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Royden Loewen

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Résumé de l'article

Les communautés rurales canadiennes se sont transformées en profondeur à mesure qu'elles ont tenté de s'adapter au contexte économique et social de l'après Seconde guerre mondiale. Dans le sillage de John Shover, ces changements peuvent être décrits comme une « Grande disjonction » (« Great Disjuncture »). Cet auteur du Canada central a montré tout à la fois comment les fermes complétèrent leur mécanisation, comment leurs produits rencontrèrent davantage les attentes du marché et les voies par lesquelles les buts des fermiers s'intégrèrent aux demandes des politiques gouvernementales. Cet article s'attache à la dimension locale de ce phénomène. Il étudie la municipalité rurale de Hanover au Manitoba, une communauté ethnique dominée par des Mennonites germanophones. À Hanover, les relations sociales traditionnelles, à la fois au niveau primaire des rapports de sexe et au niveau communautaire où se situe l'idée même de ruralité, entrèrent en relation dialectique avec les courants de changement pour créer une culture locale, particulière, un véritable phénomène de re-création culturelle.

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Rurality, ethnicity, and gender patterns of cultural continuity during the "Great Disjuncture" in the R.M. of Hanover, 1945-1961

ROYDEN LOEWEN

Résumé

Rural Canadian communities underwent profound changes as they adapted to the economic and social context after World War II. Those changes, may be described, using John Shover's phrase, as a "Great Disjuncture." From a "centrist" point-of-view Canadian farms became more fully mechanized, products commodified and farm goals integrated with government policy. This paper focuses on the "local experience" of the "Great Disjuncture." Its subject is the Rural Municipality of Hanover in Manitoba, an ethnic community, dominated by Low German-speaking Mennonites. In Hanover traditional social relations, both on the primary level affecting gender and on the community level affecting the very idea of rurality, entered a dialectical relationship with the forces for change to create a particular localized culture. Here was an instance of cultural re-creation.

* * * *

Les communautés rurales canadiennes se sont transformées en profendeur à mesure qu'elles ont tentéde s'adapter au contexte économique et social de l'après Seconde guerre mondiale. Dans le sillage de John Shover, ces changements peuvent être décrits comme une «Grande disjonction» ("Great Disjuncture"). Cet auteur du Canada central a montré tout à la fois comment les fermes complétèrent leur mécanisation, comment leurs produits rencontrèrent davantage les attentes du marché et les voies par lesquelles les buts des fermiers s'intégrèrent aux demandes des politiques gouvernementales. Cet article s'attache à la dimension locale de ce phénomène. Il étudie la municipalité rural de Hanover au Manitoba, une communauté ethnique dominée par des Mennonites germanophones. À Hanover, les relations sociales traditionnelles, à la fois au niveau primaire des rapports de sexe et au niveau communautaire où se situe l'idée même de ruralité, entrèrent en relation dialectique avec les courants de changement pour créer une culture locale particulière, un véritable phénomène de re-création culturelle.

John Shover has argued that post-World War II American agriculture underwent a "vast technological upheaval that . . . overwhelmed traditional family farming and village life

that existed symbiotically with it."[1] So substantive was this time of change for the American countryside that Shover dubbed it the "Great Disjuncture." During this time farms became more fully mechanized and more capitalized; production became more commodified, and more highly specialized and often vertically integrated with processing plants; farm direction was set by rational planning with considerable assistance from government Departments of Agriculture. Studies of Canadian agriculture in post World War II society suggest that a similar phenomenon occurred here.[2]

"Great Disjuncture" serves as a useful term to describe an era that historians have only recently begun to examine seriously. However, as this emerging historiography joins with urban-based histories to fill in the details of post World War II society, caution needs to be exercised so that the "Great Disjuncture" is not described merely in terms that are "centrist and unilinear," to repeat Hans Medick's warning.[3] Government policy, market conditions, technological advancement and financial structures require description and interpretation, but so too does the "local" experience of this time of "vast upheaval." As Henri Lefebvre notes, structures can be understood "only in so far as they are created at each instant in everyday life."[4]

This paper attempts to contribute to the discussion of the nature of post World War II society in Canada by moving outside the "centrist" point of view and focusing on the way in which the Rural Municipality (R.M.) of Hanover in Manitoba, lying some 50 kilometers southeast of Winnipeg, experienced the "Great Disjuncture" at the local

1. John L. Shover, *First Majority - Last Minority: The Transforming of Rural Life in America* (Dekalb, IL, 1976), xii. Several recent books and articles examining how rural Canadian communites adapted to the economic and social changes following World War II have addressed the features of this emerging society: the new, more confident, intrusive Canadian and provincial governments; the new suburbia where families became more private and gender more rigidly defined; radio, and increasingly television, that now introduced to the nation a common language, identity, and array of symbols; the churches that drew more people into more spacious buildings and often to a message of individualized, subjective religiosity. See J.L. Granatstein, *Canada 1957-1967: The Years of Uncertainty and Innovation* (Toronto, 1986); Veronica Strong-Boag, "Home Dreams: Women and the Suburban Experiment in Canada, 1945-1960," *Canadian Historical Review* 72 (1991): 471-504; Doug Owram, "Coming Home: Family Expectations and Readjustment after the War," Paper Presented at the Canadian Historical Association Annual Meeting, 30 May 1992, Charlottetown, PEI; J.M. Bumsted, "From Don Mills to Paradise Crescent Home Sweet Suburb: The Great Post-War Migration," *Beaver*: 26-34; Paul Rutherford, *When Television was Young: Primetime Canada, 1952-1967* (Toronto, 1990); John G. Stackhouse, "The Protestant Experience in Canada Since 1945," 198-252.
2. Ian MacPherson and John Herd Thompson, "The Business of Agriculture: Prairie Farmers and the Adoption of 'Business Methods,' 1880-1950," *Canadian Papers in Business History* 1 (1989): 245-269.
3. Hans Medick, "'Missionaries in a Rowboat'? Ethnological Ways of Knowing as a Challengeto Social History," Comparative Studies in Society and History 29 (1987): 82.
4. Henri Lefebvre, Critique of Everyday Life, 1947, trans. John Moore, (London, 1991), 57.

level.[5] True, the post-war economy did establish similar material restraints and opportunities in Canada's various communities, but the values and social formations at the "local level" interacted with the modern industrializing forces to shape particular local cultures, such as the one in the Hanover district.

Hanover, for example, was an ethnic community, dominated by Low German-speaking Mennonites whose traditional social relations, both on the primary level affecting gender and on the community level affecting the very idea of rurality, entered a dialectical relationship with the forces for change to create a particular localized culture. This, then, is not so much a study of ethnic survival, as it is a study of cultural re-creation.[6] Defining culture in Clifford Geertz's words as "webs of significance," or as "socially established structures of meaning in terms of which people do things," we see culture not as static, as if it was an inheritance, but rather as dynamic in the sense that it was recreated everyday and every year.[7] What were the perceptions, the values, the images, the meanings that developed on the local, everyday level during the "Great Disjuncture?" The nature of cultural development for post-war rural Canadian prairie society can be seen in the manner in which people perceived and ordered social identities; that is, their view of household affecting gender, the value given to rural community, and

5. The boundaries of the R.M. of Hanover during the 1950s were almost identical to the 1873 boundaries that defined the Mennonite East Reserve, a land block set aside by the Dominion government for the exclusive use of the Mennonites. The East Reserve was organized politically according to Russian practices of local government among foreign colonists; in 1881, however, a new Manitoba "Municipal Act" reorganized the Reserve according to municipal law. The R.M. of Hanover would remain almost homogeneously Mennonite until the 1890s when the municipality expanded to include a small Anglo-Canadian settlement on its eastern boundary, and when German and Ukrainian settlers began settling in the southern sections of the municipality. While separate statistics for the ethnic composition of Hanover during the 1950s were unavailable for this study, 79.7 per cent of Steinbach residents were members of the Mennonite religious denomination according to the 1961 federal census. For standard accounts of the R.M. of Hanover see Lydia Penner, *Hanover: 100 Years* (Steinbach, MB, 1982); John Warkentin, "The Mennonite Settlements in Southern Manitoba: A Study in Historical Geography" (PhD Diss., York U, Toronto, 1960); Abe Warkentin, *Reflections on Our Heritage: A History of Steinbach and the R.M. of Hanover From 1874* (Steinbach, MB, 1971); John C. Reimer, ed. *75 Gedenkfeier der Mennonitischen Einwanderung in Manitoba, Canada* (North Kildonan, MB, 1949). For an overview of Canadian Mennonites during this period see Ted Regehr, *Mennonites in Canada: A People Transformed, 1939-1970* (Toronto, forthcoming).
6. Kathleen Conzen notes in a recent study of the German community of Stearn's County, Minnesota that a more useful line of enquiry into the nature of rural community than focusing on "the fate of the immigrants" is to understand the "cultures they created." Kathleen Neils Conzen, "Making Their Own America: Assimilation Theory and the German Peasant Pioneer," *German Historical Institute Annual Lecture Series* 3 (1990): 7.
7. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York, 1973), 5, 12. In a similar vein, Hans Medick argues that "meaning . . . is never just . . . transmitted in unchanging ways. . . . [it] is constantly recreated by the participation of the actors . . . ." Medick, *ibid*, 97.

their wider identity, affecting perhaps their view of nationalism, but for this study, their sense of ethnicity.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF HANOVER

The basic social characteristics of Hanover Mennonites — gender, ethnicity and rurality — underwent a drastic change after the World War II. Consumerism, agricultural capitalism, government intrusion, mass media, and military service and conscription could not but affect Hanover's social relations and local culture. In a sense Hanover's change was particularly pronounced. As late as 1940 its lingua franca was still German, stemming from the fact that only in 1919 had its school children been compelled to learn English. During the first part of the century it had remained semi-isolated without a railway or an all-weather road to the outside and its Mennonite-dominated demography had never been in doubt; indeed, that characteristic had been guaranteed by a new wave of Mennonite immigrants from Russia during the 1920s. In the pre-World War II days, moreover, its economy had been indelibly linked to self-sufficient, mixed farm households.[8]

By 1960 Hanover had a new appearance. Its countryside was dotted with modern farms that specialized in either poultry, egg, dairy or hog production and which now often sported low-lying, white-colored barns of plywood construction located across the farmyard from the modern bungalow. Scattered across the district, about eight kilometers apart, were a dozen small service centres, containing only a repair shop, a general store and four or five homes; but they all deferred to Steinbach, the booming town of 3000, that specialized in farm service, wood products, and car sales.[9]

This landscape reflected the host of new ties that had been reshaping Hanover's relationship with the outside world since 1945. During the 1940s, for the first time, a paved highway linked Hanover to Winnipeg and in 1958 the new Trans Canada highway passed 20 kilometers north of Steinbach. Rural electrification tied the farm sections of Hanover to the provincial power grid in 1947 and the Trans-Canada Pipeline of 1957 linked Hanover's town residents to Alberta's natural gas. In the same year a microwave telephone tower introduced direct dialing, bringing Winnipeg into even closer reach. The local weekly, *The Carillon News*, was particularly enamoured with air and wire links to major Canadian cities: when "Mr. and Mrs. Peter F. Reimer and baby" left Vancouver for Hanover on 5 January 1954, what was noteworthy in the eyes of the local newspaper reporter was that the Reimers "arrived in Winnipeg by plane seven hours later;" when in 1960 a Hanover youth, Frank Braun, became a national hero for his part in rescuing an engineer in a train derailment in northern Ontario, the *Carillon* ran a longer story on the

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8. For a detailed description of Hanover before World War II see E.K. Francis, *In Search of Utopia: The Mennonites in Manitoba* (Altona, MB, 1955); Warkentin, "Mennonite Settlements."
9. For a recent illustrated history of Steinbach see Gerald Wright, *Steinbach: Is There Any Place Like It?* (Steinbach, 1991).

Toronto Star's request for a "wire photo transmission" of Braun than it did on the rescue itself.[10]

Nothing, however, changed Hanover's tie to the outside quite as much as did the family car. As John Warkentin's 1961 study of Hanover noted, post-war society was marked by a "new found prosperity [that] provided the means to buy cars, and new roads [that] opened the way to larger centers where the new buying power could be utilized . . ."[11] Indeed, local car dealers made it their special goal to turn Steinbach into a regional automobile centre, and through relentless advertising, car auctions, and the construction of "ultra-modern" dealerships, Steinbach dealers were able to sell 1000 used and new cars in 1955 alone, and to see this number rise to 5000 units in 1960.[12] By December 1957 the local newspaper reported that given the eight head-on collisions of the year, Hanover could join the rest of Canada in declaring the car accident as the leading cause of death among its youth.[13] The macabre allusion pointed to a new lifestyle in which the traversing of physical distances as well as social boundaries became the norm.

These closer ties had a direct effect on the language of everyday life in Hanover. The front page features of the *Carillon* of 1957 indicated that like other Canadians, Hanover residents' foremost concern was an anxiety about the Cold War. In a startling March issue readers of the *Carillon* were warned that should "the Red Air Force . . . attack [Winnipeg] with their five megaton Hydrogen bombs on the Ilyushin jet" they, the residents of rural Hanover, would face "certain death" as the prevailing northwesterly winds would carry radiation into the heart of the municipality.[14] As a precaution, Hanover joined the rest of the country in appointing a "civil defense advisor" (Steinbach major K.R. Barkman). The extent to which Hanover residents had become assimilated to Cold War anxieties was evident, too, when just a month later the *Carillon* polled Steinbach businessmen for their views on the suicide of Herbert Norman, the Canadian ambassador to Egypt accused of pro-communist sentiment, and all but one of the businessmen had a ready opinion on the matter.[15] Then, for three successive weeks in October, the *Carillon* ran front page stories of local sightings of *Sputnik*; it was an impressive and ominous sight according to one of Steinbach's most prominent businessman, John D. Penner, a "streak of light from horizon to horizon [lasting] two minutes."[16]

Other signs of change were seen in the increasing urban nature of the municipality. As an ethnic block settlement during the late 1800s, Hanover had once boasted numerous European *Strassendoerfer*; none of these farm villages, however, had contained more than 150 residents. By World War I Steinbach had distinguished itself from other villages

10. *Carillon News*, 5 January 1954, 19 February 1960.
11. Warkentin, "Mennonite Settlements," 301.
12. Warkentin, "Mennonite Settlements," 301.
13. *Carillon News*, 6 December 1957.
14. *Ibid*, 1 March 1957.
15. *Ibid*, 19 April 1957.
16. *Ibid*, 11 October 1957; 18 October; 25 October.

by refocusing its efforts from farming to merchandizing and growing to a population of 500, a number that increased slowly over the next 30 years, changing only to reflect a similar growth in the overall municipal population base. Between 1946 and 1961, however, a significant demographic shift occurred. During these 15 years as the population of the rural sections of Hanover decreased slightly from 6843 to 6771, the population of Steinbach almost doubled, rising from 1900 to 3739.[17] In town, farm men and women found work as craftsmen or labourers in the growing service sector and, increasingly, elderly farm men and women retired in the town's new "Rest Haven."[18] Farming ceased to be an outlet for surplus population.

The burgeoning town of Steinbach brought to Hanover residents the promise of easily accessible consumer goods. Social scientists who visited Hanover in the 1940s were struck by Steinbach's "appearance as a boom town." Sociologist E.K. Francis described the town's "Main Street, . . . lined with substantial business buildings equipped with large show windows and neon signs" and argued that there "was nothing provincial about the garages and stores, the beer parlours and at least one of the cafes."[19] Stories in the *Carillon* indicated a pervading fascination with any and all new consumer items: in February 1949 it reported that the new wonder breadspread, margarine, had been purchased by "about every household" by 4 P.M. on the day it first appeared in Steinbach; in 1957 it reported how "hundreds of women" and even "more men" came to see the "wonder" of the $1900 microwave oven featured at "Penner Electric;" and in the same year how "hundreds" again were found "filing through the J.R. Friesen [Ford dealership] showroom . . . viewing the new Edsel cars."[20] By 1951 the whole of southeastern Manitoba spent over 13 million dollars in the retail sector, six times the amount spent in 1941.[21] What was significant for Hanover was that half of this money was spent in their town, Steinbach. And while much of this money was spent on appliances, cars and the new bungalows, much too was spent on services — utilities, license fees, and permits: from 1950 to 1953, for example, hydro electricity payments rose by 58.4 per cent, automobile insurance payments by 171.6 per cent, telephone costs by 177.6 per cent.[22]

Underlying these new links with the physical and cultural world of the outside was an economic transformation in Hanover's countryside. It became an "outpost of urban society," to employ Shover's phrase, not only in its consumption patterns, but also in its

17. Leland Harder, *Steinbach and Its Churches* (Elkart, 1970), 15-16.
18. Only 15.3 per cent of Steinbach workers were listed as professional or labourers; the majority were craftsmen (31.1 per cent), service workers (13.3 per cent), managers (12.0 per cent), sales personal (10.6 per cent) and clerks (10.0 per cent). Harder, *Steinbach*, 28.
19. Francis, *Utopia*, 250.
20. *Carillon News*, 1 February 1949, 5 February 1957, 13 September 1957.
21. Warkentin, "Mennonite Settlements," 303.
22. *Carillon News* 19 March 1954. In the five years between 1956 and 1960 the amount of money spent on dwellings in Steinbach rose each year, increasing from $180,000 to $536,000 annually during this time. In 1960 alone 55 houses were constructed for a total of $536,000. Harder, *Steinbach*, 16.

production goals and output. Here, in the rural districts, an unprecedented agricultural commercialization set in, evidenced by produce specialization, farm mechanization, rural electrification, financial indebtedness, and response to interventionist government farm programs. As elsewhere, farmers in Hanover readily adopted "business methods," engaging in such strategies as "cost-benefit analysis," and they readily accepted "'managerial' intervention" by governments, responding, for example, to such regulations as the Wheat Acreage Reduction Act of 1941.[23]

Hanover's physical features — its relative lack of fertile, arable land and its proximity to Winnipeg — affected the local response to the new agriculture. These factors dictated, for instance, that Hanover farmers would be especially sensitive to the new post-war urban demands for meat, eggs, dairy products and vegetables.[24] As demand for these foodstuffs increased, Hanover farms became more intensive operations. Farm sizes dropped, falling from 64.0 acres in 1921 to 54.4 acres at the outset of the war in 1941, and then further to 47.0 acres by the end of the war. In the meantime there was a shift in crop selection that indicated a heightened interest in poultry and livestock production; between 1941 and 1946 wheat production, for example, declined by 25 per cent at the very time that feedgrain production increased by almost 30 per cent.[25] This trend continued into the 1950s so that by 1956 Hanover farmers had an oats to wheat ratio that was five times as high as the provincial average.[26]

Leading the shift to full agricultural commercialization in Hanover during these years were the poultry and dairy producers. By 1956, for example, the average Hanover farm kept five times more dairy cattle and poultry than did the average Manitoba farm.[27] Dairy had always been an important commodity producing sector for the municipality.

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23. Thompson and MacPherson, "Business of Farming."
24. The small farms also translated into less land tenancy: in 1956 when almost a third [29.7 per cent] of the land in Manitoba was rented, only 14.3 per cent was rented in Hanover. *Census of Canada*, 1956, Vol II, Table 15-1.
25. Census statistics in Francis, *Utopia*, 218, 220 indicate that wheat production declined from 7045 acres to 5313 acres during this time and that oat production increased from 14,888 acres to 20,086 acres.
26. Manitoba farmers on the whole grew slightly more wheat than oats (1.0 acre wheat for .96 acres oats); Hanover farmers planted five times as many acres of oats than of wheat (1.0 acres of wheat to 5.2 acres of oats). There was a similar ratio of wheat to feedgrain acres, 1.0 acres of wheat to 1.7 acres of feedwheat in Manitoba compared to 1.0 acre of wheat to 8.3 acres of feedgrain in Hanover. See *Census of Canada*, 1956, Vol II, Table 17-2. Indicative of the same trend was the fact that although during the 50s Hanover farmers owned only half as many combines per farmer as did the average Manitoba farmer, .44 combine per Manitoba farmer compared to .19 combine per Hanover farmer, they owned as many tractors (1.2 tractors per Manitoba farm compared to .96 per Hanove farm and .58 trucks per Manitoba farm compared to .62 per Hanover farm. *Census*, *ibid.*, Table 16-1.
27. The average farm in Hanover kept 18.3swine, 24.7 cows, 640 chickens or turkeys, while the average Manitoba farm kept 6.3 swine, 4.5 cows, 122 chickens or turkeys. *Census of Canada*, 1956, Vol II, Table 16-2.

Butter and cream sales in the first decades of this century had been followed by cheese production during the Depression; indeed, it was the co-operative cheese factory in many Hanover districts that secured economic stability during the 1930s.[28] Encouraged by the Second World War's demand for the same product, the number of dairy cows in Hanover increased by 57.1 per cent between 1931 and 1946. By 1949 southeastern Manitoba could boast that it "made most of Manitoba's cheese and shipped one-half of the milk needed by Winnipeg . . . ."[29] New government-sponsored farm organizations, such as the local "Dairy Herd Improvement Association," introduced the registered stock breeding programs and the notion of "record of production" performance. Technological innovation such as the milk machine, refrigerated bulk tank, water pumps, barn cleaning systems, "Power Take-Off" driven balers, and hydraulic loaders had turned dairy farming in Hanover into highly capitalized ventures by the mid-1950s.[30]

Despite these innovations in dairy production, it was poultry that became the dominant agricultural activity in Hanover during the 1950s. Indeed, by 1951 the size of dairy herds in Hanover began declining while the size of poultry flocks increased in size. In his field research in 1946, E.K. Francis concluded that poultry production allowed "many farmers with small capital and little land [to make] a good living . . . ."[31] Increased poultry production was no local aberration, however, but was linked to changes in agriculture in the United States that saw the urban, backyard chicken coop replaced by factory-like broiler chicken barns. John Shover notes that after 1945, mechanization and marketing strategies "transformed the wife's source of pin money into the most integrated and mechanized industry of any kind in food production."[32] Hanover farmers capitalized on the new trend in Manitoba, quadrupling their total number of birds from 266,638 to over a million birds in the 15 years between 1946 and 1961.[33] Mechanization and electrification had an effect on poultry farms that was similar to that in the dairy industry: it provided heat for brooding, thermostatic ventilation for greater density, electric lights to extend output during the short winter days, and electric motors to run the water pumps and automatic feeding lines.[34]

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28. Warkentin, "Mennonite Settlements," 361.
29. Penner, *Hanover*, 63.
30. Bruce Fast, "Dairy Farming in Hanover Since 1873," Term Paper, University of Manitoba, n.d.; Ron Andres, ed., *Silver Jubilee Steinbach D.H.I.A.* (Steinbach, 1980).
31. Francis, *Utopia*, 223.
32. Shover, *First Majority*, 144. According to Shover, between 1935 and 1960 the number of chicken broilers produced in the United States rose 50 fold and per capita poultry consumption tripled — poultry consumption rose from 16 pounds per capita consumption in 1940 to 50 lbs in the 70s, whereas beef consumption rose from 60 pounds to 116 pounds.
33. *Prairie Agricultural Census*, 1956 and 1966.
34. Royden Loewen, *Blumenort: A Mennonite Community in Transition, 1874-1982* (Blumenort and Ottawa, 1990), 501-508.

A NEW MENTALITÉ

The new links to the outside, the rising urban-based consumerism and the new agriculture signalled a social transformation in the R.M. of Hanover. "The Great Disjuncture" that was sweeping the United States and Central Canada had visited even this rural ethnic community located on the eastern edge of the Canadian prairie. And as in other North American communities the farm residents of Hanover experienced a marked change in cultural perception. There were signs everywhere in Hanover that established practices, both at the community level and within the primary social unit of the household, would be shaken to their roots. In this sense both the ideas of the "communal-oriented rural community" and the idea of "mutually dependent gender roles" were being refashioned.

Rurality, for one, was no longer seen as an agrarian ideal, the guardian of favoured values.[35] True, voices could still be heard espousing a rural way of life. In February 1947 when a poll indicated that 90 per cent of Steinbach residents would favour a "closed-in [skating] rink" that might serve to preoccupy the young men, other voices remembered older panaceas for quieting rowdy youth: ". . . if we had kept the Mennonite faith," argued local resident P.J. Toews, "we would not have this town problem at all, as we were advised [by our fathers] to be an agricultural people [whose] young folks would have plenty of chores for exercise."[36] It was a minority view, however. In 1948 many of the most conservative Hanover Mennonites who had espoused rural living as a morally approved way of life emigrated to Mexico and Paraguay; and during the 50s many of those Mennonite families who were similarly committed to rural life, but who wished to remain in Canada, established new agricultural colonies on the fringes of the prairies, in Manitoba's Interlake, Whiteshell and Swan River valley regions.[37]

For an increasing number of Hanover residents the locus of cultural continuity was now relocated to town-sponsored institutions — bible schools, museums and church programs. In fact, the countryside was no longer seen as a pastoral refuge from hostile social forces. Farmers themselves viewed it commercially, as one large production unit, comprised not of so and so many families clustered around a Mennonite church, but of

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35. Rurality for sectarian ethnic groups was different than the idealized notion of agrarian existence venerated by the selective tradition of the American cultural and political elite. See Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York, 1955), 23ff. For a portrayal of this phenomenon in Canada see, Jeffery Taylor, *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 1988. For many Western Canadian ethnic groups rural life guaranteed a separation from capitalist values, but also from the majority culture and the wider society. See for example, C.A Dawson, *Group Settlement* (New York, 1936).

36. *Ibid*, 6 February 1947.

37. Leonard Sawatsky, *They Sought a Country: Mennonite Colonization in Mexico* (Los Angeles, 1971); Peter J.B. Reimer and David P. Reimer, eds., *The Sesquicentennial Jubilee: Evangelical Mennonite Conference, 1812-1962* (Steinbach, 1962), 48, 58, 67, 69-72, 75-77.

a particular productive capability.[38] Town dwellers now often saw the countryside as alien to their increasing urbanity. When, in 1960, the editor of the *Carillon News* argued that the town of Steinbach should establish a park, he reasoned that an urban park "would obviate the necessity of going out for a drive of many miles." This would save the urban dweller from ending "up in some mosquito-infested, poison-ivied corner, made more dangerous by the presence of an angry bull or a biting dog." As the editor noted, a park would secure "the beauties of nature right here within walking distance."[39] At its worst Hanover residents spurned rural life; at its best, they saw it as the avenue towards a comfortable bourgeois lifestyle.

Gender, like rurality, was affected by the new post-war farm economy. As the idea of the rural community in Hanover became attuned to the values of urban, middle-class society, gender came to reflect the arrangement of the bourgeois household. In Hanover, agricultural commercialization introduced the nucleated and gender-stratified household. Men and women would henceforth assume distinct tasks. Rural households would be separated from the agricultural production unit and would exist solely as dwelling places. Gender would dictate that men be the breadwinners and women the housekeepers, men the producers and women the consumers, the reproducers, and the child nurturers.

Agricultural commercialization provided the social context of this phenomenon. It introduced both the commodification of traditional farmyard products and the mechanization of its tasks. Peggy Sanday's argument that there is almost a universal tendency to "male labour [being] concentrated on goods . . . with a high prestige or market value" explains the exclusion of women in Hanover from the production side of the farm following World War II; Ester Boserup's observation of a tendency of "men monopoliz[ing] the use of new equipment" held true in Hanover too, and sharpened the new gender delineations.[40] Historians of farm women commonly assert that men took over wheat and dairy production at the point at which they became commercialized.[41] This phenomenon was even more pronounced in increasingly commercialized poultry farms. The backyard chicken coop was the last vestige of women's farm production in Hanover; after World War II poultry production was allocated to the man's world.

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38. One group of farmers petitioning for a gravel road in 1958 described their region terms of the number of turkeys, chickens, and swine produced per year, the number of pounds of milk shipped out each month, and the number of cases of eggs sold each week. *Petition to the R.M. of Hanover, 1958*, Dave P. Loewen, R.R.#1, Steinbach, Manitoba.
39. *Carillon News*, 19 August 1960.
40. Peggy Sanday, "Towards a Theory of the Status of Women," *American Anthropologist* 75 (1973): 1692; Ester Boserup, *Woman's Role in Economic Development* (New York, 1970), 53.
41. Cornelia Butler Flora and Jan L. Flora, "Structure of Agriculture and Women's Culture in the Great Plains," *Great Plains Quarterly* 8 (1988): 195-206; Marjorie Griffin Cohen, "The Decline of Women in Canadian Dairying," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 17 (1984): 307-334.

In Hanover, "Poultry Man" was a tradename for chicken feed that promised "better [egg] hatchability," but it was also a redefinition of manhood.[42] It was the men who attended the special poultry production meetings, who were polled about the desirability of marketing boards, and asked about tariffs protecting Canadian production. Chicken farmers came to be known as "poultry men" and turkey farmers as "turkey ranchers."[43] Poultry production was tied to scientific innovation; newspaper stories highlighted the "Barred Rock ROP" flocks, the "Broad Breasted Bronze" Turkeys and the soft meated Capons.[44] It was the men who formed the new poultry egg grading and poultry marketing co-operatives and men who established the privately owned, vertically integrated poultry companies that possessed each of the hatching, production, feed, eviscerating and marketing sectors.[45] A sure sign of the new prestige of poultry production and the erosion of the household unit was the fact that in 1960 the longest and most modern of the Hanover chicken broiler barns was being erected by Steinbach's foremost merchant, Frank Reimer, and its largest egg-layer operation by one of the town's leading car dealership owners, John D. Penner.[46]

The rise of the commercial male-dominated farms affected gender in another way. More highly capitalized farm ventures simply diminished the traditional raison d'etre of the farm household, that is, the securing of generational succession and the passing on of patrimony to the children. High land prices impeded households with many children from expanding their holdings. Mechanization reduced the dependance of the farm on the help of the children. The very notion of child rearing changed. Stephanie Coontz has argued that as the economy became highly commercialized and population expanded quickly in early nineteenth-century America, parents became unable to pass their "status position" directly to their children; the response was that parents emphasized emotional bonding with their children and encouraged them to attain higher levels of education for preparation for an off-farm economic future.[47] Mothers began to see children as requiring special parental attention throughout their early life; in adolescence they became consumers and were considered to be vulnerable and malleable. One consequence was a rising marriage age and a declining rate of fertility.

Experience in the R.M. of Hanover reflects this development. Birth rates, for example, declined sharply among rural Mennonite communities in Canada between 1931 and 1941, and then during the 1940s despite plummeting rates of infant mortality, birth

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42. *Carillon News*, 21 November 1946.
43. *Carillon News*, 7 June 1949.
44. *Ibid*, 20 May 1949.
45. Grunthal History Book Committee, *Grunthal History 1874-1974* (Steinbach, 1974), 184-186; Warkentin, *Reflections*, 309-310; Penner, *Hanover*, 75-81.
46. Interview with John D. Penner, Winnipeg, Manitoba, September 1981; interview with Ben L. Reimer, Steinbach, Manitoba, January 1982.
47. Stephanie Coontz, *The Social Origins of Private Life: A History of American Families, 1600-1900* (London, 1988).

rates rose only slowly.[48] Seemingly, the baby boom bypassed places like Hanover, for although Mennonite women had at one time had considerably more children than those belonging to other religious groups in Canada, by 1951 Mennonite women on the average bore fewer children than Catholics and Anglicans and the same number as women in the United Church.[49] Perhaps the decline stemmed from the fact that the pacifist Mennonites had not experienced the same disruption to their domestic lives during the war. Perhaps too it stemmed from the rather sudden commercialization of Mennonite agriculture. Nevertheless, by the late 1940s, a sociologist studying Manitoba Mennonites perceived a trend and warned that "decreasing birth rates [arising from a 'knowledge of contraceptive methods'] are bound to have a far-reaching effect upon the . . . structure of [this] ethnic minority. . . ."[50]

If an increasing difficulty in farm household formation was one of the factors affecting birth rates, a rising degree of consumerism, making children seem more of a financial liability than an asset, may have been another. Martine Segalen has argued that post-World War II French farm women established households that reflected bourgeois values, revealing "a desire for display, a desire for intimacy, and a desire for comfort . . . ."[51] Hanover families during the 1950s became increasingly dependent on the stores and supermarkets of Steinbach. Town car dealers advertised not only the family car, but cars fitted with automatic transmissions

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48. Information gathered by Betty Plett, Blumenort, Manitoba in 1981 from cemetery records in Blumenort, Manitoba in 1980 indicate that between 1926 and 1935 26 of 44 burials in the community were children age 0-5, in the period from 1936 to 1945 the ratio was 37 of 69 or 54 per cent of the burials, in the period from 1946 to 1955 the ratio was 27 of 55 or 49 per cent of burials, and from 1956 to 1965 it was 13 of 46 or 28 per cent of burials. Only in the period from 1965 to 1980 did the ratio plummet to 9 of 69 or 13 per cent of burials.
49. Jacques Henripin, *Trends and Factors of Fertility in Canada* (Ottawa, 1971), 196. Mennonite women in 1931 had 740 children aged 0-4 for every 1000 women, Catholic women 665, Anglicans 435, women of the United Church 435. By 1951 the number of live-born children per 1000 Mennonite women between 15 and 49 was 583, for Catholics 734, for Anglicans 622, for women of the United Church 583.
50. Francis, *Utopia*, 273 274. It is true that by 1961 birth rates in Mennonite communities had once again risen. However, their family sizes were lower than in 1931. Their family sizes were also lower than Catholic family sizes. In 1961 Mennonite women had 710 children aged 0-4 per 1000 person, while Catholic women who had 742 children per 1000 women. The 710 children marked a significant decrease from the 740 children in 1931, especially in light of the decline in infant mortality rates for children under five, falling as they did from 59 per cent of all deaths in the years around 1930 to 28 per cent for the years around 1960. Henripin, *ibid.* Most significant perhaps were figures indicating a convergence of birth rates for rural and town Mennonite women. Whereas in 1931 rural Mennonite women had had 93 per cent more children than their urban sisters, by 1961 the difference had shrunk to 34 per cent. Moreover, rural Mennonite women who were in their 30s in 1961, that is, those women whose family planning strategies were most effected by developments in the 1950s, had only 12 per cent more children than did their urban counterparts of similar age. *Ibid*
51. Martine Segalen, *Love and Power in the Peasant Family: Rural France in the Nineteenth Century*, trans., Sarah Matthews (Chicago, 1983), 156.

thatsupposedlyweremoregearedtowomendrivers.[52] Steinbach merchants ensured that women had places to visit. These included an increasing number of and increasingly elaborate grocery stores; by 1960 one of the stores, Steinbach's "Tomboy Grocer," claimed that its retail area of almost 12,000 square feet made it the "largest Tomboy Store in Canada."[53] By the late 1940s Steinbach also offered several bakeries, a score of appliance shops and two flamboyant "dress shoppes."[54]

Decreasing birth rates also clearly stemmed from increased employment of women off the farm. It was now a matter of curiosity, worthy of a photo in the weekly, when husband and wife were seen working side by side in the fields.[55] Mechanization had taken women from the fields and increasingly placed them in domestic service in the towns and cities. Indeed, by 1956 there were six percent more men on farms in Hanover than women and 11 per cent more women than men in Hanover's small towns.[56] But women were also encouraged to leave the municipality and seek work in canneries in Southern Ontario or in well-to-do homes in Winnipeg.[57] In fact, ads for a "nice experienced girl for household in good home . . . [with] private room and radio [at] . . . highest wages" in Winnipeg drew such a response in Hanover that community elders expressed concern about the "spiritual danger" of city life.[58]

For most women these years of wage labour were short and focused on the time before marriage. The new consumer-oriented household, focusing on the private family, encouraged women to contemplate a life in a supportive and relational role as homemaker, mother and wife. The "true woman" of Hanover was one who measured a husband's worth by his willingness to engage in an intimate relationship and his ability as a breadwinner. Older women, like the 68 year-old wife of Steinbach businessman, M.M. Penner, declared in 1954 that her "foremost memory" of her marriage was "her husband's powerful, aggressive personality . . . ,[a] forcefulness . . . [that] held the family together."[59] Reflecting their socialization to different values, five of six 12 year-old

52. Special appeals were now made in car ads exhibited in the *Carillon News* to lure women into the habit of driving. The ad for the 1947 Oldsmobile, for example, depicted a woman's foot in a strapped high heeled shoe in 14 different maneuvers, clutching and stepping on the gas. The message of the ad was: "with the new Olds all you do is step on the gas and go." *Carillon News* 1 December 1947, 5 September 1946.
53. *Carillon News*, 5 February 1960.
54. The latter not only steered women from traditional work patterns, they also openly objectified the female body: among scores of explicit ads in the *Carillon News*, "Marvel Ladies Apparel" in 1954 promised that with its "full bloom revolutionary new flexes bra" it had the answer to "how skinny girls get curves." *Carillon News*, 11 June 1954.
55. *Ibid*, 12 August 1949.
56. *Census of Canada*, 1956, Population, Table 12, 9.
57. *Carillon News*, 13 August 1949.
58. *Ibid*, 12 December 1947; Blumenort Colonization Meeting Minutes, 9 April 1957, Dave Loewen, Blumenort, Manitoba.
59. *Carillon News*, 9 July 1954.

Steinbach school girls used the words "hardworking" and "kind" when asked in 1960 to define a "gentleman."[60] And when teenaged girls expressd their vocational aspirations, they spoke of supportive, nurturing roles as nurses, secretaries and elementary school teachers.[61]

The commercialized farm and consumer-oriented towns, thus, introduced new concepts of both rural life and household. Once the guarantors of a separated, self-sufficient ethnic enclave, the rural community and the farm household now became tickets of admission to middle-class society. The farm enterprise brought prestige to its male producers, provided them with an associational life within the wider community and the resources to determine the rhythm of farm life. The separated household, now often only a dwelling place, belonged to a world dominated by consumerism, a redefined childhood, and a relationship-centered conjugal unit that emanated from the towns. Both the production-oriented husband and the domestic-centered wife were children of the "Great Disjuncture."

SYMBOLIC ETHNICTIY

Commensurate with the new views of rural community and household relations was a new concept of ethnicity. Hanover Mennonites had developed a strong sense of peoplehood in Europe, where they often found themselves as free peasants with special social and political arrangements within host societies.[62] This identity as a separate people was transplanted to the Canadian prairies during their migrations of the 1870s. In the years following World War II and in the context of social and economic change ethnicity was redefined and with its new code guided Hanover Mennonites to the very heart of post-war Canadian society. Mennonite ethnicity in the 1950s can be described as "symbolic," to use Herbert Gans' description of "third generation" ethnicity; it can also be seen to have been "class-oriented," taking a particular rung in what John Porter has described as the "vertical mosaic;" it may also be described as "religious," in the manner described by Will Herberg.[63] But it was most often the identity of a confident people,

60. *Ibid*, 12 February 1960.
61. In a November 1946 poll at the Steinbach Collegiate only one of the 22 students planning to attend university was a girl; a third of the 49 girls were planning to become nurses, a fifth secretaries, another fifth were undecided. Ibid, 21 November 1946.
62. For a fuller description of the "free peasant" see, Jerome Blum, *The End of the Old Order in Rural Europe*, (Princeton, 1978), 30.
63. See Marcus Lee Hansen, "The Third Generation Immigrant." 1937 *American Immigrants and Their Generations: Studies and Commentaries on the Hansen Thesis after Fifty Years*, eds., Peter Kivisto and Dag Blanck (Urbana and Chicago, 1990), 191-203; Herbert Gans, "Symbolic Ethnicity: The Future of Ethnic Groups and Cultures in America," *On the Making of Americans: Essays in Honour of David Riesman*, ed. H. Gans (Philadelphia, 1979), 193-220; John Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada* (Toronto, 1965); Will Herberg, *Protestant - Catholic - Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (New York, 1955).

fully participating within the new society, seeking — as did all farm communities — an identity which linked their old worlds and to the new.

The 1950s was a time in which Hanover Mennonites sought to reify ethnicity. Hanover residents now engaged more fully in "symbolic ethnicity," seeking to objectify and celebrate the past. One medium of the new ethnicity was a rising interest in old relics. This was the time that a local historical society publicly battled a Steinbach land developer to restrain him from demolishing the last Mennonite house-barn in Hanover. In May 1960 the quiet-spoken founder of the Mennonite Village Museum, John C. Reimer pleaded with the out-spoken and flamboyant car dealer A.D. Penner to allow the old building to remain on a piece of commercial property in town. Penner defied Reimer's pleas, as well as those made by the head provincial archivist, Hart Bowsfield, who drove out from Winnipeg to take up Reimer's cause, and the old building was bulldozed in full view of newspaper cameras. Reimer may have lost this case, but in the process he advanced the new ethnicity that sought to build a sense of peoplehood around physical vestiges of a glorified past. In his encounter with Steinbach's foremost car dealer Reimer had also planted the seed for an ambitious museum project.[64]

Less controversial and a more widespread medium of the new ethnicity in Hanover was the family gathering and the historical anniversary. During the 1950s Hanover was the repeated site of huge clan gatherings that drew people "back home" from places across Western Canada and the western United States. They came to old farmsteads and to churchyards to hear speaker after speaker embellish the stories of the olden days. They stopped for photos of the clan, they found their places in huge genealogical charts, and elected the history book committees that would compile all the information for posterity. This was the story of "Plettentag," the gathering of 400 descendants of pioneers Cornelius and Sarah Plett in July 1945; this too was the story of "Reimer Day," the meeting in 1954 of 700 descendants of Klaas and Helena Reimer, the early nineteenth-century founding family of one of Hanover's main Mennonite churches.[65]

The gatherings were memorials, objectifications of a past time. In this process, Hanover residents redefined the very notion of "history." The Mennonite heritage no longer consisted simply of the sixteenth-century "golden age" of Anabaptist martyrs who offered the ultimate religious sacrifice and attained the highest of ethical standards.[66] In

64. *Carillon News*, 20 May 1960.

65. C.J. Thielman, *Bericht von dem Plettentag* (Steinbach, 1945); C. J. Thielman and P.A. Penner, *Familienregister der Nachkommen von Groszeltern Kornelius und Sarah Plett, 1953* (n.p., 1953); John C. Reimer, ed., *Familienregister der Nachkommen von Klaas und Helena Reimer mit Biographien der ersten drei Generationen* (Winnipeg, 1958).

66. For a view of a traditional sense of Mennonite history see Thielman J. van Braght, *Martyrs Mirror*, 1660, trans. Joseph F. Sohm (Scottdale, PA, 1950).

the culture of the 1950s, one no longer strove to emulate the values of the past; one strove to move beyond its limitations. As the Steinbach Credit Union noted in 1957, after announcing that its assets had risen 10 fold in 10 years, "the past is . . . only . . . a gauge for things that are and the present . . . a measuring stick for things to come."[67] Mennonite history was now the story of primitive, but hard-working nineteenth century pioneers. After 1947 the local weekly ran regular "progress editions," each business encouraged to juxtapose early humble beginnings with booming, recent achievements. Typical was the ad for Steinbach Flour Mills which juxtaposed a photo of its mill built in 1892 with its modern five-story building that through "modernizing and enlarging" could provide a service "second to none."[68]

This fascination with progress, however, did not mean that Hanover residents turned their backs on their history. Indeed, there was a sense that their very ethnic background made Hanover residents exemplary Canadians. Their new selective tradition informed them that they had rid themselves of the closed, negative, ascetic aspects of the past, and had capitalized and progressed by Mennonite traits such as family cohesion, self-reliance and the work ethic. Thus students of Hanover in the late 50s were told by residents that the municipality's progress was due to its "past isolation which encouraged native ingenuity" and in part to "extremely aggressive" owners who were "dedicated to hard work to the exclusion of every other activity but church work."[69] Thus, in 1959, Frank Reimer, the owner of a large, modern grocery and a national trucking firm, informed the local newspaper that his success was due to his "iron determination to succeed . . . built on the foundation of old fashioned puritan Biblical principles."[70]

Hanover residents were most pleased when these ethnic traits were linked to middle-class respectability. They enthusiastically reprinted the speech of their local member of parliament, Franco-Manitoban Rene Jutras, in which he told Hanover Mennonites to "hold your head high in your usual unassuming manner [for] you have cut yourselves an honourable place among the Canadian communities."[71] By 1960 Mennonite ethnicity had come to be defined as a contemporary cultural expression. Low German was now the medium of comedy and self-deprecation found in Arnold Dyck's *Koop en Bua*, the Hanover bestseller that "sold out" in 1960. The term "Dutchmen," referring loosely to the Flemish and the Frisian background of the Mennonites, identified the most successful football team in southeastern Manitoba. The proposed Mennonite museum in 1960 would not separate Hanover from the rest of society according to its

67. The value increased from $159,017 to $1.67 million. See, *Carillon News* 25 January 1957; Mel Toews, *The First Forty Years; The Story of the Steinbach Credit Union Limited* (Steinbach, 1986), 29.
68. *Carillon News*, 19 December 1947.
69. Warkentin, "Mennonite Settlements," 382.
70. Wright, *Steinbach*, 80.
71. John C. Reimer, ed., *75 Gedenkfeier der Mennonitischen Einwanderung in Manitoba, Canada* (North Kildonan, MB, 1949), 102.

main proponent John C. Reimer; instead it would be a "show window of the past" and measure "the progress that had been made."[72]

Nothing exemplified the mixing of middle-class values and ethnic self-perception quite so much as Hanover's response to the radio. Although Hanover lagged behind the rest of Canada in acquiring the radio, it had become a widely accepted medium in the municipality by the end of World War II.[73] In March 1947, for example, Steinbach miller Peter F. Barkman was featured on CBC Radio boosting "early [January-placed] chickens," and in the same month the Steinbach Bible Institute was visited by the "radio [singing] group," the Gospel Light Messengers.[74] In the mid-50s CBC advertised its nightly Arthur Godfrey show, and the homemakers' "Trans-Canada Matinee" in the German-language *Steinbach Post*.[75] Though Hanover Mennonites had accepted these programs, they still voiced grave concerns about the listening habits of the youth. By the late 40s Hanover youth were in fact tuning into the "Western hour" on Winnipeg's CJOB, or worse still, were accused of listening to the "blaring disharmony" of Elvis Presley on CKY.[76] In this context local residents began to hear of plans for a radio station owned "exclusively by Mennonite shareholders."[77] The moment came on 1 March 1957 when the "Mennonite" CFAM first aired. Ironically, what promoters dubbed as "Mennonite" was nothing other than Canadian middle-class behaviour. The main thrust of CFAM programming, declared the promoters, would be "farm news and market prices," and the "good music" of the "favourite classics played by the best orchestras in Europe and America."[78] To be a Mennonite now was to be a respectable member of middle-class Canada.

Having redefined their Mennonite identity, Hanover residents were more willing to celebrate the polyethnic nature of their region. Southeastern Manitoba in 1961 was still a multicultural sub-region of Manitoba, a region in which five groups — French, Mennonite, German Lutheran, British and Ukrainian — lived side by side in significant proportions, albeit in separate ethnic enclaves.[79] This was, in fact, the only census district in Manitoba where Anglo-Canadians comprised less than 10 per cent of the population. The wider society was now no longer seen as a hostile force of non-Mennonites; rather it was a polyethnic community where secondary relations flourished across district borders. Memories of past times reflected this new perception. In 1947, one Mennonite old timer recalled that the pioneer days were a time of harmonious inter-ethnic co-operation involving a host of people: the Scot Ontarian "Old Man Rankin [who]

72. *Carillon News*, 23 September 1960, 5 February 1960, 8 April 1960.
73. By 1951 nine of ten Canadian homes owned a radio. Rutherford, *Prime Time*, 12.
74. *Ibid*, 27 March 1947, 3 October 1947.
75. *Steinbach Post*, 13 February 1957, 20 February 1957
76. *Carillon News*, 15 March 1947; Interview with Ralph Friesen, Winnipeg, March 1993.
77. *Carillon News*, 15 March 1957.
78. *Ibid*
79. Census statistics in Harder, *Steinbach*,, 31 indicate that these groups comprised 31.7, 28.3, 19.1, 7.0, and 6.5 per cent of the total population base of the total population base of 28,734.

entered a [sawmill] partnership with one of the Mennonite settlers . . . ."; the Franco Manitoban, "Old Man St. Laurent, the pioneer tinsmith . . . tap tapping at my . . . neighbour's store, upstairs, early, in dark November;" the Volhynian German Lutheran "Jacob family with lots of girls in the small neat straw thatched home;" and all the Ukrainian neighbours, about whom "it would take too long to tell."[80] Multiculturalism in southeastern Manitoba was the glue that allowed the new economy to flourish.

If "symbolic ethnicity" served to provide Hanover Mennonites with a respectable way to link the past with the present, so too did "evangelical Christianity." The 1950s represented a time of religious revival in both Canada and the United States. Though society in general was growing more secular after World War II, historians have noted that during the 1950s Sunday School attendance, church construction and church attendance "grew beyond the expectations" of most Canadian Protestant leaders.[81] Will Herberg's classic 1955 essay, *Protestant - Catholic - Jew*, has provided one explanation of this phenomenon in the United States. He argues that the religious revival of the 1950s was closely linked to the psychology of an immigrant people: "it was largely in . . . [their] religion that [the immigrants'] grandchildren found an identifiable place in America."[82] This occurred because religion was "both genuinely American and a familiar principle of group identification."[83] The result was that ethnicity came to be expressed within the general parameters of Protestantism, Catholicism and Judaism. John Stackhouse has argued that Canadian religious revival, too, seemed to allow for easy movement within one of these three religious categories. This was especially true of churches within the Protestant sphere that were noted to be "evangelical." During the 1950s Canadian "Protestants began to see themselves as part of a transdenominational fellowship . . . identify[ing] their fellowship as 'evangelical' despite the different religious categories this adjective had denoted in the past."[84]

In post-war Hanover society "evangelicalism" became accepted by the majority of Mennonite churches. Instead of emphasizing the old communitarian values of humility, nonconformity to worldly society and pacifism, the churches now emphasized the individualistic nature of religion, especially the ideas of "personal salvation" and "spiritual victory."[85] To secure the "experiential" aspect of religion Steinbach churches focused on emotional revival meetings and stirring missionary reports. Protracted revival meetings had first been introduced at the turn of the century, but the practice took off during the 1940s and 1950s. In 1942 a Steinbach businessman speared-headed the construction of a 1000-seat auditorium dedicated to the use of religious gatherings; known throughout southeastern Manitoba simply as the "Tabernacle" it became the

80. *Carillon News*, 1 July 1949.
81. Stackhouse, "Protestant Experience," 200.
82. Herberg, *Protestant - Catholic - Jew*, 40.
83. *Ibid*, 44.
84. Stackhouse, "Protestant Experience," 204.
85. *Carillon News*, 23 April 1954.

special focus for inter-church spiritual renewal meetings.[86] During the 1950s revivalism increased in intensity. In 1957 when Rev. George Brunk, an American Mennonite revivalist, set up his tent in Steinbach it was reported that 1900 people filled the huge tent on the first night and the RCMP had to be called in to help the town constables direct traffic.[87] Indeed, so pervasive was evangelicalism in Steinbach, that one sociologist noted, "the only outlet for Mennonites who resented a certain 'evangelical pressure'" came in 1959 when the United Church of Canada established a branch in town.[88]

Several reasons may be offered for the wholesale acceptance of mainstream Protestant evangelism by Mennonite churches that traditionally would have opposed individualized and subjective religiosity. First, it had the support of "leading Steinbach businessmen."[89] Clearly, evangelicalism fit better their new differentiated lifestyles in exclusive Steinbach suburbs and their new associational life with the outside world than did the communitarian values of the older churches. Then, too, evangelicalism was seen as the only guarantor of church growth and the only mechanism by which a more worldly-wise youth would be attracted to the Mennonite churches. One of the responses to a perceived increase in juvenile delinquency and youthful indulgence was an increase in the number of local police officers to four.[90] But even more important was the establishment of a new round of widely-supported religious programs directed at youth — an annual Christian youth conference in 1941, an evangelical-oriented summer camp in 1947, and an annual regional Sunday School teacher's conference in 1953.[91] There was an incredible base of community support for these programs; the Sunday School teachers's conference in March 1957 drew 2500 participants, the graduation ceremony at the Steinbach Bible Institute attracted an audience of 1800 in June 1960.[92] Clearly, these programs were successful. In fact, during the decade after Steinbach's conservative "First Mennonite Church" began participating in these youth programs, it saw its membership rise by from 340 to 530 members.[93] In 1959 it opened Steinbach's most modern-looking and largest church building, seating 850 persons.[94] Evangelicalism, borrowed from the wider Protestant world, allowed Hanover residents to secure a continuing sense of group identity within established Mennonite institutions.

Ironically, while religious ideals of the wider society secured internal continuity, traditional Mennonite ideals were also used to secure a place for Hanover residents in

86. Dave Schellenberg, "The Story of Steinbach's Churches," Warkentin, *Reflections*, 212.
87. The local paper predicted that "Steinbach, a town which has probably witnessed more revival campaigns than any other town of comparable size in Canada is about to see the largest . . . gospel effort ever [undertaken] until now." *Carillon News*, 31 May 1957.
88. Harder, *Steinbach*, 68.
89. Wright, *Steinbach*, 103.
90. *Carillon News*, 7 October 1960.
91. Schellenberg, "Steinbach Churches."
92. *Carillon News*, 17 March 57, 15 April 1960.
93. *Ibid*, 24 October 1946, 10 April 1947; Harder, *Steinbach*, 41.
94. *Ibid*, 42.

the outside world. The dialectic worked both ways. Clearly, the Mennonite relief and service organizations and their "peace witness" to the federal government helped recoup status and relevance that Mennonites lost during the war.[95] Local, weekly newspapers regularly reminded Hanover church members of their special role as Mennonites in a global community. The English-language *Carillon News* and the German-language *Steinbach Post* shared in this pride. In 1957 when the sixth Mennonite world conference was held in Karlsruhe, Germany, the *Steinbach Post* reported that not only were there 270 delegates from North America and Europe, but Mennonite representatives too from mission stations in China, Japan, Indonesia, and India.[96] When in 1960 the Canadian Department of Agriculture attempted to stabilize hog prices by purchasing half a million pounds of pork and offering it to non-government organizations, the *Carillon* reported with a sense of pride that the Mennonite Central Committee had been the first organization to accept the offer, can the meat, and ship it overseas.[97] Similar stories were carried in the Hanover papers about the contribution to relief by the related organizations, the Canadian Mennonite Relief Committee and the Mennonite Disaster Service.[98]

The depth of support for this new evangelical-oriented and globally-based Mennonitism was evident in the backing it received from women. If the Mennonite heroine of the past had been the patient and industrious grandmother who had seen many children establish households of their own, the heroine of the 1940s and 1950s in Hanover was the single woman relief worker or missionary.[99] Local newspapers carried frequent stories of young Hanover women in overseas contexts, as refugee workers in post-war Germany and as nurses in pre-revolutionary China.[100] True, any woman who remained single and built a high profile career as spinster was now celebrated — Mintie Reimer, the first municipal secretary retired in 1954 amidst great fanfare and in 1960 Anna Regier was honoured as the first woman from Steinbach to earn a doctorate.[101] But these woman drew less attention than did single missionary women. Missionary Susanna Plett, who died near her mission post in the jungles of Bolivia in 1956, for example, had attracted large audiences of both men and women when she came to speak in Steinbach during the 1940s and early 50s.[102] On the home front, Hanover women began organizing a myriad of mutual aid groups, gearing their benevolence as never before to overseas situations.[103]

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95. Donald F. Durnbaugh, "War and Patriotism from Historic Peace Church Perspective," *Non Violent America: History Through the Eyes of Peace*, eds., Louise Hawkley and James Juhnke (North Newton, KS, 1993), 165-197; James Juhnke, *Vision, Doctrine, War: Mennonite Identity and Organization in America, 1890-1930* (Scottdale, PA, 1989).
96. *Steinbach Post*, 10 September 1957.
97. *Carillon News*, 26 February 1960.
98. *Ibid*, 25 January 1957; *Steinbach Post*, 10 September 1957; Francis, *Utopia*, 240.
99. Reimer, *Nachkommen*, 276.
100. *Carillon News*, 19 December 1946, 21 February, 1946.
101. *Ibid*, 21 May 1954, 27 May 1960.
102. *Ibid*, 9 December 1949.
103. *Carillon News*, 12 September 1946; Reimer, *Sesquicentennial*, 144 and 145.

The significance of this level of support for Mennonite missions amongst Hanover women was that they recreated the culture of their community. They had shifted the focus of their community from the rural household to the publicly-recognized institutional roles. Women had lost their status as producers in the commercialized and specialized Hanover farms, but this did not translate into total seclusion in the domestic sphere of the dwelling place. Within the new relief and mission organizations they secured a new, more public role as meaningful contributors to society. Working under the umbrella for the first time of an official Mennonite organization, and reaching back to days of inter-dependance and mutual aid, Hanover women now organized themselves for official service.

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to account for some cultural changes in one post-World War II prairie community. It has suggested that Hanover, Manitoba like other rural communities, reshaped itself during the third and fourth generations of settlement, as it underwent the commercializing and technologizing transformation of the post-war economy. Culture, defined as the structure of meaning by which people responded to their society, changed in Hanover during this time. But here, as elsewhere, the community responded to change within the context of established institutions and attitudes. Thus, as the "Great Disjuncture" presented a range of homogenizing structures, the R.M. of Hanover produced a particular and localized culture.

This is not to make the simplistic argument of ethnic persistence. Indeed, the R.M. of Hanover underwent a fundamental reorganization after World War II. Gender, rural society and ethnic identity each changed to reflect a more integrated, urban, industrial society. Before the war the primary social unit of the rural ethnic community in Hanover had been the self-sufficient agrarian Mennonite household in which men and women worked together as producers; after the war the farm become commercialized, mechanized and capitalized; the lives of men and women were separated, gender was redefined, and in the new context, women assumed *bourgeois* behaviour. After the war, too, the very nature of the rural community changed; rurality had once been the guarantor of a Mennonite culture — simple, semi-isolated, humble — but after the war, rural economic activity became the very conduit through which the family acquired the means to attain middle-class habits or in which families faced unprecedented financial restriction, compelling a move into rapidly growing Steinbach. Finally, the new society of the 1950s changed the way in which all Hanover Mennonites, rural and urban, perceived themselves. Ethnicity no longer entailed a separation from the outside; instead, it was now a symbolic identification borne proudly within a new, integrated Canada.

New views of gender, rurality and ethnicity, however, did not represent a unilinear acquiescence to the "Great Disjuncture." In fact, Hanover residents entered the new society, assuming its social characteristics, through, not in contradiction to, these traditional social formations. Women gave up their roles as producers, but they negotiated a new self respect in the new society by engaging in voluntary community work through Mennonite relief organizations. Men found a new role by commodifying the traditional

products of the self-sufficient, mixed farm and by using those resources to support Mennonite institutions. Rural and urban residents found their places in the new society by emphasizing Mennonite traits that fit well the new, conservative middle-class Canada — orderliness, hard work, cultural stability. The traditional Mennonite concepts of gender, rurality and ethnicity that had once separated the community from the outside world now became the very path through which Hanover joined the new society. But they also determined the shape of the "Great Disjuncture" in Hanover.

What is distinctive about the Hanover experience is the way in which the sudden burst of urbanization and industrialization affected everyday life in its society. In all prairie communities traditional social relations and identities encountered modernizing forces to produce a particular structure of meaning. No doubt, other variables such as timing of settlement, physical characteristics, commodity prices, proximity to markets, and mode of production, affected local responses to the forces of change. But it is equally clear that in each of these communities traditional concepts of gender, ethnicity and rural life affected the shape of the "Great Disjuncture" at the local level.