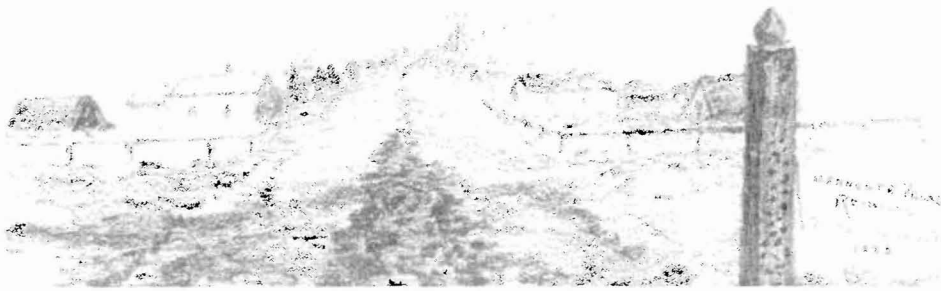


Mennonite Historian

A PUBLICATION OF THE MENNONITE HERITAGE CENTRE and THE CENTRE FOR MB STUDIES IN CANADA



Mennonite Village Reinland, The Old Post Road, 1883 sketched by artist Richard N. Lea who emigrated from Birmingham, England in 1880 and settled in the Pembina Crossing area. He often traveled between his home and Emerson where he owned a business. This sketch is the only known depiction of a post from the Post Road. Photo: Courtesy of Mennonite Heritage Centre.

The Post Road

CONRAD STOESZ

Imagine travelling along the virgin prairie of southern Manitoba over a hundred years ago, perhaps following a buffalo or Indian trail, on a grassy flat plain without hill or stone almost as endless as the ocean. Off in the far westerly distance, over forty miles away, is the hazy bluish outline of the Pembina Hills. You travel by horse or on foot, perhaps towing a cart, along a trail worn into the landscape that meanders around the wet marshy areas. The only trees you see are the small scrubby trees hugging the banks of rivers and streams.¹ Now imagine this picture in winter during a blizzard. No landmarks guide you, no yard lights, no roads, no trees, just a featureless white landscape to navigate in the cold blowing snow.

These are the conditions that the early Mennonite settlers had to contend with when they first settled on the West Reserve. They landed at Fort Dufferin in July 1875, after a long journey from south Russia.

They remained at the fort until it was decided in which village each family would settle and where these villages were going to be located. No one else wanted to settle the open prairie because of the lack of trees. There were no easily accessible trees for heating, for building houses, barns, not even trees for building fences for their animals. Once on the land they built houses out of the prairie sod and grasses. For temporary shelters, these sod houses worked well for the new settlers. They were warm in winter and cool in summer, but tended to melt away when it rained hard.² Some wood was gathered before winter from stands of trees a few miles away. In winter they continued to collect wood³ and there is evidence that a few years later some people bought land in the USA for the purpose of harvesting trees.⁴ Even Oberschultz Müller is reported to have bought some timberland along the Pembina River and resold it at cost to the

settlers.⁵

Once shelter was taken care of they broke a bit of land for the spring and prepared for the winter ahead. It did not take long to realize the harshness of the winter and the difficulty of travel. There were some wagon trails and small paths going here and there, perhaps to the well, to the neighbors, or to the other villages. There were no paved, lit highways — only prairie, grass, and mosquitoes. Some of these paths or trails are shown in notebooks of surveyors in 1875. Their notes are the earliest historical records of the Mennonite presence on the West Reserve.

Oberschultz (district director) Isaak Müller whom the non-Mennonites called Kaiser Müller⁶, took initiative in calling a meeting of all the village *Schultzen*⁷. In a letter dated May 17, 1878 from the village of Neuhorst Müller laid out the plans to mark the most commonly traveled path.⁸

The *Schultzen*⁹ were instructed to prepare posts, ten feet long and six inches in diameter, for the new road to Emerson — one for every homestead. Blumenort was to erect them on Monday, the 20th of this month, starting from Emerson. The posts were to be placed fifteen rods apart and in a line with the mileposts. Neuhorst followed, then Kronsthal, then Rosenort. Tuesday Neuendorf, Schoenwiese, and Reinland were to proceed. For every twenty miles of road they could use three wagonloads and ten men with spades and chisels. The workers should be prepared to spend three days and improve the road at the same time.¹⁰

With this directive the people of the Old Colony set aside time from their busy lives to work at marking the road. They dug the postholes by hand on the north side of the road.¹¹ According to one artist of the time, the posts had a tapered onion dome crown on them.¹²

This trail was used by people on the West Reserve, as well as those outside of it. It was used as a settlement road by hundreds of settlers who settled the southwestern portion of Manitoba. In 1879-1880 many settlers from Ontario came along this road to establish new communities further west.¹³ All their belongings, including lumber, pianos and machinery traveled along this road.¹⁴ Once settled, the new settlers' closest and most important trading and commercial point was the town of Emerson.

The concept of road markers was not a

(cont'd on p. 2)

The Post Road

(cont'd from p. 1)

new one. In Russia, as early as the 1700s, tall wooden verst¹⁵ posts marked some roads. These posts were put on either side of the road, painted, and inscribed marking the year they were erected in Russian and German letters.¹⁶ Later some roads in Russia had small ditches running alongside with posts marking the distance to the next stopping station, an idea implemented by Peter the Great.¹⁷ Still other roads had small stone pyramids marking the road at certain intervals.¹⁸ In the Mennonite areas of Russia, the road from the Chortitza Colony over the Dnieper River and on to the Crimea was marked with posts.¹⁹ Travel in winter remained hazardous on the Russian steppes because the posts planted one verst away were not much help in a storm. Travelers knew they were coming to Mennonite areas when they saw posts denoting that they were entering Mennonite land²⁰. Traveling in the Mennonite areas during storms was easier because of the trees planted alongside the road; the treetops could be followed, guiding them on their journey.²¹

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This concept of using posts as markers was not a new idea in North America either²². In 1825, an oak post was erected along the 49th parallel near what is now Emerson, with U.S.A carved in one side and G.B on the other. By 1870 another post was erected, marking a whiskey smuggling enterprise near what is now Gretna²³. The Mennonite Post Road in Manitoba was unique because no other trail or road was as well marked as the Post Road. It had posts every 250 feet, whereas other roads had them over a kilometer apart.

The Post Road began in a straight westerly line from Emerson and continued just south of present-day Halbstadt and past Edenburg. It continued through the village of Neuanlage, and then ran north of Blumengart and Neuhorst. From there it began to meander in a northwesterly direction, passing through the villages of Schoenwiese, Reinland, Hochfeld, Osterwick, Waldheim, and ending south of Morden in Mountain City.²⁴

(To be continued)

Endnotes

1. John H. Warkentin, "The Mennonite Settlements of Southern Manitoba" (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Toronto, 1960), pp. 6-9.
2. Kliever family fonds, Centre For Mennonite Brethren Studies (CMBS), Winnipeg, small collections "K".
3. David Schellenberg collection, CMBS, small collections, "S".
4. Johann Wall Collection, Mennonite Heritage Centre (MHC) Volume 1706, File #3 has a map showing land with timber lots marked on it. A letter dated December 8, 1999, from the Register of Deeds Office, Cavalier, North Dakota confirms that the land this map represents (the NE1/4 of section 12-163-55, 2.5 miles south of the Canadian border) was bought by Johann Wall from Joseph Cyr in 1878. Letter in possession of author.
5. *The Altona Echo*, June 28, 1944.
6. Francis Gerhard Enns, *Gretna: Window on the Northwest* (Altona, Manitoba: Village of Gretna History Committee, 1987) p. 11.
7. Recollections of David Schellenberg, 1944. Small collection "S" at CMBS.
8. This path may have been an old Indian or Buffalo trail worn into the terrain and used by the settlers.
9. *Schultz* is a village mayor who is responsible to the people in the village and to the *Oberschultz* who supervised all the mayors in the area.
10. Rosenort Village Organization, MHC,

Volume 1099, file 27 "An die Schulzen Aemter", translated by John Dyck. Some sources have other dimensions for the posts and the distance in between them. For example Enns lists the posts as fourteen feet long (page 12) and seven inches in diameter (page 11). Here the distance between them is listed as seventy-five strides. Ted Friesen in his book *Altona Centennial History Tour July 27-28, 1995* (Altona, Manitoba: Altona Centennial Committee, 1995), lists the posts as seventy-five feet apart (page 7). Perhaps the new replacement posts would have been slightly different from the originals accounting for the difference in descriptions.

11. Telephone interview with Ingvar Lindin of Gretna on March 4, 1999 at 3:30 pm. by Conrad Stoesz.

12. Richard N. Lea emigrated from Birmingham England in 1880. He settled in the Pembina Crossing area. He owned a business in Emerson. He traveled back and forth from his home to Emerson many times. He made this sketch depicting the village of Reinland and a post from the Post Road in 1883. Now property of Felix Kuehn, Winnipeg, it is the only known picture of a post of the Post Road.

13. *The Altona Echo*, June 28, 1944.

14. Warkentin, p.155.

15. One verst is 1.06 km or 0.66 miles.

16. Paul Shott, "The Role of Highways and Land Carriage in Tsarist Russia" (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1982), p.98

17. Shott, p.99.

18. J.G. Kohl, *Russia. St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kiarkoff, Riga, Odessa, the German Provinces on the Baltic, the Steppes, the Crimea and the Interior of the Empire*, (London, England: Chapman and Hall, 1842), p.410.

19. Kurt Kauenhowen, *Mitteilungen des Sippenverbandes der Danziger Mennoniten-Familien* (Goettingen, Germany: Kurt Kauenhowen, 1940), p.69.

20. Arnold Dyck, *Warte Jahrbuch für die Mennonitische Gemeinschaft in Canada* (Steinbach, Manitoba: Arnold Dyck, 1944), p.76.

21. N.J. Kroeker, *First Mennonite Villages in Russia 1789 - 1943 Khortitsa - Rosenthal* (Vancouver, British Columbia, 1981), p.109.

22. There is a road named the Boston Post Road in the New England States that was marked in the early to mid 1600s. *Managing Travel in Connecticut: 100 Years of Progress, Connecticut Department of Transportation 100 Year History*, 1995, p.1.

23. "100 Years Ago: Boundary Commission Marks 49 Parallel", Volume 1073 file no. 1 at Mennonite Heritage Center archives.

24. The earliest map of the Post Road is in E.K. Francis, *In Search of Utopia*, (Altona, Manitoba: D.W. Friesen & Sons Ltd., 1955), p. 68. Later maps all confirm this basic outline.

Genealogy and Family History

by Alf Redekopp

Queries

Rempel and Isaak — In the course of compiling information on the family history of Heinrich Peters (1857-1930), I acquired many old letters written between 1924 and 1931. Some were written by the sister of Elizabeth Peters (nee Warkentin), a Mrs. Peter Rempel, whose husband taught at Gretna, Manitoba. There are also letters from a David Isaak, who lived near the Rempels at Gretna. Information about the descendants of these relatives would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Kathy Peters @ RR2, Didsbury, AB T0M 0W0

Letskemann – Mantler : I am looking for information on the ancestors and descendants of Jakob Letskemann (1857) and Maria Mantler (1866) who came to Gretna, Manitoba in 1892. The descendants are believed to have migrated to Mexico. Please contact: Theresia Mantler, 778 Country Rd 37, RR 3, Wheatley, ON N0P 2P0.

Thiessen and Dick - I am looking for information on Peter P. Thiessen and W.R. Dick. Both worked with the resettlement of *Russlaender* (Mennonite immigrants of the twenties) from their first situation on the prairies to the Fraser Valley of BC.

W.R. Dick was working for the Mennonite Land Settlement Board (MLSB), a subsidiary of the CM Board of Colonization, and stationed in Calgary in 1928 and 1929. He related to various agents of the Canada Colonization Association (CCA) in BC. Quite a few of his letters are in these papers which form part of the CPR fonds held in the Glenbow Museum, Calgary. He suffered a car accident at Kingston, Ontario in August 1928 while on a holiday.

Peter P. Thiessen, a *Russlaender* from Chortitza, probably Mennonite Brethren, started out in Saskatoon as an agent of the MLSB, but in 1930 he was stationed in Vancouver as an agent of the CCA in order to assist in the settlement of Mennonite families in Yarrow. He and his wife helped in the early formation of the *Maedchenheim* in Vancouver. He proved to

be an effective inspector for the CCA and was helpful to many Mennonite families in the early 1930s.

Anyone knowing anything about these individuals, or having records that might be helpful for research into the early Mennonite settlement of the Fraser Valley, please contact Peter Penner, 20 Rundelawn Close, NE, Calgary, AB, T1Y 4A5, (403) 280-2177, or Email: justpen@cadvision.com.

Enns - I am looking for descendants of Johan Enns (b. ca.1890), son of Johann and Katharina Enns of Fuerstenland, Russia. He came to Canada in the 1920s. Katharina died in 1965 and the children of this family are presumed to live in B.C. Contact: Paul Thiessen, R.R.#3, 62 Hunter Road, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON or phone 905-468-7392.

Wiens - I am looking for information on the descendants of Peter and Agatha Wiens from Kleefeld, Molotschna. They had 5 children — Peter (d. in WWI), Abram, Jacob (b. June 4, 1904 d. 1947 in Canada and married to Anna Giesbrecht), Helena and Agatha (married to a Harder). Contact: Paul Thiessen, R.R.#3, 62 Hunter Road, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON or phone 905-468-7392.

Enns - Reimer: I am searching for the ancestry of Peter Enns (b. 1832 in Tiege, Molotschna). He lived in Berdjansk and had 11 children with his first wife Elisabeth Reimer (b. 1835). They were Abraham b. 1855, Peter b. 1857, Jakob b. 1858, Isaak b. 1860, Johan b. 1861, Heinrich b. 1862, David b. 1863, Johann II b. 1866, Johan III b. 1868, Elisabeth b. 1869 and Gerhard b. 1870. His second marriage to Eva Berg in 1882 resulted in the following additional children: Anna b. 1882, Katharina b. 1884 Margaretha b. 1886, Cornelius b. 1887, Agnetha b. 1889, Sara b. 1893 and Maria Louise b. 1910. This family emigrated from Russia in 1885 and settled at Newton, Kansas. Contact: Audrey Hawk, 2035 Old Portland Road, St. Helens OR 97051-3122, USA or e-mail: audrey10@crpud.net.

Enns - I am searching for family history information on Peter Enns who came out of Russia via China and settled in the Los Angeles, California area around 1930. He had a cousin also named Peter Enns who lived in Portland, Oregon.

Contact: Audrey Hawk, 2035 Old Portland Road, St. Helens OR 97051-3122, USA or e-mail: audrey10@crpud.net.

Recent Book

Isaac Bergen. *The George Krahn Family 1839-1999*. (Abbotsford, BC : Private publication, 1999) 390 pp.

This book focuses on the family history of George Krahn (1839-1919) and Justina Thiessen (1853-1834). Both of these had a first marriage— George Krahn first married to Maria Vehr (1844-1879) and Justina Thiessen first married to Jacob Klassen (1852-1890). Each of these first marriages produced a number of children, so that they brought a family of 13 children together in their second marriage. Together they had another 3 children. This family lived in Kronsweide, Chortitza, Russia. This book contains many stories, photographs and genealogical data on these families. Contact: Isaak Bergen, 1675 Gladwin Road, Winnipeg, MB V2T 5Y5

Upcoming Publication

Kathy Peters, Didsbury, Alberta has just completed the compilation of a family history on the descendants of Heinrich Peters (1857-1930) and Elizabeth Warkentin (1860-1936). The compilation is in manuscript form and consists of many family stories and pictures, copies of some old letters and documents, and some genealogy. Heinrich Peters was the grandson of another Heinrich Peters whose brother Jacob Peters was a leader in the emigration of Mennonites from Berghthal, Russia to Canada in the 1870s. Contact: Kathy Peters, R.R.#2, Didsbury, AB. T0M 0W0

Send inquiries to Alf Redekopp, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4
E-mail: aredekopp@mennonitechurch.ca.



MHC News

Summer Assistance

Through the **Summer Career Placement Program**, a division of Human Resources Development Canada, several students found employment at the Heritage Centre this summer. Shauna Weiss was hired by the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society as an archival clerk with the main task of entering early Manitoba Mennonite Church registers into the GRANDMA database. Shawna is a first year student at Canadian Mennonite Bible College. She is originally from Warman, Saskatchewan.

Myron Dyck, originally from Altona, Manitoba, most recently a student of Mennonite history at the University of Winnipeg, was hired by the Mennonite Heritage Centre as an archival assistant to process a variety of donated material. His tasks will also include uploading descriptions of archival holdings for inclusion in the Canadian Archival Information Network (CAIN). Part of this project is funded by **Young Canada Works in Heritage Institutions**, a program delivered by the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Help us Connect!

The Heritage Centre has had a presence on the world wide web (WWW) since February 1996 and would like to develop this resource much more. The potential for connecting people with their heritage has never been greater.

Leaders in the heritage field in Canada have done significant strategic planning during the past five years through an initiative of the Canadian Council of Archives, the National Archives and Heritage Canada, which has come to be known as the "CAIN" (Canadian Archival Information Network).

CAIN is a distributed, searchable

network of networks that will link Canadians, via the Internet, with every Canadian archive in towns and cities throughout the country. It will give all Canadians unlimited, easy access to a rich resource of Canadian historical records and documents. Just imagine the results of such a network.

A grade 8 girl is given an assignment to learn about Nunavut. From a computer terminal in her school she discovers CAIN and both the Inuit Cultural Institute in Arviat and The Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife. From their respective web sites she is suddenly transported to the vast lands of Nunavut and is able to download photographs and information about the new territory and the people who have struggled to retain their heritage. She leaves the computer terminal with enough material for her assignment and a desire to learn more about the land and indigenous people of Nunavut.

Imagine another scenario. A young man, recently arrived in Canada, wonders how he will ever become familiar with this huge, strange country. At his local library he discovers CAIN, which leads him to records and pictures of people who have come before; who traveled great distances to find a home in Canada. Sorting through the many stories and pictures of earlier immigrants to Canada he begins to read part of the diary of a young man who came to Canada 50 years earlier - suddenly he does not feel quite so alone.

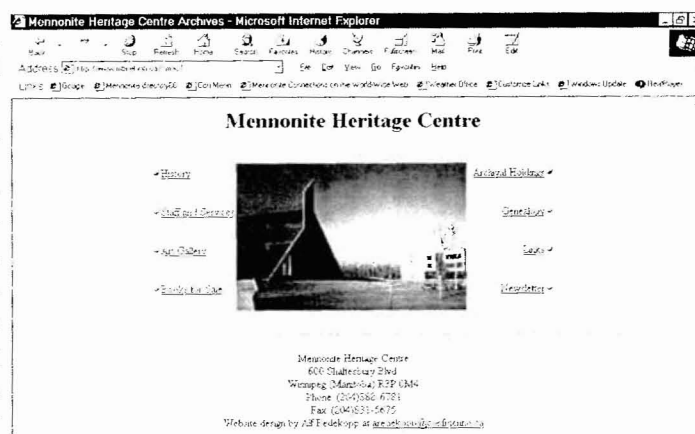
The heritage of Canadians can be found in more than 800 large and small archives across the country. The holdings of these many institutions span any number of themes: arts and culture, education, environment, family and domestic life, religious life, industry, manufacturing and commerce, labour, law and justice, local government, medicine, health sciences and services, science and technology, social organizations and more. CAIN will enable us to discover where the particular documentary evidence is preserved in order to answer the questions we face. It is difficult to convey the emotion of people who they encounter the archival

record for the first time. It might be the school child reading a diary from her home town, familiar surroundings and landscape but written 150 years ago, or the "eureka" from the behind the microfilm reader as a genealogist finds an unknown ancestor, or the relief of a woman who suffered from nightmares throughout her life discovers from the record that she did not witness a grim murder as a young child.

Several inter-provincial archival databases are already fully functional on the internet, and others are at various degrees of development. You may wish to check out these sites: Canadian North West Archival Database (Alberta, BC, Yukon) (<http://aabc.bc.ca/aabc/icaul.html>); Manitoba and Saskatchewan Archival Information Network (<http://www.usask.ca/archives/sain-main/>). When I recently searched under the keyword "Mennonite", in the Canadian North West Archival Database, I received a list of 25 descriptions of archival holdings. Fifteen (15) of these collections were in BC, nine (9) in Alberta and one (1) in the Yukon!

The Mennonite Heritage Centre began reformatting and revising its 1988 *Inventory Guide to Archival Holdings* several years ago and now has a number of these descriptions uploaded to the Manitoba-Saskatchewan site. However, only a small portion of our rich collection, is described according to the current standards for archival description.

What we need most is time and money, so that we can adequately staff the Centre to meet the needs and respond to opportunity of sharing our heritage in these new ways. **Donations are always accepted and tax deductible.** If you appreciate your heritage and want to "help us connect", please consider a donation.



Mennonite Heritage Centre Home Page on the web

Mennonite Brethren and the West Reserve Anniversary

This year marks the 125th anniversary of the founding of the West Reserve in Manitoba. The first wave of migration of Russian Mennonites to southern Manitoba began in 1874, when a large group settled in the East Reserve (near present-day Steinbach), and a year later a settlement began west of the Red River (Altona-Winkler areas). A number of celebrations and other activities are scheduled for the West Reserve areas in the coming months.

Mennonite Brethren were not among the first settlers in Manitoba. The Mennonite Brethren Church had only begun in Russia a short period earlier (1860) and a relatively small number were among the first settlers in the mid-western states (Kansas, Nebraska, Minnesota, and the Dakotas). Thus this year's anniversary does not relate directly to the Mennonite Brethren Church.

Many Mennonite Brethren in Manitoba do trace their family origins to this group of settlers even though they were not Mennonite Brethren at the time. In Russia Mennonite Brethren obviously sought to win converts to their church from their fellow Mennonites. Although this proselytization was understandably often deeply resented, the Mennonite Brethren believed that many members of other Mennonite groups were in need of spiritual awakening and felt an obligation to minister to them.

Not surprisingly, therefore, Mennonite Brethren in the United States soon began to look north to the Mennonite settlements in Manitoba as places for a potentially fruitful ministry. At the fourth annual convention in 1882 in Kansas a delegate raised the possibility of beginning a ministry in

Canada. At the next convention in Nebraska, two ministers, Heinrich Voth from Minnesota and David Dyck from Kansas, were commissioned to investigate the situation. The two ministers arrived in southern Manitoba in June, 1884, stopping in Reinland, Hoffnungsfield, Blumstein and Burwalde. They met with believers and also conducted services in several homes.

After they reported to the convention in Minnesota in 1885, the Conference decided to establish an active missionary program in Manitoba. Voth was commissioned for the work. During the next three years Voth made numerous visits to the West Reserve and gradually won more and more followers. Among the first converts were Jacob and Anna Banman who were also soon baptized together with another couple. By 1888 Canada's first Mennonite Brethren Church was organized at Burwalde and a church building was completed in 1889. The original church remained at Burwalde until 1897 when it was relocated to Winkler. But it had already become too small and in the same year a new structure was begun. The old Burwalde church continued to be used as a kitchen and dining hall adjacent to the new structure.

In addition to the Winkler congregation, two daughter congregations were organized in the early years—one at Grossweide north of Plum Coulee and one at Kronsgart, north-east of Winkler. The membership remained fairly small having reached only 324 by 1924. But then a large influx of new immigrants began to arrive from the Soviet Union which increased the Winkler membership dramatically and also led to the organization of many new congregations in southern Manitoba. A Bible school (Peniel, or Winkler Bible School) was founded in 1925. For the next decade or so Winkler was probably the leading Mennonite Brethren congregation in Canada.



The Winkler Mennonite Brethren Church and the former Burwalde Church in the early 20th century



CENTRE FOR
**Mennonite
Brethren
Studies** IN CANADA

1-169 Riverton Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada R2L 2E5

Heinrich and Saara Voth Family Reunion

Coincidentally, with the West Reserve Anniversary the Voth Family is celebrating a reunion at the Westside Community Church (MB) in Morden from June 30 to July 3, 2000. Extensive preparations for this event have been underway for some time. The latest newsletter indicates that there are about 500 "Grandkids" of Heinrich and Saara Voth, many of whom are actually "greatgreatgrandkids" and at least one a "greatgreatgreatgreatgrandkid." A variety of activities are being planned and displays will include items from the Voth collection at CMBS (Voth's glasses, clerical collar, etc.) and many photographs from CMBS and others held by members of the Voth family. The Centre also has one tape of a sermon by Heinrich S. Voth, the son of Elder Heinrich Voth, who was also a leader of the Winkler Mennonite Brethren Church.

Student Appointed for Summer Assistance

As in previous years, the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies has appointed a student under the Career Placement program of Human Resources Development Canada. Sheila Wright began work on June 1 and will perform a variety of tasks, including entering the data for the statistics that are compiled annually for the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. Sheila is a member of the Westwood Community Church (MB), a graduate of the Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute, and attended the School of Discipleship of Concord College in 1999-2000. She plans to enrol at Concord College as part of the Canadian Mennonite University in 2000-2001.

Alfred van Vogt, Edenburg / Hollywood, Dies at 87

by Lawrence Klippenstein



In the wider world Alfred van Vogt was known as a Science Fiction Master, as the late John Dyck put it in his brief biography of the man. But John then

went on to say, "Few readers of the fiction written by this Hollywood writer suspect that his roots are in southern Manitoba.

The fact is that Alfred Vogt, as he was known as a child, was the son of Heinrich and Aganetha (Buhr)Vogt, grandson of Heinrich and Judith (Wiebe) Vogt, and the great grandson of Wilhelm and Anna (Quiring) Vogt. These families lived for a time in Edenburg, a village a few miles east of Gretna, Manitoba. Edenburg was the place where Alfred was born on April 27, 1912. His father became a lawyer and the Henry Vogts then moved to Neville, Saskatchewan, where the father set up a law practice. The great grandparents had moved to Dallas, Oregon already in 1890, but were nevertheless listed in the Bergthal Church Register No. 1 when it was begun around 1903. (Anna Vogt nee Quiring died in Oregon in 1895). They spent some years in the village of Altberghthal as well, possibly before moving to Oregon.

Alfred's own career took off in 1940 when he moved with his family to Hollywood where he lived for many years. His last book of fiction was published in 1980. By then he had written 85 books and short story collections. *The Voyage of the Space Beagle* was one of his best-known science fiction titles. He became a grandmaster of the genre in 1997.

It has been said that Vogt was definitely influenced by his Mennonite tradition - a social life centring around the church, radio broadcasts from Moody Bible Institute, travelling Mennonite evangelists from the United States, as well as self-help salesmen and the motivational industry promoted by men like Dale Carnegie and Earl Nightingale.

One of Vogt's biographers has said that "during the forties and fifties this (former West Reserve) Manitoban was the most popular science fiction writer in the world surpassing Asimov, Clarke and

Heinlein". His books have been widely translated and his reputation remains undimmed in Europe and South America.

Vogt, not really a Winnipeg-born author (though he attended high school there), as the *Winnipeg Free Press* stated, died in February earlier this year and was buried in Los Angeles, California.

Sources

Dyck, John, "Alfred van Vogt : Science Fiction Writer", *Preservings* No. 10, Part II, (June, 1997), p. 66.

Ellis, Scott, "Surrational Dreams : A.E. van Vogt and Mennonite Science Fiction", *Prairie Fire* Vol. 15, No. 2 (Summer, 1994) pp. 204-219.

West Reserve Bergthal Church Register No. 1 and No. 2. Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives, Volume 718 and 719.

Old Maps and Drawings Discovered



Several old maps and drawings of Mennonite colonies in the Ukraine have recently been received by the Mennonite Heritage Centre courtesy of Diane W. Williams, Forestville, New York. The maps were discovered among the items saved by her father Gerhard Wiens.

Gerhard Wiens was born in Tashchenak, Russia on May 13, 1900, emigrated to the United States in 1920/21, lived in Newton, Kansas until 1939, when he married Olga Hiebert from Mountain Lake, Minnesota. He worked as a chemist for Robin Hood Flour in Kansas City, Missouri until he retired in 1965. In the 1969 Gerhard and Olga Wiens moved to Toronto. Gerhard Wiens passed away on May 13, 2000 on his 100th birthday.

One of the rare maps in this collection is entitled, "Karte der Molotschnaer Mennoniten-Bezirk Halbstadt und Gnadenfeld Gouvernement Taurien." The Molotschna Teachers' Association commissioned a J. Janzen to prepare this map and it was published by A.J. Unruh, Tiege in 1912. After almost 90 years, this item is still in excellent condition.

Another rare item in Wiens collection

is a map published in 1914 entitled "Mielitopol (Jekaterinoslaw)". The language on the text on this map is in German. The map shows villages, estates, roads and railways and some physical geographical information of the district of Melitopol.

The most unique items in the Wiens collection are, however, a number of drawings of the estate Tashchenak. The land at this estate had been purchased by Johann Cornies before 1832. It was here that Cornies first attempted to establish a vineyard in 1836. Later, fruit orchards and sheep-shearing enterprises were developed. Included in this collection of drawings is plan which shows the division of the estate to the heirs of David David Schroeder. These heirs included son Johan D. Schroeder and daughters Louise D. Wiens (Gerhard Wiens' mother), Anna D. Enns and Katherina Sudermann.

Manitoba Mennonite West Reserve 125th Anniversary 1875-2000

The year 2000 is an important year in human history, marking the advent of a new millenium. It is especially significant for our Western Canadian Mennonite communities because it is the 125th anniversary of the Mennonite beginnings on the West Reserve. Several committees are working hard at planning events to commemorate this event. The main event is on **July 16, 3 pm at Fort Dufferin** (Near present-day Emerson). A drama is being written by play-write Wilmer Penner.

On July 22 there will be an unveiling of a plaque at the Reinland church. This is the oldest Mennonite church in Western Canada. This plaque commemorates the importance of the first Aeltester, Johann Wiebe.

A third project is the initiation of the Post Road self guiding tour. Signs, replica posts and a brochure are in the works telling the story of the various points of interest and the uniqueness of the road which stretches across the West Reserve from Emerson to Mountain City. The opening is yet to be announced, but the goal is to complete this by August.

Radio spots on CFAM will begin in June and a 12-page insert will appear in the Altona, Winkler, Morden and Carman

Book Review Essay

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the 1806 list).

The great value of the 1806 list is the confirmation and extension of the B.H. Unruh data regarding the various homestead transfers that took place over the years. The 1806 list is particularly important in documenting the movement of the various settlers to the new villages such as Burwalde and Niederchortitz. For the villages such as Neuenburg and Schoenhorst, the 1806 list is the last in the available early Old Colony lists. However, as stated above, non-homestead owning families (the trademen, craftsmen, smiths, etc.) are not included in the 1806 list.

In the 1806 list, the data is sometimes confusing, owing no doubt to the predilection for the comparative approach. There are several 1797 entries needlessly put under the 1806 list (for instance the third Isebrandt Friesen entry under Schoenhorst) and a duplicate entry for Martin Wiens under Rosenthal. This has the potential of confusing the reader. As well it appears there is an entry missing under Einlage for Isaac Born/Isaac Woelcke, although I do not have any original to verify this.

The Grodno Lists (1803-1810)

These lists document the settlers arriving at the border point at Grodno and continuing on into the interior of New Russia. Most of these families settled in the Molotschna, although some settled in the Old Colony. The majority of these families are found in the 1808 Molotschna or Old Colony lists of B.H. Unruh. As well, B.H. Unruh documents many of these families by year of immigration.

The great value of the Grodno lists is the inclusion of a considerable amount of information regarding the individual families, their traveling companions

(relatives and servants) and the financial aid received. A good many details regarding arrival and departure dates, illnesses and routes taken are included. There is certainly a lot of new and additional material in this section, and for some families who do not overtly appear in the 1808 lists, this may be the only data presently available.

The Lists of Households and Visas after 1815

Here again the author has used a comparative approach, with the list of visas issued in a given year followed by the list of new households established in New Russia (in either Molotschna or Old Colony villages) for the same year. Helpful notes are included in the visa lists indicating the probable location of a family in the new household list. This approach works well in these sections because the data are comparable and because there is no obvious distortion of the original list, except perhaps an alphabetical ordering of the new household lists.

The data of both lists separate naturally by year. Furthermore, the visa lists appear to be represented in their entirety and include many non-Mennonite immigrants. The new household lists complement the 1835 Molotschna census. Of special note are the lists of families moving to the Molotschna from the Old Colony, although much of this information (and perhaps more) is already in the Molotschna census (and does in fact seem to originate from the 1835 census sources). Some interesting new data is presented for new households established in the Old Colony. Included in the data presented for the new householders is a brief economic description regarding the economic affairs of the household.

The most interesting and informative new data is contained in the visa lists themselves. All the persons traveling on the passport are generally named and include various relatives (and the relationship to the passport owner), maiden names (in some cases) and the village where the passport-holder resided. All of this adds a great deal to our knowledge of the settlers.

As will be apparent to the reader, this volume contains much new and varied information. Some of the data will be more useful than other data. The importance of the data in sections 3 & 4 (as outlined

above) have been recognized in this volume by the inclusion of a brief but excellent economic overview of the new settlers (1815-1825) by Conrad Stoesz. Also included is a map of the Visual Delta and valley, detailing the villages from which many of the new settlers originally came. Included as well is some informative introductory commentary re the original lists. This book undoubtedly deserves the popularity it will achieve.

¹B.H. Unruh. *Die Niederlaendisch-niederdeutscher Hintergruende der Mennonitischen Ostwanderungen*. (Karlsruhe, 1955)

Book Notes

by Adolf Ens

Salt & Sign: Mennonite Central Committee in Palestine, 1949 B 1999 (150 pages) by Alain Epp Weaver and Sonia K. Weaver is an account of fifty years of Christian service, peace and education work on the West Bank. Maps, photos and a good index enhance this account.

Jean Janzen, *Tasting the Dust* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2000); 69 pp. pb. \$9.95 (US). This is another volume of poetry by the Saskatchewan-born poet and hymn writer who teaches poetry writing at Fresno Pacific and Eastern Mennonite universities.

Perry Bush, *Dancing With the Kobzar: Bluffton College and Mennonite Higher Education, 1899 - 1999* (Telford, PA: Pandora Press U.S., 2000); 320 pp. pb. This centennial history of one attempt at combining liberal arts education with Anabaptist theology and retaining a Mennonite church connection may be of interest to the church bodies which recently founded Canadian Mennonite University.

Irvin J. Kroeker, compiler and editor, *The Papers of Howard W. Winkler* (Winnipeg: Open Door Communications, 1999); 173 pp. pb. \$10. Winkler was Member of Parliament for the constituency of Lisgar 1935-1953. Since his area included large numbers of Mennonite communities in southern Manitoba, Winkler's memoirs and correspondence are of considerable interest to Manitoba readers of the *Historian*.

125th Anniversary

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papers near the end of June.

In addition to these events there are various family and community gatherings and book launches. For more information visit our Web site (www.mmhs.org) or call 888-6781.

Book Review Essay

Peter Rempel. *Mennonite Migration to Russia 1788-1828* / edited by Alfred H. Redekopp and Richard D. Thiessen (Winnipeg, MB : Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 2000) 249 pp.

Reviewed by Henry Schapansky

It is an exciting event when documentary material on the Russian Mennonites is made accessible to the public in book form. Recent publications such as the Bergthaler Gemeinde Book, the Reinlander Gemeinde Buch and the recent Molotschna 1835 census data (although not yet published in book form, I understand that plans are in the works for the publication in book form) testify to the enthusiastic interest of the general reader in such works. This is to say nothing of the enduring interest in the great work of B.H. Unruh.¹ There is no reason to believe this current book will not enjoy a similar popularity.

The documentary material presented in the present volume is, in fact, supplementary to all these works but in particular to B.H. Unruh's book and the 1835 Molotschna census data. Indeed, the reader will want to have both works at hand when going through this volume.

When reading this book, I can't help thinking of what a great debt Mennonite history and family history owes to B.H. Unruh, and how the pioneering work of this historian has held up over time. All subsequent works seem to be footnotes or enlargements of his justly famous book. The present volume will be of interest to both professional historian and family historian, but like all books of this nature, the interest of the family historian will be the dominant one. I think it is sad that works of this kind are too often neglected by the academic historian, since all history is composed of the countless lives of ordinary people and the data and facts of their lives. The documents assembled for this book may be grouped (and here I differ slightly from the view of the author in his preface) into the following categories.

1. The Old Colony lists of 1797 and 1806
2. The Grodno lists of 1803 -1810
3. Lists of households established in

Russia 1815-1828;

4. Lists of visas issued by the Russian Consulate at Danzig 1819-1828.

The approach taken by the author is a chronological one with the data being restructured in such a way as to facilitate the comparison of individuals in one list with those in another. This works well for some of the data, less well for other data. In a work of this kind, the reader expects the documentary data to be presented in its original form, in so far as practical, and appreciates additional commentary, as appropriate, and distinguished as such. In general, the author and editors will have met the readers expectations in this volume. I would like to discuss the data of this work under the headings I have indicated above. It would be appropriate to say at this point, that at least some of the material in this book was originally uncovered by the late Dr. D.G. Rempel while in Russia in the 1960s. Dr. D.G. Rempel took copies of much of this material on his return home, including a transcription of the 1797 census. It is astonishing that no one has seen fit to publish any of this material although some of this material has circulated in unpublished form (I have a copy for instance of the 1797 list given to me by Richard D. Thiessen, one of the editors of this book).

The Old Colony lists of 1797 and 1806

The documentary lists under this section are among the most important of the whole book, being compiled at earlier dates than elsewhere in this book. Only the B.H. Unruh's lists of 1793 and 1795 are dated earlier than 1797, and there are Old Colony families who may only be documented in the 1797 or 1806 lists. We may therefore be grateful indeed that this material has been published here.

The two lists were compiled for quite different purposes and differ greatly in material presented. The 1797 list was a general Old Colony census (and included Kronsgarten) and contains information regarding the economic data of each household, including the number of horses, cattle, sheep and pigs owned. Only the household head is named, but the total number of males and females in each family is tabulated. The lists are organized by villages, with a last section for new settlers not yet assigned to any particular

village. The 1806 list was established for the purpose of establishing the tax-free years remaining to each homestead. By homestead I mean homestead in the Canadian sense, according to the various provincial homestead acts, where families received a free grant of land (and some tax exempt years) under certain conditions. The German word is *Wirtschaft*. The 1806 list gives the name of the original owner of the homestead rights, and the owner in 1806, along with a count of males and females in the 1806 owner's family. The 1806 list therefore contains only the data relative to the 1806 *Wirtschaft* owners, and the original owners. The author has chosen to present the 1797 and 1806 lists in parallel columns so that names from the 1797 list are across from the same names in the 1806 list. This approach will doubtlessly please many readers wanting an easy reference from a name in the 1797 list to the same name in the 1806 list. I, however, would have preferred that the original format had been maintained. In fact I feel that even in the present format, the author should have included a description of the record as it was originally created.

In my view, the comparative approach taken doesn't work here, essentially because the lists do not contain comparable data, although most of the 1797 families did in fact own a homestead. Many of the unlisted (not yet assigned a particular village) 1797 families had by 1806 acquired a homestead, and to have done a full comparison would have required a gross distortion of the 1797 list. As it is, the 1797 list comes off poorly in this volume. There are a number of errors and omissions in the 1797 list. The name Lehn is sometimes misstated as Lepp, and the name of Johann Leppky (at Insel Chortitza) is misstated as Lempke, even though the adjacent Russian is clear. The error of Karl Stumpp is continued in the Kronsgarten entry under the entries for Bartel Meussen. There should have been a footnote, at least at this entry, indicating the name is Bartholomaeus (as in B.H. Unruh), a variant of the name Bartel (Bartel is a short form). More serious however, is the omission of the Chortitza entry for Jacob Berg (Bark/Barg) and the Neuendorf entries for Abraham Dyck and Michael Loewen. (The Michael Loewen entry is misplaced into

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