

Mennonite Historian

A PUBLICATION OF THE MENNONITE HERITAGE CENTRE and THE CENTRE FOR MB STUDIES IN CANADA



The view of the south side of the Mennonite Heritage Centre. The building currently houses the Canadian Mennonite University Library, the Mennonite Historical Library, the archives of Mennonite Church Canada and the MHC Gallery. Photo taken in 1998.

Mennonite Heritage Centre: How it began 25 years ago

by Alf Redekopp

Twenty-five years ago, the construction of the Mennonite Heritage Centre building was almost complete and ready for occupancy. By the end of October the move was complete. The official opening ceremony, held on the Canadian National Archives Day, November 15, 1978, followed by a service of dedication on January 26, 1979, was an important event in the history of Mennonites in Canada. The story of the developments in the years immediately preceding its construction is of interest and significance as we ponder where we will find enough space for archival storage for the next 25 years.

According to an article by Rudy A. Regehr in 1977, "a dream" for a Heritage Centre was first voiced at the Conference in Waterloo in 1972. He writes: "It was on this occasion that Rev. Gerhard Loh-

renz, the 'dean' of Mennonite historians among our people in Canada, said that some day someone from among us would give the Mennonite community in Canada a building in which we would be able to preserve the documents of the past and in which the people of the present could gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for their heritage."¹

Regehr continues to relate how one of the many people present at the 1972 annual conference was Peter W. Enns, a business entrepreneur from Winkler, who left that conference wondering whether he might in some way be able to become part of Mr. Lohrenz's dream. "Not long afterward he raised the idea of an archives building for the Tuxedo campus."²

What was said by Gerhard Lohrenz at that 1972 conference? The only mention of archives in the minutes is the record of

the motion "that \$2,600 be made available in 1972, and an additional \$2,600 be added to the 1973 budget (for archives)." Two lines follow in the official minutes – "A brother says we need much more and should get it" followed by the line, "Motion is carried."³ Who was this "brother"? Was this the speech that inspired Peter W. Enns?

The following year (1973), in the Canadian Mennonite Bible College report to the delegates, Henry Poettcker and David Schroeder referred to the 1972 Waterloo conference as follows: "One area of interest that surfaced strongly at the Conference was the interest in Mennonite studies and the development of the Mennonite archives."⁴ It seems that the need and the vision for a facility that would allow the collection, preservation and study of historical documents in order to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for the heritage of the Mennonite church was continuing to grow in the intervening years from 1972 to 1977.

In 1973 the General Board proposed that an endowment fund be established so that the earnings of the investment of this fund would be used to underwrite the history-archives program of the Conference. In 1974 it was reported that congregations and individuals had contributed a total of \$11,500 to this fund.

At the delegate session in 1976 in Clearbrook, a concern was shared "that finances sent to the central office [Winnipeg] be honoured as designated. The wishes of congregations must be honoured at all times." A little later in the discussion, P.W. Enns asked, "Can receipts be issued for monies donated to projects outside the Conference programs, if the money is channeled through the Conference?" We may continue to wonder what thoughts were still developing behind this question?⁵

At the same session, D.P. Neufeld raises a concern regarding affluence. "It's a real problem to have money...Matt. 6:19-24...Opportunities present themselves in affluence...We have twice what our grandparents had in travel and study opportunities; afford service to others; preserve our heritage i.e. museums, films books, school, \$20 million food bank. Make sure you haven't lost the things money cannot buy..."⁶ Perhaps this was what the delegates to the 1977 delegate session in Toronto, were remembering when the General Board presented the following resolution:

(cont'd on p. 2)

Mennonite Heritage Centre

(cont'd from p. 1)

"Whereas, many Conference people have long felt the need for more adequate facilities for the Mennonite Archives, and whereas, the P.W. Enns Family Foundation has generously offered to fund the building of such a facility, be it resolved that the Conference of Mennonites in Canada accept the proposal to build and furnish a Heritage Center as described in this Bulletin and that we commit ourselves to allow this center to serve the broader Mennonite community."

The discussion which followed at the annual delegate session reveals that the real debate was around whether the gift could be accepted. Delegates asked questions such as: Does wealth control the church? Who decides what is done? What about receiving such a large gift? Can we accept money like this? They made comments like "opportunism should not be allowed to cover up unethical practices", "wealthy people are often lonely", "we need experience in accepting large gifts", "we need to discuss wealth to a greater extent", "[the gift] is really a response to an invitation", "The Winkler Berghaler Church has affirmed the gift the Enns family intends to give", "I am excited about a Heritage Centre", "big donors in the past [have been] very positive". In the end the resolution was carried in a secret ballot result of 643 yes to 43 no.⁸

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Editors: Heinrich Loewen (CMBS)
Alf Redekopp (MHC)

All correspondence and unpublished manuscripts should be sent to the editorial offices at:

600 Shaftesbury Blvd.
Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4
P: 204-888-6781

E: aredekopp@mennonitechurch.ca
W: www.mennonitechurch.ca/heritage

or

1-169 Riverton Avenue,
Winnipeg, MB R2L 2E5
P: 204-669-6575

E: hloewen@mbconf.ca

W: www.mbconf.ca/mbstudies

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The ground breaking ceremony occurred on August 28, 1977 with about 60 persons from the city and other nearby congregations present. Henry J. Gerbrandt, executive secretary of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, led the service. Rudy A. Regehr, chair of the newly-formed building committee, introduced the architect Siegfried Toews of Vancouver and Peter Martens of MBS Construction, Winnipeg, the contractor heading up the construction itself.

By late March 1978 the new building was beginning to take shape, as the prominent front facial clock tower of precast concrete was put in place, reaching a height of 57 feet, forming a central point of interest in all directions about the existing campus. In the end the final form of the building consisted of a large rectangular section attached to a tall A-frame structure. The rectangular section was to contain the CMBC library, Mennonite Historical Library, the archives of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, all well protected against fire, wind and rain. The A-frame section included a meeting room and considerable space on two levels for displays and feature presentations.

The December 1978 issue of *Mennonite Life* featured the new Mennonite Heritage Centre with a front cover photograph as well as an article by then chair of the History-Archives Committee, John J. Friesen, and Historian-Archivist Lawrence Klippenstein, who served as the director of the archives program until his retirement in 1997. "The recent erection of a new archives-library building offers...improved services in areas of general research along with specialized work e.g. in family studies (genealogy), immigration, minority relations in Canada, state-church relations, Mennonite life and thought, etc."⁹

Today, the Centre remembers the construction of a building, dedicated to the preservation of all that is good and worthwhile in our heritage, to the memory of our leaders, to the inspiration and education of our youth, to the service of the larger Mennonite community, and above all, to the glory of God. Facility challenges and the need for space is again a critical issue for being faithful to this dedication. What is the dream and vision today? How is it possible to preserve "all that is good and worthwhile" for the inspiration of our youth and for the service of the church without adequate space?

We have learned to accept and even invite large gifts, but do we still have the same passion for the dream for what needs to be remembered and preserved during the next twenty-five years?

Endnotes

1. CMC Bulletin, Vol.13, No. 1 (May 30, 1977), p. 13.
2. Ibid.
3. 1972 CMC Yearbook, p. 19.
4. CMC Bulletin, Vol. 9, No. 1 (May 28, 1973), p.3. The final resolution at the 1972 session had urged the college to bring a more comprehensive and detailed proposal to the 1973 session with regards to program and campus development, following the defeat of a CMBC board motion requesting authorization to construct facilities at CMBC to meet some of the existent needs (office, lounge and library space).
5. 1976 CMC Yearbook, p. 39
6. 1976 CMC Yearbook, p. 50
7. CMC Bulletin, Vol. 13, No. 1 (May 30, 1977), p. 14-15
8. 1977 CMC Yearbook, p. 51, 58, 60
9. Lawrence Klippenstein and John Friesen, "The Mennonite Heritage Centre: For Research and Study", *Mennonite Life*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (Dec. 1978), p. 22.



Terry Hiebert changing the lights inside the MHC archival storage vault. This photo also shows some of the current space crisis. Every row of shelves is full to the top. The next solution to create space will be to install a mobile shelving system. For more information how you can help, contact MHC Director, Alf Redekopp at 204-888-6781, ext. 193.

Genealogy and Family History

By Alf Redekopp

Recent Books

Don Fehr. *A Family Gathering of the Descendants of Heinrich Fehr (15 Jun 1846-12 Sep 1911) and Sarah Neufeld (18 Jun 1847 - 4 Sep 1922)* (Port Coquitlam, BC: Private Publication, 2003) 149 pp.

This book was compiled as an attempt to help those attending a family reunion to understand how they are related to one another. The reunion was for the descendants of Heinrich Fehr (1846-1911) who married Sara Neufeld (1847-1922) in 1870 and who immigrated to Canada in 1876, settling in the village of Hoffnungsfeld in the Manitoba Mennonite West Reserve, and who both died in Saskatchewan after the start of the 20th century. This book includes a chapter on the "Genealogy of the Manitoba Fehrs and DeFehrs before the Russian emigration" written by James Jakob Fehr, a chapter consisting of a reprint from the book *Reinland: An Experience in Community* describing the trip and pioneer beginnings in Canada, and a chapter on the village Hoffnungsfeld written by John Dyck. The book concludes with the list of descendants of Heinrich and Sarah Fehr with an accompanying index. Contact: Don Fehr, 782 Wright Ave., Port Coquitlam, BC V3B 5M7; E: don_fehr@telus.net.

Michael Penner. *Of Russian Roots and Canadian Migration: The illustrated Story of the Abram P. Bergmann and Katharina Wiens Family and Ancestry* (2nd edition) (New Westminster, BC: MBGP Publications, 2003) 115 pp.

This book contains the biographies of Abram P. Bergmann (1884-1971) and his wife Katharina Wiens (1887-1980) as researched and written by their great grandson Michael Penner. Abram P. Bergmann was born in Ladokopp, Molotschna and his wife was born on the private estate Hochfeld, Schoenfeld Colony in South Russia. This family came to Canada in 1925. The biographies are supplemented with translations of the writings of Abram P. Bergmann as well as brief vignettes on the parents and some of

the siblings of Abram P. Bergmann and Katharina Wiens. A genealogical listing at the end will help the descendants understand how they are related to each other. Contact: Michael Penner, 1603-707 Seventh Ave., New Westminster, BC V3M 2J2.

Delbert F. Plett. *Johann Plett: A Mennonite Family Saga* (Steinbach, MB: Crossway Publications Inc., 2003) 858 pp.

This book begins with the story of Johann Plett (b. before 1718) of Ellerwald, the earliest known common ancestor of all the Russian Mennonite Pletts and their modern-day diaspora in Germany, Canada, U.S.A., Mexico, Belize, and elsewhere. It is a Mennonite "family saga" with biographies to the fifth and sixth generation. The book is divided into three major sections – the historical background section, the Michael Plett section and Johann Plett section; and, three shorter sections – the Anna Plett Isaac (1766-1807) section, the Maria Plett Dyck (b. 1767) section and the Heinrich Plett (1769-1843) section. Contact: Delbert F. Plett, Box 1960, Steinbach, MB R0A 2A0 or phone 204-326-6465.

Dave Obee. *Destination Canada: A Guide to 20th Century Immigration Records* (Victoria, BC: Private Publication, 2001) 42 pp.

Far more immigration to Canada took place in the 20th century than before that date. This book attempts to tell us what federal government records exist to help us study this period. We learn, for example, that the federal government has released passenger lists and border entry records up to 1935 and that naturalization and citizenship indexes are available up to 1951 with some limitations. These records may be accessed through the National Archives of Canada on microfilm. This book lists the microfilm numbers for ocean arrivals (1925-1935) (organized by date and ship name), border entry records (1908-1935) (organized by port of entry and a date range) and border entry records (Immigration Form 30) (1919-1924) (organized alphabetically by name of immigrant). Another section in

this guide is the list of Naturalization indexes published in the *Canada Gazette* (1915-1947), as well as summary of regulations pertaining to naturalization and citizenship in Canada from 1906 to 1946. The book may be order from: Dave Obee, 4687 Falaise Drive, Victoria, BC V8Y 1B4.

Gwen Rempel. *The Klippenstein Sisters: Anna, Katharina, Sara and Lena* (Lloydminster, AB: Private Publication, 2003) 199 pp.

The sisters which are the subject of this study were the daughters of Johann Klippenstein (1876-1916) and Lena Derksen (1881-1935) who lived in the village of Silberfeld about 40 km from Slavgorod in Siberia, Russia. Lena remarried in 1917 to Kornelius Unger (1867-1947). They left the Soviet Union in 1931 and eventually settled in the Fernheim colony, Paraguay. Together they had twelve children. The book follows the genealogical lines of three of the Klippenstein children -- Sara, Katharina and Anna who were all able to come to Canada, and whose descendants have been meeting for several reunions within the past ten years. The book includes hundreds of photos, tributes to 14 persons who have passed away, numerous maps, and other related materials. Unlike some genealogies church affiliation is a prominent line in the brief biographical sketches. Often the affiliation is Mennonite Brethren, but there are also others. Contact: Gwen Rempel at erempel@telusplanet.net

Queries

Sawatzky / Pauls – Searching for any information about my parents and grandparents, especially on my father's side. Johann Sawatzky b. July 26, 1887 in Rosenthal was married in 1902 or 1908 to Helena Pauls b. May 7, 1890 in Eichenfeld. They emigrated from Russia to Canada in 1923, settling in Didsbury, Alberta, then on a farm in the Pleasant Pointe district near Dundurn, Saskatchewan. Contact: Hilda (Sawatzky) Peters, 101-1395 Molson St., Winnipeg, MB R2K 4L8 or phone 204-885-5294.

Send inquiries to Alf Redekopp, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4 or e-mail: aredekopp@mennonitechurch.ca

War Ship, Ice Blocks and Mennonite COs

by Donovan Giesbrecht of Winnipeg

It was supposed to be the weapon that would win the Second World War: an unsinkable battleship made out of ice, tar, and refrigeration pipes. And if that's not bizarre enough, pacifist Mennonites were to construct the prototype.

In the later months of 1942, the British were in desperate need of warships that could withstand attacks from German U-boats. Inventor Geoffrey Pyke proposed a solution: a 2000 foot ice ship, weighing 1.8 million tons, with enough refrigeration equipment to repair any damage that a German torpedo could inflict. Churchill expressed interest in the idea, and as a result, plans were made to construct a small scale version of the ship at Patricia Lake, Alberta, in what is now Jasper National Park. The top secret affair was code named the "Habbakuk project." "For I am doing something in your own days that you would not believe if you were told it." (Hab 1:5)

David D. Goerzen—now a retired farmer living just east of Calgary—found himself working on the undercover project as a young man of 18. Goerzen joined a mixed group of conscientious objectors (COs) that were shipped to Patricia Lake as labourers—part of the Canadian government's contribution to the Habbakuk project.

Earlier in the year, I had the opportunity to visit with Goerzen about some of his unique experiences as a CO. I asked him if building this top secret ice ship was a



The Ice Ship model built at Patricia Lake weighed over a thousand tons and was completed in March 1943.

difficult job. "Oh no, that was interesting," Goerzen remarked with a glint in his eye. He went on to explain how the operation proceeded at Patricia Lake. First, the COs cut grooves in the ice and then they drove wedges in the grooves to break off sizable cubes of ice. After that, the cubes were dragged out of the water and fused together with a tar/shavings mixture. While this went on, tradesmen were busy laying refrigeration pipes along the huge ice slab.

But how did pacifist Mennonites feel about building the prototype of Britain's secret weapon? According to Goerzen, the COs didn't really understand what they were working on, and besides, who would have suspected that a warship—intended to sail the Atlantic, mind you—would be constructed in a secluded lake that was hundreds of miles from the ocean. Goerzen explained, "When you're in these situations you don't ask too many questions, and they don't tell you too much...Oh sure you heard talk of different things, but you get a bunch of boys together with no outside news really, and of course it was top secret, nobody said anything...We just did what we were told."

In fact it was not until much later that Goerzen realized what the Habbukuk project was all about, and this only because he stumbled upon an article in a 1984 issue of *Western People*.

According to the article, however, Mennonite and Doukhobor labourers heard rumors that they were working on a military weapon and in protest "formed a committee and wrote to the provincial government asking to be shipped to B.C. and Alberta farming communities (*Western People*, 20 September 1984)." But Goerzen, who was at Patricia Lake for the full duration of the Habbukuk project, can't recall any committee of the sort. In response to the article's claim, Goerzen stated "I kind of wonder whether this writer made it up himself."

Whatever the case, the Habbukuk project was destined to fail. It was very costly to maintain and it did not meet the expectations of its supporters. As a result, the ship was left to sink to the bottom of Patricia Lake.

While the project was an obvious failure, Goerzen's two and a half years of service were nothing of the sort. His experiences at Patricia Lake and at other alternative service work camps were predominantly positive. With a glowing smile, Goerzen tells of climbing mountains, swimming in hot springs, entertaining wild animals, singing to the tune of guitars, pondering over chess matches, and even studying Biblical Hebrew and Greek—with the help of a University educated co-labourer. "Oh I don't regret it at all," Goerzen said, "It was good. It was a very good experience."

(cont'd on p. 9)



David Goerzen's experience as a CO initiated a life-time of volunteering at places like this MCC Thrift Store in Calgary which now also houses the Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta's library and archival collection. Photo courtesy of Donovan Giesbrecht.

Mediaeval Music Collection

by Walter Loewen

"Bullfight plus Tourist equals Mediaeval Music Collection" is how I describe the events leading up to my private collection of music manuscripts.

February 1970 my dear wife Elly and I attended the Annual Frankfurter Messe in regards to our involvement with the music industry in Canada. Trade shows are always hectic and a trip to Barcelona, Spain for some rest and relaxation would be just the ticket.

Our attempt to see a bullfight proved unsuccessful. While all the spectators were seated in the stands ready for the action to begin, a public address system mounted on a small car entered the bullring and blared out something in Spanish. All pandemonium broke loose. The spectators showed their displeasure to the announcement by flinging their rented seat cushions flying through the air into the bullring and then left. This was to be our first and only experience with bullfights. An exiting afternoon at the bullring was expected, but not in this form. Our bewilderment was calmed when someone interpreted the announcement. The bullfight had been cancelled because the bulls did not show up. After a taxi ride back to the hotel, it was decided to walk around the old sec-



Car in bullfight arena in Barcelona, Spain announcing that the show was cancelled (1970).

tion of Barcelona, in stark contrast to our earlier exciting expectations.

The inevitable antique shop with its display of old pistols, pots, pans and paintings beckoned this holiday couple over the threshold. An anxious shopkeeper showed us many things we were not interested in. I did notice however a small stack of loose sheets on the floor off to one side of the shop. It appeared these sheets had music notes on staff lines with words below the staff lines. When I asked about them, the shopkeeper referred to them as *pergamino*. Language difficulties did not allow for adequate discussion. It was obvious from his repeated *pergamino* emphasis that he considered these old sheets of parchment to have an antique value for the parchment sooner than any musical significance. The sheets were after all just random sheets. I bought three *pergamino* sheets for a few dollars each without hesitation and Elly and I continued our stroll through the city.

It has to be understood, when you are immersed in the music industry every day of the year and have just finished a hectic week at the music trade show, THOU SHALT NOT pursue any music business while on your vacation with your sweetheart.

Thoughts of what could be done with these sheets of parchment with music notation on them were to frame each one and gift them to some of our music teacher customers. It was soon determined

that we had brought home parchment with mediaeval music manuscript of Gregorian Chant. Hindsight indicated the whole pile should have been purchased from the antique shopkeeper who was oblivious to their value.

The Frankfurter Messe is an annual event so the plan was to return to Barcelona the following year. Certain limited research on parchment manuscripts in preparation for next year's holiday junket would be desirable. The public library provided various pieces of information to provide some focus on what to look for. Armed with this new found albeit limited knowledge, Elly and I proceeded to search for manuscripts following the trade show. In Duesseldorf we discovered the absence of this type of manuscript. We were told that most everything was sold many years ago. Some shops had a few wrinkled and soiled sheets selling at prices beyond what we were willing to pay. Our next stop was Rome. It was encouraging to find several quite unique pages in antique bookstores. Selection was again extremely limited. We happened upon a market and found a street vendor selling antiques. To our surprise he had the best part of an old book with all pages separated, selling by the page. After a time of serious negotiations as to price, a transaction involving numerous pages was concluded. I must confess my intentions for these pages, was to use them as gift items for

(cont'd on p. 9)



Sample page from the Walter Loewen Gregorian Music Manuscript Collection recently donated to the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives.



Mennonite Heritage Centre

600 Shaftesbury Blvd Winnipeg MB Canada R3P 0M4

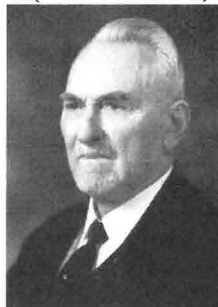
MHC Archives: 1933-2003

The archival programme of Mennonite Church Canada traces its origin to a decision in 1933 to appoint Bernhard J. Schellenberg (1879-1966) as the first archivist for the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. For many years the programme consisted of an appointed position, no budget for most of the time except for a small honorarium, and no specific physical storage space. It wasn't until the 1970s that budget moneys began to be set aside annually to staff an office and develop the programme. A major boost came to the programme 25 years ago with the construction of a separate building (see article on p. 1). However, without the dedication of people appointed by the church for the specific office or function, the archives would not have become what it is today. The following photos are intended to recognize and acknowledge their work in celebration of 70 years of archiving.

Early Archivists (1933-1973)



Schellenberg
1933-1941



Ewert
1941-1958



Lohrenz
1958-1966



Epp
1966-1973

Directors of the MHC Archives 1973-1999

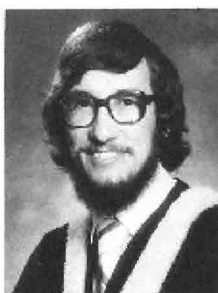


Klippenstein
1973-1997



Reddig
1997-1999

Acting or Interim Directors of the MHC Archives



Stoesz (interim)
1984-1986



Rempel (acting)
1992-1993

Bernhard J. Schellenberg (1897-1966), Benjamin Ewert (1870-1958), Gerhard Lohrenz (1899-1986) and Henry H. Epp (1925-) were the our archival pioneers. Lawrence Klippenstein (1930-) and Ken Reddig (1946-) were the "first-generation" of archivists, dedicated to developing the programme.

The Heritage Centre was served by interim directors on two occasions when Lawrence Klippenstein was away on a leave – these "acting directors" were Dennis Stoesz and Peter Rempel.

An part-time archival assistant position has been staffed for the past ten years. Persons who served in this capacity include: Bev Suderman (1984-1986), Jim Suderman (1986-1990), Peter Rempel (1990-1994), Alf Redekopp (1994-1999) and Conrad Stoesz (1999-present).

After the move into the MHC building in 1978 the following people served in the position of secretary/receptionist: Lois Schmidt (1978-1979), Elizabeth Quapp (1979-1980), Iris Toews (1980-1981), Ruth Epp (1981), Bev Dyck (1981-1983), June Wallman (1983-1984), Bev Suderman (1984-1986), Jim Suderman (1986-1990), Kimberly Epp (1990-1992) and Connie Wiebe (1992-present).

Many, many students, volunteers and special project archivists have also served and made significant contributions to the development of the MHC Archives, especially during the past 25 years.

A.R.



Current MHC Staff: Alf Redekopp, Director (1999-present), Connie Wiebe (Secretary/Reception/Administrative Assistant (1992-present), Ray Dirks, MHC Gallery Curator (1998-present) and Conrad Stoesz, Archivist (1999-present).

Helmut Huebert Completes Lengthy Term as Chair of the Historical Committee

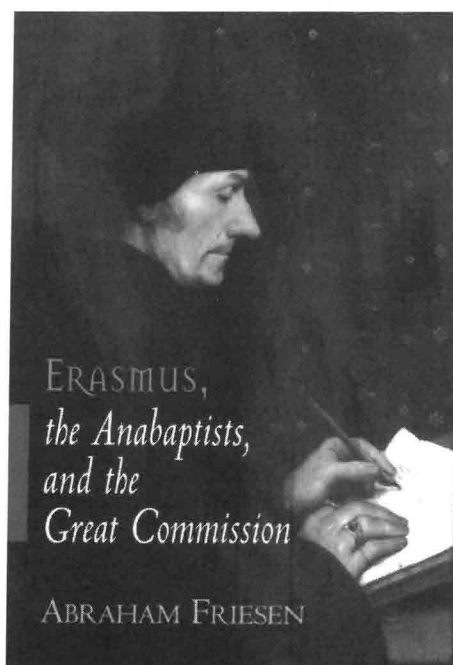


Dr. Helmut Huebert recently resigned as Chair of the Historical Committee of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, a post which he had held for many years. Dr. Huebert was involved with the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies since its beginnings in the 1970s. At that time he was also a member of the Historical Commission of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches in North America, which developed a comprehensive plan for the three major archival centres in the United States and Canada.

Dr. Huebert has demonstrated a strong interest in Russian Mennonite history in many ways, including particularly the publication of the well-known *Mennonite Historical Atlas*, which was produced in cooperation with William Schroeder. It is now in its second edition and was published by Springfield Publishers, owned by Huebert. Huebert has published a number of other books, including *Hierschau: An Example of Russian Mennonite Life* (1986) and *Events and People: Events in Russian Mennonite History and the People that made them Happen* (1999). He is presently working on other projects such as a Molochna Colony map book and a documentation of the various Mennonite estates in southern Russia.

Huebert will continue as a member of the Historical Committee, which is now chaired by Gerald C. Ediger.

Abe Dueck



Many scholars have pointed to the influence of Erasmus on the early Anabaptists, but the extent of this influence has never been firmly established. This volume uses new data to argue convincingly that the early Anabaptist movement depended on the ideas and thought of Erasmus. Abraham Friesen traces the intellectual origins of both Swiss Anabaptism and Menno Simons to the writings of Erasmus and shows the impact that Erasmus ultimately had on the form and content of Anabaptist thought.

To order contact Conrad Stoesz at the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies at cstoesz@mbconf.ca. Cost is \$20.00 plus tax, shipping, and handling.



CENTRE FOR
**Mennonite
Brethren
Studies** IN CANADA

1-169 Riverton Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada R2L 2E5

75th Anniversary Book of Concordia Hospital

This year is the 75th anniversary of Concordia Hospital. The hospital began as a maternity hospital on 291 Machray Avenue in north Winnipeg and admitted its first patient on July 29, 1928. In 1931 it moved to 720 Beverley St., then in 1934 to a much larger facility on De Salaberry Street in Elmwood. Finally, in 1974, the hospital was moved to its present location on Concordia Ave.

Abe Dueck, former Director of the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, was commissioned by the Board of Directors to write the anniversary book, which is entitled, *Concordia Hospital: Faith, Health and Community. 75 Years, 1928-2003*. It is scheduled for release in October. Dueck also wrote *Concordia Hospital 1928-1978* for the 50th anniversary in 1978.



Concordia Hospital, 1934.

Sketches From Siberia II: Some Workshop Notes

by Lawrence Klippenstein

Russian Mennonites studies, especially in the field of art, have drawn new inspiration from the recently-exhibited paintings of Jacob Sudermann (1888-1937), originally from Khortitza, southern Ukraine, and then exiled to Siberia. The exhibition, titled *Sketches from Siberia: The Paintings of Jacob Sudermann*, and curated by Werner Toews and Ray Dirks, both of Winnipeg, drew much positive comment at the Mennonite Heritage Centre where the show concluded on July 19.

The workshop on Mennonites of Siberia, held at the Heritage Centre on June 21, also owed its reason for being to the Sudermann exhibit. It sought to highlight a part of the Mennonite story which has been somewhat forgotten, given the pre-eminence which the "mother colonies", Khortitza and Molotschna, have always had in talking, writing and publishing about the Mennonite experience in the former Soviet Union.

A suitable centennial celebration of Mennonite life in Siberia could have been held in 1997 but seemingly such an event did not occur, at least not as far as we know. There one would have recalled the first Mennonite settlers, coming from the older Mennonite colonies, such as Peter Wiens' family, who came to the city of Omsk, Siberia, as permanent residents already in 1897. His was the first of a number of businesses that emerged in Omsk and elsewhere, although farming the steppes occupied most of the first comers and their descendants.

It could have been the time also to provide a memorial of some kind for many thousands, Mennonites and others, for whom Siberia, more specifically the *Gulag* was usually a word that signified exile, suffering and death. Many publications have given this theme significant attention, and, it would seem, more are on the way. Anna Applebaum's recent study of *Gulag* history is one recent example.

Belatedly perhaps, but cognizant of something "neglected and forgotten", the workshop touched on these themes and a few others. Nine presentations, prepared somewhat at short notice, could clearly do little more than scratch the surface. All the presenters and others helping in the workshop earned the gratitude of the two

dozen or so participants who became involved.

An opening survey note brought attention to the Mennonite start-ups in Siberia, meaning the first settlements of Omsk and the Kulunda steppes which began to appear in 1901 and 1908 respectively. That included expressions of thanks for some the earlier lay historians, who helped put the Mennonite story of Siberia on the map -- persons like Jacob J. Hildebrand (*Siberien*), Peter Rahn (*Mennoniten in der Umgebung von Omsk*) and Gerhard Fast (*In den Steppen Sibiriens*).

The planners thought it appropriate to put all these brief essays in the context of the Sudermann paintings, since many came from the period of his Siberian exile in the mid-1930s. A paper early in the program brought the story of Jacob. An even more unknown topic covered, as the story of the art of Sudermann's colleague, Abram Froese (1899-1942?) was told. Both men lived and died in Svobodny. Gerd Froese's new 50-page publication, launched at the workshop, and titled *The Gate and Other Paintings of the Gulag* (with about 80 smaller and larger colour sketches, and an artistic blending of the family story with the themes of the paintings) is a wonderful vignette in its own right, deserving much wider distribution than it has had so far.

With their contributions on the art of Mennonites in Russia, Werner Toews and Gerd Froese of Winnipeg have placed the art of Russian Mennonites considerably more at the forefront of cultural developments in the Mennonite communities of that day. They are challenging others to penetrate a theme not really dealt with in depth till now.

Several fairly recent but not necessarily

well known publications, *The Siberian Diary of Aron Toews*, published by Olga Rempel of Virgil, Ontario and *The Silence Echoes: Memoirs of Trauma and Tears*, published by Sarah Dyck of Waterloo, Ontario drew attention to the exile theme. Readings chosen by Ingrid Janzen Lamp, editor of *Der Bote*, and Helene Friesen, author of Volumes III to V of the *Bote Index*, familiarized participants with these volumes, and highlighted the darker side of the Mennonite Siberian odyssey.

The Amur Mennonite settlement has been given a very helpful boost with the publication of an essay in *Forschungen zur Geschichte und Kultur der Russlanddeutschen* by Manfred Klaube (Volume 10, 2000). At the workshop Klaube's extended and detailed treatment was deftly summarized and briefly analyzed by Ed Hoepfner. Much recent research on the Germans/Mennonites of Siberia has been appearing in this journal since it was founded by German scholars around 1990.

More recent decades of Siberian Mennonite life formed the general topic of three afternoon papers. Peter Rempel, now with Mennonite Church Canada as missions administrator, spoke about the future of the Mennonite church in Siberia, while Jacob M. Klassen, long-time administrator with MCC Canada (with the help of files from Harold Jantz), introduced participants to the leadership and ministry of Rev. Nikolai Dueckmann, leader of the Evangelical Baptist Union of Siberia, headquartered in Marianovka near Omsk. This group is the successor to what was from 1902 to 1957 an association of Mennonite Brethren congregations in that area.

Experiences of learning to know the Mennonite community of Neudachino (now largely Khazakian Russian, with the emigration of most earlier Mennonite residents to Germany), were shared by Lawrence Klippenstein, with the help of new data from one-time MCCers there, Ben and Erna Falk of Virgil, Ontario. This village was founded around 1907 as the most easterly of dozens of Mennonite communities established along the Trans-siberian Railway to the east of Petropavlovsk from 1900 on.

A similar workshop is being projected for a day in October, perhaps, at the Mennonite Heritage Village where the Sudermann paintings are still expected to display. Further details will be announced shortly.



Lawrence Klippenstein, introducing "Sketches from Siberia II Workshop" on July 21, 2003 in the MHC Gallery. Artworks of Jacob Sudermann (1888-1937) can be seen displayed in the background. Photo courtesy of Werner Toews.

War Ship

(cont'd from p. 4)

Goerzen's CO service left him with many fond memories, but perhaps more importantly, it initiated a life-time of voluntary service. Goerzen has been volunteering with MCC and the Alberta Mennonite Conference for much of his life, and he notes that many of the former CO boys have done the same. "When you look at the Mormons here, they demand that their boys take two years of training and they have to go out and do service work...I think the Mennonites should have the same kind of program where their boys go out for say two years, away from mom and dad, and in some way contribute to the church."

In Goerzen's view, working without pay at a young age helps to set a life-pattern of service. He acknowledged that many of our young people are doing this kind of service with MCC related projects. Nonetheless, Goerzen's advice still deserves amplification. If Mennonites wish to continue to form youth that are disciples of Jesus, they must also encourage them to invest their time in voluntary service. Jesus, our example, came to serve, not to be served, and it is this attitude of service that Goerzen's life depicts well.

As for some of those fond memories—including unique tales of war ships, ice blocks, and Mennonite COs—they are recorded on cassette tape at the Mennonite Heritage Centre waiting to be explored further.

For more info on the Habbukuk project see:
 "Taped interview with David D. Goerzen," 9 June 2003, deposited at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, MB.
 Ferguson, Ted. "Pyke's Ice Ship." *Western People* (20 September 1984).
 McEvoy, F.J. "Professor Pyke's Secret Weapon," *The Beaver* (April/May 1994) p. 32-39.
 Robertson, Terence. "The Weirdest Weapon of the War," *Macleans Magazine* (17 December 1960).
 Stormy Weather Software Website:
www.stormy.ca/marine/habbakuk.html.

This article was inspired by the proposal by the Mennonite Heritage Centre to create a virtual exhibit for the web on the contributions of the Canadian Conscientious Objectors to war during the World War II. For more information see notice below (this page). --AR



David Goerzen of Calgary and interviewer Donovan Giesbrecht of Winnipeg

Medieval Music

(cont'd from p. 5)

our valued customers back in Canada. We left Rome with great enthusiasm to continue our search.

Our next stop Madrid, was without success. Barcelona, where the original purchase was made the previous year was the next stop. The antique shop was easily found, but to our great disappointment, the shopkeeper had not a single sheet of manuscript in the shop. Surely we can't end our search here. After much sign language and pleading to show me to where I might buy some manuscripts we were directed to a tiny shop down a narrow street not far away.

It was the *Libreria de Tomas Trallero Bardaji*. This gentleman shopkeeper was a professor who spoke English, but was blind. His helper was his wife. In his shop he sold various antiques including books, maps, parchment documents, music manuscripts, and various curios. He immediately became aware of what we were after, and suggested that we come back the following day as he could not offer us any suitable manuscripts from his existing stock. (We would learn at a later time, the professor acted as a broker for a monastery in the countryside that would sell some of their antiquities to raise money for the monastery.)

The complete books that the professor brought in for us to consider stimulated a drastic change in our approach as to the potential of our search. We could not imagine rare books of this kind would be an option for us to achieve. We chose to purchase four books.

The professor's experience in selling rare antiquities led him to advise me as to the export license requirements to avoid criminal charges by the Spanish customs

officers. The large book was the only book requiring such a license. With the help of a brokerage house in Barcelona, funds and power of attorney were given them to give effect to the necessary government export license, purchase and shipment to Winnipeg.

Our next stops were Paris and London where we came up empty handed in efforts to find manuscripts for sale. The visit to the London Museum was interesting as we saw the first printed music book on display. It was printed shortly after the time of the invention of the Gutenberg press. The 1536 edition we had purchased from Professor Trallero looked the same in size and format. With this rewarding visit to the museum we ended our manuscript search and returned to Winnipeg with antiquities that were well beyond our comprehension and understanding.

The Walter Loewen Medieval Music Manuscript Collection will be on display briefly at the Mennonite Heritage during the CMU Homecoming Weekend, Sat. Sep. 27, 2003, noon till 5 pm.

Canadian Conscientious Objectors to War Virtual Exhibit

We are proposing to create a new interactive web exhibit to highlight the experiences and contributions of Mennonite COs in World War Two (1939-1945). If you have photos, letters, interviews, audio recordings etc. relating to this important time, please contact Conrad Stoesz, MHC Archives, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4.

Book Notes

by Adolf Ens

Information, photographs, and other materials relating to the history of Matheson Island have been gathered over a number of years by a variety of persons. Neill and Edith von Gunten have compiled and organized this material and provided additional text to produce the long awaited history book. *From Paddles to Propellers. The History of Matheson Island: A Fishing Community* (Matheson Island, MB: Matheson Island Community Council, 2003, 619 pages, hdc.) is available from the compilers or through Native Ministries, Mennonite Church Canada. As Matheson Island was the first ministry location of Mennonite Pioneer Mission, later Native Ministries, the book is of interest to many Mennonites in southern Manitoba and beyond. Another modest volume, Sirlux-bound, (37 pages) containing additional photographs, entitled *Matheson Island Memories: A Celebration of Mennonite Pioneer Mission and Native Ministries' Involvement at Matheson Island, 1948-2003* will also be of special interest to Mennonite readers.

John A. Harder, ed. and trans. *From Kleefeld with Love* (Kitchener: Pandora Press, 2003 co-published with Herald Press, pb, 198 pp., \$22) is a model of what can be done with family letters of historical interest. This powerful volume describes a turbulent era (1914-1933) of war, revolution, famine and emigration in Russia-USSR. Both the primary correspondent, Mariechen Harder, and the translator-editor have a keen sense of detail and bring a reflective mind to their task. Photographs and carefully selected supplementary information from a wide range of sources allow even the uninformed reader to understand the context of this story. It will be of interest far beyond the Harder clan whose story is its focus.

The Old Colony (Reinländer) emigration to Mexico in the 1920s was undertaken by a decision of the Church. However, in the end fewer than half made the move. This presented a dilemma since all but two ministers emigrated. Abram G. Janzen of Hague, Saskatchewan, has recounted the story of one of them in a small booklet, *Altester Johan M. Loeppky, 1882- 1950: As I Remember Him* (By the Author, 2003, 24 pp). Loeppky was elected Ältester of the group that

remained in the Hague-Osler area in Saskatchewan 1930 and later helped to organize the group that remained in Manitoba as well. Janzen's account is very helpful in understanding the complex dynamics of this group migration and of ministry to those who remained behind.

Lena Mennonite Church 1926-1968, compiled and edited by John Dyck (Winnipeg: Book Committee, 2003, 60 pp), was produced in preparation for a service of remembrance and the unveiling of a memorial stone at the church's cemetery this summer. Besides the history of this former branch of the Whitewater Mennonite Church founded by 1926 immigrants, the book contains biographies of all leading ministers and elders who served the group, a membership list of the church families, and brief biographies of persons interred in the cemetery.

A much more substantial congregational history is Laureen Harder's *Risk and Endurance: A History of Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church* (Kitchener: Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, 2003, pb., 236 pp). Born out of revival and the liberal-fundamentalist controversies of the 1920s, Stirling has an interesting history of blending solid Mennonite identity with independent "risk-taking" innovation. After its break from First Mennonite of Kitchener and the Ontario Mennonite Conference in 1924, it remained an independent congregation until its affiliation with the General Conference in 1946 (through membership in its USA Eastern District). In 1981 it joined the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. Harder focuses less on organizational detail than on a narrative of a community of faith. Very well written, thoroughly researched, and always aware of the broader context, this is an excellent congregational history.

Edward M Ledohowski, *The Heritage Landscape of the Crow Wing Study Region of Southeastern Manitoba* (Winnipeg: Historic Resources Branch, Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism, 2003) is a very useful volume of background information for the study of any community east of the Red River from Winnipeg south to the US border. The author will be familiar to many readers from his earlier publications on architectural heritage in Mennonite areas of Manitoba. The current volume is a pilot project in "looking at heritage from a regional, rather than a localized" perspective. In addition to surveying the natural landscape, Ledohowski looks at

pre-European Native land use, the fur trade era, the various land surveys and settlement groups, as well as later developments in infrastructure and agriculture. Numerous maps and photographs are well chosen. While discussion of specifically Mennonite settlements is limited, the thorough background introduction to the areas of Mennonite settlement is very helpful. The "Crow Wing Study Region" includes a narrow strip west of the Red River, including the Morris area and the West Reserve almost up to Altona-Rosenfeld.

Book Reviews

(cont'd from p. 12)

particular names do appear here because one is far less familiar with a large group of people of Mennonite background who found their way into Soviet society and could live and work there under a new atheistic regime.

A number of the biographies are excellent enhancements of shorter and less well researched versions that have appeared in print earlier. Others comprise quite new and very excellent fresh research that definitely widens our field of information about the persons. The items on Heinrich J. Braun, David G. Rempel, Rinamarus and several others fit here.

Some of the essays are somewhat narrower in scope and one assumes more information will be forthcoming. The one on Abraham H. Unruh could have had a stronger analytical section dealing with his 850-page volume, *Die Geschichte der Mennoniten Brueder Gemeinde* (1954) for which the full title does not even appear in the text. The names of Jacob Kroeker's children would have been a useful addition to that story. Writers for this series note more than once that specific biographical material is indeed sometimes hard to acquire, which is what make these writings most significant as a whole.

Not meant to be "hagiography", anthologies such as this one which look for the "great men", tends to lean somewhat in that direction at times. More than one attempt is made to "set the record straight" and fill in gaps for a better appreciation of what this or that person really did produce. Commitments, if only for a time to rightist ideologies like National Socialism (or leftist, as noted) are dealt with gently on the whole, and the matter of personal Christian faith moved

rather to the background in several instances.

The book is well edited, typos are rare, and the text, with accompanying photos, is most readable. Pandora Press has done its job well. This reviewer would find a consistent use of footnotes and a formal list of references desirable for all the essays. Some important documents in archival collections could further flesh out the stories.

We are deeply indebted to Harry Loewen and all his colleagues who have brought this project to pass. May their "tribe increase", and other published collections like this come into being soon.

Gerd Froese. **The Gate and other Pictures painted in the Gulag** (Winnipeg: Private Publication, 2000). 52 pp.

Ida Bender. **The Dark Abyss of Exile: A Story of Survival** / translated by Laura Anderson and William Wiest, with Carl Anderson. (Fargo, ND: Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, 2000) 197 pp.

Reviewed by Lawrence Klippenstein

The experiences of those who suffered and died in the Gulag has been told and published many times and places. Each person's experience, and millions had it, was different however, so the total account is still far from complete. These two portraits bring that account somewhat closer to the full picture.

The Gate has to do with the exiled life, in Siberia, of the author's father, Abram Froese. Its focal point is in one sense a set of paintings, some 80 in all, done in watercolour by Abram during his time of imprisonment, and sent to his family during the time that correspondence was permitted (through 1937).

The text is woven around the paintings in a brief review of general early Soviet history, but particularly also of the experience of the family in the early years of the Soviet regime, and then Abram's years in prison till he died in 1942.

All the biographical and autobiographical notes gain a special poignancy, connected as they are here to the various smaller and larger painted pieces often directly designed for the occasion of a birthday, the recall of special moments in the family, the beauty of nature, but also in a few instances certainly somewhat veiled references to the artist's own situation in Siberia (p.49).

The Siberian landscape as a whole is touchingly highlighted by the author in his commentary on the paintings, and his father's life and work as a whole.

The pictures are all the more moving as one sees in them, the loving and deeply moving attempts of a father in deep distress to be of some comfort to his family, going through its very difficult times, and attempts to sustain a parental and husband's relationship in this inescapable and ultimately totally depriving situation. The originals of the paintings remain in the possession of the author.

The last letter which the family received from Abram mentioned the sentence of another ten years, saying also that he was being transferred to physical labour on a railroad. One needs to mention here that his place of exile was in fact the city of Svobodny (meaning freedom) on the Transsiberian Railway, and not too far from the western villages of the Mennonite settlement which had opened up in the Amur region in the late 1920s. It is not clear that Abram ever learned about these villages during his stay in Svobodny.

As it happened Abram spent a good deal of his time working along side another Mennonite artist, exiled, as it happened to the same locality. This man was Jacob Sudermann, also from Chortitza, and serving a period of exile very similar to that of Abram. The paintings of Sudermann, recently exhibited at the Mennonite Heritage Centre and now at Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach, form another very important corpus of Russian Mennonite artistic endeavour, which as a whole is still waiting for fuller discovery and discussion. This collection may be featured in a publication at some future time.

In **The Dark Abyss** Ida Hollmann, a young woman in a Volga German family living at Engels in the former Soviet Union, is introduced as a student in foreign languages in Leningrad, when World War II broke out. It was very soon decreed that the entire German population of the area would be forcibly evacuated to other regions. They would henceforth be treated as spies and saboteurs, and often destined for ultimate destruction.

A moving story of getting ready for leaving home forever, with all the accompanying difficulties and distress is told in simple, but dramatic detail. The long years of exile would begin very soon. By September of 1941 they had

come to Siberia where the more difficult journey of survival began.

For the family in this account the tragedy of mass deportation deepened greatly when the Father was removed from the family, and the mother with children needed to survive by themselves.

A fishing town on the Yenesei River would become home for a number of years. Finding enough food to eat, and a roof over their heads, was a daily terrible struggle. Pressures from the local governing authorities, and even from hostile neighbours became almost unbearable at times. But giving in was not an option that this family considered at any time.

After seven or eight years things improved somewhat. Limited German cultural activities were permitted in the nearby city of Iskup. Father would write letters as he could to encourage the family. Ida's time in the Trudarmia ended in July, 1948. and soon the family was on the way to Krasnoyarsk. Ida had married Rudolf Bender the year before. Release from perpetual supervision created by the Kommandatura (strict supervision regime) came in 1956.

The final sections of the book describe the untiring efforts made by people like Ida's father, and others, including entire delegations to Moscow, to secure an end to the many oppressive regulations directed at the Germans which continued long after 1956. After moving to Kamyshin it was possible to join a German cultural club, and then began the struggle to obtain documents to emigrate. The organization *Wiedergeburt* (meaning Rebirth) was organized in 1989 to help these and related efforts by the Germans to improve their lot in the Soviet Union, and also to find ways to leave. Ida's father, a writer and constant promoter of a better lot for his people, right to the end, died in 1990.

A year later in 1991 Ida and her husband Rudolph arrived in Hamburg, Germany, to begin a new life, and to undertake in due time, the recording of this overcoming testimonial.

Much appreciation will continue to go to Ida for getting this story recorded in such detail. Appreciation will also extend to the translators for making an English language publication possible, and to the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection for giving it to the public with photos, maps of the tortuous journey of the Hollmann and Bender families, and other good features.

Book Reviews

John A. Lapp & C. Arnold Snyder,
General Editors. **A Global Mennonite History: Volume One, Africa** (Kitchener ON: Pandora Press & Scottdale: Herald Press, 2003), 306 pp.

Writers: Alemu Checole with Samuel Asefa, Michael Kodzo Badasu, Bekithemba Dube, Doris Dube, Erik Kumedis, Barbara Nkala, I.U. Nsasak, Siaka Traore, Pakisa Tshimika

Reviewed by Anna Ens, Winnipeg

"To be an African is to sing and to dance" (14). What must it have meant to native Africans to be told by white missionaries that the songs they were singing and the dances that gave them vitality were sinful and inappropriate expressions of Christian worship? What did it do to their identity, their self-worth?

This book is a first for the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ (BIC) peoplehood. Uncensored, African writers, not western missionaries or service workers, are telling the story of the birth, growth and strength of their churches from their own perspectives. Researched and written within a relatively short time span so that the book could be ready for the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) Assembly in Zimbabwe last month, and with few published materials or documentary material at the writers' disposal, this volume is truly a wonder and an astounding gift to the Mennonite world fellowship.

God was in Africa before the missionaries came. The Christian churches, however, came into being with the arrival of the Christian missionaries. It is amazing how the diverse, complex, and powerful stories from 16 countries come together to present a larger reality of the now almost half a million member Mennonite and BIC church of sub-Saharan Africa. The book's organizational structure and general background themes give a helpful cohesiveness to the volume. Writers provide invaluable information on the geographical and historical context, the many tribes and languages, traditional African religion with its ceremonies, the slave trade in some regions, strong Muslim and Orthodox Church influences in others, the impact of colonial rule and western missionary activity, and the inevitable struggle for independence. A regional approach, with maps of Central,

Southern, Eastern and Western Africa, focuses the stories especially for non-African readers. Photos and "box stories and summaries" contribute significantly.

Some writers in this volume tend to be more critical in how and with what baggage the Gospel was presented by the missionaries, how the church came into being, and what contributed to its development or what became a liability. For example, institutions such as schools and hospitals, which mission agencies built and administered were extremely difficult for the indigenous church to maintain when independence came in the 1960s or later. Other writers, particularly those telling the story of the BIC churches in Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Botswana, are less analytical and more integrative of the work of missionaries and nationals. (Generally, the writers show an amazing measure of generosity, one of the main characteristics of both African traditional religion and the Christian Gospel.)

Both approaches are invaluable. The book gives much detailed information that helps non-Africans begin to understand African Christians. It provides food for reflection and dialogue on mutual questions, such as, what is the essence of the Gospel and what are the cultural trappings? It stimulates the removal of the barriers between nationalities (Jews and Greeks, Europeans and Africans) and tribes, slaves and free people, as well as between male and female persons in the church everywhere. For westerners, including mission boards and other international endeavours, it provides an unavoidable challenge to take a fresh look at their interpretation of the Gospel mandate and one-way, controlling, philosophy of missions that often resulted from it.

A first reading of the book leaves the overall impression of an African church triumphant and hopeful in spite of the liabilities of a colonial and missionary legacy, in spite of persecution, in spite of the current economic, political and social problems. Equipping and mobilizing the laity for proclamation and active commitment to peacemaking are taken seriously. First priority is to be faithful in sharing the Gospel, which leaves little time to focus on trials and tribulations. Ongoing are the churches efforts to know their identity and to discover how to be truly Christian, in an Anabaptist sense, and truly African.

It is hoped that this book, and those that will follow from other continents, will

nurture a worldwide sense of belonging together, promote mutual understanding, and stimulate the renewal and extension of Christianity with an Anabaptist emphasis. A projected schedule for further volumes in this MWC sponsored Global Mennonite History Project series is: Asia 2004, Latin America 2005, Europe 2006 and North America 2006. Hopefully, the longer time frame will allow subsequent volumes to include an index, among other things. An organizing committee of two members from each continent, the General Editors noted above, and the Executive Secretary of the Mennonite World Conference continue to give direction to this project.

Harry Loewen, ed. **Shepherds, Servants and Prophets: Leadership among the Russian Mennonites (ca. 1880-1960)** (Kitchener, ON and Scottdale, PA: Pandora Press copublished with Herald Press, 2003), 452 pp.

Reviewed by Lawrence Klippenstein

Twenty-four biographies of persons of Russian Mennonite background are found in this volume. It has brought to fruition a good idea, which, as the introduction suggests, may well be extended to cover other similar groups, such as women of note, or Kanadier Mennonites perhaps.

The twenty-four featured here are an eclectic group and only with considerable stretch of the imagination fit the category of "leaders who sought to serve and guide their (Mennonite) people". Certainly they were all achievers, in various fields, with the focus on spiritual, intellectual and cultural aspects of Mennonite community life and work.

Persons conversant with the Russian Mennonite story will be familiar with recent contemporaries like Cornelius Krahn and D.G. Rempel, as well as public servants such as C.F. Klassen, B.H. Unruh, and Arnold Dyck, but Heinrich J. Braun, David H. Epp and others may be less well known. Several individuals who lived their life outside Mennonite circles and indeed became their opponents (as Communist party members?) make this case. Such were David Johann Penner (known as Reinmarus from some of his writings, and perhaps also David Schellenberg. It is significant that these

(cont'd on p. 10)