

Face Lift at Mennonite Marker

In October, 1943, almost due east across the road where the first Eden Mennonite Church building stood, the descendants gathered 69 years later to dedicate a granite memorial marker to the pioneers who first settled in the Moundridge community. The marker stands four miles west and one-eighth mile north of Moundridge, on the S.W. quarter of Sec. 19-21-2W of Mound Township, McPherson County, Kansas, on a quarter section donated by the Santa Fe Railroad. Eighteen family names appear on the east side of the marker: Albrecht, Dirks, Flickner, Goering, Graber, Kaufman, Krehbiel, Nachtigal, Schrag, Schroeder, Schwartz, Strausz, Stucky, Sutter, Voran, Waltner, Wedel, Zerger.

Rev. Christian J. Goering was instrumental in erecting this monument. He was very determined that the memory of his Swiss forefathers who gave him his Mennonite heritage, be preserved. To his ancestors, religious freedom was a most valuable possession often refused them. After many years of bitter persecution, these preservers of the faith sought refuge in France, Austria, Poland, and Russia before coming to America.

A mimeographed page was found in a steel box stating the following resolutions adopted at a marker planning meeting held on Thursday, March 18 (no year stated):

- 1) In commemoration of important experiences the children of Israel erected memorials. In view of this scriptural procedure be it resolved that we too erect a memorial stone in memory of the faith of our Mennonite Fathers.
- 2) Resolved, that we endeavor to collect \$1250.00 to finance this project; if there shall be a surplus left after all expenses have been paid, the same shall be sent to the treasurer of the Emergency Relief Board of our General Conference for relief work.
- 3) Resolved, that a soliciting committee of five shall be elected to secure subscriptions for the financing of this undertaking, and that this committee to go work at once. The following brethren were elected: Jac. J. Goering, Jac. H. Stucky, Val. Stucky, John D. Schrag and John P. Krehbiel.
- 4) Since the Santa Fe Railroad Company gave our fathers a quarter section of land for church purposes and built an immigration house on the same, the memorial stone shall be erected on the southwest corner of this quarter.
- 5) Resolved, that a public program shall be arranged in connection with the dedication of this memorial stone and that a program committee of five members be chosen to prepare the program.
- 6) Resolved, that a cache be made into the stone, into which shall be placed historic and other materials as shall be determined by the executive committee and the program committee.
- 7) That a committee of three shall be chosen to make investigation on the procuring of a stone.
- 8) That an inscription be placed on the stone to read something like this, "Dedicate to the faith of our Mennonite fathers, who for the sake of religious freedom immigrated to this country from Russia in the year 1874."

Further resolutions passed affecting the above were as follows:

- 1) Resolved that the present committee which was chosen to do preliminary work towards erection of a memorial be made the permanent executive committee. The committee is Rev. C. J. Goering, President; Ed. R. Goering, secretary; and P.P. Wedel, member.
- 2) Resolved that the Executive Committee be a part of the program committee and that the chairman appoint two others.
- 3) That the Ex. Com. appoint the committee to look for a stone. To carry out the actions of the meeting of March 18, the soliciting committee met with the executive committee on the evening of March 25. It organized as follows: Val. Stucky, President; John D. Schrag, Vice President; Jac. J. Goering, Secretary-Treasurer. It was decided to divide the whole territory into zones, beginning at McPherson

and then southward, with one of the members of the soliciting committee. Together with these, the following brethren are requested to help with the solicitation as directed by the soliciting committee members.

- Under Val Stucky – Jac P. Kaufman, Peter J. Schrag
- Under Jac. H. Stucky – Dave T. Stucky, Peter Zerger, John C. Goering, Gideon Stucky
- Under Jac. J. Goering – Peter C. Stucky, Ben Krehbiel, N.P. Stucky, David Zerger
- Under John P. Krehbiel – Andrew Flickner, Paul Goering, C.C. Kaufman, Herman Krehbiel
- Under John D. Schrag – C.C. Graber, Andrew Kaufman, John E. Stucky, C.D. Kaufman.

These solicitors together with their leader may ask others to assist them in the work.

--Information from interviews by Betty Ann Zerger in 1945 and from mimeographed pages in C.J. Goering files

P.P. Wedel and C. J. Goering at Dedication Service. Printed in The 75th Anniversary (The Eden Church in Mission – Past, Present, Future, pg 47-49

After a time the trees grew up to nearly dwarf the marker.



The SMCHA Board trimmed the trees this May so the marker stands out large and strong.



IN MEMORY OF THE
SWISS MENNONITE
CONGREGATION
OF KOTOSUFKA, VOLHYNIA, RUSSIA, WHOSE
MEMBERS LEFT RUSSIA IN SEARCH OF
RELIGIOUS LIBERTY. SIXTY-TWO FAMILIES
SAILING ON THE CITY OF RICHMOND
LANDING IN NEW YORK SEPT 3, 1874
AND IN OCTOBER ARRIVING ON THIS
QUARTER SECTION (S.W. QUARTER SEC
19-21—2W) WHICH WAS DONATED BY THE
SANTA FE RAILROAD COMPANY FOR
CHURCH PURPOSES AND WITH A FEW
MORE FAMILIES ARRIVING LATER SETTLED
THIS NEIGHBORHOOD.
AND IN GRATITUDE
TO THEM AND TO OUR BELOVED COUNTRY
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA WHICH
GRACIOUSLY GRANTED THE RELIGIOUS
LIBERTY SOUGHT, AND TO OUR HEAVENLY
FATHER TO WHOM WE GIVE ALL THE HONOR
THEIR DESCENDANTS
ERECTED THIS MONUMENT
OCTOBER 1943

EVERY ONE THAT HATH FORSAKEN HOUSES
OR BRETHREN OR SISTERS OR FATHER OR
MOTHER OR WIFE OR CHILDREN OR LANDS
FOR MY NAME'S SAKE SHALL RECEIVE AN
HUNDREDFOLD AND SHALL INHERIT EVER-
LASTING LIFE.

MATTHEW 19, 29

To make the site more attractive some hollyhocks, lilacs, grasses and vinca minor ground cover were planted (they'll have to be pioneer plants to survive in the Kansas heat and wind). Stop by to appreciate the memorial commemorating the faith of your ancestors.