

BAER, MORGAN

(See I16)

Date: March 2/75

Place: Baden

Birthdate: March 18/21

Place: near Mannheim

Occupation: Dairy Farmer

#### Family Background

- oldest of six children; father was a farmer; father died when he was 14 - lost everything- the farm, house, car, truck, cattle, etc.; forced to move to a neighbour's farm where the rented a house and earned a living by doing; chores and peddling the bread their mother baked
- family developed a real sense of togetherness; strong spiritual emphasis - daily worship an integral part of family life
- the church was the other context of solidarity; served as a spiritual and social centre - welded them into a community
- nonresistance was a natural part of being a follower of Christ
- was able to finish Gr. 8 before having to work on the farm - wanted to go to high school but not able to because of his father's death

#### War Experiences

- Dec. /42 - May/43 - at Montreal River
- recalls leaving the Gait train station- did not know more than 6 people; frightened; as they left, the people that came to see them off sang "Anywhere With Jesus I Can Safely Go"
- boys got to know each other quickly - coming from common background and all there for the same purpose (more or less)
- some did not pull their weight - others had to make up for it
- free time - much letter-writing; were starved for communication from the outside world
- had a close bond with the superintendent, Tench
- many denominations - some mixed well, others not: Pentecostal and Catholics worshipped with the Mennonites; Seventh Day Adventists would not, and the Mennonites would attend the Plymouth Brethren assemblies but not vice versa
- singing a very important part of worship; also had prayer meetings and Bible studies
- felt that they were placed up north to get them out of the public eye; felt they could have been doing something of more benefit but since this was where the government had placed them he would have to make the best of it.

### General Reflections

- was a strengthening and maturing experience; were placed in a totally new environment and had to either "sink or swim"
- learned to accept responsibility more readily
- experience afforded the opportunity to read the Bible through several times and engage in many meaningful dialogues - this made it a growing experience

BEARINGER, EDDIE

(See I4)

Date: Oct. 24/74

Place: 22 First St. W., Elmira

Birthdate: Feb. 10/21

Place: Elmira, Ont.

Occupation: Manager of a construction firm

#### Family Background

- father, (Noah), was a church leader and a member on the Military Problems Committee
- quit school after Grade 8 to work for father (driving coal truck); went back to school at 16; felt that he was discriminated against by others in their Waterloo-Markham Church because of this; after 2 years at school, went back to work for his father, learning the lumber trade and driving coal truck
- was baptized at 18 "because it was the thing to do"; parents demanded it even though he had no firm convictions
- when the war came, he was not sure whether to go CO or not despite the fact that he was well aware of the Menn. peace position and the alternatives available because of his father's involvement in the M.P.C. ( he did much of the correspondence for his father with the other church leaders and government officials)

#### War Experiences

- spring/42 - Dec./42 - B.C. forestry, at Koksilah (Camp C3)
- was uneasy about going to B.C. because he was afraid that the other CO's would "be spouting Scripture from morning 'til night" and would have no sense of humour; when he met them on the train he was relieved to discover that many of them were of the same mind as he - "a jolly bunch, with a good sense of humour"
- of the 32 original men at C3 there were 18 different representations, eg. a Buddhist, an Emissary of the Divine Light, a Jehovah's Witness, a Doukhabor, an old army soldier, a "star-gazer", Christadelphians, Plymouth Brethren, and all kinds of Mennonites; in the midst of this diversity there was a real spirit of co-operation, mutual respect, fellowship, and friendship
- words of high praise for the camp foreman, Bill Mudge, who literally threw away the rule-book in granting them many privileges and treating them with a real sense of dignity; he only lived 12 miles from camp and would go home on weekends, leaving them on their own, and occasionally inviting some of them to his home
- Christmas/42 - returned home; admitted to hospital for injury to ear received in fire-fighting; was in hospital for 6 weeks; after that, he was not allowed to return to B.C.; went back to driving coal truck, and also was responsible for bringing fuel into Elmira from up north

### General Reflections

- resented it that the CO's were hidden away in the "outback" just to keep them out of the public' eye
- felt very deeply that he should be out in the world somewhere, helping to "alleviate human suffering", rather than being stashed away doing relatively meaningless work; if it would not have been for the constant rumours in camp that they were being trained for some work overseas he would have left for some other form of service, perhaps non-combatant
- if the same situation, were to arise today, he would not encourage the youth to do the same as they did; besides, he feels that the youth of today would insist on doing some service to make a positive peace witness

BECHTEL , LEN

(See I14)

Date: Feb. 11/75

Place: 1062 Loon Village Rd., Kitch.

Birthdate: Aug. 19/16

Place: near Kitchener

Occupation: Semi-retired owner of Bechtel Construction

#### Family Background

- father was a farmer; had four sons - Len was the oldest
- Gr. 8 education; left school to work on the home farm for three of four years; then went to work for uncle, farming and butchering for 3-4 years
- had picked up interest in carpentry from his grandfather; went to work for Norm Heipel, building barns and arenas
- married in 1941; first son, David, was born in March, 1942

#### War Experiences

- June/42 - Nov./43 - in B.C.

summer - at Emory Creek; worked primarily in the shop filing saws and keeping other tools in shape; also had opportunity to cut snags and blaze fire trails; found the work interesting because of the variety; felt a sense of accomplishment in doing good work and as he developed his skills in filing the saws

- worship - mentions especially Jack Boldt and his enthusiasm for singing, and Charlie Shorten (from the EUB church) who was an inspiration leader; visiting ministers tried to to encourage the men and keep them optimistic about what they were doing

- fall - went to L. Cowchan; cutting snags, taking up ties from an old railroad to widen it for a road, tree planting, and fire-fighting (were only about 2 or 3 fires)

- a few months later, the boys from Langford camp joined them; already knew most of them, from Waterloo

- late summer, because of the fuel shortage, he was called to Victoria to work with some government officials to develop a power-driven chain saw; was chosen because of his ability with saws and also as a mechanic; in Victoria for six weeks, then moved to Vancouver to work on the project there; was here only two weeks when he was granted his leave to go home

- returned to work in Heipel's saw mill

#### General Reflections

- had led a very sheltered life – thus he found this a very broadening experience; discovered that there were other groups that believed much the same as the Mennonites
- experience was difficult for him in that he missed his wife and his 3 month old son; wife said that when he got home "they just wanted to forget the whole thing- they were 18 months that were unnatural"; "made bigger persons of us - we had weathered some

hardships"

- drew him closer to the church which had been a real source of support to him
- mentioned especially the importance of letter-writing

BERGEN, ABE W.

(See 11)

Date: Sept. 26/74

Place: 361 Craigleith, Waterloo

Birthdate: Dec. 25/20

Place: Mariawohl, Russia

Occupation: Tax consultant

### Family Background

- father was killed by Communists three months before he was born;  
1926- mother left with her four children for Canada; forced to remain  
in Holland for a few months; then came to Wallenstein, Ont. where  
their family was split among several Pennsylvania Dutch families

### War Experiences

- wanted to enlist in the military but found out that he had already been  
registered as a CO  
- Montreal River - four months; many CO's were there because of  
circumstances, not convictions; worship not very meaningful; but a  
impressed by the witness of some genuinely sincere CO's  
- Camp C3 - Shawinigan Lake, Vancouver Island - forestry; from June  
until Sept., 1942

### General Reflections

- recalls much pro-German feeling among the Mennonites, both  
culturally and politically, eg. many had pictures of Hitler and owned  
short-wave radios so that they could listen to his broadcasts  
- he, himself, detested this  
- being "Mennonite", as far as he knew, had only cultural implications;  
only as the threat became imminent was it brought to his attention that  
Mennonites were nonresistant

"All the discussion that took place on the subject of service  
was after the fact."

BOWMAN, ANDREW

(See I12)

Date: Jan-30/75

Place: 55 Sherwood, Kitchener

Birthdate: Sept.2/16

Place: Elmira District

Occupation: Salesman, Maple Lane Dairies

#### Family Background

- parents belonged to the Old Order
- at 14 he finished Gr.8 and then had to leave home to work year round on other farms; all earnings (around \$100/month) had to be sent home until he was 21
- at 18 he began to attend Erb St. Mennonite and was baptized there
- family, families where he lived, and church were strong influences towards nonresistance

#### War Experience

- June 2/42 - Feb. /44, - in B.C.
- summer of '42 spent at Emery Creek (Yale Camp), which was a converted training camp for gold miners; mostly worked at snagfalling and building fire trails; when they had arrived at camp everything needed repairs - had to build their own beds and put doors and windows on the cabins
- fall of '42 were sent to L. Cowichan because Emery Creek did not have winter facilities - here they were grouped together with the boys from Langford
- while in B.C., he had an appendicitis operation in Duncan, B.C.
- was at Cowichan until he was sent home; at home he was placed in the mill where he had been working when he was called.

#### General Reflections

- experience was helpful in getting to know and appreciate other Christians, some of whom were not Mennonite
- was a "good experience"; feels that today the youth would probably do something a little more useful
- when they returned from camp felt that perhaps the boys were a little defensive, ie they did not speak about their experiences too much; were a little self-conscious about being Mennonite



BOWMAN, TOBIAS

(See I10)

Date: Jan.13/75

Place: 383 Colonial Dr., Waterloo

Birthdate: Jan.15/17

Place: Floradale, Ont.

Occupation: Waterloo County Board of Education

#### Family Background

- parents belonged to the Old Order
- after completing Gr.7 he worked on other farms (and lived there); through this influence he was led to the Floradale Mennonite Church; baptized there in 1935
- the home emphasized discipline and love for the neighbour; this meant that going to war was out

#### War Experience

- spring/42 until spring/44 - at Langford (C4)
- fall/42 - went to L. Cowichan
- at both camps worked as a cook's helper with his cousin, Elias Brubacher
- remembers how each person given a ration of butter and sugar in small containers with their names on them
- had words of appreciation for the foreman, Paul Neal - "a good man"
- Christmas/43 - went home and got married; wife stayed in Ontario and, he returned to Langford until spring; came home and worked on the Kaya farm (near Kitchener) for 1 ½ years

#### General Reflections

- made us learn to cooperate, matured us as men
- a feeling of "here we are so we have to the best of it"
- thus there was a commitment one to another (for the most part, that is)
- experience was helpful in emphasizing to him heritage and the tradition of peace
- mentions that there were some "lonely hours"

BRUBACHER, ELIAS

(See I4)

Date: Oct. 24/74

Place: 22 First St. W., Elmira

Birthdate: July 25/18

Place: Elmira, Ont.

Occupation: worker at Beaver Lumber

#### Family Background

- father was a woodworker, but also did some farming
- to help pay off family debts, he went to work for other farmers after completing Grade 8
- 1937 - baptized into the Old Order Church - soon transferred to the Elmira Mennonite Church
- when call for A.S.W., parents were sad to see he and his brother go since they were needed to earn money to pay off debts, but still felt that they were doing the right thing

#### War Experiences

- July/41 - Nov./41 - in the first group at Montreal River
- when they first arrived they had to first finish the bunkhouse and set up more beds; after that, he worked mostly in the kitchen
- felt that the spiritual experiences at M.R. were very influential in his life; "J. Harold Sherk was like a father" to him
- Nov./40 - came home - got job "peddling bread"
- spring/42 - called to the forestry work in B.C.; worked in several camps as cook

#### General Reflections

- recalls C.O. experience fondly - was spiritually uplifting
- felt fortunate in that a cousin who was a close friend of his was with him most of the time during his terms of service in M.R. and in B.C.
- was committed to the "way of peace" and felt good about his C.O. work

BRUBACHER, ISAAC

(See 16)

Date: Nov.21/74

Place: 99 King St., St. Jacobs

Birthdate: 1914

Place: St. Jacobs

Occupation: Porter, K-W Hospital

#### Family Background

- descendents came from Pennsylvania; farming background
- settled in St. Jacobs area
- parents belonged to the Old Order but then joined the Old Mennonite, primarily because they felt the need for Sunday School
- baptized in 1928
- finished Grade 8

#### War Experiences

- June/42 - Jan./43 - Mt. Seymour Camp, near Dollarton B.C.
- had been married for 1 ½ years when he left for B.C. and his wife was expecting their first child
- involved in building a ski run at a resort; did not consider this a very worthwhile work; some of them worked in a logging camp for three months (after their foreman had told them it would only be for a week)- were there on loan as standby fire-fighters
- when he was at Mt. Seymour there were about 12 Ontario boys and 12 from Manitoba; the two groups did not mix very much and not all were there for the same reasons; was taken aback one day when someone replied to him: "Well, I'm no Christian and I got just as much right to be here as you have"
- when he came home he worked in a shoe factory; felt that he was making more of a contribution here than in Alternative Service

#### General Reflections

- left for B.C. with a spirit of adventure; had a feeling that he might never return home because this might be the final Battle of Armageddon
- wished that he would have been doing something more worthwhile than building ski runs
- felt that the A.S.W. camps were not a well-planned thing, and that the CO's were sent to them to appease the wrath of non-CO-minded people

BURKHOLDER, CLAYTON

(See I9)

Date: Jan.9/75

Place: Breslau

Birthdate: Jan.21/19

Place: Breslau

Occupation: Canadian Tire, Waterloo

#### Family Background

- parents originally from Markham; moved to Breslau in 1918; father was minister there for 45 years in the Ontario Mennonite Church; the church, therefore, was a very important part of his life; to accept CO status was the natural thing to do - father was a strong supporter of it, at home and in the pulpit
- Gr. 10 education

#### War Experiences

- Montreal River - July-Nov./41 ; did not consider the work very meaningful - was a job simply "created" to get the CO's away from the public eye; not much progress
- expressed appreciation for J.Harold Sherk - was very capable in handling the men
- much free time - recreation: chess, checkers, baseball, fishing, and hiking
- Nov./41-June/42 - back in Kitchener working at Can. Tire; was under the impression that his time of service was completed; had made plans to be married in August/42; then, received the call to go to B.C. for the duration
- June - fall/42 - at Langford (C4) firefighting; cut wood for Victoria during its fuel shortage
- fall - winter - at L. Cowichan for tree planting
- spring/43 - went to Hill 60 - trained as a staker, ie. one who stakes out the rows for tree planting; duties also included making the fire in preparation for dinner, having all the men's lunches there, having the bunches of seedling ready for the planters
- Christmas/43 - went home and was married; brought wife back to Langford with him; lived in a cottage two miles from camp with two other CO couples; in spring/44 when he was transferred to L. Cowichan his wife remained at Langford: worked in Victoria, cleaning house (earned 50¢/hr. while CO's made 50¢/day)
- April/44 - returned to Ontario; worked in Martin's Feed Mill in Elmira (ie. that is where he was assigned); was there until Sept./44

#### General Reflections

- has very good feelings about the whole experience
- was a time of questioning and discussing, a search for a valid set of values; convictions were established which form the basis of this life today
- expressed appreciation for the leaders who made the CO experience possible, ie. the Military Problems Committee

CRESSMAN, FRED

(See I7)

Date: Dec. 5/74

Place: 264 Sunview, Waterloo

Birthdate: Jan. 20/17

Place: near Calgary, Alta.

Occupation: Manager of Production – Canbar Ltd.

#### Family Background

- parents were originally from Kitchener area, but moved to Alberta to farm before he was born; moved back to Ontario in 1928
- recalls attending church services of “Bible Bill” Aberhart in Calgary
- mother was instrumental in influencing him in his stand on nonresistance
- education – finished Grade 8; then took three years of technical training in high school (to be a pattern-maker) and also some night school since then
- was married June 7/41

#### War Experiences

- was in B.C. - Langford - from June 6/42-Nov./43
- accompanied to B.C. by J.B Martin, conducted devotional services on the train
- after arriving at Langford (C4), they organized a devotional committee; he was the Ass't Sunday School Superintendent and teacher
- camp was unfinished when they arrived - bunk houses were not completed, damp, and they did not have stoves for 1 1/2 weeks
- was a straw-boss, ie. in charge of a crew of men
- in June, had devotional meetings each evening (1/2 hour); Sundays they had Sunday School and church services in the morning and Young People's service in the evening; devotional life fell off after a few months
- original group hit it off fairly well; but then a group of boys came who were a little more "spiritually" aggressive and this created some dissension, especially when it came to their inconsistency in the way they worked on the fire line
- good working relationships with the camp foreman
- their camp was only nine miles from Victoria the most visible to the general populace

#### General Reflections

- felt that the church had not done its job in educating the boys about nonresistance
- did not question his being there
- is now a strong supporter of V.S., MCC., and MDS. - they are visible and viable expressions of concern for our fellow man that goes beyond being only an alternative to participation in a war

ERB, ALBERT

(See I21)

Date: April 16/75

Place: 83 Henry St., Wellesley

Birthdate: Oct.6/21

Place: Wellesley

Occupation: Massey-Ferguson Dealer

#### Family Background

- father was the local blacksmith
- attended Mapleview Menn. Church (W.O.M.); was baptized there at age 15 (mentioned his appreciation for the fiery preaching of Bishop Samuel Schultz); recalls the teaching of the church emphasizing a life set apart from the world
- Gr. 10 education
- from 15-18 he worked in the local General Store; at 18 went to Burkhardt's Dairy in Kitchener, partially to get away from antagonism of the non-Mennonite community in Wellesley who looked down on the nonresistant Mennonites

#### War Experiences

- Jan.- May/43 - Montreal River
- the most difficult part of the experience for him was the trip to the camp bouncing around in the back of the dump truck 80 miles in the freezing cold
- around 225 men there - roughly 200 of them were Mennonites
- the work they were doing did not seem to make too much sense; could have been done much more quickly and efficiently by machines; however, his attitude was simply to accept this; felt that they were there to get them out of the public eye
- had very good relationships with the foremen
- camp ministers - stayed for roughly three weeks - mentions Merle Shantz (Preston), J.B. Martin,, and J.Harold Sherk
- May/43 - without notice, a group of 25-30 was sent to Chatham; here they lived in a camp where the Japanese had formerly been held and were free to organize themselves in terms of administration; daily, they would be picked up by local farmers
- this project was under the auspices of the Dept, of Agriculture
- at the end of June the group was transferred; half of them went to Centralia (4 miles east of Exeter) where they were in the same setting as at Chatham; some of the boys bought a car and on some weekends they would sneak home
- Oct./43 - the group was dispersed; he was allowed to come home and work with his father, who had made application on the basis that his was a farm-related business

#### General Reflections

- remembers feeling it a privilege to be a Mennonite - used to think everyone should be like us; wondered how others could possible believe that war was right
- was made to re-evaluate his lifestyle - forced to think about what it really meant to be nonresistant
- expressed appreciation for the work that was done on the boys' behalf by the Military Problems Committee

GERBER, MICHAEL

(See I19)

Date: March 24/75

Place: 82 Brown St., Wellesley

Birthdate: March 17/19

Place: south of Baden

Occupation: Salesman for Dry Goods Wholesale

#### Family Background

- was the youngest of 8 children
- recalls the Depression as being a very sad time – their family lost everything, including their house and farm; moved to Baden for two years and in 1933 they bought a farm in Crosshill
- during this time his father was excommunicated from the Steinman Church; their family then began to attend the Maple View Church
- nonresistance taught in the church and by the family
- finished Gr. 8; then went to work for father on the farm

#### War Experiences

- Montreal River – Aug. 6/41 – Dec. 5/41
- was shocked to find that there were 17 different groups of Mennonites there; for the most part they all got along and worshipped together, except for the Reformed Mennonites, who would only worship by themselves – in work and everything else they would associate with others, but in worship they always segregated themselves
- worked on the road crew- shoveling gravel, cleaning ditches
- the work set-up was rather flexible so that if one got tired of working on the road crew and wanted to work in the bushes cutting down trees that was possible; in general, the boys were not expected to work very hard – on one occasion a foreman had some of the boys clear a field and only afterwards did he inform that it was to be used as a ball-field
- had good relationships with the foremen; apparently, thought, when the first group arrived at camp some government personnel had guns due to their ignorance of the exact nature of the boys coming to the camp
- there were some who were more educated than others – but still they could all fellowship with each other; characterized the Russian Mennonites as generally being the most educated
- the facilities were rugged and primitive, but he had no complaints
- recalls that there was a distinct sense of loneliness – they knew they would be going home but they did not know when
- there were some Old Order boys who were characterized as having worked much harder than they had to; they did not consciously seek to segregate themselves from the rest, but they were generally more shy and quieter and thus did not integrate as much

#### General Reflections

- in terms of a sense of contribution, temporally, he felt the soldiers may have contributed more, but spiritually, he felt their contribution was greater
- was a great learning experience – was made more aware of the importance of church; also it taught you how to get along with other people
- is thankful for the experience and would not have wanted to have missed it

- learned to live a more reserved, quieter, withdrawn life – to appreciate the value of listening



GIESBRECHT, OTTO

(See I2)

Date: Sept. 30/74

Place: Campden

Birthdate: Aug. 16/19

Place: Friedensruh, Russia Occupation.

Construction

#### Family Background

- father was a schoolteacher; supplemented income by farming; whipped by raiders one night
- decided that this was no place to raise children
- 1924 - migrate to Manitoba - Arnaud for 4-5 years, then to Stonewall - farming;
- Depression - hard times but parents never complained because they were so thankful to be free of Communism
- 1937 - move to Vineland

#### War Experiences

- baptized - June 1, 1941; was taught, understood, and agreed with the Mennonite stand on nonresistance
- Montreal River – Dec./41 to July/42; recalls the train trip from Toronto, the friendship of J. Harold Sherk (who was on his way to the camp to be its first minister)
- disappointed in the Mennonite leaders - not one ever visited the camp while he was there
- spent some time in hospital in Sault Ste. Marie - treated with contempt by Dr. Gimby, the camp doctor, because of his CO stand
- April 7/42 - received news that they would be in for the duration - changed the mood of the camp - very depressed

#### Reflections

- feels that the Mennonites could have a much stronger witness if they would initiate a program whereby they would offer two years of voluntary service to the government during peacetime
- his experience at Montreal River was a positive one

GOOD, RAYMOND

(See I6)

Date: Nov.21/74

Place: 99 King St., St. Jacobs

Birthdate: Jan.17/20

Place: St. Jacobs

Occupation: Co-owner, Good's Garage - St. Jacobs

#### Family Background

- descendants came from Pennsylvania; farming background
- settled in St. Jacobs area
- parents belonged to the Old Order but then joined the Old Mennonite, primarily because they felt the need for Sunday School; grandfather donated land for the O.M. church
- baptized ca. 1934

#### War Experiences

- July - Nov./41 - at Montreal River; was the truck driver
- discouraged by the poor equipment and the slow progress
- participated in the morning and evening devotions; appreciated the visits of local ministers, eg. J.B. Martin, and the camp pastor, J. Harold Sherk
- not too distressed over the lack of unity, ie. that there were separate worship services and that not everyone participated
- June/42 - May/44 - in B.C.; served in various places: Langford, Cowichan, Vancouver, and Langford
- Langford - fought forest fires; considered this a worthwhile service
- from Cowichan he was sent to Vancouver to aid in the project of building sawmills (portable-size) which were needed because of the wood/fuel shortage in the local schools; because of the high priority of this project he was not granted leave to go home; (a number of boys from the camp were chosen for this project)
- in Langford - built their own chapel from cedar logs

#### General Reflections

- felt that there was more progress in the work they were doing in B.C, than in Montreal R.
- considered the whole experience a valuable one in that it taught him to respect those of other faiths and those who had no faith
- felt good about "serving our country as well as our Lord"

HUNSBERGER, WILSON

(See I3)

Date: Oct. 21/74

Place: 298 Bridge St., Waterloo

Birthdate: Aug. 31/19

Place: Bridgeport (Kitchener) Occupation:

Director - Children's Aid Society of Waterloo

#### Family Background

- family has been farming in the area for 5 or 6 generations
- father was a strict, devout person, faithful to the church, afraid of higher education (would not allow his oldest son to attend medical school)
- church was an integral part of his childhood
- baptized at age 14; was taught, understood, and accepted the doctrine of nonresistance; influenced greatly by his minister, J.B. Martin
- graduated from high school (unusual for his community), went to Teacher's College, then taught in a local school

#### War Experiences

- July/41 - Nov./41 - Montreal River: recalls much chopping down of trees and working in the bush; not much work was actually done on the road - was more of a "make-work kind of project"
- different denominations - united only in their peace stand, so that worship services were still held separately
- some individuals were more committed to the peace position than others, i.e. some were there as a result of pressure or circumstances; felt, though, that there was an air of congeniality among the boys
- Nov./41 - June/42 - at home teaching
- June/42 - Oct./43 - B.C. forestry service at Camp Koksilah on Vancouver Island: fighting fires, building roads, blasting crew, radio operator
- more intimate relationships with the foreman and the cook because of the smaller size of the group (around 60)
- many denominations - but not a divisive factor - many friendships made
- impact of travelling ministers not too deep; recalls Gilmore and Loewen (Manitoba)
- good relationships with the people of Shawinigan
- Oct./43 - Feb./44 - Neys (Northern Ontario); taught school for six Japanese children, whose families had been "thrown out" of B.C.;
- Feb./44 - mother died - granted leave - did not have to return to Neys since the Japanese had been given permission to move to Toronto
- went back to teaching locally; then spent a term of service with MCC in Europe

#### General Reflections

- was a time of great opportunity for the establishment of friendships; a maturing experience; not unpleasant
- was helpful that he was single, freeing him from deeper worries, and allowing him to take full advantage of the beautiful country into which he had been placed

JANTZI, DAVID

(See I20)

Date: March 26/75

Place: Milverton

Birthdate: Feb. 21/16

Place: near Milverton

Occupation: Pastor and Wookworker

#### Family Background

- parents were Old Order Amish; he was baptized into the Old Order "church" at 17; their congregation gathered every other Sunday in the home of the members
- was taught early that going to war was wrong but he really did not have any strong convictions about it
- Gr. 8 education – after that he went to work on his uncle's farm; at 20 he went to work as a machinist in town
- was married in 1940; in March/42 his first son was born, just three months before he left for camp

#### War Experiences

- June/42 – Sept./43 – was stationed at Mt. Seymour in B.C.
- involved in building a trail up Seymour Mt. for skiing, snagfalling, tree-planting, and fire-fighting – felt the trail-building was significant, but the other work was import
- good relationships with the foremen (there were 3 govt. personnel at Mt. Seymour)
- spent one month in early spring/43 at Campbell R. planting trees; the cook there, not a pleasant fellow, would often try to shortchange them and not give them enough food
- some boys would gather daily for Scripture reading, singing, and prayer
- May 11/43 – his leg was crushed by a tree; spent 3 months in hospital, returned to the camp for a month, and then was discharged ; was eligible for a pension because of the accident but declined to take it
- spent much of this free time at camp carving; also, writing letters
- many boys would apply for farm leaves whenever there was a chance; he did too, but never received any word

#### General Reflections

- regrets that the church did not give them a better understanding of what it meant to be nonresistant instead of being simply told that it was wrong to go to war
- gained an understanding and respect for different kinds of people – became more tolerant and not so ingrown
- deepened his Christian experience and commitment

JUTZI, RUFUS

(See I8)

Date: Dec.13/74

Place: 50 Kent St., Kitchener

Birthdate: June 26/15

Place: Kitchener area

Occupation: Director, Mennonite Foundation of Canada, (Ontario)

#### Family Background

- family has lived in this area for generations; forefathers came from Alsace-Lorraine ca. 1832
- family and church were strong influences
- baptized ca. 1931 into Steinman Mennonite Church (Amish)
  - came to Kitchener - joined First Mennonite
- had a very keen consciousness of the wrongness of war
- parents somewhat apprehensive about his leaving for B.C., but mostly because of the element of the unknown; he never had any doubts in his mind about the stand he was taking
- Gr.8 education, and three years at Ontario Mennonite Bible Institute

#### War Experiences

- in B.C. - Langford (C4) – from June/42-spring/44
- when his call came he was given less than a week to prepare
- non-Mennonite neighbours were friendly and cordial
- at C4 – during June, involved in roadbuilding; July and August, were in standby crews in case of forest fires; in winter there was a shortage of firewood in Victoria, so the CO's were recruited to cut wood
- from winter to March he was at L. Cowichan camp - worked as bull-cook and on clean-up
- spring - went to Hill 60 to plant trees; there for 7 weeks
- then went back to C4; in October he returned to Ontario to be married; then returned to C4 until spring/44
- after returning to Ontario in '44, spent two years working as farm labour on a poultry farm near Kitchener
- basically, felt very good about the work he was doing as, a CO; firefighting, cutting firewood, planting trees were worthwhile projects; did not consider the roadbuilding very worthwhile, however
- felt positive about the relationships in camp; the variety of backgrounds and denominations provided for a broadening experience and forced him out of a kind of "provincialism"
- many good experiences with the original group at C4; a certain camaraderie develops; never quite the same at the other camps or when the new group arrived at C4; after the new group came to C4 there were more men per bunkhouse, changing the group feeling from the camp as a whole to a closer relationship with those of the same bunkhouse

#### General Reflections

- the whole experience provided the opportunity to serve, witness, and strengthen his position in relation to war
- learned to be adaptable

- gained an appreciation for the church; feels that it was a growing experience for the church as well

MILLAR, DON

(See I5)

Date: Oct. 31/74

Place: 43 Duncairn, Kitchener

Birthdate: Dec. 24/21

Place: Kitchener

Occupation: Electrician

#### Family Background

- father was a Presbyterian, mother a Mennonite; father worked as a carpenter and a farmer; moved from Kitchener to a farm near New Hamburg when Don was 1 year old
- baptized in 1937 in Stirling Ave. Church
- finished high school
- worked at odd jobs on construction, and also at Kauffman Rubber plant

#### War Experiences

- Aug./42 - Jan./43: at Mt. Seymour (roadbuilding camp, six miles outside of Vancouver); camp was already established when he arrived; some of the boys were "grumpy" because education had been interrupted or simply that their lives had been disrupted; overall, though, the spirit in the camp was good; church services were regularly held despite the lack of a minister; could also attend church in Vancouver;
- foreman, at first, ruled them according to the book because he thought the CO's were "slouches"; but the boys soon established themselves as honest and hard-working and he relaxed his measures
- respected the other groups' points of views, except for the Jehovah's Witnesses, who seemed to carry a chip on their shoulders

#### General Reflections

- the work "was not a great accomplishment, but rather more of a filling in of time, and doing jobs that were not all that necessary"
- spiritually, though, it strengthened him in his Mennonite position
- thought of the experiences as a time of "adventure"

Addition: he also spent some time planting trees on Vancouver Island (at Campbell River) from Feb. until the beginning of April in 1943

MILLAR, DOUG

(See 15)

Date: Oct. 31/74

Place: 43 Duncairn, Kitchener

Birthdate: Jan. 9/20

Place: Kitchener

Occupation: Insurance salesman (Mutual Life)

#### Family Background

- father was a Presbyterian, mother a Mennonite; father worked as a carpenter and a farmer; moved from Kitchener to a farm near New Hamburg when Doug was 3 years old
- baptized in 1934 in Stirling Ave. Church
- after Grade 8 went to Bible school in the church with C.F. Derstine, S.F. Coffman, and Oscar Burkholder as teachers; he then went on to finish high school
- 1940 - began working for Mutual Life

#### War Experiences

- Aug. 15/41 - Nov.15/41 - Montreal River; for the first two months there was no organized spiritual life; the boys were "ill-prepared" to cope with the situation; most were "lackadaisical and luke-warm"; only a few were involved in their own private services; but after J. Harold Sherk arrived, the situation greatly improved and there were regular services in which nearly everyone took part
- workwise, nothing was accomplished; the boys worked hard but what they did was not of much use
- Nov/41 - June/42: at Mutual Life
- June til Fall/42: in a camp near Chatham, Ont where the CO's lived and were daily transported to nearby farms
- Fall/42 - Fall/43: lived and worked on a farm near Sarnia

#### General Reflections

- the experience was sort of like a vacation, ie. a good time in the bush
- socially, met many new people which, in turn, led to increased interest and involvement in the Menn. church
- felt that the A.S. program was "patchwork" in nature, with its primary purpose being to get the CO's out of the public eye; should have been possible to be of more practical service



NEUFELD, PETER

(See I2)

Date: Sept. 30/74

Place: Campden

Birthdate: April 24/18

Place: Paulsheim, Russia

Occupation: Works at Thompson Products, St. Catharines; part-time farmer

#### Family Background

- father was a farmer; remembers the raids by the White Red, and Green Armies as well as the raiding bands, especially Nestor Machnov; father was killed in a raid one night when they came to steal the money the Neufeld's had made selling all their goods to pay for the passports;

- 1924 - cost \$50 for a passport and there was no limit; in 1926 it cost \$1000 and there was a quota; three weeks after his father's death they left for Canada (1926); settled in Waterloo; 1927 - moved to Vineland, bought a farm

#### War Experiences

- baptized in 1937; had been indoctrinated with the doctrine of nonresistance (father served in the Russian Red Cross during WW1); family was very pro-German, pro-Nazi, mostly because they were fighting the Communists; after he read Mein Kampf he became anti-Nazi;

- was in charge of registering the boys in the Vineland church between the ages of 20-25

- sent their applications for exemption to the Military Problems Committee

- Montreal River - Nov./41 to April/42; felt that the experience was worthwhile:

"Rather than do destruction, they went in the country's cause to do construction."

- recalls first sermon of Sherk: "Boys will be men", using the example of Shadrach, Mishach, and Abednego who stood up for their convictions

- was the camp photographer

- returned home in April/42, got married, and went into farming - made payments to the Red Cross up until two years after the war

PETERS, JACOB

(See I12)

Date: Jan.30/75

Place: 55 Sherwood,, Kitchener

Birthdate: Oct.1/16

Place: Village #2,Romanovka, Russia

Occupation: Waterloo Board of Education Russia

#### Family Background

- parents of Mennonite Brethren background; he recalls the raiders who came to their village after the Revolution and relates in detail one particular experience
- family came to Manitoba in 1925 via Germany; (left on their own - were not part of the mass movement); moved to four different places in Manitoba before coming to Ontario in 1932 (first to St. Catharines and then to Kitchener)
- worked at Schmidt's Furniture (Preston) from '33-'35 and then went to The Globe in Waterloo until he was called
- because of poor health (asthma) father required a change of climate; went to Germany just before the war started, however he was able to travel throughout Germany unmolested
- father had served in the Forstei in Russia and had also been conscripted as a cook for the army

#### War Experience

- June 2/42-No.17/43 in B.C.
- summer of '42 spent at Emery Creek (Yale Camp), which was a converted training camp for gold miners; mostly worked at snagfalling and building fire trails; when they had arrived at camp everything needed repairs - had to build their own beds and put doors and windows on the cabins
- fall of '42 were sent to L. Cowichan because Emery Creek did not have winter facilities - they were grouped together with the boys from Langford
- recalled fighting one particular fire for 53 hours with only three hours rest; at one point they were trying to hold a line and had lumberjacks working on either side of them; they were holding their portion of the line well when they suddenly realized that the fire had almost completely surrounded them - the lumberjacks had gone off somewhere to play cards
- because he was suffering from an ulcer he was sent home in Nov./43; was then sent to work at Krug Furniture he remained until 1959)

#### General Reflections

- was a completely new venture for everyone involved and therefore everything was not as well organized as it could have been; wished that they could have been able to produce more
- experience was worthwhile; spiritually it did them a lot of good

REMPEL, FRANK

(See I15)

Date: Feb.27/75

Place: 32 Euclid St., Waterloo

Birthdate: March 18/14

Place: Lichtenauer, Russia

Occupation: works at Uniroyal

#### Family Background

- in Russia until 1924; father was a farmer - served in Forstei for three years; during the Revolution his father went into hiding as did many others; recalls very vividly their suffering under the anarchists
- 1924 - came to Manitoba (Winkler, and then to Arnaud)
- 1929 - moved to Kitchener, where he began to work in a furniture factory
- baptized in 1933 at George St. U.M. Church
- left school in Gr. 7

#### War Experiences

- June/42 - Feb./43 - at Koksilah (C3)
- work - on road project for lumber company - was a little disgusted with this work since it was merely providing cheap labour for the company
- also fought some large fires - in this there was a sense of contribution
- when visiting ministers of a certain denomination came and were not accepted by the others, they were referred to as "sky pilots", ie those who just flew in
- were some "fanatical Christians" who thought only their way was right and who were continually trying to convert people; rather than work during the day they would discuss religion; in this way they were a source of irritation for the foreman and for those who had to take up the slack (sometimes 6 men would have to do the work of 10 because the other 4 were standing around discussing); felt that these men were rather inconsistent in their Christianity
- great food
- mentioned the significance of letter-writing - had girlfriend at home whom he married in 1944
- Feb./43 - received complete discharge for medical reasons
- came home, worked at B. F. Goodrich for 3 months, off for 3 weeks of rest, then went to Deluxe Furniture Factory; never had to pay Red Cross dues

#### General Reflections

- felt a deep sense of responsibility to serve where the government had placed him - "we had a job to do"
- meeting young men and working hard together was a growing experience; feels that it would be very good for young men today to be placed into this kind of situation
- really enjoyed the work

SCHMIDT, HAROLD

(See I16)

Date: March 2/75

Place: Baden

Birthdate: Jan. 20/20

Place: Baden

Occupation: Farmer, and Secretary-Treasurer of Menn. Aid Union

Family Background

- family well-rooted in the Baden area; father was a farmer
- he was the only son; father died when he was 14, leaving him in the position of leadership
- parents' value system included a number of givens, or absolutes, eg. going to church every Sunday, which sustained them through life; these values gave him an appreciation for the church; teaching of nonresistance emphasized in family and the church
- finished high school as well as completing correspondence courses in business and economics on the post-secondary level

War Experiences

- Sept. - Dec./41- Montreal River
- worked in the office for Tench; looked after the mail, time sheets, etc.
- returned home worked on farm for 1/2 year
- June/42 - May-June/43 - Camp Dollarton, B.C, ie Emory Creek
- worked as cook's assistant for a short while; cook had a drinking problem, which left him with most of the work
- then placed in the office where he was responsible for the bookwork and ordering the supplies for the camp; administratively, Dollarton was a central camp and thus he knew and was partially responsible for the situations in the other B.C. camps; there were many visits from government officials
- when the boys from the camp were sent to Campbell R. for tree planting he was left at Dollarton with the cook and the foreman; used the spare time to complete correspondence courses
- was the Sunday School Supt. at Dollarton; responsible for having grace said at all the meals, Bible studies on Wed. evenings, and Sunday School and, church service on Sundays
- says that J. B. Martin was responsible for the system whereby all the B.C. camps had autonomous religious structures and thus could maintain Christian nurture on a regular basis (since the visits of the itinerant ministers were sporadic)
- Christmas/42- someone from the church paid for his trip home, and applied to the Agric. Rep., E.I. McLoughrie [*i.e.* McLoughry], for him to stay home since his mother was left alone on the farm; he had to return to B.C. but was granted a discharge in spring/43

General Reflections

- working in the kitchen gave him an appreciation for the work of women (ie

could empathize with their concerns)

- working in the office gave him an appreciation for the role of the public official
- witnessed their sensitivity to the motivation of the CO's, while at the same time wanting to get as much work from them as possible
- occasionally, he had to answer letters of protest from people who were upset with the CO's – forced him to try to understand their viewpoint as well as to crystallize some of his own thoughts concerning the nature of the CO position
- feels very positive about the whole experience

SHANTZ, ELVEN

(See I22)

Date: April 24/75

Place: 174 East Ave., Kitchener

Birthdate: 1893

Place: Kitchener

Occupation: Retired

#### Family Background

- family had been in this area since the early 1800's
- because of the untimely death of his 19 year old brother, he was forced to leave school at 13 and work on the farm
- refers to the strong sentiments of the general populace during W.W.I and the total commitment of all the people - these circumstances made it difficult for him as a young Mennonite trying to start a business to make ago of it in this area; therefore, in 1918 he moved to Kindersley, Sask.; returned in 1920 to be married, then went back to Sask. until the fall of 1929, when they returned to Kitchener and he went to work for his brother at Superior Stone

#### War Experiences

- was very actively involved as a member of the Military Problems Committee as well as working together with E.I. McLoughrie [*i.e.* McLoughry] (provincial rep), and Mr. Angus (federal rep) on a committee that functioned something like a review board for all the CO's in Ontario, handling the various problems that came up, eg. they handled many requests from fathers who wanted their boys home to work on the farm
- for more details see I22

SHANTZ, ORVIE

(See II1)

Date: Jan.17/75

Place: St. Jacobs

Birthdate: Aug.13/19

Place: Waterloo

Occupation: Farmer

#### Family Background

-was able to trace his lineage to when Jacob Shantz left Switzerland to come to Pennsylvania

- belongs to the Old Order Church in St. Jacobs
- left school at 14 years of age to work on the farm
- church and family instrumental in educating concerning nonviolence

#### War Experiences

- Montreal River - July 15 - Nov.15/41

- coming from the farm, he was used to working a full day; found it a little frustrating that they were stuck way up in the north out of the public eye and doing only 8 hrs. of work per day; for the most part, however, they simply put these thoughts out of their minds

- in winter, the men made arrangements take turns keeping the stoves burning; he was the first one; but Tench, sympathizing, with their predicament, placed one man on that full time

#### General Reflections

- the work they did was not that important; the main thing was to get them out of the public eye
- learned to get along with a lot of other people
- appreciated the efforts of E.I. McLoughry (the Agric. Rep.) on their behalf; after he returned from Montreal River he was allowed to stay home and work on the farm

SHANTZ, WARD

(See I18)

Date: March 19/75

Place: Waterloo Stockyards

Birthdate: Dec. 5/18

Place: near St. Jacobs

Occupation: Manager, Waterloo stockyards

#### Family background

- was born on the farm his great-grand father gave to his grand-father and which his father inherited; therefore, he has always worked on the farm
- had one brother and no sisters; family belonged to Erb St. Menn. Church; he was baptized when he was 14
- from family and the church he learned early that Christianity meant being nonresistant – J.B. Martin was particularly influential
- went to school as far as almost finishing Gr. 10
- recalls that during the Depression even though they lived on a farm it was difficult to meet all the needs

#### War Experiences

- Montreal river – Aug. 5 - Dec. 5/41
- the men left in 3 groups of 50, two weeks apart; he was in the last group; J.B. Martin was already up there - came to Sault Ste. Marie to pick them up; he was lucky enough to get a ride back in the car while most had to go in the two gravel trucks
- some of the government men resented the CO's - felt that they could be doing more important work in the army; the boys accepted this attitude and did not blame these men since many of them had served in W.W.I
- mentioned the "remarkable" job that Harold Sherk did in keeping the boys together
- by and large the relationship among the many denominations was very good
- were some who had problems with the food, ie. stomach problem and diarrhea
- recreation - each bunkhouse had a ball team, and they would play after supper; fishing, hiking, reading, writing letters
- occasionally there would be visiting ministers - recalls especially the message of C. F. Derstine on one occasion - he warned them to beware of the dangers to their health

#### General Reflections

- made many friends that otherwise he would not have
- during the experience there may have been many questions but afterwards he felt it to have been really worthwhile



STECKLY, ANDREW

(See I17)

Date: March 10/75

Place: Wellesley

Birthdate: April 19/19

Place: near Milverton

Occupation: part-owner of Floor Covering store in Wellesley

#### Family Background

- father was of Old Order background; a carpenter; after he was married he tried farming, but after a year went back to carpentry work; kept a few acres and some cattle and did some dairying
  - also after getting married they charged to the Old Menn. church at East Zorra
  - lived in Shakespeare - small, non-Menn. community; therefore, his closest friends were non-Menn.; maintained good relationships with them and their families and after the war despite their differences of orientation (while he was in B.C. a friend stationed in Vancouver looked him up and would come to the camp on his leaves to visit)
  - Gr.8 education
- worked in lumber yard until the time of the war

#### War Experiences

- Montreal River – Aug. 6/41-Dec. 5/41
- one weekend when J. Harold Sherk was away his tent burned down and all his personal belongings were lost; the boys took a collection to help replace some of them
- recalls taking many hikes
- food not very good
- June 6/42 - March/44- in B.C. at Dollarton (GT 5)
- enjoyed it here much more than at Montreal River - it was new country, there were many different jobs which he did, and the work seemed to be more worthwhile
- a variety of jobs: tree-planting, road-building, fire-fighting and office (he replaced Harold Schmidt when he was discharged in spring/43)
- would go to Vancouver often on weekend leaves; went to the library - did a lot of reading at camp
- was in an octet that would often sing in local Menn. churches on Sundays - once they went to a Vancouver department store and "cut" a record (of which he has the master copy)
- was the only one to have a movie camera - has two excellent films of the B.C. experience
- mentioned the significance of the mail – writing and receiving letters
- one fellow supposedly on a weekend leave went A.W.O.L. - took a train back to Ontario because his wife just had their first child; apprehended and returned to B.C.; after this weekend leaves were not given out for a while, consequently the boys were a little upset with this fellow

#### General Reflections

- was an enriching experience and a growing one

- was a lesson in understanding human nature - getting along with different types of people

TIESSEN, GERHARD

(See I1)

Date: Sept. 26/74

Place: 361 Craigleith, Waterloo

Birthdate: June 27/19

Place: Ekaterinoslav, Russia

Occupation: Pattern-maker, Greb Industries – Bauer Skate Division

#### Family Background

- parents belonged to the landless class; came to Canada ca. 1924, directly to Winnipeg; family worked for a bachelor farmer in Marquette who offered to give them the farm when he died if he would agree to work for less money; didn't accept – moved to Waterloo

#### War Experiences

- Montreal River – 1941 for four months; mentions the crowded conditions and the poor food, as well as the excellent fishing
- Camp C3 – Shawinigan Lake, Vancouver Island – forestry; from June/42 until June/43
- sense of fulfillment in the fire-fighting, but very frustrated with the rest of the time when they were made to do only “busy-work”
- joins the Air Force as airplane engine mechanic but remained in Canada
- working in the Air Force fulfilled his sense of duty to Canada

WEBER, AARON

(See III)

Date: Jan. 17/75

Place: St. Jacobs

Birthdate: March 11/19

Place: R.R.2 Waterloo

Occupation: Farmer

#### Family Background

- descendants came to Ontario from Switzerland via Pennsylvania
- still living on the farm where his grandfather lived
- belongs to the Old Order Church in St. Jacobs
- left school at 14 to work on the farm
- church and family instrumental in educating, him concerning nonviolence

#### War Experiences

- Montreal River - Aug-5 - Dec./41
- there were three groups of 50 at the camp; the first two groups left two days of each other in mid-July; he was part of the third group which left three weeks later
- religious life – morning devotions, singing school and Bible one evening a week each, Sunday School and worship on Sunday mornings
- J. Harold Sherk taught the singing school

#### General Reflections

- was a time of growth in the faith; learned to put trust in the Lord for the future

WEBER, NORMAN R.

(See I4)

Date: Oct. 24/74

Place: 22 First St. W., Elmira

Birthdate: Sept. 27/22

Place: Elmira

Occupation: Poultry Farmer

#### Family Background

- father was a farmer
- quit school after Grade 8 to help on the farm
- parents of Old Order background
- because of the war he decided that he should be baptized to identify himself as a Mennonite and as opposed to war – baptized in 1940 in the Waterloo-Markham Church; soon transferred to Elmira Menn. so that he could have Sunday School

#### War Experiences

- if there was any way possible, he did not want to go to war; therefore, did not hesitate to do A.S.W.; was very conscious of the Mennonite peace position
- fall/42- spring/43 - in the last group at Montreal River; worked mostly on gravel trucks; says that at first the boys worked hard, but then realized that it really was not accomplishing anything, that all it was a make-work project, so they decided to take things a little easier - built a small "shelter" in which they would play cards or just "shoot the breeze" when the foreman was away
- felt that the spiritual life at the camp was very good - recalls a special week of meetings with a Mr. Stevanus (sp?)
- spring/43 - the last group at M.R. was split in half - half went to the Niagara Peninsula and half went to Waterloo, to work on farms; he was part of the group that came back to Waterloo; spent the next year at home on the farm; winter/45 called to cut wood on a different farm

#### General Reflections

- could not understand why some CO's got fed up and left the camps to join the armed forces; felt that they were all there for the same purpose and that they should have been more willing to put up with the drudgery; he was very thankful for the opportunity to be away from the war and would want his son/s to do the same thing today

WIENS, DAVID

(See I13)

Date: Feb.6/75

Place: 78 Glenwood Dr., Kitchener

Birthdate: Feb.9/19

Place: Kamenka, S. Russia

Occupation: Principal, Queen Elizabeth Public School

### Family Background

- of Russian Mennonite Brethren background; mentions the raiders, especially the Machnov bands, who came to their village
- arranged to leave Russia and go to Germany where they lived camps; very poor conditions but they were well taken care of
- 1930 - came to Leamington where his mother's brother (C. H. Thiessen) lived; attended church together with the G.C.'s until the MB's were able to build their own; baptized at 17
- 1940 - moved to Kitchener; worked in a factory
- Gr. 13 education; since then he has also completed his B.A. B. Ed.

### War Experiences

- Montreal River - July-Nov./41 was a straw-boss working on road maintenance and clearing right of way
- when he came back from M.R. he went to Teachers' College
- fall/42 -spring /43 - called back to M.R.
- after that he was sent directly to a farm near Chatham
- fall/43 - called to teach at Three Bridges School; almost 100% Old Order children
- at camp - mentions Harold Sherk and his contributions - was a good man for the position; not dogmatic - tried to present a reasonable declaration of faith that would include all the various elements there
- recalls a small group that had early morning prayer meetings
- were many pleasures, eg. hiking, the joviality of the boys, contests (eg. feats of strength, especially among the Old Order boys)

### General Reflections

- was a maturing experience - having to get along with others who were strangers in more than one way
- grateful at the government provided a way in which they had an opportunity to serve the country
- feels that the peace witness should be expressed now during peace time so that there is an inward commitment to this doctrine, not only one that is manifested during wartime

WILLMS, JOHN

(See I1)

Date: Sept. 26, 1974

Place: 361 Craigleith, Waterloo

Birthdate: May 21/20

Place: Davlikonova, Russia

#### Family Background

- father dealt in heavy machinery and a textile mill - wealthy; 1924 - serves in Turkey; senses coming trouble; sells as much as possible; buried much of his machinery; leave for Canada but in Holland are rerouted to Mexico; there for 2 years; rather than use arms to protect themselves against the lawless Mexicans, they moved to Winnipeg; there for 2-3 years, then move to Leamington due to father's inability to farm

#### War Experience

- when he turned 18 he received a letter from the Nazis, offering to pay his expenses to come to Germany to complete his education; he declined
- had no strong convictions, but was persuaded to go CO by his father (also: encouraged by N.N. Driedger)
- Montreal River: there for 4 months; when they arrived in Sault Ste. Marie they were driven around the town to show the people what "Conchies" looked like
- sent home: then transferred to forestry in B.C.; there from June/42 until May/44; after the Montreal River experience he didn't want to go to B.C., but was persuaded by his father
- sent many letters to Ottawa applying for any other kind of service, but never received an answer
- enjoyed some aspects of the experience as times of good fellowship, but resented the evangelical attitudes of some of the CO's and ministers

#### General Reflections

- felt deeply the lack of understanding of the issues because of the lack of instruction; N.N. Driedger argues that joining the military is wrong; Leam. [*i.e.* Leamington] church then decides to baptize some who joined, anyway
- feels that the experience has made him less of a CO
- now a member of the United Church

#### NOTE

When he went to register as a CO he found that he had already been registered as a farmer; found this strange because he had only lived on a farm for about a year in his life

WITMER, LEN

(See I10)

Date: Jan. 13/75

Place: 383 Colonial Dr., Waterloo

Birthdate: Dec. 21/14

Place: Plattsville, Ont.

Occupation: General Contractor

#### Family Background

- when family moved to Kitchener they went to First Mennonite; then changed to Stirling Ave.; after getting married to a Baptist he went back and forth between the two churches; in 1941 he was baptized into the Baptist Church
- from his upbringing in the church he felt that he should not go to war; was not something that was ever directly taught in the home – rather, it was understood that peace was the Christian way of life
- prior to going into A.S.W. he worked at B.F. Goodrich for ten years
- Gr. 8 education
- married in 1940

#### War Experiences

- June/42 – fall/43 – at Langford (C4); mentioned firefighting and snagfalling
- fall/42 – went to L. Cowichan – planting trees
- spring/42 – Mrs. Witmer came to Langford; rented a cottage with the Munro Jutzis about five miles from camp; felt that the presence of some of the wives helped to lift the boys' spirits – men would come over for Sunday afternoon visits, etc.

#### General Reflections

- learned to respect people more, to share more, and to show forth the Christian spirit
- feels that today he would serve in some way that he could be more of a contribution, eg. the Red Cross or noncombatant service; at the time the question was not where to serve but rather, would he go to war or not, which for him was a straightforward question with a straightforward answer, ie. the CO camps