

engagements. His last words before his death on August 21, 1952, at Altona, are contained in the following verse of a hymn:

“Jesu Heiland meiner Seele,  
Lass an deine Brust mich flieh'n;  
Da die Wasser naeher rauschen  
Und die Wellen hoeher zieh'n.”



Rev. and Mrs. Jacob Hoepfner.

Rev. Jacob Hoepfner, a great-grandson of the deputy Jacob Hoepfner of West Prussia, was born August 10, 1850, on the Island of Chortitza, Russia, where he received his education. Like his grandfather, he had an independent nature and aggressive character. His father ran the ferry across the Dnjepr River in Russia and young Jacob grew up on the ferry as a fisherman. He claimed to have learned to swim and to walk at the same time. His feat of being able to stay under water longer than was considered safe, the members of his family as well as other ferry passengers often observed with anxiety. What these passengers did not know when young Jacob slipped underneath the ferry was that he found an air pocket in which he could breath. After every one was thoroughly alarmed, he would reappear on the surface of the water. Cossacks and other ferry passengers became his friends.

At an early age, Rev. Hoepfner experienced a profound encounter with God and he remained faithful in this relationship until his death on November 16, 1936. In 1871 he was baptized and received into the Mennonite Church. Two years later, 1873, he married Miss Aganetha Dueck, and in 1876 he and his family moved to Canada. They arrived at West Lynn on July 24, and on the West Reserve July 26. His first year here he was engaged as private school teacher in the village of Hochfeld. Soon Rev. Hoepfner moved to Waldheim in the Glencross district and then to Schanzenfeld, and from here the family moved onto a farm near Winkler where they resided for 21 years, until 1919 when they finally moved into a house in town at the north-east corner of Eighth Street and Stanley Avenue. By 1914 he had already been formally asked to stop all attempts at farming so that he could devote his time exclusively to the

ministry in the Church. This would indicate that the Bergthaler Church was willing to grant him some remuneration to compensate for the income from his farm.<sup>2</sup>

In 1887 Rev. Hoepfner had been elected to the ministry at Hoffnungsfeld, and on April 14, 1903, he was ordained by Elder Johann Funk in Hochstadt as assistant Elder of the Bergthaler Church. Elder Hoepfner's home visitation, patience, kindness and love made him a most welcome guest throughout his entire parish.

Elder and Mrs. Hoepfner had a family of twelve children. Two of their sons were public school teachers in the local community. Mr. Peter Hoepfner served as choir leader, Sunday School teacher, and for twenty-nine years he taught in the public schools of southern Manitoba.

After 48 years of married life, Mrs. Hoepfner passed away on April 24, 1922, and subsequently Elder Hoepfner found a helpmate in Mrs. Heinrich Harder to whom he was joined in matrimony on January 21, 1923. However, she predeceased him on December 24, 1935. Elder Hoepfner went to his heavenly reward on November 16, 1936, at the age of 86 years. Although he was old and hard of hearing, he had continued to serve God through the Church until his death.

The funeral service for Elder Hoepfner was conducted in a large tent on the Church yard at Winkler. An indication of the love and respect for the deceased was the participation by people from all walks of life attending the service on November 19, 1936, and also by the following list of ministers of the gospel who spoke words of comfort: J. J. Siemens, David Schulz, J. N. Hoepfner, J. Bueckert, Benjamin Ewert, J. J. Hooge, D. H. Loewen, Henry Born, D. D. Klassen, W. P. Heinrichs, Jacob M. Pauls, Johan Loepfky, and Isaac Hoepfner.

As is usual at Mennonite funerals, an opportunity was given the entire congregation to cast one last fleeting glance on the remains of the deceased in the casket. As the assemblage filed by the coffin, many of those present involuntarily were reminded of the stanza which Elder Hoepfner himself often quoted when he had personally conducted a funeral service, namely:

“Komm, Sterblicher, betrachte mich;  
Du lebst; ich lebt' auf Erden.  
Was du jetzt bist, das war auch ich;  
Was ich bin, wirst du werden.  
Du musst mir nach, ich ging voran;  
Ach denke nicht in deinem Wahn,  
Dass du nicht duerftest sterben.”

#### Rev. Jakob J. Siemens

Jakob J. Siemens, the son of Rev. and Mrs. Jakob Siemens, was born September 17 (September 29), 1882, in Adelsheim, Jasykowo, South Russia. In 1903 he was baptized by Elder Isaac Dyck and from 1904 to 1907 he did alternative service in a Camp for Conscientious Objectors at Neuberjaner. In 1908 he was married to Miss Eva Klassen from the neighboring village of Eichenfeld who passed away in 1931. The last years before he emigrated from Russia, Rev. Siemens lived with his family in the Caucasus, and from 1914 to 1917