

MENNONITE HISTORIAN

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

Volume XXII, No. 3, September, 1996



Participants of the Menno Simons 500 conference at Elspeet, The Netherlands, entering the Doopsgezind (Mennonite) Church in Witmarsum. A small Mennonite congregation continues to meet here. The conference convened from July 2-6, 1996. Among those attending were Adolf and Anna Ens of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Photo: Courtesy of Anna Ens, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Menno Simons 500: A Birthday Anniversary

by William Schroeder

In the sixteenth century Europe was a place of uncertainty and change. Martin Luther had challenged the mightiest power on earth in his day, the Roman Catholic Church, causing many people to abandon that medieval institution and to follow him in his teachings. However, the torch of the Reformation did not remain there but was taken up by other reformers who modified Luther's teachings in some important respects and soon gained a following of their own.

The Anabaptists in Zurich, led by Conrad Grebel, constituted such a group. They advocated a personal faith in Christ, adult baptism and separation of church and state. Persecution compelled them to flee to neighbouring countries and so to spread Anabaptist ideas. In the Netherlands one of their converts, Menno Simons, became their leader and in the course of time the whole movement adopted his name.

Menno Simons was born in Witmarsum, Friesland, in 1496, four years after Columbus

discovered America.¹ In 1520, at the age of twenty-four, he was ordained as priest and assigned to the Catholic Church in the village of Pingjum, two kilometres northwest of Witmarsum.

Menno was a successful and contented priest before a series of events brought about a crisis and radical change in his way of life. First, while carrying out his usual priestly duties, doubts came to him about the reality of a miracle transpiring with the Mass. Did the bread and wine he was using actually change into the body of Christ? When these doubts persisted, Menno discussed his personal perplexity and doubt with his superior. He searched the writings of the Church Fathers and the Reformers but none could offer a satisfactory solution to his questions.

Finally, and with great apprehension, Menno decided to search diligently in the New Testament, a book he had never read before. He was surprised to discover that the

Bible taught nothing of the traditional teaching of the Church on the Mass.

The second event that changed Menno's life occurred in Leeuwarden on March 20, 1531. On that day a tailor named Sicke Freerks was publicly beheaded because he had been rebaptized. When Menno heard that the victim was a good, God-fearing man, he wondered why a man would be ready to die for faith linked to his baptism. He wondered whether the Catholic Church could be mistaken about child baptism as it was wrong about transubstantiation.

Once more he turned to the Scriptures for an answer. He discovered that there was in fact no Biblical basis for infant baptism. In spite of all his inner turmoil, outwardly Menno still appeared as a successful priest. He was promoted to the position of pastor in Witmarsum.

The third event that changed Menno's life was the tragedy at Bolsward on April 7, 1535. On that day a group of some three hundred radical Anabaptists (Melchiorites), who had taken refuge in an old cloister and had barricaded themselves against government forces, were overpowered and slain. Among those killed was Menno's own brother. This catastrophe, occurring less than four kilometres south-east of Witmarsum, made a profound impression on Menno Simons. He saw the victims as poor, misguided sheep who, although in error, dared to face death for their convictions. He, on the other hand, knew the truth of the gospel but didn't have the courage to follow it. While in this traumatic state of mind and soul, Menno turned to God for forgiveness and was fully changed. The whole truth dawned on him gradually. For another nine months he remained within the Catholic Church, but in January, 1536, he gave up his priestly office. He turned his back on a life of ease, security and pleasure, and deliberately chose the way of the cross.

For several months after his conversion and subsequent renunciation of the priesthood, Menno went into hiding in the vicinity of Witmarsum. He stayed in the home of Hermann and Gerrit Jansz, who lived about one kilometre southeast of the village, for at least part of the time. Their house was one of a cluster of four cottages. A small shed (*Scheune*), which was almost totally hidden from view by the four neighbouring dwellings, was attached to the

Jansz house. According to tradition it was in this *Scheune* that Menno was baptized. It was also there that he married Gertrude Hoyer, his life's companion. And it was there that he first preached the gospel and won men and women to Christ.²

When Menno's activities and hiding place became known, his persecution at the hand of the state and church officials commenced. On October 24, 1536, the public prosecutor of Friesland demanded that Hermann and Gerrit Jansz publicly admit their error or be sentenced to death for having sheltered "Menno Simonzoon," the former pastor in Witmarsum. However, before they could be apprehended, the two couples fled to the vicinity of Groningen. In Groningen Obbe Philips and several other leaders of the moderate wing of the Anabaptists persuaded Menno Simons to accept ordination as elder of their new church. From that day forward Menno, his wife, and their three children wandered from one hiding place to another and from one city or state to another wherever Anabaptists were tolerated. In 1543 he fled to Emden, in 1545 to Cologne, and in 1546 to Wismar. It was during his stay in Emden that his followers were first referred to as "Mennists".

Wherever Menno Simons went he preached the gospel, baptized new converts, ordained ministers, organized churches and wrote books.³ At all times he had to travel and work in secret because of threats to his life. In 1542 an imperial edict in the name of Charles V was issued against Menno. The edict placed a price of 100 gold guilders on his head and forbade anyone from giving him aid or shelter and from reading his books. These edicts were not mere words, but were strictly enforced. In 1539, Tjaert Reyerts was tortured and killed at the wheel in Leeuwarden because he had given lodging to Menno Simons. Another man was executed because he had transported Menno Simons in a boat down the Meuse River from Fischerswert to Roermond. On April 16, 1545, Quirinus Pieters was burnt at the stake in Groningen because he had been baptized by Menno Simons six years earlier.

To help government officials apprehend their most wanted criminals, Menno Simons being one of them, they employed artists to prepare posters which displayed sketches of the offenders and provided information about the reward. These posters were displayed in public places. It is believed that followers of



Menno Simons retained some of these posters as treasured souvenirs. Later these sketches were used by artists such as van Sichem, de Cooge and van de Velde to prepare the first formal portraits of Menno Simons, some of which are available to us today. Menno's stay in Wismar from 1546-1554 was a relatively peaceful one. He was able to spend most of his time visiting newly organized Mennonite churches from Flanders to the Vistula Delta in West Prussia.

However, as time went on, the civil and ecclesiastical authorities in Wismar made it difficult for Mennonites to reside in that city. They declared that all Anabaptists should be banished from Wismar by November 11, 1554. Menno fled to the village of Wüstenfelde on the Fresenburg estate, north of Bad Oldesloe, a few months before the deadline. The owner of the estate, Bartholomäus von Ahlefeld (?-1568), had participated in a military campaign against Charles V in 1542. He was greatly impressed with the Mennonites whom he had met in Julich, North Brabant and Antwerp.

When Bartholomäus von Ahlefeld inherited Fresenburg in 1543, he immediately invited the Mennonites to settle on his estate. Many Mennonites eagerly responded to Ahlefeld's invitation and immigrated to Fresenburg. They settled on a small knoll about two kilometres northeast of Bad Oldesloe. Their settlement was locally known as Wüstenfelde. In spite of numerous requests and demands from King Christian III and his brother Prince Adolph to evict the Mennonites from his property, Ahlefeld

continued to shelter them.⁴ For Menno this was an ideal refuge where he could spend the last few years of his life.

Menno Simons wrote his first book just before he left the Catholic Church. He continued to write and publish books as he fled from one state to another. With the help of Ahlefeld he set up a print shop in what is now known as the Menno Cottage (*Mennokate*) between Bad Oldesloe and Wüstenfelde. There with the help of an experienced printer he revised and printed his earlier books and published some new ones. His sermons were Bible-centred and Christ-centred. The people who heard or read Menno's sermons thought his style and content were profound.⁵ The fact that Philip II had the writings of Menno Simons placed on the Index⁶ on December 10, 1557, confirms the effectiveness of his books.

Menno Simons died in 1561 at the age of sixty-five and was buried in the vegetable garden behind his house in Wüstenfelde.⁷

Menno Simons created a place for himself in the history of the Christian Church. During the years of the most relentless persecution by Charles V and Philip II he encouraged the harassed brethren and gave them leadership in doctrine and faith. In 1541 a royal advisor in Friesland complained to the King's regent in the Netherlands: "The pesky sect of Anabaptists would have been eradicated by now if it weren't for Menno Simons who visits the area once or twice every year and leads many people astray." Menno caught a vision of what Christ meant when he said, "...teach them to obey everything I have commanded you."⁸ For him Christianity was more than faith only.⁹ It was faith and works, the fruit of the Spirit, "for faith without works is dead."¹⁰

Stone markers have been erected near Witmarsum and Bad Oldesloe so that future generations may remember where Menno Simons lived, laboured and died. However, by far the most significant memorial is the church that still bears his name and whose members accept his understanding of discipleship.¹¹

Endnotes

¹ Historians disagree about the dates of Menno Simons' birth and death. The dates used in this article were suggested by Karel Vos (1874-1926). Jacob G. de Hoop

(cont'd on page 11)

GENEALOGY AND FAMILY HISTORY

by Alf Redekopp

Queries

Braun / Loewen - I am seeking information on the ancestors, siblings and descendants of Johann Braun (b. 26 May 1836 - 1897) and Gertrude Loewen (15 April 1836 - 1904). Apparently some relatives of Gertrude Loewen came to Canada in 1923 at the same time as their nephews Franz, Dietrich, Peter and David Braun but they lost contact in Canada. I would like to get in touch with this family as well as obtain any other information regarding the above. Please contact: Deborah Stasiewski, 12742-23 Avenue, Surrey, B.C. V4A 2C7

Dueck - I am seeking information on the family of Johann Dueck (1848-1933), son of Isaac Dueck and Maria Blatz of Fürstenland, who was married to Aganetha Redekopp (1852-1909), daughter of David Redekopp and Aganetha Giesbrecht. Any information about Isaac Dueck's ancestors, siblings and descendants would be appreciated. Contact: John Dyck, Box 344, Blumenort, MB R0A 0C0.

Dyck / Zacharias - I am seeking information about Mrs. Agatha Dyck nee Dyck. She was a foster child in the home of William Zacharias before she married a Gerhard Dyck. Gerhard Dyck was murdered in Russia and Agatha came to Canada with her three boys in 1923. Contact: Esther Dyck, 301-32040 Peardonville Road, Abbotsford, BC V2T 6N8.

Funk - I am seeking information on the parents of Peter Funk (b. 17 March 1805 d. 15 March 1855) and his wife Helena Schroeter (b. 5 Nov. 1806 d. 16 April 1869). Contact: Queenie Martens, 4435 Cascade Drive, Vernon, BC V1T 8J7.

Hamm/Berg - I am seeking information on the ancestors, siblings, and descendants of Heinrich Hamm (b. 15 Sept. 1825) and Margareta Berg (b. 17 Sept. 1835). They were married 11 Oct. 1855. Margareta is a descendent of a Jacob Berg (b. 16 Oct. 1791) and Helena Sawatsky (b. 1792). The parents and siblings of Heinrich Hamm are unknown. Please contact: Deborah Stasiewski, 12742-23 Ave., Surrey, BC V4A 2C7.

Hamm/Dyck - I am seeking information on my great grandparents, David Hamm and Sarah Dyck. David was born in Southern Russia and his family immigrated to Canada when he was two years old. They settled near Morden, Manitoba. I estimate he was born sometime between 1870-1885. Sarah Dyck was born in Morden, Manitoba, about 1870-

1885. I think her family originally came from Pennsylvania, USA. They were probably married in Manitoba in the late 1890's. My grandmother, Annie, the fifth of 12 children was born in Manitoba on December 28, 1904. The family later moved to the Rosthern, Saskatchewan area, where they farmed. About 1929 many of the Hamm's moved to the Chilcotin area of British Columbia where they homesteaded. Names of the children are: Sarah, Elizabeth, Lena, Hugo, Annie, Mary, John, Bert, Matilda, David, Wanda, and Edgar. Contact: Lorie Wilson, 1785 Rutland Rd, Kelowna, B.C. V1X 4Z8, ph 604-491-0363, e-mail: lwilson@awinc.com

Nickel / Geddert - I am seeking information on the ancestors of Peter Nickel (1826-ca.1877) who was married to Anna Geddert (ca.1829-1882). They lived in Liebenau, Molotschna and also Wohldemfürst, Kuban. Their children were Anna (b. 1852) who first married Peter Isaak and then Abram Loewen; Peter (b.1853 d. 1937) who emigrated to Kansas; Sara (b. 1858) who married a Schmor; Abraham who married Sara K. Klassen and emigrated to Borden, SK, in 1903; Jacob b. 1868 and Kornelius b. 1870. Contact: Wesley Nickel, 2402 Wiltse Dr., Penticton, BC V2A 7Y9.

Voth - I am looking for information on Andreas Voth (1826-1885) and Katharina Wall (1828-1908). They had a son Johannes (1854-1920) who was born in in Pastwa, Molotschna where Andreas was teaching. Andreas Voth was one of the eighteen men who signed the 1860 document of secession which brought the MB Church into being. This family lived for a few years near Neuhoffnung and then moved to Neuman, Crimea, where Andreas died. Contact: A. Schroeder, 434 Sutton Ave., Winnipeg, MB R2G 0T3.

Recent Books

Katy Penner, ed. *The Penner Family : Faithful through Adversity* (Saskatoon, SK: PENN Publishers/Penner, Katy, 1996), pb., 490 pp.

This book traces the ancestry and descendants of Kornelius Heinrich Penner (1842-1933), seventh child of Heinrich Penner (1801-1843) and Margareta Loewen, born in Schoenhörst, Chortitza settlement, South Russia. Kornelius was first married to Helena Peters (1844-1881) and then to twice-widowed Helena Wiebe (1852-1932), daughter of Jakob and Helena Friesen. Shortly after his first marriage, he moved to the village of Schoendorf, Borozenko Colony where he lived the rest of his life. Contact: Katy Penner, 5-80 Berini Drive, Saskatoon,

SK, Canada S7N 3P8.

Ernest Dyck, ed. *The Peter Dyck Family* (St. Catharines, ON: Ernest Dyck, 1996) pb., 42 pp.

This book contains the family history of Peter Dyck (1873-1926) who was born and resident in Hirschau, Molotschna, Russia. He was married first to Margaretha Sukkau (1875-1908) and then to Katharina Toews (1887-1968). Peter Dyck was murdered by roving bandits the night after the family held its auction sale in preparation for emigrating from Russia to Canada in 1926. The book describes the events surrounding the survival and growth of this family in Canada, first in Alberta and then in British Columbia after 1937. Contact: Ernest Dyck, 102-201 Dorchester Blvd., St. Catharines, ON, Canada L2M 7W1.

Esther Patkau, ed. *The Paethkeau Book 1714-1987 Volume 2* (Saskatoon, SK: Private publication, 1996) hdc., 376 pp. \$65.00.

The first volume of *Paethkeau Book 1714-1987* was published in 1987. Volume 2 contains several large sections of information that were not available in 1987. It is primarily information which came from the families who were resident in the northern parts of the former USSR, especially from the Orenburg settlement, and are now in Germany. The biographical sketches and short stories appear in both English and German and there are many photographs. The common ancestor for this family is Jacob Paetkau (1789-1843) who lived in Burwalde, Chortitza, South Russia. Contact: Esther Patkau, 2206 Wiggins Avenue, Saskatoon, SK Canada S7J 1W7.

Genealogical Resources

The Mennonite Heritage Centre and the Centre for MB Studies have recently acquired copies of the following: *The Complete Brandregister of 1727* transcribed by Glenn H. Penner of Guelph, ON; *The Deutsch Kazun Mennonite Church baptism register 1834-1943* and *The Molotschna School Attendance Register of 1862, (P.J. Braun Archives)* both transcribed by Arnold M. Schroeder of St. Catharines, ON; and *Two Alphabetical Lists of Baptisms in West Prussia 1773-1804 for Rosenort, Elbing-Ellerwald, Ladekopp and Orloffsfelde* edited by George H. Fast of Lynn Lake, MB, Canada, and previously published in *Mennonite Family History*.

Send inquiries to Alf Redekopp, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4 or 169 Riverton Ave, Winnipeg, MB R2L 2E5. E-mail: aredek@mbnet.mb.ca

Getting Together: The Ontario Swiss and Russian Mennonites At First Glance (Conclusion)

by Lorna Bergey

The first part of this article was printed in the June 1996 issue of the Mennonite Historian.

The outstanding event of the day for me was the returning of thanks audibly by one of the guests from Russia, after partaking of the meal. It was a totally new experience for me.

Another point of interest in this story is that it was after the Mennonites in Ontario received the Mennonites from Russia into their homes that they first realized that divisions had occurred in the Mennonite brotherhood in Russia, very much like the divisions in the Mennonite brotherhood in America. Thus, some members in our congregation had a migrant family in their home who refused to regard another Russian Mennonite family billeted in the same congregation as a member of the family of Menno.

On Sunday morning the guests usually went along with their hosts to attend worship service. Perhaps this experience demanded a greater exercise of Christian understanding on the part of our guests than did the demands of adjusting to unfamiliar eating and working habits of the Pennsylvania German Mennonites.

Surprise was expressed at the small simple meeting houses used by the Pennsylvania German Mennonites for their places of worship. There was no ornamentation inside or outside, only functional simplicity. The services were conducted in a simple style by pastors with no theological training who supported themselves by farming. The congregational singing was unaccompanied. Traditional hymns and lighter gospel songs were sung. There were no choirs or singing ensembles as this was considered an expression of pride and classified as a performance rather than act of worship. Looking back from this point I am sure the services seemed very drab to our guests.

Our sisters usually were clad in rather conservative colours and clothing styles. All wore a white net cap on their heads while in church. The married ladies in the Russian Mennonite group wore large black bows in their hair and their dresses were somewhat more stylish than was encouraged by the Ontario Mennonite church at that time. To them stylish dress was an indication of pride and conformity to the world, two pitfalls the conference leaders continually admonished their members to avoid.

In the 1920's the Ontario Mennonite churches were still experiencing sensations of the Great Revival movement which swept through the Mennonite churches in America at the turn of this century. In these meetings people responded to the invitation of the evangelist to turn from the world and to begin a new life in Christ, including a personal commitment to live a pure life, to abstain from the use of alcohol and tobacco, to refrain from involvement with worldly business associates, and to avoid worldly entertainment.

Early in our encounter certain strained relationships developed between the Russian Mennonites and their Canadian hosts. This was probably magnified by the language barriers. Also, the accounts of survival tactics resorted to by the Mennonites in Russia, which smacked of outright violence, simply left the Mennonites in Ontario aghast. The Mennonites in Ontario were eight generations removed from the scene of famine and harassment. They could not empathize easily with their Mennonite brothers and sisters from Russia.

Most of the immigrants arrived at the time of our annual fall communion service. The communion service is always followed by a foot-washing service. Some of our guests were highly amused at this ritual and spoke lightly of the ceremony among themselves in German, unfortunately within ear shot of a host who also happened to be conversant in

the German language. This incident further corroborated the Ontario Mennonites' earlier impression of the Mennonites from Russia, i.e., that they were inclined to pride. The foot-washing ceremony was to serve as a reminder that within the brotherhood we are to be servants of each other.

Longing to hear a sermon in the German language, many guest families asked their hosts to take them to the local Lutheran church when a German service was held. Only recently did I learn that they not only longed for a sermon in good German but that they also longed for the sound of a good pipe organ and a church choir, both taboo to the Ontario Mennonites at that time.

The enthusiasm with which the Mennonites from Russia observed religious holidays such as Christmas and Easter, with special programs and decorations was a matter of great concern to the Swiss Mennonites because they considered such observances to be pagan. However I do recall hearing the observation made in later years that our brothers from Russia showed evidence of possessing some of the truth.

The time was not ripe for an inter-Mennonite exchange as we are experiencing today. Each group preferred to establish and protect its own identity. The language problem and cultural differences provided a barrier insurmountable at that time so we went our separate ways.

Occasional interchange among the leaders through the NRRO, forerunner of MCC

(cont'd on page 11)



Swiss and Russian Mennonites marched in 1984 for getting together to merge the conferences which became the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada. The actual merger happened administratively on February 1, 1988. Photo: Courtesy of Mennonite Reporter, Waterloo, Ontario.

The 1835 Molotschna Census Chortitza/Bergthal Colony Connections

by Glenn Penner

In the summer of 1990 a large collection of Mennonite archival material, collected by a Molotschna settlement school teacher Peter J. Braun and presumed lost after 1929, was discovered, independently, by Dr. George K. Epp of Menno Simons College, Winnipeg, MB and Dr. Harvey Dyck of the University of Toronto, Toronto, ON.¹ When news of the discovery of these records reached the Manitoba Mennonite community there was considerable interest as to what genealogical information might be found. I think that there was some disappointment when it was learned that, aside from a few tid-bits, the only major acquisition of genealogical importance was a census of the Molotschna Colony villages from the year 1835.

Although this census is of considerable significance to the descendants of the Molotschna Mennonites who emigrated to the U.S. in the 1870s and to North and South America in the 1920s and 1940s, the relevance of this document to those whose ancestors lived in the Chortitza Colony is not so obvious. In this article I would like to point out some interesting and hitherto unknown information that I have gleaned from the 1835 census. One of my goals is to show some surprising connections between this census and the Chortitza and Bergthal colonies. I will further illustrate how Russian records can provide information reaching back to the generation of Prussian Mennonites that preceded the emigration to Russia.

Those who have taken a close look at the census will have noticed the occasional occurrence of the statement "nach Chortitz" (or "to Chortitz" in the English translation). I have been able to identify 57 of these entries. I have also been able to make several connections to existing Chortitza Colony, Bergthal Colony and Manitoba records. First it should be pointed out that these entries do not appear in the original Russian but are added in German. I have found that "Chortitz", in this case, means the Chortitza or Bergthal Colonies. For example Peter Dirksch Heinrichs (31 years, i.e. born in 1804) of the Molotschna village of Friedensdorf is said to have moved with his family to Chortitza in 1836, but in fact can be found in the church records of the Bergthal Colony (Vol. A, p. 37).²

That same year the families of Peter Johann Funk (b. 1799) of Rudnerweide and

Jacob Kornelius Stoesz (b. 1780) of Halbstadt are recorded as leaving the Molotschna Colony. Both of these families ended up in the Bergthal Colony. Peter Funk can be found in Vol. A, p. 102, of the Bergthal Colony *Gemeindebuch*.² His son Johann (1836-1917) later became the Ältester of the West Reserve Bergthal Church in Manitoba.^{2,3} Johann Funk was born in Nieder Chortitz in the Chortitza Colony. The census also lists Peter Funk's father, Johann Johann Funk (b. 1773) in the same village (Rudnerweide), indicating that there was a grandfather, Johann Funk, who possibly remained in Prussia.

Jacob Stoesz and his family can also be found in the Bergthal Colony church records (Vol. A, p. 90).² Jacob Stoesz is the ancestor of the Stoeszes presently living in North and South America.⁴ His son Kornelius (1836-1900) became a minister of the Bergthal Colony church in 1864. Son David (1842-1903) became a minister in 1869 and later (1882) became the Ältester of the Chortitzer church in Manitoba. These two examples also show how the census of 1835 can provide information reaching back to pre-immigration times in Prussia. From the Stoesz entry we know that Jacob Stoesz's father was Kornelius. This is in agreement with the Stoesz Genealogy.⁴ Kornelius Stoesz (1731-1811) remained in Prussia.

In one case it is actually possible to make a connection from the Prussian forefather (who never left Prussia) to the Old Colony (Reinländer Gemeinde) Church Records in Manitoba with this single document. The family of Abraham Franz Peters (b. 1801) is listed as moving from Marienthal to the Chortitza Colony in 1843. His sons Jacob (b. 1830) and Abraham (b. 1832) are listed on pages 116 and 132, respectively, of the Manitoba Old Colony church register.⁵ In a census of 1881, Jacob is found to be living in Blumenort and Abraham in Rosenort.²

The Old Colony church records also give Franz (b. 1840) and Heinrich (b. 1842) as children of Abraham and Aganetha Peters. These two were born after the 1835 census. Abraham's (b. 1801) father, Franz Franz Peters (b. 1771) can also be found on the same page of the 1835 census. Having been born before 1788, Franz Franz Peters must have come from Prussia, either with his own family or as part of his father Franz Peters' family. I can find only one Franz Peters in B.H. Unruh's book⁶ and that is Franz Peters who lived in Schoenhorst, in the Chortitza Colony, in 1795 and 1802. Although this

Franz Peters is of about the right age in the 1795 Revisions-Liste, a closer look⁷ shows that he is not the Franz Franz Peters of the 1835 census.

This is one of a number of cases where people who have appeared in the 1835 census, and were born well before the move to Russia, cannot be found in Unruh's book. Since Franz Franz Peters was born before 1776 one might expect to find his father Franz Peters Sr. in the 1776 Prussian census.⁸ The name appears three times: in Augustwalde, Neumuensterberg and Rudnerweide. I will leave it up to the interested genealogist to determine which is the right one.

The Molotschna census of 1835 will, no doubt, prove to be a very useful source of genealogical and demographic information. The Molotschna-Chortitza (Bergthal) connection is certainly of interest and definitely warrants a closer look.

References

- ¹ *Mennonite Historian* Vol. 18, No. 1 (March, 1992), p. 4.
- ² John Dyck, ed. *Bergthal Gemeinde Buch* (Steinbach, MB: Hanover Steinbach Historical Society, Inc., 1993) This book includes 1881 Federal Census data.
- ³ Mary Dueck Jeffery, ed. *Ältester Johann Funk: a Family Tree* (Winnipeg, MB: the author, 1980).
- ⁴ Henry D. Stoesz, ed. *Jacob Stoesz 1780-1859* (1972).
- ⁵ John Dyck and Bill Harms, eds. *Reinländer Gemeindebuch 1880-1903* (Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 1994).
- ⁶ B.H. Unruh, ed. *Die niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der Mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Karlsruhe: Schneider Verlag, 1955).
- ⁷ Henry Schapansky, "Schönhorst: The Old Colony The First Settlers: 1788-1803, Part I", *Mennonite Family History*, July 1993, p. 111.
- ⁸ H. Penner, ed. *Die ost und westpreussische Mennoniten* (Weierhof, Germany: Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein, 1978).

Editor's note: The list of 57 persons in the 1835 Molotschna Census who have connections with Chortitza is available at the Mennonite Heritage Centre and on the internet at: www.infobahn.mb.ca/mmhs/mmhs.htm.

Dr. Glenn Penner is a professor in the Department of Chemistry, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario and an avid genealogist. e-mail: gpenner@uoguelph.ca

New Mennonite Sources from Russia and Ukraine

The post-Gorbachev period has opened up new opportunities to do research in archival centres of the Former Soviet Union, and also to procure materials from those collections.

One of the largest bodies of materials to reach the Mennonite Heritage Centre and the Centre for MB Studies, and several other Mennonite institutions, is a set of microfilm of Mennonite records in St. Petersburg. Personnel from the St. Petersburg Christian University have helped to make these arrangements. Ten rolls are at the Centre now, ten more are on the way, and the finishing of the task (we are told, by the end of the year), may result in yet another ten. An inventory is available for the materials already on hand.

A second collection available here now includes 2000 pages (mostly written in Russian) of photocopied material from the Zaporozhian State Archives in Zaporozhe, Ukraine. It was offered in exchange for help in securing a computer which is now in use there. The assistant archivist, Alexander Tedeev, has been very helpful also to private Mennonite researchers who are able to access the files in that institution. An inventory for this material is being prepared, and should be ready soon.

An extensive collection of printed materials in both Russian and German has been deposited here through the courtesy of Dr. Terry Martin of Chicago, Illinois. Dr. Martin has spent extensive time doing research in Moscow, and was able to obtain copies of many articles not available in North America before. An inventory of this material can be obtained from the Centre here also.

Smaller collections include audio-tapes from the Mennonite village of Neudachino, Siberia, miscellaneous files on the All-Russian Mennonite Agricultural Society, documents related to Forstei service in tsarist Russia (including 18 letters written in German from a recruit in the CO camps to his relatives), lists of persons executed in the Altai region in Siberia, and other items.

We will be happy to send duplicates of



A meeting of archivists at the Zaporozhian State Archives in August, 1996. Left to right: Lawrence Klippenstein, historian archivist at Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, Canada; V.I. Leventsov, director at the Zaporozhian archives, Zaporozhe, Ukraine, and Alexander S. Tedeev, assistant archivist at the same institution. Photo: Courtesy of Heinz Bergen, Regina, Canada.

inventories and other items if they can be located easily, for the cost of copying, handling and postage.

Our thanks go to generous donors who have helped make it possible to obtain the materials noted. If anyone can assist financially with the publication of several books on pacifism in Russia, please write or call and we will provide details. An outline of these projects appeared as an insert in the June *Historian*. If you would like another copy of this outline, please notify us.

Recent Archival Contacts in the FSU

by Lawrence Klippenstein

It was my privilege to direct an August tour to the FSU, and to make a number of helpful archives-related contacts along the way. Unfortunately we were not able to connect with people working on our microfilm project in St. Petersburg, but recent messages have kept us up-to-date on that work.

In Moscow I wanted to see Dr. Sergei Sokolovskii to return some materials on Siberian Mennonites which he loaned to us several years ago. Sergei was away but he has communicated with us a few weeks ago,

noting also that a book he has done on Siberian Mennonites has just come off the press. We have placed an order for several copies.

In Moscow too I wanted to visit with another scholar, Peter Rempel, but he seemed to be out of town. We are trying to secure some materials he has gathered on former Mennonite khutors (estates), and may be able to report more on that shortly. You will find a photo he had submitted elsewhere in this issue.

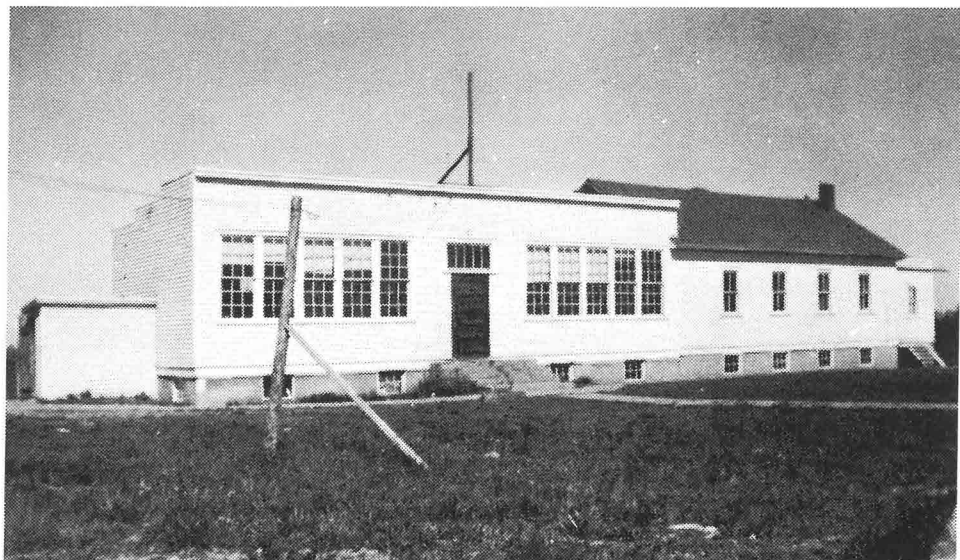
We were very pleased to obtain the promised help of a young teacher in Orenburg to do some research for us in the archives of that city. She has submitted her first report, with the name of another researcher, Ms. Neufeld, who is deeply interested in Mennonite research.

In Zaporozhe we enjoyed a very cordial conversation with Alexander Tedeev, mentioned above, and also with the director of his institution, Valentine Ivanovich Leventsov. They showed us some of their collections and expressed their appreciation of contacts with western Mennonites who are interested in materials available in their holdings. Mr. Tedeev submitted the final half of the photoduplication project which is mentioned in the New Holdings article of this issue.

An interesting new experience was an invitation to look at a collection of old books that once were in the library of the former Chortitza Mennonite Church. We were taken to the apartment of their owner, an Armenian artist, who is interested in selling these materials if he can. The same pile of books had a large collection of annual parts catalogues from Germany, once owned by the Lepp and Wallmann factory, and dating from the 1870s. They are for sale also. We had been told there was some manuscript material in this collection but were not shown anything on this visit. Something may be available later, we were told.

One evening a young scholar, Sasha Beznov, came to our hotel with Oksana, his wife, and presented us with an interesting map showing places of Mennonite activity in the city of Dnepropetrovsk in the early 1900s. He also gave us several copies of journals from the University of Dnepropetrovsk containing very recently-published studies of Germans and Mennonites in that general region.

We hope it will be possible to sustain connections with these people, and to create a network of scholarly work which will be beneficial both to our Russian and Ukrainian colleagues, and to our own communities here in North America.



The Alberta Mennonite High School in Coaldale, Alberta, Canada ca 1952. Photo: From *MB Church of Coaldale, Alberta 1926-1976* (1976) p. 25.

Recent Events at CMBS

This summer has been a very busy one at the Centre for MB Studies in Winnipeg. On June 7 and 8 the Centre hosted the annual meeting of the Historical Commission of the Mennonite Brethren Church (North America). Although the Commission generally has met in Fresno, California, it has recently met at various other locations, including Hillsboro, KS, Abbotsford, BC and Salem, OR. These have been educational experiences for Commission members because they have provided opportunities to learn something about the history of congregations in the particular areas.

Highlights of the meetings included extensive discussion of microfilming projects in Russian/Ukrainian archives, approval of several forthcoming publications and sharing of the activities of each of the Centres (Hillsboro, Fresno, Abbotsford, and Winnipeg). John Sharp also attended all the meetings, representing the Mennonite Church, and Lawrence Klippenstein attended some of the meetings on behalf of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

In early July the convention of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches met in Winnipeg. The Centre sponsored several well-attended workshops

entitled, "Heritage Celebration: Writing Family and Congregational History." Abe Dueck also organized a tour which included visits to the Mennonite Heritage Village near Steinbach and a Hutterite colony at Crystal Springs.

Alberta Mennonite High School Reunion

A reunion celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Alberta Mennonite High School in Coaldale, Alberta, in 1946 took place at the Dalhousie Mennonite Brethren Church in Calgary on August 31 to September 1. Approximately 300 guests, most of them former students, teachers and spouses, attended the very successful event. The *Mennonite Historian* hopes to publish more on the history and significance of this school in a future issue.

Summer Projects

Special funding has enabled the Centre to pursue several projects during the summer of 1996. Funding from the federal government's CareerStart program allowed the Centre to hire Jennifer Rogalsky for ten weeks to

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

continue the computer cataloguing of books in the J.A. Toews Historical Library. This project was begun last year when Tamara Dyck worked at the Centre two days a week.

Alvina Block has been working on a Personal Papers Redescription project which is funded by a Control of Holdings Grant received through the Canadian Council of Archives. This project, when complete, will provide a much more detailed and accurate inventory of the Personal Papers Collection at CMBS. Many of the major collections, such as the B.B. Janz Collection, had very inadequate descriptions of the inventory.

Saskatchewan Records Transferred to CMBS

For many years a large number of records of the Northern District and Southern District conferences of the Mennonite Brethren churches of Saskatchewan as well as the records of a number of congregations have been stored in an archival room at Bethany Bible Institute. It became increasingly clear that this storage facility was inadequate and that trained staff was not available to process the material and to allow proper accessibility. After discussions with the Saskatchewan Conference executive it was agreed that the material should be transferred to the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Winnipeg. In early September Abe Dueck travelled to Bethany and loaded approximately 35 boxes of material in a rented van. These were then transported to Winnipeg where they will be processed and stored.

Many congregations continue to house their records in their local church. The Centre has had considerable success in the last several years in encouraging congregations to transfer these to the Canadian Conference archives in Winnipeg. This will provide better guarantees that the records will be preserved for future generations. Dialogue with various congregations will continue in the hope that more will transfer their records to the Centre.

Now Available

Mennonite Historical Atlas. Second Edition Revised and Expanded
by William Schroeder and Helmut T. Huebert

\$25.00 (soft cover) and \$35.00 (hard cover), plus shipping and GST.
Order from Centre for M.B. Studies, 169 Riverton Ave., Winnipeg, MB R2L 2E5

The EMBs - I Wonder...

by Cal Redekop

I have just read your second instalment of the EMB story in Alberta and thank you very much for the important reporting you have done. As you may know, I am just now finishing a socio-historical work on the DMB/EMB/FEBC. Your research has corroborated the information and generally the conclusions I have arrived at regarding the Alberta congregations. I am citing your research in the text.

However, your conclusions regarding the renaming of the conference the "Evangelical Mennonite Brethren" because of the immigration in the 1920s of the Russian Mennonites connected with the *Allianz* evangelicals is not necessarily proven by the information you provide.

I'll start with the implied arguments. The Alberta congregations were not very significant for DMB (Defenseless Mennonite Brethren) life during the time of the name change. To begin with, they were not sure who they were (i.e., MB or *Allianz* or what), thus could not have been very influential, especially in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Secondly, they were just becoming organized and so could not affect decision-making among DMBs very much. As a matter of fact, the 1935 Yearbook includes an extensive historical report by A.A. Toews, indicating that this may have been the first time the conference heard a report from them. What is more, the early DMBs were in touch with the *Allianz* movement and members in Russia, so the Alberta contingent was not the only contact.

I also find your comment that evangelicalism was not known as a term during the 1930s since "neo-evangelicalism did not emerge until the 1940s" somewhat mystifying and tangential. Neo-evangelicalism emerged out of evangelicalism which had a long history and was quite healthy during the 1920s and 1930s, if I know anything about the history of religion in America. So why should the DMBs wait until neo-evangelicalism came along in order to make an authentic name change to evangelicalism when it was the reigning paradigm in America?

You are assuming it was influential, and I agree that it was. My research and reading of the DMB is that they were "evangelical" from the outset, and that it is the most logical and predictable name for an emerging movement in the process of losing its Anabaptist emphasis. The third article of the original

constitution (1889) reads, "The Purpose of this conference is not only to build each other up in the faith, but to spread the net of conversion (*das Netz des Evangeliums*). Nothing is more clear in the history of the DMB/EMB/FEBC than its strong emphasis on conversion and missions/evangelism. This was what they meant by being evangelical (*evangelisch* in German may have had a slightly different meaning.)

Hence I would say they had an inherent understanding of "evangelical", supported and enhanced by the reigning evangelicalism in America which was influencing the DMB as they were becoming assimilated. Here is where my earlier "Embarrassment" argument is relevant. I would admit that the argument in my "Embarrassment" article is not fully adequate, though not wrong. I wrote that before I began to research the history for my present manuscript.

I do not want to downgrade the importance of the Alberta events, but I do not think they were that crucial. The 1937 Yearbook gives the reason for putting the word "evangelical" in the name change as: "*Das Wort Evangelium bedeutet dass die Konferenz beim wahren Evangelium bleiben will.*" If my reasoning above is correct, and I am sure it is, then the name change is not that significant in the first place.

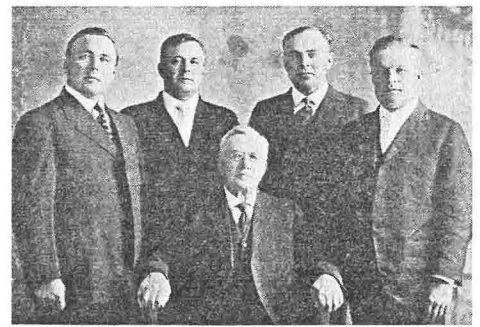
Dr. Cal Redekop resides in Harrisonburg, Virginia. He is retired from teaching at Conrad Grebel College in Waterloo, ON.

Response to Cal Redekop

by Abe Dueck

Cal Redekop's response to my article is appreciated and helpful. He is right that I have not proven that the renaming of the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren was the result of the influence of the Alberta *Allianz*. The language I used was "suggests" and "appears." Perhaps my inferences were unwarranted or overstated, but I do not find the counterarguments totally convincing.

It may be true that the EMBs did not know who they were, but they nonetheless insisted that they be allowed to retain the name "Evangelical Mennonite Brethren" when they decided to join the Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ in 1934. Redekop argues that the Alberta group could not have been very influential, but then states that contacts of the DMB with the EMB dated back to the earlier period in Russia.



Preachers of the Schultz Family. l - r: Henry, George, Dave, Jacob. Seated - Rev. Peter Schultz (father). George was active as an evangelist in the Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ of N.A. denomination. He took his training at Moody Bible Institute (1911-13). Chicago Theological Seminary (1915). Northern Baptist Seminary (S.T.B. and Th. M), 1916, 1918.

This suggests that the connections were even stronger than I had realized.

The issue of the role and understanding of evangelicalism in America is a rather complex issue. Firstly, I did not say that "evangelicalism" was not known as a term during the 1930s. Rather, I stated that the neo-evangelicalism of the post-1940s could not have been a factor in the change of name.

Evangelicalism of a particular kind was indeed the reigning paradigm in America during the 19th century, but the late 19th century and early 20th century brought about many changes in evangelicalism including the emergence of a new coalition which came to be called "fundamentalism" by the 1920s (see e.g., George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Eerdmans, 1992, pp. 62ff.). After the fundamentalist controversy of the 1920s, evangelicalism appeared to be in disarray until the 1940s, when the National Association of Evangelicals was formed and new evangelical strength emerged under the influence of people like Carl F. H. Henry and Billy Graham and in institutions such as Fuller Theological Seminary. As a result, evangelicalism reemerged as a force in American culture (Marsden, 63). My point was simply that the change of name in the DMB came before the advent of this new evangelicalism as a prominent religious movement in America. Many denominations adopted the term "evangelical" after these developments, not before.

I look forward to your forthcoming work on the DMB/EMB/FEBC. Perhaps this exchange can further illuminate what is sure to be a fascinating story relating to the identity struggle of this particular (Mennonite) group.

The Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church: Some Historical Notes

by William Schroeder

The original Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church in Alexanderwohl, Molotschna settlement, was built in 1865 (see top photo). The walls measuring twelve by twenty-two metres were constructed from red kiln-dried bricks. Inside arrangements included a large L-shaped balcony.

Because of its large size and central location in the settlement, the building was often used for conferences which were attended by representatives from neighbouring settlements such as Borozenko, Bergthal, Chortitza and Fuerstenland.

During the 1870s, for instance, a number of conferences dealing with the military question and conscription were held on these premises. In April, 1874, General Eduard Ivanovich Tottleben (1818-1884) had a meeting here to attempt to dissuade the Mennonites of southern Russia from emigrating. He also brought Tsar Alexander's offer to provide an alternative service so that Mennonites would not need to join the regular army which was being rebuilt at the time.

Half a century later, in 1921, the Mennonites had another conference here, this time resulting in the choice of B.B. Janz to serve as spokesperson for Mennonites who might wish to emigrate from Soviet Russia at

Mennonites in Canada Volume 3 Launched

The third volume of the series *Mennonites in Canada* was "launched" in Saskatoon on September 7 and in Manitoba on September 14 at the Lieutenant Governor's residence in Winnipeg. Dr. Ted D. Regehr formerly of the University of Saskatchewan is author of this volume. It may be purchased from the Mennonite Heritage Centre for \$25.00 plus shipping and GST.

this time.

In Gerhard Lorenz's book, *Heritage Remembered* (First edition, 1974, p.156), one can find a photo of a group of baptismal candidates (37 persons) and ministers standing at the main entrance to the building. The year was 1930, so it will have been one of the last groups to be baptized in the Stalin period.

The church was partially destroyed during

World War II. Only the lower part of the building remained, to be incorporated in reconstruction for other purposes.

Editor's note. A tour group travelled through Alexanderwohl this past August, and saw a building almost completely demolished. The guide informed the group that the remaining brick pile was what was left of the old church. Can anyone confirm this information?



The original Alexanderwohl Mennonite church building in the Molotschna colony.



Eduard Ivanovich Tottleben (1818-1884), military engineer. Photo: Courtesy of William Schroeder, Winnipeg, Canada.



A much later version of the church building which retained the lower portion of the original building. All photos on this page: Courtesy of William Schroeder, 434 Sutton Ave., Winnipeg, MB R2G OT3 Canada.

Call for Papers

Conference: An informal consortium of Mennonite historical societies invites papers and proposals to an upcoming conference entitled "One People, Many Stories: Comparing Mennonite Experiences in the United States and Canada through the Twentieth Century."

The sponsoring organizations include The Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, the Mennonite Historical Society (US), the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church, the Historical Commission of the Mennonite Brethren Church (North America), and the Brethren in Christ Historical Society.

Held at Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, BC on October 23-25, 1997, the conference will be focused on the Mennonite experience in North America, north and south of the US/Canada border.

Sessions (though not necessarily individual papers) should thus include an explicit comparative dimension. Topics could address, for instance, Canadian and US Mennonites' responses to social forces such as military service, nationalism, minority status, Evangelicalism/fundamentalism, popular culture or urbanization. Mennonite experiences in terms of race, gender or ethnicity could come under scrutiny; similarly, contrasting Mennonite initiatives in missions, service or peacemaking might be examined. Papers of a more reflective nature are also encouraged. Papers may be weighted towards, but are not restricted to, twentieth century developments. The *Mennonite Quarterly Review* is interested in publishing some of the conference proceedings, and will have the right of first refusal on conference papers.

Proposals are welcome both for individual papers and for entire sessions (2-3 papers, comments and discussion in a 1 1/2 to 2 hour session). The proposals should include a short 1-2 page abstract by the presenters and commentator(s), along with a one page curriculum vitae from each participant.

All proposals should be sent to Perry Bush, co-Chair, Planning Committee, History Department, Bluffton College, 280 W. College Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817; tel. 419-358-3278; e-mail: BushP@Bluffton.edu.

All materials must be postmarked no later than January 10, 1997. A limited number of travel subsidies for conference speakers and for student participants will be available.

Mennonite
1996 **Simons**
500 YEARS

Mennonite Genealogy on Internet

Genealogists interested in Mennonite genealogy can contact each other and exchange ideas through MennoLink.

Send the following MennoLink messages via e-mail to:

admin @MennoLink.org:

info

info groups

info policy

Among the MennoLink group is one specifically for genealogists:

menno.rec.roots

If you can access the Web, also try the following sites:

<http://www.infobahn.mb.ca/mmhs/mmhs.htm>

[gopher://pixel.cs.vt.edu/11/German-Russia%20Genealogy/](http://pixel.cs.vt.edu/11/German-Russia%20Genealogy/)

<http://www.genealogy.com/gene/faqs/faq.html>

<http://www.prairienet.org/mennonite/MennoLink/MFRI.txt>

---submitted by Adalbert Goertz, be404@yfn.ysu.edu

Now Available

Into the Past. Buildings of the Mennonite Commonwealth

by Rudy P Friesen and Sergey Shmakin

Covers the Chortitza, Molotschna, Zagradovka, Yazykovo, Crimea, and Baratov-Schlachtin colonies
pb., 352 pp., well-illustrated.

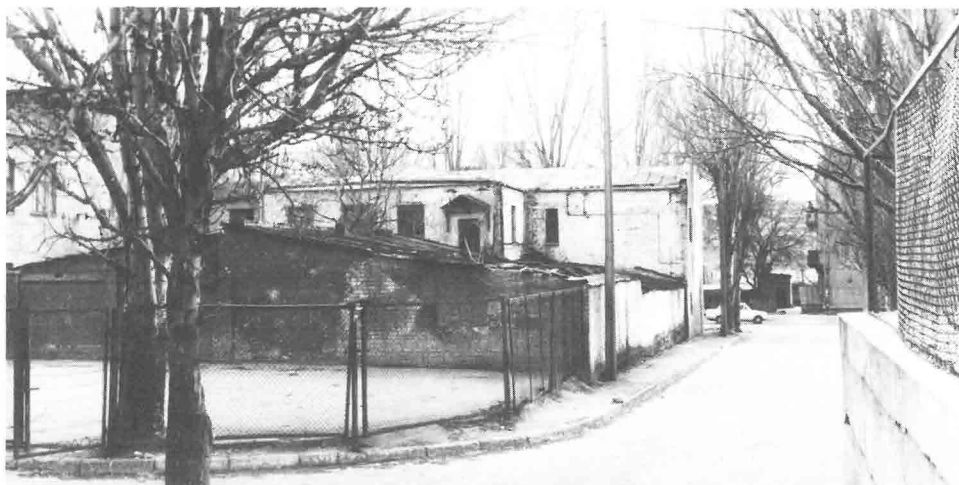
\$33.00 CAN plus postage and GST

Order from:

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



The site of the new archives building going up in Weierhof, Germany. The Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein is underwriting the project. The new Forschungstelle is to cost DM 500,000. Donations may be sent to Esther Driedger, Klosterhof 2, D-67295 Bolanden, Germany. Photo: Courtesy of Dr. Horst Gerlach, Weierhof, Germany.



This garage located at 28 Dzerzhinski St. in Zaporozhe, Ukraine, marks the site of the execution of hundreds of persons during the period 1936-1938. Photo: Courtesy of Peter Rempel, Moscow, Russia.

News Notes

● A new video series called **Cloud of Witnesses**, which explores the meaning of Anabaptist tradition and thought for contemporary society, has been launched by Mennonite Board of Missions. The first video **Rediscovering Anabaptism**, has stories of early Anabaptists interwoven with commentary by numerous Christians in England.

The video and study guide cost \$34.95 US/\$48.50 CAN plus shipping. Call or write Mennonite Board of Missions Media Ministries at 800-999-3534, 1251 Virginia Ave., Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

● The J.J. Thiessen lectures will be held **October 21-22, 1996, at Canadian Mennonite Bible College with guest speaker Nancy Murphy presenting on the topic "Christian Faith in a Scientific Age". Lectures will take place at 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. both days.**

● A member of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia is heading up a project to translate the 1848 **Gemeindeberichte** published by Margarite Woltner (reports on founding German and Mennonite villages in Ukraine - then southern Russia). If you would like to volunteer to help on the Mennonite section contact: Dale Lee Wahl, 7370 Grevena Ave. NE., Bremerton, WA 98311. E-mail: 74437.2151@compuserve.com.

● The book **Hague-Osler Mennonite Reserve (1895-1995)**, first released in the summer of 1995, is now about to go into its third printing. The cost of the volume remains \$55.00, plus \$7.00 for postage. Order from committee member Dick Braun, Box 184, Osler, SK S0K 3A0.

● The **twelfth Believers' Church Conference** will be held at **McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, ON on October 17-18, 1996.** For further information call **1-905-525-9140, ext. 24685** or e-mail bellousk@mcmaster.ca.

● Dr. Royden Loewen is the new appointee to the Chair of Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, MB. He began his duties this fall.

● Upcoming Mennonite publications include an autobiography by Jake M. Unrau, long-time missionary with Mennonite Pioneer Missions / Native Ministries (CMBC Publications); the fourth and final volume of **Mennonite Experience in America** (by Dr. Paul Toews, Herald Press), and a history of MCC

Ontario by Lucille Marr.

● New Menno Simons 500 souvenirs available include a T-shirt (see design on p.2), extra large, \$16.00 plus shipping and GST), a 14"x18" poster (same design), \$2.50 plus shipping and GST), and a 20"x24" *Fraktur* drawing for framing (\$30.00 plus shipping and GST). Order from Mennonite Heritage Centre, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4.

● The annual meeting of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada will be held at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario on December 6-7, 1996. A book launch for **Mennonites in Canada Volume III** will be held at that time also. For further information call Sam Steiner at 1-519-885-0220.

Getting Together

(cont'd from page 4)

Ontario, was the extent of our interchange until World War II loomed on the horizon. Then once again the sense of belonging together pervaded the entire Mennonite family, as we joined hands to reinforce our peace witness. Alternative Service Work Camps were established to enable our young men of conscription age to make a positive rather than a negative contribution. Perhaps the greatest benefit derived from this experience was that it brought the leaders together, and the young men from all branches of the church learned to live and worship together for the duration of their camp term.

The establishment of the MCC clothing depot in Kitchener to facilitate the overseas relief program in Ontario brought the laity of all Mennonite groups together as they prepared bales of bedding, clothing, and food for shipment to be distributed to war sufferers in need, regardless of faith and creed. An active inter-Mennonite program has evolved from this experience. It has led to the formation of an inter-Mennonite Ontario Executive Council in Ontario this past year.

No doubt the intermarriage of some of our young people in recent years will be instrumental in breaking down a few remaining barriers. Personally I have learned to know some of you quite well and have experienced true Christian fellowship with the Penners, the Enns, the Epps, the Dicks, the Reimers and the Koops.

You have enriched my life and I consider it a great privilege to participate in your

celebrations of a historic event. They have come to pass because back in the 1920s, when some of you and your parents were in need of help, my parents and others in their generation took the Scriptures literally. They bid the Christian brotherhood "to do good unto all men, as opportunity offers, especially to those who belong to the Christian household".

My hope and prayer is that we look to the God of history to continue to guide and direct our lives so that His Grace and Power will be revealed to the people of our time.

Lorna Bergey is a retired business woman and historian in the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada. She resides in Kitchener, ON.

Menno Simons

(cont'd from page 2)

Scheffer (1819-1894) believed the dates should be 1492 and 1559. The monument at Witmarsum bears the dates 1496 and 1561.

² The church which stood at that site for more than 300 years was always called the *Scheunenkirche*.

³ Menno Simons also became involved in two prolonged public debates on theological problems of the day, first in Emden and again in Luebeck.

⁴ The region was under the rule of the King of Denmark at that time.

⁵ Menno Simons published 24 books and pamphlets. In his writings he discussed a wide range of topics relevant to the Christian Church: the authority of the Scriptures, the Holy Trinity, atonement, repentance, sin, justification by faith, regeneration, the church, non-resistance, swearing of oaths, non-conformity to the world and others. His most important works are *The Foundation of Christian Doctrine* and *Of the True Christian Faith*. Every book and every pamphlet he wrote had on its front page the motto, "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 3:11).

⁶ The *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* was a list of books which the Roman Catholic Church forbade its members to read.

⁷ Menno was survived by one daughter. He was predeceased by his son, one daughter and his wife.

⁸ Therefore go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you (Matthew 28:19-20a).

William Schroeder is a retired school teacher and historian who resides in Winnipeg, MB. This article was adapted from an earlier version which appeared in Preservings Part Two, Hanover Steinbach Historical Society Inc., No. 8, June 1996, Used with permission.

Book Reviews

Ens, Anna. *In Search of Unity. Story of the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba* (Winnipeg, MB: CMBC Publications, 1996) pb., 290 pp., \$20.00.

Reviewed by John J. Friesen

The Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba was formed in 1933. Or was it in 1936, or in 1947?

In sorting out the story of the tattered beginnings of the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba (CMM), Anna Ens sets the stage for a history which, she maintains, is a long search for unity. In her view, the CMM's major agenda was bringing together two diverse groups, the Bergthaler and three immigrant *Gemeinden* (multi-congregational churches), into one united conference.

Anna Ens' meticulously-researched and well-documented study takes the reader on an interesting journey through numerous difficult issues. During the World War II years, when the conference was in the process of forming, disagreements on how to relate to the government over the issue of exemption from military service severely strained relations between the Bergthaler *Gemeinde* and the three immigrant *Gemeinden*: Schoenwieser, Whitewater, and Blumenorter.

The war was not quite over when a conflict arose between the Schoenwieser *Gemeinde* and the rest of the *Gemeinden*. This conflict resulted in the Schoenwieser *Gemeinde* withdrawing from the CMM, and not rejoining for more than two decades.

Church splits over the transition to the English language, the pain of leadership changes from lay ministry to professional pastors in autonomous congregations, the origin of radio work, camps, youth work, the changing role of women, all this and more Ens discusses in a style that is readable, interesting, and even handed.

The book is liberally documented, although the author notes in the foreword that a more fully documented version of the manuscript is in the Mennonite Heritage Centre. The book includes a listing of the archival sources which were researched for the book, as well as a list of the people interviewed. An extensive selected bibliography is also added.

To help her tell the story, Anna Ens included numerous pictures, maps, charts, and tables. Ens compiled a list of all the *Aeltesten* (bishops) who served the *Gemeinden* of the CMM. An organizational chart of the present CMM is provided in the appendix.

A fascinating section is the one in which each congregation in the CMM is briefly characterized, its history summarized, and leaders listed.

To return to the question of when the CMM began, one could ask whether Ens' study may not suggest that the CMM began with the formation of the Bergthaler church. The addition of the Herald congregation and of the immigrant *Gemeinden*, can be seen as an expansion of the Bergthaler vision, as articulated by Benjamin Ewert, to unite all Mennonites. In fact, the earliest movements toward the formation of the CMM occurred at the 1933 annual Bergthaler Church-sponsored mission conference.

Anna Ens' *In Search of Unity* is a very fine study which sensitively and honestly interprets both the positives and the negatives of CMM's history.

John Friesen is professor of history and theology at Canadian Mennonite Bible College in Winnipeg, MB.

Bergmann, Günther. *Auslandsdeutsche in Paraguay, Brasilien und Argentinien* (Bad Münstereifel: Westkreuz-Verlag, 1994), pb., 256 pp.

Reviewed by Titus F. Guenther

Based on his 1993 Ph.D. dissertation, Bergmann offers his readers a well-documented history of the migrations and settlements of the over 5 million *Auslandsdeutsche* (i.e., Germans abroad; p. 221) now living in South America (SA).

The study focuses on the *Auslandsdeutsche* in Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil, from the early 19th century to the present. Considerable attention is given to the impact of National Socialism on these Germans abroad.

Overpopulation in Europe and the economic misery, coinciding with the search of countries like Paraguay, Chile and Brazil for able settlers, led to sizable migrations. Over time the colonists' German identity slowly waned. The Nazis attempted to stir up old patriotic sentiments in them to gain power in SA through them.

This caused a deep identity crisis among the *Auslandsdeutsche*, when the host countries reacted by closing German institutions and forcing wholesale assimilation to the national cultures and languages. The case of Brazil was especially drastic.

Later chapters deal with post-war migrations (homeless Jews, Germans and fugitive Nazis) to the same region and their impact on the communities there. Bergmann

also looks at the inner regional migrations in their socio-economic context as big agribusiness forced small farmers to retreat further inland or into adjacent Paraguay. Finally he reflects on the future prospects for the *Auslandsdeutsche* in these countries.

The German Mennonites in these countries are treated separately as a group with distinctive characteristics. Mennonite life is defined primarily by religious-biblical principles (pp. 74f.) and not by nationalism (though some Mennonites did flirt with Nazism -- pp. 89-94). This gave Mennonites greater cohesiveness and was expressed in various cooperative community structures. Affirming many contributions by Mennonites, Bergmann cites the Mennonite-Indian relations in the Paraguayan Chaco as being a model for other communities (pp. 166-168).

The other German colonies also formed numerous community-based institutions: schools, churches, cultural clubs, clinics and financial co-ops. Their small-scale farms offered a promising alternative to the Latino large landowners. After WWII, most of the *Auslandsdeutsche* redefined themselves as being of German descent but consciously became citizens of their SA countries of residence, some reaching high-ranking political positions. The immigrant churches played a leading role here by forming regional and transnational synods in SA, shifting their allegiance from Germany to their new national and social contexts.

The German Democratic Republic, in complete contrast to the Third Reich, has helped the *Auslandsdeutsche* to build and run German schools open to both German descendants and Latino citizens. This policy facilitates integration while allowing maintenance of the German heritage and serves to build amiable relations between Germany and the SA countries, which are eager for trade and technological development.

Bergmann makes a valuable contribution to the understanding of the *Auslandsdeutsche* in SA. One criticism pertains to Bergmann's perpetuation of the notion of an oppressive paternalism in the Jesuits towards the Guaraní Indians. Jesuit historian C.J. McNaspy's reassessment of the Jesuits' amazing experiment with democracy two hundred years before the rest of the world would dare to try it, could offer a helpful corrective here. Libraries and specialists will find the book a valuable resource. Interested lay readers will enjoy it as well.

Titus Guenther is assistant professor of theology and missions at Canadian Mennonite Bible College in Winnipeg, MB.