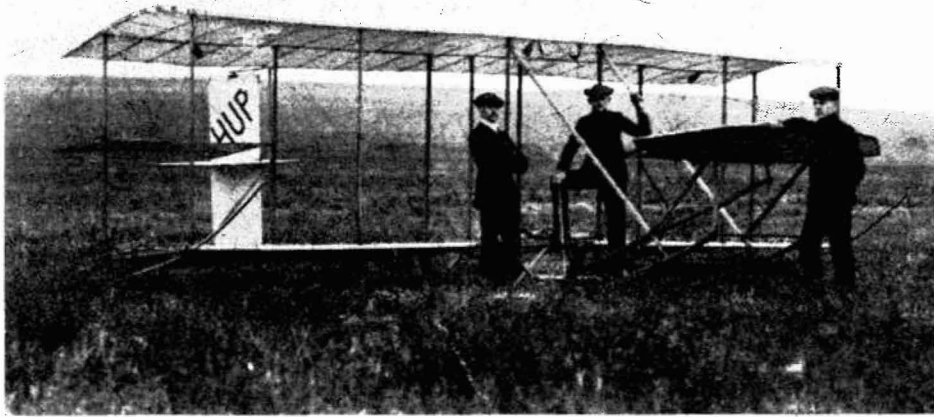


MENNONITE HISTORIAN

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The airplane built in Chortitza by Hildebrand, Unruh and Plenert (1907).

Photo: Walter Quiring and Helen Bertel, eds. *Als Ihre Zeit Erfuehlt War* (1963).

Mennonite Aviation Pioneers: The HUP Project at Chortitza

by Peter Lorenz Neufeld

Our prairie history is rich with settlers who wrote history elsewhere before emigrating to Canada. One such pioneer was Henry Plenert.

It was summer over eighty years ago. In the bustling Mennonite colony of Chortitza in the Ukraine, aviation history was being made. Three college students were trying to launch an airplane.

What is remarkable about that, when the U.S. Wright brothers had flown their KITTY HAWK six years earlier, French and British aviators were experimenting, and Canada's Bell and McCurdy had already flown their SILVER DART? In 1909 Russia was still a sleeping giant, technologically and otherwise. "If God wanted humans to fly, wings would have been provided," was the mentality that prevailed at the time.

Few Canadians know of a fellow citizen who died in Winnipeg twenty years ago, and whose research and exploits rank with early aviation masters. They don't know about his boyhood colleagues, the widow of one recently still living in St. Catharines, Ontario and sister of the other in Clearbrook, BC.

Had Kornelius Hildebrand, Peter Unruh

and Henry Plenert lived in another country, their research would be immortalized with that of other aviation pioneers. But living in Russia and speaking German as their first language in the early 1900s wasn't the right combination with which to write such history.

While researching my family roots, I stumbled across an out-of-print Mennonite book containing a faded 1907 photo of three youths beside a two-winged glider with letters HUP on the tail. This initiated research revealing that probably the first flying machine in Russia was designed, built and partially launched by three Mennonite students. The name HUP, German for 'hop', was, it seems, derived from the first initials of their surnames.

Of the trio, Hildebrand was the oldest and Plenert the youngest. All possessed a good deal of mechanical ability. Reading German newspapers and magazines which touted aviation work being done by engineers like Lilienthal and other early fliers was certainly an asset, in addition to all of them attending a good technical high school and later college. Two boys had family ties with industrial establishments. Hildebrand's

father, Kornelius, was co-owner of two agricultural machinery plants and famous in Mennonite history for making fine hanging pendulum clocks. Unruh's father worked in a factory while Plenert's was a farmer and minister. Most of the trio's research was done in the Hildebrand factories.

Launching a glider on the flat Russian steppes was as great a feat as designing and building one. The youths solved this by fitting HUP with skis to slide on grass and using two horses for launching power. A powerful stallion provided initial horsepower to overcome inertia and was then cut loose. An exceptionally fast mare continued at a dead gallop towing the machine sufficiently high into the air to glide blissfully around until speed loss and lift forced the pilot to land.

The boys' efforts didn't always meet with approval in an agriculturally-oriented community with strict religious standards where the "man with wings" philosophy also predominated. Nonetheless, their efforts invariably drew a crowd. Sometimes the young gliders capitalized on this by charging admission and occasionally an adult donated to the project.

By 1907 the men, aged 17 to 20, felt they had sufficient experience, knowledge and finances to try building a real plane. They abandoned the glider and set to work designing and building HUP II. They planned and built the four-cylinder air-cooled motor by hand in Hildebrand's Chortitza factory, then constructed the fuselage and wings in Alexandrovsk. Only the propeller was imported from Germany. The cost was so high that they couldn't afford wheels and once again had to rely on skis.

Impatiently they waited for the summer holidays to test their new machine. To avoid traffic and attract as little attention as possible, they chose a dark and foggy night to assemble their invention. Aided by a Hildebrand servant they hitched a horse team to HUP II and dragged it from Alexandrovsk to Chortitza. The main problem they encountered was negotiating a very narrow bridge. Quickly but carefully they installed the precious motor and prop.

(cont'd on p.2)

Mennonite Aviation (cont'd from p.1)

Because of ski friction they again needed the horses to provide initial take-off power. Plenert, either because he was the most adventuresome, or simply because of low seniority, served as test pilot. Because the team was unaccustomed to the terrific din of an internal combustion engine without muffler, the three wisely concluded that help was required to prevent needless accidents. Hildebrand's younger brother Peter (later killed in the Russian Revolution) was enlisted to spin the prop.

The engine burst into life with a deafening roar. The horses, understandably alarmed by the fire-breathing monster at their heels, galloped even harder than they had pulling the glider's predecessor countless times before. The horses were cut free. HUP II was flying on its own power and climbing!

Then it happened! The propeller, the most expensive item in the whole project and the only unit they hadn't personally made, shattered into bits and the plane crash-landed. Fortunately it was still low and the pilot escaped with nothing more than bruises and a severe shaking.

Much speculation surrounds the possible cause of the prop failure. Some believe it was faulty. Henry Hildebrand of Vancouver (Kornelius' kid brother), who was present and with whom I corresponded much in the 1970s (he has since died), felt it was the tangling of a short rope piece remaining on the plane after the horses were cut loose. Kornelius' widow thought it might have been a stone churned up by the horses' hoofs that split it. Plenert's son told me recently his father was sure it was caused by a guy wire snapping.

Whatever the reason, it effectively stopped the HUP project. Hildebrand left for Darmstadt, Germany (the other two eventually followed) to continue his mechanical engineering education. His father died soon after the HUP II crash and, as dutiful eldest son now responsible for the family welfare, Kornelius promised his mother never again to risk his neck in frivolous exploits. And, as often happens when people mature, the lives of the three developed in different directions.

The plane wings, inherited by Plenert, were removed and stored in the Chortitza factory. The canvas was later made into clothing. The motor, a truly excellent

invention in itself, continued to attract strong attention when installed in a boat that long plied the Dnieper River, piloted mainly by Unrau. One boating party even contained Plenert's father, Rev. Peter Plenert (married to Maria Unrau), who occasionally had questioned the wisdom of his oldest son's rather worldly endeavours.

Then came the First World War. Hildebrand worked as munitions engineer in Alexandrovsk and married his employer's daughter. Unrau served on the Caucasus front in the medical corps. Plenert also joined the medical corps and was put in charge of office supplies at Tiflis. The overlapping civil war intensified the campaign against property-owning German-speaking Mennonites. Many were killed or banished to Siberia; others fell victim to famine and epidemic resulting from economic collapse. Henry Hildebrand vividly recalled the Communist charge that Mennonites were aiding Germany in air warfare against Russia and how he himself had demolished everything that remained of the plane, the wings having been hidden under stored grain.

As skilled professionals, Hildebrand and Unrau were forbidden to emigrate, a status granted to some co-religionists. Several years later the former fell ill and with the help of an old classmate, then a high-ranking Communist official, was allowed to travel to Berlin where specialists were to operate on a suspected brain tumor. He died before the operation could take place. His wife with two children, three brothers and a sister, emigrated to Canada.

Less is known of Unrau's fate. In 1922 he married a Maria Neufeld and they had four children. A loner, he continued research, while also designing and driving boats and motorcycles as a hobby. What research especially pleased the new regime isn't known, but it warranted Russia's highest honor, the Order of Lenin. Shortly before the Second World War, his usefulness apparently outweighed by political considerations, he and his wife were abducted and vanished in Stalin's purges. The children were placed in homes and orphanages.

In late 1925, Plenert and wife Agnes Neustaedter emigrated. They had two children, Henry E. and Mary Agnes. After farming in Rabbit Lake, Saskatchewan, where they were members of the

Hoffnungsfelder (Mennonite) congregation, they moved (eventually retired) to Winnipeg, attending the First Mennonite Church. Henry recently passed away, and in September 1990, his wife was admitted to the Misericordia Hospital as an invalid.

During his half century in Canada, Henry Plenert lived the traditional devout Mennonite life which earned his people the nickname, "Silent in the Land." When he died, virtually nobody realized that this gentle, quiet person had played so major a role in aviation history, one which both Tsarist and Soviet Russia never acknowledged.

Sources:

Correspondence: Walter Quiring to Peter Neufeld, March 14/71; Henry Hildebrand to Franz Thiessen, March 26/71; Henry Hildebrand to Mrs. Mary Martens, March 26/71 and her reply April 15/71; Henry Hildebrand to A.J. Sawatzky, March 26/71 and his reply of May 17/71; Henry Hildebrand to Katie Epp, March 26/71 and the reply from David and Katie Epp of April 14/71; Henry Hildebrand to Maria Hildebrandt, March 26/71 and her reply of April 4/71; Henry Hildebrand to Peter Neufeld, March 23/71, June 3/71, December 1/71 and December 28/71; Marianne Janzen to Peter Neufeld, August 15/78; Irene (Mrs. John) Klassen to Peter Neufeld, December 17/82; Neil Hildebrand to Peter Neufeld, June 14/88. Discussions in early September/90 between Peter Neufeld and C.C. Plenert, as well as Henry E. and Mary (Friesen) Plenert.

Peter Neufeld is a free-lance writer and currently a student at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg.

Our Apologies!

Re: the December 1990 issue we need to note the following "bloopers". Our apologies!

1. The author of "On Women in Ministry" (p.5), should have been given as Paulina Foote.
2. In the article "What's in a Name?" (p.5) the reference is to Loewen being a missionary in Colombia. (See also *Letter to the Editors*, p.7).

Book Notes

This book was written by retired Lt. Col. David Wiens, born in Alexandrodar, Kuban Settlement, South Russia. He came to Canada in 1925 at the age of four, was educated at St. John's College and the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, and served under various appointments in the Canadian military system. This book chronicles the social and genealogical history of his family in Ukraine where his mother left the Mennonite Brethren to join the Seventh Day Adventists. His great grandfather was a founding father of the Mennonite Brethren Church. About two thirds of the book tells the story, while the final section contains the genealogical data tracing the descendants of Abraham Wiens (ca. 1800-1844) and Margaretha Froese (1801-1873). Contact: David Wiens, 644 Glenhurst Crescent, Gloucester, ON, K1J 7B7.



Queries

Address queries, etc., regarding items on this page to: Alf Redekopp, CMBS, 1-169 Riverton Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, R2L 2E5.

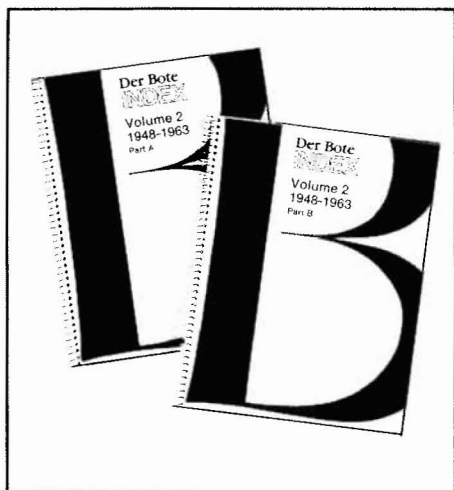
CMC History Project Begins

Work on writing a history of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada will be getting underway very soon. Monies allocated by the CMC General Board at the February Council of Boards meetings will help significantly to get this project underway.

The first phase will be concerned primarily with the location of needed information and documents. We will be looking hard, for instance, for personal papers of people involved at any time as leaders or committee members in the Conference since it began in 1902.

If you have any such papers surviving in your attic, please contact the Heritage Centre to inform us how we can get access to research such material. Our phone number is (204) 888-6781 (Archives) and our address is: Mennonite Heritage Centre, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB, R3P 0M4.

You will be hearing more about this project in the near future. Any help given to find materials will be most important and we are looking forward to hearing from you.



We are pleased to announce the release by CMBC Publications of Der Bote Index Vol. II, Part A and B. It is a sequel to Vol. I which appeared in 1976 (covering 1924-1947). The new volume, edited by Peter H. Rempel, totals 427 pp. and covers the years 1948-1963.

The price of Vol. II is \$30.00. Vol. I is still available, at \$20.00. If ordered together the cost for both is \$40.00, with postage, handling, and GST extra for each offer noted above.

Assistant Archivist Wanted

To work half time at the Mennonite Heritage Centre.

Application deadline. May 1, 1991. Beginning duties: June 1, 1991.

For an application form or other further information call 888-6781, Ext. 243 or write:

Mennonite Heritage Centre
600 Shaftesbury Blvd.
Winnipeg, MB
R3P 0M4

The "Odessa File": Ukrainian Mennonite Archives Found

The startling discovery in the summer of 1990 of a major Russian Mennonite documentary collection in the Odessa State Archives is most exciting news in the archives and broader Mennonite world. The discovery was made independently by Dr. Harvey Dyck of the University of Toronto, and by Dr. George K. Epp, of Menno Simons College, Winnipeg.

Dr. David G. Rempel, Menlo Park, California, a leading authority on Russian

Mennonite studies, has called this Mennonite archive, which disappeared from public view for sixty years following its confiscation in 1929 by Soviet authorities, "absolutely incredible in its historical significance."

Assembled during the years of war, revolution and civil war from 1916 to 1920 by secondary school teacher Peter Braun, the Molotschna Mennonite archive is phenomenally rich in its records of leading Mennonite agricultural, administrative, educational, and alternative military service (Forstei) institutions. About fifty percent of the collection covers the first half of the nineteenth century. It includes almost complete personal, family, and official files of Johann Cornies, celebrated Russian Mennonite agricultural and educational modernizer and reformer, whose influence reached throughout the southern Ukraine.

On the basis of a unique barter agreement signed in September 1990 by Professor Dyck with Odessa Archives Director Vladimir Malchenko, the Archives are microfilming the entire collection in exchange for microfilming equipment and a photo-duplicating machine.

"The success of negotiations that culminated in the microfilming agreement," Dyck says, "owe much to the contacts, skill, and advice of Odessa radio broadcaster Svetlana Vishtalenko, whom I hired to help me" (see photo on p.7). Mention of the collection appeared nowhere in the Odessa Archive's published holdings guide and the Archives had no information on how it landed in Odessa.

In December 1990 Professor Dyck returned from a second visit to Odessa with over 27,000 pages of microfilmed archival material. In the meantime an additional 40,000 pages have been filmed, and Dyck hopes, barring unforeseen developments in the USSR, to cross the Soviet frontier with the last of the microfilmed archive after a further research trip to Ukraine this coming spring and summer.

The copying project is being organized by the University of Toronto-Conrad Grebel College Joint Research Program in Russian Mennonite Studies. It is cooperatively funded by three Canadian institutions: Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario, the Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba, and the Centre for Russian and East European Studies, University of Toronto. Following its evaluation and indexing the microfilm collection will be made available to the scholarly community and other interested persons.

Der Bote began publication in 1924 and is still coming off the press weekly. All back issues are available for research at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, and microfilm copies can be borrowed through inter-library loan for the years 1924-1980.

The Heritage Centre can also supply back numbers of Der Bote. Send a list of what issues you need to our address and we will mail you whatever is available. The cost is postage, handling charges of \$2.00 per order, and GST.

Send orders for Index copies, etc. to:

mhc
MENNONITE HERITAGE CENTRE
600 Shaftesbury Blvd. Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3P 0M4

Staff Changes at CMBS

Recently the Board of Higher Education of the Canadian MB Conference announced the appointment of Dr. Abe Dueck as director of the Centre for MB Studies in Canada. He will fill in part the vacancy left by the departure of Ken Reddig last December. Dr. Dueck will also be working half-time as a professor at Mennonite Brethren Bible College.

The Historical Committee which supervises the work of the Centre wishes further to announce the appointment of Alfred Redekopp as half-time archivist. Redekopp also teaches at the Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute. He has been a research assistant at the Centre for several years and is presently acting as director until Dueck assumes his position in summer. He will serve as assistant to the director after that.

Recent Accessions

1. The personal music collection of N.J. Fehderau donated by Dr. Harold Fehderau, consisting of autobiographical notes by Fehderau during his time as choir director in the Kitchener MB Church. Includes song collections, 14 books of choir music, an indexed list of songs, record books of songs and a list of singers in the choir from 1931-1962.
2. A photocopy of an index to the Mennonite holdings of the "Odessa Archives" (USSR) in Russian (116 p.). Donated by Dr. George K. Epp. (See also p.4).
3. Minutes, reports and correspondence from the secretary of the Canadian MB Conference Board of Faith and Life (1983-1986).
4. Twenty-six hymn books, originally owned and used by the Music Committee of the Canadian MB Conference in preparing the German *Gesangbuch* in 1952.
5. "Vom Jaeger und Sammler zum Landbauern", a documentary video of missions among the Chaco Indians of Paraguay (1990).
6. A collection of *Brunk Revival Tapes* consisting of messages presented by evangelist George R. Brunk during tent revival meetings held in Canada between 1951-1957 (twenty-one cassettes).
7. *The German Identity of Mennonite Brethren Immigrants in Canada, 1930-1960*, a masters thesis by Benjamin Wall Redekopp submitted to the University of British Columbia, September, 1990.



Former CMBS Archivist Ken Reddig (L) and Indexer Bert Friesen (R) examine the first copies of the Mennonitische Rundschau Index, Volumes 1 and 2. Copies may be ordered at \$50.00 per volume plus shipping from the Centre for MB Studies, 169 Riverton Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R2L 2E5.

Horch Music Collection

by Herbert Giesbrecht

The Ben and Esther Horch Music Collection was very recently (1990) established at the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Canada. It consists of the generous donation of (mostly) published music materials, by the Horch family, and contributions by several others as well: William Neufeld, William C. and Erna DeFehr, the Harold W. Fehderau family, Doreen H. Klassen, Peter Koslowsky and Cornelius Klassen.

The Collection encompasses a large variety of Mennonite and other Protestant/Evangelical hymnals and choral books (the largest component); popular song books (religious and secular); choral, motet, cantata and oratorio anthologies; scores for choral and instrumental pieces (some 900 of them!); instructional and lesson manuals; and a smaller assemblage of tapes and cassettes of recorded music (choral and solo).

These various materials are being

catalogued (by way of L.C. classification, in the case of the hymnals, song books and choral books), and inventoried (in the case of the rest of the collection) to render them more accessible for research purposes. These hymnals and choral books (about 200 in total) reveal the ever-expanding development of Mennonite congregational and choral singing from its earlier beginnings in Prussia, through its later nineteenth and early twentieth century phase in Ukraine, right on to more contemporary activity in the Mennonite churches and choral societies of Canada and the USA.

Nearly all of the many Mennonite and other pietistic hymnals and choral works discussed in Peter Letkemann's comprehensive and illuminating dissertation, *The Hymnody and Choral Music of Mennonites in Russia, 1789-1915* (1985), are represented in this collection. These works provide a rich resource for further study of our Mennonite musical heritage and its impact upon contemporary music-making within the larger Mennonite community.

Centre Evening Hours

The Centre for MB Studies will remain open Tuesday evenings until April 23, 1991, after which time the Centre will continue with regular daytime hours, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday.

Films and Videos

The following films and videos are available for purchase or rental at the Centre for MB Studies, 169 Riverton Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R2L 2E5.

The Mennonite Brethren Church: A Missionary Movement. (16 mm.) Rental fee: \$25.00/film (3 in series).

The Hutteries: To Care or Not to Care. (16 mm.) Rental fee: \$75.00 for one-hour film.

Video (VHS):

The Mennonite Brethren Church: A Missionary Movement. Rental fee: \$7.00/video (3 in series). Purchase price: \$60.00 for the set.

The Hutteries: To Care or Not to Care. Rental fee: \$7.00.

The Birth of Anabaptism. (with Dr. Abe Friesen). Rental fee: \$7.00. Purchase price \$32.00.

Archives: The Inside Story. (Introduction to Using Archives). Rental fee: \$7.00. Purchase price: \$40.00.

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

My Record of CO Service During World War II

by Paul E. Poetker

This is the final part of an article begun on p.3 in Mennonite Historian, December, 1990.

Our work was to prepare a tote-road, which is a small road that later serves to construct a larger road or highway. The work included drilling, blasting, and clearing of rock, cutting down bush and trees, and using mattocks to hoe out a small road along the hillside.

One of our men served as "straw boss." The foreman, the powderman and the cook were government employees. Toward late fall we were joined by another small camp and their foreman replaced ours. This brought our number up to forty-five COs.

Our recreation consisted of reading, and for some, making music, as well as hiking and some mountain climbing on week-ends. One such climb on a Sunday afternoon resulted in some men getting lost. Our foreman's repeated call on the telephone to his not very available superior of "five men lost" echoed through the camp. However, the men turned up well, but tired in the wee hours of the morning. They had quite a story to tell.

There were a number of camps in and near Jasper Park at this time, perhaps as many as five.

The **Green Timbers** camp was a BC government Forest Service tree nursery, located just north of Fraser Highway (IA) east of Wally, the King George Highway junction. The place had a number of large bunk houses and a dining hall, and served as a staying place for a great number of COs from the three western provinces. From here groups of about forty to fifty men were transferred to a number of camps on Vancouver Island and other points in BC. Some names of camp locations that come to mind are Campbell Lake, Cowichan Lake, Shawnigan Lake, Ladysmith, Nanaimo, Blubber Bay on Texada Island (lime plant and cement plant).

Camp Q7 was located between Campbell Lake and Lowerland Lake. The site is now under 15 feet of water because of the Campbell River dam. It had about 50 or more men, residing in cabins that had been quickly blocked up with medium-sized planks of cedarwood. Each had four double bunks and an air-tight heater with room for eight men.

Our main work consisted of felling dead trees and tree trunks (snags) which were a



Workers at the Q7 CO camp (L-R): Paul Poetker, Peter Unger, Cornelius Martens, Willie Epp, David Wiens, John Unger, and Pete Martens.

Photo: Courtesy of Paul Poetker, Edmonton, AB.

fire hazard. We also had to plant trees to reforest the logged over area. The forest had been logged by Bloedel Stewart and Welsh and had experienced a slash fire in the 1930s, so great that the ashes reached Seattle, Washington. We also fought fires, and improved service roads existing in the area as they were needed for our tree-planting activity. Altogether, the COs planted seven million trees, mostly fir, on Vancouver Island.

After tree planting in the spring of 1943, and having been at the camp for about eight months, we were moved to Vedder Crossing near Chilliwack, BC. Here we cleared brush to make a trail, which looked like busy work to me.

A man was needed at the Haney-Alouette River CO camp, so I was transferred. The men in this camp came from a great variety of backgrounds. There were a few Mennonites, some Old Mennonites from Saskatchewan, Henry Vogt from Lethbridge (GC) and I. However, there were also representatives of the Two by Two's, an Anglican, an Evangelical Free Church member, a Nazarene, a converted Hutterite, George Hofer, some United Church boys, I believe, and two Brethren, with keen, rather extraordinary minds. With such a variety of faiths represented, we had some interesting theological debates and discussions. Yet we were all good friends.

The work here consisted chiefly of making firewood for the city of Vancouver. I aggravated an old injury and had to have cartilage removed from my knee. Consequently, when the camp boys were moved to a new location in the fall of 1943, I remained with another man to guard the property.

This camp may have been around twenty miles east of Radium Hot Springs in the

Kootenay River Valley. When I arrived in the spring of 1944, most of the men had been sent home to help with the much needed work on farms. Besides two companies of Jehovah's Witnesses, there were only a few men left. The J.W.s located there temporarily to be again relocated. The camp had had a saw mill which was operated by the COs.

From here I left for Vancouver to enlist in the medical corps for which I had volunteered at the beginning of the war. I was not accepted then. Now I was again turned down because of a knee injury.

From the fall of 1944 until the end of the war I worked for very little pay as an orderly in the Vancouver General Hospital.

If you were to ask me, "Would I do it again?" my answer would be both "yes" and "no."

I would again stand up for my conviction that killing is wrong. However, I would make a much stronger effort to get out of the camp and back into teaching or some other useful work as soon as possible.

Paul E. Poetker was born in Russia, and came to Canada in 1926. He is a retired school teacher, and has lived in Alberta since 1962.

Canadian Mennonite CO Conference Coming Up

A special conference will be held commemorating the 50th anniversary of the beginning of alternative service in Canada during WW II. The dates are November 9-11 and the location is Winnipeg. For further information, write to Mennonite Heritage Centre, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB, R3P 0M4.



A member of the Odessa Archives staff with new microfilming equipment. To the right is Soviet radio broadcaster Svetlana Vishtalenko, who played a key role in negotiating Dyck's microfilming agreement with the Odessa Archives. (See "Odessa File" on p.4).

Photo: Courtesy of Dr. Harvey Dyck, Toronto, ON.

Letter to the Editors

Dear Sir or Madam:

I would like to comment on the article by Dr. Jacob Loewen in which he relates the incident of the Mennonite minister saying that he always removed the Mennonite name from the sign in front of his church (*Mennonite Historian*, December, 1990, p.5).

I live here in the Ottawa Valley and travel extensively throughout it and northern New York State. While I am a member of a Presbyterian congregation here in Ottawa, I sometimes like to go to Ottawa's Mennonite church and I must say that any mention of the name "Mennonite," simply conjures up an image of hardworking, orderly, and very friendly people. I don't see how a Mennonite minister would feel at all ashamed of the name. This minister must certainly be one of a kind!

I enjoy the *Historian*, and wish it was published more often. Thank you for your time. Dale G. Wallingford, 1818 Gilbert Ave., Ottawa, Ontario, K2C 1A4.

Note from the editors: At least four different Mennonite editors have asked for permission to reprint this article.

Book Reviews (cont'd from p.8)

story of C.F. Klassen and the Russian Mennonite refugees.

C.F.'s course intersected with the lives of thousands and thousands of Mennonites in Europe, North and South America. For those to whom these events are remote from their personal experience, this biography presents the universal challenges of retaining faith in difficult times and serving others sacrificially.

For the scholarly reader, the paucity of documentation may detract from the value of this biography. For the skeptic - and perhaps for those who encountered C.F. personally - the absence of references to tensions with co-workers or to mistaken decisions and actions, will also raise questions. Surely under the pressures of desperate needs and immense issues at stake, with limited material resources and strong personalities, there will have been conflicts and failings involving C.F.

Nevertheless, one can readily affirm the admiring portrait of C.F. Klassen presented by his son, Herbert, and his daughter-in-law, Maureen, especially if one is the child of Russian Mennonite refugees and has also served with MCC in Europe. C.F. rendered invaluable service and his devotion to his people and his faith in God can inspire new generations of Mennonite believers. As an inspiring model for Christian service, one hopes that this biography will be read widely and emulated even more widely.

Peter Rempel is an MA graduate student at the University of Manitoba and currently also an archival assistant at MHCA.

Janzen, William and Frances Greaser. *Sam Martin Went to Prison: The Story of Conscientious Objection and Canadian Military Service*. (Winnipeg: Kindred Press, 1990). 64 pp., Pb., \$5.95 CAN.

Reviewed by Ken Reddig

The collective conscience of peace churches and activists was pricked by the sudden hostilities and war in the Persian Gulf these past few months. Events that followed quickly stunned peace churches and activists. For some Mennonites it seemed like the centre had been lost and now needed to be rediscovered.

Young people who were but babes during the Vietnam war were concerned with the threat of conscription, even though its possibility was in reality quite remote. If conscripted what should they do? What were the arguments for and against pacifism? Perhaps the biggest question facing young people was the perceived threat to their future.

It was most appropriate that this readable booklet was available for young people during the war. Reading about a young man faced with some of the same fears and concerns which they themselves were facing, and seeing his strength and determination while in prison or before hostile authorities, they saw before them an example they could follow.

This helpful book is divided into two parts. The first portion tells the story of Sam Martin, a Canadian conscientious objector during World War II. Resolute in his determination to witness of his faith in Christ which has led to his refusal to bear arms against other people, Sam endures nineteen months in prison, sometimes in solitary confinement. Like young people today he is concerned about his friends, his girlfriend, his church and his future. Yet his strength of conviction carries him through terrible ordeals which he could easily have avoided had he worn the military uniform offered him.

In the second part, William Janzen outlines, in brisk readable style, the story of conscientious objectors in Canada. It sets Sam Martin's experience into context. Going far beyond the circumstances facing Martin, Janzen quickly helps us come to grips with the Canadian political scene. He then delves into the intricacies of Mennonite church politics and leads us through the maze of denominational concerns, focusing on the theological issues of the day.

This booklet contains two important stories for Mennonites and all conscientious objectors. Without retelling them again and again, we may become complacent in our theological understanding of Jesus' message of love and redemption - a message meant for all mankind, even one's enemies.

The authors deserve commendation in giving us Sam Martin's story, and that of the COs as a whole. Our young people - and the rest of us - should get to know it well.

Ken Reddig is head of the Textual Records and Public Service section of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba in Winnipeg.

BOOK REVIEWS

Dyck, Arnold., *Collected Works* / *Gesammelte Werke*. Volumes I-IV. Edited by Harry Loewen, Al Reimer, Victor Doerksen, George K. Epp and Elisabeth Peters. (Steinbach, MB: Derksen Printers Ltd., and Altona, MB: Friesen Printers. 1985-1990). Hdc., Vol. I, 515 pp.; Vol. II, 508 pp.; Vol. III, 604 pp.; Vol. IV, 504 pp., \$25.00 CAN per volume or \$90.00 per set.

Reviewed by Gerhard Ens

Editing the four volumes of the collected works of Arnold Dyck published by the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society has been a labour of love for Victor G. Doerksen, George K. Epp, Harry Loewen, Elisabeth Peters and Al Reimer. At least three of these editors look back on earlier associations with Arnold Dyck: George Epp comes from the very village where Arnold Dyck spent his formative years, Al Reimer knew the Dyck family very well from their common years in Steinbach, and Elisabeth Peters is a translator of Arnold Dyck's works. She and her family have had very close associations with Arnold Dyck. Victor Derksen and Harry Loewen were intrigued by the works of this versatile Mennonite author.

The publication was also a labour of love for the two printing firms, D. W. Friesen and Sons in Altona, and Derksen Printers in Steinbach. It seems the terms they offered the historical society were simply too good to turn down. Last but not least, the Arnold Dyck family was very co-operative, waiving any copyright claims and even providing some manuscripts which have never before been published.

Arnold Dyck's *magnum opus* now includes the novel *Verloren in der Steppe* (Volume One) his entire Low German collection (Volumes Two and Three) and Volume Four, his previously unpublished works as well as those essays that were published in the periodical *Mennonitische Warte* (1935-1938).

So many things have been said about Dyck's only novel-length work, *Verloren in der Steppe*, that one does not want to become repetitive. It has been called a *Bildungsroman* in the best tradition of that genre in German literature. Mennonites of today will want to read it (an English translation by Henry Dyck has been

published a number of years ago) to catch the flavour of village life in a Ukrainian-Mennonite colony in the Ukraine around the turn of the century.

Originally published in five 100-page paperbacks, *Verloren in der Steppe* is now available in one volume. Unfortunately Dyck's unpublished sequel to *Verloren in der Steppe*, describing the end of this halcyon era during the days of anarchy, was not available at the time of this publication.

Dyck is probably best known for his Low German publications. He is his own best self in this dialect which he was able to reduce to print in a marvellous fashion. Unfortunately most readers look only for humour in Dyck's Low German prose. While it seems to appear everywhere, this reviewer does not see it as the major motif. Even his *Opp Reise* books contain very thoughtful and delightful excursions into the more serious aspects of life.

His best Low German *Novella*, *Twée Brew* (an English translation by Elizabeth Peters is available) is a veritable Mennonite panorama from pre-revolutionary days in Russia to post World War II times in both America and Europe. Of course, the quality of the various Dyck works varies considerably. His first two *Opp Reise* books (from Müsdarp to Saskatchewan and back) are in the opinion of this reviewer the best ones of the *Opp Reise* series.

This reviewer is particularly delighted that Dyck's *Warte* pieces, written originally under the pen names of Fritz Walden (High German) and Hans Ennen (Low German), come to us in a new garb in Volume Four. Probably the best as well as the most touching one is *Das Kalb und die Perlen*, in which the shift from belonging to a well-to-do middle class in Russia to abject poverty in Manitoba is indicated without resort to maudlin tactics.

A word ought to be said about Dyck's first love in the arts. It was the graphic arts which first occupied him very seriously. Unfortunately war and revolution intervened and he could never complete his training, begun in both Munich, Germany and Leningrad, Russia.

The climate for graphic arts in a post-war (World War I) Steinbach was hardly conducive to Dyck's development as an artist. The pages 298 to 330 of Volume Four nevertheless contain a well reproduced folio of Dyck's oils and pencil sketches. Dyck's love for the graphic arts also unconsciously influences his prose. He is at his best in descriptive passages.

It is unfortunate that Dyck could not live long enough to see and enjoy this beautiful

four-volume *Collected Works*. He would have felt vindicated.

Gerhard Ens was for many years instructor, then also principal of the Mennonite Collegiate Institute at Gretna, MB, and has been editor of *Der Bote* since 1977.

Klassen, Herbert and Maureen, *Ambassador To His People: C.F. Klassen and the Russian Mennonite Refugees*. (Winnipeg, MB; Hillsboro, KS: Kindred Press, 1990) 261 pp., pb., \$15.95 CAN.

Reviewed by Peter H. Rempel

The life of Cornelius F. Klassen was inextricably bound up with the events which affected almost all Mennonites of Russian background in the first half of the 20th century. Not only did he share these experiences; he was also one of the leaders who determined the reactions of the Mennonite people to these events.

C.F. began his service as a representative of his Mennonite community during the initial revolutionary phase of the Soviet Union. He then became involved in the desperate efforts to reconstruct the social and economic life of the Russian Mennonites.

After emigrating to Canada in 1928, he supervised the collection of the massive "Reiseschuld" incurred for the migration - a daunting task during the Great Depression. C.F.'s concern for the situation of the Mennonites who had stayed in the USSR found expression through his attendance at the Mennonite World Conferences in 1930 and 1935. His last major undertaking was the finding of Russian Mennonite refugees in post-war Europe, the organizing of relief aid and emigration for them, and assisting in recovery of the Mennonite churches of western Europe. He died suddenly in the midst of his work in 1954 at the age of 59.

The biography of C.F. Klassen is in a sense another version of *Mennonite Exodus* presented first in a comprehensive 1963 publication by Frank H. Epp. As the story of a person who moved and worked among and for others, the elements which bind us together as Mennonites and as persons become more apparent than they generally do in the history of organizations. Many will find direct points of personal contact in the

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