

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MODEL FOR THE
LIFE CYCLE OF A CLOSED AGRICULTURAL
COLONY

THE MENNONITE COLONIES OF SOUTH AMERICA

THE MENNONITE COLONY OF SPANISH
LOOKOUT, BRITISH HONDURAS

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BRITISH HONDURAS

by

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Abstract: The development of a Model for the Life Cycle of a Closed Agricultural Colony.

There are available a number of in depth studies of individual closed agricultural colonies in various parts of the world. Studies which attempt to find areas common to these colonies are less numerous. This paper attempts to identify some factors common to most closed agricultural colonies.

This paper contends that there are similar patterns which are common to most closed agricultural colonies. Some of these are in the area of the colonists' motivation in establishing a new colony in what is usually a relatively unknown and undeveloped area. The pattern of establishment, growth, development, the pressures from outside, and the eventual decline of these colonies as "closed" units, and the beginning of the process of assimilation of the colonists into the society of the host countries will follow similar patterns despite great differences in the geographical and ethnic origins of the colonists or differences in the location of the closed colonies.

From these similarities a model for the generalized life cycle of a closed agricultural colony is then developed.

Abstract: The Mennonite Colonies of South America.

In the last half century there have been a number of Mennonite Colonies established in South America. The first of these was established in Paraguay in 1926. A number of others have been established since and now there are a total of seven Mennonite colonies in Paraguay. In addition to this two Mennonite colonies were established in Brazil and another one in Uruguay. The majority of the colonists came from Canada and Russia with smaller numbers from other sources. Their reasons for selecting the South American locations varied. For some there was no other choice within the terms they desired, for others the decision to move to South America was a deliberate well thought out move.

There was also a wide variation in the capitalization of the colonies. Some were established by penniless refugees with the help of relief agencies while others were established by groups with adequate capital.

This paper then compares the Mennonite Colonies to the Model for the Life Cycle of a Closed Agricultural Colony. From this comparison certain conclusions may be drawn regarding factors necessary for the success of a closed colony within the context of Mennonite colonization.

Abstract: The Mennonite Colony of Spanish Lookout,
British Honduras.

When a group of people decide to migrate to an area which to them is relatively unknown they develop certain expectations regarding the new site. At the same time the government of the country to which they are migrating develops certain expectations of the colonists, both in an economic and in a social sense. These two sets of expectations may not be compatible so there must follow a period of time in which both groups go through a process of adjustment.

This paper deals with a group of Mennonites who migrated from Mexico to British Honduras in 1959 and established a closed colony at a location known as Spanish Lookout. It deals with the expectations the government of British Honduras had of this group of agricultural settlers and also with the reasons on the part of the Mennonites for moving from Mexico to British Honduras. The desires of the two groups were different and they are now going through a period of adjustment.

By applying the Model for the Life Cycle of a Closed Agricultural Colony to the Spanish Lookout colony it is possible to make some predictions regarding the future both of the colony and in the area of government action towards the colony.

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ESSAY No. 1

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MODEL FOR THE LIFE
CYCLE OF A CLOSED AGRICULTURAL COLONY

INTRODUCTION

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries numerous governments in various parts of the world encouraged agricultural settlements as a means of upgrading and increasing agricultural production and enlarging their effective national territory. This occurred to a large degree in America but was by no means peculiar to the Americas. In many cases the encouragement of settlers to take up land in a given area was a definite attempt on the part of a government to establish more firmly its claim to the land in question.¹ Frequently, the land being settled was disputed territory with more than one country claiming it as part of their national territory. Governments acted on the premise that people who received land from them would be loyal to them and this would in turn reinforce their territorial claims. In south Russia vast tracts of land were settled in the late 1700's in an attempt to secure Russia's claim to the area.² In Paraguay there was a long standing border dispute between Paraguay and Bolivia over the possession of the Chaco. Paraguay actively promoted the settlement of the Chaco in order to bolster her claim to the area. Paraguay had also lost a great deal of her population in a war with Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina.

She was defeated and her population was cut from 500,000 to 220,000.³ In an attempt to rebuild her population and consolidate her territory, Paraguay promoted a large number of colonization projects.⁴ The net result was a demand on the part of countries in the Americas for settlers to increase their agricultural production and to consolidate territorial claims.

Given the world situation in which there was a surplus of population in Europe, constant communication between Europe and America, an awareness in Europe of the settlement opportunities in America, there resulted a large migration of people from the old world to the new.

Among this larger mass of agricultural settlers was a small specialized sub-group. There were the people who, for one reason or another, sought a place in which to establish a "Closed Agricultural Colony." They hoped to establish a more or less autonomous or independent colony within the confines of a host country. This colony would be closed to all people who were not members of the particular group establishing the colony and in these colonies they hoped to carry on their distinctive way of life with little or no interference from the outside world. Where others came as individuals or as family groups, these colonists came as larger more extended groups with special, and very strong, group ties. This resulted in the larger group acting as one

cohesive unit, as an individual, rather than as a number of individuals with the same general goals in mind.

The phenomenon of the Closed Agricultural Colony occurred in many parts of America from Canada to Argentina. A study of the life cycles of these colonies as closed units reveals certain similarities. Despite great differences in the geographical origin, ethnic and racial origin, and cultural backgrounds of the colonists involved, the development of the closed colonies tended to follow similar steps.

HYPOTHESIS

Based on this similarity a general hypothesis can be developed for the life cycle of a Closed Agricultural Colony.

This general hypothesis is that there are similar patterns common to most Closed Agricultural Colonies. The colonists' motivation for migrating from an established area to an undeveloped area, and for settling in a closed colony tend to be similar. They see migration as a method for preserving a distinctive way of life. The pattern of establishment, growth, development, the pressure from outside, and eventual decline of these colonies as "Closed" units and the beginning of the process of assimilation of the colonists into the society of the host countries will follow similar patterns despite great differences in the geographical and ethnic origin of the colonists or differences in the location of the closed colonies. From this hypothesis a model of a generalized life cycle of a closed agricultural colony may be developed.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Of perhaps prime influence is an article by Norman R. Stewart,⁵ "Foreign Agricultural Colonization as a Study in Cultural Geography." Although very short, it has something which seems to be lacking in many other publications in the field; it gives a clear and concise point of view on what cultural geographers should be studying in the field of settlement geography. Stewart points out that "...to date, geographic studies of colonization have focused upon inventories of land use detail, upon economic roles of such settlements...and upon the effectiveness of foreign colonies as "instruments of settlement"..."⁶

To Stewart the study of agricultural colonies should include more than the taking of inventories, it should provide a fuller understanding of the role "culture" plays in man's influence on the landscape. This would include more than a mere listing of the changes in any one given location, it would provide a deeper understanding of what brought these changes about and why. It would provide some understanding of the interaction between two cultural groups occupying more or less contiguous geographical locations and the manifestations of this interaction on the landscape of the area.

It is the intent of this paper to concern itself with the phenomenon of Closed Agricultural Colonies only; however,

a great deal of what has been published about agricultural settlements in general does have some application to closed settlements as well, and for that reason some literature on agricultural settlements in general is included. This will be restricted to some degree, although not exclusively, to the economic and technical aspects of organizing settlements in a frontier area.

In the field of the economics of colonization, and technical problems involved in settlement, Eidt has done much work. His discussion of settlement problems in eastern Peru⁷ gives a comprehensive insight of the problems faced by a settler in any new area; the problems of markets, transportation, choice of crops, clearing land and somehow managing to support himself and his family until the agricultural unit begins producing. Eidt's discussion of the settlement of the Misiones province of Argentina⁸ adds a further dimension in that it touches on the political implications of settlement schemes which are carried out or promoted by governments in an attempt to secure more fully national territory which they feel is in danger of being claimed by other political entities.

Fretz, in Immigrant Group Settlements in Paraguay,⁹ gives an extensive review of agricultural settlements which were attempted in Paraguay. Paraguay, perhaps more than any other country in Latin America, encouraged foreign agric-

ultural settlement within her boundaries. Paraguay, as a land locked and isolated area, had difficulty attracting settlers when settlement opportunities existed in places like Uruguay and Argentina. Because of her economic and geographic isolation she was forced to actively recruit settlers. As her success in this was limited, Paraguay allowed a number of settlement schemes within her borders involving Closed Agricultural Colonies. Although, because of the scope of the information he deals with, Fretz is unable to study in depth any one particular colony, he does provide an extensive inventory of attempts at starting colonies and is therefore of value in a study which deals with generalizations and not with minute details.

Hills, in his discussion of the Caribbean area¹⁰ adds to the information on the economic aspects and some of the bureaucratic problems involved in agricultural settlement schemes.

Platt¹¹ presents a history of settlement schemes involving British subjects settling in South America. It also is extensive rather than intensive in nature but it is of help in that it is almost totally negative for it shows many of the pitfalls of land settlement projects, and in this way adds to the sum total of information on colonization.

Tuinman¹² adds a further dimension in that he discusses

foreign settlements not in an historical sense but with the present and the future in mind. In doing this he brings into focus the fact that agricultural settlements are not merely an interesting historical study but that they exist in the present and will continue to do so in the future even though there are no vast new continents to be discovered and settled.

In addition to these works of a general nature there are a number of works of a more specific nature from which information was drawn. These were the individual case studies of closed agricultural colonies. In this group Fretz¹³ played a major role in that his inventory of the large number of agricultural colonies organized in Paraguay was of immense value. Again it must be noted that, because of the extensive nature of the subject tackled, Fretz did not provide a great deal of detail on any one colony. He did, however, provide enough that basic patterns could be discerned.

Augelli has made a major contribution to case studies in two studies he carried out in Brazil. His studies of The Latvians of Varpa¹⁴ and the Japanese colony in Bastos, Brazil,¹⁵ provide detailed, in depth studies of two culturally dissimilar groups of people in very similar geographical settings.

Krause,¹⁶ in discussing the Mennonite settlements in

Paraguay, is able to compare two groups of very similar people, two groups of Mennonites, who moved to Paraguay for different reasons. From this it is possible to gain some information on the role of attitude of the colonists on the success or failure of a colony.

Schmiedhaus,¹⁷ provides detailed information on the development of agricultural colonies in Mexico by foreign groups when he discusses the Mennonite settlements in Mexico. This is a fairly recent development and some detail is provided.

Vanderhill and Christensen¹⁸ in "The Settlement of New Iceland" provide an account of a group which was more or less forced out of its previous home, a group which was quite willing to integrate into the social fabric of its new home. In this it provides a contrast to the numerous groups which set up closed colonies with the definite purpose of remaining isolated from the people around them.

Warkentin,¹⁹ in discussing the Mennonite settlements in southern Manitoba brings an historical angle to the picture in that the colonies he deals with were started about 1874. This adds a greater time depth to his study than is possible in many other and later developments.

Winsberg's²⁰ study of the Jewish agricultural colonization in Argentina provides a great deal of detail about the process of settling urban-oriented people in a rural community.

His study is unique in that the majority of the other case studies dealt with rural people starting a new settlement and not with urban dwellers in a rural setting.

It must, however, be kept in mind that all of these case studies are mainly what Stewart has referred to as "inventories."²¹ They list a great number of facts about one colony in particular but there is relatively little attempt made to draw inferences from the vast amounts of factual material presented.

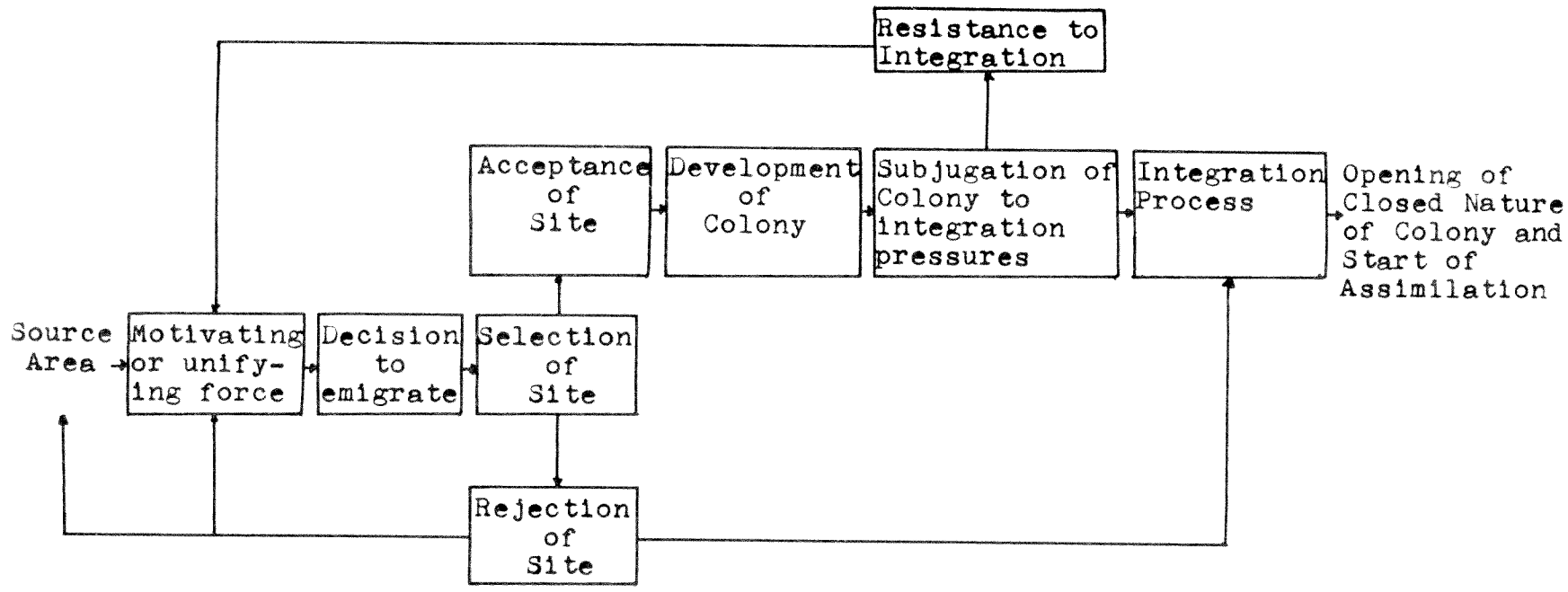
It is the intention of this paper to draw on the works listed, not so much for facts as for conclusions which can be drawn from the facts when the inventories of the various case studies are compared.

THE PROPOSED MODEL

From these individual case studies similarities became apparent. It was observed that despite the obvious differences in the cultural, racial, ethnic, and geographical backgrounds of the colonists as well as the differences in the location of the closed colonies, the life cycle of the colonies as "closed" entities followed much the same pattern. These are similarities of pattern, not in mechanics of everyday living, but in the external and internal pressures to which the groups were subjected, pressures which were cultural and political as well as economic in nature. It is in the process of dealing with these pressures, the decision-making processes, the choice of alternatives and the eventual results of these decisions that the similarities become obvious. From their origins, to the breakdown of the totally closed nature of the colonies, like patterns appeared.

This life cycle, which is common to the closed colonies, can be presented graphically in the form of an open-ended flow model or diagram.

This model is shown on the following page.



MODEL FOR THE LIFE CYCLE OF A CLOSED AGRICULTURAL COLONY

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODEL

The various groups of colonists attempting to establish Closed Agricultural Colonies, despite their varied backgrounds, all started with one thing in common; they saw emigration as a solution to a major problem. All had been faced with a problem, a threat to their way of life, and they all reacted in the same way, they emigrated to an area where they felt the threat did not exist.

The first stage of this move was the process of drawing from the general population of the source area those who would eventually emigrate. There must be some strong unifying force or motivational factor involved before a large group of people will leave an established area for a relatively unknown land.

Fretz lists a number of unsuccessful attempts at setting up Closed Agricultural Colonies²² and a study of these indicates some of the conditions necessary for the establishment of a successful colony. Fretz feels that in the final analysis the reasons for success or failure of a colony lie in the social composition of the groups involved. The social composition of the unsuccessful colonies was in almost every instance so diverse in cultural background and in motive that they lacked close, tight internal organization and social cohesion.²³ It lacked a group "we" feeling. The "we" feeling of the group was very important and where it

did not exist, the colonies failed. This in fact seems to be so important a factor that it is included as one of the necessary prerequisites of a successful closed agricultural colony by Fretz.

In discussing these closed colonies, Fretz has defined such a colony as "...a group of like-minded people with common interests and ideals, living in a well-defined geographical area..."²⁴ This working definition is perhaps inadequate in some ways. In defining such a group it is not enough to say they are like-minded as the feeling must go well beyond having a common purpose as a group. Any settlement of a frontier area will be carried on by a group of like-minded people, but they may still act as individuals rather than as one person as closed colonies tend to do. There must therefore, be a "we" feeling which is strong enough for the individual member of the group to subject his personal wishes and feelings to the will of the group as a whole to a very large degree. It is the attitude of identifying one's own welfare with that of the group, as well as the physically closed nature of a closed agricultural colony which sets it apart from other forms of frontier settlement.

There must, therefore, be a motivating or unifying force which will produce this "we" feeling in a group of people and set them apart from the rest of the population

in the area of their origin. This is the factor which coalesces this sub-group within the larger population and starts them on the process of emigration. It is the necessary first factor in the model.

This unifying force in reference to Closed Agricultural Colonies has frequently been a particular religious persuasion. The Latvians in Varpa were motivated by their religious beliefs.²⁵ They were Pentecostalists, a splinter group from the mainstream of Baptist theology. As a group they were strongly united by their particular beliefs. The Mennonites of southern Manitoba were a group united by religious views. They had very definite and fixed religious ideas and would not tolerate change in these. These religious principles became the uniting force in the Mennonite community and held it together through a number of periods of migration.²⁶

In other cases it was a feeling of nationalism which bound the group into a cohesive unit. The Japanese colony of Bastos in Brazil is an example of this.²⁷ Although religion played a definite role within the Japanese colony in Brazil, the main unifying force here was the common nationality. The settlers had been chosen carefully by the Japanese Government with regard to their agricultural Background and their loyalty to the Japanese emperor. There may, however, have been religious overtones in this as the

Japanese emperor at that time was considered to be a direct descendant from the deity.

The Icelanders who moved to Manitoba also depended to a large extent on a feeling of nationalism to keep the group functioning as a cohesive unit. Again, however, there were strong religious overtones as most of the members of the group adhered to the same religious faith.²⁸ Most of the groups then had a religious persuasion which united them.

Once the group was united, the motivating force needed to be strong enough to cause these people to make the decision to emigrate to preserve their way of life. For a large group of people to make the choice to leave a familiar area and to move to what was generally an unknown country and an uncertain future would require a major threat to the survival of that group. This threat, the force which persuaded them to move, generally took one of two forms.

One form was that of a perceived threat to the way of life that had been established in a certain area by a group of people. This was usually interpreted as a threat to their religious practices. The Latvians who moved to Varpa clearly moved for religious reasons as they felt that to stay any longer in Latvia posed a threat to their group's physical safety and to their group's religious integrity. This integrity could be maintained only if they could

emigrate to some unsettled area and establish a Closed Agricultural Colony and in that way achieve the isolation they desired.

The Mennonites of Russia also felt a severe threat to their way of life and religious freedom. They reacted by emigrating to Manitoba, a relatively unsettled region in western Canada. In this case the threat was only to their religious practices and not to their physical well-being, yet it was enough to cause them to emigrate.²⁹

In other cases the emigrants had no real choice in whether to emigrate or to stay. Changes in their environment had made staying in their existing location impossible. These changes could be changes in the physical environment such as those experienced by the Icelanders.³⁰ A series of cool summers had resulted in the fjords of north-eastern Iceland remaining frozen all year round and this put rather severe limits on the fishing in which the people of this area engaged. At the same time a series of volcanic eruptions resulted in a great deal of lava and ash being deposited on the limited amount of pasture land available. The net result was a change in the physical environment which forced some of the people to leave. In effect, the decision to emigrate was made for them by changes in the physical environment.

Political motivation resulted in the establishment of

a large closed agricultural colony in Argentina. This was the colony known as "Colonia Baron Hirsch."³¹ It was set up to receive Jewish refugees from eastern Europe. In eastern Europe the political environment just after the turn of the twentieth century was such that many Jewish people felt they must leave or they would be in danger of losing their lives as well as their property. The colony in Argentina was set up as a place in which to resettle that portion of these political refugees who had no private means and no other place to go. The colony was closed in nature so the settlers could carry out their own religious practices with no interference from the outside world and also to ensure the safety of the colonists from active religious persecution in the forms which they had experienced in Europe.

The decision to emigrate can then be brought on by a number of different circumstances. At one end of the scale is simple environmental change. The physical environment changes in such a way that an area can no longer support all of its people. Emigration is the only course of action left open to readjust the population to the carrying capacity of the land. At the other end of the scale the circumstances are less easy to define. A slight change in the social or political environment takes place and this is interpreted by the group as a threat to their particular way of life. To an external observer this will perhaps not appear as a threat in any sense of the term but to the

people involved the threat is very real. The reality of this perceived threat to them is reflected in their making the decision to emigrate as a reaction to this threat.

This represents the two extremes of the scale, the conditions under which the Icelanders came to Canada and the conditions under which the Mennonites came to Canada. It is not the intention of this paper to give the impression that all cases must fall into one of these two categories. It should rather be viewed as a continuum with these two cases representing the extremes. Most cases will fall somewhere in between with both real and perceived threats being instrumental in bringing about the decision to emigrate.

A further point of interest in the "decision to emigrate" portion of the model is that "normal" decision-making processes do not seem to be followed by the groups setting up Closed Agricultural Colonies. In the case of most of these groups the normal adoptive process of awareness of alternatives followed by the adoption of one of these was not followed. They were not first made aware of alternative sites in which to live before deciding to emigrate. Quite the opposite took place. They decided they could no longer remain in their present location--they must emigrate. The decision was based on "push" rather than "pull" factors. Once the decision to emigrate had been made they searched for a suitable place which would give them the factors they

regarded as necessary in setting up a closed colony.

This brings up the problem of site selection. This process is severely limited by a number of factors, both economic and ideological. The first definite limit placed on prospective immigrants is political. There are only a limited number of countries in the world which will accept religious groups who want to form closed agricultural colonies. Those countries which do accept them and extend to them the privileges they require are generally countries which are considered to be underdeveloped and are willing to accept the social anomaly of a closed colony in return for the increased agricultural production and political stability³² it will bring. This process then forces the groups out to the less developed portions of the world when selecting sites for their colonies.

Once a suitable country had been found there is the task of selecting a site within its boundaries. In order to form a closed agricultural colony a large block of land is required. One of the basic requirements is a large parcel of land with no "outsiders" living on it. It must be a large, continuous plot with enough land for all those who wish to migrate, land for the expansion of farms once settlement has taken place and land for expansion resulting from natural growth within the colony. It must also be closed to outsiders. This will tend to force them out to

the less settled regions of the country of their choice. Nearer the larger and more developed centres there usually will not be the large acreages of arable land required in one continuous block. The result will be the establishment of the colony in an isolated part of an underdeveloped country.

A further factor determining location will be economic. The nearer to centres of population suitable agricultural land is, the higher, generally, will be the price of the land assuming factors of arability to be constant. This will result in the cost of establishing a large colony close to commercial centres being too great for most groups attempting to form such a settlement. This will also tend to force the colony to the more distant parts of the economic sphere, to the outer fringes where the cost of land is low and the total cost of purchasing the amount of land required will be within the bounds of possibility, an area where subsistence farming becomes more likely.

A fourth, and in many cases primary, factor in determining the location of a colony will be the ideology of the group involved. Many of the groups which emigrated did so in response to a threat and this threat frequently was brought about by increased contact with the world outside of their group. The groups want, and require, isolation. If their isolation is destroyed by having the areas around

their colony built up, they may again respond by moving away from the built-up area. Groups that emigrate for this reason will require a large degree of isolation in the location in which they propose to set up their new colony.

The net result of all of these forces will be an isolated colony. Political considerations will force colonies to less developed countries. Economic consideration will force them to the less developed parts of these countries and frequently their ideological requirements will reinforce the economic factors and push the Closed Agricultural Colony to even more isolated regions of the less developed countries.³³

Once the site selection stage has been passed, the process of occupying the site begins and along with this comes the acceptance or rejection of a site by the group involved. If the site can be developed and more or less meets the requirements of the settlers it will be accepted. If for some reason the site proves to be unacceptable it will be rejected. One example of this is the rejection of the site of the Icelandic settlement in Manitoba.³⁴ In this case the Icelanders had passed up better quality, but open, farm land in southern Manitoba and had settled instead along a lake shore north of Winnipeg. Their choice of site was based on a transfer of values from Iceland. In Iceland they had lived on land that was partly wooded and land that

was near to open water for both fishing and transport. In the area north of Winnipeg they saw land which, in physical appearance, most nearly resembled the land they had left. Unfortunately, with the severe mid-continental climate of the region the land proved totally inadequate for their needs. It is this straight transference of criteria that frequently causes selection of a poorer site in a new land. This can lead to eventual rejection of the site for a better one once the new area is more fully understood.

At this stage, the rejection of a site, there are a number of possible courses of action open. If the site proves unacceptable to some member of the group and the member is financially solvent, he may simply return home. If on the other hand, the situation is such that a return to the country of origin is impossible, the rejection may become the motivating force for yet another move.³⁵

A third possibility is that the individual may leave the group and become assimilated almost immediately into the economy of the host country.³⁶

Once a site has been accepted, the development of the colony takes place. This stage of the development is influenced to a large degree by economic factors. There is usually a period during which the colonists are more or less experimenting with various old and new crops, farming methods, or possible alternatives in order to adjust to the

area. The range of crops available to them which will yield sound financial returns is usually limited more by transportation factors than by agricultural ones. Because of the isolated nature of these colonies the cost of transport to market and the time involved in reaching this market are frequently overriding factors in determining the crops grown.³⁷

This economic development will also be affected to a large degree by other considerations such as the amount of capital available to the group, the level of leadership and organization within the colony, and the technology employed by the colonists.

During the time the colony is adjusting to its new environment and going through the process of establishing itself as a viable economic unit, the country into which it has moved is also appraising the colony. This results in certain pressures being brought to bear on the colonies simply because they exist in a larger political structure and yet try to operate independently. The net result tends to be the subjection of the colony to certain pressures in order to force it to become more of an integral part of the host country rather than to exist as an independent area within the confines of a larger political entity. The pressures are usually not too severe but they are constant. In the long run the colony must do one of three things. It

can give in to these pressures. If this is the case, the closed nature of the colony will disappear. It can resist these pressures. This is usually possible only to a limited extent as the political power is all with the host country and not with the colony.³⁸

The third possibility brings up another possible step in the model. The group may see itself once more as being threatened. This may unify the group and it could once more emigrate.

Most of the countries which accept closed agricultural colonies really did not believe the people intended to remain isolated for any length of time. When it becomes evident that the colonists had no intention of becoming assimilated into the social fabric of the host country certain steps are taken to force this assimilation to begin. One of the most frequent steps was to take away the language rights originally granted to the colonists and force them to learn, to some extent, the language of the host country. Many of the groups forming closed colonies believe their language to be closely tied to their religion and they insisted on certain language rights when they negotiated the terms under which they would establish a closed colony. This right to use their own language almost exclusively seems to be one of the first rights suspended by the host country.

This attempt to move the closed agricultural colonies

toward eventual assimilation by forcing them to use the language of the host country is a widespread technique. It was used in Brazil as a major part of a program of enforced nationalization³⁹ which was applied to all foreign colonies. The method usually included the enforced use of the language of the host country in the schools of the colonies or, alternatively, the closing of the special schools within the colonies and the forced integration of the students into the national schools of the country. In Paraguay the government was applying pressure within five years of the establishment of the Mennonite colonies to have Spanish taught in the schools of the colonies.⁴⁰ This action took place despite the fact that the charter under which the Mennonites moved to Paraguay expressly gave them the right to conduct their own schools in their own language with no interference from the government. The closed colonies of Mennonites in Canada met with a similar fate. Within a decade of their settling in Manitoba the government outlawed the line village pattern of settlement which the Mennonites had established within their closed colonies and forced them to adopt the sectional survey system and live on individual farms.⁴¹ This was an attempt on the part of the government to break the closed nature of the colonies and force the integration of the Mennonites into the Canadian social pattern. A further attempt at forced integration was made

in the period immediately following World War I. When the Mennonites emigrated to Canada they were promised the right to maintain their own school system and the right to use their own language, German, in their schools. Immediately following World War I, they were forced to suspend the use of German and to teach in English only.⁴² This serves the singularly useful purpose of allowing the younger generation from within the colony to communicate with the people outside of the colony, and this in turn means they will become aware of alternative modes of life other than remaining within the colony. As awareness is one of the first stages of diffusion this will allow them a wider choice in decision-making as individuals and facilitate the eventual diffusion of the people from the colony among the population of the country as a whole.

This sequence of events seems to be very general. The colonies are allowed to set up as closed units and are allowed to establish themselves in an area. It would seem the governments of the countries involved really do not believe the colonies want to remain as closed units with as little contact with the outside world as possible. Once the governments in question realize the serious intent of the colonies to remain isolated they move to bring about the assimilation the governments desire.

During the time the country in which they have settled

is adjusting to them and making regulations regarding them a number of other changes are also going on within and around the colony. These forces are all working at the same time during the "development of colony" stage of the model.

Within the colonies this is a period of economic development. During this time the farmers are becoming established on the land and learning to cope successfully with the new area and the agricultural techniques applicable to it. This usually takes some time and during this time it is usual for the land around the colony to become developed to some degree. Although many of these colonies want a large degree of isolation they cannot get complete isolation. They must settle near enough to the markets of the country to be able to get their products to these markets. This means there must be some communication between the markets and the colonies and that in turn means other settlers can move out to the area in which the colonies have been established. The colonies in fact tend to settle in a frontier zone. Once located, the site of a colony is more or less fixed; the frontier zone, however, is usually not static but dynamic and it tends to move further out from the economic centres as time passes. The colony is thus established within a frontier zone but within a short time this frontier has moved on and the colony is now located in

an area where an increasing number of people are settling. This leads to increasing social contact and interaction and in turn means the isolation desired by the colony is being lost and thus further social pressure is brought to bear on the colonists to integrate.

During this stage there is also growth within the colony. In this period most of the land within the boundaries of the closed colony may be brought under cultivation. This results from a number of forces active at the same time. The individuals farming, once having established themselves, can bring more land under cultivation as their time is not so taken up with clearing unused land and preparing it for cultivation or with construction of farmsteads or colony establishments. The net result is that as time goes on each individual is able to farm more land. Another force active at this time is increased mechanization. Once the individual can invest in improved mechanical equipment, he will in turn be able to farm an increased amount of land. A third source of pressure on the land is a demand on the part of the younger men growing up in the colony for farms of their own. Because of the age grouping of the people forming closed agricultural colonies, the demand for land on the part of the younger generation is great before the senior generation is ready to move off the farms. The original colonists generally are not old people when they

attempt to establish a colony. They tend to be young families. The result is that within ten to fifteen years of the establishment of a colony a number of the males have grown to an age where they require land of their own. Usually this is not available within the colony as there were no older farmers in the original group who would be ready to leave the land at this time, and expansion resulting from previously mentioned factors has taken up most of the land within the colony. The alternatives for the younger group who desire land are limited. If the colony is wealthy, and few are, it can set up a daughter colony.⁴³ If there is still unsettled land around the colony and money is available, the colony itself can expand.⁴⁴

The alternatives within the colony are limited. The need for non-agricultural labour is limited. The only possible employment is as farm labour and this seems to be limited as well. Young families with a number of children still living at home do not require additional labour. In addition, they are competing with native labour on the unskilled agricultural scene. As these colonies tend to develop in underdeveloped areas, the rates of pay for agricultural labour also tend to be very low.

Attitude would also seem to play a large part in the choice of alternatives. A young colony is a dynamic and growing thing. The values instilled in the people are such that they want to work hard and produce tangible results from

their labour. If this is denied them within the colony, the very dynamics which produced the colony in the first place will tend to drive the young men from it in order to achieve the success which they have been taught to value and which is denied them within the colony. If this generation wants land they must then frequently leave the closed colony.

Because the education of the colonies' children has been integrated to some extent with that of the host country by this time,⁴⁵ those young people who want to obtain an education beyond the barest minimum level are also forced out of the colony. They tend to gravitate toward the larger urban centres which contain the better schools.

Host countries also tend to set standards for the teachers, within the colony. In this way teachers are forced to become familiar with the educational system of the host country. Once this has happened, the teacher will always be aware of the country outside of the colony and be aware of alternative modes of action. With awareness of alternative courses of action being the basic step in adoption of new innovations, the laws regarding teacher training bring about changes in the colonies.

People seeking a source of cash income are also forced to look outside the confines of the colony as their chances for employment are almost non-existent within the colony. They in turn are also forced to the cities. The stage is

thus reached where for one reason or another a significant proportion of the young people are leaving the colony. Many of them intend to return as soon as they are able, but for a number of reasons this happens infrequently. Once outside of the colony, the process of assimilation is rapid.⁴⁶

The integration stage of the model is thus reached. This is the final stage. The younger members of the group are being rapidly integrated into the population of the host country. This in turn has its effect on the colony. With the young aware of alternative opportunities outside the colony, many tend to leave and the colony will eventually find itself with a shortage of labour. To supply this need for labour within the colony the colonists turn to sources outside of the colony. Labourers will be brought in from the countryside around the colony.⁴⁷ This destroys the totally closed nature of the colony. By the time the first generation of settlers are ready to leave the farms there are frequently not enough younger members still within the colony to fill the farms available and the owners are forced to sell to nationals of the host country. This "opens" what started as a "Closed Agricultural Colony" and for all practical purposes the group is on its way to being absorbed into the population of the host country. This would normally bring us to the end of the process described by the model. Here again the process is not inevitable and an alternative

mode of action exist. Some groups will resist the final stages of integration. To them the threat of integration will once more be the motivating force required to convince them to emigrate. The model must therefore include the possibility or the path for a group to return to the starting point and once more venture into the unknown and start a new closed agricultural colony.⁴⁸

The final part of the process, the integration, is a process which is rather difficult to define in exact terms. Augelli felt there were a number of factors involved.⁴⁹ In very general terms, however, they would all seem to be measures of difference between the colonists and the people around them. As long as the colonists are aware of a degree of difference they will not integrate fully. As this awareness of difference decreases, as the "we-they" feeling goes, integration will take place. One factor affecting the rate of integration would seem to be the relation of the individual to the group. If the group is very strong and can keep the individual within the group, the resistance to integration will be strong. Once, however, the individual is outside of the control of the group and is aware of alternatives open to him, his resistance to integration will drop. In this context the availability of land within the colony becomes important. As long as there is land available, the individual will stay within the physical

confines of the colony and thus more directly under the day-to-day control of the colony. Once he is forced out of the colony, and forced to make decisions as an individual for any reason, the group will rapidly lose its control over the individual and he will tend to integrate much more rapidly.

It is, however, not the intent of this paper to discuss the sociological aspects of integration. For the purposes of developing the model it is enough to establish that integration does occur at a certain stage and that this stage signifies the end of the "closed" aspect of the closed agricultural colony. It is also not the intent of this paper to claim that the closed colony will immediately become totally integrated once it becomes open in nature. It may, and most likely will, retain definite manifestations of the culture of the original colonists for a long time. It is, however, the claim of this paper that once the closed nature of a colony is lost, the process of integration is inevitable.

CONCLUSION

The original hypothesis was that there were similar patterns which were common to most closed agricultural colonies. That despite great differences in the racial and geographical origins of the colonists as well as great differences in the geographical location of the colonies themselves the life cycles of the colonies were similar enough that a general model for the life cycle of a Closed Agricultural Colony could be developed. It would seem that the motivating factors involved, the decision-making process involved, the economic factors which bear on the process, the political considerations, and the dynamics of the colony itself are important enough in the life cycle of the colony to override factors such as the diversity of geographic origin of source and site as well as diversity of cultures and races.

A generalization can be made regarding the life cycle of a Closed Agricultural Colony. The model previously presented is such a generalization. It has all the shortcomings of generalizations but also has the predictive and explanatory values of generalizations, and as such is valid.

FOOTNOTES

1. This happened in a large number of cases. The Mennonite settlements of Manitoba, the Icelandic Republic in what is now Manitoba, the Mennonite settlements in South Russia are a few examples.
2. D.G. Rempel, "The Mennonite Colonies of New Russia: A Study of their Settlement and Economic Development from 1789-1914" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1934).
3. J.E. Fagg, Latin America: A General History (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1963), p. 586.
4. J.W. Fretz, Immigrant Group Settlements in Paraguay (North Newton Kansas: Bethel College, 1962).
5. N.R. Stewart, "Foreign Agricultural Colonization as a Study in Cultural Geography," The Professional Geographer, Vol. XV, No. 5 (September, 1963).
6. Stewart, op. cit., p. 1.
7. R.C. Eidt, "Pioneer Settlement in Eastern Peru," Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Vol. LII, No. 3 (1962), pp. 259-278.
8. R.C. Eidt, "Die Stadliche and Private Besiedlung von Misiones," Argentinien Geographische Rundschau, Jahrgang XVII, No. 11 (1965), pp. 464-470.
9. Fretz, op. cit.
10. Theo. Hills, "Land Settlement Schemes: Lessons from the British Caribbean," Revista Geografica (Rio), Toma XXXV, 2 Semester, No. 63 (1965).
11. D.C.M. Platt, "British Agricultural Colonization in Latin America," Inter-American Economic Affairs, Vol. XIX, No. 1 (Summer 1965), pp. 23-42.
12. A.S. Tuinman, "Dutch Settlements in Brazil," International Migration, Vol. V, No. 1 (1967), pp. 14-18.
13. Fretz, op. cit.
14. J.P. Augelli, "The Latvians of Varpa," Geographical Review, Vol. XLVIII (1958), pp. 365-387.

15. J.P. Augelli, "Cultural and Economic Changes of Bastos, a Japanese Colony on Brazil's Paulista Frontier," Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Vol. XLVIII (1958), pp. 3-19.
16. A.E. Krause, "Mennonite Settlement in the Paraguayan Chaco" (unpublished thesis, University of Chicago, 1952).
17. W. Schmiedhaus, "A Beleaguered People: The Mennonites of Mexico," Landscape, Vol. IV, No. 1 (Summer, 1954), pp. 13-21.
18. B.G. Vanderhill, and D.E. Christensen, "The Settlement of New Iceland," Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Vol. LIII, No. 3 (1963), pp. 350-363.
19. J. Warkentin, "Mennonite Agricultural Settlements of Southern Manitoba," Geographical Review, Vol. XLIX (July, 1959), pp. 342-368.
20. M.D. Winsberg, Colonia Baron-Hirsch-A Jewish Agricultural Colony in Argentina (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964).
21. Stewart, op. cit., p. 1.
22. Fretz, op. cit., p. 25.
23. Fretz, Ibid., p. 46.
24. J.W. Fretz, "Factors Contributing to Success and Failure in Mennonite Colonization," Mennonite Quarterly Review, Vol. XXIV, No. 2 (April, 1950), p. 130.
25. Augelli, op. cit., (Latvians of Varpa).
26. E.K. Francis, "The Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia," Mennonite Quarterly Review, Vol. XXV, No. 3 (July, 1951), pp. 173-182.
27. Augelli, op. cit., (The Japanese of Bastos).
28. Vanderhill and Christensen, op. cit.
29. Warkentin, op. cit.
30. Vanderhill and Christensen, op. cit.

31. Winsberg, op. cit.
32. Fretz, op. cit.
33. The Settlement of Mennonites and Icelanders in Canada, in what is now Manitoba in the 1870's is an example. Warkentin, op. cit., and Vanderhill, and Christensen, op. cit.
34. Vanderhill and Christensen, op. cit.
35. An example of this is the abandonment of the Colony of Auhagen, Brazil. Peter Klassen, "The Mennonites of Brazil," The Mennonite Quarterly Review, Vol. 11, No. 2 (April, 1937), p. 111.
36. R.W. Minnich, "A Sociological Study of the Mennonite Immigrant Communities of Parana, Brazil" (unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, University of Florida, 1966).
37. Ulv. Masing, "San Vita DeJava, Analysis of the Success and Failure of an Immigrant Farm Settlement in the Rain-forest of Costa Rica" (unpublished research paper, University of Florida, 1964).
38. Abraham, Friesen, "Emigration in Mennonite History" (unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1962).
39. Augelli, op. cit., (Japanese of Bastos).
40. W. Hiebert, "Mennonite Education in the Gran Chaco," Mennonite Life, Vol. 11, No. 4 (October, 1947).
41. Warkentin, op. cit., p. 361.
42. Schmiedhaus, op. cit., p. 14.
43. This is the process being used by the Hutterite Colonies in Western Canada.
44. The process of expansion of the colony itself is demonstrated by the Mennonite Colony in Paraguay. E. Krause, op. cit., p. 71.
45. A. Friesen, op. cit., Friesen discusses the replacement of the Mennonite school system with that of the Province of Manitoba.

46. R.H. Minnich, op. cit. He discusses the problems of young people leaving a closed colony either to work or study in larger cities.
47. N.R. Stewart, Japanese Colonization in Eastern Paraguay, Publication, 1490 (Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Sciences, National Research Council, 1967), p. 172.
48. The Mennonite Movement through the course of their history is a good example of this reaction to integration. Charles Henry Smith, The Story of the Mennonites (4th ed.; Newton, Kansas: Mennonite Publication Office, 1957).
49. Augelli, op. cit., (Latvians of Varpa), p. 386.

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ESSAY NO. TWO

THE MENNONITE COLONIES
OF SOUTH AMERICA

The Mennonites have a lengthy history of migration and colonization, one that covers over 400 years in time and a large portion of the globe. Mennonites are a branch of the Anabaptist movement that developed in Europe during the sixteenth century, a branch that was founded by Menno Simons, after whom the Mennonites were named. In 1536 Menno Simons renounced the Catholic Church¹ and sided with the "Protestant" movement and thus became the founder of the present day Protestant sect whose members call themselves Mennonites.

By the end of the seventeenth and the early eighteenth century the Mennonites had migrated from Holland to north-eastern Germany.²

Their next major migration was to Russia. This was started in 1787 during the reign of Catharine the Great and continued until 1895.^{3&4} The latter part of this move overlapped the beginning of the next migration, the move to North America. By 1874 there was a large scale migration to the prairie states of the United States,⁵ and also to the province of Manitoba, in Canada.⁶

This move to Canada continued until as late as 1929 but the "Closed Colonies" which were set up by the first Mennonites did not remain closed for more than a few years and the latter Mennonite immigrants became a more or less integral part of a much larger land settlement move which included

many people who were not Mennonites.

By the 1920's some of the Mennonites from the southern prairies were once more on the move. A portion of them moved to Mexico in an attempt to set up the self-contained and isolated agricultural settlements they could no longer have in Canada.⁸ Another portion of the Canadian Mennonites decided to emigrate to Paraguay instead. This they did in 1926.⁹ A further colony of Mennonites was established in Paraguay in 1930¹⁰ by Mennonites who came directly from Russia. These were further augmented when two more colonies of Russian Mennonites were established in 1947,¹¹ and the final two colonies of Canadian Mennonites in 1948.¹² By this time one of the original colonies had formed a daughter colony so the total number of Mennonite colonies in Paraguay now stands at seven.

In addition to this there were two colonies established in Brazil in 1930,¹³ and one established in Uruguay in 1948.¹⁴

Thus, in the period from 1926 to 1948 there were a total of ten Mennonite colonies established in South America. It is the life cycle of these entities as "Closed Colonies" with which this paper deals.

It is the claim of this paper that the Mennonite Colonies of South America, despite their desire for isolation and their desire to cut themselves off from all outside influences and to remain unchanged, are eventually subjected

to the forces of assimilation and the "closed" nature of the colony disappears. In this context assimilation does not mean the immediate and total disappearance of the Mennonite culture. It is taken in the sense of a growing awareness of another culture and therefore alternative modes of action which will, in time, lead to a converging of the two cultures.

The hypothesis is that Closed Mennonite Agricultural Colonies will follow the same life cycle that other Closed Agricultural Colonies do. In this they fit the model previously developed for the Life Cycle of a Closed Agricultural colony.¹⁵ (See Appendix one for the detailed model).

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A review of the literature on Mennonite colonization presents certain problems. In some ways the literature is reasonably extensive. On the other hand, literature which is of sound academic quality is more limited. There is a reasonable amount of literature of a theological nature as well as literature of a personal narrative form. However, competent historical, sociological and geographical accounts are rare.¹⁶ In addition to this, there is the problem that those accounts which do exist tend to be of a descriptive or "inventory" nature rather than analytic.¹⁷ It is the intention of this paper to deal with the literature

in three categories.

1. Dissertations

In this category the number of works available is limited and the value to the topic varied. Of prime importance in the field is the work by R.H. Minnich,¹⁸ A Sociological Study of the Mennonite Immigrant Communities of Parana, Brazil. The work was completed in 1966 and is among the most up-to-date of the works available. It goes well beyond the mere inventory stage and deals with the problems faced by members of one ethnic group trying to retain their group identity while living in a country whose culture is quite different from its own. In doing this, Minnich contributes a great deal to the understanding of the forces involved in the assimilation of the Mennonites into the social fabric of their new home, Brazil.

Krause's dissertation, Mennonite Settlement in the Paraguayan Chaco,¹⁹ describes in detail the land use patterns, climate and economic activities of the settlements in the Chaco of Paraguay. While the analysis of the data may be incomplete, Krause nevertheless provides an excellent and detailed description of the colonies dealt with and their problems. In this it becomes quite valuable.

Fadenrecht²⁰ provides valuable historical background in his dissertation on Mennonite Migrations to Paraguay. Although it does not give too much information on the

Paraguayan settlements as such, it does provide an idea of the pressures and forces which resulted in the moving of prosperous farmers from the prairies of Canada to the, to them, unknown Paraguayan Chaco.

Friesen takes a more long term point of view of much the same subject.²¹ In doing this, he provides an historical depth which adds to the understanding of the various emigrations by the Mennonites.

2. Books

Smith, in The Story of the Mennonites, provides a concise but comprehensive history of the Mennonites as a group and of their many migrations in an attempt to retain their religious, and later ethnic identity.²² It has become a basic reference when studying the Mennonites.

Fretz, in Immigrant Group Settlements in Paraguay²³ provides a history of group settlement attempts in Paraguay and among these are the Mennonite settlements. This provides the reader with the opportunity of comparing a number²⁴ of colonization attempts.

A further work by Fretz²⁵ Pilgrims in Paraguay, provides an early history as well as some inventory of the Mennonite colonies in Paraguay. Because both his works are written in a more popular style, and meant for a general rather than an academic audience, they are quite easy to read and follow. However, for the same reason, they lack

the degree of verification and detail that one would hope for in an academic work. They are nevertheless valuable to any study of the Mennonites of South America.

3. Articles from Periodicals

The articles on the Mennonites of South America generally suffer from two limitations. Many of the articles are religious in nature. This is to be expected as the Mennonites emigrated to South America expressly to preserve their religious practices and many of the articles deal with, in a general way, their concern for this problem. They are of value, however, to this paper in that they frequently deal with the outside forces which are acting on the religious practices of the Colonies and thus are forces of assimilation. The other limitation is that many of the articles take the form of personal narratives. In these articles there is always the possibility that the author is subjectively acting on incomplete or misunderstood information. Again, they are of value in that they will describe forces, both social and economic, acting within the colonies as well as on the colonies from the outside.

An article by Fretz, "Factors Contributing to Success and Failure in Mennonite Colonization,"²⁵ deals almost exclusively with the success or failure to maintain established religious practices without change. In doing so, it deals indirectly with the cultural pressures exerted on

a colony. It must be kept in mind, however, that his definition of success is the maintenance of established practices with no adjustment to the host country and his definition of failure is:

"...Colonies of religious, ethnic, or economic groups that have accommodated themselves so completely to the society around them as to be totally assimilated into the surrounding culture...²⁶

The host country may well view the latter definition as describing success rather than failure.

An article by W. Quiring, "The Colonization of the German Mennonites from Russia in the Paraguayan Chaco,"²⁷ provides information on the reasons behind the move from Russia directly to Paraguay as well as early historical information about the colony itself.

A second article by Quiring, "The Canadian Mennonite Immigration into the Paraguayan Chaco, 1926-27"²⁸ provides historical background for the move from Canada to Paraguay. It is thus possible to compare the motivation expectation and economic state of the two groups involved, and perhaps come to some conclusion of the effect of these factors on the success of the colonization venture.

Isaak wrote a personal narrative of the colonization of Paraguay, "The Settlement in Paraguay from the Point of View of the Colonist."²⁹ Its main value is in the insight it gives into the reasons for an individual emigrating to

Paraguay, and what he hopes to achieve there as well as revealing some of the pressures acting on him.

Bender's article, "With the Mennonite Refugee Colonies in Brazil and Paraguay"³⁰ deals almost exclusively with the religious aspects of the colonies. However, as the Mennonites emigrated to South America for religious reasons, and as they think of their culture and their religion as being synonymous, any secularizing forces exerted on their religious practices by the host culture would in fact be forces tending to cause assimilation of the group.

An article on "Pioneering in Paraguay"³¹ tends to be almost an inventory of land, crops and livestock. It contains some demographic data as well. Its main value is that in comparing the inventory with earlier inventories, some idea of the economic growth of the colonies can be obtained.

Kliwer's work, "The Mennonites of Paraguay"³² is mainly historical in that it deals with factors leading up to the move to Paraguay and then with conditions within the colonies in their first years.

Faust, in "The Mennonite Colony in Paraguay"³³ deals mainly with the adjustments the first group of Mennonites had to make in emigrating from the colder mid-continental regions of Manitoba and Saskatchewan to the tropical savannah of Paraguay.

Klassen's article, "The Mennonites of Brazil"³⁴ deals

mainly with economic conditions within the Brazilian colonies in their earlier years. This is of importance as in this case a large number of colonists left the colony very shortly after it was founded. Their reasons were mainly economic.³⁵

Heibert, in "Mennonite Education in the Gran Chaco,"³⁶ gives important insight into the method used by the host country in using education as a method of assimilating an ethnic group settled within its boundaries.

As has been shown, Mennonite colonization in South America took place in three countries, Paraguay, Brazil and Uruguay, over a time span stretching from 1926 to 1948. This paper proposes to deal with the ten colonies involved in the following manner.

The discussion will be broken down in a country by country manner. Paraguay will be dealt with first for two reasons. The first Mennonite colonies in South America were in Paraguay and also seven of the ten colonies involved are in Paraguay. Brazil's two colonies will be dealt with next and the colony in Uruguay will be considered last.

Within a country, the colonies will generally be dealt with in chronological order, based on the founding date of the colonies. The basic aim of the paper is to compare the life cycle of these colonies with the "Model of

Life Cycle of a Closed Agricultural Colony" and to determine if the Mennonite colonies do or do not follow the generalized model.³⁷

PARAGUAY

Menno Colony

The first of the Mennonite colonies to be established in Paraguay was the Menno colony.³⁸ It was established by an ultra-conservative group from Manitoba and Saskatchewan which felt that laws passed by the Canadian Government would in time destroy their culture and the Mennonites would become indistinguishable from other Canadians. The laws dealt mainly with the use of English and the right of the group to operate its own school in its own language. This, as well as other factors such as the increased population both within the Mennonite settlements and around them and the abolishment of their line villages was interpreted by the Mennonites as a threat to their way of life.³⁹ It was decided that..."There remained but one possibility for the German Mennonites to maintain their native language and native culture, namely emigration..."⁴⁰ After this decision to emigrate was made there followed the problem of the selection of a site. In 1919 the first delegation left Canada to investigate colonization possibilities in Latin America. The countries considered as possible sites at the time were Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina and Mexico. A second delegation in 1920 considered Paraguay as well.⁴¹ In 1922 an emigration began to the state of Chihuahua in Mexico⁴² but many members of the sect remained in Canada as

they felt they would not gain the isolation they desired by migrating to Mexico. A delegation which had visited both the Mexican site and a potential site in the Paraguayan Chaco reported that "...in their judgment, the Chaco was unqualifiedly better than Mexico...because they would remain unmolested longer there."⁴³ This does seem to acknowledge an understanding on their part that permanent isolation is not possible. In addition to this, the Paraguayan government seemed anxious to attract the Mennonites as settlers and did all they could to encourage the Mennonites to settle in Paraguay. This encouragement by the Paraguayan Government was carried to the extent that they passed a law which granted to the Mennonites all of the privileges they requested.⁴⁴ The main concessions were: exemption from military service, the right to establish autonomous closed colonies, and the right to establish their own schools in their own language, German. Because no other South American country was willing to grant these concessions, the stage was set for a move to Paraguay. The first of the immigrants arrived in Paraguay in December of 1926.⁴⁵

Several factors influenced the selection of the site within Paraguay. The Paraguayan Government wished to attract agricultural settlers in an attempt to upgrade the agricultural standards within the country. They further wished to encourage the settlers to go to the Chaco area as

it was an area claimed by both Bolivia and Paraguay and Paraguay wished to bolster her claim by settling the area.⁴⁶ The Mennonites' search for land was influenced by two factors: they wanted the maximum amount of land possible for the capital they had, and they wanted isolation. This combination of forces tended to steer the delegations searching for a site for the colony into the least settled part of Paraguay, the northwestern section known as the Chaco. Eventually, in 1926, a site in the Chaco was selected and a block of land, 138,994 acres in size, was purchased.⁴⁷ By this purchase the Mennonites had achieved the degree of isolation they desired.⁴⁸ Their colony was located about 440 miles from Asuncion, the capital and main market of the country. To cover this distance they had to travel north by riverboat to Puerto Casado, from there west by logging railroad for 135 Kilometers and from the railhead a further 70 Kilometers by wagon.⁴⁹ Isolation had been achieved.

However, the site was not agreeable to all. A small group rejected the site and returned to the source area, Canada. This return move involved a total of 371 of the 1765 immigrants.⁵⁰ The remainder accepted the site and began developing the colony.⁵¹

Although their main aim was to live an isolated existence within their closed colonies, total isolation was not

possible for the Mennonites. They were accustomed to large scale and economically competitive farming in Canada. Thus, when they emigrated to Paraguay they were faced with a choice. To gain complete isolation meant to cut themselves out of the economic and commercial life of the country and this, in turn, meant a return to subsistence agriculture. The other alternative was to live in as isolated a manner as possible and still remain part of the economic picture of the country. The latter course was chosen. Thus while the colony was developing and steadily resisting any move to become assimilated into the Paraguayan culture, there were in fact forces acting on the colony which in time would lead to a certain degree of assimilation.

One of the first of these forces exerted was in the field of education. Very early in the life of the colony, the Paraguayan government began exerting pressure on the Mennonite schools to teach Spanish as well as German.⁵² The result was that Spanish was introduced to the school system at the grade three level. In addition to this, both Paraguayan history and geography are taught in Spanish.⁵³

A further method of applying pressure to the Mennonite school system was in the field of determining the qualifications of the teachers. Although the Mennonites were allowed to operate their own school system independently, they were required to have teachers who met the Paraguayan standards.

In order to obtain the necessary certification, Paraguay required

"...that those wishing a teacher's certificate take all training above the sixth grade in Paraguayan schools."⁵⁴

The effect of this has been twofold. Those wishing to become teachers are forced to leave the Colony and to take some of their primary schooling plus all of their secondary and post-secondary training in Paraguayan national schools. They are thus exposed to a lengthy period of living outside of the colonies and are made aware of possible alternatives to the life within the colony. They become the teachers when returning to the colony and in this role are in a unique position to influence the younger members of the colonies. This exposure of the pupils to alternative modes of action by the teacher is augmented by the fact that they are learning the language of the country in which they live. The early members of the Menno colony spoke English and German but not Spanish. This tended to isolate them from the Paraguayans as the latter spoke mainly Spanish. The members of the generation who received their schooling within the colony however, learned Spanish and are thus able to communicate with the people around them.

This learning of the national language has one direct, practical, and almost immediate result. The younger members of the group are able to leave the colony in order to earn

money in the cities. This, in fact, does happen and a number of the younger people from the colony have gone to Asuncion in order to earn money to supplement the income of the farms in the Chaco.⁵⁵

There is then a definite move toward assimilation based on the enforced teacher training regulations, the curriculum regulations and the need for extra cash which is available only by working outside of the colony.

In the case of the Menno colony, these forces of assimilation are offset by a number of factors. The colony, although it has a large rate of internal growth, has not had to send its younger members away from the colony in search of more land. Because the area in which they settled was so extremely isolated they were able to purchase more land as it was needed, and by 1958 the acreage owned by the colony had expanded to 843,206 acres.⁵⁶ Another of the usual influences tending toward the assimilation of a closed colony, the hiring of outside labour, is largely absent. In the case of the Menno colony, the need for outside labour is largely supplied by a tribe of comparatively primitive Indians who lived in the area before the Mennonites arrived.⁵⁷ The use of this Indian labour is fairly extensive.⁵⁸ However, as they were not a part of the Paraguayan cultural fabric they do not tend to introduce Paraguayan values into the colony. There has been a tendency

for the Indians to learn the Low German dialect used in everyday speech by the Mennonites and thus adjust their culture to that of the Mennonites.

It can thus be seen that the great degree of isolation, the ability to acquire more land in the immediate vicinity and the use of primitive, unskilled labour on the farms has kept the colony reasonably cut off from outside influences. To offset these factors, there is the need for cash income which is supplied by the younger members going to the cities to work, the introduction of the Spanish language into the colony's school system and the training of the colony's teachers in Paraguayan institutes. There is thus, a degree of outside pressure being exerted on the colony. Its ability to resist this assimilating pressure has been bolstered by its location and the fact that the immigrants arrived with enough capital to purchase more land when needed to supply the needs created by internal growth. To an outside observer, the assimilating influences would appear to have been kept to a minimum. To the members of the Menno colony this may not be the case. A number of them rejected the site in resistance to the assimilative forces. They turned to the traditional Mennonite way of solving their problem, they emigrated.⁵⁹ In 1958 a small group left the Menno colony to set up a new colony in Bolivia.

Thus it can be seen that the Menno colony is progressing through the stages of the model. Its progress has been slowed by conditions peculiar to it, but it does fit the model in that pressures are being exerted on the colony and the colony is adjusting to these pressures.

Fernheim

The second Mennonite colony to be established in Paraguay was the colony of Fernheim,⁶⁰ which was established in 1930 when a group of 2,000 Mennonites arrived from Russia. This colony was located about 30 miles to the northwest of the Menno colony.⁶¹ Although both of them were colonies of Mennonites there were some differences. The Canadian Mennonites had come voluntarily. They were able to choose their own location and they arrived with a large amount of capital. This was not the case with the Russian Mennonites who established the Fernheim colony.

This group of Mennonites fled from Russia, arriving in Germany as political refugees with no capital.⁶² They were forced to appeal to the Mennonite Central Committee (usually referred to as the MCC)⁶³ for aid in finding a home. They wanted, if possible, to settle in either the United States of America or in Canada. Due to current regulations this was not possible and the MCC began considering other possible locations. In the end they turned once more to Paraguay as no other country would grant the privileges they wanted. However, Paraguay was willing to grant them all of the privileges granted to the previous group of Mennonites.⁶⁴

Thus, mainly because there was no other place open to them, a second group of Mennonites emigrated to Paraguay.⁶⁵

The selection of a site within the country to which they were assigned was also taken out of their hands.⁶⁶ The site was selected for them by the MCC and only after it had been selected were they informed of the choice. Thus the first stages of the model were forced onto them by powers outside the group rather than by voluntary action from within the group itself. They arrived at a location, not of their own choosing as penniless refugees.⁶⁷ They were transplanted from the mid-continental environment of Russia to a 40,000 acre⁶⁸ tract in the remote savannah of Paraguay.

The problems of acceptance or rejection of the site were in this case complicated by their financial situation and by the fact that there was no other country which would accept them as a group. The group involved was not as conservative as the Mennonites from Canada. In Russia these people had been exposed to, and accepted, a more sophisticated and mechanized method of farming and were taking part in the cultural and political life of the country around them. Their desire for isolation was not as strong as that held by the Canadian Mennonites. All of these factors complicated the site acceptance. By 1938 the dissatisfaction with the site had reached the stage where a group of 748 people rejected the site and moved out to start another colony.⁶⁹ The remainder set to work

developing the site. In this they were subjected to the same pressures to assimilate that had been applied to the Menno colony by the Paraguayan government. Their schools and teachers complied with the laws of the country and by learning the language of the land, the people became able to communicate with the Paraguayans. There was, however, a continual exodus and in the first eight years approximately 1,000 persons left the colony.⁷⁰ Of these only one group left to start another colony, the rest left as individuals and were assimilated.

It would then appear that the assimilation process is more effective and faster in the Fernheim colony than in the Menno colony. The reasons for this probably lie in the motivation of the colonists themselves. The people of Menno are there by their own choice; the people of Fernheim are in Paraguay because they had no other place to go. The people of Fernheim had been exposed to a more industrial and urban life in Russia than had those of Menno in Canada and were not as strongly determined to keep their isolation. They were more willing to sacrifice isolation and accept a degree of assimilation in return for a higher level of income and education.

It would then seem that the attitude of the people involved would have a great degree of influence on the rate at which a group will progress through the stages of the model.

Friesland

In 1937, 748 people who rejected the Fernheim site established the settlement of Friesland.⁷¹ Their reasons were mainly economic. They felt that by settling closer to the capital, the main market for their goods, they would be in a much better position to compete economically. They, therefore, selected a site within 70 miles of Asuncion,⁷² and established a settlement on a plot of 14,602 acres.⁷³ Although most of the literature considers Friesland to be another Mennonite colony, it is not so, in the strictest sense. It is a settlement rather than a "Closed Colony," as it is not closed to non-Mennonites nor does it enjoy any of the privileges granted to the Mennonite colonies by the Paraguayan government.⁷⁴ It is, in fact, a settlement of Mennonites who rejected the Fernheim site, but instead of forming another "Closed Colony" established a settlement which lacked the closed nature of the previous colonies as well as the isolation of the Chaco site. Therefore, when the rejection of the site took place, this group did not return to the start of the model; they progressed instead to the end of the model and accepted a settlement that was not "closed."

Neuland and Volendam

World War Two and its dislocation of peoples did not leave the Mennonites untouched. At the end of World War Two, there were a number of Mennonite refugees in Germany. These people had left Russia in the period 1941 to 1943 and the end of World War Two found them stranded as refugees in Germany.⁷⁵ These people were not too interested in pioneering in a primitive area. Most of them wanted to come either to Canada or the United States of America. However, because they were considered to be German citizens at the time, this choice was impossible. The Mennonite relief agency (the M.C.C.) once more stepped in to help find a home for these refugee people. Because the M.C.C. had been able to establish colonies in Paraguay in the past, they turned once more to that country. Again Paraguay offered an extension of all of the privileges granted to the previous Mennonite groups to any group the M.C.C. might want to settle at that time. Based on this, the M.C.C. decided to resettle a number of Mennonites in Paraguay and they set up two colonies, Volendam and Neuland. For the colony of Neuland, the M.C.C. purchased a 197,535 acre tract in the Chaco.⁷⁶ This group of Mennonites then had no say at all in the selection of a site. The war had forced them to flee from Russia to Germany and the M.C.C. then selected the country and the site within

that country where they would settle. Being penniless refugees they were not in a position to argue.

Some of the refugees did object to the remoteness of the site and the M.C.C. allowed them some choice in selecting a site within Paraguay. They decided that economic considerations took precedence over isolation and selected a site on the river Paraguay within reasonable distance of Asuncion.⁷⁷ It was here that the colony of Volendam was established.

On June 4, 1947, Neuland was officially established and its population was 2,389 by 1948.⁷⁸ The colony of Volendam was established at the same time with a population of 1,800.⁷⁹

Certain pressures were immediately apparent within these colonies. They were exposed to the pressures in the areas of education and economics that had affected the previous colonies of Mennonites. In addition to these pressures, these colonies were faced with the additional problem that most of the colonists were there against their will. They had been exposed to, and were part of a much more cosmopolitan life in Russia and were not interested in setting up a "Closed Colony" in an isolated region. They were in Paraguay only because there was no other place for them to go. Once an alternative opened up to them, many rejected the site and left. By 1961 the population

of Volendam was down to 800.⁸⁰ The majority of these people had gone to Canada, some to Brazil and some back to Germany. They had rejected the idea of a "Closed Colony", rejected the site and gone ahead to become assimilated into the cultural fabric of the country of their choice.

In Neuland the same forces were in action and by 1958 the population of the colony was down to 1,715.⁸¹ Again, most of the emigrants went to Canada, the country to which they had originally wanted admittance. During the period 1947 to 1961, a total of 3,405 Mennonites emigrated from Paraguay to Canada.⁸² This represents a substantial rejection of the Paraguayan sites.

In the case of these two colonies, it would seem that the lack of motivation on the part of the colonists made the task of setting up "Closed Colonies" almost impossible. As soon as they were financially able, and the Canadian laws would permit, a large portion of the people involved moved to Canada, their original choice. In Canada, however, they did not set up closed colonies but entered instead as individuals with no special concessions.

From this it can be concluded that a strong degree of motivation is necessary in order for a "Closed Colony" to succeed for even a short period of time. Where the motivation is missing, the determination to resist forces of

assimilation is missing and assimilation in one form or another comes more quickly.

Bergthal and Sommerfeld

More or less at the same time as the two colonies of Neuland and Volendam were being established, another move of Mennonites to Paraguay was taking place. This move was again from Canada to Paraguay.

During World War Two a certain amount of pressure had been exerted on the Mennonites of Canada. They were German-speaking pacifists in a country which was at war with Germany. Their insistence on the use of German and their refusal to contribute to the military effort of the country made them unpopular with their neighbours. The result was that another group of Mennonites decided that in order to maintain their ethnic integrity, they must emigrate. They felt

"...the force of secularization penetrating their communities and slowly but surely dis-integrating their once strong religious convictions and cultural solidarity.⁸⁵

In contrast to the colonists who went to Volendam and Neuland, this group deliberately chose to emigrate to Paraguay. They were successful, well-established farmers in Manitoba and Saskatchewan rather than penniless refugees, and they decided they must move in the face of what they conceived as a threat to their way of life. They were aware of possible alternative sites as some of their friends and relatives had migrated to Mexico and others to South

America in the past periods of migration.⁸⁴ After due deliberation, Paraguay was chosen as the country to which they would go. The choice of a site within Paraguay shows a slight change of attitude between this group and that of the group which had established the Menno Colony. This group decided against settling in the Chaco and decided instead to settle in eastern Paraguay where the climate was more suitable for farming and where the markets were easier to reach.⁸⁵ Such a choice indicates less of a desire for total isolation than that demanded by the first group to settle in Paraguay and more of a desire to be situated so as to be in a competitive position for the markets in the country.

In this way the decision to emigrate was made and the site chosen. Bergthal and Sommerfeld were established in 1948,⁸⁶ and a group of 1700 left Canada to develop the new colonies. Of this group, 500 rejected the site shortly after their arrival and returned to Canada.⁸⁷ There has also been a continual but slow out migration from both of these colonies. This amounts to an average of 16 people per year leaving Sommerfeld and 11 people per year from Bergthal. Despite this emigration, there is now a slight annual increase in population within the two colonies.⁸⁸ The two new colonies face the same problems as did all the previous Mennonite Colonies in Paraguay in that they are

forced to teach Spanish, Paraguayan History and Geography in their school system and this carries with it all of the assimilative forces that were previously outlined. However, because they had brought with them considerable capital reserves they were not forced to send their young people to the cities in order to find work. On the other hand, their colonies are not isolated. They are, in fact, built along a main all-weather road connecting Asuncion and Curitiba in Brazil.⁸⁹ This means the area is easily accessible to outsiders. Also the area around them is occupied by Paraguayan nationals. This has a two-fold implication as far as the Mennonites are concerned. It means there must be a certain amount of interaction between the two groups simply because of their geographical proximity to one another and secondly, it means the colonies will not be able to expand their borders when they need more land. Both of the latter factors will tend to bring about assimilation more rapidly. From this it can be seen that the latter two colonies also fit the model.

Brazil

During the time Mennonite colonies were being established in Paraguay a similar effort, but on a much smaller scale was being carried on in Brazil. When the Russian Mennonites were looking for a possible site in the late 1920's, not all of them were willing to settle in Fernheim in Paraguay. To a number of the Mennonites, this location was far too isolated and they continued looking for alternatives. In this effort, they were encouraged by the German government which suggested locating in Brazil. The group was aided by the Hanseatischen Kolonisationsgesellschaft,⁹⁰ which had been successful in settling large numbers of Germans in Brazil.⁹¹ These negotiations were completed and the first of the Mennonite colonists arrived in 1930 to take up land selected for them by the Hanseatic Company.⁹² The site selected was in the State of Santa Catarina, in a mountainous region west of the cities of Blumenau and Ibirama,⁹³ an isolated spot with no effective all-weather communication with any centre of population.⁹⁴

Again the process of site selection had been taken out of the hands of the colonists to a large degree. Their original choice was Canada but this country was closed to them.⁹⁵ They had been forced to choose between Paraguay, which offered them all the concessions they wanted, or Brazil, which offered no special concessions. This group

had chosen Brazil because it was not as isolated as Paraguay. The selection of sites within Brazil had again been carried out by a body outside of the Mennonite group, by the Hanseatischen Kolonisationsgesellschaft. Thus it happened that this group of Mennonites found themselves in a country which had been their second choice. Brazil had been selected, rather than Paraguay because total isolation was not desired. The site within Brazil was however not of their own choosing and turned out to be quite isolated. Their problems were further increased when they found the land to be mountainous. Where they had hoped to have large scale level farms which were suited to grain farming, they were settled instead on small ten to twenty acre tracts on steep mountainsides which forced them from mechanized farming into a hoe type of agriculture.⁹⁶ This then constituted the first Mennonite colony in Brazil, the Kraul colony.

The second colony, the Auhagen colony, was established about the same time and within a distance of three miles of the first.⁹⁷ The reason for establishing two colonies was very simple. There was not enough land at the first site to accommodate all the settlers and so another site, Auhagen, was chosen for the remainder of the group. Those settlers who arrived in June of 1930 found the first colony, Kraul, already full and forced to settle in Auhagen.⁹⁸ A total of 500 people settled in the Auhagen colony and 700 in the

Kraul colony.⁹⁹

An attempt was made to develop the sites. There were, however, a number of difficulties.

Kraul

Because the Mennonites had received no special concessions from Brazil they were immediately forced to let into their colonies certain cultural influences which would lead toward eventual assimilation. They could not develop their own school system. This meant that they must hire Brazilian teachers or send their own teachers to Brazilian schools to obtain the necessary accreditation. They were forced also to follow the Brazilian curriculum and teach Portugese.¹⁰⁰ A second factor which led to assimilation was an economic one. The group had arrived as refugees and it did not possess the capital necessary to develop the site. One of the ways in which some capital could be acquired was by sending the younger members of the group out of the colony to work for wages. This was done.¹⁰¹

These young people went mainly to the cities of Blumenau, Curitiba, and Sao Paulo.¹⁰² During the early years, a significant number of people decided to leave the colony. In the first six years, 28 families left.¹⁰³ These did not form another settlement but instead were assimilated into the Brazilian economy. This in turn led to another problem. When these individuals left the colony, some of the land was sold to non-Mennonites. This practice effectively opened what had been a "Closed Colony."¹⁰⁴

There was a continual stream of people out of the colony to places which offered a better economic opportunity. The peak population in the two colonies was reached in 1934 and from then on declined.¹⁰⁵

In 1951 the Kraul group decided officially to reject the site and began looking for a possible new location. A 19,424 acre site was purchased and the move begun. This site was chosen for its advantageous economic location with respect to markets as well as for its flatter and more open land. This site, which became known as "New Witmarsum" became a co-operative farm rather than a "Closed Colony" and only about one half of the remaining colonists from Kraul chose to go there, the remainder rejected both the old colony of Kraul and the new site and struck out on their own as individuals.¹⁰⁶

Auhagen.

The Auhagen site was rejected almost from the beginning. As early as 1933 people were rejecting it and moving away to the nearest cities. In 1934 the group agreed to abandon the site and search for a better location.¹⁰⁷ By 1937, 65 of the original 106 families had left and the last of the Mennonite families left in 1951.¹⁰⁸ The majority of these went to the city of Curitiba. Many of the young people had gone to Curitiba to work and their reports of the city eventually convinced their parents to move there. In Curitiba there was no attempt to set up a colony. They simply moved in as individual settlers and were assimilated.¹⁰⁹ So, very shortly the Kraul and Auhagen settlements were abandoned.¹¹⁰

This rejection of the sites and assimilation was fairly rapid when compared with the process in Paraguay. This difference can be accounted for in a number of ways. Primarily though, it is a matter of attitude. The group which settled in Brazil did not desire the degree of isolation that was sought by the colonies in Paraguay. This is shown by their rejection of Paraguay as a possible site because of its extreme isolation. This in turn led to the rejection of the sites within Brazil when they were found to be too isolated.

The study by Minnich discusses in detail the assimil-

ation of the Mennonites in Brazil.¹¹¹ He found a number of factors to be of importance in this process. He found that the highly trained youths were leaving the colony in search of employment.¹¹² There simply is not the employment opportunity in an agricultural colony for university graduates and they are forced out of the colony. It was also found that when the group's traditional internal governmental systems and land holding systems came into conflict with the Brazilian legal guarantees, the Mennonites were willing to abandon their traditional systems in favour of the Brazilian system.¹¹³

Although historically the Mennonites have been conscientious objectors, the Brazilian government would not give them any exemption from military service. This they were aware of before they emigrated to Brazil, and so the men of draft age have reported for military service. In this they are subjected to an extended period away from other Mennonites and in total and daily contact with Brazilians.¹¹⁴ Such a separation from the group does much to break down the we-they feeling and helps assimilation.

As further evidence of the assimilation of the Mennonites, Minnich discusses the degree of intermarriage between Mennonites and non-Mennonites.¹¹⁵ This is attributed to the loss of isolation, school contacts and jobs outside of the colonies.

From the preceding discussion it can be seen that the Mennonites of Brazil have rejected their original sites and have advanced to the final stages of the models, they are being assimilated.

Uruguay

Among the Mennonites dislocated by World War Two were a number from the Danzig region. These were perhaps the most cosmopolitan of all of the Mennonite groups. They had lived on individual farms in an area where German was the common language. They were thus not accustomed to thinking of themselves as being somehow different from the people around them. They considered themselves to be simply another Protestant group. A number of these Mennonites were located in displaced persons camps in Denmark after the war.¹¹⁶ As with so many other Mennonites, their personal choice of sites in which to relocate was North America. However, because they were German citizens, both Canada and the United States of America were closed to them. Possible sites in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Paraguay were suggested by the M.C.C. but the group rejected all of them as being too isolated.¹¹⁷ In 1948, a group of 750 agreed to emigrate to Uruguay. Uruguay gave them no special considerations. They were required to conform to the educational requirements of the country but would be allowed to form colonies. The question of exemption from the draft was not of importance to this group and Uruguay's constitution allowed for exemption on a personal basis for conscientious objectors.¹¹⁸

The M.C.C. had purchased a 2,900 acre site for the group but when they arrived, the site was not ready for

occupation. This site was in developed farmland, 180 miles northwest of Montevideo.¹¹⁹ These people therefore were not going to an isolated location.

Because the site was not ready, and it could hold only half of the group at best, members of the group began to take jobs wherever they could be found.

In September of 1950, the site could be occupied and about one-half of the group moved onto it, the other half was scattered as individuals, mostly around Montevideo.¹²⁰

In 1951, a second group of 431 persons arrived, an additional tract of 4,500 acres was purchased and they were settled on it. Again the land was in a well-developed part of the country and so no attempt was made at isolation or setting up of a closed colony.¹²¹

The Mennonites of Uruguay are thus quite different from those of both Paraguay and Brazil. They very staunchly resisted any attempt by the M.C.C. to settle them in an area which was not of their own choosing. Once an acceptable area had been found, they refused to set up totally "Closed Colonies." They in fact made every effort to become assimilated and to take part in National affairs as soon as possible. They immediately progressed to the final stages of the model, to the integration and assimilation stages.

CONCLUSIONS

It can then be concluded that the Mennonite colonies of South America do fit the Model of the Life Cycle of a "Closed" Agricultural Colony.

It can also be seen that there are some important factors which govern the amount of time involved in moving from the establishment of a closed colony to the opening of the closed nature of this colony and thus to eventual assimilation.

Motivation is an important factor. In the case of the Mennonites from Canada who set up the Colonies of Menno, Bergthal and Sommerfeld, a strong degree of isolation was actively sought and gained. This was a definite choice on the part of the colonists and this has been reflected in their ability to withstand integrative pressures to a greater degree. On the other hand, some of the colonies were established by people who had no choice and no other place to go. The motivation toward developing that particular site was not as strong, particularly where the individual had hoped to emigrate to a different country altogether. In this type of colony the resistance to outside pressure was not as great. This can be seen particularly in the colonies of Brazil and Uruguay.

A second factor which seems very important is a

purely economic one, the amount of capital at the disposal of the group. The groups from Canada arrived with sufficient capital to acquire a large enough acreage to keep all of the people together on one site. The refugee colonies on the other hand arrived with no capital and a considerable debt. They were immediately forced to send some of their members out of the colony to work for wages in order to secure the capital needed.

The attitude of the host governments has a bearing on the rate of assimilation. In the case of Paraguay, the government is willing to allow a great degree of internal autonomy to the colonies. In addition, it allowed a number of concessions in order to attract the group. On the other hand, the governments of Brazil and Uruguay allowed no special concessions to the Mennonites and assimilation is faster in these areas.

It can thus be seen that the Mennonite Colonies do fit the model, and that an understanding of the factors involved can be of help in determining the rate of progression through the model. This can be of help in determining the expected life of other, more recent colonies of Mennonites as "Closed" Agricultural Colonies.

ESSAY NO. TWO

FOOTNOTES

1. Henry C. Smith, The Story of the Mennonites (4th Edition, Newton, Kansas: Mennonite Publication Office, 1957), p. 89.
2. For a quick account of the reasons for the migration, the times and places involved and the destinations Smith's work is very useful, Smith, op. cit., p. 239.
3. Benjamin Heinrich Unruh, Die Niederlandisch-niederdeutschen Hintergrunde der Mennonitischen Ostwanderungen in 16, 18 und 19 Jahrhundert (Karlsruhe, Karlstrasse 28: Heinrich Schnieder), p.185.
4. For a detailed account of this move see: D.G. Rempel, "The Mennonite colonies of New Russia: A study in their Settlement and Economic Development from 1789 to 1914" (Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, Stanford University, 1934).
5. Smith, op. cit., p. 635.
6. In this article Warkentin presents a definitive account of the early settlements of Mennonites in Manitoba. J. Warkentin, "Mennonite Agricultural Settlements of Southern Manitoba," Geographical Review (July, 1959), pp. 342-368.
7. Warkentin, op. cit.
8. Walter Schmiedhaus, "A Beleaguered People: The Mennonites of Mexico," Landscape, Vol. IV, No. 1 (Summer, 1954), pp. 13-21.
9. Smith, op. cit., p. 718.
10. Ibid., p. 722.
11. Ibid., p. 735.
12. J.W. Fretz, Immigrant Group Settlements in Paraguay (North Newton, Kansas: Bethel College, 1962), p. 51.
13. J.W. Fretz, Pilgrims in Paraguay (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1953), p. 172.

14. Fretz, op. cit., (Pilgrims in Paraguay), p. 189.
15. For the development of this model, see M.A. Essay No. One by R. E. Langemann, Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University, 1971.
16. Reynolds Herbert Minnich, Jr., "A Sociological Study of the Mennonite Immigrant Communities of Parana, Brazil," (Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, University of Florida, 1966).
17. Minnich, op. cit., p. 37.
18. Ibid., p. 37.
19. Annemarie Elisabeth Krause, "Mennonite Settlement in the Paraguayan Chaco" (Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1952).
20. George Fadenrecht, "Mennonite Migrations to Paraguay" (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Dept. of History, University of Kansas, 1949).
21. Abraham Friesen, "Emigration in Mennonite History" (Unpublished M.A. History Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1962).
22. Smith, op. cit.
23. Fretz (Immigrant Group Settlements in Paraguay), op. cit.
24. J. W. Fretz (Immigrant Group Settlements in Paraguay), op. cit. In this he describes 33 different Colonies.
25. J.W. Fretz, "Factors Contributing to Success and Failure in Mennonite Colonization," Mennonite Quarterly Review, Vol. XXIV, No. 2 (April, 1950).
26. Fretz, op. cit., (Factors Contributing), p. 131.
27. Walter Quiring, "The Colonization of the German Mennonites, from Russia in the Paraguayan Chaco," Mennonite Quarterly Review, Vol. VIII (April, 1934).
28. Walter Quiring, "The Canadian Mennonite Immigration into the Paraguayan Chaco, 1926-27," Mennonite Quarterly Review, Vol. VIII (Jan., 1934).
29. Jacob Isaak, The Settlement in Paraguay from the Point of View of the Colonist, Fourth Mennonite World Conference Proceedings (August 3-10, 1948).

30. H.S. Bender, "With the Mennonite Refugee Colonies in Brazil and Paraguay," Mennonite Quarterly Review (Jan., 1939).
31. "Pioneering in Paraguay" (author unknown), Mennonite Life, Vol. V, (Jan., 1950).
32. Fritz Kliwer, "The Mennonites of Paraguay," Mennonite Quarterly Review, Vol. IX, No. 1 (Jan., 1937).
33. John B. Faust, "The Mennonite Colony in Paraguay," Mennonite Quarterly Review, Vol. III, No. 3 (July, 1929).
34. Peter Klassen, "The Mennonites of Brazil," Mennonite Quarterly Review, Vol. I, No. 2 (April, 1937).
35. Klassen, op. cit., p. 111.
36. Waldo Hiebert, "Mennonite Education in the Gran Chaco," Mennonite Life, Vol. II, No. 4 (Oct., 1947).
37. A copy of the Model is attached and forms Appendix One to this paper.
38. Fretz, op. cit., (Immigrant Group Settlements in Paraguay), p. 83.
39. Quiring, op. cit., (The Canadian Mennonite Immigration into the Paraguayan Chaco), p. 32-33.
40. Ibid., p. 33.
41. Ibid., p. 33.
42. Ibid., p. 34.
43. Ibid., p. 35.
44. A copy of the Privileges granted to the Mennonites by the Paraguayan Government (Bill 514) is attached, forming Appendix Two.
45. Fadenrech, op. cit., p. 95.
46. Fretz, op. cit., (Pilgrims in Paraguay), p. 15.
47. Ibid., p. 16.
48. See Appendix Three.

49. Faust, op. cit., p. 183.
50. Quiring, op. cit., (The Canadian Mennonite Immigration into the Paraguayan Chaco, 1926-1927).
51. For a complete report on the development of the Colony, see Krause, op. cit.
52. Hiebert, op. cit., p. 30.
53. Ibid., p. 31.
54. Ibid., p. 30.
55. "Pioneering in Paraguay," Mennonite Life, op. cit.
56. Fretz, op. cit., p. 37 (Immigrant Group Settlements in Paraguay), op. cit., p. 85.
57. Faust, op. cit., p. 186.
58. Krause, op. cit., p. 49.
59. Ann Dyck, Mennonite in Aller Welt, (Basel: Agape Verlag, 1967), p. 81.
60. Fretz, op. cit., (Immigrant Group Settlement in Paraguay), p. 51.
61. Quiring, op. cit., (The Colonization of the German Mennonites from Russia in the Paraguayan Chaco), p. 66.
62. Ibid., p. 62.
63. The Mennonite Central Committee, commonly known as the M.C.C. is a committee representing all the Mennonite Relief agencies in North America. As such it coordinates all major relief work carried out by the North American Mennonites.
64. See Appendix Two, a copy of the privileges granted to the Mennonites.
65. Isaak, op. cit., p. 189.
66. Quiring, op. cit., (The Colonization of the German Mennonites from Russia in the Paraguayan Chaco), p. 66.

67. H.A. Fast, "Mennonites in Paraguay," Mennonite Life, Vol. I (1946), p. 38.
68. Fretz, op. cit., (Immigrant Group Settlements in Paraguay), p. 90.
69. Ibid., p. 59.
70. Bender, op. cit., p. 67.
71. Fretz, op. cit., (Immigrant Group Settlements in Paraguay), p. 59.
72. Ibid., p. 58.
73. Fretz, op. cit., (Pilgrims in Paraguay), p. 32.
74. Bender, op. cit., p. 70.
75. Fretz, op. cit., (Immigrant Group Settlements in Paraguay), p. 95.
76. Ibid., p. 95.
77. Isaak, op. cit., p. 192.
78. Fretz, op. cit., (Immigrant Group Settlements in Paraguay), p. 97.
79. Ibid., p. 61.
80. Ibid., p. 63.
81. Ibid., p. 97.
82. F.H. Epp, Mennonite Exodus (Altona, Manitoba: D.W. Friesen & Sons Ltd., 1962), p. 442.
83. Fretz, op. cit., (Pilgrims in Paraguay), p. 49.
84. Fretz, op. cit., (Immigrant Group Settlements in Paraguay), p. 100.
85. Ibid., p. 99.
86. Ibid., p. 31.
87. Ibid., p. 100.

88. Ibid., p. 101.
89. Ibid., p. 101.
90. Klassen, op. cit., p. 108.
91. Epp, op. cit., p. 257.
92. Ibid., p. 258.
93. Fretz, op. cit., (Pilgrims in Paraguay), p. 172.
94. Klassen, op. cit., p. 108.
95. Ibid., p. 108.
96. Fretz, op. cit., (Pilgrims in Paraguay), p. 173.
97. Ibid., p. 173.
98. Klassen, op. cit., p. 109.
99. Fretz, op. cit., (Pilgrims in Paraguay), p. 172.
100. Klassen, op. cit., p. 114.
101. Ibid., p. 111.
102. Bender, op. cit., p. 63.
103. Klassen, op. cit., p. 112.
104. Ibid., p. 117.
105. Minnich, op. cit., p. 23.
106. Fretz, op. cit., (Pilgrims in Paraguay), p. 181.
107. Ibid., p. 173.
108. Ibid., p. 174.
109. Ibid., p. 175.
110. Minnich, op. cit., p. 116.
111. Ibid., p. 273.
112. Ibid., p. 223.

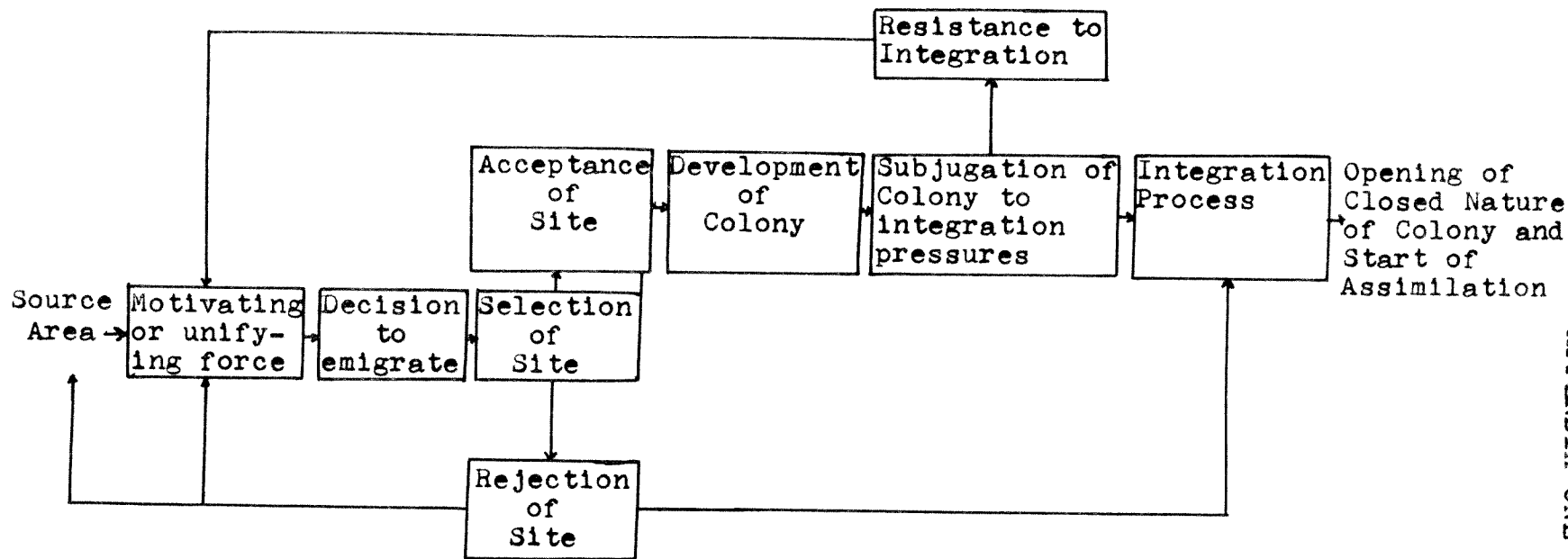
113. Ibid., p. 273.
114. Ibid., p. 278.
115. Ibid., p. 285.
116. Fretz, op. cit., (Pilgrims in Paraguay), p. 188.
117. Ibid., p. 188.
118. Ibid., p. 189.
119. Ibid., p. 190.
120. Ibid., p. 193.
121. Ibid., p. 192.

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APPENDIX ONE

MODEL FOR THE LIFE CYCLE OF A CLOSED AGRICULTURAL COLONY

APPENDIX TWO

II

PARAGUAY LAW 514

(MENNONITE PRIVILEGIUM)

Article I. Members of the community known as Mennonites who come to the country as components of a colonization enterprise, and their descendants, shall enjoy the following rights and privileges:

1. To practice their religion and to worship with absolute and unrestricted liberty, to make affirmations by simple "yes" or "no" in courts of justice instead of by oath; and to be exempt from obligatory military service either as combatants or non-combatants both in times of peace and during war;
2. To establish, maintain, and administer schools and establishments of learning, and to teach and learn their religion and their language, which is German, without restriction;
3. To administer inheritances and especially the properties of widows and orphans by means of their special system of trust committees known as Waisenamt and in accordance with the particular rules of the community without restriction of any kind;
4. To administer the mutual insurance against fire established in the colonies.

Article II. The sale of alcoholic or intoxicating beverages is prohibited within a zone of 5 kilometers from the properties belonging to the Mennonite colonies unless the competent authorities of those colonies request the Government to permit such sale and the Government accedes to the request.

Article III. The following concessions are granted to the Mennonite colonies for a period of ten years from the arrival of the first colonists:

1. The free entry of furniture, machinery, utensils, drugs, seeds, animals, implements, and in general, everything that may be necessary for the installation and development of the colonies;
2. Exemption from all classes of national and municipal taxes.

Article IV. No immigration law, or law of any other character, existing or that may be passed in future, shall impede entrance of Mennonite immigrants into the country because of age, physical or mental incapacity.

Article V. The concession referred to in paragraph 3 of Article I is to be understood as not affecting the rights of persons capable of administering their own property. In the case of those incapable of administering their own property, the judges, as soon as it is proved that the person or persons involved belong to one of the Mennonite communities, shall appoint the trust committee of the respective community to act as guardian. Such guardianship shall be exercised in accordance with the rules of the trust committees.

Article VI. The company in charge of the Mennonite colonization or the recognized authorities of the colonists must inform the executive power of:

1. The lands to be colonized by the Mennonites;
2. The persons or corporations which represent the colonists;
3. The names, authorities, and regulations of the trust committees (Waisenamt) in order that these may be approved by Congress.

Article VII. The privileges and concessions granted by this law shall extend also to individuals of the Mennonite community who may enter the country singly, after their identity as Mennonites is certified by the competent authorities of the community.

Article VIII. Notify the executive power. Given in the Hall of Sessions of the honorable Legislative Congress this twenty-second day of July in the year one thousand nine hundred and twenty-one.

Felix Paiva,
President of the Senate

Juan De D. Arevalo,
Secretary

Enrique Bordenave,
President of the Chamber of Deputies

Manuel Gimenez,
Secretary

Asuncion, July 26, 1921

Be it enacted, enforced, published, and filed with the official registrar.

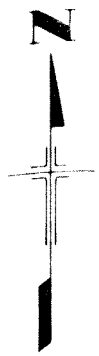
Gondra,
Jose P. Guggiari,
Minister of the Interior

Ramon Lara Castro,
Minister of Foreign Relations

Eligio Ayala,
Minister of Finance

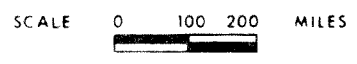
Rogelio Ibarra,
Minister of Justice, Worship, and
Public Instruction

Adolfo Chirife,
Minister of War and Marine



LEGEND

▲ Mennonite colonies



MENNONITE COLONIES OF SOUTH AMERICA

ESSAY NO. THREE

THE MENNONITE COLONY OF
SPANISH LOOKOUT
BRITISH HONDURAS

One of the latest of a long series of migrations in which groups of Mennonites have engaged over the past four centuries is the recent move from Mexico to British Honduras.¹ A group of Mennonites arrived in Canada from Russia during the 1870's and developed an extensive area of farmland in the prairies. By the 1920's they felt they could no longer tolerate the outside influences exerting pressure on their colonies in Canada, and a portion of the Canadian Mennonites migrated to Mexico where they hoped to live free from any outside influences.² They did not find the total isolation they had expected in Mexico. The government was controlling schools and land ownership. This they felt was unacceptable. By the mid 1950's they were once more searching for a place in which to establish a new colony. In this they considered all of the Central American countries and their choice was British Honduras.³

Their move to Mexico and their development within Mexico have been well documented⁴ and it is not the purpose of this paper to dwell on that aspect of their history. It is the purpose of this paper to compare the development of the Mennonite colony of Spanish Lookout in British Honduras with other closed agricultural colonies.

A model has been developed for the "Life Cycle of a Closed Agricultural Colony."⁵ This model is based on the

fact that there are certain similar patterns common to most closed agricultural colonies. The motivating force behind the migration from an established area to an underdeveloped area, as well as the desire to settle in colonies closed to outsiders tend to be similar. The colonists see migration as a method of preserving a distinctive way of life. The pattern of the establishment of a new closed agricultural colony, its growth and development, the outside pressures it is subjected to and the eventual decline of these colonies as closed units as well as the beginning of the process of assimilation of the colonists into the society of the host countries will follow similar patterns despite great differences in the geographical and ethnic origin of the colonists or differences in the location of the closed colonies. From this hypothesis a model of a generalized Life Cycle of a Closed Agricultural Colony was developed. This model was then tested against the Mennonite colonies of South America.

The hypothesis of this paper then is that the Mennonite colony of Spanish Lookout, British Honduras, will conform to the Model of Life Cycle of a Closed Agricultural Colony, and further that its rate of progression through the model will largely be governed by factors peculiar to Mennonite Colonies.⁶

It is the intent of this paper to study the progression

of the Spanish Lookout Mennonite Colony through the early stages of the model, study some of the influences of the Mennonites on the country, and the influences of British Honduras on the Mennonites, and, based on this make some prediction as to the rate of progression through the remaining portions of the model.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of the literature is, of necessity, not very extensive. There has been little written about the Mennonites of British Honduras and no sound academic study had been carried out on them at the time the field work was carried out for this study.

There are, however, some studies which do have a periferal bearing on the subject.

Sawatzky's⁷ study of the Mennonites of Mexico is of great value in that it provides a detailed study of the Mexican Mennonite colonies, the source area for the emigration to British Honduras. In his study, Sawatzky provides a detailed and accurate study of the Mexican colonies and the pressures on the colonies from the very different cultural environment in which the Mennonites had established their closed colonies. It was as a result of these outside pressures that a portion of the population of the Mexican Mennonite colonies turned to emigration as a possible solution to their problems and eventually set up the colony of Spanish Lookout in British Honduras. Sawatzky, then, is important to this study in that he provides the information on the conditions which eventually resulted in the rejection of the Mexican site and the selection of a new site in British Honduras.

Bushong's⁸ study of agricultural settlement in British

Honduras devotes some space to the Mennonite colonies and their contribution to the agricultural section of the economy. In this, he provides a considerable amount of factual data which is of value when analysing the contribution which the Mennonites make in the field of agriculture. Bushong also points out that not much has been done in British Honduras in the line of inventories and interpretations. There is a need for work in "...virtually every aspect of its physical and cultural Geography."⁹

Huck¹⁰ ignores the presence of the Mennonites altogether in her study of British Honduras. She does however provide a quick general coverage of all aspects of the economy and in this adds to the sum total of knowledge of the region.

Beyond this, the material consists of books of a popular nature as well as articles in periodicals which tend to be of a popular nature rather than of sound academic quality.

It was for this reason that a period of field study was undertaken in January-February of 1968 and much of the paper is based on the findings of that period of field work.

DECISION TO EMIGRATE

A number of factors led up to the decision to emigrate from Mexico. Some of them were in the economic vein. The Mennonites wanted to maintain closed colonies but this had become impossible in Mexico for a number of reasons. In the period in which they had developed their colonies, mainly in the state of Chihuahua, the land around the colonies had been occupied by Mexican nationals. This made it impossible for the Mennonites to expand their colonies simply by buying up more land immediately adjacent to their colonies. This in turn meant that if the Mennonite group wanted to remain in Mexico they would be forced to set up daughter colonies to absorb the natural increase in population within the colonies.¹¹ Laws controlling the size of landholdings and cultural pressures such as social security and school laws convinced them that they should look for possible sites outside of Mexico. Because they had been granted a charter giving them rights regarding their schools, their language and the land tenure system within their colonies in perpetuity before they emigrated to Mexico, the Mennonites felt they should be exempt from laws requiring the breaking up of large estates in order to provide land for the landless peasants. There was, however, continual pressure put on the Mennonites to break up their large land holdings. In addition to this, many

of the Mennonites had been careful to retain their Canadian citizenship, and this made them foreigners in Mexico even though they had lived there for up to 35 years. Under land reform and nationalisation laws, their land titles were continually in jeopardy.

There were also cultural pressures. They were a group of rather severe Protestants living in a predominantly Roman Catholic area and this led to conflicts with the Mexican nationals around them. The Mennonites' right to totally control their own education was also being challenged and they were forced to teach some Spanish in their schools. This again would lead to eventual assimilation and the Mennonites wanted to avoid this. The final blow came when the Mexican government forced the Mennonites to pay Social Security taxes.¹² This, they felt, was totally unfair as they took care of their own aged and infirm and none of these people ever became a burden on the Mexican taxpayers. The social security tax issue is generally given as the "official" reason for their leaving the country, but a number of other reasons were also behind the move. Not the least of these is simply an attitude that the time had come to move on. Sawatsky found a belief growing among the Mennonites of Mexico that "...it is part of the divine plan for the Mennonites that they should be forced from time to time to forsake their homes and seek a

new home."¹³

In this manner the stage was then set. A number of forces, some economic, some cultural, some internal, some external, were acting on the Mennonite colonies of Mexico and so, rather than be assimilated, some rejected their site and decided to emigrate. They felt themselves and their way of life threatened and their answer to this threat was to move on.

SELECTION OF SITE: THE COUNTRY

The list of countries which could be considered as possible sites for colonization was rapidly shortened to the point where only British Honduras remained.

The Mennonites wanted to stay reasonably close to the Mexican mother colonies. This limited the possible sites to Central America and the U.S.A. They wanted a country which was not predominantly Roman Catholic and this limited the choices to British Honduras and the U.S.A. The U.S.A., they knew from past experience, would not give them any special concessions and this left British Honduras. They also remembered their past in Canada and the Canadian legal system. When they compared their experiences in the Mexican courts with those in the Canadian courts they decided they much preferred the British legal system. In addition to this, many people had retained their Canadian citizenship and thus were British subjects. This would make the move to British Honduras much easier. All of these factors combined and pointed to British Honduras as a potential site for a new colony. Delegations were thus dispatched to British Honduras to do a preliminary survey of the country and report back. The reports were favourable and the move began to be considered with more seriousness.

British Honduras wanted agricultural immigrants; it

was predominantly Protestant, it was British and so as British subjects the move would present no legal complications. In addition, British Honduras was willing to give them all of the concessions they required and none of the other countries had indicated a willingness to do so.

In Mexico, the Mennonites had been faced with the danger of their land being confiscated and redivided under land reform laws. This had tended to make them suspicious of most other Central American republics which had similar land reform laws on the books. Again they turned to British Honduras where they felt their land would not be confiscated because of the British legal system and the fact that they were British subjects.

The stage was thus set for the migration of Mennonites from Mexico to British Honduras.

SELECTION OF SITE WITHIN BRITISH HONDURAS

The selection of the site within British Honduras took some time. The period of negotiation with the Government of British Honduras lasted more than two years.¹⁴ At the end of this time, in August of 1958, the Mennonites were granted all of the concessions they requested and the¹⁵ actual selection of the site within the country began.

The selection of a site within the country proved to

be largely a process of elimination. This particular group of Mennonites had decided they wanted a site which would be in an economically competitive position. They did not want total isolation at the expense of economic considerations. The delegation selecting the site toured all of British Honduras and came to several conclusions. There were only two all-weather roads in the country and in order to be in a position to get their products to market, they would have to locate very close to one of these roads. This more or less eliminated the southern half of the country. They then checked out the existing farms along the road from Belize, the Capital, north to the Mexican border and decided that the land was too swampy for their liking. This left the all-weather road from Belize west to the Guatemalan border. This was then checked out and the delegation felt that the only truly successful farms in all of British Honduras were along this road in the Cayo district. In addition to this, the government experimental farm was located along the highway in the Cayo district. For these reasons then, transportation, the experimental farm, and the existence of successful farming units in the area, the Cayo region was chosen as the location for their colony. As far as the actual selection of the precise site was concerned, this was fairly simple. When the previously outlined considerations were kept in mind and cross checked

with the available pieces of land in the region, one large block of land stood out as the obvious choice.¹⁶ This was an estate known as "Spanish Lookout", an area of about 20,000 acres. The Delegation inspected the site and decided it filled their requirements. It was for sale, the price was right and so on the 20th of August, 1958, they purchased the estate for the sum of \$100,000.00 (BH) (about \$80,000.00 Canadian).¹⁷ Early in 1959 the settlers began arriving in British Honduras and by 1960 there were 663 people in the Spanish Lookout colony.¹⁸

WHY BRITISH HONDURAS WANTED THE MENNONITES

An analysis of the factors leading up to the emigration of the Mennonites to British Honduras indicates that, not only were the Mennonites anxious to move to the country, but the government of British Honduras seems to have been very anxious to have them move to British Honduras.

The reason for this goes back to a time well before the application of the Mennonites. The population of British Honduras is small, only 90,343,¹⁹ in 1960, at about the time the Mennonites were settling there. Every economic study done seemed to indicate a much larger population was needed in order to make the country an economically viable unit. The official policy of the

government, therefore, had been to encourage emigration as much as possible. The British had plans for bringing the population of British Honduras up to about 400,000.²⁰ An official goal of 7,000 immigrants per year had been set for the country.²¹ This goal had never been met. In fact, very few immigrants had been attracted and most of the growth was due to natural increase within the colony.

Another reason behind the attempt to attract immigrants was the state of the agricultural economy within British Honduras. The country imported much of its food. The majority of the farming in the country was of the slash and burn type and at a near subsistence level. Thus, despite the fact that much of the land was unused and many of the people unemployed, the majority of the foodstuffs were imported.²² Despite this home market, in 1960 there were only 9,000 persons engaged in farming in the entire country.²³ In response to this situation, the government was very anxious to attract permanent agricultural settlers who would turn to scientific farming rather than the slash and burn method.

The idea of the Mennonites as model and master farmers was very strong at the time,²⁴ and the government seems to have expressed a great deal of faith in the ability of the Mennonites to make British Honduras self-sufficient in agricultural products.²⁵ This idea even expressed itself

in the charter which was granted the Mennonites. Into this was written the clause²⁶

"The Mennonites will . . .

(c) produce food not only for themselves but also for local consumption and for the export market.

The government had stated further that they hoped the country would become self-sufficient in the production of milk, butter, cheese and eggs as a result of the efforts of the Mennonites.²⁷ There was, thus, a great deal of importance attached to the role the Mennonites were expected to play as master farmers.

Another role that the Mennonites were expected to fulfill was that of model farmers. The government hoped that by exposing the local subsistence level farmers to the Mennonite farmers, who were much more scientific and market oriented in their methods, the local farmers would improve their production methods. The problem of lack of local production or ability was increased in severity by the fact that the whole role of farming was looked down on by the majority of the people in the labour force. The country had long been oriented to the logging industry and

"...the loggers were proud of their occupation and inclined toward the opinion that all real men were to be found in the forests...while raising food was left to the women, old men and cripples.²⁸

The government was thus faced with the problem of convincing its people that farming was a respectable occupation as well as that of upgrading the level of farming within the country.

There was, thus, a definite need for agricultural immigrants. Another problem, however, must be looked at. For some time a number of different groups had attempted to settle in British Honduras, but their applications had been denied. Why then were the Mennonites admitted? The answer is to be found in the internal politics of the country and so will have a direct bearing on the future of the Mennonite colonies, if there is ever a change in government.

There is a longstanding disagreement with Guatemala about the ownership of British Honduras. Guatemala claims all of British Honduras as part of its national territory. It is, therefore, opposed to the settling of non-Latin-Americans in the territory.²⁹ The Government of British Honduras, on the other hand, encouraged agricultural settlers in hopes of bolstering its claim to the area.

There have, however, been a number of attempts to settle non-Latin-Americans in British Honduras which have been turned down by the government. An attempt to settle 400 farmers from Hong Kong in 1961 did not succeed.³⁰ Mauritanian immigrants were refused entry in 1960,³¹ and

repeated attempts to settle the surplus of population from some sectors of the West Indies have been turned down.³²

The suggestion has been made that the reasons for this are largely racial.³³ It is felt in some circles that the present administration favours white, Spanish-speaking people and for this reason the Mennonites were admitted while others, like the West Indians, who are culturally and racially much more like the people of British Honduras, are kept out.³⁴ In this the government of British Honduras may have erred. Although the Mennonites came from Mexico and had learned some Spanish, they still used German as their formal language and a low German dialect as their everyday language. Thus, when the Mennonites applied for entrance permission, the government of British Honduras checked the Mennonite Colonies in Mexico and decided that they would make suitable settlers for British Honduras. Many concessions were then granted to the Mennonites to induce them to settle in British Honduras.³⁵ These included exemption from military service, the right to run their own schools in their own language and almost complete internal autonomy within their closed colony. The Mennonites were, in fact, given "...everything they asked for."³⁶

And so the Mennonites moved to Spanish Lookout. Much was expected from them in economic terms and, even before they arrived and without their knowledge, they were already

involved in internal politics.

In this manner the site was selected and occupied. The site was accepted by the majority as there was no mass out-migration from the site or rejection of it. The Mennonites then set about developing the site. The population was 600 in 1966,³⁷ and this represented a net drop of 63 persons in the period 1959 to 1966. Some of this decrease is due to individuals rejecting the site, but much of it is due to a very high infant mortality rate in the early days of the colony.³⁸

Economically, the colony developed quickly. By 1966 the colony had 4,280 acres under cultivation and was well established as a viable part of the local economy.³⁹ The majority of its products were marketed in Belize, about forty miles from the colony. In order to facilitate the marketing, a marketing centre was set up in Belize. This was established and is managed by the Lancaster Mennonite Conference Church of Lancaster, Pennsylvania⁴⁰ as a form of assistance to the Mennonites of Spanish Lookout.

As well as the basic agricultural function, the Colony at Spanish Lookout was providing a number of other services to the area. By 1966 the Manpower Report listed a service station and garage in the colony which sold petroleum products and provided mechanical repair services for both motor vehicles and farm equipment. A cartage

business had been established to bring goods from the colony to the market in Belize and this served people around the colony as well as within the colony, and a metal shop had been established on the colony. This metal shop has more significance than it would seem at first observation. In the city of Belize, the local water supply is unreliable and drinking water must be stored. This water is generally gathered from the roofs of buildings during the rains and stored in large tanks for the dry periods. These tanks had generally been made of wood. The Mennonite colony at Spanish Lookout is now supplying the market in Belize as well as in Cayo with metal tanks which are of a superior quality. In Belize alone, 65 of these tanks were sold and installed in the last half of 1967.⁴¹ This represents a substantial penetration of a non-agricultural nature into the economy.

The colony also has established a hatchery, both for its own needs and those of the surrounding area. This has had the effect of turning British Honduras from an importer of eggs and chickens to an exporter of these products⁴² inside a two-year period. By 1966 a store, a feedmill and a lumbermill had been added to the economic endeavours of the colony.⁴³

In addition to these, there are some services provided by the colony. The colony provides a medical and dental

clinic which is open to all. It also provides employment for about forty five persons from outside the colony for about six months of the year. This in turn indicates a substantial penetration of the "closed" colony by British Honduras nationals.

It immediately becomes obvious that the Mennonites of Spanish Lookout have interpreted their role as farmers in a most liberal way. They have spread into a number of periferal activities and indicate every intention of continuing to do so in the future.

ASSIMILATION

In this context assimilation is understood to be the gradual breaking down of the "we-they" feeling and the gradual merging of the Mennonites into the British Honduras society. It does not mean the Mennonites will cease to exist as a cultural entity but rather that the sharp line between them and the people around them will gradually blur. Because the Mennonites of Spanish Lookout chose to establish a colony close to a marketing centre rather than one in total isolation, they immediately exposed themselves to pressure from the outside. They were granted the right to establish their own schools in their own language. This is having some effect in slowing the rate of assimilation.

The Mennonites who originally moved to British Honduras were able to converse in a number of languages. Those who moved from Canada to Mexico and then to British Honduras spoke English and Spanish as well as German and their own form of Low German. Those Mennonites born and raised in Mexico had learned Spanish in addition to their two forms of German. The people who settled Spanish Lookout were, thus, reasonably fluent in a number of languages.⁴⁴

In Spanish Lookout, however, the schools are being conducted in German and their normal conversations are conducted almost completely in low German. The result is that, although members of the older generations are able to converse with those around them with reasonable facility, the younger generation is almost totally cut off from the people outside the colony because of the language barrier. There is some indication that this will change. The English language is, by law, the sole official language of the schools in British Honduras⁴⁵ and this language law might be enforced in the Mennonite colonies despite their charter.

Although the Mennonites definitely stated that they wanted to establish Closed Colonies, the officials of British Honduras really didn't believe they would. The normal social life in British Honduras is so free and open that they could not conceive of any group of people really wanting to live by themselves and wanting to be left

totally alone. This lack of understanding has led to a certain degree of dislike for the Mennonites and a feeling that they should be forced to integrate. Pressure is being put on the government to bring this assimilation about. Basically, it results from a lack of understanding. The population of British Honduras cannot understand why a group of people would want to work so hard, acquire so much capital, not take part in the social life of the country, not drink, and not attend any public functions.⁴⁶ The Mennonites, on the other hand, regard the locals as rather lazy because they devote so much time to enjoyment and so little to working.

There is also a great deal of feeling that the Mennonites take from the country but give nothing back. This seems to be based on the fact that they come to town only to sell and buy very little. The Mennonites tend to be very frugal and try to be as self-sufficient as possible. They buy as little as possible and produce as much of what they need as they can.⁴⁷

Another source of friction is the racial issue. Because most of the population of British Honduras is coloured to some degree or other,⁴⁸ any attempt by a group of whites to keep to themselves is interpreted as a racial prejudice.⁴⁹ Whether this is, or is not, true is of little importance. The people of British Honduras

believe it to be true and react accordingly.

The belief that Mennonites are racists is augmented by missionaries from the U.S.A. A number of Mennonite missionaries from the U.S.A. are active in this part of the world.⁵⁰ They represent a totally different branch of the faith from those in the Spanish Lookout colony. Those from the U.S.A. belong to that branch of the faith which moved from Holland to the U.S.A. in the 1700's.⁵¹ They never attempted to establish colonies and they regard themselves as merely one more Protestant sect. The Mennonites of the Spanish Lookout colony, on the other hand, belong to that branch of the faith which went from the low countries in the late 1600's to Prussia, from there to Russia in the late 1700's and to Canada in the 1870's. From Canada they went to Mexico in the early 1920's and then to Spanish Lookout in 1959. There has been little, if any, connection between the branches of the faith for centuries and about the only thing they really have in common is the name Mennonite. This difference is not, however, understood in British Honduras and from this lack of understanding, arise some of the problems. The missionaries from the U.S.A. have been converting the local people in British Honduras to their faith. The people of British Honduras believed that if they became Mennonites they would be accepted as equals by the Mennonites in the colony of

Spanish Lookout. When, despite the fact that they had been baptized as Mennonites in Belize, the people of Spanish Lookout would not accept the converts as Mennonites and avoided social contact, the racist issue arose once more. To the locals the only difference between themselves and the members of the Spanish Lookout colony was the colour of their skin. If they were not accepted, then racial differences must be the reason.⁵²

In an economic sense, then, many of the expectations held by the politicians of British Honduras for the Mennonites were fulfilled, to a certain degree. In a social sense, they have been disappointed in that the Mennonites did not mix with the people around them to the extent that had been expected of them. In the capacity of model farmers, a certain amount of disappointment has occurred. It had been hoped that when exposed to the more modern and scientific farming methods of the Mennonites, the local farmers would upgrade their production methods and so rise above the subsistence level. There is some suggestion that just the opposite has happened. The people around Spanish Lookout observed that the Mennonites were producing more than they needed for their own consumption and so stopped producing almost completely and purchased supplies from the Mennonites instead.⁵³

There was also a suggestion that the party in power

had encouraged the colonization of the Mennonites in order to bolster their own political strength. In this regard, the Mennonites again disappointed the local politicians, as they refuse to take part in politics. The voters' list for the Cayo district in 1966 contained not one Mennonite name.⁵⁴

From the point of view of the Mennonites, the colonization has been reasonably successful. As was noted earlier,⁵⁵ the degree of isolation and the duration of this as far as Mennonite colonies were concerned, was affected largely by two factors: the determination of the people forming the closed colony to retain the closed nature of their colony, and the amount of capital available to the group.

From the point of view of capital, there would seem to be no trouble in the Spanish Lookout colony. It has been estimated that the Mennonites have brought about \$1,000,000.00 (BH) into the country.⁵⁶ In addition to this, their colony seems to be producing well. They were able to pay off a mortgage of \$66,666.00 (BH) on their colony by March of 1961⁵⁷ and a further mortgage of \$21,000.00 (BH) by December 31, 1965.⁵⁸

It is more difficult to be precise about the factor of determination. When the Mennonites chose Spanish Lookout as a site rather than one of the more remote

locations available,⁵⁹ they were, in fact, expressing a lack of determination as far as remaining totally isolated for any length of time. This group, then, would seem to value economic advancement over total isolation.

PREDICTIONS ON FUTURE ASSIMILATION RATES

Up to this point in time, the Mennonite colony at Spanish Lookout is following the Model for the Life Cycle of a Closed Agricultural Colony.⁶⁰ The people are now developing the site with a certain degree of economic success. They have some degree of isolation in that it is a "Closed Colony" and no outsiders may move into the colony as the Mennonites own all of the land. There has been little assimilation with regard to members leaving the colony, although a few have left the colony and are competing as individuals. The colony is no longer closed however, in that it provides services on the site of the colony which are used by the people around the colony. It is further opened to outside influences in that it employs a number of non-Mennonites on the colony itself. There is further social intercourse in that they have an established marketing centre in Belize and trips to Belize from the colony are made on a daily basis. There is further social intercourse in that the town of Cayo is within walking

distance, about four miles from the colony.

If political rumblings are interpreted correctly, the colony will, in the near future, be forced to teach some English in its schools and this will further open the closed nature of the group.

Even now there is a great deal of involvement in the economic life of Belize, so much so in fact, that the Mennonite centre has added a dormitory for those who stay in Belize or for those who work in Belize and go back to the colony only on weekends.

Despite their stated intention of remaining separate and apart, it can be seen that assimilation is being carried on at a fairly rapid rate as far as this Mennonite colony is concerned.

The group from Spanish Lookout are progressing through the model at a fairly rapid rate and if this continues, the closed nature of the colony will soon be broken and the process of assimilation will be underway.

ESSAY NO. THREE

FOOTNOTES

1. For an accurate but compact history of the Mennonites, see J.C. Henry Smith, The Story of the Mennonites, Newton, Kansas: Mennonite Publication Office, 1957.
2. Walter Schmiedhaus, "A Beleaguered People: The Mennonites of Mexico." Landscape, Vol. IV, No. 1 (Summer, 1954), pp. 13-21.
3. The Times British Colonies Review, Third Quarter 1958, p. 26.
4. Harry Leonard Sawatzky, "Mennonite Colonization in Mexico: A Study in the Survival of a Traditionalist Society." (Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1968).
5. For the Development of this Model see R.E. Langemann, unpublished paper, Simon Fraser University, 1971. A copy of the Model is attached to and forms Appendix One of this paper.
6. For the development of this, see R.E. Langemann, "Mennonite Colonies of South America," (unpublished paper, Simon Fraser University, Department of Geography, 1971).
7. Sawatzky, op. cit.
8. Allen David Bushong, "Agricultural Settlement in British Honduras: A Geographic Interpretation of its Development," (unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Florida, January, 1961).
9. Bushong, op. cit., p. 11.
10. Susan Lillie Marie Huck, "British Honduras: An Evaluation," (unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, Clark University, 1962).
11. By 1966 the Mennonite population in Mexico had grown from a few thousand in the mid 1920's to over 30,000. Sawatzky, op. cit., p. 1.
12. Bushong, op. cit., p. 108.
13. Sawatzky, op. cit., p. 323.

14. The Times British Colonies Review, op. cit.
15. Attached to, and forming Appendix Two of this paper, is a copy of the Charter granted to the Mennonites before they emigrated to British Honduras.
16. Information gained in conversation with Mr. E. King on February 1, 1968. Mr. King was President of the British Honduras Chamber of Commerce at the time the Mennonites were selecting a site and was assigned by the Government to assist them. In doing this he toured the entire country with the Mennonite delegation and assisted in the selection of a suitable site.
17. British Honduras Central Registry, General Registry Ordinance, (Folio #667, Volume 3, Transfer Certificate of Title).
18. Bushong, op. cit., p. 110.
19. Huck, op. cit., p. 74.
20. Ibid., p. 93.
21. Bushong, op. cit., p. 106.
22. Latin American Report, Vol. IV (1960), p. 14.
23. Bushong, op. cit., p. 98.
24. Ibid., p. 107.
25. The headline to an article on the Mennonites reads "Mennonites hoped to achieve Agricultural Independence for British Honduras." The Belize Billboard, (#2447), Friday, December 13, 1957.
26. See Appendix Two.
27. Bushong, op. cit., p. 123.
28. Huck, op. cit., p. 117.
29. Belize, Billboard, (#2439), Wed., December 4, 1957.
30. Belize Billboard, (#3495), Wed., June 14, 1961.
31. Belize Billboard, (#3292), Tues., Oct. 4, 1960.

32. Conversation with Senator V. Leslie, Jan. 28, 1968.
33. Ibid.
34. Huck, op. cit., p. 197. Huck makes a good case for Prime Minister Price, being pro-lightskinned and pro-Spanish. Huck, op. cit., p. 93, British plan favoured the West Indies as a source for immigrants for British Honduras.
35. See Appendix Two.
36. Conversation with L. Sylvestre, Jan. 1968. Mr. Sylvestre is a member of the assembly and is the only member of the committee which did the negotiating with the Mennonites who is still in British Honduras.
37. British Honduras Manpower Department. Report on Mennonite Colony. Belize: 1966.
38. Belize Billboard (#2596), Thursday, June 19, 1958, p. 1, "Polio Outbreak feared in Cayo. Mennonites bring disease from Mexico," and (#2624), Tuesday, July 22, 1958, p. 1, "Dysentary kills 28 Mennonite Babies."
39. British Honduras Manpower Department Report, op. cit., p. 3.
40. Ibid., p. 8.
41. Conversation with Paul Martin, Manager of Mennonite Marketing Centre in Belize. Koop Metal Shop manufactures the tanks and Mr. John Dyck sub-contracts the erection of these tanks in Belize.
42. British Honduras Newsletter, Department of Information and Communication, Vol. XXXVI (June, 1960), p. 3.
43. Bushong, op. cit., p. 119.
44. The Times British Colonies Review, op. cit., p. 26.
45. Huck, op. cit., p. 89.
46. Conversation with Mr. L. Sylvestre, op. cit., Mr. Sylvestre stated that when they let the Mennonites in, they really had not believed they would keep to themselves and not intermarry.

47. This feeling that "They come to town, only to sell and never buy anything" was continually expressed to the researcher by people from all walks of life in British Honduras.
48. Huck, op. cit., Huck cites demographic data which suggests only about 4% of the population is white.
49. The idea that Mennonites are racially prejudiced is also a strong one and was expressed frequently by people in all walks of life including politicians.
50. There is a Mennonite Mission in Belize and another at Hattievville. These are supported by the Mennonites of Pennsylvania and really have little to do with the local Mennonites.
51. Smith, op. cit., for a complete breakdown of the various branches of the faith, Smith serves as a useful reference.
52. The author is indebted to Mr. Clive Gillet, Principal of the Belize Technical Institute for an explanation of this problem.
53. In talking with the farmers in the area around Spanish Lookout the idea that "Why should I grow food when I can buy it from the Mennonites" was expressed very frequently.
54. British Honduras Gazette, Belize City, 14 May, 1966. Voters' List supplement.
55. Langemann, op. cit., (Mennonite Colonies of South America).
56. Conversation with Mr. F. Hunter, Member of the House of Representatives in Belize, Jan. 25, 1968.
57. Central Registry, Belize, Land Charges Register, Deed of Mortgage #312.
58. Central Registry, Belize, op. cit.
59. Two other Mennonite Colonies established in British Honduras at the same time chose very remote and isolated locations, well off any all-weather road.

They achieved almost total isolation at the expense of economic competitiveness.

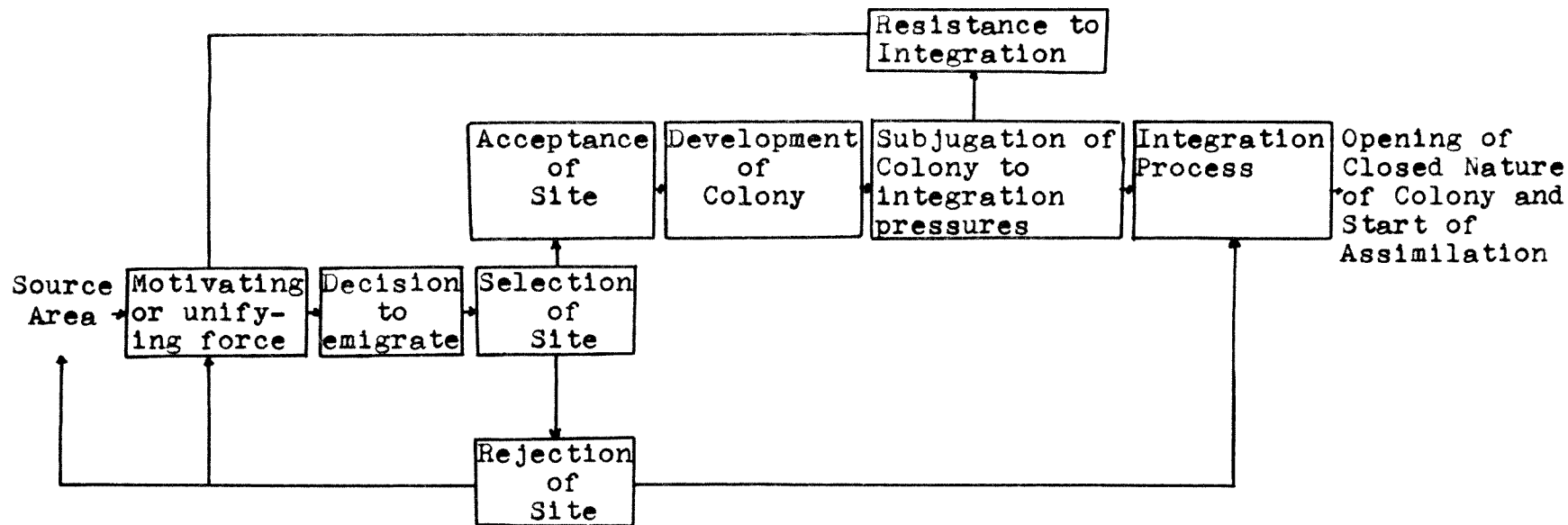
60. See Appendix One.

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MODEL FOR THE LIFE CYCLE OF A CLOSED AGRICULTURAL COLONY

APPENDIX TWO

British Honduras Gazette, 23 Aug. 1958.

No. 761 M.P. 6822/19
Colonial Secretary's Office
Belize, 20th August, 1958.

Agreements

The text is published of the following agreements signed on the 18th day of December, 1957, between the government of British Honduras and the representatives of the Reinland Mennonite Church of Chihuahua and Durango, Mexico, and on the 16th day of December, 1957, between Government of British Honduras and representatives of the Kleingemeinde Mennonite Church of Chihuahua and Durango, Mexico.

By Command
(sgnd.) J.M.G. Fann
Acting Colonial Secretary.

No. 762
British Honduras

This agreement made the 16th day of December, 1957, between the government of British Honduras and the undersigned Representatives of the Kleingemeinde Mennonite Church of Chihuahua and Durango Mexico;

Whereas members of the aforesaid Mennonite Church (which members are hereinafter called "The Mennonites" are desirous of emigrating from Mexico and settling in British Honduras:

And Whereas such settlement will be to the mutual advantage of British Honduras and the Mennonites:

And whereas it is desirable that there should be some instrument setting forth in general terms the conditions under which the Mennonites will be permitted to settle in British Honduras:

Now therefore this agreement witnesseth as follows -

1. The Government of British Honduras will grant to the Mennonites:
 - (a) the right to run their own churches and schools, with their own teachers, in their own German language, according to their own religion;
 - (b) exemption from making the customary immigration deposits;
 - (c) protection of life and property in peace and war;
 - (d) entire exemption from any military service;
 - (e) the privilege of affirming with a simple 'yes' or 'no' instead of making oaths in or out of the courts;

- (f) freedom of movement, according to law, to enter or leave the country with their money and property;
- (g) the right to administer and invest the estates of their people, especially those of widows and orphans, in their own "Trust System" called the "Waisenamt," according to their own rules and regulations.
- (h) the right to bring into British Honduras the old, infirm and invalid members of the Mennonite community provided that these individuals do not become a charge on the Government of British Honduras;
- (i) exemption from any social security or compulsory system of insurance.

2. The Mennonites will -

- (a) pay all costs and expenses incurred in establishing their settlements;
- (b) bring into British Honduras capital investment in cash and kind amounting to five hundred thousand dollars more or less British Honduras currency;
- (c) produce food not only for themselves but also for local consumption and for the export market;
- (d) conduct themselves as good citizens, and subject to this agreement, observe and obey the laws of British Honduras;
- (e) pay all normal duties, taxes, fees and charges by law established, such as customs duty, land tax, estate duty, property tax and income tax.

3. It is understood that the privileges granted by the government shall be enjoyed by the Mennonites and their descendants for all time so long as the Mennonites observe and fulfill the conditions imposed upon them by this agreement.

In witness whereof the two parties hereto have signed these two identical copies of this Instrument this 16th day of December, 1957.

Signed for and on behalf of the Government of
British Honduras

C. H. Thornly, Governor.

Witness - P. H. Wiebe
 Louise Sylvestre, A.M.N.R.

Signed for and on behalf of the Kleingemeinde
Mennonite Church

R. Reimer
P. D. Reimer

Witness - P. H. Wiebe
 Louis Sylvestre, A.M.N.R.

