



# Schweitzer Salt

Swiss Mennonite Cultural and Historical Association

September 2012

**Rich Preheim, speaker at SMCHA Fall Banquet**

**Thursday, October 18, 2012, 6:00 at Bethel College Mennonite Church**

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### SMCHA Mission:

- \* 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 Hoffnungs-feld Cemetery and Swiss Mennonite Marker and Monument.

"Three Kingdoms: Origins of the Schweitzer Missionary Impulse" is the title of the speech by Rich Preheim, freelance journalist and historian. Rich was most recently director of the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee. Many in this area remember Rich in editorial roles at *The Mennonite* and



*Mennonite Weekly Review*. Currently he is writing a history of Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference.

Rich will be sharing about the first Schweitzer missionaries whose work started in early 1900's. Those who served in China included Jonathan Schrag, Henry and Maria Miller Brown, Ed. G. and Hazel Dester Kaufman, and Sam and Pauline Miller Goering. The photo at right is of the first "Bible woman" or evangelist in the village of Kai Chow. In early days Christians closely followed the lives and news of the missionaries in China and India. Rich will remind us of the work of Schweitzers of the General Conference in ministering overseas.



Mrs. Chia La Sao, first and oldest Bible woman. Location: Kai Chow

Music by a Voran family ensemble led by Marles Preheim, update by Brian Stucky about the Monument dedicated at the Catlin Cemetery near Peabody in memory of the Schweitzer children who died there in 1874, Schweitzer songs, and history of the Bethel College Mennonite Church will be included in the program.

Dinner will be served by members of the Bethel College Mennonite Church at 6pm at the cost of \$15 each. The Banquet is open to members and non-members. Join the work of SMCHA by becoming a member for \$15/year or \$100 for ten years. Call reservations to Alice Suderman at 316-283-3815 or email Kathy Goering at [kjgo@mtelco.net](mailto:kjgo@mtelco.net) before Friday, October 12.

### **Swiss Mennonite Cultural and Historical Association Awards Scholarship**

Caley Ortman has been chosen to receive the 2012 SMCHA Scholarship. He was awarded \$250 toward his part-time studies at AMBS—Great Plains. He is a 2008 Bethel College graduate and in addition to his employment at Prairie View, he has a quarter time position as youth leader at Faith Mennonite Church in Newton, Kansas.

### **Swiss Volhynian Heritage Tour 2013**

Registrations are coming in for the July 22-August 6 2013 trip to walk in the footsteps of our ancestors in Europe and Ukraine. Gary Waltner who lives in the Weierhof in Germany will lead the trip to visit villages and historical sites in the most inclusive tour possible, including Montbeliard, Emmental, Zurich, Kiev, and the settlements of the Swiss Germans in Volhynia. Several other sites are still being considered. A downpayment of \$500 reserves your spot on the bus planned to hold about 30. A second payment of \$2500 will be due February 1, and the last payment by April 1. We are working hard to keep the total

## Ukraine Trip, continued

fee around \$5000 per person. A full refund will be given for cancellation prior to February 1, 2013. A 75% refund will be given for cancellations between February 1 and April 1. After April 1, 2013, no refunds will be given. The reservation form is available by contacting Helen Nachtigal at 316-283-8077. Reservations will be accepted until our quota is filled. David Rhodes from Reflection Travel will make the travel arrangements from Wichita and can assist others who may want to fly out of different cities.

Travelers have a year to more specifically explore your own family story. Several books that present the riveting European history of the Swiss Mennonites are Martin H. Schrag's The European History of the Swiss Mennonites from Volhynia and Banished for Faith by Emil J. Waltner. Reading these and family genealogy books and other historical materials will get you excited about the possibility of actually seeing some of the territories in which our ancestors lived. What a great opportunity. Apply for your passport and get your name on the list.

Another resource is a "Study Guide of the Swiss Mennonites who came to Kansas in 1874," written in 1974 by William Juhnke. Many of the Swiss Mennonites who settled in Freeman, South Dakota will have this same background. See portions below.

### Schweitzers -Where did our ancestors come from?

"The little country of Switzerland in the heart of Europe was the ancestral homeland of our forefathers. The journey of the Swiss flows through the Emmental Valley. It is in this valley and in the highlands that border it that such names as Graber, Krehbiel, Goering, Stucky, Schrag, and others first come to our attention.

Forced out of their ancient homeland due to religious persecution, our Swiss forefathers went to the Palatinate of South Germany while others went into French Alsace and to the area around Montbeliard. From these regions, after about a century, they moved to Galicia and Volhynia in Polish regions in Austria and Russia respectively. A few temporarily joined the Hutterites on the Desna River deeper in Russia. From Kotosufka, Sahorez, Waldheim, and Horodisch, among the last settlements they made in Russia, they came to America in 1874.

In the beautiful valley of the Emme River lived the ancestors of many of our Mennonite families of today—the Bachmanns, the Krehbiels, Lugenbills, Grabers, Rupps, Zergers and many other familiar Mennonite names. From Zazawil came the Krehbiels (Grayenbuehl), from Lutzel-fluh and Hetiswil (Huttwil) came Fluckigers (Flickner or Fliginger). The Grabers came from Huttwil and Kirchdorf. The Kaufman family from Grindelwald, and the Stuckys from Kirchdorf, Diesbach, and Diemtigen. Many familiar names of the Mennonites can still be found there today." (Waltner, Banished for Faith, p. 138)

At first our people left valley farms and moved into the hills. The stiffening of the rules and persecution reached its peak in 1671. Several hundred left Switzerland and migrated to Alsace, to the Palatinate, and some went to the Duchy of Wurttemberg of which Montbeliard was the center.

Jost Krehbiels were among the first to go to the Palatinate (700 refugees). Zergers and Millers and certain Schrags were among those who came to the Pfalz of South Germany. Jacob Kaufman fled to Alsace; his son Peter is at the base of our known Kaufman family tree records. Gerigs (Gering, Goering, Gehring), Grabers, Stuckys, Flickingers, Lichtis, and others bypassed Switzerland and journeyed to Montbeliard, invited by Prince Leopold-Eberhard. Gerings are traced to Moses Gering, baptized in 1766. Grabers are traced to Petter Graber; there are many Grabers in the Montbeliard community today. Stuckys stem from Christ Stucky of Grandvillars, a village near Belfort, France. The Flueckiger (Flickinger) name is first seen in 1759 in the Emmental. Johann Lichti proceeded with others to Poland after 1790. There is little doubt that the Grabers, Kaufmans and others still living in France today in the Montbeliard-Belfort area are our distant relatives..." Volhynia later became the melting pot of many of these families and other Mennonites. 18,000 Mennonites would leave Russia for America.

*A copy of additional excerpts from this document can be requested from Kathy Goering at [kjgo@mtelco.net](mailto:kjgo@mtelco.net).*

## Can You Speak Schweitzer?

To paraphrase Shakespeare—to be or not to be—the question is have you actually crossed the Turkey Creek. Or, what makes you the being you are. Language determines or defines a big portion of our identity. If you talk to me, do I know you by your tone, your use of words, your bodily expression? All languages, included Schweitzer, are a combination of four languages: baby talk, grade school talk, high school talk, and adult talk. Has the Schweitzer dialect disappeared? Are you proud of your Schweitzer dialect? Schweitzer does not go to church, rather it is a language used in everyday conversation. It surfaces in critical situations, such as when a machine breaks down, a recipe is ruined in the kitchen, or a glass is spilled or broken at the table. Comical situations will cause it to emerge. It is comfort language that can be mixed with English. It is all home-learned and a part of one's personality. Every generation has to pass it on to the next; it is the soul of a generation.

In years to come, when your grandchildren go over family histories, will they find *bierogge* in them? Will they remember when Grandma said, “Sprinkle a little *salz* on this?” How do we get across the Creek?

Across the Turkey Creek, differences in language can be encountered. Observable differences exist in how we talk, how we listen, how we use words in conversation. In conversation, the Schweitzer comes across even if one speaks in English. Ask yourself if there is any of the syntax of Schweitzer left? For example, do you say, “I wonder myself what she is thinking?” Or, have you heard someone say, “I want supper to eat?” Are there any Schweitzer words or sayings left? Do you remember when Grandpa talked about a neighbor who was a real *schinder*? Or do you know of a relative who definitely was *wunderlich*? *Ganz gewiss*, will you know where you came from? Some of these colorful words simply defy good translations. Do your children and grandchildren hear *heidel heidel* as you circle your hand in their hair? Do you play any games typical of the Schweitzer culture, such as the homemade board game of *miel zu*?

We don't want to lose the Schweitzer completely. Are you keeping the language alive and growing? Is the plant nurtured? Do you verify Shakespeare's “to be or not to be”? How comfortable are you with Schweitzer salt? Don't let the Turkey Creek dry up.

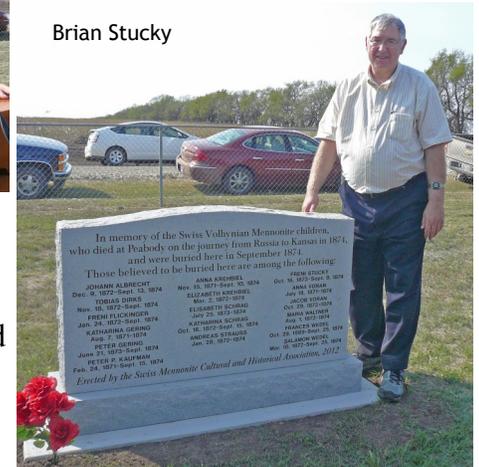
—John O. Schrag

## Dedication of Kansas Pioneer Children's Graves at Catlin on Sunday, September 23

The children who died in Kansas when our ancestors journeyed from Russia to the Moundridge area in 1874 are finally memorialized in stone. This fascinating immigrant story was shared at the dedication service at the Catlin Cemetery on Sunday, September 23 by Jim Juhnke. Don Stutzman, cemetery sexton, gave a welcome. John Sharp, local historian, spoke of the background history of



Alan Stucky



Brian Stucky

Catlin. Pastor Alan Stucky prayed the dedication prayer. Brian Stucky thanked the many contributors.



Dedication Crowd

*Recently when researching Wedel genealogy, I found a reference to two Wedel children who died at Peabody, and I remembered seeing those names on the Catlin stone pictured in the last Schweitzer Salt. Then I found a Schrag, a Gering, and a Krehbiel who also died there in 1874. Few in our Wedel family realized that their ancestors had suffered such a hardship. One cannot imagine the pain that these courageous pioneers endured. No doubt many families don't realize that one of their relatives is named on this memorial stone. The story touches us most deeply when we connect personally. We must thank the researchers (Brian Stucky, Jim Juhnke, Arnold Wedel, Vic Goering) for their diligence in following this amazing pioneer story. —Kathy Goering*

ATTENTION Schweitzer cooks and all of you who like to eat Schweitzer food! We want suggestions for the ethnic foods you want to see included in our new cookbook. Many of our younger generation want these recipes handed down from generation to generation. Send your list (not recipes yet) to [djwedel@embarqmail.com](mailto:djwedel@embarqmail.com) or Jeanette Wedel, P.O. Box 457, Hesston KS 67062. We are also planning to make a “how to” DVD to accompany the cookbook. This is so exciting, so send your suggestions SOON.

Swiss Mennonite Cultural and Historical Association

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Only Schweitzer Spoken Here Program was held on Friday, Aug 31, at 2pm at Pine Village Wellness Center. The program consisted of: Chairman Norvin Schrag; poem and excerpts played from J.O. Schrag's CD "Unsere Leit" by Alice Suderman; two short stories of childhood by Verlene Kaufman, and memories of growing up by Stan Saner. Refreshments were served.

Fall Fest program at Bethel College—11:00 on Saturday, October 13. Clemon Kaufman and Bessie Huxman are making the plans. Come enjoy the Schweitzer program.

Family Genealogy Books

So much historical data found in family genealogy books could be a part of the archival history of Mennonites. Before these books get lost, be sure that a copy is in the Mennonite Library and Archives for others to explore and trace their own heritage. We're getting a list at MLA or stop there to check on yours. Possibly some books could be scanned. Let SMCHA officers know if you would be willing to share a family genealogy book that you own.

Sunday, March 10, 2013 Annual Meeting scheduled at First Mennonite Church, McPherson, Kansas.

## Grandmother's Quilts are Works of Art

In 1874 when she was two years old, Anna Preheim Graber, daughter of Peter and Barbara Strausz Preheim, left with her parents from Horodisch, a Mennonite colony in Volhynia, Russia. They sailed on the S.S. Chester arriving in New York on 24 August. They made their way by rail to Yankton in Dakota Territory and eventually settled on a homestead claim in Turner County in the fertile Turkey Ridge Valley. There they experienced many of the hardships of early pioneer life including grasshoppers which brought about ruin to crops, prairie fires and severe blizzards. With hard work they were able to provide for their family and turned their land into one of the most productive farms in the county.

In 1891, Anna Preheim married Jacob G. Graber. Later they retired in a small farm house where most of her quilts were made - no running water or bathroom facilities. Grandchildren remember Grandma Anna piecing those small pieces of often left-over fabric scraps by hand or with her treadle sewing machine—pieced accurately with Anna's precision color matches; she left the quilting to her daughters. See pictures of her many quilts at <http://www.ortmanmarchand.com/index.html>.

Thanks to funding from the South Dakota Arts Council, the South Dakota State Legislature and the National Endowment for the Arts, Anna Preheim Graber's lifetime of quilts were photographed and videotaped. In 1992, over twenty of these quilts became part of a traveling exhibit throughout South Dakota. Her work hung in art galleries - museums - and at Governor's Arts Awards in the State Capitol building in Pierre. Slides and a video are now at the Freeman Historical Museum, South Dakota.

—Information from Great Grandson David Ortman, Seattle WA, who said, "I believe that it is grandmothers who often are the glue that holds families together."

