

\* DOUKHOBOR ARCHITECTURE \*  
by Chris Verigin

Doukhobors are a sect of religious people who believe in Universal Brotherhood. They came here from Russia and they brought with them a very unique form of architecture.

In every way that they do something, seems like a work of art. These people are very creative and to appreciate their fine craftsmanship one must view the beautifully hand made crafts that they do. From the early years and still today they are people with a remarkable way of life.

In January of 1899, the first two shiploads of Doukhobors came to Canada from Russia. They were billeted temporarily in large immigration halls in the cities and towns such as: Winnipeg, Portage la Prairie, Brandon, <sup>Dauphin</sup> Dulfen and Yorkton. One large group from the second boat was posted in a large railway roundhouse. Bunks were built on either side of the walls and in the center were tables, along with large vats for cooking.

Before long, at least twenty men were sent 40 miles from Yorkton where they were to begin their new way of life. Previously After, 150 more workers joined the twenty men. Large square buildings began to go up for their temporary settlement. Both men and women took part in the procedure.

The buildings were constituted of logs and the walls were plastered with mud. The roofs were of dirt, but some had roofs of boards which were sawed by hand.

"The earth of the mortar was carried on the women's backs in baskets woven of willow or in large platters hewn of logs.

The water was carried at times for half a mile in buckets, hewn like platters out of tree trunks and hung at the end of long saplings. The water was then poured into a deep trench while six other women trod the mortar until it was a smooth paste. Another gang of women carried it in wooden troughs to the houses where still another group would plaster the logs inside and out, with this cold clay mixture. " 1

*is a little different*  
The neatness of the work was astonishing. In some cases log structures were found, while in other cases they had to weave coarse willow branches. Whichever, they were both presented in a remarkable fashion. A work of great neatness and precision.

Also the carpentry work of the interior was a work of ingenuity. In many cases these people had neither tools nor nails. Their elaborate ovens were moulded out of clay, built close to the entrance and occupying an area of five square feet.

Completion of these buildings brought still more settlers to the area. This was around the first part of April. Bunks were built in the walls of the block houses and the cooking was done in the middle.

From these locations, chosen people were sent to find suitable locations for villages. For the first 3 years mostly, the Doukhobors lived in these private loghouses with sod roofs or in dugouts which were dug into the ground and only the roof was visible 1 or 2 feet above the ground. These were the typical types of homes for the years 1899 to 1902 in the areas of

1) Woodcock, George, and Ivan Awakumovic, 1968

The Doukhobors. Toronto, Oxford University Press.

Verigin and Blaine Lake Saskatchewan.

Only in the Village of Blahoveschenia, where my great grandfather, Simeon Ivanovitch Verigin, settled was the first dwelling different than other villages. Here the entire village of 200 people lived communilly by all living together in one large dugout. The size of which was 40 x 75 feet with the roof only visible by 1 or 2 feet. Around the sides of the dugouts, inside, were built two tiered bunks and each family had their own place. The younger slept in the upper berths, while the elders occupied themselves on the lower ones. In the center was found two large , long tables. The women had brick ovens for baking, made of bricks and stoves were built, also out of bricks. Iron grills were laid on the tops of these stoves , where the cooking was done.

By 1902 newer-typed buildings began to appear in all villages. They were built in the Russian type pattern, w. One main street with private homes on each side of the road and all facing each other. Although some villages had more people than others, the average was around 200 to 300 people and 25 to 40 homes.

These buildings were built out of logs, with a log roof support. Over the roof , branches, hay and then sod was laid. Following this a thin layer of loose soil was put to fill in any cracks. The walls were plastered both inside and out. They were also white-washed from both sides. White wash was made by finding limestone rocks, and placing them into a large log fire. When the rocks began to burn, the fire was smothered



and left to smoulder over night. By morning the lime was ready to make whitewash. When the walls were washed, on the outside near the bottom was a flowered patterned border, made from red clay.

In areas such as the Blaine lake area, where there were more bogs or swampy areas, a reed type of grass grew. This grass was cut in the winter months and was thatched and covered over with a clay layer, to prevent fires from chimneys, caused by sparks.

Walls in all homes were plastered with a clay. The best type of clay plaster was made from mixing horse manure, which was left in water overnight, straw chaff, clay and water. The mixing was usually done by the women. They would mix it with their feet. If a large amount of clay was needed then a horse was used.

Floors were of dirt, covered with this clay layer. To make it dust proof, after it was covered with clay, fine straw-chaff was spread over it. The thickness was from 3 to 4 inches thick. It was left to dry a bit and then walked over for a couple days. The loose chaff was then swept out and the floor was left clean, hard and dustproof.

All the Doukhobors ideas, are unique and they represent work of art.

In 1908, because of the loss of their land to the Government in Saskatchewan, the Doukhobors were forced to find land elsewhere. They found some in the beautiful regions of

British Columbia, <sup>at</sup> Brilliant and Grand Forks.

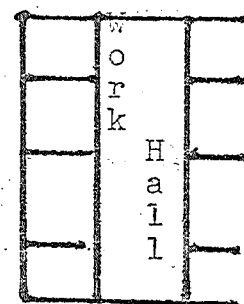
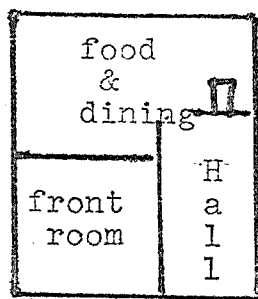
In 1909 the first group of workers arrived and were followed by many other groups, in the following year. By 1911 the first families began to arrive.

In B.C. the Doukhobors also lived a communal way of life. They lived in villages but they were a different type, than that of Saskatchewan and Russia. Here they were more of an apartment type building.

Two large two story buildings, made of wood, stood side by side with a large U shaped array of one story buildings in the back, forming a courtyard. Each of these buildings had from 30 to 50 people living in them, or from 60 to 100 in each village. Downstairs of the wooden structures, there was a large kitchen and a large living-dining room. Upstairs there were 8 small bedrooms, four on each side, separated by a hallway. The smaller buildings in the back were used for storage, and often sleeping quarters for the aged and sick. The hind buildings of the courtyard were saunas and a barn. Inside walls were clay plastered with lath boarded walls, covered in wall paper. In the earlier days they were whitewashed, but soon some were covered over in wall paper.

Barns and saunas were too, very artistically constructed. They were both wooden structures, The barn had usually a designed pattern on the top front of it. This design was hand carved and something worth while seeing.

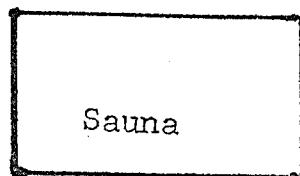
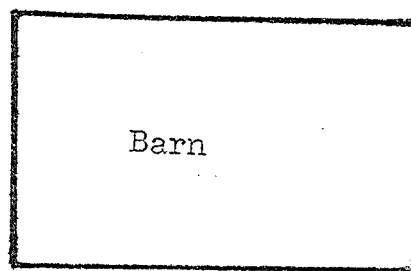
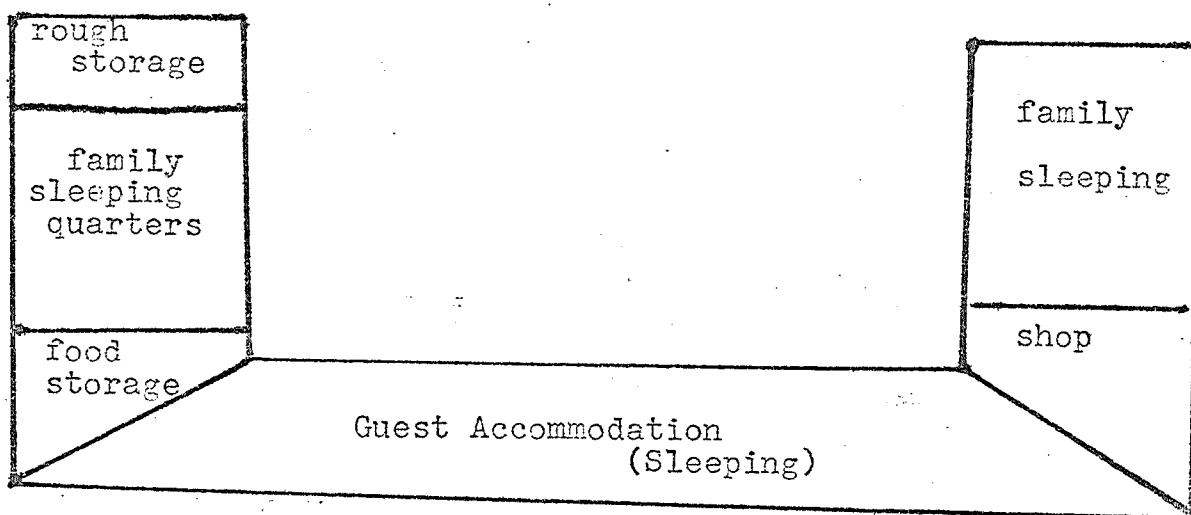
The saunas contained a large stove-like tub, where a fire was stoked underneath it. Water was placed in the tub and the people would sit in this room and relax while the heat would



singles &  
elders.

8 rooms,  
occupied  
by one  
family of  
4 people.

LAYOUT  
OF  
COMMUNITY  
VILLAGE



*Location of  
Big Hope is not  
correct  
should give scale*

Mealing, M. F.  
1972, Our Peoples Way

Vol. 2.

heal their tired bones.

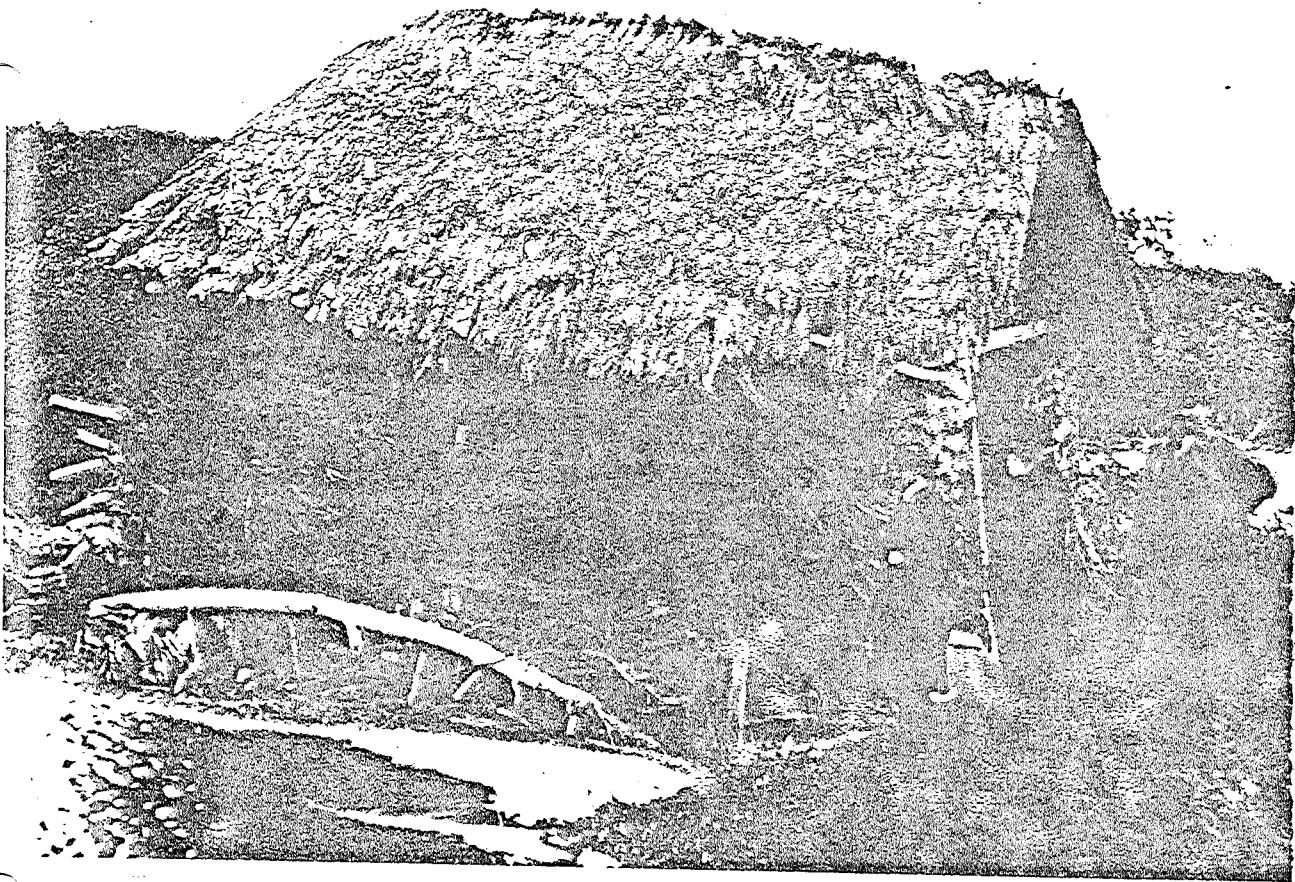
A great deal of wood carving <sup>was</sup> is done by the Doukhobors on their homes, such as; carved stair-rails, fancy carvings over doors, windows and supporting columns on their verandas. Household necessities such as beds, tables, chairs, as well as kitchen utensils were carved. The favorite color of Doukhobors was white or lightblue, and trunks, spinning wheels or other woodwork was usually painted a rust red. ✓

Today, after the confiscation of their communal lands in Canada, the Doukhobors live and build as do <sup>many of the</sup> ~~all the rest of~~ the Canadians. ✓

Newly built Prayer Homes or Community centers, of the three provinces, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia, are all work of fine craftsmanship, and the pride of the communities, but the Doukhobor style is not seen in them. it changes.

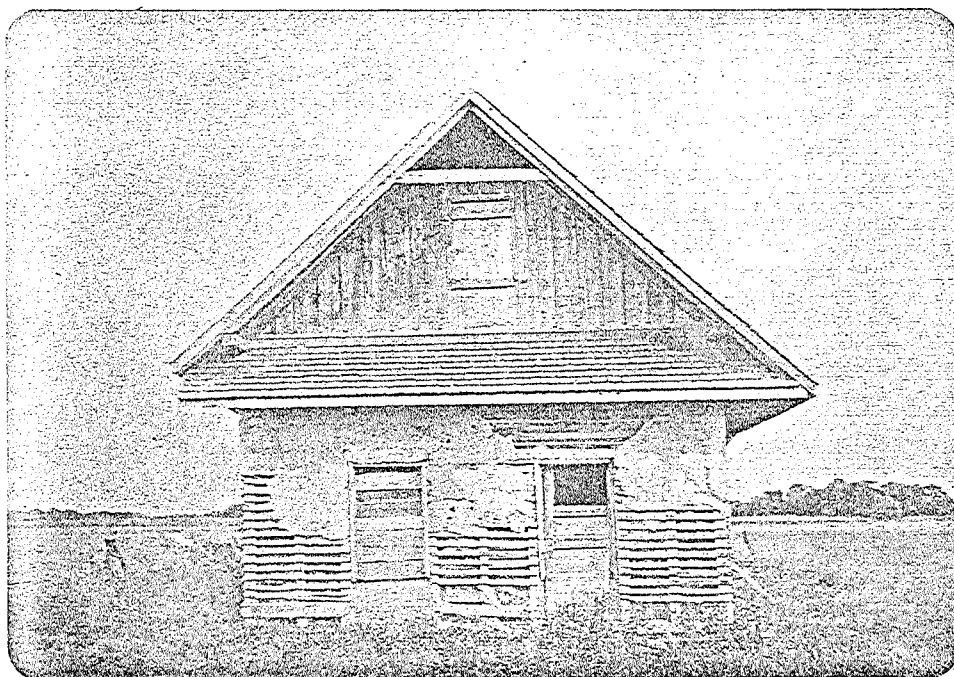
To really appreciate the Doukhobor creativeness, one has to see the fine work on the Official Residence of Peter Lordly Verigin, at Verigin Sask. Any person who sees this will truly appreciate the Doukhobors and their unique craftsmanship. These people are truly remarkable. ✓





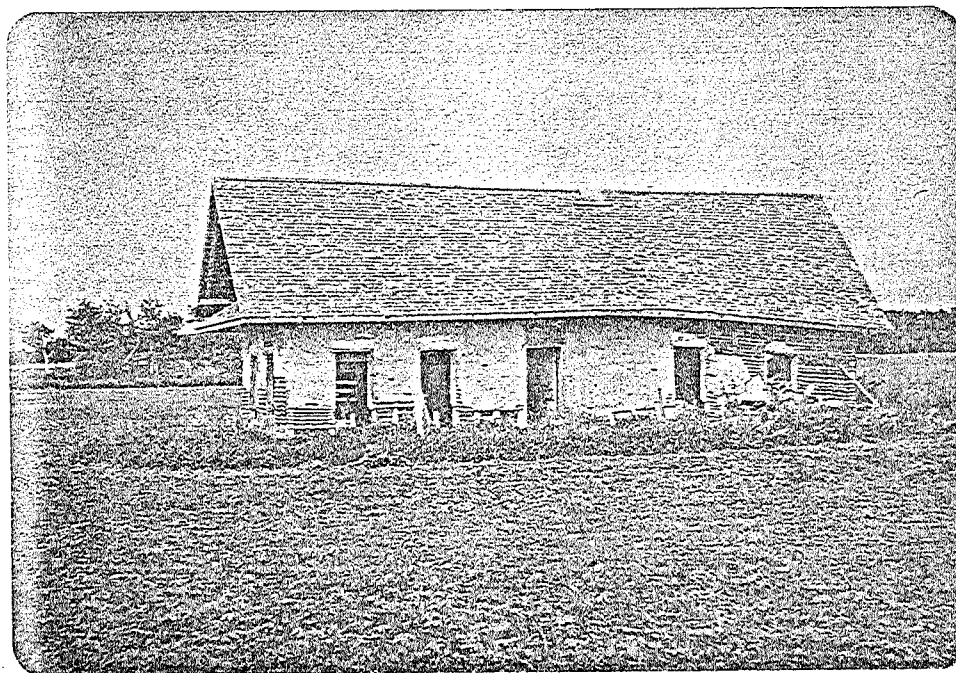
Turf Dwelling. View of side wall.

Note: Walls built from Prairie sod., roof supported by branches, covered over by hay. Mud plastered walls and only one small window.

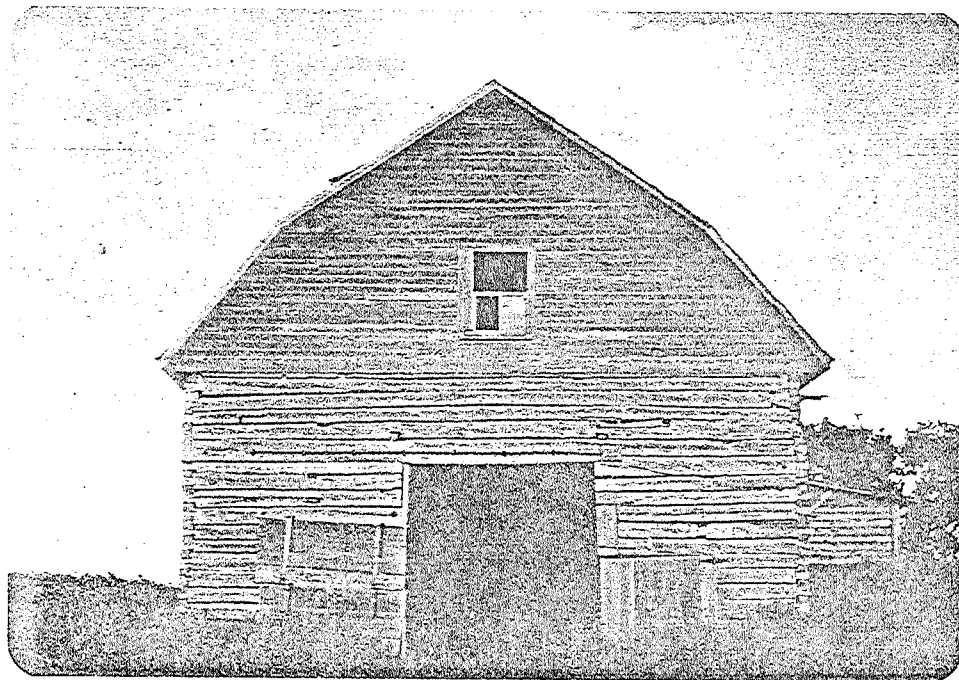


Home of Steve Kalmakoff, at Village of  
Blagoveschenia, near Verigin, Sask. Built c. 1903.

Note: Mud plastered walls, inside and out,  
doorway and window location, gable ends,  
inner shingle work beneath plaster work.

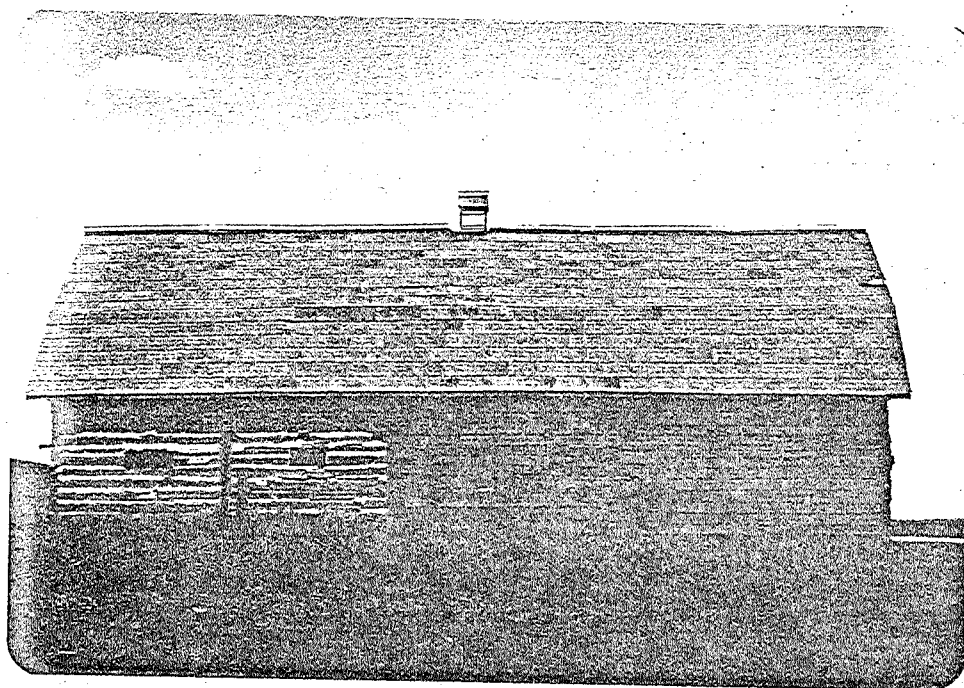


View of side of building. Note: Design on roof,  
SELKIRK COLLEGE LIBRARY door location.  
CASTLEGAR, B. C.



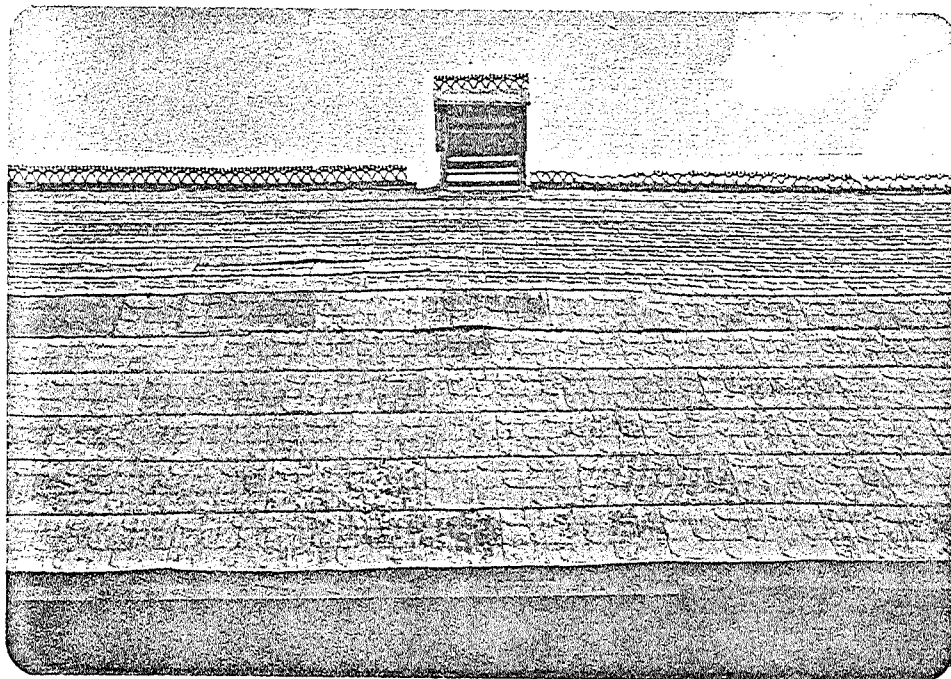
Barn, in Village of Otradnoe, official residence of Peter Lordly Verigin, Doukhobor Spiritual leader of Doukhobor's in Canada. Built c. 1903. Style carried over from Russia.

Note: Roof shape and structure



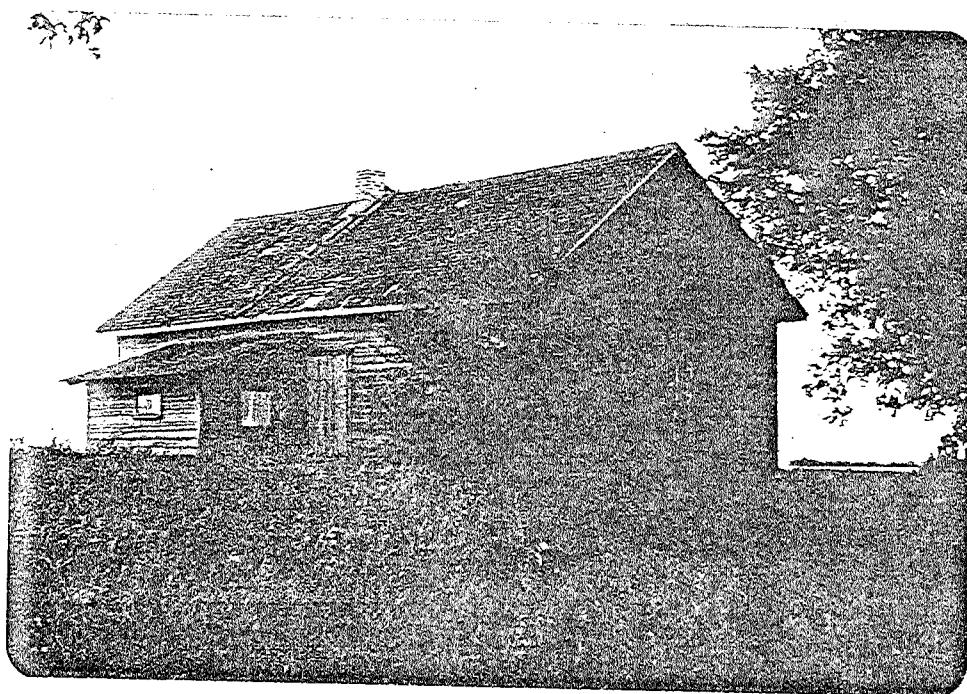
Side view of the Barn.

Note: Tin roof, squared log and mud plastered, inside and out.



View of roof of Barn.

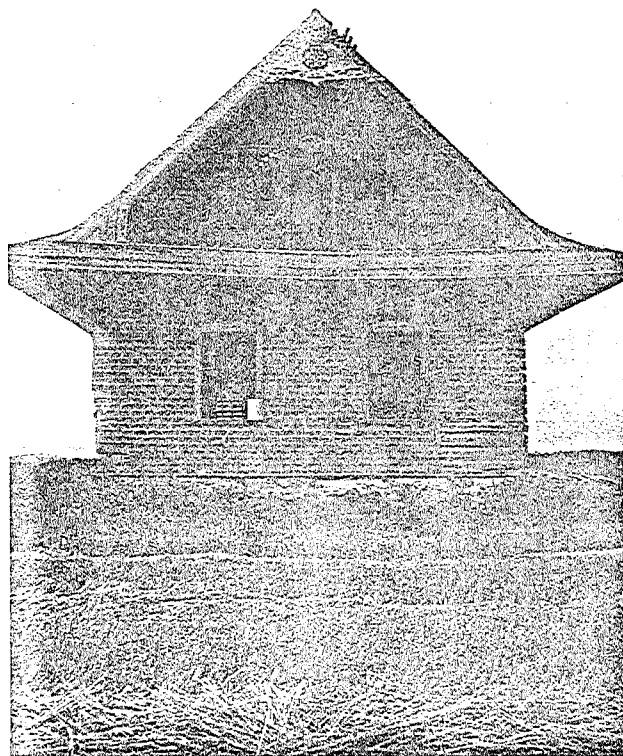
Note: Beautifully scrolled peak.



Russian type of Steam Bathhouse. Village of Otradnoe.  
Built c. 1903.

Note: Windows and doors, designed roof



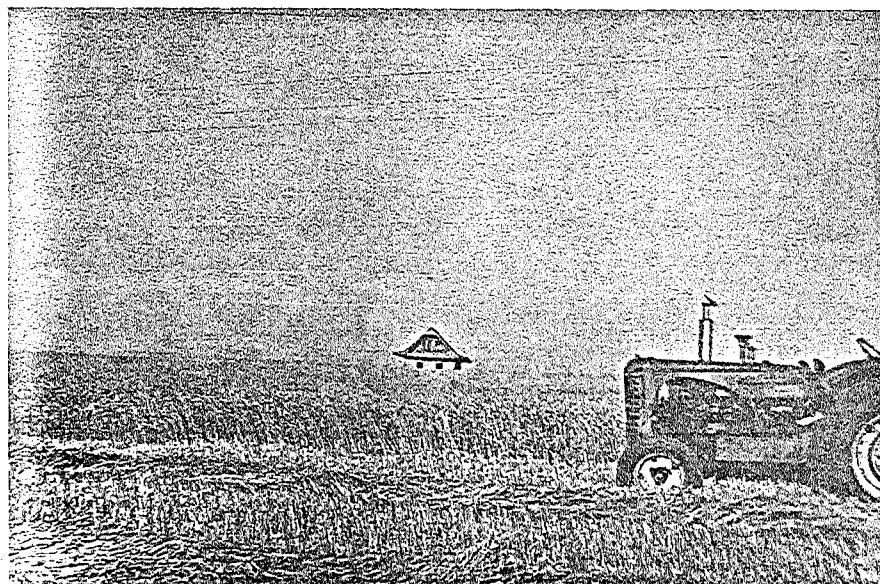


Building in Village of Vosnesenia.  
Near Verigin, Sask. Built c.1903.

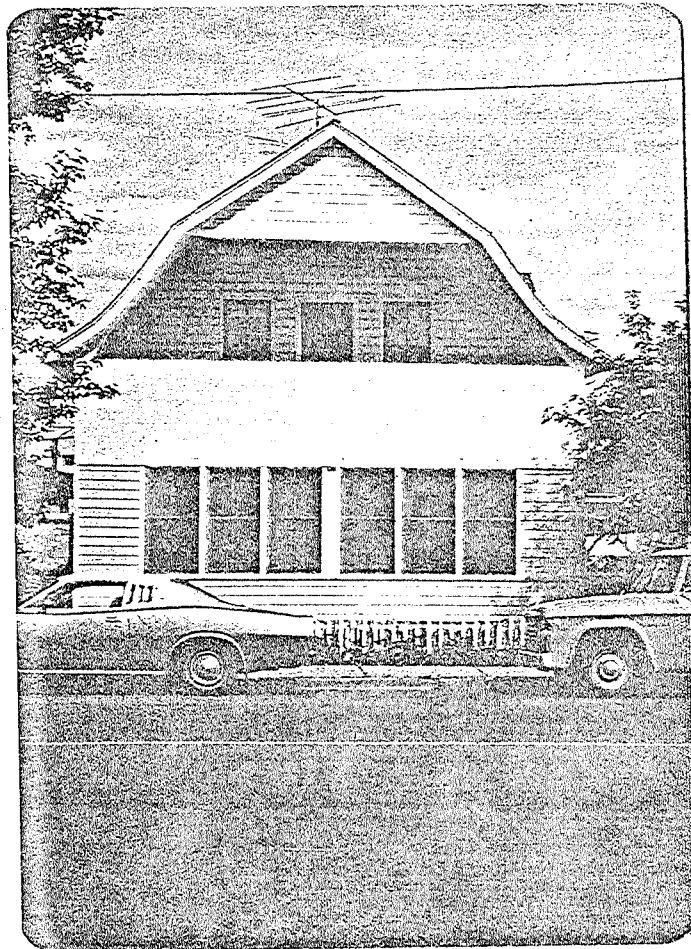
Note: Wooden structure, overlaid  
with brick, beautifully scrolled peak,  
gable ends.. door and window location.



Side view.  
Note: underlayer of  
cedar, covered in  
bricks.

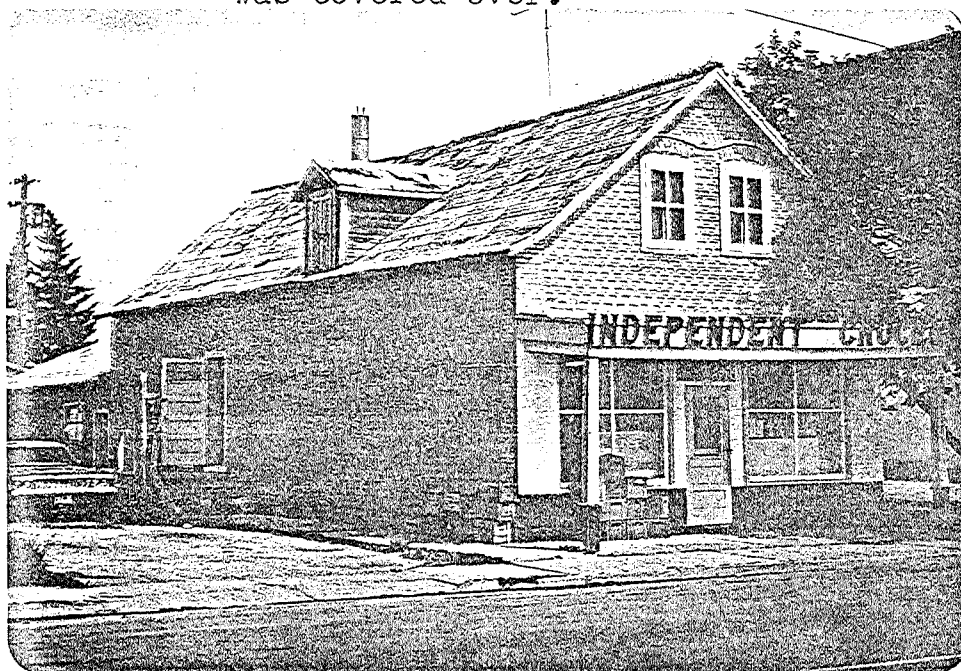


Distant view of building.



Official residence of Peter Lordly Verigin  
In Canora Sask. Built by Simeon Ivanovitch Verigin,  
( my great grandfather) c. 1905.

Note: Balcony was formerly scrolled, but recently  
was covered over.

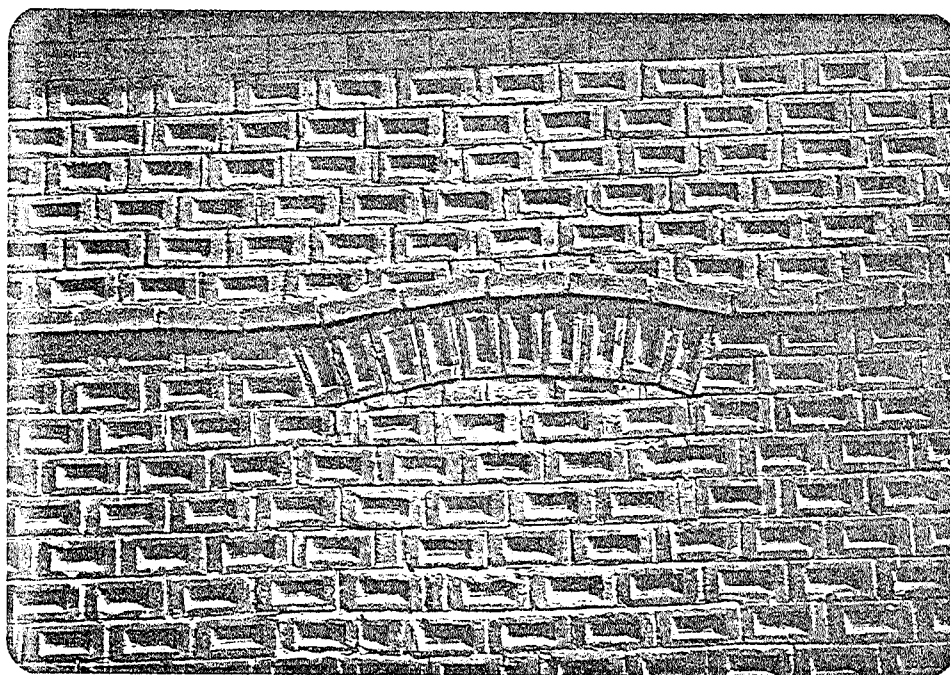


Office, found next to the above photograph, in  
Canora Sask. Brick made at the Doukhobor Brick Factory  
at Yorkton, Sask. Also built by my great grandfather.

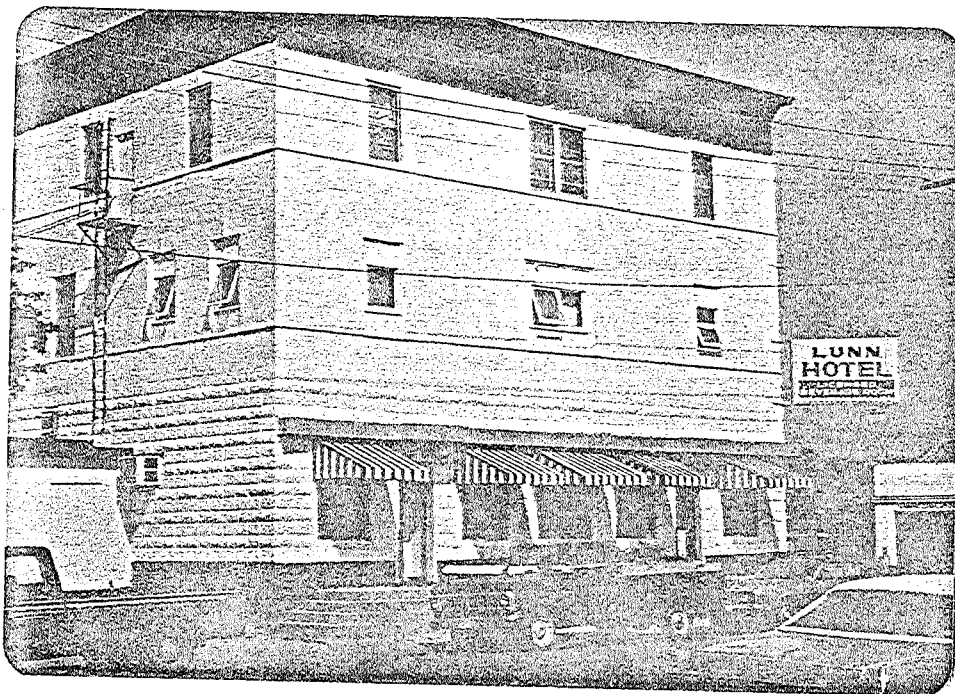


Top view of Office.

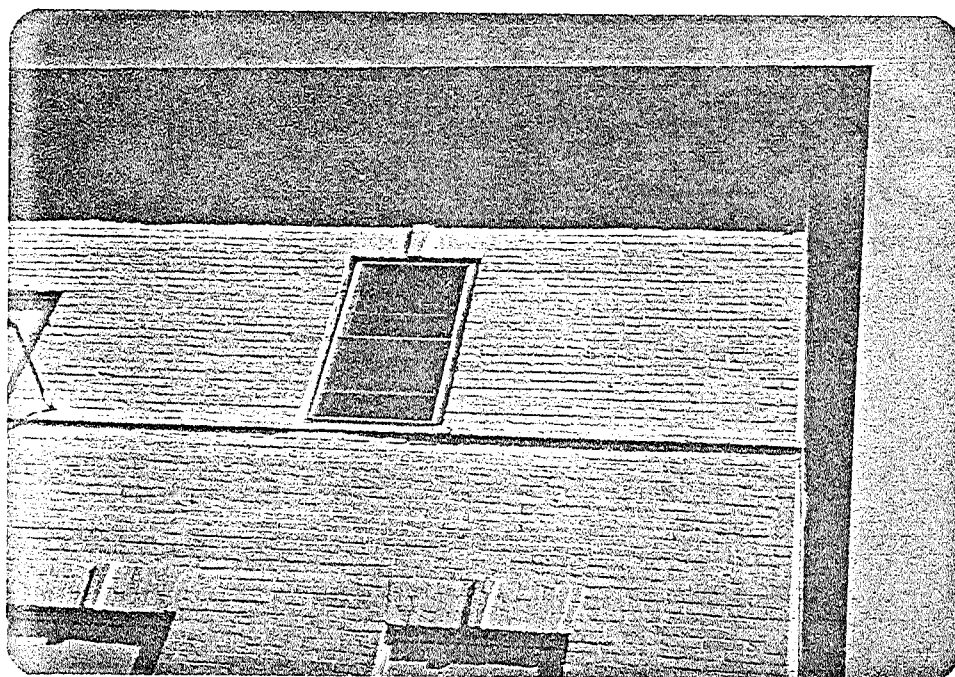
Note: Gables, designed peak, brick work  
very nicely laid.



Design in brickwork.



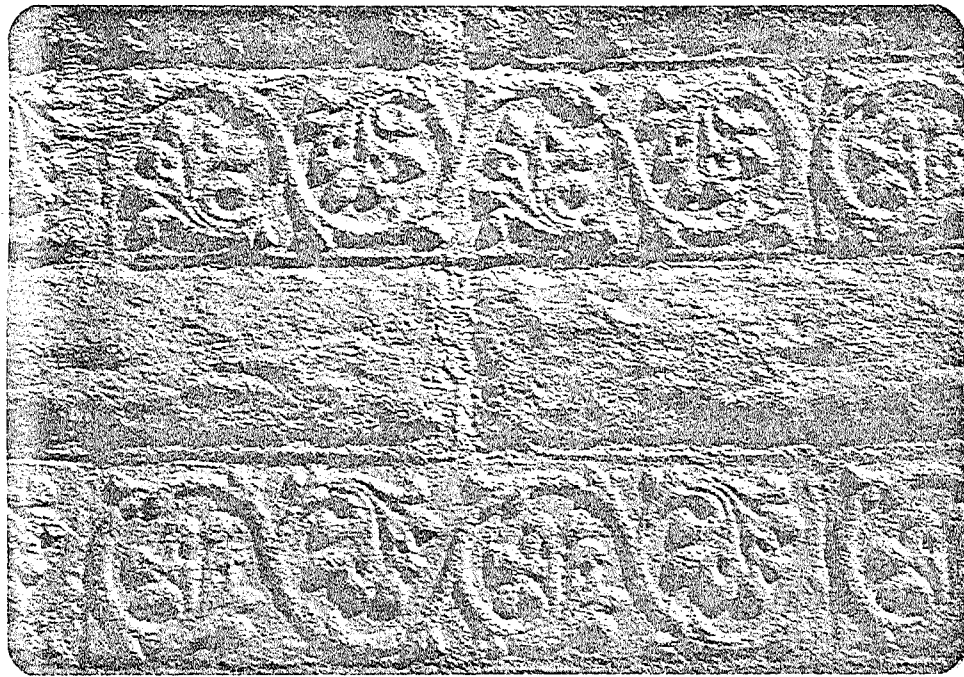
Formerly two identical buildings, boarding houses. Found in Kenora Sask. Built c. 1905. Walks were built from each floor to get to the next building.



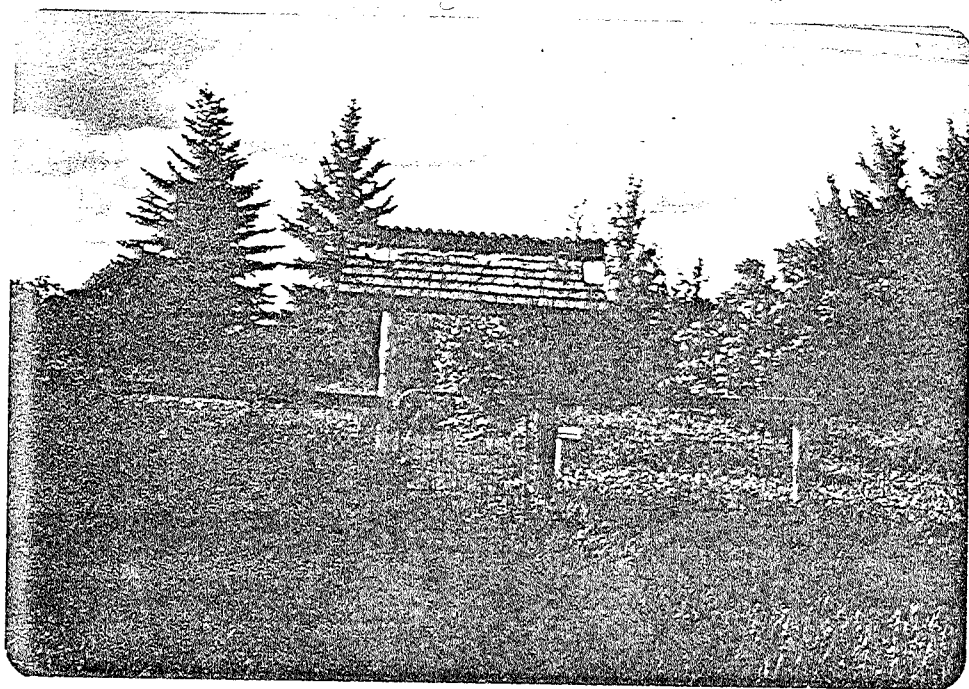
Upper view

Note: Brickwork done by my great grandfather. Designs above each window.



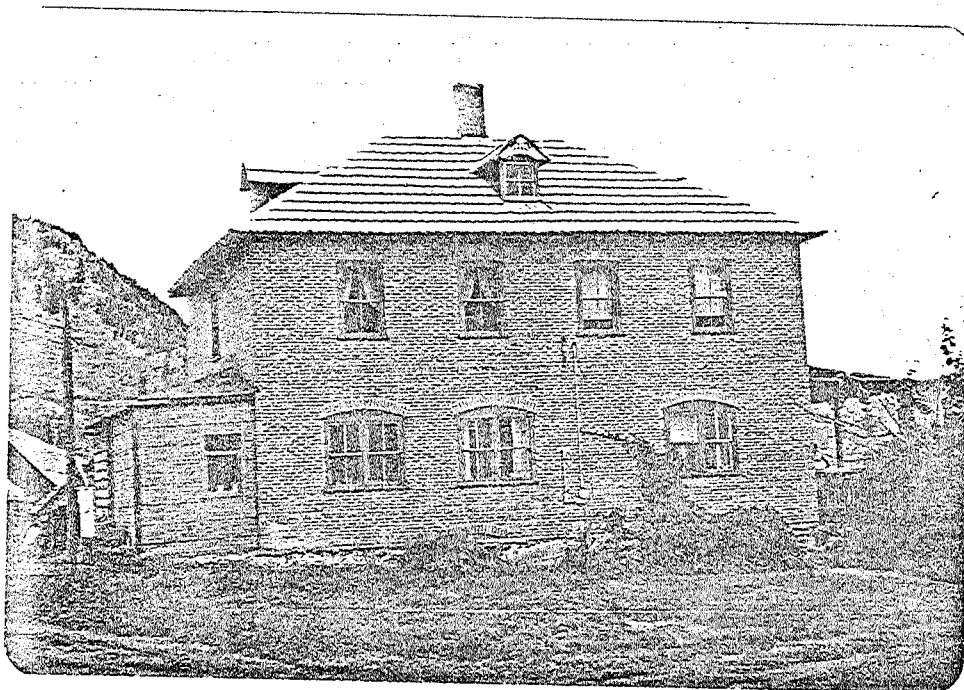


Design on brickwork, done by my great grandfather.



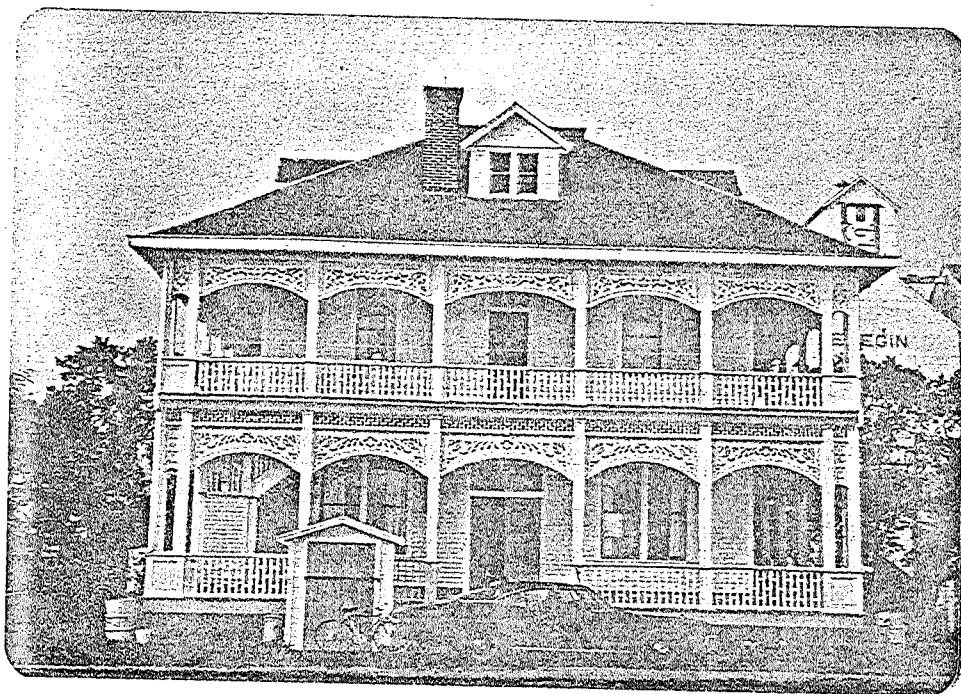
Gateway entrance leading to Tolstoy's Cemetery, in memory of, near Verigin Sask.

Note: Patterned design, scrolled ridge on gate overhead.



Village Residential Home, Grand Forks, B.C.  
Built c. 1910. Occupied by 30 to 50 people.

Note: Brick overlaid, mud plastered, in  
and out, balcony on front, lower  
floor, scroll work on roof and around  
top of windows.

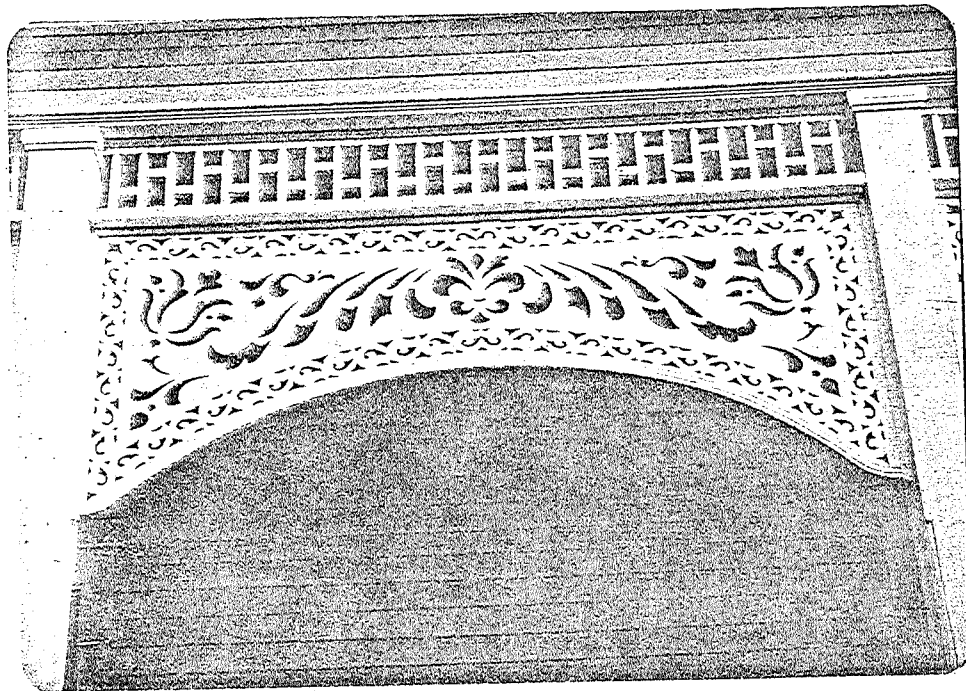


Official Residence of Peter Lordly Verigin,  
in Verigin Sask. Built in 1917. Today it is  
preserved by the Saskatchewan Provincial Government,  
as a historical building. The first floor is used  
as a place for prayer services, meetings, funerals,  
etc. The top floor, as a museum. Scroll work done  
by Ivan Mahonin.

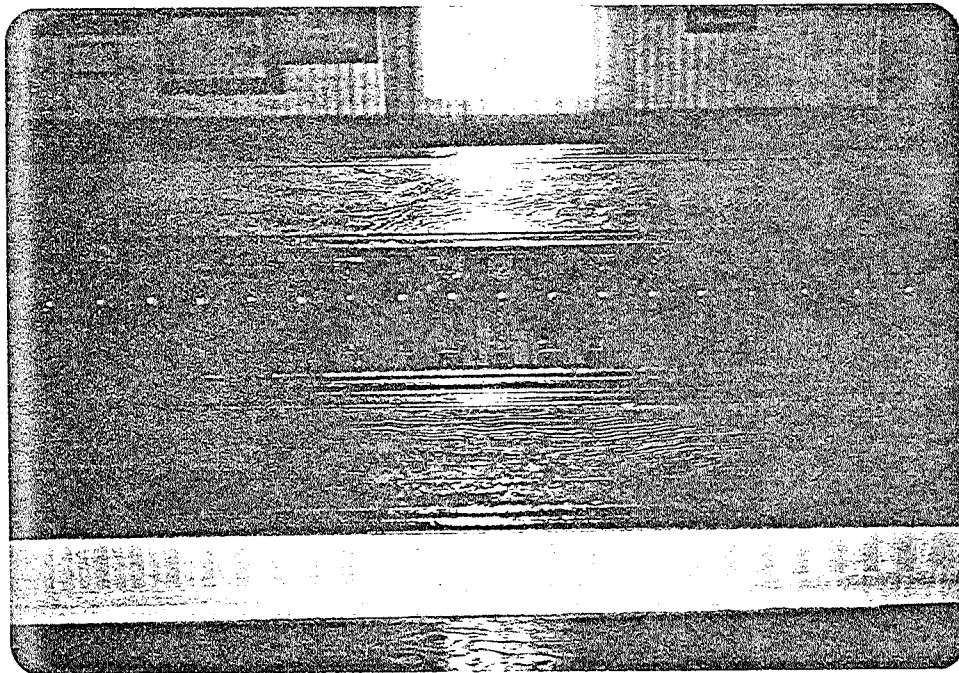
Note: Plastered walls, in and out, papered  
over. Beautiful scrollwork all over  
entire building.



Fine craftsmanship, shown here, on balcony.



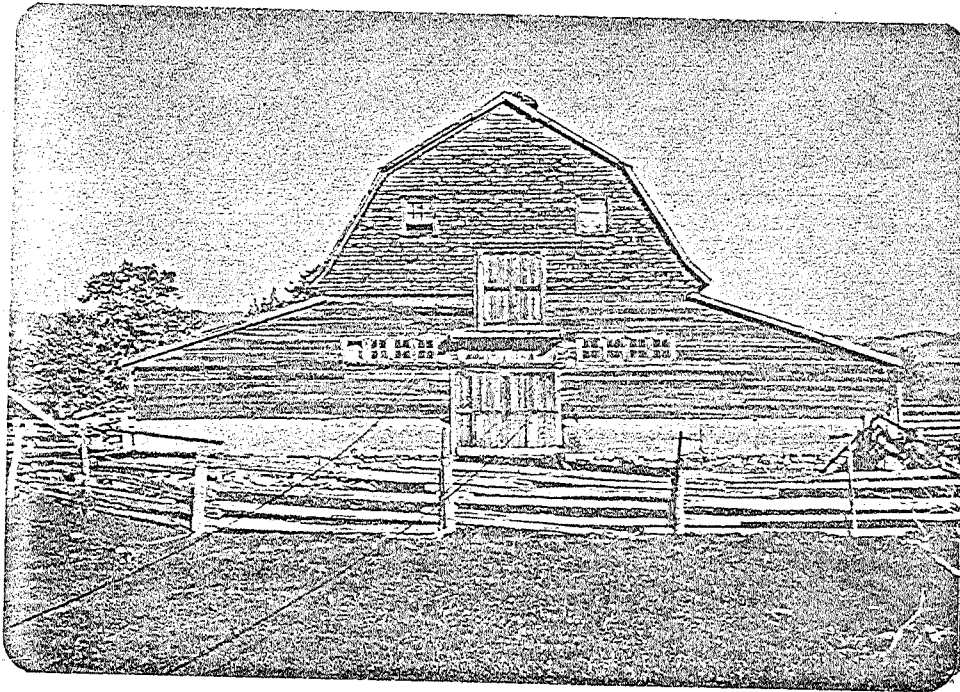
Note: Artistic pattern in woodwork.



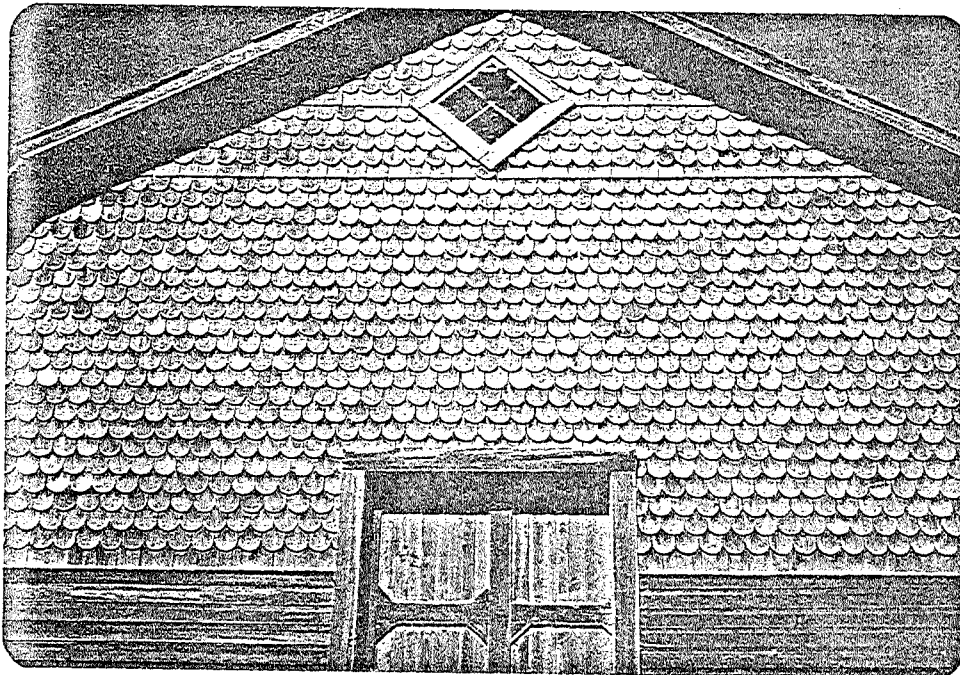
Partition or Roomdivider, found in building.

Note: Creative plan.



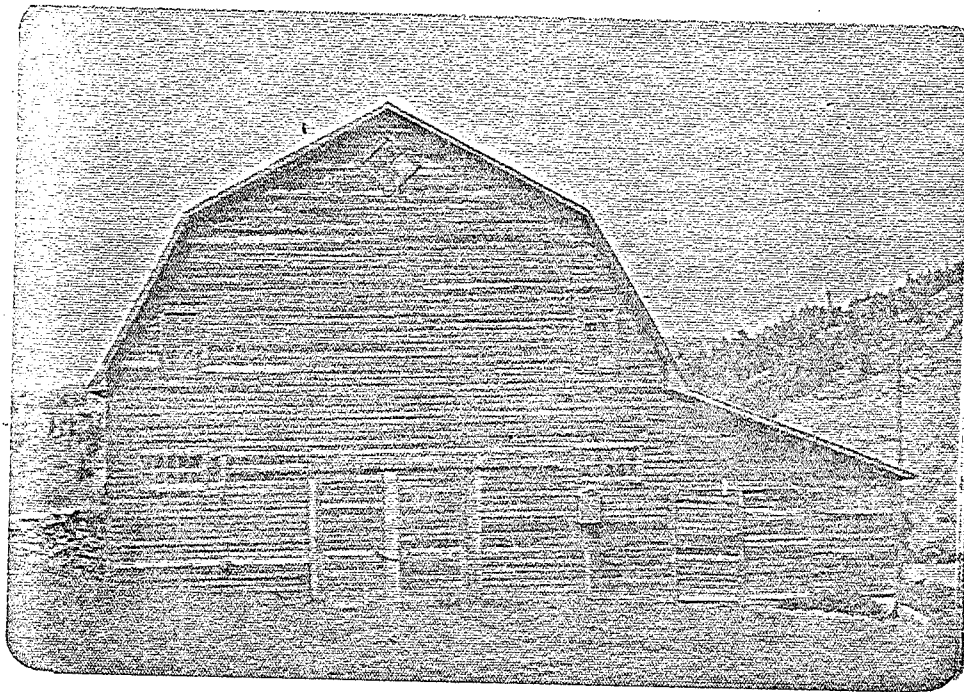


Communal Village Horse barn. Village of Bogatoi  
Rodnik, (Bountiful Spring), 9 miles north of Lundbreck,  
Alberta. Built in 1916 by Simeon Ivanovitch.  
Note: Shingles on front all cut by hand.  
Shape and window location.



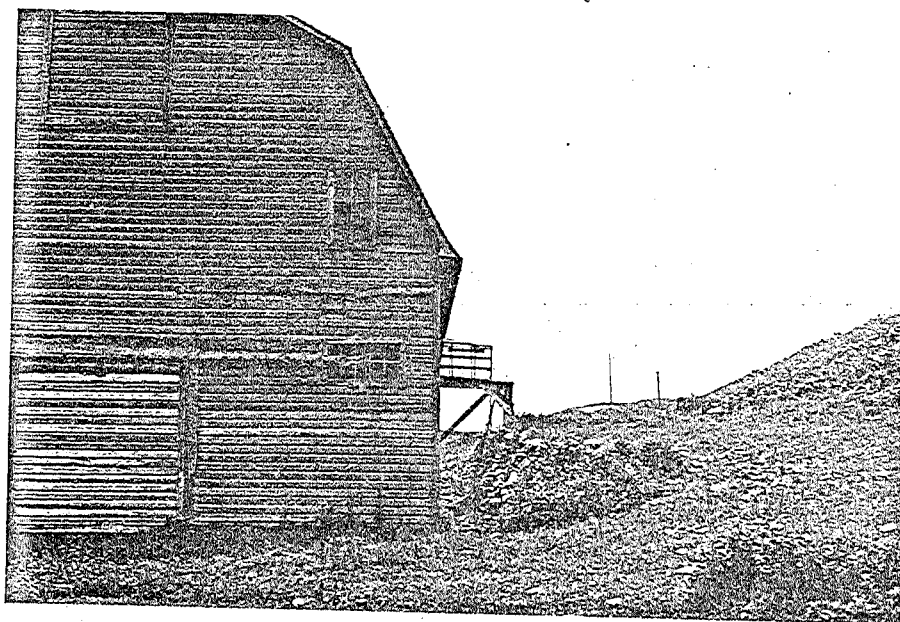
Beautifully carved woodwork, on top view  
of barn. All uniformly carved.





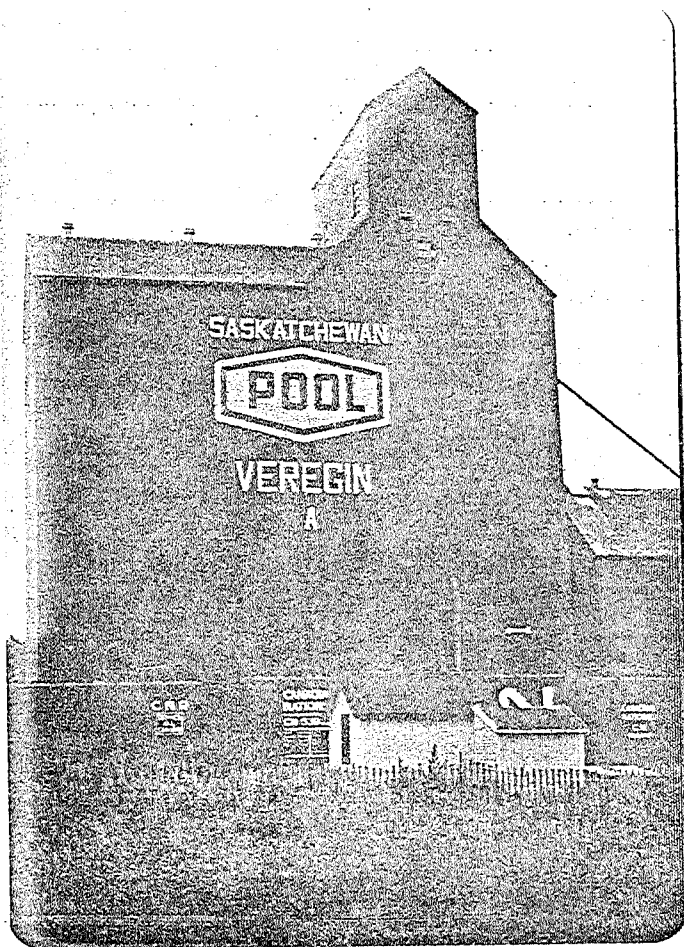
Village Community Barn, Village of Bojia Milost,  
( God's grace), Built in 1917 by Timothy Ogloff.  
3 miles east of Cowley, Alberta.

Note: Leanto on side served as living quarters  
(temporary) for families while their  
dwellings were being built. Walls  
were mud plastered and covered over with  
catalogue pages.

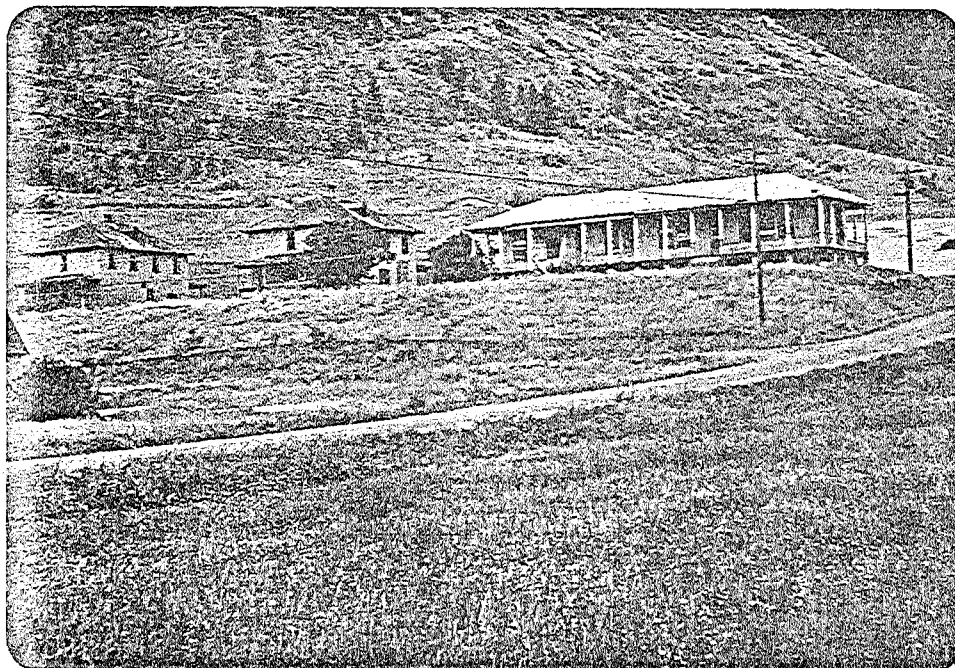


Back view of barn.

Note: For easy unloading of hay, an  
earth and rock ramp was built  
close to the ground. Windows  
in back and front.



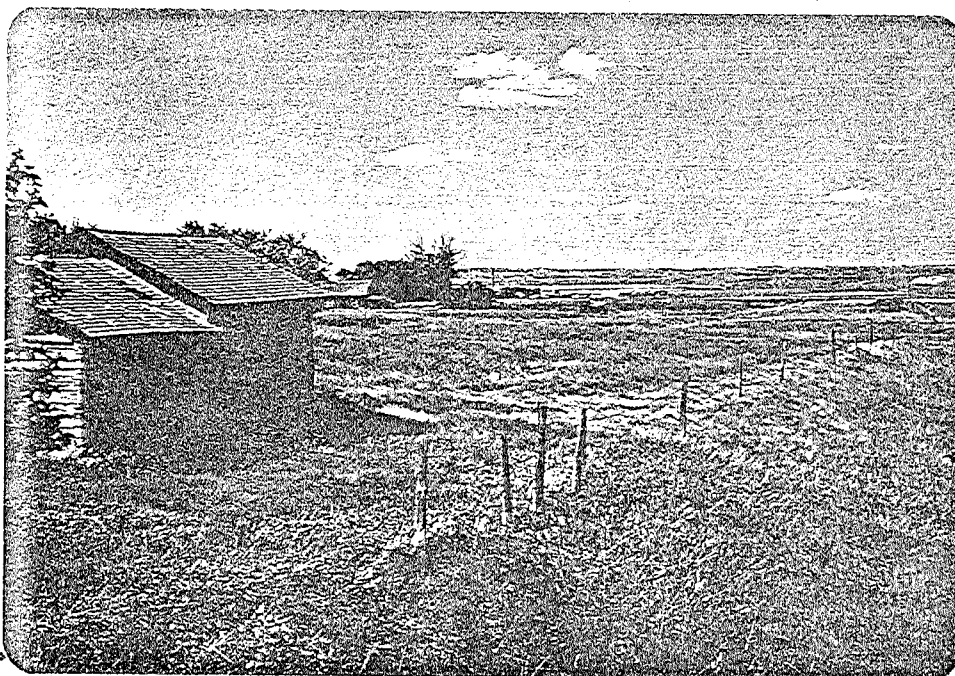
Grain Elevator at Verigin,  
Sask.



Village in Grand Forks, B.C. Built c. 1912.  
Note: Building on right, used as office  
and School.

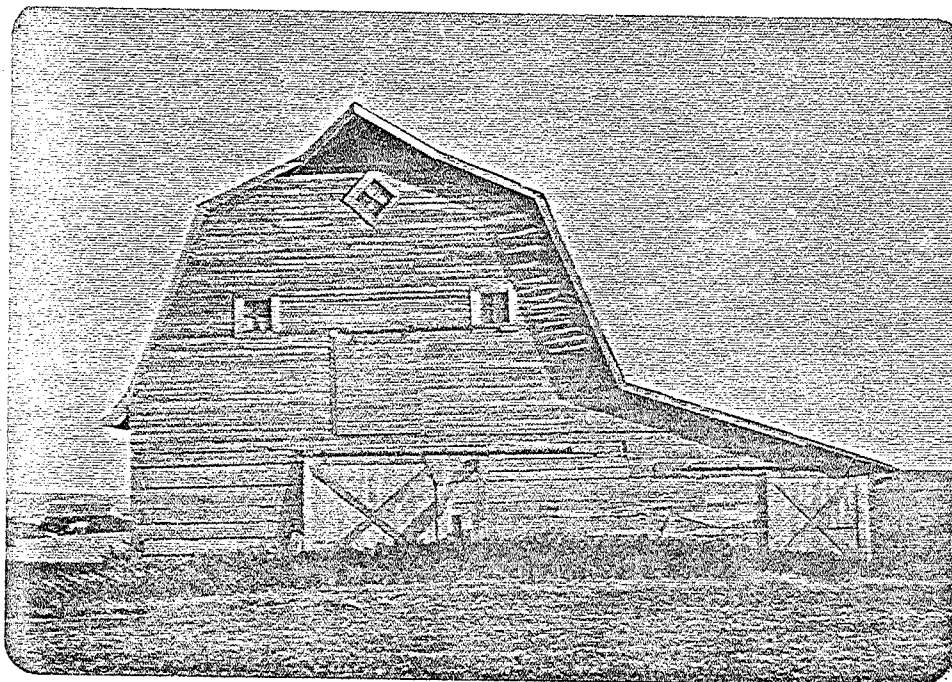


Lordly's Settlement, ( Gaspodnia Pasilenia )  
 Most commonly known as Village of Anastasia. Residence  
 of Spiritual Leader of this group, Anastasia Lords  
 Holoboff. Built in 1926, 2 miles from Sholdice, Alberta.  
 Note: Small homes and courtyard. Wooden structures.



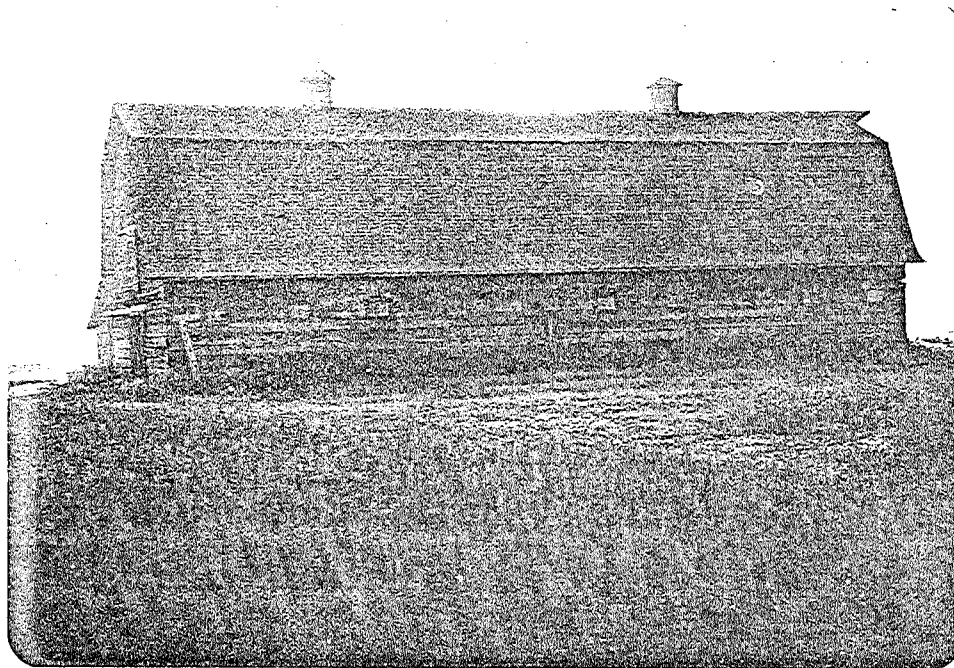
Cowshed, in same village.

Note: Each family had their own private  
 cowshed and gardens. Log structure,  
 and mud plastered.



Horse barn, built in 1929, Village of Anastasia.

Note: Bridge timber used in construction,  
mud plastered.

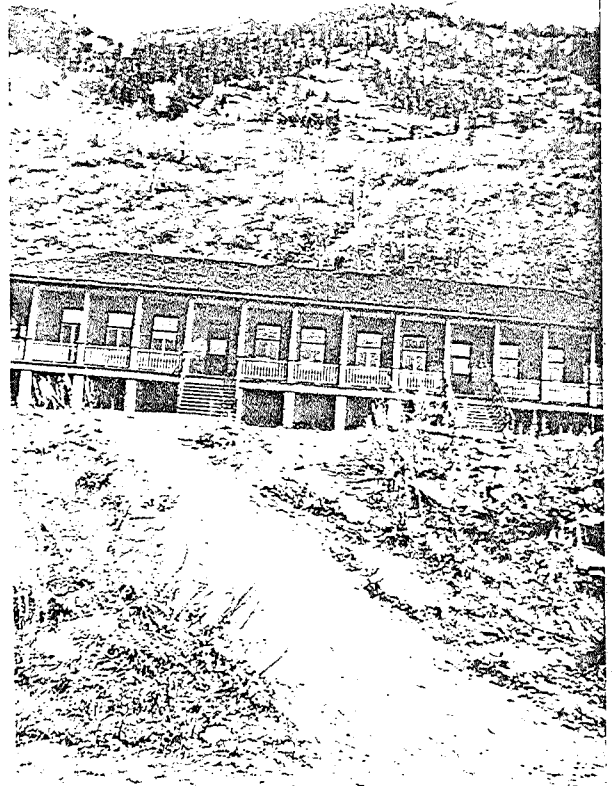


Side view of barn.



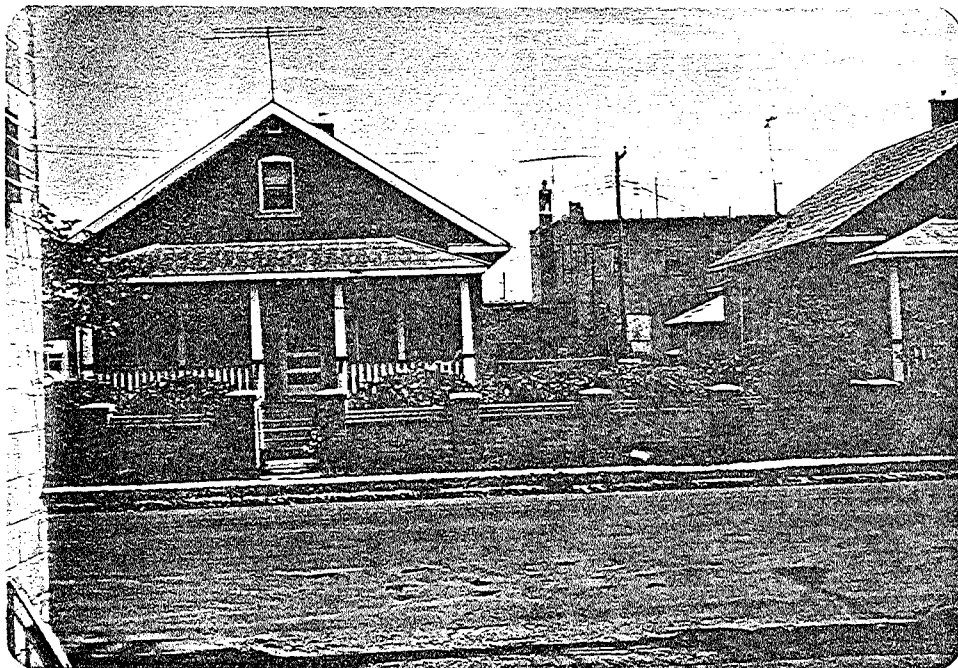


Prayer Home at Castlegar, B.C.



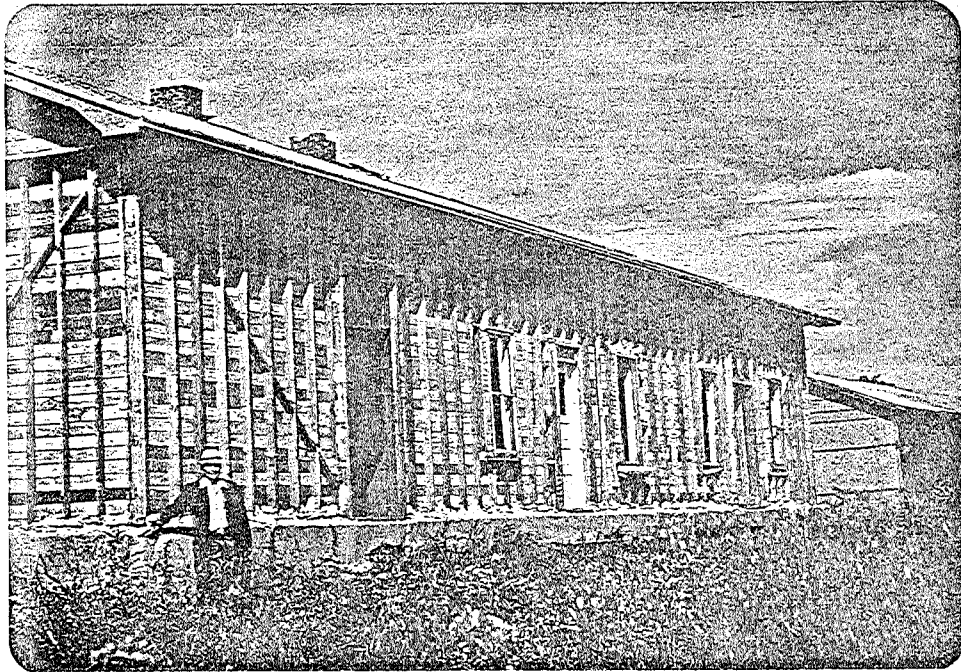
School near Brilliant, B.C.

Both built in 1930's

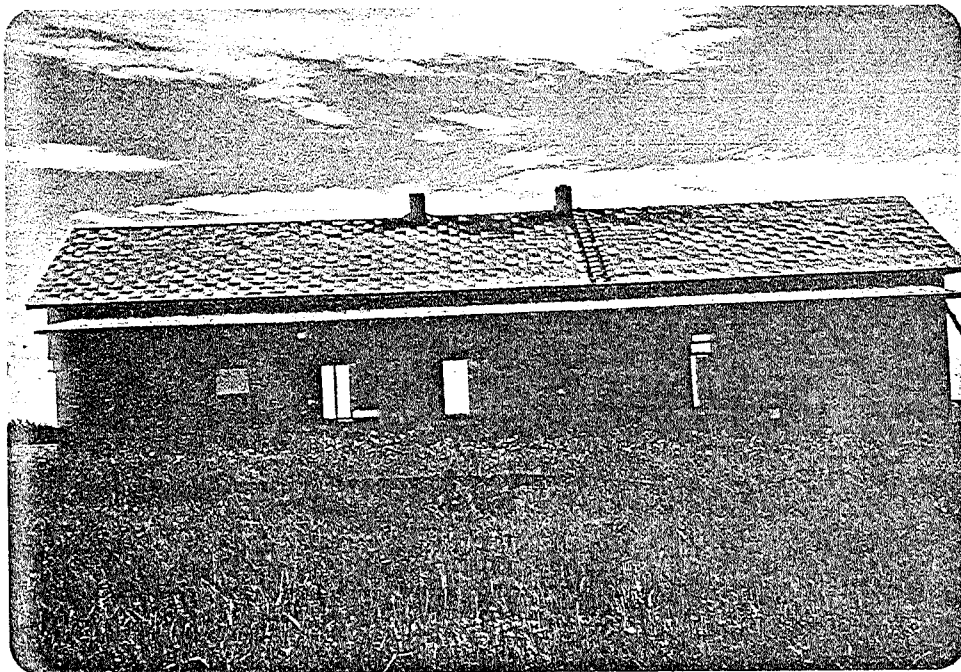


Five family homes were identical to this.  
Off Broadway Street in Yorkton Sask.  
( Main Street)





Two buildings, Warehouses on the CNR line at Buchanan Sask. Distributing points. Living quarters, along with warehouses. Built in 1930's  
Note: Brick layered

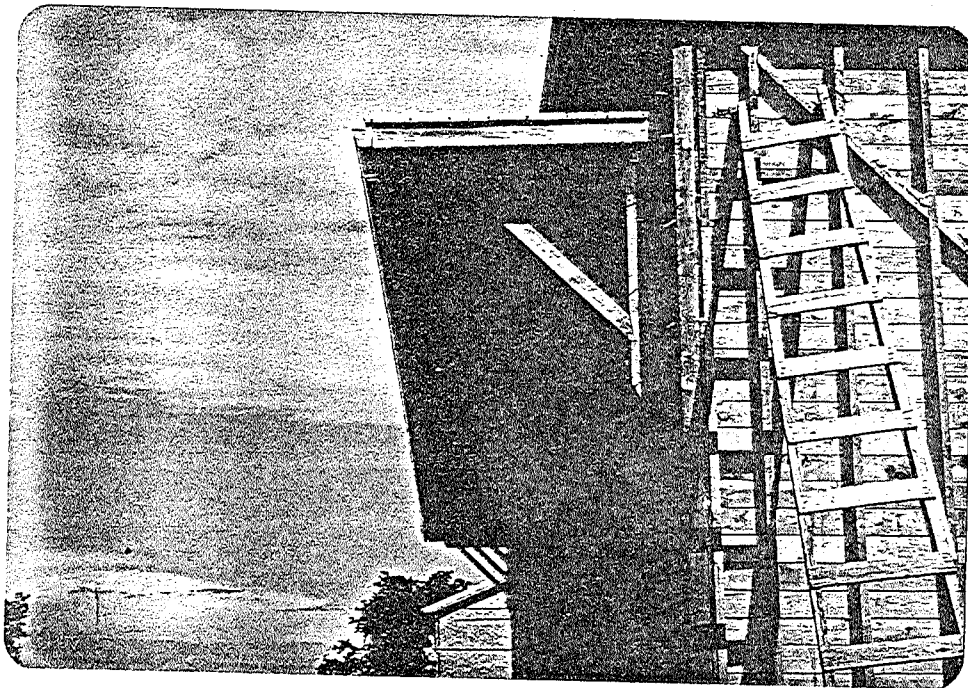


Note: Wood underlying.



Front view of roof.

Note: Artistic design.



Note: Eaves.



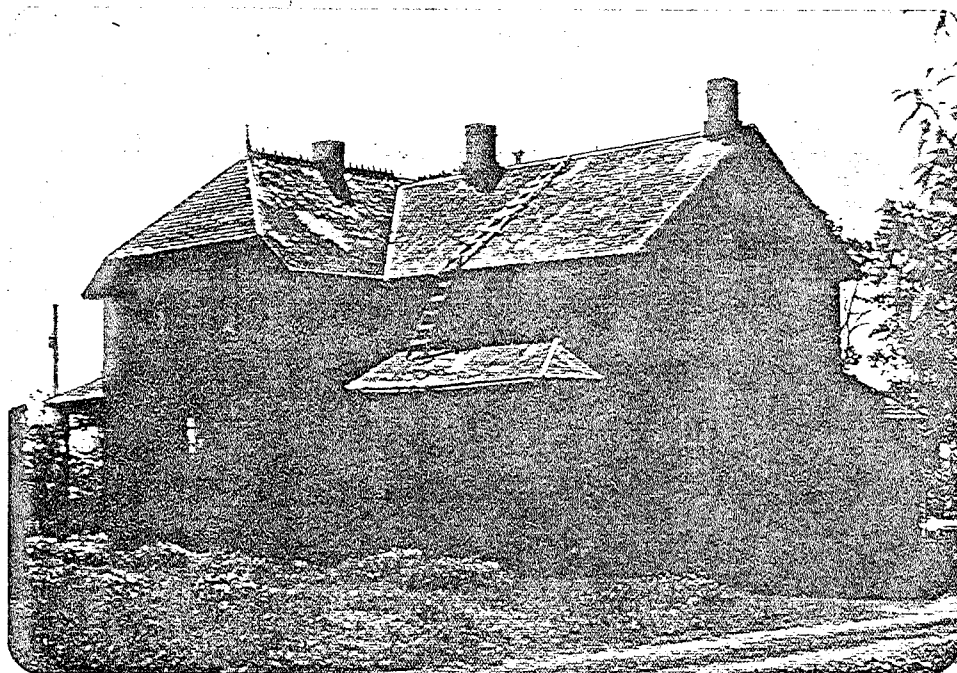
Rustic Root Cellar,

Note: Cement walls, Sod roof, originally  
had wooden plank walls and sod roof.



Grain Elevator at Village of Shouldice, Alberta.  
Note: Shape, wooden and round.





Communal Dwelling, Village of God's grace. Built by a non Doukhobor in 1895. A typical type of B.C. home was built next to it.

Still in use today.

Note: Designs on ridges.

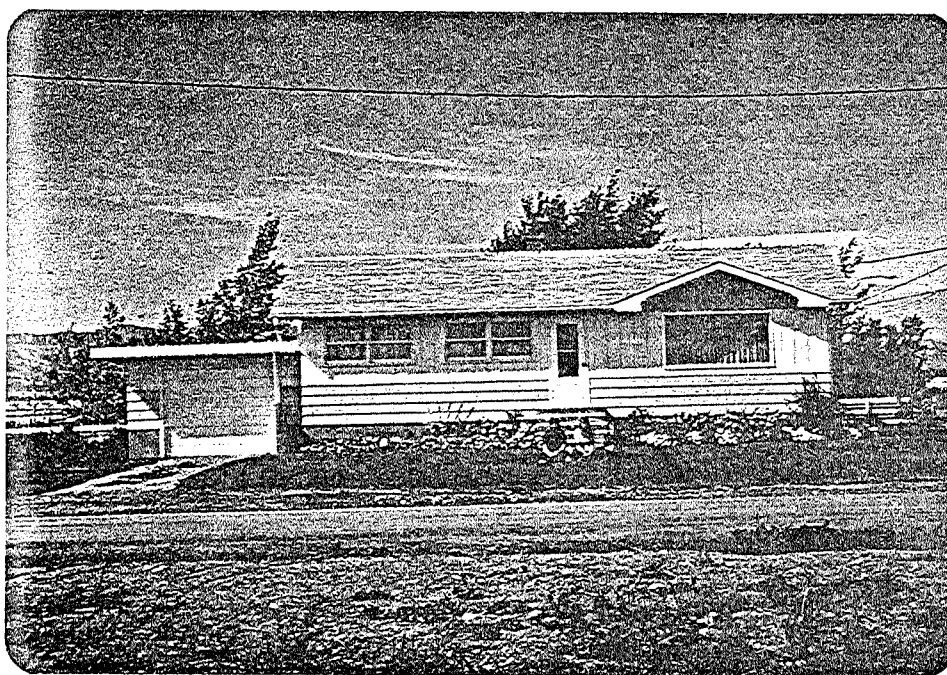


Official Residence of Manager of Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood. Built in 1916 at Cowley, Alberta. Still used today by deceased family. Wallpapered and plastered



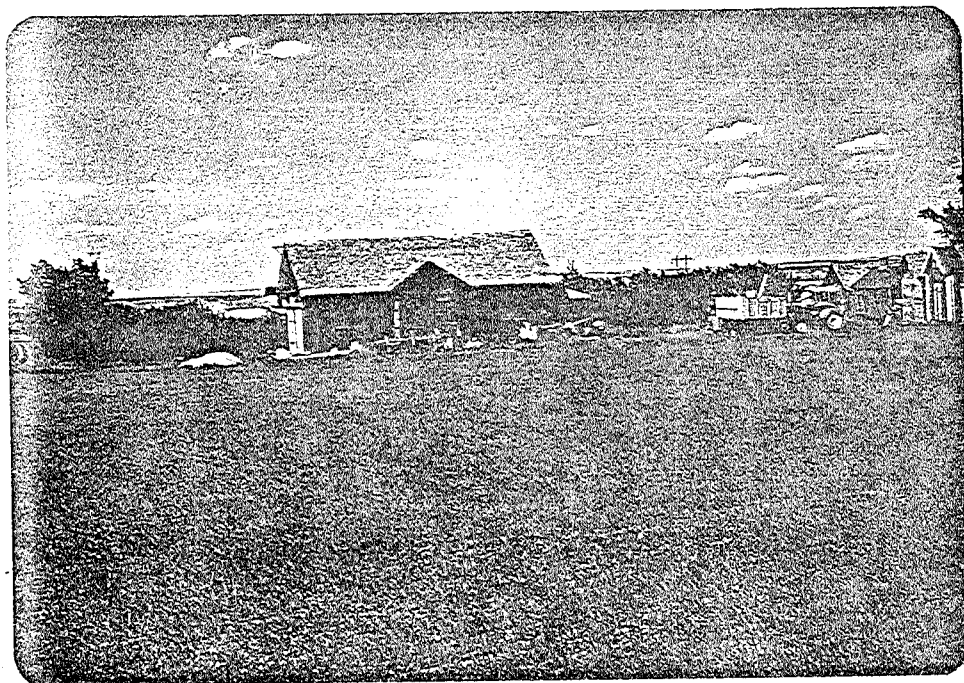
Farmhome of Mike S. Verigin. Built in 1940  
by John Kazakoff. 3 miles east of Cowley, Alberta.

Note: Mud plastered and wall papered.  
Style has changed, somewhat.  
Not much design, except a bit on  
shingle work.

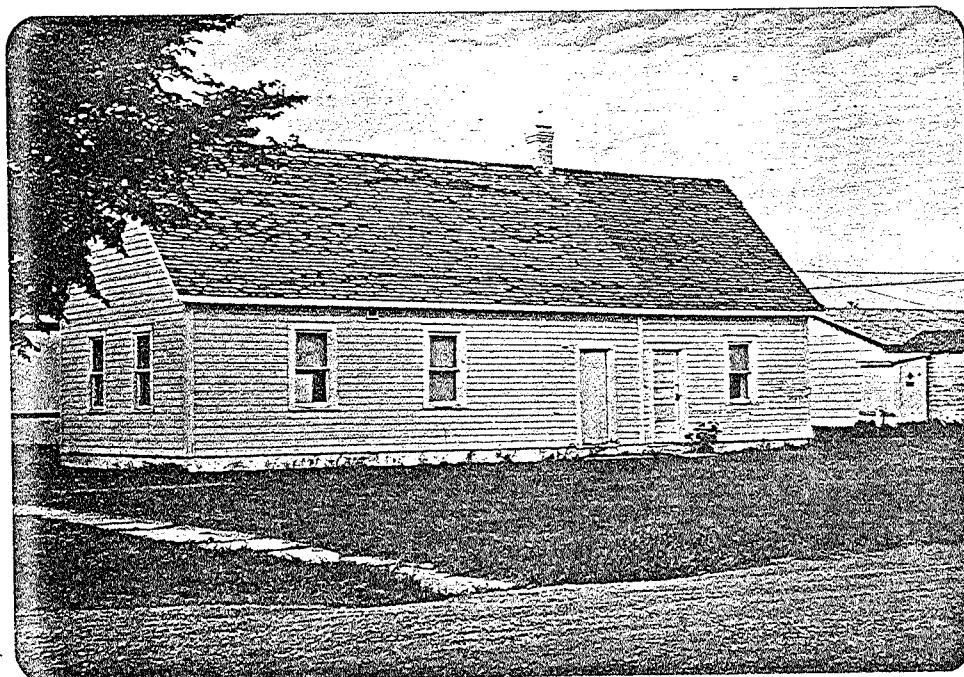


Modern Styled Home. Mike M. Verigin, Cowley, Alberta.  
Built in 1958. Style is a typical everyday home.

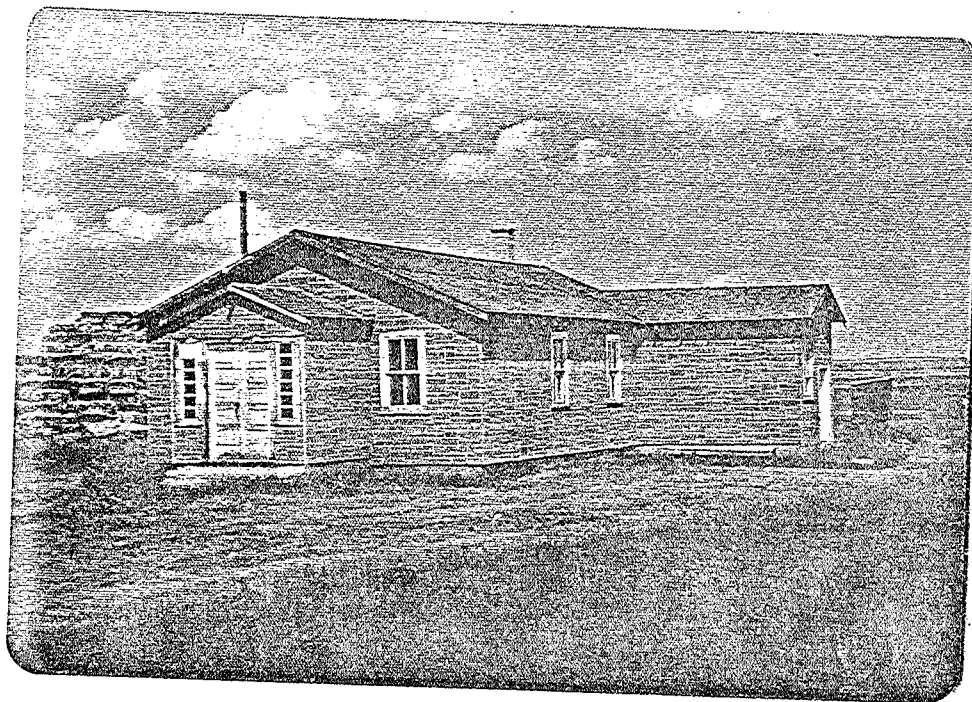




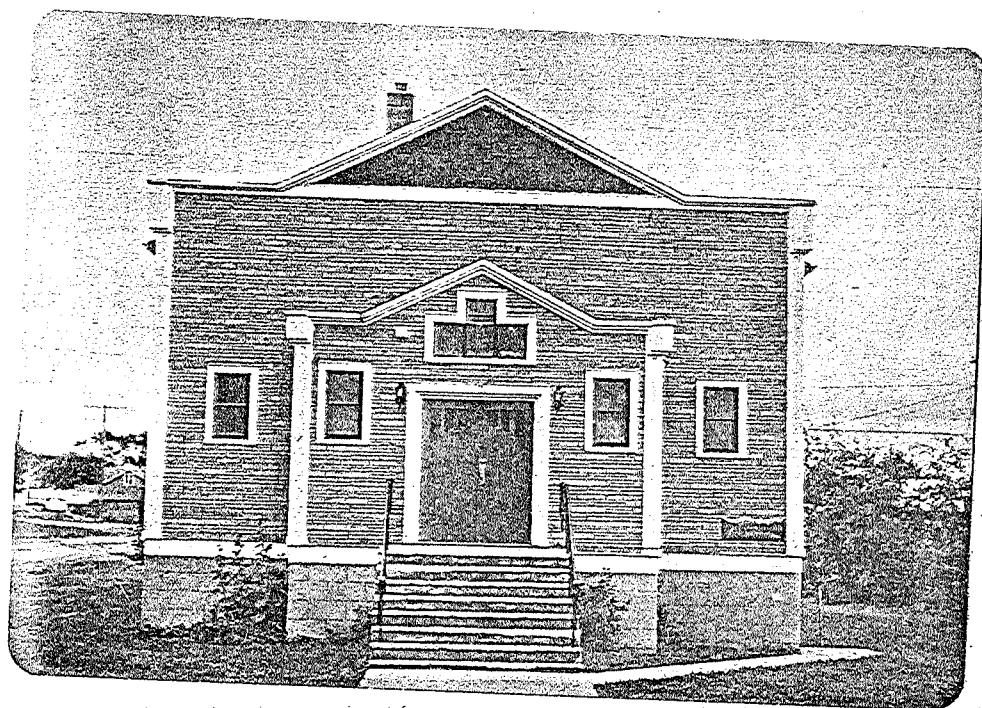
Former Prayer Home in Village of Lordly Settlement,  
at Shouldice Alberta. Built in 1927.  
Wooden structure.



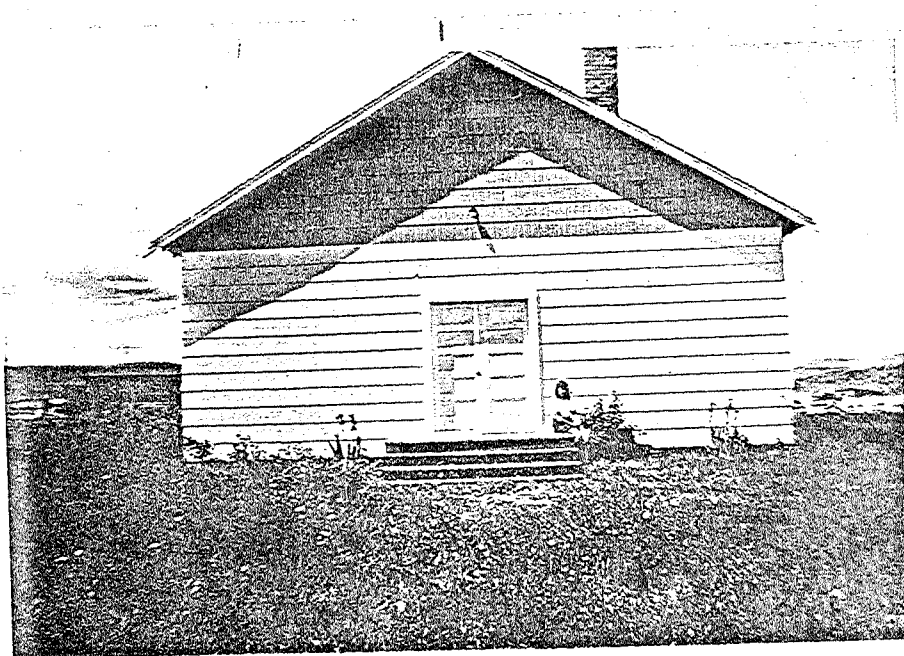
Prayer Home, in Buchanan, Sask. Built in 1930's.



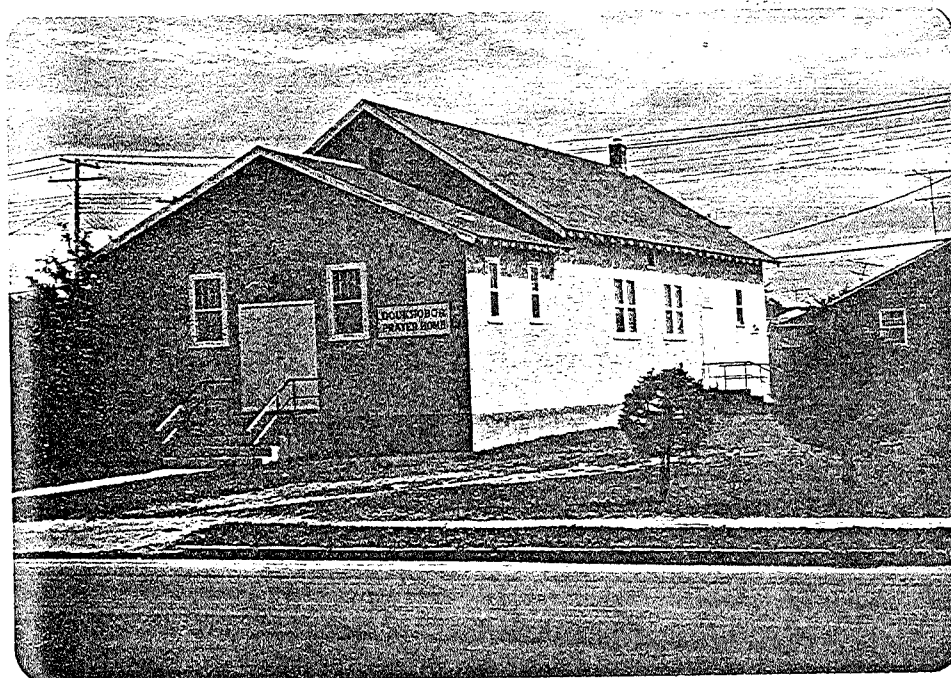
Prayer Home of United Doukhobors of Mossleigh and District, at Mossleigh Alberta.



Prayer Home at Kamsack, Sask. Built in 1950's.



Prayer Home of United Doukhobors of Alberta,  
Cowley-Lundbreck, located at Lundbreck, Alberta.



Prayer Home in Canora Sask. Built in the 50's.

## REFERENCES

Mealing M. F. 1972, Our Peoples Way, Volume 2.

2) Woodcock, G. & I. Avakumovic, 1968,  
The Doukhobors, Toronto, Oxford University Press.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

1) Micheal M. Verigin, Cowley Alberta.

*Photos are really magnificent.  
Your commentary is good - I've noted  
a few corrections - note correction for p. 6.*

(B)