ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

OF

RUSSIAN-MENNONITE IMMIGRANTS

OF THE 1920's (Ontario)

Interview #42 in the series of oral history interviews conducted by Henry Paetkau, graduate history student at the University of Waterloo on behalf of Conrad Grebel College under the direction of Walter Klaassen.

Date of Interview: Thursday, August 26, 1976; 2:30-4:30 p.m.

Place of Interview: Lounge of the Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church

Interviewee: Mr. Henry Dueck
1410-100 Queen Street North
Kitchener, Ontario

Interview:

PAETKAU: Can you tell me at the outset Mr. Dueck, when and where you were born? A little bit about your family background .

DUECK: Yah. I was born in the Crimea in a village called I was born June 3, 1902 . This is where we grew up. This is where I found my wife. She also is from the same village. Date of birth is only three years younger.

PAETKAU: Is this a Mennonite village?

DUECK: Yah, a Mennonite village. That village was bought many many years. My grandfather he was shareholder in this village and they bought the land for 1 ruble. The whole village. There was Tartars living there. It used to be Turkish. The land was quite good. Well we needed a lot of rain to have the crops. The crops were good, good for fruit, wonderful. We've been back there 1963. We couldn't go to the place where we were born, they wouldn't let us. So we went on the

But from what we could see from above in the plane it's all bushes now, the whole Crimea. There's only a small parcel which they use for horticulture farm for grain. The various types of graineries--what you call them. In 1969 we again were not allowed to go there so we went down to the....?

PAETKAU: How much land did your father have?

DUECK: He had in the Crimea--in acres?

PAETKAU: Or disertine.

DUECK: I think it was 450 disertine in the Crimea and 4,000 disertine in Siberia
That's where he later on had a flour mill. There was no need to--well they lived good. As our Mennonites always do, they saved. They saved for somebody. That somebody will be--Communistic government they took everything. I built a house in 1929. I figured we were going to get married.
So I built a beautiful big house. I had good luck. I had good employment. I was earning a lot of money. A lot more than I ever earned in Canada. I built that house. Everything was done. There was a few finishings to be done yet but then we left for Moscow and then we were arrested and sent back. When we came back that house was the same way the carpenters had left it. There was nobody around there. Then we escaped again back to Moscow. We got away in fall of 1929. What happened to our house down there. My father-in-law he had a flour mill, 3-4 storey flour mill in our village. And that was torn down and my house was torn down because they needed those stones and bricks to build a home in the city of for those , the ones that have no fathers or mothers.

PAETKAU: Orphans.

DUECK: Yah orphans. It was the silliest thing what they could have done tearing down the flour mill. And this was a brand new house which I had down there. But before they tore it down they had a before the village put up--and at the back there was a big stoneway basement all the way through. Around here it's never done that way but in Europe we used to do this. At one end of the house it wasn't finished just a big hole left over the staircase to go down into the basement. What they had done was partitioned that right up to that hole, torn out all the walls. It was self supporting with the big beams. They had a . in there. And whoever needed a washroom they had a few boards over there. This is where they gone in. So this tank was so bad that they had to close. Then they tore it down.
That's the way they do it.

PAETKAU: How did your father come about to getting this land in Siberia? Were there a lot of people who had land up there?

DUECK: There were quite a number of Mennonites in Siberia. This village was called--it was actually a very small village but very wealthy fellows. was the name of this place. It was owned by a fellow
He bought it. He didn't build the
He bought it from a fellow by the name of Peter Janzen, from

DUECK: the Crimea. He was good friend of him. He came down there one day and Mr. Janzen apparently he was going to live there. But then he came back and says, "It's too darn cold I can't do it." And he says to my father; his name was John: "John, would you like to buy my flour mill down in Siberia?" M-m-m. father had money which we at that time didn't know. He says, "Well I'll talk it over with my brothers." He had three brothers there. I had three uncles, his brothers. Uncle Dave, George and Uncle Jake. He talked it over with them. They went down to Siberia and looked the whole thing over and he bought the whole shubang down there with his one brother David who was single. They run this flour mill down there and they bought all this land with it. And the other two brothers they came down a little bit later and I think they rented land instead of buying. The could just about rent as much as they wanted. Down at home here we had a very good farm. Well equipped with everything. Very up to date. In the early 20's we had already a tractor. The threshing outfit was perfect.

PAETKAU: This was wheat and grain that you had?

DUECK: Wheat, barley and oats. Each farmer--there were only seven farmers in this little village and each had a lot of land. Each one had a big orchard; plums, no peaches, pears, apples and walnuts. They were grown there in the Crimea. Across the street--you see the village were on this side of the farms and on this side here; the other side, that's where the vineyard was. In front of it was a forest, big nice trees. And behind it, oh about 2 1/2-3 acres. Each farmer had so many acres of vineyard. So the year around there was wine--there was lots to eat, to drink. I have never seen a person drunk in our village, that I can recall. I recall our neighbour , Mr. Jake and Mr. Peter Wiebe , he called--have you heard about Schultebott? He called a gathering for the farm owners and they came down and he said, "Liebe Brueder, ich will Euch sagen ich reiss meinen Weingarten aus." "No warum denn?" "Meine junges wachsen dran und ech habe Augst der Wein wird gut schmecken und ich will es nicht haben." He was a model farmer. Beautiful, everything that he had, vineyard. Well they thought he was joking. "Leave it alone. That's all that's to it." He left the meeting and he said I'm tearing it down. This was on a Saturday night when the meeting was and Monday morning early he was in there with a pair of horses. And the boys were there. And the horses just with the--chain on there and ripped the chain around the head of this line and bush and away they go and tear it out. The whole vineyard, they took everything out. He was going to clear his mind that nobody's going to be drunk from our wine. Very good people. Their oldest son, Mr. Jacob Wiebe was the head of the Batonia
It's a good family. But he could perceive there would be trouble. I seen where in the basement they had, oh I

DUECK (cont'd): think 1200 gallons a year. Each farmer made his own wine. There was no water added, no alcohol, no sugar, no nothing. It was just natural wine. Beautiful wine. There was none of it sold, for instance, in the fall before threshing there was a lot of hired help--well we hired a lot of farm help. They came all from the north, Butal(?), those districts. When they came and if they were good, they had a good weeks work done and father was satisfied, each one got a big bottle of wine on Saturday. "You can't drink it in the street. Stay home and drink it." That was the weekend. Sunday we didn't get anything. So, well, O.K. he had a bottle of wine, sounded a bit happy but he would get home then if he stayed. When the tailor came around or when the tailor called, those Jews, the Jewish chap he came from He had a big wagon , like these Conestoga wagons, big one. This is where he had all kinds of cloth, lots of dry goods, lots of stuff and he came in. And he would ask, "What does your family need this year?" Father would say, "The boys need a suit each and mother wants to have a fur coat, I may need a suit or a pair of pants. And he would stay there for one, two, three weeks before it was finished. The cloth was--those days they dipped the cloth in water and they spread it out on the lawn, to take the shrinkage out, so it wouldn't shrink later. He had a big table there and this is where he was taking measurements, did the cutting, sewed the suits and that's it. Those Jewish chaps--there was about three or four, they were drinking wine instead of water.

PAETKAU: Did you go to school in this little village?

DUECK: Just the public school and from there I went down to Alexanderkrone. This is where I went to school--in English you would call it , School of Commerce. This is where I was in 1915, 1916, 1917 and part of 1918.

PAETKAU: Do you remember the outbreak of the first world war?

DUECK: Oh yes, quite well.

PAETKAU: How did that affect people? What did they think of that?

DUECK: Not much. They were all patriotic. They all figured Russia must win you know. But it turned out to be really differently. Even our farmers done that. They bought government bonds, war bonds. There was all these people around from Germany. Even when the war was on with Russia, Germans with Russians. Those fellows were around selling bonds to people. This is what I couldn't understand then and when I think today, if they would have been caught by any government they would be spies ? I don't think they would have got out. But there was a lot of sympathy for Germany then. I know there was quite a number of farmers that had loaned or bought more--it actually was a loan, right? Bought more than they expected these fellows would do. They sent silver metals, gold metals. I know my

DUECK (cont'd): father-in-law he had a big boat and everything . (Unintelligible --sound too low_) loaning the money.

PAETKAU: What were the feelings generally towards the Tsar?

DUECK: Towards the Tsar? When I grew up we didn't have much respect for him. It was just--at that time the Tsar already had very very little power. It was the "dooma"(?) the senator or whatever you call it, they had the power. Whatever they did the Tsar had to come and sign. The new laws were whatever they wanted. When the war was on his uncle, Nicholas, he was the chief of the whole Russian army. I think they could have done much better of there wouldn't have been so many drunks among those high officials and officers. Even later on when the White Army when he still was--this was in 1919 when Schlushjoe(?) came into the Crimea. He was a general. He was very very rude that fellow. Something like Stalin. There were rumors around that Schlushjoe(?) had died and that he would be buried in war and so on. But he killed that very fast. First his schtraw(?) they were standing in a big station--big train coach--big long ones. We have much bigger coaches down there than they have here. And this is where his head office was. Then the next day in the paper we read: (I'll say this in English now) "I, Schlushjoe(?) live and will live and whom I feel necessary I will hang." So the next day after we read the paper we had to go down in the city on some business. So we took mother along, father had already died, he was buried. We had three brothers. And as we drove into Youngkoy(?) into the city we seen something hanging down there in the tree. Well I couldn't see too much. What is it in the tree down there? Oh I says, "Probably some (?) blowing in the wind and so on." So she---(unintelligible) She read it in the paper later herself and said, "I seen what the clothes(?) meant." I think there was eight of them hanging in trees. He was very very rough to the soldiers and to the public too. You couldn't buy. There was no clothes to be bought. And soldiers were selling their uniforms. If one of these soldiers would be caught they'd be shot, or hung or something like that. It's the same thing today in Russia as it was then. Before the Tsar.. We've been in Russia twice. We were down in 1963 and in 1969. We had in mind to go this year again but as I told you, not too well, we didn't go. But there's nothing changed. There has nothing changed. The Russian will be Russian and he never will change--it's something different. He's stubborn. He doesn't trust no matter how much the United States will promise or let's say documents signed of nonaggression and so on he wouldn't trust them. I don't think--well you probably will see it that there will be a different government. Oh let's see, you're probably about 25--(24)--in about 50 years or 4 years--you probably will see it. We won't. It's worse than when you want it rosey. You want it terrible.

PAETKAU: The Tsar came out with some policies against the German people during this war didn't he?

DUECK: It was after--just a minute--during the war, during the revolution that's when he came out with it. To allow a farmer to have no more than 300 acres of land. This was in the Crimea. It was different again. See, the Crimea was by herself, autonomy. The Ukraine probably had different rulings but we were in the Crimea not to have any more than 300 acres of land. But they didn't get that far and it was getting worse and worse and finally the land was taken away and so on. If Kerensky, after--when the revolution started, it was Kerensky that led the revolution. If he would have stayed in power I think it would have developed to this. But Lenin came..

PAETKAU: Was there any kind of support for Kerensky and his provisional government?

DUECK: Oh yah, definitely. But it was too big. So little known about the whole thing down south. You know Russia, just imagine, it's a big piece of land. We were just to tell you how big it is. In 1969 we were down there. My wife has a number of relatives living in Russia, various parts. We wrote them and asked them if they would come down if we would pay for the trip. They came in as far--we flew in several thousand miles from the border in but they came in from the other side. They flew 3 1/2 thousand miles to this place. It's so big. Even if there would be a different type of government, let's say in . I would say that still would take a year before they would know it all over. It's so big. Of course today it's better transportation and better ways and means of communication which they didn't have in our days.

PAETKAU: Did you lose some of your land in the Crimea at this time?

DUECK: Everything. Leave or ? Lose? Yes, everything. Everything what we had. I just left the buildings stand there. We worked together on one big farm, three brothers. And three younger brothers they were school age , and my sister. But then--well the second oldest brother married. He stayed at the farm. And David he built himself a house across the street. And I got a piece of land at the end of the village. This old farm we still operated. I actually was in business. My brother was in machinery and had a large machine shop. My brother Frank he was running the farm. We had it this way- what I earned, or what Frank earned or what Dave earned it all went into one pot. At the end of the year we just divided. We gave mother her share and she could live with the children. That's the way we did it. It was quite good. I did those days already--I was employed for a flour mill

DUECK (cont'd) at first to buy grain for flour and oats and barley. Oats was shipped north for horses and later I went to the government they hired me. The elevator companies. They paid also commission, bushel or whatever you call it, so much. I would say my earnings were way way out of line. I was earning ten times as much as a good employer. Unless it was my luck to sell so much. I got through the government permission to buy myself a motorcycle, those days as a side car. I usually had a few 1,000 ruble in the side car in a few bags and drive around the villages at the farmers. I usually would stop at one of the bigger farmers, farmers who would have something to say in his village. Stop at his place and see if I could convince him to sell his grain. And he would then. Of course I had no problem. Then the rest would follow suit and I had no problem. I had money with me. I gave him the price, left him a few bags to fill to take down to the station to a grain elevator. Everything was shipped in bags. Then they got their supply of bags and filled their bags and shipped the grain. Later we had a

farmers where we bought they had cooperators. We were supplying for the members all the goods they needed. But in the Crimea it was a failure. They went bankrupt. And we had

So when they went bankrupt three were elected to clear this up. There was Henry Bolsick(?), a brother to Martin B__ and Jake Klassen, brother-in-law to Henry B-- we three were on this committee.
It took us quite awhile to clear it all up.

PAETKAU: So this was in the 20's already?

DUECK: Yah

PAERTKAU: What had happened to your father's land up in Siberia?

DUECK: It was a few years later. And as I say it's so big. The bands came in. They didn't actually want to shoot my uncle . They looked for somebody else. But he was shot from the back, through his shoulder and his neck, he had 2-3 bullets through his body. We took him down to Omst(?) but he died right there in the hospital. The two girls they stayed there. They farmed there till all the land was taken away. It took a couple years till they just confiscated everything. There were 400 acres of land with this flour mill. I said there was 4,000 acres but the 400 acres it was beautiful big forest. They had it divided into forty sections. So when they cleared one unit and there wasn't enough wood in it to feed those machines and the rest of it they left nice small trees standing, growing again. In forty years they had another big area again. It was pretty good. So there always was forest--good forest there--big trees. But the land was -- There is still a few relatives of mine, a few cousins living there. Only a few. Do you know Mary Fast

DUECK: in Vineland?

PAETKAU: Yes.

DUECK: Do you? Did you talk with her?

PAETKAU: A little bit. I haven't interviewed her

DUECK: You should. It would be very interesting. What she went through in Siberia that was....

PAETKAU: Oh she was up there.

DUECK: Oh yes she went (intelligible) For years. She was one of those patronized vest labourers in the Red labour force. She had the name of

PAETKAU: You said in 1918 you sent back to your village from Alexanderkrone. This is when the Germans came in?

DUECK: Yah. I think it was after Easter.

PAETKAU: It was March or April. How were the Germans received by the people?

DUECK: Down there? Oh wonderful. The population in Crimea, it was international. There was all the nationalities you could find. There were Turks, Tatars, Russians, a lot of Jews, a lot of Germans. They had a very good time down there the Germans. They didn't have to be afraid of saboteurs and so on. Everybody liked them when they came in. There was no problem. But they had to leave on account of--I'm not too familiar--the Ukrainian government-the Ukrainian tried to separate from Russia at that time. It was the Hepmonse(?). And I think they had an agreement with the German army to move out. And they did. They moved back into Germany again. The Germans moved quite a bit of good stuff out of the Crimea. We had a lot of--there's quite a number of mountains close to the Black Sea shore. They found one mountain it was slippery stones. So most likely they sent some to Germany. And labratoriously found out it was very good for . . . And they shipped ship load after ship load. And they made all kinds of and whatnot all they had down there in Germany. They were fast down there to see what can be taken out; what's good. The Crimea is--are you familiar from books what the Crimea is like?

PAETKAU: Generally.

DUECK: Very good. It's flat land in the Northern part and then down south it's mountains. Behind the mountains there's there--there's tropical food, cypress(?) oranges

DUECK: Very very seldom in the southern part--not any longer than a day if there would be any snow. It was a real nice climate. But the northern part was a bit rough on account of the waters being so close. The Crimea--the acres--what you call the salt waters. When those winds came over that was rough, raw.

PAETKAU: What happened when the Germans left?

DUECK: ---Just everything was taken, left and right. Whatever they could grab--all kinds of Russian bands came in and the bandits. Like there was the Makhno, White(?) whatever their names are. I don't think they ever came as far as the Crimea. They stayed in the Ukraine. One group, we imagined at that time there will be one of those groups, they came through there. They didn't do much harm in our village. In the Crimea it was different. We were not organized against the Russians or the Red Armies. The White Army was fighting the Red ones. But in the Ukraine it was different. When the bands came in the Mennonites they gathered and they formed sort of a self defense. This was the Selbstschutz. But we in the Crimea didn't have the Selbstschutz. When they had to flee out of the Molotschna, the southern part of the Ukraine into the Crimea then they mobilized. We were four brothers in arm --at that time with them .

PAETKAU: In the White Army?

DUECK: Yah. That was in the White Army. Actually it was one of these---have you ever heard of the ——turks? It was the Mennonite little army, I would say that.

PAETKAU: There was kind of a division that was mostly Mennonite?

DUECK: The Selbstschutz. Really the Selbstschutz. First there was other people in it too though, a few lower rank officers which stayed back from the German army when they pulled out. And they helped to organize it. This is where I think a lot of damage was done in the Ukraine, and those Mennonite villages in the Ukraine when they were fighting against them. In the Crimea nothing like this had happened. We never did. When they came down there we joined. But since then it's just a little army----.

PAETKAU: This was under Denikin when you joined?

DUECK: Yah, that's right. Wrangel actually.

PAETKAU: Under Wrangel. He was the second one wasn't he?

DUECK: They were all old Russian Generals. ---Markus----there was ---- they were all Russian generals of the first world war. They tried to protect Russia and keep it clean. But it didn't work.

PAETKAU: Were there a fair number of Mennonites fighting or in the army the same time you were?

DUECK: They were all, just about 100% were in it.

PAETKAU: This was kind of a German or Mennonite division?

DUECK: Yah.

PAETKAU: Do you have an idea of how many men that would have been?

DUECK: Several hundred. Could have been 400-500. I'm not too sure.

PAETKAU: Was it cavalry, infantry and all kinds..?

DUECK: Cavalry..... My brother was a--we called it---there was a different name for it--he was a bit better than a nurse, a male nurse. The nurses here--well I think they had a bit more schooling in this--he had it already in the first world war. He was in Moscow. He was in the hospital. The Selbstschutz had their own hospital. There was Jewish doctor, Mennonite male nurses--I would say there was my brother Frank, I think there was 3-4 male nurses there. hospital down in Dujimkoy(?). We had quite a number of people that died by accident, being shot, chopped to death in segments.

PAETKAU: How much action did you yourself see in the army?

DUECK: I first joined to free my oldest brother. I was no farmer. So I decided I should do something, because John, Frank and Dave were in the army. I was home alone and old enough to do some work; 17 years. I decided I would go down to about 18 miles away where his head office was. And I went down there and asked if we could talk. And they always asked me what I want. Just imagine if a 17 yr. old boy wanted to talk to the Commander-in-Chief of the southern army. "What do you want from him?" So I had to go from one officer to the next. Finally I got here and I told him what I want. He told me to come in. And I said, "I would like to replace my oldest brother who was also in the hospital in . And I would like to replace him. I am younger and he's the only one that can farm. And we need bread. We all know this. Seeding is to be done, to be harvested and so on and so on." And this is where I met working people who was also in the army. said, "Then, O.K., fine. You are as of now in the army. And your oldest brother John is now free. He's going to get a work passport." So I tried from there to go home first. "No, you are in the army now." Took me right down to--they said, "Take your wagon--they gave me a soldier that went with me. Go down to the quarters where he's staying at the hospital and you exchange him, give him your wagon and

DUECK (cont'd): let him go home. And that was it. Then I was in a hospital for awhile. I couldn't take it. That was not for me. Then I was a machine gun mechanic. We carried machine guns and so on. When I was sick and tired of it a new law came out that all the students who were going to study again--they would be free. So I did and they freed me. And I came home. But this time the Red Army from the north came up so strong, you couldn't resist them--we--

PAETKAU: This was still in 1919?

DUECK: Yah.

PAETKAU: So you sent back to the farm. Did you go back to school at all afterwards?

DUECK: No. Well you couldn't. There actually was no more school. It was all out. This was-- the Bolshevik government tried to introduce the Day of Commerce school that became an agriculture school. A lot of changes happened there. I though (unintelligibel) but I never went back. --Now it was too late.

PAETKAU: Is that when you started working in the flour mill?

DUECK: That's right. This is when I started to sell grain and the government elevators and later started a small dry goods store, went out to Moscow and bought goods there. Shipped it south, take it to the Wittermere train whatever I could The prices in Moscow were still very low--16-17 Kaperik(?) a yard, where down south already, all over was selling at 75-80. I was bringing in the stuff what they wanted.

I couldn't supply enough of that stuff. This I carried on for a couple years. And then I was elected in this we had in our village. It was all a community. I was involved. I had several jobs. I was elected as director of the bank in the next I was head of this and still buying grain. That's right. Anyway it was a bit too much. I dropped finally the grain buying. That's many years ago. Well I did other things --threshing outfits were needed. There was none available. We couldn't buy any new ones so I pulled them in from one end of the Crimea to the next end. And made a here. We had a machine shop and started threshing and helping other people out so they could get their grain threshed. I was everything was available. I had the knack of doing it. We had a tough time getting out of Russia though. In 1923, 1924 a lot of people in the Molotschna, a lot of people left then, thousands of people. But we in the Crimea we had a good life there. There was no pressure from the government. Nothing. As long as we behaved, fine.

PAETKAU: Had you had a famine down in the Crimea ?

DUECK: In 1921, yah. It was not as bad as it was in the Ukraine. We had to do all kinds of things to keep alive. I told you we had all kinds of machinery there. We had our own threshing outfit. Let's say, here's the big motor standing. Then he was --there was a wall in the big grain barn or building and next to it on the side there was another addition put on for coarse grain--you know the big stones. This is what we had there. We could crush grain for the horses. But you also could make good flour if you watched carefully, you could make, let's say, whole wheat flour . Well they knew we had this here. Once they came in everything was taken on paper--whatever we had there. We told then not to eat, not to crush any grain. Well what shall we do? Neighbours they begged us to grind up a little bit. We said, "We can't, because the minute we start that motor you hear the noise out there." My brother Dave he thought we should do something. Then what they did they came to the area and really checked if it had been used. What they did, between the spokes for the big clutch where the big belt was on they had a few wires around there and sealed it. You couldn't use that. They would come back next time and see the seal was broken. We would be responsible ourself. We would get jailed or stuff like this. And outside the noise, some people, some other people--by this time there were quite a number of different people were not as familiar to us as other people and we decided we 'd dig a long ditch. Where the present muffler is, a big heavy muffler outside, stationary. We dug almost 100 feet. All have to be done at night because nobody should know about it. Then a pipe was put in. All kinds of stuff like that. And we brought that muffler way down behind the straw pile. This is where it was. There would be no sparks flying there couldn't be. So we knew there would be no fire there. Then we covered the whole thing with straw. When that motor would run at night you probably heard a noise and we would sh-sh. So O.K. we decided on account of the noise we can't thresh grain. What are we going to do with this seal. O.K. this was my suggestion: "Our ground, we had heavy, heavy, yellow loam there. If you dig down, say this deep, we had that stuff . It was about the color of this yellow here. It was beautiful color. Very hard, like a stone. We softened it up and made a dough out of it and pressed that on the seal . That seal was from--this red seal, just poured on.

PAETKAU: Wax kind of?

DUECK: Yah. No it was harder than wax. Anyway, we made it so that we could press it on there and get the impression on it. Then we let it dry and then we poured lead in it. Then we had stamp. Then we tried on--this red seal you could buy anywhere. And we tried to imitate it. Press it

DUECK (cont'd): in there . And then we compared this with our own. It was exactly the same. Well, O.K. let's watch for the time. He had been there, let's say, four days before this when we were ready to see him. We waited until he came again. Everything found in order. Fine. We cut it the next day, only at night. No lights, nothing. Whoever wanted to have something threshed they brought it in small bags was standing there, John, Peters, or whatever the names were. And they would get the stuff back in the same bag. And when it was all done we stopped the motor, pulled the wire out, put the seal on there. But we gave ourself away. The fly wheel was shining from . We took sulphuric acid and sprayed it around or had it on a rag and just wiped that wheel. And about 15 minutes it was reddish. All around we never cleaned up there. We never swept the floor It looked like the chickens had been in there. We had to rack the ground a bit
They were suspicious of us. There were a few people they asked me one day, if they would pay me a good price if I would thresh some grain for them. I said, "No we couldn't do it. It's all sealed." "I thought I heard your motor running." "You can't hear. There's nothing. We haven't." In order to convince them that I was right what I was saying I took them down there and showed them. I said it was all dry, and rust from the time when they sealed this thing. I had to prove it otherwise we would be jailed. That was one of those tricks we had to learn in order to save our lives. We had bought a few persons grain and given them some. My brother-in-law what he had done in order to save some grain for when it was needed and in the kitchen. Are you familiar with a Russian Mennonite home? Inside of it? Fenced in . You come in the front and here the and here is the .
Here in the fenced in
this is where he dug down under the house. There was no basement in this house. And he dug I would say 8-9 feet down. Like I told you before it is very hard clay. Then what he used one night, opened up the windows so all the smoke could come out of the house if there would be any in and he burned straw in this hole to warm up everything. He opened up the windows and all the smoke went out of the house. Cleared it up. And the grain that he had hidden somewhere that was put in this hole. I think he had about 1,000 pud. These farmers they had their grain hidden. But then when they came around to confiscate they found every darn piece that they hide. They had long iron bars and they tried the floor--they had learned this from other employers--the employees seen it and so on. It was all taken out. You had to even dip it out yourself. You had the trouble of making the hole, putting the grain in and then dip it out of there and give it to them. Oh it was terrible those things. A lot of people survived.

DUECK (cont'd): I have seen a few fall over at night going from house to house begging for food. One fell over that I seen it. He was dead in the morning. There wasn't much food around. Even in our house when mother baked the bread that was taken into the basement. It was not laying in the counter because maybe somebody maybe cut a chunk off. So when supper came, whatever she had made there and then it was a privilege for anybody from me to the younger or older brother to go down and get that bread. Even get a few crumbs out of it.

PAETKAU: The government came out with a NEP programme, it was called I guess.

DUECK: That was in 1925, 1926. 1927, 1928 was very good. 1928 in fall this is where I thought it won't last too long. It was too good, really too good. We had rented a lot of land; us three brothers. We had that year I would say about 10,000 pood?) of grain which we threshed. And we had very good grain. We had a good price for it. Everything was excellent. No problem. In '29 I built this house. A new big home. And figured on getting married. But then I seen how the wind was blowing--it wouldn't last. We left everything before we were caught. The NEP was starting to

PAETKAU: But things changed quite a bit under this program.

DUECK: For the better? Oh, yes! Everybody was breathing freer again, you know. But not for very long, and it was always--we still lived in fear, you know--what's going to be next?

PAETKAU: You started talking before about the emigrations in '23 and on in the Ukraine mostly, some from the Crimea. Did more people from the Crimea stay than elsewhere because it was better there?

DUECK: Oh, yes. They stayed in the Crimea. Those days when they emigrated from the Ukraine the Crimea still was staying home. We didn't believe in it. We thought it's going to get better. Why should we go down to a land which we don't know and we can't talk the language and so on. A brother-in-law in Gretna, Manitoba--my wife's brother, he was here in 1922. He wrote us to come down here. We tried to explain it is much better down there than here where you live. It was at that time but then everything happened in Russia. Everything was taken away,confiscated. Even later on, if the neighboring villages, was all those fellows that belonged to the Party, would see that you are doing better than the other neighbors, than the neighboring villages, would say let's go investigate and take away. It's not right that these

people have more than the other Russian poorer fellows. It was the know-how and the sincerity of doing something right, that is why we had success.

PAETKAU: Then in '29 as you said, people started going to Moscow.

DUECK: I was the first one from the Crimea that left for Moscow. in 1929 in May I said to my brothers--I tried already once in 1923 to go over for Odessa to get out. It didn't work.-- This time I said I am going down to Moscow to see what can be done. I traveled, everything was fine. In Moscow I met another fellow from the Crimea, Johannes Dick who was from Kröntal, a teacher, and a Mr. Federau, who was also from the Crimea. Each one of those three didn't know what he was doing. I didn't know what John Dick was going for, Federau didn't know about Dick and me, so when we stepped out in Hotel, it was on a Sunday morning, what a coincidence to meet here. Where are you going? Federau says, I would like to go down to the Baptist Church this morning. So that is where we went. We took a taxi, a horse you know, went down there, and after that we talked more freer you know. "What is your concern? What do you want in Moscow?" "Business. Besides business, I want to try to see if we can get out somehow."
This is where I met the fellow by the name of Wiens--he was from Samara. And that John, whatever his first name was-- I used to know but forgot it--whoever came to Moscow, he would get all the information from them, where are you from? what are you trying to do? where are you going? You had to be careful, he tried to get all the information he could. He was working for the GPU, for the Russian army. I think he got paid for every bit of information that he gave them. I tried then and it was very . It was in May. I went back in July. At that time I seen who was the president of Russia. And he said, "Why Not?" I asked if there would be any use of applying to get out of Russia, if we would have any success, if the government would let us out or not, or if it would be useless. He says, "I can't see why not. You are free in this land to do as you like." That was a bit of encouragement.
Then in '29 in the fall I decided--I had started to build a house, the construction was going ahead--we would get married in Sept. '29, and on Sept. 30 we left for Moscow with nothing, we had nothing. The clothes we took along, that is all. Money I had for and so on, but we left everything stay there. We didn't sell anything. When we arrived there I became ready--several hundred people had been there already by this time from all over--Siberia, from the Ukraine, from Samara, all over and I formed the fourth group that was trying to get out of Russia. I was the group leader of the fourth group. It was so tough then in Russia, you actually have no idea how dangerous it

not to be arrested or put into into jail and you never would come out of there. Or if you did, you would miss your whole group. My brother Dave was in the same group. In order to be safe, not to be arrested, we lived in the village of Torossa, this is north on the railroad towards Leningrad about 40 miles out of Moscow. It's on the same line. Electric trains were going there. We lived in this village of Torossa, about 500-600 people lived there. fellow by name of Alex this is where we stayed. But we couldn't trust this to stay over night because they always picked the group leaders or any other people that had something to do with emigration--they picked them up and put them in jail. So I said to Dave--money we had--"Let's buy a ticket from this place here and go up north--it takes us so many hours up to here. We leave here at 7 o'clock. At 7 nobody will be arrested, or at 8 nobody yet. We leave at 8:00 and it takes 5 hours or 4 hours, 4 hours drive, and we buy a return ticket and come to here and take the next train, we have to wait an hour, and come back here and we'll be back in the morning. This is the way we lived for two weeks. It was tough, you know. And in daytime we had to go and work with all our papers, the whole thing. That was 2 weeks and then my brother said, "Henry, de Dummheit heat sich nu op. I'm quitting, I'm staying home. If they want to arrest us they would have arrested us a long, long time ago." That night they arrested us. They were going to send us away, you know. We had no idea where to. We had Mother with us and my younger brothers Jake and George were also with us, and we a young married couple, and Dave with his wife--they had one child, seven or eight months. What to do now? I was so disgusted. I actually didn't know what to do. Then I thought to myself, God wouldn't mind even if I lie a bit as long as we get out of the situation. There was a guard standing in front of our door, had his rifle there, and I said to Dave and to Mother, "I am going down to the GPU, where this fellow is sent from." They were Dave says, "How are you going to get out of here?" I said, "I'm going to ask the soldier. I'll try." I asked the soldier, will you give me permission to go down to your headquarters and I am going to ask them for permission that we can go home voluntarily with my mother, who is not too well and my younger brother. He said, "I can't let you go." I said, "Be a man! For heaven's sake, I am not going to run away from my wife, to whom I was married a month or two ago." He looked at me and sort of grinned. I said, "Listen, I'll leave you all my papers here. Of course, I can't. I have to use those papers to identify what I want. You have the whole shebang--all the clothes are in here. I won't run away." I begged him. "How long will it take you?" I said, "I'll take the first electric train going down there. I'll do my begging, come back and tell you." "Okay, fine." I took the train and went down

there, and and I went up in front
there where they and I asked
for permission to volunteer to go home to the Crimea. They said, "Why are you asking us? Are you arrested?" "Yes, I am arrested." Did he ever swear and gave me hell down there. I was lucky I got out of there. He said, "You go back where you came from and all those various neighbors

I took the train back

the Russian children they played, they laughed, and I was going around here drunk and not knowing

O come on here. Cheer up. Do something fast. I said, "God you didn't mind if I lie a bit." And I went down to the soldier and I said, "My dear soldier, I got permission." "Did you?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Get out of here as fast as you can." He says, "We don't want you here." And he looked at me. I said, "You send the truck down later to pick up the baggage which we have here and we'll leave." I said to my mother, my brother, and my wife, "Now let's go, fast, quick, quick. We've got to go fast." We went down, we jumped in the first train, went down to Boorsky, we went on our own south. We left the two boys here. There was a fellow which was not far from us living there, he came down there and he said he was not arrested, how we were getting along. He was a trustworthy man. I told him what had happened. He said, "I'll bring the boys along." Then we went home, although we had a tough time getting tickets and the GPU were all over, having their eyes open for those fellows that tried to get out of Russia, at every station. We finally got our tickets--had to push a few dollars aside, you know. When we got home to our station, the fellows that knew me especially very well down there "What are you coming back for? Do you think it's better here?" "No," I said, "we've been arrested. We just escaped." In Moscow a fellow by the name of Cornelius Penner, who was from the Crimea also, he stayed in Moscow, I don't know what group he was, third, fourth, fifth or sixth, he wired from Moscow down to the Crimea to the village Anovka, which was only 6 or 7 miles away from us. He had a brother-in-law Boschmann down there, for them to know just the word in Russian _____, that means, "We are going!" And on this word alone, "We are going!" we knew that we would get permission soon, it all depended on Germany to accept us or not. If Germany would accept us--we wanted out to Canada--but there was no way. Why Canada did not accept us, CPR and CNR, because the payments on the voyage for the Mennonites from '23 and '24 weren't paid, and we had no credit. These fellows said, "No, we don't let them in."

Then Germany stepped in. We begged them at that time to help us, so the Germans let us in at that time. The minute Germany opened the door, the Russian let us out whoever was down there. This telegram--Mrs. Penner still lives here. Corny Penner is dead--he died last year of Parkinson's disease. Then I said to Dave, "We have to go back. I'm going." He said, "Now listen," He is a bit slower. "Well," I said, "I am going." So his wife pushed a bit, so he went. You know, at every station we had a lot of problems to get tickets, but with extra money, with a lot of extra money we finally got the tickets and we left. Let's say, the train pulled in at the station, we would step out on the dark side at night, and walk into the train till--they had these big bells ringing one, two, three--and the minute they rang then we stepped on. We were scared because they were picking us off left and right. And the women were lying on top of the shelves in the coaches , they were dressed Moscow style (we had been there for a couple of months), looked like farmers, and so we got through. When we arrived in Moscow at that time, first we bought tickets not from to Moscow, we bought tickets from to which is way farther north, just to mislead--we are not going to Moscow. They ask for tickets to Moscow and you are German looking, out you go--where are your papers? This is how they picked the German people off, because they wanted to emigrate. When we arrived in Moscow, I said to Dave, "Let's go right away quick to the head office where our Mennonites are organized to see--no, this was to the government, used to be Russian Canadian Steamship. We went down there and as I came down there I seen fellows that I had seen before, fellow by the name of Miller, Enns (one-armed) and they were preparing to present a thirteenth group. That means 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12--all these trainloads of people had already moved out. When we were in Moscow, at the height there were over 25,000 people there, and they had arrested better than 20,000 people and sent back. We got only 4,500 people out into Germany. This I know. I had still those lists at one time. I said to Dave, "I'm going right down to where our people are handing in all the applications for emigration." He said, "I'm going first to find out where I can stay over night." I said, "Dave, we have to go right now." He said, "No. Okay, you go your way. I'll form a new group. We'll start the 14th group." When I came in there and I saw those fellows--I had already a fountain pen not the ball point. I asked them, "May I see the group who is going with this group?" And they showed me the group, and there were 202 families in that group, figured at only 4 average, it is over 800 people already. I think the families were bigger than five members. I took my fountain pen and I wrote "Henry John Dueck", where I was born, my wife Margareta, nee Wall, born at such and such a date, and there was what documents are applied with this list, and they seen me that I was writing, and they said, "What are you doing?" I knew it was dangerous for the group, if the list wasn't correct with all the applications that you have, they would reject. They were very strict. It was not the strictness, it was just to make problems

that they couldn't go. I said, "You just wait a few minutes here." They got mad at me. They had a reason for it too. I said to my wife, "Let's go down and see if we can get pictures taken." I had nothing, absolutely nothing. I took a piece of paper in the Crimea from our local government down there, a copy of a copy that we were married. That's all we had. When we applied, when I was leader of the fourth group, all my documents they were already attached to my application. I had nothing. And then we were arrested. We went down to a photographer and I paid him a very high price for a few pictures, and there were people standing in line getting pictures made and within fifteen minutes they were ready. It was just a picture that wouldn't last very long, but the pictures were there. They were good enough for what we needed. Then I took my wife along, we went down to where we used to stay and the village used to have a book where every resident that lived in this village was entered. In order to prove myself that I had been a resident here for so long already in Moscow I had to find out, had they crossed me out or was I still there, and I was still in it. So I asked whether I could have this book and take it down to Moscow and verify this and he would give me a document. So he did this. My wife stayed there. I went down to Moscow and had a piece of paper typed, it was again the time in Russia where you had to be so very careful what you were doing. If you were going to write a note or a letter it would take this much space, and then you could only use half of it because you had to type both sides. In my case where this notary public took a piece of paper about this size, he couldn't get everything on here, he had verified this that we both had been living at so long. And then at the bottom he said, "and I verify . . ." there was no stamp, then he turned it over and finished two more sentences and signed it and put the stamp on it. Another document which they had, it was just a different booklet that I could go and buy myself bread. It was a bread book. It was very, very important in Moscow in those days and who wasn't a resident of Moscow never would have a book, so it was proof that we were citizens of Moscow, and this is what we needed in order to get out, If we could prove that we had been there since September, no, let's say since the beginning of October, then we could get permission now. We could start going. I brought those documents down to this office. But we were too late. They had at this time not accepted the whole list yet. There were other villages which this office had to do before they would accept this. The next morning I went down and they accepted the whole list. I was the 203rd family, Dueck, John Henry and his wife. The group leaders had to go and pick up the passes, it was just a piece of paper which was good for 10 days to get out of this land. After the 10 days you were stateless. Then they could shoot us anywhere in the field.

We never had passes. Nobody. I still have my piece of paper. It is all faded out but Jarodev (?) signed it, have you heard of Jarodev , read about him? He was

This fellow was before. He was just a s brutal and cruel as that fellow. I had met Jarodev before. These fellows that were leaders of this group they refused to go and pick up these passes. They said, group so and so lost their leader, group so and so lost their leader, and another friend of his was arrested, and so on. "You forced yourself into this group. You going to get the papers. You have been leader of the fourth group. You know all about it, and you go ahead and get it. I am not going," they said. I'll go, I didn't like it, but I'll do it. I said, "All I want eine Ledertasche so wie die Aerzte tragen, hat ich mir gekauft in Moscow. And I give them this Ledertasche and I said, "you gather money as much as you can. We need for Blue Cross, for the Red Cross we had to have so much per person on each passport, and we need so much money for each grownup for a ticket down to and then for a child half as much." They gave me a list and I gave them a list, okay, here, we need so much money, but make sure there is more than we need, because if I have to bring those passes back it probably will take some money.

I must go back a bit. The next day where I said I forced myself into this list Miller and Enns they went in to see who would go along when all these applications would be checked with these authorities and what they were doing was this way. There was a little window where I could look through and see exactly where they were sitting there. And I could see the pile of applications of 203 families--it takes a lot of papers. And they were sitting there, and he opened up a map and he looked at theapplications and he seen it was very good documents, and then what he did he left the photographs in there, the application, and the rest of the papers he threw into a big pail--waste paper basket. That was it. The next one he took, let's say it was about 14-20 he went through this way, that pile was growing, and then he seen, oh, oh, then he looked at it again, he put this one down here, and then again, there was maybe about 5 or 6 down here. This grew up to the top. Ours was at the very bottom, the 203rd family. This is why I was standing there. I was shivering and sweating both. When he came to the very last one, he looked at it, he turned it, and put it down here. That's me. I had met that fellow before, so anyway, I thought, this time I'm going to take a chance. I had dark glasses on, Iwent in there. I says, "Mr. Jagorev, I have a friend in Torossa who lives at such and such a place. He applied also. And he wanted to know if he has gotten permission or not
As far as he told me and I know it is the 203rd family
He looked down. This is the 203rd, he said. He opened it up and said, "No, he is not going. There is not enough documents in here. There is no stamps in here."
Then I said, "Just turn one paper over. Turn it over.

As far as I know he has the notarieles Bescheinigung dass er in Moscow gelebt hat." And he turned it over,

this is gut, und nimmt die Papiere und wirft sie im Korb rein

Dankeschoen. Die zwei Kerle dort, these two fellows they just about - they didn't know what to do. I could have spoiled the whole thing. If they would have caught me, it would have been an awful thing for the whole group, for the 203 families. But I took these chances. Then when I left I met those fellows the next day and they came up to me and said, "Henry, you are going to get those passes! We are not going." I could feel that they actually wouldn't go and they were scared and the risk I was taking, they didn't know what to do. So finally I went down there and then I gave them this Ledertasche and I said, "Fill her up!" and they did.

And I went down there and they gave me all those passes and I had somebody with me and we licked stamps and put those 20 or 40 Rubel stamps on each of those passes. They were all done, we put them in a big envelope or whatever they had there (eine grosse Tute) and we went down to and from there everything was ready, the train was loaded, I was late. The whole train was loaded, the 203 families were except my wife and myself, were the 203rd. My wife was still in where I picked her up, and all these papers with me, picked her up, we packed a bit, had very little to pack because all the rest we left behind, we went down to the station and when we got there I' went down to the station agent and asked whom I had to see and he said the head of the GPU is in this room. We went in there, I introduced myself who I was. He said, let me have those." They were not in any rush. The train was loaded, all the people were in there. There was a guard on each end. They were all locked the doors, nobody could get out. They were waiting for Henry Dueck to come from Moscow to bring the passes. Then this head of the GPU, he was sorting here, the passes, he looked through, put one over here, put this one here, and put this one here, he had three
and finally he looked at me and said, " Dueck, you'd better go and get all those tickets you have lists, you know how many grownups and how many children there are, get all the tickets." I said, "I'd better wait till you are through with it." He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "I don't know who's going." He said, "What makes you say that?" "Well," I said, "the seventh , so and so stayed back, the eighth stayed back, the ninth, tenth, eleventh. You tell me who's going and I'll go and buy the tickets." He said, "You are going to buy them all." I said, "No, those fellows that are staying back here, you know they have nothing to eat here, absolutely nothing, they can't even go

home. They have no money." And I pointed to my brown bag I had it with me, there was lots of money, and we had put those stamps on - 40 Rubel, and I said, "I will be just too glad to buy all the tickets provided they will all go." And I put my bag on the desk where he was sitting and opened it up and said, "See all I have to do is buy tickets, the rest of what I have I don't know what to do with it, I know we can't take it with us. I would like to donate it to the Blue Cross. You give me a form and I'll fill it out and you can later on fill in the amount. We have no time, because we must leave." on his face changed. "Well," he says, "Go buy all the tickets. They are all going."

And they all went through with no problems - not one fellow was held back. While I was in his office, I went down to the station agent to give him the list, he bought them all, brought them all in, I paid for them, lots of money left. And then the fellow, I think it was Reimer, a young fellow about 17 years of age, came in. He says, "Onkel Dueck, kaun eck nich irgendwo met-fohre?" He used to be in the fourth group.You knew that they had no pass, his parents were arrested and I would like to go, please do something for me.

So I turned around to this man and said, "Is there any chance for this man to go? He used to have a pass. It was all taken away

He asked me, "Have you any children?" "No," I said, "we haven't got any." "Okay, he will be your son. He'll go with you." On the strength So I told him, "You'll go with me."

The procedure was that we went in the first door of the half of the train. The man from the Chekov would be the first one, I would be the second one, and the third one the station agent with his tickets. I had the list and we had them all sorted in all those names. And then I would take the list from this group that were all formed already before and I said then the names so and so and the passes were together also, and he would call out the name, o.k. here's your passport, call out another name, he would hand the pass over at the back, he would give the ticket. We went through the whole thing, then there were two had no ticket left. Reimer went in. Well it didn't matter. I'll go. As I stepped out to once through the station with him, there was some other stuff I had to sign. A fellow by the name of Dejager, and he said, "Mr. Dueck, we have one child who died just now in the train." I said, "We want to stay back." I said, "Don't do that." I think he had three children or four. "No," I said, "that is the wrong thing to do." He said, "What shall I do with the child?" I said, "There must be a funeral home section at this station. Why can't we

deliver this child here and they'll look after it. We pay for the expenses " We left the child over and they came along. Before we got to Sebezh another child died and we left it at the station, and I had another half ticket, and at the end I had my tickets. And how people tried to get stuff over. There was nothing that you could take along. It had to be hidden. My brother was in the same train and we were in one coupe and the brother was doing this. He had a twenty dollar bill and he tried to roll it together as closely as he could. He had a heavy carpenter's pencil and he had pushed out the lead, and was going to put this $20 bill in there, and he tried, and in the meantime the control (Cheka) went through again. Finally a hand reached over, he said, "Let me try it. Ach, I better not." and put it in his pocket. "Thank you." This was all he had. He had just $20 and they took that away. He went through the whole train this way and then when they were through they asked myself and my wife to come into their office in this train. We went in there nad there was a lady that demanded my wife in a different room to undress completely. And then they checked her out to see if there was nothing hidden. Nothing hidden, fine. They did the same thing to me. And then we could go back. I think maybe another fellow that was checked as close as they did us. Well that is the experience we had getting out of Russia. Anyway we got out. When we arrived at Sebezh and then we had to go through the Polish corridor from we went down to Hammerstein that's where we stayed in a big stable, huge big stable, no beds, no nothing, just straw in there. We were glad for this. At least we could eat and talk free and from there we went down to Moln,this is where I worked in the office down there where we met Benjamin Unruh and all those fellows. When we left Moscow, when I saw this GPU man that handled our passes at the station, I begged this man. I said, "You know there are hundreds of people left back here, they live somewhere around in this area, in villages and so on, they haven't got even money to go home; they have no money to buy bread. They are in very, very poor shape. They bet their last dollar to get out of Russia." I talked to him quite freely when he saw this money. I felt right away he'll trust me, he won't do nothing. Out of our whole group nobody was held back. Then I begged, "If you know of anybody who can drum up a few of these fellows, you had those tickets, you had their passes, they must be somewhere, please send them along down to Germany, send them down to Berlin." And I was quite sure they would even know where we were going because you know how good they are in finding out exactly where people are going and what they are doing, and so on. Their espionage is terrific. When I was in the office in Moln working there, it was about two weeks after we had landed, we had a telephone call from Benjamin Unruh from Berlin. He said, "We're sending over a fellow by the name of Boldt with a big family", to accept them and place them in our lager where we were . He came down there, he asked for Mr. Henry Dueck. That fellow had told him that Henry Dueck

had asked him to That man went on his knees, he thanked me and thanked me. I said, "Mr (I know how he would feel. I would have done the same thing.) But I have never seen a more thankful man than this man. And it was just on the strength that you told this man and begged him to do this. That's the only one I know that came out. I think he had seven or eight children.

The German people were very, very good to us. For instance, we had to go to all those various, what do you call them, abteilungen, where you had to undress completely, take a shower and make sure you haven't got a single louse or egg on your head. And women the same thing. And all the clothes were sent through and they were baked, whatever they did. Whatever didn't come out, they gave you different clothes. I had a very good, in my mind, at that time, a topcoat, a very nice one. I had bought it in Saporovka, and when that came out it was just terrible, probably too much synthetic was in there, I don't know, it was burned. They replaced it. They were very good.

Even down in Moln where we stayed. We went from Möln, at one time I had a brother-in-law who was in Prenzlau, went down there, they had one child that died there. You know we had quite a number of youngsters that died in Möln, in Prenzlau, Hammerstein. There was a sickness. I would say, eine Epidimie das brach aus unter unseren deutschen Kindern. They couldn't breathe, high fever, and everything plugged up. In about a week, two weeks, they died. When we were in Germany the last time we went down to the cemetery in Möln and I took a picture. There is a big stone. What they have done, a stone about this big in size, a tremendous one. Nature stone, not formed or made by a cement man, and a big chain around it. It said there, "1929-31 Fluechtlingskinder begraben." There are 31 of them down there and in FRance there is a whole bunch of them too. That is what happened. My brother-in-law lost two children.

PAETKAU: How long were you in this refugee camp?

DUECK: In Germany?

PAETKAU: Yes.

DUECK: Four and a half months. We went down to Prenzlau for a funeral. But otherwise we never travelled anywhere. There was no money, nothing.

PAETKAU: Then you were able to come over to Canada.

DUECK. Then we came over. I wrote to my brother-in-law who was in Canada since 1922. He escaped. He was with the Cossack army. He was in the cavalry. He went to Poland and to Germany. I

wrote to him and then Mr. Janzen, his brother-in-law, Abram Janzen, he had formed a little immigration board--Mr. Hiebert, Mr. Buhr, Mr. Janzen, that the CNR, CPR,the Canadian Immigration Board, and so on, this was a little board--these three fellows tried to help. We came with the CNR, not the CPR, we came with the Cunard Line, I wrote him that we were down here and we would very much appreciate to get help from Canada to get into Canada, so they arranged it for us, and we were a group of around 30 people--let's say around 40 people that this board accepted. They had to be responsible for us fellows, we came in on COD, we came on credit. You know Isbrand Janzen, Virgil?

PAETKAU: No.

DUECK: It's Mr. Martin Boldt's half brother. He came with our group. They wrote us that it was all arranged and we would be called to Hamburg and they would ship us down. Nothing happened. You know Ohm Peta, Peter Klassen, old gentleman? He had a brother also in this group, he lived in Aldesloh near Hamburg. He came down there periodically. So one day I asked him, "How can we get out of here? This is the permission from Canada but nobody is coming to see us, no doctors." He said, "I know the gentleman at the Cunard Line quite well." He wrote me a little card to go down and see that gentleman. So we went down there and we had action then. It didn't take very long. They sent a doctor down to Moln, and we came before doctors. There was a Penner Crimea, he was going to go with our group. His second youngest boy pulled on his mother's arm while she was writing a letter and she hit the child with her pen in his eye, and they were held back on account of the kid. They had to go down to Brazil. Oh, there were so many mix-ups.

PAETKAU: I was very grateful to Mr. Dueck for making special arrangements to take some time on a busy afternoon to visit with me and to tell me some of his very interesting and exciting experiences when the summer was almost at an end and there was little time left for interviews.