

MENNONITE HISTORIAN

Published by the Mennonite Heritage Centre and the Centre for MB Studies in Canada

Volume XXIII, No.2, June, 1997



Alexanderwohl Church near Goessel, Kansas, was the meeting place for General Conference (GCMC) sessions in 1886. Photo credit: Samuel Floyd Pannabecker, *Open Doors: A History of the General Conference Mennonite Church* (1975), p. 208b.

Mennonite General Conferences: Will They All Disappear?

by Abe Dueck

During the last decade of this millenium, Mennonites seem to be in a hurry to get rid of their "General" conferences. After the confusion of the past century or more, we may end up with no General Conference at all among the various Mennonite groups. Right now, the General Conference Mennonite Church (GCMC) and the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches (MB) seem to be in a tight race to see who can drop the label first. Actually, unless the MBs renew their charter in the meantime, they will automatically lose the legal entity of the "General Conference" in 1999! And the GCMCs and the MCs are on a clear course toward merger which may culminate in new structures by 1999 and a new denomination, called the Mennonite Church, by the year 2000. What a coincidence!

The first "general conference" was the General Conference Mennonite Church formed in the United States in 1860, coincidentally, the same year that the Mennonite Brethren Church began in Russia. It resulted from the union of two groups of Swiss/South German Mennonites who met in West Point, Iowa, USA, at Pentecost that year. At that point there were still no Dutch/Prussian/

Russian Mennonites in North America. The first of these arrived in the 1870s and many joined the GCMC in the succeeding years.

The Conference of Mennonites in Canada (earlier known as the *Konferenz der Mennoniten*

im mittleren Kanada) was formed in 1902 and consisted initially of a group of Bergthaler congregations in Manitoba and several Rosenorter congregations in Saskatchewan. Not all the congregations which joined the CMC, however, necessarily also became members of the GCMC. The Bergthaler congregations in particular retained a separate identity for a longer period. Some still retain that adjective in their congregational names.

The MBs were the first Mennonites in Russia to form a conference (*Bundeskonferenz*) in 1872. This conference was also referred to as a "General" conference (*Allgemeine Bundeskonferenz*). The congregations from which they seceded generally came to be referred to as "kirchliche" (lit. "churchly") Mennonites. They were very loosely affiliated, relatively autonomous, congregations.

Although the elders of the colonies met occasionally to discuss common concerns (as a *Kirchenkonvent*),¹ the more formal organization of a "general" conference of the "kirchliche" congregations took place in 1883 at Halbstadt, in the Molotschna settlement. This conference usually met on an annual basis and at first it was primarily a meeting of elders (*Ältesten*) and ministers. Lay leaders were not represented. By 1906 some MBs wondered how this conference could call itself a "general" conference of Mennonites, when MBs, who were determined to be considered Mennonites rather than Baptists, were not represented. The conference therefore decided to extend an invitation to MBs as well. However, aside from taking part in the 1910 sessions

(*cont'd on page 2*)



Persons attending an October, 1912, MB General Conference in Kansas, USA. Photo: Courtesy of Centre for MB Studies, Winnipeg, MB.

Mennonite General Conferences (cont'd from page 1)

of the General Conference (*Bundeskonferenz*), very few MBs attended. They were, however, represented on the Commission for Church Affairs (*Kommission fuer Kirchliche Angelegenheiten*), which was the chief executive body of the *Bundeskonferenz* for all the Mennonites (including the *Kirchliche*, Mennonite Brethren, and *Allianz* groups). Between 1910 and 1914 serious attempts were made to bring all Mennonites in Russia under a common constitution as an "Evangelical Mennonite Confession." These efforts died with the outbreak of World War I.

The necessity for Mennonites to work cooperatively increased after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. All Russian Mennonites were represented in the conventions of the General Conference of Mennonites (*Allgemeine Bundeskonferenz der Mennonitengemeinden in Russland*) which met at various times from 1917 to 1926.² In addition, an All-Mennonite Congress was convened in 1917 and 1918.³

After the mass emigration of Mennonites from Russia to Canada and South America in the 1920s, attempts to join forces were largely forgotten. The MBs joined the already existing General Conference of Mennonite Brethren, which had been formed in the United States in 1879, whereas the *Kirchliche* immigrants usually joined the CMCs in Canada and the GCMC of North America. In some places (e.g., in British Columbia and Ontario) they were also called the United Mennonites.

In recent years, the two largest Mennonite bodies in North America-- the Mennonite Church, which used to be referred to as the (Old) Mennonite Church, and the General Conference Mennonite Church-- have been moving toward merger. Some of the regional bodies have already merged (e.g., in Ontario). Some others have adopted patterns of closer cooperation (e.g. already earlier in BC and more recently in Alberta). This summer, at the 61st convention of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, the delegates will be asked to consider whether their General Conference structure has become obsolete. Perhaps by the year 2000 we will be rid of all general conferences. But there will still be MCs, MBs, EMCs, EMMCs, BCs, etc. And there will still be the Mennonite World Conference (MWC). Or should it become the Mennonite General Conference (MGC)?

Endnotes

¹ See Cornelius Krahn, "Kirchenkonvent," in *Mennonite Encyclopedia (ME)* Vol. III, 180.

² There appear to have been seven conferences during this period. John B. Toews lists four in *The Mennonites in Russia from 1917 to 1930: Selected Documents* (Winnipeg, MB: Christian Press, 1975), 395-448. Additional conferences took place on 3-4 December 1918, at Landskrone (*Friedensstimme*, 25 January 1919), in September, 1919 at Rudnerweide, and in October, 1922, at Chortitza (See Cornelius Krahn, "Allgemeine Bundeskonferenz der Mennonitengemeinden in Russland", *ME*, Vol. I, 57-60.

³ The minutes of the 1917 Congress are in John B. Toews, *Selected Documents*, 449-480. See also Cornelius Krahn, "Allgemeiner Mennonitischer Kongress", but according to the *Friedensstimme* (7 September, 16 November, and 19 November, 1918), it also met or was scheduled to meet at Ohrloff on 18 September 1918. It is possible, however, that the latter never actually convened.

Abe Dueck is the director of the Centre for MB Studies, Winnipeg, MB.

Letters to the Editors:

Dear Editors:

Re: the photo in *Mennonite Historian* Vol. 22, December, 1996, p. 1. We received the picture from our aunt, Anna (Mrs. Jacob) Enns, nee Warkentin. The Warkentins were among the 140 or so families that came from Russia to Irapuato between 1924 and 1926. They landed at Vera Cruz and went to Irapuato. They were molested by thieves to the point that they moved to Canada, some moving to an area just west of

Cuauhtémoc, Chihuahua, before they were able to go to Canada. My Aunt had an old tattered picture of which I made a copy. The Enns' may be contacted for further information at 210-32070 Peardonville Rd., Abbotsford, BC V2T 6N9.
Abe Rempel, Cuauhtémoc, Mexico.

Dear Editors:

I'm trying to get in touch with other Neustaedters. Can anyone tell me anything about upcoming reunions of Neustaedter families? My grandfather Gerhard Neustaedter came from the Omsk, Siberia, area in Russia. I would like to correspond with people who can connect me with that part of my history.

*John Neustadter, 4385 State Route 26,
Vernon, NY USA 13476.*

Dear Editors:

We would like your readers to know about an upcoming Swiss Heritage tour to Switzerland, Alsace, and the Palatinate in Europe. Dr. Delbert Gratz of Bluffton, OH is planning to lead the tour which will take place Sept. 3-26, 1997. For further information contact Tara Slaven, Menno Travel, 210 South Main St., Goshen, IN USA 46526-3723 or call 1-800-635-0963.

Note re: the Mexico Mennonite photo.

Adina Reger of Tulpenstr. 14, 56575 Weissenthurm, Germany would like very much to hear from anyone who has information about the 1924-26 Russian Mennonite migration to Mexico.



Canadian Mennonite Bible College is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year (1947-1997). Special events are scheduled for July 5-6. Photo: Courtesy of Wendy Janzen, CMBC, Winnipeg, MB.

MENNONITE HISTORIAN is published by the Mennonite Heritage Centre of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada and the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies (Winnipeg) of the Canadian Conference of MB Churches. Editors: Lawrence Klippenstein (MHCA) and Abe Dueck (CMBS). All correspondence and unpublished manuscripts should be sent to the editorial office at 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, R3P 0M4 (Phone 204-888-6781) or 1-169 Riverton Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, R2L 2E5 (Phone 204-669-6575). Subscription rates: \$9.00 per year, \$16.00 for two years and \$22.00 for three years. Individual subscriptions may be ordered from these addresses. ISSN 0700 8066.

GENEALOGY AND FAMILY HISTORY

by Alf Redekopp

Queries

Blatz - I am looking for any information about Andreas Blatz and his wife, Katarina Entz who were listed in the diary of Jakob Wall of Neuendorf, Chortitza as having married on October 2, 1845. I have no idea of their parents or origins, birth dates or death dates. They had at least two children, Gerhard and Maria, who came to Canada, and are listed in the *Reinländer Gemeinde Buch*. Maria Blatz married Bernhard Loewen, the son of Jacob Loewen and Margaretha Braun. I suspect that they probably came from the Chortitz colony as well, since their son (Jacob B. Loewen) was born in Michaelsberg, Fürstenland, Russia. Contact: Mary Loewen, 6405 Prince Albert St., Vancouver, BC V5W 3E7 or e-mail: 72163.401@CompuServe.COM

Heppner - Heinrich Penner 10 Mar. 1776-31 May 1854 married Anna Hoeppner ? 1781-29 June 1826. Their daughters were Elizabeth 26 June 1824-26 Dec. 1914 and Aganetha 12 Aug. 1833-10 July 1922.

I would like to know who Heinrich's parents were, was he married a second time and were there more children? Contact Pauline Heppner, 45351 Haig Drive, Sardis, BC V2R 1K3

Martens - I am seeking information on the ancestors and siblings of Abram Heinrich Martens (b. May 17, 1892 in Chortitza and d. Sept. 22, 1968 in St. Catharines, Ontario). He was the son of Heinrich Martens and Justina Dyck of Chortitza. He married Sarah Guenther (b Jan 18, 1898 d. Nov. 2, 1960) on Sept. 23, 1917 in Rosental. They emigrated to Canada in 1926 with their daughter Olga and son Abram. He had four brothers: Heinrich, William, Peter, and Jacob; and one sister Anna. Contact: A. Martens, RR 1, 1610 Britannia Rd. W., Milton, Ontario L9T 2X5 or e-mail: amarten@ibm.net.

Dueckmann - This is a request for updated information about the children of Martin Dueckmann (1802-1867) and his wife Katharina Fast (1814-1898). This includes the descendants of Katharina and Johann Dyck (Mountain Lake, MN), Susanna and Johann Franz (Mountain Lake, MN), Heinrich and Aganetha (Neumann) Dueckmann (Alexandertal, Molotschna), Martin and Anna Penner (Alexandertal, Molotschna), Elizabeth Dueckmann, Margaretha and Diedrich Barg (Pordenau, Molotschna), Peter and Margaretha (Gerbrandt) Dueckmann (Grossweide, Molotschna), Maria and Gerhard Wall (Zagradovka), Johann and Aganetha Dueckmann (Orenburg), Helena and Gerhard Derksen (Alexandertal, Molotschna), Anna Dueckmann, Wilhelm and Anna (Warkentin) Dueckmann

(Zagradovka), and Anna, Jacob and Cornelius. This genealogy is being put onto computer and will be available on the Family Tree Maker program. Contact: Kathy Peters, RR 2, Didsbury, AB TOM OWO.

Martens - I am looking for information about Maria Martens who married Peter P. Hildebrand (1871-1947) in 1892. Maria died Sept. 6, 1899 leaving three daughters. Peter P. and Maria Hildebrand lived in Steinfeld, Shlakhtin Colony near Krivoy Rog, South Russia (now Ukraine). Contact: John Friesen, 104-1850 Henderson Hwy., Winnipeg, MB R2G 1P2.

Vasilovka - I have a map that my grandfather (Jacob A. Nickel, 1895-1990) drew of the village he emigrated from in 1903. It is near the villages of Petrovka, Barvenkovo, Bazebutevka and Shavrovye. I would like information about the village of Vasilovka or the families who emigrated with my grandfather. Please contact: Wesley Nickel, 2402 Wiltse Dr., Penticton, BC V2A 7Y9.

Recent Books

Isaac Bergen. *Isaak & Helene Derksen Family* (Abbotsford, BC: Private publication, 1993?) hdc., 162 pp.

This book traces the ancestors and descendants of Isaak Derksen (1864-1926) and Helene Bergen (1865-1945) who lived in Neuendorf, Chortitza, Russia. Included are the family's stories of life in Russia. Over half of the descendants left Russia during the 1920s. Others came to Germany during the 1940s. The stories are presented in German and English and interspersed

A "Kashubian" doll's cradle. Its design (like one familiar to the informant here) is based on a cradle owned by an Abraham Isaac family, originally from Ellerwald not far from Klein Krebs in Prussia. See Reinhild Kauenhoven Janzen, "Sources and Styles of the Material Culture of the Mennonites in the Vistula Delta" *MQR*, LXVI (April 1992), 189-190. Photo and data: Courtesy of Hilda Matsuo, 2605 Avebury Ave., Victoria, BC V8R 3W3.



with many photographs. Contact: Isaac Bergen, 1675 Gladwin Road, Abbotsford, BC V2S 4N5.

Marvin Bahnman. *Our Heritage : 1997 Birthday Calendar and Family Directory : Descendants of Rev. Nicolai and Meta Clara Bahnman*. (Fort Worth, Texas: Private publication, 1997) pb., 54 pp.

This item consists of a 1997 monthly calendar, one photograph for each month, and family members' names on the appropriate date signifying their birthdate. Included are additional pages with genealogical charts and addresses of the descendants of Nicolai W. Bahnman (1879-1945) and Meta C. Bahnman (1887-1975). Contact: Marvin Bahnman, 7709 Grassland Dr., Fort Worth, TX 76133.

Isaac Bergen. *The Solomon Bergen Family 1831-1995* (Abbotsford, BC: Private publication, 1995) hdc., 447 pp.

The focus of this book is on the descendants of Solomon Bergen (1831-1897) who was married first to Anna Penner (1831-1865) and then married to Susanna Klassen (1849-1920). From these marriages there came 12 children with descendants. This book includes the ancestry of the families traced back to Bernhard von Bergen (1769-1809) who left the Danzig area in 1789 and settled in Chortitza, Russia. The book includes stories printed in German and English, and many photographs of the descendants. Contact: Isaac Bergen, 1675 Gladwin Road, Abbotsford, BC V2S 4N5.

The Molotschna Census School Registers of the P. J. Braun archives

Arnold Schroeder of St. Catharines, ON has translated and printed a number of school register lists including items for 1857-58, 1861-62, 1872-74 and 1883-84. Write to the Mennonite Heritage Centre for more details.

Mennonitische Rundschau Index, Vol. VI, Available

An additional volume of the *Mennonitische Rundschau* Index is now available at a price of \$55.00 (plus 5.00 shipping and handling). This index, edited by Alf Redekopp, covers the period from 1930-39. Earlier volumes (I, II, III, V, VI) are also still available at the same price (except Vol. V which is \$45.00). Work is now beginning on indexing Vol. IV (1910-1919).

Send inquiries to Alf Redekopp, 600 Shafesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4 or 169 Riverton Ave., Winnipeg, MB R2L 2E5. E-mail: aredek@mbnet.mb.ca

MHC 1997 Summer Staff

Several recent grants have made it possible to add three summer staff persons at the Heritage Centre. A grant from the federal Summer Career Placement Program is supporting Irene Blank, a CMBC grad and nursing student at the University of Manitoba, to serve as an archival aide. Stephanie Heidenreich of Winnipeg, and currently a student at McGill University, is archiving four special collections with support from a CCA Control of Holdings grant and a Preservation Management grant (for supplies).

The urging of the **Bote** committee and a special grant, have allowed the Centre to push ahead on its **Bote** indexing project so that, hopefully, Vol. III of the index to **Der Bote** can come off the press in 1998. Helene Friesen, a recent graduate of the University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba (a joint Master's program), is the indexer. This task will go well into the fall of this year.

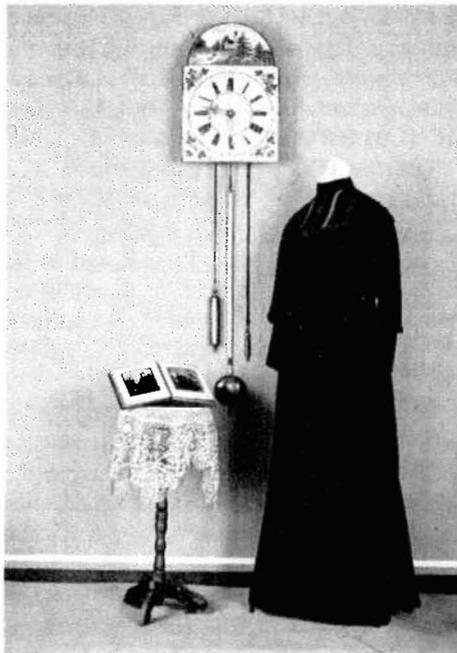
Thanks much, Elizabeth

Elizabeth Abrahams works in the library at the Steinbach Mennonite Church in Steinbach, MB. She made a point of stating in their church newsletter that fewer copies of **Mennonite Historian** are being mailed in bulk to CMC congregations. It is a cost cutting measure related to the fact that congregational donations to CMC have declined somewhat in recent years. She also added the address of the Mennonite Heritage Centre so church members could order personal subscriptions, and noted that one copy of **Mennonite Historian** is always held back for the library. Wonderful, Elizabeth! Thanks a lot, and keep up the good work. We hope many others follow your example.

Klippenstein Retires from the MHC

Historian Archivist Lawrence Klippenstein will be retiring from his work at the Mennonite Heritage Centre at the end of August. His work there began part-time in the fall of 1974. He and his wife LaVerna also spent three sabbatical/leave years in overseas MCC Service in subsequent years (England 1984-86 and Russia 1992-93).

Ken Reddig, currently employed at the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, will become direc-



These Mennonite items are part of a larger "Germans in Siberia" exhibit put up recently in a state museum in Omsk, Siberia, Russia. Siberian Mennonites are celebrating their centennial of settlement in Siberia. Among the first Mennonites to come to Siberia was Peter Wiens who became a distributor for farm machinery in Omsk. See J. J. Hildebrand, *Hildebrand's Zeittafel* (1945) available at Menn. Post, Steinbach, MB, R0A 2A0.

tor on September 1. Further information on this appointment will be published in the September issue of the **Historian**.

Congratulations to...

Dr. Reg Good, Waterloo, ON for completing his work of editing the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario's newsletter, **Ontario Mennonite History**, in recent years. Brent Bauman, writer of a history of the Floradale Mennonite Church will succeed Reg as editor. The April issue was guest edited by Lorna L. Bergey.

Janis Thiessen and **Helene Friesen** for completing Masters' degrees in history at the University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg. Their theses were entitled, respectively "Friesen's Corporation: Printers in Mennonite Manitoba 1951-1995", and "Treasured School Days: The Mennonite *Mädchenschulen* in the Russian Empire 1874-1920". Both items are now available at MHC.

Roma Quapp, CMC editor, for completing a three-year monthly series of NEXUS, as a CMC periodical. NEXUS carried a column for the Heritage Centre in virtually every issue.

Lynette Wiebe, of the Fort Garry Mennonite Church, for becoming a top medallist at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg. A graduate from the Fine Arts program, Lynette also curated a

major fine arts exhibit by U of M colleagues and friends at the Mennonite Heritage Centre in March, 1997.

Heidi Koop and **Helga Dyck**, both of Winnipeg, for completing a major manuscript of interviews with North Kildonan (Mennonite) pioneers. They are looking for a publisher now.

Gilbert Brandt of Mennonite Books, Winnipeg, for carrying forward the work (by buying the entire stock) of the North Kildonan Christian Book Store owned and operated by **Helen** and the late **Margaret Giesbrecht** for many years. The bookstore can be reached at 1-204-668-7475. Mennonite Books has marketed many books for MHC over the years.

Ernie P. Toews of Steinbach, MB for his leadership in the Steinbach Cairn Committee and historical research in the local journal **Preservings**. A video of the unveiling of a 50th anniversary cairn in Steinbach's first cemetery, was deposited at the Mennonite Heritage Centre recently. The event commemorated the 50th anniversary of Steinbach's incorporation. A book on the story of Steinbach will be going to press in the near future.

CMC Sessions Dates to Note

July 2-3. CMC history symposium begins on July 2, 7:00pm in the CMBC chapel.

July 4. CMC Heritage Committee meeting 4:30pm at the Heritage Centre.

July 4, Friday. Archives (MHC) workshop. Themes: Report from the Centre, genealogy, new sources from Russia/Ukraine.

For Sale

Books by John P. Nickel

Hope Springs Eternal: A Legacy of Service and Love in Russia During Difficult Times (1988) pb., 304pp., \$18.00.

Hope Beyond the Horizon: Stories by Russian Refugees Fleeing the Soviet Union (1997) pb., 148pp., \$12.95.

Order from: Mennonite Heritage Centre, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB, Can. R3P 0M4. Fax: 1-204-831-5675.

Nostalgic Recollections

A 220 page book of youth-related farm stories, C.O., camp experiences, everyday life work anecdotes, and much, much, more, all written in a humorous vein. Still available for \$15.00, shipping included, from: Jake Krueger, Box 552 Altona, MB R0G 0B0.

C Centre for
M Mennonite
B Brethren
S Studies in Canada
 1-169 Riverton Ave., Winnipeg, Canada R2L 2E5



This building included the premises of the Tshongrav Bible School and a worship area for the MB congregation, a village school and a teachers' residence. Photo credit: W. Quiring and H. Bartel, eds. *Als Ihre Zeit Erfuullet War* (1964), p. 108

Winkler Bible School: A Significant Chapter in the History of Mennonites and of Mennonite Brethren Education.

by Abe Dueck

On 20 April, 1997, Winkler Bible School celebrated its final commencement. This marked the end of 72 years of operation of the school. It may have seemed like a local event, but in many ways the history of this school relates to a much larger context of Mennonite theological education in Russia and in Canada.

The predecessor of the Winkler Bible School was the Tshongrav Bible School, officially registered under the name "Mennonite Theological Seminary." It was also known as the "Crimea"

Bible school and the "Pniel" Bible school. This school was established in the village of Tshongrav by the Mennonite Brethren Conference in Russia in 1918. The man who was appointed the leader was Johann J. Wiens who had been a missionary in India and was not allowed to return. Two other teachers were appointed--Abraham H. Unruh and Gerhard J. Reimer.

The Tshongrav Bible School functioned for six years until 1924 when it was permanently closed by the Soviet authorities. It had the distinction of being the first Bible and theological training school established by the Mennonites in Russia. Two others, the Mayak Bible School at Davlekonovo and the Orenburg Bible School were established in the 1920s but they functioned for three or four years only before being shut down also.

Shortly after the Tshongrav Bible School was closed, many Mennonites sought refuge in Canada. A. H. Unruh was among the early refugees. Shortly after his arrival in Winkler, Manitoba, he was asked to begin a Bible school which became Pniel Bible School and, eventually, Winkler Bible School. The other colleagues from Tshongrav, Reimer and Wiens, soon joined him on the faculty. Essentially the new school became a transplant of the institution which they had headed in the Crimean peninsula.

The story did not end there, however. When the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches (at that time known as the "Northern District" of the General Conference of MBs) decided to establish a Bible college in Winnipeg in 1944, Abraham H. Unruh was asked to be its first president. This created significant concern

in the Winkler constituency both because they did not want to lose Unruh and because there was a feeling that, in effect, this was a move of part of the Bible school itself to a new location. Many had hoped that the more advanced theological education program would be an extension to the already existing Bible school program. Some advanced classes were indeed conducted for a short period of time.

In the fall of 1944 the Mennonite Brethren Bible College opened. President Unruh was the significant thread of continuity from the first school at Tshongrav, in the Crimea, to Winkler in southern Manitoba, and finally to the city of Winnipeg. MBBC was the first advanced theological educational institution established by Mennonites in Canada and in its first years also attracted a large number of students from the Conference of Mennonites in Canada.

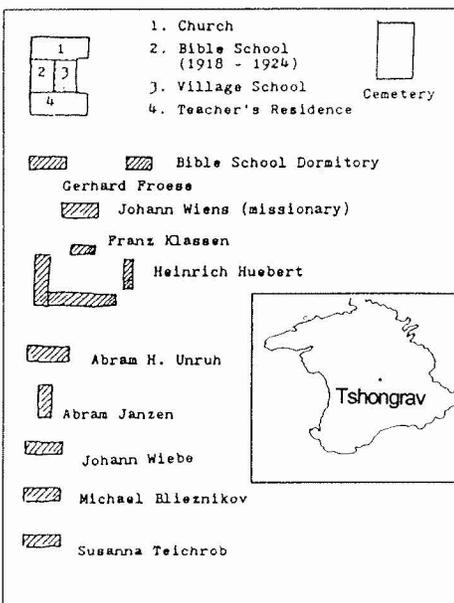
The Mennonite Brethren Bible College closed in 1992 to make way for a new institution, Concord College. Then, in March 1997, a proposal was placed before the Manitoba Mennonite Brethren Conference which would have involved, to a considerable degree, an amalgamation of the Winkler Bible School and Concord College. This was not approved and consequently, with the closing of WBS, Concord College has been left as the only school with some links to the first Mennonite school in Russia. The proposed federation of colleges in Winnipeg will in some ways further strain the threads of continuity of Mennonite Brethren theological education which began in Russia. In other ways though, such a federation may be reminiscent of these efforts to establish an inter-Mennonite theological school in Russia in the early Soviet period.

The Herbert Bible School Photo

In response to our query regarding the identity of individuals in the photograph of the Herbert Bible School (MH, March, 1997, p. 7), Dr. Reuben M. Baerg of Saskatoon sent us the following information:

In the front row: the young man with the cello is likely Frank Derksen of Dalmeny, later Hepburn. In the back row, left to right, the third man from the left is likely John Sukkau of Dalmeny, later Hepburn. Fifth from the left is Abe Janzen from Dalmeny, now from Kelowna. Sixth from the left is Jacob P. Lepp from Dalmeny.

Our thanks for this information.



The church and Bible school area of the village of Tshongrav. Map: Courtesy of Bill Schroeder, 434 Sutton Ave., Winnipeg, MB.

Allianz in Ukraine: More Pieces of the Puzzle (conclusion)

by David Sudermann

This is the second and concluding part of David Sudermann's very informative article on the Allianz movement in southern Russia (Ukraine). We have used the designation "Ukraine" in the title in recognition of historical developments which have brought that country to its current independent status and self-designation.

Professor Ernst Ströter, accompanied by his wife Carrie, and evangelist Paul Rosenzweig, led a Bible retreat from May 8 to 16, 1900, in Steinbach (p. 3). Schmidt writes enthusiastically: *Überhaupt waren alle Tage reich gewesen und besonders das h. Abendmahl. An [m?] selbigen beteiligten sich 60 Personen. 1 Jude 2 Methodisten 2 Baptisten 6 Prediger aus Rückenau 3 Lehrer u. 5 Laien aus der Rückenauer Gemeinde 1 freie Gemeinde 15 kirchliche Prediger 5 Lehrer kirchliche 20 Laien darunter waren 14 Schwestern beteiligt* (p. 3).

Pages 4 and 5 indicate trips to Blankenburg in 1904, 1905, and 1907. For the 1904 trip Schmidt itemized the travel costs for four persons by rail from Melitopol to Berlin. In 1905 Schmidt took 8,676 rubles along to Blankenburg, perhaps as a contribution. The conference in Laitz noted in Notebook I is reported in more detail on p. 7 of NB II. Held from 27-29 May 1900, just after the Bible seminar at Steinbach, this conference also involved Ernst Ströter as the featured speaker. Ministers Reimer, Quiring, and Pastor Stackelberg also preached. A complete table diagram of a "Tischgesellschaft bei B. Üxk 'll'" appears on p. 8. Many of the same Allianz guests are present here as are named in NB I, p. 92, although the two diagrams do not correspond exactly. In each case 25 guests were present. On p. 10 Schmidt notes: *Allianzbl. [att] bezahle für uns, David, Reimer.*

Pages 12-16 contains a complete roster of the founding members of "Die Evang. men. Bruderschaft gegründet 1905. den 17 Oktober." This list is especially interesting because the date 17 October 1905 given by Schmidt for the formation of the Evangelical Mennonite Brotherhood, later termed the "Lichtfelde Gemeinde," differs from the date of 16 May 1905 given by P. M. Friesen.¹ Schmidt also records one more name than Friesen, that of Franz Wiens of Lichtfelde. Schmidt, moreover, does not distinguish the elders of this new Allianz congregation from the other members as does Friesen. And in contrast to Friesen, Schmidt gives the home village of each member. Peter Schmidt's list runs as follows: 1. *Isaak Ediger, Altonau, 2. Heinrich Günther, Ohrloff, 3. Nachtigal,*

Alex.kr [Alexanderkrone], 4. Pet. Schmidt, Steinbach, 5. Nikol. Ediger, Altonau, 6. Boschmann, Rosenort, 7. Peter Boldt, Alexandk., 8. Johann Enns, [Alexanderkrone], 9. Ediger, [Alexanderkrone], 10. Peter Enns, [Alexanderkrone], 11. Johann Dick, [Alexanderkrone], 12. Peter Stobbe, [Alexanderkrone], 13. Franz Wiens, Lichtfelde, 14. Klassen, Prangen.[au], 15. Jacob Dick, Prangen.[au], and 16. Heinrich Harder, Steinbach.

Schmidt records that a Willms and a Warkentin, both of Alexanderkrone, joined the EMB group in 1906 (p. 13). In 1907 another fourteen men joined: 19. *Peter Wiebe Leh.[rer], Gnadenthal, 20. Abr. Dick, Lichtfelde, 21. Peter Kliewer, Scharbau, 22. Jacob Friehsen, Grohsweide, 23. Kornelsen allein, Tiegenhag.[en], 24. Peter Giesbrecht, Lichtenau, 25. Jacob Löwen, Fürstenau, 26. Jacob Dick, Osterwick, 27. Pankratz, Paulsheim, 28. Abr. Klachsen, Orenburg, 29. Mandler [Ort fehlt], 30. Johann Boschmann, Rosenort, 31. Dietrich Warkentin, Nikolaidorf, 32. Onkel Ediger, Prangenu (p. 14). And in 1908 seven more members were added for a total, by Schmidt's count, of thirty-nine: 33. *Abraham Epp, Rosenort, 34. Daniel Boschmann, Edigers Schwiegersohn, 35. Jacob Löwen, Fürstenau [second mention], 36. Daniel Schmidt, Steinfeld, 37. Töws, Friedensruh, 38. Willms, Augustebe, and 39. Prediger [name missing], Orenburg.**

Nothing is noted regarding the membership of wives or families, though one assumes the involvement of entire families. But on p. 13 Schmidt also begins a list of the unmarried young people who were baptized into the Molotschna EMB from 1906 until about 1909. Among the forty-five named are Peter and Anna Schmidts' own children, Maria and Anna, the daughters of David Dick, Anna and Maria, and the three sons of Heinrich and Elizabeth Günther, Dietrich, David, and Victor.

The remaining pages of Notebook II are filled with personal estate business, except for the last eight pages, which contain Peter Schmidt's address list. Written in German and Russian, the addresses clearly reflect Schmidt's missionary and philanthropic interests. Among some thirty-five addresses are those for MB missionaries in India and Java, Allianz personalities like Anna von Weling, Ströter, Baedecker, Podin, Rosenzweig, and, curiously, the addresses of Cornelius H. Wedel (Bethel College, Newton, Kansas) and Abraham Reimer (Hoag County, Nebraska).

The Steinbach Guestbooks. The twin guestbooks of brothers Nicolai P. and Peter P. Schmidt of Steinbach contain together over 135

entries from visitors, many of whom were involved in Allianz, the Bible courses, or in missionary activity. Nearly identical in size and origin, the two books are bound in buckram (now coming apart) with page size 19 cm x 26.5 cm. Both books were printed in Basel, Switzerland, and have the same design, cover page, and title: *Unsere Gäste. Ein Herbergsbuch fürs Haus.*

The entries in the Nicolai and Justine Dick Schmidt guestbook begin in 1901 and continue with large gaps until 1987. The first sixteen pages preserve inscriptions into the year 1912. Nicolai Schmidt died in 1913, and the remaining entries belong to succeeding generations. Each of the early entries consists usually of a scripture verse, a word of thanks to the hosts, date, and signature. Sometimes a place is given. Here is the roster of guests in order by years: 1901 Maria A. Gerber (missionary to Armenians), Adam Podin, Jakob Reimer, P. Riediger, P. F. [?] Heinrichs, E. F. Ströter and Carrie Ströter, R. _ Morgan and Wilma Morgan, F. W. Baedecker, Johan Regehr, Jakob Quiring; 1902 W. Üxküll-Laitz, Paul Lieven, Franz Thiessen, Carl Seher; 1903 Franz u. Aganetha Ediger (Kansas), Joh. Wilh. Sarwe (Sweden and Tiflis); 1904 Fritz Oetzbach; 1905 H. Epp; W. Penner (China; no date); 1906-1907 E. Karl, Maria Vetter and ___ Vetter, Franz Bartsch, Jacob Löwen, Frieda and Benjamin Unruh (no date); L. Rosenberg (no date); 1908 Chr. Koehler (Berlin); 1909 M. Hübert and J. Hübert (Java), Esther Grubb and George C. Grubb, E. Regentrop; 1912 Heinrich G. Regier (Mt. Lake, Minnesota).

The Peter P. and Anna Schmidt guestbook contains sixty-seven filled pages, beginning in 1900 and ending in 1948. As in the first register, most pages remain empty. About 100 inscriptions are arranged one to three per page; the content is again mainly scriptural, with an occasional bit of religious verse. Most of the signatures found in the Nicolai Schmidt guestbook are also recorded here, including many of the same Allianz dignitaries. Over sixty new names appear in the Peter Schmidt guestbook, and in addition there are lists of participants for two of the Bible seminars held at Steinbach. The first, held on 8-16 May 1900, is inserted as a loose sheet 21 cm x 26.8 cm, folded in half and written on four sides. The list of participants for the second seminar, held on 3-8 May 1906, is found on pp. 36-38. Because of their length and importance, these lists will be presented in a separate article.

The following guests are not recorded in the Nicolai and Justine Schmidt guestbook but appear only in the Peter and Anna Schmidt book: 1900 Peter A. and Lizzie Penner (General Conference missionaries to India), David Goertz (Newton, Kansas), Peter I. Friesen (Mt. Lake, Minnesota), Wilhelm Sudermann (Zhelanaya), Johannes and Susanna Kroeker (Crimea), David Schellenberg (Rückenau), Cornelius Wittenberg,



A Bible conference held in 1902 at the estate Apanlee in the Molotschna settlement. The conference was hosted by estate owner David Dick. The conference was led by Professor Ernst Ströter (5th from right in row 2). About 20 members of the estate-owning clan of Dicks, Schmidts, Sudermanns and Guenthers are dispersed throughout the group. In the first row (middle) sits a young B. B. Janz, well-known (later) in Canadian Mennonite circles also. Photo original: Courtesy of Jessie Schmidt Froese, Elm Creek, Manitoba, Canada.

Allianz in Ukraine

(cont'd from page 6)

Nickolai Friesen (Neu Samara ?), Heinrich Sukkau [?](Riga), J. D. Enns; 1901 C. Füllbrandt, Wilhelm Löwen (Alexanderkrone), Peter Reimer (Friedensruh), Jacob Kröker, Johannes Thiessen, Johann Regehr (Aliata in Rama [?]), Paul Rode (Berlin); 1902 Paul Rosenzweig (Warsaw), J. H. and Maria Pankratz, Ewald Rehs, E. H. Broadbent; 1903 F. Ediger (Tiflis), David Dürksen (Spat, Crimea), Naphtali Rudnitzky, Elisabeth Karl (Lausanne and Dresden), Rose Lambert (Elkhart, Indiana, and Hadjin, Turkey), Komelius and Martha Unruh; 1904 P. M. Friesen, Susanna Friesen, _____ Friesen, and Olga Friesen (Sevastopol), Eduard Moring (Reval); 1905 P. Tarajanz (Baku), Nikolai Janoviev [?](Moscow), Paul Nicolay, Dr. Johannes Lepsius, Theodor Golikhin [?], Vasili Stepanov, Ivan Gadenkov [?]; 1906 Johannes Werlietzky (Moscow); 1907 J. Heinrichs (Rama _____, India), W. Izack, F. Wiens [?], Helene Liebe, Joh. Wiebe, A. Böcking, Vasilii Polianskii (Kharkov), Norbert J. apek (Brünn, Mähren), Johannes Warns (Berlin); 1908 Joh's Quiring (Koeppenthal-Orloff), Joh. Bergmann, George Lambert (Elkhart, Indiana), Lena E. Penner (Turkey), Jak. Siemens (Java), Constantin von Renteln (Kerro, Livonia), Manfred von Glehn (Hohenhaupt bei Reval), Ahvine [?] Procko, S[?]embart Bagdasarjanz (Veltheim bei Winterthur, Switzerland), H. Braun (Neuhalbstadt), Cr. Müller (Klättschy [?], Saratov); 1909 Bertha Lajus (China Inland Mis-

sion, Yushan); 1914 Jacob Thiessen (Alexanderkrone); 1917 H. Günther; 1920 Prof. Dr. K. Lindeman.

Preliminary and Concluding Observations. Those acquainted with Russian Mennonite church history and the *Allianz* will quickly spot connections that deserve further comment. In general, the four documents together clearly point to Steinbach as a centre of lively spiritual activity and as an important source of financial support for charitable causes. One notes the names of several Mennonite Brethren and General Conference missionaries in the notebooks and guestbooks. In addition, the names of certain Mennonite Brethren elders and other leaders stand out—David Schellenberg, David Dürksen, P. M. Friesen, Jacob Reimer, and Jacob Kröker, among them. At least for the Schmidts of Steinbach, estate life certainly did not unfold in isolation. Guests appear from all corners of the globe, not only Western and Eastern Europe. The Schmidt notebooks indicate trips outside Russia to Blankenburg and Laitz (Latvia), as well.

The Schmidt documents also suggest significant inter-Mennonite engagement stimulated by the Bible seminars at Steinbach and the fellowship groups that gathered there for worship. Other evidence from photographs and the two lists of Steinbach seminar participants will show not only the Schmidts but also other estate families such as the Sudermanns and Dicks of Apanlee and the Günthers of Juschanlee, all deeply involved in the enrichment of religious life

in the Molotschna. John B. Toews suggests that *Allianz* was "largely incidental to the process" of religious renewal among the Mennonites in Russia.² Our preliminary review of the Schmidt documents leans in the other direction, toward a view of significant *Allianz* influence mediated by these estate owners. In-depth study of both Toews's sources and the materials in the Dick-Schmidt-Sudermann Collection will further clarify the picture.

Endnotes

¹ John B. Toews, "Russian Mennonites and *Allianz*," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 14 (1996): 46-64. See also a volume recently retrieved in Zaporozhe, Ukraine, from a surviving library book collection of the former Chortitzer Mennonite Church there, *Bericht der siebzehnten Allianz-Konferenz zur Vertiefung des Glaubens*. These are reports given at a theological conference held at the Allianzhaus in Blankenburg, Thür, Germany, on 25-29 August 1902.

² Peter M. Friesen, *The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia (1789-1910)*, trans. and ed. by J. B. Toews, Abraham Friesen, Peter J. Klassen, and Harry Loewen, 2nd ed. rev. (Fresno, California: Board of Christian Literature, General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1980), pp. 920-21. Toews, "*Allianz*", p. 55.

³ Toews, "*Allianz*", p. 58.

⁴ P. M. Friesen, pp. 920-21 (English ed.). See also Friesen's extended note on pp. 1040-41 on the *Allianz*, which concludes with a heart-felt eulogy for Peter Schmidt who died on 30 May 1910, just as Friesen was completing his monumental history.

⁵ Toews, "*Allianz*", p. 60.

Dr. David Sudermann is an independent scholar resident in Northfield, Minnesota, USA.

Book Notes

(cont'd from page 8)

Story in Photographs from 1855-1935, written and compiled by Joanne Hess Siegrist (pb., 220 pp., \$ 14.95 US); and Joseph C. Shenk's **Silver Thread: The Ups and Downs of a Mennonite Family in Mission 1895-1995** (pb., 250 pp.).

The 22nd *Heimatsbuch der Deutschen aus Russland* dated 1995/1996 is now off the press. It is published by Landmannschaft der Deutschen aus Russland e.V. at Raitelsbergstr. 49, 70188 Stuttgart, Germany. The whole series (apart from 1990-94) is available at the Mennonite Heritage Centre.

Finally, we note as well a title from LOGOS Verlag in Germany: Johannes Reimer, *Auf der Suche nach Identität: Russlanddeutsche zwischen Baptisten und Mennoniten nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Lage, Germany, 1996), pb., 166 pp., 16.80 DM (ca. \$ 15.00 CAN).

For more information on these titles contact the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

BOOK REVIEWS

Snyder, C. Arnold and Linda A. Huebert Hecht, eds. **Profiles of Anabaptist Women – Sixteenth-Century Reforming Pioneers** (Waterloo, ON, Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1996), pb., 438 pp., \$28.95.

Reviewed by Barb Froese

Reading **Profiles of Anabaptist Women** is like finding an old diary in the attic that contains page after page of fascinating family history previously undiscovered. This book contains the stories of unsung heroes – often the wives of Anabaptist martyrs and church leaders, the “invisible” women who were in the background and frequently ignored by the authorities, but who provided the essential leadership, strength and continuity that enabled the underground movement to survive.

Editors C. Arnold Snyder and Linda A. Huebert Hecht have compiled the writings of nineteen different authors in order to take us on a journey that traces the history of women in the Anabaptist movement throughout the countries of Switzerland, Austria, Germany and Holland. These profiles are developed from information gleaned from sixteenth-century letters, hymns, poems, government records and court transcripts. The letters and trial records provide anecdotal details that add colour and interest to the personalities described.

The stories range from the activities of the “ordinary women” of Augsburg in southern Germany, where a woman like Barbara Schleiffer hosted “sewing circles” for the purpose of gathering women together for Bible reading and commentary, to the activities of noblewomen like Helena von Freyburg, who, after being re-baptized, was forced to leave the comfort of her castle home in Tirol for a life of exile.

The book includes excerpts from letters written by noblewomen Magdalena von Pappenheim and Helena Streicher in the so-called “war of the radical ladies” as they argued or supported the opposing theologies of leaders Marpeck and Schwenkfeld. In another chapter, one learns of the emerging theology of the Hutterite Brethren through the hymns that were written about the characters, lives and deeds of women martyrs.

Snyder and Hecht make the apt observation: “Making visible the lives of women from the past benefits us all by bringing needed balance to the historical memory of humanity” (p. 1). This book has helped to bring that balance to the history of Anabaptism. **Profiles of Anabaptist Women** could be used for classroom study as well as for personal growth and inspiration.

Barb Froese is co-pastor of the Laird Mennonite Church in Laird, SK.

Born Hutterite (Montreal: National Film Board of Canada, 1997) 48 mins. \$30.00 and **Migration North: Mennonites in Mexico** (Winnipeg: Mennonite Central Committee, 1995) ca. 35 mins. \$20.00. Two videos.

Reviewed by Abe Dueck.

Born Hutterite is the story of two former Hutterites, Mary Wipf and Samuel Hofer, who left their colonies under very different circumstances and made very different pilgrimages following their exits from their respective colonies. And yet there is a common thread that ties the two stories together. The narrative moves back and forth between the two individuals and their reflections on their experiences. The account is interwoven by a number of scenes from the Pincher Creek Hutterite colony in Alberta, in which a Hutterite minister and several colony members defend the life and principles of the Hutterites. The ideals of the colony as a closely-knit family where all members are loved and find economic and spiritual security are juxtaposed with the deep disappointment which Mary feels with a system that let her down when she needed help and with the repressive and closed worldview that Sam encountered when he tried to explore the world beyond.

Sam left a colony near Moose Jaw, SK in 1983 and, after wandering for some time, eventually became a one-man book publisher called Hofer Publishers. He has published four Hutterite cookbooks and two works of fiction. He now refers to himself as a universalist, taking the best from all religions. He is especially critical of what he calls “fundamentalism”.

Mary, on the other hand, left the colony near Sioux Falls, SD after years of struggling with a large family and an alcoholic husband. Her husband told her, “I have to drink to live here.” But treatment outside the colony did not heal him either, and eventually Mary divorced him. She studied to become a practical nurse and struggled to keep her large family together. Three of her boys returned to the colony. Mary now worships in an evangelical (fundamentalist?) church.

Sam and Mary both still retain deep emotional ties with their past and would like to be remembered fondly by their relatives and associates on the colonies. But they know that this is unlikely. In one of her concluding comments Mary states that she would like the Hutterite ministers to hold her up as a mirror, showing how the system failed all of them - her husband, her children and herself. The main thrust of the video, therefore, is very unsympathetic toward the Hutterite community. The Hutterites themselves are defensive and unconvincing as they try to represent the ideals of community life.

The second video, **Migration North: Mennonites from Mexico**, is much shorter and

more descriptive. The story is told primarily by Gladys Terichow, although there are many segments where Mexican Mennonites are allowed to speak for themselves. Their Low German speech, of course, is translated. Again, there are those like the ministers who defend their system and those who find it too repressive and without economic promise. More liberal persons, we are told, leave for Canada, whereas others move to Belize, Bolivia and Argentina. The poorest can not afford to leave Mexico. The situation of the Mexican Mennonites as a whole is desperate, although it is described more sympathetically than the Hutterite situation in the previous video. Bill Janzen, one of the MCC workers in Mexico, states that change is inevitable, but that change need not mean the loss of their value system. This may be too idealistic. Value systems are an integral part of all of life and cannot remain undisturbed when other fundamental changes are made. Part of the problem is with the value system itself.

These videos both give interesting and valuable insights into the nature of the respective communities and are an excellent educational resource.

Book Notes

Just off the press: Katherine Martens and Heidi Harms, **In Her Own Voice: Childbirth Stories from Mennonite Women** (Winnipeg, MB, 1997) pb., 246 pp., \$18.95; John P. Nickel, trans. and ed. **Hope Beyond the Horizon: Stories by Russian Mennonite Refugees Fleeing the Soviet Union** (Saskatoon, SK, 1997), pb., 148 pp., \$ 12.95; Leonard Gross, trans. and ed., **Prayerbook for Earnest Christians: A spiritually rich Anabaptist resource** (Waterloo, ON, 1997), pb., 149 pp., \$12.85; and Jash Leewe, **Onze Ieashte Missionsreiz** (Abbotsford, BC, 1997), pb., 222 pp., \$8.99. Written in Low German.

New Publications from Steinbach, MB: Jerry Hildebrand, assisted by Doreen Klassen, **Training Servant Leaders: A History of Steinbach Bible College** (Steinbach, MB, 1997), pb, 160 pp., \$19.95; Harvey Plett, **Seeking to be Faithful: The Story of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference** (Steinbach, MB, 1996), pb., 188 pp., \$6.95; David Schellenberg, ed., **Great is Thy Faithfulness... 50 Years of Resthaven 1946-1996** (Steinbach, MB, 1997), pb., 102 pp., \$9.35.

Genealogists may take note of a newsletter now on the scene, titled **The Ratzlaff Report**. Contact Patricia Goff, Box 1482, Elgin, IL 60121-1482.

We also want to cite two publications from Good Books in Lancaster, PA. **They are Mennonite Women of Lancaster County : A**

(cont'd on page 7)