

MENNONITE HISTORIAN

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Archives (Mennonite Encyclopedia Committee meeting at Concord College, December 5, 1997, L-R: Alf Redekopp, Victor Wiebe, Ken Reddig, Bert Friesen, Richard Thiessen, Sam Steiner, Abe Dueck

Historical Society to Produce Canadian Mennonite Encyclopedia

by Ken Reddig

A new Canadian Mennonite Encyclopedia that will be accessible via the internet was approved at the annual meeting of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada held in Winnipeg December 6, 1997. In addition the Society approved the research and writing of a one-volume Canadian Mennonite history book.

The historical society came into existence in 1966 to sponsor a history of Mennonites in Canada. The project grew into a three-volume history under the authorship of Frank H. Epp (first two volumes) and Ted Regehr. It was completed in 1996.

The society's archives committee brought forward the proposal for a new encyclopedia. The rationale for developing a new Mennonite Encyclopedia is to provide better and more current information regarding Mennonites in Canada for students, researchers and the

general public. The *Mennonite Encyclopedia* dates back to the 1950s, though an updated fifth volume was published in 1990.

With current technology, information can be updated on a regular basis at minimal cost. Most major encyclopedias are no longer being printed, but rather are updated yearly and available only in electronic format.

The one-volume history of Mennonites in Canada will fulfill a need for students. While the three-volume work provides substantial detail, Mennonite studies instructors are reluctant to ask students to purchase the whole set. Ted Regehr will be the author of this new volume.

Still another project is being pursued. In his research Regehr came across many excellent photographs and illustrations which will be incorporated into an illustrated history volume.

1998 – An Important Anniversary Year!

This year marks an important anniversary for many Mennonites who came to Canada from Russia in the 1920s and the late 1940s.

75 years ago, on June 22, 1923, a group of 738 left Chortitza to make their way to Canada. They had experienced revolution, famine and much suffering after the Bolsheviks took power in 1917. They arrived in Rosthern, Saskatchewan after a lengthy railroad trip across Canada on July 21, 1923. That will be 75 years ago this summer. In the years between 1923 and 1930 over 20,000 Mennonites arrived in Canada and settled in various provinces.

50 years ago a similar story unfolded. After severe hardship during World War II many Mennonites made a difficult trek westward with the retreating German forces. Some could not escape the advancing Soviet armies and were forcibly returned and exiled in remote regions of the Soviet Union, far from their former homeland. But close to 8,000 Mennonites were able to find a new home in Canada between 1947 and 1951. Others made their way to South America, particularly Paraguay and Brazil.

The first group to arrive in Canada arrived in Halifax aboard the "General Stuart Heinzelman" on October 16, 1947. Among the approximately one thousand refugees aboard the ship was a group of approximately 120 Mennonites. The peak of the post-war immigration occurred in 1948 when almost 4,000 Mennonites, almost one-half of the total, arrived. That was 50 years ago.

An anniversary gathering took place at Concord College on October 17, 1997 where many of the original group aboard the Heinzelman were present (see "Danke,

(cont'd on p. 2)

Gott, Für Canada!" in *Mennonitische Rundschau*, February, 1998, p. 17).

An important celebration is being planned to take place in Winnipeg on August 15-16, 1998, which will focus on the immigration experience of those who came to Canada between 1947 and 1951. Jacob R. Wiebe is chairing the planning committee.

The editors of the *Mennonite Historian*, published by the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies and the Mennonite Heritage Centre, have decided to devote much of the June (and/or September) issue to these anniversaries. We are inviting readers to contribute articles, stories, photographs, etc. to help us in this venture. We cannot promise to publish everything, but we hope to receive a rich collection, some of which may be published. The remainder will enrich the collections at the archives for future generations. Readers are encouraged to submit materials to the Mennonite Heritage Centre or the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies.

My Grandmother was an Undertaker : A Tribute to Anganetha Dyck Bergen Baerg (1859-1942)

by Margaret Klassen Neufeld

For a considerable length of time before her death, grandmother was a semi-invalid. I remember as a little girl asking to be allowed to assist grandmother to walk to the table for a meal, and being granted this privilege while a strong person held her up on the other side. Since I could not remember seeing her walk alone and generally we were expected to be subdued and respectful around her, perhaps unconsciously I longed to connect with her as the person she had been, or still really was inside.

Grandmother meant peppermint candies which we politely ate, colorful embroidery on a black shawl, a long dark Sunday dress, and a black Sunday cap

made up with ribbon, lace and beads (which I still possess). Grandmother meant flowers -- a huge Christmas cactus in full bloom, tall Amaryllis with four or five blooms and the ever present cheerful geraniums, all set in the bay window on the south wall of the parlor. Grandmother meant an old ornate Russian-made clock with pink flowers artistically hand-painted on the face of it, and a long, swinging, golden pendulum that slowly ticked away time. Grandmother also meant quiet conversation on a dark winter evening lit only by one kerosene lamp set under a beautiful hand-painted glass shade with glass prisms hanging around the bottom rim, as well as around the circular piece above the lamp chimney and at the bottom of the metal frame which hung by a chain from the ceiling. How I loved to run my forefinger along those glass prisms and watch the refracted light shimmer in rainbow colors as the glass glistened in the light! And grandmother meant reciting the biblical story of the birth of Christ for her in German at Christmas time.

Grandmother died at age 83, when I was seven. Having immigrated to Canada with her parents from South Russia in 1875, first to the East Reserve, then moved to the West Reserve in Manitoba, and later accompanied her husband to pioneer 2 1/2 miles North of Waldheim, Saskatchewan in 1898, grandmother to me was an historic figure. I was told much later that grandmother had been a strong woman in body and character. She had had a lively disposition with a great sense of humor. Grandmother had been the type of person who was called on by the people in the community in time of need. When someone was ill grandmother was brought over to nurse them back to health; when a baby was about to be born, grandmother had to come to the home to attend the delivery; and when someone died it was grandmother who prepared the body for burial. So grandmother was not only a nurse and midwife, she was also an undertaker.

Grandmother was not a trained practitioner, but gathered experience and



Anganetha and Gerhard G. Baerg ca. 1935.

expertise as she worked. Hence, judgements were made on the basis of her experience and good common sense. In those days, being called on to prepare a body for burial meant washing the body and dressing it, then placing it in a homemade coffin. Occasionally, when a person was in a deep coma for some time, confirming a death without medical help was difficult. She would wait, even several days if need be, until she was absolutely sure that no mistake would be made. The body was then washed, using alcohol to cleanse and to prevent a potential odor.

At one time the deceased was dressed in a white burial gown which grandmother called *ein stoave Hamd*. Having experienced situations where a child had died and no cloth was available to make this burial dress, grandmother made a couple of them to have on hand and kept them in the bottom drawer of the *glaus Schaup* (cupboard with glass doors) in the parlor. My mother and her twin sister, who were children at that time, seemed to have the notion that these dresses had been made for them in case they died. Of course, this was a source of great consternation for them, so Grandmother eventually used the fabric for some other purpose.

(cont'd on p.9)

GENEALOGY AND FAMILY HISTORY

by Alf Redekopp

Queries

Braun - Searching for information and descendants of Jacob Braun b. Feb 25 1873 and Abraham Braun b. Oct 14 1874 sons of P. Braun and Margaretha (Doerk-sen) Braun. Margaretha born Sept 7 1852 (Neuendorf) widowed and then married Gerhard Neufeld on Jan 4, 1876. Died Dec. 8, 1895. Please contact Eleanor Reimer 75 Valence Ave. Winnipeg, MB R3T 3W6 or e-mail: reimere@cc.umanitoba.ca.

Nickel: I am looking for the descendants of Heinrich Nickel and Katharine Wiebe who came to Canada in the 1920s. Katharine Wiebe was the daughter of Johann Wiebe (b. Apr. 25, 1840) and Auguste ? [maiden name unknown]. Contact: Elsie Wiebe, 306-333 Garry Cres. NE, Calgary, AB T2K 5W9.

Vanderhoof: I am looking for anecdotes and letters relating to the Mennonite migration to Vanderhoof, BC in 1918 and in subsequent years. Contact: Shirley Bergen, 1819 34th Street, Brandon, MB R7A 5Y1.

Recent Books

David Gross. *Schmiedeleut Family Reord*. 2nd Edition . (High Bluff, MB : Sommerfeld Hutterite Colony, 1997) 498, 69 pp.

The main section of this book contains the family records of families in the Manitoba and U.S.A. Hutterite Colonies. The families entries are organized by colony with cross-references in the margin to ancestors and/or descendants. The final section compiled by Tony Waldner consists of the Hutterite family records of the Russian period from the early 1700s to 1874. Contact: James Valley Book Centre, Box 324, Elie, Manitoba R0H 0H0.

Lenora Kroecker and Ruth, Maureen and Herbert Klassen. *The Franz and Justina Klassen Family Book*. (B.C. : Private publication, 1997) 89 pp.

This book is a family history about the

descendants of Franz Klassen (1870-1924) and Justina Wiebe (1874-1933) who lived in the village of Donskaja, Russia. Between 1924 and 1928 the children of this couple left Russia for America. They include Cornelius F. Klassen (long-time MCC with post-World War II refugees), Franz F., Gerhard F., Heinrich F. (long-time editor of the *Mennonitische Rundschau*), Jacob F., Justina (Mrs. Dietrich Peters), Johann F., Nicolai F., Alexander F., Agatha (Mrs. Emmanuel Horch) and Elfrieda (Mrs. Peter J. Dyck, long-time workers with MCC). Contact: Herbert & Maureen Klassen, 31603 Old Yale, Abbotsford, BC V2T 2B4.

Edith Mae Wieler. *A Bible and a Plow : the Peter Wieler Family 1740-1996*. (Clyde, AB : Private publication, 1997) 346 pp.

This book traces the descendants of most of the children Peter Wieler (1814) and Agatha Hiebert from Nieder-Chortitza as well as the descendants of a nephew Jacob Wieler (1856-1928). These people came to Canada during the 1870s and settled in places such as Schoenwiese and Blumenhoff, Manitoba. One family homesteaded in North Dakota and another who came to Canada in 1902 homesteaded at Herbert, Saskatchewan. Contact: E.M. Wieler, Box 394, Clyde, AB T0G 0P0.

New Family Newsletter

Giesbrecht Family News is a newsletter of, by and for the Giesbrecht family and friends. The editors hope that this newsletter will include family stories, genealogy items and current news of family activities and interests. Contact: Albert Ratzlaff, 17585 Hwy 22, Dallas, Oregon 97338-9377 or e-mail at: albert7@juno.com.

Epp Family History Workshop

As a result of the growing interest of a number of Epp researchers in finding the interrelationship of the numerous Epp lineages, as well as the importance and influence of a number of Epp leaders, particularly in Prussian and Russian Mennonite church history, several representatives of different Epp clans in Winnipeg have scheduled a workshop for

June 26-27, 1998 at CMBC, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The registration is \$30.00 including materials, breakfast and lunch. Contact: A. Ens, 117 Lanark Street, Winnipeg, MB R3N 1K9 by April 30, 1998.

GRANDMA CD-ROM Vol. 2

The California Mennonite Historical Society recently released a second CD-ROM which is part of the GRANDMA (Genealogical Registry and Database of Mennonite Ancestry) project. The database has almost doubled in size from the earlier version released in September 1996. The current release includes 267,864 names linked with 75,296 families available in both Brother's Keeper format (74.9 MB) and GEDCOM format (53.1 MB). This second release includes a much better coverage of Russian Mennonite families that migrated to Canada. Ten of the 25 submissions for the database came from Canadian genealogists including the significant databases of Judii Rempel, Calgary (34,186 names), Richard Thiessen, Winnipeg (29,380 names) and Dennis Friesen, Altona (42,456 names). The CD also includes a directory with an additional 19 submissions pending which have not been merged with the main database. These files would represent well over 100,000 names. Anyone working on their Russian Mennonite ancestry should be sure to check this resource.

GRANDMA 2 also includes scanned images of maps of South Russia and Prussia, photographs of selected persons, scanned images of B.H. Unruh's book *Die niederlaendisch-niederdeutschen Hintergrunde der mennonitische Ostwanderung im 16., 18., und 19. Jahrhundert* pp. 183f. (Part 2) and genealogy software and image viewing software.

GRANDMA 2 can be ordered for \$30.00 US plus \$2.00 for shipping and handling from: California Mennonite Historical Society, 4824 E. Butler, Fresno, CA 93727-5097.

Send inquiries to Alf Redekopp, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4 or 169 Riverton Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2L 2E5. E-mail: aredekopp@confmenno.ca

George K. Epp

1924-1997



In Memoriam

by Peter Letkemann

George K. Epp was born on 26 October 1924 in the Mennonite village of Osterwick (Pavlovka) in the former Chortitza Settlement. His parents were Maria and Kornelius Epp. His father was a well-liked school teacher by profession and a respected lay preacher by calling. Being a teacher was a risky occupation in the new Soviet "Workers' Paradise" of the 1920s. In 1923 the Soviet government introduced laws prohibiting preachers from serving as teachers, and vice versa. While this decree was aimed primarily at the Russian Orthodox Church and its 50,000 or more church schools, it struck Mennonite communities hard as well. Kornelius Epp was unwilling to compromise his principles, and was dismissed from three successive teaching posts - in Schönwiese, Osterwick and Franzfeld - within a five-year span. The family moved from Osterwick to Franzfeld (Varvarovka) in the Yazykovo Settlement only weeks after George's birth, and for some unknown reasons George's birth was "officially" registered in Franzfeld rather than Osterwick.

George spent his difficult, yet happy childhood years in Franzfeld. He attended school in the neighbouring village of

Nikolaipol and was known for his discipline and diligence. While most boys had enough of school after seven years and went out into the work-force, George hoped to continue his education. He was able to complete his eighth grade at the school in Neuendorf. He apparently had ambitions of working in the agricultural sector. During the summer months he worked on the collective farm.

On 21 June 1941 Germany invaded the Soviet Union and George's life changed for ever. At the age of sixteen he was drafted into the German *Wehrmacht* and, given his command of the German, Ukrainian and Russian languages, was given an assignment as interpreter. As the German army retreated westward after 1943, George eventually ended up in southern Bavaria where he was captured by the American army. Unlike 1.5 million other German prisoners of war who perished in American captivity, George was lucky enough to be released shortly after the war ended. In 1947 he was among the first group of Mennonite refugees to leave Germany for Paraguay on the *Volendam*.

In the Volendam Colony he met and married Agnes Froese in 1948. Together they shared the hardships of pioneer life in a new land. The community soon recognized his teaching gifts, although he had no formal pedagogical training, and hired him to be their school teacher. After his baptism in 1950, George also began his lay ministry in the church - thus continuing a long-established family tradition.

In December 1954, George and Agnes emigrated to Canada. Within days of his arrival in Winnipeg on 20 December 1954, he was offered a job as lab assistant to Dr. Campbell in the chemistry department at the University of Manitoba. George became an accomplished glass blower, making test tubes, beakers and other glass apparatus for the lab. The complex Pyrex glass vacuum system that he built to store gases for chemistry research at the University of Manitoba still stands as a monument of sorts to his skills.

Already fluent in Russian, Ukrainian, German, and Spanish, George began studying English and taking night-school classes to complete his high school

requirements. In addition to his work in the lab, George then enrolled at the University of Manitoba and earned BA and MA degrees in German. His MA thesis, entitled "Rilke und Russland" was completed in 1968 and published in 1984. In 1976 he earned his Ph.D. in history with a dissertation on "The Educational Policies of Catherine II."

George gave up his career as a glass-blower in 1968, and began a long and distinguished teaching career. He taught at the Mennonite Brethren Bible College, the University of Manitoba, Canadian Mennonite Bible College, the University of Winnipeg and Menno Simons College. From 1978-83 he served as President of the Canadian Mennonite Bible College; from 1985-92 he served as Director of the Mennonite Studies Centre and helped to establish its successor - Menno Simons College. He retired from Menno Simons College in 1992, but continued his involvement with the Hutterian Heritage Teachers' Training program, where he taught church history.

In addition to his teaching duties he also served as a lay minister in the Sargant Avenue Mennonite Church, Springfield Heights Mennonite Church and Douglas Mennonite Church. He also worked on many conference committees - especially the editorial advisory board to the German-Mennonite paper *Der Bote*.

George K. Epp died of cancer in Winnipeg on 25 October 1997, one day short of his 73rd birthday. He will be remembered as a man with a diverse range of interests and talents: a master glassblower, a dynamic teacher, a passionate public speaker, a capable college administrator, and a renowned scholar in various disciplines - ranging from Anabaptist history and theology, Russian and Soviet Mennonite history, to Mennonite literature. He was a man of courage, deep conviction, passion, determination, discipline and sincere humility. He was a man of faith and vision who looked not only to the past but also to the future. Above all he was a man deeply devoted to his family and to his fellowship of faith, a sensitive pastoral counselor, and a dear friend, always ready to listen and take time for people.

Selected Bibliography of published books and articles:

Books:

1974. *Harvest: Anthology of Mennonite Writing in Canada, 1874-1974*. Altona: Friesen Printers, 1974.
1977. *Unter dem Nordlicht, Anthologie des deutschsprachigen Schrifttums der Mennoniten in Kanada*. Altona: Friesen Printers, 1977.
1984. *Rilke und Russland*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1984.
1984. *The Educational Policies of Catherine II. The Era of Enlightenment in Russia*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1984.
1997. *Geschichte der Mennoniten in Russland*. Band I - Deutsche Täufer in Russland. Bielefeld: Logos Verlag, 1997
1998. *Geschichte der Mennoniten in Russland*. Band II (in preparation)
- [1999] *Geschichte der Mennoniten in Russland*. Band III (in preparation)

Articles:

(1) Anabaptist-Mennonite History

1980. "The Spiritual Roots of Menno Simons," *Mennonite Images*, ed. Harry Loewen. Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1980, 51-59.
- 1988a. "The Premonstratensian Connection of Menno Simons: Confirmations, Revisions and New Evidence," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 1988, 349-55.
- 1996a. "Am Erbe gemessen," *Kein anderes Fundament. Beiträge zum Menno Simons Symposium*. Hrsg. von Johannes Reimer. Bielefeld: Logos Verlag, 1996, 9-18.
- 1996b. "Menno Simons - Gesamtwerk und Bedeutung für die Gegenwart. Probleme der Forschung," *Kein anderes Fundament. Beiträge zum Menno-Simons Symposium*. Hrsg. von Johannes Reimer. Bielefeld: Logos Verlag, 1996, 21-39.
- 1996c. "Das 'Fundamentbuch.' Im Gespräch mit den Reformatoren," *Kein anderes Fundament. Beiträge zum Menno-Simons Symposium*. Hrsg. von Johannes Reimer. Bielefeld: Logos Verlag, 1996, 127-146.

(2) Russian and Soviet Mennonite History

George Epp's greatest contribution as a scholar came in the field of Russian

Mennonite studies. He was uniquely qualified. for this role - he was not only fluent in Russian, Ukrainian and German, but he understood the Russian and Ukrainian setting, and knew the Mennonite story intimately from his own personal experience. I can still recall the tour which he and I led to the Soviet Union in 1990 - on a warm spring day our group was sitting on the upper deck of a boat cruising on the Dnieper River around the Island of Chortitza in Zaparozhye; George spoke 'off-the-cuff' for at least an hour, telling us story after story of what we were seeing. I can also remember that memorable day in May 1990 when he came back to our hotel room in Odessa brimming with excitement about his discovery of a vast archive of materials relating to the history of Mennonites and German Colonists in south Russia.

The final fruits of his labours are found in his *Geschichte der Mennoniten in Russland*. Volumes I and II were completed well before he died. Several chapters of volume III were completed before George was hospitalized in June 1997, others exist only in draft. Before his death he asked me to oversee the completion and publication of this third volume. I hope to complete this task, together with a team of Mennonite scholars, before the end of the millennium.

1985 "Die grosse Flucht, Vom Dnjepr zur Weichsel - Von der Weichsel zur Elbe, 1943-1945," *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch* 1985, 69-74.

1986 "Russian patriotism among the nineteenth-century Russian Mennonites," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 1986, 120-134.

1987a. "Those who seek God in the U.S.S.R. discover he never went into exile," *Mennonite Mirror*, May 1987, 9-10 [contains the translations of Pasternak and Solzhenitsyn].

1987b "A confession of faith is a costly choice in the Soviet Union," *Mennonite Mirror*, September 1987, 5

1987c "Perestroika: Khrushchov-Gorbachov-Yeltsin." *Mennonite Mirror*, December 1987, 5-6.

1988b "Mennonite in Spite of. . .," in *Why I am a Mennonite. Essays on Mennonite Identity*. Ed. Harry Loewen. Kitchener: Herald Press, 1988, 50-60.

1988c "Zur ethnisch-sozialen Interaktion der südrussischen deutschen Mennoniten," in *Die Deutschen in der UdSSR in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. Hrsg. Von Ingeborg Fleischhauer und Hugo H. Jedig. Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1990. Internationales Symposium: Brücke der Verständigung - Die Deutschen in der UdSSR Einst und Jetzt. Bonn, 1. - 3. Mai 1988.

1989a "Johann Cornies (1789-1848): Deutsches Bauerngenie am Schwarzen Meer," *Heimatbuch der Deutschen aus Russland*, 1985-1989. Stuttgart, 1989.

1989b "Mennonite-Ukrainian Relations (1789-1945). *Journal of Mennonite Studies*, 1989, 131-144.

1989c "Urban Mennonites in Russia," *Mennonites in Russia, 1788-1988: essays in honor of Gerhard Lohrenz*. Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1989.

1990 "The Mennonite Historian and Perestroika," *Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society Newsletter*, December 1990.

1994 "Die deutschen Mennonitenkolonien an der Wolga," *Zwischen Reform und Revolution. Die Deutschen an der Wolga, 1860-1917*. Herausgegeben von Dittmar Dahlmann und Ralph Tuchtenhagen. Essen: Klartext, 1994. [Paper presented at U of Freiburg, 6 - 10 Oct 1992]

1997. *Geschichte der Mennoniten in Russland*. Band I - Deutsche Täufer in Russland. Bielefeld: Logos Verlag, 1997.

1998. *Geschichte der Mennoniten in Russland*. Band II (in preparation).

Further tributes to George Epp:

Isaac P. Bergen, "Erinnerungen an meinen Mitschüler und Freund," *Der Bote* 19 Nov 1997, 7.

Erwin Strempler, "Epp focused on the Mennonite Story," *Canadian Mennonite*, 8 Dec 1997, 5.

Brenda Suderman, "Historian/preacher was also craftsman," *Canadian Mennonite* 22 Dec 1997, 12.

Peter Epp, "Erinnerungen an meinen Bruder Georg," *Der Bote* 2 Jan 1998, 4-5.

Peter Letkemann is a researcher, writer and businessman who lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Heritage Centre Renovations

Over the years a problem has developed with the patio portion of the Heritage Centre building. Facing west, with large windows overlooking a beautiful grassed mound, the patio has been a favourite place for students, staff and visitors to sit in the warm sunshine.

Unfortunately, the patio is not water tight and leaks into the library below. Numerous attempts have been made to seal the patio; all unsuccessful. After consulting with a number of people in the construction industry, it was decided that the best way to solve the problem was to cover the patio with a roof.

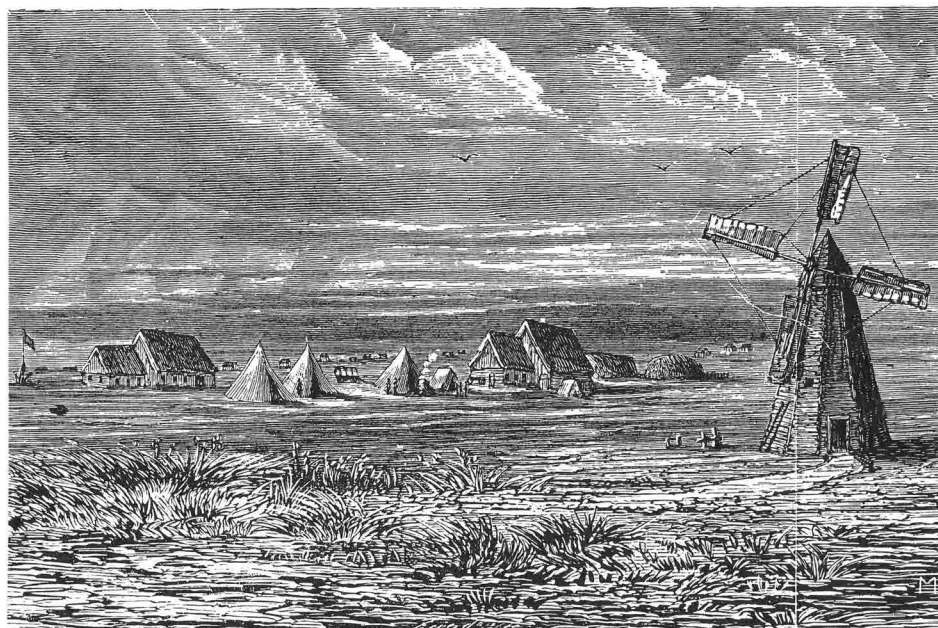
Last year the CMC designated money for this project to proceed. A committee comprised of John I. Friesen (Business Manager at CMBC), Gordon Epp-Fransen (CMC Treasurer), Paul Friesen (CMBC Librarian) and Ken Reddig (Heritage Centre Director) has been working with *Friesen Tokar Architects* since the fall of 1997 to plan and design an appropriate cover to this section of the Archives and Library. It is hoped that the roof section covering the former patio can be completed by late spring.

In addition to fixing this problem, the Centre will have its worn-out carpets replaced and better lighting installed.

Der Bote Index Update

Work steadily progresses on volume 4 of the index for *Der Bote*. This volume will encompass the years of 1964-1976 (the years when P.B. Wiens was editor). At the present time Helene Friesen, who is working on the index, has completed the years 1964 - 1975. Within a few weeks the final year should be completed. It is anticipated that this volume will be available for purchase later this year.

The funds for this project come from



Scene on the Rat River Mennonite Reservation, Manitoba

Rat River Mennonite Reservation

The engraving, which has been reprinted above, is labeled as being based upon a sketch by the Earl of Dufferin. A copy of this engraving was recently purchased by Jacob Dick at a flea market in Ottawa.

We are somewhat puzzled by this engraving. We have checked numerous sources to locate more information regarding its printing or publication. The Provincial Archives in Manitoba has been consulted as have other historians and archivists. To this point we have not been able to locate any additional information on this engraving.

Our question to you, our many readers, is whether anyone has any additional information on this engraving? Was it ever published in a book? If you have any information on this engraving please contact the Heritage Centre.

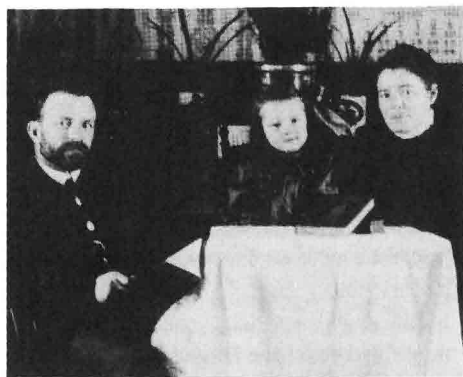
the *Bote Committee*, a sub-committee of the Resources Commission. Recently a donor contributed funds to the Heritage Centre to purchase a computer for this project. The Heritage Committee expresses its thanks to the Resources Commission and to private donors who help to make projects such as this possible.

MHC Gallery Display

On a regular basis the Heritage Centre receives calls or visits from tourists who wish to come to the Centre to learn more about Mennonites. They are invariably disappointed when they do come because they anticipate more of a visual than documentary (archival) display.

A need for a visual display on the CMC/CMBC campus which recounts the faith story of our Anabaptist- Mennonite heritage telling our story and witnessing to our faith and the work and what we believe and who we are today, has clearly been demonstrated by these visitors.

To address this need the Mennonite Heritage Centre is planning to develop a multi-paneled display (8-10 large panels) which will tell our faith story beginning with the 16th century up to the present. The theme of this display will be: "**Faith, Service and Reconciliation**", concepts which a broad spectrum of people already relate to Mennonites. The display will be multi-cultural, emphasizing that Mennonites come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, live in many different countries and come from all walks of life. It will incorporate the story of both the Swiss and Russian Mennonites and the current day ministries of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. The display panels will be invitational, presenting the viewer with the opportunity to participate in this community of believers.



Rev. and Mrs. Jacob J. Wiens, and Peter, the father of Georgi Vins.

Georgi Vins, Jacob J. Wiens and Saskatchewan Mennonite Brethren Connections

by Abe Dueck

On January 11, 1998 Georgi Vins, the well known Russian Baptist dissident who spent his final years in America, died suddenly in Elkhart, Indiana.

Vins was a leader of large group of Baptists in the Soviet Union who refused to comply with the demands of the state. The resistance movement was known as the *Iniitsiativniki*, and the organization which developed was called the Council of Churches of Evangelical Christian Baptists (CCECB). The story of Vins, his imprisonment and ultimate release in 1979 to begin a new life in America during the era of Jimmy Carter, became widely publicized in the western media, although less became known about his activities later.

Many Mennonites knew that Vins (Wiens) had Mennonite roots, but the stories of his father and grandfather are not as widely known.¹ The grandfather, Jacob J. Wiens, was born in 1874 in Blumenau in the Molotschna colony in southern Russia. He was baptized in 1891 or 1892 by Aron Lepp of the Einlage Mennonite Brethren Church. Later he married Elizabeth Baerg, the daughter of an MB minister. In 1898 a son Peter was born to them.

Early in his Christian life Jacob felt called to the ministry and he served as evangelist and Bible colporteur in various areas until 1910, when he was apparently sent to Siberia by the state because of his activity. In 1911, however, he was able to

attend the second Congress of the Baptist World Alliance. He decided to remain in North America and soon his wife and children joined him. Before long he had made his way to Borden, Saskatchewan, where he became one of the leading ministers in the MB church. He is listed as one of the delegates to the convention of the General Conference of MB Churches which met in Hillsboro in October, 1912.² But Wiens was constantly on the move. From 1914-16 he led a small German Baptist church in Queen Centre, Saskatchewan, in 1917-18 he was in Wasco, California, in 1918-19 he spent time in Philadelphia in the interest of Russian missions, and in 1919 he was commissioned by the German Baptists to serve in Russia.

In the period from 1919 to 1928 Jacob Wiens was active mostly in Siberia and in Charbin, Manchuria. But in 1928 he again attended the Baptist World Alliance meeting in Toronto. This time he remained in North America until his death in 1944. He pastored various German Baptist congregations in Saskatchewan, British Columbia (Vancouver) and Alberta. But he also spent another period of time leading the Borden MB Church (1934-38) where he was well received and fondly remembered.³ The 75th anniversary book of the Borden MB Church includes an article on Rev. Jacob Wiens written by A. K. Rempel, as well as a photograph of the Wiens family.⁴

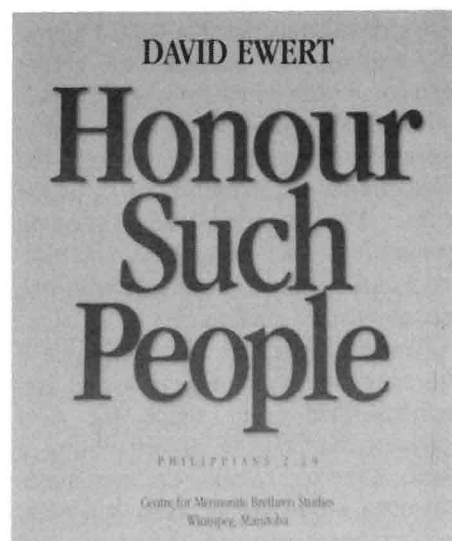
Peter Wiens, the son of Jacob Wiens and father of Georgi Vins, remained in the US when his father returned to Russia in 1919. From 1919-22 he attended the Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. After that he served a group of Russian Baptists in Pittsburgh from 1922-26 after which he returned to Russia as an evangelist. But he spent most of his time in prison and died in a labor camp in 1943, one year before his father's death. His widow, Lydia, became a prominent leader of the Council of Prisoners' Relatives and also spent several years in jail. The grandson of Jacob, Georgi, followed the family legacy in evangelism and resisting the efforts of the authorities to curb the spread of Christianity. For that he too spent most of his life while in the Soviet Union in prison.

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Walter Sawatsky, who knew Georgi Vins quite well, writes as follows: "Like many persons of deep faith, courage and passion, Vins had his flaws. Yet his impact was not limited to his attempts to lead a wing of the Soviet evangelicals to renewed faithfulness in the face of heavy handed state pressure to beat religion into the ground. . . . He was one of many in this century who gave new meaning to "the power of the powerless." The epitaph on his mother's grave in the Prairie Street cemetery of Elkhart, [also] fits the son--'he has done what he could'.⁵ In fact, the epitaph fits at least three generations of the Wiens family.

Endnotes

1. Most of the information in the following summary is drawn from an article by Albert W. Wardin, Jr., "Jacob J. Wiens: Mission Champion in Freedom and Repression." *Journal of Church and*
(cont'd on p. 8)



Available for \$14.95 (plus GST and shipping and handling = \$18.00) Order from Centre for M.B. Studies, 169 Riverton Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2L 2E5

Georgi Vins

(cont'd from p. 7)

State, (Autumn, 1986): 495-514

2. *Verhandlungen der zweiunddreissigsten Bundeskonferenz der Mennoniten Brüdergemeinde von Nord Amerika, abgehalten in der Gemeinde zu Hillsboro, Kansas, am 27, 28, 29 und 30 Oktober, 1912*, p. 5.

3. J. J. Wiens is listed in all the Northern District (Canadian) Conference Yearbooks from 1934 to 1938 as a delegate and/or ordained minister.

4. *Borden Mennonite Brethren Church 1905-1980: Precious Memories* (Borden, SK: Borden Men. Church, 1980): 8-9.

5. Walter Sawatsky, e-mail message, January 14, 1998.

Binational History Symposium Set to Go

Conference Title: "One People, Many Stories : Charting the Next Generation of Mennonite Historical Study in the U.S. and Canada."

Date: May 7-9, 1998

Place: Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, B.C. Canada

The program has been finalized for the binational history symposium, One People, Many Stories, scheduled to take place at Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, B.C. on May 7-9, 1998. The symposium will feature about 30 Mennonite historians from across Canada and the United States. The meeting will celebrate the recent completion of two important history book series, the four-volume *Mennonite Experience in America* series and the three-volume *Mennonites in Canada* series. The authors of the concluding volumes, Prof. Paul Toews (U.S.) and Prof. Ted Regehr (Canada) will be among the presenters at the conference.

The conference has two purposes: it will examine a new range of issues and methods that could shape the next generation of Mennonite history writing in North America; second, the conference will open a dialogue between American and Canadian historians by comparing and contrasting the Mennonite experience in Canada and the U.S.

The conference will begin on May 7,

Thursday night at 7 p.m. with several presentations including one by Prof. John Redekop. On Friday and Saturday Mennonite historians, both senior and junior, will focus on a variety of issues. These issues will include urbanization, peacemaking, gender, cross-cultural borrowings, industrial relations and textual representation. Papers will also be given on national differences in theology, congregational life and artistic expression. Keynote addresses will be given by Dr. James Urry on Friday night and Dr. Theron Schlabach at a banquet on Saturday night, May 9.

The conference is sponsored by the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, various Mennonite historical societies and by the Mennonite Central Committee. All sessions will be held in the Columbia Bible College chapel; the public is welcome to attend. Admission is free. Persons wishing to attend the banquet should purchase their tickets from David Giesbrecht, Columbia Bible College (e-mail: giesbrecht@rapid.net). For a full program contact Royden Loewen, Chair in Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, MB R3B 2E9. (e-mail: Roy.Loewen@uwinnipeg.ca) or Perry Bush, Bluffton College, Bluffton, OH 45817 (e-mail: bushp@bluffton.edu).

Call for Papers

Khortitsa 1999: New Sources and Perspectives on Mennonites in the Russian and Soviet Empires, an international scholarly conference, will be held in Zaporizhzhie, Ukraine from 27 to 30 May 1999.

The collapse of the USSR has opened archives to all scholars, while freeing Ukrainian and Russian scholars to pursue new interests. The conference will provide a forum for the knowledge these new opportunities have brought to light, and help set the agenda for the study of Mennonites in Ukraine and Russia as we move into the new century.

The conference is sponsored by the Centre for Russian and East European Studies at the University of Toronto through its Research Program in Russian and Soviet Mennonite Studies, in conjunction with the Chair of Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg, the

Regional State Archive of Zoprizhzhie, and the State University of Zaporizhzhie.

Proposals are invited for papers along three broadly thematic lines: 1) sources, and studies based on new sources; 2) new perspectives emerging out of the collapse of the USSR and alternative approaches (social history, women's studies, economic history, etc.); and 3) studies that place Mennonites in the context of their neighbours and the larger society. Papers presented at the conference, in English or Russian, should be new, previously unpublished work. The official language of the conference will be Ukrainian, while the working languages will be English and Russian.

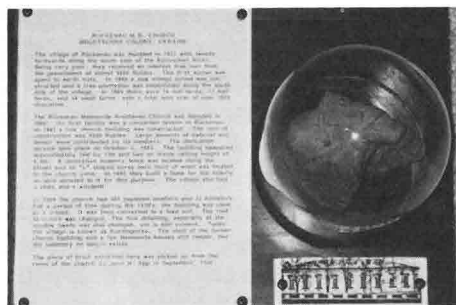
Proposals for papers should be submitted by no later than 15 April 1998 to Harvey L. Dyck or Leonard Friesen, Research, Program in Russian and Soviet Studies, Centre for Russian and East European Studies, Room 14335, 130 St. George Street, Toronto, Canada M5S 1A5, or e-mail to hdyck@chass.utoronto.ca or lfriesen@mach1.wlu.ca.

Our Readers Respond . . .

Although the *Mennonite Historian* does not have a "Letters to the Editor" column, we are always happy to hear from our readers. Here are several brief comments by readers.

"Thank you for this paper. I always read it from cover to cover and enjoy it a lot. Making it a bit bigger could be considered." Leslie Plett, Calgary, AB..

"I really enjoy the *Mennonite Historian*. I am into my family histories and it has been very helpful." Isabel Klassen, Coaldale, AB.



This plaque was presented to CMBS by John H. Epp. The brick enclosed in the glass is from the Rückenau Mennonite Brethren Church built in 1883.

My Grandmother

(cont'd from p. 2)

When grandmother was present at the time a person died, she and her helper, Mrs. (Rev. David) Epp, could very soon carry out the required preparations. However, if the family came for her after rigor mortis had set in (as people in the medical profession will readily understand) it was much more difficult to carry out this task. Such things as closing the eyes of the deceased or putting a rolled up towel under the chin to keep the closed mouth in position, are done routinely in medical institutions today. But not every family knew what to do, unless Grandmother was able to give instructions immediately. One also needs to keep in mind that telephones and cars were not in use at that time to deliver messages. On occasion Grandmother shared about the difficulties of washing and dressing a body after a significant time had elapsed following death.

One can also readily understand that keeping a deceased body at home for several days before the funeral without the modern benefits of refrigeration and embalming practices was not a simple matter. Whether or not a body could be kept for several days had a lot to do with the type of illness the person had prior to death. The result was that some bodies simply deteriorated more quickly than others. Some homes had an ice house-- in the winter, river ice was sawed and hauled to the farm and put into the ice house which was partly dug into the ground. The ice was then covered with sawdust so that it wouldn't melt until well into the summer time. This facility allowed a deceased body to be kept cold in the spring and summer by packing it with ice. In the winter the body was sometimes kept in the "summer kitchen." This was an unheated room, attached to the house or as a separate small building, used to do the cooking in the summer time to keep the rest of the house cool. In some cases the body was kept in a cool church basement, which was not a finished facility, but was used as storage. On occasion the coffin was kept closed without a viewing because the body had deteriorated very quickly.

Usually a man in the community who

had carpentry skills built the wooden coffin. Frequently Grandmother and Mrs. Epp would put in the lining using white satin or silk. Sprigs of greenery from Grandmother's *Bloumen Fensta* (bay window) were sometimes sewn onto the lining and, when available, flowers were placed in the hands of the deceased and/or on the coffin. When a woman died at childbirth, which was not uncommon, the baby was buried in the same coffin with its mother.

On the day of the funeral my uncle, Peter D. Friesen who lived three miles north of Waldheim and who had a beautiful team of black horses, would transport the coffin to the graveyard. Uncle Peter took pride in keeping his property in mint condition and on these occasions he also used his best harnesses with polished studs and special hames that had a black tassel attached to the pointed top (the hames fit over the collar on the horses). Sometimes the back seat of a black, two-seater buggy was removed and the coffin placed in the resulting box behind the front seat. Many times they used a low box on a wagon or sleigh in which to place the coffin to take it to the cemetery. Pallbearers and family wore wide black armbands stitched onto the sleeve, and sometimes there was a bow attached to the armbands of the pallbearers¹. The grave was dug by relatives and friends of the deceased, using pick axe and spade. The body was buried facing east and the grave was closed by the same people who dug it, while the family and friends stood around the grave.

Grandmother stated that she particularly enjoyed attending to the burial of young children. For one thing, they were easier to handle; but more, it was rewarding to be able to carry out this special service with love and care for a bereaved family. In a list she wrote up of the people she had prepared for burial (*eingebettet*), as she could recall at that time, there were 19 women, 17 men and 36 babies and children, for a total of 72. This included attending to the burial of her father-in-law, Gerhard G. Baerg, in Minnesota in 1910.

Yes, my grandmother was an undertaker in her own right. But she was also a courageous, resourceful woman of tremendous inner strength and depth of

Einlage Mennonite Brethren Baptism List from 1862

by Alf Redekopp

The list which follows comes from a document on Reel 1 of the St. Petersburg Microfilming Project sponsored by Mennonite Historical Society of British Columbia, Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies (Fresno), Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies (Winnipeg), and Mennonite Heritage Centre (Winnipeg). A file described in the Russian inventory guide as 'on the appearance of the Mennonite sect of *Hupher* in the village of Chortitza...1863-1869' (Fond 821, Opis 5, Dielo 976) appears to contain the first list of Mennonite Brethren members in the Chortitza Colony.

The list begins with the heading which indicates that this is a list of persons baptized according to the teachings of Menno Simons, giving their age and year of baptism, and arranged according to the village of residence where they are registered. The list has an additional column presumably containing the initial of the one who baptized. Some of these letters are illegible, but many can be deciphered as a "A", "A.U.", "Ung." or "N", referring to Abraham Unger and Heinrich Neufeld. This is confirmed by

(cont'd on next page)

character, a woman who had the love and concern for her people that it took to carry out this difficult, yet essential, task for her family and her extended community.

Endnote

1. My sister recalled that in another community (namely Tiefengrund), when the *Aeltester* Rev. Peter Regier died in April, 1925, the pallbearers walked 1 1/2 miles beside the wagon carrying the coffin to the church and cemetery, in honor of the deceased. This was remembered as a special tribute because it was not a common practice.

Margaret Klassen Neufeld is a genealogist and writer who lives in Winnipeg. For many years she was involved with MCC Canada Peace and Social Concerns.

Heinrich Epp's writings as follows:

The brothers Abraham Unger and Heinrich Neufeld travelled to Molotschna in the spring of 1862, were baptized by Gerhard Wieler, and returned home. On 18 March, 1862, the first baptism was held in the Dnieper River. Those baptized were: Abraham Unger's wife, Heinrich Epp and his wife, believers in Kronsweide, and several more from Einlage. The ice on the Dnieper was pushed aside and 18 people descended into the water. Only one outsider was witness to this, a fisherman named Hoeppner, and he later told the authorities. Both Abraham Unger and Heinrich Neufeld performed the baptisms in order to be finished as quickly as possible.

After the baptism we continued on our way rejoicing, and everyone could see that we were changed. The little group of baptized brethren grew quickly to 76 souls by May of 1862...

This list which was recently discovered contains 76 names, men and women, as well as the maiden name of the married women. Additional descriptors and relationships such as "his wife, his son, maid-servant" and "deaf-mute" help in identifying the people baptized. The list ends with a signature and a term equivalent to the expression "certified to be correct".

Our thanks to Margaret Kroeker, Mennonite Genealogy Inc. and George Dyck of Winnipeg and Johann Epp of Bielefeld who were involved in the translation. The list which follows reproduces most of the information in the document.

Residents of Einlage: 1) Heinrich Neufeld, Schönhorst, 43; 2) with wife Maria Unrau, Schardau, 25; 3) her son Heinrich, 16; 4) her daughter Anna, 16; 5) her daughter Agatha, 13

6) maidservant Katharina Friesen, Schönhorst, 28; 7) Abraham Unger, Einlage, 37; 8) his wife, Katharina Martens, 36; 9) Heinrich Epp, Rosental, 30; 10) his wife Maria Unger, 30; 11) Peter Neufeld, Schönhorst, 28; 12) Peter Unger, Insel Chortitza, 31; 13) his wife Maria Bergmann, 27; 14) Johann Hiebert, Einlage, 31; 15) his wife Elisabeth Fast, 28; 16) Kornelius Unger, Einlage, 39; 17) his wife Katharina Regier, 29; 18) their daughter Helena, 16; 19) widow Margaretha H. Unger nee Sawatzky, Einlage, 67; 20) her daughter Helena, 16; 21) Johann Neufeld's² daughter Helena,

Schönhorst, 27; 22) his daughter Anna, 19; 23) his daughter Katharina (deaf-mute), 21.

Residents of Kronsweide: 24) Johann Isaak, Chortitza, 45; 25) his wife Helena Banmann, 49; 26) their son Johann, 22; 27) their daughter Maria, 18; 28) Wilhelm Janzen, Kronsweide, 44; 29) his wife nee Neufeld, 33; 30) their son Jakob, 18; 31) Abram Klassen, Kronsweide, 41; 32) his wife Susanna Neufeld, 44; 33) their daughter Katharina, 17; 34) Kornelius Klassen, 33; 35) his wife Anna Neufeld, 31; 36) Heinrich Kruse, Kronsweide, 43; 37) his wife Katharina Friesen, 38; 38) Kornelius Unrau, Kronsweide, 43; 39) his wife Maria Peters, 43; 40) their daughter Maria, 17; 41) Gerhard Isaak, Chortitza, 30; 42) his wife Susanna Schmidt, 32; 43) Peter Neufeld, Kronsweide, 36; 44) his wife Katharina Klassen (?), 44; 45) Johann Kasper, Nieder-Chortitza, 52; 46) his wife Anna Siemens, 56; 47) Heinrich Peters, Kronsweide; 48) maidservant Katharina Klassen, Kronsweide, 19; 49) maidservant Sara Klassen, Kronsweide, 17; 50) maidservant Elisabeth Neufeld, Kronsweide, 19.

Residents of the village Insel Chortitza: 51) Abram Abram Neufeld, 19.

Residents of Village Chortitza: 52) Heinrich Toews, Alexanderowsk (?); 53) his wife Katharina Loewen, 21; 54) Peter Berg, Neuendorf, 30; 55) his wife Anna Rempel, 31; 56) Johann Loewen, Chortitza, 33; 57) his wife Margaretha Friesen, 33; 58) Peter Friesen, Chortitza, 37; 59) his wife Anna Koop (?), 37; 60) Kornelius Huebert, Chortitza, 27; 61) his wife Katharina Wiens, 21; 62) Aron Lepp, Einlage (previous resident of Kherson), 33; 63) his wife Katharina Siemens, 32; 64) Gerhard Buller, Chortitza (?), 28; 65) his wife Aganeta Harms, Liebenau, Molot., 22. **Residents of Nieder-Chortitza:** 66) Johann Toews, Rosental, 37; 67) his wife Maria Klassen, 40; 68) Johann Wieler, Chortitza, 51; 69) his son Franz, 18; 70) his son Jakob, 16; 71) Peter Nickel, Nieder-Chortitza, 34; 72) his wife Judith Nickel, 26; 73) Gerhard Rempel, Nieder-Chortitza his wife Aganeta Buller, 27; 74) Benjamin Benjamin Nickel, Nieder-Chortitza, 22; Residents of Schönwiese; 75) Dietrich Goerzen, 29; 76) his wife Aganeta Klassen, 45.

The Russian Remnant : The "Left-over Mennonites"

by Rev. Henry Dueck

The above expression can be heard in the villages of Chihuahua. Where did it originate?

During the 1920s when Mennonites from Manitoba and Saskatchewan were settling in Mexico, some 40-60 families also arrived from Russia, seeking refuge from the war, revolution and famine of that country. Many sought to emigrate to Canada and some were allowed, but when the Canadian borders closed, they looked for and found another country — Mexico. A number of families came to Mexico and it was possible for the existing Mennonite settlements to assist these refugees with help and hospitality.

After a difficult journey they landed in Tampico and Vera Cruz. They travelled to Irapuato and then to Durango to the village of El Trebol, not far from Patos. Another village in Chihuahua, not far from Pedernales, was called El Rosario. The ultimate goal of these refugees had been and still was, Canada or the USA. When that became a possibility, many emigrated, leaving a small group at each place. They were too small to become self-sufficient villages and so they sought for a place to live in Cuauhtemoc. It was a good opportunity for two groups whose ways had parted long years before to meet and

(cont'd on next page)

Endnotes

1. Notizen aus dem Leben und Wirken des verstorbenen Ältesten Abraham Unger, dem Gründer der Einlager Mennoniten Brüdergemeinde (Halbstadt, Gouv. Taurien : Selbstverlag, 1907) pp. 8-9, translated and published in *Direction* (Fall, 1990 Vol 19, No. 2) pp. 132-133
2. Johann Epp of Bielefeld adds Johann Neufeld, age 53 and a certain Johann Froese, 37 and his wife Anna Nickel, 36, all from Kronsweide as baptized on Mar. 18, 1862.

Alf Redekopp is Archivist at the Centre for M.B. Studies and the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg.

help one another. This happened in various ways. However, when the *Russländer* sought to settle in the Old Colony villages, the latter would not allow this. This was to have far-reaching consequences. Years later the Bishop indicated his regret over the decision. They had failed to realize that God may have sent or allowed those *Russländer* to come as people through whom they could show their love for God and their neighbor. Did they only love themselves and those who were like them.

All this resulted in the formation of another Mennonite Church in the vicinity. That which they wanted to prevent was about to happen. Another church in their neighborhood would challenge their understanding.

The new group sought help elsewhere and received it from the General Conference Mennonite Church of the USA and Canada. A congregation was organized in 1938 after a school had been opened. It consisted on the *Konferenza*, the "Left-over *Russländer*". Cuauhtemoc now had a Mennonite Church called "Hoffnungsaue Mennonite Church". The congregation related in particular to congregations of the Western District Conference in Kansas and Oklahoma. Workers from Canada and USA came to help in the church and the school. Even though the village youth were forbidden to associate with the *Russländer*, there was an openness on the part of the latter to relate to the village youth.

The *Konferenza* were now there, not to work among the Old Colony people, but to help those whom the Old Colony church would not accept.

The development of this new church aroused interest among some of the people of the villages who were influenced in their church life, in the school and in the homes. Many from the villages attended the church services and the school. The Old Colony church responded by excommunicating such members. They did not wish this kind of association with others. One might ask: Did they themselves contribute to the fact that these "others" were there?

It should be understood that the *Russländer* Mennonites did not come to Mexico to work among the Old Colony people, but it became a fact that more and

more people from the villages attended the worship services. Unfortunately, this eventually led to tensions in the new church. A group of workers from the USA and Canada, plus those coming from the Old Colony church, began assembling in Quinta Lupita, and also opened a school. The *Russländer* continued to meet in Cuauhtemoc.

This latter group had no church worker (leader) now and the few families remaining chose workers from their own group. Workers were not sent from the Conference anymore. Worship services consisted essentially of readings. The group became smaller as more moved away and others became a part of the Spanish speaking people and ultimately disappeared as an organized group.

Today the building which was once the church in Cuauhtemoc is a business place selling books and items for church use: "El Reliquario". A "left-over *Russländer*" woman, a Catholic, operates the store. The identifiable *Russländer* range in economic status from the very rich to the very poor. They tell us there is one of these whose wealth is such that he gains a million pesos during the time it takes to tie his shoes! No doubt that is an exaggeration, but he is extremely wealthy. Another one of these *Russländer* makes the rounds of the garbage cans, collecting paper to be sold as a means of sustenance. Between these extremes are others, no doubt. These "left-over *Russländer*" Mennonites are part of the history of the Mennonites in Mexico.

In writing these notes I mean to stimulate discussion and reflection. My observations may or may not be accurate. If I am correct, then it is essential that in our common responsibilities as followers of Jesus, we cease to fight with each other, and work together in order to further proclaim the love of Jesus. If my observations are incorrect, then I wish to be corrected in order to understand the significance of the "left-over *Russländer*" for our history and development.

Rev. Henry Dueck, formerly leading minister at Oak Street Mennonite Church, Leamington, Ontario served a number of years in Mexico under General Conference Commission on Overseas Ministries.

Book Notes

(cont'd from p. 12)

book describes the experiences of A.A. Klassen in Russia until 1929 and then later in Germany, but they were translated by Linda Matties and the 45-page book is available for \$5.00 plus postage from Linda Matties, 2-32817 Marshall Rd., Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 1J8.

A recent Latin America story is an MA thesis which some readers and researchers will be very interested in reading. It was completed by David M. Quiring. The title is "*Mennonite Old Colony Life: Under Siege in Mexico*". It was submitted to the Department of History, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, in December of 1997. It is available for viewing at the Mennonite Heritage Centre.

Abe Warkentin, longtime editor of the *Mennonitische Post*, has completed a book of selections from the *Post* since he began editing the paper in 1977. Entitled *Dies und Das*, the 215-page book is in German and is available for \$11.00 plus postage and handling from the Mennonitische Post, Box 1120, Steinbach, MB R0A 2A0.

Saskatchewan writer and researcher Carl A. Krause has recently published two books which have some significant Mennonite content. The first, *Two Apples in a Jar*, describes the birth and death of a homestead in northern Montana. This 142-page book sells for \$13.95 including shipping and handling. The second book, *Who was George White?*, is the true story of a vagrant who ran afoul of the law in a village in central Saskatchewan and paid for it with his life. It is a 28-page narrative and is available for \$6.00 including postage and handling. These books can be purchased from Pupil Profiles, 204-710 Eastlake Ave., Saskatoon, Sask. S7N 1A3.

Dallas Wiebe and Kevin Dyck have translated and published Claas Epp Jr.'s *The Unsealed Prophecy of the Prophet Daniel and the Meaning of the Revelation of Jesus Christ*. This apocalyptic text was instrumental in getting some 1,500 to 2,000 Mennonites to leave their homes in the Molotschna, Russia in 1880 for Central Asia in order to escape the tribulation. Order from Dallas Wiebe, 582 McAlpin Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45229 for \$20.00 postpaid.

BOOK REVIEWS

David Ewert, *Honour Such People* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 1997). Paperback, 140 pp., \$14.95 Cdn.

Reviewed by Gerald C. Ediger

In this book, New Testament scholar and churchman David Ewert, pursues his interest in Mennonite Brethren biography. Having written a biography of A. H. Unruh (*Stalwart for the Truth*, 1975) and his own autobiography (*Journey of Faith*, 1993), Ewert now offers a series of eight biographical sketches in the spirit of Paul's admonition that the Philippians should honour their leaders (Philippians 2:29). The eight men Ewert has singled out are chosen for personal reasons, giving the reader a further glimpse into Ewert's own place in the array of Mennonite Brethren leadership at mid-century. All were Bible teachers and colleagues of Ewert in various Mennonite Brethren schools during his own scholarly and teaching ministry. Representing the period from 1920 to 1970, all but one are Russian-born, placing them in the generation of leaders that served the Mennonite Brethren Church and beyond in the aftermath of the 1920s migration of Mennonites to Canada and its attendant assimilation into Canadian society.

In offering these sketches as candid personal tributes to his teachers, colleagues and friends, it is obvious that for Ewert this book is a respectful, well-researched, journey into his own reminiscences. Still, Ewert has an eye on the future, hoping his book will serve to introduce these leaders to the youth of today. In this, Ewert's hopes are well-placed. Abraham H. Unruh († 1961), Cornelius Wall († 1985), Henry H. Janzen († 1975), Bernhard W. Sawatsky († 1974), John A. Toews († 1979), Jacob H. Franz († 1978), Jacob H. Quiring, and Frank C. Peters († 1987) will be remembered by many Mennonites in Canada as household names at mid-century, but Ewert's younger readers will find this book to be a winsome introduction to a generation of leaders they never knew.

Employing a readily accessible narrative style, Ewert uses just under twenty pages as he places each subject within the

Mennonite family, traces their story amid numerous anecdotes and, in many instances, offers appreciative, but not altogether uncritical, perspectives on their accomplishments and contributions. The portraits drawn in this book exhibit the shades of nuance and telling detail available only through the eye of a fellow sojourner. The appeal of Ewert's book for those who knew and appreciated these leaders and teachers as Ewert does is obvious. These portraits, however, also offer the more detached reader a ready store of information and potential insight into circumstances, challenges, opportunities and attitudes that shaped a generation of Mennonite Brethren leadership. Generally unencumbered by analysis, but ably presented in the natural stream of experience, one encounters dimensions of the Mennonite story such as the Russian Mennonite experience, the realities of immigrant life, the sensitive interplay of family relationships, and the stresses and challenges of ministry in congregational and conference-related contexts. At the appropriate time, it will be interesting to use Ewert's sketches as a basis for comparing Mennonite Brethren Church leaders of his generation with those of today.

Used by permission, Journal of Mennonite Studies 16 (1998).

Gerald C. Ediger is Assistant Professor of Christian History at Concord College.

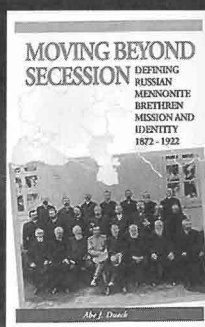
Book Notes

by Ken Reddig

Books which have recently been received include a publication of autobiographical sketches from the notebooks of Evangeline Dirks Rempel. The 127-page book includes pictures and copies of documents descriptive of their family life and travels. The family moved from Russia to Germany, living in Baden, Lower Saxony, until their arrival in Canada in July, 1948. Entitled *Evangeline Dirks Rempel's Reminiscences 1873-1966*, the various sketches have been arranged chronologically and translated by her granddaughter, Irene Artes Hedlin. The publication was printed in 1994.

Just off the press is the English translation of the book by Heinrich Goerz, *Memrik: A Mennonite Settlement in Russia*. This is the tenth book in the *Echo Historical Series* published jointly by CMBC Publications and the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society. The book was translated by Eric Enns. The 103-page book is available for \$10.00 plus postage and handling from the CMBC Bookstore, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3P 0M4.

Another immigrant story is *Lost Homeland: The Diary of a German Colonist Abram Abram Klassen*. This (cont'd on p. 11)



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