



Photo Courtesy Aaron Klassen, R.R. 1, Waterloo, Ontario

From *Als ihre Zeit erfuehlt war*, by Walter Quiring and Helen Bartel
The Mennonite church in Chortitza.

emigration in Chortitza and even though Elder Gerhard Dyck was considering emigration as a serious alternative (apparently he persuaded the Bergthal elder to read Canadian immigration literature),¹¹ this leadership was not forthcoming. In Chortitza both church and colony leaders were still hoping that migration, at least on a mass scale, could be avoided by an acceptable agreement in St. Petersburg. Elder Dyck did call a brotherhood meeting to discuss migration and at least one contemporary source states that a decision to send a delegation to America was made then but was not carried out. Chortitza was still considering a delegation as late as 1874.¹² On March 22, 1874, Peter Wiens, who was to become an outstanding Reinland pioneer, wrote to the Mennonite Board of Guardians (a committee set up by American Mennonites to assist Mennonite immigration from Russia¹³) as follows:

Some of the brethren have determined to get ready for the journey . . . without sending a deputation. In order, however, not to separate from the church, we went to see our bishop . . . He advised us to write to you and he would confirm and sanction it and assist us. We also determined that in case we should send a deputation to America during the present Summer, which should select land for us, that we would move on it. Should this not be done, however, then we would join the Bergthaler Church, which were represented in the deputation by Wiebe and Peters.¹⁴

A Chortitza deputation was never sent. The immigrants from both Chortitza and Fürstenland later moved onto land which had never been