

RUSSIAN-MENNONITE IMMIGRANTS
of the 1920's (Ontario)

Interview #15: Tape # 1, sides A and B (79 minutes)

Interviewee: POETKER, Henry, born in 1904.

Interviewer: Henry Paetkau

Date: Wednesday, June 23, 1976.

Place: 60 Ramblewood Way, Kitchener, Ont.

Language: Low German

SUBJECT INDEX (in minutes)

Side A

- 00-01 Introduction
- 01-10 Biographical information
 - Revolution: -flight from the bandits
- 10-15 Education
- 15-19 After the Revolution: -moving from place to place
- 19-21 Marriage: anecdote
- 21-23 Comments on emigration
- 23-29 Relations with Russian peasants
- 29-39 Emigration: -reasons
 - process
 - the trip
- 39-44 Arrival in Canada: -on the farm in Vineland
 - working the first years
- 44-48 Church attendance: -in Vineland
 - attitude toward Russian immigrants
- 48-56 First years, cont.: -at Vineland
 - problems with the language
- 56-60 New Hamburg: -the church of immigrants (with MB's)

End of side A

Side B

- 00-09 Church life: -J.H. Janzen
 - the small congregation at New Hamburg
- 09-11 Relationship with MB's: anecdote from Russia
- 11-15 Reiseschuld
- 15-19 Interviewer's comments and evaluation

End of side B

RUSSIAN-MENNONITE IMMIGRANTS
of the 1920's (Ontario)

POETKER, Henry

60 Ramblewood Way, Kitchener, Ont.

Tape #1, sides A and B

Recorded on June 23, 1976 in Low German

Biographical sketch:

- born on an estate in Gnadendeld in 1904
- forced to give it up and flee during the Revolution
- continued to move from town to town afterwards as refugees
- father received 3 or 5 permanent stripes on his back from beatings by the Bolsheviks
- believing there to be no future in Russia they emigrated in 1924
- moved to Vineland where they worked the first two summers
- then moved to New Hamburg to farm on their own, a move he still questions because of the hardships they experienced
- language difficulties made things harder
- were discriminated against in Russia because they were German, he says, and in Canada because they were Russians
- enjoyed the close fellowship of the small congregation in New Hamburg where they worshiped with the MB's
- had a bad experience with Reiseschuld repayment