

# MENNONITE HISTORIAN

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The Peters family, Gretna, Manitoba, 1889. David and Helena Friesen Peters seated in the centre of the picture. Photo: Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives

## The Oregon Trail of Manitoba Mennonites

by John Dyck

Some twenty-five Russian Mennonite families emigrated from Manitoba to Oregon in 1889-90, less than fifteen years after arriving in North America. The settlement which they established struggled through pioneer stages to become a strong, stable farming community. **Why leave Manitoba?**

When the Mennonites arrived in Manitoba in the mid-seventies, the government allocated twenty-five townships for their exclusive settlement. The continuing influx of settlers, to a total of some 7,000, and the land requirements of the growing families soon raised concern over a shortage of good land.

Although homestead sites were still available on the West Reserve in 1888, a strong feeling developed that the best lands had been claimed. Gretna businessman Peter Abrams reported such a demand for homesteads that anyone prepared to sell could expect as much as \$1,000 to \$2,000 for a farm (presumably a quarter section) with buildings.<sup>1</sup> Some of the free lands still available around Rosenfeld were subject to heavy spring floods and suffered from poor drainage.

Land shortage was not the only reason for

the move to Oregon. Several families gave the harsh Manitoba winters as the primary reason for leaving. "We moved here for the mild climate," wrote Jacob Kliever.<sup>2</sup> Wilhelm Vogt and Elias Bergen expressed the same sentiment, and Vogt published daily temperature readings in the *Rundschau* to underscore this point.<sup>3</sup> Later reports indicate that still other emigrants were looking for quick fortunes in the newly developing Oregon frontier.<sup>4</sup>

That the cold Manitoba climate was a serious matter for some was evident already in 1875 when Erdman Penner, in the middle of his first Canadian winter, wrote to Christian Krehbiel for advice on moving to the U.S.A.<sup>5</sup> Penner had been warned about the cold climate by his uncle, Cornelius Buhr, who came to Canada with the delegates in 1873. Now wishing he had heeded that warning, Penner expressed strong determination to go south but only to a community where he could be part of a "*wehrlose Gemeinde*." (nonresistant church)

### Why to Oregon?

Early in 1888 a letter to the *Rundschau* extolled the mild climate and fertile soil in

Oregon.<sup>6</sup> The writer, John Gerber, had moved from Ohio to Kansas and then in 1886 to Oregon. There he joined other Mennonites from South Dakota and Kansas who had first moved to Polk County in 1882 and had organized a congregation under the leadership of J.R. Schrag. Gerber's letter evoked considerable interest among Manitoba Mennonites and by spring "Oregon fever" was reported in some communities.<sup>7</sup>

When Gerber, responding to many personal inquiries, quoted current land prices (\$10-20 per acre for bush land; \$25-35 for mountain land; and \$40-75 for premium land in the Willamette Valley) the fever abated somewhat.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, two delegates were commissioned to inspect farming opportunities there.

### Delegations to Oregon

"Oregon fever still rules there," wrote Jacob Wiens of Hoffnungsfield after a visit to Edenburg near Gretna.<sup>9</sup> He reported that David Peters, owner of Peters Milling Co. in Gretna, had left for Oregon in spring as elected delegate to explore settlement opportunities in the southwest. Only one early report on this delegation was published.<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile, more settlers from other U.S. communities arrived in Oregon and reported favorably on the land and climate.<sup>11</sup> In Manitoba a second delegation was chosen, headed by another Gretna businessman, Klaas Peters.<sup>12</sup> This group, which included Jacob Wiens of Edenburg and Cornelius Eidse of Rosenhoff travelling at their own expense, left by train in spring of 1889 to explore settlement opportunities in western Canada as well as in Oregon.<sup>13</sup> The warm welcome extended to this delegation by *Ältester* Schrag when they arrived there on Pentecost, and their participation in several worship services, added to their favorable impressions of Oregon.

Upon their return a month later, Klaas Peters reported at length in the *Rundschau*.<sup>14</sup> His account reports in detail on their visit to Lethbridge and Medicine Hat, where good homestead lands were still available, as well as on their later stops in the U.S.A. He concluded with this glowing tribute to the region:

All the dear brothers with whom we talked were very happy to be in a region where everything pleased them so well. And not only them but it pleased us there as well, for the fruitfulness of the land is outstanding. Much of the wheat stood the height of a man and waved its heavy heads back and forth. Cattle grazing in the deep grass looked better than any I have seen elsewhere. The trees were so full of fruit that

(cont'd on page 2)

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the branches hung down heavily. ... All this beauty and the grandeur of the vegetation can be attributed not only to the fruitful soil of the Willamette Valley but also to the beautifully mild climate.<sup>15</sup>

In spite of this enthusiasm, Peters' final recommendation cautioned those without the means to purchase established farms against venturing too far west. He pointed out that good land was also available in Assiniboia (now Saskatchewan and Alberta) where the Canadian government was still offering free homesteads.

#### The Emigration Begins

The Peter Redekopp family of Edenburg was the first from Manitoba to settle in Oregon, probably in early 1889.<sup>16</sup> The Wilhelm Vogts left Gretna in August by rail, bound for Dallas, Oregon. There he joined his friend, Henry Grup of Marion, Iowa, to purchase a homestead.<sup>17</sup> Next month the family followed, having sold some of their possession by public auction. In October they were joined by the Franz Kliewers of Neuanlage, the Jacob Wiens of Edenburg, and the Cornelius Hieberts and Gerhard Brauns of Gretna. Kliewer, former secretary-treasurer of the Municipality of Douglas and member of the Gretna school organizing committee, was able to sell his two quarter sections of land at \$12 and \$18 per acre.<sup>18</sup>

In November the Jacob Penners of Schanzenfeld and the Elias Bergens of Hoffnungs-feld left Manitoba. The Jacob Dycks and Isaak Penners of Schanzenfeld indicated their intention to go to Oregon in the fall, Penners selling their farm in anticipation of the move. They were joined by widower David Unger of Hochstadt, East Reserve.<sup>19</sup> By the end of the month Wilhelm Vogt reported that there were now 26 German families, mostly Mennonite, around Dallas.<sup>20</sup>

The following made the move in 1890: the Johann Quiring family of Edenburg,<sup>21</sup> together with Johann's father, widower Heinrich Quiring, and his son Heinrich and wife Helena; the Peter Vogt (son of Wilhelm Vogt) and Peter Hiebert families;<sup>22</sup> Heinrich Esau of Hochstadt;<sup>23</sup> the Jacob Loewen family of Silberfeld;<sup>24</sup> the David Peters family of Gretna (head of the 1888 delegation);<sup>25</sup> David Redekopp of Schanzenfeld;<sup>26</sup> and David Unger, jr. of Hochstadt.<sup>27</sup>

David Peters had served as chairman of the new school association in Gretna.<sup>28</sup> His move, and that of several other active members of the association, meant that the new community in Oregon would give early attention to education. Already there were 21 children of school age among the Manitoba settlers. In October classes began in a new school of the Franz Kliewer farm.<sup>29</sup>

#### Return to Canada

During the next half dozen years the majority of the emigrants to Oregon returned to Canada, some to their former homes in



The Johann Quiring Family.

Manitoba and others to new settlements in Saskatchewan and Alberta.

The first came in summer of 1890: Jacob Wiens, buying back his former farm in Edenburg, and Isaac Penner, formerly of Schanzenfeld.<sup>30</sup> Jacob Loewen hoped to be back by Christmas.<sup>31</sup>

Their return sparked a controversy about the entire emigration. "They simply were not pleased with the conditions there and they are most grateful to be back again where they can grow No. 1 hard wheat," wrote Julius Siemens in Manitoba.<sup>32</sup> From Oregon Jacob Kliewer responded: "Most moved here with the thought of doing little work and still becoming rich quickly; because it doesn't work that way ... they moved back. ... We moved here for the mild climate, which we have also had."<sup>33</sup> And Elias Bergen added that some had been disturbed by their unaccustomed neighbours who were mostly English speaking.<sup>34</sup>

At least two, Jacob Penner<sup>35</sup> and Elizabeth (Goertz), the widow of Abram Vogt, returned to Manitoba to remarry when their first spouse died. Some families did not return to Manitoba but went directly to new settlements such as Duck Lake and Carrot River in Saskatchewan. Perhaps they found the closed Mennonite communities in Manitoba too confining after living in a mixed settlement in Oregon.

(To be concluded)

*John Dyck is a businessman and freelance researcher in Winnipeg.*

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Mennonitische Rundschau, 9 May 1888.

<sup>2</sup>Der Nordwesten, 9 February 1890.

<sup>3</sup>Rundschau, 26 February 1890.

<sup>4</sup>Letter, 15 January 1875, Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives, microfilm #62.

<sup>5</sup>Rundschau, 24 February 1888.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 2 May 1888.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 18 April 1888.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 23 May 1888.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 13 June 1888.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 27 June 1888.

<sup>11</sup>Johann Becker, *ibid.*, 10 October 1888; Gottlieb Stumpp, Idaho, reported land prices from \$7-10 per acre, *ibid.*, 19 December 1888.

<sup>12</sup>See Leonard Doell in Klaas Peters, *The Berghaler Mennonites*, (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1988), pp. 48-49.

<sup>13</sup>Rundschau, 5 June 1889.

<sup>14</sup>Four installments, *ibid.*, 17 July to 7 August 1889.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 7 August 1889

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 18 September 1889.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 11 December 1889.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 13 November 1889.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 5 February 1890.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 11 December 1889.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 29 January 1890.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 19 February 1890.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 26 March 1890.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 14 May 1890.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 23 April 1890.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 11 June 1890.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 26 March 1890.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 15 January 1890.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 12 March 1890.

<sup>30</sup>Nordwesten, 22 July 1890.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 5 December 1890.

<sup>32</sup>Rundschau, 13 August 1890.

<sup>33</sup>Nordwesten, 19 February 1891.

<sup>34</sup>Rundschau, 18 March 1891.

<sup>35</sup>Letter, Gerhard Rempel to Isaac Loewen, 12 April 1896, MHC Archives, microfilm #44.

## Canada's First Mennonite Brethren Church at Winkler, Manitoba *(Continued from June 1988 issue)*

by Arnie Neufeld

But in spite of encouraging signs, the work was not without opposition and difficulties. In the summer of 1887 Voth was again able to baptize new believers. One couple was very disturbed to see their married children re-baptized, and that by immersion. They insisted that their grandchildren be taken from the parents and placed into their home for a period of time.

On another occasion Voth was conducting a service in the home of the Abram Kroekers in Hoffnungsfeld. Suddenly three men entered, intending to seize Voth and take him back to the American border. However, when the service came to an end, one of the three was converted and the other two left for home quietly.<sup>14</sup>

Voth's ministry in Manitoba was drawing to a close by late 1887. He returned to serve his "congregation" again in December. Word had been received that Gerhard Wiebe, an ordained Mennonite Brethren minister from Russia, was soon to arrive. Wiebe, whose mother lived in Manitoba, would be able to give much needed instruction, leadership and nurture to the fledgling congregation. Although Voth would continue to make occasional visits to Manitoba, and though his influence would be felt for years to come, he could now look back to several years of intensive missionary service, knowing that his efforts and labors had not been in vain.

The congregation was formally organized as Canada's first Mennonite Brethren Church and conducted its first official membership meeting (*Bruderberatung*) on January 12, 1888. A recording secretary was appointed, a mission fund was established and matters of ethical concern (like the practice of smoking) were discussed. The group also laid plans to construct a church building in the Burwalde district, and together pledged a total sum of 275 dollars.

A dynamic spirit of mission and outreach would continue to characterize the young church. Representatives of the church would travel to the East Reserve, North Dakota, and Saskatchewan with the aim of sharing the gospel with those who needed to hear. Daughter congregations were established at Grossweide, north of Plum Coulee, and at Kronsgart, about 10 miles north-east of Winkler. By 1895 the total Mennonite Brethren membership had reached 84; by 1924 it had grown to 324.

There were other significant developments. In 1897 the church building was relocated to Winkler and, later in the same year, a new structure was built. Also in 1897 the Winkler congregation hosted the first North American Mennonite Brethren convention held in Canada. At this conference delegates commissioned the first foreign missionary couple, the N.N. Hieberts, to serve under the new autonomous Mennonite Brethren mission board.

In 1895 the responsibilities of leadership

were entrusted to David Dyck, one of the original Mennonite Brethren missionaries to visit Manitoba in 1884. When Dyck moved to Saskatchewan in 1906, former school teacher Johann Warkentin was chosen as the new leader. He served the congregation until 1931. Warkentin was an enthusiastic promoter of evangelism and was largely responsible for the creation of a new fellowship group in the City of Winnipeg in 1908.

Various programs and agencies were also organized in the church during its early years. A Sunday School was in operation by 1889, a choir was formed in 1904, and the *Jugendverein* started in 1894. The Winkler Bible School was founded in Winkler by A.H. Unruh in 1925 and also made a very significant contribution to the life of the church and the larger community.

Until 1929 Winkler had the largest Mennonite Brethren congregation in Canada. A host of pastors, missionaries and other church workers would leave the community to serve the Lord in a variety of ministries and assignments around the world.

Many have continued to live in the community and are still able to serve the Master in the community, in their homes and places of employment. A spacious new sanctuary and Christian Education complex was completed in 1988 in time for the Canadian Convention and special centennial celebrations for this year.

From a small group of dedicated followers of Jesus, living in a world of change, tensions and opportunities, the church has continued to grow in maturity, numbers and influence. Like the New Testament church, the Winkler Mennonite Brethren congregation has literally seen its testimony and witness extended to the ends of the earth.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> J.F. Galbraith, *The Mennonites in Manitoba, 1875-1900*. (Morden, Man.: The Chronicle Press, 1900), p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada, 1786-1920*. (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1974), p. 287.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> See E.K. Francis, *In Search of Utopia: The Mennonites in Manitoba*. (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1955).

<sup>5</sup> Helen Janzen, "Memoirs of my Father, Abram Janzen" in *Manitoba Mennonite Memories: A Century Past but Not Forgotten*. Ed. by Julius Toews and Lawrence Klippenstein. (Altona, Man.: Julius Toews, 1974), p. 89.

<sup>6</sup> Epp, *Mennonites in Canada*, p. 289.

<sup>7</sup> Henry J. Gerbrandt, *Adventure in Faith. The Background in Europe and Development in Canada of the Bergthaler Church of Manitoba*. (Altona, Man.: Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Manitoba, 1970), p. 104.



Johann Warkentin (1859-1948). Early leader of the Winkler MB Church from 1906-1931. Warkentin was largely responsible for beginning the City Mission in Winnipeg which resulted in the North End MB Church, the first Mennonite congregation in Winnipeg.

Photo: Centre for MB Studies

<sup>8</sup> Francis, *In Search of Utopia*, p. 262.

<sup>9</sup> Gerbrandt, *Adventure*, p. 79.

<sup>10</sup> Victor Adrian, "Born of Anabaptism and Pietism" in *Mennonite Brethren Herald*, 26 March, 1965, pp. 2-3.

<sup>11</sup> Johann Warkentin, "Die Entstehung der M.B. Gemeinde in Manitoba: Aufzeichnungen" in Frank Brown, ed., *Mennonite Brethren Church, Winkler, Manitoba, 1888-1963*. (Winkler: M.B. Church, 1963), p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> Jacob A. Froese, *Witness Extraordinary, A Biography of Elder Heinrich Voth, 1851-1918*. (Winnipeg: MB Board of Christian Literature, 1975), p. 18.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>14</sup> Frank Brown, *A History of the Town of Winkler, Manitoba, 1892-1973*. (Winkler: The Author, 1973), p. 176.

<sup>15</sup> Arnie Neufeld, "A Brief History of the Horndean Mennonite Brethren Church" in *Horndean Heritage*. (Winkler: Horndean Reunion Committee, 1984), pp. 138-147.

<sup>16</sup> Arnie Neufeld, "The Origin and Early Growth of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Southern Manitoba," A Master's thesis completed at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California, 1977. pp. 186-189.

Arnie Neufeld was ordained to the ministry by the Winkler Mennonite Brethren Church in 1981. At present he is serving as Leading Pastor in the Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Winkler, Manitoba.

## Donor Acknowledgement

We are pleased to acknowledge those who have generously given to support the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives programs. Their support and patronage make the continued growth of our resources possible. The list below includes all those who made a donation between March 15 and August 31, 1988. Our donations, as of August 31, total /2,945.19.

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Mary Dyck, Chilliwack  
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Ernest Hiebert, Gainesville, Florida  
Linda Gehman Peachey, Lancaster, Pennsylvania  
Margaret Tiessen, Redford, Michigan

## REFLECTIONS ON COLLECTIONS

### The Sudermann Family Collection

by Jim Suderman

The Sudermann collection has the artwork of Jacob Sudermann as its centrepiece. Born in 1888, near Nikopol, Ukraine, Sudermann attended the Chortitza Zentralschule and later studied mathematics and physics in St. Petersburg (present-day Leningrad). From 1923 to 1933 he taught at the Chortitza Paedtechnikum (teachers' college). He was arrested in 1933 and, except for a few months, spent the rest of his life in prison or exiled. Moscow authorities indicated that he died in 1940.

Jacob Sudermann's interest in architecture resulted in several detailed drawings of interest to historians and art-lovers alike. One booklet contains floor plans and exterior views, drawn to scale, of the oldest house in Rosenthal, built in 1796. Included are details of door and joint construction and base- and ceiling-trim boards. The value of such a work to those studying the early domestic life of the Russian Mennonite colonies is considerable.

A second booklet includes a portfolio on a country house, created by Sudermann in 1920. Pictures include detailed pencil sketches and colored interior views, colored exterior view, interior floor plans drawn to scale, and cut-away views.

Three original paintings are also included in the collection and show Sudermann's natural talent along with indications that he studied artistic technique. His favored medium appears to have been some sort of water color on paper stock.

The remainder of the collection is dominated by Anna Sudermann's memoirs, a 408-page document, type-written in German. Anna, 1893-1970, was Jacob's sister, and lived, most recently, in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Her memoir is a detailed and personal document, of great value to those studying the history of the Mennonites in Ukraine in the first half of this century.

There are three collections of photographs related to the collection. The first group (collection #334) has a rare interior view of the Chortitza Church in 1930, as well as photos of baptismal groups in Prussian Stargard, 1944. The other two collections (#328 and 336) contain photos of original works by Jacob Sudermann, which had been loaned to the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery.

## MHCA Conservation News

Late in March of this year the Manitoba Heritage Conservation Service's "Preservation Action Project" reached the Heritage Centre. The Service was represented by Karen Myrholm and Jane Dalley.

During the course of the three-day visit, several documents were encapsulated, a storage area was created for over-size photographs, the storage of vellum and parchment was discussed, and a conservation policy, tailored to the needs of the Heritage Centre, was discussed.

The largest project was the cleaning, humidifying and repairing of a large map of an estate near Ekaterinoslav (prior to the Revolution) from the Kathe Hoooge collection.

The time and materials were all provided courtesy of the MHCS. The Heritage Centre would like to express its deep appreciation for the assistance of the Conservation Service.



Heinz Fast and Gwen Enns, students at CMBC, completed a ten-week Career-start grant program at MHC archives this summer. They served as archival assistants in various aspects of work in the Centre.



## MHC Gallery Notes

A new exhibition of paintings by Peter von Kampen of Winnipeg was mounted on September 17. It will continue into November.

Persons interested in exhibiting materials for shorter or longer periods are invited to phone the Centre at (204) 888-6781.

Gallery hours are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and 1-6 p.m. Sunday.

## Film Series Heavily Booked

The film series entitled *The Mennonite Brethren Church a Missionary Movement* has seen considerable use this summer and the Canadian copies are solidly booked for the months of September, October and November. Congregations from across Canada are utilizing the film for their fall missions conferences and festivals.

Bookings for the new year are presently being accepted by the Centre for MB Studies in Winnipeg. Already the months of January and February are almost filled.

With some four sets of the film series for rental by congregations and schools, the Centre for MB Studies underestimated the extensive demand for these films. The Historical Commission of the Mennonite Brethren Churches of North America plans to have VHS copies of the films available for sale early in the new year. It is hoped that congregations will purchase video cassettes of the films and use them in baptismal classes as well as in Sunday School classes.

If your congregation would like to rent these films for showings in the new year please contact the Centre to arrange rental dates. Cost of rental is \$25.00/film.

## First Volume of *Rundschau* Index Completed

The first volume of the index to the *Mennonitische Rundschau* has been completed. The index does not begin with the year of 1880, when the paper actually began, but rather in 1920, the beginning of the decade which saw the large migration of Mennonites from the Soviet Union. The completed volume contains entries for the years 1920-1929. The volume will be going to press shortly and it is hoped that it will be available before the end of the calendar year.

## Mennonite Piano Concerto

The Centre for MB Studies still has some copies left of the music for 2 pianos 4 hands of the Mennonite Piano Concerto. Copies of the music are available for \$18.00/copy plus \$2.00 postage. The music can be played by anyone who has attained at least a grade eight level in piano.

The Concerto is still a popular piece of music. Dueck Films of Winnipeg, producers of the original recording, recently indicated that to date they have sold some 15,000 copies of the recording.

## Request for Old Photographs

The Centre for MB Studies has, over the years, received many photographs depicting the life and activities of Mennonites in Canada, South America and the Soviet Union. An index to some 6,000 or more of these photographs was completed several years ago.

However, over the years more and more collections of photographs have been located which contain photographs of interest to historians, genealogists and individuals interested in the history of Mennonites in Canada and Russia. But in many cases the families who hold these collections are not willing to give them to the archives for preservation. The photographs, understandably, have personal, sentimental value.

In order to develop a better method of preserving and obtaining photographs of historic value the Centre for MB Studies is beginning a program whereby such photographs will be copied and the negatives stored in the Centre for safe-keeping. Copies of the photographs can then be made from the negatives either for family members or, if the family gives permission, for other interested individuals.

To aid in this program a grant was received by the Centre for MB Studies from the Provincial Government, under the Archives Capital Facilities Grants Programme, to enable the Centre to purchase the proper camera equipment for copying archival photographs. The Centre wishes to express its appreciation to the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation, the Honourable Bonnie Mitchelson, for providing this grant.

The equipment will not be installed and operating until the middle of October. However, individuals with photographic collections who would wish to have them preserved may contact the Centre at any time to make arrangements as to when their photographs can be copied.

## Evening Hours for Archives

Commencing September 13, 1988 the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies will be open every Tuesday evening from 6:00 PM to 9:30 PM. The general public is invited to make use of these evening hours. The Tuesday evening schedule will be maintained until the end of April 1989.



## Centennial Issue of *MB Herald* Available

The May 27, 1988 issue of the *Mennonite Brethren Herald* was devoted entirely to the Mennonite Brethren congregations comprising the Canadian Conference of MB Churches. Departing from its usual format this issue contained a brief historical overview of each provincial conference as well as a photograph and an historical sketch of each Mennonite Brethren Congregation in Canada.

The issue in many ways is a pictorial introduction to and history of the Mennonite Brethren Church of Canada. Sensing its long-term use the Centennial Committee requested that several hundred extra copies of this issue be printed. They are available from the Centre for MB Studies for \$2.50 each — this includes postage. Please send your request for extra copies to the Centre.

## News Notes

The April, 1988 issue of the *Bulletin of the MB Historical Society of the West Coast* features an article titled, "Hidden Treasure in Colorado: The Family Records of the Joes MB Church." The first leaders of this congregation were Heinrich Berghold and David Dyck, who later pioneered in the formation of the MB church in Manitoba.

The Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren Churches in Ontario's Niagara Peninsula have organized a thanksgiving festival for those who came to Canada during the 1920s and later. The event will be held Sept. 24-25 at Eden Christian College, Niagara-on-the-Lake. Speakers will be Peter Dyck of Akron, pa. and John Redekop of Waterloo, Ont.

## GENEALOGY AND FAMILY HISTORY

by Alf Redekopp

### Family Newsletters

In the March issue of the *Mennonite Historian* the Klippenstein family newsletter, entitled *Klippings*, was briefly reviewed. Several other publications of this nature recently appeared.

In January 1988, the first issue of *The Harder Family Review* was published. This eight-page newsletter, scheduled to appear four times a year over the next six years, is a unique way of publishing a family history. Each chapter in the story is represented by another issue, an entire family history in 24 installments. The themes of the first two issues were: The Migration from Netherlands to Poland and the Migration from West Prussia to South Russia. The common ancestor of those to whom this newsletter is addressed, is Johann Harder (1765-1826), who left Kaldau, West Prussia in 1803 and settled in Blumstein, Molotschna in South Russia in 1804. Some of his descendants include such people as, Johann Harder (1811-1875), the Elder of the large Orloff-Halbstadt Mennonite Church, Bernhard Harder (1832-1884), a poet, teacher and evangelist, and Abraham A. Harder (1866-1941), founder of the Grossweide Orphanage. Present descendants in America include those who trace their ancestry back to the 1874 immigrant, Johann Harder (1836-1930), as well as others who descend from immigrants of the 1920s and later, who settled in Ontario and British Columbia. One of the scheduled issues will feature the "Latest exodus from Russia, 1979: The Story of Franz Harder (1929- )". Copies of *The Harder Family Review* can be obtained from editor Leland Harder, Box 363, North Newton, KS 67117 USA.

A book, entitled *Flashback*, recently received at the Centre for MB Studies, compiled and edited by Herman A. Neufeld of Van Nuys, California consists of Neufeld family newsletters circulated between October 1959 and December 1976. What was life like in the typical family in North America during the 1960s and 70s? *Flashback* records events in the life of the children and grandchildren of John Herman Neufeld (1903-1983) of Winnipeg, and may answer that question. The many photographs and other graphics greatly enhance this publication.

### Queries

**Alexanderheim:** Information wanted about the MB Church and GIESBRECHT and WIENSZ families from this village in a district near Pavlograd. Contact: Albert Ratzlaff, 15785 Hwy. 22, Dallas, Oregon 97338.

**Enns:** ABRAHAM GERHARD ENNS b. Feb. 8, 1834 in Entigenbrunn or Saribasch, d. Oct. 17, 1906 in Petrovka, Orenburg, m. ANNA DURKSEN b. Oct. 29, 1841 d. Dec. 13, 1901. Enns was a blacksmith and moved to the Crimea at some time. Anna's parents were linen weavers. With further information contact: Margaret Neufeldt (nee Enns), 302)32025 Tims Ave., Clearbrook, BC V2T 2H3.

**Goerzen:** SARA GOERZEN, daughter of David Goerzen and granddaughter of Johann Goerzen, married JACOB LOEWEN and came to America. Any information about them would be appreciated by Kathy Peters, R.R. 2, Didsbury, Alberta T0M 0W0.

**Klippenstein:** JOHANN KLIPPENSTEIN b. May 1, 1845, possibly in Alexanderwohl d. Dec. 15, 1913 in Petrovka, Siberia or Lichtfelde, m. HELENA WALL b. Dec. 28, 1855 in Lichtfelde, S.Russia d. Dec. 17, 1932 in Taschkent. Any information about these would be appreciated by Margaret Neufeldt, 302)32025 Tims Ave., Clearbrook, BC V2T 2H3.

**Penner:** FRANZ PENNER, Rudnerweide, Molotschna may have settled in Western Canada around the turn of the century. His brother CORNELIUS C. PENNER lived in Dalmeny, SK until 1910 and died near Dallas, OR in 1915. Information about any PENNER families from RUDNERWEIDE would be appreciated by Albert Ratzlaff, 15785 Hwy. 22, Dallas, Oregon 97338.

**Schwandt:** The WILHELM SCHWANDT family (wife Wilhelmine; Bertha b. 1870, Herman b. 1874, William b. 1879, Gustav b. 1881, Paul b. 1884), German Lutherans from Emilienthal West Prussia lived at or near GRETNA, Manitoba 1884-1888 before moving to Strasbourg, Saskatchewan to homestead there. A baby Ludwig was born at village Kronsthal Dec. 24, 1886; midwife Mrs. Enns, registered with Franz Kliewer then municipal clerk. Any information on this family's stay in Manitoba should be directed to John Schwandt, 11 Goldthorpe Crescent, Winnipeg, MB R2N 3C9.

### Genealogy Workshop

The Manitoba Genealogical Society Inc. is sponsoring a seminar in Brandon, Manitoba on October 14-16, 1988 with keynote speakers Ronald Bremer and Bruce Elliot. Sessions include a mixture of Irish, English, American and Eastern European research information. For further information contact the Manitoba Genealogical Society Inc., 167 Lombard Ave., Winnipeg, Canada. Phone 204-944-1153.

### Russian Mennonite Bicentennial Genealogy Workshop

#### When:

October 15, 1988, 8:30-3:30

#### Where:

Mennonite Heritage Centre,  
600 Shaftesbury Blvd.  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

#### Speaker:

Alan Peters, Fresno, California

#### Theme:

"Sources for Studying Prussian  
Mennonite Roots"

For further information contact Anne Unruh, Conference of Mennonites in Canada, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3P 0M4, Canada. Phone 204-888-6781

### Recently Published Genealogies

Durksen, Peter J., ed., *The Life Stories of Durksen, Duerksen, Derksen and also Doerksen*. Guelph, ON: Private Publication, 1985. 147 pp.

Friesen, T.E., ed., *Genealogy of Bernhard Krahn (1847-1930) and Helena Peters (1849-1919)*. Altona, MB: Private Publication, 1988. Loose-leaf, 100 pp.

Klassen, Harold P., ed. *The History and Genealogy of the Unruh Family, 1783 to 1987*. Victoria, BC: Private Publication, 1988. Looseleaf, 190 pp.

Mierau, Thomas B., ed., *The Johann Klippenstein and Helena Kroeker Family History and Genealogy*. Wichita, KS: Fairview Books, 1986. Pb., 392 pp.

Neufeld, Hermann A., ed., *Mary Neufeld and the Repphun Story, from the Molotschna to Manitoba*. North Hollywood, CA: The Carole Joyce Gallery, 1987. Hdc., 234 pp.

Redekopp, Alfred H., *Jacob Thielmann and Helena Kroeker: A Family History and Genealogy of their Descendants*. 2nd Edition. Winnipeg, MB: Private Publication, 1988. Pb. 314 pp.

Sawatsky, Reynold, ed., *Out from the Prairie. The History of the Family of Jacob and Cornelia (Klassen) Sawatsky*. Private Publication, 1987. Pb., 106 pp.

## The Early Doell Family

By Glenn Penner

The first Mennonite Doell<sup>1</sup> and, to my knowledge, the forefather of all Mennonite Doells was Peter Doell. He was baptized into the Flemish Mennonite church in Danzig, West Prussia, on July 3, 1689. According to the Danzig church records<sup>2</sup> he was baptized "in Holland". This suggests that he was either sent to the Netherlands by his parents to be educated and baptized or that he was originally non-Mennonite and had to move from Danzig to the Netherlands in order to be baptized into the Mennonite church. Local Prussian laws often prohibited the conversion and baptism of non-members by the Mennonite church. On October 24, 1691 his wife (name unknown) died. He married Sara Steffan on December 26, 1692. Peter Doell died on September 15, 1709. The next year his son Peter Doell II was baptized into the Danzig church. Sara Doell (nee Steffan) died on July 14, 1746.

Peter Doell II married Anna Berg on November 15, 1711. He died in 1749. Five children of Peter Doell II are known: Heinrich (1718-1789), Anna (17..-1758), Peter III (1716-1789), Daniel (17..-1757), and Susanna (17..-1751). Peter Doell II and his family lived in Schidlitz, a suburb of the city of Danzig. Son Heinrich moved to the village of Tiegenhof where he was a weaver<sup>3</sup>. Son Daniel died a bachelor.

Peter Doell III was born on September 20, 1716 and married Maria Berg (1717-1749) on October 15, 1747. She died on September 22, 1749. Peter III remarried on April 23, 1753 to Maria Lehn (1732-1789). Five children of this

(cont'd on page 7)

## David G. Rempel Visits Winnipeg

It was a very pleasant privilege to have Dr. David G. Rempel of Menlo Park, California, with us some weeks ago. He joined relatives in an enjoyable family reunion of the Bernhard Pauls descendants, held at the CMBC campus, Winnipeg.

Many people have come to know Dr. Rempel as a person deeply interested in Russian/Ukrainian Mennonite research, a topic on which he has done much work, and published extensively. Dr. Rempel's counsel on archival aspects of research has been much treasured also.

Now, nearly 90, yet in relatively good health, Dr. Rempel was able to give a good deal of energy to visiting, to a lecture for the family, and to visits with friends, as well as the Mennonite Heritage Village during his time here. We are most grateful that he could come and hope that our contacts can continue in the years ahead.



Dr. David Rempel with Ken Reddig, MB archivist, in front of the Johann Bartsch monument at the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach, Manitoba.

(cont'd from page 6)

marriage survived to adulthood: Maria (1753-?), Anna (1759-?), Peter IV (1760-1833), Heinrich (1770-?) and Elisabeth (1776-?). Peter Doell III died on June 10, 1789.

Peter Doell IV was born on November 20, 1760. On May 1, 1788 he married Anna Kasdorf (1760-1844) of Stoltzenberg, Prussia. It was Peter IV who made the move from Prussia to Russia sometime between 1792 and 1794. He settled in Neuenburg in the Chortiza Colony, Russia<sup>5</sup>. Peter Doell IV died on October 28, 1833.

Many descendants of Peter Doell IV moved to Manitoba in the 1870s and their descendants have, in turn, spread throughout North and South America.

### Sources

<sup>1</sup>The name has been spelled Doell, Dill, Dell and Dyll.

<sup>2</sup>Danzig Mennonite church records: Deaths 1667-1808; Marriages 1665-1808; Baptisms 1667-18083.

<sup>3</sup>Tieghagen Mennonite church records 1781-1944.

<sup>4</sup>"Ein Mennoniten Verzeichnis aus dem Jahre 1776" in *Die Ost- und Westpreußischen Mennoniten* by Horst Penner, 1978.

<sup>5</sup>B.H. Unruh, *Die Niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der Mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16. 18. und 19. Jahrhundert.* (Karlsruhe-Rueppurr, 1955).

Glenn Penner is a researcher at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, with a Ph.D. in Chemistry. We look forward to further articles by him on various early Mennonite families.

## The Hillsboro MB Church: Centre of the MB World

by Wes Prieb

The story is often told of Mennonite immigrants who were coming to North America from Russia, and were passing through New York City. Upon gazing at the skyline in New York harbour they are reported to have said, "If this is New York, what must Hillsboro be like?"

Hillsboro was never very large. At its largest it may have reached a population of 3,000 people or so. Yet, for over half of this century, the Hillsboro Mennonite Brethren Church, in Kansas, was the centre of Mennonite Brethren leadership in North America.

The congregation in this small community has an origin that is quite different from that of most Mennonite Brethren congregations. All but two of its charter members came from Poland, not South Russia. They came to Marion County not as Mennonite Brethren, but as European Mennonites. But they shared a common Dutch ancestry with their cousins in South Russia. Their "Mennonite Moses" was Wilhelm Ewert, who helped fifty families from several villages on the Vistula River near Warsaw to find new homes in the French Creek territory in Marion County between 1874-1880.

The French Creek revival was not started by Mennonite Brethren, but began under the direction of a General Conference school-teacher, Johann Harms. Harms taught children during the day and conducted Bible studies with adults during the evening. Through his leadership a revival began and many people experience renewal and conversion. Elder Jacob Wiebe of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Church helped conduct Sunday services.

Later, Abraham Schellenberg, a Mennonite Brethren leader from Buhler, Kansas, was invited by Harms to help organize a new church. Some converts joined the KMB congregation, others aligned with the General Conference church, and thirty-four, after baptism by immersion, formed a new Mennonite Brethren congregation under the leadership of Johann Harms.

This new congregation, after meeting in houses, barns and schoolhouses in the French Creek territory, moved to the town of Hillsboro after the railroad was built. It remained a small congregation until Tabor College was built in 1908 and the Mennonite Brethren Publishing House was moved to Hillsboro in 1913. Suddenly this little church became the nerve centre of the Mennonite Brethren Conference in North America. For nearly half a century it offered leadership in a variety of Mennonite Brethren ministries: education, missions, Mennonite Central Committee and world relief, home missions, publications, to name several.

Quickly this church with Polish origins became a new kind of Mennonite Brethren church eventually reaching a membership of more than 800. The remarkable growth of this congregation in the setting of a relatively small village was bolstered by several factors.

To begin with, the educational leaders of the Ebenfeld Mennonite Brethren Church, located southeast of Hillsboro, moved to town as Tabor College developed. Then some of the members of the Gnadenu KMB congregation south of the town, who helped develop hospitals, orphanages and rest homes, moved to Hillsboro as well and joined the Mennonite Brethren Church.

The tradesmen, craftsmen and businessmen of the French Creek territory eventually brought their business and trade skills to town also. Here they found a church home with the Hillsboro MB congregation. Finally, a number of German Lutherans and Baptists, already living in Hillsboro, joined the church.

With several gifted conference leaders within their midst, and the mix of various religious and ethnic groups, the church became an exciting and dynamic leader in the Mennonite Brethren conference, providing leadership for the broad spectrum of ministries for nearly half a century.

A history of this congregation was written and released in January, 1988. The writer is Orlando Harms, formerly editor of the Christian Leader, the US Mennonite Brethren church periodical. Entitled *The Journey of a Church*, the book is available through the Centre for MB Studies in Hillsboro, Kansas, and the Centre for MB Studies in Winnipeg, Canada.

## BOOK REVIEWS

Warkentin, Abe, *Strangers and Pilgrims* (Steinbach: *Die Mennonitische Post*/Derksen Printers, 1987). 361 pp., hdc., \$34.95.

Reviewed by Adolf Ens

Don't be deceived by the coffee table format and the glossy, full-colour dust jacket into thinking that this is 'merely' a picture book. True, its well over a thousand photographs occupy the bulk of the pages. But there is much more, to make this a quite substantial telling of the story of the 90,000 "Canadian" Mennonites living in Mexico, Paraguay, Bolivia, and Belize.

As founding editor of the *Mennonitische Post*, which serves these Mennonites, Abe Warkentin takes a keen interest in their story. His dreaming about a book of this kind and collecting photographs for it have occupied much of his spare time during the past decade. To see those dreams take on reality in this excellent book is rewarding indeed.

First, the photographs. They range from the genuinely artistic, things of beauty in themselves, to the obviously amateur complete with the photographer's shadow stretching out toward the focus of the picture. But all are carefully chosen to make their unique contribution to telling the story.

Secondly, the text. None of the prose sections introducing the Mennonite communities in each of the four countries goes beyond three pages. And since the entire text is in both English and German, this means three columns. But those pages are packed with information. Supplemented by data compactly presented in tables and by the informative, though brief, photo captions, these few pages of text provide an amazingly comprehensive picture.

Thirdly, the maps. A number of the sixteen maps included in the book are new, prepared especially for this occasion. Others have been adapted for this purpose. Most have been redrawn in clear and attractive style by Dianne Harms. Her emergence as cartographer a few years ago has raised the quality of maps in Mennonite publications by a significant notch.

But mostly it is the photographs that make this book so good. Warkentin combines the qualities of a perceptive journalist and a conscientious historian — with a sense of humour. Who else would think of including a photo of a Belize sign reading: "PREWET LAND. PLES QUIP OF." and then add the casual caption: "Not all Mennonites had mastered the national language by 1967."

Even if the book had not sold well, Warkentin would have done the Mennonite community an enormous service by collecting and preserving this valuable collection of photographs, and by compiling the historical data and statistics. Fortunately, it sold well enough to go into a second printing within months of its first appearance. A third printing is now in process.

*Adolf Ens teaches history and theology at Canadian Mennonite Bible College.*

*Resources for Canadian Mennonite Studies: An Inventory and Guide to Archival Holdings at the Mennonite Heritage Centre.* Edited by Lawrence Klippenstein, Adolf Ens and Margaret Franz (Winnipeg, MB: MHC Archives), 136 pp., pb., \$7.50.

*Inventory of Archival Material in Western Manitoba.* Edited by K.S. Coates, J.C. Everitt and W.R. Morrison (Brandon, MB: Brandon University Press, 1987) 2 Vols. 402 pp.

Reviewed by Ken Reddig.

Inventories and guides to archival resources assist both the researcher and also the establishments generating the inventory. While one often expects a repository to house certain kinds of resources, it is the listing of those resources which creates the interest or awareness that encourages a researcher to make use of those archival holdings.

Recently two very different inventories have been published. The first is the *Inventory and Guide to Archival Holdings* at the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg. This Centre was the first Mennonite archives in Canada, and contains resources on numerous Mennonite groups in Canada in addition to resources on agencies of major importance to the settlement of Mennonites in Canada. The inventory contains a selected list of holdings organized around the institution, agency or individual creating the records. Each record group is introduced by a brief summary of contents, an historical sketch, a listing of additional resources with a very brief description of the actual scope and content of the collection. If there is a criticism which could be made of this inventory it would be that the descriptions of the scope and content of each record group are far too brief. Upon reading the entries one often knows more about the agencies history than about what kinds of documents are included in the collection. Nevertheless the inventory is quite valuable and is certain to be well utilized by historians and students of Canadian Mennonite History.

*The Inventory of Archival Material in Western Manitoba* is quite different in scope and content from the previous guide. Rather than listing the documents in a single repository, the guide lists several hundred places which hold resources relevant to western Manitoba history. Some sixty-three communities were surveyed and listings prepared of their holdings of such resources as agricultural organizations, archives, libraries, businesses, cemeteries, churches, military organizations, school divisions, newspapers, service clubs—to name but a few. The description of resources held in each location is quite good and extensive. Unfortunately the descriptions, perhaps to save space, are listed in one long paragraph, in some cases over three pages in length, with subject areas simply underlined. Nevertheless, the guide is most helpful and an amazing resource.

In summary both inventories leave the

researcher with the impression that Manitoba is indeed rich in resources pertaining to its historical past. Students, historians and genealogists are provided an excellent introduction to and guide as to where relevant resources are housed by these two inventories. The inventories should provide the impetus for other institutions and regions of Manitoba to create inventories of their holdings as well.

Ken Reddig is the archivist for the Centre of MB Studies in Winnipeg.

## Book Notes

With this year's drought and poor crops, Altona farmers John Rempel and William Harms are probably glad that they "retired" from field work to pursue their research hobby full-time. Their 25-page *Atlas of original Mennonite Villages and Homesteaders of the East Reserve, Manitoba* (Altona, 1988) provides detailed maps of all 8 townships of the former East Reserve, showing the original owners of each quarter section. Accompanying lists identify the original residents of each of the approximately fifty villages. Additional orientation maps, photos and historical notes add to the value of the book. It is well worth the \$10 for which the authors are selling it. Work on a similar volume for the West Reserve is underway.

Readers of *Mennonite Mirror* who have enjoyed Rhinehart Friesen's stories of early Manitoba Mennonite life, which appeared in that magazine over the years, now have the opportunity of getting 14 episodes (1874-1918) in one volume. *A Mennonite Odyssey* (Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1988, 124 pages, \$12.95 pb) is the 14th volume of Hyperion's series of "Mennonite" books. Dr. Friesen, a retired physician, has edited and revised the episodes on the basis of reader response to their original appearance.

The Dordrecht Confession of faith has been published in over 250 editions in 5 languages since it was first adopted by Mennonites in the Netherlands in 1632. A new English translation by noted Menno Simons scholar Irvin B. Horst, has now been released by the Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Historical Society (2215 Millstream Rd., Lancaster, Pa. 17602-1499; 88 pages, \$7.95 pb/\$10.95 hb; \$2 handling).

Gerhard Ratzlaff has edited and published a yearbook for Germans in Paraguay. (*Deutsches Jahrbuch für 1988: Geschichte, Kultur, Unterhaltung*, Asunción, 1988, 112 pages, \$5.50 U.S.). As the title indicates, the book is about Germans. An article on 50 years of Friesland Colony and another on the teacher training institute in Filadelfia are the main items on Mennonites. In contrast to most yearbooks, this one does not feature current church or colony statistics.