

Commemorative Publication

of the

25

Anniversary of the Founding of

St. Paul's Parish

Vibank, Saskatchewan

June 12, 1929

Written by Paul Abele

Translated by: Frank Dornstauder
2011

Festschrift

zur

25 jährigen Jubiläumsfeier

der Gründung der

St. Pauls-Kirchengemeinde

in

Wibank, Sask.

12. Juni 1929.



Courtesy of Saskatchewan Archives

Leaving for the Homestead



Courtesy of Saskatchewan Archives Board

Isolation

* The above pictures are not part of the original Commemorative book.

Translator's Notes

I grew up in the Village of Vibank. My grandfather Johann Dornstauder took out a homestead in the District of Assiniboia in 1900. He and his wife Elisabeth and family moved from Regina to the area known as South Qu'Appelle in the spring of 1901. My father Christof later farmed this homestead.

While this history has as its primary focus the founding of St. Paul's Parish it is really much more comprehensive. The work encompasses the colonization of the district known as South Qu'Appelle. It was here that St. Paul's Parish, the Elsas School District, and finally, following the advent of the railroad, the Village of Vibank were established.

I was thrilled to find a copy of Mr. Abele's Commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the founding of St. Paul's Parish. The memorial is written in German and therefore not accessible to most present day descendants of our early pioneers.

It is an interesting story written by someone who lived the birth of our community. Mr. Abele's description of the early pioneer days provided me the impetus to struggle with the translation of his work. In the course of the translation it occurred to me that this engaging piece of the history of South Qu'Appelle should be accessible to the descendants of our pioneers who are now far removed from the realities of pioneer life.

It should be noted that as I was completing the translation I came across a draft (a manuscript, not a book) of an earlier unpublished translation by Dr. A. Becker and Sister Bernadine Kletzel. It was a great help to be able to compare the two translations. One quickly comes to realize the myriad of interpretations that can be placed on a word, and how one's understanding of events is coloured by one's own experiences. I hope to have given a faithful and accurate rendition of Mr. Abele's work and what he intended to convey to the reader.

In this translation I have, where possible, tried to reflect the German writing style of Abele's era. I feel this is important in order to convey the flavour of the time and prevalent attitudes. At the same time, I wanted it to be fluid and not encumbered by the somewhat stilted old German writing style. By current English standards Mr. Abele's German style is quite convoluted. When translating the work I sometimes broke the long sentences into two or three shorter ones.

Also, because this Commemoration was written 80 years ago some of the words used are now archaic, or their meaning evolved over the years. In addition, many of the expressions are idiomatic and if translated literally would be quite nonsensical. So the translator can then only strive to translate the meaning of what the author intended.

It should also be noted that the author's references regarding gender, racial, or ethnic issues reflect the prevailing mores of the time and are not to be judged by our current understanding of them. That is the way it was.

Occasionally, Mr. Abele also uses the dialect of the German Russians and the German Hungarians. He often refers to the latter as "Swabians," a designation the German Hungarians brought with them from the old country. One needs to be careful not to assume that our ancestor pioneers came from Swabia which, in most instances, is not the case.

Anyone reading this should keep in mind that the European countries and boundaries Mr. Abele refers to are as they existed prior to World War I.

The pictures are scanned from Abele's original book and are inserted in the same locations as in original text. The "1917 Surveyor's Map" was not in the original text. It is included here for your information.

Enjoy a little trip into Vibank's past.

Frank Dornstauder

FOREWORD

On the occasion of the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the founding of St. Paul's Parish, our church council decided to write a brief commemorative history for the enjoyment of members of this Parish, their friends, and their sons.

This publication is dedicated to the early pioneers of this land and Church as a testament to their foresight and industry which resulted in the founding and development of our parish community. May this tribute evoke in them the memories of their journey from the early beginnings to this day.

This commemoration consists of two parts:

Part I: A brief history of:

- a) The Settlement;
- b) Church and Priests
- c) School districts and Schools
- d) Village of Vibank

Part II: A narrative account of the development:

- a) A short historical account of the culture of the south German peoples, the Germans, the Swabians and Franks who are the ancestors of our settlers.
- b) The development of the settlement and the building of our district and Parish.
- c) Conclusion.

Developed with the help of the members of the parish, the church council, and the various priests.

Edited and written by our local German pharmacist Paul Abele.

Vibank, Sask. Canada, June 1929.

The Parish Council:
Rev. Father Schorr, Parish Priest
Joseph Biegler
Stephan Klotz
Wendelin Wingerter
Michael Haider
Adam Huck, Secretary-Treasurer

Note: - Thanks are due to the following parish members whose contributions of information and ideas greatly lightened the author's work in preparing this commemorative publication:

Rev. Father Schorr, Anton Huck, M.L.A., Peter Kleckner, Adam Huck, Joseph Biegler, and Rev. Sister Ambrosia.

P. A.

Part I.

a) A BRIEF HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE SETTLEMENT OF THE VIBANK DISTRICT AND TODAY'S ST. PAUL PARISH.

Year 1891 - Settlers, Group I

1891 The arrival of the first settlers of our district to Regina, which was then the headquarters of the Northwest Territories. Our first pioneers came from the Black Sea area of South Russia, whose capital is Odessa.

Immediately after their arrival in Regina they decided to take up government homesteads with the intention to establish a colony for settlement. They choose prairie land south of the C.P.R. rail line between the stations of Balgonie and Qu'Appelle, an area known as Many Bone Creek .

The first groups of pioneers or the actual founders of our settlement and today's parish consisted of the following families:

From Mariental	Adam Klotz Michael Klotz
From Josephstal	Philipp Kiefer Andreas Leibel Anton Weisgerber
From Baden	Christian Kirschner Jakob Jung
From Selz	Anton Huck Johannes Lochert
From Manheim	Johann Deis Joseph Biegler
From Franzfeld	Anton Zerr Daniel Zerr Philipp Materi and son and Lorenz Klein from Elsass.

The above noted families formed the root-stock of today's St. Paul Parish community.

Year 1897 – Settlers, Group 2

1897 Following the arrival of our first settlers from Regina, our settlement welcomed a second group of new arrivals from the Banat, a German settlement in southern Hungary.

Because the northern portion of the Many Bone district was already taken up by the first settlers from South Russia, the Banaters decided to bypass the first settlement colony and go somewhat more southerly from the first settlement and parallel to the Many Bone Creek. The availability of water was a deciding factor. Running water was at hand in Many Bone Creek. The Banaters decided that this land further south would be suitable for farming.

In addition, the new-comers did not want to be too far away from the already existing neighbouring settlement.

This Banat pioneer group numbered the following families:

From Zichydorf (Banat), southern-Hungary:

Johann Kleckner	Peter Ortmann
Thomas Kleckner Sr.	Michael Donauer
Joseph Binzenberger	Nikolaus Leitner
Anton Kayner	Josef Bartole
Joseph Rist	

Year 1901 – Settlers, Group 3

1901 In 1901 additional groups of settlers arrived from Austria-Hungary (Burgenland and Bukowina), Romania and again, some more from South Russia. All were of German descent. The following families are from South Russia:

Deis, Benedict	Lorenz, Christian	Weisgerber, Philipp
Deis, Domenick	Lochert, Domenick	Weisgerber, Johann
Deck, Phillip	Mastel, Ben.	Wickenheiser, Josef
Deck, Nikolaus	Merk, Josef	Wickenheiser, Anton
Deck, Peter	Merk, Sebastian	Wenniger, Franz
Diewold, Rochus	Materi, Romuald	Weichel, Sebastian
Geiger, Prodasius	Moser, Lorenz	Wagman, Wendelin
Heintz, Friedrich	Sitter, Aloisius	Wittman, Salmes and son Johann
Heintz, Peter	Schaumleffel, Ignatz	Zerr, Sebastian and Wendelin
Heintz, Franz	Schaumleffel Paul	
Kuntz, Johann	Sali, Franz	
Leier, Anton	Sali, Georg Sr.	

The following are also from South-Russia, but later established their parish in the Blumenfeld-District:

Bast, Franz	Harti, Valentin	Mildenberger, Johann
Bachmeier, Mathias	Koehler, Josef	Schaeffer, Johann
Bauman, Florian	Held, Jacob	Weinberger, Anton
Ferner, Leonhard	Kambeitz, Anselm	Wolbaum, Andreas
Gerein, Franz Jos.	Klein, Johann	Wormsbecker, Michael
Gerein, Anton Jr.	Kambeitz, Ludwig	Uebelhoer, Valentin
Fuchs, Franz	Pfeifer, Johann	

From Hungary, Banat and Burgenland:

Massong, Mathias	Kiene, Rudolph	Wesan, Nikolaus
Staeber, Johann	Krumenecker, Peter	Kleckner, Thom. Jr.
Dornstauder, Johann	Fink, Karl	Wingert, Kaspar
Seibel, Johann	Fink, Ignatz	
Jandel, Stephan	Horack, Christoph	

From Bukowina, Austria:

Flaman Peter,	Druschgewitz, Ignatz	Staudt, Ferdinand
Schmidt, Heinrich	Tobias, Johann	Draunchuk
Schmidt, Ludwig		

Members of St. Paul's Parish in the year 1929:

Abele, Paul	Deck, Mrs. Nik.	Gangle, Michael
Biegler, Josef	Erautt, Josef	Geis Constantin
Biegler, Johann	Eisler, Frank	Goertel, Ludwig
Beck, Johann	Flaman, Peter Sr.	Gerein, Johann
Bulach, Barbara	Flaman, Peter Jr.	Gerein, Theodor
Bonn, Josef	Flaman, Victor	Gerein, Anton F.
Bachmaier, Mrs. Kath	Flaman, Johann	Gerein, Jakob
Baumgartner, Elis.	Flaman, Frank Sr.	Gerein, Clara
Deis, Johann	Fink, Frank	Goetz, Valentin
Deis, Ben	Fink, Heinrich	Huhkman, Dr. J.W.
Deis, Domenick	Fink, Herman	Heisler, Thomas
Deis, Michael	Fink, Karl Jr.	Heisler, Johann
Diewold, Rochus	Fink, Karl Sr.	Heisler, Josef
Diewold, Peter	Fink, Josef	Huck, Adam
Dornstauder, Christof	Fink, Josef H.	Huck, Anton Sr.
Dornstauder, Elis.	Fink, Johann	Huck, Anton Jr.
Deck, Peter	Fink, Sebastian	Huck, Rochus
Deck, Josef	Fuchs, Nikolaus	Haider, Carl Sr.
Deschner, Michael	Gall, Frank	Haider, Carl Jr.

Haider, Michael
Heintz, Friedrich
Heintz, Peter
Horack, Vinzens
Haberlach, Siegfried
Klotz, Michael Sr.
Klotz, Michael Jr.
Klotz, Johann
Klotz, Nikolaus
Klotz, Jakob
Klotz, Ben
Klotz, Stephan Sr.
Klotz, Stephan Jr.
Kuntz, Frank
Kuntz, Johann Sr.
Kuntz, Johann Jr.
Kuntz, Gregory
Kleckner, Peter
Kleckner, Thomas
Koch, Paul
Kiene, Rudolph
Kiene, Rudolph Jr.
Kowatsch, Adam
Keller, Josef
Keller, Lambert
Keen, Florian
Knoll, Jakob
Kerwel, Nikolaus
Lochert, Dominick
Lochert, Johann
Lochert, Jakob
Lochert, Josef
Leboldus, Johann
Leboldus, Wendelin
Lorenz, Christian
Lorenz, Frank
Lochert, Anton
Merk, Sebastian
Merk, Josef
Merk, Georg
Merk, Anton
Materi, Georg

Materi, Peter
Materi, Basil
Mastel, Ben
Mack, Wendelin
Mack, Valentin
Moser, Johann
Metz, Paul
Merk, Johann
Malone, Edward
Miller, Miss Elis.
Niedermeier, Johann
Pfeifer, Johann
Petrofski, Walter
Roeslein, Josef
Roeslein, Andreas
Rist, Mrs. Elis.
Rissling, Josef
Resch, Jakob
Resch, Johann
Runge, Rudolph
Sitter, Aloisius
Sali, Georg Sr.
Sali, Georg Jr.
Sali, Anton
Sali, Frank Sr.
Sali, Frank Jr.
Sali, Jakob
Sali, Christian
Sali, Adam
Sali, Josef
Schaumleffel, Ignatz
Schaumleffel, Paul
Schaumleffel, Johana
Stroh, Rochus
Stoeber, Michael
Stoeber, Mrs. Anna
Schneider, Heinrich
Schneider, Johann
Schlosser, Wendelin
Staudt, Mrs. Ferd.
Schaeffer, Christian
Schaeffer, Mrs. Joh.

Schmidt, Heinrich
Schmidt, Richard
Schmidt, Mrs. Joh.
Seibel, Johann
Tabor, Frank
Tabor, Johann
Tobias, Frank
Tobias, Wilhelm
Thomas, Michael
Thueringer, Peter
Ursulinen Schwestern
Vorreiter, Karl
Vetsch, Pius
Weisgerber, Felix
Weisgerber, Anton
Weisgerber, Anton Jr.
Weisgerber, Phillip
Weisgerber, Michael
Weisgerber, Alex.
Weisgerber, Robert
Weisgerber, Mrs. H
Wolf, Heinrich
Wolbaum, Johann
Wolbaum, Andreas
Wolbaum, Leonhard
Wickenheiser, Raimund
Wickenheiser, Josef
Wickenheiser, Peter
Wickenheiser, Leonh.
Wingerter, Wendelin
Wingerter, Wend. Jr.
Weisbeck, Johann
Wittman, Johann
Young, Christian
Young, Jakob
Young, Johann
Zerr, Stephan
Zerr, Adam
Zerr, Benedick
Ziegler, Valentin
Ziegler, Jakob

This third “in migration” constituted the final group of the original settlers and these three deserving groups taken together could be considered the cradle of today’s St. Paul’s Parish.

1902 From the year 1902 onward our settlement grew year by year, partly because of new arrivals, but most importantly through the growth of the existing families who at this time, had already increased to 60 members.

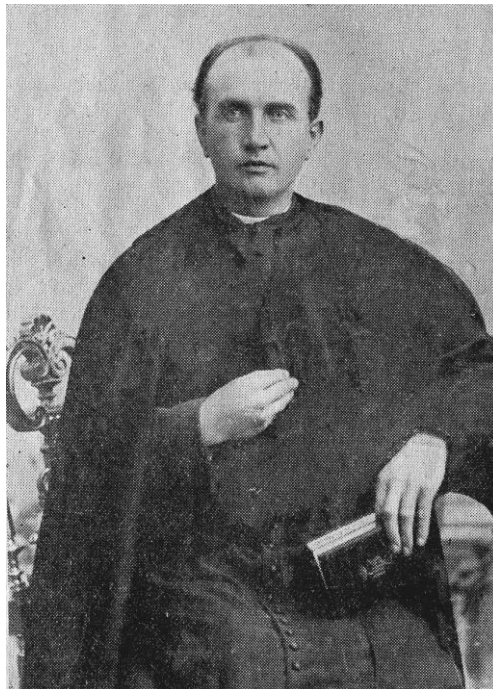
1907 The expansion of the newly built rail line, the Canadian Northern Railway took place in 1907. Our settlement received a train station and was given the name “Vibank”. From then on our district was also called Vibank. The station then became the focal point around which our community was built.

1910 In 1910 our community had already grown to 120 families and in 1920 we could proudly lay claim to 160 families.

1920 to present From 1920 to the present day the number of families in our community grew by an additional 20 families, so that today, on the occasion of our 25 Jubilee Celebration, the total number of resident families in our parish is an impressive sum of about 180.

b) A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CHURCH AND PRIESTS.

1891 to 1895. The spiritual welfare of the newly founded settlement north and along the Many Bone Creek district had the status of a mission. The then missionary priest Rev. Father Roi, visited us from Qu’Appelle once or twice a year. Since this was a new colony it is understandable that there was no church or house of worship available. So we had to alternate, holding the church service in one or the other of the settler’s houses.



Rev. Zerbach - First Missionary Priest

1895 to 1903. From the autumn of 1895 our settlement received more regular mission services because Father Zerbach from St. Joseph's parish in Balgonie was assigned to cover our area. He visited once a month. Since there was no church or prayer house available until 1903, he also had to hold services in a farmhouse or school.

Because of the urgency created by the lack of a worship space, the necessity to establish a proper, separate parish was generally recognized. So, 1903, at the urging of Fr. Zerbach, it was decided to build our own church. Its construction was begun and finished under the direction of our acting pastor, Rev. Father Zerbach.



Father van de Velde

First Pastor of St. Paul's Parish 1904-1905

1904. In the following year, 1904, an independent parish was formed, which by general consensus was named St. Paul's Parish in honour of the great and princely apostle, Paul. Rev. Father van de Velde was appointed as permanent Pastor. From this time onward we had regular Sunday services. As well, under the leadership of Rev. Father van de Velde, a parish rectory was built immediately following the completion of the church.

1905. In 1905 the authorities transferred the above-mentioned Priest (Fr. van de Velde). He was replaced by Rev. Father Jansen. Father Jansen led the parish until 1906. In the same year, the then assistant chaplain, Father Joseph Schelbert, took his place. Rev. Father

Jansen was assigned to St. Josephs Colony at Balgonie. From 1906 onward we had Rev. Father Schelbert as parish priest. Under his leadership the still unfinished church was completed and the interior furnishing obtained.

The church was built for \$4000. This amount was borrowed by the then Pastor Zerbach with the approval of the incumbent Bishop Langevin from the Diocese of St. Boniface. It fell upon Rev. Father Schelbert to repay it over several years.

1912 - 1913. In 1913, under the initiative of our pastor Father Schelbert, the church together with the rectory, which now stood on the prairie three miles distant from the newly established village and station, were moved to the village.

1914 In 1914, the first rectory, which was moved in from the prairie was sold for \$1000 and a bigger, new one was built.

1919 – 1920 For many years our priest harboured the hope to convince the now established teaching order of sisters to set up a school here. In 1919 he managed to bring the Ursuline Sisters, whose mother house was in Grayson, to our Elsass school district. Rev. Father Schelbert offered the use of his rectory to the Sisters who subsequently purchased it for themselves for \$5000. Following this, Rev. Father Schelbert bought himself a house, made the necessary upgrades and lived in it until 1920.

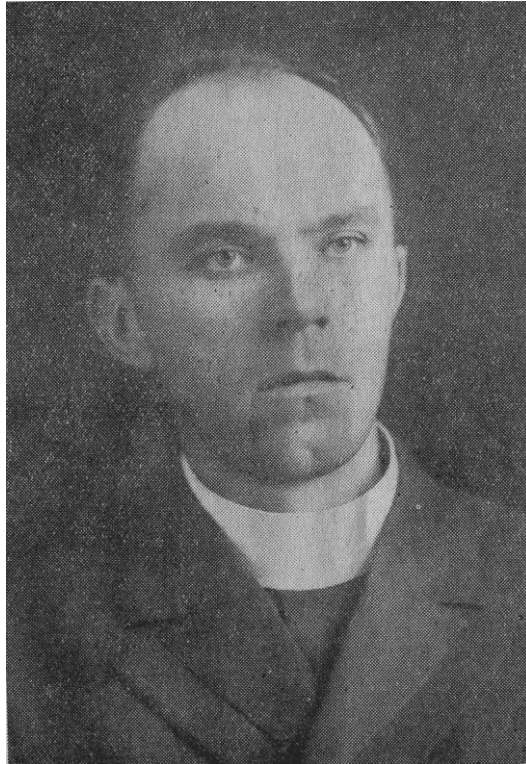
In the same year (1920) the community built a new rectory at a cost of \$8000. It stands to this day.

1922 In the spring of 1922 a new, bigger cemetery was established at the north end of the village. This was accomplished under the leadership of Father Schelbert with the help of volunteer labour by the community.

After a fire destroyed the Ursuline mother house in Grayson, Sask. our priest, Rev. Father Schelbert, by promising financial support to construct a new convent, persuaded the Sisters to transfer their community to Vibank.

1923 This offer was thankfully accepted by the Ursuline Sisters and in 1923 the construction of the convent was immediately begun. Construction was completed in the same year at the cost of about \$60,000.

The community for its part raised about \$10,000 through voluntary contributions to assist in the construction of the convent.



Rev. J.J. Jansen
Pastor of St. Paul's Parish 1905-1906

1924 In June 1924 only two years after the establishment of the new cemetery our pastor, Rev. Father Schelbert, was called from this life following an operation in Rochester, Minnesota. He found his eternal resting place in the cemetery he himself had established two years before.

Rev. Father Schorr, the pastor of our neighbouring community Odessa, succeeded Rev. Father Schelbert and is to this day our pastor and parish priest.

1926 Under the leadership of our new priest the decision was taken to build a newer and bigger parish church. It was to be partly built in brick and big enough to meet current needs. The initial cost estimate was \$24,000.

The plan was to complete the building of the church in subsequent years as soon as the necessary means (to do so) were achieved.

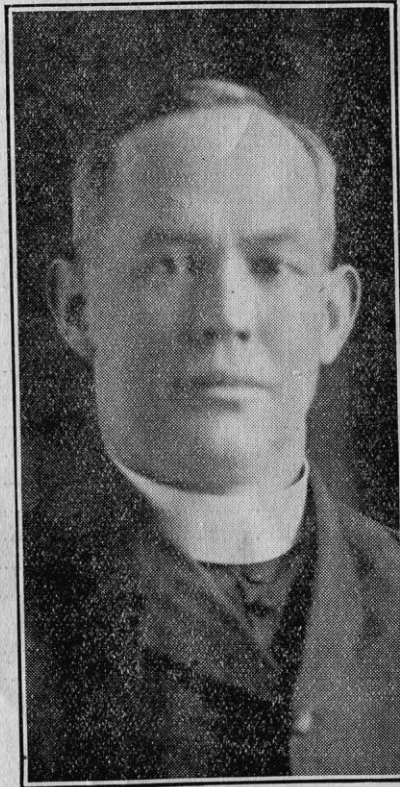
Statistical summary of the past Births, Marriages and Burials in St. Paul's Parish

Year	Baptisms	Marriages	Burials
1904	51	10	6
1905	75	15	5
1906	75	17	9
1907	52	13	5
1908	81	9	11
1909	47	5	19
1910	36	16	8
1911	53	9	11
1912	43	7	9
1913	33	9	6
1914	51	15	4
1915	57	11	4
1916	43	13	1
1917	45	8	6
1918	48	8	15
1919	43	19	13
1920	58	8	9
1921	50	6	4
1922	68	5	9
1923	54	12	15
1924	48	5	14
1925	57	4	18
1926	52	8	8
1927	32	7	11
1928	66	6	9
1929 to May	20	3	4
TOTAL	1338	248	223

In the combined 25 years and 4 months:

Births ----- 1338
Marriages ----- 248
Burials ----- 223

In Memoriam



Rev. Father Schelbert †

Pfarrer der St. Pauls-Gemeinde
von 1906 bis 1924.

Rev. Father Schelbert
Parish Priest of St. Paul's Parish 1906-1924

c) **HISTORICAL SUMMARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE SCHOOL AND SCHOOL DISTRICT.**

The first School District

1895 In 1895, because of the impressive growth of the population since the founding of the settlement in 1892, the idea of building a school took a step closer to becoming a reality.

Upon the initiative of the missionary of the time, a meeting was convened where the decision was taken to establish a school district. It received the number “43” as a Roman Catholic school district. It was named after the Bishop of the time, Tasche. The school was opened in the same year in a vacant sod building and outfitted with home-made furniture.

1896 The first teacher was McDonald with a salary of \$45 per month. He was initially hired for three months. The next year a proper school was constructed out of fieldstone and loam and roofed with shingles at a cost of \$500.

The first overseers or trustees were:

Adam Klotz, Chairman
Johannes Deis, Trustee and
Philipp Materi Sr. Secretary-Treasurer

1896 After autumn of the same year, following the completion of the new school built of stone, our sod school was vacated and torn down.

Under the leadership and personal assistance of our teacher J.J. Smith, now the current incumbent Minister of Municipal Affairs, the interior furnishings were supplied for the children in the new stone school.

This school was in use until 1903. It was the birthplace and source of our knowledge and education in the new homeland, Canada.

1904 In 1904 the Tasche school constructed of fieldstone and loam was replaced by a more modern structure of wood. It was also more centrally located in the Tasche School District.

This school still serves today as the public school for the Tasche School District No. 43

The second School District

1902 Because a sizable settlement was also developing south of the Many Bone Creek, the question of building a public school for those people also became urgent. So, the settlers of this area decided to establish a school of their own which came into being under the name “Blummenfeld School District No. 705”.

The first school trustees were:

Anton Gerein
Valentin Uebelhoer
Johannes Pfeifer

The third School District

1903 Since the population of the then Tasche school district was increasing year after year, the school district had to subdivide and establish a second independent school district. This resulted in the building of a new school in March 1903 which stands to this day and which is commonly known as “St. Franciscus School District No. 1822.”

The first trustees were:

Jakob Jung
Franz Heinz and
Ludwig Schmidt.

The fourth School District

1904 A fourth school district, the “Elsas School District No.1049” was organized and established 1 ½ miles north of today’s village of Vibank with the following trustees:

Fritz Lenz
Michael Donauer
Rochus Diewold

The name Elsas was chosen for the school district since the majority to the people came from the Elsass Kolonie in south Russia.

Following the building of the “Canadian Northern” railway and after the establishment of the village around the Vibank station, it was decided to move the school, which lay 1 ½ miles north, to the new village. This took place in 1912. Since this school house gradually became too small for the expanding community, the school district was soon forced to think about a bigger school. As early as 1914 the decision was made to replace the inadequate school with a two-storied, four-roomed one built with brick. The building started immediately and was completed within the same year at a cost of \$6200.

1914 This school serves today as the public government school in Vibank, Sask.

1923 After the successful completion of the new Ursuline convent in our village, which was principally built to serve as convent and private school, the possibility arose for the Elsas school district to rent two classrooms from the Ursuline sisters to accommodate our high school students. This then meant the school children of the Elsas school had access to a range of grades 1-12.

The fifth School district

1905 The families who settled along the Many Bone Creek felt the need and necessity to establish a school district closer to their area. This became a reality in 1905 and the district took the name of the local creek, “Many Bone Creek School District No. 1422”.

The founding trustees were:

Anton Kayner
Johann Miller and
Joseph Rist.

This school district exists to this very day.

The sixth School district

1907 The sixth and last school district still to be mentioned within today’s St. Paul’s boundaries is the Niederland School District. This school district became necessary because the daily travel distance for the children to the nearest school was too far. For that reason, the local settlers, in the beautiful month of May in 1907, established an independent school district initially named “Cloverfield School District”.

The founding trustees were:

Peter Flamann
Philipp Zerr and
William Cannon.

1912 In 1912 the name of the Cloverfield School District was changed to “Niederland School District No. 1812”. The school still exists under this name to this day.

Elsas S.D. No. 1094
Statistical summary of school registrants of the higher Grades and Diplomas received.

Year

1914 -1916, ---- One roomed school ---- Average school attendees 40

School year	Teacher	Grades				
		VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
1916/17	Baumann	8				
1917/18	McInnis	2				
1918/19	McLean	11				
1919/20	McLean	12				
1920/21	Harrigan	9				
1921/22	Harrigan	10				
1922/23	Sr. Ambrosia	14	12			
1923/24	Principal	13	2	8		
1924/25	Principal	7	8	6	8	
1925/26	Principal	15	3	10	7	5
1926/27	Principal	11	7	5	9	6
1927/28	Principal	11	9	6	7	3
1928/29	Principal	16	9	6	8	4

Diplomas received:

	Grades				
	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
1923	8				
1924	7				
1925	5			3	
1926	10			5	1
1927	9			6	4
1928	5			3	4

Two students of our school have taken their second year "Arts" examinations.

17 students have attended Normal School of which 9 received their First Class Certificates and 8 their Second Class Certificates.

2 Students of our school have graduated as "Nurses."

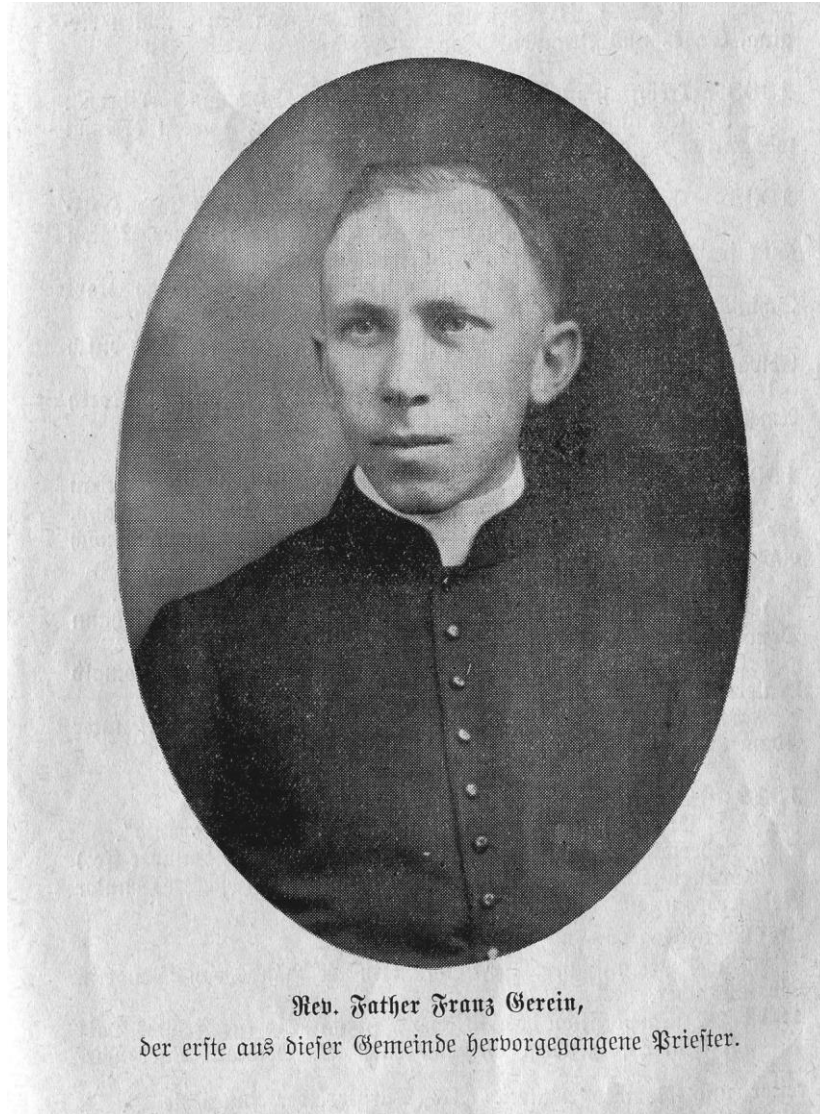
4 students of our school are training as "Nurses." Aside from the above, the following were previously students of our school:

1 Priest and

2 Lawyers

2 Bachelor of Arts, one of which is studying medicine.

Today's students in Elsas School number 182 with six Ursuline sisters as teachers, of which Sister Ambrosia in the Principal.



Rev. Father Franz Gerein,
der erste aus dieser Gemeinde hervorgegangene Priester.

Rev. Father Frank Gerein
The first priest ordained from this parish



d) A BRIEF HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE FOUNDING AND GROWTH OF THE VILLAGE OF VIBANK.

1907 The construction of the “Canadian Northern” railway which ran between the cities of Regina, Sask. and Brandon, Man., cut through the middle of the settlement.

1908 The opening and inauguration of the “Canadian Northern” mixed freight and passenger services, initially three times a week east and three times a week west.

1908 The establishment of a general store and lumber yard by the following men, Peter Kleckner, Anton Huck Jr., Johann Kleckner, and Kaspar Wingert.

The establishment of the first “board – lodging” house and restaurant by Karl Schmidt.

The opening of a hardware and farm machinery business by Edwards and King,
The construction of the first grain elevator by the “British North America Elevator Co.”

1909 Significant business development through the new expansion of the existing firm Kleckner, Huck and Company, who in this year also included Adam Huck; so a new firm came into being, Huck & Kleckner.

A blacksmith shop was opened by Joseph Bartele.

A livery stable was built by the brothers Michael and Johann Donauer.

The construction of individual houses, Adam Huck, Romald Materi and Alois Sitter.

Transfer of the Post Office from the farm to the village with Adam Huck as post master.

1910 Biggest expansion of the Village of Vibank.

The opening of a branch of the “Bank of Toronto.”

Establishment of a second lumberyard (Sask. Lumber Co.)

The establishment of a second general merchandise store by Weisgerber and Driscoll.

Building of more private residences.

The livery stable was sold to Wendelin Leboldus.

1911 Incorporation of “Vibank” as a village in its own right with the following village Council: W. Driscoll, Carl Vorreiter and Romald Materi. J.J. McCarthy acted as village secretary.

Building of the “Maple Leaf Hotel” by Benedikt Deis and Karl Schmidt. Upon receiving the liquor serving permit this hotel became a strong draw for the town, farms and the entire territory.

1912 Moving the school from the prairie to the Village.
Following this a large four roomed school was built out of brick.
The church that then stood on the prairie was moved to the Village.



Rev. Father Schorr
Pastor of St. Paul's since 1924

- 1912** More houses built in the village by retiring farmers moving to the village.
- 1919** The further growth of the village through building business enterprises until it reached its highpoint. The opening of a resident Doctor's office and pharmacy.
- 1921** Installment of central electric lights to illuminate the village.
- 1923** The most important structure our village has seen and which must be considered the gem of our village, has to be the monumental Ursuline sister's Holy Family Convent. It was built in 1923 and, as a two story brick building, is the largest building in Vibank. The convent houses approximately 35 Sisters of which about 16 are state authorized teachers. As well, the convent accounts for a goodly number of private students every semester.
- 1926** As evidence of further new building we can point to the addition to our parish church, which was built in brick, and was, for the time being, attached to the old church.

The Village now routinely receives daily train service from the west and east – has telegraph service and is connected to telephone service to all parts of the province and beyond. Vibank, as well as the districts abutting it, was founded as an entirely German village, with an almost total German population. It can be counted as a worthy example of the German people in Canada, both in the entire province of Saskatchewan and all of the dominion of Canada. As proof of the interest that the German residents of this town and countryside take in furthering the development of our new homeland, take note that the current representative of our constituency in the legislature of the province of Saskatchewan is Anton Huck who came from the line of our German settlers.



Holy Family Convent of the Ursuline Sisters, Vibank
Built in 1923

PART II

a) PAST HISTORY OF THE SETTLERS AND THEIR ANCESTORS.

**“I cannot divert my gaze from you,
I must contemplate you forever,
With busy hands you give
Your possessions to the boatman there.
And you, adorned with a golden ribbon,
You Black Forest maiden, brown and slender,
How carefully you place your jars and pots,
On the slippery green bank.”**

Freiligrath

Yes, truly, emigrant,-- immigrant, -- once again emigrant, again immigrant.

Above all, (they were) wanderers, these Alemannen, Franken and Swabians.

In our legends the Swabians were proverbially know as globetrotters, as a little story goes:

As Christopher Columbus set foot on the shores of America in 1492, he was immediately confronted by the natives with the question:

“Are you the gentleman Christopher Columbus?”

“Yes, but how do you know my name is Christopher Columbus?”

“Very simple! Several years ago, a Swabians, who was selling seeds, came to us from Erringen and told us: “Soon Mr. Columbus will come to discover you.”

The Swabian, in his innate modesty never allowed his visit to America to be publicized and so the glory of discovering America remained with the great Christopher Columbus.

Despite the above tale being only a fable, a person can still today actually ascertain that these Swabians or South Germans can virtually stretch out their hands, from the rising of the sun to its setting, and make a living chain around the entire globe as there are Swabians settlements to be found in every corner of the world.

Why? How come is it that it is mostly South Germans, Swabians, Franken and Alemannen who have left their homelands to seek their fortunes in other parts of the world? Are they, and only they called by Providence to play the role as the carriers of culture, and promoters of civilization for most of the world? It almost seems so.

Still, modest as the Swabians appear to the broader world, they make absolutely no claim to have a prominent place as the purveyor of culture, but yet, they are proud to have contributed one’s small bit, to have helped other peoples with Swabians affection, German affection, Swabians loyalty, German loyalty, Swabians knowledge and diligence, German industry, to building and supporting every land and every climate.

The South Germans accomplished these things as an example for future colonies; the beautiful Swabians villages, the golden fields they conjured up out of the wild steppes and swamps, all of this the work of their diligent hands. Thousands upon thousands succumbed to swamp fever and other epidemics but the few who survived did not give up. Instead, with typical Swabians stubbornness, they toiled on without complaint until the work was completed and they could meet the basic needs for their livelihood. And these first settlers, the forbearers of the fathers and grandfathers of our Canadian settlers, they who made such promising progress, where did these people come from?

For the most part these colonies are in the Black Sea district, South Russia, and in southern Hungary (Banat), in Romania, south Slovenia, Caucasus and Bukowina.

How did these people get there and why?

The aftermath of the frightful disaster of the 30 years' war (1618-1648) left no stone upon stone in south Germany - everything was destroyed and plundered. The Swabians, Franken and Alemennen had only a brief period of respite to half-way reclaim their land and start their lives again when the new hordes of war in the Spanish-Austrian war of Succession (1701-1714) of Ludwig the XIV, murderer-burner, overran the land. Lastly, the conquering army of the big Corsican, Napoleon I flooded, plundered and burnt everything.

There was nothing but misfortune and devastation, so that in the 17th, 18th and particularly in the beginning of the 19th century a general poverty took hold inevitably resulting in the mass migration of South Germans to almost every country.

Upon the invitation of Kaiserin Katharina II, the Swabians moved to South Russia in several stages. She asked them to settle the land. The wasteland of the Russian steppes was transformed by the Swabians into major blossoming Black Sea colonies. They accomplished this through their industry, perseverance, untiring work and boundless energy. Today they have the sterling reputation of having model settlements throughout the world. Then as their prosperity grew, and their accomplishments became obvious, the envy of the neighbouring Russian people and their government was stirred up. Slowly it became obvious that the promises and guaranteed special privileges (given at the time of migration), started to be eliminated and withdrawn. Military service, at first only moral obligation, later became compulsory. Nor was there any more land to be had for those born there. This new generation had to find room to expand. People heard about Canada which, through its advertising, invited people to settle here. As a result, many of the Russian-German colonists were once again gripped by wanderlust. In previous times one had only to emigrate over land but this time one must go over the great water to the land of unlimited possibilities - to America, really to the northern part of America, the Dominion of Canada. The emigration out of South Russia and the immigration to Canada also signaled the beginning of our St. Paul's Parish in Vibank.

In a similar manner, several waves of mass migrations of South Germans, Swabians, followed the Danube to southern Hungary for settlement. The then Kaiser Franz I invited them to settle the area between the Temesch and Danube rivers, the part of South

Hungary which had been completely neglected through centuries of Turkish rule.

Working in the swamps of this region resulted in the area getting the reputation of being disease ridden because of the prevalence of swamp fever and typhoid.

“The brave Swabian does not slacken, he went determinedly step for step”.

With unspeakable effort and deprivation they built canals in this swampland. (The land) was drained and transformed into fertile grain fields and pasture for their cattle.

Thousands upon thousands died from swamp fever and other plagues. The resilient Swabian did not falter. The work continued and after several years was completed.

Flourishing villages arose out of nothing, fields that were trampled by Turkish horses were transformed into swaying fields of grain. Soon the Banat, that is, the Swabian settlements, became known as the “bread basket” of Hungary.

Within a short time there also would be insufficient room within the promised borders. There was less and less room for the expanding population, until finally, the need to get new land became so great that one was forced to consider the possibility of searching in some other country. Because of the enforced Hungarian political policies such as compulsory military service and other cultural pressures, many of the German population decided to follow the lure of the promising Canadian invitation and to emigrate there.

This was proven to be a good thing because for over a period of about 25 years people again took to the waters, however, this time not to the Danube but over the Atlantic Ocean to Canada which was in its early stages of development. In this way, our Banat Swabians also supplied their building stone to our St. Paul’s Parish community. Still more South Germans, Franconian, and Alemanni settlers came to Canada from Bukowina, from Romania, from Burgenland, and Austria-Hungary, all together, not only as building stones to build our parish community, but also as it were, a roof to cover our new building with which to bring the founding of this our St. Paul’s Jubilee community to its fruition.

So we see, the Swabians did it!

In any case, the South Germans in many countries have proven what German energy, German industriousness, German honesty, German punctuality, often under difficult circumstances could do in the old lands. What they could accomplish through tenacious effort. Likewise, we shall see the same pioneers, step up with their men and knowledge and transform the wild prairie into waving fields of grain.

Hopefully they will reap more thanks here than they did in some of the old countries, from which they could only bring with them sad memories of their influence as promoters of culture.

Despite the never ceasing warmongering in some lands, the Swabian settlers in recent

times and places, have always been singled out with deep respect and honour. They spoke of these foreign settlers as loyal members of the state, as law abiding citizens, and as good countrymen always concerned for the well-being of all. In proof of this I will quote several views of non-German voices from various countries. As an example, the Croatian leader Stefan Raditschin in 1926, said the following about the Germans in a meeting of Croatians:

“The Danube connects us to the industrious German peoples. Our Germans, who came from South Germany are a hard-working, honest and loyal element, and the Croatians who live with them can best judge that”.

Briefly, in the Romanian magazine “Institute social Roman”:

“We can frankly say that the German population is the leading element in the economic and agricultural industries in our country. Among the Germans there is almost no illiteracy. The general attitude of the Germans toward the state is a deep and earnest loyalty. The German population proves itself to the state in its devotion and faithfulness and he sees his well-being only in the strength and support of the state”.

The Serbian paper “Pravda” 1924:

This paper praised the efficiency, endurance, commerce and industry of the Swabians living there:

“They are almost without exception reliable in economic and moral matters. You can leave Napoleons (gold piece) and dollars lie in the drawer with them. The reason for this can be found in their upright character that was brought here from Germany more that 200 years ago and was preserved in the new homeland.”

These are only a few examples from the countries from which a huge number of our people came. The many others are of no particular interest to us since they are not part of our St. Paul’s community. People of this “cut of cloth” came over the great water with a like-minded purpose of changing the wild conditions of the flat Canadian prairie which to this point the native Indian saw only as his hunting ground for buffalo and antelope or as a place to camp during the constant tribal feuds. They came to transform this land into the more peaceful purposes of their culture.

b) THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR SETTLEMENT AND PARISH ON CANADIAN SOIL.

Slowly and snorting the transcontinental “Canadian Pacific” rolled into Regina, the centre of the “Northwest Territories”. It should be noted (the railway) was built with south German money, Frankfurt money, Bank of Rothschild & Co.,

These initial families are considered to be the founding settlers of our community.

Soon their first and only wish, their hunger for land - to have a piece of land for oneself, would be fulfilled.



“Remembering the first year”

Once they got the necessary information the newly arrived colonists immediately and unanimously agreed to establish a self-contained settlement, a “colony.” They did this by applying for and taking up government land - a “free homestead” for a single payment of 10 dollars. Heeding local advice, the patch of the prairie south of the Canadian Pacific (railway) between the stations of Balgonie, McLean and Qu’Appelle was deemed to be an ideal place to develop a common, self-contained settlement modeled after the homeland colonies in South Russia.

After the purchase of the most necessary essentials such as draft animals, especially oxen, one or two milk cows, wagons, and other vital provisions, the Swabian train, under the experienced leadership of the men, once again took to the road with wife and child in tow. The age old test of the pioneer.

It was in the spring of 1891 as they slowly made their way - directly east toward Balgonie and Qu’Appelle – on an “Indian trail.” Because it did not go as quickly with oxen as with horses, or today’s “devil wagon,” the “Automobile” the sun was already setting in the west when our pioneers stopped on the prairie. “Out of the wagon,” wife and child “here is our new land, our new homeland.” They were greeted by endless prairie without tree or shrub, only sparse grass with scattered sloughs, a level and flat view to the horizon. Here we would be building our shacks. “Good! in God’s name we will strive as our fathers taught us. We have brought this inheritance with us across the sea.” Because it was already starting to get late a small evening snack was quickly prepared on an open fire, eaten and off to bed. “But where is our bedroom? Naturally, for the time being it is in our canvas-covered wagon.” It is somewhat cramped but sufficient for what a newly arrived Swabians could expect - not much room. He slept in God’s open nature just as

well as a prince in a bed of State. The next morning it is out from under the feathers.

In the new morning mist they were beset by a new enemy - mosquitoes. Gnats by the millions greeted the newcomers to quickly dispute their right to be in this new land. The stout Swabian did not flinch, but instead went his way step for step only to scoff at the situation.

A smudge was lit in order to at least keep the tormenting pests away from the living area. Only then was it possible to think what one should do here in God's free, wide open country. A family meeting was quickly convened to decide where the buildings should be located.

"I think over there near the slough would be the best because first, we would have water for our cattle and for washing, and also, we could dig a well for drinking and cooking water on the edge of the slough,"

"You are right, Mother!" said the farmer. "I have always said the women are usually right."

"But there is hardly a tree to be seen around here, where then are we to find wood for building?" asked the children.

"Yes, but did you not know that at home in Russia our people built their houses out of earth, sod or mud. Our father and grandfather. Oh yes, that's the truth".

The oxen, grazing on the prairie were quickly caught, hooked up to the hand plough and they began turning the sod. Hard working hands placed sod upon sod and in short time the shell of the house was finished. What about the roof? One heard that there was a forest six or twelve miles to the north. Good. They hooked up the wagon and drove northward to get poles for the roof. After slowly driving back and forth in the still unfamiliar land, they finally found the woods, chopped a sufficient number of trees, and with a good load they set out for home, all the while beset by the evil swarms of mosquitoes inflicting great torment. As anyone who has worked with oxen must know a person must almost become an ox himself in order to acquire the necessary stubbornness, endurance and patience to be able to handle these ornery animals.

They constructed the roof supports with the poplar poles they brought home. The poles were placed next to each other and the entire structure was covered with a base of dried reeds caulked with narrow strips of sod. A pair of windows was installed in the openings left for them and the sod house was finished. Oh, what joy that one now had a house and was protected from the pesky insects and the inclement weather.

"The frigid wind bites your face." The Canadian prairie being so close to the polar zone does not have the same poetic charm as the old homeland. With the construction of homemade bedroom furnishings, a homemade cooking hearth constructed out of fieldstone and clay, homemade table and chairs, soon all the necessary interior

furnishings were complete. So, now, a person could have a fairly comfortable house. Each house was built in a manner so the cattle barn and residence were under one roof. The entry door was through the barn giving common access to the living room and bedroom and the kitchen. The typical cold north wind blew around the walls, yes, often howled. Nevertheless, inside the sod house it was comfortably warm and in the summer pleasantly cool. The interior walls were plastered with mud and covered with whitewash.

As easily satisfied as the newly arrived settlers were with their home, so too they were they with their food. In the early years they nearly lived the life of a primitive people, mainly milk and flour, and sometimes, when work permitted there was rabbit stew, wild game or prairie chicken. Every day it was much the same since there simply was nothing more to be had. What admirable frugality.

Working together and with great energy father and mother would plant a garden. It is unthinkable for the German settler to not have potatoes for the kitchen. He mostly lived on vegetables, flour pastries, dumplings, noodles and soup, rather than meat. Potatoes were planted to be harvested for the upcoming winter.

All beginnings are difficult, but one cannot lose heart. It will all work out. With this determined energy the work went ahead. Now to break the land!

Again, this was easier said than done. Aside from the sparsely growing prairie grass the poor settler did not have proper feed for his draught animals. Everyone knows that without nourishing fodder one cannot expect much work from his draught animals. Breaking the prairie, cultivating it to produce something more than prairie grass required work, - very heavy work. In addition, another huge problem for the weakened men and draught animals was the myriad of mosquitoes. Not only did the men suffer frightfully under the continuous torture and become dead tired repelling the constant attacks, but there also was no respite for the poor animals. Their hide was not thick enough to protect them from the millions of stings. Already weakened because of the sparse grazing, the oxen became crazed, and often were in such a stubborn state that they would charge to the nearest slough into water up to their necks, dragging the plough behind them, in an effort to get some relief from the plague of mosquitoes.

The pioneer had to remedy this evil. He made a smudge at either end of the land being plowed so that the smoke from these fires would drive the mosquitoes away, giving the draft animals some peace. So then at least one furrow could be ploughed around the field per day. Each day several furrows, which by autumn amounted to several acres which finally was enough acreage to be able to sow oats and barley which would provide feed for his cattle and pigs next spring. In the first years one could not even consider planting wheat as a cereal crop given the low prices, insufficient seeding acreage and the great distance from market. Instead the pioneer was forced to earn his livelihood by selling wood and hay.

Great effort and bone weary tiredness were commonplace when hauling a load of wood or hay 20 miles on a two day trip to the neighbouring village of Qu'Appelle, or even 35 miles distance to Regina.

This, to earn \$2.50 or \$3.50 so as to be able to bring home the most essential necessities for the family. A sorry state indeed but it must suffice. Distress and need were everywhere, but the brave Swabian shouldered it all on his broad back following the motto: “Learn to endure suffering without complaining, go forward undeterred”.



Anton Huck in the year 1896 – age 16

Late summer and fall were spent hauling wood, making hay and storing these to ensure having sufficient fodder and heating for the winter. The hay and wood augmented his income by selling them later on. This income was needed to buy the most important necessities for the winter. Once this was done, big stoves were built out of clay and stone or out of homemade brick. (air dried sand and clay)

It was with uncertain and mixed feelings one faced the approaching Canadian winter. The barn, the living quarters, the firewood, all were in place to be able to cope with the winter storms. Once autumn begins in Canada it is not long until the cold winds begin to whistle out of the infamous ice hole.

One look into the well shows that it is almost empty, but it is essential to ensure enough water for the winter. From past experience it was known flowing springs could be found in the Many Bone Creek. One had to make preparations. Barrels were loaded on the

wagon and off to Many Bone Creek they went, despite a challenging distance of sometimes four or five miles. The days were taken up filling the well to provide the household with enough water for the winter. Before the Canadian earth was permanently covered with the all-encompassing snow blanket, one made a final trip to visit his neighbours who, at the time, did not live as closely together as today. They sometimes were four to five miles distant from each other. Before the onset of the so-called Canadian winter sleep, one wanted, one last time, to check on the well-being of his neighbour, and to clearly memorize the directions to his place so that he could occasionally visit them during the long winter. Then as the coming winter slowly made its appearance and the snow was not yet too deep, the man of the house made a trip in order to buy food for his hungry family. On one trip he would take a load of wood and next time a load of hay. If he was lucky he would be able to sell his hay or wood the same day for money or for the promise of payment. Unfortunately, sometimes the trip took two or more days and the dear mother and children waited at home with fear and trembling for the return of their father. They imagined every possible calamity – father had an accident, or perhaps he lost his way. But he who trusts in God did not build on sand.

All eyes are at the window of the snug and cozy sod house, the children are watching for the return of their father. Dear mother often asked from the hearth: “children, is Da Da not coming yet?” “No,” came the reply from the window. Suddenly a pair of eyes sees something emerging in the misty light. As it comes nearer the house it becomes apparent that it was father with his team of oxen. All began to shout with joy: “father is coming, father is coming!” Indeed, the door opens and at last father is home again. After anxious hours of waiting there is overwhelming joy. “Have you brought something with you?” “Yes indeed.” Father pulls a pig’s head out of the sack, the one he bought in Qu’Appelle for 25 or 50 cents. All are happily looking forward to the feast. With foresight and planning it is divided into salt pork, fat for rendering, and the tongue was made into delicate hamburger dumplings, a luxury which at that time was a rare, fine treat. The value and worth of such a pig’s head can be gauged in that this meat had to last one month.

Various provisions were gathered in the summertime in order to prepare for the suffering and privations of the coming winter. The Canadian winter soon brought with it a truly fearsome, barbaric cold and terrible snow storms. Oh, how often people woke up, looked to the window - everything is dark, then turned over to the other side and slept some more since it is not yet morning. After several hours they wakened again, still not daytime! But now he could no longer sleep. He felt hungry despite the darkness, it must be time to get up. Out of the bed and checked the clock! To his surprise, it is already 11 o’clock in the morning and still no light. “Well, what could be the matter?” Father, look out the door. The door is opened. What is this? Snow, nothing but snow. The entire sod house, along with people and cattle is buried in snow. “Bring me the shovel,” and the snow was shoveled into barrels in the barn, and as it melted it was used to water the cattle and provide washing water for the family. By digging a tunnel through the snow a person was finally able to reach daylight. Having thus dug his way out of his snow cave, a person was then confronted with a ten to fifteen foot high snow bank which nature piled so high that only the chimney peeked through. Sometimes the house was covered with so much

snow that some of our settlers choked in the smoke from the stove if they were unable get to fresh air on time. Such trials and tribulations are hard to contemplate. Only those who endured them can really appreciate them. The shoveled out tunnel was enlarged and made into steps as an exit for man and cattle. The hay stack had to be dug out of the snow.

Sleighs and other implements had to be found. In the course of such raging storms one dared not think of going anywhere. But luckily, there was peace and quiet after the storm.

The weather cleared up and the sun shone once again low in the sky. It was very cold. It was not unusual for it to be 40 to 50 degrees below zero. Challenges, huge challenges were always on one's back.

30 or 40 below zero was no excuse! Father must again take a load of wood or hay to Qu'Appelle. Regardless how cold it is, need has no boundaries! At four in the morning, the oxen would be hooked up to the sleigh, the hay or wood was loaded and in God's name, we were on the way. Ringing cold, threadbare clothes! Which way to go? According to the old saying, "All roads lead to Rome." So also in our snow wilderness, all roads lead to Qu'Appelle. At any rate one set out in a northerly direction. Sometimes a round trip took 10 or 12 hours during which time one could not sit (on the sleigh) lest one would be totally frozen. He finally arrived half frozen. His load might have upset a couple of times on the way and had to be reloaded. It is no wonder the bone weary man could lie down in any barn, sometimes next to his oxen, and sleep the deep sleep of the righteous.

With the money he got from the market, the father again bought only the most necessary clothing and foodstuffs. Sometimes, because it was often impossible to sell the hay or wood, many a settler found himself in a desperate situation. He absolutely had to bring a bag of "XXXX" flour home because his little children were crying for bread, bread. The heart of the tough Swabian almost seemed to stand still. At the last moment, with tears in his eyes, he found a generous merchant who would give him credit for a bag of flour. So now at least his dear, poor children could be fed.

The writer is aware of a situation where a father, in a similar dismal situation, was rescued from his desperate need with not only one sack, but several sacks of flour provided by benefactors in Qu'Appelle. The need of some of our settlers was so great that it prompted these generous hearts to act mercifully toward them. And at this juncture, we thankfully acknowledge the English business merchants of the time who came to the assistance of the newcomers in word and deed in the kindest way. The inborn honesty of the newcomers had gained great respect with the result the merchants extended credit to a people who were strangers to them for the purchase of their necessities.

The father of the family made his way home with the few necessities he was able to buy from the proceeds of selling his wood. It often happened, as a result of him being dead tired, that he wandered off the trail and had to seek shelter at one of the larger settlements which were scattered in the area, or had to seek the protection of a fellow local settler. He hoped he could remember the location of the dwellings from the previous summer. But now with the winter snow everything looked different. The picture had entirely changed.

He should be there behind that ridge. That is the direction! Go on oxen, we should soon be there - always further. But alas, nothing is to be found. Suddenly - stop! Whoa – hoo. I'm not sure but it must be around here. What is that? I smell something like smoke around the sleigh. One heard soft, soft voices, for sure, voices. Where? There is nothing to be seen! Look, there is a cloud of smoke coming out of the snow! Incredible, kicked the snow away with the foot! Yes, a chimney, curling smoke, and under the snow bank, human voices. Children were hollering and the voices of their parents were muffled!

“Hello, hello, cousin Jacob, is that you?”

“Yes, Anton!” “We are snowed in”!

“And we, oxen and sleigh, are standing on the roof of your house! Can you believe it? I had to search in order to find you again.”

“Dig us out so we can have light and air.”

“We want to come in. We are half frozen, man as well as the beasts.”

After quickly shoveling a tunnel to the entrance, neighbour Anton led the oxen down the steps into the warm barn. He himself quickly crawled into the Lord's nook behind stove and oven to thaw out. As he refreshed himself with hot milk soup or coffee, the neighbours discussed their mutual lot in life; the complaints about the barbaric winter with its northerly storms, and the plagues of mosquitoes in the summer. The oxen were watered with snow water and fed life-giving hay. Soon the eyes of the house father and newly arrived guest fell shut, the “visiting” came to an end and soon all were in a holy slumber, dreaming of better times.

The next morning it was again off toward home, through snow and icy cold. Frozen through to the bone, he hoped he would not suffer frostbite. He was greeted by his anxious, waiting family. They were overjoyed to have him in their midst once again.

Yes, yes, then and now. Those were scary, truly scary and alarming experiences, when under those road and winter conditions the head of the family had to forage for his family despite wind and weather. One's life was truly at risk. The neighbours were miles apart so how could they know about each other's situation in such a winter? How easily one could freeze to death on the desolate winter plain or become disoriented and lose his way. They faced unspeakable pressures. They could be overcome by fatigue and risk perishing on the trail without anyone knowing what had happened to them. Perhaps they searched for the missing man who was covered during a snow storm, but could not find him, until finally spring brought the day-time sun which uncovered the catastrophe. This would reveal the remains left by the wolves. It was battles such as these that the pioneers had to fight in the early years, still, in the ongoing battle and privation the hardened pioneer remained firm as steel and iron. His neck was not bent by these obstacles. He met the future with open arms. He struggled through winter, and sometimes when the weather was calm he would visit one or the other of his neighbors where they discussed the here and now and the future. Finally, the winter also came to an end.

Spring slowly arrived and at the end of March or the beginning of April the snow began to melt. With the approaching warm weather the frost came out of the ground and then it was out again to the virgin prairie to begin field work. Plowing was done day after day, fields of oats and barely were sown and in the later years, wheat. The ever present hordes of mosquitoes soon returned to again pester and plague the settler as he worked the hard prairie sod. But the new settler also had a new solution, one he learned from previous years. Nets were made from finely woven material which he wrapped around his hat and tied around his neck, in this way at least his head had protection and peace. Soon he adopted the Canadian custom of wearing gloves in the summer. Now one could entirely understand how one could work with such diligence here. The heat was always getting worse, and many salty drops of sweat dropped into the hot soil. As evening approached the oxen, because they did not want to work anymore, were unhitched and all went home. The oxen were put to pasture and it was into the house for supper.

Then, suddenly a child calls from the window:

“Father, look, over there in the west there is a fiery red glow in the twilight.” He could see it getting wider and wider, mile upon mile. It is always growing bigger and bigger.

“Look father, a prairie fire is coming.”

“Boys, get the oxen.” Once they were hooked up they ploughed furrow upon furrow around the house, barn and yard as a protection. The crackling and the roar of the fire came nearer and nearer. It’s an awesomely impressive sight to see the entire horizon immersed in red flames in the night sky. If the fire came by day one would see how everything alive was in full flight to escape the devastating flames. Rabbits, foxes, prairie wolves and antelopes were fleeing. Some of these noble deer fell victim to the gunshots of the pioneers and filled the empty meat pots as a special treat.

The wise man of the house, who ploughed a protective fireguard around his house, could be confident he could witness this scary spectacle in complete safety. Woe to him who lacked the foresight to take this precaution. Many a sod or turf house, dried out by many years of summer sun was lost during a prairie fire.

Even though men gradually got used to the elements and traveling and isolation, the weaker sex did not adapt as easily by a long shot. Many a mother was deathly afraid when her husband was away in the town. Even in the old country they heard horror stories about white settlers being followed and murdered by Indians. Despite the fact that they were forced by the government to live on their reserves, and were held in sharp control by the Northwest Mounted Police, many still wandered about the land as beggars and vagabonds. The sight of such a redskin was sufficient to frighten the women and mother of the house to death. Truly, when such a one came to the house, seeming not to be very trustworthy, reddish brown in appearance, a long hunting knife in his belt, mortal fear ran through all. The children hid behind their mother and the mother was almost paralyzed by fear. Unable to understand a single word, she still had the presence of mind to deal with this frightening intruder. In her confusion, she ran, knife in hand, certainly

not to fight the dangerous redskin, but to get a loaf of bread which she cut in half with a shaking hand and mutely gave half to the intruder. Then she awaited the things that were supposed to happen. Lo and behold, the enemy was slain! The former mortal enemy drew all his impressions of the white race through this kind of experience. What a relief for the family. The heavy stone of fear was removed from their hearts.

From time to time the father had similar experiences. As one was returning home through the woods in the vicinity of Qu'Appelle, on occasion a red face would emerge from behind a tree and block the road of the homeward bound pioneer. Whoa ---whoa -h! What does he want? Darn it all! Surely he doesn't want my whole load! His face looks pretty dangerous! Think fast! Took out the plug of tobacco, cut it in half and gave half to the chap without a word. And so the danger was averted. And the redskin slunk off satisfied. He ran into the bush with words sounding like Woohu - ba—houh!

The first years were marked by difficulties, dangers, deprivations, crosses and distress that had to be dealt with. But still in general there was the assurance and satisfaction that every year more settlers came to fill the huge space so that it soon meant that it would be only one mile to the closest neighbour. Soon they were able help one another. Progress was slowly made with this mutual support. Soon sufficient land had been broken so that they were able to start sowing wheat. Everything looked very promising. Even though one had the early huge difficulties behind him new problems arose. Certainly, at this time one had chickens, cattle, and pigs, and many also had horses. With the seeding completed one waited with great confidence for the coming harvest. The seed germinated well and promised the fulfillment one's greatest hopes.

“Still there is no eternal alliance to be woven
with the ablest Powers.”

In the summer 1894 and 1895 a huge heat wave dried up everything. What was not totally ruined in the blazing sun and hot wind, was eaten entirely by the thousands of gophers running around the fields. What a terrible disappointment, what dire necessity; the situation was so desperate that many seriously thought about moving from the district. Their strong character and the iron will seemed to falter. One did not have any Sunday worship since leaving the old homeland, and when the church's words of comfort are missing, strength and endurance plummet. This fact was well understood in the 100 year history in the old homeland and was quickly understood here. Still, “God is nearest where the need is the greatest.” The missionaries are coming! The thirsty soul will be refreshed at least once a year. Also the all-important baptisms will be performed. However, not all the people could be informed when the missionaries were to come and where the worship was to take place, consequently many a family did not have access to a priest in the early years. As hard as it was to attend to the health of the soul, so too it was for one's physical health. There were no doctors outside of the city of Regina, some 30 – 35 miles distant. But who could afford to have a doctor come that far? If one became ill, he just had to endure the illness. One had to rely on the old traditional remedies. It was simple: “If it helped him, he recovered, if it didn't he went into the ground”.

These were dire times, the drought destroyed everything in those early years. The lack of the ordinary necessities of life resulted in a general despair for the entire settlement. One turned to the government for help which then gave each family 30 dollars so they could at least get over the immediate emergency. In order to give the settlers an opportunity to pay back this loan the government offered them work so the industrious pioneers could work off the money loaned to them. The adult sons of the newcomers could work part time on the railroad or go to the city of Regina to seek opportunities to earn some money so as to support their homestead bound parents or to later, take up a homestead for themselves so they too could start farming.

That's the way it went until 1896. Up until this time the enormous prairie plain was only sparsely settled between Many Bone Creek and northward to the CPR line between Balgonie – Qu'Appelle. In 1897 a new flood of immigrant families arrived. They were Banater Swabians from Zichydorf from the south of Hungary. These newcomers to Regina were advised to join up with the German settlement already established in the Many Bone Creek district. The original settlers were also approved of this arrangement. Land was still abundant, very good land, about 10 miles south of the pre-existing colony. This was the fairly good land near the Many Bone Creek. So the Banaters decided to settle in the creek area. Because water is necessary for all aspects of life it was the main factor for the Banater to build their settlement in the vicinity the creek. The second reason was that they did not want to be too far removed from the already established settlement which lay several miles to the north. A third factor was that they wanted to settle as close as possible to the only railway, the CPR, which already was about 20-25 miles away.

“We have come here from afar
and are without a true roof
May we be received with a hospitable gentleness
Which will not disgrace a stranger.”

It is known that some of the Swabians initially found shelter with friends who had already settled around Balgonie. They were indeed welcoming, even if some families had to house ten people to a room. In any event, it was a pleasant way to live through the first Canadian winter, because from the very beginning the barbaric nature of winter reigned free and vigorous on the open prairie. But the winter also passed and in the spring the new pioneers settled on their land.

Upon the newcomers arrival their story was much the same as it was for the first group of settlers. They had hard, bitter times as well. During the summer months they faced mosquitoes and swarms of insects, followed by snow storms and barbaric cold in the winter. They knew only deprivation and hardship. But now, it is spring outside the sod hut, and a garden needs to be planted! So what shall we plant? What do we need the most?

Potatoes, corn, cucumbers, onions and cabbages are essential. We must definitely have some of those. How can we make galuschki without them? So, we get at it with the hoe.

The first thing, a patch was ploughed for the potatoes. The hard clods were broken up with a rake, holes dug and potatoes planted. The remaining greens were planted and quickly the garden was finished.

The Banater Swabian houses were superb sod houses which were built according to the customs of the time and included windows to let in the light. The Hungarian Swabian wanted to see the promised land from his window. In most cases, the barn and living quarters were under one roof.

The first summer was mostly taken up with breaking the land, making hay and bringing home wood, which in the first years were the sole sources of income. Their hardships in winter and summer were the same as for the first settlers. All the pioneers were equally privileged and had the same opportunity to experience the Canadian climate. Our newly arrived immigrants were satisfied with very little and considered themselves fortunate to be able to obtain a huge area of land for only 10 dollars. The hunger for land was satisfied and the coming years ensured that they had the means to establish themselves. This despite the many deprivations and huge obstacles! From the bad comes good or so the saying goes. And to be sure, this held true for them. Soon they no longer depended only on livestock and selling wood and hay, but instead, they now were seeding their land to wheat. Even when the price was low, 30 to 40 cents a bushel, it still provided better returns than hay and wood. As they brought more money home they could then acquire more cattle and farming tools. Put simply, the new settlers were somewhat freer and less burdened since the early miseries were no longer as big and one could begin to look to the future. Each year more newcomers arrived. There was activity everywhere.

There was also much activity on the religious front. The priest came from St. Joseph's, in Balgonie, on a monthly basis. The stalwart Swabians were quickly reconciled with their God Who they may have offended by swearing profusely when in the heat of battle with mosquitoes or enduring the snow storms. The Swabian is usually mild mannered and doesn't say much. He can endure a lot without complaint but when he is pushed too far, fists fly. The Frank is more of a live wire, is merry and noisy, thus the name: "Pfizer yell." The Elsasser enjoys singing. He comes from wine country and therefore never turns down a good drink.

As things got more civilized in the so called golden west, people often got together to discuss church or school matters. Since the population was comprised of three distinct ethnicities, the discussions sometimes became quite heated. On the one side you had the stubbornness of the Swabians. On the other the hot tempers of the Franks. Whether it was a school or church meeting – many heads usually led to many opinions.

One wanted the school to be there, the other, naturally wanted it built another place. The debate swayed back and forth, initially quietly, gradually somewhat louder, and at the end, fists slammed on the homemade table. The climax has been reached. When the hot heads were red in the face, the wine-loving Elsasser stood up: "I will donate a few acres and you can build the school there." What earlier seemed impossible to solve, now, through the good nature of the third party, resolved itself smoothly.

That is how the school district and school came to be situated on the prairie, approximately in the middle of the settlement. Now we could send our children to school for an education and to learn the new language, so that later they could serve as useful citizens in their new land. We now also had church services every Sunday. That is how the community continued to change and improve year after year.

Every year saw an increase in wheat being sown. In 1899 the crop looked very promising, but the industrious farmers were disappointed when a light frost struck just as the crop was flowering. The anticipation of a good harvest was somewhat dampened. What there was, was good. The price was fifty cents a bushel for number one grain. Once the crop was sold, winter was once again at the door. Even though the good people were already somewhat accustomed to the difficult Canadian winter, it was virtually impossible for them to get used to the long, long period of isolation. In the old country one was accustomed to living in villages where, in the worst of winter, one had more opportunity for diversions and social life. For the Swabians who were used to companionship, the spinning room, and visiting with neighbours, this monotonous pioneer's life was simply unbearable. Yes, one had newspapers, but because of the snow storms and the bearish cold it was often impossible to get the mail for weeks. With virtually nothing to do, being holed up within the four walls of the sod house was almost unbearable. So an idea was proposed which would arrange the houses as in a village, in family groups. That would enable a person to visit a neighbour and the next morning visit another for company or to play "66". When a person is forced to sit in such a small living space with a wife and 6 – 8 children the opportunity for discord is great. One cannot always be thrashing the children, or even the wife, so alternatives had to be found. Various solutions were considered. They mutually agreed to group themselves into colonies. This was organized by a Banater Swabian and eventually a small Swabian colony was established. But this dream did not last long! The Swabians did not sing their beloved folksongs like "Beautiful is the youth in happy times," or "A boy saw a standing rose" with their comrades for long. They soon discovered that the Canadian "little rose" also had thorns in that their fields were too far away and so, the effort failed.

"Man can adapt to anything" and so the Swabians adjusted to the local situation - to the realities of Canadian farm life.

In 1900 still more settlers came to the local district, these were Banater Swabians from South Hungary, and several families from Burgenland and south Russia. This year one could realistically harbour the optimistic hope of harvesting an abundant crop. Seeding went extremely well with sufficient winter moisture and several good spring rainfalls. But right in the middle of the growing season an enduring hot spell set in. There was continuous heat, and no more rain. Everything dried up and remained so small and scrawny that one could not even cut it down. Only the well cultivated land - summer fallow - yielded 8 to 10 bushels per acre. The newly arrived settlers also did not yet have enough horses to undertake such work. After having had so much hope, this was a powerful setback. Most of the hard-hit settlers had to earn their bread by "working out" and selling wood and hay. The good natured Swabian once again overcame the catastrophe. "Do not allow your courage to fail, or tomorrow you will have to drink water" goes the saying. Still, the pioneers felt this weight on their broad shoulders.

German honesty, German industry and their inborn thrift left its mark on the new land. The English business people, whose businesses were established earlier on, extended credit to them. This generosity enabled the prairie pioneers, some even without a harvest, to buy the necessities to live. The original settlers supported and acted as guarantors to the business people of the time. But if any newcomer in any way abused this credit, things would go very badly for him. From the very beginning of the settlement, our settlers were always known to be honest and reliable and repaid every farthing and penny. That is how the first line of settlers earned the trust upon which the credit was based. They developed this good reputation. As a rule, the thrifty German was regarded as unassuming and modest. Even though he was a big spender, he was also a good payer.

In 1901 still more people came from South Russia. The fellow landmen already living here told them about the “good” Canada. With the addition of more new people the settlement grew into a sizeable community. The most recent arrivals settled farther to the south in what today is called the Blumenfeld district. Because St. Paul’s district was mostly taken up with earlier settlers there were no longer very many homesteads to be had. The open land was either already claimed as homesteads or alternatively reserved for the sons of those already settled there. There were only a few quarter sections of marginal land left, and they were not considered appropriate for settlement. With the arrival of the newcomers, even that land was being taken up so that by 1902 the area was completely settled. The area that today carries the name St. Paul’s community was completely spoken for.

The harvest of 1901 was an improvement over the failed crop of 1900. The 1901 harvest was not only huge but also of outstanding quality – Number 1 wheat. Despite the fact that the price of wheat fell to 46 cents per bushel, the settlers earned more than enough, in any case, more than they were expecting. There was a wave of optimism in the new homeland which featured universal contentment and happy faces. The pioneers could look to the future with light in their eyes.

The following years were noted for their expansion and development. New houses, modern wooden houses and big livery barns sprang up everywhere. More land was constantly being broken. Now one had more horses, more cattle, fowl and more hogs. Indeed, they were now well established farms. Roads were being built all around. It was easier to get to the neighbours who now were only a ½ or one mile distant. This happened because of the willingness of the first pioneers to support the new arrivals in their every need. They did this through the exercise of Christian brotherly love in word and deed.

With this mutual support and hospitality it became possible for each individual family to eventually stand on its own two feet. Thus, the foundation was laid for the vigorous development and further expansion leading to the present flowering of the settlement.

It did not take very long for the unoccupied land still owned by the government, the Hudson’s Bay Company and the Railway company to be bought up by the settlers at a price of 3 to 20 dollars per acre. By 1907/08 everything was spoken for. During that

period the district usually harvested good average crops but 1907 was truly a huge step forward. School districts were formed, schools were built and teachers hired.

The cornerstone for the parish church serving the already established community was laid in 1903. It was named St. Paul's Parish. Occasionally, as the school was being established, some difficult obstacles had to be overcome. Things did not always go smoothly.

The same could not be said of the establishment of the parish. Previously, the settlers, arguing with each other and some in the heat of the debate, would sometimes bang their fists on the table in order to make a point. Now, however, an "educated" man, the priest, was present. This was the first time things were more quiet but sometimes there still was a little bickering like: "you should go mad," "you should shut up," "you thundering ass," "you stone picker," "you yellow foot," "you boot neck!" and so on. Usually the epithet was deserved. Now, with the help of the priest the meetings became quieter and eventually the big problem was resolved. In any case, it was decided to build a church and construction was quickly started. With volunteer help, fieldstone was brought to the site, and working together they laid the foundation and built the church. Once the furnishings were made, the church was completed. It was named St. Paul's.

From this time on there were regular church services. With the influence of the church and the help of the resident priest, the hot heads cooled down and became quieter. The whole settlement progressed year by year.

The wheat fields became ever larger as did the harvests. Even the small harvests of previous years had other challenges, such as the grain had to be transported a distance of 20 to 25 miles. Now, with a considerably larger quantity of grain on hand, transportation to market became a much bigger problem. The grain company's grain storage facilities were too small to handle the ever increasing quantities. Our pioneers had to drive 20 to 25 miles to the northward lying stations of the Canadian Pacific at McLean and Qu'Appelle. This led to serious difficulties and extreme effort during the icy winter months. It was not much better in the summer when the road was still interspersed with swamps. What fearfully arduous work to free a loaded wagon stuck in a swamp! Having contended with these difficulties up to this time, it was easy to understand the relief experienced by those in the southern portion of our settlement when a rail service was built through the southern market area. The C.P.R. Arcola rail line was constructed to serve the area. What was previously a distance of 20 to 25 miles for the southern settlers to market, now had to drive only a matter of 6 to 13 miles. Before the construction of the Arcola rail line, the farmer having the greatest distance to travel, often had to wait in the unloading line for several days before he could unload his grain since there often was not enough space in the elevator. This aggravation was now somewhat eased because from that time on the deliveries were split between two locations. One part of the settlement delivered south to the Arcola line, the other went northward to the C.P.R. Prior to this time one would have to wait 1 to 3 days with his 50 bushels of grain until he could sell it. Then he had to deduct expenses for himself and his draft animals for those 1 to 3 days. The delay amounted to a considerable expense. But most importantly the most serious problem was remedied.

In 1905 the Dominion government in Ottawa, granted full autonomy and self-governance to the Northwest Territories. It was divided into two provinces: Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Our settlement was situated in the District of Assiniboia which is today incorporated into the Province of Saskatchewan. Our settlement was progressing in all areas and building better roads. It should also have a railroad. 1906 saw the beginning of the construction of the “Canadian Northern” rail line. It went through the heart of our settlement and went into service in 1908. The building of the railroad engendered huge enthusiasm among our people since it meant they would be freed from the difficult and tiring distances to deliver their produce. With the construction of the station which was named “Vibank,” the farmers’ distance to market was only a matter of 6 – 8 miles and for many less. Initially, the train service between Regina SK and Brandon MB was three times a week return to the east and three times to the west. It was a mixed train, half passenger and half freight.

The shrill whistle of the locomotive announced another significant step in the development of our settlement. The sons of several of the pioneers quickly recognized the unlimited opportunities in this new land where one day he could be one thing and the next day something else. He could now even establish a German business in this German community.

Out in the countryside, one hears the hum of the threshing machines, and in the new station of Vibank the hammers of the carpenters ring out. House upon house sprang up like mushrooms in the field. The first building to be erected was a general store. It was somewhat small but it served the purpose. With the addition of a lumber store one could soon buy construction timber and boards. Food and refreshments were soon available at an eating place or restaurant, as well as at several residential houses. The post office which was situated on a farm several miles distant, and was called “Elsass Post Office” was also moved to the new village. And that was the beginning of today’s village, “Vibank.” In 1909 the tiny store was replaced with an impressive big business building carrying general merchandise. Now, row upon row of houses were built and the new village grew ever larger. Progressive development. A big livery barn was built and various farm implement dealers opened their doors. Tradesmen opened shops, a blacksmith, shoemaker, carpenters and a butcher.

Two years later the church, which was originally built out on the prairie, was moved to the village. This was done with the help of the entire community so that now the church is located in the village.

After the village of Vibank was incorporated, a large hotel was built. It was licensed to serve alcohol.

A branch of the Toronto-Dominion bank was opened.

Soon the newly established village was bustling with life. Vibank was now the established center for the spiritual needs of the soul, but equally important it was also the focal point of one’s livelihood. So, because of having achieved this milestone, it is understandable that a “celebration” was in order.

According to the song:

“He who does not love wine, women and song, remains a fool lifelong.”

At first the men from the farms and village gathered somewhat shyly at the hotel. Soon the door opened, and a mighty blow of the hammer dislodged the bung from the barrel. Now the good liquid flowed in streams. In and out they went; the initial thirst of the Swabians was soon satisfied with beer. The Elsasser drank wine or brandy, the Frank tasted all three together. To each his own. Several serious drinkers were still there late in the evening according to the old song: “The old Germans will have another drink.” At the end of the evening “champagne” was passed around, the blood began to whirl, the last of the Rodensteiner was drained from the barrel. They then gingerly went out into the night air. The chuckling moon shone down on the drinking buddies who were soon singing: “Must I now, must I now, must I now leave the town” weaving their way home in the dark night. (Musse denn)

From here on, our village truly became the center of the business, religious and social life of our entire district. As soon as rail service began it became possible for our farmers to load their grain into railcars to send it to market. Soon grain handling was greatly simplified when the “North American Elevator Co.” built a grain elevator. In the following years still more businesses opened and even more people were attracted to Vibank. Because most business people were often related to people in the surrounding community, i.e. brothers, sisters, uncles and aunts, in-laws, sponsors (Godparents) they brought business and trade to our community in droves. Furthermore, since most farmers were still not comfortable with the language of the new land, they were more or less inclined to give their business to their landmen. In any case, it was easier for them to conduct business in the German speaking village than it was in McLean or Qu’Appelle where one sometimes had to employ his hands and feet as sign language in order to carry out one’s business. The landmen felt it was important to support their people. In those times, one was still motivated by the spirit of mutual support and cooperative endeavor.

Gradually, as years passed, more of the old pioneers moved into our village. According to the custom of their forefathers, which was followed by our grandparents, the farm was passed on to the sons and in retirement the parents moved to the village. They built modest houses for themselves, and following the old tradition, had a small flower and vegetable garden surrounded by trees and ornamental shrubs. Many a stranger visiting our village commented with wonderment and praise on this innate tidiness and eye for beauty.

They could also now display their perfectly organized farms with their beautiful living quarters and yard buildings. In all, this is certainly strong evidence that these Swabian people brought their culture to this land as they previously had done in so many other lands.

Our pioneers who moved to the little village had a comfortable, affordable life. They were among their friends and still lived reasonably close to their children. As well, the school and church were also in the village and so our retirees had the comfort of

attending mass daily and thus had the opportunity to satisfy their religious and spiritual needs. Finally, after having lived their difficult pioneer lives for the good of their children and to the benefit of the state they could now expect to live out their lives in peace, satisfaction and confidence.

There were always more buildings being erected. More businesses continued to open, such as a hardware store, new wood and coal businesses, poolroom and the like. More modern houses were built and the population continued to increase.

An event of considerable importance occurred in Vibank's business community in 1914. In spite of a dry year and an only average harvest, the first five "Ford Lizzies" automobiles were sold. In the following year, the gigantic crop which became known throughout all of western Canada as the "1915" crop was taken in and sold. Until now this was the biggest success.

This crop enabled the farmers to rise above the early deprivation and their hearts rightly swelled with pride. As the old saying goes: "If the farmer has money so does the whole world." This fact became apparent in both town and countryside. Our settlement had never before experienced such prosperity and never dreamed it could be possible. All manner of things were bought and sold; trashing machines, various farm implements, tractors, new harness for horses, and the automobile became more prevalent. Local businesses flourished. There was money here and so the wealth of the town and the farming people increased ever more.

The following year, 1916, the harvest looked promising but the value of the crop was considerably reduced due to the appearance of rust. As a consequence of the world war, the price of wheat rose month by month. This meant the smaller crop did not greatly impact the farmers. There may be somewhat fewer "bushels" but the price per "bushel" was so high that the loss was covered through the increased price. Understandably, the cost of farm machines, cost of living and such needs, also rose. The tough farmers and business people felt good about themselves and gave credence to the saying: "We are we, and we refer to ourselves as "Us!" The old Swabian hat that they brought with them was thrown into the corner. Parisian fashion and newest styles were adopted. The large landowner, the shop owner, the hotel owner, and the poolroom owner, the butcher, the bartender, all dressed the same: "The Joseph from the farm, and the Michael from town" all now wore stiff collars in the English fashion. Indeed, the elders shook their heads: "It is true, clothes make the man."

In this time of affluence there were those with wealth and richly blessed with good fortune. Farms were sold, farms were bought, sometimes at fabulous prices. New state of the art houses were built and businesses were expanded, in one word, "Everyone felt the sky was the limit." So typically American. One was only concerned with expanding and cost. And the little horse the old Swabian previously led along the fence, was now going through it.

But stop! The great war was over, the grain prices dropped rapidly and there were repercussions. The price of the merchandise in the stores had to be lowered and bore no

relationship to the purchase price. Those who speculated on land and went into debt had to now pay off their debts with pre-war wheat prices.



Anton Huck, M.L.A.

In the frenzy of those prosperous times many people, even the older people lost the innate frugality of the south German people and recklessly catered to their ever growing expectations. They were certain the good prices would hold forever. Some businessmen thought the same way and gave as much credit to his customers as they wanted.

“But illusions are short, regrets are long.” Our district also suffered during the depression following the war, particularly given the poor crops of the last years. Hail storms, saw flies, rust and frost were frequent and came as enemies of the farmer. In latter years farmers were particularly plagued by the ever increasing number of weeds which will be a problem for our colony or district for the foreseeable future.

The recently completed Ursuline convent, built of stone, houses a private school which has two classrooms to serve our high school students. With the completion of the church

(partially built in brick) and upon getting a resident doctor and druggist, Vibank is today truly the center of the Swabian pioneer settlement.

Vibank is a practical, clean German village in the middle of an entirely German settlement. The lovely well planned houses are typically surrounded by flower gardens and trees. The scrupulous order of the houses and yards, the solid traditional morals, the folksiness, the Christian virtues of contentment, frugality, hospitality, and spirituality are still obvious today. Our current Swabians still hold high the heritage of their fathers.

Swabian faithfulness, German loyalty to state and church are ideals going back to our Swabian ancestors. It was because of these ideals that they brought their very best to this country, their new homeland, Canada. Following centuries of tradition promoting culture and fostering civilization, for which we have ample evidence, he declares himself not to be a second class citizen in this land, but to be recognized as every other resident as a worthy Canadian citizen. There is sufficient evidence in our settlement to substantiate this.

Who do we have to thank for the rise of this beautifully prosperous community, this lovely flourishing village, this great parish community?

Answer: The pioneers of the land and the pioneers of the church.

The Irish monks Columban and Gallus, around the year 1200 promoted culture in the old Germany by instilling Christianity into the homes, farms, and cattle ranges, as well as by building cloistered churches in their settlements. As a result the people became more morally aware and responsible. By working together they developed a love of cultivation, an attachment to the land. Things developed in much the same manner here, the only difference being that here the pioneers arrived first and only then the church. But still, it did not take long in Canada. Father Schelbert came to this settlement after the parish had already been established. Being a Frank, he adapted well to the settlement. First of all he and the pioneers working with him are to be thanked for the blossoming of our parish. Just as a state cannot function without a leader, it was our Father Schelbert who was our leader and parish pioneer. He had an energetic, firm and restless nature.

He had a true German vigor which can still be found in Speffart and Odenwald, his homeland in Franconia. It was because of his tough perseverance, energy and persuasion skills that the parish stands in the village today. It is thanks to him that so many of our old pioneers moved to the village to locate their homes around the church. He, as a fellow German was always ready to protect or defend the rights of his landsmen with his whole being and if necessary fight for them. He was available to give advice and assistance to each of his pioneers.

He understood how to rally his parishioners around him when it was necessary to do some work or to complete communal projects. No effort or work was too much for him. He eschewed no sacrifice to make the parish what it is today. It was he who stood up for culture and religion; it was he who brought the Ursuline sisters to the school. Vibank and the entire district can thank him for having the splendid Holy Family Convent within its midst. The foundation laid by our Rev. Father Schelbert for St. Paul's Parish, today's

Jubilee Parish, is also the foundation of our village. Without this, the rise to excellence of the village and church would not have been possible.



Adam Huck
Notary Public
Sekretär-Schatzmeister der St. Pauls-
Gemeinde, Vibank, 1929



Adam Huck
1895

Adam Huck, Notary Public and Secretary-Treasurer of St. Paul's Parish
Vibank 1929

Faithful and true to one's community
Faithful and true to one's village
Faithful and firm to one's ideals and principles till his death.
A truly German man
Honour his memory.

Our current pastor, Rev. Father Schorr followed in the footsteps of our deceased Father Schelbert. Upon his initiative a new brick church is being built and for the time being the new part is attached to the old church. It will be completed as soon as the necessary funds are available. Also, our new priest and pastor gives himself wholly and unselfishly to the protection of the entire community and to the souls entrusted to him in the parish community. May he have many happy years in this Jubilee community in the midst of his loving and esteemed parishioners.

Vivat, crescat, floreat, St. Pauli Ecclesia Parochiaque!

May the Parish and Church of St. Paul be vibrant, grow and flourish!

CONCLUSION

A CHALLENGE TO THE YOUTH OF OUR PARISH

“Never forget you are German!”

All peoples of the world are proud of the deeds and feats of their fathers and ancestors who have striven to carry their culture to other lands and faithfully protect and preserve their centuries old traditions.

Each peoples' language is a priceless treasure to preserve! It is the most noble and precious good we have inherited from our ancestors.

The same is true for the German people!

You are obligated to preserve this inheritance of your fathers, to foster it and to never forget it. For it is by this means you can promote German truths and values.

The better you protect your mother tongue and pass it on to your children, the more you show the love of our culture.

Yes, openly and without fear be true to your religion and language as a means to preserve your morals and character and in that way show the world your fearlessness.

Fearless and true, those are the two golden words on the coat of arms of the Swabians.

You young ones, never forget these words! Be true to your traditions, to the customs and needs of your elders, maintain your inborn frugality, honesty and trustworthiness. Then you will also earn admiration and praise here just as your forefathers earned them here and in other lands.

Be fearless in the defense and protection of your goods, religion and language. Hold your head high and go straight ahead and you will soon no longer be the stranger looking over his shoulder.

Do not allow yourself to be seduced like the Americans who know nothing but dollar bills, skyscrapers and jazz.

Be proud to own your own land, cherish and cultivate it. Be thankful to your parents, the old pioneers who by their many drops of sweat made your good life what it is.

How devoted and faithful our South Germans were to their own land in the old fatherland.

They did not regard their property as objects of speculation. They protected their family holdings just as faithfully as their ancestors did for generations. They were farmers and

farmers they wished to remain. Remain loyal citizens of your new homeland, show yourselves as men, defend your religion and rights.

And then it will also be said in Canada: The Germans as promoters of culture have also given their best here. Their good name has also proven true here as in many other lands before.

P.A.

Also a Swabian.



NOTES