

MENNONITES OF NIAGARA

Interviewee: Henry Goertz
 Interviewer: A. Marshall
 Language: English
 Topics Covered:

Own Experience In The Early Years

He arrived at St. Johns, Newfoundland, and then went to Windsor by train. He first worked in a factory (piece work) but worked too fast, so he was dismissed. He worked on a farm, in a brick yard, for a street car company, and in a lumber yard. A factory owner gave him a job, and became a very good friend, often lending him money. He went into the chicken (broiler) business. He came to Virgil in 1945. He joined the Niagara Credit Union. Banks provided no satisfaction. He opened up a grocery store in Virgil. He then worked for the Fuller Brush Company in Niagara Township.

During the depression they sent food parcels to Russia and Germany. They sent parcels to Russia to Mr. Goertz's sister, about \$1000 worth. They help through MCC, which has developed into a very big business.

He believes in taking up arms against the enemy, in order to protect his family.

He believes Mr. Falk of Niagara-on-the-Lake (who was a missionary for many years) to be a leader.

Arrival and Integration of Newcomers

Mr. Goertz encouraged some of his wife's relatives to leave Germany, come to Virgil. Goertzs moved into a new larger home and gave the older, smaller home to the immigrants. He helped to get them jobs, because he had the store, he had good connections.

Kind and Degree of Organization Today

Organizations have changed greatly in the last 5 years. They used to be so poor. He believes that there is more participation in Mennonite organizations today than in the past. Mennonite Brethren are more strict than are the United Mennonite. Differences are not large enough to effect Mennonites working together. In MCC, the Mennonites all work together.

Ethnic Persistence

Ethnic ties are not as important today as in the past. Young people do not have a strong sense of Mennonite identity, in fact, they wanted to change the name "Mennonite". Prosperity has has a lot to do with it. The sense of community will change in the future.

Individual's Background

Born: Russia, 1899

Worked as a clerk in a store. His father was a farmer. Mr. Goertz opposed Communism and therefore he felt it necessary to come to Canada. When Mr. Goertz could speak English and was able to communicate well, he felt at home in Canada.