

Mennonite Historian



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This photo of the Winnipeg Maedchenheim directors and girls staying at the home is dated 1946. Centre left are Aganetha Epp and Mrs. Benjamin Ewert, centre right are Rev. Benjamin Ewert and Helena Epp (recently deceased), and at centre, Rev. and Mrs. J.H. Enns. Aganetha and Helena were in charge of the home for more than 25 years. Photo: Courtesy of Mrs. Ida Friesen, 230 Hawthorne Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The Winnipeg Maedchen Heim - Ebenezer

By Katherine Schellenberg Klassen

The Winnipeg Maedchen Heim (Girl's Home) opened on October 30, 1926. Mrs. Helena and Gerhard Peters were the house parents. They were married the day before — Oct. 29, 1926 at 7 p.m.

Theirs was a most busy life: meeting the girls at the C.P.R. (Canadian Pacific Railway) Station, carrying home all the groceries for the pantry, etc. The girls also lodged with Mr. and Mrs. Peters until placed with an employer for housework.

Employment was never lacking. So it was usually only a day or two until each girl had work. Occasionally it took longer. Thursday afternoon and every other Sunday afternoons were days off. On these afternoons the girls met at the Home, each one bringing her

sandwiches for supper. Mrs. Peters provided the tea. Mr. Peters conducted a worship service on both of the evenings. These days were particularly busy and somewhat tiring for the Peters.

The house parents would check every home each girl was sent to. They were honest, truthful and already house helpers trained by loving mothers. The employers, it was hoped, would give kind and considerate treatment in return. The girls' reputation with the employers was excellent. If any of the latter gave them poor treatment (which was rare) such a person need not ask for a girl's help ever again.

The employers helped the girls to learn English in the way of Canadian housekeep-

ing. Almost all of the girls sent home most of their pay, ranging from \$15.00 to \$35.00 a month for the experienced ones. It helped to buy food for the parents, sisters and brothers until the homefolks could grow a crop or two, the chickens laid eggs, and the cows gave milk and butter. Here on the farm each family also butchered a pig or two. The girls' wages also helped to pay the **Reiseschuld** (travelling debt) to the Canadian Pacific Railway which owned ships on which their families had come from Russia.

Very careful housekeeping was imperative with the Peters in those early years. Many a girl coming directly from Ukraine was in need of acceptable clothes to go to her household job. Most girls were supplied by their employers with blue chambray morning uniforms and large white aprons, black dresses and dainty white aprons for the afternoon, and to serve dinner. Many were given little white caps to wear. This was mandatory in most homes. The maid had her meals in the kitchen.

It was not so on farms where the girls' help ate with the family. The city households were preferred because of more wages. Also they offered cleaner and easier work. The farm girl help of course did not come to the **Maedchen Heim**.

The employers varied. There were those who had to be asked to let the girls have supper and sandwiches on her free afternoons. This handful of skimping women could afford a maid to do all their chores they themselves did not care to do and not the cooking either. But they resented giving three sandwiches - a "straining at the gnat and swallow the camel" type of action.

One even heard of an occasional woman who had her hard working maid go hungry. Can you imagine that, with Canada having more grain and other food than she can sell? Even the ancient Romans knew that a slave needed adequate food to do good work.

As farmwives the Maedchen Heim girls fed a meal now and again to the hungry wanderer who travelled from farm to farm along the railroads seeking work. These men hitched rides on the freight trains in the West. In these days of unemployment pay and welfare that chapter is also closed.

Most girls married in a few years, and became excellent housekeepers and helpmates to their husbands. Possibly very

(cont. on next page)

(cont. from page 1)

few if indeed any Mennonite girls go housekeeping in cities today.

The Winnipeg girls' home was financially supported by the General Conference Home Missions Board and the women's Vereins in the U.S.A. It was indeed a great and wonderful gift of our gracious Lord and we do forever thank Him for it, and the General Conference for its love and concern.

The Jansen Group in Sask.

By Henry Funk

Conclusion

Today there are two retired couples at Watson who are descendants of the Riesens and the Friesens. They attend at the North Star Mennonite Church at Drake when they are able. Four other former Jansen Group members reside at Drake and are members of the North Star Mennonite Church. The old **Gemeinde-buch** (Church record book) was found in a farm house, the former residence of one of the sons of Rev. Johann J. Friesen. The records in the book are, however, quite incomplete. It is now in a vault with the old records of the Drake congregation.

There are no former members of the Jansen Group, or descendants, left in the area north of Janzen. The information recorded here was furnished by Jacob J. Siemens of Drake. He is the son of the former Heinrich J. Siemens and his wife is the daughter of Klaas K. Janzen. They were married in the large Siemens living room the day before Mrs. Siemens' parents moved to Alberta. On March 31, 1979, they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Fifty years earlier they were a happy couple in their early twenties. Today Mrs. Siemens is a resident in the Mennonite Nursing Home in Rosthern and Mr. Siemens lives alone in their home in Drake. Rev. H.H. Bartel of Drake, who officiated at their wedding has passed away many years ago. And so the experiences of life become history.

This story is only one point on the broader scope of the history of Mennonites in Canada. However it is important. There must have been small fellowships like this in the 1920's as the new Mennonite immigrants found "Lebensraum" on arrival in Canada — only to relocate as better opportunities presented themselves elsewhere.

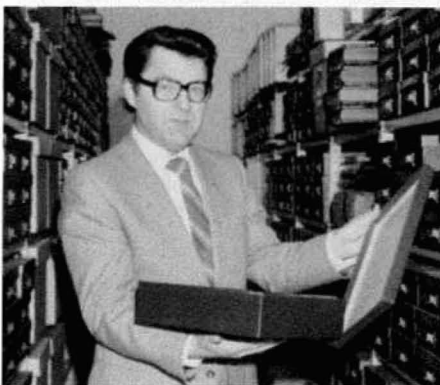
Corrections: The reference to H.H. Ewert in the first part of this essay (*MH*, Dec. 1983) should have been to H.H. Bartel. Also the spelling Janzen in the title should have been Jansen. Our apologies!

The Editor

MHC Staff Change

By Lawrence Klippenstein

Historian-archivist Lawrence Klippenstein will be leaving the archives for a two-year sabbatical and leave of absence. He will be going on an MCC term of service with his family to England and West Germany (possibly also the Soviet Union). The sabbatical will begin on July 1 this summer. In June Lawrence will graduate with a PhD in European history from the University of Minnesota. His dissertation, defended in February, is entitled, "Mennonite Pacifism and State Service in Russia. A Case study in Church-State Relations, 1789-1936". Plans are to return to the archives at the conclusion of service abroad.



By Dennis Stoesz

Dennis Stoesz, of Winnipeg, Man., will be serving as historian-archivist in the absence of Lawrence Klippenstein. Dennis graduated from CMBC in 1976 and received an honors BA in history at the University of Waterloo, Ontario in 1980. He has done graduate work at the University of Manitoba, and has served as assistant archivist at the Mennonite Heritage Centre for several summers and on other occasions. Dennis is currently writing a short history of the Home Street Mennonite congregation. He will begin his duties on June 15 this spring.



Recent Acquisitions

Nathaniel Eitzen school exercise book from Russia, dated 1836, along with several books of poems. Courtesy of Dr. Paul Hiebert, Carman, Man.

Mennonite Piano Concerto by Victor Davies - recording. Courtesy of Dueck Film Productions, Ltd. Winnipeg, Man.

Hans Rempel, "Splitter and Spaene," typewritten manuscript of poems. Ca. 150 pp. Courtesy of the author, Virgil, Ontario.

Letters from Jacob Kornelson, MCI, 1915-1916, to a friend in Steinbach, Man. Courtesy of Mrs. P.D. Reimer, Steinbach, Man. Duplicates. 13 pp.

David Hamm. **Choralbuch Kirchen Gesang der Mennoniten Gemeinde an der Volga.** Danzig, 1859. In "Ziffern". Duplicate from MLA, North Newton, Kansas.

Original copy and English translation (rough) of **Familien Chronik der Familie van der Smissen.** Danzig, 1875. Reprinted, 1981. Courtesy of Mrs. C. Blouw, Winnipeg, Man.

Johanna Braun Meitrike, "Jugenderinnerungen, 1867-1874". Handwritten manuscript, with rough typed English translation. 43 pp. Courtesy of Mrs. C. Blouw, Winnipeg, Man.

Two photographs about schools: classroom at Houston, S.D. (Manitoba) 1909, and MCI (Students with H.H. Ewert - date not given). Courtesy of Jake Giesbrecht, Springstein, Man.

Six portraits of young men among the Mennonites of Russia. COs. Courtesy of Rob Nickel, CMBC.

Picture of **Kommerzschule** class of 1917, Halbstadt, Ukraine. Courtesy of Abram Berg, Leamington, Ont. Enlarged duplicate.

A copy of a Giesbrecht family register (Great grand-parents, Abram Giesbrecht). Donated courtesy of Isaac Unger, Box 764, Altona, Man., R0G 0B0. For those ordering enclose \$12.00 plus postage.

We thank the donors, and encourage deposits from others. Pack well if mailing, or deliver in person.

REMEMBER OUR LEADERS

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AUTHENTIC PHOTOGRAPHS AND BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES RECOUNT THE LIFE AND WORK OF THE
MINISTERS OF THE CONFERENCE OF MENNONITES IN CANADA (1902-1977)

Abraham Friesen	1849-1901	1
Johann M. Friesen	1865-1932	2
Cornelius C. Ens	1843-1915	3
Johann Funk	1836-1917	4
Gerhard Epp	1864-1919	5



5.
Gerhard Epp
1864-1919

Gerhard Epp was born on September 20, 1864, in Southern Russia. He was baptized in 1884. In 1889 he married Katharine Janzen. While still in Russia, the church called him to be a deacon. He immigrated to Canada in 1894 and homesteaded near Rosthern, Saskatchewan. In July of 1895 the Rosenorter church ordained him to the ministry.

The system of travelling ministry in those early days often required him to spend long periods of time away from home. In the winter he had to make long journeys with a team of oxen. He was not an outstanding speaker, but through his faithfulness and devotion he was a blessing to many. He was a peacemaker in the real sense of the word. He had a great interest in education. He himself served the new settlement as a teacher and was very committed to the school that later became known as the Rosthern Academy. He was also very interested in missions and served as a member of the General Conference Board of Missions for a number of years. He passed away on April 2, 1919, at the age of fifty-four.

AVAILABLE now at the discount price of \$10.00 (formerly \$18.00). Postage extra for mailing.
Buy a book in memory of our leaders or present one to a friend or relative.

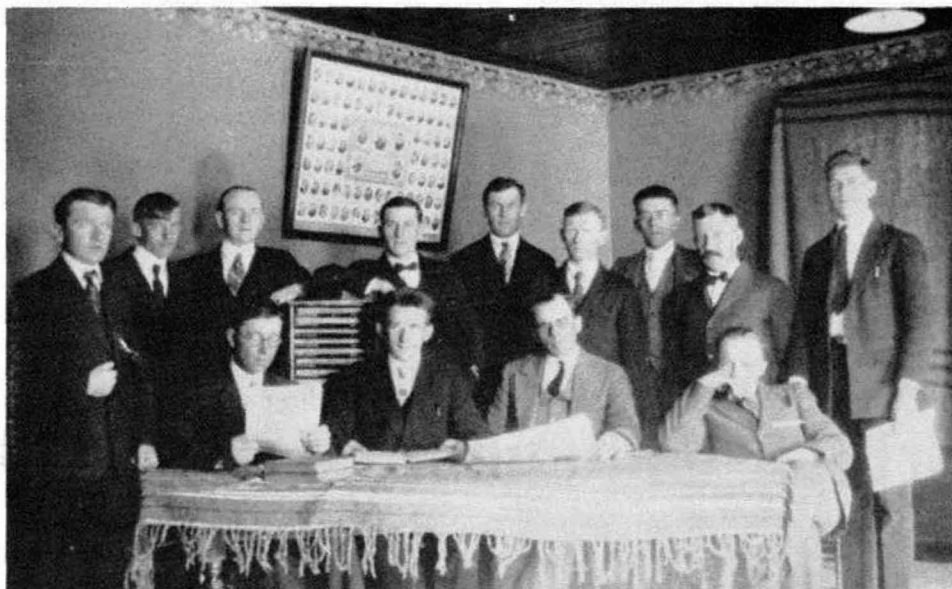
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 Peter Block, 533 Wilson, Steinbach, Man. R0A 2A0
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 Mennonite Historical Society of B.C., P.O. Box 2032, Clearbrook, B.C.
 *Phone 888-6781



Gerhard I. Peters
author



A picture of students and teachers at the MCI, taken in 1925-1926. Names are as follows: Seated (l-r): John H. Block, — Schmidtke, Peter Brown (teacher), Jacob Sawatzky. Standing (l-r): Gerhard G. Schmidt, Hermann Voth, Abe Hooge, Nikolai Martens, Johann Janzen, John P. Dyck, — , Bernhard J. Schellenberg (first archivist for the Conference of Mennonites in Canada), and Peter Thielmann. Corrections on above information will be much appreciated. Picture courtesy of P. J. Wiens, Ottawa, Canada.

Legacy

By Marlace Berg Zacharias

When my father passed on.
He left me a legacy.
A legacy not assessed
By dollars in the bank.
As far back as I recall
He had a pencil in hand.
Shaping his thoughts into poems.
Setting them to music.
As far back as I recall
Father's spare daylight hours
Were spent in the orchard.
Pruning, hoeing, planting,
He taught me to know and love
Birds, flowers, trees and shrubs.
I have dad's compulsion
To get things down on paper.
His love of words, of music.
Of living close to nature
And creating with your hands.
Dad never knew loneliness.
There was always too much to do,
To create, to become.
I'll always be grateful
For this rich legacy.

The poem is reprinted by permission from the book *Prairie Gold* published in 1980. It is a paperback edition of 48 pp. which can be ordered for \$4.00 from the author at Fiske, Saskatchewan. Marlace has just published another volume of poetry entitled *Now and Then*, selling for \$5.00. For further information write to the author.

A Reader Writes

Dear Lawrence,

I wonder whether any of the excellent writers of Manitoba Mennonite history ever came across the little speck of history revealed in the enclosed pages of Raymond Hull's *Charles Aeneas Shaw - Tales of a Pioneer Surveyor* . . .

" . . . We stopped for a few days at Haverty's Hotel, most of the bedrooms being in large tents. Here I first saw some Mennonites, a large number of whom had come from Russia and settled along the southern boundary of the province, west of the Red River. The first one I saw came to the hotel and asked Haverty, 'You buy huns?'

Haverty, who was very Irish, said, 'What's huns?'

The Mennonite went to his wagon and brought in some fowl. Haverty said, 'Them's not huns, them's hins.'

Another Mennonite came along trying to sell butter. I was amazed to see it packed in a crockery container of the type which is usually concealed in one's bedroom. The unfortunate man could not understand why he was driven out with such contumely . . . "

Ed's note. The stories quoted are from a report on a trip to Manitoba with a visit to Winnipeg taken by Shaw in 1879. We owe this information to Mr. Henry J. Siemens of 831-440 Simcoe St., Victoria, B.C. V8V 1L3. Hopefully MHC can get a copy of Hull's book in its entirety.

Upcoming Books

A history of the Rural Municipality of Rhineland in southern Manitoba by Gerhard Ens, Jr. Edmonton, Alberta.

A history of the town of Gretna in southern Manitoba by Gary and Gaile Enns of Aubigny, Manitoba.

A history of the Blumenort Mennonite congregation near Gretna, Manitoba by Peter D. Zacharias of Gretna, Manitoba.

An enlarged and revised edition of a Low German dictionary, **Waed boek**, by Herman Rempel of Morden, Manitoba.

A history of the Kronsweider congregation in Ukraine. By Rev. I.P. Klassen, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

An English translation of Oscar Hamm's **Erinnerungen aus Ignatewo**, published in German in 1980.

CMBC Publications

Esther Wiebe. **That They May Be One**, the cantata written for performance at Bethlehem '83 in Bethlehem, Pa.

Menno Epp. **The Pastor's Exit**. A study of issues related to involuntary termination of pastoral leaders.

An English translation of Olga Rempel's **Einer von Vielen**, about her father, Rev. Aron Toews.

David Schroeder. **Anleitung zum Bibel Studium** (tentative title), a German translation of his book, **Learning to Know the Bible**. (1966).

Maria Winter-Loewen Books For Sale

Hoehen und Tiefen, Vol 3, pb., 332 pp. 1976. \$5.00

Gelegenheitsgedichte. 174 pp. 1981. Pb., 6.25 Hd. \$7.50

Lyrik und Eipik. Poems on 9 themes. 1982. Pb. \$6.25. Hdc. \$7.50

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MMHS

An Annual Meeting Report

By Peter Paetkau

The annual meeting of the Mennonite Historical Society of Manitoba was held on March 17. Combined with it again was a banquet, which featured a concert by the "Heischraitje enn Willa Honich" group and some readings from "Koop enn Bua" by Al Reimer. Attending were about 65 members and guests of the Society.

During the brief business meeting conducted by President Delbert Plett, a number of committee chairpersons presented reports.

The Society, whose membership in 1983 stood at 158, reached its 25th anniversary last year. The brochure produced in conjunction with this has been available for some time and was distributed to members and guests of the Society in an effort to gain new memberships.

From the report heard it is evident that various committees of the Society have been fairly active during the past year.

The project relating to Mennonite cemeteries, begun in 1981 and filed in the MHC in 1982, continues to receive information about Mennonite cemeteries. The committee in charge of the above recommends that an effort should be made to recognize Mennonite farms in the possession of the same family for 100 years, as well as prominent figures in such fields as education, philanthropy, music and the humanities.

The recording of the Mennonite Piano Concerto is another project which has been completed in the past year. Before its completion the opportunity of recording it as a sound-track for "And When They Shall Ask" arose, and as everyone who saw the film knows this did become a reality. The recording was offered in a special promotional package for the film as its November, 1983, in Winnipeg.

Funds have been obtained for the publication of the Arnold Dyck works for printing in the first volume. Just under 500 pp., it will contain "Verloren in der Steppe" and an autobiographical essay, "Aus Meinem Leben", as well as some illustrations and plates by Dyck. It is expected to be released by late 1984. Editorial work for Volumes II, III and IV has also begun. Volumes II and III will contain Dyck's Low German writings as well as a new orthography. Volume IV will contain previously unpublished works.

The ad hoc committee working to establish and operate a Mennonite Book Club has recently encountered some difficulties. At a recent meeting with Hyperion Press people, who were to take care of promotion and distribution, the committee was informed that in order to make the operation practical, books from publishers would have to be purchased at 75% discounted from the retail



Some members of the MMHS Board. Seated front (l-r): Dr. Al Reimer, Ruth Bock, Delbert Plett and Doreen. Standing: (l-r) Dr. Bert Friesen, Ken Reddig (former member), Dr. Harry Loewen, Hermann Rempel, Ed Schellenberg, Royden Loewen (former member). Photo: Courtesy of Dennis Stoesz, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Materials on this page were provided by the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society.

price. The committee finds this problematic and is therefore investigating alternatives to the proposed arrangement with Hyperion. It may have to begin on a more modest scale than it was envisioned at first.

The monument in memory of Mennonites who lost their lives due to violence in the 20th century is to become a reality as soon as possible. It is hoped that it may be in place by late 1985. solicitation and publicity in the media is to begin immediately. The size and form of the monument will depend on the funds contributed for the project. In any case, such a monument is to be simple but dignified, contain the least possible political overtones and be as inclusive as possible.

At the end of the business meeting Dr. Gerhard J. Lohrenz and John C. Reimer were presented with honorary memberships in the Society. In making these appointments the Board recognized two very gifted and dedicated men who have made outstanding life-long contributions to Mennonite life. Both were vitally involved in the founding and organization of the present Society.

The banquet highlighted deliciously prepared traditional foods and a full-length concert featuring the Low German singing group, "Heischraitje enn Willa Honich". The program also included some dramatized readings from "Koop enn Bua" by a "personage from the past" (with Al Reimer as Arnold Dyck), a feature also well-received by a capacity crowd in the MBBC auditorium

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**Paid-up membership on
 March 31, 1984: 122**

**Send renewals to: MMHS, 77 Henderson
 Highway, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.**

The book **Causes and History of the Mennonite emigration from Russia to America** by Gerhard Wiebe, published in translation by MMHS is still available at the Mennonite Heritage Centre.

EMMC

Report on EMMC History

By Jack Heppner

A. Our Story

The study of our history as the Rudnerweider Mennoniten Gemeinde (EMMC) has been a stimulating experience for me. I have gained many new perspectives and a fuller understanding of the dynamics involved in our story. In one sense it is a simple story; a story of God's faithfulness to a segment of His church. It is the story of new found faith that sought expression in the context of the past half century.

On the other hand it is a very complex story. The forces that led to the formation of the Rudnerweider Church in 1936-37 are many and varied. Much more was involved than a series of evangelistic meetings in Reinfeld and Winkler. And the shape that the new Rudnerweider Church took was a blend of historical precedent and experimentation in newness. At times they were in conflict.

Furthermore, we did not live out our story in isolation. Again and again we were confronted, challenged, inspired and/or discouraged by the forces that swirled around us. World War Two, for example, left its imprint on our character. So did the powers of ethnicity, economics, migrations, education, radio and television, theological pluralism, and urbanization. Churches and organizations that were rooted outside of our circle projected their influence into the arena of our story. Begging, coaxing, inviting and sometimes seducing, they prodded us on into an ever wider network of relationships and issues.

"Who are we and how did we get to be what we are?" That is the initial quest of this research project. The second is like unto it. "Can we learn from the past as we step into the future?" Hopefully as we retell our story to each other and our children we will find the seeds of courage and faith that we need to move forward in faithfulness into the second half of our century.

The temptation we face is, on the one hand, to make our story into a fairy tale; everything unfolding according to perfect design and symmetry. On the other, we are tempted to concentrate mostly on mistakes and failures of the past, creating instead a depressing document of despair. We will need to steer clear of both extremes. Not all was positive; nor was all negative. In the rough and tumble of our growing up years we received many bruises and not a few broken bones. But again and again we found healing and a new sense of God's presence. Sometimes the story is sweet; sometimes sour. That is true. Nevertheless, it is our story. And it is God's story! It is a story of God's faithfulness to an undeserving people.

B. The Task

Needless to say, the task of putting together our story is a large one. Recently I told Ruth that it was comparable to piecing together a 10,000 piece puzzle, the only problem being that most of the pieces are scattered around the countryside.

Much of my energy during the first phase of research has gone into collecting, sorting and organizing these scattered pieces. To do this I first undertook to visit all Canadian EMMC pastors in their locales. With the use of questionnaires I further attempted to capture the memories and thoughts of the many other leaders who have served in our midst. Many interviews, especially those with the older leaders, have been recorded on tape. As time permitted I attempted to piece together complete sets of minutes, first of the early ministerials, and later of the various boards and committees. Some gaps still remain, the most significant being the ministerials, and later of the various boards and committees. Some gaps still remain, the most significant being the ministerial minutes form 1937-39. The study of these minutes of course forms the back bone of much of the research. Numerous persons have done some research and writing on the EMMC before me. I have collected works by J.D. Adrian, Norman Friesen, I.P.F. Friesen, Walter

Sawatsky, and Frank Zacharias. These are of great value to the project.

One objective we have is to include numerous pictures in our publication. That presents a problem, since pictures of the early years especially, are hard to come by. If you have some pictures of persons, events, or buildings, please let me know. I would be interested in copying them.

The task is not nearly done! Although the initial phase of the project terminated last summer, I am trying to keep the project alive. Perhaps you, or someone you know, have something to share in the telling of our story. Your piece of the puzzle may be the missing piece that completes the picture. Why don't you consider sharing it with me? Perhaps it is a set of minutes, records, or correspondence. Or it may simply be a memory or perspective on our story. **One specific piece that is missing is the November 1959 issue of the Leitstern.** Do you have it?

Send your pieces of the puzzle to me at the following address, or stop in to talk with me. My address is: Jack Heppner, Box 1420, Steinbach, Man. R0A 2A0., Phone 326-6778.

Materials for this page were provided by the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference.

Manitoba Mennonite leaders at a Bible Conference in the early 1950s, at Chortitza (?), Saskatchewan. Standing at back (l-r) are Mr. and Mrs. I.P.F. Friesen, Edwin Klippenstein, John and Mary Froese, Jake Hoeppner, Mr. and Mrs. G. H. Penner, Jerry Hildebrand, Ben and Susie Sawatsky with Walter (Ron?). Front (l-r) Mrs. and Mr. P. W. Schmidt, Mr. and Mrs. P. D. Berg, Mathilda, Mrs. and Mr. J. H. Friesen, Mr. and Mr. D. J. Funk. Photo courtesy of EMMC Reporter office. Who can give exact date and place of conference, or make corrections (if needed) with names? Write to Mennonite Heritage Centre, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3P 0M4.



Book Reviews (cont.)

Calvin W. Redekop. **Strangers Become Neighbors: Mennonites and Indigenous Relations in the Paraguayan Chaco.** Scottdale, Pa. and Kitchener, Ontario. Herald Press. 1980. Hardcover, 305 pp., \$19.95 (US), \$23.15 (Can.) Reviewed by Jake Wiens, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

In the early 1970's the Mennonite Central Committee invited Redekop to do a ten-year progress evaluation of the Chaco-Indian settlement program sponsored by the Mennonites. The program has been staffed mainly by Paraguayan Mennonites. A large proportion of the monies needed for this program have come from non-Paraguayan sources such as MCC, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Mennonite Economic Development Association (MEDA), European Mennonites (particularly from the Netherlands and Germany) and other international development agencies.

In order to become familiar with this settlement project, Redekop and his family lived in Yalve Sanga, the largest of the Indian agricultural settlements for over 10 months between Sept. 1, 1981 and July 15, 1982. The study was completed with a number of reports that were submitted to MCC and Asociacion de Servicios de Cooperacion Indigena-Mennonita (the organization that replaced the Indian Settlement Board).

In the late 1970's Redekop used the immense amount of data he had collected to write this general book on the people in the Chaco. As Redekop did not go back to the Chaco after 1972, Wilmar Stahl, an ASCIM staff sociologist, provided Redekop with updated information for this book.

The theme of the book is the interaction of the different cultural groups that live in the Chaco. The main ones are the Mennonites, Indians and Paraguayans. There are also smaller groups such as the R.C. mis-

sionaries and the New Tribe missionaries. Redekop deals with the interaction of all these groups.

The first four chapters deal with a short description of the area (including good reference maps) and the historical background of each of the above groups of people. The historical background covers a large span of time and thus the author had to be very selective of what to include. For example the background of three Mennonite groups settling in the Chaco is traced back to 1925. The chapter on the Indians gives a brief description of some of the cultural traits of the different tribes.

The next four chapters deal with the linkages between the different groups of people in the Chaco. The last two chapters attempt to explain the interrelationship and the development of the different Chaco cultural groups with sociological and anthropological models. Someone not familiar with these types of models (such as myself) may have difficulty with these chapters.

The first eight chapters are very informative to a newcomer to the Chaco scene. It is an overview of the situation in a conversational mode. The overview is interspersed with human interest incidents.

In the chapters on the interrelationship of the various cultures one is left with the impression that Redekop, as a Mennonite, was overly cautious not to be biased in favor of the Mennonites. Thus he did not give the Mennonites enough credit (in this reviewer's opinion) as the main positive element in the interrelationship of the different cultures.

The last two chapters (more particularly the last one) appear out of place with respect to format and presentations. It raises the question of who Redekop had in mind as his audience.

Calvin Redekop is trained in sociology and anthropology at the University of Chicago. His specialty is sociology of religion, social theory, and human ecology. He has spent several years in Mexico and Paraguay and is presently a professor at Conrad Grebel College.

Barbara C. Smucker **Amish Adventure** Toronto: Clark, Irwin & Co., 1983 144 pp., pb., Reviewed by Peter B. Paetkau, Sperling, Manitoba

Barbara C. Smucker, one of Canada's finest writers of juvenile fiction, has created another exciting story in her latest publication, *Amish Adventure*. As recipient of some prestigious awards for her previous book, *Days of Terror*, *Amish Adventure* the author is like to obtain considerable recognition as well for her excellent portrayal of Amish life in rural Ontario.

Amish Adventure is reminiscent of a book written by Merle Good some years ago. The similarities are obvious, if not intentional. Like Good's book, *Happy as the Grass was Green*, Smucker's new book could be billed "a bitter-sweet journey between a complex world of violence and the simpler Mennonite world of peace".

Like Eric in Good's book, Ian MacDonald is thrust abruptly into the situation and discovers to his sheer amazement a lifestyle familiar only from books - barn raising, worship meetings, hearty meals and warm and forgiving people. Coming from another time and another place, both remain in this remote world to discover some very pertinent answers to contemporary problems.

Ian MacDonald's "Amish Adventure" begins when a car in which he is riding hits a buggy in a rainstorm. As a result he finds himself living with an Amish family in the Kitchener-Waterloo area. The days that follow are filled with work, play and wonder as Ian and his Amish friend Reuben live with the tragic results of the accident, and the uncertainty of Ian's immediate future.

Ian immediately falls in love with the simple life of the Bender family but knows "it is all very well pretending he had slipped 200 years backwards in time and has lost Aunt Clem (where he dreaded going in the first place) some place through the centuries". But the Bender farm wasn't an escape much as he would like to remain here.

Maybe the Amish are wiser than the rest of us who are all wrapped up in progress and keeping up with the Jones. As I read Jonah's argument (p. 57) for the retention of the old method of agriculture, I realize that these people have developed a way of life complete with answers to most of the difficult questions like delinquency and unemployment, etc., which we grapple with today.

With Ian, the central character in this memorable story, the reader becomes totally involved as in a dream and inevitably must analyse his way of life. The author is at her best on a subject she is familiar with. Well written in a manner appealing to all age groups, *Amish Adventure* is the kind of story that definitely belongs into every church and home library.



A Mennonite baptism in an Indian settlement of the Chaco, 1981.

Book Reviews

Irene Friesen Petkau and Peter A Petkau.

Blumenfeld - Where Land and People Meet. The Blumenfeld History Committee, 1981. Hardcover, 264 pp., \$20.00. Elizabeth Peters, editor, **Gnadenal 1880-1980** The Gnadenal History Committee, 1982. 232 pp., \$25.00 *Reviewed by Peter Paetkau, Sperling, Manitoba.*

These two histories of villages in the West Reserve constitute excellent accounts of their development during their first century. Though they reveal similarities of style and format, the development of one village stands in considerable contrast to that of the other.

When these villages (Blumenfeld in 1979; Gnadenal in 1980) celebrated their centennials a few years ago they both decided to mark the occasion by producing a book to set the record straight.

Both books present evidence of the thoroughness with which the authors handled the often difficult task of examining every aspect of village life in words and images. An unusually large number of photos, maps and charts, as well as a variety of other things like the excerpts from church minutes and personal diaries and the recollections and views of older citizens, undergird the general story of both volumes. This compels the reader to marvel at the rich texture of village life the more closely he examines it. Painstaking research and commitment to the projects is evident on every page.

The contrast really comes in the contents — Blumenfeld followed an entirely different course than Gnadenal, and despite all their similarities, the chronicles of these villages are studies in contrast.

Although the first settlers of both communities were adherents of Aeltester Johann Wiebe coming from the Fuerstenland colony, reorganized in the West Reserve as the Reinland Mennoniten Gemeinde, two major distinctions affecting the future of these villages are notable. The village of Gnadenal was settled mostly by single young men, while Blumenfeld was established by couples in their middle years, hence with growing families. And, except for one family, all Gnadenal residents left for Mexico in 1922, but only "about half the residents of Blumenfeld joined the migration", with the result that some families were broken up in Blumenfeld but not in Gnadenal.

More significantly however, the complete emigration of Gnadenal residents opened the village to a new influx of Mennonites from southern Russia with a fairly different mind-set. The coming of the Russlaender to

Blumenfeld however opened new doors for the Kanadier to self-expression in instrumental and vocal music and perhaps some other types of what in those days was called "worldliness" by the more temperate group.

In effect Gnadenal became a quite "progressive" village in terms of culture, education and religion but "as in the early 1920's Gnadenal has once again experienced an almost total turnover in population" as all but one of the Russlaender immigrants have retired from farming and moved elsewhere permitting Mennonites arriving from Mexico to purchase many of the vacated farmsteads. In Blumenfeld on the other hand, the fixed Reinland residents mingled with the incoming Russlaender, and fifty years later it is difficult to tell the difference.

Dimensionally the books, both printed by Friesen Printers, measure 11 1/4 by 8 3/4, and contain almost equal number of pages. The Gnadenal book with 32 fewer pages, has two 3 1/4" columns of writing compared to a single 4 1/2" column in the Blumenfeld volume, frequently with supplementary information or photos in the 3 1/2" outer margins.

These are engaging accounts not only for those who have lived in either of the villages but to historians, sociologists and everyone intrigued by the variations of life in rural communities during the past one hundred years.

Royden Loewen. **Blumenort A Community In Transition** Blumenort, Man., The Blumenort History Committee, 1983. Hardcover, 650 pp., \$25.00 *Reviewed by Irene Friesen Petkau, Morden, Manitoba.*

Make room on your Mennonite history shelf for another community history. *Blumenort, A Mennonite Community in Transition*, is one of the latest off the presses. Royden Loewen, a native of the Blumenort community, has developed the story of the Kleingemeinde and its people of the Blumenort and surrounding areas. The author recounts the personal struggles and community developments of this Mennonite people. It is a unique picture he draws for the larger constituency because the Kleingemeinde have grown into a distinctive denomination among our people. Their beginnings and struggles in Russia and in pioneer Manitoba are recreated poignantly and thoroughly with detail and clarity.

In a book of this nature it is important to the reader how the author has organized and encountered the themes that were the forces of growth and change in the community. He has developed the story chronologically, but at the same time he has emphasized the differences in the various time periods as he understood the changes. Because the scope

of the book includes many small settlement areas that have long since disappeared, it is difficult for the reader to put all the pieces of this puzzle into clear perspective. Certainly for a local resident this task would be much easier. The amount of material presented necessitates numerous readings and some serious study to "feel" the interrelatedness of the various sections.

Because the book needs to be attractive to the reader and to make a good "conversation piece", the design and layout are crucial. The charts and graphics are large enough and usually self explanatory. Pictures enhance and express the local "color", and the large selection provide a welcome diversion for the reader. In the recording of history it is the picture which is often best remembered and which provides the most unbiased opinion of the time.

This book also has many helps for the "stranger" to the community by including a detailed bibliography and index. Because of the length of the book, these are necessary to help sort and remember information, as the reader gains an overview of the story. To give the better feeling of continuity, this reader would have preferred to see the footnotes for each chapter at the end of the book instead of after each chapter.

Mr. Loewen and his committee need to be commended for undertaking a project of this size. The amount of research and checking of data and personal stories is time consuming and this has been organized into an interesting story. Because of the wealth of material, this book can be used for further study of this area of Mennonite settlement. It is a benchmark for referring to the history of the East Reserve because of its comprehensive coverage of the Blumenort and Kleingemeinde development. The use of primary source materials also make it an invaluable source book for other studies relating to this area.

Although the task of the historian is to present the trends and facts as they were, the biases and understandings of an author are seen in the choices and attitude toward material. But a historian is also an interpreter, not just a recorder. Therefore analysis and synthesis of data is appropriate as a way of helping the local reader understand the past. Loewen could have provided more of this to show how this community experienced transition.

As the title suggests, the changes that the author has documented are viewed by him as being within the framework of Mennonite cultural and religious expression. It provides the book with a positive tone, one of acceptance of the past and a hope for the future. This reviewer has found the book very interesting. It will be of value for our younger generations because it depicts the strengths of our Mennonite way of life.