



# Schweitzer Salt

Swiss Mennonite Cultural and Historical Association

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## Swiss Mennonite Historical and Cultural Association's mission:

- Collect and disseminate information concerning the spiritual and cultural history of Anabaptists of Swiss origin.
- Engage in dramatic and artistic activities to better understand our heritage.
- Offer scholarships and research grants to qualifying college and seminary students.
- Attempt to interpret and relate in a meaningful way the faith of our Mennonite forebears to the present and future generations.
- Maintain the Swiss Mennonite Marker, Memorial, and Cemetery near the Hopefield Church.

*Membership in SMCHA is \$15 per year or \$100 for a 10 year membership. For more membership information contact Treasurer H. Keith Goering 1823 Arrowhead Rd, Moundridge, KS 67107.*

## Goessel Historian, Artist, Teacher to be Featured Speaker at Annual SMCHA Banquet

by Kathy Goering

Wondering how the Mennonite immigrants who came from the Ukraine in 1874 got to the immigrant house near Moundridge? Local historian BRIAN D. STUCKY will be speaking at the Swiss Mennonite Cultural and Historical Association banquet on Thursday, September 23, 2010, at 6:00 p.m. on "Filling in the Gaps of Swiss History." Brian's rediscovery of some of the trails and grave sites of early settlers has given him a glimpse of what life was like in those early years. Ethnic food will be served for \$15/plate by the Bread Basket Restaurant, Newton. The Banquet begins at 6:00 p.m. at Faith Mennonite Church, Newton. Call or e-mail reservations before Monday, September 20 to Kathy Goering (620-345-8532) ([kjgo@mtelco.net](mailto:kjgo@mtelco.net)), LaVern Stucky (620-983-2348) ([lavern@powwwer.net](mailto:lavern@powwwer.net)) or Faith Church (316-283-6370).



*Featured Speaker Brian D. Stucky*

A Bethel College grad, Brian teaches Art and Photography in the Goessel School system. As an artist, he has exhibited at professional art shows, including the Mennonite World Conference. He is listed in the Mennonite Encyclopedia as a noteworthy Mennonite artist. He is active in church life at Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church. He has several historical interests, and has published numerous articles and photos. His current area of historical interest is pinpointing pioneer trails in Harvey, Marion, and McPherson Counties, and is working towards a book on that subject. Check his websites: <http://www.thetrailfinder.com>; <http://www.hallowedhardwood.com>. About his book and for Alta Mill history <http://www.altamill.org>.

Come to the Banquet to hear about Brian's recent research and enjoy ethnic foods and great fellowship. All are welcome.

"Schweitzer Salt is now only sent to members. Do encourage others to join so they can have a copy too. Or pay for a membership for interested children or grandchildren so they can get a "flavor" of their background."

# Immigrant Hardship

by Duane Schrag

The following two articles appeared in the December 1874 Herold der Wahrheit, a now defunct monthly which was published in Elkhart, Indiana. The approximately seventy Swiss Volhynian families that the two articles treat arrived at Yankton, Dakota Territory (now South Dakota), by train in three separate groups. A fourth group went to Kansas. About ten families remained in Ukraine. Though the Herold articles name only Karl Preheim in the prairie fire tragedy, we learn the first names of Preheim's family from Art Graber's Swiss Mennonite Ancestors and Their Relationships from 1775. Preheim's wife Katharina née Graber, died at thirty-seven, and Lizzie, his daughter, died at eighteen the following year in 1875, undoubtedly from her severe burns. Grandmother Elisabeth Senner Graber's death date is not recorded in Swiss Mennonite Ancestors. Karl had eight children from his first wife and four from his second wife, whom he married in 1880.



## Ein schreckliches Unglück

### (A Terrible Accident)

One of our beloved immigrant (eingewanderten) Russian families, namely Karl Preheim in Dakota, has suffered a sad misfortune. He had recently acquired a piece of ground and already bought several cattle, when a prairie fire destroyed his hay and other provisions. Still that was not the worst. Because Preheim was not at home when the fire approached, his mother-in-law, an old grandmother, tried to save the cattle. Soon she found herself surrounded by flames. Her clothing caught fire, and she was overcome, falling to the ground. Her daughter, Mrs. Preheim, saw her plight, and rushed to her aid but too was overtaken by the flames. Then the daughter ran to help her mother and grandmother and was also overcome.

All three were severely burnt (schwer verbrannt). Mrs. Preheim died after ten days. The old grandmother, at last report, lay in grave condition, and there was only hope that the daughter would survive.

It is with deep empathy for this family that we give this report. A greater tragedy could hardly have befallen newly arrived immigrants. May the God of compassion grant them strength to bear this heavy burden.

## Die Noth unsrer Brüder im Westen

### (The Adversity of Our Brothers in the West)

News of the adversity [threat of starvation] of our immigrant brothers in the west has arrived. Letters from Yankton, Dakota, to the Mennonite Executive Aid Committee requested help to alleviate the serious condition. Sent to Yankton to investigate the situation were H. K. Gottschall, Souder's Station, Montgomery County; Gabriel Bär, Mount Joy, Lancaster, Pa., and several other brothers. They discovered that the threat was not exaggerated. Provisions were in short supply and winter was approaching (*vor der Thür*). It was obvious that if nothing is done for them, many would starve. The Committee agreed that the necessary provisions would be distributed. It was decided to buy 1000 sacks of flour in Yankton, which would be divided among the needy. In all there were between 80 and 90 families that will be recipients of this largesse.

Among the people whom these delegates encountered were the following:

"We visited many of the brothers. They were very happy to see us. We attended three of their worship services. Most live in mud [huts] or *Wasenhäuser* that they built themselves. We were at a worship service in one house, where a grandmother lay on a bed. She had been in a prairie fire and suffered such terrible pain that it was heartrending (*herzzerbrechend*) to look at her. Next to her lay a severely burnt young girl, who was barely awake. Here was not only need but also misery. Such a sad home (*Trauerhaus*) we have never seen among our people."

*The article "Immigrant Hardship" was originally published in the September 2009 edition of Heritage Review along with a reprint of "Die Noth unsrer Brüder im Westen" (originally printed in Herold der Wahrheit, Dec. 1874, p. 203) and "Ein schreckliches Unglück." (originally printed in Der Mennonitische Friedensbote )*

## History and SMCHA

By President LaVern Stucky

To help give direction to an organization like SMCHA is both daunting and challenging. SMCHA is about preserving the Schweitzer culture, about honoring the pioneers who made the important decision to immigrate from Russia to the young United States, about remembering those who worked and struggled to develop this land, about the hardships of pioneer life and the unconquerable desire to be successful in a new place. For now at least a major emphasis must be to preserve this history. The pioneers are gone. The first generation American Schweitzers are gone. Their lives have become a closed book. We have lost first person access to their tales of success and accomplishment, their tales of joy and joyful events, their tales of heartbreak and failure, and their tales of how God has walked with them and carried them when need be. Some of these stories are lost forever; some have been passed from generation to generation within the families. It is these stories that need to be collected along with some more current ones if we are to maintain the fabric of our culture. All families have stories to tell. The job is to entice them to share them and to record them. The alternative is for these stories to be lost. It is these stories that are the fabric of life and these stories when molded together have made us who we are. They are the "salt of the Schweitzers."

A second focus is to help people view the Swiss Mennonite Cultural and Historical Association as an organization of value, relevant because of what it provides the members. The organization needs a broader more intergenerational membership base. This is important for financial, social and cultural reasons. Programs need to be developed to stimulate young people, to stimulate older people and all those in-between. There are some ideas being floated about, but none ready for public discussion at this time. This is where is where we need your help. I hope that these concerns resonate with you the readers and that you will feel compelled to accept the invitation to contribute ideas of ways we can begin to accomplish these goals. When we put our heads together, I am sure we can make things happen. In the words of Jake Goering, "Lets make something out of this once."

## Scholarship Awarded 2010

SMCHA Scholarship Committee awarded a \$250.00 grant to Sarah Pohl, a member of First Mennonite Church of Christian, Moundridge KS.



Sarah, a sophomore at Bethel College, participated in a ten-week Ministry Inquiry program in Reedley California, a program designed for exploration of Christian Ministry.

— Ellen Kling

## Education Endowment

My dad Oswald (Ozzie) Goering was very committed to the education fund and sat on the committee for a long time. Even before he died, he talked about leaving some kind of legacy with SMCHA because he was so committed. Arnold Wedel approached the family and asked if we would consider a donation of \$10,000 to start an educational endowment. Our hope was that this initial gift would encourage others to give to the fund so that the scholarships someday could be self sustaining. So the \$10,000 from Elaine Goering and named for both Oswald H. and Elaine Luella Wedel Goering is in an endowment fund which supports the scholarships. —Kathy Goering Reid

## Research Committee

After considering the various suggestions given at the SMCHA Board meeting, the research committee decided to begin by studying the Ship List and locating the first homesteads of the families. We visited the Mennonite Library and Archives at Bethel College for early research. — Wayne Goering, Maynard Krehbiel, Marlene Krehbiel, Victor Goering

Liebe Lite Ich han a Prief Kreet fum my frienshaft. See saen as der Uncle hut arbeit kofun der earst a mol in acht yoara. Yetz sin meir riech. Ar Pringt hame Septshane dollar unt acht and twantecdh cent yaardera fridack. Yetz sin meir reich. Maer hodden nee a baasthup im house. Vee dee riche liet so mier hin tsi Sears & Roebuck Kafaar. See hensir entlich rows Keprung und Ich Vill lere saa das ist eppis. Gaaga a Vant iso a langie Visee trook. Ias gooked vee a sow trook. Kansht dich rin hurka un allis uf a mol Vesha. In der Vant iss a Visee shissel fur dee hent unt Kesicht Vesha. Abber im Eck (Wow) Dut setzed eppis vo dar foose rin gate. Kamicht im goot op Visha. Than Kancht a Ket Tzee un Kumpt Suberous Vassar fur den andera foose. See hen a rull paper mit Ke Schicht abber is tsu din to Schribe on.

PS. C hen Tswie deckela mit he schieked mit den foos Vescher. Meerhen net Keviss Vas macha mitt dem So ma doot era broat Knada an ain un meir hen am Grosspa sie bilt im andera rin Kestuckk.

—Die Cousin Herb, Der Swertzer Baur

Online at:  
www.swissmennonite.org

### Swiss Mennonite Cultural and Historical Association

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## “Only Schweitzer Spoken Here” Meetings in Moundridge

At the June 18 meeting, stories and jokes were told in German. Toby Goering, wearing an apron, asked what the German word was for apron and then continued to relate many ways that aprons were used besides keeping one's clothes clean: blow your nose, wipe tears, shoo flies, warm hands, gather eggs, carry in wood, dust off furniture if someone is arriving unexpectedly, pot holder, carry seeds to the garden, bring in garden produce, call men in for lunch, fan yourself on hot day, chase the smoke out of the house if someone is smoking, put out fire, chase husband out of house if he doesn't behave....

## Schweitzer Program at Bethel College Fall Fest

Plans are being made for the Saturday, October 9, 2010, 9:00 a.m. program by the Schweitzers at Fall Fest at Bethel College.

As I studied and gathered Schweizer nicknames, I discovered that they provide an excellent basis for understanding Schweizer Mennonite culture. Taken in a cultural perspective, the study of nicknames can lead to insights with regard to how people relate to one another, what they find amusing and pleasurable. Nicknames also suggest who is important in a community (or unimportant, for that matter) and why. All of these insights point in the direction of cultural understanding. And since knowledge of different cultures enriches one's own, I find it of great importance to know the background and essence of one's own culture.

Before any discussion of Schweizer Mennonite nicknames can prove meaningful, a few basics must be understood about Schweitzers. The folk group to which this paper refers are those Mennonites of Swiss origin who migrated from Volhynia around 1874 and settled in South Dakota and Kansas. Their religious, ethnic and linguistic history bound them together for hundreds of years.

Perhaps the best way to explain this ongoing feeling of separateness is by illustration. When my father (who was born in Freeman, South Dakota) carried news of his engagement to my mother (who was born in Moundridge, Kansas) back to South Dakota his aunt told him, *Nu sie is yu von doe, aber sie is von unsere Leit.* (Although she is not from here, she is of our people.) Mother was an acceptable bride because of a common background. This was 1942.

I found six classifications of nicknames that were collectable. The categories are: diminutives, physical characteristics, behavioral characteristics, memorable incidents or word associations, occupation and place designations. It should be understood that some nicknames fit more than one classification; therefore in my tabulations, nicknames may be repeated.

### Diminutive Nicknames