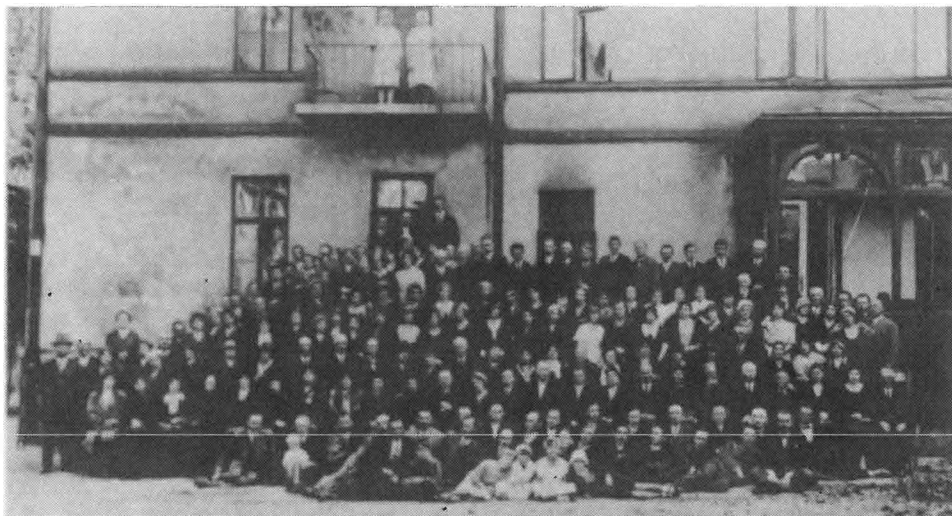


# MENNONITE HISTORIAN

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

Volume XX1, No. 3, September, 1995



The ordination and installation of Rev. Arnold Bachmann on October 2, 1932. Those seated in the front include the following (r-l): No. 5: Curator Jacob Rupp; No. 10, Rev. Arnold Bachmann; and No. 11: Rev. Heinrich Pauls; Photo: From *Galiziens Mennoniten im Wandel der Zeiten*, p. 630 (in the picture section).

## Mennonites from Galicia (Klempolen): Some Historical Notes

by Glen Linscheid

The historical accounts of cruel persecutions unto death suffered by the early Swiss Anabaptists have been well-documented. Seeking escape and refuge, many fled into the Rheinpfalz of the German Palatinate. One source puts it this way: "After the Thirty Years' War the Rheinpfalz was in a sorry state. Trees and brush covered much of the fields. Of livestock there was practically none . . . The Elector wanted his former peasant land, now reduced to rubble, to be populated again with strong workers."<sup>1</sup>

Providential concessions and inducements caused their Rheinpfalz sojourn to prosper, despite some unjust restrictions, leading to an eventual over-abundance of settlers, usually with large families. We quote another historian as follows: "By today's standards the conditions under which the Anabaptists settled in Germany would seem somewhat discriminatory. They were allowed freedom of worship but forbidden to build their own churches,

were not allowed to meet in groups larger than twenty members, and were prohibited from doing evangelistic work among their neighbours. Later they were denied the right to live in cities, and marriage required the consent of the government."<sup>2</sup>

In 1772, upon the first partition of Poland, Galicia (*Klempolen*) became part of the Austrian Empire. Galicia was a predominately agrarian society, undeveloped culturally, with a peasant population largely uneducated and poor. Large sections of the region were properties of the Church and the aristocracy. Monasteries also had large land holdings. The Polish nobility valued hunting and other entertainments above developing the land and its people. Galicia was wild and untamed.

In 1780 the Austrian emperor, Franz Joseph II, extended an offer to German farmers to settle the land gained through this Polish partitioning. Thus in 1784 six Mennonite families joined this eastward flood of human-

ity out of Germany. The Mennonite surnames included Bachmann, Ewy, Krehbiel, Mundelien and Schrag. By 1786, twenty-one more families followed them. Their surnames included Bergthold, Brubacher, Huwen (Hubin), Klein, Kintzi, Linscheid, Merk, MÅller (Miller), Rupp and Schmidt. The first settlement was named Falkenstein after their Rheinpfalz home. Its location was about 40 kilometers southwest of Lemberg (L'viv, L'viv), their chief cultural, governmental and economic center.

New settlements grew as the population increased. Einsiedel and Rosenberg spawned the daughter colonies of Neuhoof, Kiernica, Wiszenka, Ehrenfeld, Troscianiec, Debrowalny, Lipowice and Podusilna. Following the lead of some 80 years earlier, in 1862, another smaller group from the Rheinpfalz settled in Galicia. Their surnames included Forrer, Jotter, Laise (Leisy) and Stauffer. The total Mennonite population increased from 72 families in 1856 to 142 families in 1880.

Up to this time, pastors were chosen from within the congregation. But with settlements being in such scattered locations, the lament of "we are sheep without a shepherd" was heard. A further quote has it thus: "The number of elders and preachers was not sufficient to meet the needs of the ever-spreading church. So in 1860 Johann Klein and Jakob Mueller were elected preachers . . . Those at Kiernica formed their own congregation in fellowship with the large one at Einsiedel. They chose Johannes van der Smissen as their elder . . . But van der Smissen had hard going, inasmuch as some members and preachers had freer thoughts about some points of doctrine. Even today (1934), some talk about the "religious war of the Mennonites in 1865."<sup>3</sup>

Attempts at bringing in other preachers from outside the congregation during the years 1910-1929 proved less than favorable for various reasons. Heinrich Pauls, Leopold Gesell and Christian Guth pastored during those years.

"As the congregation saw that preachers from another land could not adjust to, or fit into local conditions, and despite mutual efforts, preacher and congregation felt strange

(cont'd on page 2)

## Mennonites from Galicia

(cont'd from page 1)

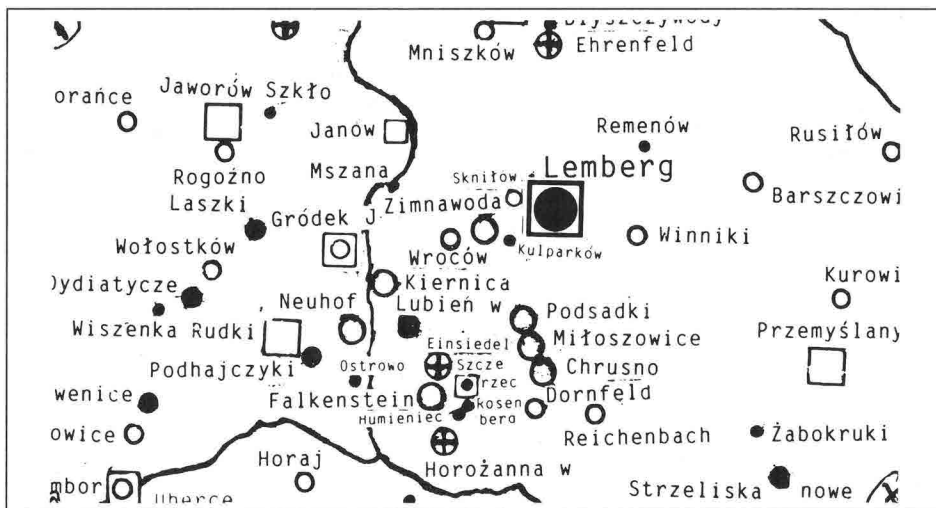
to each other. They decided to send one from their midst to (obtain) theological education, furnishing the finances for it. They found such a one in Arnold Bachmann."<sup>4</sup>

"Four and one-half years the church was without a minister till Arnold Bachmann finished his studies (at Tuebingen, Greifswald and Vienna) and returned."<sup>5</sup> Heinrich Pauls was recalled from Germany to ordain Arnold Bachmann on October 2, 1932. Of notable interest is the fact that Pauls was a leading light in the formation of the Mennonite World Conference.<sup>6</sup>

The devastating effects of two world wars took a tragic toll of Galician Mennonite lives and property. In effect, all these families were forced to flee their homeland, a fate endured by many caught in the web of warfare. Following World War II, resettlement efforts brought many of these refugees to the USA, to Canada, and to Uruguay. Many also resettled in what was then West Germany. It was in Hichst am Odenwald that Arnold Bachmann came to reside with his family.

"Now he (Arnold Bachmann) could put his plan into action to write a book about the Mennonites in Galizien as a continuation of Peter Bachmann's book, *Mennoniten In Kleinpole* . . . In 1983 the job was done (gathering genealogical data by many volunteers) and Pastor Arnold Bachmann also finished his book. A year later the book was published in 700 copies. A work was created which describes the history of the Mennonites in Galicia from 1784 till the parish ceased to exist in 1939. So lives Arnold Bachmann in our memory not only as a dedicated pastor, but also as the author of the family history of the Galician Mennonites. His mortal remains were put to rest on 20 September 1990, in Heubach (Germany)."<sup>7</sup>

Regarding traces of this heritage remaining to the present as evidentiary testimony to their historic plight, the following account is highly significant to those seriously studying this slice of our past: "As we return, Ganna, a friendly woman motions to us. We follow her down steep stone steps into the cellar of the vintage house. There a supporting beam reads, "Peter Linscheid, 1827." It is her way of connecting to my past. Hers is one of the few buildings (in Einsiedel) that survived the battle



Mennonite settlements around Lemberg (today L'viv in Ukraine). From a map drawn by Arnold Bachmann. This map is available in *Galiziens Mennoniten im Wandel der Zeiten*.

zones of 166 years."<sup>8</sup>

As for Galician Mennonite descendants holding Canadian citizenship, their numbers can be traced mainly to post-WWII refugee status. Canada became their new home in the late 40s and early 50s. Addresses to which the author sends an annual newsletter (*Along the Galician Grapevine*) include Winnipeg, MB; St. Catharines and London, ON; as well as Lethridge, AB and Landis, SK.<sup>9</sup>

### Endnotes

1. Peter Bachmann. *Mennoniten In Kleinpole* (1934), 91. Cf. also an unpublished summary translation by Albert F. Rupp, Los Angeles, CA, p. 11.
2. Lola (Regier) Friesen. *Kintzi. The Story of Theodore and Wilhelmine (Linscheid) Kintzi and their Descendants* (North Newton, KS, 1986), B-1.
3. MİK, 39; Rupp, 242.
4. MİK, 62; Rupp, 351.
5. MİK, 62; Rupp, 351.
6. Cf. C.J. Dyck, "History of the Mennonite World Conference", *Mennonite World Handbook* (Lombard, ILL: MWC, 1978), 1-9.
7. Romauld Mueller in a funeral oration given as a final tribute to Deacon Arnold Bachmann, the last pastor of the Lemberg-Kiernica (Galicia) Mennonite parish, 20 September 1990, Heubach, Germany.
8. Orpha V. Schrag, "Andreas D. Schrag:

Volhynia to Dakota", *Mennonite Family History* Vol. XII, 3, (July, 1993), 107. The author and her husband travelled in Ukraine on a pilot project to search for the former Swiss-German villages located between Zhitomir and L'viv. They visited 15 such villages. The address of the Schrags is: 3511 Echo Hill Rd., Nashville, TN, 37215.

9. Arnold Bachmann. *Galiziens Mennoniten im Wandel der Zeiten*. (Weierhof: Mennonitischer Buchversand, 1984). To order this book write to: Gary Waltner, D-67295 Weierhof, b. Bolanden, Germany. The newsletter can be ordered from Glen Linscheid, Box 194, Butterfield, MN, USA 56120. See also Brian J. Lenius, "Galizien Genealogical Organizations", *Newsletter of the Federation of East European Family History Societies*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (April, 1995), 9-13.



## GENEALOGY AND FAMILY HISTORY

by Alf Redekopp

### Queries

**Bergen** - Abraham Bergen (1859-?) and Maria Reimer (1864-?) both born in Lichtfelde, Molotschna, raised five children which include Maria (m. Johann Pankratz), Johann (m. Maria Reimer), Katharina (m. Heinrich Janzen), Anna (m. Gerhard Wiens) and Elisabeth (m. Jakob Isaak). I would like to contact the descendants of these children. Contact: Harry Janzen, 6040-187A St., Surrey, BC V3S 7R6.

**Feldberg** - Gustav and Ernestine Feldberg were German Lutherans who migrated to Manitoba, and worked for a Mennonite farmer in the village of Friedensfeld from 1894-1897. They had two sons, Henry b. 1895 and Reinhold b. 1897. Does any one have records to confirm these facts and add to their history? Contact: M.A. Feldberg, 10 Curvins Way, Lancing, Sussex, England BN15 9JQ.

**Friesen** - I am looking for COs who recall my uncle John S. Friesen from the CO camps, most likely in BC. I have photos with many faces, and some marked Camp Q5 and Courtney Camp, but as he passed away Nov. 1993, I have to find other sources to identify them. John S. Friesen never married, was a reflexologist in Swift Current, sold various products and became known as the "watermelon man". Contact: Ruth Friesen, Box 208, Hague, SK S0K 1X0.

**Giesbrecht** - Aron Giesbrecht, b. Sept. 23, 1846 (possibly at Kudashev Khutor), was orphaned and raised by a Sawatsky family. Which one? Aron married in 1868 to Helena Neufeld, b. Apr. 3, 1848, in Kronsthal, Russia. Who were Helena's parents and siblings? Contact: Albert Ratzlaff, 15785 Hwy. 22, Dallas, OR 97338.

**Janzen** - Johann Janzen and Margaret Dyck, both born in Lichtfelde, Molotschna in the 1850s, raised six children which include Kornelius (1872-1908), Justina (m. Jacob Duerksen), Elisabeth (m. Abraham Duerksen), Jacob (m. Margaret Isaak), Heinrich (m. Katharina Bergen in 1905) and Margaret (m. Franz Klassen) living in Neu-Schoensee, Sagraadowka, after 1910. I would like to know what happened to these children and their descendants. Contact: Harry Janzen, 6040-187A St., Surrey, BC V3S 7R6.

**Klassen** - I am looking for information about the parents of Peter Klassen, b. ca. 1840-1850, possibly in Neuendorf,

Chortitza, who came as a widower with his son, Johann Peter from Neuendorf to Steinfeld around 1887. In Steinfeld he married Anna Warkentin and had one son, Kornelius. Contact: John N. Klassen, Tilsiter Str. 8, D-53340 Meckenheim, Germany.

**Knelson** - I am looking for information about Jacob Knelson b. July 17, 1901 in Plum Coulee, MB, and died Nov. 16, 1948, in Sandy Lake, MB. Who were his parents, siblings, etc? Contact: Lorrie Stalker (nee Knelson), 303-2536 Wark St., Victoria, BC V8T 4G8.

**Kroeker/Hiebert** - David Kroeker (1863-1940) and his wife Maria Hiebert (1861-1933), were born in Russia, migrated to Canada in 1892, and lived awhile in Plum Coulee, MB, moving later to Osler, Chortitz and Blumenheim, SK, and eventually to Durango, Mexico where they died. David's parents were Gerhard Kroeker and Anna Nickel, and Maria's parents were Johan Hiebert and Helena Harms. When and where were they born and who were their ancestors and other descendants? Contact: Ruth Friesen, Box 208, Hague, SK S0K 1X0.

**Ratzlaff** - I am searching for information on my grandfather Gerhard Ratzlaff, b. 1858 in Antonofka, Poland, married to Agneta Unruh, b. 1868, and migrated to Kansas. When did he move from Poland to Kansas? Contact: Wes Ratzlaff, Box 1476, Rimbe, AB T0C 2J0.

**Reimer and Penner** - I would like to contact anyone researching Abram Reimer and Justina Rempel, parents of Jacob Reimer (1836-1908), and Martin Penner and Katharina Neustaeter, parents of Maria Penner (1840-1929), wife of Jacob Reimer. Contact: Queenie Martens, 4435 Cascade Drive, Vernon, BC V1T 8J7.

### Recent Books

Edward R. Brandt, et. al. eds. *Germanic Genealogy: A Guide to Worldwide Sources and Migration Patterns* (St. Paul, MN: Germanic Genealogy Society, 1995), pb., 370 pp.; \$24.00 US.

This book, compiled by five members of the Germanic Genealogy Society, with input by archivists and genealogists in five continents, deals with genealogical research related to German-speakers and their descendants in about 60 countries. It includes chapters on the Family History Library and its Centres, passenger departures and arrival lists in many countries, personal and place names, geography and

history of the Germanic people, help in reading the records, and many other topics. Contact: Dept. W. Germanic Genealogy Society, P.O. Box 16312, St. Paul, MN 55116-0032.

Hedy Janzen, *Addendum [to] Our Heritage: The Descendants of Heinrich P. Janzen* (Winnipeg, MB: Private publication, 1995), loose-leaf binder, 99 pp.

This item was prepared as an update for the 1990 publication and distributed at a Janzen Family Reunion in July, 1995, in Saskatchewan. Not only does it include updated information for the period 1989-1995, but it has also made use of additional information gleaned from the Peter J. Braun collection discovered in Odessa in 1990, and contacts with family members who emigrated from the former Soviet Union to Germany in recent years. Contact: Hedy Janzen, 2-246 Home St., Winnipeg, MB R3G 1X3.

Edward Enns. *In Search of Abraham Ens* (Winnipeg, MB: Private publication, 1995), pb., 139 pp.

The main subject of this publication is Abraham Ens (1861-1935), born in Russia, and a teacher in the village of Steinfeld before emigrating to Canada in 1893. There he continued to teach, first at Alt-Bergthal, west of Altona, MB, and then in other schools in the area. He moved his family to Hodgeville, SK in 1910 and later he moved on to Portland, Oregon, returning again to Manitoba in 1930. This book includes a genealogy of the descendants of Abraham Ens (1789- ) and Maria Penner (1786), and a genealogy of the descendants of Abram Toews (1828-) and Maria Klassen.

A translation of 83 letters written by Abraham Ens and published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau* from 1893 to 1911 is also included in the volume. Contact: Edward Enns, 156 Glenwood Cres., Winnipeg, MB R2L 1J6.

Peter Penner. *A Brief History of the Steingart Family* (Calgary, AB: Private publication, 1995), pb., 12 pp.

This item is a brief report prepared for the Steingart Family Reunion held at the Canadian Mennonite Bible College in Winnipeg, August 25-26, 1995. The family traces its ancestry back to Franz Steingart (1840-1892) who lived and died in Waldheim, Molotschna. The family reunion was for the descendants of his son, Heinrich F. Steingart (1872-1957), who lived in

(cont'd on page 10)



## Strengthening Mennonite Ties: Letters by S.F. Coffman and H.H. Ewert (Conclusion)

by Lawrence Klippenstein

Here we are sharing the final portion of the article begun in the June issue of MH (pp. 1-2). Footnotes added here cover both parts of the article.

They are also accused of conducting their own schools and perpetuating their language and doctrines by the use of their language. The purpose of the agitators seems to be to create sentiment in public that will support legislation by the Dominion Parliament to take away the privilege of immigration and colonization for people of our faith. Legislation is also threatened to take away the privileges of military exemption which is now enjoyed by our people. These threats have been made by men high up in Governmental rank in the Province of Alberta, and men who have acted for us here, and who are members of the Legislature have warned us of a possible attempt on the part of certain members to introduce legislation of their character in the next session of parliament. We would indeed be sorry for any such steps taken by the Government. It will certainly mean the denial to certain classes of religious liberty, which is one of the fundamental principles of the British constitution.

We believe that the Premier of Canada will stand by the liberties that have been promised our people and also the Minister of Immigration and Colonization, Hon. J.A. Calder of Saskatchewan.<sup>4</sup> His report on the situation regarding the Mennonite colonies in the West was very fair and shows a disposition to look upon the agitation against them as unwarranted.

The late sessions of the Conferences of the Presbyterian Church and the more recent Quadriennial Methodist Conference have shown that their Home Mission workers are raising opposition to the colonizing of our people in the West. Their principle objection is the language question and the attitude of our faith toward the military question. We cannot help expressing our feelings that this is an expression of religious intolerance and the interference of one religious organization with the rights of another for them to make recommendations to the Government concerning the establishing of laws that would interfere with the

settlement privileges and the religious practices of any people of a civilized character. The recommendations concerning such legislation came from the mission boards of the said churches. We have felt that the false impressions that exist in the general body of these conferences and among their adherents should be corrected. The men who compose the legislatures to whom their appeals will be sent should be informed as to actual conditions.

Some time ago, a letter was sent to the Editor of the *Rundschau*<sup>5</sup> at Scottdale, Pa, and also to John Horsch, of the same place asking for information concerning conditions among our Russian Brethren in the West as to their schools, congregations and other institutions relative to the use of the German language. Among our people of Ontario affinity, there are no private, or separate schools. Among a few congregations the German language is used in the public services. The majority of our congregations use the English almost exclusively. The Amish Brethren (sic) still use the German in Church services but their children are all educated in the Public schools and are familiar with the English language. Some are teaching in the Public schools. Our Church schools, as you know, are at Goshen, Indiana and at Hesston, Kans, and are both standard schools, or accredited institutions.

It may be possible for you to give the information, or may I beg your assistance in securing the information asked for on the

enclosed sheet. The questions may not be in order, and may not be as distinct as they should be, but the information is asked so as to give or secure as definite information as possible, and answer any inquiries that may be made concerning our Russian Brethren. It is our desire to be posted, if it may become necessary for us to again, meet the Government regarding the question of our continued liberties. In fact it seems almost essential that our Non-resistant people be united in some manner in mutually assisting each other in these matters. Through the mercies of the Lord we were able to render assistance in the past years, and we will stand on the same faith and may the brotherly love of those days be perpetuated as well as the faith which we believe was and is still founded upon the Word of God and manifested in the life of our Saviour.

Please find, enclosed, some literature and copies which may be of interest to you.

Trusting that this epistle will not be an imposition upon your time and patience, and thanking you for your brotherly inquiry and interest in us in Ontario, I am,

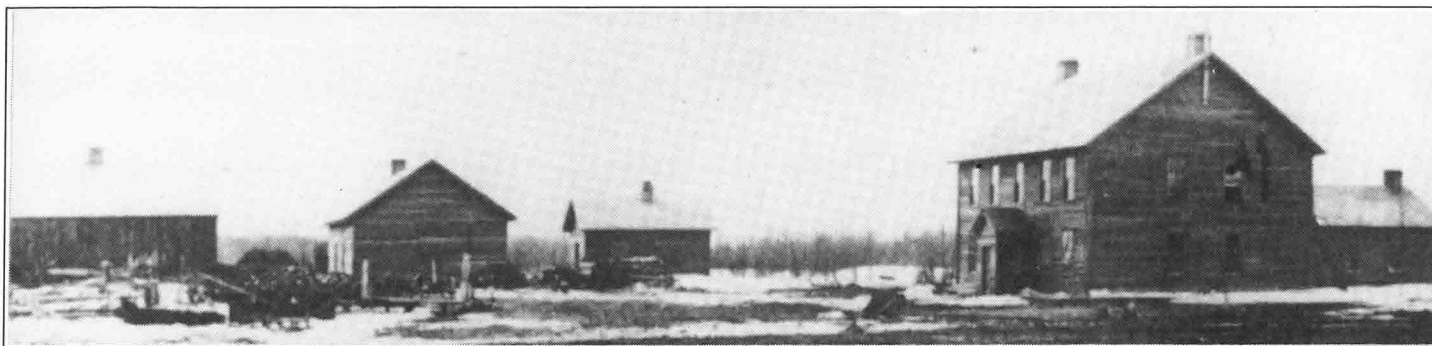
Yours in faith,  
S.F. Coffman

P.S. -Since writing the above, the literature mailed by you has arrived. Many thanks for the same. I had previously received a copy of the *Wichtige Dokumente*.<sup>6</sup> It was a great help to us in

(cont'd on page 5)



A singing and social group in Gretna, MB, with David Toews (seated middle row, left) and H.H. Ewert (seated centre), 1893. Photo: Courtesy of the Village of Gretna, MB., and Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, MB.



This summer Mennonites of the former West Reserve in Manitoba commemorated the 120th anniversary of the coming of their first families to the area on July 15, 1875. They landed at Fort Dufferin just north of Emerson on the Red River. The photo shows buildings of the fort used at that time. Photo: Courtesy of Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB., and Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, MB.

our work. We have also received notice of the offer of the Minister of Finance and we think that our people will respond to his request. It is significant that the Government comes to our people with a special request to loan them money. Under the conditions of their request can the Church refuse to comply? Had it been a command to furnish the money, would the Church have been in a position to refuse? The matter is worthy of consideration and compliance may mean much as to future favours granted by the Government to our people.

S.F.C.

## Endnotes

1. The larger picture of these events and Mennonite relationships is presented in Frank H. Epp's *Mennonites in Canada, 1786-1920. The History of a Separate People*. (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1974), 365 ff.

2. We want to thank Reg Good of the Conrad Grebel College Archives for supplying us with copies of the original correspondence found in the S.F. Coffman collection (Hist. Mss. 1-163). For biographical materials on these men cf. Paul J. Schaefer. *Heinrich H. Ewert. Teacher, Educator, and Minister of the Mennonites* (Winnipeg, MB: CMBC Publications, 1990) translated by Ida Toews from *Heinrich H. Ewert. Lehrer, Erzieher und Prediger der Mennoniten* (Gretna, MB: Verlag der Manitoba Jugendorganisation der Mennoniten-Konferenz von Canada, 1945), and Urie A. Bender. *Four Earthen Vessels. Biographical Profiles of Oscar Burkholder, Samuel F. Coffman, Clayton F. Derstine and Jesse B. Martin*. (Kitchener, ON: and Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1982), 113-184.

3. For further developments regarding this exchange cf. Peter H. Rempel, "Inter-

Mennonite Cooperation and Promises to Government in the Repeal of the Ban on Mennonite Immigration to Canada 1919-1922", *Mennonite Historian* Vol. XIX, No. 1, (March, 1993), 1, 7.

4. On J.A. Calder cf. Adolf Ens. *Subjects or Citizens? The Mennonite Experience in Canada, 1870-1925*. (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1994), 115, 132, 181, 201.

5. The weekly, *Mennonitische Rundschau*, was published in Scottdale and Elkhart, USA, from 1880-1923 and then moved to Winnipeg, Canada. It is still being published there, though now only twice a month.

6. This is most likely a reference to Benjamin Ewert's sixteen-page publication, *Wichtige Dokumente betreffs der Wehrfreiheit der Mennoniten in Canada*. (Gretna, MB: Selbstverlag der Kanadischen Mennonitengemeinden, 1917). The booklet is available at the CMBC Mennonite Historical library.

## The Boer War Story Once More

by Peter Penner

*Due to space pressure, we were unfortunately unable to include this material with our earlier responses to James Urry's article on the Boers and Mennonites (MH, Vol. XXI, No. 2, June, 1995). We would like to add this to those comments. Our apologies for fragmenting the dialogue unduly. The editors.*

To the editors:

I would like to offer another interesting footnote to the fascinating story about the Boers of South Africa and the Russian Mennonites by James Urry.

I discovered the following reference in my research into the story of the Mennonite Brethren Mission in India. Two missionaries, Anna Suderman of the Mennonite Brethren (who became the third wife of Daniel Bergthold in 1916), and George Thomssen of the related American Baptist Missionary Union, both had some experience with Boer prisoners of war held (by the British) in South India. Thomssen, a German Baptist from Kansas and well-known to the Mennonite Brethren, worked at Bapatla. He had the opportunity to minister to these prisoners on several occasions.

Thomssen's description of the Boers he met reinforces one of the thrusts of Urry's article, that the Mennonites in Russia resembled the Boers in many ways. Writing to the editor of the *Zionsbote* in Hillsboro, Thomssen stated: they look "just like my beloved Mennonite Brethren look. Their manner, their singing, their prayers, their weeping is just like your own, because these men in truth are your brothers".

References: see *Zionsbote*, 18/24 (11 June 1902), 2-3; 18/28 (16 July 1902), 6; 18/33 (20 August 1902), 2.

Regrettably, I must also offer one significant correction to this article. Professor Urry seems mistaken to identify President Kruger by the forename Peter. It was Paul Kruger who defied the Queen and thus helped to bring about the British military action in 1899. In any case, this fact also makes a difference to the suggestion that Heinrich Koslowsky was known as "Ohm Peter" after Kruger, and, as in footnote #6, that Jacob Kroeker the editor of the *Familienkalender* identified with Kruger because he was named Peter.

Perhaps the reasons for the strong identity need further clarification.

*Dr. Peter Penner, formerly a professor at Mount Allison University in Sackville, NB now resides in Calgary, AB.*

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

## Mennonite Historian has Twentieth Birthday

With this issue twenty years of publishing the *Mennonite Historian* have passed. The first issue appeared in December, 1975 and stood there as all we had for Volume I. Two issues were combined in 1976. Otherwise it's been a quarterly throughout.

This is the time certainly to thank all those who contributed voluntarily with articles and information to make each issue possible, and all those, of course, who helped financially to make **MH** appear regularly through the years. From a starting four-page newsletter the publication grew to the more standard eight pages and on numerous occasions including this issue it became a 12-page piece.

The newsletter was launched as a publication of Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg but became a joint periodical together with the Centre for MB Studies in 1987. The two Centres then used the middle page spread for their own specific news and gave the rest of each issue to items of a general Mennonite interest (hopefully).

Readers may secure back numbers for all issues, most of them available in original,



Renate Lusis and Nikolai Zholudev of Klaipeda, Lithuania mounted a very interesting exhibit of watercolour paintings and handcrafted amber jewellery. The dates were Sept. 8-15. They were sponsored by Ernest and Lorraine Dueck of Kleefeld, MB, both of whom have just completed two years of teaching at Lithuanian Christian College in Klaipeda. Photo: Courtesy of Erwin Strempler, *Der Bote* editor, Winnipeg, MB.

copies. An index for Vol. 1-XII is available too, as is a print-out edition of indexing for Vols. XIII - XVI.

If you are not a regular subscriber we urge you to join the 600 or more readers now on our paid up lists.

ligraphy, pottery, ceramics, computer programming, etc. Hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday. Everyone is welcome. Admission is free but donations are warmly welcomed.

## Irma Penn Multi-Media Exhibit Up

A very interesting exhibition titled *Self Expression in Multi Media* was mounted at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery on September 21, 1995. It will run to November 15. Most of the exhibit consists of paintings but there are also works in cal-

## HAGUE-OSLER RESERVE BOOK AVAILABLE

If you wish to order a copy of the new Hague-Osler Reserve history book, (hdc., 728 pp.) write to Dick Braun, Box 184, Osler, SK S0K 3A0. The cost is \$55.00 (includes GST); postage extra (ca. \$7.00). The first run of 850 copies was sold out on the weekend of the centennial celebration held on August 5-6, 1995.

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Sir Edmund Beatty, President of the CPR, being presented with an illuminated address by Rev. B.B. Janz at the Coaldale MB Church on behalf of Mennonite settlers in Canada. The date was a day in September, 1937. Photo: Courtesy of the Centre for MB Studies, Winnipeg, MB.

## Former Coaldale MB Church Becomes Museum

by Abe Dueck

The former Mennonite Brethren Church building in Coaldale has recently become the home of a museum for the community. In 1994 a society called the Gem of the West Museum Society was established, with Erna Goertzen as president. The society immediately turned its attention to acquiring the former church for its home. By April of 1995 the necessary structural studies had been completed and the building was purchased for \$65,000.

The church was built in 1939 and for a time it was the home of the largest Mennonite Brethren congregation in

Canada. In 1941 it had a membership of 494. After that membership declined until after the war when it reached a new high of 616 in 1955. However, by then the Yarrow congregation had surpassed it in membership.

The building continued to serve the Coaldale congregation until early 1971, when a new building was dedicated near the centre of the town. Thereafter the old building housed a block factory for approximately twenty years. Many considered this an inappropriate use of a building which evoked so many memories of a very different past.

During the peak period of Mennonite settlement in Coaldale there were several other Mennonite institutions adjacent to the sanctuary. These included the Coaldale Bible School (later Alberta Mennonite Brethren Bible Institute open from 1929-1965) and the Alberta Mennonite High School (a society school in operation from 1946-1964). A Mennonite cemetery was located just west of the church building site.

The Coaldale Mennonite Church (CMC) was located in the town of Coaldale, although with a somewhat smaller membership. Mennonites from both churches were very active in their support of another institution, the Coaldale cheese factory.

Although Mennonites made up a significant segment of the community which had begun in the 1920s, the Coaldale communi-

**C** Centre for  
**M** Mennonite  
**B** Brethren  
**S** Studies in Canada

1-169 Riverton Ave., Winnipeg, Canada R2L 2E5

ty had many people of other religious and ethnic backgrounds. These included Japanese, Ukrainian and British settlers, and members of the Mormon, Roman Catholic and United Church denominations.

The Museum society expects to expend considerable effort to restore the building to its earlier condition. It will rely on much-needed volunteer support. In addition to housing artifacts for display, the building will become the site for plays, skits, ethnic dance demonstrations and food booths.

More information can be obtained from the Gem of the West Museum Society, 1806 - 21 Avenue, Coaldale, AB T1M 1E9. Membership in the Society costs \$10.00 per year.

## Menno Simons 500th Anniversary Tour

1996 marks the 500th anniversary of the birth of Menno Simons. During that year a number of events will take place in the Netherlands to commemorate the contributions of the man after whom Mennonites are named.

Coincidentally, 1996 is also the 450th anniversary of the death of Martin Luther, and a number of special events are being planned in various places in Germany.

The Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies will be sponsoring a Menno Simons study tour in cooperation with Concord College from April 29 to May 19, 1996. Arrangments are being made by Assiniboine Travel. Abe Dueck, director of the Centre, will be the host. Besides visiting important sites in Holland, the tour will also proceed through northern Germany and Poland, and there will be brief visits to Berlin, some Aussiedler churches, as well as Worms and Strassburg.

Participants may enroll for university credit but are not obligated to do so. More information may be obtained by writing to the Centre for MB Studies, 1-169 Riverton Ave., Winnipeg, MB R2L 2E5 or by calling 1-204-669-6575.



The church building which has become a community museum in Coaldale, AB.

## Family Reunions - Epps and Klippensteins

*Summer time brings with it innumerable family events of all kinds. Reunions, large and small are a part of the pattern. One could not begin to comment on them all.*

*Two reports have however arrived at the MH office. We want to share some excerpts from each.*

### Epp Families

Peter Epp, a Mennonite born in 1681 in Petershagen in the Vistula delta region of what is now Poland, married Anna Claassen. Their grandson Heinrich Epp with wife Maria Penner emigrated to Russia June 14, 1795. A grandson of Heinrich and Anna, born 1811, also called Heinrich Epp, and married first to Sara, then to Justina, fathered twelve children.

Seventy years ago in 1925, a number of Heinrich's descendants settled in southwest Manitoba at Whitewater and Lena, buying large farms lock, stock and barrel with no money down. The immediate descendants of this group organized the fifth quinquennial weekend Eppfest of the descendants of Heinrich Epp, renting the campus of the Canadian Mennonite Bible College in Winnipeg on August 4, 5, and 6. Previous meetings at Boissevain, Leamington, Mountain Lake, and Coaldale had created high expectations. The 350 plus participants registered were not disappointed and perhaps gratified that a new generation has taken on most of the duties of this venture.

Attending from abroad were Margarethe Epp of Karaganda, Kazakhstan (in Asia), four youthful Guenter family siblings from Germany along with Boschmann relatives, a Hildebrand couple also from Germany and Epps from many states and provinces in North America.

The organizers and leaders of the event included the ex-Boissevainite John and Mary Fast family (Elsie, Jack, Vern, Helen and Henry), Peter J. Dyck formerly of Ninga and Mary Warkentin (formerly "Mickey" Neufeld of Boissevain), supported by their spouses and children.

Anna Ens of Winnipeg (formerly of Lena), editor of *The House of Heinrich* and, so to speak, our genealogical matriarch, as always was given many requests for information. Her brother, Menno Epp, of Leamington, ON, was also born at Lena, MB, gave the sermon at the Sunday worship service.

Anna and George Fast gave a presentation on finding the exact place of the Epps in the Prussian family setting.

The range of talent displayed throughout the event was truly remarkable, ranging from Ken Epp's clever nylons-like musical spoof on the name **Epp** and George G. Dyck's comic yet gentle skit of a 1930s Whitewater Mennonite Church brotherhood meeting to choral performances, wood work, glass crafting and, best of all, the gift of the gab. Endless conversations took place on every topic under the sun. The location, dining hall included, was excellent, as was the wonderful Assiniboine Park near at hand, to say nothing of the Assiniboine Forest and its fine Sagimay Nature Walk.

### The Klippensteins

They came in cars, trucks, motor homes, airplanes and even Harley Davidson motorcycles. They came from across Canada, five states and all the way from Paraguay. They came from a variety of ages, occupations and lifestyles, but they had one thing in common. It was the Klippenstein connection.

Over three hundred descendants of Berend Klippenstein (1781-1841), and more specifically two of his sons, Johann (1809-1877) and Peter (1819-1885), gathered in Altona, Manitoba on July 25 to renew acquaintances, fellowship around the table and swap stories of the family.

The reunion was three years in the making, taking place nine years after the last reunion, when over 600 Klippensteins gathered for a weekend in Altona. The 1995 gathering was held in conjunction with the Altona centennial celebrations and Sunflower Festival.

A well-organized program on July 25 included singing, led by Linie Friesen, family introductions, historical background, a memorial service, story telling, entertainment, and speeches on family life in other countries. Lawrence Klippenstein spoke on his search for Klippensteins in Russia.

Squeals of surprised delight, warm hugs of welcome and the buzz of conversation could be heard as relatives were reunited. One man welcomed an aunt he hadn't seen for 40 years.

If storytelling is a tonic and a blessing, family storyteller Jake Krueger handed out the biggest doses of the day. Reading from his book, *Nostalgic Recollections of Jake Krueger*, he had his audience in stitches as he told tales of his youth. His books were a hot item at the book table after his part in the program. If all the stories told on this day had been recorded, there could be a second volume to Mr. Krueger's tales.

In case anyone had the impression all the Klippensteins were well behaved, Hartley Klippenstein told a story of a group of cousins who nearly burned up the whole community

when they got to playing with matches around the fuel storage tanks. "There were some bad Klippensteins, but most were good," he joked.

On a serious note, Ray Hamm led the group in a memorial service, in honour of all relatives that had passed on since the family last gathered together. "A part of remembering is to remember the loss . . . to remember the gifts we received from these people," he said.

All in all it was a day to remember. Ted Friesen was heard to say this would be the last such event he would be organizing. It would be sad indeed if this was to be the last Klippenstein gathering of its kind.

*We assume that the full texts of these reports written by Ernie G. Dyck of Oakwood, ON and Marj Heinrichs of Rosenort, (near Morris) MB will be appearing in the respective family newsletters, **EPPisode** and **Klippings**.*

## Experts Fail to Save 700-Year-Old Oak of Chortitza

**Kiev, Ukraine.** Even chicken dung and goat carcasses couldn't save Ukraine's beloved Zaporizhia Oak. The country's most famous tree, visited by thousands of tourists a year, has died after 700 years despite some unconventional treatments, the **Kievskiy Vedomosti** newspaper reported yesterday.

The 36-metre tree grew on the Ukrainian island of Khortitsa, which lies in the Dnieper River and once was home to Ukraine's largest Cossack settlement. Encampments of medieval princes stood in its shadow, and famous Cossack treaties and documents were signed there, according to local lore.

The tree started to die when a drainage system built around it broke and remained unrepaired last year. The system had been built in the 1970s to protect the tree from flooding from nearby water reservoirs.

Experts called in from across the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe were too late to save the oak with treatments that included burying goat carcasses and chicken dung near its roots.

The tree lost all its leaves in June and by midsummer was pronounced dead. A government report blamed the death on "natural environmental events and the oak's age."

*From a Winnipeg Free Press release, dated August 12, 1995.*

**Note:** We hear that a transplanted acorn from the old oak is growing well at the Kaufmann Museum in North Newton, Kansas.



## A Chip Off Which Old Block?

by Margaret Kroeker

If your surname is Block, or if you have Block ancestors, you may have been told the story about the first Mennonite Blocks who settled in Russia. The story claims that at the time of the first migration in 1788-89, three Block brothers went to New Russia. One became disillusioned and returned to Prussia. The second one left the Mennonite community and some say his descendants went to America.<sup>1</sup> The third brother was Peter Block (1797-1878), who settled in the village of Krons Garten in the Chortitza Colony where he became the second minister of the Mennonite congregation.

It is alleged that all Mennonite Blocks in Russia are descended from this Peter Block. Other writers say that he is the ancestor only of all Blocks in the Chortitza Colony. Various versions of this story can be found in several Block records, but I have been unable to determine its original source.

In the records at Mennonite Genealogy Inc. I have found no evidence of this story. The Block information we have in our files is mostly about the third brother, i.e. Peter Block, who will be referred to as the Krons Garten Peter Block in this article. It could possibly be said that he is the ancestor of all the Blocks in the Chortitza Colony. However, there are also several Block lines of families in the Molotschna Colony and further study is needed to determine whether or not they have a common ancestor.

In 1895 the Krons Garten Peter Block's son, Peter (1822-1901), was looking for the descendants of his father's brother. A letter of his appeared in the May 29 issue of *Mennonitische Rundschau*. This letter reveals quite a different story about the origin of the Block brothers. Peter Block wrote that his father came to Russia in 1819 and settled in Krons Garten, leaving behind in Prussia his mother, four brothers, Heinrich, David, Jakob and Johann, and one sister, Anna. All of his father's brothers remained single, except David. Peter Block was the only one of his family to move to Russia from Prussia.

This information helps to confirm the belief that the Krons Garten Peter is the son of a Salomon Block<sup>2</sup> found in the Montau church records of Prussia. This Salomon Block, a resident of the village of Montau, Kreis Schwetz, was married in Gro. Lubin<sup>3</sup> on August 24, 1792. The following are

believed to be his children: Heinrich, 1793-1794; Heinrich, b. Jan. 1, 1795, (possibly the one who moved to Deutsch Kazun where he died in 1841), no record of a marriage). Peter, b. April 29, 1797 (the Krons Garten Peter Block)<sup>4</sup>; David, b. Jan. 27, 1799<sup>5</sup>, and Maria, b. Dec. 21, 1803.

This family also included: Katharina, b. Oct. 26, 1801; Anna, b. March 3, 1806<sup>6</sup>; Jacob, b. ca 1808-1836, born in Deutsch Kazun, Poland<sup>7</sup>, and Johann, b. Dec. 22, 1810.<sup>8</sup>

The father, Salomon Block, died in Treuel on February 26, 1814, five years before Peter went to Russia. This death date agrees with the statement that Peter Block went to Russia after the death of his father, "leaving behind his mother."

The many requests we have received for information on the Krons Garten Peter Block indicate the large number of his descendants presently living in Canada. Their genealogies have been documented in at least eleven family histories in our library.

In the past decade Henry J. Block from Campden, Ontario, has taken on the phenomenal task of compiling the genealogy of these families and also collecting interesting stories reflecting their life and character. His computer is now able to produce not only the genealogy, but a variety of other fascinating statistics about these families.

Let me briefly introduce you to Peter Block, the person whose life has sparked the interest of so many of his descendants. Besides being a wealthy<sup>9</sup> farmer and entrepreneur, he was elected minister of the Krons weide Mennonite church in Krons Garten in 1833. Cornelius Hildebrandt, the son of the *Aeltester* Jacob Hildebrandt (1795-1867), reported that Peter Block discontinued preaching because of apparent quarrels in the church. It would be interesting to find further details about this disagreement.

Peter Block had 15 children with his first wife, Maria Bartel. After Maria's death, he remained a widower until all his children had married. He was over 70 years old when he went to the Molotschna Colony to choose his second wife, namely the widow Anna Neufeld (nee Zacharias) who was younger than most of his children. Two daughters were born to this marriage.

It is interesting to note that both of his wives had connections with *Kleingemeinde* families in the Molotschna. I have often puzzled about a note in the *Tagebuch* of Cornelius Loewen (1827-1893) referring to money he had borrowed from Abraham Block (Peter Block's son) in 1864. Now the research of Delbert Plett has revealed the

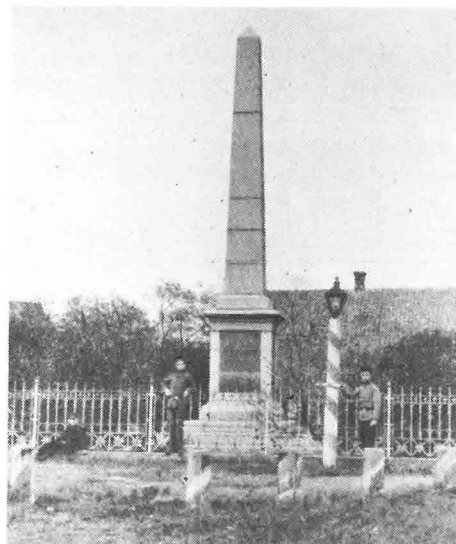
connection of this large *Kleingemeinde* Loewen clan to this Frisian Bartel family, namely the line of Peter Block's first wife, Maria Bartel.<sup>10</sup> (To be concluded, with endnotes added, in the next issue.)

## The Chortitza Centennial Monument - Further Comments

We have had several responses to the article on the Chortitza centennial monument written by Joan Kirk (MH, June, 1995, p. 6). Further comments are most welcome.

Johann Epp currently of Espelkamp, Germany was the last district administrator (*Oberschulz*) of the Chortitza settlement before it was evacuated completely by the Mennonites in 1943. He recalls events this way: "It was not soldiers who destroyed the monument; it was a group of workmen directed by the NKVD in 1938. The monument consisted of 12 stones which were dissembled and buried. Some were buried in the courtyard of the Wallmann home near the bakery, which had once been Wallmann's stable. . . . I enclose a sketch of the monument as I remember it."

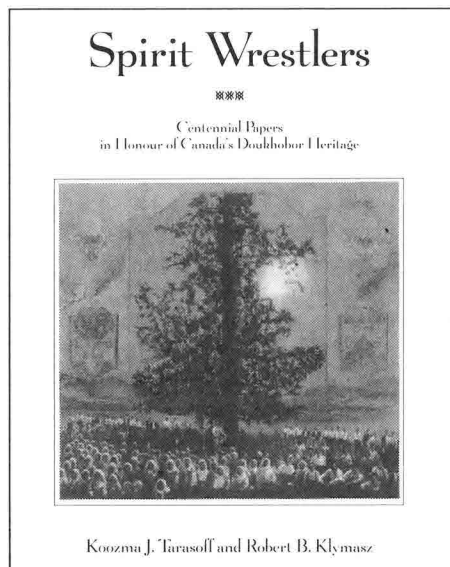
Nikolai Wiens from Salach, Germany writes: I have also seen the 100-year old monument. An iron fence surrounded it. On one side of the base were the words: *Hitherto has God helped us*, and on the other side, *In honour of the first Mennonite settlers who emigrated to Russia under Catherine the Great*. The other two sides had these words in Russian.



The centennial monument at Chortitza, Ukraine. A Lenin monument was erected in its place after it was dismantled. Photo: From *Heritage Remembered*, ed. by Gerhard Lohrenz, p. 106.

## Doukhobor Centennial in Canada

As part of its centennial celebrations in Canada (1895-1995), the Doukhobor community of Canada is featuring an exhibit at the Canadian Museum of Civilization from Nov. 15, 1995 - Dec. 9, 1996. The volume, *Spirit Wrestlers*, pictured below, may be ordered from the Museum at 100 Laurier St., Box 3100, Station B, Hull, Quebec, J8X 4H2. A full program of activities may be ordered from there also.



## Introducing Mark P. Shevelyov

Mark is a writer and museum curator from Zaporozhe, Ukraine. He has been in touch with a number of travellers from Mennonite communities in Canada. Recently Mark published a book in Russian called, *You have not Vanished like Shadows*. (pb., 180 pp.) and sent us copies to sell.

The first part of the book deals with Mennonite factory owners and their achievements. He notes and pictures Abraham Jakob Koop, the founder of the factory.

This part has been translated into English by Vitalius Martens of Montreal. Hilda Epp and Marguerite Bergmann of Winnipeg have made helpful contacts in Zaporozhe regarding this project. Abraham Jakob was Marguerite's great-grandfather. Hilda's father, Peter J. Dyck, was the chief engineer at the factory. His administrative assistant was Gerhard Christian Hamm., Marguerite's father.

The whole package (book and translation) can be purchased at the Mennonite Heritage Centre for \$17.00 plus postage and GST. Mark has also sent us a short article in English titled, "A Jewish Cemetery in Chortitza". We hope to publish it in the *Mennonite Historian* in a future issue.



Mark Shevelyov



Abraham Jak. Koop

## NAMAL Notes

On Tuesday, July 25, 1995, ten historians, archivists and librarians gathered at a NAMAL meeting held during the GCMC/MC sessions held in Wichita, Kansas, this summer.

Dr. John Roth of Goshen College gave a final report on the Mennonite periodicals microfilming project which he directed since it began in 1989. Fifty-one titles have been filmed.

A discussion was given to formalizing NAMAL (North American Mennonite Archivists and Librarians) as a permanent organization. The consensus was that 1) in order to get people to participate in a formal organization, NAMAL would have to offer some kind of compelling program or project that we can't get at other library and archival meetings; 2) NAMAL would be better off as a subgroup of some larger Mennonite history organization (none of us has the budget and time to go to all the meetings we might want to) and that some of the networking and information sharing needs will probably end up being met by an Internet discussion group.

*From notes recorded by John Thiesen, MLA, Bethel College, North Newton, KS67717.*

## Genealogy and Family History (cont'd from page 3)

Sagradowka and immigrated to Canada in 1926. Contact: Peter Penner, 20 Rundle-lawn Close, NE, Calgary, AB T1Y 4A5.

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

## Harder Family Chart Available

The chart begins with Johann Harder (b. 1779) married first to Justina Fast, then to Gertrude Rempel and finally to Widow Kasdorf. It ends with babies born in 1995. Families include David Harder (b. 1836), Kornelius Harder (b. 1866) etc. There are eight generations and over 700 names. It is available in scroll form measuring 24" x 96".

Cost is \$12.00 including mailing. Order from: **J.D. Harder, 194 Oeming Rd., Edmonton, AB T6R 2G2.**

## Just Arrived

**Biographies of Our Late Leaders and Histories of the Mennonite Churches in Essex and Kent Counties 1925-1995**, edited by Gisela Schartner and Astrid Koop. Pb., 150 pp, \$14.95 and \$3.50 for postage and handling. To order phone 1-519-322-0456

## Book Reviews (cont'd from page 12)

should probably have been changed to Russian Orthodox Church (p. 100), that the word subjects be used instead of members (p. 94), and that the name of the last Russian Tsar be rendered as Nicholas, not Nicholaus (pp. 21 and 125). On p. 98 the date 1803 should be 1833.

The addition of a substantive and interpretive translator's preface, a selected bibliography, a number of new pertinent photos, and a series of enlightening footnotes definitely enhances this English edition. Supplementing it with an up-to-date map of the Molotschna (not Molo-tschna, p. 102) settlement, and perhaps the Melitopol (Tashchenak) area, where Cornies had several estates, might have been helpful also. A footnote on the origins of the Molokans and Doukhobors (p. 107) would have been appropriate as well in this year of the Doukhobor centennial in Canada. Another note would have been good for Epp's discussion of the *Judenplan* (p. 90). The dates for Philipp Wiebe (photo, p. 64) are 1816-1882 (*Johann Cornies Stammbaum*, p. 4).

We believe that this volume, will find the same enthusiastic readers' reception given to the other five recently-translated volumes now extant in this series.

## CALENDAR 1996 - THE DARP

### Photographs of Village Farmsteads In Southern Manitoba Taken From 1968-1995

**PHOTOGRAPHER: HAROLD FUNK**

**COST:** \$20.00 (includes taxes) with shipping and handling extra

**CONTACT:** ALICE FUNK at: 1-204-489-4647 or 1-204-943-5087  
or send order to: 333 Queenston St. Winnipeg, MB R3N 0W9

## Mennonites In Canada Vol III

**Mennonites In Canada Vol. III**, it is anticipated, will be published in the spring of 1996. Dr. Ted Regehr, Saskatoon, is the author. The book covers the era from World War II to the 1970s. This volume completes the projected **Mennonites in Canada**.

Volumes I and II of **Mennonites In Canada** were published in 1974 and 1982 respectively. Frank H. Epp was the author of these two volumes. When he died in 1986, Ted Regehr was appointed by the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada to become the author of Volume III. Marlene Epp was appointed co-author and researcher.

Funding for the research and writing of Volume III was provided by the Federal Government, Mennonite Central Committee of Canada, several Canadian Mennonite conferences, the University of Saskatchewan, and private individuals.

As was the case with Volumes I and II, the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada will provide funds to reduce the price of Volume III, and thus make the book more affordable. Places for purchasing copies will be announced later.

## Mennonite Books and Services

**Mennonite Books**, with store and office at 844-K McLeod Avenue, Winnipeg, has added several services for the convenience of its customers.

Recently a used book section was added. A number of customers have continually requested books that are no longer in print, or asked for books at lower prices. We have responded by adding a used book section. You can now buy and sell used Mennonite books. In order to do this, contact the office to make arrangements if you have used books to sell. Stop by if you want to check our selection.

Other customers have asked about church and/or family histories. These often have limited sales, but we recognize the importance of such books, and so we are offering space to any publishers of church and/or family histories. We will take these on consignment and sell to interested customers. Call us about this new service.

Also, we realize the need to connect individuals with specific titles requested. Therefore, the staff at **Mennonite Books** now maintains a card file for customers asking for out-of-print titles or almost-impossible-to-find titles.

## Assiniboine Travel Services Ltd.

**Three Menno Simons 500th Anniversary Tours in 1996.**

**April 29 - May 19. Leader:** Dr. Abe J. Dueck, Centre for MB Studies, Winnipeg, MB. See page 7 for details.

**July 15-29** Visit some of the places where Menno Simons lived including Witmarsum, Pingjum, Emden, Bad Oldesloe, Danzig and Cologne. The tour will also stop at Amsterdam, Hamburg, Berlin, Wittenberg, and Muenster. **Leader:** Dr. John J. Friesen, CMBC, Winnipeg, MB.

**August 1-21** Visit the Former Soviet Union (FSU) including stops at Orenburg, St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev, Zaporozhe (with day trips (we hope) to the former Chortitza, Molotschna, Bergthal, Fuerstenland and Sagradowka settlements), Odessa, and several places in The Netherlands (Amsterdam, Witmarsum, Pingjum). **Leader:** Dr. Lawrence Klippenstein, Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, MB.

**For further information call ATS at 1-204-775-0271 or 1-800-262-8863.**

The staff at Mennonite Books wants to provide the best service possible. Call 204-668-74475 or fax 204-661-8530 for further information. You may also write to: **Mennonite Books**, 844-K McLeod Ave., Winnipeg, MB R2G 2T7.

## A warm "Thank you" for special support of this issue goes to:

**CMBC Publications, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4 Ph. 1-204-888-6781**

Catalogues available upon request. See p. 6 for special announcements.

**Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, c/o Ted Friesen, Box 720, Altona, MB R0G 0B0. Ph. 1-204-324-5018.**  
Volume III (1939-1975) of *Mennonites in Canada* by Dr. Ted Regehr (Saskatoon) is to come off the press in the spring of 1996.

**Assiniboine Travel Service Ltd., 1317 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, MB R3G 0V3. Ph. 204-775-0271 or 1-800-262-8863.**  
See the ATS insert for the June *Historian* for a full listing of tours in 1996. Note especially those mentioned above.



## BOOK REVIEWS

Friesen, Jacob. *The Road Unknown*. (Gladstone, MB: the author, 1993), pb., 248 pp., \$10.00. Gerbrandt, Henry J. *Enroute (Hinjawaajis). The Memoirs of Henry J. Gerbrandt*. (Winnipeg, MB: CMBC Publications, 1994), pb., 314 pp., \$15.00.

*Reviewed by John J. Friesen*

In these two books, two Mennonite men from southern Manitoba relate their life stories. Friesen grew up in the Glencross area south of Morden, and in Reinland. He served in CO camps in Riding Mountain National Park and Vancouver Island, married Anne and moved to Paraguay with the Sommerfelder migration of 1948. He was thoroughly disillusioned there, returned, tried farming near Snowflake, and settled on farms in the McGregor and Gladstone areas. In the McGregor Berghaler church he was called to be the minister. After retirement he and his wife Anne spent some time in Mexico working as missionaries among Old Colony Mennonites.

Gerbrandt was born and raised in Manitoba in the Lowe Farm area, studied in Altona, and married Susan Heinrichs after a proposal by letter while stationed as CO in northern Manitoba. He had a brief stint as a missionary to aboriginals in Mexico, returned and became a long-time minister in the Altona Berghaler Mennonite Church and a teacher in the Elim Bible School. Later he became general secretary of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, and also served *Umsiedler* congregations in Germany.

The stories of both men become the window into a large segment of southern Manitoba Mennonite history. The two stories are situated geographically at opposite ends of southern Manitoba and overlap at only a few points. The reader gets a glimpse into everyday life, courtship and marriage, struggle with illness and mishap, the role of evangelistic campaigns, and relationships between *Kanadier* and *Russlaender* Mennonites. First trips to Winnipeg, dealing with incompetent dentists, and displaying ingenuity in overcoming one difficulty after another are all part of their stories.

Both men began their life in the Sommerfelder Mennonite Church, and both became ministers in the Berghaler Mennonite Church of Manitoba. Both struggled with poverty most of their lives, and both acknowledge with regret and some

feeling of guilt that much of the burden of poverty was borne by their spouses. Both became heavily involved in the life of the church, Gerbrandt from the time he finished high school, and Friesen later in life after he had farmed for some time. Both were COs in World War II, and Friesen includes fascinating descriptions of life in a CO camp.

Readers will find these books interesting and informative. Gerbrandt presents more context and background, and makes an effort to present various views on issues and events of note, often concluding with his own interpretation of events. Friesen's book is a more straight forward chronological narrative in which his story is divided into short pithy episodes. He employs wit, irony, and humour, often at his own expense, to good effect. Both books are easy to read and engaging in style.

Kizik, Edmund, *Mennonici w Gdansk, Elblagu i na Zulawach Wislanych w Drugiej Polowie XVII i w XVIII Wieku, Studium Dziejow Malej Spolecznosci Wyznaniowej* (Mennonites in Danzig, Elbing and the Vistula Lowlands during the Second half of the 17th and Early Part of the 18th Centuries. Studies in the History of Minority Religious Groups), Gdansk, 1994, 268 pages.

*Reviewed by John J. Friesen*

In this book Edmund Kizik presents his doctoral study of Mennonites in the Vistula and Nogat River regions. He divides his study into four main areas, namely: settlement and size of population; legal rights, work and tax responsibilities; elements of Mennonite religious life; developments after the first partition of Poland including Prussian policies in regards to Mennonites, as well as the start of the emigration to Russia.

The book is in Polish, but includes a brief German summary of contents. Most of the illustrations, maps, pictures and statistical tables have a German bi-line. The book is well footnoted, and also includes a lengthy bibliography. In addition, Kizik also surveys the various archives which have collections on Mennonite history in Poland and Prussia. He includes archives in North America, Germany, Holland, and Poland. The survey of holdings in Berlin-Dahlem (formerly Merseburg) and in Gdansk and Elblag are the most detailed and the most comprehensive.

The strength of this book lies in Kizik's

careful study of the archival sources in order to establish the variety of settlements as well as legal and contractual arrangements affecting Mennonites. Kizik shows that the Mennonite communities were much more varied than has been generally understood.

Future studies of Mennonites in Poland and Prussia ought to take this book into account. The fact that it is in Polish will, however, make it difficult for North American scholars to access its contents fully.

*Dr. John J. Friesen is Professor of History and Theology at CMBC in Winnipeg, MB.*

Epp, David H. *Johann Cornies*. Translated by Peter Pauls. (Winnipeg, MB: CMBC Publications and Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 1995), pb., 137 pp., \$10.00.

*Reviewed by Lawrence Klippenstein*

This publication is the sixth in the Echo Historical Series, all translations from the 14-volume Echo Verlag set (mostly on Russian Mennonite themes) edited by the late Arnold Dyck (Vol. 14 by Victor Peters).

The Cornies book first appeared as a German edition in Russia (Ukraine) in 1909, "the 120th anniversary of Cornies' birth, and the 60th (sic) of his death," as Epp observed in the original manuscript. The book was reprinted in German by Diedrich H. Epp at Rosthern, SK, in 1946. It has been the main easily-available source of information about the life and work of Cornies till now, although lengthy assessment comments did appear in Russia, especially right after his death in 1848.

Cornies was unquestionably a man greatly appreciated by the Russian authorities, and a person who deeply impacted the Mennonite community. The specific nature and longer-range significance of this influence are still being debated today (see translator's footnotes).

Pauls' translation is well done and very readable, a task which the complex original made rather difficult to carry out. In general format this edition upholds the high quality of work which the series has achieved in all its volumes so far. One could still suggest that Altenau might more appropriately have been called a village rather than a colony (p. 97, footnote, and p. 99), that references to the Greek Orthodox Church

*(cont'd on page 10)*