

Call for Participation

Still/Moving: Stories of Low German-Speaking (Dietsche) Mennonite Women

August 26 & 27, 2016

King's University College, Western University

London, Ontario

The tension between standing still and moving has been an important part of the life of Dietsche Mennonites throughout their history. For many, a commitment to the permanence of tradition has resulted in a history of migration. Indeed, maintaining tradition, culture and language has itself been a balance of remaining and changing, staying and moving. Some have felt the limits of tradition and sought religious change while for others, tradition has been a bedrock of rich, spiritual life. Some have entered the more rapid pace of modernity and greater economic security by migrating to Canada and the United States. In all of this women have been makers and keepers of culture, using creative resourcefulness to shape their families and communities even as they shape their own lives. With their families they have moved across the Americas, and wherever they have lived, women have been central to their communities and religious life, finding their own balance between stillness and movement.

In this two-day, interactive festival, we hope to further our knowledge and experience of Low German-speaking women in order to more fully understand Dietsche culture in the tensive connection between stillness/moving, preservation/innovation. The event will bring together academic, professional, Dietsche, and community participants.

We invite proposals for participation on any topic pertaining to Dietsche women in the context of still/moving. Topics may include but are not limited to

Migrations and their effect
Religious life, including making religious change
Women bridging family and community
Women and family health
Women's roles in the family and community
The production and meaning of clothing
Women and the culinary arts
Adversity and hope in women's lives
Education, children and mothering
Dietsche and identity

We are looking for proposals for academic papers, creative and artistic presentations, and interactive activities. We encourage proposals from academics, grad students, service providers, artists, and Dietsche women. Send a short description of your presentation in 250 words or less to stillmovingkings@gmail.com. Please also specify the number of people involved, any equipment you need and space requirements. Travel subsidies may be available. Please inquire. Deadline for submissions is February 28, 2016.

This Festival is hosted by the Southwestern Ontario Research of Mennonite Women Group, a semi-formal gathering of researchers and professionals who have an ongoing interest in Dietsche migrants to Ontario.