

# NOTES FROM THE ARCHIVES



September 2015  
Volume 2, Issue 2

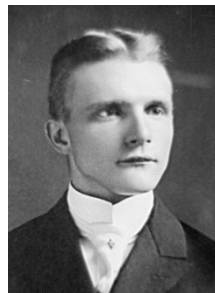
Canadian Moravian Historical Society, Edmonton Chapter  
2304-38 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6L 4K9

## What Have We Been Up To?

The Annual Dinner Meeting, held on April 18<sup>th</sup>, was a success. To reduce the cost for attendees it was decided to serve a lunch instead of a full meal. Soup, sandwiches and a veggie platter were provided. Food preparation was accomplished by the Jasper Place High School culinary class. The Society Board is soliciting feedback on how well this format was received (See Page 4).

The meeting was opened by Board President Laurie Ward; followed with a prayer by Rev. Bob Voelker. The business meeting continued with various reports, all of which were accepted. Board elections were held (See Page 4 for the list of directors).

Following the intermission, we enjoyed a presentation by Bill Brese on the Canadian Ministry of Rev. William Schwartze. Rev. Schwartze, along with Rev. Hoyler, was a founding pastor of the Canadian Moravian work in Western Canada. His time in Canada was brief but his impact was significant. The full presentation by Bill Brese will be available in a future newsletter.



Rev. William Schwartze

## Champion

### 75 years ago.

In 1939 the future looked bright for the Moravian Congregation at Champion, Alberta. It included 45 adult communicants and 55 children. The annual report stated, "A future here with so many children and young people growing up demonstrates that a church edifice is urgently needed, but financial considerations are very poor." Brothers Ben and Jacob Lebsack left the Church that year and moved to British Columbia. Both would eventually end up in the Moravian Mission field in Alaska.

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In 1940 the fallout from WWII began to affect the church. Before WWI, German Canadians did not question the compatibility of their customs and traditions with their new Canadian life. During WWI Canadian Germans became vilified enemy aliens. Many were charged with treason and sedition, although no charge was ever proven. Life began to return to normal with the end of the war. During WWII those feelings reemerged. The Canadian Government arrested and interned 837 German Canadian farmers, workers and organization members. Again, cultural activities all but ceased. This included use of the German language and cultural activities in the Champion Moravian Church. The annual report stated, "The first six months of the year were months of constant argument concerning the language question. A number of families opposed the use of English. In mid-year, the government warned against 'subversive activities of the 5<sup>th</sup> Columnist' and that people of German origins were being watched. This forced the use of more English in Sunday School and Services. The outcome was that nine families withdrew their membership from the church.

In 1941 the church was dealt another major blow when the Alberta Health Department ordered that no children 17 years or younger could gather for any kind of meetings. This was due to the danger of infection with Infantile Paralysis which was gaining epidemic proportions in Alberta. The year closed with a dismal membership of 29 adults and 25 children.

In 1942, with dwindling attendance and financial resources, it was determined the church could not continue and it was disbanded. Some members transferred to other local churches and several joined the Moravian Church in Calgary.



In 1936 Champion had a large and growing Sunday School. The Church would continue to prosper for three years.

## Calgary Central

Calgary Central traces its founding back to the very early 1900's when Rev. Clement Hoyler was making regular trips to Dunmore and Southeast Alberta in support of the Moravian efforts. He would take the train from Edmonton to Calgary to spend a day or two meeting with the Moravians.

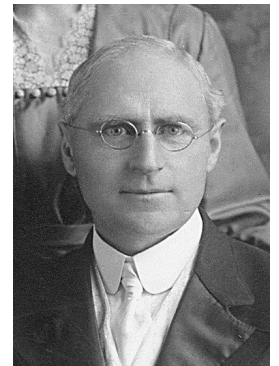
Spring 1902 was particularly wet and rainy. On March 1<sup>st</sup> Rev. Hoyler caught the train to Calgary for a trip to the Dunmore area. Monday evening, the 3<sup>rd</sup>, he met with a number of Brothers to discuss the possibility of organizing a Moravian church in Calgary. The group included a number of Lutherans who were dismayed at how the pastor of the Lutheran church had treated them. They had decided to leave the Lutheran Church and had their names removed from the membership roster. The Moravian Church had not led them to sever their ties but encouraged them to remain faithful to the church of their fathers. They did decide to leave the Lutheran Church and requested that they be allowed to join the Moravian effort. In the meantime, the Seventh Day Adventists were trying to draw the former Lutherans to their church so it was decided to grant the Lutherans their request and they were accepted into the Moravian group. The group in Calgary was growing and it was time to consider starting a church.

Over the next two months Rev. Hoyler began laying the ground work from his office in Bruderfeld. On May 13, 1902, he traveled to Calgary for the express effort of organizing a congregation. A service was held in the home of Brother J.P. Paffenroth at the end of which Rev. Hoyler announced the Provincial Board had agreed to appoint a permanent pastor for Calgary. Because

the number of Moravians was growing, it was becoming difficult to find a private residence large enough to hold the group for meetings. During ensuing conversations, it was requested that a small, simple church be built with a room partitioned off for the use of the pastor.

On Tuesday, May 14, the search started for a suitable lot. Rev. Hoyler looked at several and presented the options to the group gathered for prayer meeting that evening. No agreement could be made; all lots were in somewhat low-lying areas. It was asked that Rev. Hoyler look at lots on the corner of McIntyre Avenue and Third Street. Those lots were available and acceptable. After a confirmation class on Wednesday night, a small group met and came to agreement to purchase two lots. The price of \$300 for Lots 39 and 40, Block 40 was accepted by those present.

Monday, May 19, Rev. Hoyler received a letter stating a graduating seminary student, Emil Suemper, had accepted the call to Calgary. That same day it was requested the lots be held pending approval by the Church Board. Later that day the future congregation met again to discuss plans and they immediately underwrote pledges for the building fund.

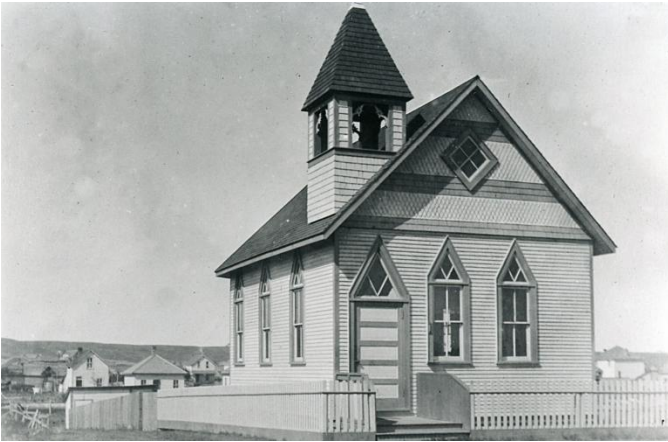


Rev. Emil Suemper  
First resident pastor  
of the Calgary  
Moravian Church.

Over the next two days Rev. Hoyler inquired into plans for a church building and got several estimates for building costs. On Wednesday night twelve Brothers attended a Church Council meeting. Board members were elected; plans for a building, with pledges for funding, was approved. Rev. Hoyler gathered the plans and proposal together and sent them to the Moravian Board in Bethlehem, PA, for approval.

Rev. Hoyler remained in southern Alberta and spent several days with the Moravians in southeast Alberta. On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, shortly after his return to Calgary, he received a telegram from the Bethlehem Board informing him the plans for the new Calgary Church were approved and they were to proceed.

By the end of the day, purchase of the lots was finalized and a contract was signed for the construction of the building. The contractor agreed to have the building completed by July 19 so that Rev. Suemper could begin his work, upon his arrival in Calgary.



The first Calgary Moravian Church went from inception to a congregation, in a completed meeting building in 4 ½ months.

Rev. Suemper arrived in Edmonton on July 18. On July 22, after several days of meeting Canadians, Rev. Suemper and Rev. Hoyler caught the train to Calgary. Later that day the first service in the new chapel was held and Rev. Suemper was introduced to the congregation. From the Hoyler Diaries

100 years ago - 1915 - was a year of changes for the Calgary Church. The year started with Rev. Theodore Weingarth as pastor. March through May saw Rev. J.B. Hoppel filling in. The year closed with Rev. R.J. Grabow accepting the call as the permanent pastor. The year did see growth with the numbers growing from 205 to 263 members. The Sunday School was also very active with an enrollment of 120 and an average attendance of 105.

## Esk

### 75 Years Ago

The Moravian Church in Esk, Sask. was established in 1921 by Rev. Hoyler. A building for worship was built and the prosperous farming community seemed to have a bright future. until 1934. The depression hit the community hard and was followed by a total crop failure. Even with government help, survival was very difficult for the community.



For two years the church membership did grow; reaching a high of 70 in 1936. By 1940 the membership had dropped to 36 and the burden of debt was overwhelming for the small church. With several other churches in the community and no prospect for a full time pastor, it was decided that the church should close. The building was sold to the Baptists in 1940 and moved to Jansen, Sask. As of 1992 it was still in use as the Jansen Temple Baptist Church.

### Moravian Milepost Highlights, June 1965

The Moravian Milepost was a quarterly publication of the Canadian Moravian youth. Ruth Hickman was the Editor.

Calgary - Arnold Rish reported that their treasury was low on funds. Chocolate bars were being sold to supplement the funds. A skating party was called off due to lack of ice.

Vancouver - Corey Graff reported that a social was held in Stanley Park. The youth donated two shrubs to all mothers for Mothers Day. The shrubs were planted on the church grounds. A car wash was held to raise money for an African Leper Colony.

Bruderfeld - Marcia Johansen reported several youth joint meetings and Bible studies with Heimtal. Topics such as dancing were discussed. In May the joint group traveled to Calgary for several days of fun and fellowship.

Rio Terrace - Diana Hertz reported that on April 4<sup>th</sup> the youth served a dinner for the congregation after the morning worship service. May 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> a joint youth rally was held with the Calgary youth and a group from the United Church. May 19<sup>th</sup> the youth sold candy and aprons at the Women's Spring Tea and Bake Sale.

Edmonton - Dianne Harke reported that parents were invited to come to a meeting and discussion on "problem teens." The lively discussion was started with a film presentation entitled "The Teens." Two weeks later the teens met at the Adams' Cooking Lake Cabin. The turnout was impressive with over 70 youth attending.

## Camp Van-Es

### 75 Years Ago

Okay, before you dig out your time line to correct me, Camp Van-Es did not exist 75 years ago; (the Editor) however, the ground work was being laid for a Moravian campsite on the shores of Cooking Lake. The Moravian Church has always had a strong focus on the spiritual development and growth of its youth. The Canadian Moravians understood that youth was the future and focused on their development.

**Camp Van-Es (continued)**

The effort began with one-day youth rallies starting in 1914. From 1914 through 1939 rallies were held at least once per year with the exception of 1925. They were held at different churches. Frequently, during the year, youth groups from adjoining churches, i.e. Heimtal and Bruderfeld, would meet for joint fellowships and socials.

In 1916 the Young Peoples Society of the Canadian District was formed and an Executive Board was formed to lead the effort.

At the July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1936, rally the Executive Board was directed to make arrangements for the 1937 rally and Conference. It was also directed that every minister should organize a Christian Endeavor group in their congregation.

The first Youth Conference was held July 1-4, 1937, at the New Sarepta Moravian Church with 75 attendees. The girls stayed in the parsonage and boys in tents on the lawn. The effort was a great success. In 1938 the Conference was held in Didsbury with 102 delegates. By 1939 the conference at Bruderheim grew to 133 participants. At the meetings a strong desire for a Moravian camp grew. In 1940 the 26<sup>th</sup> annual Conference moved to the Gull Lake Bible Camp.

A five acre wooded lot on South Cooking Lake became available in 1939; however, money for the purchase was not available. Mr. and Mrs. Fred Williams, owners of the lot, made a generous offer in November. If the Church would pay for the surveying of the land and transfer of the deed, the Williams' would give them a free and clear title to the property. This was an answer to prayer and the Moravian Board was able to meet the Williams' requirements which resulted in clear title of the land on Cooking lake.

The land was heavily wooded and had no access. Fall of 1940 and early 1941 was a very busy time for a group of volunteers. They roughed in a road and built kitchen/dining area and pavilion/assembly/dining hall with upstairs sleeping area for the girls. Sites were cleared for Vespers and Campfire programs. Thanks to the hard work and support by District members, the first camp was ready for registration by July 8, 1941.

**HELP Wanted!!!!**

The Canadian Moravian Historical Society (CMHS) needs you! No experience necessary. We are seeking individuals to assist us in the collection and recording of artifacts. Help is also needed in the sorting and digitizing of photos and documents.

Also needed are individuals interested in sitting on the CMHS Board of Directors. Needed immediately is someone to fill the position of Treasurer as well as Directors at large. Meetings are held bi-monthly (or less) at the Archives located in the basement of the Millwoods Community (Moravian) Church. (SKYPE

available for those not able to attend.) A new President or Vice President will be needed to take over at the annual general meeting in April 2016.

If interested in helping in any of these capacities please contact the current CMHS President: Laurie Ward (Rio Terrace Church) @ 780-487-1802 or email [wornout@telus.net](mailto:wornout@telus.net).

**Follow-up from the 2015 Annual Meeting**

The format of the April 2015 Annual Meeting changed in that the meeting included a light lunch instead of a full meal. Several ideas were floated for additional meeting changes that would better meet the needs of attendees. Following are the most prevalent suggestions:

1. Hold a Friday evening dinner meeting
2. Hold a Saturday afternoon luncheon meeting
3. Hold a Sunday evening dinner meeting

If you have any ideas or preferences for improving the meeting format, please let one of the Board Members know. Your support and input is appreciated.

**Presentation by Bill Brese** - The presentation during the 2015 Annual Meeting, on Rev. William Schwartze, was made by the Historical Archives Archivist Bill Brese. The text of the presentation will be available in a future newsletter.

**Following is a listing of the Canadian Moravian Historical Society (Edmonton Chapter) Board**

President - Laurie Ward, [wornout@telus.net](mailto:wornout@telus.net)

Vice President - Esther Vitt-Gonzalez

Secretary - Kerry Bloomer

Treasurer - Donna Goodwin

Directors - Brian Pemberton

Robert Voelker

BECD Representative - Rev. Rebecca Craver

Archivist - Bill Brese

780-440-3050, [billbrese@gmail.com](mailto:billbrese@gmail.com)

Other - Joel Henkelman, [jhenkelm@yahoo.com](mailto:jhenkelm@yahoo.com)

Elaine Bloomer

**Notes from the Archives**

This is the third edition of our newsletter "Notes from the Archives." Our goal is to provide a document that is of interest and applicability to the greater Canadian Moravian community. If you have an item you would like to see included, or you would like to be involved in the publication, let Joel Henkelman or one of the other CMHS Board members know. Background material and photos seen in these publications are available in the Canadian Moravian Archives.