

Date: Sept. 30, 1974

Place: Campden

Participants: Otto Giesbrecht, Peter Neufield

#### Pre-War

- the Mennonites were among the pioneers in this area; had a reputation for honesty and industriousness; got along fairly well with their Anglo neighbours; but in the city there was more anti-German feeling - in Virgil they tried to burn the church
- many Mennonites were pro-Nazi because the Nazis were fighting against the Communists; felt that the Canadian government did not comprehend the threat of Communism; but as the war progressed many began to see the danger of Naziism

#### War

- Montreal River - no religious director until Sherk arrived; no Sunday services; the camp "wasn't as spiritual as we wished it had been"; some of the denominations segregated themselves completely from the rest - the Christadelphians, and the Plymouth Brethren; often sought to emphasize their differences rather than their similarities; the varying cultural and educational backgrounds were also hindering factors
- April 7/42 - received the news that they would be there for the duration - very disheartening - some enlisted
- camp personnel: foreman, Art Deforge and supervisor, Tench, had good relationships with the CO's even though they did not agree with their stand; the doctor, Dr. Gimby, criticized them severely and treated them poorly ie. not very good care
- there were some CO's from non-pacifist Churches eg. the United Church; said that the Mennonites had it easier for they had the support of the church while they were there on their own convictions
- when they returned home to Vineland they were accepted by the community

#### Note

- recall the sermon that E.J. Swalm preached when he came up after they received the news of April 7/42 -- "When they bid ye go with them one mile, go with them twain"; gave them a real "pep talk" - helped to change the mood of the camp