

MENNONITE HISTORIAN

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Four native leaders, Spoot Owen, Jacob Owen, St. John Owen and David Owen were ordained in 1972 at Pauingassi, Manitoba to serve the local Mennonite congregation.

Credit: CMC Native Ministries, courtesy of John Funk.

Native People and Mennonites

by John Funk

Mennonites, like all other immigrants to Canada, settled on land once occupied by Native people. The first recorded land transaction in Canada by Mennonites came in 1803, when a group of Mennonites in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, formed the German Land Company to purchase 488 acres in what is now Kitchener/Waterloo. While the official record shows that the Native people received their "share" for releasing this land for settlement, they in fact received few benefits from this and subsequent land deals and were progressively cut off from the land base needed to maintain their traditional ways.

In western Canada the first contact between Native people and Mennonites created some tension. When a delegation of Mennonites from Ukraine came to Manitoba in 1873 to inspect potential settlement sites they were met with expressions of strong hostility from a group of Metis, people of French and Indian descent, who surrounded their hotel at White Horse Plains just west of Winnipeg. This incident prompted the delegation to seek assurances that Native claims to the land they eventually chose near the Red River had been satisfied. They were assured that there were no outstanding claims.

When Mennonite settlement began the following year they were given land east of the Red River. Later, another tract was made available to them west of the Red in the area of the present towns of Altona and Winkler. The 25 townships set aside exclusively for the Mennonites had been ceded by Treaty No.1 in 1871. The settlement of southern Manitoba by Mennonites and others rapidly restricted access to traditional hunting grounds and confined the original inhabitants to reserves at Roseau River and Brokenhead. This pattern of settlement repeated itself with successive Mennonite migrations to areas near Rosthern and Swift Current in Saskatchewan.

In the past 15 years it has come to light that a number of Indian band areas were not included in the original treaty process. Some groups never received their promised allocation of land, while others received only a portion of their land entitlement. Since Mennonites benefited directly from such oversights in the Red River valley and northern Saskatchewan, MCCC and CMC have joined the affected bands in advocating that these

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Mennonites in Canada: Some New Asian, Hispanic and Native Congregations

by Rudy A. Regehr

There was a time when Mennonites in North America could fairly easily be classified as being of either Swiss or German background. Even that subtle distinction was evident primarily to insiders.

Today any characterization of Mennonites in North America cannot be that simple. For decades already we have known about Mennonites on other continents who are very different from us. During the last decade that diversity has come to Canada. An increasing number of Mennonites in Canada trace their racial and ethnic histories not to Europe but to Asia and South America with a variety of languages and cultures.

Mennonites have come to us through many different channels. One of these is intermarriage, where the outside partner chose to join the Mennonite church. One could suggest that just as many such marriages ended up with the erstwhile Mennonite choosing another denomination in preference to his or her own. The result is that there are now a significant number of Mennonites with non-

Mennonite backgrounds in our congregations; on the other hand many former Mennonites find themselves in other denominations.

During the 1980s significant numbers of Asians and Latin Americans joined the Mennonite family in Canada. To us traditional Mennonites they are an unexpected gift from God. Their enthusiasm for evangelism and church planting has inspired many. This gift may have come to us partly because of our empathy with homeless refugees a few years earlier.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, i.e., in the aftermath of the Vietnam war, thousands of refugees clambered into boats and fled Vietnam and Laos. We know them simply as the "Boat People." The Canadian government opened its borders and called for people to sponsor these immigrants. With the guidance and encouragement of MCC, many congregations responded generously. They remembered with gratitude how they, their parents,

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Native Mennonites

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outstanding issues be corrected. To date the allocation of a reserve at Pauingassi is the only issue that has been successfully resolved.

First contacts between Mennonites and Native people were sporadic, but intensified during the war years (1939-1945) when Mennonite COs were scattered into remote Manitoba communities to work in forestry and education. Out of these contacts came the momentum for the beginning of missions programs in the late 1940s. These programs pioneered education and health care in many communities alongside the more conventional mission activities.

Today there is one Native Mennonite Conference with twelve congregations that grow out of the Northern Light Gospel Mission work in north-western Ontario. Other Native congregations are members of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (3), Beachy Amish (2), Evangelical Mennonite Conference (1), Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference (1), Fellowship of Evangelical Bible Churches (1) and the Mennonite Church (1), mainly in the prairie provinces and north-western Ontario. These congregations with mainly local leadership are located in remote communities where the first mission contact was made. Although Mennonite conferences were responsive to the migration of Native peoples to cities, few functioning congregations have formed to date.

In addition to these Native congregations, many Mennonite conferences support church planting, educational and community development projects. To the list of the conferences active in cross-cultural ministries in Native communities need to be added the Brethren in Christ, Church of God in Christ Mennonite, The Conservative Mennonite Church of Ontario and the Mennonite Brethren Church. Also involved in northern Ontario is the Northern Youth Program, an independent Mennonite agency.

The work of the conferences has been supplemented by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) through the Native Concerns department, which began in 1974 under the direction of Menno Wiebe. This department built on the earlier foundations of the various conferences and prior experience of MCC volunteers working with Native people in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Since that time volunteers have spread from coast to coast, and from the U.S. border to the Arctic Circle. Projects have included summer gardening, wild rice harvesting and processing, assisting the Innu peoples' protest of low-level flight testing and supporting the land rights of Alberta's Lubicon.

John and Vera Funk have served as executive secretaries of the Native Ministries Board of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada for the past number of years. Their work will be continued by Walter Franz.



The cross-cultural pastors meeting together with other Mennonites to share experiences and to examine Mennonite doctrine and practice in a deeper way. The Chinese pastors have by now formed an informal association called the North American Chinese Council which meets annually.

Credit: CMC Congregational Resources Board, courtesy of Rudy Regehr

New Asian, Hispanic and Native Congregations

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or their grandparents, had been graciously received as immigrants in this country not so long ago. These new Asian immigrants included Chinese, Vietnamese, and Laotian as well as others.

During this time many Chinese people moved from Hong Kong to Canada. Some came as students, others were responding to the anxiety cause by the uncertainties felt by Hong Kong residents as they awaited the return of that city to the People's Republic of China in 1997. Asian immigrants, like the Mennonites who came to Canada from Russia and the Soviet Union, have among them qualified ministers and leaders who gathered their people into congregations. Through a variety of personal connections and conference assistance, several new Asian congregations were established. Some of them became financially independent in less than ten years.

At first there was some attempt to integrate these people into the older Mennonite congregations. Before long, however, they were meeting separately, often in existing Mennonite church buildings. Soon they began to look for their own premises — a few even acquired their own buildings. Meanwhile, many established Mennonite congregations and conferences assisted as they were able. The earliest of the new congregations were established in Winnipeg, Toronto and Vancouver. At the same time Hmong, Laotian and Vietnamese congregations formed in several cities across Canada.

Similarly, in Central America unrest and instability brought a number of refugees to Canada. Some established congregations sought to meet the spiritual needs of these refugees and were instrumental in raising the consciousness of established Mennonites about the need for a ministry to many new Canadians.

By the end of the 1980s, fifteen or so Chinese Mennonite congregations with a membership of over 800 had been planted in Canada. Today there are about 30 Asian and Latin American Mennonite congregations in Canada. These congregations are located in cities from Montreal to Vancouver. Vietnamese congregations are located in Calgary and Winnipeg. Laotian congregations exist in Clearbrook, Regina, St. Catharines, and there is at least one Hmong congregation in Kitchener. In addition, there are a number of Native and French congregations (see other articles in this issue).

The Northwest (Old Mennonite) Conference, with its base in Alberta, has been instrumental in establishing Spanish congregations in Vancouver, Calgary, Saskatoon and Winnipeg. The ministry to Hispanics in Toronto led to the formation of a small Latin American fellowship, which has now become a thriving congregation. In Kitchener and Regina, some creative efforts have been made to establish multi-language congregations involving Laotians, Chinese and Latin Americans.

The Conference of Mennonites in Canada looks back to more than 40 years of involvement with the Native community in Canada. It is a very different kind of ministry, but one which is maturing in very gratifying ways as leadership is going from white missionaries to the Indian people themselves.

There was a time when you could "connect" with most Canadian Mennonites if you knew something about Low German or Pennsylvania Dutch. That is no longer the case.

Today you will find hymn books in a number of languages being used in our congregational worship. The old Mennonite hymnals no longer reflect all of our traditions.

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FAMILY HISTORY AND GENEALOGY

By Alf Redekopp

German-English Genealogical Dictionary

Edward Brandt writes: "There is clearly a need for a German-English genealogical dictionary, particularly for terms not generally found in modern bilingual dictionaries. . . I have decided to undertake the task of developing such a reference book."

Brandt would like interested genealogists and family historians to send him words or terms they have encountered in their genealogical research which are obsolete, rare, unique to a particular area, etc., and not found in standard reference works such as *Cassell* or *Langenscheidt*. If you have discovered what the word means, submit both the term and the meaning. If you don't know the meaning, submit the word, along with information concerning the context, the area where and the time when it was used, or the kind of record in which it occurred, to facilitate identification. If you are not sure how to decipher the word, enclose a copy of the entry or passage, with the word(s) highlighted.

Genealogical terminology will be defined broadly enough to include many words relating to religion, history, geography, government, law, medicine, occupations, etc. Contact: Edward R. Brandt, 13-27th Avenue S.E., Minneapolis, MN, 55414-3101, U.S.A., (612) 338-2001.

Recently Published Genealogies

Janzen, Russel H., comp. *Janzen, 1780-1989. A Family History and Genealogy of Jacob F. and Susanna (Baerg) Janzen - their ancestors and their descendants* (Bountiful, UT: Family History Publishers, 1989) 271 pp. hdc. \$40.00 Cdn. \$34.00 US. Contact: Russel H. Janzen, 37-3341 Horn Rd., Abbotsford, BC V2S 4N3.

The family and descendants of Jacob F. Janzen are the focus of this book. Jacob F. Janzen was a grandson of Cornelius Janzen, who emigrated from Reinland, West Prussia in 1817 to Lichtfelde, Molotschna. [Note: This is a correction from the *Mennonite Historian*, Vol. XV (December, 1989), p.3]

Recent Community History Book

Neufeld, Bill. *A Heritage of Homesteads, Hardships and Hope 1914-1989. La Crete and Area* (La Crete, AB: La Crete and Area Then and Now Society, 1989) 450 pp. hdc.

In the late 1920s Mennonite farmers from Manitoba and Saskatchewan began looking in northern Alberta for a new place to settle. A number of these families found their way to La Crete.

Besides giving a historical background to the La Crete area, and telling the story of settlement, this book contains short family histories of the families who moved to the area in the early part of the 20th century and are presently living in the area. This type of local history book is an excellent resource for the genealogist who is seeking to put a family history into the context of the community.

Who was Maximillian Matuskiwitz?

The Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies is looking for further information regarding the identity of Maximillian Matuskiwitz. Before our readers consider this request to be a bit of frivolous sport, we refer them to the August 28, 1895, issue of the *Mennonitische Rundschau*.

From this article it appears to have been the case that following the tenure of John F. Harms as editor of the *Rundschau* (1880-1886), an unnamed editor took over the task of putting together this paper for the next nine years. This editor worked at his task anonymously. He left his editorials unsigned, and only on those occasions when the owner and publisher, John F. Funk, picked up his pen and stated his views, do we have any signed editorials. The mystery is cleared up finally in the August 28, 1895, issue. On the front page, in a one-paragraph article, it is simply noted that Maximillian Matuskiwitz has "functioned" as editor for the years of 1886-1895.

Who was this person? How and why did he become editor of the *Rundschau*? Could it be that he was not a Mennonite? Since his name is not typically Mennonite, might he therefore never have been identified to his readers? Why is it that only when Mr. Matuskiwitz and his family move to Los Angeles is he given recognition in the *Rundschau* for his service? Regarding his service at the *Rundschau* the only comment made on his tenure is: "He was a faithful worker and assistant in our business these past eleven years."

At the Centre we are interested in locating more information concerning the identity of Maximillian Matuskiwitz. The suggestion has been made that perhaps he hailed from among those Polish immigrants that moved to Hillsboro, Kansas. Maximillian may have been lured to Elkhart, Indiana, as an assistant to John F. Harms.

We would like to hear from our readers. Whoever might have further information regarding the identity of this individual please write to the Centre for MB Studies, 169 River-ton Ave., Winnipeg, R2L 2E5.

Ship Passenger Lists (1874-1880)

Margaret Redekop of Winnipeg, with the assistance of Mennonite Genealogy Inc., has recently entered over 7000 names of Mennonite passengers on ships arriving in Canada from 1874-1880. This computer register, consisting of 4 5/4" diskettes, was done with an Apple II computer using the Appleworks Data Base program. Each record provides the name of the passenger, the ship, arrival date, group identity, sex and age. The project will be a valuable asset to anyone researching a Mennonite ancestor who settled in Manitoba during this time period. It is hoped that in the near future this computer register will also be available for IBM users of dBase software.

Buyer Beware!

Two people recently forwarded to me a letter they had received advertising a book about their family name. In both cases there were a number of aspects which seemed suspicious. The titles were almost identical — *The World Book of Friesens* and *The World Book of Hieberts*. The publisher's name: Halberts, Scarborough, Ontario, and the price was listed as \$29.95 plus shipping and handling.

In each case the letter was signed by William C. Farnor for a "fictitious" name such as Nancy C. Friesen i.a., and Pamela J. Hiebert i.a. If that wasn't enough to make one a little suspicious, some of the information in the letter was also misleading, perhaps even false. For example, one letter claimed that "there are now over 1775 households bearing the Friesen name in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland and Northern Ireland" and that the book provides "an international directory of virtually every Friesen household (with address)".

I began to wonder: Were the Friesens not natives of Friesland, and are there no Friesens in Holland and Germany today? According to a study by Victor Peters and Jack Thiessen, entitled *Mennonitische Namen/Mennonite Names* (Marburg, Germany: N.G. Elwert, 1987) there are 1607 households bearing the Friesen name in Canada alone, a statistic based only on the telephone directories of 6 major towns or cities in Canada. I could conclude that *The World Book of Friesens* will come no where close to being "an international directory of virtually every Friesen" in the world.

Buyer beware!!

Queries

Krahn — Jakob Krahn, auctioneer of Fuestenland Menn. settlement, S. Russia, b. ca. 1840. Children: Katharina (1863-1901) m. Johann J. Enns; Mary (Siemens); Anna (Wolf); Edith (Derksen); another daughter (also Derksen); Cornelius (son Jakob and 5 daughters); Jacob (sons: Jacob, Cornelius, Johann); Isaac; and Sarah (Isaak Enns). Looking for information on Jakob Krahn and his wife and family. Please contact Agatha Ratzlaff, 31861 Beech Ave., Clearbrook, BC, V2T 1G8.

Ratzlaff — Peter P. Ratzlaff of Friedensdorf, Molot., d. ca. 1901; m. ca. 1860 to Anna Lohrenz, daughter of Wilhelm Lohrenz who emigrated in 1819 from Danzig to Russia with his father, Johann Heinrich Lohrenz. Siblings incl. Adam Ratzlaff (1833-1920), and Benjamin and Bernhard, who emigrated to U.S.A. Anyone with information on the parents and siblings of Peter P. Ratzlaff and dates of birth and marriage of Peter and Anna, contact: Agatha Ratzlaff, 31861 Beech Ave., Clearbrook, BC, V2T 1G8.

Schroeder — Wilhelm Schroeder and Helena Kasper of Elizabethtal, Molot. Daughter Anna (1867-1950) m. Peter Ratzlaff, another daughter m. ? Harder, and another m. ? Derksen. Anyone with information on this family, please contact Agatha Ratzlaff, 31861 Beech Ave., Clearbrook, BC., V2T 1G8.

The *Kanadier* Mennonites: From Mexico to Canada

by *Menno Kroeker*

Over the past 30 years there has been a steady stream of German-speaking Mennonites coming into Canada primarily from Mexico. The volume of that stream has varied but has increased quite dramatically within the past five years. It has also come to include substantial numbers from Paraguay, Bolivia and Belize.

What is the reason for so many of these *Kanadier* Mennonites returning to the land which their parents or grandparents left some 68 years ago? In order to answer that question we must first do a brief historical survey of the movement to Mexico and other Latin American countries.

In 1922 some 6000 Mennonites from Manitoba and Saskatchewan made the move to Mexico, settling in the northern state of Chihuahua and further south in the state of Durango. The immediate reason for making this move was the insistence of provincial governments that the children of Mennonites must be educated in English schools. Rather than submit to the abandonment of their private German schools many Mennonites saw the move to a new country as the only solution.

The move to the Paraguayan Chaco by the Chortitzer Mennonites of the East Reserve in Manitoba was triggered by the same circumstances. Once settled in their new colonies these pioneers not only reinstated their tradition of totally German schools but excluded elements of reform that they believed had entered into the schools back in Russia before they moved to Canada.

The closed colony way of life coupled with a very traditional educational system put tremendous limitations on the world view of the colonists, their interaction with their non-Mennonite neighbours and on their economic activity. The customary and most acceptable way of life was farming and that became the ambition of most of the young people in the colony.

As the population of the colonies increased and as new generations of farmers grew up there arose a need for more land and new colonies were formed to accommodate the increase. However, developments of this kind never kept pace with the need for more land as the large families of the Mennonites grew to maturity. Because employment opportunities on the colonies were very limited and wages very low (by Canadian standards) many were drawn to the land of their fathers. They hoped Canada would bring them more material rewards.

While the relatively well-paying jobs in Canada were the primary factor in drawing so many Mennonites back to Canada there were also other, lesser factors. In many cases people were unhappy with the very restricted way of life that the church required of them and which it sought to maintain by excommunicating those who did not conform. The uncertainty of the conscientious objector status of

the Mennonites in Mexico has also influenced some. There are also those who desire that their children should receive a better education for their children than the colony schools provide.

For many that move was facilitated by the presence of relatives in Canada who gave help in making the transition. But the movement of many of these Mennonites to southern Ontario indicates that such family connections played a relatively minor role in the return. Today southern Ontario is the area receiving the majority of Mennonite returnees and the main attraction is the promise of good-paying jobs. Initially most newcomers found employment in seasonal agricultural jobs but many soon moved on to more permanent and better-paying jobs in the factories. There are also many who have become self-employed as farmers, tradesmen and businessmen.

The initial move of this first wave of Mennonites in the 1920's was supplemented by later waves of immigration in the 1940's when a group of *Kleingemeinde* Mennonites moved to Mexico and the Sommerfelder from southern Manitoba moved to Paraguay. Eventually substantial numbers of the Mennonites from Mexico moved further south, to Belize, Bolivia, Paraguay, and most recently Argentina. In most, though not all cases, these moves were made because the old traditions were being threatened, especially in the Chihuahua colonies of Mexico. Changes were introduced to some extent by mission agencies from Canada, and by the later migration of less traditional Mennonites. Mostly they came through people in the colonies who could not see the point of driving their tractors on steel wheels when rubber tires were at hand or who preferred to drive a motor vehicle over the traditional horse and buggy.

While one can only guess at the number of people who have moved back to Canada, the figure is most likely in excess of 25,000. For some time there was an almost equal number going to southern Manitoba as were going to southern Ontario. However, more recently there has been a decline in numbers coming to Manitoba coupled with a consistent increase in those moving to Ontario. There is also a significant number going to southern Alberta.

Additionally, there are a substantial number who have moved to the Interlake area of Manitoba and there is a group from Belize which has sought to transfer the colony system from Central America to Canada. These families have settled on a large tract of land in Nova Scotia. There are also substantial numbers who have returned from Paraguay and have settled in the Niverville-Steinbach area with many taking up work and residence in Winnipeg. The latter group has resulted in the establishment of a new Winnipeg congregation which ministers almost exclusively to people who have come from the Menno Colony in the Paraguayan Chaco.

In Manitoba, with its large resident Mennonite population, the churches have been instrumental in helping the newcomers to feel at home. There is at least one church

group in southern Manitoba which is comprised 90% of people who have moved from Mexico. This church has picked up a very substantial portion of the resettlement needs that people come with. Several churches have maintained a strong German content in their services in order to accommodate the many newcomers. In several instances churches which had made the transition to English have started German services to accommodate the returning German-speaking Mennonites. Mennonite Central Committee (Manitoba) maintains an office in Winkler, Manitoba, to give assistance to returning Mennonites.

In Ontario the Mennonites from Latin America settled in an area where there was no resident Mennonite population and therefore there has been a much greater need for assistance from outside of the immediate community. The churches from Manitoba, most notably the Old Colony and the Sommerfelder, have given substantial assistance in the organization of sister congregations in Ontario. Several other groups have also established congregations made up almost exclusively from returning Mennonites.

MCC Ontario maintains their aid offices with full-time staff who give assistance to the Mennonite immigrants. Their resources, both physical and financial are often taxed to the limit coping with the documentation, housing, and social assistance needs of the ever-increasing stream of newcomers.

At the same time it must be said that the returning Mennonites have shown tremendous resourcefulness in making the required adjustments, such as learning the language (English), finding employment and adjusting to new school and church situations. In many cases it is these people who today do more than any others to provide employment and give the affirmation that these newcomers to Canada constantly need.

Menno Kroeker is director of Kanadier Concerns for MCC Canada.

James Urry Comes and Goes

Dr. James Urry of the Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, was a most welcome guest in our Manitoba Mennonite circles for nearly a year. He conducted research on the social history of Grunthal, Manitoba, gave a number of lectures and presented several papers on Mennonites of Russia, his major field of research.

Dr. Urry was joined by his family after Christmas and has made many friends in this community. He left Canada on June 17 to continue his work as an anthropologist at the University where he is located.

In the fall of 1989 Hyperion Press published his book *None But Saints*. The Transformation of Mennonite Life, 1789-1889. He has published a number of related articles as well.

We are most grateful for Jim's presence and his varied contributions. His visit has been one all of us will remember and treasure for a long time to come.

Mennonites in Quebec: The New Fact

by Ken Reddig

Decades ago, some Mennonites considered moving to Quebec when problems of acculturation became acute for them in western Canada. That move did not take place, but a significant Mennonite community has emerged in that province nonetheless. Most of them belong to Mennonite Brethren congregations, but some groups joined what is now the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada. Briefly told, here is the story of that "new fact."

The beginning of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Quebec was to follow two significant events of 1960. The first, in Quebec, came on June 22, when the Liberals surged into power with Jean Lesage as Premier. The second, on the African continent, came with the expulsion of missionaries from the Belgian Congo (now Zaire) in the summer of 1960.

The removal of these missionaries meant reassignment for many. One such couple, Ernest and Lydia Dyck, were reassigned to explore mission possibilities in Quebec.

The coming of the Dycks to Quebec was fortuitous. Their timing could not have been better. The province was at one of its most historic turning points and more open than ever before to new ideas and the Gospel.

Premier Jean Lesage had caught the tenor of the times. Quebecers were tired of the antiquated "religious" politics that had dominated the province since 1534. While still maintaining a positive face towards the Roman Catholic Church, Lesage worked towards eliminating or reducing the church's broad influence. The church was conservative and traditional and was keeping Quebec society from a liberal-democratic progressivism, so Lesage thought. He changed the politics of the province from a Roman Catholic "theocracy" into a "secular" institution. By 1964, for example, he had wrested control of the educational system from the church.

The biggest change came in the fact that politics, instead of the church, now led society. Where once the church had taken the lead to protect the "French Fact" in Canada, now political movements took leadership. Lesage had lit a nationalistic flame which was to make itself felt across Canada. Catholicism was diminished to the state of being a powerful and prominent religion within a now "secular" society. "Secularization" now meant a new openness to religious pluralism, extended even to the protestant camp.

It was into this transitional setting that the Dycks began church-planting in Quebec. Bible studies, visitation, radio programs as well as Sunday services received a positive response. By 1962 a small congregation with an average attendance of over 60 people was founded.

The next years were to witness steady growth, not without many frustrations and setbacks, however. Innovative and successful programs such as the yearly summer employ-

ment of French-Canadian students aided evangelistic work. The founding of a French-Canadian Bible school in 1976 helped build a strong group of trained church workers. Through the years this led to the significant step of the formation of a Quebec provincial conference and this conference was formally accepted into the Canadian Conference of MB Churches on July 7, 1984.

A fuller story of the other French Mennonites still awaits the telling. Four other congregations can be mentioned briefly in this version. They include the Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal, the Eglise evangelique Mennonite de Rawdon, and Eglise evangelique Mennonite de Rouyn-Noranda. The membership of these groups totals just over 150, with attendance higher, of course.

These groups find their larger fellowship circle in the recently-formed Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada. Other points of outreach and church planting among French Canadians are found in this Conference as well.

In general it must be noted that today these congregations, now totalling nearly 1,000 members, are composed almost entirely of French-Canadians. Only a handful of its members are from Russian-Mennonite ancestry. Therefore, they see themselves more as Anabaptists rather than Mennonites with a German-Russian ancestry.

As one French-Canadian Mennonite Brethren put it, "We are reliving the 16th century in Quebec. We can relate to the problems of the early Anabaptists with the state church."

New Asian, Hispanic and Native Congregations

(cont'd from p. 2)

On a typical Sunday morning any of at least twelve languages (Spanish, Cree, Saultaux, Hmong, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Laotian, French, German, Portuguese, or English) can be heard in Canadian Mennonite worship services. The Mennonite church has indeed become a place where many peoples have become God's people.

The next decade promises to be as interesting as the one past. We will see these new Mennonite congregations mature and take their rightful places in the ranks of leadership not only in local communities, but the country as a whole.

Congregations

British Columbia

Bethel Chinese Christian, Vancouver
Gideon Chinese, Vancouver
Grace Chinese, Vancouver
Hindu Punjabi Gospel, Vancouver
Lao Christian, Vancouver
Life Chinese, Vancouver
Pacific Grace Chinese, Vancouver
Peace Chinese, Richmond
Vancouver Chinese, Vancouver
Vietnamese, Clearbrook
Vietnamese Church of Love, Vancouver

Alberta

Calgary Chinese, Calgary
Calgary Vietnamese, Calgary
Edmonton Chinese, Edmonton

Saskatchewan

Chinese Community, Regina
Grace Laotian Fellowship, Regina
Grace Mandarin Fellowship, Regina
Saskatoon Chinese, Saskatoon
Spanish (First), Saskatoon
Kamsack

Manitoba

Chinese, Winnipeg
Pauiingassi, Pauiingassi
Portuguese, Winnipeg
Spanish Christian, Winnipeg
St. Boniface Evangelical Christian, Winnipeg

Winnipeg Chinese, Winnipeg
Winnipeg Vietnamese, Winnipeg
Riverton, Riverton
Grace, Manigotogan
Bloodvein, Bloodvein
Matheson, Matheson Island
Pine Dock, Pine Dock
Selkirk Christian, Selkirk
Elim, Cross Lake

Ontario

Hmong Christian, Kitchener
Laotian Christian, St. Catharines
New Life Fellowship, Toronto
Spanish Fellowship, Kitchener
Toronto Chinese, Toronto
Community Bible Fellowship, Morson
Pikangikum, Pikangikum
Fellowship of Believers, Poplar Hill
Deer Lake, Deer Lake
Sandy Lake, Sandy Lake
North Spirit Lake, North Spirit Lake
Slate Falls, Slate Falls
Bible Believers Church, Grassy Narrows
Osnaburg, Osnaburg House

Quebec

Assemblée Chrétienne de la Perseverance, Montréal
Eglise Chrétienne Evangelique, New Richmond
Eglise Chrétienne Evangelique de St. Eustache, St. Donat
Eglise Chrétienne Ste. Rose, Laval
Eglise Chrétienne, St. Jerome
Eglise Chrétienne, St. Laurent
Eglise Evangelique, Charlesbourg
Eglise des FM, St. Therese
Eglise Evangelique, Ste. Anne des Plaines
Obra Menonita Hispana, Montréal
Eglise Evangelique, Joliette
Eglise Evangelique, Rouyn/Noranda
Eglise Evangelique, Rawdon

Attendance for these congregations totals approximately 2,400.

Rudy Regehr is Executive Secretary for the Congregational Resources Board of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada.

REFLECTIONS ON COLLECTIONS

Abram Dyck (1869-1919) Diaries

by Jim Suderman

Abram Dyck, eldest son of Jacob and Katharina (Niebuhr) Dyck, was born June 13, 1869, in Chortitza, Ukraine. In 1886 the Dyck family moved to Schonwiese, near Alexandrovsk (now Zaporozh'e), where Abram assisted his father in the flour mill. The Dyck's purchased a mill in 1898, and a second in 1908, both of which Abram managed. Dyck was also active in the city administration of Alexandrovsk, where he was an alderman. As an alderman, he also participated on several committees.

Abram married Susanna Toews (1876-1914) in 1900. One daughter, Katherina, was born in 1901. His second marriage was to Helene Thiessen (1885-?), in 1916. Another daughter, Helene, was born in 1918.

Abram Dyck's last years were difficult. He, along with many others, including Jakob Niebuhr, was threatened by the revolutionists and anarchists during the time of terror (1918-19), and eventually fled to Berdiansk. He died on December 22, 1919, of typhus.

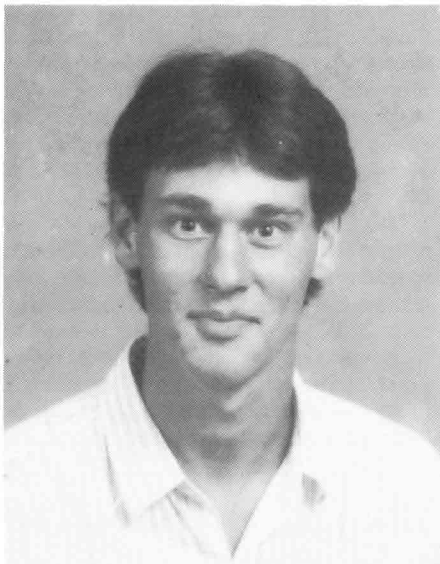
Dyck's hand-writing is clear and in German gothic script. The diaries detail everyday life, current events and business dealings as well as key political events in Russia including the Russo-Japanese War, the 1905 Revolution, the outbreak of the First World War, the outbreak of the Russian Revolution in 1917, and finally the period of civil war in Ukraine. All these events had a significant impact on the Russian Mennonite economic situation. The period covered by Dyck's diaries is that in which costs for maintaining the forestry service escalated beyond the ability of the Russian Mennonites to pay for the program.

The pocket-sized diaries, each with approximately 120-150 pages, date from 1894-1919. The format is the same as that of business diaries today: all sorts of details, distance charts, weights and measurement conversion charts, maps, etc. are included. Tucked into some of the diaries are advertisements, notices, lottery tickets and other mundane notes.

Unfortunately the diaries for 1895, 1896, 1907, 1918 and possibly parts of 1919 are missing. In addition to the diaries there is a small notebook with figures in pencil.

These diaries are a rare and rich resource for the Heritage Centre collection. Records of leaders in the Russian Mennonite economic and political arena are very rare among archival holdings. Yet it is partially in these fields, generally entered by business people rather than ministers, that the strength of the Mennonite colonies in Russia was founded.

The diaries have been presented to the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives by Abram Dyck's daughters, Katherine (Dyck) Thiessen and Helen (Dyck) Klassen, both of British Columbia. Perhaps diaries or correspondence relating to the Niebuhr relatives of Abram Dyck will surface to complement these records of an Alexandrovsk businessman.



The Centre is fortunate to have obtained the summer service of CMBC student Arlyn Epp. Arlyn is employed under a CareerStart grant provided for 1990 by the Manitoba Ministry of Family Services.

Arlyn's help will make it possible to do some backlog cataloguing needed for collections archived in the past year or two. This assistance will be available at least through the month of July.

Kathleen Nanowin, MHCS Conservator

Kathleen Nanowin, a conservator hired by the Manitoba Heritage Conservation Service, worked at the Heritage Centre for three weeks in June and early July. She prepared documentary, cartographic and photographic exhibits for display during the Polish/Prussian Mennonite Symposium in the MHC Gallery. She also improved our storage facilities for our over-sized photographs and documentary art.

Her services were provided free of charge by the Conservation Service, and were of great value to the endurance of the MHC collection and its public outreach work.

Grants Received

The Heritage Centre has applied for and received several grants in the past few months. These grants are in the form of money and, in one case, personnel.

Early this year \$1,900.00 was received from the Manitoba Ministry of Culture, Heritage and Recreation in the form of a capital facilities grant. The money was used to purchase a laser printer and a hygrothermograph, used for continuous monitoring of temperature and relative humidity in the MHC vault.

The Canadian Council of Archives awarded

MCI Centennial Celebration

The Mennonite Collegiate Institute of Gretna, Manitoba, is celebrating a centennial of continuous activity this summer. In its earliest phases (beginning in 1889), the institution was called a "Normal School", then was renamed Mennonite Educational Institute. After this school was moved to Altona, a new building was erected in 1908 and given the name it has today. Heinrich H. Ewert served as the principal of these schools from 1890-1934, the year of his death.

Centennial celebrations are scheduled for July 20-22 on the campus of the MCI. Questions may be directed to Allan Dueck, MCI principal, at (204) 327-5891.

The Mennonite Heritage Centre has an excellent collection, recently organized, of the MCI records from its founding. An agreement with the MCI has been reached for ongoing deposits of MCI records. A finding aid exists for the collection. A nearly complete run of *Ich sende Euch* (school newsletter) and its successors is in the MHC Archives. If you have any back issues or old MCI photos, please contact the Archives at (204) 888-6781.

The MHCA has most MCI Yearbooks and the papers of Paul J. Schaefer and G.H. Peters.

Mennonite Records in Mexico

Recently the [Mexican National Archives] incorporated a large number of foreign registry cards from the Departamento de Migracion [Department of Immigration]. Some 4,000 of these cards are for Canadian citizens who emigrated to Mexico from 1890 into the early 1920s. Most of the Canadian emigrants are Mennonites from Manitoba. The registry cards each include a detailed personal description and a photograph.

The Heritage Centre is hoping to receive a microfilm copy of these cards. They would be a valuable source for genealogists and for researching the migration of Mennonites to Mexico. This may be especially pertinent in the light of the return migration from Mexico to Canada, presently taking place.

five backlog reduction grants to the MHC Archives for 1990-91. The grants total \$5,050.00. The projects funded include: arranging and describing the Elim Bible Institute collection; arranging and describing the Alexander Rempel (1915-1985) collection; arranging and describing the records of the Mennonitischer Sprachverein [Mennonite German Society]; and arranging and describing the records of the Kleefeld Dairy Cooperative. These are large, valuable collections for the MHC Archives. When these projects are complete they will be much more accessible to researchers.

The Bote Committee has granted \$2,000.00 to help get *Bote Index, Vol. III* underway. Peter H. Rempel is expected to come in September to continue work on this project. It is expected that *Vol. II* will be published this fall.





Friesen family, homesteading near Buffalo Prairie in the Peace River region of Alberta. We would appreciate further information regarding this photograph.

RECENT ACCESSION

Papers of Missionary Hermann Jantzen (1866-1959)

The major portion of the collection consists of a manuscript of Jantzen's autobiography written in 1951 at the age of 85. The collection contains some correspondence of Hermann Jantzen of Hilversum, Holland, to Mr. Ernst Kuhlmann of Omaka, Nebraska, during 1949-1951. The following details of Jantzen's life point to the significance of this collection:

Hermann Jantzen was born on May 28, 1866, in the village of Hahnsau in the Am Trakt settlement in the Samara region. His parents were well-to-do landowners in this settlement. As a 12 year-old boy, he moved with his parents to Turkestan, being led by Claas Epp, a brother-in-law to his father. While employed by an Emir of Chiva he mastered the Uzbek language and became well versed in the Islamic religion. Later, through E. H. Broadbent of England, he was called to be a missionary to the Islamic people of Central Asia.

Jantzen accepted this call and made a number of trips into Turkestan before the 1917 Russian Revolution disrupted his life. In 1923 he emigrated from Russia to Germany, and eventually settled in Holland. The last 10 years of his life he lived near Hilversum, where he died in 1959 at the age of 93.

Note: A review of Hermann Jantzen *Im wilden Turkestan: Ein Leben unter Moslems* (1988) was published in *Mennonite Historian* XV, No. 3 (Sept., 1989), p. 12.

Rundschau Index Available

The first volume of the *Index for the Mennonitische Rundschau (1880-1889)* is now available from the Centre for MB studies and/or Kindred Press. The index is available in hard cover only. Please order from the Centre for MB Studies or from Kindred Press. Both organizations utilize the same address, 169 Riverton Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2L 2E5.

A Paper On The Move

On February 27, 1990, the *Mennonitische Rundschau*, the oldest Mennonite German-language periodical in North America, moved yet again. Though this move was only two city blocks from its former location, it represents yet another in a long series of moves for this periodical.

The paper was established in 1880 by John F. Funk to serve the Russian Mennonite communities in the prairie states and Manitoba. Published in Elkhart, Indiana, it made its first move in 1908 when it went to Scottdale, Pennsylvania. There it remained until 1923 when it was moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba. For almost 28 years, 672 Arlington was its home base. Then, in January of 1951, it was moved into newly-constructed offices at 157 Kelvin Street. Though it remained at this location until last month, the street was renamed Henderson Highway in April, 1964. This present move brings it to 169 Riverton Ave., the headquarters of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.

This last move was initiated as a consequence of internal reorganization. A managing Editor will now be responsible not only for the *Mennonitische Rundschau*, but for the *MB Herald* and *Le Lien* as well. A part of this reorganization has been the purchase of new desk-top publishing equipment. To make the best possible use of this equipment necessitated that all typesetting, design and layout be handled from one location. It is hoped that the move will help streamline operations and increase efficiency.

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

Music Collection to be Catalogued

The Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies has received confirmation of a Backlog Reduction Grant from the Canadian Council of Archives to process and catalogue its extensive music collection. A portion of this material, including hymn books, audio tapes, sheet music and manuscripts is from the collection of Ben and Esther Horsch, which was donated to the Centre last fall.

To process and catalogue these materials the Centre has acquired the services of Herbert Giesbrecht, recently retired librarian of MBBC. This collection is certain to be well used since it represents copies of almost all the church music, hymnody as well as choral music sung by Mennonite Brethren in Canada, and in Russia and the Soviet Union. Herb will begin work on this collection in late summer.

Following completion of this project Herb and his wife Margaret will be spending a number of months in Germany where he will assist in the cataloguing of the European Mennonite collection, currently housed at the Mennonitische Forschungsstelle in Weierhof.

Mennonite Atlas to be Released

A new atlas of maps on Mennonite settlements is now in print. Copies have been received in the Centre for MB Studies. Release of the publication for sale to the general public is slated for July 3, 1990.

The general public, friends and anyone interested in this important publication is invited to a brief book launch ceremony at 8:00 PM on July 3, 1990 at the Mennonite Brethren Bible College auditorium. William Schroeder and Helmut Huebert, compilers of this atlas, will be present to autograph copies of their atlas. Both hard and soft cover copies of the book will be on sale at this event. Cost of the atlas is \$20.00 for the soft cover and \$30.00 for the hard cover.

(cont'd on p. 9)

Summer Assistant

The Centre For MB Studies has hired Brad Thiessen, formerly of Edmonton, Alberta, as a summer student assistant. Brad is an English student at the Mennonite Brethren Bible College. Brad comes to the Centre under the "Career Start" program of the Manitoba government.

So far Brad has been engaged in numerous projects including the organization and development of a Finding Aid for all the MBBC records deposited in the Centre, as well as adding some 10 linear feet of MEDA (Mennonite Economic Development Associates) files to the existing MEDA records deposited in the Centre.

Brad's work is much appreciated. The Centre extends its thanks to the "Career Start" program for their financial assistance in the hiring of Brad.

Old Letters from Grandma: The Flight to Moscow, 1929

by Hans Werner

December, 1989, marked the 60th anniversary of the flight of thousands of Germans, many of them Mennonites, to Moscow in an attempt to escape to the west. While these Mennonites came from almost all areas of Russia, the largest group came from the Slavgorod region of Siberia. Among the Siberian refugees was my grandmother, Anna (Janzen) Froese, husband Johan, and their family. Some of the children were from previous marriages, including my father, aged twelve.

One of my aunts had stayed with an uncle of hers, and had gone with them in 1925 when that family emigrated to Canada. Before she passed away in 1989, she gave my father a number of letters which she had received from their mother, Anna Froese.¹

The harsh policies of the first Five Year Plan quickly affected the Mennonites of Siberia and encouraged those who were already thinking of emigrating. The Froese family was considering emigration as early as 20 February 1929.

In the spring of 1929, 70 families from Siberia arrived in Moscow, received passports and left for Canada on 31 July 1929. News of their success spread and by fall the *dachas* [road houses] along the northern railroad line in Moscow were filled with Mennonites, including the Froese family, who moved into a *dacha* near the Perlovka train station.

In Germany renewed efforts were made by B.H. Unruh, and in Canada, by David Toews, to lobby the governments to permit further immigration of Mennonites. The efforts in Canada met with failure. Germany, however, voted to bring in all the refugees and care for them until a permanent home could be found for them. On the night of 17 November 1929 the Soviet officials began sending the refugees back by force.

From November 17-19, the Soviet authorities forcibly loaded about 8,000 of the estimated 13,600 refugees onto trains. The remaining 5,600 persons were allowed to leave on the basis of the German governments assurances for their care and as a result of the storm of protest the deportations had caused in that country.

One letter, dated December 19, 1929, reads, "... We have been sent back. Everything was ready, we just had to board and travel to Leningrad. In the evening it looked promising, we prepared so that if we got word during the night to go to the train station to wait for good news. Then it was completely different."

"During the same night a vehicle came, we boarded, and went back to the railway. The children were happy, we were going to America. I told them right away that we were going back, otherwise, they would not have come to get us. The first and second groups had to provide their own way to the station, after all, it was only three versts.² I would have will-

ingly gone to the station myself, as difficult as it was. That which we wanted to take along, bedding, we would have carried."

"The two groups left at night. The trip back was very difficult in the red cattle cars. It was dark and uncomfortable and crowded, forty-two persons in the car, and then all the things the people took along: trunks, baskets, suitcases, containers of potatoes. We travelled twelve days to get back."

"We came here to Kulunda.³ We had to travel another 45 versts. We travelled 25 versts and then stayed overnight. There was a big storm with snow and wind. We stayed overnight with the Russians. Then at night we received the gift of a child and stayed there one week, Froese and I."

"The children were taken to the old, poor homestead. . . . Our Johan had stayed behind and Froese had given him the authority to take care of the money and then also send it to Moscow. When we came back the money was still in the soviet, but you can imagine what was going on. There was a lot of stealing, poor nourishment, no cooking utensils, the house was empty. I wanted to have a little cloth to wrap the child, but there wasn't enough. So if you are willing, send us the money, I thank you in advance, we will repay it all. The passports we paid for over there, 880 Rubles for 4 passports and papers, everything we paid for. Too many people came, or we would have escaped."

The circumstances facing the Froese family upon their return were miserable. They had lost everything except the house and some straw which they had not been able to sell. They had to beg to be admitted into the collective. Johan Froese, who had always been a vocal anti-communist, talked increasingly of the likelihood that he would be exiled. In the winter of 1930 he committed suicide.

Another letter records: "I am very poor. I have acquired some things already but not a tenth of what we had before the flight. You can dispose of everything in one morning but to get it back, that —. I sometimes feel so forsaken, and I am so alone, no brother, no sister, no husband. Oh, you cannot imagine how terrible I feel."

"I also miss my brother Jacob very much. I felt so sorry for him. He was so sick with pneumonia in winter. I couldn't visit him because there were no horses. He was so poorly buried, no coffin and without clothes. In comparison, I was able to provide Froese with a better burial. I asked, and they consented to bury him on the church yard. I am crying as I write. My eyes are full of tears..."⁴

In the following years all the heads of the families who had fled to Moscow from the villages were exiled to the labor camps in the far north. In 1938, my father was drafted into the Red Army and after being captured by the Germans in 1941, grandmother never heard from him again. She died in 1943 of tuberculosis.

Endnotes

¹ The surviving letters which were sent by Anna (Janzen) Froese to her relatives in Can-

ada consist of seven letters (some only fragments) addressed to her daughter or the foster parents. Although the letters are not all dated, they are written during the period from February, 1929, to 1935 or 1936. The portions quoted here are translated from German by the author.

One account of the larger story is H.J. Willms, ed. At the Gates of Moscow (Abbotsford, BC: Committee of Mennonite Refugees from the Soviet Union, 1965).

² A verst is approximately equal to a kilometer.

³ Kulunda was the train station nearest to Grigorevka, home of the Froese's. Grigorevka was one of the Paschnaja villages located approximately 85 kilometers southeast of Slavgorod.

⁴ This excerpt is from an undated letter fragment, likely written in 1932 or 1933.



1990 Winnipeg

Historic Church Building Destroyed by Fire

by Peter J. Klassen

During the night of February 23-24, 1990, the former Prussian Mennonite church building of the Fürstenwerder congregation burned to the ground. This structure, situated at the north end of the village Barwalde, now called Nedzwiedzica, was the last of several log churches that once dotted the Vistula-Nogat delta. Dr. Arkadiusz Rybak, leader of a historical preservation group in that area, reported that children had been playing in the building when it caught fire.

In 1768 the Bishop of Kulm granted Mennonites permission to construct four churches according to prescribed specifications and "removed from the open streets" (*von den öffentlichen Strassen entfernt*, Gdansk, State Archives, 358/402). By then, a large congregation had already developed there. In 1782 Elder Dirck Tiessen, chronicling his activities for the year, reported that he baptized 20 persons in that church (*Verzeichniss der Getauften nebst einen Anhang der Lehrer- und Dienerwahl, Petershagen, 1782*, Gdansk, State Archives, 358/245/1).

For most of the time since 1945, when the Mennonites left this region, the building was used for storage by the adjacent collective farm. More recently, the church stood empty. At the time of the fire, several possibilities for transforming the church into a museum were being considered.

The issue of Mennonite museum construction in northern Poland will come up at the Polish/Prussian Symposium to be held on July 21-24 in Winnipeg.

Mennonites and Matheson Island: A History Book Project

by Neil Funk-Unrau

To the casual observer the Metis fishing community of Matheson Island, located at the narrows of Lake Winnipeg, appears to be a quiet, peaceful and relatively isolated settlement. Under the surface, however, a rich and exciting history lies waiting to be explored.

Residents and former residents of the island remember a time when Lake Winnipeg was alive with ships and boats of all sizes. Many of them had to stop at the island for freight, fuel or passengers on their way through the narrows. Community members also remember the many fishing stations scattered across the island and along nearby bays and inlets. The history of Matheson Island provides a window into the story of life and industry all along Lake Winnipeg.

For Mennonites, the history of the island community is significant in another way. Matheson Island was the first aboriginal community to receive Mennonite missionaries sent by the churches in southern Manitoba. Since 1948, representatives of Mennonite Pioneer Mission (then sponsored by the Berghaler churches of southern Manitoba, now by the Conference of Mennonites in Canada), have worked closely with the community and developed many strong relationships with its members. Mennonite teachers at the island school have also left a major impact over the years. The relationship between Mennonites and this one Metis community has profoundly affected both sides in the last 40 years.

Other aspects make the Matheson Island story a unique one. This community was one of the first in Manitoba to develop its own fishing co-op. It is still a very successful venture. The historical relationship between the island settlers and nearby Indian communities deserves further attention as well.

A process of collecting the history of the community has begun with a project to tape oral histories of the local area. This is being accomplished with the aid of a grant from the Oral History Grant Program of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba. The next step is to supplement the oral histories with documented information and to begin preparing a written history of the community.

More financial assistance is needed to continue work on this project. For further information, contact Neil Funk-Unrau, c/o Native Ministries, Conference of Mennonites in Canada, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba. Telephone: 888-6781 or 783-9070.

Mennonite Atlas

(cont'd from p. 7)

As noted in our previous issue, copies may be ordered from Springfield Publishers, 6 Litz Place, Winnipeg, Manitoba R2G 0V1 or from Kindred Press, 169 Riverton Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2L 2E5.



Peter Heinrich Janzen (1902-1967) was born in Blumengart, Ukraine, and died in Grunthal, Manitoba. Janzen was recruited around 1922, and served in the Soviet Navy, stationed at Leningrad, and Kronstadt. He was not able to get conscientious objector status but worked as an office clerk.

Information and photo were provided by Jake Janzen of Grunthal, Manitoba, through Dr. James Urry.

Directory of Mennonite Archives and Historical Libraries

Verzeichnis Mennonitischer Archive und Historischer Bibliotheken

Répertoire des Archives et des Bibliothèques Historiques Mennonites



1990 Winnipeg

Third edition

The *Directory of Mennonite Archives and Historical Libraries*, third edition, edited by Lawrence Klippenstein and Jim Suderman, is expected to be launched during the NAMAL meetings held during Mennonite World Conference. Copies are available from the Mennonite Heritage Centre.

Upcoming Publications

The spring and summer of 1990 are bringing forth a number of new Mennonite publications, especially for the participants at MWC. Several new items off the press are mentioned elsewhere in this issue.

We encourage our readers to be looking for a number of other titles which should appear very shortly. Included are the following:

1. The fourth volume of Arnold Dyck's *Complete Works*, edited by George Epp, et al, and to be published by Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society.

2. The fifth volume of *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, edited by Dr. C.J. Dyck of Elkhart, Indiana.

3. A second edition of Margaret Loewen Reimer's *One Quilt. Many Pieces* to be published by Mennonite Reporter.

4. A pictorial album titled *The Mennonites of Canada*, edited by Andreas Schroeder of British Columbia.

5. A history of the Mennonite Collegiate Institute, edited by Dr. Gerhard Ens, Jr., and published as a Centennial project by the MCI.

6. An English edition of Paul J. Schaefer's book on *Henry H. Ewert* (of the MCI), translated by Ida Toews and published by CMBC Publications, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

7. An art exhibit catalogue, *Mennonite Artist: Insider as Outsider*, edited by Priscilla Reimer and published by the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society for the opening of its MWC exhibit, July 6-29 (Access Gallery in Winnipeg).

8. A second edition of a Low German work, *Kohmt met no Expo* by Ted Klassen and Gerhard Peters. Published by the authors.

9. *Daydreams and Nightmares. Life on the Wintergruen Estate*, based on memoirs written by Helena Goosen Friesen and translated by the late Neta Enns. Publisher: CMBC Publications, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

10. *Templar Mennonites*, by Heinrich Sawatzky, second in a translation project of monographs on Russian Mennonite life and history. Echo Historical Series. Publisher: CMBC Publications, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

11. *MWC Handbook on Manitoba Mennonites*, with tour information for the MWC sessions. Written by Lawrence Klippenstein and Ken Reddig.

12. The 1990 edition of *Journal of Mennonite Studies*, edited by Dr. Harry Loewen of the Chair of Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg. It includes a number of papers read at the November 1989 symposium on Mennonites in Russia.

13. Selection of items from *Mennonite Martyrs* (Vols. I-II), written by Aron Toews and translated by Dr. John B. Toews. Publisher: Kindred Press, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

14. A novel, *The Deacon*, by Myron Augsburg and Marcie Augsburg Kindenon. Publisher: Kindred Press, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

A number of these items will be appearing at the main book store at the Assembly 12 MWC sessions. All will be available through the Mennonite Heritage Centre after the MWC sessions end.

The Prussian Mennonite Emigration: A Letter to the Family

Translated and edited by
Lawrence Klippenstein

This letter was written by Maria Born, nee Wiebe, earlier Mrs. Ens. It was copied from a document in the State Archives in Danzig, Section 117, Tiegenhof No. 881, located in the original files of Zeyers-Vorder Kampen, page 12. The document was first reprinted in Der Bote No. 15 (April 12, 1939), 5, and reappeared in Mitteilungen des Sippenverbandes der Danziger Mennoniten Familien Epp-Kauenhowen-Zimmermann VII, No. 5 (October, 1941), 132-133. The document was submitted for publication by Franz Harder.

My dear children,

It would be the deepest desire of my heart that this simple letter would find you, my dear children, in good health. Thank God we are well.

I have received your letter of 5 August 1788, and note that you are well. For that we are thankful. You have said that you would like to follow us if I tell our destination. This I would gladly do, but I can offer you nothing due to your circumstances, of which you are fully aware.

But I would like to tell my daughter Maria that she may come as soon as she is able, and in whatever way possible. My dear daughter Maria, do come, if you would like to, perhaps with Peter Neufeld. That would be your best way, but do inquire about it first.

I am living at Solovii, three Russian miles (wersts — ed.) from Dubrovna. My family is with me there. We are living together with many other families on a large estate. My situation though is quite distressing. God has permitted a great separation in my life. He has taken my dear husband from me.¹ He arrived here shortly after we had come from Riga, then became sick, and was in bed for fourteen days with Putatschen(?). He departed from this world on 13 September 1788, at 4:30 a.m. to enter eternity.

On the 17th he was buried at Solovii in an honorable way according to the customs of our country. The trip from Riga to Dubrovna has gone well so far. Magdalena and Anna did get very sick while travelling, and Anna is still very sick. Thank God, the rest of us are well.

You, my dear children, have written me about the purchase money. I want to pass that on to you. Do give my greetings to my brother H. Wiebe, and to H. Penner, the present owner of the property. Ask them that the rest of the money be given to the children.

Otherwise do not be too concerned about my situation, thinking that it may be difficult because I am in a foreign country. I am quite well, and have really nothing to complain about. It would not be honouring God or the gracious Empress if I were to do so. We know that things are fine here in Russia, no matter what the dollards (*dumme Pöbel*) may jeal-

ously say against Russia. Let them beware that they do not devour themselves in so doing.

We are living in peace here, are not charged for living expenses, and may get our wood from the forest as we need it. We may also feed our horses on the pasture.

I can tell you that I am better off now than if I were with you. They would surely be after me there. Jacob Hoepfner, the deputy, is my guardian. He has promised to see that I get anything I need, and to do what is best for me at all times. If you were as well off as I am, no one would need to go to bed hungry.

I must close now. Please give my greetings to my brothers and sisters. I wish all of you would be treated as well as I am. If you want to enjoy what I have, then you may follow me. I give over all of you to God's care and peace. I remain, till death may part us, your loving mother

Maria Born

Solovii at Dubrovna,² 22 October 1788

P.S. I would also like to send warmest greetings to Peter Isaac, guardian of my two children. I am wondering if it will be possible to

get the money for them. Could you send me an answer to this by return mail? I will give you the address to which you should send the letter. Address it to The Most Honored Baron von Macolotschy, care of Jacob Hoepfner at Dubrovna, to be forwarded to Mrs. Born. Send it with Mr. H. Penner at Langenzug Campe. A letter from Solovii.

Endnotes

¹Her husband's name was Isaac. His death date is listed as September 9, 1788, B.H. Unruh, *Die niederländisch-niederdeutsche Hintergründe der Mennonitischen Ostwanderungen* (1955), 291. Maria later married Isaak Woelke with whom she may have lived in Chortitza after 1794, and later also in Einlage. Cf. Marianne Janzen, "The First Mennonite Settlers in Russia (1789)," unpublished manuscript, MHC, 14.

²Dubrovna (the Russian spelling was Dubrovno) was a regular stop-over for all the immigrant groups. It was located on the Dnieper River, which made it possible to ship goods downstream to Chortitza.

Notes on the *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch*, the *Odessaer Kalender* and the *Odessaer Zeitung*

by Jim Suderman

Published and first edited by Heinrich Dirks (1879-1938), of Berdjansk, *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch* was established to record the life of Mennonites in Russia and promote the renewal of their religious life. Dirks later shared the editorship with Hermann Lenzmann of Tokmak.

The *Jahrbuch* regularly included reports on foreign missions, Molotschna-based charitable institutions, itinerant ministry, and historical articles on the Gnadenfeld congregation (of which Dirks was an elder). Dirks also sharply criticized the activities and impact of separatist groups, such as the Mennonite Brethren, interpreted Biblical prophecies and discerned signs of the end-time.

In 1911 the *Allgemeine Konferenz* became the publisher and appointed David H. Epp to edit the *Jahrbuch*. Epp's editorship reflected the efforts of the *Allgemeine Konferenz* to include the Mennonite Brethren. In 1914 the Russian government banned German publications, at which time the *Jahrbuch* ceased publication. The entire run (1903-1913) of the *Jahrbuch* is available at the MHC Archives. An *Index* was prepared by Peter H. Rempel recently and is available here as well.

The *Odessaer Kalender*, also known as the *Neuer Hauswirtschaftskalender für deutsche Ansiedler im südlichen Russland*, began in 1863, the year the *Unterhaltungsblatt für die deutschen Ansiedler im südlichen Russland* ceased. It was published by Louis Nitzsche and included agricultural news, pictures, comments on practices on the field and in the home as well as entertainment features. The *Kalender* for the period from 1881 to 1915 is available on microfilm at the MHC Archives.

Also founded by Nitzsche was the *Odessaer deutsche Zeitung*, begun in 1861. It published

news, reports and advertisements for business opportunities, schools, doctors, job vacancies and obituaries as well as serialized novels. In their scope and variety these articles provide a clearer picture of the German context for Mennonite life in Russia up to 1914. One section, headed "Koloniales," is devoted to news, views and opinions of the German-speaking colonists settled in Ukraine.

Many of the Mennonite items are reports on the weather, agricultural news, reports and accounts of institutions. The paper was also a source of Mennonite opinion and debate on new ideas in agriculture, continuing in the tradition of the *Zeitung's* predecessor, the *Unterhaltungsblatt*. Articles on education, including discussions of institutions and methods, education for women, and articles on the land issue are also well represented.

The existence of a certain literary flair is evident in many submissions. Charming sketches of colonist life can be found in the late 1870s and early 1880s. Low German contributions can also be found as early as 1882.

Unfortunately there is almost nothing on the 1870s migration, due perhaps to legal suppression of this topic. However, comments on other ways that the Great Reforms (1861-80) affected the colonists are present. Like the *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch*, the *Zeitung* ceased publication at the outbreak of the First World War, except for a few issues in 1917-18.

An almost complete set of the *Zeitung* is held on microfilm at the Centre for MB Studies in Winnipeg. A microfilm copy for the years 1880-1914 is available at the MHC Archives. Dr. James Urry has provided a finding aid for Mennonite-related items in the entire series.

Book Reviews

(cont'd from p. 12)

Dyck, John. *Oberschulze Jakob Peters, 1813-1884. Manitoba Pioneer Leader*

(Steinbach, Man.: Hanover Steinbach Historical Society, 1990). 130 pp., pb., \$10.00.

Reviewed by Royden Loewen.

Here is a fine little book about one of the Steinbach area's first leaders. It is a biography of Jakob Peters, the first *Oberschulze*, or district reeve, of the East Reserve.

The East Reserve, presently known as the Rural Municipality of Hanover, was a block of land between Niverville and Steinbach that was reserved for the Mennonites in 1874. In that year two groups of Mennonites arrived there; approximately 300 families of the Bergthaler Mennonite congregation (presently the Chortitzer Mennonite Church), and about 100 families of the Kleine Gemeinde Mennonite congregation (presently the Evangelical Mennonite Conference).

Peters was a Bergthaler who lived near present-day Mitchell. As *Oberschulze* it was his duty to oversee the building of roads and canals, confer with provincial and federal government authorities, and coordinate the activities of the *Schulzen* %reeves— of each of the many villages on the East Reserve.

The book is much more than the narration of a political leader, however. It tells the vivid story of Peters' life, from the time that he was a boy in Russia, through his rise to the position of *Oberschulze* in the colony of Bergthal in Russia and one of the leaders of the 1874 migration to Canada, and pioneer life in the new land. It describes the difficult pioneering years between 1836 and 1874 in the Bergthal colony in Russia.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the book is the story of "the rejected child." A whole chapter is dedicated to describing how, in Russia, the Peters family adopted a Russian boy who, as a baby had been abandoned in a pig pen by his mother. Later he was severely mistreated by his first foster parents and the village schoolteacher.

The book also tells how Peters was honoured by the Russia Czar for providing material aid during the Crimean War in the 1850s and exhibits a photograph of the watch that the Czar gave Peters on that occasion. It describes as well how Peters witnessed the peaceful transition from a Mennonite *Gebietsamt*-type of government on the East Reserve to a Manitoba municipal government.

The author of the book is John Dyck, a retired Winnipeg businessman. Dyck is also a noted genealogist who has shown an acumen for historical research. He has used these skills in this book, examining newspapers from both Russia and Manitoba, interviewing old-timers, translating German-language material and drawing materials from largely ignored government records. He has previously published research about the Mennonite migration from Manitoba to Oregon.

The book is attractively laid out with photographs, a useful index, a number of append-

ices relating to the genealogy of Peters, and a helpful bibliography. Those interested in Mennonite history will find this book useful as it describes an important Manitoba pioneer leader.

Dr. Roy Loewen is an historian who also operates a farm near Steinbach, Manitoba. With the help of a grant, he is currently researching a comparative study of conservative Mennonite groups in Manitoba and Ontario.

Rempel, John, and William Harms. *Atlas of Original Mennonite Villages and Homesteaders of the East Reserve, Manitoba*

(Altona, Man.: The Authors, 1988). 32 pp., pb., \$12.00, and *Atlas of Original Mennonite Villages, Homesteaders and some Burial Plots of the Mennonite West Reserve, Manitoba* (Altona, Man.: The Authors, 1990). 197 pp., pb., \$26.00.

Reviewed by William Schroeder.

Descendants of the Mennonite pioneers who settled in Manitoba during the 1870s have learned with delight that atlases of the East and West Reserves have been completed. Until recently individuals who attempted to trace their roots found themselves hampered by the paucity of reliable source materials. By now this problem has been considerably reduced. First, many church records have been photocopied and indexed. Then the ship passenger lists were released and finally these homestead atlases have been completed. For genealogists this is most welcome news.

The authors of these atlases have used a style that permits them to convey a vast amount of historical and genealogical information in a compact and meaningful way. A large map of each township has the name of the homesteaders printed in each quarter section. The quarter sections that belonged to a given village are marked off, and where possible the actual village site is located. Following the map is a brief history of each village in the given township, a list of the residents of each village and several photographs.

The *West Reserve Atlas* has larger print and the village sites are marked in a more obvious way. The village histories are much longer and supplemented with numerous letters, agreements and village maps. An index of all the settlers on the West Reserve serves as a very useful finding aid.

Two supplements have been added to the *West Reserve Atlas*: Burial Plots and Cemeteries and the Scratching River Settlement.

On behalf of the descendants of the pioneers who settled on the two reserves in Manitoba more than a century ago, a hearty thank you to John Rempel and William Harms for their labour of love.

William Schroeder is a researcher and retired teacher in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Book Notes

Merrill Mow, *Torches Rekindled: The Bruderhof's Struggle for Renewal* (Ulster Park, N.Y.: Plough Publishing House, 1990, 328 pp.) is the very readable account of the eastern Hutterite communities since 1955 when Mow and his wife, Kathy, left the Church of the Brethren to join the Bruderhof at Woodcrest. Along the way there are flashbacks to the early 1930s, when the Eberhard Arnold Bruderhof movement united with the North American Hutterian Brethren.

A new volume of twelve short stories by Lois Braun has been published under the title, *The Pumpkin Eaters* (261 pp., pb.), by Turnstone Press, Winnipeg. Braun is the southern Manitoba (Altona) author of *A Stone Watermelon*.

Bethel Place 1980-1990 (68 pp., hdc.) is a tenth anniversary photo history in full color, produced by the Bethel Place Board, along with the staff and residents of this retirement centre in Winnipeg. Abe Penner did the photos and edited the book. For copies, write to Abe Penner, Bethel Place, 445 Stafford St., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3M 3V9.

Victor Adrian and Donald Loewen, ed., *Committed to World Mission: A Focus on International Strategy* (Winnipeg: Kindred Press, 1990, 129 pp.) is a record of the presentations and discussions at Curitiba 88, the first World Mission Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches. Major essays by North American missiologists are supplemented in the section on "Contemporary Issues" by contributors from Zaire, Japan, Austria, Brazil, Paraguay, India and Columbia.

Agatha Schmidt of Kitchener, Ontario, is the editor of a new illustrated book on the village of *Gnadenfeld*, Molotschna, Ukraine. It is a paperback volume selling for \$18.00. For copies, contact the editor at 59 Cornell Ave., Kitchener, Ontario, N2G 3E5.

Marjorie Kaethler and Susan D. Shantz, also of Kitchener, Ontario, have published a colorful book entitled *Quilts of Waterloo County. A Sampling* (61 pp., pb., \$22.95). The book is available at the Mennonite Heritage Centre.

Mennonite Archives Workshop

Date: October 13, 1990
Place: Columbia Bible College
2940 Clearbrook Rd.,
Clearbrook, British Columbia
V2T 2Z8

Theme
How to Organize Church Records
Resource Person
Ken Reddig
Centre for Mennonite Brethren
Studies in Canada, Winnipeg

Contact Person
David Loewen
CBC, Ph. (604) 853-3358

BOOK REVIEWS

Fretz, J. Winfield. *The Waterloo Mennonites: A Community in Paradox* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press for Conrad Grebel College, 1989). 391 pp., pb., \$16.95.

Reviewed by Lucille Marr.

J. Winfield Fretz's sociological study tells the story of a unique community of Mennonites. It was the diversity of Mennonites living in Waterloo County that aroused Fretz' interest when he arrived in Waterloo to assume the presidency of Conrad Grebel College in 1963. As he often pointed out to his colleagues and students, "Nowhere else in the Mennonite world do you find such a variety living in one geographical area."

During the sixteen years that he resided in Waterloo, Fretz sought to understand the Mennonites of Waterloo County. Through teaching a course on "The Sociology of the Mennonites," learning to know Mennonites from the various branches and other methods of research, Fretz collected data on the unusually large number of Mennonite churches within a thirty-mile radius of Kitchener-Waterloo.

Swiss Mennonites, migrating from Pennsylvania in the late 1700s, were the first to make Waterloo their home, but by the 1820s Amish had migrated to the area directly from Europe. Although most Russian Mennonites ended up in western Canada, a small number have joined the Swiss and the Amish in Waterloo from each of the three migrations which took place in the 1870s, the 1920s and the 1940s.

After pointing out historical commonalities and differences among the three groups, Fretz categorizes the various Mennonite persuasions as progressive, moderate or conservative. The conviction that they must retain their traditional rural values and lifestyle is what makes the conservatives' the Old Order Mennonites, the Old Order Amish and the Old Colony Mennonites' stand out as unique in Waterloo County. The moderates and progressives, in contrast, have in varying degrees, adopted the urban secular values of the society around them.

Fretz analyzes the effect of rural and urban values on Mennonite communities, the significance of German culture to the Waterloo County Mennonites, Mennonite education, farming and other vocations taken on by Mennonites, and the diverse approaches of the conservatives and progressives when it comes to leisure, welfare, politics and mutual aid.

But what is most significant for an understanding of the Mennonite community in Fretz's view, is religion. Whether electing to remain separate from the world as the conservative groups have done, or choosing to accommodate themselves to society as the progressives have done, Fretz calls Mennonites "first and foremost a religious body rather than an ethnic or cultural group." Although

the various persuasions may live their faith differently, Fretz believes there is a fundamental tenet common to all: their commitment to Christian community.

Their varied approaches to welfare illustrate the diverging ways of living out their common belief in community. The conservatives, who believe self-sufficiency within the group to be essential, refuse government aid as health insurance and old age pensions. The progressives, on the other hand, no longer view social welfare as something to eschew, but they continue to be committed to the notion of community, extending help to the needy through such organizations as Mennonite Central Committee.

If I would be so bold as to offer some criticism of this thorough and fascinating study, it would be in two areas. First, some discussion of how new Mennonites have integrated into these communities would have been helpful. At the time Fretz conducted his survey, he found few Mennonites in the Waterloo area who were unable to trace their Anabaptist-Mennonite roots back for generations. For instance, he discovered only one Roman Catholic convert in all of the churches in the area. It strikes me that things have changed somewhat, for I know of one rural congregation where there are at least three members who come from a Roman Catholic background, one being the minister. In addition, there are new ethnic Mennonite communities in the area. First Mennonite in Kitchener provided facilities for a Hmong and a Spanish congregation.

Second, a chapter on gender would have been useful. How do Mennonite men's and women's experiences differ among the progressive, the conservative and the moderate Mennonite communities? Do men and women bring similar or different views to politics, mutual aid, community life?

These omissions in no way detract from Fretz's scholarship and his contribution to our understanding of Mennonite life. Indeed this book is particularly timely for the progressive Mennonites in their new integrated conference which they call the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada.

Mennonites of all ethnic streams are seeking to discover anew what Mennonite community means. In this process they will do well to heed Fretz's challenge to progressive Mennonites that they shun the individualistic creed of modern culture and continue to make their historic belief in Christian community a fundamental tenet of their faith.

Lucille Marr is a doctoral candidate in History at the University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario.

Driedger, Leo. *Mennonites in Winnipeg* (Winnipeg: Kindred Press, 1990). 96 pp., pb., \$5.00.

Reviewed by Rudy A. Regehr.

This very readable little book is an excellent introduction to *Mennonites in Winnipeg*, both for those about whom it is written and

those who are interested in this community. Mennonites in Winnipeg is one of several publications prompted by the coming of the 12th Assembly of the Mennonite World Conference to Winnipeg.

The author, a long-time student of the sociology of Mennonites, has clearly tackled a project that is far greater than he could squeeze into a 100-page book. By his own admission much more detailed research needs to be done on the topics covered. To long-time residents of Winnipeg the book should give a new understanding of themselves. It is clearly written with a local population as its primary audience.

At the same time, it will be of keen interest to other observers of the Mennonite scene. Driedger systematically describes the development of Mennonite churches in the various areas of the city. In the last half of the book he describes different aspects of non-church activities, including schools, hospitals, business and the arts.

The figure (p. viii) showing Winnipeg's traditional divisions is not well co-ordinated with the accompanying list of current and former institutions. For someone well acquainted with Winnipeg this is not a problem. For the outsider it may be confusing.

Mennonites in Winnipeg is a book that is long overdue. Driedger has done the Mennonite community a great service by drawing this story together in a preliminary way.

Generally it is the story of a community of faith. However, when the author deals with Mennonites in business or the arts he tends toward a definition of Mennonite that is more ethnic than religious. To Manitobans this dual meaning of the term "Mennonite" is somewhat understood. Will other readers make sense of all of this as well?

Although the book is well footnoted, this is done in such a way that many readers will likely not go to the back of the book to check. The little volume could also have been enriched by supplying an index for those who want information about specific churches or institutions. It is a shame that this wealth of information remains largely inaccessible without an index. The publisher should not have let it go to press without this essential tool.

With the wealth of information the opportunity for errors is great. To this reviewer it seems largely free of factual errors. Faith and Life Communications is a program of the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba, not the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. Maybe the fact that they share the same building in Tuxedo has contributed to the confusion of sponsorship.

When all is said and done one can only hope that the many topics highlighted in this book will be pursued by others in the not too distant future. MWC guests will be able to purchase the book at a very special price. Don't leave the Conference without a copy of your own.

Rudy A. Regehr is Executive Secretary of the Congregational Resources Board, Conference of Mennonites in Canada.

(cont'd on p. 11)