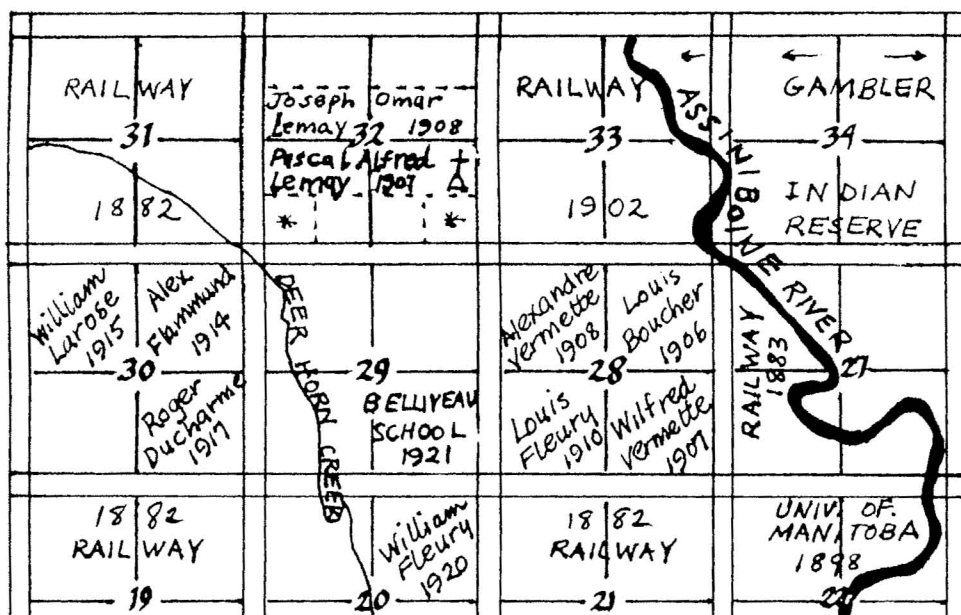


MENNONITE HISTORIAN

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

Volume XXI, No. 1, March, 1995



A partial map of Metis homesteads in the former community of Ste. Madeleine, located some miles southwest of Russell, MB. near the Saskatchewan border. For the full story of this community read *Ste. Madeleine. Community without a Town. Metis Elders In Interview* (Winnipeg, MB: Pemican Publications Inc., 1987) by Ken and Victoria Zeilig. The map is on p. 124. Used by permission.

Metis, Mennonites, and Land in Manitoba

by Alvina Block

On September 19, 1993, a "Mennonite Landing Site dedication" took place at the junction of the Red and Rat Rivers south west of Niverville, Manitoba. At this occasion, the Honourable Clayton Manness, then Minister of Finance for Manitoba, presented the Mennonite Memorial Landing Site Association with the lease of a two and one-half acre tract of land--the spot where the first Mennonite settlers from Ukraine arrived one-hundred and twenty years ago. On August 1, 1994, a cairn was unveiled in a small park which now marks that landing site.

At such times of celebration, the audience pictures the historical setting from a Mennonite point of view. What was it like for those first emigrants from Ukraine who left comfortable homes to settle in a mosquito-infested wilderness? Had the delegates made a good decision when they chose the eight townships that comprised the "East Reserve", rather than a US location, or had the Canadian government duped

them into settling on barren land?

As interesting as a study of these pioneering Mennonites may be, one should note that they did not come to an unpopulated province. More should certainly be said about some of the people resident there at the time, particularly the Metis families who had lived in Manitoba for many, many years. When Manitoba officially entered Confederation in 1870, the Metis were concerned about their land rights. Changes were certain since their territory was now under Canadian government authority and no longer in the possession of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Section 32.1 of the Manitoba Act assured them, however, that "all grants of land in freehold made by the Hudson's Bay Company up to the eighth day of March aforesaid, shall, if required by the owner, be converted into an estate in freehold by grant from the Crown." Section 31 committed the government to granting Metis children 1.4 million

acres of land.

Because the Canadian government had land dealings with Mennonites and Metis during the same time period, it is interesting to compare how each fared in these negotiations. Mennonites wanted to live in block settlements to resist assimilation into the dominant Canadian culture. A block of eight townships of land was ready for their possession when they arrived in the summer of 1874, although the first inquiry made to the Canadian government was as early as March 7, 1872. The federal government loaned the newly-arrived Mennonites \$100,000, co-signed by Ontario Mennonites. Without this material aid, they could not have bought implements, building materials, and supplies to begin farming.

Like the Mennonites, the Metis wanted blocks of land with their river lots, hay fields, and children's land grant in one area. To keep the extended family together was the key to Metis survival, given Manitoba's climate and the group's limited amount of farm equipment. However the children's allotments, promised them in the Manitoba Act, were chosen randomly. Indeed, it is a matter for speculation whether they received land or scrip at all in many cases. Much procrastination and many amendments and changes were made to regulations about land while the Metis waited, became demoralized and disenchanted with the government, and many finally moved to the West.

When the first contingent of Mennonite immigrants were taken to the East Reserve, Roger Goulet of the Lands Office was with them. Several "half-breeds" protested telling him, that parts of the Reserve actually belonged to them. He entered these Metis claims into the books of the Dominion Lands Office in pencil and did not give those lands to the Mennonites.¹ But before the federal government's Order-in-Council of February, 1881, regarding unsettled claims had been issued, Mennonites had already settled on these lands.²

Perhaps the Canadian government was influenced and pressured by discriminatory attitudes such as those expressed by the *Daily Free Press*. Of Mennonite immigrants the editor wrote:

"The individuals composing the party seem to be composed of exactly the right

(cont'd on page 2)

Metis, Mennonites, and Land

(cont'd from page 1)

kind of stuff physically, for pioneer life, and this, taken in connection with the well-known frugal habits and thriftiness of the Germans, ensures their prosperity here."³

Less than a week later, an article appeared in the same paper saying that the decision to allot 1.4 million acres to Metis children had inflicted "a great and lasting evil" upon Manitoba and was made "against the better judgement of the then government." If a settlement could be made by granting scrip then "in God's name give it to them and take off the blot from the map of our Province which turns from our door the most wished for emigrants."⁴

Clearly the Mennonites and the Metis were not treated as equals. Why was there such discrimination against the Metis? More studies need to be done to clarify these events and to help bring about reconciliation with Manitoba's aboriginal peoples.

Endnotes

¹ Roger Goulet, Winnipeg to Department of Interior, May 23, 1892.

² Department of the Interior, Ottawa to Dominion Lands Agent, Winnipeg, February 18, 1879.

³ *Daily Free Press*, August 1, 1874.

⁴ *Daily Free Press*, August 7, 1874.

Alvina Block is currently enrolled in a Masters program in archival studies at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB.

Rural Research in West Prussia

by Adalbert Goertz

In addition to the church books, there are other documents and sources for genealogists needing information on rural Prussia. One major source are the mortgage books of the Prussian courts which go under the name of *Hypothekenbücher*, *Hypotheken-Akten* or *Hypotheken-Beilageakten* of the *Amtsgericht*.

The legal basis for introducing the mortgage books in West Prussia was the Prussian Mortgage Decree of 1783. Each land owner had to appear in court to present and

record which deed and other records of title he could produce, indicating where the boundary lines and neighbors of his land were located. The court then assigned a *Blatt* and *Hof* number to his plot of land which had to be displayed at his residence.

Unfortunately there are no listings of inventories or archives indicating exactly where these mortgage books may be found today. Readers are requested to report their findings and experience in this matter including call numbers of the archives. The Polish State Archives have published inventories but these say very little about these mortgage books.

As an example of what is available, the records of *Amtsgericht Stuhm* are almost complete in the Marienburg Archives. The same holds for those of *Amtsgericht Neuenburg* in the Bydgoszcz archives which are of interest to researchers in the Montau area. In some cases the *Hypotheken-Beilageakten* have remained in the regional courts like in Chelmno for *Amtsgericht Kulm* where frequently lack of personnel makes getting the proper information a frustrating experience. The researcher must always first identify the correct pages of the *Hypothekenakten* which he or she wishes to check. You have to know the correct *Blatt* and *Hof* number of "your" *Hof*, if you want to avoid unnecessary costs. You could start by ordering photocopies of the first three pages with title and *sygnatura* of all *Höfe* of "your" ancestral village before you think of additional pages.

In 1992 I received the first 230 pages of the *Hypotheken-Beilageakten* of *Kommerau Hof Nr. 4*, *sygnatura 68/939*, *Amtsgericht Neuenburg*. Prior to 1815, the following Mennonite villages were part of the court district (*Domainen-Justiz-Amt*) of Graudenz. Later they were reassigned to Neuenburg: Kommerau, Gross and Klein Lubin, Compagnie, Dragas. Additional Mennonite villages in *Amt Neuenburg* were Montau, Gross and Klein Sanskau, Treul and Neusass Treul.

To give researchers some idea what kind of information may be expected in the *Hypotheken-Akten* I attach part of a table of contents of a collection called:

Hypothekenakten Kommerau Nr.4., Bd.1, Amtsgericht Neuenburg, vor 1815 Graudenz

From Archiwum Panstwowe, Bydgoszcz: Akt Sadu Obwodowego w Nowem

a) *Beilageakten zum Hypothekenbuch, Kommerau Nr.4, Amt Graudenz (sygn.939)*, p. 1; b) Hans Goertz records original land title and boundaries in 1783, p. 2; c) Hans Goertz acquires land by marrying Helene, dau. of Stephan Franz, 1776, p. 6; d) Assignment of Nr.4 in first deed book to Hans Goertz property in 1783, p. 13; e) *Erbvergleich* of Stephan Franz daughters in 1776, p. 14. f) Death, *Erbvergleich*, probate of Helene Franz, first wife of Hans Goertz in 1778, p. 18.

One can also find helpful information in the *Praestations-Tabellen* (tax lists) of 1806 of Geh. Preussisches Staatsarchiv in Berlin, Germany. They are useful since they give a brief title history for each *Hof*.

The notations seem somewhat cryptic, but I add a few.

Geh. Staatsarchiv PrK., Berlin: General-Directorium Westpreussen, Materien Tit.109, ad Nr.1 Bd.2 Acta betref die Veranschlagung und anderweitige Austhuung der Grundstücke der emphyteutischen Einsassen zu Kommerau, Amt Graudenz, 1806. Geh. Staatsarchiv PrK., Berlin: Marienwerder, 20. May 1806, ad Nr.3.

Vol. 1 Einrichtungsakten des Amts Graudenz. Nr. 12 Praestations Tabelle Kommerau

a) Subemphyteut Hans Krause luth. olim Jacob Janz, derselbe von Jacob Franz Andreas Kienbaum aus Krusch; b) Emphyteut Heinr. Kliwer, menn., olim caduc.1800, 1774 fuer seine Kinder erkaufte Subemphyteut Heinrich Adrian, dito, 1800 erkaufte vom Menn.Stobbe; c) Emphyt. Georg Lux, luth., caduc. 1810, ererbt.

I have additional information which I can mail to interested researchers for \$ 1.00 US and a self-addressed envelope. If you need assistance in transcribing or translating the tricky German script, I may be able to help. My postal address and E-mail address are as follows: **Adalbert Goertz, 12934 Buchanan Trail East, Waynesboro PA 17268-9329 USA. Email: adalbert.goertz@bbs.serve.org**

Adalbert Goertz has done extensive research in Mennonite records from West Prussia. Copies of many of his published articles can be obtained from the Mennonite Heritage Centre. A listing of deposited articles is available - all for the cost of copying and postage.

GENEALOGY AND FAMILY HISTORY

by Alf Redekopp

Queries

Dyck - Looking for information about the following: Peter Dyck, b. Apr. 6, 1749, in Neuendorf, first marriage to Justina Giesbrecht, and second marriage to Maria ?, b. 1759. Also looking for information about another Peter Dyck, b. 1769, and married to a Maria ?, born 1770, with children Maria, b. 1795, Peter, b. 1799 or Aug. 12, 1796, Heinrich, b. 1801, Gerhard, b. 1804, and Anna, b. 1806. Contact: George Dyck, Box 218, Aberdeen, SK S0K 0A0.

Epp - We are looking for parents/siblings of Peter Jacob Epp, b. April 1, 1855, near Berdiansk, and his wife, Marie Schmidt b. August 30, 1858, Ukraine. They were wealthy farmers in Wohldemfuert of the Kuban. They had three sons, Jacob, Johann, and Nicholas, b. May 16, 1896. Nicholas came to the USA in 1921 as part of the group of 62 Mennonite soldiers who had served under General Wrangel and escaped via Constantinople. Peter may have had a brother, William, who came to America long before that. Contact: Herb and Carol Epp, 27427 Sunnyridge Road, Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274.

Giesbrecht - I would like anecdotal information from anyone who knew my father, George K. Giesbrecht born 1905 in Plum Coulee, Manitoba and died 1951 in Abbotsford, BC. He attended Bethany Bible Institute in the 1930s and worked for the Western Children's Mission at Hague Ferry, Saskatchewan, in the late 1930s and early 1940s before ill health forced him to move to Vineland, Ontario and then to Clearbrook, BC. Contact: Vern Giesbrecht, RR 4, Russell Road, Gibbons, BC V0N 1V0.

Recent Books

Margaret Warkentin, ed. **Descendants of Jacob Heinrich Thiessen 1781-1994** (Winnipeg, MB: Private publication, 1994) hdc., 153 pp.

This book traces the descendants of Nicolai Thiessen (1832-1910) and Helene Peters (1836-1908) who lived in Gnadenenthal, Russia. Nicolai Thiessen was the youngest son of Jacob Heinrich Thiessen (b. ca. 1781) who settled in the village of Tiegenhagen, Molotschna, in 1805. Most of the descendants of Nicolai and Helene Thiessen lived in the Soviet Union throughout the first half of the 20th century. Several of the oldest grandchildren immigrated to Canada in the 1920s.

Several descendants came to Canada after World War II. Another of the descendants left the Soviet Union for Germany during the 1980s. Contact: Margaret Warkentin, 875 Goulding Street, Winnipeg, MB R3G 2S9.

Herbert D. and Justina Peters, eds. **A Genealogy of the Jacob Dahl Family** (Saskatoon, SK: Private publication, 1994) pb., 60 pp.

This book traces the Dahl family back to an ancestor, Paul Dahl, member of the Tragheimerweide Mennonite Church in Prussia during the late 1700s. Specifically, the book documents the descendants of three great grandchildren of Paul Dahl. They were Jacob Dahl (1858-1927), Katharina Penner (nee Dahl) (1866-1958) and Heinrich Dahl (1869-1947), all children of Jacob Dahl (1834-1878) and Helena Epp (1836-1909) of Kronsweide, Chortiza Colony, Russia. The Penner family immigrated to Canada in the 1920s and settled at Springstein, Manitoba. The Heinrich Dahl family also immigrated in the 1920s and settled in the Rosthern, Saskatchewan, area. Contact: Herbert D. Peters, 1420 Faulkner Crescent, Saskatoon, SK S7L 3R4.

Abram B. Giesbrecht, ed. **Die ersten mennonitischen Einwanderer in Paraguay: Einwandererliste** (Loma Plata, Paraguay: Sociedad Civil Chortitzer Komitee, 1994) pb., 84 pp. \$18.00.

This book documents the first Canadian Mennonite migration to Paraguay. It includes the names of 1,745 individuals with birth dates and place of last residence of those who left Canada for Paraguay in 1926 and 1927. The individuals are first listed with one of the seven emigration groups. Here it comments on the individuals who returned to Canada. Another list includes the names of all individuals from these seven groups who had died by January 1, 1929. Several other lists, sets of statistics and a name index, make this book very useful for genealogists who wish to document the story of families who settled in the Menno Colony in Paraguay. Contact: *Mennonitische Post*, Steinbach, MB R0A 2A0.

Isaac H. Unger, ed. **The Family Register of Peter A. Giesbrecht** (Altona, MB: Private publication, 1977) pb., 109 pp.

This book traces the Giesbrecht family back to David Giesbrecht (1750-1852) and Christina Harder (1758-?). Specifically, it traces the descendants of a grandson of this David named Peter A. Giesbrecht (1843-1922) who came from Russia to Gretna, Manitoba, in 1879. The book is out of print, but a copy

has recently been acquired by the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg. This copy has additional handwritten genealogical data added from 1977 till 1994.

Noteworthy Articles

Goertz, Adalbert, "Ostpreussische Mennoniten im Regierungsbezirk Königsberg", *Ostdeutsche Familienkunde* (Heft 4, 1994), 402-407.

_____, "Ostpreussische Mennoniten im Regierungsbezirk Gumbinnen", *Ostdeutsche Familienkunde* (Heft 4, 1993), 267-272.

_____, "Mennoniten des Danziger Landgebietes im Jahre 1793", *Ostdeutsche Familienkunde* (Heft 2, 1992), 54-56.

_____, "Erwerbungen westpreussischer Mennonitenhöfe in den Jahren 1789-1898", *Ostdeutsche Familienkunde* (Heft 1, 1991), 316-319.

_____, "Mennonitengeburten 1759-1781 um Tiegenort/Westpreußen", *Ostdeutsche Familienkunde* (Heft 2, 1990), 198-200.

Koop, Gerhard S., "Mennonite Families in Belize", *Mennonite Family History* Vol. XIV (January, 1995), 40-43.

Schapansky, Henry, "Chortitza: The Old Colony Russia: The First Settlers: 1788-1803, Part III", *Mennonite Family History* Vol. XIV (January, 1995), 29-34.

Periodical Addresses:

Mennonite Family History, P.O. Box 171, Elverson, PA 19520-0171.

Ostdeutsche Familienkunde, Verlag Degener & Co. Postfach 1360, D-91403 Neufstadt/Aisch, Germany.

BOOK FOR SALE

*From Prussian Lowlands to
Saskatchewan Prairies:
A History of the
Tiefengrund Friesens.
155pp., 355 photos. \$ 40.00*

Order from:

Alfred Wieler
2113 Clarence Ave. S.,
Saskatoon, SK S7J 1L4.

Make cheques payable to:
Friesenfest '91

Send inquiries to Alf Redekopp, CMBS,
1-169 Riverton Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2L
2E5.

Recent Acquisitions

1. Passenger ship lists of Germans from Russia arriving in Canadian ports 1906-1909, ca. 40 typed pages. Donated by George Dorschner, Calgary, AB.
2. *Neufeld Ancestors and Lineage (1772-1994)*, 23 pp. Compiled and donated by Herman A. Neufeld, Canoga Park, CA., USA.
3. Materials related to the CMC mission church in The Pas, MB. Ca. 40 pp. Donated by Cornel G. Rempel, Elizabethtown, PA., USA.
4. Lehn Family Register - supplement to a register on Lehn's prepared by George Krahn in Saskatoon, Ca. 50 pp. Donated by John J. Janzen, Hague, SK.
5. Photo of Peter Regier (Tiefengrund) descendants with background notes (10 pp.). Donated by the family.
6. *Gesangbuch Treasures. Hymns of the 1804 Unpartheyisches Gesangbuch*. Cassette. Purchased from Harmonies Workshop, Leola, PA., USA.
7. Album of data on the village of Neuendorf, Ukraine. Brought in by Henry Sawatzky, Winnipeg, MB.
8. Personal papers of David H. Rempel (1869-1962). Donated by John D. Rempel, Hague, SK.
9. J. J. Thiessen photo album received in 1950 in South America. Donated by Jake K. Wiens, Winnipeg, MB.
10. Manitoba Women in Mission records, 1988-1993. 0.25 metres textual records. Received from Jolanda Friesen, Altona, MB.
11. Ben Braun collection of records related to Bethel Mennonite Church (Winnipeg), Bethel Place (Winnipeg), Elim Bible Institute (Altona), and Eden Mental Health Centre 1949-1989 (Winkler). 0.45 metres textual records. Donated by Ben Braun, Winnipeg, MB.
12. Peter Schmidt collection consisting of three journals documenting personal trips to Russia from 1979 to 1982, approximately 1000 slides and several roof tile fragments from former Mennonite buildings in Ukraine. Donated by Etta Schmidt, Goshen, IN., USA.

13. Sommerfeld Mennonite Church *Waisenamt* records (1908-1956) loaned from the Sommerfeld community, Herbert, SK and microfilmed by Alf Redekopp. Brought in by Jake E. Peters, Winnipeg, MB.



Stan Born, of St. Andrews, MB., with samples of an artistic wood-turning (lathe) exhibit mounted in the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery. The exhibit will run until about April 15. Stan's phone number is 1-204-757-9332. Photo: Courtesy of Robb Nickel, Winnipeg, MB.



Heinrich Thiessen has built a model of the village of Neuendorf, Chortitza settlement, Ukraine, as it existed in 1943 when all the Mennonite inhabitants joined the trek of the retreating German army westward. The model may be viewed in the Mennonite Heritage Centre during the next several months. Henry's address is: 1 Reinhard Pl., Winnipeg, MB R2G 1Y1. Photo: Courtesy of Der Bote, Winnipeg, MB.

CMC History Symposium Coming

Several years ago the History-Archives Committee began planning to write a history of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. Some very helpful research was completed and it was hoped that a writer could be found to do a manuscript text.

Then plans changed due to the need for funding. At present the committee is planning a one-day symposium at which papers on selected topics will be read and discussed.

It is hoped that the meetings can be held just before the CMC summer sessions of 1996 which will take place in Alberta. People planning to attend those sessions will be invited to come a little earlier to take in the symposium also. Everyone will be welcome. It is hoped that the papers will speak to non-academics as well as academics, i.e., to provide a congregational-level discussion.

Nine non-committee persons were invited to help in the planning. Three meetings have been held at CMBC to date.

Further information will appear in our Conference newsletter, *Nexus*, and other publications soon. If you have questions about the project please write us here at the Centre (600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4) or call 1-204-888-6781.

Publications Grant Awarded

The Gerhard Lorenz Publication Fund Committee provided financial support for four new books in its annual allotment of publishing subsidies:

a) Elisabeth Peters, retired Winnipeg author and educator, for two collections of stories and recollections, *Erzählungen aus dem mennonitischen Leben* and *Wem Gott will rechte Gunst erweisen*;

b) to the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba for the publication of its history;

c) to CMBC Publications and the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society for their publication in English translation of *Am Trakt*, the seventh monograph of the Echo Historical Series.

The late Gerhard Lorenz left behind a wealth of historical information about Mennonite life in Russia and the Soviet Union which he collected, wrote and published during his lifetime. In his will he provided a means to continue "to assist in the publication of manuscripts dealing with various phases of Mennonite life."

The Fund Committee invites applications for future grants. The next awards will be made in January, 1996.

News from CMBS

Heritage Preservation Workshops

At its June 1994 annual meeting, the Historical Commission of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches decided to sponsor a series of workshops on "Heritage Preservation" at each of its Provincial and District Conferences (US) within the next two years. The workshops will introduce congregational historians/archivists/secretaries to the book *Heritage Preservation: A Resource Book for Congregations* (1993) by David A. Haury. (See review on p. 8)

This volume emerged initially from a mandate of the Historical Committee of the General Conference Mennonite Church, but the Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission realized the need for a similar resource for the Mennonite Brethren congregations and agreed to cooperate in the publication. A few additions and revisions were made to take into account the specific needs of Mennonite Brethren congregations.

Successful workshops have already taken place at the Central District and Pacific District Conferences in the United States and at the Ontario Provincial Conference in Canada in late February. Workshops will be conducted under the guidance of Historical Commission members and staff representatives of the various centres in Saskatchewan and Alberta in March, and in British Columbia in June. Each congregation is being asked to send a representative. One volume of the resource book is being presented to each congregation. Paul Toews from the Center in Fresno recently remarked that he was "persuaded that the Congregational Heritage Preservation project is one of the best things the Commission has done in recent years."

Needs Assessment

The Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Winnipeg recently completed a "Needs Assessment" report pertaining to the status of the present facility and the projected needs for the foreseeable future. It has become increasingly clear that the present facility is inadequate to serve the needs of the Canadian Conference for many more years. Inadequate space is one of the factors, but there are also other factors related to environment and access. The Centre is located in a basement which is prone to flooding. It is also difficult to find and is quite inaccessible to the physically challenged.

At the same time that the Centre is seeking to make plans for the future, Concord College is investigating the possibility of a

change in location. If Concord College should move to a new site, the Centre will have to determine whether to move with the College or to stay near the Canadian Conference offices, assuming they will remain at the present location.

Historical Commission to Meet with other Mennonite Bodies

The annual meeting of the Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission will take place on May 19-20 in Salem, Oregon. The Mennonite Church Historical Committee will also have its sessions there and some joint sessions are being planned. The General Conference Mennonite Church, which no longer has a Historical Committee, will have some representatives there for the joint sessions.

Conference on Canadian Evangelicalism

An academic conference on "Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience" is being held at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario from May 10 to 14. This conference is part of a project undertaken by Professor George A. Rawlyk and funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts. Papers on a variety of topics will be presented including one entitled "Mennonites and Canadian Evangelicalism" by Bruce Guenther, a Ph.D. candidate at McGill University. More information may be obtained from the Department of History, Queen's University, Kingston, ON K7L 3N6.

Recent Acquisitions

1. Files of Henry Brucks (Conference minister), 1983-1987. Transferred by Susan Brandt, Conference Ministers administrative assistant, Winnipeg, MB.
2. Herb Giesbrecht (1925-1992) Personal Collection consisting of 3.25 metres of textual records, 1950s-1990. Donated by Mrs. Margaret Giesbrecht, Winnipeg, MB.
3. Topographical map of the Dnepropetrovsk Oblast (1:200 000). Donated by John Friesen, Winnipeg, MB.
4. Photocopy of a Christmas and New Year's poem written by Helena Derksen, age 9, in 1900, at Fischau, Molotschna Settlement, to her parents, David and Katharina Derksen. Donated by Gertrude Klassen, Winnipeg, MB.
5. Six-volume set of Matthew Henry's **Bible Commentary** published by Herald Press. Donated by Gerry Ediger, Winnipeg, MB.
6. Board of Evangelism of the Canadian MB Conference Records, 1976-1979. Transferred by Rikki Oelke, Evangelism office

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

secretary, Winnipeg, MB.

7. Winkler Bible School photos, one dated 1927 and one undated. Donated by Helen (Harder) Loewen, Waterloo, ON.
8. Photograph of students and teachers of Halbstadt School, South Russia and book entitled, *Skeena Aground* written by Isaac Unger. Donated by the author, Winnipeg, MB.
9. "The Mennonite Central Committee as an agency of development in the third world" (B.A. honours thesis, 1985), and "The work of Mennonite Central Committee volunteers in a developing aboriginal community" (M.A. thesis, 1993). Written and donated by Heinz Dyck, B.C.
10. German New Testament printed by the unregistered Baptist underground press in the USSR in 1973. Donated by Anne Schmidt, Winnipeg, MB.
11. Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Conference (earlier known as the *Wehrlosen Mennoniten Brüder in Christo*) year-books, annual reports, constitution, and historical sketches, 1917-1979. Donated by Travis Reimer, Winnipeg, MB.
12. East End Mission and Riverview Mission (Brandon) records, 1954-1965. Donated by Shirley Bergen, Brandon, MB.
13. Portraits by Balthasar Denner (page reprints from a published source). Donated by Bill Schroeder, Winnipeg, MB.

RUNDSCHAU INDEX AVAILABLE

The following volumes of the *Mennonitische Rundschau Index* have been reprinted:

Volume I: 1880-89
Volume II: 1890-1899
Volume III: 1900-1909
Volume V: 1920-29
Volume IA: Author Index, 1880-1909
Price: \$55.00 per volume, Vol. V: \$45.00.
Add \$5.00 per volume to a maximum of \$15.00 for shipping and handling.

Order from the Centre for MB Studies.

MMHS 1995 Annual Meeting

The Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society held its annual meeting on January 21, 1995 at the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach. The first part of the meeting was concerned with various reports from the executive and boards. A lengthy discussion followed concerning the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada. Those in attendance agreed to continue to support a national society in principle. Several suggestions were made as to what the national society could do after Volume III of the *Mennonites in Canada* series is published. It was also reported that the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society is involved in planning a conference of Jews, Mennonites and Ukrainians to discuss their experiences in Canada. This conference will be held August 28-31, 1995, at the University of Manitoba.

Alf Redekopp, treasurer, reported income for 1994 of \$14,209.81 with total expenses being \$16,580.39. This difference left \$8,260.34 in the general fund as of December 31, 1994.

The Research, Scholarship and Publications committee reported that work is under way on several more volumes in the *Echo-Verlag* series, but that an assessment will be undertaken before any additional volumes will be committed to publication.

The Membership and Publicity committee reported that the society's membership as of December 31, 1994 stood at 147 members, representing a small decrease from the previous year, when membership stood at 157.

After the business meeting those in attendance were treated to music provided by the Steinbach Bible College brass ensemble. This was followed by a presentation by Dr. Harvey Plett of Steinbach Bible College on the history of Mennonite church groups in the former East Reserve. Dr. Plett reviewed the current church scene (52 congregations of which 31 are members of 9 Mennonite groups or conferences), reviewed the history of the Berghthaler and Kleine Gemeinde groups and their descendants, including the Chortitzer Mennonite Conference, presented information on other Mennonite groups, and finally presented a brief overview of the history of non-Mennonite congregations.

The New MMHS Board

The Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society Board of Directors met for its first meeting of the year on February 28 at the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg. At that



Members of the MMHS Local History committee presenting the new *Reinländer Gemeinde Buch*. Front (l-r): John Dyck (Winnipeg); Bruce Wiebe (Winkler); Mary Ellen Neufeld (Gnadenenthal); Ed Falk (Winkler); Henry Unger (Crystal City); Abe Loewen (Gretna); Back (l-r) John Wall (Morden); Adolf Ens, committee chairperson (Winnipeg); Otto Hamm (Morden); Jake E. Peters (Winnipeg) and William Harms (Altona). Photo: Courtesy of Carl Zacharias, Reinland, MB.

time a new executive was chosen, and boards were reorganized as follows: president: Bert Friesen (Winnipeg); vice-president: Ken Reddig (Winnipeg); secretary: Richard Thiessen (Winnipeg); treasurer: Alf Redekopp (Winnipeg); and member-at-large: Evelyn Friesen (Steinbach). The other directors include: Abe Dueck (Winnipeg); Adolf Ens (Winnipeg); Henry Ens (Reinland); Helene Friesen (Winnipeg); Lawrence Giesbrecht (Altona); Dolores Harder (Winnipeg); Marianne Janzen (Winnipeg); Lawrence Klippenstein (Winnipeg); Conrad Stoesz (Altona); and Henry Unger (Crystal City).

Standing committee chairpersons were also appointed. They include: Research, Scholarship and Publication: Abe Dueck, Membership and Publicity: Richard Thiessen, with a Genealogy committee chairperson still to be appointed. Special committees include the Local History committee, now chaired by Dr. Adolf Ens, CMBC, and the newly-formed Historical Sites Committee to be organized and chaired by Dr. Lawrence Klippenstein, Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg. Dr. Victor Doerksen will continue to serve as chairperson of the *Echo-Verlag* translation project sub-committee.

Note: This year "West Reserve" Mennonites may commemorate the 120th anniversary of the coming of Mennonites to their settle-

ment area west of the Red River. The first Mennonite families to arrive en masse docked at Fort Dufferin near Emerson, Manitoba, on July 15, 1875. Most were members of the group which organized as the *Reinländer Mennonitengemeinde* while they were still at the immigration sheds on the Fort Dufferin grounds.

Local History Committee Report

The Local History Committee recently met to plan a number of activities for 1995. The first event of the year took place on Saturday, March 4, at the Reinland Community Centre in Reinland, MB. At that time the public was introduced to the book entitled *Reinländer Gemeinde Buch*, Volume One in the West Reserve Historical Series. Editors of the book are John Dyck of Winnipeg and William Harms of Altona. Rev. Peter D. Zacharias presented material concerning the *Reinländer Gemeinde* and Ältester Johann Wiebe, and John Dyck gave a paper on the *Reinländer Gebietsamt* and *Oberschulze* Isaak Mueller.

The committee also gave an update on Volume II to appear in the West Reserve Historical Series. This volume will feature the Mennonite Settlement Registers, a listing of 1880 West Reserve residents by village. Brief family data will be added, where possible, as well as cross-referencing to the Quebec Passenger Lists and to various church registers.

BOOK FOR SALE

The *Reinländer Gemeinde Buch*, appearing in a 525-pp. paperback edition, can be purchased from the Mennonite Heritage Centre for \$ 25.00 plus postage and GST.

See address at the bottom of p. 2.

M Manitoba
Mennonite
Historical
Society

West Reserve (Manitoba) Workshop

Where: Winkler Senior Citizens' Home, Winkler, MB.

When Saturday, April 22, 1995,
9:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

Topics: History of Burwalde village
(Ed Hoepfner)
My Templer relatives
(Nettie Neufeld)
Teaching in Southern Manitoba Villages
(Elisabeth Peters)
Book exhibits

For further information call John Dyck,
Winnipeg, 1-204-256-1637

Watch local papers for further
announcements

ALTONA CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS 1895 - 1995

Dates: July 25-27, 1995
Information: Call Ted Friesen
1-204-324-1333

KLIPPENSTEIN REUNION All Clans welcome!

Date: July 25, 1995
Place: Rhineland Pioneer
Centre, Altona, MB
**Information and
registration:** Call Ted Friesen
1-204-324-1333

Book Review

Dueck, Abe, ed. **Canadian Mennonites and the Challenge of Nationalism** (Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 1994) Pb., 207 pp., Cnd. \$ 17.95

Reviewed by Gerry Ediger

Abe Dueck presents his readers with a series of perspectives on the subject of *Canadian Mennonites and the Challenge of Nationalism*. With this he adds a helpful volume to the literature of religion and society. The most noteworthy of its various particularities is the suggestion that nationalism constitutes a multi-faceted challenge to

Canadian Mennonites.

The essay that sets the stage of the main theme is third in the book. Adolf Ens delineates how, historically, Canadian Mennonites have sorted themselves out on vital issues such as being subject to a sovereign authority within the limitations and privileges of *privilegia* or accepting the responsibilities and involvements inherent in being citizens of a nation state. He asks if Mennonites who have accepted Canadian citizenship have perhaps succumbed to the pressures of nationalism.

Rodney Sawatsky offers an analysis of Mennonite conferences and agencies in the light of the binational character of the larger North American Mennonite community. He discovers a series of challenges inherent in the observation that the forty-ninth parallel does indeed foster a Canadian Mennonite sense of nationalism. He feels that Canadian Mennonites need to admit and validate their uniquely Canadian Mennonite experience. But they must also transcend this particularity with a new continentalism and internationalism in order to confront the dangers of a narrowly-defined Canadian Mennonite chauvinism.

John H. Redekop goes on to ask if "nationalism has moved Mennonites towards involvement in non-Mennonite national religious bodies" (p. 111). He notes that many Mennonites do not hesitate to involve themselves in such groups, some of which claim a national Canadian mandate. Conferences are less eager for such alliances. MCC Canada has perhaps been the most active in articulating a national agenda for Canadian Mennonites. Redekop concludes that while Mennonites may be moved to ecumenical involvement on theological grounds, they are not motivated by nationalistic agenda, hence are not challenged by nationalism in that realm.

The whole discussion touches on the historic Christian ideal that a universal religion should transcend the claims of historical particularity. Larry Miller explores this ideal as he asks if Mennonites have achieved an "international Christian fellowship" distinguished by the cardinal signs of "solidarity" and "accountability" (pp. 139-140). In the end Miller declares the experience of global Christian fellowship among Mennonites to be a divinely-ordained goal which has not yet been fully met. James Reimer also poses the question of particularity and universalism using the language of human origins: nature, soil, blood, family, tribe and nation (p. 1). Reimer embraces and affirms what he sees as the inescapable elements of human identity rooted in nationality, ethnic-

ity and family, while denying the illusion that nations can forge themselves into homogeneous nationalisms defined by such elements of origin. His solution is the "ethnic and nationally-polymorphic state in which ethnically-defined groups are treated equally and fairly on the basis of a shared humanity" (p. 20).

Menno Wiebe's case study of "Mennonites and Aboriginal Identity" appears to serve as an example of how Reimer's ideal of an "ethnic and nationally-polymorphic state" might constitute a concrete challenge to a Mennonite peoplehood. For Wiebe, Mennonite peoplehood stands in need of being reborn as a corporate reality. Such a rejuvenation would need to be tested and validated by challenges such as the call to affirm and contribute to the corporate viability of Aboriginal peoples as self-determining entities along side Mennonite people in the Canadian context.

A trio of articles seem to stand somewhat outside the scope of the book. James Urry offers an examination of the Russian Mennonite confrontation of nationalism and the state between the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries. John D. Thiesen documents the Mennonite fascination with National Socialism in Latin America in the first half of the twentieth century. Royden Loewen presents a socio-historic analysis of the confluence of American nationalism and the rural Mennonite experience. One wishes that these themes had been more thoroughly directed at highlighting dimensions of the challenge nationalism presents for Canadian Mennonites, perhaps by comparative analysis.

Abe Dueck has done his readers a fine service in assembling these papers into such a readable and accessible collection. Although writers such as Reimer and Urry rightly locate their understanding of the roots of modern nationalism in the historiography dealing with Euro-America in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the issues raised by the book are endemic to the whole of Christian history. The challenges of particularity and universalism, separatism and assimilation, bridge-building and fence-building, have confronted Christians since the earliest centuries. Modern Mennonites, Canadian or not, cannot escape the likelihood that their answers to the challenges of nationalism move them in the direction of one current or another existing in the larger stream of Christian response to the world.

Dr. Gerry Ediger is Assistant Professor of Historical Theology at Concord College in Winnipeg, MB.

BOOK REVIEWS

McKee, Wilma. *Heritage Celebrations : A Guide to Celebrating the History of Your Church*. (Newton, KS : Faith and Life Press, 1993), binder, 110 pp., \$12.00.

Haury, David A. *Heritage Preservation : A Resource Book for Congregations*. (Newton, KS and Fresno, CA : Historical Committee of the General Conference Mennonite Church and Historical Commission of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1993) Pb., 30 pp., \$6.00.

Reviewed by Alf Redekopp.

Many congregations will find these two books a very practical and user friendly resource for preserving and celebrating heritage. The first publication, *Heritage Celebrations* not only provides the theology behind celebrating our heritage but also offers numerous tips and examples of activities to use when planning a celebration.

The author says "that the meaning of celebration needs to be broadened within congregations" and not be "limited to large anniversaries." Congregations are encouraged "to use their many opportunities to celebrate." With this underlying motivation, the book has been written "to stimulate congregations to reach out to God in praise and thanksgiving, to joyfully remember their Christian heritage, and to consequently gain a vision for future mission."

Anyone who is asked to help plan a congregational heritage event will find here a host of suggestions on planning, organization, publicity and involving the congregation to make the celebration successful.

Heritage Preservation provides suggestions for enhancing the collection and preservation of archival materials which become indispensable in planning these events, and especially in preparing a written history of the congregation.

David Haury encourages congregations to consider and appreciate more the role of a congregational historian or archivist. In the author's view, "collecting and preserving the records which chronicle the life of your congregation are complex tasks." This book addresses such questions as: Who should keep the records? What records should be created and kept? Where and how should records be kept?

Both of these volumes have been distributed free of cost to all GCMC congregations and the latter in MB congregations also. The second volume is also being used as the basis for workshops offered to congregational historians at various provincial and

district Mennonite Brethren conferences.

The authors and the respective commissioning bodies who published these resources are to be commended for a job well done.

Alf Redekopp is archivist at CMBS and assistant archivist at the MHC Archives, both in Winnipeg, MB.

Koop, A.E. Heidi. *The Hell of God's Call. One Woman's Pilgrimage from "Commitment to" through "Uncommitment from" Church Ministry*. (Winnipeg, MB: private publication, 1991) Pb., 81 pp., \$12.00.

Reviewed by Dora Dueck.

The title of this book is startling. Therefore it is effective in drawing the reader with real curiosity into its pages. Winnipeg resident Heidi Koop, the first Mennonite Brethren woman to graduate from seminary with an M.Div., (Master of Divinity) degree, tells about twenty years of her life (1967-87), years in which she both studied and served in the church. They were also years in which the hopes she had nurtured to use her gifts fully would not be realized.

As a woman, she faced many obstacles. She left Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries (AMBS) in Elkhart, Indiana, "confident that God was calling me and that I would fulfill His will in good time." She served as dean of women and teacher at Elim Bible Institute in Altona, MB for three years and in a variety of other ministries. However, these ministries were often brief and of a "setting up" nature. An effective, sustained ministry opportunity eluded her. "Repeatedly I have come into bloom only to wither away," she writes. Compounding these disappointments were serious personal health problems, as well as the sudden loss of her only sibling and the failing health of their parents. "I felt like Job of old," she writes.

The book consists of typed pages bound spirally. This gives it the feel of an intimate, somewhat private document, with all of its first-draft, unpolished qualities. It is very much Koop's own story; there is little attempt to step back and draw for the reader the details of the larger context in which events occurred. Sometimes I felt I was hearing one side of an argument. Yet I appreciated reading these pages.

Koop is very honest in relating her feelings, hurts, and victories. There is merit, I believe, in people setting down their individual and particular "argument". She has experienced brokenness, but exhibits courage, persistence, and at the end, has "eager

anticipation" for what may still lie ahead.

Dora Dueck is a writer from Winnipeg, MB.

Bartel, Siegfried. *Living with Conviction. Germany Army Officer Turns to Cultivating Peace*. (Winnipeg, MB: CMBC Publications, 1994) Pb., 212 pp., \$15.00.

Reviewed by Lorina Marsch.

Siegfried Bartel was born in West Prussia and lost his mother in an accident at the age of eight. With the remarriage of his father, the children again belonged to a loving, caring family, growing up on a prosperous estate with servants and farm hands.

When he was twenty-two, with the question of serving in the army no longer an issue within the Prussian Mennonite churches, Siegfried joined the army, where he soon advanced through the ranks to become an officer. He describes many of his experiences, including details of fierce battles and his own command to a subordinate to execute a prisoner. Meeting a wounded German-speaking evangelical face to face on the "enemy" side, as well as hearing Christmas carols sung in the Polish trenches, shook his self-confidence in the justice of the war effort. The atrocities and death he witnessed and the terror and suffering of countless people changed his perspective on the just-war theory he had accepted from Martin Luther earlier.

Much of the book is devoted to family life and the author's intense involvement in church life and Mennonite Central Committee, both nationally and internationally. One is constantly struck by the self-confidence and independence of the author. Midway through the book, the author gets caught up with trivial details of his everyday life on the farm in Canada. It is only when the book is read in its entirety, that one realizes that all of these chapters are needed to present a complete picture and to provide a sense of understanding for the whole life and personality of the man.

The author portrays himself as a man of strong convictions throughout the book. Often he stands alone with his insights; many times his views forcefully counter those of his peers. Through dialogue, observation, writing, reading and lecturing, Siegfried Bartel comes to terms with his past, moves beyond it, and embraces Christ's way of peace.

Lorina Marsch is editor of the Mennonische Rundschau in Winnipeg, MB.