

MENNONITES OF NIAGARA

Interviewee: Mr. A.P. Regier
 Interviewer: A. Marshall
 Language: English
 Topics Covered:

Pioneers

The Pennsylvania Dutch Mennonites came to Canada (Vineland) about 200 years ago because they wanted to live under the British system. They were farmers. Early settlers had a strong sense of identity with other Mennonites.

Own Experience In The Early Years

Mr. Regier came to the Niagara Peninsula in 1943 with his wife and eight children. He had friends and relatives here. He worked for a farmer then for the Co-op. He founded the Niagara Credit Union. They worship at the Niagara U.M. Church. He had assistance in finding a place to live, and had to pay rent - \$15 a month. They sent money to Russia to help support relatives. They organized their own cooperative health insurance plan in Alberta and Manitoba and then the Mennonite Health Insurance Association in the Niagara Peninsula, Mr. Regier being one of the founders. The Mennonite Mutual Burial Society began about 25 years ago and collects \$7 a year from every Mennonite, to cover funeral expenses. The leaders were the Ministers and the Mennonite community supported them.

Arrival and Integration of Newcomers

Mr. Regier encouraged and assisted many people in coming to the Niagara Peninsula and helped find them a place to live. Newcomers accepted the leadership structure.

Kind and Degree of Organization Today

Cooperative Societies have just been developed recently. There is more participation in Mennonite organizations today than in the past. There are no differences among leaders which make cooperation difficult. It is no longer difficult for leaders to win support for cooperative efforts.

Ethnic Persistence

Many young people do not have a strong sense of Mennonite identity. Prosperity may have influenced this. The traditional language is being lost. They still have Pioneer Days in Jordan.

Individual's Background

Born: Russia, 1895

His father was a farmer. Mr. Regier worked in a factory. The program of the communist party convinced him of the need to leave Russia.