

This is for my history teacher. She doesn't know much about us even though she grew up near-by. Her school didn't teach about Hutterites. And not every neighbour feels comfortable driving onto a Hutterite colony. We don't have gates, but it might feel a bit scary. Kinda like me walking into the Shopper's Mall for the first time, just before Christmas.

Here's my paper. "*Where Hutterites Come From*". I'm Samuel Waldner. 14 years old. Living on a Colony beside Turtle Mountain.

It was 600 years ago in Europe, that farmers got so angry with their rich rulers, that they started a Peasant's War. Due to poorer weapons, more than 100,000 peasants died. A large group moved to a place called Moravia where they felt free to start their own community with their own rules, growing food, doing pottery, tin-smithing and other handy things. They refused to ever fight in a war again.

We're Anabaptists, which means we're Christians but aren't Catholic or Protestant. We believe there should be no rulers over our congregations; that every person, and every colony, has the ability to find God. Everyone is equal before God, so no one should be rich and no one poor. We own our property in common. Because of a popular teacher, Jacob Huter, we became known as Hutterites. Our language is Tyrolean, which originated in Austria.

Due to their reputation for honesty and good quality work, our people were accepted for about 100 years. But then, the Moravian rulers chased them east into Romania, Hungary and Russia, where they joined the Mennonites (also Anabaptists) to enjoy religious freedoms granted by the Russian Czar, like, managing our schools and refusing military service.

We did well, until 1870 when Russian rulers canceled our freedoms. Hutterites heard that farmers were wanted in the Dakotas, so we moved to the US, where, we again enjoyed religious freedoms.

But, 45 years later, during WWI, the Americans told our men they had to fight, so we asked Canada to grant us religious freedoms here. About 1/3 of us moved again! Mostly to Alberta and Manitoba.

That's a lot of moving and starting over. It's important for us to live as a sharing, loving community, managing our own affairs and following Jesus' teachings of non-violence.

We eat meals communally, but I live with my family. There are daily prayers we can choose to attend. Individually, we don't own property, but by working together, the colony becomes prosperous. Even so, if you take the land the colony owns and divide it between families, each family would only own a quarter section! We're poor alone, rich together. With so many kids to play with! Today we're making rooms and tunnels in a big snowbank!

I hope this helps you understand us.

'Hutterites' is drafted for a future Vantage Points story.

See ya' later!

David Neufeld