

# MENNONITE HISTORIAN

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The 95<sup>th</sup> sessions of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada in recess. A centennial celebration is being planned for the year 2002. The sessions of a special conference of GCMC (its last one held alone) followed the CMC July meetings. Photo: Courtesy of CMC editor, Roma Quapp.

## Two Decades at the Heritage Centre: Survey and Reflections

by Lawrence Klippenstein

At the close of my work at the Mennonite Heritage Centre I have been asked to share a few thoughts about this experience. In doing so I can look back at some of the highlights and central foci of the program that came into being during that time.

I was first invited by the History Archives Committee to take on a smaller archives contract in 1973. Impetus for an expanding CMC history program seemed to come along with other initiatives taken during that time to celebrate the Mennonite Centennial in the years 1973-75. In 1974 I was asked to take on the CMC job of editor, along with serving as historian/archivist of the conference.

It was explicitly desired that the expanding of a heritage preservation program, represented by this move, would become a strong resourcing dimension for the congregations of the conference. Helping to care for congregational records became a central thrust therefore of what was targeted as the history-archives task of the time.

The preservation of Conference office records was, of course, a primary task as well.

If we look at what congregations have done in this area we become aware of many anniversary celebrations, the production of published congregational histories and a heightened consciousness of the importance of maintaining good records for congregations. Many of them sent copies of these records to the Centre and some have placed major deposits for archival preservation.

Construction of the Heritage Centre facilities in 1978-79 was a decisive factor in developing the program as a whole. A wealth of historical material is being preserved there now, and there is room for much more. The foresight of those who donated the funding, notably the P. W. Enns Family Foundation, and persons like Gerhard J. Lohrenz who stood firmly behind such a project, needs to be gratefully highlighted here. We would do the same, of course, for M.B.S. Construction with the architect, Siegfried Toews, and sub-

trades, as well as other groups who were involved in the project at that time.

Being a resource to researchers was greatly enhanced by the facilities and the accessibility of materials at the Centre. Genealogists have formed the core, I would say, of those who came to look for information and study various themes, particularly connected to the Mennonite story. I have been quite astonished to see the publication productivity of genealogists and other researchers, too. In my opinion, the volume of output has risen sharply during the two decades I was around at the Centre. By all indications this sort of thing will continue, into the immediate future at least.

On genealogy (possibly looked down on just a bit at times, by regular historians), I would add that telling family stories has come to be emphasized more and more, i.e., along with sorting out and setting down the "branches" of the "family tree". This is a good trend because it fleshes out the real-life experience of families in a way that brings out the deeper significance of lineal trees which genealogists go after with such zeal.

Naturally we've been delighted to see the academics come by and dig in the files as well. We have had CMBC students and other students, too, leave literally hundreds of their papers for others to use. There have been the MA and PhD. people too. Here I would add that much excellent material still lies unexplored. Many more major studies could be done on documents available now. A more extensive and detailed inventory of holdings may be the tool that will attract history graduate students even more to what can be attempted here.

We have never assumed, of course, that everyone needs to become a historian, academic or amateur. It's one field of study, important we'd say, certainly - for people in the churches and on other levels also. Historians may need to tolerate their "minority" position, but taken all together, there is a rather large community of these people in our CMC community. It has been a special opportunity for me to learn to know some hundreds, at least, of these individuals and I will miss these connections a great deal. Perhaps a few will continue in other ways.

To us it seemed that keeping in touch with these people somehow was very necessary. The **Mennonite Historian** emerged out of that concern. A great many persons have contributed useful articles - some short, some longer - to

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## Two Decades at the Heritage...

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this quarterly publication which has a subscription list of around 600 persons and institutions. About a quarter of these come from outside Canada.

Hopefully, this contact can be sustained. The **Historian** is now a joint venture with the Centre for MB Studies here in Winnipeg, giving us at least some exchange across denominational lines. There has been talk of enlarging it to a small journal, perhaps a little more academic. Thoughts on this will be welcomed by the ongoing joint editors, Ken Reddig and Abe Dueck, I am sure.

Unfortunately it has become financially difficult to distribute free copies in bulk anymore. For that reason the subscription price has been kept as low as possible. We urge people to get personal subscriptions to keep this "pipeline" of research and news on Mennonite historical themes coming into their homes.

Several larger questions have been on our minds, especially in recent years. One has to do with writing a history of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. Some steps have been taken to get this done - some suggest by 2002, the CMC Centennial. The project still needs a "wave" of support to make it come alive and really happen. The Heritage Committee will be looking for affirmation - and a writer, as well - soon.

Further questions take us to inter-conference levels, to integration, to themes like a Federated College, international historical societies, etc. It is unfortunate that a Historical Commission has not been sustainable at the General Conference level. That may account for a gap in giving historical commentary of greater scope, as some saw it, at the GCMC sessions in July this summer - the last ones it will hold by itself. Historic or is it not? The story of beginnings featured there was quite appropriate, but the experience of 137 years of life together could have been summarized somewhere, we thought.

A small group discussed the possibility of doing this in St. Louis, Missouri, during the joint sessions of 1999. The Mennonite Church might want to do the same and a "joining" story could be depicted in the process. An aspect of this was done very ably, we are told, at its summer session in Orlando, Florida. Perhaps NAMAL (North American Mennonite Archivists and Librarians) can play a role in this somehow.

At this point, I want to commend the provin-



A Mennonite Studies seminar at CMBC, March, 1975. Photo: Courtesy of the late Rudy Regehr, then at CMBC.

cial and regional societies, as well as national Mennonite historical groups, which have been productively active in recent years. The **Mennonites in Canada** three-volume series and the four-volume **Mennonite Experiences in America** form a major achievement of historical work during the past two decades. Local activities, involving hundreds of people, need to be mentioned and acknowledged also.

But we will look for the church groups (we have two or three dozen in North America, I would think) tell their stories, too—in more detail and with up-to-date in-depth analysis. That did not really get done in the two series: whole chunks of dynamic and very basic Mennonite activity and thought are still to be looked at and critically evaluated for all to consider. It may be difficult to do—but should be worth a try.

The Centre has a big agenda for the years to come. More and more people are ready now to bring materials for archival preservation. The message of the importance of doing so has begun to sink in. That brings with it the ongoing, rather formidable, task of making this material available to the researching public.

Researchers continue to call, write and visit the Centre by the hundreds. Consultation and research assistance take much time and expertise, but cannot be given second place. Congregations and communities would like to see pres-

entations on archives in their own midst. Coordination with local historical groups then becomes imperative, and this working together must remain a positive partnership in the years ahead.

There is also the growing urge to publish results of research and study. CMBC Publications has made a major contribution in this area, but private publication activity has not diminished. There is need for creating better and more inventories of holdings in all the Mennonite archival centres to facilitate the preparation of published work. The larger picture of all this activity must be updated and made presentable so one can say where topics are "bunched up" and where gaps remain. In Canada, the **Journal of Mennonite Studies** of the Chair of Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg will undoubtedly assist in this enterprise in the future, as it has until now.

One could say a lot more. I have found it greatly rewarding to be "a part of all that I have met" in the Mennonite historical arena during my time at the Heritage Centre. I have no doubt that will be the case for those taking over the reins and moving on. May God bless this very important undertaking in the days ahead.

*Lawrence Klippenstein was the historian-archivist of the Mennonite Heritage Centre from 1974 to 1997. He retired in August.*

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## GENEALOGY AND FAMILY HISTORY

by Alf Redekopp

### Queries

**Dirks** - I am researching the Dirks family from Karolswalde, Russia, which migrated to Kansas and South Dakota during the 1874 migration. I would be very interested in information regarding a Karolswalde Church Book. Contact: Robert G. Dirks, 1948 Sheffield Way, Kamloops, BC, V2E 2M2 or e-mail: bdirks@mail.netshop.net

**Feller** - I, Ivan (Hans) Feller, born Feb. 21, 1929 seek my Aunt Emilia Feller, born Dec. 25, 1899, in Neudorf, USSR and moved from this village in 1936, and any relatives. Contact: Peter Klassen, 5991 Culloden St., Vancouver, BC, V5W 3S3 (ph. 604-321-9571)

**Klassen** - I am seeking information on the ancestors and siblings of Martin Klassen b. Sept. 14, 1835, and married to Margareta Leiki (Leyke) b. June 10, 1836. Their children included: Heinrich b. 1859, John b. 1863 (married to Anna Harms), Martin b. 1869, Katharina b. 1861, Helena b. 1865, Maria b. 1867 and possibly others. Heinrich and John settled in the Herbert, Saskatchewan area. Contact: Isabel Klassen, 2005-23 Avenue, Coaldale, AB, T1M 1G6 (ph. 403-345-3781).

**Loewen** - I am looking for any leads regarding the ancestors and descendants of Johann Jacob Loewen (20/7/1800 - 28/11/1848) and his wife Katharina Klassen (27/7/1801 - 31/10/1851). He is believed to be the son of Jacob Loewen (Ellerwald, 1781 ?) and Katharina Driediger. This family is believed to have entered Russia in 1819. I am most interested in the Prussian connection, and especially in any photographic information. Contact: Dave Loewen, 32187 Golden Ave., Abbotsford, B.C. V2T 5C5 (e-mail: loewend@xl.ca)

**Meckelberger** - I am looking for ancestors of Anna Dick Meckelberger b. 15 Mar. 1852 in Molotschna to Peter Dick and Katherina Berg. Her parents came to the U.S.A. in 1878 with four children but she remained in Russia with her husband, Mr. Meckelberger. Contact: Malinda Pauls, 2353 N 92<sup>nd</sup> Ave. #8, Omaha, NE 68134-5929.

### Recent Publications

David Wiens. **The Wiens Family Chronicle** (Gloucester, ON: Private publication, 1994), pb., 412 pp.

This book begins with a section on the gen-

eral history of the Wiens family. Included are sections about the beginnings of the name, the Friisian heritage, the years in the Vistula Delta, the emigration to Russia, the first known direct ancestor, Abraham Wiens born 1830 in Elizabetal, Molotschna, the founding of the Mennonite Brethren Church, revolution and famine and then immigration to America. The second section of the book consists of the genealogy focusing primarily on the descendants of Abraham Wiens (1830-1900), one of the founders of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Russia in 1860. He moved to the Kuban settlement around 1864. Contact: David Wiens, 644 Glenhurst Crescent, Gloucester, Ontario K1J 7B7.

Shirley Neufeld, ed. **The Loewen Genealogy** (Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON: Private publication, 1995), pb., 101 pp.

This compilation also begins with a brief history of the Mennonite tradition to which this Loewen family related closely (written by the compilers brother, Rodney J. Sawatsky). The compilation traces the ancestry of the Loewen family back to Jacob Loewen (1748-17--?) who migrated to Russia in 1788/89 and settled in the village of Einlage, Chortitza, S. Russia. A major source of the earlier data in this compilation was the *Bergthal Gemeinde Buch* published by the Hanover Steinbach Historical Society. Contact: Shirley Neufeld, 18 Wall Road, R.R. 3, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON, L0S 1J0.

Kroeker, Abe, compiler. **Kroeker Genealogy 1819-1997** (Winnipeg, MB: Private publication, 1997), pb., 150(?)pp.

This compilation was prepared for the Kroeker family reunion held on June 23, 1997 in Winnipeg at the Canadian Mennonite Bible College campus. It consists of a loose-leaf binder with various background articles and photographs relevant to the family's history. Biographical sketches of some of the descendants and many photographs of current descendants complete the remainder of the collection. Specifically, the book deals with the descendants of Cornelius Kroeker (1819-1904) and Susanna Friesen (1823-1898) who came to Canada in 1875 with the Bergthal Gemeinde. Contact: Abe Kroeker, 214-445 Stafford, Winnipeg, MB, R3M 3V9.

Kroeker, Maria. **The Schellenbergs** (Port Hardy, BC: Private publication, 1992), pb., 502 pp.

This book begins with early European history noting the first von Schellenberg as a descendant of a Czech called Viwoy, who in A.D. 726 married Krscha, a sister of the oldest family of Czech princes. Illustrations include castles and coat of arms. The first Schellenbergs to migrate from Prussia to Chortitza (Russia) in 1788 are but one branch of the family which is discussed. For example, the book also deals with a number

of Schellenberg and Schellenberger families who settled in Pennsylvania between 1727-1808. The photographs of present descendants in the book come primarily from the "Russian stream". Contact: Maria Kroeker, Box 2602, Port Hardy, BC, V0N 2P0.

Bahnman, Marvin W., ed. **Our Heritage: Remembrances of My Life in Russia 1866-1895** (Fort Worth, TX: Private publication, 1997), pb., 274 pp.

The first part of this book contains excerpts from the old diary of Katharina (Wiens) Bahnmann Dyck Regier (1859-1936) who was born in Berdjansk, South Russia and died in Laird, Saskatchewan. The book also contains a significant section, which traces her ancestors and descendants. Contact: Marvin W. Bahnman, 7709 Grassland Drive, Fort Worth, TX 76133 or email: mbahnman@aol.com

Hofer, Marnette D. (Ortman), compiler. **The F. Christian and Anna Eleanora (Zafft) Ortman Family History 1800-1992** (Dolton, SD: Private publication, 1993), hdc., 466 pp.

This volume traces the family history of Friedrich Christian Ortman who was born in the region of Mecklenburg, Germany. At least five of his children immigrated to South Dakota and Kansas in the 1870s. The book includes photographs, footnotes documenting sources, and a comprehensive index. Contact: Malinda Pauls, 2353 N 92<sup>nd</sup> Ave. #8, Omaha, NE 68134-5929.

Justina Schellenberg Baerg, ed. **Johann J. & Justina Schellenberg** (Winnipeg, MB: Private publication, 1997), pb., 71 pp.

This book traces the history of the descendants of Johann J. Schellenberg (1856-1935) and Helena Rempel (1859-1940) who were both born in Gnadental, South Russia and died in Gnadental, Manitoba. The family came to Canada in 1924 and was active in the Blumenorter Mennonite Church. Contact: Justina Baerg, 201-20 Valhalla Drive, Winnipeg, MB, R2G 0Y1.

Elsie Wiebe, ed. **Wiebe Family Tree: Descendants of Johann Wiebe 1806-1872 and Margarete Hamm 1814-1888** (Calgary, AB: Private publication, 1997), pb., ? pp.

This book traces the descendants of a Wiebe family which moved from Prussia to Russia between 1868 and 1872 and settled at Ufa in the Samara Colony. Specifically, it deals with the descendants of their four sons - Johann 1840-,

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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



## Ebenfeld Mennonite Church Beginnings: The First Meeting House

by Jake Wiens

The first Mennonites to settle in the Herschel area immigrated to Canada from the USSR in the 1920s. The first of these immigrants settled in the area in 1924. However, no organization or church service was held that year.

Ältester David Toews had written an article on settlement of Mennonite immigrants coming from USSR, in the *Immigranten Bote* of December 31, 1924. He wrote that the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization (CMB of C) was looking for larger farms for sale so that several families could be settled in an area and thus lead to forming a Mennonite community including a church.

The September 24 issue of *Der Bote* reported that the CMB of C had concluded negotiations for the purchase of three large farms. Two of these were at Herschel - the Myers farm for four farming families and the Lamborn farm for ten farmers. In early 1925, ten individuals bought the Lamborn farm. In this group were three brothers: Bernhard B. Wiens (father of P.B. Wiens who later became the editor of *Der Bote*, and David B. Wiens, later moderator of the Canadian MB Conference), Ältester Jacob B. Wiens, (whose grandson, Arthur, would much later be the last leading "lay" minister of the Ebenfeld Mennonite Church), and Rev. Gerhard B. Wiens.

All three immigrated to Canada in 1924. Bernhard B. Wiens had been an *Oberschulze* in the Molotschna Gnadenfeld Volost. Gerhard B. Wiens had been a teacher in the Terek settlement and was an ordained minister. Jacob B. Wiens had been a teacher for 20 years in the Molotschna settlement but had to leave his teaching position because of a hearing impairment. He then became a farmer. He was ordained as a minister in the Orloff Neukirch Mennoniten Gemeinde in 1901. After the death of Elder Abram Goertz in 1911 J.B. Wiens was elected and ordained as Ältester in this Church.

Ältester J. B. Wiens arrived in Waterloo, ON in August, 1924, and lived there until March, 1925. During this seven-month period he preached in eleven different churches in Ontario. His schedule indicates that he preached nearly every Sunday. On March 1 he preached in St. Jacobs, ON, then moved to Herschel, SK where he had his first service on March 22.

If one of the settlement objectives as stated by David Toews was to assist in establishing local church organizations, than that really happened in Herschel. On Easter Monday, April 13, 1925, the Mennonites in the Herschel area got together under the leadership of Ältester J. B.



The church meeting house at Herschel then and now. Photos: Courtesy of Jake Wiens (on photo), Winnipeg, MB.



Wiens and Rev. G. B. Wiens to organize a church with the name of *Ebenfelder Mennoniten Gemeinde*. The congregation had 34 charter members. The first baptism service was held in May, 1926. Twelve people were baptized. Membership at the end of 1926 was 117.

On July 6, 1925, this church was accepted as a member congregation of the Conference of Mennonites in Central Canada (later CMC). At the August 22-26, 1926, conference of the General Conference of Mennonites of North America held in Berne, IN, the Ebenfelder Mennoniten Gemeinde was accepted also as a member of that organization.

The first recorded minutes (Protokol No.1) are dated January 23, 1927. This first meeting dealt with church services, catechism and baptism, acceptance of new members and a church building project. A location site for the church was agreed on. Bernhard K. Klassen was elected as head of the building project (*Baumeister*).

At the June 5 meeting it was decided to build a temporary building until sufficient funds were available for a permanent structure. On July 24 another meeting was held. Ältester J. B. Wiens reported he had a letter from David Toews saying that the General Conference Mennonite Church was prepared to lend the congregation \$800 with no interest for two years and then a charge of 4%. With a very good crop in prospect and this offer it was decided to build a permanent structure 28' by 40' with no basement.

Work was started immediately.

Approximately two weeks later the Herschel area experienced a killing frost. In addition there was rust damage. The good potential crop was ruined and the building project debt started. It was often suggested that if the July 24 meeting had been held two weeks later the decision would have been not to build. However, it was built at a cost of \$3665.65.

As it turned out it was the first church building in Canada constructed by the 1920s Mennonite immigrants. It was dedicated by a double celebration on December 11, 1927.

At the April 9, 1928, meeting a committee was elected to borrow money privately to pay the debt at the lumberyard and to come up with a plan to repay this debt. Money was borrowed from two local non-Mennonite farmers, R. Henderson and R. Gardiner. These loans were guaranteed by individuals on the basis of a per farm and an individual member levy. Individuals were to pay their levies directly to these two farmers and the Conference. Due to the crop failure in 1928 (rust and hail) and the collapse of farm prices in 1930 not all members were able to meet their obligations.

At the November 16, 1931, meeting the unpaid levy was dropped and the debt was to be paid on a voluntary basis by all. The debt to Mr. Henderson was paid during the early 1930s. In 1934 a levy was agreed to again. This time it was based on the net amount of grain harvested (7%) and a per member levy. This was cleared with Mr. Gardiner. At the October 10, 1940, meeting it was reported that the debt to Mr. Gardiner had been repaid. An indication of the tight financial situation during this long period is that only at the November 3, 1942 meeting was it decided to buy a Coleman lamp for evening services.

An \$800 building debt to the Conference still remained in 1940. The levy established in 1934

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## Mennonite Utopian Dreamers: Will There be Others?

by Erica Jantzen

During the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Mennonites in eastern and Central Europe were eager readers of books on utopian themes. They had suffered persecution and were looking for any place which would offer them peace and quiet. Among the books Mennonites read were the two volumes *Das Heimweh* (Homesickness) published in 1791-1794 by Jung-Stilling (Johann Heinrich Jung) of Marburg, Germany.

*Das Heimweh* is an allegory, similar to *Pilgrim's Progress* written by John Bunyan (1628-1688). Jung-Stilling took his protagonist, known as Christian von Ostenheim (Christian from Home in the East), from a dissolute Germany to an unspoiled Asia. This was to be the place of refuge from the impending Armageddon. He wrote about a land of haunting beauty, marvelous peacefulness, far from a world headed for destruction. He intended to join the elect in this idyllic refuge.

Some Mennonites paid close attention to Jung-Stilling's writing. They also read Christoph Cloter's books. These likewise dealt with the establishment of the Kingdom of God in the east. For some, the two books confirmed their already-held chiliastic views. Jesus would reign on earth for a thousand years and the place of refuge would be in the east. Cloter based his belief of Utopia in the east on Dan. 8:14, "evenings to mornings". Mornings, of course, meant the east. Some hopeful Mennonites saw this as divine leading. Hadn't they travelled from west to east all along -- from the Netherlands to Germany and on to Prussia? They would now move further east to Russia and on to Central Asia, the final place of refuge.

It is not surprising that *Das Heimweh* was of great interest to Mennonites. They were given a significant role in these volumes. At the outset of the story, Jung-Stilling described the burial of a heretic, a Mennonite woman. That compassionate deed carried out by a local clergy netted Christian von Ostenheim the displeasure of the authorities of the town. The second important character of the story is Urania. She was a daughter of a Swiss-Mennonite farm home who became the bride of Christian. He later received the name Eugenius and his high calling came through her because she, Jung-Stilling took pains to elaborate, was of royal descent.

Eugenius wandered east. He moved from the Rhine to Augsburg, Munich, Vienna and on to Bukhara and Samarkand in Central Asia. Going further east, he finally reached Utopia, described as Vespera and Solyma. Neither place can be located on any map.

Jung-Stilling projected his Utopia from Bukhara and Samarkand, the oldest and richest

cultural and trade centres of Asia. Samarkand dates back to the third or fourth millennium BC, and played a significant role in developing ancient trade routes between the Middle East and China. This glorious past of the east, with its riches and vastness, must have greatly appealed to Jung-Stilling in crowded Germany. His writings certainly held tremendous attraction for Mennonites in Europe who were eager to escape persecution, and ready to seek out a safe haven during the predicted millennium, the thousand years of Christ's reign on earth.

Jung-Stilling concluded *Das Heimweh* with a description of half a million believers finding Utopia in Solyma and Vespera, two imaginary places in Central Asia. He painstakingly described the preparation of housing construction for the many faithful expected to arrive with the beginning of Armageddon. He sought to lend authenticity of the venture by adding his request for admission and a teaching position, complete with a letter of invitation by Eugenius.

In 1880 large numbers of chiliast-thinking Mennonites embarked on the journey to Central Asia. They were led by Claas Epp (d. 1913), who proclaimed himself a prophet of God and considered it his task to take the elect to Central Asia. They hoped to receive permission to settle on land southeast of Samarkand, called Schar-I-Sabs (City of Carrots). However, the ruling Khan refused to grant their request and the Mennonites had to move on. Their arduous journey left some followers to question Epp's divine appointment. A number moved on to Kansas and Nebraska in the USA. Others separated from the main group, but remained in Central Asia to settle in an area then known as Turkestan, near the cities of Tashkent and Alma Ata.

About one hundred families remained with Claas Epp. He began calling himself the Elijah of the New Covenant and in 1886 set the date of Christ's return as 1889. The only permanent structure the community built was a white meeting house. Neighbouring Moslems called the place Ak Metchet (White Mosque). The name remained.

The year 1889 arrived, but Christ did not make his appearance. In 1913 Claas Epp died a very disappointed man. The people of Ak Metchet, sorely chastened, adjusted to live in the present and established a community for themselves and their children. They also set out to show great concern for their neighbours. A few years later, many people caught in severe persecution found shelter in Ak Metchet.

In 1925 Ak Metchet came to an end with the land reform of the new Soviet regime. Most

of the men of the village had already been deported to labour camps when the ten remaining men were imprisoned. After many weeks these ten, mere skeletons, were brought to a village court and ordered shot. Trucks stood ready to deport their families to Siberia. An astounding act of civil disobedience stopped the action. All women and children of Ak Metchet climbed onto the trucks or stood in front of the vehicles and shouted, "Take all or none." The deportation was halted. The incident came to the attention of the higher authorities who commuted the death sentence of the ten men to labour camp.

In time, as was to be expected, reinforcements of soldiers and trucks arrived. All remaining residents of Ak Metchet were loaded up. However, instead of deporting the people to Siberia, they were taken first to Samarkand, and then 140km southeast to Schari-I-Sabs. They had reached the place that, in an earlier time, was considered Utopia. Once there, they experienced more or less the same fate as the rest of the people in the USSR -- awaiting God's deliverance.

In the *Lost Years of Asia*, Colin Thubron, described his search in 1993 for the Mennonites of Ak Metchet. Of course, none remained. Nobody knew anything about them, except one old Uzbek. He remembered them. He claimed they had looked just like Thubron. 'They vanished in Stalin's time, he said. Their village was turned into a Communist Young Pioneers' camp, but now that was falling into ruin. He pointed to an orchard with a few scraggy trees and said that it used to be the cemetery of the Mennonites of Ak Metchet.

### Sources

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Jung, Johan Heinrich (Stilling). *Das Heimweh* (Vierter Band). Stuttgart: Rieger & Sattler, 1843.

*Erica Jantzen is a freelance writer from Waterloo, ON.*

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## Reddig Becomes Director at the Mennonite Heritage Centre

It is not really news for many that the Mennonite Heritage Centre has a new director, Ken Reddig. The **MH** announcements, though, have been brief, and more detail on his background and experience is warranted.

Ken is a graduate of AMBS and has taught at the Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute and Mennonite Brethren Bible College, now Concord College, for several years. He served as Conference Archivist and Director of the Centre for MB Studies (Winnipeg) from 1979 to 1990. He then joined the staff of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba as head of the textual records and public service branch.

The world of archives is a world of stories to Reddig. "I've always been interested in stories, in how things evolve and happen... I guess I... have an antiquarian interest, although archives isn't necessarily old stuff."

Reddig is interested in pursuing the possibilities that the electronic media offer in getting information to people. "We have to work harder at interpreting... the Anabaptist experience to the broader public." He has a vision of establishing an interpretive centre where anyone could come to learn about Mennonites.

Reddig began his work as MHC director on September 1. He may be reached by calling 1-204-888-6781, or at the Heritage Centre address.



Summer additions to the MHC staff: Helene Friesen, left above, working on Vol. III of the *Der Bote* index; Irene Blank, centre, archival assistant on a Career-start grant; Moses Dueck, part-time editorial and secretarial assistant; Stephanie Heidenreich, lower left, assistant archivist on a CCA grant; and Bert Friesen, lower right, special Resolutions project on CMC history.

## Recent Acquisitions of the MHC Archives

*A rather unusual wealth of deposits at the Heritage Centre has brought in more valuable documents and research materials. We want to note some of them for our readers.*

\*The papers and library of the late John P. Dyck of Springstein, MB, have been brought in section by section. The latest portion came just a month or more ago. These deposits have been an important source of rare Russian Mennonite publications that do not exist commonly in North American libraries. Two examples are *Nachrichten über den mennonitischen Heidenmissionar Heinrich Dirks* (1876) by David Dirks, and *Eine Ferienreise* (1906) by G. Loewen. Other materials about Heinrich Dirks have recently come to the Centre courtesy of Irene Hedlin, Winnipeg, MB.

\*Several CMC congregations have closed in recent years. One of these congregations, Burrows Bethel Mennonite, recently reorganized as Bethel Community Church (Mennonite) decided to close. A number of boxes of materials have been left at the archives. We commend this decision, and hope that other groups that experience a termination will not forget to deposit all records in an archival centre somewhere.

\*Notable too has been the deposit of eight cartons of material from Manitoba Mennonite Mutual Insurance, headquartered in Steinbach in recent years and now merged with Red River Valley Mutual Insurance headquartered in Altona. These materials go back to letters and other items dated in the late 1870s.

\*A large collection of records remained af-

ter the completion of the history of the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba, *In Search of Unity*, authored by Anna Ens of Winnipeg. Several related collections came with the process of this research. These include the personal papers of Rev. Frank Isaak of Winnipeg, and some materials from the Blumenorter Mennonite congregation near Gretna, MB.

\*A deposit by Anna Willms, Saskatoon, SK, forwarded courtesy of Dick Epp of Saskatoon, SK, included the papers of Anna and her husband Peter, as well as an extensive collection of letters from the files of her late father, David H. Rempel. Anna is 99 with a birthday upcoming in December.

\*An extensive portion of the Arnold Dyck personal papers, consisting of much of his art work and voluminous correspondence was forwarded to the Centre courtesy of Dr. Harry Loewen, formerly holder of the Chair of Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg, and now resident in Kelowna, BC. We are told that other portions of Dyck's documents are found in the Mennonite Library and Archives at North Newton, KS, USA.

### Vox Submissions Wanted

Poetry, fiction, B&W art, and photography. For the Fall edition, they should be postmarked no later than September 30, 1997. Please include a short bio and SASE with all entries and requests.

Send to: **Vox, c/o Moses Dueck, #03-600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB, R3P 0M4.**





Summer workers at CMBS. L to R: Cynthia Unruh, Heidi Lepp, Alvina Block, Sergei Chnaidermann.

## Busy Summer at CMBS

This past summer was an exceptionally busy one at the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies. In addition to regular staff and volunteers, four individuals worked at various projects, largely funded by outside sources.

Heidi Lepp began work in May under the Canadian government's Summer Career Placement program. Heidi is from Paraguay and is a student at Providence College at Otterburne. She worked at a variety of tasks, including processing a number of smaller photograph collections, sorting and filing periodicals, preparing several inventory lists, as well as doing German-English translation work.

Alvina Block continues to work at organizing, describing and filing the Saskatchewan Conference records which were transferred to the Centre in September of 1996. Her work is financed by a grant from the Canadian Council of Archives and will continue into the fall.

Cynthia Unruh spent much of the summer at the Centre microfilming records from the Carberry Plains Archives in southern Manitoba. These records were being microfilmed under a contract with Carberry Plains who received a grant for this purpose from the Canadian Council of Archives. The Centre for MB Studies was approached to do the project because of the availability of a microfilming camera at the Centre and because the expertise was available here.

Finally, Sergei Chnaidermann has spent the summer at the Centre translating documents and creating a detailed inventory of the contents of microfilms from the St. Petersburg Archives which have been received during the past year. Much of this material pertains to the relationship of the Russian government to the Mennonites in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The translation work was funded by a Summer Career

Placement grant awarded to the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society. Sergei is a Jewish landed immigrant from Ukraine and has been a high school student in Winnipeg.

## New Book in Preparation

The Historical Committee of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches has endorsed the Centre's publication of a new book by David Ewert. The book is entitled, **Honor Such People**, and consists of brief biographies of eight leaders in the Mennonite Brethren Church, all except one of whom are no longer alive. Among the leaders are Henry H. Janzen, Bernhard W. Sawatzky, Jacob H. Franz and Frank C. Peters. Although the choice of individuals may seem somewhat arbitrary, they were all colleagues of Ewert in the Bible teaching ministry at some time.

## Winkler Bible School Materials Transferred to CMBS

As a result of the closing of Winkler Bible School (see June issue of **Mennonite Historian**, p. 5), all the records have been tentatively organized and transferred to CMBS. The collection includes all the administrative and academic records as well as a variety of other materials such as composite photographs of graduating classes, some books, etc. More culling, organization and filing will be done at the Centre.

### Used Books for Sale

CMBS has a considerable number of used books relating to Mennonite history. A list of books and prices is available on request.

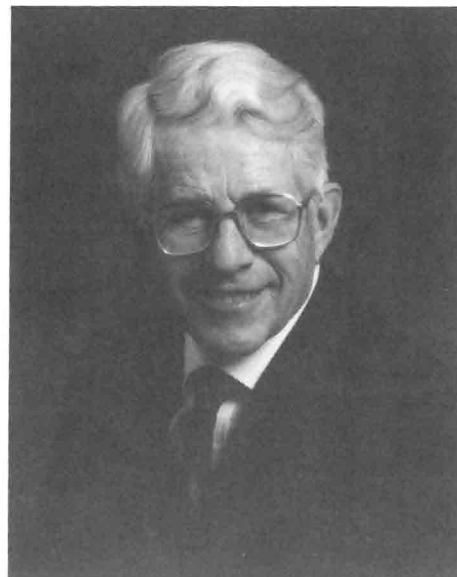
C Centre for  
M Mennonite  
B Brethren  
S Studies in Canada  
1-169 Riverton Ave., Winnipeg, Canada R2L 2E5

## Mennonitische Rundschau Index, Vol. VI, Available

An additional volume of the *Mennonitische Rundschau* Index is now available at a price of \$55.00 (plus 5.00 shipping and handling). This index, edited by Alf Redekopp, covers the period from 1930-39. Earlier volumes (I, II, III, V, VI) are also still available at the same price (except Vol. V which is \$45.00). Work is now beginning on indexing Vol. IV (1910-1919).

## In Memoriam: John Friesen

A frequent visitor to both the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies and the Mennonite Heritage Centre passed away suddenly on July 18, 1997 in Zaporozh'e, while on a Mennonite tour to Ukraine. John was employed for thirty-two years in the Departments of Agriculture and Municipal Affairs in Manitoba. He had an avid interest in Mennonite history and had already published two books, one entitled **Against the Wind: The Story of Four Mennonite Villages in Southern Ukraine** (1994) and the other, **Field of Broken Dreams: Mennonite Settlement in Seminole, West Texas** (1996). A third volume of research was almost ready for publication. He was also a member of the board of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society.



## Dr. Katherina Born Thiessen: A Woman Who Made a Difference

by Shirley Bergen

The story of Katherina (Born) Thiessen (1842-1915), a "practical doctor" in Hillsboro (Peabody), Kansas from 1874-1885, and then in Hoffnungsfeld (Winkler), Manitoba, from 1885 to 1907, is one of courage and tragedy.

At a time when women were expected to stay at home and be among the "quiet in the land", she worked as a midwife, chiropractor, naturopath, and doctor. She also expressed her opinion verbally and in writing as shown in letters to the *Mennonitische Rundschau* in 1909 and 1910.

You would think that a person who improved conditions by expertly delivering babies, setting bones, diagnosing illnesses and prescribing remedies for everything from lung disorders to skin cancer, and also saving lives through emergency surgery, would be considered very important. But the opposite was true. She was too radical for the Ältesters of the Reinländer (Old Colony) church so they excommunicated the Thiessens. Fortunately, the family was able to join the minority Berghaler church led by Ältester Johann Funk from 1892 on.

In spite of the fact that the Morden doctors called her to help with baby deliveries when they were desperate, she was shunned and ridiculed by her medical colleagues. In fact, in 1895 they sued her because she did not have a license from the American Medical Association. She did not contest the charge because Mennonites did not go to court. The court order did not allow her to charge fees for practising medicine. This was a great setback financially because she and her husband had just built a big house to serve her in-and-out patients. This house was converted into an Old Folks Home by Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Hooge in 1919. Later it became the boys' dor-

mitory for the Winkler Bible School.

Katharina, daughter of Peter and Anna Born of Alexanderkrone, Molotschna, must have shown considerable aptitude in helping midwives, even as a teenager. When she was eighteen her parents sent her to Prussia to study midwifery. She also developed skills in chiropractics and naturapathy. In 1862 she married Abraham K. Thiessen from Lichtenau, Molotschna. Their only son, Abraham, was born in 1865 in Fürstenau. In 1874 they emigrated to the USA and settled in Peabody, Kansas, where she worked as a "practical doctor" and he ran a farm. Free homesteads attracted them to Manitoba in Canada where they settled in the village of Hoffnungsfeld near Winkler in 1885.

In 1907 she left her medical practice which by then consisted largely of selling Dr. Chase's Patent Medicines. People continued to come to her for help in spite of the above-noted court ruling because they trusted her and she spoke their language, Low German.

She was a shining example of what a woman could do if she had an education. Her strong and indomitable spirit kept her going in spite of the setbacks society and the church threw in her path. A detailed story of her life and family history as told to me by her great-grandson Peter H. Hildebrand is available at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, the Centre for MB Studies (Winnipeg), and the Chair of Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg. It includes the newspaper account of the court case as reported in an 1895 issue of *Mennonitische Rundschau*.

*Shirley (Penner) Bergen is a free-lance writer from Brandon, MB. She is researching stories of pioneer women from Winkler, MB*

where she has her roots. A longer version of this article was presented as a paper at The Quiet in the Land Conference in Pennsylvania (1995), and the Manitoba History Conference held in Winnipeg in May, 1997.



Abraham K. and Katharina Thiessen.

## Conference on Mennonites and Other Germans in Ukraine

For several years now researchers from the German Lab at the University of Dnepropetrovsk have been holding conferences dealing with Germans from Ukraine. Mennonite topics regularly get included among the presentations.

Papers are published (all in Russian) in the Lab's own historical journal, and frequently also in German translation in *Forschungen zur Geschichte und Kultur der Russland-deutschen* edited by Dr. D. Brandes and several colleagues at Goettingen, in Germany.

Another conference has been planned for late September this year. If interested contact Oleg Derkach (who spent two months at the Heritage Centre recently) at his E-mail address: olegd@solar.dnepropetrovsk.ca. Oleg translated some of the material when he was at the Centre early in 1997. He also donated a video on the village of Grünfeld, Barátov-Schlakhtin colony.

The *Forschungen* address is Dr. D. Brandes, Institut für Kultur und Geschichte der Deutschen im östlichen Europa. Heinrich - Heine - Universität Düsseldorf, Universitäts - Straße 1, 40225, Düsseldorf, Germany.

To obtain copies of the Table of Contents for these journals, contact Lawrence Klippenstein at the Centre.



The A. K. Thiessen farm in Winkler, MB, Canada. Photos: Courtesy of CMBS, Winnipeg, MB.



## Vanished Mennonite Weavers: An Extinct Dutch Mennonite Community

by Denis Freels

Jade Bay in northwest Germany had from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> century a western extension called the Swarte Brak. On the northern shore were two small farm communities called Neustadtgödens and Dykhausen (approximately 20 km west of the modern city of Wilhelmshaven).

To this remote little village of Dykhausen two leading members of the *Täufer* movement fled in 1535 and lived out their lives. One was Dr. Gerhard Westerburg, nicknamed "Doktor Fegefeuer" since he published a flyer by that name and was married to the sister of the *Bilderstürmer*

Andreas Carlstadt, who became a preacher for the Reformed Church in Dykhausen. The second one was Hinrich Krechting who bargained for a dramatic escape from the fighting on the town square in Muenster. It was his lesser known brother who became one of the three unfortunate victims who after their execution by torture, were displayed in those well-known iron cages on the church tower in Muenster, so to say in place of his more senior brother. In Dykhausen he was for years warden for the church and the poor of the Reformed community.



Schönwiese near Alexandrovsk, across the Dnieper River from Chortitza, around 1907, as seen from the second floor of the Koop factory. More notes on the photo can be obtained from the Heritage Centre. The Koop factory building still exists in Zaporozh'e today. Photo: Courtesy of Jeff Salter, Renton, WA, USA.



The new premises of the Mennonitische Forschungsstelle in Weierhof, Germany, are nearing completion. Photo: Courtesy of Horst Gerlach, Weierhof, Germany.

Some time later Mennonite skippers founded the neighbouring town of Neustadtgödens and created a prosperous trading settlement. In 1615 the then Duke of Oldenburg, Count Anton Guenther, cut off their tidal water during land reclamation by erecting a dam. This severely affected the village.

But by the end of the century a new group of Mennonite weavers from the town of Leer, East Friesland, helped revive the economy, and a horse, livestock and flax market were held.

Approximately 190 independent tradesmen could find incomes and the village boasted five different confessions with centres of worship namely Mennonite, Catholic, Reformed, Lutheran and Jewish. But by 1780 the second downturn began when industrialization began to affect the weaving industry.

Today this little town of about 700 has lost its Mennonite community again and often I have been wondering where they might have gone. On the other hand, Dr. Westerburg is a rather elusive man and I wonder if someone might know more about him.

**Ed. note.** Maps of the area under discussion can be obtained from the Mennonite Heritage Centre.

*Denis Freels, originally from The Netherlands runs a bed and breakfast place, Kiska House, in Dead Man's Flat (near Canmore, Alberta). You can ask about it at 110-1 Ave., Dead Man's Flat, AB, T1W 2WA.*



A "child" of the Chortitza oak tree (in Zaporozh'e today) is growing up in Virgil, ON. Anna Yegorova, Moscow, formerly from the Chortitza settlement, checks it out. Photo: Courtesy of David Regier, St. Catharines, ON.

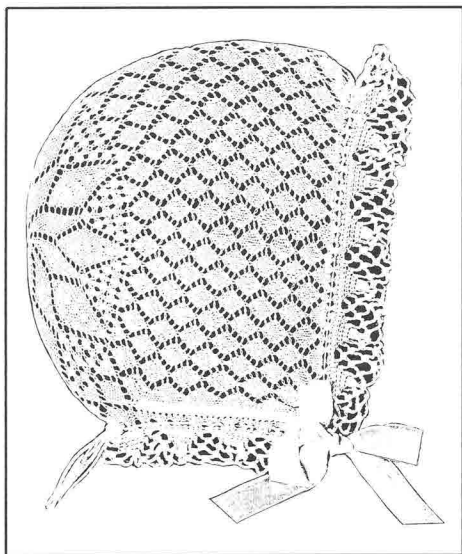
## Wiens Family Heirloom from Russia

by Justina Wiens Peters

All eight children of Johann and Helena Wiens of Morden, Manitoba wore this baby bonnet. Mother Wiens had about a dozen similar bonnets made of fine cotton, hand knitted by Aunt Maria Wiens of Nova Pokrowsk, Siberia. Nova Pokrowsk is about 100 km north of Omsk on the Irtysh river.

Homes in Russia were often drafty. It was customary to keep a bonnet on the baby both day and night. Bonnets were usually hand washed and changed every day to prevent cradle cap.

The Wiens family came to Canada in 1926. Three of the children were born in Siberia, Russia, the rest in Canada. These bonnets were well made, lasting for all eight children and some will be handed on to the next generation.



## News Notes

**\*The U of W Chair of Mennonite Studies symposium on "Mennonite Victims of Soviet Oppression" will be held on Sept. 26-27 at the University of Winnipeg. For further information call 1-204-786-9391.**

\*The Mennonite Historians of Eastern Pennsylvania will host BETHAUS, MEETING-HOUSE, CHURCH, an international conference on the architecture of Anabaptist-Mennonite worship spaces and places. Sessions will be held at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, Harleysville, PA, on October 16-18, 1997. The conference is co-sponsored by the Germantown Mennonite Historic Trust and the Mennonite Historians of Eastern Pennsylvania. Inquiries should be addressed to: Mennonite Heritage Centre, 565 Yoder Rd., Box 82, Harleysville, PA USA 19438; by phone: (215) 256-3020.

\*Copies of *Hildebrand's Zeittafel* and

*Siberien* written by the late J. J. Hildebrand can be ordered from Louise Friesen, 71 Wadham Bay, Winnipeg, MB R3T 3K2.

\*Menno Simons tulips can be ordered from Menno Simons Tulip, Scheepjeserf #5, NL-1843 JE, Grootshermer, The Netherlands. Fax # NL-299-673397.

\*Hilda Matsuo writes re: the cradle photo in the June *MH* (p.3). "The cutlines need to be revised so it would include the statement: Its design, though old and from another source, is like others familiar to the informant here. It is based on a cradle owned by an Abraham Isaac family (etc. as noted in the article)."

\*The Bergfeld EMMC congregation near Plum Coulee, MB, held a 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration on September 7. It was the first EMMC church founded when the "Rudnerweide" group emerged in 1937.

\*The archives of the Mennonite Historical Society of BC (housed at Columbia Bible College in Abbotsford) probably will have moved to their new facilities by the time readers get this issue. To contact the archives call 1-604-853-3358.

**\*The organization known as NAMAL (North American Mennonite Archivists and Librarians) is celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> birthday this year.** A newsletter issue is being prepared for distribution later this year. If you have not been on the mailing list before send \$3.00 plus a note ordering it to NAMAL c/o Mennonite Heritage Centre, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB Canada, R3P 0M4. A back copy of the previous issue (1995) will be mailed, if desired, for the same price.

## Ebenfeld Mennonite Church...

(cont'd from p. 4)

was to remain to pay this debt. At the November 15, 1943 meeting it was reported that a debt of \$530 remained. A motion was passed to elect a committee to collect this money on a voluntary basis. The committee consisted of Jacob J. Wiens, Jacob Dueckman, and Peter Sawatzky. At the October 5, 1944 meeting it was reported that the debt had been fully paid and there was a small surplus. There it was also decided to change to electric lights, build a higher fence, and to enlarge the church, all to be purchased on a cash basis.

*Jake Wiens, at one time a member of the Herschel congregation, now resides in Winnipeg. He has served as a volunteer at the Heritage Centre for over ten years.*

## Recent Genealogy Publications

(cont'd from p. 3)

Gerhard (1844-1923) and Herman (1850-1920), businessmen who travelled widely in Rus-

sia and moved their business to America in 1894, and Wilhelm (1847-1900), whose son Abraham immigrated to Canada in 1924. Contact: Elsie Wiebe, 306-333 Garry Cresc. NE, Calgary, AB, T2K SW9

Shirley Neufeld, ed. **The Sawatsky Genealogy** (Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON: Private publication, 1995), pb., 81 pp.

This compilation begins with a brief history of the Mennonite tradition to which this Sawatsky family related closely (written by the compilers brother, Rodney J. Sawatsky). The compilation traces the ancestry of the Sawatsky family back to Peter Sawatzky (1760-1846). Several ancestral lines are traced for Cornelius Sawatsky (1891-1956) and his wife Elizabeth Sawatsky (1892-1967) of Altona, Manitoba. These include Harders, Kauenhowens, Hoeppners and Isaaks. Contact: Shirley Neufeld, 18 Wall Road, R.R. 3, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S 1J0.

## Other genealogical resources

**The Ratzlaff Report** is a newsletter for persons interested in German Mennonites from Russia mainly with the surname Ratzlaff. There are many other surnames that are connected, such as: Toews, Penner, Nachtigal, Buller, Enns, Neufeld, Thiessen, Wiens, Bartel, Friesen, Goertz, Klassen, Peters, Schroeder, Wiebe, Schmidt and others. This 18-page newsletter is free of charge, although donations are very much appreciated. Contact: Patricia D. Goff, P.O. Box 1482, Elgin, IL 60121-1482.



This sculpture was commissioned by the GCMC for its July sessions in Winnipeg. It was done by Gerald Loewen. It is now located in the main gallery of the Mennonite Heritage Centre. Photo Courtesy of Aiden Schlichting Enns, Winnipeg, MB.

## Prussian Mennonite Land Measurements

by Hilda Matsuo

Land measurement terms of the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century in East and West Prussia can be confusing. I have found some data that may clear up difficulties.

Three Morgen equals 1.89 acres. In Prussia one Morgen was 2553.23 square metres. One acre consists of 4047 square metres. The Morgen was a German land measurement which was equal to what could be ploughed in one forenoon. There were variations in different German states. Cassel's German-English dictionary designates a Morgen as equal to 0.6 to 0.9 acres.

A Hube/Hufe was, in the Middle Ages, a normal piece of land which was enough to support a family. It was equal to 7-15 and more hectares of ploughed land. Hufen were later divided so there were in addition to Vollbauern and Hüfnern also a) Halbbauern, Halbhüfnern and b) Viertelhüfnern, etc. The above would work out to 17.297 acres per Hube/Hufe and up to 37.05 acres or more per Hube/Hufe at 2.471 acres per hectare.

### Book Notes

(cont'd from p. 12)

incorporated in 1947.

Exploring the story of Mennonites residing in Latin America and Mexico are two books by Peter P. Klassen, the first of which is *Die*



Historian-archivist Lawrence Klippenstein with Gerd Bartel, vice-chairperson of CMC, at the "handing over" for retirement during the July sessions of CMC. Photo: Courtesy of CMC editor, Roma Quapp.

*russlanddeutschen Mennoniten in Brasilien: Wümarshum am Alto Rio Kravel und Auhagen auf dem Stoltz Plateau in Santa Catarina* (1995, pb., 490 pp.). The second book is entitled *Und ob ich schon wanderte... Geschichten zur Geschichte der Wanderung und Flucht der Mennoniten von Preußen über Russland nach America* (1997, pb., 319 pp.). Both books describe through personal account and historical narrative the journey, struggles and settlement of our Latin American cousins. They are published by the *Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein*, Weierhof, Germany. To order contact: Gary Waltner, b. Bolanden, 67295 Weierhof, Germany.

Uniquely descriptive of life in a colony in Mexico is a book of "folk" illustrations by Sarah

Unger de Peters. Capturing the lifestyle of her (Old Colony) people with captivating drawings, and minimal captions, she has drawn pictures of people and events with which she is familiar. Published by *Die Mennonitische Post* the book commemorates the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mennonites in Mexico. Copies of *Mennoniten in Mexiko (Mennonites in Mexico)* (1996, pb., 76 pp.), edited by Abe Warkentin in a bilingual text, may be obtained from the Mennonite Heritage Centre for \$15.00 plus tax and shipping.

Another description of a journey, in novel form, is that of Dallas Wiebe a retired English professor currently residing in Cincinnati, OH. In first person narrative style, Dr. Wiebe takes the reader in *Our Asian Journey* (1997, pb., 449 pp.) to Central Asia to await Christ's return. (See the Jantzen article in this issue). Exploring the soul of pilgrims who embarked on the "Great Trek", Dr. Wiebe's story is an interesting version of this familiar event. The novel is available from MLR Editions Canada, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, ON N2L 3C5.

The Historical Commission of the Mennonite Brethren Church (NA) has published a new 15-page edition (1997) of a pamphlet titled *Basic Mennonite Library for Mennonite Brethren Congregations*. Copies can be obtained from the Centre for MB Studies in Winnipeg.

Just Arrived: *Marie Cornelsen geb. Wiehler. Stationen eines Mutterlebens in Briefen und Bildern* by Marianne Cornelsen Ullrich (1997, pb., 75 pp.). A family register of Cornelsens is enclosed. We thank Erwin Cornelsen, Vancouver, BC for this donation.

The long-awaited publication, completely in Russian, of selected papers presented at a 1992 Moscow conference on pacifism in Russia, is now off the press. The book, entitled *The Long Way of Russian Pacifism: An Ideal of International and Inner Peace in Russian Religio-philosophical and Socio-political Thought*, is edited by Dr. Tatiana Pavlova of the Institute of World History in the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow.

This volume of 375 pages includes summaries in English of all the eighteen essays which it contains. The North American contributors are Dr. Walter Sawatsky, Elkhart, Indiana, Dr. Peter Brock, Toronto, Canada, and Dr. Lawrence Klippenstein, Winnipeg, Canada. Brock and Klippenstein were also members of the editorial committee, along with Dr. Rosanna Illukhina and Dr. A. Chubarian of the Institute of World History, and Dr. Pavlova, the editor.

An English edition of this volume is being planned under the direction of Dr. David McFadden of Fairfield University in Fairfield, Connecticut.

The Mennonite Heritage Centre, MCC and the Quaker community have provided major funding assistance for the Russian volume.



The Kroeger clock exhibit pictured here was presented to MHC late in August by members of the owner family and Arthur Kroeger of Winnipeg. The clock once belonged to a Peter Martens family in Einlage, Chortitza Colony. Their home was invaded by Machno bands during the Civil War period and the clock was smashed by Nestor Machno. It was then repaired but the face remained damaged. In the photo here are L-R (seated): Arthur Kroeger, Cornelius Plenert, Victor Peters and L-R (standing): Elfrieda Kroeger, Elizabeth Peters, Margaret Wieler, Herman "Hank" Peters and Victor Wieler. All are relatives and/or friends of the original owners. Photo: Courtesy of Aiden Schlichting Enns, Winnipeg, MB.



## BOOK REVIEWS

Martin, Terry. **The Mennonites and the Russian State Duma, 1905 - 1914** (Seattle: University of Washington, 1996), pb. 77 pp., \$4.25 US. Friesen, Abraham. **History and Renewal in the Anabaptist-Mennonite Tradition** (North Newton, KS: Bethel College, 1994), pb., 155 pp., \$23.00 US.

*Reviewed by Lawrence Klippenstein*

Till recently, one could find little published information on the political life of Mennonites in Imperial Russia. Martin's published treatment changes that quite considerably. It appeared in a series titled "The Donald W. Treadgold Papers in Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies."

That two Russian Mennonites, Hermann Bergmann and Peter Schroeder, found their way into the four Dumas (1906-1917) is a fairly well-known fact. But we knew less of the Mennonite and broader Russian political context in which, and the process by which, this came about. Martin has filled in many of the blanks.

It may surprise some people that P. M. Friesen helped to form a Sevastopol-based Mennonites/evangelicals political party in 1905. It was called (take note!) "The Union of Freedom, Truth and Peace: Foes of all Violence, Proponents of Unceasing Civil, Economic and Moral-Spiritual Progress Party", known locally simply as the Friesen party. For details about its development and, alas, short life, see Martin.

We wish we could consult the full collection of the P. M. Friesen personal papers (still not found) to flesh out the picture of his own role, and that of others associated with him in this project. It would be exciting as well to find the Hermann Bergmann and Peter Schroeder personal papers. Eric Sommer's work on Russian German political activity between 1905 and 1917 might contribute something here also. Martin certainly illustrates clearly that Russian newspapers and journals still have a lot of gold for Mennonite studies left unmined, but he has obtained a good bit of it. This is a path-breaking study which we hope he and others will pursue in even greater depth soon.

**History and Renewal** presents Friesen's 1992 Menno Simons lectures at Bethel College, published in the Cornelius H. Wedel Historical Series. It deals with a previously less-well explored facet of Mennonite life and thought. A very extensive collection of Ludwig Keller correspondence in the Mennonite Library and Archives provided the basic "stuff" for sketching a portrait of Keller's vision for bringing renewal to the European Mennonite community. The Waldensian consensus and the writings of Hans Denck were key features of this proposal.

This vision shattered, Friesen concluded on "the internal tensions of his own historical vision, the split between Pietist South German and rationalist North German Mennonites, and the purposes Keller had in mind for his own renewal." That opened the way for Mennonites like John Horsch (Europe, then USA) and Harold Bender (Goshen College) to bring forward alternative visions for renewal, a story perhaps better known to North American Mennonites than European endeavours along this line.

In that connection Friesen is looking for an answer to the question "Who speaks for Anabaptists today?" (since Bender has been openly challenged on the still, but now less-widely held contention that his "Anabaptist vision" is the only needed one). There is more to be said on this general topic, says Friesen, and he has promised to do just that. We will be eagerly awaiting that "further word".

Friesen, Rudy P. **Into the Past: Buildings of the Mennonite Commonwealth** (Winnipeg, MB: Raduga Publications, 1996), pb., 352 pp., \$34.99. Guenther, Jacob et al. eds. **Hague-Osler Mennonite Reserve 1895-1995** (Saskatoon, SK: Hague-Osler Reserve Book Committee, 1995) hdc., 727 pp., \$45.00.

*Reviewed by Ken Reddig*

While the many books which have been published on the Mennonite experience in Imperial Russia are replete with photographs of Mennonite buildings, it is of considerable importance that a book finally be published that details more carefully the architectural feats of a life now past. The text, accompanying each building illustrated, is uncomplicated and points to architectural features which the casual viewer of photographs or tourist would likely miss.

What probably intrigued me most about **Into the Past** is its artistic usefulness. Mennonites in Imperial Russia followed stylistic themes. While I knew that, I was nevertheless struck by that fact when page after page these themes kept recurring.

The whole layout of the book should endear it to the traveller seeking to find structures of their ancestral past still intact. Dividing the book into sections by colony and village makes it easy to find out where buildings once stood or still remain. Some readers will miss their ancestral settlements in the survey but a possible "updating" volume may help to fill the gaps.

The **Hague-Osler Mennonite Reserve** book moves us to another historical arena. For many Mennonites, the Canadian story followed the Russo/Ukrainian one, as most people know. The first Mennonites from south Russia arrived in Western Canada in the 1870s. To relieve population pressure on the West Reserve Mennonite

settlement in the mid-1890s, Bishop Johann Wiebe and Franz Froese negotiated with the Minister of the Interior for another specific area where Mennonites could settle. The area chosen was a fertile strip of land in the North West Territories between the North and South Saskatchewan Rivers, north of Saskatoon where the towns of Hague and Osler were located on a railroad. To this settlement groups and families from Manitoba moved. They consisted largely of Reinländer (Old Colony) people. Within a few years, shortly after the turn of the century, the reserve was fully occupied and successful.

To commemorate the centennial of the official establishment of this settlement, this book was produced. It is a monumental volume. Amply illustrated with hundreds of photographs, maps and sketches, the book documents the establishment and subsequent life of the Mennonites who settled on this reserve.

The book provides the reader not only with basic historical and family information but also with delightful asides. Illustrative of the different stories which become part of the folk history of a community is the story of Isbrand Penner and his Perpetual Motion Machine, or the tragic story and poem of John Hildebrand, who married one day and the next is felled by the hooves of a wild horse.

The Hague-Osler book is rich in detail. Anyone planning to visit the area should certainly obtain the book and read it prior to taking what will undoubtedly be a most worthwhile trip.

*Ken Reddig assumed the position of director of the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg, MB on September 1, 1997.*

## Book Notes

Commemorative books celebrating 50-year anniversaries include the story of Bethania, a personal care home operating in Winnipeg. Entitled **50 Years of Caring and Sharing 1945- 1995**, the book traces the concern for the care of elderly and the eventual construction of the Bethania Personal Care Home (1995, hdc., 237 pp.). It was written by Sheila Klassen-Wiebe and Isaac Unger. The book may be ordered from Bethania, 1045 Concordia Ave., Winnipeg, MB R2K 3S7.

Celebrating 50 years of incorporation as a town, Steinbach has produced yet another volume, an anniversary book, which through brief text and numerous photographs highlights organizations, churches, businesses, the arts and recreation activities within the town. Copies of **Steinbach 1946-1996: So Much to Celebrate** (1997, pb., 157 pp.), edited by Doris Penner, may be obtained from Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, MB, R0A 2A0. The town was

*(cont'd on p. 11)*