

**WESTERN CANADIAN
MORAVIAN
HISTORICAL MAGAZINE**



**No. 9 May 2004
Complimentary Copy**

**Published by
CANADIAN MORAVIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Edmonton Chapter
2304 – 38 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T6L 4K9**

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FOREWORD

Historical accounts that involve the author's family members are always welcome as they have a personal touch. This is the case with Doug Fenske's work, which deals with the topic of the Conscription Issue, which was a feature of Canadian History during World War I.

We asked Doug if he would write an article on this topic for the Magazine because we knew that his Uncle Dave was a prominent person in the episode. Happily Doug agreed. It was our good fortune to have in tact the whole Conscription File that had been accumulated by Bishop Clement Hoyler, who was the key participant in the affair. We copied the file and turned it over to Doug. He in turn expanded his research and turned up more valuable information, which he incorporated into an article. This helps us to understand this segment of our church history much more clearly. It should be remembered that during World War II many Moravians served in the military. The Chapel at Camp Van-Es was named, "The Service Memorial Chapel" in part to remember those who lost their lives in the war.

The Hoyler Diaries give us great insight into the founding of our Moravian congregations in western Canada. In these writings, Rev Hoyler made frequent reference to his writing reports for the MORAVIAN, the official communication means for the Moravian Church in North America. Rev. Hoyler's first report to the MORAVIAN is included in this issue.

Hoyler's reasons for being so diligent in sending regular detailed reports on how the Home Mission work was

proceeding becomes clearer in the paper which was prepared by the editor, and presented at a meeting of the Society for the German Genealogy in Eastern Europe (SGGEE) at the Annual Meeting which was held in Edmonton, August 8-10, 2003. The Home Mission work of the Moravian Church that Rev Hoyler founded here in 1896 was financed by a special financial levy of the Board of Church Extension. All of the congregations were asked to make extra donations to finance the work in Alberta. The fact that western Canadian Moravians owe a debt of gratitude to the rest of the church is an important aspect of this article.

Wm. G. Brese
Editor

CONSCRIPTION

Greetings from Doug Fenske

I am writing from Edmonton to my Moravian brothers and sisters in the Canadian District of the Northern Province. I am also writing to the wider Moravian Church and to people everywhere who know or would like to know something about Canadian Moravian conscientious objectors, Bishop Hoyler, and the First World War.

THANKFULNESS AND HEDGING OUR BETS

I'm thankful for all of Bill Watterson's Calvin and Hobbes cartoon books. It's the stuff of imagination, of wonder ... of fluff. You know, the stuff of importance. And it's simple.

"Oh no! Everything has
suddenly turned neo-cubist!
It all started when Calvin
engaged his dad in a minor
debate! Soon Calvin could see
both sides of the issue! Then
poor Calvin began to see both
sides of EVERYthing! The
traditional single viewpoint
has been abandoned!

Perspective has been
fractured! The multiple views
provide too much information!
It's impossible to move!"
Calvin quickly tries to
eliminate all but one
perspective! "It works! The
world falls into a
recognizable order! ... You're
still wrong dad."

In another conversation with his father, Calvin suddenly realizes the world has no hue, value, or chroma. Pondering that reality up in his room, he clearly concludes there's no point in discussing things with his dad. In the last frame, back downstairs, his father, perched on his throne, err, armchair, says to him, "The problem is, you see everything in terms of black and white."

Calvin's response is simply brilliant:
"SOMETIMES THAT'S THE WAY THINGS ARE!!"

Sometimes, just like Calvin, we, dear brothers and sisters, think we know; yet hedge our bets just in case we're wrong. That's what Prime Minister Robert Borden did.

THE DEAL WAS NO MORE

It was May 24, 1917 and the deal was no more. The Leader of the Opposition, Sir Wilfred Laurier, refused to support conscription (compulsory military recruitment). If Prime Minister Borden wanted conscription, he needed to make it law without his support and call an election. Why? Because Prime Minister Borden's Conservatives were elected to power in 1911, and now six years later, one longer than normally allowed before an election must be called, were only holding onto power with a weak all-party agreement not to call an election until the war's end. Now, though, the deal was no more.

CANADA, THE BRITISH EMPIRE, AND DECLARING WAR

Our Conservative Prime Minister, Robert Borden, was a man on track to becoming a great Prime Minister and international statesman. But God had other plans for him. While on a summer siesta during the third year of his first term as Prime Minister, Borden was handed the most unwelcome task of all: leading Canadians through the Great War of 1914 - 1918.

You see dear brothers and sisters, Canada, as part of the British Empire, was automatically at war when Britain declared war in 1914. Instead of deciding

whether to enter the war, the Prime Minister's task was now to bring all of Canada and its economy together for the sole purpose of fighting the war.

If this wasn't enough, Canada had entered the war without the say that normally goes along with the size of effort a country puts forth. So, in the summer of 1915 Prime Minister Borden traveled to England to resolve this very issue. But instead of resolving it, he discovered even more problems. He came away from his encounter with British officials with the view not only that England was poorly prepared for the war and was now quite disorganized, but with a sense that British officials were arrogantly evading his questions. Returning home, he was hurt and angry, and resolved that now, more than ever, he must show Britain—and the world—that Canada was no mere colony, but an independent and equal nation to Britain, who deserved to make her own decisions. To do this, he sacrificed possible future political success and decades of Conservative support in Quebec so that no future Prime Minister would ever have another decision made from him or her by another country. And to do this, instead of ending Canada's involvement because Canada was only permitted limited control and it only made sense that Canada should equally limit its liability, he chose to double Canada's commitment. By the end of

1915 this would mean a call for a four-division Canadian Corps in France, involving 500,000 soldiers at one time. A move that was almost beyond what Canada could sustain.

CALL FOR SOLDIERS

Here's why. Canada's population was just under eight million. Best guesses were that there was only one to one and a half million males seventeen to forty years old, the traditional group drawn from to supply armed forces in wartime. Of these, half were estimated to be working in essential services, such as farming, railway, and munitions factories. This left barely 700,000 men for both military service and to maintain the desired four-division Canadian Corps Prime Minister Borden wished to have in France. (By war's end 620,000 soldiers would be required to maintain the four-division Canadian Corps.)

Even more "interesting" was that Canada intended to do this with paid volunteers. With recruitments of 30,000 per month, at the beginning of 1916, dropping to 6,000 by year's end, Canada felled 70,000 short of Prime Minister Borden's 500,000 goal. Urban Ontarians, as did Winnipeggers, expressed their concerns. In such bleak times as this, had the "enemy

aliens" only developed a love for Canada, but none for the British Empire?

Well, no. It wasn't that simple. Farming, and an expanding munitions industry—1,500 such factories in ninety different towns were created between 1915 and 1918—were out recruiting the armed forces. Why? In large part, French-Canadians and many minorities were shying away from military service because Canada's armed forces were English. Put blatantly, if you didn't speak English, you didn't feel welcomed. Even in Quebec, with the Royal 22nd Regiment supposedly for Quebeckers, there were few French-speaking officers, making it in truth no different than any other unit. Perhaps the biggest disincentive for Quebeckers, though, was the commissioning of a Protestant clergyman to supervise recruitment in the predominately French-Catholic society of Quebec.

SOLUTION

For Prime Minister Borden the issue couldn't be clearer. Canada had to put forth an extreme effort, stretching Canadians to their utmost limits. Or put another way: a four-division Canadian Corps, involving 500 000 soldiers at one time.

Sir Wilfred Laurie agreed ... well, sort of. In his view, it was only reasonable to expect the utmost

effort as a result of voluntarism. This approach, though, meant that we would likely never achieve Prime Minister Borden's goal of having 500,000 soldiers at one time, and to the totally committed, it was all or nothing.

But Borden was Prime Minister, not Sir Wilfred Laurier anymore, and he got to decide. To him, we needed conscription to make the extreme effort, and to do so meant calling an election. And winning the election was so important he needed to manipulate the outcome in his favour.

To make conscription law, Prime Minister Borden worked very hard during the spring and summer of 1917 and succeeded in creating a Union Government: a coalition of English federal politicians (MPs) from government and opposition members who favoured conscription. (French MPs refuse to join as they opposed conscription. To them it was a strictly British affair, which they bitterly resented having to be a part of). Conscription became law under the name, The Military Service Act, August 29, 1917.

To win the election, the Solicitor General, the Secretary of State, and the Minister of the Interior (none other than Arthur Meighen of Manitoba),

oversaw election plans. Meighen was a natural pick for Prime Minister Borden, as from all accounts he was one of the most brilliant debaters federal politics has ever had. By mid-November 1917, he ensured victory.

How did Arthur Meighen do this? As any good lawyer, he knew his way around the law. He used closure to cut off debate in the House of Commons and stacked the Senate with enough Conservatives that Unionists were able to pass, in September 1917, the Military Voters Act, providing the means for people in uniform to vote overseas, including army nurses. For the first time females got to vote. With the introduction of the Wartimes Elections Act, also in September 1917, the wives, mothers, sisters, and widows of military personnel were also given the voting privilege. Mind-you, all conscientious objectors and all newcomers who became Canadians after March 31, 1902—regardless of sex—had their voting rights withdrawn if they were natives of one of the enemy countries. Only if they were in uniform or were women related to soldiers overseas, were they allowed to vote.

So, you get the point, give the vote to the people in favour of conscription and take it away from those opposed, and there you have it. By mid-November 1917, Arthur Meighen secured the vote.

Smugly, Prime Minister Borden then called the election for December 17. The result was a majority (?) government for Prime Minister Borden.

CANADA'S CONSCRIPTED VOLUNTEER ARMY

Canada's volunteer army would now be filled with conscripts. Farmers' sons, as of 1918, were no longer exempt. All male British subjects, residents of Canada, who were born on or after October 13, 1897, and who were unmarried or widowers without a child on April 20, 1918, and were not beyond 22 years of age, were required to report and register on or before June 1, 1918 to a Military Tribunal. This would affect about 68 of our Moravian brothers.

In the Edmonton area, this meant the Military Tribunal sitting in South Edmonton. Its' chairman was none other than Orlando Bush, a big, burly Baptist, a man of solid integrity, and which didn't hurt, a long time friend of our Moravian Bishop Clement Holyer.

22 GEORGE II, CHAP. 30 (IMPERIAL), THE ACT OF 1749

With the approval of our Moravian Bishop J.T. Hamilton, who had visited Alberta in the summer of 1917, Bishop Hoyler, and the Canadian Moravian District Executive Board, each young man required to

appear before a Tribunal was given a full copy of 22 George II, Chap. 30 (Imperial), the Act of 1749, along with his certificate of membership in the Moravian Church, and Bishop Holyer's own certificate as a Bishop of the Moravian Church, which they were to hand to the Chairman of the Board of the Tribunal. A full copy of 22 George II, Chap. 30 (Imperial), the Act of 1749 was rather long, and as you can imagine, these copies began to pile up. Humorously, Bush remarked on this to Bishop Holyer, saying, "You certainly gave your boys a whole Bible to stand on!"

This Bible, technically known as "Chapter Thirty of the Statutes of the Twentieth Year of the Reign of George the Second" is variously referred to as 22 George II, Chap. 30 (Imperial), the Act of 1749; Act of 1749; and the Act; and is one of the Statutes of the Twentieth Year of the Reign of George the Second, being Chapter Thirty in consecutive order. The Act received royal assent May 26, 1749, coming into effect about a month later. To Bishops Hamilton and Hoyler, it hadn't been rescinded and was still valid in Canada. To them it clearly stated our Canadian Moravians were *bona fide* conscientious objectors, allowed the privilege of exemption, even if not being in the strictest sense a conscientious objector.

MORAVIANS WERE TRUE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS

On this last point Bishop Hoyler was sure the exemption was unnecessary because Canadian Moravians were true conscientious objectors. Writing to future generations who might question such beliefs, he pointedly noted these German-speaking Moravians didn't dislike fighting simply because the fighting was to be done against Germans, but because they opposed war *per se*; their deep Christian belief being that war as such was not compatible with pure Christianity.

Many Moravians were immigrants from Poland and Volhynia, and truly were conscientious objectors. Some had escaped from military service in Russia, and their children and other relatives retained these beliefs. Even though many were ethnically of German ancestry, their sympathies were with England rather than Germany, whose Kaiser and militarism were just as distasteful to them as Russia's Czar and what he stood for. War was war—period! No ifs! Ands! Or buts!

MORAVIANS SPOKEN ABOUT IN THE HIGHEST TERMS

In Alberta, Moravian brothers and sisters were spoken about in the highest terms. In Edmonton, merchants and government officials considered them

to be about the best settlers. In Calgary, while the German Lutherans were ordered by the Calgary police to close their doors, Calgary Moravians weren't. They continued their services by special permission of the police. Bishop Holyer, though, advised them to temporarily suspend Moravian services, but soon introduced English at the Sunday school sessions and church meetings until the excitement in Calgary passed.

FEDERAL REACTION TO ACT OF 1749

Still, though, the Federal authorities appeared rather disinterested in the Act of 1749. They seemed to reject it, without even as little as reading it, and assumed it had long been superseded and overridden by newer provisions. The multiple views presented by our brothers and sisters were too much. There could only be one view: we weren't given the legal right to claim conscientious objectors' status in the Military Service Act of 1917, as were the Doukhobors and Mennonites, and so we dear brothers and sisters would have to serve or suffer the consequences like anyone else.

Anticipating this possible reaction, the Canadian District Executive Board had already given Bishop Holyer the go ahead to take any steps necessary,

including, if required, obtaining legal counsel to ensure the Tribunals and higher-ups would allow Moravians the right to claim conscientious objectors' status.

Initially this involved Bishop Holyer trying to convince the military and political bigwigs. But when a day turned into a week, a week a month, and a month became two, and still there wasn't any success, Bishop Hoyer began to doubt that he, a layman, could convince the authorities. He hadn't been able to convince the Registrar of the Military Service Act in Calgary, the Director of the Military Service Branch in Ottawa, nor any federal politicians to the validity of the Act of 1749, and the right to grant complete exemption to Moravians for both combatant and non-combatant service. So now there was only one thing he could do.

MR. SHORT DEFENDING A WORTHY CAUSE

Yes, that's right; it was time to visit a lawyer, a Mr. William Short of the law firm of Short and Cross in Edmonton. That's Short and Cross in Edmonton, which is variously referred to by both Mr. Short and Bishop Hoyer as Short and Cross; Short, Cross, and Company; and Short, Cross, Maclean, Ap'John and Macdonald. To be consistent, though, dear brothers and sisters, we'll just refer to it as Short and Cross.

Bishop Hoyler presented him with a copy of the catalogue of the Malin Library, the last portion of which there's a supplement containing the full text of the Act and a résumé of the arguments pro and con that preceded the adoption of the Act. A few days passed. Then, on January 21, 1918, Mr. Short responded. He was very grateful for the transcript. He had already written His Honor, Judge McNeill, pointing out the statute and stating that at this time, while he would be pleased to appear on behalf of the church, he didn't feel it would be necessary.

But matters took a turn for the worse on April 20, when a Federal Order-in-Council passed, canceling all exemptions that had been granted by the Tribunals. Spirits, already heavy with worry, now sank to previously unknown depths.

By April 29, there was also much confusion. Men, including non-Moravians, who had previously been granted exemption on religious grounds and were assignable only to non-combatant service, were now being placed into combatant units.

Reluctantly, Bishop Hoyler once again called upon Mr. Short. You see professionally, as a Bishop of the

Moravian Church, he could be expected to "fight" for conscientious objector status; yet would it be right to "officially enlist" the services of Mr. Short? It could not only affect his standing as a lawyer, but also as a citizen living in Edmonton. Feelings were that raw. So, always the honorable one, Bishop Hoyler laid his concerns on the line with Mr. Short.

Apparently, the worry of a considerate person who often put others first wasn't necessary, for according to a lawyer's code of ethics the righteous case of any client is more important than any personal considerations or feelings. In fact, Mr. Short was willing to defend our cause wholeheartedly, and if I'm not mistaken dear brothers and sisters, with a deep, inner satisfaction one gets from defending a worthy cause.

LEGAL BATTLE FOUGHT ON THREE FRONTS

Under his direction this battle would now be fought on three fronts. In Edmonton, Mr. Short, senior partner of Short and Cross, would represent the Moravian Church of Canada and oversee the case. In Calgary, Mr. Short secured the assistance of Short, Ross, and Company, because it was the gathering point for all young men conscripted in Alberta and the place where most of the higher military brass in Alberta

were based. Here, a junior member, Mr. Frederick Mayhood would handle the case. (Short, Ross, and Company, dear brothers and sisters also appear as Short, Ross, Selwood, Shaw, and Mayhood in correspondence). Finally, he secured the assistance of Thompson, Pringle, and Company of Ottawa, because it's the capitol of Canada and the place where the federal government and federal departments are. Here, a French Canadian and Roman Catholic, Mr. Louis Côté, would handle our case. (Thompson, Pringle, and Company also appears as Pringle, Thompson, Burgess, and Cote in correspondence.)

Mr. Mayhood began by trying to clear up the Order-in-Council canceling all exemptions and calling immediately to service, including combatant service, those who had previously been classed as conscientious objectors. He wired Ottawa on May 29, asking federal civil servants whether men classified as non-combatants by reason of conscientious objections were required by any order to serve at once. But, the civil servants chose to side step the question by saying, "Men ordered to report objecting on conscientious grounds to combatant service will be transferred to non-combatant branches for duty."

You see, they weren't allowed to tell him, and if Mr. Mayhood was going to get an answer he needed to telegraph someone higher up in the Federal Government ... say, the Adjutant General of Ottawa ... and bingo, he got the answer. (Why waste your time when people's lives are literally on the line?)

That same day, May 29, Mr. Mayhood telegraphed Bishop Holyer, stating, "Today, Ottawa, in a further notice, has now stated that non-combatants of all ages, including the 20 to 22 classes, have not been called to serve. Registrars under the Military Service Act were notified to that effect by telegram on the 6 of May. If you have any difficulty, we can telegraph the Adjutant General."

DIFFICULTIES

Well, as you might have guessed by now, there were some difficulties. Eight young Moravians from the Edmonton area had been given the order to report to Calgary on Tuesday morning, May 7. Frantically, these young men and some of their folks gathered in the parsonage in Strathcona, Monday evening, May 6.

It was a solemn affair. Bishop Hoyler tried to conduct a regular prayer meeting, but as you can understand, it wasn't. A number there present,

including many of the young boys, took part in prayer. After giving the "recruits" final instructions, the Lord was asked to take care of them, and they were off to Calgary, taking the midnight train, and arriving at Victoria Barracks the very next morning, Tuesday, May 7.

That evening, a telegram arrived from Calgary for Bishop Hoyler, asking him to come down at once. Struggling to speak due to bronchitis and too many long nights with little or no sleep, he unselfishly took the midnight train—the first of many to Calgary during subsequent months. Luckily, with an annual rail pass, no additional financial outlay was required.

Most of the boys had signed for what they thought was only non-combatant service within Canada, but had since discovered they were to be trained for military service in the fullest sense, guns and all. They were expected to drill without delay.

Two Bruederfeld boys, David Fenske and Arnold Kolke hadn't signed, and were placed into the guardroom for the night.

Arriving at Victoria Barracks at 8:30, Wednesday morning, Bishop Hoyler immediately visited

the two Bruederfeld boys in their cell. He discovered that not only had the military taken all of their personal things, they had even taken the German New Testament he had given David Fenske on Monday evening.

Unexpectedly, a third young Moravian, Henry Dick of Carseland, a member of the Calgary congregation, had also refused to sign and was in the guardroom. They told Bishop Hoyler that they were to appear before the Officer Commanding (O.C.), Major J.M. Carson, the very next day, May 9. Bishop Hoyler was assured that counsel could represent them.

Wasting no time, Bishop Hoyler scurried off to the law office of Short, Ross, and Company. For the first time he met in person Mr. Mayhood, and arranged to accompany him the following morning to the Victoria Barracks for the boys' hearing before the O.C.

Thursday morning, after having an interview with the boys, the Sergeant Major informed them that the meeting was to be between ten and eleven, and it was a private affair. Translation: no legal representation. In this meeting the boys were to be once again given the chance to sign the papers. Any

who refuse would be remanded for eight or ten days, when another hearing would be held.

Later that day Bishop Hoyler learns that the pressure was too much for Henry Dick and he signed for non-combatant service. He was paroled for the time being and when Bishop Hoyler caught up with him that evening, he was at the home of one of the Calgary Moravian members.

Fenske and Kolke still held strong to their convictions and refused to sign. They were each sentenced to 28 days in jail.

For the time being there was nothing more Bishop Hoyler could do in Calgary, so he took the midnight train back to Edmonton. But instead of going to bed Friday morning as soon as he arrived back home, which would have been a good thing since he had bronchitis; he stoically handled the many calls about Calgary. Each time he patiently recounted the events, and assured each caller that though it may appear very bad right now for our boys, they shouldn't worry. They should keep on praying and trusting in God, for right and justice would win out.

By evening, now way beyond being tired, Bishop Hoyler welcomed one more visitor into his home, Mr. Short. He's impressed ... tired, but impressed. It's very unusual for a prominent lawyer, like Mr. Short, to take time outside of normal working hours to come and hear what has happened. This spoke volumes as to the importance of the case for Mr. Short. And so Bishop Hoyler told him everything. Increasingly Mr. Short's face became distorted with rage while hearing of the boys' treatment and the refusal to allow legal representation. He had reread and further studied the Act of 1749 and was absolutely convinced it was the law. The O.C. had no right treating our young men in the way he did, especially denying legal representation. The O.C. would now have to deal with him.

Well, brothers and sisters ... the O.C. wouldn't budge. As Mr. Short discovered, it's not easy trying to convince someone of the legal status of an Act from 1749, who has never taken the time to look it up, and was instead guided by the Military Service Act of 1917. With a ruling from Ottawa that Moravians were to be treated as other claimants because the Military Service Act only gives exemption to Doukhobors and Mennonites based on conscientious objections, the O.C.'s actions had to comply with the present Act. (If there was any consolation—so, the O.C. offered—

perhaps Moravians should have been given exemption, but they weren't.)

Mr. Coté, of the Ottawa law office of Thompson, Pringle, and Company, also tried by preparing a *Factum*, a statement of the case and the legal arguments, for the consideration of the Director of the Military Service Branch, H.A.C. Machin, in Ottawa. And he, too, failed. In a telegram to Mr. Short on May 28, the Director of Military Service Branch was said to have ruled on Mr. Coté's *Factum* as follows, "Moravians are not entitled to exemption under the Imperial Statute."

MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

During this same period of time medical examinations were done on Arnold Kolke and David Fenske. Arnold Kolke failed the physical and was allowed to go home. He returned home on the 16th of May. This left Fenske the sole holdout.

TWO POSSIBLE WAYS TO PURSUE JUSTICE

Given the unfavorable decision of Mr. Machin and the Justice Department in Ottawa, Mr. Coté suggested two possible ways Mr. Short might further pursue justice on this issue. He could try asking Prime Minister Borden's Union Government to pass an *Order-*

In-Council that would override the federal civil servants decision, or he could begin *habeas corpus* proceedings (taking before a judge or court the issue of one's detention, where the right of detention is to be determined).

Our legal advisors huddle. Mr. Coté's thoughts were exactly what the others were already thinking and they agreed to start *habeas corpus* proceedings against the Military. The law firm of Short and Cross of Edmonton prepared the necessary papers, "Fenske vs. Colonel P.A. Moore and Major J.M. Carson". Short, Ross, and Company of Calgary served the papers. Mr. Mayhood would conduct the proceedings, which were to go before the Judge on Thursday, June 13, 1918.

Repeat, that's Thursday, June 13, 1918. Trust Bishop Hoyler to make light of this. He had never been superstitious and the number 13 didn't bother him. If anything, he had come to regard it as his lucky number. So, even though the matter didn't appear to be too hopeful, Bishop Hoyler quietly saw the date as another sign of hope.

LONG HOURS TOO MUCH FOR BISHOP HOYLER

Now, dear brothers and sisters, we need to pause for a moment and mention that by May 17,

Bishop Hoyler's long hours had become too much—his bronchitis worsened and on May 17 and 18 he could do little but rest at home while Brother G. Henkelmann traveled to Bruce and Mayflower for him. On May 19, with Hoyler's voice practically gone, Brother L. Klapstein, an Elder, read a sermon. The morning service at Edmonton was cancelled, while the evening service at Strathcona was lead by Reverend R. Schulze.

CALLED TO SERVE

We need also to mention that although the Adjutant General said that non-combatants of all ages, including the 20 to 22 classes, had not been called to serve, and that registrars under the Military Service Act were notified to this effect by telegram on the 6th of May, Moravians were being called to serve. For example, on May 13, three New Sarepta boys left on the midnight train to Calgary, as did several more Canadian Moravians May 21. On May 28, Brother H.T. Kant brought two boys to South Edmonton to catch the midnight train to Calgary. Then on June 4, a large group of Bruederheim boys, having also been called to service, took the midnight train to Calgary, accompanied by Brother Gutensohn. On June 6, they were granted thirty days leave of absence until their status under the Act was determined. Everything now depended on the outcome of the Fenske court case.

TWO DIFFERENT CELEBRATIONS

With this legal case pending, our brothers and sisters were allowed to celebrate the anniversary of the founding of our Strathcona congregation, June 9, with uplifting services and a record offering of \$136.00. Speakers were the Reverends S. Wedman and R. Schulze in the morning, E. Suemper in the afternoon, and S. Wedman in the evening.

Then on June 12, 1918, we received an historic document dated June 11, 1918. The following is the contents of the telegram:

Messrs. Short, Cross, Maclean, Ap'John & MacDonald
Barristers, etc., Edmonton, Alta.
Re Fenske

HAVE READ CHAPTER THIRTY STATUTES
TWENTIETH YEAR GEORGE SECOND AND HAVE
CONCLUDED FENSKE ENTITLED TO DISCHARGE
FROM MILITARY SERVICE stop UNNECESSARY
THEREFORE FILE DEFENCE ACTION SUPREME
COURT stop KINDLY HAVE FENSKE APPLY TO ME
AS MILITARY REGISTRAR AS IN MY OPINION I
AM PERSON WHO WITHIN MEANING SECTION
FOUR STATUTE SUMMONED FENSKE TO SERVE.
KINDLY PROVIDE CERTIFICATE MEMBERSHIP AS

MENTIONED IN ACT stop PRESUME YOU MAY DISREGARD PAYMENT OF RATES MENTIONED STATUTE ALSO DEPOSIT BY ADVOCATE OF LIST OF BISHOPS stop AM WILLING ACCEPT BISHOP HOYLER'S CERTIFICATE FENSKE'S MEMBERSHIP IF IT IS ACCOMPANIED BY CERTIFICATE OF RESPOSIBLE PERSON SAY EDMONTON MAYOR OR PROVINCIAL CABINET MINISTER THAT BISHOP HOYLER IS BISHOP OF MORAVIAN CHURCH. UPON RECEIPT OF PROPER DOCUMENTS UNDER ACT WILL OBTAIN CERTIFICATE OF DISCHARGE. IF MATTER NOT COMPLETED BEFORE EXPIRY FENSKE'S PASS WILL HAVE SAME EXTENDED SO THAT NO TRAVELING EXPENSES NEED BE INCURRED BY HIM OR ON HIS BEHALF stop KINDLY REPLY stop WILL WRITE YOU TOMORROW.
J.M. CARSON

Finally, Major Carson had read the Act on the 11th of June. With that, suddenly, and unexpectedly, the case against David Fenske took a new turn. The *habeas corpus* proceedings were cancelled, and we, dear brothers and sisters, no longer had a date with the Judge. Our legal battle had been WON!!

Upon hearing the great news, Bishop and Mrs. Hoyler's joy and gratitude to God overflowed. Upon

Mrs. Hoyler's suggestion, they fell to their knees and thanked God for having so graciously heard and answered the many prayers. And as quickly as that was done, they passed the news on to the families most vitally concerned, including Brother Gutensohn and the Bruederheim families.

The news spread like wildfire. The excitement was contagious ... only slightly tempered because some of the boys weren't home yet. For these, the celebrations would have to wait. Nonetheless, mothers once filled with terrible grief were now giddy with excitement, busily preparing food for their celebrations. For nothing says love like a home cooked meal!

DISCHARGE OF ALL OUR YOUNG MEN

As soon as the validity of the Act was established, Bishop Hoyler quickly took the necessary steps to gain the discharge of all our young men who thus far had been drafted into the armed forces. Following the advice of Major Carson, Mr. Mayhood drew up the discharge papers for each Moravian draftee. Bishop Hoyler left on the midnight train to Calgary, Thursday, June 13, and Friday morning, June 14, while in Mr. Mayhood's office, the forms were

drawn up—there just couldn't be any delay. The forms included the following blanks:

1. "Application for discharge from Personal Military Service." To be signed by the draftee.
2. "Certificate of Membership in the Moravian Church." To be signed by Clement Hoyler, as Bishop.

In accordance with Major Carson's request in the telegram, Bishop Hoyler was able to obtain a certificate from a prominent person attesting to the fact he was indeed a Bishop of the Moravian Church, from the former Premier of Alberta, Alexander C. Rutherford ... an old friend. They had both come about the same time to Strathcona and had maintained a friendship all this time.

That afternoon of June 14, Bishop Hoyler headed over to the office of Major Carson and was warmly welcomed. It was the first time they met in person, although, from the many, often lengthy, yet straightforward correspondences, they knew each other very well. They discussed the *modus operandi*, the procedure for performing the task ahead that would be followed by Mr. Mayhood and our men in securing their discharges. And they discussed the

habeas corpus proceedings instituted on behalf of Brother Fenske. The action was to be stopped and he was to get his discharge without delay. He was honorably discharged June 26, 1918; but in my excitement, dear brothers and sisters, I'm getting ahead of things.

Before David Fenske and the other boys were released, Bishop Hoyler handed each the two blanks and explained what they needed to do with them. Armed with these they were eventually able to receive their final "Discharge Certificates," all based upon their "Being a Moravian, Chapter 30 of the Statues of the 20th Year of the Reign of His Majesty King George II, Year 1749."

COST OF LEGAL BATTLE

The Act of 1749 also provided for a cash "payment of rates" in lieu of service, but such a tax or payment was never demanded by Major Carson. In lieu of this, our members were ready to voluntarily contribute to the payment of lawyers' fees and all other expenses. Short and Cross, through their agents in Calgary accumulate a bill of \$150.00. Short, Ross, and Company of Calgary, having actually secured the discharge of our men, 26 specifically, and 59 generally, and charging a flat rate of \$50.00 per person, along

with a small amount for telegrams, accumulate a bill of \$1550.00 (based on the 26 specifically they obtained). If, dear brothers and sisters, you count all the 59 boys from Alberta, it's roughly \$26.27 per person. Our brothers and sisters easily and gladly raised the money.

The money didn't stop there. Members contributed a purse of several hundred dollars, with which Bishop Hoyler bought a Rammond Typewriter, and spent several weeks relaxing and catching up with his family at Lake Auburn, Minnesota. The Canadian District recognized the unselfish act Bishop Hoyler had given them, and would forever be eternally grateful. For the many hours of lost sleep, the quiet mediation behind the scenes with the military and political bigwigs, and accurate and timely counsel, the Canadian District granted, nah, ordered Bishop Hoyler to take two months off. His colleagues took care of things in his absence.

Bishop Hoyler and his family left for Minnesota on July 22, 1918, and returned to Edmonton, September 27.

NO LEGAL DECISION

Now, dear brothers and sisters, we need to make it very clear that while we had won the right to

both declare ourselves conscientious objectors and not to serve in combatant or non-combatant units, we had no legal decision, because the Judge never ruled on the legality of our case. For all our joyful noise making, the rights we won were what the government decided they were prepared to grant us. Rights, by the way, that fail to explain why the Government truly backed out of the court case.

As late as October 23, 1918 Mr. Scott was still asking that, because of the unjust incarceration of young Fenske, the Military Department grant him monetary compensation, or at least admit the injustice of his detention and express regret for it. Major Carson found this rather embarrassing and practically suggested that we put this behind us, now that we, dear brothers and sisters, achieved our goal. Upon Bishop Hoyler's agreement and indeed, his suggestion, this was done by our lawyers.

LIST OF NAMES

Thanks to the ministers of the Canadian Moravian congregations, Bishop Hoyler was able to list the names of all our men who were affected by the Military Service Act of 1917. Those who were actually drafted and discharged, appear with an asterisk.

Owing to the war ending November 11, 1918, the 19-year class was never summoned.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Congregation</u>	<u>Postal Office</u>
*Busenius, Ferdinand	Bruederfeld	Strathcona
*Busneius, Reinhold	Bruederheim	Bruederheim
Deines, Henry	Calgary	Calgary
*Dick, Henry	Calgary	Carseland
Dick, Philip	Calgary	Carseland
*Diewert, Reinhold	Bruederfeld	Hay Lakes (New Sarepta)
Drebert, Reinhold	Bruederfeld	Strathcona
Dreger, Reinhardt	Strathcona	Wainwright (Bruederfeld)
*Fenske, David	Bruederfeld	Strathcona
Frauenfeld, Leopold	Bruederheim	Bruederheim
Frauenfeld, Nathaniel	Bruederfeld	Strathcona
Frauenfeld, Reinhold	Bruederfeld	Strathcona
Harke, Martin	Bruederfeld	Strathcona
*Hauer, Ludwig	Bruederheim	Bruederheim
*Hildebrand, Robert	Bruederfeld	Deermount
*Hoppe, Reinhold	Bruederfeld	Sibbald
*Jeck, Adam	New Sarepta	Hay Lakes
*Jeck, Charles	New Sarepta	Hay Lakes
Kittlitz, Edward	Bruederfeld	Strathcona
Kittlitz, Rudolph	Bruederheim	Bruederheim
Klammer, Gottfried	Bruederheim	Bruederheim
Klommer, Karl	Bruederheim	Bruederheim
*Kolke, Arnold	Bruederfeld	Strathcona
Kolke, Ludwig	Bruederfeld	Strathcona
Komshu, Jacob	Calgary	Calgary
*Lenz, Julius	Bruederfeld	Strathcona(Bruce)

*Lippert, Carl	Bruederheim	Bruederheim
*Luft, Conrad	Calgary	Calgary
Mielke, Heinrich	Bruederheim	Bruederheim (Bashaw)
Morasch, Henry	Calgary	Macleod
Neumann, Emil	Strathcona	Strathcona
*Noske, Adolph	Bruederheim	Bruederheim
Paul, Emil	Bruederfeld	Strathcona
*Paul, Reinhold	Bruederfeld	Strathcona
Poffenroth, Alex	Calgary	Ponoka
Prochnau, Heinrich	Bruederheim	Bruederheim
Prochnau, Ludwig	Bruederheim	Bruederheim
*Prochnau, Rudolph	Bruederheim	Bruederheim
Rentz, Rudolph	Bruderfled	Strathcona
*Riske, Edward	Bruederheim	Bruederheim
Sampert, Edward	Bruederheim	Bruederheim (Vegreville)
Sampert, Emil	Bruederheim	Bruederheim
Schattschneider, Herman	Heimtal	Strathcona
Schattschneider, Otto	Heimtal	Strathcona
*Schmick, John Jr.	Calgary	Calgary
*Schneider, Adolph	Bruederheim	Bruederheim
*Schultz, Edward	Bruederheim	Bruederheim
*Schultz, Emil	Bruederheim	Bruederheim
Schultz, Emil E.	Bruederheim	Bruederheim
*Schultz, Julius	Bruederheim	Bruederheim
Schultz, Robert	Bruederheim	Bruederheim (Lamont)
Seutter, Christian	Bruederfeld	Strathcona
Seutter, Gustav	Bruederfeld	Strathcona
*Tober, Gottlieb	New Sarepta	New Sarepta
Voelpel, John	Heimtal	Strathcona
*Werner, Carl	Bruederheim	Bruederheim

Wolfram, Edward	Heimtal	Strathcona
*Zelmer, Adolph	Bruederheim	Bruederheim
Zelmer, Julius	Bruederheim	Bruederheim
Piper, Arthur	Canaan, North Dakota	Davenport, North Dakota (Headingly, Manitoba)
Piper, Carl	Canaan, North Dakota	Davenport, North Dakota (Headingly, Manitoba)
Piper, Ferdinand	Canaan, North Dakota	Headingly, Manitoba
Piper, William	Canaan, North Dakota	Headingly, Manitoba
Qualman, Elmer	Pleasant Point, Dundrun, Saskatchewan	Saskatchewan
Qualman, Hugo	Pleasant Point, Dundurn, Saskatchewan	Saskatchewan
Qualman, Roland	Pleasant Point, Dundurn, Saskatchewan	Saskatchewan
Rothe, George	Canaan, North Dakota	Davenport, North Dakota (Headingly, Manitoba)
*Strong, Rufus	Waconia, Minnesota	St. Johns, Quebec

DOUG'S FINAL THOUGHTS

There are many individual cases to this story, of which I've only briefly mentioned some. Regarding the case of David Fenske, I have discussed his case in more depth as it was his that lead to the right and privilege for us dear brothers and sisters, to declare ourselves conscientious objectors. I encourage you to

seek out those other stories and to write about them, so that this story may be more complete.

DOUG'S FINAL GREETINGS

Dear brothers and sisters, I close my letter with these last words: Remember. Keep the faith. Encourage each other. Live in harmony and peace. Then the God of love and peace will be with you.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

WESTERN CANADIAN MORAVIAN ROOTS

by Wm. G. Brese

Introduction

When my interest was kindled in our family history, I found my way into the records of the Moravian Church in southeast Edmonton, to look for information about our family origins. Both my grandparents and my wife's grandparents, although of German origin, were born in Poland, but their children were born in Volhynia, Russia. When they immigrated to Edmonton, Alberta, Canada in 1894, they became charter members of the Bruderfeld Moravian Church.

Fortunately, some very capable people have done some remarkable work in delving into the origins of the early German Moravian settlers who came to the Edmonton area. We now know a good deal about where they came from, why they migrated to Volhynia, Russia and later moved on to Canada. It is their connection to the Moravian Church back in Europe, which gave rise to their strong desire to establish Moravian Churches in Canada, which is often a puzzle to the researcher, particularly because the Moravian Church is not all that well known.

Origins of the Moravian Church

Established by the followers of Jan Hus, who was burned at the stake in 1415 for his reformation activities, the Unitas Fratrum, or Unity of the Brethren as it was then known, was established in 1457 in Moravia and Bohemia, in what is today the Czech Republic.

The Unitus Fratrum waxed and waned with religious wars and persecution almost extinguishing it. It was a remarkable encounter of a German nobleman and leaders of the remnant group who were fleeing persecution in Moravia and Bohemia, that gave rise to the renewal of what would come to be know as “the Moravian Church”. The nobleman, Count Louis Nicholas von Zinzendorf, a 22 year old German count, offered the group refuge on his new estate, Berthelsdorf, in Saxony in 1722. This contact between the young Count and this group of evangelicals, who longed to re-establish the church of their forefathers, was to have consequences that neither party could have imagined.

Count Zinzendorf was a member of the German nobility with court responsibilities at Dresden, which he gave up soon after the arrival of the refugees, so he could focus on the development of the new community on his estate. It had grown to about 300 people. The count was a devout follower of Christ. He was a Lutheran, who took theological training to supplement his broad formal education. Zinzendorf became an ordained Lutheran pastor.

After making contact with the refugees from Moravia, Zinzendorf investigated the origins and practices of the Unitas Fratrum, the Unity of the Brethren, and readily identified with them. Zinzendorf became the spiritual leader of this group of Christians. What emerged from this connection was a peculiar role for the Brethren in the church world of Europe and America for the next 200 years.

The Christian community at Berthesdorf under the leadership of Zinzendorf, expressed their earnest desire to continually develop a closer personal relationship to Jesus Christ by the use

of Daily Texts, personal devotions, prayer, daily song services and regular participation in Sunday worship services. Following a Pentecostal experience on August 13, 1727, this small community was to launch a missionary effort which was unprecedented. This uprooted group of exiles readily took to vocations of itinerant evangelism, singly or in twos. They went not only to the "heathen " in foreign fields, but to likeminded Christians, too, to cultivate fellowship among the children of God. Hamilton's HISTORY OF THE MORAVIAN CHURCH sets this out succinctly.

"Out of this grew a network of societies within established churches, to which the term, "Diaspora" was applied. The spiritual warmth which these societies brought into the large state-church congregations was among the major contributions of the Moravian Brethren to continental Protestantism. The Diaspora was Zinzendorf's first love".

He was an ecumenical pioneer who was interested in drawing people closer to Christ. This work was unselfish and non-proselyting and more than any other element checked the development of Moravianism as a denomination.

The idea was to encourage fellowship and spiritual growth, while those involved would retain membership within their own denominations. Close contact with the Moravians developed as a consequence of this diaspora work, which reached its zenith by 1785 when 20 districts across Europe had been organized. This was still many years before the diaspora work of the Moravians had been extended into Poland.

Moravians In Poland

In 1818 the Moravian diaspora found its way to Poland where it served the colonies of German migrants. Much excellent work, documenting and tracing this development, has been done by many family history researchers. Ron Neuman and Cyril Harke are but two, that immediately come to mind. We learn how Moravian prayer halls were built in many communities in Poland. Moravian pastors provided leadership for festivals, open prayer meetings, love feasts, musical expression in congregational singing (singstunde), choirs, and bands. The Moravian church did not have official status, but worked in co-operation with the established Lutheran church, where official church records of births, deaths and marriages were recorded.

Land shortage was an everpressing problem. It had provided the impetus for the Germans to move to Poland and it was a motivating force along with political unrest in Poland, which would give rise to many Germans making another move, this time to Volhynia, Russia. The abolition of serfdom in Russia in 1861, resulted in landowners encouraging the migration of Germans from Poland. The movement of Germans from Poland to Volhynia became massive. Harke reports that by 1883, 550 villages had been established, which were populated by 171,333 Germans. Twenty to thirty of these villages were Moravian.

Moravians in Volhynia

Many inducements had been offered to the migrants to encourage them to move to Volhynia. Good land, although heavily forested, was offered on a lease basis, which after 12 years was to be converted to ownership. Exemption from military service was important to the Germans from Poland. The opportunity to operate schools in the German language was

another important concession. Moreover, in those communities that were populated by Germans from Poland, who had been involved with the Moravian church, there was a strong desire to establish Moravian congregations in Volyhnia. The Moravian church headquarters in Herrnhut, Germany sent Rev. Herman Steinberg and Rev. W. Lange to Volyhnia to serve the Germans. A petition was organized by the settlers and submitted to the Russian authorities and the state church officials, seeking recognition of the Moravian Church. Congregations were established at two locations, Shadura and Kamenka. Harke reports that the Schadura prayer hall had the capacity to accommodate 400 people.

The fortunes of the Germans in Volhynia continued to reverse as the special privileges were steadily withdrawn by the Russian authorities. They lost exemption from military service, ownership of land could only become a reality by joining the orthodox church. Russification of schools meant the loss of the use of the German language in education. The Moravian congregations at Shadura and Kamenka were closed. The Shadura group emigrated to Brazil under the leadership of Rev. Lange, with financial support from the Moravian church in Germany. This event reveals how deeply dissatisfied the Germans were with the situation they faced in Volhynia. It was growing increasingly clear to many of those in the German communities that finding a new home elsewhere, perhaps in America, was the solution to their problems.

Andreas Lilge

Andreas Lilge emerged as the leader who was required to find a way for the disgruntled Moravians in Volhynia to emigrate to western Canada and establish their beloved Moravian church in the land of their choice. The role that Lilge played in this saga

has been well documented by the late Moravian pastor, the Rev. Kurt Vitt, in *THE HISTORY OF THE MORAVIAN CHURCH IN WESTERN CANADA AND THE ANDREAS LILGE STORY*. This work was published by the Canadian Moravian Historical Society in 1983.

For most of his adult life, Andreas Lilge aspired to be a Moravian pastor. This propelling desire made him an ideal person to lead the way. He was motivated not only by his own personal desire to serve as a Moravian pastor, but as a person concerned for the welfare of his friends and relatives in Volhynia. They longed to find a home where freedom would allow them to worship as they wished and have the opportunity to work hard to make a good life for themselves and their families. Canada would be the place where this was to come about, but Lilge took a long and difficult course in making it happen.

Born in the German colony of Augustowok, near Warsaw, Poland, Andreas Lilge was trained in an Evangelical Teachers' Seminary. Lilge was greatly influenced by the Moravian Diaspora workers. Lilge and his wife were part of the migration to Volhynia, moving there in 1878. The birth records of their children reveal that while living in Volhynia, they moved frequently. He was a teacher at Lutheran schools, which had made it mandatory that he belong to the Lutheran church.

In 1880 he had contacted the Moravian church headquarters in Herrnhut, Germany, requesting that he be admitted to the Moravian Seminary. However, his application was denied because he was a married man with several children. However in 1884, his passion for a Moravian connection was so strong that he left the Lutheran church and his school teaching

position, to join the Moravian church and serve as an active lay preacher and fellowship elder in the Moravian communities.

As discontent with the circumstances that faced the Germans in Volhynia rose, Lilge renewed his efforts to find a way to get help for the Moravians to emigrate to America. The man was clearly motivated with the initiative that is required of people in leadership roles who do not sit back, but who make things happen. In 1891 Lilge wrote a long and detailed letters to the Moravian church headquarters in Herrnhut, Germany, and in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, requesting assistance for a group of Moravians to emigrate to America. He made specific reference to Wisconsin, where the Moravians were established. No help was forth coming. The Moravian church had helped to finance the group of Moravians who had left Shadura, Volhynia for Brazil, where they had established a colony at Bruderthal. This costly venture had not met with success. Unsuitable land was one main reason. Apparently it had been a serious drain on church finances and Lilge's approach met with encouragement, but no money.

Undeterred, in 1892 Andreas Lilge, 40 years old, with his wife and 10 children left Olgenburg, Volhynia setting out for the U.S.A. His goal was to establish a colony for a Moravian congregation in the free world. On their journey they made a stop in Herrnhut, Germany. Lilge consulted with Moravian church officials. One can conclude that there was support for his objectives, because in Vitt's account it is noted that Br. Thophil Richard, a member of the church's governing body, the Provincial Elders' Conference, made Lilge a personal loan of 500DM. These funds were likely used to help finance the family's passage to the U.S.A.

Bethlehem, Pennsylvania was a stopping place for the Lilges. After discussions with Moravian church officials, the Lilge family moved on to Ebenezer, Wisconsin, where he secured a job as a German teacher. Some of the older Lilge daughters remained in Bethlehem where they got work as domestics.

In the summer of 1893 Lilge returned to Bethlehem for more discussions about his plan to establish a Moravian colony, which was now focused on Canada. Two years previous the railway had been completed from Calgary to Edmonton, and the area around Edmonton was open for settlement with the encouragement of the Government of Canada. This had no doubt come to Lilge's attention. The reaction of church officials at this stage was, "Show us what can be done and we will react to your accomplishments."

What Andreas Lilge accomplished during the course of the next year almost defies belief. With little or no support, using his own meager resources he embarked on an investigative journey to Alberta, Canada to check out prospects for a Moravian settlement. This involved trips back and forth to Winnipeg, Manitoba to make arrangements for a tract of homestead land northeast of Edmonton to be dedicated to the Moravians. Because many of the Germans from Russia were unable to finance the cost of their passage, Lilge had to negotiate concessions from the transportation companies and financial assistance from the Government. He freely contributed funds that were coming to himself for assisting with immigration, to the cause of covering the travel costs of the settlers. Lilge was single minded and devoted. The fostering of immigration from Volhynia, the establishment of the Moravian church and his becoming a Moravian pastor were coming closer to reality.

The Moravians in Volhynia had provided Lilge with a letter, which named him as their representative. He was referred to in correspondence with Canadian Government officials as "Rev." Andreas Lilge, although in fact he had been an elder and layworker in the church not a pastor. The homestead land that he had secured for the settlers was known as "the Moravian Colony".

The pieces were finally in place. Lilge was able to write letters to his relatives and contacts in Volhynia imploring them to come to Canada, to the land of their dreams. He had land for them, travel assistance for those who needed it and they would be able to establish a Moravian church. One can only imagine the reaction of the people who received the news in Russia. The range of reaction must have spanned the spectrum from jubilation to serious doubt. For some it just seemed too good to be true.

The difficulties encountered in selling out and getting passports and making the long and difficult journey from the villages of Volhynia to the Canadian frontier in the Edmonton area, are well documented in most of the family history books. The first group of Moravian settlers arranged through Lilge's efforts, arrived in Edmonton in March of 1894, the second in May and the third in June. They totaled about 300 people.

Those settlers in these groups who had sufficient funds, bought farm land on the south east outskirts of Edmonton, at what would be known as Bruderfeld (now Millwoods). The others took up homestead land on the tract arranged by Lilge, about 40 miles northeast of Edmonton at what would become known as Bruderheim. Fortunately the land in both areas was for the

most part of very good quality, well suited to farming, although much of it was heavily wooded.

With the settlers getting established on their new holdings, Lilge pressed forward with plans to get the Moravian church to officially sanction establishing two congregations. Letters were written to Bethlehem Pa., reporting on progress and asking for a commitment. Lilge received instructions on how to set up the congregations according to the rules and regulations of the Moravian church, which he did with dispatch. The Bruderheim Moravian church was officially organized on May 6, 1895, and officers were elected. This was followed by Bruderfeld, nearer to Edmonton, on June 27, 1895.

Moravian Provincial Elders Conference and Board of Church Extension

With all of the administrative matters completed, the documentation was sent to Bethlehem, Pa. with the request that a Moravian pastor be assigned to the new work in Alberta. What had transpired in Alberta under Lilge's leadership was extraordinary. More typically new Moravian congregations were the result of initiatives taken by the Board of Church Extension following a period of careful planning and consideration of all of the ramifications, particularly the costs involved in accomplishing the tasks.

Faced with Lilge's request the Moravian church in Bethlehem acted immediately. The official boards decided to dispatch a member of the Provincial Elders Conference to Alberta to review the situation and report back. Rev. Morris Leibert, a mature experienced member of the PEC, was given the assignment. He had one month to complete his task. Two weeks would be required for train travel and two weeks for fact

finding with government officials in Edmonton and Winnipeg, of which five days would be spent at Bruderfeld and five days at Bruderheim with the settlers. The trip took place from November 4 – December 3, 1895. The Leibert Report is a gem. Leibert was a wonderfully perceptive person, who filled his report with comprehensive details about the circumstances which faced the settlers and expressed his impressions about how well suited they might be to forming successful Moravian congregations. Clearly the Germans from Russia with Moravian aspirations, made a favourable impression on Leibert. The longing in the hearts of the people comes out clearly as Leibert writes, “Shall we have as we supposed we should when we sold our humble but well ordered European homes and came to this waste place, shall we have here a real Moravian Congregation and a real Moravian minister?” While conducting services in homes, Leibert comments on how impressed he was by the devotion and expectation written on the faces of the worshippers.

Leibert came out strongly in favour of acceding to Lilge’s request and supplying the Germans from Russia with a pastor to serve the work even if it had to be developed as a special enterprise of the Moravian Church. Moreover he recommended that the church should provide the best pastor who could be found.

What is not widely known or appreciated is the financial constraints that faced the Board of Church Extension at the time the request to start a Home Mission in Canada was made. Accepting Leibert’s recommendation could only be accomplished through launching a special fund raising effort. The Provincial Elders Conference and the Board of Church Extension jointly agreed to do this. It meant inaugurating a

special appeal to the congregations in the U.S.A. for funds to start work in Alberta at Bruderheim and Bruderfeld. The appeal was extended to the Moravian Unity (the world wide Moravian church). The initial goal was to raise \$2000.00, as the struggling settlers could not be expected to afford the costs for roofing, hardware, furniture, for churches and a parsonage or for a pastor's salary

Clement Hoyler

It seems evident now with the benefit of historical perspective, that the Provincial Elders Conference of the Moravian Church in Bethlehem, Pa. gave serious and careful consideration about who to call to take on the responsibility of taking on the new work planned for the Moravian church in Alberta. The PEC extended the call to the Rev. Clement Hoyler. Lilge's reaction to this positive development appears in a letter that he wrote, dated January 22, 1896 that is published in the Moravian church paper, THE MORAVIAN. The letter is long and expressive. It reveals how able Lilge was in expressing himself and how deeply he felt about the favourable action that the Moravian church had taken to his initiatives. In part he said, "Who of us would years ago have thought and believed that our faithful and merciful God would grant such a gracious and wonderful answer to our prayers from relief and deliverance from Russian bondage and tyranny."

Clearly Lilge believed that their prayers had been answered. It would unfold over time that Divine providence must have also been involved in the selection of the man to head up the Moravian work in Alberta. Hoyler's contribution to the establishment of Moravian work in Western Canada is engraved in the history of Canadian Moravians. Fortunately Hoyler had a sense of history in the making. He recorded it. There is a

wealth of information written by Holyer, which documents his efforts and also describes the life experiences of the settlers.

Hoyler was rigorously faithful in recording his activities in the Church diaries. He also recorded valuable family history information in the church registers, which show parentage and place and date of birth of people joining the church.

Clement Hoyler was 23 years old, single, with just three years of pastoral experience behind him, when he stepped off of the train in south Edmonton, on the evening of February 3, 1896. His task was daunting. He had two congregations to serve which were approximately 40 miles apart. A parsonage needed to be built immediately, followed by two church buildings. He was responsible for everything. Lilge would serve as his assistant at Bruderheim.

Life on the frontier with the settlers was highly suitable to Rev. Clement Hoyler. He loved the people and they loved him. He was their pastor, friend, advocate and helper in every imaginable way. A gifted musician, he accompanied them on his portable organ, or led the singing with his violin or flute. He led the choirs and bands. The prayer life of his parishioners was of great concern to him. He was an outstanding preacher. The very essence of their longings for a Moravian expression of their faith and practice were realized under Hoyler's loving care and service.

Holyer was well aware that the needed financial support for the Alberta Home Mission was dependent upon contributions of the congregations in the U.S.A. Therefore, he made a point of keeping people apprised of progress in Alberta by writing regular reports which were published in THE MORAVIAN.

They were mailed to every Moravian household in America. These reports are a valuable source of information, which give a detailed regular account of how the work developed in Alberta.

The Moravian Church followed through with their commitment to establish Moravian congregations to serve the German settlers from Russia by sending the best pastors available and by providing the needed financial support to build churches and parsonages. The settlers provided the labour and the raw materials such as hewn logs for construction. In addition to the two congregations organized by Andreas Lilge, a third congregation, Heimtal, south west of Edmonton was added. Before the end of the first year \$2,363.70 had been allocated to the home mission work in Alberta. The largest appropriation had been for building the church buildings at Bruderheim and Bruderfeld and a parsonage.

Holyer's efforts were soon augmented by the appointment of a second pastor, the Rev. William Schwarze, a 21-year old seminary graduate, who had finished at the top of his class.

The entries in the church diaries written by Holyer and Schwarze, together with the reports which they submitted to the MORAVIAN, are revealing not only of the historical sequence of events as they unfolded, but the reactions of the settlers to these events. We get glimpses of how the Germans from Russia felt about achieving their deepest longings of establishing Moravian churches in their new communities and being able to worship in the Moravian way at last.

Holyer's first report to the MORAVIAN, written on February 17, 1896 says in part, "It is needless to say that the people both at Bruderfeld and Bruderheim gave me a warm welcome. They

evidently appreciate to the fullest extent, the action of the Moravian Church in the United States, in sending them a pastor of their own. Their delight was written on their faces, expressed in their words and shown in their actions. I anticipate a great deal of pleasure and encouragement, working among our people in Alberta.”

The main thrust of the home mission work in Alberta was with the members and friends of the newly established congregations. But the elements of the Moravian diaspora were soon evident as they had been in Volhynia and in Poland. The pastors met with people who lived in more remote areas and did not have churches and pastoral care. Thus meetings were held in homes and in schools to provide for the spiritual welfare of these people in many surrounding areas. Hoyler even made several trips to the Dunmore area 400 miles south east of Edmonton, beyond Medicine Hat, at the invitation of the Germans from Volhynia who were eager to have service from a Moravian pastor. A report on a visit to the Dunmore area submitted by G. Henkelmann, who went there on Hoyler's behalf after Hoyler had made several visits, indicates the feelings of the settlers regarding a Moravian connection.

The report in the MORAVIAN is dated April 10, 1901. Excerpts from this report are as follows:

“After some hesitation, a visit was made, to the great joy and evident blessing of many of the good people, who had desired the visit. They seemed to find again what, many years, a beloved Moravian Diaspora worker, C. Hessemeeer, in Poland, as well as his present successor, Bro. H. Steinberg (the latter also personally known to the writer) and brought to them, namely, a warm and living testimony concerning Christ's merits

and death. Thus knitted together both minister and people were greatly blessed. ... True happiness and sincere gratitude toward God lit up the faces of these people.... A week of richest blessing followed.”

In relatively short order thriving congregations were established in many rural communities in Alberta. The work was extended to Saskatchewan, too. Urban congregations were founded in Calgary and Edmonton as well.

The Legacy

The gratitude of those early settlers to the Moravian church was expressed not only in their generation but in succeeding generations as well. Western Canadian Moravians were known for their generous financial support for the foreign mission work of the church, and by the remarkable number of pastors and missionaries who responded to the call to enter full time service. Thus today we find the names of those families of Germans from Russia, sprinkled throughout the church's roster of Moravian clergy. Many of them trace their family roots back through the early settlers in Alberta, to Volyhnia and Poland, where the Moravian contacts they had there made a life long imprint on their forbearers. Thus the process continues with blessings being passed on to succeeding generations.

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WESTERN CANADIAN MORAVIAN ROOTS- Chronology

- 1415 Jan Hus – Czech reformer, burned at the stake
- 1457 Unitas Fratrum, (Unity of the Brethren) established in Moravia and Bohemia by followers of Hus. Later will be known as “The Moravian Church”
- 1722 Zinzendorf provides refuge to remnant group from Moravia and Bohemia
- 1727 Moravian Pentecostal Experience of August 13th at Herrnhut
- 1732 Moravian International Foreign Mission work launched
- 1818 Diaspora work extended to German communities in Poland
- 1861 Serfdom abolished in Russia. Migration of Germans from Poland
- 1878 Andreas Lilge moves from Poland to Volhynia, Russia
- 1885 Efforts to establish Moravian work in Volhynia thwarted. Rev. Steinberg recalled to Poland.
- 1892 Lilge family migrates to North America seeking new home for Moravians in Volhynia

- 1893 Lilge in western Canada arranging for land for a Moravian Colony.
- 1894 Moravian settlers arrive in Edmonton
- 1895 Lilge organizes two Moravian congregations
- 1896 Rev. Clement Hoyler arrives to become founding pastor of two Moravian congregations.

August 9, 2003

Hoyler's First Report to THE MORAVIAN from Alberta

BRUEDERFELD AND BRUEDERHEIM

It is now about two weeks since I arrived at South Edmonton, and so my new work in Alberta has fairly begun. I am sure there are many who will follow with interest the progress of this new enterprise, and it will be my aim to keep them constantly well informed.

It is needless to say that the people both at Bruederfeld and at Bruederheim gave me a very cordial welcome. They evidently appreciate, to the fullest extent, the action of the Moravian Church in the United States, in sending them a pastor of their own. Their delight was written on their faces, expressed in their words and shown in their actions. I anticipate a great deal of pleasure and encouragement, working among our people in Alberta.

There is much that is new to me. Coming from the extreme East, from a city with many advantages, located as it is, so near to the metropolis of the New World, leaving a circle of ministers as pleasant and congenial as can be found anywhere in the Moravian Church, and going almost to the extreme

West, into a new country, among people struggling with early settlers' problems, hundreds of miles from the nearest Moravian minister—this is a change that necessarily will bring new experiences. Nevertheless, I could not say that I had the slightest touch of homesickness or the least desire to return to the East. Not that I love the old place less, but that I love the new place more.

My dealings in Canada, with Government and railroad officials, professional and business men, whether at Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton or South Edmonton, were universally pleasant, and some valuable acquaintanceships were formed in the interests of our work. Their advice and assistance may be counted upon in the further development of our colonies.

It may be too early to express an entirely correct opinion as to the future outlook and prospects for growth—and without numerical increase the whole project would prove to be a very lame affair. However, the indications are that many families may be expected. Bro. Leibert's visit was immediately reported to the friends and relatives in Volhynia. The news of the subsequent action of the Elders' Conference in promising to send a pastor was likewise transmitted to Russia. Since my arrival here, letters have again been forwarded. Replies to the first letters are just being received. They are very favourable, and as time proceeds they will be more

so. Many in Volhynia have been holding back only because they wanted to be certain that they would have a real Moravian Church in Canada. Now that this is assured they are ready to come, even if in temporal matters they will not enjoy the same degree of prosperity. But we believe that in this respect also they will better their condition vastly by coming to Alberta. Last summer, to be sure, an early frost did considerable damage, but untimely frosts also do occasional damage in Florida. Our people did not become discouraged. Some said that in spite of the frost they harvested more per acre than they did under the most favourable circumstances in Russia. Taking it altogether, the people in Volhynia will not make a mistake by coming here, and we are pretty well assured that they will come, many of them at once. The prospects, therefore, it seems to me, are bright. We believe this is a work of God and as such must succeed, if we do our part.

My first Sunday at Bruederfeld was a very blessed one. In spite of a sharp and piercing wind that raised the snow in clouds, the services both morning and afternoon were very largely attended. Last week I paid my first visit to Bruederheim, mainly to see about the building of the church, the selection of the land and to submit the plans. Unfortunately, we struck one of the coldest waves experienced here this winter, and the long drive of fifty miles, with the thermometer far below zero, was anything but a pleasure. Next Sunday I expect to spend my first

Sunday at Bruederheim, and will then in accordance with instructions from the Elders' Conference, introduce Bro. A. Lilge as my assistant there, hand him a license to preach and receive him as an acolyte.

Yesterday we organized a Sunday-school at Bruederfeld, enrolling the names of twenty scholars, ranging from five to twenty-two years of age. This is something new to these people but it found immediate favor, and we expect that before long the number will be doubled. We shall probably also organize a Sunday-school at Bruederheim next Sunday, if time permits. Through the thoughtfulness of the Sunday-school at Bethel, N.D., we will be supplied with fifty copies of an excellent lesson paper for 1896. I have since written to a Sunday-school in the East about a supply of tickets and reward cards, and to another, about fifty copies of the *Missionsfreund*. Later on we will also need a supply of song books, and perhaps by that time we will know of some Sunday-school that will be willing to provide these. If we only are started, we will be able to look out for ourselves. As yet we have no funds of our own, and so we feel quite free to appeal to the generosity of older schools. Penny collections will not be introduced out here, for the simple reason that there are no pennies to be seen in this section of the country. The smallest coin is the five cent piece, and so we will expect our children to bring one of these on the first Sunday in every month.

As for the buildings—two churches and a parsonage—which are to be erected, some preparatory work has already been done, and before seed time we trust the exterior and most of the interior work will be completed. The structures, of course, will be of logs, but will be well built, roomy and neat—buildings which will command the respect of outsiders and will be no discredit to the Moravian Church. As soon as possible they will be sided, and will then look like any frame buildings. Fuller descriptions with illustrative cuts, if these are not too expensive, will be given later.

Now, brethren, this is a work of faith. Our people came here in faith, the Moravian Church undertook the enterprise in faith, we are going to build in faith. We believe you are going to stand by us. A great interest evidently is being taken. Large and small individual gifts have already come from friends in Europe and America. If you give us a strong support now, we hope to be self-supporting in a short time.

Asking for your constant prayerful interest in us, I remain cordially yours,

Clement Hoyler,
South Edmonton, Alberta, Canada,
February 17, 1896.