



Schweitzer Salt

Swiss Mennonite Cultural and Historical Association

June 2014

Jason Holcomb Shares Farming Interviews on Sunday, July 6, 2014

Jason Holcomb has come to Kansas for many years from his Geography teaching at Morehead State University in Kentucky to help a Kansas farmer with custom harvesting. His Iowa farming background gave him a great appreciation too for the Mennonite farmers he met.

In 2011 Keith Albrecht asked if Jason would interview some of the Schweitzer farmers which he did with the help of transcription by his wife Heather. Jason will be in Moundridge on Sunday, July 6, at 2:30 p.m. at the Wellness Center at Pine Village, sharing about what he has learned from visits with Martin H. Goering, Fern Goering, Maynard and Marlene Krehbiel, Wayne Ensz, Toby Goering, Victor Goering, and Arnold Wedel.



Some experiences shared were memories of farm work and harvesting many

years ago—remember a 7' combine? And shocks? Jason will talk about his own impressions. Also he will reflect on a 1980s article *Generational Drift on Four Variables Among the Swiss-Volhynian Mennonites in Kansas*.

Come hear great harvest stories. No reservations are necessary. Refreshments will be served.



One of our SMCHA Board members, Dr. Kip Wedel, has summarized each of these interviews into a readable booklet to enjoy.

SMCHA wants to encourage sharing family histories. Come listen to Jason and then start writing about all those life stories of your parents, grandparents, and yourself for others to enjoy too.

Central Kansas Bus Tour Report 2

Annual Meeting

Warkentin Farmstead 3

Jesse Graber's new SMCHA Logo

Pioneer Dugouts

Goerings give Corn Planter to Museum 4

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 Hoffnungsfeld Cemetery and Swiss Mennonite Marker and Monument.

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SEEKING CONTRIBUTORS

SMCHA Fall Banquet is planned for Tuesday, November 11, at 6:00 p.m. at Water's Edge Restaurant located in the Wellness Center at the Schowalter Villa, 701 S. Main, Hesston, Kansas (NOTE CHANGES). Jeff Koller will share stories of Mennonite alternative service experiences. Put it on the calendar. We'll be looking for you.

Central Kansas Bus Tour

By Dr. Kip Wedel

A full busload of Mennonite history enthusiasts toured sites of historical importance in Harvey, Marion, and McPherson counties on April 26 in a tour organized by SMCHA.

The tour began and ended at Hopefield Mennonite Church, west of Moundridge. Brian Stucky of Goessel did most of the narrating, much of which he drew from his original research and fieldwork. He said he used written sources where possible, and divining rods to locate some specific sites left unclear by written materials.

Major stops took place at the Catlin Community Cemetery near Peabody to see the memorial stone honoring the immigrant children who died of illness shortly after arriving in Kansas in 1874, and the Peabody Mennonite Centennial Memorial in downtown Peabody. In Florence, the tour stopped briefly at a warehouse which may have housed the so-called “Helpless Poles” that same year. Many of them eventually became Holdeman Mennonites.

In Halstead, Frank Stucky described the Bernard Warkentin mansion on the north end of town near the levee (see story next page). The group also saw here the former site of Halstead Seminary, forerunner of Bethel College and on the way back to Moundridge, the former site of Alta Mill, the John J. “Krickehannes” Schrag home, the boyhood home of Olympian Conrad Nightingale, the



German Translation Quiz

Bitte, hol mir die Sachen von Mittel Gesheft
Übersetz in English

Salz	_____
Suker	_____
Mehl	_____
Hahn fleish	_____
Gurken (saur)	_____
Äpfel 3 pfund	_____
Ruben fünf stick mit Bletter	_____
Butter	_____
Erdberry butter	_____
Milch	_____
Grünebohne zwei kannn	_____
Brot—roggen Brot ein Leib	_____
Schmant	_____
Wassermelon	_____

—Marlene Krehbiel

Valentine Krehbiel home, Liberty Grade School and the Garden

Community Church, formerly a Mennonite church.

Southwest of Moundridge, the bus stopped at the ridge for which the town is named. While viewing downtown Moundridge, Arnold Wedel noted that the Joseph Schrag for whom the “Joseph Schrag Opera Block” was named, later moved to California, where he became fabulously wealthy.

North of Moundridge, the tour passed the Lone Tree

Church and Cemetery, the founding church of the Holdeman branch of the Mennonite family. Then farther north Brian Stucky recounted the story of the town of Empire, and the Fuller Ranch (first white settlement in the area).

At Elyria, a full busload of onlookers appeared to surprise local residents at the town’s sudden popularity. Ben and Jan Stucky brought along a photo of the Elyria hardware store taken on the day in 1968 when its final contents were auctioned off.

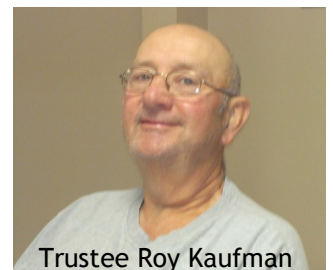
Jim Juhnke recounted the story of Otto Juhnke at the site of Otto’s farm at the intersection of the Elyria Road and the McPherson-Burrton Road. During World War I, Otto was confronted by a gang of McPherson residents unimpressed with his nonresistance. So they burned a cross in his yard and announced plans to hang him. When the torches attracted the attention of a neighbor, and the neighbor recognized some of the men involved, they thought better of their plan and went back to McPherson.

The group enjoyed poppyseed rolls and gorovei provided by LaVern Stucky family at Eden Mennonite Church.



2014 Annual Meeting at First Mennonite, Halstead

At the SMCHA Annual Meeting on Sunday, March 9, 2014, President LaVern Stucky updated members on events of the year, and the proposed budget was approved. LaVern will continue as president, Clemon Kaufman as treasurer, Keith Albrecht as trustee, and Roy Kaufman elected as the new trustee. Four previous recipients of SMCHA scholarships (Alan Stucky, David Roth, Bernie Kaufman, and Jim Ostlund) shared how the scholarships had encouraged them. Each has impacted the church—scholarship funds well spent.



Trustee Roy Kaufman

Original Bernard Warkentin Farmstead

By Frank Stucky

One of the historical treasures that remain from the Schweitzer influx into Central Kansas has been designated a National Historic Landmark by the Congress of the United States. The large Victorian style home at the outskirts of Halstead features a grand wrap-around porch, walnut staircase, imported Italian marble fireplaces, stained glass windows. The original portion of the house built in 1876 later became the kitchen and maids' quarters. The main portion was designed by the same architect who designed our



state capital building in Topeka. The large T-shaped barn was designed to house the finest horses, even the famous Percheron draft horses. The very high tech barn had inter-

nal grain handling equipment powered by a steam engine in the brick pump house south of the barn. A large rope and pulley system transferred power to the elevator leg. The main alleyways of the barn feature brick floors with a basket weave design. A fine carriage house housed four of the finest buggies. Still standing is the ceramic silo with an unusual mansard style roof.

Harley Stucky purchased this original Warkentin farm in the late 1960's with the sole intent of saving it from ruin and preserving its heritage. It had been used as a pig farm and much cleanup was needed.

My wife, Kathy, and I lived on the farm 1994-2007 and worked tirelessly to restore and improve it. When the Army Corps of Engineers was building the flood levee around Halstead, the barn and silo were in danger of being torn down. With support from the Kansas Historical Society and The National Trust for Historic Preservation in Washington, D.C., I attempted to save this national treasure. Senator Bob Dole arranged for me to meet with the head of the Army Corps of Engineers at the Pentagon, and they agreed to move the levee line just enough to save the buildings from bulldozers as well as the destructive power of the floods which we had witnessed there firsthand.

The cast brass plaque at the Mennonite Historical Library and Archives at Bethel College serves as a permanent reminder of the importance of Bernard Warkentin, Turkey Red Wheat, and his original farmstead.



Check out the New SMCHA Logo.

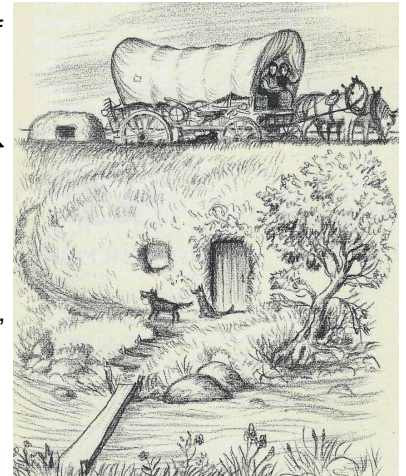
Jesse Graber was raised in Newton, Kansas by his parents Charles and Diana Graber. He spent much of his time drawing and raising watermelons on his grandparents Ransom and Mary Katherine Stucky's farm near Moundridge. A Bethel College 2000 graduate, he married Ruth Harder in 2002, and graduated from the American Academy of Art in Chicago in 2006. Jesse has worked as an illustrator and designer with work appearing in magazines and books. In 2013 he moved to Kansas City where Ruth became the pastor at Rainbow Mennonite Church. See more of his artwork at www.jessegraber.com. Thank you, Jesse, for a beautiful SMCHA Logo.

Pioneer Dugouts

By Alice Suderman

The description my grandmother gave to her son, my Uncle John A. Boese, many years after she experienced living in a dugout for four months, was very brief: "We lived in a dugout just north of the Newton Water Tower on the west bank of Sand Creek." So I searched for more details. Dugouts (1860-1880) sheltered early pioneers from the summer's heat and the cold of winter, temporarily until a house could be built.

Some dugouts were small rooms dug into the lee side of a hill or ravine, maybe similar to the picture in Laura Ingalls Wilder's On the Banks of Plum Creek. My Grandmother's dugout might have been occupied by another family first since they arrived in Newton in January of 1875, too cold a season to be digging a dugout. The location was carefully chosen so that the water of the creek didn't fill the entire creek bed and



even block their leaving. The front wall was made of large blocks of sod cut out of the virgin prairie by the sod-buster plow — two feet square and four to six inches thick — with a door and window built into this wall. The other walls were solid earth, sometimes lined with a sandy cover and white-washed. The ceiling was made by placing long cottonwood or willow branches and twigs across the top. Straw or hay was placed on top of the branches; it was topped off with blocks of sod which allowed grass to continue growing on the roof.

It was home for a time.

**Come see the Mennonite Marker—
hollyhocks are blooming, grasses
are growing, and hen & chicks
plants like it there.**

Online at:
www.swissmennonite.org

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Genealogy Advisor: Betty Graber
Hartzler

**2014 Membership dues \$20/year
or \$100 for 6 years. Schweitzer
Salt is sent only to members.**

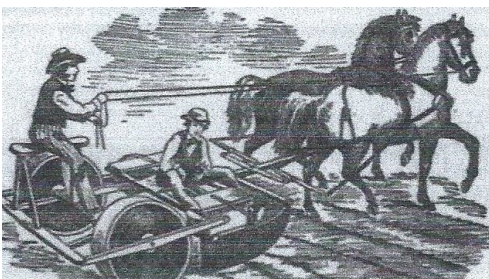
Goerings Give Corn Planter to Moundridge Museum

There I was just settin' in my hayloft restin' place when Leland Goering decided to take down his old barn. He was surprised to see me there and wondered just how I happened to get here. I've been here around 80 years, I suppose, put here after some years of hard work in the field. I'm actually sturdy enough and some parts still shiny, that if they would put some wheels under me, I could still get that corn into the ground — no horses around to pull me though. Actually farmer George W. Brown, my inventor from Galesburg, IL modified a cultivator for a new



Leland and Leona Goering

planting system, making multiple steps into one—in 1851. By 1878 he was manufacturing 8,000 like me. He obtained the patent and started manufacturing and eventually shipped his machines all over the country. At times he almost went broke to keep his business going but eventually he was recognized as the Corn-Planter inventor and



That's a picture of me working!!

he could collect royalties. Leland and Leona found out all about me when they decided to donate me to the Moundridge Agricultural Museum. Robert Stucky, SMCHA liaison to the Moundridge Historical Association, seen here in my comfortable metal seat, even traveled to Illinois to find out more, and he came back bragging that I was among the best — my tongue was all in one strong piece. Do you realize that for a time Kansas produced more corn per acre than any other State? In 1883, Kansas produced 26,581,198 bushels. Then came the Swiss Volhynians and their wheat which changed some of that. I hope lots of people will stop by the Museum to see what a good lookin' planter I am. Others might also bring special historical items to the Museum, like me — I'd love the company.



Robert
Stucky