



PHOTO: LORETTA SORENSEN

Chalkstone or limestone was quarried from the banks of the nearby Missouri River to erect this first permanent building at Bon Homme Colony.

History

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look for a new home. According to www.hutterites.org, Paul and Lorenz Tschetter were among a delegation sent in 1873 to find suitable land.

During that visit, the delegation met with then-President Ulysses S. Grant to petition for military exemption. However, Grant was unable to guarantee their request.

“While this was happening, the Russians realized that they were about to lose 45,000 of their best farmers, so they sent representatives to try to persuade them to stay. So instead of all Mennonites and Hutterites leaving, only 18,000 left, although all of the Hutterites in Russia left. During the immigration to the USA, thirty-six children and one old man died of dysentery in Lincoln, Nebraska.” (Hutterites.org)

The first group that arrived at the Bon Homme Colony site was made up of 17 families. They had traveled from the East Coast by train to Lincoln, Nebraska. Then came to Dakota Territory in June 1874.

“By November of that year, there was a total of 97 people living here,” the Preacher said. “There were 52 men and boys and 45 women and girls. As far as we know, they selected this area because the railroad was here and that was a means of transportation for them.”

“The Schmiedeleut (those under the leadership of Michael Waldner, a schmid or blacksmith) settled at Bon Homme Colony, where they bought 2500 acres of land for \$25,000. The Dariusleut (named after their leader, Darius Walter) established their first community at Wolf Creek. Later a third group was established. They were called the Lehrerleut, because their leader, Jakob Wipf, was a teacher (lehrer). They built their first colony, Elm Spring, near Ethan, SD.” (Hutterites.org)

The fourth group to arrive had not been living communally in Russia, so when they came to America, they settled on separate homesteads on the Dakota prairies. They were known as the Prairieleut.

“That’s why you see so many of the same names

found in Hutterite communities in areas like Freeman (SD),” the Preacher said. “They were also from Russia but chose not to live communally here.”

The Hutterites are one of three surviving Anabaptist (named for their belief in adult baptism) sects - Hutterite, Mennonite and Amish - that originated in Europe during the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century.

Communal living is one of the most distinguishing of Hutterite characteristics. Bon Homme’s Preacher said the practice stems from their understanding of the Bible.

“We believe God asks us to give up ownership of things and live and work together for the common good,” he said. “We don’t force anyone to stay. Young people make their choice to stay between the ages of 22 and 24 when they’re baptized. If a member does leave and decides to come back, we ask them to abide by our rules when they return.”

The Preacher oversees all the Colony activities. He is chosen by lot, a practice also taken from the Bible. The selection process begins by the nomination of candidates by the Colony’s Board of Directors. Nominees must be a Board member and Nominees are selected from the members of the Colony and a Hutterite Bishop oversees the entire process.

“Once those nominees are selected, male members of the Colony vote,” the Preacher said. “One must have at least 5 votes to become part of the lot. Once those names have been selected, Colony members pray about the final selection. Names are combined and the final name is selected at random. That person becomes the Colony minister for the remainder of his life.”

“Church is held every afternoon at 6 p.m.,” the Preacher said. “On Sunday, our service is held in the forenoon and children attend Sunday School. Also on Sunday evenings, we have church. Sermons are spoken in High German, which students study in school.”

While farming is the principle industry of each of the 30-plus colonies in South Dakota, each one has unique industry as well, such as a furniture-making shop and high-quality beef products at Lakeview Colony (Lake Andes) and turkey and pork production at other Hutterite colonies.

“We often work together on construction projects,” the Preacher said. “But most of the farming for each Colony is done by that group’s members.”

In years past, when a Hutterite community reached about 150 members, plans were made for branching off into a new Colony. Over the years that number has been increased and the Brethren find it challenging now to find new settlement areas.

“It takes time, but there are good places to live,” the Preacher said. “South Dakota is still a good place for us. We travel around and see different areas, but when we come home we realize what good communities we live in.”

Adequate shelter was one of the primary needs of the new Bon Homme community, whose property lay along the north side of the banks of the Missouri River. One of the first buildings constructed at the site was built from chalkstone (limestone) quarried along the banks of the river.

Chalk is formed from lime mud that is comprised of microscopic skeletons of plankton. Under the right conditions, the mud accumulates on a sea floor. Over time, the chalk is transformed into rock by geological processes. If chalk is subjected to high enough heat and pressure it becomes marble. A number of chalkstone quarries were found throughout South Dakota during that era.

The building still stands, although it may soon be cleared due to its deteriorating condition. It’s just one of the changes that comes to any group over time.

“Our faith in the teachings of Jesus Christ is what has kept us together over all these years,” the Preacher said. “We need some money and some material things to live, but faith is what keeps us going. We teach our faith to our children so they can continue the tradition. We love one another, work together and treat everyone equally. Those are the things that keep us going.”

More information about Hutterites in South Dakota is available in an online 1966 31-page publication, “The Hutterites, South Dakota’s Communal Farmers,” by Marvin P. Riley (Associate Professor) and James R. Stewar (Graduate Assistant) at South Dakota State University. Additional information is available at www.hutterites.org.

canned pickles.

“If it’s homemade we’ll probably have it,” she said.

No ticket is needed for Bake Sale and the prices of the items will be reasonable.

Money raised from this event help the Contact Center, Women’s Shelter, Church Women United, Placerville Camp Scholarships and Youth Bibles, and a small portion will resupply the UCC kitchen. It will also help the Sack Pack program, which provides kids from low-income households food for the weekend. Also benefiting is the Angel program, which helps kids who don’t have money for school meals.

Last year, more than \$5,000 was raised from the Christmas Coffee and Bake Sale for these programs.

French encourages everyone to mark their calendar and plan to participate. She says the mark of success of

this event is seeing the smiles on people’s faces, with a lot of visiting going on.

Tickets for the coffee and pie can be purchased at the door. For more information, contact French at 665-8185.

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NY Boys Buried In Snow Pile Heard Rescuers Calling

BY MICHAEL HILL

Associated Press

NEWBURGH, N.Y. — Two boys trapped in a snow pile for about seven hours after a plow buried them could hear their worried family’s cries but couldn’t respond loudly enough to be heard, they said Friday. Police credited an air pocket with saving their lives.

The two cousins, 11-year-old Elijah Martinez and 9-year-old Jason Rivera, were building a snow fort Wednesday night across the street from Elijah’s apartment in Newburgh when a plow operator clearing a parking lot unknowingly pushed snow over them.

Buried in about 5 feet of snow, they could barely move and couldn’t breathe very well, so they could do nothing as they heard the anguished cries nearby. Jason lost his gloves. His hat flew off. They relied on each other to stay alive, they said, sharing Elijah’s face mask to try and keep their hands warm and talking to each other so they wouldn’t fall asleep.

“I felt so tired. It didn’t feel real that they were coming to get us,” Elijah said at a news conference at the hospital where the boys were recovering.

Meanwhile, their parents were growing more frantic,

calling police and searching through the snowy streets for the children who were mere feet from the apartment.

“I just kept telling myself: ‘This is not true. This is not real,’” said Jason’s mom, Auxil Martinez. “It was just scary, and as time went on, it got scarier. I was begging the police to please find them.”

Neighbor Takiaya Stevens told The Associated Press that police rallied help for the search.

“The cops were coming to all the neighbors’ houses. They were knocking on doors. They were ringing bells asking for shovels, asking for help,” she said. “The neighbors came out. Everyone tried to join in the search for the little boys.”

At about 2 a.m., Officer Brandon Rola spotted footprints that were disappearing as more snow fell. Then he saw a shovel.

“I felt led to dig,” he said. Rescuers saw the sole of a child’s boot and then motion, digging faster as residents joined in the rescue, some with their bare hands in the pile of packed, wet snow.

“When I first hit the boot, you just try and stay positive and hopeful,” Rola said. “You get that ray of hope and everybody just started working together trying to

get these kids out. And as the snow kept coming come off, you started to see more and more movement and then you started to hear the voices and it was a very great feeling.”

Rola said seeing the look of joy and hope in the boys’ faces was a terrific feeling.

The boys were conscious but suffering from exposure.

“I felt so happy,” Elijah said. “Everything we went through just fell right off my back.”

“I’m just glad they got that big block off my chest, that was heavy,” Jason said.

They were very thankful for the officer who found them. “I want him to be proud for what he did. I want him to have a good Thanksgiving, because he’s a hero,” Elijah said.

The cousins appeared healthy Friday; Jason dressed in plaid pajamas and Elijah still wearing his snow pants and a black sweatshirt with skulls. They said they wanted to eat and go to Disney World when they got home from the hospital, but Jason’s mother said she wasn’t sure when they would be discharged.

Newburgh, about 60 miles north of New York City, received more than half a foot of snow Wednesday.

Shopping

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“I’m not crazy about the whole thing,” Nelson said. “I’m just looking for some really exciting shelving. I am also going to check out the toy section for my 3-year-old.”

Jim Simpson, manager of the Kmart in Yankton, said that the store saw big sales Thursday evening.

“Thanksgiving night is when we had the most business,” he said. “Business was good up until after midnight. This morning (Friday), it started off slow, but as the day progresses, it has been getting busier.”

Several other Yankton stores were also contacted by the *Press and Dakotan*, but their spokespersons referred inquiries to corporate offices.

Though many businesses started with an early kick-off, others stuck to keeping the deals on the traditional Black Friday. Due to the good weather Friday, business was better than expected for some area stores.

Yankton’s Menards, which opened at 6 a.m., had a line of waiting customers wrapped around its parking lot. Some had been there for more than an hour.

“I’m so glad it isn’t cold,” Nelson said while she was standing in line at Menards.

The warmer weather helped out smaller downtown businesses as well.

“The weather has been quite fabulous today and people are out, so we have been busy all day,” said Cathy Clatworthy, owner of

LilyCrest, Friday afternoon.

Everyone who made a purchase at LilyCrest was able to participate in a drawing for several wares from the store.

“We have been quite busy because of it,” Clatworthy said.

Though Yankton’s Rexall Drug wasn’t a “hot spot” for Black Friday specials, Letha Gause, manager of the gift shop there, said business was very good.

“We don’t really advertise it, so it was nice that we had so many people come in,” Gause said.

She said the store’s sale on Christmas wrapping paper and box cards where a big hit.

“Though we don’t participate as much, it is still a good day because people are out and spending money, even if (items are) not on special,” she said.

For many, Black Friday was the perfect day to get most of their Christmas shopping done.

Stacy Hanson of Harlan, Iowa, has been shopping on Black Friday for the last five years and was out looking for some holiday gifts in Yankton.

“I look for the smaller, good deals,” she said. “I do most of my Christmas

shopping today.”

Shopper Sonya Wattier of Yankton said she is just looking for any deals she could find.

“I’m looking for scarves, candles — just really random stuff. Anything that is on sale, really,” she said. “It’s a rush.”

However, other shoppers admit the whole Black Friday experience is crazy.

“There are just people throwing stuff,” Hanson laughed. “It is really crazy when you get inside. There is always problems with budgeting. I have seen a couple people even push each other.”

For first-year shopper Terri Lammers of Yankton, who was standing in line for a tool set at Menards, the Black Friday adventure may have been more than she bargained for.

“I might not come back after this experience,” she laughed. “I think that this is really crazy.”

Follow Jordynne on twitter at yankton.net. Discuss this story at yankton.net.

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Bake

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“They are faithful knowing what we’ll serve them will be good. It’s nice to see people like that in the community.”

French said she enjoys this event because it brings people together. It takes a lot of people to make Christmas Coffee a success, both in working the event and in participation.

French related one such person that at the present time has cancer and is going through chemotherapy. She wouldn’t have to participate but she is willing to prepare the posters for this occasion.

There is also a bake sale that features a variety of items. Everything is homemade, ranging from breads, cookies, jams, snack mix, pastries, German kuchen and

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