

Scattered Documents: Locating the CO Record in Canada

Conrad Stoesz, *Centre for MB Studies/Mennonite Heritage Centre*

Documentation of the conscientious objectors (COs) in Canada during the Second World War is scattered throughout the country, in personal collections, religious archives and government archives. The following is an overview of the major archival collections in existence on this topic with selected quotations. I have not seen all the records but highlight the ones I have located. I am most familiar with Mennonite records but other communities such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Hutterites, Brethren in Christ, Quakers, and Doukhobors, as well as government agencies, have their own collections of materials.

The three main categories of documents on this topic are government, religious, and personal records found in various archives. Secondary sources such as essays and published books will not be the focus here.

Government

The Canadian and provincial governments of course hold large amounts of material regarding COs. To get at these materials it is helpful to know the structure of the government offices. Originally the federal department of Agriculture was responsible for National War Services. This body undertook the registration of all able-bodied males in Canada. Thirteen divisions were formed based on provincial boundaries and population densities. In March 1942 responsibilities for registration and mobilization of young men moved to the Department of Labour and from that time on was known as the National Selective Service.¹ The federal electoral officer in each province became the Registrar who had a copy of all registration cards and called up men for their medical examinations. If the men were asked for they would appear before a Mobilization Board made up usually of three men chaired by a judge from a provincial superior court. These boards were expected to adjudicate applications for postponement and review applications for leave of absence. The boards had great autonomy and could interpret the laws as they saw fit. They could almost act

independently. Their judgments could only be reviewed by the board itself. For this reason the boards responded to the COs variably, from province to province. Mennonite leaders in Ontario for example were able to work with the mobilization board and came to an agreement that if the word “Mennonite” appeared on the registration card the young man in question would automatically be exempted and not have to appear before the board. COs in Manitoba and Saskatchewan had much more difficulty as Judges John E. Adamson and J.F.L. Embury saw it as their duty to send as many men as possible into the forces². This inequity in the way boards interpreted the laws was cause for great concern for Mennonite leaders. Benjamin B. Janz (also known as B.B. Janz – see article in this issue) wrote the following in a letter to Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King in 1942.

I may state that the Boards in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia, who have been appointed under the same regulations as our boards in Saskatchewan and Manitoba... give us no cause for complaint. They recognize our young men as Mennonites and conscientious objectors, while our young men in the west [Manitoba and Saskatchewan] are being sent to jail for not being willing to deny the faith of their fathers.³

Some young men were counseled by leading Mennonite ministers to go to British Columbia and appear before the B.C. mobilization board so that they might get a more sympathetic hearing.⁴

Politicians like Member of Parliament (MP) Walter Tucker of Rosthern, Saskatchewan were sympathetic to the nonresistant stance. Mennonite leaders often corresponded with him. Letters and telegrams to and from Tucker can be found in the collection held by the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization. He took up their cause in the House of Commons where in a debate in 1941 he criticized members of parliament who would “deprive conscientious objectors of their civil rights. He called attention to the readiness of COs to serve Canada in harmony with their convictions.”⁵ These discussions can be found in the House of Commons debates recorded in *Hansard*, the official record of the Canadian Parliament.

Once alternative service became an option in 1941 the young men were sent to perform various tasks which then fell under different governmental departments. Those in national parks across Western Canada came under the jurisdiction of Parks Canada or the Department of Forestry. They performed tasks such as fighting forest fires, logging, surveying, building roads, and laying telephone wire. Some were sent to work in mines and industry, hospitals, and farms. Others opted for restricted enlistment in 1943 and while they were involved

with the military they did not receive weapons training but were allowed to serve as medics.

Library and Archives Canada (formerly known as National Archives of Canada or NAC) has changed its finding aid system from record groups to a searchable database. Most works that use NAC materials cite record groups (RG) files such as RG 22 (Department of Indian and Northern Affairs), 84 (Parks Canada), 39 (Forestry), 44 (Department of National War Services), 76 (Immigration), 27 (Department of Labour), 24 (Department of National Defense), and 35/7 (Public Records Committee). Now with on line searchable databases searching is done by key word. In the notes area there are RG numbers given as old finding aids, but the on line system gives much more detail. Old record group numbers can be used as key word searches but other keywords would include Mobilization Board, National Selective Service, National War Services, Department of Labour, Hansard, and House of Common Debates.

Since 1996 I have been on a search to find a listing of the names of the approximately 10,800 COs. So far I have not been able to find a complete listing, only fragments scattered through mostly non-governmental collections.⁶ In my research with the Department of Defense, the archivist there wrote to me saying "... There is no definitive list of Conscientious Objectors during the Second World War. I have no doubt that such a thing must have existed... Unfortunately it has not survived".⁷ To me this means that such information was not deemed important to this department.

Most COs in Western Canada had to appear before a judge. Each case took about 10 minutes. For the most part the case files of the proceedings and subsequent correspondence regarding these individuals have not been located.⁸ One exception is in the files of Justice Horace Harvey of Alberta. Some of his note books have survived. In these he lists the names of persons, where they are from, their registration number and then a sentence or two about their hearing. Following is one example:

Peter Tym, Heinsberg, Alberta.

Seventh Day Adventist. Objects to bearing arms – church also objects – parents are 7th day Adventists. Objection recommended. Ordered to go to camp in July.⁹

Some surprising areas of government that contain information about projects on which COs worked are in collections such as the National Research Council, Combined Chiefs of Staff, Canadian Joint Staff Mission, Department of Defense, Prime Minister Mackenzie King's correspondence, and the records of the Minister of Munitions

and Supply. These bodies were involved with what was known as the Habakkuk project – a top secret military operation involving senior levels of the Canadian, American and British governments. The plan was to build huge aircraft carriers of a mixture of ice and wood pulp. If the vessel was damaged, built-in refrigeration units would refreeze water repairing the damage. In correspondence with Prime Minister W.L. Mackenzie King, Winston Churchill writes:

You know the importance I have attached to the construction of the large ice floating-airbase known as Habbakuk... The British Chiefs of Staff have discussed this question with the Canadian and United States Chiefs of Staff. They have all resolved that this work of development be pushed forward with vigor.¹⁰

Research on this project was going on in several parts of the country. Unknowingly, conscientious objectors were building the 50 foot 1/50 scale prototype of the ship at Patricia Lake in Jasper National Park. In a letter to Rev. David Toews, Rev. John Wiebe writes:

On the ice of Lake Patricia [sic] they are building a box 60 x 30 and 20 feet high, which is to be filled with ice and then sunk. Since spring is approaching, they are rushing to be finished with the work on the ice and thus are working day and night in two 11 hour shifts.¹¹

The young men and the ministers had no idea they were aiding in research for the war effort. A documentary is set to air on the History Channel this fall about the Ship of Ice. Most of these governmental records mentioned above have been researched and utilized in some important studies. These include books by John A. Toews and William Janzen as well as theses by David Fransen and Ken Reddig. John A. Toews' 1959 book, *Alternative Service in Canada During World War II*, actually duplicates some of the governmental documents related to the negotiations for alternative service, and gives a breakdown of where the COs came from as well as the ethnic and religious makeup of the group. Toews also cites work performed and financial contributions to the Red Cross by the COs. His research in governmental records complements his experience during the war when he visited nearly all the alternative service camps in British Columbia and Alberta and served as camp chaplain for 5 months.¹²

Searches of provincial, university and community archives in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia via email requests for information has had a very low success rate of uncovering any new

materials related to the conscientious objector story. For a more complete discussion of these records much more time and effort would need to be expended including personal visits.

Religious

Mennonites had their own organizations to deal with their concerns about the war. Long before the Second World War, in 1907, the Military Problems Committee was formed. In 1919 it became known as the Peace Problems Committee of the Mennonite General Conference (MC) which had a Canadian (Ontario) and US arm. Long-term Canadian members of this committee include J.B. Martin and Samuel F. Coffman.¹³

In 1940 this committee was instrumental in creating the Conference of Historic Peace Churches which included all Mennonite groups in Ontario as well as the Brethren in Christ (BIC), and the Society of Friends (Quaker). It was in contact with the Mennonite churches in Western Canada and their activities on the same issues.

The Conference was largely responsible for the interpretation of nonresistant faith to the government, especially as the convictions of peace church adherents related to problems of army service. With the establishment of Alternative Service for Canadians of peace church persuasions, CHPC provided spiritual oversight for men in service.¹⁴

A third Ontario committee was the Non-Resistant Relief Organization (NNRO) established in 1917. It tried to devise practical ways of thanking the Canadian government for exemptions and raised funds for relief work. In 1946 this committee came under the watch of the Conference of Historic Peace Churches. These three committees were among the nine that merged to form Mennonite Central Committee in 1963. Documents of these three Ontario based committees are found in the Ontario Mennonite Archives at Conrad Grebel University College.

In Western Canada Mennonites did not have as long a history of working together on this issue. The first meeting was held in 1939 in Winkler, Manitoba when the winds of war were already blowing. At this meeting nine of the ten Western Mennonite groups were represented. They were unable to find a unified position. The groups who came to Canada from Russia in the 1870s believed they should get a group exemption from military service as had been the government's promise. The larger group, which immigrated to Canada from Russia

in the 1920s, had experienced alternative service in the forms of tree planting and medical work and they suggested the same in the Canadian context.

The conservative groups created the *Aeltesten* committee led by Rev. David Schultz representing the Sommerfeld, Chortitzer, Bergthaler, Rudnerweide, Kleine Gemeinde, Church of God (Holdeman), Evangelical Mennonite Brethren and Old Colony churches. They wanted to stay clear of negotiations that would suggest that the government did not have to live up to its promises. This group's deliberations were published in David Reimer's book *Experiences of the Mennonites of Canada During the Second World War, 1939-1945*. Those who did negotiate the alternative service program included David Toews, C.F. Klassen, Jacob H. Janzen, E.J. Swalm and others. During this negotiation Jacob H. Janzen stood up to Canadian Major General L.R. LaFleche who was a First World War decorated veteran and was the Associate Deputy Minister of National War Services. LaFleche challenged the delegation:

"What will you do if we shoot you?" That was too much for Janzen, who had survived several desperate situations in the Soviet Union. Obviously agitated, he replied: "Listen General, I want to tell you something. You can't scare us like that. I've looked down too many rifle barrels in my time to be scared in that way. This thing is in our blood for 400 years and you can't take it away from us like you'd crack a piece of kindling over your knee. I was before a firing squad twice. We believe in this!"¹⁵

By 1939 the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization was well established. This organization had been founded to provide a unified voice in negotiating and administering the immigration of Mennonites from Russia to Canada. The church leaders on this Board became key people in negotiations with the Canadian government and served as advocates for the Mennonite people to government and judicial officials. The Board's records are immensely important with copies of outgoing correspondence in addition to the incoming mail.

Rev. David Toews, as chairman of the Board, carried on a vast array of correspondence with the Mennonite constituency as well as the government. In a letter to Justice Embury, chair of the Saskatchewan mobilization Board, Toews writes:

There are a number of our young men who have enlisted voluntarily; we never interceded for any of them. But when it comes to young men who say they will rather go to jail than

give up their faith, I consider it my duty to do for them what is possible to do.¹⁶

Justice Embury replied a day later:

... I may tell you frankly that we are by no means satisfied with what we believe to be the attitude of some of your people towards War Service. You appear to exercise a dominating influence... We are convinced that the younger people would gladly co-operate with the Government and are only prevented by superior influence.¹⁷

The Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization collection contains correspondence between church leaders. At one point a teacher in Drake, Saskatchewan was forcibly removed from the school and the town by an angry mob. Rev. Jacob Gerbrandt writes to Toews:

It seems possible now to desecrate our churches, forcibly close our schools and indulge in all kinds of insolent activities, and still be identified as heroic. It also seems that regardless of how right we are, we lose out in the police investigations... As to the attack upon our Bible School, Br. E. Schroeder will have informed you, and you yourself were personally threatened... Hoping that you will be willing to represent me in this matter, I remain with brotherly greeting, J Gerbrandt.¹⁸

The ministers had a huge job in maintaining their regular work as many were still farmers and maintained their work in their home congregations. One such minister was Jacob W. Friesen, a well-liked minister from the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church who visited many of the camps. His diary records his activities and there are several photos of him working alongside the young men in the camps.¹⁹ The ministers supported the young men who were serving as conscientious objectors or in the military and had run into problems with the government bureaucrats. In 1941 Peter Bolt writes to Benjamin B. Janz:

As I hear the incessant mean and blaspheming swearing around me I almost feel sure that nothing but evil can emerge from this mode of life... I am as opposed to killing as ever... you are aware of the fact that my only other alternative was jail. I could have drunk this bitter cup if my parents wouldn't have been involved. In all probability my father would have lost his position. I couldn't imagine this situation. So here I am a so-called CO in the air force.²⁰

While David Toews was the chairman of the Board of Colonization he had very capable leaders working with him. Some of these leaders have their own collections of materials that they kept or were separated from the colonization board before they came to the archives. The most prominent leaders would include C.F. Klassen and Benjamin B Janz whose papers can be found at the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies (CMBS), Winnipeg. The Janz papers, for example, contain thick folders of correspondence to government officials, judges, young men in CO camps and in active service, other church leaders in Canada and the USA, and to congregations.

For some of the young men in the camps this was the first time away from home and a first experience with people from other faith traditions. Most of the stories written in memorial books such as *Alternative Service for Peace* speak well of this experience with other viewpoints. There were, however, some difficulties – as can be expected. A CO writes to Janz:

The need in these camps of a true and powerful preaching... is appalling. Many of the men in these CO camps see no line of distinction between saved and unsaved... half of these men have had no definite experience of a new Birth. Some think that this change of heart will come gradually...²¹

Benjamin B. Janz also kept in close contact with many of the ministers visiting the camps and the correspondence and reports are in his collection.

There are other collections of materials in the church record that merit mentioning here. National and provincial church conferences of all the Mennonite denominations would have references to the CO story. In Vancouver, a home established by the Conference of Mennonites in Canada and the Mennonite Brethren (MB) conference served as a halfway house or a home away from home for conscientious objectors.²² The South Saskatchewan MB Conference was part of The Joint Mennonite Committee on Military problems, “Herbert District,” which focused on supporting the COs.²³ This was in addition to the regular minutes of the conference which also contain references to the conscientious objectors.²⁴ Individual congregations were involved in sending their young men copies of sermons, letters of encouragement and care packages. Erb Street Mennonite in Ontario, the home congregation of Rev. J.B. Martin, is a good example of this.

Personal

Of the close to 11,000 conscientious objectors, most did not serve in alternative service camps. Most served on farms, with fewer in various industrial jobs. The young men in the camps had a great advantage and because of the concentration of them in these camps they quickly established a sense of camaraderie. The men who worked on farms outside their communities were somewhat isolated from their religious communities and at times worked for people who had sons or former employees in the military. This no doubt created some tensions in the employee-employer relationship and to face this alone of course would be more difficult than in a group setting.

The men in the camps kept in touch through their own publication *The Beacon*, which began in October 1942 and ran until September 1945. Its first editor was Wesley Brown who was from the United Church.²⁵ *The Beacon* reported things that happened in the camps and the wider world related to the war and the conscientious objectors.

The COs all have their own unique story to tell which is evident in looking at the different personal collections. Some of these stories have been written by the COs themselves in books such as *Alternative Service for Peace*, *Alternative Service Memoirs*, and *That There Be Peace*. See the appendix for a sample of personal collections. For Hutterites there are two books that include CO experiences. They include *Hutterite CO's in World War One*, 1997, and *Das Klein-Geschichtsbuch der Hutterischen Brüder*. Fahler, Alberta, 2002. This later book is a long history of the movement from its 16th century beginnings to the modern era. However, many collections are still in the hands of families.²⁶

As in most archives, textual materials are the most prevalent. There are, however, photographs of the CO experience in various locations including in Government, church and personal collections. These photos add emotion and many details to the textual records.²⁷ Some of the more unique items are two silent 8mm films made by Rev. J. Harold Sherk and Andy Steckly. These films totaling almost three hours are the only moving images I am aware of that document the Canadian CO experience. The films are mostly black and white but include some color portions. They were filmed at the alternative service camps in BC, Alberta, and Ontario between 1941-1943. The films have been transferred to newer formats and the Mennonite Heritage Centre (MHC), Winnipeg, has a VHS copy.²⁸ They document life in the alternative service camps and tend to emphasize the unique things they did as well as their natural surroundings. There are also good portions showing the work they were doing and more of their daily routine. In some cases the quality of the picture has deteriorated significantly.

There are some oral history collections of COs telling their story. David Fransen produced about twenty audio recordings interviewing conscientious objectors from Ontario. These are held at the Mennonite Archives of Ontario. Included in this collection is an interview with Brethren in Christ leader E.J. Swalm. Another collection I have been made aware of is that of Henry Goerzen in Calgary consisting of about forty handwritten interview notes. The third large grouping of interviews was done by Bill Waiser for his book *Park Prisoners*. Interview transcripts of 15 COs have been deposited in the University of Saskatchewan archives.

Another kind of record is found in newspaper clippings. Two large collections were believed to have been compiled by Katie Hooge, secretary for the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, and Benjamin Ewert, Conference of Mennonites in Canada archivist.²⁹ For a listing of individual collections (fonds) see the appendix.

Other Faith Groups

Other faith groups such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Doukhobors, Brethren in Christ, Hutterites, Quakers and a section of the United Church of Canada, had a significant number of men involved in alterative service.

The head offices for the Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs) are in Brooklyn, New York and in Halton Hills, Ontario. The offices do have rich archival materials about their organization and the experiences of their members in the Second World War. However these records are closed to the public and most Witness members as well. Primary sources open to the public about The Witnesses would include government documents and personal sources. Secondary sources based on archival documents are the next best option. These would include books such as *Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada* by M. James Penton (see his article in this issue).

For the Doukhobor story there are records in the Saskatchewan Archives including four interviews with John G. Bondoreff and his son John J. Bondoreff (August 18, 1975); Nick N. Kalmakoff interview (October 17, 1975), Dr. John Postnikoff interview (April 13, 1976), and the Peter G. Makaroff papers. The 50 issue Doukhobor periodical *The Inquirer* (1954-1958) is another source.

There is one collection that includes copies of primary sources related to the conscientious objector experiences of the Mennonites, Hutterites, and Doukhobors. This can be found in the research carried on by William Janzen in connection with his thesis and subsequent book *Limits on Liberty: The Experience of Mennonite, Hutterite and*

Doukhobor Communities in Canada, 1990. Janzen collected documents that show the interactions between the Canadian federal and provincial governments and these three minority religious groups on several topics, one of them being military exemption. For example, there are clippings, essays, and copies from the P.G. Markarott collection dealing with Doukhobors, correspondence related to Hutterites, and correspondence from National Defense headquarters.³⁰ Janzen's book and the material he collected, which is available at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, are important contributions.

The Brethren In Christ have their archives in Grantham, Pennsylvania. Their collection seems to have only scattered materials related to the Canadian experience with a much bigger emphasis on the American story. Mary J. Heisey's book, *Peace and Persistence*, does have some Canadian content in it. The Mennonite Archives of Ontario has a collection of materials related to Brethren in Christ Bishop E.J. Swalm that relates to this topic.

One group that should not be over looked is the United Church of Canada. Seventy-five of its ministers signed a letter stating their opposition to the war³¹. There were over forty COs who were from the United Church. Many ministers did join active military service leaving their posts as teachers and ministers. In Manitoba some of these openings were filled by Mennonite conscientious objectors. There are a few reports by these men in the Mennonite newspapers.³² There is also some correspondence in the United Church records in Toronto and Winnipeg recording policies for hiring Mennonites, and problems at Nelson House with a Mennonite worker refusing to conform to United Church practices.³³ There are materials about the United Church COs as well. The experience of Mennonites in Northern Manitoba and conscientious objectors during the war was significant because it paved the way for agencies such as Mennonite Pioneer Mission to work in these communities.³⁴

The periodical, *United Church Observer*, is also a source that carried articles and letters to the editor during the war years. These articles and letters would include some information on conscientious objectors.

The Society of Friends, or Quakers, house their Canadian archival holdings at the Quaker Archives and Library of Canada at Pickering College, Newmarket, Ontario. While their numbers were small they were actively involved in the promotion of conscientious objection and peaceful service. Fred Haslam, General Secretary, represented the group in the Conference of Historic Peace Churches and the Military Problems committee which were mentioned earlier in this paper. He was also involved in negotiations with the Canadian government. His reflections on his experience can be found in his book *A Record*

of Experience with Canadian Friends (Quakers) and the Canadian Ecumenical Movement 1921-1967. Haslam also gave leadership to the Friends Ambulance Unit. This unit provided COs the option to object to war and to offer meaningful assistance. Starting in 1941 it transported medical supplies to war torn locations in Europe, West Asia, and China. Sources include a file for each member of the unit, letters written by the service members 1944-1947, minutes of the Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC) between 1939 and 1945, the book by J.W. Awmack, *In China with the Friends Ambulance Unit 1945-1946*, and a home movie taken in China by Gordon Keith. Other sources include minutes of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends in Canada 1937-1947 and the journal *The Canadian Friend*.

In addition to these major efforts the Friends also provided relief through the Save the Children fund, Canadian War Victims Relief Committee, the Elizabeth Fry Sisterhood, and support for those Japanese Canadians who were displaced.

A survey of this material suggests a great wealth of information. Still, I am concerned with the relatively short amount of time left in which to gather first hand accounts from the aging COs. Relatively few audio or visual accounts of the CO story exist. The task of interviewing these people so their voices and experiences will not be forgotten is urgent. Overall, a wealth of materials does exist and an interesting and exciting story-line is available for the popular media, including film makers, interested in the CO story. The challenge for today is also to locate and document unique materials and stories related to this topic that remain virtually unknown.

Appendix: Archival Sources in Manitoba and Ontario:

Government: Library and Archives Canada (formerly known as National Archives of Canada) has changed its finding aid system from record groups to a searchable database. In most works citing National Archives of Canada files record group numbers are used. These include: RG 22 (Department of Indian and Northern Affairs), 84 (Parks Canada), 39 (Forestry), 44 (Department of National War Services), 76 (Department of Labour), 24 (Department of National Defense), and 35/7 (Public Records Committee). Now with on line searchable databases one has to search by key word. In the notes area RG numbers are given as old finding aids, but this system gives much more details. Suggested Key word searches include: Mobilization Board, National Selective Service, National War Services, Department of Labour, Hansard, House of Common Debates. For records on judges, specifically, Horace Harvey (it seems that Judges Adamson and Embury who worked in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, respectively, have not left records regarding this topic, although there are originals at Archives of Alberta, with copies of some materials at MHC 5112-55; 2).

Saskatchewan Archives Board, Saskatchewan, Department of Agriculture Farm Labour Division. GGR6R file 6, COs March 1943 - April 1945. Saskatchewan Veterans Civil Security core. GS75 file CS151 Saskatchewan sub division intelligence 1940-1944, GS75 file CS33. Department of agriculture R262 file 6 COs from 1943-1945, file 19 military rejects, file 23 postponements for military service. University of Saskatchewan archives, correspondence of the president of the University of Saskatchewan 1940-1943 and correspondence of the principle of St. Andrews College 1940-1943.

Religious Organizations: 1) Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization (CMBoc) – MHC 1320-1323; 2) Conference of Historic Peace Churches, Mennonite Archives of Ontario (hereafter MAO); 3) Military Problems Committee, MAO; 4) Non-Resistant Relief Organization, MAO; 5) Mennonite Central Relief Committee (hereafter MCRC); 6) National and provincial Mennonite conferences such as the following would make at least references to the war and conscientious objectors, including the Mennonite Brethren (hereafter MB) Conference of British Columbia, the South Saskatchewan District Conference of MBs (See vol. 310 files 4-6), the North Saskatchewan District Conference of MB, the MB Conference of Manitoba, the MB Conference of Ontario, the Canadian Conference of MB Churches, the Conference of Mennonites (hereafter CM) in British Columbia, CM in Alberta, CM in Saskatchewan, CM in Manitoba, CM in Ontario, CM in Canada, the Evangelical Mennonite Conference (Archives are in Steinbach, Manitoba), the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference (Archives are held at the MHC, Winnipeg), the Northwest Mennonite Conference.

Conference Histories: Leading Conference histories include the following: T.D. Regehr on the Northwest Mennonite Conference; Ana Ens on the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba (today, Mennonite Church Manitoba); Jack Heppner on the Rudnerweider/Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference; Adolf Ens, on the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (today, Mennonite Church Canada).

Individual congregational records will have some materials in places such as ministerial minutes, correspondence, congregational history books etc. A small sample listing of Ontario congregations includes the following: 1) Erb Street Mennonite Church, MAO, including letters sent to men in C.O. camps, 1942-1944 and sermon texts sent to men in C.O. camps, 1942-1944; 2) Nith Valley Mennonite Church, MAO; 3) Riverdale Mennonite Church, MAO; Stirling Mennonite Church, MAO.

Leaders: David Toews (CMBoc) – MHC 1320-1323; 2) Cornelius F Klassen – CMBS 999-1000; 3) Benjamin B. Janz – CMBS 980-989; 4) Jacob W. Friesen (Sommerfeld church minister) – MHC 4955, with diary of activities until 1945. Translation included; 5) John A. Toews – CMBS - papers and essays post Second World War re pacifism and nonresistance, relationship of the church to the state; 6) E.J. Swalm – MAO.

Personal Collections at Mennonite Heritage Centre (MHC), Winnipeg: 1) Peter J. Klassen, collection of official correspondence 5112-54; 2) John J. Bergen, correspondence re: reinstatement of teaching certificate 4039-19; 3) John H. Enns, from Reesor, Ontario, correspondence to family from the Alternative Service camp 3467, 3473; 4) George Rempel, correspondence 5112-53; 5) Howard Pollard – correspondence with Canadian government, 5112-52; 6) D.W. Friesen – MHC 601; 7) Ed Brooks, photos, Camp boss at Clear Lake, MB 2003-119; 8) John P. Hiebert – photos – MHC 2005-086; 9) Jake Krueger, photos, Photos of Radium Hot Springs and Glacier National Park, 2003-127; 10) J. Harold Sherk film of CO experience, 86 (VHS copy); 11) Andy Steckley film of CO experience, MHC 85 (VHS copy);

12) Benjamin Ewert, MHC 544-38, 2849-5 includes newspaper clippings; 13) Peter Unger photos, MHC 600; 14) Ed Bearinger photos, 599; 15) David T. Wall photos, 583; 16) David Jantzi photos, 598; 17) Katie Hooze, newspaper clippings; 18) John Dueck, 4391- 1; 19) Cornelius B. Dueck, 1006- 1; 20) David M. Stoesz, 1159-2; 21) Mennonites in Manitoba, 2286-12; 22) Pacifism in Canada, 1080-10; 23) J.J. Hildebrandt, 3308-67; 24) Questionnaire answered by COs in the 1980s, 1015; 25) David P. Reimer, 652-1; 26) Peter J. Friesen diary from prison, MHC 1681 translated by Jake K. Wiens

Personal Collections at Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies (CMBS), Winnipeg:

1) Katie Funk-Wiebe, photos; 2) Ben L. Kroeker, official correspondence from the government.

Personal Collections at Altona and Area Research Centre, Altona MB: 1) the John C. Klassen collection

Personal Collections at Mennonite Church USA Archives, Goshen IN: 1) Goshen, the C.J. Ramer collection - Mss 1-835 regarding his nephew Sam Martin who spent jail time during the Second World War.

Personal Collections Mennonite Archives of Ontario (MAO): 1) George Wesley Brown, editor of *The Beacon*; 2) John L. Fretz, 3) David K. Jantzi, 4) Orland S. Gingerich; 5) John H. Enns, photos; 6) Wilson Hunsberger, photos

Oral histories: 1) David Fransen collection at MAO; 2) Henry Goerzen collection (about 40 interviews consisting of handwritten notes, private collection); 3) Bill Waiser collection (interviewed 15 COs who worked in National parks), transcripts at University of Saskatchewan archives; 4) Henry Gerbrandt, MHC 2004-026 (worked in Northern Manitoba); 5) David Goerzen, MHC 2516 (worked in Banff on Habakkuk project); 6) Sam Martin, MHC 2517 (he spent 18 months in jail); 7) Gerhard Ens, MHC 1386 (had teaching certificate revoked); 8) Henry W. Redekopp, CMBS NA15-223; 9) Gordon Toombs, MHC 2386 (a United Church CO who later entered the Canadian air force); 10) 5 Interviews of St. Jacobs Mennonite Church persons about local Mennonite men who served in the military during the Second World War (conducted by Andrew Scheifele), MAO; 11) Frank Isaac, CMBS

Web Site: www.alternativeservice.ca which has over 780 pages that include original documents, photographs, audio and moving images related to COs in the Second World War.

Newspapers including: *Phoenix Star*, Saskatoon; *Red River Valley Echo*, Altona, Manitoba; *Winnipeg Free Press*; *Morden Times*, Morden, Manitoba; *Der Bote*; *Mennonitische Rundschau*

Notes

¹ During the Second World War the Department was responsible for all manpower phases of the mobilization of Canadians in the war effort. The National Selective Service, the Department of National War Services, the National Registration, the German prisoner-of-war camps in Canada and the employment of persons evacuated from British Columbia were all carried out under the direction of the Minister of Labour.

- ² Ken Reddig, "Manitoba Mennonites and the Winnipeg Mobilization Board in World War II", MA Thesis, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, 1989, viii.
- ³ Letter to The Right Honourable W.L. Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada from Benjamin B. Janz October 24, 1942. In Benjamin B. Janz fonds, volume 982 file 67, Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies (hereafter CMBS).
- ⁴ Conversation by author with Peter Klassen of Winnipeg, August 8, 2006 at Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg (hereafter MHC). When Peter Klassen donated his CO papers he said that in a meeting C.F. Klassen suggested that if they could, young men should go to BC and appear before the mobilization board there because they would get a better hearing.
- ⁵ John A. Toews, *Alternative Service in Canada During World War II*, (Winnipeg: Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1959), 38.
- ⁶ There are some partial lists of COs in a certain camp, for example in government records. A thorough search through these records still needs to be done to pull these lists together.
- ⁷ Letter to Conrad Stoesz from Paul Marsden, Military archivist, Government archives division, Library and Archives of Canada, November 12, 1996. In possession of author.
- ⁸ Most indications suggest that records such as these have been destroyed.
- ⁹ Justice Horace Harvey notebook, January 16, 1941 p. 148, Volume 5112 file 55, MHC.
- ¹⁰ Letter to Mackenzie King from Winston Churchill, August 25, 1943, volume 5112 file 56, MHC.
- ¹¹ Letter to Rev. David Toews from Rev. John I. Wiebe, 22 March 1943, vol. 1323-946, MHC.
- ¹² Toews, *Alternative Service in Canada*, 53, 77.
- ¹³ "Peace Problems Committee", *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, IV.
- ¹⁴ "Conference of Historic Peace Churches." <http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/C663ME.html>. Retrieved 18 August 2006.
- ¹⁵ David W. Fransen, "Canadian Mennonites and Conscientious Objection in World War II," MA thesis, University of Waterloo, Ontario, 1977, 102.
- ¹⁶ Letter to Justice J.F.L. Embury from Bishop David Toews May 21, 1942, MHC, volume 1321 file 922.
- ¹⁷ Letter to Bishop David Toews from Justice J.F.L. Embury, May 22, 1942, MHC volume 1321 file 922.
- ¹⁸ Letter to Bishop David Toews from Rev. Jacob Gerbrandt, February 7, 1941, translated from the German by Jake K. Wiens. MHC, volume 1322, file 933.
- ¹⁹ See MHC Jacob W. Friesen fonds, volume 4955 .
- ²⁰ Letter to Benjamin B. Janz from Peter Boldt R 258165, No. 3, Manning Depot, Edmonton, Alberta [ca. 1941]. B.B. Janz fonds CMBS, volume 982 file 68.
- ²¹ Letter to B.B. Janz from John H. Enns Campbell River, BC, July 18, 1943. In B.B. Janz fonds, CMBS, volume 983 file 68.
- ²² "Centre for Conchies While on Leave", in *The Beacon*, January 1944, 6.
- ²³ The Joint Mennonite Committee on Military problems, Herbert District. CMBS, accession 2003-014.
- ²⁴ South Saskatchewan district Mennonite Brethren Conference vol. 310 files 4-6. Conference minutes records discussions regarding the War and the Conference's response.
- ²⁵ See Mennonite Archives of Ontario, Waterloo ON, for a Wesley Brown collection.
- ²⁶ At the MHC I am familiar with collections such as Peter J. Klassen, John J. Bergen, John H. Enns. Mennonite Archives of Ontario John L. Fretz, David K. Jantzi, Orland S. Gingerich, George Wesley Brown, Phillip S. Martin, William (Dick) Martin, E.I. Elliot Irwin McLoughry.

- ²⁷ At the MHC some would include the photo collections of Ed Brooks, John P. Hiebert, That There be Peace, Jake Krueger. At Mennonite Archives of Ontario this would include Wilson Hunsberger, John H. Enns.
- ²⁸ MHC Video collection number 85, 86.
- ²⁹ See for example: Volumes 544, 1080, 1320, 2849, 1159 at MHC.
- ³⁰ William Janzen collection at MHC, volumes 5109-5111.
- ³¹ United Church of Canada (Toronto), Board of Evangelism and Social Service, Office of the Secretary 1926-1971. World War II files, 1981-1946 83.052C. There are at least 4 files related to this topic here.
- ³² See letter from George Dyck, Norway House, Manitoba and Edwin C. Brandt, Island Lake, Manitoba in *Mennonitische Rundschau* April 26, 1944, p. 5.
- ³³ United Church of Canada (Winnipeg) Nelson House Charge. 509/2/2-8-9 and 509/2/2-8-10.
- ³⁴ Mennonite Pioneer Mission was a mission started by the Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Manitoba and later was incorporated into the Conference of Mennonites in Canada and re named Native Ministries.