵ This position seemed to be confirmed in 1873 when the twelve-man delegation, traveling through Manitoba, was besieged by a group of angry Metis in a cabin outside of Winnipeg.⁵⁶ Despite such stories, Mennonites felt that they had little to actually fear from Indians, as by 1874 they had been mostly driven from southeastern Dakota. Some Mennonites actually settled in Sioux territory along the Minnesota River. This land was being "held in trust for Indians" by the federal government, but as one congressman remarked during the debate over the Mennonite Bill, "there can be no objection to allowing [the Mennonites] to take those lands."⁵⁷ Congressional sentiment as well as policies created by the territorial legislature clearly promoted the influx of European immigrants over the needs of native peoples.

In the summer of 1876, fears of Indian violence in southeastern Dakota resurfaced following the Battle of Little Bighorn. Rumors spread that Indians were "plundering" and "murdering" their way south, and that Mennonites would soon be in danger. Settlers abandoned their farms wholesale and fled to Fort Yankton for protection. Those who stayed were driven "into hysterics" by slight movements in the grass, and distant lights at night were taken for Indian campfires. One group of settlers came close to what they thought was a dreaded massacre:

It happened one night when a number of families were gathering at one house that the regular war-whoop, "How," "how!" was heard... A glance thru the window of the darkened room revealed the outline of several horsemen with feathers in their hair moving about thru the yard as if getting ready to make a charge. While the majority of inmates were trembling with fear one brave settler mustered up sufficient courage to open the front door a trifle and discharge his old musket into the

dark mantel of the night. Silence reigned for a moment and immediately the sounding hoofs of retreating horsemen were heard.⁵⁸

The settlers later learned that their assailants were not Indians at all, but rather “disguised pale faces.”⁵⁹ That whites would dress up as Indians to terrify vulnerable settlers speaks to the turbulence of the times, as well as the cultural divide between immigrants and native peoples. It is worth noting that Mennonites, who emigrated from Russia largely out of opposition to organized violence through military service, were quite willing to fire upon those they thought to be “savages.” While terms like “Red Face” and “savage” were used well into the twentieth century, Freeman Mennonites have long since discarded such terminology. They acknowledge their part in the displacement of native populations and embrace the shared history of the land.⁶⁰ The Heritage Hall Museum, founded in the mid-twentieth century by immigrant descendent Charles Kaufman, is dedicated to the preservation of both Indian and Mennonite heritage in South Dakota.⁶¹

Indian raids were not the only potential hardships faced by early settlers. The first autumn brought massive grassfires, killing several people and consuming crops and whole buildings. When farmers saw smoke in the distance, they rushed to plow a furrow around their property, hoping to stop the fire by removing a ring of highly flammable prairie grass. They then hid in cellars and wells to avoid the flames.⁶² The next year, most of the crop was destroyed by a plague of grasshoppers. Dismayed settlers witnessed a great “cloud [come] up from the northwest obscuring the sunand watched these miserable locusts devour their promising fields.”⁶³ Over the following seasons, Mennonites faced deadly summer floods and winter blizzards. In poor harvest years, they were “compelled to break up and burn most of the furniture in order to keep a fire.”⁶⁴

Despite these challenges, the Mennonite communities grew and prospered. The settlers built schools and churches. “Stately mansions” replaced “sod shanties” and sheds grew into sizable barns for housing livestock, farm machinery, and hundreds of bushels of grain.⁶⁵ In 1903, the people of Freeman even founded a junior college.⁶⁶

Religious beliefs still dominated social life and any practices considered “worldly” were shunned. Congregations chose their ministers by lot and conducted services that included hymns and pre-written

sermons brought over from Europe.⁶⁷ These dictated that Mennonites wear only muted colors and forbade jewelry. One father warned his children that if he ever caught them wearing a ring, he would cut off the finger. Dancing was forbidden as well, but despite frequent admonitions from their elders, young people often broke this rule.⁶⁸

As time progressed, the Swiss Volhynians placed less emphasis on religious doctrine. Without the threat of encroaching Russianization or prospect of military conscription, there was a general relaxing of religious and social life. Mennonites began to engage with other Americans, learning English and participating in the new South Dakota government. In 1904, one David Wipf even became Secretary of State.⁶⁹ By 1914, only a few courses at Freeman Junior College were still conducted in German. More conservative Mennonites in the east disapproved of such changes, however, and even as early as the 1870s, considered the Swiss Volhynians to be “buried in heathen ways.”⁷⁰ Samuel Haury, a preacher from Illinois, traveled to the Dakota Territory to begin missionary work with the Native Americans, but found the Mennonites there to be as big a potential “harvest for the conference” as the Indians.⁷¹ Nevertheless, Haury and other eastern reformers enjoyed little success in southeastern Dakota, and the Swiss Volhynians continued to assimilate and engage wider American culture.

Today, Freeman, South Dakota, remains a small, predominantly Mennonite farming community. Local Mennonites wear conventional American clothing and work in typical occupations, but still retain aspects of their Russian Mennonite heritage, including cultural foods, histories, music, and an annual Schmeckfest celebration. The Swiss Volhynian immigrants who first settled the region after the relocation of Indian natives labored to build a safe, prosperous social order. Like other Russian Mennonite pioneers, the Swiss Volhynians endured harsh conditions during their early years in the United States but ultimately succeeded in preserving their religious beliefs and practices from the militarism of Czarist Russia.

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Endnotes

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- ² *The Mennonite Encyclopedia* (Scottsdale, PA: Mennonite Publishing House, 1956), 846.
- ³ Schlabach, *Peace, Faith, Nation*, 234.
- ⁴ *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, 846.
- ⁵ John Unruh, *A Century of Mennonites in Dakota* (n.p.: n.p., 1972), 14-15.
- ⁶ *Ibid.* 15.
- ⁷ John Gering, *After Fifty Years* (Freeman, SD: Pine Hill Printery, 1924), 17.
- ⁸ Schlabach, *Peace, Faith, Nation*, 252.
- ⁹ Unruh, *A Century of Mennonites in Dakota*, 17.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.* 14.
- ¹¹ *Brothers in Deed to Brothers in Need: A Scrapbook about Mennonite Immigrants from Russia 1870-1885* (Ed. Clarence Hiebert. Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press, 1974), 150.
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- ¹³ Unruh, *A Century of Mennonites in Dakota*, 24.
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- ¹⁵ Unruh, *A Century of Mennonites in Dakota*, 17.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.* 27.
- ¹⁷ Schlabach, *Peace, Faith, Nation*, 241.
- ¹⁸ Unruh, *A Century of Mennonites in Dakota*, 19.
- ¹⁹ Schlabach, *Peace, Faith, Nation*, 256.
- ²⁰ *Brothers in Deed to Brothers in Need*, 133.
- ²¹ Unruh, *A Century of Mennonites in Dakota*, 20.
- ²² *Brothers in Deed to Brothers in Need*, 133.
- ²³ Unruh, *A Century of Mennonites in Dakota*, 23.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.* 13.
- ²⁵ Schlabach, *Peace, Faith, Nation*, 249.
- ²⁶ *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, 846.
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- ²⁸ Unruh, *A Century of Mennonites in Dakota*, 21.
- ²⁹ Gering, *After Fifty Years*, 23.
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- ³¹ Schlabach, *Peace, Faith, Nation*, 253.
- ³² Unruh, *A Century of Mennonites in Dakota*, 24.
- ³³ *Ibid.* 21.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.* 25-26.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*
- ³⁶ *Ibid.* 22.
- ³⁷ Kaufman, *Our People and Our History*, 85.
- ³⁸ Unruh, *A Century of Mennonites in Dakota*, 23-24.
- ³⁹ Gary Waltner, "A Study of the Economic Conditions of the Swiss Mennonites of Dakota, 1874-1882" (Research paper presented to the Department of Bible, Bethel College: North Newton, KS, 1961), 3; Schlabach, *Peace, Faith, Nation*, 231.
- ⁴⁰ Gering, *After Fifty Years*, 30.
- ⁴¹ Unruh, *A Century of Mennonites in Dakota*, 27.
- ⁴² *Ibid.* 29.
- ⁴³ Waltner, "A Study of the Economic Conditions of the Swiss Mennonites of Dakota, 1874-1882," 2.
- ⁴⁴ Unruh, *A Century of Mennonites in Dakota*, 28.
- ⁴⁵ Edwin Graber, "An Analysis of Social Change in a Swiss-Mennonite Community" (Master of Arts thesis, University of South Dakota, 1932), 2.
- ⁴⁶ Kaufman, *Our People and Our History*, 41.
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- ⁴⁹ Graber, "An Analysis of Social Change in a Swiss-Mennonite Community," 20.
- ⁵⁰ Unruh, *A Century of Mennonites in Dakota*, 30.
- ⁵¹ Marilyn Rose, *On the Move: A Study of Migration and Ethnic Persistence Among Mennonites From East Freeman, South Dakota* (New York: AMS Press, 1989), 63.
- ⁵² Goossen, "Prairie People," 4.
- ⁵³ Gering, *After Fifty Years*, 18.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 42.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 17.
- ⁵⁶ Schlabach, *Peace, Faith, Nation*, 251-252.
- ⁵⁷ *Brothers in Deed to Brothers in Need*, 136.
- ⁵⁸ Gering, *After Fifty Years*, 42-43.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁰ S. Roy Kaufman, *Roots that Nourish our Congregational Life: Adjusting to a New Land—The Plains of South Dakota* (Sermon at Salem Mennonite Church: Freeman, SD, August 31, 2008).

⁶¹ *Heritage Hall Museum* (Complete Media, 2007. 3 Nov. 2009 <<http://www.freemanmuseum.org/>>).

⁶² Waltner, "A Study of the Economic Conditions of the Swiss Mennonites of Dakota, 1874-1882," 6.

⁶³ Gering, *After Fifty Years*, 34-35.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 36.

⁶⁵ Unruh, *A Century of Mennonites in Dakota*, 30.

⁶⁶ Freeman Junior College remained open until 1986; Freeman Academy, an affiliated secondary school, still exists.

⁶⁷ Unruh, *A Century of Mennonites in Dakota*, 64.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 51.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* 98.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 49-50.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*