

Stories: How Mennonites Came to Be
John D. Roth
Student Study and Assignment Guide

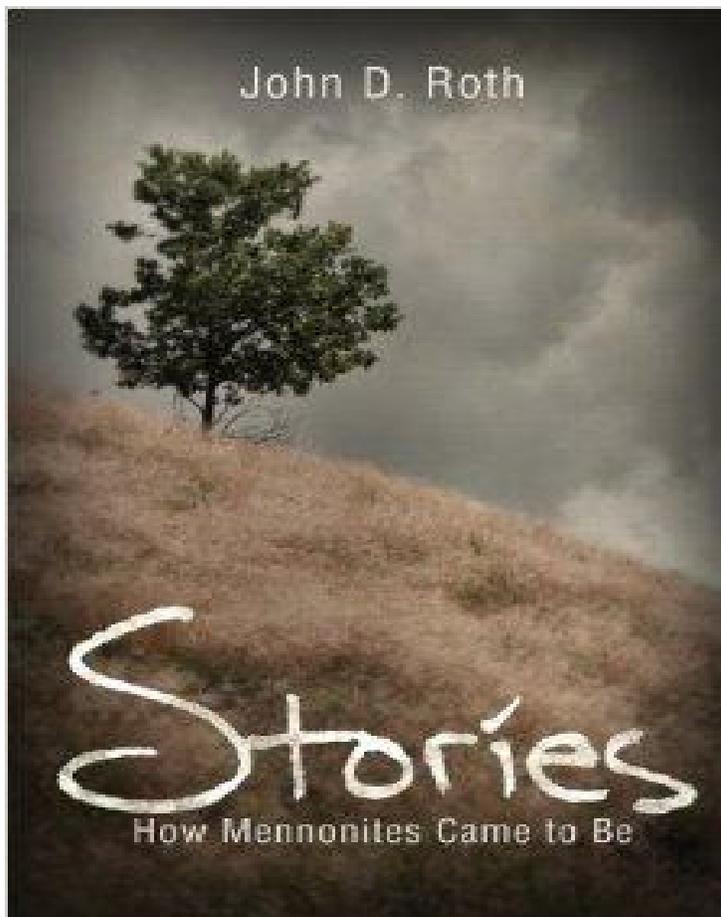
Pre-Reading Activity

Before reading the book, answer the following pre-reading questions.

What do you think this book is going to be about?

What can you infer from the Title?

How do you think the author will approach the subject?



Introduction: Conflict and Renewal in the Church Tradition

Read Introduction p. 9-19

Answer the following questions:

Pg. 9-11

1. How does the author's use of a personal story introduce us to this content?

Pg. 11

2. How does the author describe the stories of the past?

Pg. 11

3. What are the three assumptions the author says are important for understanding the structure of this book?

With a partner: Discuss your answers

Pg. 19

4. Write down what each chapter will be about as outlined by the author:
 - Chapter 1, 2, and 3
 - Chapter 4 and 5
 - Chapter 6 and 7
 - Chapter 8
 - Chapter 9
 - Chapter 10

Pg. 18-19

5. What is the author's own context and experience?

Pg. 19

6. Why did the author, John D. Roth, write this book?

Chapter 1

A Newborn Church, From Movement to Structure

Read Acts 2: 1-4

Vocabulary: Define

1. Pentecost
2. Movement
3. Structures

p. 22

1. What was the primary theme of Pentecost?

p. 23

2. What had happened by the end of Acts 2?
3. How were the disciples transformed into a cohesive community?
4. What does the Fire and Spirit mean to you?
5. Define movement.

p. 24

6. What attracted people to this emerging community?
7. Did the new members understand what they were getting into? Why or why not?
8. List the 4 common set of resources that propelled this movement forward.
9. Summarize the 6 distinctive characteristics that distinguished the early Christian community from the Jewish tradition and Pagans religions of that day.

p. 24

Voluntary membership-

p. 25

Sharing possessions-

p. 26

Accountability to each other-

Commitment to non-violence-

p. 27

A distinctive culture-

Mission-minded-

The Movement in Conflict: Separating Essentials from Peripherals

Read Acts 15

p. 29

10. What was the conflict that developed between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians?

p. 30

Author's Questions:

- A. How does the community keep the energy of the movement on track while preventing it from spinning in a dozen different directions?
- B. Which teachings and practices are non-negotiable?
- C. Which would be optional?

The Church Responds

p. 30

11. The early church/movement evolved into an institution. What 4 structures helped to address the challenges the early church was having and give it form?

p. 30

Formal patterns of leadership-

p. 31

Rituals: Baptism and communion-

p. 32

Canonical Texts: The New Testament-

p. 33

Authoritative doctrine: The Creeds-

Conclusion: Read

What can you conclude the author meant by the following statement: “The shift in the character of the early church from movement to structure was probably inevitable and even necessary.”

Chapter 2

A Catholic Church Constantine and the Christian Empire

Vocabulary: Define

Christendom

Just War

Monasticism

p. 37

1. Who was Constantine the Great and what is his role in the history of the church?

Persecuted Church

p. 38

2. The context for early church life is demonstrated in the following Biblical passages.
3. Group Reading Assignments- Report to class a written or oral summary of passages read.

Group A: Read Acts 4:5-18

Group B: Read Acts 7:54-60

Group C: Read Acts 9: 1-19

Group D: Read Acts 22:4 and Acts 26:12

p. 39

4. Where did the most severe threat for the Christian movement come from by the middle of the 1st century?
5. When did the first systematic persecution of Christians begin and why?

p. 40

6. What profound impact did the adoption of “Christianity” of the Roman Empire have on the character of the church?

Remembering the Early Church

p. 40

7. Two compromises emerged that enabled the church to keep some of its deepest ideals while adjusting to the political realities of a Christian Empire.
8. Define Monasticism and give examples from the text.

p. 41

9. Define Just War and give examples from the text.

'Christendom in the Middle Ages

p. 44

10. Define Christendom

p. 45

11. Where was the spiritual presence and authority of the church visible in medieval daily life?
12. What two traditions were especially important to maintaining political and religious order in medieval Christendom?

p. 46

13. Describe the spiritual and political aspects of infant baptism.
14. Describe the spiritual and political aspects of the oath?

Conclusion

p. 47

15. The author uses the phrase, "Constantine shift." How did this shift alter the identity of the church?
16. What did the fusion of church and state mean to the Christians of Medieval times?

p. 48

17. Who would challenge this line of thought in the 16th century and why?

Chapter 3 A Protestant Church Revolt, Reform, Renewal

Vocabulary: Define

1. Anti-clericalism
2. Sale of Indulgences
3. Protestant

p. 49-50

1. What did Martin Luther write that set into motion a chain of events that divided the church and ultimately shattered it?

Problems in the Catholic Church of the late Middle Ages

p. 50

2. What were some of the problems the Catholic Church was having in the late middle ages? List them below according to the following dates.

p. 51

1303- 14th Century-

1378- 14th Century-

1388- 14th Century-

15th Century-

p. 52

3. Define anti-clericalism and the consequences of anticlerical sentiment of the 15th century.

Reform Initiatives Prior to the Reformation

p. 52-53

4. What 4 calls for renewal from voices within the church had been taking place before the Reformation?
5. What reform initiatives did Francis Assisi begin to make back in the 12th century and what became of his initiative?
6. Who was Peter Waldo and what initiative did he begin? What became of his initiative in the 12th century?
7. Who was John Wycliffe and what initiative did he begin and what became of his initiative in the 13th century?

p. 54

8. Why were church authorities nervous regarding the reformer's desires and views of the Bible in the middle ages?
9. Over time, loyal Catholics became open to some measure of reform. Give examples 2 examples of reform that were influenced by a deep concern about abusive practices throughout the Catholic Church.
10. What major invention in the early 16th century helped to change the climate of how reformers like Martin Luther were viewed?

p. 55

11. How did Luther view this invention and what potential did he see in it?
12. The German political climate was changing as Luther began to push for reforms in the early 16th century. Give examples of why the German princes were seeking greater economic and political independence.
13. What 5 factors helped to create conditions that were favorable for reforms that Martin Luther proposed?

Martin Luther: A Church Divided

p. 55

14. Give a brief summary of Martin Luther's background before becoming a priest.

p. 56

15. After becoming a Catholic priest, what questions troubled Luther the most regarding God?
16. What changed Luther's perspective in 1516?
17. What did he conclude about salvation, forgiveness, and grace?

p. 57

18. How did Luther put into practice his newfound insight?
19. Based on his disagreement with the sale of indulgences, what did Luther write and post in 1517?

p. 58

20. What was the Catholic Church's official reaction to Luther's document?

21. What became Luther's central theme in the reform efforts?

Consequences and Problems of Luther's Theology

p. 59

22. How did Luther insist that religious differences be resolved?

p. 60

23. What were some disputes Luther had with other reformers?

The Reformation Turns Radical, The Reformer Turns Conservative

p. 61

24. Who protected Luther from the Catholic authorities?

25. Where did Luther go into hiding and what did he do then?

26. What were some of the consequences of Luther's radical arguments?

27. Why did the peasants in some parts of Germany revolt?

28. What did the peasants rally around between 1524-1525?

p. 62

29. What did Luther write in response to the bloody peasant uprising in 1525?

30. Luther asked the princes to unite in repressing the peasant uprising. How did the nobility respond?

p. 63

31. In what context did the new Anabaptists emerge?

32. Who were these Anabaptists?

33. What did their movement draw heavily upon?

34. What was the difference between the Anabaptists and Medieval Catholicism and the early reformation?

Chapter 4 A Third Way Emerges

p. 65

1. Why did Luther detest the new Anabaptists?
2. John D. Roth uses the story of Margaret Hottinger from the village of Zollikon just outside the Swiss city of Zurich at the beginning of this chapter. What were the Hottinger's best known for in this region?
3. Who were perhaps the first martyrs of the Swiss reformation?

p. 66

4. Why did Margaret become the target of an investigation in 1525?

Author's Questions:

- A. What is it exactly that Margaret and her friends were teaching?
- B. Why did these new doctrines terrify the authorities?
- C. What compelled people like Margaret to persist in their convictions even to the point of death?

Anabaptist Beginnings in Switzerland

Review 1550 Map of Europe (Book provides map)

p. 66

5. What was the biggest difference between Catholics, Protestants, and Anabaptists?

p. 68

6. In the 16th century, why were Anabaptists persecuted?

p. 69

7. List 3 basic challenges the new Anabaptist movement needed to respond do.

p. 70

8. What three Anabaptist groups emerged by the 1540's?

The Swiss Brethren in Switzerland and South Germany

p. 70

Locate Zurich, Germany on the map

9. The earliest form of Anabaptism appeared in Zurich, Germany in the early 1520's as an extension of the broader reformation.
10. Who was Ulrich Zwingli and what did he do when he accepted an invitation to assume the pulpit at Grossmunster church?
- p. 71
11. Why did the Zurich city council break with the Catholic Church?
12. Who were the more radical Zwingli students who were part of Zwingli's inner circle?
13. In groups, research and present findings to class
- Group 1- Research Conrad Grebel
- Group 2- Research George Blaurock
- Group 3 – Research Felix Mantz
- Group 4- Research Simon Stumpf
- p. 72
14. Aware that radical reforms could cause social and political upheaval, what did the Zurich city council and Zwingli decide to do?
15. What divisions emerged from that decision?
16. Describe the first “re-baptism.”
- p. 73
17. What were the results of this rebaptism?
18. What stories does the author describe regarding rebaptism?

The Schleitheim Confession 1527

- p. 74
19. How did the Schleitheim Confession come about?
20. In groups, read the Schleitheim Confession and present summary to class.
- Group 1- Article 1 and 2
- Group 2 – Article 3 and 4

Group 3 – Article 5 and 6

Group 4 – Article 7 and conclusion

p. 76

- 21. Who was the first Anabaptist to die in Zurich and what were the implications for other Anabaptists?

The Hutterites of Moravia

Look at map and find Moravia.

p. 76

- 22. Why did recent Anabaptist converts leave their homes in the Tyrol to immigrate eastward to Moravia?

p. 77

- 23. Why did the Moravians accept the Anabaptists?

24. Who was Hans Hut?

25. What were some of their beliefs?

26. He considered an Anabaptist. Tell why he was considered mystical and apocalyptic.

p. 78

27. What did he do during rebaptism and what did that symbol mean to him?

28. What conflict did Hubmaier and Hut have based on each of their beliefs regarding Anabaptism?

p. 79

29. What became a defining feature of Hans Hut's group after they fled to nearby Austerlitz?

30. Who was Jacob Hutter?

31. What did he bring to the group?

p. 80

32. What did another prominent leader within the Hutterite community write and what did that provide the Hutterites?

The Melchiorite/Muensterites in the Netherlands

Look at map and locate the Netherlands

p. 80-81

33. Who was Melchior Hoffman?

p. 82

34. What made Hoffman seem even more radical with his apocalyptic beliefs?

35. After Hoffman's death, who continued his Hoffman's views and what did he lead the Melchiorites to do?

Münster Tragedy

p. 83

36. Summarize the Münster Tragedy.

37. Who led the rebellion and what did they accomplish?

38. What was the Anabaptist Kingdom of Münster?

p. 84

39. What three words were associated with the Anabaptist movement after the tragedy of Münster?

Keeping a Movement on Track

p. 85

40. What challenges did the Swiss Brethren, the Hutterites, and the Melchiorites face by the middle of the 16th century (1540's)?

Chapter 5 New Reforms, New Structures

p. 87

1. Who was Arent Dircksz Bosch and why is his story remarkable?

p. 88

2. What dramatic transformations took place over the course of the 17th and 18th centuries for Anabaptists?

Nature of the New Struggles

p.88

3. What three distinctive groups had developed by the middle of the 16th century?
4. Look at map to find each of regions where the three groups took root?
5. What common question did all three groups face?

p. 89

6. What three characteristics became hallmarks of all Anabaptist groups in Europe between 1530-1800?
7. Why did the Dutch Anabaptists prefer the term Doopsenzinden (Baptist-minded) or Mennonite?
8. Where did the Mennonites get their name?
9. Where did the Hutterites of Moravia get their name from?
10. Where did the Swiss Brethren get their name from?
11. What new problems did the Anabaptists face as they tried to survive?

Dutch Mennonites: Between Affluence and Stewardship

From Muenster to Menno:

p. 90

12. Who was Menno Simmons?
13. What did Menno bring to the new Anabaptist group?

Reformer on the Run:

p. 91

14. What event caused Menno to begin to question infant baptism?
15. What led Menno to break with the Catholic Church?

p. 92

16. On January 20, 1536, Menno resigned as a Catholic priest. What did he base his reasons for leaving his position as priest?
17. What did Menno Simmons do after he left the priesthood?
18. Who ordained him and what is the significance of that?

No Other Foundation

p. 92

19. What was central in Menno Simmons teachings?
20. What scripture did he use to support his central theme?
21. What did the term "New Culture" mean?
22. What does the following statement mean to you: "True evangelical faith cannot lie dormant?"

p. 93

23. What did Menno describe as the 7 characteristics of the church?
24. Read Romans 5:8-11 and summarize this passage.
25. What did Menno interpret those scriptures to mean for the church?

p. 94

26. Describe the division between Menno and the Waterlanders in 1557.

The Path to Toleration

p. 94

27. How did open persecution end against the Mennonites after Menno died?

p. 95

28. How did the Mennonites participate in the Dutch Golden Age from 1600-1800?

29. In what areas of the printing industry did the Mennonites take a lead in?

30. List Mennonite artists

List Mennonite Art Historian

List Mennonite Literary Figure

List Mennonite Physician

How did wealthy Dutch Mennonites apply their entrepreneurial and organizational skills to church life?

Challenges: Divisions and Affluence

p. 96

31. Describe the divisions of the 1560's?

p. 97

32. Describe some of the positive consequences of Mennonite prosperity in the 17th and 18th century.

Author's Questions:

- A. Can the Anabaptist tradition be sustained in circumstances of wealth and social prestige?
- B. Or were cultural developments, the impact of enlightenment - rationalism, for example – the primary cause of the decline?
- C. Should Mennonites regard prosperity, higher education, and social prestige as a sign of God's blessing or a threat to their deepest convictions?
- D. Can a church in the Anabaptist tradition retain its radical witness in the midst of affluence and cultural assimilation?

Hutterites: Between Success and Survival

p. 98

33. List 3 extremes of the Hutterites

Structure and Theology of Hutterite Communities

p. 99

34. Describe the Hutterite Golden Age of the 17th century.
35. What were Hutterites expected to learn and why?
36. What drew 16th century peasants and artisans struggling to survive to the Hutterites?

Ideals and Realities

p. 100

37. What was the Hutterite ideal?

p. 101

38. What were some of the realities that demonstrated Hutterites did not achieve Christian perfection?

New Conflicts and Forced Emigration

p. 101

39. Why were the Hutterites of Hadsburg, Moravia forced to immigrate?

Hutterite Survival in South Russia

p. 103

40. Create a timeline showing the Hutterite migration from Moravia, Transgerania, Ukraine, North Dakota, and Canada.

Swiss Brethren Between Compromise and Flight

p. 103

41. Compare the Swiss Brethren to the Dutch Mennonites.

Official Antagonism

p. 104

42. During the 16th century, how did Zurich and other cities respond to Anabaptists?
43. Describe the nature of the debates church officials initiated in the 16th century against the Swiss Brethren?

Swiss Brethren Religious Life

p. 105

44. What was Ausbund and what did some of the themes reveal about congregational life in the Swiss Brethren in 1564-1583?

p. 106

45. What was the concordance (Concondantz vnd Zeyger) made up of and what did it reveal about the Swiss Brethren?

46. Describe the third text that was central to the Swiss Brethren religious life.

47. What organizational structure did it reveal?

Give examples.

48. What did the Ausbund, Concordance and Strasbourg Discipline of 1568 impart to the Swiss Brethren congregations?

Revival and Compromise

p. 107

49. Who were the True-hearted and how did they view their Anabaptist neighbors?

p. 108

50. Who was the last Swiss Brethren martyr?

51. What did his death suggest on the part of the government?

52. What did the Zurich city council create in order to eradicate the Swiss Brethren from their territories?

53. By the 1640's, what was the Swiss Brethren's result of the government's repressive actions? Where did they go?

54. By the second half of the 17th century, what prompted the Swiss Brethren to leave Bern and seek refuge in the Palatinate and Alsace?

p. 109

55. What was the overall picture of the Swiss Brethren church in the final decades of the 17th century?

56. What were the compromises the Swiss Brethren who refused to leave their homeland make?

57. What caused the greatest internal crisis within the Swiss Brethren church during that period?

The Amish Division

p. 109

58. Why were Jacob Amman and other ministers commissioned to go back to the Bernese Emmental area in 1693 after they had relocated Palatinate and Alsace?

p. 110

59. What were some of Jacob Amman's concerns regarding the Swiss Brethren who had stayed behind in the Bernese Emmental area and their compromises?

60. Where does the word "Amish" come from?

61. How do the Amish differ from the Swiss Brethren?

The Quiet in the Land

p. 111

62. Why were the princes of Alsace and the Upper Rhineland anxious to attract farmers and artisans after the Thirty Year's War of 1618 to 1638?

63. What freedoms did Swiss Brethren receive after moving to Alsace and the Upper Rhineland?

64. What were the Swiss Brethren, Amish, and the Mennonites best known for in that region?

65. What type of reputation did the Mennonite-Amish farmers gain?

66. At what cost did the Mennonite-Amish count their success?

p. 112

67. Why were the Swiss Brethren of the 18th century known as the quiet of the land?

Chapter 6
Mennonites in South Russia
Migration and Assimilation

Vocabulary: Define

Define Glasnost

Define Aussiedlers

p. 115

The scene John D. Roth shows is one dismal at the beginning of chapter 6. What do you think could have led to this tragedy?

How were Mennonites recognized throughout Russia at the beginning of the 20th century?

p. 116

What event were the Russian Mennonites totally unprepared for?

How did they respond to the revolution?

How were their lives impacted by the Russian revolution?

How long did the Mennonite experience in Russia span?

Explain blessing and Trauma, Prosperity and Pain.

p. 117

Over time, the Mennonites faced similar dilemmas as the early church after the conversion of Constantine.

Author's Questions:

1. What happens to the essence of faith if the church is primarily defined in terms of territory?
2. What happens to believer's baptism if everyone in the colony is a Christian (or at least a Mennonite) by virtue of their birth?
3. What happens to non-resistance if it is Mennonites who must maintain public order?

From the Netherlands to North Germany to South Russia

p. 117

What do roots of the Mennonite Russian experience have to do with the story of the Dutch Mennonites?

What were the Dutch Mennonites well known for in the Netherlands during the last decades of the 16th century?

What do skilled laborers bring to an economy?

p. 118

What did city officials in those regions do in order for Mennonites to settle there?

What exemptions did Mennonites moving into Hamburg, Germany receive?

What compromises did the Mennonites have to make?

Give examples of how the Mennonite immigrants to North Germany thrived?

What happened by the middle of the 17th century that began to cause problems for the growing Mennonite population?

p. 119

What government shift took place in the Danzig region in 1770?

Who offered a welcome solution to the Mennonites and the uncertainties they were facing?

p. 120

What were Catherine the Great's reasons for inviting German farmers to establish colonies on land in Southern Russia?

When did she invite the Mennonites to come to South Russia?

What persuaded the Mennonites to go the South Russia?

How many families established a cluster of villages on the western bank of the Chortitza River in the heart of the Ukraine in 1788?

p. 121

What challenges did the Chortitza colony encounter?

Name the other colony that settled in South Russia in 1803?

Within a few decades, how many Mennonites had settled in Ukraine, Crimea, Caucasus, and Siberia?

Despite difficulties, why did the Mennonites think the decision to leave Germany and move to Russia was a good one?

Colony Life

p. 121

Describe the organization of the colonies in South Russia.

Challenges Within the Colony System

Research and Present:

Group 1: Theological dilemmas of self-government

Group 2: Economic Disparities

Group 3: Religious Renewal

Group 4: Relations with Russian Government

The Collapse of the Colony System: World War I and the Communist Revolution

p. 129-130

What events led up to World War I?

In what ways did the Russian Mennonites try to assure the local population and the Russian government of their loyalty?

Give examples

p. 130

Why do you think the Russian Mennonites were completely unprepared to the scale of devastation the war produced?

What happened in 1917?

When did the war end and what were the aftershocks for the Russian Mennonites?

p. 131

Describe Mennonite villages and what they endured after the war was over?

Describe the Mennonites "Self-Defense" during the traumatic years after the war?

p. 132

What did the Russian Mennonites re-dedicate themselves to in February 1921?

Give examples of the devastation in the villages for next 10 years?

How did Mennonites in North America respond to the crisis in South Russia in the summer of 1920?

What did this new organization do to help the Russian Mennonites?

p. 133

Where did the majority of the immigrants fleeing Russia go?

Mennonites Under Stalin

What was life like for the Mennonites who stayed in Russia as the new Soviet dictator, Joseph Stalin, took command of the country?

What happened to the 77 persons who attended the All-Mennonite Conference in Moscow in 1925?

p. 135

What happened from 1936-1938 in what is known as the Great Terror?

p. 136

Describe the Mennonites in Russia during World War II.

What happened to the faith of the Russian Mennonites in post WWI?

Glasnost and the Aussiedler Exodus

p. 135

Between 1987 and 1993, How many people of Mennonite origin left the former Soviet Union to settle back in Germany?

Define Glasnost and give examples.

Who are the Aussiedlers?

p. 136

What challenges have the Aussiedlers faced in their integration to life in Western Europe?

Conclusion: Author's Questions:

1. How do believers live like Christ in the world of time and space?
2. What shape will the faithful church take within a changing context?
3. How does the world become flesh?

Chapter 7 Mennonites in North America I

Negotiating the New World

Pg. 139

1. What did six pastors from the Shippack congregation in Eastern Pennsylvania ask their Dutch cousins to do?
2. How were the Mennonites permitted to live in their New World setting?
3. Why did the Swiss Brethren and American colonists come to America?
4. What liberties had these groups been granted in America?

Pg. 140

5. What did the ministers who wrote the letter hope to keep alive?
6. Based on Van Brought's reason for writing the Martry's Mirror during the Dutch Golden Age?
7. What is your opinion of prosperity vs. suffering?
8. Explain what the fear of militarism was and why the Mennonite pastors hoped to squelch the uprising.
9. What was the central challenge for Mennonites in America?

Pg. 141

10. What were some of the reasons Mennonites migrated to America?
11. Why do you think American life posed a threat to their faith and identity?

Author's Questions

- How was the American celebration of rugged individualism to coexist with Mennonite virtues of humility and communal accountability?
- How could the materialism and the competitive nature of market-oriented capitalism be integrated with Mennonite values of simplicity and mutual aid?
- How would Mennonites in America negotiate their new status as citizens of a democratic society rather than as subjects of a feudal prince?

Immigration to North America

Pg. 141

12. Describe the new immigrants: Where they were from, when they arrived, and where they arrived.
13. How many more Mennonites and Amish came to the United States in the next century?
14. Where else did they settle?

Pg. 142

15. Describe the westward trend in the 19th century of the Mennonites and Amish.
16. What new settlement group arrived in 1870?

17. Where did slightly half of the 18,000 Russian Mennonites settle?
18. What other groups immigrated to Canada in the 1920's and where?
19. What brought the Swiss Germans and Russian Mennonites together in their new communities?
20. What were some of the primary reasons Mennonites immigrants first came to America?
21. Describe the first Mennonite and Amish groups in the early 18th century.

Pg. 143

22. What was one of the greatest fears that Mennonites from South Russia in the 1870's had?
23. Describe other motivations immigrants had and why you think the author believes these motivations to be complex?
24. List immigration patterns.
25. Describe some of the outcomes Mennonites were having with the Native Americans in the struggle to possess the land?