



Schweitzer Salt

Swiss Mennonite Cultural and Historical Association

February 2012

David Habegger Will Share History of First Mennonite Church of Christian at SMCHA Annual Meeting

The Rev. Dr. David Habegger of North Newton, Kansas, will be the speaker at the Annual Meeting of the Swiss Mennonite Cultural and Historical Association to be held on Sunday, March 11 at 2:30 P.M. in the First Mennonite Church of Christian, Moundridge, Kansas. He will be speaking on the life and ministry of Elder Valentine J. Krehbiel who was the first minister of the First Mennonite Church of Halstead, Kansas, and of the First Mennonite Church of Christian, Kansas.



Mr. Habegger has done extensive research and writing on Swiss Anabaptists in Switzerland, France and Germany and has published articles in Mennonite Family History magazine. He is the founder of SAGA, the Swiss Anabaptist Genealogical Association, which is a web-site on the internet with over 100 databases containing genealogical information on Swiss Anabaptists and subsequent descendants. Habegger also led six tours to Switzerland, Germany, France and the Middle East.

Habegger's particular interest in Valentine Krehbiel stems from his deceased wife, LaVeta Loganbill Habegger, who was a great-granddaughter of Valentine. Her family received, kept and cherished sixty-two hand-written letters that Valentine wrote in German to his son Peter Paul Krehbiel who lived in Deer Creek, Oklahoma. David has researched the church records that Valentine kept for the two congregations he served.

Valentine Krehbiel was instrumental in starting the Garden Township Mennonite Church with members of the First Church of Christian. The West Zion Mennonite Church was also started by former members of the First Mennonite Church of Christian under the leadership of Wilhelm Galle shortly before Valentine died on July 21, 1902.

Agenda for SMCHA Annual Meeting 2012

Devotions by Richard Ratzlaff
 Overview of the year - President LaVern Stucky
 Catlin Monument Project Report - Brian Stucky
 Naming of the Cemetery located by Hopefield Church and now owned by SMCHA
 2013 Tour possibility
 Election of new officers and Budget approval

Refreshments of Poppyseed rolls, cookies and coffee served by members of First Mennonite Church of Christian.

If you are unable to attend, you may complete and return the signed proxy on page 4 to Secretary Kathy Goering at 1906 Carnation Vlg., Moundridge KS 67107.

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Swiss Mennonite Cultural and Historical Association's mission is:

- Collect and disseminate information concerning the spiritual and cultural history of Anabaptists of Swiss origin.
- Offer scholarships to qualifying college and seminary students.
- Relate in a meaningful way the faith of our Mennonite forebears to present and future generations.
- Maintain the Cemetery and Swiss Mennonite Marker near Hopefield Church.

Check out the new article on the website by Ben Goossen: *Indians and Boa Constrictors: The Making of a Swiss Volhynian Community in the Dakota Territory*. Ben is researching Mennonite history, studying in Germany. He is the grandson of James A. Waltner.

Early Swiss German History Topic of Fall 2011 SMCHA Banquet

At the SMCHA Banquet on Thursday, October 20, 2011 at the West Zion Mennonite Church in Moundridge, Gary Waltner, curator of the library and archives at the Mennonite Historical Society of Germany in Weierhof, spoke about the European roots of Kansas and South Dakota Schweitzers before the Russian sojourn.

He began with the question faced by the Roman Emperor Constantine about who was higher, the church or the state—could the pope crown the emperor or does the government have all authority?

As far back as 450, the Pope in power forbade rebaptism of anyone. In the Catholic Church, baptism was a sacrament; sacraments were between the person and God and could never be repeated because that would be considered blasphemy against God. Our forefather Felix Manz was tried in Zurich in 1527 and executed based on that law.

1527 is considered the beginning of the Anabaptist movement (about ten years after Martin Luther nailed his “95 Theses” on the church door, which actually was not out of the ordinary since religion, philosophy, and justice were discussed in public regularly). Anabaptists lived in the hills; they didn’t take their children to be baptized, breaking the law that everybody had to belong to the Reformed Church, and soon Anabaptist hunters were even paid to bring them for punishment.

In 1550 in Augsburg, three Christian religions were acknowledged: Catholic, Reformed, and Lutheran. The word “Protestant” comes from the word “protest” and from the practice of people protesting the authority of the Catholic Church at Rome.

In 1670 some Anabaptists moved to Alsace and Montbeliard in France: Flickinger, Gerig, Graber, Kaufman, Krehbiel, Schrag, Stucki, Zerger, later Mauer. From the large congregation at Montbeliard, some moved on to Alsace and

some further north to Palatinate. The Schweitzer language comes from the Palatinate and is the basic dialect still spoken there and very similar to the language of Pennsylvania Dutch.

Most of our people were Amish at some time (different from Amish of today - no prescribed clothing; in those days everyone wore hooks and eyes as they were easy to make, and all Christians wore head coverings). Footwashing and Sylvester (service on New Years Eve) were two religious Amish traditions, but maybe nothing has remained from our Amishness. Footwashing was last used regularly in our area in the 1930s. In 1791 some moved from Montbeliard to a relative’s land in Poland where they raised cattle and learned the art of making cheese.

In Russia, some Mennonites, wanting to prove that they were Swiss citizens in order to have their sons exempted from serving in the Russian army, tried to get a Heimatschein (a document indicating they were members of an old standing family in Switzerland). Some of these documents may still be found in Swiss villages. Even today, for example, if my Great Grandfather would have had a Heimatschein in a certain town in Switzerland, I could become a Swiss citizen.



About 175 people enjoyed the German Sausage and poppyseed cake meal served by West Zion members. Before Waltner’s informative presentation, Jesse Graber provided music, Vic Goering gave a report of the homestead research, and Natalie Stucky read a poem written by her great grandmother Olga Laura Stucky. A CD of the program is available for \$5 from SMCHA Treasurer H. Keith Goering.

Ka decht: Foular Baur und Goodie Frau

Morgetz graddle ich aus em bett dan guck ich uff die wolke
Dan bin ich an der Kiehsthall kum un die mamma hot fertig gmolke
Oh die moma is so siess, die momma is so schaffich
Sie weart Gumschtiffle uss der fiess das macht sie a bissli dappich.

Ich get yetz rin und schtrale my Hoar und Wesch my rode Backe
Die momma kocht die lebber vorscht un dut mis Oier mache
Oh die momma is so gut; sie dut dar kiehschtall butze
Sie weart an alter hut un lebt uff Eppelgrutze

Ich geh yetz raus zum schaddelbaum; Ich muss a bissle ruhe.
Un schpader bin ich ufkavack, die mamma iss draus am bluge
Oh die mamma is so schane; ich kans bino net glabe
Sie hot braade wiesse zsane un kohle schwatyi aage.

Ich gae und hole my ibberschi ass ich see net vergesse
Die mamma saagt, kum yetz ins haus Siss zeit fers middaagess
Oh die momma is so klie, sie is krat halb kewaxxed
Sie mus uf ihre tsche schteh for ihre kup tgu gratze.

Ich bin mied, die Sunn is heis; Ich lay mich uff den Bodde
Un bis ich rauskomm hut die momma shun das hi abglaade
Ich schwetz mitt dem Fuderman, er weist fiel neie sache
Die momma hot die chores geduht un iss anam supper mache.

Obeds muss ich frieh ins Bett, ich kants bino net mache
Es macht mich so gratt hesslich mied, de momma watsche schaffe
Oh die momma is die bescht, von all die deitschie weibsleit
Sie hot Graffat wie a Gaul un Wunderbaarie Weibheit.
--The Sweitzer Baur

Catlin Memorial Stone

By Brian Stucky for the Task Force

It's a fascinating immigrant story unlike any other. It's an emotional story passed down among families of the Swiss Volhynian Mennonites of Kansas. And it will finally, soon be memorialized in stone.

In 1874, as 8,000 Mennonites immigrated from Russia into Kansas, Swiss Mennonites who first settled in the area near today's Moundridge, stepped off the train at Peabody. The men went to scout and buy land in Mound and Turkey Creek townships. When they returned three weeks later, they discovered that *"almost all the children became sick. Some children died. The town had no cemetery at this time. A few miles north there was a place with a few graves. Since there was no other way of transportation, the bodies were carried there and buried"* ([A Short History of the Swiss Mennonites](#) written by P.P. Wedel, pg 64-65). Until recently, that location has been a mystery.

An article came to light in the January 1875 issue of the *Herald of Truth* newspaper out of Elkhart Indiana. A correspondent from Peabody, KS wrote,

"I found this country completely devastated by the grasshoppers, but the farmers now have out a very fine crop of wheat. . . . They seem well pleased with the country. Brother Stucky's party buried about fourteen children here on Brother H. Hornberger's farm."

A quick check of land records show that this Henry Hornberger farm was exactly the site of what is today's Catlin Mennonite Cemetery. So, we know that the Swiss children are in this cemetery, which is located 3 miles north, 1 west, and ½ north from the northwest corner of Peabody. After 138 years, they have been found.

A SMCHA task force has researched names, then designed and received bids for a memorial stone to be placed in the Catlin cemetery. Now is the time to solicit funds for the stone. We would ask that you participate in remembering these children by contributing to a fund for the stone. The cost comes to \$2,170.00 for a stone 4' 6" long and 2' 6" high.

What makes the story more complex is to identify exactly who these children are. According to genealogist James W. Krehbiel, author of the book, [Swiss Russian Mennonite Families Before 1874](#), as many as 17 possible children have been identified, with some "Probably buried at Peabody" and some "Possibly buried at Peabody." Some of these names have exact death dates; some have "September 1874"; some are simply identified as having died in "1874." It is also known that some children on the journey were buried in a cemetery north of Halstead. So, in order to properly memorialize the children at Catlin, the wording on the stone was chosen to read, *"Those who are buried here are among the following"* along with the list of all 17 names.

Some families have passed down tearful stories of the children who died at Peabody. Is your family one of those? Since their graves have been unmarked, it is time to memorialize the children. The goal of SMCHA is to place the stone as soon as weather permits in Spring 2012, and to have a dedication of the memorial in late August or early September. Now is the time for you to participate and contribute to this project. Funds collected in excess of the cost will be directed toward the ongoing Hopefield cemetery maintenance and toward the Catlin cemetery.

Thank you for your consideration, and support of Swiss Mennonite heritage. The children's names are listed below on the rough design for the stone:

In memory of the Swiss Volhynian Mennonite children
who died at Peabody on the journey from Russia to Kansas in 1874
and were buried here in September 1874.

Those who are buried here are among the following:

JOHANN ALBRECHT
Dec 9, 1872--Sept. 13 1874
TOBIAS DIRKS
Nov. 18, 1872--Sept. 1874
FRENI FLICKINGER
Jan. 24, 1872--Sept. 1874
KATHARINA GERING
Aug. 7, 1871--1874
PETER GERING
June 21, 1873--Sept. 1874
PETER P. KAUFMAN
Feb. 24, 1871--Sept. 15, 1874

ANNA KREHBIEL
Nov. 15, 1871--Sept. 10, 1874
ELISABETH KREHBIEL
Mar. 2, 1872--1874
ELISABETH SCHRAG
July 25, 1873--1874
KATHARINA SCHRAG
Oct. 16, 1872--Sept. 15, 1874
ANDREAS STRAUSS
Jan. 28, 1872--1874

FRENI STUCKY
Oct. 16, 1873--Sept. 9, 1874
ANNA VORAN
July 18, 1871--1874
JACOB VORAN
Oct. 29, 1873--1874
MARIA WALTNER
Aug. 1, 1872--1874
FRANCES WEDEL
Oct. 29, 1869--Sept. 25, 1874
SALAMON WEDEL
Mar. 10, 1872--Sept. 25, 1874

Erected by the Swiss Mennonite Cultural and Historical Association, 2012

Kathy Goering
1906 Carnation Vlg
Moundridge KS 67107

“In Their Footsteps Tour” Possibility

We are a unique people! How many people can say that their ancestors moved all around Europe, Asia and finally to the United States to avoid religious persecution? How many people have ancestors who were city dwellers who became farmers to be more inconspicuous? Ancestors who were invited into countries because they were hard workers, good farmers and honest upright people? Just having the treasure of knowing who your ancestors were for many previous generations is significant. How boring would life be if one could not play the ‘Mennonite game’? We have what many people do not -- deep strong roots. We know who were our grandparents, our great grandparents and generations beyond whereas many people when questioned about ancestry illicit a blank look and an “I don’t know” response. Our ancestors passed on to us a set of values and core beliefs that have focused our lives over the years.

With this in mind, SMCHA is considering sponsoring a tour/trip to trace the steps of our Schweitzer ancestors. Whether it happens or not will depend on the response of Swiss Volhynian constituency, likely to take place in summer 2013. Gary Waltner, SMCHA banquet speaker last fall and historian from Wierhoff in Germany, has indicated an interest in helping to lead such a tour, but he is not available until 2013. Gary who has roots in Freeman South Dakota has lived most of his life in Germany and would be a most capable leader.

Gary wrote that a possible trip might be about 12 - 14 days and include a stop in Lemberg, Galizien (present day Ukraine), a stop at the former Bruderhof where the Amish attempted to join the Hutterites in 1793, and a drive to the territory of Volhynia which is partly in the Ukraine and in Russia today. Time permitting, a stop in the Palatinate might be a possibility. Due to considerations including bus size, Gary says the tour would need to be held to about 35 people. Thus if you have an interest, please let us know. —LaVern Stucky, president

Online at:
www.swissmennonite.org

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Schweitzer Language Project Update

In May Dr. Michael Putnam from Pennsylvania State University Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures, was in the area interviewing about a dozen Schweitzer-speaking members of the community. In ‘one on one’ speaking situations such as a conversation between Vi Graber and Bess Huxman in Pretty Prairie, Dr. Putnam got a feel for the language and how it is constructed and used. In other interviews, participants would speak or translate phrases and words in an effort to give Dr. Putnam an understanding of the structure of language, how it is syntaxed, verb conjugation, etc. A special ‘Only Schweitzer Spoken Here’ meeting on Friday, May 13 more fully immersed Dr. Putnam in the Swiss dialect.

Thank you to those who agreed to be interviewed. From Newton: Vic Goering, Edythe Entz, Jake Goering, John O. Schrag; From Moundridge: Howard and Neva Kaufman, Roland Kaufman, Nadine Wedel, Maynard Krehbiel, Virgil Kaufman, Martin H. Goering, Verna Goering. From Pretty Prairie: Vi Graber, Bess Huxman, Reed Graber, Clemon Kaufman. Dr. Putnam has an interest in understanding and preserving the language and intends to someday publish a book relating to his efforts. Helen Nachtigal and Toby Goering coordinated the events locally.
-LaVern Stucky

PROXY

I hereby appoint _____ (fill in name of a SMCHA member here) or a member of the SMCHA Executive Committee to be my proxy at the annual meeting of SMCHA at First Mennonite Church of Christian, Moundridge, Kansas, on Sunday, March 11, 2012, 2:30 p.m. to vote upon any matter coming before the meeting or any continuance or adjournment of the meeting. The person named above is granted full power to substitute any member of the Executive Committee of SMCHA or someone appointed by them to act as my proxy as provided herein.

Date: _____ Signed: _____

Printed Name: _____