

**THE CONTROL OF SOCIAL SPACE IN MENNONITE
HOUSEBARNS OF MANITOBA, 1874-1940**

by

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Abstract

Mennonite migrants coming to southern Manitoba from south Russia in the 1870s and afterwards brought with them a unique settlement pattern and architectural heritage that included open prairie street villages and the construction of housebarns. Mennonite households were treated in this study as a form of ethnic architecture encompassing social and economic concepts of individual and public values. The structural and habitation histories of twenty-six dwellings were documented and analyzed. Oral interviews with former inhabitants were conducted to provide historical, social and personal context.

This research was informed by Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice and the concept of habitus, a set of durable dispositions carried by an individual throughout their lifetime. Habitus is structured by daily practice, including the activities and relationships found in household settings. Mennonite households in this study were examined to determine the degree to which they were products and producers of habitus, and how this changed over time. Dwellings were also examined as products of status display strategies, and exteriors and orientations of houses were compared to previous studies of Mennonite architecture.

Mennonite habitus was structured according to strict age and gender categories that were physically symbolized in furnishings, decoration, and activity areas found in Mennonite dwellings. Over time, as many villages dissolved and an ethic of individualism was incorporated into Mennonite society, these categories weakened. It was determined that variations of the Flurkuechenhaus design concept used by Mennonites were related to financial and social status differences within an orthopraxic village setting. When villages dissolved due to the relatively open nature of land acquisition in Manitoba, Mennonite homes reflected and inculcated the increasing independence and individuality of the household economic unit. In the villages that remained, extant

housebarns were modified in both interior and exterior design to accommodate changing concepts of family, economy, and status. Over time these structures were transformed to accommodate both ethnic Mennonite and mainstream Canadian stylistic elements and spatial use.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Mennonites, named after an early leader, Menno Simons, are part of a Christian religious movement known as Anabaptism that originated in 16th century Europe. Persecution of Mennonites in Northern Europe combined with economic opportunity in other countries led to the migration of Mennonite groups and the establishment of settlements in West Prussia/Poland, Ukraine, and the Americas, including Reserves in southern Manitoba in the 1870s. During these sojourns Mennonite groups were transformed into ethnic enclaves, with their own sets of knowledge and habits. The use of household space became standardized and ethnically identifiable as Mennonite. Homes and village layouts were used to structure social values, which encapsulated tensions between the economic household unit and the rigorous demands of the community. House forms and use were manipulated in Manitoba in such a way as to restructure these values in response to new kinds of social relationships found in the context of emerging large-scale capitalist developments. Architectural changes were not a passive reaction to acculturation, but were active components in the structuring of a new worldview.

When present day Mennonites discuss the domestic architecture of their recent past (the *housebarn*) they often refer to it as normative (“typical” or “all the same”) and environmentally practical.

In reality there was no “typical” Mennonite house. Rather there were a number of choices for building in the ethnic Mennonite manner that encompassed common design themes. This reflected a variety of family structures and life cycles, as well as economic disparity in the village. Large social differentiation in the village setting was discouraged due to an ethnic *habitus* that over centuries encompassed a perceived Christian ideal of equality.

While it is true that Mennonite housebarns were extremely practical in Manitoban

winter environments, there are numerous other practical building styles in the same environment that are vastly different from the Mennonite housebarn. Different styles do not vary merely according to environment or economy, but are also deeply tied to ethnic affiliation. What is considered functional is always so only within a worldview. While the Mennonite housebarn was functional in the West Prussian marshlands, the Russian steppes, and the Canadian prairies, it was also used by its inhabitants and the larger community as a method of asserting cultural identity and a system of social relationships. The household is a place where residential groups grow, change, work and die, and as such it is a setting for daily practice, within which ideological schemes are played out and constantly re-tested.

In each region where the Mennonites settled after the Netherlands (West Prussia, Russia, North America, Latin America), there was constant interaction with other local populations, and varying degrees of adoption of their customs and laws. Although the reasons for migration out of these regions was complex, one of the driving forces was always the perceived threat to Mennonite religion, which included the often rigid transmission of a lifestyle. The continued use of forms of the Mennonite housebarn was always part of an attempt to replicate this lifestyle, one that stressed religion, social control, and labour on the “independent farm”.

How household architecture may work to perpetuate a worldview is addressed successfully by Pierre Bourdieu. Using his Theory of Practice, I will examine how the conformist architecture of early Mennonite settlers in Manitoba was used to inculcate and manipulate particular social orders and structured perceptions of the world.

Central to Bourdieu’s work is the concept of *habitus*. *Habitus* is a set of dispositions that generate common practices and perceptions of reality, and is the result of a long process of inculcation beginning in childhood. Inhabited space in vernacular architecture is a prime location for the perception of cultural schemes used to structure social reality. Because *habitus* is created by structures characteristic of a type of social and economic

existence, and is shared by individuals living in similar conditions, it therefore also changes as these conditions change. I investigate how modifications to Mennonite household architecture, a structuring device, occurred in relation to changes in the socioeconomic environment and in the structuring of *habitus*. These modifications were not passive reflections of cultural change, but active structuring elements of this change.

A second important concept for this study is “orthopraxis” as it relates to Mennonite ideology and to *habitus*. The term orthopraxis means “correct practice” and is related and often opposed to orthodoxy (correct belief). Historically, Mennonites have tended to invest more authority in aspects of lifestyle rather than a particular belief system imposed by a spiritual elite. While *habitus* encompasses the variety of dispositions engendered by a complex social upbringing, Mennonite orthopraxis involves the more rigid, outward representation of the moral system. A common problem with studying any social group, and Mennonites in particular, is the disparity and connection between what should be done according to the local moral code, and what is actually done. The two concepts of *habitus* and orthopraxis are employed to actively deal with this disparity in Mennonite social life. This tension remained largely unacknowledged by Mennonites until the 20th century precisely because their ideology was orthopraxic in nature, attempting to make daily life and Christian ideal one and the same. In the total Christian life of the Mennonite village (relying on strict conformity) variety and eccentricity were disparaged, at the same time that real disparity existed and was cloaked through various material methods. I would suggest that social differences in the villages were mediated by the seeming conformity of architecture, while local inhabitants knew very well what certain subtle styles, building types, and decorations meant in terms of social differentiation.

There are two specific objectives of this research:

- 1) to investigate the role of early Mennonite household architecture (1874-1940) in structuring daily practice and community values.
- 2) to investigate the role of domestic architecture as a device in cultural change.

The methods I have chosen to achieve these objectives include detailed on-site architectural documentation, archival and historical research, and oral interviews with former inhabitants. Three Mennonite villages in southern Manitoba have been chosen for intensive study, including Neuberghal, Reinland, and Chortitz. In terms of structural analysis, there is an emphasis on floorplan, room function, decoration, building techniques, yard layout, and comparison with other village houses. Oral interviews stress the household relations and activities of residents, and their uses and perceptions of various rooms. Utilizing these two methods of research allows for an understanding of the change in perceptions of social relations as expressed through architectural change.

Chapter 2

Practice Theory and Household Architecture

Pierre Bourdieu's application of Practice Theory to household structures (1977, 1990) is directly relevant to the study of historic households from an archaeological perspective. Bourdieu's central thesis collapses the dichotomy between subjective versus objective theorization in the social sciences when referring to human motivations in a cultural context. He replaces this recurrent dichotomous structure with the theory of practice and the concept of *habitus*. Both highlight the importance of material culture in structuring community and individual values while being structured by them.

In this study Bourdieu's views on the house as a cultural structuring device are examined in accordance with practice theory. This is supplemented by examples of archaeological attempts at using practice theory to explain the maintenance and change of cultural values through the study of architecture. Two issues are addressed that affect the use of practice theory in such studies: the relation of *habitus* to cultural change, and; the effect of literacy and literature on the processes of inculcation found in traditional domestic architecture.

The concept of *orthopraxis* (correct practice), as opposed to *orthodoxy* (correct belief), is examined as a central aspect of Mennonite ethnicity. The development of orthopraxis and its relationship to the structuring of *habitus* is valuable in understanding historical Mennonite social values and the primacy of the household in structuring these values.

Finally, the operationalization of practice theory in the present study of Mennonite households is discussed. Gender, age and ethnicity are examined as social organizing principles that can be investigated through architectural features and their use by inhabitants. Furthermore, the changes in these principles, and the consequences for social life, can be examined by studying the shifts in architectural use over generations.

Defining the Architecture of the Household

The terms “household”, “domestic” and “vernacular” are used in architectural studies to refer to a rough idea of the common home. Each has its own problems of definition.

“Household” refers as much to the inhabitants of a home as to the structure itself, and there is no universal definition of what constitutes the household as a social unit. Hammel (1984) notes how scholarly definitions of the social unit are either too abstract to be applicable to real social structures, or too tainted by European folk concepts of household to be of use in cross-cultural studies. There has been some confusion as to the relationship between family and household, with the common distinction being that household refers to “geographical propinquity or common residence” while family is more broadly defined as kinship (Yanagisako 1979:162). Hendon (1996:47) refers to the household as a “task-oriented, co-resident, and symbolically meaningful social group”. It is sometimes a “family”, of which there is no universal definition, but often includes unrelated persons. Moreover, definitions of the household as a group should not suggest a collection of individuals that are subordinate to the group. “The domestic group consists of social actors differentiated by age, gender, role, and power whose agendas and interests do not always coincide” (Hendon, 1996:46). The task for the archaeologist is to link this social household with the architectural household.

“Domestic architecture” as a term tends to separate the home from public or official life, which is certainly not a feasible position. Although it can be the locus of “privacy”, the domestic house nevertheless remains enmeshed in public (political) activity, discourse, and economics. At the same time, it does not “merely react passively to changes imposed from the outside” (Hendon, 1996:47).

“Vernacular architecture” refers to architectural style more than the home’s inhabitants, and is defined as architecture that is designed and constructed by and for its inhabitants. It is usually part of a cultural tradition of folk building.

Despite these problematic definitions, all three labels focus on the home as a unit of architecture *and* interaction where people normally carry out those functions key to human existence, in an atmosphere of relative safety and predictability. It is my purpose here not to create a universal definition of the household, but to point out what makes the household a unique feature, and this is its sense of stability, predictability, and comprehensibility for the inhabitants. It is within this household setting that reiterations of basic social divisions and personal identities take place. These occur as a series of interactions. The architecture in turn frames these activities, and it is this that constitutes the home.

In studying households it is important to emphasize the activities of inhabitants and the culturally constructed meanings of these activities (Hendon, 1996:46; Rapoport, 1990). Without this emphasis, a discussion of domestic architecture becomes little more than a polemic on style utilizing a positivistic notion of ethnicity (Upton, 1996), or as an exercise in structural analysis that remains ahistorical (Glassie, 1975).

Hammel's (1984) detailed statistical and demographic analysis of household change in different cultures indicates that "cultural prescriptions" or "rules" have a greater effect on household changes than population growth rates or randomness. Thus architectural changes over time would also reflect these cultural "rules", or dispositions, as much as they would economic or demographic shifts.

Bourdieu and the Theory of Practice

This study is informed theoretically by the work of Pierre Bourdieu, specifically his construction of a "theory of practice" based on work among the Kabyle of Algeria (1977, 1979, 1990). His basic claim is that humans do not act according to rules that are set either by themselves or by a static and imposed worldview. Rather, humans act according to *habitus*, a set of dispositions that generate practices and perceptions, created by daily experience within an historical context.

According to Bourdieu (1977:72), these dispositions are:

- 1) durable, existing throughout a person's life;
- 2) transposable, generating practices in diverse fields of activity;
- 3) structured structures, incorporating objective social conditions during inculcation;
- 4) structuring structures, through their ability to generate practices adjusted to specific situations.

What people do is determined neither by their instantaneous reactions to stimuli in a given situation nor by a cultural code or set of rules that are blindly followed. Instead, people adjust to a given situation by using culturally regulated ideas of how to proceed. Events or trends in human history are not the product of rational, self-interested planning or mechanical reactions on the part of individuals. The trends are instead a product of individual decisions based on a shared cultural structuring of reality, in relation to changing material and social circumstances.

Habitus is ultimately a product of individual experience. This experience should not, however, be considered as distinct events that happen to the individual, but as culturally mediated situations. These situations always occur in relation to cultural understandings inculcated through relations with others in the same society or class. Thus, by growing up in a community that shares a common domestic architectural tradition, similar situations encountered daily and experienced through practice in the home will produce a similar *habitus* in all of the inhabitants.

Bourdieu's work is a reaction against Cartesian dualism, in which body and mind, nature and self, science and culture, are seen as opposite essences. Tied to this dualism is the theoretical duality of objectivism vs. subjectivism in which the relation of individual to society is consistently explained either as "social phenomenology" or "social physics" (Bourdieu, 1990:25). Bourdieu's theory seeks to combine and condense the artificial cause and effect cycle of such dualistic thinking.

It is necessary to abandon all theories which explicitly or implicitly treat practice as a mechanical reaction.... But rejection of mechanistic theories in no way implies that...we should bestow on some creative free will the

free and wilful power to constitute, on the instant, the meaning of the situation...and reduce the objective intentions...of actions and works to the conscious and deliberate intentions of their authors. (Bourdieu, 1977:73)

Habitus, therefore, is not wholly subjective (mind creating reality) or wholly objective (mind reacting to stimuli). Neither is it a concept meant to be merely a synthesis of the two opposite extremes of objectivity and subjectivity (see Bourdieu, 1990:25-29).

Bourdieu sees both “obligatory options” as reductionist and lacking in analytic rigor (1977:73). However, the abandonment of pure subjective motivation (in which reality is created and reshaped by the individual mind) is not the same as denying agency. Personal agency is contingent on a way of thinking about reality. “Strategic calculation” on the part of the individual, for example, is possible as an accompaniment to the working of *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977:76). The general nature and direction of these calculations, however, are formed by *habitus*.

The Enlightenment philosophy of Cartesian dualism has had a profound effect on scientific inquiry. Archaeology in particular, in studying “material culture”, has been caught between emphases on the material of nature and the metaphysics of mind (Thomas, 1996). Over the years, debates have focused on whether the object of archaeological inquiry is materialist or idealist. However, in espousing one brand of investigation over another, each claims a primordial stance in relation to the other, and this fundamentalism creates an essential evasion of analysis. Thomas (1996:18) contends “that archaeology has attempted to reduce material culture to an essence, which must then be located either within the realm of ideas or that of biological presences.” Material culture, of course, is forced to participate in both. But rather than think of material culture as a place where they meet, it can be considered a product and producing medium of both (see also Leone, 1978). In practice theory material culture is the setting that reproduces cultural knowledge through active involvement of the body.

The body is not a container for the self, but is an aspect of the self that we live through. Bourdieu (1990:73) states this in another way by claiming that “what is ‘learned

by body' is not something that one has, like knowledge that can be brandished, but something that one is". Cultural knowledge, by extension of the same logic, is not contained within a "mind", but is produced, reproduced and circulated through active relational involvement (Thomas, 1996:19). Practice theory denies a mind/body distinction and explains the importance of material objects in the structuring of dispositions: the human learns, in daily practice, the structures by which to skilfully relate to the world.

The world of objects, a kind of book in which each thing speaks metaphorically of all others and from which children learn to read the world, is read with the whole body, in and through the movements and displacements which define the space of objects as much as they are defined by it. (Bourdieu, 1990:76)

There is enough homogeneity in *habitus*, created by a similar context of living, to cause the activities and ideas of others to be intelligible and relatively foreseeable (Bourdieu, 1977:80). However, as Thomas points out, the contexts and relationships experienced by individuals are not entirely homogeneous, and cultural knowledge is not evenly distributed, but is in fact managed, restricted, and shared (1996:19). These differing contexts of experienced relationships are shared among certain groups and can be referred to as "class" (Bourdieu, 1977:80). Interpersonal relations are never "individual-to-individual" relations based solely on the current situation, but are two people using their *habitus* to mediate and manipulate interaction in that new situation (1977:81-82).

Habitus is "history turned into nature" (Bourdieu, 1977:78), each person carrying the stored lessons of their history (personal and social) as structures which regulate, but do not determine, their present actions. It is created throughout one's lifetime, but its most important period of formation is childhood (1977:81,87-93). It is then that identities and manners of social interaction are most forcefully and mnemonically learned.

Children interact with other community members outside the household in such social places as school, church, and market, but their role in such settings tends to be restricted. The household works to reify or contrast appropriate public behaviour by cre-

ating a microcosm of public life while at the same time focussing on individual strategies and interpersonal relationships. These relationships have a powerful effect on the creation of *habitus* because they occur in front of and in relation to children, and they are repeated and changed in the context of daily practice (as opposed to ritualized or sacred practice). As an example, gender relationships between two parents may differ greatly in public and household contexts, and the child sees and is involved in both. But it is the household context that provides more open and therefore malleable parameters for these gender relations.

Habitus and the Household

This kind of learning through relational involvement leaves preserved traces, some in the form of memories, traditions, and habits, but others in the form of physical presence, and here lies the relevance of archaeology and household architecture. When archaeologists use practice theory they are relying on the archaeological record as a discernable remnant of the structuring principles inherent in the daily practice of individuals.

According to Bourdieu, inhabited space is the “principal locus for the objectification of the generative schemes [*habitus*]” (1977:89). Actions performed in a house are qualified symbolically as structural exercises for mastering fundamental schemes of cultural reality. The household is a product of the systematic application of principles coherent in practice, and in turn produces these principles by physically structuring social life on a daily basis.

To study how social space governs inculcation of social practices it is necessary to understand how space is perceived (objectified) and embodied (deeply remembered) in the earliest learning processes. While the *habitus* always remains obscure, it can be “revealed” in the objects that it structures, such as the domestic household (Bourdieu, 1977:90).

Such a study “presupposes a structural analysis of the social organization of the internal space of the house, and the relation of this internal space to external space” (Bourdieu, 1977:90). There are numerous organizing principles of space that are used to

reconstitute social structures through the inculcation of *habitus*. These may include the cardinal directions; creation myths; gender, kinship; the segregation of individuals (Pearson, 1994:11); labour activities; and age. Mechanisms for organizing space include structured oppositions; homologies of body and cosmos; boundedness; decoration; cleanliness; concentric and diametric structuring; among others, and these depend on the particular historical background of a society. Cleanliness, for instance, is a manifestation of social order and the preservation of sanctity (holiness and purity) and varies widely from culture to culture. These mechanisms for organization can be investigated in archaeological contexts, but they will differ according to ethnicity and the degree of material preservation and knowledge of social context (Pearson, 1994:26).

I do not wish to overstate my case: while domestic architecture has a hand deep in the structuring of *habitus*, it is always only an integrated part of the larger social order. Archaeologically speaking, it is easy to see the house as a reflection of this order, but one should not therefore jump to the teleological conclusion that the house is built *only as a reflection* of social order (Leone, 1978:194). The inhabited house is used, albeit partially unconsciously, as a structuring device, and through daily practice it plays an active role in promoting cultural values.

Practice Theory in Archaeology

Bourdieu's Theory of Practice has been increasingly used by anthropologists and archaeologists to study the interface of social life, agency, and material culture.

Gilchrist (1994) examines the relation of architectural space and material culture in Medieval English nunneries to the creation of *habitus*. She suggests that material culture was used to create a *habitus* linking common interest groups, specifically nuns and aristocratic women (1994:192). Although formalized religious ideology and Pauline teachings on the behaviour of women were the ultimate authorities of female norms, gender identities and relations were *maintained as habitus* through the daily practice of individuals in a social setting defined by architecture (Gilchrest, 1994:14-15). Thus, although

a formal literature existed to maintain orthodox beliefs, architectural settings and material culture also worked, perhaps at a more profound level, to create identities and link social groups. Gilchrest uses the concept of *habitus* to explain the maintenance of gender identities and relations.

Burley, Horsfall, and Brandon (1992) examined *habitus* evident in the settlement patterns and house floorplans of Metis communities in the Canadian prairies. They noted that open and informal human relations and an organic “human/nature relationship” could be observed in the irregular location of houses in relation to the landscape, an unsegmented floorplan, and an informal regulation of farm and herding land (Burley *et al.*, 1992:161). The researchers point to the reproduction of the organic structuring of space of a *hivernant* camp in Metis social behaviour, which included “egalitarian social organization, ill-defined group boundaries in band composition, and the absence of rigidly defined activity zones” (Burley *et al.*, 1992:156). This *habitus* is argued to be the regulating factor of Metis ethnicity well into the 1870s, after which changes took place due to the migration of Europeans into the Canadian West. During this period, the Metis shifted to sedentary agricultural lifeways, with a concomitant change towards a segmented landscape, specialized tools, and symmetrical house facades in imitation of Anglo-Canadian settlers. However, the researchers note that Metis *habitus* was maintained in part by the openness of house interiors, the lack of fences used in land partitions, and the use of the river lot system, in which households remained close to one another, while each farmer had relatively equal quality of land. In other words, the Metis *habitus* was able to maintain ethnic precepts while allowing for dramatic functional and material change in the society. The researchers use *habitus* as an explanation of cultural continuity within material and social changes (Burley *et al.*, 1992:153-161).

Both studies emphasize the role of architecture in maintaining *habitus*, even as the architecture changes over time. Architecture, domestic or otherwise, is one of the most stable material devices of society, and this may reflect its importance in securing ethnic and

cultural continuity. Architecture nevertheless does change over time, and both the form and rate of this change are important in discussing shifts in culture and *habitus* in archaeological contexts. This is especially true since domestic architecture not only reflects, but assists in creating, *habitus*.

Lightfoot, Martinez, and Schiff (1998), in their study of ethnic contact at the Fort Ross trading colony in northern California, focus on practice theory as it relates to culture contact studies. They state that cultural values are not merely reproduced, but are reinterpreted and creatively modified in daily practice to make sense to “others” while suiting an agent’s own personal interests (Lightfoot *et al.*, 1998:201). This is done not in a “prescribed, uniform manner”, but according to a person’s “social status, political affiliations, kin relations, and gender” (Lightfoot *et al.*, 1998:202). These terms, however, are all by definition culturally prescribed, or constructed. In other words, *habitus*, as defined by class and status within an ethnic group, greatly influences personal strategies when relating to others.

Lightfoot *et al.* claim to have distinguished different scales of reproduction of ethnic structuring principles. At the settlement level, Russian administrators at Fort Ross imposed a spatial layout emphasizing ethnic segregation. At the neighbourhood level, ethnic preferences were allowed. At the household level, interethnic relations (between Alaskan men and Native American women) were exemplified by the maintenance of “distinct social identities” on the part of the inhabitants (1998:214). This is not surprising considering the Native Alaskan section of the colony existed for only 30 years (1998:217). Little evidence of drastically changing daily practice would have been noted in the first generation of interethnic marriages. This makes sense when one considers that *habitus* is produced not only by personal experience, but also by the organizational principles of a society learned most concretely in childhood (a multi-generational/cultural historical set of principles). Thus *habitus* would only change dramatically after the first generation. It would be the second generation that would exhibit extreme changes in *habitus* and its cor-

responding changes in daily practice such as foodways and architectural use.

Habitus, Household, and Cultural Change

This brings to light the problem of the formation of *habitus* through architecture and its relationship to cultural change. Differences and conflicts between generations of individuals are created by “conditions of existence which impose different definitions of the impossible, the possible, and the probable” (Bourdieu, 1977:78). Each generation, as it deals in daily practice with new objective conditions of reality, recreates and manipulates *habitus* that has been created by the conditions of the past. Succeeding generations thus share understandings of reality while at the same time finding certain behaviours or aspirations “unthinkable or scandalous” (Bourdieu, 1977:78).

It can perhaps be stated (and tested) that a change in *habitus* in new colonial or interethnic settings would occur and present itself most strongly in the second generation of immigrants/settlers, even though it is the first generation that directly experiences these changes. Daily practice can thus most strongly be connected to *habitus* by relating the two in childhood learning processes.

This may seem obvious, but it is contrary to a view of the individual agent who possesses the ability and desire to manipulate and direct her place in a new social setting according to a self-wrought strategy. The agent, while always acting in some vaguely self-interested way, does so only in accordance with her *habitus* as defined in childhood and affected by adult experiences. Only for the most traumatized of individuals will *habitus* actually change dramatically in their adult lifetime.

While some researchers would like to see the subjects of their inquiry as strategically motivated, practicing the subjective choice of agents (see Wilkie and Bartoy, 2000), individuals are only ever capable of manipulating their identities within the structure they have received. Individuals are perpetually constrained by *habitus*, while it is this same *habitus* that provides the framework for what Bourdieu calls “intentionless invention” (1977:79).

An individual may have exceptional abilities, bordering on genius, which make her behaviour seem exceptionally original or rebellious, but this behaviour is recognized by society as such. It is subsumed under social *habitus*, and indeed is merely an extension of *habitus* to an innovative extreme. It is between ethnic groups that behaviour is misunderstood, because of often radically different *habitus*.

Habitus, Embodied Learning, and Literacy

One issue that Bourdieu raises briefly but has not been addressed by archaeologists to any degree is the role of household architecture in a literate society engaged in formal education.

So long as the work of education is not clearly institutionalized as a specific, autonomous practice, and it is a whole group and a whole symbolically structured environment, without specialized agents or specific moments, which exerts an anonymous, pervasive pedagogic action, the essential part of the *modus operandi* which defines practical mastery is transmitted in practice...without attaining the level of discourse. (1977:87)

In other words, without institutionalized education, and within a relatively “holistic” society, the practical learning of *habitus* is never made explicit. It is learned wholly through the body, through imitation, and through oral tradition. Once knowledge is written, however, it is free from the body, and its objectification through literature makes it susceptible to rationalization (Bourdieu, 1990:73). The methods of inculcating *habitus* are weakened by and shifted towards institutionalized learning.

Bourdieu continues by claiming that, “in a social formation in which the absence of the symbolic-product-conserving techniques associated with literacy retards the objectification of symbolic and particularly cultural capital, inhabited space – and above all the house – is the principal locus for the objectification of the generative schemes” (1977:89). For non-literate societies, the household is often the locus for the schemes generating *habitus*, and takes the place of written ideology (see also Bourdieu, 1990:73). The idea of the house as a symbolic reservoir has precedents in archaeological literature. Referring to the earliest archaeological evidence of architectural manipulation by *Homo*, Leroi-

Gourhan stated that “from the higher paleolithic period onwards there was an attempt to control the whole spatio-temporal phenomenon by symbolic means, of which language was the chief. They imply a real ‘taking charge’ of space and time through the mediation of symbols: a domestication of them in a strict sense, since it involves, within the house and about the house, a controllable space and time” (1964:139-140). The architectural structure is promoted as a symbolic device, important especially to a non-literate society. This concept is echoed by Wilson (1988), who claims the house becomes the most powerful practical symbol before writing by encoding, encapsulating and classifying the cosmos.

Through the divisions and hierarchies set up between material, people, and practices, the house works as a classifying system that inculcates arbitrary cultural divisions as a natural way of being (Bourdieu, 1977:89). The house is in many societies a direct physical symbol of cosmology that is learned in childhood.

What then of the members of a literate and schooled society who live in their own domestic architecture? The Mennonites of Manitoba have a long history of literary involvement and regulated schooling. They were particularly adept at reading and interpreting Biblical scripture and other religious material, including the works of Menno Simons, the *Martyrs Mirror*, hymnals, and Catechisms. In some cases reading material was restricted to this kind of literature, and certain colonies had a strong distrust of education higher than the elementary level. Nevertheless, throughout Mennonite history, and particularly after 1700, most community members could read at some level and generally attained literacy between ages five and twelve. Sophisticated administration of the colonies and multi-ethnic interaction on official levels was common in both West Prussia and Russia from the 17th century onwards. The Bible in particular was considered standard reading and was certainly used to both argue and sustain a religious ideology. It is important to note, however, the distinction in Mennonite society between formal religious language and the informal *Plautdietsch* of daily life. Beginning in the Vistula Delta, Mennonites increasingly separated religious language (first Dutch, then High German)

from Low German, which was the language of daily discourse in the home. This distinction of uses for the two languages has been maintained well into the 20th century. This strongly suggests that the written word in Mennonite society had a less than total monopoly on the social structuring of values. Rather daily practice and the mundane structures therein were essential to the reproduction of Mennonite *habitus*, which was only partially articulated by Biblical references and religious ideology.

Among the Mennonites, orthopraxis was emphasized more than orthodoxy, and the household and village setting became an exceptionally strong method of inculcation. Community members shared a common domestic architectural heritage that was continued through the migrations from West Prussia to Russia and to Manitoba, spanning several hundred years. Although variation existed, a common and strong design element was present and consistent.

What does Bourdieu's analysis of household architecture suggest about this type of society? With an explicit literary ideology and an organized educational system, does the vernacular house become a lesser form of inculcation? Does the presence of pedagogic literary tools (such as the Bible or a history text), or the dominance of a mainstream literary society make the domestic household redundant and weakened as a physical source of generative schemes?

Mennonite "education" was traditionally both specific and anonymous. It was specific because it was an institution: it encompassed specialized architecture (school buildings), teachers, four classes of students, and the expectation that all children would participate. It was anonymous because teachers were not trained as such, and the system was didactic (emphasizing non-competitive, group rote learning) rather than pedagogic (which stresses the individual and competitive nature of class dynamics). The historic Mennonite education system thus lay between Bourdieu's dichotomy of "practical mastery" and discourse.

I would also suggest that it is precisely because ideology is not explicit in house-

hold architecture (it having been extolled in print) that the home can be used by its inhabitants in ways that support, manipulate, or oppose the dominant ideology, while always maintaining a modicum of conformity.

As seen in Gilchrest (1994), even the most orthodox of societies creates architectural living situations that can be used for more than merely co-existing or reproducing the orthodox belief system. Through individual agency and group interests, architecture and material culture were used to produce and reproduce a *habitus* that included many layers of social meaning and purpose.

In a non-urbanized society in which community members construct the house according to standard practices and design, the household maintains a primary structuring function despite the presence of a pervasive literature and educational system.

The household and the physical characteristics that restrict and guide movement and relations are always redundant, whether in a literate or non-literate society. They are redundant in terms of their relationship to oral history, semiotics, literature, and education, among other traditions. This is in fact what makes their influence so powerful: they embody these other traditions in a physical manner. In addition, these traditions are taught in conjunction with, and in the context of, the household. The movement and interaction of individuals within this setting instills social values. This learning is deep and mnemonic, being taught at the level of the body and reaching into subconscious as well as conscious understanding.

Habitus is to a large extent embodied and learned in early childhood, and therefore occurs at a preliterate stage of development. At the same time that parents and elders are pontificating the teachings of religious leaders and the Bible, children live, work and play in their parents' home and in their community. In other words, before they learn to read and write and think abstractly on theological or administrative themes, they must literally learn their way around a social domain with walls, doors and windows, a social domain created by many factors other than literature. Although the house may not be a direct

reflection of the cosmology or a direct metaphor of the human body, as in some non-literate societies, it remains a reiteration of social values. It orders these social values and is ordered by them.

Orthopraxis

Common in theological discourse is a structured dichotomy between orthodoxy (correct belief) and orthopraxis (correct practice). Mennonites have historically put such a great emphasis on orthopraxis that “church splits have often been over behavioural and lifestyle issues rather than doctrinal orthodoxy per se...” (Yoder, 2000: 89). Although a strict division between the two concepts is illusory, the dichotomy does suggest a way of viewing the social representation of ideology. One can view the two concepts as opposite extremes of a continuum: at one end the stress is on adherence to doctrine and at the other end the emphasis is on the adherence to particular lifestyles or practices.

The distinction between orthodoxy and orthopraxis came to the forefront in the work of Latin American Liberation theologians in the 1970s (Gutierrez, 1973; 1975:33). “[T]he goal [of an emphasis on orthopraxis] is to balance and even reject the primacy and almost exclusiveness which doctrine has enjoyed in Christian life and above all to modify the emphasis, often obsessive, upon the attainment of an orthodoxy which is often nothing more than fidelity to an obsolete tradition or a debatable interpretation” (Gutierrez, 1973:10). Orthopraxis was used as part of an emancipationist agenda in response to class differences and oppression of the poor in local Latin American communities. Liberation theology emphasized ethical practice over religious doctrine, the latter of which theologians believed had for too long maintained the status quo of oppressive regimes (Gutierrez, 1973).

Orthopraxis has since taken on numerous related meanings in theological circles. In Liberation Theology it refers to ethical social practice in opposition to oppressive power. The term can also be used to refer to correct practice *as defined by* orthodoxy and doctrine, as Pope John Paul II made clear by referring specifically to the orthodoxy vs.

orthopraxis debate in the *Catechesi Tradendae* (1979:22): "...firm and well-thought-out convictions lead to courageous and upright action". Finally, the term has been used in reference to correct *lifestyle*, in which daily life is based on a commonly understood, but not necessarily doctrinal, moral pattern of living. In Mennonite communities, this is often referred to as a life of "discipleship", conceptualized as a literal following of Christ.

Orthopraxis has served as a primary authority throughout Mennonite history. Correct action defined either negatively (what ought not to be done), or positively (what ought to be done), are constants in defining normative Mennonitism. Such formulations of orthopraxis, in turn, can be powerfully authoritative. (Dyck and Martin, ed., 1990:5: 45-47)

While scholars of Mennonite history and theology have often emphasized the beliefs and organizational systems of Mennonite congregations, they have only recently begun to explore the qualities of Mennonite practice, which occur within a sphere of bodily and social experience (Klassen, 1998; Bender, 1997). This experience is tied to historical circumstances (economics, politics, social history, individual relationships, etc), and the ethnic/cultural constructions of reality, which are connected to, but not determined by, Mennonite doctrine and congregational politics.

I contend that traditional Mennonite household architecture was a structuring device of Mennonite *habitus*, and in turn could be used as a structure to support or challenge Mennonite orthopraxis. *Habitus* is defined in this context as the underlying principle of communally determined orthopraxis. While *habitus* is the unconscious inculcation of a limited set of possibilities of action and disposition, orthopraxis confines these possibilities according to communal ideology. And while *habitus* presents possibilities that lie outside accepted behaviour, Mennonite orthopraxis (which is largely conscious but not strictly codified) would have informed the morality of such possibilities. Orthopraxis is the authority that underlies acceptable behaviour, and is enabled by familiarity and proximity of inhabitants (Leone, 1978:196).

Orthopraxis is only a part of the Mennonite *habitus*, and is not responsible, or deterministic, of all Mennonite thought or action. *Habitus*, learned in childhood and rein-

forced and reworked in adulthood, encompasses orthopraxis and is the locus of its enforcement, but is not limited to it. Mennonite rebellion, in whatever form, is also informed by *habitus*, and usually occurs as a reaction against the perceived oppression of conformism (orthopraxis). When Mennonites rebelled, they rebelled *as* Mennonites against Mennonite society. While *habitus*, though durable in the individual, constantly shifts at varying rates between generations (Bourdieu 1977:78), orthopraxis is by definition conservative and tends toward stasis. The latter eventually becomes inappropriate in new social realities, leading to continual church schisms and localized disintegration of communities.

Operation of Theory in Archaeological Context

The purpose of this dissertation is to describe the role of the household in the construction and reconstruction of Mennonite social structures, and how individuals could manipulate their social space to reflect new dispositions, or *habitus*, concerning the nature of social reality.

To best understand the influence of architectural settings on social learning, one must investigate different aspects of social structures within the home. These may include labour divisions, gender relations, age hierarchies, the construction of ethnic identities (aspects that are deeply interrelated), and the degree to which variation is expressed in material culture. These structures must be evaluated according not only to the division of space, but how this space was used, or how residents moved and related within it. This is particularly true for children, in whom *habitus* is first and most forcefully embodied (Bourdieu, 1977:90).

As the social and economic environment changes, these social structures may also change. This will be reflected in the shifting design and use of architectural settings to structure and reflect family and community values.

It should also be understood that events and situations that take place within the home are not separate from the public realm, but are economically and socially inter-

twined with it. Household interiors and exteriors may be ideologically opposed within the culture, but they nevertheless share basic structures, and work to represent and reinforce one another (Hendon, 1996; Bourdieu, 1977:90,92). Physical space is “appropriated and reified as social space” by a conceptual correspondence between a distribution of agents and a distribution of space (Bourdieu, 2000:134). People can be characterized by three physical-social space elements: the home, the “relative position” of temporary or permanent inhabited spaces, and the ownership of properties (Bourdieu, 2000:135). Thus, the home and the public realm are related by conceptual correspondences, which work as symbols of social status. However, while the home will reflect the structuring principles and morality of public space through conformity of design, challenges to these principles should be discernible through variation at the level of individual expression between households.

According to these observations, it is necessary to study a number of factors when investigating the role of the household in the production of *habitus*. The first of these is the social interaction within the house as it pertains to the cultural construction of structural divisions that shape concepts of identity, such as gender, age, labour, status and ethnicity.

Ethnicity

While this is a study of Mennonite household architecture, it is emphatically not another investigation of vernacular architecture as a material signifier of ethnicity. Such studies, though often rigorous, view culture or ethnic affiliation as positivistic; a tangible essence to be owned or rejected (Upton, 1996). Vernacular architecture then becomes a list of traits either authentic or corrupt in relation to their supposed ethnic affiliation, without direct relevance to social structures or identities. While the Mennonite group in question was certainly an ethnic group, and while their domestic architecture was standardized during the creation of a Mennonite ethnicity in the 16th to 19th centuries in the Vistula Delta and Russia, this ethnic identity and architectural heritage changed and remade itself according to the needs and varieties of Mennonite individuals. There is nothing static or

essential about either.

Bentley (1987:26) has pointed out that neither primordialist nor instrumentalist definitions of ethnicity stand up “to empirical scrutiny”, largely because “both leave unexamined the microprocesses by which collectivities of interest and sentiment come into existence”. Ethnicity must be partially examined at the level of the individual, for it is the individual who is claiming to be a particular kind of person in a particular situation. According to Upton (1996:4) ethnicity is a “synthesis of imposed and adopted characteristics that is forged through contact and conflict. It is a role played for the benefit of others”. While the individual plays the role of an ethnic person, he does so in conjunction with collective concepts based on shared experience.

Gender

Researchers such as Hendon (1996), Lyons (1989), and Tringham (1994, 1995) have emphasized the domestic household as a place of continual relational involvement, where the “domestic spatial order is a strategy which articulates co-operative and competitive relationships” (Lyons, 1989:28). Gender relations, labour divisions, and individual agency are emphasized in these studies.

Gender has become increasingly important in the study of domestic architecture, although there are varied approaches to this concept. Gender can be seen as a basic structuring principle for human society; a personally and socially constructed identity for political purposes; and as a socioeconomic construction generated by those creating the gender roles. Gender can therefore be understood as a cognitive structuring principle and as a product of both political forces and individual agency. Most importantly, while cultural concepts of gender are stable, they are not static. Gender is a process of modification through different elements of society such as religious doctrine, the individual’s manipulation of their gendered identity, and daily social interaction with other people.

The gender identity inculcated in an individual works to structure their worldview and how they should act. A child’s relation to its mother and father only structures the self

and the world insofar as “that initial relation is set up with objects whose sex is defined symbolically, and not biologically” (Bourdieu, 1977:93). In a household context, this inculcation occurs with the objects and space of daily practice where sexual identities are played out.

The way gender is constructed in and guided by household architecture will help maintain the general precepts of a culture’s gender values. At the same time, individuals can use material culture to challenge these values, according to their personal desires as they correlate with *habitus* and new social, political, and economic environments. “The subject constitutes her or his own personal identity while at the same time reinforcing the structural relations of society” (Gilchrist, 1994).

Age Categories

Age and status are usually related, and age categories are used to structure power relations. The household is a primary location for the inculcation of appropriate age relations, in much the same way it works to structure perceptions of gender and labour divisions. Architecture and furniture guide all movements, activities and interaction, and furniture and different settings are considered appropriate for certain inter-generational activities. By examining the types of activities in certain settings, and the meanings of certain rooms, one may understand the use of the home in structuring *habitus* as it relates to age. For instance, children may be allowed in certain rooms only at certain times, and these rooms may have very specific meanings and functions that are considered appropriate only for adults. The conditions under which children may enter such rooms must also be carefully considered. One must also be cautious when defining age groups, as these vary considerably between cultures. For Mennonite households, age category is often linked to marital status, and the following general categories can be expressed: infant, child, adolescent, single adult, married adult, elderly, and elderly widowed.

The physical design of the house and its changes over time must be documented in order to detect the changing values of household populations. This includes the use of

rooms for labour and interaction, as well as furnishings within the home and the meanings and functions of these items. Decoration must also be examined, with the types and amounts of variation indicating cultural parameters of individual expression.

Although purely architectural features alone (floorplans, walls, doors, etc) are useful in determining degree of segmentation and aspects of social movement and relation, they are limited by lack of context. Context for the researcher is best provided by direct observation of, or participation in, social activities in the household and community. Lacking this, oral interviews with those once living in these homes and archaeological and historical research can provide some of this context.

Amos Rapaport's tripartite conceptualization of feature elements presents the possibility of analyzing the social use of space in an ethnographic and archaeological context (1982, 1990). Rapaport's three distinctions of non-verbal communication elements for the study of architecture and meaning include;

- 1) Fixed feature elements, which change rarely, if at all, and are essential ordering principles. These include features such as walls, portals, windows, etc.
- 2) Semi-fixed features, including portable items in the house that create barriers and corridors for interaction, and represent symbols of identity. This includes furniture, decoration and other items that can be infused with symbolic meaning.
- 3) Non-fixed feature elements include individuals communicating through body position, stance, and movement etc.

Architectural settings defined by these elements facilitate communication between individuals by creating appropriate contexts for interaction. Rapaport claims environmental meaning lacks linearity (determinism) and therefore lacks a set of clearly articulate rules that can be decoded. Rather, people in a given culture deal with "cues" that are especially easy to understand if there is redundancy. Like Bourdieu, Rapaport believes that cues present in architecture are learned early in life at a pre-literate level. Dwellings with distinct male/female domains and activity areas, clear areas of use, spatial layouts con-

veying hierarchy of rank and sex, in which “events are structured to express and support the social order” will produce highly enculturated children (Rapaport, 1982:65).

Particularly useful in a study of changing historical circumstances are fixed and semi-fixed feature elements. The present study focuses on Mennonite homes built between 1874 and 1940. Various researchers have divided such houses into style categories, and these roughly correspond to their date of construction (Noble, 1992; Butterfield and Ledohowski, 1984; Lehr, 1997; Ennals and Dyck, 1998). This classification will be reevaluated. However, those buildings constructed in the earliest period were in continual use for decades, and in some cases are still inhabited. It is during the period of interaction between Mennonite communities and “mainstream” Canadian society that the social and practical use of space in the homes changed. Their continual use involved renovations to the fixed feature elements (walls, floors, portals, etc) that reflect these social changes. The change in the social use of space was also reflected in the new uses and positions of furniture and decorations (semi-fixed feature elements).

Conclusion

Household architecture can be a means to structure *habitus*, and although architectural changes may occur slowly, they are important in the shifts of cultural values over time. This can be investigated in the primary structuring principles of society based on age, gender, labour and ethnicity, as seen through the changing construction and use of the house.

Among the Mennonites of Southern Manitoba, household architecture was particularly standardized among the first generation of immigrants after 1874. The changes that occurred in community values were reinforced and reflected in changes in the structuring of the home. Despite the presence of a centuries-long tradition of literacy and adherence to Biblical principles, Mennonites invested more meaning in orthopraxis than orthodoxy, in which lifestyle and daily practice was most important in communicating community values. The floorplan and use of the Mennonite housebarn (in conjunction with village

layout) was a major factor in structuring values, specifically among children. This accounts for the long and stable use of the housebarn structure and its floorplan design over centuries of migration. The changes occurring to the housebarn design after the first generation period in Manitoba should reflect changing attitudes towards mainstream society and the social values normally attained within the Mennonite village.

Chapter 3

Mennonite History and Architecture

The “Dutch-Russian” branch of Mennonites that settled in Manitoba in the 1870’s began as part of the Anabaptist movement during the time of the Reformation and the larger fragmentation of Roman Catholic power in Europe. From the Netherlands many members of the group migrated to West Prussia and later Russia and Manitoba. In the process they became an ethnic society united by a belief system, a common lifestyle, and similar historical experiences.

It was specifically in the Vistula Delta of West Prussia and Poland that Mennonites became settled and experienced an ethnogenesis. A variety of factors contributed to this process, including official restrictions on group activity, the adoption of a common language, a distinct and somewhat radical religion, and restricted economic opportunities. However, group ethnicity was *expressed* largely through an adherence to forms of orthopraxis, or “correct practice” in daily life. Orthopraxis remained important well into the 20th century, even as Mennonite groups were drawn into the world of national capitalism in Russia and North America.

The Mennonite housebarn form originated largely in the Netherlands, but its architectural design was modified in Prussia and this new form became common among rural Mennonites. Transplanted to Russia, this design soon became the standard household for Mennonite farmers, with variation on a particular theme of room placement and structural orientation.

I suggest that the Mennonite housebarn, including its floorplan and its orientation to the village layout, was used as a structuring device for the reinforcement of Mennonite *habitus*. This included the spatial expression of religious and social values through gender and age relations and the structuring of labour. Daily practice, structured in part by the use of the household, inculcated a Mennonite *habitus* that became identified as a particular ethnic identity.

Early Mennonite History

Anabaptism began as a broadly anti-clerical Christian religious movement on the European continent shortly after the Reformation. The movement had several sources, namely Switzerland (1524-27), South Germany (1526-28), and the Netherlands (1530-36). The term “Mennonite” derives from the Dutch Anabaptist religious leader Menno Simons (1499-1561).

Martin Luther challenged Rome and the authority of the Pope during the 1520s, but in many ways his proclamation was a continuation of a ferment of ideas, as well as economic and political dissatisfaction. With the Peace of Augsburg, the treaty ending the war between German nobles and the Emperor, each regional noble chose for himself the dominant religion of the area. Northern German states, the Baltic states, and Scandinavia became Lutheran, while the south generally remained Catholic. In both cases, citizenship in church and state was inaugurated through the baptism of infants.

Ulrich Zwingli (d.1531) of Switzerland began a reform movement similar to Luther's, in which a reform of the church and state citizenship went hand in hand. He supported the abolition of Mass and the translation of the Bible and baptismal services into vernacular languages. With the civic leaders of Zurich, Zwingli inaugurated the Christian Civic League, which soon drew in the cantons of Berne, Basel and Constance. This league went to war with the Catholic regions twice, and out of it came a separation of Protestant and Catholic Cantons similar to the situation in northern Germany.

Some of Zwingli's followers, mostly young men educated in the humanities, promoted more radical reforms. They believed that no entire populace could responsibly live as Christians (Epp, 1974:27), but that it would require a dedicated, small group of true believers to live the Christian faith directly and purely. In addition, they accepted no authority above the Bible, civic or otherwise, and began to meet in private homes for Biblical study (Epp, 1974:27; Ens, 1994:3). Lacking civic and/or religious authority, and stressing personal responsibility, the issue of baptism came to the forefront. It was

believed that a decision to become a disciple of Christ could only be made by the individual, rather than one's parents or the state, and therefore infant baptism was replaced with adult baptism. This challenged a core method of state and religious inclusion (used in methods of taxation and military conscription). Following a public debate, the city council ordered baptism for all infants and the end of private Bible studies. The radicals did not comply, were imprisoned, escaped, and eventually many were executed, becoming the first in a long list of Anabaptist martyrs. Anabaptism was fully outlawed throughout the Holy Roman Empire by 1529.

The fundamentals of the faith were solidified, but not universally adopted, in 1527 at two meetings: Schleitheim, Switzerland (resulting in the *Bruederliche Vereinigung*, or Confession of Faith) and the Martyr's Synod in Augsburg. These fundamentals included adult baptism, a life of discipleship (which included communities separated from secular conditions), and pacifism (or "non-resistance") (Epp, 1974:34; Urry, 1989:35). There were other issues discussed at these meetings that remained pertinent for Mennonite/Anabaptist groups throughout their history to varying degrees. The "ban" was a form of communal, non-violent discipline in which a person breaking the rules of the community (whatever they happened to be) was excommunicated. This involved exclusion from economic and personal interaction to the extent that even immediate family members were forbidden to talk or eat with the shunned person. The issue of communion was also important, for while it was a central rite in Mennonite worship, it was considered symbolic rather than a direct transubstantiation of the blood and flesh of Christ. Other issues discussed at these meetings and important in Mennonite life included church leadership and the resistance of oaths to church or state.

The most obvious difference of Anabaptism as outlined by the early reformers and sustained by later Mennonites, Amish and Hutterites was the emphasis on orthopraxis (right living) rather than orthodoxy (correct belief).

Differences in theology and group organization characterized Anabaptism from

the beginning, and were due to the de-emphasis of doctrinal teaching, the fragmentary nature of the movement after 1529, the loss of leaders to execution, the acceptance of independent biblical interpretation, and the newness of the “tradition” (Epp, 1974:32). Another reason for theological and organizational differences lay in the varied ethnicities, specifically between Frisian and Flemish Anabaptists and their understandings of orthopraxis. In time over forty groups worked under the umbrella term Anabaptists.

After 1525, Anabaptism spread East from Switzerland to Tyrol, Austria, Bavaria and Moravia. It also spread north along the Rhine into the Palatinate and Alsace regions, and then to the Netherlands and Flanders by 1530. From there it spread to London, northern Germany, and east to the Vistula Delta.

The Anabaptists that emerged in Friesland, the Netherlands and Germany were largely of Frisian and Flemish background, with the inclusion of some South Germans (See Figure 1). The Flemish and Germans came fleeing persecution, and entered Friesland because about one quarter of the population were Anabaptists and the area had until then been spared persecution. The ethnicity and language of this area was largely Saxon, and differed somewhat from the West Frisian groups of the Frisian Islands and coastal area.

In 1534, in the city of Muenster, a group of Anabaptists began a violent millennial movement that ended in the siege of the city and execution of most inhabitants. Earlier, in the 1520s, the revolutionary Thomas Muntzer led a peasant revolt against authorities in southern Germany that was quickly and violently repressed by local authorities. Both of these incidents supported a view of Anabaptists as violent anarchists set on the destruction of state and church authority. Persecution and executions intensified.

The violent excesses of the revolts and the persecution that followed encouraged the consolidation and organization of the movement in the Netherlands. Two Dutch leaders were particularly influential: Dirk Philips (1504-1568) and Menno Simons, both of whom opposed all forms of violence. Simons had been a Catholic priest who left the church in 1536 and went into hiding to study scripture as an Anabaptist. It was during this

time that a delegation of Anabaptists requested he become an elder and leader of the movement. Simons emphasized pacifism and discipline in the life of church members. The term “Mennists” was first used by the Countess Anna of East Friesland in 1544, and was followed by “Mennonists” and “Mennonites” some time later. However, the term only came into common usage in Royal Prussia after a large number had fled there in the middle of the century (Epp, 1993:51). This term helped to distinguish his group from more radical or violent movements (Smith, 1981:72; Dyck, 1967:82). Pacifism in this way became part of the unifying and movement-preserving themes of Mennonite ideology, and was important in subsequent constructions of ethnicity and group coherence.

Menno Simons was of Frisian background, but during this time as leader of the northern Anabaptist movement he fled and travelled extensively and lived temporarily in Emden, Friesland, Groningen and in the Schleswig-Holstein region of northern Germany. Mennonites found refuge under the nobles of Schleswig-Holstein, who were interested in their skills in draining land for farming. Fleeing persecution in the Spanish-Catholic ruled Netherlands and following the trade routes from Amsterdam and north Germany, many Mennonites were permitted to settle in the trading cities and estate lands located in Polish and West Prussian regimes of the Vistula Delta. Differing degrees of religious tolerance were found here under four political jurisdictions, including the Catholic King of Poland, the King of Prussia, and the Hanseatic, free cities of Danzig and Elbing (Ens, 1994:4). Close ties were maintained with churches in Amsterdam, and the growth of Vistula congregations continued as persecution ebbed and flowed in the Netherlands during the 16th century.

Mennonite Migration to the Vistula Delta

It must be noted that it was largely the *ideas* of Anabaptism that spread from Switzerland along the Rhine to the Netherlands and northern Germany, while it was Mennonite *people* that spread from these northern regions to the Vistula Delta. These populations included urban and rural peoples, the urban population coming largely from the

middle and lower classes (Krahn, 1957:220). Farmers moving to the Vistula region were considered particularly useful in the marshy areas of the delta due to their land drainage experience. The settlers were from different regions of the Netherlands, including Friesland and Flanders, and Northern Germany, and consisted of merchants, farmers, weavers, craftsmen, artisans, ex-priests, and others. The variety of classes and regions of origin presents a population disparate in previous experience, other than as subjects of a religiously intolerant state. These differences, although maintained in some respects (such as the division of Flemish and Frisian congregations in West Prussia), were modified as the religious communities became an ethnic group in the Vistula Delta region between the 16th and 18th centuries. Here their experience became a common one, in which they functioned under a state *Privilegium*, and were restricted in their interactions with other populations and merchant guilds. The *Privilegium* was granted to the Mennonite communities under the authority of a monarch to modify discriminatory laws of the nation, and was not constitutionally binding (Ens, 1994:4).

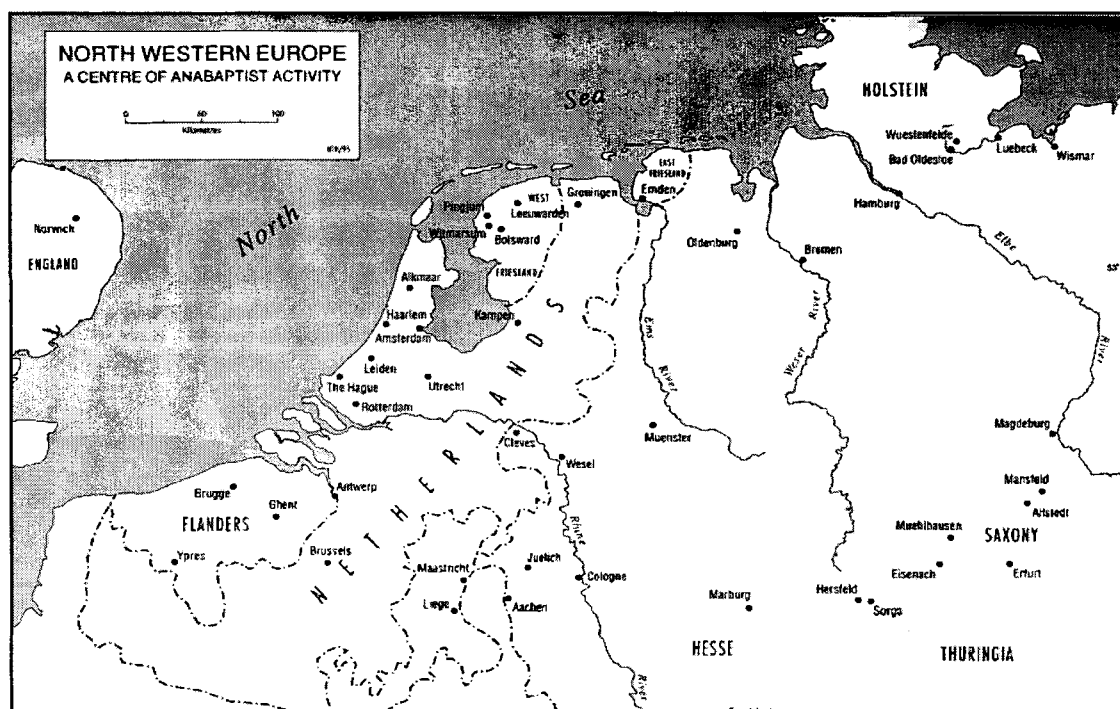


Fig. 1 Northwestern Europe. (Schroeder and Huebert, 1996:5, by permission)

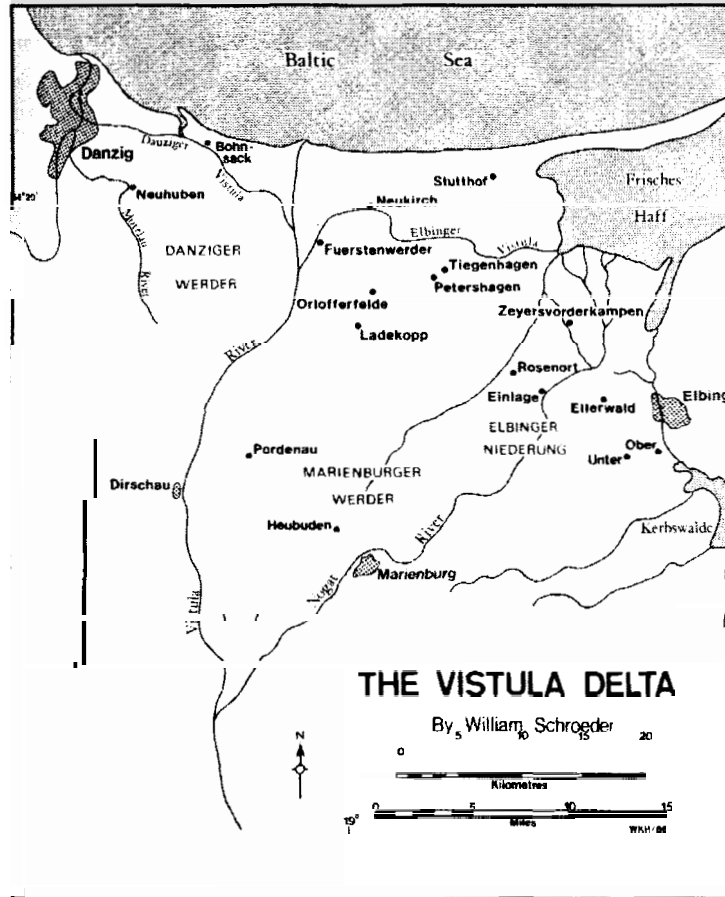


Fig. 2 The Vistula Delta with Mennonite Settlements. (Schroeder and Huebert, 1996:11, by permission)

Ethnicity and Mennonites

Ethnicity has long been a difficult concept to define and use when discussing historic groups. Archaeologists have often associated ethnicity with specific cultural traits or materials that were passed from generation to generation in pure or corrupted forms. Since Barth (1969), however, ethnicity has commonly been understood as a method for maintaining group boundaries, and can be considered fluid and dependent on historical circumstances, rather than *essential* to identity. What purposes these group boundaries served was a topic of debate based on a dichotomy of primordialist and instrumentalist models. The former argued that ethnic groupings were the result of social disruptions that drove

people to seek psychological comfort in communal worldviews. The latter claimed that political and economic disruptions influenced the creation of new, shared material interests, and ethnic groups formed to take advantage of strength in numbers in pursuing their economic goals. The commonality between both models is the importance of societal disruption in the formation of ethnic groups.

As Bentley (1987:26) states, however, neither theoretical stance “addresses the question of how people recognize the commonalities (of interest or sentiment) underlying claims to common identity”, nor do they seek evidence at the level of the individual, where ethnic identities actually occur.

Bentley attempts a construction of ethnicity based on Bourdieu’s practice theory. Ethnicity in this sense is founded upon shared experience creating shared *habitus*, and not merely on (rationalist) economic interests or (emotional) safety nets. Shared daily experience, which is both rhythmic and habitual, creates shared memories and unconscious patterns, and informs appropriate ways of thinking and acting in the world (Bourdieu, 1977; Bentley, 1987). Furthermore, ethnic identity is constructed by the individual in daily practice with other individuals, and is not merely the product of structural distinctions created out of the mind’s necessity of ordering social reality (Bentley, 1987:35). In other words, conceptions of ethnic identity are bound in historical, shared experience as expressed in *habitus*. Processes of ethnic identity formation are based on the “habitual responses to environmental constraints” and “the symbolization of the experience of shared *habitus*” (Bentley, 1987:40). The investigation of ethnicity is ultimately an investigation of the material and social conditions of shared experience that create *habitus*.

In applying this formulation of ethnicity to Mennonite ethnogenesis, we must consider the ethnic identity of the individual not only as a generalized response to sociopolitical strain, but also as shared *habitus* created by daily experience, or life rhythms, based in part on ideological grounds. It is in such a setting that Mennonites in the Vistula Delta found themselves. They shared daily experiences that were circumscribed by ideological

foundations and by governmental restrictions on their activities.

With the arrival and settlement of Mennonites in the Vistula Delta, various factors combined to create an ethnic cohesion among the previously different populations of Friesland, Flanders, and North Germany. Similar factors were at work within Hutterite communities in Monrovia and Swiss Anabaptists in the Americas. These factors included political and economic isolation, education methods, religious doctrine, language patterns, settlement patterns, and architecture. These factors would have been important in daily relations with non-Mennonites, with whom contact was constant and varied. With a unique religious background and official group recognition, Mennonites interacting with local peoples would have understood themselves as a separate community, with motives differing from local populations. In a study of household architecture found in Mennonite colonies in Mexico during the 1970s, Eighmy identified Mennonite ethnicity with orthopraxis (1984). "Strict control over behaviour is used to maintain a clear distinction between themselves [Mennonites] and non-Mennonites." (1984:74)

Eighmy was inspired by Barth, and espoused boundary maintenance as the functional purpose of Mennonite ethnicity. This sense of Mennonite ethnicity, however, ignores the reproduction of social (and socially bounded) knowledge and understanding. The individual agent's decisions about ethnic identity, both conscious and unconscious, are subsumed under group economic function, passive group consensus, and the "diffusion" of new ideas.

At the same time that ethnogenesis was taking place among the Vistula Mennonites, their domestic architecture seems to have been standardized in its rural form, and it was this design concept that was carried by migrating groups to South Russia and North America. It was among these groups that it most strongly embodied specific meanings in terms of childhood inculcation and social practice.

Political and Economic Restrictions

The first arrival of Dutch Anabaptists in West Prussia occurred in about 1530, with

many settling in the Danzig *Werder*, and in 1562 Mennonites were invited to settle the Marienberg *Werder*. A *Werder* is an island of land partially below sea level, with channels and rivers separating it from the surrounding mainland. Such a landscape was familiar to the Dutch farmers settling in the area, and over a period of about one hundred years they drained and farmed the area in pieces, under long-term leases granted by local nobility. These areas had previously been occupied, but had deteriorated after the defeat of the Teutonic Order.

Not all Mennonites settling in the area were farmers, however, and many came from their original lands with knowledge of various crafts and trades, including weaving and other proto-industries such as dyeing, liquor distillation and even banking. These Mennonites were excluded from guilds inside Danzig, denied urban citizenship, and restricted in business ventures in some towns and cities. They therefore often lived on the outskirts of towns, although they regularly interacted with people and traders from urban areas (Urry, 2001). Thus, Mennonites of the Vistula area were not a homogeneous farming population. They had varied economic activities, and interacted with other political and ethnic groups, including Lutheran and Reformed Germans and Polish Catholics. Many farmers needed to “raise capital beyond the immediate subsistence needs of his family and this involved engagement with the wider market economy” (Urry, 1989:45). Producing surplus dairy was a common endeavour in this regard. Even the conservative and isolated farming community needed regular ties with the “world”.

Although some religious tolerance was shown by the local nobility and the kings of West Prussia and Poland (largely due to the Mennonites’ worth as settlers of the marshlands) the Mennonites of the Vistula also experienced forms of discrimination. As mentioned, they were excluded from guilds and city citizenship, and they were also denied expanding land ownership, and taxed differently from the wider population. These restrictions did not, however, interfere with the Mennonite system of bilateral partible inheritance, allowing them to extend their local leases to their male and female children, equal-

ly divide their land holdings into smaller sections, and seek agreements for new block settlements in adjacent areas (Loewen, 2001:36).

Eventually settlements grew south along the Vistula River, but they remained less prosperous than the northern communities.

There were early divisions within the Mennonite population based on regional origins: the Flemish *Gemeinde* (whose members fled from Belgium to the Netherlands, and then eastward) and the Frisian *Gemeinde* (from the northern Netherlands), both of which were based in Danzig after 1566. Although the congregations lived in close proximity, they had differences based on various church traditions such as preaching and baptism styles. Some of these differences also began as ethnic lifestyles: “The Frisians took offense at the dress and manners of the Flemish, which they thought were too worldly and too sumptuous, whereas to the mind of the Flemish the Frisians were not sober enough as to the furnishings of their houses” (Bender and Smith, ed., 1959: 2:413). This confirms an adherence to orthopraxis, in which lifestyle and religious morality are deeply interrelated. Each *Gemeinde* felt itself correct in its lifestyle/morality to such a degree that they demanded rebaptism of a person transferring from the other congregation.

Language

The adoption of a particular language is important to ethnogenesis because it creates a basis for understanding a conceptual order between people who share daily activities. In West Prussia the Mennonites formed their own unique dialect of Low German, very similar in most ways to local Nether Prussian, but distinct in terms and idioms to Mennonite communities with an “exclusive vocabulary...unknown to German neighbours” (Thiessen, 2000:158). Although there was no creation of a Creole or patois language among the Mennonites, a dialect of dialects was adopted by them as a group.

Among the Mennonites originating in northern Europe, Frisian, Flemish, Dutch and Low Saxon were the most common languages. Low German consists of two branches, the Low Franconian (Flemish and Dutch) and the Low Saxon (Plattdeutsch). Most

Mennonites came from West Groningen and East Friesland, where Plattdeutsch was common, while some also came from West Friesland, speaking Frisian (related to English). Various Low German dialects existed across northern Germany from West Prussia to the Netherlands, and would have been known to most of the migrants from the Netherlands regions moving into the Vistula Delta.

The people already inhabiting the delta spoke nine Low Saxon (or Nether Prussian) dialects similar to those used by incoming Mennonites. The Mennonites largely adopted the Prussian Low Saxon in daily life by the 1750s (Dyck, 1967:107; Thiessen, 1967:111), but incorporated over 100 words of their Netherlander dialects (Thiessen, 2000:159). This became known as the *Plautdietsch* spoken by Mennonites in West Prussia, Russia and the Americas (Epp, 1993:10) and had its own distinctive speech patterns and nuances known only to native speakers (Urry, 1989:45,154). While the Mennonites had daily interaction with other native groups of West Prussia from whom they adopted vocabulary (including Polish, Old Prussian, and High German) they maintained unique linguistic features.

It must be noted that from the beginning of settlement in West Prussia there was a split between daily language and religious language among Mennonites. While Low German dialects were used in the home and with outsiders on an everyday basis, sermons and hymns were generally performed in literary Dutch. This was in part due to correspondence with religious leaders in the Netherlands who wrote in this language. However, the dichotomy became a part of Mennonite orthopraxis, in which local dialects were considered inappropriate for church services or religious congress. West Prussia, though ruled by Poland, was under the control of the Middle High German Teutonic Order until 1466, and a Germanic presence remained stable well after Poland controlled the area. In the 1560s the High German language was being adopted in official circles for correspondence and documentation. Mennonites, however, only began to use High German for religious communication during the 17th and 18th Centuries, and only after 1780 did it become the

language of worship for the “Flemish” congregations (Duerksen, 1967:109; Epp, 1993: 71). Duerksen notes that “the more conservative congregations and those of the cities such as Danzig who remained for a longer period of time in contact with the Dutch congregations, retained the usage of the Dutch language longer” (1967:109). In the home, *Plautdietsch* was the most common language, while High German was to become reserved mainly for religious services and official communications with the government.

Two trends in Mennonite language preferences can be seen in West Prussia during the 17th and 18th Centuries. The first is a division between religious language and speech in the home. Although the official church language changed from Dutch to German, the split between church language and home language was maintained. This split was further maintained and strengthened in Russia and the Americas, and is still common in many Mennonite communities.

The second trend was a change in the common language of Mennonites. They arrived with varied Western Low German and Netherlander languages into an area with still more dialects of Low German, and incorporated many of these into a rather distinct Mennonite *Plautdietsch*, which became largely homogenous during their stay in the Vistula and throughout their later migrations.

The importance of these trends for Mennonite ethnogenesis can be seen in the roles the languages would have played in Mennonite relationships with other communities. The maintenance of Dutch as the official religious language for such a long period (up to 200 years in some congregations) would have excluded other Prussians from worshipping with Mennonites. With the church setting as an important focal point for group membership and the locus of admonishment of lifestyle, this would have created a distinct boundary with other groups. Meanwhile, the slow creation of a Mennonite “dialect” of Low German, while not exclusionary of other groups, attests to daily practice and interaction specific to Mennonite communities. The language provided a “sense of identity” to be carried through 200 years of migration into Russia and the Americas.

Education and Literacy

Literacy was widespread and important for the recreation of the religious social order of Mennonites, and represented a literary tradition unique to Mennonite groups. This literature was an important part of a growing Mennonite ethnic identity because what the literature represented was essential to Mennonite faith and lifestyle. The ownership and use of books, however, did not extend deeply into the community, where a Low German oral tradition was common and vibrant (Urry, 1989:154). Literature and literacy became important for group cohesion, but it was only a part of a larger process of tradition building in West Prussia.

Literature among the Mennonites of the Vistula was largely in the hands of elders and ministers, and dealt with religious and church matters. This literature, whether originating in the Netherlands or West Prussia, was used to defend Mennonites from state and religious persecution, as well as forming a foundation for a worldview within the group (Loewen, 1999:5). Mennonite literature became an important part of Mennonite ethnogenesis through the creation of group boundaries (by challenging mainstream authorities and values), and by forming a common group identity. In the Vistula, this process of defense and identity maintenance through literature was accentuated in new ways, and played a restrictive and protectionist role within the community. Literature became “devoted to the defense of the “true” teachings and practices against opponents outside the church, as well as against those within the brotherhood who deviated from the true path” (Krahn, 1957:232).

Some examples of Mennonite literature include *the Collected Writings of Menno Simons* and other early Anabaptist leaders, and the *Ausbund*, a collection of songs written by early Mennonites (including some of the imprisoned leaders of the movement such as Michael Sattler).

The *Martyrs Mirror*, compiled by T.J. van Braght in 1660, was a common source of inspiration and conserved the tribulation heritage of the Mennonite ancestors. In this

tome of over 1600 pages, the suffering, torture, loss, and dispersion of early Anabaptists was combined with their recorded testaments of faith to provide a comparison with the righteous suffering of Christ and the early disciples. Van Brought compiled the stories to encourage the increasingly worldly Mennonite communities of the Netherlands in the 1600s to return to a life of pious Christian humility. It can be argued that for Mennonites in West Prussia, Russia, and North America, the book helped to promote a martyr identity that incorporated the early failure of the movement into an origin myth explaining their state of marginalized existence and constant migration.

Other common forms of literature included epistles, confessions, exhortations, Catechisms, and hymnals. Sermons could be personal interpretations of scripture or a transferred work from previous generations, and were often copied and became part of the literary corpus.

While most of the early literature was the work of Anabaptist leaders, a general level of literacy among Mennonites was attained in their sojourn in West Prussia, with an emphasis on reading and reciting Catechisms (part of the baptismal rite of passage), hymns, and the Bible.

It is debatable to what extent new doctrines and religious ideas found their way into Mennonite circles through literary distribution. Although Urry (1989:38) claims that new ideas were generally dismissed as worldly, Friedmann (1949), Crous (1957), and Plett (1999) cite the influence of Pietism in the 18th century.

The education system among Mennonites in the Vistula was village based, and Prussian authorities granted the Mennonites permission to conduct their own schooling in 1722. The textbooks included the Bible, the Catechism, *Fibel: ABC* (Instruction for reading and writing), *Die Wandelnde Seele* (The Wandering Soul) and the *Martyrs Mirror*. Mennonites of Russia, Manitoba, Mexico and Paraguay usually adhered to a standard order of schooling that originally developed in 18th century West Prussia (Ens, 1982; Plett, 1999; Martin Sawatzky, personal communication, 2001). The order of learning, or

memorizing, in the school system was as follows: Fibel, spelling and writing primer; Catechism; New Testament; the Old Testament. After mastering reading from the *Fibel* primer, the student was directly indoctrinated into the community value system through the Mennonite Catechism, in which articles and confessions of faith were read and memorized. Only then, after competent memorization, could New Testament scripture be learned and thus interpreted through the lens of the Catechism. The Old Testament was learned afterwards because the New Testament was central to Mennonite faith issues.

In general, education was largely didactic, with emphasis on memorization and mastery of basic skills. As Urry (1989:155) states, “the classroom was usually an extension of the home environment and teaching was not a distinct profession but a part-time occupation that helped supplement the income of less fortunate members of society.” Essentially the teacher’s job was to maintain order while the basic skill set was learned. Formal literary learning was unimportant compared to the tasks of daily living and the local economy. Communication among community members was largely oral, rather than written, and among many congregations this remained the pattern well into the Manitoba experience of the late 1800s.

Marriage and Inheritance Patterns

Marriage patterns were generally insular. Vistula Mennonite society, as noted earlier, included two main branches: the Danzig Old Flemish and the Frisian congregations, the former being more conservative. Marriage amongst the Old Flemish could only occur with a member of an unaffiliated Mennonite congregation (Frisians) if that person was rebaptized. The Frisians allowed the marriage not only of persons from other congregations, but allowed people of other ethnic or religious background to marry into the group, as long as conversion was undertaken. Marriage patterns thus discouraged assimilation with other groups or mainstream society, and cultural borders were strictly maintained. A side effect of this practice was the perpetuation of Dutch surnames, many of which have survived to present times. These names were recognized by members of Mennonite pop-

ulations as their own, and continue to be used as signifiers of ethnic belonging.

The Mennonites coming to the Vistula region brought with them a system of bilateral partible inheritance, a system common in both Friesland and Palatinate regions. Loewen (2001:35) notes that bilateral partible inheritance was practiced by both of the most enduring Mennonite “streams”, namely the Swiss-Pennsylvanian and the Dutch-Russian. Partible means that estates were divided into parcels, while bilateral indicates both genders received equal amounts of inherited, partitioned property. This system differed greatly from the West Prussian and Slavic cultures of the Vistula and Russia where a “patrilineal stem-family” (or ultimogeniture) system was practiced, in which the farm or business was inherited by a single descendent (Janzen and Janzen, 1991:73).

The bilateral partible inheritance system had a number of consequences for Mennonite communities. Habakkuk (1955) notes that individual displacement to cities or other agricultural areas was discouraged by the promise of at least a small plot of land. This created population pressures in farming communities that, combined with the insular nature of Mennonite communities, caused mass migrations, rather than individual emigrations into the craft or industrial workforce. Various other consequences of this system are outlined by Loewen (2001:38-39). The standards required for status and power in a village were lowered, because any male landowner (and there were many due to partibility) was allowed to vote. Inheritance along kinship lines formed protection from the growing influence of European market economics on rural food producers in the 18th century, and the resulting “lure of the world” into urban centres. Bilateralism provided a degree of autonomy and matrilocality for women, in which their landholdings would secure their position in the village and attract “husbands of poor backgrounds”, thus consolidating inter-village kinship connections. By bringing together a share of each parent’s property, the “household of the newly married couple”, the neolocal residence, was emphasized in this system (Janzen and Janzen, 1991:73). Loewen (2001:39), however, claims that the eventual complexity of the system in Russia actually destabilized the nuclear household,

and this required a strong “community authority to oversee its execution”. In this case the household members had to be constantly aware of the divisibility of their assets, and the weakness of its internal cohesion translated into increased power of community regulations.

Documents from the 19th century in Russia show how this system had been incorporated into the religious ideology: “We are unable to depart in the least detail from our rules regarding inheritance...[because] these regulations are closely connected [to] our religious beliefs and even based on them” (Peters, 1985:7). This probably occurred early in the Mennonite movement since the inheritance system coincided with a theological understanding of generalized egalitarianism and social cohesiveness.

Bilateral partible inheritance was thus not only an economic system based on kinship, but was incorporated into a larger religious ideology by Mennonites to sustain and recreate a particular social order. This system originated in the scattered homelands of the first Anabaptists, but only became fully developed as part of the religious order as the Mennonites formed communities distinct from other local populations in the Vistula region. This religiously sanctioned inheritance pattern was centred on the household.

Religious Doctrine

It was from the 16th to 18th centuries in the Vistula Delta that Mennonites fully consolidated their religious doctrines of adult baptism, pacifism, separation from the world, and community discipline *as part of a group identity*. Although there were numerous congregations differing in details of this ideology, the main tenets of the sect were consolidated and incorporated into a generalized communal lifestyle differing from neighbouring ethnic groups. Threats to this ideology and identity were one of the primary factors in their decisions to migrate. Three aspects of belief and practice that became central to Mennonite lifestyle and ethnic identity are listed below.

Dichotomization of Good and Evil: Purity and Worldliness.

The separation of good and evil was one of the main tenets of Christian faiths of the time, and was not in itself distinguishing of Mennonites. It was the decision to incor-

porate this dichotomy into daily community life to such a great degree that separated them from surrounding societies. Life on earth was not to be lived merely in the trivial cycles of sins, guilt, absolvment, and further sins. Rather, according to Anabaptists, life on earth was to be lived in imitation of Christ and the earliest churches in the New Testament. This imitation is often referred to as “discipleship”. They strove to organize themselves on the basis of a communal *Gemeinde* of like-minded believers. Early Anabaptists attempted to influence the larger state organizations with this ideology, but violent persecution put an end to these attempts. With the “world” incapable of being Good, a purely Christian life could only be maintained on a small scale, with dedicated believers. Purity as a form of discipleship was a major issue in community life, although its definition was based on the historical lifestyle differences of the congregations. It was an emphasis on discipleship and lifestyle that created the authority of orthopraxis, deviation from which became the subject of great discussion and sometimes punishment in the form of the Ban.

Social life was dominated by the ethical code of the *Gemeinde*, and the boundaries of this community contained most cultural exchanges, such as “marriage partners, the distribution of goods and services between brethren, and the transmission of ideas concerning the principle of faith” (Urry, 1989:38). Farming was the most common occupation in rural areas, with unique goods and services also being available within the community. Settlements were ideally self-sufficient, with as little contact and dependence on the outside world as possible, although trade was quite common and isolation was never complete. The theology of separation from “the world” contributed to the creation of an ethnic identity by combining both an actual physical separation of communities (imposed by the community and often by the state) with an underlying ideology to sustain it. “Mennonites...established not only separate social entities, but also attempted to develop distinctive cultural patterns from neighbouring rural communities” (Urry, 1989:40).

Adult Baptism

Adult baptism was not only the dedication of one’s life to Christ, but also (in con-

junction with a personal confession of faith), the method of gaining total membership into a *Gemeinde*. In the earliest Anabaptist era, adult baptism was an act of rebellion against the state and church as much as it was a union with a fellowship. During the period of West Prussian Mennonite settlement, however, it became a rite of passage for sub-adults into the community into which they were born and raised and an essential step before marriage. Only rarely were outsiders baptized into Mennonite communities. Thus the separation of the communities from the world was supported by an inner focus on social acceptance through baptism.

Although baptism was a personal acceptance of faith, it was also a public expression of this acceptance, and was performed as a symbolic, but explicitly non-supernatural ritual in front of the congregation. “In the public arena Mennonites agreed to subordinate themselves to the ethical rules of the community: baptism was a private act with public consequences” (Urry, 1989:36).

Pacifism

As mentioned earlier, pacifism was a central tenet of the Mennonite belief system. This was an interpretation of the actions of Jesus Christ, in which he neither supported violent action or even defence or resistance. It also stemmed from the disastrous events at Muenster and the peasant rebellion of southern Germany, where violent resistance to state forces ended in the destruction of the perpetrators and intensified persecution of other Anabaptists. Thus imitation of Christ and the survival of the movement coincided to support an ideology of absolute pacifism.

This extended to the maintenance of community discipline, in which no one was allowed to physically injure anyone else (except children), for any reason. Therefore, physical punishment was not practiced on those committing offences to the community. Early in the Anabaptist movement, and greatly supported by Menno Simons himself, the “ban”, or “shunning”, was introduced to deal with those stepping beyond the regulations of the *Gemeinde*. Unless repentant and willing to conform to community standards, the

offender is ignored by the community and his or her family, and refused any economic or social interaction. With no livelihood or social contact, life in the community becomes intolerable, and the offender must move out of the community boundaries. The ultimate form of passive aggression, such a punishment was only implemented for serious offences, although each specific congregational branch decided what these were.

Pacifism brought the Mennonites into repeated conflict with the ruling classes of their regions. Migration and expansion within the Vistula Delta was partly dependent on military service exemption for Mennonite men. However, during the Enlightenment period the governmental systems in Europe shifted from kingdoms to nation-states, and the subsequent orders found the old *Privilegium* irrelevant in new situations. The individual was expected now to be loyal to the idea of a state rather than to a single monarchial figure. This repeatedly created the conditions under which Mennonites felt pressure to migrate.

All three of these religious emphases demonstrate a stress on orthopraxis (correct living) in which the incorporation of belief into life is paramount and supersedes the codification of a particular belief system. This is not to suggest that the latter was unimportant, and indeed it informed the reasons for the constant schisms among Mennonites and other Anabaptist groups (although these splits were often based on, or incorporated, into behavioural differences). However, with emphasis on communal organization at the expense of a ruling priestly class, and with biblical interpretation occurring at the personal and congregational levels, orthodoxy was always at the mercy of orthopraxic adherence and innovation.

It was this orthopraxis which stood at the centre of Mennonite settlement and architecture, with both presenting opportunities for the physical manipulation of social and spiritual life.

Settlement Patterns

The native rural Polish and West Prussian inhabitants of the Vistula Delta were set-

tled in compact villages with architectural structures such as barns, dwellings, and sheds built as separate units among wealthy farmers (Bender and Smith, eds., 1959:2:149) and combined house and stable among the less wealthy. With the arrival of Mennonites in sparsely inhabited areas (*Werder*), they often settled along rivers, each farmer on his own land, with a street connecting the various farmyards. These farms were often built on marshland, and came to be known as *Marschhufendorfer*, or dike villages. It has been claimed that the compact Mennonite villages of West Prussia, and the retention of the single unit housebarn, was a product of the restricted settlement space allotted to the migrants in marshy, flooded areas and *Werder* of the Vistula (Ennals, 1998; Butterfield and Ledohowski, 1984:78-79). Friesen, however, indicates that at least some Mennonites in West Prussia “were used to a widely spread-out village pattern...whereby each farmer had a single plot of land including an individual farmyard” (2004:35).

The living quarters faced the street, while the connected barn and shed stretched out behind it towards the river. In this manner, each farmer would receive equal access to river water. In speaking of Mennonite settlements in the Mazovian land just west of Warsaw in the 18th century, Marchlewski asserts that “residences and fruit orchards were set on the land nearest the shore line. On the lowlands beyond the banks of the river, there were pastures, meadows and plough fields” (1986:7). This pattern of settlement enhanced group solidarity in two ways: locating households near one another with a clear link (the street) between them; and providing equal access not only to river shore line (and the dangers of flooding that went with it) but also the variable worth of pasture, meadow and farmland beyond.

An example of Mennonite settlement in the Mazovia region between 1750 and 1800, after the Mennonites were well established in the Vistula region, is outlined by Marchlewski (1986). He describes the settlement of the Mazovia flood and marsh region as “strictly planned and organized on the one hand by the settlers themselves, who were in need of new land, and on the other hand by the owners of the flood lands and marshes”

(1986:5). Mennonites were granted religious and personal freedom, judiciary jurisdiction over their own area, free rent for seven years, and forty years of guaranteed tenancy. In return, the nobility who owned the land were able to profit from the settlement of lands previously inhabited by Mazovian peasants involved in minor forest-related industries.

Initially, forests were cleared for farmland, creating the need to build canals and dikes to drain the land and control flooding, which was always problematic in the area. Communal labour was used to accomplish this during the initial seven year rent-free period. Damage caused by massive and irregular flooding was forestalled by building sand-retarding fences around fields, planting trees to block damaging ice-flows, and building entire housebarns on two to four meter high hummocks.

By the beginning of Mennonite migration to Russia in the 1780s, Mennonites were a minority in most villages where they had settled in the Lower Vistula region (Ludwig, 1961). They were becoming less isolated, and by the 1800s many began to adopt the Middle-German farmhouse, in which all buildings were separate and the dwelling took on a different form. Mennonites living in more isolated villages, especially in areas first settled according to “Dutch Right”, or the Royal decrees, appear to have adhered longer to the Lower Saxon housebarn building pattern (Dick, 1984:39). Thus by the late 1700s a Mennonite farm building tradition had formed, and was already being replaced by a more mainstream Middle-German tradition. The Mennonites who first left for Russia, generally the more conservative groups, carried the housebarn design with them, suggesting this form held more meaning in terms of tradition, ideology and group solidarity.

Mennonite Household Architecture in West Prussia

The household architecture of the Mennonites who settled in rural areas of the Vistula Delta was largely a continuation of the Medieval Lower Saxon farmhouse style, in which dwelling, stable and barn were all united under a single roof. This style includes Frisian, Saxon, and Brabant variations, all of which locate the three functional divisions on the same ground level floor (Oliver, 1998:1368-1380; Dick, 1984:9). It has been stat-

ed that the medieval Frisian form is the direct forerunner of the Mennonite Housebarn found in the Vistula region, with modifications occurring “during the various adjustments to new environments” (Bender and Smith, eds., 1959:2:150). However, the Mennonite populations moving to West Prussia came from a variety of Dutch, Flemish, Frisian, and North German backgrounds, and it is uncertain what exact combinations and influences of style the different settlers used in farmhouses in the new lands. Architectural scholarship in this area has emphasized the genealogy of structures, with a distinction made between “pure” or traditional forms and corrupted forms (Dick, 1984; Zahle, 1998). While acknowledging the detailed contribution of such studies, this study emphasizes social theory and the extent to which inhabitants use domestic architecture for social purposes. In effect, I wish to investigate the people through their homes, rather than the houses in and of themselves. That being said, the following is an historical outline of the development of various Mennonite forms of vernacular building. It is from this history that the housebarns of Manitoba are derived.

The Mennonite housebarn of the Vistula Delta had much in common with the German “hall-house” of Schleswig-Holstein and the longhouse of the Baltic coast, both of which featured a living area at one end attached to a stable and barn, with side entrances into the living quarters (Oliver, 1998:1364). The Frisian housebarn, found in northern regions of the Netherlands, began as a simple longhouse, or *Einhaus*, with dwelling, workroom, and byre for cattle under one roof with no partitions. This was not untypical of medieval households, in which privacy and work/dwelling divisions were less distinct than in later times (Janzen and Janzen, 1991:22). By the 16th century, this longhouse was divided into three compartments, sometimes referred to as the “head, neck and rump” (*kop-hals-romp*). The “head” was the dwelling area and the “neck” contained the dairy. The “rump” was a triple-aisle stable structure, with the largest middle aisle used for storing crops. This area was flanked by the two smaller, low-ceiling aisles containing the cattle on one side and the threshing floor on the other (Zahle, 1998:1372). Dick (1984:14)

claims the connection between the Frisian housebarn and the later Vistula Mennonite housebarn is tenuous because the orientation of the threshing floor in the Frisian barn is parallel to the other aisles and the ridgeline of the structure, while the threshing floor of the Vistula barn is perpendicular to the aisles and ridgeline.

Another form that had much in common with the Mennonite housebarn before 1700 is the Zeeland farm of southwestern Netherlands. It included a dwelling section attached to the stable and barns. The barns included horses and cattle along the outside aisles facing inward, and threshing floors found within the barn structure, but perpendicular to the main aisles (Zahle, 1998:1380).

Clearly, the Mennonite housebarn of the Vistula region had much in common with all these forms, which constituted generalized concepts of the attached barn and dwelling, long rectangular structures, and the triple-aisle, peaked barn section. It is possible that regional variations of this form were transplanted to the Vistula region and over time, as Mennonites became a distinct ethnic group, the number of variations decreased and a more homogenous form was created (Dick, 1984:20) to reflect new, widely-experienced Mennonite economic realities and ethnic values.

The Polish term *Holendrzy*, or “Hollanders”, was historically used to refer to the Frisian settlers of the 16th century, although not all of these were Mennonites, and future developments changed the ethnic meaning of the term (Myovich in Marchlewski, 1986:9). The term “Hollander house” is a confusing label used by some scholars to refer vaguely but largely to Mennonites, and is used to describe a house style with a small variety of interior arrangements. It has been used by Francis (1954) and Marchlewski (1986) to describe “a combination of the Slavic *Wohnspeicherhaus* [residential-shed-house] with the Germanic *Wohnstallhaus* [residential-stable-house]”, a combination that was widespread in federal Europe (Francis, 1954:57). Some versions include a distinct hallway and a more open, less centralized and secluded kitchen. The Mennonite/Hollander house was part of a widespread North Germanic *Flurkuechenhaus* design concept, which included “the use

of two or more unequally sized rooms around an off-centre central chimney stack” (Ennals and Holdsworth, 1998:174; see also Upton, 1998:24).

There are no known early remnants of Mennonite architecture in the Vistula region dated before 1600. By the 18th century, the Mennonite housebarn of the Vistula region was a clear combination of Frisian and local West Prussian-Polish Slavic design. Janzen and Janzen (1991:45) claim that Slavic, Germanic, Dutch, Baltic and Italian sources influenced the architecture that eventually represented Mennonite ethnicity. The varied groups of urban and rural Mennonites of the Netherlands that went to the Vistula region were familiar with both the Dutch Renaissance style and the more ancient longhouse tradition. Mennonites were influenced by Italian Renaissance architectural themes through everyday mercantile contact they had with the “worldly” citizens of Danzig and Elbing. This was specifically visible in the furniture that Mennonites were buying and making into the 18th century (Janzen and Janzen, 1991:50; Janzen, 1998:87).

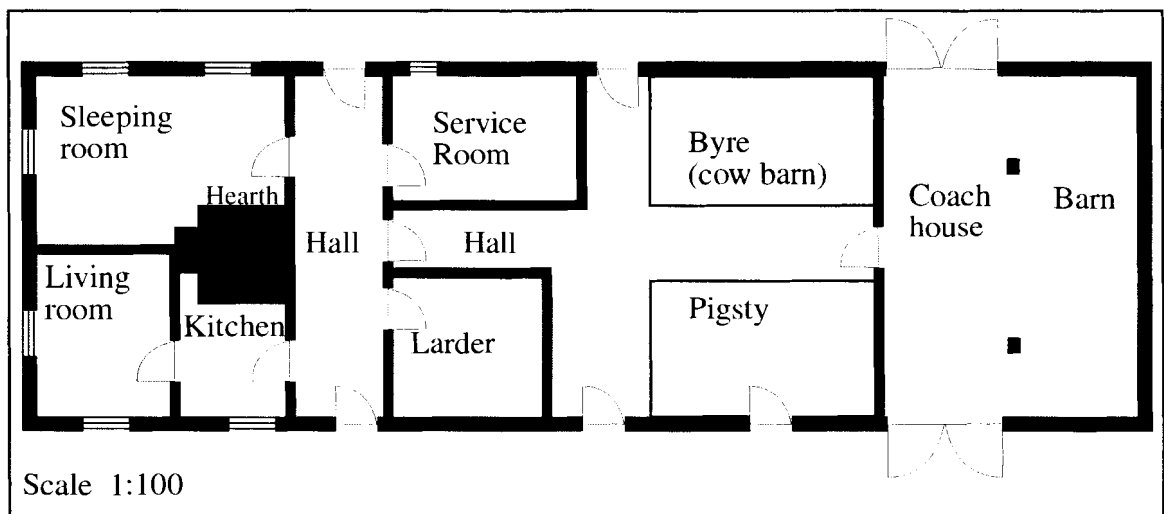


Fig. 3. Friesen Residence, Ellerwalde, Vistula Delta. (After Marchlewski, 1984: 90)

The unified house-stable-barn structure is clearly Dutch-North German in origin, and differed significantly from local rural populations, whose farm buildings were separate. Although Mennonites continued the building tradition of upright timber construction

and transom-rafter roofs of Northwestern Germany in their barns (Butterfield and Ledohowski, 1984:107) (See Figure 4), they adopted the log building technique for their residential sections from local populations (Slavic Kashubian or Kujawien).

Log construction provided quicker drying after floods than masonry or half-timbering, and also provided great warmth in the harsh Polish winters (Kundzins, 1949:14,19; Dick, 1984:32). By the 18th century, some Mennonites had introduced Baltic-style porches (*Vorlaube*) and ornamentation (based on early Medieval Viking designs) to their homes,

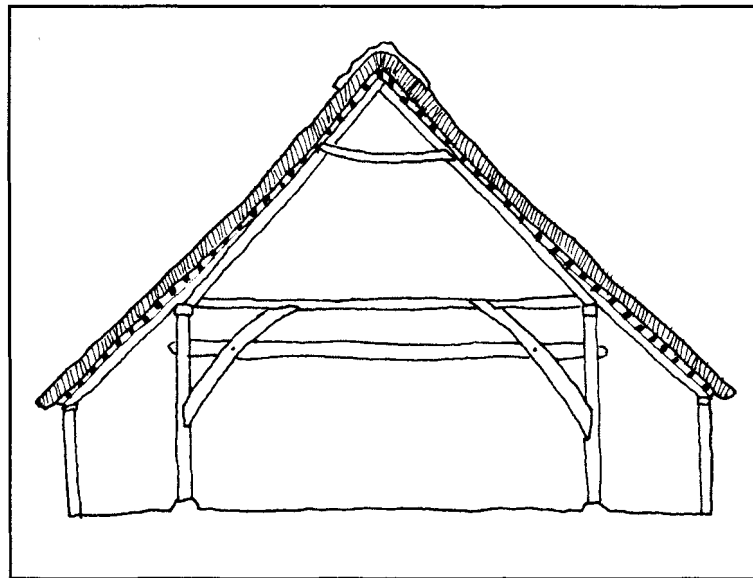


Fig. 4. Section of Medieval Danish Barn. (Butterfield and Ledohowski, 1984:107, by permission)

thus presenting a façade in keeping with local styles (Kundzins, 1949:19). The *Vorlaube* was attached to the front entrance of housebarns and Middle-German style houses, and consisted of a “supported gabled extension of the second floor” with room enough to drive a wagon through it (Dick, 1984:28) (See Figure 5). According to some Mennonites, “the number of columns supporting the *Vorlaube* were a measure of the amount of land (and hence, the wealth) of a farmer...one column representing one *Hufen* (about 16 acres)”

(Dick, 1984:29). It was in West Prussia and Poland that the ethnic identity of rural Mennonites began to be associated with the concept of the successful, landowning, farming household. The *Vorlaube* as status symbol is evidence of this trend.

Inside the home, the Mennonites incorporated two important Kashubian elements, including the *Schwoatet Tjaatj*, or “black kitchen”, which was “essentially a room-sized chimney” where cooking took place (Dick, 1984:21; see also Kundzins, 1949:15; Francis, 1954:57; Noble, 1984:157; Friesen, 2004:38). Smoke from this area was funnelled up a large chimney into a smoking chamber where meats could be hung and cured. The second incorporation of Kashubian design was the Slavic masonry heating stove, which was arranged around the black kitchen in order to share the same heating system. The heating stove was constructed of bricks or a wood frame covered in clay. The mass of masonry and the small, tight stove allowed for efficient, slow heat radiation based on low-grade burning fuel, such as willow branches, straw, and dried manure bricks (Dick, 1984:23). This large brick fireplace had brick extensions into each attached wall allowing the even heating of all rooms directly in contact with that feature. Thus the massive chimney and central brick oven of Kashubian-Slavic design were used for cooking, curing meat, and heating the home (Janzen and Janzen, 1991:45). This design was very old in the Vistula Delta region, dating to before the 16th century, and unique in Europe. Much of central and northern Europe continued to use hearths or tile ovens (rather than brick) into the 20th century (Janzen and Janzen, 1991:70). Light was sometimes acquired through the construction of windows in the walls of the black kitchen facing the main entrance rooms.

Although there is no absolute typical form for the living quarters of the Mennonite house in West Prussia, some common features applied. These included two entrance doors, neither of which faced the street, placed roughly opposite one another on the “sides” of the house. The floorplan was centred on the central brick oven and chimney. All the rooms around the hearth had two doors leading into adjacent rooms, thus creating a circular pattern of connecting spaces. The parlour or living room was situated in one cor-

ner of the front of the house facing the street, and doubled as a bedroom. Beside it, also facing the street, was a corner room. Neither of these rooms had doors leading outside. The black kitchen, as mentioned earlier, was in the centre of the home, and was flanked by two to five rooms, which contained the two exits to the yard and the one connection to the barn. It was usually in one of the rooms closest to the barn that the pantry and stairs to the upper story were contained. The upper floor was not usually finished, and was used for the storage of grains and equipment. Halls were unusual, and rooms led directly into one another.



Fig. 5. *Vorlaube* of Middle-German House in Tiede, West Prussia. Constructed 1802, Photograph 1917. Courtesy of the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives, Winnipeg MB.

There were other aspects of the Mennonite housebarn of the Vistula region which were particularly Dutch in origin and differed from the architecture of local populations. The split door (*Agter deur*), otherwise known as a Dutch door, was common and had upper

and lower halves that could be opened separately.

The *Beischlag*, a platform in front of an entrance to urban *Burgerhaus* was a product of Dutch/Flemish influence in Danzig in the 15th century (Dick, 1984:27). Mennonites would have known of this feature through their association with urban centres, particularly Danzig. The *Beischlag* was adopted in rural Mennonite housebarns and continued as a strong design element in Russia, often accompanied with a covered porch (Dick, 1984:27).

The interior of housebarns in the Vistula region often contained townhouse design elements, including “Baroque free-standing and built-in cabinets, and wainscotting in the ‘Danziger’ fashion” (Grisebach, 1917:94, translated by Dick, 1984). These elements were subdued in Mennonite housebarns, where built-in cabinets and wainscotting were present but not elaborate, and pictures and fashionable furniture coverings were avoided (Mezinski, 1975:49).

There is a clear association of the *Beischlag*, wainscotting, and decorated cabinets with Dutch Renaissance architectural fashion, which was copied by well-to-do rural farmers all over the Vistula region. Rural Mennonites had considerable contact with urban centres, and Danzig in particular, where other Mennonites lived. The association of these features with wealthy urban lifestyle, would not have been lost on rural Mennonite communities. They intentionally incorporated these “urbane” designs into their homes, although they simplified the Baroque excesses of decoration (Mezinski 1975:49). Examples of housebarn interiors in Russia and Manitoba would suggest that the retention of these elements was important, although they show great variation in detail and ornamentation, and in some cases severe simplification. These elements, during their incorporation into Mennonite housebarns, became part of a Mennonite ethnic architecture that included the production and stabilization of certain design elements (see Janzen and Janzen, 1991). The *Beischlag*, wainscotting, and standing cabinets, although shared by many groups in the area, were incorporated in a particular way in a Saxon-Kashubian dwelling and eventually became part of the architecture used for constructing Mennonite identity.

It is with these decorative elements that individuals could express their personal aesthetics and social status, while at the same time conforming to a standard set of ethnic concepts regarding appropriate expression. Personal expression was allowed within strictly bounded parameters, and the more conservative the Mennonite groups, the more rigid these parameters became. Variation of style within these parameters reflected the degree of conformity within a congregation, as well as a village itself. This theme of using certain appropriate architectural elements to express personality and status runs through Mennonite history well into Manitoba Mennonite settlement.

The stable for horses and cattle was attached directly to the house, with an opening between them mitigated by a short hallway. Attached to the stable was a barn for storage of hay, wagons and farming implements. The connection of the house to the stable and barn took on various forms, including I, L (*Winkelhof*), T and cross shapes (See Figures 6a-d). The I-shape was the most basic form, with the others being variations associated with increased wealth and larger barns. At some point an exceedingly long house-barn would have become impractical, and barns and sheds were added at right angles. Many poor, rural Slavic peoples of the Vistula Delta sheltered humans and animals in the same structure, but prosperous farmers separated these areas. Only the Mennonites continued to combine dwelling and stables as they grew wealthy and constructed larger and larger farmhouses (Dick, 1984:36). The I- and L-shaped housebarns were both transferred to the Manitoban landscape, although the I-shape was much more common.

The most common Mennonite architecture in the Vistula Delta was characterized by the combination of the Slavic-Kashubian log-constructed dwelling (containing the black kitchen) with the Lower Saxon barn, the use of urban Dutch decoration in house interiors, and the continued use of total house and barn attachment even in prosperous households. The combination of these elements was the product of over two hundred years of habitation and interaction in the Vistula Delta, and came to represent Mennonite ethnicity to varying degrees. While other architectural forms were utilized by Mennonites,

most notably the Middle-German house, it was the housebarn form that was carried by groups to Russia and later the New World. It was this form that carried meaning and instruction on what it meant to be a Mennonite.

The following four examples show different Mennonite housebarns from the West Prussian-Polish region, dating between 1725-1797 (Kundzins, 1949) (Figures 6a-d). In these examples one can see the differences in barn shapes as well as variation on the circular, linked placement of spaces. The latest example was owned by Eduard Schmidt and shows an entirely different, Middle German style of house, unconnected to the barn. This square form with arcaded halls was first established by Middle Germans settled under the protection of the Teutonic Knights, and was associated with large land holdings (Janzen and Janzen, 1991:69). It represents a departure from the Dutch-style rural home, and probably portrays a wealthy family engaged fully in the Germano-Prussian social world (Kundzins, 1949). According to Janzen and Janzen (1991:70), more Mennonites used the housebarn mode, but this square form was not uncommon.

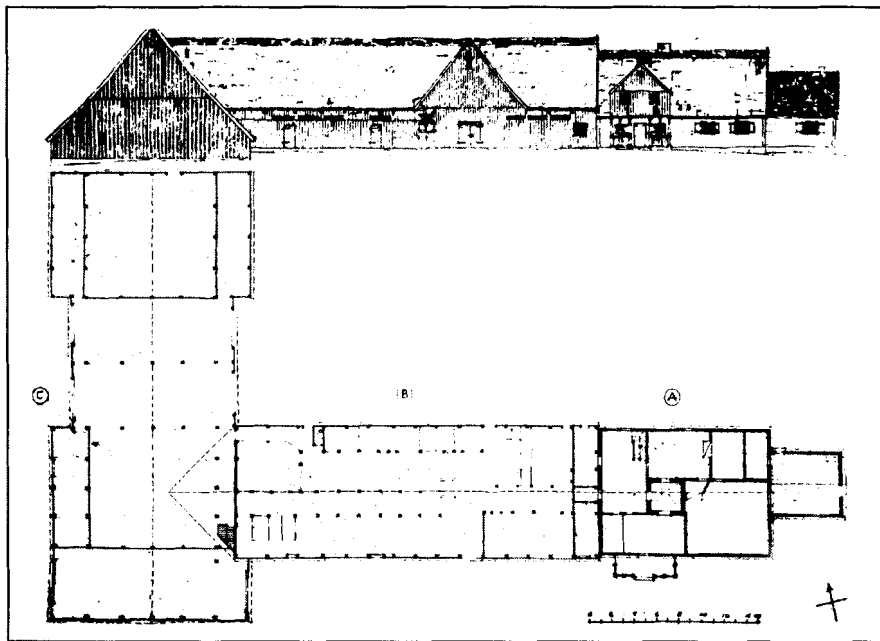


Fig. 6a House of Fritz Wiehler, Markushof, Marienburg. A. Dwelling B. Stable C. Barn. (Kundzins, 1949:3)

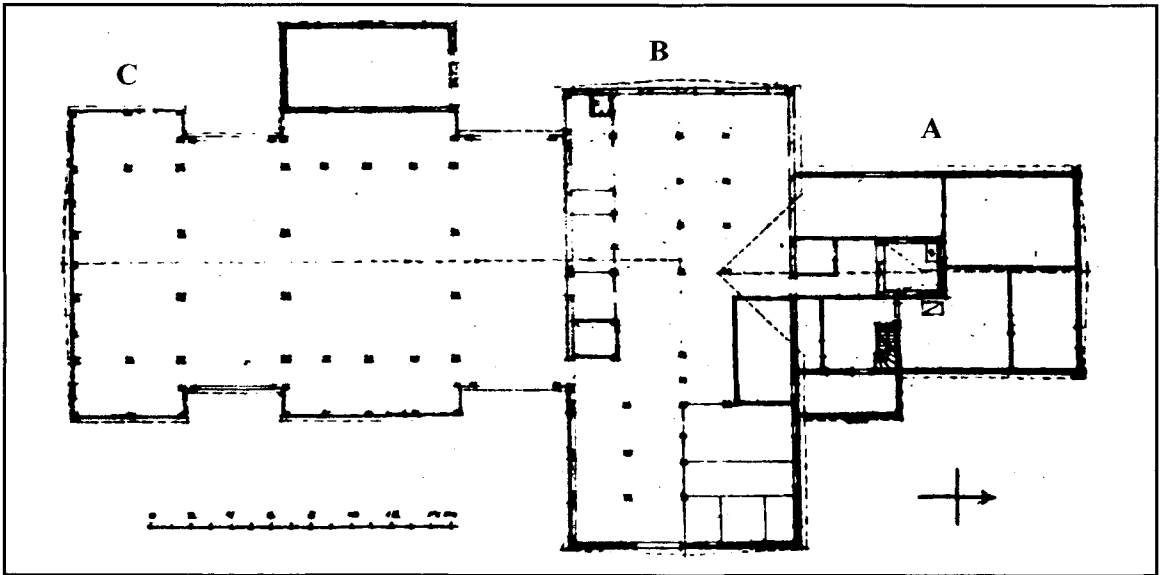


Fig. 6b House of Hermann Thiessen, Aschbude, Elbing. A. Dwelling B. Stable C. Barn.
 (Kundzins, 1949:4)

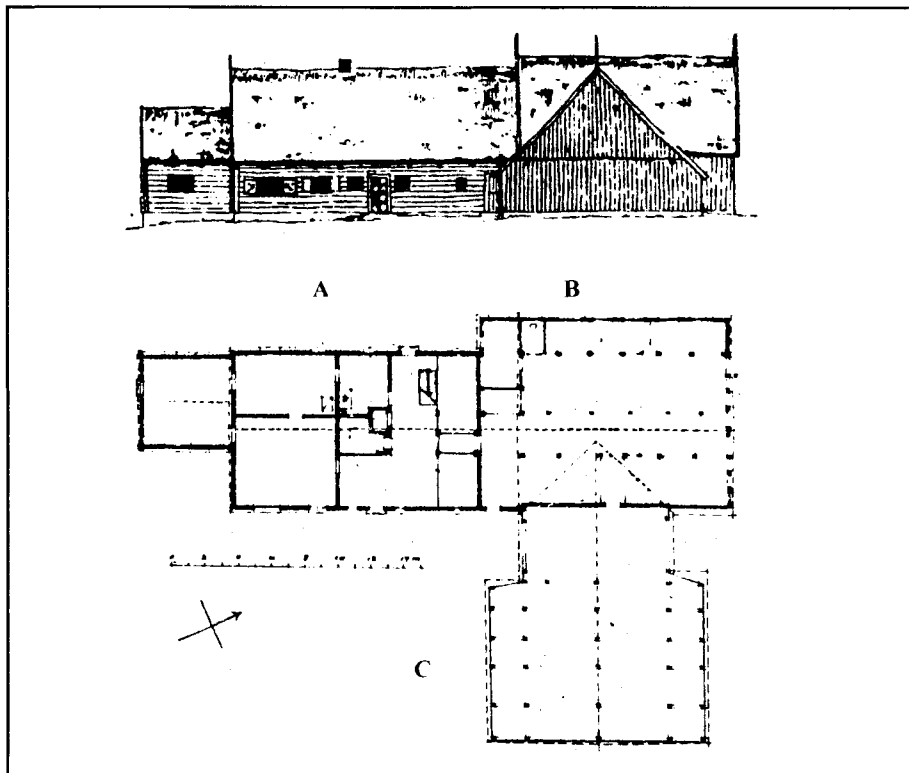


Fig. 6c House of August Wegner, Montauerweide, Stuhm. A. Dwelling B. Stable C. Barn.
 (Kundzins, 1949:5)

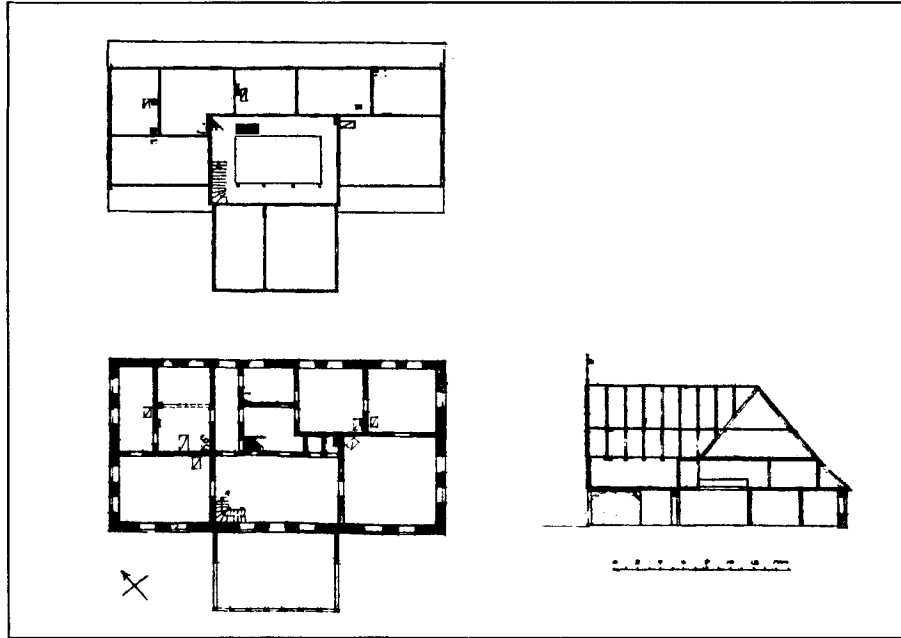


Fig. 6d House of Eduard Schmidt, Koenigsdorf, Marienburg. (Kundzins, 1949:7)

The Migration to Russia

Between 1550 and 1770, the Vistula region was constantly racked with warfare amongst competing states. Many of the areas in which Mennonites lived were under Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth rule, and this state was at war with and occupied by Swedish, Austrian, Turkish, Prussian, and Russian armies until 1773, when it was partitioned for the first time by Prussia. Prussia became increasingly militaristic, with visions of unity and power throughout the region and a government based on the rule of law.

In the Commonwealth period, Mennonites gained grants and privileges by royal decree and under local nobility. This was essentially a feudal system of law making, very different from the subsequent West Prussian bureaucratic rule. By 1777 rural Mennonites made up about two thirds of the roughly 12 000 Mennonites living outside of Danzig. The Mennonites were finding themselves in a difficult situation in which the large families and rapid expansion of rural Mennonite communities created population pressures. While expansion did take place, as in the southern movement of villages along the Vistula River, the restrictions on attaining new farmland caused many Mennonites to emigrate to towns and cities in search of work as merchants, craftsmen, distillers, millers, etc.

The Prussian King Frederick I (1688-1740) instated civilian military conscription, and although the Mennonites were able to secure military exemption, their ability to purchase land and expand settlement was curtailed. This was largely due to their predominance in certain regions, creating a problem for the cantonal quota system of Prussian conscription (Urry, 1989:48). King Frederick's successor, Frederick William II (1740-1786), enforced even stricter measures against the Mennonites concerning taxes and settlement restrictions. As the congregations interpreted it, they "would be forced off the land and away from the farming life into the urban areas, where congregational control had proved more difficult to enforce" (Urry, 1989:48-49). These restrictions were the worst conditions possible for a burgeoning agrarian population dedicated to bilateral partible inheritance, and mass migration seemed inevitable.

Answering the invitation by Catherine the Great of Russia to western European farmers, Mennonite delegates travelled to New Russia (currently Ukraine) in 1786 to evaluate lands proposed for settlement. This was an attempt by the Czarina to settle lands recently appropriated from the Turks through warfare. In 1789, 228 poor and largely landless families left West Prussia to establish in the Colony of Chortitza on the Dnieper River north of the Black Sea. In 1789, full land-purchase restrictions were placed on the Mennonites in West Prussia, and over the next sixty years, more than 10 000 Mennonites of a more varied and sometimes wealthy background settled in New Russia. Particularly important was the 1804 establishment of Molotschna Colony about 150 km east of the earlier Chortitza (thereafter also known as the Old Colony, or Altkolonie). Each colony had approximately 20 villages by the 1820s, each containing 25-30 households to begin with, with expansion occurring afterwards.

Thus the creation of Mennonite colonies in Russia was a product of both economic and religious factors, combining the pressures of landless, impoverished conditions with the erosion of religious and cultural freedoms. Eventually, military exemptions for Mennonites in West Prussia ceased altogether, and many more arrived to colonize the

Middle Volga region, over 600 km east of Chortitza.

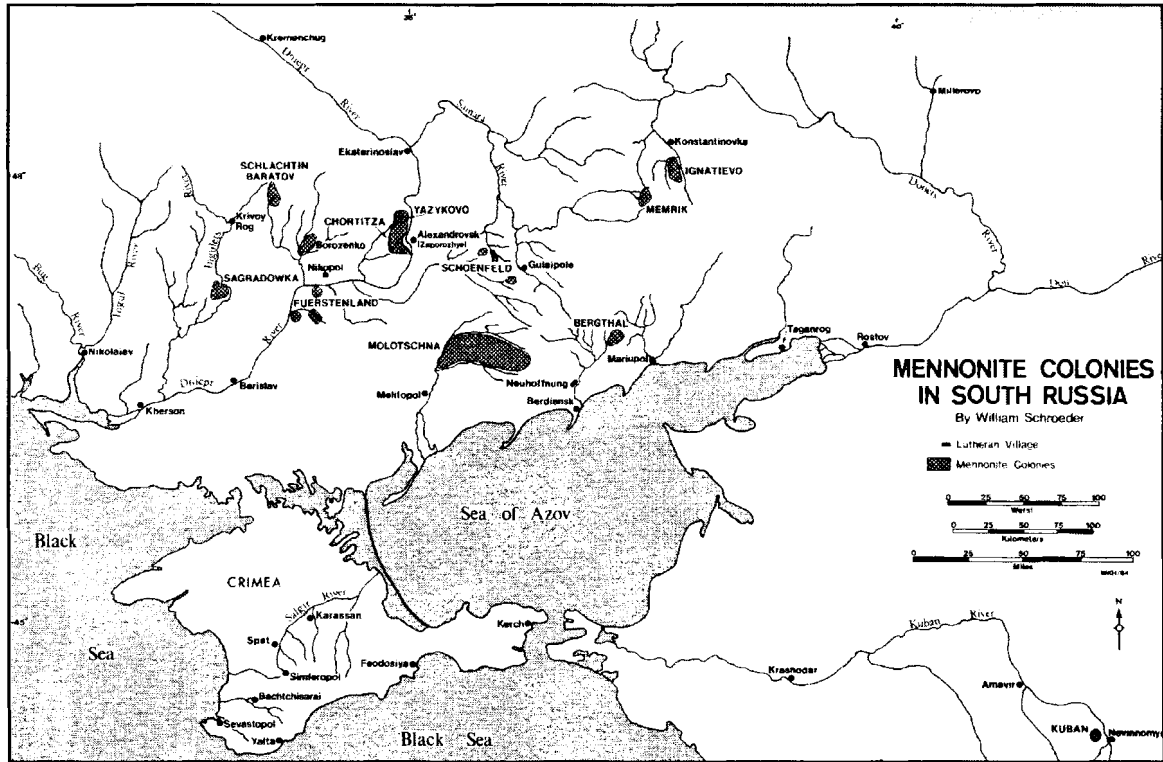


Fig. 7. Mennonite Colonies in Southern Ukraine (Schroeder and Huebert 1996:15, by permission)

Settlement Patterns in New Russia

Mennonite ethnogenesis began in West Prussia, where settlement patterns, economic and political restrictions, unique literature, language patterns, and religious ideology all served to create boundaries between Mennonites and other groups. The ethnic identity of Mennonites changed and was greatly reinforced in Russia. Even before the migration to Russia, many Mennonites in West Prussia were acculturating to the surrounding German population. E.K. Francis (1954:20) notes that “after some time the Mennonites in West Prussia were differentiated from their German neighbours only through their religion while the emigrants [to Russia] developed into a separate people, clearly distinguished from both the large society and other German-speaking colonists in Russia”. The Colonial Law of Russia, enacted in 1764, allowed for closed migrant communities that were meant

to practice some form of self-regulation. While they were not permitted to proselytize their religion to Orthodox populations, Mennonite communities had some autonomy in their local civic and religious affairs. Nevertheless, Mennonites engaged in intensive negotiation with Russian state officials and experienced some degree of industrialization of farming life. By the 1860s farm machinery, railways, cash crops, and centralized distribution centres connected the Mennonites to the larger capitalist system spreading throughout Europe. Mennonite ethnicity, rather than being buried by this progressive interaction, thrived as a unifying identity for individuals in an increasingly competitive world. In Russia, Mennonites took their ethnic identities and made them the basis of group cohesion.

The Mennonites transferred many of their West Prussian-Polish settlement habits with them when they came to Russia, but these were tempered and modified by Russian laws and the colonial nature of the migration. In West Prussia, Mennonite settlements were dispersed in rural and urban settings and had varied contact with other ethnic and economic groups in the 18th century. They were not colonies *per se*. When Jacob Hoepfner and Johann Bartsch, both farmers, traveled as delegates to Russia to investigate lands and possible settlement locales, they attempted to choose areas that would support a mixed farming economy and be reasonably close to the waterways and cities of New Russia for trade purposes (Urry, 1989:52; 2001).

Despite the uneven migration patterns of Mennonites into New Russia, ordered and long term planning characterized the settlement of the colonies, a program undertaken as a partnership between Russian government and Mennonite leaders. Each colony was divided into villages, and these into household plots, with the colony in control of rivers, lakes and wasteland. One-sixth of useable land (meadow, pasture, farmland) in a village area was set aside for population expansion, and areas further away were reserved for the settlement of entirely new villages. In addition each village had to reserve one-sixth of its household plot areas, for the construction of houses and workshops of craft and trades-

people not interested in farming (Rempel, 1974:52).

The earliest Chortitza colony villages were “located according to preference or to follow the natural lie of the land” (Urry, 1989:58). These settlers were largely poor craftsmen, and Friesen claims that “these Mennonite pioneers had never lived in compact settlements nor in their own villages” (2004:35). However, they quickly adopted compact village settlement in the Russian colonies. Village settlement, especially in the Molotschna colony, was organized in the *Strassendorf* formation, with a single street running through two rows of houses and yards. The houses were placed side by side, with the end of the dwelling facing the street, and the connected stable and barn extending back into the fields (See figure 8).

Each farming household was allowed 65 *desiatina* (1 *desiatina* = 1.092 ha) of land that included arable soils, meadow, pasture, and wooded land if possible. The house and farmyard plots were 1.5 *desiatina* in size, and a substantial wooden fence usually separated these plots. The land surrounding the house and barn contained a yard as well as gardens and orchards for household consumption.

There was often a school in the centre of the village, with a meeting-house (church) placed on the opposite side of the street. Every household had its own well, although there was also a well that was accessible to the whole community. At the end of the village was a windmill, and placed somewhere outside the village was a cemetery and a plot of forest land that could provide firewood. This village pattern of compact settlement along a single street eventually “came to receive religious sanction from the Mennonite church for its utility in reinforcing a particular ‘Mennonite way of life’, namely a social homogeneity and separateness from the outside world.” (Klippenstein, 1997:18; see also Urry, 1989:116)

By the middle of the 19th century, as some farmers were becoming wealthy and status differences became more pronounced in the villages, those who were poor or landless were found at the ends of the street villages (Urry, 1989:60). The richest were the

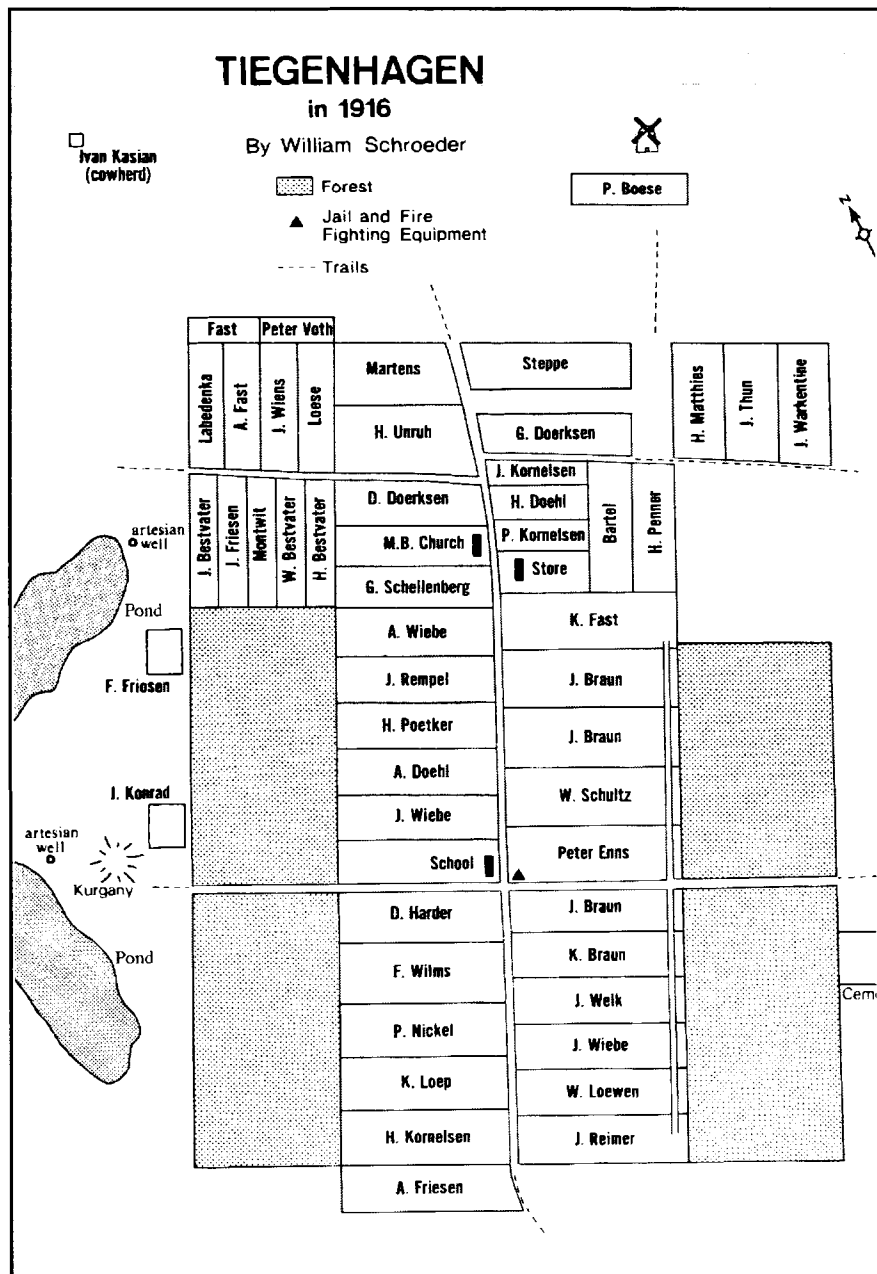


Fig. 8. Village of Tiegenhagen, Molotschna Colony 1918 (Schroeder and Huebert, 1990:24, by permission).

Vollwirtschaft, those who owned a full farm of 65 *desiatini*. These men could vote and dominated the village. Towards the ends of the village were tradespeople or *Anwohner* (cottagers), who had no farmland. Finally, the *Einwohner* lived in rented homes, usually on the outskirts, and were so poor they had to work as servants or labourers for other

wealthy Mennonites.

Economy in the Colonies

The economic situation in the Mennonite colonies of New Russia, although based on traditional mixed farming methods and communal landholdings, was also closely tied to Russian economic policies for the area. The Russian government was not satisfied with merely settling the region for nominal purposes, but hoped for a large-scale increase in colonial productivity. A reform of the colonists was meant to improve agriculture and crafts, manufacturing, and trade (Bartlett, 1979). This was undertaken by the Board of State Economy, established in 1797, and included directives towards the introduction and improvement of fine wool and silk industries and vine growing. Numerous sheep breeds were introduced into the area. By the late 1830s, most Mennonite households were involved, owning between 125-150 head. Other initiatives focused on beer brewing, flax and linen production, and tree cultivation (i.e. Mulberry trees, the leaves upon which silkworms fed). All of these projects were subsidized by state loans to colonies and individual households, although community initiatives received the most assistance. At first, involvement was voluntary, but eventually “official directives were issued and enforced by local administrators (Urry, 1989:87).

The main materials for surplus production and trade in the colonies included wheat and wool textiles. After the 1850s, wheat became the primary export as wool production faded, and the use of harvesting machines, the introduction of railways, milled wheat and English steam mills changed the nature of the previously provincial region. Trade was greatly magnified with cities and ports, and Mennonite dynasties based on factories, mills, and distilleries were increasing. This period also increased the demand for blacksmiths and carpenters, as well as creating pressure for cheap labour. Labourers were largely from poor Russian and Ukrainian backgrounds, but Mennonites were also hired as labourers and servants (Venger, 2001). Eventually, service and supply industries also became important within the colony centres.

Household Economy

From the very beginning of colonization individual households were the basic economic unit of the settlements. Farm work was labour intensive, and much of the household capital went to equipment and livestock. In the early years of settlement, the main concern was producing enough for household consumption, and dairy products, vegetable gardens, orchards, hog-raising, and some wheat, barley and rye were grown for this purpose. To an extent, the mixed farming and textile production of the Russian colonies was a continuation of the old way of life for Mennonites, as can be seen in the statistics of previous professions of settlers in the Molotschna region in 1808. Household heads gave the following figures: 61% were farmers, 14.5% linen weavers, 7.5% tailors, 10% woodworkers, with the remaining 7% made up of builders, smiths, shoemakers, and a clockmaker (Urry 1989:91). Thus the largest percentage of workers was involved in agrarian or cloth industries (83%). This mixed farming economy was prevalent throughout Mennonite existence in New Russia, but it was later tempered with large-scale wool production after the 1820s, and wheat production after the 1850s.

Many households possessed their own spinning wheel for linen and yarn production, and many of these homes also created their own clothing. This work, as well as food preparation and storage, was the domain of women. It is not known to what extent the increased production of wool and silk affected the household industry of clothing manufacture, since much of the material was traded to other regions. It is known, however, that silk, new to the Mennonite economy in Russia, was spun into yarn by young girls in the home (Urry, 1989:87). Thus government directives concerning such products as wool and silk had a direct effect on the household order of work activities.

The bilateral partible inheritance system of the Mennonites also changed somewhat during Mennonite settlement in New Russia. Russian law decreed that immigrants could not subdivide their landholdings amongst their children, so the partibility of the system was jeopardized. To lessen the impact of this law, the Mennonites set up a system in

which the inheritors could bid on the property, the highest bidder receiving it, and then he or she would pay the others their share in money (Rempel, 1933:110). In addition, the head of the household would make some provisions for those who did not inherit the property (Urry, 1989:61).

Loewen (2001:36) notes that this method of retaining Mennonite inheritance practice was codified within the first generation of settlement in Russia, and was tied to religious values and biblical interpretation. Supporting this practice was the *Waisenamt* institution (or “orphan’s bureau”), established in West Prussia, which was administered by two church officials. While its main function was to regulate inheritance, it also assisted widows and orphans and served as a savings bank. The ideal of the *Waisenamt* system and the Mennonite laws of inheritance lay in the equal rights of husband, wife and all children in their economic portions of the farmstead. This did not translate into control of finances or production (this was ideally the office of the head male) but had direct and specific consequences after the death of a parent. If a widow remained unmarried, she chose two “curators” or *Gute Maenner*, to help with financial transactions, although she retained the right to operate the farm activities on her own.

The incorporation and reproduction of an ethnic inheritance pattern with religious ideology, the reproduction of the system through the generations, and its eventual codification, demonstrates the importance Mennonites conferred on the household. As the colonies grew and became prosperous, the Partition Regulations became longer and more complex. By 1857, “the range of scenarios in the event of the death of both wife and husband, or of living descendants, had changed from a series of haphazard stop-gap amendments to a complex code that outlined in detail the meaning of ascending, descending, and lateral lines of inheritance” (Loewen, 2001:39). Clearly the inheritance system, and thus family life, was coming under increasing control from Mennonite communal bureaucracies, which were influenced by the larger Russian state. To the colonies, this control was justified by the religious principles of “equality”. The system retained certain community

values in the face of a quickly changing society involved in industrialization, interregional capitalism, population growth, and increasing social stratification.

Bureaucratic control was also becoming a part of a larger concept of community regulation towards a general purpose. This purpose was “progress” as conceptualized in the dominant European philosophy of the time, and as manifested in the work of certain community leaders in league with Russian officialdom.

Social Control, Education, and the Idea of Progress

With the support of the Russian government, certain Mennonites were able to gain considerable control over the affairs of colonial communities. Mennonites became increasingly involved in secular and official government, a policy at odds with earlier Anabaptist beliefs. In early Anabaptist history it was not considered appropriate that a Christian should judge the conduct of others in worldly matters (Epp, 1974:27; Ens, 1994:3). Christian life had to be separated from that of the state, and although the latter was ordained by God, obedience followed only insofar as it did not contradict Biblical obedience to God (Ens 1994:3). In the Vistula Delta Mennonites were never granted citizen status. In New Russia they were required by foreign immigration policies to govern themselves at village and district levels according to Russian instructions. Each village was a separate unit with a mayor (*Schulze*) elected by household heads making up the community assembly. This assembly had great local powers, and controlled such issues as taxation, the hiring of teachers, preachers, herdsmen, the assignation of land to farmers, and crop rotation (Ens, 1994:6). The *Schulze* and his assistants also had great power in most affairs, including the morality and church attendance of villagers, although their decisions could only be ratified by the community assembly (Ens, 1994:6). A group of villages formed a district (*Volost*), which worked in the same way a community assembly did, with each village having a representative. The decisions of the *Volost* assembly were binding for all villages. Together the *Volost* assembly elected an *Oberschulze*, or reeve, to represent the colony to the Russian government, and with a small bureaucracy he admin-

istered the affairs of the entire district or colony. This included such things as maintaining peace and order in the community. Sentences imposed on offenders (with the permission of the offenders' home village Schulze), could include fines, incarceration, public labour, or corporal punishment. It is clear from this system of administration that although communal power still held sway in the community assembly, the larger administrative unit now had powers greatly out of keeping with original Anabaptist beliefs. This system was part of a larger push by Russian authorities to control and guide settlements in New Russia towards economic progress and "good government".

One hundred and fifty years after his death, Johann Cornies is still a contentious figure for Mennonites of Russian background. At the age of twenty-eight, Cornies (1789-1848) was appointed official mediator between the Mennonites and the Russian government. He became the permanent chairman of the Agricultural Association in 1817, and thereafter used this organization to reform agricultural practices, education, and other related issues. Cornies became quite wealthy, and at the time of his death controlled 25 000 acres, and keeping 8000 sheep, 500 horses, and 200 head of cattle.

Under Cornies' influence, the educational system changed dramatically. In the didactic system of the Prussian Mennonite schools of the 17th and 18th centuries, students were taught enough to read and write minimally, and to become competent with calculations necessary for farming. Important to the system was the memorization and replication of religious doctrine, as spelled out in the catechism. Students were not encouraged to compete, but to attain the same level of skills. With these basic skills and religious knowledge, students were discharged from elementary school in their early adolescence to become productive farmers and fully socialized members of the community.

Cornies' reforms were based on the educational theories prevalent in Germany and West Prussia in the early 19th century. This knowledge was initially provided by Mennonite settlers coming to the Russian colonies from West Prussia after 1800, where educational reforms had begun. Under the system Cornies implemented in the 1830s

(which included the introduction of secondary schools), new pedagogical techniques were stressed. Teachers were trained with specific methods based on European educational models, and competition between students was supported and rewarded.

This was a challenge to conservative communities, who expected direct transference of knowledge and belief, and the repression of pride. Educational reform occurred slowly. By 1850 only about ten percent of over 16 000 people in the Molotschna colony had attended secondary schools (Urry, 1989:164).

The attempt at guided control of Mennonite community life by the Russian authorities and Mennonite civic leaders such as Cornies demonstrates the influence of Enlightenment philosophy and the concept of “progress” in ruling circles. Nevertheless, the actual influence on the colonies of such attempts was slow and in some cases thoroughly spurned. Those individuals and groups who accepted these influences were considered “progressive”, while those who rejected or fought them were considered “conservative”. The attempts at reform and control by the civic Russian and Mennonite authorities spread to the household architecture of Mennonites as well, in the form of “model” farms and architectural ideals presented through agricultural periodicals.

Mennonite Household Architecture in Russia

The form of household architecture in the New Russia Mennonite colonies was transplanted from the villages of the Vistula Delta, but over time the institutional control of communal life and increasing social stratification both changed and codified their design and construction.

The earliest homes in Russia were sod dugouts, or *semilins*. These were soon replaced by timber framed houses with walls filled with an earth and straw mixture. Other construction methods included walls made of “grooved vertical timbers spaced about 2.4 meters apart with tenoned logs, measuring 20 cm by 20 cm, stacked horizontally between them” (Friesen, 2004:37), a similar construction method to some early Mennonite houses in Manitoba. Roofs were thatched with grasses or reeds. Often a separate cooking build-

ing, known as the summer kitchen, was placed near the main dwelling structure. It is not known when Mennonites developed this feature, but it may have first occurred in Russia in response to the long, hot summer months, when indoor cooking in the “black kitchen” would have become intolerable.

Due to the general poverty of the first settlers in the Chortitza colony, most houses only had two rooms until about 1815. In the second generation houses became larger, reaching up to 20 feet in width and 40 feet in length (See Figure 9). Kroeker (1981:72) claims these houses typically had “three rooms and a kitchen ... 8 windows, a door for each room, and a single entrance”. The attic above the dwelling area was used for grain and implement storage. This served to keep the grains safe from bandits (a concern in the recently settled area still prone to Cossack, Nogai, and Tatar activity) as well as providing extra insulation (Butterfield and Ledohowski, 1984:80; Urry, 1989:60), although it was already a custom in the Vistula region.



Fig. 9. Mennonite Housebarn on the Kamp of the Island of Chortitz, South Russia. Courtesy of the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives, Winnipeg MB.

Reports from the West Prussian travellers Reiswitz and Wadzeck in 1820 outline

the extent to which the colonies in Russia replicated previous buildings and settlement patterns. Concerning the first colony of Chortitza, one states, “The buildings in these villages have been patterned largely after those here [West Prussia]; but because of the scarcity of lumber, which had to be transported overland...home-made, sun-baked mud bricks, together with wood studding, were used in its place. Many farmers still did not have all the necessary farm buildings when I visited them in 1817.” (Friesen, 1978).

The same traveller states of Molotschna, “The villages of this colony are laid out in a regular pattern, with wide streets and ditches on either side that run through it, and no more than twenty farmers. The buildings are uniformly patterned after those here [in West Prussia], and already one can find some good homes. The earlier buildings of the Old Colony [Chortitza] were built in an irregular manner, but now everything is strictly regulated: at first the buildings were erected fifteen rods apart, then twenty, and finally, in 1818-1820, twenty-three rods in order to leave sufficient space for gardens and provide a degree of safety against fires. Next to each home there is an orchard with a promising stand of new trees, while industry and love of order are everywhere apparent.” (Friesen, 1978).

By about 1840, with the advent of the third generation of settlers, a standard construction plan had evolved (Kroeker, 1981:72). Variations on this plan depended largely on funds. Some dwellings were now 30.3 feet wide and 52.5 feet long, with ceilings 7 feet high and increasingly divided space in the interior.

Two articles published in Russia from the mid-19th century show the degree to which agricultural reform projects and Russian government involvement began to make inroads into the Mennonite home. Both explain in detail the “proper” methods of building the house and farm buildings, and thus reinterpret and sanction the Mennonite vernacular form of building. In this regard they also attempt to restrict variation and individual expression in design. A form of Mennonite material culture became the “official” rural architecture of Germans in South Russia, further stabilizing it as a marker of ethnicity.

An instructional article entitled “Rural Architecture: General Remarks”, by Ph. Jaensch comes from the *Unterhaltungsblatt fuer deutsche Ansiedler in suedlichen Russland*, or the “Literary Supplement for German settlers in southern Russia” (1846). Johann Cornies was in league with the founder of the journal, Eduard von Hahn, both of whom worked in conjunction with the Ministry of State Domains towards agricultural reform. The journal was distributed to all the colonies through local government offices, to be further disseminated to landowners and officials (Urry, 2002: personal communication). The article attempts to standardize the practice of constructing dwellings and farm buildings, and makes explicit the necessity of both leadership and community dominance in design and construction:

All human existence has its rules. If we wish to live happily here below, in human society we must be willing to learn. ‘Obedience is the first obligation’...Therefore one may not murmur, when through wise decree it is required that the private interest (of the individual) must give way to the interest of the whole group. So it is in architecture: the group or community must go before the individual and utility before beauty. If human understanding can combine the useful with the beautiful, the individual with the collective, without great sacrifice, then it is much more pleasant, useful and profitable. [Jaensch (1846:49-51), translated in Dick (1984)]

The author states that in regard to rural architecture the community is more important than the individual, buildings should be standardized, and that individual expression in design is beautiful only in so far as it does not contravene normative practice. The reference to murmuring against wise decree implies that there was indeed murmuring, possibly directed at reforms unpopular among many Mennonite communities (Urry, 1989).

The article prescribes specific measurements for many household features, to be used with either a 6- or 4-room layout. This included “minimum roof overhangs (71 cm); minimum ceiling height (2.7m); chimney heights and exterior windows sizes (89 cm high by 71 cm wide); and door sizes (213 cm high by 98 cm to 107 cm wide)” (Friesen, 2004:46). It also included requirements for firewalls between houses and barns, barn dimensions, spacing between buildings and even between households on different lots.

In 1852, Philip Wiebe, who was then president of the Agricultural Union, published a plan for dwellings, barns, and yards in the *Communication of the Royal Free Economic Association of St. Petersburg* (1852: 52-55) (See Appendix 1 for full translation). Wiebe was the son-in-law of Johann Cornies, the previous chairman of the organization, and had taken over the implementation of Cornies' reforms. Ohrloff was at this time the chief village of the Molotschna colony and the residence of Wiebe (See Figure 10). The housebarn plan is probably based on a wealthy farmstead from this settlement, and perhaps his own dwelling (which was formerly Cornies'). The Wiebe publication is an excellent source of information on how Mennonite officials believed housebarns should be constructed. It makes a distinction between large and small houses, and includes a diagram and explanation of the larger, more expensive of the two. This was considered more modern and perfected, and the article espouses its construction through the use of illustrations (and by omitting illustrations of the impoverished version).



Fig. 10. Housebarn of Johann Cornies, Ohrloff, Molotschna Colony. Courtesy of the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives, Winnipeg MB.

Construction materials and technique differed for the two kinds of dwellings. “A large house is commonly built with fire-baked bricks and covered in roof tiles, while a

small one is built with raw bricks on a stone foundation and covered in thatched roofing” (Translated from Wiebe, 1852:53-54) (See Figures 10 and 11).

There were three other main differences in the two house sizes. In the larger house the main entrance room was larger, and had a window to the left of the entrance. The entrance room also had an attached, enclosed porch with windows, thus extending the entrance area significantly and splitting it into two rooms: the outer and inner entrances. Finally, the formal parlour was enhanced in width, making the room significantly larger. The differences noted for the larger houses (the porch, the larger entrance room, and the expanded parlour) all show a concern with presenting a more elaborate route into the house and particularly the formal parlour. In a footnote in the article, a commentator notes that the main difference between the large and small houses is the dimensions of rooms, and so only an illustration of the larger was used (Wiebe, 1852:53). In the same way the size and material of barns was different for wealthy and poorer farmsteads. Wealthy farmers often had stables built of brick rather than wood.

The distinction between small and large houses was based on wealth, and therefore the social position, of the village inhabitants. As mentioned, by the 1840s obvious social stratification had occurred, and full landowners were both wealthier and had more prestige and power (through the voting system). It was primarily these landowners who would have owned the large brick and shingled houses, while their poorer neighbours would have owned the “raw brick” and thatched homes. In this way, the larger brick and shingle houses identified landowners of status, wealth and position in the village and the larger Mennonite community. Meanwhile, their basic floorplan and shape were similar to poorer houses, thus retaining a communally shared house form and its attendant values. A further interesting development outlined by Friesen (1996:33-34) was the construction of very large, elaborate brick and plaster gateposts and fences towards the end of the century. These were placed on the road outside the yard, and “appear to have become a way of expressing the status of the farmyard’s inhabitants” (Friesen 1996: 33) (See Figure 10).

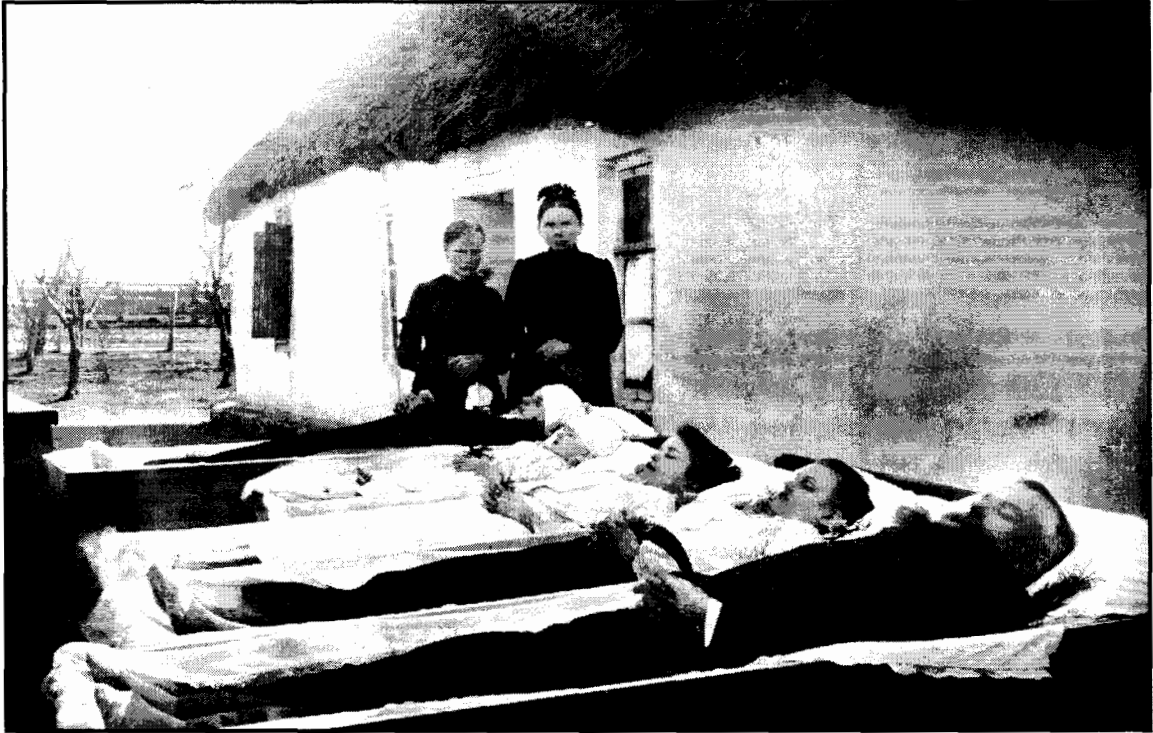


Fig. 11. Jakob Ens residence, Friedensruh, Molotschna Colony, 1918. Thatched roof and mud brick construction with mud plastering. The deceased were killed by marauders during the Russian Revolution. Courtesy of the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives, Winnipeg MB.

The names given to the different rooms of the dwelling are given in High German in the Wiebe article, and they correspond only roughly to their Low German equivalents. The High German names used in the diagram (Figure 12) denote room *function* for the benefit of non-Mennonites and Mennonites alike. The Low German names for rooms describe their *location* in the house or their size. For a Mennonite, knowing the location of the room meant knowing its functions. These Low German names were common in Manitoba, and stemmed from their use in Russia and West Prussia.

The following is a list of the High German names from Wiebe (1852) and Low German names for the rooms of the Mennonite household, with direct English translations.

High German	English
a. Reines- oder Besuchzimmer	Clean or Visiting Room
b. Schlafzimmer	Sleeping room
c. Wirtschafts- oder Speisezimmer	Work or Mealroom
d. Kueche	Kitchen
e. Hausraum	House room (hall)
f. Speisekammer	Pantry
g. Bodentreppe	Stairs to the attic
h. Kellertreppe	Stairs to cellar
i. Gang in den Stall	Hall to the stable
k. Sommerstube	Summer room
l. Beischlag	Platform/area before entrance
m. Defer	Ovens/Fireplaces (?)
Low German	English
a. Groote Stow	Large/great room
b. Atj Stow	Corner room
c. Tjliene Stow	Little room
d. Tjaatj	Kitchen
e. Vaeathues /Hinjethues	Front & Back of the house
f. Koma	Pantry
i. Gang	Hall
k. Somma Stow	Summer room
m. Teajelow	Oven or Brick Oven

This Low German ethnic Mennonite lexicon of room names was based on the assumption that another Mennonite hearing these words understood where that room was located and what was normally done and placed there (See Figure 12). The rooms were more multi-functional than the Wiebe article would suggest. In the large Mennonite families, often consisting of over eight children, sleeping space was at a premium and space-saving furniture was built to perform as beds and benches or couches. These could be placed in any of the rooms. Thus a workroom or formal parlour was also a bedroom. What Wiebe describes as “House rooms” were common rooms used for sleeping, eating, preparing food, working, and visiting on a daily basis. They are split into “front” and “back” rooms in Low German to denote formal and informal entrances, with the formal being

closest to the parlour. The *Atj Stow*, or corner room, was often the bedroom of the parents and infants. The *Tjliene Stow*, or little room, was a bedroom for children and girls, and doubled as a workroom; the *Somma Stow*, or summer room (so named because it often lacked heating, being separate from the central oven system) was used by older children, especially teenaged boys. These are the general characteristics of room functions, although variations occurred depending on family structure, as we shall see in the data obtained from Manitoba.

Mennonite Public Buildings in Russia

Schools and prayer houses (*Bethaueser*) were the first public buildings in the Mennonite colonies, and greatly resembled the architecture of the houses. In West Prussia, the Mennonites were first allowed to construct separate churches for their villages in the 1750s, as opposed to confining their religious meetings to barns or houses. Nevertheless, “their prayer houses were not permitted to resemble churches” (Friesen, 1996:26). Many Mennonite worship buildings were thus constructed in the manner of homes, and resembled houses in proportion and decoration.

Over time the Mennonites of Russia adopted various architectural forms for some of their congregations. Liberal groups began to construct churches that exhibited more ornate decorations, including Baroque and then neo-Gothic windows, until by the end of the 19th century they fully resembled modern churches throughout Europe (Friesen, 1996:26; 1999). Other communities retained most of the *Bethaus* features, and carried this design concept with them to Manitoba and the central United States.

By the middle of the 19th century in Russia, changes began to take place in other public buildings. Johann Cornies decreed new construction techniques for schools that allowed more light, and included a hip gable roof. After 1860 industrial buildings such as factories and mills owned by Mennonites were increasingly common in Mennonite centres and non-Mennonite towns and cities. They were the first of their kind in the area and mimicked industrial buildings in other parts of Europe, with extensive decoration and

elaborate brickwork (Friesen, 1996:33).

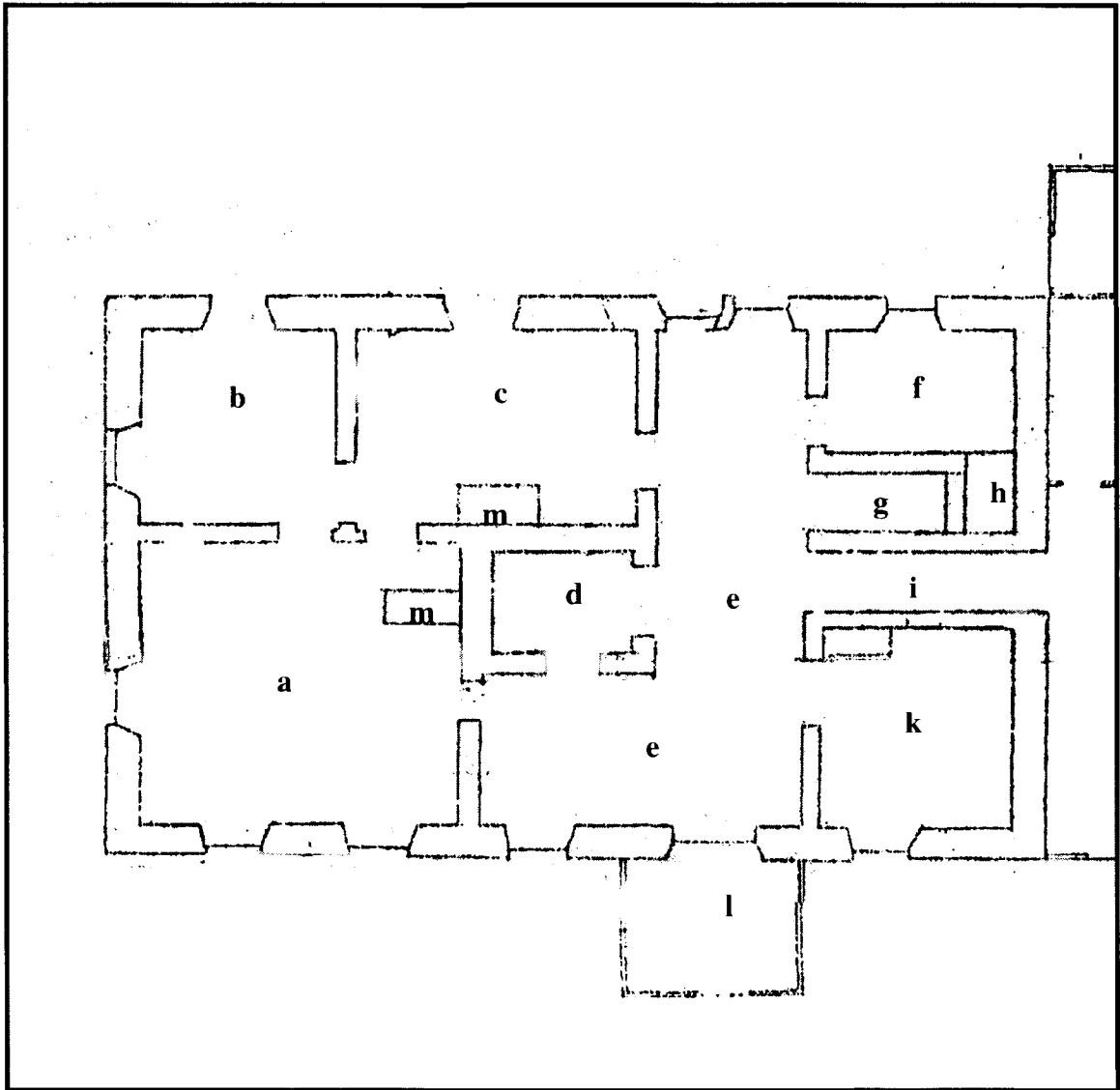


Fig. 12. Housebarn floorplan (Wiebe, 1852:53).

By the 1900s, new houses owned by the wealthy, churches, schools and other buildings began to incorporate, if not entirely imitate, European trends in architecture. The economically influential members of Mennonite society began to dominate and dictate symbolic styles of public buildings, as well as influence the idea of the domestic dwelling.

The Migration to Manitoba

The Mennonites chose to leave Russia in the 1870s and afterwards for a variety of reasons, and migrated to different regions of the world. The largest migrations were directed towards the central United States and Manitoba, Canada.

In 1870 the Russian government planned a reform program that would make the Russian language compulsory for all citizens and enforce conscription of all young men into the army. With government supervision of schools, many thought the deep connection of their church language (High German) and their religious heritage would be jeopardized (Lohrenz, 1974:15). Their non-violent stance would also be distorted by accepting military conscription, and although the government eventually allowed alternative service, many believed this depletion in their ranks of young men into Russian service would be disastrous.

To add to these uncertainties, the colonies were becoming overcrowded and there were a large number of poor, landless families due to economic and social stratification. This was precipitated by the exodus of the large semi-nomadic Nogai society from the Molotschna colony in the 1860s. Since the Nogai leased pastureland to landless Mennonites, this created a major land crisis in the colony (Staples, 2000:247). The Russian government ceded the land to Bulgarian colonists. Expansion of Mennonite colonies was not permitted directly around the mother colonies, and the government only supported daughter colonies if they were placed hundreds of kilometers away. The inconsistency of the position of Mennonite officials in colonies such as Molotschna, where imprisonment and punishment were practiced against offenders, was also at the heart of dissatisfaction with the direction of Mennonite life in Russia.

After a delegation to the Russian authorities failed to secure the *Privilegium* set forth by Paul I in 1800, serious consideration was given to mass migration. Cornelius Jansen, a grain merchant and West Prussian consul in the port city of Berdyansk, contacted the British consul about the advantages of Canada and its policies concerning military exemption and land availability. With Canadian officials interested in the possibility of

organized settlements on the prairies, preparations were undertaken. The United States became involved in 1875, with a delegate, C.B. Schmidt, sent in 1875 to convince as many Mennonites as possible to move to Kansas.

In 1873, a delegation of twelve men representing the colonies went to North America to see the possibilities for themselves. They checked the condition of the soil, climate, and the conscription situation. On their return, the delegates from the more conservative colonies in Russia suggested Canada. Those who came to Manitoba, mostly from the Bergthal, Kleine Gemeinde, and Furstenland-Chortitza groups, “distinguished themselves from their co-religionists who settled in the United States by the importance they attached to a *Privilegium*, which would once more define for them a separate status in their new home” (Ens, 1994:231). By the end of 1874, about 6500 people had left Russia, and by 1880, there were about 10 000 in the U.S. and 7000 in Manitoba. Together this represented about one third of the Mennonite communities in Russia.

Urry (1989) outlines complex and varied reasons for the migration to North America, without presenting a common motivation that united the emigrants. While there may have been no unifying “reason” or plan to which all emigrants would have adhered, there may have been a “transcendent motivation” on the part of certain groups (Guenther, 2000:168). Guenther claims it was a “practical expression of faith in Christian communities” in the “conservative” Mennonite groups (as represented in the writings of their leaders) that was the underlying and common motivation for migration (2000:168). I suggest that this “practical expression of faith” was in fact a part of Mennonite *habitus*, the orthopraxis that demanded adherence to economic and social order traditions. This orthopraxis was a strongly united and bounded ethnicity, which found its greatest expression in the “conservative” groups of Russia that migrated to Manitoba.

This can be illustrated by a list of motivations that the immigrant Mennonites moving to Manitoba shared, according to Zacharias (1999:5):

1. opposition to military and alternative service

2. general opposition to “Russification”
3. a desire to settle in villages
4. a desire for “*en bloc* settlements”, in which they would control a block of land as a colony, instead of being dispersed and mingled with other ethnic groups
5. a desire to control their own schools, where they could teach their religious (Mennonite) doctrine and language (German)

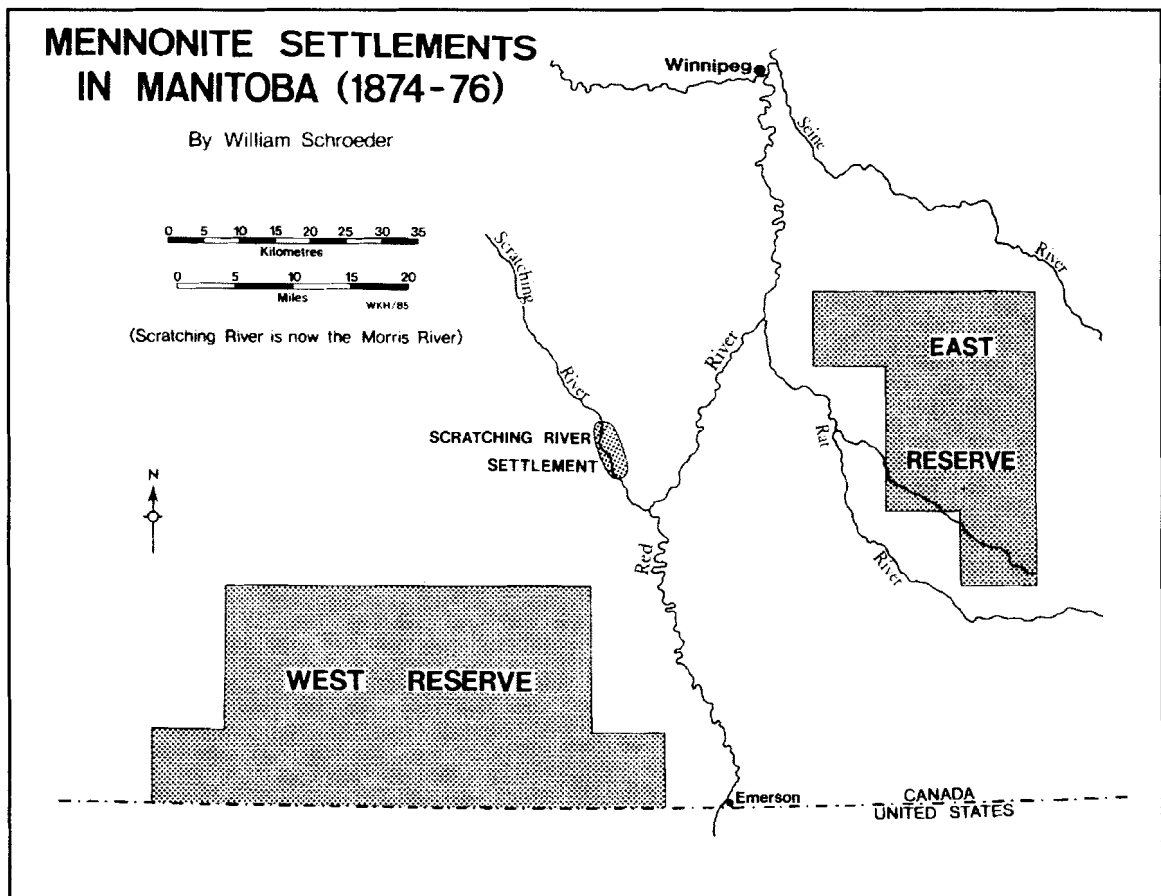


Fig. 13. East and West Mennonite Reserves of Manitoba. (Schroeder and Huebert, 1990:63, by permission)

All except the first trait in the list show a deep concern with the maintenance of an ethnic residence pattern, in which settlement patterns, economic practice, religion, and language figured prominently. The first trait, a commitment to pacifism, is central to

Mennonite theology, as well as being a source of distinction from mainstream society and government policy.

Mennonite Settlement in Manitoba

The Canadian government created the province of Manitoba in 1870, but maintained control over crown lands in a scheme to induce settlement and co-operate with railway companies. In 1871, the Cree and Ojibway nations signed treaties ceding their titles to the land, and a year later the Dominion Lands Act provided homestead grants for would-be settlers. By 1873 the Royal Northwest Mounted Police had been created, and plans for a transcontinental rail system were promoted to ensure the timely and orderly settlement of the western half of Dominion lands. The Canadian government agreed to help settle the Mennonite immigrants *en masse* in an attempt to settle agriculturists on the prairies and maintain the boundaries between the US and Canada. Negotiating the *Privilegium* was essential to this process.

The Mennonite *Privilegium* granted by the Canadian government included assurances of military exemption, bloc settlement, available land, religious freedom, and to some extent local control of schools, although later it became apparent that this last issue was ambiguous in wording and caused great friction.

The first areas to be settled by Mennonites were known as the East Reserve, made up of eight townships east of the Red River, and the Scratching River settlement of two villages. The East Reserve had relatively poor agricultural land, and 386 homesteads soon filled it to productive capacity. Many settlers left this area in the next few years for what was to become the West Reserve, which lay west of the Red River. Preceding the movement of East Reserve settlers to the West were migrants from Chortitza and Furstenland in Russia. This group arrived in 1875 and settled the land west of the Red River, despite misgivings about the availability of wood. They quickly formed the new Reinlander Mennonite Gemeinde, popularly known as the Old Colony Church, which was facilitated by the common Flemish Church background of most of the settlers. In the summer of that

year eighteen villages were established in the West Reserve. This reserve constituted 17 townships by 1876, and formed part of the border of the United States. The villages under consideration in this study are all located in the West Reserve, with Chortitz and Reinland established in 1875, and Neuberghthal established between 1876 and 1879.

The process of settlement cannot be fully understood without reference to the tension between the Mennonite village tradition and Canadian homesteading policies. From the beginning, the Mennonites hoped to transplant their settlement pattern to Manitoba, and they negotiated their Homestead Rights and the Hamlet Privilege with the federal government to attain this end.

The Homestead Act granted each head of a household or 21-year-old person the right to claim 160 acres of farmland, which they would own after three years of full residence. Township and range determined these sections, and the federal concept of settlement was one of individualistic, dispersed homesteading, rather than compact village settlement.

The Mennonites, however, quickly pooled their resources, and instead of settling sparsely across the plains chose to live in compact villages. The homestead land they signed for and were supposed to inhabit was often far from the family's residence in their village, thus violating the Homestead Act. However, an amendment to the act in 1876 (the Hamlet Privilege) allowed the Mennonites, as well as Icelanders, to fulfil these residence requirements while living in their villages. The 160 acres owned by an individual became communal land, but it was not legally owned by the village. This was not the case in Russia, where the village actually owned the land and state law prevented farmsteads from being subdivided or alienated from the colony (Ens, 1994:37). In Canada, there was no such law, and individuals could legally leave the village to homestead alone on their land. This was modified by the voluntary agreements of some farm owners, which bound the settlers "not to sell their holding without the consent of two-thirds of all the farmstead owners" (Ens, 1994:37). Nevertheless, the lack of legally binding agreements became

extremely problematic for village cohesion, and is considered one of the main reasons for the dissolution of community life among the Mennonites.

The 1916 School Attendance Act encouraged a standardized public school system that taught English. Besides the German language, religion was also stricken from the school curriculum, and these two factors created a situation in which the more conservative branches of Mennonites again organized to emigrate. Between 1922 and 1927 a number of groups left for Mexico and Paraguay. Many of the Mennonite communities that remained bypassed these educational restrictions by teaching German and Religion one half hour before and after official school hours.

Comparison with Mormon Developments in the Great Basin, USA

Mennonite settlements in Manitoba and Mormon settlements in the Great Salt Lake area of the Great Basin in the 19th century shared some cognitive-structural elements of the built environment. Both types of planned settlements included self-sustaining, agrarian economies, village sites, and an ideal of social equality (Leone, 1978). Village settlement in particular had the dual effect of providing cooperative effort for community needs (bridges, ditches, etc.) and insuring “homogeneous behaviour” (Leone, 1978:196). Mennonite society in Manitoba also relied on the early interdependence created by the village setting. Ideology was reified and manipulated at the level of intravillage relationships: proximity and common background provided orthopraxis with an authority unavailable to church elders.

Both groups had a ballot system for determining lot and farmland upon arrival, providing equal access to land and locale. Villages (and towns in the case of Mormons) were highly regulated in terms of planning, with lots equally sized and oriented along grid lines.

Such a system has economic utility in the Mormon Great Basin context, but this technological imposition on the environment has social and ideological consequences: settlement grids, fences, and gardens forced on an arid environment provide for the inhabi-

tants further proof and justification of an expansionist, Christian ideology. "He [the Mormon] has helped redeem the earth...He has created a semblance of the divine" (1978:198).

The material culture that is the settlement (in this case the ideologically circumscribed, rural village) is not only a reflection of the agrarian, religious society, but also deterministic of its cognitive patterns.

"Mormonism could not exist without the spatial representations and technological devices that allowed its population to exist. Here we see that mental processes are as much a product of the use of tools, as the way that the tools are used is a product of mental rules." (Leone, 1978:199).

Changes to Mennonite life in Manitoba can be compared on a large scale to what happened to Mormon society in the American West. Like the Mennonites, the Mormons moved to their settlement region en masse (1847) to create an independent and intricately planned society (in the Mormon case, a nation) (Leone, 1979). Power was to be concentrated in ecclesiastical, not secular, hands.

For the Mormons, changes occurred because of internal developments such as wealth generation, contact with national markets, and federal authorities fearful of Mormon independence. This led to legislation in the late 1800s that effectively transformed the society from a theocracy to an American sub-culture with a mainstream church structure (Leone, 1979: 148-149).

Mennonites in Manitoba experienced the same development of wealth, while government legislation consisted of the Municipality Act and the reform of the schooling system (1910s-20s). The school reforms convinced thousands of Mennonites to migrate. The English-Canadian nationalistic education system weakened the inculcation of Mennonite children in locally controlled school buildings. The Municipality Act of 1873 was rigorously instituted by the Canadian government in 1880, and this encouraged the participation of Mennonites in provincial politics. This affected the vote of individuals: now any

male of appropriate age could vote in secular affairs, rather than being enabled only by land-owning status, as had been the case in the Russian colonies. Church leadership, which in its mildly theocratic manner helped organize “secular” local affairs, became less important as these responsibilities shifted to the municipalities. This helped relegate the church to secondary, institutional (rather than pervasive) status.

In both Mormon and Mennonite cases, federal legislation effectively transformed these emergent theocracies into mainstream church structures. As economic possibilities continued to expand and become less isolated and rural due to the contact with large-scale capitalist markets, the power of church-society continued to weaken.

“An unpredictable, uncontrolled economy accompanied the removal of the church from direct management of economic and political affairs and the imposition of minority status” (Leone, 1979:210).

Congregational Schism and Mennonite History

A distinctive part of Mennonite history is told through the organization and changes of different congregations, churches, and conferences. These organizational structures reflected both the ideological views of different groups and conflict between them.

The Frisian-Flemish division that existed in West Prussia reflected a general trend in Mennonite church schism based on a perceived difference between conservative and liberal elements. While this is sometimes considered a difference in church discipline, with Frisians being lenient and the Flemish strict (Dyck and Martin, eds., 1990: 193-199), this discipline can be seen as only an integrated part of a larger understanding of orthopraxis. Lifestyle, not doctrinal adherence, was the subject of discipline, and schisms reflected a greater or lesser degree of adherence to practice.

In the Russian colonies the conservative-liberal dichotomy was apparent in the issue of “civil Mennonite organizations” such as educational and agricultural societies and the role they played in controlling Mennonite life (Dyck and Martin, eds., 1990: 193-199). Traditionalist elements believed that discipline and education should be administered by

the church. In the Chortitza colony, conservatives resettled in the Bergthal and Furstenland settlements, known thereafter as Bergthaler Mennonites. The Mennonite Brethren Church, which emphasized a more Pietistic, subjective religiosity, also split from the Frisian church of Chortitza in the 1860s. In Molotchna, the other large colony of New Russia, the Flemish church split into the Kleine Gemeinde in 1812 and the Lichtenau-Petershagen church in 1822. The Ohrloff community members were considered the innovators. Together with Johann Cornies, they insisted on educational reform as outlined by Russian authorities, and this led to the departure of the other two groups.

It was largely the Kleine Gemeinde and Bergthaler churches, along with conservatives from the Chortitza colony, that contributed migrants to Manitoba. It was assumed that church discipline and order was to dominate life in this new setting, and with Canadian concessions concerning bloc settlement and military exemption, a Mennonite “way of life” could be maintained, or in the minds of many, renewed. The emphasis on orthopraxis is unmistakable, and the “control” of the church over daily life had more to do with the perpetuation of a particular set of ethnic dispositions (*habitus*) than with actual ecclesiastical power.

Control of the Mennonite social order was to be maintained not by force or the threat of such, but through what Bourdieu would call “symbolic violence”. Domination was maintained not solely by leaders, who were in fact quite easily resisted, but through the force of orthopraxis, in which the commonly held conceptual structures of appropriate daily practice became paramount in forcing order. This orthopraxis included material culture such as style of dress and types of personal possessions, but it also involved adherence to norms of behaviour, economic pursuits, and religious expression. Orthopraxis, in which the manipulation of *habitus* is so important, became the ethnic identifier of historical Mennonites. When conformity was not sufficient in an individual, the final threat included excommunication, or the “ban”, a physically peaceful but psychologically torturous event.

This is not to say that everyone thought and acted the same out of abject fear of rejection. There were numerous rebels and rebellious acts in Mennonite history, but rebellion was *understood* in the context of community values.

Conclusion

The history of Russian Mennonite communities is characterized by a high degree of conformity in thinking and lifestyle. This was important in defining group boundaries within the Mennonite ethnic world, and probably held as much influence on religious thinking as individual conviction to certain religious ideals, and more than religious leadership. Orthopraxis perpetuated religious schisms within the colonies and between generations. This was carried to Manitoba, but through mixing of settlers in the West Reserve new organizations were also formed.

Chapter 4

Analysis and Discussion

Methodology

The objectives of this dissertation are to understand the role of the Mennonite household in structuring *habitus* (the set of dispositions generating practices), and the role of domestic architecture in cultural change.

The methods used for addressing these objectives include the analysis of particular Mennonite dwellings and oral interviews about life in Mennonite homes.

The sample of houses chosen for analysis comes from three villages in southern Manitoba, and includes most of the existing houses from the period 1874-1930. Chortitz, Reinland, and Neuberghal were the three villages selected for study on the basis of a rich sample of existing structures. Most dwellings built prior to 1930 in these villages were documented. Some houses, or parts of houses, were not accessible, but for the most part residents and owners were very accomodating. A total of 30 structures were documented, including six from Chortitz, eight from Reinland, thirteen from Neuberghal, as well as two structures from a yard associated with the former settlement of Grunthal and one housebarn from Sommerfeld (See Table 1). These buildings exist in a variety of conditions and were used for different purposes. Some had been abandoned for decades and were in poor repair, while others had been converted into machine, storage, or grain sheds. In some cases the original barn is still attached, while in others the barn is much newer than the house or had been completely removed. A few of the houses had been recently gutted and had undergone such heavy interior renovation for habitation purposes that no useful documentation was possible. In these cases the house exterior and barn were recorded. Many housebarns, however, are still inhabited and in good condition.

A choice based on such rich surviving resources creates an impression of Mennonite village stability and preservation over time. In fact these villages are uncommon remnants of architectural heritage and the single street plan. Of the original 95 or so

street villages in southern Manitoba in 1880, only 18 survive as such, and these contain very few housebarns. To address this bias in data collection I have maintained a provincial historical context for the three sample villages, situating them within the larger changes occurring in Mennonite communities. They are the exception to the rule regarding village survival into the 21st century. Nevertheless, many of the housebarns and villages that disappeared or changed so drastically did so within the last fifty years, and the three sample villages are representative of village and architectural changes before 1940.

Research Design

Addressing the two objectives of this thesis required detailed architectural data combined with the historical context of household and village life. Material was gathered to explicate the nature of household relations and activities as part of the architectural setting, and how this related to the larger social context of the village and Mennonite society. Specifically, information was collected to define the following:

- 1) The early years of the village
 - a) Public village life, to be compared with life in the household.
 - b) Historical background of the village inhabitants.
 - c) Land-use patterns, including the village layout and its changes over time, demographic changes of each village, economy, transport and exchange routes.

- 2) The early years of the house
 - a) Floorplans, early construction, decorations, furniture, renovations.
 - b) Functions of rooms, (inhabitants, activities, visitor accommodation) and how this use changed over time in relation to renovations.
 - c) Types of stories surrounding the home, and what kinds of patterns these reflect in terms of attitudes about the purpose and role of the household in the community.

- 3) Family life
 - a) People who lived in the home, including when and in which rooms, and their relationship to one another.
 - b) Rules and activities in the home.
 - c) Old family stories, and what this says about family life and patterns in the household.

Two types of fieldwork were chosen to gather this information: architectural documentation and oral history.

The structures of this study are presented in full detail in Appendix 2. Buildings from the villages of Chortitz and Reinland are designated by street number. Neuberghthal village as a whole is a National Historic Site of Canada and as such was designated 24K within the Parks Canada archaeological provenience system. The yard designations used by Klippenstein (1997) and Priess (1998) are followed in this study: “the village is divided into four quadrants, as determined by the two roads through it, and each yard is designated as to its position in the quadrant. The quadrants are identified by cardinal direction (eg.: SE) with the yards numbered consecutively beginning at the crossroads” (Priess, 1998:2).

Where possible, interviews were coordinated with former residents of the structures analyzed in this study. Architectural documentation and interviews took place between June 2001 and November 2002.

Village Structures and Interviews

Chortitz Village Structures and Interviews

Yard	Sections of Structure(s) Documented	Interview
12 Chortitz Rd. South	Exterior of dwelling only (Aug. 10, 2002)	None
26 Chortitz Rd. South	Dwelling structure and barn (Aug. 16, 2001)	Peter Klassen (Sept. 12, 2002)
60 Chortitz Rd. South	Dwelling structure, and barn remains (Aug. 10-15, 2001)	Frank and Mary Penner (Dec. 6, 2001)
70 Chortitz Rd. South	Dwelling structure, exterior of barn (Aug. 10, 2001)	Frank and Mary Penner (Dec. 6, 2001)
52 Chortitz Rd. North	Dwelling structure, first floor only (Sept. 4, 2002)	Wolfe Family (Sept. 4, 2002)
Teichroeb House (formerly located in NW quad of village, now at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach Manitoba)	Dwelling structure and barn (Aug. 19, 2002)	Mary Penner (Aug. 13, 2002)

Reinland Village Structures and Interviews

Yard	Sections of Structure(s) Documented	Interview
109 Reinland Ave.	Exterior of dwelling only (Aug. 3, 2001)	None
141 Reinland Ave.	Dwelling structure and barn (June 8, 2001)	Abe Ens (June 29, 2001)
163 Reinland Ave.	Dwelling structure, exterior of barn (June 22, 2001)	Henry Ens (June 29, 2001)
164 Reinland Ave.	Dwelling structure, first floor only, exterior of barn (July 11, 2001)	Jacob Isaac Fehr (Sept. 12, 2002)
170 Reinland Ave.	Dwelling structure, no barn (July 24, 2001)	Jake and Ingrid Friesen (July 24, 2001)
171 Reinland Ave.	Exterior of dwelling and barn (July 21, 2001)	None
179 Reinland Ave.	Dwelling structure and barn (June 28, 2001)	Mary-Anne Zacharias (June 12, 2002), Abe Ens and Henry Ens (June 29, 2001)
193 Reinland Ave.	Dwelling structure and barn (July 25, 2001)	None

Neubergthal Village Structures and Interviews

Yard	Sections of Structure(s) Documented	Interview
NE2	Dwelling structure and barn (July 30-31, 2001)	Ed Schmidt (Oct. 17, 2001)
NE3	Dwelling structure, no barn (Aug. 15, 2001)	Henry Hamm (Nov. 28, 2001)
NE4	Dwelling structure, no barn (Sept. 17,18, 2001)	None
NE12	Dwelling and barn structure (July 17, 2001)	Henry Kehler (July 19, 2002)
NE14	Dwelling and barn structure	Willie Hamm (June 12, 2002) and Larry Hamm (June 5, 2002)
NW4a	Dwelling, first floor only, exterior of barn (Oct. 17, 30, 2001)	Lynn Hoepfner (Oct. 17, 2001)
NW4b	Entire structure (Oct. 17, 2001)	None
SE1a	Dwelling structure and barn (Aug. 2, 2001, Nov. 13, 2002)	
SE1b	Granary, first floor only (Aug. 15, 2001)	None
SE3	Dwelling structure, first floor only, and barn (Sept. 17-18, Oct. 1, 2001)	Ray Hamm (Summer 2000), Rose Hildebrand (May 30, 2002)

SE5a	Exteriors of dwelling and barn (June 4, 2002)	Pete and Judy Friesen (Nov. 24, 2001)
SW3	Dwelling structure and barn (June 27, July 3, 2001; July 23, 2002)	Norma Giesbrecht (May 28, 2002), Bernhard B. Hamm (Sept. 26, 2002)
SW4	Dwelling structure, no barn (Aug. 2, 9, 2001)	Helena Klippenstein (June 5, 2002)

Other structures and Interviews

Yard	Sections of Structure(s) Documented	Interview
Rempel Housebarn (Sommerfeld)	Dwelling and barn (Oct. 3,4, 2001)	Henry and Ed Rempel (July 29, 2002)
Driedger Housebarn ("Gruenthal")	Dwelling and barn	Peter Driedger (July 10, 12, 2002) (June 15, July 2002)
Driedger Dwelling ("Gruenthal")	Dwelling structure, no barn (June 15, July 12, 2002)	Peter Driedger (July 10, 2002)

Other interviews were conducted with Anne Wiebe, Suzie Thiessen, and Tina Fehr (Nov. 12, 2002), all former residents of Chortitz; and Abram and Annie Krueger (Aug. 12, 2002), former residents of Neubergthal.

Architectural Documentation

Since domestic household design and use is a product of *habitus*, a way of viewing and structuring social reality, the design, construction, and renovations of the home are indicators of *habitus*, as well as a gauge of cultural change.

The remaining houses from the period 1874-1930 in the three villages were compared for building techniques and materials and fully mapped and documented for evidence of floorplans, room function, and decorative histories. Although a number of housebarns are still standing, they have undergone numerous renovations, and it is necessary to understand these in detail.

This documentation provides data on the chronology of construction and renovations. It also provides information about the perceptions of inhabitants on the appropriate living size and space within the household, and how this changed over time. Outward appearance and orientation of houses towards the street and to each other reveal changing perceptions of the relationship of the household to public village life. Henry Glassie (1975) provided evidence of changing perceptions of space in the home in his study of folk architecture in Middle Virginia. Although his work has been criticized for its structuralist, ahistorical approach to cognition, it reveals trends in vernacular architecture towards increasing spatial division through a careful study of many individual structures.

Information from the documentation of Mennonite housebarns combined with oral accounts of furniture placement, room use, and renovations also provide data on what Rapaport (1982; 1990) calls fixed and semi-fixed feature elements: the physical and meaningful elements of the home that structure movement as well as providing settings for interpersonal relations. These features produce an account of the ways people could personally create and change their surroundings to suit their changing physical and social desires.

Oral History

Oral history in the form of informant interviews has been chosen as one of the primary methods of investigation for my dissertation for a number of reasons. In studying the social use of space in Mennonite households, I required information about family activities in household settings and changes in architecture over time. Interviews with current and former inhabitants of housebarns in three villages provided data concerning architectural history of particular houses (furniture, renovations, room function) and the family activities and history that were part of that household. My goal was to understand the basis of certain patterns in architectural use and change, while revealing the variations within these patterns, and what this means in terms of cultural process and the creation and maintenance of community values through daily practice.

Oral history is a valuable tool for archaeologists in three ways:

- 1) it assists in defining site history, in which objects or places are located in real geographic settings and explained in terms of their functions
- 2) it tests other information sources, such as documents or the archaeological record, for accuracy and bias
- 3) it links the material culture with the social world

According to studies in oral history methodology (Friedlander, 1984; Thompson, 1988; Gluck, 1999), the most reliable data on details of material culture come not from formal surveys, but from informal dialogue guided by appropriate questions. Asking about factual information out of context may actually decrease the reliability of the data because the details of material reality are attached in one's memory to personal experience, and do not float as raw or abstract data in the mind. This has brought to the forefront various issues concerning context and interpretation in the discipline of oral history, and has direct consequences for the use of oral accounts in studying past material culture. Social context in oral accounts must be understood when studying material culture, rather than depending on decontextualized descriptions. Furthermore, it is necessary to examine contradictions or blank areas in a testimony.

Oral History Methodology and Historical Archaeology

Margaret Purser (1992), director of the Paradise Valley Project, has explained how specific questions about the changing landscape of a town and its material culture led to long and involved stories about the town history. It was within these stories that information about material culture was available. Moreover, these stories were carefully constructed interpretations of historical "facts", and anthropological understanding lies in that interpretation as much as in the facts themselves.

Purser found that there were two competing community histories that depended on the age of the informant and their rural or urban background. Younger individuals told a history that reified the present, while older informants told a history that highlighted the

differences between old and new, and the changes that had taken place in the community. Neither version contained many inaccuracies. Rather, the material context of the younger group was quite different (reflecting social differences) and therefore they organized their past differently.

At the Silcott, Washington site, excavated by Adams (1982), oral history was initially used to acquire information directly related to sites and artifacts to use as control data. As interviews continued it was obvious that information about social relations had surfaced that was not previously documented in historical sources, and this became part of the research design. Adams noted success with informants' descriptions, including sketches of maps, buildings, rooms, and their contents. However, when informants were taken to the site they had once been familiar with, but there were no longer visual cues to the structures, the informants became confused and often upset because the context of their personal memory had vanished. Adams found a distinct correlation between archaeology and oral history, but the most useful information concerned local social interaction, and therefore provided a good link between material culture and the social world.

Williams (1991), in his study of folk architecture in Southwestern North Carolina focused on what former inhabitants were willing and able to speak about rather than asking particular questions about buildings or sites. Discussions generally included stories concerning spatial use and the meaning of "homeplace". Vernacular patterns and systems of thought were outlined by matching informants' interpretations of habits and personal experiences.

These examples of the use of oral interviews in historical archaeology and architectural history provide evidence of the importance of context in the interview process. All three examples also highlight the connection between personal experience and shared history, and the link between this social context and material culture. While some of the researchers asked about specific site data, their interviews towards this end showed more depth and accuracy when tied to social or personal experience. Historic places and social

spaces are thus linked to social and personal narratives.

For these reasons, my interview methods concentrated on the memories and attitudes of informants about their former homes and household life in an informal but guided manner. Since I wished to reveal patterns and variations in the use of material culture and social space, I created a chart system to inventory placement, use, and origins of certain items found within these testimonies. With the application of both remembered experience and a tally of items and spaces, I was able to link the social use of architectural space with the formation and change of shared *habitus* in Mennonite society.

Oral interviews were arranged largely with former inhabitants of the houses under consideration, although in some cases descendents of the inhabitants or senior community members were interviewed for more generalized knowledge of a house or the area. Interviews were generally between one and two hours in length, recorded on cassette, and afterwards transcribed (and translated when necessary from the Low German). After transcription, informants were sometimes contacted to fill in gaps or clarify certain points or issues.

The following questions concerning household life, architectural details and renovations, and community life were used to guide discussion. They were not necessarily asked in the following manner or order.

- 1) Name
- 2) Date of Birth
- 3) What do you know about the original construction of this building? (time of building, who built it, original plans, how long it took to build).
- 4) Who lived in the building originally?
- 5) When did you live in this house, and how old were you?
- 6) When you lived in the house, where was your room and the rooms of your parents and siblings?

- 7) What were your daily routines (including evenings) between the ages of:
 - a) 2-5 (if remembered)
 - b) 6-10
 - c) 11-15
 - d) 16-20
 - e) 20-30
 - f) etc
- 8) How would you describe your relationships (over time) with your father, mother, siblings, grandparents, maids or farmhands (and anyone else living in the house with you at the time)?
- 9) Where were you most comfortable in the house, or where was your favourite place in the house? Your least favourite place?
- 10) Were there any places in the house you were prohibited or encouraged to spend time in?
- 11) What kind of furniture was in the house when you first lived here, and how did it change over the years?
- 12) What kinds of decorations did the family use in the house (wall hangings, colours, etc)?
- 13) How has the building changed over the years, and do you remember the reasons why certain renovations were done?
- 14) What do you know about the early history of the village?
- 15) How was it linked to other communities and towns?
- 16) What were early farming practices like and how did they change over time?
- 17) What church or congregation did the early village inhabitants belong to? Where did you attend?

By combining oral testimonies of household and village histories with detailed documentation of particular housebarns, I have been able to outline the Mennonite *habitus* as it relates to domestic architecture and its changes over time. The results of these methods are fully situated in Russian Mennonite history as it pertains to the construction of ethnicity, the standardization of the housebarn structure, and the perpetuation of ortho-

praxis, or correct practice.

The Villages of Reinland, Chortitz, and Nebergthal

Reinland, Chortitz and Nebergthal are all situated in the former West Reserve of Manitoba, an area originally consisting of 17 townships west of the Red River and bordering the United States (Figure 14). Reinland and Chortitz were both settled by migrants coming directly from Russia in 1875-1876. Nebergthal was formed somewhat later by families coming largely from the East Reserve, which had been first settled in 1874.

It is important to note that although these three villages all represent the Mennonite *Strassendorf*, along with about 16 others still existing in Manitoba, most Mennonite villages disbanded and the single street layout disappeared. In this study of changing Mennonite dwellings, the houses in question are part of a surviving settlement pattern not used by most Mennonites in Manitoba after 1930. Thus, when looking at how the house changed over time, it must be considered how this relates to the survival of the street village and the relevance of both elements to social life.

The settlers who came directly from Russia were affiliated with the Chortitza Flemish Church, and chose to form the Reinlander Mennonite Church at Fort Dufferin under the leadership of Rev. Johann Wiebe, the only ordained elder. It must be stressed that in the eyes of many Mennonites the Reinlander, or Old Colony, Church was seen as the most conservative group of Russian Mennonites that migrated to North America, and they were known for opposing secular rule. Community members were expected to submit to Church discipline, and early leaders wished to rule with the authority of the church rather than that of the Canadian government.

The immigrants from the East Reserve settled villages and individual homesteads on the federal half of the West Reserve, but instead of joining the Reinlander Church they continued their Bergthaler Church tradition, creating a permanent division in the West Reserve along congregational lines (Friesen, 2001:9).

The Municipal Act of 1879 created municipalities that were eventually controlled

by elected councils. This directly challenged the authority of the Reinlander Church, which had assumed control of colony affairs according to their version of biblical principles (including discipline of church members). In addition, the Bergthaler settlers from the East Reserve, who made up about half of the West Reserve by the late 1880s, were uncomfortable with the Reinland Church organization. In time, their ranks were also swelled with dissenters from the Reinlander, and they had a great influence in the adoption of municipal, rather than church, administration in the West Reserve (Zacharias 2001:75-76).

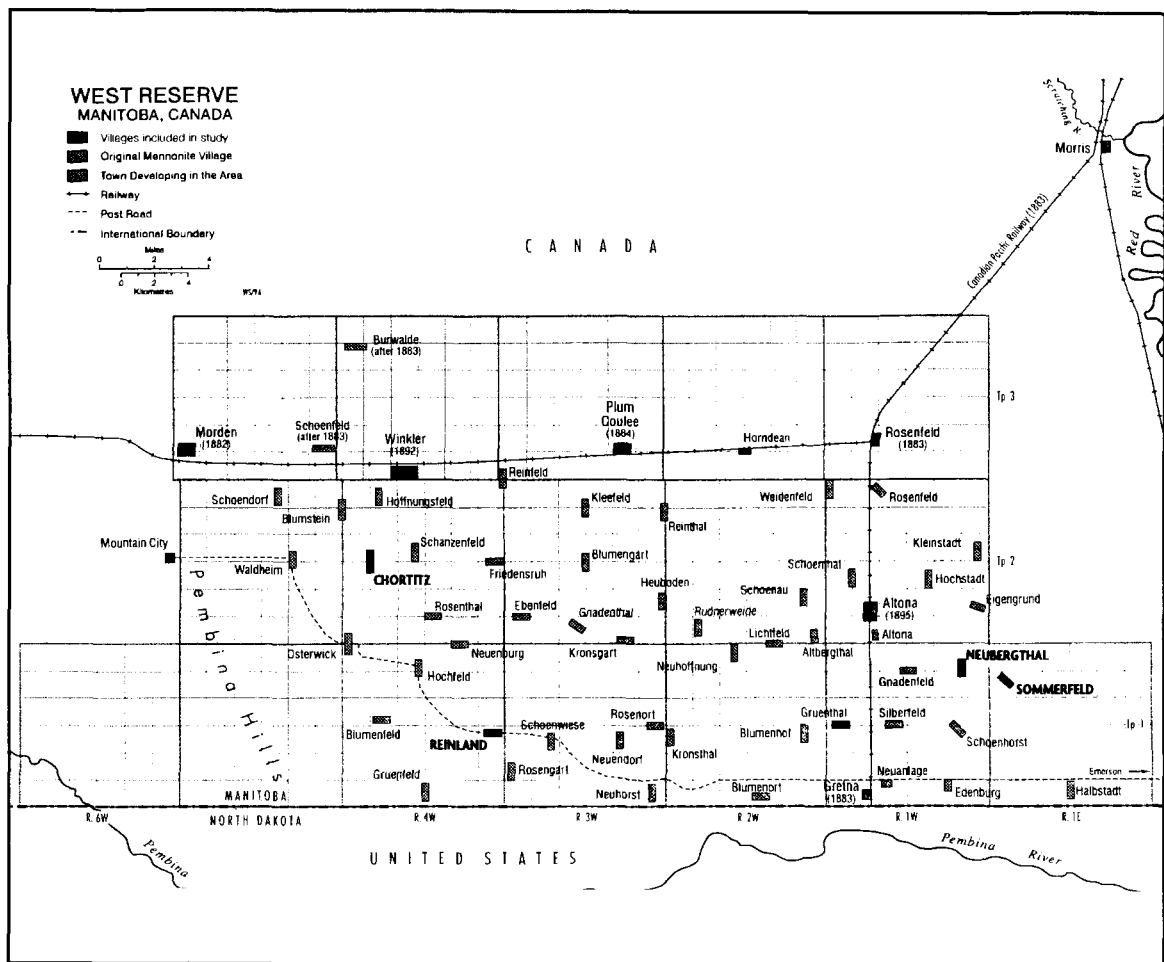


Fig. 14. Mennonite West Reserve, Manitoba. (Schroeder and Huebert, 1996:74, by permission)

Public Life

Public life in the first 30 years of Mennonite village settlement was largely centred in church and school activities, although not every village owned a church building.

The church as a social formation provided organizational structure for most public village affairs, including the *Waisenamt* (orphan's bureau), social welfare, and political decisions on how to deal with the Canadian government. In addition the church influenced issues on appropriate behaviours of individuals and the administration of the ban. The church organization was exclusively male. Church power was an ideal of many of the immigrants coming to Canada, who felt secular rule in Russia had gone too far in determining ethical behavior.

As has been made clear, however, this form of church power quickly came under pressure from various directions. Canadian government implementation of municipal divisions and laws made jurisdiction and registration an issue only marginally affected by the church. Meanwhile, population pressures combined with the non-legal status of the street village and open field system meant that new opportunities arose for the individual farmer to expand his operations outside the village confines.

As the power of the church decreased or was transported to Latin America in the 1920s, the church took on new meanings for Mennonites still living in villages. Whereas in the earliest period it maintained tradition and helped enforce the orthopraxis of community behaviour, it later came to symbolize the differences between religious (Mennonite) ideals and those of secular (including economic) life. The unity of church and life sought by many of the immigrants coming to Canada broke down into a dichotomy separating church and secular power, as envisioned by Canadian authorities.

Public church buildings were a symbol of congregational (community) affiliation as much as they were places of worship. Each village in this study had a unique early church history, and the construction and destruction of church buildings reflected shifting affiliations, migrations, conflicts, and groundswells in changing religious belief and practice.

The dichotomy between private and public architecture in any community is always tenuous. The design of Mennonite church buildings, or *Bethaueser*, of the early period of Manitoba settlement was reflective of community *habitus* rather than being theologically determined.

Janzen, using the ideas of Max Weber (1958), proposes a “contingent association of form and meaning” for historical Mennonites caught in a paradox of world-rejection vs. corporeality (1999a:163). “Contingent” in this sense refers to non-determinism: form in cultural and architectural expression was understood by Mennonites as being arbitrary, and therefore not “essential, iconic, for truth and faith” (Janzen 1999a:163). Built form was not based on orthodox ideas, but was accountable to the necessities and activities of the worshipping community.

Arbitrary as cultural forms may be, they are still logical and significant, as Janzen points out (1999a:163). While form is considered arbitrary, adherence to form was in many cases required for community acceptance or membership (i.e. form of baptism, style of dress, use of technology, etc). Weber’s “contingency” must therefore be held up against the light of Mennonite community conformity and schism. Early Mennonite church buildings in Manitoba were not theologically determined or conspicuously symbolic, but were created according to communally accepted norms in the vernacular tradition and to the requirements of appropriate social interaction.

Church exteriors were very similar to most homes in the village, exhibiting plain walls and windows and no outward sign of differentiation that would signify them as “churches” to non-Mennonites. Proportions were similar to dwellings, with the buildings constructed in similar longhouse fashion (See Figures 15a,b). The orientation of the church building to the street, however, was parallel rather than perpendicular.

While *Bethaus* exteriors were not elaborate, interiors had distinctive features common to Mennonite/Anabaptist congregations (Janzen 1999a:154). The space for congregational seating and movement was divided according to gender, including separate

entrances for men and women. The space was arranged to emphasize eye contact, or “face-to-face” interaction, between the congregation and the leadership: interiors were not overly large, and worship leaders were directly visible. This collective, visible leadership was located on the long side of the building, and the congregation faced this direction. A raised pulpit was also located on this side, and interior decoration was minimal (Figure 15c). Janzen elaborates by claiming that these features are largely the result of the “social organization of rituals and of the congregation” (1999b:328). Worship rituals varied between Mennonite groups (i.e. Baptism by immersion vs. sprinkling), usually following congregational, and by extension, historical experience. This influenced *Bethaus* spaces more than a preconceived “correct design” of sacred buildings. “The diversity of forms and the character of the rite reduces the demand on a specific kind of space and place.” (Janzen 1999b: 328)



Fig. 15a. Reinland Church. Courtesy of the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives, Winnipeg MB.

By looking at the *practice* of Mennonite worship, Janzen articulates a Mennonite *habitus*, one that emphasizes orthopraxis, the correct way of doing things, over orthodoxy.

Unlike the Catholic Medieval cathedral, based firmly in the scholastic tradition of correct and total design, the Mennonite *Bethaus* was accountable to the necessities and activities of the worshipping community.



Fig. 15b. Chortitz Church, 2003, Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach MB.



Fig. 15c. Chortitz Church interior, 2003. Courtesy of Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach MB.

Both Chortitz and Reinland had early churches created in this fashion, while Neuberghthal residents attended the nearby Sommerfeld church until the late 1930s, when many began to attend the new *Rudneweider* services in the home of one of the residents.

The school in the Mennonite village was a public reinforcement not only of basic Mennonite knowledge, but also of the relationship between children, and by extension their families. The daily interactions of related or well-known children in a formal, rigidly controlled setting reified familial, economic, and gender relations in the village. As an example, the schoolhouse had separate entrances and seating for girls and boys, which differed from English schoolhouses in the nearby regions (Butterfield and Ledohowski, 1984:138). This spatial arrangement mimicked the separation of males and females in Mennonite church buildings. As Mennonites were forced to participate in the Canadian public school system after 1919, the school changed from a locus of reinforcement of orthopraxic knowledge to a place of largely English instruction of knowledge based on a national (and nationalist) curriculum. While the school earlier espoused basic religious knowledge, literacy and calculation through the four-form format, it later became the setting of the imposition of an English-Canadian world-view.

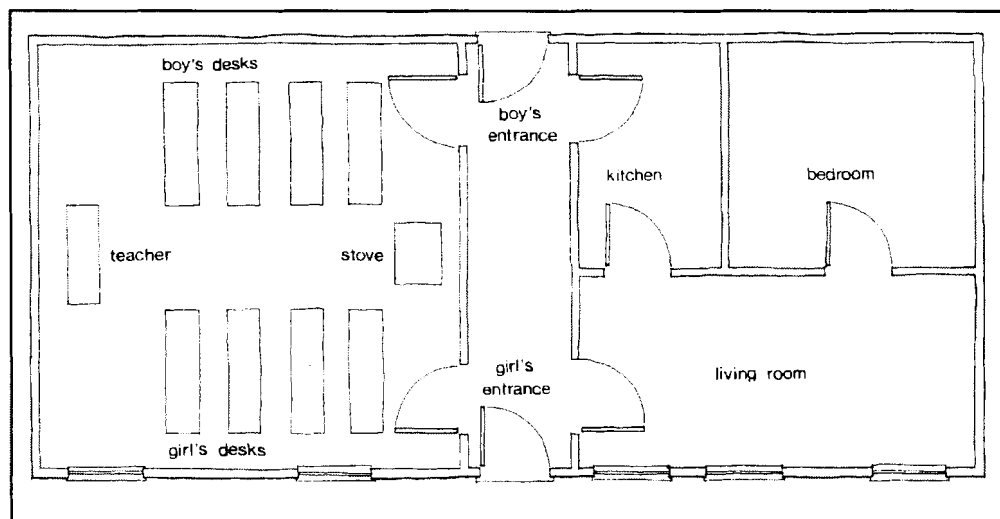


Fig. 16. Floorplan of Mennonite School. Courtesy of Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, Manitoba.



Fig. 17. Blumenhof school, 1881. Now located at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, Manitoba.

Public life was also expressed in Mennonite homes, which were not bounded, private units. Visiting was a constant and important pastime (*spazieren* – “to walk” in High German, took on an additional meaning in the Mennonite Low German: *spezeare* - “to visit”). Many households also had hired hands or kitchen maids, which were usually from the village and often neighbours’ children, who in many cases lived, ate and slept with the family. Thus family affairs could hardly be kept private, just as privacy for the individual in the home was a marginal concept in the early years of settlement.

The Village of Reinland

Foundation

Reinland was settled by people from the Russian Mennonite colonies of Chortitza, Fuerstenland, and Bergthal. After spending six weeks at Fort Dufferin, Manitoba, the migrants set out on a three-day journey before arriving at the proposed site of Reinland in the summer of 1875. The location had been pre-arranged by Jacob Y. Schantz with the help

of surveyors and with government permission. This settlement was part of the larger development of a Mennonite reserve west of the Red River. The West Reserve was also referred to as the Reinland Mennonite Colony (not to be confused with the village).

The villagers were predominantly *Reinlaender* Church members stressing community conformity and church discipline. A number of families from the village left for Mexico in 1923/24 due to new Canadian educational restrictions, and their homes were sold to, and inhabited by, Mennonite refugee immigrants from Communist Russia.

Settlers and Lots

By 1880 there were 34 households in total, with spatial divisions within the street village according to landholding status. Lots 1-21 belonged to landowners, 22-24 belonged to the landless, and those with land elsewhere inhabited lots 25-34. Lot 25, in the middle of the village on the south side of the road was in the name of the deceased Jacob Toews, and this land was used for the cemetery and church, which still exist today. The school was located directly south of the church on the lot of Peter Bergman, #26. The mill was at the Southeast end of the village, while the herdsman's dwelling was at the northwest end of the village.

Economic and Social Change

With the unofficial Hamlet Privilege assumed and approved by all involved, including Canadian officials, the early residents of Reinland settled their village lots in the 1870s. At the same time, they claimed ownership of their government-granted quarter sections, many of which were some distance from the settlement.

The early agriculture of Reinland was characterized by wheat, barley and oat production, although flax and potatoes were also grown. Horses replaced oxen by 1880, and farm implements were increasingly mechanized, including the purchase of a steam thresher in the 1880s.

The Mennonites in Russia used the open field system, and under the Hamlet Privilege it was reproduced on the Manitoba prairie in almost every village. The fields

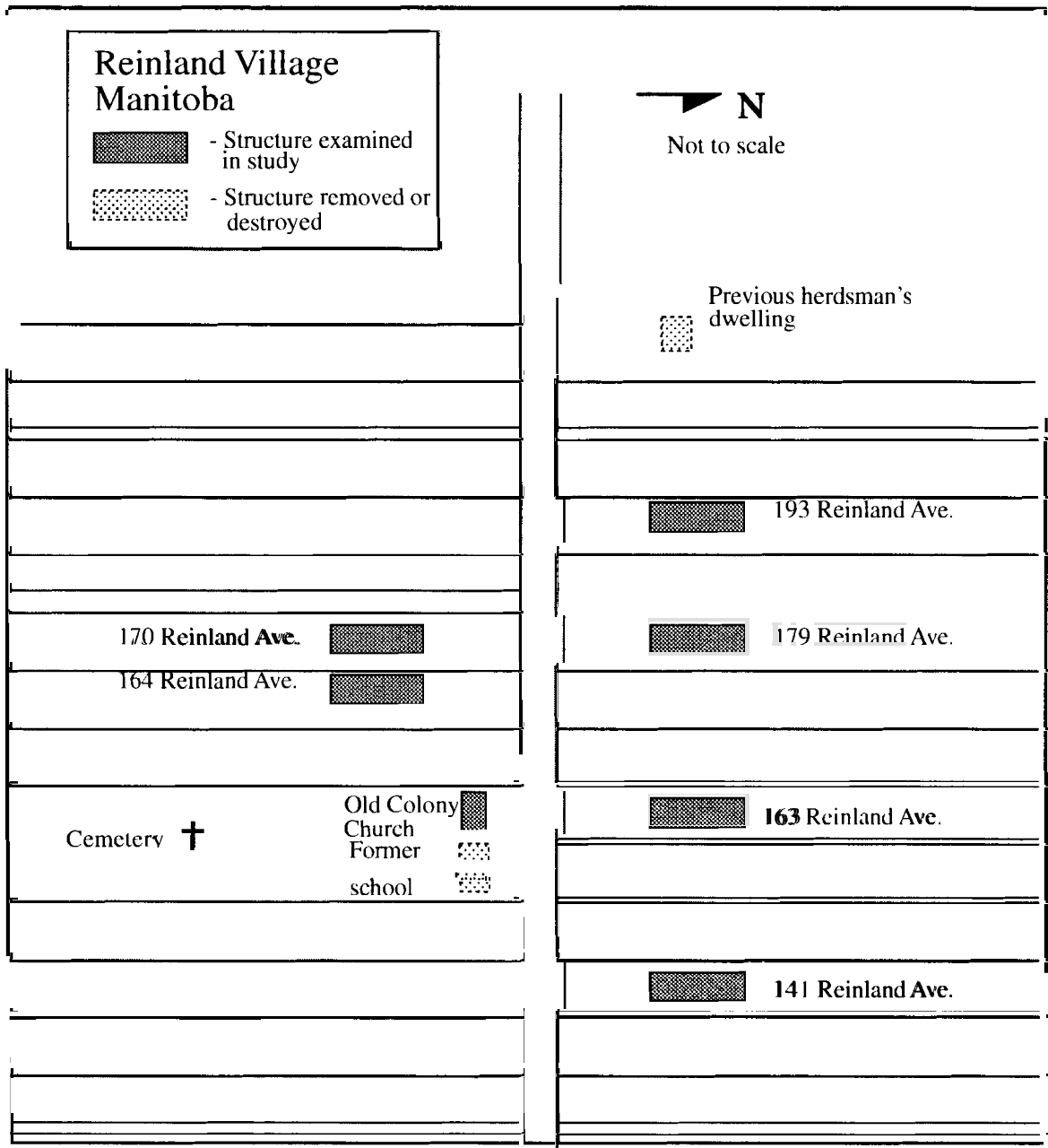


Fig. 18. Village of Reinland with housebarns in study.

were arranged as long strips, or *Koagels*. The term *Koagel*, of German origin, has two meanings in Mennonite Low German: 1) an individual, narrow field, which is part of a larger complex of strip fields usually surrounding Mennonite villages; 2) “a piece of land behind the home as part of the yard in a Mennonite village, usually about 10 acres in size...used as pasture and garden” (Thiessen, 2000:161). Every villager had a lot for their

home, barn structures, orchards and gardens. Besides this they had a number of *Koagels* (fields), usually separated from one another, and all farmers had a similar distance to travel from their farmyard. This system depended largely on the co-operation of the farmers, since legally they retained the right to leave the village and claim their quarter section, which in most cases was tilled as a number of separated strips. Rather than use fences to separate fields, a *Rain*, or strip of grass was retained to verify borders.

Mennonite communities largely abandoned this “open field system” by 1900, although in Reinland it survived into the 1920s. The long strip pattern of the open field system was partly meant to ensure equal access to fertile and poor soil for each farmer, although around Reinland the soil was generally uniform and fertile. In addition to the open fields, about one fifth of village land was used for communal pasture, which was overseen by a hired herdsman. This was supplemented by the use of post-harvested fields for pasture in the fall.

The extent to which Reinland interacted with the market economy and social networks of non-Mennonite centres can be seen in the dependence on the grain market and the establishment of a substantial store in the village. These were not new activities for the Mennonites. In the early settlement years the villagers were dependent on large government loans to survive and build capital for their independent farms. Once seed, machinery and livestock were in place, the Mennonites quickly re-established the pattern of economic activity seen in Russia, with farm yields sold for profit in a national market, and imported goods sold locally by merchants.

Grain, primarily wheat, made its way from Reinland to eastern Canada through grain trade centres that constantly shifted with the railways. The first railway came through the West Reserve in 1882, until which time grain was taken by cart two days to Emerson. Prices and amounts of grains for sale were a constant concern for the local farmers, as they are now, and shows the extent to which they depended on large, external markets. Herman Dyck operated the first of a number of local stores, established in 1876, and

by 1882 he was importing goods from commercial centres as far away as Toronto, Montreal, St. Paul, and Minneapolis.

Mennonite communities were therefore dependent on loans and external markets, a pattern that was not a break from traditional life, but merely a continuation of socio-economic life in Russia. In fact it can be argued that although the Mennonite Reinlander leadership sought to create a renewed church-centred society, the settlers in general were comfortable with and sought to replicate the old patterns of inter-ethnic relations, and to trade liberally, but at “arm’s length” with non-Mennonites. They were comfortable, in other words, with the civic/religious dichotomies maintained with outside groups, while life remained religiously and ethnically orthopraxic within the community. Total isolation was neither possible nor desired, but ethnic cohesion was.

The Mennonite farm system, although structured around communal pasture and open strip fields, was nevertheless a private affair. Farming households were under the control of the head male, and once they had their land they were considered to be largely responsible for the yield and success of their crops. Wealth was privately owned. In this sense they continued the long tradition of the “independent” German farm common throughout northern Europe, and blamed failure on the inadequacies of the individual farmer. While it has been claimed that the Mennonites switched from a communal to an individualistic way of life in Canada, the shift from open field to quarter section farming was no great shift in belief about the capabilities of the individual agent. This change rather signalled a shift in the extent to which the agent was tied to the ethnic operation of Mennonite orthopraxis, which had previously demanded submission to the norms of community practice, one consequence of which was equal access to land among community members. Russian Mennonite ethnicity became disentangled from economic and political pursuits as the conditions of daily life changed for the household inhabitants of Manitoba.

A major shift in population occurred in the 1890s, with more groups from Russia arriving in the West Reserve. These groups came largely to escape the economic problems

of the Mennonite Colonies in Russia, particularly scarce farmland and the resulting endemic poverty of a large portion of the Mennonite population. Reinland received a number of families who worked as farm labourers and store clerks. A primary motivation was to work, gain capital, and thus access land and equipment. In a letter from Eduard Wiebe sent back to Russia in 1892, he states: "You who are without land over there and practically without bread, come here and work hard in the midst of your brethren and eventually you will find the ways and means to own a piece of your own land" (Translated in Zacharias, 1975:126). The appeal of the possibility of starting an individual farm while remaining in the secure, ethnic world of Mennonites speaks of the importance of both sectarian and household loyalties.

Population pressure was significant in most Mennonite villages, with large families being the rule. Available farmland was a concern early on, and the bilateral partible inheritance system and the quarter section plans of the Canadian government combined to create a new Mennonite settlement pattern. This included purchasing landholdings outside the village for sons and daughters, rather than starting a daughter colony or village. Nevertheless, daughter colonies were still an option for Mennonites, with colonies and villages created *en masse* in Saskatchewan in the 1890s, and the migration to Mexico and Paraguay in the 1920s.

Reinland was largely *Reinlaender*, or Old Colony, in church affiliation, although a *Bergthaler* Church was present from the 1880s onward. The domination of the conservative element of the village, in which orthopraxis was strongest, was a major force in retaining the open field system, the street village, and the predominance of housebarns well after other Mennonite villages disappeared. It was also this Old Colony group that caused another major migration out of the village to Mexico in the early 1920s, in protest of new Canadian laws decreeing that the German language and religious teachings were no longer acceptable in elementary schools. Most *Reinlaender* members left the village, but at the same time a new wave of Mennonite immigrants arrived from Russia, who mostly pur-

chased and moved into the housebarns of departing community members. Reinland was thus a village of constant in and out migration, rather than of continued long-term stability. Old Colony orthopraxis was largely responsible for the relatively slow rate of change until the 1920s in village structure as compared to other villages.

Village of Chortitz

Foundation

Like Reinland, Chortitz was settled by Mennonites from Chortitza, Fuerstenland and Bergthal in Russia. In its early history it was required that all villagers be members of the *Reinlaender* church.

All villagers were originally landowners, but as the population grew, a landless class (*Anwohner*), began to inhabit the village as well, working largely as farmhands or maids. This population pressure caused migrations out of the village in 1895 and 1905, with about a dozen families moving to Saskatchewan daughter colonies in each period. After the Canadian education decrees of the 1920s, half of the village departed for Mexico and their dwellings were largely re-inhabited by Russian Mennonite refugees fleeing the Soviet Union.

Settlers and Lots

All original settlers were landowners, with 32 original households on 32 lots. The school was located in the middle of the village on the west side of the main street. The original church was situated at the northeast corner of the village, while the cemetery, which holds over three hundred graves, was located at the southeast end (See Figure 19).

Each landowner owned 160 acres of land, divided into sections that included the 14-acre habitation lot, a few separated strips of cultivated land situated near the village, and a share of the hay and pastureland. The pasture was located west and south of the village, and disappeared after the migration to Mexico, when landholdings were rearranged.

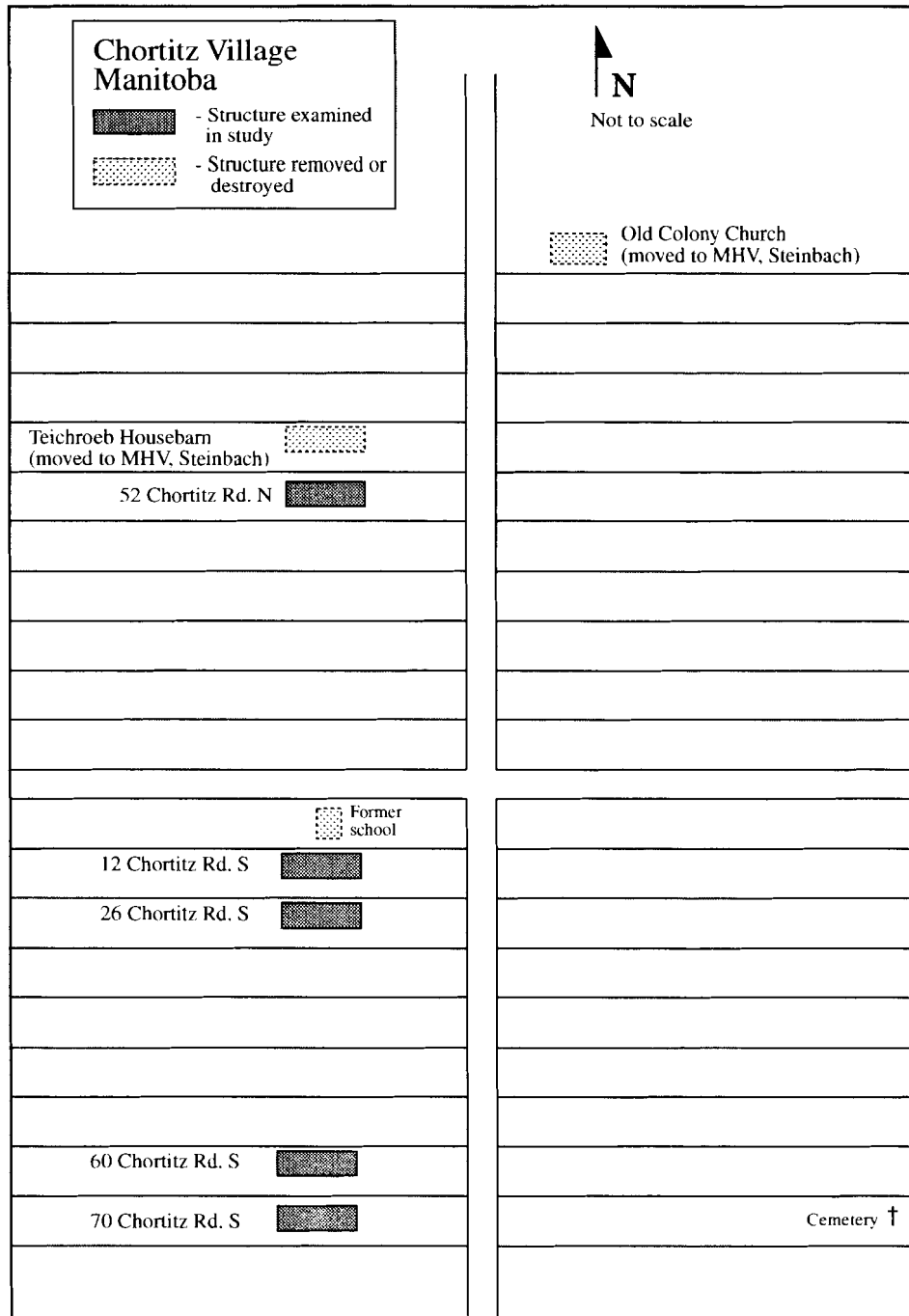


Fig. 19. Village of Chortitz with housebarns in study.

Social and Economic Change

The first two generations of Chortitz settlers had a particularly strong adherence to orthopraxis, in which the actions of community members were meant to conform, some-

times in astonishing detail. There had been some out-migration in the early years, but the large numbers migrating to Mexico in 1925 enabled Russian refugees to inhabit the village; the latter group had of course experienced 50 years of Russian history separate from their Canadian counterparts. Many of the village houses were purchased from the Mennonites travelling to Mexico by a businessman from nearby Morden. He hired many of the new immigrants from Russia, and rented many of the empty housebarns to these new families.

The migration to Mexico caused a break in church authority in the village. The Reinlander church was dissolved, and a number of Mennonite denominations began to exist side by side. Architectural and village patterns slowly began to change. The church was abandoned until 1936, when it was taken over again by the Old Colony church. The open field system of farming was in place until the migration, after which time farms became larger and people began to work their quarter sections. A public, English school was imposed on the village by the Canadian government after the migration to Mexico. It was situated directly east of the village, and was named Mersey School after an English town (Dyck, 2002:5).

The Village of Neubergthal

Foundation

Although homestead entries of the lands on which Neubergthal is situated were first signed in 1879, according to oral tradition the village was settled sometime in 1876. The first families to settle the village show up on records of the ship Sarmatian No. 28 that arrived in Canada from Liverpool in 1875. These Mennonite settlers were largely from the Chortitza and Bergthal colonies in Russia. On arriving in Manitoba they spent a year or two in the East Reserve before moving to the West Reserve. The families that settled Neubergthal were well known to each other and formed a tight kin network dominated by Klippensteins and Hamms, names with a continued presence in the village (Klippenstien, 1997:30). In the 1881 federal Census, 11 families are listed with a total population of 64

individuals (Dyck, 1993:367-368).

Settlers and Lots

The Neubergthal Village Agreement was signed on August 25, 1891, a “contract” that ensured families would continue to remain in the village and share certain community responsibilities. Official owners of lands on which the village was located allowed the village to exist thus for another 99 years; gardening and construction could continue on this land; residents could only be evicted from their lot with the consent of two-thirds majority of the residents of the village; the Neubergthal Village Agreement could be terminated if two-thirds of village residents voted for dissolution (Klippenstein, 1997:33). The agreement was signed to offset the repeal of the so-called “hamlet privilege”, which promised Mennonites their street village settlements despite quarter-section arrangements by the Canadian government. The local initiative was meant to formalize their village arrangement. Other villages in the area had already dissolved and these occurrences combined with the loss of the hamlet privilege spurred some villages to create a formal agreement. The residents of Neubergthal dissolved their Village Agreement in 1909.

The village was originally situated only on the East side of the street, but when reliable water sources were found west of the road, construction and settlement occurred on that side as well. Unfortunately the west side of the village had poor drainage and flooded crops were a recurrent problem (Larry Hamm Interview 2002; Klippenstein, 1997:33).

Severe population pressure was evident by the early 1900s, and many young couples and families were crowded into parents’ homes while they saved money to buy their own farmland and construct a house. This pressure was given as a reason for the renovation of house attics into habitable quarters in the 1910s and 20s (Henry Hamm Interview 2002).

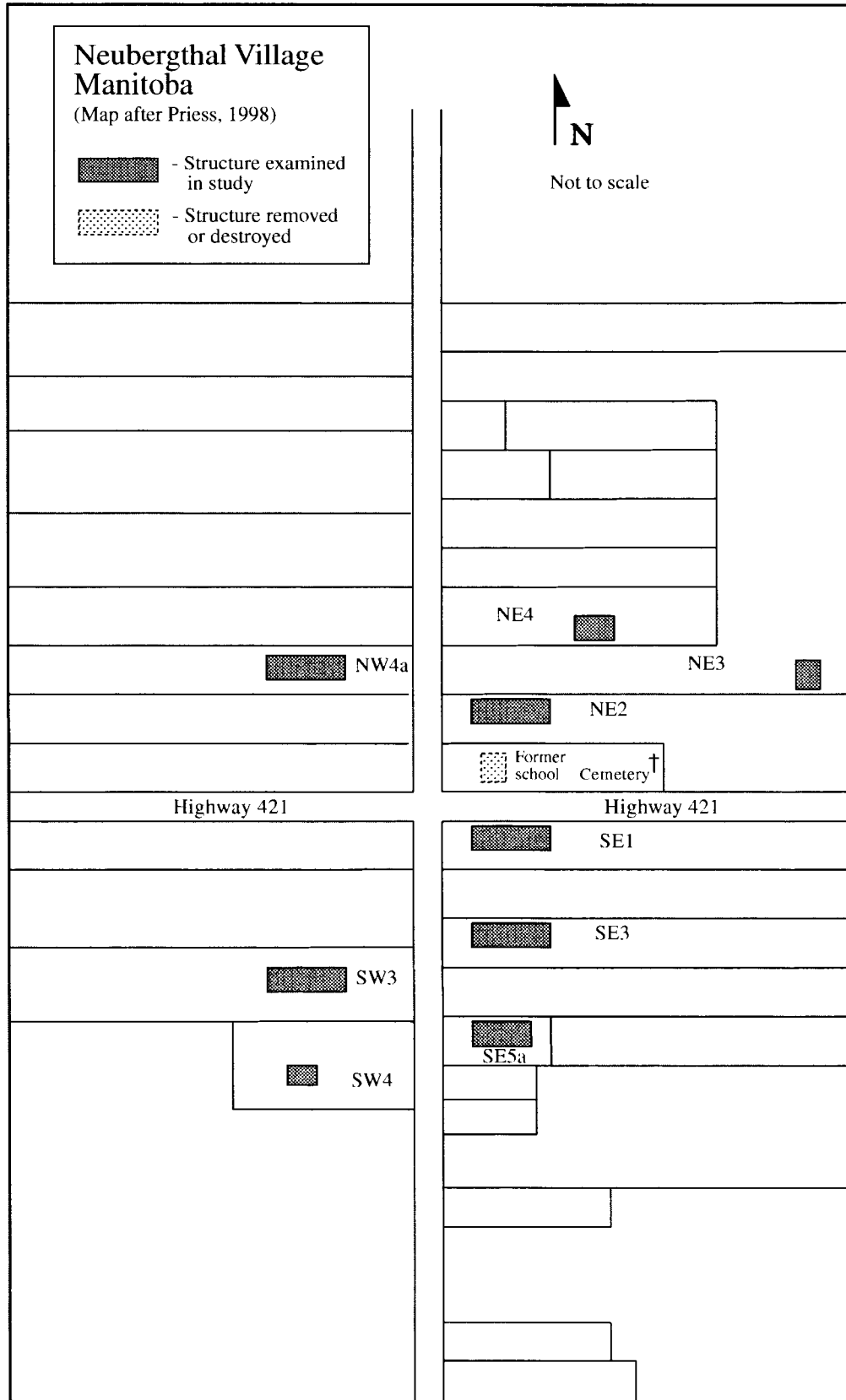


Fig. 20. Village of Neuberghthal with housebarns in study. (After Priess, 1998:3-4)

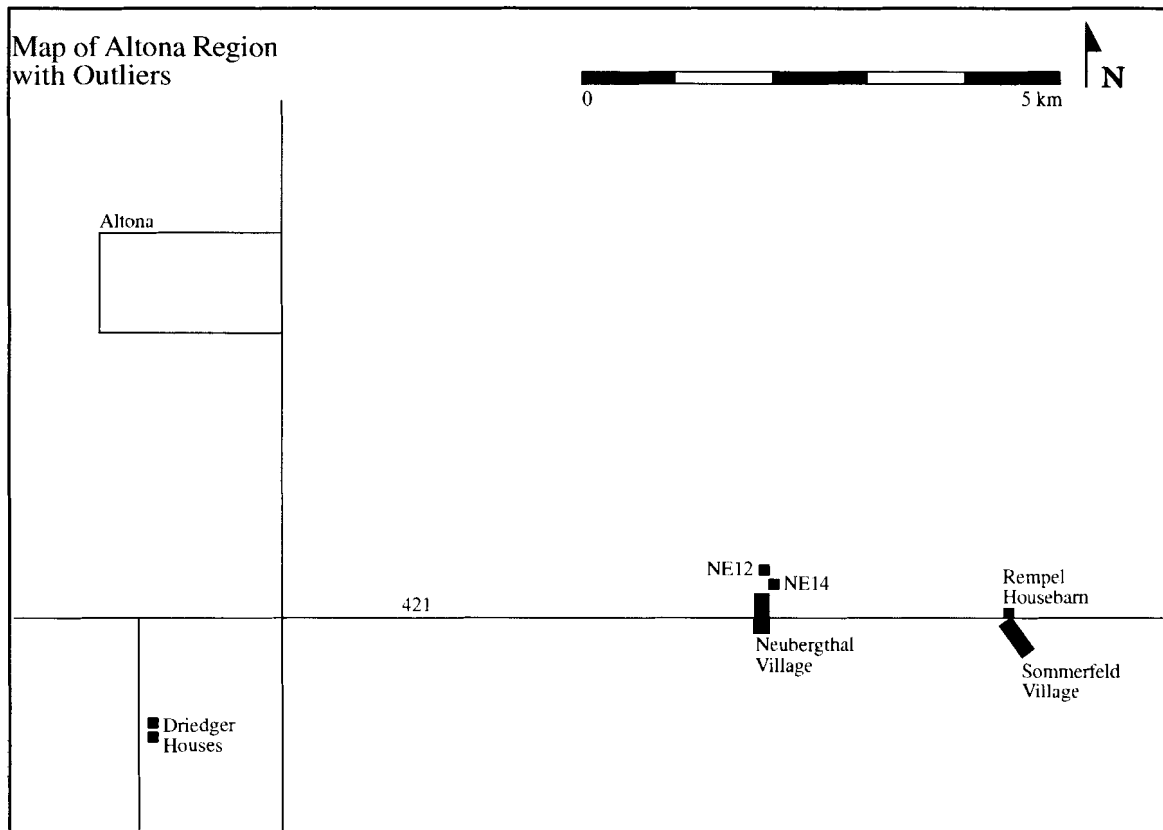


Fig. 21. Altona region with study villages and outlier housebarns.

Cultural and Social Change

With the expansion of farming operations, the open-field system was deemed less convenient, since long, separated strips of land were impractical for large machinery and the increased number of horses (Jake Krueger interviewed in Klippenstein, 1997:35). Pastureland became privately, rather than communally, owned, and farms took on less strip-like and more square formations in keeping with the Canadian quarter section system. While threshing, hog-butchering, and manure-brick fuel making remained common communal efforts, there was a discernible movement towards individually driven farm operations.

Neubergthal residents chose to align themselves with the fledgling Sommerfelder denomination of Mennonites founded in 1893/4. The Sommerfeld church broke away from the Bergthaler church of the West Reserve. The Bergthaler leader Johann Funk “pro-

moted higher education, foreign missions, and pulpit exchange with other churches”, innovations that offended the majority of Bergthaler members (Bender and Smith, eds., 1959:4:841-843). Almost all residents attended the church in the village of Sommerfeld, about two kilometers east of Neubergthal. The Sommerfelder church was a highly orthodox organization and stressed conformity of behaviour and maintenance of church traditions.

By the 1930s, however, changes in church organization and activities were sought by many Neubergthal residents, changes that reflected widespread Canadian church practices such as Sunday School and “explanation” (considered by many as a more relevant illumination of biblical themes, rather than mere reiteration of old sermons). Many transferred their church membership to the new Rudnerweider church (or Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference) which stressed a more personal and charismatic style of worship.

From 1937, independent church services occurred in the home and barn of the grandmother of Rose Hildebrand.

My grandmother had services in the big Schien, the barn, that big open space, that's where that little church started, in 1937 they started services. In wintertime, in her own home, the minister would stand between two rooms in the doorway, and she would have everything full of chairs... Well, in 1936 they split off from the Sommerfelder church. It had to do with wanting to sing songs out of an evangelical songbook. They wanted to preach the word and not just read sermons. They wanted to preach the way of salvation clearly, that you could know that you were born again, instead of hoping you were. Those were the basic splits. Then I guess it was kind of a petition... But again you can see too from Russia, you had only the Bergthaler, then the Sommerfelders split off, and most of her other siblings remained Bergthaler, they never split off; she did. So it wasn't that difficult for her to go back to what she was used to, and not have to stay with the old kind of thing. (Rose Hildebrand Interview, 2002).

When a marriage was taking place, the Sommerfelder had to have a black dress on when they got married, and not there [Rudnerweider], they could have a white one. Altogether it was different, they had a different way of leading a church, they couldn't get along, so it was better this way. The sermons were different too, Sommerfelder mostly read their sermons, and our

pastor had some too, but they explained, and that's what Sommerfeld didn't do...they just read it, they didn't explain it. That's a very big difference...The Sommerfelder had the old hymns, without notes, and we had books with notes in there. (Helena Klippenstein Interview 2002).

In 1944 a new church building was erected at the southwest end of the village. This was dismantled in 1969 as community members sought membership in diverse churches in Mennonite society, particularly in the nearby town of Altona.

A store was located in the village by the early 1900s, first as part of a barn at the north end of the village (on NE-8), and later as a general and grocery store (NE-7), operated by John W. Klippenstein from 1926 onwards (Klippenstein, 1997:41). It was closed in 1973.

There have been three schools on the yard of NE-1, all with an attached teacher's residence. The village cemetery and pasture for the teacher's livestock were also located on this lot, and the annual school picnic was held elsewhere for these reasons (Priess, 1998:23). The last school was dismantled in 1967.

The Village Landscape and the Mennonite Home

The street village was the most common Mennonite cultural landscape in Russia, and was fully and formally transplanted onto the Manitoba prairies. It was in many ways a bounded "unit" of social and economic organization, and was a significant arena of culturally structured and structuring space.

Urry (1989:238) states of Mennonite settlements in 19th century Russia,

"differences in social structure were clearly reflected in the layout of the villages. At the centre of the villages were the fine houses and well-kept yards of the full farmers, surrounded by sturdy brick walls and mature stands of trees. Towards the ends of the village street were the houses of those belonging to the lower orders. The houses were often smaller, less well-kept buildings, and were overcrowded by the standards of the "middle class" farmers."

The village unit as geographical place presented numerous physical experiences

and mental associations for both community members and visitors. This includes the orientation of houses in relation to the street (the public avenue), the use of physical structures as guides to movement and social relations, and the importance of the placement of people along village axes in terms of status and labour. All of these factors created a cultural landscape in which the village acted as an ordered, bounded cultural unit imposed upon a relatively flat and featureless plain. Not only were street villages easily recognizable to outsiders as being Mennonite, but the colonial nature of their design, and the eventual polarization of rich and poor created an important cultural understanding of the social order. This was lived and observed in a physical manner on a daily basis. Life inside the houses of these street villages was also ordered physically in social fields, and these were related to the social structures of the community. As villages changed or broke apart the relevance of both street and houses as ethnic methods of inculcation of *habitus* and orthopraxis changed in a perceptible manner.

Housebarns were designed and constructed according to their exterior appearance and how this related to the village, as well as to the interior arrangement of space and how this was culturally prescribed and individually manipulated for purposes of social control.

Mennonites in Manitoba have often referred to the “typical” Mennonite house, one that included various divisions and orientations based on architectural structures commonly found among Mennonite colonists in Russia in the 19th century. In practice, the residents worked with this form to produce a place that met their immediate needs and changing perceptions of what a household was.

Adherence to the idea of the “typical” Mennonite house was observed both among Mennonite scholars and the informants in this study. This strong support of what is typical or normative suggests a created past in which houses and families were identical in structure and value system. The implication is that all families in a village were similar and shared a communal understanding of appropriate and robust social interaction, without discord or inequality. Although many informants spoke of variations in social rela-

tions, and all could certainly recall them, there was a tendency to flatten this variation by claiming that all houses were similar, and that therefore all families lived in the same conditions.

Mennonite street village homes were not uniform in construction or size, although they did share basic design concepts (such as entrance placements, the *Flurkuechenhaus* design, and central ovens). Homes differed greatly in size and number of rooms, which depended largely on wealth. Smaller, poorer houses were located on the ends of villages, to such an extent that these locations were stigmatized. By 1920 intense experimentation and innovation was taking place with the construction of new homes. Older houses built before 1900 were constantly being renovated according to individual tastes and necessities, with various degrees of adherence to village norms. Meanwhile Mennonites everywhere, especially those who lived on homesteads and all those living in towns, were choosing to purchase or build houses in Anglo-Canadian and mail-order styles. Those Mennonites who continued to live in the few surviving street villages after 1900 were the only ones to continue building in the older ethnic designs, but facades came under increasing influence of Anglo-Canadian styles common among Mennonites living outside of villages. The acceptance and incorporation of new styles depended to a great degree on the congregational background of villages in this study. Neubergthal farmers, mostly Sommerfelders before the 1930s, proudly displayed these new styles for their neighbours and other villages. Old Colony communities in Chortitz and Reinland adopted these styles very slowly until 1924, at the time when many migrated to Mexico. It was also among the Old Colony Mennonites before 1924 that the “canon” of Mennonite furniture remained a stable, structuring element of spatial use. A late version of the housebarn, differing significantly in interior spatial design from older houses, began to appear in the 1920s on the outskirts of villages in the Altona area (see NE14, NE12, Rempel Housebarn, Driedger Housebarn). These were the last housebarns to be built.

Evolutionary Models of Mennonite Housebarn Design

Researchers of vernacular Mennonite architecture have emphasized unilinear evolutionary models based on the chronological classification of building forms to explain shifts in housebarn construction over time (Noble, 1984; Dick, 1984; Butterfield and Ledohowski, 1984, 1990; Lehr, 1997; Ennals and Deryck, 1998).

These models of structural change vary in content and temporal placement of types, but each presents a number of distinct stages, three to five in number depending on the researcher. The first stage generally represents the early pioneer era when materials and funds were scarce, and includes basic sheltering structures such as the *semelin* (sod house), the *serai* (a large thatch structure) and small log houses with attached barns. Shortly thereafter “traditional” housebarns that replicated the designs of the Mennonite buildings in Russia replaced these temporary dwellings. The next phases indicated by researchers occurred roughly between 1900 and 1925, with the house and barn now linked only by an exterior passageway (*Gang*). At this point the house was also often rotated perpendicular to the barn, to make it look “more Canadian” (Noble 1984). Dick (1984) and Lehr (1997:1821) complete the evolutionary model by presenting a final stage in which the “pattern book” house and later the modern bungalow were adopted and totally separated from the barn, although the traditional arrangement of space was retained in the farmyard.

All of these stages emphasize two design strategies used by Mennonites to acculturate to Canadian society: the separation of barn and house over time, and the movement towards a mainstream appearance of the dwelling. Both stress external appearances, with Mennonite builders attempting to communicate the increasingly English-Canadian nature of their dwellings.

These models all depict a single path of evolution, starting from the first basic prairie shelters, then settling into classic or “typical” forms, and finally morphing into a variation in which house and barn become increasingly separated and the house is reori-

ented in relation to the street. While these classifications are not entirely incorrect, like all such constructions they oversimplify the variation and purpose of houses. After a preliminary observation of a small sample of houses, researchers create a limited typology and then force their samples into one or another category, ignoring the complex life histories of each home (Noble, 1984; Dick, 1984). By creating a unilinear evolutionary model, they also disregard variations that follow other, sometimes contradictory, directions.

These models highlight the exterior appearance of the house, but do not examine the manner in which people lived in these homes. Interior space and the renovations that shape it through time are largely ignored as a setting for interaction and daily, rhythmic activity so important in the development of *habitus*. Economic divisions within the community, which were expressed in placement and design of homes, are also neglected. By emphasizing evolutionary models of changing house forms, the choices and designs of their owners and residents are not reflected, but subsumed under a single, inexorable direction of change. This ignores social differentiation and individual agency.

Finally, in studying Mennonite homes that share continuities with past ethnic designs, there is a danger of ignoring the many Anglo-Canadian buildings used by Mennonites outside and within villages, and the effects these had on community architecture as a whole.

The approach in this research emphasizes the house as a structuring element of social life. This inculcation of social patterns of behaviour and belief occurs both inside and outside the home. Rather than treat Mennonite housebarns as objects detached from the values and experiences of daily reality, in which they are merely a passive product of cultural traditions and environmental realities, they are viewed as a material setting integrated with public and private practices that daily reify ethnic Mennonite values. To accomplish this, life inside the homes must be examined, in addition to the exterior appearance of houses. Variations in household design and use must be investigated as choices household residents made in terms of appropriate (and changing) living conditions.

The Influence of Anglo-Ontario Architecture on Mennonite Houses

The greatest contact Mennonites of the West Reserve had with other ethnic communities was with people of Scottish and Irish background from southern Ontario. These groups had settled the Manitoban prairie as farmers on homesteads and business owners in small towns. The Mennonites' business dealings and shared farming experience with these settlers was their main source of interethnic interaction. The influence of the rural housing styles of these Ontario immigrants on the housebarns of Mennonites can be seen in a number of modifications common after 1900.

Ontario settlers coming to Manitoba in the 1860s and 1870s brought with them a building tradition emphasizing symmetrical facades (facing the road or main entrance to the yard) and 1.5 storey houses (a technique of avoiding Ontario taxes on 2 storey homes). Front doors were centrally located, accompanied by windows on each side and often a peaked gable/dormer window above the door. By the 1890s, with the onset of economic prosperity in the prairies and southern Manitoba in particular, larger 2 storey houses, stained glass windows, and porches and verandas also became common, along with an increased variety of building forms (Butterfield and Ledohowski, 1983, 1984; Butterfield, 1988).

Many Mennonites of the West Reserve chose to orient and adorn their houses with particular elements of these Ontario-influenced homes. A number of particular changes were prevalent in homes built after 1900: 1.5 storey houses, symmetrical facades, re-orientation of housebarns, dormer windows, and the use of a front porch/veranda/vestibule.

The construction or renovation of a second storey in the attic, accompanied by dormer windows, created the effect of a 1.5 storey home in Ontario style. In Neuberghal, NE2 (ca 1910) and NW4 (1919) (See Appendix 2) are both full 1.5 storey homes (with the second floor not merely being a renovated attic) with large massing on a symmetrical street-oriented façade. Variation existed with these strategies as well. While many residents finished the attic or part of the attic after 1910, in part to accommodate population

pressures within the villages (H. Kehler Interview, 2001), only the wealthiest community members could afford a fully finished upper space with dormer windows. These kinds of second floors were also considered status symbols (B.B. Hamm Interview, 2002). In Neubergthal, SW3 and SE3 are good examples of the latter, while in Reinland, 141 Reinland Ave. has many of these same attributes. On the other hand, many families created only one or two rooms in the attic, with windows on the gable end (164, 179 Reinland Ave., 26 Chortitz Rd.S, NE4, SE1).

The orientation of the house changed for many housebarns built after 1900, resulting in the façade and front entrance facing the street. Interior arrangement of rooms changed little however, and the symmetrical placement of the door did not take place: it was still off-centre in order to accommodate the traditional arrangement of interior rooms (particularly the large size of the *Groote Stow*). Houses 170, 171, 163, and 164 Reinland Ave. all exhibit this pattern.

Porches, verandas, and vestibules became common after about 1900 as well, as an aesthetic and spatial extension of the *Vaeathues* in the style of Ontario homes. These are located on housebarns of either orientation. Other innovations adopted from Ontario styled houses include the full construction of a mansard-roof square house in the Northwest quadrant of Neubergthal. Green and blue coloured glass was used in the front doors of NW4 (1919) which were originally located on the main and second floor above the front porch.

A significant aspect of rural Mennonite identity and social status, both in Russia and Manitoba, was the success of the individual farmer and farming household. Being a successful farmer-landowner meant having a significant standing in the community and, traditionally, the ability to vote on village affairs (political power). Adopting certain external stylistic features of the homes of economically and socially accomplished Ontario settlers became one strategy by which Mennonite farmers displayed economic wealth and social sophistication. This Ontario immigrant social group was also well connected with

the national markets, the upper political elite of Manitoban government, and was associated with British royalty, for which Mennonites had a good deal of reverence. There was little direct competition between these two social groups. The Ontario settlers were widespread, individualistic, and of mixed national backgrounds, and although their language and many customs were similar, it would be difficult to label them an ethnically coherent group in the same way Mennonites of Russian background were at the time. The land and market laws of Manitoba and Canada were sufficiently open to allow Mennonites unhindered entrée into the capitalist market system, and although Mennonites were socially differentiated through language and religion, competition was increasingly at the level of the individual, rather than group *versus* group. Emulation of a few external stylistic elements would have created a link between Mennonites eager to enter this new national style of agrarian capitalism on the prairies and their closest peers, the English speaking, wealthy farmers of the region. These stylistic elements would have assisted in downplaying ethnic Mennonite structural identifiers to both travellers and local residents in villages, as well as indicating to locals the new association with national social and economic systems. Until the 1920s, however, housebarn interiors still contained many Russian Mennonite assumptions about spatial use and social relations, assumptions that were part of the inculcation of a particular *habitus*.

In addition, each village in the study seems to have had its own version of what was appropriate in terms of the incorporation of Ontario-style elements. Reinland dwellings began to be oriented parallel to the street, and their facades remained asymmetrical, while some housebarns in Neubergthal retained the “I-shaped” plan and elaborated on this with verandas, fully finished second floors, and dormer windows. Later housebarns (1910s) in Neubergthal showed clear symmetrical facades with fully shifted orientation. In Chortitz meanwhile, very little incorporation of Ontario stylistic elements seems to have been preserved, although there is some evidence of shifts of orientation in two houses that still exist but were not available for full study. It must be stressed that

these types of incorporation were of use largely in established Mennonite villages, and outside the village confines varied strategies were undertaken, from the adoption of full mail-order prairie homes to new variations on the housebarn theme (NE12, NE14, Rempel Housebarn, Driedger Housebarn).

For Mennonite village-dwellers, this strategy of stylistic incorporation was primarily expressed on house exteriors, with the internal layout of rooms remaining very similar to previous Russian-Mennonite dwellings. This manner of adoption of Ontario building elements corresponds to other patterns of stylistic change occurring during the same period (1880-1930) among the Metis (Burley *et al.*, 1992).

Variations in the Earliest Mennonite Dwellings

On first arrival in 1875, settlers quickly raised tents as shelters while they began to build *semlins*, *sarai*, and small log houses (See Figure 22) . In most cases a small number of livestock shared one half of the structure during the winter months. Within a year or two, most families were able to build a more substantial house, usually of logs, and then a barn. Those who came with wealth or did well in repaying their debts to the Canadian government soon built fully articulated Mennonite housebarns similar to those common in Russia, although they were now built of wood rather than brick. Older homes were sometimes moved, destroyed or used as storage or livestock shelters.

Within two generations many of these early, simple houses became the homes of poorer Mennonites. They consisted of two to four rooms and had dirt floors in the kitchen areas and no *Gang* to the barn. School teachers, usually poor and landless, lived in one half of the school-house, the other half being the classroom, with a hallway separating the two. Herdsman's houses, usually without barns, were basic shelters with two rooms, placed at one end of the village. The examples in this study of such homes (SW4 Nebergthal, and 70 Chortitz Rd. S) both lacked the woman's wall cabinet common in larger homes. This may indicate that these shelters were built for single herdsmen, or it may reveal the level of poverty of its residents. Both houses, however, exhibited

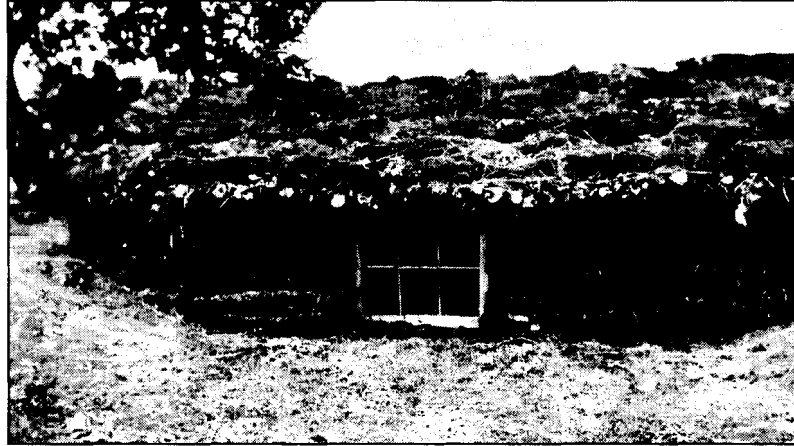


Fig. 22 *Semlin*. Courtesy of Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, Manitoba.

wainscotting in the living quarters (but not the “kitchen”), indicating that a separation of formal from informal/utilitarian rooms was maintained despite the spatial simplicity.

All of the Mennonite houses in this study, except for the four examples constructed after 1925 (NE12, NE14, Rempel Housebarn, Driedger Housebarn) followed the *Flurkuechenhaus* design concept. This includes a rectangular structure divided near the middle along the short axis. This dividing wall contained the central oven and chimney, which worked to heat both sides of the structure. One entrance was placed in each of the long sides of the house, both leading into the less formal half of the home. On this basic design principle further divisions of space could be constructed. These divisions depended on the size of the entire structure and the finances of the owner-residents. The next, more complicated division of space after the two-room structure was the four-room house, in which each of the two spaces would be divided again through their long axes. The residents of SW4 decided at an early stage to divide only one side of the house in this manner, giving them a three-room structure. More complicated still were the houses containing six to eight rooms, in which these spaces were again divided. The following diagrams (Figure 23) of these spatially differentiated houses are *not* meant to represent a chronological evolution of Mennonite architecture. Instead, these examples reveal some of the choices in design available to Mennonites in the first two generations of settlement in

Manitoba. These choices depended largely on social and financial status, but all were based on an ethnic Mennonite understanding of spatial patterns in the home.

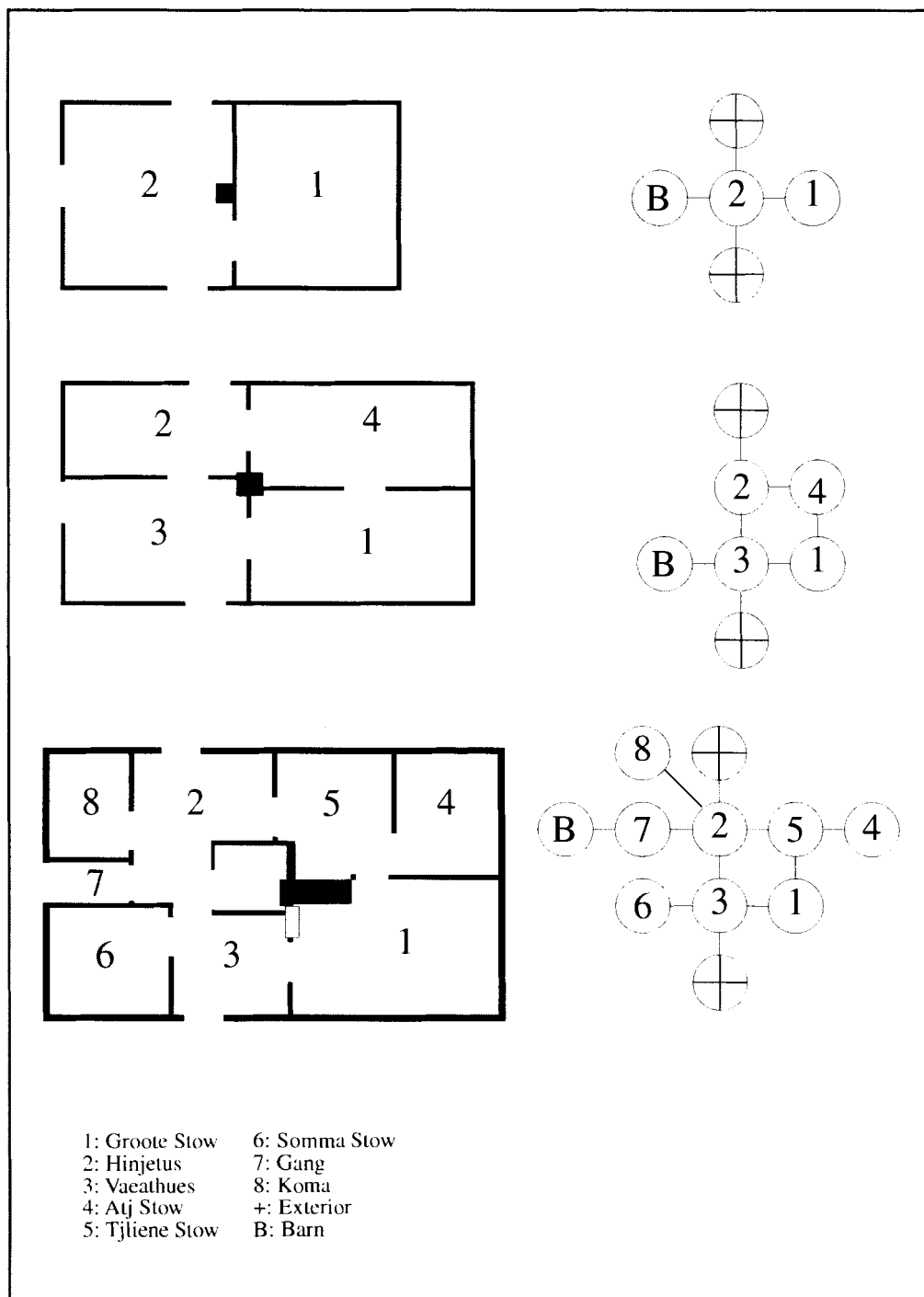


Fig. 23 Options for *Flurkuechenhaus* design (with corresponding circular spatial patterns).

Most Mennonite homes in this study consisted of four to eight rooms. The most stable room in the designs of these houses, in terms of placement, decorative treatment, and renovations, was the *Groote Stow*. It was always, without exception, placed on the south or east side of the house and faced the street, whatever the house's orientation. It was never subdivided, and was an average of twenty to twenty-five percent of the total area on the main floor. The large size of this room was maintained despite the fact it was the least used of all the rooms and the least accessible to the majority of residents. The room beside it remained either whole or was subdivided into the *Atj Stow* (corner room) and *Tjliene Stow* (small room). In the other half of the house, the space could be divided into *Vaeathues* (front room), *Somma Stow* (summer room), *Koma* (pantry), *Hinjetus* (back room, used for dining, visiting, working, and as a kitchen), and the "black kitchen". The inside walls of the *Somma Stow* and *Koma* could create a *Gang*, or hallway, leading to the barn. This fully articulated Mennonite house, constructed by well-to-do landowners, is exemplified by the Teichroeb House of Chortitz, which is now located in the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach, Manitoba (Figure 24).

Once rooms on second floors were incorporated into the design of houses, the total area of the main floor became less important and the number of spatial divisions was reduced (see NE2 and NW4 of Neubergthal). Most houses in this study renovated the second floor into habitable quarters years after the house was first constructed, and did not incorporate it directly into the original design. Examples of habitable second floors in Reinland date from various periods, from the 1930s to 2000. In contrast, habitable second floors built in Neubergthal houses have dates clustering between 1910-1930. The earliest versions (NE2, NW4, SE3, SW3) utilize all the floor area of the second story while the later renovations (SE1, NE4) included just one room. The construction of a full second floor was considered a matter of status in this village (B.B. Hamm Interview, 2002), while in Reinland, where it happened haphazardly over the century, it never achieved such symbolic import. This is probably due to the presence of *Reinlaender* Mennonites in Reinland

until 1924, for whom a furnished second story may have been considered ostentatious. Neuberghthal informants, on the other hand, expressed pride in the appearance of the village, and this attitude was known to cause tension with other nearby communities in the past (A. Krueger Interview, 2002; B.B. Hamm Interview, 2002).

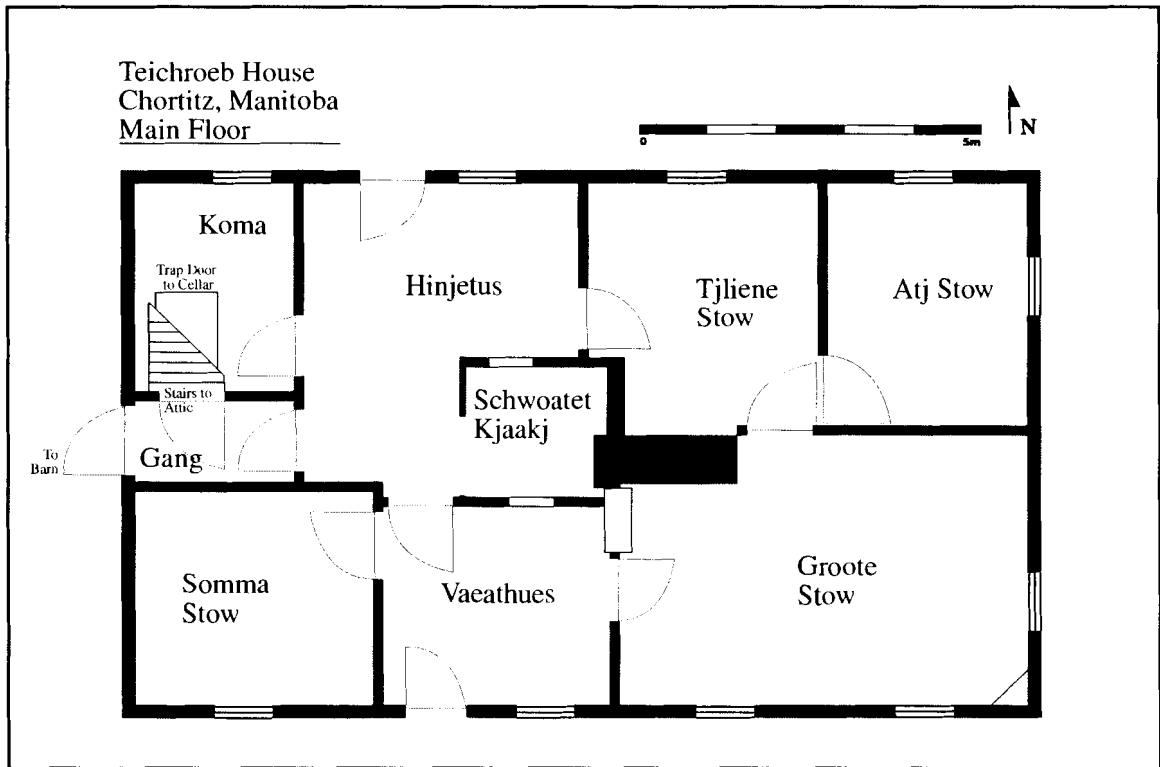


Fig. 24 Teichroeb House

There are a number of architectural examples that directly contradict the pattern of house and barn separation proposed by other researchers (See Figure 25). In the vicinity of Altona, Manitoba there are four fully integrated housebarns built in the late 1920s and early 1930s (NE12, NE14, Driedger Housebarn, Rempel Housebarn). Three of these structures incorporated the house into the barn to such a degree that to the untrained eye no human dwelling would be evident. All of these housebarns are located outside or at the ends of their associated villages (See Figure 21).

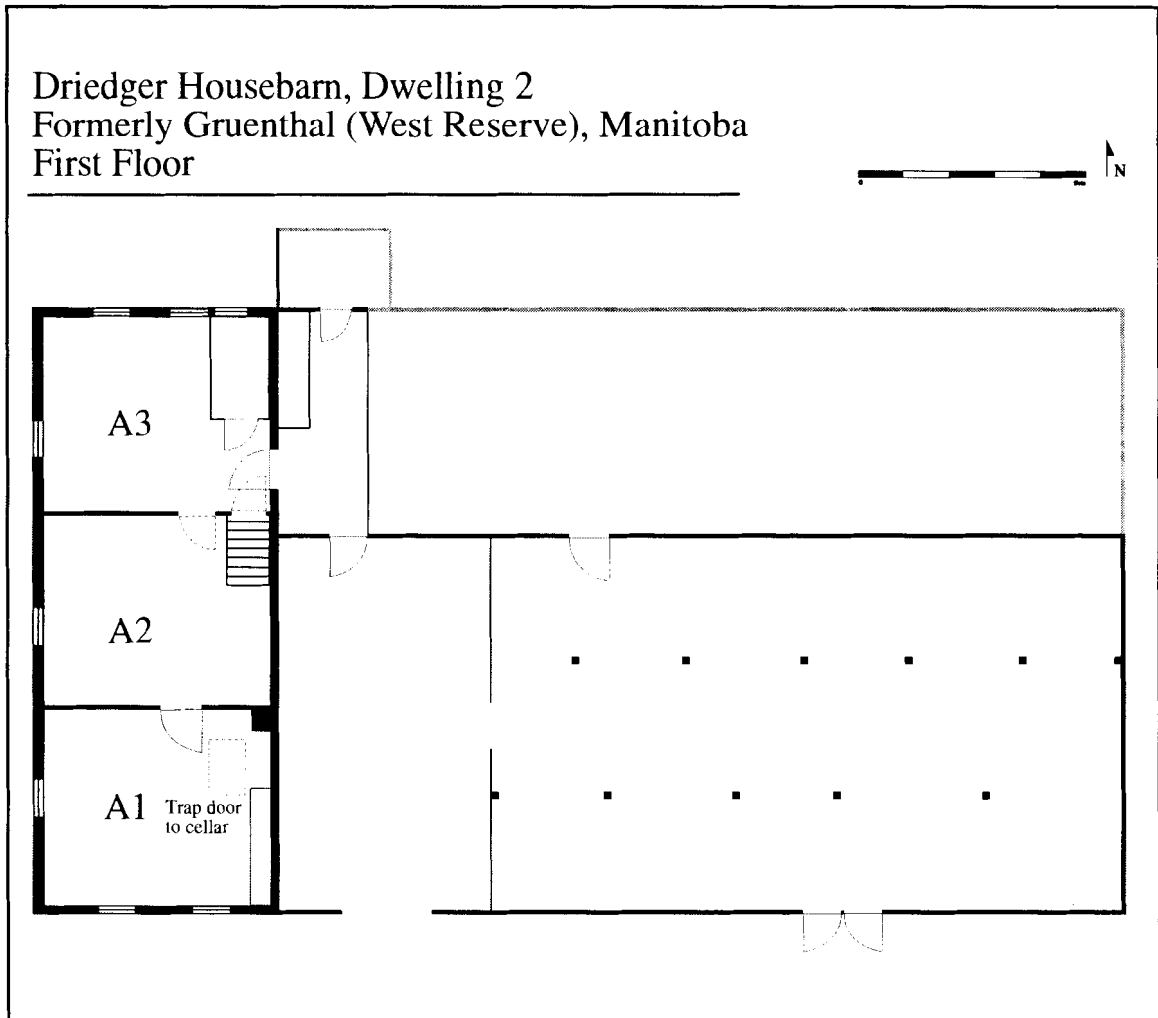


Fig. 25 Driedger Housebarn, Gruenthal, West Reserve, Manitoba. A1, living room; A2, living room; A3, kitchen. Constructed 1926.

These dwellings do not replicate or even resemble Mennonite homes found in villages in the area. While the use of space in the barn sections remained very similar to the earlier barns of the 1870s and 1880s, the structures represent significant departures in the design of dwelling spaces.

In the four examples of housebarns built after 1925, the *Flurkuechenhaus* design is greatly simplified through a modification of the circular pattern of spaces into a linear arrangement. The dwelling is incorporated into the barn, (with the exception of NE14, which is constructed similar to an *Owesied*, or lean-to), and truncated to a depth of only

one room. Additional living spaces, usually in the form of bedrooms, were built above the main rooms. In both interior floorplan and exterior appearance, these housebarns emphasized the importance of the barn, the primary economic structure. The dwelling lost its importance in representing the hierarchical order of inhabitants and the relationships of community households. It acts as the most economical of possible shelters. This in itself would impart a *habitus* of family life and structural continuation where economic efficiency holds primary position over and above household or ethnic continuity, especially in contrast to the previous generations' dwellings in nearby villages. None of these four housebarns were found within villages. There are two related reasons for this. The orthopraxis of the village would not have easily incorporated these new forms into the village context, but outside the village this type of experimentation could more easily take place. These four housebarns are also less expensive to construct: incorporation of the dwelling inside the barn (rather than building two distinct structures sharing one wall) reduces material and labour costs (local carpenters were hired for construction).

Mennonite buildings after 1890 were not designed according to a directional movement towards Anglo-acculturation, but show a diverse array of design strategies pulling in different directions according to local pressures and local backgrounds.

Design in the Village Context

Streets were usually oriented either North-South (Neubergthal and Chortitz) or East-West (Reinland). The location of the street and its relation to northwesterly winds were critical factors in house orientation. While the formal end or side of the house (which included the *Groote Stow* and *Atj Stow*) always faced the street, certain rooms and structures were chosen to bear the brunt of fierce northwesterly winter winds, or be protected from them.

Housebarns of the earliest period (1875-ca.1900) were with few exceptions "I-shaped". That is, they extended back from the street in one long unit, and the dwelling and barn shared the same ridgeline (See Figure 26). The *Owesied*, or lean-to, was always locat-

ed on the long north or west side of the barn. The *Groote Stow* and *Vaeathues* (front entrance room) were always located on the south or east side of the house, keeping them warmer in the winter, while the *Hinjetus* was always located on the north or west side of the house. The *Groote Stow* always had one window facing the street, while doors were on the long sides of the house and did not face the street. The similarity of the orientations of most of the early houses in street villages made the interior placement of people, things, and activities known to all community members at a glance. Once orientations and building styles changed and began to exhibit variation, this knowledge or set of assumptions was called into question. The ethnic and communal logic (essential to *habitus*) of Mennonite housebarn spaces was confused by houses built after 1910, and this helped create more private and individualistic spaces for residents.

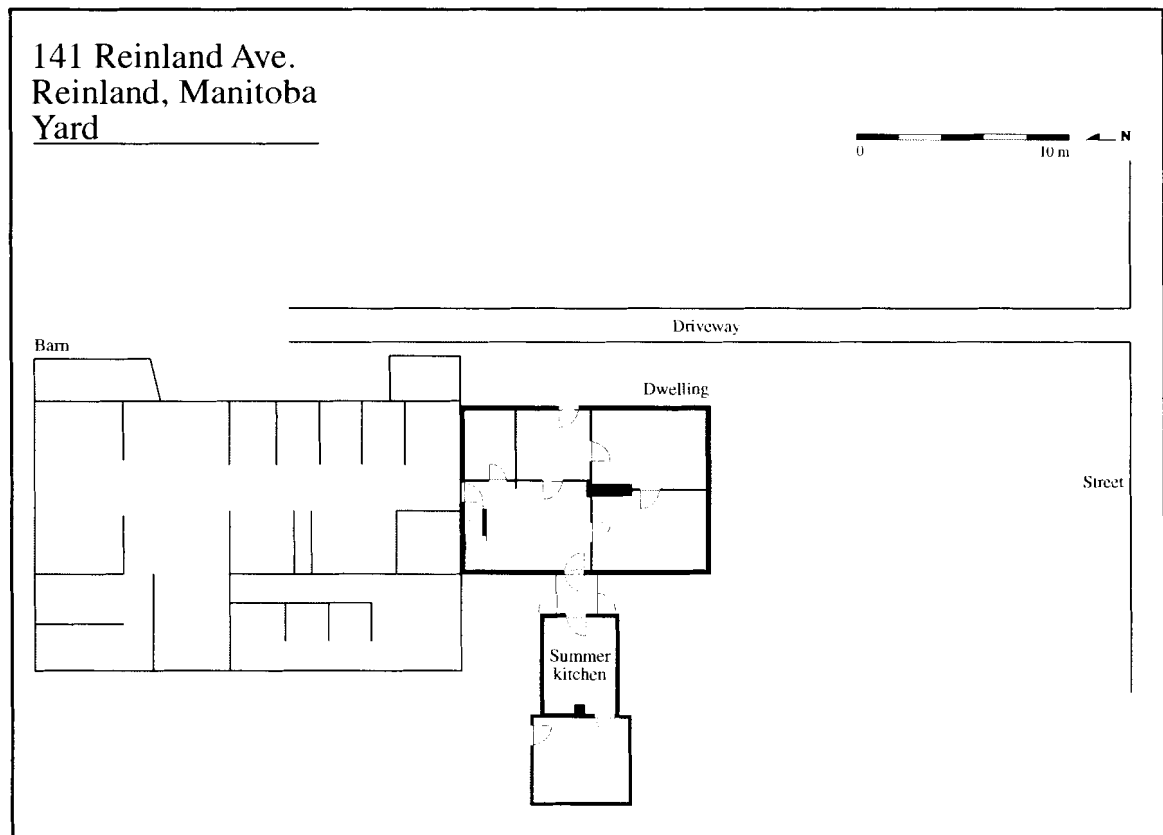


Fig. 26 141 Reinland Avenue, Yard. Constructed circa 1910.

All of the housebarns with a “T-shape” plan in this study were constructed between

1905 and 1919 (See Figure 27). In contrast to the “I-shape” housebarn, the house was oriented parallel to the street, while the barn remained perpendicular. An exterior *Gang* connected the two structures. While the exterior appearance of the house was altered, the interior layout did not change significantly from previous Mennonite design options, except for the disappearance of the interior *Gang* (Butterfield and Ledohowski, 1984:111).

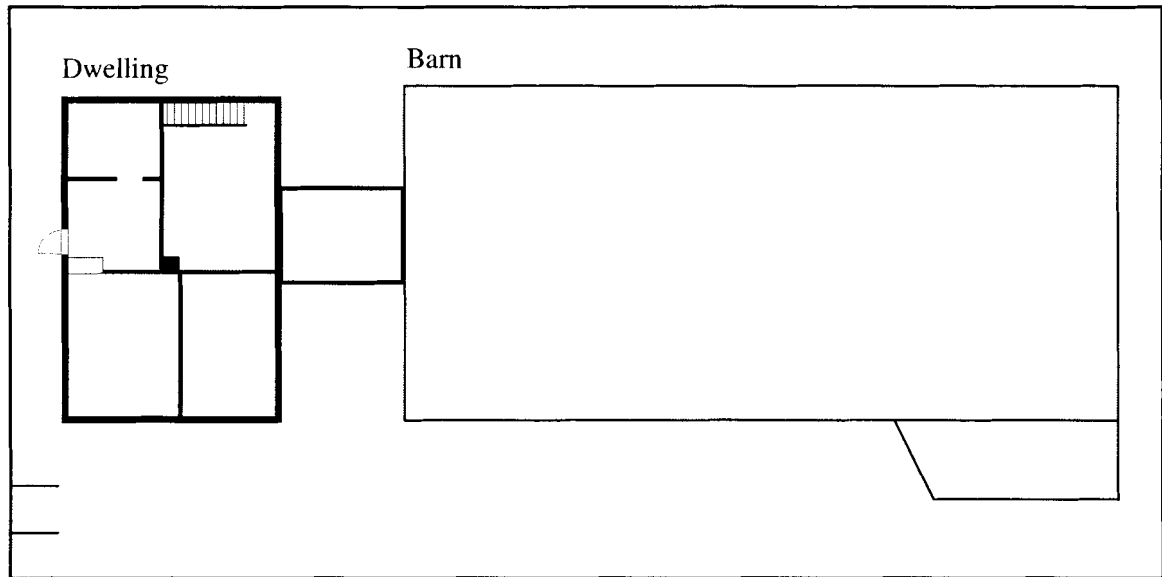


Fig. 27 NE2 Housebarn, Neuberghthal. Constructed circa 1910.

One of the major visual effects of this change in orientation was the presence of the formal entrance to the house now facing the street. The earlier ubiquitous orientation of village dwellings presented a totally symmetrical façade of the gable end of the structure, with two windows and no door (See Appendix 2, 26 Chortitz Rd. S). These small, non-entrance facades were located 25-30 meters from the street, usually including trees and a garden between street and structure. This presented an extremely formal, reserved frontage deeply removed from the main avenue of travel. The new T-shaped orientation presented a large, nearly symmetrical façade with a central door and front steps (See Appendix 2, NE2). The similarity in *appearance* of the “T-shaped” plan with Anglo-Canadian house styles cannot be mistaken. Three reasons have been given for this shift in

orientation: increased hygiene; reduction in snow drifts formed along the very long “I-shaped” structure; and style (Warkentin, 2000:84). With regards to cleanliness, the room linking the dwelling and the stable was usually used as the summer kitchen, therefore begging the question of hygiene. Snow drifts could indeed have been a problem, but more manageable drifts are likely to have been a result rather than a cause of the shift. More likely, Mennonites were “copying other Manitobans for hygienic and stylish reasons” (Warkentin, 2000:84). That is, new ideas of what was considered clean (separated barn and house) and attractive were adapted to village settings, although these houses cannot truly be considered to have been more hygienic. In reference to this shift Warkentin claims that “in the opinion of some elderly Mennonites the desire to be stylish was a very important factor in following the prevailing custom” (2000:88). The similarity of the interior of these houses with older Mennonite homes, however, reveals the persistence and importance of the floorplan in structuring an ethnic *habitus*.

Social Status, Houses, and the Village

In Mennonite settlements in Russia, poor or landless villagers (*Anwohner* and *Einwohner*) often had their homes at the ends of street villages. While this was not a pre-conceived plan of colonial street villages, it became a social reality with the increased division of classes within Mennonite society. This pattern quickly replicated itself in Manitoba, and informants recall its presence.

Two interviews with former inhabitants of Reinland reveal the location of poor and landless within the village landscape.

I shouldn't even talk about that. Well, I can't, isn't it always that way, that there are some people...it will always be...There were two very poor ones, one lived on one end of the village, and the other one lived on the other end of the village. But on the west end he did some farming, and he could get some grain, he fed some pig, and he always slaughtered pig every fall. And the other one, he had only 3 boys I think...and later on they moved out of their little hut, and they were living on the Old Colony church, they took care of the church...I don't know if I should say that. But in those days I know that lard, that was a very big food...I heard the women always asking after a slaughter how much lard they got, that was the most important

thing, to grease the potatoes. But I was in one place, a very poor place, I saw her make potatoes in a pan, and it didn't look like lard, they were going a little black...I shouldn't say that, but I've seen it and I've often thought about those people. But I think they were used to it... (J. Fehr Interview, 2002)

When I was little, every Saturday afternoon I would have to wash and braid my hair wet, and take a little basket with buns, eggs, and jam and walk to the east end of the village and turn left, where the cheese factory was. And on the right hand side in the very last house were three single old ladies from Russia, and they were very poor. When I would get in my hair was frozen, and they would make me take off my winter clothes, they would sit me down next to the Teajelowe and warm up. It was a very small house, much simpler in design. It wasn't the herd house, because he lived at the other end of the village beside the pasture. They came in 1923, but I didn't really know how old they were, because they all wore long dresses and shawls. They had unique names: Auntjemum, Liestjum, and Taunte Funkje, the last was the widow, I don't know where her husband was. Somehow I always felt there was an air of mystery about those three ladies...I could always sense that my parents had some concern about them. They had relatives, but they weren't part of a family as such. (M. Zacharias Interview, 2002)

In Chortitz, it is also remembered that the “poor lived at the ends of the village” (Wiebe, Thiessen, Fehr Interview, 2002). When widows came to the village from Russia in the 1920s they lived in “very dreary, small houses” of one to three rooms (Wiebe, Thiessen, Fehr Interview, 2002).

Spatial Design Elements of Mennonite Houses

Three design features important to Mennonite housebarns included the circular connections of interior space in the *Flurkuechenhaus* floorplan, the *Gang*, and the placement of entrances on the sides of houses not facing the street. The shifts in the use of these features indicate changing perceptions of the household and social relations.

The *Flurkuechenhaus* Floorplan

Although Mennonite homes exhibiting the fully articulated *Flurkuechenhaus* design were partitioned, they were not rooms assigned to individuals, nor did they ensure any degree of privacy. There was no hall (except for the *Gang* to the barn) to act as a “dead

space” accessed by each room. Rather, each room opened into the next in a circular pattern. The wall between the *Groote Stow* and the *Atj* and/or *Tjliene Stow* did not necessarily reach the ceiling, and sometimes large holes were maintained in these walls. Both of these features increased heat exchange between the spaces, but reduced the effectiveness of the rooms as “private” areas.

“Privacy”, like “comfort”, is a relative term of course, and was not an objective idea to be attained in early Mennonite houses. Rooms were multifunctional and inhabited by numerous people in different ways and combinations. Furniture was collapsible and multifunctional (*Schlopbenkj* -see Figures 28a,b) to utilize space most efficiently, and such items could be found in almost any room. The idea of a “bedroom” was non-existent, because any space could be used for sleeping. Informants mention people sleeping in every room in the house except the *Koma* or cellar, but including the *Gang* and places in the barn.

The *Flurkuechenhaus* floorplan of Mennonite homes, whether simply divided or fully articulated, was essentially a circular pattern of connected rooms (See Figure 23). Each room led to another. The only exception was the *Somma Stow* in larger houses, which could only be accessed from one other room. The older boys of the family usually inhabited this room, and while it provided them with “privacy” and a level of independence, it also excluded them from the circular pattern of movement through the house.

Having mentioned this “circular” pattern around the central oven, it must be noted that room use was not evenly distributed either in level of activity or equal access to inhabitants. In most houses the *Groote Stow* was relatively off-limits, and most daily activity took place in the *Hinjetus*, or kitchen/dining area.

This circular pattern dominated ethnic Mennonite architecture until the 1920s. With the construction of “barnhouses” (NE14, NE12, Rempel Housebarn, and the Driedger Housebarn), the circular pattern was modified drastically into a linear 2-3 room floorplan. All rooms were still attached to each other directly, revealing the continued

value of non-personalized, multifunctional space. Of all the housebarns in this study, hallways were only found in the upper floor of NE12 (constructed in the 1940s) and on the main floor of NW4 (part of renovations in 1980s).

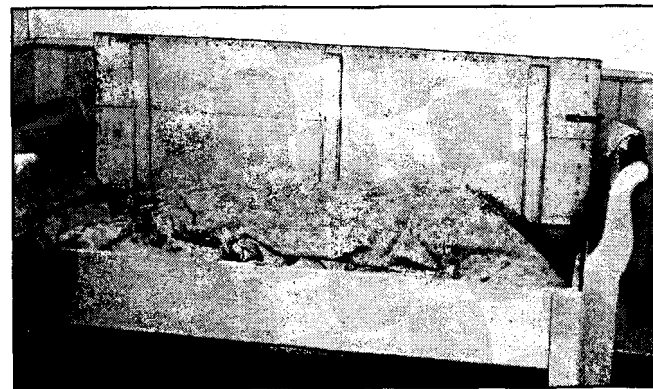
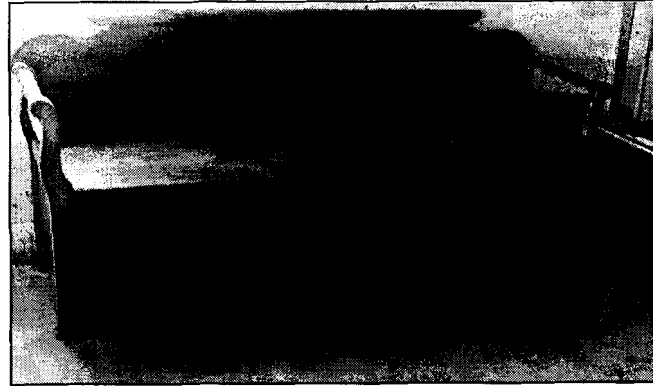


Fig. 28a (top) Closed *Schlopbekj*, 966.819.1. 28b (bottom) Open *Schlopbekj*, 966.1785.1. Courtesy of the Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, Manitoba.

This method of connecting rooms and guiding movement in design was supplemented by the multifunctional character of all rooms and the lack of personal, private space. The importance and symbolic use of the *Groote Stow* to the parents is the one method in which social order was inculcated through architectural order. As the social order of the orthopraxic village setting and the farming organization of these settlements collapsed, the importance of this room for instilling social values changed. With the acceptance of second story rooms as “bedrooms”, individual space was introduced to eth-

nically Mennonite choices of house design. This did not occur at the expense of the circular design in the *Flurkuechenhaus* floorplan except in the later “barnhouses” of the 1920s.

The *Gang* in Mennonite Architecture

The *Gang*, or hall, has an important place in ethnic Mennonite architecture. The literal translation of the term is “passage”, although this does not incorporate all its uses or meanings. In the oldest homes it is indeed a hall inside the house leading to the barn, while later it was often associated with an outdoor link between the house and barn or house and summer kitchen. Sometimes it doubled as a summer kitchen itself and often as a storage area. “Connection” therefore would be a more appropriate translation and encompasses its various locations and uses.

In an analysis of *Gang* locations, sizes, and dates of construction, it becomes evident that the first meaning of the term was indeed “passage”, and refers to an interior hall from the kitchen area to the barn. This was the only hallway in the house and was poorly lit. The Ens family referred to this old passage in 179 Reinland Ave. as the “*diester Gang*” (dark passage), which also housed an unfriendly dog (A. Ens Interview, 2001; H. Ens Interview, 2001). An interior passage such as this was created by the walls of the *Somma Stow* and the *Koma* (pantry) (See Appendix 2, Teichroeb House and SE3), and was only found in the fully articulated, “wealthier” homes. In houses with four or fewer rooms, where pantries and *Somma Stow* rooms were absent, such a passage was lacking and the entrance to the barn was mediated only by a door (26 Chortitz Rd. S, 70 Chortitz Rd. S).

The removal of the interior *Gang* in larger houses was one of the most common renovations to be made, and allowed for an increased area for the kitchen/dining room. In 193, 179, and 141 Reinland Ave. this was accomplished by removing the pantry. In some cases, a *Gang* was built inside the barn to create a transition space into the house (SW3, SE1). These changes were undertaken somewhat later, in houses built from 1890 to 1910. Large spaces were created in the barn to accommodate milk storage throughout the early

part of the 20th century, and some of these served as *Gangs* (P. Friesen Interview, 2001).

The *Gang* as a separate exterior structure, removed from both house and barn but linking the two, began to appear only after 1905. This happened in conjunction with the change in orientation of houses in relation to the street and barn. New houses built after this period were often oriented parallel to the street and perpendicular to the barn. This created a break in the ridgeline between the two structures, but instead of connecting the end of the barn with the side of the house, people chose to create a new room. These *Gangs* were generally large and functioned as the main entrance to the house, a summer kitchen (See Appendix 2, NE2 and 163 Reinland Ave.), and/or storage room (See Appendix 2, NW4, 171 Reinland Ave., 164 Reinland Ave.). An exterior *Gang* was usually constructed when either a house or barn was being rebuilt after the destruction or dismantling of a previous structure. A *Gang* was sometimes built between the house and a summer kitchen located on the yard somewhere, and this connection was also a later innovation (See Appendix 2, NE12, 141 Reinland Ave., 179 Reinland Ave.).

It seems from this material that over time the *Gang* was moved first outside the house into the barn, and then was removed entirely from both structures as the two were formally separated, and became its own structure.

In the four housebarns built between 1926 and 1928 in the Altona area (See Appendix 2, NE14, NE12, Rempel Housebarn, and the Driedger Housebarn) an opposite pattern occurs. These are the last full housebarns to be built in the area, in which house and barn are contained totally under one roof, and the dwelling area is truncated one room deep against one end of the structure. The separation of people from animals is accomplished by the inclusion of a large storage room that also functions as the main entrance into the dwelling. In the Rempel Housebarn of Sommerfeld, room A4 was the link to the barn and doubled as a summer kitchen (See Appendix 2, Rempel Housebarn). The door was blocked in the 1950s and a new more circuitous route was designed. Thus, while the barns and houses were linked in the most structurally integral manner, a large mediating

room effectively separated the dwelling and stables.

In Neubergthal, historical photographs of NE4 (see Appendix2) show the use of an exterior *Gang* in 1890, and by 1920 it had been removed, the space taken over by an enlarged dwelling. Dwelling and barn were directly attached, with a small *Gang* now inside the home. This example is in direct contradiction to the evolutionary patterns proposed by other researchers: instead of the house and barn becoming increasingly separate over time, the dwelling and barn in this case became joined. Neubergthal still had many directly linked housebarns at this time, and this choice of increasing linkage was one of many that the residents of NE4 could choose.

Informants' recollections about the *Gang* and the connection of house and barn present a number of meanings and reasons used to explain their existence and continued use over time.

Of NE12, a housebarn built in 1926, Mr. Kehler (Interview, 2001) recalls that one "had to come through the barn to the kitchen" and that was "always a bit of a hang up for the young people".

Only horses and cows were in the barn, not chickens or pigs because they smelled worse: our neighbour here they had pigs and that was bad. Here in the village at Mr. Hamm's, he was eating watermelon for lunch and when he was through with a rind he would open the door and throw it into the cow's trough. You would feed the horses and the cows before you went to bed, that means you didn't have to go outside. That was the reason for the housebarn kind of thing. That was a big advantage. It also kept the whole area warmer, but it was more that you didn't have to go outside. When the house was turned sideways and house and barn were separated by a *Gang*, the *Gang* was often used as a summer kitchen where they would eat too. (H. Kehler Interview, 2001)

Mr. Driedger's (Interview, 2002) uncle had a small two-room dwelling "connected to the barn, and if you opened up the door to the barn the smell came right into the house". Mr. Peter Friesen (Interview, 2001) refers to the housebarn connection as "smelly but convenient...but they [the houses] all smelled the same".

Informants universally recognized the *Gang* and housebarn connection as an iden-

tifying marker of Mennonite homes. The smell of the animals was pervasive, as one presumes it had always been. With Mennonites becoming less accepting of the intimate connection of people and animals in their architectural settings, the manipulation of *Gang* locations and uses facilitated a greater separation. Although hygiene was important, and all rooms and the stable were kept very clean, it was not the prime motivating factor behind the shift in *Gang* use. Many of the later large *Gangs* were directly in contact with the barn and used as summer kitchens, as well as entrances into the home. Mennonites had by all accounts extremely clean barns, and were constantly cleaning out manure, washing the stalls, and regularly whitewashing the stables. All informants also mentioned the use of the barn in the winter as a toilet, with human excrement being cleaned out with that of the animals. One barn, SW3, had an outhouse-type of toilet seat built between two cow stalls.

The *Gang* was used as an area of spatial control, one that mediated movement between barn and house, and eventually also came to be used as a main entrance into the house. The direct link between dwelling and barn acted as a shelter from inclement weather, facilitating easy and comfortable movement. While most houses and barns in the earlier period were connected, the *Gang* as a passage only existed in wealthier households. In these cases it was located and enclosed inside the home between *Somma Stow* and pantry. Poorer households had no *Gangs*, and relied on only a door to separate human from animal residents. This is another example of the control of space being a privilege of wealthier landowners, while people outside this class exercised less control of space and less separation from animals, assuming they even had a barn.

The Use of Entrances to the House

In general, “I-shaped” housebarns had three entrances to the house, including the front door (*Vaeathues*), the rear entrance (*Hinjetus*), and one door from the barn. Houses that were built in the “T-shape” configuration had only two entrances, through the front door and through the *Gang*. The later housebarns in this study, built after 1926, in which

the house was incorporated into the barn (See Appendix 2, NE12, Rempel Housebarn, Driedger Housebarn) had only one entrance into the house, and that was through the barn. House NE14 had a front entrance and a barn entrance.

In interviews concerning “I-shaped” housebarns it was related that the front door was rarely if ever used, and then only in the summer.

“In very many homes the front door wasn’t used either...but we always used the front door. That’s another thing that my mother...that door was for use. We used the door into the kitchen from outside in the summer only. It was like that in most houses. In a lot of the older houses they had a split door for this back door. Ours was complete. We used the front door in winter, but in a lot of homes they didn’t.” (R. Hildebrand Interview, 2002)

This door led into the *Vaeathues*, which was often used as a bedroom. The back door was used only in the summer and closed and blocked for the winter. “The door out of the kitchen to the north was closed for the winter, stuffed with paper to keep out drafts. It was opened for the summer, that was a real sign of spring, when my mother said we could put the screen door up and this door could open” (N. Giesbrecht Interview, 2002). The barn entrance was the most common access into the house, whether for family members, workers, or visitors.

In the “T-shaped” house, the front entrance, which faced the street, seems also not to have been used to any great extent, and continues to this day to be largely decorative. Large ditches, fences, and the lack of street sidewalks would have discouraged the use of this entrance in the past. Currently, sidewalks that extend out from front doors lead nowhere and disappear in the front lawn. In these cases the exterior *Gang* was the main entrance used by everyone. “Most people entered through the side into the *Somma Stow*...nobody ever used the front door” (E. Schmidt Interview, 2001). In Reinland, Jake and Ingrid Friesen speculate that in such houses “front doors might have been used more before vehicles came around, when the main entrance became the side or back, closest to the driveway” (Interview 2001).

In the four post-1926 examples, the house was directly accessed through a *Gang*-like room in the barn, even in house NE14.

Vestibules were a common design element on both “I-shaped” and “T-shaped” houses, although most have been removed (See Appendix 2, 163 and 164 Reinland Ave.).

The “T-shaped” housebarns show an exit and entrance use pattern similar to the earlier housebarn layouts. The main entrance to the farmyard was always on the south or east side of the house (depending on street orientation), and in the “T-shaped” housebarn this did not correspond to the placement of the front door facing the street. People instead used the new exterior *Gang* in a replication of common and informal approaches to the household and its residents. In all villages an informal network of paths and trails led from yard to yard for quick and informal access, especially for neighbours, and in the summer, kitchens and barns were likely entry points into the home.

The presence of a formal entrance at a particular location as in the “I-shaped” house was a presentation of formal access to arriving guests that was the same for most houses prior to 1900. This gave way to variation of placement and disappearance of the social importance for such a room (*Vaeathues*). The infrequently used front entrance of the “T-shaped” house shows the extent to which such an orientation was more a decorative element than purely utilitarian. The older patterns of social use of the home, its access areas, and connection to the barn remained similar.

Daily Practice and Social Use of Space

The study of original architectural construction, although useful, is only a glimpse of the concepts of spatial use during a very short time period (the period of construction), and only of specific builders. Once a house is built, the residents begin to alter in age and number, and ownership may also change. Renovations can begin occurring quite quickly. On the other hand, the social use of space may change without any renovations taking place. Merely observing the design and placement of walls when the house was first constructed only reveals certain elements of the social construction and practice of spatial use.

To assume otherwise would suggest that design is determinant of all practice and *habitus*.

The ethnic Mennonite construction of space inside the home that became common in the era of Vistula settlement was standardized through the Russian experience, and was eventually re-established in Manitoba. It disappeared in a ten-year period, from 1910-1920. The earlier conceptualization of appropriate household space and its attendant social structures were replaced by various local experiments in design as well as the construction of pattern book houses found in mail order catalogues.

It must be noted that this change occurred before the introduction of English schools and curriculum in Mennonite communities, and before the resulting mass migrations to Mexico and South America, and is thus not an effect of these cultural and demographic traumas.

Preceding this disappearance of the interior ethnic arrangement of rooms (1910-1920) was the dissolution of village landholding arrangements and organization, and the resultant loss of emphasis on orthopraxis. Once villages broke up and homesteading flourished, and homesteaders became successful farmers, exteriors and interiors of house forms began to vary in design. Many homesteaders had purchased mail-order Anglo-Canadian houses and these influenced village residents' designs through social contact. Although homesteaders and town-dwelling Mennonites often lived far from villages, the network of social and kin relations remained strong (and does to this day).

The ethnic Mennonite housebarn was always a signifier of landowner status, and the size and internal partitioning of dwelling and barn reflected the success of a farming operation. This was linked to *social control* through the manipulation of social space possible in wealthier homes, the ability to vote in village affairs (an exclusive right of male landowners), and the ability to provide inheritance to descendants (thus increasing social networks).

The Mennonite housebarn originated in the Vistula region of West Prussia/Poland, although another form of house (Middle German) was also present among Mennonites

and used to represent landowning status. In Russia, most rural Mennonites lived in housebarns, and status was reflected and reified in the village placement, materials, size, and divisions of the home. The differences in homes were mediated by the orthopraxic expression of ideology, in which it was correct practice to conform in exterior appearance. In Manitoba a similar pattern was transplanted to the first village settlements, with successful landowners eventually surpassing their poorer neighbours in size and location of homes. Once the village structure was dissolved in so many of the Mennonite communities, and homesteading became popular and accepted practice, the importance of the ethnic Mennonite home was greatly reduced, in both orthopraxic inculcation and exterior representation. It was now possible for Mennonite farmers to become successful outside the village landscape. It cannot be overstated how important it was to the identity and welfare of Mennonite farmers to be *successful* farmers. Being a Mennonite and being a farmer were considered part and parcel of the same ethnic identity, and this still forms opinion in Mennonite communities in Manitoba. Before the village break-up large housebarns acted as a symbol of successful farming and were located in the village core, while the poor and landless usually lived on the ends or outskirts of the village. After the dissolution of the villages and the success of homesteaders (and their use of Anglo style houses) the use of the housebarn as symbol of land ownership decreased, and the placement of villagers in relation to the village axis loosened. After 1900 villagers began to experiment with various designs that reflected homesteader and town houses, while remaining within certain parameters of house design within the village (i.e. the use of the *Gang*, decorative effects, yard layout). This is particularly evident in Neuberghthal and Reinland.

The disappearance of the interior arrangement of space according to previous Mennonite design concepts between 1910 and 1930 can also be tied to the village break-up. In this case, however, rather than representing an exterior to visitors and villagers, the interior changes had real consequences for social control of space and the symbolization of male-female order. The breakdown of village orthopraxis was reflected and reinforced

by the individualization of house design and room use.

At the same time that the design of new houses was changing, renovations to older, traditional housebarns were taking place as part of the same deconstruction of previous social orders. The interior of the home was becoming less important for the presentation of orthopraxis and the social order that was part of it. It continued to remain important in the structuring of *habitus*, but it was less and less tied to orthopraxis.

The Meaning and Use of Mennonite Furniture

Hand-made vernacular Mennonite furniture was constructed exclusively by males for use in the Mennonite household. This furniture was elaborated with a variety of accepted styles usually expressed in fringe decoration.

Janzen and Janzen enumerate at least thirteen items in the canon of the immigrant Mennonite furniture tradition that arrived in North America in the 1870s (1991:116). Among the most symbolically potent of these are the *Atjschaup* (corner cabinet), the *Glausschaup* (glass cabinet) and the *Tjist* (chest for dowry, storage, and travel), all of which generally had their place in the *Groote Stow*, or formal parlour.

The *Glausschaup*, or *Miaschaup* (wall cabinet), was usually built directly into the wall (often from floor to ceiling), and consisted of an upper and lower level. The upper area included framed glass double doors for the display of fine ceramics on three to four shelves. The lower level could consist of three to four drawers, or cupboards with solid doors, for the storage of fine linens. This furniture tradition was in existence by at least 1800 in West Prussia and south Russia (Janzen and Janzen, 1991:27). The *Glausschaup* was used for the display of expensive items that assisted in establishing status among visiting groups. The *Groote Stow* was a formal setting for visiting, and thus acted as a public space within a “private” dwelling. The ceramics on display were rarely if ever used, and were usually prized gifts or heirlooms from elder female relatives. A Low German Mennonite saying states “*Nuscht weat aus too emm Glausschaup sate*” (Thiessen, 2003:85), or “No worth except to sit in a glass cabinet”. This saying refers to the lack of

practical use of an item, and the glass cabinet was a place for items not to be used or even handled.

The *Glausschaup* must be compared in its permanence to all other types of Mennonite furniture, which were easy to dismantle, transportable, and multi-purpose. The *Glausschaup* was first and foremost the mother's domain. Its built-in placement in the *Groote Stow* (at the centre of the house, beside the brick oven) symbolized a depth of permanence for female relations over time and the importance of the mother in the control of household economy and appearance.

Adjacent to the *Glausschaup*, in the outside corner of the *Groote Stow*, was the head male's *Atjschaup*, or corner cabinet. This storage cabinet was hung on the wall, often resting on a triangular piece of wood attached to the top ledge of the wainscotting. It could house various items, including valuable documents such as accounts (if any) and passports, important texts such as the Bible, *Martyrs Mirror*, *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons* and others, money, medicines, tobacco, and liquor. The *Atjschaup* was off-limits to children, and a feeling of reverence was attached to it. There was often a table and chair placed beneath it for writing. An open Bible was commonly placed on the table as a symbol of the piety and centrality of religion for the household. Both the placement of the *Atjschaup* (outside corner of the *Groote Stow* closest to the street and farmyard entrance) and the items within it helped to solidify it as a symbol of the male as public agent. The written word, the legal documents, the money, and the books of historical significance tied its owner to the public realm of action and interaction. The existence of medicine, tobacco, and liquor, which had ambiguous if not negative meanings in the Mennonite world, were symbolic of the independence of the head of the household: powerful and dangerous items were under his personal control. Janzen and Janzen use the term "spiritual and money management" when referring to the importance of the *Atjschaup* (1991:32). Significantly, all of this was hidden from view behind a solid door (except possibly the Bible, as noted).

The dowry chest, or *Tjist*, was also often found in the *Groote Stow*, and was used to store linens and other precious items. While in Russia, the dowry chest “represented family and household continuity”, and was used to collect dowry items for young females (Janzen and Janzen, 1991:35). After the migration to North America very few were hand-built, and the meaning of chests in general changed to symbolize Mennonite migration history. Its place in the *Groote Stow* was a reminder of the transitory nature of Mennonite life. The dowry chest, while taking on new meaning, was still used to represent and hold a young woman’s future: the interior of lids were often plastered with personalized items, often in the form of glued pages from catalogues and pictures of royalty.

Other furniture important in the *Groote Stow* were the wall clock and the bed. The hanging wall clock came in a variety of forms, a particularly high status item being the Kroeger clock. Such clocks were all metal, with the round face being part of a square metal front piece. Around the face were included various designs, usually of flowers. Two weights hung below. The Kroeger clock was made by a Mennonite manufacturer beginning in West Prussia, and re-established quite successfully in Russia. These clocks were easy to dismantle and hundreds, possibly thousands, were brought to North America.

A bed was often found in one corner of the *Groote Stow* for the use of grandparents, parents, or special visitors. During the day these would be used for piling linens, and the higher the pile of fine linens and bedding, the more status was implied.

Interviews concerning Spatial Division and Social Relations in the Home

Space in the Mennonite home was divided according to conceptions of appropriate social relationships. Such relationships were multifaceted and included associated divisions based on gender, age, labour, and relatedness. Social control in the house was practiced through the devices of spatial division and symbolic cues that suggested appropriate activities.

The relationships and interactions between members of a household indicate cultural perceptions of social structure as well as the possibilities for individual agency with-

in and outside this structure. The households in this study showed a significant number and variety of inhabitants beyond the “nuclear” family, which included grandparents, hired hands, whole other families, and various single relatives such as cousins and aunts and uncles. It is also clear that the earlier period exhibited significantly more formal utilization of space in the homes with regard to gender, age, and labour.

The interviews conducted with members of the Mennonite community also portray great variety in these interpersonal relationships. They show the changing parameters of these interactions over generations, with child-parent relations becoming less formalized as space in the home becomes less rigidly divided and more malleable according to family needs. This occurred during the breakdown of the orthopraxic aspect of Mennonite *habitus*. In the earlier period, and especially among the more conservative communities, the household was considered a space meant to meet the expectations of the community as well as the desires of the inhabitants. Division of space, and the concomitant social hierarchies this engendered, was as much a presentation of control to community members as it was a tool for inculcation. Those who were successful farmers (and this usually accounted for the majority of villagers) had the most segmented houses, complete with all the standard rooms and their standard uses. Those who were outside the successful landowning core, such as herdsman, teachers, poor widows, renters, and *Anwohner*, practised and exhibited less control over space, over their inhabitants, and over their fortunes. They were dependent on the structure of communal allocation of resources, and were usually adequately provided for. Their conditions for living were nevertheless often considered cramped, dreary and stigmatized. In Chortitz and Reinland, their houses were located at the ends of the village, similar to the cultural landscapes of Mennonites in Russia and later in Latin America (Wiebe, Thiessen, Fehr Interview, 2002; F. and M. Penner Interview, 2001; J. Fehr Interview, 2002).

Household Life Cycles

Household life cycles are bound to time and generally follow a pattern involving

three overlapping phases (Fortes, 1969:4-5). The first phase is one of expansion, which begins with the union of two individuals until the completion of procreation (and/or adoption). The second phase involves fission or dispersion, beginning with the marriage of the oldest child and ending with the marriage (or dispersal) of all children (or the point at which the youngest child begins the role of caregiver for the parents). The final phase is replacement, which involves the gradual assumption of social power and centrality by the younger domestic generations, and ends with the death of the parents. The structure and direction of these “phases”, or perhaps more appropriately, processes, are not internally bound or the result of “natural” factors such as physiology or lifespan. The developmental cycles of domestic groups are intimately linked with the realm of the public, or the “politico-jural domain” (Fortes, 1969:6), and its attendant pressures and rewards. Goody (1969) finds that two very similar societies differ in their fission/dispersal process based on the differing social rules of descent, rather than the labour conditions or “private” life of their domestic groups.

Mennonite household life cycles in the three villages generally followed a pattern that began with a newly married couple settling in a house with sufficient farmland to begin a family. The importance and deep association of the neolocal residence pattern and the independent farm is exemplified by the Low German term *Fieastaed*, which has two related meanings. It refers to “a specific amount of land sufficient to provide for a family, generally the required amount of land for a young couple to establish their own household, or in the more patriarchal homes, enough for a male suitor to win the approval of a Mennonite bride’s parents in Russia” (Thiessen, 2000:161). The second, and more literal meaning, is “hearth” or permanent place of fire, denoting sedentary life, permanence, and “home”.

For couples fortunate enough to start on their own farmyard, farm workers and maids would often be hired until the children were old enough to do chores. These hired hands sometimes lived in the home, and were usually young and familiar with, or related

to, the couple.

When children reached the age of six or seven they would begin school as well as their allotted chores in the home and on the farm. During the first generations of settlement in Manitoba, children finished school at age twelve or thirteen and then began strenuous work routines on the farm. All profits from the farm industry were controlled by the parents until such a time that the children were married. Many informants indicated a period of one to six years after marriage that the newly wedded couple would live in the house of one of their sets of parents. This co-residence ensured that the young couple continued to contribute to the household economy until a new farmyard could be established for them with the help of the parents.

In Chortitz “when they got married they usually moved into the father’s house for one to three years until they found something of their own. They got a heifer, pillows, a commode, and a chest to start with” (Wiebe, Thiessen, Fehr Interview, 2002).

In those days, when you got married, the first four years, five years, six years, you would stay in the same house as your grandpa, your mum... Jake Kehlers lived at Grandma Klippenstein’s for six years. F. Kehlers there were two families at the same time. I can’t imagine it really. When you had the money, you were expected to strike out on your own. That’s what happened here. If there was room in the village you’d do it in the village. That’s what happened in this case - Grandpa owned this quarter section. My father bought it. (H. Kehler Interview, 2001)

The death of one of the parents was often succeeded by re-marriage. This sometimes occurred between two individuals whose spouses had died, and children from both previous marriages were incorporated into one family. The youngest sibling of a family was often expected to marry and remain in the parent’s household with the new spouse. They retained the family farm but were also expected to take care of the elderly parents.

This household life cycle is only a generalized summary, and in reality residents and habitation histories could vary greatly from this pattern. For instance, Mr. Henry Hamm recalls his father telling him of the living situation in NE3. Three “families” lived together in this single story housebarn, including one couple with 3 children, one couple

with one child, and Henry's father and aunt (H. Hamm Interview, 2001). Abe Krueger's family of five had a Russian couple and a maid living in the household in 1924 (A. Krueger Interview, 2002). Mary Penner of Chortitz recalls her family of 11 also making room for her uncle in the winter, and her grandparents adopting two grandchildren whose parents were deceased (M. Penner Interview, 2002). Frank Penner's grandparents would move from one of their children's residence to another, staying a month or more at each place (F. and M. Penner Interview, 2001).

While marriage was the usual base of a productive household, it was quite possible to thrive in differing circumstances. In the following two examples, Mrs. Klippenstein and Mrs. Fehr remained in control of their farming operation while working with hired hands and children, after the head male of the household had died.

Ed Schmidt moved into NE2 in 1938 as a hired hand with the owner and widower Bernhard Klippenstein, Mr. Klippenstein's son, and daughter-in-law Elizabeth. The son died a few years after the marriage, and the household afterwards consisted of Mr. B. Klippenstein, Elizabeth Klippenstein, her child Edwin, and Mr. Schmidt. This remained stable until Mr. B. Klippenstein's death in 1950, when Mrs. Klippenstein took over the farm and Ed continued as a renter and farmhand. In 1967 Mr. Schmidt and Mrs. Klippenstein moved into a new bungalow on the property, and continued to live together until her death in the 1980s. As of 2001, Mr. Schmidt continued to farm in Neuberghthal (E. Schmidt Interview, 2001).

After the death of Jakob Fehr's father in 1924, his mother bought land and a house (now 164 Reinland Ave.) in 1928 across the road from their old residence. She maintained ownership of the farm while purchasing farmland in other areas, and with her children established a successful operation (J. Fehr Interview, 2002).

It is clear from the various living arrangements and the success of widows outlined above, that household life cycles were not strictly regulated according to the structure of the "nuclear family", although they did tend to revolve around neolocal pairs.

Often considered “part of the family”, hired hands and maids tended to come from poor and/or very large families, and hiring oneself out in this manner was not necessarily a positive experience. One informant recalls his parent wanting to find the children farmsteads so they would not “have to go to other people to work as part slaves, doesn’t sound good, but that’s how it was in those days” (J. Fehr Interview, 2002). Ed Schmidt (Interview, 2001), a great lover of work, recalls the paltry sums he was paid as a young labourer after his parents were forced off their farm during the Depression. In no interview, however, did anyone speak of poor personal relationships with hired workers or employers. Positive relationships, on the other hand, were frequently mentioned (A. Krueger Interview, 2002; R. Hildebrand Interview, 2002; E. Schmidt Interview, 2001; M. Zacharias Interview, 2002; F. and M. Penner Interview, 2001). This is probably due partly to the close relationship or familiarity employers and their families had with the workers they eventually hired, who usually came from nearby areas. It may also be due in part to the nature of nostalgic oral history, in which negative relationships tend to be minimized.

Hired hands and maids frequently lived in the home of their employers and were stationed in different areas of the house for the night. Ed Schmidt (Interview, 2001) lived in the *Atj Stow* of NE2 (A5), between the kitchen and the room occupied by his boss Mr. Klippenstein (A6). Willie Hamm (Interview, 2002) recalls a maid sleeping in the kitchen (A2) on a bench in his home (NE14). Frank Penner’s brother used to sleep in the same bed (a *Shlopbenkj*) with one of the hired hands, and frequently told him that “he should keep his distance” (F. and M. Penner Interview, 2001). A maid sometimes slept in the *Atj Stow* (A3) of 179 Reinland Ave. with the older girls of the family (M. Zacharias Interview, 2002). In the village of Neuberghthal, some maids had “a little house in the back” which was their private abode (H. Kehler Interview, 2001). Mary Penner of Chortitz remembers that her parents’ hired hands all slept in the kitchen. “They were just like family, we had just three rooms, and we never thought anything about it, they slept just like the rest of us”

(F. and M. Penner Interview, 2001). Rose Hildebrand relates a close friendship between her parents (after they had recently married and moved into SE3 in 1926) and a young married pair hired for the summer months (R. Hildebrand Interview, 2002). The couples lived in two rooms on the second story.

The only mention of a formal separation between hired workers and employer was in SE3 before 1926, when the housebarn was in possession of the Klippensteins.

“Mr. Klippenstein obviously was a man of means. The house has two staircases, one for the servants, one for the family, and it was constructed in such a way that the servants would remain closer to the barn, like the entrance for the male servants as well as the ladies. The ladies slept upstairs, whereas the males had a room next to the barn entrance [A7].” (R. Hildebrand Interview, 2002)

Mrs. Hildebrand links this formalized separation of employer and employees to the wealth and lifestyle of the former inhabitant.

“This ...Klippenstein, because he was living in the fast lane, he had servants, male servants and female servants, and of course that was in the days before the car...the servants would be required to wait up for him, no matter what time he would get home, and they would have to take the horses in, and all he would have to do was get off and go in. And they would have to take care of the horse and buggy. And in those days...he was really living it up, and expecting a lot of his servants. They said he never worked a day in his life, he had servants, but yes, farming was his business. He had land and lost it all.” (R. Hildebrand Interview, 2002)

This story is part of the oral tradition of the village and functions to point out the dangers of an ostentatious lifestyle and its connection to social inequality. The unfortunate Mr. Klippenstein, also an alcoholic, no longer lived appropriately within village behavioural standards, and this could be discerned through his incorrect treatment of his servants: they were no longer equals living equally under the same roof.

Age Categories

Age categories were essential for the placement of the individual in the spatial and social order of the household. The relationships enforced in this order were paramount in preserving attitudes towards authority, economic opportunities, and privilege. The changes that occurred in household architecture and its uses reflected and reified shifts in attitude towards proper age relations.

Age categories cannot be separated from gender roles. Speaking of gender and generational differences in Mennonite society, Urry (1999:97) notes, "The roles men and women play[ed] and their status changed markedly with age, particularly in terms of authority and spheres of influence." Fathers and mothers were the heads of households, with fathers being the recognized source of power. Grandparents were also deeply respected, and their relation to their children and grandchildren in the home was often one of dominance.

Mennonite categories of age and age relations were also intimately linked to baptism, marriage status and gender. No informants mentioned baptism in the course of interviews. While it was meant to be a transforming event in the adult life of a confirmed believer, it also acted as a rite of passage into the community, and was necessary before marriage was possible. Marriage, linked to the creation of a household and landholding, was a much more significant public rite in terms of individual status within the community. Baptism often took place as a precursor to a wedding.

Age categories in the earliest generations in Manitoba were structured in the household through the manipulation of space, with the use and access of certain rooms strictly bounded. The most meaningful room, charged with various symbols and meanings, was the *Groote Stow*, and well into the 20th century this acted as a representation and tool of parental dominance and control.

Both Frank and Mary Penner (F. and M. Penner Interview, 2001) recall cases of parents eating separately from children. Mary states, "My mother remembers that the par-

ents sat alone in the living room [*Groote Stow*]...they only had two daughters and they had to eat alone, she couldn't understand that". Frank recounted that "the Peter Fasts did the same thing, parents were eating in the living room and the kids were in the kitchen. That's the first time I saw that, usually the parents would eat with the children" (F. and M. Penner Interview, 2001). In most cases meals were shared, but in some families, possibly a custom from earlier generations, parents and children were separated by room, with children relegated to the kitchen.

The *Groote Stow*, the most formalized and presentational room in the house, was deeply associated with parents and their possessions. "It was more for the parents, when they had visitors then we stayed out of it, the parents even closed the door. There was glass in the doors to the living room, and we always used to look through there at the company. One man said 'Now I know you've grown up because I can see you through the window'. We didn't think they saw us, but they did" (F. and M. Penner Interview, 2001).

Displays of affection or praise from parents were rare, as Mrs. Penner testifies. "I remember my grandmother Froese, when she went to Mexico...I'll never forget...she gave my mother a hug, a hug in those days among *Altkolonien Mennoniten*, *doat wie nicht mode* [it was not done]...we were surprised...it meant a lot." (F. and M. Penner Interview, 2001)

Another informant claimed that parents of earlier generations were not particularly open with feelings.

Mother wouldn't praise very easily, that wasn't part of that generation anyway, my father didn't either, but the fact that he wanted to hear, that was all the reward I needed. But it wasn't done, and sometimes I tried very hard to gain her favour and I wanted to hear a bit of appreciation, but no, those things don't come when you haven't been trained that way. One of my father's adages was 'strikj den Kaute nicht toa sea, aus haew de noch den Soagel opp' [don't stroke the cat too much, or he'll raise his tail]. (Anonymous Interview, 2002)

Discipline of young people was established through example, adages, and threat.

Corporal punishment for children, meted out by the father, was a symbolic threat as well as a real possibility, despite the contradiction such a practice has with the absolute pacifism espoused by Mennonite ideology.

Order in the home was largely structured around age categories, and reified by the manipulation of space. Though order was enforced ostensibly to control chaos in large families, the way this order was structured worked to instil basic values about appropriate social relations and concepts. In the earliest generations the attendant relationships of age categories were life-long structures, while in later years these were deconstructed and often reversed.

We had a dad. Order was in the house. He would say like this: ‘Junges...’ [Boys...]. He was a nice dad but a sharp dad. Mom was a kind-hearted woman. When the boys grow up they want to be the boss too, but dad always stayed boss on his property. It’s not like that now, dads slide off and let their boys take over. I think it’s better the way my dad did it, because you learn a lot sharper than you do if you let your kids run away with it. Dad had a strap in his drawer...had to honour his idea about how kids should behave. (P. Driedger Interview, 2002)

Fathers often had a special place in the home where their documents and accounts (if any) existed and where they could perform some written work if necessary. Among Old Colony Mennonites this locale was the desk and corner cabinet (in the *Groote Stow*), while in other groups this varied. These areas were in any case off-limits to children.

In a number of interviews, widowed parents or grandparents chose a room of their own on the main floor of the house as their bedroom while the rest of the family, including married children, found what space they could.

When I was a young child, before my grandfather passed on, this was his room [Atj Stow (A4) of SW3 Neuberghthal]. There was a big Russian chest in here, where extra jackets and stuff were kept, but he had a beautiful home, we couldn’t believe it. Later on I thought about it, why did that man...? This was his room. If Grandpa went in his room and closed the door, nobody ever questioned it. Well we didn’t want to [go in]...but you just didn’t walk in any time. So that’s how it was, I was eight when he passed away. And then after that my parents bought twin beds, and then it

was their bedroom. (N. Giesbrecht Interview, 2002)

Before the grandfather died, Mrs. Giesbrecht's parents slept in A2, the small *Vaeathues*, in a "42 inch wide bed" (107 cm), where a crib was also located (N. Giesbrecht Interview, 2002; B.B. Hamm Interview, 2002).

Ed Schmidts' widower employer, Mr. Klippenstein, lived in the *Groote Stow* of NE2, Neubergthal. Helena Klippenstein, when still living in NW3, Neubergthal, had a corner room with her husband while her father had the larger *Groote Stow*. Henry Hamm's widowed grandmother slept in the *Groote Stow*.

In the village of Chortitz grandparents without their own house (i.e. those coming directly from Russia), were taken in by their children on a rotating basis. In 60 Chortitz Rd. S, the grandparents would come and stay with the children for a month or so, and then move on to another family. When they came to live in this house their married children, the owners of the house, would move out of the *Groote Stow* into the *Tjliene Stow*, and the grandparents would move into the *Groote Stow* (F. and M. Penner Interview, 2001). Frank (b.1910) and Mary Penner (b.1916) tell of grandparents in their village living in small houses on the yard of their established children.

"Across the street in Chortitz the parents had a house like that...it was a good idea, parents had a small house, if they needed help the kids were close by. There were quite a few places where those little houses were, Peter Wieler's had one, but the parents weren't there, the children lived there sometimes, the Goertzen's had one..." (F. and M. Penner Interview, 2001).

In Neubergthal, the parents and grandparents who possessed their own room were widows or widowers. The grandparents mentioned in Chortitz, however, were living as couples, and given their own space where possible. A married couple was considered a distinct social unit, deserving of their own place, while a single widowed parent lost this distinction but retained the status of age. The elderly, in all cases, were elevated in social stature to the point that they commanded the best room in the house.

Gender Divisions in the Home

Gender roles were connected to labour regimens, age categories, and larger social structures. “The women’s sphere...included not just the house and kitchen, but also the home garden where the essential foodstuffs for every sustenance, vegetables and fruits, were grown. They also cared for the animals required to support the domestic sphere, especially milk cows. Men mostly worked beyond the domestic sphere and household and increasingly produced goods for external commercial markets.” (Urry, 1999: 98-99)

Gender identities among early Mennonites in Manitoba were incorporated and manipulated largely in the village setting, both inside and outside the home. Outside the home, women and men were distinguished by strict dress codes, with women wearing head coverings and dresses. In the most regulated public appearance of the week, at the church (*Bethaus*), they were spatially separated in seating arrangements as well as church entrances (see Janzen 1999a,b). Women were forbidden from speaking in such settings, according to biblical injunction (1 Corinthians 11:2-16), but were less hindered in other social arenas. Children were instructed on a daily basis in this division through the separation of girls and boys in the school, which was a direct imitation of spatial divisions in the church.

Gender roles and identities were also inculcated through the observed and experienced behaviour of adults, and male-female relationships were most forcefully exhibited in the home. In the Mennonite house, labour activities, the division of girls and boys in sleeping arrangements, the arrangement of sexually symbolic items, and aesthetic design activities assisted in defining gender categories and identities.

Fathers were the disciplinary force in the house and enjoyed the privilege of both gender and age in social relations. This was recognized as the case in all informants’ testimonies, and played itself out in the control of space in the home. The power that men wielded was assumed, functioning as a structuring element and the background for family relations. Mothers were generally considered “kind-hearted” (P. Driedger Interview,

2002) and “gentle” (H. Hamm Interview, 2001), even though the control and power they did wield was at times substantial and determined the course of a family’s destiny. During interviews, instances of power displayed by women were often contextualized in a story and communicated as a special event.

Henry Hamm recalls a situation when some Mennonites in Neubergthal were deciding whether to migrate to Mexico in the 1920s, and the power his mother, “a very gentle woman”, had over the decision.

He [Henry’s great-uncle] was coming a-coaxing, and he was so desperate, and my father said yes, and he made pictures for him for the passport. It was all settled, they wanted to go and all of a sudden my mother said, she asked us, ‘Would you like to go, and we all said no, we wanted to stay’, and she said, ‘We’re staying’, and that was that time when we stayed home. (H. Hamm Interview, 2001)

Jake Fehr’s mother was also expected to move to Mexico, but preferred to stay after her husband died before the planned date of departure. “Mother asked my father if she should move to Mexico too, since there weren’t very many Old Colony Mennonites left... and he told my mother, ‘If they all go you go too’”. A number of families stayed, including her brothers and sisters, and Mrs. Fehr decided to remain in Canada. Jake Fehr reveals the extent of economic power his mother practiced.

I was getting restless, unrestful, getting 28 years old and I never had any dollars in my hand, and she had no car, and all this and that, and she always said, ‘Each of you children will get 80 acres’. And I got 80 acres of this place, the other 80 acres I paid twenty dollars an acre...paid that to my mother. She got it by trading with the man who went to Mexico. My mother bought it after my father died...my father had that quarter which my grandfather had inherited...that was in Reinland. (J. Fehr Interview, 2002)

Mary Penner, whose family remained in Chortitz during the migrations to Mexico (after 1924), mentions that “the girls began to make and wear different kinds of clothes, and the father said to your [husband Frank’s] sisters they shouldn’t dress just like in the city, because then they are just like the world. It was a problem in the beginning but then

they wanted to pass the old mode, that was often upsetting for your dad” (F. and M. Penner Interview, 2001). Here a generation of young women pushed forward with new styles after the exit of the conservative Mennonites to Mexico. Frank Penner’s father, an Old Colony member himself who chose not to migrate, resisted these changes while the mother let them pass. “I never heard her tell the girls like dad did, about those dresses...when she was young she dressed differently too.” (F. and M. Penner Interview, 2001)

These examples show the extent to which women could and did exercise power affecting cultural change and the stability of the home. While men’s power and position was officially sanctioned by the church (and in the church building), women had the facility to decide the fate and direction of a household. Despite the fact that in church doctrine of conservative Mennonite communities women were “to blame for everything” and had “all these restrictions on them” (P. Driedger Interview, 2002) they were entirely capable of directing and supporting the household. This central role of women in the social and structural existence of households, and the officially public role given to men, was reified and inculcated in part through the mechanism of household architectural use.

Gender and Labour Division

Women participated in labour regimens in the house, garden, barn and field, while men worked more regularly in the fields, in the barn, and in the workshop. Men almost never worked in the home, except for initial construction and renovations involving carpentry. Women were in charge of all cleaning, cooking and decoration (including painting walls and floors).

Labour activities on the farm were similar to those on most farms in the Canadian prairies at the time. Young children did many but basic light tasks. As they grew older girls would learn the labour of the home, as well as milking, gardening, and feeding animals. Women were in charge of milking year round. “This is how it was with Mennonites in those days: with the cows, the menfolk did the managing, but the women managed all the milking [laughter]” (F. and M. Penner Interview, 2001). Women were also heavily

involved in stooking in the earlier years, and the visual appearance of sheaves was important. "If it was a nice shape that was something to be proud of" (H. Kehler Interview, 2001).

Boys would work in the fields and clean the barn, and milk cows if there were not enough girls in the family. At an early age they would learn to plow, first with horses and by the 1940s with tractors.

In general, labour was divided by gender, with some jobs falling specifically to men and others to women.

Dad was in control, very much, and mother respected that...like she didn't try to change that...but they were very distinct roles, some were women's jobs, some were men's jobs. Maybe it was that way everywhere, I don't know, in those days. But I don't recall that my dad ever really helped my mom, and mother did a lot of work. Not on the field, except I've seen her stooking, that was women's work too, a lot of women did that. When they made the haystacks on the yard, they would bring her loose hay, before they baled, and she'd make these big stacks...she liked that a lot more than housework. (R. Hildebrand Interview, 2002)

Exceptions were common in the sexual division of many tasks and depended on the demographics of the household and the types of work to be done around a particular farmyard. The daily practice of farm labour was nevertheless structured around sexual divisions, and these were learned at a very early stage in childhood development. Movement and activity around the farm was structured by sexually defined labour, and this was organized in spatial terms. There was a clear dominance of female labour in the home, a combined effort in the barn and immediate yards and gardens around the house, and a dominance of male labour in the fields. Women's daily activity focussed around the house, while men's daily activity was dispersed among the fields, and these spaces were important in defining sexual identity and gender roles. While the technology of labour changed drastically on the Mennonite farm during the period under study, these labour and spatial gender divisions did not change significantly.

Gendered Spaces and Features

Gender identities were also inculcated by the early division of boys from girls in sleeping arrangements, usually before the age of five. These arrangements changed over time as spatial conceptualizations and use became more individualized, but continuity was maintained well into the 1940s in many houses.

In the first two generations of settlement, sibling males and females would be separated according to a customary Mennonite conceptualization of sexual space. In the houses built before 1910, very few upper floors were renovated for habitation so everyone slept on the main floor. As infants and toddlers, both sexes slept in the parents' room. Once children were four or five years old they slept in any room where space allowed, but were divided by gender. In the "fully articulated" Mennonite home, adolescent boys would be moved to the outer edges of the house, usually in the *Somma Stow*, which was closest to the barn and lacked a heating connection with the central brick oven. Adolescent girls would sleep in the *Tjliene* or *Atj Stow*, between the parents and the kitchen, a room directly in contact with the central oven. Their place was more centralized around work areas and parents, and could be easily supervised, while the teenaged boys were given the freedom of their own marginally disconnected (and colder) space. While the boys were being symbolically propelled towards the outside world, the girls remained intimately linked with the activity of the kitchen, the centre of the home, and the parental control this entailed.

As construction and renovation changed the Mennonite house over time, the separation of young people by gender took place in less standardized spaces. A renovated second floor often acted as the repository of older siblings and newlyweds, but the parents remained on the main floor, usually in the *Atj* or *Groote Stow*.

The most formal arrangement of sexually symbolic materials was the use and placement of the wall cabinet (*Glausschaup* - see Figure 29) and the corner cabinet (*Atjschaup* - see Figure 30) in the *Groote Stow*. This was common in Old Colony homes,

although most early Mennonite houses in this study exhibited this division to some degree. The *Groote Stow* was a room set aside for formal social occasions. It was a setting used more for social presentation than daily use. The wall cabinet, containing the most prized possessions of the household matriarch, was located in the innermost corner of this room beside the extension of the brick oven. It acted as a status symbol for the benefit of visitors, and items within were rarely if ever used. Without exception, the wall cabinet had glass doors in the upper portion for the display of fine ceramics on three or four shelves. The lower portion had three drawers or cabinets containing fine linens and sheets. These items belonged to the female head of the household, and were passed down from her mother and grandmother. The collection was added to during the woman's lifetime. The *Atjschaup*, containing the few private possessions of the head male, was located opposite from the wall cabinet, usually on the outermost corner. It was also off-limits to children, and held items such as a Bible, money, accounts, important documents, tobacco, and liquor, although these varied somewhat by household. Often a writing table and chair were placed under the *Atjschaup*, and a Bible would be displayed on the surface of the table. A pail was sometimes located under the table to function as a spittoon for tobacco chewing, a memory that elicited some disgust among female informants (Wiebe, Thiessen, Fehr Interview, 2002).

Over time Mennonites moved away from the symbolic presentation of gender in the *Groote Stow*. The first item to lose prominence was the men's corner cabinet, which largely disappeared after the migration of Old Colony Mennonites to Latin America. Many wall cabinets remained in the house and some are still used in the same manner. Others were removed and/or moved to another area, such as a workshop or barn, where they were used to store sundry items.

Division of labour, positional spacing, and symbolic use of the *Groote Stow* all worked to inculcate a *habitus* in which men were considered the most appropriate individuals for public discourse and action, and women controlled the interior management

and direction of the household. This is further exemplified by the decorative treatment of the house, which was executed and directed exclusively by women.

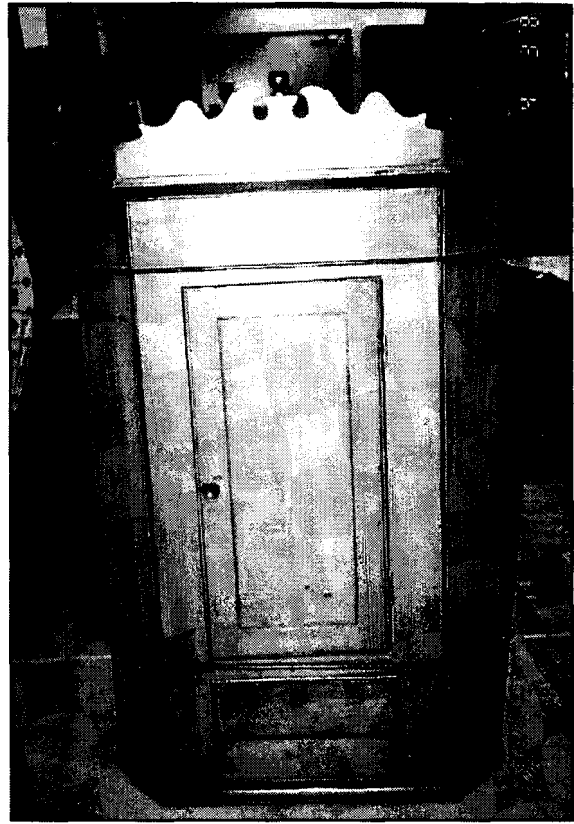
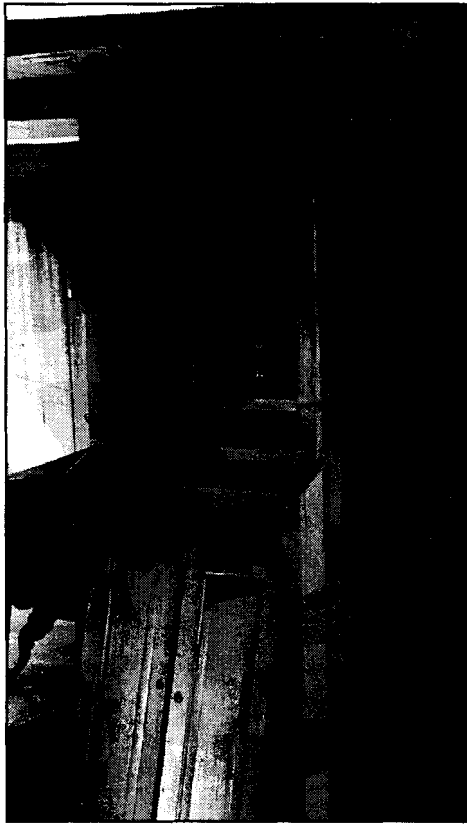


Fig. 29 (left) *Glausschaup*. Courtesy of the Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, MB.

Fig. 30 *Atjschaup*. Courtesy of the Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, MB.

Household Aesthetics and Decoration

Through the application and manipulation of aesthetic design principles, female household members in Mennonite villages signified their level of adherence to local customs, and thus to the community. Great uniformity in design has different meanings for different societies. Among Mennonites it was part of community orthopraxis, in which conformity to strict behavioural standards, and the outward trappings this entailed, was expressive of social (and thus religious) adherence, a central theme of identity and belonging.

Mennonites generally avoided ostentation in material decoration, and status was not expressed in this manner in the earliest settlements. The general uniformity of trim and decoration in all houses is evident. Status was displayed, however, in the actual number of rooms (division of space) made possible by the size of the house and finances for its construction.

House decoration also reveals changes in aesthetic concepts over time, and how these are influenced by other styles in the region. Colours for walls, floors, ceilings, and furniture, while initially quite uniform, began to undergo numerous variations by the 1900s. While early applications of colour and pattern were done by hand the eventual purchase and use of wallpaper, linoleum and plasterboard reveals a shift to engagement in the capitalist mass-market economy. The common use of such items after 1930 portrays the importation of the mass-market system into the home as an accepted practice. This acceptance was another step for Mennonites away from ethnic constructions of home that excluded “the world”. Now the world was included on the floors and walls of each house. In many ways, however, these new patterns of material representation were a continuation of the old. There were still accepted ways of doing things, and after about 1930 this included the use of store-bought items (Wiebe, Thiessen, Fehr Interview, 2002).

Finally, décor in homes could be a personal expression of aesthetic preferences and talent. This usually occurred within accepted parameters of decoration, but could also be used to surpass them. Examples of such material arenas open for socially recognized, personal expression include painted colours of walls, floors, and ceilings (including wainscoting), carving and treatment of door and window trim (both exterior and interior), and shutters.

Painted Floors

The earliest known painted wooden floors in Mennonite homes were ochre yellow, and this was found in all three villages. It was particularly popular in the *Groote Stow* and *Atj Stow*, although the pantry and kitchen area (*Hinjetus*) was often painted a different

colour, such as grey (M. Penner Interview, 2002; Wiebe, Thiessen, Fehr Interview, 2002).

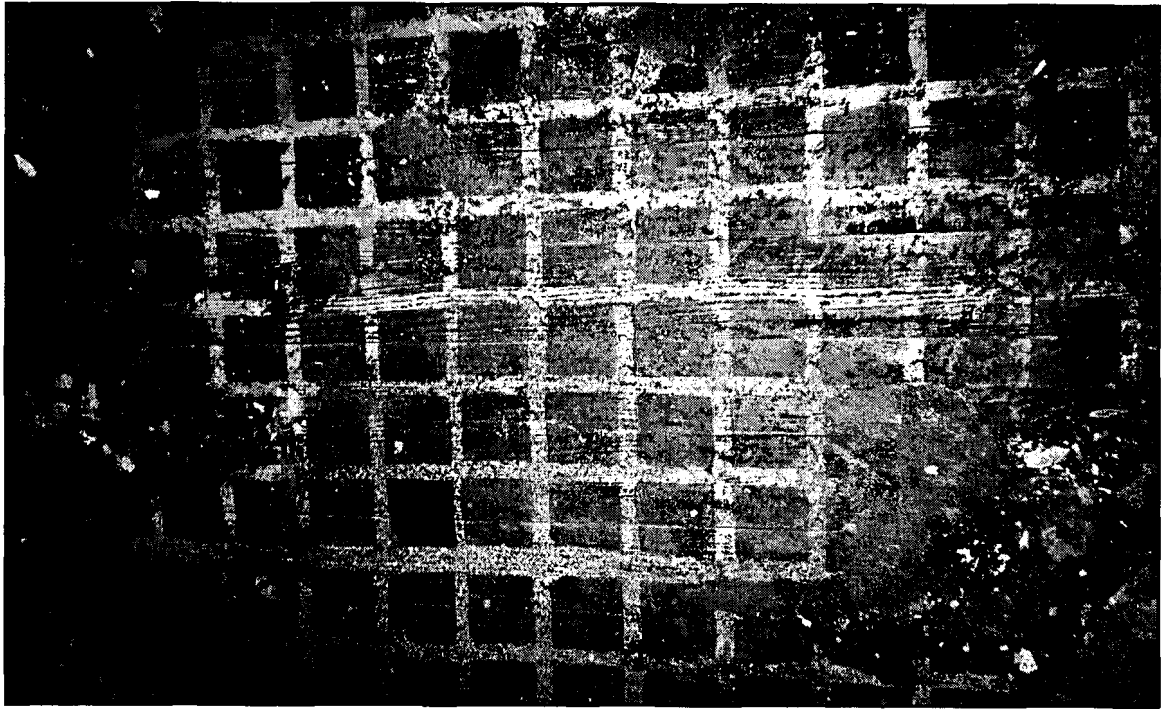


Fig. 31 Painted floor, Room A1, Rempel Housebarn.

It is difficult to determine exactly when patterned painting of floors became common, but it has been found in seven of the houses in this study, all from the Neubergthal area (See Figure 31). The practice, however, was noted by informants from all three villages (M. Zacharias Interview, 2002; Wiebe, Thiessen, Fehr Interview, 2002; H. Klippenstein Interview, 2002). It seems to have been a common practice between about 1900 and 1930 (two of the houses with such floors were built in 1926 and 1928), and disappeared with the increased use of linoleum. The decorative effect utilized at least three colours per pattern, and was usually found in the kitchen. A design would be cut into a sponge, the sponge soaked in the appropriate colour, and then applied to the floor, usually in a regular pattern. Brushwork and a straight item (probably a board) were employed to create linear arrangements with great exactitude.

According to informants, the patterns were designed and applied by women. Floral designs seem to have dominated early floor treatments, followed later by geometric

designs. Some of these were accomplished with a great degree of sophistication.

Used to be wood floors and they were painted. Some were yellow, it looked awful, and some were green. Some made patterns on there yet, with a sponge or so, patterns with different kinds of colours...usually it was mother's business. Had to paint it first, then you had to let it dry, and then you had to make your patterns on it. Sometimes they weren't a cut pattern, they were a sponge, they made the sponges different colours, you know, and sometimes they had a pattern they made of squares, a pattern they put them on the floors. ...where my brother moved in last next house there was an old house too, but those girls they knew how to draw, paint, they had an upstairs room, had wooden floor, they had roses like this, oh that looked beautiful. They had painted the floors like that...it was all painted, they had like a rug in the middle that was painted with flowers, and...very nice. (H. Klippenstein Interview, 2002)

Norma Giesbrecht's mother (b.1894) was still sponging patterns in the 1940s.

"There was a big thing about, Mother would still do that on some things, we would use sponges, you know, before they put linoleum in, I'm sure the floors were sponged. My mother was still big on sponging stuff, she sponged where there was wood, she also sponged the [cement] porch outside." (N. Giesbrecht Interview, 2002)

Mr. Henry Hamm recalls his grandmother making patterns on the floor, and that women "had to do it to make it more comfortable" (H. Hamm Interview, 2001).

"I remember we had that in Edenthal where I grew up...they made their own designs and different colours of paints and designs...the women did that. I think it was just one woman doing it, but if the daughters were old enough they helped." (H. Rempel Interview, 2002)

Patterned floors were found in all types of homes, from wealthy, double storied houses to the humble three- room herdsman's house. Such floors were also found in many types of rooms, including kitchens, bedrooms, the *Vaeathues* and the *Groote Stow* (in houses built after 1910). In the village of Chortitz it is related that the *Groote Stow* and *Atj Stow* were "orange", while women sponged their own patterns in the kitchen (Wiebe, Thiessen, Fehr Interview, 2002).

In the kitchen (A1) of SW4 Neubergthal, there are three layers of patterns. The first two are located on the same wood surface, while the last pattern was painted on a second layer of wood flooring. In the kitchen (A2) of the Rempel housebarn in Sommerfeld two layers of different painted patterns overlap. In the *Groote Stow* (A6) of NE2, an intricate geometric pattern emulating an area rug in size and placement obscures an earlier layer of ochre yellow paint with a floral design. In all three cases floral patterns occur earliest, followed by rectilinear geometric patterns, indicating a shift in aesthetic styles in this area among women painters. While the general style may have changed in a perceptible direction, each floor in each house was entirely unique in colour and design. This was clearly an arena of personal aesthetic expression for women, and was something visible for visitors and household alike. In all three villages it was an accepted mode of personal expression within the rather strict parameters of acceptable behaviour and material culture.

In most interviews, the mention of patterned floors only occurred after a remark by the interviewer on the discovery of such features. Informants did not voluntarily mention them, and this may indicate the perception of such features as mundane. This despite the obviously intensive and creative labour that was engaged in their making.

The interrelated structures of gender principles in the Mennonite household, which included labour, gendered spaces and features, and the decorative treatment of the home, all provided children with symbolic settings for their initial relationships to their mothers and fathers. Labour, space and symbol all acted to inculcate a gendered *habitus* through both daily rhythm and formal divisions of men, women, and their activities.

Men were considered the appropriate actors in a public setting, while women were considered the defining agents of the household *and the presentation of the household* to other Mennonites. The organizational state of the household, along with the ideals of cleanliness, hospitality, and status (as reflected in the glass cabinet and piled linens) were all part of this presentation. Women were thus also active participants in the public dis-

course entailed in “socializing” through their controlled presentations. *Spazieren*, or visiting, occurred in constant rounds, informally on most days and formally on Sundays. Families would always be prepared with food and drinks in case visitors would arrive, and these usually came unannounced and often from other villages. The formal visiting arena of the *Groote Stow* was in effect the “presenting room”, where all these ideals were most forcefully shown. The man’s corner cabinet, in contrast, located on the outer corner edge of this room (and thus closest to the street and the formal entrance) was formalized as a public display of reserve and privacy.

Individual Space and the Notion of Privacy

In an analysis of spatial use in the home, it must be understood what importance was given, if any, to individual space and concepts such as privacy or spatial possession, as this has repercussions for the emic conceptualization of identity and the individual. Informants were universal in their depiction of the Mennonite home as lacking in personalized rooms for individual young people and hired workers. Janzen and Janzen rightly claim that “the presence of several rooms to separate the sleeping quarters of family members suggests that...Mennonites of nineteenth century European origin had been thoroughly influenced by an increasing desire in the late eighteenth century for privacy” (1991:22). These rooms were nevertheless crowded with a variety of people (separated by gender) often sleeping in any available space and in close proximity with up to four or five to a room. Thus the concept of “privacy”, while certainly more developed than in Medieval Europe, was still less than fully individualized.

Many informants mention the crowded conditions of houses. Mrs. Giesbrecht states that ten people lived in her “very crowded house” (SW3, Neubergthal). “According to the standards in those days, this was a very large house, nobody ever said they felt cramped or wanted privacy or anything, that’s just the way it was” (N. Giesbrecht Interview, 2002). Five children, two parents and a maid shared the small three-room home (NE14) of Willie Hamm from the 1920s to the 1940s. Although it was very crowded, “we

never had any quarrels or anything, everybody was happy, even if we didn't have that much room" (W. Hamm Interview, 2002). Hired hands slept and ate where they could, sometimes with members of the family. This pattern of intimate co-habitation between employer's families and hired labourers was pervasive and well established in Europe and the Americas in the previous centuries (Johnson, 1996:165; Epperson, 2001). It was also a common practice among Mennonites living in the colonies in Southern Russia in the 1800s, where many had hired hands and servants of Mennonite or Ukrainian background.

Between 1910 and 1930 Neubergthal experienced a minor explosion in marriages. About twenty young couples were married, but farmland was at a premium and many were forced to live with their parents for a number of years. Many eventually had to leave the village because of a lack of available farmland in the area. It was at this time that the second floors of many homes in the village were renovated for habitation in order to accommodate the new pairs.

It wasn't popular to take walls out. Only if a young couple got married, they would finish the upstairs. There were about ten or twelve houses that made upstairs for room for the young men. There were about twenty farmers, there were about forty households that had mail, but farmers there were about twenty. Non-farming households were mostly old people, nothing else to do. (H. Hamm Interview, 2001)

This was an innovation in Mennonite house design unseen in earlier generations and relatively rare in Reinland and Chortitz, where group migration to Saskatchewan and Mexico occurred. In these villages too, however, newly married couples would stay with their families for a short period, and this did not necessitate the construction of new rooms. In all cases it was considered desirable to begin a farmstead near one set of parents as soon as possible.

The renovation of the attic into habitable quarters, or the full construction of a one and a half storey housebarn (such as NE2 and NW4) in Neubergthal also signified status. Mr. Bernhard Hamm does not remember the exact date of the construction of the stairs and second story rooms of SW3, but he recalls the event of their construction clearly.

“That was something grand if they had rooms upstairs” (B.B. Hamm Interview, 2002). In four of the houses from Neubergthal (SW3, SE3, NE2, NW4), a veranda was attached to the second floor, accompanied by numerous decorative carved details. Although the construction of upper rooms was tied to the growth of a young adult sector of the village population, it was also linked to the wealth necessary for such projects, and thus to status.

Attitudes towards privacy varied in the interviews, with some people stating that a crowded house was “just the way it was” (N. Giesbrecht Interview, 2002) or “wasn’t noticed” (H. Kehler Interview, 2001), and others claiming they didn’t like the lack of privacy (Wiebe, Thiessen, Fehr Interview, 2002).

Abe Ens explains the renovations in his childhood home (179 Reinland Ave.) in terms of the size of the family (12 children) and the need for privacy as the children grew older in the 1940s: “The family got bigger, and the people got bigger. As they got older they wanted, demanded, expected...whatever word you want to use, more privacy and not so many people in one room” (A. Ens Interview, 2001). Henry Kehler states that although there was little tension in his home despite the cramped conditions, “it was kind of a relief when those upstairs rooms were built” (H. Kehler Interview, 2001).

Household populations were generally large and multi-generational. The room a person slept in was not “their room”, but was shared by others in a variety of ways, and changed as they grew older. Sleeping in a kitchen or entrance room was common, and occurred on benches, in *Schlopbenkje* (pull-out bench-beds), beds, and in one case “on buffalo skins on the floor beside the oven” (Wiebe, Thiessen, Fehr Interview, 2002). Rooms were multipurpose and communal, and sleeping arrangements did not define their personal space. It could, however, help define their place in the social order of the home and community.

There were two general exceptions to this state of affairs. Married couples and sometimes the elderly occupied their own rooms. The head pair tended to sleep in the *Afj Stow* or *Groote Stow*, often accompanied by infants. Newly wedded couples were given a

specific room in the house of their parents (H. Klippenstein Interview, 2002). Elderly parents sometimes retained their own rooms (after a young married couple took over the farm) until their death, as was the case in SW3 and NE2 of Neubergthal (N. Giesbrecht Interview, 2002; E. Schmidt Interview, 2001). Sleeping space and personal space was only linked in full adults (married landowners), and functioned as a type of control of space unavailable to younger single persons and workers.

Judging by the circular arrangement of rooms, the size of rooms, the number of residents, the types of bedding furniture (benches, *Schlopbenkje*, *Ruhbenkje*), and room use (generalized), “privacy” was not an issue in the earliest few generations of settlement. The expansion of bedrooms in housebarns occurred only after 1910 and mostly in the 1920s to 1940s, reflecting a shifting understanding of individual space. Informants used privacy issues in the interviews as a method of contrasting current and previous conditions and perceptions, as well as explanations of certain renovations. They reflect current conceptualizations of private space.

Religious Practice in the Home

Both the Mennonite home and church in the first generations of settlement (until about the 1930s) were significantly similar in exterior appearance and mode of use. There was a lack of sacred space in both types of structure during religious, communal events, and iconography was absent (including crucifixes of any kind). Both were used in accordance with the requirements of the gathered people. After the 1930s, many communities began to construct churches in the Anglo-Canadian, and then later Modern/International style, and these contained segmented areas (including a sanctuary) and sometimes a Cross and *Wandspriche* (Scriptural wall hanging).

The homes of Mennonites did not exhibit explicitly sacred spaces or icons. Religious expression did take place, however, in the form of interior decorations, the use of the *Groote Stow* during religious holidays, the display of the family Bible, and communal religious rites that occurred in the home, such as weddings and funerals. All of

these aspects changed during the first half of the 20th century to greater or lesser degrees. These changes reflected the increasing separation of religious and domestic life as well as increasingly individualistic expression and choice in spiritual matters.

Interior Decorations

Among the earliest generations of the more orthopraxic Mennonites of Manitoba, very little was displayed on interior walls other than calendars and the occasional clock (See Figure 32). This lack of decoration in itself was a type of religious expression on the part of residents, who considered pictures or excessive decoration vain, proud, or “worldly”, and therefore inappropriate for the humble Christian model that Mennonites were supposed to follow (Redekop, 1986; Janzen and Janzen, 1991). Informants also used the Low German term “*Daut wie nicht Moohd*”, or “That was not stylish” when referring to reasons for the lack of decoration. As an example, Henry Hamm, born in 1914, replied to a question about the presence of wall hangings: “We had very little things hanging on the walls... that was... that was... *wie nicht Moohd*” (Interview, 2001). This suggests a concern for representation of conformity within the community.

When asked about interior decorations or wall hangings, every informant mentioned the presence of calendars. Mary Penner, (b. 1916), remembers her mother saying that when she was young some families removed the pictures from calendars because they were considered worldly (F. and M. Penner Interview, 2001). Other families put up numerous calendars, using the pictures as the main source of decoration in the home. Calendars were an accepted form of wall hanging in Mennonite communities because they had the sanction of usefulness. They were also prominent because they were usually free or inexpensive, often distributed by Manitoba businesses (J.Fehr Interview, 2002). The extent of their use and the inclusion of pictures were forms of personal expression within the parameters of accepted decorative choices.

Scriptural verses as wall hangings (or *Wandspriche*), often accompanied with a flower motif, were absent in the orthopraxic Mennonite homes of this study until the

1920s, and only became common in the 1930s (F. and M. Penner Interview, 2001; H. Ens Interview, 2001; J. Fehr Interview, 2002; H. Klippenstein Interview, 2002; P. Driedger Interview, 2002). Their inclusion as decoration occurred at the same time that framed photographs of family members became common and the use of calendars became less prominent. Both scriptures and family photographs became acceptable in the *Groote Stow* and the parents' bedroom.



Fig. 32 Interior of Neuberghal home, ca. 1930s. Unknown individuals. Courtesy of the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives, Winnipeg, MB.

This lack of decoration remained central to Mennonite construction of space well into the 1940s and 1950s, as testified by the Mrs. Norma Giesbrecht (b.1940).

“Basically it was relatively simple, so there weren’t that many pictures on the walls, not really pictures of people, that wouldn’t have been... the wedding pictures were one thing, but other than that, it wouldn’t be very humble. There were some Bible verses

later on the walls, but not earlier on. Not a lot of ornate stuff on the walls.” (Interview, 2002)

Religious Holidays

Several informants recall their grandparents’ formal use of the *Groote Stow* during religious holidays. Ed Schmidt (b.1917) recalls his widowed grandmother only opening the room at Christmas: “Most families would use the *Groote Stow* for visiting at Easter and Christmas, not my grandma...we would only go there when we got our presents, and that was it” (E. Schmidt Interview, 2001). Mary Penner (b.1916) was given cookies and cake in the kitchen at Christmas, because children were not supposed to be in the *Groote Stow*. She was only allowed into this room to recite a scriptural verse. She went on to say, “We had to come into the living room, sometimes they would give us a few pennies or something, we never got a real big present like they do these days” (M. Penner Interview, 2002). Rose Hildebrand (b.1934) states, “I remember in many houses, my grandmother’s house, you didn’t go into the *Groote Stow* unless it was Christmas, Easter, or Pentecost, these family gatherings, then that door was open, but other than that you kind of just peaked in” (R. Hildebrand Interview, 2002).

These three informants share vivid recollections of the attitudes their grandparents had of the proper use of the *Groote Stow*. Children were essentially forbidden from this room: it was clean, formal and off-limits, and it seems that among the first generations of settlers it was particularly restricted to religious occasions and formal visits. As we have seen, it was also the locus of core male/female material representations and status display. The *Groote Stow* became much less restricted as these customs changed, a reflection and reinforcement of changing Mennonite *habitus*.

As previously mentioned, part of the Russian Mennonite “canon” of furniture, according to Janzen and Janzen (1991), was the corner cabinet, or *Atjschaup*, which was attached to a corner of the *Groote Stow*. It was most common in Old Colony communities, and was often the receptacle of the few private possessions of the head male of the

household. A number of informants refer to a table located beneath this cabinet with a Bible placed on its surface, or in the cabinet itself (M. Penner Interview, 2002; F. and M. Penner Interview, 2001; J. Fehr Interview, 2002). Jake Fehr, whose father died when Jake was ten years of age, interprets the Bible's position on the table as a reminder to him of the importance of biblical knowledge.

My mother had a Bible lying in the *Groote Stow* on a table....I don't know why it happened but I went to that room quite often...and my mother was a clever woman, she had a Bible lying there and I think there was a reason. I think it was for us... (J. Fehr Interview, 2002).

The *Groote Stow* was a location of the family Bible, and at least among the Old Colony Mennonites, the Bible maintained a specified location among the head male's locus of possessions. Informants from Neuberghthal and descendants of Russian immigrants who arrived in the 1920s in Reinland do not report the use of the corner cabinet.

Weddings

The Mennonite home was often, until well into the 1930s and 1940s, the location of two important communal rites of passage: marriage and death. Weddings could occur in the church if one existed in the village. Villages without churches would often have the wedding in the home, as occurred in Neuberghthal until the first church building was constructed there in the 1940s.

Weddings usually took place in the house or outside in the yard in the summer months. The location of the ceremony varied, with informants noting that it took place in the *Groote Stow* (N. Giesbrecht Interview, 2002), and the *Somma Stow* (summer room) because "there was lots of sunshine" (H. Hamm Interview, 2001). Houses became crowded with invited guests from the village and beyond, and extra chairs and benches were brought to the house for the event. According to Rose Hildebrand (Interview, 2002), an engagement party would "traditionally" be held at the groom's home and the wedding would take place at the home of the bride, but other interviews suggest variation from this pattern. Celebrations after the wedding were often large and boisterous (Anonymous

Interview, 2002; Urry, 1989).

It was also the custom to marry on a Thursday. One couple that married on a Friday were forever known as the “Friday Friesens”, which shows the extent to which deviation from custom became an identifying feature (R. Hildebrand Interview, 2002). (In fact, the use of nicknames was very common because so many Mennonites shared the same Christian names and surnames. Nicknames almost always pointed out a behavioural deviation.)

Wedding dresses were all black for certain churches (like the Sommerfelder, Chortitzer, and Old Colony) until the 1920s and 1930s, when some of these congregations began allowing white dresses in the style of Anglo-Canadians. Mrs. Klippenstein, born in 1911 in Neuberghthal, was dressed in black for her wedding at the age of twenty. She recalls that this was the norm in Sommerfelder weddings, but later as the less conservative Rudnerweider and Bergthaler churches established themselves in Neuberghthal, in the late 1930s, white dresses became common (H. Klippenstein Interview, 2002). It was at this time too that weddings began to take place in the new church buildings, and moved out of the home (N. Giesbrecht Interview, 2002; R. Hildebrand Interview, 2002).

Among the more orthopraxic communities during the period under consideration, church weddings took place under two circumstances: the deep poverty of the couple’s families, or the premarital pregnancy of the bride (Martin Sawatzky, personal communication 2002). The wedding ceremony would directly follow a regular church service on a Sunday. The church wedding symbolized the public, communal acknowledgement of these states of affairs, although it was not explicitly articulated in a theological context of punishment or shaming. Nevertheless, the testimony of one informant indicates the public shame and discomfort in his own experience of marriage to his already pregnant bride.

“We had the worst wedding. I had no idea my wife’s family was like that.” When the informant’s father eventually took charge of the strained circumstances, they decided to attend the regular church service, and have the wedding ceremony in the building

directly afterwards. “And then a lot of people came to look because my wife had become big, oh boy that was lowdown...it was so bad. My wife, she was so nice...” (Anonymous Interview, 2002). The existence of such a custom itself indicates that premarital sex and pregnancy was a persistent concern, if not a common incident.

In certain Mennonite congregations (Chortitz, Old Colony, Sommerfelder) weddings in the home were sanctified not by any particular theological reasoning, but through custom, or repeated practice. The home was the appropriate and correct setting for such an event, while the church was a place where unfortunates were forced to experience their weddings. This dichotomy was reversed after the 1930s.

The Funeral

The Mennonite home was also often the location of ceremonies surrounding the death of a community member: the viewing of the deceased, a funeral service, and the gathering of invited guests (See Figure 33). On the occasion of a death, the body would be prepared for viewing and preservation for two to three days. Informants recall that in Neuberghthal and Chortitz the village midwife was also the “undertaker”, and was responsible for cleaning and dressing the corpse (H. Hamm Interview, 2001; Wiebe, Thiessen, Penner Interview, 2002). The body was preserved until formal burial in the summer by placing it in a dugout under a tree, or keeping it in a shuttered room, and in both cases surrounding it with ice or cold water. During one winter, a corpse was kept in the lean-to attached to the barn, and this area was heated to keep the body from freezing (R. Hildebrand Interview, 2002). A single invitation would be written with the names of all those invited to the funeral, and this would be passed from household to household within the village. At this point the women of the village would begin collecting material to bake buns, which would be baked for the gathering on the day of the funeral.

Every villager would bring some milk and butter to the...in preparation for baking buns...and then when the day came that they wanted to mix the dough then the ladies would get together, they would mix and knead all the dough, and then they would bring it to the neighbours to bake it. (A. Ens Interview, 2001)



Fig. 33 Neubergthal funeral in the *Groote Stow*. Individuals unknown. Courtesy of the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives, Winnipeg, MB.

The body was not kept in a particular location in the house during the viewing. Informants mention a variety of rooms where this took place, including the *Vaeathues*, the *Tjliene Stow*, the kitchen, and the *Atj Stow* (N. Giesbrecht Interview, 2002; A. Ens Interview, 2001; R. Hildebrand Interview, 2002; J. Fehr Interview, 2002). Abe Ens (Interview, 2001) was told by carpenters in Reinland that entrance doors to the house must be a minimum of three feet wide to accommodate coffins. Chairs and benches would be brought for the post-funeral gathering to accommodate the large crowds.

Mrs. H. Klippenstein (Interview, 2002) states of her mothers' funeral in 1928, "There was a viewing just before the funeral. That was in the house where the funeral was. There was a sermon with the funeral. Anyone who was invited would come. I know they're not invited anymore, but then they were. A letter was written, and their names were in there".

Later, although the viewing continued to take place in the home, the funeral service took place in the church, and the body was moved there for further viewing (N. Giesbrecht Interview, 2002; A. Ens Interview, 2001). This began taking place perhaps in the 1930s and was common by the 1950s. The first use of the funeral home for preparation and viewing in Altona was in 1954.

After the funeral service the coffin was removed from the house (later the church) and a procession to the cemetery would begin.

The house among early Mennonites in Manitoba was the locale for important communal events surrounding the death of a community member. This was not accompanied by the temporary creation and use of a sacred space in the home, but was expedient and malleable according to the needs of the community and desires of the family. The house acted as both the location of the corpse during the funeral events, and as the spatial focus of intense social activity, where people worked and visited together and with the bereaved family. The practice of these social rituals was personal and interactive, with little or no emphasis on sacred or supernatural elements.

As churches became the locus of funerary rites, houses became increasingly separated from the experience of death, although they remained a place of gathering. Both weddings and funerals were practiced in the Mennonite home, and between the 1930s and 1950s both were eventually excluded from the home and entered the realm of the church building. The separation of public rites of passage from the home ground accompanied the separation of domestic life from communal religious practice. The house was becoming private and individualistic while the church became the location for sanctioned and formal presentation of religious belief.

Conclusion

The household was the economic productive unit, and this did not change with the adoption of quarter section farming. The household's relation to the community, however, did change drastically, and this can be seen in the construction of domestic dwellings. Until the full abandonment of the open field system, construction reflected adherence to the Mennonite versions of the basic *Flurkuechenhaus* design. Outside the villages, this design became meaningless. Inside the villages such houses were supplanted by new forms after the 1920s, and existing housebarns were greatly renovated to reflect contemporary ideas of domestic living. *Habitus*, informed by the daily experience within the

house, changed with the *continued* Mennonite adoption of mainstream Anglo-Canadian principles of separation, capitalism, and individualism.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

The study of the social use of space provides insights for the changing definitions and values of the household, but also for changing attitudes towards the economy and new political realities. The Mennonite household was always a labour-intensive economic unit based on the independent farm. All other social positions (teacher, minister) were viewed in relation (often negatively) to the farming career. Mennonite identity was deeply tied to being an independently successful farmer within an orthopraxic village setting, and this influenced both the interior use of space and the exterior presentation of housebarns.

The ethnic Mennonite household use of the *Flurkuechenhaus* design and furnishings helped inculcate a Mennonite *habitus* emphasizing social order and control through age and gender categories and domains. These categories represented stable social structures of the “family” and the household economy. Dwelling spaces were relatively undifferentiated in terms of personal ownership, and thus lacked attendant notions of privacy or a strong sense of individuality. They were nevertheless ordered according to categories. Public use of this space for marriage and funeral ceremonies reflected socio-religious values of the primacy of community.

Although specific sacred spaces in the house were lacking, the male’s *Atjschaup* was a locus of importance, housing the main religious texts and other “untouchable” items. Meanwhile, since life was to be lived according to an orthopraxic understanding of ethical and religious tenets, the entire household acted as a model of private and public behaviour, and was in this sense “sacred”. This was attended by values of simplicity (including the lack of extraneous wall decoration and similarity in design and ornamentation with other houses), cleanliness, and order (*Ordnung*). The underlying principal of these values was spatial control, symbolizing the very real mandate of social control.

Rooms were assigned as gender-appropriate in terms of sleeping arrangement,

although there could be many people in one room. The *Somma Stow* and the *Tjliene Stow* are examples, with both exhibiting significant placements in the home in relation to exits and other rooms. The *Somma Stow* was often assigned to teenage boys, and provided access to the formal house exit/entrance and the barn, but usually without direct contact with the central brick heating oven. The boys' spaces were associated with the realm of the public (both social and labour), and were furthest from the parents. The *Tjliene Stow*, on the other hand, was generally assigned to girls and located between the kitchen and parents' bedroom, creating a setting of parental control and household centrality. Both spaces helped inculcate adult gender roles in young inhabitants. Married couples and their infants were assigned their own rooms, which could be almost anywhere in the house, reiterating the concept of the married couple as a neolocal economic and social unit.

The *Groote Stow* was a public space representing specific gendered loci and possessions of the head male and female. These loci (the female *Glausschaup* and the male *Atjschaup*) were diametrically opposed in their spatial association and were used to present a material reminder of the power and role of the "established" married couple. They were separated by space (being in opposite corners of the room) and the nature of contents (the female's cupboard for presentation of fine heirlooms, the male's cupboard for the hiding of documents and dangerous or personal items, as well as religious texts). While separated, these loci were also united in the sharing of a single room, as well as their form (cupboard) and function (storage of personal items). The *Groote Stow* was a presentation of all the powers and permanence of male and female roles in the household and society, made real through material objects and presented to a public on formal occasions. The room itself was generally off-limits to children, and its doors often had glass panels for viewing.

Household space was also oriented along age categories, with more control of personal space allocated to adults, including grandparents. Senior household members often had their own room in the house or their own small dwelling on the yard. This independ-

ence and personal control of space was symbolic not only of their status in the family and society, but helped reify the “respect” parents expected from their own children.

The *Flurkuechenhaus* design concept of housebarns allowed various options for the builder. The basic design included rooms arranged around a central brick heating oven, with each room connected to the next with a door. Hallways were absent except for the *Gang*, which led from kitchen to barn in the larger, wealthier dwellings. The elongated dwelling structure could be divided from anywhere between 2 and 9 spaces, depending on the size of the overall building and the financial status of the owner. The more divided (controlled) spaces constructed in the dwelling, the wealthier the owner. Social control depended on spatial control. The fewer divisions available to a family, the less control over space and people the farming couple were perceived to have. Control was linked to the status of the successful farmer, because only he could provide a house large and divided enough for maintaining concepts of civilized order. Increased division also allowed for greater separation of animals and people (through the use of the *diester Gang*) and the full articulation of all the divisions of gender and age considered appropriate.

The divisions of the *Flurkuechenhaus* floorplan in the first generation of settlement in Manitoba followed the general pattern of farmstead establishment: *Semlin* (2 rooms), log dwelling housebarn (4-5 rooms), and full housebarn (8-9 rooms). Not all farming households experienced the same financial success, however, and those that remained poor or lost wealth were unable to build the full housebarn. Herdsman’s houses of 2-3 rooms or the log dwellings of 4-5 rooms became symbols of general squalor and poverty. This was also evident at the level of village settlement pattern, where poor households were often located at the ends of the single village street. While many of the settlers came to Manitoba to escape the increasingly stratified structure of the Russian Mennonite villages, the social order of the new settlements soon replicated the structures of the homeland.

Orthopraxis was the domain of the village because it was among villagers that it

was enforced. Elders of the church were also instrumental in incorporating orthopraxic concerns and admonishing individuals or families concerning proper behaviour. This could be done from the pulpit or as part of a special visit from the minister or elders (as with many special visits, this would occur in the formal arena of the *Groote Stow*). But it was within Mennonite household architecture that the full range of the dispositions of the habitus were learned and reified, including both orthopraxis and the possibilities of individual movement outside this orthopraxis. The extent to which a family, most specifically a mother and father, rebelled against village conformity was visible in the home, and was expressed in part through material culture. Those households in which new or idiosyncratic items were placed were the loci of challenges to orthopraxis, and would have been understood as such by its residents, thus inculcating the dispositions of possibility. The maintenance of the social life structured within the home by its architecture and furnishings changed considerably over time. Changes to the household interior facilitated the relaxation of control by parents over their household inhabitants. The increased desire for privacy was a reflection of the strengthening concept of individuality. The manipulation of the ethnic identity of the Mennonite agent as a community-based person was undertaken in the home through the manipulation of space. One of the results was the weakened power wielded by mothers and fathers over their young (including adult children). The *Groote Stow* was the most formal room in the house, in which symbolism, hospitality, and presentation were primary elements of its purpose. This was the most stable cell of the home over time, although it did become less formal over time. The *Gang*, kitchen, and entrances to the home were the most volatile spaces. Individual spaces (or at least increasingly private spaces) were constructed on upper floors. Hallways were sometimes introduced to create single entrance rooms, rather than the older double entrance rooms positioned within a circular set of spaces.

Accompanying the loss of the *Groote Stow* as a formal signifier of male/female dichotomies and age-specific interaction, were changing perspectives concerning age

privilege and the shifting importance of the household as an economic unit.

Age categories for males were effectively reversed over time, with young men assuming power and independence from their fathers while the latter were still in a position of responsibility. The powers and decisions of land-owning fathers over their young, which was previously nearly equivalent to law, waned as the individualism supported by the new economic condition ascended. Certainly part of this process was the shift in vote power on the part of men, who in the village politics of Russia could only vote on village affairs if they were landowners. In the period after 1880, the issue of the Municipality Act became increasingly contentious for many Mennonite communities in respect to how it undermined local church governance. The municipality assumed many responsibilities previously under control of the local churches. In addition, the opinion and ability of the young male became increasingly important in comparison to the previous patriarchal system.

Mennonite communities were not without tensions of all forms, interpersonal, political, and structural. A major paradox within the Mennonite paradigm, one that led to the gradual dissolution of the rural villages and assisted the transformation of church structures and ethnic identities, was the individual success of the farmer versus the requirements of the community. These requirements were highly orthopraxic and actively structured to reduce the ascendance of the individual. Eighmy notes the same phenomenon in the Mexican Mennonite colonies of 1975, referring to the colonists as strong advocates of “free enterprise” (1984:75) while recognizing a high degree of behavioural conformity.

Mennonite colonists assumed that in Canada they would be able to resume the patron/guest relationship (such as the *Privilegium*) they had previously enjoyed with Russian and West Prussian authorities. This included certain religious freedoms in conjunction with bloc settlements. It also implicitly entailed the boundary maintenance instituted by both government and Mennonite powers.

The economic and expansionist conditions available to Mennonite farmers on their arrival in Canada, however, were unlike those ever available before. The quarter section grant system of the Canadian government on the prairies was effectively unconditional (the conditions imposed by the government being easily met by most Mennonite settlers), small-scale, and inexpensive. These conditions were ideal for small-scale Mennonite farmers, many of them poor, whose identity was based as much on the farmstead as the village. The fact that Mennonite settlers were also granted their quarter sections before the villages were even erected, and that these villages were not legal institutions, was enough to dissolve the village system within a generation, by the very communities that constructed the villages.

Mennonite landowners in Russia prospered socially and otherwise within the colonial street-village landscape, with their status and abilities assured and reproduced within an ethnic enclave and in the social hierarchy of village space. In this proto-capitalist Mennonite society, the conditions necessary for individuals to have an interest in the perpetuation of the community, were present in the structure of that community and supported by the boundaries imposed by the state. Once in Canada the conditions for individuals to maintain such a community changed due to open, fully capitalist economic conditions and the lack of state-supported ethnic boundaries. While the ideal of the successful landowner-farmer continued, the habitus engendered by the structure of villages and household architecture changed in accordance with individualistic values available to be expressed in the new conditions.

With the widespread break-up of Mennonite street-villages between the 1880s and 1920s, the interior of homes and their ethnic social order became less relevant for presentations of orthopraxis or the reproduction of habitus in accordance with traditional gender or age categories and interaction. As farmers increasingly moved out of villages onto their quarter sections, their homes were moved, destroyed, or sold to others. With the exodus of successful farmers onto quarter sections (with mainstream Canadian houses) the fully

articulated Mennonite housebarn of the street village became much less important as an interior locus of inculcation or an outward symbol of status.

Much has been made of the importance of the changing exterior appearance of the Mennonite housebarn and its relation to ethnic assimilation. While housebarn exteriors did change beginning around 1900, and while Anglo-Ontario facades did have an effect on Mennonite choices, Mennonite ethnicity continued to be expressed in interior design, farm layout, and barn connections, to name merely architectural features. Mennonites did not “assimilate” to mainstream culture, but incorporated certain non-Mennonite features as part of their own changing ethnic identities. They did not become English Canadians. Some of the best evidence for the non-assimilation of Mennonites is their current condition: continued use of Low German, the continued vitality of Mennonite institutions, and the ubiquitous, ferociously maintained network of family relations.

There was a strong element of innovation with the Mennonite housebarn form after 1900 that included experimentation with orientation, ornamentation, and *Gang* use and placement. This could include Anglo-Ontario designs, but as the four “barn-houses” attest, there were local experiments until the late 1920s with the housebarn form that differed substantially from previous Mennonite and Anglo-Ontario designs.

As the standardization of floorplans relaxed (due to changing *habitus* and the waning of orthopraxis) the interior arrangement of space, people, and material symbols was separated from “common knowledge”. Whereas the interior arrangement (and thus social use) of earlier Mennonite houses was always understood at a glance from the street village setting, later homes with new facades and floorplans hid these interiors. The Mennonite house became more “domestic” and “private” by obscuring these interiors to the common knowledge of the community.

The direction of change was also noticeably different in each village or area, although similar within these settlements. Eighmy’s explanation (1984) of the effect of “conformity” (orthopraxis) on the rate of change is useful in understanding the reasons for

these different options for architectural change between villages. Since orthopraxis first dampened and then “rapidly diffused” social changes within the community once those changes were accepted, and since orthopraxis was maintained and enforced at the level of the village, then each village produced its own “direction” of architectural change. This direction, however, was always based on the decisions of individual agents in relation to Mennonite *habitus* and local history.

Bourdieu understood the relationship of physical and social space, claiming that a society is characterized by its distribution of agents in the home, the relative distribution of these homes, and the ownership of properties (2000: 134-135). While the Mennonite street village and its hierarchy of *Vollwirtschaft*, *Anwohner* and *Einwohner* (disguised by the orthopraxis of house form and material culture) quickly disappeared among the new opportunities so attractive to the “independent farmer”, the ethnic cohesion of Mennonite society remained robust in its interaction and expansionism.

The Mennonite household interior was used by its inhabitants to mediate tensions between the demands of the community (orthopraxis, social transparency, unity) and the desires and direction of the household members (agricultural economy, individualism, status, degree of ethnic affiliation). The changing interior use and exterior appearance of houses were active material manipulations of community members within this mediating process. But these manipulations were only partly conscious. The “reasoning” behind these changes was linked to vast periods of a partly coherent past and the imperceptible pressures of modern experience.

Glossary of High German, Low German, and Russian Terms

All Low German spellings are taken from the Mennonite Low German Dictionary (Thiessen, 2003).

Atj Stow (Low German) – Corner room.

Atjschaup (Low German) – Corner cabinet. This was usually placed in the corner of the Groote Stow and contained the head male's personal items.

Anwohner (High German) – A term among Mennonites denoting villagers who owned their own dwelling, but no farmland.

Beischlag (High German) – Porch. A platform in front of an entrance to a dwelling.

Bethaus (High German) – Prayer house.

Einwohner (High German) – A term among Mennonites denoting villagers who owned neither their own dwelling nor farmland, and could merely rent a small place to live.

Flurkuechenhaus (High German) – A north European house floorplan including “two or more unequally sized rooms around an off-centre central chimney stack” (Ennals, 1998:174)

Gang (Low German) – Hall or passage. This term usually referred to the passage between the house and barn.

Gemeinde (High German) – Community or congregation.

Glausschaup (Low German) – Glass cabinet. In Mennonite architecture this usually refers to the china cabinet usually built directly into the inner corner wall of the Groote Stow. Also referred to as a Miaschaup.

Groote Stow (Low German) – Literally “great room”, this was the term for the large, formal parlour of the Mennonite dwelling.

Hinjetus (Low German) – Back of the house. The term refers to the part of the larger kitchen area that was entered through the back door. This was also the main dining and work area.

Koagel (Low German) – A strip of land behind the Mennonite housebarn in the village setting used for pasture and gardens.

Miaschaup (Low German) – Wall cabinet. (See Glausschaup)

Owesied (Low German) – Lean-to.

Sarai (Russian) – An A-frame dwelling with walls of thatch.

Schien (Low German) – Section of the barn used for transport and storage. It was normally furthest from the house, with the animal stable between them.

Schlopbeintj (Low German) – A sitting bench during the day that could be pulled out into a bed.

Schwoatet Tjaatj (Low German)- Black kitchen. A small room centred around the Tael Owe, or brick oven. The room acts as a cooking area and provides access to the main oven doors for fuel deposition. It was called the Black Kitchen because it was dark (having no windows to the exterior) and the accumulation of soot on the walls.

Semlin (Russian) – Dugout house with sod walls and roof.

Somma Stow (Low German) – Summer room. This room was not connected to the central brick oven heater and was thus most habitable in the summer months.

Teajelowe (Low German) – Brick oven.

Tjaatj (Low German) - Kitchen

Tjist (Low German) – Chest, Trunk (for storage, dowry, and travel)

Tjliene Stow (Low German) – Small room. This room was usually located between the Atj Stow and the Hinjetus.

Vaealeew (Low German) – Porch, veranda (see Vorlaube).

Vaeathues (Low German) – Front of the house. This term referred to the front entrance room.

Vollwirtschaft (High German) – A term denoting a villager who was a full landowner and could therefore vote in village and colony affairs.

Vorlaube (High German) – Porch, veranda. In the Baltic German houses, this feature was extremely large, being a frontal extension of the second floor of the dwelling creating an open space beneath supported by large timber columns. (See Vaealeew).

Waisenamt (High German) – The Mennonite institution of the “orphan’s bureau”, which functioned to ensure the economic wellbeing of orphans and widows, and also served as a savings bank in some instances.

Appendix 1

“The Arrangement of Farmyards, Gardens, Houses and Work Buildings of Colonies on the Molotschna in Taurischen Government”, pp. 52-55 in *Mittheilungen der Kaiserlichen freien oekonomischen Gesellschaft zu St. Petersburg*, 1852.

The enclosed plan of farmyards and gardens are sent to us by the leader of the Colony community, Herrn Wiebe, as an illustration of the buildings of the Molotschna Colony. The types of buildings built in those steppes and clearings are very interesting, and our readers can decide whether this design may serve the small farming operation.

Figure 1.

Map of Farmyards and the Gardens, the details of which are:

1. Wohnhaus (House)
 2. Stall (Barn)
 3. Scheune (Shed)
 4. Viehhock (Cattle corral)
 5. Reiner Hof (Clear yard)
 6. Vorgarten (Front garden)
 7. Einfahrt (Entrance driveway)
 8. Obstgarten (Orchard)
 9. Bleichplatz (Bleaching ground)
 10. Gemuesegarten (Vegetable garden)
 11. Stroh- und Heuhof (Straw and hay yard)
 12. Viehof (Cattle yard)
 13. Misthof (Manure yard)
 14. Aschenbude (Ash stall)
-
- a. Wege (Walkway)
 - b. Maulbeerhecken (Mulberry bushes)
 - c. Zaeune (Fences)

Figure 2.

Plan of the House and Workbuildings

A – Des Wohnhaus (The Dwelling House)

- a. Reines- oder Besuchzimmer (Clean or Visiting Room)
- b. Schlafzimmer (Bedroom)
- c. Wirtschafts- oder Speisezimmer (Work or Dining Room)
- d. Kueche (Kitchen)
- e. Hausraum (Room)
- f. Speisekammer (Pantry)
- g. Bodentreppe (Attic stairs)
- h. Kellertreppe (Cellar stairs)

- i. Gang in den Stall (Hall to the barn)
- k. Sommerstube (Summer room)
- l. Beischlag (Porch)
- m. Oven

The attic rafters form a steep roof for grain storage and house and work implements. This also allows room to build two more living chambers.

There are large and small houses. The main difference in both houses are the sizes of single rooms. Those in the small house are a little smaller than those in the large house. In the so-called Hausraeume of the smaller houses there is one small entrance room with a door to the left that leads into another room. In the larger house, this room is broader and in the front wall beside the door there is a window. Finally, also in the larger house, there is often a vestibule (Vorlaube) with glass windows instead of a porch (Beischlag) in the front.

It is also common that a so-called large house is built with fire-baked bricks and covered in roof tiles, while a small one is built of crude bricks on a stone foundation with a thatch roof.

B. The farm buildings of larger houses are built with fire-baked bricks and covered in roof tiles. The farm buildings of smaller houses are built with wood and straw roofs. The inner organization is the same.

- a) Stallraum (Stable room)
- b) Schlafkammer fuer die maennlichen Diensboten (Sleeping chamber for male servants)
- c) Hock fuer Jungvieh (Fenced area for calves)
- d) Futterbehaeltmiss (naemlich fuer Schrot, Haeckfel u.s.w.) (Fodder storage – namely for chaff and chopped straw, etc.)
- e) Raum henter den Kuehen (room behind the cows)
- f) Mistgruben (Manure troughs)
- g) Kuhstand fuer 10 Stueck Kuehe berechnet (Cowstall measured for 10 cows)
- h) Krippe zum Tuettern und Traenken der Kuehe (Cribs for feeding and watering cows)
- i) Brunnen nebst Pumpe (Well with pump)
- k) Pferderaeume, jeder fuer ein Gespann von 4 Pferden berechnet (Horse rooms measured for a team of 4 horses)
- l) Ein zweispaenniger Pferderaum (a room for 2 horses)
- m) Ein einspaenniger Pferderaum (a room for 1 horse)
- n) Pferdekrippen, ueber jeder derselben eine Raufe zum Heu (Horse cribs for hay)
- o) Gang in die Scheune (Hall in barn)
- p) Rollkammer, zugleich zum Gelaess fuer Hausgeraete, als Tonnen und vergl. mit anwenbar (Room with a sliding door for storage of implements such as barrels and other practical things)
- q) Abtritt (exit)
- r) Durchgang (passage)
- s) Huehnersthall (chicken coop)
- t) Raum fuerer Brennmaterialie wie Holz (Room for storing burning material, such as wood)

- u) Raum fuer Schweinemast (Room for swine manure)
- v) Schweinestall. Oftmals ist der Schweinestall besonders gebaut, und dann wird dieser Raum ebenfalls fuer Brennmaterialie benutzt (Swine stall. Often a separate swine stall is built separately, and then this room is used for to store burning materials)
- w) Heuwinkel (Hay storage)
- x) Abtritt fuer die Arbeiter (Exit for workers)

The attic area of these workrooms, which are generally named the stables, hold the hay for cow fodder during the winter months.

C. The barn, roofed with wood and thatch.

- a) Dreschdielen (Threshing floor). The middle wall is removed during the threshing period to make room for the roller-stone threshing of the grain. In the winter the chaffcutters, wagon, and farm implements are stored here.
- b) Fach zum Einlegen der Garben (Compartment for storage of sheaves)
- c) Abseiten zum Aufbewahren von Futtermorraeten, wie Haecksel, Spreu, dienlich. (Side storage for chaff and other useful things)
- d) Schafstall fuer den Winter (Sheepstall in winter. In summer wagons and similar items can be stored here.)

On the gable end of the barn one commonly finds one of the requirements appropriate for gathering in the open, which in the winter is used to fodder sheep and calves, and where cows may be corralled during pasture time.

To remove the manure a drive-through is made with one end able to be shut.

Fig. 3 The façade of the dwelling house with the work buildings and the barn

Fig. 4 End-view of the dwelling house.

Ohrloff Colony

Ph. Wiebe, Correspondence member of the society.

Fig. 1

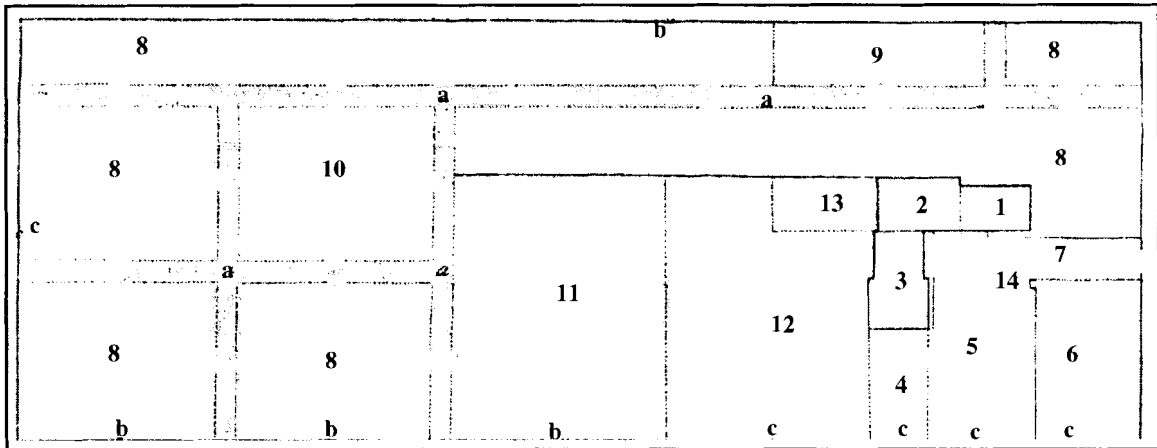


Fig. 2

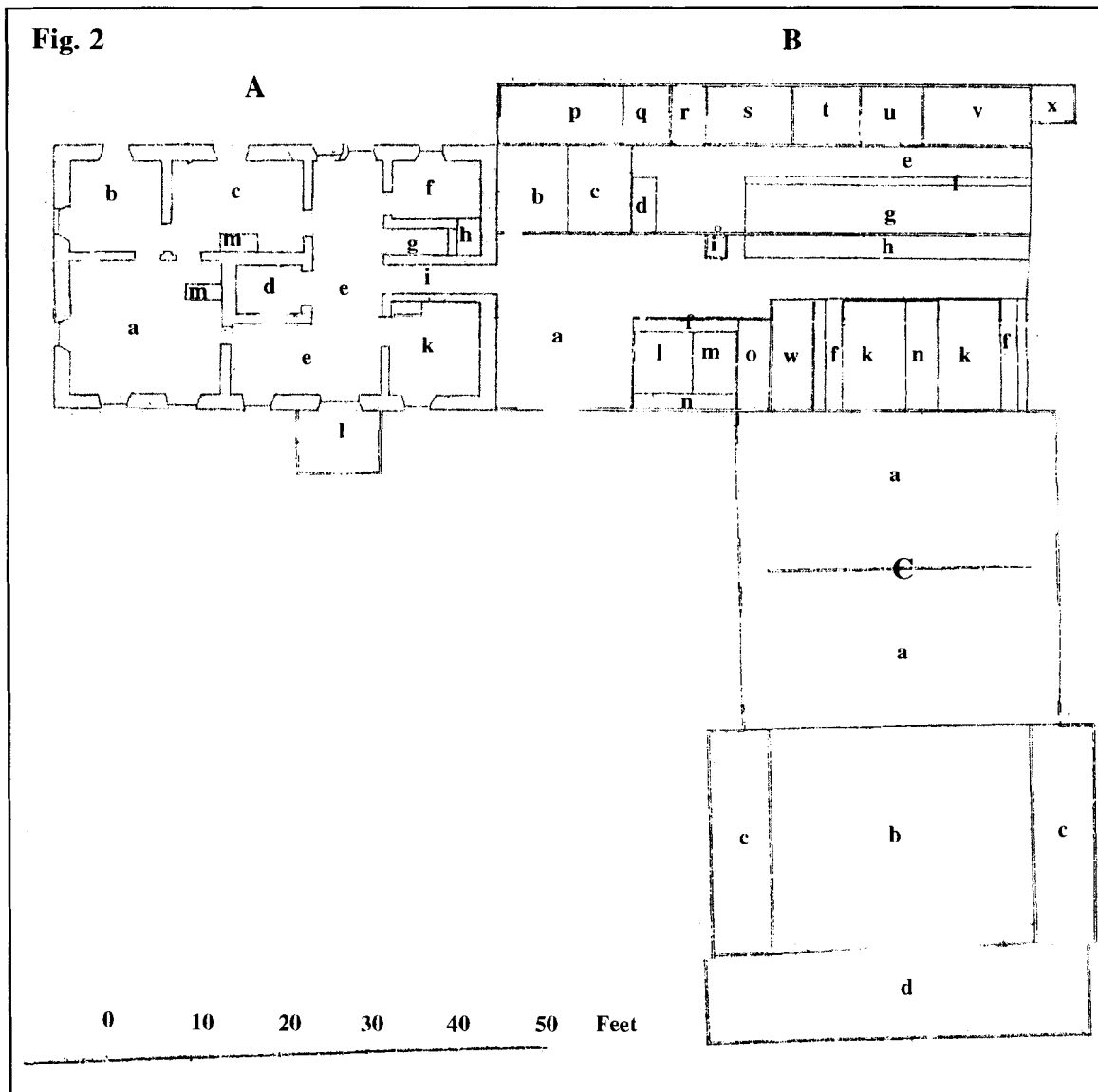


Fig. 3

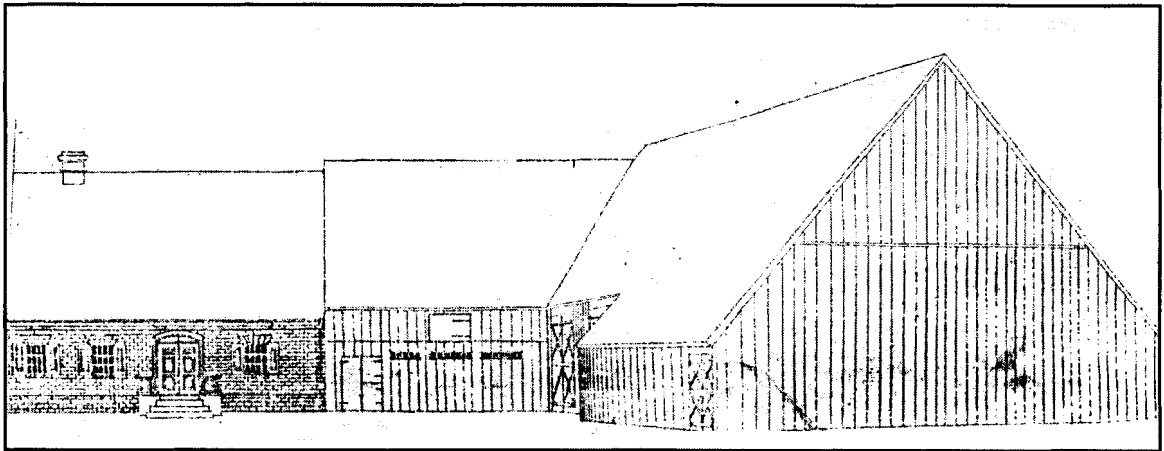
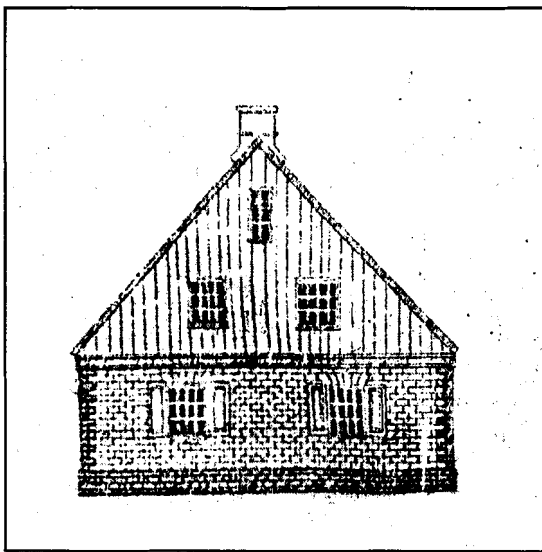


Fig. 4



Appendix 2
Housebarn plans and descriptions

141 Reinland Ave.

Date of Construction: House 1900-1910, Barn 1885

Interview: Abe Ens

This cribwall construction house contains a half cellar under the kitchen A1. The stairway to the cellar is accessed by a door rather than a trap-door, and is contained beneath the stairs to the second storey. The exterior walls are of 6" siding painted white, and the shutters have been removed. The house is oriented perpendicular to the street. It contains a finished second storey, although this is a converted attic with one dormer on the west side. The barn is built with heavy timber framing, with an exterior of 6" siding painted red with white trim. It was originally attached to a dwelling that was replaced by the current house.

The interior of the house includes ceiling rafters spaced every 4', and floors currently covered in linoleum. The walls dividing east and west rooms are of horizontal wood planks painted white. It is largely original in layout except for the modern (1960-1970) bathroom (A5). Ceiling features in A4, the *Vaeathues*, reveal the movement of the north wall a further foot north. This probably occurred when building the bathroom, with the original wall being the south wall of the old *Somma Stow*, now A5. The door from A1 to A5 is also "modern" and was undoubtedly built with the bathroom. The door to this room would have originally been from A4, and was removed with the old wall. The kitchen (A1) has modern cupboards and a sink on the west wall. The attic/cellar stairwell may be a renovation to enlarge the kitchen area, and may have been built to do away with a *Koma*, or pantry. All doors have been painted lime green, except the doors to A4 and A2, which retain the original varnish. The walls all have wainscoting painted lime green and a central brick oven is located in the Southeast corner of the room. A shallow cupboard has been built into the outside wall of the stairs to the attic and cellar. The north door leads directly into the barn.

Room A2, the *Aij Stow*, contains one of two built-in glass cabinets, the other being in the *Groote Stow* (A3). The presence of two glass cabinets in adjacent rooms is unique among the housebarns in this study, and speaks of a certain degree of wealth of the original builders. Beneath the brick oven extension in this room, the original deep orange paint of the baseboards can be observed. Room A3 retains the original varnished wainscoting and whitewashed walls. A4, the *Vaeathues* currently contains an 1960s attached wardrobe in the SE corner and an enclosure for an oil heater in the SW corner of the room.

A small exterior *Gang* leads west off the kitchen to the summer kitchen (A6) and an attached dwelling room (A7). The *Gang* contains two doors to the exterior. The summer kitchen interior is painted pale yellow and lime green, including the chimney on the west side. The floor is cement painted lime green with the central area covered in linoleum. Room A7 is largely unpainted wood, except for the east wall and door, which are dark grey. The floors are wood painted brown, with some linoleum, and a trap door leads into a collapsed cellar.

The stairs to the second floor are steep, reflecting their previous utilitarian function as an access to the attic, rather than a formal staircase. There are three rooms in different states of finishing on the second floor. Room B1 seems to have been used largely as a storage room, a hall to B2 and B3, and an access room to the ham smoking chamber. The wood walls, ceiling, and floors are untreated, and the room has no windows or decorative door frames. B2 is more finished, with painted grey floors and a dormer window. It also contains the cubical body of the smoke chamber. The outside walls of B1 and B2 are the roof of the house, and begin slanting after a one foot vertical rise. B3, on the other hand, has vertical walls to a height of 1.4 meters before the slanting of the roof is evident. The dead space behind these walls was used as storage. B3 is the largest and most finished room, with linoleum floors, varnished wood, decorative frames around the two windows painted white, and a closet built into the Northwest corner of the room. B3 probably functioned as a bedroom for a couple or young family.

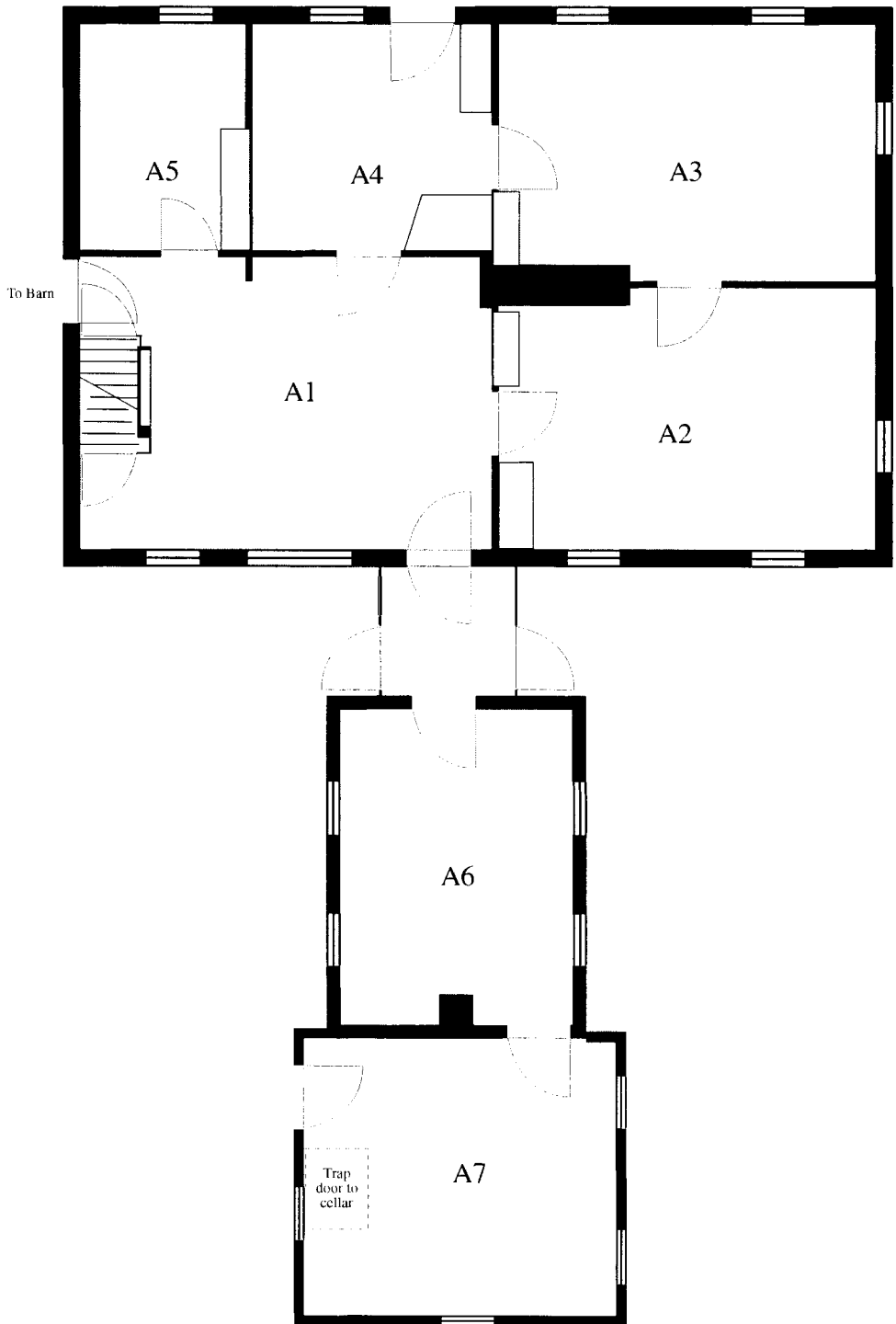
The lot was first inhabited by the Isaak and Susana Dueck family. After Mr. Dueck died,

Johann Wall married Mrs. Dyck in 1882. In 1893 the farmer and blacksmith Abraham Rempel and his wife Sarah (Froese) moved onto the lot, and he constructed a smithing shed to the north of the dwelling across the driveway. He also went into business dealing and servicing sewing machines and gasoline engines (Plett, 2001a:1820). The Rempels moved to Mexico in 1923. In 1923 Gerhard and Margaretha Ens and family arrived as refugee immigrants from Chortitza Colony, Russia, and moved in with the Rempel family for a short time before the Rempels moved to Mexico (Plett, 2001b:184). Abraham Rempel was Margaretha's second cousin and Gerhard's classmate in school in Russia. The Ens' purchased the farm in 1923, for an agreed price of \$14,000.00 for the farm, livestock, and equipment, which they paid over the next 10 years. Gerhard and Margaretha lived in the home until their deaths in 1949 and 1955 respectively. Their daughter Maria had married in 1924 to Heinrich Andres, and after his death two years later she returned and cared for her parents. She remarried in 1959 to a Jacob F. Ens. Maria died in 1995 and the lot was purchased by her nephew Abe Ens.

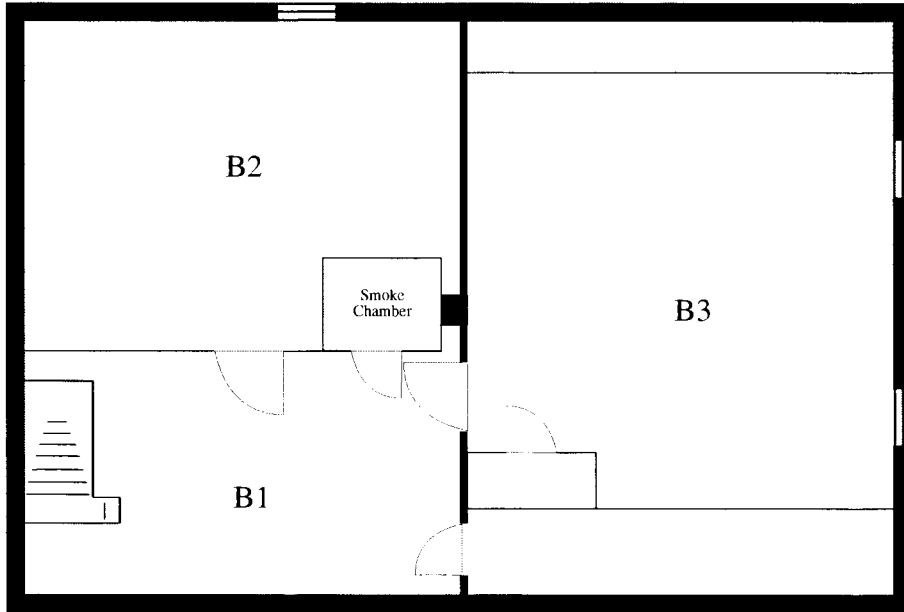
Abe Ens recounts how his widowed aunt (Marie) lived in the house taking care of her parents until 1955, when his grandmother died. In 1956 he was married and moved with his wife into the eastern two rooms (A2 and A3), while his aunt lived in the western two rooms (A2 and A1). "Grandmother died in 1955 and we got married in 1956, and so she really welcomed us... We would eat together at the table." After a period of two years the young couple were able to purchase a house at the Southwestern end of the village, and moved out of 141 Reinland Ave.

The housebarn is currently uninhabited but well cared for. It is referred to as The Heritage Homestead, and Mr. Ens provides frequent tours for interested parties.

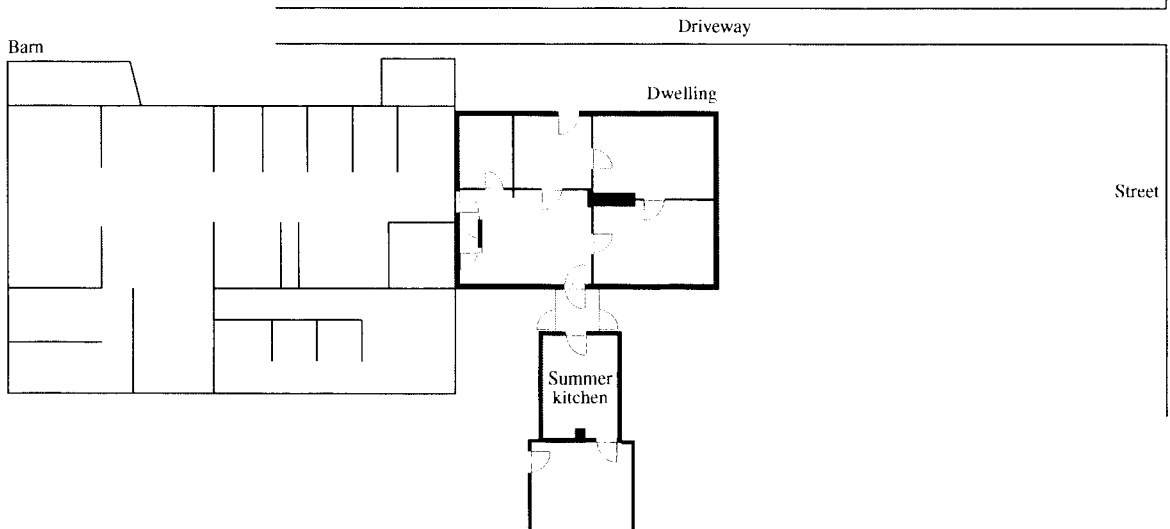
141 Reinland Ave.
Reinland, Manitoba
First Floor



141 Reinland Ave.
Reinland, Manitoba
Second Floor



141 Reinland Ave.
Reinland, Manitoba
Yard





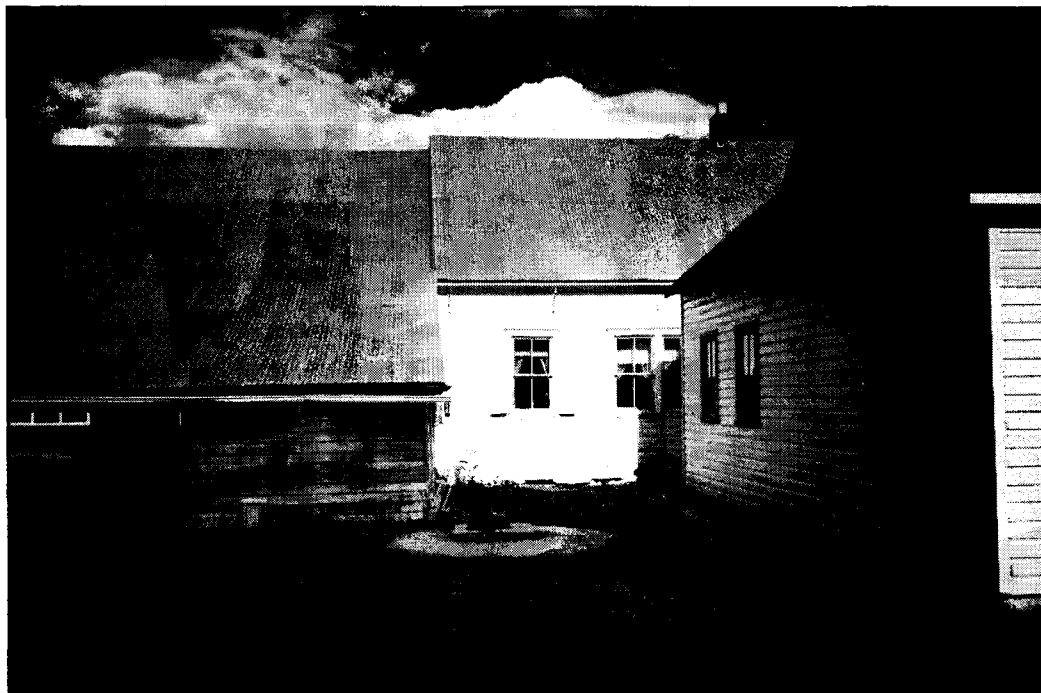
141 Reinland Ave., Southeast corner of housebarn



141 Reinland Ave., South facade of housebarn. The lack of a door and the symmetry of the end of the dwelling facing the street displays a modest, formal and closed facade.



141 Reinland Ave. Right to left: Southwest corner of housebarn, *gang*, summer kitchen (A6), and extra dwelling room (A7).



141 Reinland Ave. West side of housebarn. Summer kitchen and extra dwelling room(A7) on right.

163 Reinland Ave.

Date of construction: House 1910, Barn pre-1882

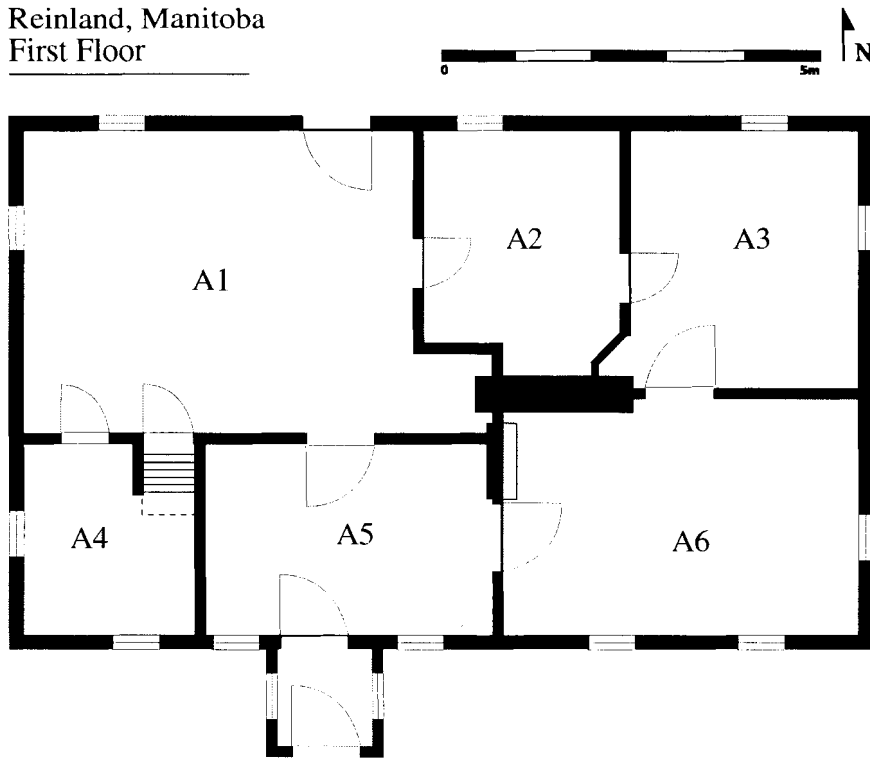
Interview: Henry Ens

The construction of the 1910 house (and the local school building) was supervised by a Mr. Demke, a well known local carpenter (Zacharias, 2001: 94). This house was built on a foundation of 12-18" concrete sills with a half cellar under the kitchen (A1) and koma (A4). Four tapered cement piers were poured to support the brick oven. The framed walls are constructed of 2x6 uprights with 3 layers of boards on the exterior, 6" siding being the outside layer. According to oral tradition the house has always been painted white, with grey covering older light green-blue trim. The house is oriented parallel to the street, with a vestibule as the front formal entrance, which was added later than 1910. The original 1880s house on this lot was built attached to the barn and was perpendicular to the street. The house section was cut in half, and the current house added onto that in 1910. The half-house was used as "some sort of summer residence" (Henry Ens Interview 2001) or perhaps a *Gang*/summer kitchen, and was replaced in 1982 by a garage, which now connects the house and barn. The attic of the house was finished for habitation in 1983. The barn is red with white trim with a lean-to on the west side. It is framed with cedar and joined by steel bolts with oak beam remnants from an older structure. This may be the original barn with a renovated cement foundation.

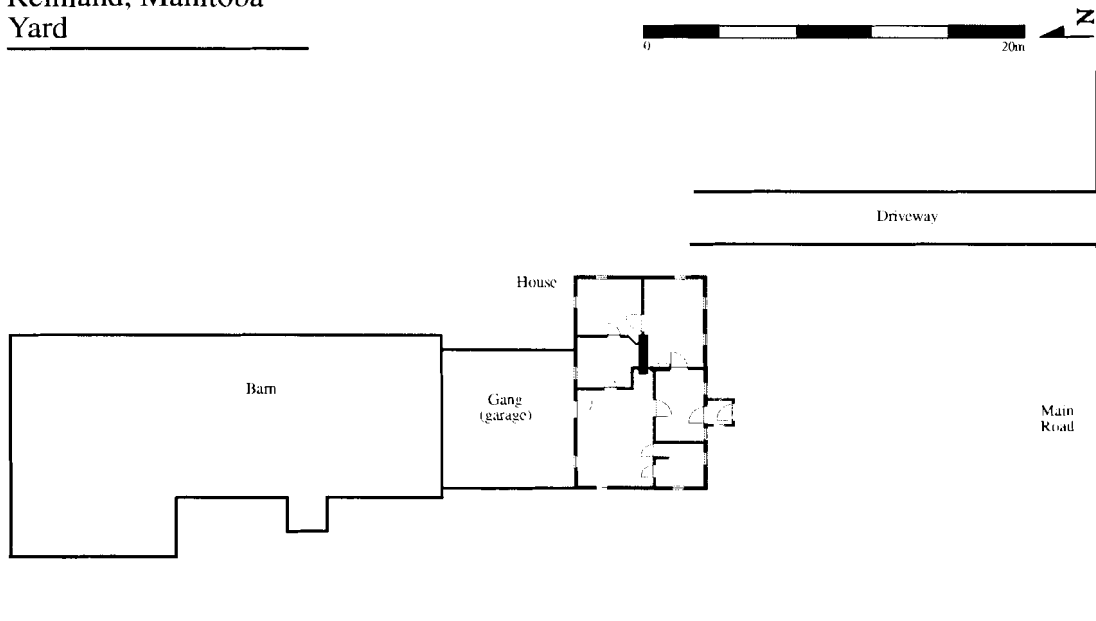
The interior of the house retains many original features and decorations. The doors and wainscoting are unpainted and have been varnished twice, in 1910 and after 1940. The kitchen was extensively renovated in the 1960s to 1980s, but retains the original size and shape. The central brick oven is still in place and still in use, and is recessed in a small alcove (smaller than a "black kitchen"). Electrical wiring was added in the 1940s and plumbing was added in 1982. All floors are covered in newer vinyl or carpet. Ceilings are painted white tongue and groove boards covering the ceiling beams. The bathroom (A2) is newer (1982) and a slanted southwest corner of A3 provides access to the heating vent from the central brick heater. The kitchen (A1), pantry (A4), stairwell and west wall of the *Groote Stow* (A6) are walled with original horizontal boards painted beige. Wainscoting is found in all rooms except A2. The doors in rooms A6 (*Groote Stow*) and A5 (*Vaeathues*) have arched glass windows in the upper portions. The wall cabinet is located in the northwest corner of A6 beside the exposed central brick oven, both of which reach to the ceiling.

This lot was first inhabited by Isaak Kehler and family from 1875-1878, after which it was inhabited by Bernhard and Helena (Huebert) Bergmann. Isaac Dyck of Berwalde married the widowed Mrs. Bergmann (the original inhabitant of the lot) in 1882 and moved into the home with her (Dyck and Harms, 1998:132). According to Henry Ens, the original house was cut in half by a Mr. Unruh. Ens (b. 1925) states "when I came of age it was owned by a certain [Isaac] Dyck". They built the current housebarn in 1910. Dyck "died and then a certain William Thiessen married into that family and he occupied this place until the latter 30s" (H. Ens Interview 2001). The Dycks only had two daughters and Thiessen married one of them. The David Zacharias family lived there from the late 1930s until his death, when his daughter inherited it and lived in the house until 1982, when the Enses purchased it.

163 Reinland Ave.
Reinland, Manitoba
First Floor



163 Reinland Ave.
Reinland, Manitoba
Yard



164 Reinland Ave.

Date of Construction: unknown (~1905-1920)

Interview: Jakob Isaac Fehr (Sept.12, 2002)

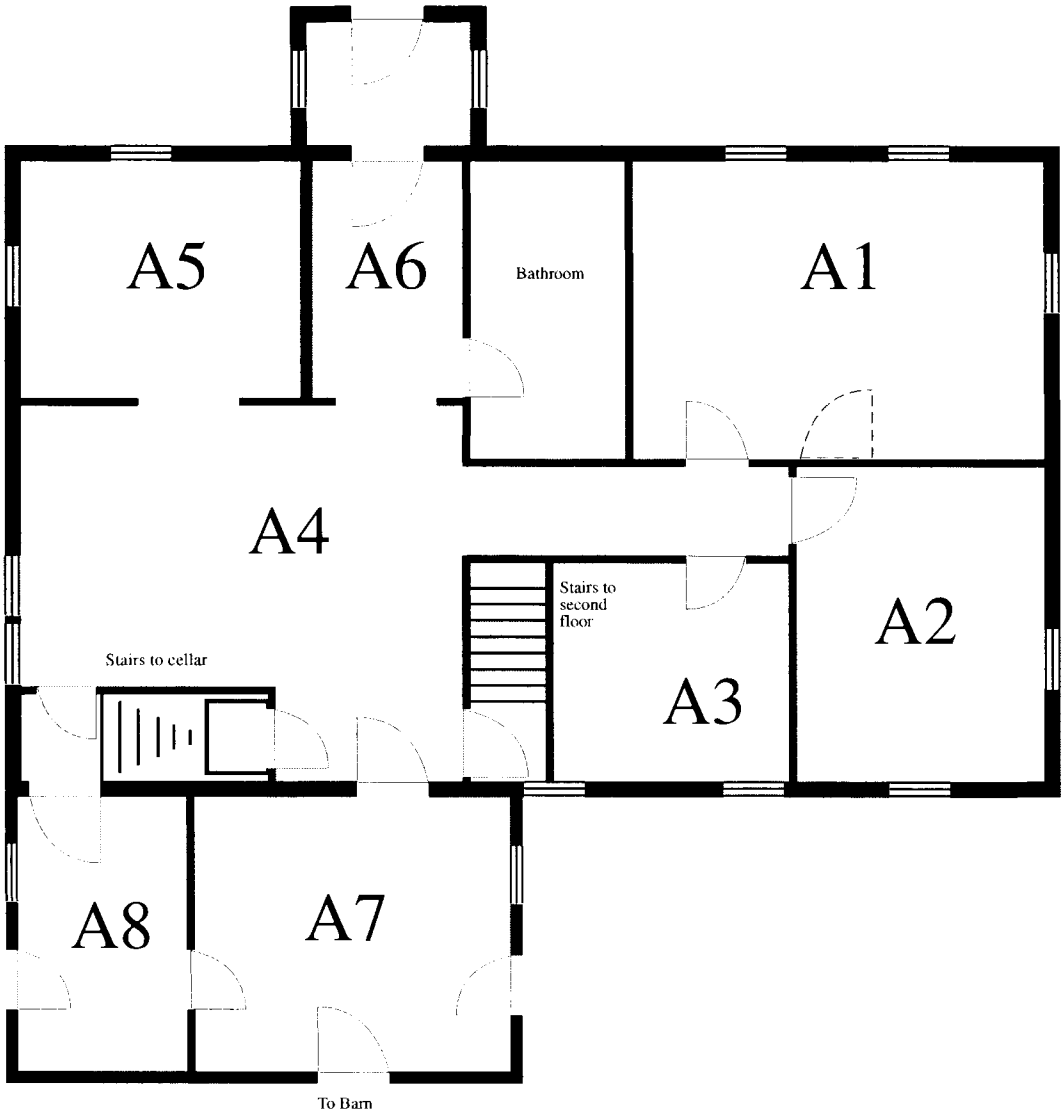
The exterior of the house is now covered in white plastic siding, but was previously painted white wood siding. All shutters have been removed. The orientation of the house is parallel to the street, and includes a vestibule on the north side and a large *Gang* on the south side connecting the house to the barn. The total area of the main floor of the house is 109.6 square meters. The barn has original cedar siding and has recently been spray-painted red. In the 1930s it was painted with linseed oil mixed with red powder.

This housebarn was constructed with the 2x6 crib technique, and includes exposed ceiling rafters every 3 feet. Although crib construction tends to be an early building method among Mennonites (usually 1880-1900), the orientation of the house points to a later period. Most renovations have occurred in the last 20 years, including a bathroom and the modernization and removal of walls in the kitchen/dining area (A4, A5). The stairs leading to the second floor are not original to the house, but were built before the 1960s. They obscure one window in the southwest corner of A3. A hallway was created in the eastern half of the house by moving the original doorway between A1 and A2 west about one meter, and building north and west walls to create A3. The doorway between A1 and A2 was filled in with the wall cabinet (in A1), which had previously stood in the southwest corner now occupied by the bathroom. The *Groote Stow* (A1) has wainscoting on the north, east, and south walls. Original window frames throughout the house were plain and painted white. The original windows were 75 cm wide and 136 cm high, and followed the usual placement for Mennonite houses. Historical paint colours in the house can be detected from the door sill of the kitchen leading to the *Gang* (the oldest being ochre yellow), and the doorsill of the vestibule leading into the house (which exhibits six different colours, the earliest being bright blue). The door from the vestibule into the house was originally painted grey, then lime green, and finally white.

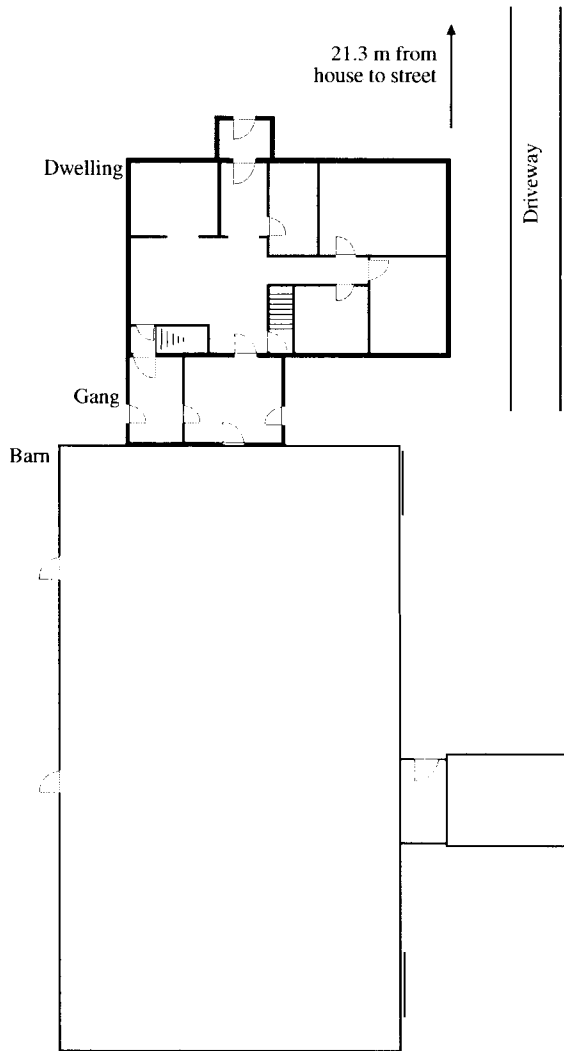
Jakob Isaac Fehr (b.1913), lived in this house from 1928 until 1941, after which he married and moved to a homestead with his wife.

The lot was originally settled by the Johan or Isaac Fehr families, and the Abram Friesen family lived here from the 1880s to 1905, when they migrated to Saskatchewan. The builder of the current house was a Mr. Jakob Froese, who migrated to Mexico in 1924 and sold it to a Mr. Isaac. The latter went bankrupt and an "American millionaire" purchased the property and eventually sold it to Jake Fehr's mother, who was widowed in 1924. Mrs. Fehr, Jake, and his two brothers and five sisters lived in the house together until the 1940s, when the children began to move out. Mrs. Fehr lived in this house until her death in 1979. No renovations were made to the first floor during this time, although Jake built himself a room upstairs so he could entertain visitors (young men of his age). It was probably at this time, in the 1930s, that the current stairs to the second floor were constructed. Prior to recent renovations, as Mr. Fehr recalls it, the *Groote Stow* had been where A1 and the bathroom currently stand. To the west of the *Groote Stow* was the *Vaeathues* (which consisted partly of the current A6), where his sisters slept. The *Koma*, or pantry, was in the northwest corner of the house, which would be part of the current A5. A2 and A3 were previously one room, and this had been the bedroom of the mother. No one slept in the *Groote Stow*, despite its size, because "that wasn't used very much".

164 Reinland Ave.
Reinland, Manitoba
First Floor



164 Reinland Ave.
Reinland, Manitoba
Yard





164 Reinland Ave. East side of "T-shaped" housebarn. Left to right: Barn, *gang* (A7), dwelling.



164 Reinland Ave. Northeast corner of housebarn.



164 Reinland Ave. The dwelling facing the street in this “T-shaped” housebarn exhibits a front door, vestibule and asymmetrical facade.



164 Reinland Ave. Southeast corner of housebarn.

170 Reinland Ave.

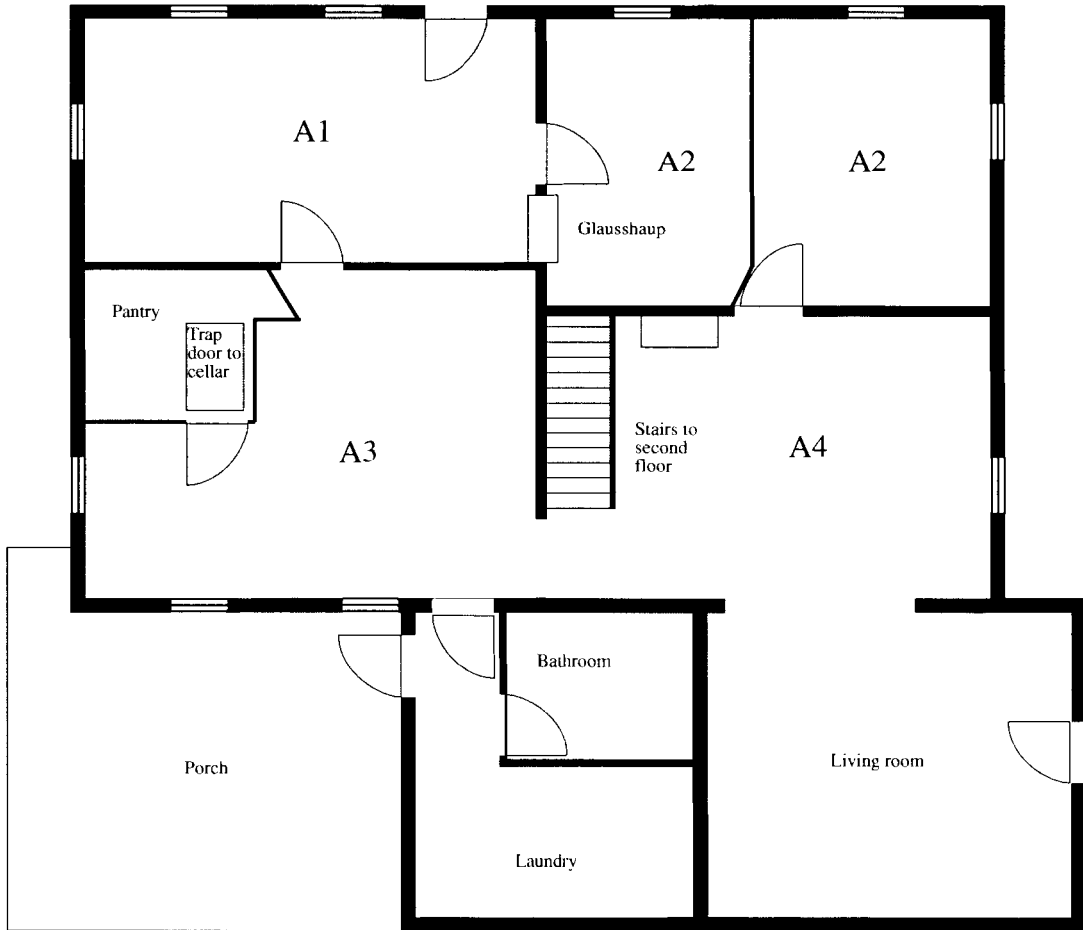
Date of construction: 1905-1910

Interview: Jake and Ingrid Friesen, July 24, 2001

This house is oriented parallel to the street and is built of stud frame construction. It is now covered in plastic siding, which covers wooden siding last painted a pale yellow. The front entrance had wooden stairs, but these no longer exist. A summer kitchen was located directly southwest of the house, and has been removed. A barn extended behind the house into the yard, and was connected by a small *Gang* from the kitchen, creating a large “T-shaped” housebarn. The *Gang* was not insulated, and had doors on both sides leading outside. The house sits on a concrete foundation. Major renovations have occurred in the form of additions to the southeast side of the house, creating a living room, bathroom, laundry room and entrance room. A large porch has been added onto the southeast side of the house. The additions and removal of the barn occurred in 1989/1990. The barn had been painted grey on its east side only, “where the guests were greeted by the driveway. Mother used to say ‘*Woa de Lied Goondach sajen*’ [Where the people say Good-day]” (Ingrid Friesen Interview, 2001). The other sides were left unpainted. The siding of the foundation of the barn was painted green, and the trim white. A well stood on the east side of the barn.

Room A2 was once the *Groote Stow* and has been split into two rooms. It contains a varnished *Glausshaup* in the southwest corner. The *Glausshaup* in A4 (*Atj Stow*) is newer and built onto the wall rather than into it, as this is a load bearing wall. The wainscotting for all the rooms was originally varnished and later painted either white or grey. The floors of A4, A3 (kitchen) and A2 were originally painted ochre yellow. Exposed ceiling beams running the entire width of the house are varnished and spaced 3.5 feet apart. Window and door frames in all rooms were originally varnished and later painted white. The stairs in A4 leading to the second floor, which was finished for habitation in the 1990s, are a recent addition, and replaced a bathroom that had been installed in the 1960s. The original stairs to the second floor were found in the pantry in A3, just above the trap door leading to the cellar. The cellar is constructed of yellow brick and concrete.

170 Reinland Ave.
Reinland Manitoba
Main floor, dwelling



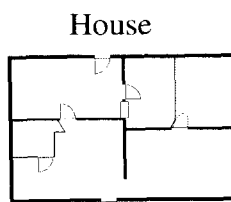
170 Reinland Ave.
Reinland Manitoba
Yard (Structures outlined
in grey no longer exist)



26.6 meters
from house
to street




Driveway



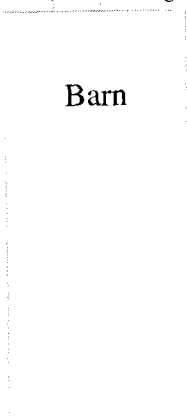
House



Garage

Summer
kitchen 


Gang



Barn

Chicken
Barn 

Shed

Outhouse 



170 Reinland Avenue. Northeast corner of dwelling.



170 Reinland Avenue. Northwest corner of dwelling.

179 Reinland Ave.

Date of Construction: ca. 1890 – 1900

Interviews: Mary-Anne Zacharias (June 12, 2002), Abe Ens (June 29, 2002), Henry Ens (June 29, 2002)

This house is oriented perpendicular to the street, and includes an attached summer kitchen on the west side. It is constructed with the crib-wall technique, has a fieldstone foundation, and is directly attached to the barn. The wood siding and shutters are painted white, although there is evidence that both were painted pastel green in the past. The windows have original pediment ornamentation. There were previously vestibules on both the front (east) and back (west) doors. The later was replaced by a full *Gang* link to the house around 1940.

The interior of the house is very similar in shape to its original layout, and includes exposed ceiling rafters spaced three feet apart and a root cellar beneath A1. It is currently used as office and storage space for Ens Farms, which had a seed processing plant located in the barn. Floors are all covered in linoleum and carpeting, and most original moulding has been replaced. The baseboards and floors of A3 were originally orange in colour. Walls behind closets were investigated for paint. A3 exhibited olive green walls over original grey, and A2 had a combination of pastel green, orange, and grey.

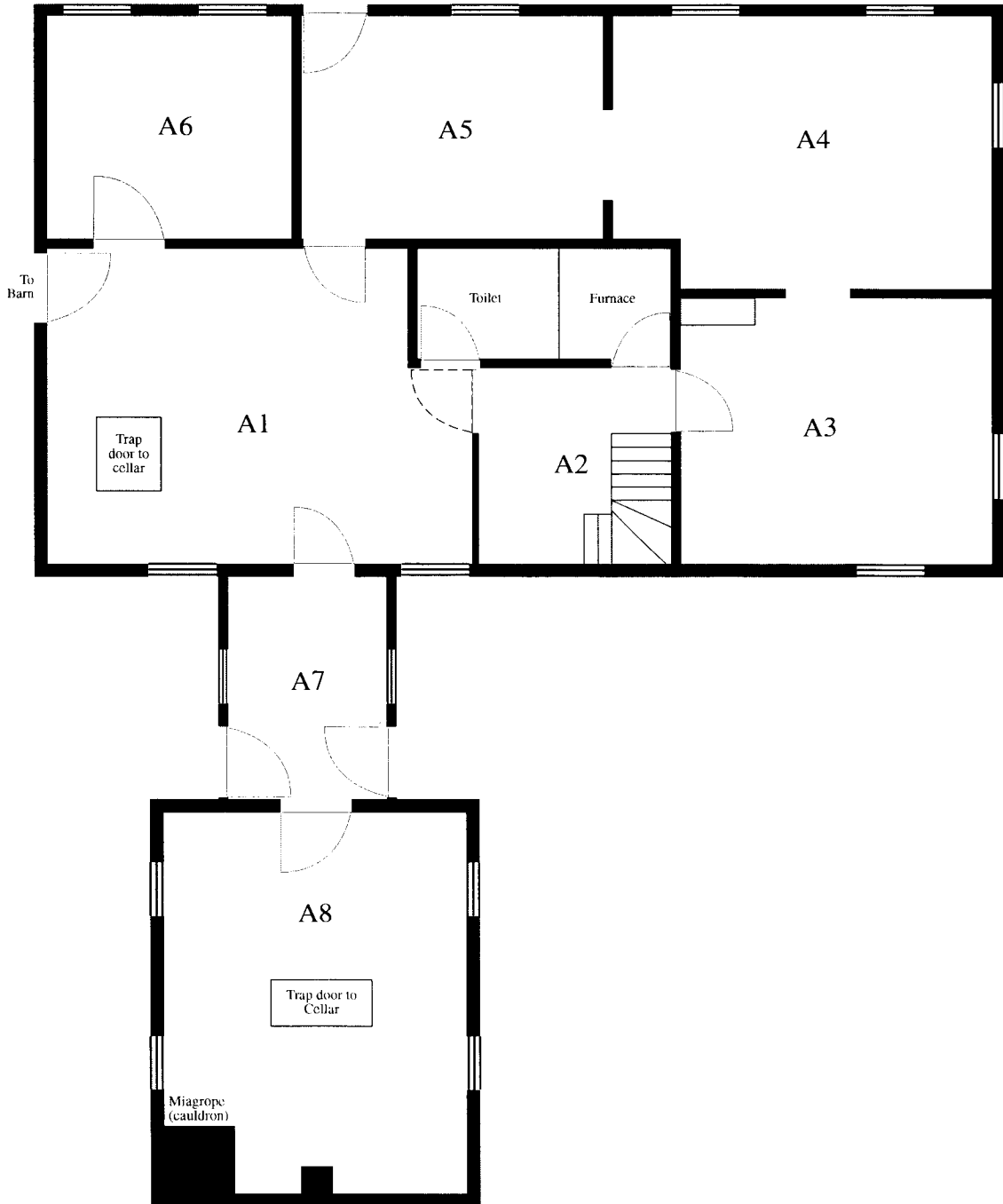
The three informants who lived in this house were all siblings. Henry Ens (b.1925), Abram Ens (b.1931) and Mary-Anne Zacharias (b.1935) moved into the house in 1936 with their parents and other siblings, of which there were eventually twelve. Their parents, Gerhard and Helena (nee Sawatzky) Ens, migrated from Russia to Canada in 1923, and first lived in a converted machine shed near the yard of 179 Reinland Ave. The building was first owned by a successful sheep farmer, a Mr. Wieler. Eventually a Zacharias family was living there, until Mr. Gerhard Ens purchased it in 1936. According to Henry Ens, this Zacharias family was quite large, and made no changes to the interior of the house. He recalls that when the family moved in the colours were “dull and drab”, but the floors had linoleum with “interesting designs”, except the kitchen floor which was wood and painted brownish yellow.

Numerous renovations were done to the interior of the home after the Ens family moved in, primarily to enlarge the kitchen/dining area to accommodate the large family. There had originally been an interior hallway to the barn entrance, known to the Ens family as the *Dieta Gang* or dark hallway. The west wall of this *Gang* was removed shortly after the Ens’ arrival. A *Koma* was situated in the northwest corner of the kitchen, and this was also immediately removed, with the shelves moved into the cellar for storage. The trap door to the cellar was located in the *Koma*. The stairs to the attic were located above the *Koma* and accessed from the interior hallway. The north wall of A2, the *Tjliene Stow*, was moved south about one meter. A second set of renovations began in the late 1940s when the second floor, previously used for storage, was converted into two bedrooms, a bathing room, and a storage area. The stairs were moved from the *Koma* area to A2. The summer kitchen was fully finished in the early 1940s. The doorway from A1 into A6 was put in much later by the father, Gerhard Ens, to accommodate traffic into A6 from the barn. He used this area as a study and meeting room. The previous doorway had been from A5, but the front door into A5 was not used in the winter. The central brick oven was used until 1958, when it was removed and replaced by the bathroom and furnace room.

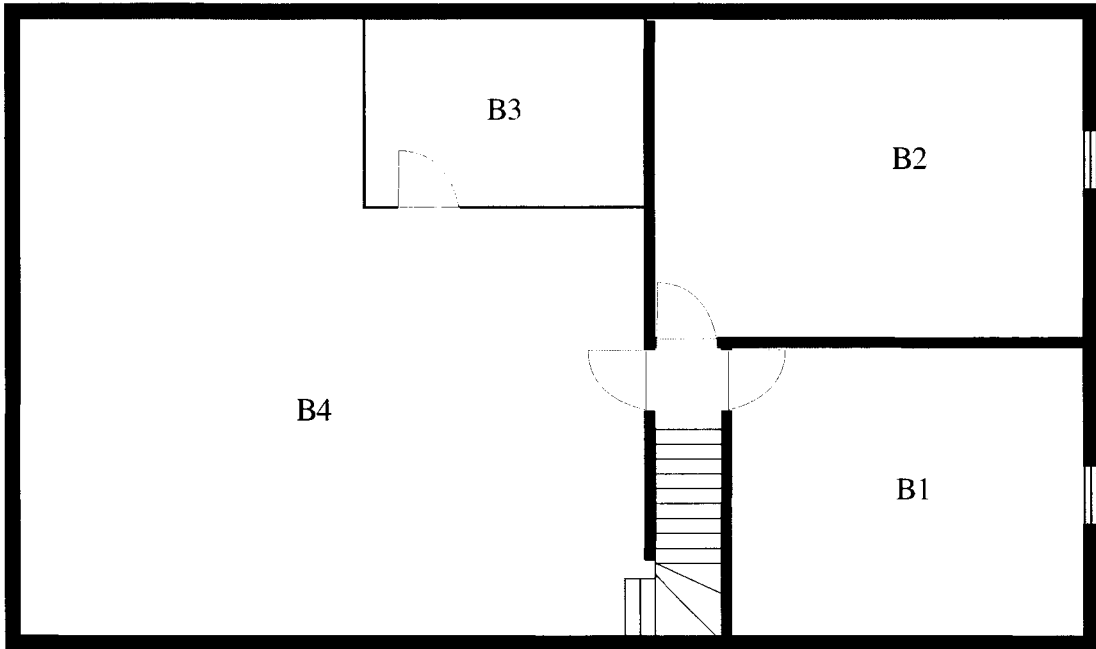
Mrs. Zacharias recalls that when she was young (in the 1940s) the *Somma Stow* (A6) was used as her father’s office instead of the boys’ room like in other homes. Mr. Ens had converted it to his office upon arrival, and it housed the ledgers and accounts of the church and the cheese business, school papers, and the church “library”. The older boys slept in the *Vaeathues* (A5), while the mother and father slept in the *Groote Stow* (A4), which was also the formal visiting room. The older sisters and sometimes a maid would sleep in the *Atj Stow* (A3), and four more brothers would sleep in the *Tjliene Stow* (A2). Mrs. Zacharias herself, being a middle

child, slept in three different rooms during her childhood. Most daily indoor activity would take place in the *Hinjetues* (A1), the kitchen/dining area. When the second floor was finished in the early 1940s, the girls moved into one bedroom and the boys into the other, and the parents moved out of A4 (*Groote Stow*) and took A3 (*Atj Stow*) as their bedroom.

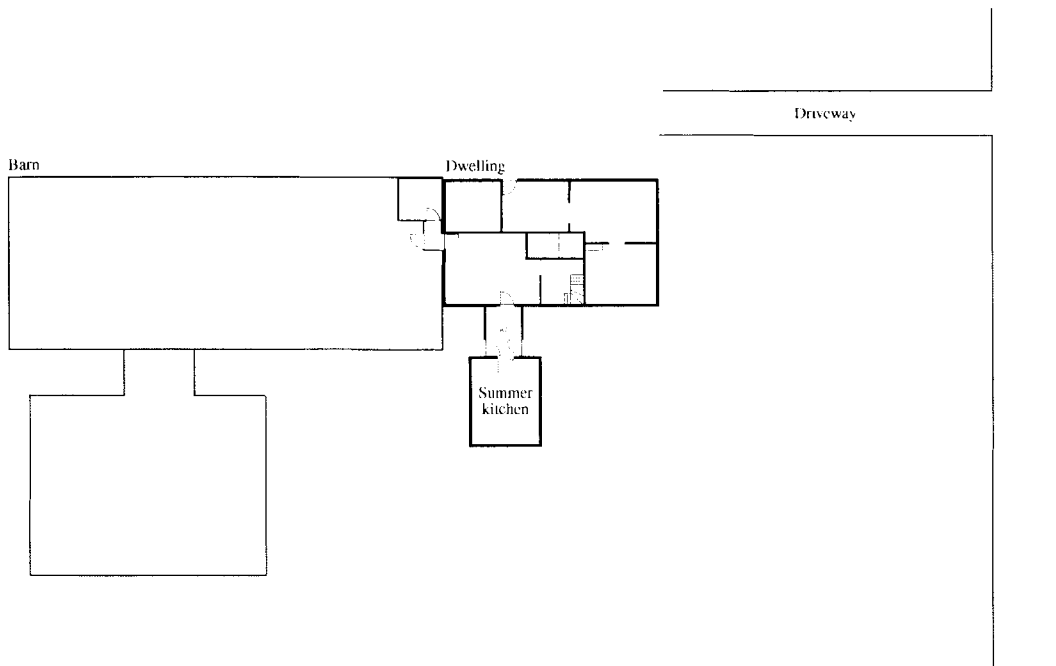
179 Reinland Ave.
Reinland, Manitoba
First Floor, Dwelling



179 Reinland Ave.
Reinland, Manitoba
Second Floor, Dwelling



179 Reinland Ave.
Reinland, Manitoba
Housebarn and Yard





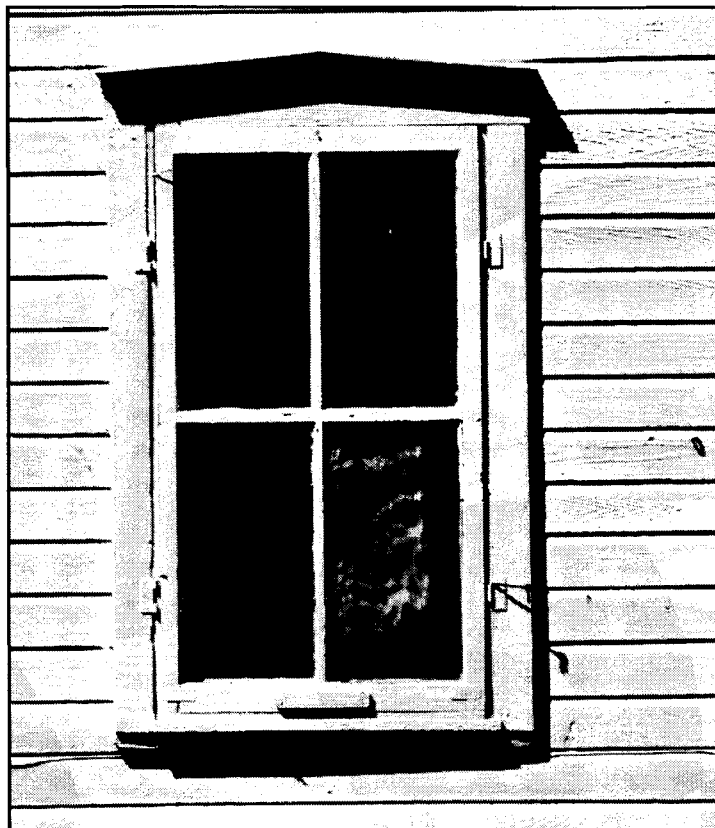
179 Reinland Ave. Southwest view of housebarn.



179 Reinland Ave. South end of housebarn and *gang* with summer kitchen (left).



179 Reinland Ave. East side housebarn.



179 Reinland Ave.
Window with pediment
treatment.

193 Reinland Ave.

Date of Construction: House unknown (ca. 1890-1910), Barn unknown (ca. 1890).

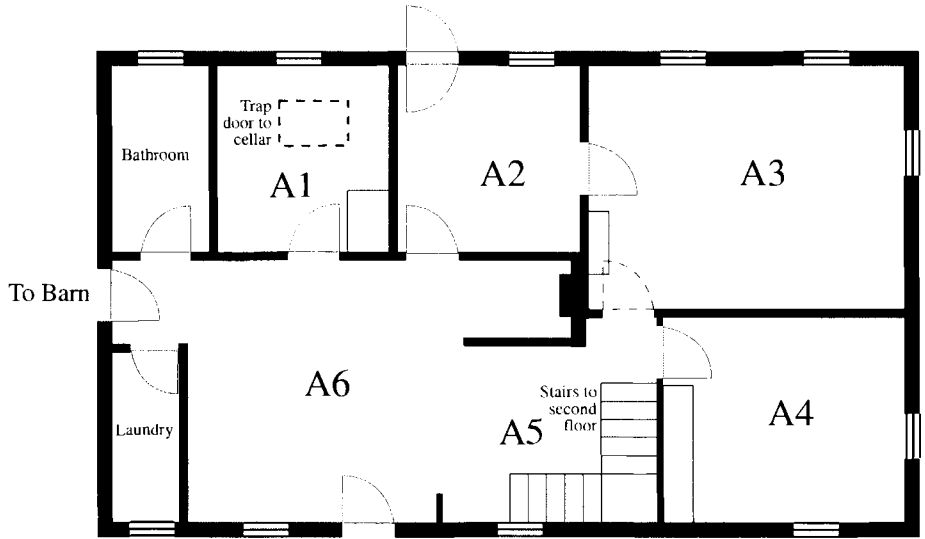
Interview: None

The dwelling of 193 Reinland Ave. is built with 2x6 stud wall frame construction on a concrete foundation. The exterior walls are currently covered with grey asbestos siding. The barn is constructed in the Dutch truss style, with a haysling added at a later date.

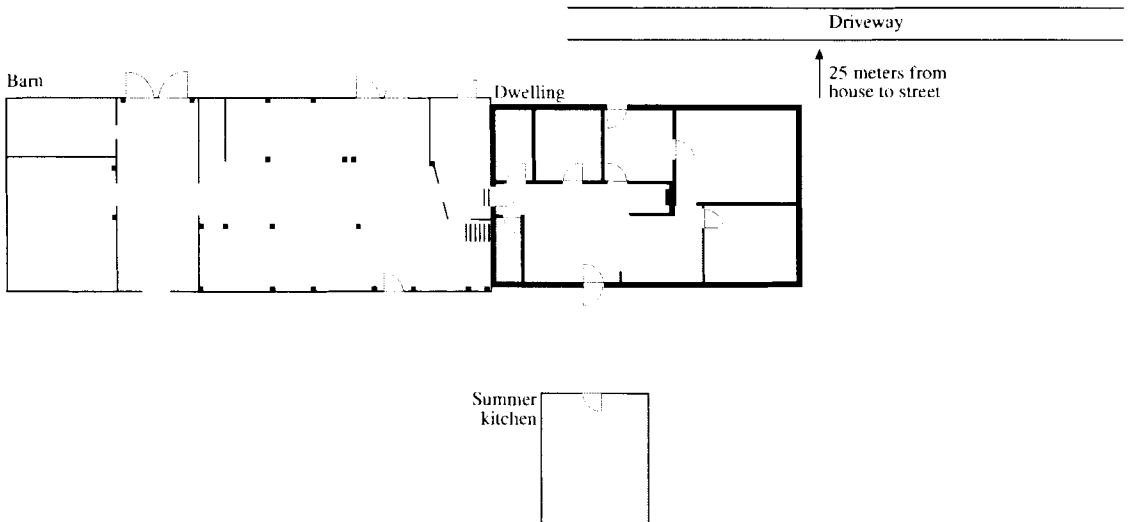
The interior arrangement of rooms has includes a newer bathroom and washing room on the north side of the dwelling. Stairs in A5 were built at an unknown time. In 179 Reinland Ave., directly east of this structure, a similar arrangement was constructed in the 1940s. A wall protruding from the central heating system creates the effect of a Schoatet Tjaatj, although it is unknown when this feature was constructed. It does exhibit wainscotting probably original to the house. Certainly on the west wall of A2 a window opening (now boarded) did exist, and such features were used to help illuminate the "black kitchens". A3, the Groote Stow, contains a Glausschaup. The doors leading from A3 and A4 to A5 were probably moved at sometime, as in the dwelling at 164 Reinland Ave.: the door on the west wall of A3 was probably moved a few feet north, while the entire north wall and door of A4 was moved south to make room for the stairs and disconnect A4 as a more private bedroom.

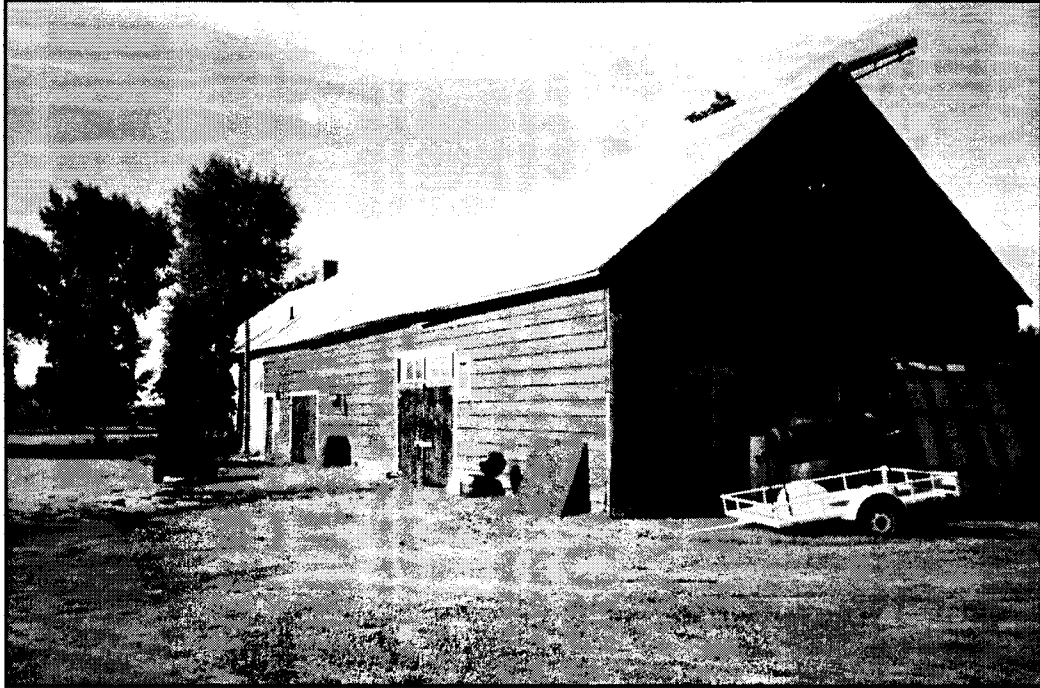
The back door leads from the kitchen (A6) to the summer kitchen, although the two are not linked by any sort of Gang. There is a Gang within the barn, creating a mediating space between A6 and the barn.

193 Reinland Ave.
 Reinland, Manitoba
 First Floor



193 Reinland Ave.
 Reinland, Manitoba
 Yard





193 Reinland Avenue. Northeast corner of barn.



193 Reinland Avenue. Southwest corner of dwelling, and Summer kitchen.



193 Reinland Avenue. Glausschaup in northwest corner of Grootte Stow (A3).



193 Reinland Avenue. Schwoatet Tjaatj (the black kitchen) in southeast corner of kitchen (A6).

NE2 Neuberghthal

Date of Construction: House ca.1910, Barn 1887

Interview: Mr. Ed Schmidt

This one and a half story house of 2x6 stud wall construction is oriented parallel to the road, with an exterior *Gang* connecting it to the barn. The house has always had painted white siding, and although the trim and shutters are currently black, they were once green. The second story was built as a half story for habitation, rather than a converted attic, and the total area of both floors is 188m². The west façade is symmetrical except for the front entrance door, which is one meter north of centre. The *Gang* between barn and house has an elaborate south entrance with various detailing, and is currently in very poor condition. This was the main year round entrance, and the structure served as the kitchen during the summer.

The barn, built in 1887, was moved from Bergthal, in the East Reserve. It has the original fir siding, painted red, on the exterior, while the walls of interior are still supported by original oak timbers and joints. When the structure was dismantled for transportation, Roman numerals were etched into certain timbers for re-assembly on this location. There are two lean-to structures, one along the north side of barn, and the other on the east end of the south side. One section of the north, supporting wall of the barn is constructed entirely of logs.

Rooms A1 and A2 were created by the construction of a wall between them in the early 1950s, and were previously one room. All walls of both floors were originally covered in wooden siding, then wooden slats covered in mud and chaff plaster. This was removed in rooms A1, A2 and A3 in the 1950's, and replaced by plasterboard, painted pink and lavender. Room A5 has a wooden west wall and mud and chaff plastered east and south walls. The kitchen, room A3, also has a west wall of wood (painted white, and previously dark grey and pastel green) and north and east walls of mud plaster with wooden moulding at a height of one meter. A trap door in the southwest corner of the room leads to a cellar. The kitchen also contains a "sink" without plumbing, which has stood here since before 1938. The ceilings are all wooden with no exposed rafters, and painted white except for room A5, which is pastel green. Rooms A5 and A3 both have wood trim around the ceilings originally painted black and currently light blue. All window and door trim was originally grey and later covered in white and light blue. Rooms A1, A2 and A3 have linoleum covered floors, though the floor of A3 was originally painted pale green and then white, with mustard and then black baseboards. Room A5 has retained the original ochre yellow paint. Room A6 is decorated with a painted pattern in five colours that imitates an area carpet.

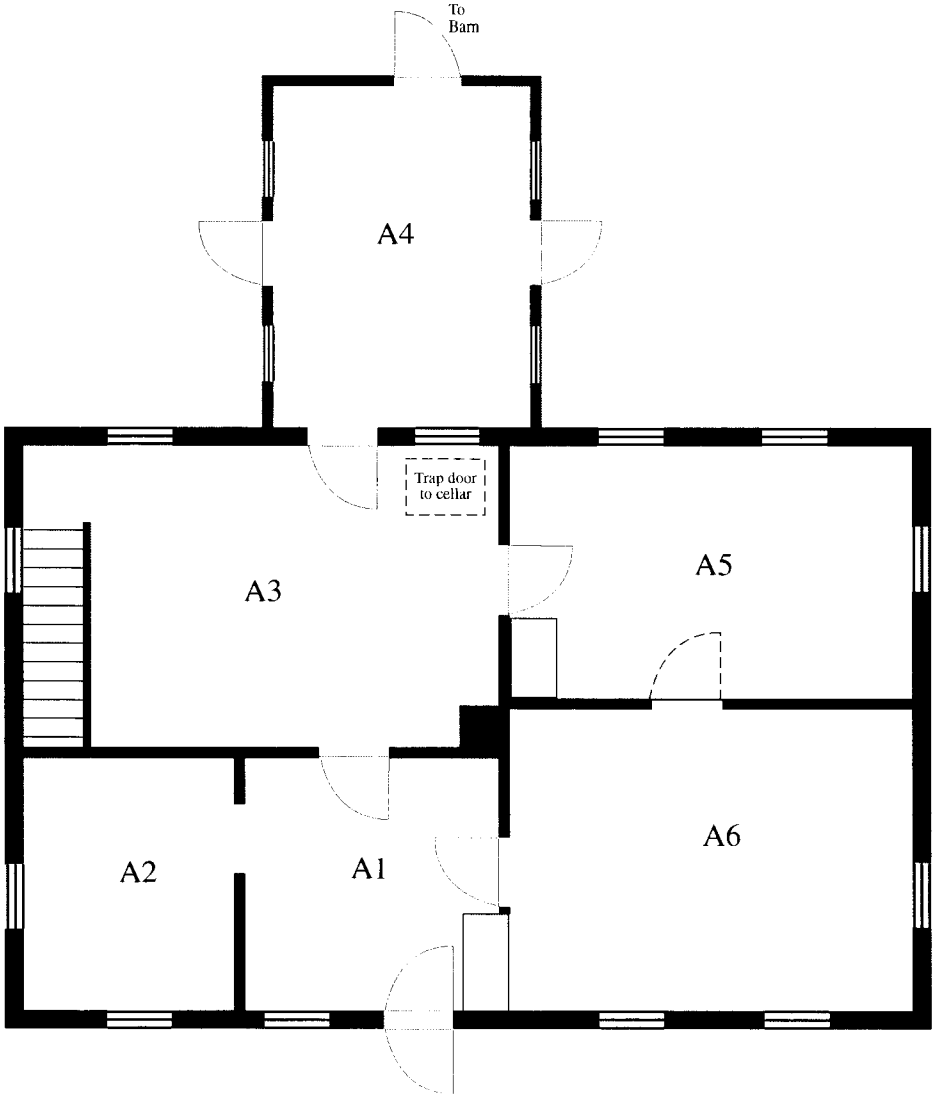
The stairs to the upper floor located in the kitchen are exposed with a railing, and were originally painted grey and then beige. The walls and ceilings of the three rooms on the second floor were all wallpapered before 1938. There are two dormer windows on the west side and one door leading onto the roof of the *Gang* on the east side. The floor of B1 is unpainted wood, B2 has linoleum, and B3 has painted floral decorations on the floor with white, dark green, and olive colouring. The *Gang* has kitchen counters and cupboards, and is painted white and yellow over an original pastel green. The floors are linoleum.

Mr. Ed Schmidt (b.1917) lived in this house from 1938 to 1967, and has worked on this farmyard since 1938. This house was originally owned and inhabited by Mr. Bernhard Klippenstein. By the 1930s, his son John P. Klippenstein and daughter-in-law Elizabeth lived in this house as well, but John died soon after, leaving Bernhard Klippenstein, Elizabeth, her son, and Ed Schmidt. This house never had a brick central oven, but began with a coal heater in the northwest corner of A6 and a wood-burning stove in the southwest corner of the kitchen, A3. Both these heating units, and the later oil-burning heater in the kitchen, shared a system of heating pipes that led into the second story. The pantry was in the kitchen, and a root cellar was also located under the *Gang*, which Mr. Schmidt refers to as the *Somma Shtov*.

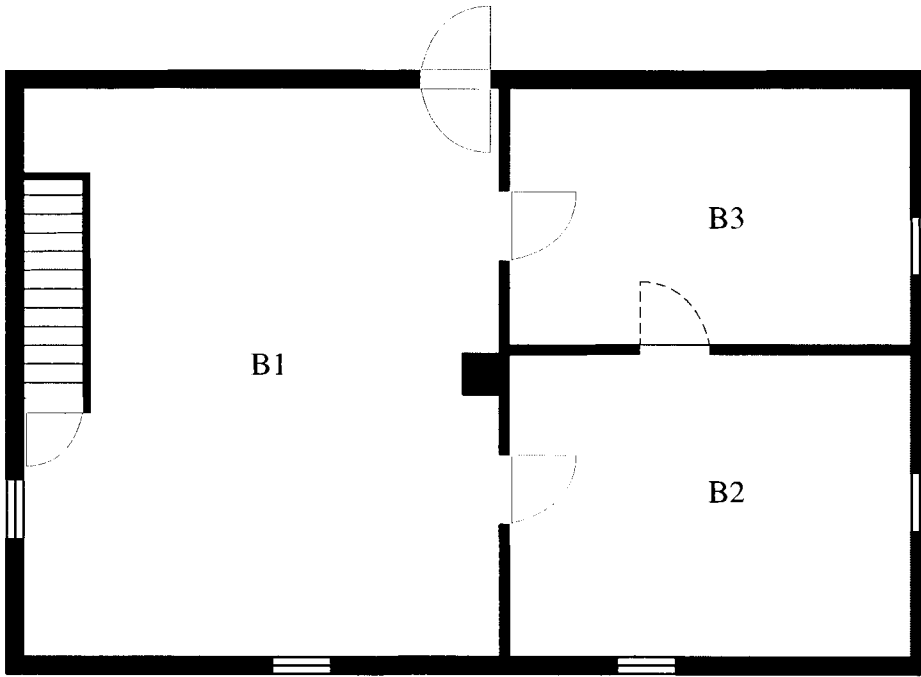
Mrs. E. Klippenstein slept in room A2/A1, Mr. Klippenstein in room A6, Mr. Schmidt in

room A5, and Mrs. Klippenstein's son slept upstairs. After Mr. Klippenstein died in 1950, Elizabeth began renovations in the house (installing plasterboard, building a wall between A1 and A2) and took over the farm business, retaining Ed as her main worker. There was never a wall cabinet or corner cabinet in the *Groote Stow* (A6) although this was used for formal visiting, Ed's room being the thoroughfare into this space. The front door of the house was never used, since this led into Elizabeth's room.

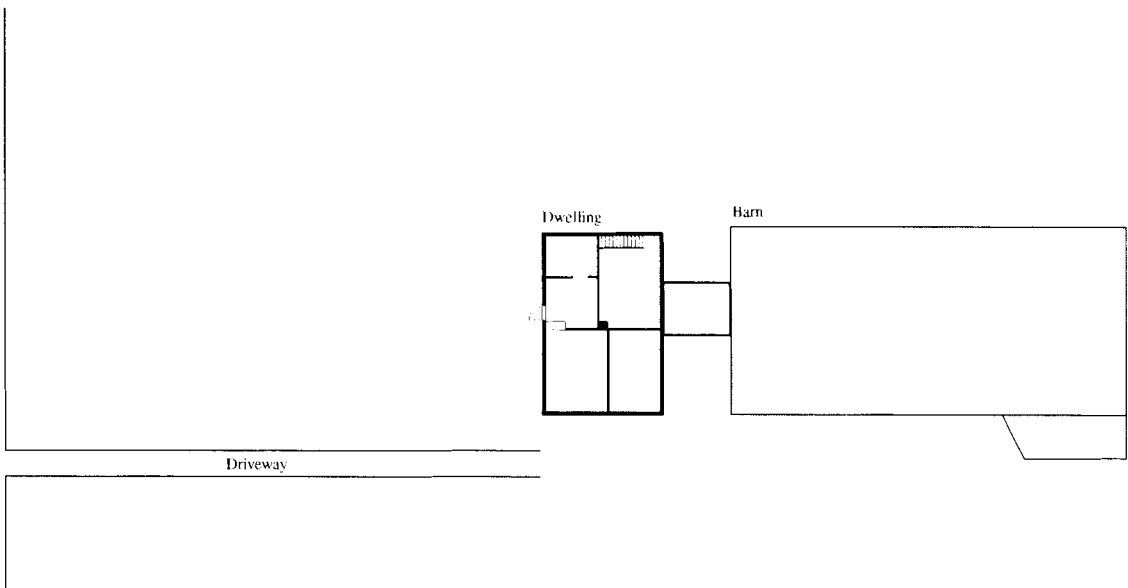
NE2
Neubergthal, Manitoba
First Floor



NE2
Neubergthal, Manitoba
Second Floor



NE2
Neubergthal, Manitoba
Yard





NE2 Neubergthal. North side of barn.



NE2 Neubergthal. South end of dwelling with Gang to barn.



NE2 Neubergthal. South side of barn with *gang* and dwelling (left).



NE2 Neubergthal. This "T-shaped" housebarn has a 1.5 dwelling with a nearly symmetrical facade, front door and dormer windows facing the street.



Son of Elizabeth Klippenstein, ca 1940s, at southeast corner of dwelling, NE2 Neubergthal.
Courtesy of Ed Schmidt.

NE3 Neubergthal

Date of construction: 1880s

Interviews: Henry Hamm (November 28, 2001)

This house has been removed from the barn section, and rotated 90 degrees. Built in the 1880s on this same lot (but near the street), it was moved to its current location at the back of the lot in 1906 and was eventually used as a granary. All directions referred to in this analysis relate to the structure's current orientation. It was built with the crib construction method, with walls of full 2x6 stacked boards. The exterior was painted white, with 6" siding. The window framing was painted white, with top pediment-style decorative elements. The exterior of the east door was painted green.

The interior room walls have all been removed, although the outlines of their placement can be seen on the inside of the exterior walls and the ceiling. Concrete flooring was poured for the purposes of the granary. The interior of the south wall was finished with 6" shiplap siding and painted yellow, as were the interior walls of room A5, which would have been the pantry. The east wall has the same shiplap siding finishing, but is unpainted. The central wall running east-west has been entirely removed except for diagonal braces attached to the exterior walls. These beam braces are attached to the ceiling beams and with wooden dowels, and the triangular space created by the braces was filled with more stacked boards and finished with whitewashed mud and chaff plaster. Similar diagonal braces are found in all corners of the house. This, combined with its crib wall construction, has helped to create an extremely stable structure. The ceiling is intact with exposed ceiling beams spaced every 3.5 feet, and a square hole for the chimney structure found in the centre of the ceiling.

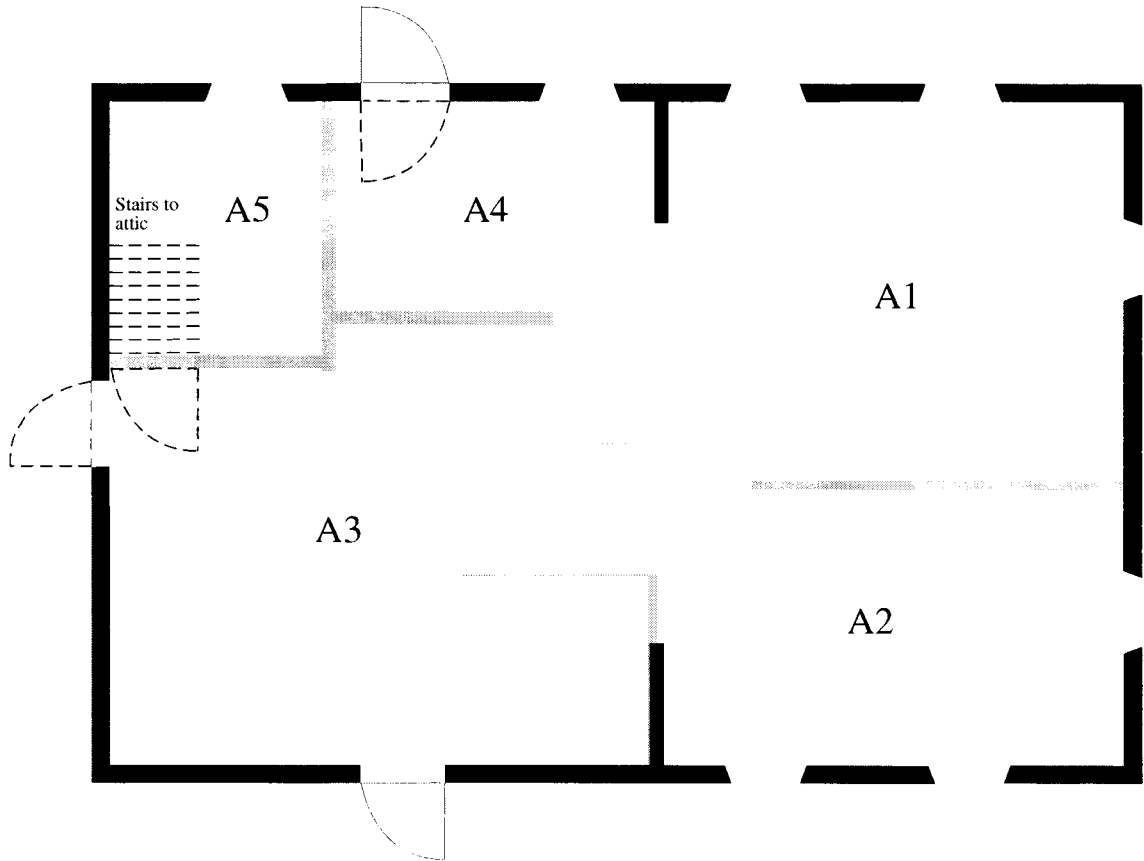
The interior arrangement of rooms can be determined from linear remains of painted and unpainted sections on the ceiling and walls. Originally the current west wall would have faced south. A1 was the Groote Stow, A2 was the Atj Stow, A3 was the Hinjetus, A4 was the Vaeathues, and A5 was the Koma. The front door led into A4, the back door into A3. The end door beside A5 led to the barn. The wall that once extended into A3 from the central wall separating A2 and A3 formed a Schwoatet Tjaatj (black kitchen). The brick oven would have extended into A1 and A2. With this knowledge, it is possible to give nearly exact locations of interior doorways.

The windows are unique to the sample of housebarn architecture in this study in that the openings are wider on the interior than the exterior, a method of allowing as much light in as possible without exposing too much of the poorly insulated glass window and frame to the elements. Unlike the early medieval cathedral, the stability of this structure would not have been compromised by larger windows. The window frame portions within the walls are all painted bright blue, are the doorframes, a common colour in Neubergthal.

According to Henry Hamm there were four rooms in this structure, at one time housing three families. One family "had three children, one had one child, and my father was there and my father's sister, but they weren't married". These people all lived on the main floor as "there was upstairs for storage, but not finished". The structure was moved in 1906, and a similar house was built, but there too a second floor was never finished for habitation.

This structure is currently owned by the Neubergthal Heritage Foundation.

NE3
Neubergthal Village
Main Floor





NE3 Neuberghal. Northwest corner.



NE3 Neuberghal. Window, west side.



NE3 Neubergthal. Exposed crib wall construction with diagonal brace beams, northwest corner.

NE4 Neuberghthal

Date of Construction: unknown, ca. 1885-1890

Interview: none

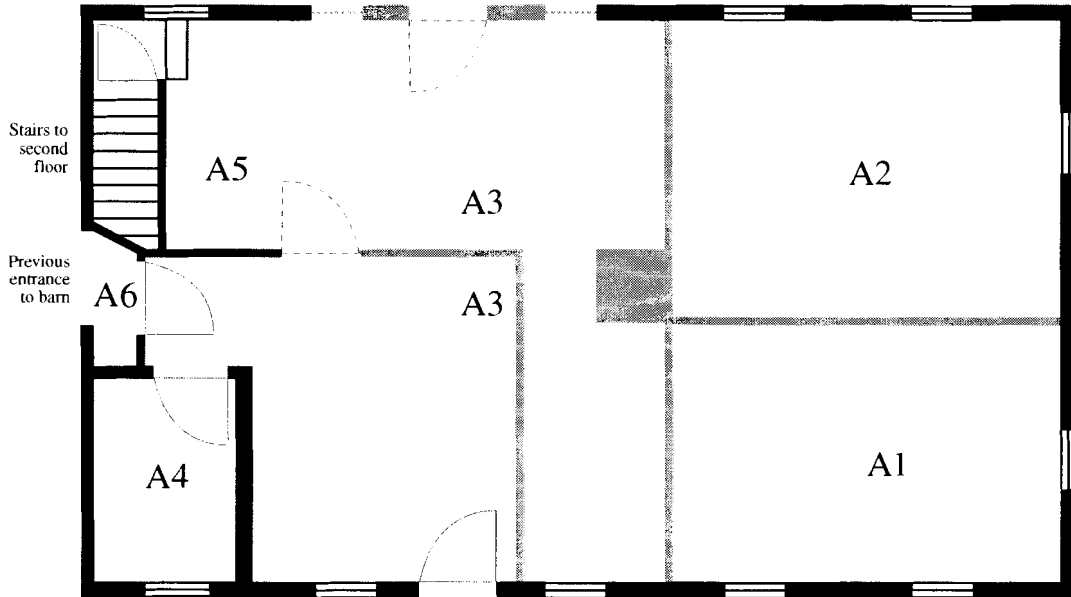
This stud-framed house was relocated to the south area of this yard, rotated 180 degrees, and then placed on a concrete foundation. It originally sat on a wooden sill foundation. It is currently used as a garage and workshop. The house has always been painted white with red trim. The shutters have also been painted red, overlaying an earlier burgundy colour. At some point in the history of the house the west end (all orientations on plan are consistent with its current location) was lengthened by 2.8 meters. This is evident from the break in roofing as seen from inside the attic, the different dimensions of the westernmost windows, and the thickness of the east wall of room A4, which matches that of the exterior walls. Two historical photographs of the house explain this 2.8 meter expansion onto the (originally) east end of the house. The 1890 photograph shows a *Gang* between the dwelling and the barn. The *Gang* includes exterior stairs leading to a landing that would have provided access to the door into the second floor. The 1920s photograph shows how this *Gang* has been replaced by the 2.8 full extension of the house, now including an extra window. The stairs were then built on the inside of the house, and this also made room for a pantry. The new *Gang* separating the barn and house was a small, oddly shaped alcove (A6). The barn was unique in its orientation: while the house was perpendicular to the street, as most early housebarn dwellings were, the barn (1890) was parallel to the street, unlike most other housebarn barns. Both sides of the barn have an *Owesied*, creating an awkward attachment to the home.

The walls of the interior rooms have been almost entirely removed. The 2x10 ceiling rafters are not exposed, being covered in 1x4 tongue and groove boards. Rooms could be defined by measuring paint lines on the ceilings that outlined pre-existing walls. Judging by the pattern and sizes of the rooms as compared with other houses, and assuming the rotation of the house, the structure originally had four rooms. Room A1 would have been the *Aij Stow*, A2 the *Groote Stow*, A3 the *Hinjetues* and *Vaeathues*. The ceiling of A1 was painted green with grey moulding, all of which was later covered in pink paint. A large square hole in the centre of the structure's ceiling indicates the previous existence of a central oven. The window frames of A1 and A2 were originally painted bright blue and later pink. All floors of this area have been removed and replaced by cement. The walls of these rooms have mud and chaff plaster covered in three layers of pink wallpaper.

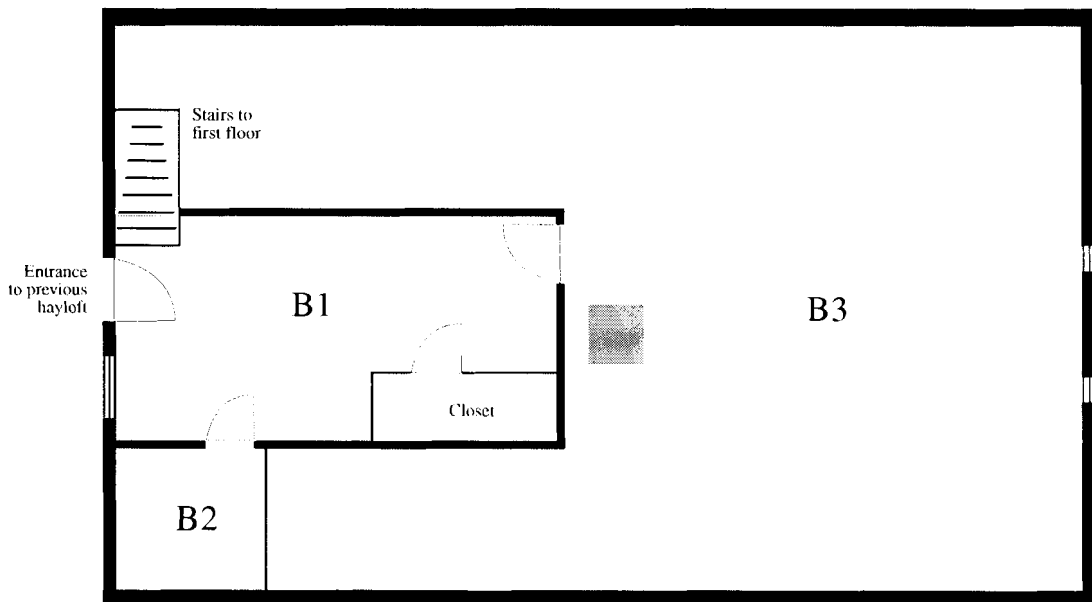
The western addition to the house provided space for a pantry (A4), stairs with a door on the main floor (in A5 area), and a *Gang* leading to a door on the west side (A6). All three areas have original wooden flooring, with the floors of A4 pale blue, A6 white, the stairs bright green, and the main floor of A5 having a hand painted multi-coloured pattern. The walls of these rooms are of wood, with the north wall of A5 having wainscoting painted various colours, grey being the earliest. The west wall in the storage area beneath the stairs exhibits grey wainscoting, suggesting that the stairs were built after the finishing of the room, and that the addition was not built to accommodate the stairs. However, after the stairs were built, two layers of yellow and then pale green paint were added to the wainscoting of the north wall, indicating that the room was used long after the introduction of the stairs. The very small *Gang* (A6) is split by a door, and leads to the west into an oddly shaped cubby with shelves on the south wall. Planks of wood at shoulder height make exiting difficult. This was used to enter a barn.

The second floor consists of one finished room (B1) with a closet and one storage room (B2), in addition to the large attic (B3). A door on the west wall of B1 leads to the exterior, and would have led to the landing. Room B1 was constructed and finished much later than the rest of the house, probably in the 1940s, and its walls are plasterboard painted pastel green. This house was inhabited by the parents (Bernhard G. and Suzanna Hamm) and grandparents (Gerhard Ens) of Willie Hamm of NE14.

NE4
Neubergthal, Manitoba
First Floor



NE4
Neubergthal, Manitoba
Second Floor





NE4 Neubergthal. Northeast corner of dwelling.



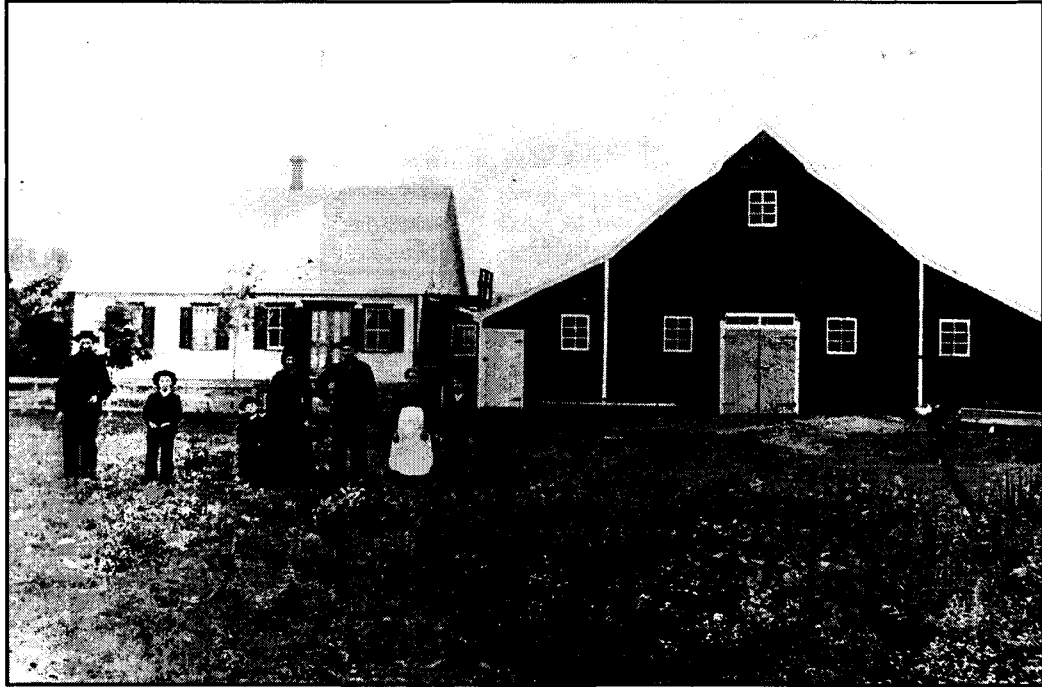
NE4 Neubergthal. Southwest corner of dwelling. West end was once connected to a barn.



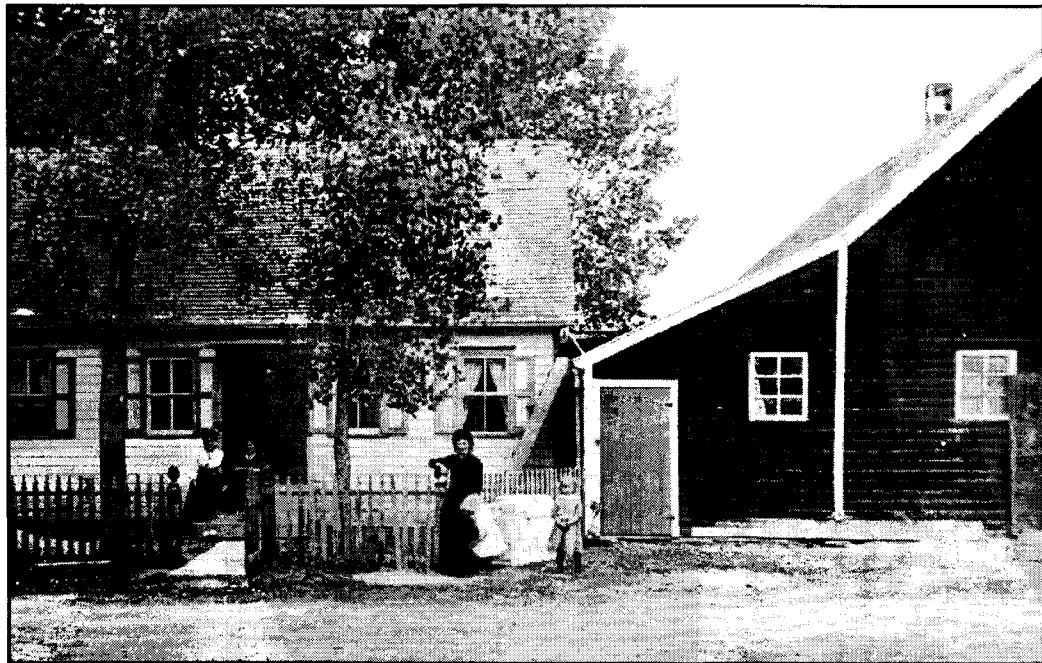
NE4 Neubergthal.
Door on west end of dwelling that once
led into the barn.



NE4 Neubergthal.
Window with closed shutters.



NE4 Neubergthal. South side of Housebarn, 1890. Courtesy of the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba.



NE4 Neubergthal. South side of Housebarn, 1920s. Courtesy of the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

NE12 Neubergthal

Date of Construction: 1926, 1927

Interview: Henry Kehler (July 19, 2001)

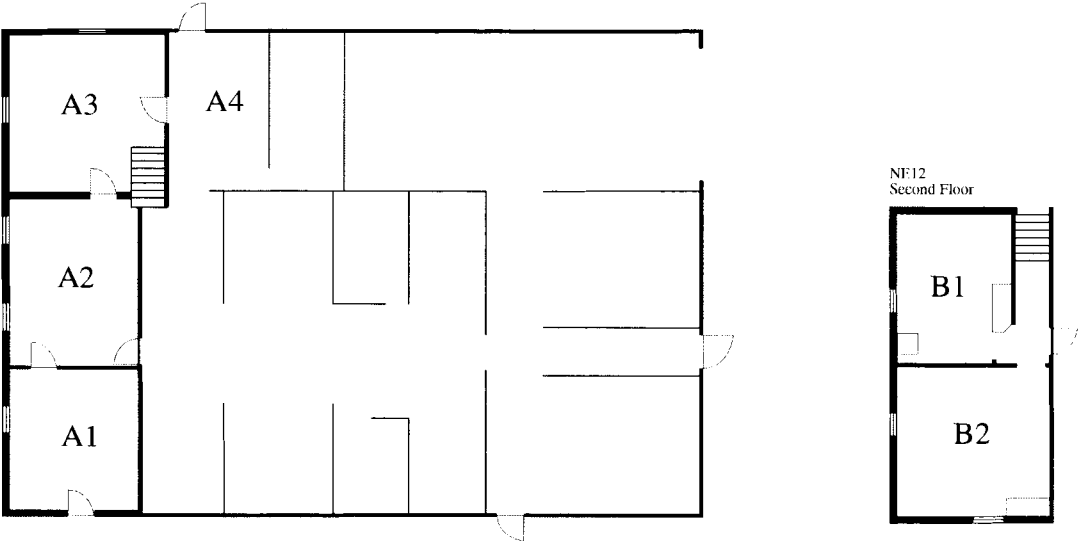
This housebarn was built with the dwelling area directly incorporated into the barn structure, entirely of 2x6 stud construction. The southern portion of the building was built in 1926, while the northern lean-to and room A3 was constructed one year later. The entire housebarn is sheathed in pale grey painted siding, with no distinction between barn and house. The dwelling area, however, had two layers of siding for increased insulation. Once human habitation ended in 1966, the house section was converted into storage, and the south doorway leading into room A1 the door leading from A2 west into the barn were both constructed. The house windows have very simple trim, and never had shutters. A summer kitchen was once located north of the building and connected by a *Gang*. The total area of the first floor of the house is 45.5 m², while the entire structure is 236 m². The barn includes a haysling apparatus and well to water the livestock. A split door was once located on the south side of the barn just east of the dwelling area, and this was used as the main entrance.

The walls of the interior were lathe and whitewashed mud plaster until they were wallpapered in the 1940's. The south walls of rooms A2 and A3, however, are tongue and groove wood painted lime green and beige respectively. The floors of A1 and A2 are wood, and were covered in linoleum immediately after construction. The floor of A3 (the kitchen) is a step lower than the other rooms and covered in tile. The rafters of the ceiling are 2x10, and were hidden by white 1x6 tongue and groove boards. The trim of doors and windows were originally painted pastel green and later painted white, except for A3, in which all trim was beige. Cupboards and a kitchen counter are found on the west wall of A3. An oil heater eventually replaced a wood stove to heat the house, and the remains of a chimney stand in the southwest corner of A2. Hydro electricity was installed in 1950.

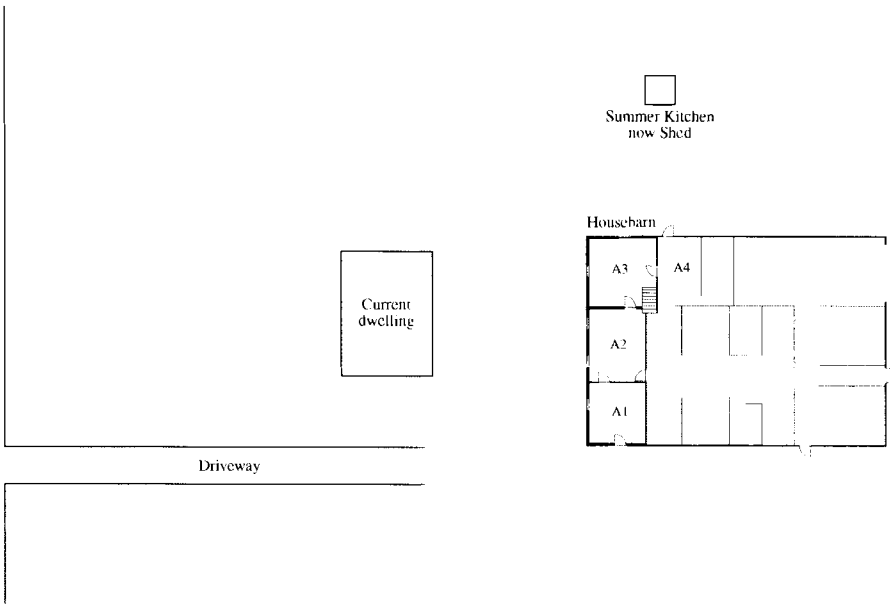
The upper story to the house was finished for habitation in the 1940's, and includes two rooms (B1 and B2), a 2.5 meter hallway, and a door to the barn loft. The walls are finished with plasterboard and painted beige and light blue. Room A3 was converted into a full kitchen at the time these rooms were built.

Jakob Kehler hired contractors (four men worked on it for three months) to build the house in 1926, and before this time he and his wife lived with her parents (Klippensteins) in Neubergthal. Henry Kehler (b.1926), son of the Jakob Kehler, was the informant for this interview, and the second of six siblings in the family. The parents' room was in the middle (A2) with the two youngest children, and the boys and girls were separated into the other two rooms on the main floor (A1 and A3). Henry and his brother Ben would sleep in the barn lean-to in the summer months, despite the rats. Despite the wood and oil heaters, the house was quite cold in the winter because of lack of insulation, and the kitchen cupboards were used as a refrigerator/freezer. There were shlopbenks (sleeping benches) in the kitchen where the boys would sleep. When the second floor rooms were built they were used exclusively as bedrooms, and the kitchen ceased to be used as such.

NE12 Housebarn
Neubergthal, Manitoba
First Floor and Barn

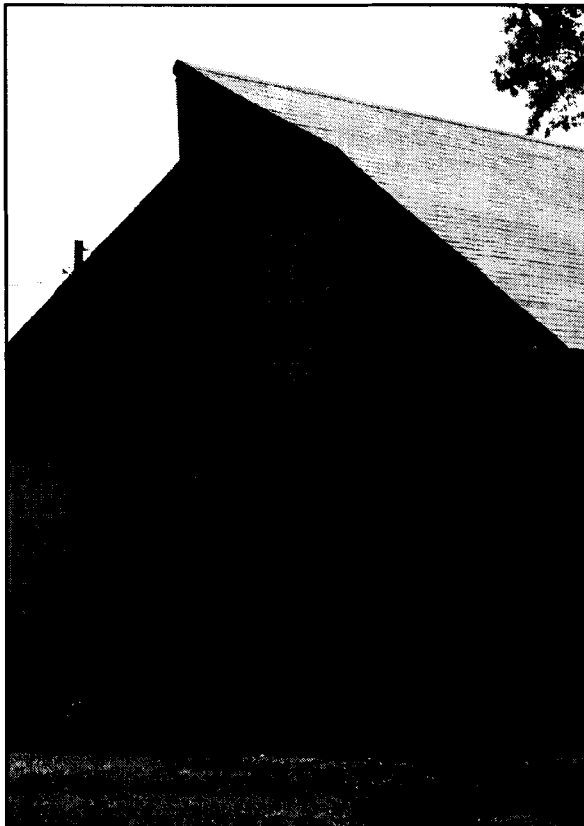


NE12 Yard
Neubergthal, Manitoba





NE12 Neuberghal. South side of housebarn. Door on left side is entrance to A1.



NE12 Neuberghal.
East end of housebarn (barn section,
with haysling peak)



NE12 Neubergthal. West end of housebarn (dwelling section).



NE12 Neubergthal. Southwest corner of room A2 with chimney structure, heating pipe, and door to A1.

NE14 Neubergthal

Date of Construction: 1926

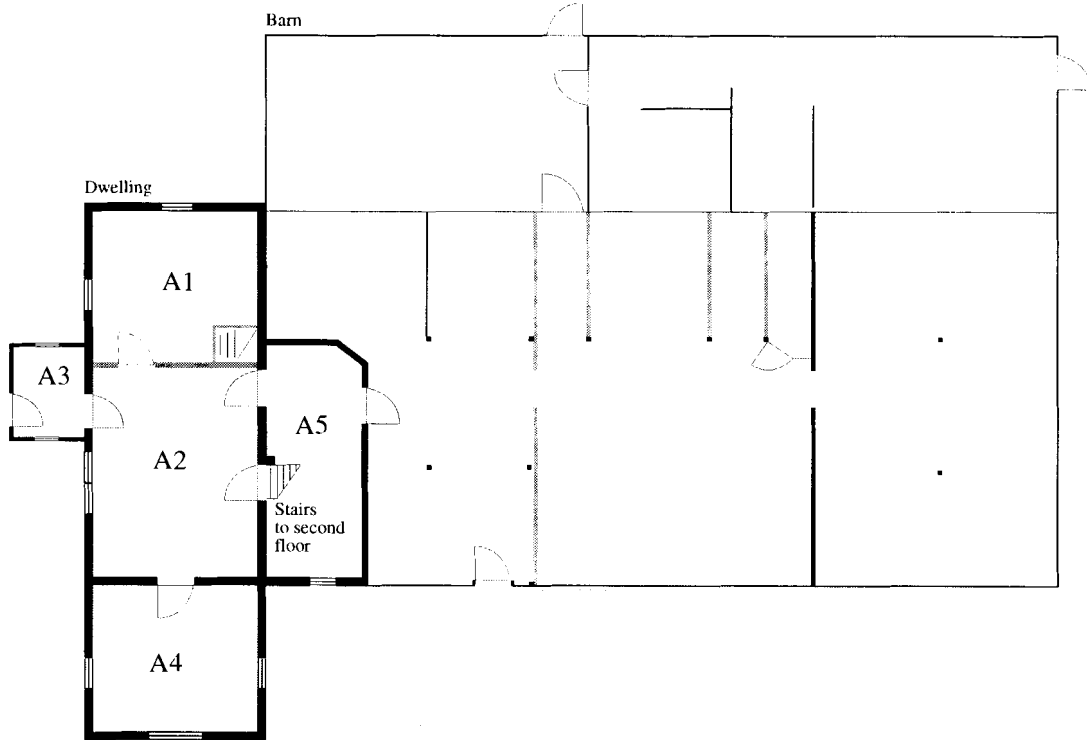
Interviews: Larry Hamm (June 5, 2002), Willie Hamm (June 12, 2002), Willie Hamm in "Neubergthal Notes" (Spring 2004)

A local contractor (Mr. Brown) from nearby Sommerfeld, at a total cost of \$2200, built both the barn (first) and the dwelling in the same year with stud frame construction. A full basement foundation of concrete cinderblock was also constructed at this time, and cedar shingles used as roofing material. The upstairs rooms (B1 and B2), located in the loft of the barn were built in 1930/31. The fir centre beams of the barn were imported from British Columbia, and the entire structure was built on a foundation of concrete slab with concrete footings. The barn, which incorporates a hay-sling, has always been painted red, and the house white. The dwelling section of the structure is built as a lean-to onto the south end of the barn, with the easternmost room (A4) added in 1952. A separate two-room summer kitchen was located about 30 meters west of the dwelling structure, although this was torn down recently.

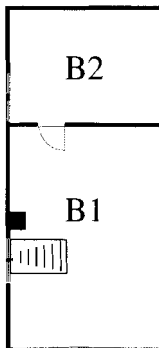
The interior of the original dwelling (rooms A1 and A2) has walls of mud and chaff plaster on slats and was originally whitewashed with lime, but was painted pastel green and wallpapered in 1952. The floors were tongue and groove hardwood, painted grey. Before the addition of A4, two windows were located in the east wall of A2. The front entrance room (A3) was built in 1952, and originally had two doors. A wall once separated rooms A1 (bedroom) and A2 (kitchen). A door on the north end of this wall led into a steep, curving stairwell to the basement. A wood heating stove was located beside this door in A2. The *Gang* to the barn was built sometime after the rest of the house, probably in the 1930's. Room B1 was first used as a workshop and then as a bedroom, while B2 was used for storage, and had a trapdoor cut in the floor for raising furniture. The chimney in B1, which extends from the kitchen below, was cased in mud by hand.

Willie Hamm was two years old when his parents moved to this house in 1926. His parents Bernhard G. and Susanna (nee Janzen) Hamm had lived with Mr. Hamm's parents in NE4 in Neubergthal for three years before NE14 was built. The land was bought by Bernhard G. Hamm from his father Gerhard Hamm. At this time it was an open field directly connected to the village by a strip, but instead of building the house on this access route they chose to build it on a raised ridge in the middle of the field. Willie had four sisters, two older and two younger, and he and his two older sisters slept in B1 after it was finished. Before this the three children slept in the parents' room (A1), and a maid slept in the kitchen (A2) on a *Schlopbeintj*. Room B1 was built with the coming of the fourth child, who slept in the parents' room. In room B1 the two girls and Willie were divided by a curtain, with Willie sleeping in the eastern portion of the room. When the older sisters had married, the younger ones then moved upstairs. Willie Hamm eventually married, and he and his wife lived in the house with his parents until 1961, when they built a bungalow on the same yard. His parents lived there until 1974, after which it was converted to a workshop.

NE14 Barn and Dwelling
Neubergthal, Manitoba
First Floor



Second Floor
(Located in barn loft above A5)





NE14 Neuberghal. Northwest corner of housebarn (barn section with haysling peak).



NE14 Neuberghal. South end of housebarn. White lean-to is dwelling section. The two horizontal windows in barn just above the dwelling are second floor of dwelling (B1 and B2).

NW4 Neubergthal

Date of Construction: House 1919, Barn 1918

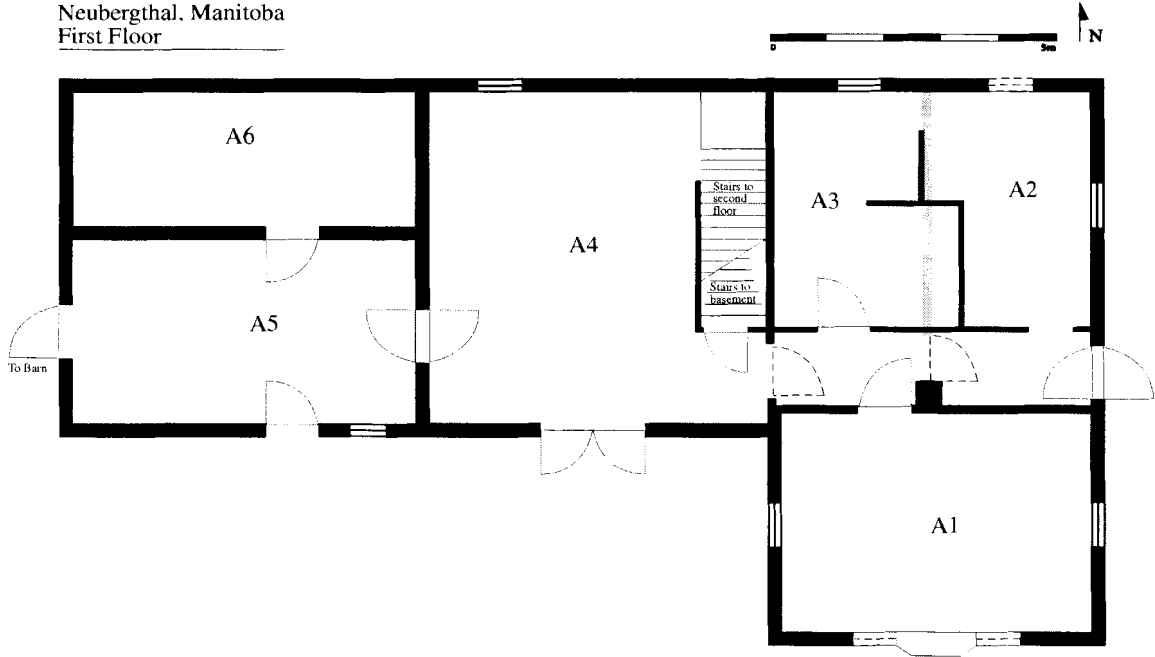
Interview: None (Architectural details and history provided by Lynn Hoepfner, current owner)

This house is stud-framed and was built with the village's first full cement basement. It also originally included a coal-burning heater with a chimney centrally located. Two large rooms were built on the second floor at the same time as the house, but these were not finished until the 1990s. The exterior of the house was originally painted beige with green trim. The porch, veranda, bay window on the south wall, and garden doors on the kitchen are modern renovations. The original two front doors on the first and second floors (the latter never used) were unique: both included coloured glass panels. The upper story had a door with a large blue glass panel surrounded by clear glass tiles, while the lower story had the same type of door with green glass. Family history has it that the doors were so expensive that there was not enough money left after construction to finish the second story for habitation. Whatever the case, these two façade doors are clear presentations of wealth to the public street, with the upper door never even being used. Currently these doors are located in the kitchen (blue) and bathroom (green).

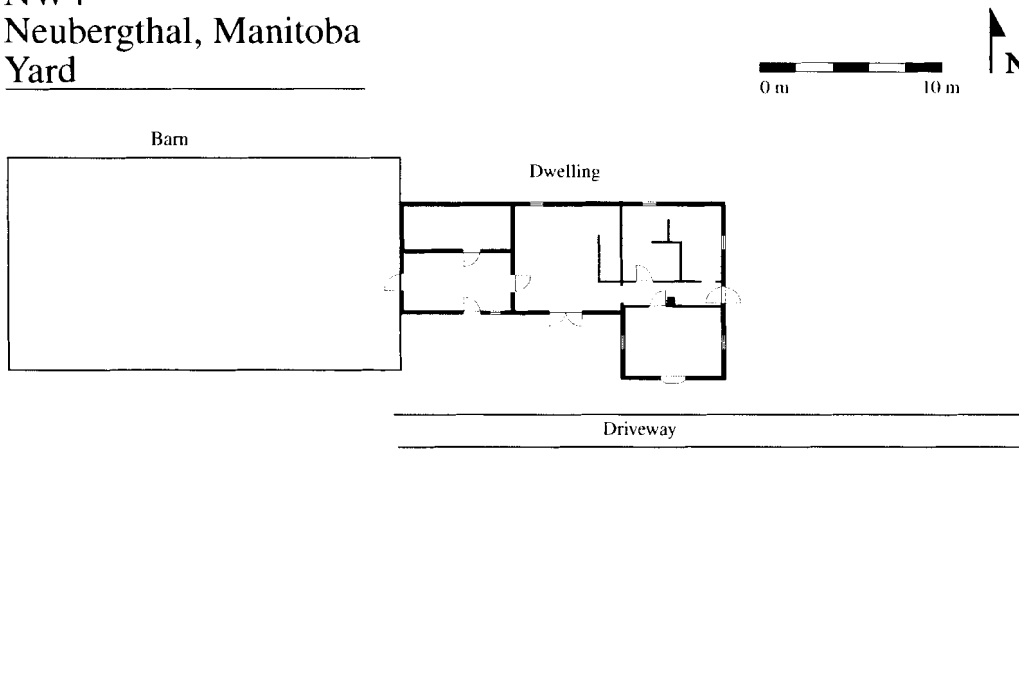
The original walls of the house were mud and chaff plaster on slats, painted white. There are no exposed rafters in any of the rooms, and all the rooms have fir, unpainted floors except the kitchen, which has unpainted maple. No *Glausschaup* (glass cabinet) was ever built into the wall of the living room (A1), although a detached cabinet was located in the SE corner. Rooms A2 and A3 were once split evenly by a wall running North-South, with a door connecting the rooms on the south end beside the central chimney. No brick oven was ever located in this house. The hallway dividing A1 from A2 and A3 is a modern renovation, and previously none existed. The kitchen is separated from the main front body of the house, and includes the stairs to the second story, which was unavailable for study. The kitchen is connected to the barn by an exterior *Gang*, which has an exit door on its south side and a door to a lean-to on its north side. A3 is currently a bathroom with modern plumbing.

According to Mr. Hoepfner, his grandmother lived in room A1 after his grandfather died. This suggests the continued multifunctional (entertaining and sleeping) and age specific (elders) use of the *Groote Stow* despite the "Anglicised" shift in house orientation and style (street-facing, symmetrical, 1.5 story). Mr. Hoepfner also relates that the door handles on the kitchen doors were low because his grandmother was a small woman. This story is similar to the case of low door handles in NE14. Mr. Hoepfner's parents lived in room A2 when they were first married and his uncles lived in room A3.

NW4
Neubergthal, Manitoba
First Floor

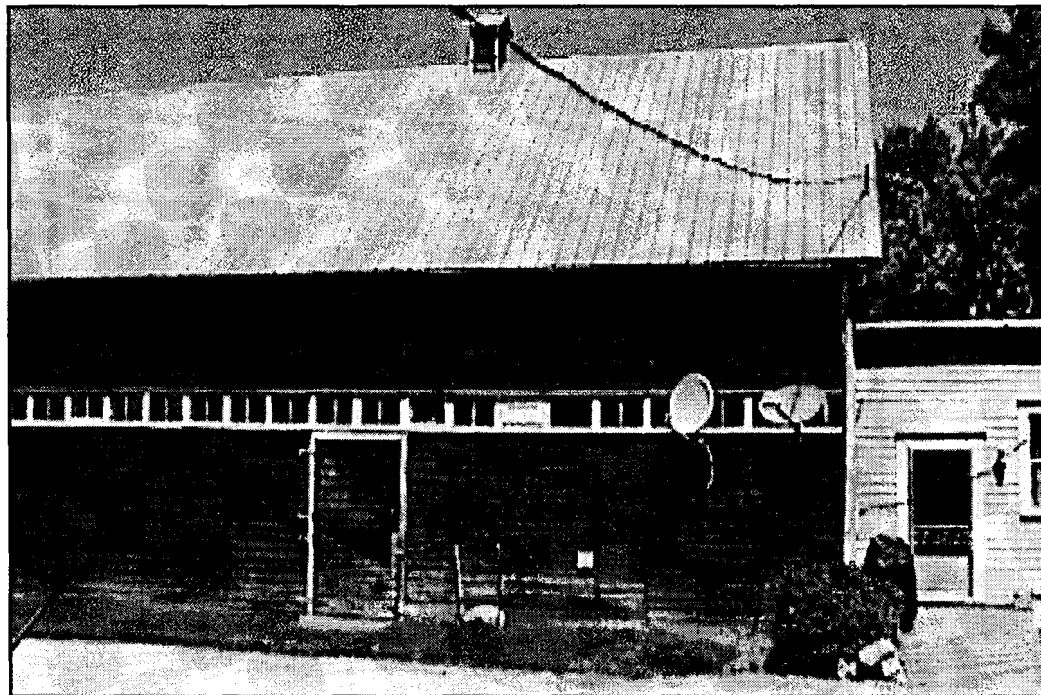


NW4
Neubergthal, Manitoba
Yard





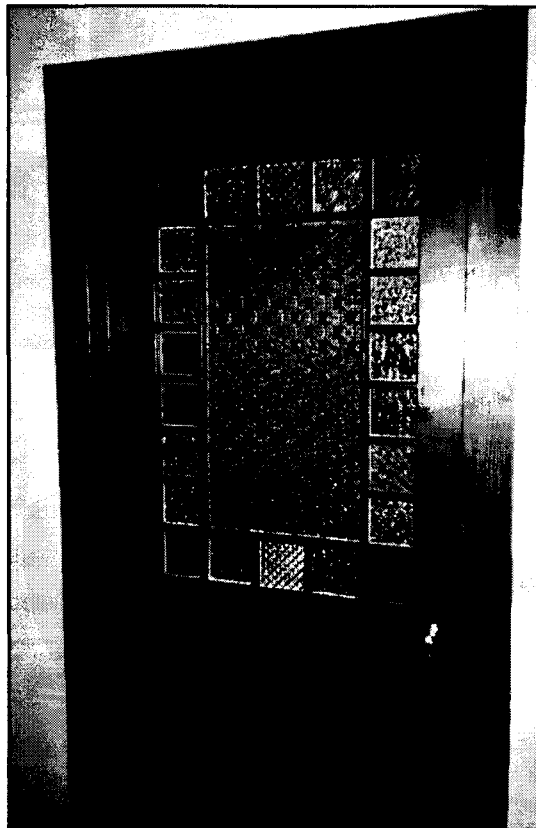
NW4 Neubergthal. East side of dwelling of housebarn. Symmetrical facade with front door of this "T-shaped" housebarn face the street.



NW4 Neubergthal. South side of barn and *Gang*.



NW4 Neuberghal. Green glass door, West entrance to A4 (kitchen).



NW4 Neuberghal. Blue glass front door.

SE1 Neubergthal

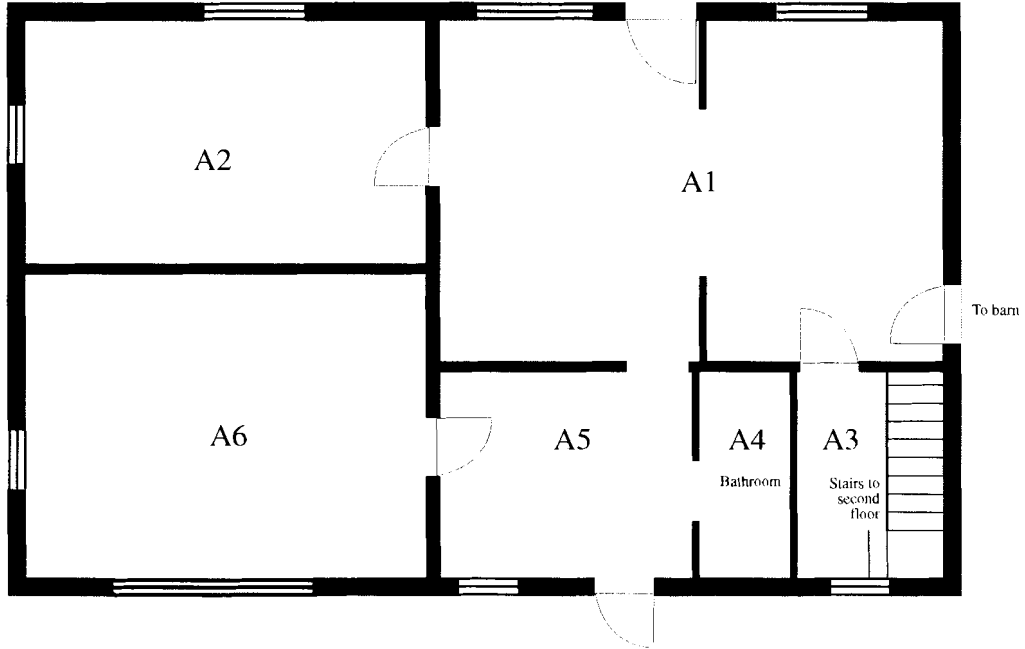
Date of Construction: House:1904; Barn:1909

Interview: none

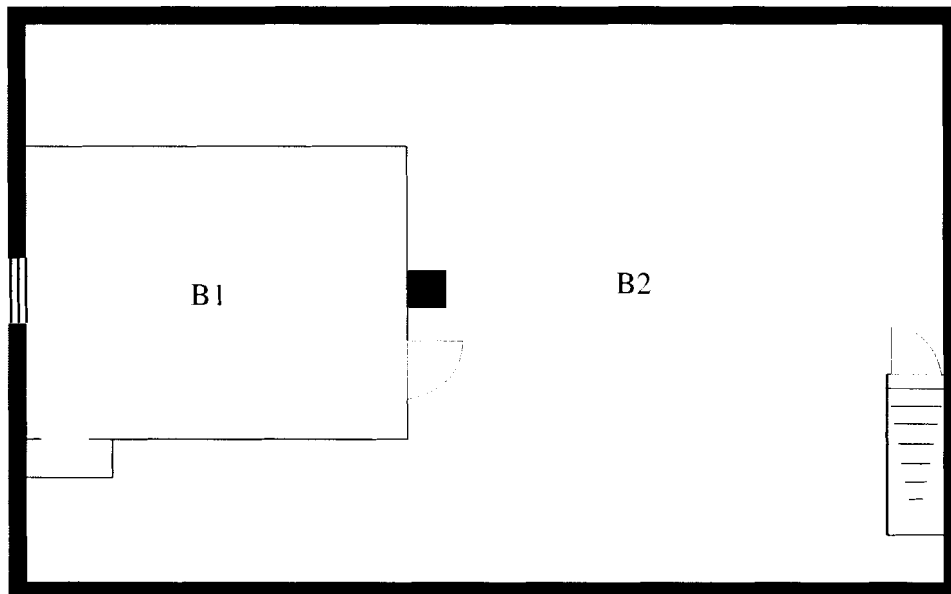
This housebarn, although located on its original placement and orientation, has been greatly renovated in the interior. The exterior has wooden siding painted white, and the barn is painted red. The *Gang* connecting house and barn is located inside the barn.

The original interior walls were built of mud and chaff plaster and whitewashed. The floor of A5/A4 (originally the *Vaeathus*) has an early painted pattern of 15 cm burgundy diamonds stenciled or sponged onto a grey background. A4 is a modern bathroom, and the wall between it and A5 is new. The doorsill between A5 and A6 (*Groote Stow*) has an original layer of ochre yellow paint followed by green and finally cream. A3 is the *Koma*, with access to the second floor from the stairs beginning at the south end of the room. It seems the stairs have been reversed, sometime before 1956, having previously been accessed from A1. The southeast door from A1 now leads into the cellar, directly under the stairs. The counters in A1 (kitchen) were probably constructed sometime in the 1940s or 1950s.

SE1 Housebarn
Neubergthal, Manitoba
First Floor

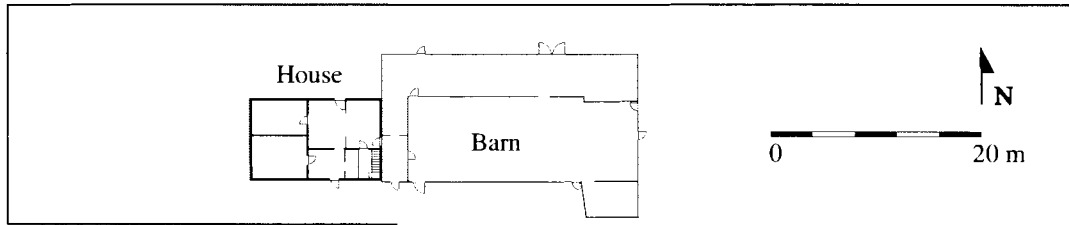


SE1 Housebarn
Neubergthal, Manitoba
Second floor of dwelling

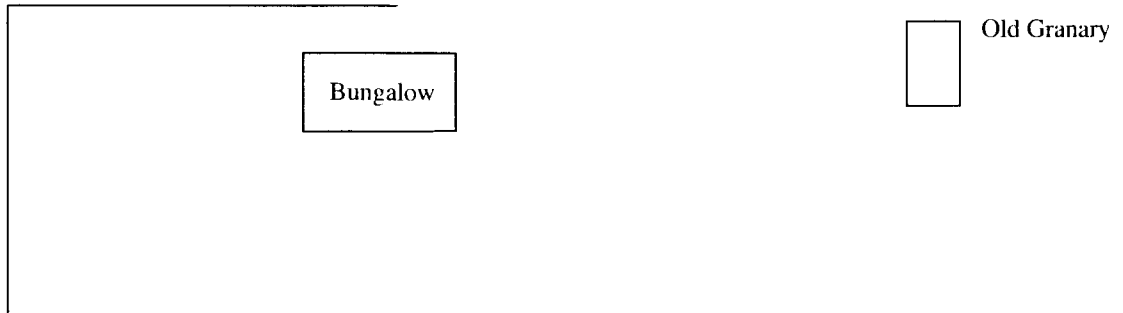


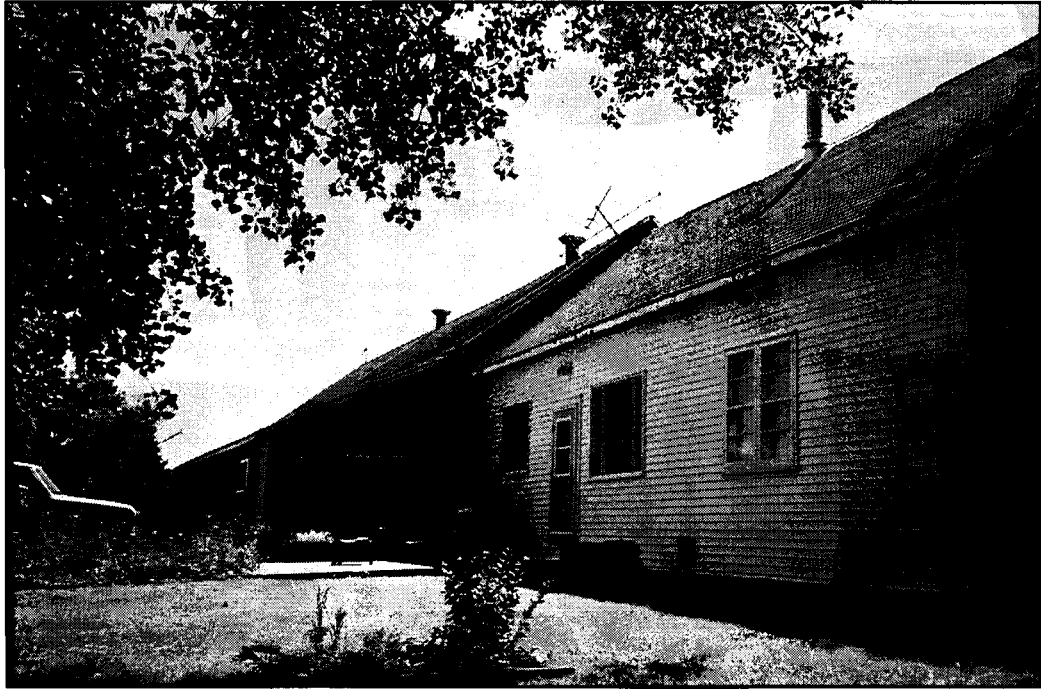
SE1 Yard Neubergthal Village

Highway 421



Driveway

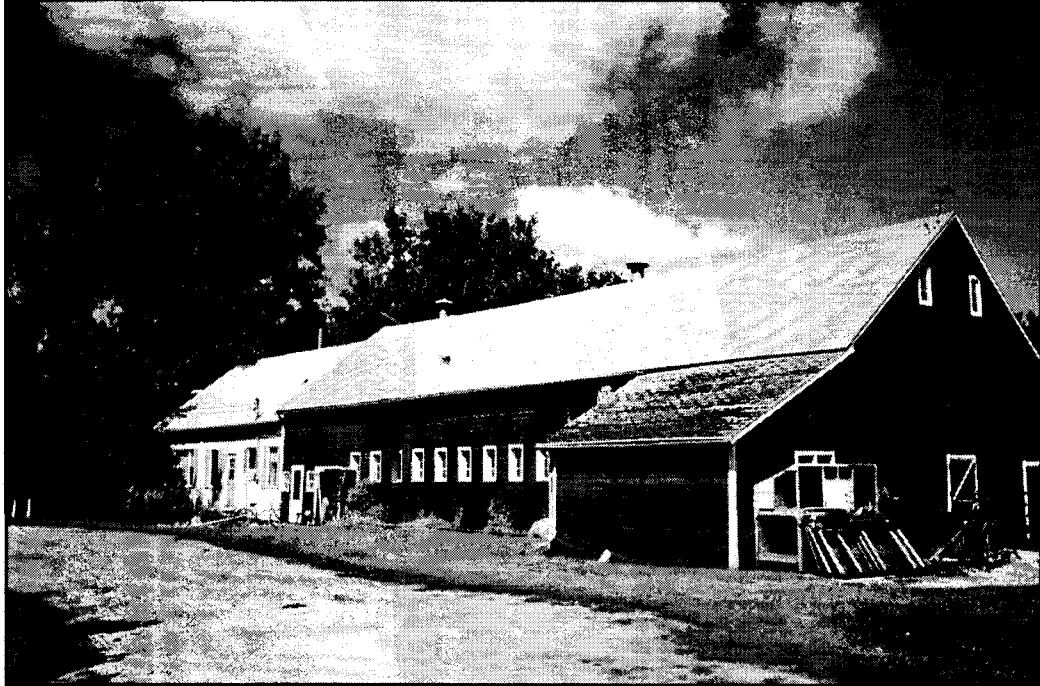




SE1, Neubergthal. Northwest corner, dwelling.



SE1, Neubergthal. North end dwelling.



SE1, Neuberghal. Southeast corner barn.

SE3 Neubergthal

Date of Construction: House 1891, Barn 1870s/1876?

Interviews: Ray Hamm (Summer 2000); Rose Hildebrand (May 30, 2002)

This lot, according to oral tradition, was one of the first two to be established in the village. The current house is the second on the yard, the first having been moved or destroyed. The house sits on an oak beam foundation placed directly on the ground. The largest dormer on the south side of the house extends to create a veranda over the front entrance, and this was repaired in 1942. The wooden siding has always been painted white, and the walls were originally filled with flax chaff insulation. The total area of the main floor of the house is 116.5 m². The barn, built possibly in 1876, has been reduced in length on its east end by 30 feet at an unknown time, and is painted red with white trim. The framework of the barn is of oak timber, and the western part of the interior, where cattle and horses were kept, was whitewashed.

The first owners of the house were Bernhard and Helena Klippenstein, who were married in Russia before they immigrated to Manitoba. They were wealthy from a milling business in Russia, and often provided credit for the community. Mrs. Klippenstein had five sons from a previous marriage (Hamm) and they with Mr. Klippenstein constructed this house. For the first twenty years of habitation, the upper story was used for grain storage. The living quarters of the second floor, the stairs in A4, and three dormers were constructed between 1910 and 1912. An electric generator, the first of its kind in the village, produced electricity for the house before 1926. The Klippensteins had a son of their own, named Henry or Bernhard Klippenstein, who eventually attained ownership of the house. He went bankrupt in the 1920s, and one of his brothers, Jakob Hamm, bought the house in 1926 for his newly married son.

The original central brick oven was removed sometime before 1926, probably during the renovations of 1910-1912. Coal heaters replaced the oven, and then an oil burner was installed in A4 (*Vaeathues*) in the 1940's. The second story was unheated until the 1940s, and was largely uninhabited in the winter months, when the children would sleep in on the main floor (R. Hildebrand Int., 2002).

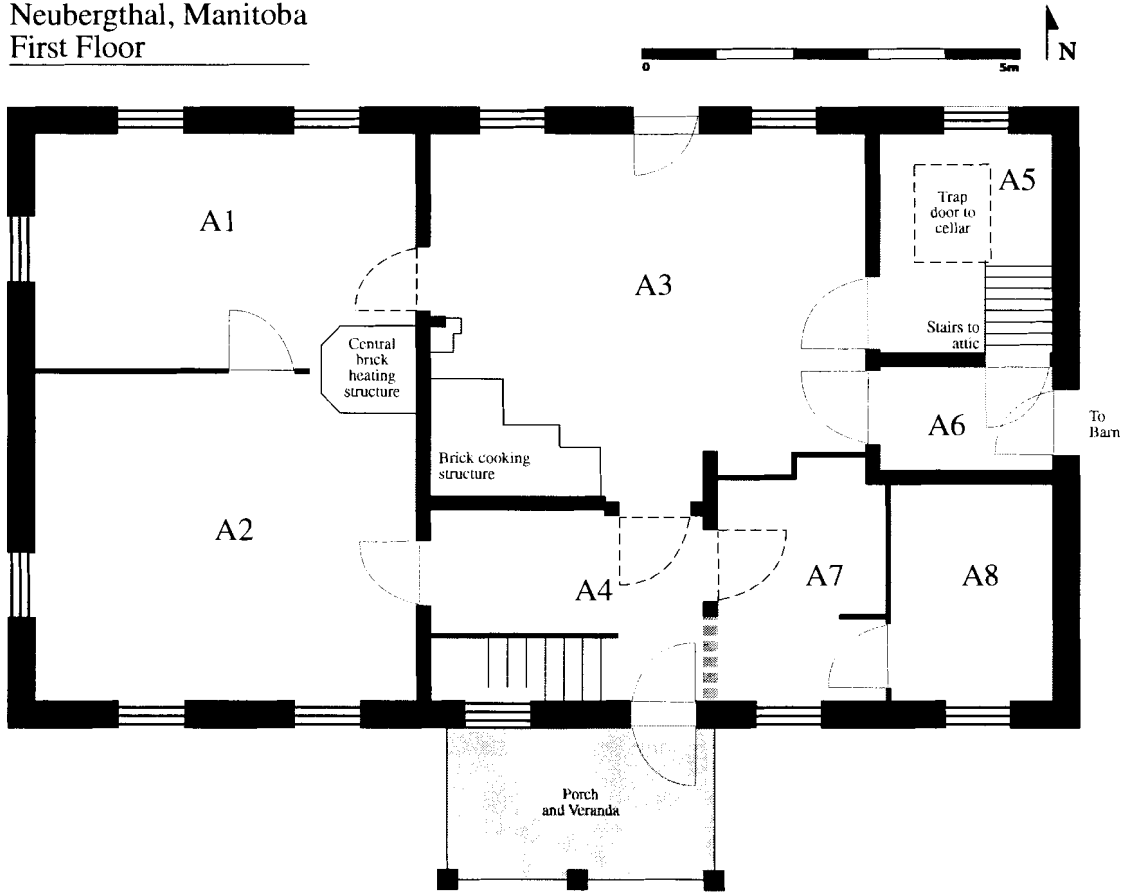
The decorative elements of the home on the main floor, built in 1891, were very simple and included elements common to most successful Mennonite homes. A wall cabinet was built into the northeast corner of A2, and all the rooms had wainscoting beneath smoothly plastered walls. Three doors with upper glass panels adorned A2 and A1, and the floors of both these rooms were painted orange. These floors had some form of carpeting before 1926, but these were removed and they were eventually covered with linoleum. In contrast the renovations of 1910-12 are more indicative of wealth. The front stairs built at this time exhibit painted artificial wood-graining, and this staircase was for family use, while the older, traditionally steep stairs near the barn were for servants. The trim on the second floor included fancy framing for the doors and windows.

Mrs. Hamm, mother of the informants, had painted the wainscoting light green with dark green moulding, and in the 1940s began a new set of renovations. This included the removal of the wainscoting (replaced by floor to ceiling wallpaper), the stippling of ceilings, and the construction of cupboards in the kitchen. A bathroom was built in southeast corner of the house, taking up part of A7, in the 1960s.

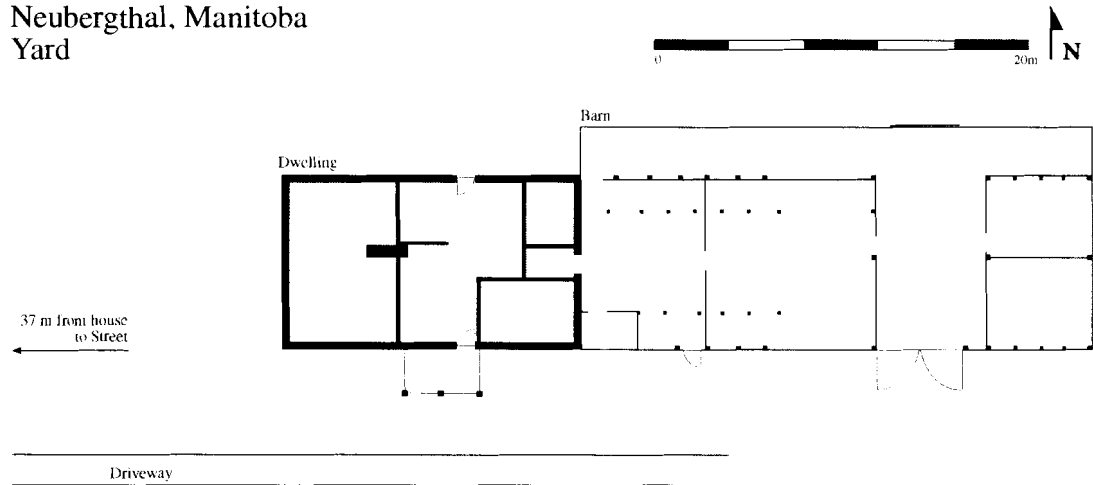
Rose Hildebrand (b.1934) and moved out of the house to her husband's parents' home in 1951. Ray Hamm (b.1947) grew up in the house and lives there currently. When their parents moved into the house in 1926, they shared the second story with another couple who were hired to help on the farm. The Hamms eventually had four children, three boys and one girl, born between 1927 and 1947. The parents moved into A1 (*Atj Stow*), and during the warmer months the two younger brothers shared a room upstairs, Rose had a room upstairs, and the oldest brother slept in A7, the room formerly used by the hired hand. In the winter Rose slept on a couch in A2 and the boys slept in A7. Ray as a child slept in his parents bedroom, then moved into A7,

and later had a room upstairs. The grandmother of the family also lived in the house from some-time after 1947 until her death in 1955. The oldest brother and his wife Agatha, married in 1951, lived upstairs for the first 4-5 years of their marriage before moving to NW1, where the grandparents had previously lived.

SE3
Neubergthal, Manitoba
First Floor



SE3
Neubergthal, Manitoba
Yard

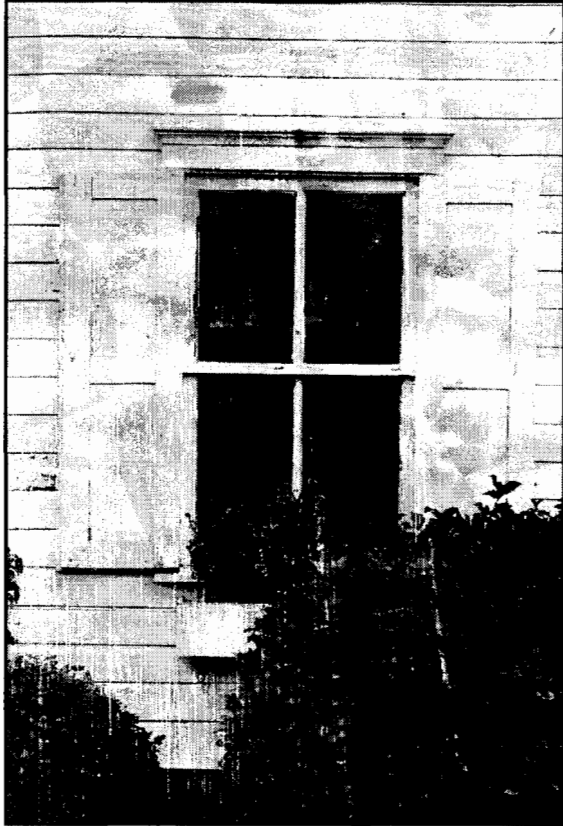




SE3 Neuberghthal. Southwest corner of housebarn.



SE3 Neuberghthal. South side of barn.



SE3 Neuberghal.
Window with shutters.



SE3 Neuberghal. Front of dwelling with veranda, 1974. Courtesy of Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

SW3 Neubergthal

Date of Construction: 1901

Interviews: Norma Giesbrecht (May 28, 2002)

Bernhard B. Hamm (Sept.26, 2002)

The exterior of this house has always been painted white wooden siding, with trim having been first burgundy, then light green, then dark green, and finally white. The shutters, now removed, had a variety of colours, the first being burgundy, which according to oral tradition in the village was the colour of all the shutters on all the houses. There are large dormers on the north and south sides of the house, with the south dormer also containing a door and veranda over the front entrance. The total floor area of both floors is 143 m². The house is oriented perpendicular to the road, and is directly attached to the barn. The barn was once red with white and then green trim but was painted white some time in the 1930s. The lean-to is on the north side, and the barn contains a water pump and wooden lavatory seat for the winter months. A small 1.6 m² chamber located in the barn acts as a *Gang* between the house and stables. A summer kitchen was once located a few meters north of the north door of the house, connected by first a wooden walkway and replaced after 1940 with a concrete sidewalk and porch.

The house is built of stud frame construction on wooden sill foundation. Ceiling rafters are not exposed, and the wood ceilings are painted white and light blue. The kitchen (A5) has undergone numerous renovations, including the removal of the original brick oven, the construction of the stairs, and the blockage of a window-like opening in the southeast corner used to let light into the old black kitchen. There is some discrepancy whether the stairs and other second floor renovations took place in the 1910s or as late as 1930. The southeast corner of the kitchen has large mud bricks with chaff inclusions used in the bottom portion of the walls. This may have acted as a type of insulation for the central brick oven. A 9 cm wide band of tin lines the bottom of these corner walls, which are covered in mud and chaff plaster, and treated with whitewash above 110 cm and blue whitewash from 36 cm above the floor to 110 cm. This probably matched the original blue wainscoting and whitewashed walls found in the rest of the room.

The floors of all the rooms are of wood, painted ochre yellow and eventually covered in linoleum and carpeting. The floor of A2, A3 and A5 had 3 different hand-painted multi-coloured patterns painted over an original mustard yellow floor paint. All the wooden floors are placed directly on a layer of mud and chaff plaster (of the same material as the wall plaster) which lies directly on the ground. This probably helped with insulation and prevented moisture rot. A trap door to the cellar is located in A1 (the pantry), with the stairs painted ochre yellow. All the walls of the first floor were originally whitewashed mud and chaff plaster, with wainscoting painted possibly light blue, then pastel green, and then brown in the kitchen, which has the only surviving example from the house. The wall between A3 and A4 east of the connecting door was constructed of 1 x 4 boards painted mustard yellow placed horizontally between upright beams (one against the wall on the east side of the room and the other beam forming the east part of the doorjamb). A massive beam, painted first burgundy and then lime green spans the top part of the wall separating A3 and A4 and forms the top of the doorjamb. The west end of this beam is carved in a simple ornamental fashion. Room A3 currently has plasterboard walls while A4 has wallpaper over pastel green paint, both of which were introduced after 1949. The wall between rooms A1 and A2 and the shelves in A1 were built ca. 1930 to create a pantry (A1). The window and door trim of all the rooms was originally bright blue and later painted white and pastel blue. A wall cabinet was built into the northwest corner of A3, the *Groote Stow*, and wardrobes were built onto the southwest corner of A3 and the entire west wall of A1. Storage cupboards are also located on the east wall of A5 south of the door, and under the stairs. The house was heated first by the brick oven, and later by a coal burning stove and eventually by an oil heater, the latter two connected to various pipes running throughout the house. Electricity came to the house in

1946.

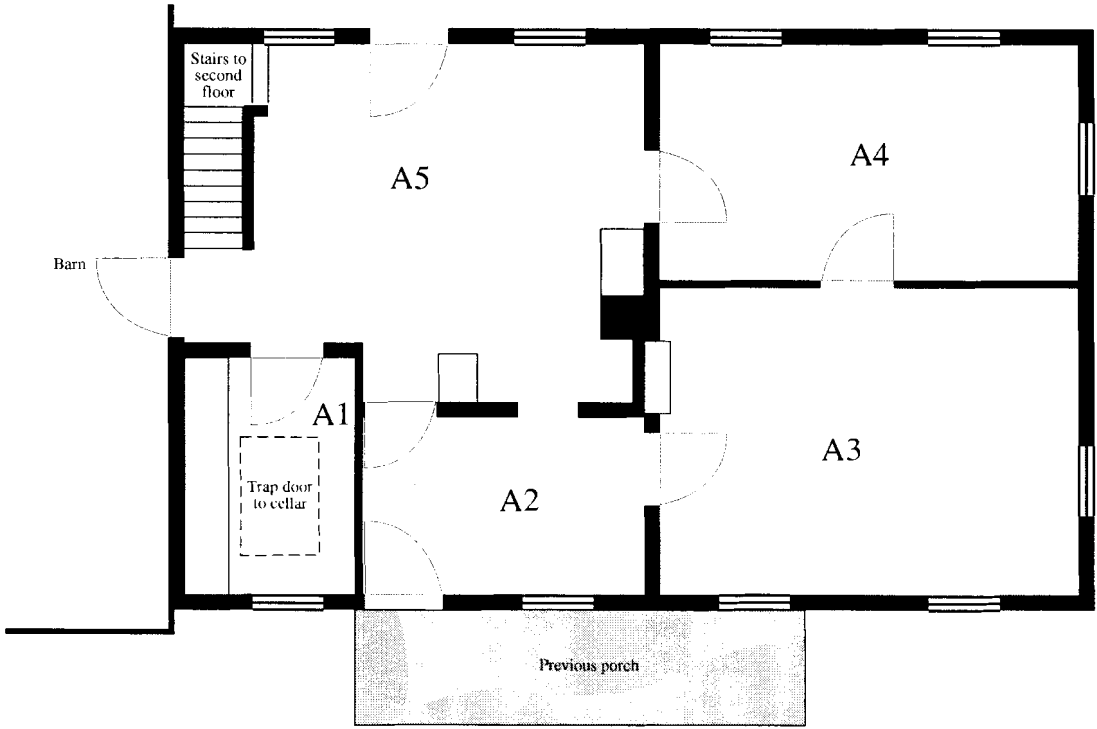
The upper story includes three bedrooms (B1-B3) and numerous cubbyholes for storage. Room B4, a large storage space, has an opening in the west wall to the barn loft. A door from room B3 opens out onto a veranda.

According to local history, this house was built in 1901, by Bernhard Hamm (1865-1949). Bernhard Hamm arrived in Manitoba with stepfather Bernhard Klippenstein and his mother (previously Mrs. Hamm) and four older Hamm brothers in 1875, and moved to Neubergthal in 1880. He married Helena (nee Klippenstein) in 1886, and they had six children, five daughters and Bernhard B. Hamm (b.1907), one of the informants for this study. Helena Hamm, Bernhard's B. Hamm's mother, died in 1917, and afterwards he lived here until 1929 with his widower father (d.1949), his sisters, and Margaret's husband Abram Friesen (1892-1952) and their children. Norma Giesbrecht (b.1940) is the daughter of Abram and Margaret Friesen.

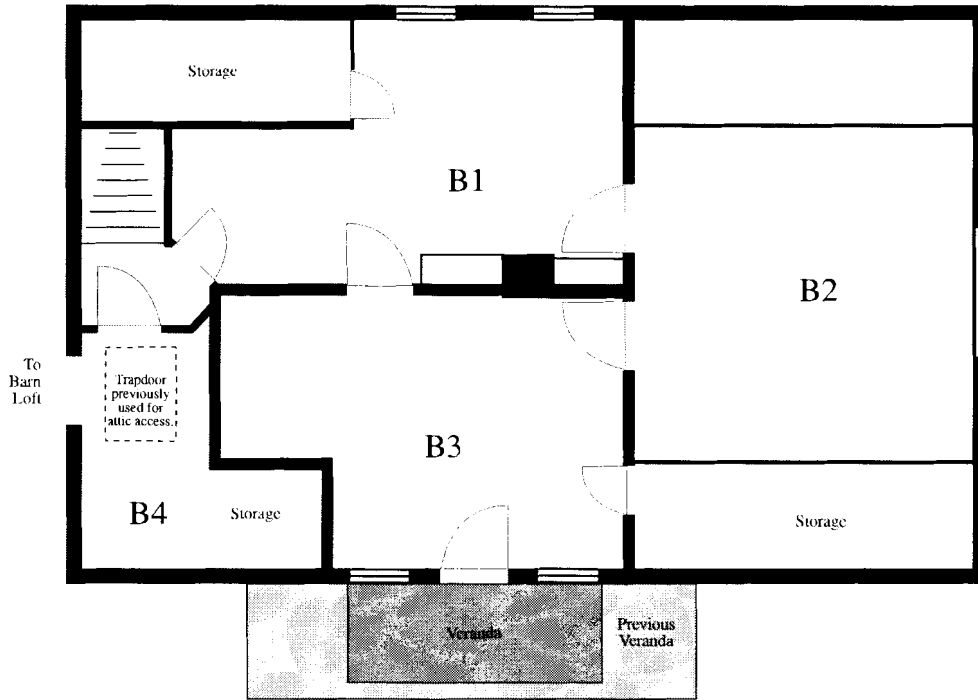
Bernhard B. Hamm recalls sleeping downstairs somewhere when he was young, before the attic was converted, but as he grew older he slept upstairs in B1. His parents slept in the *Vaeathues* (A2). No one slept in the *Groote Stow* (A3) except visitors. Bernhard's grandfather, towards the end of his life, lived in the *Atj Stow*. His oldest sister Margaret married Abram Friesen and although they moved out, they eventually moved back in and took room B2. In 1929 he married and moved to a farm two miles west of the village.

Norma Giesbrecht was the youngest of five children of Abram and Margaret Friesen, and was eleven years younger than the next oldest child. Besides this family a hired hand, a maid, a mentally challenged aunt, and grandfather Bernhard Hamm also lived in the house. Initially Norma slept in a crib in A2 for a number of years, and her parents were also in this room. Norma's older brother slept in Room A3, but besides this it was only used for visitors. Room A4 was the dominion of her grandfather, Bernhard Hamm, until his death in 1949, after which time her parents moved into this room. Two of Norma's brothers got married the same year (around 1935) and with their wives took rooms B2 and B3. After they moved into the house no maids were hired. Norma's sister and mentally challenged aunt lived in B1. The aunt slept in a shlopbenk in the western portion beside the stairs, and Norma's sister occupied the eastern part of the room, with a curtain dividing the space. She moved upstairs into room B3 when she was five years old, after one of her sisters got married and her brother's and their wives moved into their own houses.

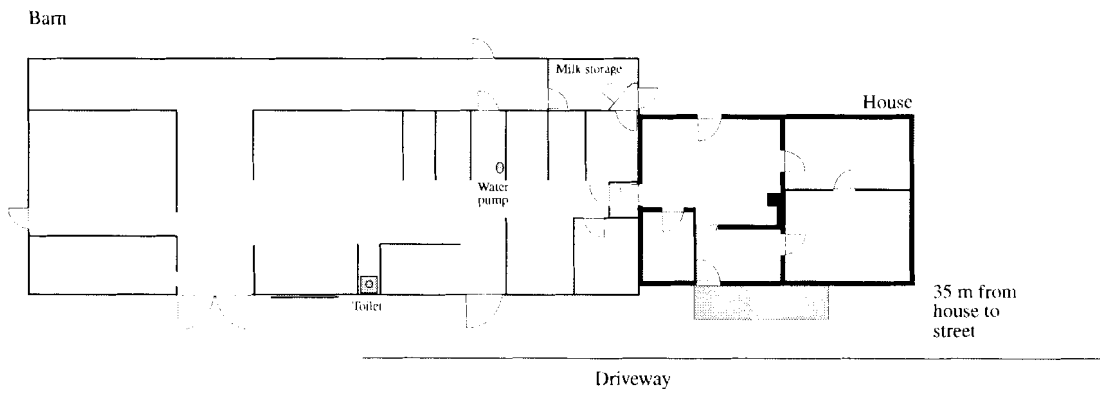
SW3
Neubergthal, Manitoba
First Floor



SW3
Neubergthal, Manitoba
Second Floor



SW3
Neubergthal, Manitoba
Yard





SW3 Neuberghal. Northwest corner of housebarn (barn section).



SW3 Neuberghal. Southeast corner of housebarn.



SW3 Neuberghal. Dormer windows on South side of house with remaining veranda.



SW3 Neuberghal. Glausschaup in Northwest corner of A3.

SW4 Neubergthal

Date of Construction: Unknown (pre-1900)

Interview: Helena Klippenstein (June 5, 2002)

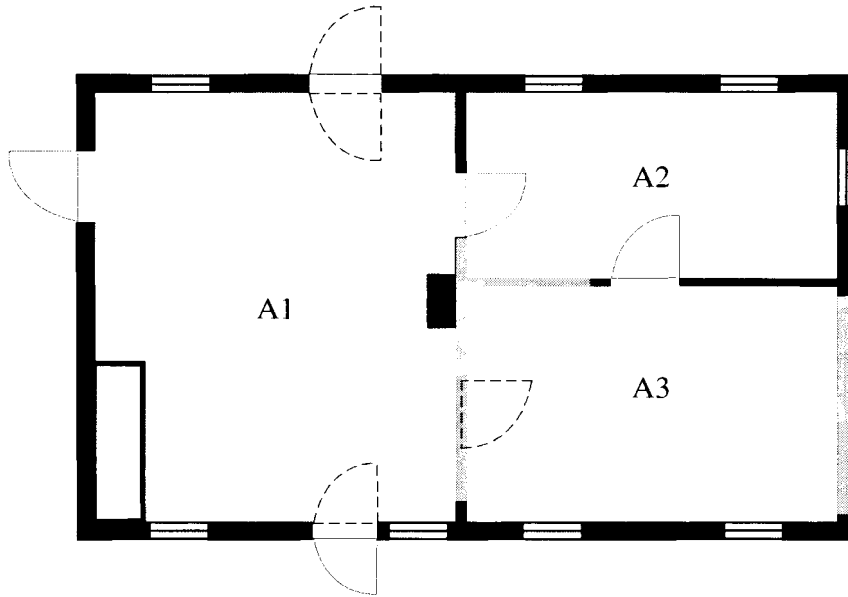
According to oral tradition, this three-room structure was a herdsman's house from Gnadenthal before it was moved to Neubergthal in 1900. It is of stud frame construction with a floor area of 63.4 m². The exterior siding was painted white and fastened to the frame with cut nails. The door and window trim were also painted white, except for the north door, which was red before it was painted green. The north door once led into a *Gang* that connected the house with a small barn to the north, both of which have been removed. A lean-to for wood and manure storage on the west side of the house has also been removed. It had steps leading up to its roof on the outside of the structure, and this was an access to the door into the west end of the attic (where laundry was hung in the winter).

The ceiling of the interior has 11 exposed rafters spaced 32 inches apart. The rafters and moulding around the ceiling in A3 were originally painted grey, while the ceiling of room A2 was painted light green. The ceiling in A1, the kitchen, was papered over and painted green. All ceilings were later painted white. The floor of A1 has two layers of wooden flooring. The earliest layer has boards running east-west, with two overlapping painted floral patterns. The top layer has 1x4 tongue and groove boards running diagonally southeast-northwest, and a geometric pattern painted on it. The floor of A2 has three layers of wooden flooring covered in two layers of linoleum. The wood floors are painted, from earliest to latest, ochre yellow, grey, and green. A small root cellar was located under this room. The floor of A3 had been completely removed at the time of documentation. The walls of A3 and A2 were originally plastered with mud and chaff and whitewashed, and later wallpapered after 1955. Wainscotting is present in both A3 and A2. It was painted black, then beige, and then covered in a layer of wallpaper in A3, and was painted yellow and then mustard orange, with black moulding. The walls of A1, the kitchen, were plastered with mud and whitewashed, then covered in wallpaper, and then later painted. No wainscotting was present in this room.

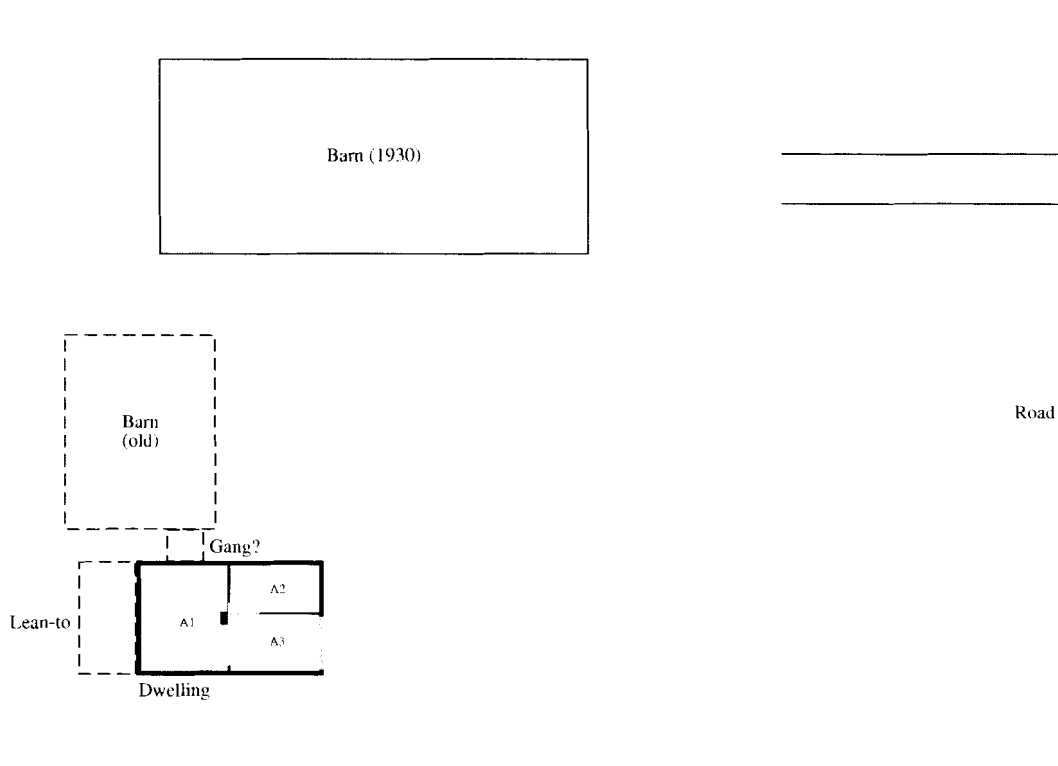
A central brick oven was located in the kitchen, and this had a cement foundation painted with the same pattern of the oldest wood floor layer. There is a pantry cupboard in the southwest corner of A1. The southern portion of the east wall of the house has been removed and this room used as a garage. No wall cabinet ever existed in this home.

Helena Klippenstein's deceased husband John Klippenstein (b.1910) was two years old when his family moved into this house. Helena and John were married in 1931, and they lived with Helena's father for twenty-four years in NW3, Neubergthal. By 1955 their children were grown, married, and out of the house, and the pair moved, with Helena's invalid sister Sarah, into SW4. Nine years later they purchased a bungalow to place on the lot. While living in SW4, John and Helena slept in A3, while A2 was Sarah's room. Some renovations they made to the house included moving the door connecting A2 and A3 from the far eastern end of the wall to middle of the wall. They also put wallpaper on the walls of A3.

SW4
Neubergthal, Manitoba



SW4
Neubergthal, Manitoba
Yard





SW4 Neuberghal. Northeast corner of dwelling.



SW4 Neuberghal. Southwest corner of dwelling.



SW4 Neubergthal. Painted floor patterns, room A1.



SW4 Neubergthal. Painted floor patterns, room A2.



SW4 Neuberghal. East end of dwelling showing barn connection, c.1940s. Photograph courtesy of Rose Hildebrand.

26 Chortitz Rd. S

Date of Construction: House 1875/76, Barn 1877-1879

Interview: Peter Klassen

This early house is of roughly squared log construction with dovetail corner joints. One foot of 2x6 crib construction forms the sill and top plate. The entire structure is placed on a heaped earth base (about 50 cm in height), and was once covered in 6" wooden siding painted white. The upright timbers flanking the south door have grooves down the sides to fit joints of the horizontal logs. The roof of the house is currently boards with shingles, but was originally of log and branch frame with thatching. The attached barn is of oak post-and-beam framework construction with diagonal sway braces and trusses fastened with lap-notch joinery and wooden pegs. The exterior siding had been painted red.

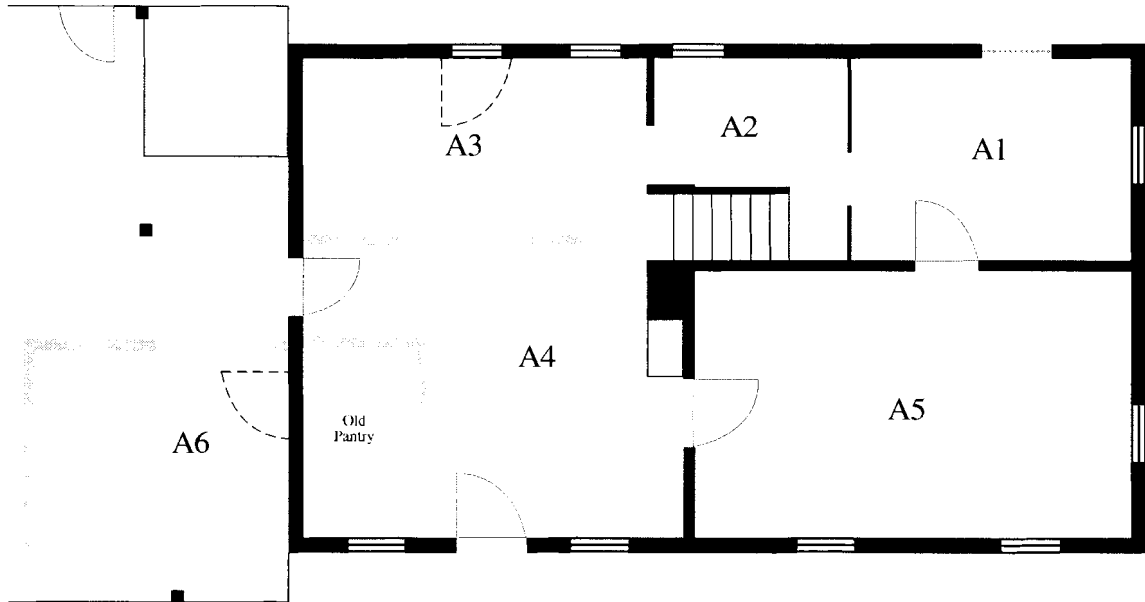
The ceiling of the house includes exposed rafters spaced every four feet, which extend to the exterior of the log walls. The ceilings are of painted wood (green, grey, blue) now covered in plasterboard and paper. Most renovations in the house occurred in the 1950s. All interior walls were covered in plasterboard in the 1950s, and before this they were of mud plaster, as well as shiplap siding in some areas. A mud layer behind the shiplap functioned as insulation. Wainscoting was located on all walls (except A5, where it has been removed), and was originally painted ochre yellow in the east half and grey in the west half of the house. A brick oven was located in the center of the house in the kitchen area (A3/A4), and the chimney and access doors to this structure still exist. A wood-burning heater was placed in the center of this area, and a cookstove was located in the southwest corner of A4 after 1950. A cabinet was built onto the east wall of A4 just south of the brick chimney. This house never had a *Glausschaup* in the *Groote Stow*, although one currently stands in the barn.

The floors of the east half of the house were originally painted yellow, then grey, and eventually covered in linoleum. Around 1940, a room for human habitation was built in the southeast corner of the barn and attached to the house by a door (A6). It was insulated with wood shavings and heated by heat exchange through the doorway. This room is now gone, the door boarded up, and the area most recently served as a garage. The floors of the west portion were dirt until 1945, when a wooden floor was built on a stud frame placed directly on the ground. At this time, the root cellar located in the northern portion of the room was filled, and one was built in the southern portion. This western half of the house was originally one large area with a small pantry room in the southwestern corner. The stairs to the attic were located in this pantry area. The pantry was removed and the stairs moved to their present location in 1950, at the same time that a wall was built to separate the western half of the house into rooms A4 and A3. It was also at this time that the single room (B1) on the second floor was constructed. A door on the north wall of A3 has been replaced by a window, and a window just west of this has been boarded up. A window on the north wall of A1 has also been boarded up, and the wall between A1 and A2, is a later addition, meaning both formerly constituted one room. Some sort of feature, possibly a cabinet, was present on the north wall spanning both rooms. A hot water tank and tin bathing tub are currently located in Room A2, installed in 1965.

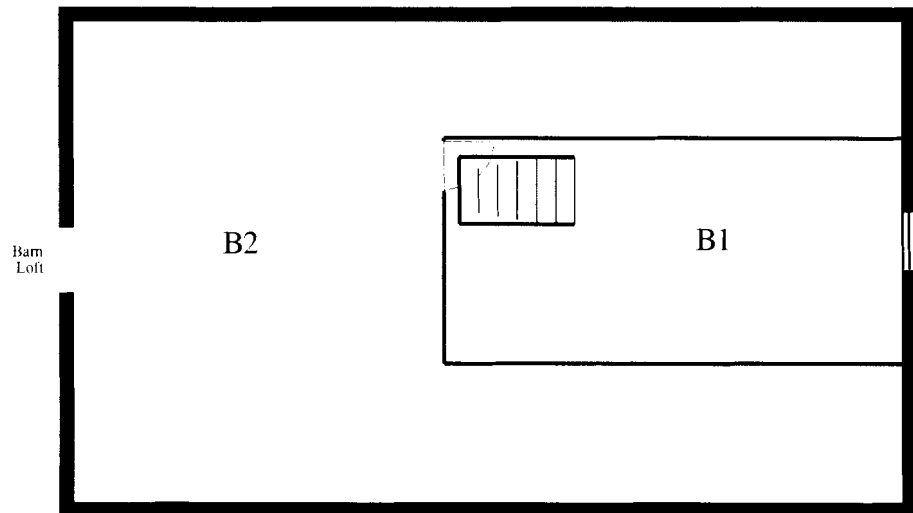
This house and yard was first homesteaded by the Penners, who migrated to Mexico in 1924. It was then rented by various tenants until 1940, when Peter Klassen's parents moved in. They bought the property in 1945. Mr. Klassen's father fled to Canada from Soviet conscription in 1921, and was eventually married in 1926, his wife working as a maid in Winkler. He worked for Mr. Serlok, a prominent businessman in Winkler, and moved to the village in the 1930s. Here he continued to work for Mr. Serlok in the blacksmith shop on the NW corner of the Chortitz crossroads. Mr. Serlok at this time owned much of the village, having bought property from Mennonites migrating to Mexico in the 1920s. The Klassen family moved into 26 Chortitz in 1940 "because there was more room for a bigger family, and dad started his own blacksmith's shop." The family also farmed. There were 12 children in total, with about 10 living at home at

any one time, and the upper room was built to accommodate four girls. Five children slept in A3/A4, the older boys slept in A6 (the *Somma Stow* in the barn), and the parents slept in A5, the *Groote Stow*. Peter Klassen (b.1943) was married and lived in this house with his wife for one year before it was abandoned in 1976. They continue to live on the same yard in a newer house and provide the old house for public viewing.

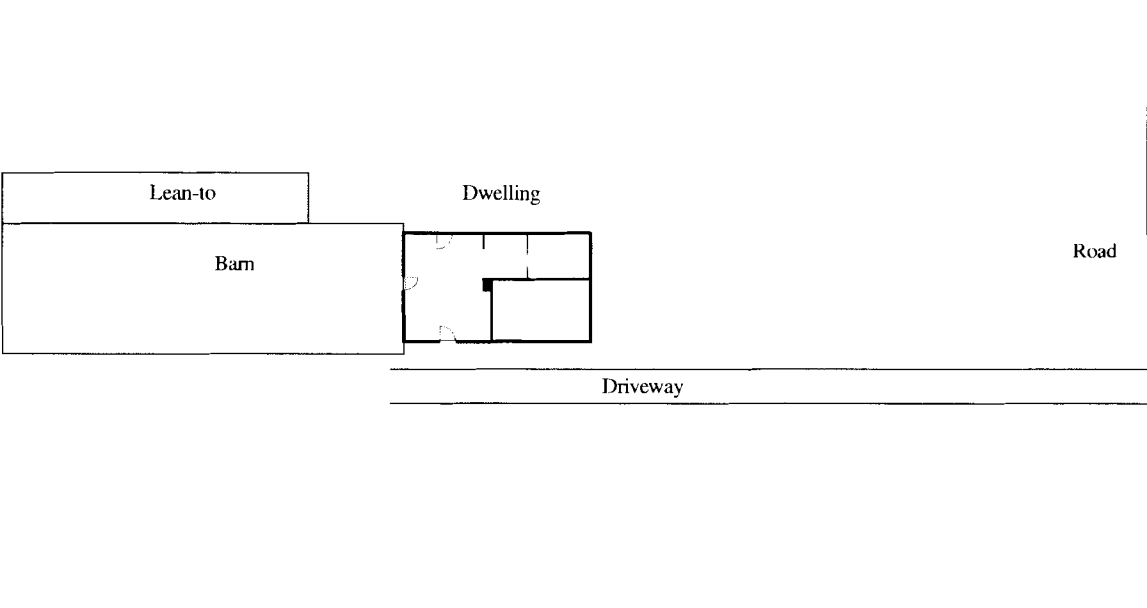
26 Chortitz Rd. South
Chortitz Village, Manitoba
Dwelling and part of barn

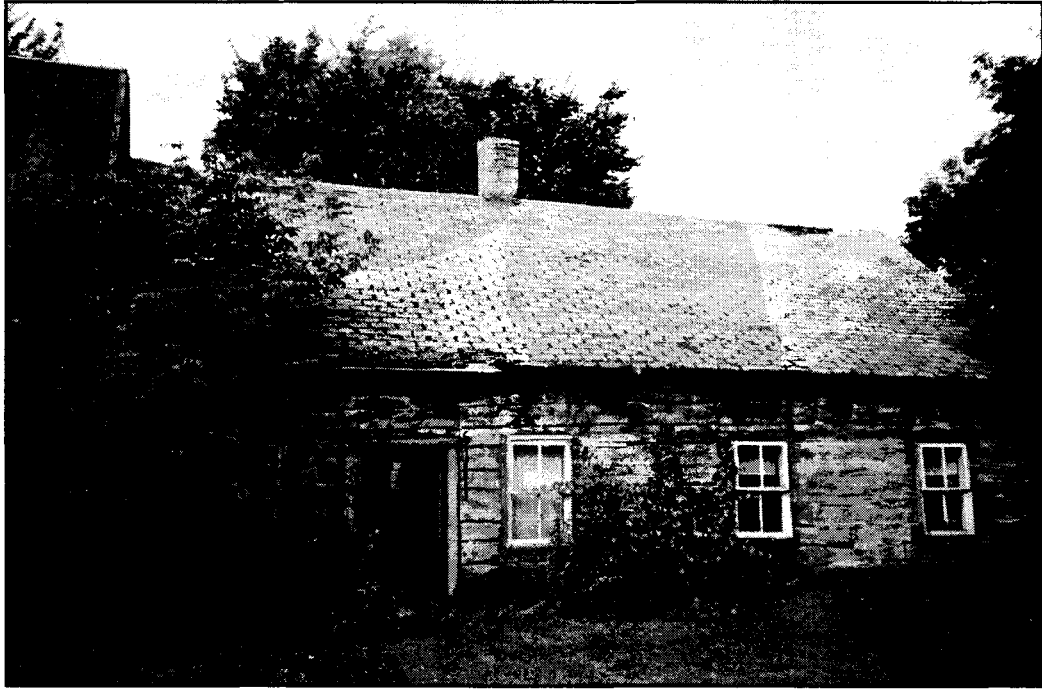


26 Chortitz Rd. S.
Chortitz Village, Manitoba
2nd Floor of Dwelling

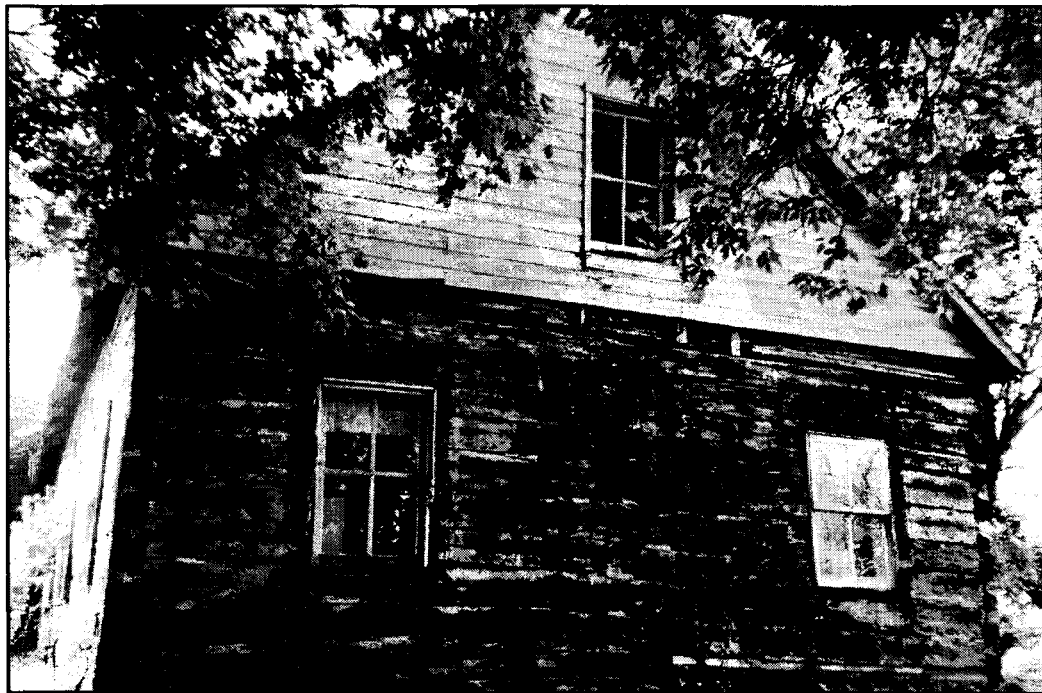


26 Chortitz Rd. South Yard
Chortitz Village, Manitoba

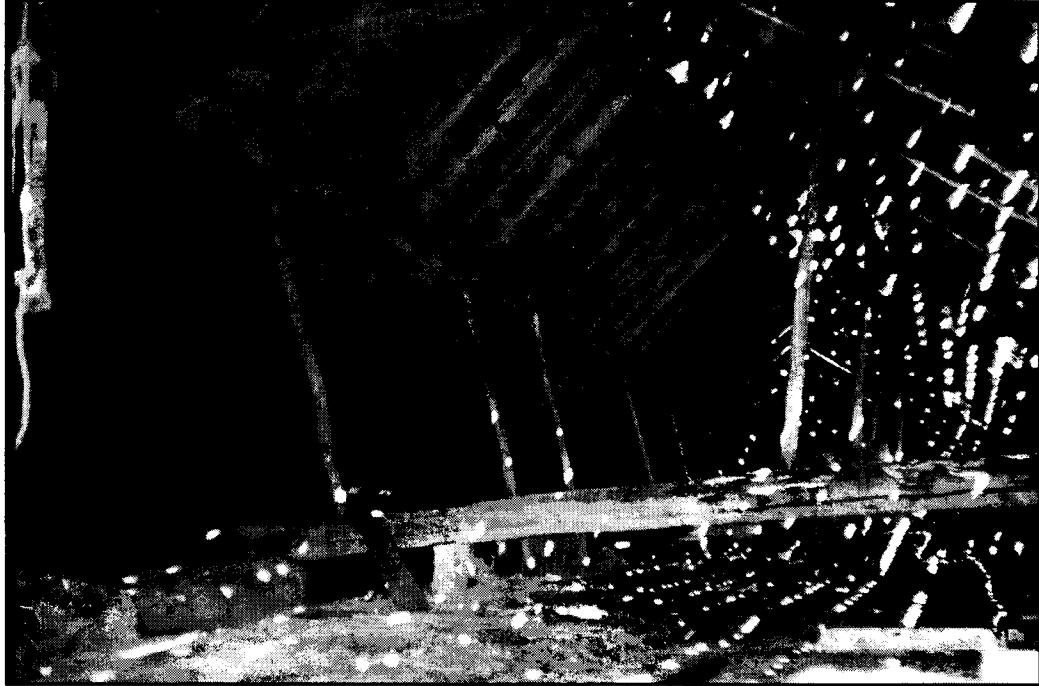




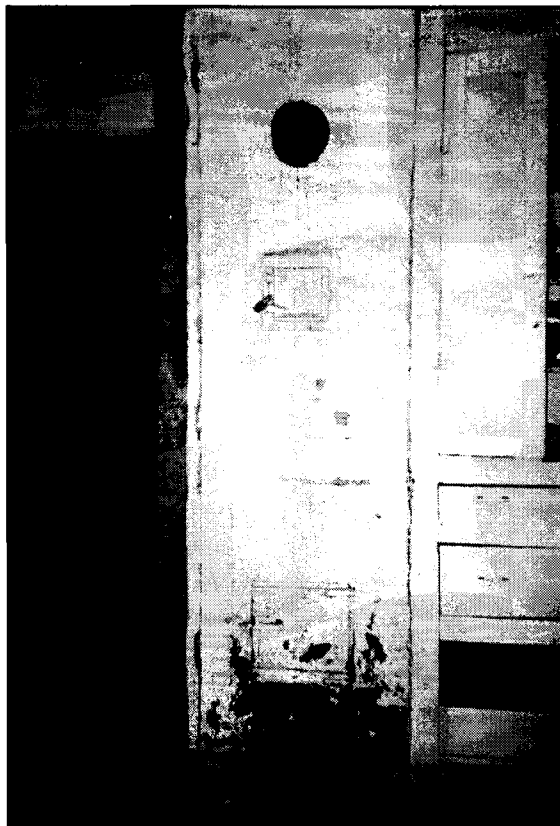
26 Chortitz Rd. South. South side of dwelling.



26 Chortitz Rd. South. East end of dwelling.



26 Chortitz Rd. South. Barn loft.



26 Chortitz Rd. South. Brick heating oven chimney, room A4.



26 Chortitz Rd. South. Dove tail joints,
Southeast corner of dwelling.

60 Chortitz Rd. South

Date of construction: Unknown (1880s?)

Interview: Frank and Mary Penner, December 6, 2001

This dwelling is built of stud frame construction on a wood sill foundation. The house has been painted a cream colour, with window frames on the east end and north side painted red, and on the south side white. The dwelling is currently used as a garage and workshop, with a chicken coop attached to the north door and a cattle pen directly west of the dwelling where the barn once stood. The roof currently has asphalt shingles. The south exterior doorframe was originally painted bright blue, and this was eventually covered with grey. The barn once attached to this dwelling has been destroyed, although the concrete pads further back from the house testify to its placement (this barn may have been newer than the house, or the old barn may have been raised to pour the concrete pads). A rectangular area of burnt wood remains lies furthest west of the house, but attached to the end of the furthest pad.

The western half of the interior of the dwelling has been gutted, although wall features can be distinguished by paint marks on the ceilings. The stairs to the ceiling and former cellar still exist. The ceiling of the entire dwelling contains 11 cross beams (including the beams on the gable ends) spaced four feet apart. The western portion can be divided into number of previous rooms including the *Vaeathues* (A4), the *Hinjetues* (including a possible black kitchen) (A3), a *Somma Stow* (A5), and a *Koma* (A6). It seems likely that a *Gang* led from the west door (barn door) to a door linking it with A3. A5 has a newer door providing a south exit.

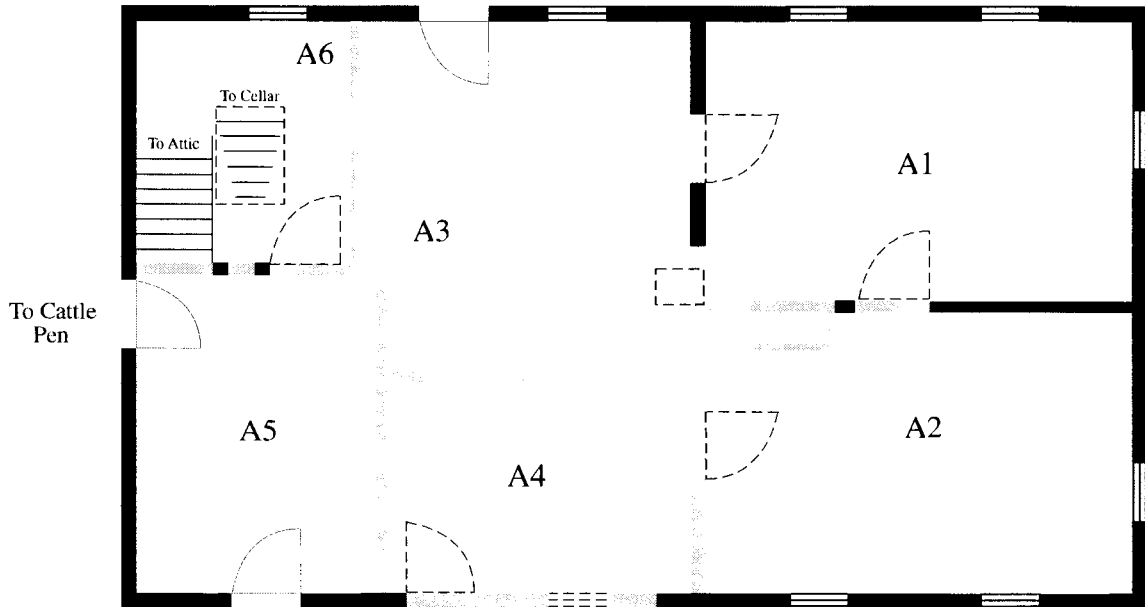
The *Atj Stow* (A1) and the *Groote Stow* (A2) have walls covered in white plaster with stone inclusions on horizontal slats. This has been whitewashed (light blue tinge) covered in pink wallpaper. The wooden vertical wainscotting was painted bright blue with a black top moulding, which was painted over with cream paint and pink for the moulding. The south portion of the west wall of A1 is all wood without wainscotting, painted grey, then light blue, then pink. The massive door frames (22 cm wide on each side) between A2 and A1, and A1 and A3 are set into the wall and were originally painted bright blue. The interior of the window frames were also painted bright blue. Both A1 and A2 had ceilings originally painted emerald green, covered afterwards in successive layers of white and lime green.

The boards framing the doorway from A3 to A1 are half as wide as their counterparts on the other side of the door in A1, although their original colour is also bright blue. The central brick oven was eventually replaced by a wood or coal burning stove, and a round hole in the wall is evidence of round heating ducts. The floors of the western portion of the house were painted mustard yellow and eventually covered with linoleum, now very old and tattered. The boards framing the door to the barn are also quite wide, 15 cm, set into the wall, and were originally painted a bright blue.

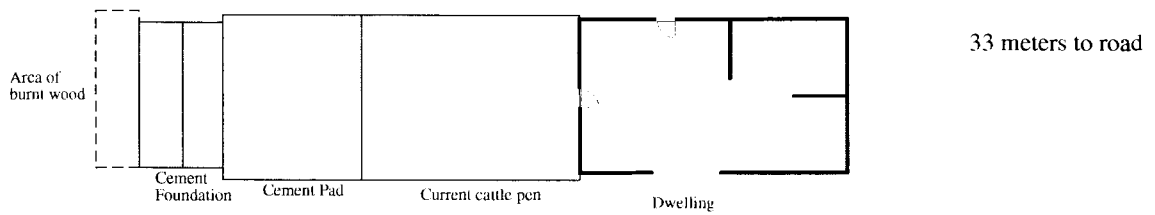
Peter and Helena Sawatzky homesteaded this lot from 1875-1888, and were succeeded by William and Helena Fehr until 1905. Martin and Helena Penner, uncle and aunt to Frank Penner, lived in this house from 1905-1949 (Dyck, 2002:11). Frank remembers his uncle and aunt sleeping in the *Groote Stow* unless the grandparents came to stay with the family. In this case, the grandparents would move into the *Groote Stow*

(A2), and Martin and Helena would move into the *Atj Stow* (A1). Grandparents often moved from one of their children's house to the next, often for a month or so. This would result in the burden of care being dispersed throughout the family. Martin and Helena had 4 boys and 4 girls, and Frank remembers some were already married when he was young.

60 Chortitz Rd. South
Chortitz Village
Main Floor

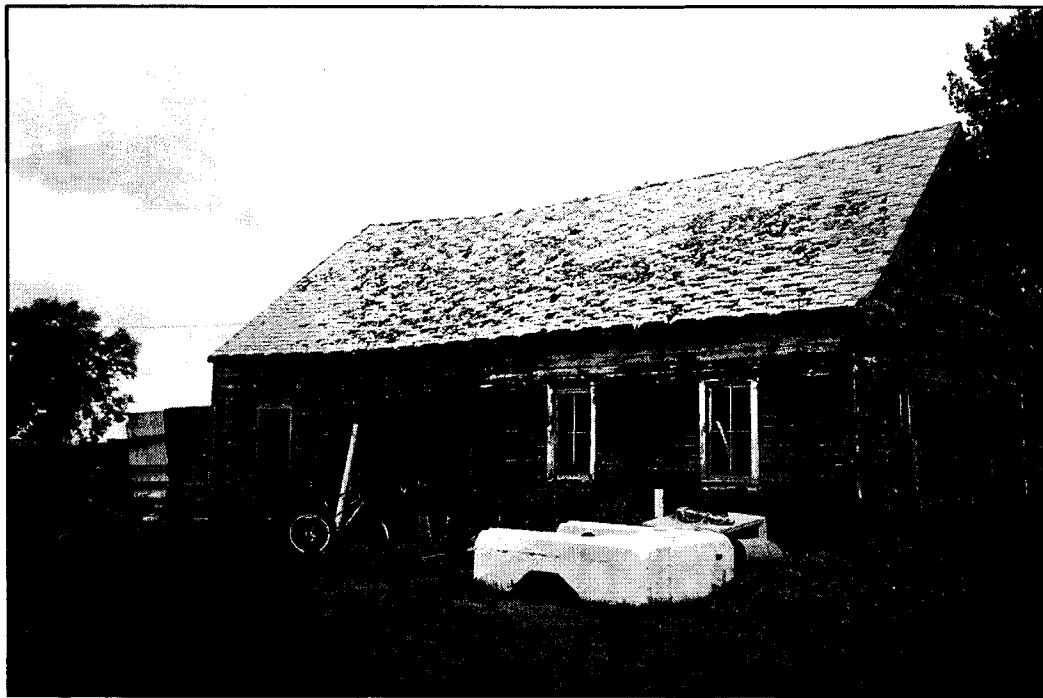


60 Chortitz Rd. S Yard
Dwelling, attached pen and
previous foundations





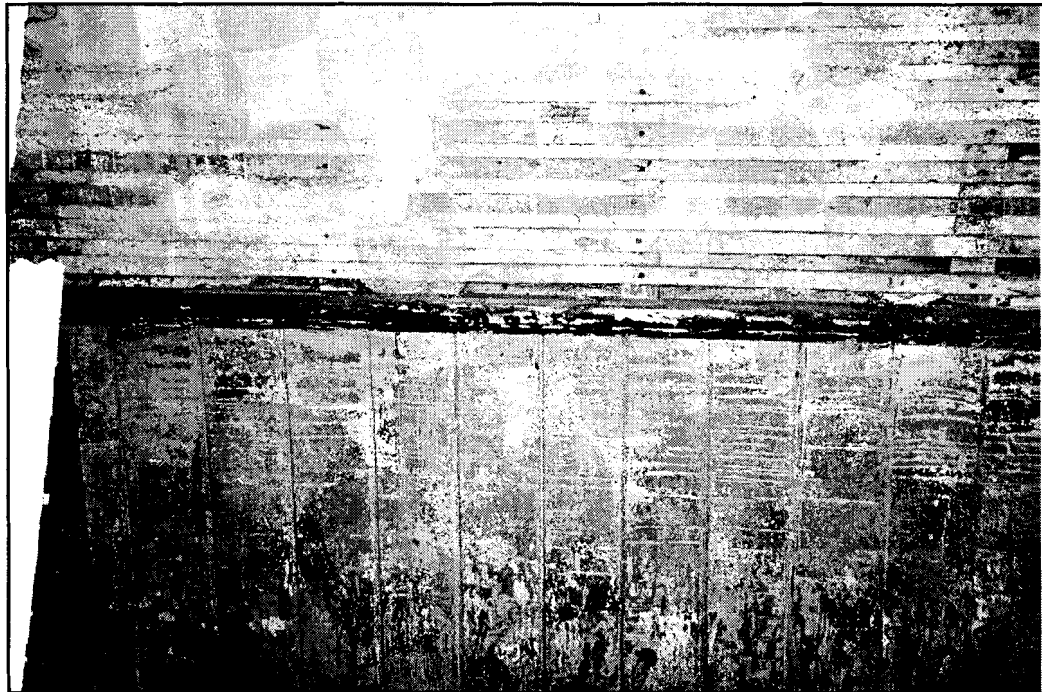
60 Chortitz Rd. South. East end of dwelling.



60 Chortitz Rd. South. South side of dwelling.



60 Chortitz Rd. South. West end of dwelling, formerly attached to barn.



60 Chortitz Rd. South. Wainscoting and plaster and slat wall construction, North side of room (A1).

70 Chortitz Rd. South

Date of construction: House ca.1875-1880, Barn 1937

Interview: Frank and Mary Penner

The oldest part of this housebarn (rooms A1 and A2) was built with post-and-fill log construction. Squared uprights created the basic frame of the house and were attached to wooden sill and top plates with mortise and tenon notches secured with wooden dowels. Roughly squared horizontal "filler" logs were placed between the uprights and fastened with cut nails. Like the example in Butterfield and Ledohowski (1984:91), the space created by the corner diagonal bracing was merely filled in with fitted logs. Mud was used for chinking and 6" siding fastened to the exterior. The window shutters were painted light blue and light grey, and window trim was painted white. Early in the history of the house a lean-to was attached to the north side of the structure, but this was only finished for year round habitation in the 1930s. The original barn was dismantled and the current one built in 1937, after which A3 was constructed to unify the house and barn. The barn is red with white trim. The entire house section, including the area where the northern lean-to once stood, was built on a rectangular mound of heaped earth approximately 50 cm in height. It slopes to ground level 1.5 meters from the south side and 3 meters from the east side. The only other house in this study that was treated in this manner is 26 Chortitz Rd.S., three lots north of this structure.

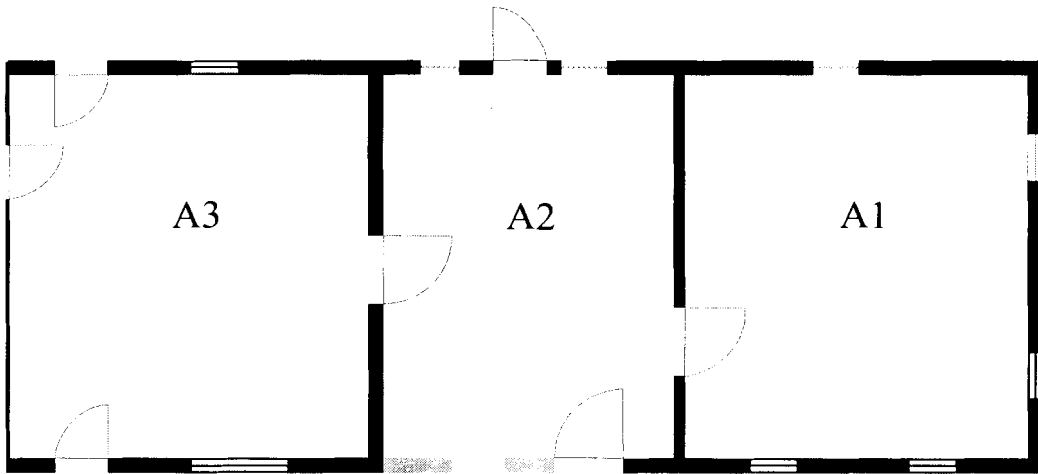
Rooms A1 and A2 have sunk approximately 30 cm. The interior walls were treated with a mud and chaff mixture plastered over a framework of diagonal slats that were nailed directly to the logs. Wainscotting is nailed onto the lower portion of the log walls in A1. The bottom part of the west wall north of the door in room A2 is constructed of stacked 2x6 boards fastened with cut nails. The wall between A1 and A2 is of stud construction and covered in shiplap siding. The ceilings are of wood (painted grey initially, and later white) with six exposed rafters spaced four feet apart. The floors are of wood, painted ochre yellow in A1 and green in A2, with A3 covered in linoleum. A dirt root cellar under A2 has been filled in. Room A3 has walls of light stud construction with plasterboard painted light blue, except for the north wall, which has shiplap siding.

The original central brick oven located in the middle of the wall between A1 and A2 was removed in the 1930s and replaced with a wood-burning oven. The previous northern lean-to also had a cook stove, and this room acted as a kitchen and bedroom in the summer and a pantry in the winter. When A3 was constructed it became the kitchen and has a chimney on the east wall. The doorframe of A1 was black, later painted grey, and the door itself was painted red and black and later white. The large trimming of the north doorway of A2 was painted a bright blue and later covered with white paint. The window trim of A1 and A2 were also painted bright blue and covered in grey and then white paint. The doors in A3 are light blue and all trim is white.

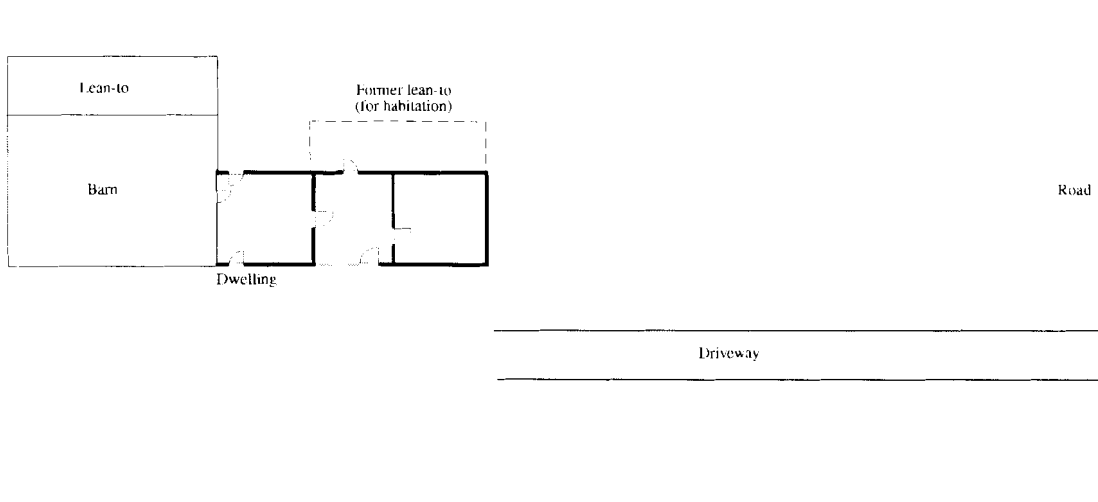
This lot does not appear on the earliest records of the 32 lots of the village in 1875 (Dyck and Harms, 1998:76). It is located directly south of the most southwestern lot (#32). It seems the first residents were Martin Penner (b.1873), the son of Martin Penner who lived on Lot 28, and wife Helena, who moved onto 70 Chortitz S. in 1892. (Note: lot numbers and street numbers are not the same in this village). The young Martin would have been 19 years of age. It passed to his brother Frans Penner (b.1875) in 1905, who was the father of Frank Penner. Frans died in 1939, and his wife Helena died in 1957 in this home. Although this lot was first inhabited in 1892, the construction method of the house seems to be of an earlier period (1870s) and may have been moved here from another location, a common practice among Mennonites. Another possibility is that this could have been the village herdsman's residence, which is known to have been at the south end of the village, and would not have been included on the original plan of village lots. The original two-room structure including rooms A1 and A2 greatly resembles SE4, the former herdsman's house now located in Neubergthal.

Frank Penner (b.1910) grew up in this house, and had six sisters and three brothers. One of his brothers died at the age of six, and a few of his four older sisters were married and had moved out by the time Frank was born. At this time A3 had not yet been built, and the house consisted only of three rooms: A1, A2 and the north lean-to. As a child Frank slept in A1 with his parents and brother, and when he was older he moved into the lean-to, but only used this room in the summers. Room A2 was used as the kitchen/dining and visiting room, and was also used by the girls for sleeping. Frank's father died in 1939 at the age of 65. Frank and Mary married in 1940 and moved into the house with his mother. Frank then assumed the role of head farmer. They lived in the north lean-to, which by that time had been finished for year-round habitation.

70 Chortitz Rd. South
Chortitz, Manitoba
Dwelling

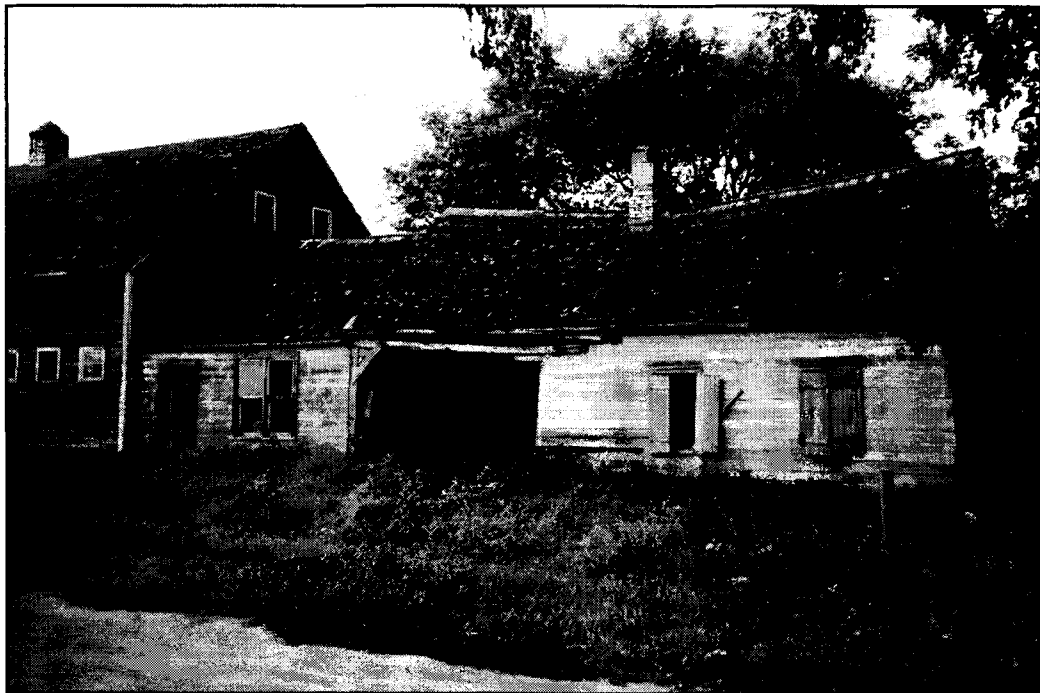


70 Chortitz Rd. South
Chortitz, Manitoba
Yard





70 Chortitz Rd. South. Wainscoting and wall construction, North wall of A1.



70 Chortitz Rd. South. South side of dwelling.



70 Chortitz Rd. South. Southwest corner of barn.



70 Chortitz Rd. South. Diagonal brace, South side of dwelling.

Teichroeb House, originally located in Chortitz Village

Date of construction: 1892 (house and barn)

Interview: Mary Penner

The Teichroeb House was originally located on the seventh lot north of the crossroads on the West side of Chortitz village in the West Reserve. It was moved to the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach Manitoba in 1967. All orientations given in the following description follow the original Chortitz orientation of structure.

The dwelling originally rested on a stone foundation (now cement) and is built of 2x6 crib construction. The interior partition walls are also crib construction utilizing 2x4's. The exterior is covered in 6" siding painted white, and all windows have replica shutters. The roof has new cedar shingles. The attached barn is of oak post-and-beam framework construction with diagonal sway braces and trusses fastened with lap-notch joinery and wooden pegs. The exterior siding had been painted red. A lean-to is attached to the north side, and a smaller one has been attached to the south-west corner of the barn.

The ceiling of the house contains exposed, bevelled rafters spaced 3.5 feet apart. In some areas it seems the ceilings were painted ochre yellow before they were painted white. The floors are all constructed of wood, with the floor of A8 being a reconstruction. All the doors of the house are currently painted white, which covers two older layers of dark blue and grey paint. The central brick heating oven is a reconstruction, as well as the brick cookstove. The brick extension of the brick heating oven extends into A1 and A3, and the brick is covered in plaster and whitewashed. All the rooms contain light blue wainscoting, and the outer walls are constructed of mud and chaff plaster with whitewash. The *Groote Stow* (A1) a glass cabinet built into the southwest corner of the room. The floor is original ochre yellow, and both doors to room A3 and A8 have glass upper panels. The north wall of A1 contains a hole near the ceiling shared with A2, ostensibly for ventilation and heat exchange. Rooms A2 and A3 are separated by recently constructed wooden wall which replaced a somewhat older but not original masonite wall. The floors of both rooms are ochre yellow covering an older paint layer of grey colour. The *Hinjetues* (A4) originally had unpainted ceilings and contains a *Schwotet Tjaatj* (Black Kitchen) (A6) which encompasses the brick stove and heating unit. The north wall of this black kitchen is a reconstruction, and both it and the south wall of this "room" have window openings (without glass) for light and ventilation. The *Koma* (A5) contains a trap door leading originally to a cellar under the west part of the house. The *Gang* (A9) has doors at both ends and leads to the stable. A door leads from the north wall of the *Gang* to the attic. The attic contains a smoke chamber as an extension of the chimney for smoking meats.

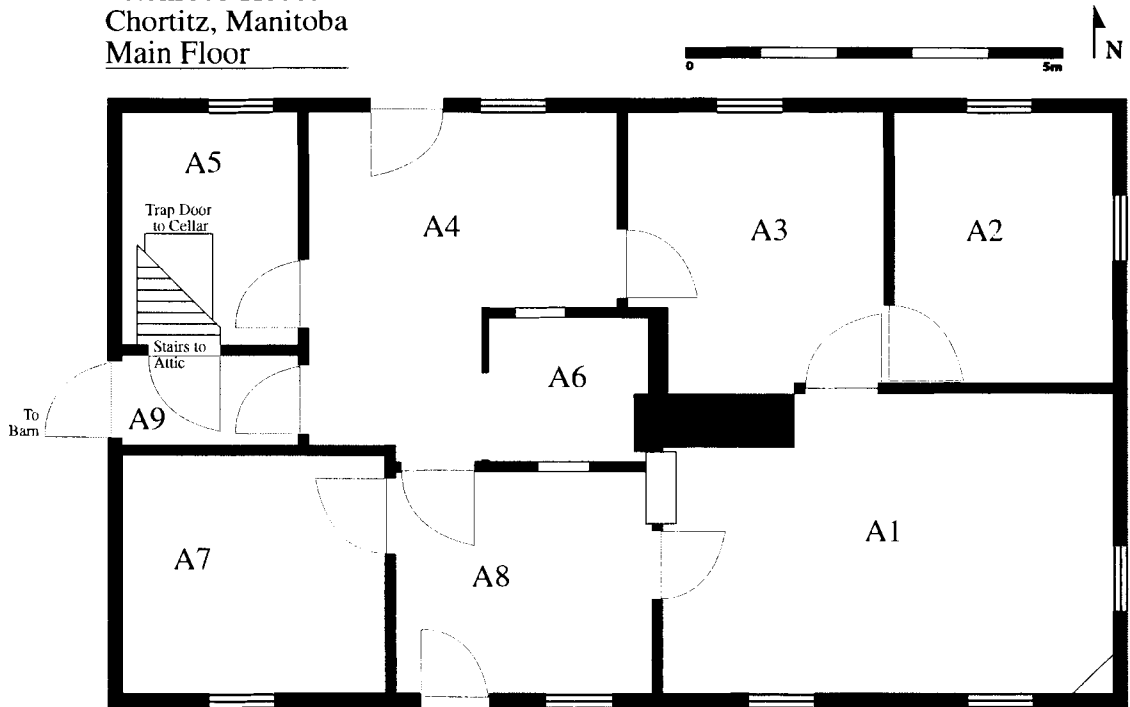
Jacob and Justina Teichroeb moved onto the lot in Chortitz in 1890 from the settlement of Blumstein, and built this housebarn in 1892. They had 13 children, 5 of whom died. The oldest daughter Justina married in 1893, so there were never more than 8 children at one time living in the house. By the time of Justina's death in 1902, only the father, two sons, and one daughter remained in the home. The following spring the father remarried a Mennonite widow (Maria Peters, cousin to Justina) with nine children from Saskatchewan. After three months Maria died all these children except for one went to different homes in five different villages. The following November Jacob Teichroeb remarried once more to a Justina Bergen (nee Redekop) with her three children. They moved to Blumenort in 1903 and sold the Teichroeb land and many possessions by auction.

Abram and Aganatha Froese were living in the housebarn by 1909. This was Aganatha's third husband, and they had moved from a homestead near Hoffnungfeld because Abram preferred to live in a village. Aganatha had 10 children from her three husbands, but all were grown with children by the 1920s. The Froeses were the grandparents of Mary Penner. She recalls that by the early 1920s two grandchildren of the Froese's (Jacob and Leid) were living with them at the home because their mother had died. The grandparents slept in the *Groote Stow* (A1) while

Jacob slept in the *Somma Stow* (A7) and Leid in the *Tjliene Stow* (A3). The *Groote Stow* contained a bed with piled bedding, some chairs, a *ruhbenk* (wooden couch), an *ackjshop* (corner cabinet) with a table beneath it. A glass cabinet contained "some nice cups that she had". A common item in many homes was a chest, but Mary's grandfather "didn't think much of a chest" (Interview 2002). Mary also remembers geraniums in the windows throughout the year. Abram Froese died in 1926 and the grandmother Aganatha moved to Mexico the same year with the larger migration. By 1925 however, four Thiessen siblings had purchased the house and moved in with the Froese couple and their two grandchildren. They later built a summer kitchen to the north of the house.

In 1951 the Jacob Wall family purchased the house and some land, and lived in the home until the 1960s when they began building a new home.

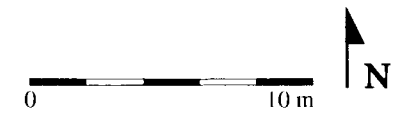
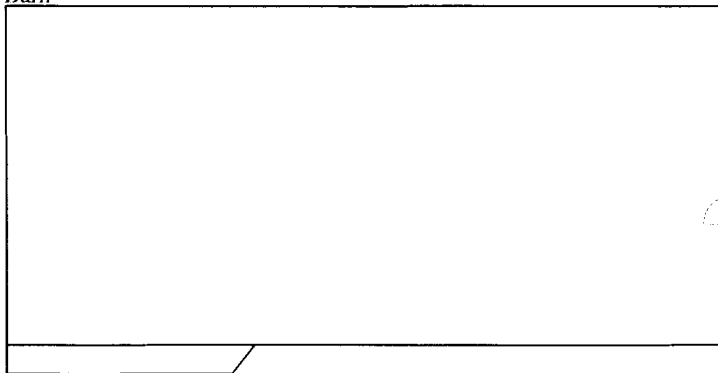
Teichroeb House
Chortitz, Manitoba
Main Floor



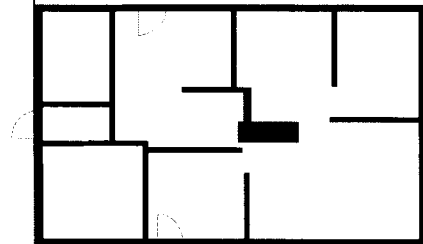
Teichroeb Housebarn
Chortitz Village

(now at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, MB)

Barn



Dwelling





Teichroeb House. Kitchen (A4).



Teichroeb House. Glausschaup, Groote Stow (A1).

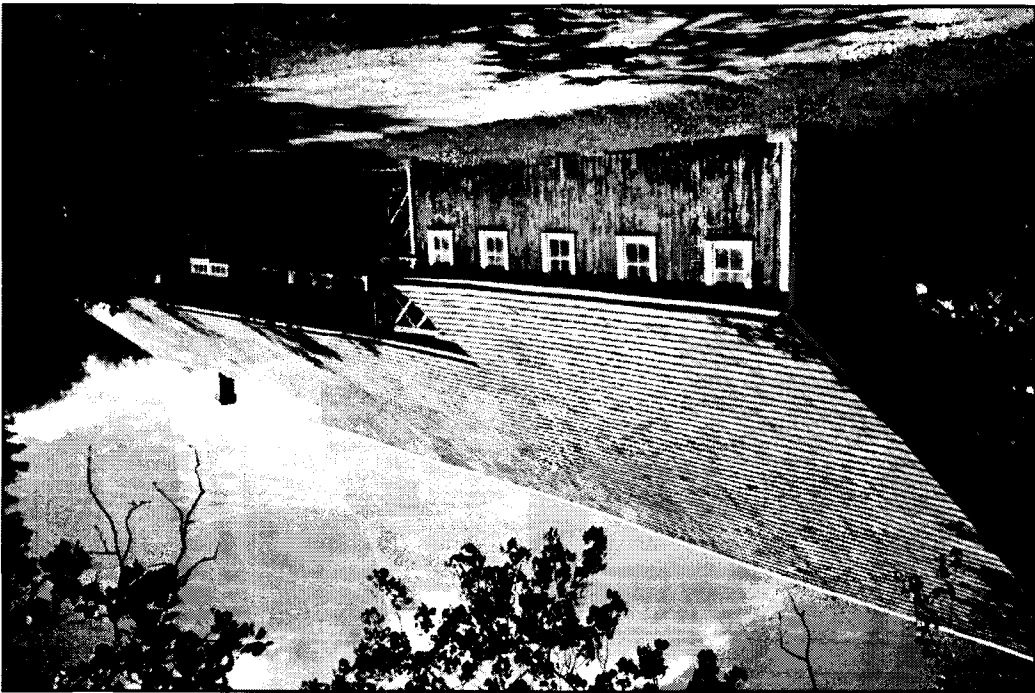


Teichroeb House. Dwelling and Summer Kitchen.



Teichroeb House. Brick heating oven (A6).

Teichroeb House. Barn.



52 Chortitz Rd. N

Date of Construction: Unknown (1880s – 1890s)

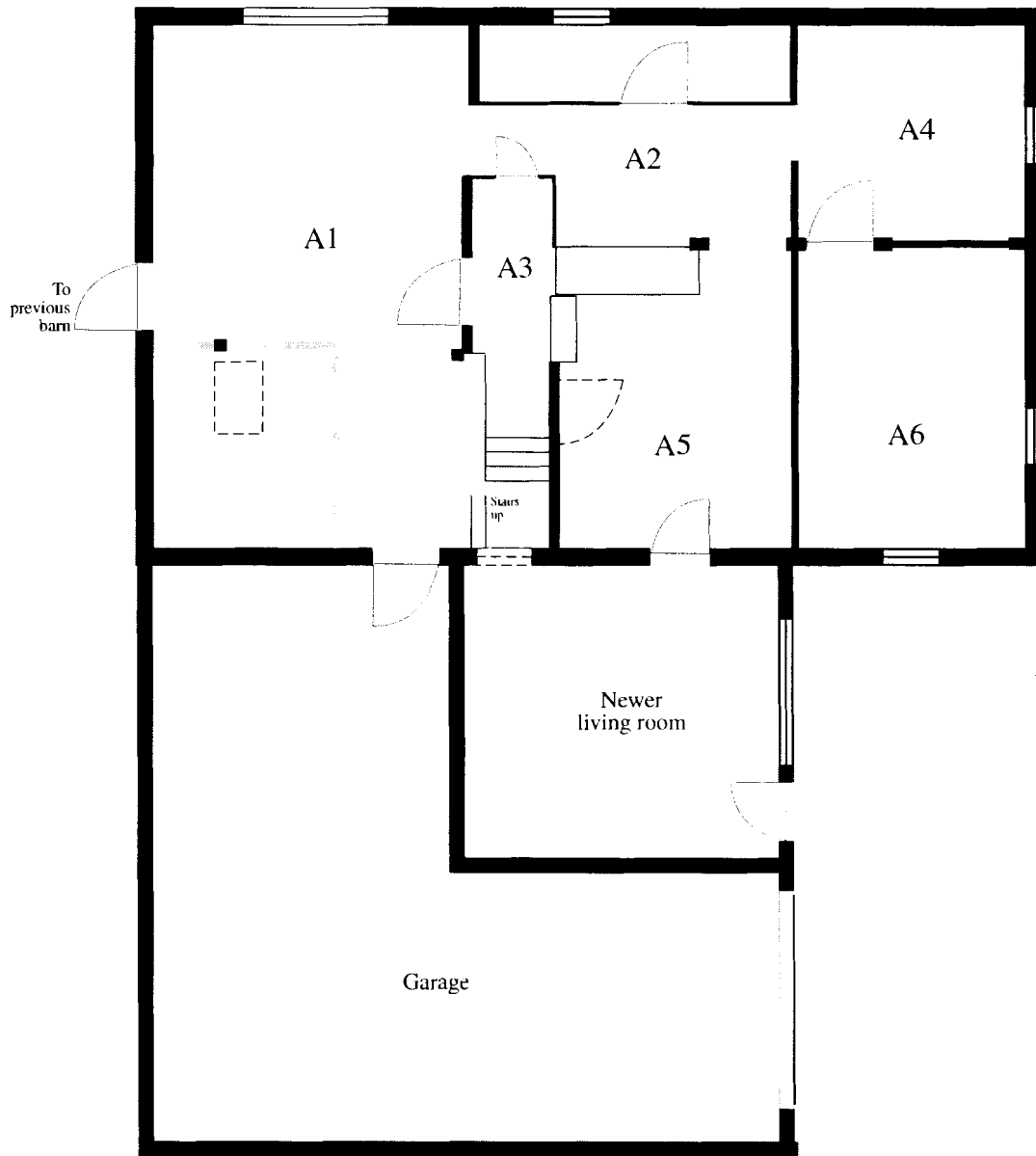
Interview: None

It is unknown when the barn section of this housebarn was removed, but the crib construction of the dwelling walls suggests a building date in the 1880s or early 1890s. The dwelling has had numerous interior renovations, most of which took place in the 1970s. The exterior has plastic siding, and access to the upper floors was unavailable. Nevertheless some original features were visible, and much of the original layout can be reconstructed. The entire ceiling of the home reveals exposed 8x10" cross beams spaced every 5', which is the widest spacing seen in the sample of housebarns in this study. This may have been made possible by extremely large ceiling boards, measuring a full 10x4".

The kitchen/dining room (A1) has had the original *Koma* and stairs to the attic removed from the southwest corner of the room. The original trap door to the cellar still exists, and the cellar is still used. The current stairs to the second floor were constructed in the 1970s. The front door now leads to a garage, and the back door was removed in 1970 to accommodate a large 2 m wide window on the north side of the kitchen. The door on the west wall of the kitchen would have led into the barn. A3 was constructed as a furnace room and would have replaced the original brick heating oven. The *Groote Stow* was split into two rooms (A5 and A6), and the original *Glausshaup* (painted first bright blue and later white) still exists in the northwest corner of A5. The door south of the *Glausshaup* has been boarded up, and the southwest window now accommodates a door to newer living room addition. The wall and vertical oak beams between rooms A6 and A4 are original to the house, although the door placement may have been a few feet further west. It is unknown if the wall separating rooms A4 and A2 is original to the house, although it seems unlikely that the two would have originally been a single, long and narrow room. It is more probable that these two rooms were always split into the *Atj Stow* (A4) and the *Tjliene Stow* (A2). The bathroom along the north wall of A2 was constructed in the 1970s. The earliest colours for the window and door frames seems to have been dark green.

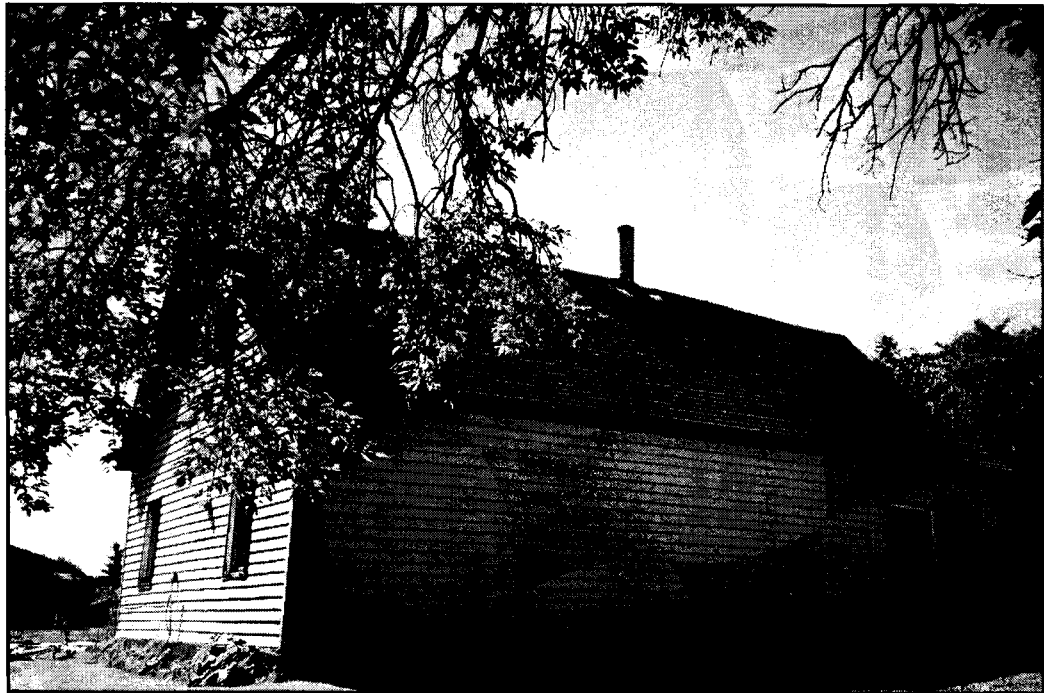
The lot (21) was originally homesteaded by Abram and Eleonora Sawatzky, who lived there from 1875-1916, and would have constructed this house. In the 1880 Census they are listed as having one daughter, Eleonore, born in 1872. Abram (or Abraham) was the son of Peter and Helena Sawatzky, who homesteaded lot 32 (60 Chortitz Rd. S), also part of this study. Both families came from Neuendorf, Chortitza Colony, South Russia. It is unknown where they moved in 1916, although Abram may have died in Canada, and his wife moved to Rosenthal, Manitoba Colony, Mexico in the 1920s. The house was inhabited by Peter and Agatha Thiessen until 1925, when they probably moved to Mexico. It was then inhabited by a succession of four other Mennonite families until 1976, when the current residents, Aaron and Helen Wolfe and their family, purchased the house.

52 Chortitz Rd. N.
Chortitz, Manitoba
Dwelling





52 Chortitz Rd. North. East end of dwelling.



52 Chortitz Rd. North. North side of dwelling.

Rempel Housebarn

Date of Construction: 1928

Interview: Henry and Ed Rempel

The village of Sommerfeld is located approximately one mile east of Neuberghthal, on the south side of the highway. The Rempel Housebarn, on what is known as yard 21, is located on the north side of the highway. The village was established in 1880 by families moving from the East Reserve in search of better farmland. The land where the Rempel Housebarn is located was originally owned by Jacob Friesen, who sold it to Abraham Wiebe in 1907, who lived on yard 15 in the village proper (Bergen 1994). The land was registered to his son Abram Wiebe (b. 1899) in 1925 (married to Aganetha Kehler). In 1945 the Wiebe's moved to British Columbia, and the house was inhabited by Johann and Anna (Wiebe, sister of Abram Wiebe) Rempel until 1957, from Grunthal and Edenbthal, Manitoba. Their son Henry Rempel was married in 1955, and he and his wife continued to reside there until the early 1970s, when a new bungalow was built beside the structure. They resided there until 1981, and it has since been inhabited by Edwin (son of Henry) and Carol Rempel.

The housebarn was built by Abram A. Wiebe, and was modelled after other buildings like it in the area being built at the time: "quite a few, but not too many" (Rempel Interview, 2002) (see NE12, NE14, Driedger House). Gravel was hauled from the Bird's Hill area north of Winnipeg, and lumber was purchased in North Dakota. The house has a concrete foundation with a full cellar under rooms A1 and A2. Both floors of the house and the barn were built at the same time with frame construction.

Room A1 was the living room and A2 the "winter kitchen". A2 provided access to the regular kitchen (A4), the stairs to the second floor, and the cellar. The floors of A1 and A2 are of wood and painted with checkered pattern in A1 and layers of floral and geometric designs in A2. All floors were eventually covered in linoleum (A1 before 1945, the other rooms after 1945). The floor level of A4 is 2 feet lower than the other residential rooms, and is effectively part of the barn structure. The main entrance to the residence was through the east door into A4. A door on the north wall of A4 led to the stables, but was boarded up in the late 1950s. Room A3 was used as a storage room and was unfinished and not used for habitation. The ceilings were of wood and painted white, with no exposed rafters. A cistern for holding rainwater was located beneath A4, and was fed by a concrete channel leading underneath A2 from the south side of the house. A pump was located in A4 to retrieve this water. The walls of A1 and A2 were covered with slats, mud and chaff plaster, and later giprock (A2 was painted pale green, then white, A1 painted white). The dividing wall had vertical wood boards painted white and later covered in giprock as well.

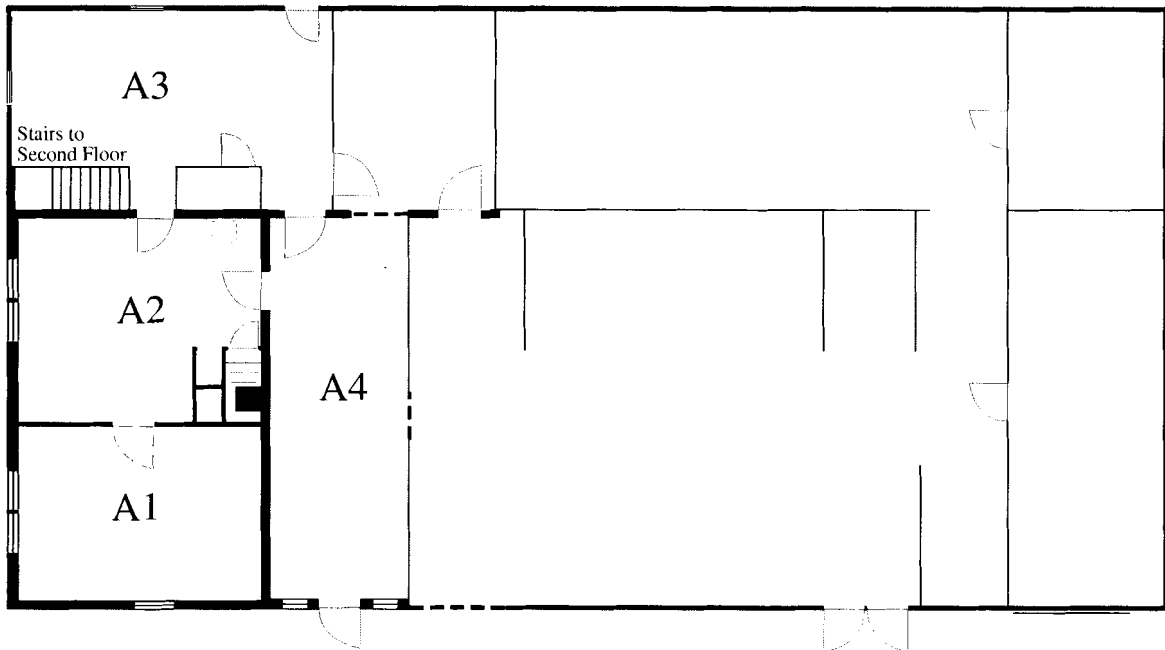
The second floor contained four rooms, three of which were bedrooms (B1-3), B4 being a storage area and access to attic (a tin closet is found here for storing flour). B1 had a "Drommel" (drum in Low German) which refers to a double tin drum attached to a heating pipe system, used for increasing heating efficiency. The dividing walls between these bedrooms were removed in the 1990s. The floors were never painted, but were eventually covered in linoleum.

Henry Rempel (Interview, 2002) moved into the house with his parents and 4 of his siblings in 1945 at the age of 22. He was married in 1955 and his parents stayed one more year until they moved to a home in Altona. Henry's parents at first slept in A1, the living room, and later moved to B1. Henry's room when he first moved in was B3, which he shared with his brother. When Henry and his wife became parents, they slept in B1, and their 3 boys slept in B2 and B3.

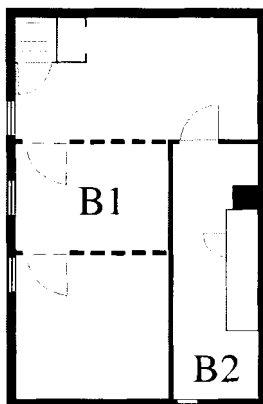
The house was heated with a wood stove until the 1950s, when an oil heater was installed. Decorations in the house included "calendars, not many pictures, Bible verses later on when we moved in there, yes, one in the kitchen and one in the living room" (Rempel Interview,

2002). The stairs from A2 to the cellar were moved a few feet east in the late 1940s by Henry's father so that walls and an upright door could replace the trap door, which was considered too dangerous.

Rempel Housebarn
Sommerfeld, Manitoba
First Floor and Barn



Rempel Housebarn
Second Floor, dwelling





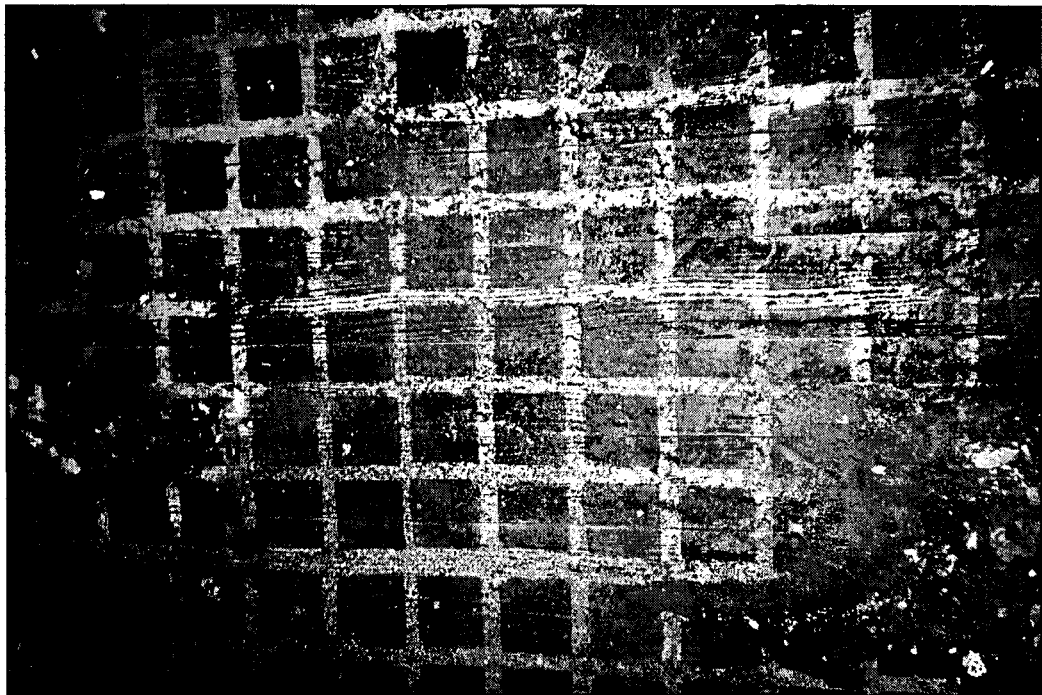
Rempel Housebarn. Window, South end of dwelling.



Rempel Housebarn. Northeast corner of Housebarn.



Rempel Housebarn. Painted floor patterns, room A2.



Rempel Housebarn. Painted floor patterns, room A1.

The Driedger Structures

1. Dwelling 1, Date of Construction: 1880s
 2. Dwelling 2 (Housebarn), Date of Construction: 1926
- Interview: Mr. Peter Driedger, July 10, 2002

The location of the two Driedger structures lies about half a mile north of the old village of Grunthal in the West Reserve, on the East side of the road. It is about six kilometers west of Neubergthal.

The first and older of the two structures is a frame house of 2x4 timbers, with 1x12 shiplap siding forming interior and exterior walls, fastened with cut nails. The south and north walls are collapsed, and the foundation is a framework of 6x8 wooden sills on limestone blocks. The exterior has never been painted. The interior has two rooms (52.45 m² total), and both have exposed 2x8 ceiling rafters. At some point commercial plaster was applied to the walls of the west room and painted yellow and later pastel green, which was also the colour of the ceiling and window frames. The east room was also painted pastel green, except the north door had a yellow frame, the window frames had a second coat of brown paint, and the east door was painted grey. The floors of both rooms had been treated with linseed oil.

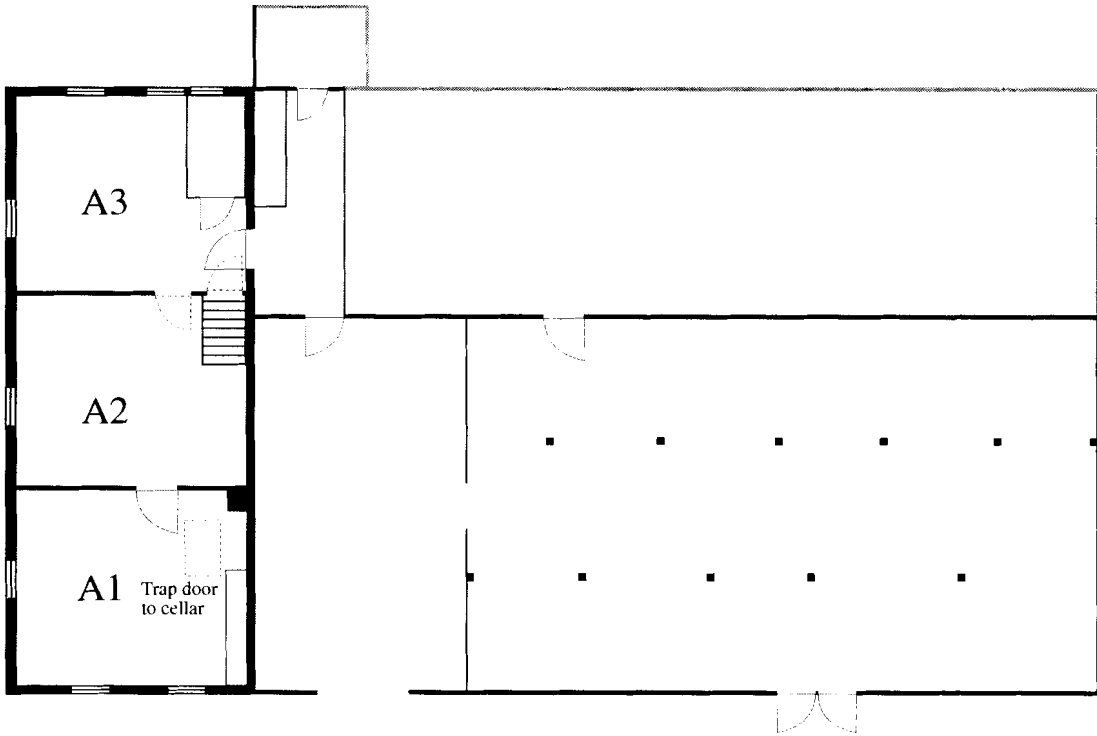
This house was originally located on the west side of the road and housed Mr. Driedger's grandparents (who migrated from Russia in 1893) and never had a barn attached to it. The west room was used as a living room and bedroom and the east room was the kitchen. Both rooms were heated with a small wood burning stove. In the 1930s, Mr. Driedger's father moved this house to the east side of the road, just north of the other housebarn (built in 1926) where it is presently situated. It was then used only as a summer kitchen and was not utilized in the winter.

Mr. Driedger's Uncle Ben Bergen built the housebarn structure in 1926, but according to Mr. Driedger soon lost it in bankruptcy because "he spent too much on it" (Int., 2002). It was then purchased by Mr. Driedger's father. It is a 2x4 framed house with a cement foundation and basement (now flooded), and is directly attached to the barn. The barn is constructed on wooden sills placed directly on cement sills. It is thus much higher than most barns in the study, (a full 12 inches off the ground), and a ramp was necessary for access into the eastern entrance. A water pump is located in the northwest corner of the stable area. The door leading into the north lean-to from this area was built in the 1950s, and before this feed had to be hauled from the lean-to around the outside of the barn to the cattle and horses.

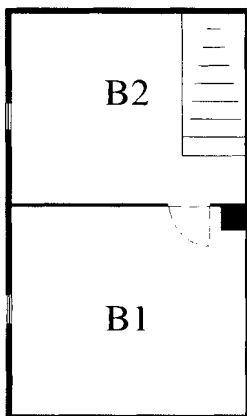
The floor of A1 was hand-painted with a flowered and checkered pattern in four colours, while A2 and A3 both had ochre yellow painted floors. These were all eventually covered in linoleum. All rooms had white painted plasterboard walls, probably replacing earlier plastered walls, and ceilings of varnished wood covered in plasterboard. The second floor, housing two bedrooms, was built between 1935 and 1940. The floor of the upper story is constructed of 2x10 planks, and the stairs are painted grey. The pantry connected to A3 and "fae laeve" (front entrance room, now gone) were constructed around the same time.

The exterior of the barn and house were originally both treated with 6" siding painted red, and could not be distinguished from a distance. The house section was later covered in false-brick asphalt siding. The *Gang* between the house and barn is located within the structure east of the kitchen (A3) and north of the "garage", and was painted pastel green. Mr. Driedger's entire family, including parents and eight siblings lived in the house at the same time. The parents slept in A1 with the youngest girls, while Peter, his two brothers, and oldest sister all slept in A2. When the second story was finished, one sister had already married and moved out, and all three boys and one of the sisters took these as their bedrooms. The house was heated with a wood stove in the southwest corner of A3 and a coal stove in A1, with pipes extending through all the rooms.

Driedger Housebarn, Dwelling 2
Formerly Gruenthal (West Reserve), Manitoba
First Floor




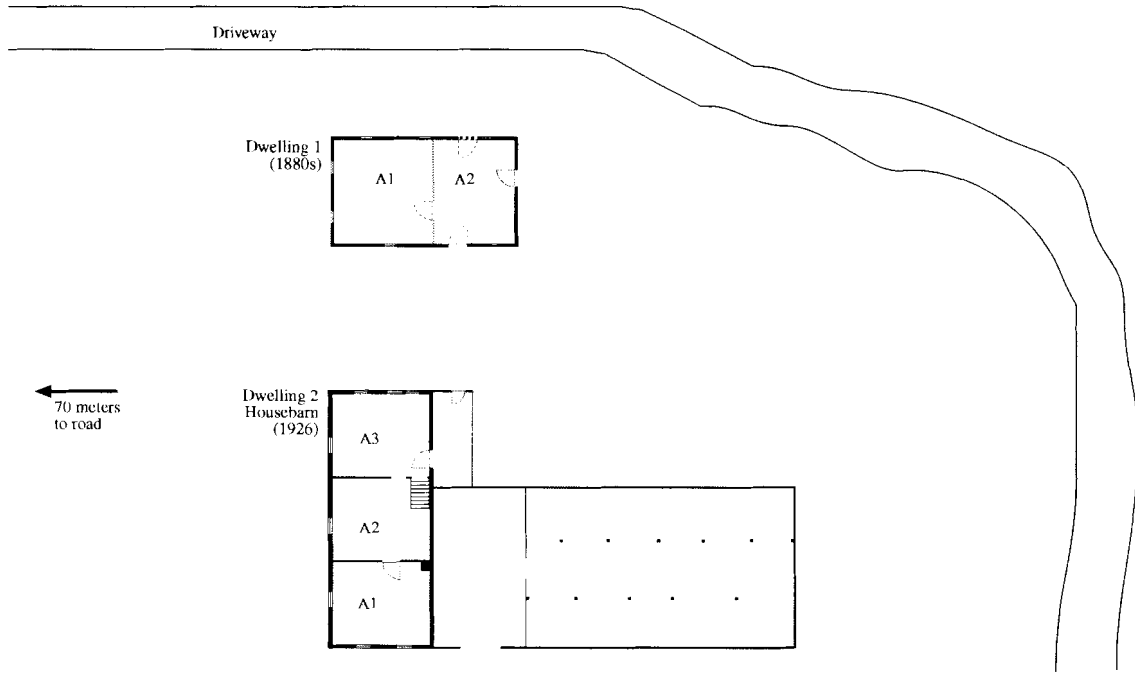
Driedger Housebarn,
Dwelling 2
Formerly Gruenthal
(West Reserve), Manitoba
Second Floor

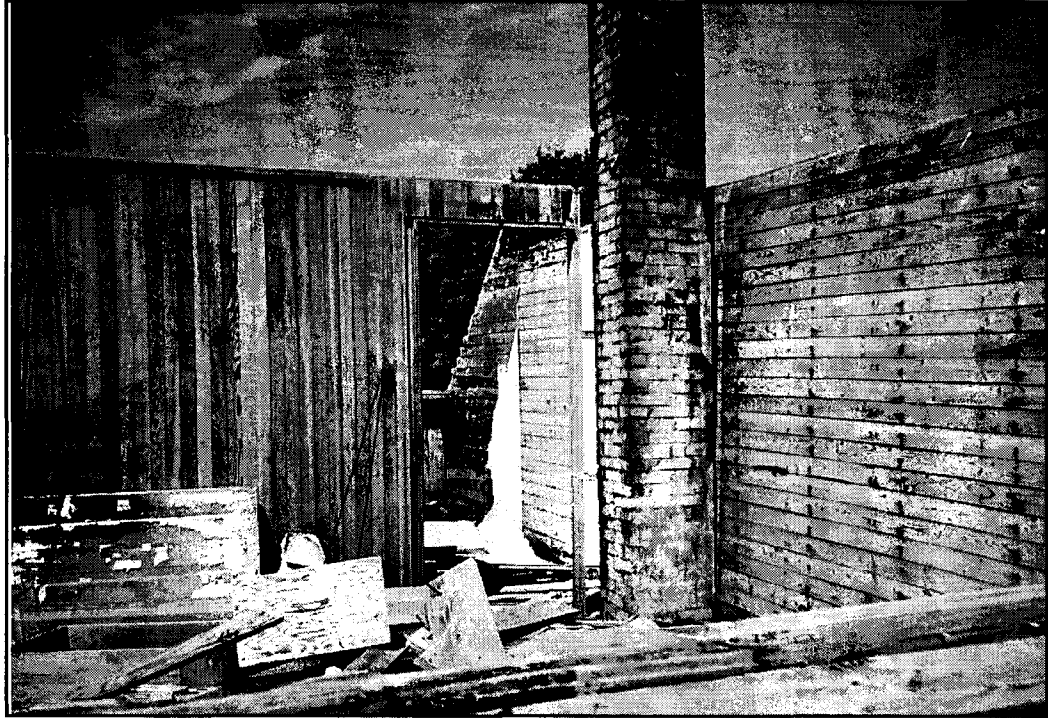


Driedger Yard
Formerly Gruenthal
(West Reserve), Manitoba

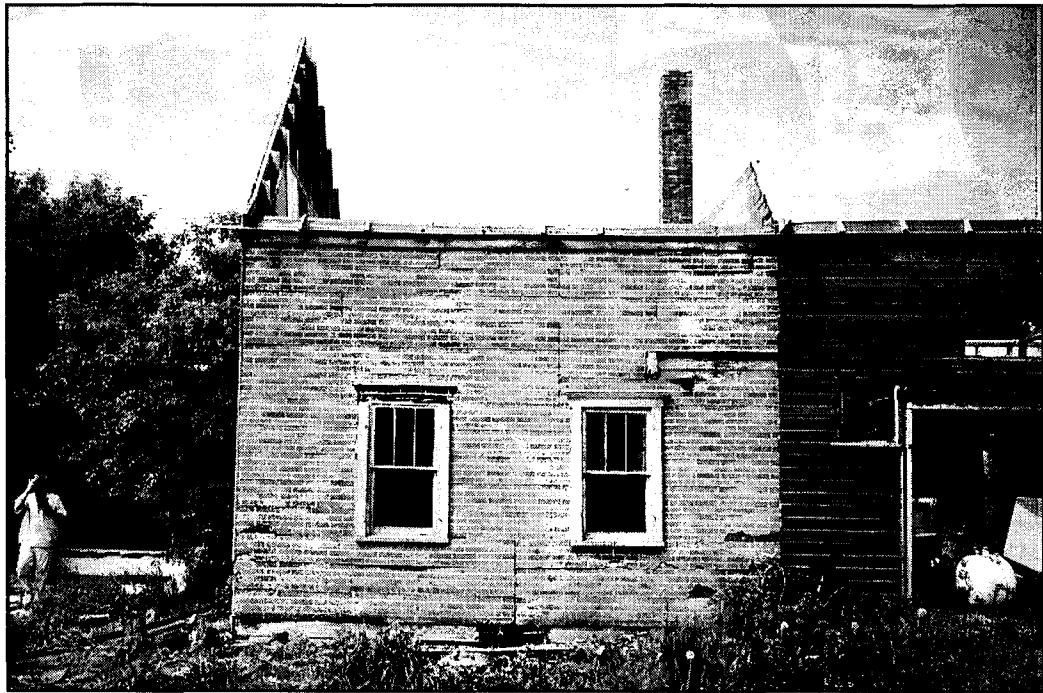


 Outhouse





Driedger Housebarn. Second floor of dwelling (B1)



Driedger Housebarn. South side of dwelling..



Driedger Housebarn. West end of dwelling.



Driedger House. West end of dwelling.

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