

MENNONITE HISTORIAN

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

Volume XVII, No. 3, September, 1991



These persons attended the Geikie Camp CO reunion held at Coaldale, AB, recently (see page 10). On the photo are (Back row, l-r): Peter Unger, John Neufeldt, Peter Wall, Jacob Neufeldt, Peter Thiessen, Paul Poetker, David Klassen, Jacob Dueck and Henry Klassen. (Front row, l-r): John F. Dyck, Henry Harder, Dave Huebert, Nick Unger, Henry Baerg, Nick Thiessen, John Schmidt, Comy Martens, William Schmidt, Jacob Willms, John Goossen.

Photo: Courtesy of John Goossen, Coaldale, AB.

For further information on the camp experiences of these men read Paul Poetker's article "My Record of Peace Service During WWII," *Mennonite Historian*, December, 1990, p.2, and March, 1991, p.6.

A Fiftieth Anniversary of the CO Experience

by William Janzen

The fall of 1991 is an important anniversary for Canadian Mennonite and Brethren in Christ people. Fifty years ago it is now, since the first young men joined an alternative service program during World War II. In the war years that followed, over 7,500 Mennonite and Brethren in Christ conscientious objectors (C.O.s) served in this program.

Canada had entered World War II in September 1939. At first many young Canadians enlisted voluntarily but in June 1940 the government felt it necessary to pass a conscription law, formally known as the National Resources Mobilization Act. In the fall of 1940 young men began to receive calls to report for military training.

How would Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches deal with this situation? Twenty years earlier, during World War I, a

strong anti-Mennonite feeling had emerged, leading the government to ban Mennonite immigration for several years. To prevent a repeat of such public animosity and at the same time get exempted from military service, they would have to render an alternative public service, some church leaders felt.

However, not all Mennonites favoured the idea of an alternative service. All supported international relief work, but offering to participate in a government-sponsored service program was another matter. Significantly, the Russlaender Mennonites, meaning those who had come from Russia in the 1920s, had experience with alternative service. Already in 1881, following pressure from the Russian government, their young men had begun to serve in a forestry program. In World War

Special Issue of MH

We hope you will find these features on conscientious objectors and military service significant in some way.

The Editors

I (1914-1918) they had operated complete medical corps units on Russia's front lines. Indeed, 120 Russian Mennonite medical corps workers died in World War I.

Though not all Mennonite groups supported the idea, in November 1940, eight church leaders (six Mennonite, one Brethren in Christ, and one Quaker) journeyed to Ottawa to propose an alternative service program. They asked that the work be of a civilian nature, for example, agriculture or forestry, preferably on government-owned land so that the benefit would accrue to the country as a whole. Some Mennonites were willing to do medical corps work, even under military auspices, but to propose that would have created more internal divisions.

At first officials in Ottawa resisted the idea of a separate civilian service program, urging, instead, certain forms of non-combatant service under military auspices. The church leaders then met directly with the responsible Minister, the Hon. Jimmy Gardiner. Gardiner recounted his childhood friendships with Brethren in Christ people and quickly assured the church leaders that their requests would be accommodated. Soon the regulations were amended to reflect Gardiner's commitment.

Still, various practical arrangements had to be made so it was June 1941 before the first A.S.P. men were sent out, this time only for a four-month period. Those in western Canada went to national parks at Banff, Jasper, Prince Albert, and Riding Mountain. They cleared forests of dead and diseased timber, constructed drainage facilities, and built trails and roads to help fight forest fires. Those in Ontario were sent to a camp 80 miles north of Sault Ste. Marie to clear the way for what was to become the Trans-Canada Highway.

While the Alternative Service Program was taking shape, the process for getting
(cont'd on p.2)

CO Anniversary (concl. from p.1)

C.O. status was also under way. Men had to get C.O. status before they could be sent to A.S.P. To get C.O. status, men had to apply to National War Service boards set up across the country. These boards had a broad discretionary power. As a result they did not all operate in the same way. In Ontario, the boards tended to grant C.O. status on the basis of lists brought in by church leaders. In the prairie provinces the boards questioned every C.O. applicant individually.

Most of the men who applied for C.O. status received it quickly but the boards could be difficult. Judge John E. Adamson who chaired the Board in Manitoba felt that young Mennonites were too heavily influenced by their parents and church leaders. He urged the men to speak only on the basis of their own convictions. He rejected some applications. In such cases, if the person still refused to join the military, he could be sent to jail. As a result, several dozen Manitoba Mennonites did spend some time in jail.

In Saskatchewan, Judge Embury encouraged the men to accept four months of regular military training and to then go into a non-combatant branch of the military. Some men agreed to this. However, Defence Department officials said that no branch of the military was absolutely non-combatant. In some branches it was extremely unlikely that the men would ever have had to use weapons but military commanders wanted the right to call on everyone in emergency situations.

In addition to these difficulties in getting C.O. status, the A.S.P. was not satisfying everyone either. Some young men, particularly the more educated ones, felt that their work in the A.S.P. bush camps was insignificant, that they could serve humanity in better ways. Also, there was an inequity in that while some C.O.s were sent out to the A.S.P. camps for four-month assignments, others were allowed to continue in their regular work at home. This inequity increased in 1942 when those in the camps were ordered to stay for the duration of the war.

In 1943 the Alternative Service Program was broadened and changed. By now the C.O.s were recognized as an important resource for alleviating the widespread labour shortage. Accordingly, many C.O.s were given new assignments in the more

FUNNY BUSINESS

"He's a conscientious objector, sir."

This cartoon appeared in a Canadian newspaper during WW II.

regular labour market, subject to an Alternative Service contract stipulating that a portion of their wages would go to the Red Cross. The new arrangement allowed many Mennonite and Brethren in Christ men to work on their parent's farms. Some, with high school education or more, were given teaching assignments. This was ironic because earlier some of these same teachers had their jobs terminated for taking the C.O. stand. Other men worked in hospitals. Also, the government now allowed C.O.s to join the military's medical corps with full assurance that they would never have to use weapons. Two hundred and twenty-seven C.O.s accepted this option.

There is little doubt that the A.S.P. in World War II helped to prevent the emergence of a strong anti-Mennonite feeling in the general public. Early in the war signs of hostility did appear. Two Alberta Mennonite churches were burned down. A Bible school in Drake, Saskatchewan was harassed. Members of a church in Leamington, suspected of sympathizing with the Germans, were searched for arms. But later in the war some leaders in business and society spoke publicly of the "excellent service rendered by these conscientious objectors". They planted over twenty million trees in British Columbia alone and gave over two million dollars to the Red Cross.

For the A.S.P. men it was a multi-faceted experience. To some it gave a first exposure to other Mennonites and to the outside world. (About 4000 A.S.P. men were of other backgrounds such as United Church, Pentecostal, Baptist, etc.) Some A.S.P. camp officials were hard to work for. They

kept telling the men that they were cowards, and shirking their responsibilities. Partly due to this pressure, perhaps, several hundred C.O.s, changed their minds and joined the military voluntarily.

Some A.S.P. men felt led to study the biblical basis of their beliefs more fully. Some found their assignments deeply meaningful. They saw them as forms of Christian service worthwhile in themselves, not just as means for getting out of military service. Several C.O.s died during the course of their work.

For the churches generally, it was a difficult experience. Family life and social relationships were disrupted. Ministers, usually unsalaried, travelled long distances to visit their men in the A.S.P. camps. Worship services there, in most cases, had to be held in the English language, to which few ministers were accustomed. Also, many churches had to wrestle with the fact that some of their young men went into the military. Should they support these men too? Or should these men be excommunicated when they returned?

When the war ended in 1945 Mennonites were greatly relieved, just like other Canadians. The experience had not been neat and tidy. But the stand which the C.O.s took, both in refraining from military service and in seeking to render a positive alternative service, represents an important chapter not only in their personal lives but in the history of our church. It should not be forgotten.

William Janzen is director of the MCC (Canada) office in Ottawa, Canada.

For further reading:

Janzen, William and Frances Greaser. *Sam Martin Went to Prison. The Story of Conscientious Objection and Canadian Military Service*. Winnipeg: Kindred Press. 1991.

Janzen, William. *Limits on Liberty. The Experience of Mennonite, Hutterite and Doukhobor Communities in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 1990. Klippenstein, Lawrence, ed. *That There Be Peace. Mennonites in Canada and World War II*. Winnipeg: The Manitoba CO Reunion Committee. 1979.

Reddig, Ken, "Judge Adamson Versus the Mennonites of Manitoba During World War II," *Journal of Mennonite Studies*. Vol. 7, 1989.

FAMILY HISTORY AND GENEALOGY

by Alf Redekopp

Queries

Toews - Searching for the descendants of Julius Toews (1811-1890), who was first married to a Suzanna Wall and lived in Niederchortiza, especially the descendants of his children Julius, Wilhelm, Aganetha, of this first marriage and Johann, Gertruda and Maria of the second marriage. The descendants of the son Jacob Toews (1844-1920) and Gertruda Hiebert (1844-1908) who came to Canada in 1875 are well documented, but little is known about the others. Contact: *Anne Giesbrecht, 791 Preston Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R3G 0Z2.* (NOTE: This query includes a correction from what appeared in *Mennonite Historian*, June, 1991).

Spent - Searching for descendants of Katherine Spent, daughter of Jacob and Maria Spent. Katherine was born 10 February 1882 and lived most of her childhood near Langdon, N.Dakota. She married Gerhard (George) Wall and around 1915 they lived in the area of Herbert, SK. Contact: *Ron J. Spent, 4412-7th St. NE, Minneapolis, MN, 55421.*

Pauls - Looking for the ancestors of Franz Pauls (1821-1911) who came from Kronsweide, Chortiza and wife Agatha Martens (? 1888). A daughter Agatha Pauls (1856-1932) married Peter P. Froese (1850-1943) of Andreasfeld and Barvenkovo. Both died in Winkler, MB. Contact: *Irmie Konrad, 4805 Meadfield Road, West Vancouver, BC, V7W 3E6.*

Konrad - Searching for ancestral information about Jakob Abram (?) Konrad, married to Helena Janzen, lived in Rosenort, Molotschna and whose birth and death were around 1820 and 1890. Children: Jakob of Kasnisch and Omsk, Susanna (Mrs. Johann Kroeker) of Spat, Heinrich of Barnaul, Peter of Alexanderwohl, Abram of Kalentarowka, Helena (Mrs. Peter Huebner) of Alexanderkrone and Gerhard of Terek. Contact: *John Konrad, 4805 Meadfield Road, West Vancouver, BC, V7W 3E6.*

"Wahrheitszeuge" - Does anyone know of a periodical (possibly a missions-related news letter) with this title published around the turn of the century (i.e. ca. 1901) in the United States which was read by Mennonites in Southern Russia at the time? Contact: *Alf Redekopp, 229 Home St., Winnipeg, MB, R3G 1X2.*

Johannesruh - According to municipal records at Altona, Manitoba, one of my

ancestors lived at and/or worked for a Mennonite family at Johannesruh. I have not been able to locate this village. Does anyone know where it was? Contact: *Jerry Frank, 3548- 2 Ave., S.W., Calgary, AB, T3C 0A1.*

Friesen - von Riesen - Searching for descendants of brothers and sisters of Nikolai N. (Klaas) Friesen b. August 23, 1862. Rosenort, U.S.S.R., son of Nikolai von Riesen (date unknown and still searching), married to Sara Wiens b. February 9, 1864, Blumstein U.S.S.R., daughter of Nikolai and Margaretha Janzen Wiens. One of his brothers is supposed to have moved to Siberia. Contact: *Olive Klassen, 29 Meadowview Rd. S.W., Calgary, AB., T2V 1W1.*

Giesbrecht - Need name of ship and date of immigration of Abraham and first wife Helena (Martens) and family. They first went to the West Reserve, Manitoba, (believed to be 1876). Others who may have immigrated at the same time were: his mother Elizabeth (Driedger) and second husband, Johann Janzen and his brothers, Jacob and Cornelius Giesbrecht. Abraham, later was one of the first Mennonites to settle in Saskatchewan in the Rosthern area. He married 2nd Anna Dyck. Contact: *Jean Clark Giesbrecht, RR #4, Box 73, Reimersite, Quesnel, BC, V2J 3H8.*

Noteworthy Periodical Articles

The periodical *Mennonite Family History*, edited by J. Lamar and Lois Ann Mast, regularly runs a column noting published articles dealing with genealogy. We are sharing some entries found in the most recent issues. A few other items are included also.

Gerlach, Horst, "Von Westpreussen nach Russland 1789-1989," *Westpreussen-Jahrbuch* 41 (1990), pp.98-114.

Goertz, Adalbert, "Mennonites of the Danzig Territory in 1793," *Mennonite Family History*, (January 1991), pp.20-21.

Goertz, Adalbert, "Taufen 1761-1780 in der Mennonitengemeinde Montau, Kreis Schwetz," *Altpreuussische Geschlechterkunde*, (Bd. 18, 1988), pp. 227-240.

Goertz, Adalbert, "Trauungen 1776-1800 in der Mennonitengemeinde Ladekopp," *Altpreuussische Geschlechterkunde*, (Bd. 18, 1988), pp. 241-247.

Klippenstein, Lawrence, "The Slavic Collection in MHCA," *Generations* Vol. 16, No.3 (Sept. 1991), pp.48-51.

Peters, Alan, "The Family of Johann Claassen," *California Mennonite Historical Society Bulletin*, Nov. 1990, pp.5-6.

(cont. on p.4)

Katie Peters Compilations

The following compilations have recently been donated to the Centre for MB Studies and may be consulted by researchers who visit the centre:

Descendants of Johann **Retslaff** b. February 1, 1726, in Diesen auf dem Halm;

Descendants of Peter **Ens** b. ca. 1761 in Krebsfelde/Elbing and his wife Magdalena b. ca. 1765 who settled in Einlage, Chortiza ca. 1789;

Descendants of Johann **Franz** (1814-1893) and Elisabeth Janzen who lived in Alexanderkrone, Molotschna;

Descendants of Julius **Janzen** (1836-1905) and Katharina Letkemann (1834- ?) who lived in Schoenhorst, Chortiza;

Descendants of Heinrich **Penner** (1801-1943) who was born in Marienburg, W. Prussia, and his wife Margaretha Loewen;

Descendants of Johann **Martens** (? - 1846) who settled in Waldheim, Molotschna in 1836;

Descendants of Abraham **Claahsen** (1722-1788) who lived in the Vistula region between Danzig and Marienburg, W. Prussia.

Book Notes

Bartel, Peter K. et al (comps.). *Bartel from 20th Century American, 19th Century Ukraine, 18th Century Prussia, 17th Century Nederlandt.* (Rosenort, MB : Prairie View Press, 1991.)

This book traces the descendants of the two brothers, Jacob W. Bartel (1864-1947) and Heinrich W. Bartel (1867-1949), sons of Heinrich Bartel (1834-1867) and Gertrude Warkentin (1832-1872). Jacob W. Bartel came to America with Gerhard and Elizabeth Schellenberg in 1874. Heinrich W. Bartel came to America with Isaac and Katherine Warkentin in 1875 and settled in Manitoba's East Reserve with the Mennonite Kleingemeinde. Contact: *Harvey Bartel, R.R. 1, Steinbach, MB R0A 2A0.*

Letkeman, Erwin (comp.). *Descendants of Peter Wieler : 1778 - .* (Walhalla, ND: Private publication, 1991.)

This genealogy consists of a computer print-out of the descendants of Peter Wieler and Katherine Bergen. The print-out covers the period from 1778 to 1990. Contact: *Erwin Letkeman, Box 409, Walhalla, ND 58282.*

Address queries, etc., to: *Alf Redekopp, 1-169 Riverton Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R2L 2E5.*

My Neudorf Scoop

by Ruth Friesen

Can you imagine how I sucked in my breath with amazement when I opened the envelope from a new correspondent in genealogical matters, and five sheets of tightly hand-printed charts, showing not just one or two generations before the earliest I had on my Neudorf side, but four! That's not all. When I lined them up against each other and ran to check them against some other notes from family books where I'd had a hunch we were connected, I found that we were related just as I had suspected.

I got on with the job at hand, painting some bedrooms for my parents, but the whole time my head was spinning with excitement. What a scoop! Wait until I tell so-and-so, and also so-and-so!

Back in 1985 when my New Year's resolution was to write a book honouring my dear Groszmama Elisabeth (Friesen) Kroeker, I had expected to have a tidy little home-made book ready to show her by her birthday on May 6, and send copies to all my cousins and relatives so they could get to know her better. I never dreamed that it would take me three years, that I would still be selling extra copies of *A Godly Inheritance*, another three years or more after that, and that I would have what is fast developing into a career as a translator of old German diaries. Oh, how Groszmama would smile, no, beam from her Old Colony black kerchief, if she knew now what a rich inheritance she had left me.

A small review in the *Mennonite Historian* led to the book sale to Mr. Henry Schapansky in B.C. It was in response to his reading and my suggestion that he sent me this "Neudorf Scoop" as I call it. I judge from the copies of his articles in other genealogical magazines that he sent me, that he is a careful researcher of Mennonite villages and census lists in Prussia and Russia, and a reliable source.

I like to look at it from the top, the earliest person, down. There is a **Giesbrecht Neudorf** (1722-12/15/1794). We do not have his first wife's name, but her years were from 1717-1787. They had two sons, of whom, supposedly, all the Neudorfs in Canada are descended. Giesbrecht (1755), and **Abraham** (1761).

Abraham was first married on May 8, 1781 to Anna (1741-May 10, 1786) who had earlier been married to an Abraham Olfert. They had three children, a set of twins, Abraham and Katharina (February 10, 1782), and Johann (b. April 13, 1783 at Petershagen, d. April 15, 1860 at

Osterwick).

Johann was prolific, and those descendants are expanded in the book by J.J. Neudorf, *He Leadeth Me*. His first wife, Susanna Klassen (1770-November 11, 1817) was the widow of Jacob Dirksen, (one of her Dirksen children was a great-grandmother to Groszmama Friesen's grandmother). Johanna and Susanna had four sons, two of which died in infancy. With his second wife, Helena Hildebrandt (November 21, 1798 - January 11, 1888), he had 13 more children.

Back to Johann's father, **Abraham** (1761). He married Katharina Wiens (1762) and had a second family of four children; Maria (1787), **Jacob** (1789) who married a Maria Penner, Susanna (1793) and Anna (1795).

Jacob and Maria had four children. 1) Maria (9/7/1818-11/7/1882), who married a Heinrich Neustaedter (1/7/1820-2/20/1882). 2) Katherina (2/7/1821-4/26/1858), who married Gerhard Dyck (1/3/1817). (He latter married Katharina (Klassen) Quapp. 3) **Heinrich** had Katherina Hildebrandt as wife, but here is a weak spot as we need dates for them. 4) Elisabeth (12/6/1829-5/14/1870) whose husband was Jacob Abrams (3/4/1829).

Heinrich and Katharina had nine children. 1) Heinrich (12/23/1843) married Anna Siemens (12/15/1839-7/3/1909) and in later years to the widow of Jacob Neustaedter, a Buhler's daughter. Their son Heinrich (8/30/1871) and wife Anna Martens (8/10/1876), came to Canada in 1891 and their descendants ended up in the village of Neuhorst near Hague, Saskatchewan. I grew up knowing most of this family at church in Chortitz, SK, not realizing we were related.

The next son of Heinrich and Katharina was 2) **"Our Jacob"** as I have begun to refer to him. His children and 85 grandchildren are documented in my 100 page book of genealogical charts. **Jacob** (6/29/1844-11/1/1908) was first married to Anna Peters (5/26/1846-1/1/1865) and had nine children, three of which died in infancy. (Anna's father was a Herman Peters. No further information is known about him at this time.) At the end of the year that Anna died, Jacob married Katharina Reimer (5/9/1857-12/12/1937), and had another nine children. Jacob and his family came to Canada in 1891, perhaps at the same time as his nephew Heinrich above. I need more details on this, ship name, etc. After Jacob died, Katharina married a widower, Isaac F. Dyck of Rosthern and helped him raise two of his orphaned nieces. It is her diaries of the period 1917-1935 that I am presently

translating with great interest. A cousin in Edmonton is planning to publish them once I'm done.

Ah, but let's finish Heinrich and Katharina's family. They also had, 3) Isaac (nothing on him), 4) Peter (5/6/1852-3/8/1920) who was married to Susanna Klassen (3/17/1854-9/18/1900). I have recently corresponded with a grandson of his in Vernon, BC, who sent me information which confirms most of the data of this family.

5) Johann (7/22/1858-1903) was a preacher who was married to Elisabeth Braun (8/28/1860-2/22/1932). He was struck by lightning while working with a team of horses. 6) Aganetha married a Peter Toews from Kronsfield. 7) and 8) were daughters, whose names I don't have, only that they were married to Johann Toews and Abraham Giesbrecht. 9) Katharina (2/15/1865), the youngest, was married to Heinrich Lepp (1/1/1862) of Schoenhorst.

Isn't it wonderful to get so much information in one letter? (and this is very condensed). There are so many new leads to follow. Cousin Karin and I will gladly accept any other tidbits of information to add to the overall picture of "Our Jacob" and other related families.

Ruth Friesen is a genealogist who resides in Hague, Saskatchewan.

Noteworthy Articles (concl. from p.3)

Schapansky, Henry, "Einlage: The Old Colony Russia; The First Settlers: 1788-1808, Part I," *Mennonite Family History*, (January 1991), pp.26-31.

Stayer, Jonathan T., "Researching Pa.'s Civil War Conscientious Objectors: A General Perspective," *Bucks County Genealogy Society Newsletter*, (Winter 1991), pp.12-16.

Mennonite Family History is published at 10 W. Main St., Elverson, PA, USA 19520-0171. A subscription for one year is \$17.00 US.

Pauls Publication of Paintings in Print

A celebration will be held at Conrad Grebel College in Waterloo, ON, on October 27 to launch the Henry Pauls painting publication "A Sunday Afternoon: Paintings by Henry Pauls". Cost: \$60.00.

A CO on Trial: The Court-martial of Amos M. Showalter

by Gerlof Homan

In the USA, World War I was unlike World War II when conscientious objectors were provided with the option of performing civilian service. In WW I conscientious objectors had to perform so-called non-combatant work which was not until March 1918 defined as service in the Medical or Quartermaster Corps or the Corps of Engineers. From September 1917, when the first Mennonite draftees arrived in the military camps, until the end of the war many of these young men were mentally and physically abused because of their refusal to obey orders to render service, to drill, or to wear the uniform.

After March 1918 the situation did not improve although new regulations instructed military commanders to segregate conscientious objectors and to allow them not to accept work, to wear the uniform, or to drill if they chose not to. Many military commanders ignored these instructions and liberally interpreted others allowing them to court-martial conscientious objectors.

In the summer of 1918 the government established a so-called Board of Inquiry which questioned most conscientious objectors and on the basis of their sincerity assigned them to combatant, non-combatant, or farm work. But not all conscientious objectors were heard, and some who were granted a farm furlough were not allowed to leave the camp. Therefore, the latter could be, and in some instances were court-martialled.¹

Most of the 136 or more Mennonites who were court-martialled during World War I were tried in the summer, fall, and winter of 1918. Some military camps had many more court-martials than others. Camp Funston, Kansas had at least twenty-one such trials of Mennonite conscientious objectors. The trial of Amos M. Showalter was one of these.²

While most Mennonites tried to explain their position to the court they were not always very articulate, and found it difficult to explain clearly their religious convictions. Their rural background and lack of education may explain this problem, although it should be added that no amount of eloquence or learning would have impressed any court. Most court members detested conscientious objectors as did the public at large. Amos M. Showalter made a most spirited and eloquent defense on his own behalf. His rationale for not cooperating with the military establishment

is a very good summary of the position of many other Mennonites who refused to obey military orders but often could not articulate their position well. This article may help us understand the position of these men. Furthermore, it may tell us something about the system of military justice and the attitude of the military towards conscientious objectors.

Amos Martin Showalter was the great-grandson of Daniel Showalter who left the Palatinate in 1788 and settled in Virginia. In the course of time the Showalters produced a large number of ministers. During the Civil War both of Amos' grandparents suffered because of their loyalty to the Union and were conducted safely to a loyal state.

Amos was born in December 1891 near Singers Glen, Rockingham County, Virginia where he belonged to the Bank Mennonite church (MC). In 1908 he moved to McPherson County, Kansas and six years later to Cass County, Missouri. The year following he enrolled at Goshen College where he graduated in June 1918 with a degree in biology, although he also told the court he intended to do missionary work. He registered for the draft but also applied for overseas work with the American Friends Service Committee. In May 1918 he was accepted by the American Friends Service Committee but because of some technicality was not issued a passport. One month later he was drafted and arrived in Camp Funston on June 24.³

Apparently, from the very beginning of his arrival in camp, Amos refused to cooperate very much with his military superiors and thus spent about three weeks

in the guard house. On August 28 he was assigned to one of the base hospitals as an attendant or floorman. For one day he agreed to scrub floors.

In doing this, did Amos agree to become a non-combatant? This matter was not brought up during his court-martial and no documentary evidence was submitted to prove he agreed to serve in the Medical Corps. Most likely Amos became one of those many Mennonites in camp who, after they had initially agreed to do some work, refused to cooperate any further.

For many Mennonites, refusal to do even menial tasks such as scrubbing floors, chopping wood, or kitchen work was unrealistic and stretched the idea of non-resistance a bit too far. They felt that cooperating a little would not violate one's conscience or traditional Mennonite non-resistant principles and values. Among Mennonites who urged the men to cooperate were various church leaders.

Many young men in the camps, however, did not view it this way. To them even a little cooperation would result in imposing greater demands upon them. It also implied acceptance and support of the military establishment which only believed in destroying and not in saving human lives. Amos became one of those who resisted cooperation and on August 29 refused to do any more scrubbing.

His action resulted in a court-martial held on October 23, 1918. His defense counsel was Captain Ralph E. Fleicher, a division medical supply officer who was different from most other defense counsels in that he did try to obtain a fair trial for the accused. In most such situations, the defense counsel was, like the members of the courts and the public, very hostile to their defendants. Fleicher, like most other defense counsellors, and even members of every court, may not have been trained or well-versed in legal matters. It was not until 1948 that defense counsellors were required to be attorneys-at-law.

Fleicher tried unsuccessfully, to demonstrate that the court had no jurisdiction in this case because of the Department of the Army's instructions of July 30. It exempted conscientious objectors from bearing arms, wearing the uniform, or performing duties contrary to the dictates of their conscience. Fleicher should have known, and may have, that in most military camps these instructions were ignored. Later in the trial Fleicher also tried to demonstrate that Showalter had not violated Article 64 of the Articles of War by "wilfully" disobeying "any lawful command of

(cont'd on p.9)



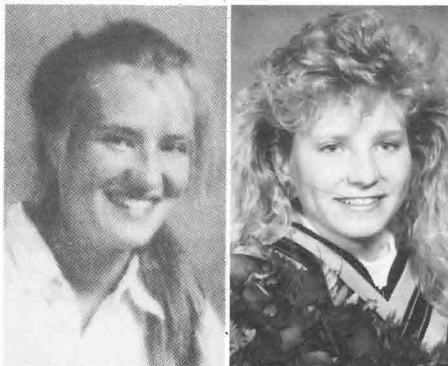
Amos Showalter (1891-?)

CO Conference Coming

A CO conference commemorating the 50th anniversary of alternative service in Canada will be held at Winnipeg and Altona, Manitoba, on November 9-10, 1991. The first day, Saturday, will feature lectures by Dr. William Janzen of Ottawa, and Dr. Ted Regehr of Saskatoon, several shorter afternoon presentations by Betty Goosen of Winkler, and others, as well as an evening banquet at the Portage Avenue MB Church, with guest speaker Dr. David Schroeder, of Winnipeg. The program is sponsored by three agencies, the Mennonite Heritage Centre, the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, both of Winnipeg, and the Education Committee of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society.

The second day, Sunday, will provide an afternoon CO reunion in Altona, with an evening meal following the program. Lawrence Klippenstein will be one of the speakers. Mennonite congregations may want to give some emphasis to the CO story during the Sunday morning worship. Several special media events, such as the showing of a new CO video produced by MCC Ontario, and several radio interviews with COs are also being considered. A special issue of *Mennonite Historian* is being devoted to this topic as well.

The conference will follow the Mennonite Studies lectures on the topic of *Mennonites and Modern Wars* to be held at the University of Winnipeg on November 7-8. More detailed information on both series will be publicized shortly, and may be obtained from the Centre for MB Studies in Winnipeg (1-204-669-6575) or the Mennonite Heritage Centre (Ph. 1-204-888-6781, Ext. 243; or Fax. 1-204-831-5675).



Natasha Sawatzky and Kathy Wiebe were student assistants at the archives this summer. They were funded partly by a Manitoba CareerStart grant. Part of the work related to new research for a history of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada now being written.



A bronze plaque commemorating the life and work of the late Ältester David Toews of Rosthern, SK was mounted at the Mennonite Heritage Centre recently. It was unveiled first at the CMC July sessions in Saskatoon, and then dedicated at the cairn on September 22. In the photo are descendants of the family present at the first phase of the unveiling. Another group will be noted in the December issue of *MH*. On the photo are: (Front row, l-r): Jacob Sawatzky, husband of Margarete Toews (deceased); Sylvester and Anna (Toews) Funk, Elma Toews, Elsie Hooze (Toews), Louise (Toews) and Blake Friesen. (Back row, l-r), John Ens, husband of Elsie Ens (Hooze), Bob, (nephew of Ältester Toews) and Joan Sawatzky, Henry and Margaret Jantzen (Hooze, niece of Ältester Toews), Margaret Murray (Sawatzky, niece of Ältester Toews), Eileen Funk Sawatzky (niece of Ältester Toews).

Photo: Courtesy of Dick Epp, Saskatoon, SK.

Letter to the Editors

by Jim Urry

Peter Lorenz Neufeld's account of early Mennonite aviation pioneers in Chortitza before 1914 (*MH* March 1991) provides an interesting insight into the adventurous spirit of young Mennonites during that period. There is another account of their work with portraits of the young Mennonite engineers involved, in Nick Kroeker's history of the Chortitza colony.¹

Neufeld's statement, however, that "in 1909 Russia was a sleeping giant, technologically and otherwise" cannot go unchallenged. While it is clear that the young Mennonite pioneers were influenced by reports on aviation stemming from German sources, they must also have been aware of developments in aviation in Russia at that time.

A magazine entitled *Aeronautics* (*Vozdukhoplavatel'*) first appeared in Russia in 1903 and Russian engineers, members of the nobility and the Imperial family were fascinated by the potential of aviation. The Grand Duke Alexander supported the

development of aviation for military purposes; an Imperial All-Russian Aero Club was founded in 1908 and local aero clubs and aviation journals sprang up all across Russia. A regional journal was published in Kherson, for instance, while another appeared in Sevastopol in the Crimea where a government flying school was founded in 1910. Many of the early airplanes used in Russia were of foreign manufacture, but by 1910 Russian-designed airplanes were being built. The most famous designer was Igor Sikorsky, later to be a major force in American aviation after he emigrated to North America.²

¹N.J. Kroeker, *First Mennonite Villages in Russia 1789-1943*. Khortitz - Rosental. Vancouver: The Author, 1981, 190-91.

²Von D. Hardesty, "Aeronautics comes to Russia: the early years, 1908-1918," *Research Report of the National Air and Space Museum*, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C., 1985, 23-44. I am grateful for Dr. von Hardesty, Curator in the Aeronautics Department of the Museum, for supplying me with a copy of his paper. He has written and translated a number of interesting accounts on Russian and Soviet aviation.

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

Recent Accessions

1. Files from the Alberta MB Conference "Christian Education Commission", 1980-1983. (2 linear inches).
2. A photocopy of the Schoenhurst Church register created around 1840 and in use until 1945 in Russia, believed to have been brought to Canada after World War II.
3. One file (0.5 linear inch) of correspondence and newspaper clippings related to the "Yarrow triple tragedy" of 1961, where three Mennonite Brethren men were killed in a highway accident near Bonners Ferry, Idaho, enroute to the Canadian MB Conference. Donated by Peter Penner, Sackville, NB, who has worked as a correspondent for several Mennonite periodicals.
4. A copy of an essay on Eichenfeld (Ukraine) written by Marianne Janzen as a requirement for a University of Winnipeg Mennonite Studies course.
5. A map of the village of Landskrone, Molotschna, Ukraine showing the residents of 1925. Donated by Katie Peters, Winnipeg, MB.
6. Minutes of the Springstein MB Church "Jugendvereinsprogramme" (1938-1947).
7. Congregational records from the Valley Gardens Community Church, Winnipeg.
8. Files from the Manitoba MB Board of Missions and Church Extension (1987-1990).
9. Sixty-eight books from the library of John H. Voth (1908-1991) of Saskatoon (some of which originally were in the library of MB minister Jacob G. Thiessen (1876-1967), Vancouver). Courtesy of Edna Froese.
10. *Gesangbuch in welchem eine Sammlung geistlicher Lieder befindlich zur allgemeinen Erbauung und zum Lobe Gottes herausgegeben.* (Odessa: P. Franzow, 1859). Courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. David Peters, Dallas, OR and John Dyck, Winnipeg, MB.

Students Introduced to Archival Work

This summer three students were involved in government-sponsored work programs at the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies. Laura Loewen and Brad Thiessen participated in the Manitoba CareerStart Program for a total of approximately eight weeks and Erika Pauls was employed under the Federal Government's Challenge program for approximately nine weeks. In addition to learning a great deal about archives and about their own history they also made a very significant contribution by performing

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

some very important, although sometimes tedious tasks. Below is a brief account of this experience by one of the participants (Erika Pauls).

"Working in the MB Archives this summer was a very enriching experience. Although the tasks of sorting, filing and indexing were in themselves monotonous, it was the little, hidden secrets and personal accounts of people's lives that made the job very interesting.

It was quite easy to become distracted when sorting through the personal papers collection, especially when quotations as inspiring as Erich Ratzlaff's appeared. The one that impacted me the most was the following:

*It's not enough to know,
One must also apply;
It's not enough to want,
One must also do.*

It is amazing to think of all the people before us who had this mindset and demonstrated through their diaries and other materials how committed to God they were.

Although personal papers make up a large portion of the archive collection, there are also many other collections, like the tape collection, which includes numerous sermons and musical events, a vast periodical collection, a 3000-book library, an incredible music library including the Ben and Esther Horsch collection, and finally, the Katie Peters collection which provides a wealth of information for people who want to trace their roots.

The people at the MB Centre really made me feel comfortable during the past two months. Abe Dueck, the director, Alfred Redekopp, the archivist, and Bert Friesen, the *Rundschau* indexer, all contributed to the good experience I had working at the Centre.

I would encourage everyone to visit the Centre and discover all the interesting stories and information preserved there. It can be a most rewarding and challenging experience."

Historical Committee Meeting

On September 12, the MB Historical Committee met for the first time since the Canadian convention in July. A variety of issues and decisions faced the Committee.

The Director reported a number of developments over the past months. Physical arrangements in the Centre itself have been changed considerably to make the limited space more usable and attractive for researchers. Additional shelving is still to be installed and the possibility of acquiring additional space will have to be considered in the near future. Eventually, it is hoped, a ground level location closely associated with the library can be acquired.

Bert Friesen is continuing the indexing of the *Rundschau*. The third volume, which should be significantly larger, should be ready by the end of the year. The current funding for the project will terminate by then but it is hoped that the renewed application for another two years of funding will be approved shortly.

The Centre will be co-sponsoring a symposium on Alternative Service in Canada on November 9. This will be one of a series of events which are taking place this year to commemorate the experiences of 50 years ago during World War II. The Historical Society also met earlier at the convention in Saskatoon to reflect on those experiences. A number of people shared their own stories related to World War II.

Recently the specially-commissioned musical composition by Thomas Jahn from Germany was completed. It is entitled *Kernlieder: Cycle for Voice and Piano*, and was largely initiated by Dr. Ben Horsch. A premiere performance by William Reimer was already held at several locations in British Columbia. The CMBS hopes to sponsor a performance in Winnipeg in the near future in cooperation with the Music Department of MBBC.

The Committee also made several important decisions including the decision to apply for a grant under the Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Recreation program to apply for funding for a new computer and copier. The present equipment is no longer adequate. Also, it was agreed that the Centre should seek to procure an exhibit called "Mirror of the Martyrs," which features some of the original copper plates used for the *Martyrs Mirror*. This venture may need to be done in cooperation with the Mennonite Heritage Centre.

The Committee is very conscious of the fact that a restructuring of Boards at the Canadian Conference level is taking place. This will place the Centre under the jurisdiction of a new board. The Committee plans to consult closely with those who are responsible for making a recommendation to the Conference so that the best interests of the Centre continue to be served.

The Lake Four Bethel Mennonite Church

by Anna Thiessen

Church services were held in houses by our leader, Mr. Jacob G. Giesbrecht from 1932-1939. He was greatly concerned about a church building, and wished it to be built on Henry M. Thiessen's homestead. Everyone agreed to that. On June 18, 1939, Mr. and Mrs. Dick Thiessen came to our area. Mr. Thiessen was soon appointed to help with the ministry. We donated two acres of our homestead land for the "Church and Cemetery". Mr. Giesbrecht passed away December, 1939 and Dick carried on with the help of visiting ministers.

In 1940 the men started taking out and hauling logs to the site. Some lumber was bought. The foundation was on rocks. Logs were levelled off for the floor and then finished with lumber. People living there at this time or attending services and taking part in the building of same were: Mr. Henry H. Thiessen (*supervisor*), Henry M. Thiessen, Dick Thiessen, Abram Thiessen, John Thiessen, Jacob Unrau, Peter Neufeld Sr., Peter Neufeld, Mr. John Bueckert Sr., Johnny Bueckert, Abram Bueckert, Cornelius Friesen, Jacob J. Giesbrecht, Cornelius Giesbrecht, Cornelius Neufeld. The following is a record taken from the late Mr. Henry H. Thiessen's report.

On May 22, 1942, this was donated or paid up: \$8.00 towards plastering the church; \$7.25 to John Reimers for ploughing; \$6.90 stove pipes; \$4.60 lumber; \$14.08 lumber; \$3.00 gas drum; \$20.00 donation for doors; \$20.00 donation for lamp; \$60.00 donation from Elder Johnnes Regier; \$4.05 donation from Ladies Aid towards windows; \$30.31 donation from Ladies Aid towards windows from Auction Sale.

The Ladies Aid members at that time were the following: Mrs. Jacob G. Giesbrecht and daughters, Mariechen and Anna, Mrs. Jacob J. Giesbrecht (Nettie), Mrs. John Bueckert and daughters, Mary and Betty, Mrs. Henry M. Thiessen (Anna), Mrs. John Thiessen (Louise), Mrs. Dick Thiessen (Margaret), Jacob Unrau (Mary), Mrs. Cornelius Friesen (Mary), Mrs. Peter Neufeld and daughter, Lena.

Church services were held in the summer of 1942, although the building was not completely finished. The two acres of land had its own registration. The location was the "N.E. 26, 54, 6, West 3rd Mer. The name of the church was "Lake Four Bethel Mennonite Church". Cornelius Friesen



The Bethel Mennonite Church at Big River. The building was put up in 1942. A wedding picture for the 1957 marriage of Mary, daughter of Anne and Henry Thiessen.

Photo: Courtesy of Anne Thiessen.

chose the name and all agreed. It was "dedicated" under the above name. Fond memories remain.

Mr. Ens was one of the visiting ministers, along with Mr. Regier, Epp, Dyck and others. Peter Funks came in 1958 and under his direction a lumber church was built, other groups and neighbours helped. A parsonage was built also. Due to high costs the log church could not be restored. Mr. and Mrs. C. Boldt came when Funks left. I was appointed as church historian by Rev. Boldt. When they left Jacob Giesbrecht took over with the help of visiting Ministers. He passed away in 1982. Ministers came to visit but now our church has closed due to low attendance.

A Centre for Leamington

by Hugo Tiessen

The Essex-Kent Mennonite Historical Association has taken its first step in establishing a Mennonite Heritage Centre in Leamington, Ontario.

The Association has agreed to purchase 975 square feet of space from the Leamington Mennonite Home. This space is located in a housing complex which is now being developed. The Association would have equity in its purchase as the space is a "Life Lease" arrangement.

The cost to the Association will be \$80,000. At the present time approximately \$32,000 has been pledged in donations and interest-free loans. In addition, the Association is allocating about \$12,000 of its existing funds towards the project.

The Mennonite Heritage Centre will act as a museum and archives serving the Mennonite population of Essex and Kent

counties. Presently there are eleven Mennonite churches located in these two counties, with Leamington being the hub of the Mennonite presence.

In addition to serving as a museum and archives, the Association is very interested in making this a learning and educational centre. One objective will be to tell both Mennonites and also the larger outside community the story of the Mennonite people.

The Association is presently embarking on a fund raising drive to raise an additional \$35,000.

Any questions or comments regarding the establishment of this centre may directed to Hugo Tiessen, 73 Debergh Street South, Leamington, Ontario, N8H 4V7.

German Canadian Centre to Open

by F. Michael Heitmann

Winnipeg's German-Canadian community is proud to announce the long-awaited dedication of the Hon. Wilhelm Hespeler Centre on Thursday, October 10, 1991.

There will be a celebration in the form of a dedication dinner in the Skyview Ballroom of The Marlborough, Winnipeg, 331 Smith Street. It is being sponsored by the German-Canadian Congress (MB) Inc.

The guest speaker will be the Hon. Jake Epp, with many other dignitaries in attendance. Tickets for this important event are available through the German-Canadian Congress office, at a cost of \$30.00 per person. Tel.: 338-7903.

The German-Canadian Cultural Centre is finally happening, after a long and sometimes turbulent planning period. It has been much written about and discussed in the media. Here is your chance to attend the event and get the facts!

The reception will take place at 6:15 p.m., with dinner to be served at 7:00 p.m. Music will be provided by the Faith and Life Male Voice Choir (CMM).

For more information, please contact Ron Schuler at our office, Tel. 338-7903, or write German-Canadian Congress, 16-1110 Henderson Hwy, Winnipeg, MB, R2G 1L1 (Fax no.: [204] 334-3869).

Editor's Note: The Mennonite Heritage Centre would like to congratulate GCC in Winnipeg for building this new centre. A large collection of German-language books is being donated to the new German-Canadian Centre as a way of recognizing this achievement.

CO Court-martial (concl. from p.5)

a superior officer" as charged, but that his "manner, intent and demeanour" had been civil.

In most court-martial cases the legal counsel did not advise the defendant of his right, and the advisability not to testify on his own behalf. We do not know if Fleicher did so, but Showalter informed the court, "It is inconsistent with my religious belief and principles to have a man fight a case...for me." He informed the court that he was not standing trial as a "soldier but as a conscientious objector" and asked permission to read and submit a statement. This request was granted. Below is most of Showalter's statement.

The reasons for my refusal to perform military service are purely religious. It is not a question of my will or the saving of my own life. I willingly concede to the government of my country the right to deprive me of my political and civil freedom but to be deprived of my religious freedom would render me unfit to be a citizen of a free country. I am as willing as anyone to serve and give my life for my country or for the people of France - in fact I am willing to sacrifice for my country anything except my soul and willing to do for my country anything which does not interfere with the relation of my soul to the Spirit of my Creator. But I cannot take part in any enterprise which involves that destruction of human life, no matter how depraved or degraded that life may be or how worthy the ultimate purpose of that enterprise. I cannot perform duties in any branch of the military establishment because in so doing I feel that I would be instrumental in the taking of human life and therefore guilty of murder.

Since my early childhood I have been taught the religious principle of non-resistance which Jesus expressed when he said "Love your enemies; do good to them which hate and pray for them to suffer injury, abuse or insult rather than to recompense injury, abuse or insult for their like", and this teaching has been the mould in which my character was cast. I believe that Jesus expressed in the statement quoted above a fundamental principle which He wants me to use as the guiding principle of my daily life and conduct. I have for eleven years tried to live up to this belief and it has become such a vital part of my religious life that to renounce it would be to renounce all allegiance to Jesus Christ and to forfeit all the peaceful relations of my soul to its Creator...

Although I cannot approve of the cause my country has chosen to take in the present world crisis, I do not criticize or oppose its

action. I believe that my country is the best governed country in the world and I make no effort to change its government. I consider it my sacred duty to obey my country's laws so long as they are not interpreted and applied so as to interfere with my religion to my God. When they are so interpreted and applied, I cannot obey, no matter what the cost. My people enjoyed freedom of conscience under the government of my country during previous wars and we are grateful for the degree of freedom which in general has been given to my brethren in the present war. I have tried to avail myself of the freedom accorded to us by the provisions of the War department as prescribed in the Adjutant General's letter of instruction, dated July 30, 1918, subject "Conscientious Objectors." and at the same time I have obeyed all instructions as far as my conscientious scruples would permit. I have tried to obtain an examination by the Board of Inquiry in order that I might be permitted to serve my country of the people of France in some way within the limits of my conscientious scruples, but that privilege has not been granted to me...

As I said before, I willingly place my life at the disposal of my country. If my country thinks I can render greater service...by becoming a martyr because of religious freedom or if my country thinks that I am a dangerous citizen and should not be at liberty, I am willing to take what my country shall give me. I thank you.

Upon reading Showalter's statement to his court one cannot but be impressed by his expressions of loyalty to his country and



These men participated in a reunion of WW II Christian veterans, including about twenty present and former Mennonites. Here we see (Back row, l-r): Jake Koop, Peter Friesen, John Bergen, Isaac Schmidt, Frank Thiessen, John M. Thiessen, Wally Kornelsen. (Middle row, l-r): Jim Gilmour, Pual Cavanaugh, Lawrence Anderson, Ed Regehr, Cornie Thiessen, John Froese, Bruce Cole, Henry Hiebert, Herb Jantzen, Cornie Riediger. (Front row, l-r): John Epp, Bill Braaten, David Durksen, Henry Hiebert, Lorne Thomas, Peter Wiens, John M. Schmidt, Jack Block.

Photo: Courtesy of C. Riediger

his patriotism. Yet, this kind of rhetoric was not unusual. During World War I Mennonites were often stung by charges of lack of loyalty and patriotism. As a result, they developed their own patriotic rhetoric to persuade their neighbours of their loyalty. Unfortunately, many non-Mennonites and military courts were not persuaded. To them the best and most genuine expression of patriotism was a willingness if not eagerness to give one's life for flag and nation in the trenches. *(to be concluded)*

CO Conference Held in Goshen

A "Mennonites and Alternative Service in World War II" conference took place May 30-June 1 at Goshen College. About 125 people - many of them veterans of alternative service - from the United States and Canada participated in structured historical presentations and informal stories of camp life.

Almost 12,000 men served in the U.S. Civilian Public Service program, including 4,665 Mennonites, 951 Quakers and 1,353 members of the Church of the Brethren, according to the CPS *Directory*.

Estimates given at the conference added 7,500 men for Canada. CPS was administered by the U.S. government with funds from the historic peace churches, while the Canadian government covered all supervision expenses.

Adapted from Mennonite Weekly Review, June 1991, page 1.

Geikie/Jasper CO Reunion

by Paul E. Poetker

It was on an evening in August, 1941 that thirty-six men from the Coaldale area boarded a Greyhound bus to travel practically non-stop to a partially-prepared camp at Geikie, about half an hour's drive west of Jasper, to perform alternative (to military) service. The pay would be a pittance, 50 cents per day, and much of the work rigorous - blasting and moving rock and hacking out a tote road. That is a road that precedes the construction of a more developed road or highway. But, we all did it because we did not want to train to kill and believed that it is more important to obey God than man.

The CMC Church in Coaldale hosted the reunion on August 2 - 4, and a large banner prepared by Corney Martens in the church auditorium announced the event. On Friday evening we were served a delicious meal of chicken borscht, rollkuchen and watermelon. Our wives had joined us which made our meeting even more delightful. John Gossen and John Dyck had organized the event. Some of our comrades had deceased and a few could not come, but twenty of us were there, once young and robust, but now many white-haired and not as spry.

There was some hearty singing and Peter Unger of Chilliwack shared some thoughts with us, based on Psalm 78:14. He encouraged us to pass on our convictions to the next generation. He went on to state: "My refusal to take up arms rests upon my calling as a disciple of Christ. My life-style and my ethics must be in harmony with Christ." He also said, "It is important that we remember those who died and were crippled and suffered loss in World War II. Though my position and views were different from theirs, God forbid that I should judge them."

David Klassen showed slides of scenes in camp at Geikie. This was followed by sharing about camp life and a late coffee.

On Saturday evening we were again served a tasty meal at the Coaldale Mennonite Church. A memorial service for those who have passed on followed. They are Henry Lepp, Abe Janzen, Abe Schierling, Peter Vogt, John Voth, Mrs. Selma Schulz and Mrs. Margaret Unger. John Schmidt read Psalm 145:1-9, 17-19 and some shared memories of the departed. The widow Sally Janzen and Jean Lepp were with us.

A time of sharing led by Jake Dueck included some inspirational talks by John



This is a group of Russian Mennonite COs who served as medics in the Russian army during WWI. They were captured on the frontline in 1915 and imprisoned in Germany for the duration of the war. When they were released, Moscow authorities accused them of being spies, and it took some time to clear up the matter before they could get home.

Photo: Courtesy of Gerhard Ens, *Der Bote* office.

Schmidt, Henry Baerg and Henry Klassen. This was followed by a session of picture taking and coffee. A barbecue at the Lethbridge Research Station on Sunday afternoon concluded our reunion. It had been worthwhile. (See page 1 for a photo of the men.)

CO Conference Coming Up In Winnipeg

Are you aware of the upcoming 50th anniversary conference dealing with alternative service in Canada during World War II? See page 6 of this issue for details.

World War II Christian Veterans Reunion

by John Thiessen

The Winnipeg Bible College campus at Otterburne, Manitoba was the site of the first World War II Christian Veterans reunion held June 18-21, 1991. The idea was conceived about two years earlier and was followed up by a committee headed up by Cornie Riediger. From a list collected by Cornie Riediger about seventy former servicemen received an invitation to register for the reunion. Twenty-seven couples sent in registrations. Of these 54 people all but a few were present to participate in the reunion.

It was a time of renewing acquaintances, recalling common experiences during the army experience, and relating what the Lord had done in the lives of the veterans and

their families over the years since they served together. The over-riding theme of the reunion was the centrality of Christ in the WW II experiences of the servicemen and the dedication to serving Him since those experiences. This theme was highlighted by the devotionals held on Tuesday evening, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday by Rev. John Froese, Rev. Henry Hiebert, Rev. John M. Schmidt, and Rev. Herbert Hantzen, all of whom served as pastors of churches after taking theological training immediately upon termination of their army service.

It was remarkable and inspiring to note that all veterans present served in the army with a desire to be a witness for Christ, and kept that commitment when they returned to civilian life. Testimonies of these experiences were a vital part of each of the morning, afternoon and evening services. Bruce Cole gave a slide presentation of their missionary work in Venezuela. Bill Braaten testified of his effective ministry in the Lutheran Conference. Jim Gilmour led in a deeply moving Communion and Memorial Service. Throughout the reunion the group joined in hearty singing and enjoyed the special music of the Cornie Thiessens, a male choir, male quartets and duets, all organized on the spur of the moment. Every meal was a time when friends shared personal family experiences as they visited while enjoying the tastefully prepared food.

The group left Friday afternoon with a renewed determination to praise God for all He does and will do in individual lives. Another reunion is anticipated, possibly in two years.

John Thiessen is a retired school teacher from Winnipeg.

Book Reviews (concl. from p.12)

Holiness groups such as the Wesleyan Methodists, the Free Methodists, and the Church of the Nazarene issued statements critical of capitalism and war, and the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana) proclaimed itself to be a peace church. (As a matter of fact, Beaman points out that there was considerable contrast between sectors of the Holiness movement and various Mennonite groups).

After the Pentecostals distanced themselves from the Holiness movement, they continued to develop a strong case for pacifism. Many early Pentecostal groups developed pacifist statements, including the Assemblies of God, the Pentecostal Holiness Church, and the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee). However, these groups did not attempt to press pacifism upon individual members. Pacifism was also endorsed by Pentecostal groups in other countries, especially in Great Britain, and to some extent in Eastern Europe.

Beaman focuses on major personalities in the development of Pentecostal pacifism. These include John Alexander Dowie, Arthur Sydney Booth-Clibborn (son-in-law of William Booth), and Donald Gee. He also mentions other Pentecostal leaders who moderated the stance on pacifism after World War I, encouraging subjection to the government, nationalism and patriotism.

A major factor in the moderation of Pentecostal pacifism was the fact that "Pentecostals were very rapidly becoming a part of the emerging status quo. The radical edge...was being blunted by a change in social status afforded, at least in part, by denominational success and recognition of ministerial status" (p.78). By World War II there was little Pentecostal pacifism in practice. World War II saw the wholesale enlistment of Pentecostal men, as well as a large number of Pentecostals who served as military chaplains, suggesting an implicit approval of the military.

Beaman also argues that the loss of pacifism by the Pentecostal movement can be related to its roots in the Holiness movement, which did not maintain a strong pacifist stance after World War I. Also, after the distancing between the two groups due to the renunciation of "tongues" by the Holiness movement, the Pentecostals sought new associations with mainstream evangelicals which encouraged them to further de-emphasize their pacifist origins.

Beaman concludes that "ironically, in a time when many evangelicals are questioning the validity of warfare as a Christian enterprise, most Pentecostals are forgetting

their heritage of pacifism" (p.118). Unfortunately, the same could very well be said for large segments of several Mennonite denominations.

Pentecostal Pacifism is a somewhat sketchy treatment in places, and one wishes that Beaman could have included more data to substantiate his thesis. However, the book is very informative and easy to read. It contains an index of names, subjects, and denominational and religious movements, a ten-page bibliography, and numerous footnotes.

Jay Beaman and the Hillsboro Center for MB Studies have provided a helpful way to reflect on the rise and fall of pacifist thought in Christian communities. It is hoped that its appearance will encourage other church historians to delve into the records of various Pentecostal denominations, exploring in more detail the history and significance of the loss of pacifism in the life of the Pentecostal movement.

Richard Thiessen is a librarian at the Mennonite Brethren Bible College.

Toews, John B. ed. *Letters From Susan: A Woman's View of the Russian Mennonite Experience (1928-1941)*. (North Newton, KS: Bethel College, 1988). Pb., 150 pp., \$8.00 U.S.

Friesen, Katie. *Into the Unknown*. (Mission, B.C.: By the author, 1986). Pb., 134 pp., \$8.50 CAN.

Reviewed by David J. Rempel Smucker

These two engaging books, a 1986 autobiography by Katie and a collection of excerpted letters from Susan, are fascinating companion pieces. Although these two women are one generation apart, both Susan Toews (1892-1943) and Katie (Dirks) Friesen (b.1926) were born in Molotschna Mennonite villages, Ohrloff and Gnadenfeld respectively, and experienced the onslaught of a Communism which destroyed their culture in South Russia. Both accounts reveal, amid the description of daily life, numerous striking and poignant quotes that encapsulate the tragic and ennobling elements of the Russian Mennonite experience. Both women retained their faith in God amid repressive terror, starvation, epidemics, and experiences of joy.

Yet, the accounts reveal significant differences which, at one level, depended on the generosity of an unnamed Russian

station master at Stulnevo. In 1941, when the German army invaded Ukraine, that station master disobeyed his orders to send Gnadenfeld residents, including Katie, east to Kazakhstan. In contrast, the authorities over Susan, who had fled to nearby Melitopol, obeyed their orders. Consequently, Katie went west (on the trek of two thousand wagons stretching twenty kilometres) and finally settled in Canada where she lives with her children and grandchildren. Susan was deported east and faced her death in an earthen hut in Kazakhstan.

In addition to providing a rich resource on women's experiences during this epochal period, the reader finds many "raw materials" for developing a religious understanding of sin and disaster. Katie has a remarkable memory for objective details after about fifty years, but I wondered if factors other than time and God's blessing had purged (or healed ?) her account of the intense frustration, anger, sarcasm, and bitterness which Susan expresses about very similar events. Did the shape of their faith in God differ so that they felt different emotions and different interpretations of similar events? More reflection and more attention to frustration in Katie's account (or even letters that Katie might have written soon after these events) would have helped the reader to deal with such questions.

We Swiss-background Mennonites feel sympathy for this epic tragedy of our co-believers, yet we have a different, probably narrower, repertoire of responses to the Russian Mennonite experience than those whose relatives lived and died in Russia. Perhaps God needs both sets of responses in order to teach us that no human experience, however cruel and dark, can snuff out God's will for its creation. More horrifying to me than the scenes of physical degradation in Susan's letters, is the relentless crushing of earthly hope and the slow tide of despair which rose as the enemy of human decency. Only after Susan and her sister flee the collectivization of Ohrloff to a shack near Melitopol does a peace of the soul descend on her; she knows that God's love and care will be with her in any circumstance. We have no letters by Susan from her last two years in Kazakhstan, nor can we read an autobiographical perspective by Susan at the end of her earthly life, but I prayed in hope that such peace remained in her heart until her death.

David J. Rempel Smucker is a historian and genealogist at the archives of Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

BOOK REVIEWS

Schroeder, Andreas. *The Mennonites. A Pictorial History of Their Lives in Canada*. (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1990). Hdc., 181 pp., \$34.95 CAN.

Reviewed by Adolf Ens

This attractive semi-coffee table book was published, probably not coincidentally, in time for Assembly XII of the Mennonite World Conference meeting in Winnipeg. Only some fifty pages of the book consist of written text. The rest of the book is filled with photographs, over 180 of them, and tastefully laid out white and black space.

The author, identified as "an ethnic Mennonite," intends the book to serve "as a general interest, nonscholarly introduction" to the history of Mennonites. He admits to a heavy dependence on the writings of E.K. Francis and Frank H. Epp for text content and to a number of Mennonite institutional archives and newspaper files for photographs.

Schroeder presents a generally very positive picture of Mennonites in Canada. While identifying boldly some of their negative or embarrassing quirks and faults, he seeks to excuse or at least explain them. At the same time, he exaggerates (or so it seems to this reviewer) their positive qualities. In the five pages of text dealing with "1950 to the Present," the formation of MCC Canada receives prominent mention, reflecting perhaps Schroeder's (or Mennonite) embarrassment about the denominational splintering of Canadian Mennonites.

It is unfortunate that an attractive volume like this, intended for popular consumption, was not checked more carefully for historical accuracy. Since sources are not footnoted, (understandably in a volume intended for general interest readers) it is difficult to track down the source of erroneous assertions like: clergy reserves for "the Anglican state church" (p. 10); tsarist governments' "benign, hands-off policy with respect to Mennonite schools" to 1917 (p. 18); Methodists' "full-immersion baptism" (p. 26); US government "agents and promoters" of immigration in the Mennonite colonies in the 1870s (p. 38); \$260,000 in loans from the federal

government by the 1870s immigrants (p. 42); 133 "bible schools and institutions" established before WW II (p. 75).

Less significant errors, which won't mislead anyone, include the immigrants travelling "up the Red River" from Moorhead to Winnipeg (p. 40) and the caption "threshing in Saskatchewan" for a photo showing two binders (p. 66). Statistics are loosely and confusingly used. Were there 50,000 Mennonites living in Canada in 1913 (p. 54) or 50,000 church members? (p. 60) 23,000 (p. 62) or 20,000 (p. 66) immigrants from the USSR in the 1920s?

I am more hesitant to challenge interpretive perspectives. But the simplistic treatment of the way in which the Mennonite Brethren church emerged from the *fröhliche Richtung* (p. 34) and the convoluted account of the Manitoba transition from *Gebietsamt* to municipality (p. 48) would be very difficult to defend. The same is probably true of the account of the school controversies in Manitoba and Saskatchewan (pp. 50, 59).

Since photographs are such an important part of the book, it is regrettable that the cutlines are so frequently unhelpful. The author's problem of using "unidentified" photos from archival sources, is understandable. But that does not account for a precise identification of one church building and a generic label of another on the facing pages (p. 141); the failure to locate the business establishments on pp.154-55; or the peculiar inconsistency in describing three similar photos on pp. 174-75. Toward the end of the book it appears that mainly generic photos remained, so we have "a Mennonite married couple," "Mennonites of yesterday," "a Mennonite woman of yesterday," etc. Is this tongue-in-cheek? It must be if a well-known retired professor (Bethel and Conrad Grebel Colleges) wearing obviously 1960s rectangular black-rimmed glasses is identified as "A Mennonite man of today" and city-born and raised music teacher Doug Pankratz is described as "A contemporary young Mennonite farmer." (p. 176)

One senses that a publication deadline prevented the necessary care being taken in the final stages of the preparation of this book. The result is a product sufficiently flawed to make it difficult to recommend in a periodical that calls itself *Mennonite Historian*.

Adolf Ens teaches history and theology at Canadian Mennonite Bible College.

Beaman, Jay. *Pentecostal Pacifism: The Origin, Development, and Rejection of Pacific Belief among the Pentecostals*. Hillsboro, Kansas: Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 1989. Pb., 142 pp., \$10.00.

Reviewed by Richard Thiessen

Jay Beaman's book is an interesting study of how Pentecostals adopted pacifism as an integral part of their faith during their formative years, only to let it slip away in a relatively short period of time. Beaman argues that pacifism was deeply rooted and broadly endorsed in the early history of the Pentecostal movement. Its leaders believed that the renewal of the church should include a return to the pacifist beliefs of the early Church, and saw warfare as adverse to Christian missions.

This perspective on pacifism changed after World War I, when many Pentecostals became "upwardly mobile" and began to assimilate with the dominant American culture, as well as with mainstream evangelicism. By World War II, very few Pentecostal men refused to participate in the military, and in following years the major Pentecostal denominations officially adopted non-pacifist stands.

Beaman discusses the origins of Pentecostal pacifism in the early twentieth century, and the extent to which it existed in various Pentecostal groups. He notes the major personalities in its development and moderation, the experience of Pentecostals during the two world wars, and the factors leading to its virtual demise among Pentecostals.

Beaman points out that the Pentecostal movement originated in the Wesleyan Holiness movement. After the Civil War, the latter shifted from a postmillennial view of eschatology, believing that Christians could convert and civilize the world, to the pessimistic premillennialism of J.N. Darby, which saw the return of the Lord as the only solution to the evils of society. Ideas of optimism and progress in society were replaced with the non-conformist idea of conflict between Christians and the world.

(cont'd on p.11)

This issue is partly sponsored by Assiniboine Travel Service Ltd., 201-1317A Portage Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R3G 0V3. For information call John Schroeder at 1-[204]-775-0271.