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The Hutterites: South Dakota's Communal Farmers

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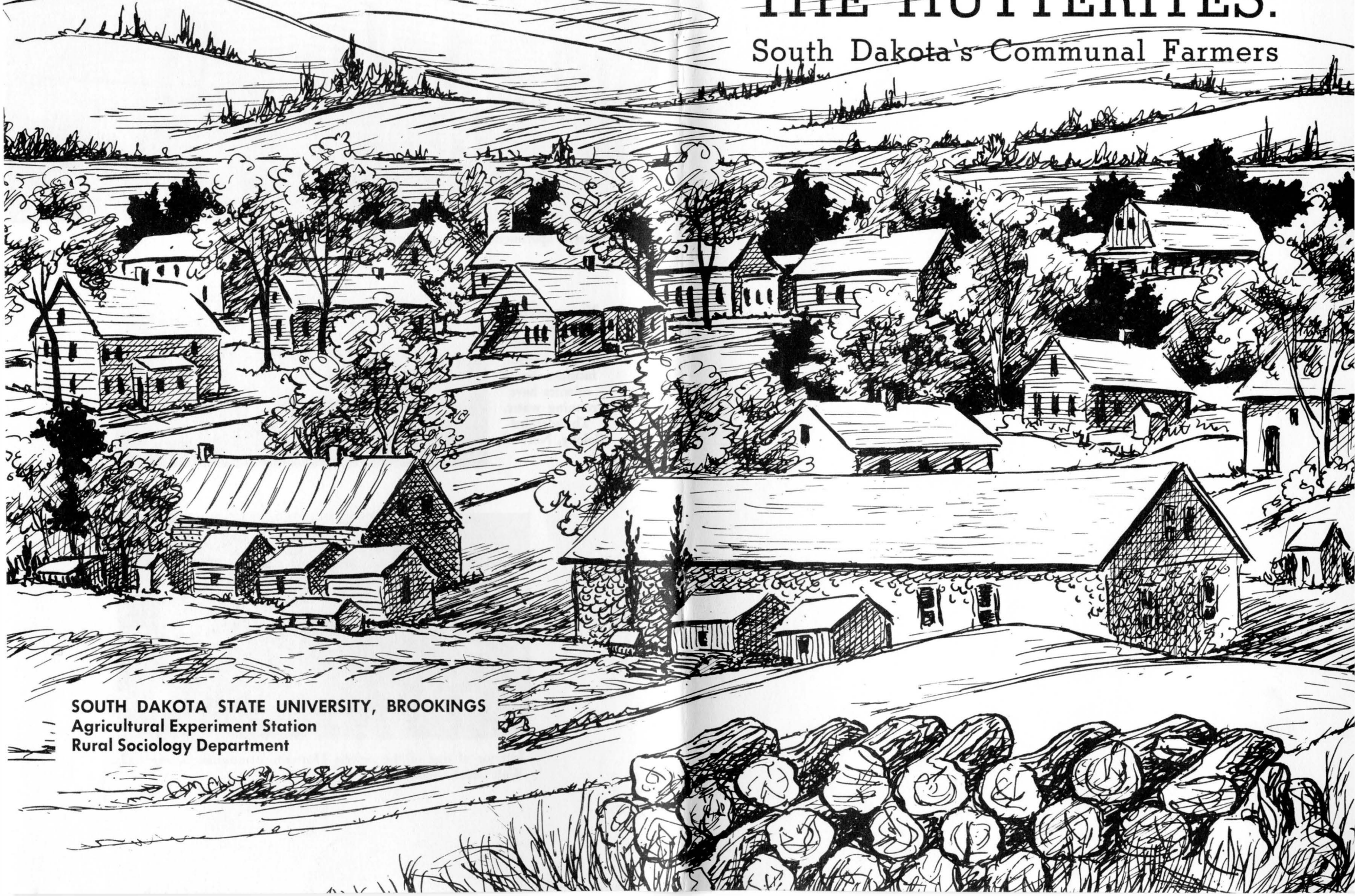
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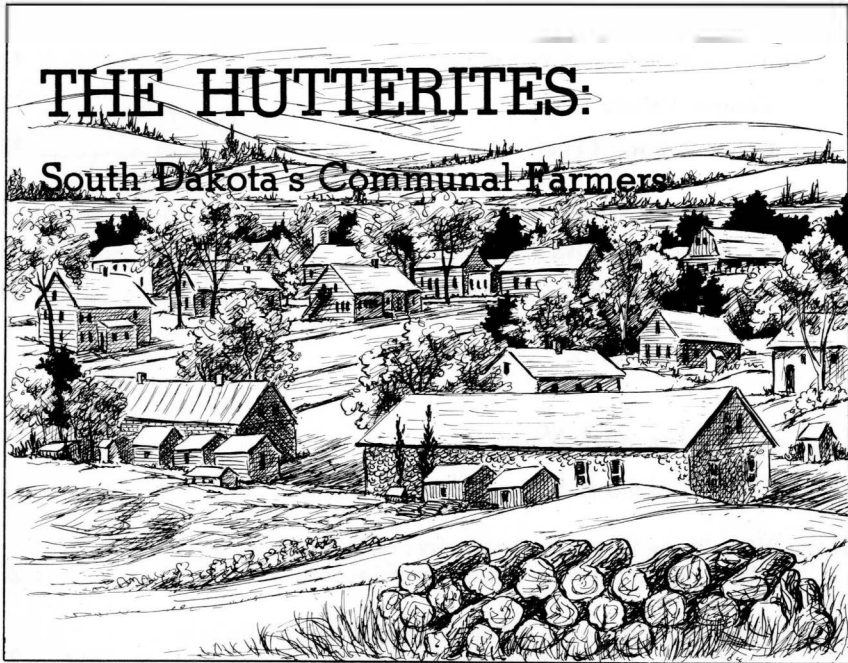
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THE HUTTERITES:

South Dakota's Communal Farmers



SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, BROOKINGS
Agricultural Experiment Station
Rural Sociology Department



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INTRODUCTION

South Dakota is the home of a small religious group known as the Hutterite Brethren. Members of this sect live in small cooperative colonies in the northern United States and in several provinces in Canada. The Hutterites are unique in that while using modern agricultural technology, they have isolated themselves from the main current of Western civilization. The boundary maintenance of their social system has enabled them to retain many characteristics of their culture developed during the Protestant Reformation. The most distinctive feature of the Hutterite way of life is a pattern of communal living which is practiced in connection with their agricultural enterprises.

South Dakotans have a special interest in the Hutterites and their communal farms for at least two reasons: First, from a historical standpoint South Dakota was the location of the first settlements of Hutterites when they migrated from Russia in 1874 to 1879. In fact, the first colony established in North America, Old Bon Homme, is still

in existence. It is located a short distance west of Yankton, S. D., near the town of Tabor. The second reason for local interest in the Hutterites is that South Dakota has the largest number of colonies and population of any state in the United States (Canada now has the larger part of the Hutterite population with more than six times the number in South Dakota). Modern transportation and communication have made local citizens aware of and interested in knowing more about the Hutterites, their beliefs and their practices. The purpose of this publication is to provide reliable up-to-date information on the Hutterites of South Dakota and their communal farms.

This publication is divided into two major parts: the first part attempts to answer such questions as who are the Hutterites, what they believe, and where they are located in South Dakota. The second part reports on the 1964 census of these communal farms and summarizes the sect's agricultural enterprises and changes in farm operations.

PART I

THE HUTTERITE BRETHREN

HISTORY¹

Origin of Hutterites

As a religious group the Hutterites are not a new sect but a very old one. They originated in Moravia in 1528. An offshoot of the Swiss Brethren, they are one of the many Anabaptist groups that arose directly out of the Protestant Reformation struggles of sixteenth century Europe.

Founders of the Hutterian Brotherhood subscribed to the Anabaptist beliefs of adult baptism and separation of church and state. Like the Swiss Brethren, they were strongly opposed to war. In addition, the Hutterites interpreted the New Testament literally, insisting on the complete sharing of worldly possessions. It is this principle of communal living that distinguishes them from the Anabaptist groups such as the Mennonites. Many of these beliefs ran counter to those held by the established churches of that day; and, as Europe was in an almost constant state of war, the rulers were not tolerant of pacifists. Consequently, the Hutterites as well as other Anabaptist groups were often the object of severe persecution.

Jacob Hutter

In 1533, Jacob Hutter, the Anabaptist preacher from whom the sect derives its name, came from the Tyrol to join the group in Moravia and became their pastor. Through the efforts of Hutter and his assistants a well-defined communal pattern was established which has continued to the present. Hutter was burned at the stake in 1536 for his convictions.

Hutterites in Europe

The history of the Hutterites in Europe includes three periods: almost a century was spent in Moravia; approximately a century and a half in Hungary, Transylvania, and Wallachia; and a little more than a century in Russia.

In Moravia the nobles considered the Hutterites good tenants and protected them from attacks by the Catholic Church and Emperor as long as possible. However, the pow-

¹The information on the history of the Hutterite Brethren was drawn largely from the two following sources: (1) Horsch, John, *The Hutterite Brethren 1528-1931*, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, 1931; (2) Smith, C. Henry, *Smith's Story of the Mennonites*, 3rd Revised Edition, Mennonite Publication Office, 1950.

er of the nobles was broken in 1620, and the Hutterites were forced to flee Moravia. For more than 150 years they wandered through Hungary and neighboring countries. Although often close to extinction, a small group always managed to survive and carry on the faith.

Finally, upon invitation of a Russian Count named Romanzov, the surviving Hutterites moved to Russia in 1770 to settle the Ukrainian frontier. There they were given refuge and allowed to practice pacifism under the religiously tolerant regime of Catherine the Great. However, an edict nullifying their grant of exemption from military service was issued in 1871, and after an appeal to the crown failed, their nonresistance policy demanded they emigrate.

SOUTH DAKOTA COLONIES

Settlement in Dakota Territory

Practically all Hutterites, afraid of renewed religious persecution, between 1874 and 1879 left Russia where they had been living in three Crimean villages. Approximately 100 Hutterite families arrived in Yankton from Russia between 1874

and 1879.² After their arrival these families divided about equally, one group choosing to live in colonies, while the remaining families chose to settle on private farms.

In 1874 the Hutterites established their first colony, Bon Homme, about 18 miles west of Yankton on the Missouri River. Because the leader of this colony was a blacksmith by trade, these people and their descendants are called *Schmieden Leut* (the smith's people).

Later in 1874 another group of Hutterites led by a man named Darius Walter arrived from Russia and established Wolf Creek colony about 12 miles west of Freeman. The descendants of this group are called *Darius Leut* (Darius' people). Old Elm Springs Colony was founded by a third group of Hutterites in 1877. Led by two teachers, this group settled northeast of Parkston. Descendants of this group are referred to as *Lehrer Leut* (teacher's people).

²Eaton, Joseph W. and Albert J. Mayer, *Man's Capacity to Reproduce: A Demography of a Unique Population*, The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1954, p. 3.

All meals are eaten in the communal dining hall. This one at Tschetter Colony near Olivet was built around 1900.



SOUTH DAKOTA HUTTERITE COLONIES (TABLE 1).

Colony	Parent Colony	Estab.	Nearby Town	Relocation	Place of Relocation
<i>Schmieden Leut</i>					
Bon Homme	Russia	1874	Tabor	Never	
Tripp (Neudorf) ¹	Bon Homme	1878	Tripp	1884	Milltown
Milltown ¹	Tripp	1886	Milltown	1918/22	Manitoba, Can.
Maxwell (Old)	Bon Homme	1900	Scotland	1919	Manitoba, Can.
Rosedale (Old)	Milltown	1901	Alexandria	1918	Manitoba, Can.
Huron (Old)	Bon Homme	1906	Huron	1918	Manitoba, Can.
James Valley ²	Milltown	1907	Huron	1918	Manitoba, Can.
Rockport	Bon Homme	1934	Alexandria	Never	
New Elm Springs	Manitoba, Can.	1936	Ethan	Never	
Jamesville	Manitoba, Can.	1937	Utica	Never	
Tschetter	Manitoba, Can.	1941	Olivet	Never	
Spink	Bon Homme	1942	Frankfort	Never	
Huron	Jamesville	1944	Huron	Never	
Rosedale	Rockport	1945	Mitchell	Never	
Maxwell	New Elm Springs	1947	Scotland	Never	
Gracevale	Tschetter	1948	Winfred	Never	
Glendale	Manitoba, Can.	1949	Frankfort	Never	
Millerdale	Manitoba, Can.	1949	Miller	Never	
Platte	Bon Homme	1949	Academy	Never	
Riverside	Rockport	1949	Huron	Never	
Pearl Creek	Manitoba, Can.	1949	Iroquois	Never	
Blumengard	Manitoba, Can.	1950	Wecota	Never	
Clark	Jamesville	1955	Raymond	Never	
Big Stone	New Elm Springs	1958	Graceville, Minn.	Never	
Plainview	Spink	1959	Ipswich	Never	
Hillside	Huron	1961	Huron	Never	
Clover Leaf	Gracevale	1963	Carthage	Never	
Spring Valley	Platte	1963	Wessington Springs	Never	
Wolf Creek	Tschetter	1964	Menno	Never	
Spring Creek	Maxwell	1964	Forbes N. D.	Never	
Thunderbird	Glendale	1964	Norbeck	Never	
White Rock (farm)	Rosedale	Not Est.	Rosholt	Never	
Long Lake (farm)	Pearl Creek	Not Est.	Wetonka	Never	
<i>Darius Leut</i>					
Wolf Creek ³	Russia	1875	Menno	1930	Alberta, Can.
Jamesville	Wolf Creek	1886	Lesterville	1918	Alberta, Can.
Tschetter	Wolf Creek	1896	Menno	1918	Alberta, Can.
Lake Byron ⁴	Wolf Creek	1899	Huron	1918	Alberta, Can.
Spink	Wolf Creek	1905	Frankfort	1918	Alberta, Can.
Richards	Jamesville	1906	Forrestburg	1918	Alberta, Can.
Yale (farm)	Lake Byron	1913	Huron	1918	Alberta, Can.
<i>Lehrer Leut</i>					
Old Elm Springs	Russia	1877	Parkston	1918	Alberta, Can.
Rockport	Old Elm Springs	1890	Alexandria	1934	Alberta, Can.
New Elm Springs	Old Elm Springs	1900	Parkston	1918	Alberta, Can.
Milford	Old Elm Springs	1910	Carpenter	1918	Alberta, Can.

¹Tripp colony was settled from Bon Homme colony in 1884. Tripp colony then moved to Tidoute, Pennsylvania, at the invitation of the Harmonists religious sect. They then came back and established the Milltown colony in 1886.

²The James River Valley colony first settled near Gann Valley, South Dakota, and in 1912 moved to its site near Huron, South Dakota.

³The Old Wolf Creek colony first settled near Silver Lake and in 1875 moved to its site north of Menno.

⁴The Lake Byron colony, a branch of Old Wolf Creek, first settled in Manitoba, Canada, and in

Early Daughter Colonies

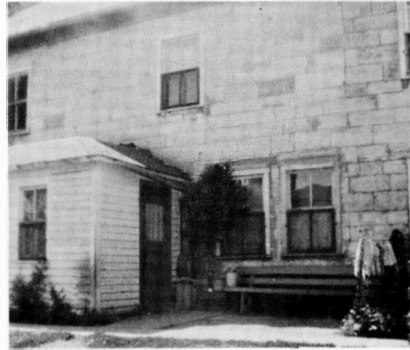
The period from 1879 to 1913 was a time of increase in the number of colonies in South Dakota. By the process of branch colonization,³ the three mother colonies had established a number of daughter colonies along the James River.

By 1913, Bon Homme had established three daughter colonies—Milltown, Old Maxwell, and Old Huron (table 1). The Milltown colony had two daughter colonies of her own—Old Rosedale and James Valley. Wolf Creek (mother colony of the *Darius Leut*) had produced four daughters by this time—Old Jamesville, Old Tschetter, Old Spink and Lake Byron. Old Jamesville had a daughter colony of her own—Richards.

Branch colonies of Old Elm Springs (*Lehrer Leut*) included Old Rockport, New Elm Springs, and Milford. Thus, in 1913, there were 17 Hutterite colonies in South Dakota: six were *Schmieden Leut*; seven, *Darius Leut*; and four, *Lehrer Leut*.

Migration to Canada

Strong sentiment against the Hutterites' German cultural background and their conscientious objection to war along with proceedings to annul their corporation charters created a difficult situation for the sect in South Dakota during World War I. As a result of this per-



The first Hutterite apartment building constructed in North America. Bon Homme Colony, Tabor.

secution, 12 colonies left for Canada in 1918. Four more colonies had followed and by 1934 only Bon Homme Colony remained.

Present South Dakota Colonies

In 1934 Bon Homme started Rockport colony near Alexandria on the site of a vacated colony (see map). The 1935 South Dakota Legislature passed the Communal Corporation Act, an act which allowed the colonies to incorporate, and in 1936 one colony returned to South Dakota from Canada.

Contrary to a common concep-

³When the population of a colony reaches 100-150, the membership is divided approximately in half. One half remains at the colony site, the other half (the daughter colony) is assisted in setting up a colony at a new location. The term "granddaughter" colony is used to describe those colonies that have branched from a "daughter" of the mother colony.

1905 the whole colony returned to South Dakota and bought "Spink" and "Lake Byron" colony sites near Frankfort and Huron. They had a somewhat involved movement between South Dakota and Montana during the period of 1912 to 1936.

SOURCES: A. J. F. Ziegelschmidt, *Das Kleine Geschichtsbuch der Hutterischen Bruder*, Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, Philadelphia, 1947, pp. 460-62. Also, Norman Thomas, "The Hutterian Brethren," South Dakota Historical Collections, Vol. 25, 1951, pp. 273-274, and South Dakota State Council of Defense Report: 1917-1919, pp. 62-63. Additional detailed information supplied by present Hutterite leaders, 1964.



Present Tschetter Colony returned from Canada in 1941 and settled on the site of Old Tschetter Colony on the James River west of Freeman.

tion, only seven of the present South Dakota colonies have come from Canada. The first one to come was New Elm Springs, a granddaughter of Bon Homme, which settled near Ethan. Another granddaughter, Jamesville, returned from Canada in 1937 to its present site near Utica. Tschetter, founded in 1941, is a great granddaughter of Bon Homme which reoccupied an old colony site near Olivet when it came from Canada. Three other granddaughters — Millerdale, Glendale, and Pearl Creek—came from Canada in 1949.

Spink, a daughter colony of Bon Homme, was established on an old colony site near Frankfort in 1942. During 1944 Jamesville established a daughter colony, Huron, on an old colony site near Huron. In 1945, Rosedale was established near Rockport colony from which it came. New Elm Springs founded a daughter colony, Maxwell, near Scotland in 1947 and Gracevale, a

daughter of Tschetter, was established near Winfred in 1948.

Five colonies began in 1949: Bon Homme started the Platte colony near Academy; Rockport began Riverside north of Huron; and three granddaughters of Bon Homme — Glendale, Millerdale, and Pearl Creek, as mentioned previously — came from Canada and settled near Frankfort, Miller, and Iroquois, respectively. Blumengard, a great granddaughter of Bon Homme from Canada, settled north of We-cota the following year. In 1955, Clark colony, a daughter of Jamesville, was established near Raymond. Big Stone colony, a daughter of New Elm Springs, was started near Graceville, Minnesota in 1958. During 1959 Spink founded a daughter colony, Plainview, near Ipswich.

New Colonies Since 1960

In 1961, Hillside was established near its mother colony, Huron.

Spring Valley, a daughter of Platte colony, and Clover Leaf, a daughter of Gracevale, were established in 1963 near Wessington Springs and Carthage, respectively.

Three colonies were established in 1964: Tschetter started Wolf Creek near Menno; Maxwell started Spring Creek in South Dakota near Forbes, N. D.; and Glendale began Thunderbird colony near Norbeck. At the present two colonies are in the process of setting up daughter colonies—Rosedale has a farm near Rosholt and Pearl Creek has purchased land near Wetonka. All of the present 24 South Dakota colonies belong to the *Schmieden Leut* group.

BELIEFS AND PRINCIPLES

The Hutterites are readily distinguished from their rural neighbors by their garb and mode of life. The married men have full beards and wear black denim clothes. The women wear dark, full skirts, long sleeved blouses and headscarves. The colony has a machine shop, communal dining hall and plain church. All these attest to a people living an unusual life. Why

do these people live as they do? To understand the Hutterian way of life it is necessary to know what they believe.

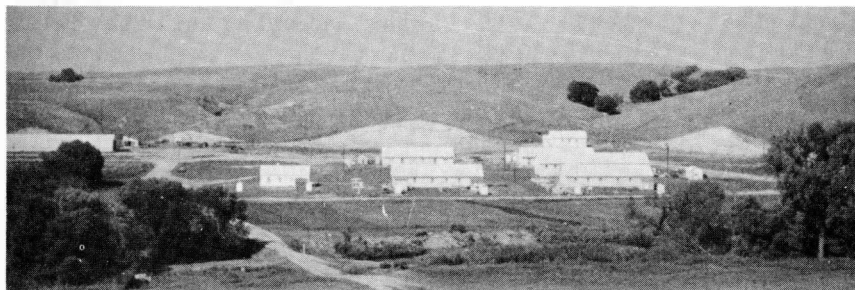
Central Beliefs

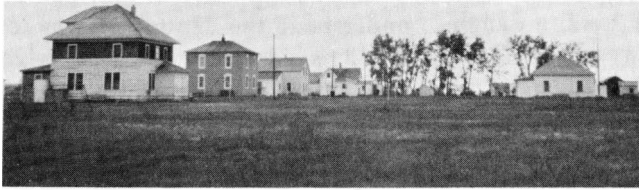
Dr. Lee Deets, in his study of Hutterite communities in the 1930's, found that all sanctioned activity within the community is ordered around central beliefs.⁴ Any consideration of their central beliefs would undoubtedly include the following:

The Hutterian way of life is God - sanctioned and God - commanded. Relation to the Deity is governed by the belief that God is the Creator, the supreme all-powerful Being to whom all else should give obedience. For them, the Hutterian way of life is sanctioned by an infinitely wise Deity who must be obeyed even to martyrdom. Their beliefs are regarded as expressions of the will of God as revealed through a literal interpretation of the Scriptures.

⁴Lee E. Deets, *The Hutterites: A Study in Social Cohesion*, Times and News Publishing Co., Gettysburg, Pa., 1939, pp. 16-28.

Wolf Creek, one of the newest colonies, was established in 1964 on Old Wolf Creek Colony site north of Menno.





View of colony
yard of newly
established
Spring Creek
Colony north of
Leola.

The principle of communal living. The Hutterites believe in and practice communal living—holding their goods and property in common. Basic to their principle of communal living is the concept of Christian love. They believe that the highest expression of the Christian ideal of brotherly love is possible only through the self-denial and sacrifice that is involved in communal living. The idea constituting the principle of communal living is revealed in a statement from their petition to President Woodrow Wilson in 1918:

“The fundamental principles of our faith, as concerns practical life, are community of goods and non-resistance. Our community life is founded on the principle, ‘What is mine is thine,’ or in other words on brotherly love and humble Christian service, according to Acts 2:44 and 45: ‘And all that believed were together, and had all things in common; and sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men, as every man had need.’”⁵

The importance the Hutterites attach to the principle of communal living is indicated by another statement from the same petition:

“Our community life is based on God’s Word, and we could

not serve God according to the dictates of our conscience if we were not permitted to live together in our communities. Our members would, by the help of God, suffer what He may permit, rather than consent to leave the community life.”⁶

The principle of nonresistance. Their interpretation of Christianity is that Christians are not to serve in war nor are they to take revenge. The principle of nonresistance is not unique to the Hutterites as it is practiced by other religious sects such as the Quakers and the Amish. Biblical admonitions cited to support the belief in nonresistance include Luke 2:8-20; Isaiah 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-4; and Romans 12:14-21.

Avoidance and nonconformity.

Hutterites desire, as is also true of such groups as the Amish, to remain as far as possible from the influences of the outside world. Worldly pleasures are to be avoided, the plain, simple life preferred. Christians, according to their belief, should not be conformed to the world (Romans 12:2). Nonconformity is expected in those things in which standards of the world conflict with Bible standards. Their occupation of farming and the loca-

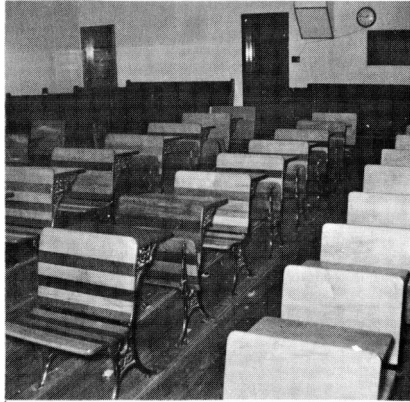
⁵*Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁶*Loc. cit.*

tion of their communities in relatively isolated rural areas help to maintain their principles of avoidance and nonconformity.

Other Related Beliefs

The preceding enumerated beliefs of the Hutterians are not to be considered all-inclusive. Growing out of and in many ways supporting the central beliefs are many other doctrines which help cement their religious and social structure. Among these are admonitions against pride, patterns of discipline, and restrictions on apparel and ornamentation. These more specific teachings also have Scriptural basis and are just as binding as the central beliefs. They help to translate the central beliefs into rules for practical living.

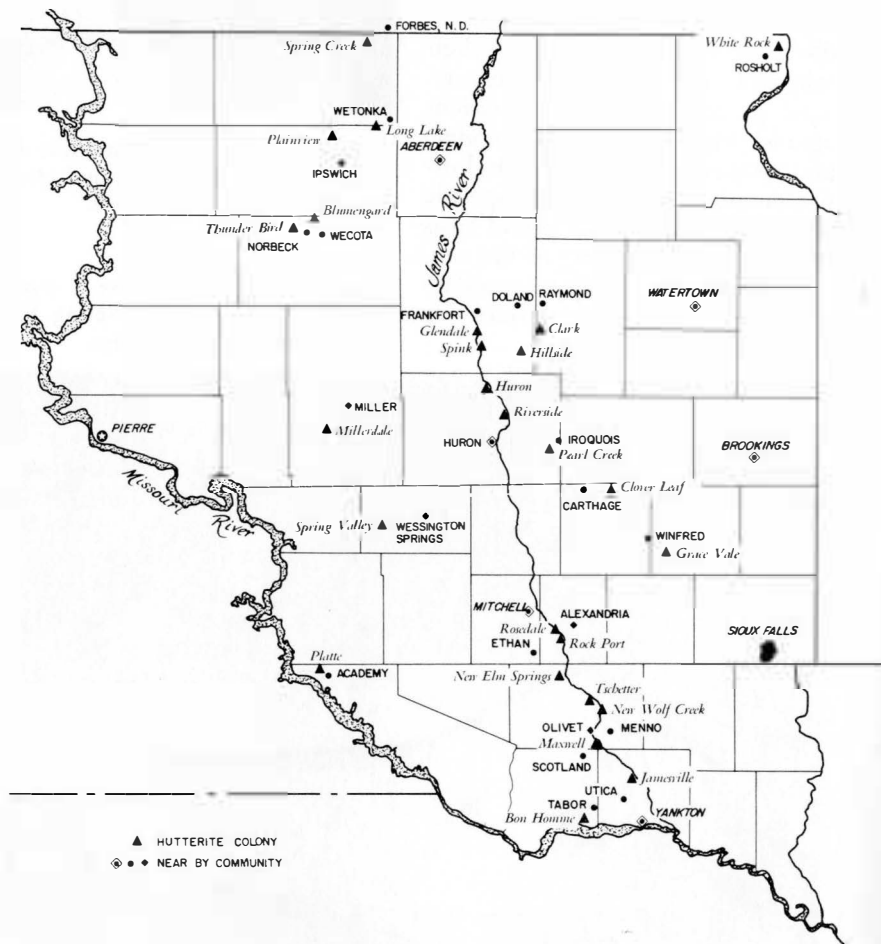


Colony schoolhouses traditionally have been used as both school and church. Glendale Colony, Frankfort.

Some newer colonies have a separate building for the church. Spring Valley Colony, Wessington Springs.



LOCATION OF HUTTERITE COLONIES IN SOUTH DAKOTA, 1964



PART II

AGRICULTURE ON COMMUNAL FARMS

HUTTERITE PRINCIPLES APPLIED TO AGRICULTURE

Three principles derived from the Hutterites' religious beliefs serve as general rules for everyday life. A review of these principles, as explained below, helps toward an understanding of the farming and production practices of the sect.

First, Hutterites attach considerable importance to the principle of "self-sufficiency." Each colony attempts to be as self-sufficient as possible by producing most of the goods and services it uses. For the Hutterites, the emphasis on self-sufficiency has always had more than an economic motivation. It has the latent function of keeping down contacts with the outside world. It also reflects the religious emphasis on the principle of austere simplicity. Diversification of colony enterprise is one result of application of this principle. Another principle, "simplicity of living," further contributes to self-sufficiency by limiting the needs and demands of the Hutterites primarily to what can be produced in the colony. A third principle, "efficiency," encourages them to accept changes in farming practices. The Hutterites in contrast

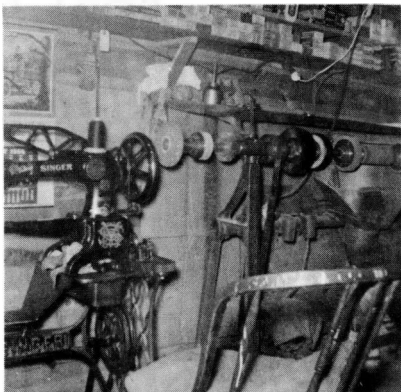
to the Old Order Amish justify the use of modern agricultural technology by stating, "It's not the thing itself that's good or bad, it's the use to which it is put." It also helps to explain the extensive use of labor- and cost-saving devices in crop, livestock and poultry production.

Colony Organization

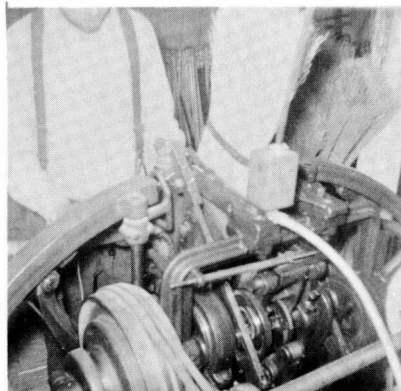
Hutterites live in small agricultural villages, or colonies in the center of their land holdings. Each colony headquarters consists of a large cluster of buildings somewhat centrally located. Arrangement of buildings follows a functional pattern. Residences, communal dining hall, church, and school are in the center. Partly surrounding this area are the shops for maintenance facilities. A short distance beyond are the granaries and the barns and sheds for livestock and poultry. Beyond these facilities are the pastures and fields.

Work Organization

The nature of colony organization permits the Hutterites to engage in many farming enterprises. The older, more responsible men of the col-



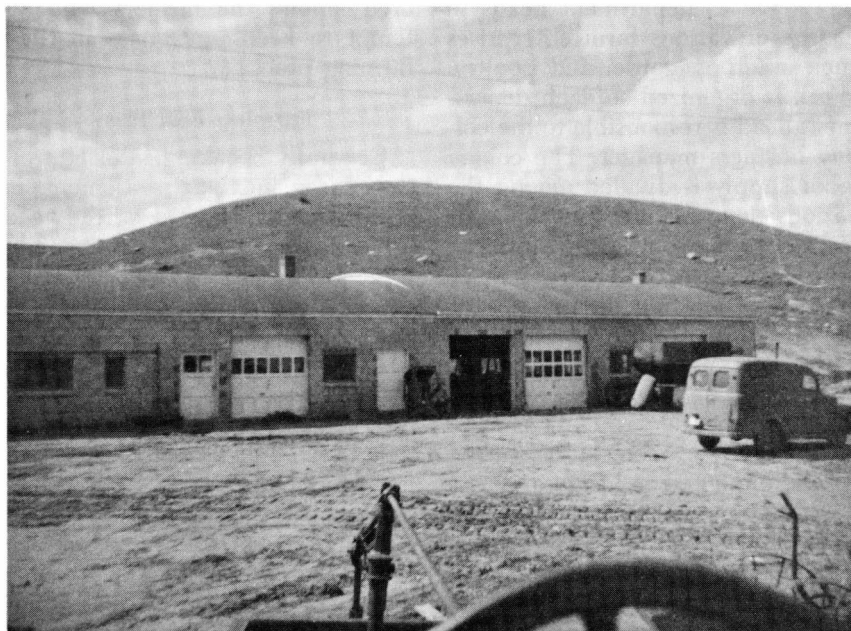
Self-sufficiency enterprises include shoe making and repairing. New Elm Springs Colony.



Broom making has been an important self-sufficiency enterprise in some colonies. New Elm Springs Colony, Ethan.

Laundry soap is still homemade in Hutterite colonies. New Elm Springs.





Garages and machinery repair shops are in all Hutterite colonies. Tschetter Colony.

Colony-trained
blacksmiths do most
of the repair work on
farm machinery in the
colony. Spink Colony,
Frankfort.



ony serve as department heads in charge of various farm enterprises such as crops, cattle, and poultry. Work is organized so each department head is responsible to the colony business manager. The colony labor supply is divided among the various departments. Each department head may have working under him an assistant and one or more helpers, depending on the size of the enterprise. This arrangement allows flexibility in the use of manpower. When the work requirements of the departments change during the year, men can be shifted to where the demand is greatest.

Although election to the position of department head is usually annual, a capable man may be re-elected time and again. After years of experience in an enterprise, often first as an apprentice, obtaining information from company salesmen, county extension agents, and reading articles in farm journals, most department heads become "specialists" in their field.

Agriculture Is Mechanized

The Hutterites have mechanized their agriculture. As a colony, it is possible to arrange their cropland into large fields to make extensive use of power equipment. Thus, they can use track and diesel tractors to pull plows with as many as nine 14-inch bottoms or three subsoilers hitched in tandem.

To improve and increase production and efficiency, the Hutterites are willing to try new developments in farm techniques and machinery. Although exceptions may be pointed out, the Hutterites can be consid-

ered among the farmers who attempt to keep up-to-date in their farming practices.

Farming Practices

Generally speaking, the Hutterites early in their settlement in South Dakota, recognized the need for soil conservation and reconditioning. They presently use subsoilers, disc plows and ground chisles to conserve both soil and moisture. Crop rotations have been practiced for many years. Although livestock production provides manure for their land, the use of commercial fertilizers is increasing.

However, even with their high degree of mechanization, extensive crop rotation, and liberal use of fertilizers, the Hutterites have felt themselves caught in the situation of declining prices and increasing costs. They feel that their agricultural production must be fed to livestock and poultry before they can realize significant gains. This conclusion, supported by their principles of self-sufficiency, simplicity of living, and efficiency, encourages them to specialize to some extent in one or two or several of their basic enterprises.

1964 AGRICULTURE AND POPULATION

Population, Acreage of Colonies

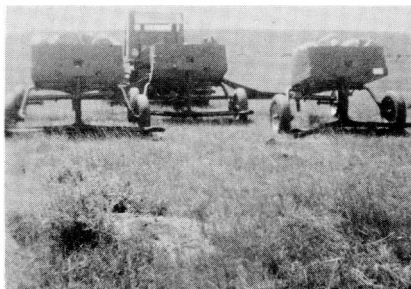
A survey of all South Dakota colonies in late 1964 shows that 2,443 Hutterites were living in 24 colonies.⁷ These people comprised 341

⁷These figures do not include the Big Stone Colony, Graceville, Minn., which is a branch of the South Dakota New Elm Springs Colony.

families with an average size of seven persons. Farmland operated by the South Dakota colonies in 1964 totaled approximately 123,000 acres. Of this land, slightly over 113,000 acres (92%) were owned, and about 10,000 acres (8%) were rented or leased from non-Hutterite landowners.

Data from the 1964 survey show that the "average" South Dakota colony had approximately 14 families with a population of 102 persons. This average colony operated 5,100 acres, 400 of which were rented. Similar to most other farms in South Dakota, all of the land which the colonies operated was not cropland. Only about 54% of the total land they operated in 1964 was in crops.

Because Hutterite colony land is owned and operated by the members of the colony working cooperatively, it is not possible to determine acreage operated by separate families or individuals. However, statistical averages indicate that each family operated 360 acres of which approximately 200 acres were



Tandem-hitched subsoilers rapidly plow cropland while preserving both soil and moisture. Spink Colony.

cropland. This amounted to about 50 acres per person in 1964. Although the data are not precisely comparable, the U. S. Census of Agriculture information suggests that the acreage operated per Hutterite family is smaller than the average size farm in the same location of the state.

Diversification of Enterprises

All of the colonies are operated from an agricultural base. Without this, little other production would be possible. Although there is variation among colonies, each pro-

Large diesel tractors are used to pull heavy equipment and increase efficiency. Hillside Colony, Huron.





Hutterites can and preserve large quantities of fruits and vegetables raised in the colony gardens and orchards. New Elm Springs Colony.

duces quantities of nearly all types of livestock and poultry. However, in recent years there has been a tendency for a few colonies to develop to a greater extent in one enterprise, such as turkey production.

All colonies raised cattle, hogs, and chickens in 1964. Each colony has a dairy herd and nearly all have flocks of ducks and geese. Most also raise sheep and nine colonies produced turkeys for market.

Part of this production is used for their own consumption, but most of it is sold. Pork, poultry, mutton, and beef are used in their diet. Feathers from ducks and geese are still used for bedding. Feathers are now mainly used for "down" comforters rather than feather "ticks" as in the past. Milk from the dairy herds is used for cooking, drinking, and making butter and cheese. How-

ever, separating milk is on the decline as more and more colonies are moving into bulk milk production. In fact, information from the 1964 survey indicates that most colonies now have dairy parlors and sell bulk milk to creameries. Almost all colonies keep bees and the honey is commonly used in place of sugar and syrup.

In livestock and poultry feeding,

Table 2. Top Three Livestock Enterprises of South Dakota Hutterite Colonies Ranked on the Basis of Income, 1964.

Enterprise	No. Colonies Ranking Enterprise as:			
	1st.	2nd.	3rd.	Total
Cattle	9	7	5	21
Hogs	8	9	5	22
Sheep	1	1	6	8
Turkeys	6	2	0	8
Chickens	0	3	3	6
Dairy	0	2	5	7

Modern hog raising units make possible year around hog production. Spring Creek Colony.



the Hutterites use their own forage and field crops whenever possible. Colonies that are more extensively engaged in hog or turkey production make feeds by grinding and mixing their own grains to which they may add commercial supplements.

Major Livestock Enterprises

As a part of the survey, each colony reported what it considered to be its major crop and livestock enterprises for the year 1964 (tables 2 and 3). Livestock enterprises are more important to the colonies than crop production as a source of in-

come. Nineteen colonies include both hogs and cattle in the top three livestock enterprises of their colony. Seven colonies depended upon all three types of livestock (hogs, cattle, and sheep) as principle sources of income.

In poultry production, turkey raising is increasing in importance in some colonies. Eight of them count it among the three top income enterprises. Chickens also provide a significant income for six colonies from the commercial sale of eggs and meat. Dairying is also becoming an important source of income for most colonies.

Table 3. Top Three Agricultural Enterprises of South Dakota Hutterite Colonies Ranked on the Basis of Crop Acreage, 1964.

Enterprise	No. Colonies Ranking Enterprise as:			
	1st.	2nd.	3rd.	Total
Corn	11	4	3	18
Sorghum	6	7	3	16
Oats	3	6	8	17
Alfalfa	1	0	5	6
Wheat	3	6	1	10
Barley	0	1	3	4
Flax	0	0	1	1

Major Crops

Corn is the most important grain for most Hutterite colonies. Eighteen colonies list corn among their top three grain enterprises. Sorghum, wheat and oats are also found in considerable quantity on the majority of the colonies. Milo is increasing in importance as a feed crop, particularly among colonies in the southeastern part of the State. Although the colonies use most corn



Turkey production is an important enterprise in many colonies. Rosedale Colony, Mitchell.

and small grain crops as feed for livestock and poultry, some consider the sale of small grains, such as wheat, as one of their principal sources of income.

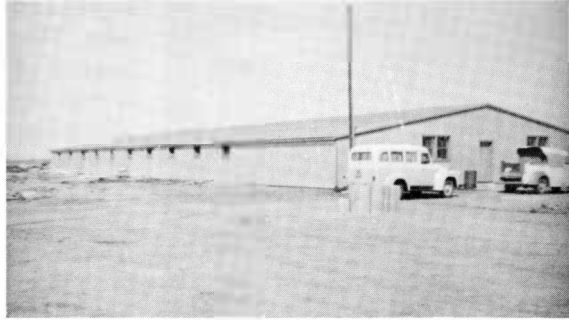
It is not intended to give the impression that there is complete conformity to a standard pattern of agricultural enterprises and of production among the colonies. Although the information presented here is generally applicable, each colony is an independent unit and distinctive in the arrangement and the importance of its major enter-

prises. There is considerable variation among colonies which average figures tend to hide. For example, although the average size of a colony was 5,100 acres in 1964, they ranged in size from 2,200 to 7,295 acres, and the population varied from 75 to 159 persons. With respect to livestock and poultry enterprises, several colonies relied rather extensively on sheep, an important livestock enterprise, while other colonies no longer raise sheep. A number of colonies are engaged in large scale production of both white and

Turkey range houses under construction at Clark Colony near Raymond.



Chicken production provides a significant part of the income for some colonies. Chicken house at Hillside Colony.



bronze turkeys while a few colonies do not even consider the idea of raising turkeys.

CENSUS COMPARISON: 1957 AND 1964

An earlier census of South Dakota Hutterite colonies was taken in 1957. The similarity of the information collected in 1957 to the 1964 census provides a reliable basis for comparing the population, land holdings, and the livestock and grain enterprises of the two periods.

Population, Acreage Changes

During the years between 1957

and 1964 the number of Hutterite colonies increased from 17 to 25. The 1957 census showed that 1,870 Hutterites were living in South Dakota; however, the 1964 census indicated that the population had increased to 2,552 persons.⁸ In 1957 there were 270 Hutterite families compared to 350 families in 1964. The average size of family has re-

⁸At the date of the collection of these data there were two new branch colonies which were in the process of being officially established. These colonies were not included in the total number of colonies; however, their acreage and population was counted in with that of the mother colony. The figure of 25 colonies includes the Big Stone Colony, Graceville, Minn., which is a branch of the South Dakota New Elm Springs Colony.

Bulk milk production is increasing in importance for many colonies. New Elm Springs Colony.





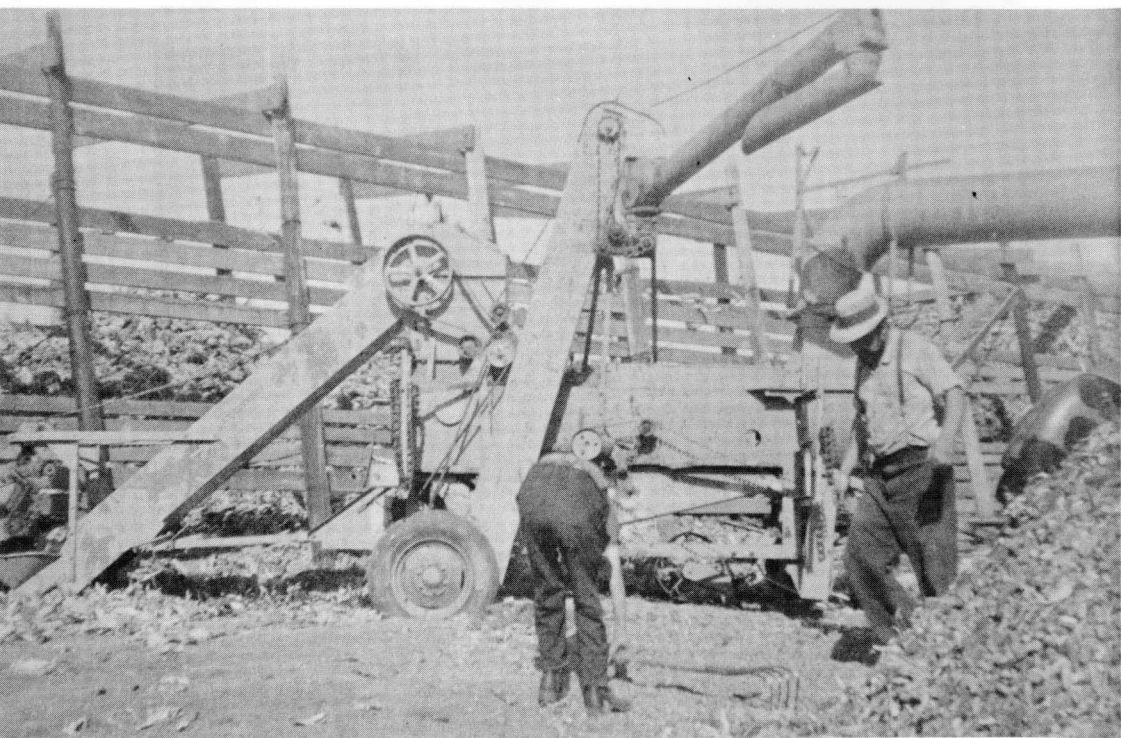
Irrigation makes possible higher crop production for some colonies. Bon Homme Colony.

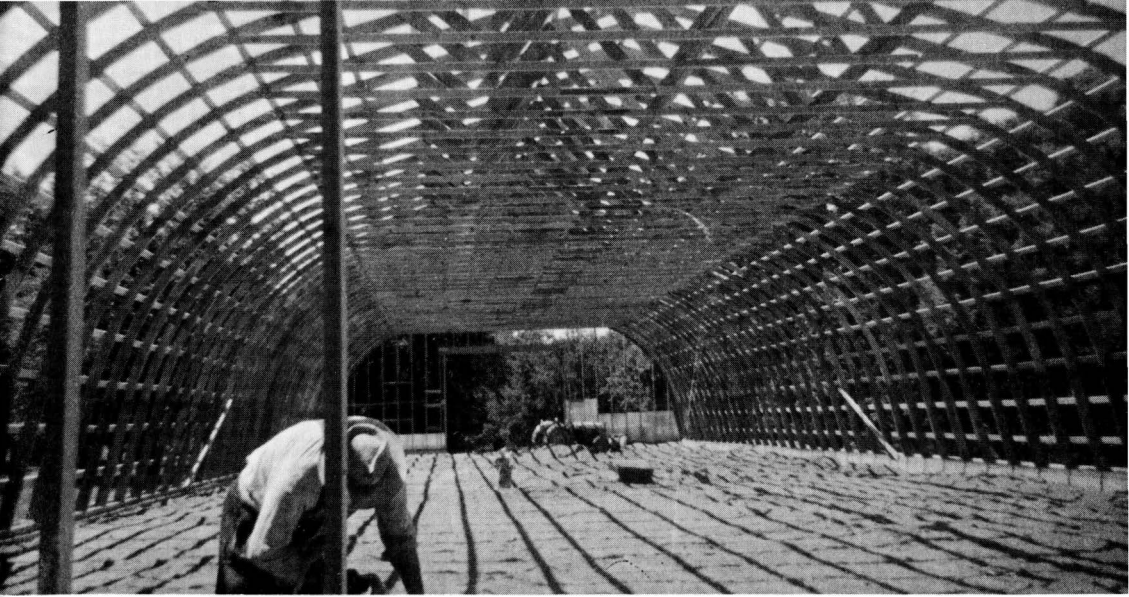
maintained about the same—seven persons. Data from the 1957 census show that the “average” Hutterite colony had 16 families and a total population of 110 people. In 1964 these comparative figures had de-

creased to 14 families and 102 persons. This decline in the average number of families and population is due to the “branching” process which has split a number of mother colonies.

The total number of acres held by all of the colonies increased from approximately 79,000 acres in 1957 to slightly more than 126,000 acres in 1964. The percentage of this land used for crops has decreased from 57% in 1957 to 53% in 1964. The “average” colony in 1957 operated 4,460 acres, but in 1964 this figure had increased to 5,100 acres. This increase in average acreage is due in part to the newer colonies being established in the northern and central part of South Dakota where farms tend to be larger. Statistical averages indicate that in 1957 there were 291 acres for each family of Hutterites, or about 42 acres per

Corn is considered the most important crop enterprise by the colonies. Corn sheller in operation, Spink Colony.





Some colonies consider turkey production as the most important enterprise. Turkey barn under construction at Tschetter Colony.

person; however, in 1964 this had changed to 354 acres for each family or about 50 acres for each person.

Changes in Farm Operation

In comparing changes that have taken place in production of livestock and crops, only the colonies that were interviewed in both the 1957 and the 1964 surveys were used. Eight new colonies interviewed in 1964 did not exist in 1957 so no

basis of comparison is available. The information obtained from the new colonies does have some value, however, because it can be used to measure the differences between the newly established and older colonies.

Livestock Production

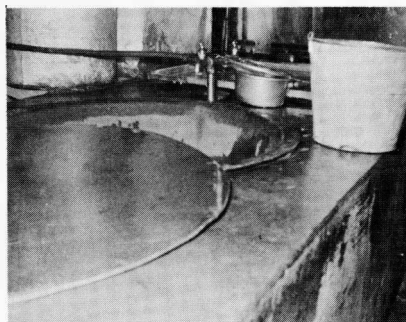
Livestock production has changed to a certain extent in most Hutterite colonies. Production of beef cattle and hogs varies somewhat

Occasionally colonies use large heavy duty equipment in their farming operations. Four wheel drive tractor. Spink Colony.





Sorghum or milo crops are fast becoming important in many colonies.



Kettle for heating water and making soup, fired by wood and coal, is traditional among the colonies.

Business manager of a colony has his "office" in his apartment. Greater use is being made of modern office equipment.

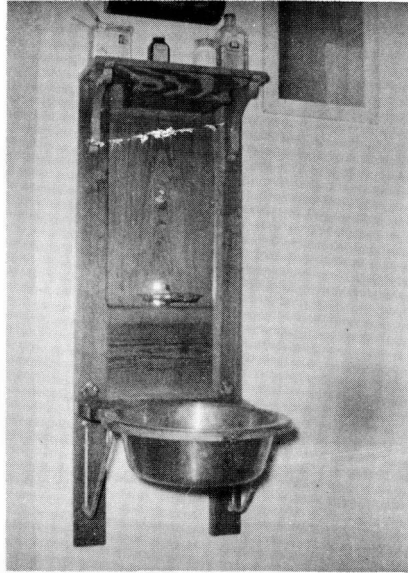


from year to year, but has remained relatively constant throughout the period between 1957 and 1964. Sheep production is decreasing. With two exceptions, all colonies have decreased flocks or discontinued raising sheep entirely. Turkey production, which was once more widespread, has decreased slightly. Some colonies that started in turkey production several years ago have found the operation too demanding of time, skill and equipment. About a third of the colonies still raise turkeys but some of these not to the extent that they once did. Of the colonies that raise turkeys for market, seven have decreased flocks and only two colonies have increased production.

Of the six main enterprises of livestock production, only two have increased to a large degree. The dairy herds of most Hutterite colonies have become larger because of the increased importance of bulk milk production. Commercial sale of poultry products has also increased in importance for most colonies. Three-fourths of them have increased the number of chickens in their flocks.

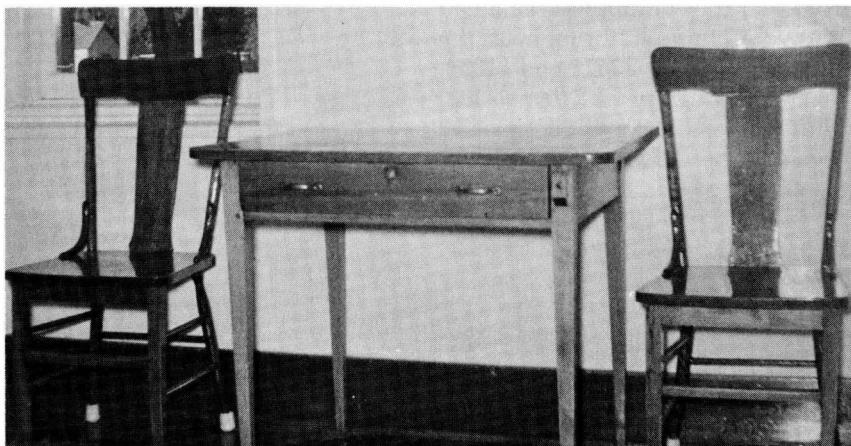
Crop Production

In comparing changes in crop production, the number of acres rather than the yield of a particular crop is used as a measure. Production of the three most important crops of the Hutterites (corn, oats, and wheat) has not changed significantly since 1957. Evidence indicates that the relative importance of these crops will vary slightly from one year to the next, but it has



Many Hutterite apartments are furnished with a wash basin similar to the one shown above. Colony apartments have no kitchens.

not changed very much over the years. Production of barley, flax, and rye has decreased since 1957. Most colonies have reduced considerably the number of acres set apart for these crops and some colonies have even stopped raising them. Production of sorghum, or milo, has increased largely because experience has shown it to be a good substitute for corn in feeding livestock plus the fact that it yields better and is more drought resistant. Findings of the two surveys show that alfalfa production is also increasing in most colonies. Almost twice as many colonies have increased alfalfa acreage compared to those that have decreased it.



Hutterite apartments are provided by the colony with simple, functional furniture.



Changes in Self-Sufficiency Practices

A Hutterite living in one of the South Dakota colonies in the early 1900's is quoted as saying, "Our colony is so self-sufficient that all we need to go to town for is needles and salt." Those days, along with the pioneer homesteaders, are gone. The trend for colonies to be more dependent on the outside world has been underway for many years. The 1957 and 1964 surveys revealed some changes in self-sufficiency practices that have been occurring in the colonies in recent years.

These changes can best be shown when the older colonies (those established before 1950), and the newer colonies are compared to the extent in which they still follow self-sufficiency practices. Self-sufficiency practices of the Hutterites include such things as spinning, broom-making, shoe making and repairing, soap making, gardening and canning, clothes making, bee-keeping, and raising ducks and geese.

Older colonies usually follow many of the old self-sufficiency practices but the newer colonies have exhibited a tendency to discard some of the ways of their mother colony. For example, the newer colonies do not usually set up facilities for broom-making. The older colonies usually make shoes for their men and boys while the new colonies may only repair shoes. The newly established colony may buy more clothing, whereas the older colony still makes such garments.

There are at least three reasons for the changes which occur in



**Construction of a new dining hall
at Plainview Colony, Ipswich.**

daughter colonies that make them less self-sufficient than their mother colonies. First, the older colonies are reluctant to change the established facilities already constructed and developed. Second, the autonomy of the individual colonies allows the new daughter colonies to develop their facilities, within the limits set by their religion, to suit their own needs and location. Third, the new colonies must start with limited facilities and they may not choose to duplicate some of those available at their mother colony.

Other Major Changes

As a part of the 1964 census schedule, a section was included for each colony to report on any new colony facilities, farming methods and equipment that had been de-

veloped within the last few years.

Most colonies had made some changes in their buildings and facilities. With reference to their living quarters, seven colonies indicated they had already piped water into their apartments or were planning to do so in the near future. Until the establishment of Clark colony in 1955, few, if any, of the colonies had running water in their apartments. Three colonies were remodeling communal dining halls, adding tile flooring, fluorescent lights and new kitchen equipment. The trend in almost all South Dakota colonies is to improve the living and dining quarters through remodeling and redecorating.

A number of colonies were remodeling or constructing new farm buildings. One colony has constructed a new barn for its important enterprise of raising geese. A number of other colonies are in the process of building new hog barns to make hog production a year around operation. The new buildings have modern farrowing pens and flush drainage equipment for

cleaning. Because of the increasing importance of bulk milk production, some colonies are modernizing and improving dairy parlors to qualify for State inspection.

The Hutterites extensively employ the use of new methods of farming. Some of the colonies have recently introduced sugar corn as a supplement to their regular crop production. The use of new fertilizers has also been adopted by a number of colonies. One colony has recently introduced a new pump irrigation system.

Hutterite colonies are characterized by the use of modern and efficient agricultural machinery. Most colonies report recent purchases of tractors and other machinery such as self-propelled combines, grain dryers, and hay balers. The most recent adoption by several colonies is the corn combine. This is a machine adapted for combining corn by attaching a corn cutter head to the standard small grain combine. Thus the corn is picked, husked and shelled in one operation.

Hutterite apartment unit constructed about 1900 at Tschetter Colony.





Hutterite apartment houses at Glendale Colony, Frankfort.

New apartment
units stand in
marked contrast
to older housing
facilities. Some
colonies have
running water.
Thunderbird
Colony, Norbeck.



Interior of one of the newest Hutterite communal dining halls.
Wolf Creek Colony.