

## **MENNONITE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS AT FAIRVIEW FARM DURING WWI**

*We thank the Mennonite Church USA Archives for permission to use the photos and descriptions shown in this document. The organization can be reached at <http://resources.mennoniteusa.org/executive-board/archives/>*

*This document was compiled for The Odebolt History Pages  
[www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~iaohms](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~iaohms)  
by Barb Horak, editor*

### **Background information ....**

from: <http://www.ionline.org/articles/conscientious-objection-during-world-war-i/>

In the U.S. Church denominations with long histories of peace witness (Mennonite, Amish, Hutterite, Dunkard / Church of the Brethren, Religious Society of Friends / Quaker) produced many American objectors.

... The C.O.s in World War I were sent to military camps where they had to convince officers and other officials that they were sincere in their conscientious objection to war, which, at times, resulted in abuse from the enlisted men. One unofficial source states that 3,989 men declared themselves to be conscientious objectors when they had reached the military camps: of these, 1,300 chose noncombatant service; 1,200 were given farm furloughs; 99 went to Europe to serve with the Friends Reconstruction Unit; 450 were court-martialed and sent to prison; and 940 remained in the military camps until the Armistice was fully enacted in 1918.

from: <http://www.thirdway.com/peace/?Page=1849%7CWorld+War+I>

During World War I, the government offered no alternatives to conscription; there were no provisions for employing a substitute or paying a fine. This meant that nearly 2,000 Mennonite young men were called to army camps during that period. However, by this time, the church was better prepared spiritually and intellectually to meet the test of conscription. The Selective Service Act of May 18, 1917, provided that conscientious objectors would serve as noncombatants. So-called noncombatant military service was not generally acceptable to Mennonite conscientious objectors, since noncombatants were not allowed to provide medical or humanitarian aid to the enemy side. Months of confusion and distress ensued for those conscripted and for military officials. Finally in March 1918, Congress enacted a law that opened the way for COs to provide farm labor because of the shortage of labor on farms. A Civilian Board of Inquiry was established to visit military camps and review all cases of conscientious objectors.

From: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/mennonitechurchusa-archives/15666104331/in/set-72157649039138052>

The below photos were taken by World War I Mennonite conscientious objectors on Adams Ranch (Fairview Farm) near Odebolt, Iowa. There were 47 COs there from all over the USA. "We came here from 163rd Depot Brigade Camp Dodge, Iowa in 1918, the 20th of Aug." - B. M. Ensz, Beatrice, Nebraska

## WWI MENNONITE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS - 1918



### **Mess hall and sleeping quarters at Fairview Farm near Odebolt, Iowa**

Description: Mess hall and sleeping quarters of Menn. boys on furlough at Fairview Farm near Odebolt, Iowa. Bedrooms were upstairs. Note corn wagons in foreground. Date: ca. 1917

Location: Odebolt, Iowa MLA filing: World War I -Mennonite COs (3) Original Size: 10 x 6 cm Source: Herman B. Neufeld, Newton, KS



### **Residence at Fairview Farm of Adams Ranch**

Description: Residence at Fairview Farm of Adams Ranch near Odebolt, Iowa Date: ca. 1917 Location: Odebolt, Iowa MLA filing: World War I -Mennonite COs (3) Original Size: 10 x 6 cm Source: Herman B. Neufeld, Newton, KS



**Ranch office, Fairview Farm of Adams Ranch**

Description: Ranch office, Fairview Farm of Adams Ranch near Odebolt, Iowa Date: ca. 1917

Location: Odebolt, Iowa MLA filing: World War I -Mennonite COs (3) Original Size: 10 x 6 cm

Source: Herman B. Neufeld, Newton, KS



**Residence at Fairview Farm of Adams Ranch near Odebolt, Iowa**

Description: Residence at Fairview Farm of Adams Ranch near Odebolt, Iowa Date: ca. 1917

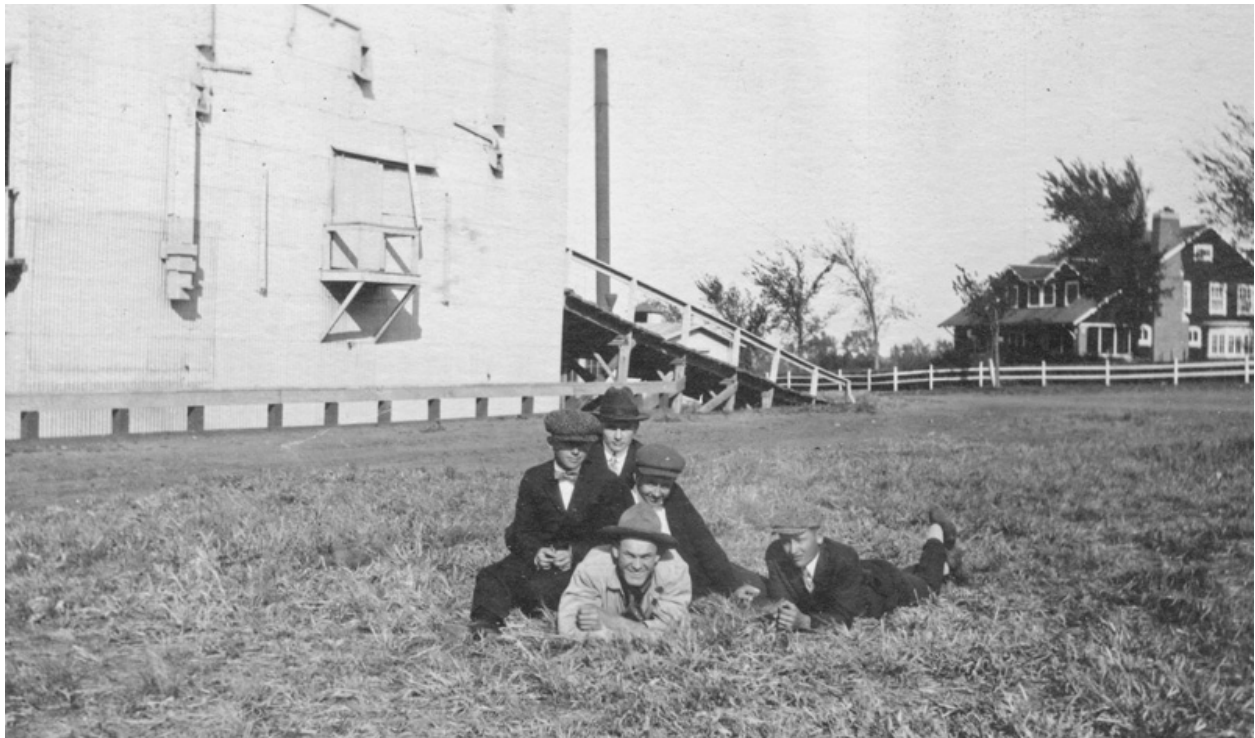
Location: Odebolt, Iowa MLA filing: World War I -Mennonite COs (3) Original Size: 10 x 6 cm

Source: Herman B. Neufeld, Newton, KS



**CO group picture at Fairview Farm near Odebolt, Iowa**

Description: CO group picture at Fairview Farm near Odebolt, Iowa. Boys had been furloughed out from Camp Dodge. Date: ca. 1917 Location: Odebolt, Iowa MLA filing: World War I -Mennonite COs (3) Original Size: 10 x 6 cm Source: Herman B. Neufeld, Newton, KS



**Mennonite boys posing in front of grain elevator on Fairview Farm near Odebolt, Iowa**

Description: Mennonite boys posing in front of grain elevator on Fairview Farm near Odebolt, Iowa Date: ca. 1917 Location: Odebolt, Iowa MLA filing: World War I -Mennonite COs (3) Original Size: 12.5 x 7.5 cm Source: Herman B. Neufeld, Newton, KS





**Neufeld and others threshing on Fairview Farm**

Description: Neufeld and other Mennonite fellows threshing on Fairview Farm Date: ca. 1917

Location: near Odebolt, Iowa MLA filing: World War I -Mennonite COs (3) Original Size: 10 x 7.5 cm

Source: Herman B. Neufeld, Newton, KS

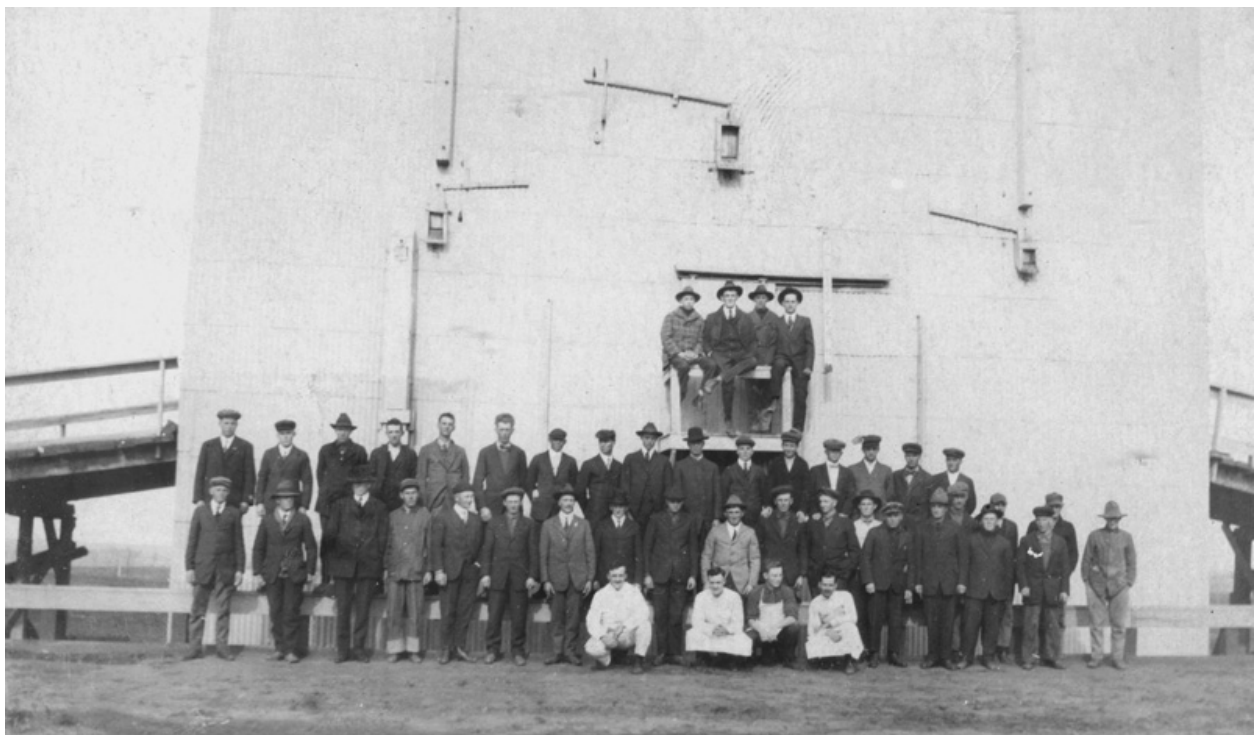


**Line of corn husking wagons on Fairview Farm near Odebolt, Iowa** Description: Line of corn husking wagons on Fairview Farm near Odebolt, Iowa. The corn was picked by hand; the wagons were pulled by mules. A good husker according to Neufeld, picked 100 bushels a day. Since he was unfamiliar with the task, Neufeld was less proficient than some. Sometimes the biggest problem was controlling the mules. Neufeld cited the case of Peter Penner, who, losing his temper at the mules, incited them to take off without him- unfortunately the reins hooked onto his pants and he lost them (his pants) too. Date: ca. 1917 Location: near Odebolt, Iowa MLA filing: World War I -Mennonite COs (3) Original Size: 10 x 6 cm Source: Herman B. Neufeld, Newton, KS



**Mennonite boys on furlough on Fairview Farm, Odebolt, Iowa**

Description: Mennonite boys on furlough on Fairview Farm, Odebolt, Iowa, Picture is taken in front of elevator on the farm. Date: ca. 1917 Location: Odebolt, Iowa MLA filing: World War I -Mennonite COs (3) Original Size: 10.5 x 6 cm Source: Herman B. Neufeld, Newton, KS



**Mennonite boys posing in front of grain elevator on Fairview Farm near Odebolt, Iowa**

Description: Mennonite boys posing in front of grain elevator on Fairview Farm near Odebolt, Iowa Date: ca. 1917 Location: Odebolt, Iowa MLA filing: World War I -Mennonite COs (3) Original Size: 12 x 7.5 cm Source: Herman B. Neufeld, Newton, KS



### **Hay and livestock barn. COs furloughed to farm work**

Description: "This is the big barn we hauled the hay in, about 124 loads a day. They had two big doors on each end. In this barn they had 150 mules and 12 horses." Date: ca. 1918 MLA filing: World War I -Mennonite COs (3) Original Size: 13 x 7 cm Source: B.M. Ensz, Beatrice, NE



### **COs chopping wood**

Description: COs furloughed to farm work. "After done hauling hay, they put us on the wood pile, this is the way it looked as we started" Date: ca. 1918 Location: Odebolt, Iowa MLA filing: World War I -Mennonite COs (3) Original Size: 12.5 x 7.5 cm Source: B.M. Ensz, Beatrice, NE



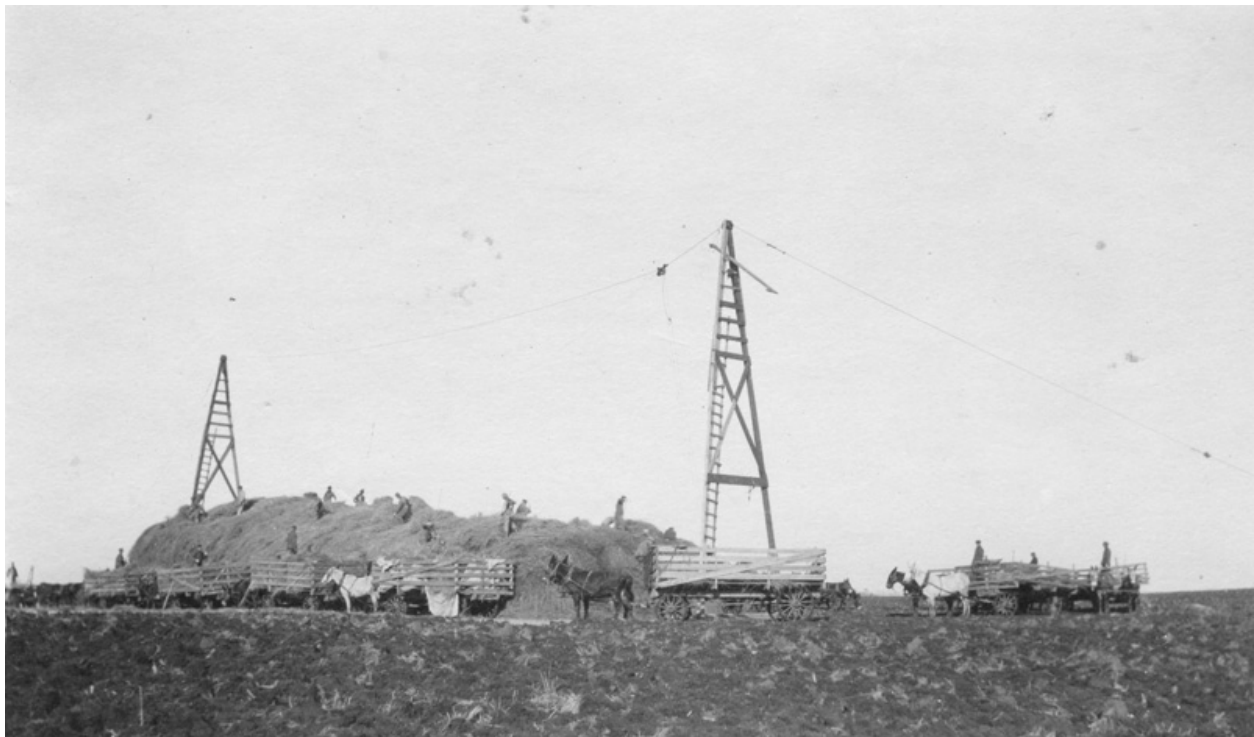


**Wood pile after COs had worked on it, Odebolt, Iowa**

Description: "This is the way the wood pile looked after we were done" Adams Ranch, Odebolt, Iowa

Date: ca. 1918 Location: Odebolt, Iowa MLA filing: World War I -Mennonite COs (3)

Original Size: 12.5 x 7.5 cm Source: B.M. Ensz, Beatrice, NE



**Hauling hay to the barn, Adams Ranch, Odebolt, Iowa**

Description: "After picking corn, we hauled hay in the big barn in the next picture (2014-0931)" Adams Ranch, Odebolt, Iowa Date: ca. 1918 Location: Odebolt, Iowa MLA filing: World War I -Mennonite COs (3) Original Size: 13 x 7.5 cm Source: B.M. Ensz, Beatrice, NE





**Bringing in wagons of corn, Odebolt, Iowa**

Description: "After plowing and repair work we picked corn-they had 125,000 bushels of corn in their cribs. We got 7 cents a bushel for picking. We picked around 50 to 80 bushels a day. For this days work we got \$1.00 a day. The rest of the money went to Red Cross" Adams Ranch, Odebolt, Iowa Date: ca. 1918 Location: Odebolt, Iowa MLA filing: World War I -Mennonite COs (3) Original Size: 6 x 10 cm Source: B.M. Ens, Beatrice, NE